

The LA Organizer

NAPO-LA's newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 1

October 2002

The President's Message

Program Director's Note

WHAT A NIGHT!

Tanya Whitford, *Organizing Wonders*

On September twenty-third, we brought back an old tradition, a Membership Meeting. The room felt different: there was warmth, openness and excitement in the air as we enjoyed a larger-than-usual turnout at this members-only meeting. The first part included Product Spotlights. Members signed up in advance to showcase a favorite product and information was distributed so other members would be able to find and purchase the items that interested them.

The second part was our Membership Meeting. Dorothy Breininger facilitated the discussion between Chapter members and a panel of Board members. She reviewed the 2002 Membership Survey results, which have been posted on the website under *Publications & Forms*. The floor was opened to any member concerns. One issue was a desire to share resources among members. It was noted that the current forum on the website for members to share and communicate was not being used, so alternate suggestions were made, including redoing the Resource Directory that Beverly Clower compiled

in 1999 and setting up a Chapter group e-mail. There were discussions on mentoring and educating newer organizers, the Assistants List and outsourcing publicity. One of the questions on the Member Survey concerned moving meetings to a different location. The Board explained the increasing concerns that our current space is no longer providing us a good deal for our money. Dorothy asked who was in favor of looking for a different meeting space that is equally convenient but would provide us more benefits for our money. It was unanimous, so we will set up a special committee to look for a new meeting location. The change will not alter dues or meeting fees.

Members had the opportunity to voice their opinions and share their ideas. The Board was able to listen, receive lots of feedback and answer any questions. Then, all too quickly, the meeting was over. Hopefully this will become an annual tradition to which we all look forward! Stay tuned as the Board begins to implement some of the ideas that were generated that evening!

CREATING DEMAND WITH YOUR BRAND

Justine Miceli, *Organizing by Miceli*

You are a brand! Whether you know it or not, you are as much a brand as a box of cereal or an airline—only much more complex. Have you built your personal brand by design or by default? Does your brand navigate your business strategy? In other words, does it maximize the achievement of your business goals? Does it work for you when you're not there?

Come hear Michele Lando, principal of Skilset Communications, speak at our October Meeting about "Creating Demand with Your Brand." She will explore with us:

- What a brand really is and is not
- How to create your personal brand by design
- How to leverage your personal brand to achieve your business objectives

Michele helps companies and their individuals build brand differentiation as a strategy to maximize their bottom line. She views brand-enabled communications as a key to reaching audiences, enhancing the perception of value and creating preference in the marketplace. She regularly speaks on branding strategy and tactical applications. An entrepreneur herself, Michele sits on the boards of select organizations dedicated to the advancement of women in business and The Girl Scouts of America.

Regular Features

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Who's Who in NAPO-LA

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Associate Member Coordinator	Barb Schmit
Chapter Historian	Marci Alpert
Client Referrals Coordinator	Diane Ridley
Database/Yellow Pages	Shawna Smith
Ethics Committee	Sheila McCurdy
Golden Circle Advisor	Ann Gambrell
Greeting Coordinator	Toni Scharff
Meeting Assistant	Debra Frank
New Member Coordinator	Sherry Kelly
New Member Orientation	Jean Furuya Ann Gambrell
Prospective Member Coordinator	Robin Davi
Public Relations	Heather Thompson
Special Projects Coordinator	Jean Furuya
Webmaster	Chris Janetsky, Shawna Smith, Tanya Whitford
Website Coordinator	Toni Scharff
Web Sponsor Coordinator	Heather Thompson
Workshop Co-Chairs	Heather Thompson, Mishele Vieira

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The LA Organizer

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DEADLINE The first of the month for any submission.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Size	Members	Nonmembers
3-line classified	\$5.00	\$10.00
Business card size	\$10.00	\$20.00
Quarter page	\$25.00	\$50.00
Half page	\$35.00	\$70.00
Full page	\$50.00	\$100.00
Full page insert	\$85.00	\$150.00



The mission of the National Association of Professional Organizers is to encourage the development of Professional Organizers, to promote recognition of and to advance the professional organizing industry.

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NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES

Individual (renews on member's anniversary)	\$200
Associate-Corporate	\$550
Associate-Branch	\$150
Associate-Local	\$250
New Member (one-time processing fee)	\$20
National NAPO Name Badge	\$10

MISSION STATEMENT—NAPO-LA

NAPO-LA is an organization dedicated to bringing Southern California Area Organizers together through networking, education, professional growth, industry updates, support, and public awareness.

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PMB 134, 10573 W. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064
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www.napola.org

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

National Membership required
 Includes electronic newsletter

ANNUAL DUES

Basic Member (Oct. 1st–Sept. 30th)	\$75
Full Member (includes monthly meetings)	\$135
Out-of-State Individual (Oct. 1st–Sept. 30th)	\$50
Associate Member (Oct. 1st–Sept. 30th)	\$150
New/Lapsed Member Processing Fee	\$10
Meeting Fee	\$7

NONMEMBERS

Newsletter Subscription (annual)	\$25
Meeting Visitor Fee	\$15



HOME OFFICE DEDUCTION: CAN I OR CAN'T I?

Glorya Belgrade Schklair, *The Practical Organizer*

Q What can you tell me about the home office tax deduction, it's advantages and drawbacks? I posed this question to Barbara Neuberg (see below), after she spoke at a NAPO-LA Chapter meeting.

A The home office deduction can be very confusing to many taxpayers. Who is eligible to take the deduction? Answer this question: Do I conduct my business in an area used regularly and exclusively in at least one of the following ways?

- 1) As the principal place of business (including administrative use) or
- 2) As a place to meet with clients in the normal course of business or
- 3) In connection with the business if it is a separate structure—such as a garage—that is not attached to the taxpayer's personal residence.

How does the IRS define “regularly and exclusively?” “Regularly” means that a business uses an area on a continuing basis. The occasional or incidental business use of the area does not meet the “regular” use test, even if the area serves no other purpose. “Exclusively” means that a specific part of a taxpayer's home is used for business purposes only.

Assuming that you meet these conditions, how does the home office deduction affect renters and homeowners differently? A renter can deduct the business portion of the rent and utilities,

which is quite straightforward. However, a homeowner can deduct the business portion of mortgage interest, real estate taxes, utilities, home repairs and/or maintenance, homeowner's insurance, security system and depreciation.

On the surface it seems like homeowners get a great deal. Not necessarily. In general, when a personal residence is also used for business, the home must be divided into two assets—a business asset and a personal asset—based on usage. When the house is sold, the portion of gain attributable to the business use is taxable as a sale of a business asset. That means you may have to pay capital gains tax on the business portion.

The home office deduction can be attractive, but there are many issues that need to be considered as they can have future long-term consequences. Please check with your tax advisor when making these decisions.

Barbara R. Neuberg has an MBA from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She has prepared income taxes for individuals for ten years, the last four years in private practice. Five years ago she was awarded the Enrolled Agent credential by the IRS. Enrolled Agents must maintain a stringent annual schedule of professional education in the field of taxation and along with CPAs and tax attorneys are able to represent their clients before the IRS in an audit.

Save the Date!

2003 Southern California Winter Workshop

Saturday, February 1, 2003 • 8:30am-5:00pm • Radisson Hotel, Culver City, CA

The Call for Speakers, Speaker Application, and Vendor Application are available on the homepage of our website www.napola.org
Check back for more details as they become available.

Agenda

Monday, October 28, 2002

- 5:50 Registration: Please wear badge
- 6:15 Meeting begins promptly
 - President's Remarks
 - Silent Auction
 - Member Spotlights
 - Announcements *
- 7:00 Break
- 7:15 Michele Lando
- 8:15 Silent Auction Results
- 8:20 Meeting adjourned

Fourth Monday except as announced
Olympic Collection Conference Center
11301 Olympic Blvd. at Sawtelle

Parking: \$5 Look for signs to meeting.
Meeting: \$7 NAPO-LA members
\$15 Visitors/prospective members

We welcome all Professional Organizers and those interested in entering the field (no clients please). Business attire is appreciated. Networking table is available to display brochures and flyers.

* To make an announcement, please email JustineMiceli@napola.org prior to the meeting or call her at (310) 576-6043.

Members in the News

Orange County members are in the news. Susan Lasater of *Clearly Organized*, Cathy Torre-Houghton of *Organized with Style* and Rachel M. Sparks of *Sparks Organizing Services* were in the *Irvine World News* October 3 issue. The article, titled *Get Organized and Find Lost Treasures*, discussed Get Organized (GO) Week and announced Irvine contest winners John and Linda Daily. There were also photos of Cathy and Rachel.

Donna McMillan, of *McMillan and Company* was featured in the June 2002 issue of *HomeOfficeMag.com* in an article titled, *Make Over Your Office for \$200*. NAPO.net also gets a plug in that one. In addition, Donna was quoted in the *San Diego Union Tribune* in May of this year. She has contributed tips in two recently published books, *Organizing Plain and Simple*, by Donna Smallin and *The Consumer's Guide to Experts* by Susan Ten Abby Shay.

WEBSITE HITS

Chris Janetsky, Webmaster. *All Organized*

	August	September
Home page	4231	4414
Clicks on specific members after search	938	938
Find an organizer	2068	2049
Becoming a member	167	114
Calendar	425	362
Cumulative hits	13720	13258

Abbreviated Minutes September Board Meeting

Robin L. Davi, Secretary, *Simply Arranged*

1. The 2003 Winter Workshop will be held at the Radisson Hotel in Culver City on Saturday, February 1, 2003.
2. A total of thirty-nine Member Surveys were returned; results have been posted in the Members Only section on the website.
3. The GO Week outreach program at Break the Cycle was set to take place on Thursday, October 10, 2002.
4. The Donate-A-Phone fundraising/recycling program will be introduced at the September Chapter Meeting.
5. Board Members will finalize the 2003–2003 Chapter Budget at the October Board Meeting.
6. NAPO National Board will vote on a new logo at their January meeting.

Thank You!

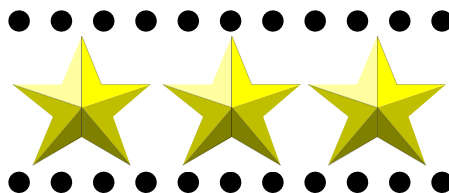
Thank you to Marilyn Crouch and Jessica Duquette for coordinating our GO Week event at Break the Cycle.

They did a tremendous job planning and running the day.

Thank you to Barb Schmitt and Esselte for generously donating a Dymo Labelwriter to our Chapter.

Thank you to the 39 members who completed the 2002 Membership Survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated. All those who completed the survey were eligible for the drawing to receive free Basic Dues for the year.

The lucky winner was Karen Simon.



Sponsors/Resources

We wish to extend a great big

Thank you

to our Platinum Website Sponsors

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Chris McKenry, Representative

Go to www.napola.org and click on Sponsors/Resources for more information on what our sponsors have to offer.

Complete details on becoming a NAPO-LA Website Sponsor are available online or by contacting Heather Thompson, our Web Sponsor Coordinator, at advertising@napola.org



November Calendar

Home & Family Month

8th	National Paperworks & Photoworks Day
15th	America Recycles Day
11th–17th	National Random Acts of Kindness Week
25th	Board Meeting, 2:30pm Chapter Meeting, 6:15pm
30th	Computer Security Day

TIMELESS TRUTHS TONI SCHARFF: THE SIMPLICITY PROJECT

Talia Eisen, Staff Writer

Tony Scharff began *The Simplicity Project* and joined NAPO Los Angeles four years ago. At her first Chapter Meeting, her thoughts were groundbreaking—for her—but have since revealed themselves to be timeless truths. In Toni’s words, “Oh my god, there are other people like me!” As a seasoned pro, she now knows that many share this feeling when first introduced to NAPO. This sentiment is a wonderful catalyst to so many who have yearned to start their own businesses but wondered if it were possible. Another timeless truth is that there are many people out there who do need organizers and the work we do for them! Amazing.

The Simplicity Project focuses on residential organizing, including home offices and small offices. Toni doesn’t mind getting dirty as she reorganizes garages and workshops. She organizes kitchens, manages mail and processes paper. She even reorganizes purses for simplicity and ergonomics. She has experience in corporations, government, law, insurance and nonprofit organizations, including a women’s clinic.

NAPO is lucky to have Toni as a member and regular volunteer. She is

currently the Web Site Coordinator. This includes keeping track of members who have paid to be listed on the site and collecting those agreements, helping members with their profiles and coordinating with the other web committee members to troubleshoot and maintain our website. Toni also posts the organizing tips on the website. She volunteered at the Break the Cycle event this month and has served as Secretary of NAPO-LA and as a Greeter at Chapter meetings.

Toni came to Los Angeles in 1989 from Montana with her husband. She loves the outdoors and enjoys hiking—Mount Whitney is next on her list—and cycling. She has traveled a great deal in Europe and speaks German, as well as some French, Spanish and Italian. The Big Sky country must have given Toni a special sense of the possibilities of life. She says that when she gave up corporate work and started her own business, her happiness soared and her level of tension went down measurably. “You know what they say,” she starts, recounting another timeless truth, “Do what you love and the money will follow.” She is quick to add that even if it doesn’t follow, being able to do what she loves is the true reward.

makes just by rearranging a few things and cleaning up the clutter. Looking at how we changed their environment, we changed their lives, and the lives of the people that Break the Cycle helps everyday. Their smiles are our smiles!

I want to thank my great team: Sandra Ateca for doing such a great job of constantly rearranging the office supplies all day long—she has the patience of an angel; Diana Ryan for her quick thinking of making the reception area so efficient and pleasing to the eye; Robin Dorsch for stepping right in and helping fine tune things; and, of course, Justine Miceli for moving the world—I mean that 8’ couch—so Shawna Smith could place the couch where everyone could enjoy it the most; and Michelle Spear at Economy Office Supply who donated office supplies. And a big thanks to everyone else’s contributions that made Serena’s area a great place for visitors to stay.”

Evelyn M. Gray, *GO Get Organized!*

“It was an honor to be one of the organizers of this very successful and awesome GO Week event at Break The Cycle! I was so proud of what NAPO-LA volunteers were able to accomplish. The demonstration of team spirit and camaraderie was a joy to see. Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this event such a success. The donation of our efforts has made a huge impact on many people’s lives! We have a lot to be proud of!”

Marilyn Crouch,
Avenues To Organization



DON'T FORGET

Our Chapter has two recycling programs in place. Bring your old cell phones to meetings and pick up a receipt from Donate-a-Phone. You can also pick up postage-paid mailers that you can use to recycle your used inkjet cartridges.

Encourage your clients to take advantage of these programs as well!

Chapter Announcements

The 2002 Membership Survey Results were passed out at the September meeting. You can find these results on the website under “Publications & Forms.”

Has your contact information changed recently? Don't forget to update your profile on-line at www.napola.org. This is the information used for the monthly Yellow Pages and referrals.

Happy Birthday to You!

November

2nd Jessica Duquette
5th Susan Johnston
6th Lynn Hall
9th Janet Aird
14th Robin Davi
30th Steve Skidmore

December

4th Gloria Schklair
6th Janice Kemmer
6th Ruth Kennison
13th Shawna Smith
25th Nancy Miller
27th Christine Cohen

GET ORGANIZED (GO) WEEK: A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Marilyn Crouch, *Avenues To Organization*

Here are just a few comments from some of our Chapter's organizers who graciously participated in the GO Week Event at Break the Cycle. By all accounts, it was a great success.

"I woke up Thursday morning wondering, 'How did I get myself into this?' I left wondering, 'How come it's over already?!' It was such an amazing and rewarding experience all around."

Heather Chapman, *All In Order*

"We are an amazing group of organizers. I was quite overwhelmed by our ability to work almost seamlessly together, as well as with our astonishing accomplishment."

Toni Scharff, *The Simplicity Project*

"In all my years (eighteen) as a professional organizer, I've never experienced a day quite as *awesome* as October 10, 2002 at Break The Cycle. It was a pleasure meeting and working with the staff, along with so many NAPO-LA

members, and to celebrate National Get Organized (GO) Week together."

Donna D. McMillan, *McMillan & Company Professional Organizing*

"What an amazing day! There is nothing like a big group of organizers all working towards the same goal. It is educational and very interesting to see how other people organize. Kudos to Marilyn Crouch and Jessica Duquette for coordinating this event and making sure the day went so smoothly. It was an honor to help out such a wonderful organization like Break The Cycle. Seeing their faces as we toured their newly organized offices was priceless. I am so proud of our volunteers and happy that I was a part of this day."

Tanya Whitford, *Organizing Wonders*

"It was a very rewarding experience to see how spending a few hours doing what we do best can have such a great impact on the community. Thanks to us, Break the Cycle is in the position

to move forward and help more people."
Heather Thompson

"It was fun working with so many organizers and watching how people seemed to gravitate naturally to whatever they were good at, either within their assigned areas, or by instinctively moving to other areas. My heartfelt thanks to the coordinators of this year's event, everyone who participated, the team members in my area, and everyone who helped me in the every-changing, ever-shifting, ever-expanding supply area."

Sandra Ateca,

Out From Under Custom Organizing

"Just how amazing it was as air-traffic controller to see everyone naturally gravitate to the skills they do best."
Jessica Duquette, *In Perfect Order*

"It's so inspiring and especially rewarding to see what a difference a day

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Thank You, NAPO-LA

October 2002

*OFFICE OVERHAUL
celebrates its 20th Anniversary!*

I couldn't have done it without you.

My appreciation and admiration for our chapter and its individual members increases with every year. I am deeply grateful for the blessings that have come my way through the profession of organizing, and for the love and support that you continually present through your friendship and acknowledgement. And especially for still asking me questions as though I might have some pertinent answers or suggestions!

*I am proud to be one of the founders,
and honored to be one of you.*

Beverly Clower

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TELECOMMUTE:

ESSELTE PROVIDES TIPS FOR ECONOMIC HOME-OFFICE SOLUTIONS

MELVILLE, NY—February 12, 2002—The number of Americans who are “telecommuting” to work each day has exploded, prompting millions of people to set up a home-office. With so many dens, basements or bedrooms turning into extended workplaces, there is a need for more efficient organization of household finances.

“A home-office can certainly make your life easier, but what if you’re on a budget?” asks Sharon Mann, an organizational expert at Esselte, a leader in office solutions and known for its Pendaflex® brand of filing products. Mann offers the following tips for setting up a home-office space without denting your pocketbook.

1. Yesterday's computers are today's value: While a computer is the center stage of any home-office, it doesn't have to break the bank. Computers that were made just a year or two ago should be more than enough power for your home-office, and these computers can be purchased at substantial discounts. “Don't feel that you need a fresh from the factory, high speed ‘dream machine’ to get big bang for your buck,” advises Mann.

2. Furnish for functionality, not fashion: Forget the Victorian-era replica desk chair and the mahogany computer desk. To save money, purchase a combination desk/computer center that gives you two working spaces in one. Instead of buying the unit from an upscale furniture store, you could purchase a “knock-

down” piece from a discount store. “Knock-down units may require assembly, but they can be quite nice looking and will do the job very well,” suggests Mann.

3. Go with combination technology: Let's face it: it is difficult to find the desk space for a computer printer, scanner, fax machine, copier and everything else. Why buy all that? Mann recommends purchasing a unit that combines all these functions into a single machine. “These all-in-one office machines do a terrific job, and you could save hundreds of dollars versus buying separate units,” she says.

4. Share phone, fax and Internet on the same line: One phone bill is quite enough, and you don't need two or three. Chances are (unless your job requires it), your home-office probably won't need dedicated lines for your telephone, fax and online connections. “That way, you won't have to fork over extra money each month to pay for additional phone lines,” says Mann. Special switching devices that allow you to automatically go from one of these functions to another are available at just about every electronics store.

5. Purchase filing supplies that deliver value: With so much going on in your home-office, you want to make sure it stays organized and tidy. “Continually replacing ripped file folders in your home-office can add up to wasted money,” warns Mann. Look for folders that last, such as Pendaflex brand hang-

ing folders with laminate reinforcements; guaranteed for life, they save you money in the long run.

While a home-office can sometimes be an intrusion to your personal space, it doesn't have to intrude on your wallet. “By remaining conscious of costs, consolidating your resources, and investing in quality, long-lasting supplies, your telecommute could end up being cost-effective and productive,” counsels Mann.

Sharon Mann is an organizational expert for Esselte Corporation (www.esselte.com), the world's leading maker of innovative organizing products—including Pendaflex brand hanging file folders. Mann also serves as president of the Pendaflex “I Hate Filing” club (www.ihatefiling.com), a dedicated group of nearly 100,000 office professionals who dislike filing but enjoy finding new ways to become more organized and more productive in the workplace.

About Esselte: Esselte Corporation is the leading manufacturer of office supplies worldwide. A global group with annual sales exceeding \$1.4 billion, the company has subsidiaries in 31 countries, selling office products in over 120 countries and employing over 6,000 people. Esselte brings innovation, efficiency and style to the way people work in the office and at home with its principal brands of Oxford, Pendaflex, DYMO and Leitz. U.S. headquarters are located in Melville, NY. For more information, please visit www.pendaflex.com.