

Food for Thought

SECC—Committed to a Stronger Community

Thanks to the legislature for creating the State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) in 1993, state agency and university employees in Texas are able to contribute to many of their favorite charities through an annual workplace campaign. Through SECC we can make a one-time gift by cash or check, or even better, use the convenience of payroll deduction.

As in previous years, the 2004 campaign runs from September through October. During this time your unit coordinator will provide you with an informational brochure and pledge form. The brochure provides information on all the charities in the campaign. For questions or additional information, please contact your unit coordinator. Unit Coordinators for the 2004 campaign are listed below:

Administration & Auxiliary Oprs.,
TAES & TCE - Loretta Morse
Admin. Services - Gina Konderla
District 9 Office—Sally Johnson
Ext. Info. Technology - Melanie
Mattil
Family Dev. & Resource Mgmt. -
Terri Miller
4-H / Eastmark - Jeff Howard /
Kari Perkins

Ag. Communications - Judith White
Ag. & Environmental Safety -
Denise King
Ag. Economics - Dr. Kerry Litzen
bery & Ms. Dee Cochran
Ag. Education - Kim Pritchard
Animal Sci. - Rachel Williams
Bio. & Ag. Engr. - Susan Levien
Biochemistry / Biophysics -
Juanita Withem & Wanda Ayers
Entomology - Felicita Anzualda
Forest Science - Gail Hyden
Horticulture Sci. - Ericka Junek
Plant Path. & Microbiology -
Patsy Bolch
Poultry Science - Jo Ann Pilkey
Rangeland Ecol. & Mgmt. -
JoAnn Price
Recreation, Park & Tourism Sci. -
Justine Brydia
Soil & Crop Sci. - Richard Drees
Extension Vet. Medicine - Kathy
Prendergast
Wildlife & Fisheries - Chris Lang
Ag. Prog. Centers at Centeq Bldg. -
Connie Sebesta
Inst. of Food Sci. & Engr. -
Lyne Galloway
International Ag. - Beverly Cook
Office of the State Chemist -
John See
Texas Water Resources Inst. -
Rosemary Payton

— Gloria Schwind



Don't be afraid to go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is.

— Arthur F. Lenahan

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PHONE NUMBERS

- **Ag Program HR**
Phone: 979-845-2423
Fax: 979-458-1046
- **Benefits**
Phone: 979-845-2178
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Compensation**
Phone: 979-845-7986
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **County Programs HR**
Phone: 979-845-3708
Fax: 979-458-1046
- **Employment**
Phone: 979-458-HIRE
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Payroll**
Phone: 979-845-3636
Fax: 979-845-9329
- **Training**
Phone: 979-845-4766
Fax: 979-862-4885

Helpful Websites

AG Program HR:

<http://aghr.tamu.edu/>

Ag Program Directory:

<http://agdirectory.tamu.edu/>

Benefits:

<http://aghr.tamu.edu/benefits.htm>

County Programs HR:

<http://taex-hr.tamu.edu>

Employment (GreatJobs):

Applicants: <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu>

Staff: <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu/hr>

Forms (Alpha List):

<http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/forms-alfa.htm>

HR Connect:

<http://hrc.tamu.edu/hrc/>

LeavTraq:

<http://aghr.tamu.edu/leavetraq/leavetraq.htm>

New Employee Processing:

<http://aghr.tamu.edu/processing.htm>

Payroll:

<http://aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm>

Selective Service Verification:

http://www4.sss.gov/regver/verification_nc.asp



Prescription Drugs & Formulary Lists

Have you ever wondered why you pay a particular amount for one certain prescription drug and a different amount for another? Have you ever wondered what your co-workers mean when they ask if a certain prescription drug is on the “formulary”?

Let's start with the basics. A formulary list is simply a health plan's list of approved drugs. This doesn't mean you cannot get a drug that is not on the formulary; it simply means you will pay more for it. Each health plan has different formulary lists, tiers, and co-pays, but the bottom line is that you need to know which prescription drugs are on the formulary for your health plan at the time the drugs are being prescribed to you. **As consumers of prescription drugs, each of us must be responsible for having this knowledge and being prepared when we visit our doctor.** Because each health plan is different and because formulary lists change, doctors cannot possibly know which drugs are on your health plan's formulary.

Step 1—Know your formulary

A&M Care 350, 1250, 65+ - Eckerd Health Services (EHS)
<https://www.ehs.com/member/formulary/index.asp>

Scott & White Health Plan

http://www.sw.org/sw/iwcontent/public/pharmacy/en_us/pdf/formulary_alpha.pdf

Humana Health Plan

http://apps.humana.com/prescription_benefits_and_services/includes/2004rx4druglist.pdf

FirstCare

<http://www.firstcare.com/prefdrug/index.asp#alist>

Mercy Health Plan

<http://www.mercyhealthplans.com/formulary/default.aspx>

Step 2:—Know your co-pays and deductibles

Remember that many health plans have a deductible that must be met before the co-pays begin (refer to your Annual Enrollment booklet)

Step 3—Share your formulary with your doctor

— Jennifer Humphries

First Your Thinking—Then Your Life

Are you letting inaccurate information determine the quality of your day?

Dan Miller

I had a lot of fun with creative experiments while getting my graduate degrees in Psychology. Students are known for devising interesting experiments to test various human theories. A number of years ago, some students decided to use one of their friends as a guinea pig, to see if false suggestions could cause reactions in the body. On the chosen day, the guinea pig left the dorm, suspecting nothing unusual. However, a friend greeted him with, “*Good Morning, Chuck! How are you doing today? You look a little pale.*” Seconds later another friend rounded the corner with “*Chuck, are you feeling okay? You look a little sick!*” A third friend greeted Chuck and said, “*You really shouldn’t be out of bed! You look horrible!*” Before the young man could get to his first class, he turned around, went back to the dormitory and fell into bed. He was in fact, sick.

“The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions, and not on our circumstances.” — Martha Washington

Has anyone been feeding you false information lately? Maybe the newspapers are in on a big joke—telling you no one is hiring. Your “*friends*” have been misinformed—you really are competent and capable. Your boss is a bozo, not you. What would happen if rather than listening to the

feedback, you decided to “*see*” and create your own future? Isn’t there just as much likelihood that you could create a good, clean, positive future?

***As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”
Proverbs 23:7***

There is a lot of evidence that we can lead our thinking with our actions. In teaching Introductory Psychology, I would challenge the students. Many would come to that first morning class with their heads down, shoulders drooping and a frown on their face. It was obvious the kind of day they were anticipating. I would present the challenge to jump out of bed, walk with a spring in their step, pull those shoulders back, head up with a smile—and see if by 10:00 AM they did not expect a great day.

***“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow. It’s what sunflowers do.”
— Helen Keller***

“Think you can or think you can’t; either way you’re right.” Henry Ford



— Dan Miller is president of Business Source in Brentwood. www.48days.com, 615-373-7771. This excerpt is from Dan’s soon to be released book, *The Rudder of the Day*.

Are Your Retirement Beneficiary Designations Current?

To ensure that any death benefits payable by TRS are paid according to TRS members’ wishes, it is important for every member to have a current beneficiary designation on file with TRS. Print a copy of form TRS 11 from the TRS website www.trs.state.tx.us or contact TRS for a change in beneficiary form whenever significant life events occur, such as marriage, divorce, death of a spouse or designated beneficiary.

Once the form is signed and completed, send it directly to TRS. If the designation form is not received by TRS by the date of the death of the member, the new designation is not effective.

Optional Retirement Program participants should contact their ORP vendor for the form to change beneficiary designations.

— Patsy Schoppe

New Employees in Human Resources & Payroll



We have a couple of new faces in Human Resources and Payroll.

Margaret Dow joined our payroll staff on July 26 as a financial assistant I filling the position vacated by Lor'ee Easterling. Margaret is responsible for updating personal data information.

Jingqiu Ren joined Human Resources as a human resources representative on Septem-

ber 6. Jingqiu (pronounced gin-chew) and her husband moved to Texas from New York where Jingqiu worked as a human resources manager with Bristol-Myers Squibb. She has a Masters in Industrial and Labor Relations in Human Resources from Cornell University. She will be working in the Employment/Comp area and fills the position vacated by Lisa King.

— Pat Onstott

How a company deals with mistakes suggests how well it will bring out the best ideas and talents of its people, and how effectively it will respond to change. When employees know that mistakes won't lead to retribution, it creates an atmosphere in which people are willing to come up with ideas and suggest changes. This is important to a company's long-term success.

— Bill Gates , Chairman & CEO, Microsoft

Did you know....?

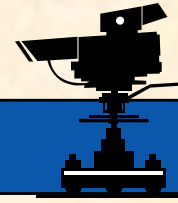
Mr. Rogers was an ordained minister.

Al Capone's business card said he was a used furniture dealer.

Sesame Street characters, Bert & Ernie, were named after Bert the cop & Ernie the taxi driver in Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life."

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**There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.
— William Shakespeare, Hamlet**



AGHR Learning Central

Our monthly TTVN Training and Information sessions continue this fall with the following schedule:

September 28:

Dealing with Difficult People — Bob Hensz

October 26:

To be announced

November 30:

TimeTraq — An introduction to the new

on-line time card program — Bob Hensz

December 21:

Performance Management — An introduction to the New Performance Management instrument and system — Gloria Schwind, Bob Hensz, & Linda Edge

Additionally, we will have a staff symposium during the January 2005 Ag. Program Conference. Additional information will be forthcoming on this event.

— Bob Hensz

New System Policies and Regulations

At the end of July, the System Office of Policy Implementation and Compliance released one group of new/revised policies and a group of new/revised regulations. These may be found at <http://sago.tamu.edu/policy/whatsnew.htm>. On that page, scroll down until you locate Electronic

Distributions 56 and 57. On those pages you can get copies with the changes annotated. Also, don't forget that all the TAES and TCE Rules and Procedures are linked at: <http://aghr.tamu.edu/pol.htm>.

— Bob Hensz

GreatJobs has One-Year Anniversary

Do you remember tediously processing paper NOVs and application forms? It could take days or weeks or even months from the time a vacant position was posted to the time the position was filled.

This September marks the one-year anniversary of GreatJobs, the Agriculture Program on-line job site. GreatJobs streamlined the job posting, application and approval process tremendously. It now takes less time to fill a vacant position.

Job listings are available 24 hours a day at <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu> on any computer with internet access. All positions are also listed at the Texas Workforce Commission. GreatJobs is listed on the employment websites for Texas A&M University,

all Texas A&M System components and the State of Texas.

Applications remain on file as long as an applicant actively applies for positions. Applications can be reviewed and updated at any time.

Has the new system impacted you or your unit? How does electronic employment processing compare to using paper forms? Have you applied for a position within the last year using GreatJobs? We would like to hear from you about your experience with GreatJobs. Email us at employment@ag.tamu.edu and tell us how GreatJobs has impacted you and your office.

All responses will be kept confidential.

Hey, I'm a Nice Guy

Dan Miller

I continue to see resumes with "objectives" that are meaningless. Here's another one from this week:

"To be given the opportunity to work full-time in a facility utilizing my skills and work experience. To grow with a company and establish a career."

Why don't we just add, "I'm a really nice person and it would really make me happy if you would give me a job."

Here's another: *"To support the growth and profitability of an organization that provides challenge, encourages advancement, and rewards achievement with the opportunity to utilize my experience, skills, and proven abilities."*

Sounds great - would you like to hire this person? But what do you know about this person? Is he/she a candidate for flipping hamburgers or for a CEO position? Does he have skills in supervising, organizing, planning, selling, marketing, etc? Is she proficient in any computer skills? We don't know. This "Objective" tells us absolutely nothing about the person. It was a total waste of time on the applicant's part.

Knowing that most resumes get 30-40 seconds look, you'd better tell the recipient something about yourself that would make them want to

see you as a candidate. IMMEDIATELY! Begin your resume with a **Skills Summary, Profile, or Expertise**. Here's an example:

Skills Summary: *"Over 14 solid years in technology planning and management. Experienced in strategic systems, organizing and overseeing projects. Knowledgeable in R&D, product development, and financial management. Team player in maintaining company policies and procedures. Expertise with IT businesses, especially those with complex technical, logistical and implementation challenges."*

Don't waste your time with generic lead-ins that get you sent to the bottom of the pile. Use your 30 seconds to convey your "unique value." Companies are not in the habit of helping you out. What they do want is someone who can make a contribution. What is it that you can do to benefit them?

Refer to pages 52-70 in **48 Days To The Work You Love** for a complete guide to building your own attention-getting resume (<http://www.48days.com/products.php>).



— Dan Miller is president of Business Source in Brentwood. www.48days.com, 615-373-7771. This excerpt is from Dan's soon to be released book, *The Rudder of the Day*.

Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up. — Thomas Edison

2004 SECC Coordinators Kick Off Fund-Raising Drive

For the Agriculture Program, the annual State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) began on September 3 with a team kick-off for designated unit coordinators from our Bryan-College Station offices. The coordinators met at the George Bush Museum to learn more about this year's game plan and to exchange ideas on how to run their unit's eight-week campaign.



Ag Program unit coordinators "Class of 2004" meet to kick off the annual State Employee Charitable Campaign.

Hank Roraback, with United Way of the Brazos Valley, spoke about the importance of teamwork and showed the video, One Gift, Countless Results. In addition, Chris Boleman, Extension specialist, spoke about the critical role of volunteers and supporters in helping others.

Area co-coordinators Suzanne Deatherage and Gloria Schwind hosted the "huddle."



Justine Brydia, unit coordinator for RPTS, receives a door prize from Suzanne Deatherage.

"Without our unit coordinators at the front line, the campaign simply could not be successful," said Deatherage. "With their help and the continued generosity of our fellow employees, we

can make a difference in bringing solutions to our community's needs and focusing on issues that really matter."
— Gloria Schwind



President and CEO of the United Way of the Brazos Valley, Hank Roraback, informs unit coordinators of the role the United Way plays in the SECC.



Chris Boleman, Extension specialist, speaks to the group about the importance of volunteerism in meeting the needs of our communities.



Unit coordinator "huddle" to share ideas on conducting a successful campaign.

Don't Miss the Party for Want of a Bun

Living Without



Reprint of article from issue of Living Without magazine:

We recently celebrated my son Alec's 7th birthday. It was a sprawling summer affair on our front lawn with a slip-and-slide, a make-your-own sundae bar, and a gluten-free, amazing castle cake that we drove 50 miles to pick up. We served a wide variety of food—drumsticks, hot dogs (kosher and vegetarian), chips, baby carrots. Everything was gluten free because I wanted Alec to have at least one social event a year, his own party, where everything was safe to eat.

We decided to serve the hot dogs without buns. It was an easy decision to forego the buns because I'd attended lots of kids' parties and seen plenty of hot dogs eaten and plenty of catsup-soaked buns tossed in the trash.

One little boy stepped up to the buffet, looked at the hot dogs, and asked for a bun. I simply said, "We don't have any." He froze. He looked at me as if I had said that we eat kittens for breakfast. "How can you eat a hot dog without a bun?" he asked. "Well, you eat it using a fork. Alec can't eat buns and since it's his party, we don't have any today," I explained.

As he dug into the question and I into the answer, I tried appealing to empathy. I noted that at most birthday parties, Alec can't eat anything but some things might be missing, like buns. No

go. I offered a slice of gluten-free bread as an alternative to the bun, but that was met with sheer horror. He completely fell apart. He could never, ever, under any circumstance eat a hot dog without a bun. As we continued, it was clear that he would not, could not, eat anything at a house where they served hot dogs without the buns. In fact, we needed to call his mother right now. As his universe fell apart and we tried valiantly to contact his mother, I felt awful. It was clear that this was an existential crisis for this child.

Mom came and whisked him home to a world where hot dogs come sheathed in buns. He missed the piñata, the make-your-own-sundae whipped cream frenzy, the cake, and the squirt gun/water balloon battle. He missed the party because we didn't have a bun.

What a metaphor for our lives. How many people miss the party for want of a bun? They can't see how good life is because the bun isn't there — the bun could be the right job, the right car, the right something that completes their vision of a perfect universe. How many times in our own lives do we obsess about the missing bun? And as I think of the people I know with celiac disease, I see how they all must learn to look beyond the bun and enjoy the party — the big sprawling, wet-and-wild, fun-filled celebration of life.

Reprinted with permission from the Fall 2004 issue of Living Without magazine. That issue is available at www.LivingWithout.com. In July 2004, Folio, the magazine for the publishing industry, featured Living Without magazine in "Small Magazines We Adore" stating "It's a brilliant example of a niche magazine, and one that does some good. If you or someone you know has dietary restrictions, you might not be able to live without, Living Without." We think you'll agree. Party on!

