

PEP TALK

Vol. 67, No. 5, January 2011

PRIDE ENTHUSIASM PARTICIPATION

Pennsylvania Association of Educational Office Professionals

55th Annual PAEOP conference planning committee unveils unique opportunities for you!

By Bonnie J. Miller CEOE, conference planning chair

The conference planning committee has lined up a spectacular selection of speakers for the 55th annual PAEOP conference, to be held at the Toftrees Golf Resort and Conference Center, State College, PA, April 13-15, 2011. Please join us for the start of conference with the annual business meeting on Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. This is a great opportunity to learn about all of the many facets of our organization. Immediately following the business meeting, Annarose Ingarra-Milch will kick off the conference as the keynote speaker with a presentation, *You Can Do Anything – Discovering your Untapped Potential*. And, you will not want to miss out on the sports-themed reception being planned and hosted by PAEOP members from the Central Columbia SD.

Thursday morning plan to join in a nature walk around this beautiful resort! A delicious breakfast will be prepared for everyone to enjoy, prior to a day packed with educational opportunities. This year's topics include *The Exceptional Office Assistant,*

Dealing with Difficult People, Stress Management with Physical Therapy,

Internet Safety and Identity

Theft, PSERS – Foundation for your Future,

Excelling in E-mail

Exchanges, Advanced

Word, Advanced

Excel,

Teaming and the Professional Standards Program session. The membership lunch on Thursday will include acknowledgement of first-time conference attendees, local affiliates and certification recipients from the past year of the Professional Standards Program. Door prizes and raffles will also be distributed. The day's events wrap up Thursday evening with a social hour at 6 p.m., followed by the annual banquet (which is being offered at a reduced price this year).

Continued on page 3 >>>



Awards and scholarships

By Linda Best CEOE

PAEOP is proud to sponsor the following awards and scholarships as a service to our members. If you, or someone you would like to nominate, are qualified to apply, please contact me, Linda Best, at lbest@hcsd.iu5.org.

Some of the applications require letters of recommendation and all required forms and signatures should be postmarked no later than March 15, 2011. Please leave ample time to process the applications and submit them accordingly.

Continued on page 3 >>>

In this issue

Conference offers opportunities!	1
President's Note	2
Ways and means committee invite	4
A Winning Equation	5



PEP TALK



Louise R. Mikowychok –
Editor

Circulation – 277

*Pennsylvania Association
of Educational
Office Professionals*

A Department of Pennsylvania School Boards Association and affiliated with the National Association of Educational Office Professionals

Founded in 1937, the Pennsylvania Association of Educational Office Professionals is a member-supported organization dedicated to the professional growth and recognition of educational office personnel as members of the educational management team. PAEOP became a department of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association in 1973.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Linda Best CEOE, PAEOP president



Happy New Year!

Here it is! A new year. A new decade. Time to embrace all things new...or is it? Perhaps we should reconsider. There's a lot to be said for the comfortable and traditional.

We can make plans and resolutions to do and be better, but still remain in our comfort zone. After all, these are the things we love and cherish. We could do new things with our old friends and grow together. Our families would probably appreciate us learning new ways to cook and shop, but we can teach them about tradition and pass along favorite recipes and customs.

We can reconnect with extended family and old friends. Perhaps they, too, are hoping to refresh and renew prior relationships. We may find ourselves very fortunate to realize what we already have. Maybe everything we need for comfort and support is right here. We might need to stop and smell the roses.

We can stay in our current positions and learn faster, smarter ways to accomplish our work, but still be secure in the fact that we are where we should be. There are things we can and should do to enhance our professional status – attending in-servicing, classes, courses, workshops and conferences to name a few. We need to improve our skills and make ourselves as useful and valuable as possible. Being part of the PAEOP team can help you in that endeavor. Contact your friends at PAEOP to find out what you can do to make a better you this year!

Linda Best CEOE

Linda Best CEOE
President, PAEOP

Visit the ways & means committee display, conveniently located in the Gallery Room. Everyone attending will want to check the door prize board, as all attendees have a chance to win. In addition, everyone is encouraged to purchase a chance for 50/50s and affiliate theme baskets. Be sure to check out the clothing items with our new PAEOP logo.

If you miss the nature walk on Thursday, you will have a second chance on Friday morning. After breakfast, attendees will be able to join colleagues throughout the state for a roundtable session of their choice. The conference will wrap up with a lively closing session by Dr. Bob Orndoff, titled, *The Pie of Your Life*. Closing session will include the raffle of the famous handmade quilt and beautiful theme baskets, and announcement of the winners!

You are encouraged to sign up EARLY for the conference to ensure seating in sessions that meet your professional goals. To register please access the following link www.outreach.psu.edu/

programs/educational-secretaries which can also be found through the PAEOP website at www.paeop.com, where you can access "Conference" from the menu bar. Credit card payments continue to be accepted for registration fees.

Hotel reservations should be made directly with the Toftrees Resort. You can contact the resort via telephone at (814) 234-8000 or www.toftrees.com.

Come join us and experience a professional development opportunity that is sure to provide you with new information, advance your knowledge, uncover your potential and reveal a refreshing outlook for you to take back to your office.

If you need additional assistance with conference registration, please feel free to contact me at bmiller@paceschool.org or at (412) 342-4386, or Cindy Stearns, Penn State conference planner, at cas81@psu.edu.

Happy New Year! I hope your holiday season was healthy, joyful and filled with many blessings.



Awards and Scholarships

Marion T. Wood Student

Scholarship – Designed to assist business education students who wish to continue their education and pursue office-related careers, preferable in the educational field. This scholarship is a one-time \$1,000 award for the winner. More than one scholarship may be awarded. Only applicants who have not received this award may apply.

Student with Special Needs Scholarship –

This \$500 scholarship is designed to assist a special needs high school student with an identified disability who will be pursuing a post-secondary program.

Louise Henderson Nelson Award –

The award gives recognition to the outstanding affiliate associations: (1) one to a state association; (2) one to a local association. Criteria based on five-year participation.

National Education Administrator of the

Year – One candidate may be nominated by each NAEOP affiliate association for the current affiliation year (Aug. 1-July 31).

Olive T. Ritchie Educational Office

Professional of the Year – One candidate may be nominated by each NAEOP affiliate for the current affiliation year.

Rachel Maynard Award for Excellence in

Communication – Award for newsletter/magazine in different categories.

Website Award –

Judging will be in the following categories: professionally designed site – state and local, non-professionally designed site – state and local.

PAEOP will have several submissions for these awards at the national conference in 2011. Perhaps you will be among them.



Ways and means committee invitation

By **Patty Keller**

Hello everyone! I hope you all made it through the holidays and are surviving the cold weather. I personally do not like this bitter cold weather. I would rather have the springtime. Speaking of springtime, the annual conference will be here before you know it. The planning committee is working very hard this year getting ready for another great conference. By now you have heard of the conference (see page one of this month's *PEPTalk*) and are making your reservation to come, to enjoy and to learn. We hope to see you there.

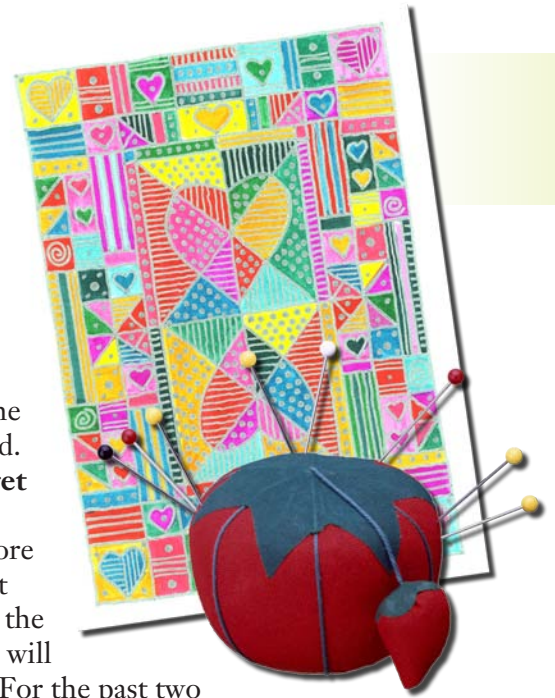
When you arrive at the conference, please come and check out The Gallery. That is where all the action will be. We will have some items for sale, and of course, the beautiful treasure baskets. The ways and means committee would like to thank the affiliates that make up these beautiful baskets and donate them for the raffle. Along with those items, we will have our 50/50 drawings each night. You will be receiving your quilt raffle tickets in early February. If by some chance you do not receive them, or you are in need of any additional tickets, please e-mail me at pkeller@upsd.org. I will see that you receive them immediately for sale.

If you would be available to help out in The Gallery, once again that would be great. Sometimes

we get so busy that we need all the help we can get! So please stop by and ask someone if help is needed.

Don't forget to bring door prizes. The more door prizes that are brought in, the more prizes we will have to award. For the past two years, we had enough door prizes that everyone that attended received one to take home. Bring something small to brighten up someone's day in a festive gift bag to easily transport them. It is so pleasing to see the "pile" that makes up our door prize table – just another colorful way to welcome in spring!

So remember to make your reservations soon. You will have great opportunities to meet new people, make new friends and talk to other secretaries throughout the state. Hope to see you at the conference.



Free mandatory posters

Public service announcement for office professionals

Federal laws require many employers to display posters on topics such as minimum wages, federal and medical leave, lie detector tests and many other topics. Poster requirements may vary between large and small employers, and there are also state requirements that need to be considered. The Department of Labor offers a number of resources to assist your employer with determining which posters need to be displayed. PDF copies of posters may also be downloaded at no charge in a number of different languages.

You can review a list of various requirements by topic if you visit: www.dol.gov/compliance/topics/posters.htm.

Look for positives

From *Communication Briefings*, Oct. 2010

People who struggle with perfectionism have the habit of spotting mistakes in even the best work they and others perform. While that habit is difficult to break, perfectionists can improve by making a conscious effort to notice all that is good with their own efforts and others' contributions.

Example: If you notice something you don't like about a piece of work, look for five things that you do admire or approve of. Over time, you will replace your critical focus with more positive patterns.

– Adapted from "Overcoming Perfectionism: How to Develop a Healthier Outlook," Elizabeth Scott, <http://stress.about.com/od/lowstresslifestyle/a/perfectionism.htm>.

Personal Growth + Professional Development = A Winning Equation

By Louise Mikowychok CEOE, editor, PEPTalk

Retrieved from FirstDraft subscription, printed with permission, 2010

Succeed in the New Year with the right goals

Is this the year that you are going to lose weight, finish that novel or get that promotion? It can be! January is the perfect month to re-examine and renew your goals. Here is how to get on track and stay there:

- **Explore your motivation.** How will achieving your goal make you happy or satisfy a need? Dig deep. A promotion may mean more money, but what does that do for you? Other related rewards may provide greater motivation to succeed.

- **Know what you really want.** Do not assume that losing weight will change your personality or make you magnetically attractive. Be realistic about the pros and cons of getting what you think you want, as you may end up disappointed in the long run.

- **Focus on just one factor.** Instead of a complete makeover, try to improve in one area at a time. Give yourself enough time to make real, sustainable progress. You may not be able to change

What if you held a meeting – and no one said a word?

As a leader in a project, or a group, or even among peers, it is more productive for all parties to be actively involved in a meeting. If no one talks, you might as well issue a memo – and you won't have the benefit of your cohort's insight and experience. Here are some tactics for generating a substantive discussion:

- **Become an active listener** by giving nonverbal encouragement to speakers when they are talking – with a nod, a forward lean, a raised eyebrow, etc. Restate what people say to confirm you've understood their points. Acknowledge enthusiasm, concerns or anger.

- **Ask effective questions** by using open-ended questions which cannot be answered by a "yes" or "no," promoting the exchange of ideas. On the other hand, when you want specific information or you want to move the group to action or agreement, ask the closed-end questions. Accept all answers, and let

your personality overnight, for example, but you can become a better listener over time. Then move on to something else.

- **Hang out with the right people.** Make connections with people who support your goals, who challenge you to do more or who offer new insights and perspectives. You need to have inspiring people around you.

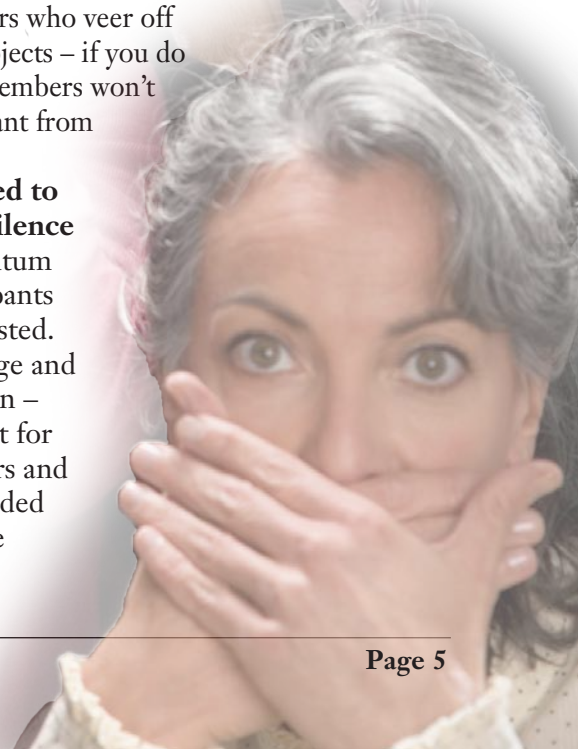
- **Take risks.** Don't stay in your comfort zone. If your goals are really worthwhile, you will need to push yourself to try new things. Accept that you are going to feel uncomfortable, at least in the beginning, but try to get yourself in the habit of challenging yourself.

- **Take charge of your life.** You don't have to do what you've always done. You don't have to do what you think everyone expects. Think about what you really want to achieve, and why. Question your assumptions. You don't have to necessarily reject everything in your life, but start with what is important to you and go on from there. It will be a wonderful journey!

your team determine their value.

- **Direct the conversation** by calling on specific team members by name, if necessary, to include (but not embarrass) anyone. Discourage interruptions when employees are speaking, keeping the discussion on track and rein in speakers who veer off into irrelevant subjects – if you do not do so, team members won't know what you want from them.

- **Be prepared to encounter the silence** when the momentum fades and participants become disinterested. Refocus, re-engage and solicit cooperation – this shows respect for the team members and the solidarity needed to accomplish the project.



12 traits to cultivate achievement

The identifiable skills essential to success are what smart people never leave to chance. Success depends on a certain amount of luck, but in addition to luck you should rely on your raw talent!

1. Response inhibition – think before you act.
2. Working memory – recall even while performing complex tasks.
3. Emotional control – not giving into anger, anxiety or other counterproductive feelings.
4. Sustained attention – ability to focus on the immediate job.
5. Task initiation – get it started!
6. Planning & prioritizing – know what is important, and what to do first.
7. Organization – have tools and resources at your fingertips.
8. Time management – efficiently use your time, and that of others.
9. Goal-directed persistence – set goals and move steadily toward them.
10. Flexibility – adapt to changing circumstances.
11. Perspective – see the big picture and your role in it.
12. Stress tolerance – ability to deal with stress.

Take control of meetings – and your time!

Do endless meetings compete with demanding job duties for your time and attention? Follow these tips to keep meetings in check and stay focused on what you want to accomplish:

- **Determine if you are really necessary at the meeting.**

Look at the agenda, or find out what the meeting is intended to accomplish. Ask yourself, “do I get anything out of the meeting?” and “do I contribute anything to the meeting?” If the answers are no, let the organizer know that you will not attend, but would be willing to review the final notes.

- **Determine if you can attend part of the meeting.**

If one part is relevant for you, and not the other half, excuse yourself when your attention is no longer necessary.

- **Arrive on time – leave on time.** Let meeting organizers know that you will be happy to attend, but will only stay until the appointed end time. Then, show up on time and keep track of time to leave on schedule.

Do you contribute to the pet peeves in your office?

The secret of success in any career usually boils down to some basic advice: Work hard, get results and don't annoy your boss! These tips keep a working relationship on track:

- **Be punctual** – Bosses notice when you are habitually a few minutes late, or always leave early.

- **Double – no, triple check your work** – Do not assume the almighty spell-check is the catch all of every spelling error. Re-read your e-mails, re-add your figures and be aware that when you send out sub-par work, it is a reflection on your department, your boss and then yourself.

- **Think before you ask** – Instead of automatically asking your boss for assistance make an effort to solve a problem, or find the answer on your own. You may otherwise seem lazy or uninvolved and uninterested in your work.

- **Pay attention** – Missing the details of a meeting, or the contents of a package is evidence you are not paying attention. A manager who puts a good deal of time and effort into providing you with details will wonder about your skills if you are in doubt about what he feels is the obvious.

- **Exude enthusiasm** – Commitment to the organization's success requires at least a basic level of interest in the mission – take an active role in your job, and perhaps the mistakes of inattention will be reversed.





Shake up your habits and spark creativity!

Creativity doesn't just happen. You have to exercise your brain to develop new ideas. The key is to train yourself to open your mind to possibilities:

- **Change your routine.** Reschedule your day so you do things in a different order.
- **Vary your surroundings.** Rearrange your space for a different view, and some new scenery.
- **Share data differently.** Look for ways to distribute information. Rhyme the words in a report, or perform a presentation with a skit.
- **Learn something new.** Force your mind to examine new ideas.
- **Question assumptions.** Why does the same meeting happen each Monday? What is the purpose of the memo you send out each Monday?

What to do when you are to blame

Everyone makes mistakes. The difference between good and bad staff is that good staff will address the mistake, whereas bad staff tries to cover up and blame it on someone else.

As an employee you must learn how to apologize – managers and employees alike. Remember these tactics:

- **Be as specific as possible.** Vague regrets and empty clichés are usually worse than no apology at all. Accept responsibility for your actions and don't use the apology as a chance to make excuses.
- **Explain how you are correcting the problem.** Taking the necessary steps toward fixing the problem will defuse the other person's anger and give your apology added credibility. Otherwise, it is an empty gesture – and people will see it for what it is.
- **Return to neutral ground as soon as you can.** Once you have apologized and corrected the problem, move on. There is no need to beat a dead horse. You need to re-establish rapport and trust, and that cannot happen if you constantly remind the other person of what you did wrong.

January-July 2011 DATES TO REMEMBER

- ❖ **Jan. 15, 2011**
NAEOP PSP application deadline
- ❖ **Jan. 31, 2011**
Deadline to submit articles for March *PEPTalk*
- ❖ **Feb. 1, 2011**
PAEOP Student Scholarship deadline
Louise Henderson Nelson Membership application deadline
- ❖ **March 15, 2011**
Gertrude E. Kopf Award of Recognition application deadline
Louise Henderson Nelson Award (NAEOP) deadline
NAEOP Marion T. Wood Student Scholarship deadline
National Educational Administrator of the Year (NAEOP) deadline
Olive T. Ritchie Educational Office Professional of the Year (NAEOP) deadline
Rachel Maynard Award for Excellence in Communication deadline
- ❖ **March 31, 2011**
Deadline to submit articles for May *PEPTalk*
- ❖ **April 13-15, 2011**
PAEOP 55th Annual Conference, State College, PA
- ❖ **April 20, 2011**
Administrative Professionals Day
- ❖ **May 1, 2011**
NAEOP affiliates renewal
- ❖ **May 15, 2011**
NAEOP PSP application deadline
- ❖ **May 15-21, 2011**
National Educational Bosses Week
- ❖ **May 30, 2011**
Deadline to submit articles for July *PEPTalk*
- ❖ **July 31, 2011**
Deadline to submit articles for September *PEPTalk*
- ❖ **July 18 - 22, 2011**
NAEOP Conference, Charleston, SC

Before you accept a promotion, ask these questions

You are an employee with promise – and you do not want to jump the gun and accept a promotion until you are groomed and ready. Consider these issues before making the leap:

1. Are you prepared for the new job?

Management often rewards hard work and enthusiasm without considering proper training.

2. Do you want the new job? Submitting ideas is one thing – carrying them out is another! Moving up the ladder is a serious matter – don't climb too high and lose your footing.

3. What will your peers think? Get feedback before you take the plunge. Your colleagues may ask questions you have not considered.

4. Does this align with my career path? Some

advance for the money; some advance for additional responsibility. Know your reason why. Make this decision with care. There is not much worse than accepting a promotion without qualifying and then attempting to return to the team the way it was beforehand. That rarely works.



Are you wishy-washy – or realistic?

From *Communication Briefings*, Oct. 2010

The magazine *Forbes* recently published a list of the worst words and phrases to say at work. That list included the following: “try,” “maybe,” “Yes, but...,” “I guess,” “I don’t know,” “I’ll get back to you” and “We’ll see.”

People who are eager to prove themselves at work should heed that list of taboos. On the other hand, those who have little to prove and much to accomplish know that everything, even weak words like those on the list, have a time and a place.

Take the word “try.” True, it expresses doubt and uncertainty. Yet equally true is the fact that not every task or question has a predictable outcome. If a task involves risk, why not declare that risk upfront so that everyone can evaluate and assess it?

Best bet: You should avoid hiding behind weak words like

REGIONAL REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP	
as of Dec. 31, 2010	
Region 1 Elizabeth Buren CEOE 13 IU 5 – 9, IU 6 – 4	Region 10 OPEN. 0 IU 26 – 0
Region 2 Kathy Himes CEOE 4 IU 4 – 0, IU 27 – 1, IU 28 – 3	Region 11 Charlotte Walter CEOE 12 IU 22 – 8, IU 23 – 4
Region 3 OPEN. 8 IU 1 – 4, IU 7 – 4	Region 12 Eva Green CEOE 6 IU 17 – 6
Region 4 Amy Myers. 15 IU 9 – 12, IU 10 – 3	Region 13 OPEN. 0 IU 2 – 0
Region 5 Marilyn Rearick 1 IU 8 – 1, IU 11 – 0	Region 14 OPEN. 9 IU 3 – 9
Region 6 Tracy Shaffer 36 IU 15 – 20, IU 16 – 16	Region 15 Louise Mikowychok CEOE. . 28 IU 24 – 28, IU 25 – 0
Region 7 OPEN. 4 IU 18 – 0, IU 19 – 4	Retirees OPEN. 22 Honorary and Life Memberships 28
Region 8 Carol Goldberg 35 IU 14 – 10, IU 20 – 12, IU 21 – 13, IU 29 – 0	Others 12
Region 9 Donna Ozga 44 IU 12 – 15, IU 13 – 29	TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS (includes 51 joint members) 277

Respectfully submitted: Pam Sherts, membership chair

“try.” However, it’s better to be someone who “tries” than to be a worker who promotes a false sense of security. The ability to admit vulnerability and uncertainty can be a valuable workplace asset – especially if you balance your uncertainty with enthusiasm for calculated risk and well-thought-out plan to succeed.

– Adapted from “Weak Language vs. Overconfidence,” Steven Matthews, www.newstext.com.