



# Focus

NEWS FROM ACCA US



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In Brief.....

### **A message from the President:**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prem Goyal for his many years in the service of ACCA-US. He became a member in 1993 and came to the US in 1997. Shortly thereafter Prem was introduced to Steve Taylor, the founder of ACCA in the US, who got him involved with ACCA in this country. He initially offered his services as auditor, he then served as secretary, then as vice president, and of course, most recently as president. He has done an excellent job for ACCA in the US this past year.

I can't tell you how proud I am to be a member of ACCA, especially when I attend the Annual General Meeting and chapter meetings. I consider it an enormous honor to be elected President of ACCA -US and I will do my utmost to promote the interests of members and students in this country during the coming months.

Prem and the ACCA US chapter heads have worked very hard this year to offer chapter meetings and other events for members, affiliates and students providing opportunities for networking and another means of fulfilling CPD requirements. Our US committee has helped form a strong, dynamic membership in the US which we plan to continue strengthening in the coming year. It can't be emphasized often enough that a strong, involved membership can do a great deal, from the grass roots level, to raise awareness of ACCA in this country and promote this excellent qualification.

## A Message from the President (*cont'd*)

As you know, the theme this year is “professionalism & ethics” in keeping with the launch of ACCA’s redesigned professional syllabus which will have a greater emphasis on professionalism and ethics at its core. For accountants, the independent exercise of judgment, based on ethical values and technical skills is key to our success in the business world. This is exemplified in the core values of ACCA and in the ethical principles that guide our behavior as professionals, especially when we come under pressure from management, or when we deal with the grey areas of accounting, reporting, or taxation. Our values of opportunity, diversity, accountability, innovation and integrity are deeply embedded in all aspects of what we do as members and students of ACCA. There can be no better ambassadors of ACCA in the US corporate marketplace than the members themselves.

For the coming year I envision more and more members and students attending chapter meetings throughout the country. We now have 11 chapters each having quarterly meetings which total 44 meetings a year, plus the occasional special event. We hope you will all be able to take advantage of these meetings, not only to network with one another, but also to learn something that will be of help to you in your career, either now or at some point in the future, so that you can use them for CPD credit. I look forward to continuing to work together with the chapter heads and committee members to raise awareness of ACCA as the foremost international qualification in the world.

I look forward to another year of continued progress for ACCA in the US and will keep everyone apprised of new developments through emails and the newsletter.

Best regards to all,

Beatrice Janke, FCCA  
President, ACCA-US



## ACCA Deputy-President Richard Aitken-Davies Remarks on Ethics & Professionalism at the US AGM

Good evening – I’m delighted to be able to join you for what has proved to be a very enjoyable and enlightening evening.

It is encouraging, not only to witness the rapid growth of ACCA US, which mirrors our performance in other key international markets, but also to note the progress ACCA members are making in their careers in the US.

ACCA is committed to continue to strive to build on the services and support which are provided to you wherever your careers may take you....and we welcome any suggestions or comments which you may have about those services.

As you well know, the theme of this year’s event is professionalism and ethics. These interlinked issues are at the heart of ACCA’s new qualification, which is due to be examined for the first time in December this year. But it is much more than answering a number of tough questions within an allotted time frame, it is about ensuring that our members are equipped to make a number of critical ethical decisions and choices throughout their careers.

It’s interesting that, if we had been talking about ethics and professionalism in the 1990’s, the debate would have been somewhat more philosophical than it is now. Equally if we had attempted to interest the media in those self-same issues we would very likely have met with indifference at best and more likely with audible yawning.

As we know, that all changed with events that took place not too far south from where we sit now.....

You’ll be delighted to hear that I’m not going into any detail on the history of Enron and WorldCom, but it’s obvious that integrity and transparency went absent without leave on a few occasions during both scandals, and that professional accountants were placed under intense pressure to make the figures look good in the interest of the companies involved. In fact, the only people under more pressure at that time were the stand-up comedians who had to make accountancy and special purpose vehicles funny.

But seriously, ACCA believes its interest is the public interest and has a responsibility to help its members act in that interest. As such, ethics is at the core of ACCA’s *raison d’etre*. We see ethics as impacting directly on ACCA’s reputation and influence around the world. This is

## Richard Aitken-Davies Remarks on Ethics & Professionalism at the US AGM (cont'd)

why we ensure that our ethical code complies with the IFAC Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants and will always comply with that code.

Our members, if they wish to remain members, have to accept their responsibility to act in the public interest. We believe a professional accountant's responsibility is not exclusively to satisfy the needs of individual clients or employers. The fundamental principles of 'being an accountant' are common to all – ethics is indivisible.

As people, professional accountants are already expected to act ethically – in line with the principles of 'correct' conduct in the society in which they live and work. The professional ethics which they accept, will add layers to those acceptable levels of behavior. But what is regarded as 'acceptable behavior' already presents dilemmas. It's not always obvious where the 'right' course of action lies.

Rushworth Kidder, President of Institute for Global Ethics, says: "The really tough choices involve right versus right. They are: truth versus loyalty, individual versus community, short-term versus long term, and justice versus mercy."

The day-to-day work of professional accountants as business 'interpreters' means they are regularly in the public eye and on the ethical frontline. There is an expectation – from bodies such as ACCA, as well as from organizations which employ them, that senior professional accountants will encourage an ethics-based culture in the organizations.

ACCA surveys have shown that senior accountants, such as CFOs are worried about how they can build an overall corporate culture based on integrity, while dealing with intensifying pressures from increased competition and the need to help grow the business.

Our surveys have also shown that, while many CFOs struggle with the need to juggle codes of conduct along with the harsh realities of doing business, half the CFOs said that, despite the red tape involved in regulations such as Sarbanes Oxley, they believed that the Act had a positive global effect on business ethics. Some even felt that there should be a more stringent ethical framework.

ACCA believes that, if there were to be such a framework, rather than a detailed attempt to legislate and regulate ethical

behavior, any guidance should be principles-based since that would be best suited to meet the needs of CFOs and their teams in a rapidly changing business environment.

The experiences of Enron and WorldCom here and of Parmalat in Italy, another heavily regulated business environment, show that legalistic, rules-based codes encourage creative, loophole-based avoidance.

ACCA believes that a principles-based code provides a framework for 'doing the right thing', acting as a benchmark for professionals, and enabling them to influence the culture of an organization. Such a code should articulate the application of ethical values to business practices and provide the means to measure behavior. But, having a code is not in itself enough - Enron had a code of ethics, unopened copies of which could, until recently, still be purchased on E-Bay I've been told.

We believe that business leaders must be active and highly visible, if ethical leadership is to mean anything.

Organizations need to have measures of 'success' which are non-monetary and need to have rewards structures which promote 'ethical' behavior.

Top management must also 'champion' an ethics-based culture and provide a framework for 'doing the right thing', something which ACCA as a professional body can help with.

Ethics is much more than simply blind compliance; it is about an attitude of mind.

We need to show that organizations with a strong - and used - code of ethics are also successful. What organizations must avoid is marketing spin whereby they can claim to 'tick the governance box'. Companies should consider the business case behind having an ethical approach to work, and maybe, just maybe, board and senior management should promote the idea that companies and employees do the right thing just because it is the right thing to do.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. It has been a pleasure to address you this evening.

## An Interview with Beatrice Janke, President, ACCA-US

### **Where are you originally from and when did you come to the US?**

I am originally from Germany. I came to the US in 1995.

### **How did you become interested in accounting as a profession?**

Accounting is my second career. My first profession was in housekeeping management for institutions. I worked in that profession for about 7 years mainly in Bonn, Germany. As I did not see many choices for me to advance in that profession, I decided to study programming and IT. Although I got the best grades in the exams, in the end, it did not appeal to me as a full time career.

So, I decided to go to school again and start over in a new career. I chose accounting and taxation since it offered the greatest variety of career choices.

### **Where did you study ACCA and when did you graduate?**

After I finished the German exams, I briefly worked for a CPA firm in Germany when personal circumstances brought me to Great Britain where I soon discovered that I lacked the specific terminology required to work in the profession in England.

Once again I went back to school, and was admitted to study full time for the ACCA qualification at Thames Valley University in Slough, West of London. I passed my final exams in February 1993.

### **How did you become involved with ACCA and active with the chapter in Northern California as well as the committee?**

After moving to the US, I found myself in a situation where I didn't know anyone. Since I did not yet have a work permit, I decided to use the time to go back to school. I had my ACCA education evaluated and had sufficient units to sit the CPA exams. I took Becker CPA classes and then passed the CPA exam all in one sitting. Shortly thereafter I obtained a green card and was permitted to work in the US.

Several months after I came to the US, I was contacted by B.L. Pang, founder and president of the ACCA Northern California chapter who invited me to a chapter meeting where I finally met people whom I could ask about

job opportunities and accounting firms in Silicon Valley. I received much good advice at a critical time in my life when I was interviewing with accounting firms. I was glad to have found people whom I could call, if I had questions.

That experience, combined with my general belief in the concept of community and team spirit, kept me attending ACCA chapter meetings and helping out with the administrative work of organizing chapter meetings, updating the address roster, mailing invitations to members, making phone calls, etc.

### **Why have you been so enthusiastic about ACCA and about dedicating so much of your personal time to helping fellow members and students?**

I am enthusiastic about ACCA because I am proud to be a member of an organization that is truly global, and embraces diversity and opportunity. Evidence of this is the way it has enabled me to move around in Europe and the US and successfully work in my profession. Evidence can also be found in the diversity of members and students at our local chapter meetings. ACCA also has the progressive vision and active role in the global marketplace embracing a multiplicity of issues.

During my many years of being an active ACCA member, and later as chapter head, I have met many fellow members and students and I have heard many stories of their path through their careers and life, and listened with amazement at what challenges many have overcome to earn their deserved place as a professional in the business world. I have gained a great respect for the ACCA members and students.

I consider myself very lucky that I had the opportunity to study for the ACCA exams full time without having to work and support myself at the same time. I know that many students do not have such luck.

My activities with ACCA is my chance to give something back by keeping the chapters active so they are there as a resource for members and students, offering a place to meet, talk, exchange experiences, ask questions, and network, plus provide an opportunity to obtain CPD credits. Chapter events provide an opportunity to gather at a place where everyone knows and recognizes what an excellent qualification the ACCA is.

## An Interview with Beatrice Janke, President, ACCA-US (cont'd)

### **What does it mean to you to have taken on the role of ACCA-US president?**

To me it means a great honor and a huge responsibility, but it is also an opportunity to work with a wonderful team of very committed chapter heads and committee members as chapter activities and member attendance continue to evolve.

I see strong chapter activity as the way for ACCA members in the US to contribute to the great work undertaken by ACCA headquarters, combined with the outstanding support from our Senior Advisor, Patricia Limoges and our Business Relationship Manager, Helen Perkins, to achieve greater awareness of ACCA in the US.

The role of president also presents an opportunity to expand ACCA-US efforts in some areas that I feel passionate about: provide support for the students in the US, who are studying for the exams, and recognition of our members' and students' achievements. I would also like to work with the ACCA headquarters on the idea of a global student financial scholarship, or aid fund. We, who are so lucky to live in this part of the world, can share with students who happen to be in countries where economic circumstances are so much more difficult.

### **What would you say have been the primary motivating factors in your career?**

Professional responsibility, the belief that there are 'win-win' solutions for everything and the drive to find them.

What obstacles did you have to overcome in establishing your career in this country?

With my first job in the US, I had to start "at the bottom" again, and prove myself, and the worth of my professional qualification, again.

### **What have been the achievements in your career you've been most proud of?**

A reputation as "our expert." In one of my first positions as auditor in the US, after about two years of proving myself, my employer ended up sending me out as "our expert for..." because they felt confident I could handle just about anything. Thanks to my solid ACCA education, I could

handle any area they assigned to me, even if I had not worked in it before.

### **ACCA's new syllabus has professionalism and ethics as one of its central themes – how important do you think it is for accountants to be committed to professionalism and ethics in today's society and in business?**

It is absolutely essential and one of the fundamental values every accountant should strive for. These days, the many complex business transactions that one may be confronted with, require research, studying, and learning, to gain a better understanding of the fine line that exists between right and wrong.

### **How do you spend your time when you are not working?**

I have spent many years working with other not-for profit organizations, such as the American Business Women's Association and the Friends of Mills Canyon. Other interests include nature and environmental issues which are entangled with socio-economic issues. I also enjoy home improvement projects, gardening, and reading.

### **What advice would you want to offer members and students who have recently come to the US?**

You may not like the fact that the CPA qualification is more widely recognized in the job market, but there is not much use in fighting it. Rather than resenting the requirement for the CPA qualification, consider it an opportunity to add to your professional qualification. In preparing for the CPA exams myself, I have learned a lot about how the US system works and I have greatly benefited from it in my career in the US. I also believe it would be of benefit when moving to another country.

Get in touch with the local ACCA chapter closest to you and participate as much as you can. There is much value in building a strong community from which you can get help or to which you can contribute.

We can all be ACCA ambassadors and can slowly and consistently contribute to educating accounting industry professionals in the US about the value of the ACCA qualification.

# ACCA-US CHAPTER EVENTS

## Houston Chapter Meeting, February 22

Irina Leontieva, Houston chapter head, invited members, affiliates, students and their guests to listen to a presentation by Jay Strickland, a Certified Identity Theft Risk Management Specialist with Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc.

The topic of his presentation was "Facts About Loss of Data Used for Identity Theft - How to be Compliant with Federal Laws." The lengthy Q&A which followed was indicative of the degree of interest among those who attended this dinner meeting

(Irina recently gave birth to a beautiful baby girl and will be organizing another chapter meeting in the not too distant future.)



## Southern Florida Chapter Meeting, February 24

Kirsty Taylor, South Florida chapter head, invited members, affiliates, students and their guests to the first quarterly meeting of the year to listen to guest speaker and ACCA member, Kenneth Henry, discuss identity theft. Ken is a professor at Florida International University and is completing research on the topic for his doctoral dissertation.

Patricia Limoges also attended the meeting and updated members and students on recent developments with ACCA-US including the upcoming CFO Conference in Orlando, the 21st Annual General Meeting in New York in May and events at other chapter meetings throughout the country.



# ACCA-US CHAPTER EVENTS

## Chicago Chapter Meeting, March 15

ACCA members, affiliates and students in the Chicago area welcomed Neal Fenwick, FCCA, Executive Vice President & CFO of ACCO Brands, as their new chapter head.

Beatrice Janke, ACCA-US president, traveled from San Carlos, CA to attend the meeting and offer her support as well as did long-time members Peter Corrigan and Henry Segal who have been active with ACCA-US for many years. Beatrice updated the audience on recent activities undertaken by ACCA in the US.

Neal gave a presentation on the topic of "Recent Accounting Pronouncements on Taxes and Pensions" which was well received by all. Members and students noted that they welcomed the opportunity to network with others in the area on a regular basis.



## Northern California Chapter Meeting, March 29

Kathy Liu, Northern California chapter head, invited members, affiliates, students and their guests to hear guest speaker Joshua Ramey-Renk, a recruiter with Robert Half Management Resources, specializing in senior-level finance and accounting engagements. He spoke on a topic which was of great interest to all who attended; "Managing Your Career in Today's Business Environment."

The meeting was held at a restaurant venue in San Carlos, California which has become a favorite of members and students. The event also provided an opportunity to network with others as well as a chance to acquire CPD credits as almost all chapter meetings qualify as being of benefit to one's career, either currently, or at some point in the future.



## MORE CHAPTER EVENTS

### Philadelphia Chapter Meeting, March 29

Todd M. Havens (CIA) Director, Internal Audit, Regulatory, and Compliance Services at KPMG, LLP was the featured speaker at this meeting. Todd is responsible for managing teams and ensuring the quality of the Sarbanes-Oxley and internal audit co-sourcing & out-sourcing services. He discussed the audit and compliance environment in the US.

The meeting was lead by chapter head and ACCA-US Vice President, Mahendra Pattni and was held at the Robert Half offices on Market Street in Philadelphia.

### VA/MD/DC Chapter Meeting, April 5

Ali Eltilib, the VA/MD/DC chapter head, organized a meeting at the Olive Garden in Vienna, VA for members, affiliates, students and their guests.

ACCA's Helen Perkins presented on CPD requirements and reporting procedures for members and Rick Moyer, Senior Manager, PricewaterhouseCoopers briefed the audience on recent accounting updates.

The meeting attracted an enthusiastic audience from all over the VA/MD/DC area representing many regions of the world.

The venue for the next meeting is expected to be located in Washington and is scheduled for July.

### Atlanta Chapter Meeting, January 18

Jeffrey Bowman, Atlanta chapter head, invited members, affiliates, students and their guests to attend a dinner and chapter meeting at Crawford & Company's corporate headquarters in Atlanta.

Helen Perkins, ACCA-US Business Relationship Manager, was the guest speaker and provided an overview of CPD and its requirements for ACCA members living in the US followed by a discussion of examples verifiable and non-verifiable activities and how to document CPD related activities.

### Dallas Chapter Meeting, April 7

Siobhan Pandya, the new Dallas chapter head, invited members, affiliates, students and their guests to hear Maanasa Jain, a senior manager in the Dallas Systems and Process Assurance group at PricewaterhouseCoopers. The topic of her presentation was "The journey to controls excellence - the controls continuum," and was well-received by those in attendance.

Our thanks to Luba Brewster, previous Dallas chapter head, for her efforts on behalf of ACCA members and students in the Dallas area.

# ACCA-US CHAPTER EVENTS

## NY-NJ-CT Chapter Meeting, April 12

On this occasion, ACCA members and students were invited to a reception at PwC's corporate headquarters to meet two special guests: Dean Westcott, ACCA Council Member and Sharon Cannaby, Head of Health Sector Policy at ACCA headquarters.

Both Dean and Sharon were visiting the US to discuss health-care cost containment issues with their counterparts in this country. Dean is a member of the ACCA health panel and is also finance director at the West Essex Primary Care Trust.

During his address Dean emphasized ACCA's commitment to professionalism and ethics which has been made a core component of the new syllabus. He also noted that ACCA is now the international market leader by size in 47 markets making ACCA the world's largest and fastest growing global professional accountancy body.



*Dean and a member of the NY/NJ/CT chapter*

## Boston Chapter Meeting, January 25 & April 19

The January 25 chapter meeting featured three speakers, all ACCA members, who presented on:

Sarbanes-Oxley – The Basics,

An overview of Government Accounting & Reporting, and  
Strategic Planning & Budgeting

The meeting was an excellent learning experience and demonstrated the wealth of knowledge possessed by ACCA members.

For the April 19 meeting, KPMG provided several taxation specialists to present on:

United States Tax Exempt Entities and Private Foundations.

Individual Income Tax.

C and S Corporation Income Tax.

The Boston chapter plans to have more meetings of this nature which have been attracting record turnouts.



## OTHER EVENTS

### ACCA Achievement Award Dinner for Steve Taylor, December 16

Over 30 members, affiliates, students and guests attended a dinner on December 16 at the Native Café & Gathering Grounds, in Calabasas, CA to honor Steve Taylor, a winner of the ACCA Global Achievement Awards in 2006.

The awards recognize individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the development of the accountancy and finance profession. Steve, who until recently was senior vice-president, finance at Paramount Pictures, has worked tirelessly throughout his career to promote ACCA and support its members in the US.

The dinner was a great success and attracted members who had been active in establishing ACCA in the US. Prem Goyal presented Steve with the award and noted Steve's contribution not only to members new to this country but also to the accounting community at large.

*Steve Taylor in the middle, Claude Birch and his wife Wendy are in the photo at right*



### CFO Rising Conference, March 17-21

The CFO Rising Conference in March marked the first time that ACCA-US participated as an exhibitor at an event of the nature. The conference attracted approximately 450 CFOs and senior finance executives to listen to a host of industry leaders on the theme of the CFO as Growth Champion. This was a great opportunity to improve awareness of ACCA among a key constituency. Both Helen Perkins and Patricia Limoges were on hand to discuss the merits of ACCA and of hiring ACCA members as highly skilled accountants with an international accounting qualification.

*ACCA members Karen Clark and Andrew Lamb can be seen in the photo at right in front of the ACCA exhibit.*



## OTHER EVENTS

### ACCA-US Annual General Meeting, 2007

This year's AGM attracted a record turnout of over 150 members, students and their guests to a business meeting, reception and dinner at the Yale Club in New York City.

In keeping with ACCA's global theme of "Professionalism & Ethics," designed to mark the launch of the new ACCA Qualification, Jude A. Curtis, Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer for PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, was invited to be the keynote speaker. Mr. Curtis is a principal with the firm and a resident in PwC's New York Office. He is responsible for PwC's ethics and compliance program in the United States covering all of the organization's practices and its 30,000 partners and staff.

Richard Aitken-Davies was the guest of honor at the AGM. Richard was elected Deputy President of ACCA in May 2007. He has been on ACCA's Council for six years. He is Chairman of ACCA's influential external Financial Reporting Committee, ACCA's Remuneration Committee and serves on ACCA's Governance Committee, ACCA UK Committee, International Assembly, Nominating Committee and Tax Committee.

Also attending from Glasgow headquarters was Muir Brown, Head of Strategic Business Unit - Americas & Caribbean who was impressed with the enthusiastic turnout among ACCA members, affiliates and students. Hin Leong, president, ACCA-Canada and Paul Costello, senior advisor, communications and public affairs represented ACCA Canada.



**From l to r: Ali Eltilib, Patricia Limoges, Richard Aitken-Davies & Beatrice Janke**



**ACCA-US committee members**



## In brief . . . .

- the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) designation is the only globally accepted certification for internal auditors and remains the standard by which individuals demonstrate their competency and professionalism in the internal auditing field. This year, ACCA members are eligible to gain the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) qualification through a special fast-track route that requires ACCA members to take only a Challenge Exam that will be held in November 2007. Further details on the enrollment process will be sent to you in plenty of time to prepare for the exam.
- special exam sites are available for students in various parts of the country other than New York, Houston and Washington. Students who wish to have a special exam venue set up for them should contact [students@accaglobal.com](mailto:students@accaglobal.com) by March 15 before the June exams and by September 15 before the December exams. The cost of the exam venue and proctor will be at the expense of the student, but this is often less expensive than traveling to a distant city.
- the student-study-partner program, in effect since last October, continues to attract students who would like to discuss their papers with others who are studying at the same level. This program will be continued in the fall.
- to follow on from the Americas Marketing Planning Conference last September, this year, closer ties have been initiated with ACCA Canada with representatives from both ACCA Canada and the US attending each other's AGMs. Further plans are in progress to strengthen the North American ACCA network.

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