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Photo by Kathy Ritchie,
Aurora, CO 10/11/07



RSSHERALD.COM

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**Cover Photo by
Kathy Ritchie
1/06/08**

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. Old Time is still a-flying; And this same flower that smiles today Tomorrow will be dying"

Robert Herrick
(1591-1674)

Show Your Assistant You Care by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services

Whether you are a corporate executive with a full administrative staff; the boss at a mid-size company with your own in-house executive assistant; or the owner of your own small business and utilize the services of a virtual assistant, you know how valuable your assistant is.

As technology progresses, so too do the skills of your assistants. They are always learning and upgrading their skills allowing them to provide more and more professional services. If it wasn't for them organizing your schedule, typing your correspondence, designing your marketing material & website, and sometimes even answering your phone calls, where would you be? Could you imagine all the time you would be taking away from running your business if you had to do all of that yourself?

Throughout the year, your assistant helps you keep control of your business life. So, why not let them know

how much you appreciate them? Well, the perfect time to do just that is fast approaching.

Since 1952, the last full week of April (20-26, 2008) has been designated Administrative Professionals Week (formerly called Secretaries Week) by the International Association of Administrative Professionals (<http://www.iaap-hq.org/APW/apwindex.htm>), with the 23rd being the official Administrative Professionals Day. 2002 marks the 50th anniversary of this special event.

Bosses traditionally use this time of year to show their appreciation to their assistants for all of their hard work throughout the year.

And, with the increase in the partnering with Virtual Office Assistants, small and home-based business professionals are also acknowledging the invaluable services of



those that handle their non-core tasks.

You may know your assistant's likes and dislikes or it may require research on your part (or someone else on your staff) to find just that perfect sentiment.

If you have an in-house assistant, there are many things you can do locally to show your appreciation. These include:

Taking your assistant out for a nice, long lunch at a fine restaurant.

Giving him/her a gift certificate for a local shop, and the afternoon off to go shopping there.

Present a plaque for all of their years of hard work.

(Continued on page 3)

Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (www.docutype.net) is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA) and a Master Virtual Assistant (MVA) and author of a library of ebooks to help you build your business, including How to Set Up & Start Your First Blog. More information, including a comparison of blog software, can be found at http://www.docutype.net/business_ebooks.htm.

Show you care...

(Continued from page 2)

Or, perhaps book & pay to have his/her car tuned up and spring cleaned.

If your assistant is virtual, you still may be able to arrange some of the above or perhaps:

Find out who their favorite author is and send him/her their latest book.

Send a gift certificate for an online store that they enjoy shopping from.

Provide them with a long distance calling card.

Or, arrange to have flowers or a gift sent to them at their office.

Whether near or far, your assistant will be overjoyed

that you took the time to show your appreciation. In turn, this will help you to strengthen your business relationship with him/her.

But, don't forget that this isn't the only time of year you should show your appreciation to your assistant. Ensure that you make them feel valued throughout the year. You'd be amazed at how far a 'thank-you' or kind word can go.

Here at Docu-Type (www.docutype.net) we have an abundance of wonderful clients, mostly small business owners, who all say thank you when a project is completed just the way they like it.

This makes me feel great and pushes me to provide even better service the next time.

Now, if you are an entrepreneur that does not have an assistant and you do all the work yourself, don't let this day go by without patting yourself on the back for handling all of the administrative tasks. And also, why not think about outsourcing some of your work to a Virtual Assistant and give yourself back some personal and revenue generating time. And next year, during Administrative Professionals Week, you will fully understand why your assistant deserves a special day!

Are YOU Ready?

It's time for the 3rd annual Online International Virtual Assistants Convention (OIVAC 2008), the once-a-year, affordable event the entire VA online community is invited to attend. This year's theme, "Pathways to Successful VA Practices: Using Communication & Technology to Enhance Business", highlights various communication and technology resources virtual assistants can implement to increase business.

OIVAC offers participants timely training, informative workshops, motivating seminars, business showcases and casual networking sessions, along with an exhibitor hall open around the clock, all from your desktop or laptop computer. This "live" yet vir-

tual environment can be experienced from the comfort of your own home via any Internet connected computer. Imagine attending a world class event without incurring travel/ airport hassles, airfare costs, hotel bills, fatigue or exorbitant registration fees or most important, precious time away from your home, family and business!

Scheduled for Thursday, May 15, 2008 through Saturday May 17, 2008, and running from 8 a.m. to 12 midnight EDT, we've packed 18 hours a day, across six time zones, with training, networking, motivation and inspiration from knowledgeable VAs and non-VA industry experts.

Register today!
www.oivac.com



INTERNATIONAL

Virtual Assistants

DAY

Friday, May 16, 2008

Pre-Paid Legal: A Good Resource - An Excellent Business Opportunity

by Shari Shipman, Pre-Paid Legal Independent Associate

As we all know, Virtual Assistants are in a very opportunistic position these days. There aren't many industries that allow you, as the business owner, to communicate with such a variety of different occupations. Because of that, the sales and marketing of legal service plans and identity theft protection is growing in numbers.

I am a prime example of this particular circumstance. I am a VA working in Reno, Nevada through my company, Smart Solutions. Last year, I purchased a legal service plan and the Identity Theft Shield from Pre-Paid Legal, an NYSE company offering comprehensive legal assistance on a month-to-month basis. Coverage plans vary from family-based to those tailored for specific industries and employee groups. Among the benefits offered are legal consultation on an unlimited number of personal or busi-

ness matters, will preparation, and more. A companion service is the Identity Theft Shield. Think you're not at risk? Unfortunately you are!

I was so impressed with the service I received with Pre-Paid Legal that I became an Associate with the company so I could offer the services to individuals I meet through my business contacts. VA's working in the real estate and mortgage markets are in a particularly advantageous position, since some of the legal service plans offered by Pre-Paid Legal are related to those industries. Actually, it's hard to find market that would not benefit from the services offered by Pre-Paid Legal.

Whether the VA uses Pre-Paid Legal as a business and household resource or as a business opportu-

nity selling the service, having the peace of mind knowing that help and advice is just a phone call away is very reassuring. Think of that Verizon commercial with people standing behind you describes the feeling of having a Pre-Paid Legal membership for your family and business. They will always be there when you need them.

If you would like more information about Pre-Paid Legal and the Identity Theft Shield, please contact Shari Shipman, Pre-Paid Legal Independent Associate, 775-848-5178 and smartsolutions@clearwire.net.

Shari Shipman is the owner of Smart Solutions, a graduate of the University of Virtual Assistants, and a member of the IAVOA.



RSS Herald Recommends: Cut your clutter in 15 minutes a day!

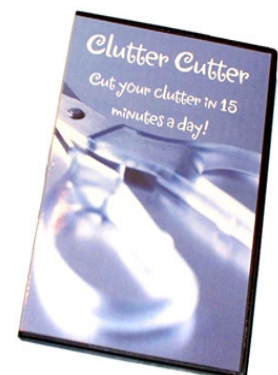
Now there's a tool to help you clean out the clutter in your home. This CD includes 9 minutes of inspiration, information and motivation as well as 15 minutes of upbeat music. It's like having me there to walk you through anything you might encounter along the way.

click here to listen to a sample!!



Newsletter Special Price: \$15.00

Shipping and Handling: \$4.05 (anywhere in the U. S. A.) - Priority Mail 2-3 day Delivery



APRIL 2008

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6 D.S.T. Begins, CAN	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Erev Pass- over
20 Passover	21	22	23 Admin Professionals Day (USA CAN)	24	25 Anzac Day (AUS, NZ)	26
27	28	29	30			

Monday Nights with Kelly Poelker Schedule: <http://www.another8hours.com/cgi-bin/chat/chat.cgi>
Other days in April:

01 April Fools' Day, Firefighters Day, International Fun At Work Day
 02 Great Lovers Day, Peanut Butter And Jelly Day, Reconciliation Day
 03 American Circus Day, Chocolate Mousse Day, Find A Rainbow Day
 04 Independence Day (Senegal), Tell A Lie Day, Tomb Sweeping Day (China), Vitamin C Day
 05 Bell Bottoms Day, Lady Luck Day, World Catfish Festival (Mississippi)
 06 Animated Cartoon Day, California Poppy Day, Caramel Popcorn Day, Gudi Padwa, Tartan Day, Ugadi
 07 Coffee Cake Day, Ham Radio Day, Let Someone Else Clean Day, World Health Day
 08 Buddha Day (Japan), Hana Matsuri
 09 Astronauts Day
 10 Cards For Siblings, Golfers Day, Salvation Army Founder's Day
 11 Cheese Fondue Day
 12 Big Wind Day, Look Up At The Sky Day
 13 Baisakhi, Tamil New Year, Songkran (Thailand), Thomas Jefferson Day
 14 Bengali New Year, Malayalam New Year, Ram Navami, Pecan Day, John Hanson Day (Maryland), Shad Festival (North Carolina)
 15 Tax Day, Fast Food Day, Rubber Eraser Day, Freak-out Day, Leonardo da Vinci's Birthday
 16 Stress Awareness Day, Eggs Benedict Day
 17 Cheesecake Day, Nosy Neighbor Appreciation Day, International Special Librarian's Day, Indian River Festival (Florida), Music Festival (Texas), Godwit Days (California)
 18 Time Out Day, Independence Day (Zimbabwe), Mahavir Jayanti, Paul Revere Day, Gold Festival (North Carolina), Scottish Festival (Arkansas)
 19 Passover, Primrose Day, Hot Dog Day, Husband Appreciation Day, Cow Chip Day, Garlic Day, Lazarus Saturday, Spinach Festival (Arkansas), Balloon Race (Florida), Fly Fishing Festival (Virginia)
 20 Lima Bean Respect Day, Full Moon Day, Hanuman Jayanti, Look Alike Day
 21 Patriots' Day, Kindergarten Day, Festival Of Ridván, Birthday Of Charlotte Bronte, Creativity And Innovation Day
 22 Earth Day, April Showers Day, Jelly Bean Day, Oklahoma Day
 23 Administrative Professionals Day®, Cherry Cheesecake Day, St. George's Day, Shakespeare's Birthday, World Book And Copyright Day
 24 Pigs In A Blanket Day, Ambivalence Day, Plumber's Day
 25 Cuckoo Day, Don't Step In The Dog Poop Day, Arbor Day, Zucchini Bread Day, Orthodox Holy Friday, Anzac Day (Australia), Anzac Day (New Zealand), Asparagus Festival (California), Crab And Seafood Festival (Oregon), Rice Festival (South Carolina), Seafood Festival (Florida), Riverfest Weekend (Georgia)
 26 Bird Day, Pretzel Day, Remember Your First Kiss Day, Iris Festival (California), Maple Festival (Pennsylvania), Daffodil Festival (Connecticut), Red Poppy Festival (Texas)
 27 Orthodox Easter, Morse Code Day, Freedom Day (South Africa), Independence Day (Togo)
 28 Kiss Day, Great Poetry Reading Day, National Day Of Mourning (Canada)
 29 Zipper Day, International Dance Day
 30 Oatmeal Cookie Day, Hairstylist Day, International Guide Dog Day, Honesty Day

A Quick Fix for the Eyes

Are you tired of squinting when you read your e-mail? Maybe someone sent you something that's just too difficult to read as is.

Looking for a quick way to make the font larger, but without making the change permanent?

If so, I've got just the thing for you!

In MS Outlook, as well as, Outlook Express, you will be happy to find that the **Ctrl key combined with your mouse scroll wheel** will enlarge (and shrink) the e-mail text you're trying to read.

All you need to do is **place your mouse pointer over**

the e-mail body, hold down the Ctrl key and spin the wheel.

(Sounds a bit like a game show, doesn't it? Too bad the only prize is happier eyes!)

Also, as a bonus, you'll find that this little trick works in both the Preview Pane and in the e-mail when it's fully opened.

I feel that I must warn you though. In some versions of Outlook, this works for the text of the e-mail, but not the pictures. You will find that pictures stay as they are. That means if the text you're trying to enlarge is part of a picture in the e-mail, you're out of luck.

But, are you ready for the best part?!

This feature will work in other MS Office Suite programs as well! You can control the zoom in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. with the Ctrl + scroll wheel function. Yes! You've just entered the no squinting zone. Isn't it nice to read in comfort for once?!

Courtesy of
WorldStart.com



IAVOA

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“Pay Up, Dude!” Open a Dialogue with Late-Paying Clients By Clara Fyffe

We at IAVOA frequently discuss how to get late-paying clients to fork over your hard-earned money. Some clients simply ignore you, some make lame excuses, and some try to explain what seem like

client should be asked in writing, as well as possibly over the phone, so that you will have a paper trail, should this matter wind up in court. And since collection agencies charge up to 50 percent of the money owed, you really want to attempt to collect the debt by yourself first. Some of the information that follows was gleaned from the December 2006 issue of Inc. magazine.

Clara Fyffe, writer for the IAVOA Corner

legitimate reasons for late payments or no payment at all.



Shirley Gandee

What happens if we don't pay our light bill? We lose the service and wind up sitting in the dark. The same principle must be followed with our clients. If they don't pay, they don't get their completed projects. It's basically as simple as that.

You obviously worked hard for your client, and you probably sent him or her the completed project plus your invoice which, aside from the amount due, more than likely also includes a phrase such as, "Total amount due within 15 days from date on invoice." But your client still hasn't paid. What do you do?

As the old adage goes: "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." The same principle holds true with delinquent clients. The solution is to open a calm dialogue with that client on the first day the payment is late.

A certain protocol exists for interacting with clients to gently prod them into paying what they rightfully owe. A series of seven questions to ask the

Question #1: "Did you get the invoice?"

Although it is rare, a lost invoice can happen. In writing, ask your client if he/she received your invoice dated such-and-such. Be sure to include a new identical invoice with the short letter. Tell the client that you will give him fifteen additional days to pay the full amount. Thank the client for paying that invoice quickly and that you look forward to working with his company again. Be maple-syrupy sweet with this first letter.

Question #2: "Was there a problem with my work on your finished project?"

Again, in writing for that paper trail, ask your client directly if he feels the project was not completed to his satisfaction. If not, ask him to describe in detail what was done wrong. Then, check his response against the written orders you were given as to how the project was to be completed. If, in fact, you find the client to be correct, kindly offer to fix the error and also offer to reduce the invoice by a fair percentage in relation to the extent of the corrections. If, though, the completed project does match his initial request, send the client a copy of

"You will sometimes receive an answer that the client is having a "cash flow" problem and is paying his "more important" invoices first."



(Continued on page 7)

IAVOA Corner

(Continued from page 6)

the instructions, stating that your copy of the end product was completed accordingly, and that the invoice is still due. Offer to discuss it with him, but include another copy of the invoice with a modified due date. Let the client know that if he has a question in the future, to contact you right away.

Question #3: "Is there a particular reason you have not paid?"

You will sometimes receive an answer that the client is having a "cash flow" problem and is paying his "more important" invoices first. This is where your written response will become more firm. Again, include a copy of the original invoice, but stamp "Second Invoice" on it with the original due date circled. Inform this client that you performed a professional service for him and that, as with any other company, he should not expect to be given additional time to pay, that he knew when he placed his order that he would have to pay by a certain date. Ask the client when you can expect full payment.

Question #4: "Are you willing to discuss a settlement?"

If this is a good client with whom you have worked previously with no problems, you might consider negotiating with him and offering, for example, a one-time 10 percent discount if the new balance is paid by a certain date. If the client is worth keeping and has always paid

his invoices on time, this could be a good option. But be sure to stress that this is a one-time offer only.

Question #5: "Who is the best person to talk to about this invoice?"

In the case of a larger client, you may have trouble getting past the office manager or the employee who types out the checks. Ask for the full name and position of the president or CFO of the company and direct your written communication to him or her. Be specific and to the point in your letter, and don't forget to include the invoice with "Second Notice" and the circled due date on it.

Question #6: "When did you send the check?"

Fortunately, the following situation rarely occurs, but can. When you ask a client about a late payment, he may tell you that your check is on the way. If so, ask him when the check went out, how much it was for, and the check number. Chat for a couple minutes, then, before you hang up, ask for the check number again. If he hesitates or gives you a different check number, you'll know your payment is probably not coming. Remind the client that he will be responsible for attorney fees and collection costs if your payment in full is not received by a given date. Your payment should be forthcoming.

Question #7: "Do you expect any problems with future invoices?"

Your client may assure you that everything should be fine from this point on. But if you're burned once, it will likely happen again. If you choose to work with this client again, you might tell him that his next completed project will be held until payment is received. Assure him that you will release the project immediately after his check arrives and that, if he likes your work, chooses to keep you as his Virtual Assistant, and agrees to these terms, you might consider going back to regular invoicing after two or three pre-paid projects.

Remember the paper trail. Put everything in writing. And, as per last month's article, perfection in your written communication is imperative! Never send out a letter without re-reading and proofing carefully. If you're not 100 percent professional, you can't expect it from your clients.



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The RSS Herald accepts submission of articles relating to Virtual Assistants and other virtual workers. The RSS Herald reserves editorial privilege for grammar, spelling, and length.

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Be Mobile Friendly

Why should you consider making your site mobile friendly? More and more people are turning to wireless technologies for their business needs when they are away from traditional access. Today's PDAs are very web friendly and there are many tasks that can be done with them.

For instance, I frequently pair my PDA and my cell phone (when I'm not near a wireless access point) and go online for directions, or if I need to check email in my office. It's easy, efficient and the many mobile friendly sites are making it more attractive to PDA users like myself.

Want to make your site mobile friendly? All it takes is a tiny bit of coding inserted in the <head> </head> tags of your site.

```

<script language = "JavaScript">
var isCE = navigator.appVersion.indexOf("Windows CE")>0;
if (isCE)
{
window.location.href="mymobile.htm";
}
</script>

```

Be sure and replace the mymobile with your site's mobile section. For instance, for my site, I redirect mobile users to www.thebestva.com/rssmobile/index.html. Or, they can just type in www.thebestvamobile.com and it is much easier than the mobile user typing it all out.

Be sure and keep your mobile site very light, and easy

to load. Remember, the web capabilities of many of the mobile devices aren't as advanced as our regular browsers. It's a good idea to make your visitors something that fits easily in their screen.

Thank you!
~Kathy Ritchie

Good Mobile Sites are:
rssheraldmobile.com
Mail2PDA.com
Mapquest.com/pda/
Mobidock.com
Aws.com/palm/ (weather)
Wap.ebay.com
Google.com/pda
Pocketpcmag/mobile/

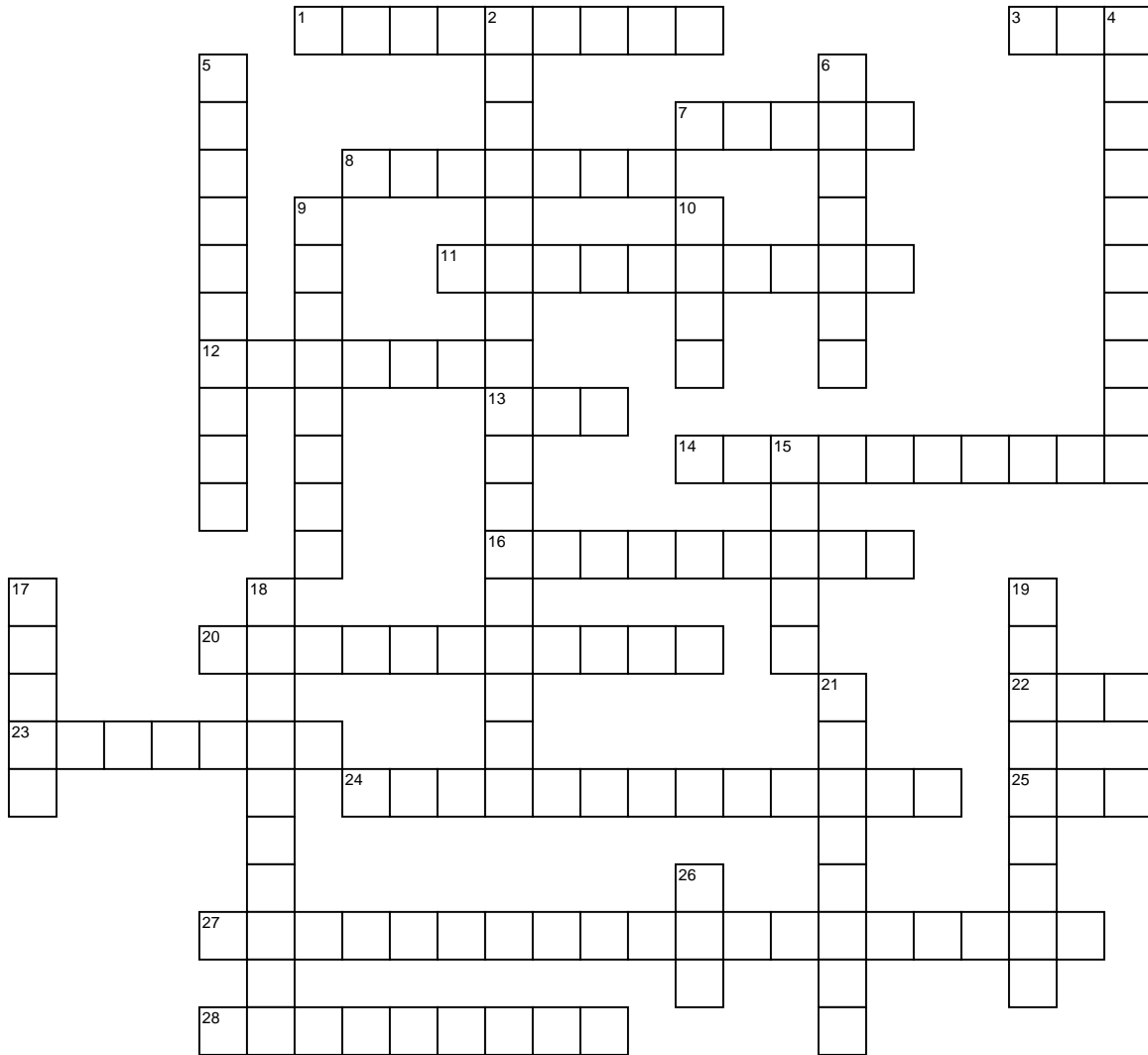


EDITOR'S

Corner

 **Barefoot
Domains**
www.barefootdomains.com

Words used in a Virtual Assistant's daily life.



www.RSSHerald.com

ACROSS

- 1 Some virtual assistants specialize in this.
- 3 Professional Virtual Assistant
- 7 One way to manage data.
- 8 Newest disk storage format.
- 11 The US President recently mentioned this search engine.
- 12 Microsoft's useful notebook
- 13 Master Virtual Assistant
- 14 Alternative to Microsoft's Office
- 16 Old fashioned term for administrative assistant.
- 20 HTML editor.
- 22 Potential clients submit this.
- 23 Most used email software.
- 24 Very widely used word processor.
- 25 Most commonly used electronic document format.
- 27 A virtual assistant who answers their client's phone.
- 28 This newsletter

DOWN

- 2 Most important when completing a mailing.
- 4 A smart office machine.
- 5 Widely used software for bookkeeping.
- 6 Interconnected computers
- 9 Search out and retrieve information.
- 10 Specilized VA in the RE industry
- 15 Electronic letters
- 17 An industry association indispensible for virtual assistant growth.
- 18 The science of physically correct workplace environment.
- 19 Blogging Suite
- 21 Method of posting your thoughts online.
- 26 Abbreviation for specialized website maintenance.