

AGA DALLAS CHAPTER

Association for Government Accountability AGA Dallas Chapter Newsletter

July 2015

Welcome to the *AGA Dallas Chapter*

I hope this newly formatted newsletter finds all of you healthy and adjusting to the summer heat. My name is Ron Salo and I am your new Chapter President for the 2015 — 2016 program year.

My priorities are to provide quality CPE training at the lowest cost not just for CGFMs but for all government accountants, auditors, GAO and IG Analysts, and financial managers who need CPEs, and to build the DFW community of professionals. Your chapter will try to bring training that is educational for all levels of government — federal, state, and local — because collaboration and networking are the main reasons AGA exists and as far as I know, AGA is the only professional association that actively recruits members who represent government at all levels as well as private sector accounting firms, government contractors, and university faculty.

The main challenge your Dallas chapter faces is getting people like you to join the Board of Directors. This is a great opportunity for individuals early in their career to develop or demonstrate their leadership skills and enhance promotability. I ask each of you to consider joining the board and inside this newsletter is a brief listing of board vacancies and their duties. I look forward to serving you and hope you will join me on the board.

“We are changing this year from one hour CPE luncheons to quarterly 3-hour CPE luncheons in October and January; so if you have a preferred date and time in October and January, contact one of the board members and we’ll try to accommodate you.”

- AGA Dallas Chapter Board



In This Issue

- Open Board Positions
- Dallas Chapter Recognized at the National AGA Conference in Nashville
- Benefits To You From Serving in Your Community
- The Expectation Chasm

Your Chapter's Board Room Has Lots of Opportunity for New Leadership: Come Join Us!

Community Corner

Sometimes it is nice to do something with your family that benefits someone else. Last month my family and a couple of my daughter's friends worked at the North Texas Food Bank (NTFB), something we have done on and off for the last few years. It is shocking to me how many people in the DFW area that are going hungry every day. Each day, the NTFB provides access to 170,000 meals through a network of programs and partner agencies. This is something they could not do without a lot of volunteers. Everyone benefits by participating in community service. My family will be working at the food bank again on Saturday, July 11th. If you are interested in helping out, please email me at Laura.Velez@ice.dhs.gov. (children – 10 years and up welcome). The food bank really needs help in the January-March months. This is a time when they have very low turnout, so look in future newsletters for information about a food bank trip during this time. If you have an organization that you would like our local chapter to participate in a service day, please email me or any of our officers with your suggestions. By giving back, we can all make a difference in someone else's life.



Past Dallas Chapter President Thandee Maung holds the Chapter Recognition Award the Dallas Chapter received at the Annual AGA Professional Development Training in Nashville on July 15, 2015.

Dallas Chapter Recognized at the National AGA Conference in Nashville

Your Dallas Chapter was recognized with a Platinum Chapter Award this month in recognition for its highly respected Professional Development Training (PDT), growth in membership, and community-building activities.

The energy behind the scenes that created the AGA Dallas Chapter's PDTs in October 2014 and April 2015 were the Board of Directors: Trish Wheeler, Michelle Richards, Thandee Maung, Richard Siu, Thomas Ny, Gary Gist, Joetta Obot, Sheila Campbell, Lisa Lara, Gaye Patrick, and Tung Pham. Gaye, Lisa, and Thandee represented the board in Nashville with Bill Miller, National Past President (photo). Board members have stepped down to make room for you. Don't wait to enjoy the perks that come from being on the board.



Open Board Positions

- Newsletter Editor
- Community Outreach
- Early Careers
- CGFM Coordinator
- Program Planning
- Meetings and Social Events Co-Chair
- Education Chairperson

Come Join Us by contacting the board through the AGA Dallas Chapter Web Site.



Whatever you are, be a good one. — Abraham Lincoln

Reward Yourself Personally and Professionally

As a board officer, you will be spending some of your personal time to serve your friends and colleagues. In return, you get rewarding personal and professional benefits such as opportunities to:

- Develop and demonstrate your leadership skills
- Learn new skills, keep skills sharp, use existing skills in new ways
- Meet new professional contacts and employment paths
- Meet government leaders at all levels

We encourage rotation in the board to keep ideas fresh and to give anyone interested an opportunity to serve.

Do You Like to Write and Publish?

Go ahead and write an article (500 words) on a topic of interest to the AGA community and we'll publish it in this AGA Dallas newsletter.

What is Your Community?

You think of community as those who share your spirituality and place of worship, or your children's place, school, their sports teams and the PTA.

But what is your professional community? Yes, there are colleagues and co-workers in your office but what goals do you share with them that compel you to do something outside of work? That's where the AGA comes in. AGA provides a platform for you to collaborate on projects that you care about.

AGA gives you a space to share your ideas and even publish your accomplishments. The AGA Dallas Chapter can do that for you. In fact, you are the AGA Dallas Chapter and its resources stand at the ready. Suppose you wanted to put your ideas down on paper. The AGA Dallas Chapter can give a voice to your ideas in the monthly newsletter, or on your AGA chapter web site. You write it and we'll publish it. You can even present your ideas to your community as a speaker at one of our luncheons. We all benefit from your ideas and you add quality experiences to your resume.

So please get involved with your chapter. Become a board member for a few hours a month, join the study group preparing for the CGFM, write an article for the chapter newsletter, volunteer your time for a good cause, and in turn, help your own community of professional auditors and financial managers. We're waiting to hear from you.

Contact Us

Send an email for more information about your Dallas Chapter's services.

Newsletter Editor AGA Dallas Chapter

ronald.salo@dallascityhall.com

Or visit us on the web at www.agadallas.org/

On stage (below) are AGA members including Thandee Maung who recently passed the CGFM exams



The Expectation Chasm

Turkey for Thanksgiving. Fireworks on Independence Day. Champagne for New Year's Eve celebration. These are the common expectations for each of the holidays. Yet, somehow when the actual day arrives, reality fails to meet expectations.

This is no different when it comes to managing—upwards or downwards. There are expectations on either side on how something should happen. Much has been written on how to set expectations. Meet with whom are working early on, define the roles, and set expectations. Despite this process, the parties involved are often disappointed.

Setting expectations is easy. Managing expectations is not easy. In my previous job, at the beginning of each project, like most good managers, I met with staff and told them what I expect of them, my personal preferences and my management style. Then I asked them what their expectations were of me. Often the response was, "I want to be a manager." These were millennials. Putting aside the generational gap issues... First, I burst their bubble without killing the enthusiasm—no easy task. Then, I had to bolster their self-esteem by talking about why they were chosen for the project. Then, I would ask what their expectations were. We now have something to work with—complete project with limited supervision, learn how to conduct Oracle database reviews, etc.

The project started. Two weeks later, I checked on the project's status and the expectations. At this point in the project, nothing substantial is happening. We are both happy. Two weeks later, I check in again. By now, some project activity is occurring, but not significant enough to change the original expectations. A few weeks later, the project is picking up steam; we are in the heaviest part of the project. Deadlines are set; client needs are immediate; bosses are asking for results. Guess what? I forgot to check in with the staff to see if expectations have changed on either side. By not asking, there is unspoken expectation gap.

We keep working through the project ups and downs. By now, I have no idea whether I am helping them meet their expectations because I have not checked in. I do know that they are not meeting mine because project work is not where I would like for it to be. I could stop now and have those discussions. But it is too difficult and deadlines are looming. Now, expectations went from being a small gap to being wide gap.

So, I tell myself, if we can just go through the next two weeks, it will work itself out. Besides, there is too much to be completed on the project, so there is no time to discuss expectations. Now the expectation gap went from being wide to a chasm in a heartbeat. That is how it will remain till the project completes.

The project ends and the performance appraisal is written. Hurt feelings on both side.

At the beginning of the project, we were on the same page. By the end of the project, we are on opposite sides. This kept happening again and again. It came to a point where I would re-do the work again and again and staff would not develop further. This was happening not just to me but also to other managers. What I learned is that when we set expectations, we also did not set acceptable results.

For instance, how do I evaluate whether staff worked with limited supervision—by hours, by work quality? It is interesting how parenting techniques can be so helpful when managing staff. I applied a basic concept of *Lenience*. The way this approach works is first you have to know your personal lenience levels—floor, ceiling and in-between.

For instance, say my expectation is to have work papers annotated completely and correctly in accordance with professional standards. Now, I have to define my lenience levels. My floor for the expectation is not having working papers annotated, or annotated without professional standard requirements. This is unacceptable. The ceiling for the expectation is to have all work papers annotated and annotated consistently in accordance with professional standards. This is the ideal and would make my review fast and productive. Now for the in-between lenience level. The in-between is that I expect basic work papers, prepared by client documents, and research material to have complete annotation and in accordance with professional standards. Other work papers, where there is analysis, testing, and some auditor judgement involved to be less so; therefore re-work is necessary and coaching comes into play.

Once I set the lenience levels--floor, ceiling, and in-between--it helps me handle the expectation gap better. So, when a testing work paper is incomplete, this is one where we work together on it. When a research work paper is not annotated correctly, this is a problem. This is also the starting point for both of us to understand what is necessary for their development and the level of freedom necessary for the staff to grow.

Lenience gives me wiggle room to be imperfect and the other person to be imperfect but also makes room to reduce the expectation chasm to just a manageable gap. If expectations are matched with Lenience, it increases the level of confidence for the staff and satisfaction in seeing staff develop. This can also works in reverse when managing upwards and meeting expectations.

Mamatha Sparks (CIA, CISA) has over 16 years of auditing and assurance experience and has been working with the Office of the City Auditor for the City of Dallas since 2008. She authored and published *Debt-Free College: 79 Secret to Successful College Financing* (2002)



Recruit a Member Drive **WIN A MINI TABLET**



(Not the actual tablet; tablet will be purchased after December 2015.)

Did you know that a large percentage of new members join AGA simply because someone Invited them?

As a valued member, you can impact the future of AGA by sharing your experience with your peers, your staff and others in your organization with an interest in government financial management. No one knows better than a current AGA member how beneficial membership is to advancing government accountability.

For the period **May 2015 through May 2016**, for each member you recruit, you will have an opportunity to enter a drawing for a **Mini Tablet**.

Drawing will be Thursday, May 19, 2016, at our regular Luncheon/ Meeting.

Mini Tablet donated by:
Joetta Obot, Membership Director