

Committee Spotlight:

Accounting & Auditing Committee

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— MARK CUCCIA, CPA
CO-CHAIR



The Accounting & Auditing Committee has one main goal—to be the go-to resource for their members. According to Mark Cuccia, CPA, Co-Chair of the group, as well as Secretary and Board Member of the NYSSCPA’s Nassau Chapter, “they strive to be a platform for people to hear relevant speakers and get answers on any topics they might have questions on. We want them to be able to bounce ideas off of us and receive help where needed. Someone might be dealing with very difficult issues and hopefully they can ask one of us or any of our speakers to help them resolve that issue.”

“The committee’s primary focus is on anything related to the areas of both accounting and auditing and especially on keeping our members updated on any new standards that affect these areas.” And this committee does handle all areas and practice sizes in the field. “It could be a sole practitioner we’re helping,” says Mark, “a two-man firm, or one as big as Marks Paneth. We want to help every firm in any way possible.”

Mark Cuccia, CPA, Director at Marks Paneth LLP, shares his Co-Chair responsibilities with Tina Fasano, CPA, and Franco Martorana, CPA, both Supervisors at Marks Paneth. Mark works in the commercial business group and mainly focuses on audits of financial statements, managing staff and dealing with clients. Franco is in the real estate group out of Long Island and supervises staff on audits, reviews and compilations. His areas of expertise lie with textile companies, home security and home heating oil companies, and with manufacturing industries.

Tina is a supervisor in the commercial businesses group, a group that encompasses retailers, commercial businesses and manufacturers. She provides staff leadership on engagements and in dealing with clients, focusing on the attest side and in auditing financial statements. The fact that all three work together in one firm makes co-chairing the Accounting & Auditing Committee that much easier.

Their involvement came about pretty organically. Mark was already involved, for at least five years, and then recruited Tina soon after. Two years ago, they recruited Franco. Since they all work in auditing, the committee was a natural fit for all three.

And they share responsibilities equally on the committee as well. “We all have the same role as Co-Chairs,” says Tina. “That includes organizing the meetings, dealing with the venues, focusing on finding topics and recruiting speakers for events. We share the responsibilities involved in each of the events.”

“The events are mainly technical ones,” says Mark, “to qualify for CPE. They all cover topics related to accounting and auditing. We discuss accounting pronouncements that might be brand-new or ones from earlier years that are still being implemented, so we figure out how to continue to implement those new standards.”

Each year, they hold a big joint event with the Suffolk County Chapter of the NYSSCPA. This past month, on November 9, they hosted an all-day accounting and auditing conference, held

at the Radisson Hotel in Hauppauge. Five different topics were discussed, with multiple speakers covering aspects of each topic. The event began at 8:30AM and ran all day.

“We like doing joint events with the Suffolk Chapter,” says Mark. “It boosts attendance and provides a larger base for our events. Also, attendees receive eight CPE credits all at once and we are able to host a larger amount of speakers. Our individual committee meetings are usually smaller.”

The committee’s last event of the year, the Accounting and Auditing Update, is to be held at the Marks Paneth office on December 4 from 6pm to 8pm and qualifies for two CPE credits.

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— **TINA FASANO, CPA
CO-CHAIR**



In each endeavor we take on in life, there are always both challenges and rewards, and co-chairing this vital committee is no exception. Franco feels that one particular challenge involved is in simply getting people to show up: “Our biggest challenge,” says Franco, “is in getting attendance. We do have a lot of sole practitioners attending and we love that. So now we are also trying to get, CFOs, controllers and the next generation of accountants to come. The challenge we’re facing this year is that if you’re a member of the Society you can now get CPE online through that membership, so we’re seeing a lot less people attend who are just doing CPE on their own time. Also, a lot of bigger firms offer CPE in-house, so some firms won’t pay for CPE at our events, especially if they can cover it on their own.”

According to Tina, one of the biggest rewards of Co-Chairing this committee is truly for their own education: “It’s really important for us to learn about the new topics we are bringing forward—it keeps us updated as well.”

Mark feels that the biggest reward in attending and hosting these events is in meeting new people. “I love networking with fellow practitioners and also being able to answer their questions. I like getting members through an issue, answering their technical questions, or even in helping them to see a different perspective. It’s rewarding for me to help others.”

Going forward, Mark hopes that the committee can be even more of a help to the CPA community. “The standards in our industry are getting more and more complex, so we want to be a gathering place to exchange ideas, to be a place of learning, and an encouragement in growth. There is always more than one way to see how things are handled in certain areas of accounting and auditing.”

Franco said it best in that “it’s a challenge getting the next generation to come. But

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there are different ways to get them involved, either by helping them to become a Co-Chair or by suggesting they simply attend events. Getting them to attend networking events is definitely a good way to do that. And using our events as a stepping-stone can give them the confidence to then go on to attend other events or chair a committee.”

So what would be one word of advice the Accounting & Auditing Committee would offer to others in their field, to further their future knowledge and success? Tina knows: “Get involved!”