



NACOP Newsletter

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Message from the Co-Chairs

By: *Debra J. Duckworth, SAA*
Veronica C. Cullum, PWA

We're very pleased to announce details of the 2006 National Conference for ARS Office Professionals. Each Area (including Headquarters and the National Agricultural Library) was authorized a certain number of slots, based on the number of clerical employees in that Area. Selected participants will be notified and provided full conference details in the near future.

The conference will be held May 9-11, 2006, at the El Tropicano Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The theme for this year's conference is "Partnership for Success." An opening reception will be held for participants on the evening of Monday, May 8. We encourage all participants to join us for the reception and to meet and interact with your ARS colleagues.

The purpose of the conference is to provide ARS office professionals an opportunity to: 1) share information, including how to work together to support the ARS mission; 2) learn ARS' vision for the future and how office professionals can support that vision; 3) network with peers; and 4) participate in appropriate training to ready our skills in the changing technical environment.

This year's conference will offer a combination of motivational keynote speakers and breakout sessions designed to give you useful information that will help you in your daily workday.

2005 ARS Office Professional of Year Selected



Marlene Coley, Program Support Assistant in the Application and Production Technology Research Unit, Stoneville, Mississippi, was recently selected to receive the 2005 ARS Office Professional of the Year Award by Edward B. Knipling, Administrator. Marlene received the award in Washington, D.C. on February 7, 2006. Marlene's nomination was submitted by Dr. Ed King, Mid South Area Director, as the Mid South Area's Office Professional of the Year. Marlene is supervised by Ray Williford, Research Leader.

Congratulations Marlene!

Improve Your Reputation

Submitted By: *Patricia Coyle, NAA*

In any workplace, a good reputation can create opportunities for promotions, projects or perks. Try these strategies to boost your reputation and become known as a top performer:

■ ___ Respond exceptionally quickly to requests. Become known as the “get it done” professional. Surprise your boss and others by completing tasks sooner than expected. While this may not be possible in every case, aiming to get things done quickly is a definite reputation booster. If a task can be done within a couple of minutes, try to do it right away rather than postponing it. When you get an e-mail asking you to do something that might take more time than you have available right now, send an acknowledgement immediately and give an approximate date or time when you can get it done.

■ ___ Perform above and beyond what’s expected. Workers with outstanding reputations are rarely the kind of people who do just enough to get by. Often they work harder and aim for higher standards than other people do. When you are working on a task, ask yourself how you can do it better and faster than ever before. Try to catch your own mistakes by double-checking your work before passing it to someone else.

■ ___ Be a source of creativity and new ideas. Analyze a problem or challenge that exists in your office, then do some research and brainstorming (alone or with others) to generate ideas for improving the situation. When you attend conferences or read the latest publications in your field, look for new

products or approaches that might be useful in your office. Even if an idea you suggest isn’t accepted and implemented, your efforts will give you a reputation as a creative office professional.



You're a doer — not just a talker — and everyone knows that about you. You're a multi-tasking whiz kid, burning the midnight oil, taking the heat when the office burns down, and then putting out that fire. See, I used to be like that too. But then my family grew, and, well, it was a wake-up call to let me know that 1) I didn't need to do all of it all the time all by myself and 2) I was not only stealing the thunder from my coworkers, I was also woefully underutilizing their considerable talents. So I learned the **D** word: Delegation.

The path to delegation is paved with good intentions

Like anything else you undertake, you can't just jump in there willy-nilly and start delegating everything to everyone. I did a little research and came up with this list of how to get started.

Figure out why you haven't delegated before. Is it because you don't trust others to do the job? Or is it because you just don't want to take the time to explain what needs to be done?

Next, figure out what needs delegating. While you're at it, remember that there are some things that you should really keep for yourself (firing someone, writing performance reviews, volunteering to be a scout troop leader...).

Find the best people for each task at hand and be sure to communicate exactly what you expect of them; give them lots of information and set specific goals.

Let go. Check up when necessary. Give feedback. Let go again.

Now that we have a better idea what do, we need to figure out just how to use Office to make sure your delegation is successful.

Share the information...and thereby the love

We're taught early on that sharing is good. And you know, it *is* good. For a lot of reasons. It's good because it relieves you of some of the burden, and it's good because it gives other folks a chance to get their hands dirty, so to speak. Below are a few ways you can share some of your workload.

Note A majority of my tips below require that you use Outlook with Exchange Server. (As if you needed more reasons to use Exchange....)

I give you permission to help me Your private folders (such as your **Tasks** and your **Calendar**) are, by default, you guessed it: private. But if you want your coworkers or even your manager to be able to see certain things that you're working on, perhaps you should [give them sharing permissions on your private folders](#). You can set just exactly how deep these permissions go, too, by setting them up as read, modify, create, or delete.

Represent me, won't you? You know what a delegate is don't you? (I mean, I'm writing this in November folks — if you

don't know what a "delegate" is by now, it's time to wake up and smell the politicians....) In this case, a delegate is someone to whom you've given permission to send messages for you, accept meeting and task requests for you, and actually manage information in your private folders.

More information about delegates

[About delegate access](#)
[Delegate access permissions](#)
[Permit others to access a folder](#)
[Delegate Access: Let someone else mind your busyness](#)

(Training course; requires Office 2003) **Leave nothing secret**

Make your work an open book: Create a separate folder — a public folder — outside of your own mailbox that other Exchange users in your company can access (ah yes, Exchange once again). These are a great way to share information or work on projects together.

See, these public folders can contain any type of Outlook item such as messages, appointments, contacts, tasks, journal entries, notes, forms, files, and postings. When you're connected to your Exchange server, folders labeled "Public Folders" appear in the Outlook **Folder List** in the **Navigation Pane**.

Now everyone can share Outlook items related to a specific subject or project. You are no longer working in a vacuum.

More information about public folders

[Create a public folder](#)
[Open a public folder](#)
[Troubleshoot public folders](#)

A tisket, a tasket, let's clean out that task basket

Now that you non-Exchange users are thoroughly disgusted with me, I'm going to give you a tip about how to delegate some work when you're not using Exchange Server.

If you're like me (or want to be like me, although I can't imagine why; maybe it's my sparkling wit/sparkling jewelry), you are a list-maker. And you probably keep a list of everything you need to do — for work and your personal life — in your **Tasks** folder. I frankly cannot do without this helpful little friend. I use it to keep track of everything from my daily tasks (read customer e-mail messages and sort the customers from the stalkers) to my personal to-do list (de-flea the Crabby Office dog).

However, sometimes this list gets a little, shall we say, bloated. Then it's time to share it. If you're a manager, "sharing" is also known as "delegating." If you're not a manager, "sharing" is sometimes known as "passing the buck."

See, you can go ahead and assign your tasks to someone else to finish in a specified timeframe. It's simple, painless (for you, anyway), and it'll lighten your load in no time.

More information - passing the buck

[Assign a task to someone else](#)
[Share my Tasks](#)
[Turn a message into a task](#)

(I love this one: My manager sends me a message requesting something ridiculous of me, and I turn it into a task for you! So simple and yet so beautiful...)

Don't forget the kudos

Now that you've freed up a little of your time, make sure you take the time to give credit where credit is due.

Acknowledge your delegates; you're more likely to not only give them more job satisfaction, but you'll also have more willing delegates next time the opportunity to lighten your load comes along.

"No person will make a great business who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit." — Andrew Carnegie



ARS Travel Tips

BY: Sheila Messineo, BA

The following is what I use for the Food Composition Laboratory located in Beltsville, Maryland.

The information below is typed onto an Avery #537 Business Card for the Traveler to carry in his/her wallet:

SATO Transportation Management Center: (877) 698-2472

ARS Contacts:

Nancy Gadhula, BA, (301) 504-8356

Diane Egert, HQ, (301) 504-12160

Sheila Messineo, FCL, (301) 504-8356

The following information is typed onto an Avery #5364 Laminated Rotary Card for the Traveler to use in their offices:

SATO Transportation Management Center: (877) 698-2472

Foreign Travel-Outside the U.S.

Call Collect (210) 824-8455

Nancy Gaudula, BA (301) 504-6106

Diane Egert, HQ, (301) 504-1260

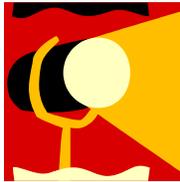
The following information is filled in by the traveler on Business Cards during the planning process.

Name: _____

Purpose: _____

Authorization: _____

Accounting: _____



Northern Plains Area Secretarial Advisory Council News (NPASAC)

Greetings! My name is Cody Jensen and I am from the Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota. I am the newly appointed Northern Plains Area (NPA) representative to NACOP and I have been a member of the NPASAC since 2003. I truly believe that the national and area councils have made a difference for office professionals and have proven to be vital to the mission of ARS. So, the next time your Area Director sends out a volunteer request for volunteers for your area or the national council, take the opportunity to submit your name. Your contributions can make a difference and you can be proud of your shared accomplishments. An added bonus is the memorable time you will have in meeting new people and making new friends. Our NPASAC held their annual meeting in November at Fort Collins, Colorado, and we

welcomed two new members and appointed new officers. Our Council has been very active with goals and initiatives. Recently our website was revised and presented at the last Northern Plains Area (NPA) Leadership Conference. This is a user friendly site and secretaries, LAOs, and scientists alike have found it to be a useful tool. Please check it out at the following website:

www.arsnet.usda.gov/npasac/index.html

At the NPA Leadership Conference, our Council distributed mousepads featuring our unique council logo. We also had a grammar exercise for the secretaries and LAOs and awarded prizes. Currently we are searching for a user friendly Adobe guide to distribute to all secretaries in NPA. In July 2006, NPASAC will host the National Council Annual Meeting at Fort Collins, Colorado. Our council has also consented to be one of the test pilots for the new Share Point Program. We are looking toward another productive and exciting year!



A Tip from the IRS

Submitted By: Emily Willis, MSA

Keep your hotel room key cards and destroy them yourself to make sure your information is not left on the card key. All of your information, including credit card number is stored on your room key when they swipe it at registration.

The Payoff of the “Three Ps”

Submitted by Patricia Coyle

You’ve probably heard that joke about the master violinist being stopped on the street in New York City and asked how to get to Carnegie Hall. His reply is, practice, practice, practice.”

Over the years, I’ve come up with my own, “three P” formula for succeeding: patience, perseverance, and progress. Some years ago, I was aiming to be promoted from an administrative job to an entry level management position. When I heard that a supervisory job for which I had most of the qualifications was coming open in my company, I was really excited. With the encouragement of my colleagues, I eagerly submitted my résumé and waited anxiously to be called by human resources for an interview.

When the call came, it wasn’t the invitation to an interview that I had hoped for. Instead, I was advised that I wasn’t sufficiently qualified and would not be interviewed. An external candidate, whose qualifications weren’t much better than mine, was hired for the position. I was very disappointed and, I admit, somewhat angry. But that was nothing compared to the outrage of my co-workers, who expressed to me their dismay that I wasn’t even given the courtesy of an interview.

Soon after this happened, I was approached by one of the managers who had contributed to the decision not to interview me. He asked me to help him with a special project. When he left my desk, one of my co-workers came over to me and said that she hoped I had said no. (Her actual suggestion about what I should have said is unprintable.) She was astonished to hear that I had politely accepted the invitation to help this manager. The approach of “don’t get mad, get even” has never worked for me or for anyone else that I have seen using it.

While working with that manager, I asked him for some concrete advice on how to have a better shot at the next promotion. I listened carefully, worked hard for the next couple of years (there’s the patience) and persevered in improving in every way he suggested. Two years later, I got that promotion I sought and made the progress I desired. Although I’ve been tempted occasionally in my career to use the “get even” approach, I’ve tried to rely on the “three Ps” in most situations. Although I haven’t made it to Carnegie Hall (yet), the “three Ps” have taken me much further than I ever expected. *Diane Moore, Editor*



Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia." --Charles Schultz





3 Steps in Recognizing a Stroke

Submitted By: Alice Reditt, MSA

1. Ask the individual to **SMILE**.
2. Ask him or her to **RAISE BOTH ARMS**.
3. Ask the person to **SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE COHERENTLY** (i.e. Is it sunny out today)?

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher. After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They

presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke.



Stop Unwanted Telemarketers

“The National Do NOT Call Registry”

<https://www.donotcall.gov/default.aspx> to register your phone number. This is a FREE service.



Credit Card Tips

Submitted By: Betty Hall, MSA (Retired)

Do not sign the back of your credit card. Instead, write the words, “Check Identification.” Store clerks will have to check for identification, making it harder for someone to forge your signature.

Also, are you bombarded with constant credit card offers in the mail? Prevent identity theft by making sure you tear up or shred credit card offers before discarding. Anyone could go through your garbage, apply for a credit card in your name and the next thing you know, your credit is ruined.

Remove your name from receiving credit card offers in the mail by calling 1-888-5-OPTOUT or go the following website: www.creditsourceonline.com/opt-out.html



Meet Karen Pearce, ARS Legislative Affairs Advisor

Karen Pearce joined ARS' Office of the Administrator in late November 2005. Karen's major duties include being the Agency representative to Congressional committees and their staffs on behalf of the Administrator; preparing drafts of proposed legislation requested by Members of Congress in areas in which they have primary interest; and providing assistance with the preparation of testimony and related material for use by the Department, Agency officials, and scientists testifying before Congressional Committees and the Office of Management and Budget on legislative matters affecting or of interest to Agency programs, and, as required, participating in the presentation of Agency's views at such hearings.

In addition, Karen manages arrangements for all Congressional invitations including laboratory visits and appropriate protocol for building dedications, groundbreaking ceremonies, and other speaking engagements, and provides advice and counsel to the Administrator, Associates, Deputies and Assistants, and other top staff regarding Congressional relations and legislative affairs.

Karen also serves as the principal Agency contact person, authority, and representative for making input to the periodic USDA formulation of legislative proposal for the Farm Bill, generally renewed every 5 years.

Karen is located in Room 351-A of the USDA Jamie Whitten Building. She can be reached via e-mail kpearce@ars.usda.gov and telephone 202-720-3173.

ARS Expert List - Keep this List accessible as it can be a valuable reference when help is needed.

Please go to (NACOP) website for current information <http://www.arsnet.usda.gov/nacop/>

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