

ACCOUNTING AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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STATEMENT FROM THE EDITOR

Commencing this year I assumed the editorship of *Accounting and the Public Interest*, taking over from Jesse Dillard. We all owe Jesse our most ardent gratitude. Through his ingenuity, hard work, and commitment the Public Interest Section's risky venture of publishing an on-line journal is a success. I promise to do my best to sustain the momentum Jesse has generated and not jeopardize what is his legacy to our section and our discipline.

The journal's policy and philosophy are not going to change; the journal will continue to reflect the scholarly concerns of the Public Interest Section and its friends. Over the last generation accounting practice's ambitions and reach have expanded substantially. FASB writes increasingly arcane laws that govern and, thus, influence economic behavior and outcomes for everyone. GASB now writes law that increasingly dictates how our political life closest to where we live our daily lives is to be conducted. That accounting and auditing are part of society's *regulatory* apparatus is patently obvious. So to continue slavishly to speak of accounting and auditing only in the language of private, economic interests is to purposely choose to remain ignorant about potentially important aspects of the practice. The late Carl Devine would repeatedly remind his students that, "What accountants do, matters." That is, our practice has consequences and is, therefore, not merely a collection of neutral technologies. As Professor Anthony Hopwood trenchantly observed in his speech at the last AAA annual meeting, accounting isn't a science, either, but is quite emphatically a *practice*. As a practice, he noted, accounting can be spoken about any way we choose. *Accounting and the Public Interest* was created to encourage accounting scholars, particularly in the U.S., to freely seek understanding about accounting as the practice it is, rather than merely as a sub-discipline of economics restrained by its marginalist discourse. *Accounting and the Public Interest* will continue in that purpose.