



CONSULTING MATTERS

A publication of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Independent Computer Consultants Association

www.iccadelval.org

February 2004

From the President

by Keith Mast
Access Consultant
President
ICCA/Delaware Valley



Keith Mast
Access Consultant
President
ICCA Delaware Valley

Kerry. Edwards. Dean. Bush. If you turn on the TV, it's hard *not* to notice the many politicians claiming they are the best candidate. I am usually interested to hear what they have to say. I like to hear them answer the question "will you stay in politics if you are not elected President?" They never say "I plan to spend more time with my family." They always say "**I am going to win!**" There's no reason to talk about losing.

Herrera. Weber. Mast. How would ICCA members react if one of us said, "I'm running for President and I'm the best candidate. The other candidates are way too liberal." Let's be honest. We usually don't have more than one candidate for President. Or any of the other elected positions. But if we did, it would feel strange to hear someone saying "I'm the best candidate." That's not how we (Del Val ICCA) do our politics.

On March 11, 2004, we will have our chapter elections. Our current officers and terms are listed below. Officer terms in bold will expire unless re-elected.

Office		Term Expires
President	Keith Mast	3/31/05
Vice President	Michael McAndrews	3/31/04
Treasurer	George Smith	3/31/04
Secretary	Cynthia Cole-Macia	3/31/05
Director	Leigh Weber	3/31/05
Director	Patricia Pickup	3/31/04
Director	Vishnu Tambi	3/31/04
Director	Rose McNeil	3/31/05

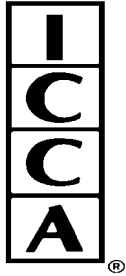
If you would like to run for one of the positions expiring, please contact me or another member of the board. The director positions can fulfill any number of chapter duties, depending on the needs of the chapter and the interests of the director. Currently, our directors are helping with these duties.

In this issue.....

<i>President's article</i>	1
<i>Meeting information</i>	2
<i>Make Sure You Get Paid—Every Time!</i>	3
<i>New Member Company Profile</i>	4
<i>ICCA Upcoming Dinner Meeting Dates</i>	4
<i>Delaware Valley Tech Calendar</i>	7
<i>Board of Directors</i>	7

Membership	Maintain membership numbers Get members involved Ask for member feedback Review & update member benefits
Marketing	Let the public know about ICCA Let the public know about our services Publish the newsletter
Website	Maintain the current website Help implement a new user interface Help maintain the email lists

(Continued on page 2)



**Meeting
Information
610-394-9090**

**info@iccadelval.org
www.iccadelval.org**

6:00 P.M. Networking & Cash Bar
7:00 P.M. Dinner
8:15 P.M. Meeting & Program

Entire Evening Prepaid	\$30 Members	\$40 Guest
Entire Evening at Door	\$40 Members	\$45 Guest
Networking/Speaker	Free Members	\$5 Guest

First time guests pay member rates. Prepayment must be received and cancellations for refunds must be made by Monday before meeting. Credit Cards accepted (MC, Visa, Discover). If there is more than one person in your party, we request that you pre-pay. Note that making a reservation is a promise to pay. "No-Shows" will be billed.

Mail Check Payable to:
ICCA Delaware Valley
125 N. Highland Avenue
Lansdowne, PA 19050



**TOP TOPICS at
ICCA DeVal
2003-2004**

by George Smith, GRS Associates

For the **January 8th** meeting at the Airport Hilton, we were very fortunate to catch **Bonnie Huval**, passing through the area on her way back from an assignment in England to her home base in Texas. Ms Huval's talk "Make Sure You Get Paid, And Other Business Basics" was very well received by a good size crowd.

Next month we will be at our Delaware location for a presentation on workflow management. This will probably be of particular interest to our larger member firms, and to those who consult in this field. (Though I personally can always use hints on better organizing.) The speaker will be **Steve Knapp**, a Product Manager at MKS, Inc.

As I said last month, I will be resigning as program chair at the end of this season, and we need a replacement. The position does not need to consume a terrible amount of time, but it does require some attention to detail. There are six 'tasks' involved: book the sites; develop a theme; get speakers; remind speakers close to their date; make a/v arrangements; and thank the speaker. None of these need fall solely on the program chair, although the speaker reminders and thank you's are probably easier to do than to delegate.

I'll give some details on the tasks in future columns. For now, I just want to say that seeing the final program come out in print each year is very satisfying!

I look forward to all of you at the Holiday Inn Select in Delaware on **February 12.**

**Meeting Locations:
(Please call the hotel for directions.)**

Philadelphia Airport Hilton

215-365-4150
4509 Island Avenue
Philadelphia, PA

DoubleTree Guest Suites

610-834-8300
640 W. Germantown Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA

Clairon Hotel

856-428-2300
Route 70 & I-295
Cherry Hill, NJ

Holiday Inn Select

302-792-2700
630 Naamans Road
Claymont, DE

From the President

(continued from page 1)

Public Services Evaluate our public services
Can we improve our monthly meetings?
What other services should we provide?
Help new consultants with FAQs.

Some of the director positions will be expiring in March. Others will remain filled for another year. However, if you would like to help in one of the areas listed above, please let us know.

We can shift positions if needed to accommodate a new member. You don't have to be "presidential" to be on the ICCA Board of Directors... You just have to be willing to help our chapter be successful.

Make Sure You Get Paid—Every Time!

by Bonnie Huval, Seneschal Incorporated

We all love to make sales. Land a big order or sign up a big new customer, and your consulting business will turn into a money machine. Won't it?

Maybe not. There are plenty of ways of not getting paid. The most common are:

You fail to bill completely and promptly.

Develop and follow good procedures to keep this from happening.

You inadvertently sell more than you meant the price to cover.

Exactly what are you selling? Make certain your contracts place proper limits on what is sold and done. No contract should unreasonably restrain you from doing business with other customers. Your proprietary tools, ideas, procedures, or other trade secrets should be protected. Sell license rights instead of ownership, unless you truly intend to sell ownership. Sell only what you intend to sell, and give away only what you intend to give away. As a consultant, your most valuable product may be intangible. You may not even realize you are selling what your customers regard as your most important offering. If you don't realize you are selling it, you will inadvertently give it away free of charge!

The contract is too loose.

- **Liability and indemnification are inadequately bounded; or**
- **deliverables, acceptance mechanisms and time limits are not clearly defined; or**
- **invoicing and payment terms and timelines are vague.**

Your attorney can probably devise adequate clauses for liability and indemnification, but will need your help to understand

- What you must deliver
- How expenses (especially travel) are to be handled
- What happens if you cannot fulfill your promises because of a dependency on someone else who falls short
- How your customer's satisfaction will be signified
- What warranty you offer and what you are obligated to do if the customer is not satisfied

Collaborate with your attorney to make sure the contract is right. After the first in-depth collaboration, brief guidance to your attorney will probably be enough for most subsequent contracts.

Your customer disputes a bill.

If the aspects of the contract mentioned immediately above are thorough, the reason for any dispute over a bill can be readily pinpointed and resolved to clear your customer's objection.

Your customer ages the bills, or takes undeserved discounts, or sends payments that are no good, or never pays.

Whenever you send a bill and then wait for payment, you are extending credit to the customer. Not all customers are worthy of that trust.

"Aging the bills" is a term for paying bills at the last moment before you would take an action the customer is unwilling to bear, instead of paying when bills are due. Organizations in a cash flow squeeze need to age their bills in order to survive. Many large companies age their bills even during good times. If a company normally ages its bills, it will age bills longer when its cash flow drops.

[\(continued on page 6\)](#)

Join the ICCA!

Become a part of the region's premier association for Independent Computer Consultants.

Membership rates are:

- * \$100 Local Chapter Dues
- * \$175 National dues for 1 person firm
- * \$225 National dues for 2-9 person firm
- * \$275 National dues for 10+ person firm
- * \$25 National Processing fee
(1st time only)

This Translates to:

- * \$300 for a first-time 1 person firm
- * \$275 subsequent years for 1 person firm

Call 610-394-9090 to request an application, or fill out membership application on line at www.icca.org



Here, Here! Welcome New Members

Michael Long
MagnaTech Inc
5 Fox Ridge Road
Glenmoore, PA 19343
610-458-0137
michaellong@comcast.net
<http://www.magnatech-pa.com>
Expertise: project management

Ronald Jones
Precision Technologies
Support
258 Wilmington Pike
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
610-459-3658
www.pre-tech.com
Expertise: LAN Support

Brian J. Browne
Edoxa, Inc.
218 Cowbell Road
Willow Grove, PA 19090
215-659-0801
Expertise: Information Security
and Network Performance

Upcoming Dinner Meeting Dates 2004

* **2/12 Holiday Inn Select**
Claymont, DE

Topic: **Defining &
Implementing Standardized
Process & Workflow Across An
Organization: The Key to Good
Corporate Governance**

Speaker: **Steve Knapp,
Product Manager, MKS Inc.**

Steve Knapp, Product Manager, MKS Inc., will speak on the importance of defining and implementing standardized processes and workflows across the entire organization. Learn what to consider both culturally, and technologically, when establishing a process management system, and how you can move from chaotic and ad hoc processes to a higher level of maturity.

Joint Meeting with TEMPO

* **3/11 Doubletree Guest Suites**
Plymouth Meeting, PA

Topic: **“Enabling our Clients to Manage
Change”**

Speaker: **Audrey Jaffe
Jaffe Consulting LLC**

Each of our projects involves change... in the way people use technology, or work, think and act ... to some degree. Audrey Jaffe, Principal Consultant of Jaffe Consulting LLC, will discuss effective strategies for trainers and systems consultants to help clients cope with change.



New Member Company Profile

In each issue of Consulting Matters, we introduce you to one or more new members and firms. In this issue, we introduce you to **Michael Long, MagnaTech Inc.**

Michael began his career in the computer industry with Dupont in the early 1970's. Starting with mainframe operations, he moved into software coding in various languages and on various platforms before moving into project management and then leadership. His last 15 years of project management has been in the healthcare, energy, banking, retail, and real estate industries. Michael's personal strengths are in leadership, team development, training, and presentations.

Some of the applications Michael has been involved in:

- Project manager for the Sarbanes/Oxley compliance-related security initiatives
- Project management for HIPAA Privacy related activities
- Project management for Payroll migration from PeopleSoft to ADP
- Migration of expense management from PeopleSoft and internal legacy application to Web based ASP
- IT Help Desk setup and implementation.
- Managed all activities required to install and implement a company's loan origination (web-based) applications for clients.
- Technical management of a credit card application system and the internet service provider interface
- Product evaluation, selection and implementation of a new client/server Problem Management, Asset Management and Decision Support system
- Human resource/Payroll system - project leader responsible for evaluation, and implementation of a new client/server HRIS payroll system for all company personnel.
- Project leader responsible for developing and implementing a client server contact management application
- Project leader directing the migration of numerous (40+) applications from DuPont to ICI Americas following a partial merger of the two companies.
- Directed the creation of a database and application for daily operations of a Corporate Executive Information System.

- Project leader who directed the creation of a Daily Operating Statistics Database for a direct marketing company
- Project leader responsible for moving operations from a HP3000 platform to a PC/Novell platform.
- Student Information System - project leader of an 8-person team responsible for the design of a relational database and implemented
- Time Management System - project leader
- Refinery Accounting System modifications and evaluation of possible replacements
- Regional Tech. Manager, Senior Tech. Advisor for Cognos
- PNB Mortgage Processing System

On a personal note, Michael is married (23 years) with 4 kids, ages 12 (twins, boy and girl), 16 (girl) and 19 (boy and a freshman in Drexel).

He's been in the IT industry for 30 years. Oh, and he's a big Flyers fan. Be sure to welcome Michael at the next ICCA meeting.

ICCA MEETING

S C H E D U L E

6:00 P.M. -- Networking & Cash Bar
7:00 P.M. -- Dinner
8:15 P.M. -- Meeting & Program

Entire Evening Prepaid
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e-mail info@iccadelval.org

Make Sure You Get Paid—Every Time!

(continued from page 3)

Offer incentive discounts only when you are sure your customer will not take the discount without doing whatever is required to earn the discount. With the right customer, though, incentive discounts can encourage a customer to pay early, or in a desired manner such as electronic funds transfer.

With customer whose checks might bounce, consider requiring safer forms of payment. Typical forms of payment include: cash, certified or cashier's check, traveler's check, money order, personal or business check, wire transfer, electronic funds transfer, credit card, charge card, debit card, or cyberspace payment service. Choose payment types that fit the business relationship.

You lack an effective means to make a delinquent customer pay.

One of the most common business-killing mistakes is an assumption that customers will uphold their end of the bargain—and if they don't, hiring a collection agency or taking them to court will solve the problem. In reality, both collection agencies and legal action are expensive last resorts that can become a bigger problem than the unpaid bill.

When a customer never pays, an intolerable consequence is your best way of wringing out the payment. If you do everything else right but cannot impose intolerable consequences, you cannot make your customer pay.

The choice of "intolerable consequence" tends to be a matter of business more than law. Perhaps the software you wrote begins requiring a license key 30 days after the final payment is due, and you will issue the key only after payment is in hand. For hardware, depending upon federal and state law, a critical hardware item (such as a fuse that is installed but removable) may be subject to repossession.

Making sure you get paid is not a problem with a simple canned solution. You must integrate

- knowledge of your customers,
- behavior that encourages customers to take you seriously,
- clauses in your contracts and terms,
- procedures,
- and
- enforcement tools

By effectively integrating the above, you can make it happen.

About the Author:

Bonnie Huval's experience ranges from serving on a board of directors that pulled a large non-profit back from the financial brink, to her consulting firm which got paid on time by WorldCom while other creditors waited for their checks.

Her primary business is her consulting firm, Seneschal Incorporated. Her firm enhances or builds software that generates revenue or cuts costs, instead of only counting money. Clients range from Du Pont in manufacturing to MCI WorldCom in telecommunications.

ICCA Delaware Valley Shirts

\$25 per shirt. Various colors available.

Size	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Color	Green	Ecru	White	Navy	

Qty _____ Total Enclosed: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

ICCA Delaware Valley Mugs.

\$5 each

Qty _____ Total Enclosed: _____

Send this form with check payable to:

ICCA
125 N. Highland Ave
Lansdowne, PA 19050

Or call/email your VISA/MC/Discover card number, expiration date, and total dollar amount of order to

610-394-9090
icca@erols.com

Shirts/mugs will be ready for pickup by the following meeting.

February Tech Calendar

12 - Feb

ICCA Del Val Chapter Meeting
"The Key to Good Corporate
Governance"
Steve Knapp, Product Manager, MKS
Inc.,
Holiday Inn Select
Claymont, DE
6pm - 7pm Networking
7pm - 8pm Dinner
8pm - 9pm Presentation
www.iccadelval.org

13 - Feb

Technology Tour- Value Recovery, Inc.
8:30-11am
Bridgeport, NJ
www.njtc.org

24 - Feb

NAACP Diversity Career Fair
11:30-4:30pm
Pennsylvania Convention Center
Philadelphia, PA
www.naacpjobfair.com

25-Feb

NJTC Networking Event
5-7pm
Atomav
Somerset, NJ
www.njtc.org

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● **Consulting Matters** always
● welcomes newsletter article
● submissions.
●

● If you have an article that would
● be of interest to the computer
● consulting community, send your
● article to:
● newsletter@iccadelval.org.

● MS-Word or plain text is preferred.
● Article submission deadline for
● the **March** Issue of Consulting
● Matters **February 23rd**.
●

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