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8-20-1996

## AICPA News & Views, August 20, 1996

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)

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# NEWS & views

August 20, 1996 • For the Employees of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants

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## SPECIAL EDITION... Mission Accomplished!

# *News & views* Pats Team AICPA on the Back

This edition of *News & views* celebrates recent accomplishments of Team AICPA. It is quite easy to forget, in the midst of difficult new challenges, the distance we have already traveled toward the ideals expressed in the Institute's Values & Visions Statement. Too easily, we forget to acknowledge our own accomplishments and the accomplishments of others.

This issue lists the recent milestones reached by a variety of day-to-day work teams, it congratulates those who have recently been promoted, and it visits our commitment to quality member service through

the eyes of some of our senior managers. It examines some of the challenges of being a new member of Team AICPA, and it gives us reasons not only to scan the horizon, but also to notice how rapidly our starting point shrinks in the distance behind us.

All of us have been challenged by our senior managers to become a team without divisions, without fiefdoms — a team that not only thinks out of the box but one that also tears down the box's walls so that none of us are limited in our ability to solve problems. This challenge has created tighter deadlines

for us and has caused us to juggle competing priorities as new opportunities for professional and personal growth have arisen. None of this has been easy, and we have a long way to go before we reach a phase where we can say to ourselves that we are a dream team.

However, during the course of a long journey, it is important to chart one's progress. This special edition of *News & views* attempts to help us do just that. Congratulations are due to all of us who have braved the changes of the last year. We are all on our way to a better AICPA.



## TEAM TRIUMPHS

What follows is a list of different recent team accomplishments and awards. Many Team AICPA members do not see awards for their work, not because their work lacks excellence, but because of the very nature of their jobs, people outside the Institute do not have the opportunity to notice the quality of their efforts. This is one of the reasons why it is important for all of us to take pride in the accomplishments of Team AICPA which are recognized outside the Institute.

### **Congratulations are due to the . . .**

#### **Academic & Career Development Team**

Because Room Zoom, their CD-ROM which promotes the accounting profession to students through dynamic multimedia techniques won the "Grand Award" in the "Video and Multimedia—Nonprofit" category of the APEX 96 awards for publication excellence.

#### **Examinations Team**

Because The May 1996 CPA Exam was the first non-disclosed exam prepared, administered, and graded by the AICPA. That meant that the AICPA was responsible for receiving and accounting for over 225,000 question booklets, over 173,000 essay answer papers, and 173,000 essay answer sheets. The State Boards of Accountancy were favorably impressed.

#### **Information Technology Team**

Because the Information Technology Membership Section publication, InfoTech Update won an APEX 96 award for newsletter writing.

#### **Journal of Accountancy Team**

Because for the seventh consecutive year, The Journal of Accountancy won an award for publication excellence. This year, the Journal won in the category of "Most Improved Magazines."

#### **Management Consulting Services Team**

Because two of their teams' newsletters won APEX 96 awards for publication excellence — *CPA Management Consultant* in the newsletter-

overall category and *CPA Expert* in the new newsletters category.

#### **Meetings & Travel Team**

Because some team members sat for and passed the international examination for meetings professionals that now qualifies them to use the designation Certified Meetings Professional (CMP).

Because team member Marianna Morgan won a scholarship from Meeting Professional International to attend a conference in France, which taught her about the ways in which meeting planners from other countries operate.

#### **On-line Services Team**

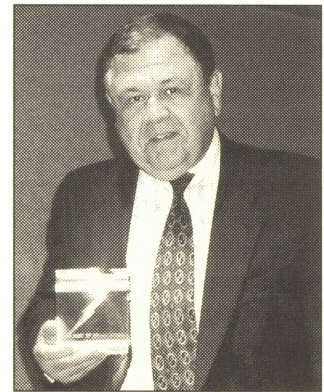
Because the AICPA's website, AICPA On-line, was recognized by Harcourt Brace Professional Publishing for being one of the Week's Accounting Top Websites for July 8–14.

#### **Public Relations/ Communications Team**

Because the AICPA Image Enhancement Campaign television commercial, "Pins," won a Best of Broadcasting award at the 16th Annual Best of Broadcasting show sponsored by *Adweek* magazine and the New England Broadcasting Association. The award was for best animated graphics in a television commercial.

#### **SECPS Peer Review Team**

Because the SECPS Peer Review Team, led by Karen Jones, successfully completed the 1995 peer review season by processing 406 reviews by the end of June this year.



*PR/Communications Team Leader Geoff Pickard proudly displays an award won for an advertisement which was part of the Institute's Image Enhancement Campaign.*

*Photo by David Oliveras*

## TEAM AICPA MEMBERS ARE MOVING AHEAD

There has been a lot of attention paid lately to teams at the Institute, and rightly so — everything that we do from now on will be done in a team-based environment. Teams are made up of individuals, however. Individuals at the AICPA have been working harder than ever, and they deserve to be recognized for their individual accomplishments.



*These Team AICPA members are facing new challenges  
From left to right: Aaron Arjun, Kevin Burns, LaShaun Cooper, and Ed Rose. Photo by Rick Gesualdo.*

Here are some Team AICPA members who fairly recently began facing new challenges in new positions at the Institute. *News & views* congratulates them and wishes them the best of luck.

**Wanda Amparo** also was promoted to Administrative Assistant when she moved over to the Member Service Team.

**Aaron Arjun** moved to Accounts Receivable, where he is working as an Accounting Clerk.

**Kevin Burns** was promoted to the Receiving Coordinator of the Distribution Services Team.

**Leslie Billera** was promoted to Copy Writer on the Marketing Services Team.

**LaShaun Cooper** was promoted to Library Clerk on the Library Services Team.

**Michael Doyle** was promoted to Production Editor of the Production-Periodicals Team.

**Madeleine Feldman** moved to the Order Team as a Member Services Representative

**Richard Koreto** was promoted to the News Editor of the Journal of Accountancy.

**Lianne Morales** of the Professional Publications Team was promoted to an Administrative Assistant.

**Bill Moran** moved to the Magazines & Newsletters Team to work as the Coordinator/Editor with them.

**Ed Rose** was promoted to Graphic Designer on the Graphic Design Services Team.

**Kim Shapiro** was promoted to Conference Planner on the Meetings & Travel Team.

**Hector Torres** moved to the Information Systems Team where he was promoted to a Technical Support Specialist.

**Lillian Zenker** was promoted to Supervisor—Conferences on the Professional Development Production Team.

### HUMAN RESOURCE TEAM MEETINGS HAVE MOVED TO TUESDAY

Every Tuesday from 3 pm to 5 pm, The HR Team will meet in the HR conference room in Harborside. At that time, the Human Resource offices in New York and New Jersey will still be open for business. As always at Harborside, human resource forms can be picked up from the metal kiosk near the entrance to HR, and attendance forms can be dropped in HR's in-box. In New York, forms are available on the cabinet just outside of the HR office, and attendance forms can be dropped off there as usual. If anyone has an emergency or a concern which requires immediate attention, the Human Resources team can be reached at extension 3824.

## New Faces at the AICPA Facing New Opportunities for Success

Eighty percent of success, a current advertisement assures us, is just showing up. Well, showing up here for the first time presents both challenges and opportunities for success, according to some of the people who recently joined Team AICPA.

**Sheri Fabian**, CPA, who recently joined the Practice Monitoring Team, says that one of the things that struck her first about her new job at the Institute's Harborside office was, "The atmosphere.

People are working hard, but the people here are casual, at least compared to where I was in public accounting."

Fabian says the hardest thing to adjust to was simply where to find things and people, and she would recommend that all new employees take a tour of the Institute when they start working here. She also remarked that it might be beneficial for new employees, particularly those who don't have a background in accounting, to learn about the mission of the Institute and the kinds of work that CPAs do.

**Surendra Bhimani** is enthusiastic about his new position as a member of the Production & Editorial Services Team. Of his first day at Harborside, he says, "I was struck by the location, that literally a few paces from my desk was the Hudson River and the great New York skyline. I am still struck by that."

Bhimani says that he took an instant liking to his team members in Production and Editorial Services, and he feels strongly that the Institute should "keep uppermost in mind how to get along with different people in different situations, given the team environment."

**Noelle Humenick**, a recent addition to the Professional Development Production Team, shares Bhimani's enthusiasm for the team-based environment and the Institute's work ethic. "I do feel like I have found a new place that appreciates hard work. It has been a very positive experience thus far."

Nevertheless, Humenick says that adjusting hasn't been one hundred percent effortless. "It

was hard getting used to a big place. I used to work for a small company, and there weren't so many procedures, for example, to solve a problem that I had with my printer. It was a simple matter where I used to work because I sat two seats away from the person who was supposed to help with that kind of problem. I just asked him to fix it, but here, I had to get used to the corporate [structure]."

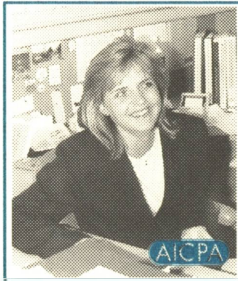
One of the people that Humenick might have called to solve her printer problem is new to the Institute as well. **Brian Hochberg**, who supervises the help desk for the Microcomputer/LAN Support Team, joined the Institute a few months ago. He says that the greatest challenge for him that working at the Institute presents is, "learning what the Institute does. My job really works internally within the Institute, so I had to find out just what each [team] does so that we can serve their needs."

Hochberg says that the Institute is more oriented toward member service than some of the places he has worked previously, but the team concept was not entirely new to him. He says that at IBM, the organization formed problem solving teams, "to raise employee morale and to point the company in a new direction that would increase profits."

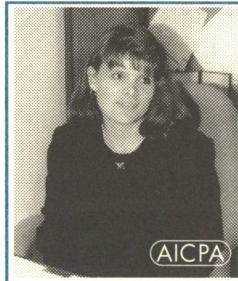
Hochberg says that his employee orientation at the AICPA had everything that he would expect coming aboard a new organization. Nevertheless, the Human Resources team, with the help of members of other teams throughout the Institute, is reexamining the orientation process for new employees, looking for ways to give newcomers to the AICPA the kinds of information that they need to become acclimated rapidly and effectively. For all new members of Team AICPA, whatever orientation they receive, the challenges presented by the change of environment and the high quality of work expected here provide opportunities for growth, both professional and personal. Just an invitation to join the team means the player is an all-star.

## New Teamates at the Institute

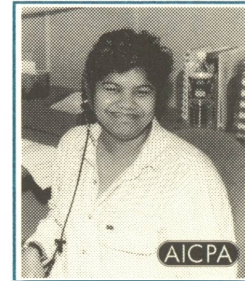
*News & views* photographer Rick Gesualdo caught some recent draft picks for Team AICPA in action. You may know their names already—here are their faces.



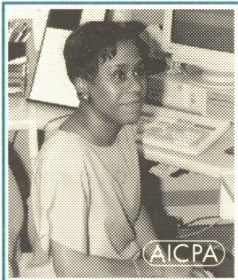
Meetings & Travel  
 Samantha Bowermen  
 Meetings Planner



Practice Monitoring  
 Sheri Fabian, CPA  
 Technical Manager



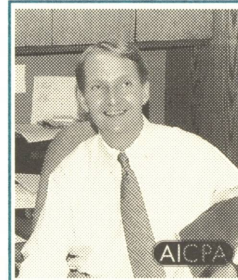
Membership Administration  
 Alicia Mangra  
 Sr. Data Entry Operator



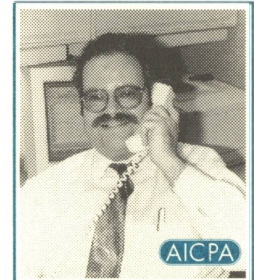
Practice Monitoring  
 Beverly Henry  
 Secretary



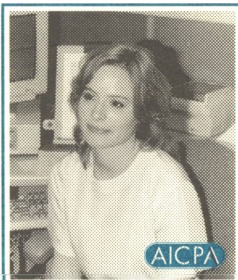
Marketing Services  
 Suzanne Mazzeo  
 Copywriter



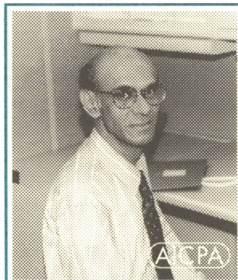
On-line Services  
 Will Rehm  
 Webmaster



Micro/LAN Support  
 Brian Hochberg  
 Help Desk Manager



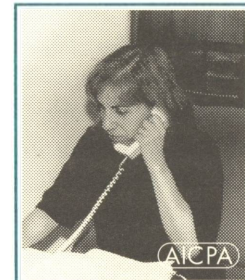
Professional Dev.—  
 Production  
 Noelle Huenick  
 Production Assistant



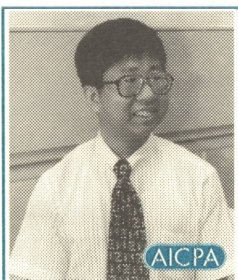
Production & Editorial  
 Services  
 Surendra Bhimani  
 Production Associate



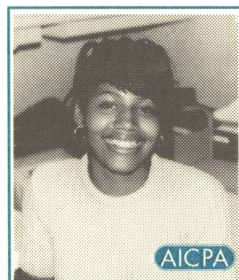
Facilities  
 Management—NJ  
 Lois Coyle  
 Relief Receptionist



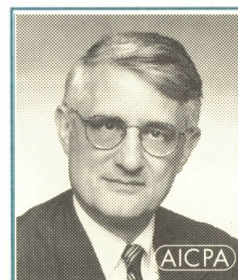
Production & Editorial  
 Services  
 Margot Fivush  
 Associate Editor



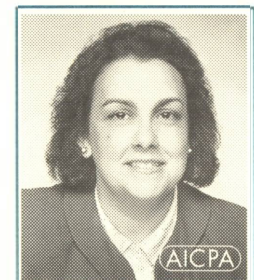
Information Systems  
 Siu Hon Wong  
 Senior Programmer  
 Analyst



Library Services  
 Jalecka Wanton  
 File Clerk



Operations &  
 Information Tech.  
 Frank Kemp  
 VP—Information Tech.



Finance  
 Eileen Miele  
 Chief Financial Officer

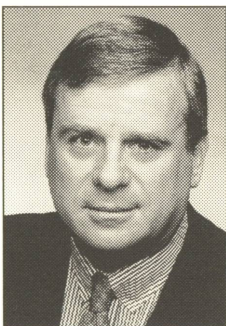
## A MISSION THAT NEVER ENDS — IMPROVING OUR SERVICE TO MEMBERS

*Barry Melancon has made our commitment to member service the Institute's top priority. Of course, we have all heard this said before. We all feel we give our members our best. We know that it is not only our duty to our members to meet their expectations, it is our duty to exceed them. However, sometimes it is helpful to hear from others what they consider "going all out" for members. Here, in their own words, are some examples of what our senior managers mean by giving our members the best customer service possible. These are their own experiences with members, as told to News & views.*



### Jay Rothberg

"There was a member in Seattle with a Big 6 firm who was thinking about starting his own practice, going off on his own. The first thing I did was to let him know that we have a book by Albert Williams, *Starting Your Own CPA Practice*, which deals with some of those kinds of questions. I also let him know that Albert Williams teaches a course on this at a lot of State Societies, but I wasn't sure if the AICPA offered it as well. But I thought that he taught it for State Societies on Saturdays, which was the best time for him to take the course. I also referred him to Laura Inge, since I knew the MAP area used to have a series of current articles from the *Journal of Accountancy* which dealt with this topic, but I wasn't sure if we still had them available. Laura Inge contacted Barbara Vigilante from PCPS, and she said that she was pulling those kinds of articles together again. I think we gave that member good service because we didn't stay within the confines of one area of the AICPA to respond to his questions."



### Chuck Peck

"There was this one guy, he was in the CEA program for business valuation. He was furious because he had waited six months to get his certificate for receiving the credential. He wrote Barry [Melancon] originally to complain. "First, I had to do some investigating to find out what had happened. It turned out there was a problem between one of the

State Societies and ourselves. The member had taken the course through one of the State Societies. At that time, they did the administration of the course, and we did the printing and fulfillment of the certificate and credits. All the record-keeping resided with them. Unfortunately, the State Society had taken four months to send us the information we needed to give out a certificate. That was not this member's problem. It should all be seamless, and it's not his job to know who did what. We, unfortunately, also took too long. We had had the information for two months, but there was a bottleneck, and there were not enough resources allocated to getting certificates out to members.

"The first thing I did was to solve the short-term problem. I groveled with him in apologizing, because however it happened, a member didn't get the service he deserved. What I also did was to try to get Pat Williams and Bill Suda to see where the certificate was in process. I'm a big believer in you do what you say and you say what you mean. I made sure we got him the certificate right away.

"But that was just a quick fix. I realized we had a long-term problem, too. I worked out an agreement with the State Society so that now we do all the administration work for those courses, and I worked with Pat and Bill and Charles Keiser to figure out a system that would speed up the process of getting these certificates out in the future.

"The member wrote Barry again. This time he complained about how he thought our whole CE program was no good. I wrote him back with some facts about our Continuing Education and how on a scale from one to five it gets ratings above a four. He finally agreed that maybe it wasn't right for him to criticize the whole program. At the end, he was overwhelmed by our response to him."

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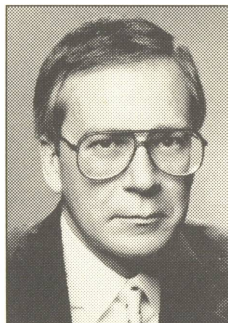
**Ed Niemiec**

“The thing I find most rewarding is overcoming the challenge of [reaching out to members on] the phone system. It’s a good day if I get a member outreach call. The other day I got two. One member had recently changed firms, and he wasn’t sure that we had his new

address. I was pretty sure that we did have it, because he had recently paid his dues, but he wanted to fax me his new address, so I made sure it got processed. Another member had determined that her office had recently thrown out her membership dues letter. She gave me her married name, and then she gave me her maiden name so that I could track her down in our system, and I faxed her another copy of the letter, since that was what she wanted.

“The important thing here is that I didn’t transfer these two people to anyone. I took down the information, and I closed the loop with them myself. I also communicated with them the way that they wanted me to communicate with them. Because each of them wanted to work with me by fax, I didn’t suggest that we do it another way. I adapted my responses to their way of operating.

“I think the important thing to remember is that, not only with members, but also with each other on teams, we need to treat others the way that we would want to be treated ourselves. All good human relations are founded on that.”



**Dan Guy**

“Most of the calls I get are technical. We had a recent Statement, SAS 59, which deals with going concerns. Invariably when I get a member call about going concerns, the member is going through an agonizing process of trying to find the right technical answer to the question and is

trying to deal with client resistance to adjusting the audit, which frequently is required. Usually the member has the literature down pat, but he or she just wants to talk. They want more than the technical question answered; they want empathy. I’m kind of their listener.

“When it comes to dealing with these calls, I have really two advantages. First of all, I grew up in a small town in the South, and if I was ever rude, someone called my mother and told her about it before I got home. I was brought up to respect peo-

ple and to respect their questions. Secondly, I was a professor. As a professor, you don’t demean students by saying their questions are stupid. You have to have something like a doctor’s bedside manner.

“You know, New York City probably has the best-trained doctors in the world, but they don’t always do a good job because they don’t have a good bedside manner. They can be pedantic, condescending, and they don’t listen to their patients. We have to have a good bedside manner when we speak to members.

“Sometimes, like anybody else, I have a bad day. It’s rare, but if I’m on the phone with a member, I’ll say, ‘Hey, I’m having a bad day,’ so that they know that it has nothing to do with them or their question. There are times when things are piling up on my desk, and I get a bunch of questions from members, but I can’t pass these calls to someone else. I need to deal with those people first and foremost, and I do.” ▲

*This is the first article in a series that will appear periodically in News & views about the way Team AICPA provides quality member service.*

## American Literature Trivia Quiz

Apparently, a lot of Team AICPA members have gotten some reading done this Summer. This quiz has received quite a lot of entries. Good luck, page turners, and look for the winners’ names in the Next *News & views*.

**1** *In Gone with the Wind, which character keeps insisting, “I’m not the marrying kind?”*

Why fiddle dee dee! That would be Rhett Butler; that rogue rebel blockade runner, of course.

**2** *Name the famous American poet who read at the inauguration of President Bill Clinton.*

Maya Angelou read that poem that marked the beginning of the Clinton administration. Anyone who has never read her poetry or her autobiographical books, starting with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, is missing out.

**3** *Which famous nineteenth-century short story writer was expelled from West Point, allegedly for gambling?*

Rumors abound regarding the true reason why Edgar Allen Poe was expelled from that venerable military academy. One rumor that still has some currency is that he showed up for guard duty in his underwear, and that the gambling story was just concocted to let his parents down easy. If only the tell-tale heart could tell us more!

*continued on page eight*



## American Literature Trivia Quiz

**4** Which Harlem renaissance poet asked what happens to a dream deferred?

Langston Hughes did. He wondered if a dream deferred dries up like a raisin in the sun, prompting Lorraine Hansberry to write a play called *A Raisin in the Sun* which attempts to answer the question.

**5** Which epic poem by Benet depicts the Civil War from the perspective of both Northerners and Southerners?

*John Brown's Body* is a narrative poem which examines the war between the states from the perspective of dozens of characters. It even manages to poetically narrate the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

**6** 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?

John Steinbeck, the author of *The Grapes of Wrath*, *East of Eden*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Cannery Row*, and other works, tended to combine California's farmland and oblique biblical references with contemporary American language. His books are rich and pulpy like fresh Petaluma tomatoes.

**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?

Amy Tan seems to want to find out if family members born in different countries can ever really understand each other. In her work, the answer seems to always be that on a superficial level, it is impossible for them to understand each other, but on a higher level, blood is thicker than the Pacific Ocean.

**8** Which American novel is narrated in a stream-of-consciousness style by a hooky-playing, prep-pie Holden Caulfield?

J.D. Salinger's book, *A Catcher in the Rye*, was initially banned in Boston, but today it is considered a landmark American novel.

**9** Which Tennessee Williams play ends with Tom saying, "Blow out your candles, Laura, and, so, goodnight"?

Tennessee Williams's lyrical first play, *The Glass Menagerie*, was autobiographical, and it portrayed his mother in a somewhat less-than-flattering manner. Luckily for him, even though she saw the play more than once, she never noticed the family resemblance.

**10** Who wears the scarlet letter in *The Scarlet Letter*? Which letter of the alphabet was scarlet?

Hester Prynne wore a Scarlet A in Nathaniel Hawthorne's sharply descriptive book about Puritanism. In Hawthorne's book, the A did not stand for "accountant."



### Team AICPA Anniversaries

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

#### Bill Stromsen

Taxation ..... 20th

#### Mike Bright

Professional Development—Production 17th

#### Janis Grossman

Member Service ..... 16th

#### Helen Kuch

Membership Administration ..... 13th

#### Bruce Brasell

Practice Monitoring ..... 10th

#### Frank Katusak

President & CEO ..... 10th

#### Marguerite Gray

Membership Administration ..... 9th

#### Pamela Green

Practice Monitoring ..... 9th

#### Miguel McKenzie

Distribution Services ..... 9th

#### Chiu Chi

Information Systems ..... 7th

#### Robin Johnson

Practice Monitoring ..... 7th

#### Rufina Kaminski

Operations & Information Technology . 7th

#### Ralph Terranova

General Accounting ..... 7th

#### Steven Walme

Practice Monitoring ..... 7th

#### George Durk

Internal Audit/Quality Control ..... 6th

#### Bibi Kumar

Subscription Administration ..... 6th

#### Jose Suarez

Member Service ..... 6th