



The Bulletin



East Bay Association of Enrolled Agents
*To Enhance and Protect the Professional, Economic, and
Educational Interests of all Enrolled Agents*

March 2007

General Meeting

NEXT MEETING Wed, March 21, 2007

Place: **PLEASANTON Crowne Plaza Hotel** (go to
http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/cp/1/en/hotel/sfopl?_requestid=103835 then click on Map/Directions)

5:45 Board Meeting (short Board meeting)

6:15 Hospitality

6:45 Dinner Buffet

7:30 Program: **IRS Tax Panel**

Cost: \$35.00 with reservation by Friday March 16
\$45.00 with reservation after deadline

ALL STANDING RESERVATIONS ARE CANCELLED!

**NEW REGISTRATION
PROCEDURE – YOU MUST
READ ARTICLE ON PAGE 2**

March Topic: “IRS Tax Panel”

Speakers: Joe Calderaro and Karen Brosi

This month we will have a panel discussion on Federal tax issues. We have our long-time friend Joe Calderaro, IRS Technical Coordinator for Northern CA District, blessing us with his considerable wisdom again. We also have Karen Brosi again. You all know who she is, so I am not going to repeat her bio from last month. The session will be transcribed and distributed to the members (thanks to Mike Power).

It is crucial to e-mail your questions to Mike Power (michael.power@PowerInvesting.Net) by the afternoon of Monday, March 19th, if you want to have the best chance of having them answered. Questions will be taken during dinner, but they will be answered in

the order received, with all the emailed questions going first. If your question is complex, PLEASE email it in early so the panel will have a chance to research it before the event. Also, sending your question in advance allows Mike to spend his limited time that evening focusing on the answer to your question instead of writing the question itself, so he can transcribe a better answer for you at the event.

As in years past, the transcribed questions and answers will be emailed to everyone on the Chapter NEWS mailing list, so if you're not signed up for that, go to <http://ebaea.org/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi> and select the NEWS list from the pull-down menu and follow the simple instructions to subscribe to that email list.
by Phil Fiegler EA, CPA, Program Co-Chair

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bonnie Buhnerkempe EA, CFP®, CSA

Yes, it is March already and we are in the thick of Tax Season. Take a depth breath, it may be the first one you have had in a while. We have to take care of ourselves, especially this time of the year, or we won't be able to take care of our clients. Remember to come to the dinner meeting in March to get that weird tax question answered and to eat a real dinner (which you probably haven't had since the season began). If you have time you can even register for the May dinner meeting on ethics at the same time you are registering for March. See you at the dinner meeting.

WE'VE GOT ETHICS COVERED!

by Phil Fiegler EA, CPA, Program Co-Chair

If you are wondering where you will pick up your 2 hours of ethics this year, please look no further! For our May meeting on Wed. May 16th, Irene Lawrence, the current President of CSEA, will be giving a 2-hour ethics presentation. She is an excellent speaker. The fee for this meeting will be \$10 higher than the normal dinner meeting due to the extra hour of education. You may reserve space at this meeting now at the registration web site. Mark your calendars - don't miss this event!

CRITICALLY IMPORTANT - NEW DINNER REGISTRATION PROCESS STARTS NOW!

by Bonnie Buhnerkempe EA, CFP®, CSA

Yes, you no longer have to wait for someone to answer the phone or call you back. You can register for the dinner meeting on-line by going here:

<https://www.123signup.com/calendar?Org=ebaea>

For now, PLEASE bookmark this URL. We have set up a link directly from our website so when you get the bulletin you can register at the same time. You can even register for all dinner meetings through June now instead of doing it during tax season. If you are like me I try to get everything off my schedule during tax season except for actually seeing clients and preparing taxes. The first time you go to register you will need to put your name, address, phone, and email address into the system. In the future you will only have to put in your name then proceed with what event you want to register for. When you register you will get an email back confirming your registration.

Addendum from Duncan:

I expect there will be a number of comments regarding this change, so I'd like to spare myself untold hours of explanation by addressing the major issues up front. There are two main reasons for this change.

The first reason is that, in response to the announcement of my resignation and the repeated calls for a new Chapter Office provider, no one stepped forward to fill the existing position. Consequently, we no longer have a labor force to handle registrations, so we had to find a way to automate the function.

The second reason is that too many members have been abusing the reservation policy. Our dinner fee barely covers our costs, so not only do no-shows and at-the-doors mess up the room seating and food supply, we still have to pay for the number of dinners reserved. At the November and December dinner meetings, nearly 20% of those who had reservations failed to show, at an annualized cost to the Chapter of about \$3,000. From now on, the only way to reserve your spot is to pay in advance through the website or to buy the annual subscription plan.

THE OLD STANDING RESERVATION LIST IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT. IT IS DEFUNCT IN ALL RESPECTS. You must register online from now on or you will be charged the at-the-door price.

Procedural notes: From now on, all registration (dinners, miniseminars, TaxTalk, etc) will be handled through this website. As Bonnie mentioned, you will need to register once, then just sign in on future visits. You can register (and pay) for as many events as you wish, and you will get email confirmations for every

event. There will be no question of postmark date, or phone messages not received, etc.

The official cancellation and other policies will be finalized after we get a bit of experience with the system. For now, if you cancel before the deadline we'll either credit your payment towards a future event or cut you a refund check. If you cancel after the deadline, you can either consider your registration a contribution to the Association or you can find someone to go in your place and notify us accordingly.

Starting in February, we are trying out a test procedure to accept checks. If you do not wish to pay online by credit card, you may send a check to the Chapter Office and we will register you accordingly. Note that the Friday deadline still applies, so please call or email us to let us know you're sending in a check.

TAX SEASON – RESPECT YOUR CLIENTS, RESPECT YOURSELF

By Gary Ansbach, EA, North Bay Chapter President

Another tax season is upon us. This is a time of exhilaration and apprehension. Amidst the various preparations for tax season such as scheduling, sending organizers, hiring staff and learning the changes in our software, we serve ourselves well by remembering that psychological and emotional preparation is equally important.

It's difficult to be calm in April if you approach February in a frenzied state of mind. Our goal is to achieve and maintain a balance between taking care of our clients and taking care of ourselves, recognizing that taking care of our clients is a significant component of taking care of ourselves. However, when we feel stress and the calm and patience we desire is elusive, we have forgotten that many of our relationship with clients closely resemble a parent-child relationship. Some children are more difficult than others, but they all need our patient guidance, even if that means we have to explain something several different ways before they understand. It is our job to figure out a way to ease the client's frustration and confusion.

The more you like your clients, the more you will like yourself. When the inevitable frustrations and feelings of being overwhelmed appear, it is critical to take care of yourself so that you may rediscover the calm and patience necessary for effective and efficient performance. Whatever works for you – such as exercise, meditation, time with your family or commiserating with colleagues - do it now! Too often we tell ourselves we can't afford the time when the reality is we can't afford not to take the time. Diligent attention to the fluid, delicate balance required to maintain a positive attitude towards your clients, your work and yourself will keep you sane and healthy.

IRS E-FILE COMPLIANCE VISIT

By George Crozier, EA

I was visited by a field auditor on special assignment to verify e-file compliance (this is not a new program as I was first visited in 1995). They called about 1 week in advance to schedule the meeting and I was told to set aside about 2 hours for the interview.

The interview was about procedure in being sure 8453 or 8879 forms are signed before submission, EIC 8867 checklists are maintained, identities of taxpayers are confirmed, security, and retention of records. The auditor was under the impression that a copy of signed 8453 or 8879 was to be given to each taxpayer, but we later confirmed that it was only required, if requested. The auditor was under the impression that all records needed to be in locked cabinets and we are still researching that issue. Many of the questions were poorly worded - e.g. do you accept "typed, handwritten or altered W-2's" and indicate them as nonstandard - I think the questions should be "altered (typed or handwritten)" meaning any form of altered W-2, as opposed to simply receiving a typed W-2 or a handwritten W-2.

I was requested to print a list of my e-file clients to date. Ideally the auditor wanted a list of the filing date, which I had difficulty creating from the software. My listing showed the acknowledgement date, or most current status date. The auditor then randomly selected about 15 returns and wanted the signed e-file form, W-2/1099 forms, 8867 and a copy of the return as filed.

The total time in office was 4 hours. At the end the auditor issued a report addressing these areas:

- * 8633 (Verify EIC claims)
- * 8453/8879 (Maintained signed forms before filing)
- * Acknowledgement Files (maintained for adequate period)
- * Tax Return Electronic Portion (maintained for adequate period, handling of rejects)
- * Refund Anticipation Loan/ other bank products
- * Security
- * Advertising (no use of IRS logo or association as IRS approved, etc)
- * Forms W-2, 1099 (verification of income from good forms)
- * Physical Checks (visibility of client records to the public, signage)

And a final rating as Compliant - Warning - Proposed Written Reprimand - Proposed Suspension - Immediate Suspension - Expulsion

Unfortunately I did not receive a copy of the questionnaire, so I am sure I have missed some points. I think most of us have nothing to fear, but I hated giving up all of that valuable time in the 1st week of February.

NEW SMALL GROUP IN CASTRO VALLEY

by Dagmar Bedard, EA

We meet every 3rd Tuesday at 8:00am at Carrow's Res-

taurant 2723 Castro Valley Blvd at Lake Chabot Rd, Castro Valley. Dagmar Bedard EA (510) 537-3883

PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGE

by Duncan Sandiland, EA, Nominating Chair

The size of the Board has been an issue contemplated since the creation of the EBAEA Strategic Plan several years ago. The current size of the Board makes it too easy to focus on administrative matters and harder than necessary to form quorums, consensus and policy. Reducing the Board size would be a major step forward in concentrating the function of the Board to its true purpose: setting basic policy for the Association. Upon review of other Chapters and organizations, it appears that the most effective Board size for our association is on the order of ten seats. We have six required Officer positions, so reducing the Board to ten seats would overweight the Officers against the Directors. Reducing the Board to twelve seats would give six voting Directors and five voting Officers (tiebreaking President not voting), retaining the ultimate authority in the "outside" directors.

****PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT:** *The first sentence of Article 4.02 of the Bylaws shall be amended from the current text:*

"The Board consists of 15 persons: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Immediate Past President, and nine members selected from the membership at large, all of whom must be active members in good standing of the Association." *to the following text:*

"The Board consists of 12 persons: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Immediate Past President, and six members selected from the membership at large, all of whom must be active members in good standing of the Association."

Per the Bylaws, the presentation of this item at the February Board meeting requires publication in the March, April and May Bulletins, and presentation to the membership at the Annual Meeting in May. This proposal has received the non-binding approval of the Board of Directors. It will be submitted for the approval of the membership before the election of next year's Officers and Directors. The proposal will require a simple majority of the votes cast at the Annual Meeting to pass. Should it pass, it will be effective immediately.

EBAEA AMBASSADORS

In an effort to promote networking and member retention, the East Bay chapter is launching an exciting opportunity. We are looking for Ambassadors to "work" the monthly dinner meetings. The role of the Ambassador is pretty simple: 1) When a new member comes to their first few meetings and is trying to get to know people, be willing to introduce them around, invite them to sit at your table, and include them in conversations.

Have you considered yet a way to be involved? Is this something you can do? Well, can you answer warmly when a stranger comes to ask you a question? Can you introduce people? If you said yes, you could be an Ambassador! And best of all, this does not require a once-a-month-for-a-whole-year commitment. Can you do this for at least 3 meetings a year? This will also be a great way for YOU to meet some of the new members that come in and be instrumental in making them see the benefit of coming back.

If this Ambassador Program sounds like something you can help us with, please contact Judi Gilmer, EA at 925-373-1468, or call the Chapter Office at (800) 617-1040. No one should ever leave a dinner meeting feeling like an outsider. The East Bay Chapter is about Education and Networking, and the first contact for that is at our dinner meetings. You CAN make a difference in another EA's career!

NEW CHAPTER OFFICE DUTIES

As Bonnie mentioned, the traditional Chapter Office has been split into five separate bite-sized positions with the following approximate job descriptions, **AND NOW WITH COMPENSATION OFFERED FOR EACH POSITION.** The final duties will change slightly from time to time as we reassess our Chapter's needs. For more information, please call Bonnie:

- Dinner Meeting Coordinator
- Seminar Registrar [**position filled**]
- Bulletin Editor [**position filled**]
- Webmaster
- Chapter Office

Dinner Meeting Coordinator (est 4 hours/month)

This position takes care of all administrative (non-Program) aspects of the monthly dinner meetings, including:

1. Site selection (book venues one year out for maximum planning time)
2. Menu selection
3. Liaison with hotel staff, including calling in final head count
4. Input future events into online reservation system
5. Maintain list of prepaid and complimentary dinner subscribers
6. Provide final registration list to greeters
7. Provide Member registration assistance as necessary

Compensation: one free dinner subscription

Seminar Registrar (est 5 hours per miniseminar, 20 hours for TaxTalk) [**position filled**]

This position takes care of all registration aspects of a particular educational event, including:

1. Input future events into online reservation system
2. Coordinate meal registrations if needed
3. Produce badges for registrants
4. Provide final registration list to greeters

5. Provide registration assistance as necessary, including online registration of attendees who register by mail
 6. Monitor Member/non-Member discounts
- Compensation: one registration for that event

Bulletin Editor (est 4 hours/month) [**position filled**]

This position takes care of all aspects of the monthly Bulletin newsletter, including:

1. Prompting relevant parties for article submission
2. Maintaining reserve of useful filler
3. Editing submitted articles for style and grammar
4. Formatting articles into a professional-looking publication
5. Transmitting finished product to Webmaster for distribution
6. Producing semiannual postcard calendar mailed to all Members

Compensation: one free dinner subscription

Webmaster (est 5 hours/month)

This position takes care of all aspects of the Chapter website and email channels, including:

1. Update the webpage with each new issue of the Bulletin
2. Update the webpage with each new Chapter educational event
3. Coordinate with Dinner Meeting Coordinator and Seminar Registrar to ensure all registration-enabled events are properly accessible through the Chapter website
4. Maintain appropriate other website content
5. Maintain email distribution lists for Bulletin and News subscribers
6. Format and transmit email broadcasts as appropriate
7. Perform annual synchronization with CSEA email database
8. Maintain and de-spam incoming generic Chapter email accounts
9. Set up and maintain dedicated Chapter topic-based list servers

Compensation: one free dinner subscription

Chapter Office (est 6 hours/month)

This position is the public persona of the Chapter, and also takes care of all banking and archive aspects of Chapter administration, including:

1. Answering the Chapter toll-free phone line, making referrals as necessary
2. Receiving all Chapter faxes and forwarding them to the appropriate parties
3. Receiving Chapter mail via POBox and transmitting mail to the appropriate parties
4. Maintain current membership lists and related lists
5. Make bank deposits at least twice monthly as needed
6. Store historical Chapter records (1 filing cabinet+)
7. Update and maintain Chapter records per the Chapter record retention guidelines
8. Coordinate SEE class inquiries and registrations
9. Oversee other four positions to maintain overall accuracy and consistency

Compensation: one free dinner subscription

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mark your calendars

March 2007

- 21 EBAEA Dinner Meeting
IRS Panel: Joe Calderaro & Karen Brosi
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Pleasanton

April 2007

No meeting – catch up on lost sleep!

May 2007

- 16 EBAEA Dinner and ANNUAL Meeting
Ethics: Irene Lawrence, EA
Special 2-hour meeting at \$45/\$55
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Pleasanton
- 5/31-6/2 SuperSeminar Reno

June 2007

- 20 EBAEA Dinner Meeting
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Pleasanton
- 6/11-6/13 SuperSeminar Las Vegas 1
- 6/14-6/16 SuperSeminar Las Vegas 2

HUMOR (thanks to Bob McKenzie)

“The government deficit is the difference between the amount of money the government spends and the amount it has the nerve to collect.”

“Behind every man who achieves success, stands a mother, a wife and the IRS” - Ethel Jacobson

A financial planner suggested to a wealthy client that he should invest in a circus. The client expressed great surprise at such an unusual recommendation: “A circus? Why on earth should I buy into a circus?” The financial planner replied: “Because of the elephants.” The client, puzzled even more, then asked: “The elephants? What is the connection between circus elephants and investments?” The financial planner asked: “Well, do you know much it costs to feed an elephant?” The client, slightly annoyed, responded: “No, of course I do not know much it costs to feed an elephant.” The financial planner explained: “Well, neither does the IRS Commissioner.”

NEW EA LOOKING TO HELP YOU

Yvette Koehler, EA (new member) is willing to do your simple easy returns and take them off your hands. Call (925) 735-2407 or email to ykoehler@sbcglobal.net. I thank you very much, Yvette.

Small Group Tax Meetings

Antioch /Brentwood Every Fri 8:00am
Brentwood Café, 8500 Brentwood Blvd, Brentwood
Ken Seamann EA (925) 634-8297

Oakland/Berkeley 3rd Fri, 10:30am
Park Avenue Grill, 4184 Piedmont Ave at Linda, Oakland
Philip Fiegler EA (510) 530-1174

Danville Area 4th Tues, 9:30am
Pascals French Oven, 155 Railroad Ave, Danville
Michael Power EA (510) 366-8836

San Ramon 2nd & 4th Fri, 7:30am
Contact Bonnie for location
Bonnie Buhnerkempe EA (925) 855-0829

Livermore Area 1st & 3rd Wed, 7:30am
Beebe's Sports Bar&Grill, 915 Club House Dr, Livermore
Richard Goudreau EA (925) 606-6672

Castro Valley 3rd Tues, 8:00am
Carrow's, 2723 Castro Valley Blvd@Lake Chabot, CV
Dagmar Bedard EA (510) 537-3883

South Alameda County 1st Wed, 9:30am
Dino's, 1 block W of I-880 on Industrial Blvd, Hayward
Sal Romo EA or Walt Thomas EA (510) 487-1691

SUPERSEMINAR DISCOUNT DEADLINE

In 2007 CSEA's Super Seminar will have 1 session in Reno and 2 sessions in Las Vegas. The dates are 5/31 to 6/2 in Reno, and 6/11 to 6/13 or 6/14 to 6/16 in Las Vegas. The early-bird discount expires **MARCH 15** so register now at <http://www.csea.org/superseminar>.

OFFICE SPACE TO LEASE

Office to sublet: Sunny, private 130 sq. ft. air-conditioned office on second floor in prime Rockridge, Oakland location. Share 415 sq. ft. common space with two other tax professionals. Includes access to copier, fax machine and tax library. Walk to BART. Easy freeway access. Available November 1, 2006. \$775 includes all utilities. 510-655-9893. Sheila Khalov, EA

HELP WANTED

Lodestar Private Asset Management LLC, an independent RIA in Alamo, is seeking an E.A. with an established client base to join our growing wealth management office and provide tax services to our clients. Excellent opportunity for referrals from in-house fee-only CFPs, Investment Advisors, and Estate Planning Attorney. Please contact Scott Miller (925) 838-1234 for more information.

OFFICES FOR LEASE

Three individual offices in a shared elegant 1920 office suite that overlooks Lake Merritt. The unit is shared with a Tax and Financial Planning practice and may be an ideal situation for a person just beginning their own tax practice. Options of larger or smaller offices, with/ or without lake view. Each office has its own charming character, all are light and airy. This suite has a front and rear entrance and shares a waiting room, large kitchen and bathroom. The building is secure, with ample parking in area. There is easy access to the 580 Freeway; 1.5 miles to Oakland City Center, and easy access to public transportation. Wired for DSL and phones. Lease negotiable. Please call 510-444-0500.

HELP WANTED

Tax Preparer needed full time during tax season and part time the balance of the year. Quick Books, 10 key by touch, payroll tax reporting and phone skills all very helpful. Salary based on experience. Office in Danville. Fax resume and salary requirements to 925-855-0844.

TAX PROFESSIONAL WANTED

Fremont Business Services Firm seeking year-round degreed tax professional to join our firm. We are looking for a team player with over five years experience preparing individual, corporate, LLC and partnership tax returns. Experience in preparing fiduciary and nonprofit returns is helpful. Candidate must be experienced in QuickBooks and the use of tax software. Enrolled Agent or CPA preferred. E-mail resume to yvonnetbc@aol.com or Fax to 510-657-9503.

TAX PREPARER PART TIME

A growing Tax and Financial Planning Firm is seeking a tax preparer part time from mid- January though April 15. The candidate should have at least 2 years tax prep experience. A working knowledge of Lacerte is a plus. Additionally, bookkeeping skills and knowledge of QuickBooks would ensure continued part-time work throughout the year. Compensation is negotiable and commensurate with experience. Please email your resume to earthfreed@gmail.com or fax to 510-444-5166.

2006 - 2007 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

Web Page <http://www.eastbayea.org>

President: Bonnie Buhnerkempe EA, etc 925-855-0829

1st VP: Thomas Johnston EA 925-828-4500

2nd VP: Walter Nygaard EA, etc 510-547-0440

Treasurer: Clare Flores EA 510-785-8356

Secretary: Peggy Hall EA 925-388-1040

Past President:

Duncan Sandiland EA, etc 925-691-1040

2 Year Directors:

Philip Fiegler EA 510-530-1174

Barbara Sparks EA 925-634-8630

Norman Madge EA 408-398-5737

Charleen Daefield EA, etc 925-872-4075

1 Year Directors:

Janet Bridges EA 510-505-0818

Judi Gilmer EA 925-373-1468

Joanne Harteau EA 510-683-4688

Eleanor Power EA 510-525-9987

Dagmar Bedard EA 510-537-3883

Communication Committee, (2nd VP)

Chair: Walter Nygaard EA 510-547-0440

Membership: Barbara Sparks EA 925-634-8630

Judi Gilmer EA 925-373-1468

Outreach: (vacant)

Public Affairs: Michael Barrick EA 510-339-7039

Social Affairs: Janet Bridges EA 510-538-0401

CSEA Directors: Thomas Johnston EA 925-828-4500

Walter Nygaard EA 510-547-0440

Education Committee, (1st VP)

Chair: Tom Johnston EA 925-828-4500

Inter-chapter Liaison: (vacant)

Tax Talk: Diane Jaworski-Faulhaber EA 510-538-0948

Program: Philip Fiegler EA 510-530-1174

Charleen Daefield EA 925-872-4075

Scholarship: Norm Madge EA 510-489-8713

Continuing Ed: Joanne Anderson EA 925-938-9086

Mini Seminar Team: (vacant)

Administration Committee (IPP)

Chair: Duncan Sandiland EA 925-691-1040

Audit: Lonnie Gary EA 650-559-5124x2229

Bylaws/SOP: Sal Romo EA 510-417-9492

Budget & Finance: Walt Thomas EA 510-725-8356

Chapter Off.: Bonnie Buhnerkempe EA 925-855-0829

Legislative Affairs: Lillian Lea EA 510-526-2220

Nominating: Duncan Sandiland EA 925-691-1040

Strategic Advisory: (vacant)

Bulletin: Duncan Sandiland EA 925-691-1040

TAX Agency Liaison:

LaRee Jensen-Graham EA 510-428-1458

EAST BAY ASSOCIATION OF ENROLLED AGENTS

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