



Newsletter Issue No. 61

April 2021

## TekTalks and You

TekSynap's company name speaks to the heart of what we do: 'Tek' for our abiding interest in the technological solutions that facilitate so many important missions for our customers. And 'Synap' for the cerebral synapses, the points of communication between two neurons or neurons and target cells – the place in our brains where the action happens. And just as that communication is essential in each one of us, so is communication between

TekSynap's many programs and among our personnel supporting them. Knowledge learned by few and shared with many gives us a larger collective brain, and that principle is behind TekSynap launching TekTalks.



TekTalks provide a forum for personnel supporting one program to share technical subject matter, best practices, lessons learned, and innovations with their counterparts supporting other programs, enabling knowledge gained in one place to benefit all our programs, present and future.

TekTalk topics can cover leading edge work such as TekSynap's new task to develop and implement an NSA approved Commercial Solution for Classified (CSfC) Capability Package (CP) in support of a requirement for secure remote access to SIPRNet – a solution that will likely be of interest to more of our customers in the near future. But not all good work is leading edge; more often you solve problems that are common. If you discover a better, faster, more efficient way to overcome a persistent challenge, that's TekTalk-worthy too. You know when you're doing something uncommonly good, something there will likely be a demand for among other federal agencies. You know when you've solved a problem that is likely still frustrating your peers, or when you've built a better mousetrap, so to speak. In that case, please reach out to your TekSynap manager to say you'd like to give a TekTalk. Share what you know and the value TekSynap provides all our customers increases exponentially. When you give your next TekTalk, please don't forget to include the Proposal Team on your invite list ([proposals@teksynap.com](mailto:proposals@teksynap.com)). We will make sure the good work you are doing today is communicated once again – to our customers of tomorrow.

**- Julie Ennis, Sr. Vice President**



## Caught in the Act

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A DTRA customer would like to give **Arland Smith** a shout out for his outstanding knowledge, excellent skills, and remarkable expediency & efficiency.

Congrats to **Jordan King** for being selected as DTRA's March 2021 employee of the month.

The DLA customer would like to recognize **Kierstan Dearborn, Arun Kapoor, Daniel Boes, Alex Hentges, Thomas Seay, and David Ward** for going above and beyond on several occasions.

The DTRA customer would like to recognize **Marty Smith** for his outstanding knowledge, excellent skills, and remarkable expediency and efficiency.

Patrick Pocock and David Bordelon would like to thank **Rachel Holliday, Heather Davis, Carmen Loggins, and Erika Brown** for helping with BOEM workstations and monitors while at the client site.

**Cornell Williams** received positive feedback from the DTRA customer for his ability to quickly fix their problem.

**William Asiamah** impressed the DTRA customer with his work performance and ability to "jump in".

Rachel Bates would like to thank **Ashley Frederick, Kim Snyder, Darrin Snyder, Will Smith, Jordan King, Randy Tisler, and Sarah Keiper** for their efforts on the DTRA AEMSS proposal.

Will Smith would like to thank **Neri Dominguez** for his exemplary support with DTRA CSSP.

Ray Caruso and Chris Schuster would like to extend their appreciation to **Jim Shilling, Tina Kieffer, and Patrick Burke** for their dedication and efforts applied to the NRC Project



### TekSynap Employee Appreciation

Thank you to all who attended TekSynap's Employee Appreciation Virtual Cooking Event. For those of you who missed the event, the recorded stream and recipes are posted on the employee portal [here](#).

If you have a suggestion for a future engagement event, please send them to [events@teksynap.com](mailto:events@teksynap.com).

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## TekPets



Ava is an Exotic Shorthair that belongs to **Lesley Quezergue** who supports DOI BOEM in New Orleans. Ava is approximately 16 weeks old and loves to snuggle and join Teams Meetings!



We want to feature your pets in the next newsletter! Send pictures of your companions to [news@teksynap.com](mailto:news@teksynap.com)

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## Tiny Team TekSynap!

**Tiffany Bean's** niece Riley (shown right) completing her first Easter egg hunt.



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## Great Eggspectations

Springtime formally arrived on March 20<sup>th</sup> at

5:37am and signaled the spring equinox, which brought with it nearly equal minutes of daylight and nighttime and the exciting promise of longer days, warmer temperatures, and shorter evenings. As the weather grew warmer, the first flowers began blooming on the side path that I walked. Buds started appearing on the trees and the sound of the birds in the morning, which at first was a pleasant anomaly, I quickly became accustomed to as nature began to return to the East Coast. After months of cold, windy, and dark winter, I eagerly anticipated each nice day in which my children could enjoy playing in the backyard without concern for a jacket or gloves, and we look forward to the Easter bunny and searching for hollow plastic eggs filled with candy or toys.



Reflecting on the prior winter, which was filled with grim news stories about COVID infection rates, people balancing telework at the office and school for the kids, local stores closing, in some instances, permanently, and more stories than I can count of people who have lost friends and family members due to COVID or other ailments. The latter kept many of us living remotely, concerned about contracting and passing an invisible illness to those we interact with and love. Through this period the team at TekSynap never skipped a beat, quickly adjusting to abnormal work and home schedules where dining rooms became home offices. Many of us managed juggling responsibilities with family at home while successfully managing customer and work expectations while solely relying on teleworking tools such as Microsoft Teams and Citrix virtual desktop.

During this time TekSynap continued our tradition of exceeding our customers' expectations, upgrading internet circuits and increasing licenses at customer sites, and designing and implementing new tools such as M365 SaaS services to allow our customers to work remotely. For example, on the NRC SNCC program, the NRC's CIO, David Nelson, stated, "I think our highest number of VPN users prior to this was 600 concurrent users, in situations like weather closings. But now we are regularly seeing 2,800 concurrent VPN users. We can also securely log into Microsoft 365 from our mobile devices. That allows us to use the portal to access email our material saved on cloud drives, without coming through the VPN." Based upon our employee's performance, our stellar reputation, and our excellent proposal team, TekSynap continues to expand our business, winning new and exciting work with the DLA, ITES, and NRC customers. This success is due in no small part to our performance over the past year.

On a personal note, while many of us *adapted* to telework, I never truly *adjusted* to telework, desperately missing the face-to-face interactions with my friends, coworkers and customers. However, with the warming weather I find myself becoming more and more positive and optimistic with each passing day, and in my conversations with others, they confirmed that they shared the same sentiment. I am heartened that many of my colleagues, friends, and family have now been vaccinated and that the infection rate has dropped dramatically and continues to trend generally in the correct direction. At the beginning of April, 4 million COVID vaccine doses were administered in a single day, breaking a new record! Excusing the bad play on words but, I have great Eggspectations that 2021 will be a fantastic year and I am optimistic that we will continue to build the successes that we achieved in 2020. Please stay safe and healthy and I look forward to seeing many of you in person very soon!

**- Chris Schuster, Vice President**

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## Certification Corner

### Robert Journeigan

Microsoft Azure Fundamentals

### Curtis Deemer

Microsoft Azure Administrator Associate

### Marc Loman

AWS Cloud Practitioner

### Jonathan Brinkman

Bachelor of Science: Network Operations Security  
CCSK

### Caleb Greenwell

Security+ CE

### Shelva Hawkes

Sec+

### Leonard Newman

Microsoft Azure Administrator Associate



We encourage employees to use the Employee Learning Program (ELP) Benefit.  
[Click Here](#) to access the form and submit to your manager for approval.

**If you have received a new certification please add it to ADP  
and include an effective date**

ADP> Myself > My Information > Profile  
And email a copy to [HR@teksynap.com](mailto:HR@teksynap.com)

Updating your certifications in ADP will help us grow your  
career through advancement opportunities.

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## TekSynap's Ken Farber named Industry Co-Chair for ATARC's Working Group

TekSynap is helping government agencies  
apply the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI).  
Working with ATARC, *the Advanced  
Technology Academic Research Center*,

TekSynap is providing thought leadership for the "AI Policy Implementation Framework" and the "Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics Guidebook". The Policy Framework is an approach to ensuring that the federal government defines and implements policies for the ethical and effective development of AI tools and systems. The Guidebook is a resource for senior government leaders, project managers, and AI practitioners, including best practices, lessons learned, and key considerations covering the entire lifecycle of AI system ideation, design, development, testing, and deployment.



**Ken Farber**, TekSynap Solution Architect for AI, is the industry co-chair for ATARC's AI Policy and Data Analytics Working Group. In collaboration with the government co-chairs for the AI Policy Framework and the Guidebook, Ken is helping design the AI Policy Framework and providing input to the AI Guidebook. ATARC is hosting an AI Summit on May 4, 2021 that will include a senior government IT leader keynote and two panel discussions, one on the AI Guidebook and one on the AI Policy Framework.

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## **TekSynap is proud to announce a partnership with Elizabeth City State University**

We believe that by creating more opportunities for careers in business and technology through partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, we will help foster a more diverse and inclusive workforce. TekSynap is committed to providing funding and support for curriculum development, technology certification sponsorships, and internship opportunities. By making this commitment, TekSynap will provide HBCU students with opportunities to gain real-world experience and identify career paths in the tech industry.



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## **Mental Health - Myths vs Facts**

**Myth: People with mental health needs, even those who are managing their mental illness, cannot tolerate the stress of holding down a job.**



**Fact:** People with mental health problems are just as productive as other employees. Employers who hire people with mental health problems report good attendance and punctuality as well as motivation, good work, and job tenure on par with or greater than other employees.

When employees with mental health problems receive effective treatment, it can result in:

- Lower total medical costs
- Increased productivity
- Lower absenteeism
- Decreased disability costs

**Myth: Therapy and self-help are a waste of time. Why bother when you can just take a pill?**

**Fact:** Treatment for mental health problems varies depending on the individual and could include medication, therapy, or both. Many individuals work with a support system during the healing and recovery process.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. It accounts for the loss of more than 41,000 American lives each year, more than double the number of lives lost to homicide. [Learn more about mental health problems.](#)

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## **What Is a 401(k) Plan?**

A 401(k) plan is a retirement savings account

that allows an employee to divert a portion of their salary into long-term investments.

TekSynap matches up to 4% of your salary when you make a contribution.

Contributions to a 401(k) are pre-tax, meaning it reduces your income before your taxes are withdrawn from your paycheck.

A Roth 401(k) is an employer-sponsored investment savings account that is funded with after-tax dollars up to the plan's contribution limit.

This type of investment account is well-suited for people who think they will be in a higher tax bracket in retirement than they are now, as withdrawals are tax-free.

The maximum amount of salary that an employee can defer to a 401(k) plan, whether traditional or Roth, is \$19,500 for 2021 (remaining the same as 2020). Employees aged 50 and older can make additional catch-up contributions of up to \$6,500 in 2021 (also the same as 2020).



To learn more about 401k plans, [click here](#).

We encourage all employees to take advantage of the ADP 401k plan. *TekSynap matches up to 4% of your salary each paycheck and there is also NO vesting period.*

To add a 401k account in ADP:

**Myself > Benefits > Retirement Savings**

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## Amp up your skills!

TekSynap employees have access to Skillsoft to increase their knowledge. Employees can learn about customer service, project management, cloud services, and much more.

If you are interested in learning more, [click here](#).

### Management

Browse all of the Management subjects below.



Business Execution



Business Strategy



Leadership Essentials



Management Essentials

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## Open Positions

Please email your referral resumes to [careers@teksynap.com](mailto:careers@teksynap.com)

### AFNCR - Arlington, VA

HBSS /ACAS System Administrator

### Kirtland AFB - Albuquerque, N.M

Client Support Technician II

### EWASS - Kaiserslautern, Germany

IT Support Specialist



## **WAN - Multiple Locations**

Network Engineer

## **NETOPS - Remote**

Telecommunications Network Engineer

## **Central LAN - Columbus, OH**

Senior Network Engineer

## **DOT EITSS**

Communications Support Analyst

Office 365/Exchange Engineer

Sr Network Engineer – New York

RMF Analyst

Endpoint Engineer

## **FDA IT BPA**

Help Desk Analyst (2)

## **NRC-SNCC**

Sr Windows System Administrator

## **Senate ITSC – Washington, DC**

Help Desk Tier 3 Network Technician

System Consultant

Email Queue Coordinator

Service Delivery Coordinator

## **Wireless - Remote**

Site Manager (2) – remote/travel

Jr Wireless Engineer (3) – remote/travel

Core Network Engineer

## **DTRA - Fort Belvoir**

Senior Azure Systems Administrator

Systems Administrator (3)

## **ISSE - Fort Belvoir**

SharePoint Administrator

## **NGA - Springfield VA**

Jr Helpdesk Specialist

## **NGA - St Louis Missouri**

Jr Helpdesk Specialist

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## **Referral Program**

TekSynap offers \$3,000 for candidates that fill a cleared position  
and \$1,000 for non-cleared positions.

Please visit the employee portal [here](#) to learn more.



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## **State Marijuana Legalization and Federal Laws**

TekSynap policy on drug and alcohol use prohibits the use of illegal drugs. Until federal law changes, this prohibition includes the use of

marijuana regardless of the local legality within any particular state and/or municipality. Many contracts may require regular drug testing and a positive test result will lead to termination. Employees are subject to drug testing at any time for any reason. For more information, please read sections 702 and 714 of the employee handbook.



The United States operates a layered judicial system that usually has a consistent and cooperative set of local, state, and federal laws.

However, with many states and localities legalizing medical and sometimes recreational marijuana use, there is a growing gap between federal laws and state/local laws as it relates to marijuana. It is important for all of us to understand that DOD and civilian agency security clearances are granted at a federal level, meaning that federal law trumps state/local laws. A failed drug test or any legal infraction related to marijuana use could impact your ability to hold a DOD or civilian agency clearance. For many employees, a change in clearance status, could result in a loss of ability to work on customer systems and a loss of employment.

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## Anniversaries

## Welcome, New Employees!

### Seven Years

Thomas Willson

### Six Years

Vinh Le

### Three Years

Chase Rustand  
Israel Negron  
Jason Warsewich  
Jacob Withers  
Elizabeth Page  
Eric Underkoffler  
Thomas Whear

### Two Years

Danyl White

Billy Blackmon  
Ann Gooden  
Kenneth Fidler  
Christine Schemmel  
Whitney Mondragon  
Estelle McKnight

John Shuff  
Leslie Franck  
Nichole Carter  
Tayler Fullen  
Eric Gilmore  
Regina Snow  
Cody Campbell  
David Ward  
Neil Strecker  
Steven Howard

**One Year**

John Kornovich  
Bruce Hann  
Jason Ballah  
Liana Bernt  
Shaneka Scott  
Ian Caisse  
Richard Flores  
Mia Nelson  
Michael Lorincz  
Richard Fike  
Christopher Cornell  
Derwood Spencer  
Pierre Collins  
Stephen Ivy  
Gerard Hogue  
Stone Baggiano

Phil Jacobson  
Joshua Smith  
Barbara Bishop  
Nicolas Chaisson  
Felicia Coverson  
Jerry Dillard  
Jacob Elsom  
Christopher Ellington  
Maria Lindsey  
Tracy McEntyre  
Radouane Rock  
Ivan Santana-Gomez  
William Talbert  
Michael Ramirez  
Jimmy Smith  
Luis Silva  
Victorio Curley  
Austin Boggs  
Cedric Hinojos  
Zenish Neupane  
Bentley Posey  
Thomas Reid  
Kasey Tan

