



# AUDITOR- CONTROLLER'S NEWSLETTER

*Editor: Jan Ingold*

## Our Mission

***Safeguard the County's resources and ensure its financial integrity through responsible fiscal monitoring and reporting.***

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## **COMMENTS FROM LAUREN**

*--By Lauren Klein, Auditor-Controller*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the department for their hard work and willingness to adapt to several changes made in the Auditor-Controller's Office in these last few weeks.

As in our prior Newsletter we are once again saying goodbye to a long time employee of the Auditor-Controller's Office. Jim Bolt, Cost Accounting Manager, has notified us he has revised his retirement date to March 25, 2011. Jim has 30 years experience with the County, all of it with the Auditor-Controller's Office. Jim started in the Cost Accounting division as an accountant in 1980. I would like to thank Jim for all of his efforts, the quality of his work and the work performed by the Cost Accounting division. Several employees from other departments have commented to me regarding the reliability and quality of Jim's work. I wish Jim the best with his retirement. I know he is looking forward to this change.

Currently we have five management positions in the department, the Auditor-Controller, Assistant Auditor-Controller, General Ledger Manager, Payroll Manager and Property Tax Manager. Four of the five positions have employees new to these positions. On January 4, 2011 I was sworn in as the Auditor-Controller. This same day, Kashmir Gill assumed her new role as the Assistant Auditor-Controller. In addition, Todd Filgas became the Property Tax Manager on February 7, 2011 when Ray Rasmussen retired from County employment. As of March 1, 2011 Natalie Elliott will take on the duties as the General Ledger Manager. From an administrative perspective this is quite a change in a short period of time.

The Internal Audit division was closed effective March 1, 2011 with formal approval from the Board of Supervisors. The remaining two employees were transferred to other divisions in the department. Natalie Elliott, as mentioned above moved from the Internal Audit Manager position to the General Ledger Manager position. Robert Granelli, Accountant III, transferred to the Property Tax division where he can provide further help with the demands of this division. The department will need to continue to perform a few of the engagements performed by the Internal Audit division even with the closure of the division.

Further personnel changes include a Confidential III position in the administrative division who has accepted a position with the Clerk Recorder's department as a Legal Clerk III. Her last day in the Auditor-Controller's Office was February 25<sup>th</sup>. Also, an Accountant III in the General Ledger division has accepted a

position at Health Services Agency. His last day in the Auditor-Controller's Office will be March 11<sup>th</sup>. I want to wish both of these employees the best of luck with their new role in county employment. I am sure both will be successful.

If these changes were not enough, three of the divisions physically moved in our department to provide a more cohesive working environment. The Cost Accounting division has been merged with the General Ledger division to create one larger more effective division. With Jim Bolt's, Cost Accounting Manager's upcoming retirement, on March 25, 2011, the position will not be filled as the expanded General Ledger division will absorb his duties. Both General Ledger and Cost Accounting division staff have moved into cubicles near one another and closer to management staff for a more efficient work environment. The Property Tax division has moved to a location previously occupied by Cost Accounting division.

The employee's in the Auditor-Controller's Office have shown their ability to adapt and work together in these demanding times. I am grateful for the attitude displayed by everyone in the department and know we will be able to weather the dynamic environment we find ourselves in.

"People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built"  
– Eleanor Roosevelt

I think we are all building character these days. There will be further changes awaiting us in the near future: some known and some unknown.

I have suggested we find ways to de-stress from work demands by having some fun together outside of work. On March 5, 2011 I have arranged a bowling afternoon at McHenry Bowl for employees who are interested. I hope many of you will decide to participate in this afternoon event. Other ideas for fun events are to attend a Nuts game either in the evening or a weekend and having a picnic at Graceada Park. Other event suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Good Job Auditor-Controller's Office – look at what we accomplished this last quarter:

- Completed the Annual Audited Financial Report for year ending June 30, 2011 along with the Single Audit Report
- Completed and submitted to the State the annual Cost Plan
- Completed required annual Form 1099 reporting
- Completed required annual W-2 reporting
- Completed PeopleSoft Tools upgrade
- Property tax apportionments were completed on time

Sadly, the March Newsletter will be the last Newsletter issued from the Auditor-Controller's Office. Due to decreased resources, we no longer have the capacity to devote the time required to issue our department quarterly Newsletter. I would like to thank everyone in the department who has participated with submitting articles for the Newsletter and in particular I would like to thank Jan Ingold for her hard work in pulling together the Newsletter each quarter. Hopefully, in the future, possibly three to four years from now, we will once again have the resources to issue our department Newsletter.

Thank-you!

### **CROSS TRAINING**

--Submitted by **Jan Ingold**

When booking a room at SBT, notify Admin and provide the date of use, the length of use and the purpose. Our department is charged for the use of rooms at SBT. SBT will provide you with a Work Order. Give Admin a copy of the Work Order. This will save time when Admin is reconciling the bill at the end of the month.

**ETHICS/CHARACTER**

--Submitted by *Jan Ingold*

**A Day and Moment of Remembrance**

It's not just an excuse for a three-day weekend or a day for barbeque and beer.

Memorial Day is a time for Americans to connect with our national history and core values by honoring those who gave their lives fighting for this country.

It's said that this special day to salute fallen Americans was born during the Civil War in Mississippi when a group of grieving mothers and wives who were placing flowers on graves in a Confederate cemetery noticed a neglected graveyard for Union soldiers.

Knowing these ignored tombstones marked the resting place of young men equally loved and missed, the Southern women cleaned the Union cemetery and decorated the gravesites with flowers. In 1882, Decoration Day became a national holiday. Later, the name was changed to Memorial Day.

In 1996, Carmella LaSpada, founder of No Greater Love, a nonprofit organization dedicated to memorializing fallen troops and victims of terrorism, met with a group of schoolchildren on the Mall in Washington, D.C. When she asked them what Memorial Day meant, they said, "That's the day the pool opens."

Deciding that children should know why they're free and who paid for their freedom, she generated an idea for a moment of remembrance, which Congress adopted in 2000. Today, you and your family can honor the National Moment of Remembrance by pausing at 3 p.m. local time to observe in your own way one minute of silence to contemplate or pray in honor of our fallen members of the military.

During my minute I'm going to think about and thank the thousands of American troops who are in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan.

--*Michael Josephson, Character Counts*

**SAFETY FIRST**

--Submitted by *Paris Scott*

**Safety Quiz:**

- 1. If you are attacked, in order to survive, you must:** a) Overpower the attacker b) Distract the attacker so that you can break free & escape to safety c) Go along with the attack because you can't fight someone bigger and stronger
- 2. If attacked, which question would help you escape:** a) Why is this happening to me? b) Is he going to rape or kill me? c) What did I do wrong? d) What is the best way to handle this situation?
- 3. The best way to avoid being selected as a victim is to:** a) Look around when you are walking and glance at other people b) Keep to yourself and avoid looking at other people so they will leave you alone c) Look at other people and smile and say, "Hi"
- 4. If you are attacked, the safest thing to do is:** a) Make a lot of noise and call attention to the situation b) Be quiet so you don't upset the attacker c) Go along with the attacker's demands so that he won't hurt you
- 5. You are walking to your car in a parking lot when a suspicious stranger approaches you asking for directions. The safest first thing to do is:** a) Scream for help b) Run in the opposite direction c) Hold your open hands up and yell, "Back off" d) Answer the question the stranger asked and be polite



### HEALTH/WELLNESS

--Submitted by **Paris Scott**

Keys to Healthy Eating: Start by focusing on the positive of what you should eat. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (5-9) servings a day. Choose whole grains over processed grains. Look for the words 100% whole wheat or whole grains on bread and cereal products. Include beans, nuts and seeds and other sources of plant based protein. Choose the leanest cuts of meat and include fish 2-3 times a week. Choose low fat and fat free dairy foods. Choose 1% or nonfat milk and yogurt, low fat cheeses and cottage cheese. Drink calorie free drinks such as water and unsweetened teas. Become familiar with the standard portion sizes: go to [mypyramid.gov](http://mypyramid.gov) for current guidelines. And, just slow down and enjoy your meals.....



### MENTOR SITE PROGRAM

--Submitted by **Paris Scott**

Stanislaus County celebrated its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Employee Mentor Program last month at the Martin J. Peterson Event Center. This is an event to say thank you to the Mentors and Site Coordinators for the many hours they put in to help children in our communities. Many of the students and parents came out to celebrate. It was nice to see Larry and Diane Haugh, CEO, Rick Robinson and Supervisors Bill O'Brien and Dick Montieth to name a few. It was to my surprise that Lauren was there to present one of the two awards: the one for Site Coordinator of the Year. If at any time anyone wishes to sign up, please contact me. Jeremy Howell in the Clerk-Recorder's Office received the Mentor of the Year award.

### SITE COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR

On January 24, 2011, our very own **Paris Scott** was honored at the annual Mentor celebration dinner as Site Coordinator of the Year for 2010. Paris has served as a mentor for many years and has been our site coordinator for three years. Paris actively promotes the program and is a shining example of the benefit of offering this program to our local youth. Congratulations, Paris, you have earned this recognition.

### NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY

-- Submitted by **Paris Scott**




*Learn and Live™*

February is American Heart Month. On February 4<sup>th</sup>, "National Wear Red Day", thousands of people wore red across the nation. This day helps to bring awareness to the fact that about 500,000 women die each year from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD), 1 woman in 27 dies from breast cancer, but 1 in 2 dies from heart disease. Cardiovascular disease ranks first among all disease categories in hospital discharges for women. Remember to get regular check-ups, eat a well-balanced diet and exercise daily. Thank you all for your participation and support.



**IMPORTANT DATES**

March-13	Daylight Savings Time begins	
March-17	St. Patrick's Day	
March-20	Spring begins	
March-31	Cesar Chavez Day	
April-1	April Fool's Day	
April-13	Thomas Jefferson's Birthday	
April-15	Income Tax Day (also Accountant's Day)	
April-17	Palm Sunday	
April-18	Passover begins at sundown	
April-22	Good Friday	
April-22	Earth Day	
April-24	Easter Sunday	
April-27	Administrative Professional's Day	
May-1	May Day	
May-5	Cinco de Mayo	
May-8	V-E Day	
May-8	Mother's Day	
May-21	Armed Forces Day	
May-30	Memorial Day (Observed)	County Holiday
May-31	Memorial Day	

**INTERESTING TIDBITS**

Have you ever wondered, "What are the **Ides of March** and why must we beware?" The soothsayer's warning to Julius Caesar, "Beware the Ides of March," has forever imbued that date with a sense of foreboding. But in Roman times the expression "Ides of March" did not necessarily evoke a dark mood—it was simply the standard way of saying "March 15." Surely such a fanciful expression must signify something more than merely another day of the year? Not so. Even in Shakespeare's time, sixteen centuries later, audiences attending his play *Julius Caesar* wouldn't have blinked twice upon hearing the date called the Ides.

The term Ides comes from the earliest Roman calendar, which is said to have been devised by Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome. Whether it was Romulus or not, the inventor of this calendar had a penchant for complexity. The Roman calendar organized its months around three days, each of which served as a reference point for counting the other days:

- Kalends (1st day of the month)
- Nones (the 7th day in March, May, July, and October; the 5th in the other months)
- Ides (the 15th day in March, May, July, and October; the 13th in the other months)

The remaining, unnamed days of the month were identified by counting backwards from the Kalends, Nones, or the Ides. For example, March 3 would be V Nones—5 days before the Nones (the Roman method of counting days was inclusive; in other words, the Nones would be counted as one of the 5 days).

## QUOTE FOR THE QUARTER

Remember this quote? You probably will remember it as April 15<sup>th</sup> gets closer.

Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

--Benjamin Franklin

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

From our local TV news station, this undeniably true travel suggestion: "Next up, ten money-saving tips for your trip to Hawaii. Don't go away!"

--RD.com



Thank you to our monthly column contributors: **Lauren Klein** for [Comments from Lauren](#), **Paris Scott** for the Safety, Wellness and Mentoring articles, and to all those who submitted other items of interest for this quarter's newsletter.

## **KUDOS!**

*Kudos, as well as opportunities for improvement feedback we've received from our customers.*



## CUSTOMER CORNER

### FEEDBACK FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS/CUSTOMERS

**Becky (Tuss)**, thank you for your generous gesture to the Alliance Worknet fiscal staff. We really appreciate your efforts to keep the Alliance Worknet accounts payables operation running smoothly.

-- Mike Firpo, Manager III

**Kashmir (Gill)**, Please accept my gratitude for the care, quality and thoroughness with which you have taken to bring the 10th Street Place finances to a place of confidence and credibility. I know it has taken a tremendous amount of work on your part and I am so pleased that now a strong and credible fiscal accounting and reporting mechanism is in place for the JPA. It is so important and it didn't happen until the

Auditor Controller's office assumed this responsibility. This is one more reason why I am so pleased to be a member of the County team. Your work has given us confidence that we can make good solid business decisions moving forward.

Thank you again, your hard work is very much appreciated.

Always,

--*Patricia Hill Thomas, Chief Operations Officer*

**Francine Gutierrez; Steve Perales; Theresa Borrelli; Tom Flores** Thank-you everyone for all of your hard work in completing our most recent financial reports. It must feel an accomplishment and relief when you see the hard copy of the report. I particularly like the color of the report cover this year. One of my favorite colors! Just the single audit report to go.

Thank-you, again

--*Lauren*

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for allowing **Theresa (Borrelli)** to spend time away from her normal responsibilities to assist me with my project. Theresa was a tremendous help in several ways. Over the duration of the project she made several visits and spent time with me brainstorming, organizing, and developing a successful approach by helping create worksheets to convert accrual reporting to cash basis. She also spent additional time on the project by creating her own revenue and expense reconciliation that I used as a benchmark to compare and verify against summary totals and in conjunction we created a final reporting variance recap. In addition, Theresa was a great resource in the way she shared her knowledge by showing me several reports and features in Oracle that was unfamiliar to me. Overall I wanted to emphasize to you that it was a pleasure to work with Theresa and I feel her experience and knowledge is truly an asset to the County.

With Sincere Thanks,

--*Lisa Almanza, Stanislaus County, DCSS*

Supervisors – Please forward comments/suggestions received from our customers (compliments or opportunities for improvement) to be shared on this page.

--*Editor*