

Food for Thought

Editor:
Pat Onstott

State Employee Charitable Campaign—SECC



The State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) is underway and will continue through October. Please help Texas A&M AgriLife reach its 2009 goals and make a difference in people's lives. Employees can contribute with a one-time gift by completing a contribution form or they can go online at www.tamus.edu/secc/ and submit online contributions via Single Sign On.

Units are encouraged to hold fund-raising events. If you have an idea for a fund raiser or have questions regarding SECC, please contact your unit coordinator . The coordinators for each unit are listed below:

Administration, Extension — Loretta Morse, 458-7808
 Administration, Research — Zane Schwarzlose, 845-3713
 Administrative Services — Pat Onstott, 845-7802
 Ag & Environmental Safety—Mary Ketchersid, 845-6531
 Agricultural Communications — Terry Easterly, 845-2211
 Agricultural Economics — Ashley Stover, 845-5800
 Ag Leadership, Educ., & Communication — Jovonna Ivester, 845-2951
 AgriLife Information Technology — Wendy Wolfington, 845-2283
 Animal Science — Grace Glenn, 845-1543
 Biological & Ag Engineering — Susan Levien, 845-3931
 Biochemistry/Biophysics — Khara Spears, 845-0198
 Borlaug Institute for International Agri. — Jessica Reeder, 845-4164
 Dean's Office—Kleberg — Theresa Nemece, 845-3712
 District 9 Headquarters — Ruthie Gibbs, 845-6800
 Entomology — Sherry Boyd, 845-9743
 Family Dev. & Resource Mgmt. — Angela McCorkle, 845-3850
 Ecosystem Science & Mgmt. — JoAnna Price, 862-4656
 4-H/TALL/VG Young — Kyle Merten & Mary Riley, 845-6533
 Institute for Countermeasures Against Ag Bioterrorism —
 Lori Olivarez, 845-2855
 Institute of Renewable Natural Resources — Carol Gaas, 862-3687
 Horticultural Sciences — Dorothy See, 845-5269
 Military Programs — Louise Kirkland, 458-4491
 Nutrition & Food Science — Dr. Caurnel Morgan, 458-1849 and
 Robin See, 847-9227

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A smile is a crooked line that sets a lot of things straight. — Unknown



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Office of the State Chemist — John See, 845-1121
Plant Path. & Microbiology — Linda Brochu, 845-8282
Poultry Science — Sarah Robertson, 845-1931
Recreation, Park & Tourism Science — Michelle Wiederhold, 845-5411
Soil & Crop Sciences — Dr. Sam Feagley, 845-1460
Texas Water Resources Institute — Rosemary Payton, 845-8555, and Sarah Seidel, 458-4127
Veterinary Medicine, Extension — Sarah White, 845-4353
Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences — Shirley Konecny, 845-5777

— Pat Onstott

The greatest discovery of any generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude. — William James

Deja ja vu Leader

In his book, 9 Things a Leader Must Do Dr. Henry Cloud describes a character called the *déjà vu leader*. According to Cloud, this leader is someone who springs into action and continually asks themselves, “what can I do to make this situation better?” Cloud acknowledges that a great majority of the problems leaders face are people problems. Instead of hoping someone else will make the first move, Cloud suggests déjà vu leaders might take the following actions as appropriate:

- Ask, “Is there anything in my attitude or actions that have contributed to this problem? What can I do to change those?”
- Ask, “How can I communicate to the other person that I see the role I have played in our problems?”
- Go and apologize.
- Go and confront.
- Go with an agenda of only listening and trying to understand how the other person has been hurt.
- Go and make amends.

Get feedback from others on what ways they need to change and then find out how to do it.

If you find yourself confronted with a people problem, remember to ask yourself what YOU can do. Too often we are tempted to turn the entire problem over to the other party. This “wait and see what happens” approach almost never works out well. Instead, consider following Dr. Cloud’s suggestion and spring into action to make things better.

All Aboard the Learning Central Line



Check out the upcoming workshop events for 2009-10.

-> Friday Online started up in September. This series of weekly Friday morning online events, offered via Centra Symposium, focuses on competencies related to communication, technology, education/teaching, personal effectiveness and important human resource issues for supervisors. The schedule for current topics is available at http://agrilifewiki.tamu.edu/index.php/Friday_Online_Topics along with directions for logging in, creating an account and enrolling in upcoming workshops.

->The 2009-10 Employee Professional Development & Supervisor Development Workshops, delivered face to face in College Station include:

- Managing Multiple Projects, October 23 (filled/waiting list only)
- Managing Employee Complaints, October 28 (1/2 day)
- Business Writing, November 11
- Goal Setting, November 17 & 18

For a sample peek at the excellent caliber of workshop presenters for these programs, check out bios and videos at <http://www.nationalseminarstraining.com/onsite/speakers/SpeakerBio.cfm?SNO=63105>
<http://www.nationalseminarstraining.com/onsite/speakers/SpeakerBio.cfm?SNO=63012>

Register online at <http://agrilifevents.tamu.edu>. Go to *Emerging Supervisor & Professional Development Training (Leadership Development Plan)* for course descriptions and to register.

->New on the workshop schedule this year, as a result of coordination with TAMU's Employee Assistance Program personnel, will be a selection of workshops covering a wide range of topics related to personal and workplace concerns designed for both AgriLife Supervisory staff as well as employees. The first workshops, designed for Supervisors are scheduled for November 19 and focus on the topics of *Communicating with Employees in Crisis & Prevention of Workplace Violence*. Check out the October issue of Training & Development News for more information.

->Also in the works: *New Faculty Orientation* - October 19, 2009; *Emerging Leaders Conference* – November 9 & 10, 2009; and *2010 Texas AgriLife Conference/Support Staff Symposium* - January 11-15, 2010

->Look for further details on these workshops/conferences being planned in future editions of 'Food for Thought' and/or in AgriLife Human Resources' monthly 'Training & Development News'.

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A heart filled with good cheer can transform drudgery into creative employment, work into privilege. — Unknown

Scott and White Flu Clinic

The Bryan-College Station/Scott and White flu clinic started September 8 and will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., through October 16, 2009. *The flu clinic is for seasonal flu shots only.* The clinic will be open on the second floor of Building 1700. Flu shots are free to Scott and White members. Scott and White will bill your insurance provider if you are a non-member. Please remember to bring your health insurance ID card. Contact the clinic at 979-691-3636 for additional information. Scott and White will provide information about the vaccine for H1N1 later in the fall.

— Jan Kyles

Arrogance and rudeness are training wheels on the bicycle of life—for weak people who cannot keep their balance without them. — Luara Teresa Marquez

What You Can Do to Stay Healthy: Prevent & Prepare! Reminder from Scott and White Health Plan

Take everyday actions to stay healthy. You know what these are: getting enough sleep, eating well, avoiding stress, drink plenty of fluids and exercise.

Cover your cough. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you do not have a tissue handy, sneeze or cough into the inside of your elbow. Your elbow rarely touches anything else.

Clean your hands often. Soap and water is preferred, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective and should be used when you can't wash your hands. You can find this type of cleanser just about anywhere. It comes in different sizes that fit on your desk, car, purse, or pocket.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way – you can infect yourself.

Stay home when you are ill. Do not send your children to school when ill. You should not go to work.

Follow public health advice. Your local public health department will be looking at ways to reduce opportunities for exposure and to prevent infection, such as encouraging vaccination.

Develop a family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of food, medicines, facemasks, alcohol-based hand rubs and other essential supplies. Remember your pet's needs.

Stay Informed: Check the following websites often for information.

CDC website: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

DSHS website: www.texasflu.org

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/

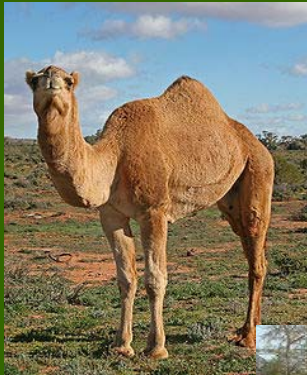
Training and Development -- [agtrain-
ing.tamu.edu/](http://agtraining.tamu.edu/)

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



Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it. — Unknown

Did you know...?



Camels are the only animals with humps. Despite its hump, a camel has a straight spine.



One hump or two? **Dromedary** is the name for one-hump camels—common to Africa and the Middle East. These camels are much more common than the two-hump **Bactrian** camels, which are native to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. In general, Bactrian camels are much more mild-mannered than their hot-tempered dromedary kin.

The hump of a really famished camel may flop over and hang down the side of the body as the fat is used up.

Camels can close their nostrils. They have three eyelids to protect their eyes from blowing sand.

Got milk? Camels can produce up to 600 liters of milk a year.

Camels eat just about anything. When they are really hungry and there is no food around, they won't think twice about gobbling up people's tents, sandals, or blankets.

Traveling at a rate of 2-3 miles per hour, camels can carry 500-1000 pounds on their backs. They are able to keep up this pace for 6-7 hours a day. They will refuse to carry loads that are not properly balanced.

An adult camel weighs between 700 and 1,500 pounds and is up to 7 feet tall. They can live up to 50 years.

Camels can run just as fast as horses, if not faster. Similar to horse races in the U.S., camel races are a popular sport in Morocco.

The fur of the vicuna, a small member of the camel family which lives in the Andes mountains of Peru, is so fine that each hair is less than two-thousandths of an inch. The animal was considered sacred by the Incas, and only royalty could wear its fleece.

There are fewer than 1000 Bactrian camels left in the wild. They have survived in a land with no water in an area used for nuclear testing. Their numbers, however, are falling dramatically as humans encroach farther and farther into China's Gobi Desert.

Information & facts were gathered from trivia on the Internet which have not been verified.

Improving Your Workplace Communication

THE BOTTOM LINE: *Following common-sense guidelines for better communication in the workplace can improve your work relationships immeasurably.*

If you're drowning in a sea of difficult relationships at work, take a look at your communication skills.

"Communication truly is the glue that holds an organization together," says Bob Nelson, author of *1001 Ways to Energize Employees*.

You can learn new communication skills and improve your work relationships by following these essential seven C's of communication.

CONTACT

There's a good reason companies send people throughout the country meeting potential clients, even though salespeople could just as easily communicate with them by e-mail, telephone and teleconferencing - you relate better to a person when you meet him or her face to face. You can read the other person's body language and feel the energy that the connection creates.

COMMONALITY

"People feel loyal to you only when you are willing to let them get to know you," says Dianna Booher, author of *Communicate with Confidence*.

Get to know the people you work with by looking for personal experiences or interests you share.

For example: Ask them about their families, what they enjoy doing in their spare time, what's the best vacation they ever had and whether they have any pets.

You will soon begin to see your co-workers as complex people, not just computer programmers, salespeople, or administrative assistants. This personal connection will make it easier to handle difficult situations at work.

COURTESY

Being courteous lets people know you care. You can instantly improve your relationships with co-workers by thanking them for their help - because the number one thing employees want is to be appreciated.

And when you need something done, it's better to ask for cooperation than command it.

Ask "Would you please answer the phone?" instead of saying "Answer the phone."

CONSISTENCY

Consistency builds trust and is created when you match your words with your tone of voice and your body language.

For example, when you say, "That's a great idea" with a smile and excitement in your voice, you appear as if you really mean it because you are consistent in your message.

But if you say the same phrase with sarcasm and a frown, your message is mixed and may come across as critical and ridiculing. It would be better to honestly say, "I see some problems in using your idea."

CLARITY

Don't assume people understand everything you say. It is your responsibility to make sure. Ask someone, "Did I explain this clearly? Do you have any questions?"

Communication

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COMPROMISE

While nobody likes the tension of conflict, but conflict opens the door to exploring other options and new ideas.

Not everyone may agree on a solution, but people won't take the conflict personally if you focus on what's best for the company.. This allows everyone to compromise without creating ill will.

CONFIDENCE

People will believe in you to the extent that you believe in yourself. When you believe in what you say, when it comes from your heart, your inner confidence will shine and you'll have the courage to deal with difficult situations as they arise.

— Reprinted with permission from SHRM

You won't injure your eyesight by looking on the bright side of things.

How to Change a Bad Habit

by Harriet Meyerson

It's not easy to change a habit, even if you are highly motivated. First of all, the habit is probably giving you some form of either instant pleasure or helping you avoid pain. Does this apply to your bad habit?

Even more powerful, your brain has formed strong synapses for the habitual behavior. This is like water that has carved a deep canyon. It's impossible to redirect the river. Don't despair, however. You can start a new river and direct its course. Therefore, instead of trying to change an old habit, form an entirely new habit. That way your brain will be forming new synapses that are not tied to the old habit.

Here are two examples:

If you are trying to lose weight, don't give up your favorite foods. Instead, form a new habit of eating a salad before each meal, with fat free dressing, of course, and a cup of steamed vegetables with each meal. These new foods will help fill your stomach and curb your appetite so you will eat less of your favorite foods and enjoy them without guilt.

If you have a habit of being late to wherever you have to go, start a new habit of getting there, not on time which is tied to your old habit, but at least 15 minutes early. Take along your favorite book and allow yourself to read it only when you arrive early to work or to your appointment. That will connect pleasure to your new habit.

Now try this strategy with your bad habit. Keep up your new habit for at least three weeks, and watch your bad habit gradually fade away.

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Boost Employee Morale and Personal Confidence.