

UPCOMING EVENTS

Audio Conference	2/6/08
Chapter Luncheon	2/7/08
Chapter Luncheon	3/6/08
Breakfast CPE	3/08
Audio Conference	3/26/08

**Make reservations for the
 Chapter Luncheon online at**
www.nashvilleaga.org

**Deadline to register for this
 month is February 4, 2008.**

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President's Message

By Ann Collett, CGFM, CPA

Marathon week! That is what I would call the week of January 7-11, 2008. We had our chapter executive committee meeting Monday, the Winter Seminar on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the finale was the monthly chapter luncheon on Thursday. The luncheon also happened to be a first-time joint meeting with local chapter members and national executive office members of the National Association of Black Accountants. We had our National AGA President, Rick Fair, in town both to speak at the seminar and attend the luncheon. We had Dr. Melvin Johnson, the President of TSU, as our keynote speaker at the luncheon; so, it was a busy time! I don't know if this was mentioned in his bio, but Dr. Johnson is a member of our AGA chapter.

Thanks so much to the Education Committee co-chaired by Nathan Abbott, Nichole Curtiss, and Donna Jewell for all their hard work and planning with the seminar. We had speakers in from out of state as well as locally. We

were using the

Tennessee Room for the first time, and we had over 200 in attendance; so, there were many details to coordinate! Just think about it – you've got registrations; taking in and depositing checks and on-line payments; you have to select speakers and coordinate topics, handouts, and travel; you've got to get a conference facility and a caterer; and you have over 200 notebooks to fill and CPE forms and evaluations to prepare.

We heard very timely topics on just about everything you could want to hear in this day and time related to our government accountability fields including risk assessment, information technology controls, how auditors should change the way they audit, and more. A lot of what we heard centers around challenges we face and how change in the way we do things is needed.

Rick Fair spoke briefly at the luncheon and talked about how he was impressed with what he had seen from our chapter, including the size of our seminar



and the number of members who attend the luncheon. He commented about how enthusiastic we are and that we should be very proud of what we do here. We're always proud to have the national president visit us. We were also glad to have Mindy Stooksbury, our regional vice-president, visit and speak at the seminar on generation gaps.

Our joint meeting with NABA was a success in my opinion. We had members from their local student chapter and from the local professional chapter. I hope a number of you got to talk with them at the luncheon. Their national executive director, Gregory Johnson, was in town from Maryland as well as John Glover, their national director of development, so we were pleased to meet them as well and hear from Mr. Johnson. We've got some great pictures so be sure to check out the website. I ran around so much at that luncheon helping meet and coordinate guests that I barely ate and never got to my dessert, which is rare for me!!! The students' lunches were paid out of chapter funds as part of our Early Career program. I hope we'll see some of these at our Career Fair in April and maybe some will apply for our chapter scholarship. We told them about our student AGA member rate as well. These students were from TSU and MTSU.

And something I think all current chapter presidents enjoy is having the slate of officers for the next year announced to the membership! I congratulate all of the nominated officers. You can see the list of names in the newsletter. I do want to point out that Melvin Jones will be the first black president serving the Nashville Chapter.

Well, after all that I need a week off! See you all in February! As a small way to show you how much we appreciate our members, we're throwing in an extra door prize drawing!!!

Ann



If members have any comments or suggestions on the luncheon meetings, or any other things about the chapter in general, I would be happy to hear them. Email me at Ann.Collett@state.tn.us to give me your feedback.

Chapter Recognition Points

Chapter Recognition Points	Annual National Maximum Points
<u>Through January 10, 2008</u>	2007-2008
Leadership	3,000
Education	4,000
Certification	4,000
Communication	3,000
Membership	3,000
Early Career	2,000
Community Service	2,000
Awards	1,000
Total Points YTD	22,000
34,728	

Chapter Luncheons

February Luncheon Speaker

John Robinson, CPA

Topic: Communications – From Rotary Dial to iPhone

John Robinson is the AT&T director of property tax for the southeast. Prior to the BellSouth/AT&T merger in 2007, Mr. Robinson was the BellSouth Corporation property tax director for nine years. He has worked in the telecommunications industry for 22 years. Before joining BellSouth in 1984, he worked in public accounting for eight years and spent four years in the USAF. He graduated from the University of Alabama, and he is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). He has six children and seven grandchildren.

Committee News

Nominating Committee

Nashville Chapter 2008-2009 Leadership Nominations

The Nominating Committee has selected chapter leadership nominees for the 2008-2009 year. The members of the Nominating Committee included Kathy Anderson, Michelle Earhart, Hellens Kruszynski, Jennifer McClendon, and Melinda Parton. Chapter leadership nominees are as follows:

Officers

Melvin Jones, Jr. – President-elect
Melissa Boaz – Treasurer
Amy Czerwinski – Secretary

Two-Year Directors

Patricia Finney Tommie Pendergrass
Rusty Lacy Suzanne Sawyers
Jennifer Lewis

Each of the nominees has indicated his or her willingness to serve. The Chapter Executive Committee unanimously accepted these nominations at its January 7 meeting. The nominees were announced at the January 10 chapter luncheon.

In accordance with the Chapter Bylaws, independent nominations for chapter leadership may be submitted to Kathy Anderson until March 15. A petition that contains at least 50 signatures of Nashville Chapter members and an indication of the candidate's willingness to serve if elected must accompany all independent nominations. In the event there are additional nominations, an election will follow. If there are no other nominations, the nominees listed above will be certified without ballot.



The newly nominated leadership for the Nashville Chapter's 2008-2009 program year are pictured here (left to right): Patricia Finney, Melvin Jones, Jr. Tommie Pendergrass, Melissa Boaz, Jennifer Lewis (front), Rusty Lacy, Suzanne Sawyers, and Amy Czerwinski.

Committee News

Awards

ATTENTION STUDENTS

AGA National's deadline for the submission of the Graduate/Undergraduate **Academic** scholarship applications is March 31, 2008.

Students must be an AGA member or family member (spouse, child, or grandchild) of an AGA

member. See National's website for details and application at <http://www.agacgfm.org/membership/awards/>

The AGA Nashville Chapter's 2008 Government Financial and Information Systems Career Fair is April 3 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Nashville Public Library, Main Branch.

Education

Audio Conferences

When: Wednesday, February 6, 2008
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. CST
What: "Understanding how internal controls can be used to improve operations"
Location: TBA

Good internal controls can be used for far more than just making sure we have the right numbers in the financial statements. Good controls can improve accountability, prevent problems and most importantly, improve the delivery of services to the public. Find out how one State is using controls to improve its grant management process to provide better oversight and accountability for grants all the way down to the sub-recipient level. You will also hear how one Federal agency is integrating its internal control program with its enterprise risk management program and business modernization activity.

To share their expertise in internal controls are Janet Hayes, MBA, CPM, CICA, Director of the Management Services and Nongovernmental Compliance Division, Office of the State Auditor, State of North Carolina; Michael L. Piazza, MBA, CICA, Principal Associate and lead consultant of Professional Development Associates and Director of Program Development and Training for the Institute for Internal Controls; and Martha J. Stearns, Central Site Director, Cleveland Center, U.S. Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

Audio Conferences

When: Wednesday, March 26, 2008
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. CST
What: "Emerging Issues at FASAB and GASB - The Landscape is Changing"
Location: TBA

AGA, in conjunction with the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers (NASACT) and the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA), is pleased to offer an audio conference addressing Emerging Issues at the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

This audio conference offers a unique opportunity to hear from two key officials of the Federal, State and local accounting standards board on evolving concepts that drive accounting standards.

To discuss these issues are Wendy M. Payne, CPA, CGFM, Executive Director of FASAB, and David R. Bean, CPA, Director of Research and Technical Activities at GASB.

Please join us for two hours of lively discussion about these important and timely topics. In addition to the speakers' presentations, there will be 20 minutes for Q & A so that the participants can ask the speakers questions and share their own experiences.

Committee News

Early Career

EARLY CAREER MEMBER UPCOMING SOCIAL

The next Early Career member social will be held on January 28 at 6:00 p.m. at Bailey's on Broadway.

If you have any suggestions for venues or events please contact Michelle Earhart at Michelle.Earhart@state.tn.us or Robyn Probus at Robyn.Probus@state.tn.us

Be sure to check out the Early Career website for upcoming events and opportunities at <http://www.nashvilleaga.org/earlyCareer.htm>

ATTENTION STUDENTS

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CGFM



March is CGFM Month

Beginning March 2006 and going forward, AGA's Professional Certification Board and National President has declared March CGFM Month. Tennessee was among 13 states and 6 local governments that issued official proclamations as well as five more states issuing congratulatory letters and recognition that first year. Each year the effort continues to grow, and Tennessee is rising to the challenge once again.

The CGFM Committee will soon begin the process of asking the governor, General Assembly, and Metro City Council to proclaim March 2008 as CGFM Month. The committee will also begin its annual letter-writing campaign regarding CGFM and CGFM Month to the State Legislature, Metro Council, state fiscal directors, and state department heads. It will also send out letters regarding the Certified Municipal Financial Officer (CMFO) in relation to the CGFM to local CPAs and governments.

Exam 2 Training Session

The CGFM Committee will offer a CGFM Exam 2 Training session on January 31, 2008, from 8:00-4:30 in the 16th Floor Training Room of the James K. Polk Building. The objective of the training is to provide essential training for individuals who plan to sit for the CGFM Exam 2 with the goal of becoming certified. Eight hours of CPE will be awarded to those who have not previously attended the class.

The CGFM Committee has two sets of the CGFM Exam 1, 2, and Exam 3 Study Guides, and these study guides are available for checkout after each training session on a first-come, first-serve basis. Preference may be given to individuals who have already registered to take the exams by September 2008, and the study guides can be checked out for a limited 45-day time period.

Also, watch for news on Exam 1 directed study sessions starting in February 2008. Details will be emailed to members on February 4.

If you have any questions, please notify any of the Committee members: Ron Queen, co-chair; Gerry Boaz, co-chair; Rebecca Barr; Mary Anne Queen; Bob Boydston; Karen Hale; and Tammy Fruscione.

Committee News

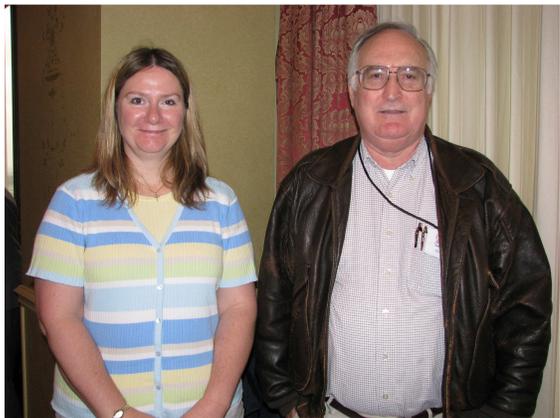
Membership

Recruitment Incentives

The Membership Committee would like to remind you of the incentives available for sponsoring new members:

1. You earn 3 active member points per new member sponsored. (These points are earned in a variety of ways; once you get 30 points you earn a \$45 reimbursement for regular membership dues. See www.nashvilleaga.org/Documents/0708_point_structure.pdf)
2. Once a month a goody bag is given to the member who sponsored the most new members the previous month.
3. At yearend a drawing will be held for all sponsors of new members. Members are entered once for each new member sponsored. The grand prize will be two one-day passes to Universal Studios in Orlando plus \$100 cash. A second prize of \$100 cash will also be similarly awarded.
4. Prizes are also available from AGA National including:
 - c) Sponsor one or more new members and receive a *Sponsors Only* lapel pin and be recognized in *TOPICS* and on the AGA website.
 - b) Sponsor two members and start earning AGA Dollars. You'll earn 5 AGA Dollars for each new member. These dollars can be used for membership dues renewals, AGA publications, and national conference registrations.

- a) Sponsor 10 or more members by March 31, 2008 and be entered into a drawing for a trip for two to anywhere in the Continental U.S. or Caribbean.
- b) Other prizes are also available for those finishing in the top nationally in recruiting. (See www.agacgfm.org/membership/m_campaign.aspx)



Rhonda Williams and Harvey Joiner, two of the newest chapter members, attend the January luncheon meeting.

The Nashville AGA Chapter would like to welcome the following new members:

Emmanuel "Mel" Marcella, Metro Government
Sponsor: Kayla Shewcraft

Eddie A. Stott, CPA, Department of Transportation
Sponsor: N/A

Welcome!

Committee News

Membership

Active Member Incentive

Be an active member and reap the rewards! The Nashville chapter will reimburse a new or renewing (non-early career) member \$45 of the next year's annual membership dues if the member earns 30 or more active member incentive points by April 30, 2008 and submits a request to the Membership Committee accompanied by proof of dues payment by March 31, 2008.

Points are earned for such things as luncheon or social meeting attendance, meeting guests, attendance at training events, AGA community service participation, newsletter articles, committee membership, and sponsoring new members.

See

www.nashvilleaga.org/Documents/0708_point_structure.pdf for details.

AGA Members – Recruit to Win

This year at the Awards Luncheon in May, the Membership Committee will be giving away **two prizes** to members who have recruited new members throughout the year (May 2007 to April 2008).

Grand Prize: There will be 2 one-day passes to Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida. This pass will get you into both Islands of Adventures & Universal Studios Florida all day long for one day. Also, we may be able to expand on this grand prize. Watch for updates in upcoming newsletters.

Cash prize: For every new member that you recruit during the AGA program year, you will get your name placed in the hat for a \$100 cash drawing. The winner of the Grand Prize will not be eligible for this drawing.

PIZZA FOR PROSPECTS

Host a pizza party at your workplace and share the benefits of being an AGA member with others. The pizza is on us! See the rules of participation at www.nashvilleaga.org/Documents/Pizza_for_Prospects.pdf.

This offer is valid as long as funds are available, so act fast!

JOINING IS EASY

1. Pick up an application at the luncheon, or
2. Visit <https://www.agacgfm.org/membership/join/registration.aspx> on the National Website and you can register on-line with a credit card, or
3. Download and print an application.

Committee News

Program

The survey results for this year's social event are – The Chieftains!!!

We have reserved 100 tickets for AGA members and their guests to attend The Chieftains concert on Tuesday, March 4, 2008. The concert will take place in the Laura Turner Concert Hall at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. The Chieftains hail from Ireland and will give us an evening of Celtic music. SunTrust Bank is providing free parking to concertgoers at its parking garage at 4th Avenue North and Commerce Street.

Each member may purchase up to two tickets (one for themselves and one for a guest) at \$20/ticket. The chapter will subsidize the rest of the cost. We have reserved 58 seats on the Orchestra level and 42 in the Balcony. If you have a preference, you should indicate that when you register. Seats will be assigned on a first come/first serve basis.

You can reserve your tickets by going to the AGA website (<http://www.nashvilleaga.org>) or contacting Hellens Kruszynski at 401-7909 or Hellens.Kruszynski@state.tn.us. You must make your reservations by **January 28, 2008**.

Meetings and Attendance

The next AGA Luncheon is February 7th! AGA has invited the Institute of Internal Auditors to join our February meeting. Please make every effort to greet and make our guests feel welcome.

When: Thursday, February 7, 2008, at 1:30a.m.
Where: The Nashville City Club, SunTrust Bank Building, 20th floor, 201 Fourth Avenue North

Speaker: John Robinson, CPA, AT&T
CPE: One CPE Hour

Reservations can be standing for the entire year or booked individually through our AGA website or by contacting Joe Kimery at 401-7847 or at Joe.Kimery@state.tn.us. To cancel a reservation, call or e-mail Joe Kimery before the reservations deadline.

Luncheons are \$10.00 for members who make their reservations by the deadline (6 pm Monday the week of the Thursday meeting). Members who make a reservation but do not attend or find a member or first time guest replacement will be responsible for the \$10.00 fee. Luncheons are \$17.40 for nonmembers.

First-time guests of attending members eat free. After a guest's first visit, he or she will be charged our costs (\$17.40).

Community Service

2008 Community Service Event:

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

We are still seeking volunteers for VITA. We have been informed that Tammy Thompson will be hosting a site in Columbia, and she needs volunteers for that site. This site is ideal for people who live south of Nashville in Franklin, Spring Hill, or Columbia. Please contact her if you are interested at Tammy.Thompson@state.tn.us. For the Volunteer Registration Guide 2008 and Davidson County site locations, please visit <http://www.unitedwaynashville.org/nwba>. Please let Jennifer Lewis know if you are interested.

Nashville Rescue Mission

We are working on getting a date in February to volunteer at the Rescue Mission and hope to have a date soon. As soon as we receive the date from the Mission, we will send an email out to the listserv. Be watching your email!

Upcoming Activities:

March – Nashville Public Television (NPT)
April – Music City Marathon
May – Habitat for Humanity

Make it a point to participate in community service projects for the new year!

CEC Member Profile

Teresa Kennedy, CPA
Awards Chair



A military brat, my Dad's last active duty base assignment was Fort Campbell, Kentucky. We opted to live off base in Clarksville, Tennessee, and I attended Austin Peay State University. I went to a career fair before graduation, and this is where I learned about the Division of State Audit. I completed an employment application, interviewed with Clare Tucker, and the rest, they say, is history.

I graduated from APSU in December 1995 and began employment with the Financial and Compliance section on February 2, 1996. I'm currently an audit manager. My responsibilities include supervising audits, reviewing audit reports, and staying current on standards and emerging issues.

I live in Mount Juliet with my two shelter rescue cats – Chipper and CiCi.

And so ladies, gentlemen, and any tiny tots;

I begin channeling Dr. Seuss from this very spot.

My favorite hobby is watching TV
"Lost" is what really does it for me.

Now I know half of you snubbed your nose at this

And said, "It's PBS that's really can't miss."

But to the detractors out there with some certainty I say, Albert Einstein himself would be perplexed if he were alive today

That perhaps today the famous formula
would instead be $(4+8+15+16+23+42)/$
 $(4+8+15+16+23+42)mc^2=e!!!$
If all this talk has made you curious
And the writer's guild strike has left
you furious
Sit tight because January 31st looms near
The date of *Lost's* season premiere
Tune in to channel 2 at seven
And treat yourself to a little bit of TV
heaven.



Teresa Kennedy and Dan Willis cut a rug at the President's Reception (the last night of the 2007 PDC).

AGA Past National President Jeffrey C. Steinhoff, CGFM, Retires

By Marie S. Force
Published in *Government Financial
Management TOPICS*, January 22, 2008.

Steadfast, determined, consummate professional, outstanding fiscal steward, and finally, “father.” These were just some of the adjectives used by his colleagues and friends to describe AGA Past National President Jeffrey C. Steinhoff, CGFM, CPA, CFE, on the occasion of his retirement this month after 40 years of federal service.

Credited for being the “father” of AGA’s Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Program during his term as 1993–1994 AGA National President, he served as the first Professional Certification Board chairman, from 1994–1998, and continues as a board member today. He is also considered one of the fathers or principal architects behind the groundbreaking 1990 Chief Financial Officers Act.

After graduating from the College of William and Mary, Steinhoff began his federal career as an auditor with the Army Audit Agency. In 1973, he moved to the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO, now the Government Accountability Office) where he spent the remainder of his career, retiring as managing director for Financial Management and Assurance. As managing director, he headed up GAO’s largest audit unit, with responsibility for oversight of financial management and auditing issues across the federal government. Included in his duties were the audit of the government’s consolidated financial statements, the establishment of Government Auditing Standards and internal control standards, reviews of internal control, forensic auditing, financial management systems reviews, cost management, improper payments, and the full



range of accountability and corporate governance issues.

Steinhoff’s colleagues and friends were effusive in their praise for his many accomplishments over four decades of federal service.

“Jeff, by combining determination, thoroughness, conscientiousness and fairness in your work at GAO and at AGA, you drove financial management to levels heretofore considered unattainable,” said Harold I. Steinberg, CGFM, CPA, technical director for AGA’s Certificate of Excellence Programs, and retired deputy controller, U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Wendy Payne, CGFM, executive director, Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB), said, “I’ve had the privilege of working with Jeff—on both AGA and FASAB endeavors—for over 16 years now. Jeff is a leader in his field—it’s difficult to know whether to refer to him first as the father of the CFO Act or the CGFM. In each case, he’s had a great idea and been consistent in nurturing it as it grew. In nurturing these ideas, he’s also nurtured the members of his profession—government financial managers. Hopefully, we’ll continue to follow his lead for years to come!”

Steinhoff served under three comptrollers general of the United States, whom he credits for fostering an environment where he could thrive professionally.

“It was a privilege to work with three outstanding comptrollers general: Elmer Staats, Chuck Bowsher and Dave Walker—who epitomize the best in public service and have provided lasting vision to the government accountability community,” Steinhoff said. “Very few people in government have the opportunity to work with such giants in our profession and to have had only three top leaders in more than 34 years with the organization. I have been truly blessed and very much appreciate the opportunities that GAO provided to me to make a difference, which is what public service is all about.”

AGA’s 1989–1990 National President Virginia B. Robinson, CGFM, former executive director of the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP), said, “Jeff has been a stalwart contributor in the financial management and auditing community. His contributions to the CFO Act and other legislation; financial management improvements and best practices through JFMIP; accounting standards, auditing standards and methodologies have been exemplary.”

Steinhoff recalled the early days of his career when there was no such thing as calculators or computers, when audit reports were sent to the typing pool, and work papers were photocopied a page at a time. He leaves a government confronted by escalating fiscal problems that will continue to challenge the federal financial management community. Chief among his concerns for the future is “finding ways to add greater value to program and operational managers by providing reliable, relevant and timely information for decision support and day-to-day operations.” He hopes to see the focus move from transaction processing to providing useful information to program managers, a shift he called “moving from the backroom to the boardroom.”

“While important as a measure of an organization’s ability to be accountable, audited financial statements provide a historical perspective and have proven at the federal level to still be of little value to the program manager and the overseer, such as Congress, who need a different portfolio of information to do their jobs,” he said.

He looks back with pride on the 1990 CFO Act, which he says has had a “profound impact” on the government financial management community and government accountability in general. With 17 years’ perspective, he said much has changed since the bill was passed.

“Who would have ever imagined that 19 of 24 CFO agencies would be receiving clean audit opinions only 45 days after the end of the fiscal year and that internal control weaknesses would be significantly reduced?” he asked. “Who would have imagined financial management making a president’s radar, but it is an integral part of the President’s Management Agenda and has been so since the start of the Bush administration. Who would have imagined a clean opinion on a primary government-wide financial statement, but this year GAO rendered a clean opinion on the Statement of Social Insurance? Who would have imagined outsourcing accounting to another federal agency, but this is happening. By any measure the journey is not over, but the range of management legislation has resulted in better government.”

He continued, “We now need to move to the next leg of the journey and successfully address what I view as the three key provisions of the CFO Act: the systematic measurement of performance, the development of cost information and the integration of systems—program, budget and accounting.”

Value of Membership
An AGA member since 1976, Steinhoff said AGA membership is “the best way to broaden one’s perspective on financial management and auditing issues, network among peers at all levels across government, and have a

chance to lead and make a difference while growing as a professional. Just getting to know others outside your own organization is invaluable and makes it much easier to navigate through the layers and different facets of government.”

One of his AGA colleagues in state government was AGA’s 1992–1993 National President Charles L. Harrison, CGFM, CPA, director of Management Services and Assistant to the Comptroller, Comptroller of the Treasury, state of Tennessee.

“Under Jeff’s guidance and leadership, distinctive improvements and additions have been made to AGA programs,” said Harrison.

“Amidst adversity, Jeff made it his passion and goal to create a professional certification program for government financial managers,” Harrison continued. “His fundamental ability to ‘talk the talk’ and ‘walk the walk’ guided his success in creating the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) at AGA, which resulted in AGA membership growth for the first time in years. It also advanced AGA’s stature as being the premier professional association for state, federal and local government financial management professionals.”

AGA’s 2002–2003 National President William J. Anderson Jr., CGFM, agrees. “The CGFM certification greatly enhanced AGA’s national prestige and stature in the accountability profession. Jeff will forever stand as a role model for all accountability professionals.”

When looking back at the start of the CGFM Program, Steinhoff credits AGA’s National Board of Directors for “taking a chance” on an idea put forth by a President with a one-year term. “Without their support,” he said, “we would not have been able to begin the journey. Once we got the thumbs up, it was

a labor of love, with too many volunteers to mention coming to the forefront to contribute their precious time and vast talents to implement the program and developing the CGFM Exams. It is an example of what AGA members can achieve when they work together toward a common goal.”

Throughout his career, Steinhoff, a member of the Northern Virginia Chapter, mentored young professionals and encouraged their development through membership in organizations such as AGA.

“What a role model he has been in mentoring as well as hosting meetings for ‘early career’ members in AGA,” Robinson said. “His leadership role in the CGFM Program, the best conferences, and other educational activities have acquainted us with the consummate professional.”

Anderson concurred. “Looking at Jeff’s 40-year government career I see a strategic thinker who epitomizes excellence in public service. He is an exceptional leader, visionary and consensus builder who greatly enhanced government financial management and the accountability profession. Jeff was the principal architect of the CFO Act of 1990 and championed many other federal financial management improvement initiatives.”

The recipient of AGA’s highest honor, the Robert W. King Memorial Award in 1996, Steinhoff also received the AGA’s Distinguished Leadership Award in 1990, AGA’s Elmer Staats Award in 1999, AGA National President’s Awards in 1995, 1997 and 2003, and was one of 23 people recognized by AGA in 2000 for significant contributions toward advancing government accountability during the Association’s first 50 years.

Am I My Brother's Keeper? – A Tax Question by Melvin Jones, Jr. CGFM

The January 2008 issue of Governing Magazine had an article that was very interesting. It is a story everyone should take the time to read. It addresses the true nature of taxation and how, "Outmoded tax systems are undercutting the economic future of the states." The article is more about the impact tax policy can have on the overall economic vitality and development of an area, but this article is not.

As a non-tax professional in a state taxing department, I am often amazed by the disconnect much of the public has between the many services they receive and the taxes they pay. No one, including myself, is a fan of paying taxes. However, like everyone else, my family and I, are and always will be, benefactors of taxes we pay to the government.

In the quest for what is important and what is not, we have to look deeper than our individual needs. In determining what may or may not be punitive in respect to taxation, we need to provide a little perspective. So much of what we all think about taxation and "Big Government" is based on the identification of services we see others receiving. However, we are all protected by the military. We all use the roads in our city, county, parish, state, country. We all eat food, pump gas, go to barbers, and attend fairs and carnivals, made safer by government employees.

Some people will say, "My child doesn't attend public schools, so why should I pay for them." Others may say, "I am not on welfare, so why should they eat steak using food stamps, while I have to pay for hamburger out of my own pocket." Others may drive around the capitol of their state honking their horn to protest a tax they



Melvin Jones, Jr., CGFM

think unfair to them and those like them. I say, life is too short to begrudge someone who does not make enough to adequately feed their family on what they bring home in pay.

In the Publisher's Desk Section of the same issue of Governing, Russell B. Long of Louisiana is quoted as saying, "Don't tax you. Don't tax me. Tax that fellow behind the tree." However, if you are in Southern Louisiana and a catastrophe like Katrina happens or if you are in California and fires are ravaging your community, you probably are not worried about who is paying the taxes that will provide for your personal safety and for the inevitable recovery effort.

You probably are not even remotely concerned with the regressive nature of sales tax or the impact of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) on your federal tax liability. You will not be wondering if the current tax structure of your state limits



the growth of the communication industry in your area (Governing). You will just expect that something will be done to bring a sense of normalcy back to you and the ones you love and the dream home you worked so hard to build.

You may at some point realize that it is your tax dollars and those of people you don't even know that will help you rebuild your life. It will be your hard earned dollars that paid for the Coast Guard personnel flying mission after mission to rescue people from rooftops. Your tax dollars will have paid for the firemen who risk their lives to put out the fires and provided the funds to pay the policemen that secure the area. Your taxes make the life we have become accustomed to in America possible.

Taxes have fueled many political and personal arguments over the years. No one wants their property, payroll, sales, or business taxes to rise. But in the end, the very growth that signals the prosperity

of a region also brings about a need for more and more revenue to fund new schools, roads, water systems, and other infrastructure improvements and updates that we take for granted.

Governing addresses the true nature of various tax methods on the coffers of state government and on business and economic development and says they are addressing this issue now, a time "when most legislatures are reconvening." In the article, they state that, "Since 2000, virtually every state has commissioned at least one major tax reform panel to study the issue and develop proposals for modernization."

I say that this is an opportune time for people to look at what they may receive and what their personal impact on taxation can be, through their acceptance or rejection of tax policy in relation to what they and their family and their individual community receive as a result.

A Ghanaian Proverb says, "It is through small things that a village is established," and it is through the commitment of those able to pay that a "village" grows and thrives and provides a better opportunity at life for all, through better streets, public safety, national security, safer and better schools, where young people can learn, and through all the many other "village" responsibilities paid for through tax receipts.

I have heard the question asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Maybe not, but in times of need, we may find that we have made the world a better place for ourselves, if we have made an attempt to make the world better for others around us, even if it is by paying taxes.

Meeting Minutes

January Chapter Luncheon

The January Chapter Luncheon was held on January 10, 2008, at the City Club. To read the draft minutes from the Chapter Luncheon and see the photo gallery, please visit the chapter website. Members will have an opportunity to approve the minutes at the February 7 Luncheon meeting.

Minutes

http://www.nashvilleaga.org/monthly_meetings.htm

Photo Gallery

http://www.nashvilleaga.org/photo_gallery.htm



President Melvin Johnson spoke at the January Luncheon meeting on the 10 goals he implemented in the first 90 days at Tennessee State University as well as plans for TSU's 100th anniversary to be celebrated in 2012.



The Nashville Chapter AGA was excited to hold its first joint meeting with the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) on January 10. Pictured here are NABA members in attendance at the meeting.

Chapter Executive Committee Meeting

The Chapter Executive Committee met on January 7, 2008, in the 14th floor conference room of the Tennessee Tower. To read the approved minutes from the December 3, 2007 Chapter Executive Committee meeting, please visit the chapter website.

Minutes

http://www.nashvilleaga.org/monthly_meetings.htm



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