

Food for Thought

State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) 2007

September 1 marks the beginning of the annual, two-month State Employee Charitable Campaign. The SECC is the only statutorily authorized workplace campaign for state agency and higher education employees throughout Texas. In 2006, the SECC marked its 13th year by raising more than \$9.2 million for charitable organizations throughout the Lone Star state.

One of the benefits of the SECC is the wide variety of charities and causes represented, while administrative costs are kept to a minimum. With only 10% of the total dollars pledged used to cover administrative costs more of your contribution gets to the charities you select than in almost any similar fund-raising activity. All participating agencies must meet strict eligibility standards established by state law, so you can feel confident that your gift will be used efficiently by your designated recipient.

How much you give is totally up to you. Any size gift, no matter how large or small, can make a real difference to any of the charities in the campaign. As an example, giving just \$2/month for one year will provide one day of food and shelter for a homeless person or two weeks of meals for a homebound senior citizen. While a gift of \$45/month can provide 11 days of food and shelter for a homeless person or 26 students with assistance in math and science.

You may elect to give a one-time gift by check or cash or donate a specific amount from each paycheck via payroll deduction. Payroll deduction helps minimize costs while maximizing contributions and it saves time and effort. Also, you will want to watch for any of the fund raising events sponsored by the various departments and units.

Dedicated volunteers are at the heart of every successful campaign. This year's campaign area coordinators are Linda Edge and Judy Franklin. Providing critical support in distributing SECC information and materials throughout the departments and units are the following unit coordinators:

[\(cont'd. on p. 12, see "SECC"\)](#)

**Editor:
Pat Onstott**

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The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is the way they are put to use.

—Unknown



PharmaCare Will Become Caremark

PharmaCare, which is the prescription carrier for employees and retirees enrolled in any BlueCross Blue Shield health plan through the Texas A&M University System, began a planned merger with Caremark last November. On Aug. 1, 2007 the official name of the merged company became Caremark.

You can expect the following during the transition:

- After Aug. 1, the Caremark name will begin appearing on marketing materials and other communications. By Nov. 1, the new name will be used on most marketing materials and other communications.
- On Jan. 1, 2008 the PharmaCare website will change to Caremark, and Caremark will begin issuing Caremark ID cards to new members and existing members who need replacement cards. Caremark will **not** be doing a mass reissuing of ID cards to existing A&M Care plan participants. All A&M Care plan participants are to continue using their existing PharmaCare ID cards. Caremark/PharmaCare will have notified network pharmacies of the name change and that existing members will be using their PharmaCare ID cards for some time.
- The January 2008 Preferred Formulary Drug List will bear the Caremark name.
- All customer service phone numbers will remain the same.

— Dana Daugherty

TRS Changes That May Affect YOU

The 80th Texas Legislature enacted laws that will impact TRS members and retirees. Listed below are some TRS related laws approved this session. Changes are effective September 1, 2007.

Anyone who becomes a TRS member on or after September 1, 2007, will be required to meet one of the following eligibility requirements to qualify for an unreduced annuity at retirement:

- Age 65 with 5 years of service credit, or
- Age **60** with at least 5 years of service credit **and** meets the Rule of 80 (combined age and years of service credit equal at least 80).
-

Members who have the Rule of 80, but are not age 60 will have a 5% annuity deduction for each year under the age of 60.

Effective September 1, 2007, the TRS employer contribution rate will increase from 6% to 6.58% of gross payroll. The employee contribution remains 6.4%.

Note: The employer contribution for ORP participants will also increase from 6.0% to 6.58% of gross payroll. The employee contribution will remain 6.65%.

A complete list of the new laws can be found on the TRS web site at www.trs.tx.state.us.

— Jan Kyles



All Aboard the Learning Central Line!

New Learning Opportunities for 2007-8

Be on the lookout for AGHR's new training schedule for 2007-8 and check out these new learning opportunities:

Lunch with Leaders (2nd Wednesday, monthly 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

Bring your lunch and check out the online menu for supervisor learning opportunities: Roles & Responsibilities, Goal Setting, Team Building & Motivation to just name a few. Join your colleagues in a workshop on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Each session will also include one or two leaders from within TAMUS sharing and discussing their experiences and knowledge on the featured topic.

Employee Learning (3rd Monday, monthly 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.)

It's around the middle of the month and your 'get up and go' is just about gone! Give yourself a boost with this mid-month Monday afternoon workshop series. Varied topics that all employees can relate to, focus on both your professional and personal development needs. This learning opportunity is available to you, right at your desktop, via Centra, on the 3rd Monday of each month. Grab a coffee and join us for an hour of information sharing and lively discussion.

Now, here's the training schedule for September – November 2007.

Date	Activity	Venue	Time
9/7	Tips for Preventing Workplace Violence	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
9/12	Supervisor Roles & Responsibilities	Lunch with Leaders	11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
9/14	Overview: American Disabilities Act	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
9/17	Customer Service	Employee Learning	2:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.
9/21	Workers Compensation Update	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
9/25	Employee Retention: Love 'em or Lose 'em	TTVN	10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
9/28	Overview: Fair Labor Standards Act	Friday online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
10/5	Overview: Hiring & Recruiting	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
10/10	Supervisor Goal Setting	Lunch with Leaders	11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
10/12	Overview: Family medical Leave Act	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
10/15	Retirement Planning: Tax Deferred Plans	Employee Learning	2:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.
10/19	Skills Behaviors & Competencies	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
10/26	Performance Evaluation	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
10/30	Stress Management	TTVN	10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
11/2	Web 2.0/RSS — Blogs, Wikis, RSS ...	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
11/9	GroupWise Calendar	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
11/14	Supervisor Motivation Myth Busters	Lunch with Leaders	11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

(cont'd. on p. 4, see "Learning Central Line")

Learning Central Line (cont'd. from p. 3)

Date	Activity	Venue	Time
11/16	Adobe Fillable Forms	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.
11/19	Dealing with Difficult People	Employee Learning	2:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.
11/27	Minding Your Money: A 12-Week Plan	TTVN	10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
11/30	HTML in TECO	Friday Online	9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.

How to Participate

Centra: Friday Online, Lunch with Leaders & Employee Learning — go to <http://eit.tamu.edu/centra.html> and follow the directions for logging in or creating an account for yourself and enrolling in an event.

TTVN: Go to the nearest TTVN site to participate. To view a listing of sites and find the one nearest you, go to <http://ttvn2.tamu.edu/home/index.php?p=conf&id=2890626> . You may also view and listen to the presentation from your desktop. go to <http://ttvn2.tamu.edu/home/?p=streams> and select channel 6. Please note, you will need **Windows Media Player** installed on your computer to view from your desktop.

— Beverley Rose

Some of us never put our best foot forward until we get the other one in hot water.

— Unknown



FAS Relocation Network



If you are planning a move, the FAS Relocation Network can help make all necessary arrangements. You pay nothing for FAS' services, which include planning the move, helping you sell your home, selecting movers, helping you find housing that meets your needs and is within your budget, and prequalifying you for a mortgage. In addition, FAS' website (<http://www.fasrelo.com>) provides many tools that can assist you with your move. You can view/print a flyer regarding this service at http://tamus.edu/offices/shro/benefits/fas_flier.pdf

— Dana Daugherty

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

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

Zip Code

Did you know...?

In Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting "The Last Supper," a salt cellar near Judas Iscariot was upset.



The statue by Auguste Rodin that has come to be called "The Thinker" was not meant to be a portrait of a man in thought. It is a portrait of the poet Dante.

James McNeill Whistler's best known painting, often called "Whistler's Mother," is actually titled "Arrangement in Black and Gray: The Artist' Mother."

X-rays of the Mona Lisa show that there are three completely different versions of the same subject, all painted by Leonardo, under the final portrait.



The Mona Lisa has no eyebrows. It was the fashion in Renaissance Florence to shave them off.

The Mona Lisa measures less than 2 feet by 2 feet.

The chief oil in the oil paints used by artists is linseed oil, made from the seed of the flax plant.

Performance Evaluation Module Changes

With round one of the online performance evaluation over, we gathered feedback from a variety of sources and have made the following improvements to the online non-faculty evaluation process in GreatJobs:

- Supervisor can now make summary comments on the online non-faculty performance evaluation form. A field for “Overall comments” was added as a non-required field on the performance summary tab.
- The “Employee Comments” field was moved above the “Employee Acknowledgment” section on “Performance Summary” tab to make it easier to see.
- The “Edit” button is a larger font and red so it will be more obvious for those who want to make comments or attach documents during the evaluation process.
- The workflow has been adjusted so that an employee can return the performance evaluation to the supervisor for editing and has ensured that the employee will always receive a new version of the evaluation for signature after edits have been made. This required the addition of a new status called “send to supervisor for edits.”

— Jennifer Humphries

*We must experience valleys to truly understand and
enjoy mountaintops.*

— Unknown



Changing an Employee's Name in GreatJobs and Payroll Records

If an employee has a change of their name, the following steps should be followed:

- The employee or the unit contact can send an email to HR at Employment@tamu.edu and request the name be corrected for the employee's GreatJobs employee user account.
- After HR has updated the employee's account as indicated above, the unit contact should log in to GreatJobs and begin a new action to “change user access” to the existing PD. The “Employee User Account Name” field and the “Last Name” and/or “First Name” fields should be corrected.
- The employee should contact the Social Security Office to request a Social Security card with the new name. If the name is changing due to marriage, a copy of the marriage license will be required at the Social Security Office, which is located at 2120 W. Briargate in Bryan (off William Joel Bryan Parkway—phone 979-731-1140). When the new Social Security card is received, the employee should take the card to the unit contact and complete a new Form I-9.
- The unit contact should complete the “Change of Address, Phone Number, or Name” form (<http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/AG-502.pdf>), make a copy of the new Social Security card and forward copies of the card, the Form I-9, and the “Change of Address, Phone Number, or Name” form to Payroll via Laserfiche.

— Pat Onstott

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Last year the Worker's Compensation Commission was absorbed into the Texas Department of Insurance and renamed the Division of Worker's Compensation. As a result of this move, new forms were created, including the DWC-1, First Report of Injury, DWC-3, Employers Wage Statement, and DWC-6, Supplemental Report of Injury. All previous versions of these forms are no longer accepted by the Division nor the Office of Risk Management at the System, so please be sure to go to the internet for the most current forms – which are available at <http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms> .

Recently, many of the forms we have received have been incomplete. Please be sure to complete all the blocks on the form in accordance with the guidelines which are linked at <http://agtraining.tamu.edu/how-to.htm> . In addition, be sure to use the guides in the instructions for the DWC-1 form for the 'Nature of the Injury' and 'Part of the Body Exposed' blocks. This will ensure that our safety personnel will be able to properly categorize the injuries and assist us in creating a safer workplace.

Our new procedures for submitting the forms have been simplified with the advent of the Laserfiche Document Management System. You can now complete the forms online as a PDF, then print them directly into Laserfiche. Within the Laserfiche system you can then sign the document if you have set up an electronic signature as a private stamp. After putting the forms into Laserfiche, either electronically or by scanning them in, be sure to e-mail a copy as a PDF document to Risk Management at wci@tamu.edu if there has been lost time or if a medical practitioner was seen. Risk Management needs the forms quickly so please have them in Laserfiche within 48 hours so that we can be sure to aid this process. This is very important because another one of the changes instituted by the Division of Workers' Compensation was to increase the possible fines to \$25,000 for submitting the DWC-1 late or failing to submit it. These fines will be assessed to the unit and, according to Risk Management, they are getting very serious about assessing the fines.

Finally, employees need to report the injury expeditiously. If they delay reporting the injury, it may be denied resulting with the employee bearing the responsibility for the medical bills. So please encourage your employees to report all injuries. It is much better to make the report and file the paperwork, than it is to delay and not receive the treatment needed.

— Bob Hensz

Trouble is only temporary, but the lessons it teaches us are permanent.

— Unknown

New ID Cards for FirstCare and Graduate Student Health Plan

FirstCare and the Graduate Student Health Plan are the only carriers issuing new ID cards to all enrollees, existing and new. All other carriers—BlueCross BlueShield, PharmaCare, Humana, Mercy, Scott & White and Delta Dental—will send new ID cards **only** to new enrollees. If you need replacement or additional ID cards, please contact your particular insurance carrier.

— Dana Daugherty

In Praise of Followership

by Tom Terez

Would you rather lead or follow?

For years, I focused on leadership. I read books about it, interviewed people about it, talked about it, wrote about it, and did my best to be about it.

Then came May 20 and an unlikely experience on the streets of Cleveland, Ohio. Now I'm proud to be what I'd call a strategic follower.

My conversion began a year earlier, when I ran my first-ever 10K road race. I did it with two of my older siblings, and we had such a fun weekend reuniting in our hometown of Cleveland that we promised to make it an annual event.

The next year approached quickly, and two months before the May race, I began to buckle down and work off that winter weight. But something didn't feel right -- my lungs didn't seem up to capacity. A doctor confirmed it, diagnosing a mild case of pneumonia.

He prescribed antibiotics, and my lungs began to clear. But a month later, my neighborhood jogs still seemed difficult. The fun of running had turned into plain old hard work as I struggled for breath.

Three days before the race, I laced up my shoes and hit the road for one last preparation run. Ten minutes into it, it felt like someone was sitting on my chest. I stopped running and started walking, wondering how I'd manage to cover a full 10 kilometers in an official race.

On race day, I woke up at 4:30 a.m. in my Cleveland hotel room. Alone with my thoughts, I resolved to think positive, to expect the best, to approach the starting line with full confidence. Then I fueled up with a big breakfast of oatmeal, an energy bar, a banana, and two cups of coffee.

Whatever it was -- the mental resolve, the extra calories, the caffeine, the beautiful spring weather, or all of the above -- it worked. The first 15 minutes of the race flew by. My lungs seemed back in business.

Then the grade steepened, my legs tightened, and my breathing once again became a struggle. My early-morning optimism seemed to fall away with each heavy stride. I thought back to my failed run three days earlier and began wondering whether I'd even make it to the finish line.

It was right about then that I spotted him: a runner with perfect form who was easing his way past me. He wasn't huffing and puff-ing like the rest of us. He wasn't looking left and right. He wasn't wiping away sweat. He wasn't even running so much as gliding.

For a moment, I envied him. Then I began to follow him.

He had a pace that was slightly faster than mine. But I watched closely and tried to match him step for step. I even adjusted my posture and arm movements to mimic his effortless flow. Soon I found the rhythm and forgot all about my breathing problems.

We never made eye contact. We never said a word to each other. I'm not even sure he knew I was engaged in a race-saving game of follow the leader.

[\(cont'd. on pg. 9, see "Followership"\)](#)

Followership (cont'd from p. 8)

But it worked. As he picked up his pace on a downgrade, so did I. As he slid past other runners, so did I. As he poured it on toward the finish, so did I.

I always stayed behind him, but you know what? I ran a much faster race as a result, shaving nearly four minutes off my time from the previous year -- and clocking my fastest 10K pace ever.

Followership gets little attention. Plug the term into Google and you'll come up with 183,000 hits. It sounds like a lot -- until you search on "leadership" and get a whopping 157,000,000 hits. That's a 1-to-858 ratio.

Most workplaces prize the lion-like leader who stays in front. But being a thoughtful follower might be the best way to strengthen your performance and get better results.

Look around for people who are gliding along at a faster pace. Watch their methods. Learn from them. Literally do what they do.

Just don't be surprised when people begin to follow you.

About the author:

Tom Terez is the founder of <http://TomTerez.com> , <http://BetterWorkplaceNow.com> , and <http://InnerBest.com>. His talks and workshops are all about helping organizations and individuals achieve their very best.

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*Times of general calamity and confusion create great minds.
The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace, and the
brightest thunderbolt is elicited from the darkest storms.*

— Charles Caleb Colton (1780-1832)

New Employee in Human Resources

Joy Leighman joined the staff of Human Resources in the Payroll section as Financial Accountant I on August 20. Joy recently returned to Texas from Irvine, California, where she served as District Manager for Arbonne International. Before moving to California in 2006, Joy worked for Texas A&M as an Accounting Assistant II, the City of College Station as a Staff Assistant, the Brazos County Health Department as Director of Support Services, and the Brazos Valley Council of Governments as Senior Accountant. She earned her BS from Texas A&M University. Joy fills a vacancy created with the departure of Irene Campbell. She will be working with reports, payroll deduction transmittals, and reconciliations for retirement, savings bonds, IRS, insurance, Social Security, etc.

The Art of Self-Promotion

by Caroline Levchuck



Are you more comfortable reciting your responsibilities than your accomplishments? Worried you'll be perceived as a braggart if you toot your own horn?

Stop worrying and start promoting yourself. There's a big difference between being an obnoxious braggart and showing employers why they should hire you.

Employers are more likely to hire people who can effectively communicate their strengths with confidence.

If you're still nibbling on that piece of humble pie, put it down.

When It's Time to Change

It's one thing to recognize your greatest accomplishment. It's another to express it appropriately.

Communicate your strengths only when they're relevant to the topic at hand.

When an interviewer says, "Lovely weather we're having," you shouldn't reply with "I single-handedly brought in \$1 million in revenue last year." But, when the interviewer mentions that a position requires someone who's assertive and industrious, that's your chance to mention your achievement.

Never change the topic abruptly to relate an accomplishment. Instead, make sure it's relevant to an interviewer's question or current topic of conversation.

Leave Disclaimers in the Dust

How do you express your strengths?

Do you speak in active, direct phrases? Or do you begin statements with "I don't mean to brag but ..." or "I was lucky enough to ..."

You're not bragging, and it likely wasn't luck. So practice promoting yourself without the qualifying phrases.

Make a conscious effort to speak using direct statements. Begin sentences with "I did," "I believe," "I accomplished" and the like. And try to look people in the eye when you're speaking to them.

Brand U

There's no one else just like you. So how do you distinguish yourself from the pack?

[\(cont'd. on p. 11, see "Self-Promotion"\)](#)

Self-Promotion (cont'd. from p. 10)

One word: Branding.

Branding is the perception that others (including employers) have of you. It's the way you present and express yourself that shapes people's opinion of you. Powerful businesspeople and celebrities, like Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey, often develop a personal brand.

Your brand can make you unique and valuable -- and more than just another resume.

Trust Yourself

It may sound cliché, but it's true: You have to believe in yourself for others to believe in you.

To be able to promote yourself believably and sincerely, you need to have confidence in who you are, what you know and what you've accomplished.

Even confidence can be learned if practiced. When you're feeling insecure, practice telling yourself self-affirming statements. Or make a list of your talents and skills. Carry it in your pocket and, when you're feeling unsure of yourself, take a peek at it.

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Obstacles are those frightening things that you see when you take your eyes off the goal.
— Unknown

Management Reviews

The Management Review reports and associated documents that have been conducted thus far are now available in Laserfiche. These are located in 1.1.01.3 Management Reviews. Each are separated by individual unit but are open and available for everyone – similar to the System Audit Reports which are available on the internet. Reviewing these reports can help you prepare for System Audits and Management Reviews.

— Bob Hensz

SECC (cont'd from p. 1)

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Vet Med, Extension	Kathy Prendergast/845-4353	kprendergast@cvm.tamu.edu
Wildlife & Fisheries	Chris Lang/845-5749	clang@tamu.edu

The width and breadth of the organizations supported through SECC touch all of us. "If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to sleep with a mosquito." Anita Roddick, founder of The Body shop.

This is the final test of a gentleman: His respect for those who can be of no possible service to him. — William Lyon Phelps

Laserfiche Information

By now, most units are using the Laserfiche Document Management System to some level. TCE County Programs will be working over the next fiscal year to incorporate the counties into the system so that documents can be managed easier and documents shared so that we can eliminate the redundancy of paper copies. We are currently implementing the Workflow module and are setting it up to be able to electronically route and sign/approve the CB-5s and Requests to Hire for TCE, and to be able to route documents to all the Resident Directors and obtain confirmation that the document has been seen. As we progress further, more workflow processes will be added. Because of this, try to take a look at all the workflow processes that you use that involve administration and administrative services and identify those that may be candidates for a defined workflow. In many cases, our use of the Work-in-Progress folders, are the easiest method, but in some instances, we can identify processes that would benefit from the Workflow module.

Don't forget that passing paper via Laserfiche by using the Work-in-Progress folders is a very easy and efficient method – and the cost is much lower than overnight delivery and faster than other forms of snail mail.” For Payroll, be sure to send all new hire paperwork via Laserfiche to expedite getting the new employee on payroll, and for other Administrative Services units, why not send document reports, etc via Laserfiche?

Concerned about the safety of your documents? The system backs up files incrementally each day, and does a full backup weekly. We validate a backup every four weeks to verify the documents can be restored to the system in case of problems.

Need additional information about Laserfiche? Go to <http://agdocsinfo.tamu.edu> . On this website you will find training resources for Laserfiche plus documents to instruct you on attaching to the repository, guides to setting up files, the Texas A&M Agriculture File Plan, a guide to help you set up an electronic signature as a private stamp, and many others.

See you on Laserfiche!

— Bob Hensz

Trouble is only temporary, but the lessons it teaches us are permanent.

— Unknown