



For information about restaurants, things to do, and sights to see while in Chicago, click the "Annual Meeting Information" link on our home page at <http://AAAhq.org>.

It is with great enthusiasm that I invite you to the 2007 American Accounting Association's Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois on Sunday, August 5 through Wednesday August 8. With its theme, "**Imagined Worlds of Accounting**," the meeting will aim to explore new directions for all aspects of our discipline.

The centerpiece of the meeting is a series of three plenary sessions on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings. On Monday, the plenary speakers will help us envision new links between Accounting scholarship and the fields of Anthropology and Archaeology. Professor Joseph Henrich will speak on "**Culture and the Nature of Human Sociality**." Professor Henrich's theoretical and empirical research has been published in *Nature* and *Science*, he has coedited *Foundations of Human Societies* and is the coauthor of *Why Humans Cooperate*. The second plenary speaker on Monday morning is Professor Denise Schmandt-Besserat, who will speak on "**The Origin of Accounting**." Professor Schmandt-Besserat's research on prehistoric tokens ties these artifacts to the first human use of accounting. Her book based on this research, *How Writing Came About*, was named by *American Scientist* as one of the 100 books that most shaped science in the 20th century.

On Tuesday morning, Professors Michael Hechter and Eric Posner will **explore the emergence of social norms**. Professor Hechter is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. *Social Norms* (2005) is among his extensive writings on nationalism and group solidarity, rational choice explanations of macro-social outcomes, and the role and measurement of individual values in social theory. Professor Posner's books include *Law and Social Norms* (2000) and *Chicago Lectures on Law and Economics* (2000). These talks will help us chart new directions to better understand how accounting norms may develop in the absence of explicit standard setting.

Professors Robert E. Lucas, Jr. and Vernon L. Smith will explore economic issues that I believe will be relevant to future accounting scholarship in Wednesday morning's plenary session. Professor Lucas, who will speak on **the economics of growth**, has published several books and his articles have appeared in most leading academic journals in economics. He received the 1995 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel "for having developed and applied the hypothesis of rational expectations, and thereby having transformed macroeconomic analysis and deepened our



understanding of economic policy." Professor Smith will speak on "**Hayek and the Experiment.**" He has written extensively on capital theory, finance, natural resource economics and experimental economics, and was awarded the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel in 2002 "for having established laboratory experiments as a tool in empirical economic analysis, especially in the study of alternative market mechanisms."

A series of concurrent sessions will follow up on the themes raised in the plenary sessions to focus on developing links between the plenary addresses and accounting scholarship. These sessions will feature remarks by noted accounting scholars on how these areas of scholarly inquiry are relevant to the work of AAA members. In addition, there will be ample opportunity for Q&A to raise pertinent issues. Finally, some of the afternoon concurrent sessions have been designed with the intent of further developing the themes raised in the morning of each day.

The highlight of Tuesday lunch is an address by one of our own—the 2007 Presidential Scholar John Dickhaut of the University of Minnesota. In addition to a long line of experimental work in accounting and economics, John has made fundamental contributions in the emerging area of "**Neuroeconomics.**" His recent research has attracted attention from scholars in Economics and Neuroscience as well as scholars in other business disciplines like Marketing. More recently, he has returned to his "accounting roots" with papers on the foundations of accounting. His exploration of the links between accounting foundations and the human brain promises insights into "Imagined Worlds of Accounting."

Under the leadership of Greg Waymire, the AAA Annual Meeting Program Advisory Committee is planning well over 200 concurrent and panel sessions, including several on issues such as data mining, the history of accounting scholarship, fundamental changes to the accounting curriculum, financial literacy, and the archiving of accounting data.

I have worked with the Program Advisory Committee to make sure that we use *all* the days of the meeting to assemble a program of maximum quality that will excite the imaginations of our members and serve as a resource to bolster their intellectual capital. Consequently, I encourage you to plan on staying for the entire meeting to avoid missing some of the great events in store for the afternoon of the final day of the meeting.

As noted already, our Wednesday plenary session features two Nobel Laureates in Economics. An important panel session on "**Big Unanswered Questions in Accounting**" is set for Wednesday afternoon. This session will provide impetus for future scholarship by posing the following question to a group of noted accounting scholars: "**What is the most important issue in Accounting that we think we understand but in fact do not?**" The scholars tackling this question include Ray Ball, Rob Bloomfield, Joel Demski, Steve Huddart, and Venky Nagar. The day will close with a raffle drawing for a prize immediately following the last session of the Meeting.

While I hope that this year's program will be sufficient to hold your interest for four days, I do encourage you to take advantage of your visit to enjoy the city of Chicago. The convention hotels, the Chicago Hilton and the Hilton Palmer House, are a short walk away from the world-renowned Chicago Art Institute, the historic Grant Park, and the beautiful lakefront. Other nearby museums include the Field Museum of Natural History, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium. And, of course, Chicago is home to shopping on Michigan Avenue's Magnificent Mile, some of the best restaurants and theater in the country, and home to two major league baseball teams.

So, I hope you'll plan to attend the 2007 AAA Annual Meeting, which promises an extraordinary opportunity to build your intellectual capital, renew old friendships or develop new ones, and explore the boundaries of imagination in one of the great cities of the world.

Shyam Sunder,
American Accounting Association President



Shyam Sunder