



MSAOP Newsletter

Mid South Area Office Professionals

Volume 3, Issue 2
Editor Marlene Coley

Special points of interest:

- MSACOP elects new officers
- Sandra Warren Retires
- ARS Office Professional of the Year Selected
- MSACOP Budget Approved

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Burton Becomes Senior Chair, MSACOP

Janell Becker, Secretary, New Orleans, LA, turned over Senior Chair duties to Telecia Burton, Program Support Assistant, Oxford, MS, at the MSACOP Annual Meeting held in Auburn, AL. Telecia served as Second Chair the previous year.

National Meeting, selection of Office Professionals of the Year, the prospects of having an operating budget and 2004-2005 accomplishments.

Attendants enjoyed a tour of the facilities at the National Soil Dynamics Laboratory given Dr. Randy Raper.



Telecia Burton, Senior Chair

Other newly elected officers include Linda Fulton, Secretary, Mississippi State University as Second Chair and Janice Boyd, Secretary, New Orleans, LA, as Recorder.

Other issues discussed at the Annual Meeting included membership selection process, revisions to the MSACOP Charter, the MSAOP Website, the



Linda Fulton, Second Chair



Janice Boyd, Recorder

Credit Card Tips *(Submitted by Tammy Dorman, Auburn, AL)*

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 to this website: <http://www.creditsourceonline.com/opt-out.html>.

Wisdom from Charles Schultz *(Submitted by G. Sassenrath, Stoneville, MS)*

You don't actually have to take the quiz. Just read straight through, and you'll get the point (an awesome one) that it is trying to make!

The quiz:

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields.

But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten.

Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.
6. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards.

They are the ones that care!!



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

-- Charles Schultz

Stop unwanted

telemarketers. Visit

"The National Do Not Call Registry" at <https://www.donotcall.gov/>

[default.aspx](https://www.donotcall.gov/default.aspx) to register

your phone number.

This is a Free Service.

A Tip From the IRS

ARIS TIP *(Submitted by Betty Hall, Oxford, MS)*

To cut down on copying approved documents from ARIS, try the following.

Create directories (or folders) on your hard drive for 115's, 416/417's, 425's, etc. Since the log number will always be the same for 115's, you may want to create additional folders such as Approved, Pending or Referenced.

After you have generated the approved document and it is ready to print in Adobe Acrobat, click on the "Save a Copy" button in the top left corner under Address. Change the file name to the log number of the 115 and save as a .pdf file in your newly created folders.

Email all ARS authors and attach the 115.pdf file for

their records. When the authors have the citation information from the publication, have them email it to you referencing the log number from their copy of the 115.

This will save you a tremendous amount of time and can be used with various documents in ARIS.

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.

By Emily Willis, Lexington,

Sandra Warren Retires

Ms. Sandra D. Warren, Program Analyst, retired June 2, 2005. Sandra had a wonderful career with many outstanding achievements during almost 33 years as a federal employee. Sandra will be sorely missed by this Area Office and the entire ARS.

A native Mississippian, Sandra was a legal secretary/stenographer before beginning her Federal career in 1972 as a Clerk-Stenographer in the Bio-environmental Insect Control

Laboratory, ARS, USDA, at Stoneville, Mississippi. In January 1973, she transferred to the position of Secretary to the Assistant/Associate Area Director. Sandra was hired as Executive Assistant to the Area Director in 1984. She was named 1998 ARS Secretary of the Year. She moved into her current position as Program Analyst on October 1, 2000. Sandra has taken and taught numerous secretarial and administrative training

courses while employed with ARS.

She served as a member of the National Advisory Council for Office Support Professionals and as Technical Advisor for the Mid South Area Council for Office Support Professionals from 1997-2000. Sandra and her husband, John (a retired ARS employee), have one son, David. They have relocated to Pontotoc, Mississippi to enjoy their retirement.



Sandra D. Warren

How To Keep A Healthy Level Of Insanity *(Submitted by G. Sassenrath)*

1. At lunchtime, sit in your parked car with sunglasses on and point a hair dryer at passing cars. See if they slow down.
2. Page yourself over the intercom. Don't disguise your voice.
3. Every time someone asks you to do something, ask if they want fries with that.
4. Put your garbage can on your desk and label it "in"
5. Put decaf in the coffee maker for 3 weeks. Once everyone has gotten over their caffeine addictions, switch to espresso.
6. In the memo field of all your checks, write "for sexual favors".
7. Finish all your sentences with "in accordance with the prophecy."
8. Dont use any punctuation marks
9. As often as possible, skip rather than walk.
10. Specify that your drive-through order is "to go".
11. Put mosquito netting around your work area. Play a tape of jungle sounds all day.
12. Five days in advance, tell your friends you can't attend their party because you're not in the mood.
13. When the money comes out the ATM, scream "I won!", "I won!" "3rd time this week!!!!!"
14. When leaving the zoo, start running towards the parking lot, yelling "run for your lives, they're loose!!"
15. Tell your children over dinner "Due to the economy, we are going to have to let one of you go."

Retract an Email *(Submitted by Marlene Coley)*

Have you ever sent an email and wished you could get it back? Well, there is a way.

Use retract to delete a sent item from the recipient's Mailbox or Resend to make corrections and resend. You can only retract the item if it has not been opened by the recipient. You can retract an email, appointment, phone message, reminder note or task. Fol-

lows these steps to delete:

1. Click the item in your "sent" Mailbox that you want to retract.
2. Click edit in your toolbar and then delete. This will remove the email from the recipients box.

To make corrections and resend:

1. Follow step one above.

2. Click Action in your toolbar and then Resend. This will bring up your email and you can make your corrections.
3. Click the send button and a box will come up asking if you want to retract the original email. Click Yes and the corrected email will be sent again.



The Crossroad— Mid South Area, Stoneville, MS

Flying! *(Submitted by Kay Bolen)*

Remember it takes a college degree to fly a plane but only a high school diploma to fix one, reassurance for those who fly routinely in their jobs.

After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a "gripe sheet," which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft. The mechanics correct the problems; document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the gripe sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers. By the way, Qantas is the only major airline that has never had an accident.

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what they're for.

P: IFF inoperative.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel, sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget

2005 ARS Office Professional of Year Selected

Marlene Coley, Program Support Assistant in the Application and Production Technology Research Unit, Stoneville, MS, was recently selected to receive the 2005 ARS Office Professional of the Year Award by Edward B. Knipling, Administrator. Marlene will receive the award at the Annual ARS Recognition Program 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.



National Campaign for "ICE" *(Submitted by Alice Redditt)*

This didn't sound like such a bad idea. I'm putting it in my cell phone

I received this from a friend; it seems like sensible advice that could be adopted as a standard notation. "In view of recent events in London East Anglian Ambulance Service have

launched a national "In case of Emergency (ICE)" campaign. The idea is that you store the word "ICE" in your mobile phone address book, and against it enter the number of the person you would want to be contacted "In Case of Emergency".

In an emergency situation ambulance and hospital staff will then be able to quickly find out who your next of kin are and be able to contact them. It's so simple that everyone can do it.

For more than one contact name ICE1, ICE2, ICE3 etc.



Have a Very
Merry
Christmas...

Tips on Staying Ahead in a Changing Workplace (Submitted by Telecia Burton)

The office workplace is changing rapidly. Administrative professionals are being given greater responsibilities. What can professionals do to adapt to these changes and maximize their value to their employers? International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) offers seven tips:

- 1) Become a computer software expert. Demonstrate your mastery of "office suite" software packages which typically include word processing, spreadsheet, database, presentations, and scheduling software. Learn to navigate the Internet, and gather information via the World Wide Web to further your organization's goals and to serve customers' needs. Become a "Web Master" or a Web content provider for your employer.
- 2) Actively pursue continuing education. Attend business-related workshops and seminars or pursue a college degree program. Polish your written and verbal communications skills.
- 3) Learn how to plan conferences and meetings. Make the meetings well organized and user friendly through good room and site selection, meeting arrangements, and audio-visuals. Understand audio- and video-conferencing. Become adept at presentation software such as Microsoft's *PowerPoint* or Corel's *Presentations*.
- 4) Be a good teacher and leader. Many administrative professionals are training and supervising other staff.
- 5) Become a communications hub for your workplace. Clients and vendors often judge the character of a business by the quality and efficiency of its administrative support staff. Customer service skills are critically important. Interpersonal skills (tact, diplomacy, negotiation) are also essential.
- 6) Be an adept organizer and "Information Manager." Utilize computerized data as well as paper office records to provide information needed by managers. Today's administrative staff increasingly conducts research and helps manage projects from conception to completion.
- 7) Get involved in selecting and maintaining office equipment. Stay abreast of the types of available office equipment and what is most suited to your organization. Seek out appropriate vendors. Learn to oversee equipment purchases, evaluate office supply needs, and schedule maintenance.

MSACOP Budget

Approved

On June 15, 2005, a letter was drafted to Dr. Ed King, Director, Mid South Area, by Emily Willis making a proposal to help support and provide funding for the MSACOP.

Throughout the year, the council needs funds for various supplies, welcome packets and many other endeavors. With the Council having its own budget, the units with Council members would not be burdened with carry the cost of supplies, etc.

A \$3,000 budget was approved for FY 2006 for those needs. Drusilla Fratesi, Executive Assistant to Dr. King and a member of the council, will manage the budget. Requests for funds must have prior approval from Drusilla Fratesi before funds can be paid.

A yearly report will be due at the end of the fiscal year showing how the funds were spent.

Three Steps in Recognizing a Stroke (Submitted by Alice Redditt)

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 last February.

Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and prevent brain damage.



Attitude Is Everything by Jim Rohn *(Submitted by Janell Becker)*

The process of human change begins within us. We all have tremendous potential. We all desire good results from our efforts. Most of us are willing to work hard and to pay the price that success and happiness demand.

Each of us has the ability to put our unique human potential into action and to acquire a desired result. But the one thing that determines the level of our potential that produces the intensity of our activity, and predicts the quality of the result we receive is our attitude.

Attitude determines how much of the future we are allowed to see. It decides the size of our dreams and influences our determination when we are faced with new challenges. No other person on earth has dominion over our attitude. People can affect our attitude by teaching us poor thinking habits, unintentionally misinforming us or providing us with

negative sources of influence, but no one can control our attitude unless we voluntarily surrender that control.

No one else "makes us angry." We make ourselves angry when we surrender control of our attitude. What someone else may have done is irrelevant. We choose, not they. They merely put our attitude to a test. If we select a volatile attitude by becoming hostile, angry, jealous or suspicious, then we have failed the test. If we condemn ourselves by believing that we are unworthy, then again, we have failed the test.

If we care at all about ourselves, then we must accept full responsibility for our own feelings. We must learn to guard against those feelings that have the capacity to lead our attitude down the wrong path and to strengthen those feelings that can lead us confidently into a better future.

If we want to receive the rewards the future holds in trust for us, then we must exercise the most important choice given to us as members of the human race by maintaining total dominion over our attitude.

Our attitude is an asset, a treasure of great value, which must be protected accordingly. Beware of the vandals and thieves among us who would injure our positive attitude or seek to steal it away.

Having the right attitude is one of the basics that success requires. The combination of a sound personal philosophy and a positive attitude about ourselves and the world around us gives us an inner strength and a firm resolve that influences all the other areas of our existence.

Tips for Better Verbal Communication *(Submitted Drusilla Fratesi)*

Communication is an important part of our daily lives that is often taken for granted. Studies are being conducted and articles are being written about better communication in both our personal and our work-related conversations. One recent study in children even showed that women who ate fish regularly during pregnancy had children who had better language and communication skills by the age of 18 months. Since we are well past receiving that kind of help with our communication development, we could instead follow some of the guidelines below to facilitate better verbal communication. Though many of these seem to apply to public speaking, think about them as related to a conversation with a relative or fellow worker.

—Think before you speak. When you speak to someone, you don't have a backspace key to erase what you just said. Do not hesitate; speak as though you have confidence in what

you are saying

—Keep it simple. Break up your ideas so they will be easier to comprehend. Use direct statements so your audience can digest as you speak. Too many thoughts rolled into one statement causes the listener to have to sort out your ideas and think too much about your point. Speak concisely to keep the listener focused.

—Ask questions and stay involved in the conversation. Ask for someone to repeat something that you did not understand or did not hear. Don't assume that you understand what the other intended. Paraphrasing in your own way what you believe the person is saying will facilitate communication. Paraphrasing also lets the other person know that you are interested in what they have to say.

—Use eye contact. Eye contact emphasizes sincerity and interest.

—Watch your body language. Folded arms, sarcastic rolling of the eyes, and listless sighs send messages that interfere with good communication.

—Respond, don't re-act. Responding mindfully requires discipline and knowledge of our own selves and allows better communication than re-acting emotionally. Identify your "hot buttons" and have a plan for reacting calmly when they get pushed. Anticipate and be prepared.

—Many communication trainers promote better communication as an on-going development process that requires attention **and** work, and they indicate most of us think we are better at it than we really are.

So, keep working.....

FEMA and other emergency operations groups make use of ARS Research Facility at Poplarville, MS, after Hurricane Katrina.



Flooding at SRRC, New Orleans, LA



Stoneville Hosts Displaced SRRC Employees





MSACOP

2005-2006 MSA Council

Members

Front row, l-r, Lucienne Savell, Madeline Hall, Dr. Deborah Brennan, advisor, Telecia Burton, Janell Becker, Janice Boyd, and Jennifer Roberson.

Back row, l-r, Emily Willis, Marlene Coley, Alice Redditt, Linda Fulton, Tammy Dorman, Drusilla Fratesi, and Kay Bolen.

We're on the Web:

[http://
msa.ars.usda.gov/osp/](http://msa.ars.usda.gov/osp/)

Mid South Area Council of Office Professional

The **Mission** of the MSACOP is to provide a resource for the Area Director's Office and all levels of management for matters relating to office professionals.

The **Goal** of the Council is to enhance office professions through training, networking, mentoring, and recognition of office support employees. It is the desire of the Council to work with all levels of management to assure that office support staff are highly skilled and motivated professionals and to assure that the clerical and administrative needs of the Mid South Area and ARS are met.



Organizing and Maintaining a Clean Desk *(Submitted by Linda Fulton)*

As we all know, one of the keys to organizing and keeping a clean desk is to handle a piece of paper only one time. If it is something that requires action, take care of it immediately, send it to someone else that may need to take action, or forward information to other people as needed. Or, it may simply need to be filed. I have found that it is so much easier to file items as they show up on my desk rather than have a marathon filing event. Sometimes it seems that time does not allow for filing at that moment, but in the long-term, it is a time saver, and it helps maintain a clutter-free desk.

There are occasions that a piece of paper will have to be handled more than once. If so, handle it as few times as possible. A good way to do this is to have an accordion file that has a slot for each day of the month, or you may utilize your calendar as a reminder for when you need to look at a particular piece of paper again. For example, there are occasions when you can not complete a project until you have received

information from others. Note the date on your calendar or in your accordion file as to when you should have the information you need, the project can then be completed.

For items that I may need on a daily basis, I organize them in file folders in desk trays on my desk. I have file folders labeled: (1) ARIS, (2) Travel Reservations, (3) Travel Regulations, (4) STAR, (5) CATS, (6) PCMS, (7) Object Class Codes, (8) Visitors, etc. When I receive an E-mail (which is the case most of the time) about pertinent information for these respective folders, I simply place the piece of paper in the proper folder. For the Visitor folder, as we have visitors at our Location, I place the information in the Visitor folder so that I have what I need to put together the quarterly report. Of course, these file folders will need to be purged as updated information is received. This system allows you to have current information at your finger tips.

I utilize three-ring binders (as I am sure most everyone does) for hard copies of manuals (ARIS, OSQR, etc.). Upon notices of updated chapters in ARIS, I print, and replace

old information with new information as with OSQR, ARMPS, etc. I find if I have a hard copy of this information with all pertinent E-mails in each respective binder, it is easy to access, and all of the information is in one place. It also allows for a clutter-free desk.

To sum up the above, I believe it has been said by Barbara Friedman, President of Organize IT, "Creating a system to process your paper will increase productivity and relieve stress. The system should reflect how you work, and how you think. It is your system. It should complement your style."

Also, as quoted by Walter S. Mossberg in the Wall Street Journal, "The promise of a paperless office [and home] where documents are entirely created, distributed, read and stored on computers, has been about as reliable as the promise of a check in the mail." Paper will always be around to clutter our desks, so it is best to get organized so maintaining this situation is easier and less stressful.

.....And a Happy New Year