

The Washington Connection

ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS
WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER

JUNE 2005 ISSUE

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 **AGA**
WASHINGTON DC, CHAPTER



The Washington Connection will be back in September 2005

Thank you for your membership and have a wonderful summer!

President's Message

by Karen Alderman, President



Ms. Karen Alderman, President

Dear Chapter Members,

As my term as Chapter President comes to a close I look back with gratitude for the opportunity to serve and many smiles for the people that served with me. I thank all the DC AGA Board members and Chapter volunteers. These are a diverse group from Federal agencies and private sector companies who contribute time, energy, and talent to improve the profession. Together, our Chapter made significant progress in providing quality professional development programs, reaching out to the next generation through a

dynamic early careers program, and giving back to the community through community service.

The AGA DC Chapter Board of Directors deserves special thanks. To Treasury's Bob Reid, thank you for your service as Past President whose efforts put the Chapter on sound financial footing enabling us to expand our services to our members this year. To Department of Commerce's Lisa Casias, thank you for serving as President-elect this year and for taking up the mantle as President in 2005-06. Your commitment of precious time and talent will benefit us all. Thank you to Treasury's Ann Davis for serving as Treasurer (with the able assistance of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Marianne Condon) who accomplished all the due diligence with efficiency, effectiveness, and grace. Your financial reporting efforts are "green" in my book. To the U.S. Coast Guard's Dan Christovich, our Chapter Secretary, thanks for all the record keeping, meeting organizing, the communications infrastructure, and the general good will that you brought to every task.

Thank you directors and chairs. What a great job this year. Membership Chair Marguerite Nealon of Treasury's Financial Management Service stewarded growth of 150 new members—about 13 percent. Programs Chair Scott Bell of the Department of Health and Human Services (and incoming President Elect) put together a first-rate monthly luncheon series that featured many of the foremost "movers and shakers" behind "Federal Financial Management in Transition". Thank you to Mark Higgins, now of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, who stepped in as Meeting Director to make sure the table was set, the meals were delicious, and the audio visual equipment worked. Treasury's Wanda Carrington served as Assistant Meeting Chair helping in too many ways to innumerate. Wanda was the "greeter" at the door at most of our events and we could not have asked for a more gracious ambassador. Finally, thank you to Treasury's Judy Ochs for orchestrating our Chapter awards nominations and dinner this year. The outcome was a lovely affair that recognized outstanding members of our community.

Thank you to LMI's Susan Johnson, our Education Director, and Mike Allen, her assistant and next year's Education Director, for their leadership developing a high quality conference in May (co-sponsored with the Greater Washington Society of CPAs), as well as making it possible for our Chapter members to take advantage

of two AGA audio conferences underwritten by the Chapter. Your efforts brought our community high quality, low cost CPEs, and we made some money that will help support future programs.

We engaged the next generation of financial management professionals, thanks to Grant Thornton's Ken Bresnahan, Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Coordinator, and Laura Glass, Director of Early Careers, who orchestrated groundbreaking programs to reach out to younger members of our community and get them hooked on AGA. Three "brown bag" lunches shared insights of senior leaders into how to achieve career success. An outstanding CGFM training program taught by Virginia Robinson helped prepared 40 early career members for CGFM certification. These efforts, underwritten by the Chapter, represent our investment in the future of our profession.

Thank you to Department of Agriculture's Tonya Allen-Shaw and the MIL Corporation's Lloyd Farmer, for spearheading outstanding community service efforts this year. You helped us to help others with "gusto."

On communications and outreach, kudos go to Bearingpoint's Harris Gofstein, Webmaster, and Bill Black, Assistant Webmaster, for keeping us all connected. Thank you to Karen Shaffer of LMI and Kathy Ivey, Graphic Designer, for keeping the [Washington Connection](#) a high quality source of information for our members and to Altum and Clifton Gunderson for sponsoring the newsletter. Thank you to CGI-AMS's Simcha Kuritzky, Publications Director, for contributing so many high quality articles. Thank you to KPMG's John Cherbini for orchestrating our Corporate Sponsors program. And thank you to our corporate sponsors—Kearney & Company, Savantage, IBM, Grant Thornton, and PriceWaterhouseCoopers for their generous financial contribution to our Chapter.

Thank you to Treasury's Karl Boettcher, Membership Services Chair (or as I like to call him, "Director In Charge Of Fun") for all his support, good will, and efforts on behalf of the Chapter. Finally, I would like to thank Department of Labor's Pat Clark Duncan for her service as Chapter Administrator. Pat captures all the points our Chapter earns through our activities and reports them to AGA National. She does her job well. I am proud to announce that in 2004-05, AGA DC earned 32,400 points (which may go up with additional membership points). We hold AGA's "platinum" rating (the best). This accomplishment reflects the strength of our Board and our members. Congratulations!

I pass the gavel to Lisa Casias and look forward to her leadership as President in the 2005-06 year. I know that you will all give her your heart felt support. My best to you all.

Sincerely,

Karen Cleary Alderman
Chapter President

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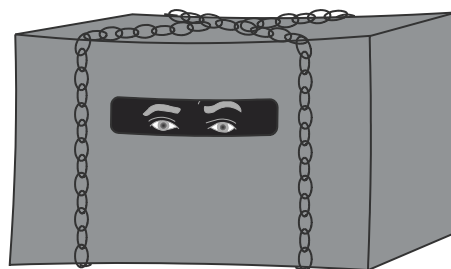
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Inside the Black Box

by Simcha Kuritzky, CGFM CPA



When Zero Doesn't Mean Nothing

Yes, that's a double negative, and no, it's not there for emphasis, but rather to be taken literally. We often assume that if an account has a zero balance then there is nothing in the account. Sometimes that assumption is wrong.

There is a new emphasis in agencies today on cleaning up old data, either for conversion to a new system or to better manage the current one. Funds which do not close, such as deposit and no-year funds, can have balances from long ago—even before agencies had implemented the Standard General Ledger or current posting logic.

Reconciling an account with a decade or more of data in it can be quite daunting. Accountants, in the interest of efficiency, look for ways to cut down on the data that needs to be analyzed. If the balance of an account was ever zero, one can safely assume that all the entries were cleared out, and the balance only comes from transactions that occurred since that point, right?

Unfortunately, this may not be correct. Take, as an example, a deposit fund used to hold stray deposits and IPAC disbursements until they can be properly assigned. If one looks at the remaining transactions and uncovers one or more deposit or disbursement transactions that were backed out, but no evidence they were ever put in, then the zero balance does not mean the account had been cleared out. Look at the entry which brought the balance to zero; if it was a journal voucher or some miscellaneous posting, then it is masking all the open transactions that are still sitting in the account. It will be necessary to include older transactions in the reconciliation.

If it is easy to get a listing of all journal vouchers that posted to the account, those balances can be compared to the account balance to see if the remaining balance (which presumably is composed solely of collections and deposits) ever was zero. If so, analysis can begin from that point in time.

While Treasury does not require that deposit and no-year funds be subdivided, it has been my experience that splitting out such funds by budget year makes them easier to reconcile. Any transactions that are modified or cancelled come out of the original budget year, while all new documents go into the current budget year. Sometimes a balance in one budget year offsets a different year (which reduces the usefulness of this tactic), but more often balances in old budget years are reduced to zero and so can be excluded from the reconciliation process.

Comments, suggestions, and critiques are welcome. Send them to Simcha.Kuritzky@cgi-ams.com, and not to the AGA.





June 4, Baseball Game



Take us out to the ballgame! We're sponsoring a Potomac Nationals baseball game. Formerly known as the Potomac Cannons, the renamed Potomac Nationals are a Carolina league affiliate of the new Washington Nationals. This minor league

game will be played against the Myrtle Beach Pelicans on Saturday, June 4 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets for the Grand Stand are \$7, tickets for children ages 6-12 are \$6, and children under age 6 are admitted free. There is plenty of free parking. We will meet at approximately 6:45 p.m. past the ticket booth by the food court tables. There will be fireworks at the conclusion of the game (approximately 9:00 - 9:30 p.m.).

Directions to the G. Richard Pfitzner Stadium: Take I-95 south past Woodbridge to Exit 158B, Prince William Parkway, toward Manassas. Continue on the Parkway for about 5 miles; turn right into the County Complex Court.

If you are interested in attending the baseball game, please contact karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov (202.874.6131).

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June 15, Golf Tournament

In partnership with the Association of Military Comptrollers (ASMC), we are sponsoring a golf tournament at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The tournament will be at the Gunston Course on Wednesday, June 15. Format for the 18 holes will be Captain's Choice with a shotgun tee time start at 8:00 a.m. Entry fee is \$50 per person for government employees and \$75 per person for non-government employees. The fee includes a picnic style lunch, golf cart, green fee, and prizes. Foursomes are created as needed. If you have a group of two, three, or four, please ensure that all pay with the same registration. Early arrival is suggested to clear base security and to warm-up on the driving range.

To register, please contact (ASMC/PS) Brian Boshart 703.813.1900, brian.boshart@ps.net. Make checks payable to ASMC and send to ASMC Washington Chapter, P.O. Box 70776, Washington D.C. 20593, attn: Brian Boshart. If you would like more information about the golf tournament, you can also contact AGA DC Chapter representative Karl Boettcher at karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov or 202.874.6131.

<http://www.belvoirgolf.com>



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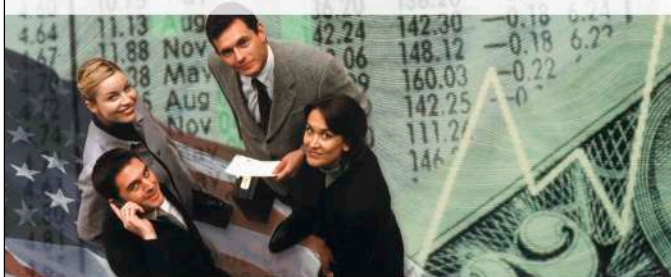
AGA DC Chapter Sponsors Financial Management Conference

The AGA DC Chapter held its 4th annual conference, "Financial Management in Transition," on May 3 and 4 at the George Washington University, jointly sponsored by AGA DC and the Greater Washington Society of CPA's. Twelve sessions highlighted emerging financial management trends and updates, including the latest news on Federal Financial Management Improvement Act (FFMIA) Systems Compliance, Internal Controls, Real Property Management, and other important topics. Kay Daly and Steve Lowrey from the U.S. Government Accountability Office discussed FFMIA Systems Compliance, stressing that the implementation of a Joint Financial Management Improvement Program-certified system does not guarantee compliance. In addition to a certified financial system, key factors for achieving FFMIA compliance include managing data conversion, proper system configuration, and disciplined processes around requirements management, system testing, project planning, and oversight.

David Zavada, Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Elliot Lewis, Department of Labor; and Jim Taylor, Department of Commerce, addressed management's responsibility for internal control reporting in the context of OMB's revised Circular A-123, "Management's Accountability and Control," which includes quarterly monitoring of internal controls. Stanley Kaczmarczyk, General Services Administration, and Lora Muchmore, Department of Defense, focused on Real Property as it relates to the President's Management Agenda, implementation of the Real Property Council, and the establishment of a Senior Real Property Officer (SRPO) in each agency.

The presentation materials from these sessions, and others, can be found on-line at http://www.agadc.org/presentations_01.php. Please join us for next year's spring conference on Financial Management!

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Professional Development Conference 2005

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Join us in sunny Orlando for the government financial management education event of the year! AGA invites you to attend its 54th Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition, to be held **July 10 – 13, 2005**, at the Orlando World Center Marriott in **Orlando, FL**.

With the theme “**Leadership > Preparing Tomorrow's Accountability Professionals**” the PDC will bring together more than 1,800 professionals from federal, state and local government, as well as private sector leaders, to discuss critical government financial management issues.

Education sessions will provide technical training, useful information on emerging trends, tools to help you become more effective and lessons from the best in the business.

In addition to an outstanding technical program, we have arranged a number of social events to ensure an exceptional conference experience. You can register online or print the registration form to register by fax or mail. Advance registration discounts apply to all forms received before **June 10, 2005**.

Register at <https://members.agacgfm.org/source/security/memberlogon.cfm?origin=meetings> or go to www.agacgfm.org and follow the prompts for more information and to register.

Earn up to **25 CPE** – NASBA Certified – Accounting & Auditing, Consulting, Ethics, Management, Personal Development, Specialized Knowledge & Applications, Taxation.

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Take the CGFM Examinations at the PDC

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New this year - AGA is offering a unique opportunity to take the CGFM Examinations and earn your CGFM right at the PDC in July. To help you reach that goal, we are offering a special two-day Intensive Review Course on **Thursday, July 7** and **Friday, July 8** and an opportunity to take CGFM Examinations on **July 9 - 10**.

More good news: the Intensive Review Course is only \$175 for qualified participants and the CGFM Examinations are offered at no cost. You cannot afford to miss this opportunity!

Pre-registration is required. This is a special limited enrollment offer for those individuals who have already been studying for the CGFM Exams and need extra reinforcement of the material. Participants must attend the Intensive Review Course to take the CGFM Exams at no cost. Participants must have satisfied the education and experience requirements for the CGFM prior to registering for this event.

For more information please contact Katya Silver at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 305, or ksilver@agacgfm.org.

Email Reminders?

Would you like to receive email reminders of our monthly meetings and conferences? If so, please go to <http://www.agadc.org> to sign up for our mailing list in the Member Services section of the website.

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16th Annual ACFE Fraud Conference & Exhibition July 10-15

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From the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners
www.fraudconference.com

Great educational opportunity locally! Speakers include: James B. Comey, Chair, Corporate Fraud Task Force, US Deputy Attorney General; Brian Lamkin, Chief of the Financial Crime Section, FBI; Tim Noonan, Former President, Rite Aid Corporation.

Held at Hilton Washington. See last month's Newsletter for more information or visit www.FraudConference.com.

Excellence in Government 2005 July 25-27

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From Government Executive magazine

Government Executive magazine invites you to attend Excellence in Government 2005, the premier conference for key executives and managers who run the federal government. The conference will be held **July 25-27, 2005**, at the Washington Hilton, Connecticut Avenue, ¼ mile from the Dupont Circle Metro station.

For details, see last month's newsletter or visit the Web site at http://amemedia.com/lrd2_AAJCYQAAqvKB

Richmond & Roanoke AGA Chapters' 8th Annual Blue Ridge Professional Development Conference July 28-29

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See www.agarichmond.org for more information

The Premier Conference for Human Service Finance and Audit Professionals. Make Plans to Attend the "8th Annual Blue Ridge PDC" at the Doubletree Hotel-Charlottesville for 12 CPE hours.

Keynote speakers include Ed Mazur, GASB; Woody Jackson; and Virginia's Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Jane Woods. The multi-track conference will focus on human service finance and audit issues. Ethics for CPAs (annual requirement in Virginia) will also be offered.

Registration fees range from \$110-\$160. Conference hotel rates are \$60 per night. Early registration discounts are offered prior to **June 14**.

Contact Nauri Ahmed for further information at 804-371-4613, or at nauri.ahmed@co.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov.

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- **CPA, CGFM, MBA or CISA a plus**
- **Top secret clearance a plus**
- **Due to Defense and Federal Government client requirements, US Citizenship is required**

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Treasury/FMS

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Contract Specialist, GS-1102-11, 12, 13 (Multiple Positions). Vacancy Announcement No. M-05-022, Department of the Treasury/Financial Management Service, Location: Washington, DC. Closing Date: August 12, 2005.

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)

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Financial Auditors/Standards Experts

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) seeks experienced financial auditors and standards experts to manage significant segments of GAO's annual audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements of the U.S. Government and GAO's standards-related efforts. To apply, visit www.gao.gov, register in GAO Careers and submit your online application.

General Services Administration Office of Inspector General

The General Services Administration, Office of Inspector General (OIG) is looking for motivated candidates to join the Office of Audits as an Audit Manager/Team leader at the GS 14 level (\$88,369 - \$114,882) in its Finance and Administrative Audit Office located at 18th and F Streets, NW in Washington DC.

The incumbent's primary responsibility will be to provide oversight over the Agency's annual financial statement audit and financial-related reviews, including the formulation of audit plans and objectives, performance goals, and priorities. For more information on duties and responsibilities or to apply for this position, please visit www.usajobs.opm.gov.

In addition to existing Federal benefits, the OIG provides flexible work schedules, transit commuter supplements, and exercise opportunities. If you have any questions, please contact the OIG Human Resources Office at 202.501.0360, or the Finance and Administrative Audit Office at 202.501.0006.



Getting to Green: Summary of May 12 Monthly Chapter Meeting

By Simcha Kuritzky

The AGA DC Chapter's final luncheon meeting for the 2004-2005 season featured guest speakers Danny Werfel, Chief, Financial Integrity and Analysis Branch, Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Office of Federal Financial Management; and Susan Grant, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Director, Office of Management, Budget and Evaluation for the Department of Energy (DOE). Mr. Werfel and Ms. Grant discussed efforts and initiatives driving Federal agencies to enhance the practical use of financial information to support program and management decisions, and "get to green" under the President's Management Agenda (PMA).

Mr. Werfel is responsible for coordinating OMB's efforts to initiate government-wide financial management improvements in the following areas -- improper payments, asset management, and debt collection. He plays a leadership role in coordinating OMB review of agency efforts under the Improved Financial Performance initiative of the PMA.

The real value of accelerated and interim financial reporting and unqualified audit opinions is to make quality financial information available to Federal managers to support timely and informed decisions at both the program and agency levels. This PMA initiative of using financial information to support "day-to-day" management seeks to elevate the role of financial information from "compliance" to "practical" use. Mr. Werfel provided OMB's insight into this initiative and the criteria by which agencies are assessed for the PMA Executive Scorecard. Ensuring managers are using financial data to make more timely and informed decisions on operations and costs at both the program and agency-wide level. Yellow provides the foundation:

- unqualified audit opinion, meeting reporting deadlines,
- complying with FFMIA, Anti-Deficiency Act and other laws and regulations, and
- no material internal controls weaknesses.

Green requires decisions based on financial information. To get there, agencies should:

- identify best in class examples,
- describe the business questions that managers are looking to answer,
- discuss how data is captured and presented to managers, illustrate how managers are using the data to drive results, and
- plan to continuously expand scope of routine data use.

Agencies should ask:

- are there management areas with known risks or deficiencies,
- what business questions do managers need answered,
- is data currently available, and
- what are the desired results?

In the business areas, agencies should focus on program efficiency, financial integrity, error reduction, contract management, procurement decisions, asset management, strengthen internal controls, travel and credit card management, grants management, and debt collection.

In summary, there are three basic pieces to get to green: (1) identify objective to be achieved, (2) determine how can data be used strategically to achieve objective outcome, (3) track results over time. The framework to approaching data integration is to: identify business questions, data needs, report format, and routine use.

Starting in FY 2006, OMB will require agencies to identify surplus properties for disposal.

At OMB, 70 percent of personnel are budget examiners (Resource Management Officers); only 30 percent are on the program management side.

Ms. Grant was sworn in as CFO and Director on December 14, 2004. She has overall responsibility for assuring the effective management and financial integrity of the DOE programs, activities, and resources by developing and implementing Department-wide policies and systems in the areas of budget administration, program analysis and evaluation, financial and accounting policy, acquisition management, human resources management, and administrative services. As the CFO, Ms. Grant has financial management responsibility for DOE's \$24 billion budget and the integration of appropriate program and financial controls for effective stewardship.

Ms. Grant discussed DOE's recent efforts to get to green through the integration of financial information into its program and operational management landscape. Financial data is the customer's (program manager's) data and not the accountant's data. The CFO must be customer- and metrics- focused. Behavior follows metrics, she noted, and you get what you measure, so you'd better measure the right thing. Link business decisions to agency's strategic plan. Inputs required include mission requirements, infrastructure needs, budget estimates, FTEs, accurate cost data, and performance metrics. Feed initiatives in PMA+, which results in defensible budgets, long-range plans, modern workforce, performance rewards, optimized infrastructure, enterprise business solutions, and best in class processes. The outcomes provide effective program management, increase operating efficiency, improve decision-making, and enhance accountability.

continued on page 14

Getting to Green: Summary of May 12 Monthly Chapter Meeting

continued from page 13

DOE has a financial management business plan, and started a top-to-bottom business process review using I-MANAGE STARS/data warehouse. Use of this warehouse will lead to decisions based on integrated data. DOE created a performance management framework and started a Business Process Integration business plan that will lead the Department to institutionalize a Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Evaluation system process. For example, DOE is looking at increasing the oil in Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and is look at cost information to drive decisions. DOE needs to show utility of this analysis.

DOE got to green by identifying how major programs already use financial information, presenting program illustrations to OMB, and developing an outline of a Data Integration Improvement Plan. DOE "lives the green" through an expanded plan with milestones that indicate progress, corporate process roadmap, system integration, institutionalizing best business practices, driving operational decision-making with financial performance data, and delivering integrated results. I-MANAGE integrates accounting, human resources, travel, budget, payroll, facilities, etc., feeds into a data warehouse, which feeds program targets and produces reports. DOE wants to push information to managers with standard suite of reports at different levels of detail for different management levels. She noted that 80 percent of DOE's spending is from major contractors, and DOE wants to get a weekly feed of estimates.

AGA DC Chapter, Executive Board Minutes - May 10, 2005

The DC Chapter Executive Board met on May 10. Eight Board members participated.

President Karen Alderman announced:

- Jorge Asef-Sargent will take over as luncheon chair from Mark Higgins (contact information: jasef-sargent@kpmg.com, cell: 703/400-8267, fax: 202/533-8525).
- The final Board meeting for the 2004-2005 program year will be in June.
- The Chapter's fund balance as of February 28, 2005, was approximately \$159,000.

Susan Johnson and Mike Allen reported on the Spring Conference:

- There were 81 attendees; Susan hopes to have more next year (may use a new venue).
- Slides from the conference are posted on the Chapter's website.
- The Chapter has not completed the reconciliation with GWSCPA, but they expect that the event will be profitable.

Marguerite Nealon noted:

- The AGA exhibitor table at the May 9 A-123 Expo featured AGA DC newsletters and "freebies" such as visors and candy labeled "Join AGA DC/www.agadc.org."
- She has been contacting recent Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) trainees, new members, and others encouraging them to recruit new AGA DC members.
- She will soon receive the latest AGA DC membership numbers and will share data with the Board.

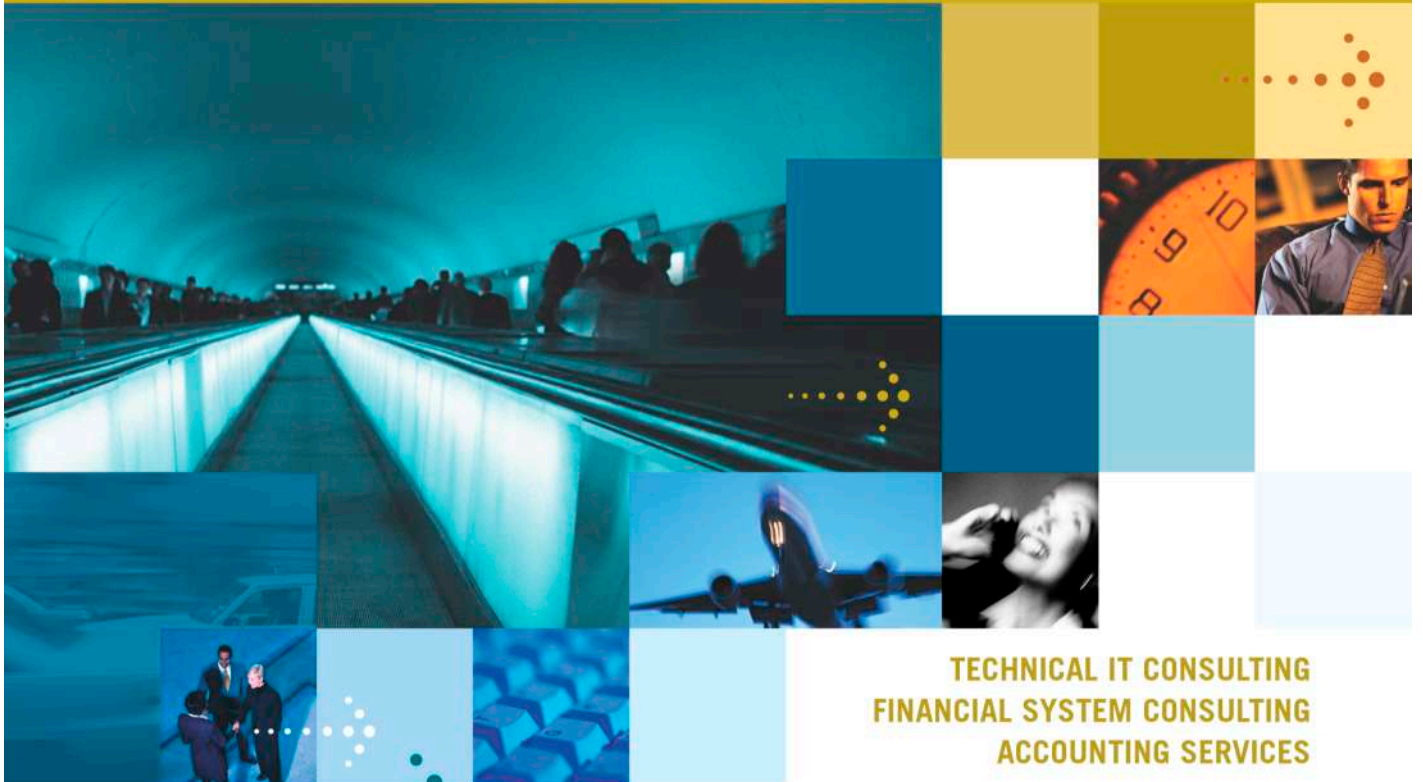
Lisa Casias discussed Chapter Leadership Transition:

- John Lynskey of the National Science Foundation will be the incoming Treasurer. Marianne Condon is willing to continue as Assistant Treasurer.
- Wendy Comes of FASAB recommended a potential newsletter editor who works at FASAB; that person has yet to confirm.
- Scott Bell will continue to head up Programs/Speakers. Scott will serve as President-Elect next year. Karen Alderman will confer with Scott on President-Elect duties. Bob Reid asked Karen to handle such duties as overseeing the survey and writing articles.
- Pat Wensel has agreed to handle awards next year.
- Lisa mentioned the need to review the by-laws to avoid the risk of losing the Chapter's not-for-profit status. Karen Alderman also recommended reviewing the by-laws regarding eligibility rules for those who assume the Presidency. To her knowledge, the DC Chapter is the only one that restricts the Presidency to Federal employees.
- Lisa needs a few more Board position descriptions.

Other Items of Interest

- Professional Development Conference (PDC) 2005 in Orlando—Karen Alderman sent a message to AGA National regarding a Service Raffle at the PDC. Karen suggested that the Chapter make a donation to underwrite memberships, attendance at luncheons, and some educational programs. The raffle could be promoted as "Gift Certificates from DC."
- 2004-2005 Program Year History—Pat Clark Duncan is writing a history of the past year for the DC Chapter.

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ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS, WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER

Officers

President, Karen Alderman

4101 Round Hill Rd.
Arlington, VA 22207
phone: 703.533.9214
kcalderman@4aks.org

Past President, Robert Reid

Treasury
phone: 202.622.1802
fax: 202.622.0550
robert.reid@do.treas.gov

President Elect, Lisa Casias

DOC
phone: 202.482.1207
LCasias1@doc.gov

Secretary, Dan Christovich

Coast Guard
phone: 202.267.1257
dchristovich@comdt.uscg.mil

Treasurer, Ann Davis

Treasury
phone: 202-622-1028
ann.davis@do.treas.gov

Assistant Treasurer, Marianne Condon

VA
phone: 202.273.9445
marianne.condon@mail.va.gov

Directors/Chairs

Administration, Chair, Pat Clark Duncan

Labor
phone: 202.693.6808
clark.patricia@dol.gov

Director of Programs, Scott Bell

HSS
phone: 202.205.2099
Scott.Bell@hhs.gov

Programs Assistant, Phyllis Hunter

LMI
phone: 703.917.7490
phunter@lmi.org

Directors/Chairs

Director, Awards, Judy Ochs

Treasury
phone: 202.622.2136
judy.ochs@do.treas.gov

CGFM Coordinator, Ken Bresnahan

Grant Thornton
phone: 703.637.3034
ken.bresnahan@gt.com

Director, Community Service, Tonya Allen - Shaw

USDA
phone: 202.720.5026
tallen-shaw@cfo.usda.gov

Community Service Assistant, Lloyd Farmer

MIL Corporation
phone: 301.809.1326
lfarmer@milcorp.com

Corporate Sponsors, John Cherbini

KPMG
phone: 202.533.4339
jcherbini@kpmg.com

Director, Early Careers, Laura Glass

MetaFormers
phone: 703.919.9181
lglass@metaformers.com

Director, Education, Susan Johnson

LMI
phone: 703-917-7082
ssjohnson@lmi.org

Education Assistant, Mike Allen

LMI
phone: 571.633.7804
mallen@lmi.org

Meetings, Chair, Mark Higgins

GSA
phone: 202.219.0526
mark.higgins@gsa.gov

Meetings Assistant, Wanda Carrington

Treasury
phone: 202.622.0550
wanda.carrington@do.treas.gov

Directors/Chairs

Membership Services, Karl Boettcher

Treasury, FMS
phone: 202.874.6131
karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov

Director, Membership, Marguerite Nealon

Treasury, FMS
phone: 202.874.5709
marguerite.nealon@fms.treas.gov

Agency Liaison, Marguerite Nealon

Treasury, FMS
phone: 202.874.5709
marguerite.nealon@fms.treas.gov

Newsletter Editor, Karen M. Shaffer

LMI
phone: 703.917.7174
kshaffer@lmi.org

Newsletter Assistant, Don Geiger

IRS
phone: 202.435.5374
don.geiger@irs.gov

Production Assistant, Ken Fang

Altum, Inc.
phone: 703.787.0060
ken.fang@altum.com

Production Assistant, Steve Pinchotti

Altum, Inc.
phone: 703.787.0060
steve.pinchotti@altum.com

Publications, Simcha Kuritzky

AMS
phone: 301.492.5418
simcha.kuritzky@ams.com

Webmaster, Harris Gofstein

Bearingpoint
phone: 202.228.0689
harris.gofstein@bearingpoint.com

Webmaster Assistant, William S. Black

Bearingpoint
phone: 202.224.4842
william.black@bearingpoint.com

Regional Vice President, Diane Dudley

KPMG LLP
phone: 202.533.3002
ddudley@kpmg.com



Washington Chapter
P.O. Box 423
Washington, DC 20044-0423
(703) 758-4080
www.AGADC.org


AGA
 WASHINGTON DC, CHAPTER