

Food for Thought

Editor:

Pat Onstott

System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) Elections

Nominations for both the Texas AgriLife Research and Texas AgriLife Extension Service seats on the System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) will be accepted until March 9, 2009, and should be sent to Joy Bading, AgriLife Human Resources at jlbad-ing@aq.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 director for Risk Management 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 AgriLife Research or Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

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, please 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 first week in April. The successful candidates will serve a two-year term September 1, 2009 – August 31, 2011.

If you have questions, please contact Joy Bading, AgriLife Human Resources at 979-845-7986 or by email at jlbad-ing@aq.tamu.edu.

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Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.

— Mark Twain

Performance Evaluations

What is a performance evaluation and why bother with it anyway? Although the positive attributes may not have been on the tip of your tongue, let me mention a few key points that may make you see performance management in a whole new light or with at least a little sheen.

Supervisors can utilize performance management to facilitate employees' awareness of the link between their individual performance and the organization's mission. Appraisal or evaluation is an opportunity for a supervisor to provide an employee with feedback about desired vs. actual performance, reinforce what is working well, discuss what is not, and establish development opportunities. And as all good organizations do, we have a policy requiring an annual evaluation of employee performance.

Back in your school days, you received grades. As the semester went on, you were aware of major grades, daily grades, and knew about where you stood when the semester came to a close. The story you told your parents may have been different, but more than likely, you knew the truth. The employment situation should be similar in that supervisors and employees communicate regularly so employees know and understand their supervisor's judgment of the quality of their work. The annual documentation of ongoing conversations, or the performance evaluation, should not be a surprise to the employee. The performance appraisal, simply stated, is a formal record of a manager's opinion of the quality of an employee's work.

For additional resources on performance management, consult the "Performance Management" section of the HR Toolbox at <http://hrtoolbox.tamu.edu/evaluate.htm>.

All performance evaluations will be completed or uploaded into GreatJobs (<http://greatjobs.tamu.edu/hr>). If you have questions or concerns, contact the Human Resources office.

New field added to performance evaluation:

EMPLOYEES will be required to respond to the following statement: *I confirm that I am current on all required training as identified by System Policy 33.05 Employee Training and System Regulation 33.05.02 Required Employee Training, as of the date of this evaluation.*

Reminders:

1. All performance evaluations will be routed for signature online—even when using the storage option to upload an alternate approved evaluation form.
2. Certification of the position description will be completed as part of the performance evaluation process and not required as a separate action.

— Jennifer Humphries

Ready, Set, Walk...



Started by our own AgriLife Extension Service 11 years ago, Walk Across Texas is a FUN program that encourages people of all sizes, shapes and athletic ability to take important steps to help improve their health and well-being.

Walk Across Texas runs from February 21 through April 18 and is a great way to kick-off your exercise efforts. Get your teams ready and join the fun or challenge yourself individually.

Visit <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/index.htm> to find out more about the program and any local county efforts.

— Jan Kyles

2009 Annual AgriLife Support Staff Social

The Annual AgriLife Support Staff Social in conjunction with the Ag Conference was held this year at the Brazos Center; its theme was Mardi Gras. Participants enjoyed fun competitions and games for prizes and Mardi Gras beads. There were 148 support staff and administrators in attendance and all seemed to really enjoy the great food, games, camaraderie, and Cajun music. The music was provided by the Cajun band—Zydeco Dots. **Kudos** to the planning committee for all their efforts in planning, organizing, decorating, and working at the social!



How to Win Friends — and Jobs

In 1929, following the stock market crash, businesses and factories were shutting their doors and millions were out of work. Sounds much like today. In that environment Dale Carnegie first introduced the concepts from How To Win Friends and Influence People (<http://astore.amazon.com/48days0b-20/detail/0671027034>). Carnegie offered people a way to differentiate themselves by learning the skills of “human engineering.” His research had shown that 15% of a person’s financial success is due to technical knowledge (degrees, certification, intelligence, aptitude). 85% is due to personality and the ability to lead people (enthusiasm, energy, a pleasing smile, tone of voice).

With thousands of competitors having the same or better education and experience, you can still separate yourself from the pack and emerge as the most desirable candidate by focusing on the same 85% that Carnegie pointed out in a previous difficult time for workers. Here are some excerpts from How To Win Friends and Influence People.

- Don’t Criticize, Condemn or Complain
- Give Honest and Sincere Appreciation
- Remember that a person’s name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
- Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.\
- Smile
- Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.

These tips will do more to open doors of opportunity than going back to school for an additional degree. People will see you as someone they want to have on their team. And you can add these today—no waiting, no classes, no money.

The March issue of *Success* magazine has a wonderful article about Dale Carnegie’s unexpected success in sharing these common sense principles that allowed struggling people to get great jobs and move up financially even in troubled times. “It Takes Character and Self-Control to be Understanding and Forgiving.” You can use the same principles to move ahead today.

If you’ve never read this timeless classic—get it today—it’s a \$9.00 investment in a brighter future.

— Reprinted from Dan Miller’s Weekly
E-newsletter, 48 Days, business Source in
Brentwood. www.48days.com

Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you
have to start young.
— Unknown

Recipients of Professional Development Grants

Congratulations to the following employees who received professional development grants during the 2009 Texas A&M AgriLife Conference:

TEACHING GENERAL SESSION [2 @ \$500]

Fred Boadu, AGECE

Shannon Degenhart, ALEC (Ext. Program Specialist)

KEYNOTE GENERAL SESSION [2 @ \$500]

James "Jay" Yates, Extension Program Specialist II – Risk Management [Lubbock]

Elaine Fries, Regional Program Director – Family and Consumer Sciences [Corpus]

RESEARCH GENERAL SESSION [2 @ \$500]

Rudy Dunlap

Donald Vietor

EXTENSION GENERAL SESSION [2 @ \$500]

Rolinda Hans, Senior Staff Assistant, Wildlife Services – San Antonio

Larry Hysmith, Extension Associate – Conservation, Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences–Campus

SUPPORT STAFF SYMPOSIUM [4 @ \$250]

Amanda Mendoza, Office Associate, AgriLife HR, 979-845-4704, AMMendoza@ag.tamu.edu

Kathy Wingate, Administrative Assistant, AgriLife Extension, District 01- Amarillo,

806-677-5600, kwingate@ag.tamu.edu

Ubaldo (JR) Jacques, Sr. Office Assistant, AgriLife Research - Weslaco, 956-968-5585,

UHJacque@ag.tamu.edu

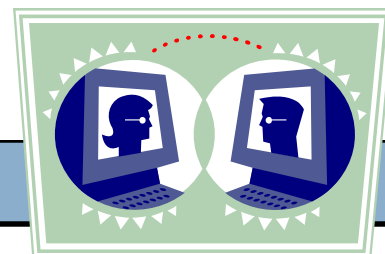
Gail Hyden, Business Administrator II, Nutrition & Food Science, 979-458-3349,

ghyden@ag.tamu.edu

Old age is the most unexpected of all the things that can happen to a man. — Trotsky

Administrative Professionals Day Conference—IAAP

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) would like for you to save the date for their annual Administrative Professionals Day (APD) Conference to be held on Thursday, April 23, 2009. All administrative/clerical/support staff personnel are encouraged to attend this day long event to be held at the College Station Hilton. More information will be forthcoming or you may contact Betty Cotton at blcotton@tamu.edu for more information.



Employee Training and Development

Have you seen the 2008-9 AgriLife Course Catalogue?

The first edition of Texas A&M AgriLife's Professional Development and Learning Course Catalogue was distributed to units/departments. If you missed seeing it or would like additional copies, we still have a few left. An electronic copy is available at http://agtraining.tamu.edu/ProDevel_LearnCat_Web.pdf

It is our intent to 'grow' this Catalogue into a document representing professional development and learning opportunities for all employees of Texas A&M AgriLife agencies. Get in touch with us if you have content – or a link to existing contact/resources – you would like to see included in the catalogue. The printed copy will be updated annually; the electronic version will be updated more frequently, as changes occur.

Save the Date – April 29 & 30, 2009 – New AgriLife Supervisors Conference

A two day conference for AgriLife's new supervisors, with three years or less of experience is being developed. Local presenters, along with a national speaker – or two – will facilitate workshops on topics related to core supervisor competencies. We hope to make this conference an annual event in varied locations around the state. The 2009 event is being planned for College Station. Details re agenda and registration will be available in late January 2009.

Training Calendar

March 6	The Basics of Evaluation — Friday Online
March 13	Form I-9 Compliance — Friday Online
March 20	No Friday Online — Spring Break
March 27	Successful Meeting Planning — Friday Online
March 31	Persuasive Communication — TTVN
April 3	Copyright — Friday Online
April 17	Identity and Branding — Friday Online
April 24	Newsletters — Friday Online
April 28	Gaining Control of Your Workday — TTVN
May 1	Educational publications — Friday online
May 8	Total Marketing — Friday Online
May 15	Identity and Branding — Friday Online
May 22	Marketing Educational Programs — Friday Online
May 26	Supporting Multiple bosses — TTVN

If we can assist you further with employee development or learning needs, please let us know. For details on how to access any of these great opportunities, go to <http://agtraining.tamu.edu/TD-News.pdf> or get in touch with Beverley Rose at 979-458-3279 or barose@aq.tamu.edu

— Beverley Rose

New Employee in Human Resources

Joy Bading has joined the Human Resources staff as human resources generalist, filling the position vacated by Linda Edge. Joy transferred from the Veterinary Teaching Hospital where she worked from April 2007 through January 2009 as a human resources manager; prior to that she worked at the System Offices as a senior HR representative from January 1998 through March 2007. Joy has considerable experience working with benefits and has served as a unit contact in AgriLife Research. She earned a BS degree from Texas A&M with a major in Psychology/Management.



The great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been. — Madeleine L'Engle

Helpful Websites

A&M System Online - tamus.edu/systemwide/

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

Dictionary - dictionary.reference.com/

Employment Posters - hrtoolbox.tamu.edu/

GreatJobs - greatjobs.tamu.edu (Applicant site)
greatjobs.tamu.edu/hr (Employee site)

Food For Thought Archives -
aghr.tamu.edu/food4thought.htm

Forms (Alpha List) -
agservices.tamu.edu/Forms/forms-alfa.htm

Holiday Schedules -
aghr.tamu.edu/holidays.htm

Human Resources - aghr.tamu.edu/

Maps - www.mapquest.com/

New Employee Processing -
aghr.tamu.edu/processing.htm

Postage Rate Calculator - postcalc.usps.gov/

Payroll - aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm

Policies, Procedures & Forms -
aghr.tamu.edu/policies.htm

Position Descriptions—Generic —
aghr.tamu.edu/title-index.htm

Selective Service Registration Verification -
<https://www.sss.gov/RegVer/wfVerification.aspx>

SSO (HR Connect, TimeTraQ, LeaveTraQ) -
<https://sso.tamus.edu>

Texas A&M AgriLife Directory -
agdirectory.tamu.edu/

Training and Development -- agtraining.tamu.edu/

Zip Code Lookup -
zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp

Leadership Development Program — Emerging Leaders Supervisors Conference — Save The Date

Interested in pursuing supervisory skills? The Emerging Leaders Conference is a great opportunity for you to develop new skill sets and competencies to accelerate your effectiveness as a leader.

Date: April 29 & 30, 2009

Location: The Hilton, College Station

This two-day conference, part of AgriLife's blended learning approach for emerging leaders, is designed to develop core leadership skills and provide a framework to reinforce new supervisor competencies. It is designed to assist supervisors with their existing roles and prepare them for new challenges and responsibilities.

To ensure sustainability, it is planned to offer an Emerging Leaders Conference annually in varied locations around the state. The Conference will be open to all supervisors but will cater to those with less than three years of experience in their supervisory positions. Agenda items and workshops will focus on supervisor competencies and involve two days of guest speakers, workshop facilitation, and activities related to roles and responsibilities of supervisory staff.

Conference attendance is limited to fifty (50) participants and will be by application or recommendation of a supervisor/manager. Participants will not be charged a registration fee; they will, however, be responsible for any travel and accommodation expenses incurred.

Conference application and agenda details will be available at or before mid-March. At that time, brochures will be mailed to each unit/department and information will also be available online at the Conference Services website. In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact:

Beverley A. Rose

979-0458-3279

BARose@ag.tamu.edu

**None are so old as those who
have outlived enthusiasm.**

— Henry David Thoreau

Did you know...?



Rabbit

Rabbits are born hairless and with their eyes closed.

The hare can travel up to 45 miles per hour, whereas the rabbit can achieve an average speed of just 35 miles per hour.



Hare



Arctic hare

Hares are born covered with fur and with their eyes opened.



The jackrabbit is not a rabbit; it is a hare.



Jackrabbits are powerful jumpers. A 20" adult can leap 20 feet in a single bound.

The teeth of a rabbit never stop growing.



According to a February 2007 [Washington Post article](#), the colossal bunny in the pictures is a German gray giant named "Robert" who weighed in at a whopping 23 lbs. The man holding Robert is Karl Szmolinsky, a long-time rabbit breeder

who lives in Eberswalde, a town in eastern Germany.



The dictionary defines a bunny as a rabbit, esp. a small or young one.

Emergency Communications Team Wins AgriLife Vice Chancellor Award

A team of communications specialists who have handled wildfire, floods, animal disease issues and hurricanes was honored with the Vice Chancellor's Award in Excellence during the recent Texas A&M AgriLife conference in College Station.

The award was in the Extension Education and Service team category. Members of the team are Diane Bowen, Chuck Lind, Dave Mayes, Kathleen Phillips, Melissa Smith, Bill Watson and Judy Winn, all of whom work with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in College Station, and Kay Ledbetter, who is located at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Amarillo.

The team represented some 30 additional professionals and communications support staff who handle news and media relations, create and distribute educational materials, and develop training materials on the state and national level to respond to natural and man-made disasters. The team was cited for extraordinary service over the past five years to provide public information for a variety of disasters.

— Kathleen Phillips
Media Relations Manager
AgriLife Communications

I want to die young at a ripe old age. — Ashley Montagu

Heart Health

Heart disease is the number one cause of death and disability in America today. If you have more than one risk factor, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, you may have a 6.2 times greater risk of developing heart disease than if you had none of the risk factors. Making modifications in your daily life can reduce your risk factors significantly. Talk with your doctor and begin to make small changes such as eating more fruits and vegetables and limiting fast foods. Start an exercise regiment and quit smoking. Go to the American Cancer Society website at www.cancer.org or the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org for information and support.



— Jan Kyles

President's Meritorious Award Recipients

Three AgriLife employees received the President's Meritorious Award this year. Recipients were Cheryl Yeager, Robert Jensen, and Mark Wright.

Mark Wright is a Senior Lead Microcomputer/LAN Administrator with the Entomology Department. He has 23 years of service with Texas A&M.

Nominators state:

- Dr. Wright handles the management and maintenance of the department's workstations and servers and is the key person for resolving computer issues. He also oversees facility security and serves as the department's health and safety officer.
- Mark was instrumental in the discovery, evaluation and implementation of a document imaging system which has now been adopted by the college and various A&M System agencies. This technological advancement saved the department \$100,000 per year in improved space utilization and increased staff efficiency.
- Mark has the amazing ability to juggle dozens of projects and requests, always with a smile on his face, while satisfying the needs and requirements of each and every person in the department of Entomology. He genuinely cares about those with whom he works.



Robert Jensen is a Business Coordinator II in the Entomology Department. He has 22 years of service with Texas A&M.

Nominators state:

- Robert is responsible for providing a wide variety of tasks and provides exceptional leadership and expertise in handling a variety of business activities related to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Texas AgriLife Research.
- He exemplifies the qualities of an effective Business Coordinator and is one of the agriculture's best-known, and most respected authorities on all departmental business functions. Business Administrators from other departments often call on Robert to provide thoughtful advice, constructive criticism and well-considered options with regard to business practices.
- His work ethic and dedication are inspiring. His hard work and willingness to get the job done is a hallmark of his personality.

[Continued on page 12, see "Awards"](#)

Awards (cont'd. from p. 11)

Cheryl Yeager is an Academic Business Administrator for the Ecosystem Science & Management Department. She has 14 years of service with Texas A&M.

Nominators state:

- Cheryl is responsible for all aspects of the departmental business operations, including budgets, financial accounting, payroll, human resources, cash management, inventory and property accounting, travel, purchasing and contracts and grants.
- She supervised business offices in two departments on different sides of campus for several months while reorganizing them into a single cohesive unit. She often worked late hours and weekends to get the job done. Cheryl handled the many daunting tasks associated with joining the departments and remained available to faculty from both departments for their requests for assistance.
- While Cheryl is professional in her strong work ethic, she remains a very congenial and positive person who inspires those with whom she works.



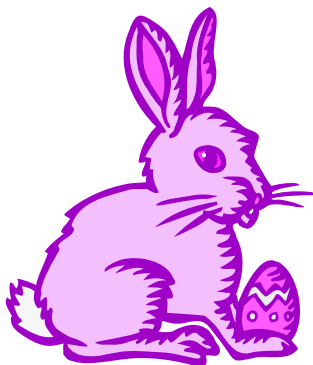
And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.
— Abraham Lincoln

Bob Hensz Receives Laserfiche Award & Earns Senior Professional HR Certification



During the January 2009 Laserfiche Conference, Bob Hensz, on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife, accepted the Run Smarter Award for Higher Education. This prestigious achievement was directly due to Bob's leadership throughout the implementation of the Laserfiche Document Management System throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The award noted that AgriLife used the Laserfiche solution to expeditiously move documents across the state through the innovative idea of using "Work in Progress" folders thus creating a system for a "Workflow" without using the Laserfiche Workflow module, and the use of a common repository where documents could be shared between units while access could still be tightly controlled.

Bob also earned his Senior Professional Human Resources Certification. This was achieved through an extended course of study and a comprehensive examination covering things such as Human Resources Development, classification and Compensation, Employment Law, Strategic Human Resources Management and Planning, and other areas of Human Resources.



The Easter Bunny

is not a modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eastre. The goddess, Eastre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit.

The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter itself was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.