

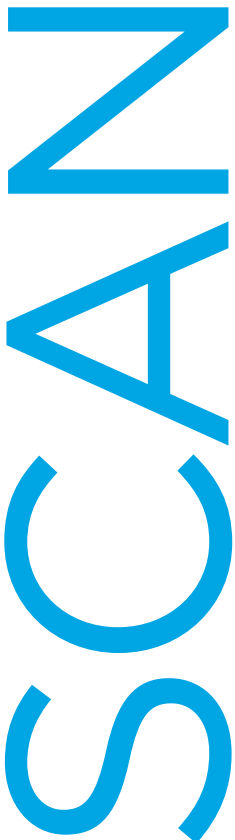


Spring 2008

Chartered Accountants of Nova Scotia

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President's Message

On behalf of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nova Scotia (ICANS), it's my pleasure to present you with our 2008 spring issue of SCAN. Hot off the heels of our annual Convocation, this issue is always special, as it recognizes and pays tribute to our members; to Nova Scotia's new UFE graduates and to those whose career achievements have brought honour to the profession.

To this end, ICANS awarded diplomas to 37 Nova Scotia graduates who passed the 2007 Uniform Evaluation (UFE) and who were among the 3,117 candidates who participated in this rigorous process across Canada and Bermuda. Passing the UFE is a tremendous milestone and as every graduate will tell you, preparing for and passing it is a group effort. Consequently, we would like to recognize and acknowledge the valuable role that the

Atlantic School of Chartered Accountancy (ASCA) plays in delivering the high quality education demanded by the profession, as well as the individual public accounting firms and the Auditor General's Office for their support and guidance in mentoring our future CAs.

We are also thankful for the support shown from our partners in government. In fact, we were delighted that Nova Scotia's Finance Minister **Michael Baker** and his wife, **Cynthia**, could join our Convocation celebration. On behalf of the Nova Scotia Government, Minister Baker offered heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and echoed **Premier Rodney MacDonald's** sentiments - which he presented via video - in encouraging the graduates to build their careers in Nova Scotia; to use their expertise and skills to work with government to help grow and support Nova Scotia's financial sector.

Of course, already active in helping to strengthen Nova Scotia's economy and enhance community development are ICANS' five new FCAs (see page

four for profiles). Earning a Fellow Chartered Accountant designation (FCA) is the Institute's highest honour, as it is bestowed on long-standing members who have rendered meritorious service to the profession or whose career achievements or achievements in the community have brought honour to the profession. In 2007 we proudly welcomed **Claude Carter** (Former Deputy Auditor General, Office of the Auditor General

of Nova Scotia, Halifax); **David Hoffman** (Co-CEO, Bragg Group and Oxford Frozen Foods Limited, Oxford); **Susan McIsaac** (Managing Partner, McIsaac Darragh, Chartered Accountants, Amherst); **Susan Payne** (President and CEO, ACA Cooperative Limited, Kentville); and, **Michele Wood-Tweel** (ICANS' CEO and Executive Director, Halifax) into this prestigious group of business leaders. After reading their profiles in this publication you will quickly realize that,

with their diverse careers and unwavering commitment to volunteerism, each is a proud icon of the CA profession and our members' ability to successfully combine superior financial expertise, strategic thinking, business insight and leadership.

Naturally, the same can be said of our **Ross L. Towler CA of the Year, Tara Timms, CA**, (see page eight). As someone who incorporates volunteerism into her philosophy of life, Tara is an all around ambassador and great role model for the profession. Similarly, our graduates are already becoming excellent role models by encouraging others to follow in their footsteps and to achieve success - even great success - like our Gold Medal winner **James Mowbray**, whose valedictory speech is on page two.

Looking ahead, the ICANS Council continues to work hard at representing the membership both provincially and nationally. In particular, the national focus continues to be centered on initiatives related to the profession's



Don Flinn, CA, President, ICANS

Strategic Plan. Last summer saw the introduction of the profession's new CA logo and during the fall of 2007 and into 2008, the continuation of the CA Advantage advertising campaign. The national branding micro website (www.CAadvantage.ca) continues to be 'the source' for info about branding and the profession and I encourage you to regularly monitor it for developments. I'm also pleased to report that new creative is currently being developed for phase two of the advertising campaign, which we hope to unveil this coming fall.

On the Education front, we are continuing to gain ground regarding the profession's plans to expand its training opportunities. Members across the country have approved bylaws to broaden the definition of 'qualifying experience' and expand the range of organizations recognized as CA Training Offices. This is an important development for our profession and we will see the expanded opportunities beginning this year.

The national Member Relations Task Force, chaired by ICANS CEO and Ex-

ecutive Director **Michele Wood-Tweel**, continues to focus its energy on developing ways to enhance member services – to increase the two-way communication between members and provincial Institutes, and between the Institutes themselves. Recent initiatives of this group include the national CA Compensation and Professional Practice surveys.

Furthermore, the group charged with developing initiatives related to Public Trust has been discussing issues ranging from continuing professional development to professional standards and the discipline process. In our ongoing efforts to protect the public, we continually assess our standards against the expectations of provincial, national, and international markets, making sure that our standards are second to none.

In addition, aside from focusing on Strategic Plan initiatives and ICANS' ongoing operational matters, Council has been considering the Federal Government's Competition Survey of the Professions, the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for

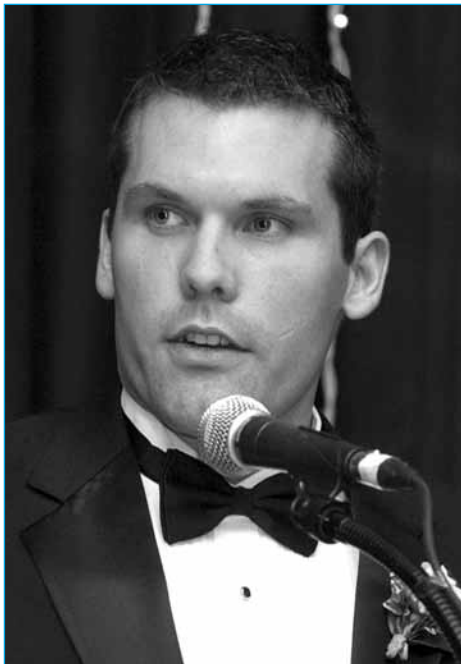
private enterprises and of course, the adoption of International Standards in Auditing (ISAs) and the transition to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), now confirmed to be effective for interim and annual financial statements relative to fiscal years beginning on or after January 1, 2011.

As with all areas of business in today's world, much is happening and much is changing. Moreover, I'm proud to be a part of a profession that is not only embracing these changes, but is demonstrating strong leadership in helping to guide Canada into an even better position of prosperity.

On behalf of all our Council members and ICANS staff, I wish to offer heartfelt congratulations to our province's newest UFE grads, our FCAs and our CA of the Year. You make us proud of our profession and we look forward to serving you throughout 2008.

Valedictory Address

James Stanley Mowbray placed on the 2007 CICA National Honour Roll, placing first in Eastern Canada, receiving the Chartered Accountants' of Canada Gold Medal for the highest standing in Eastern Canada on the Uniform Evaluation.



James Stanley Mowbray delivers his Valedictory Address to his fellow UFE graduates.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests and fellow graduates: When I was first told that I had to give a speech at Convocation, I thought to myself, "Well it shouldn't be too difficult. In fact, I can use some tricks that I've learned through auditing to help write it." So, I spent a few hours preparing how I would approach the speech; then I reviewed prior Convocations to gain a better understanding of the work required. Finally, when it came time to actually write the speech, I obtained a copy of last year's speech and rolled the dates forward. But, in the end, I decided on something more original.

For many of us here tonight, this evening is the culmination of a long held dream. It is the product of months of preparation, of endless hours of studying, and of three grueling days of perseverance. I believe it is important to focus not just on the examination itself, but also the path that we have taken to get here tonight. Despite what we would like to believe, tonight is not

the result of any one individual's effort. There have been countless people guiding and helping us along the way, ranging from our knowledgeable workshop instructors to the administrative staff at the Atlantic School of Chartered Accountancy (ASCA). Without the hard work of these individuals, our performances would have suffered. As well, we cannot overemphasize the help of our friends and family who played supportive roles, keeping us on track and ensuring that we recognized it was just an exam. Finally, there were our co-workers and mentors, past graduates who offered us their advice on not only how to wrap our minds around passing the evaluation, but also how to unwrap them at the end of the day. There were so many distinct and diverse efforts, yet all of them combined to work towards the same goal. So, in actuality, tonight is not just the culmination of our dream, but the dream of those who have helped us along the way. We would not be here

tonight if it was not for them, and for that I think we owe them a round of applause.

But for now, I would like to focus on those of us graduating. Let me ask you, "What is it we are truly celebrating tonight?" The simple answer is that we're here to commemorate having successfully completed the Uniform Evaluation. By all means, this is something worth honoring, because it is one of the most difficult and challenging experiences a professional accountant can undergo. I think it is only human to feel an overpowering relief at the thought of never having to write another simulation or attend another workshop.

However, I think there is a reason to celebrate that is more forward looking. We are here tonight to celebrate the path that lies ahead of us. We are at a point in our career where there are so many options available to us that it is almost beyond comprehension. These choices we will make will dictate the rest of our lives, and these choices will be made within the short years to come. I will admit, it sounds exciting. In fact, it sounds so exciting that it teeters on the brink of terrifying! However, just as we were able to prepare for the UFE, if we arm ourselves with an objective and a plan of attack we can handle anything.

So, the question becomes, "Who do I want to be? What would I like to become?" These are difficult questions to answer, I realize, but I believe that if you can visualize your ideal self, the steps to developing that person become clearer and clearer. For that reason, I feel it is important to stress the benefit of giving back to the community. Same as the individuals who helped us successfully pass the evaluation; we too have been given an opportunity to help others. I believe that

we, as future Chartered Accountants, are in a unique position; as the financial knowledge and experience that we have developed, and will continue to develop, is highly valuable to those who need it. And, it is my belief that one of the most fulfilling ways that we can give back to the community would be to volunteer with a charitable organization.

I recall a time when my mother was chair of Cabot Habitat for Humanity, which is the Newfoundland chapter of

clients. We can provide the understanding of financial mechanics that many volunteers lack.

Now, I recognize that we lead busy lives. It is likely that if you have spare time on your hands you won't be jumping at the chance to fill it with volunteer work. But, it is important to realize that if you believe strongly enough in the cause, you won't consider it work - it will take on a whole new meaning; one that will leave you with a sense of fulfillment so great and so lasting that no audit or tax return could rival it. So, I ask you tonight to consider donating your time to a volunteer organization and giving back to the community that has helped you become who you are.

But, these decisions are for another night. Tonight, we should focus on rejoicing and savoring the moment. This evening is a landmark celebration in our lives; one of those instances in time when all of your dreams and hard work come together and you have achieved exactly what you have set out to do. There is no better feeling than what we are feeling right now. This emotion has been the fuel that has driven us through our university careers, through our recruiting efforts, through our constant balance of work and school and through the Uniform Evaluation. It is a mixture of accomplishment, joy, pride and awe. And tonight, it is ours to embrace and to own.

So, to finish, I would like to propose a toast. Let's toast to 565 hours spent working on ASCA, to 1,980 minutes of testing, to 17 months spent worrying about one evaluation, to somewhere between 32 and 38 primary indicators - because really, who had any idea - and most importantly of all, to never having to do it again!

"This evening is a landmark celebration in our lives; one of those instances in time when all of your dreams and hard work come together and you have achieved exactly what you have set out to do. There is no better feeling than what we are feeling right now."

Habitat. The board members lacked financial and regulatory knowledge, and as a result they lost their charitable status with the government. Facing possible government taxing, as well as a mounting HST liability, they sought out the assistance of a Chartered Accountant to help them through. By negotiating with the government and filing the appropriate returns, she managed to ensure that the funds they had raised went towards providing shelter for low income families. This shows the sort of value that we can bring to the whole community, not just our business

David Hope Honour Roll

Congratulations to the following individuals who were among the top 15% of first time writers in terms of average grade in the Atlantic School of Chartered Accountancy (ASCA) Professional Program courses and who also passed the profession's Uniform Evaluation (UFE).

Jill Lindsay Bradley
Office of the Auditor General
of Nova Scotia, Halifax

***James Stanley Mowbray**
Grant Thornton LLP, Halifax

Dana Anne Richter
KPMG LLP, Halifax

Erin Coleen Wight
KPMG LLP, Halifax

*Also placed on the 2007 CICA National Honour Roll, placing first in Eastern Canada, receiving the Chartered Accountants' of Canada Gold Medal for the highest standing in Eastern Canada on the Uniform Evaluation.

Meet Our Newest Fellow Chartered Accountants

The Institute's highest honour, a FCA is awarded to long-standing members who have rendered meritorious service to the profession or whose career achievement or achievements in the community have brought honour to the profession. Only a handful are awarded in any give year and relatively few of our total membership will ever receive this prestigious recognition.



Nova Scotia's newest FCAs: L to R: Claude Carter, FCA; Susan Payne, FCA; David Hoffman, FCA; Michele Wood-Tweel, FCA; and Susan McIsaac, FCA.



Claude Carter, FCA

Upon reflection, this is what **Claude Carter**, FCA, President, Claude Carter Consulting Inc., had to say about receiving a FCA: "I was absolutely and totally shocked. However, words like amazed, surprised and shocked can't do it justice. I was and am very grateful and humbled by the fact that a group of people - friends, colleagues - took the time and effort to nominate me for such an honour; and frankly, tears come to my eyes even now."

In reading these inspiring words, it's not hard to tell why this dedicated, competent, reliable and valuable team member was nominated for the CA profession's highest honour. A consummate professional with the highest degree of integrity and concern for the public good, Claude is an excellent example of why the CA designation is the gold standard.

Much of Claude's inspiration to become a CA was gained from the CAs he worked with or learned from while studying at Saint Mary's University and later articling with the Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia.

"I am a Chartered Accountant because of the support and effort I received from CAs (now FCAs) like Paul Cormier, Pat O'Neil and David Hope," explains Claude. "Not only did they help me understand and appreciate the technical material, but more importantly, they demonstrated the true intrinsic value of the designation . . . a real opportunity to provide an informed, thoughtful, constructive and principled contribution."

Claude earned his CA in 1975 and served as Audit Supervisor for the Office of the Auditor General until 1979. He then served one year with the Auditor General's Office of Alberta, before joining Clarkson Gordon (now Ernst & Young) in Toronto as a Manager in the firm's

Computer Audit Staff and then in its National Audit Group. In 1985, Claude rejoined the Auditor General's Office of Nova Scotia as Director of Audits and then became the Deputy Auditor General from 1998 to 2007. Within this role, Claude's expertise was invaluable and he led many important initiatives that significantly benefited Nova Scotians and others by furthering public confidence in reported financial information.

Not surprising, serving the public good is the hallmark of Claude's career. In particular, he's motivated by variety, change and adding value; making a difference by helping organizations and people solve problems or address new challenges. To that end, he currently manages his own consulting business.

"As I move into my second career, it (my CA designation) not only helps open doors, but also ensures that the expectations of others are being set at a level that will continue to be both challenging and interesting," says Claude.

He also adds that being a CA allows him to make more meaningful and valuable contributions to organizations and projects. In fact, over the years, his commitment and contribution to organizations such as the Public Sector Accounting Board, the Information Systems Audit and Control Association, the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors, and CCAF-FCVI Inc. have had a significant and lasting benefit to professional accountants and IT audit professionals in Canada and internationally.

In addition, Claude has served on numerous ICANS and CICA committees and was a member of the Nova Scotia Council from 1987 to 1991 and from 1997 to 1999. Currently, Claude is a Board Member and Secretary of the Kidney Foundation of Canada - Nova Scotia Branch and a member of the Halifax Chamber's Provincial Affairs Committee. He also served on the Halifax Metro YMCA Board, serving as Treasurer from 1987 to 1993 and played a leadership role in merging the metro area YMCAs. In response, Claude received the YMCA's A. Gordon Archibald Award for Outstanding Adult Volunteer in the Advisory Contribution category.

Outside of work and volunteering, you can find Claude walking, skiing, reading, revitalizing his golf game or spending time with his wife, Chris Hansen, and their teenagers, Jill and Alex. However, it's hard to get someone who loves their profession as much as Claude to really relax. After all, as he says: "I enjoy providing strategic and other practical leadership to current and future challenges; thinking and being successful 'outside the box.'"

In fact, for Claude, the 'CA Advantage' can be summarized in four thoughts: "The people, the principles, the profession, and the possibilities!"



David Hoffman, FCA

For anyone who knows **David Hoffman**, FCA, it's no secret that he prefers to be involved in the action rather than watch from the sidelines. Whether it's delving into the operational performance and growth strategies at Bragg Group and Oxford Frozen Foods Limited where he is Co-CEO or leading the charge in his community activities, David thrives on being a part of the action and affecting change.

"Planning and executing change, and working at a senior level with great business minds, is inspirational," says David. "The CA training provides you with some unique business analytical tools, perspective and insight, which allow a CA in any organization to contribute well above his/her 'weight' and to make decisions which can create real change."

And create change he has! Originally from England, David admits that he "fell into the CA profession by accident." However, after finding his way he soon discovered he enjoyed the work and the insight it gave him into the workings and dynamics of different businesses, and business in general. Moreover, with his innate ability to grasp complex situations easily and thrive on problem solving, it wasn't long before he attracted attention and in 1982 he was recruited to Canada by KPMG LLP. Later, after spending six years with the firm, David joined High Liner Foods as Controller of its Atlantic Canadian Production Division. In 1990, he then became High Liner's Corporate Controller and helped to lead the company through a massive restructuring in response to the demise of the east coast fishery. Next, in 1993, David moved his family to Oxford, Nova Scotia, where he became Treasurer and CFO for the Bragg Group of Companies, a dynamic and entrepreneurial, family-grown and owned

business, including Oxford Frozen Foods, EastLink, Pierceys, and numerous other operations. Shortly thereafter, the company appointed him to his current position of group Co-CEO. David is also the President of FS Industries (real estate holdings), Vice Chair of Buildrite Centres (Pierceys Building Supplies) and Corporate Director of all Group Companies.

Upon reflection, David says he enjoys the people side of work, adding: "I think the best business managers are those who can seamlessly draw on different skills from different disciplines, and integrate their knowledge and experience into a multidisciplinary response to a situation. It is critical to be able to anticipate the impact of decisions and to think laterally about integrated and broad-based solutions."

Outside of work, David is affiliated with several prominent organizations including the Trans Canada Trails Foundation, where he's Director and Vice Chair; the Nova Scotia Community College Foundation, where he's Director and Chair; the Shaw Group (Director); the Wild Blueberry Association of North America (Canada), where he serves as President and Chair; and, he is a member of the Atlantic Chapter of Financial Executives International (FEI). His past affiliations include the Halifax Metro United Way, St. Joseph's Children's Centre, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Taxation Committee, Cumberland YMCA, Oxford Recreation Commission, Crossley Carpets Limited and Nova Scotia Textiles, Limited. In addition, David has supported the profession by serving on the ICANS Annual Conference and MEIGS committees. He also enjoys various outdoor activities such as skiing, golf, hiking and camping, as well as spending time with family and friends, and reading.

Needless-to-say, a FCA is a fitting complement to David's list of notable accomplishments. However, it was with much surprise that he received the news, adding: "I am happy to represent industry members in being awarded this honour. There are a large number of CAs who have left public practice, but still make massive contributions to their industries, local communities and charitable organizations. Receiving a FCA holds you to a standard which you aspire to, knowing that it's difficult to reach. I hope it provides some inspiration to the young CAs coming through the program."



Susan McIsaac, FCA

Susan McIsaac, FCA, once said:

“Accounting is about people, not numbers.” Now, most people – especially those outside the CA profession – may feel this statement sounds odd. However, for anyone who knows her you must remember, Susan McIsaac isn’t ‘most people’; she’s unique in many ways.

Susan truly loves being a Chartered Accountant, despite the fact that it wasn’t her first career choice. In fact, she first earned a diploma in plant science from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College before graduating first in her class with a Bachelor of Commerce from Mount Allison University. From there, Susan applied for a CA student position with Grant Thornton LLP in Amherst, explaining, “I didn’t think there would be too many other opportunities for a commerce grad without moving outside of Amherst where my husband worked and our two sons attended school.”

However, her decision was stellar and in 1990, Susan not only earned her CA, she made the David Hope Honour Roll, placed first in Atlantic Canada, and was among the top 20 in Canada. In 1999, she purchased the Amherst Grant Thornton office and since then, has run a very successful general practice in the town with a satellite office in Sackville, NB. Today, Susan is the Managing Partner of McIsaac Darragh Chartered Accountants and a founding member of the AC Group of Independent Accounting Firms Limited.

“I really thought I would get my designation and then move on quickly; teaching at the university level was under consideration at the time,” recalls Susan. “Now, almost 20 years later, I am doing the same thing. In fact, until January 1 of this year, I worked in the same office since I started with Grant Thornton (then Doane Raymond) in 1988.”

So, why does Susan love her career so much? “What I have always liked best and why I stayed in public practice much longer than I ever expected is the people. I have great clients, I enjoy working with them and I feel I can provide useful services and advice,” says Susan.

Not surprisingly, Susan also uses her extensive expertise to serve numerous charities and community associations and she has worked tirelessly to advocate for small-to-medium sized practices throughout the province as well as dedicating countless hours to advancing the CA profession. Currently, she is a Council Member, serving on the Executive as Treasurer, Chair of the Audit Committee and a Member of the Human Resources, Professional Standards Review, and Practitioner’s committees. Susan is also an ICANS professional development instructor and has been a marker and supervisor on the CA profession’s Uniform Evaluation (UFE) comprehensive question. Outside of the profession, she is a speaker and presenter to a wide variety of business groups on a range of financial topics. She has been a member of the Rotary Club of Amherst since 1997, is a Past-President and currently Co-chairs the District Conference organizing committee. In addition, Susan is currently the Audit Committee Chair and Treasurer of the Canadian Cancer Society, Nova Scotia Division; Treasurer of the Bridge Adult Service Centre (Workshop); and, a Standards Committee Member of the AC Group. She has also just completed a term as a citizen-appointed Board Member of the Amherst Police Commission.

When not working or volunteering, you can probably find Susan attending a live theatre production – she’s even participated in a few – or enjoying an evening of live music. She’s also an avid explorer of Nova Scotia’s back roads. However, Susan readily admits that ‘down time’ is a rare luxury, but that’s not such a disappointment when you clearly enjoy your career and all it has to offer.

“I love what I do,” says Susan, “and I am very proud of my designation and my profession.”



Susan Payne, FCA

Sue Payne, FCA, is used to being at the decision-making table. After all, as the President and CEO of ACA Co-operative Ltd. and a past president of ICANS, she’s led numerous meetings and discussions about important issues requiring decisions. However on November 30, 2007, when she received the call regarding the Honors Committee decision to appoint her as one of Nova Scotia’s newest FCAs, she was awestruck.

“When I got the call I was thrilled,” recalls Sue. “Having sat on the ICANS Honors Committee a couple of years ago as Past President of the Institute, I came to realize how well-rounded you must be to be a FCA and the rigor that the Committee goes through to screen the nominees. I remember thinking at the time that it was a tall order.”

That said, achieving the ‘tall order’ of becoming a FCA is not surprising for anyone who knows Sue. In fact, Sue’s always been clear about her career goals, and with focus and courage she’s achieved great success.

“I chose a CA designation as I felt it was the best accounting designation and would do the most for my career in business.”

And so it has. After graduating from Acadia University with her Bachelor of Business Administration, Susan obtained her CA in 1989 while working with Price-waterhouseCoopers LLP. She remained with the firm’s assurance group until 1994 and then made her move into industry by accepting a two-year appointment as Director of Finance for the former Camp Hill Medial Centre. Then, in 1996, Susan grabbed an opportunity too good to pass up – the chance to return home to the Annapolis Valley by accepting the position of CFO with ACA Co-operative Ltd. Three years later, she

became the company's President and CEO, as well as Director of Eastern Protein Foods Limited and Chair of Country Ribbon Inc. in St. John's, Newfoundland. In 2006, Susan obtained her Chartered Director (C. Dir) designation from McMaster University.

Sue is also motivated by learning and helping others to learn. She routinely encourages students to look at the CA profession as a career choice, adding: "CAs are more rounded in their skills and have a greater understanding of financial issues. They have a wider experience range in getting their designation than the other accounting designations and I think bankers, investors, etc. are very comfortable having a CA at the helm."

It's also very comforting to non-profit organizations and charities, and Sue has certainly aided many in her pursuit of establishing a solid reputation as a committed volunteer. Aside from her extensive contribution to ICANS - most notably serving on Council from 1998 to 2005 and being the Institute's President in 2005 - Sue has served on the Boards of Gleggory Pines Golf Club (1995-2002), the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (2001 to 2007), the Nova Scotia Community College (2001 to 2007) and is a past Director of the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council. In addition, she was Treasurer for the Halifax Branch of the Canadian Diabetes Association (1993 to 1996) and a member of the Finance Committee for the Association's Nova Scotia Division (1994 to 1995), as well as an Audit Committee member for the 2014 Commonwealth Games Bid (2007). Currently, Sue is a Board Director, Finance and Audit Committee Chair and Governance Committee member with Agrapoint International Inc.; a member of the Advisory Board for Lawton's Drug Stores Limited; and, a Board Member of Brigadoon, a camp for chronically ill children being built in the Annapolis Valley.

"I think CAs have a lot to offer and should volunteer," says Sue. "The people you meet on boards and committees of non-profit and charitable organizations broaden your knowledge and experience, and can be great business and personal contacts. It is my experience that you often get more out of the experience than you put in."

When not working or volunteering, you can find Sue outdoors, snowshoeing, hiking, playing soccer, boating or snowmobiling. In addition, she also enjoys cooking and being a consummate CA who always strives to understand things, she is currently keen to learn more about the art behind the beloved task. And of course, when Sue sets a goal, you can be sure she'll reach it!



Michele Wood-Tweel, FCA

Watching a seed grow into its full potential is truly amazing, especially when that seed is a nugget of knowledge that inspires a career rich in leadership, strategic thinking, business insight and expertise. And, while this description may be a metaphor, it's similar to the true story of how **Michele Wood-Tweel, FCA**, ICANS' CEO and Executive Director, turned a chance encounter at a university business dinner into a career altering decision.

"I had originally entered the Commerce program at Saint Mary's University (SMU) on a track toward law school," recounts Michele, "but a chance meeting with **Brian Rogers, FCA**, of KPMG LLP, changed all that. He described the CA profession and the roles available to women who aspired to a career as a professional. With that seed planted firmly in my head I went about my studies and learned from a great roster of CA professors at SMU who quickly became my examples and confirmed for me that the integrity of the CA profession is what I would aspire to."

And aspire she has! After graduating cum laude from SMU in 1983 with a Bachelor of Commerce, Michele joined KPMG LLP in Halifax and earned her CA designation in 1985. In 1990, she completed CICA's In-Depth Taxation course and obtained her Certified Financial Planner license in 1998 and became a Member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners in 2002. Michele used this and other training/experience to benefit countless clients during her 21 plus years working with KPMG LLP where she held the position of Associate Partner - Private Client Advisory Services. Then, in 2005, she joined ICANS with a view to making a contribution to the Nova Scotia Institute and the greater CA profession.

"In public practice I had great colleagues and wonderful clients; it was a fulfilling and rewarding experience" says Michele. "Moreover, throughout this experience, I was always aware of the trust and value placed in our designation. And so, with that in mind and knowing the many challenges our profession would be facing in the future, for me, the timing was perfect to take a different track in my career and make what will hopefully be a significant contribution to Nova Scotia's CAs."

Subsequently, in just over two years, Michele had earned recognition in her leadership of ICANS and sparked the CA profession's national interest such that she quickly gained consideration from other Institute CEOs and leaders. In fact, aside from being a member of the CA profession's Council of Senior Executives, she was appointed the Chair of the national Member Relations Task Force, one of four major areas of strategic initiatives for the CA profession.

In addition, prior to becoming ICANS' CEO and Executive Director, Michele participated on numerous committees and boards related to the profession and served as a course instructor. She is a past chair of ICANS' Taxation and Conference Committees, and a past member of the Institute's Public Relations, Mandatory Professional Development and Professional Standards Committees. Michele also served as Atlantic Canada's representative on the CICA Task Force on the Financial Planners Standards Council of Canada, and she's contributed articles and been a media spokesperson for local and national media regarding tax and personal financial planning matters. Furthermore, as a community volunteer, Michele has contributed to many organizations including the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission, The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo Society, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, the Red Cross - Nova Scotia Division and the United Way. Currently, she is Vice Chair of Saint Mary's University Board of Governors as well as Chair of the University's Finance Committee and is on the Board of Directors of the Halifax International Airport Authority where she also serves as an Audit Committee member.

As a true ambassador for the profession, Michele is quick to identify and communicate the benefits that CAs bring with them to clients, employers and community organizations. For those considering their futures, she states, "Having a CA means that you have the most recognized financial expertise, the gold standard, and you can choose where and how far to follow your opportunities in business and in giving to your community."

Well said, in fact, perhaps another seed has just been planted!

Meet our 2007 CA of the Year

Many people who volunteer will tell you that you 'get back' far more than you 'put in', as volunteering is a very rewarding experience. So, needless-to-say, ICANS' *Ross L. Towler CA of the Year*, **Tara Timms, CA**, was quite surprised to hear she was being recognized for something she naturally loves to do!

"I was completely shocked," recalls Tara. "Being named the CA of the Year has been an overwhelming honour."

That said, Tara - Senior Manager of Finance, Administration and Information Technology for the 2011 Canada Games - also remarks that, "It seems odd to receive an award for volunteering." However, while we know members don't volunteer for the recognition, ICANS takes great pleasure in honoring our *CA of the Year* recipients, as they exemplify the dedication of countless CAs throughout Nova Scotia working tirelessly for good causes in their communities. As ICANS' CEO and Executive Director, **Michele Wood-Tweel**, explains: "In their careers,

CAs span the spectrum of organizational management and with superior financial expertise, strategic thinking and business insight, they are natural leaders, especially when it comes to volunteering and community development. In fact, *CA of the Year* recipients, like Tara, personify this leadership and serve as wonderful mentors to our new CAs. Honoring them reminds us all how important volunteering is to maintaining strong, vibrant communities."

For Tara, receiving the Institute's 2007 *CA of the Year Award* reflects her passionate commitment to Alice Housing - the largest second stage housing organization in the Maritimes, which provides safe affordable housing and supportive counseling to women and children leaving domestic abuse. Having answered a 'call for volunteers' posted by Alice Housing in *E-SCAN* during the spring of 2006, Tara had just returned to Halifax from Toronto and finding a volunteer position was a top priority. Today, as a Board member and the organization's Treasurer, Tara oversees all financial matters related to Alice Housing, and is also involved in public relations and fundraising for the organization.

"(Upon receiving the award) it was great to know that Alice Housing finds my work useful," says Tara. "Having strong financial controls and reporting enhances donor confidence, improves their public profile and helps them win awards such as they did from the Donner Foundation. Hopefully, it also encourages more support via corporate sponsorship."

Tara adds that receiving a *CA of the Year Award* also demonstrates how much the CA profession and ICANS encourages members to put their unique set of skills to good use outside of their daily work. So, not surprising, in addition to helping Alice Housing, this past September, Tara used two weeks of her vacation to travel to the African nation of Malawi where

she worked as a volunteer financial field reviewer for Dignitas International (Note: in collaboration with national and local governments, Dignitas is increasing access to prevention, treatment, care and support for people affected by HIV/AIDS across the district). This experience arose after **Carolyn Bodnar-Evans, CA**, Dignitas' Director of Finance, identified Tara as being an excellent candidate with a strong sense of community and volunteerism, having worked with Tara at the Canadian Cancer Society in Toronto. Other charities that have benefited from Tara's generous volunteer spirit include the YWCA women's shelter in Toronto, the Gerrard Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club, and the Friendly Visitors Program for Seniors at Halifax's Spencer House.

"I grew up watching my mother make a difference in other people's lives and I've tried to follow in her footsteps," says Tara. "Volunteering is a fulfilling experience which enriches my life!"

Moreover, as Alice Housing's Executive Director, **Joanne Bernard**, states: "Volunteering is part of Tara's philosophy of life. Her enthusiasm is incredible and she consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty to make Alice Housing a priority. She is an all round ambassador and a great role model for her profession."

Of course, ICANS couldn't agree more! And, whether Tara is helping the clients of Alice Housing, whom she admires for their strength to change their futures or the clients of Dignitas International who are gaining hope in their battle against HIV/AIDS, we know she's also helping to enhance the CA brand.

"Being a CA is a great source of pride for me," says Tara. "The profession has strong pillars of technical excellence and unwavering values and ethics which ensure that CAs are respected, trusted professionals that add great value to the organizations they work within. The CA designation speaks for itself!"



Tara Timms, CA, 2007 CA of the Year

CAs do so much more. Get the CA Advantage! www.CAadvantage.ca

ICANS Mission Statement

"Our mission is to foster public confidence in the CA profession by acting in the public interest and helping our members excel."

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