



# MSACOP News Notes

*Editor Sydney Beaumont*

## Mid South Area Office Professionals Meeting

The Mid South Area Office Professionals Meeting was held on May 15-16, 2007, in Oxford, MS.

The talks were structured and planned to provide training, networking opportunities, motivation and information on relevance of office professional positions to ARS mission & goals.

Drusilla Fratesi, and Linda Fulton, welcomed us to the Meeting. Agency leaders had our attention as we learned more about "What RL's Expect from OP's." Dr. Matt Romkens, Dr. Steve Duke, Dr. Carlos Alonso and Dr. Martin Locke presented a lively and well planned discussion. Their question and answer session, personally involving all office professionals, provided a very motivational tool for all concerned.

Marlene Coley gave us very useful information regarding RPES procedures/changes and prepared an "Instructions folder" as a handout for everyone. Margaret Rushing & Linda Robinson gave an overview of AIMS/Agreements in ARIS. group about the MS Outlook migration.

Hilda Roberts enlightened the group about the MS Outlook migration. Groupwise will be maintained for one year after migration.

Cack Norquist gave a presentation on Foreign Travel and Cost Comparison. Cack emphasized requirements regarding Passport/Visa Requests and led a question and answer session. The refresher information is always welcome. Rita Keeling gave a talk on T&A's and Starweb and also discussed Compensatory and Compensatory travel time.

Margaret Rushing's brought us all up-to-date on the Budget and ARMPS processes and she also informed the audience about upcoming deadlines.

Next, Dr. James Payne was our very motivating Motivational Speaker. He demonstrated the importance of building relationships and the significance of those relationships in making a difference on how tasks are completed as well as the necessity of taking pleasure in our chosen profession. He had one-on-one displays of game playing involving two individuals having fun and enjoying the idea of having fun while being a team player.

He also presented a video of the famous Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle, WA. In short, we should have fun in our jobs, build relationships and perform our jobs in the best possible way as a team player relying on each other.

Dr. Deborah Brennan gave a presentation on Writing Performance Accomplishments. The following items were pointed out: 1) Make sure your standards reflect what you do, 2) Standards should be measurable (quality, quantity, timeliness, impact), 3) keep track of accomplishments throughout the year, 4) write accomplishment documentation in such a way that shows initiative, 5) do not be modest) 6) tie your documentation to Mission, Strategic Plan. Dr. Brennan's information was extremely well received. All of us will benefit from her speech.

Sandra Hanks informed us of ARIS updates regarding LOI's, and other changes affecting our Agreements processes and last but definitely not least, Tyrone Swearngen wrapped up the conference with an overview on Sharepoint followed by a question and answer session.

(Pics from conference on pg. 9)  
Submitted by Tammy Dorman,  
Linda Fulton and Ann McGee

The MSAOP Meeting was wonderful! Thanks to everyone who made the event a success!!

Our MSACOP webpage is (<http://msa.ars.usda.gov/osp>)

## SPOTLIGHT ON: PAT KIRKLAND



Pat Kirkland is a native of South Mississippi. She has twenty one years in Federal Service at the USDA-ARS location at Poplarville, MS, which is now designated the Thad Cochran Southern Horticultural Laboratory.



Pat is married to Mike Kirkland and their only son, Kyle was married this past year.

The Kirkland family lives on a farm in Pearl River County, MS where they raise cattle and horses. They are all are active in the Mid South Rodeo Association.



Pat and Mike supply bucking bulls for regional rodeos, often sponsoring bull riding events at their farm and throughout the Gulf South.

They have even supplied bulls for the Professional Bull Riding Association so their bulls have been seen on television.

Kyle, who in the past used to compete in bull-riding now participates in these events as a rodeo clown.

In her spare time (when would that be?) Pat enjoys gardening and is an active member of the St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Submitted by Susan Herrin



The 2007 National Advisory Council for Office Professionals' (NACOP) annual meeting was hosted by the Midwest Area July 24-26 at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, Illinois.

The Council is comprised of one member from each area, one from the National Agricultural Library, two from Headquarters (one from AFM and one from other Administrative groups), an AFM/HQ Technical Advisor & the Secretary to the Administrator. Business during the three-day meeting included:

Review of the Charter and Code:

Revision of the rotation schedule of Council members including discussion of the selection process; (Currently the Co-chairs request a

### NACOP News

nomination from the Area Director or management official. The nominated individual should be a present or former local Council representative who has been with the agency for 3 or more years. (The National Council may accept or decline the nomination). Committee evaluations and new assignments, including the Newsletter and how to provide more information to Office Professionals, the Website and keeping information there current, and the establishment and maintaining of NACOP historical records;

Review of 2006/07 goals and accomplishments and establishment of 2007/08 goals which related to many of the items discussed during this meeting.

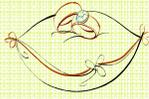
Review and updating of the NACOP website, particularly the Training Guide, the Mentoring Guide and the Links & Resources; Area and National Councils' annual reports; Proposal to hold 2009 Conference. At the conclusion of the meeting, **Drusilla Fratesi** (Mid South Area) accepted the role of Jr. Co-Chair, **Patricia Berry** (Headquarters) accepted the role of Sr. Co-Chair, and **Veronica Laird** (Pacific West Area) became Ex-officio.

Additional information on NACOP may be viewed: (<http://www.arsnet.usda.gov/nacop/>)

Submitted by **Drusilla Fratesi**

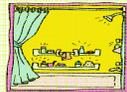
## HOUSEHOLD HINTS

by Marlene Coley



### BED SHEETS

After drying sheets, put both sheets and one pillowcase in the other pillow case. Fold neatly in a square. Next time you change sheets, just take the one pillow case and all the sheets and pillow case are inside. No need to look for matches.



### CLEAN YOUR GLASS SHOWER

To clean the glass in your shower easily, apply lemon juice to the glass with a sponge. Then take newspaper and wipe the lemon juice off the glass. It will be clean and sparkle with no scrubbing!



### REHEAT PIZZA

Heat up leftover pizza in a non-stick skillet on top of the stove, set heat to med-low and heat till warm. This keeps the crust crispy. No soggy microwave pizza.



### EASY DEVILED EGGS

Put cooked egg yolks in a zip lock bag. Seal, mash until they are all broken up. Add remainder of ingredients, re-seal, keep mashing it up. Mixing thoroughly, cut the tip of the baggy, squeeze mixture into egg. Just throw bag away when done for easy clean up.



### MORE FROSTING

When you buy a container of cake frosting from the store, whip it with your mixer for a few minutes. You can double it in size. You get to frost more cake/cupcakes with the same amount. You also eat less sugar/calories per serving.



### REHEATING BREAD

To warm biscuits, pancakes, or muffins that were refrigerated, place them in a microwave with a cup of water. The increased moisture will keep the food moist and help it reheat faster.



### NEWSPAPER WEED KILLER

Start putting in your plants, work the nutrients in your soil. Wet newspapers, put layers around the plants overlapping as you go, cover with mulch and forget about weeds. Weeds will get through some gardening plastic, they will not get through wet newspapers.



### EASIER THANK-YOUS

When you throw a bridal/baby shower, buy a pack of thank you cards for the guest of honor. During the party, pass out the envelopes and have everyone put their address on one. When the bride/new mother sends the thank yous, they're all addressed!



**MINE!!** If you purchase a new bike for your child, place their picture inside the handle bar before placing the grips on. If the bike is stolen and later recovered, remove the grip and there is your proof of who owns the bike.



**STATIC CLING** Pin a small safety pin to the seam of your slip and you will not have a clingy skirt or dress. Same thing works with slacks that cling when wearing party-hose. Place pin in seam of slacks and-- voila-- static is gone.



**MEASURING CUPS** Before you pour sticky substances into a measuring cup, fill it with hot water. Dump out the hot water, but don't dry the cup. Next, add your ingredient, such as peanut butter, and watch how easily it comes out.



### GOODBYE, ANTS

Put small piles of cornmeal where you see ants. They eat it, take it "home," and can't digest it so it kills them. It may take a week or so, especially if it rains, but it works and you don't have the worry about pets or small children being harmed!

**(Submitted by Marlene Coley)**

## Blueberries and Aging (Submitted by Sydney Beaumont)

In a **USDA** Human Nutrition Research Center laboratory, neuroscientists discovered that feeding blueberries to laboratory rats slowed age-related loss in their mental capacity, a finding that has important implications for humans.

In one study, Jim Joseph, director of the neuroscience laboratory in the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center (HNRC), fed blueberry extractions—the equivalent of a human eating one cup of blueberries a day—to mice and then ran them through a series of motor skills tests.

He found that the blueberry-fed mice performed better than their control group counterparts in motor behavioral learning & memory, and he noticed an increase in exploratory behavior.

When he examined their brains, he found a marked decrease in oxidative stress in two regions of the brain & better retention of signal-transmitting neurons compared

with the control mice.

The compound that appears responsible for this neuron protection, anthocyanin, also gives blueberries their color and might be the key component of the blueberry's antioxidant & anti-inflammatory properties.

Blueberries, along with other colorful fruits & vegetables, test high in their ability to subdue free radicals. These free radicals, which can damage cell membranes and DNA through a process known as oxidative stress, are blamed for many of the dysfunctions and diseases associated with aging.

These findings could become increasingly important as the U.S. population ages. It is projected that by 2050, more than 30% of Americans will be over 65 and will have the decreased cognitive and motor function that accompanies advanced age.

Joseph is currently testing the effects of blueberries on

humans. Preliminary results show that people who ate a cup of blueberries a day have performed 5-6% better on motor skills tests than the control group.

(This writer is going out to buy a case of blueberries!)

From USDA Agricultural Research Magazine



## Travel Tips

### Calling Cards for Foreign Travel

Request through Erica Jones to Maureen Harris.

Email Erica a request for a calling card for (person's name) going to (country) and provide the dates.

This process will take 3-4 weeks so be sure to submit your request early enough to receive the card before the traveler departs.

My suggestion is that requests be submitted 1 month before departure.

(Lynda Taylor, Stoneville, MS)



## More



## Blueberry facts

Frozen Blueberries - Frozen blueberries are available year round in your grocers' freezer case.

And **Yes**, they do contain the beneficial vitamins & minerals of the fresh berry as well as those beneficial **antioxidants** and phytochemicals. *S.Beaumont*

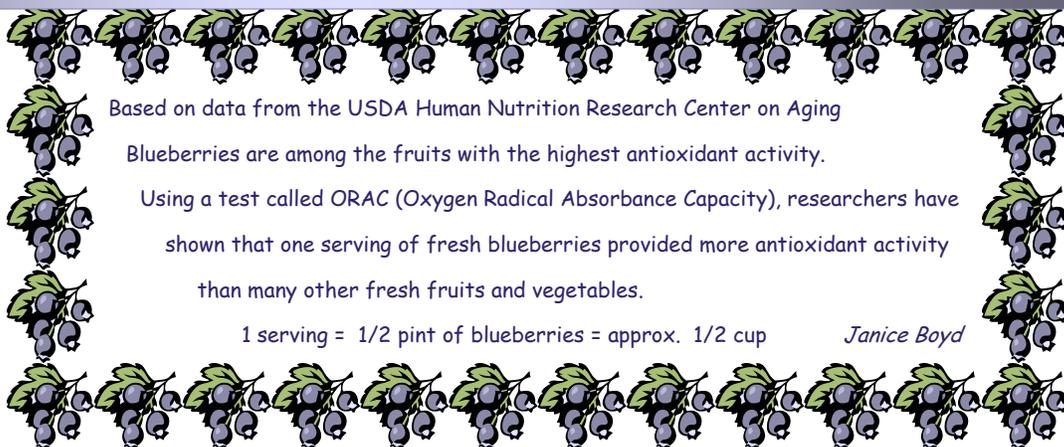
Based on data from the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging

Blueberries are among the fruits with the highest antioxidant activity.

Using a test called ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity), researchers have shown that one serving of fresh blueberries provided more antioxidant activity than many other fresh fruits and vegetables.

1 serving = 1/2 pint of blueberries = approx. 1/2 cup

*Janice Boyd*



## BLUEBERRIES

	FRESH	1 cup (148 g)
Energy	kcal	84
Protein	g	1.10
Fat	g	0.49
Carbohydrate	g	21.45
Fiber	g	3.6
Calcium	mg	9
Iron	mg	0.41
Magnesium	mg	9
Phosphorus	mg	18
Potassium	mg	114
Sodium	mg	1
Zinc	mg	0.24
Copper	mg	0.084
Manganese	mg	0.497
Selenium	mcg	0.1
Vitamin C	mg	14.4
Thiamin	mg	0.055
Riboflavin	mg	0.061
Niacin	mg	0.619
Panthenic acid	mg	0.184
Vitamin B6	mg	0.077
Folate	mcg	9
Vitamin B12	mcg	0
Vitamin A	IU	80
Vitamin E	mg	0.84
Vitamin K	mcg	28.6

## REMEMBER!!!

(THIS REALLY IS FOOD FOR THOUGHT)

1. Which fats may pump up your brain's gray matter?

Omega-3 fatty acids, Triglycerides, Monounsaturated fats or Saturated fats

2. You get the most choline, an essential nutrient that may guard the brain against senility, in which food?

Egg yolks, Egg whites, Spinach or Legumes

3. Which nutrient seems to help protect the brain from diseases of aging, like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's?

Vitamin B12, Calcium, Niacin or Folic acid

4. Which food has the most antioxidants, which are top disease fighting nutrients? Blueberries, Black beans, Chocolate or Spinach

5. What spicy favorite may help prevent Alzheimer's disease?

Wasabi, Harissa, Jalapenos or Curry

6. Which of these drinks may sharpen your mind?

Water Orange juice, Milk or Green Tea

7. Which berry has been linked to reducing brain cell damage after a stroke?

Lingonberries, Strawberries, Blueberries or Cranberries

HOW DID YOU DO?

— Answers on page 7 —



**Congratulations!!!**

To the winners of the MSA Office Professionals of the Year

Althea Hunt (GS-06 and above), Program Assistant, Southern Regional Research Center (SRRC), Cotton Chemistry and Utilization Research Unit, New Orleans, LA and

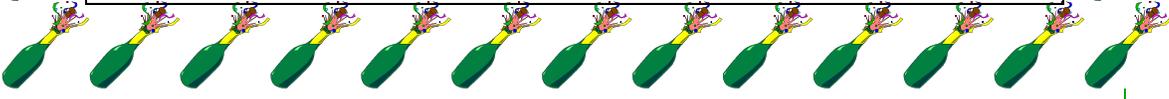
Donna Signa (GS-05 and below), Office Automation Assistant, Application and Production Research Unit, Stoneville, MS.



Althea, Program Assistant for the Cotton Chemistry and Utilization Research Unit at SRRC, was described as a cheerful co-worker who exceeded her usual helpfulness and willingness by stepping in for over a year to carry the duties of Program Assistant (PA) for another unit as well as her own when their PA resigned following Hurricane Katrina. The citation read "For exceptionally meritorious service associated with performance of duties during and after the crisis created for SRRC by Hurricane Katrina."



Donna, Office Automation Assistant for Application & Production Technology Research Unit at the time of the nomination, was described as an individual who strives to learn everything she can and who can be counted on to be sure the job is done right and on time. The citation read "For providing dedicated and exemplary support to administrative and fellow employees of the Application and Production Technology Research Unit and to fellow employees of USDA ARS." Submitted by Drusilla Fratesi and Tammy Dorman



**MSACOP Welcomes New Members:**

The Council welcomed three new members:

*Accepting their titles proudly, read a bit about these three lovely Southern "Pisces" below:*

Donna Signa, Stoneville, Mississippi: Like most Pisces, Donna is energetic and a visionary. We learned in a previous Newsnotes that she enjoys tennis and other sports and loves cooking—but now she even finds time to manage her own catering business.

Peggy Tubertini, Oxford, Mississippi: A naturally artistic Pisces, some of Peggy's past-times include singing and photography and traveling. A graduate of Delta State University, she's a big fan of Ole Miss and DSU football!

Sydney Beaumont, New Orleans, LA: An artist at heart, Sydney, sings and writes music and enjoys spending time with her children Greer 14 and Greg 10. Most recently, she also enjoys getting creative with the MSACOP Newsnotes! \*



\* All three Office Professionals wish for world peace.

me



**RETIRING**

Congratulations to Martha Barnes (Secretary, AO) Martha retired August 31, 2007!!!

## Answers to Quiz (from pg. 5)

- 1. Which fats may pump up your brain's gray matter? Correct Answer: Omega-3 fatty acids**  
Omega-3 fatty acids, such as those found in fatty fish (like salmon and sardines), appear to have many health benefits. New research shows they may even build the brain's gray matter. In one study, healthy adults who ate the most omega-3 fatty acids had the most gray matter in three brain areas that regulate mood. How do omega-3 fatty acids help the brain? Scientists are still studying the connection. But they do know this: The omega-3 fatty acid DHA, is the major polyunsaturated fatty acid found in the brain, and is important for brain development and function.
- 2. You get the most choline, an essential nutrient that may guard the brain against senility, in which food? Correct Answer: Egg yolks**  
Choline is a chemical building block of every cell. Scientists have been studying the effects of choline supplementation on memory in rats for more than a decade. They've found that those rats who got plenty of choline prenatally don't seem to develop senility in old age. Some studies in humans have found that boosting choline intake in adulthood can also improve memory. Egg yolks are among the richest natural sources of choline.  
\*\*\* Concerned about the cholesterol? Skim milk has plenty of choline as well.
- 3. Which nutrient seems to help protect the brain from diseases of aging, like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's? Correct Answer: Folic acid**  
You probably know that folic acid is important in pregnancy for healthy fetal development -- but grown-ups need it, too. A large Dutch study found that, over three years, people between 50 and 70 who took folic acid supplements improved their cognitive function -- the ability to think and remember. Studies in mice have found that folic acid deficiency may play a key role in Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.
- 4. What spicy favorite may help prevent Alzheimer's disease? Correct Answer: Curry**  
Love your chicken vindaloo? Dig in! In the lab, scientists at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that curcumin -- a chemical found in the spices curry and turmeric -- may help the immune system clear amyloid-beta from brain tissue. Amyloid-beta is the substance that forms the plaques characteristic of Alzheimer's disease. Does it also work in humans? More research is needed.
- 5. Which food has the most antioxidants, which are TOP disease-fighting nutrients? Correct Answer: Chocolate -- although the other three are right behind!**  
That cup of cocoa may keep your brain sharp. A study by food scientists found that the antioxidant concentration in a cup of hot cocoa was higher than that found in either red wine or green tea. Of course, gorging on too much chocolate can put you at an unhealthy weight, so keep your intake moderate. Blueberries, black beans, and spinach are also rich antioxidant sources, with far fewer calories.
- 6. Which of these drinks may sharpen your mind? Correct Answer: Green Tea**  
A hot cup of green tea may give you more than just a soothing break on a cold afternoon. A recent Japanese study of 1,000 people over 70 found that those who drank the most green tea showed the least signs of the cognitive decline associated with aging. Coffee and other kinds of tea didn't yield the same results.
- 7. Which berry has been linked to reducing brain cell damage after a stroke? Correct Answer: Cranberries**  
They're not just for Thanksgiving anymore! In laboratory studies, scientists found that rat brains exposed to stroke-like conditions, then treated with a cranberry juice extract, preserved twice as many brain cells as the rats that weren't treated with the extract.  
*Syd*

IRS: <http://www.irs.gov>

REE Directory: <http://199.133.10.140/>

Electronic Forms are now REE Forms: <http://reeforms.ars.usda.gov/REEForms/>

Per Diem Rates: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov>

Pay Tables: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov>

(Submitted by: Lynda Taylor, Stoneville, MS)



## Mid South Area Council of Office Professionals

The **Mission** of 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.



**MSA Council:** (L) Back row: Telecia Burton, Drusilla Fratesi (Technical Advisor), Ann McGee (Jr. Chair), Alice Reddick, Marlene Coley, Dr. Deborah Brennan, (MSACOP Sponsor), Tammy Dorman (Sr. Chair). (L) Front row: Lynda Taylor (Recorder), Lynda Fulton (Ex-officio), Janice Boyd, Lucienne Savell, Kay Bolen. Not pictured: New members Sydney Beaumont, Donna Signa and Peggy Tubertimini.

## HOW TO "CONNECT" WITH PEOPLE Submitted by Peggy Turbertini

*The following information is taken exactly as written from the book "The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day" by John C. Maxwell.*

Leadership thought for today: **Connection requires intentional effort.**

Connection isn't something that just happens once you establish a relationship with a person. It requires more than saying hello in the halls or sending a Christmas form letter to everyone in your organization. It requires an investment in another's life and is an ongoing effort. All great leaders know that no job is more important than their continual investment in people.

The following is a list of seven (7) actions that Maxwell believes every leader needs to carry out on a continual basis.

Use it as a checklist for connecting with someone new or as a daily reminder for strengthening current connections.

**1. Connect with Yourself:** Do you know your strengths and weaknesses?

Understand yourself before trying to understand others. A positive self-image helps others feel secure with you.

**2. Share with Openness and Sincerity:** Are you willing to be vulnerable with others?

Vulnerability is an equalizer and will immediately help others relate to you on their level.

**3. Live Your Message:** Are you doing what you're asking others to do?

Make sure your actions are always consistent with your words. Integrity promotes trust.

**4. Know Your Audience:** Do you understand the needs of your people?

When you know what your people need, you can focus your actions on meeting those needs.

**5. Communicate on Others' Level:** How do you come across when you talk to your people?

If you're condescending, your people will come to resent you. But when you talk to them as friends, they will come to respect you.

**6. Believe Totally in Your People:** Do you believe in the ability of your people to succeed?

As a leader, you have the job of setting your people up for success. That requires you to demonstrate your trust in them.

**7. Offer Direction and Hope:** Are you inspiring to your people?

In every form of communication, whether in words or actions, you should be a positive encouragement to your people.

The ability to connect with people is essential if you want strong, successful leadership. The more time you contribute to establishing and strengthening your connection with people, the more opportunities you will have to lead.

Pictures from MSACOP Meeting



**THEY'RE**  
**GRRREAT!**

Dr. Brennan  
and all the  
other tigers  
say...  
"Grrrrrrr"

1...2...3...4...5

**6 Seconds Can Make A Difference**

By Ann McGee

I was about 30 feet from the unopened gate when a co-worker turned off of the main road into the parking lot.

How far out of my way would it be for me to change my angle of approach to the back door to include the keypad to open the gate?

I changed my angle to open the gate before the co-worker got to the keypad on his side of the gate. I counted how many seconds

it took to be considerate of another human being. I used 6 seconds and saved him maybe 15 seconds.

We waved at each other and continued on our own paths. So, what's the point? What does it cost?

Very little considering the bonuses received by everyone. The additions are unlimited to the morale and feelings of wellbeing that result from this kind of action. The minuses can take longer to build and

show themselves but be sure.... they do build and they do grow.

Over time, if everyone just keeps going on the straight path to make their life softer and easier, morale sags and feelings of well being can fade.

Six seconds doesn't sound like much until you count the possible negative effects of staying on my own path without ever changing anything to consider others.



The negatives can be compounded through time but... so can the positives.

**Make the choice to build morale!**  
Have a great day!