

If any of you have thoughts you want to pass along regarding the improvement of our Society, I will welcome them. Please feel free to contact me at:

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## ALASKA SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANTS

*Fall 2003 Newsletter*

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – *Rex R. Cruse, EA, ABA, ATA*

This year is almost over and the Holiday Season is upon us. I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a Joyous Holiday Season.

Those of you, who were not able to attend the Convention in Girdwood, in September, missed a very good time and some excellent education. We are working on the next convention, which will be in the Kenai/Soldotna area and would welcome any suggestions you have to make our conventions even better. One of the hardest things to do is find speakers and topics that are relevant to our practices, so if you know of any good speakers or have any topics you would like to see covered, please let me or Paula Laurion know.

Marty and I have just returned from the NSA District IX & X State Directors and State Presidents meeting and Leadership Networking Conference held in Portland, Oregon. This was a very good meeting as usual and the discussion and exchange of ideas this year may lead to a change in the way ASO's (Affiliated State Organizations) can qualify for legislative aid, making it easier to qualify.

We just had our first Board Meeting of the new year, November 20<sup>th</sup>, in Anchorage. The dates of the remaining board meetings for this year are May 7, 2004 in Fairbanks, July 30, 2004, in Fairbanks and September 22, 2004 at the Convention site. As a member, if you have anything you want to bring before the Board you can attend any of these meetings or contact any of the Board members, in advance of the meetings. Your Board of Directors is as follows:

President	Rex R. Cruse
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Paula Lauion
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Bernadette Illichmann
Secretary	Kelly Hunter
Treasurer	David Stephenson
Past President	Marty Brantingham
President, ASIA Anchorage	Kathie Riley
President, ASIA North	Phyllis Church
President, Kenai Peninsula	Kathy Hammer
NSA State Director for Alaska	Marty Brantingham

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### **CHAPTER REPORTS**

**Anchorage Chapter-Kathie Riley, President** - The Chapter meets regularly with the last meeting program being a MSSP Discussion regarding Lawsuits, Awards, Etc. The December meeting will be a Christmas party at Mike and Ginger Curnow's on December 12, 2003. A Non-Profits Seminar will be held on December 13, 2003. There will be no meeting in January due to the Gear-Up Seminars.

**Fairbanks Chapter-Phyllis Church, President** - The 2003-2004 officers have been installed and have assumed their responsibilities. We are pleased to announce that Judy Clarke will chair the Program Committee for the coming year. The monthly Chapter meetings continue to be well attended. There will be no regular meeting in December as the Chapter Christmas Party will be held at Benson's Tax Service (The Pink House). Mark December 19, 2003 on your calendar for that festive event.

**Kenai Chapter – Kathy Hammer, President** - There will be no meeting in December due to Gear-Up. Kathy reports the Chapter holds monthly luncheon meetings. Liz DeSmidt was welcomed at their last netting. Tentative meeting date for January is January 30<sup>th</sup>. James Nantau, from the local state office will be their speaker.

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### **A WORD FROM THE NSA STATE DIRECTOR** ***Marty Brantingham, EA, ATA, ATP***

Where has the year gone? It seems we just finished the season and already appointments are being scheduled and our offices made ready for the new year.

NSA's annual convention in Salt Lake City was another outstanding event. Leading NSA for the coming year is Daniel E. Setters from Champaign, Illinois. Those of you who attended the Fairbanks convention will remember him.

ASIA contributed to the NSA/ASO Scholarship Foundation and the 2003-2004 recipient is Shiela Isaak of Soldotna. She is a 4<sup>th</sup> year student at Western Baptist College. We congratulate her and look forward to having a recipient during the year 2004-2005.

NSA finished the past year with significant positive growth. The Society is operating under a balanced budget and programs and services to its members continue to grow. I encourage you to go to [nsacct.org](http://nsacct.org) and check out the new, more visually appealing, easier to navigate site.

NSA is the leading advocate for independent practitioners and has been a major force protecting practitioner rights. NSA recently purchased an on line legislative service. Now NSA can monitor state legislatures and provide copies of bills to SROC and state affiliates.

NSA continues their long-standing tradition of testifying before Congress and other oversight bodies. Following NSA recommendations, you are currently reading of policy changes made by the IRS.

This is just a small picture of what NSA is doing or could be doing for you. Contact me if I can share more of what NSA can do for you. I can be reached at [marty@ias-ak.com](mailto:marty@ias-ak.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

I have just returned from the District IX & X State Directors and State Presidents meeting. This is always a beneficial time as you get to hear what is happening in other states as well as updates from our District Governor as to the latest from NSA. It was a pleasure to have your State President in attendance. The following day Rex and I attended the Leadership Networking Conference.

I wish each one of you a successful "tax season". Remember NSA members, one of your many benefits is *Free Tax Research*.

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### DATES TO REMEMBER

NSA/AFTPNJ National Tax Update – Atlantic City, NJ – December 1-2, 2003

Gear-Up 1040 2-day Video-Kenai, AK-December 16-17, 2003

Gear-Up Business Entities Video-Kenai, AK-January 6, 2004

Gear-Up Business Entities – Anchorage, AK – January 8, 2004 – Hilton Hotel

Gear-Up Business Entities – Fairbanks, AK – January 8, 2004 – Fairbanks Princess Hotel

Gear-Up Form 1040 – Anchorage, AK – January 9 & 10, 2004 - Hilton Hotel

Gear-Up Form 1040 – Fairbanks, AK – January 9 & 10, 2004 – Fairbanks Princess Hotel

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### FROM THE IRS

The Internal Revenue Service has launched the first of a suite of Internet-based business tools that give tax professionals and financial institutions easier access to client information. Known collectively as e-services, the suite of products provides tax professionals with new choices for working electronically with the IRS. The first three products provide a foundation for future services that will significantly enhance how the IRS does business with tax professionals and those who file selected information returns.

Before using other e-services, the tax professional must register online to create an electronic account. The process is a one-time process where you will select a user name, password and personal identification number.

The Preparer Tax Identification Number or PTIN application lets a paid preparer apply for and receive a PTIN immediately over the Internet. There is no longer the need to complete and mail a paper Form W-7P. Processing time and input errors associated with a paper application are reduced. Anyone paid to prepare a tax return must sign the return and provide either a PTIN or a Social Security Number. (SSN). The ability to substitute a PTIN for a Social Security Number began in 1999 to address concerns that clients and others could use the paid preparer's SSN inappropriately.

Interactive Taxpayer Identification Number Matching or TIN Matching is a new pre-filing service offered to banks or others that pay income subject to backup withholding. Authorized payers can match up to 25-taxpayer identification number and name combinations against IRS records before submitting an information return. Results of the match are returned within seconds. This pre-filing check prevents mismatches and possible penalties for the payer.

Future services include an online application for those who want to become authorized e-filers, an expansion of TIN Matching that allows bulk matching of thousands of Taxpayer Identification Numbers within 24 hours and special incentive products for e-filers who file more than 100 electronic returns.

You can register for e-services immediately through the Tax Professional's page on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).

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### FROM YOUR DISTRICT GOVERNOR

Andrew T. Morehead, PA, CFP, ATP

The Salt Lake City convention has come and gone and, as usual, District IX garnered its fair share and more of the awards. I was elected to a second term as District Governor, for which I thank all present and voting-or at least not objecting, since I ran unopposed.

Millard Ashley of Virginia is our new 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and, for those who may not know him, a common-sense individual who will preside with good judgment and has contributed much at our Board meetings. Hopefully he will visit some of our conventions or other get-togethers and all will get a chance to meet and know him.

Board meetings at conventions are one-day affairs, so only a few major items were on the agenda. The 2003-2004 budget was given final approval; reports were given by the committee chairs and the Presidents of ACAT and the Scholarship Foundation. Appointments were made to Board committees. Governor Bill Parrish and I were reappointed by the Board to the Finance and Investment Committee. Budget.

One of the subjects discussed at the Board meeting was the role of NSA in the Coalition for Affordable Accounting. The coalition was formed to develop and promote alternatives to the wholesale implementation of Uniform Accountancy Act provisions deemed harmful to both our licensed and unlicensed members. There was general agreement that the CAA may have outlived its original role given the current regulatory climate and that NSA needs to continue its preeminence in the legislative arena.

Our recent and current NSA Presidents have also believed that we needed to renew our emphasis in this area. In recent years these officers have appointed some very competent and experienced people to the Right to Practice Area and, specifically, to the State Regulatory and Oversight Committee. They can only work, however, with support from our state organizations. Our District has been among the leaders in monitoring state boards of accountancy, and we need to keep that position in view of the challenges we expect to face in the next few years as Sarbanes-Oxley and the Enron fallout are considered at the state level. So, keep the faith, monitor regularly, and consult as needed with your State Director and with Bob Cross of Colorado, our SROC liaison.

The last Board meeting was in Chicago in early November. I will be reporting on that meeting soon. The agenda was full and included such area as long-range planning; our education program, changes in the annual convention, possible reincarnation of our National Affairs Committee and membership and financial reporting improvements at our national office.

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### ACAT CREDENTIAL

Over 4300 accountants and tax preparers hold an ACAT (Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation) credential today and the ACAT Accountancy Examination is used for licensing a second tier of accountants in several states.

Objectives of ACAT are:

- To raise professional standards and improve the practices of accountancy and taxation.

- To accredit persons with demonstrated knowledge of the principles and practices of accountancy and taxation.
- To encourage practitioners in a continuing program of professional development.
- To assure that accredited individuals provide the highest degree of technical proficiency in small and mid-size business and individual accounting and taxation services.
- To foster increased recognition for the accredited individual in the public, private and educational sectors of our nation.

If you are a member of ASIA and you are not accredited, we strongly encourage you to give the achievement of one or more of these credentials serious consideration. Alaska is very friendly to unlicensed accountants but that could change with one stroke of the legislative pen. ASIA, along with NSA has pledged to do our utmost to protect the practice rights of small business accountants. The use of the ACAT credentials is an integral part of our strategy and could become an essential element to your practice in the future.

ACAT offers five credentials:

- *Accredited Business Accountant (Advisor) ABA*
- *Accredited Tax Advisor ATA*
- *Accredited Tax Preparer ATP*
- *Elder Care Specialist ECS*
- *International Accredited Business Accountant ABA*

You may be able to waive part or all of the testing process on the credential you seek. Contact your NSA State Director, Marty Brantingham, for further information.

*Acknowledgement: Segments of this article were taken from Colorado's The Professional Public Accountant.*

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### CONGRATULATIONS

Nancy Goudy became Mrs. Nancy Mills on October 11 2003.

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### WHAT A DEAL!

Members you are getting your current ASIA membership for 15-months. This is due to the change in our fiscal year.

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### NEW ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE PROVIDER

The Board of Directors would like to introduce to you our new Administrative Service Provider, Linda Stephenson. Linda is well versed in the skills the Board sought to assist in the ongoing activities of ASIA. You may have already seen some of her expertise in the development and maintenance of our website. Welcome Linda!

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### SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL