



# Capital News & Views

## The Art of Pre-Assessment

### Next Chapter Meeting - September 8, 2008

#### Phone Assessment and Intake Forms

Do you feel like you are getting the right information before entering your client's home or office? Have you ever been surprised by the scope of a job once you arrived? Are you missing opportunities because you are too busy organizing to answer your phone? In this session, the *Space Matters*® team of Mindy Godding (CPO®, CPO-CD®) and Katherine Lawrence (CPO®) will share techniques for building successful client relationships from the first point of contact. You will learn to grow your business through procedures including client self-assessments, phone/email consultations, and niche marketing. Strengthen your phone interview techniques and develop

your own "Client Intake Form", customized to your business. Learn to pre-screen prospective clients to determine their needs and begin formulating a strategy before an on-site visit. We will teach you how to delegate the information gathering process to an administrative or organizing assistant to capture leads and eliminate surprises.

#### Ask the Experts Focus Group

Come early (6:15 pm) to register, network, and visit NAPO-WDC Corporate Partners. If you are new to organizing, attend our informal "Ask the Expert" Focus Group from 6:30 to 6:55 pm, hosted by a member of NAPO's Golden Circle.

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## September 8 Chapter Meeting Information

#### Location

Westin Tysons Corner  
7801 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22043  
703-893-1340

[www.westintysonscorner.com](http://www.westintysonscorner.com)

There is ample free parking.

#### Meeting Agenda

6:30 - 7:00 pm Registration, Networking and "Ask the Expert" Focus Group

7:00 - 9:00 pm Business Meeting and Program

Guests are welcome to attend for a \$25 fee per meeting.

*Professional attire please.*

**This Issue  
Client  
Assessments**

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# Professionalism



Michelle Bogert  
*SatisFunctional Spaces*  
*NAPO-WDC Chapter President*  
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What does it mean to be a professional? According to Webster's New World Dictionary, a professional is a person who is "worthy of the high standards of a profession." And a profession is, "a vocation or occupation requiring advanced training... and usually involving mental rather than manual work."

If we and the people around us were more professional, our lives would be easier, our businesses would grow more effortlessly, we'd find our jobs more fulfilling... the list of dramatic benefits can go on and on. What can we do to make sure that we, and our associates, are becoming increasingly more professional?

The traits that are usually associated with professionalism are:

- Conscientiousness
- Competence
- Timeliness
- Sensitivity
- Confidentiality
- Effective Communication
- Integrity

A trait that is often overlooked is the desire for lifelong learning. As professionals, we distinguish ourselves by our dedication to personal growth. We work to implement the ideas and skills from training programs and seminars. A professional is always reading something which prompts them to grow and develop. Professionals aren't afraid to try something different, to expand their comfort zones, understanding that while it might be uncomfortable, it may allow them to build additional capabilities. Professionals seek individuals who stimulate them to think by joining professional associations, small groups, and Internet communities.

Whether it's honing existing skills and knowledge or developing expertise, NAPO-WDC can help you enhance your career and increase your value to your client. One of our missions is to promote lifelong learning by providing opportunities for us to expand our knowledge base and stay up-to-date on new developments. Continuing education involves more than passively attending a few courses; it involves actively taking some responsibility for your own learning. Thus, as a professional organizer, you should approach continuing education in the broadest sense, using all available resources at your disposal.

NAPO-WDC also provides the opportunity for collaboration with leading experts in our field who will share their knowledge and experiences with you. We can all learn from successful people by finding out how they achieved their success. You and your business will recognize a return on the investment when fresh ideas are brought back to the workplace and you are able to connect with emerging trends.

Lifelong learning is an attitude; that one can and should be open to new ideas, decisions, skills or behaviors. "It's never too soon or too late for learning!"

Michelle

# NAPO in the Schools Arrives!



Amy Goldberg-Cutler  
*The Runaround*  
NAPO-WDC Marketing  
Director  
NAPO in the Schools Liaison for NAPO-WDC  
[www.runaround.com](http://www.runaround.com)

We are pleased to announce that NAPO in the Schools has come to our chapter! This program is newly launched and aims to bring professional organizers into our area schools. It is a community outreach program available to all NAPO members as part of your membership. The program was developed by a task force of NAPO members who have a passion for working with and educating students. The task force has created a comprehensive package for trained organizers to go into their local elementary schools, to connect with their communities, and to build their credibility as professional organizers. It doesn't get much easier than this to get involved!

The Fall of 2007 marked the debut of the NAPO in the Schools elementary school program. It is designed for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. The middle school and high school programs are still in development with plans to be launched by Fall 2008 and Fall 2009, respectively. The programs teach students the benefits of being organized as well as basic organizing principles. We show students that being organized is important and really does make a difference.

NAPO in the Schools elementary school program is a completely interactive classroom presentation. Professional organizers teach students the benefits of being organized using the fictional characters, Drake and Hazel. This hands-on organizing exercise helps students learn the first steps of the organizing process: sorting and purging.

Training is required for all NAPO mem-

bers who want to become NAPO in the Schools providers. The NAPO in the Schools website provides information about the program, frequently asked questions, and training and program materials. This website is located through the NAPO website at [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net), in the Members Only section.

NAPO in the Schools provides an excellent opportunity to volunteer and get involved with our chapter. Amy Goldberg-Cutler is our chapter's temporary NAPO in the Schools liaison. The following chapter members are trained providers of the elementary school program: Michelle Bogert, C. Lee Cawley, Sandra Forbes, Amy Goldberg-Cutler, Lauren Halagarda, Jennifer Kundrod and Cheryl Richardson.

With the beginning of the new school year, we look forward to other members participating in training for this outstanding program. Deborah Kawashima, Task Force Chair, will be holding training via teleconference. The dates and times have been

planned to accommodate all schedules. View the teleconference schedule in the Members Only section of [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net) for available dates and times and to sign-up for a NAPO in the Schools training session.

Our chapter's goal is to present one program a month in the upcoming year. A committee has been established to promote the program and to coordinate acquiring the materials that are needed for the presentation. If you are interested in scheduling your school, becoming a presenter or want additional information, please send an email to [marketing@dcorganizers.org](mailto:marketing@dcorganizers.org) or call Amy Goldberg-Cutler at 301-922-0196.

**We are excited to bring this newly launched NAPO program to our chapter and we invite other chapter members to join us!**

## NAPO-WDC 2008-2009 Committee Chairs

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# Certification

## September

- 8 Chapter Meeting:  
The Art of Pre-  
Assessment  
Westin  
Tysons Corner
- 23 Book Club North
- 25-27 NSGCD  
Conference  
St. Louis, MO



Susan Kousek, CPO®  
*Balanced Spaces® LLC*  
Chapter CPO® Liaison  
[www.balancedspaces.com](http://www.balancedspaces.com)

### Not Yet Certified?

Did your beach reading include books on organizing? Did you listen to the NAPO 2008 conference CD "Studying for Certification, Studying for Your Future"? Are you ready for the certification exam?

The next computer-based exam is offered throughout the month November in Hanover, Woodlawn, and Bel Air in Maryland, and in Abingdon, Ashburn, Falls Church, Herndon, Norfolk, Richmond, and Roanoke in Virginia.

For more information about the exam, including eligibility requirements, visit [www.certifiedprofessionalorganizers.org](http://www.certifiedprofessionalorganizers.org).

**Already Certified?**  
For those who have attained Certified Professional Organizer® status, don't forget to record your continuing education credits (CEUs) online at the CPO web site. Recertification is required every three years and requires either retaking the exam or 1,000 hours of paid work in any area related to organizing PLUS earning

45 organizing-related CEUs during the 3-year period.

To record your CEUs, go to the CPO web site noted above. Select "CPO Only" and log in with your username and password (they're in your CPO letter). After logging in the first time, you'll be asked to change your password.

On the left, you'll see a choice for "Record My CEUs." You record them one at a time, so don't wait until the last minute to record all of them. Notice the note: No credit is given for any coursework less than a full hour. However, 90-minute courses now result in a 1.5 hour credit. At this time, credits are given only in half-hour increments, so a class of an hour and 45 minutes will be credited as 1.5 hours.

On that same menu on the left, you'll see "Edit My Info." It's a good idea to review this periodically – your contact info, a brief paragraph about your business, the organizations to which you belong, and whether you authorize your name to be included in the public listing of CPOs. Your name will not appear unless you select "Agree" after the Directory Display Authorization at the bottom of this screen.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Kousek at 703-742-9179 or [skousek@balancedspaces.com](mailto:skousek@balancedspaces.com).

## October

- 6 Chapter Meeting:  
Tech-Savvy  
Organizing  
TBD
- TBD New Member  
Brunch  
TBD
- 22 Book Club South

## November

- 3 Chapter Meeting:  
Roundtable  
Discussions  
Westin  
Tysons Corner
- 18 Book Club North

## December

- 1 Chapter Meeting:  
"My Mother's  
Garden"  
TBD
- 10 Book Club South

## January

- 5 Chapter Meeting:  
Organize Your  
Estate  
Westin  
Tysons Corner
- 20 Book Club North

## February

- 2 Chapter Meeting:  
Best Business  
Practices  
TBD

(Continued on page 5)

## Become a Certified Professional Organizer® (CPO®)

<http://www.certifiedprofessionalorganizers.org/>

Find eligibility requirements, answers to commonly asked questions and other details to help you decide if you are ready to sit for future CPO® examinations.

### Benefits of Certification

- Recognition of achievement within the industry.
- Competitive market advantage.
- Professional development and increased knowledge gained through preparation for the BCPO examination.
- Listing on the BCPO web site.
- Authority to use the CPO® designation on letterhead, business cards and all marketing materials.



# The Value of . . .

## Complimentary In-Home Assessments



Jessica Williams  
Clutter Doctor  
NAPO-WDC Golden Circle  
Liaison  
[clutterdr@earthlink.net](mailto:clutterdr@earthlink.net)

While many professional organizers charge for initial consultations, complimentary in-home assessments are valuable for both me and my prospects.

First, let me be clear that, for my business, a free assessment does not mean doing even a minute of hands-on organizing without pay, nor providing a complimentary action plan for them to follow on their own.

What it does mean is having the opportunity to make an educated decision about whether or not to enter into a business relationship by:

- meeting the prospect in person for less than an hour so we can both determine (before any agreements are signed) if we are the right fit for working long hours together;
- seeing the actual physical state of the space (which may differ greatly from how it has been described over the phone);
- determining if there are health or safety issues for me to consider;
- deciding if the scope of the job is more than I want to take on (if I already have several long-term clients who can only meet me on weekends, I may not want one more);
- asking questions both from my standard questionnaire and those that

could arise only when seeing the space firsthand;

- telling the client whether or not I have handled similar situations and/or feel qualified to do the job, and discuss what type of organizer might be a better fit, if necessary;
- using general terms to explain how the project will be tackled and in what area I would recommend starting, especially if there are time or budget issues for them;
- making a list of what types of products/tools I will bring to the first work session since I don't keep everything in my car at all times;
- easing any anxiety the client feels so that s/he can enthusiastically get down to business at the first work session!

“. . .having the opportunity to make an educated decision about whether or not to enter into a business relationship . . . ”

I ensure that time spent

traveling to the assessment is worthwhile by staying in my preferred geographical area and by informing the prospect of my hourly rate before our meeting – no time wasted on price-shoppers.

I personally would not hire a contractor to work in my own home based solely on a phone conversation. I want to meet them face-to-face. Similarly, they want to see what the job entails before accepting the job or placing a bid.

Some organizers may argue that the free, in-home consult means giving away too much of their time and energy. However, I see it as a worthwhile investment because I am hand-picking clients that are a perfect match for me and my business!

(Continued from page 4)

18 Book Club South

### March

2 Chapter Meeting:  
Envisioning the Future  
Westin  
Tysons Corner

24 Book Club North

### April

6 Chapter Meeting:  
Reduce, Reuse,  
Recycle, Rethink  
TBD

22 Book Club South

29-  
May 2 NAPO National  
Conference  
Orlando, Florida

### May

4 Chapter Meeting:  
Annual Awards  
Dinner  
TBD

19 Book Club North

### June

1 Chapter Meeting:  
A Few of Our  
Favorite Things  
TBD

17 Book Club South

### July

TBD Book Club North

**No chapter meetings  
in July or August.**

Do you promote a product or service useful to professional organizers? NAPO-WDC would like to have you as our Corporate Partner. For more information please visit [www.dcon organizers.org/become-corporate-partner.php](http://www.dcon organizers.org/become-corporate-partner.php)

## PR Corner

Cheryl Larson, *Cheryl's Organizing Concepts*, gave a presentation to the Northern Virginia Women's Club at the Fairfax Country Club in June.

Linda Flickinger represented *Cheryl's Organizing Concepts* at the Get Stronger, Live Longer Expo held at White Flint Mall in May.

Cheryl Larson, *Cheryl's Organizing Concepts*, assisted members at the Silver Spring Drop-In Center who had formed a Clutter Group in April. Cheryl returned to the center in May to present an organizing workshop.

Victoria Robinson, *Clutterbucks*, Alisa Levy, *Embrace Your Space*, and Stacey Graham, *Time 2 Get Organized*, volunteered at the Fairfax Unitarian Yard Sale in May.

Janet Schiesl, *Basic Organization*, spoke to the MOMS Club of Purcellville, VA on July 15.

Lynn Meltzer, *Clutter and Paperworks*, taught a one week course in July, "Organize Yourself: Save Time and Money" at the Chautauqua Institution in NY.

Heather Coccozza, *Coccozza Organizing & Design, LLC*, presented the course "Organize Your Office & Control the Paper" and "Design Your Space & Organize Your Home" in June through Arlington County Adult Education.

# What to Know Before You Go



Victoria Robinson  
*Clutterbucks*  
[Clutterbucksvar@cox.net](mailto:Clutterbucksvar@cox.net)

Assessing the client begins before you arrive onsite. "Selling" yourself as an organizer also begins during that first call. What are your goals for that preliminary contact? Obviously, one goal is to learn why this person called you: determining what his/her needs are and whether this assignment is a good fit for both of you, without exposing yourself to a too-long confessional. The second goal is to present enough information about you and your business to get hired.

A one-page Intake Form permits collection of basic data and being able to listen *actively*, while simultaneously completing a mix of 'fill-in-the-blank' and check-off questions, plus having space to record answers to open-ended questions. Demographics might include: name, address, phones (home/work/cell), email address, plus some open space to record personal/family 'background'. Check-off boxes capture type of job: home, office, home-office, training/consulting, or "other." Given my allergies, I want to know if the client smokes or has pets. I might not turn down those jobs, but I need to be prepared. Without a GPS, I use MapQuest. I still solicit driving directions (once the caller has actually committed to an initial visit) and add info to the Intake.

Recording dates -- whether using a paper or electronic file -- is important: date of first call/email, date (and time) of first onsite appointment. If the caller won't commit to meeting you, on what date will you take follow-up action? If you have a website, the caller may already know the basics about your business. But especially if you *don't* have a website, mailing out mar-

keting info can still get you hired. One other marketing idea: ask how the caller heard about your business. If your form has several check-off options, it'll be easier to track (NAPO referral, Yellow Pages, website, referral from \_\_\_\_\_, etc.)

While I'm assessing the caller's needs (often starting with an open-ended question like: "What is it that made you make this call *today*?"), I'm seeking not just the specific tasks (and if I'm good at those things), but listening for mood & motivation. Calm or 'crazed'? Is the organizing request mostly defined, or is this an overwhelmed person who needs my help in clarifying goals before we can craft an action plan and do the hands-on work? I also try to see if the job might benefit from a 2-person team, and if so, who might be the best adjunct organizer.

Asking "do you live alone or with others?"

**"determining what his/her needs are and whether this assignment is a good fit for both of you."**

is a tactful way to learn who constitutes 'the client'. With anyone who's partnered, I'll often ask "who's the decision-maker about what stays vs. goes?" and "Might both of you be available, at least for the initial consult?" If the caller works *outside* the home (or if it's a stay-at-home person with a full schedule), it's good to clarify not only the preferred time for an *initial* visit, but what -- if any -- weekday flexibility they have for organizing sessions. Does this job require a weekend organizer? Do you have a minimum number of hours/session -- have you said so?

Finally, explaining (in a friendly and reassuring manner) what will happen in Session #1 -- and how the preliminary needs already mentioned will be expanded upon and *solved* -- will hopefully get you hired. That's when the "real" assessment begins!

---

# Assessments

## A Benefit to You and Your Client



**Janet Schiesl**  
*Basic Organization*  
[www.BasicOrganization.com](http://www.BasicOrganization.com)

I do two types of assessments. One I call a Home Assessment and one I do for my benefit at the first Hands-On Organizing appointment. At first contact, I explain the difference between the two types of assessments to prospective clients.

A Home Assessment is for the do-it-yourselfers who just want some direction and advice. This type of assessment is for the client's benefit alone. I ask many questions of the client and determine a course of action that they could take. I give them advice on products or services that could be helpful. I see my role at this type of appointment as a de-cluttering cheerleader. Sometimes these appointments turn into Hands-On Organizing appointments, but sometimes not. That's ok. As people become more familiar with the role of a professional organizer, they want to learn how it can benefit them and sometimes they want to try it themselves.

If a new client chooses to hire me for Hands-On Organizing, I do the same type of assessment, but for my benefit along with the clients. By seeing the whole space and speaking to the client face to face, I formulate a plan of action that we will implement together. Of course, these assessments are somewhat different; as I know what I can do to help the client focus on their goals, stay motivated, let things go, and set up systems that will work for them.

An assessment is an interesting part of client contact for me. Often the phrase from Kathy Waddill, "Eyes of a Stranger" pops into my head at an assessment. I find that people are so immersed in their environment that they don't see the big picture. They don't have to be my most disorganized client to be that way. I think not "seeing the forest through the trees," happens to a lot of people. Sometimes it makes me wonder about my space. Could it be better organized? That's why I always leave my clients with the idea that it's an ongoing process for us all, client and organizer.

---

# Book Club South



**Judy Parkins**  
*Gently Organized*  
[www.gentlyorganized.com](http://www.gentlyorganized.com)

It's official – we have a Book Club South! The club will meet every other month to discuss the latest books on organizing and related topics; the book for October is "When Organizing Isn't Enough: SHED Your Stuff, Change Your Life," by Julie Morgenstern. A New York Times best selling author, Morgenstern calls her readers' attention to the behavior and emotions that create clutter, as well as offering a system for clutter reduction.

A Book Club South planning meeting was held on Sunday, August 10, with many

members sending their regrets but offering planning input. C. Lee Cawley, an active member of Book Club North, attended the meeting and offered invaluable information on schedule, format, and potential books.

Several members expressed an interest in attending both Book Clubs and requested that the meetings not conflict with one another. Book Club North begins meeting in September and meets every other month until July 2009. Book Club South will kick off on Wednesday, October 22, meeting every other month at 7 p.m. on either the second or third Wednesday through June 2009. Future meeting locations will be determined by Book Club South attendees.

## NAPO-WDC Chapter Membership Dues

Regular Chapter membership requires membership in NAPO National (*see below*).

Regular chapter member (local)	\$165
Regular chapter member (non-local)	\$120
New member one-time processing fee	\$ 25
Corporate Partner	\$275
New Corporate Partner one-time processing fee	\$ 50

Membership year is from October 1 through September 30.

For NAPO-WDC Chapter membership information and application, visit [www.DCorganizers.org](http://www.DCorganizers.org) or contact the Membership Director, Karen Swain at [membership@dcorganizers.org](mailto:membership@dcorganizers.org). For Corporate Partner questions, contact Kim Oser at [CorpPartners@dcorganizers.org](mailto:CorpPartners@dcorganizers.org).

## NAPO National Member Dues

Provisional member annual dues	\$180
Active member annual dues	\$200
Corporate Associate member annual dues	\$550
One-time processing fee	\$ 20

Send NAPO National dues to:

National Association of  
Professional Organizers  
15000 Commerce Parkway  
Suite C

Mount Laurel, NJ 08054  
Tel: 856-380-6828  
Fax: 856-439-0525

Visit the web site to download a membership application or join directly at:

[http://www.napo.net/join\\_napo/regular.html](http://www.napo.net/join_napo/regular.html)

## Newsletter Information

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## Newsletter Topic Schedule

Sept	Client Assessments
Oct	Technology for You and Your Client
Nov	Donation and Disposal
Dec	Coaching
Jan	Financial Organizing
Feb	Great Products
Mar	Special Interests
Apr	Home Staging
May	Organizing Generations
Jun	Growing Your Business

(Continued on page 9)

## Share the Experience



Amy Goldberg-Cutler  
*The Runaround*  
NAPO-WDC Marketing  
Director  
[www.runaround.com](http://www.runaround.com)

I had one of those “aha” moments recently while taking a nostalgic walk down memory lane. As I was wondering how some of my past clients were faring these days, a very clear picture formed about the direction of my business. Without even realizing it, a change had taken place. It was once very lopsided with one type of client. Since 1996, quite subconsciously, my client base had become extremely balanced. I had become a Generalist. Without even recognizing that this transition was happening, I had developed a very clear process for accessing potential clients in order to maintain a balance.

At one point, I had several elderly clients. While I found the work financially rewarding, it created a situation where I felt I never left work. I was living with my own elderly mother. The needs of both my job and personal life blended together. I began to resent them both. The stress level that was created

became unbearable and I was concerned about not only the quality of my work but also of my life. Since I was not in a position to “fire” my mother, I had to graciously figure out a way to transition out the dependency on me that some of my clients had begun to have. I recognized that I had limitations and could easily do a disservice to myself and my clients if I was not careful. Fortunately, the situation worked out well for everyone involved.

So what else did I learn? Sometimes, you have to make the difficult decision to refuse a potential job and the financial gain in order to provide the best of and for yourself, both professionally and personally. One of the aspects I love about my job is the satisfaction I feel with every task that is accomplished with a client, no matter how small. Sometimes, the clients who need the least are the most grateful. I have learned it is okay to say no and hope that by sharing my experience, you may too.

“Without even recognizing that this transition was happening, I had developed a very clear process for accessing potential clients in order to maintain a balance.”

## Yahoo Group – Your Ticket to Travel

Janet Schiesl  
Basic Organization  
[www.basicorganization.com](http://www.basicorganization.com)

With the price of gas and commuting becoming more time consuming by the day, why not considered carpooling to chapter meetings? Carpooling is a simple way to decrease your commuting expense and an easy, convenient way to get to know other chapter members. Consider this even if you only carpool to one chapter

meeting. You will cut your commuting costs in half for that travel time.

It's as easy as sending an email to members through the chapter's Yahoo Group. Just note in the subject line of the email stating where you are coming from and that you want to carpool to a chapter meeting. For example, “Carpool to September 8 meeting from Rockville, MD”.

**Save money, make friends, and go green. Win all the way!**

# Book Club

(Continued from page 8)

## Book Club North

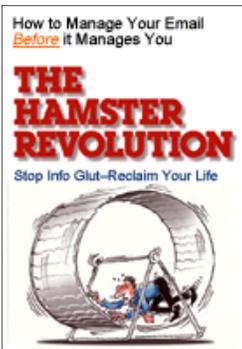
Coordinator: Lynn Meltzer  
*Clutter and Paperworks*

When: Tuesday, September 23, 7pm

Where: The Home of Lynn Meltzer

Book: *The Hamster Revolution: How to Manage Your Email Before It Manages You*  
by Mike Song, Vicki Halsey and Tim Burress

The aim of this book is to reduce email volume, improve email quality, encourage sending email that is more actionable and organize folders using COTA (Clients, Output, Teams, Admin) approach. *The Hamster Revolution* makes you rethink the way you use email.



## Book Club South

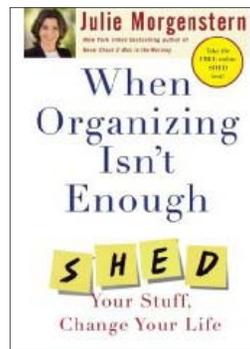
Coordinator: Judy Parkins  
*Gently Organized*

When: October 22, 2008

Where: Gently Organized Office  
Alexandria, VA

Book: *When Organizing Isn't Enough: SHED Your Stuff, Change Your Life*  
by Julie Morgenstern

Expert organizer Julie Morgenstern has developed the four-step SHED plan to help you get unstuck. This organizing book will help when you're eager to make a change in your life, but you are unsure of your new destination -- you need to SHED.



The deadline for each newsletter submission is one week after each chapter meeting.

The NAPO-WDC Chapter is committed to providing information through the newsletter. Contributions from members are encouraged. All articles are subject to editing. Please include your full name, business name, email address and photo for possible publication.

If you would like to advertise in this newsletter, please contact Lauri Mennel, [ltarver@austin.rr.com](mailto:ltarver@austin.rr.com). NAPO-WDC makes no endorsement of products or services advertised.

Advertising sizes and rates:

Small (3 1/2 x 2")	\$30
Medium (3 1/2 x 4")	\$50
Large (7 x 4")	\$100

25% discount for members  
25% discount for repeat ads (3 or more consecutive months)

All ads must be pre-paid.  
Rates subject to change at anytime.

## Board Meetings

The next board meeting is scheduled immediately preceding the September chapter meeting. Board meetings are open to all chapter members. To ensure enough space at the location of an upcoming board meeting, non-board members who wish to attend should contact Chapter President, Michelle Bogert, one week prior to the meeting.

The NAPO-WDC Book Clubs meet every month and choose their own books. Take part in this great opportunity to get to know other members and to share your knowledge, thoughts and questions.

All chapter members are welcome to attend. Please check the chapter newsletter calendar (on pages 4 and 5) for future dates for both the North and South Book Club. RSVP to Lynn Meltzer at [arnielynn@verizon.net](mailto:arnielynn@verizon.net) or 301-530-3551 for directions to the Book Club North meetings. RSVP to Judy Parkins at [judy@gentlyorganized.com](mailto:judy@gentlyorganized.com) or 703-548-1000 for directions to the Book Club South meetings.

## Get Well Norman Zalfa

One of NAPO-WDC's long time members, Norman Zalfa, *Organize Your Estate, Inc.*, was involved in a bicycle accident over the summer and broke his shoulder and hip. He is recovering at INOVA Fairfax Hospital and will move to a rehab facility when he is ready. He will not be able to walk for three months while he goes through the healing process.

We are all concerned about Norm's well being and wish him a great recovery. We know his wit and wisdom will be missed at our next few meetings. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

If you would like to contact Norman to wish him well, you can email him at [oye@comcast.net](mailto:oye@comcast.net).

## Book Review

### *The Gift of Fear* by Gavin de Becker

Reviewed by  
Valerie Quinn  
[valerie.quinn@verizon.net](mailto:valerie.quinn@verizon.net)

At our May meeting, the Book Club discussed Gavin de Becker's "The Gift of Fear."

The author is an internationally recognized safety and security expert and the founder of Gavin de Becker and Associates. In his book, he states that violent behavior can be predicted and prevented. He then goes on to explain how. The book discusses such varied topics as strangers, stalkers, extortion, serial killers as well as workplace security, domestic violence, violent children, and attacks against public figures.

Throughout the book, de Becker emphasizes the importance of intuition. He demystifies it, writing that "it is the ability to see with our brains rather than our eyes." It works something like this: Through our senses, we "take in" our environments, without really being aware of it. Over time, non-threatening day-to-day stimuli no longer attract our attention at the conscious level. For example, you probably sleep through the familiar sounds that your house makes (ice maker, air conditioner, etc.) however the sound of glass breaking would probably cause you to wake up, with your heart pounding.

A similar process is in effect in our dealings with people. We are always collecting information about others as we interact with them, even if we are not aware of it. For example, if a person behaves in a subtly unusual way, you might start to feel apprehensive or suspicious. De Becker says this discomfort is your intuition trying to tell you something. You should listen to it or, in other words, trust your gut.

Too often, people try to deny those feelings, saying "oh, it's probably nothing." De Becker makes the risk of ignoring those feelings clear. He says no animal in the wild, suddenly overcome with fear, would

spend any of its mental energy thinking "it's probably nothing". It is important, however, to distinguish manufactured worry from true signs of concern. Worry will actually get in the way of your ability to see true danger. De Becker believes that if you learn to recognize the true signs of danger, you can stop the needless worrying, feel safer and be safer.

Chapter 4, *Survival Signals*, provides very specific behaviors to look for when you are interacting with another person. One behavior is Forced Teaming, "the projection of a shared purpose or experience where none exists." A stranger might try to establish a premature sense of trust between the two of you, referring to "we," in an attempt to make you feel that you are both in the same boat. De Becker notes that with all of these survival signals, it is important to consider the context. For example, Forced Teaming would be appropriate in a corporate team-building exercise, but not in the case of a woman alone in a parking garage with a strange man. *Occupational Hazards* in Chapter 9 will be interesting to Professional Organizers who have employees. It provides specific questions to ask potential employees to get a true sense of their work experience and how they deal with others. The book also contains a number of useful appendices, including information about resources, gun safety and questions to ask your child's school. Appendix 1, *Signals and Predictive Strategies*, is a list of survival signals and signs that indicate a person is likely to become violent.

Overall, the Book Club felt that *The Gift of Fear* contained much valuable information, presented for the most part in a very readable manner. There are many examples--some exciting, some scary--of people and organizations dealing with a variety of difficult situations. I recommend that everyone read the chapter on Survival Signals, if not the entire book.



#### Education

NAPO-WDC offers educational opportunities to help you become more efficient, knowledgeable, and competitive:

1. Free admission to all monthly chapter education meetings.
2. Mentor program for new and aspiring organizers.
3. "Ask The Expert" program available to guests and members offering personal and professional support.
4. Enhanced membership identification for Golden Circle members and CPOs®.
5. Increased professional credibility.

#### Professional Resources

NAPO-WDC provides resources and services geared toward your professional growth and development:

1. Free electronic subscription to Capital News & Views, NAPO-WDC's monthly newsletter.
2. Tape/CD recordings from previous NAPO & NAPO-WDC conferences available to be checked out from the chapter lending library.
3. Book club meetings held bi-monthly.
4. Media exposure through

(Continued on page 11)

# June 2 Chapter Meeting Review



Sandra Merrigan  
Organizing Matters  
NAPO-WDC Secretary  
[organizingmatters@yahoo.com](mailto:organizingmatters@yahoo.com)

## Highlighted Chapter Announcements

- The new Board of Directors was announced. Sandra Merrigan, [secretary@dcorganizers.org](mailto:secretary@dcorganizers.org), was named Secretary to the Board.
- Corporate Partners attended and displayed their products for the chapter members. All Corporate Partners are listed on the chapter website and some offer monthly promotional opportunities.

- "NAPO in the Schools" needs people who are willing to be trained. The free 2-hour conference call training is offered through NAPO. If you are interested in this program contact Amy Goldberg-Cutler, [marketing@dcorganizers.org](mailto:marketing@dcorganizers.org).
- The Board is seeking applications for a nonprofit organization for "GO Month". The application is on the chapter website with instructions.
- Thanks to all the members who presented their favorite organizing tools. A complete list is in the Member's Only section of the chapter website. This meeting marked the chapter's highest attendance of the year.

## Benefits

(Continued from page 10)

- NAPO-WDC chapter promotions, print, and electronic media.
- 5. Online referral network generating business leads and connections with new clients.
- 6. Unique Members Only section for additional resources.
- 7. Participation in the NAPO-WDC Yahoo Discussion Group.
- 8. Public relations and cooperative marketing efforts.

## Networking

NAPO-WDC recognizes the importance of being able to interact with and learn from the leaders in the organizing industry:

1. Meet manufacturers and distributors of organizing products, and give them your input on product development.
2. Take advantage of volunteer opportunities that provide experience, exposure, and the opportunity to affect the future of the organizing industry.
3. Your business web site linked to the chapter web site [www.dcorganizers.org](http://www.dcorganizers.org)
4. Leadership opportunities through committee positions, board leadership, project, and event coordination.

# Web Site Report



Theresa McDonald  
Precisely Right Organizing  
NAPO-WDC Director of Communication & Technology  
[www.preciselyrightorganizing.com](http://www.preciselyrightorganizing.com)

Month/Year	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits
June 2008	1,101	1,500 1.36 visits/visitor	4,731 3.15 pages/visit	42,666 28.44 hits/visit
June 2007	958	1,251 1.3 visits/visitor	3,912 3.12 pages/visit	41,527 33.19 hits/visit

Fun Fact: Other than direct links to the site, the NAPO-WDC website receives more links from Google than any other search engine.

## Membership Directory

Detailed information about members can be found on our chapter web site, [www.DCorganizers.org](http://www.DCorganizers.org) in the Members Only section.

## Changes and Corrections

Once you join or renew chapter membership, you can update your own information at any time. Go to [www.DCorganizers.org](http://www.DCorganizers.org). From the "About Us" menu, select "Members Only Pages." Enter your NAPO National membership number and your unique password. Click "My Account" and make changes.

## Information & Referral Line

202-362-NAPO (6276)  
[www.DCorganizers.org](http://www.DCorganizers.org)

## Golden Circle

Golden Circle originated in 1990 as a way to recognize our veteran members with a special designation for their dedication to the organizing profession and to NAPO. There are more than 300 members throughout the country and 40 in our area.

If you've been in business as an organizer for at least five years, and a NAPO member for at least one year, you may qualify for GC membership. To apply, go to [www.napo.net/members-only/golden\\_circle\\_application.pdf](http://www.napo.net/members-only/golden_circle_application.pdf) for an application.

There are no membership fees or dues and new members receive a GC certificate and gold membership pin. The GC logo can be used on your marketing collateral and you are designated in the National and Local NAPO Membership Directories, and websites, as a GC member.

GC members attend many outstanding events at the NAPO national conferences – including luncheons, special lectures and roundtable discussion groups – as well as local get togethers.

## MARKETPLACE TABLE

The Marketplace is available at chapter meetings for members' promotional materials including seminars, products for sale or hiring subcontractors.

# Golden Circle Report



Jessica Williams  
Clutter Doctor  
NAPO-WDC Golden Circle Liaison  
[clutterdr@earthlink.net](mailto:clutterdr@earthlink.net)

Many thanks to Amy Goldberg-Cutler who hosted nine Golden Circle (GC) members in her home for our quarterly gathering on July 27th. I appreciate all of the excellent feedback that members provided on a wide variety of topics. Detailed meeting notes were emailed out to all WDC-area Golden Circle members in late July.

Thank you, also, to the GC members who took the time to fill out the latest Golden Circle member survey distributed via email in July. The input will help me plan future get-togethers that are tailored to your needs.

Please consider writing an article for an upcoming newsletter. Outstanding editor Janet Schiesl could really use the input of our many local experts! She will be happy to let you know what topics will be covered in future newsletters so you can determine where your expertise would be a good fit. Because the newsletters are on

the public side of the website, having an article published is an excellent opportunity to promote your business at no cost to you.

## Next Golden Circle Gathering

Our next quarterly gathering will be in October in Virginia. Watch for details via email and in future newsletters. Discussion topics and meeting venue ideas are always welcome!

## Ask the Expert Table

At the beginning of each chapter meeting, an "Ask the Expert" table is hosted by Golden Circle members. This gives new organizers an opportunity to ask questions of more seasoned organizers and for GC members to give back to the organizing community. Volunteers are needed to host the Ask the Expert tables for the Fall and Spring. Please let Jessica know at which meeting you'd like to be the "expert!"



# Advertising for Organizer Assistants

Janet Schiesl  
Basic Organization  
[www.BasicOrganization.com](http://www.BasicOrganization.com)

Chapter members interested in assisting other organizers have the opportunity to advertise in the monthly Constant Contact. These emails come out seven days before each chapter meeting.

The listing will have your name, business name, phone number, email address, and

photo. You are able to purchase space on the list twice a year for \$75.00, September through January or February through June. Since Constant Contacts are not sent on a regular basis in the summer, we will not offer this in July and August.

You can now purchase space on the list. But don't delay. The deadline for advertising for the first half of the chapter year is September 30.

# Welcome New Members!

Laurie Beth Coleman  
[lauriebethcoleman@hotmail.com](mailto:lauriebethcoleman@hotmail.com)  
703-847-6050

Jayna Novich  
College Foxes Packing Boxes  
[jayna@collegefoxes.com](mailto:jayna@collegefoxes.com)  
571-213-5797

Alison Allen  
[Alison4299@yahoo.com](mailto:Alison4299@yahoo.com)  
703-624-4815

Janet Hanchuck  
Loudoun Home Consulting LLC  
[LoudounHomeConsulting@yahoo.com](mailto:LoudounHomeConsulting@yahoo.com)  
703-282-1155



NAPO-WDC had 17 guests and one new member at our June meeting.

## Chapter Mission:

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

**Learn how to  
organize like a pro!**  
Class will be held in Arlington, VA on  
**September 17th**  
For more information, please contact  
**Karen Swain at (703) 534-5450**

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