

# THE LOS ANGELES ORGANIZER



October 2004

Volume 12, Issue 1

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## NAPO Los Angeles

**Mission Statement:** 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  
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Los Angeles, CA 90064  
Hotline (213) 486-4477

## NAPO Los Angeles Who's Who

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

**VP Membership:** Nicole Pacheco  
(909) 476-8448  
nicolepacheco@napola.org

**Director of Professional Development:**  
Michelle Quintana  
(888) 665-5887  
michellequintana@napola.org

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

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

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

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

## Coordinators & Committee Chairs

Associate Member Coordinator:

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 2004 members-only Holiday Dinner and Chapter Meeting will be held on Monday, November 15, the third Monday in November. We have a fantastic menu planned, plus fun and games just for organizers and plenty of time to network and socialize with our colleagues. YOU MUST RSVP VIA THE NAPO-LA WEBSITE BY NOVEMBER 8th, [click here](#). *Cancellation Policy: No shows will be charged \$20.*

New NAPO-LA member Michelle Quintana of The Simple Organizer is our new Director of Professional Development. Michelle is a former member of the San Francisco-Bay Area chapter of NAPO.

## CALENDAR

October is "Self-Promotion" Month  
Oct. 25: NAPO-LA Board Meeting - 2:30 p.m.  
Oct. 25: NAPO-LA Chapter Meeting - 6:15 p.m.  
Oct. 29: "Take Back Your Time" Day

November  
Nov. 15: Board Meeting: 2:30 p.m.  
Nov. 15: Chapter Holiday Dinner: 6:15 p.m. (Please note this is not the regular 4th Monday of the month.)  
Nov. 15: "America Recycles" Day  
Nov. 21: Doo Dah Parade  
Nov. 26: "Buy Nothing" Day

## October Program

## Peer Group Discussions: Learn From and Network With Fellow Organizers

This month's meeting will allow us to learn from one another, as well as afford us additional time to network with each other. The program will be small, group round-table discussions, which are always one of the most popular meeting formats. Often-requested topics will be addressed so that those members and visitors attending can ask questions and have an open discussion in the context of small groups of organizers.

NAPO-LA would like to thank Hector Escarcega, CSP, ARM, MSIH, of Bilingual Solutions, International, for his wonderful presentation about safety hazards in the workplace. Hector was an amusing and knowledgeable speaker and we enjoyed the presentation. We look forward to having him speak again in the future.

**November Holiday Party (Members ONLY)** - Please remember to mark your calendars for the holiday party. The November meeting will be held on Monday, November 15th, which is one week earlier in the month than usual. We are moving the meeting to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday.

Please bring your favorite dessert to compliment a delicious buffet dinner. [Register by November 8th.](#)

~ Heather Thompson, Organization Matters/Secretary

Barb Schmitt  
**Database/Directory:** Tanya Whitford  
**Golden Circle Advisor:** Ann Gambrell  
**Greeting Coordinator:** Toni Scharff  
**Greeters:** Barbara Ricketts, Toni Scharff  
**Librarian:** Lenore Sokol  
**Meeting Assistant:** Sara Getzkin  
**MET Program Coordinators:** Jean Furuya, Ann Gambrell, Barbara Ricketts, Tanya Whitford  
**New Member Orientation:** Jean Furuya, Ann Gambrell  
**Public Relations:** Chris McKenry  
**Registration Assistants:** Susan Honnold, Claire Quinlan, Tiffany Schwartz  
**Scrapbooker:** Mary Lasnier  
**Volunteer Coordinator:** Mishele Vieira

**Webmasters:** Cindy Kamm, Chris McKenry, Gayle Westrate, Tanya Whitford  
**Web Listing Coordinator:** Toni Scharff

### The Los Angeles Organizer Newsletter Staff

**Editor:** Dee Saar  
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**Staff Writers:** Talia Eisen, Deborah Kawashima, Gloria Schklair, Kathleen Schulweis, 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](mailto:DeeSaar@napola.org).  
**Deadline:** The 25th 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](mailto:LaurieClarke@napola.org). All art and payments must be received by the 25th of the month for submission. All payments to be arranged with Cindy Kamm ([CindyKamm@napola.org](mailto:CindyKamm@napola.org)).

**Ad Size:** 125x100 pixels  
**Ad Price:** \$25 Members, \$35 Non-NAPO Members  
**Coupon:** This feature allows advertiser to provide a text of 50-75 words for a more detailed description than the sponsor link  
**Coupon Price:** \$35 Members, \$45 Non-NAPO Members

### Chapter Membership:

National NAPO membership required. Price includes electronic newsletter.

[For more info on NAPO-LA events, click here.](#)

### President's Message



The team of NAPO-LA Organizers assembled at Project Angel Food.  
*Photo by Karen Embry*

## GO, GO, NAPO Organizing Angels

What an incredible sight to behold: 40 organizers, dressed to the nines in black and white NAPO t-shirts, bright-eyed and raring to descend upon the offices of Project Angel Food for the 2005 GO Week project.

This was the largest GO Week project that the chapter had ever attempted; so not only was there excitement about what we had undertaken, there was high energy abounding as we were spread out into four different buildings where we worked with staffers and PAF volunteers from the kitchen, the executive offices, a storage and supply area, and also rolled out over 40 banners that were photographed and indexed.

This was my third GO Week project, and I am always in awe of the talents, creativity, resourcefulness and camaraderie that everyone contributes. I am immensely proud of our membership, not only for their individual organizing abilities, but as a cohesive and united working group.

I especially want to thank Claire Flannery, this year's GO Week Chairperson, for her tireless effort in putting together amazing teams, a perfectly laid-out plan and the day's schedule which ran like clockwork. Kudos to you, Claire!

Joya Parenteau, our point person at Project Angel Food, called Claire the next morning and was effusive in the praise from everyone involved at Project Angel Food. They are thrilled, which, of course, is music to our ears! Joya also said that some of the people who got organized were so impressed that they are thinking of having their homes organized, too.

I want to personally thank all of you who participated and took time out of your busy schedules to come together for a very worthy cause.

~ Robin Davi, *Simply Arranged/NAPO-LA President*

[For more information on Robin and other NAPO-LA Board Members, click here.](#)

### September Volunteer of the Month



## Dedication, Energy and Enthusiasm Make for A Wonderful Volunteer!

Chris McKenry hails from Tennessee where his family was in the poultry business. He used his natural talents in marketing and

### Annual Dues (Oct. to Sept., Annually)

\$85 - Basic Member w/website referral listing  
\$135 - Basic Member w/website referral listing and paid meeting fees  
\$50 - Out-of-State Individual  
\$150 - Associate Member  
\$10 - New/Lapsed Member Processing  
\$10 - Meeting Fee

### Non-Members

\$25 - Newsletter Subscription (Annually)  
\$15 - Visitor Meeting Fee

### National Membership Annual Dues:

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

### Welcome to NAPO-LA's Newest Members

Bridgette Bradley  
Victorville

Josef Csongei  
Los Angeles

Lisa Groot  
Hesperia

Jodi McDaniel  
Redondo Beach

Kristine Oller  
Glendale

Michelle Quintana  
Long Beach

Lenae Raspa  
Hacienda Heights

Kathleen Said  
Huntington Beach

### Abbreviated Minutes September Board Meeting

1. The board determined the budget for the coming fiscal year.
2. A banner with the NAPO logo will be purchased for chapter use.
3. Andy Frasure has resigned as Director of Professional Development.
4. Before-and-after photos of NAPO LA Chapter events such as GO Week, will be added to the website in the near future.

~ Talia Eisen, Clarity Professional Organizing

### Membership Report

September Meeting  
58 - Total Attendance

organizing to help the family business and became known for these abilities. He had seen a segment on Oprah featuring Julie Morgenstern and realized that he was doing the same kind of work. Knowing he needed a change, he made the move to Los Angeles and decided to become an organizer, even though he didn't know a soul out here. He found NAPO on the internet and joined in September 2000. Chris' business, *Get it Together LA!*, does all types of organizing, though he particularly enjoys closet design, garage projects, and relocations.

Chris' dynamic personality and high wattage energy have become staples at NAPO-LA. He is currently serving the chapter as Director of Communications & Technology on the Board of Directors. He has participated in several GO Week events, and held other NAPO-LA volunteer positions since the time he joined.

He feels strongly that, "if you are going to be successful, you can't just join a group, you have to get involved in a group." The results have proven his point for him. He has made important business connections at NAPO-LA, has learned a great deal that has helped in his business and has developed meaningful friendships. As he puts it, "Volunteering and staying involved with the chapter creates a 'win-win situation.'"

In addition to his dedication to NAPO-LA, Chris stays involved with many other groups. He is serving on the Board of Directors at the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, he's outgoing President of BNI-West Hollywood, and he volunteers for Project Angel Food on the Communications Committee, as well as being a kitchen volunteer.

Chris also founded the West Hollywood Chapter of Business Network International and co-developed the popular "Networking Seminars" for the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. He is featured as organizing expert for WBIR TV's "STYLE: A Show for You."

~ Talia Eisen, Clarity Professional Organizing

### Feature



## Determining Your Value Proposition

It would be so nice if we could trust that our marketing materials worked for us. The usual, "I save my clients time and money and bring peace to their lives" does not cut it. If that is your message, then it is time to discover your "value proposition."

A value proposition is much more than some simple marketing message. It sets you apart and stimulates people to hire you. Breaking away from generic marketing messages and developing your value proposition begins with the following three ingredients:

The first ingredient is your unique spirit (in the sense of personal energy, power, attitude). No two organizers in our organization are interchangeable; they have similar and sometimes identical skills, but the way they organize and empower their clients is unique. The uniqueness comes from individual natural strengths, gifts and qualities. They usually show up in childhood, sometimes are reflected in a nickname you had as a child, or were apparent in something you truly enjoyed while growing up (in the days before you were self-conscious about your work and your life). Think deeply about how you are unique and how you can build that into your marketing materials.

The second ingredient for your value proposition is identifying the natural outcomes or results of your work. Ask yourself what meaningful contributions are made through your efforts. What do you bring to the table that is not required or expected? What occurs during your peak moments of organizing that your clients did not expect but now feel were key to their transformation?

43 - Members  
15 - Guests  
0 - New Members  
104 - Total Membership

### Assistants List

The following people are available to work as an assistant this month.

Laurie Clarke  
(818) 783-5683

Evelyn M. Gray  
(626) 576-2059

Susan Honnold  
(310) 948-0493

Mary Lasnier  
(310) 782-7083

Justine Micheli  
(310) 980-7891

Deanna Nadalin  
(714) 267-2832

Cheryl Perkins  
(310) 306-1769

Sahira Traband  
(310) 740-2716

John Trosko  
(310) 806-7638

Robin Valdez  
(818) 886-9635

### Participate in NAPO-LA

The Assistants List is available as a resource connecting those available to serve as assistants for projects of organizers. Submit your request each month you wish to be listed. Include your name, business name, phone, and email address. The list is only for members of NAPO-LA and does not guarantee work. The Assistants List is found in the "Member's Only" section of the website on the membership directory page. To add your name to the list, send an email to [Assistant@NAPOLA.org](mailto:Assistant@NAPOLA.org).

Organizing events of members may be listed on the NAPO-LA calendar for only \$30 per month. Include event, date, time, location and your contact info along with 50-word descriptions to [Calendar@NAPOLA.org](mailto:Calendar@NAPOLA.org), and your event will be advertised.

Submit your organizing tips for monthly listing on NAPOLA.org. Each "Tip" should be 50-75 words and will be used at the discretion of the editor of this section. Your name and business name will be listed. Send your tips to [Tips@NAPOLA.org](mailto:Tips@NAPOLA.org).

### Member Survey

What do you think of the new NAPO-LA newsletter? Love it? Hate it? What could we do to improve it? What types of articles would you like to see in the

Consider the skills you possess: your sensitivity, analysis, planning, insights, etc., when thinking about your meaningful contributions!

The third ingredient of your value proposition is your natural wisdom. That is, how do you implement your unique character and skills? Take the results of your self-exploration in these areas, and you have the beginnings of your value proposition. In the process of doing work as a business development coach, experience has proved that in order to get past the stress and failures of growing a business, and start to experience a more relaxed and easy flow of clients, then the most effective way to get there is to deepen your understanding of who you are and the value you offer, so you can communicate it with confidence and clarity.

~ Kathleen Schulweis, Ph.D., Confidence Connections

### Silent Auction Volunteer



## Expert in Sales and Organizing to Share Knowledge with Top Bidder

### Michelle Quintana, The Simple Organizer

Prior to establishing the *The Simple Organizer*, Michelle Quintana spent 14 years in the field of medical/technical publishing sales at McGraw-Hill and Sybex Publishing. She was promoted in both positions to West Coast Regional Sales Manager, consistently achieving sales within the top 1% nationally and was recognized in 1994 as the salesperson of the year (from a sales force of 1,100) for achieving 400% over quota.

Michelle was born in Havana, Cuba and received a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Wisconsin. She won her first sales award in 1970 at the age of 10 for raising \$1,000 in the school Human Society fundraiser. Her mom still treasures that certificate!

In 1998, after a company-wide layoff, she established her company, *The Simple Organizer*, joined the San Francisco chapter of NAPO in 1999 and served on the board in 2001. She served on special committees and was a program speaker at conferences for the topics *How to be #1 in Sales and Marketing* and *How to Attract More Clients in your Professional Organizing Business*.

After 14 years in the Bay Area, Michelle recently relocated to Los Angeles and works out of Belmont Shores/Long Beach. Her specialties are working with severe chronic disorganization and ADD clients. She also works with realtors to de-clutter unattractive and very disorganized property listings that need quick staging at a reasonable cost.

Michelle has expressed that she is very excited to be a member of NAPO-LA and looks forward to meeting all the other members.

*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 time they can ask anything regarding the professional organizing business.*

[Click here for more information on Michelle Quintana.](#)

Golden Circle Spotlight

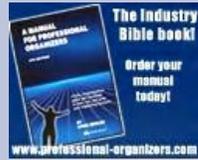
newsletter? Send a quick e-mail to [newsletter@napola.org](mailto:newsletter@napola.org).

For more information on becoming a NAPO member, click [here](#).

### Quick Links...

- [NAPO-LA Website](#)
- [NAPO Website](#)
- [NAPO-LA Annual Conference](#)

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## The Organized Family

Esther Simon of *Traditional Home Organizer* has been specializing in family organizing and kosher kitchens since 1998. A mother of seven, with a master's degree in social work, she teaches families how to get organized.

Esther's philosophy is that by creating a tranquil space for the client to enjoy first, you create more time for the client to get organized in all parts of the home.

"In most homes there is an overabundance of toys, papers, clothes and other personal items. Congratulate your clients for recognizing the problem," advises Esther Simon, "Then tell them you're there to help and teach them how to get organized."

She says that the first step is to give your clients a reason to get organized. Create a mission statement to help your clients recognize that they're doing the most important task, raising a family. Parents need to be role models, teaching children how to become organized and responsible for their things. It's their job to create a safe, clean, nurturing environment.

Remind your client that running a family is a team effort. They are the CEO's of their home, managing many different people and activities. Their life needs to be simplified.

"If your client's going to the market five times a week, teach them how to go only once a week. Create a master meal plan, complete with shopping lists, to help them simplify their life," explains Esther.

The next step is to create a paper management system. The mail becomes an overwhelming source of clutter. Set up an area in one central place to help clients make time to get organized in the rest of their home. Use a desk or cleared area with easy access as a central place where your client will open up the mail each day. In this place have only four items: The hot file, family phone book, telephone, and day planner.

Another suggestion from Esther is for clients to use a "Hot File." This is a portable file box with hanging files, where the client opens the mail each day. Label each file and use no more than ten files. The client's mail will dictate the file labels. Suggested labels would include: To Pay, To File, Pending, Activities, School, Coupons. When the school file gets too big, sort into a memorabilia box, saving only the best samples of the children's work to put into storage. Put magazines/catalogs someplace else.

To keep family information in one place, set up a family phone book. This is one place for all family information that everyone can access. Take a 3-Ring Binder with clear sheet protectors, labeled tab dividers, and create your client's own personal "yellow pages." If it's important for the family, it's in here: phone numbers, information for insurance, repairs, school, activities, and even take-out menus!

A planner can keep track of the family schedule, to-do lists, scheduled appointments and events. In helping clients juggle their time, look at their schedule, their priorities and their strengths. Pinpoint the most important task at hand, helping them realize things can be simplified, delegated or just skipped.

Possible problems that can occur are when your client is blaming the spouse or children for the mess. They don't want to take responsibility and need to work as a family unit. Work separately with each family member, teaching everyone it's worth their time to help out.

Another problem may be that the client becomes too organized. (It happens!) Help them realize the importance of relaxing and sharing the organizing process with the family. Create ways to involve the children; ask for their input in menus, schedules and saving school items.

In regards to getting clients to throw things away, Esther says never make them feel that they have a problem. Let them know you have many clients like this and they are not alone.

"Help your clients realize that organizing is a process, and that they can do it," concludes Esther.

*This is the first in a series of articles by Deborah Kawashima focusing on our Golden Circle members.*

~ **Deborah Kawashima, Creative Organizer**

## 10 Tips for Online Shopping

With the holidays just around the corner, we will likely be shopping online more than last year. Here are just a few tips to streamline the process.

1. Bookmark your favorite websites so that you can return to them easily. Check your bookmarked sites frequently for special online discounts, sales, sweepstakes, and special events.
2. Register with user-friendly sites that have constantly changing content and provide special features such as online newsletters and gift registries.
3. Capitalize on the convenience of search engines like Yahoo, Excite or Lycos, to find the products or services you are seeking. Most online retailers offer a search option that will help you locate hard-to-find and unique products that are not readily available in local stores.
4. Even though it's safer to give your credit card online than at your local shopping mall, safeguard yourself by shopping on secure sites that have encryption, and use a browser such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. Look for the URL, or web address, when you reach the checkout page. If the URL begins with "https://" the document is coming from a secure server. Review privacy policies to see how your personal information will be protected.
5. Check the company's return policy before placing an order.
6. If you have a problem or question, email the Customer Service Department to review product details such as color, materials, or size before placing your order.
7. Complete surveys and provide feedback to sites you frequently visit so that your favorite sites can continue to satisfy your needs.
8. After you place your order, make sure you get an email confirmation of your order.
9. Print a copy of your order so you can verify that it's correct upon receipt and also to use it as a reference in case you need to contact Customer Service.
10. Use reputable companies when shopping online. If it's a popular company, the site is more likely to be secure.

~ **Robin Davi, Simply Arranged**

## MET Program Update

The Mentoring, Education and Training (MET) Committee has been very busy in 2004, and the year isn't over yet! The committee, consisting of Tanya Whitford, Jean Furuya, Ann Gambrell and Barbara Ricketts, is evaluating the program and looking ahead to 2005.

This is what has been accomplished to date:

**Mentoring:** The MET Classifieds were the first part of this program. The purpose of the classifieds is to provide our veteran members who coach and mentor other organizers a means to advertise to new and prospective organizers who are looking for guidance. The classifieds are published twice a year and are available on our [website](#) and at chapter events. If you are interested in advertising and have been a member of NAPO-LA for three years, [you may sign up for the next issue](#). So far, the classifieds have proven to be a great opportunity and resource.

**Education:** There have been three Q&A Nights held for those researching the field of professional organizing or those new professional organizers with a list of unanswered questions!

The final Q&A Night for 2004 will be held November 8 at the Westside Pavilion. Reservations are now being taken for this date.

A total of 24 participants have attended the Q&A Nights. In this program, each participant is invited to ask either of two veteran organizers questions regarding starting an organizing business, being in the organizing profession, etc., for a period of two and half hours. The organizers, one specializing in residential organizing and the other specializing in corporate/office organizing, share their experiences and knowledge with the participants.

Each Q&A Night is unique, and each session's direction is determined by the questions asked. The goal of the Q&A Night event is to bring practical business information to those interested in becoming an organizer or investigating the possibility of entering the professional organizing field.

The committee reviewed the evaluation forms from the participants and as a result, the length of the program was extended to include introductions of the participants.

In planning the 2005 Q&A Night schedule the MET Committee is looking for more facilitators to join the program. If you would like to help facilitate a Q&A Night, please go on the NAPO-LA web site and fill out the application. This is an opportunity to share your experience and expertise with possible future professional organizers and give back to the NAPO-LA chapter. If you have questions regarding the Q&A Nights, talk with Barbara Ricketts at a monthly chapter meeting or contact her by email at [LMAssociates@comcast.net](mailto:LMAssociates@comcast.net). We look forward to working with you.

*~Barbara Ricketts, LifeStyle Management Associates*

[For more information on the next Q&A Night, click here.](#)

## Volunteers Needed

### NAPO-LA Newsletter Looking for Fresh Faces

Looking for a way to flex your creative muscles? Have some thoughts about how to improve the L.A. Organizer and how to better promote NAPO-LA? Here's your chance! The Editor and Publisher of the L.A. Organizer have had a great year with the newsletter but are now looking for other ways to contribute to the chapter, so the search for worthy replacements has begun!

The Editor solicits articles for the newsletter and edits all incoming copy. The Publisher places the articles into the newsletter format and looks for creative ways to make it look good. The layout is now done online, so no software programs are necessary. Both roles require working with the Board, especially the NAPO-LA President and the Director of Communications and Technology.

Both positions are great opportunities to contribute to the chapter and to get to know other organizers in NAPO-LA without a huge

time commitment.

For more information, please e-mail [Dee Saar](#) if you are interested in being Editor. E-mail [Laurie Clarke](#) if you are interested in being Publisher.

## **Golden Circle Volunteer Needed**

We are in need of someone to manage the Golden Circle Column for our Los Angeles Chapter newsletter. The job entails asking Golden Circle members, with expertise in a specific area of organizing, to submit articles to be published. This is a great opportunity to help our veteran members share their information and knowledge with the entire membership.

If you are interested, contact [Ann Gambrell](#) or [DeeSaar](#). Step forward to help show that we ARE "The Organizing Authority."

email: [newsletter@napola.org](mailto:newsletter@napola.org)  
web: <http://www.napola.org>