

# CONNECT

Local Expertise • International Presence

2014

*"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."*

~ Aristotle ~

Would it be wrong to quote Aristotle and Jon Bon Jovi in the same article? Although Aristotle was a bit more concise than the rocker they both describe the essence of INPACT.



Another word related to INPACT would be synergy! Defined by Webster as "the increased effectiveness that results when two or more people or businesses work together" and "a mutually advantageous conjunction or compatibility of distinct business participants or elements", INPACT is certainly a synergistic organization! Or as Aristotle said, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

The synergy of members helping members ultimately helps members help their clients. INPACT has a long history of doing just this! This is where the Jon Bon Jovi quote enters.... Not exactly a quote in the traditional sense, but lyrics to the song he wrote with Richie Sambora "The More Things Change".

It's an old familiar proverb... "The more things change, the more they stay the same". A recent pass through archival INPACT newsletters certainly proves the point.

In the December 1996 article "From the President" Tom Thomas addressed "the many changes our profession and our firms are experiencing on what often feels like a day-to-day basis." He went on to say, "These progressive times present challenges that most of us never imagined. But they also present

dynamic opportunities – for expanding our practices, entering new fields that did not even exist a decade ago, adding an array of consulting services, doing business on a much broader scale than ever before in our profession's history.

Technology has transformed our profession, enabling us to do many of the things we have been doing for years in a fraction of the time we are used to spending on them. Consider how advances like the computer and fax have leveraged our time and expedited access to the expertise of our associated in INPACT Americas and INPACT International. To gauge technology's growing importance to our group, simply count the number of SOS requests that come across the fax every week!"

So although the days of SOS requests arriving by fax are long gone, the concept of INPACT members helping members has endured; and certainly Tom's words about "challenges that most of us never imagined" continue to hold truth. The details change, the challenges continue, the world moves forward but the INPACT Alliance continues its role of supporting small to mid-sized accounting firms serve their clients in the best way possible. Members helping members... that will never change!

#### **"The More Things Change"**

*The more things change  
The more they stay the same  
The more things change  
The more they stay the same  
Ah, is it just me or does anybody see  
The new improved tomorrow  
isn't what it used to be  
Yesterday keeps comin' 'round, it's just reality  
It's the same damn song with a different melody  
The market keeps on crashin'  
Tattered jeans are back in fashion  
'Stead of records, now it's MP3s  
I tell you one more time with feeling  
Even though this world is reeling  
You're still you and I'm still me  
I didn't mean to cause a scene  
But I guess it's time to roll up our sleeves.  
~ by Richie Sambora and Jon Bon Jovi ~*

INPACT Americas is dedicated to member firms' business growth and effectiveness providing SOLUTIONS through a large association of affiliates.

## INPACT AMERICAS

2014

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## message from the president

### It's a small world after all

I am not exactly what one would call a veteran when it comes to world traveling. My first venture outside the country was a group tour in 2006, and I've visited Europe a handful of times since then. However, this past Fall I attended my first INPACT International and Asia-Pacific Joint Conference and I had a revelation. It didn't have to do with culture, or a new continent, or the differences between us. In fact, it was just the opposite. In talking to my fellow practitioners, even in Dubai, I was amazed at just how similar our conversations were.

Staffing issues only in Cherry Hill? Competition mergers and sales struggles only in Rochester? Generational communication problems only in Wheaton? Personnel and succession troubles only in Louisville? Absolutely not. What I discovered and told my staff is that you could swap each of those regions with larger or smaller cities throughout North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and so forth, and the issues are still as relevant. The world is getting smaller, and, as a managing shareholder, there is comfort in knowing the same issues and challenges our firm faces are being faced by firms across the globe. This assurance, that the grass isn't always greener and the issues aren't just on you, can be eye-opening to accountants of all levels.

The tendency used to be to look at firms or practices in your own comfort zone, but the message I took home was, **"it's bigger than that"**. It is okay to lean on others for guidance, recommendations, or to strengthen your weaknesses without feeling threatened or wary of competition. The best part about membership in INPACT is that there exists a borderless, like-minded support system ready and eager to help. Whether it's through connecting at a conference, responding to an SOS, posting a discussion in the Member Forums, or collaborating through the SIG conference calls and webinars, each of our individual firms are stronger when we unite as a team, no matter which city or country we call home.



With INPACT as a shoulder to lean on, I guarantee that Dubai was not my last international conference, and I hope to meet you at the next one. As our members often say, "you don't have to reinvent the wheel," and there is no better evidence than the people I met and ideas that were shared that week. Give the international conference format a try by attending the upcoming one being held in your comfort zone, the World Conference hosted by INPACT Americas this Fall. Then in 2015, I dare you to venture beyond your comfort zone and share the enlightening international experience I am grateful to have had. For as they say, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Reynold (Ren) P. Cicalese  
President, INPACT Americas



# members in the news

The Curchin Group, LLC - Red Bank, NJ raised \$16,000 for two local charities at the Eighth Annual Curchin Open Miniature Golf Tournament. Clients, sponsors, and friends played a round of miniature golf on Curchin's team-designed 9-hole course, which flowed through the firm's office. Since 2006, the annual indoor tournament has taken place at The Curchin Group's Red Bank, New Jersey office.



Each player donated \$20.00 for admission, which included a round of mini golf, food, and beverages. Additional funds were raised through the sale of Fantasy Scratch-Off cards and the event was sponsored by over 50 businesses and individuals. Peter Pfister, CPA, a Partner at Curchin and the Chairperson of the event, remarked, "It's so rewarding to see our Curchin team and the community cheerfully join in every year with increasingly stronger numbers to support all these wonderful causes. Our donors help ensure that 100% of all funds raised go directly to these charities, and it's icing on the cake that everyone has so much fun doing it."



Proceeds from the event benefited the Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore and Family & Children's Service of Long Branch, NJ. Over the past eight years, The Curchin Open has raised and donated approximately \$105,000 to local charities.



At the Partners Forum Fall Conference the Award for Innovation and Management Excellence (AIME) was awarded to Peter Pfister for his presentation on this innovative and non-traditional method of keeping staff energized, attracting new business and contributing to the community.

Alloy Silverstein - Cherry Hill, NJ received the Readers' Choice Award in Accounting from SNJBP (Southern New Jersey Business People). In addition accountant Ren Cicaese, III was featured in their Money & Banking Roundtable.



Levine Caufield Martin & Goldberg, PC - Needham, MA showed their community spirit by participating in the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants Day of Service. Pictured are LCMG volunteers at Room to Grow in Boston, MA.



Wermer, Rogers, Doran and Ruzon, LLC - Joliet, IL announced that effective January 1, 2014 Mary E. Lancaster, CPA has been named a partner in the firm.

international presence



# partners forum conferences 2013

## spring o nashville

## fall o scottsdale

Who is really a great client for you? Are you marketing to your "A" clients? Is your team on the same page? What are the trends in the CPA profession? Is your firm prepared for the challenges of succession? How will you support your clients as they navigate the Affordable Care Act? And perhaps the most perplexing question... What the heck is 3D printing? These questions (and more) generated lively exchange as each presenter brought a unique energy to our conference.

Delegates were engaged and intrigued as evidenced by some of their comments... *"Thought provoking", "I enjoyed thinking out of the box", "Really enjoyed this", "Fascinating", "Fabulous! Great and timely for me!"*

International Delegates, Derek Lai of INPACT Asia Pacific and Tendai White of INPACT International also made the journey to Nashville bringing our alliances together once again.

Nashville, otherwise known as "Music City" provided several venues for socializing, relaxing and networking. The Gaylord Opryland Resort, a huge property comprised of several enclosed atriums complete with lush foliage, waterfalls and even a quarter mile river provided ample opportunities to give the feet and legs a workout. Navigating the corridors and lobbies of the hotel was at times challenging but undaunted, our delegates managed to find their way.

Aboard the General Jackson Showboat we were not only well fed but also learned the three distinctly different areas of Tennessee provide three distinctly different types of music. "Heart of Tennessee: A Musical Journey" featured bluegrass, soul and of course country music. It was a beautiful evening on the Cumberland River as INPACT Americas members enjoyed a relaxing evening of socializing.

If the General Jackson show only whet the appetite for country music, the next evening included an outing to "The Show That Made Country Music Famous", otherwise known as Grand Ole Opry! After a dynamic lineup of the famous and not so famous, all in the midst of a live radio broadcast, the group extended the evening with a Backstage Tour for a peek into a wild variety of dressing rooms and a chance to stand in the circle onstage and walk in the footsteps of country music's superstars!

The benefits of..... being in a tranquil or 'restorative' environment allows individuals to take respite from the periods of sustained 'directed attention' that characterize modern living. Certainly the tranquil environment at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain provided the perfect opportunity for our partners to take a respite from daily life and join together to work, network and socialize. Our meeting room provided a panoramic and inspirational view of Paradise Valley and the surrounding mountains – a truly stunning setting!

A member panel kicked off the program portion tackling the "Thorny Issues, Productive Solutions" (TIPS) topic of "Successful Client Transition and More". Delegates were eager to hear of the actual experiences of these fellow members on protecting the future of your firm, successfully transitioning clients to a new situation and the always popular question, "What keeps you awake at night?" Definitely a thought provoking session!

Our guest presenters, Debra Andrews, Jennifer Wilson and Roman Kepczyk each had unique and engaging style to capture the delegates' interest. Topics included Nurturing Young Professionals, Marketing vs Business Development, Creating and Developing a Vision for the Future, Firm Governance and The Digital Ecosystem. The depth of knowledge and lively styles of these presenters allowed for delivery of an enormous volume of useful information in a relatively short period of time.

The great program was certainly enhanced by the lovely setting as well as opportunities to relax, socialize and have some fun. So, off we went to the Canyon Creek Ranch for some cowboy chow and libations as well as some cowboy games! Picture this... After many (too many) miles on the highway followed by 2 miles of narrow, bumpy dirt road a gang of cowboys on horseback greeted our bus load of accountants and led them to the ranch. Fortunately, the first stop was the saloon followed by a feast of down-home cowboy cookin'.

Our satiated group then tried their hands at a variety of cowboy experiences such as archery, target practice, steer roping and a favorite... hatchet throwing. Such skill our members demonstrated! After sitting in the glow of a campfire and some cowboy songs we were back on the bus, back to the civility and serenity of Camelback Mountain! But certainly with a few tales to tell back home!

*A Guiding Principal of INPACT is "Never reinvent wheels or start with a blank page". The INPACT Americas Partners Forum provides an opportunity for time away from the office to learn as well as to socialize and network with peers. This support system of firms and members with many areas of experience and expertise contributes to the success of our firms and most importantly to their clients.*

## CONNECT

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S. Mara Ambrose  
Executive Director  
PO Box 495  
Frederick, MD 21705-0495 USA  
Tel: +1.301.694.8580  
Fax: +1.301.694.5804  
[inpactam@inpactam.org](mailto:inpactam@inpactam.org)  
[www.inpactam.org](http://www.inpactam.org)