



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Kieran Coe
kieran.coe@us.gt.com

President-Elect

Vacant

Secretary

Stanton Martin
stanton.martin@hhsc.state.tx.us

Treasurer

Lorna Schwimmer-Staggs
lorna.schwimmer@dfps.state.tx.us

Research Committee

Debi Weyer (Chair)
debiweyer@gmail.com

Education/Programs Committee

John Barnes (Chair)
john.barnes@ers.state.tx.gov

Benjamin Lyons (Co-Chair)
benjamin.lyons@texasagriculture.gov

Communications Committee

Shayla Prince (Chair)
shayla.prince@dfps.state.tx.us

Bhakti Patel (Co-Chair)

bhakti.patel@us.gt.com

Community Service Committee

Priscilla Suggs (Chair)
priscilla.suggs@dfps.state.tx.us

Membership Committee

Khiry Burke (Chair)
khiry_burke@us.gt.com

Professional Certifications Committee

Patti Roano (Chair)
patti.roano@ers.texas.gov

Early Careers Committee

Angela Bourianoff (Chair)
angela.bourianoff@us.gt.com

Chapter Historian

Sharita Jefferson
sharita.jefferson@dfps.state.tx.us

Webmaster

Eddie Chan
eddie.chan@ers.state.tx.gov

Regional Vice President

Chelly Hilmes
chellyhilmes@yahoo.com

Hello,

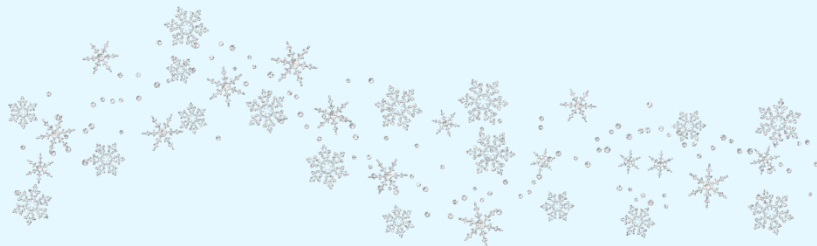
I'm excited assume the role of President of the Austin Chapter. I'm honored that the Committee entrusts me to lead our Chapter for the remainder of the year and I have every intention to make this a great one! Of course, we'll be continuing with our monthly luncheons, newsletters, and our annual networking events; however, I'd like to extend our focus on outreach to our local Universities. If you would like to be involved in this effort or if you have ideas on how to attract talent into our field, please send an email to me at Kieran.coe@us.gt.com.

We've been fortunate to have some great speakers with new topics of interest. I'd like to give a special thank you to this month's guest speaker, Rene Valadez, who shared with us what it takes to effectively administer an Economic Incentive program. Our next CPE luncheon will feature Mike Barba, Senior Manager, Public Sector Decision Analytics with Grant Thornton to speak to us about Data Analytics. We also have our annual December Toy Drive in the works. Please look out for notices to come.

The CPE luncheon will remain at Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen. I want to encourage everybody to take a few minutes to mingle with at least one member that you don't already know. If you haven't been around for a while, we have room for a few more. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

As always, we are always looking for additional participation on the Board and Committees. If you are interested in assisting on the board or any committee, are interested in assisting with a particular event during the year, or if you have any ideas for our chapter, please contact me or any of the board members for more information. Thank you in advance for your continued support of the chapter. See you all on December 14th!

Kieran Coe





UPCOMING EVENTS

What: CPE Luncheon

“Applying Decision Analytics to the Auditing Industry”

When: Dec 14, 2017

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Where: Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen

6319 N I Hwy 35 | Austin, TX | 78752

Who: Mike Barba,

Why: Earn 1 continuing professional education credit

Sign up at: <http://www.agaustin.org/cpe-events/event3.html>

Members: \$27.00

Non-members: \$32.00



Meet our presenter...



Mr. Barba is a Senior Manager based in Austin, TX that is a leader in Grant Thornton’s Public-Sector practice. With more than 15 years of experience, Mr. Barba has a wide range of experiences including in complex technology system strategy, design and implementation, data strategy and analytics as well as cyber security.

Since joining Grant Thornton, Mr. Barba has managed projects with several state agencies as well as commercial clients in the healthcare, higher education, insurance, financial services, retail, technology and manufacturing industries.

Mr. Barba received his BS in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Lafayette College, an MBA from Drexel University’s LeBow College of Business and an MS in Business Analytics from the University of Notre Dame.



HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to the following member who reached their anniversary milestone in the month of December.

Membership Anniversaries



1 year Anniversary:

Mr. Robert Carstensen

Mr. Joseph Ortiz

Luncheon Gift Card Drawings!

Congratulations to Mari Queller for winning the raffle during our November luncheon! She won a \$25 Gift card to Macy's.





TREASURER'S REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 10/31/17



Beginning Bank Balance	9/30/2017	\$4,734.73
<i>Funds Received:</i>		
10/20/2017	ACH Deposit of Quarterly Dues from AGA National	\$20.00
10/13/2017	ACH Square - Oct Luncheon	\$223.28
10/12/2017	Deposit of Grant Thornton Sponsorship Check for April Networking Event	\$300.00
10/12/2017	ACH Square - Oct Luncheon	\$25.92
10/11/2017	ACH Pmt for Sept Luncheon - ERS	\$108.00
10/1/2017	Dividend through 9/30/2017	\$0.41
Total Funds Received		\$677.61

Funds Available	\$5,412.34
------------------------	-------------------

<i>Funds Expended:</i>		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Check No./Credit Card.</i>	
10/13/2017	Debit Card Pmt for Oct Luncheon - Pappadeaux	\$550.62
10/11/2017	Debit Card Pmt for FY 18 Gift Cards - Walgreens	\$200.00
Total Funds Expended		\$750.62

Ending Bank Balance	10/31/2017	\$4,661.72
----------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Check Register Reconciliation:		
Ending Bank Balance	10/31/2017	\$4,661.72

<i>Outstanding Checks:</i>		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Check No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
Total Outstanding Checks		\$0.00

<i>Outstanding Deposits:</i>		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	
Total Outstanding Deposits		\$0.00

Adjusted Ending Bank Balance	10/31/2017	\$4,661.72
-------------------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Total Chapter Funds Available Per Check Register	10/31/2017	\$4,661.72
---	-------------------	-------------------

<i>Cash On Hand:</i>		
	CU Min Savings Balance	\$5.00
	Luncheon Bank	\$40.00

MEETING MINUTES



1. Roll call—

Meeting called to order at 12:10pm

Those in attendance by conference call included: Kieran Coe, Khiry Burke, Lorna Schwimmer-Staggs, Priscilla Suggs, Shayla Prince & Sharita Jefferson

- Kieran thanked everyone for supporting him during his transition from President-elect to President, in place of Aaron Dvorak who stepped down last month from the role
- Kieran wants to bring new ideas & shift the focus of the meeting metrics defined by nationals, moving towards a more visionary & strategic focus instead of bogging down in details
- Kieran believes our focus should be on what's the impact AGA Austin Chapter will have five years from now, thinking beyond what we've done in the past and more about what's important to AGA Austin Chapter, and focus on attracting high-talented recruits in our respective fields
- Kieran states we have all the resources necessary to make a difference and we should reach out and establish communication with the four universities in our areas; we are never going to identify these characteristics unless we meet with the students
- Kieran would like to create a program of some sort in order to attract people in our field, by developing a symbiotic relationship between the universities, government agencies and other private industries, like Grant Thornton (GT), that work with government agencies (i.e. KPMG, Deloitte, etc.)
- Also noted:
 - Millennials want to do good & this won't happen in accounting or government work alone
 - Universities are going to provide opportunities for AGA to do community service
 - Kieran has been actively looking for sponsorships & has gotten GT sponsorship increased to \$499
 - Universities have grants and endowment funds that are very loose with their requirements and can be a source of sponsorship; we should get them to sponsor a networking event, which will help them get their students employed
 - AGA needs to create that pipeline and build our relationship with them; are we bringing in young recruits to our Chapter?
- Kieran would like to create 4 Early Careers Chair positions—one has already been filled by Angela Bourianoff; Kieran will take one position and he would like the other two positions to be filled by other Chapter Executive Committee (CEC) members
 - Angela is fully committed to this position
 - Kieran already has contacts at Huston-Tillotson University
 - Kieran would like to have four student-sponsored memberships, one from each of the local universities (also includes St. Ed's, Concordia, U.T); maybe we could talk with professors of Accounting at each; the four students would be Chapter Committee Members (note: we have the authority to decrease the price of memberships for students in order to increase our membership numbers)

- Lorna suggests Austin Community College should be included because ACC has a lot of students who take Accounting there in order to get the necessary hours to work towards their CPA
 - CEC member Eddie Chan is an Accounting professor at ACC, would be a good contact for ACC
 - Priscilla volunteers to be the liaison for U.T. and will contact Steve Goodson (Accounting professor)
 - We should make sure the universities are included in everything that we do (i.e. networking events, luncheons, community service events, etc.) and it needs to be something that adds value
 - **Kieran’s Master Plan—to express to agencies & companies that they will not be able to get access to high quality recruits without coming through the AGA Austin Chapter...** this is what AGA will be all about
2. Monthly Luncheons—
- We need to get the vouchers to attend a future AGA event sent out to our speakers; Priscilla is supposed to handle this
 - We should try to get our speakers to become AGA members
 - Kieran wants to have someone to reach out to the speaker by email to say “Thank You” for their presentation; “Thank You’s” have been mentioned in the President’s Message of the AGA newsletters in the past
 - Kieran would like to add it as a permanent feature to the newsletter in the President’s Message going forward
 - a. Debrief of November Luncheon--- speaker, Rene Valdez
 - b. Speaker for December CPE luncheon - Bret Adams- Continuity of Operations Coordinator
 - c. Location of December CPE luncheon – Pappadeaux
 - Lorna has already booked Pappadeaux for 3 months at a time and it is currently booked through December
 - Lorna will book it for January as well
 - d. Remaining speakers
 - i. December – Mike Barba, Grant Thornton
 - ii. January – Jon Nuelle, Toastmaster/ Data Analyst at Health & Human Services Commission
 - iii. February – Sylvia Kauffman, Principal Deputy Inspector General
 - iv. March - Scott Abel, Health & Human Services Commission Organizational and Leadership Development Trainer
 - v. April – Leita Hart
 - vi. May – Karin Hill, Health & Human Services Commission Director of Internal Audit
3. Monthly newsletter—**Newsletter has been looking amazing lately!** Let’s get it out to more people.
- a. October newsletter posted-- Good job everyone!
 - b. November Newsletter—
 - For November newsletter, maybe make it the December newsletter and everyone is to have their parts in by November 28th; we have been sending stuff in last minute
 - Kieran would like to have Newsletters distributed to people who are not members, including teachers & students
 - Lorna says there is already a list of non-members (includes those who have come to networking event in the past); Eddie adds them to our email list
 - Khiry’s job will be to maintain this list
 - LaToya Brown was at the November luncheon and is a potential member

4. Community Events—Priscilla will send out information on Tuesday for a Toy drive & will have it placed in the Newsletter
5. Other items –
 - a. Kieran asks about the State Board of Accountancy Application that he has received & the fees that go with it;
 - i. Lorna states that she usually just gives someone the check for it & it is sent along with the completed application, she will give the check to Kieran;
 - ii. Kieran asks for help filling out the application; Lorna will fill it out for Kieran
 - iii. Lorna indicates that if the Chapter increases the number of CPE hours it offers, it can pay the difference after the fact; the Board of Accountancy just wants organizations to register and they can settle fee amounts owed later
 - b. Kieran was in contact with the Oklahoma AGA Chapter to inquire about the CGFM crash course
 - i. Oklahoma Chapter doesn't have the numbers (they have four people who would like to take it)
 - ii. If the Austin Chapter can make it work here, OKC will send people down here to participate with us if we host it
 - iii. There are six people at Grant Thornton who want to take the CGFM course & GT is a sponsor
 - iv. Kieran would like to shoot for April to host the course, which is a one week, 50 hours and can be condensed down to 4 days if needed; there is a lot of good information and government CPE's in the course
 - c. Membership Survey- Stanton
 - Kieran asked for a refresher regarding these
 - These are questions designed to help us plan better and help us better understand the needs of the attendees/participants, for example:
 - providing them with a list of training topics we've presented or that are available and asking which they prefer
 - what types of trainings would you like AGA to conduct;
 - We will follow up with Stanton at the next meeting on the Membership Surveys
6. Committee Reports
 - a. Treasurer (Lorna)—Lorna will get back to doing her Treasurer reports, just finished with a big audit that took a lot of her time
 - b. Secretary (Stanton)
 - c. Communications Committee (Shayla)—have information for newsletter in by November 28th
 - d. Membership (Khiry)—Thinking of having the networking event at 77 Degrees in April (note: April 21st holiday for State Employees is on a weekend this year); Kieran will put the networking event on the agenda for the next meeting
 - e. Professional Certifications Committee (Patti)
 - f. Education/ Programs Committee (John/ Ben)
 - g. Community Service Committee (Priscilla)—Toy Drive, will send out info next week
 - h. Webmaster (Eddie)
 - i. Research (Debi)
 - j. Historian (Sharita)
 - k. Early Careers (Angie Bourianoff)
 - l. Bylaws - VACANT

Meeting Adjourned at 1:10pm



The Austin Association of Government Accountants (AGA) is partnering with CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Travis County, in their annual toy drive to help bring joy during the holidays to more than 1,000 children in Texas. \$30 Target and Wal-Mart gift cards are the most popular item requested by children every year. For children spending the holidays in foster care away from their family, receiving the means to purchase a special gift they have wished for is priceless. Here's how you can assist AGA in helping CASA brighten the lives of children in the state's care:

- Donate a \$30 Target or Wal-Mart gift card during the December 14th CPE Luncheon
 - *(please write the amount on the gift card)*
- Donate \$15 during the December 14th luncheon and the chapter will compile donations collected to purchase remaining gift cards to submit to the CASA office Friday at noon on December 15th.
 - (cash please, we'll have a sign-in sheet to account for money collected)

CASA of Travis County believes every child who's been abused or neglected deserves to have a dedicated advocate speaking up for their best interest in court, at school and in our community. To accomplish this, CASA educates and empowers diverse community volunteers who ensure each child's needs remain a priority in an overburdened child welfare system. When the state steps in to protect a child's safety because the people responsible for protecting them have not, a judge appoints a trained CASA volunteer to make independent and informed recommendations and help the judge decide what's best for the child.

As always, thank you in advance for your participation AGA.

All the best,

Priscilla Suggs



COMMUNITY EVENTS



Cherrywood Art Fair 2017 hosted by the Chula League

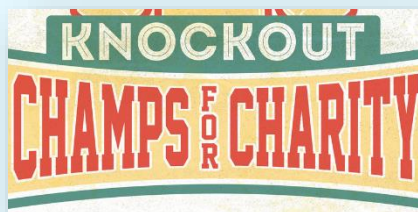
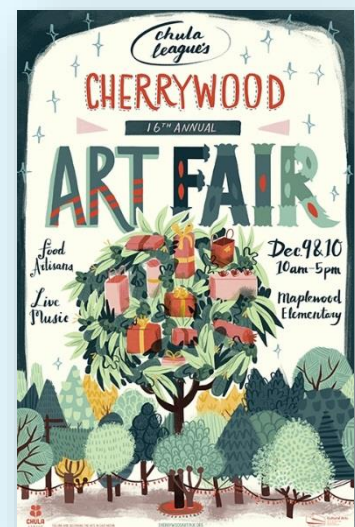
When: Fri Dec 08, 2017 - Sun Dec 10, 2017

Where: Maplewood Elementary
3808 Maplewood Ave., Austin, TX 78722

Sign-up: <http://chulaleague.org/volunteer/>

Chula League is a small but dedicated group of community activists that support the arts and arts education in East Austin neighborhoods. Although the Cherrywood Art Fair and Little Artist BIG ARTIST programs are our main focus – we also support beautification or landscaping projects. Whether you are into lifting and moving, chatting with artists and shoppers, decorating, or organizing receipts, we've got a job for you!

We welcome volunteers age 16+ and younger volunteers accompanied by an adult. Attendance at Volunteer Orientation is encouraged on Thursday, Dec. 7th 6:30-8pm at Maplewood Elementary in the cafeteria. Please sign up if you can make it.



Knockout Champs for Charity by The New Movement - ATX

When: Mon Dec 11, 2017 09:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Where: 616 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701

Sign-up: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/knockout-champs-for-charity-atx-tickets-39470559506?aff=es2>

This Holiday Season, The New Movement is getting into GIVING BACK. Knockout at TNM, Austin's weekly comedy clash, has invited eight returning CHAMPIONS to take the stage for the ultimate PRIZE FIGHT. Not only will they be battling for bragging, they'll be competing to win money for their favorite CHARITY.

\$10 per entry with net proceeds going to local nonprofit organizations.

Meals on Wheels Training Central Texas

When: Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017 12:15 – 1:15

Where: 3227 East 5th Street, Austin, TX 78702

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/volunteer-trainingorientation-tickets-39331695159?aff=es2>



Become a volunteer with Meals on Wheels Central Texas! Learn how you can help deliver meals to older adults and people with disabilities all across Austin. Just an hour of your day can have a huge impact on someone's life.

Training sessions are held every Thursday at 12:15 pm and take about an hour. Our office is located at 3227 East 5th St, and volunteers will need to bring: valid driver's license, current auto insurance, and be able to pass a background check.



Naughty or Nice Toy Drive hosted by Project Transitions, Inc.

When: Sat Dec 16, 2017 09:00 PM - Sun Dec 17, 2017 02:00 AM

Where: 121 W 8th Street, Austin, TX78701

Sign-up: <http://signup.com/go/WoOwCUa>

Project Transitions is dedicated to serving people with HIV and AIDS by providing supportive living, housing and hospice in compassionate and caring environments.

DJ C-Rail holds a yearly toy drive benefiting Project Transitions' children who otherwise may not receive presents during the holidays. Volunteers are needed to take donations of toys and cash from attendees. You'll need the ability to download the Square Reader app to your phone to take monetary donations. The Square Reader itself will be provided.





RESEARCH ARTICLE

Applying Lean Thinking to Optimize Your Business

By Joe J. Ursone

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

“Let’s leave well enough alone.”

“We’re too busy to go tinkering around to do anything differently.”

“We like the way things are.”

“The last time we tried to change things it was an utter disaster.”

“But we’ve always done it this way.”

Do any of these sound familiar? Chances are they do. These are the kinds of sentiments that keep us from really examining the way we do things with an eye to improving. This is where lean thinking comes in. Lean thinking helps us to overcome some of these obstacles by starting with the customer’s perspective and looking at our processes from the time citizens approach us to the time they get what they need.

Lean thinking grew out of the continuous process improvement teachings of W. Edwards Deming, who was influential especially with the Toyota manufacturing company in Japan. Deming proposed taking small improvement steps frequently instead of giant leaps to help free employees from the fear of failure. Taiichi Ohno, the former leader at Toyota, said, “The Toyota style is not to create results by working hard. It is a system that says there is no limit to people’s creativity. People don’t go to Toyota to ‘work’ they go there to ‘think.’”

So let’s think about what we do and how we do it. Let’s look at our processes and the paths that information follows between the time our ‘customers’ ask us for something and the time they get it. How much waste currently exists in our processes? At Toyota, they defined waste as anything that does not add value to the end-product and then identified several sources of waste. Their focus was in manufacturing, but non-value added activities can be found in any endeavor.

Lean thinking involves much more than looking for and eliminating waste in our processes—but that’s a good place to start. The next step is to look beyond rooting out waste in processes and delve into the foundational principles of lean thinking. It is built on a foundation of support from leadership with a goal of providing customer value, both internal and external, and the pillars supported by leadership are Respect for People, Flow, Innovation and Relentless Improvement.

Leaders are required to:

- Lead the change, walk the walk
- Know the way; emphasize continual learning

- Develop & empower their people
- Inspire and align with mission; minimize constraints
- Decentralize decision-making
- Share responsibility within the team

Respect for People requires us to:

- Harness the intellect of employees
- Empower them to analyze and solve problems
- Ask “How might we do this better?” or
- “What might we do instead of this?”

Flow requires us to:

- Optimize for continuous and sustainable throughput of value (Optimize for the whole end-to-end process)
- Use smaller batches & shorter cycles
- Avoid start-stop-start (task switching) delays
- Build in quality; (flow requires consistent high quality)
- Inform decision-making via timely feedback
- Eliminate or reduce waste

Innovation requires us to adhere to the following principles:

- Identify the values that customers demand
- Map the steps required to deliver value to the customers
- Deliver value to customers on demand (PULL)
- Deliver value to customers without waste (FLOW)
- Seek perfection (standardize & solve to improve)

Relentless Improvement requires us to:

- Maintain a constant sense of urgency
- Identify and remove barriers to change
- Maintain focus on the whole value stream
- Apply lean tools to identify and address root causes
- Reflect at key milestones to identify and address shortcomings

A good place to start is by evaluating a culture’s readiness and willingness to change. Then staff should be trained on Lean Principles & Lean Thinking and encouraged to practice them daily. Management can lead the way here by daily practicing Lean Thinking with their direct reports. Staff should be engaged in identifying and mapping a value stream, identifying any constraint however small and developing counter measures specific to the root cause of the constraint. The key is to experiment with solving a problem and measuring the results of the change. If the change was successful, it can be adopted, and then the process is repeated for either another value stream or the next constraint or threat.

Joe Ursone, PMP, CSM, MCP, SPC is a manager with BlumShapiro Consulting.

AGA AUSTIN CHAPTER OCTOBER LUNCHEON





FUN FACTS

Christmas is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, a spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of their religion. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. December 25—Christmas Day—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1870.

Christmas Carol

Around Christmas time, English author Charles Dickens created the classic holiday tale, *A Christmas Carol*. The story’s message—the importance of charity and good will towards all humankind—struck a powerful chord in the United States and England and showed members of Victorian society the benefits of celebrating the holiday.

The family was also becoming less disciplined and more sensitive to the emotional needs of children during the early 1800s. Christmas provided families with a day when they could lavish attention—and gifts—on their children without appearing to “spoil” them.

As Americans began to embrace Christmas as a perfect family holiday, old customs were unearthed. People looked toward recent immigrants and Catholic and Episcopalian churches to see how the day should be celebrated. In the next 100 years, Americans built a Christmas tradition all their own that included pieces of many other customs, including decorating trees, sending holiday cards, and gift-giving.

Although most families quickly bought into the idea that they were celebrating Christmas how it had been done for centuries, Americans had really re-invented a holiday to fill the cultural needs of a growing nation.

