

# The L.A. Organizer

Volume 11, Issue 8

NAPO - Los Angeles

July 2004

President's Message

## So You Want To Become a Professional Organizer?

*Robin L. Davi, Simply Arranged / 2004-05 NAPO-LA President*

I am sure that since the day you were born, you were always neat, clean and extremely organized - so, why not become a professional organizer? In fact, you have organized everything from school work to your friends' closets and so much more.

In my case, it was the spring of 2001 and I was recovering from carpal tunnel surgery, had been on disability for five months and was unemployed, which was not a pretty picture. I knew that I did not want to go back to the corporate world and sit all day at a desk, and especially at a computer, but basically, I had no idea what the future held and how I was going to make a living.

Then, my best friend Gail called to ask me if I had ever heard of a professional organizer, which I had not. Apparently, her boss was moving into a new home and needed assistance unpacking and putting things away, so he had found the name of an organizer in the phone book and set up a consultation. This prompted her to think of me, and she said, "You know Robin, you could be an organizer. Look at everything you have done in the past and how important it was to be organized."

Without further adieu, I went to the

NAPO National website and saw that they were having their annual conference in Austin, Texas in May. I knew I needed to check this out to make an informed decision about becoming a professional organizer.

Nothing could have prepared me for the conference. I signed up for all of the sessions designed for new and wanna-be organizers. It was amazing. I met so many wonderful people that I was totally inspired and ready to come back and begin a new career.

Soon I went to my first L.A. Chapter meeting, joined NAPO, and felt very connected to everyone, knowing right away that this is where I belonged.

The hardest part was coming up with a name for my business, but once that had been decided, I filed my DBA notice, applied for a business license and hired a graphic designer to create a logo.

I thought I was now on my way, but how was I going to get clients? After having a gift basket business for a few years, I realized I could rely on those contacts, and I also joined the chamber of commerce and a networking group, and from there I received my first two clients.

I also placed ads in the yellow pages and hired a company to create a website. It took a while for the phone to ring, but as time went on, the word got out and I received more referrals and calls from the yellow pages, which to this day has been my best source for new business.

I believe that all of us have a story of

*President's Message continued on page 2*

## Case Studies Program is a Big Hit

*Andy Frasure, Andy's Organizing / Director of Professional Development*

Our June case study meeting received great reviews. Based on the feedback provided on evaluation forms, having two meetings a year examining various case studies would be highly beneficial and worthwhile to our membership.

Our sincerest appreciation and gratitude go to Lynne Gilberg, Barbara Ricketts, and Nicole Juarez for providing us with three exceptional case studies. Each of the three panel members provided an engaging, well-developed account of their challenges and how they overcame them. Audience members contributed to the success of the meeting by asking great questions and actively participating in the discussion.

Reminder: Ideas for the theme of the 2005 NAPO-LA Conference should be submitted to [andyfrasure@napola.org](mailto:andyfrasure@napola.org) by July 15th for consideration.

The next LA Chapter NAPO meeting will be Monday, July 26th at 6:15pm. Please be sure to fill out and submit the meeting evaluation form at the end of the meeting as they are very important in helping us feature topics and speakers that our membership wants to hear. Whether the feedback is positive or negative, both help us plan better, more productive meetings. Please help us build the quality of our chapter by filling out the meeting evaluation forms and giving us good honest feedback.

### In this issue

Abbreviated Minutes	p. 4
Calendar	p. 2
July Program	p. 1
Membership Update	p. 4
Silent Auction Volunteer	p. 3
Volunteer of the Month	p. 2
Who's Who	p. 6

*President's Message from page 1*

how we became an organizer and what it took emotionally, physically and financially to create a whole new career as an entrepreneur. For many of you, it was probably the hardest thing you have ever done, and for many it was a piece of cake.

I am a firm believer that if I could leave behind the security of over 20 years in the corporate world with full benefits, a 401(k) plan, bonuses and getting paid every two weeks, that anyone can, if they put their hearts and minds to it.

Whether you are a veteran organizer or just beginning, nothing can prepare you for the personal satisfaction of meeting new people and developing new friendships. My experience is that NAPO and NAPO-LA are the cornerstone and inspiration to learn new skills and hone your old skills.

Personally, my life has changed for the better ten-fold, as I have gained more confidence, made new friends, have terrific clients, and most of all, get to do what I love.

The world needs organization, and thank goodness we are all here to lend a helping hand (and sometimes a plastic container).

## Calendar

### July

- 11-17 Take Charge of Change Week
- 17 Toss Away the "Could Have's" and "Should Have's" Day
- 26 Board Meeting: 2:30pm
- 26 Chapter Meeting: 6:15pm

### August

- 1-7 Simplify Your Life Week
- 14 National Garage Sale Day
- 15-21 Reduce the Clutter Week
- 23 Board Meeting: 2:30pm
- 23 Chapter Meeting: 6:15pm

### September

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Month
- Self Improvement Month
- 7 Do It Day!
- 20-24 National Love Your Files Week
- 27 Board Meeting: 2:30pm
- 27 Chapter Meeting: 6:15pm

## May Volunteer of the Month

# Member Works Hard to Share Organizing and Business Knowledge

*Heather Thompson, Organization Matters*

Each month, the NAPO-LA Board of Directors recognizes one of our wonderful volunteers to show how valuable their donation of time and energy to this chapter is and how much they are appreciated.

The NAPO-LA Volunteer of the Month for May is Barbara Ricketts of LifeStyle Management Associates, who was recognized for her volunteer work in several aspects of our chapter. Most importantly, she has been instrumental in the development and implementation of our Mentoring, Education, and Training Program. This is a new and growing program and Barbara and the rest of the committee are working hard to make it a success. Barbara also helps with the New Member Orientations and is a greeter at our chapter meetings.

Why does she volunteer her time to NAPO-LA? Barbara said that through volunteering she can share what she has learned with others, and, in return, she acquires knowledge that helps her grow personally and professionally. She also likes to give back to NAPO-LA for the educational opportunities and professional relationships she has developed.



It is not just NAPO-LA that benefits from her generosity. Barbara also volunteers her time at the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital in Santa Clarita, where she and her Golden Retriever, Treasure, are involved in the Pet Therapy program.

Barbara also has a successful professional organizing business that she started by accident when working as a personal assistant to an interior decorator. She ended up organizing the decorator's home office, after which referrals followed and her business began to grow.

It wasn't until 1994 that she found out about NAPO. Barbara had just moved to the New England area and she joined NAPO-NE (formerly known as NEPO). Barbara was active in the NAPO-NE chapter, too, serving on their board for two years.

Barbara says she tries to educate clients and potential clients about professional organizing and NAPO when speaking to them and through the monthly article she writes for a Santa Clarita magazine. A lot of her business is focused on general residential organizing and teaching women to regain control of their lives. She feels her ideal client is one with whom she can build a good and lasting relationship, as it is important to her to have fun with her clients while helping them organize. Most of all, she likes to help empower her clients to make change.

Barbara says she picked organizing as a profession because she has a passion for organizing and truly enjoys her work.

Silent Auction Volunteer

# NAPO-LA Past President to Share Knowledge on Organizing, Business and NAPO with Highest Bidder

## Marilyn Crouch Avenues to Organization

Marilyn Crouch believes, "Life isn't about finding yourself, life is about creating yourself." After almost 21 years working in administration and management with a Fortune 500 company, Marilyn Crouch felt there was more to life than working in the grind of the corporate world.

So in 2000, she quit her job, which was pretty brave, considering she is single! She took some time off to do some soul searching, and the result was her transformation into a Professional Organizer and Life Coach. In April 2001, Marilyn joined NAPO-LA and opened Avenues to Organization.

Marilyn believes in being an active participant in the organizations she belongs to and immediately became very active in NAPO-LA. She joined the Board of Directors and has served as the Vice-President, GO Week Coordinator, and in April 2004, completed her term as President.

She is a member of NSGCD and an active member in the

Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Marilyn does organizing full time, considers herself a generalist and loves the variety of the organizing she does. The majority of her business is focused on home office and business organizing, but she also does relocation and home organizing to add variety to her business. In addition, she can be found speaking to college faculty, social organizations, and professional organizations.

Marilyn has been trained and graduated from the Coaches Training Institute and has added Life Coaching to her business. She loves working with people and helping them reach their full potential, clear their life from what is holding them back, and create a fulfilled life!

*The Silent Auction is a regular fundraiser for our chapter and is held at each meeting. During the meeting the volunteer will be announced and a clipboard will be passed around to everyone at the meeting. Anyone can bid by signing the sheet as it goes around. The highest bidder wins a one-hour, in-person or telephone consultation during which they can ask anything they want regarding the professional organizing business.*



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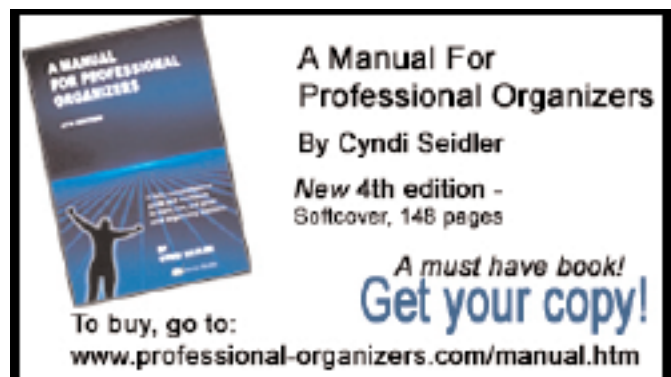
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# Focus on Filing: Making Your Office Work Better

Louise Kurzeka, Professional Organizer

It's Monday morning, 8:24 a.m. You are frantically searching through your workspace trying to retrieve two current project files, a vendor proposal and last month's activity report; all information needed for the staff meeting due to begin in six minutes. This panic stricken and stress-filled moment is brought to you by Disorganization, Inc.

If this has happened to you, you're not alone. This scene is repeated numerous times a day in offices coast to coast. Why? Usually, lack of a simple and easy to use filing system. When consulting with clients, I have often seen filing systems that do nothing to ensure that information can be retrieved quickly, and do everything to ensure papers never get put back where they belong. Documents filed haphazardly, unlabeled drawers, hard-to-read file tabs, and project papers strewn about, are all signs of a broken system. Using a few strategies along with some time-saving tools can keep you from these daily office "treasure hunts."

To start, think about the categories into which your papers and files could be segmented. Suggested designations that may fit your needs: Clients, Vendors, Prospects, Forms, Administrative, Personnel, Marketing, Technology, Products, Reports and Personal. Use those that apply, adding in others as your papers and work dictate. By creating small families of files, you'll be able to focus on just one section of information versus an entire drawer.

After determining your categories, designate a specific color for each category. Color coding the file groupings in this way is a key step in creating a file system that is easy to use. The visual distinction of color makes fast work of retrieving and re-filing documents. I suggest using Smead Hanging File Folders with match-

ing Smead Interior Folders. With 10 distinctive colors to choose from, these products can accommodate the needs of most filing systems.

When placing the files for your categories into cabinets and drawers, orient the individual hanging folders alphabetically within each category. The "alphabet" is an organizing system we all are familiar with – it's clear-cut and simple. Plus, others can access the files without learning a new system. Be sure to place one hanging folder tabbed with the category name, for instance, Vendors, at the beginning of that category section. This category file acts as a visual header for the information that follows and can hold a log of all hanging file names in that category. The log works as a ready reference tool, especially in groupings with extensive numbers of files.

Now you're ready to label. Easy-to-read file folder tabs can save lots of time when accessing your filing system. I've observed many clients struggling to identify pencil scrawled words too small to read, even with a magnifier. An alternative to consider – the Smead Viewables Labeling System. The PC generated "Viewables" are larger than standard file folder tabs so more information can be placed on each tab. Additionally, the Viewables tab, which prints in bold, block lettering, can be read from the front, back and top of the file drawer. This is especially helpful in lateral file drawers.

To finish creating your new improved filing system, label the outside of each file drawer with the specific category names for files held in that drawer. This final visual cue will help you quickly memorize locations for the new file groupings, plus helps others find information when you are not available.

While the problems associated with storing files are solved by creating the color-coded system, you're still left with the challenge of managing project papers. Many of us tend to leave files and documents associated with active projects out in the open to provide a constant reminder that there is still more work to be done. Unfortunately this "horizontal filing system" can occupy a lot of desk and credenza real estate. Instead, contain these documents in Smead Hanging Folders

*Filing continued on page 5*

## Abbreviated Minutes June Board Meeting

*Heather Thompson,  
Organization Matters/  
NAPO-LA Secretary*

1. Project Angel Food is the non-profit organization that has been selected for the Chapter's Get Organized Week project.
2. The Board has voted to test a new format for publishing and delivering the LA Organizer.
3. July 15th was established as the cut-off date for the LA Conference Theme contest. Results to be announced at the July meeting.
4. The new Chapter logos from National NAPO have been received and will be implemented by the Board.

## Membership Report

*Nicole Juarez,  
Elements of Organizing/  
NAPO-LA VP Membership*

June Mtg. Attendance.....	42
Members.....	36
Guests.....	6
New Members.....	2
Total Membership.....	106

Filing from page 4

with Smead Interior Folders, stored in a Smead Rolling File. The desk-high rolling filing cart provides easy access to project information, whether working at your desk, at a conference table or in a colleague's office. Using Smead Viewables Tabs to label the hanging files in this open-top cart will simplify retrieval and replacement of project documents. The Rolling File is large enough to accommodate multiple projects or a single "paper heavy" project.

If you work on several projects concurrently, it can be helpful to create a task list for each project. This "To Do" list should designate the multiple steps for project completion. It becomes your checklist for staying on track and meeting target deadlines. An ideal place to store this reminder list is the cover page holder of a Smead Indexed Folder. This durable poly folder has five separate tabbed sections which can help manage active project documents or those needed for transport to and from meetings. When not in use, store each project's Indexed Folder in a runner rack kept on your desktop. Be sure to label the rack "Project Manager." Now the easy-to-see task list will be your constant reminder, rather than digging through stacks of

project papers.

Creating both a categorized and color-coded filing system along with good containment of project files, will help you avoid those daily paper panic attacks and make your office work better.

...

Louise Kurzeka has been working in the field of organization since 1992 and is co-founder of Everything's Together<sup>SM</sup>. Along with business partner, Pam Hix, she has helped hundreds of business and residential clients overcome the challenges of clutter and disorganization. Through her popular seminars and presentations, Louise has shared her secrets to thousands of individuals interested in developing and improving their organizational skills.

A frequent television and radio guest, she can be seen regularly on HGTV's TIPical Mary Ellen Show. Louise is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers and a Founding Member of the Minnesota Chapter of NAPO. She can be reached at Everything's Together<sup>SM</sup>, 13012 June Terrace, Minnetonka, MN 55305-2740, (952) 939-8080.

From the Editor and the Publisher

## New Format for L.A. Organizer to debut in August

*Dee Saar, editor, and Laurie Clarke, publisher*

To better serve our members, the next issue of the L.A. Organizer will be in html format. This means that it will be more dynamic and will work with the NAPO-LA website with direct links to further information on our chapter and events.

If you already receive other newsletters in this format, you know how efficient it can be to click on a link as you are reading an article and jump to more information on the given topic.

The new format will be easy to print and read that way as well.

If you have suggestions or comments about the newsletter, we would love to hear from you! E-mail [deesaar@napola.org](mailto:deesaar@napola.org) or [laurieclarke@napola.org](mailto:laurieclarke@napola.org).

## Welcome! New NAPO-LA Members

### APRIL 2004

Susan Honnold  
Los Angeles

### MAY 2004

Sttevenn Bennett  
Rosemead

Brenda Cotton  
1-800-Got-Junk  
Los Angeles

Tom Nevermann  
The Moving Doctor  
Beverly Hills

Jennifer Roberts  
Room 2 Spare  
Newbury Park

Sahira Traband  
New Leaf Organizational  
Transformations  
Los Angeles

### JUNE 2004

Tiffany Schwartz  
Clearly Efficient  
Newport Beach

John Trosko  
OrganizingLA  
West Hollywood

"According to a Boston marketing firm, *the average American burns 55 minutes a day - roughly 12 weeks a year - looking for things they know they own but can't find.*"

Newsweek June 7, 2004

# NAPO-Los Angeles Who's Who

## 2004 - 2005 Officers

**President:** Robin Davi  
RobinDavi@napola.org  
(805) 522-9687

**VP Membership:** Nicole Juarez  
NicoleJuarez@napola.org  
(909) 476-8448

**Director of Professional Development:**  
Andy Frasure  
AndyFrasure@napola.org  
(818) 571-8685

**Director of Communications and Technology:**  
Chris McKenry  
ChrisMcKenry@napola.org  
(323) 571-2134

**Secretary:** Heather Thompson  
HeatherThompson@napola.org  
(818) 621-7185

**Treasurer:** Cindy Kamm  
CindyKamm@napola.org  
(310) 836-6471

**Past President:** Marilyn Crouch  
MarilynCrouch@napola.org  
(310) 375-9927

Shop the NAPO-LA Mall  
[napola.org/mall.cfm](http://napola.org/mall.cfm)  
Every purchase benefits our members.

## Coordinators & Committee Chairs

**Associate Member Coordinator:**  
Barb Schmitt

**Client Referrals Coordinator:**  
Pat Brubaker

**Conference Coordinator:** *Open*

**Database/Directory:** Tanya Whitford

**Golden Circle Advisor:** Ann Gambrell

**Greeting Coordinator:** Toni Scharff

**Greeters:** Dee Saar, Barbara Ricketts,  
Toni Scharff

**Librarian:** Lenore Sokol

**Meeting Assistant:** Sara Getzkin

**MET Program Coordinators:** Jean  
Furuya, Barbara Ricketts, Tanya Whitford

**New Member Orientation:**  
Jean Furuya, Ann Gambrell

**Public Relations:** *Open*

**Registration Assistants:** Susan Honnold,  
Claire Quinlan

**Scrapbooker:** Mary Lasnier

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Mischele Vieira

**Webmasters:** Cindy Kamm, Chris McKenry,  
Gayle Westrate, Tanya Whitford

**Web Listing Coordinator:** Toni Scharff



## National Association of Professional Organizers Mission:

To develop, lead and promote professional organizers and the organizing industry.

NAPO Headquarters  
4700 W. Lake Avenue  
Glenview, Illinois 60025-1485  
Telephone: (847) 375-4746  
Fax (within US): (877) 734-8668  
E-mail: [hq@napo.net](mailto:hq@napo.net)

## National Membership Annual Dues

Individual	\$200
Associate-Branch	\$150
Associate-Corporate	\$550
Associate-Local	\$250
New Member One-Time Processing Fee	\$20
NAPO Name Badge	\$10

## NAPO-LA Mission:

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

NAPO-Los Angeles  
PMB 134, 10573 W. Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
Hotline (213) 486-4477  
[www.napola.org](http://www.napola.org)

## Chapter Membership:

National NAPO membership required.  
Price includes electronic newsletter.

## Annual Dues (Oct. 2004 to Sept. 2005)

Basic Member	\$75
Website Listing (Optional)	\$55
Out-of-State Individual	\$50
Associate Member	\$150
New/ Lapsed Member Processing Fee	\$10
Meeting Fee	\$7

## Non-Members

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

## The L.A. Organizer Staff

**EDITOR:** Dee Saar  
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**PUBLISHER:** Laurie Clarke  
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**STAFF WRITERS:** Talia Eisen, Jean Furuya, Gloria Schklair, Kathleen Schulweiss, and Tanya Whitford  
**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Evelyn Gray

**Submission Guidelines:** Published 10 times per year. All articles are copyrighted, all rights reserved. Submit text in MicroSoft Word attachment or type directly into e-mail message. Attach visuals as .jpg or .tif. Send to DeeSaar@napola.org.

**Deadline:** The fifteenth of the month for any submission.

**Advertisements:** Ads appear as icons on an html page and include a hyperlink to your website. Send art in .jpg format at 72 dpi to LaurieClarke@napola.org. All art and payments must be received by the 15th of the month for submission. All payments to be arranged with Cindy Kamm (CindyKamm@napola.org).

**Ad Size:** 100x125 pixels      **Member Price:** \$25      **Non-Member:** \$35



*The Organizing Authority* <sup>SM</sup>

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