

## President's Message

By Kathy Anderson, CGFM, CPA

### UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>Country Music City Marathon</b>	<b>4/25/09</b>
<b>May Awards Luncheon (Wildhorse)</b>	<b>5/07</b>
<b>Spring Social</b>	<b>5/2/09</b>

Another AGA year is coming to a close soon. We still have our awards meeting in May, but as I write this, we just completed the last regular chapter meeting! As I listened to Gene Policinski talk about the first amendment, it was interesting to hear how many times he used the words "accountability" and "transparency." He was really speaking our language! Of course, he was using the words from the viewpoint of how the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights to free speech, assembly, petition, religion, and press help to ensure accountability and about transparency as it applies to campaign finance. But those words (as I've mentioned in the last 2 newsletters with regard to the Recovery Act) are really the buzz words of today.

The overriding thoughts that I had during this session had to do with technology and how things have changed since the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment was written. Transparency expectations of this level, whether for federal payment information or for campaign finance disclosures, would not be possible without the web. The ability of a government to get information to the whole population real-time is now a reality and certainly the way things are headed in the future.

Maybe soon, we will have the ability to see government transactions not just soon after they

occur, but as they are occurring! Mr. Policinski also mentioned new methods of communicating like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter that are really changing the dynamic of what we think of when we think of freedom of the press or freedom of speech. It was a very interesting discussion, an excellent speaker, and a great way to cap off our speakers for the year.

Speaking of capping off the year.... we had an excellent educational event at the beginning of April. Melinda Parton (with the help of the Conference Executive Committee, including Jim Arnette, Deby Davis, Charles Harrison, Deborah Loveless) and various committee chairs and committee members pulled together and created an absolutely top-notch educational experience!

See the following pages for pictures with a narrative.

*Kathy*

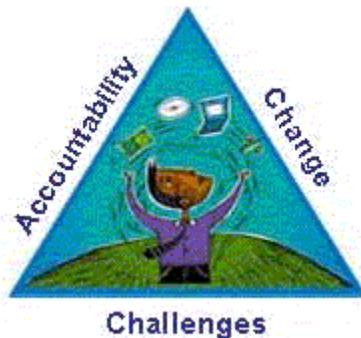
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# *2009 AGA Southeastern Region Professional Development Conference*

*April 1-3, 2009  
Doubletree Hotel  
Nashville, Tennessee*



The conference started with registration (chaired by Penny Austin) on Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. Each conference participant received a bag of items donated by various businesses, and this effort was chaired by Ann Collett. Printed materials were coordinated by May Ann Queen and website materials were handled by Dan Willis. As people started arriving in town, including many of the speakers, Hellens Kruszynski oversaw an impressive hospitality suite.



On Thursday, we started bright and early with opening ceremonies coordinated by Deborah Loveless and Chris Gingles, which included a welcome from Karl Dean, the Mayor of Nashville. The rest of the program was just as impressive!



The program committee was chaired by Michelle Earhart and Charles Harrison and included speakers like Gene Dodaro, the Acting Comptroller General of the United States; Janice Holder, the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court; Jim Williams, GASB board member; and Kinney Poynter, Executive Director of NASACT. And that was just the first day! The committees that made things run smoothly during these sessions were chaired by Phil Carr and Kevin Huffman.





The Corporate sponsorship committee, chaired by Melinda Parton and Richard Norment, brought in some generous sponsorships including lunches and even a social event at the Wildhorse sponsored by our Platinum Sponsor, Oracle. Our breaks were sponsored by our silver sponsor, Crowe Horwath, and our bronze sponsor, ING, sponsored the hospitality suite. Each of those sponsors as well as Yeary, Howell & Associates helped us ensure we put on a needed conference in challenging economic times. We thank our generous sponsors for allowing us to set up some incredible networking

opportunities with our fellow accountability professionals. The committee chairs who helped organize these networking events included Nicole Curtiss and Karen Hale.



On Friday, the conference continued with more high-caliber speakers, including Bob Attmore, Chair of GASB; John Morgan, Deputy Governor; and Mike Keith, the “voice of the Titans.” Also, throughout the conference, there was a community service silent auction, coordinated by Jennifer McClendon, that raised in excess of \$1,000 each for the Nashville Rescue Mission Women’s Program and the Make-A-Wish foundation. Of course, I’d remiss if I didn’t mention Chas Taplin, our Treasurer, who watched the budget and paid all the bills!





Thank you, AGA chapter, for the incredible participation in putting this conference together!! The volunteers make the difference! We hope to host a committee appreciation lunch in May to show all of the committee members (both from the PDC and the CEC) how much we appreciate their hard work. I hope to see you all at the awards lunch at the Wildhorse May 7!

## Chapter Recognition Points

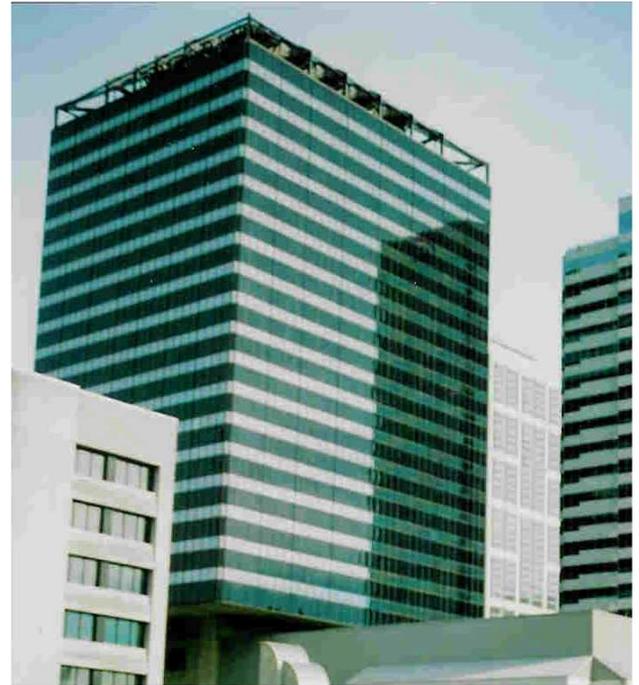
Chapter Recognition Points	Annual National Maximum Points 2008-2009
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### Through April 15, 2009

Leadership	4,400	3,000
Education	8,800	4,000
Certification	9,625	4,000
Communication	8,282	3,000
Membership	1,425	3,000
Early Careers	1,525	2,000
Community Service	4,200	2,000
Awards	7,700	1,000

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**Total Points YTD 45,957                      33,000**



## Meeting Minutes

### Chapter Executive Committee Meeting

The Chapter Executive Committee (CEC) met on April 7, 2009, in the large Conference Room on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of the James K. Polk Building. To read the approved minutes from the Chapter Executive Committee meeting, please visit the chapter website.

### Minutes

[http://www.nashvilleaga.org/monthly\\_meetings.htm](http://www.nashvilleaga.org/monthly_meetings.htm)

# 2009 SPRING SOCIAL

## Nashville Sounds vs. Omaha Royals

When: Saturday May 2, 2009.  
Picnic starts at 4:30 PM  
Game starts at 6:00 PM

Where: Greer Stadium  
TN State Parks Home Run Deck

Price: \$10.00 Members and guests  
\$5.00 Children 12 and under  
Free Children 2 and under

### Members and Their Guests Only (4 guest limit)

**Price includes reserved seating ticket and picnic buffet**

#### Menu Includes:

<b>Hamburgers</b>	<b>Hot Dogs</b>
<b>BBQ Pork</b>	<b>Baked Beans</b>
<b>Potato Chips</b>	<b>Potato Salad</b>
<b>Soft Drinks</b>	<b>Ice Cream</b>

\*\*\*LIMITED TO THE FIRST 150 REGISTRANTS\*\*\*

**TO REGISTER COMPLETE FORM AT:**

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=A59l3kYnQ4OwHyAiLKbAow\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=A59l3kYnQ4OwHyAiLKbAow_3d_3d)

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE APRIL 15th**

Tickets can be picked up at gate on game day.

## **Committee News**

### **Membership Committee**

#### **AGA's 2008-2009 Member-Get-A-Member Campaign: The Big Easy**

**National is offering AGA members the opportunity to share the value of an AGA membership while also earning BIG rewards.**

**National prizes are for the period ending April 30, 2009.**

Recruit **ONE** or more members, receive a Sponsors Only lapel pin and get recognized in Topics and on the AGA website.

Recruit **TWO** members and start earning AGA Dollars. You'll earn five AGA Dollars for each new member that joins. AGA Dollars are like cash and can be redeemed towards publications, membership due renewals and national conference registrations.

Recruit the most new Early Career members during the campaign, and earn a Garmin GPS Navigation System.

Recruiter of the Year will receive complimentary registration to AGA's 2009 Professional Development Conference in New Orleans and an Apple iPod Touch.

The next two members who recruit the highest amount of new members will receive a complimentary AGA national meeting registration.

The six chapters that obtain the highest overall growth percentage in their chapter size grouping will receive one complimentary AGA national meeting registration to give to a chapter member

**In addition to National's offerings, the membership committee is proud to announce some chapter incentives.**

## **Local Prizes!!!!!!!**

Each member that brings a guest will receive an AGA notepad (while supplies last).

If a member's guest decides to join AGA, that member will also receive a \$10 giftcard to a national chain restaurant (while supplies last). All of the above is in addition to the incentives that are already in place. See below:

Existing members:

For those who sponsor new members –

- a. get a free AGA lunch for every two new members sponsored,
- b. for every new member sponsored your name will be entered into a drawing with a first prize of two one day passes to Universal Studios in Orlando plus \$100 cash and a second prize of \$100 cash, and

Guests and new members:

Prospective new members who are first time guests get a free AGA lunch.

New members as of 10/1/08 also receive a free AGA lunch.

I can't recall so many incentives ever being offered for recruiting! Everyone needs to take advantage and get involved.

This is a great opportunity for our chapter to grow, and for you to earn some goodies along the way!

Please contact Jennifer Lewis and Ed Burr with any questions.

Continued on next page

## Committee News Continued

### Membership Committee

Congratulations to the following recipient during February:

#### Free Lunch-New Members

John Payne  
Leah Langley  
Mariano Monzu  
Regina Stout  
Marsha Cooprider  
Wendi Goodwin  
Lisa Salvador



#### Free Notebook-Brought a Guest

Keevia Battle  
Alla Cox  
Ron Erickson  
Karen Hale  
Steve Henley  
Rhonda Williams

Giftcard-Guest Joined

Cynthia Setters

***Member free lunch (sponsored 2 new members)***

Cynthia Setters.



# Committee News

## Get involved!

The Nashville Chapter of AGA is full of smart and energetic members with ideas on speakers, social events, newsletter articles, website savvy, etc.! **Be a volunteer!**

The following is a list of chapter committees.

**Remember, the more you put into an organization, the more you get out of it!**

Contact Karen Hale at [Karen.B.Hale@tn.gov](mailto:Karen.B.Hale@tn.gov) or call 741-0198 for more information and to volunteer. Committees will be working over the summer months, so volunteer today!

### **Awards**

Acknowledges participation and contributions of chapter members; participants in the National awards program that acknowledges chapter committee work, and by nominating individuals in the government financial community for leadership awards. Coordinates scholarship program.

### **Certified Government Financial Manager**

Promotes the CGFM designation by marketing the program and by assisting potential candidates in attaining the certification and supports current CGFM's.

### **Community Service**

Promotes and conducts community service activities that enhance the chapter and AGA's image and reputation. Provides a means for chapter members to give back to the community.

### **Early Career**

Promotes AGA participation and government to students and individuals early in their government careers.

### **Education**

Provides professional training, education, and development opportunities to the government professional community.

### **Finance**

Ensures the chapter meets its IRS reporting requirements; prepares the chapter history reports, and consults on financial matters as needed. The chapter leadership is looking to expand the scope to include corporate sponsorships, which will enhance specific programs and activities of the chapter.

### **Meetings and Attendance**

Promotes and coordinates chapter meetings including meeting logistics and reservations.

### **Membership/Member Services**

Works to attract new chapter members and retain current members. Provides assistance to members.

### **Newsletter**

Provides timely information to the chapter on upcoming events, recaps of past events, articles, and job opportunities.

### **Program**

Coordinates speakers for chapter luncheon meetings and develops a chapter social event for members.

### **Public Relations**

Promotes the chapter's accomplishments and activities through notices, press releases, and other means of communication.

### **Website**

Provides a mechanism for communication of chapter and national AGA information

## **“HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT...AND ACCOUNTABILITY”**

**February 24, 2009, edited April 9, 2009**

As I sat reading my brother-in-law Wendell's military "Fitness Report," I was taken by some of the specific areas for which he was being rated. I thought, "Oh, he is in the military and they have to meet a different standard," but then I contemplated the words I was reading; Honor, Courage, and Commitment."

In the midst of all the mission related comments about "successful sorties flown and flight hours logged," by the aircraft his maintenance unit kept in the air was an assessment that included the words, "Honor, Courage, and Commitment." He had received a "5", the highest performance level possible in this area. He was a man rated excellent in his "Honor, Courage, and Commitment!"

He is a military man, and a very good one, I was pressed in my thoughts, and I wondered how we civilians, especially those of us in the Accountability Profession, would measure up, if we were held to the same standards as the men and women who serve in our armed forces. Do we in the performance of our duties reflect the same kind of dedication?" How would we rate, if we were assessed on our "Honor, Courage, and Commitment."

We are professionals and we have a great responsibility. We are called, Pencil Pushers and Bean Counters," but what we do is far more important than these words would imply. The expectations of the citizenry, requires that we always aspire to reflect the same type of code and dedication in the furtherance of our duties, as espoused above. The questions that we must answer day to day and the sensibilities we must adhere to, make it all the more necessary to live and work with "Honor, Courage, and Commitment."

"Honor" is something that is defined in general by standing up and living within a certain code of conduct. Being honorable is not a fad, not just a word, and not just something for those wearing a military uniform to exhibit. In government, as in the private sector, there are those who do not welcome the scrutiny of a serious examination of their operation. We have to have the honor, a genuine desire to do what is right in the face of those situations.

"Courage" is the ability to stand, even when fear or self-preservation may be telling you to do otherwise.

In the military, courage can be stark and unavoidable, even when sitting at home, during a respite for their field service. Although most of our jobs do not have the inherent risk of military personnel, we can still face decisions to report information or situations that can have an adverse effect on us. In some instances, depending on their job duties and agency, some accountability professionals, even face mortal jeopardy. Courage starts, when we move forward, when our natural instincts tell us to "Stop!"

Continued on next page

“Honor, Courage, Commitment...and Accountability”

“Commitment” means we will not cut corners, look the other way, or be lazy in the exercise of our duties, but will stand up for our chosen cause or principals. We can most significantly display our commitment, by being well versed and well trained in the basic tenants of our profession. Most government auditors are required to operate in accordance with the “Yellow Book.” I know I should read through it more often, so that I can truly meet the commitment to my professional responsibilities, as defined by the applicable standards. To be fully committed, I must fully understand that to which I say I am committed.

Acting with the courage and commitment does not come without a cost. Taking a stand can put you in difficult positions, but as I typed and thought about the three tenants from the Fitness Report, I was reminded of the Constitution and also of the words of Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address, “...that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth.”

The decision to establish a government that was at its’ genesis, “By the people for the people,” means we should be good stewards and uphold the highest standards in the conduct of “The People’s Business.”

We are the people, and we serve the people. “Honor, Courage, and Commitment” are all embodied in “Accountability.” In the Association of Government Accountants, as in the United States military, these ideals should be at the root of everything we endeavor to believe, live, celebrate, and preserve.



By: Melvin Jones, Jr.  
Director, Internal Audit & Consulting Services  
Tennessee Department of Revenue

# Joys of Volunteering

By Suzanne A. Sawyers

In this article, I plan to share with you a few of the joys that I have experienced from participating in various volunteer projects. I also plan to share some reasons why you should volunteer if you have not already.

## Why Volunteer?

Being that Tennessee is the “Volunteer State,” it is only befitting of me to volunteer my time to help others. I began volunteering at various nursing homes during my sophomore year in high school. It started as a school project but became something I grew very passionate about. As a volunteer at the nursing home, I thoroughly enjoyed reading to patients, playing board games with them, and just talking to them. Many of the patients did not have family members that would visit them on a regular basis or at all. Volunteering at the nursing home made a lasting impression on me and became an essential part of my life.

Through the years, I have volunteered with the following organizations: The Lupus Foundation, Hope Clinic for Women, American Diabetes Association, American Red Cross, American Cancer Society, Nashville Sports Council, Nashville Humane Association, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Hands on Nashville. I am actively involved with the American Cancer Society through Hands on Nashville by playing bingo with the cancer patients once a month. The thing that I have enjoyed most from my volunteer experience is knowing that I have made a difference in someone’s life. The genuine, sincere, and heartfelt appreciation received from those I have helped is priceless. It is the greatest feeling to see their faces and to let them know that there are people out here who really care.

Based on my experiences, here are a few reasons why you should volunteer.

- 1) If you live in the Volunteer State, it’s a given!
- 2) You help someone else and brighten their day!
- 3) You gain fulfillment and satisfaction in knowing you did a good deed!
- 4) It is fun and you have fun while doing it!
- 5) You meet plenty of new people!

## How to Get Involved?

There are many ways to get involved with volunteering, through your church, your work, and/or through your school (your child’s school). Each of those is a great way to get started and provide many opportunities for volunteering. In addition, if you are interested in a particular organization, start by contacting that organization. I am sure they could use the extra hands and would love to have you volunteer with them when you can. So don’t just sit there, **Start Now!!!**



# Do Volunteer Organizations Have Good Controls?

By Jeff Hughes

Many of us belong to various clubs and organizations in both our professional and personal life. Most, if not all, of these organizations collect money and write checks. Are there controls in place to help prevent theft though? I have noticed in some of the organizations in which I am a member, people volunteer their time dearly; however, most of these have no financial background and do not think of the checks and balances that should be in place.

Just this January I was asked to take over the Treasury position for an organization in Lawrence County. All of the members of this organization are volunteers and no one receives any compensation for their time. The reason I was asked if I would take over is because of my background. This organization is the Board to the 13 volunteer fire departments within the County. Some of the departments believe that one signature on a check is the way to go, and the way to go it was. A member was able to steal money for almost a year before getting caught. Departments are now required to submit financial statements annually to both me and the county budget director. Also, these financial statements must be signed off by the Chief and Treasurer of each department.

One thing to consider in a volunteer organization is easy access to cash. We all know when we get a checking account it typically comes with an option for a debit/ATM card. While there is no problem in obtaining one of these, there is a problem in how it is used. Some places will not take a check; however, they will accept a debit card. Another place that always will accept a debit card is any ATM machine. The explanation that was given for certain cash withdrawals was they were paying for their gas. Hmm?? Last time I checked gas stations accept either a check or debit card, if not both. I cannot think of any reasons anyone would need access to an ATM in this scenario.

Another thing to consider is where the mail is going. The organization I belong to does not have a "physical" location, so there was not a set mailing address. When I became Treasurer I learned that mail was being sent to about 3 or 4 different addresses. That type of situation can cause a lot of confusion and could allow unusual transactions to go unnoticed. That stopped the day I was given the checkbook. All mail is now routed to a post office box in which only three people have a key.

All organizations, no matter how small, must have monitoring procedures in place. Everyone hates having to balance a checkbook but it is an essential part of life. The previous Treasurer was the only person involved in reconciling the bank account. Now before the bank statement reaches me the Director must review it, initial and date it. Afterwards I will reconcile the account and sign and date it also.

No one is ever going to be 100% safe from theft, but there are checks and balances that can be put into place to at least help prevent it. In addition to what I have mentioned above, organizations ensure that if they reimburse a member for an expense, they have documented everything well to prove the reimbursement was valid. Also, Treasurers should always mark each invoice paid and sign/date it before filing it away.

Most volunteers do not believe anyone would steal from their organization; however, that is not the case. A study done by the ACFE showed that over \$30 million was stolen from nonprofits in 2004. The Salvation Army didn't put locks on their buckets for no reason. Remember, no matter what organization you are working with, their controls should still be secure. Even if the organization does not have the resources to have all the controls of a Fortune 500 company, there are still simple steps and compensating controls that can be put in place to safeguard the assets of these small non-profit organizations.

# Transparency in Government

By Nathan Abbott, CISA, CFE

On February 13, 2009 the House of Representatives and Senate approved the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This is an unprecedented stimulus bill, that hopefully will turn our economy around and we do not have to do this again. However, with the ARRA will come new challenges for governments, citizens, and audit organizations. This Act promises full transparency and accountability to the citizens of this great nation.

Here are some facts about ARRA. The word Audit appears 35; Oversight appears 65; Transparency appears 20; and Accountability appears 40 times in the Act. Its apparent that with these funds comes responsibility to the Audit community that we account for these funds in a timely manner and make this accounting available for inspection by the public. On the [www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov) website it states by March 3, 2009 federal agencies must start reporting the use of the funds. By May 3, 2009 Federal Agencies are to make Performance plans publicly available. By July 15, 2009 Recipients of Federal Funding must begin reporting their use of the funds. The ARRA wants full transparency with the funds being spent and the [www.Recovery.gov](http://www.Recovery.gov) website will provide this information to the public for tracking, and reviewing of the funds. This leads me to write this article Transparency in Government.

What is Transparency in Government? To me I think to everybody else it means having the ability to track, review, and download transaction associated with the ARRA. Why do we need to stop just at the ARRA transactions; why can't we continue this transparency through all of Government spending? In the State of Tennessee we are proposing a project to develop a Local Government website that will allow all citizens to track, review, and download all revenue and expenditures for 89 of the 95 counties in Tennessee reporting their revenues and expenditures on this website.

While researching for this article I determined that at least 18 states offer full or limited ability to track, review and download transaction in those States. I believe those States should be commended for being in the forefront of Transparency in Government. Now it is up to us as leaders in our organizations to get on board and start providing transparency in your government.



## Nashville Chapter 2008-2009 Leadership

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website at:  
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