



USOMBUDSMAN

Promoting and supporting fairness, accountability, and equity in government through the public sector ombudsman.

Spring 2007

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INVITATION TO THE 2007 USOA CONFERENCE

By Linda Lord-Jenkins, USOA Vice President
 Ombudsman, Alaska Office of the Ombudsman

The Alaska Ombudsman's Office is proud and excited to be hosting the 2007 USOA conference and hopes that your trip to Alaska fulfills your professional needs and personal dreams of what our great state has to offer.



Photo courtesy of Anchorage AK
 Convention & Visitors Bureau

We hope that you come for the conference and spend some time in Alaska before or after your meeting. September is a beautiful time of year in Alaska. The birch trees are in full color and the days are crisp and clear. We don't offer our Midnight Sun in

September but you have a better than even chance of seeing our breathtaking Northern Lights in the evening.

Even if you don't venture far from town, Alaska can fulfill your dreams. As I write this I am looking out at Denali, the Great One, known in the Lower 48 as Mt. McKinley. Off to my left is Mount Susitna, also known as Sleeping Lady to locals. The Anchorage Coastal Trail winds along Cook Inlet for more than a dozen miles and you can walk it or rent a bike to drive along one of the most beautiful trails in the world.



Photo courtesy of Anchorage AK
 Convention & Visitors Bureau

I would recommend that you take a drive down the Seward Highway along Turnagin Arm, one of America's outstanding Scenic Highways to Girdwood, our local ski resort. On the way you might see some Dahl Sheep that venture down to rocks above the highway or one of Alaska's bore tides on the Arm.

You could take an overnight to Seward on Resurrection Bay where they offer water wildlife tours. Seward is home to the Seward Sealife Center, where you can see sea lions, harbor seals, otters, and puffins. The Sealife is a terrific place to visit for young and old. A further drive could take you to Homer, the "end of the road" on breathtaking Kachemak Bay.

McKinley Park is a day's drive to the North and, although some hotels are closed for the season, others remain open.

I could go one and on but you can start looking for yourself. The Alaska Visitor's Guide can provide you lots of information. Click on the link below and start dreaming.

http://www.alaska.com/plan/visitors_guide/

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By Ruth Cooperrider
USOA President
State of Iowa - Office of
Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman

Every well-run organization depends upon interested and involved members for its success.



That is why I want to first say a big “thank you” to those members who have volunteered their time and talents to the USOA. But, mostly I want to invite and encourage *all* our members to get involved in some way, because every little bit you do contributes to the success of the USOA.

I want to touch on a few tips I have gleaned from articles I have read about motivating members to be more interested and involved in an organization and how they might apply to the USOA.

Make Visible Changes

Members tend to take note when they see visible changes or new things that impact them. I hope you have all noticed that couple months ago we added e-mail lists for all the chapters. I encourage any of you who work in or with any of the specialty areas to join that chapter and engage in discussion and information sharing or even seek assistance as needed. Once you join, you simply add the chapter list e-mail address to your address book and start chatting.

We are also considering creating e-mail lists for the Standing Committees, largely because the number of members joining those committees has increased – a positive sign indeed.

And anyone visiting the USOA website will now notice a photograph of a large moose roaming through the city of Anchorage, site of our 2007 Annual Conference September 24 – 28, 2007. Please start making plans to attend a conference that promises to be stimulating, entertaining, and educational. Read the article about it in this newsletter and keep checking for website updates.

Keep Members Informed

Members will likely feel more inspired to participate if they are kept informed. This newsletter is one the ways to keep our members aware of activities and other news. I hope you read it all. Another is our website. As members, you have special access to the members directory and the Omb_Gov list archive, as well as other information or news about the association. If you want to see the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings, just request them from the business office. And, anytime you have questions, the Board members and business office are ready to assist you.

Be Responsive and Welcoming

Members will be more motivated if you make them feel important and acknowledge or respond to their needs and suggestions. While most of our members are from governmental ombudsman offices, we work in diverse settings, depending on how the office was created, by whom, where it is located structurally, and what investigative and reporting powers it has. None of our offices probably achieve all the “ideal” standards promoted by our association. As President, I have out of necessity (and gladly) learned more about and met more of our members. It’s been valuable to me. I value every member equally, and I am sure others on the Board do likewise. Please let us know what we can do to be more responsive to your needs or suggestions.

MEMBER NEWS

Oscar Harriott Receives Award

Oscar Harriott, USOA member and Deputy Ombudsman for the State of Nebraska, was a recipient of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) chancellor Harvey Perlman’s 2007 “Fulfilling the Dream” award.

In addition to his work as Deputy Ombudsman, Mr. Harriott is an active community leader who founded the Lincoln Community Gospel Choir and serves on the Lincoln Human Rights Commission. He helped establish the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Capitol Commemoration in the Capitol Rotunda and co-chairs the Chief Standing Bear Capitol Rotunda Commemoration.

The award was established in 1997 to honor individuals who have contributed to the UNL community or Lincoln by promoting the goals and vision of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Professor Don Rowat Publishes Article on Ombudsman Concept

“The Dilution and Distortion of the Ombudsman Concept,” authored by USOA honorary member Professor Don Rowat will be included in a multi-authored internationally comparative book, which has just been published in the UK, and will be available soon in North America. The publication details are as follows:

Dimitrios Argyriades, O.P. Dwivedi and Joseph G. Jabbara (eds.), *Public Administration in Transition: Essays in Honor of Gerald Caiden* (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007). \$95.00 and \$35.00. ISBNs 978 0 85303 754 5 (cloth) 755 2 (paper).

A PREVIEW OF THE USOA 27TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Gerald Papica, Ed.D., Conferences & Training Chair
Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman for Children & Families
Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth



Photo courtesy of Anchorage AK
Convention & Visitors Bureau

It is hard to believe that the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) has conducted annual conferences in North America and Hawaii since 1979! As many of you will agree, organizing these events on a national level is no small feat. It takes a group of committed individuals

to plan for conferences that improve every year.

As we announced a few months ago, the State of Alaska Ombudsman Office will host USOA's 2007 annual convention in the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska. The main portion of the conference will be held on September 26-28 at the Anchorage Marriott Downtown.

This is the second time that Alaska has hosted the event. The Office of the Ombudsman also hosted the USOA conference in the early 1990s.

In separate newsletter articles, USOA Vice President/Alaska Ombudsman Linda Lord-Jenkins will describe our two pre-conferences workshops on September 24-25.

Keynote Speaker for the conference will be former Deputy Alaska Ombudsman Mike Hostina who helped draft both the Model Ombudsman Act and the article on Public Sector Ombudsman which is posted on the USOA Web site. Mr. Hostina is now associate general counsel for the University of Alaska.

This year's conference planning committee has tentatively identified four plenary sessions and six concurrent workshops.

The plenary sessions will be:

- 1) Systemic Investigations for Small Offices;
- 2) Apology and the Ombudsman;
- 3) Issues Forum, An Opportunity to Discuss Problems Facing Members; and
- 4) If I Knew Then What I Know Now; A Panel Discussion of Former Ombudsmen looking back from the perspective of working in government and the legislature.

Tentative concurrent workshops include:

- 1) Starting and Developing an Ombudsman Office,
- 2) Evaluating Ombudsman Operations: A Conversation About New Research,

Tentative concurrent workshops continued:

- 3) Ethics and the Work of the Ombudsman,
- 4) Technology and Tribulations: Using Technology to Make our Jobs Easier and Dealing with Problems Technology Can Present,
- 5) Legal Issues and the Ombudsman, and
- 6) Partiality, Implicit Bias, and Systemic Intervention.

The other traditional components of the conference will include the specialty Chapters Meetings for the Children and Families Chapter, Corrections Chapter, Health Care Chapter, Public Schools Chapter and Municipal Government Chapter. The conference committee has consulted with chapter chairs and will again offer speakers specialized in the chapter specialties.

Finally, the USOA Annual Meeting will be held with the introduction of 2007-2009 officers and new members.

The formal conference officially runs September 26 through 28 but USOA is offering two pre-conference sessions which are discussed on the next page. The Conference Planning Committee encourages you to register soon in order to take advantage of the early-bird registration fee and to secure your hotel reservation before the blocked rooms are taken.

As indicated earlier, the 2007 annual conference will run for two and a half days. The early bird conference registration fee is \$425 for USOA members and \$550 for non-members. After August 24th, the regular or main conference registration fee for USOA members is \$475 and \$550 for non-members. As the conference planning committee finalizes the details of the event, the conference Registration Packet will be posted on the USOA Website on June 11th. Don't forget to mark this date on your calendar!

The negotiated hotel room rate is \$108 plus 12 per cent tax. This rate is applicable three days before and after the conference. Be mindful that the group rate cutoff date is August 26th. You can make your hotel room reservation two ways. By phone, reservations can be made by calling 1-800-228-9290. When calling, refer to the Mini Hotel Code "USO" and the name of the conference, "United States Ombudsman Association." By online reservation, obtain your room by going to: www.marriott.com/ancdt and follow these steps:

- a) Under "Check Rates and Availability" (on the right hand of the page) enter the desired arrival and departure dates;
- b) Enter the online group code USOUSOA, in the box that says "Group Code."
- c) Location: 820 W. 7th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907-279-8000)

The 2007 conference planning committee has made great progress organizing the convention. However, there are still a lot of things that need to be pegged down. It is never too late to join the group. If you are willing to help, please contact this year's co-chairs by calling Gerald Papica@ 615-532-1572 or Linda Lord-Jenkins@907-269-6291.

PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION FOCUSES ON DEALING WITH QUERULOUS COMPLAINTS

By Linda Lord-Jenkins, USOA Vice President
Ombudsman, Alaska Office of the Ombudsman

**Angry Argumentative Cantankerous Difficult Irritable
Petulant Confrontational Frightened Frightening
Grouchy Hot-tempered Cranky Disagreeable
Persistent Unrelenting Justified Determined
Relentless Pushy Stubborn Demanding
Time sink Frustrated Frustrating Helpless**

Do you recognize these attributes in any of your complainants? Are some complainants becoming a problem for your office's effective operation?

Querulous (adjective)

- 1) Tending to complain
- 2) Inclined to complain or find fault
- 3) Whining or complaining in tone

Citizens contact the ombudsman for help dealing with specific governmental agencies. But what happens when the complainant becomes a problem for the ombudsman? It can sap the strength and resources of the best run ombudsman offices. Querulous complainants can sometimes present unreasonable demands and dissatisfaction on agencies and then generalize those demands and dissatisfaction to the ombudsman reviewing their complaint.

In 1998, the New South Wales (NSW) Ombudsman Office developed a program to help NSW agencies deal with difficult complainants. The NSW Ombudsman has been presenting this program to governmental agencies since then. USOA is pleased to announce that NSW Deputy Ombudsman Chris Wheeler will conduct a one-day pre-conference session tailored to ombudsman offices at this year's USOA Conference.

The Pre-Conference session will be September 25 from 8:30 to 4:30 p.m.

NSW worked with forensic psychiatrists to identify a group of "unusually persistent complainants" who "pursued complaints longer, supplied more written material, phoned more often, intruded more frequently without an appointment and were still complaining when the case was closed."

NSW based the program on the four following "facts of life":

- 1) Some complainants can be difficult, unreasonable, obsessive, overly demanding, persistent, rude or aggressive.
- 2) Anecdotal evidence suggests this problem is growing in terms of the numbers of difficult complainants and the seriousness of their 'difficult' interactions with agencies and review bodies.
- 3) Most workers would prefer to not deal with difficult people and will do most anything to avoid them;
- 4) The avoidance approach seems to often be reflected in the culture of organizations dealing with complainants or customer service.

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2007 USOA NEW OMBUDSMAN TRAINING EXPANDED TO TWO DAYS

By Linda Lord-Jenkins, USOA Vice President
Ombudsman, Alaska Office of the Ombudsman

Based on feedback from past participants, the 2007 USOA New Ombudsman Training has been doubled to two days. USOA has conducted a one-day New Ombudsman training course for almost a decade but decided to increase the training time to learn nuts and bolts about their profession. The additional time will allow an in-depth look at the primary skills areas of ombudsman work as well as focus on special needs of executive ombudsmen.

The New Ombudsman one-day training has been led by Arizona Ombudsman Patrick Shanahan for several years. Two years ago Hawaii Ombudsman Robin Matsunaga and Alaska Ombudsman Linda Lord-Jenkins joined the New Ombudsman faculty. Mr. Shanahan, Mr. Matsunaga and Ms. Lord-Jenkins are all considered "classical" legislative ombudsmen.

The expanded agenda has added executive branch ombudsman to the faculty. Joining the 2007 faculty will be Mary Meinig, Director Washington State Office of Families and Children's Ombudsman and co-chair of the Children and Families Chapter, Roberta Opheim, Ombudsman for Mental Health and Mental Retardation; Minnesota, and Gene Raney, Ombudsman, Virginia Office of Health Benefits. Roberta and Gene are co-chairs of the Healthcare Chapter.

Training had been broken down into the areas of standards of practice; intake; investigation; interviewing, report writing; and post-investigation actions. The 2007 New Ombudsman Training will continue to focus on the standards of practice, but will add more time addressing the special needs of executive branch ombudsmen including group discussion led by the faculty.

Another addition to the New Ombudsman training will be a section entitled "Is it Right?" The presentation will examine the role of the ombudsman in promoting an ethical climate in ombudsman offices and review ethical challenges an ombudsman may face.

Finally, trainers will present a nuts and bolts discussion on "Tools of the Trade," the kind of information that seasoned ombudsman use to make their jobs easier. The faculty is gathering helpful information to help new ombudsmen do their work. This can range from suggestions on recruitment to caseload management suggestions. Each session will be punctuated with role-playing and group discussions.

The training will continue to include an opportunity to meet and talk with the USOA Directors who represent ombudsmen from all areas of the public sector ombudsman world.

The New Ombudsman workshop will cost USOA members \$325 and \$375 for non-members. Participants will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the training.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: BOISE OFFICE OF THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN CELEBRATES EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

By Kristen Erbes, USOA Member Services Chair
Office of the Ombudsman, City of Portland, Oregon



After a series of officer-involved shootings in the mid-1990s, the Boise Mayor sought help in creating an oversight system for Boise law enforcement. Pierce Murphy was hired in April 1999 and worked to establish the office. With advice from members of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) and the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA), Murphy developed an ombudsman structure. He presented draft legislation to the Boise City Council and the statute was adopted in July 1999.

The Boise Office of the Community Ombudsman has jurisdiction over law enforcement agencies and employees in Boise. That includes police, the airport police, code enforcement officers, and law enforcement employees who are non-sworn peace officers. Typically, 175-200 cases are opened each year. But since the office only has three full-time staff and one on-call investigator, the ombudsman needed a way to better manage the caseload. In 2005, the Office of the Community Ombudsman created the Rapid Resolution process.

When an issue comes into the Office of the Community Ombudsman that might not rise to the level of needing a full investigation, they facilitate communication between the involved law enforcement unit and the complainant. The law enforcement unit is expected to respond directly to the complainant within a week and also include the Office of the Community Ombudsman on the response in order to insure the issue has been addressed in a complete and timely manner. By giving law enforcement agencies and the public the opportunity to hear directly from one another and address the concerns raised, the parties learn from each other. The Rapid Resolution process was evaluated in 2006 and survey results indicate that complainants are satisfied with this process. 63% of the complainants responded that the process was “definitely worth my time.”

The creation of the Rapid Resolution process allows the Office of the Community Ombudsman to focus on more complex issues, such as those involving use of force. The ombudsman investigates all officer-involved shootings. Since the Office of the Community Ombudsman was established, there have been 28 critical incidents that involve serious injury or the use of deadly force and 14 officer-involved shooting deaths. The Office of the Community Ombudsman also has the duty to audit all internal investigations conducted by the Boise law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Murphy said that he has seen a sea change in the quality of the internal affairs process. The Office of the Community Ombudsman’s processes, investigations, and recommendations have also improved accountability throughout the system. The ombudsman can issue recommendations in both individual investigations as well as issue recommendations for policy or training procedures with a goal of improving effectiveness, safety and overall service to the public.

When asked what has been the most unusual or challenging case, Mr. Murphy said that two have stood out. Last year, there was an officer-involved shooting that resulted in the fatality of a 16-year old. It was a traumatic matter in the community. The second issue was a matter involving two separate incidents of juveniles being raped by strangers. Police did not initially believe their stories which delayed investigation and identification of a perpetrator. From that case, a special study group was created with representation from law enforcement, counseling and medical fields. The group issued a special report, “A Victim-Centered Approach to Sexual Assaults” in June 2004 that contained several recommendations on policy and practice, training and stakeholder/community education.

Mr. Murphy said that his office has also faced two lawsuits by the local newspaper regarding access to files. The balancing act between transparency and the privacy rights of complainants and employees is a delicate matter. But independent oversight, with a reasonable amount of transparency, creates and promotes trust. After having the Office of the Community Ombudsman in place for eight years, Mr. Murphy sees the impact through an increase in the community’s confidence in law enforcement.

The Boise Office of the Community Ombudsman model is unique among law enforcement oversight systems in the United States. While other jurisdictions use either a citizen review board/commission model or a police monitor/auditor model, Mr. Murphy said he picked the best practices and tools from what existed to create the office. Mr. Murphy is a member of USOA and currently serves as president of NACOLE. Last year, the Idaho Statesman editorial board named Mr. Murphy the Treasure Valley’s most courageous person during 2006.

To read the Office of the Community Ombudsman’s 2006 Annual Report or to learn more about the office, go to <http://www.boiseombudsman.org/>

USOA REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDS IOA CONFERENCE

By Michael Mills, Ombudsman
City of Portland, Oregon

As the representative of the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA), I attended the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) conference this April. Interestingly enough, it was held in the same City as the first North American Ombudsman Conference 11 years ago this May. That conference was dubbed as the Superconference, with some six ombudsman organizations participating.

The inspiration for the Superconference is as pressing now for our profession as it was then. We must learn from one-another, respect and value different applications, and support models that are appropriate for the particular situation. This is not to say that every ombudsman application conceived is worthy of adoption or our support. We have all seen a number of applications which are not appropriate. However, there are different models, some with significant differences, supported by the best practices adopted by our respective professional organizations, where we should be able to find common ground.

At the IOA conference, I advocated the ombudsman community must understand and support one another's professional applications and avoid a competitive environment. All of us should carry the same message to those interested in the ombudsman concept. First, the one offering information should determine what is wanted or needed by those with the interest, and then they can advocate for the appropriate model to apply - based on the corresponding standards and best practices - and offer targeted resources.

What I found among most attendees that I spoke to at the IOA conference was a receptiveness to learn more about the "classical", legislative, and executive models that USOA generally supports for external users, in most of our cases, the public. The broader the knowledge and appreciation for our work among colleagues within IOA, the more support we will have in maintaining our offices and establishing new offices.

Richard Reuben spoke at a plenary session, mentioning that the most significant growth of the ombudsman profession was in the organization arena rather than in classical models. Several years ago, he was one of those among the mediation community that through the Association of Conflict Resolution (ACR, formally SPIDR), tried to craft the proposed Uniformed Mediation Act in a way that supported the mediation community. There was concern then over the legal profession dictating how mediation would be conducted in this country. With state laws now being proposed that would establish standards of operation for the ombuds and ombudsman community, it has never been as important to have partners who understand and respect the differences between our models so that our profession is not compromised.

The Ombuds and Ombudsman in the Northwest have been meeting several times a year over the past 5 years to informally meet and learn from one-another. Those attending are from many different applications in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia, but we have all found value in addressing common concerns over creating independence, establishing ombudsman salaries, confidentiality, record keeping, evaluation, and a host of other topics. We also have benefited from a better understanding of how other offices operate.

I listened to former President Clinton speak recently here in Portland and he used the term, "interdependency" to describe how we should approach the working relationship with our international partners rather than "globalization". I think interdependence is also an accurate means to describe how we would like relationships to exist between different ombuds and ombudsman organizations. The survival of our organizations, and possibly our professions, may depend largely on our ability to work collaboratively.

PRE-CONFERENCE CONTINUED

Continued from page 4

The NWS program will give guidance on understanding complainant behavior including a review of what people want when they approach an agency; difficult complainants; obsessive complainants; and rude and angry complainants who make unreasonable demands.

Another focus will be on applying administrative controls to deal with difficult complainants. This review will include discussion of restricting services or access to difficult complainants, withdrawing services, and recording services.

The program also takes a look at dealing with angry complainants, including how to deal with the problem after the complainant's anger is diffused. Recognizing and dealing with aggressive behavior will discuss causes of aggression, responding to aggression, verbal threats or menacing behavior, actual physical violence, production of weapons and threats to agency staff and third parties will be part of this discussion.

Mr. Wheeler will also discuss procedures following an incident, security arrangements, and physical security protocols.

The NSW program differs from many "Dealing with Difficult People" programs in that it is focused on ombudsmen and governmental complaint handlers. USOA is excited to be presenting this program.

Cost of this one-day Pre-Conference session is \$225 for USOA members and \$265 for non-members. The pre-conference price includes breakfast and lunch. The pre-conference, like the rest of the USOA Conference, will be at the Anchorage Downtown Marriott Hotel.

JAPANESE DELEGATION VISITS USOA MEMBERS

By Aimee Sanders, Intern, Office of the Ombudsman
City of Portland, Oregon



Photo Courtesy of Hawaii State Ombudsman Office
Left to Right: Mr. Yasuhiro Sakon, Mr. Jun Ochiai,
Ms. Yoko Togawa

In February 2007, a delegation from Tokyo, Japan visited ombudsman offices in Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii to meet with staff and learn about the local government programs in King County and Portland, and the statewide office in Hawaii.

Japan is a member of the Asian Ombudsman Association, which was established in 1996. One goal of the Asian Ombudsman Association is to popularize the ombudsman system throughout Asia. The Japanese delegation embarked on a fact-finding mission to the United States with this goal in mind.

The delegation included Mr. Jun Ochiai, Senior Planning Officer for Administrative Counseling with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Ms. Yoko Togawa from the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications; and Mr. Yasuhiro Sakon, Senior Analyst for Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting who is serving as their consultant.

The Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT) is responsible for ensuring that the ministries and government agencies operate effectively and efficiently. The Administrative Counseling System within the MPHPT is similar to the ombudsman system in other countries.

During the meetings, the delegation asked about the history of the ombudsman office, the system of evaluation and types of methods used to gauge complainant satisfaction. They were also interested in getting ideas on promoting the ombudsman concept, building trust among users of the office and how to ensure the ombudsman's recommendations are implemented.

MERCHANDISE FOR SALE



Be a proud member of the USOA and show off our wares! Sweatshirts, polo shirts, stainless steel insulated mugs, and deluxe briefcases, all with the USOA logo, are now available for purchase through the business office.

If you did not have the chance to buy any of these items at the 2006 Annual Conference, it is not too late. You can see samples of the merchandise on the USOA website, including the prices and the shipping and handling fees.



The sweatshirts and polo shirts come in both men's and women's sizes and in grey, red, and royal blue colors. The mugs are silver stainless with black trim and have a handle and lid. The black bags, given to registrants at the 2006 conference, are equipped with multiple pockets and other features desirable in a briefcase. You will find these items to be functional and practical, as well as attractive. Plus, they can make great gifts for your favorite ombudsman.

Since this is a new venture, we are keeping the inventory to a few items. However, we are open to consider adding other items if the sales are good. If you have comments or questions, please contact the business office at 515-225-2323 or usoa@usombudsman.org.



**LOOKING FOR INFORMATION?
SEARCH THE OMB_GOV
E-MAIL LIST ARCHIVES!**

Did you know that USOA Members can search the archived files of the OMB_Gov Email List? Articles archived date back to February 2003. Even if you're not a member of the list, you have access to the archives as a member of USOA!

Here's how to do it:

1. Go to <http://www.usombudsman.org/>
2. On the left side of the homepage, click on the last choice "Members Only" - Log in.
3. A grey-shaded box on the left side appears. Choose the third option, "OMB_GOV List Archives"
4. Search for what you are looking for using basic or advance mode search functions.

If you have questions on this service, please contact Kristen Erbes at kerbes@ci.portland.or.us

**USOA CREATES E-MAIL
LISTS FOR CHAPTERS**

One of the most exciting developments in our association in recent years has been the development of chapters among our members for networking and training with ombudsman offices that serve special populations or work in a specialty field. USOA currently has specialty chapters for Children & Families, Corrections, Healthcare, Municipal Government, and Public Schools.

This year, USOA created e-mail lists for each chapter. Chapter members can use the e-mail list to post news articles, news releases, and links to investigative and annual reports that would be of interest to others in the field. Or they can post a question or concern and ask other chapter members to provide them with feedback or advice. These smaller, topic-specific discussion groups are a useful and helpful way to interact with colleagues in the ombudsman community.

USOA Chapter e-mail lists have been set up as "restricted" lists so only group members can post and access the lists. Group members also have the ability to manage their own preferences on the list. There are four ways to read postings—on the group web page, in individual emails, in digests and in abridged emails. E-mail can be sent in text or HTML formats, with photos and attachments.

If you are not yet subscribed to a chapter e-mail list, please contact the business office at usoa@usombudsman.org We hope that you will find this new service helpful!

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**Photo of several board members at
2006 Conference in Iowa.**

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 2007 USOA Conference Committee is hard at work planning the Annual Conference! If you would like to join the committee, please contact committee chair Gerald Papica at Gerald.Papica@state.tn.us if you would like to join the committee!

If you would like information on any of the other committees or chapters, please contact a member of the Board of Directors. Their contact information can be found on pages 8-9.

USOA EDITORIAL INFORMATION

The purpose of USOMBUDSMAN is to communicate the activities, goals, and mission of the United States Ombudsman Association and to publish diverse information and views on matters significantly related to the ombudsman profession. Statements of fact and opinion do not express the opinion or endorsement of the USOA unless they are specifically identified as USOA policy.

For information regarding content of USOMBUDSMAN and/or submission of articles and announcements, please contact the editor: Kristen Erbes at kerbes@ci.portland.or.us.



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Founded in 1977, the United States Ombudsman Association is a 501(c)(3) professional association devoted to the promotion of public sector ombudsmanship that represents fairness, equality, and justice in public administration. USOA's web site, www.usombudsman.org, is a ready resource in our association and its activities, contact with the board and members through the online Member Directory, reference materials related the ombudsman profession, association records, and links to other associations. Current USOA members can log-in to the "Members Only" page by creating an individual password to utilize the directory and references.

USOA sponsors the OMB_GOV listserv as a service to public sector ombudsman offices across the United States and around the world. The purpose of the listserv is to promote the free exchange of ideas about the public sector ombudsman institution. The list is open to anyone who provides governmental ombudsman or complaint resolution services at the local, state, federal, or international levels. This includes academics studying the governmental ombudsman institution and voting and associate members of the USOA, the Canadian Ombudsman Association, or the International Ombudsman Institute. We encourage all staff and managers of governmental ombudsman or government complaint resolution offices to subscribe. If you wish to subscribe, visit http://usombudsman.org/list_subscribe.cfm and fill out the form. You will receive an automatic welcome response.