

CE S News

Communication, Education, Service



President's Message

As President of Chi Epsilon Sigma I would like to welcome all returning members and encourage any classified or unclassified LSU AgCenter employee to consider becoming a member. We are having a big membership drive kick-off this year starting on September 1. Membership into Chi Epsilon Sigma is for both Extension Service and Research Station classified and unclassified employees. Anyone that joins in September will only pay \$10 for this year and for 2008. It's a great time to join and get involved with Chi Epsilon Sigma. We have many fun and exciting things going on.

One very important item we have established is our annual School Supply Drive for CASA kids. CASA is the Court Appointed Special Advocacy for children in Louisiana. We collect school supplies throughout the year and bring them all to our annual conference and divide them to be delivered to CASA organizations across the state.

In addition to our fun-filled annual conference, we will begin having quarterly Chi Epsilon Sigma meetings for all members. These meetings will be presented in different parts of the state each quarter and will be available through distance ed and later streamlined directly to your computer if you were unable to attend the meeting. We are hoping this will keep all members abreast of all activities and information vital to employees.

The third annual conference was held in May 4-5, 2007 at the Wesley Retreat Center in Woodworth. We were a small group, but everyone had a wonderful time. The guest speakers did an excellent job of keeping us informed on a variety of topics. We collected boxes and boxes of school supplies which we divided and will deliver to CASA groups across the state. We had an excellent icebreaker that had everyone laughing. The best part was the fellowship and camaraderie that has developed among all the members of Chi Epsilon

Sigma. The annual meeting concluded with a jam session on how to improve Chi Epsilon Sigma, how to increase membership, and how to get support from LSU AgCenter Staff. Overall, the annual conference was a huge success.

Our first quarterly meeting will be in September this year. Sharon Salzer will be organizing this very important meeting. I encourage all members to attend these meetings. We will have important information available on a variety of subjects pertaining to our roles with the LSU AgCenter. More information on this meeting will be coming out shortly.

Also coming up is the Dr. Rosalie Bivin Professional Development Scholarships. Last year we established two scholarships for members for \$250 each. All winners must attend a class, seminar, etc. for professional development associated with their current AgCenter job responsibilities. Scholarships should be used for registration fees, books, travel, supplies and any incidentals pertaining to the class. Jodi Davis, chairman, will provide more information later. The scholarship deadline is October 31, 2007.

I would like to introduce you to your Officers and Board of Directors. Please feel free to contact any one of us if you have any questions or need help in any way.

- President – Karen Istre
- President-Elect – Jodi Davis
- Secretary – Fay Richie
- Treasurer – Sharon Salzer
- Immediate Past President – Danielle Bayham
- Administrative Liaison – Debra Davis
- Northeast Region – Mollie Johnston
- Northwest Region – Elizabeth Jordan and Melissa Saenz
(Co-directors)
- North Central – Vonnie Jordan
- Central – Gaye Richard
- Southwest – Diane Schneider
- Southeast – Susan Burchfield
- South Central/Crescent – Jenny Simpson
- Departments – Cheryl Duplechain
- Administration -

Karen Istre, President

Volume 2, Issue 3

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Dates to Remember

- July 4** Independence Day
- July 18** Board Meeting, Room 104H in Efferson Hall
All Distance Ed sites are available also
- September 1** Chi Epsilon Sigma Membership Kick-Off
Anyone interested in becoming a member, please look for the registration form in this issue.

Chi Epsilon Sigma Annual Awards

“Above and Beyond the Call of Duty” awarded to Jenny Simpson

Jenny Simpson is an Administrative Coordinator in Plaquemines parish and strives for professional development. And she remains committed to personal growth and improvement. She routinely attends motivational, self improvement and communication skill seminars.

She is the secretary of the Plaquemines Parish Prevention Partnership which is a multi-group organization dedicated to area improvement. Jenny is the safety coordinator for the Crescent Region and for some of the parishes from the South Central region. She has designed, developed and distributed to parish safety coordinators material that will enable these parishes to become in compliance with ORM..

As a valued team leader and with her office leadership Jenny genuinely shows concern for fellow co-workers and offers assistance whenever needed.

“Award of Excellence” awarded to Karen Istre

Karen Istre’s major responsibilities include clerical support for educational programs in ANR and FCS for Jeff Davis parish. She also assists in clerical work for all the activities of the Jeff Davis Cattlemen’s Association and the Jeff Davis Rice Growers’ Association.

In 1999, Karen organized the Jeff Davis Dairy Project Club. Her motivation was to foster and expand the project in which her sons had been so successful. Beyond the initial effort of organizing the club, she has served as club leader and advisor. For the past eight years this club has met at least quarterly for educational programs, to plan fund raising activities and conduct community service projects. Projects have included public awareness of the economic importance of agriculture, presenting programs on dairy farming at parish 4-H Fun Day, providing milk and ice cream to Hurricane Katrina evacuees and sponsoring trophy belt buckles for the showmanship winners at the parish show. All these activities are funded through self-generated funds. For her efforts in directing this project club, Karen was selected as Outstanding 4-H Club Leader in state competition for 2002. She has also received the Jeff Davis Friend of 4-H Award.

For the past three years, Karen has also assisted her husband, Wayland, as adult leader for the Jeff Davis 4-H Jr. Leader Club. This club meets monthly, has over 100 members and conducts activities too numerous to list.

Beyond exemplary job performance for the LSU AgCenter, Karen provides leadership and direction to these worthwhile activities. All this is provided on “her own time.”

Diane Schneider, Scholarship Chairman



Let Me Introduce You!

CES member Angela Hood has been with the LSU AgCenter for 20 ½ years. She is an administrative coordinator in Claiborne Parish.

Angela has been married to Bryant Hood for the past 22 years.

Reading, cooking, cross-stitching, crocheting are some of Angela’s favorite hobbies.

And she does do a little Karaoke occasionally!

Concerning Chi Epsilon Sigma, Angela said, “I’m glad I got involved with CES. I’ve met quite a few really nice people who I never would have even talked to otherwise. I would like to say ‘Thanks’ to all of you for inspiration and fellowship.”

A few of Angela’s favorite things:

Favorite Color—Yellow, purple, and red

Favorite Aroma—Mulberry

Favorite Food—Tex-Mex

Favorite Music—Country and Bluegrass

Favorite Song—Daddy’s Hands (country)
Just Another Hill (bluegrass)

Favorite TV Show—American Gothic

Favorite Movie—Flash Dance and Lonesome Dove
run about neck and neck

Diverse People: Just Like Me?

Want to develop effective working relationships with diverse people at work? Start with similarities, not differences, among people when you build relationships. Diversity in the workplace adds a special richness, but also special challenges. As a human resources professional, manager, supervisor, coworker, staff member or business owner, effective diverse work relationships are critical for your success.

We've emphasized honoring and appreciating the diverse needs, skills, talents, and contributions of people in recent years. While this is critical, don't let the pendulum swing too far in this direction. We are in danger of forgetting to honor and appreciate our similarities. By acknowledging the similarities and likenesses, we create a starting point for understanding and appreciating diversity in the workplace.

A strong example emerges in *The Human Capital Edge: 21 People Management Practices Your Company Must Implement (or Avoid) to Maximize Shareholder Value* by Bruce N. Pfau and Ira T. Kay, executives with Watson Wyatt Worldwide. In Watson Wyatt's Work USA research, they asked 7500 workers at all job levels across diverse industries to respond to 130 statements about their workplaces. Watson Wyatt broke down the responses to look for diversity patterns across demographics including whites versus minorities, men versus women, and people over and under 30 years old.

They found more similarities than differences, especially in the categories respondents rated as most important to them. People agreed about what inspires their commitment to a particular employer.

People also agreed on what organizations need to improve: employee input and promoting the best performers while helping the worst performers get better. Additionally, the employees want to know how their job affects internal and external customers. They want to understand how their job contributes to the accomplishment of company business goals. They want a safe work environment and highly rated products and services.

Recommendations for Diverse Workplace Success

In response to the research, Pfau and Key recommend that organizations concentrate on four areas with their employees.

- Keep your company effective, winning, and on the right track.
- Help people, supplied with needed resources, use their talents and skills to contribute to the overall accomplishment of organization objectives.
- Respect and value people and recognize and act on their contributions.

Create an environment in which people have interesting work and enjoy their coworkers.

On the Interpersonal Level

Take a look at your coworkers or reporting staff with new eyes. Think about the factors that you share in common with them. Work is more exciting when you feel as if you are accomplishing mutual goals. Act as if you are part of a winning team. Emphasize, with coworkers, your common interest in your success and the success of the organization. You'll get to know people as people if you participate in any fun or team building events your organization sponsors. Better yet, join the team that plans them.

Conclusions About Diversity and Similarity

If you start by recognizing the ways in which you are similar to your coworkers, you'll build a base of understanding and acceptance that will withstand the sometimes stormy times when your differences come to the forefront.

Excerpted from Susan Heathfield, Diversity in the Workplace: Search for Similarities, Amazon.com/Human Resources

Torii Freeman

Asst. Director Human Resource Management

LSU AgCenter

Mission Statement:

The purpose of this fraternity shall be to maintain the standards and ideas, uphold the morale, prestige and respect of the LSU AgCenter support staff; to develop an effective working relationship and spirit of fraternal fellowship among present and emeriti employees of the LSU AgCenter support staff; to encourage professionalism; and to recognize, share and reward professional excellence in job performance.

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We're on the web!

www.lsuagcenter.com/en/administration/about_us/professional_organizations/chi_epsilon_sigma/

“Accountability” is usually a term we associate with something negative. When we hear it, we usually think, “Someone’s in trouble now” and hope it’s not us! What would happen if we thought about *accountability* in a different way? What if we thought about it more in terms of being in charge of our own destiny and taking responsibility for our own actions?

In today’s business culture of networking, team building, downsizing, reorganizing and empowering it is critical that both the organization and each individual employee take responsibility for the results achieved by the organization. In “The Oz Principle: Getting Results through Individual and Organizational Accountability” (Connors, Smith & Hickman, 1994) the writers use the *Wizard of Oz* analogy to describe the process of how we as individuals and/or as leaders/influencers help ourselves and others to take responsibility for our own actions just as Dorothy did with the lion, the scarecrow and the tin man. The book is based on an accountability model developed by Partners in Leadership, LLC. The model includes two areas separated by a line. *Below the line* are the people who have all types of excuses for why something did or did not happen. The authors call them *victims*. Have you ever made some of these statements?

- “That’s not my job.”
- “There’s nothing I can do about it.”
- “If it were me, I would do it differently.”
- “Nobody told me what to do.”
- “I didn’t know.”
- “It’s not my fault.”

- Or do any of these behaviors or thoughts describe you?
- Pessimistic about everything, especially your job
 - Feel you have no control over your present circumstances
 - Find yourself blaming others or pointing fingers
 - Always defensive
 - You have more problems than solutions
 - Use ignorance or lack of knowledge as an excuse for not doing something
 - Spend a lot of time berating others

If any of these describe you, you may be living *below the line*, playing the blame game. According to “The Oz Principle,” organizations cannot survive; much less thrive, when their employees are *below the line*. The sad fact is that many of us find ourselves living *below the line* because it’s easier to be a victim than to take responsibility for our own actions. If you find yourself there, it’s time to take steps to move yourself *above the line*.

Being accountable begins with a clear picture of the desired results. In organizations, EVERYONE is

responsible for achieving the results. In order for that to happen, you must know the desired results then figure out how your job relates. *Above the line* is where this happens. There, we individually take steps to be more accountable for our actions. The four steps to accountability are: (1) See It; (2) Own It; (3) Solve It; and (4) Do It.

- Like the cowardly lion, we muster up the courage to step out of the victim cycle by acknowledging the reality of our situation to actually see it.
- Like the tin man, we must own the situation we are in, whether it is good or bad. We cannot subscribe to the theory that our environment and circumstances are influencing our actions. Rather we must make the opposite happen.
- Like the scarecrow, we must ask ourselves, “What else can I do to get the results I want?” Solve problems by staying engaged, being persistent, using new paradigms, creating new linkages, taking initiative and staying conscious of what’s happening around you.
- Finally, like Dorothy, achieving personal accountability means accepting full responsibility for both your actions and results by doing it.

It’s not easy to stay *above the line* especially when others around us are working below the line. Where are you right now? If you find yourself *below the line*, what can you do today, right now, to move yourself *above the line*? It’s where we all need to be! And while you are at it, why not bring someone else with you!!!!

Dr. Debra Davis, Professor
Organization Development and Evaluation
Chi Epsilon Sigma Administrative Liaison





2008 Membership Form

Chi Epsilon Sigma - Epsilon Chapter
The National Support Staff Fraternity

Name/Address:

Title: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Office Phone # _____

Provide Name of Unit:

Member Registration – New Member or Renewal **\$10.00**

Membership dues are due September 30, 2007 to receive membership through 2007 and 2008

Make check payable to Chi Epsilon Sigma
(Write on the back of your check "For Deposit Only")

Return this form and your check to:

**Sharon S. Salzer
P.O. Box 25203
Room 102N, Efferson Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70894**

What Do You See?

Look around you, what do you see? What we see depends on where we are at the time and how we see things. Right now there are things in front of you, to your left and to your right. Do you know what they are? I want you to do something for me. I want you to stop reading for a moment and close your eyes. Give yourself permission to do this. Close your eyes and visualize what is in front of you, to your left and to your right.

What did you mentally see? Did you look at all of the objects in the same way? Did you look at the ones on your left differently from the ones on your right? What about the ones in front of you? More than likely, you viewed all of the objects in the same way for your goal was to just identify them.

On a larger scale and much deeper perspective, what determines how we see the world? Have you ever thought why you see things the way you do? Just as we can mentally visualize objects, we also mentally create our reality. What we expect and what we hear, see and do are guided by themes that reflect of our beliefs. These themes are the backbone of our reality for they flavor and frame our thoughts, emotions, abilities and actions. They influence our interpretation of past experiences, present ones and what we expect in the future. Our self-image, which includes what we think of ourselves, what we feel we are capable of and what we believe others think of us, is also influenced by them.

Some of these themes can be detrimental by causing us to view things with negativity. Three such themes are those of *unworthiness*, *if only* and *un-appreciativeness*. Let's talk about unworthiness first. Think about your life. Have you ever placed limitations on yourself because you felt you didn't measure up or weren't worthy of having or doing something? In what other ways has a feeling of unworthiness hindered you?

What about the theme of *if only*? Having a theme of *if only* includes feeling that things aren't good enough or won't be good enough and that we can only be happy if this or that happens. It also includes a mindset of perfectionism which is reflected when we have been responsible for something and it turned out successful, but we find a part of it that wasn't just how we thought it should have been and that is what we dwell on. We won't let ourselves experience pleasure from the success. We may also mentally beat ourselves up because of it. This isn't necessarily just a theme of *if only*, it can also include one of *unworthiness*.

The third theme is *un-appreciativeness*. There is so much good in each of our lives but often we don't see or enjoy it because we focus on looking for, seeing and dwelling on negativity. Negativity is promoted in the media, television and in many of our daily conversations. For example, how many negative conversations did you hear or participate in at work yesterday? Last week? This week? Contrast this with the number of conversations that were positive, uplifting and celebrated the good in your workplace and the lives of you and your fellow employees? Think about how blessed we are to live in the United States of America. Sure there are challenges in each of our lives, but there are also blessings, so many blessings. If we are guided by an *unappreciative theme*, we don't see the good, because we can't see the good. There is good all around us. There is more good than we usually see.

As we discussed earlier, what we see depends on where we are and how we look at things. Our themes and experiences of yesterday created our today. Our themes of today are creating our tomorrow and our destiny. They are also impacting our children's future for we are training them in our ways.

I want you to do something else for me. I want you to stop reading, close your eyes and reflect on each of these three themes. First, focus on *unworthiness*. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and exhale it slowly. Take another deep breath and exhale it even more slowly. Breathe at a slow rate and reflect on a time when a feeling of *unworthiness* limited you.

How did this feeling of *unworthiness* hinder you? At the time, did you know it was a feeling of *unworthiness* that was hindering you? Use the same breathing relaxation process and reflect on the themes of *if only* and *un-appreciativeness*. Do each individually and identify how each hindered you. Also, identify if you were aware of having them when they hindered you.

We can have negative themes influencing our lives and not realize it. I challenge you to monitor you thoughts and see how many and how often they fit these three themes. This will take commitment and consciousness of your thoughts. It will not occur naturally, but you can do it and gain insight into whether or not these themes are influencing your thoughts, feelings and ultimately your life. If they are, take charge of your life and replace them with constructive thought patterns and themes.

It has been a year and two months since I spoke on the topic of depression at the 2006 Chi Epsilon Sigma conference. I am honored to have been part of the conference and pleased that so many benefited. Even after this length of time, individuals share with me how what they learned is helping them today. I offered then, and I offer now, to speak as your guest at your church or through an organization in your community. I have developed a second presentation that addresses seeing the good in our lives and I offer it and the one on depression at no cost. I battled the black dog of depression for over a decade and what I learned, and continue to learn, can help others. Please help me help others.

Johnny Arceneaux.
4-H Youth Development
(225-578-2196; jarceneaux@agcenter.lsu.edu)





Beth Wittington, Associate Professor in Criminal Justice, spoke to us on personal safety.



Beth is showing Diane Schneider and Danielle Bayham some techniques to break away from an assailant.



Beth showing Debra Davis and Mary Baronet the correct way to break out of an assailant's hold.



Everyone practices the technique that Beth taught.



Adrienne Vidrine, Extension Agent in Acadia, talked to us about identity theft.



Adrienne gave out useful information on identity theft.



We came up with some great ideas during our "Jam Session" to increase membership.



Taking a short break between sessions.



2007-2008 Chi Epsilon Sigma Officers



Diane Schneider, Awards Chairman, presents Karen Istre with the "Award of Excellence".



2007 Chi Epsilon Sigma Annual Conference