



NACOP Notes

November 2011

Message from the Co-Chairs

By: Jackie Kelly, Sr. Co-Chair, HQ

Linda Fulton, Jr. Co-Chair, MSA

Fall has sprung upon us, and now everyone is getting ready for the upcoming holidays. We wish everyone a joyous holiday season. We were fortunate to have our Annual NACOP meeting this year September 13-15, 2011, at El Reno, OK, at the Grazinglands Research Laboratory. We WELCOME new members: Brenda Holmes (NAA), Brittney Jones (MWA), Kathleen Parker (PWA), and Linda Parnell (NPA). We also want to recognize, Lynne Pearson (PWA), Davis, CA, who received ARS Office Professional of the Year Award. Congratulations Lynne!

If you ever have suggestions or concerns, please do not hesitate to voice them. Our email addresses: jacqueline.kelly@ars.usda.gov
linda.fulton@ars.usda.gov

ARS Office Professional of the Year Award



Lynne Pearson – Pacific West Area

We congratulate Lynne Pearson from the Pacific West Area – Davis, CA on receiving the 2011 ARS Office Professional of the Year Award. Lynne started her Federal Government career at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, CA as a file clerk in the Electronics/Electrical Shop, where she maintained a library of submarine plan blueprints. She worked in many different positions at the shipyard until it was identified for closure during the Base Realignment and Closure process. Lynne was selected to continue working at the shipyard's Base Closure Realignment Caretaker Site Office, managing a small plan file library containing all of the property records for the base and providing administrative support to the Lieutenant Commander and staff. As that appointment drew to a close, she applied to a vacancy at the USDA, ARS, Western Human Nutrition Research Center as an Office Automation Assistant. Lynne was selected for the job and started her career with ARS in July 1999. Shirley Hamilton, the secretary for WHNRC, was instrumental in assisting her in learning all of the ins & outs of ARS. In late 2001, Sandy Swantz, the secretary for the Crops Pathology/Genetics Research Center was retiring after a long career with ARS, so Lynne took the position. In 2006, she was promoted to Program Support Assistant. She hopes to stay at the Davis location until she retires as "the CPGRU is a wonderful group of people to work with."

Lynne's Research Leader, Daniel Kluepfel, states that "ever since arriving in Davis, CA as the new Research Leader for Crops Pathology and Genetics Research Unit, I have felt fortunate to have Lynne as our unit secretary. She is

conscientious, courteous, and efficient at providing administrative aid to me and the Unit. This aid includes helping to organize numerous unit activities such as unit socials, stakeholder conferences, grant planning meetings, UC Davis budget meetings and innumerable conference calls. All of these activities are performed with a smile. She truly views her position as one that is there to enhance and promote the research activities of the Unit. In addition to aiding Research Unit operations, she is a wonderful representative for ARS. She handles her interactions with scientists, technicians, UC Davis staff, or outside vendors and visitors with professionalism, politeness and competence.

During the past year we hired three new unit secretaries for various management units at the Davis location. As the senior office support professional, Lynne has been a key resource for each and has provided training to all new secretaries in the use of the Government software systems.

Though it is perhaps an overused cliché, Lynne is truly ‘the glue’ which holds the Unit together. She performs her job extremely well while readily stepping up to the plate when new tasks need to be addressed. Lynne is an exceptional asset to our research unit, the PWA and the ARS.”

In Lynne’s personal life her family is the most important factor. “My husband, Greg & I just celebrated our 20th anniversary in Tahoe. I have three grown step-children, Kerrin, Daniel & Michelle, and one 14-year-old son, Michael. My husband and I have six grandchildren and one on the way. I am an avid reader and can spend hours in a book store or library. I am in the process of researching our family history on both my husband’s side of the family and my side of the family. I hope to be able to devote more time to this when I retire.”

Again we would like to extend our congratulations to Lynne on her award. Thank you Lynne for all your hard work and dedication to our Agency and the position of Office Professional.

Helpful Resource: NACOP prepared a Guide for Planning Training Workshops, which shows examples of the process used to gain approval for and accomplish the 2010 Training Workshop. Duties of the various committees are discussed. We hope that this guide can aid others in planning training workshops. To access the guide, visit the NACOP website, www.ars.usda.gov/nacop and select Training Workshop Planning Guide.

Books & Blogging: Join NACOP as we participate in the ARS book club! Books and blogging is a great, fun, and interactive way to engage with your USDA colleagues. Here’s how it works-visit www.ars.usda.gov/nacop and then select “Book Club”. The current book selection is *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* by Daniel H. Pink. To add to your reading experience, there are videos and other learning resources associated with the book selection posted. Read the book by December 31, 2011 and then return to the site and blog your opinion of the book to the bulletin board.

Don’t delay- visit your local library or purchase the book on your own and start books and blogging with NACOP!

Pleasant Attitude in the Work Place

As **office professionals**, we are **the first point of contact** for customers (both internal and external), thus the importance to be pleasant and project a “can do attitude.” At times it may seem we are taken advantage of (and sometimes this is true). But, in actuality, there is little we can do to change this normality. Therefore, a smile can go a long way to project your attitude, and make you and the customer feel good.

I often forget that I know more about the regulations, forms, and how to get things processed than the individual that is potentially annoying me with questions (even though he/she is asking the same question that was asked 6 months ago). Administrative processes are much more commonplace to office professionals than to other individuals.

In my opinion, a pleasant attitude, along with proper guidance to employees, establishes our knowledge, intelligence, and insight which promote confidence within our individual organizations. **Office professionals set the tone for the office, thereby having a great impact on the Agency** as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, a “can do attitude” is paramount for office professionals to endorse. And, sometimes “can do” might not be likely, but to project an attitude of “giving it your best shot” goes a long way in **earning respect and trust**.

The bottom line is, **it is important to enable research scientists** to provide viable research results for CRIS projects. With our help and expertise in administrative matters, we help provide the time needed to focus on research. We certainly cannot conduct research, but **we contribute to the Agency with much needed administrative and organizational skills that facilitate the research**.

Submitted by:
Linda Fulton

Administrative Lessons Learned

I was appointed to a detail at the Subtropical Horticulture Research Station, Miami, Florida, one of 17 germplasm repositories in the ARS National Germplasm Repository System. Our location is composed of 204 acres of mature tropical and subtropical trees and shrubs. It sits in the midst of a large affluent residential community in Miami-Dade County. The property was formerly Chapman Field during World War I. Stones from the original air strip became construction materials for buildings used as laboratory/offices by our scientists and staff until the new laboratory building was completed three years ago. Many of these buildings are now occupied by tenant agencies whose missions are in support of the sustainability of agriculture in Florida, through revocable permits under reimbursable space agreements. In addition to our approximately 50 employees, the tenant employees out number us by 150 percent due to the discovery of the Giant African Snail. These

demands stretched our physical resources at times. I became involved with tenant problems, together with the Location Coordinator, when I became the Acting Administrative Officer.

End of Fiscal Year

The timing of the detail began in mid August, just about when routine purchasing stops at the end of the fiscal year. Then, only emergency purchases could be made if approved by the Research Leader. Daily tracking of account balances was necessary. I am proud to say that the administrative team at Miami is extremely competent and works well together. As their supervisor, I began learning the meaning of new terms such as accounting for prior year charges, reports to process through FMIMI, annual operating costs to be entered into CPAIS, what B2 and YE documents achieve, the implications of salary lapse, the responsibility of making sure that everyone’s time and attendance is certified and travel documents are approved on time, just to name a few.

Personnel Reporting Changes

In case you may not have noticed the stress related to closing out a fiscal year, we also experienced the retirement of a project leader on September 30. The rules for filling vacant positions have changed. ARS recruitments are on hold. This means that we had to reassign a lead scientist’s duties, change ADODR on agreements, and reassign ten employees to different supervisors until a decision is made on filling the vacancy. When this scientist told me he was retiring, I asked him if he could clone me! I guess I was feeling the stress escalate!

What I Learned

It is important to focus on time sensitive projects because these affect accurate reporting by the agency. We were watching Hurricane Rina with interest to see what track she would take. I submitted my telework agreement, reviewed my hazardous weather plan, and incident reporting procedures in the event that Miami would be in her path. Our Area Director requires a daily

report of the status of employees impacted. This was my responsibility. I made certain that I had current emergency phone numbers and distributed the hazardous weather plan to everyone to review. Fortunately, Rina disintegrated and turned into a rain event, passing northwest of our location. My understanding of ARS policy and the importance of communicating with others was reinforced. I was blessed with the opportunity to lead a highly skilled business team. They made my job much easier than it might have been. I now realize how delicate the balance between work and life priorities becomes when facing new challenges. My husband supported me in working additional hours to support the detail. My former Administrative Officer made the job seem easy. I now have a much broader insight to customer service. Before this detail, I had been primarily responsible for pushing the paperwork of my scientists and co-leading our location outreach program. Now I understand more fully what it takes to extend the term of students, manage incidents related to safety, security, on the job injury, conduct and performance, document personnel actions, and be the go to person for resolving daily problems. No day was the same.

Take Advantage of Opportunities

You are never too old or young to learn new career skills. I highly recommend that all ARS professionals accept opportunities for growth. Your network will expand to include people you have not previously been privileged to know. You will learn new processes and gain new perspectives and insights.

"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened." - Dr. Seuss

By Wanda Rohrer, Program Support Assistant
OA on detail as Acting Administrative Officer

COMMA SPLICE



A comma splice is a comma that is incorrectly used to join two sentences! A comma by itself is NOT strong enough to join two sentences!

Here is an example of a comma splice (what NOT to do!)

Sally painted her room, she loved the color.

There are two complete sentences with only a comma between them. A comma alone isn't strong enough to join sentences, but one way to fix the sentence is to add a coordinating conjunction after the comma.

Here is how the fixed sentence looks:

Sally painted her room, and she loved the color.

Adapted from: Grammar Grotto
<http://grammargrotto.com/handbook.html>



Current Council members include:

- ♦ Jackie Kelly (HQ), Sr. Co-Chair
- ♦ Linda Fulton (MSA), Jr. Co-Chair
- ♦ Linda Parnell (NPA), Recorder
- ♦ LaTasha Beasley (NAL), Webmaster
- ♦ Brenda Holmes (NAA), NACOP News Editor
- ♦ Kathleen Parker (PWA), Historian
- ♦ Mary Dailey (BA), Member
- ♦ Sherry Dewald (SPA), Member
- ♦ Sandy Groneberg (MWA), Ex-Officio
- ♦ Cathy Lonaberger (HQ), (Technical Advisor)

Not Pictured:

- ♦ Brittney Jones (MWA) Outreach Coordinator
- ♦ Wanda Rohrer (SAA), Member
- ♦ Pat Berry (HQ), (Technical Advisor)

