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WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

By Frank W. Crawford III, CPA

"Quarantined at sea."

Those are three words I would never have thought I'd hear in my life, let alone live for the past month. A lot has happened since February 26, the day my wife, Cindy, and I left the United States for a cruise around the tip of South America to celebrate our 32nd wedding anniversary. Little did I know that the world would change so much in two weeks that it would barely be recognizable upon our eventual return a month later. After sailing and stopping at several South American ports during the 14-day cruise, we were denied entry into San Antonio, Chile, which was the point of our disembarkment and was to be the beginning of our trip home. Although no one was sick on board and there were no passengers showing any type of virus symptoms, no South American or Central American countries would allow us entry, which left passengers and crew no choice but to refuel, restock and set sail for San Diego—only an additional 15 more days at sea without stopping at any ports. Although we were allowed to roam around the ship freely, we were essentially “quarantined at sea.”

At our vacation's inception, the word “coronavirus” was a new word that wasn't talked about much in the U.S. and instead sounded to me much like a new type of Mexican beer, and “social distancing” wasn't even a concept yet (and by the way, try that on a crowded elevator). Now both seem to be in the vernacular of all countries. In addition, “hot spots” were a place I went to get free internet, not a place to avoid as they are now known.

Everything seems different, and we're not even home. We have yet to experience the toilet paper wars, but are not looking forward to it, as we have plenty of TP here.

Essential versus non-essential? I've always thought of accounting as the foundation of all essential services, but it doesn't appear that was initially clear to everyone in charge. It seems as if we accountants had to pitch the higher-ups to further clarify and classify us as essential. Perhaps someone explained that without us, many of those still qualifying to receive paychecks would get one because, in many cases, we accountants generate that kind of stuff.

I would have loved to have live streamed a GASB board meeting while stranded on the ship, but the internet on the ship is so slow, files attached in an email won't even open, let alone stream a live webcast. The GASB did announce they were considering a delay in the effective dates of certain accounting standards/pronouncements that were scheduled to go into effect this year. I told everybody via email and texting that I would believe that when I see a Waffle House close.

Oh, wait... Et tu, Waffle House, et tu? I guess it looks like the GASB may delay those effective dates by a year after all.

With the ship's desire to sustain entertainment and other on board activities during extra days, they asked for passengers to volunteer if they thought they could provide about an hour or so of various performance

QUARANTINE

AT SEA



options such as storytelling, juggling, magic tricks, etc. I mentioned that I was an accounting continuing education speaker who incorporates story telling and that I could easily provide a couple hours of such entertainment/education. You should have seen the looks on the faces of the ship entertainment staff in the audition room at that suggestion: A mix of bewilderment, disbelief and skepticism, but after a five-minute intro where they realized there was actually very little accounting in my presentation and, instead, a lot of funny stories that were accounting-related, they green-lit my cruise ship entertainment debut.

The next day, the presentation seemed to be a great hit for all seven people who attended, so I was happy. I think that performance, the celebration of our anniversary and winning all eight of the ship's ping-pong tournaments were the highlights of the trip. (I wasn't going to mention only three of us showed up for the tournaments or that half the time the other two didn't show up at all, but Cindy made put this part in here.)

I'm sure disembarkment will be a story in itself too, so we'll see. Until then, I guess we are all in the same boat... 🙌

