

The Washington Connection

ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS
WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER



Issue 1 • September 2007

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Welcome Back!

AGA DC Chapter's 50th Anniversary GALA AND AWARDS

[Read More](#)

LUNCHEON SERIES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2007 (11:30 am - 1:30 pm)

Members \$25
Non-Members \$30



DANNY WERFEL

Deputy Controller and Acting Controller
Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM)
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

[read bio](#)

Zola restaurant - 800 F Street, NW - next to the International Spy Museum
(one block from the Gallery Place/Chinatown red/yellow/green line Metro)

For more details, see <http://agadc.org/mlunch2.php>
Register online at <https://secure.serve.com/AGADC/lform2.php>

SAVE THE DATE

Spring Conference

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2008
THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2008

[Read More](#)

Announcements

The Washington, DC Chapter of AGA is
Sponsoring 2 Hours of Free CPE for its Members!

[Read More](#)

Click here to sign up to get newsletter and meeting notices automatically
e-mailed <http://agadc.org/mlistsubscribe.php>

President's Message

by Dan Christovich, President

Here we go!

Let me say that is my honor and privilege to serve as your Chapter President. We are going to have an exciting and valuable year of knowledge-sharing events and I encourage each of you take advantage of these events as much as possible. The 2007-2008 Program Year officially begins on Wednesday, September 5th. and I invite you all to come join me and toast the occasion at Zaytinas for our second annual Kick-Off Happy Hour.



As one of my principle goals for the AGA Washington DC Chapter, I want our group to be known as the "home base" for financial management in the DC area. And with the continued support of our corporate sponsors, this year's Chapter Executive Committee (CEC) will prepare another first class program of events and activities that will enrich you month after month.

It is my hope that each of you come and participate in our meetings, education events, networking and professional activities, and social and charitable activities. These learning opportunities are thoughtfully designed by and for our chapter members to help deepen our practical knowledge of government accounting while sharing our own personal experience. Networking is the life blood of our chapter, promoting rich internal dialogue while reaching out to other accounting professionals in the field. As a goal, I would like to see you share these experiences by adopting the "buddy system." Throughout the year each member must make the effort to bring at least one non-member to every attended event.

AGA offers so many opportunities and resources, and our DC chapter is no exception. To access this storehouse of information or to see what is new, please visit our chapter website at www.agadc.org and the AGA National website at www.agacgfm.org -it could change your whole professional perspective.

The old adage is true: to those who are given much, much will be asked. Our organization receives so much. The talent and diversity of our members, the generosity and selflessness of our sponsors, our impassioned speakers and supporters, the dedication and guidance of our chapter volunteers and our inspired leaders at the chapter and national level give us a significant amount of time and energy. It's up to us to share these experiences and apply the lessons we learn to our organizations and the government agencies we proudly represent. Ultimately, we need to be about the business of Advancing Government Accountability.

Please contact me any time you have thoughts, suggestions or questions. Remember, the Chapter can only improve if we communicate our ideas for improvement. So with that said, let's get going and make this year memorable and fun.

Sincerely,

Dan Christovich

Dan Christovich, CGFM

Luncheon Series Speaker: Danny Werfel



Danny Werfel is the Deputy Controller and currently serving as the Acting Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM) within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). He is responsible for coordinating OMB's efforts to initiate government-wide improvements in all areas of financial management. Mr. Werfel plays a leadership role in coordinating OMB review of agency efforts under the Financial Performance, Real Property, and Improper Payments initiatives of the President's Management Agenda. Mr. Werfel is also responsible for coordinating the development of government-wide policy on financial accounting standards, grants management, and financial systems.

Prior to his current position, Mr. Werfel served as the Chief of the Financial Integrity and Analysis Branch within OMB, as a budget examiner in OMB's

Education Branch, and as a policy analyst in OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Mr. Werfel also served as a Trial Attorney in the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

Mr. Werfel is a recipient of both national and local awards from the Association of Government Accountants for his contributions to Federal financial management. Mr. Werfel also serves as a member of the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board.

Mr. Werfel holds a Masters Degree in Public Policy from Duke University, a Juris Doctor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Bachelors Degree in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University.

Luncheon Series Topic:

Danny Werfel, Acting Controller for the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB), will share his thoughts on Smarter Accountability.

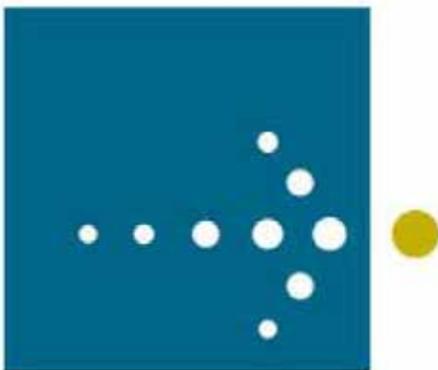
Financial reporting in the Federal government has three central objectives:

- facilitating improvements that ensure strong internal controls and sound accounting practices
- providing transparency into government finances
- documenting Federal leaders' financial information to help manage day-to-day and longer term activities

OMB is working with the CFO Council and the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency to pose questions about the extent to which these objectives are being met today and what, if any, reforms should be considered. Danny will share his progress report on these efforts, giving you the opportunity to weigh in on the questions OMB is considering. This session is sure to challenge each attendee and encourage dialogue as Danny takes a forward looking approach to financial reporting performed in today's environment.

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Note From the Editor:



First off, let me say thank you for all those who submitted articles—there is a lot of knowledge in this group that I am fortunate enough to review and publish. Our team took a lot of time to produce a high quality newsletter notifying AGA DC members of Chapter and National events, services, and the people supporting this professional organization. And, if you are not already a member, we encourage you to join AGA DC Chapter and enjoy the many benefits it offers, in particular the high quality luncheon series, learning opportunities, and conferences.

This year we decided to install a “Letters to the Editor” page in The Washington Connection, allowing members of the AGA DC Chapter to voice their opinions on any matters of concern to AGA DC Chapter. As a rule, we will only publish signed letters and reserve the right to crop submissions for the sake of space. Before submitting a letter/comment to the editor, please consider the following:

- relate your issue to a recent chapter event or article
- keep submissions short and concise
- state your main point at the beginning
- if applicable, please include the article title and author you are addressing
- send articles to Emily.asmus@gt.com with “Letter to the Editor” in the subject line

As a general rule, if you have something to say, say it! We also encourage you to submit your suggestions, comments, or questions about the AGA DC Newsletter. We have made some significant changes to the layout and would love to know what you think. After all, this is your newsletter, the strength of this page and general publication depends on your comments.

“But words are things, and a small drop of ink, Falling, like dew, upon a thought produces That which makes thousands, perhaps millions think.”

Lord George Gordon BYRON
English poet (1788-1824)

Thank you for your words,

Emily Asmus

Emily Asmus
AGA DC Chapter Newsletter Editor

Newsletter Team

Emily Asmus, Editor

Leon Fleisher, Assistant Editor

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AGA DC

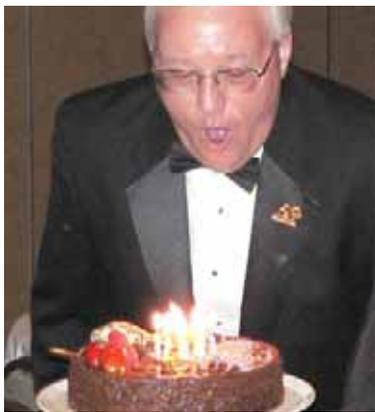
Gala and Awards

Last June the AGA DC Chapter hosted its 50th Anniversary Awards Gala at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC. The event recognized members for all of their hard work and dedication to the AGA DC Chapter, while celebrating the success and looking to the future of the AGA DC Chapter. Our own Richard "Gus" Gustafson received the Frank Greathouse Award, while non-member awards were given to: Mark Everson (Distinguished Federal Leadership Award); The Honorable Todd Platts (Distinguished Federal Leadership Award). Championed by the dedicated AGA DC Chapter President, R. Scott Bell, recipient of the Emerging Leader Award, this year's ceremony recognized a record high for chapter membership. With over 40 awards, recognition for multiple-year members, it was a truly special evening with fun, food, laughs, and music.



Snapshots

50th Anniversary Gala!



Announcements

The Washington, DC Chapter of AGA is Sponsoring 2 Hours of Free CPE for its Members!

The Chapter will participate in an audio conference, hosted by AGA National, on Thursday, September 20 from 2 to 3:50 p.m. entitled, "Making the Transition to Management: What it Takes to Succeed."

The audio conference will be held at 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20420. Space is limited, so please contact Loan Nguyen at lnguyen@lmi.org or 703-917-7037 to register. (A confirmation will be emailed to each registered participant.)

Please join us for two hours of lively discussion about this important and timely topic. In addition to the speaker's commentary, there will be approximately 20 minutes for Q & A so that the participants can ask the speaker questions and share their own experiences.

Date: Thursday, September 20, 2007

Time: 2:00 - 3:50 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Location: 810 Vermont Ave., NW,
Washington DC 20420

Learning Objectives: To obtain an understanding of how to transition from being an individual contributor to leader.

Prerequisite: Familiarity with leadership concepts

Advance Prep: None required

CPE: Two credits

Field of Study: Personal Development

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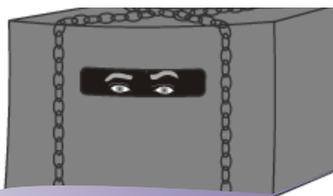


AGA D.C. Liaisons October Mentoring Luncheon

It is almost time for the biannual AGA D.C. Liaisons Luncheon. Last spring over 30 liaisons attended the Membership Team's lunch and learn session to learn about AGA DC's professional development opportunities, networking events, mentoring possibilities, and chapter recruiting. For the October Luncheon the Membership team is adding another element, introducing mentors to members at all career levels. Look for luncheon details on the AGA DC website and in the October issue of the Washington Connection.

Inside the Black Box

by Simcha Kuritzky, CGFM CPA



The Law of Large Numbers and the Law of Small Numbers

More than a decade ago, the federal accounting community struggled to produce accurate and timely financial statements. Now that we've done that with reasonable success for some time, the emphasis has switched to making statements more meaningful for the general public. To successfully create these statements we can turn to history.

From the Law of Large Numbers

Probability and statistical analysis began in the Renaissance with the roll of dice. While rolling a "fair" die, mathematicians determined they could not predict what number would be rolled with absolute certainty—they didn't know when the number would come up "6." However, through trial and error they found that it was possible to determine in a rather accurately (in a small range of numbers) how often a die rolled a hundred times would come up with the same number, like "6."

This historical account is the essence of the Law of Large Numbers and the basis for the science of statistics: as populations grow in size, they become more predictable.

As accountants, we do not typically use statistics, but if used correctly it is invaluable, especially when auditing statements. While we like to base accounting entries on objective facts, a strong preference for historical cost as a basis of valuation, sometimes we have no choice but to use subjective measures. For example, we calculate an allowance for doubtful accounts as a percentage of outstanding debts owed us by others. The percentage may be set on a number of factors, such as age of the debt or financial strength of the debtor (if known); however, it is only an estimate. If we knew for a fact which debts would be bad, we never would have granted credit in the first place. While it may be very difficult to tell which of our

debtors may default, we can come up with reasonably good numbers showing how many debtors within a cohort will default. Financial statements must include estimates based on the Law of Large Numbers.

To the Law of Small Numbers

The name "Law of Small Numbers" is actually a parody*; it is more properly known as verisimilitude. The more details we know about a subject, the more real it seems to us. If I say "I saw a cat on my way to work", that doesn't create much of a picture. However, if I say "On my way to work I passed a large red tabby, who scurried up an elm tree as I approached," then the reader has a more vivid picture of what happened, and it seems more realistic than the first description. The added details gives the account more credibility—uniqueness tends to give significance. This is an example of the "Law of Small Numbers," as you add more details the probability of the event becomes less likely. As in the cat example, there are fewer large red tabbies in the world than total number of cats, not all of them will run away from a stranger, fewer of those will climb a tree to run away, and of the types of trees, only a handful will choose elms as their escape route. As this example shows, each detail makes the event less probable from a statistical standpoint, but more real in our minds.

Final Thoughts

The law of small number is useful because it provides one of the keys to making a narrative meaningful: readers will connect more strongly when there is more detail. To put it into the context of our work, let's imagine an agency needs to describe the success of a program by listing statistics of how many people were served, and counting the number of individuals interested in the program. By applying the law of small numbers the agency could pick

a small number of representatives and describing in vivid detail what the program did for the individuals.

***Note:** This is not to be confused with another Law of Small Numbers that says that just because certain characteristics are found for a small sample doesn't mean that those characteristics will be universally true, or even the majority case when looking at a large sample.

Comments and critiques, as well as specific questions or suggestions for future topics, are always welcome. Send them to Simcha.Kuritzky@CGIFederal.com, and not to the AGA.

Simcha Kuritzky, CGFM CPA

This column is provided as part of a free exchange of ideas in federal accounting, and is not reviewed substantively before publication.

SAVE THE DATE Spring Conference

The Association of Government Accountants Washington, DC Chapter will be hosting its annual spring conference on May 7 and 8, 2008. This 2-day conference will address emerging issues related to federal financial management and systems.

Dates: Wednesday, May 7 and Thursday, May 8, 2008

Time: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Location: Ronald Reagan Building

Continuing Education: 15 CPE

For more information: visit www.agadc.org.

Connections at your Fingertips...



- AGA Membership Information
- AGA Membership Application
- CGFM Program Information
- CGFM Program Application
- AGA National Home Page
- AGA-DC Home Page (Washington DC)
- AGA-Northern Virginia Home Page (Virginia)
- AGA-Montgomery/PG Home Page (Maryland)
- MACPA Home Page (Maryland)
- VSCPA Home Page (Virginia)
- GWSCPA Home Page (DC)
- AICPA Home Page

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Accountability

AGA serves government accountability professionals by providing quality education, fostering professional development and certification, and supporting standards and research to advance government accountability.

Click on the link below to view a short AGA video:
<http://www.agacgfm.org/downloads/agaweb.wmv>

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Who is Dan Christovich?

Name:

Commander Dan Christovich



Commander Christovich is the Chief of Program, Budget & Execution Division for the Office of Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology (C4IT)... Translation: He is the Comptroller for the Coast Guard Chief Information Officer.

Prior to working for the CIO, he worked for the Coast Guard Chief Financial Officer in the Office of Policy and in the Office of Financial Systems. Before that he served aboard various Coast Guard cutters and on a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment.

He is a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy and has an MBA from George Mason University.

How long have you been a member of AGA?

I joined AGA in 2001. I was introduced to AGA when I was working on a detail at JFMIP.

What has been your most rewarding achievement in your career?

As a Coast Guard Officer I've had numerous rewarding operational assignments, including participation in the first Gulf War and providing hurricane relief in the Virgin Islands. It would be really hard to pick just one highlight from that part of my career. Since 1999 I've worked in financial management for the Coast Guard, and perhaps the most rewarding achievement in this area would be successfully transitioning the Coast Guard into the Department of Homeland Security and assisting in setting up the Coast Guard core accounting system. Federal budgeting and budget execution is so challenging...I think we are all just happy not to end up on the bad side of a story in the Washington Post.

How has AGA helped you with your career?

AGA has provided me with what I consider a complete set of tools to be successful in financial management endeavors. Education, networking, certification, publications, and other activities that I have participated in through AGA have really helped me understand and solve challenges facing the Coast Guard.

What advice do you have for someone thinking about joining AGA?

You don't have to dig too deep to realize that it's really an easy decision for financial management professionals who are inclined to be innovative and collaborative. Joining AGA and becoming an active participant in Chapter and National activities is just like using a total immersion program to learn a foreign language. You will enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities across the entire spectrum of our very complex and changing world of work. And equally important, you will meet some fantastic people and have a whole lot of fun!

What is the best thing about working in government service?

The best thing about government service is the wide range of opportunities that are available to people who are willing to work hard.

What has been the biggest obstacle in getting where you are today?

There have been some obstacles, of course, but I've found that by focusing on the desired outcomes and just doing what needs to be done, anything can be overcome. Obstacles are part of the challenge to succeed and once you get past them, I take whatever lesson I've learned and leave the obstacle in the past.

What is your favorite hobby or outside activity?

I like to be active and I like to play outside and that usually includes the beach, golf, volleyball, soccer...mostly anything. I also recently started surfing again after laying off for about 10 years. I really enjoy reading too. But family is number 1 for me, so anytime I can mix an outdoor activity with a family activity I'm pretty satisfied.

What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?

I like rainbow sherbet or vanilla with toppings. For a real treat I'll take coconut gelato.

Anything else you would like to highlight?

There is no question that we live in difficult times, but I think as long as we remain optimistic and hopeful, and stick to our values like working hard and abiding the Golden Rule, these days will give way to even better days ahead.

What is your favorite word?

My favorite word is "believe". So much of what we do in this life requires us to just simply believe first, and then the "achieve" will follow.

Education

"Listen In" *Making the Transition* *to Management*

SEPTEMBER 20TH AUDIO CONFERENCE

This personal development audio conference focuses on making the transition from being an individual contributor to leader. Emphasis is placed on understanding the leadership role, and what tools and techniques new leaders need to succeed. For those new to supervision, this presentation will also provide insight and promote confidence for taking on this important role. Participants will gain knowledge in applying several techniques to enhance productivity and teamwork, and as a result, will be able to:

- Understand the "Performance Skills" required to be a successful leader
- Apply a model for putting relationships on track with your staff, boss and peers
- Understand how your new role significantly differs from that of individual contributor.

To share his expertise with over 25 years as an active practitioner in human resources and personal development trainer is Robert A. Carnegie, MBA, founder of R. Carnegie Associates, Inc. Bob has been a faculty member of the Government Audit Training Institute, Graduate School, USDA. Bob is also a member of the American Society for Training and Development, the New England Human Resources Association, the Society for Human Resource Management and the AGA Boston Chapter.

Community Service

Giving Back SOME

The AGA DC Chapter had a successful year of supporting SOME (So Others Might Eat). SOME, an interfaith, community-based organization, assists the poor and homeless of our nation's capital with food, clothing, health care, and other life sustaining services. <http://www.some.org/> The AGA DC Chapter, along with the support of AGA National, donated \$600.00 to SOME last year. We collected \$300 from donations at our annual gala and we received \$300 in matching funds from AGA National. Fortunately, the AGA DC Chapter continues to be a strong supporter of the DC community, providing monthly opportunities for serving the local community. Look for the community service activities in the AGA DC Chapter calendar or contact Lloyd A. Farmer 703-516-9134 ext 11 or Tonya Allen Shaw 202-720-5026 to learn more.

CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK

Compete in the San Antonio chapter challenge to support the poor and homeless

Community Service Activities 2007-2008

September -	Baby Food Challenge
October -	Walk to D'feet ALS
November-	Project Harvest
December -	Toys-for-Tots
January -	Make-A-Wish Foundation
February -	Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
March-	Dress for Success Suit Drive
April DC -	Habitat for Humanity (Partnering with other metro chapters)
May -	Eyeglass Collection for Lions Club & Cell Phone collection Verizon Wireless
June -	So Others Might Eat
July -	Boy's and Girl's Club (Baseball Outing)
August -	TBD

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Want to Make a Difference?

Consider a Career in Government Financial Management

Are you, or someone from your chapter planning to attend a career fair, or an event for college students? AGA now has an eye-catching brochure that offers information about government financial management careers and answers questions for aspiring government financial managers regarding the qualifications and skills needed to get started. It also includes a bookmark for students that directs them to the Tomorrow's Professionals website for more information. To order free copies of the brochure, please submit the collateral order form found in the Members Only section or contact Jessica Jones.

Member Services

Member Services looks forward to kicking off the new year of AGA DC Chapter activities with a repeat of our Zaytinya's Happy Hour. The event is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 5 from 4-6pm. More details will follow in an email and will be posted on the website. Later in September AGA DC Chapter will once again be taking a boat cruise on the Potomac. This time we plan to visit Mount Vernon where we will tour the grounds and have lunch before we head back to Georgetown. A date has not yet been set for this event, but will be posted on the website when it is determined. We look forward to another fun and successful year of AGA DC Chapter events and we hope to see you all there!

“Put Me In Coach” I'm Ready to Play...



AGADC SOFTBALL

The chapter is exploring the possibility of forming a co-ed softball team starting in Spring 2008, and is looking for members of any skill level who would like to play. Spring 2008 seems far in the future, but if the chapter does, indeed, want to form a team, it must assemble its roster, acquire equipment, and register in one of the local leagues in the coming months.

The team would probably play in the DC Parks and Recreation League against teams from both the public and private sectors. Games typically occur one night per work week (usually the same night every week), starting either at 6:00 or 7:00 and running approximately one hour. Games would most likely be played in West Potomac Park, next to the Lincoln Memorial, near the FDR Memorial. In order to qualify to play in the co-ed league, every team must have and play at least five women for each game.

The emphasis would be on having a good time - not winning at all costs. No prior softball experience is required. Speaking of cost, there would be a nominal cost to each player of joining the team. The team would provide the basic equipment (bats, balls, bases, etc.). Each player must bring their own glove. The chapter would likely cover a portion of both the league registration fees (annual) as well as the cost of jerseys, hats, hats (one-time), and will do whatever is possible to make involvement affordable for all.

At this point, we are simply gauging interest. If you would like to be involved, please contact Scott Bell at scott.bell@do.treas.gov.

Early Career Members

Free Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Training

by Doug Bennett, AGA-DC CGFM Coordinator and Audrey Duchesne,
AGA-DC CGFM Assistant Coordinator

AGA DC Chapter will once again provide this six-day comprehensive training program to Early Career members to help them prepare for and successfully complete the 3-part CGFM examination.

The program, offered AT NO COST to qualified enrollees, will address the three key components of the CGFM examination: (1) the governmental environment; (2) government accounting, financial reporting, and budgeting; and (3) government financial management and control. The program's four key eligibility criteria include:

- Membership in the DC, Northern Virginia or Montgomery /Prince George's County chapter of AGA (you can join now to meet this requirement);
- Preference given to those with 5 or fewer years of professional experience;
- Obtaining your supervisor's approval; and,
- Committing to take the 3-part CGFM examination within one year of the training.

This program provides a wonderful opportunity for our members, in the early stage of their careers, to dramatically increase their knowledge of government financial management, and prepare to acquire a critically important professional certification that will enhance their value to their organizations, and promote their long-term career aspirations.

Although a location and firm date for this training has not been established, we are planning for it in the late Fall and hope to offer it at a location in downtown DC. Please share this exciting opportunity with your coworkers.

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September 2007 Calendar of Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5 Zaytina on Wednesday, September 5th from 4pm - 6pm for Happy Hour	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Zola Lunch - 9/19 Danny Werfel	20 Audio Conference (AC) - 9/20 - Making the Transition to Management: What it takes to succeed	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

* Luncheon speakers will be confirmed and finalized in the next month. Topics will relate to financial management and PMA initiatives. The location is Zola's restaurant from 11:30 - 2:00 with one hour CPE.

Calendar of Events — 2007/2008 Program Year

Month	Luncheons*	Community Service	Member Service	Education	Early Careers	Membership	Annual Spring Conference
September	Zola Lunch - 9/19 Danny Werfel	Baby Food Challenge	Zaytina on Wednesday, September 5th from 4pm - 6pm for Happy Hour	Audio Conference (AC) - 9/20 - Making the Transition to Management: What it takes to succeed			
October	Zola Lunch - 10/17	Walk to D'feet ALS				Membership Luncheon - date/time/place - TBD	
November		Project Harvest					
December	Zola Lunch - 12/5	Toys-for-Tots		AC - 12/12 - Anatomy of Fraud: Case Examples of Greed, Collusion, and Override of Controls			
January		Make-A-Wish Foundation					
February		Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)		AC - 2/6 - Internal Controls			
March		Dress for Success Suit Drive					
April		Habitat for Humanity					
May		Eyeglass Collection for Lions Club & Cell Phone collection Verizon Wireless					Spring Conference May 7 and 8, 2008 - Ronald Reagan Building
June		So Others Might Eat					
July		Boy's and Girl's Club (Baseball Outing)					

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