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2009 president's report, August 2009

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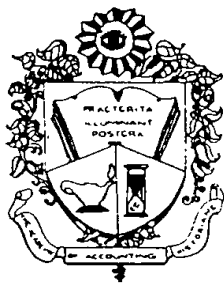
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The Accounting Historians Notebook

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October 2009

2009 President's Report August 2009

This month marks completion of 7 months as president and it is hard to believe that I am into my final months in this role. It has been an active time in terms of the Academy, but many initiatives still need to be move forward and continue in order that the Academy remain strong and viable in the years ahead. I would like to summarise briefly some activities – most of which you would have seen noted already via e-mail, on our website or in our newsletter.

This year, we have recognised a



President Cheryl S. McWatters

number of our colleagues for their research and work in accounting

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Important Notice: *Notebook* Has Gone Digital

Starting with this issue of *The Accounting Historians Notebook*, all future issues will be emailed digitally by default to individual members as pdf files. This measure is expected to save the AAH printing and mailing costs and provide greater convenience to most members. Institutions will continue to receive print copies. Individual members who email the Editor Jim McKinney at jmckinney@rhsmith.umd.edu may continue to receive print copies at no additional charge.

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history. Professor Richard K. Fleischman was awarded a Life Membership in the Academy at the beginning of 2009. In March, I had the opportunity to present the 2009 Hourglass Award to Professor Mahmoud Ezzamel at our annual research conference. At this time, we also presented our 2008 Vangermeersch Award to Nicolas Praquin. I am hopeful that this year we will see a number of candidates for the Vangermeersch Award as well as the Schoenfeld Scholarship. These awards encourage young scholars and are critical means to demonstrate the importance and value of accounting history.

As previously mentioned, our annual research conference was a success on many fronts. First, held in Paris, France in collaboration with colleagues from the Université de Paris and the Université d'Evry, it was our initial research conference outside North America. We were fortunate to join with the 14th Journées d'Histoire de la Comptabilité et du Management to present this conference and I thank Professors Henri Zimnovitch and Alain Michel for their patience and hard work to bring this to fruition. Second, we had over 70 individuals from around the globe in attendance and third,

the conference was a financial success. With this positive bottom line, the conference coordinators are able to proceed with the planned publication of selected conference papers.

Administrative efficiency, communications and member services have occupied significant time of many of us on the executive team. While this behind-the-scenes work might not be all that interesting to the average member, it is important to realise that the Academy does not function on auto-pilot. Since last year, I have come to appreciate increasingly this work and side of the Academy. Members of the 'administrative team' have established regular teleconferences during which we have been able to work through a number of administrative areas enabling us to facilitate our service to members, to eliminate some inefficiencies and to examine the financial implications of our activities in something much nearer to 'real time'. While these efforts often go unnoticed, what should be noticed is our increasing ability to be current and to serve member needs. I will come back to this issue in my closing comments.

One important part of service to members is The Accounting His-

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torians Notebook. It is wonderful to see it back on track in terms of publication and to witness our shift to a digital format. This change allows us to get The Notebook to members quickly and efficiently. The format is more environmentally friendly and meets preferences for electronic to hard copy. I would like to acknowledge the work and dedication of Joann Noe-Cross who has left the editorship after many years of service. I am happy to announce that vice-president (communications) Jim McKinney has accepted to continue as co-editor of The Notebook and will be joined by Dr. David Oldroyd, Newcastle University Business School, as co-editor. Welcome David!

Our membership numbers are one area where I plan to commit my efforts during the final months of my presidency. Our numbers are dwindling in some areas as members retire. Fortunately, we have introduced this year a 'retired members' category to provide a more economical way for retirees to remain active members. However, we need to do much more to encourage membership of doctoral students and young scholars. This year we have seen a small increase in this membership category. One challenge that I would

put out to you would be to introduce one such member with your own membership. I joined the Academy as a doctoral student – and it is a bargain! – and now can look back on many years during which I have been able to network and receive the support of like-minded colleagues for my own research and teaching. If we each find one person (or several), and encourage their interest in the Academy, we will bring fresh thinking and ideas into our midst. As well, our individual membership is becoming increasingly balanced between U.S. and international members. This sign is a positive one as it demonstrates that the Academy has an important role to play in the international research community and to bring scholars from around the globe together to foster interest and scholarship in our discipline.

In this vein, it is a great pleasure to announce that I have signed on behalf of the Academy, a memorandum of understanding with the Società Italiana di Storia della Ragioneria (Italian Society of Accounting History) “to develop academic exchange and cooperation in teaching and research in the furtherance of the advancement and dissemination of learning”. I would like to express my thanks to the SISR president, Professor

Maria Bergamin, and also to Professor Roberto Di Pietra for their determination to achieve this agreement. To paraphrase Professor Di Pietra's comments on the signing, we need 'to be proud of our own roots and traditions but, at the same time and at with the same strength, we need to be open to other communities, new ideas, exchanges, to reciprocal influences and opportunities'. I look forward to working with the SISR to foster research collaborations, meetings and scholarship.

Finally, in closing, I would like to ask all of you to renew your commitment to the Academy in whatever big or small way that you can. We have many dedicated volunteers who carry significant loads on our behalf and enable us to do much with limited administrative staff. In the next few months, the executive will be continuing its discussions on ways to improve our member services, including changes to our website and communications. I would encourage you to provide us with

your input into how we best can support your needs as researchers and scholars. As well, our president-elect Gregory Waymire will be moving forward with discussions on strategic renewal, work which began under past-president Stephen Walker. I look forward to working with Greg as we determine options to enhance the work of the Academy and to provide for our longer-term viability.

In closing, many thanks to those of you who have taken the time to be here this evening and to provide your ideas and input. As president and on behalf of the executive team, I appreciate and rely on your support and encouragement. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome. Do not hesitate to contact me in order that we can take all of your views and comments into due consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl S. McWatters,
2009 President