Office of Sustainability Project Manager Heather Lair and Intern Joanna Calabrese pick low hanging fruit outside the Chesapeake Building on the University of Maryland campus. Their employee engagement program, Energywi$e UM, led to a 10% electricity reduction in the Chesapeake Building over the course of a seven-week pilot.
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### Letter from the CEO

#### 7 Friend Me; Link Me In
*Doreen Munner, CEO, NAEP*

The NAEP Listserv has long enabled private conversations among Members of NAEP, facilitating collaboration among procurement professionals—a closed-circuit community. Now, through the use of LinkedIn and Facebook, we have expanded our conversation to include all stakeholders in the higher-education procurement community.

### Features

#### 8 Becoming Energywi$e at the University of Maryland
*Heather Lair, MBA, M.S.*

Colleges and universities appear to be taking the lead in implementing sustainable initiatives all across the nation. At the University of Maryland, the Energywi$e program is a wonderful example.

#### 12 Capturing Intellectual Capital
*John Stephen Klopp*

As Baby Boomers prepare to turn over the gavel to the Gen-Xers and Millennials, the Boomers should not be shy or sparing in sharing their knowledge, values, and ethics with their successors.

#### 14 E-Waste: Income from Sustainability
*Marc Breslav*

Being sustainable can often involve cost-premiums. But, in some cases, being sustainable can generate revenue. E-waste is one of those areas in which sustainability can actually pay and pay well.

### Departments

#### 10 Heard on the Street: Is the World Too Stupid to Be Green?
*Cory Harms, M.S.*

In his column this time, Cory asks an obvious but vital question. He also provides some excellent answers. The purchasing profession must take a lead role in creating the bow wave we know as sustainability.

#### 16 Roamin’ with Yeoman: Ancient Rules To Remember
*Brian Yeoman*

Conservation of good things is never a bad thing. This is beautifully demonstrated by Brian Yeoman’s column, inspired by notes from a lecture he attended more than 40 years ago.

#### 18 Certification: I am Going to Run a Marathon
*Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM*

Whether training to run a marathon or working toward professional improvement, studies demonstrate that those who do it with the help of mentors are much more likely to succeed. Need a mentor? Look no further than NAEP.

#### 19 Best and Final: The 10 Dumbest Things I’ve Ever Said at Work (So Far)
*Craig Passey, C.P.M.*

We’re all probably keeping a list like this, and this is a good one.
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- 2010 NAEP Green Procurement Survey Research Results (Presented June 9)
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The following sessions from the 2010 NAEP Annual Meeting were recorded LIVE from Denver and are now available on-demand from www.naepnet.org.

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2010 NAEP Green Procurement Survey Research Results
Procurement Professionals Reach for the STARS
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Resources for Higher Education

2010 Fall Regional Meeting Schedule

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According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, “the most credible source of information…is now ‘a person like me,’ which has risen dramatically to surpass doctors and academic experts for the first time.” The survey states that in the U.S. trust in “a person like me” increased from 20 percent in 2003 to 68 percent today.

NAEP Members could have told Edelman that years ago. Our listserv is a primary Member benefit as it enables you to connect, in real time, to a huge peer network of professionals who have faced the same challenges, looked for innovative solutions, and are willing to share their knowledge with other Members.

Our listserv enables ‘private’ conversations among Members of NAEP, facilitating discussions and collaboration between procurement professionals—a closed ‘circuit’ community. Responses received by Members are inherently trusted and acted upon with great results. An extension of capturing the knowledge and intelligence in our NAEP community is the collection of libraries on our website—RFP samples, Job Descriptions, Procedures Manuals, all created by Members to solve real problems and shared with the rest of the Membership via our document libraries.

So why social networking? On LinkedIn and Facebook, we can expand our conversation to include all of the stakeholders in the higher education procurement community. We can capture intelligence that is supply-side by including vendors in the conversation. Consultants join in offering their perspectives, usually based on experience with a variety of different institutions. We can enrich our knowledge base with perspectives that challenge and enhance our own, and may lead us to our next big innovation.

So, friend me. Link to me. You may be surprised at what you’ll find out.
How much electricity does your office building consume every month? How much does that electricity cost your campus? How much money can be saved and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions be avoided if you and your colleagues more effectively conserve energy?

Most of us know how much electricity we use at home. Monthly bills provide periodic feedback, and the choice is really ours: We can write bigger checks or reduce our use. On a large campus like the University of Maryland, there are more than 46,000 energy users but just a handful of people who pay the electric bills and know the true costs. To address this disconnect, our campus recently piloted a program called Energywise UM to deputize more campus citizens to help trim the University’s hefty electric bill.

Energywise educates building occupants about how much electricity their building uses and where their help is needed to reduce consumption. During a six-week pilot in fall 2009, occupants in three campus buildings (one administrative and two academic) were given weekly reports—think of them as surrogate utility bills—that tracked building electricity consumption against a weather-adjusted baseline. The data included kilowatt hours (kWh), dollars, and pounds of carbon dioxide (CO2) released into the atmosphere. Each week, occupants were encouraged to beat the previous week’s usage by adding an additional conservation strategy: simple things like turning off lights, powering down computers when not in use, and putting on a sweater instead of plugging in a space heater. When a building did well, it received a ☺. When consumption went up, it received a ☹.

The initiative was coordinated by the Office of Sustainability, a small group within the Division of Administrative Affairs which is working across the campus to promote GHG reductions and environmental sustainability. Three student interns working for academic credit served as building coordinators, meeting with liaisons in each building to understand the occupants’ unique needs and culture and touring the buildings with Facilities Management (FM) staff to identify promising energy conservation strategies. They also surveyed occupants to assess their willingness to conserve energy and to gather their suggestions. In two of the buildings, relationships that were forged with FM led to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) schedule adjustments, which reduced electricity usage during unoccupied hours.

Each week the interns tracked building electricity usage and distributed the building energy reports to occupants. They tallied up signs reminding people to take the stairs, instead of the elevator, and to open doors manually, instead of using electric doors that draw large volumes of air out of the building, making mechanical systems work harder. They left notes and chocolates on chairs in darkened offices to reward those who were saving energy. None of this was expensive—there were direct costs for food rewards, copying expenses, and a couple of “Kill-a-watt” meters that the students used to show building occupants how much electricity certain equipment used.

Energywise educates building occupants about how much electricity their building uses and where their help is needed to reduce consumption.
The pilot was supported through a grant from the National Wildlife Federation’s Campus Ecology Fellows Program.

The communication materials made use of social marketing research about behavior change. Messages were specific (“Flip the Switch” instead of “Save Energy”) and were framed in terms of what could be lost (scarce utility budget resources). They tapped into the social norm of consensus because research shows that people are most motivated by what their peers are doing. They also used simple symbols (think back to second grade) 😊, 😋, and 😌— which have been demonstrated to motivate behavior change.

So how did the three buildings do? Compared to a weather-adjusted baseline for each building, the reductions ranged from 0 percent to 10 percent, with the administrative building seeing the largest reduction. This is not surprising, since staff members in administrative buildings are generally easier to reach than faculty and student populations in buildings with greater transience during the workday.

Electricity savings during the six-week pilot amounted to 31,812 kWh, which, at average daily rates, would have cost the University $3,785. This translated into more than 50,000 pounds of CO₂ emissions—the equivalent to taking four cars off the road for a year. Importantly, there are a number of factors beyond behavior change and weather fluctuations that could have influenced electricity usage, such as occupancy levels, equipment changes, and mechanical problems or upgrades. Even so, the reductions were very welcome news.

Continued on page 11
Is the World Too Stupid to Be Green?

by Cory Harms, M.S.
Iowa State University

It sounds harsh, but sometimes I wonder if a lot of the companies we deal with really do get the idea of being green—or even being efficient. One example that you may know too well is (you guessed it) catalogs. In this age of web catalogs, thumb drives, CDs and all things digital, why do we still get inundated with gigantic printed catalogs? Oftentimes, eight or nine copies of the same catalog from the same vendor! Not only do they send the Purchasing Department eight copies, but copies go to everyone on campus who ever purchased an item from them. In some cases, the hard-copy tomes come from the same vendors who just responded to an RFP touting their “green” initiatives.

It makes me laugh on the outside but cry on the inside for the trees that were cut down and the inks, energy, and time wasted, just for me to throw these nine catalogs in the recycle bin. We have called companies, requesting them to stop, but they often continue, so my laughing and weeping continue.

Another example stems from a recent experience with one of our e-procurement vendors. Our platform uses a ghost card for payment of all transactions. This eliminates the need for us to print orders, vouchers, and checks and saves the vendor from printing invoices and from cashing checks, a truly paperless process in theory but the vendor continues to send us invoices. When we requested that they stop sending us invoices, they answered that they couldn’t. Their policy was to send an invoice even if the transaction was paid. I could hear trees groaning. Only after a lot of time and phone calls did the vendor stop sending hard-copy invoices.

Why do I share these stories? I am not a rabid environmentalist. You will not see me in a Greenpeace boat fighting whalers or chained to a giant redwood. I merely want to make the point that as purchasing-industry leaders in higher education, we need to continue to put pressure on our vendors to think not only in a green way, but in an efficient way. The college and university education, we need to continue to put pressure on our vendors to think not only in a green way, but in an efficient way.

There are huge projects that campuses take on to address sustainability, but these are not areas where the average purchasing agent is involved. There are many ways, however, where we can impact sustainability in our everyday work. The mantra of sustainability appropriately is “reduce, reuse, recycle,” so let’s look at ways we can influence each of these in our day-to-day operations.

**Reduce**

Reduction of waste is perhaps the easiest and most effective use of our time. If it isn’t produced, it doesn’t need to be reused or recycled. I’ve already given two instances of ways to reduce waste: First, stop the printed catalogs; and second, reduce the number of paper invoices by eliminating those you don’t need (Pcard and e-procurement invoices). Encourage vendors to send invoices electronically (for example, by email or cXML). Email bid packages to save paper, postage and time.

We can also ask for green practices and initiatives from vendors during the bid process. We should ask them for practices specific to the contract and then hold them to those practices. Vendors can often reduce packaging, use recycled packaging, eliminate foam packing, and pursue similar practices, but they must be made to know what is important to us and that we will enforce such requirements during contract execution.

**Reuse**

Surplus operations on campus provide one way to reuse items. Items can be shifted to other departments or sold to the public. We can also emphasize the preference for reuse in our bids. An example is furniture that can be disassembled with portions of it being made available for re-use.

**Recycle**

Recycling can be supported in many ways: promoting and expanding recycling programs; requesting recycled content in paper, carpeting, furniture; or requiring vendors to provide options for recycling products at the end of their useful lives (for example, fluorescent lights, computers, monitors and furniture).

These are just quick ideas. We in purchasing should be at the forefront of efficiency and sustainability and emphasize to our vendors that they, too, must continue to make strides in these directions.

So make a start by halting those hard-copy catalogs. The trees are driving me crazy!
Beyond the data, there is additional good news about educational outcomes among building occupants. Post-pilot surveys indicated that a number of building occupants were willing to change their behavior as a result of participating in *EnergyWise*. In the administrative building for instance, 45 percent of 70 survey respondents reported that during *EnergyWise*, they were more likely to turn off unneeded lighting during the day. Sixty-four percent reported changing their behavior based on a reminder sign (e.g., “Take the Stairs”). Half of the respondents claimed to have learned something new from the pilot, and 40 percent reported using the conservation tips at home.

Results from the academic buildings were similar, with more than 90 percent recommending that *EnergyWise* be expanded to other campus buildings. Since the pilot ended in late 2009, the three buildings have consistently used less energy than the prior three-year average. Temperature is a significant factor, but the HVAC schedule adjustments during evening and weekend hours are also likely contributors to the reductions. The Office of Sustainability continues to send monthly messages to building occupants, sharing the positive downward trend along with reminders for how to effectively conserve electricity. Enthusiastic environmental partners can be found all across campus and continuing departmental participation is expected as we explore how to expand this educational program to other buildings on campus. Whatever the department or job function, it seems that the dual message of environmental stewardship and fiscal responsibility is a strong one. People want to do their part.

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**Heather Lair**, MBA, M.S., is a Project Manager in the University of Maryland’s Office of Sustainability and is working to make the University a national leader in campus sustainability. She has more than 12 years of experience working on sustainability issues for non-profit, private sector, and government organizations.

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Like many of the Baby Boomer Generation—and after 25+ years in higher education procurement—I, too, will be heading off into the new opportunities and adventures that retirement promises. By the time this article hits the street, my tenure at the University of Iowa will have reached its conclusion.

Those of us in the contemplative retirement-thinking-mode have likely been in higher education procurement for 25 years or longer and typically at the same institution. Many have experienced first-hand the transformation of our profession: from what was thought to be a back-room operation to a strategic partner—a key contributor to the institution’s missions of teaching, research and public service.

Regarding those Traditionalists and Baby Boomers who will, over the next several years, retire from this profession, their absence will leave a large gap in the knowledge-base at many of our colleges and universities. A challenge these institutions will face at these crossroad events is how best to capture a good portion of the history and knowledge gained by these folks. Some of that knowledge will be explicit; some of it will be tacit. The explicit material will typically be written and substantially objective. The tacit knowledge, acquired over many years of use and internalized as second-nature, will typically ride off in the retiree’s sunset, unless something is done to capture it.

The question then becomes: how can we—regardless of when we retire—share that tacit knowledge? How can we transfer it in meaningful ways to our colleagues to ensure a semi-seamless transition when that time comes? It can be a daunting task. Daunting, but not insurmountable.

One place to start is to look at definitions of the generation-types working in our offices today to gain a better understanding of how knowledge is gathered and re-shared in methods most comfortable to the user. Lynne C. Lancaster, a

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Birth Year Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalists</td>
<td>Born before 1946</td>
<td>Shaped by the highs/lows of the Roaring 20s, Great Depression, WWII</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>1946–64</td>
<td>Shaped by Vietnam War, Great Society, Women’s Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation Xers</td>
<td>1965–81</td>
<td>Grew up in the era of divorce, latchkey kids, grunge music, personal computers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>1982–2000</td>
<td>Raised in an environment shaped by the technology explosion, 9/11 attacks, testing, and 24-hour news</td>
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Regardless of changes in these shifting environments, our commitment lies in preparing, as best we can, those who will carry on the work, and aiding them in performing it with an enhanced and enlightened sense of purpose.

- Provide reclassification opportunities to support advancement;
- Establish commodity cross-training opportunities;
- Provide potential opportunities for contracting back retirees;
- Develop internships for student workers;
- Create recruitment plans with strategies to generate a pipeline of possible employees;
- Foster a culture where brainstorming, innovation, and process improvement are the norm;
- Stay informed of industry trends;
- Benchmark processes with peer institutions;
- Continue to improve computer technology and systems and related training;
- Provide opportunities to better understand institutional relationships;
- Provide job-shadowing opportunities to learn first-hand from seasoned professionals;
- Document processes and procedures of standard purchasing practices related to specific commodity areas;
- Provide training for contract management skills and techniques;
- Help others understand the methodology of auditing and compliance oversight;
- Develop advisory committees within the colleges and departments that deal with buyers;
- Review Operations and Procedure Manuals as a team of seasoned and younger professionals.

These represent only a snapshot of suggestions. The commitment lies in preparing those who will carry on the work with an informed sense of purpose, transferring both the explicit and the tacit knowledge, capturing that intellectual capital, which, if ignored, might forever be lost.

As our colleague Dick Scharff said some years ago when he passed the gavel of the NAEP Board presidency to Ray Jensen, “The work of this great Association is not done—and there is much more to do.” This is still true, yet today.

For those of us leaving this profession, we, too, can still have a lasting impact on those who come after us. We can assist in the development and implementation of effective processes and procedures for sharing the knowledge and skill-sets that we’ve acquired, sharing them with the Xers and Millennials taking over leadership roles at our institutions. No matter what other steps may be taken to ensure positive stewardship of your organization, the efforts described above will surely be beneficial for years to come.

John Stephen Klopp served as NAEP President for two terms (2004–2006). He has worked in the Purchasing Department at the University of Iowa since 1985, currently as Purchasing Agent IV, responsible for the procurement of products and services and assisting with the administrative and operational duties for his department. He has served as President of NAEP’s MINK Region, two terms as Editorial Advisory Board Committee Chair, Supplier Advisory Committee Chair, Co-Chair of the Sponsorship Advisory Committee, 2002–03 Awards Committee Chair, and currently is a Member of the Scholarship Committee and Editorial Board. He is a frequent contributor to NAEP’s Educational Procurement Journal and, in 1995, received the Professional Perspective Award for writing. In 2009, he was honored with NAEP’s top award—the Bert C. Ahrens Award. For the past 11 years, he has served on the Editorial Advisory Board of Government Procurement Magazine. He has made many presentations at NAEP regional conferences and annual meetings. He retired as of June 30, 2010. E-mail: john-klopp@uiowa.edu.
E-Waste: Income from Sustainability

by Marc Breslal

When was the last time you heard of a sustainability initiative generating income?

Sometimes, as with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified printing products, initiatives involve paying a premium for more sustainable choices. Sometimes, as with compact fluorescent (CFL) light bulbs, initiatives end up saving money by saving energy.

But actual income—often in the tens of thousands of dollars—for doing something that is environmentally sound? As they say in the Bronx, “Fuhgeddaboudit!”

Even today, despite the emphasis on sustainability on campuses, colleges are discarding a goldmine of electronic equipment. Though not widely known, this e-waste in many cases can be restored for reuse elsewhere. The rest can, at a minimum, be properly and ethically recycled.

The E-Waste Crisis: A Sustainability Nightmare

E-waste—so prevalent at colleges—if not addressed properly, is a sustainability nightmare. E-waste has hazardous components with known toxicological effects, including polyvinyl chlorides and heavy metals like lead, cadmium, chromium, and mercury. In 2007, 157 million computer products were discarded in the U.S. Global volume of e-waste is projected to shortly reach 73 million metric tons annually, comprising more than five percent of the municipal solid waste stream.

In a recent year, only 11.4 percent of the consumer electronic product-load in the municipal waste stream was recycled. Industry sources claim that about 80 percent is shipped to developing countries. The TV show 60 Minutes, reporting in November 2008, documented improper dumping abroad. The carcinogenic leachates end up in the drinking water of already impoverished people, or in the air they breathe when the waste is burned. Processed in primitive conditions, e-waste severely endangers the environment, workers, and communities.

Consider this excerpt from the 60 Minutes website, describing its findings in just one town in China:

“Women were heating circuit boards over a coal fire, pulling out chips and pouring off the lead solder. Men were using what is literally a medieval acid recipe to extract gold. Pollution has ruined the town. Drinking water is trucked in. Scientists have studied the area and discovered that Guiyu has the highest levels of cancer-causing dioxins in the world. They found pregnancies are six times more likely to end in miscarriage, and that seven out of ten kids have too much lead in their blood.”

Reuse Trumps Recycling

With the Guiya tragedy in mind, hopefully the day is gone when colleges are throwing their e-waste in the dumpster. Better check, just to be sure, before the investigative reporter cutting her teeth at the student newspaper makes campus toxic-disposal front-page news.

It’s a guess, but most colleges probably believe they must pay to have e-waste hauled away. While that is an improvement on coningling e-waste in the dumpster, most schools have no way of knowing whether the waste is disposed of properly.

A likely smaller number of institutions know they can sell their e-waste for scrap, earning pennies on the ton for recycling. But few have a way of knowing, after the precious metals are extracted, whether the remaining scrap with no value is land-filled or discarded illegally.

There is a relatively new option, by which a handful of companies will pay institutions for the electronic equipment itself based on a complex
The mantra for years has been Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, in that order. “You can accomplish more by reusing a computer, for example, than by using the additional resources and energy needed to recycle its components and manufacture a new PC from scratch,” says Richard Sommers, President of the IT Asset Management Group, an NAEP Member. “Some firms will buy all sorts of equipment, including copiers, printers, monitors, PCs, mainframes, midrange equipment, and telephone systems,” he says. Others specialize only in certain manufacturers, Cisco being a prime example.

Steps to Maximizing Returns

Sommers recommends six steps for an institution to maximize its returns from excessed electronics.

1. Centralize and Track

Where college departments and programs are typically decentralized, get a comprehensive sense of all the other equipment that is available at any one time, and centralize this inventory data. This could be a student project, or some companies, after prequalifying what they are likely to find, may send someone to your campus to help. Firms are interested in volume, as well as quality. To keep the inventory up to date, purchasing officials could require that any requisition for electronics indicate if there is a used machine being replaced and require that it be delivered to a central temporary-storage facility.

2. Demand One-Stop Shopping

Do your research, looking for companies that will purchase your entire inventory. Depending on what you have, they may not be interested. For example, if much of it is not reusable and only has value as recyclables, it may not attract their involvement.

3. Prioritize Sustainability

If your sustainability policies require it, find out if the company provides downstream recycling data, following each component recyclable—for example, lead—through any recycling subcontractors to a specific smelter.

Does the company and its subcontractors follow ethical recycling practices? The better companies can document that downstream trail and are e-Stewards of the Basel Action Network. E-Stewards also honor criteria for sustainable and socially just electronics recycling that is more rigorous than even those of the U.S. EPA. Among other commitments, e-Stewards do not allow land-filling, incineration, or exporting to developing nations of toxic wastes. (Certification by an independent body will be available in 2010.)

4. Consider Data Destruction

If you are not wiping hard drives yourself, will the company deal with data security? Will they reformat drives at the initial, secure stop of their own processing facility, overwriting a minimum of three times with a multi-pass software wipe? This method, or a higher number of seven overwrites, is preferable as it allows the drive to be reused. But where data security concerns are extreme, the drives can be rendered unusable by degaussing or shredding, with a concomitant reduction in the price for reusable computers.

Find companies that are certified at all their locations by the National Association for Information Destruction (NAID). The certification is renewed annually and involves recurring independent audits by Certified Protection Professionals (CPP).

Companies should also state that they follow Department of Defense (DoD) 5220.22-M specifications. This establishes the standard procedures and requirements for government contractors handling classified information, going beyond data sanitization matters. If medical records are involved, look as well for companies with staff trained in Healthcare Information Portability and Accounting Act (HIPAA) compliance.

5. Offer the Material to Multiple Parties

You have vetted your list of potential vendors, narrowing to those that will take everything, will prioritize sustainability, and will be particularly careful about data security. Offer the material to more than one of these vetted companies.

But make sure the responses or bids you receive are comparable. Will they pick up, and do so without charge? Do they state they will take all e-waste, even the gear that cannot be reused and must instead be recycled? They should specify what will be reused, what will be recycled, and the level of data destruction. What other documentation is needed to satisfy your institution’s sustainability policy? All these and other details should be confirmed by formal agreement.

6. Supervise Pick-Up

You or an informed, higher-level college official should be present at the pick up. Some firms, while saying in advance they will take everything, end up picking through the material once onsite. They take the items that can be reused and leave recyclable items that have little or no value to their firms.

Enhancing Green Ratings

Ramping up sustainability by profiting from your institution’s e-waste has another bottom-line impact. In July 2009, Princeton Review published its second annual “Green Rating” of colleges. One of the three broad criteria areas was the school’s overall commitment to environmental issues.

David Soto, College Ratings Director, says that the Review collects data on the overall waste diversion rate, but currently does not look granularly at technology waste. “I certainly see the value of that,” he said when the sale-for-reuse model was explained. He suggested that e-waste avoidance measures could be a next step his board considers for implementation for upcoming ratings publications. Procurement matters already warrant several questions in the survey, constituting a “fairly significant portion of the rating system,” says Soto. Purchase of Energy Star equipment counts, as do other performance requirements in the categories of paper, cleaning, office supplies, building materials, equipment, landscaping and “other.” It is in this last category, he says, that colleges selling computers for reuse could take immediate credit, thereby enhancing their sustainability rating.

In its annual “College Hopes & Worries Survey” of students and parents, Princeton Review found that 66 percent of respondents place a value on information about a college’s commitment to the environment. Of those respondents, 24 percent said such information would “very much” impact [their child’s] decision to apply to the school.

Indeed, especially with cash for e-waste and enhanced enrollments in the mix, sustainability makes not only sense, but also dollars.
There is a great deal of buzz again in the mass media about the environment. Of course, this has been stimulated not by a positive upwelling of thought, dialogue and debate, but instead by political gamesmanship and finger-pointing over the tragic circumstances surrounding the oil-well fire, explosion, and leak off the coast of Louisiana. Why is it that the environment is an important newsworthy item only when threatened by catastrophic events?

This got me thinking about a lecture I had the privilege of attending as a college sophomore 42 years ago. You ask, “How relevant can anything 42 years old be today?” Well, after I scanned my horribly handwritten notes from that lecture, I decided that there were lessons, rules even, that are just as true to today as they were then when Webster Sill gave that lecture (and please don’t ask why I still have those notes; the answer might scare all of us).

Here are the 10 rules (and I believe they are timeless) that I learned from that lecture.

- It is nature’s world, not ours.
- Humans must think like nature.
- The world is finite, not infinite.
- Nature works in painfully slow cycles.
- There are renewable and nonrenewable resources; never forget it.
- There are real dangers in technology.
- Produce beauty and quality in preference to utility.
- Protect soil at all costs.
- Plants are more important than either animals or humans.
- A quality environment is a spiritual achievement.

Let’s explore each of these a little more.

*It is nature’s world, not ours.* Humans are a part of nature, simply one species among many, and we are not in command. Nature made humans possible, not the other way around. Nature produced humans over many eons of evolutionary time. Nature is above humans, and thus, humans must work with nature. When we work against nature we abuse ourselves and our offspring.

_Humans must think like nature._ We must think long-term, not in the context of a human lifetime or in the selfish manner we so often use to justify our decisions. Nature’s clock and time-spans are slow. We have to learn to think unselfishly for our children, their children, and their children—for the millions of years to come for the species (air, soil, water, plants, and animals). We are not trained to think that we are a species, so our frame of reference is easily hijacked into the mantra, “What’s in it for me?” We should learn from the planet’s native peoples, who understood this well and still do. In our own hemisphere, many tribes of North America had a “seventh-generation viewpoint.” The premise framed every decision, allowing them to function in greater harmony with natural systems.

_The world is finite, not infinite._ While the universe may well be infinite, the earth is not. Every atom that was present at creation is still in the system and slowly moving towards entropy (disorder). As such, there is fixed carrying capacity for the planet. No one knows just what the limits are for oxygen, fresh water, soil, and plant production, but they do exist. This, from a scientific standpoint, sets up the conflict. Unlimited population growth and unlimited Gross Domestic Product expansion are, quite simply, impossible. We haven’t figured out yet how to calculate the end-time, but the science is clear.

_Nature works in painfully slow cycles._ The slow, glacial, protracted cycles of nature are in stark contrast to the way humans tend to think. We have been trained to think linearly (from which have come, for example, the disciplines of engineering, medicine, business, and industry), not cyclically. Unfortunately, the cycles of nature operate oblivious to these curricula, leaving us with models that are not in harmony with our self-interest as a species. There is the carbon cycle, the nitrogen cycle, the food-chain cycle, and the painfully slow geological-time cycle. There are
the birth, maturity, death, and decay cycles, and all but a few move very slowly. We must learn to recycle every industrial and agricultural product we produce in order to return those atoms to the natural cycles that run the planet.

There are renewable and nonrenewable resources, and don’t forget it. For humans, conventional wisdom suggests that fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas, when combusted, are gone forever. But humans must understand that combustion makes nothing go away; it simply transforms the molecules into a different form. All burned fossil fuels that have been thought to have simply burned away have been, rather, transformed into molecules of carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and methane, to name a few. But there is no “away.” The atmosphere and the lithosphere hold onto those molecules in concentrations greater than what nature can transform quickly. We are literally pooping in the Petri dish we call home. Home will become unlivable if we don’t soon understand and take action.

We are blessed with renewable systems. They are the best examples for teaching us the cycles of nature. Water, soil, forests, grasslands, iron, lead, and copper can all be recycled indefinitely through our good stewardship. We need careful planning and conservation practiced by industrials, businessness, farmers and consumers.

There are real dangers in technology. Technology is dangerous because it comes with the terrific price of the demands it places on nonrenewable resources. The problem is exacerbated by the thoughtless waste in the take-make-waste and heat-beat-and-treat cycles that dominate the current manufacturing processes. If technology is not designed for efficient disassembly and recycling (so that molecules can be used again and again), technology is contributing to the degradation of the quality of the planet’s support systems. Some examples: deadly poisons, certain pesticides, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, abandoned oil-well sites, the BP oil spill, asbestos, mercury, and carbon monoxide—and these only scratch the surface.

Produce beauty and quality in preference to utility. Ecologically sound use and management of resources are beautiful because they preserve soil, water, trees, shrubs, grass, and yes, rocks. Contrast that to the get-rich-quick philosophy of some mining companies, land developers and farmers and you can witness “ugly”—the abomination to mankind. We have choices. If we consistently protect soil, trees, shrubs, grass, and rocks, we can figure out how to fit into the ecosystem and we can build structures to last not just a single generation but possibly seven generations, as much of Europe has done.

Protect soil at all costs. Soil formation is the most basic foundation for all life on the planet. Without adequate soil formation and regeneration, life will cease to exist on the planet very quickly, in geologic terms. Soil needs to be covered with a mantle of vegetation. The mantle absorbs rain and holds it. The water then creeps slowly back to the ocean, only after being absorbed deeply into the soil, where it increases groundwater, raises the water table, all the while giving life to vegetation. Bare ground renders soil into dirt and must be avoided at all costs. Minimal tillage should be the standard mode of care, but it is not. The planet is slowly losing its soil-formation capabilities. One of the primary reasons is the concreting-over of massive tracts of land each year. We make a penny-wise and pound-foolish exchange when we concrete over both a carbon sink and the medium by which our life sustenance is gained (through the production of oxygen by green plants performing the wonders of photosynthesis). No water is absorbed; no new soil is formed by decaying matter; and no habitat is created for the billions of species who are dependent upon soil as a home. When we protect soil and use it wisely, it becomes more fertile and productive, and the countryside becomes more beautiful and a better home for all living organisms.

Plants are more important than either animals or humans. Plants were on the planet perhaps billions of years before most animals, and it is highly likely that all animals were here well before humans. Humans are completely dependent upon plants for oxygen and upon plants and animals for food—and for inspiration. Neither plants nor animals are dependent upon man for anything. They were doing just fine before we arrived. On the other hand, animals are ultimately dependent upon plants for food. It should be a no-brainer that humans must learn to recognize this essential importance and protect and use plants as the most precious and critical of all benefits provided by nature. Unfortunately, we have yet to accept this very simple truism.

A quality environment is a spiritual achievement. Our quality environment is dependent upon a love of nature and nature’s God, upon the love of natural beauty; upon plants and animals, rocks and trees; upon clean air and clear flowing water. We honor nature’s peace, her sounds, and movement. A quality environment is predicated upon a group of principles closely akin to religious beliefs. Consequently, the achievement of a quality environment is essentially a spiritual pursuit, not a material one. In the end, we will be better judged by what and how we add to natural beauty and productivity, than by what we take away or cover over.

So there you have my recollections of a lecture that shaped my life’s work. There is knowledge and wisdom for you also. I know that you, too, are on a journey. I also know that you, too, can do great things!

Brian K. Yeoman is Director of Sustainable Leadership at NAEP and is the retired Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Campus Development at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. E-mail: byeoman@clintonfoundation.org.

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As many of you may know, I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma in 2000 and then again in 2009. Now I have, again, been declared cancer-free. Since I have personally been the recipient of the cancer research dollars spent by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS), I feel compelled to “pay it forward” and have agreed to help raise money for more research by running a marathon. Yep, the whole 26.2 miles. I must be out of my mind!

What does this have to do with the procurement profession in general and NAEP in particular? Everything!

When LLS suggested that I help raise cancer research funds by running a marathon, I didn’t just think they were crazy—I knew! I told them I could not possibly do it, and then I remembered: That is the same response some of you have given when I suggested that you improve your position (whether by internal promotion or outside opportunity) by completing your college degree or earning professional certification. You have told me that you are too old, that it costs too much money, that you don’t have the talent, that you don’t have the time, that you are too exhausted after a day of work to study, etc., etc., etc. Yep, I’ve heard it all, and I used them all when LLS gave me their fund-raising suggestion.

But they told me that I would not be alone in training to do this. They said they would assign me a mentor, an expert who had done this before, who would work with me one-on-one to make sure I understood the “hows” and “whys” of marathon training. This mentor, they said, would ensure my success. They said, too, that we would work together as a team so I would not be trying to climb this mountain alone—and so I would not think that I was the only one out there feeling beat up, broken-down, and unable to make it (all feelings I have had since I started my training). Again I remembered: That is the same offer NAEP extends to its Members who want to advance in today’s competitive marketplace by obtaining their certification and/or earning their college degree.

LLS gave me statistics that showed that almost 100 percent of those who try this mentor-driven, team-helping approach complete the marathon, while only a small percentage of those trying to do this on their own succeed. Again I remembered: Those are about the same results we have shown for those trying to improve their educational level with NAEP’s help versus those who try to do it on their own.

I know I will succeed. Why am I so sure? Because I am going to take advantage of their mentor and team approach rather than trying to go it alone, and because it is something I need—and truly want—to do to give back to the organization that has helped me on my journey to complete cancer remission.

If you start on a journey to improve yourself professionally, will you succeed? You will if you follow NAEP’s mentor and team approach. Why am I so sure? Because NAEP has its own experts who will guide you through the process. Through the Procurement Academy, Annual Conference, CPSM Test Preparation Assistance, and other help, NAEP will make sure that you are not doing it alone. Besides, it is something you need to do, both for yourself and to give back to the profession that has given you so much.

Contact Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM at ashbybob@embarqmail.com and let’s get you started toward running your own marathon.

Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM, is retired from his position as Director of Purchasing and Contracts for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he also served as an Adjunct Professor in the Management Department. Bob has been active in NAEP since 1997. In 2006, he received NAEP’s Distinguished Service Award, and in 2008, he won the newly established Mentor of the Year Award. NAEP renamed the award in his honor to the Bob Ashby Mentor of the Year Award in 2009. E-mail: ashbybob@embarqmail.com.
The 10 Dumbest Things I’ve Ever Said at Work (So Far)

by Craig Passey, C.P.M.
Brigham Young University

You know those t-shirts that read, “Help! I’m talking and I can’t shut up”? I need one!

1. Frustrated with our ERP software, I labeled it “The anti-Christ,” resulting in being assigned to lead the next upgrade.

2. Attending the office summer social, I won a dozen golf balls. My boss said, “Hey, Passey. Maybe now you will learn to play golf!” I countered, “Somebody has to stay in the office and get the work done.” He didn’t talk to me for more than a year.

3. A few months after the death of our boss’s spouse, he shocked us by announcing his engagement to the best purchasing assistant I’d ever hired. He reminded us that policy prohibited spouses from working within the same business division. I blurted out to him, “Gee, we’re going to miss you!”

4. A colleague announced in a staff meeting that his expeditor was planning to quit after she had her baby. I said, “If I had to do your expediting, I’d get pregnant too!”

5. Upset over a new metric to reduce our three-day processing time by an arbitrary half-day, I said, “Gee. If we can do that every year, in five years, we will be processing orders in no time at all!”

6. An attorney from the firm we retained strongly disagreed with my intended course of action and threatened to document that I ignored his advice. I said, “Knock yourself out. That’s why they call you Counsel instead of Decision-maker.”

7. Publicly reprimanded by a high-ranking officer for purchasing a Braille Bible without passing it by the Scripture Committee, I offered my simple defense: “I didn’t know there was a Scripture Committee.” He continued that had I followed protocol, I would have saved money. I rebutted that Braille Bibles are obtained from only one source—the Lutherans, who provide them at no charge. As the color red began rising on his neck, I realized I was embarrassing him and I blurted out an apology, “I’m sorry. I’ve never purchased anything in Braille before and was just feeling my way through the process.” He and my supervisor failed to find that amusing.

8. Angry over an after-the-fact purchase, I approached the department chair, but found him unsympathetic. In frustration I said, “You know, we don’t walk in and teach your classes; perhaps you shouldn’t do our purchasing job.” I was severely reprimanded for my impudence.

9. Called blindly into a meeting, I soon discovered the reason for my invitation: I was to help a consultant write boilerplate for a $12 million bid. He was absorbing my purchasing role. I couldn’t give him the neat package he sought, as we were allowed to negotiate most of the terms. In desperation, he asked, “Look, Craig, when you get a request for capital equipment, what do you normally do?” I responded (thinking of the times we had been ignored), “Well, physical facilities brings the request to us, we rubber-stamp it and send it out.” An engineer jumped to his feet and screamed at me, “That’s not true!” All night I rehearsed my apology to the director, but before I could offer an explanation the next morning, I had been removed from the project. The irate engineer suffered a heart attack two days later, adding to my guilt.

10. Prior to offering me a job in procurement, the purchasing director looked me in the eye and asked, “Do you think you can handle the job?” I said, “Absolutely!” That remains the dumbest thing I have said so far.

Craig Passey, C.P.M., has enjoyed a 30-year career in purchasing and travel for Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and for the LDS Church in Salt Lake City. His writing and teaching include assignments in both international and domestic procurement. He has a BS in financial planning and counseling, with a minor in international relations from BYU. E-mail: craig_passey@byu.edu.

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