



NACOP Newsletter

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Message from the Co-Chairs

By: Debra Duckworth (SAA) Sr. Co-Chair
Veronica Cullum (PWA) Jr. Co-Chair

NACOP is pleased to announce that we have received approval from the Administrator to convene a 2006 National Conference for ARS Office Professionals. This 3-day conference is being planned for spring 2006, although specific dates have not yet been selected. More information will be available in the coming months, and we will keep you informed as details are finalized.

The conference theme is “Partnership for Success” and will include expanded break-out sessions on topics of interest to the ARS office professional, as well as keynote/motivational speakers. We are working diligently to provide a conference agenda that will be both interesting and informative, as well as enhancing to the profession.



IT'S A BOY!!!

Congratulations to Sydney and Stephanie Sullivan on the birth of their son born on September 13, 2005. AJ weighed in at 8 lbs. 11 oz. Stephanie is a NACOP member representing the North Atlantic Area, Beaver, West Virginia. Mother, baby (and daddy, too) are doing great.

NACOP Directory 2005-2006

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Computer Safety

By: Heather Lewandowski (MWA)

Whether you are using a computer at work, home, school, or anywhere else, understanding potential problems and how to prevent them is a good "safety" measure. The following information cannot be stressed enough and may help you understand problems you might face and steps to prevent those problems.

Computer Viruses, Spyware and Phishing –

Viruses, worms and Trojan horses are human-made software programs created specifically to wreak havoc on personal computers and networks. The chance of downloading one of these computer viruses over the Internet has increased dramatically over the past few years. Typically, you contract a virus by opening e-mail attachments or going to unknown Web sites.

Some viruses are relatively harmless – they just attach themselves to outgoing messages or e-mail themselves to all the people listed in your address book. The sudden flood of e-mail overwhelms mail servers, causing the system to crash.

Other viruses are more destructive and may lie dormant until a certain date. Then they come to life to do their dirty work. Sometimes a strange message appears on your screen, your computer runs slow, or data and programs may be modified. In the worst case, the contents of your hard drive may be wiped out. These dangerous programs start on one computer, then spread quickly, infecting other computers around the world.

Inoculate Your Computer –

If you download and run software from the Internet, or receive e-mail attachments, there is a good chance of contracting one of these bugs. How can you protect yourself? Use **anti-virus programs and anti-spyware** programs to scan your incoming e-mail attachments and alert you if one is infected. These programs also scan your hard drive for viruses and delete them. Keep your virus definition files up to date since new viruses come out almost daily. If you have questions about how to update your definitions file, contact your location or Area IT specialist.

Virus Protection Guidelines –

Make sure your computer runs anti-virus software and update virus definitions regularly. **DO NOT OPEN** an e-mail attachment unless you know who sent it. Even then, it may not be totally safe, as the virus may have been sneaky and infected a co-worker's computer, accessed the e-mail address book, sent a message to everyone in the address book and attached itself. To be completely safe, scan the attachment with your anti-virus software **BEFORE** you open it.

If you receive a suspicious message, delete it immediately from your Inbox. Then go into the Deleted Mail folder and delete the message again to permanently remove it, otherwise it will stay on your system. Regularly **back up** your files so you don't lose valuable data if your system becomes infected.

Spyware –

Spyware is software loaded onto your machine without your knowledge that tracks your computer usage and reports this information back to another person. It can be loaded onto your machine by going to Web sites, opening certain emails or by loading software. It can slow your machine, make it unstable by interfering with other software and allow private information to be taken from your computer.

Phishing –

Phishing is harder to catch. It is e-mail fraud where the perpetrator sends out legitimate-looking e-mails that appear to come from well-known and trustworthy Web sites in an attempt to gather personal and financial information from the recipient. The email may ask you to click on a link and re-enter your username and password or it may ask you to verify your social security number or other sensitive information. If you are unsure if the request is legitimate, go to the Web site by typing the URL in yourself. You may also be able to call the company to confirm the email. Do not use any information from the email itself! Always be suspicious of unsolicited emails asking for information.



Telephone Etiquette

By: Debra Duckworth (SAA)

The telephone has taken a back seat in past years to all the new technological aides available, but it continues to be a powerful communication tool and should never be taken for granted. Your telephone style instantly projects to the caller an image of your Agency, your boss and your team.

In corporate America, the way customers are treated can directly affect the success of a company. Customers will not return if not treated in a courteous manner. Since Federal Agencies do not depend on repeat “customers” for their success, civil servants must be vigilant about setting high standards for themselves when it comes to dealing with the public. Taxpayers do indeed pay our salaries and are correct in expecting the same courtesy.

One easy way to ensure that you always provide this level of service is to handle each call as if it were the top person in your organization on the line. In fact, it may well be, so always use good manners and have a smile in your voice!

Be courteous to those you are calling.....by starting off with: *Is this a good time to talk?*

When a call gets disconnected*the person who initiated the call should call back regardless of whose fault it was.*

Calls should be returned within the same day if at all possible.....*or by noon the following day at the latest.*

When someone is meeting with you in your office, it is rude and inefficient to keep taking incoming calls, particularly if it is a scheduled appointment. Use your voice mail or forward phone to a co-worker.

Speakerphone Etiquette: Before turning on the speakerphone, always inform the person on the other line and identify any people in the room.



MS Word Tips

By: "Dr. Word", OCIO Staff

Contributed by: Sherri Buxton (MWA)

AutoCorrect Can be Useful:

Ever grumbled about typing those long scientific names? Word's AutoCorrect feature can be very useful. How does AutoCorrect work? You type one thing -- hte -- and Word automatically corrects it with -- the -- when you hit the space bar. To add your own entries to AutoCorrect: Go to Tools | AutoCorrect Options | Replace: (Enter text you want to correct) With: (Enter correct spelling), Click OK.

If there are typos, misspellings for which Word can find suggestions, you can add typos and their corrections to AutoCorrect by right-clicking the red underlined typo and choosing Auto-Correct from the menu. Now select the correct spelling, and that particular typo won't bother you again. If Word has no spelling suggestions, the Auto-Correct option won't appear in the menu.

Backup Copy of Current Document:

You have the option in Word to create a backup copy (the previously saved version)of the current document each time you save the document. Choose Tools | Options | and click on the Save tab. Now select the Always Create Backup Copy check box and click OK. (Remember, you can find out a bit more information about the options presented in ANY Office dialog box by right-clicking on the option and choosing.

What's This?

You may want to explore some of the other options presented on the Save tab.) To retrieve a backed-up file, choose File | Open. When the dialog box opens, click on the arrow at the right side of the Files of Type list box to expand the list. Select All Files (*.*) and look for files with your document's name but with a .wbk extension. Load the .wbk file.

Blank Lines in a Bulleted Numbered List:

Ever want to insert a blank line in the midst of a bulleted or numbered list in Word (without getting a bullet or number)? Just press Shift-Enter to move to the next line without inserting a bullet or number. If you then press Enter, bullets

(MS Word Tips continued)

or numbering will be resumed as you move to the next line.

Disabling Drag and Drop Text:

You probably already know that you can move text in Word by selecting it, grabbing and holding it with your mouse, and dragging it to another location. While some folks like this feature, other people only wind up using drag-and-drop text by accident when they're trying to select text. If you find that drag-and-drop text usually just gets in the way, you can disable the feature. Just choose Tools | Options and click the Edit tab. Then, deselect the Drag And Drop Editing option and click OK.

Editing Where You Left Off:

Want to begin editing at the point where you were in the document when you last saved it? One simple way to get to where you left off is to open the document and press Shift-F5. This takes you to where you were when you last saved the document before closing it.



OVER \$300,000 BY AGE 55!!

By: Debra Duckworth (SAA)

“Yes, it’s possible through a regular and simple saving plan that most people can handle without financial hardship. Deposit \$2,000 each year in one of the higher yielding savings plans and keep it in. Suppose you start this plan when you are 25 years of age. While future interest rates are impossible to predict, we will figure at a modest 10% accrued yield. At this yield and at the age of 55 you would have accumulated a nest egg of over \$300,000! This principal with draw over \$30,000 per year and more in later years if you continue the plan. Start a systematic and determined savings plan while you’re young—you can enjoy the benefits of wealth at the still-youthful age of 55!”

This information was taken from: “\$Million Dollar\$ Ideas for building personal \$Wealth\$” by Johnny “The Transition Man” Campbell.

Punctuation/Grammar Difficulties?

By: Sue Roberts Hurd

When the NPASAC was working on the revision of the NPA Quick Reference Guide in the fall of 2004, it was discovered that there were many questions regarding correct punctuation and grammar usage.

As a result, the council decided that all secretaries might benefit from a desk reference guide. The grammar book entitled “Action Grammar: Fast, No Hassle Answers on Everyday Usage and Punctuation” by Joanne Feierman was purchased and the books were distributed to all NPA secretaries in July 2005. The afore mentioned book is easy to read and follow, and answers to questions are easily found.

There have been many positive responses from the secretaries who received these books. To find out more information about this guide, please contact either Cody Jensen, NPASAC Chair (cjensen@gfhmrc.ars.usda.gov) or Sue Roberts Hurd, NPASAC Recorder/NACOP Representative (sue.hurd@gmprc.ksu.edu).

A Couple of Grammar Tips

By: Sue Roberts Hurd (NPA)

1) **A and An before a word beginning with "h":** "An historical book" is not idiomatic in American English. Before a **pronounced h**, the indefinite article should be **a**. A hotel; a historical. Therefore, precede a word beginning with a "breathy" **h** with an **a**.

2) **Its or It's? Its:** The possessive form of the pronoun **it** is **never** written with an apostrophe, e.g., . . . read the book. "**Its** title is . . ." or, "What is **its** value?" **It's:** contractions of **it is** and **it has**. **It's** time to go. **It's** been great.