

# \$OLUTIONS\$

ACCOUNT RECEIVABLE SOLUTIONS, INC  
P.O. Box 184 • 301 N. Clinton Avenue • St. Johns, MI 48879  
Phone Toll Free 877-385-5729 • Fax 989-227-9511  
www.ar-s.net • E-mail collectors@ar-s.net

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## A MESSAGE FROM DAVID A. MAGELI

As we begin 2012, I thought a brief reflection of 2011 may be in order. For many of our employees last year was a year of great personal loss. Several staff members lost husbands, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters along with many other good friends. I can only hope that their memories remain strong in their hearts and that they remember the good times.

Professionally, we experienced a challenging but good year. While we can always do better yet, success is not measured by revenue growth, expenses or some kind of financial chart. We provided a stable work environment for our employees and they increased our overall recovery rate for our clients. We knew that by staying focused on our core service and implementing value added services the end result would be positive. And, we thank each of our client's for their continued support. Without your trust and accounts we couldn't help you by returning that revenue to make a positive impact to your financial wellbeing.

Like everyone else, I think 2012 may bring new challenges and with it opportunities. The world is changing so fast that these challenges are becoming common place, the opportunities enormous and I know our employees are ready for whatever they may face. A little calm from time to time would be a breath of fresh air.

As this edition goes to press we are in the final stages of a complex and comprehensive HIPAA compliance and security audit by an outside firm. Without question, this has been an enormous undertaking. The audit reviewed our operations as it relates to handling personal health information we receive from our medical clientele and the privacy procedures for handling all other confidential information. Everything we do has been examined, tested and changed if needed to maintain compliance with all applicable regulations of the HIPAA HITECH Security Act. Without question, it was money well spent. Our survival is dependent on our integrity and we must do everything within our means to maintain that integrity, and yours and your patient's confidence that we have taken every possible step to keep their healthcare information confidential.

While I have always felt confident we did a good job in this area, I was very pleased that our consultants gave our company very high marks that well exceeded what they normally have experienced. When this review is complete, we will be publishing our credentials in our next edition and posting them to our website.

*Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous New Year.*

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## SIX WAYS THE RECESSION HAS MADE ME SMARTER

1. I make saving a priority. Strangely enough, getting loans isn't easy today. Lesson one, always save. With every paycheck, squirrel something away. Some weeks it may be only a few dollars, once in awhile a hundred dollars. Before the recession I lived with minimal savings.
2. I pay my debts on time or ahead of time. Every dollar counts, high interest rates are not an option. I pay my debts on time and pay them down as quickly as possible. Mentally I feel better having all paid.
3. I have learned how to price match. Before the recession if I saw it and wanted it I bought it.
4. I question each purchase. I was once an impulse buyer, not anymore. I don't buy it unless I need it.
5. I know more. I did not know much about the stock market before the recession. Today I watch financial programming, and somehow feel empowered and less helpless, even though I am still pumping \$4 a gallon gasoline.
6. I plan ahead. Today I am more careful. I don't hope for a good future, I plan for it. I have met with a financial planner and am now planning for the next five, ten and twenty years. This lesson has kept me sane.



# ARS Speaks

Contributed by Jay Koehler

During 2011 many of us were asked to speak on a variety of collection subjects. In July Jeff Kent spoke to the Flint Chapter of the Michigan Medical Billers Association and the topic of his talk was "Collection Compliance". Craig Beachnaw spoke to the Saginaw Chapter in August on "Collection Best Practices", and in October Jay Koehler spoke to the Lansing Chapter on the topic of "Collection Updates". We thank the MMBA for these opportunities and encourage medical professionals who are not a member to consider joining this association.

In November, David A. Mageli, was the Keynote Speaker for the billing module at the Michigan Ambulatory Association's Annual Educational Conference held in Traverse City, where his speech was titled "Developing a Credit Policy". And Jay spoke to a billing and coding class at the Lansing Community College on "Real World of Collections." Additionally, Craig has been very active in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan conducting small group meetings on various collection topics.

If any of our sales and service professionals can be of service to you for an in-service meeting or collection round table meeting please contact us.

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## Ten Dishwasher Dos and Don'ts



According to the experts at Whirlpool and KitchenAid anyone over the age of four can load a dishwasher.

BELOW ARE A FEW TIPS.

1. Don't pre-rinse your dishes before loading them. Pre-rinsing can waste as much as 20 gallons of water and today's detergents are designed to attack food particles.
2. Load it systematically according to the manufacturer's instructions. Plates on the bottom, glasses on top and utensils in the basket.
3. Do use a rinse aid.
4. Don't use too much detergent. They suggest you use the all in one tablet.
5. Wash on the lightest cycle possible. Certainly, if you just fed the family a big spaghetti dinner and have loaded the dishwasher pots and all, use the longer cycle, but be sure to change it back.
6. Check for clogged components and filters.
7. Do not run the dishwasher unless it is full. If it is half empty you waste electricity and water.
8. Don't block the rotating spray arm.
9. Don't wash wood, lead crystal, antique china or cast iron.
10. Use the dishwasher instead of hand washing. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, by using an energy star qualified dishwasher instead of hand washing will save almost 5,000 gallons of water per year.

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## ***Dog People versus Cat People***

Hunch.com recently polled more than 200,000 pet owners to find out if they were dog people or cat people. Here are some of the findings:

- Dog people are 15 percent more likely to be extroverts.
- Cat people are 11 percent more likely to be introverts.
- Dog people are 36 percent more likely to use a pop song as a ringtone.
- Cat people are 14 percent more likely to cling to friends at a party.
- Dog people are 67 percent more likely to call animal control if they happen upon a stray kitten.
- Cat people are 21 percent more likely to rescue a stray kitten.
- Dog people are 11 percent more likely to say they would support cloning, yet only for animals or pets.
- Cat people are 17 percent more likely to have completed a graduate degree.
- Dog people are 18 percent more likely to consider Paul McCartney their favorite Beatle.
- Cat people are 25 percent more likely to consider George Harrison their favorite Beatle.
- Dog people are 9 percent more likely to think of zoos as a happy place.
- Cat people are 10 percent more likely to send messages on Twitter.
- Dog people are 30 percent more likely to enjoy slapstick humor and impressions.
- Cat people are 21 percent more likely to enjoy ironic humor and puns.

### BOTH DOG AND CAT PEOPLE:

- Talk to animals of all kinds.
- Are equally likely to have a four-year degree.
- Dislike animal-print clothing.



**"At every party there are two kinds of people - those who want to go home and those who don't. The trouble is, they are usually married to each other."**

*Ann Landers, columnist*

# A Primer on the National Debt

I am confused by all the news accounts of the National Debt numbers thrown around by the different news organizations and I thought if I was maybe you were too. With that here are a few definitions for starters.

- The total national debt of the United States is the sum of all federal bills, notes and bonds that have been issued by the Treasury and not yet redeemed.
- The publicly held debt is the sum of the Treasury securities held by individuals, financial institutions and foreign governments.
- The intra-government debt is the sum of Treasury bonds held by agencies of the federal government, principally the so-called Social Security Trust Fund. These liabilities equal the future pensions, healthcare, Social Security payments that are promised under current legislation.



Treasury securities bear the full faith and credit of the United States and any failure to pay the interest or redeem the principal in a timely fashion would be a default, yet the liabilities are liabilities only so long as the current law remains unchanged. If Congress were to adjust the formula by which Social Security cost-of-living increases were calculated or change the age of eligibility, future federal liabilities would shrink by trillions of dollars immediately.

We all know of the Social Security dilemma we are facing with many of us saying that it won't be there when we are ready to retire. I said that to myself 40 plus years ago and still don't know. Yet with the baby boomers tapping this retirement resource Congress will be forced to use its options; cut spending, raise taxes or borrow money in the bond market. Thus the last option is the only plausible thing to do and intra-government debt should then be a part of the overall equation of the National Debt.

So let's have some fun with these numbers. The total of the public debt presently stands at \$9.924 trillion (at the time of this writing) and the intra-government debt is \$4.666 trillion for a total of \$14.587 trillion. That is well over 300 million times the country's median household income. Stacked as \$1 dollar bills it would reach 920,963 miles high or about four times as far as the Earth is from the Moon.

But while these numbers assist us in getting our arms around the subject, they really don't mean that much. It's the debt size relative to the gross national product (GDP) that matters. Put another way if you wish to borrow money, the bank or credit union examines your debt to income ratio. And while there are other factors that determine your credit worthiness this ratio is most important. GDP is about \$15 trillion dollars, thus that ratio (\$14,587,000,000,000 divided by 15,000,000,000,000) is 97.25 percent. Based upon this ratio it is no wonder our country's credit rating was lowered.

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## The Value of Time

Time is valuable and until you value yourself, you cannot value your time. And until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.

We don't pay for things with money, we pay for them with time. If you say to yourself "In five years, I'll put enough away to buy that vacation home", then what you are really saying is that home will cost you five years or one-twelfth of your adult life. I guess then that spending your life is not a metaphor, it's how life works.

Instead of thinking about what you do and what you buy in terms of money, think about it in terms of time. What is worth spending your life on? Seeing your work in that light just may change the way you manage your time.



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### USELESS INFORMATION

There are 461 stations in the New York subway system.

Tuesday is the most productive day of the work week.

Cubans eat the most sugar than anyone else.

The Irish eat the most corn flakes.

The largest bell in the world is the Tsar Kolokol in Moscow.

It weighs 222 tons and has never been rung.

McDonald's sells "McSpaghetti" in the Philippines and "McLuk" salmon burgers in Norway.

Native Americans spoke more than 133 different languages.

Automobiles first came with seat belts in 1950.

More than 50 percent of Americans fall asleep on their sides.

The "G" in G-string stands for groin.

The can opener was invented 48 years after the can was.

*When told the reason for daylight savings time the Old Indian said "Only the government would believe that you could cut a foot off the top of a blanket, sew it to the bottom, and have a longer blanket".*



# Most Americans Have No Financial Back-up Plan

According to a recent study conducted by State Farm Insurance the survey sought to determine whether Americans were prepared for the unexpected. The results were as expected in that 81 percent felt they needed to save for that rainy day yet only 45 percent actually had planned ahead.



The survey also concluded that 35 percent of the respondents had funds available to meet their needs for three months and 15 percent indicated they could get by for only one month.

Those respondents approaching retirement age concluded that 25 percent felt they were prepared to retire at retirement age, 25 percent indicated they would never be able to retire. And 60 percent indicated they could never retire without Social Security and Medicare being available as we know it today.

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## *At Your Service*

*Contributed by Craig Beachnaw*

Webster defines service as "Activity on behalf of a person, organization or cause, a domestic worker, military organization or the military, a favor, a session of public worship, a matched set of dishes or a service to maintain, repair and supply."

We at Account Receivable Solutions are not activists, domestic workers, associated with the military, provide public worship, nor are a set of dishes. What we are is an Accounts Receivable Management company, a collection agency if you like.

Webster also defines exceptional as "Outstanding or Unusual." We at ARS attempt every day to take our service to the next level and every employee in our company knows that our mission is to provide exceptional service with every opportunity that presents itself.



**"There's no sense in pretending that grown-up sons and daughters are still babies and that they need you. They don't. Let them do their own sinking or swimming while you indulge in a little fancy diving."**

*Marie Dressler, Academy Award-winning Actor*

### *ARS Mission Statement*

*It is the mission of Account Receivable Solutions, Inc. to understand and fulfill the needs of our client in the collection and processing of their accounts receivable. This will be accomplished by competitive pricing, focusing on value added services and utilizing the latest technology. Our goal will be achieved through employing a quality oriented team who is dedicated to our objectives and our clients' success.*

**"Account Receivable Solutions, Inc.**

**and**

**Integrity Consulting Group, LLC are Michigan based companies serving the healthcare community and other businesses of the great State of Michigan. Doesn't it make sense to work with those companies whose employees utilize your services in Michigan?"**

