

ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNMENT
ACCOUNTANTS

AGA

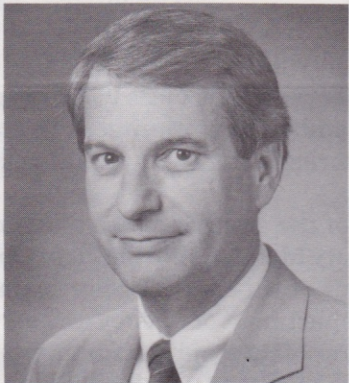
NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON CHAPTER

APRIL 1987

THURSDAY April 2, 1987

LUNCHEON MEETING TO FEATURE



G. JERRY SHAW
Founding Partner
NEILL, MULLENHOLZ & SHAW

Topic

*Emerging Legislation
and Issues Affecting
the Federal Workforce*

at the

SAM RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
Room B-338, "C" and South Capitol Streets
(Near Capitol South Metro Station)

Social	
Period	11:15
Luncheon	12:00
Cost	\$13.00 (Members with reservation) \$15.00 (Non-members and No Reservation)

For Luncheon Reservations Call 548-7040 (24 HOUR SERVICE)

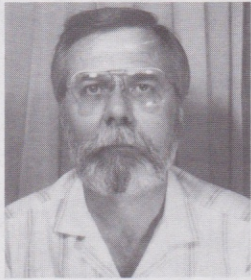
Telephone Reservations Accepted Thru March 31, 1987

NON MEMBERS WELCOME

All Reservations Guaranteed

Meeting Schedule: Apr. 2 • May 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Gary Palmquist

On February 25, 1987, Mike Causey of the Washington Post reported that a bipartisan task force headed by former Virginia governor Charles S. Robb warned that the quality of Federal career leadership would slip unless politicians stopped "bureaucrat bashing." I say it is about time someone pointed out the ill-advised trend by politicians to attack the talent needed to carry out their missions. Bureaucrats, by their very nature, are easy targets for cheap shots. Bureaucrats will not and do not fight back. My previous feeble editorial attempts to criticize political abuse of career employees have been met with whispered encouragement, but not public support. Therefore, I am delighted that this 88-page report entitled "The Government's Managers" includes recommendations to:

*Urge politicians to stop "demeaning civil servants," which "makes it more difficult to attract and keep" the best people.

*Limit key jobs in budget, administration and personnel administration to career civil servants to provide the continuity and "institutional memory" necessary to keep government running smoothly.

*Replace conflict-of-interest requirements with "precise ethical guidelines" for senior managers.

*Depoliticize the Office of Personnel Management.

The Washington Chapter has been concerned with the image of the public employee for some time. Last year we joined the Public Employees Roundtable. This year the National AGA office will join the Public Employees Roundtable for all chapters. It seems to me that career employees should speak out whenever we can in support of public employees and decry "bureaucrat bashing" whenever we find it.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

By Jean Bowles, Chapter Secretary

The Executive Committee met on February 26, 1987

Jim Goulden has taken on the Agency Liaison Network function for the Membership Chairman. He will develop contact persons in all the agencies or in specific areas within agencies. One function of these contacts is quick dissemination of information, flyers, etc. Volunteers can reach Jim on 267-0521.

National has announced the nominations of Meredith Williams (Kansas) as National President-Elect and our own Ken Winne for Capital Region Vice President-Elect.

A search will begin for a replacement for National Executive Director Fletcher Lutz who has announced his resignation effective June 30.

Doris Chew and Diane Bray reported that the February Capital Region 2-day educational event went off well. Upcoming events are the March 27 2-hour seminar on FERS and the auditing workshop in May.

HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP!

By Dan McGrath

Director, Membership Services Committee

The Membership Services Committee is still looking for additional volunteers to staff its two major networks; (1) Agency Liaisons, and (2) Membership.

Members of the smaller of the two groups carry the title Deputy Membership Services Chairperson. Each member of this network is responsible for a particular department or agency and serves as contact and source of information to Chapter members and potential members.

The second and larger network is that of Assistant Membership Chairpersons. The time commitment for these positions is minimal and presents an ideal opportunity for members who would like to be active but have not been able to devote the time to the Association's more involved activities to participate. The idea is to keep the area within the agency or organization serviced by each Assistant small enough that not more than a dozen new professionals will be introduced to it each year.

If you are interested in one of these positions or would like more information, please contact Dan McGrath 566-3717, or if your interest is in only the liaisons team and you prefer you can contact Jim Goulden, who has volunteered to chair the liaisons network, on 267-0521.

**ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNMENT
ACCOUNTANTS
WASHINGTON
CHAPTER
EXECUTIVE
BOARD 1986-1987**

Officers

President

Gary Palmquist, 233-2472

President-Elect

Terry Conway, DOD, 697-7296

Secretary

Jean Bowles, State, 524-1188

Treasurer

Vern Isenberg, Agriculture, 447-6090

Past President

Susan Lee, Financial Management
Service, 535-9693

Committees

Membership Services

Daniel McGrath, Financial
Management Service, 566-3717

Programs

Loretta Shogren, Justice, 633-2466

Newsletter

Lee Beaty, GAO, 275-9417
Anna Wilson, JFMIP, 376-5415
Herb McLure, GAO, 275-4905

Employment Referral

Joyce Shelton, DOT, 366-1306

Meetings

Judith Boyd, Financial Management
Service, 535-9693

*Cooperation with Professional and
Academic Organizations*

Joseph Rothschild, HUD, 426-6493

Relations with National Office

William Kendig, Interior, 343-4701

Research, Professional Notes

Charles McAndrew, Navy, 695-1070

Awards

Mike Merson, Financial Management
Service, 436-6840

Chapter Evaluation

Ronald Lynch, Arthur Anderson,
862-3324

Chapter Recognition

Judith Parson, Financial Management
Service, 566-9420

Education

Diane Bray, DOD, 695-0839
Doris Chew, JFMIP, 376-5415

Special Projects

Adam Shaw, DOD, 697-0585

Public Service

Paula Rubin, Financial Management
Service, 535-9696

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH

G. JERRY SHAW

G. Jerry Shaw is a founding partner in the law firm of Neill, Mullenholz & Shaw. He spent more than ten years with the Office of Chief Counsel, Internal Revenue Service, representing the agency in legal matters before courts and agencies throughout the country, and supervised more than sixty lawyers.

His extensive legal experience includes the areas of government contract, personal injury, labor law, and a variety of other administrative law matters.

In 1980, he helped found the Senior Executives Association. He served as its first President from 1980-1982 and is currently the General Counsel and lobbyist for the Association. He is the founder and Chairman of the Public Employees Roundtable, a consortium of 24 associations which represent U.S. Government managers and professional employees.

Mr. Shaw represents individuals and corporations in personnel, labor, EEO, administrative law and government contract matters before various agencies and in the courts. He is an experienced legislative strategist and lobbyist before Congress, having successfully secured enactment of numerous legislative proposals on behalf of clients.

He recently helped found and is the President of the Federal Employees Education and Assistance Fund. The Fund is a charitable and educational organization which provides benefits to federal employees, their dependents and survivors.

He received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1962 from Gonzaga University, and his J.D. degree from St. Marys University in 1970. Mr. Shaw did legal post-graduate work in Labor Law at Georgetown University Law Center.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Be sure to read the notices in this issue on the two outstanding Washington Chapter workshops coming up — Critical Factors in Developing Financial Systems (April 10), and Proposed Revisions to GAO Audit Standards (the Yellow Book) (May 18).

Mark your calendar now also for the Chapter's May 7 luncheon meeting, where our speaker will be AGA National President Jack Fawsett. The meeting will include also the Chapter's annual award presentations.

Maryland Congressman Tom McMillan will address Montgomery-Prince George's Chapter at the Chapter's April 8 monthly dinner meeting at the Greenbelt Hilton. Call Richard Kaplan, 366-1405, or Joe Giannantonio, 755-4721, for details or reservations.

Louis Rosen, of Arthur Young & Co., will speak on Revised AICPA Audit Guides for Audits of Government Contractors, at Northern Virginia Chapter's April 21 monthly dinner meeting. Mr. Rosen is chairman of the AICPA project to revise the guides. Location is the Ramada Inn (I-395 & Seminary Road) in Alexandria. Call JoEllen Kowalski, 275-9412, for details and reservations.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

William E. Douglas, Commissioner, Financial Management Service, Department of the Treasury; John R. Quetsch, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (Comptroller), Department of Defense; and Douglas R. Norton, Auditor General, State of Arizona, received the 1986 Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Award for distinguished leadership in financial management improvement. The awards were presented by the Honorable Constance Horner, Director, Office of Personnel Management at the 16th Annual Financial Management Conference, sponsored by the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program.

Mr. Douglas was commended for his outstanding leadership in modernizing Federal financial management systems for cash and information management. His managerial expertise has helped the Government yield savings of approximately \$5 billion over the last three years.

Mr. Quetsch's citation is for his distinguished and dynamic leadership in directing the design, implementation and refinement of many financial management improvements at the Defense Department. Particularly, he has made great strides in improving the budgeting process.

Mr. Norton was commended for his outstanding and continued leadership in improving financial reporting and auditing in the State of Arizona and enhancing performance and EDP auditing at the national level. Largely due to his efforts, many of the governmental units in Arizona are issuing financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Mr. Douglas is a member of AGA Washington Chapter.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The Internal Audit Division of the Internal Revenue Service has several openings for internal auditors, grades GS/5/7/9/11/12, at the National Office in Washington, D.C. These individuals will participate in challenging operational and financial audits at the National Office and in nationwide audits of Service operations. Moderate travel is required. For more information, please contact Don Eckberg on 566-2590.

Treasury's Financial Management Service has openings for 2 operating accountants, GS-5 through 12. Submit applications to FMS Personnel, Room 444, Treasury Annex 1, Madison Place and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20226. For information, call Sherman Eisner, 566-2711.

Notice of Election of Officers and Directors for the Year Beginning July 1, 1987

Included in this issue of the Newsletter is a ballot for the election of seven Directors for the Washington Chapter for the year beginning July 1, 1987. In accordance with Article VI of the Chapter Bylaws, the Nominating Committee nominated one candidate for the offices of President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Since there were no nominations by petition for these offices, the names of the single nominees are not included on the ballot and their election has been certified by the Bylaws Committee. This year, seven Directors will be elected, five for a two year term, and two for a one year term. There are eleven nominees. No nominations by petition were received for these offices. All Chapter members (except honorary members) may vote for not more than seven Directors. The five candidates receiving the most votes will be elected to two year terms of office, and the next two candidates will be elected to one year terms of office. The results of the election for 1987-1988 will be announced at the Chapter luncheon in May. Please take the time to vote.

For President-Elect: *Diane Bray*—Member since 1979. AGA Service: Education Committee Co-Chair, 1986-87; Secretary, 1984-85; Chair, Financial Assistance Committee 1983-84; Instructor for "Basic Training Course in Accounting and Financial Management" for small businesses, 1983-84; Member, meetings Committee, 1980-81. Diane works for the Directorate for Management Improvement, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

For Secretary: *Rolf Wold*—Member since 1984. AGA Service: Served on the Cash Management Task Force and the Membership Committee. Rolf is a Systems Accountant with the Department of Transportation.

For Treasurer: *Deatrice Russell*—Member since 1976. AGA Service: Participated in the VITA program, 1985. Assists with luncheon meeting logistics. Dee is a member of the National Association of Black Accountants, and Chairs the finance committee of her church, Ebenezer AME. She is a Senior Advisor, A-127 Program, Financial Management Service.

For Directors: *Lee Beaty*—Member since 1972. AGA Service: Director, 1985-87; Newsletter editor 1984-87; GAO Liaison 1983-85; Member, National ADP Subcommittee 1977-78. Lee is a Systems Accountant, GAO.

Fernando Bren—Member since 1980. Fernando is a Senior Project Director, Joint Financial Management Improvement Program. Before coming to JFMIP, he was the Director of Cash Management,

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Financial Management Service. In his 20 years of Federal Service, Fernando has worked with DoD, the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the Congressional Research Service, the President's Reorganization Project on Civil Service Reform, and HUD.

Sue Fields—Member since 1970. AGA Service: Treasurer, 1981-82, 1974-75; Cooperation with Educational Institutions, 1980-81; Chair, Meetings Committee, 1979-80; Director, National Membership Committee, 1979-80; Director, Membership Committee, 1976-77; Director, Education Committee, 1975-76. Sue is an operating accountant in the Reports and Accounts Control Branch at NIH.

William Henderson—Member since 1981. AGA Service: National Federal Government Committee, 1984-86. Bill is the Deputy Comptroller, EPA, and the Acting Director, Office of Human Resource Management. In 1978, he was the federal recipient of the JFMIP annual award, and has received letters of commendation from President Carter for his work in Cash Management, and President Reagan for his work in Debt Collection.

Vern Isenberg—Member since 1966. AGA Service: Treasurer, 1986-87; Employee Referral, 1985-86. Vern, a Certified Managerial Accountant, is also a member of the Investment Committee, USDA Graduate School and is a Past President of the Potomac Toastmasters Club. He is the Deputy Director, Financial & Management Analysis Staff, Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dan McGrath—Member since 1970. AGA Service: Director, Membership Committee, 1985-87; Member, Research Committee, 1984-85; Co-Chair, AGA National Task Force on Cash Management, 1977-83; Member, Meetings Committee, 1972-73. Dan has authored articles for the Chapter Newsletter and the Government Accountants Journal, and was a speaker at the 1981 and 1979 PDC's. He is employed by the Financial Management Service.

Russ Morris—Member since 1986. Member, National Corporate Cash Managers Association, Recipient of Washington Chapter and Northern Virginia Chapter "Achievement of the Year Award" on two separate occasions. Russ is the Assistant Commissioner, Federal Finance, Financial Management Service.

Joe Rothschild—Member since 1980. AGA Service: Director, 1985-87; Treasurer, 1984-85; Co-Chair, Research Committee, 1983-84; Member, Awards Committee, 1980-82; Member, National Committee to Select Authors Award; Member, AGA Task Force on Internal Controls in Government. Joe is the Director, Analysis and Evaluation Division, Office of Fraud Control and Management Operations, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Adam Shaw—Member since 1970. AGA Service: Member, Chapter Advisory Council, 1986-87; Chair, Relations with National Office, 1982-83; Director of Research, 1981-82; Treasurer, 1980-81; Chair, Cooperation with Professional Associations, 1979-80; Chair, Professional Awareness Committee, 1978-79; Chair, Chapter Competition Committee, 1977-78. Adam is a Systems Accountant, Directorate for Accounting Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

Joyce Shelton—Member since 1972. AGA Service: Director, 1985-87; Member, Research Committee, 1984-85; Served as Moderator, Treasury/AGA Workshop on Agency Reporting. Joyce is the Director, Financial Management, Department of Transportation.

John Simonette—Member since 1966. John is a Certified Public Accountant, a Member of the West Virginia Society of CPA's, and is a Member of the AICPA Subcommittee on MAS education and Information. He is the Associate Director for Systems Audit, Audit and Financial Management Division, GAO.

VOTE BY APRIL 10

Adam Shaw, DOD, 697-0585 Public Service Paula Rubin, Financial Management Service, 535-9696
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Young & Co., will speak on revised AICPA Audit Guides for Audits of Government Contractors, at Northern Virginia Chapter's April 21 monthly dinner meeting. Mr. Rosen is chairman of the AICPA project to revise the guides. Location is the Ramada Inn (I-395 & Seminary Road) in Alexandria. Call JoEllen Kowalski, 275-9412, for details and reservations.

WASHINGTON CHAPTER OF THE AGA IS SPONSORING WORKSHOPS

“CRITICAL FACTORS IN DEVELOPING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS”

on FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1987

9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

This workshop will address the critical factors in developing financial management systems. Experiences from various agency perspectives will be presented from the initial state of planning through the quality assurance review.

MODERATOR AND INTRODUCTION:

VIRGINIA ROBINSON

Associate Director

General Accounting Office

SPEAKERS:

Toni Gibbons
Associate Comptroller
State Department

Edward Sanderson
Partner
Arthur Andersen & Co.

Jean Kerr
Director, Office of Finance and Accounting
Department of Housing and Urban Development

COST: \$25 Washington Chapter AGA members
\$30 All others
Cancellation Fee: \$15
unless notified in writing by April 7

LOCATION: George Washington University
University Club, Marvin Center
800 21st Street N.W.
(Foggy Bottom Metro Stop)

“PROPOSED REVISIONS TO GAO AUDITING STANDARDS (THE YELLOW BOOK)”

on MONDAY, MAY 18, 1987

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

SPEAKER: Bill Broadus

Group Director

General Accounting Office

COST: \$25 Washington Chapter AGA members
\$30 All others
Cancellation Fee: \$15
unless notified in writing by April 7

LOCATION: George Washington University
University Club, Marvin Center
800 21st Street N.W.
(Foggy Bottom Metro Stop)

There is limited seating on these sessions, so that reservations will be accepted on a first come/first serve basis. For more information, call Anna Wilson on 376-5415.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR AGA WORKSHOPS ON APRIL 10 and MAY 18, 1987

cial audits at the National Office and in nation-wide audits of Service operations. Moderate travel is required. For more information, please contact Don Eckberg on 566-2590.

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Service.

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(Continued on page 5

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

By John D. Webster, OPM

By the end of this year, around two million people will be required to make the same decision I need to make; that is, should I stay in the Employees Retirement System (FERS)? Both systems provide good retirement benefits, but they are fundamentally different and you need to understand those differences before you make your decision. As a help to others who need to make this decision, I have listed below some of the factors that I will be considering in making my decision. By way of background, I am a career civil servant with 12 years service, over 40 quarters of Social Security (SS) coverage, and will be eligible to retire at age 55 with 30 years service.

Will I Stay Until Retirement Age? - Perhaps the most important judgment I need to make is whether or not I will stay until age 55 and retire from Government. If I decide that there is a very high probability that I will stay until retirement, then I will stay in the CSRS. For the amount of money I will contribute, the CSRS will give me the best return on my investment—if I stay. This is primarily because of the higher accrual rate under the CSRS (2% vs. 1%) and the full cost-of-living adjustments (COLA's) that I will receive starting at age 55 (However, I have noted that the administration is proposing to reduce the CSRS COLA benefit.). If I converted to FERS and retired at age 55, I will receive CSRS COLA's similarly, but I will not receive FERS COLA's until age 62, and I would need to contribute more money toward my retirement to get the same level of benefits. Currently I contribute 7% towards retirement; however, if I wanted an equivalent level of benefits at age 55 under FERS, I would need to contribute 10-11% (.8% for the basic benefit, 6.2% for SS, and 3-4% for the thrift plan).

On the other hand, if I decide that there is an even chance that I will leave the Government or may want the flexibility to leave Government before age 55, I will convert to FERS. Most people realize that the CSRS is not portable. If I left the Government before age 55, I could withdraw my 7% contributions with no interest or leave it in the fund and receive a deferred annuity at age 62. However, by the time I finally received monthly benefits at age 62, my dollars would have lost much of their purchasing power. This CSRS characteristic is often referred to as the "golden handcuffs" feature. In contrast, FERS is almost all portable. The credit I get for SS and the money I pay for the thrift plan are fully portable. Even though the basic benefit part of FERS is not very portable (like the CSRS), I can still get back what I paid, with market rate interest. Therefore, a low risk

decision for someone like me is to convert to FERS.

How Good Is My Health? - Even if I conclude that I will not be staying in Government until age 55, I need to look at my current health before I decide to convert to FERS for two reasons. First, if I die within the first 18 months after converting to FERS, my wife and children will not be eligible to receive FERS survivor benefits (NOTE: an amendment to change this situation is pending). Second, the definition used to determine my eligibility for SS disability payments is more strict than under CSRS and FERS. It requires me to be unable to perform *any* job, rather than just my current job. Therefore, if I became disabled, I could receive considerably less benefits because I qualified only for FERS benefits and not SS benefits.

Will I Be Able To Contribute More Towards Retirement? - As I stated above, I need to contribute 3-4% to the thrift plan to get approximately the same level of benefits under both plans. I need to make a judgement whether my budget will be able to support this additional outlay. If I don't contribute to the thrift plan, I will only be credited with my agency's 1% contribution and I will receive an approximately 15% lower retirement benefit. If I contribute 4%, then 8.5% (which includes 4.5% agency contributions) of my salary each year will grow into a nice pool of funds for my retirement. In making this judgment, I will consider the fact that what I contribute is tax deferred and that I can borrow against my thrift account for the educational needs of my children.

In summary, I need to make some important judgments before I decide to convert to FERS or stay in the CSRS. Even though this could be a troubling decision for some people, I am consoled by the fact that both systems are good retirement plans. One thing I am not going to do is rush out and buy a computer printout for \$30 or feel pressured to make a decision during the next several months. I have until December 31, 1987, to make my decision, and I know that OPM is preparing good material to assist employees in making an informed decision. I don't need to buy a computer printout because OPM will be distributing a computer model to agencies — free! I don't need to pay for a consultant because OPM will be giving me a FERS Transfer Handbook and will be providing training for personnel in my agency. Given what I have seen so far, there will be plenty of discussion and material available for me to make an informed decision by the end of the year. Good luck in making your decision!

John Webster is the Office of Personnel Management's Assistant Director for Financial Control and Management, and is a member of AGA Washington Chapter.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

By Charles McAndrew

This month we are featuring recent events of the General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Finance-Comptroller.

Productivity Improvement

Between January and September 1986, the Office of Finance accounting operations were consolidated from 6 regional divisions to 2, the Kansas City and Ft. Worth Finance Divisions, without a reduction in force.

Beginning in Fiscal Year 1987, GSA will save about \$1.8 million as a result of the consolidation. Any questions in this area, call Donna Fang on 566-0897.

Microcomputer Applications

GSA is in the final stages of developing an automated system for preparing the quarterly and annual external financial reports to the Treasury and Office of Management and Budget (SF-133, TFS-220, 225, etc.), using the C3 microcomputers installed throughout GSA in the last year. A special Trial Balance is downloaded from GSA's main computer via phone lines to its microcomputer central memory bank. At any of 32 workstations connected to this megafame, accountants can call up an External Reports Software System developed by GSA using the macro programming capabilities of LOTUS 1-2-3. After entering the fund code and period of report, the Lotus spreadsheet takes over to simultaneously prepare all of the reports for the fund, and reports can be printed at the press of a button. The system produces accurate reports in a fraction of the workhours required to prepare them manually. GSA plans to implement this financial reporting improvement for all GSA funds after FY 1987. Any further questions,

call Norman Richards on 566-1192.

Payroll System Modernization

In FY 1986, GSA converted its payroll time and attendance input from punch card to an optical scan document system. Time is recorded by darkening a circle or "bubble" on the scannable time and attendance document identifying the type of pay or leave being recorded and a corresponding "bubble" indicating the hours. An Optical Mark Reader Scanner reads the pencil marks and translates them into useful time and attendance data. This new medium greatly increases the amount of data that can be input to the system. Any questions, call Ron Rhodes on 566-1056.

Improved Billing Process

GSA has developed a new master file for its Billing System called the Agency Contract Register Nationwide (ACORN). With this file, repetitive data is accessed and stored when bills are issued, eliminating many transaction processing workhours.

Also, two reports are produced. One compares payments to vendors with amounts billed to customer agencies, to determine if billings are proper and timely. The other report compares, for each contract, the amount billed with the amount accrued each month to determine the accuracy of income accruals. Any questions in this area, call Ruth Whitson on 566-1192.

Any other questions in the area of financial management improvements at GSA, call Donna Fang, Director of the Financial Information Control Division, on 566-0897.

—Don't forget to call me on 695-1070 with your financial management, systems development projects or innovations, audit techniques, or similar items of interest.

NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED BY THE WASHINGTON CHAPTER
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS
7008 MAPLE TREE LANE
SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA 22152

OCTOBER 1984



TIME-VALUE MAIL—
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