

ALASBO News Link...



November 2012

A newsletter publication of Alaska Association of School Business Officials

ALASBO News Link
is published for the members of the Alaska
Association of School Business Officials
and its affiliate members.

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*Would you like to receive this newsletter by print,
rather than e-mail? Send a message to Amy Lujan at
the above address.*

President's Message

Jenny Martens, Lower Yukon

I hope you are all having a great year so far, keeping up with work demands while finding time to take care of yourselves. I also hope you are making plans to attend the ALASBO Annual Conference, "40 Years of Success Through Networking", December 2-5 in beautiful downtown Anchorage. One of our goals this year is to have record participation at the conference, to not only celebrate ALASBO's 40th year, but to remember and celebrate our own successes through networking.

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This conference is packed full of professional development opportunities for all school business officials and plenty of time to network with colleagues. There are honored guests as well as informational, inspirational and humorous speakers and presenters. Our business partners have once again shown their support by filling up the conference exhibit hall, providing demonstrations and sponsoring receptions. We are also pleased that the Division of Retirement and Benefits is sponsoring an Employer Training Workshop directly following the conference on December 6th and 7th.

The highlight of this conference is the celebration of ALASBO's 40th Year, recognizing the contribution by our founders and leaders and the dedication of members throughout the past 40 years.

I look forward to seeing you in December. Whether I see you or not, I wish you ALL a great rest of the year!!



Executive Director's Message

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

The 40th annual ALASBO conference is not to be missed! Attendees confirm each year that the information and networking contacts they gain serve all year long, providing the essential tools needed to get the job done.

Please remember to send in your recollections about ALASBO over the years, as requested in President Jenny Martens' email!

At our registration website, take a look at the latest schedule, to begin planning your info-gathering strategy for this year's conference. Also, don't miss the pre and post-conference sessions, offered on Sunday, December 2 and Thursday and Friday, December 6-7. It is not too late to add a pre-conference session to your registration! Let me know if you have difficulty with this update in the registration system. For post-conference sessions with EMA and the

Division of Retirement and Benefits, you must register directly with those organizations.

I'm certain you'll enjoy our vendor show, keynote speaker, evening receptions, Casino Night, student music (and we're adding native dancing this year!), and seeing so many friends and colleagues from across the state. I look forward to seeing all of you in Anchorage!

In other news, twenty-two Alaskans and their guests returned recently from the ASBO International conference in Phoenix. Once again, it was a great conference! **Thanks to American Fidelity** for sponsoring our go-kart activity at Octane Raceway! Just so you know who to look out for on the road, the top racers for best lap time were:

- Vortex Venom (Judy Erekson, Haines SD)
- Super Dave (Dave Arp, Sitka SD)
- Fivepennies (Nichole Wood, Fairbanks North Star Borough SD)
- Dennis (Dennis Niedermeyer!)
- Joy (Joy Stein, Mat-Su Borough SD)

Sorry Luke – you were just out of the running! But I was further down the list...

Another project you'll be hearing more about in the next few months is the Management Review program. The Board has assigned an ad hoc committee to put together a proposal for a program to assist school districts in reviewing their operations. Similar programs are available in through other ASBO state affiliates.

If you have questions about any ALASBO program, please do not hesitate to contact me at alasbo@gci.net, or 907-500-9086. You'll also find useful information at: www.alasbo.org.

Send us your pictures!

Last call before the conference, to add to the annual slideshow! We especially would like historical photos, in celebration of the 40th.

Send them to:

yodean.armour@klawockschool.com





ASBO Recognition for Alaskan Districts

Amy Lujan, Executive Director

Some of the most popular programs administered by ASBO International are the Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) and Certificate of Excellence (COE) programs. Both of these programs involve peer review of budget and financial statement documents against rigorous standards.

David Means of Juneau School District currently serves on the MBA advisory committee. To find out more about the programs, visit the ASBO International website, www.asbointl.org.

We are proud to have several award recipients in our state for the most recent review periods:

Meritorious Budget Award FY12

- Kenai Peninsula Borough SD
- Juneau SD

Certificate of Excellence FY11

- Anchorage SD
- Bering Strait SD
- Fairbanks North Star Borough SD
- Kenai Peninsula Borough SD
- Matanuska Susitna Borough School District

Kudos to the school business officials in these districts for achieving this level of excellence!!

Call for ALASBO Board Nominations

Luke Fulp, Mat-Su Borough School District

Are you interested in serving on ALASBO's Executive Board? This is a great opportunity to volunteer within an organization whose mission is to promote the highest standards in school business practices.

Through your service on the Executive Board you will be able to support this mission by planning the annual conference, serving as an ALASBO liaison, and participating in all Board meetings as a voting member – making critical decisions to further advance our organization.

For me personally, serving on the ALASBO Board of Directors for the past six years has been a tremendous experience. One of the perks I experienced during my time on the Board involves the professional growth afforded to me by attending numerous conferences and training events. Over the last six years, I have participated in eight annual conferences and seven leadership events hosted by both ASBO International and ALASBO.

Beyond professional development opportunities, I was able to form long-lasting friendships with colleagues from around the state. It is here that I feel I benefited the most. The business officials that I've met through this organization are dedicated professionals who are eager to share, learn, and advance their skills for the benefit K-12 public education. And it's for that reason that I feel President Martens' theme this year is so fitting: "40 Years of Success through Networking!"

Please consider nominating yourself or a colleague for the ALASBO Executive Board. Nomination forms will be provided at the upcoming annual conference. This year, the nominations committee is seeking candidates for the positions of Secretary, Director – Seat A, Director – Seat B, and Director – Seat C. You can review the job descriptions for these positions on our website, www.alasbo.org, in the about ALASBO – Policies & Procedures section.

Power Lunch Teleconference Schedule

November 20	Indirect Cost Proposal
December 18	1099's and W-2's

11 AM to noon

**call 218-844-3377, code 252726
(spells ALASBO!)**

HAPPY 40th YEAR ALASBO!!!!

Jenny Martens, Lower Yukon

As we celebrate ALASBO's 40th year I would like to share with you a brief history of an organization that has provided hundreds of school business officials across the state opportunities to grow, network, and lead as professional members of the school community. The Alaska Association of School Business Officials, better known as ALASBO, was founded in 1974 by Lowell Thomas 'Tom' Freeman along with Richard 'Dick' Swarner, Duane Oliphant, and John 'Jake' Rogers who are now all honorary members of ALASBO.

Tom Freeman, after being promoted to Finance Director of the Anchorage School District, recognized the need for Alaska districts to work together to deal with the many challenges of school district administration. Having been a member of the Washington Association of School Business Officials organization, he knew the importance of an affiliate organization in Alaska that could provide professional experiences and networking opportunities to Alaska's school business officials.

Between 1975 and 1977 ALASBO, led by current honorary members, built a professional organization by electing officers, adopting by-laws, establishing committees, Incorporating, and appointing a Treasurer. ALASBO was soon included in the Department of Education directory, which recognized the trust ALASBO had built in a very short time frame.

In November 1974 the first official ALASBO meeting convened. Fifty-seven people participated from 25 of the 31 school districts. The Anchorage Mayor and Superintendent were among the attendees. Superintendents and board members from around the state praised ALASBO and sent a common message that they would support future attendance by their school business office staff. After nearly 40 years and several years of schedule changes involving double conferences, we will arrive at our 40th annual conference in December 2012.

As Alaska increased the number of school districts in the state, the Commissioner of Education supported ALASBO, knowing the role it would play in the vital professional development for all the new school business officials. ALASBO has continued to provide leadership through the years, often collaborating

with the state and other organizations to make positive changes to educational operations.

ALASBO has established a strong presence at the national and international levels through ALASBO's affiliate organization, the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO). Over the years, an impressive number of ALASBO members have been appointed to ASBO regular and special committees and have received awards and recognition for their commitment to their profession and to their districts. Most notably, with full support of ALASBO, Melody E. Douglas from the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District was elected to the ASBO International Board in 2004, elected president elect in 2005, and served as president in 2006 and past president in 2007. Melody's service to ASBO and the respect she gained nationally was pivotal in the history of ALASBO, as it recognized the hard work and professionalism of its members and the organization as a whole, and opened doors for Alaska's school business officials.

ALASBO from its formation in 1974 through 2006 depended heavily on volunteer time by members and volunteer Executive Directors. Although ALASBO had been extremely successful due to a tremendous amount of volunteer time, membership realized that by hiring an Executive Director, ALASBO would become a stronger organization and could increase opportunities for its membership. ALASBO hired its first Executive Director in 2007. That decision proved to be another pivotal event in ALASBO's history and growth.



Today ALASBO continues to be a strong presence at the national and international level and is a key partner in Alaska's educational community. ALASBO continues the commitment of its founders to offer professional development and networking opportunities to school business officials and is driven by its overall mission to promote excellence in school business management. ALASBO serves as a leader in the educational community to advise and consult from a business management and administration position and is a valuable partner in the advancement of education in Alaska.

ALASBO



Member Spotlight

*Karen Goodwin, Northwest Arctic
Borough School District*

Tell us about your school district

Northwest Arctic Borough School District is in northwest Alaska. Its district office is located in Kotzebue, which is a little over 500 air miles from Anchorage. NWABSD operates in 11 communities with an anticipated enrollment of 1,855 students. The area serviced by the District encompasses approximately 40,662 square miles – the size of the state of Indiana. Temperatures range from –30 below to 60 degrees, with extremes from –50 below to 85 degrees. Snowfall averages 50 inches and total annual precipitation is 9 inches. Access to all of the school communities is by airplane, boat and barge during the summer months. Winter traveling is restricted to airplanes and snow machining on the frozen river or sea, all of which is limited by frequent severe winter storms. Following is a list of the district's communities and projected enrollments for the school year 2012-2013:

School/Community	Enrollment:
Ambler	68
Buckland	146
Deering	36
Kiana	112
McQueen (Kivalina)	125
Kobuk	41
Napaaqtugmiut (Noatak)	161
Aqqaluk (Noorvik)	158
Shungnak	82
Davis/Ramoth (Selawik)	257
June Nelson (OTZ-elem)	340
Kotzebue MS/HS	329
TOTAL	1,855

How long have you been in school business?

Since 1993, which is 19+ years.

How did you get into this business?

In the late 70's I began my career as a payroll controller with the King County Comptroller's Office in Seattle Washington. I left Seattle in 1989 to chase my dream of sailing around the

world. This dream was a little too early in my career and when I ran out of money, I found myself in Wrangell, AK where I began my school business career as Business Manager for Wrangell Public School in 1993. From Wrangell, I progressed to Business Manager of Southeast Island School District in Thorne Bay, then to Director of Business at Lower Yukon School District, and currently I serve as the Director of Administrative Services for the Northwest Arctic Borough School District.

What do you like best about your job?

The best part about being a school business official is the many opportunities that are offered to you in the state. I especially like the challenges that are faced in rural Alaska school business. Every day there seems to be some type of issue that is new that develops within the district office or in one of the village schools that requires innovative thinking and flexibility in problem solving.

What advice do you have for those new to school business?

Be fair and equitable; learn the political pitfalls; reach out to others they may have already dealt with the issue you are experiencing; no need to re-invent the wheel if you don't have to....

How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?

Professional networking in this huge state can be challenging and the membership in ALASBO has afforded me friendships with other school business officials that have repeatedly been beneficial. I could not imagine my success without the relationships that have been made and nurtured through ALASBO.

What do you like to do for fun?

When I am not training and raising my 95 lbs, 1 ½ year old pit bull/great dane, I spend my time travelling, scuba diving, and retirement planning.

If you could visit anyplace in the world, where would you go and why?

My career has blessed me with numerous vacations and trips to exotic areas around the world. In November I'll be on a weeklong chartered catamaran scuba diving in the Panama area. I still have to dive with the whale sharks in the Galapagos Islands.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

I have become an effective change agent as I have able to implement changes to processes that have been in place for a long time. These changes have resulted in savings and efficiencies.

The Value of Networking

Lee Ann Andrew, Southwest Region School District

As business managers we are expected to know the rules, regulations and laws on just about everything associated with school districts. We need to know personnel issues, especially how they directly affect payroll. We need to know the food service requirements. We need to know about construction and preventive maintenance requisites. We need to know purchasing laws. We need to know health insurance, liability insurance, educational issues, grant requirements... you get the picture. As brilliant as we are there is no way we can know everything. This is why networking is so important.

I would not be able to do half of what I do without the help of my fellow business managers. I have called, sent email requests through our Executive Director Amy Lujan, and searched other districts websites for valuable information. Every time I do this I find that everyone is willing to share anything they have. I have received RFP requests, personnel and purchasing policies and procedures, and many discussions of other district's experiences over the years. I get a lot through the power lunches. I go to the ALASBO website and pull up past power lunch information. This information is still posted on the website for the past few years. There are links to other great resources also.

Even though there is a wonderful network via electronic means the best by far is the face-to-face we get each year at the December conference. I remember going my first year, knowing only one person. But that one person introduced me to others. Each year my network continues to grow. As I meet more people I figure out the districts that have similar situations to mine. Because of the network I have developed, I feel confident calling any district for any issue.

I was fortunate enough to take my networking one step farther through the Lowell Thomas Freeman Grant and was able to attend the International ASBO conference in 2010, and I have gone every year since. At first I wondered what could possibly apply to me at a national level that we are not already addressing at our state conference. The issues at ASBO are the same, but the ways of dealing with them are different, and many can be applied in Alaska as well. Through these conferences my network has grown even bigger.

As business manager it is also my responsibility to provide professional development to my staff. The December conference has a wide variety of topics, so I make it possible for some if not all my staff to attend. They also attend any power lunch that applies to them.

I owe a lot to ALASBO and its networking opportunities, for the confidence I have in doing my job. I hope everyone gets involved and takes advantage of all the "free" information that is out there because of this organization.

ALASBO Committees

Please consider contributing to ALASBO by working on one of our committees this year. Our awesome volunteer board and committees make it possible for ALASBO to function productively with only a part-time Executive Director. We'd love to have all members involved with at least one committee!

Committees will meet on Monday afternoon, December 3 at the annual conference. Participants will be eligible for special door prize drawings! After that, you may be asked to participate in teleconferences and assist with committee tasks.

The ALASBO Committee Manual describes the duties of each committee. The manual is on our website, www.alasbo.org, under about ALASBO-Policies & Procedures, and it is also published for reference in our annual conference booklet each year. A listing of current committees and their membership is shown under resources-committees.

The current standing committees are:

- Audit
- Bylaws
- Services
- Professional Development
- Sponsorship
- Legislative
- Nominations
- Awards

The board has recently authorized an ad hoc committee open to members to review GASB 68 Implementation issues.

Please consider becoming involved with an ALASBO committee this year!

My ASBO Experience

David Arp, Sitka School District

Being from a small school district I have a limited amount of professional development funds for myself and for my business office co-workers. Typically, having two or three of us attend the annual ALASBO conference depletes the budget. So I was very excited to be awarded the Lowell "Tom" Freeman Professional Development Grant, which made my first attendance at an ASBO International Annual Meeting and Exhibition possible.

When I was asked to write up something on my experience for the ALASBO newsletter, I really tried to determine what had the greatest impact on me. Was it the sessions?

I was overwhelmed, worn out, and well educated after a full day preparation session for the SFO certification. I was also a little bummed that I missed the Hummer Desert Adventure while the class was going on! I truly enjoyed the case study a school in New Hampshire did on their experience bringing their technology into the 21st century. My own experience was so similar you could have taken their name off the presentation and put "Sitka School District" in its place! I realized that the "International" in ASBO International is an accurate and amazing benefit to being part of this organization, when I listened to a university professor from Australia eloquently discuss the eight imperatives for school business officials. Between her accent and depth of knowledge I could have listened to her for much longer than the one hour session!

The highlight of my experience could have been the exhibition hall where I was able to corner a significant number of my vendors and let them know why they were doing a good job and, more importantly, what they need to be doing better. I also spent an hour discussing the concept of insuring school operating budgets with an agency from the United Kingdom (also great accents!). I was intrigued, even though my ALASBO counterparts looked at me like I hit the free cocktail bar a little too early when I explained the idea to them.

However, as with the ALASBO conference, I would have to say the networking and commiserating with my counterparts had to be the most satisfying part of the experience. While we may be from Alaska, Texas, New Hampshire, British Columbia, Australia, or even the United Kingdom we all share this common bond of working to most effectively allocate our diminishing resources in a way that provides the

greatest return for our institutions. I feel I can comfortably say that we're all doing a pretty amazing job at it!

I hear it said over and over that no one understands what we go through like the others in this business. Never have I been more convinced of that, or more proud of what we do, than when I looked around the opening mixer and saw more than 600 of my counterparts from across the world animatedly talking school finance. If you have not been able to attend an ASBO International Annual conference, I strongly encourage doing what you can to make it happen. If your experience is anything like mine you won't regret it! Just make sure to watch out for Vortex Venom on the straightaways!

Your Moment of Excel Zen: Deleting Blank Rows In Excel

Susan Edwards, Lake & Peninsula School District

Excel uses blank rows to determine data ranges, and a blank row in the wrong place will inhibit many built-in features in Excel. Luckily, there's an easy way to remove blank rows from a data range. It's an easy technique but does have the potential to destroy data, so you need to understand the implications of the commands and be careful in deciding which option you want to use.

The first step is to select the data range. In the example below you'd select A3:E14. There are two blank rows (7 and 10) and of course in a sheet this simple, you'd just manually delete the rows but, if you are working with a large data range of hundreds of rows, manually deleting unwanted blank rows would be time consuming, not to mention tedious.

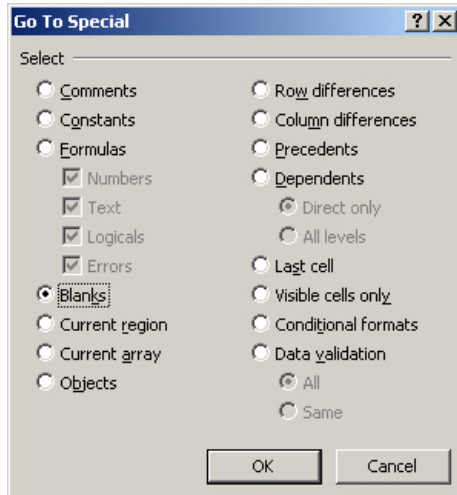
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1							
2		2010 Monthly Sales					
3		Smith	Jones	Michaels	Hancock		
4	January	\$4,212.64	\$6,795.69	\$2,148.78	\$4,611.14		
5	February	\$3,194.08	\$1,449.36	\$9,020.05	\$7,401.84		
6	March	\$3,000.00	\$2,332.71	\$8,507.84	\$4,224.17		
7	April	\$2,500.00	\$2,804.82	\$9,078.84	\$7,620.23		
8	June	\$1,200.34	\$5,426.36	\$5,325.03	\$4,494.94		
9	July	\$6,912.61	\$4,229.14	\$6,361.90	\$5,936.46		
10							
11	September	\$7,529.99	\$7,673.70	\$2,862.51	\$1,831.45		
12	October	\$5,188.08	\$9,840.23	\$2,489.00	\$6,686.40		
13	November	\$1,065.00	\$2,209.72	\$5,197.35	\$3,495.50		
14	December	\$3,656.00	\$4,578.77	\$ 938.35	\$7,961.63		
15							
16							

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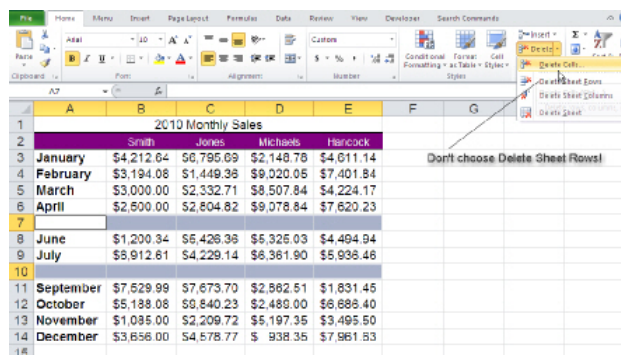
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After selecting the data range, continue as follows:

1. Press [F5].
2. In the resulting Go To dialog box, click Special.



3. Click the Blanks option and click OK. Doing so selects the blank cells (what you might think of as rows) in the selected range. In this case, that's A7:E7 and A10:E10.



Now you're ready to delete the selected cells. On the Home tab, click the Delete dropdown in the Cells group and choose **Delete Cells**. Excel will display the Delete dialog box, with the Delete Cells Up option selected. Click OK (for the keyboard shortcut people, press [Ctrl]+.-.)

Excel will delete the blank cells from the selected data range.

Choosing Delete Cells deletes only the blank cells in the previously selected range. If you choose Delete Sheet Rows in step 4, you could

potentially destroy data (often unseen) to the right.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	2010 Monthly Sales					
2		Smith	Jones	Michaels	Hancock	
3	January	\$4,212.64	\$6,795.69	\$2,148.78	\$4,611.14	
4	February	\$3,194.08	\$1,449.36	\$9,020.05	\$7,401.84	
5	March	\$3,000.00	\$2,332.71	\$8,507.84	\$4,224.17	
6	April	\$2,600.00	\$2,804.82	\$9,078.84	\$7,620.23	
7	June	\$1,200.34	\$5,426.36	\$5,325.03	\$4,494.94	
8	July	\$6,912.61	\$4,229.14	\$6,361.90	\$5,936.46	
9	September	\$7,529.99	\$7,673.70	\$2,862.51	\$1,831.45	
10	October	\$5,188.08	\$9,840.23	\$2,489.00	\$6,686.40	
11	November	\$1,085.00	\$2,209.72	\$5,197.35	\$3,495.50	
12	December	\$3,656.00	\$4,578.77	\$ 938.35	\$7,961.63	
13						

Choose carefully when using this option to delete blank rows when you really want to delete just the blank cells. It's easy to think in terms of rows and choose the wrong option!

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The ALASBO website, www.alasbo.org, is a great source for the latest news and updates. Check here for ALASBO information, such as legislative reports and committee memberships, to register for an ALASBO or ASBO event or to download materials from a Power Lunch training you may have missed!

Mark Your Calendars!



Upcoming Events

- *December 2-5 – ALASBO Annual Conference – Anchorage*
- *February 14-16 – ASBO Executive Leadership Forum – New Orleans*
- *Feb/Mar TBA – ALASBO Fly-In – Juneau*

The Correlation Between "Gratitude" and "Happiness"

Kim Ratz, Speaker, Trainer, Troubadour

Editor's Note: Kim Ratz was a long-time employee of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and was a keynote speaker at the ALASBO annual conference.

Don't leave gratitude on the Thanksgiving table this year! Here's why: People who practice an "Attitude of Gratitude" are happier.

When you focus on the good things and the positive role other people play in your life, you feel better. Conversely, when you focus on the problems in your life and complain – even in your own self-talk – you darken your own mood. You always find what you seek.

That's why this is good news for the negative Neds & Nellies. You can choose to "Reframe your situation" and look for the good in things – and you'll always find something. Do this frequently enough (practice makes better), and you can train your brain to feel more grateful (read: Happy), more often.

For example, when things are not going well for me, if I start thinking about the good things in my life (like my grandchildren), I immediately begin to feel better. The challenge is getting yourself to a frame of mind where you can let these grateful thoughts come to the surface. This isn't easy when you face a sad or tragic situation, and you shouldn't try to rush through grief when you suffer a loss; sometimes in our society we look for the "quick/easy", and sometimes it is NOT in your best interest to insulate yourself from these feelings. The trick is to recognize when you are complaining, feeling ungrateful or otherwise feel unhappy, so you can consider changing your focus to what you ARE grateful for.

Here are five things you can do to strengthen your attitude of gratitude, 365 days a year:

- Practice daily: List 3 specific things you are grateful for every day
- Eliminate or minimize negative triggers (people who complain/"awfulize", and situations that make your heart feel burdened, not blessed)

- Stop blaming others; this puts your focus on someone else, rather than remembering what YOU can do about the situation
- If you have to, FAKE IT! Just pretending to be grateful starts the mental process that guides your thoughts and feelings
- Help someone less fortunate, to remind yourself that things could be worse.

Here's wishing you sincere feelings of gratitude & happiness, so you can grow from **Thanks-Giving** to **Thanks-Living**, 365 days a year!



Give thanks for the unknown blessings already on their way. – Native American prayer

The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you. – John Southard

All happy people are grateful. Ungrateful people cannot be happy. We think being unhappy leads people to complain, but complaining leads people to becoming unhappy. – Dennis Prager

As each day comes to us refreshed and anew, so does my gratitude renew itself daily. The breaking of the sun over the horizon is my grateful heart dawning upon a blessed world. – Terri Guillemets

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it. – William Ward

Gratitude is an art of painting an adversity into a lovely picture. – Kak Sri

Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is a spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude. – Denis Watley

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened. – Dr. Seuss