

# Food for Thought

## System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) Elections

Nominations for both the TCE and TAES seats on the System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) will be accepted until March 9 and should be sent to Beverley Rose, Agriculture Human Resources at [barose@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:barose@ag.tamu.edu).

**What is SEBAC?** The System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC), consists of elected representatives from each A&M System member. The Committee's role is to advise the associate vice chancellor for System Human Resources on benefit plan design to meet the needs of employees. SEBAC studies the design and operation of the various benefit plans on an ongoing basis and makes recommendations regarding design and administration of the plans.

**Nomination Criteria** Nominees must be benefit eligible employees of Texas Cooperative Extension or Texas Agriculture Experiment Station.

Given the significant financial aspects of the Committee's work, individuals with strong financial or business-related backgrounds will be given primary consideration.

Nominators should contact those persons they wish to nominate, via email, for their approval. When submitting a name, include a copy of the email from the nominee, agreeing to have their name submitted. Self-nominations are permitted.

**Election** The election will be held by e-ballot during the last week in March. The successful TCE candidate will serve a two-year term September 1, 2007 – August 31, 2009.

If you have questions, please contact Beverley Rose, Agriculture Human Resources at 979-458-3279 or by email at [barose@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:barose@ag.tamu.edu).

— Beverley Rose

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Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each New Year find you a better man. — Benjamin Franklin

## New Employees in Human Resources & Payroll

**Irene Campbell** has rejoined the Payroll staff filling the position previously occupied by Patsy Schoppe. She began employment on November 20, 2006, as Senior Financial Accountant. Irene brings to her position a considerable amount of previous experience with TAES/TCE from 1998 to 2003. She is also a Texas A&M graduate with a degree in Accounting.

**Xiaoja (Jessy) Chen** joined Payroll on December 5, 2006, as Financial Accountant I. Xiaoja filled

the vacancy created when Vic was promoted to payroll director. Jessy is a Texas A&M graduate with her Masters in Agribusiness.

Rejoining the Human Resources office from previous service are **Gloria Schwind** who will be working half-time, effective March 1, and **Linda Edge** who will serve as Human Resources Generalist effective April 1.

One resolution I have made, and try always to keep, is this: To rise above the little things.  
— John Burroughs

## Who's Really Important in the Organization? Everyone!

A sea captain and his chief engineer got into an argument about which one was more important to the ship. Finally they decided to trade places for a day.

The chief went up to the bridge and the captain went down to the engine room. After a few hours, the captain suddenly appeared on deck, covered with oil and soot.

"Chief!" he yelled, wildly waving aloft a monkey wrench. "You'll have to come down here! I can't make her go!"

"Of course not!" replied the chief. "We're aground!"

— Reprinted from  
*For Achievers Only*,  
Fall 2006.

A man may fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame some one else.  
— Knox Manning

## Top Five Things to Remember About Workers' Compensation

1. **If you are injured on the job, notify your supervisor right away!** Work with supervisor's office to complete an Employer's First Report of Injury Form, DWC-1 (<http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/DWC1.pdf>)  
**NOTE: Items 17 and 26 MUST be complete, even if you write in "none" or "N/A". INJURED EMPLOYEE CANNOT COMPLETE THE BOTTOM SECTION OF FORM AND CANNOT SIGN THE FORM.**
2. Follow instructions regarding where to submit the Employer's First Report of Injury:  
  
TCE County Programs employees —  
<http://agtraining.tamu.edu/how-tos/wcchecklistcounty.htm>  
  
TCE Non-County Programs and all TAES employees —  
<http://agtraining.tamu.edu/how-tos/wcchecklist.htm>  
  
**\*\*Stay tuned for updated process in the very near future. The LaserFiche system will be the method used to relay the information.\*\***
3. **When seeking medical attention for injury, you must select a doctor who is approved to treat work-related injuries.**

**Go to this website to search for approved providers:**

<https://txcomp.tdi.state.tx.us/twccprovidersolution/hcpisrhglbhtml>

*In an emergency situation, go to the nearest emergency facility for treatment. The approved doctor requirement is waived in these situations. Otherwise, you must see an approved doctor in order for the claims to be paid by Risk management.*

4. If you miss time from work due to your work-related injury, you must use either your paid leave (sick or annual leave) or use leave without pay. For budgeted employees, enter your leave in LeaveTraq, as you would for any time missed from work. Contact your leave administrator if you have questions about entering your leave. Contact Human Resources with questions regarding your options for using paid or unpaid leave.
5. Keep your supervisor informed as to your injury, especially if you miss time and when you return to work. You must submit a Work Status Report to your supervisor each time you visit the doctor. The doctor will use this report to indicate any restrictions placed upon your return to work.

— Dana Daugherty

No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.  
— Heraclitus



## All Aboard the Learning Central Line!

### UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

#### **TTVN**

(Last Tuesday each month, 10:00-12:00)

March 27.....Risk Management for Supervisors  
*Bob Hensz*

April 24.....Time for a Checkup of Your  
People Skills

TTVN sites are listed at <http://ttvn.tamu.edu/schedule/default.htm>. Select the date of the training; the event is listed as "AG HR Training".

#### **FRIDAY ONLINE**

(Friday mornings, 9:00-10:30)

March 2.....Effectively Communicating as a  
Manager - *Bob Hensz*

March 9.....Leadership - *Stacy Morris*

March 23.....Leadership - *Beverley Rose*

March 30.....Performance Evaluation  
*Jennifer Humphries*

April 13.....Customer Service  
*Susanna Coppernoll*

April 20.....Networking & Teambuilding  
*Susanna Coppernoll*

April 27.....Marketing - *Elizabeth Gregory*

To register, go to <http://eit.tamu.edu/centra.html>

### PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

**Performance appraisals need effective communication between management and employees.** Employees need to communicate effectively so they can be heard by their supervisors or managers.

Prepare yourself for your performance appraisal. Ask yourself...

- What critical abilities does my job require?
- What were my special accomplishments during this appraisal period?
- What do I like about my job? What don't I like?
- What goals or standards didn't I meet?
- How could my supervisor help me?
- Is there anything that the organization or my supervisor is doing that is hindering my progress?
- How can I become more productive?
- Do I need more experience or training on my current job?
- What have I done since my last appraisal to prepare myself for more responsibility?
- What new goals or standards should be applied for the next appraisal period? Which old ones should be discarded?

Some defeats are only installments on the road to victory. — Unknown

## Helpful Websites

**Human Resources** - <http://aghr.tamu.edu/>

**Ag Program Directory** - <http://agdirectory.tamu.edu/>

**A&M System Online**

The Newsletter for A&M System

Employees and Retirees) - <http://tamus.edu/systemwide/>

**Benefits** - <http://aghr.tamu.edu/benefits.htm>

**Dictionary** - <http://dictionary.reference.com/>

**Employment**

**Posters** - <http://hrtoolbox.tamu.edu/>

**GreatJobs** - <http://greatjobs.tamu.edu>

**Forms (Alpha List)** - <http://agservices.tamu.edu/Forms/forms-alfa.htm>

**HR Connect** - <http://sso.tamu.edu>

**LeaveTraq** - <http://sso.tamu.edu>

**Online Employee**

**Processing** - <http://aghr.tamu.edu/processing.htm>

**Payroll** - <http://aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm>

**Policies, Procedures**

**& Forms** - <http://aghr.tamu.edu/pol.htm>

**Selective Service Registration**

**Verification** - [http://www4.sss.gov/regver/verification\\_nc.asp](http://www4.sss.gov/regver/verification_nc.asp)

**Single Sign On** - <http://sso.tamu.edu/>

**Zip Code**

**Lookup** - <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>

## Did you know...?



The botanical name of the chocolate plant is Theobroma cacao, which means "Food of the Gods."

American & Russian space flights have always included chocolate.



Chocolate contains phenylethylamine (PEA), a natural substance that is reputed to stimulate the same reaction in the body as falling love.

Pet parrots can eat virtually any common "people food" except for chocolate and avocados. Both of these are highly toxic to the parrot and can be fatal.



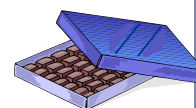
Chocolate syrup was used for blood in the famous 45-second shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's movie, Psycho, which actually took seven days to shoot.

German chocolate cake did not originate in Germany. In 1852, Sam German developed a sweet baking bar for Baker's Chocolate Co. The product was named in honor of him—Baker's German's Sweet Chocolate.



The melting point of cocoa butter is just below the human body temperature—which is why it literally melts in your mouth.

In the U.S., approximately seven billion pounds of chocolate and candy are manufactured each year.



## Message from Microsoft Regarding Computer Clocks

In 2005, the United States government passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This act changes the start and end dates for Daylight Saving Time (DST) as of spring 2007. These changes may impact the way applications run. Microsoft is releasing an update for Windows through Microsoft Update that reflects these changes.

Developers who use the .NET Framework may find their applications affected if the application uses the time zone information for historical purposes or if they have derived custom classes from [System.TimeZone](#) to provide custom time zone information. The standard System.TimeZone class provides a managed wrapper for the underlying Windows Operating System time zone functions.

In addition, developers who use Visual C++ may find their applications affected if they use the CRT time functions, or the TZ environment variable. Microsoft is currently working on a fix for this issue and will post information about its availability on the [Visual Studio Support](#) page.

Most applications that use these affected classes will not need to be modified as this update will ensure that the correct data is provided seamlessly to the application. However, applications that use these classes or the underlying [Windows API](#) to perform historical time look-ups will need to be modified.

In most cases, developers who have extended the .NET Framework's time zone support by creating custom time zone classes derived from System.TimeZone, or by direct access to the Win32 API, will not have to update their applications as long as the

available updates to the operating system are applied. However, solutions that rely on private time zone data, or that retrieve system time zone information by accessing the registry directly, may need to be updated. Applications that deal with historical time zone data may also need to be updated.

Microsoft advises all developers who make use of time zone data to test their applications against this update to ensure that their applications function correctly.

For more detailed information and the latest updates please visit <http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/vstudio/bb264729.aspx>, [Preparing for daylight saving time changes in 2007](#), and [KB928388: 2007 time zone update for Microsoft Windows operating systems](#).

### Further Assistance

Microsoft values your business. For more information visit <http://www.microsoft.com/dst2007>, or contact Microsoft for assistance. A list of phone numbers is located at <http://support.microsoft.com>. Microsoft Premier Customers may engage their Technical Account Manager directly.

If you have questions/inquiries please visit <http://www.microsoft.com/dst2007>

**Thank you,  
Microsoft US Developer Team**



**Clocks spring ahead on March 11**

## Tabula Rasa — the Power of a Clean Slate

Tabula Rasa -- This is actually a Latin term meaning "clean slate." People who end up being successful usually view change differently than the average person.

It was a cold December night in West Orange, New Jersey. Thomas Edison's factory was humming with activity. Work was proceeding on a variety of fronts as the great inventor was trying to turn more of his dreams into practical realities. Edison's plant, made of concrete and steel, was deemed "fireproof". As you may have already guessed, it wasn't! On that frigid night in 1914, the sky was lit up by a sensational blaze that had burst through the plant roof.

Edison's 24-year-old son, Charles, made a frenzied search for his famous inventor-father. When he finally found him, he was watching the fire. His white hair was blowing in the wind. His face was illuminated by the leaping flames. "My heart ached for him," said Charles. "Here he was, 67 years old, and everything he had worked for was going up in flames. When he saw me, he shouted, 'Charles! Where's your mother?' When I told him I didn't know, he said, 'Find her! Bring her here! She'll never see anything like this as long as she lives.'"

Next morning, Mr. Edison looked at the ruins of his factory and said this of his loss: "There's value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God, we can start anew."

What a wonderful perspective on things that seem at first to be so disastrous. A job loss, business failure, personal dream gone sour... whether these things destroy an individual depends largely on the attitude he or she takes toward them. Sort out why it happened, and learn something from the blunders. Think of different approaches that can be taken. Start over. With any failure, there is a lesson to be learned and forgiveness to be found. With the slate wiped clean, look forward. Be wiser and humbler in view of what has happened, but don't stop living because of it. A key truth of the Christian faith is that our hope lies in a still-unseen future rather than in a miserable past.

Don't ignore the value of your "tabula rasa."

— Reprinted from Dan Miller's  
Weekly e-newsletter, 48 Days,  
Business Source in Brentwood.  
[www.48days.com](http://www.48days.com)



# March

Spring Break — March 14-15-16

St. Patrick's Day — March 17

First Day of Spring — March 21

## Work-Life Tip of the Month

This tip comes from WFC Resources ([www.WFCResources.com](http://www.WFCResources.com)) and from Jeffrey Krivis, mediator and author of *Improvisational Negotiation: A Mediator's Stories of Conflict about Love, Money, Anger—and the Strategies that Resolved them*. In a Fall 2006 article titled, "Can We call a Truce? Ten Tips for Negotiating workplace Conflicts," *Worklife Matters* magazine culled these insights from Krivis' book:

1. Let people tell their story. Allowing people to speak their minds may increase the level of conflict, but that's okay, says Krivis, because feeling heard can dramatically change an angry person's outlook. And in the process, new information may surface that allows a solution to naturally emerge.
2. If someone refuses to budge, take the spotlight off them. When there is one hardliner refusing to budge during a multiparty conflict, suggests Krivis, just begin "settling around" them and work with the other parties. The holdout quickly sees the value of compromise when his or her perceived power is neutralized.
3. When someone seems "locked up," dig for the emotion behind the stone face. Krivis recommends asking, "What is it you really want to achieve here?" Tapping into the person's repressed emotion may provide the key to a solution.
4. When people are "picking flyspecks out of pepper," come in with a reality check. It's the mediator's role to bring people back to reality by "wrenching their attention away from the grain of sand and having them focus on the whole beach."
5. Identify the true impediment. In every conflict, says Krivis, as yourself, "What is the true motivating factor here? What is really keeping this person from agreeing to a solution?"
6. Learn to "read minds." Krivis suggests paying attention to body language and emotional tone as well as a person's words. If you give people an opportunity, he says, most people involved in a dispute will gladly talk about themselves, which gives you a chance to ask more questions and gain more information about their perspective. That helps you anticipate how they might react, and manage the negotiation accordingly.
7. Think creatively about ways people can cooperate rather than clash. Spend your time building up the relationship, Krivis suggests, rather than just divvying up the matter in dispute.
8. "Edit the script" to help people see their situation in a different light. Retell their story in positive, forward-looking terms, says Krivis, and you can "give them the words to see their options in a new light."
9. Avoid the "winner's curse" by carefully pacing negotiation. When a solution seems too easy, people may experience second thoughts about whether they could have cut a better deal. Don't rush to a conclusion even when you know you can wrap things up quickly, says Krivis. Keep the negotiation proceeding normally, for a reasonable amount of time, before the inevitable settlement.
10. Finally, realize that not every conflict can be solved. "Not every negotiation is going to have a win-win outcome. Not everyone can live together in harmony... There are times you just have to accept that both parties are going to leave the table equally unhappy." When that happens, Krivis recommends, "Isolate the participants if possible and just move on."

Improvisational negotiation, says Krivis, is "kind of like jazz. ... The chords you use depend on the chords you hear from the other participants, and vice versa. It's a conversation. It's organic. There are no limits on what can come out of mediation, and that's what makes it such a powerful skill."