



# Observations



*A monthly publication of the Chicago Chapter, Association of Government Accountants*

*AGA – Dedicated to serving the community and promoting government accountability*

*November 2011*

*Issue 3*

## **HELP US CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON!!**

Our holiday event/ Member Appreciation reception is scheduled for December 15, 2011 from 5:30- 7:30 PM. This is a **FREE** event for all AGA members who RSVP!

Please join us! We ask all members to please bring a non-member who is interested in joining AGA.

*Advance notification for Member Appreciation reception is needed; we will **NOT** be accepting walk-ins for this event. Space is limited to the first 60 people to RSVP.*

Please RSVP to: **Matthew Matczynski** [MMatczynski@hudoig.gov](mailto:MMatczynski@hudoig.gov) by **12:00 PM** on **December 2, 2011**

*See newsletter for more information.*



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*Advancing  
Government  
Accountability*

Association  
of Government  
Accountants

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November 30, 2011

Dear AGA Chicago Chapter Members,

We recently hosted a luncheon at the Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building with Michael Hood, Deputy Attorney General from the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. Mr. Hood spoke about “Red” collar crime and the role auditing and accounting plays in the investigations. We greatly appreciate the time Mr. Hood took out of his busy schedule to present to our chapter.

We are holding a holiday party at Exchequer Restaurant and Pub on Thursday, December 15, 2011 from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM. Free food and drinks for all who attend. Please RSVP by December 2, 2011 to Matthew Matczynski at [mmatczynski@hudoig.gov](mailto:mmatczynski@hudoig.gov).

As you know, our chapter obtained all three Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) study guides. Please contact our CGFM chair Raul Nieto if you are interested in checking them out. His contact information, along with the contact information of the entire executive committee, is included on the last page of this newsletter.

We still have open positions on our executive committee and are looking for members who want to get more involved. Please contact me at [tmcmanigal@hudoig.gov](mailto:tmcmanigal@hudoig.gov) if you are interested in volunteering (The Chicago chapter pays board members’ annual membership fees and provides exclusive training opportunities).

Sincerely,

*Thomas McManigal*

Tom McManigal  
President



# AGA Holiday Reception

## AGA Holiday Reception

**Thursday, December 15, 2011**

**5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**

**Free Food and Drinks!\***

**Exchequer Restaurant & Pub**

**226 S. Wabash Ave.**

**Chicago, Illinois 60604**

\*Please help us with our National *AGA Member-Get-A-Member Campaign!* Members are encouraged to bring at least one non-member. Non-members who are interested in enrolling with AGA are welcome to come!

Please RSVP by December 2, 2011

Matt Matczynski

**[MMatczynski@hudoig.gov](mailto:MMatczynski@hudoig.gov)**

*(Limited to the first 60 people to respond)*



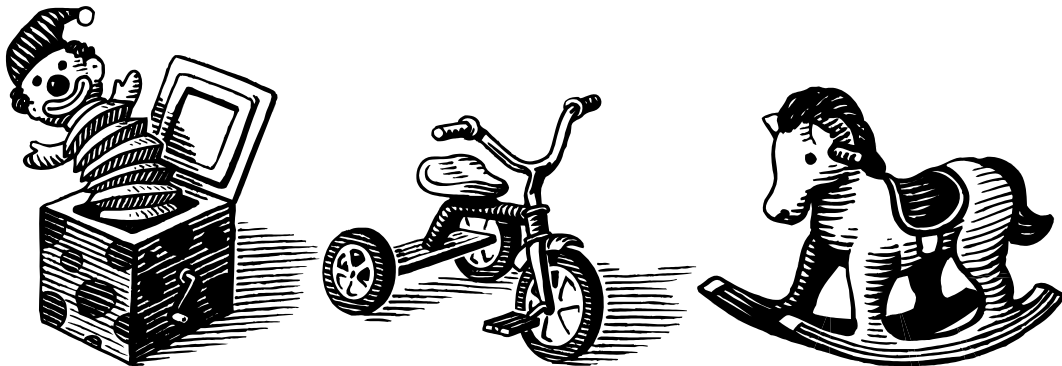
***Your commitment to enroll new members will keep advancing  
government accountability!***



## Chicago Marines Toys for Tots Foundation

With the holiday season approaching now is our chance to give back to our community by assisting the Chicago Marine Corps in providing a new toy to every needy child in the Chicagoland area. Please participate in our annual drive for the **Chicago Marines Toys for Tots Foundation**. We will be collecting new, unwrapped toys (no toy weapons please), for \$25 or less, at the Metcalfe Building, 77 W. Jackson 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor (HUD). If you would like to host a box for your agency co-sponsored by AGA, please contact Matthew Matczynski at (312) 913-8644. Donations are requested prior to December 15<sup>th</sup>. All donations will be picked up by the United States Government Marine Corps on December 16, 2011.

Marine Toys for Tots Foundation is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity. For more information please go to <http://chicago-il.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/default.asp>.



**Please help make a child's holiday wish come true!!!**



# AGA Chicago Chapter

## 2011-2012 Training Schedule\*

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER	LOCATION
December 15, 2011	Holiday Membership Reception		Exchequer Restaurant 226 S. Wabash
February 7, 2012	TBD	TBD	DHHS Conference Room at 233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1329
April 18-19, 2012	Annual Chapter Conference	TBD	GSA Conference Room 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Room 328
May 15, 2012	TBD	TBD	GSA Conference Room 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Room 328

\*Dates subject to change

Please RSVP to Matthew Matczynski at [MMatczynski@hudoig.gov](mailto:MMatczynski@hudoig.gov) by  
December 2, 2011

**Help us celebrate the holiday cheer!**



# CGFM Certification

## **Earn Your CGFM in February; Examinations Are Free**

Don't miss the opportunity to take the CGFM Examinations and earn your CGFM at the next Intensive Review Course event in February. AGA is offering a two-day Intensive Review Course on **Monday, Feb. 27, 2012** and **Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2012** and an opportunity to take CGFM Examinations on **Feb. 29-March 2, 2012**. The cost of the course is only \$279 for qualified participants, and it offers 18 CPE hours. **Special Bonus:** The CGFM Examinations are offered at no cost to course attendees.

This course is designed as a supplement to previous preparation for the CGFM Examinations, so this is a perfect opportunity for those individuals who have already attended GFM training courses or have been preparing by using the CGFM Study Guides. Enrollment is limited and participants must first apply and be accepted into the CGFM Program, so don't delay.

[More information and a registration form for this event are available on AGA's website.](#)

## **CGFM Frequently Asked Question**

**What is the CGFM's responsibility for maintaining documentation of completed Continuing Professional Education (CPE) hours?**

CGFMs are required to maintain supporting documentation on CPE hours earned for a minimum of three years and provide it to AGA upon request. The CGFM's records must include the following information for each CPE program or activity attended or completed: the sponsoring organization (for example, AGA National Office, a local AGA chapter); the title of the program, including subject matter, field of study or a brief description of its contents; the dates attended for group programs or dates completed for individual study programs; the number of CPE hours earned; and evidence of attendance or completion.

Evidence of completion may include the following:

- a certificate of attendance, a CPE form or other evidence of completion of CPE from the CPE provider for group and individual-study programs.
- a grade report received for a university or college credit course.
- a letter from the program sponsor, documenting the CPE courses presented and/or developed.
- a copy of the published book, article, or materials that names the writer as author or contributor, a written statement from the writer supporting the number of CPE hours claimed, and the name and contact information of the publisher, if applicable.

an official report from the employer that has the employer's name and lists all of the required information (employee's name, sponsoring organization, title of the program , completion date and number of CPE hours earned).



**[Current list of active CGFMs!](#)**

**[Apply for the CGFM designation today!](#)**

**[AGA Training Opportunities](#)**  
Click to find events near your area!





## From the National Office



### **From the National President, Richard O. Bunce Jr., CGFM, CPA**

We're headed into one of AGA's busy seasons. Chapter events are in full swing, and there are several regional PDCs on the calendar this month. In addition, your National Executive Committee is monitoring the implementation of the newly updated Strategic Plan, and the Finance & Budget Committee has begun to draft the operating budget for the 2012-2013 program year.

AGA's Seventh Annual Performance Management Conference in Seattle last week was a huge success. More than 150 attendees participated in sessions on Budgeting for Outcomes, Performance-Based Contracting and Data Analytics. In addition, the state of Oregon's first chief operating officer, Michael Jordan, generated a lot of interest when he discussed the state's initiative to develop a 10-year performance-based budget plan to reduce costs and improve effectiveness.

I was fortunate to be able to visit the Nashville and Northern Virginia Chapters last month. In Nashville, I was impressed with the chapter's efforts to recognize and welcome new members and guests, which made everyone feel at ease and part of the AGA family. The Nashville Chapter is home to Past National Presidents **Richard Norment, CGFM**, and **Charles Harrison, CGFM**, as well as current NEC members **Gerry Boaz, CGFM**, and **Melinda Parton, CGFM**. Thanks so much for your Southern hospitality. A good crowd came out on a cold and rainy night for the Northern Virginia Chapter's monthly meeting to discuss "Ethics and Why Good Leaders Go Bad." The Northern Virginia Chapter boasts three of our current NEC members--**Mia Leswing, CGFM**, **Joe Kull, CGFM**, and **John Homan, CGFM**. [Read more.](#)



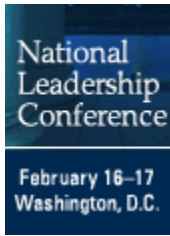
### **Reserve Your Room Today for PDC in San Diego**

Registration and hotel information for AGA's [61st Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition](#) is available online. Plan now to attend the PDC in San Diego, **July 29-Aug. 1, 2012**. You can [reserve a room at one of five hotels](#) near the conference site, the San Diego Convention Center. The room rate is \$133 (plus tax) for single and double occupancy. Rates are guaranteed until **July 6**, or until the block

is sold out.

To make a reservation, please call the conference hotels directly and mention you are attending the AGA PDC to ensure you receive the discounted rate. All hotel rooms are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis until the hotel is sold out. Make your reservations early!





## **Earn 14 CPE Hours at 10th Annual National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.**

[Registration is now open](#) for [AGA's 10th Annual National Leadership Conference](#) being held **February 16-17, 2012** at the Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center in Washington D.C.

In today's challenging economic times, now more than ever, government financial managers and accountability professionals must stay abreast of the latest developments, policies and issues affecting our citizens, and continually enhance their skills. Staying up to date on new regulations, while maintaining a clear vision of government transformation, can be accomplished through the best training.

The NLC offers a cost-effective way of doing just that. Earn 14 CPE hours, learn from top-notch speakers, discuss the latest research, discover innovative management techniques, and see technological tools that can help your agency achieve its mission.

**For Attendees--**[Register today!](#)

**For Exhibitors & Sponsors--**The NLC is the perfect place to reach your target audience. Space is limited.

[Reserve your booth space.](#)

[Consider becoming a sponsor.](#)

## **Apply for 2012 National Academic Scholarships**

Are you or a family member pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies in disciplines such as accounting, auditing, budgeting, economics, finance, information technology, public administration, etc.? If so, consider applying for an AGA National Academic Scholarship today!

Each year, AGA National awards:

- Up to four \$3,000 full-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members,
- Up to two \$1,000 part-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members, and
- One \$3,000 community service scholarship

The **deadline for receipt of applications is Friday, March 30, 2012**. Apply now and take full advantage of your AGA membership.

[Download a copy of the application](#), or contact [Louise Kapelewski](#).

## Accounting Standards News



### New GASB Bound Editions Now Available

The 2011-2012 editions of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's (GASB) annual bound editions are now available. The three titles--the *Codification*, *Original Pronouncements* and the *Comprehensive Implementation Guide*--may be ordered individually or at a discount for two- and three-title sets. Additional information is available at [www.gasb.org](http://www.gasb.org) by clicking on the Store tab.



### FAF Trustees Reappoint Jan Sylvis to GASB

The Financial Accounting Foundation (FAF), which oversees the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), has announced that **Jan Sylvis, CGFM, CPA**, has been appointed to a second five-year term beginning July 1, 2012. In addition, the FAF is searching for candidates from the financial statement user community to replace **Michael Belsky**, who tendered his resignation from the board in October, and from public accounting to replace outgoing board member **James Williams, CGFM-Retired**, whose second term ends in June 2012.



### FASAB Seeks Feedback on Annual Report

The Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) [annual report for fiscal year 2011 is now available online](#). FASAB Executive Director **Wendy Payne, CGFM, CPA**, is interested in feedback and suggestions. Send comments to [fasab@fasab.gov](mailto:fasab@fasab.gov) or call 202.512.7350.

## Federal News

### Budget Director: Stop Beating Up on Federal Workers

The White House budget director has a message for federal employees: Don't take it personally if you don't get a pay raise soon. Office of Management and Budget Director Jacob J. Lew said it's too soon to know whether federal employees should expect a pay bump in fiscal 2013 after a two-year pay freeze, or whether they might need to start paying more for their benefits. But he did say that Washington--and the country--should stop using federal employees as scapegoats in conversations about federal largesse. "I think that it's sometimes misunderstood as a vote of confidence on federal workers as opposed to a budgetary necessity," Lew said. "Wherever we go, on whether we can afford a pay raise or not, I think it's important for federal workers not to be treated as if they're the problem. They're working hard, they're doing extraordinarily important work, and I don't think they get enough respect." --Ed O'Keefe, *The Washington Post*. [Read more.](#)

## **Federal Agencies Cut Improper Payments by \$18 Billion**

Agencies saved nearly \$18 billion in fiscal 2011 by reducing improper payments, the White House announced Tuesday. The administration also unveiled new steps to prevent the government from paying money to the wrong people. Agencies saved \$17.6 billion last year, by reducing payment errors in Medicare, Medicaid, Pell Grants and a food assistance program. President Barack Obama initiated the crackdown on improper payments two years ago, when he gave agencies the goal of reducing payment errors by \$50 billion before 2013. The effort has since become part of the administration's Campaign to Cut Waste, which seeks to apply lessons learned by the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board to all federal spending. --Ruben Gomez, *Federal News Radio*. [Read more.](#)

Read a research report on improper payments by AGA's Corporate Partner Advisory Group, [Improper Payments: Not Just the Purview of the CFO Anymore?](#)

## *State and Local News*

### **California Governor Shuts Government Transparency Website**

Gov. Jerry Brown has shut down the government transparency website created by his predecessor, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, as a repository for financial disclosure statements and other records. A note on the website, [www.transparency.ca.gov](http://www.transparency.ca.gov), says information once available on the site can be found on other state websites and furnishes the links. But open government advocates objected to the website's closure, claiming citizens will find it more difficult to track spending. Many of the documents contained on the website--including information about state contracts, audits and salaries--can be found on other sites. But the transparency site, which was created in 2009 and shut down Tuesday, also included travel expense claims submitted by senior agency officials and employees of the Governor's Office. Brown's office said Wednesday that travel records can be requested under California's Open Records Act. Elizabeth Ashford, a spokeswoman for the Democratic governor, cited the time and cost of coping and uploading those documents. --David Siders, *The Sacramento Bee*. [Read more.](#)

### **For a City in Maryland, Staying Debt-Free is the Norm**

The nation's debt in dollars consists of 14 digits. The District's, 10. But Gaithersburg, MD, has only one: zero. Yes, \$0. Zilch. Just a 45-minute drive from Capitol Hill, the community is debt-free and has been, more or less, for about four decades. As the country struggles with its \$15 trillion debt, Gaithersburg has plugged away with a time-tested budgeting philosophy: Pay as you go and build your financial reserves. For the city of about 60,000 along Interstate 270, the discipline comes with rewards: There's \$33 million in Gaithersburg's rainy day fund, which draws effusive praise from local government experts. "For a community to have a large rainy day fund and no debt is the situation that any local government official would truly die for," said Donald F. Kettl, dean of the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. --Victor Zapana, *The Washington Post*. [Read more.](#)

## *Private Sector News*

### **Clifton Gunderson, LarsonAllen to Merge in January**

Clifton Gunderson and LarsonAllen, ranked as two of the nation's top 20 certified public accounting and consulting firms, today announced plans to merge and form one of the top 10 accounting firms in the United States. The partners of both firms have agreed to the combination. Pending final approvals, the merger will take effect Jan. 2, 2012. The new firm will be named **CliftonLarsonAllen** (CLA). CLA will bring together two firms of significant magnitude to offer unprecedented emphasis on serving privately held businesses and their owners, as well as entities in the public sector--not-for-profits and governmentals. Access to a firm with a top 10 presence and capabilities committed to serving primarily these types of clients is rare. The new firm will have more than \$550 million in combined revenue, employ more than 3,600 professionals, including 500-plus partners, and will operate from 25 states and Washington, D.C. --Clifton Gunderson LLP and LarsonAllen LLP.

### **Gender Gap on Wages Slow to Close**

First, there was the "mancession" that made the downturn much worse for men. Then, what my colleague Catherine Rampell has called the "he-recovery," which has put more men than women back to work. What has remained consistent is that women remain on the wrong side of the wage gap. Even with the same college and professional degrees, men earn more than women. And among so-called creative class workers like architects, teachers, artists, engineers, bankers and journalists, men earn much more than women, even though more women hold such jobs. It's similar at the bottom end of the scale. According to a report issued Thursday by the United States Government Accountability Office, a higher proportion of women finish high school than men, a milestone that is a minimum requirement for any job mobility. Women -- especially younger women -- are also completing bachelor's degrees at higher rates than men. Yet they represent a higher proportion of low-wage workers, defined in the report as those who earn hourly wage rates that put them in the bottom 20 percent of the work force. --Mokoto Rich, *The New York Times*. [Read more.](#)

### **Member News**

The following members of AGA's Boston Chapter were recently elected to the executive committee of the New England Intergovernmental Audit Forum:

**Joanna Aalt, Michael Armstrong, Suzanne Bump, Steve Burbank, Maureen Duddy and John Mahoney.**


**Erica Fleischer** , a member of AGA's Cleveland Chapter, has obtained her financial accounting certificate from Lakeland Community College. She exceeded the 24 credit hour requirement by completing additional accounting courses. This certificate will augment her bachelor's degree in business administration. Well done!

**Che Johnson**, a member of AGA's Cleveland Chapter, has received his accounting certificate from Management Concepts' Federal Financial Management Certificate

Program. This education will complement the Management Concepts' financial management certificate Che received in June 2010. Congratulations.

**Robert A. Pewanick, CGFM-Retired**, a member of AGA's Washington, D.C. Chapter since 1972, died Oct. 29 at age 69. He was president of the Washington, D.C. Chapter in 1982-1983 and the 1986-1987 Capital Regional Vice President. He worked for 38 years at the Government Accountability Office, where he served as assistant director for Financial Management and Accountability. He was the recipient of GAO's Meritorious Service Award and Distinguished Service Award. He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Carol Ann Pewanick, a niece and nephew as well as a grandniece and grandnephew.

### **Network with AGA Online Anytime**

 [Become a Fan of AGA on Facebook](#)

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*For additional information regarding Chapter/ National news and events, please click on the links below:*

<b>Helpful Links</b>
<a href="#">Our Website</a>
<a href="#">Our Events Calendar</a>
<a href="#">Our Newsletters</a>
<a href="#">AGA National Website</a>



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### **President – Elect**

Vacant

### **Past President**

Heath Wolfe  
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## **Newsletter Information**

Observations is the monthly newsletter of the Chicago Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants (AGA). Subscriptions to Observations may only be obtained by joining AGA. This is the third edition of Observations for the **2011-2012** chapter year. To submit material for upcoming issues, contact Alexandria Hayden at 312/353-3033. If you are not receiving the Chicago Chapter Newsletter electronically, please send your current e-mail address to: [Alexandria.Hayden@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:Alexandria.Hayden@oig.hhs.gov)