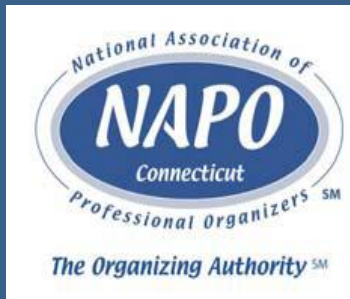


# Connecticut Connections

July / August 2009

*"It is common sense to take a method & try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."*

– Franklin Roosevelt



## Next Chapter Meeting

### When

September 18, 2009

### Agenda

9:00 a.m. – noon  
Continental breakfast  
Situation of the Month  
Networking  
Speaker

### Where

Holiday Inn, North Haven  
Route 91, Exit 12

**RSVP** if you plan to attend

[RSVP@napoct.com](mailto:RSVP@napoct.com)

## Inside this Issue:

Changing for Good	2
NAPO Summer Offerings	2
Our Board	3
June Meeting Notes	3
Newsletter Advertising	3
Read a Book in an Hour	4
Action File Box	4
NAPO-CT Plans '09-10	5
Organizing Sourcebook	6
Chapter Information	6

## President's Message – Cara Brook



I am really excited to take over the NAPO-CT reins for the rest of 2009 into 2010. Your Board of Directors met in mid-June for a Strategic Planning meeting and we're gearing up for a great year ahead! Don't be surprised if we shake things up a little bit. The format of the June meeting was just the beginning. We are structuring our meetings so that each person, from newbie to veteran

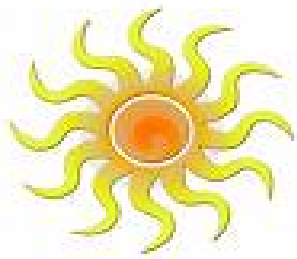
organizer, will come away with something useful. NAPO-CT is your Association, and the value in being a member lies in the networking and education we offer.

For the 2009-2010 year, the Board has come up with three themes for our programming:

- **Grow Your Business:** How can we grow our organizing businesses? How do we attract new clients? What are the best client retention methods? How do we use social networking to build our businesses?
- **Grow Your Skills:** How do we expand upon our skill set to increase the value we have to offer to our clients? What are the new specialty areas? Maybe there is a new niche for us to discover.
- **Balance It Out:** We assist our clients in achieving a balanced home/work life, and we need to make sure we're practicing what we preach. What tools/services are offered that can serve both the organizer and the client?

If you have ideas to help us expand on these themes or have any expertise in these areas, please contact me, or any other Board member, so we can highlight your knowledge at one of our meetings or in a newsletter article.

Until then, I invite you to sit back and enjoy your summer. I look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces again when we reconvene in September!



## Changing for Good – A Book Review

By Jill McKean of Organize It

jillmckean@organizeit-now.com

As professional organizers, it can be a challenge when the prospective client sounds eager to get organized; however when you return their call they just aren't ready to set an appointment. What is going on here?

### Welcome to summer!

Time out for you ~ If it is self-development, sign up for a course or read a good book. A few suggestions are included in this issue. If it is pure down time, pour yourself an ice cold lemonade, lay in the hammock, take a walk on the beach and enjoy the summer!

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### Summer Course Offerings

provided by NAPO Nat'l unless noted otherwise

Web-based course, take at your convenience: Working with People who have Memory Loss (offered by eSM MART) \$19.99

July 7 Tele-class: Introduction to Professional Organizing \$29

July 14 Webinar: Feng Shui for Organizers (offered by NAPO-NY) \$59

July 15 Tele-class: Biz Options for the Practicing PO \$99

July 15 Tele-seminar: Time Management for Students \$39

July 25 Tele-class: NAPO in the Schools – Elementary

Aug 3 Workshop for New Organizers (offered by NAPO NE) \$55

Aug 7 Tele-class: Introduction to Professional Organizing \$29

Aug 29 Tele-class: NAPO in the Schools – Elementary

Sept 1 Tele-class: Introduction to Professional Organizing \$29

Sept 8 Tele-class: Starting an Organizing Business \$179

Sept 9 Tele-class: Biz Options for the Practicing PO \$99

Sept 10 & 17 Tele-class: Preparing for the BCPO Exam \$179

Sept 14 & 21 Tele-class: Starting out as a Residential Organizer \$99

Sept 16 Tele-class: Transference of Organizational Skills \$99

In **Changing for Good**, author James O. Prochaska describes the stages of change a person goes through before they are ready to take action. It can be helpful to understand this, so you know where a prospect may be in the process. The five stages are Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action and Maintenance.

With reference to Prochaska's stages, here is how change might occur. In pre-contemplation, the individual is basically still fighting change, whether the change is to diet, quit smoking or clear clutter. In contemplation, the inner dialogue begins to shift into a stronger desire for change. In preparation, the individual is actually imagining how the change can occur. This is when they may be ready to call you for information about organizing.

Just realize the process is not as linear as it sounds. The prospect may still need to move within these stages until the desire has deepened further. When they get to the stage of commitment or action, the desire is strong and they are likely to reach out to you as a PO, make the appointment and keep it.

When they get into the action stage, here again they may wobble when they see the organizing process is slower than expected. When they are in the action and maintenance stages, it is important to have some support set up. Prochaska suggests a few ideas. First, they need to reward themselves periodically and recognize their accomplishments. They may need to counter the naysayers around them. Getting support from family and friends can be very helpful. It might be as simple as a family member gently reminding them they wanted to take care of the mail first thing after dinner each night and helping them keep to the routine.

Prochaska also explains about relapse and the ten lessons of relapse. Here are a few of them: 1) Few people who take steps to change terminate after their first relapse, 2) mini decisions lead to maxi decisions, and 3) lapse is not relapse.

I highly recommend this book. In fact, you can borrow it through the Connecticut library loan system by going to [www.iconn.org](http://www.iconn.org).

## June Chapter Meeting Notes

The Situation of the Month topic “How has the economy impacted your business?” resulted in great suggestions and comments. The lively discussion was moderated by Kerri Colombo. Several Professional Organizers are now offering package rates along with their existing rates. Others ‘checked in’ with prior clients and received renewed business. Still others are scheduling and conducting speaking engagements.

It was reported that several items are missing from the NAPO-CT Lending Library. While you are catching up on your summer reading, check around your office to see if you might have a book or CD that needs to be returned.

NAPO National Board President, Laura Leist, joined us as guest speaker. She reported on the new board members and committees. The national board meets four times a year. They are a Strategic Board, rather than a working board. Their June 22-23 meeting was scheduled to be focused on task forces, public relations and branding.

Laura encouraged everyone to take a look at the recently revamped NAPO National website. It includes a database of statistics and quotes, which can be accessed by clicking on ‘Press Room’ in the upper right corner. The website also includes case studies from clients of NAPO members and case studies on various NAPO member business models.

Plans for further improvements to the NAPO national website include the development of a job bulletin board, coming later this year. This will enable individuals to post help wanted either as staff or temporary help for larger jobs.

Laura asked NAPO members to take the time to complete national’s Quick Poll surveys that are scheduled to be sent via e-mail on a quarterly basis.

Laura reported that there are over 4200 current members of NAPO. Member retention is currently at 69% and the board is working to increase that percentage. They are finding that a majority of those not renewing are typically in their first year provisional period. We must continue to educate individuals on the benefits of being a NAPO member.

Laura also reported that there are now 34 NAPO chapters. The number of conference attendees in Orlando this year was 727; one-third of those in attendance are new members.

Many of our Chapter Meeting attendees stayed after and joined Laura for a buffet luncheon. There was a great deal of networking and good discussion.

Hope to see you in September at our next Chapter meeting!

## Chapter Board of Directors

### President

Cara Brook (203) 348-4767  
Strategize, Organize, Simplify, LLC  
[cara@organizewithsos.com](mailto:cara@organizewithsos.com)

### Vice President

Kerri Colombo (203) 794-0284  
Cornerstone Organizing  
[cornerstoneorganizing@hotmail.com](mailto:cornerstoneorganizing@hotmail.com)

### Secretary

Jill McKean  
Organize It! (203) 431-6562  
[jillmckean@organizeit-now.com](mailto:jillmckean@organizeit-now.com)

### Treasurer

Judith Ann Kirk (860) 747-8962  
Organizing Resources  
[judith@organizingresources.com](mailto:judith@organizingresources.com)

### Director – at – Large

Dagmara (Dee) Zeidenbergs  
Organized by DZeign (213) 718-5050  
[dzeign@me.com](mailto:dzeign@me.com)

### Director Communications / Technology

Sandra Wheeler (860) 608-0451  
For Peace of Mind, LLC  
[forpeaceofmind@sbcglobal.net](mailto:forpeaceofmind@sbcglobal.net)

### Director of Marketing

Deb Gabinelle (860) 561-1613  
InSightful Solutions  
[debgabinelle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:debgabinelle@sbcglobal.net)

### Director of Membership

Bernette Powell (203) 729-3721  
Organizing by Bernette  
[Bernette.powell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Bernette.powell@sbcglobal.net)

### Director of Professional Development

Vacant

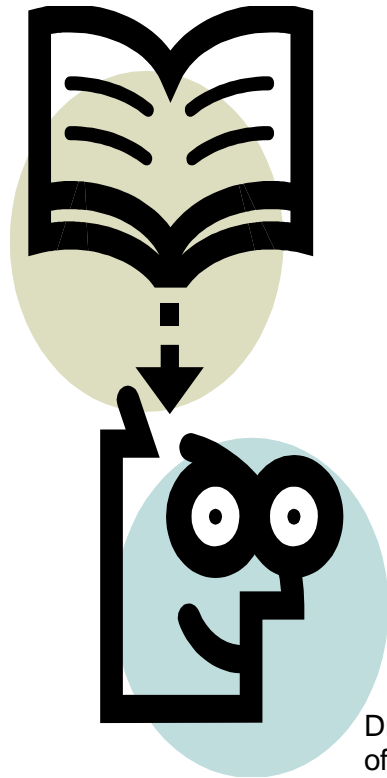
## Newsletter Advertising

For information about advertising opportunities in this newsletter, details are on our website at [www.napo-ct.net](http://www.napo-ct.net). Questions may be directed to Jennifer Burke at [jkborganizing@gmail.com](mailto:jkborganizing@gmail.com).

# Knowing How to Read a Book in an Hour

By Meggin McIntosh, The Ph.D. of Productivity

One of the many time thieves in our lives is slow reading. There are times for slow, no-rush, no-worries reading. However, there are other times we are reading as if we had all the time in the world--but only because we don't know how to read quickly. These tips will help you to read and retain only those portions of a book that suit your needs.



1. First, ask (and answer) 'What is my purpose for reading this piece?'
2. Write down your purpose on a bookmark. An index card works great for this.
3. Read the introduction, if there is one. This helps you get a general sense of the book.
4. Survey the table of contents, noticing what is of interest to you, given the purpose you have noted on your bookmark.
5. Revise your purpose, as needed. Sometimes what we thought we were going to read about isn't what the book is about--and so we need to reframe our purpose.
6. Set a timer for one hour, go to an appropriately quiet reading spot and read \*only\* what you perceive to be the most valuable. Note: By the time you set a timer, you may have already decided that this book isn't for you, after all.
7. Whichever parts you are reading, read fast! Just speed up your eyes! Your brain is perfectly capable of staying with you, I promise.
8. Read with a pencil or pen in your hand. Post-it® notes are useful as well.
9. Jot down key words or mind map as you go. When you finish, take a look at your notes and/or mind map. Add additional thoughts, words, ideas, or sentences to what you have already written. Think about what you have learned and how you will apply this information.

Dr. Joe Vaughn, one of my mentors in graduate school said, "Reading is an event of thinking cued by text." Let this definition serve you. Let the text cue your thinking about the topic. Imagine reading 5 - 10 or more books a week. You can.

## Action File Box – easy and accessible

By Jill McKean of Organize It  
jillmckean@organizeit-now.com

A challenge for Chronically Disorganized (CD) clients is how to get current important papers handy and easy to reference – like bills to pay, flyers for up-coming events, kid's activity forms, things to do, and follow ups. The Action File Box offers a portable solution to keep things handy and easy to use. It is not too big, so it can sit on the kitchen counter or move to the office beside the computer, easy to grab when it's time to sort the mail, pay a bill or check a flyer for an upcoming event.



**Setting Up the Action File Box:** To begin, select an open top file box about 6 inches deep, no bigger or it will become a catch all. The open top makes it easy to access, file and retrieve papers.

You can find this size file box in plastic or metal mesh at an office supply store. I recommend the Cargo® brand which can be found on the internet. It comes in six different colors, so a client can pick one they like

## Action File Box (continued from page 4)

and that suits their décor. Color and texture may be important to a CD client and can help them identify the Action File Box distinct from other things sitting out. Also, if the CD client is visual, the color and texture may be very important. It may help them upgrade the daily mail process to something special from the mundane everyday drudgery.

**The File Tabs:** The next step is setting up the hanging file folders. It's important to pick only a few key categories and create file tabs for just 4-6 hanging files. These tabs might be labeled To Pay, To Do, Pending, Events, and Contacts. It is important to help the CD client resist the temptation to add more files to the Action File Box. If they need more files, it's better to create additional filing in another location.

**Benefit of Vertical:** Another advantage of an open file box for the Action File Box is the ability to file vertically. If you place the file tabs on the far left or right side, you can file papers standing up or sitting vertically in the hanging folder. It makes it even easier to see what's in each file folder. This offers a great improvement over the piles of papers that they might have been dealing with before.

**Create a Routine:** The last thing is creating a routine for them to maintain their files and keep things up to date and organized. This is especially true with the daily mail. As the professional organizer, you can help them set up a routine that works for them.

A **daily** routine might be to open and review the mail. While they are still standing up with the mail – in action mode – they can file, act or toss as they review it. Doing the mail in the moment is easier than letting it pile up. When it piles up it can become overwhelming and then less likely to be done. With the Action File Box handy, they can file bills to be paid and any To Do's.

A **weekly** routine might be to get up to date on their mail, pay any outstanding bills and do some filing. Also, toss out old flyers or papers they no longer need in their Action File Box.

A **monthly** routine might be to review outstanding items in the file box, do some filing and any follow up or tossing.

The Action File Box can streamline life and save time and frustration for CD clients. It is a great asset to an organized household.

### ***NAPO-CT Plans for 2009 & 2010 – Where will you join in?***

For the coming year, the Board is planning themes for each quarter. Our meetings, website and newsletter will all highlight these subjects. Start thinking about how you will contribute ...

Sept to Nov – Grow Your Business

Jan to Mar – Grow Your Skills

Apr to June – Balance it Out

Share a client story, write an article, bullet a list of tips and tricks, share your experience, write a book review. The possibilities are endless. Send your ideas to Sandra Wheeler, **Connecticut Connections** Editor, at [forpeacofmind@sbcglobal.net](mailto:forpeacofmind@sbcglobal.net)

### Mailing Address

NAPO-CT  
Attn: -----  
994 North Colony Road  
PMB 127  
Wallingford, CT 06492  
**On the Web**  
www.NAPOCT.com

### NAPO Dues Notice

According to National NAPO policy, if your National dues lapse for 30 days, your membership date with NAPO will be reset to the date you rejoined. NAPO-CT will adhere to the same policy. If national membership expires, chapter membership automatically expires. It is your responsibility to keep both national and chapter membership current. Notify NAPO-CT Membership Director if you have any changes in your contact information.

Our Chapter Vision is to be the leading resource for professional organizers in Connecticut.

Our Chapter Mission is to:

- Support, educate and provide networking for our members.
- Promote the profession of professional organizing.
- Educate the public about professional organizing.

**OUR GOAL IS YOUR SUCCESS!**

## The Organizing Sourcebook – A Book Review

By Faith Manierre of “Busy Bees Professional Organizing LLC”  
[info@busybeesorganizing.com](mailto:info@busybeesorganizing.com)

Kathy Waddill writes about strategies for organizing your life in **The Organizing Sourcebook: Nine Strategies for Simplifying Your Life**. Written in the formula made popular by Stephen Covey with **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, Waddill’s book explains what leads to disorganization, identifies typical organizing problems and possible solutions. Waddill explains how to live what she calls a reasonably organized life, describes her model of organizing principles or strategies, and applies each to individual situations.

Each chapter addresses a different organizing problem, describing typical symptoms and recommending strategies to alleviate the problem. I enjoyed the examples Waddill shares of real-life clutter problems. At the end of each chapter, the concepts are recapped and helpful resources are provided.

I am pleased that, overall, Waddill keeps a positive tone in this book. She does not disparage clients who have difficult clutter problems; rather, she looks to identify the problem areas and ways to remedy them. Rather than promote perfection, which is how organizing is currently portrayed in the media, Waddill explains that we should aspire to be a reasonably organized person. This takes away the negative labels associated with disorganization and allows the discovery of the source of the problem without attacking the individual.

Many of Waddill’s concepts will seem very basic to those in the organizing profession. The true value is the thorough evaluations she provides and the examples she gives to explain what happens when these principals are not followed. The language she uses is accessible and easy to comprehend.

The principles outlined in this book are a good starting place for self-awareness and solutions for getting organized, and it would be helpful to organizers and clients alike. However, it does not address some of the issues often faced by people with chronic disorganization. She does not address mental illnesses, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, problems with executive functions and other challenges that undermine one’s ability to organize. Waddill believes that most people have experienced periods of order or organization in their life. This is not true in my experience; many of my clients with chronic disorganization did not have families of origin that provided an example of organization. Clients like these will find it more difficult to benefit from this book.

Waddill’s book gives examples that an individual can relate to and would like to learn. Her information could be very beneficial to both a disorganized person and a professional organizer. In fact, professional organizers will recognize many of the scenarios Waddill presents, and will easily see how our clients can benefit from her evaluation process and remedies. However, I would issue one caveat. While Waddill’s book is very valuable and helpful, there are clients who may not know how to make a system work for their individual life situation. Disorganized clients may lack the logical/organizational skills to translate or extrapolate the examples given to their own organizing problems. Fortunately, one of the strategies Waddill recommends is to get help when you need it, whether from a professional organizer or a mental health professional.

This book can be borrowed from the NAPO-CT Lending Library.