

FEW Notes

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From the President...
Reflections & Highlights
By Debbie L. Miller

One of the joys of the Holiday Season is remembering those individuals who are important to us. I would like to thank my Executive Board and the chapter members for their support this year. Without them, the chapter's endeavors would not have been so successful. I am very proud of our accomplishments during the past 18 months and my goal for the remainder of my term is to continue to offer interesting events and programs to solidify our members' participation. I wanted to share the following poem as it conveys my personal thoughts for everyone:



My Wish For You At Christmas

My wish for you this Christmas
From deep down in my heart,
Is for all good and happy things
Such holidays impart.

I wish you peace, hope, and love,
And health, and happiness,
Prosperity, and close to you,
The ones you love the best.

My wish for you this Christmas
Is most sincere and true,
And it has a special meaning
Because it's just for you.

And you'll always be remembered
For the friendship that you give,
In all my prayers at Christmastime
And every day I live.

- Grace E. Easley -

AFOSI Program Synopsis

By Jo Smith

Our chapter's November 30th program, "Federal Career Development: An Opportunity Open to Women," was held at the VA Learning Resources Center. The Center graciously provided us with a computer/projector/screen to use for AFOSI Agent In Charge Jack Angelo and one of his team agents' presentation. I would like to note that this action saved the chapter \$500+ for equipment rental--thanks VA members for your generous help.

The first in our new "Career Development Series" introducing the different and diverse careers open to women was eye opening to say the least. We got a first hand look at what the women and men are doing on a daily basis in the "Red Zone Area" of the war on terrorism. The presentation was professional and enlightening. The team member accompanying SAIC Jack Angelo was Agent Michelle Keact-Narchtrab. Ms. Keact-Narchtrab is leaving for Iraq in January for her new assignment. She is a small woman, quiet and not at all what you would be looking for as an agent seeking active terrorists. Both agents are civilian employees working at Tinker AFB.



Agent Michelle Keact-Narchtrab, Jo Smith and SAIC Jack Angelo

He shared with us how the agents go to coffee cafes, book stores and other places where people mingle and talk. This is a method regularly used to gather information shared in everyday conversation but often revealing things needed to give the agents the information to know what is going on in the community/area. The pictures in the presentation brought home that women and men are facing death on an hourly schedule as they pursue the enemy and gather information.

Agent Angelo gave us the requirements for going into this field and offered to look at any resume as the OSI is always looking for new people interested in this profession. The requirements were not the long list we all expected: a four year degree, outgoing personality and a strong passion for an exciting way to serve your country. He left his business cards with us in case we had any one we knew that might want to talk to him about becoming an OSI agent.



Myths and Lore of Mistletoe

Submitted by Debbie L. Miller

Mistletoe and Christmas--What other holiday tradition brings such a smile to the faces of men and women of all ages? It was not always this way.

For at least 3,000 years, mistletoe was gathered in midsummer and was burned as part of a Celtic ritual. Mistletoe was considered sacred by virtue of its occurrence on oak trees (a rare occurrence in Europe), a sacred tree, and a symbol of strength and immortality. The plant was ceremoniously cut with a golden sickle by Celtic priests and caught on a white cloth to avoid touching the ground. This ceremony coincided with the winter solstice and thus began the winter celebration.

Mistletoe was also used to welcome the New Year and to ward off evil. Mistletoe was hung over a baby's cradle to prevent theft from fairies, and it was believed that mistletoe promoted dreams that unlocked the secrets of immortality. When hung in the home, mistletoe symbolized purity and strength and promoted happiness, romance and peace. In fact, custom called for enemies meeting beneath the mistletoe to throw down their weapons and embrace.

Mistletoe also was believed to possess medicinal properties. When worn, mistletoe had the extraordinary powers of warding off demons and witches while protecting the wearer from fits, fever, tremors and poison. On top of all that, it was thought to promote fertility. It was even used as a treatment for convulsions and nervous disorders (even though mistletoe is very poisonous!). It also had some use as a vasodilator and sedative until the 1950s. Modern medical research has shown that mistletoe has promise for treating some cancers, hypertension, vertigo, epilepsy, palsy, and cardiovascular ailments. Research has also confirmed that it is, in fact, very poisonous, so alternatives were developed, and mistletoe--the miracle drug--disappeared.

Because of its association with pagan ceremonies, mistletoe was banned from Christmas ceremonies by the Church. A common medieval belief held that mistletoe was the wood used to make the crucifix. Cursed, mistletoe was no longer welcome on earth and was doomed to live as a parasite growing on trees. It was not until the 17th century that people became more open about their fondness for mistletoe. Kissing under the mistletoe came about because of the belief that mistletoe's curative powers would cure a broken heart and soothe the differences between quarreling lovers.

Every year, mistletoe is collected and used as a Christmas ornament, and every year, children and family pets become ill from the poisonous berries. We do not use mistletoe to ward off baby thieves or to promote dreams of immortality anymore. For some reason though, kissing under the mistletoe has survived through the ages; it probably will for a long, long time, too.

By Andrea Brewer Shea and David Duhl

Identifying and Overcoming Your Blocks

Jenn Givler believes there are three things that can hold us back from achieving our goals. The first is fear, the second is procrastination, and the third is the belief that we cannot achieve what we want.

Getting Over Fear

Fear is a natural part of attempting anything new. There are some positives to fear. It can make you slow down and really look at the decisions you are making – to ensure that those decisions are sound and are the best ones for you.

Fear also serves to protect you from danger. For example, some people fear driving too fast because it might cause an accident. However, fear can also paralyze us into inaction. Fear can come from a multitude of places, but most commonly it's from:

- ❖ Real-life experiences
- ❖ Imagined outcomes of circumstances.

If you've had an unpleasant experience in your life, you may feel fear when similar circumstances come up. We've all experienced rejection. We've all felt embarrassed. These emotions are unpleasant. Fear of such feelings can lead us to avoid situations that might provoke them. For example, picture someone that is about to give a speech. If that person falls on the way up to the podium, she is likely to feel embarrassed. In the future, her fear of similarly embarrassing mishaps might stop her from accepting speaking engagements.

Sometimes we create fear by imagining worst-case scenarios. Let's say you accept a project that you are confident you can successfully complete, even though you have little experience in relevant areas. Later, you begin to feel anxious when you start imagining negative outcomes. Think about the vision you have for your life. What is your ultimate vision of success? What is holding you back from living that vision? Do you think fear is keeping you from achieving it?

Three Strategies:

- ❖ Imagine yourself about to take a big step toward your ultimate goal of success.
- ❖ Jot down all the feelings that come up for you as you imagine yourself taking this step.
- ❖ Make a list of the pros and cons of taking the action vs. not taking the action.

Breaking Out Of Procrastination

A common behavior that can keep us from moving forward is procrastination. Procrastination has many causes. Many times it is rooted in fear. Other times we procrastinate because we have too much going on and can't bear the thought of one more thing to do. Or, we may procrastinate because we don't have the necessary information or tools to complete the task, or because we simply have no interest in the task.

Three strategies:

- ❖ When you realize that you are procrastinating, take some time to discover the reasons you are avoiding or delaying.
- ❖ Map out a plan for your project.
- ❖ Once you've mapped out a plan, if you are still immobile, take just one small step toward the plan's completion.

Believing In Yourself

What if you believe that you can't achieve what you have set out to do? Sometimes we look at the achievements of others and think that we can never be similarly successful. We are intimidated by individuals who appear to be overnight sensations, or have more resources than we do.

Believing that you can't achieve something may be enough to hold you back from even attempting it. The really bad thing is that, if you believe you can't, you won't. Don't get caught up in believing that you can't be successful, or that you can't do what others have done.

Five Strategies:

- ❖ Realize that we are all "normal" people.
- ❖ Know that whatever you can think of is in your power to achieve.

- ❖ Take a look at where you are now and how you got there.
- ❖ Map out some goals for yourself for the next year.
- ❖ Take that vision and create action steps.

If you have a vision for your life and can't seem to get there, or feel as though success is unattainable, you are probably experiencing one of the blocks outlined above. Always remember that you create your life. Ask yourself, is it better to stay stuck in a situation that doesn't serve your goals, or to move forward and experience fulfillment and joy? More than likely, you'll choose fulfillment and joy. Start taking steps today to move toward that vision. Always be gentle with yourself. You are not the only one who struggles with these types of blocks.

The important thing is, don't push your feelings down. Get them out on paper, give them space to breathe. Look at them objectively and then make your plan and move ahead!

Holiday Security Tips

Submitted by Debbie L. Miller

Historically, the holiday season is one of the highest crime periods of the year. Many people have their gifts stolen while at the office or as they carry them out of stores, from their parked vehicles, and from their homes. We encourage you to take the following precautions as you prepare for the upcoming holidays:

Around the Office:

- ❖ Only carry small amounts of cash to work.
- ❖ Don't reveal to coworkers that you have extra cash or valuable gifts at your desk or work station.
- ❖ Never leave money or valuables unattended.
- ❖ Keep electronic devices (i.e. radios, CD players, etc.) with you or secure them while you are not using them.
- ❖ Always secure your purse, wallet or other valuables if you must leave them at your work station.
- ❖ If any of your possessions or valuables are stolen at work, immediately notify your supervisor, your local facility guards (if you are at locations that have guards) and your Servicing Security Element (SSE). If no guards are present contact local law enforcement.

Before You Shop:

- ❖ Again, only carry small amounts of cash.
- ❖ Consider using a fanny pack or place cash and credit cards in the pockets of your clothing to hold what you need instead of carrying a purse.
- ❖ Carry your keys, cash and credit cards separate from each other.
- ❖ Be extremely careful using ATM machines. Try to use them in populated places and pay close attention to your surroundings.
- ❖ If you're not sure a shopping bag will be available to you, take one of your own and consolidate as many packages as possible.

While Shopping:

- ❖ If you do carry a purse or bag, carry it close to your body and always zipped. Be careful if you sling the strap across your body. If the purse or bag is grabbed, you could be injured.
- ❖ Park strategically - as close to the store entrance as possible. Park in well-lit areas. Avoid parking next to large vehicles, bushes, or dumpsters.

- ❖ Remember exactly where you parked your car. Make a mental note or write it down so you will know exactly where to go when you are ready to leave.

After Shopping:

- ❖ Leave the store prior to closing time. This way, there is greater assurance you will walk out with other people. There is safety in numbers.
- ❖ Avoid shopping until you are exhausted. You are more alert when you are less tired.
- ❖ When hurried or in a crowded store, make sure you get all forms of ID and credit cards returned to you before leaving.
- ❖ Check around, underneath, and inside your car as you approach it. Again, pay close attention to your surroundings.
- ❖ Keep your packages stored out of sight or in the trunk of your car if you are going to continue shopping at another location.

At Home:

- ❖ Keep gifts hidden from view through outside windows.
- ❖ After opening gifts when throwing out trash, break down cardboard boxes to avoid revealing your purchase of expensive electronics or other valuable items.

Remember, personal security begins with YOU!!

Origins of Solstice Celebration

Submitted by Debbie L. Miller

Individuals worldwide observe many seasonal days of celebration during the month of December. Most are religious holy days, and are linked in some way to the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. On that day, due to the earth's tilt on its axis, the daytime hours are at a minimum in the Northern hemisphere, and nighttime is at a maximum. In the southern hemisphere, the summer solstice is celebrated in December, when the nighttime is at a minimum and the daytime is at a maximum.

People view other religions in various ways, and thus treat the celebrations of other faiths differently:

- ❖ Some people value the range of December celebrations, because it is evidence of diversity of belief within our common humanity. They respect both their own religious traditions and those of other faiths for their ability to inspire people to lead lives that are more ethical. Religious diversity is to them a positive influence.
- ❖ Others reject the importance of all celebrations other than the holy day recognized by their own religion. Some even reject their religion's holy days, which are seen to have Pagan origins (e.g. Easter and Christmas).
- ❖ Some view other religions as being inspired by Satan. Thus, the solstice celebrations of other religions are rejected because they are seen to be Satanic in origin

The seasons of the year are caused by the 23.5° tilt of the earth's axis. Because the earth is rotating like a top or gyroscope, it points in a fixed direction continuously -- towards a point in space near the North Star; however, the earth is also revolving around the sun. During half of the year, the southern hemisphere is more exposed to the sun than is the northern hemisphere. During the rest of the year, the reverse is true. At noontime in the northern hemisphere, the sun appears high in the sky during summertime and low in the sky during winter. The time of the year when the sun reaches its maximum elevation occurs on the day with the greatest number of daylight hours. This is called the summer solstice and is typically on June 21st in the northern hemisphere -- the first day of summer.

"Solstice" is derived from two Latin words: "sol" meaning sun, and "sistere," to cause to stand still. The lowest elevation occurs about Dec 21st and is the winter solstice -- the first day of winter, when the nighttime hours are at the maximum.

Christianity: Any record of the date of birth of Yeshua of Nazareth (later known as Jesus Christ) has been lost. There is sufficient evidence in the Gospels to indicate that Yeshua was born in the fall but this seems to have been unknown to early Christians. By the beginning of the 4th century CE, there was intense interest in choosing a day to celebrate Yeshua's birthday. The western church leaders selected December 25th because this was already the date recognized throughout the Roman Empire as the birthday of various Pagan gods.

Judaism: Jews celebrate an 8 day festival of Hanukkah, (a.k.a. Feast of Lights, Festival of lights, Feast of Dedication, Chanukah, Chanukkah, Hanukah). It recalls the war fought by the Maccabees in the cause of religious freedom. Antiochus, the king of Syria, conquered Judea in the 2nd century BCE. He terminated worship in the Temple and stole the sacred lamp, the menorah, from before the altar. At the time of the solstice, they rededicated the Temple to a Pagan deity. Judah the Maccabee lead a band of rebels, and succeeding in retaking Jerusalem. They restored the temple and lit the menorah. It was exactly three years after the flame had been extinguished -- at the time of the Pagan rite. Although they had found only sufficient consecrated oil to last for 24 hours, the flames burned steadily for eight days. Today's menorahs have nine branches; the ninth branch is for the Shamash, or servant light, which is used to light the other eight candles. Modern-day Jews celebrate Hanukkah by lighting one candle for each of the eight days of the festival. Once a minor festival, it has been growing in importance in recent years.

Native American Spirituality: The Pueblo tribe observes both the summer and winter solstices. Although the specific details of the rituals differ from pueblo to pueblo, "the rites are built around the sun, the coming New Year and the rebirth of vegetation in the spring....Winter solstice rites include...prayer stick making, retreats, altars, emesis, and prayers for increase.

The Hopi tribe is dedicated to giving aid and direction to the sun which is ready to 'return' and give strength to budding life" Their ceremony is called "Soyal." It lasts for 20 days and includes prayer stick making, purification, rituals and a concluding rabbit hunt, feast and blessing.

There are countless stone structures created by Natives in the past to detect the solstices and equinoxes. One was called *Calendar One* by its modern-day finder. It is in a natural amphitheatre of about 20 acres in size in Vermont. From a stone enclosure in the center of the bowl, one can see a number of vertical rocks and natural features in the horizon, which formed the edge of the bowl. At the solstices and equinoxes, the sun rises and sets at notches or peaks in the ridge, which surrounded the calendar.

Setting Goals

Susanna Palomares believes that successful and happy women have a vision of how their life should be and they set lots of goals (both short-term and long range) to help them reach their vision. By setting goals they are taking control of their life. It's like having a map to show them where you want to go.

The Six P's of Goal Setting

Research tells us that when we write a goal down we are more likely to achieve it. Written goals can be reviewed regularly, and have more power. Like a contract with yourself, they are harder to neglect

or forget. Also when you write your goals in a particular fashion you are able to stimulate your subconscious to be continuously alert to situations that will further your goal. In order for your written goals to have the greatest impact, write them by incorporating the special power of these six P's of goal setting:

Positive - Goals must be stated in positive rather than negative terms.

Present Tense - Goals must be written as though they are happening now or have already happened. The subconscious mind only operates in the now. If you create goals in the future tense, your subconscious will never get there.

Personal - Goals must be about you, and under your control, not about someone else.

Precise - Goals must be clear and describe exactly what you want to do.

Possible - Goals must be realistic and within the realm of possibility to achieve

Powerful - Use words that convey action and emotion.

Happy Birthday!

Rhonda Trent – December 2nd
Linda Vaughn – December 12th
James Bina – December 14th

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