



# NACOP Newsletter

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## Message from the Co-Chairs

By Sherri Buxton, MWA  
Debra Duckworth, SAA



The NACOP has been keeping busy with the new initiatives described in our last newsletter. Very soon you will have access to a new section on our webpage called, "Ask the Experts." The "Ask the Experts" section will list key people, from across the country, who have volunteered to be an interactive resource and answer questions you may have. We are really excited about launching this and will let you know as soon as it is live.

We offer a sincere welcome to our new NACOP Technical Advisor, Rhonda Horton. Rhonda joined ARS as the AFM webmaster in February 2001. She is now part of the newly-formed Web Branch within the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

## Correspondence

By Cathy Lonaberger, OA



Preparing ARS correspondence is not difficult, if you know the rules and regulations.

Here is a quick quiz to test your correspondence knowledge (answers on the last page).

### 1. Circle the correct example.

federal government  
Federal government  
Federal Government

ARS's  
ARS'  
ARSs'

State of Maryland  
state of Maryland  
State of Mind

Agencywide  
Agency-wide  
Agency wide

### 2. Circle the correct use of numbers in a sentence.

a. Petroleum came from 16 fields, of which 8 were discovered in 1956.

b. Petroleum came from sixteen fields, of which eight were discovered in 1956.

c. Petroleum came from 16 fields, of which eight were discovered in 1956.

d. This Agency will celebrate 50 years of excellence in 2004.

e. This Agency will celebrate fifty years of excellence in 2004.

f. This agency will celebrate fifty years of excellence in 2004.

**3. Circle the correct use of commas in the following sentences.**

a. Thank you for your letter of April 1, 2004, to Dr. Edward B. Knipling concerning .....

b. Thank you for your letter of April 1, 2004 to Dr. Edward B. Knipling concerning .....

c. Thank you for your, April 1, 2004, letter to Dr. Edward B. Knipling concerning .....

d. The course will cover time, money and measurement.

e. The course will cover time, money, and measurement.

f. The course will cover time and money and measurement.

**Proper Management of E-Mail and Electronic Calendar Records**

By Marlene Coley, MSA



Did you know that Federal Law requires that e-mail and electronic calendar records be managed in accordance with the General Records Schedule (GRS) and/or the applicable ITA Records Control Schedule (RCS) issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)? Records in electronic format should be treated the same as records in hard copy format for retention purposes.

Many of us read the e-mail and then leave it to be deleted later according to the settings in your GroupWise or other e-mail program. To check your GroupWise settings: From the menu line, click on Tools, Options, Environment, and then

click on the tab labeled Cleanup. From this screen, you may view and change the settings related to deleting messages, tasks, calendar, etc.

The following steps can help ensure that e-mail and electronic calendar records are managed properly.

1. E-mail and electronic calendar records are considered to be official records if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Records were made or received by an agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business;
- Records are appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor;
- Records provide evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government; or
- Records contain valuable information.

2. Apply a common sense test if you are unsure about the above criteria. Ask yourself the question, “Would I have retained this record if I had received it in paper copy form?” The same test applies to an electronic record.

3. Save those records determined to be official by either: printing out hard copies and filing them in the appropriate subject files; or saving them in electronic format to appropriate directories on the “C” or “home” drive. When printing or saving official records, it is necessary to also print or save essential transmission data (e.g., who sent the message, the addressees and any other recipients, and when it was sent.). Tip: You can create your own directories in your GroupWise mailbox.

4. The period of retention for e-mail messages and calendars is governed by the records control schedule. Those e-mail messages and calendar

entries not considered official records may be deleted when no longer needed.

## NAL Purchases New Request System

By Pat Murphy, NAL



In early 2005, the National Agricultural Library (NAL) will implement a web-based document request generation system. With this new system, USDA employees will be able to:

- Create and submit requests directly from an AGRICOLA record (AGRICOLA is NAL's catalog and article citation database and can be accessed at <http://agricola.nal.usda.gov/>). Your contact information and the item citation information will automatically transfer to the request form.
- Create and submit requests for items not found in AGRICOLA via a web form. Again, your contact information will transfer to the form. You supply the citation information.
- Check the status of requests online.

This new system will significantly streamline NAL's processing of your requests and enhance your ability to manage your document delivery needs. When the new system is fully implemented, NAL will stop accepting requests submitted via e-mail, mail, fax, or ARIEL.

As the implementation date draws nearer, additional information will be mailed to all USDA employees who have requested materials in the past. If you have any questions, contact the Document Delivery Services Branch at: 301-504-5717 or [access@nal.usda.gov](mailto:access@nal.usda.gov)

## A Quick Thought

By Olivia Pedraza, SPA



The following poem was included in a booklet provided during a training session, "Leadership Skills for Non-supervisors," given by the USDA Graduate School. I found this to be interesting, and I offer it in the same spirit.

### Perfection vs. Excellence

Perfection is being right.  
Excellence is willing to be wrong.

Perfection is fear.  
Excellence is taking a risk.

Perfection is anger and frustration.  
Excellence is powerful.

Perfection is control.  
Excellence is accepting.

Perfection is taking.  
Excellence is giving.

Perfection is doubt.  
Excellence is confidence.

Perfection is pressure.  
Excellence is natural.

Perfection is the destination.  
Excellence is the journey.

--Author Unknown

## Why I Keep

### P&P 253.4 Handy At All Times!

By Paula Snell, MWA IT Specialist



We all wonder at times, "Can I go to XYZ website?" or "Can I get e-mail from my mother?" or "Can I use my PC to type up a homework assignment?"

According to Policy and Procedure (P&P) 253.4, "IT resources may only be used for authorized purposes." However, according to Departmental Regulation (DR) 3300-1, dated March 23, 1999, "limited personal use of Government office equipment by employees during personal time is considered to be an 'authorized use' of Government property." In ARS (and other REE agencies), "limited personal use" "involves minimal additional expense to the Government, is performed on the employee's personal time, and does not interfere with the mission or operations of the agency."

P&P 253.4 addresses "Acceptable Personal Use" as well as "Unacceptable Personal Use" and how it pertains to telephone, e-mail, internet, fax, copier, and printer use.

Acceptable use includes the use of the above services IF the use does NOT interfere with official business, involves minimal expense, and is on the employee's personal time (before duty hours, during lunch, or after duty hours). It also is limited to situations where the equipment or service already exists.

Unacceptable use would include any use that:

- Generates additional expense.
- Causes congestion, delay, or disruption of a service, i.e., forwarding "chain" e-mail messages, downloading video clips, sound, or large files that could, potentially, degrade the network's performance.
- Is illegal or offensive to fellow employees or the public, including pornography, hate speech, or material that ridicules others.
- Is for commercial purposes or "for-profit" activities, such as outside employment or to support a private business endeavor.

- Engages in any outside fund-raising activity, endorses a product or service, or participating in lobbying activity or prohibited partisan political activity.

Now, you may ask, "how does this affect me and my use of the Internet?" Prior to using the Internet, get your supervisor's approval to use these services as they have "management authority and responsibility to ensure appropriate use of resources within their organizations."

Make your supervisor aware that you may be working on your homework during lunch or before or after work. Also, let them know that your mother may send you an occasional e-mail (and, take the responsibility to make sure that it IS occasional, and that Mom understands the rules, too!)

For your own protection, make sure you do NOT use the internet for:

- Viewing or downloading sexually explicit material.
- Viewing or downloading materials related to gambling, weapons, terrorist activities, or any other illegal activities.
- Posting agency information to external news groups, etc., without prior approval.
- Unauthorized acquisition or use of computer software or other materials protected by copyright laws, trademarks, etc., including music or videos.
- Participating in chat rooms or on-line, real-time chat software, such as AOL Instant Messenger, MSN Messenger, etc.
- Using web browser add-on features to listen to radio broadcasts or music for entertainment that may overburden the telecommunications system.

Finally, for more detailed information, please take the time to read P&P 253.4.

## ARS Hints

By Madeline Hall, MSA

Have you ever had a Scientist ask you for a list of their ARS-115's? Maybe they want to know which ones still need publication dates and citation. For those of you who are not aware of the "Author Report" feature in ARIS, it is a great tool! Just log into ARIS and select:



- Research Documentation
- Reports
- 115 Author Reports
- Pull up Authors name (query "?")
- Query (this should pull up all the 115's entered in the last five years for the Author, or you can also list a specific time period in the "approval date" field).

\*Note - if you query under your location's mode code, you will only pull up a listing of the Author's 115's that were entered at your location. However, since many scientists co-author papers with other ARS scientists, you may want to query without the mode code in order to pull up 115's that may have been entered at other locations.

- Action
- Mark All Records
- Reports (there are several choices; the following are the most helpful:
- Detail by Author (gives a list of all ARS-115's with all pertinent information)
- Detail by Author - Missing Citation (this is very useful because it only lists ARS-

115's that need citation information; periodically print out this list for each SY so they can check for any 115 publication information. This is especially important at Annual Report time.)

- Detail by Author - Citation (list of all ARS-115's including the citations.)

## Combined Federal Campaign

By Jan Cline, HQ



As human beings, we are really very fortunate to have so much available to us. I would like to join the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Chairperson, and challenge you to step up and be a Super Hero to those organizations working every day to improve our neighborhoods, communities, nation and world. Be a CFC Super Hero. You have the power to help!

We all can't serve in the military to protect our freedoms. We all can't save lives from disease and accident. We all can't provide a home to the orphaned. We all can't be missionaries in foreign lands. But, every one of us can provide financial assistance to those that can. The CFC provides us with a virtually painless way to provide that assistance. The CFC 2004 Catalog provides a list of hundreds of worthwhile organizations. Please choose one and begin that pilgrimage to heroism. Please see your local CFC representative today.

## In the Spirit of Giving.....

By Barbie Ballengee, PWA



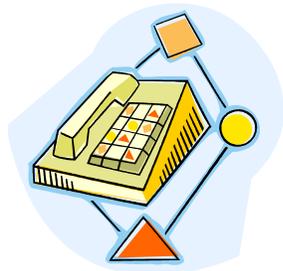
Have you ever wanted to help others in need, but you didn't know how or were financially unable to help? Here is a way that you can help those less fortunate and feel good about it, too.

When you travel, for either business or leisure, the hotel you stay in usually provides soap, shampoo/conditioner, lotion, etc. While most of us usually bring our own soap, etc., and choose not to use the hotel's supplies, you can help others by collecting these items and dropping them off at your local homeless shelter, Women, Infants & Children Center, or convalescent care facility.

I like to put individual care packages together wrapped in cellophane and tied with a ribbon to add a personal touch. These items make a big difference in the day-to-day life of those who do not have access to these basic supplies.

### FTS2001 Audio Conferencing Capabilities

By Sherri Buxton, MWA



In case you haven't heard, FTS Audio Conferencing service is available for all of your conference call needs. The conferencing center has no call capacity or duration limits and is toll

free. You may request daily, weekly, monthly, or one-time-only conference calls simply by dialing a toll-free number and establishing your reservation. The reservationists can assist you with determining the level of service your call requires.

The data we have received confirms that this is a much more economical way of conferencing (rather than utilizing the USDA bridge) that saves the Agency a lot of money. In addition, we have been encouraged by Headquarters to utilize this service.

Each Area and Location Administrative Officer (LAO) received an authorization code for your location. If you need additional information regarding this service, please contact your LAO.

### Editing NFC docs

By Andrea Miller, MWA



Most of us have experienced the frustration of receiving a travel voucher from [nfcdocs@ars.usda.gov](mailto:nfcdocs@ars.usda.gov). The document is usually pushed up into the left corner of the page with teeny, hard-to-read printing. With the help of Adobe Professional, you can change that!

Unfortunately, the following tip is only available to users of the full version of Adobe Acrobat Professional (this will not work with Adobe Acrobat Reader).

To center the document on the page:

- Open your document with Adobe Professional
- Select the Advanced Editing button
- Select the Touch-up Object button
- Select Edit and Select All
- Using the mouse, drag and drop the text to the center of the page. The drag and drop only works if you place your cursor on a selected area of the page (not a blank area).

To change the font size:

- Repeat the three steps above to select the data on the page.
- Right-click a selected area of the report
- Select Properties
- Choose the Text tab
- Change the font size and other settings as desired. You'll need to experiment with these settings to get the best results for your document.

The above steps must be followed for each page of the report.

Answers to the Correspondence Quiz:

1. Federal Government, ARS', State of Maryland, Agencywide
2. a and d
3. a and e