

### **BEYOND THE NUMBERS: BOB GRIESHABER**

# For this CPA, volunteering isn't optional

#### **Bob Grieshaber**

Employer: Robert C. Grieshaber, P.A.,

C.P.A.

Title: Principal

How long in this profession: I began my professional career in June 1967, near my former home in St. Louis, Mo., with a local firm that eventually became part of the KPMG network. My travels from the Midwest to the East began with audit assignments in Berlin, N.H. and Lewiston, Maine in 1967 that eventually led to opening the

first branch office in L/A East for Ahrens & McKeon in February 1972. I thought I'd be here only a couple of years. However, the best-laid plans, as we know, often change. I left the firm in 1973 and became CFO for two of our major clients, St. Mary's Hospital and Marcotte Nursing Home. Four years later, I returned to the public arena and opened my office. So much for a twoyear stay in Maine!

Volunteer organization/role in it: Service has varied over the years but is

- See BEYOND, page 6



Bob Grieshaber with his musician son Brant on a recent hike.

## Scholarship winner shares appreciation

A little about this vear's **MECPA Endowed** Scholarship winner, Katelyn Grant (from her thank-you note):

"I'm from Orrington, Maine, and graduated cum laude from John Bapst Memorial High School in 2019, where I was consistently on the honor roll. I'm currently a full-time second-year student at the University of Maine, where I'm majoring in accounting with a minor in economics, but I also work



Curious to know more about the **MECPA Endowed Scholarships?** Thanks to the generosity of past members, the MECPA provided seed money for scholarships designed to support accounting students at the University of Maine at Orono, Husson University and the University of Southern Maine.

- See SCHOLARSHIP, page 6

this issue: Page 5: Onward and upward with lessons

learned from the pandemic

Page 8: Attracting students to accounting and

shepherding them to licensure

All pages: Meet interesting, accomplished members of your MECPA community

Happy Spring!

### We've got big plans for our return to 'normalish!'

"No winter lasts forever, no Spring skips its turn." —Hal Borland

This winter seemed especially taxing for the accounting profession. The arrival of warmer weather, sunshine, outdoor activities and a return to "normalish" is especially welcome now.

In the spirit of renewal, the MECPA's Annual Meeting will feature several members of Gov. Janet Mills' Economic

Recovery Committee. Our panelists will share

an overview of their work and recommendations. potential impact on the accounting profession and state and tax policy implications. Please plan to join us for this virtual event, from 3-4:30 p.m. May 19. The slate for next year's MECPA Board of Governors will be voted on, too.

We're planning for a few in-person events - networking and educational - this fall. As an organization whose mission is to create community and connections, the MECPA looks forward to seeing you "live" rather than on a computer screen ASAP. Getting this right may involve trial and error, so please communicate your suggestions and comments.

-Trish Brigham, Executive Director

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### Looking for new business?

CPAs and tax preparers are extremely popular at the moment! We've received numerous requests for referrals to CPAs in the past few months. Callers are referred to the <u>Find A CPA page</u> on the MECPA website. If you're a member, be sure to update your listing. And if you're actively accepting new clients, please contact Trish Brigham.

### **Solving problems smarter**

As critical thinkers, how can we get better at solving complex problems? A promising starting point is for us to be in the same spaces with those we've traditionally deemed different.

Moments of divergence can create beautiful futures when we're willing to leave room for change. Take a step back to reflect on what winds of change you want to welcome into your life today.



# Why re-up? Connection, advocacy for starters

Advocacy on your behalf - 💜

Timely, pertinent information - 💜

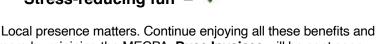
Leadership development opportunities - 💜

Recruitment -

New accountant pipeline initiatives − 🖋

Networking & connections -

Stress-reducing fun - 🗸



### more by rejoining the MECPA. **Dues Invoices** will be sent soon.

2021 SPECIALS: RENAISSANCE & REJUVENATION

A member who renews/joins with a friend/colleague in private industry by June 15 will receive a 25% discount off their membership fees. The discount applies to both people.

And ... an associate member who renews/joins with another associate member by June 15 will receive a 25% discount off membership fees. The discount applies to both members.

Please contact Trish Brigham for details.

# Trust-enhancing .cpa domains get warm greeting

In January, the AICPA opened applications for **.cpa domains** to licensed CPAs. There's been a strong response nationally and in Maine

Use of a .cpa domain allows practitioners to strengthen their brand identity and provides better security and resistance to Internet fraud, such as phishing and spoofing. Since the domain is only available to licensed CPAs and licensed CPA firms, it promotes greater trust with clients and the general public.

Firms that have registered have been strategic and creative in their name selections – technology.cpa, pensionaudit.cpa, restaurant.cpa, dentist.cpa and atlanta.cpa., for example – to promote firm services and expertise in a niche or practice area or geographical location.

Domain names currently are being awarded on a first-come, first-served basis for licensed CPAs, firms and certain approved organizations, such as state CPA societies.

Go here FMI, including a white paper,



Clockwise from top left: AICPA President/CEO Barry Melancon, new AICPA Board Chair Bill Pirolli, MECPA President-Elect Spencer Hathaway and MECPA Executive Director Trish Brigham meet via Zoom during the AICPA spring council event.

FAQs and sign-up information for the new service.

We live in a digital age, and CPAs

can improve the trust and security in their online calling cards with this new restricted domain.

## Outgoing President: Our Society resiliently, deftly marches on

# By Peter Hall MECPA Board President

Like everyone else a year ago, our Society was grappling with the impacts

of the pandemic. We faced daunting challenges and seemingly endless questions. What would happen to our profession?

Could the Society still play a role in the accounting and financial community here in Maine and what could

Maine and what could that be? How would we continue to offer CPE courses? How would meetings and events be conducted? What resources could we bring to bear in service to members and the community at large?

We're still confronting many of these challenges. But we now have the benefit of a year's experience in adaptation and have discovered ways to further our mission in a shifting landscape. Thanks to the dedication and diligence of our Executive Director (Thank you, Trish!) as well as our Board and Committees, the

Society has successfully continued to provide value to our constituency through ongoing advocacy and outreach, remote/ online CPE offerings and promotion of the profession to students and early career professionals.

Most importantly, our Society has seized on the events of this past year to launch more deeply into our Strategic Planning activities. Many questions we faced a year ago remain germane today, perhaps even more so. In the coming months our Board will be crystalizing the specifics of potential pathways to our future, including ever-expanding collaboration with similar professional organizations and serving as ever-more vocal promoters of our profession.

As I sheepishly have admitted to some of my colleagues here at the MECPA, before joining the Society's Board several years ago, I was largely unaware of the depth and breadth of the Society's initiatives and their importance. In all candor, for almost 20 years I'd been simply renewing my membership without much thought as to exactly why I was doing so, other than my understanding from the beginning that "Well, that's what

we do, plus, the firm pays for it..."

It has been with growing enthusiasm that since getting more involved, particularly over this past year, I have come to truly appreciate the role the MECPA plays as advocate and resource center and so much more for the accounting profession here in Maine. I strongly encourage any of my peers to get involved in the Society's activities in any way possible. I was pleased to note at events such as our Disc Golf Tournament and Battle of the Bridge last year, we're actually a fun group!

It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Society's President this year. I am especially enthused by and grateful for the energy and initiative of our Board and Committee members and Executive Director – who are all poised to shepherd the MECPA into the future in continued service to our profession and community. I look forward to my own ongoing service on our Board as we chart our future course to success and meaningful impact.

Best wishes to you all for good health and prosperity as we move further into 2021!

# THANK YOU! THANK YOU! to ...

- Mike Santo and Cory Vargo, Wipfli, for sharing their tax expertise in discussions with Maine Revenue Service about state tax conformity
- Ellen Cleveland, HMV, LLC; Lauren Corey, Lauren Corey Consulting; Tami Gower, UNE; Spencer Hathaway, BNN; Pat Hogdgon, Kremer & Co.; Dewey Martin, Martin CPA; and Louise Soucy, Soucy Accounting for submitting letters in support of the firm mobility bill presented by the MECPA
- Cathy Connelly, CJ Connelly, LLC, Madison HS Career Fair presenter
- Andrew Murry, BNN, Bates College "How to Adult" workshop series presenter
- Josh Bellomo and Mayson Stone, BerryDunn, Finance Authority of Maine's FAME Conference for Financial educators presenters
- **David Stone**, BerryDunn, Yarmouth Middle School Career Fair presenter
- Nick DeBlois, One River CPAs, Brunswick High School presenter



We also recognize the following firms that partnered with the MECPA and Maine Medical Center's Cancer Research Program to raise awareness with clients and the community about the addition of MMC's Cancer Research Fund to state tax Form CP. These firms pledged to make a difference in the lives of Maine's youngest cancer fighters:

- · Berman & Simmons, Trial Attorneys, Lewiston
- · Lauren Corey Consulting, LLC, Portland
- · Chester M. Kearney, PA, Presque Isle
- · BerryDunn, Portland
- · Dufour Tax, Portland
- Marcum LLP. Portland
- · Dawson and Souter, Portland
- · Runyon, Kersteen Ouellette, South Portland
- Brooks & Brooks, CPA, Scarborough
- The Swanson Group, Westbrook
- · Filler & Associates, Portland
- · Hobson & Co., Biddeford
- · BBSC CPAs, Bangor
- Berry Talbot Royer
- Purdy Powers, Portland
- · Anne Romano, CPA, Portland
- · Austin Associates, Auburn
- · Milliken, Perkins & Brunelle, Windham



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# Looking foward ... beyond the pandemic



### What we've learned about remote work

Conversations around the "virtual water cooler" ponder what a return to business as usual might look like as we emerge from the depths of the COVID-19 crisis.

A few lessons rise to the surface as we forge ahead:

- · Be intentional about daily activities.
- · Brush up on your relationship-building
- · Build trust, and honor it.

Read more here.

# Five workforce strategies worth considering this year

**Excerpted from Deloitte Consult**ing's Global Human Capital Trends in 2021 and Beyond by Erica Volini, Jeff Schwartz, Kraig Eaton, David Mallon, Yves Van Durne, Maren Hauptmann, Rob Scott and Shannon Poynton.

Access the full report here.

### 1. Designing work for well-being

COVID-19 forced organizations to redirect resources toward workers' safety and health. Post-pandemic, businesses should integrate wellbeing concerns at the individual. team and organization level as work transformation continues.

### 2. Beyond Reskilling

Workforce development approaches should reflect both the dynamic nature of jobs and potential of workers to reinvent themselves. Actions that support employee creativity are more successful at building resiliency/preparing for constant disruption than prescriptive policies and procedures.

### 3. Superteams

Maintaining employee connection has been a significant challenge during the pandemic, highlighting the importance of collaboration. Superteams work more quickly and less expensively than individuals and have potential to re-architect work. using technology to leverage complementary capabilities of humans and technology.

### 4. Governing workforce strategies to set new directions

The abrupt, significant disruption

caused by the pandemic revealed the drawbacks of relying on retrospective data and measurement.

To maintain forward movement, leaders must ask and answer better questions to gain deeper workforce insights and to prepare employees and their organizations for unpredictable high-impact events rather than planned, incremental change.

#### 5. A memo to HR

COVID-19 catapulted HR groups to the forefront in helping their organizations to survive. HR should capitalize on this more esteemed role, reorienting its mission beyond managing workers to leading efforts to re-architect work and reimagine the workplace accordingly.

# ListenUP! A member professor is in the house ...

We're pleased to introduce you to fellow member Barbara Belick, JD, MBA, CPA.

Like many an accountant, Belick grew up loving math and wanted to teach it.

Though life has a way of shifting course, Belick found her way back to that youthful aspiration after careers as a lawyer and accountant. She's now loving her role as assistant accounting professor at St. Joseph's College in Standish. Listen to her segment here.



### A chance to share your knowledge with small business owners

Any accountants or CFOs out there interested in being guest experts for the 2021 **Small Business Administra**tion Emerging Leaders Maine program now under way?



Participants in the 13-session EL program are small business owners learning from instructor Ann Marie Swenson, CFO of Thornton Academy, and a variety of speakers. Program leaders are looking for accountants and CFOs to volunteer as speakers on June 1 and June 15.

All series speakers also are invited to return for Session 13 on Oct. 19 to help provide feedback on EL participant grown plan presentations. Here's more about the **Emerging Leaders Initiative**.

Please contact Trish Brigham if you're interested in this great opportunity.

# **Volunteer Spotlight: Maria Gwinn**

The work of the MECPA, in support of you and the profession, is augmented by dedicated, talented volunteers. We'd like to introduce one of them as she wraps up her Board of Governors term. Meet **Maria Gwinn**, vice president and tax director at Spinnaker Trust:



If I weren't a CPA, you might find me: Taking a vacation during winter months or at year-end.

I am passionate about: Helping to make the accounting profession more life balanced for future generations.

I never leave home without: My cell phone.

Favorite vacation destination: Any place warm with a beach. Some favorites include Key West, Virgin Islands, Bahamas and Amelia Island.

If I hosted a podcast, my first guest would be: Jessamyn Norton, our Chief Investment Officer, who can make investment topics and their everyday implications relatable to any audience.



Signs of renewal

Patricia McCarthy photo

# Calling all MECPA past presidents

(aka volunteers extraordinaire!)

We're hoping to host a gathering of MECPA past presidents later this year. If you've served in this capacity or work with or know someone who did, please **reach out to Trish Brigham** with contact information.

# fact that nothing ever stays the same in the tax world. Everything is always changing and evolving. It is never boring.

Favorite thing about my job: The

How has being an active member of

to interact with other accountants from

different practice areas all over Maine

has been beneficial to understanding

similarities and differences we all face.

the MECPA helped you? Being able

# BEYOND THE NUMBERS — continued from p. 1

essential to the culture in which I was raised. Board and committee service for arts organizations has included: Androscoggin Chorale, Bates Dance Festival, Community Crafts Workshop, L/A Arts, Maine Acting Company, Maine Music Society.



Service for community organizations has included: Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice, Auburn Public Library, Central Maine Healthcare, St. Mary's Hospital, Healthy Kids/Brighter Future, John F. Murphy Homes, Lewiston Public Library, St. Andre's Home, St. Phillip's Parish, United Way, University of Missouri. Professional

board & committee service includes AIC-PA Council, AICPA JEEP, MECPA, NEPR, NEGASC, NE Region CPA Societies.

I've also volunteered with Auburn Ski Association, Lost Valley Racing Club, Maine Adaptive Sports & Recreation, the Lung Association's Trek Across Maine, Multiple Sclerosis Bike to the Breakwater, Dempsey Challenge, Maine Cycling Club. Volunteerism is the gift that keeps on giving!

What do you like / dislike about your job? Service to the clients is the driver. Government retroactive changes are probably the biggest negative driver. Time and effort required for rapid-fire change is draining, exhausting, yet exhilarating when within certain tolerances.

What do you hope for the future of our profession? Greater involvement by we the practitioners in taking control of our

lives ... be a player ... get involved.

### How do you relieve work stress?

Family – my 100-year-young mother; my brothers & their families; my son Brant and his love of music and his little, Aaron; my daughter Kirsten, her husband Joel and their son Bergen; my partner Leslie. Friends. The great outdoors – biking, skiing, hiking, diving, golf, although I often have said a day on my bike, even with a flat tire, towers over my golfing experiences. Music. Books. The inspiration of every day.

Little-known facts about you? I rode the American Lung Association three-day, 180-mile Trek Across Maine for 20 years and have ridden for 26 years and continue to ride the two-day, Multiple Sclerosis 150-mile ride to help fund finding a cure for that vicious disease.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

### - continued from p. 1

These institutions administer the scholarship programs with input from the MECPA Board.

Interested in assisting the next generation of accountants? Gifts to the three endowments can be made anytime. Husson University: Gifts by mail can be sent to: Husson University
Advancement Office, Maine Society of CPAs Endowed Scholarship Fund, One College Circle, Bangor, ME 04401 or online here.

**UMaine:** Gifts to the Maine Society of CPA's Endowed Scholarship can be made payable to the University of Maine

Foundation, Two Alumni Place, Orono, Maine 04469-5792 or online here.

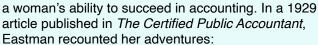
USM: Checks payable to USM Foundation and reference MECPA Scholarship: USM Foundation, Box 9300, Portland ME 04104-9300. Donations via wire transfer, or stock, email Vicki Laquerre or call 207.228.8521.

### Celebrating a Maine barrier breaker

March was Womens' History Month. Please grant us some editorial leeway in extending this period by a few weeks as we recognize Maine's first female CPA, Ellen Libby Eastman.

She also was the first woman to establish a public accounting practice in New England.

As a barrier breaker, Eastman was outspoken and eloquent regarding



"One must be willing and able to endure long and irregular hours, unusual working arrangements and difficult travel conditions. I have worked eighteen out of the twenty-four hours of a day with time for but one meal; I have worked in the office of a bank president with its mahogany furnishings and oriental rugs and I have worked in the corner of a grain mill with a grain bin for a desk and a salt box for a chair; I have been accorded the courtesy of the private car and chauffeur of my client and have also walked two miles over the top of a mountain to a lumber camp inaccessible even with a Ford car.

"I have ridden from ten to fifteen miles into the country after leaving the railroad, the only conveyance being a horse and traverse runners—and this in the severity of a New England winter. I have done it with a thermometer registering fourteen degrees below zero and a twenty-five mile per hour gale blowing.

"I have chilled my feet and frozen my nose for the sake of success in a job which I love. I have been snowbound in railroad stations and have been stranded five miles from a garage with both rear tires of my car flat. I have ridden into and out of open culvert ditches with the workmen shouting warnings to me. And always one must keep the appointment; 'how" is not the client's concern.'

(Does this sound familiar more than 100 years later!!) Eastman began her career as a clerk in a Maine lumber company, eventually becoming chief accountant. She studied for the CPA exam at night and received her certificate – No. 37 – in 1918.

In 1920, Eastman moved to New York, where she performed tax and audit services for the American Women's Hospital in Greece, NY. She became a member of the American Society of CPAs in 1925.

Eastman concluded her career at the law firm of Hawkins, Delafield & Longfellow in New York.

**Source: The Journal of Accountancy: Eight Special Women in Accounting** 



# Mark your calendar for our May 19 virtual Annual Meeting

### 'Envisioning Maine's Economic Future'

Please join us for this virtual presentation/discussion with the state's top experts about plans for Maine's recovery from the pandemic as well as long-term growth and sustainability.

**3-4:30 pm. All invited**. Free for members; \$18 nonmembers

Register here for Annual Meeting.

### Plus, more cool events ...

**April 29 & 30** 

**Fraud & Forensics Conference** 

May 6

Virtual Beer Tasting with N.H. Society of CPAs

**May 18** 

Exit Planning Strategies: ESOPS & Common Characteristics for Success. Register here.

### **May 27**

**Avalara CRUSH** – Free virtual event. Learn what to expect, how to navigate change and prevent tax compliance from getting in the way of opportunity post-pandemic. **Register** here.

### June 1

Paperless Office: How to Make it Work for your Business Register here.

### June 2

**Accounting & Auditing Virtual Conference** 

Sponsored by our colleagues at the Massachusetts Society of CPAs. MECPA members get member pricing. Check the box on the registration page for the discount. Register here.

### **August**

We hope to host another Softball Showdown!

Please check <u>mecpa.org</u> regularly as we continue to expand this calendar. And remember – top-quality online and self-study programs are conveniently available here anytime.

Connect with us on <u>LinkedIn</u>, where we frequently post notices and other information.



Happy Spring ... from glistening Higgins Beach in Scarborough!

Photo by Patricia McCarthy

### ---- CAREER PIPELINE: EDUCATION EFFORTS ----

# Join our Internship Collaborative

Hiring qualified staff in adequate numbers continues to challenge the accounting profession. Internships for students have proven to be effective recruiting and training tools.

The MECPA is convening a group of public accounting firms, private companies and government entities to discuss ways in which, together, we can expand the number of internship opportunities, improve students' experiences and build a quality candidate pool.

We're partnering with Live+Work Maine and Maine Career Catalyst, organizations focused on attracting, developing and retaining professional talent in Maine.

For more information, please contact <u>Trish</u> <u>Brigham.</u>

## Who's sitting for the CPA Exam ... and why?

This is excerpted from an article by **Brian Trout**, CPA, DBA, CMA and assistant professor of Millersville University, and **Eric Blazer**, Ph.D., and chair of accounting and finance department at Millersville.

Your hunch that the number of CPA candidates has been on the decline in recent years is correct. Demographic trends – fewer college-age students, stagnant salaries for accounting grads and expansion of alternate career choices – are all factors.

This is concerning because demand for accountants and auditors is expected to grow at least through 2028, at the same time significant numbers of CPAs are expected to retire.

A survey of accounting students at 13 Pennsylvania college and universities revealed that students' perceptions, attitudes, motivations and demographic variables all affect intentions to sit for the CPA exam. Three of these – intrinsic motivation, continued education and social influence – were determined to have the greatest impact. Students who reported stronger agreement with statements that accounting offers a personally fulfilling career path and is interesting are 2.37 times more likely to sit for the exam.

The 150-hour credit requirement did not appear to be of significant concern to students pursuing the CPA exam. Colleges and universities can play a role in enhancing student's perceptions about continuing their education

by providing undergraduates with valuable programs and clearly defined pathways to earning the additional 30 credit hours.

Family, friends, employers and professional associations also play a part. These social influencers can encourage students to sit for the exam and communicate the value society places on the CPA credential.

Researchers found that every unit of social influence experienced by a student increased the likelihood of them sitting for the exam by 1.75 times.

(MECPA member Cathy Connolly, an expert in forensic accounting, is one such positive influencer, volunteering her time in a variety of ways to encourage new CPAs. She recently presented at the Madison Area Memorial High School career fair.

"The career fair was so great, the students posed a few good questions (especially amongst the upperclassman) and my profession also received compliments from the sophomores in the form of 'forensic accounting doesn't sound as boring as we thought it would be.' It was a good exercise to think about how much reading, writing and communications factor into a successful project or career in accounting. I must have said 'I really don't do a lot of math' a dozen times!")

Read Brian and Eric's whole story here.

## **CPA Evolution initiative is closing knowledge gaps**

Employers need staff with expanded technological know-how, but many traditional accounting graduates are falling short.

CPA Evolution, an initiative supported by the AICPA and NASBA, is the profession's answer to correcting this mismatch and is currently in early implementation stages.

Here's a short primer on where things stand:

- The new exam will be rolled out in January 2024. An exposure draft for public comment is expected by mid 2022.
- A task force has been created to address the needs of candidates in transition between the two exams and adjustments to testing systems to accommodate six sections, vs. the current four sections.

# Features that will carry forward to the new exam:

- Aimed at 1-2 year experience level
- No more than 16 hours of testing

- No new experience requirements to sit for the exam
- Candidate must pass 4 sections, taken in any order
- No separate time limits to pass core and discipline sections

# Features that will characterize the new exam:

- Candidate must pass 3 core sections and 1 focus/discipline (three options)
- Candidates must select only one discipline
- Discipline passed will not differentiate the license granted
  - All sections cover discrete content

#### The three disciplines include:

- IsC: Information Systems & Controls.
   Sample content: IT governance,
   Data Governance, IT Risk Assessment,
   Information Security, Tests of Internal Control, SOC
- BAR: Business Analysis & Reporting.
   Sample Content: Financial Statement Analysis, Operations Management.

Emerging Reporting framework, State & local government deep dive, Advanced financial accounting topics

- TCP: Tax Compliance and Planning.

Sample content: Advanced individual tax compliance and planning, personal financial planning, advanced entity tax compliance

The academic community plays a significant role in nearly every aspect of CPA Evolution. Business and education leaders are jointly working to create model curriculum which will address current gaps in curriculum offerings, particularly in the areas of SOC, digital acumen and predictive analysis.

Read NASBA's Curriculum Gap
Survey here

The AICPA has taken several steps to support college and university faculty through this process, including outreach to textbook publishers, expansion of the **Academic Resource Hub** and monthly webinar offerings.



Make some ripples!

Patricia McCarthy photo

# Data can tell quite a story

\$2.7 billion

Anticipated cost of planned mission to Mars

\$4.1 trillion

U.S. spending on WWII

\$7 trillion

COVID-related federal economic stimulus: \$7 trillion

Source: AICPA

\* Keep an eye on your Inbox for membership dues renewal notices. (Even your spam folder!)
We love having you as a member and hope you'll stick with us! \*