



Volume 15-05 January 2016



President's Message

January is often a month of reflecting back to celebrate our accomplishments and looking forward to new projects and self-improvement plans. My hope is that each of us spends time honoring our accomplishments and proudest moments from this past year. Gratitude is a powerful tool and remembering some of the best lessons we learned in 2015 can be the catalyst for growth and self-renewal in 2016.

Our chapter has seen many changes this past year, both as individual members and as an AGA family. I am reminded once again how important it is to have a support network both personally and professionally for times such as these. I am always amazed at the wealth of knowledge and depth of compassion that our fellow AGA members share. I hope you will join me in reaching out to others in our chapter and sharing your



Diane MaKaeli, Chapter President

lessons and accomplishments from this past year. If you have opportunities for collaboration with others in our chapter, please share those with us. We would like to join you.

Many of the discussions I participated in recently have focused on research regarding the importance of leaders taking quiet, alone time to reflect. Your brain is a treasure trove of information and knowledge.

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Welcome New Members

We are pleased to welcome to the Seattle Chapter:

Ms. Danel Phelps,
Analyst

University of
Washington

Management,
Accounting & Analysis

Upcoming Events

**Monday, Feb 8, 2016,
12:00 pm to 12:50 pm**
***"Independent Police
Accountability:
Accessible, Trusted,
Transparent" by Pierce
Murphy, Director, Office
of Professional
Accountability***

Lunch & Presentation at
GAO, Columbia Center

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AGA Seattle Chapter Monthly Meeting Schedule for Program Year 2015-2016

Save the dates for our monthly education events for program year 2015-2016! Please join us at these luncheon and brown bag events and help us make this program year a success.

Monday, September 21, 2015 - GAO 28th Floor Training Facility, Columbia Tower.

Journal Article Discussion led by Ken Smith (See following description)

Monday, October 19, 2015 - GAO 28th Floor Training Facility, Columbia Tower.

Meena Cheng, Certified Financial Planner and founder of Impact Financial

Topic: Social Security as it relates to government retirees

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 - GAO 28th Floor Training Facility, Columbia Tower.

Webinar Presentation by Charles W. Hester, CGFM, CPA

Topic: "OMB Uniform Guidance: Impact on the Grant Community"

Monday, December 14, 2015 - City of Seattle 33rd Floor Conference Room, Seattle Municipal Tower.

Chris Ruffini, Finance Manager, Seattle Department of Transportation

Topic: "Setting Budget and Finance Priorities at the Seattle Department of Transportation"

Monday, January 11, 2016 - GAO 37th Floor Training Facility, Columbia Tower.

Tina Polf CPA

Topic: 2015 Tax Update

Monday, February 8, 2016 (TBD) - GAO 37th Floor Training Facility.

Pierce Murphy, Director of the Seattle Office of Public Accountability

Topic: Mission and structure of the OPA and the role of accountability in light of all the current media interest in police misconduct.

Monday, March 14, 2016 (TBD) - GAO 37th Floor Training Facility.

TBD

Monday-Tuesday, April 25-26, 2016

2016 Government Accounting and Auditing professional development training, Greater Tacoma Convention Center

Monday May 9, 2016 - Emerald Award Meeting

When/
Where

Monday, February 8, 2016 12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.

GAO Training Room, Columbia Center, 701 Fifth Ave, 37th Floor. (Take elevator to 40th floor and then to 37th.)

Pierce Murphy, Director, Office of Professional Accountability, will discuss Mission and Structure of the OPA and the role of accountability.

Please bring a friend or colleague.

Free to Members. Non-Members pay \$5. Box lunches will be available for \$15 (optional).

Please RSVP by February 4, 2016 to HardyM@gao.gov



January 2016 Luncheon Presentation

Once again, Seattle AGA is indebted to the Seattle Government Accountability Office and staff for allowing our chapter to hold its meetings at the GAO training facility. GAO recently moved to a different office space, so our GAO members did more than usual to assure the training room was set up for Ms. Polf's presentation and that our members were able to get through security.

Tina Polf, CPA ^{1/} provided an update on the tax law changes that will impact our members' 2015 returns and discussed new laws and regulations that may impact 2015 individual tax returns or at the very least be interesting things to know.

The presentation began by Ms. Polf providing us with a 7-page handout that summarized changes and last-minute legislation that prevented changes. The handout itself was well-written to encapsulate some quite complicated information into an easily read format.

The highlights included the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which changed the way IRS audits partnerships, and repeal of the requirement that employers must provide health insurance to employees.



Tina Polf (2nd from right) responds to a question by Julianne Cutts (far left) as (L to R) Delores Lee, Sandra Starnes, and Mary Ann Hardy listen in.

Then there is the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015, which was signed into law on December 18th. The law extends some provisions in the tax code for at least one more year ("above the line" education deduction), made others permanent (including my favorite, the sales tax deduction), and took care of some controversial issues, such as defining what is hard cider.

Just to show one never knows where a tax change may show up, Ms. Polf also discussed the Surface Transportation Act, which changes the due dates for business returns, beginning in 2017.

Ms. Polf also discussed material court cases that will influence the tax code, including King V. Burwell involving insurance premium credits and Obergefell V. Hodges, which establishes that same sex married couples can be treated as married for tax filing purposes.

The actual presentation used up the entire time allotted for the meeting. Ms. Polf graciously stayed for a while afterwards to answer individuals' questions.

^{1/}Christina A. Polf, CPA is a sole proprietor with a mission of "making taxes less scary" and an emphasis on tax planning and compliance issues for individuals and closely-held businesses. She believes that it is important that you be able to ask your questions no matter how simple they may seem.

She is a past-President of the Seattle Chapter of Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance (AFWA), a past AFWA National Board member, and currently serves on the Board of The Foundation of AFWA.

Ms. Polf's practice is located Renton, WA. She may be reached at 425-226-1500 or TinaPolf@aol.com.

PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER FAIR

Recruit employees & interns during the 2016 ASPA National Conference in Seattle



More than 1,000 people are expected to attend the conference, including students earning Master of Public Administration degrees!

Date: Monday, March 21, 2016

Time: 1pm to 4pm

Location: Westin Hotel, Grand Ballroom 2

Registration cost: \$175 per table

Register at: 2016careerfair.eventbrite.com

For questions, please contact: Karen Chen at evansjob@uw.edu



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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



Upcoming 2016 AGA Webinar Offerings

Go to: <https://www.agacgfm.org/Training-and-Events/Learn-Online/Webinars/Free-Members-only-Webinar-Offerings/Managing-in-a-Multi-Generational-Workplace.aspx>

Note: Group registration is not available for free, members-only webinars

Managing in a Multigenerational Workplace

Feb. 3, 2016 | 2–3 p.m. ET | 1 CPE

There can be up to four generations working in the same organization at the same time — each with different work values and communication and management styles.

Fraud Prevention

Feb. 17, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs

Information coming soon | [Learn more & register](#)

Grants

March 9, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs

Information coming soon | [Learn more & register](#)

Internal Controls

March 23, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs

DATA Act

April 13, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs

Fraud Prevention

April 27, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs

Ethics

May 11, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs

Government Financial Management

June 1, 2016 | 2–3:50 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs



PHOTOS WANTED

We like to decorate the first page of The Sounder with a local photo each month. If you have a picture to contribute, please send it to Tim Dobler at DOBLER5@MSN.COM.

When we use your photo, we will acknowledge you in our credits section.

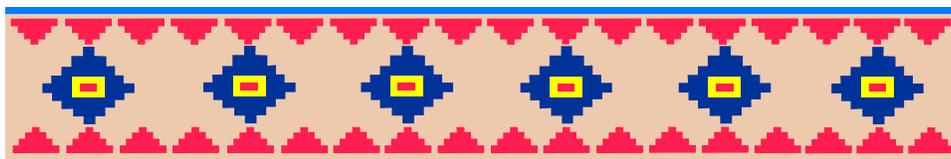
President's Message, Continued from Page 1

Are you able to listen? With so many distractions in life, it is hard to find time to just think. Visionary leaders are mindful and connected to this inner resource. How can each of us tap into this unique perspective within us? It all begins with blocking out time and committing to a quiet place. In the process of reflecting, you may find new perspectives and a renewed sense of purpose. The energy that comes when we unleash our mind is powerful and productive.

Take out your calendar and schedule some time to think and reflect. Let the thoughts flow without judgment or analysis. Several ways to accomplish this include journaling, using art to strengthen your perception and expand the way you look at things, reflecting on what new skill you might want to learn, making yourself utterly unavailable for outside distractions, breaking patterns to make yourself look at something in a different way, or sitting with ideas that are profoundly different than your own and allowing your mind to think about these different perspectives. There are a lot of great ideas on how to broaden your mind, and trying two or three can make a world of difference.

Listening with purpose, to ourselves and others, can be the springboard to a successful future. It allows us to connect to purpose and reconnect with our inner self. I look forward to seeing us all grow as leaders by making time for the important task of quiet self-reflection.

In closing, I would like to welcome our new President-Elect Olivia Brezsko and thank Ken Smith for his many years of service to our chapter. Olivia's bio is included in this newsletter to give you a little background on who she is. I am super excited to have her join our board. In the coming months, we will once again have opportunities for you to serve as well. If in your quiet moments of introspection, you feel the desire to develop your leadership skills, I know you will find the AGA Seattle Chapter a wonderful and supportive place to make that happen. I look forward to seeing you at our next chapter meeting and hearing about your professional goals.



Meet Your Board Members



Olivia Brezsko is a Senior Accounting Student at the University of Washington, Tacoma. She was originally studying to become a nurse but had a change of heart and began studying accounting in 2013.

Her interest in governmental accounting stems from a family background of civil service workers and a passion for helping others.

During her junior year of College, Olivia was voted as the Accounting Junior of the Year by fellow students and faculty.

Upon graduation Olivia plans to study for her CPA exam and become a Certified Fraud Examiner.

Olivia is very excited for her new role with the AGA and looks forward to working with the rest of the board in the upcoming year!

Tax-Aide VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Looking for a rewarding opportunity to make a difference?

The Seattle Chapter AGA is partnering with The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe and AARP Foundation Tax-Aide to offer free tax preparation services.

The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes tax site is located at:
31948 Little Boston Road NE
Kingston WA 98346

Hours of Tax Site operation:
Mondays & Tuesdays from 1:00pm – 5:00pm
January 19-April 18, 2015.

We also need volunteers to help prepare taxes at the Asset Building Coalitions Financial Fair in Bremerton, WA on February 6th from 10:00am – 2:00pm.

Tax volunteers receive free tax training in December and January, in association with the IRS. Once trained, they work a few hours a week from mid-January through mid-April, interacting with primarily low income clients.

To volunteer, contact Sandra Starnes, Seattle Chapter Secretary, at sandra@pgst.nsn.us or 360-297-9667.

Get the joy and satisfaction of helping others by joining the Tax-Aide volunteer team today. Your expertise will be appreciated more than you can imagine.

AGA Seattle Chapter Activities

Attendees at our January meeting were asked to bring a food donation for a local food bank. The membership responded enthusiastically with generosity and a diversity of donated items. Sam Lord, our Community Service Chair, is pictured here with the donations before he scooped them up for delivery to Northwest Harvest. Our thanks to everyone who donated food at this event!



AGA Seattle Chapter Recognition Program Points

Chapter Recognition Program categories	Points to Date
Section I - Chapter Leadership, Planning, & Participation	2,800
Section II - Education & Professional Development	1,425
Section III - Certification	1,100
Section IV - Communications	2,375
Section V - Membership with a Focus on Early Career and Student Members	3,800
Section VI - Accountability	0
Section VII - Community Service	400
Section VIII - Awards	800
Total	12,700

Recognition Levels:

A **Bronze Chapter Designation** will be presented to any chapter that attains between 10,000 and 14,500 credits for the year. The chapter president's plaque will include recognition that the chapter has achieved Bronze status.

A **Silver Chapter Designation** will be presented to any chapter that attains between 14,501 and 17,000 credits for the year. The chapter president's plaque will include recognition that the chapter has achieved Silver status.

A **Gold Chapter Designation** will be presented to any chapter that attains between 17,001 and 19,500 credits for the year. The chapter president's plaque will include recognition that the chapter has achieved Gold status.

The **Platinum Chapter Designation** will be presented to any chapter that attains between 19,501 and 22,000 credits for the year. The chapter president's plaque will include recognition that the chapter has achieved Platinum status.

Financial Condition as of December 31, 2015

Checking	\$ 6,040.76
Savings	\$ 2,637.42
12 Month Certificate of Deposit	<u>\$ 4,638.27</u>
Total Assets	\$13,316.45
Liabilities	\$ 0.00
Members' Equity	<u>\$ 13,316.45</u>
Liabilities & Members' Equity	\$13,316.45

Cash Flow Report, Month Ending December 31, 2015

Beginning Cash Balances	\$13,314.39
Lunch Expenses	
Board PDT Travel Costs	
Cash Expended ^{1/}	\$ -0-
Lunch Receipts	
Interest Income	\$ 2.06
Subtotal Cash Deposits	\$ 2.06
Net Cash Change	\$ 2.06
Ending Cash Balance	\$13,316.45

^{1/} There was no charge for attending the December luncheon, and we did not sell box lunches; therefore no expenditures were incurred in December.



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

The purpose of the Association and the Chapter is to be an international, professional organization dedicated to the advancement of government financial management. The Association shall serve its members by providing or sponsoring appropriate educational programs, encouraging professional development, influencing governmental financial management policies and practices, and serving as an advocate for the profession. The Association shall serve government officials and the public by sponsoring efforts to ensure full and fair accountability for all public monies, and by providing a variety of pro bono services throughout the United States and its territories that support that end.

AGA Seattle Chapter 2015-2016 Board Members

President

Diane MaKaeli,
King County Fire District 20
360-410-0820
dmakaeli@gmail.com

CGFM Chair / Webmaster

Gabrielle Sivage, Seattle DOT
202-277-8250
gsivage@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Tim Dobler, Retired
206-364-3499
Dobler5@msn.com

President-Elect

Olivia Brezsko
oliviap3@uw.edu

**Treasurer / Community
Service Chair**

Sam Lord, HHS OIG
206-615-2257
Samuel.Lord@oig.hhs.gov

Research Chair

Elizabeth Naftchi, U.S. HHS
206-615-2046
enaftchi@hrsa.gov

**Membership Chair /
Historian**

Karyn Angulo, U.S. GAO
206-287-4868
angulo@agaseattle.org

Secretary

Sandra Starnes, Port Gamble
S'Klallam Tribe
360-297-9667
sandra@pgst.nsn.us

Board Member

Pat Bohan, U.S. GAO
206-287-4824
BohanP@GAO.GOV

**Education Chair / Profes-
sional Development Chair**

Mary Ann Hardy, U.S. GAO
206-654-5594
hardym@gao.gov

Early Careers Chair

John Kurpierz,
Institute for Better Governance
JohnRKurpierz@gmail.com

Board Member

Ken Smith, Ph.D.
206-616-8698
smithka1@cwu.edu

This newsletter was produced by board member Tim Dobler with the assistance of Karyn Angulo. Thanks to chapter members who contributed articles and photos for this issue. Masthead Photo Courtesy of Diane MaKaeli.