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NEWS & views

AUGUST 6, 1996 • For the Employees of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants

IN THIS ISSUE...

- AICPA Affinity Programs
- *News & views* Viewpoint
- Word From The Webmaster
- American Literature Trivia Quiz
- Anniversaries

AICPA AFFINITY PROGRAMS— WHAT THEY DO FOR MEMBERS AND FOR US

If someone goes to the store and buys a single item, he or she will pay the store's standard price. Of course, by promising the merchant to send a dozen friends to buy the same item, he or she might be able to negotiate a better deal. Imagine being able to send thousands of friends to the store to buy the same item; the merchant might consent to an incredible discount.

That, in essence, is how the AICPA Affinity Programs work. Our members, which number more than 330,000, represent a huge amount of buying power. One way in which membership adds value to the businesses our members run is to offer substantial discounts on business products and services through special agreements between the Institute and various transportation, technology, courier, and other kinds of firms. Also available through the AICPA to members is a good number of personal financial services — mortgages, insurance policies, and auto leasing, to name a few.

Vicky Franzese of the Marketing and Product Management Team is marketing these pro-

grams to members, and she also wants to encourage us to take advantage of the discounts that are available. "Team AICPA needs to know that the value that these programs provide for members go far beyond the amount they pay in dues," she says, "and the staff can take advantage of them as well."

One Team AICPA member who has done just that is Chuck Peck of the Marketing, Product and Organizational Development Team. He explains that, "In just a few minutes, I changed my homeowner's insurance and saved \$330 per year. Everyone's insurance is different, so not everyone will save the same amount as I did. But this is a major benefit for us."

Franzese urges everyone to see what can be of use to them within the affinity programs: "Find out what they are, and find out if they're useful to you. Save money."

Over the next several months, *News & views* will periodically feature an article on the kinds of discounts available through the Institute's affinity programs. Presented here is a list of the firms with which we currently

have affinity programs (see side bar). If someone would like more information about the programs, he or she should call Vicky Franzese at extension 6136.

COMPANIES WHO OFFER US SAVINGS

Not included on this list are the wide variety of insurance products available exclusively to members of the Institute and to us. Look for more information on these programs in a future edition of *News & views*. For more information on these programs, refer to the June 1996 edition of *The CPA Letter* or call Vicky Franzese at extension 6136.

Airborne Express
AT&T Capital Corporation
Dell Computer Corporation
Hertz Car Rental
National Car Rental
Marine Midland Bank
Norwest Home Mortgage
Pitney Bowes
Research Institute of America
Sprint
T. Rowe Price
Wallace Computer Services
Xerox Corporation

News & views Viewpoint

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"WOW!"— OR, MY LIFE AS A RECEPTIONIST AT THE NEW AICPA

*Irene Cohen,
Facilities Management Team — New York*

July 10, 1996 is the day this AICPA receptionist took a leap into the twenty-first century. At 7:05 am I stepped out of the elevator onto the sixth floor at 1211 Avenue of the Americas, but this was not the sixth floor. Here was a spacious, modern, high-tech, professional yet inviting-looking reception area. I was on the wrong floor; but wait a minute, if I was on the wrong floor; why was my team leader, Joe Ciccone and our architect, Bruce Blair, standing beside this splendid desk? Surely, they were lost, too. Reality struck as I glanced upward and I saw our handsome new logo over the entrance. I did work here, and the "executive" bathroom that had a sign on the door that read "gentlemen" was gone! Indeed, this was the new AICPA!

Throughout the day, as each employee stepped out of the elevator, I heard the same exclamation: "Wow!" Most people thought they were on the wrong floor. When I mentioned this to Frank Kemp, vice president — Information Technology, he suggested that I total up the amount of "Wows" and present the story to *News & views*. My count was about 150 "Wows," plus double and triple "Wows" of approval. Of course, as each new day arises, and more people see us, the count grows. The Federal Express carrier thinks we have the best floor in the building.

The birth of the new AICPA coincides with my eighteenth anniversary with the Institute. My original goal was to become a manager. If I didn't make that in two years, I was going to leave, but the staff was so

congenial and I liked my job so much that I remained. One thing bothered me, however. We were a membership organization back then, of course, but the rule here was to keep as many calls and visitors away from the staff as possible. The rule must have been made before I came here, and I was powerless.

The receptionists and telephone operators have to have a vast knowledge of the AICPA. I personally read all our publications, and over the years, I've had to learn the inner workings of the Institute — various rules and regulations, too. Members cross my path every day when they visit the Institute and when you are away from your desks, and your calls bounce to my extension. I've gotten to know your families, too. I can't tell you the frantic calls I've received when there is some transportation crisis. Regardless of what mode of transportation you use, most family members think that you're the ones who had the accident or delay.

The team concept is not new to me. "It's not my job," has never existed in my vocabulary. Passing the buck is probably the single most destructive force in the American workplace. Receptionists work for all the teams. This is a new concept for us at the Institute, but this is the new AICPA. My obligation is to present a professional, positive, friendly image to our members, both on the phone and at my desk. How I act reflects the AICPA. Receptionists are the first ones to be seen. And heard.

The team concept excites me and motivates me. Change is exciting. My hope is that we break boundaries that stifle creative thinking. We've made the first step. In the old AICPA, a receptionist would never have been asked to contribute this article. It's a small step, but progress is made by taking small steps. Change isn't easy for some people, but we're on the right path. I've seen many changes in eighteen years, but one thing remains constant — You're the reason I'm still here because I've never worked with a finer group of people.

Editor's note: *News & views Viewpoint* is a feature which appears periodically in this publication. Views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the AICPA. *News & views* encourages any and all Team AICPA members to submit editorials about work at the Institute to Anne Rothkopf. *News & views* reserves full editorial control over any submissions it receives.

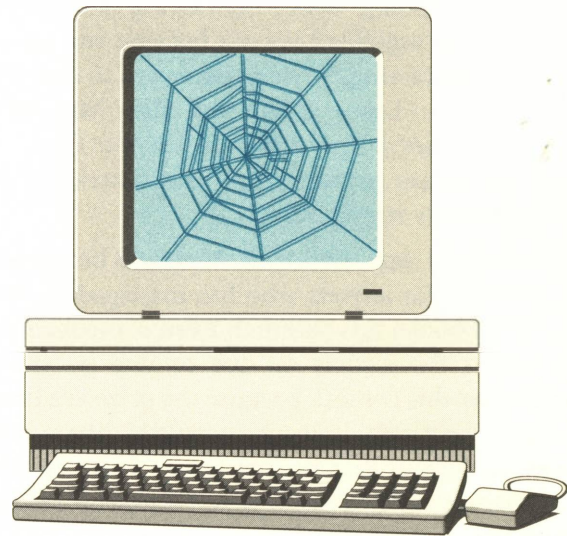
WORD FROM THE WEBMASTER

Bill Rehm, On-line Services Team

In just the first two months of operation, the AICPA On-line, the Institute's Internet website, has already had over 10,000 visitors. Our teams have fielded over 250 member questions that came from the site, and over 650 visitors have signed the on-line guest book.

AICPA On-line features a wealth of updated information, including news items, member benefit information, AICPA team information, software products information, links to other Internet resources, State Society information, and more. A "what's new" section informs visitors of the latest information that has been added to the site, while another section of the site provides visitors with a menu of e-mail links back to Team AICPA.

The success of AICPA On-line is due to the AICPA's teams who are contributing information to the site. Within each day-to-day work team there are two individuals who are responsible for their team's information. Each day-to-day work team contributing to the site has a "postmaster" who is responsible for e-mail communications to and from members, and a "key contact," who searches for important information within the team that can benefit members on the Internet. These team members are trained to use the Internet, and they act as their teams' conduit for Internet-related information. Some examples of information that teams provide on AICPA On-line include exposure drafts, answers to frequently asked member questions, member affinity information, press releases, news items, and more. With the Internet, Team AICPA is able to liberate information from the printed page, use hyperlinks and databases to add value to it, and distribute the information to AICPA members.



Because the Internet is such an efficient way to reach members, the AICPA has recently launched two proposals to assist State CPA Societies with their Internet programs. The first provides State Societies with the hardware and software that they need to run a website. The second proposal uses AICPA resources to help State Societies build and maintain their websites and participate in an on-line community.

Even more is yet to come. In the next few weeks, we will be announcing some major new programs for AICPA On-line, ones that will insure our leadership position with Internet-related accounting content and technology. Also on the drawing board are future plans for a "mirror" of the AICPA On-line site on our own Intranet, an internal AICPA system that acts just like an Internet website. If you have Internet access, and you haven't visited AICPA On-line yet, check it out at <http://www.aicpa.org>.

Bill Rehm will periodically contribute updates to News & views about the Institute's website.

AMERICAN LITERATURE TRIVIA QUIZ

Is there something about marketing and *haute cuisine* that go together? We ask because two members of the Marketing Services Team tied in the food trivia contest — Leslie Billera and Mary Maughan. They each deserve five *toques* from the Gault & Millau restaurant guide and gift certificates from a leading culinary supply store.

Below is the next trivia quiz. It should be reasonably amusing for anyone who has managed to read a few good books this summer. Even someone who only knows the answer to one or two questions should enter this contest, because the prize is a book store gift certificate, and who wouldn't like a new paperback copy of Roget's Thesaurus? Write guesses for answers where necessary, and enter by Friday, August 16.

- 1 In *Gone with the Wind*, which character keeps insisting, "I'm not the marrying kind"?
- 2 Name the famous American poet who read at the inauguration of President Bill Clinton.
- 3 Which famous 19th-century short story writer was expelled from West Point, allegedly for gambling?
- 4 Which epic poem by Benet depicts the Civil War from the perspective of both Northerners and Southerners?
- 5 Which famous Californian writer set many of his stories during the Great Depression in the farm towns of the Salinas Valley and the area around Monterey?
- 6 Which Harlem renaissance poet asked what happens to a dream deferred?
- 7 Which contemporary best-selling novelist has set a series of novels in San Francisco's Chinatown exploring the theme of cultural gaps between generations of Chinese-American women?
- 8 Which American novel is narrated in a stream-of-consciousness style by a hooky-playing, preppie Holden Caulfield?

- 9 Which Tennessee Williams play ends with Tom saying, "Blow out your candles, Laura, and, so, goodnight"?
- 10 Who wears the scarlet letter in *The Scarlet Letter*? Which letter of the alphabet was scarlet?

Team AICPA Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following Team AICPA members who recently celebrated various anniversaries with the Institute:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Ron Hynek Fulfillment & Office Services | .22nd |
| Irene Cohen Facilities Management — New York | .18th |
| Cynthia Hiris Library Services | .15th |
| Josephine Moscato General Accounting | .14th |
| Maria Beck Congressional & Political Affairs | .14th |
| Al DiMauro Distribution Services | .10th |
| Joe Bentz Professional Development Group Study | .9th |
| Carmela Chinnici Public Relations/Communications | .9th |
| Walling Almonte Subscriptions Administration | .8th |
| Kevin Burns Distribution Services | .8th |
| Viola Laquidara Facilities Management — New Jersey | .8th |
| John Sharbaugh State Society & Regulatory Affairs | .8th |
| David Trench Information Operations | .8th |
| Michele Acevedo PCPS/MAP | .5th |
| Jan Crozier General Counsel & Trial Board | .5th |
| Tisha Joiner Accounts Receivable | .5th |
| Annette Schumacher Regulated Services | .5th |

News & views would like to apologize to **Josh Grauer** of Professional Development Self-Study and to **Shermon Honeycutt** of Printing Services. We neglected to wish them a happy 15th and 5th anniversary, respectively.