

OBSERVATIONS

JANUARY 2014

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WELCOME!

We need your input!! Please update us with current member news and events within your respective offices. We would love to feature our members and share their news with the membership!

Promotions, retirements, births, job openings—if your office has some news to share, we would gladly insert into our newsletter!

If you have any suggestions on speakers for our AGA continuing education seminars, please contact Matt Matczynski.



**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

- Meeting Minutes
- CCR—Certificate of Excellence





President's Message

*Advancing
Government
Accountability*

Association
of Government
Accountants

Chicago Chapter
P. O. Box 1744
Chicago, IL
60604-9998

www.agachicago.org

Dear AGA Chicago Chapter Members, Friends, Accounting Students, and Job Seekers.

Happy New Year! I am getting ready to shovel snow for the fifth day in a row. I hope everyone is staying warm during this frigid blast of cold weather.

I owe many thanks to my Chapter Executive Board—they have been working hard.

Our next Continuing Education Seminar is scheduled for February 12, 2014. The February seminar will be a breakfast meeting located at Houlihan's Restaurant, 111 E. Wacker. Doors will open at 7:30AM and the speaker will start at 8AM. Please note that we have reserved the area through 10AM. Our guest speaker will be a representative from Truth in Accounting. The topic will relate to government accountability. More detailed information will be available on our website as the seminar approaches.

Remember to always check our website for announcements, Board updates and training.

Please send me your suggestions for future meetings and newsletter topics.

I hope to see you all at the February seminar.

Elaine Igelman, CPA (Retired)

President, Chicago Chapter

Email: elaine@igelman.com

Text: 847-922-7181

New to AGA? Here are the highlights of our last year!

[2012-2013 Year-End Review](#)

OBSERVATIONS ISSUE 5

CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINARS



The Wrigley Building, Chicago

Date	Topic	Speaker	Location
February 12, 2014 8:00 AM Doors open at 7:30AM	TBD	Truth in Accounting	Houlihan's Restaurant 111 E. Wacker Chicago, IL
<p>Pricing: All attendees: \$15 includes breakfast buffet and coffee/ tea RSVP by February 7th to Alexandria.Hayden@oig.hhs.gov</p>			

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS



Date	Time	Location
February 11, 2014	11:30AM – 12:30 PM	Metcalfe Federal Building room 329, 77 W. Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL
March 11, 2014	11:30AM – 12:30 PM	Metcalfe Federal Building room 329, 77 W. Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL

CGFM

CGFM Examinations Update

The CGFM Examinations will be updated on April 1, 2014. More information can be found on <http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/examupdate>. AGA is also hosting an informational webinar on **February 20th at 2pm ET** to go over any questions about the update. Registration for this event is free and will open the first week of February. Details will be listed on our website.



March is CGFM Month!

Request a proclamation declaring March “CGFM Month” from your state or local government. I've attached a sample proclamation and request letter. Please email me the proclamation you receive and let me know how your chapter is celebrating CGFM Month!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VACANCIES

The AGA Chicago Chapter AGA has several Director Executive Committee vacancies which need to be filled. Please consider volunteering your time for the Chapter.

We meet monthly as a Board and conduct our monthly membership meetings.

Your commitment requires no more than 5 hours of your time per month.

This is a great networking opportunity and way to learn about what fellow Federal and State agencies are doing.

Please contact any Director for information detailing the positions available.

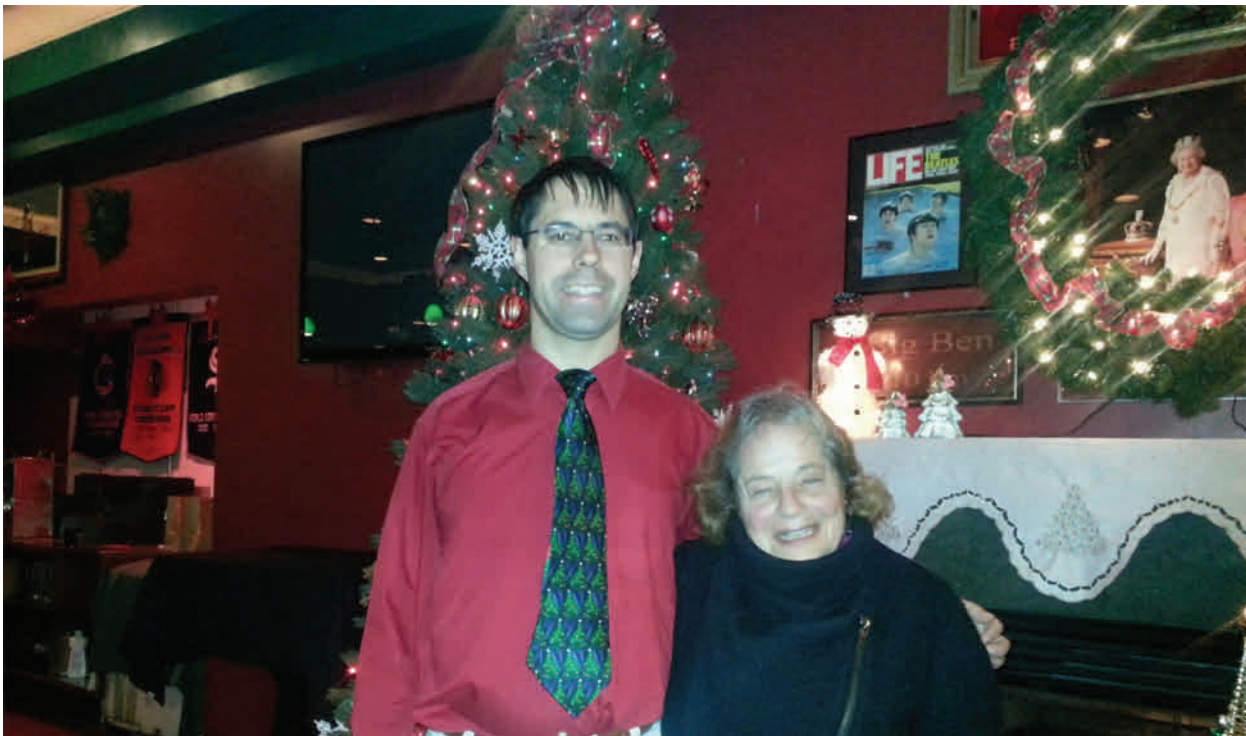
A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. —John Maxwell

agachicago.org

Post Office Box 1744
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2013 Holiday Reception

The chapter held a holiday reception on the evening of Friday December 6th. This reception was a fun and relaxing night of food, drink, networking, and getting into the holiday spirit. Our chapter president Elaine Igelman provided the entertainment by telling some fascinating stories from her experience as a federal auditor. A great time was had by all who attended.



Past chapter president Matt Matczynski and chapter President Elaine Igelman at the holiday reception.



ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS CHICAGO CHAPTER

BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 3, 2013

Present

Elaine Igelman, President
Matthew Matczynski, Past President
Thomas DiLisio, Treasurer
Frank Moy, Education Director
Olga Gesell, Website Director & Historian
Alexandria Hayden, Newsletter Editor
Raul Nieto, CGFM
Eddie Jones, Community Service Director
Amanda Cross, Awards Director

Present

Rick Urbanowski, Chapter Recognition

Absent

Janet Knauff, Membership Director
Cynthia "CJ" Carter, Program Director
Julio Cestero, Early Careers & Accountability Director
Steve Whitecotton, Job Referral

SUMMARY OF MEETING

Quorum

Matt took a roll call and announced that there was a quorum.

Chapter Advertisement

Matt mentioned that progress needs to be made on the chapter advertisement that the executive committee agreed to at a previous CEC meeting. Matt reminded the CEC that the chapter set a budget of \$250 for this project, which includes the recruitment scholarship funds. Matt also mentioned that the recruitment scholarship funds need to be used and documentation provided to the national office supporting its use by January 31, 2014.

Matt mentioned that at present, the CEC had not determined which publication(s) to place the ad in. Matt asked if anyone had information on advertising rates. A CEC member responded that it is difficult to determine the cost to place the chapter's advertisement in any publication since the chapter has not designed the ad yet. Discussion was held, and it was determined that the best approach would be to design the chapter's advertisement first, and after that research advertising rates and determine which publication(s) to place the ad in.

Matt asked for volunteers to design the chapter's advertisement. Eddie volunteered to design the ad.

A CEC member proposed that the advertisement include picture(s), and asked who would have such pictures. Olga mentioned that she had pictures, and volunteered to provide the pictures for the ad.

Elaine proposed that the chapter consider using the recruitment scholarship funds to pay for the membership fees of new members. Matt responded that per his conversation with Janet, who applied for and received the recruitment scholarship on the chapter's behalf and/or information he had read about the recruitment scholarship, he believes that the scholarship funds cannot be used directly to pay for or offset the membership fees of new members.

Elaine proposed that the chapter use the recruitment scholarship funds to provide a scholarship for a needy person. Matt mentioned to Elaine that the chapter had already voted at a previous CEC meeting to use the recruitment scholarship funds to pay for a chapter advertisement, and asked Elaine if she wished to reopen the issue on what to use the recruitment scholarship funds on. Elaine declined to reopen the topic. Rick mentioned that the term "scholarship" used by the national office in describing the funds is a bit deceiving, as the funds are not a "scholarship" that the chapter issues to someone, but rather that the funds are to be used by the chapter to help the chapter's recruitment activities.

Changing Price Of Future Monthly Continuing Education Seminars

Elaine mentioned that she believes the chapter needs to do something to increase attendance at the chapter's monthly Continuing Education Seminars, and proposed that the pricing scheme used by the chapter, that being \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members without lunch (with lunch costing an additional \$10) be changed.

SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued

Price Change Of Future Monthly Continuing Education Seminars (Continued)

Elaine mentioned that beginning with the January Continuing Education Seminar, we have some high quality live speakers lined up to speak, and that she wants to see attendance levels increased.

Olga mentioned that she believes that the cost of the monthly seminars is too high, and discussed the attendance levels at the chapter's first two Continuing Education Seminars of the chapter year. Olga also mentioned that the previous chapter year when the chapter offered the seminars for free for members and \$5 for non-members, attendance at the seminars was higher. Olga also mentioned that if the chapter is paying for an audio conference, it would be more of a member benefit to offer it at a low cost so many members attend and benefit from it instead of only a few. Olga also mentioned that for live speakers, there is little cost involved to the chapter, thus not warranting the current pricing structure.

Tom discussed the value of providing CPEs and mentioned that he is in favor of keeping the current pricing structure, and cautioned against giving educational events for free. Tom mentioned that audio conferences are used because the chapter has a difficult time finding live speakers. Tom mentioned that surveys were conducted in the past, and that no survey respondent mentioned the cost of chapter events. Tom also mentioned that if the chapter reduced the price of the monthly seminars, we would have to rely more on the proceeds of the chapter's annual conference to fund the chapter's yearly activities, and that doing this would place an unfair burden on conference attendees who pay out of their own pocket, like himself.

Matt mentioned that although live speakers who speak for free are great, they are difficult to find. He also mentioned that there is value to such speakers even though they are free to the chapter, and said that the main reason such speakers are free is because often times such speakers are government employees whose ethics rules / ethics office prohibits them from accepting speaker fees. Matt mentioned that in previous years, some government speakers could not even accept reimbursement for the taxi cab fare or CTA fare to travel to and from the meeting site, even if it was only a few dollars; and thus had to pay it out of their own pocket to speak at our event. Matt mentioned that he, CJ, and Elaine have worked hard to find live speakers, but they are difficult to find, and that if anyone knows of any potential speakers to let him know.

Tom mentioned he agreed with Matt's comments, and mentioned that the chapter members have told us that they do not like speakers to be repeated, thus making the job of finding speakers even more difficult.

A CEC member proposed reducing the price of the monthly seminars, but not making it free.

Elaine mentioned that the non-member price of \$25 was too much and proposed reducing the price to \$20.

Rick proposed keeping the gap between members and non-member prices the same, or even increasing the gap to encourage membership.

Additional discussion was held by the CEC on this topic.

Tom proposed holding a vote first on whether the current pricing structure needs to be changed before discussing new prices.

Matt made a motion of: Are you in favor of changing the pricing structure of the monthly continuing education seminars? Frank seconded the motion. A vote was held, and all those casting votes voting against, with the exception of two CEC members who voted in favor. Thus the motion to change the pricing structure of the monthly continuing education seminars failed, and the current pricing scheme of \$15 members and \$25 non-members (no lunch) with an additional \$10 charge to members and non-members for lunch will remain in effect.

Agenda Item Regarding Changing The Price Of Chapter Membership (Proposal To Reduce Or Eliminating \$7 Chapter Membership Fee) And Agenda Item Regarding Changing The Schedule Of Continuing Education Seminars (Proposal To Make The Seminars Less Frequent, Such As Every Other Month)

Elaine mentioned that she had requested that these two items be put on the agenda for discussion at today's CEC meeting. Elaine mentioned that based on the discussion just held at this meeting, she wishes to withdraw both items for discussion. No CEC member commented on Elaine's desire to withdraw both agenda items, so no discussion was held on these two agenda items.

Agenda Item To Change The Time And Venue Of Continuing Education Seminars (Proposal To Hold The Seminars Early In The Morning And At A Different Location Such As A Restaurant)

Elaine mentioned that she proposed this agenda item and still wishes to discuss it.

Discussion was held on this topic. CEC members discussed that breakfast meetings were held in the past, the breakfast meetings were well attended, and discussion was held on establishments used in the past to hold breakfast meetings.

It was the consensus of the CEC participants to explore holding breakfast meetings.

SUMMARY OF MEETING-Continued

Agenda Item To Change The Time And Venue Of Continuing Education Seminars (Proposal To Hold The Seminars Early In The Morning And At A Different Location Such As A Restaurant) (Continued)

A CEC member proposed that the February Continuing Education Seminar be a breakfast meeting, as Sheila Weinberg will be the speaker.

Matt mentioned that the chapter currently does not have a room reserved for the February Continuing Education Seminar, as a date for the seminar has not been established yet.

Elaine mentioned that she will contact Sheila Weinberg and set a date, and if that date does not work someone may be able to speak in Sheila's place.

It was mentioned that availability of space to hold the February seminar may impact what date the seminar is, and Matt encouraged a decision be made regarding breakfast meetings so he can find a conference room if needed and a date be selected.

It was mentioned that additional research will need to be performed, so a decision on holding breakfast meetings was tabled to the next CEC meeting. In the meantime, Alex volunteered to perform research on establishments to hold the breakfast meeting at and the cost involved with holding a meeting at such establishments.

Agenda Item To Reduce / Eliminate The Use Of AGA Audio Conferences At Monthly Continuing Education Seminars

Elaine mentioned that she proposed this agenda item and still wishes to discuss it. She mentioned that attendance was low for audio conference seminars, and that they don't seem to work.

Matt reminded the CEC participants that as voted on at a previous CEC meeting, the chapter purchased 4 AGA audio conferences in order to take advantage of a volume discount. Matt mentioned that 2 of the 4 audio conferences have been used, so we have 2 more audio conferences to select this chapter year that the chapter already paid for.

Matt mentioned that the AGA audio conferences are used since as previous discussed, live speakers are difficult to find. Matt mentioned that the AGA audio conferences allow the chapter to provide educational events on topics that the chapter cannot find speakers for, and pointed out that as the audio conference CPEs are issued by the national office and not the Chicago chapter, they are NASBA CPEs.

A CEC member mentioned that some of last year's AGA audio conferences were well attended, but other audio conferences held the very same year were not well attended. The CEC member mentioned that the audio conference topic could be driving attendance levels.

Matt mentioned that last year's audio conferences on The Yellow Book and on Internal Controls were not well attended, but audio conferences on other topics such as fraud were well attended.

A CEC member who reviewed the list of future AGA audio conferences commented that the audio conferences being held in the future are on some good topics.

A CEC member asked a question about whether the chapter can change the date and time of the audio conferences. Matt responded by saying no, and mentioned that as the audio conferences are live, the date and time cannot be changed. All AGA audio conferences are held on Wednesdays from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Central Time, and there are usually 2 AGA audio conferences held per month.

A CEC member asked a question about the chapter purchasing past audio conferences being sold on CD that are available on the AGA website. Matt responded that the chapter cannot issue CPEs for this. (After the call had ended, Matt clarified his answer by explaining that this topic was discussed at the 2013 Sectional Leadership Meeting, and that the national office claims that CPEs cannot be granted for playing such CDs. It was explained that CPEs can be issued for live audio conferences and not for playing CDs because participants must have the ability to ask the speaker questions, which is a requirement for issuing CPEs. At the Sectional Leadership Meeting, a participant asked if CPEs could be granted if the CD was played and there was a Subject Matter Expert present to answer any questions. The national office explained that it is possible that CPEs could be issued; however, this is a grey area and it is not advised to provide CPEs in such a situation as doing this may still not meet NASBA and/or state requirements for issuing CPEs).

Toys For Tots Toy Collection

Matt reminded the CEC members that the chapter will be holding a Toys For Tots toy collection in December. Matt requested that if anyone wished to place a collection box in their office, to contact Matt as he has extra Toys For Tots collection boxes.

Certificate of Excellence in Member-Centric Reporting



We are pleased to announce that the AGA national office recently awarded our chapter a Certificate of Excellence in Member-Centric Reporting for the chapter's 2012-2013 Citizen-Centric Report (CCR). Specifically, our chapter was praised for our CCR's overall content, visual appeal, and information contained in our CCR. This award is a great honor for our chapter to receive, and a special thank you goes out to everyone who helped contribute to our CCR.

The chapter's 2012-2013 CCR and award certificate can be viewed on the chapter website at <http://www.agachicago.org/accountability/>

Chapter Recognition Program

The Chicago Chapter earned the following Chapter Recognition Program credits during December:

Chapter Leadership, Planning & Participation – 125 credits

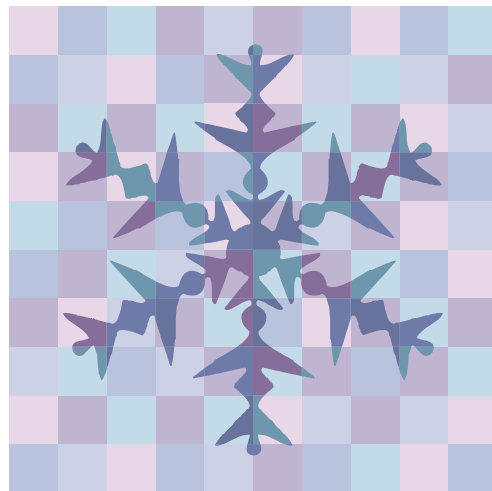
Education & Professional Development – 150 credits

Certification - 125 credits

Communications - 475 credits

Membership and Early Careers – 100 credits

Total – 975 credits



CHICAGO CHAPTER

AGA National News

From AGA National President—Mary E. Peterman, CGFM, CPA

Happy new year! My AGA resolution: Invest in myself and my professional career by renewing my AGA membership. [Read more](#)

Perspectives: Can We All Get Along?

The outcome expected from a program review is simple: better government operations and more responsiveness to citizen needs. [Read more](#)

Update Your Member Profile

Ensure you're receiving the most of membership! Update your online member profile and subscription preferences in My AGA. [Read more](#)

CGFM Examination Update

CGFM Examinations will be updated on April 1, 2014. [Read more](#)

CGFM Intensive Review Courses and Examinations

Sign up for AGA's Intensive Review Course with CGFM Examinations included – it's a great opportunity to learn about the updated CGFM Examinations content outlines and then complete your CGFM! This year we are offering the Intensive Review Course in **two locations**: Washington DC on **March 31–April 1** and Oklahoma City on **April 2–3**. The CGFM Examinations can be taken by appointment only at Pearson Professional Testing Centers from **April 1–May 31, 2014**. □ Please see <http://www.agacgfm.org/CGFMintensivereview> for more information.

Web Conference: Tackling Improper Payments

Jan. 29 | 2-3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs Available

Learn methodologies to estimate improper payment rates and ways to employ advanced analytics to reduce improper payments. [Read more](#)

Submit an Article for Consideration in the *Journal of Government Financial Management*

Submission deadline: Mar. 1

The *Journal* seeks material that provides practical insights into 'Improper Payments' for the summer issue. [Read more](#)

Call for 2014 National Academic Scholarships

Are you - or a family member - pursuing a degree in a government finance discipline? Apply for an AGA scholarship today! [Read more](#)

Web Conference: What's Trending in Financial Management, Oversight and IT?

Feb. 5 | 2-3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs Available

Understand the trends in governmental financial management, auditing/oversight work, and information technology management. [Read more](#)

2014 National Leadership Training

Feb. 11-12 | Washington | 14 CPEs Available

Learn new tactics to help you excel as a government financial manager with the challenging theme of 'doing more with less'. [Read more](#)

OPM Approves NLT 2014 Training Event

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) qualifies the AGA [2014 National Leadership Training](#) event as training in compliance with 5 U.S.C. chapter 41 and is open to all federal employees. ([Memo](#) | [Certificate](#))

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AGA CHICAGO CHAPTER

Interested in becoming a sponsor? Please contact us!

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Check us out on the web!

agachicago.org

AGA supports the careers and professional development of government finance professionals working in federal, state and local governments as well as the private sector and academia. Founded in 1950, AGA enjoys a long history as the thought leader for the government accountability profession. Through education, research, publications, certification and conferences, AGA reaches thousands of professionals and offers more than 100,000 continuing professional education (CPE) hours annually.

Pictures used throughout the newsletter are courtesy of:
www.city-data.com/album/album-Chicago-Illinois.html

CHICAGO CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the AGA Chicago Chapter is to carry out an educational responsibility of enhancing public financial management and accountability.

AGA through its chapters is a leading advocate for improving the quality and effectiveness of financial managers and auditors from local, state and federal governments from the Chicago area.

The chapter provides an opportunity for accountants and auditors to meet on a regular basis for training and networking.

