

Food for Thought

New Employee Enrollment for Benefits

We're pleased to announce that Single Sign On and the on-line New Employee Enrollment System for benefits will be accessible to all units on **February 24, 2005**. This system will allow new employees to enroll in their benefits and name beneficiaries through an on-line system as part of their new employee processing. The change to the New Employee Enrollment System (NEES) is being made in conjunction with the implementation of the Single Sign On (SSO) system. The Agriculture Program's New Employee Processing site, <http://aghr.tamu.edu/processing.htm>, will be revised to direct benefit eligible employees to the New Employee Enrollment System rather than paper benefit forms beginning **February 24**. New Employee Benefit Enrollment paper forms should not be used after February 24. In addition, the unit contact portion of the new employee processing website will be updated to include instructions for obtaining a new employee's UIN, and use of the New Employee Enrollment System.

Implementation of SSO and NEES will require the following changes for those of you who assist new employees:

1. You will need to obtain the new employee's **UIN before the date of hire**.

2. You will **no longer need to enter a temporary record in the training database** via HRConnect. The UIN will allow the new employee to enter the HRConnect training database via Single Sign On to complete their training courses, "Ethics" and "Creating a Discrimination Free Workplace".

3. You will need to enter information into the **New Employee Enrollment System (for benefit eligible employees) before the date of hire**.

If you have questions, please contact:

Single Sign On -- Bob Hensz,
rhensz@ag.tamu.edu

UIN Manager (obtaining a UIN for a new employee) -- Loree Lewis,
llewis@ag.tamu.edu

New Employee Enrollment System
Cynthia Escamilla (TAES, TCE non-county, COALS),
CFEscamilla@ag.tamu.edu, or
Jennifer Humphries (TCE county programs), JMHumphries@ag.tamu.edu, or
Dana Daugherty (TCE County Programs), d-Daugherty@tamu.edu

— Jennifer Humphries

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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

Be the change you want to see in the world. — Mahatma Gandhi

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/>

LeaveTraq:

<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



Re-employment After Retirement

After retiring from a career with the Agriculture Program, you may consider returning to work for the A&M System. Following is information about returning to work for the A&M System which may be helpful to you:

TRS Retirees:

- You must have a one-calendar-month break in service following your TRS retirement date.
- If retired before January 1, 2001, there are no restrictions on your percent effort or duration of employment with the A&M System.
- If retired after January 1, 2001, you may return to work for the A&M System on a part-time basis. "Part-time" means working 50% or less effort on a monthly basis or working more than 50% for six months or less in a fiscal year. TRS retirement annuity benefits are forfeited in any month when employment exceeds these limits during a fiscal year.
- You cannot make additional contributions to TRS, but you will be eligible for annual leave and sick leave if you are reemployed in a benefits-eligible position.
- These restrictions apply if you return to work for any state employer.

- You will continue retiree insurance benefits. Employment with a private employer will not impact TRS benefits.

ORP Retirees:

- You may return to work at any time (no break in service is required) with no restrictions on percent effort or duration of employment.
- You cannot make additional contributions to ORP, unless you retired on or before June 1, 1997, or are participating in a phased retirement program.
- You will be eligible for annual leave and sick leave if you are reemployed in a benefits-eligible position. You will continue retiree insurance benefits

CSRS Retirees:

You may not return to work in the same job from which you retired.

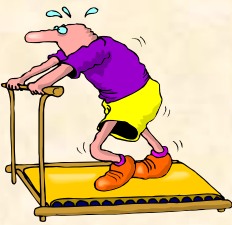
For further information, please contact Jan Kyles at (979) 845-5645 or jkyles@ag.tamu.edu. TCE County Programs employees, please contact Jennifer Humphries at (979) 845-7810 or JMHumphries@ag.tamu.edu.

Life is 10 percent what you make it and 90 percent how you take it.

— Irving Berlin



Walk Across Texas



Walk Across Texas is a program created by Texas Cooperative Extension in 1996 to help staff establish the habit of regular physical activity. From border to border, individuals or teams, walked “across the Texas”, seeing their progress across the state on-line, or on a Texas road map!

Five teams from the Ag. Program Administration offices participated in Walk Across Texas. They began walking on October 17 and completed the eight-week program on December 11 walking a combined total of 3,029 miles.

The teams and their rankings and team mileage were:

1st Place - 2 HOT 2 TROT - 860.84 miles (Members—Barbara Bracken, Sissy Jackson, Dana Daugherty, Leslie Weichert, Anna Dean, Jennifer Humphries, Kimberly Eades, and Dan Bogart.)

2nd Place - SOLE SURVIVOR - 776.75 miles (Members—Kerri Cawley, Jan Kyles, Alissa Schroe-

der, Eleen Schulze, Gilbert Schulze, Susan Schulze, and Steve Schulze)

3rd Place - BODY & SOLE - 730.16 miles (Members—Suzanne Deatherage, Linda Edge, Cynthia Escamilla, Rhonda Hall, Karen Kelly, Pat Onstott, Gloria Schwind, and Vic Seidel)

4th Place - FITAGS - 367 miles (Members—Brenda Bailey, Jana Barrett, Judith Bowden, Amy Neally, Jolie Sykes-Smith, and Dean Wideman)

5th Place - STREET WALKERS - 294.25 miles (Members—Lynda Ables, Susan Warren, Joan Pitman, Wayne & Christine Williams, Kathy Yeager and Gina Konderla)

The Brazos Valley Walk Across Texas spring session begins March 5. An informational brochure is available at: <http://brazos-tx.tamu.edu/publications/marketing%20brochure2005.pdf>. For more information about getting started at your worksite, email Dr. Alma Fonseca (AFonseca@ag.tamu.edu).

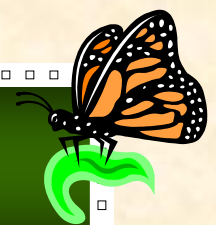
— Pat Onstott

Gloria Schwind Bids Farewell to The Agriculture Program

After almost five years of service in the Agriculture Program Human Resources Office, Gloria Schwind is taking on a new and exciting challenge as director of Human Resources at Texas A&M University - Qatar. As assistant human resources officer for the Agriculture Program, Gloria has played an integral role in the design and implementation of HR services and has been a frequent contact for employees seeking assistance on HR issues. In addition to the leadership she provides to numerous HR initia-

tives, she is also well known as a committed and effective leader of the State Employee Charitable Campaign. "She is the most thoughtful and caring individual I know and always has the well-being of others in mind. We will really miss her." said Steve Schulze, assistant director for Human Resources. Gloria begins her new job in Doha, Qatar on April 9 but will be working hard until then to complete several important projects. Please join her co-workers in wishing Gloria all the best in her new job.

Happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it will elude you.
But if you turn your attention to other things, it comes softly and sits on your shoulder.
— Unknown



Great Jobs Website Lists 1000th NOV

The Agriculture Program GreatJobs online employment went live in September 2003 and the 1000th position was listed on February 23, 2005. The system has allowed quick and easy listing of vacancies for the Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and Texas Forest Service departments/units in locations all across Texas. Applicants are able to complete an employment application one time and apply for positions as often as they wish without requiring them to complete an application each time. Over 12,200 employment applications have been processed and over 800 employees have been hired since the system went online. Departments/units are able to easily access applications for their current position vacancies and review positions and applicants for previous positions. The system maintains statistics for all applicants eliminating the need for de-

partments/units to submit Applicant Flow Reports. Human Resources is able to provide EEO statistics for reports and audits with ease.

Unit contacts submit notices of vacancies and access the applications for their department/unit by logging on at: <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu/hr>. Applicants for positions log on at: <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu>. Current employees are also provided a courtesy email listing all position vacancies included on the Great Jobs website.

Please ensure you provide the correct web address to applicants to avoid them trying to log in to the user contact site.

— Pat Onstott

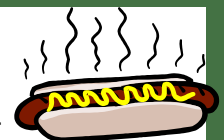
Did you know....?



There are 42 dots on a pair of dice.



There are 18 different animal shapes in the Animal Crackers cookie zoo.



There are about 3,000 hot dog vendors in metropolitan New York.



There are 48 teaspoons in a cup: three teaspoons make a tablespoon and 16 tablespoons to a cup.

Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as you even can. — John Wesley (1703-1791)

Learning Central - All Aboard the Learning Central



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

March 29 – The New Non-Faculty Performance Evaluation System

April 26 – Coaching & Mentoring Employees

May 31 – The Position Description Module

June 26 – To be determined

July 28 – To be determined

August 30 – To be determined

For updates to this schedule, handouts, How-Tos, and other learning opportunities, go to <http://agtraining.tamu.edu>

— Bob Hensz

Somedays you're a bug; somedays you're a windshield.

— Price Cobb



Helpful Information From *HR Update*

Purchasing Drugs Using Your Spending Account Debit Card

If you are enrolled in a Health Care Spending Account and an A&M System-offered health plan, you can now use the plan's debit card for most mail-order drug purchases without having to provide receipts. Receipts will still be required if you order more than one drug at a time through mail order.

Question—I am enrolled in an A&M Care health plan, and my doctor recently referred me to a facility for a medical procedure. How can I be sure this facility is a BlueChoice network facility so that I don't have to pay out-of-network costs?

Answer—Some doctors are careful about referring their patients only to network facilities, but you shouldn't rely on that. Anytime your doctor schedules a procedure at a different facility or refers you to another physician, you should contact BlueCross and BlueShield of Texas (BCBSTX) at (866) 295-1212 and ask whether that facility or physician is in the BlueChoice network. Another easy way to check is by visiting BCBSTX online at www.bcbstx.com and clicking "Provider Finder." To locate a network provider in Texas, select "PPO" under "Select a Product." To locate a network provider outside Texas, click "For a listing of national BlueCard providers, click here." If the facility or physician is not in the BlueChoice network, talk to your doctor about finding one that is. This will help you avoid unpleasant surprises when your bill arrives.

Kudos Korner



Dr. Yin-Tung Wang, professor of horticulture at the Weslaco Agricultural Research and Extension Center, has been cited as "Texas' foremost authority on cultivating orchids" in an article to be published in the March issue of *Texas Highways*. Congratulations to Dr. Wang.

— Jose Amador

Barbara Bracken, Dana Daugherty, Anna Dean, Kimberly Edds, Jennifer Humphries, Sissy Jackson, and Leslie Weichert. (See the *Walk Across Texas* article on page 3.) — Pat Onstott

Congratulations to Jingqiu Ren, human resources representative, for the birth of her baby son. Kael Shogo Kameoka was born on February 8 at 4:45 p.m. weighing 7 lbs. 12 oz.



Congratulations to the 1st Place team—2 Hot 2 Trot—in Administration's team participation in Walk Across Texas. The first place team members walked a combined total of 860.84 miles. Members of the winning team were Dan Bogart,



Single Sign On Makes its Debut

You will soon have access to Single Sign On, a convenient, one-stop web site that will give you quick access to several A&M System online applications.

This easy-to-use web site will enable you to switch between the HRConnect information system and LeaveTraq without having to log in more than once. Other applications will be accessible through Single Sign On in the future. And because Single Sign On will be the sole point of entry for these applications, you'll have to remember only one password. Single Sign On also has enhanced security features to further protect your personal information.

To log in, you will need your Universal Identification Number (UIN). If you do not currently use your UIN when logging into HRConnect and/or LeaveTraq, you can find it by clicking "Show me my Universal Identification Number" on the HRConnect homepage (hrc.tamu.edu) or by simply logging into LeaveTraq using your Social Security number. To protect your Social Security number, you should begin using your UIN to log into HRConnect and/or LeaveTraq right away. Once Single Sign On becomes available, you

will not be able to log in to either of these applications using your Social Security number.

You will also need your LeaveTraq password to log in to Single Sign On. This will become your Single Sign On password. If you do not have a LeaveTraq password, you can use your HRConnect password. If you have a LeaveTraq password but do not remember it, you should select "I forgot my password" from the main Single Sign On screen. If you don't use LeaveTraq and have forgotten your HRConnect password, you must set up a password in Single Sign On by clicking "New Employees-Set up your password."

Single Sign On will provide instructions guiding you through the login process, and its "wizard" feature can help answer any questions you may have. If you still have questions, contact your LeaveTraq coordinator or other departmental coordinator.

— from *A&M System News Online*, Feb. 05,
<http://amsnews.tamu.edu/front1.html>

Thinking Way Outside the Bag

by Dan Miller

Many years ago in a small Indian village, a farmer had the misfortune of owing a large sum of money to a village moneylender. The moneylender, who was old and ugly, fancied the farmer's beautiful daughter. So he proposed a bargain. He said he would forgive the farmer's debt if he could marry his daughter. Both the farmer and his daughter were horrified by the proposal. So the cunning money-lender suggested that they let providence decide the matter. He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty money bag. Then the girl would have to reach in and pick one pebble from the bag. 1) If she picked the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be forgiven. 2) If she picked the white pebble she need not marry him and her father's debt would still be forgiven. 3) But if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into jail until the debt was paid.

They were standing on a pebble strewn path in the farmer's field. As they talked, the moneylender bent over to pick up two pebbles. As he picked them up, the sharp-eyed girl noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. He then asked the girl to pick a pebble from the bag. Now, imagine that you were standing in the field. What would you have done if you were the girl? If you had to advise her, what would you have told her?

Careful analysis would produce three possibilities: (1) The girl could refuse to take a pebble –but her father would then be thrown in jail. (2) The girl could pick a black pebble and sacrifice herself in order to save her father from his debt and imprisonment. Or (3) The girl could pull out both black pebbles in the bag and expose the money-lender as a cheat but perhaps incite his immediate revenge.

Take a moment to think through this story. I've used it with the hope that it will help you see alternate solutions beyond the obvious. The girl's dilemma cannot be solved with traditional logical thinking. You may be in a similar situation. You may be in a job you hate – but the pay is great. You have two choices (1) You can stay in a job you hate. (2) You can leave the job

but will then give up the great pay. Are these really all the options? What would you recommend to the Girl to do? Well, here is what she did

The girl put her hand into the moneybag and drew out a pebble. Without looking at it, she fumbled and let it fall onto the pebble-strewn path where it immediately became lost among all the other pebbles. "Oh, how clumsy of me," she said. "But never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked." Since the remaining pebble is black, it must be assumed that she had picked the white one. And since the money-lender dared not admit his dishonesty, the girl changed what seemed an impossible situation into an extremely advantageous one.

Now, what about your situation? A couple of years ago I saw a very "successful" media executive. Because he was so respected he had been given increasing responsibilities over the years. He came to me with a dilemma. His current position had squeezed out all his family and community commitments. He was working 70-80 hours weekly, but he had also become used to the \$180,000 in annual pay. He was considering whether to just accept his lot in life, or to quit his job, give up his salary and seek a more balanced life. I proposed another choice. Since he was valued, why not approach his superiors with a new solution. Delegate much of his weekly work load to allow him to contribute in his "areas of competence." They agreed readily – he was able to go back to a 40 hour work week; he began playing the cello professionally again, he volunteers in his son's school, he plays in occasional golf tournaments and he manages his church bookstore. Simply by asking for a less-than-obvious solution, he was able to move into a new season of true "success."

MORAL OF THE STORY: Most complex problems do have a solution. It is only that we don't attempt to think outside the obvious choices.

— Reprinted from 48 Days by Dan Miller.
www.48days.com, The Business
Source, Inc., 615-373-7771

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.
— Henry Ford

Cop An Attitude

by ADL Associate Laura Lewis, CNN

Did You Know? Roughly 30 percent of people who are given a placebo, or “fake” pill, to help “cure” a negative health condition will totally recover, despite the predicted outcome of research scientists. It turns out that the only determining factor that makes these people different from their “non-placebo” responding friends was their attitude, outlook on life, and determination. Time and time again doctors have seen it in those extra-special patients who haven’t given up, even with a supposed terminal illness, and they became totally well! What a great representation of the power of the mind!

Attitude Items:

- A gardener was diagnosed with a terminal illness but was too busy making the world beautiful to die. He lived on!
- A woman who loses her husband to death “gives up” as well and dies within a few months of his departing.
- A man’s favorite dog is “put to sleep.” The man gives up his will to live and dies shortly thereafter.
- As people get over the age of fifty, if they have a bad attitude, their health is generally worse than their more positive friends. Their memories also seem to go faster.

Attitude Maintenance: Be constantly aware of the power of your mind. You truly are in control of your health and well-being. Keep a positive attitude and surround yourself with others who have the same mindset. Those “complainers” want to drag everyone down with them. Be also keenly aware of your thoughts and “self-talk.” Quit telling yourself “I’m bad.” Start saying to yourself, “I’m good.” Then think of reasons why. Focus upon the end result of a tedious task and “feel” the accomplishment beforehand!

Action Tips:

- Be an objective observer of your life. Keep track of how often you speak negatively to yourself.
- Are the people around you positive people? They should be.
- Try to dwell upon the end result of difficult tasks or situations at hand, and focus on the positive.
- Read any book by Bernie S. Siegel, M.D.!

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adl@ADLassociates.com

Tips “n” Technology (TnT) Newsletter

Did you know that Jennifer Jahedkar in EIT publishes a monthly newsletter with loads of user-friendly, usable computer technology information? Recently there have been articles on Centra Symposium, e-learning opportunities, inserting Spanish letters and symbols into documents, smart tags in Microsoft Office, grammar checking, viruses, and others.

To view past issues go to <http://eit.tamu.edu/EITDOCS/TnT/tntindex.html>.

To subscribe and receive the newsletters each month, e-mail Jennifer Jahedkar at jjahedkar@ag.tamu.edu

— Bob Hensz

It takes just as much time and energy to wish as it does to plan. — Eleanor Roosevelt