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*Dr. Sue Gonda, Ph.D.  
 San Diego Women of Note*

*Monthly Dinner Meeting  
 Thursday, January 18, 2007*

Dr. Gonda is currently the chair of the Department of History at Grossmont College, where she specializes in Early and Modern American History and American Women’s History. She also serves as adjunct faculty in the Women’s Studies Department at San Diego State University.

Dr. Gonda is also the Curator for the Women’s History Museum & Educational Center, a non-profit organization whose goal is to increase the self-esteem and aspirations of women and girls by revealing the daily contributions of women in our society and the opportunities available to them, as exemplified by women in the past.

Dr. Sue Gonda is an experienced and entertaining presenter specializing in American Women’s History. She has presented widely on topics ranging from women’s fashion and health to women’s roles in U.S. wars and more.

**Speaker:** Dr. Sue Gonda, Ph.D.

**Topic:** San Diego Women of Note

**Time:** 5:30p.m. Registration/Networking  
 6:15p.m. Dinner  
 7:00p.m. Speaker Presentation

**Place:** Country Inn & Suites  
 (formerly the Prime Hotel)  
 5975 Lusk Blvd., Sorrento Valley  
 (east of I-805 off Mira Mesa Blvd.)  
 Phone: 858-558-1818

**Cost:** Members: \$25 prepaid (\$29 at the door)  
 Guests: \$30 prepaid (\$34 at door)  
 Students: \$20 prepaid (\$24 at door)

**Menu:** Fajita Bar - Beef, Chicken  
 or Vegetarian Fajitas  
 Refried Beans & Mexican Rice  
 Bunuelos served with Kahlua Cream  
 Coffee and Tea.

**RSVP:** To RSVP, please reply to this message indicating whether you are a member, guest, or student, and whether you will be making a prepayment through PayPal to [aswasandiego@yahoo.com](mailto:aswasandiego@yahoo.com), or mailing a check to ASWA, c/o Lynn D. Boster, CPA, 900 Lane Ave, Suite 100, Chula Vista, CA 91914.

From the President's Office

## Happy New Year!

Yes, it is that time of year to make New Year's resolutions about what it is that we want to do differently for the future, whether it is to save more money, shed some newly gained pounds from holiday get-togethers, working less, or just spending more time with friends and family.

Why not take a few extra hours each month with ASWA at our monthly meetings. There is so much to gain from attending our meetings such as networking, meeting new people, learning about new topics in accounting, or ways to make our lives easier.

ASWA is your organization; tell us what you want. If you have some ideas about how we can make ASWA more relevant to you, please let me know at [aswasandiego@yahoo.com](mailto:aswasandiego@yahoo.com).

Elizabeth Childress  
President  
ASWA, San Diego Chapter

## Strategies for Effectively Managing Year-End Close.

Year-end close occurs annually for businesses across the nation and marks a precise end to the past year's financial activities. During this time, companies are responsible for sealing their records and handing off a complete and accurate review of their financial performance.

Completing the year-end close successfully usually includes very arduous processes that often mean late hours for key accounting and finance staff. The crunch time leading up to the year-end close can be stressful and hectic for all internal stakeholders, but employers can take steps to effectively manage this annual process.

The current regulatory environment has brought about the scrutiny of financial reporting and analysis in board rooms, offices and cubicles around the country. Companies have been forced to employ rigorous internal controls to feed comprehensive, timely and accurate reporting. Producing these metrics is increasingly vital to conducting compliant as well as efficient operations. As such, monthly and quarterly reports are now reviewed as vigorously as year-end financial records.

Although this scrutiny on monthly and quarterly reporting can cost employers additional time and money, there are very real benefits in relation to executing yearend close. Often, much of the year-end processing is spent cleaning up errors and re-checking monthly reports. However, if companies are more thorough with this process throughout the year, they will find less to clean up at year-end close. More time can be spent on general analysis and "business as usual" tasks if data integrity and reporting standards are more closely aligned with an organization's standard operating procedures.

### **plan ahead.**

Finance and accounting professionals must constantly be mindful of the yearend close. Unlike audits, year-end close is never a surprise. The date is established and circulated far in advance of the process, providing no excuse for companies who have not planned appropriately. With this in mind, companies can strategically plan and work towards a more seamless and efficient close process, beginning as early as the first day of the new year. Creating a detailed, well-designed plan that can be circulated far in advance of deadlines is a great way to engage and prepare employees.

Have your accounting staff order and review relevant documentation as early as possible. Given that regulatory changes can occur each year, keeping up to speed on these updates in a timely matter allows companies to be proactive and prepared with the right information. Accurate and complete employee data is also vital to a successful close. Be sure to consistently review staff information to ensure the necessary data has been collected and entered correctly in online systems and databases. This will simplify the production of key payroll and employment tax reports.

(continued on next page)

## Effectively Managing Year-End Close (cont.)

### staffing for success.

Since year-end close only occurs once a year, it does not fall within the “business as usual” bucket. Consequently, during this time there is a need for additional resources to step in and assist while simultaneously managing everyday responsibilities and tasks that are also critical to the business.

Knowing the risks and challenges associated with this balancing act, managers must be sure to remind employees of their function in the year-end close process as early as possible. Ensure you have scheduled adequate time and resources to meet deadlines and create contingency plans to prepare for unexpected occurrences.

Ask experienced staff to provide training and guidance to new and/or temporary staff. The individuals who have gone through the process before can be invaluable resources to those that are new. Reward employees who go above and beyond the call of duty during this time period. Consider giving these individuals well-deserved perks which can serve to boost morale and re-invigorate their efforts.

Keeping staff happy and expressing your appreciation for their hard work is key to managing your human capital effectively. A company-wide event or complimentary vacation day can also be a great way to thank staff for their efforts and keep people on board year over year.

### internal communication.

In order to run a successful year-end close, input will be necessary from all senior managers and finance professionals across the organization. When discrepancies in reporting are discovered, input from accounting staff not involved in year-end analysis may be needed — either for additional perspective or expert counsel.

Procedures and reporting from department to department need to be transparent, and senior managers must make themselves available to answer questions and clear up discrepancies before records are closed. Ultimately, accurate year-end close information concerns all staff. As such, employees should be aware of the importance of this process and should be engaged as necessary from start to finish.

### make technology your friend.

Payroll, tax and project management software are just a few of the technical work streams that feed into effectively completing year-end processes. Making sure these technologies are managed day to day, and are prepared to produce the timely data for analysis is imperative not only to year-end processes, but to running an efficient business. It's especially important at year-end close to determine how all of these systems will interface.

Each function — from HR to finance to legal — typically uses specific tools to support their unique infrastructure. These data sources house important information and, at year-end close, must interface to provide a consolidated company-wide view. Finance and accounting teams must understand the systems currently utilized and how they will impact each other during end-of-year reporting.

It is also important to remember that the value of these technical resources are dependent upon their accuracy and integrity. Backing up data and running frequent audits before and after closing procedures is imperative. Remember that using business applications requires ongoing maintenance, so be sure to schedule the appropriate time and resources to incorporate these activities within your regular operations.

### learn from experience.

One of the best strategies to process improvement is taking the time to learn from prior experience. Employers should take the time after each year's close to debrief on the process and make recommendations for improvement for the next year. Find out what worked and what didn't. If staff was an issue, create a better plan for your human capital for the next year.

If the rigor of your monthly processes was working

### — keep it up.

Budget planning is also extremely important. Business and reporting applications can turn a year's worth of data into valuable planning and forecasting information. Creating a strong budget will help when reconciling planned spend to actuals at the end of the year. Learn from mistakes made in budgeting and implement improvements year-over-year. Set key performance indicators to accurately track these improvement measures and ensure goals are consistently being met and efficiencies are implemented.

### embrace. refine. succeed!

Your organization must embrace the year-end process and embed tactics to improve its execution within your standard operating procedures. Taking the time to craft a well-planned, year-long approach, which includes effective use of both time and resources, can make the difference between a stressful or stress-free year-end close.

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For more expert insights on the latest finance trends, and for advice on how to staff your department during year-end close, contact Ajilon Finance today at 1.866.GO AJILON or visit [ajilonfinance.com](http://ajilonfinance.com).



**The San Diego Chapter of American Society of Women Accountants invites you to join us at an upcoming event for networking, fun, and professional development!**

**1/18/07 Dinner Meeting**

**Speaker: Dr. Sue Gonda, Ph.D., Curator**

**Women's History Museum and Educational Center**

**"San Diego Women of Note"**

**Country Inn & Suites, 5975 Lusk Blvd., San Diego, CA 92121  
858.558.1818**

**2/15/07 Dinner Meeting**

**Speaker: Kathi Burns, Founder**

**Add Space To Your Life!**

**A Professional Organizing and Image Consulting Agency**

**"Give Your Closet and Your Image a Facelift"**

**Tutto Mare Restaurant, 4365 Executive Drive, First Floor, San Diego,  
CA 92121  
858.597.1188**

**4/19/07 Dinner Meeting**

**Speaker: Ann Regan, ID Analytics**

**"Identity Fraud Detection and Prevention"**

**Location to be announced.**

**5/17/07 Annual Public Relations Dinner**

**Speaker: To be announced**

**Tom Ham's Lighthouse  
2150 Harbor Island Drive, San Diego, CA 92101  
619.291.9110**

**Please visit [www.aswasandiego.org](http://www.aswasandiego.org) for more details**



## Membership News

### Welcome new member Michelle Hall !

Michelle is Assistant Controller at the W Hotel. She has a Bachelors Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management and is currently attending the UCSD Extension program for accounting.



Visit our website at  
[www.aswasandiego.org](http://www.aswasandiego.org)

## MISSION STATEMENT

*ASWA is a not-for-profit membership organization with the purpose of enabling women in all fields of accounting to achieve their personal,*

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 Robert Half/Accountemps - La Jolla  
 4365 Executive Drive, Suite 450  
 San Diego, CA 92121  
 858.452.2626*



## Member Birthdays !

**Elizabeth Childress 1/15**

**Kristina Heckart 1/19**



## Membership Anniversaries !

**Masami Angus 1/28/2003 4 years**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thurs. Board Meeting-4:45 p.m.  
 Feb. 15 Monthly Dinner Meeting-5:30 p.m.  
 Katy Burns, Add Space To Your Life  
 Tutto Mare Restaurant  
 4365 Executive Dr, First Floor  
 Phone: 858.597.1188  
 All are welcome!

### Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit any news to the editor at [silvia\\_ward25@yahoo.com](mailto:silvia_ward25@yahoo.com) or via phone 619-491-4991.

Feb. 2 for February

Mar. 30 for March

Apr. 27 for May

Note: There will not be a Board Meeting nor a Member Meeting in March.

Thurs. Board Meeting-4:45 p.m.  
 Apr. 19 Monthly Dinner Meeting-5:30 p.m.

**Ann Regan, ID Analytics  
 Identity Fraud & Prevention  
 Location to be announced**

Thurs. Board Meeting-4:45 p.m.  
 May 17 Annual Public Relations Dinner  
**Tom Ham's Lighthouse  
 2150 Harbor Island Drive**