

Message from the Chair
By John C. Macaulay, CMA



Paying It Forward

Volunteerism is one of IMA's major strengths, and members have plenty of opportunities to share their time and talents to enrich our organization and the profession.

I recently attended the annual gala dinner for a local university. One of the highlights of the evening was a ceremony recognizing about a dozen individuals, all of whom had a connection to the school. Each was introduced with a bio that included a summary of their contributions, and each spoke briefly about what they had gained from their relationship with the institution. Without exception, all had been active since their graduation in giving back to the school and “paying it forward” (to borrow an expression from a popular book and film) in various ways, including contributing their time, talent, and/or financial resources.

This experience prompted me to recognize the parallels with IMA® and our own volunteers, who contribute so much to our organization and to the profession as a whole. I believe one of IMA's strongest attributes is our high level of volunteer participation. A significant number of members are committed to donating their time and talents to our organiza-

tion, thanks to the many opportunities that IMA provides for them to do so. Our organization's structure and decentralized operating philosophy offer myriad ways to become involved and pay it forward. These include the obvious—such as serving in a leadership role at a chapter or council level, becoming a member of the IMA Global Board of Directors, or contributing financially—as well as

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the not-so-obvious, such as participating in *LinkUp IMA*, attending a conference, listening to a webinar, or even paying membership dues. All contribute to IMA's vision to be the leading resource for developing, certifying, connecting, and supporting the world's best accountants and financial professionals in business.

As a long-time IMA member, I can testify to the benefits of giving back to the organization, particularly at the levels that require a commitment to be of service. In my many years of volunteering, I've met fellow pro-

fessionals from around the world (some of whom I consider among my closest friends). And I've spent time with people I never would have encountered in my daily work who introduced me to new ways of thinking and broadened my outlook.

Volunteer service in IMA also provides excellent leadership training and experience in a relatively low-risk setting. In my various leadership roles, I've had opportunities to learn teamwork, conflict resolution, and adaptability. Some of these I might have learned on the job, but IMA gave me the chance to respond to different challenges in an environment where my livelihood wasn't on the line.

IMA has long valued the commitment of its volunteers and the role they play in carrying out the organization's mission. This year the IMA Global Board is instituting several new awards to recognize these contributions. Two honor outstanding IMA leaders and volunteers and will be bestowed during IMA's 94th Annual Conference & Exposition in New Orleans June 22-26, 2013. The first is the **IMA Exemplary Leadership Award**, which recognizes an IMA

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member who has made contributions in volunteer leadership positions over a period of years and has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and personal expertise. The second is the **IMA Exemplary Volunteer Award**, which recognizes an IMA member (regardless of length of service or IMA leadership positions held) who demonstrates the true spirit of volunteerism through exemplary volunteer service to IMA that's consistent with IMA's mission and core values. The description of the award explains that "this is truly an individual who goes beyond what might be expected, demonstrating unselfish commitment and serving as an example of volunteerism for others to follow."

Although some individuals will be recognized this year, I want to thank all the many volunteers and leaders who give of themselves, in ways both big and small, to help advance IMA, our CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification, and the management accounting profession. I also want to encourage any of you who might be weighing whether to take on a volunteer role to consider the many benefits that will accrue to you and your career from this experience of paying it forward. There are countless ways to become involved (just visit the IMA website at www.imanet.org and start searching), and I believe both you and IMA will benefit.

As always, I invite you to share your thoughts with me on this or any other subject at jmacaulay@imanet.org. **SF**