



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

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President-Elect

Vacant

Secretary

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Treasurer

Lorna Schwimmer-Staggs
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Research Committee

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Education/Programs Committee

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Benjamin Lyons (Co-Chair)

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Communications Committee

Shayla Prince (Chair)

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Bhakti Patel (Co-Chair)

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Community Service Committee

Priscilla Suggs (Chair)

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Membership Committee

Khiry Burke (Chair)

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Professional Certifications Committee

Patti Roano (Chair)

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Early Careers Committee

Latosha Goard (Chair)

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Chapter Historian

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Webmaster

Eddie Chan

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Regional Vice President

Chelly Hilmes

chellyhilmes@yahoo.com

Hello,

We're rolling into spring with a great start to the calendar year. I'd like to thank everybody who has attended our January and February luncheons. I'm pleased to say we've been seeing new faces over the past few months. It's nice to see our organization gaining new interest.

We've been fortunate to have some great speakers with new topics of interest. In January, Jon Nuelle gave a lecture on Enterprise Data Governance. This week we had HHSC Inspector General, Sylvia Kauffman, who let us know about the cutting edge audit techniques that OIG is using.

The CPE luncheon will remain at Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen next month. If you haven't been around for a while, we have room for a few more. We're expecting an increase in student participation over the next few months. Please take a few minutes to talk to the students so that we can let them know the benefits of pursuing a government career. Looking forward to seeing you there!

We also have our annual networking event planned for April 19th. We've been able to secure 77 Degrees in the Domain. Please keep a lookout for the upcoming invite.

As always, we are always looking for additional participation in 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 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 March 8th!





PAST EVENTS

What: CPE Luncheon
“Discovering Value via Enterprise Data Governance”

When: February 8, 2018
11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Where: Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen
6319 N I Hwy 35 | Austin, TX |78752

Who: Sylvia Hernandez Kauffman

Why: Earn 1 continuing professional education credit



Our presenter...



Sylvia Hernandez Kauffman of Austin has served as the Principal Deputy Inspector General for Health and Human Services since early 2016 and was recently named the Inspector General by Governor Greg Abbott. Previously, she served in strategic leadership roles at the Inspector General’s Office and at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

A native Texan, born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, Sylvia was the first person in her family to attend college. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from Stanford University. Sylvia received her Master in Public Policy from Harvard University. Sylvia lives in south Austin with her husband, David, and their three children, Daniel, Natalia, and Isabella.

HIGHLIGHTS



Congratulations to the following members who reached their anniversary milestone in the month of January.

Membership Anniversaries



1 year Anniversary: Angela Bourianoff, Charlotte Carpenter, Caroline Navarro, Christian Sey



10 year Anniversary: Ida Ash, CGFM, Philip Ashely, CGFM

Luncheon Gift Card Drawings!

Congratulations to Tracy Hardwick for winning the raffle during our January luncheon! She won a \$25 gift card to Best Buy.



CASA Holiday Toy Drive

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our Holiday Fundraiser for CASA of Travis County. You made the holidays a lot brighter for so many children!!



7701 N Lamar Blvd, Ste 301
Austin, Texas 78752
Phone: 512.459.2272
Fax: 512.459.4550
www.casatexas.org

January 8, 2018

Priscilla Suggs
Austin Association of Government Accountants
P.O. Box 12403
Austin TX 78711-2403

Dear Ms. Suggs,

Thank you for helping to make the holidays bright for children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Thanks to your organization's generous in-kind donation of 8 \$30 Target and Walmart gift cards to CASA's 2017 Holiday Toy Drive, our offices were packed full of gifts and holiday cheer.

2017 brought us Moana dolls and costumes, superheroes galore, something called Hatchimals, very cool science kits, beautiful art supply sets for some of our creative kids, cuddly mermaid tale blankets, and *even a unicorn onesie*. Thanks in part to your generous donation, our Holiday Toy Drive brought in over 1,400 of these specially requested gifts and gift cards for kids in our community.

While it is impossible for us to share with you the magical moment when a child received the gift you so lovingly gave, we want you to know how much your hard work and generosity means. I invite you to enjoy video (<http://bit.ly/casatoy17vid>) and photos (<http://bit.ly/casatoy17>) from the toy drive to see the impact of your gift!

What you gave children this holiday season is so much more than just a toy or gift card. With your donation, you gave children a sense of normalcy during a turbulent time and the knowledge that there are people out there who care about them and are looking out for them. We hope you will join us for the 2018 CASA Holiday Toy Drive and we will be in touch in early September.

Thank you again for taking part in our 2017 Holiday Toy Drive. You've brought so much joy to so many children in need this holiday season!

Sincerely,



Laura D. Wolf
Executive Director

P.S. Please retain this letter as it serves as your receipt for IRS purposes. CASA of Travis County is a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization as designated by IRS, EIN # 74-2369123. CASA certifies that we did not provide any goods or services in exchange for your donation.



CASA of Travis County: A Powerful Voice in a Child's Life

2017 Board of Directors: President - David Rubiny, Kristina Baehr, Shawn Bell, John Berkowitz, Everett Carmody, Mike Clifford, Meghan Elwell, S. Alex King, Lee Potts, Leo Ramirez, Benjamin Rubenstein, Justin Siegel, Donna Stockton Hicks, Ashley Wright, Marie Wright, Paul Zito. Executive Director - Laura D. Wolf

TREASURER'S REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 1/31/18



Beginning Bank Balance	12/31/2017	\$4,172.31
<i>Funds Received:</i>		
1/30/2018	ACH Square - Feb Luncheon	\$61.54
1/22/2018	Pmt for Dec Luncheon - ERS	\$108.00
1/22/2018	ACH - Quarterly Membership Fees from AGA National	\$15.00
1/12/2018	Deposit of 2 checks from December Fundraiser	\$50.00
1/12/2018	ACH Square - Jan Luncheon	\$51.84
1/11/2018	ACH Square - Jan Luncheon	\$228.55
1/10/2018	ACH Square - Jan Luncheon	\$51.84
1/1/2018	Dividend through 12/31/2017	\$0.38
Total Funds Received		\$567.15
Funds Available		\$4,739.46
<i>Funds Expended:</i>		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Check No./Credit Card.</i>	
1/12/2018	Debit Card Pmt for Jan Luncheon - Pappadeaux	\$383.04
Total Funds Expended		\$383.04
Ending Bank Balance	1/31/2018	\$4,356.42
Check Register Reconciliation:		
Ending Bank Balance	1/31/2018	\$4,356.42
<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	1/31/2018	\$4,356.42
Total Chapter Funds Available Per Check Register	1/31/2018	\$4,356.42
<i>Cash On Hand:</i>		
	CU Min Savings Balance	\$5.00
	Luncheon Bank	\$40.00



MEETING MINUTES

Chapter Executive Committee Meeting

January 18 2017 - 12pm



1. Roll call

Stanton Martin, Khiry Burke, Bhakti Patel, Kieran Coe, Tosha Goard, Angela Bourianoff, Shayla Prince, Sharita Jefferson, Priscilla Suggs, Lorna Schwimmer-Staggs

2. Welcome New Committee Member: Tosha – DPS

Kieran welcomed Tosha and thanked her for joining the committee. Tosha will be heading up the effort to recruit university students into AGA and promote awareness of governmental accounting within university programs.

3. Monthly Luncheons

a. Debrief of January Luncheon

Kieran apologized for missing the luncheon. According to Priscilla there was a good turn-out and lots of questions. 16 people plus the speaker. Tosha did not receive an email and wasn't sure if we were having a luncheon due to the holidays. Concerns that emails aren't going out promptly. Eddie maintains a list for emails—Khiry will get a copy of that list to check and make sure it is up to date. Priscilla is sending the thank you email to the speaker along with a voucher.

b. Remaining speakers

i. February –

Sylvia Kauffman – IG – Should probably anticipate higher attendance for this luncheon.

4. Status of monthly newsletter –

a. February's Newsletter

5. Historian Report –

Sharita submitted the Historian Report a few months ago and asked for it to be reviewed and then submitted to nationals. It hasn't been submitted. Kieran will submit it.

6. Annual budget (Eddie/ Patti)

7. Networking Event

77 Degrees will be the location for the networking event. Khiry will check to see if they can get food from the restaurant downstairs or if we will need to cater food for the event.

8. Recruitment

- a. Members –Active Membership?
- b. Vacant Committee positions
 - i. Tosha

9. University Initiative – Project Infinity

- a. Update
 - Priscilla – University of Texas
 - Eddie – Austin Community College
 - Kieran – Huston-Tillotson University

10. Social Media

Ideas for utilizing social media for AGA:

- Invites for Luncheons
- Interesting Topics
- Newsletter Info

11. Committee Reports

- a. Treasurer (Lorna) No feedback on menu changes
- b. Secretary (Stanton) Nothing to report
- c. Communications Committee Delay on newsletter – Bhakti will send it out for review this weekend
- d. Membership (Khiry)
- e. Professional Certifications Committee (Patti)
- f. Education/Programs Committee (John) Ben is no longer on the board. John hasn't been on for the last few meetings.
- g. Community Service Committee (Priscilla) Thanks to everyone who contributed for the gift card drive.
- h. Webmaster (Eddie) –
- i. Research (Debi)
- j. Historian (Sharita)
- k. Early Careers – Tosha will be taking over this position from Angela.
- l. Bylaws - VACANT



COMMUNITY EVENTS



Maker Mixer 2018 hosted at the Thinkery

When: Thursday, February 15, 2018 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Where: Thinkery, 1830 Simond Avenue; Austin, TX 78723

Register for Volunteer Mixer Event at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/maker-mixer-2018-tickets-42722889312?aff=es2>

Doors open at 6pm and the faire presentation starts at 6:45. Learn about this year's Maker Faire, mix with other Makers, volunteers, and meet the staff. There will be opportunities to sign up to volunteer and how to be part of our production team, as well as information on how you can help promote the faire! There will be music by Austin Phonograph Company and entertainment. Beer, wine, and nosh will be served. Tickets are limited, so RSVP before they are gone!



Maker Faire is the Greatest Show (and Tell) on Earth—a family-friendly festival of invention, creativity and resourcefulness, and a celebration of the Maker movement. Part science fair, part county fair, and part something entirely new, Maker Faire is an all-ages gathering of tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, and commercial exhibitors. All of these “makers” come to Maker Faire to show what they have made and to share what they have learned.



Austin Marathon Water Station Volunteer 2018 hosted by Austin Habitat for Humanity

When: Sun Feb 18, 2018, 05:30 AM - 09:00 AM

Where: 500 W. Ben White Blvd; Austin, TX78704

Sign-up: <https://austinhabitat.volunteerhub.com/event/index/5749269>

Join the Austin Marathon volunteer team! This is a family-friendly volunteer opportunity where youth volunteers (8 years old & up) welcome to join. Your volunteer time benefits the Austin Marathon runners, walkers, guests and staff and just as importantly, volunteers provide the energy and enthusiasm to help encourage our runners to the finish line! Breakfast and T-shirt provided!

Creek Restoration at East Bouldin Creek in Austin! Hosted by the Colorado River Alliance

When: Sat Mar 03, 2018, 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Where: Gillis Park, 2504 Durwood St.; Austin, TX78704

Sign-up: Just show up!



Join the Colorado River Alliance in restoring part of E. Bouldin Creek! With the help of dedicated volunteers such as yourself we will be removing invasive plant species from the creek area within Gillis Park in Austin. We need 15 volunteers to complete this volunteer project. Ages 16 and up can participate; we're working with sharp tools. We will provide an educational overview of notable biological and ecological features of this important urban creek.

This is an outdoor event, you will want to wear comfortable shoes as well as long pants and long sleeves that you do not mind getting dirty. A water bottle is also highly suggested.



Art in the Park 2018 hosted by VSA Texas

When: Thu Mar 22, 2018, 09:00 AM - 02:00 PM

Where: Fiesta Gardens, 2101 Jesse E Segovia St.; Austin, TX78702

Sign-up: Please call Lynn Johnson at 512-454-9912 or email lynn@vsatx.org

This grassroots festival has been around for over 25 years and truly captures the spirit of Austin with its combination the arts, the outdoors and access for the entire community. Hosted by VSA

Texas and the McBeth Recreation Center, "Art in the Park" will include outdoor art booths, live music and performances on an outdoor stage. Over 1000 children and young adults with and without disabilities attend this festival each year.

Volunteer Opportunities include: assist participants, run a hands on booth set up/take down, perform, registration table and more.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Why Investing in Infrastructure is Always the Right Investment for Municipalities

Noah T. Ullman

When most municipalities think of infrastructure, they think of physical infrastructure like roads, buildings and utilities. In most cases, this is a good investment for the benefit and quality of life of your citizens. Investment in digital infrastructure offers similar quality of life benefits, and is usually far less expensive than capital improvements.

Let's discuss some examples and case studies. Many municipalities struggle with tight budgets, aging workforces and limited access to data. Important documents are stored on paper and in files, requiring assistance from the staff for citizen access. When work is needed, a citizen needs to call or email the Town Hall to reach the right person to file a notice or report. That person then needs to intervene and take the requested action. If the municipality could bypass the need for staff intervention and serve its citizens directly through digital services, the citizen would be happier (faster resolution) and the staff would be freed up for other activities.

It sounds good in theory, but how does this work in practice? Let's look at just two examples.

The first example is the country of Estonia. Estonia is a small country (pop. 1.35M) in northern Europe. When the Soviet Union fell, the new government of Estonia invested in a digital infrastructure. This is a timeline (from Estonia's website) of what they have been able to achieve in two decades:

- 1997 – e-Governance
- 2000 – e-Tax
- 2001 – X-Road and Digital ID
- 2005 – i-Voting
- 2007 – Public Safety
- 2008 – Block chain and e-Health
- 2014 – e-Residency

The result? Estonia has one of the world's most productive societies, and a very high quality of life index.

Closer to home we can look at the city of Cary, North Carolina (pop. 135,234), which was recently featured in the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the country's most advanced digital cities. Cary is booming, partly due to a very high quality of life, low crime, good schools and excellent services – all powered by a digital infrastructure. A brief look at their website will show you how they integrated digital technologies into all of their services.

What Cary and Estonia have in common is they look at technology differently than most governments. Here are some quotes from digital city leaders:

“The value of IT doesn’t lie in racking servers...the value of IT lies in using solutions to create efficiency and continuity [so] my staff can focus on end users and align technology with their needs to produce better outcomes.”

“The biggest lever we have to compete as a city is technology.”

“We’re trying to do more with less all the time, and we have to do more than just keep the lights on...we can be more efficient, provide better resources both internally and externally, and make decisions better, faster, and more accurately.”

What does this mean for struggling communities here at home? In the “Land of Steady Habits” amid very tight budgets, we need to do more with less. Such as:

1. Begin with automating simple workflows – common tasks that consume time and often require repetitive behavior from staff. This frees up the staff to focus on more important things.
2. Move to the cloud – maintaining on premise infrastructure is time-consuming and expensive. Build a modern digital society on a professional cloud platform from a professional provider, like Microsoft.
3. Outsource to service professionals that do this type of work every day, and have internal staff focus on the needs of the citizens.

The return on investment for these actions is fast. There is some additional capital investment needed for the changes, but the impact on the operating budget is almost immediate. Municipal staff—and citizens—will be happier and more productive, bringing increased investment and tax revenue to your community.



AGA AUSTIN CHAPTER JANUARY LUNCHEON





FUN FACTS

Every February 14, across the United States and in other places around the world, candy, flowers and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint, and where did these traditions come from? Find out about the history of this centuries-old holiday, from ancient Roman rituals to the customs of Victorian England.

THE LEGEND OF ST. VALENTINE

The history of Valentine's Day—and the story of its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

