

## NEXT MEETING

**January 20, 2011**  
**Norfolk Hilton**

**11:30 am**

Featuring a speaker TBD

### One CPE

\$10 for members  
\$15 for non members

Payment of cash, check or credit card  
accepted in person.

**All attendees must RSVP to**  
Melissa Saunders at  
[melissa.a.saunders@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.a.saunders@gmail.com)  
by January 11th

### Upcoming Chapter Meeting:

**February 2011**  
**Chesapeake**

*Happy Holidays  
from the  
VA Peninsula  
Chapter!*

## Chapter President's Message

*I hope everyone had a wonderful and relaxing Thanksgiving with family, friends and plenty of good food. It is that time of year, the holiday season. It is also time for our Fall PDC in Williamsburg, VA. The speakers are set, the atmosphere promises to be exciting, and we will be at a wonderful venue to learn, network and socialize. Therefore, complete the registration form attached or go to our website, [www.agavapen.org](http://www.agavapen.org) so you don't miss out on this conference being held on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at the Williamsburg Hospitality House. While at the conference, please visit our hospitality suite on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. for more opportunities to exchange ideas and socialize.*

*Please review the schedule of our upcoming events and activities where everyone can be an active participant. We have been actively collecting canned food items, coats and clothes and presented three boxes of food and a \$100 check to the Southeastern VA Foodbank collection at Pembroke mall, delivered 8 coats to the Coats for Kids drive and several bags of clothing to the Union Mission. We also presented a \$100 check to the Foodbank of the Virginia Peninsula at our November luncheon. Please keep up the good work. I am happy to be a part of these efforts and encourage each of you to continue, as we are still collecting these items for the less fortunate members of our community.*

*I ask each of you to see if there is an activity or area in the chapter that we can put your talents to use. There is room for everyone who wants to roll up their sleeves and volunteer. I want to also thank those members who have been dedicated to making this chapter as great as it is. We could not do it without you.*

*I hope that you continue to have a safe and happy holiday season.*

Thanks for all you do,  
Bradford W. Smith  
President  
AGA VA Peninsula Chapter



# What's Happening?

## This month:

December –

- o December 9 – 10 - Mid-Atlantic region joint fall conference with AGA Richmond Chapter in Williamsburg, VA. (POC – Brad Smith).
- o Fundraising raffle to benefit the Make-a-Wish Foundation (POC is [Helen Brooks](#))
- o December 11 – Emerging Leaders at Jillian's (POC is [Allison Shoemaker](#))

## Leadership the Focus of November Meeting

The more than two dozen people who turned out for our November chapter meeting were treated to a tag team presentation involving two speakers. John Bolino and Jeanine McDonnell gave a dynamic presentation on leadership, pointing out the differences of being a "manager" and being a "leader." They gave us insight into the concepts they presented with their own first hand experiences from serving in the military and civil service careers.



Above, Cecelia Smith (center) welcomes November speakers Jeanine McDonnell and John Bolino.

Below, Brad Smith presents a check to Peninsula foodbank representative Donna Tighe on behalf of the chapter at the November meeting.



## Virginia Peninsula Chapter 2010-2011 Schedule of Upcoming Events

- o January 20 – Chapter lunch meeting at the Norfolk Hilton (POC is [Melissa Saunders](#))
- o January - "Coats for Kids" drive (POC is [Helen Brooks](#))
- o January TBD – ODU basketball game (POC is [Allison Shoemaker](#))
- o February - Annual Sock Drive (POC is [Helen Brooks](#))
- o February TBD – Admiral's hockey game (POC is [Allison Shoemaker](#))
- o February 17-18 AGA [National Leadership Conference](#), Ronald Reagan Building - International Trade Center, Washington, D.C.
  - o Sign up for AGA's special intensive review course and take the CGFM Examinations after the NLC. (POC is [Katya Silver](#))
- o February 17 or 24 – Chapter lunch meeting, Chesapeake (POC is [Melissa Saunders](#))
- o March TBD – Chapter's spring conference, Chesapeake conference center, (POC is [Curtis Joachim](#))
- o April 21 – Chapter lunch meeting, Hampton (POC is [Melissa Saunders](#))
- o April - March of Dimes Walk America –Chapter will help provide manpower to register walkers and count donations after the event for deposit. (POC is [Helen Brooks](#))
- o May TBD – Chapter awards night (POC is [Brad Smith](#))
- o May - Equikids Therapeutic Riding program for special children. Chapter will contribute \$250 to sponsor a hole for the fundraiser and/or help sponsor a team to participate. (POC is [Joe Rutecki](#)).
- o June - Clean the Bay Day (POCs are Latrealle Lee (GAO) and [Ellen Silvela](#)).
- o July 10-13, [AGA Professional Development Conference](#), *Celebrating Our Past, Embracing the Future*, Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, GA.
  - o Sign up for AGA's special intensive review course and take the CGFM Examinations before the PDC. (POC is [Katya Silver](#))
  - o July - Community Service Fund Raiser at the AGA PDC in Atlanta, GA The chapter will provide a gift basket as a prize for the fund raiser and a donation for the chapter challenge. (POC is [Helen Brooks](#))

### Job Opportunity: Federal Advisory Associate

MorganFranklin is currently looking for experienced professionals that possess a strong federal auditing background and desire to perform a number of tasks supporting our client in achieving audit readiness. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to deliver excellence to a variety of Federal Government clients. Work location is Norfolk, VA and must be willing to travel 25-35%

#### Job Duties

As a part of Morgan Franklin's Public Sector Practice, you will provide support and insight as well as deliver quality audit readiness and remediation support focused on surpassing expectations at our federal client that will make a difference in their ability to achieve audit readiness, increase efficiency, enhance productivity, and improve controls while advancing their critical missions.

**To submit your resume, or learn more about this opportunity, please contact Christy Jablonski at 703-564-7525 ext. 293 or [Christy.jablonski@morganfranklin.com](mailto:Christy.jablonski@morganfranklin.com)**

# Membership News

## Did you know? Tidbits from our chapter history

Our chapter has grown over the years from its founding 33 members to 148 in 1986, and now 233 in 2010! To read more about the VA Peninsula chapter's history and its colorful leaders, visit the "[Chapter History](#)" link on our chapter website.

## Did you hear?

The ODU team was selected as finalists in AGA's Fourth Annual Government Finance Case Challenge along with teams from North Carolina State University and the University of Wisconsin at Platteville. The student team is invited to Washington DC for the final portion of the case competition at AGA's National Leadership Conference, February 17-18, 2011.

## Member news

- Curtis Joachim ran the Marine Corps Marathon this month (see his story on preparation, page 8 and finish line pic at right)
- Congratulations to Clement Mikowski on his new position (see his letter below)



*In the spirit of Thanksgiving I would like to thank you and members of AGA, Peninsula Chapter, for the support you provided me during my 15 month job hunt. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, I started a position with Gateway Ventures, Incorporated. GVI is a small business administration qualified consulting firm with an office in Norfolk, VA. Our manager, Matthew Hales, is a civic minded individual with many coals in the fire and a heart for charitable deeds. My title is Manager of Finance and Contracts. GVI specializes in process management, engineering, and logistics management. I am thankful for this job and will strive to be successful in my performance.*

*Also, I would like to thank the Finance Department at Tidewater Community College for restoring my sense of professional value in this troubled economy, and the Virginia Employment Commission, One-Stop Center for its valued training and assistance. There are just too many people for me to thank at this time, such as Curtis Joachim, Mark Morehouse, Allison Shoemaker and Ellen Silvela who gave me hope and assured me that something would eventually work out.*

*I look forward to celebrating with you at the December conference in Williamsburg, VA.*

*Best Wishes,  
Clement Mikowski*



*From left to right chapter members Shanelle Donovan, Bradford Smith, Candance Mianulla, Ellen Silvela and Jaci Tate surrounded by family to help pack the food*



## Update Your Membership Profile and Qualify To Win an Amazon Kindle

AGA is kicking off its 2011 membership renewal drive by asking you to take a few minutes to log in to AGA's website and update your contact information. If you do so by Dec. 31, 2010, you will be entered into a drawing to win one of three latest generation Amazon Kindles. This popular wireless reading device includes a free 3G wireless package and six-inch display.

Updating your information will enable us to keep in contact with you and ensure that our services and events remain focused on your needs. More than ever the citizens of this great nation need transparent and understandable financial information about their governments. Your professional Association, AGA, is here to support you in this endeavor. AGA looks forward to working with you to enhance your career in financial management.

Thank you for continuing to be an important part of AGA and we appreciate your time in updating your contact information. Go to [www.agacgfm.org](http://www.agacgfm.org) and log in using your member ID. Unless you have changed your password, it is your first initial immediately followed by your last name. If you have any questions, please contact our Customer Service Center at 800.AGA.7211 or at [agamembers@agacgfm.org](mailto:agamembers@agacgfm.org).

## Chapter Members "Pack" Together

VA Peninsula chapter members and their families joined with other community members in supporting Family Volunteer Day on November 20<sup>th</sup>. We were in the gymnasium of Virginia Wesleyan College to pack nonperishable food items for many local nonprofits – primarily homeless and domestic abuse shelters. It was a great time for family and friends to help and make a difference in the community. The food items were packed and our reward was knowing we made a small difference in this effort.



## Registration is open! Plan now to attend the 15th Annual Mid-Atlantic Fall 2010 PDC



December 9-10, 2010  
The Williamsburg Hospitality House  
415 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185  
Telephone (757) 229-4020

Program: Day 1 (8:15am - 5:00pm) / Day 2 (8:15am - 5:00pm)  
(Registration both days starts at 7:30am)

[Registration Form](#)

**Audience:** Accountants, auditors, financial and performance managers, budget analysts, chief financial officers, information systems managers, finance directors, etc. Finance and Audit Professionals employed in government (federal, state, and local) and the private sector (for-profit and non-profit agencies). We expect 150 + attendees. Conference will include annually required ethics for Virginia CPAs. Watch your e-mail for the registration form coming soon!

**Marketing Opportunities:** Limited exhibit space is available. Please contact Ellen Silvela at [esilvela@deloitte.com](mailto:esilvela@deloitte.com) for pricing. You may make your literature available, demonstrate software and display your banners. The exhibit hall is located outside the main conference hall. All exhibitors will be acknowledged in the conference program. Participants will be able to visit your exhibit throughout the 2 day conference, but primarily before 8:30 am, at the breaks, at lunch, and after 5pm. The Hospitality Suite will be open to all participants from 7-11pm on Dec 8-9.

### AGA Mid Atlantic Fall 2010 PDC Invited Speakers

Ivan Bereha, Senior Consultant-CGI Group, Inc.

Channing Guvernator, Public Awareness & Training Coordinator  
Virginia Utility Protection Service

David Norquist, Partner-Kearney & Co.

Joseph Kull, Director-PricewaterhouseCoopers

Sherry Weir, Partner-Kearney & Co.

Dr. Doug Ziegenfuss, Professor-Old Dominion University

Dick Bunce, Department of Assurance  
Virginia Commonwealth University

Karen Joyner, CFO-Foodbank of Southeastern VA

Dr. Doug Webster, Partner-CSC

David Zavada, Partner-Kearney & Co.

Sharon Hayes, Auditor-City of Virginia Beach

Michael Huffman, United States Coast Guard  
Practice Director - Department of Homeland Security

James Cottrell, Partner-Deloitte Financial Advisory Services

Dave Weinberg, Principal-Kearney & Co.

Marc Austin, Booz/Allen/Hamilton

# Certification News



**Quickly Earn Your CGFM Certification!** Sign up for AGA's special intensive review and take the CGFM examinations after the National Leadership Conference (NLC). Don't miss this opportunity to earn your CGFM. The Intensive Review Course will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 21, and Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2011 in Alexandria, VA. The CGFM Examinations will be offered by appointment only on Feb. 23-24. The cost of the course is only \$279 for qualified participants, and it offers 18 CPE hours. You do not have to attend the NLC to participate in the intensive review.

**Special Bonus:** The CGFM examinations are offered at no cost to course attendees. The cost of this course is **not** included in the NLC registration fee.

## BEFORE YOU REGISTER, PLEASE READ:

**What is the Intensive Review Course?** It is a special limited enrollment opportunity for those individuals who have already been studying for the CGFM examinations and want extra reinforcement of the material. It is a way to save money on the examination fees (and get the course with it!). It is a review of the main topics covered in the examinations. It is an opportunity to add the value of the instructor who can explain concepts, provide examples and answer questions for those who chose the self-study option. It is a refresher course for those who took the AGA instructor-led courses a long time ago. It is a great way to set a deadline for completing your certification examinations and get it done!

**What it is NOT:** It is **not** a shortcut. The Intensive Review Course is **not** a substitute for the three AGA [instructor-led training courses](#). It is usually **not** enough by itself to prepare for the CGFM Examinations – advance preparation is strongly recommended (see [How do I prepare?](#) for more information). It is **not** an exam prep course with strategies on how to pass the exams.

## Registration

To participate in the intensive review, individuals must:

- Apply for the CGFM Program (submitting CGFM application form, fee and college transcript).
- Pre-register for this event by submitting the [Intensive Review Course Registration Form](#) and appropriate fee. **Walk-ins will not be accepted.**

The complete application for the CGFM Program must be submitted BEFORE or TOGETHER with the Intensive Review Course Registration Form. Registrations for this event will not be confirmed until after the CGFM application is accepted.

Cancellations must be received by January 24, 2011; refunds will not be granted after this date.

**Deadline:** Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first-served basis. Space is limited, so we encourage you to sign up early. Registrations will not be accepted after **February 9, 2011**.

## Location

The Intensive Review Course and the CGFM examinations will be held in Alexandria, VA near King Street Metro. The exact address will be provided to all registered attendees.

The facilities for this event are provided by Grant Thornton LLP.

**Save \$20 by sending your CGFM exam application through the chapter until December 31, 2010!**

The AGA National Office is running a promotion from now until December 31, 2010 for CGFM exam applications. Apply with the chapter's assistance and you'll receive a rebate of \$20. There are also special benefits for the chapters! Contact chapter Director of Professional Certifications, Steve Reagan at [sreagan01@verizon.net](mailto:sreagan01@verizon.net). Also, see [www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/promotion.aspx](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/promotion.aspx) for additional information.

If you haven't heard, the chapter has a set of study guides for each of the three sections of the CGFM exam. They are available to be checked out for up to two weeks at a time on a first come first served basis. Anyone wishing to check out a study guide should contact our Director of Professional Certifications, Steve Reagan via e-mail at [sreagan01@verizon.net](mailto:sreagan01@verizon.net).

## CGFM Eligibility

To attend the intensive review course and/or take the CGFM examinations, participants must first apply and be accepted into the CGFM program. Candidates need to submit the CGFM program application form with \$85 application fee and a copy of a transcript from an accredited college or university.

The transcript must show that a degree (bachelor's or higher) was awarded and list at least 24 credit hours of courses in financial management or related topics. Applicant's name and the name of the college or university must appear on all transcripts. Please see [www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/start/](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/start/) for more information.

In addition, those individuals who want to complete their CGFM at this event need to submit a [Work Verification Form](#) listing at least two years of professional-level government financial management experience. Visit the AGA National home page [CGFM Certification](#) for more information.

## CGFMs earn more on average

Did you know that AGA conducted a compensation survey earlier this year? The results of the survey showed that those who had earned a CGFM designation reported a higher average salary than those who do not hold this certification: \$105,815 compared to \$78,905, a difference of 34 percent. The compensation survey report can be found on <http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/downloads/CGFMCompensationSurvey.pdf>

# Member Spotlight



## Winona Green

### **What is your job position?**

I am a Financial Management Analyst in the Budget Department at the Naval Facility Engineering Command, Atlantic, (NAVFAC), located at the Lafayette River Annex in Norfolk.

### **Give us a brief description of your job.**

I ensure that proper budget execution, policy and procedures are met while performing daily assignments. I'm responsible for all incoming and outgoing reimbursables for my assigned supported command. I monitor the execution of reimbursable documents and track the use and rate of budget execution expenditures. I ensure funds are used for purposes appropriated and provide guidance and assistance to program managers, analysts and other management personnel regarding financial issues associated with reimbursable orders.

### **What do you like most about your job?**

Because I am a detailed-oriented person, this job is tailor-made for me! I enjoy processing funding documents for various types of projects and ensuring funding is processed in accordance with financial and budgetary guidelines. Over the past 3 years, I have built an excellent rapport with the program analysts, project managers and budget staff at the supported command I was assigned to. Though I've always considered myself an introvert, I guess that is one of the things I've enjoyed most -- interacting with the customer and hopefully providing exceptional service.

### **What is your favorite perk of AGA membership?**

Unfortunately, due to the volume and time constrictions of my job, I have been unable to attend most of the monthly meetings. The two luncheons I was able to attend were very informative and interesting. I was seated next to people I'd never met and found them very friendly and we were able to share finance tales.

### **What is your most memorable AGA experience?**

I hope to have more time to gather some "memorable experiences" in the future.

### **What are your hobbies?**

I am an avid reader. I love any type of word puzzles, bowling, and traveling with my family.

### **What was your best vacation?**

Though we tend to take mini-vacations just to get away for the weekend, I think our trip to Canada a couple of years ago was one of the best.

### **Anything else you'd like to share about yourself?**

I reside in Suffolk with my husband, Priest, and our 10 year old daughter, Saidah.

# Community Service

## Community Service Projects Update

So far, our chapter has beautifully dressed 73 bears and filled 29 stockings with exciting toys and gifts for the Salvation Army's holiday project. November 30 was the deadline for the bear and stocking projects. Thank you all for your wonderful support.

The chapter is also receiving plenty of support for the blanket and winter clothing drive. Keep them coming as we have more needy families this winter compared to the previous years. Also, the chapter is collecting socks for the homeless. Imagine the comfort those socks would give to our less fortunate brethren this winter. The socks for the homeless will be donated to the Union Mission. You have until February 2011 to donate blankets, winter clothing and socks.

Along with the chapter's monetary donation, at least 3 boxes of food collected were donated to the foodbank during the weekend of November 20th. On behalf of collections from GAO/AGA, Joe Rutecki delivered 8 *Coats for Kids* to Albano's for cleaning as well as 3 bags of adult and kids clothing to the Union Mission.

### AGA'S COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS

Currently Collecting Socks for the Homeless	<u>New project</u> Knitting and Crochet Club
<u>On Going Projects</u> Blankets & Winter Clothing Drive Food Collections Union Mission/Salvation Army	<u>December</u> Blankets & Winter Clothing Drive Food Collection Fall PDC Raffle
<u>January</u> Coats for Kids Blankets & Winter Clothing Drive	<u>February</u> Annual Sock Drive On-Going Knitting & Crochet Project
<u>April</u> On-Going Knitting & Crochet Projects	<u>May</u> Equikids Therapeutic Riding Program

## On-Going Community Service Projects

### Blankets & Winter Clothing

Through your generous donations you will be able to provide warmth and comfort to the needy.

### Food Collections

The chapter is collecting food items for the Christmas Food Drive for the Southside and Peninsula Food Banks. The items collected are donated to the area shelters.

### Knitting and Crochet Club

It's not too late to volunteer! This project is designed to collect baby items (i.e. hats, booties, blankets, etc.), and also items needed by the elderly (i.e. scarves, hats, socks, sweaters) at low cost. The chapter will provide the yarn and will teach you the skills.

### Fall PDC Fund Raising

If you are willing to contact business owners to solicit gift certificate or other gift items for the conference raffle, please contact Helen Brooks at [Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil](mailto:Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil)

Have questions or suggestions?  
Contact Community Service  
Director Helen Brooks at  
[Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil](mailto:Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil)

## Other Ways to Support the Community!

Remember, we are still collecting Box-tops for education, aluminum can pop-tops, Farm Fresh grocery receipts for education, hotel complimentary toiletries (i.e. toothpaste, soaps and shampoos), and disposable razors. Please bring these items to the AGA monthly luncheon meetings.

Register your MVP on-line and designate the Special Olympics so they can receive a percentage of your purchase amount in donation. Registration is easy if you are a Food Lion and MVP shopper, simply go to the Food Lion website at [www.foodlion.com](http://www.foodlion.com), on "Lion shop and share", click on "register and link your MVP card", then select Virginia, Richmond and Special Olympics and follow the directions for registering your 12-digit number and name. It's that easy to help with this community service project.

If you are the point-of-contact in your organization for chapter community service events, or if you are interested, please e-mail me at [Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil](mailto:Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil) or call (757) 523-6861. We will include your organization in the bulletins and updates for the chapter's community service activities. In addition, the chapter has many on-going projects. Please let me know if you would like to be the point of contact or a volunteer for a particular project.

# Treasurer's Report

By Ellen Silvela

Below is the chapter's status of funds as of October 2010.

The chapter's major sources of revenue are our two annual conferences. Please encourage your colleagues and coworkers to attend the upcoming fall PDC December 9/10 in Williamsburg!

If you have any questions about the chapter's finances, please e-mail me at [esilvela@deloitte.com](mailto:esilvela@deloitte.com)



## AGA Virginia Peninsula Chapter Monthly Treasurer Report For Month Ended October 2010

<b>Beginning Balance</b>	\$ 11,913.40
<b>Income</b>	
Collections for Charity for Ronald McDonald House	\$ 14.00
Collections from 50th Anniv Meeting	\$ 520.00
Collections from Meeting Oct 21	\$ 380.00
Membership Scholarship from National	\$ 249.00
Collections from Fall 2010 PDC Sponsors	\$ 1,000.00
Collections from Fall 2010 PDC Attendees	\$ 190.00
Interest from Bank	\$ 0.49
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 2,353.49</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Credit Card Fees	\$ 27.99
Speaker Gift for Oct 21 Meeting	\$ 10.00
Deposit for Nov Meeting Hotel	\$ 400.00
Payment of balance for Oct 21 Meeting	\$ 1,120.81
Website October Payment	\$ 12.95
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,571.75</b>
<b>Other Expense</b> (Correction of erroneous refund from hotel for Sept meeting)	\$ 500.00
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 281.74</b>
<b>Available Balance October 29, 2010</b>	<b>\$ 12,195.14</b>

# Food for Thought



## Preparation

By Curtis P. Joachim

Hi there! Remember me? It seems like almost an eternity since we last chatted. If you remember we were playing a game of I-spy (sorry, I'm the father of a six and 7-year old). We were spying for clues. Why? The success gurus claim that success leaves clues. So we've been on the hunt for success clues. So far we've been able to track down two of those elusive clues, namely self-discipline, and persistence.

You'll recall that we defined self-discipline in layman's terms as the ability to stay focused at the task at hand, no matter what life throws at you. Persistency we describe as "doggedness", as having that resolute determination to succeed and sticking with it no matter how many times you've been knocked down, turned down or told to sit down.

I missed the last newsletter, I know, but I have a good excuse. I was preparing to write this month's article on preparation. Corny, I know, but for real! I wanted to put the theory of preparation to the test before writing about it. How did I do that you asked? Oh it was really simple, I ran the Marine Corps Marathon!

This was my first time running a marathon, and believe me I had some doubts. You hear so many horror stories about marathons, about people "hitting the wall", collapsing and some even dying! Yea, I know, very encouraging, but I was determined to get that one off my bucket list.

So I embarked on a mission to put the theory of preparation to the test.

Webster defines preparation as, "the action or process of making something ready for use or service or of getting ready for some occasion, test, or duty". For the sake of this article we will use the test part.

You see, a marathon is a test, it will test your endurance, your ability to be disciplined, to set a goal and work towards achieving it, to endure pain and keep pressing on, to stay motivated and motivate others when it's the last thing you feel like doing. It will test how well you've prepared!

I'm sure that if one was to take a survey, one would find that people who are at the top of their professions are meticulous preparers. For example, according to information posted on the Tigerwoods.com website, Tiger Woods' daily routing includes 9 hours of training – every day.

Actors are always studying and finding new ways to hone their skills, reading and re-reading scripts, until they can make themselves cry on demand. We've all heard the stories of the legendary basketball players who spend countless numbers of hours daily shooting free-throws. I'm reminded of the time I sat for the CPA exam, back when you had to take all four parts of the exam at the same time. I was determined that I was only going to do this one time. That meant four hours a day studying, every-day, for four months straight! The result, I passed all four parts of the exam, on the first try!

Sometimes it's hard to prepare or keep on preparing when it seems as though your ship will never come in. But the famous quote that says that luck is when opportunity and preparedness meet. We often times see people who are so successful that they make their craft look easy. What we don't see is the countless hours they spent preparing.

**Sharpen the Axe:** Solomon, the wisest king who ever lived, said, "when the axe is dull, much effort is required". That's why Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe". Abraham Lincoln believed in preparation. Unfortunately it's the opposite of what many people do. If they have a project to complete in six hours, they waste the first five hours fifty nine minutes and try to get it done in the last minute. Taking the time to prepare allows you to outperform those who try to wing it with little or no preparation. They accomplish the job in less time and with less stress.

**Keep sharpening the Axe:** The true value of preparation is vital to working smart. Taking the time to prepare may seem like a waste of time. You may ask, "Isn't it better to use the time to get the job done? Isn't it better to get straight to work? Not really, you see preparation can make the difference in being productive and just being tired.

Donald Latumahina, in his January 26, 2009 article called *Sharpening the Axe* listed three ways preparation can help you:

### 1. Preparation helps you find if something is worth doing.

Few things waste your time more than working on the wrong project. So it's wise to check first if something is worth doing. The time saved from not doing the wrong project far outweighs the time spent to research it.

**2. Preparation helps you find the most efficient way to do things.** Once you decide that a project is worth doing, the next step is finding the most efficient way to do it. One good way is by watching how the best people in your field work. Find several models and observe the advantages and disadvantages of their methods. Pay special attention to methods that are radically different from what you know. Then combine the best methods to create something that suits your style and situation.

**3. Preparation makes you ready when opportunity comes.** Keep learning, keep growing, and open your eyes. That way when opportunity comes you will be ready to grab it.

**Danger! Danger!** You know the old adage, that says, "too much of one thing is good for nothing"? Well that applies to preparation as well. There is such a thing as being over prepared. You could end up taking action way too late, or even worse never take action at all. Too much preparation can lead to procrastination. Some people use preparation as an excuse not to take action or delay getting started. Don't let that happen to you. Do only the preparation that significantly contributes to your project and your personal growth. Prepare well but don't over-prepare.

### "When was the last time you sharpened your axe?"

If you want to progress in life, you cannot rest on your past achievements. You must continuously sharpen your axe of knowledge, skills and expertise in whatever field of activity you may be in!

**Test Results:** So how did my test of the preparation theory go? Thought you'd never ask! After 6 months of training and running about 370 miles, I can say with confidence that preparation works. I completed the marathon in 5 hours 23 minutes, coming in at 16,866 out of 21,943 runners who completed the marathon and 35,000 runners who were signed up to run!

# AGA National & Regional News

## Meet our new Accountability and Outreach Coordinator

Dear VA Peninsula Chapter AGA Members:

*My name is Dellareese Morton-Smith, and I am the Accountability and Outreach Coordinator for the AGA Mid-Atlantic Region. I would like to encourage your chapter to develop a Citizen-Centric Report for Fiscal Years 2010-2011. This report will ultimately answer the question, "Are we better off today than we were last year?" Also, I encourage you to participate as a reviewer for the Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Program or the Certificate of Achievement in Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Report Review Program.*

*Please contact me at DellaMS732@gmail.com or 410-458-1863 and the AGA National Office at 1-800-AGA-7211 if you are interested in being a CEAR or SEA reviewer or need assistance with your citizen-centric report.*

*Thank you,*

*Dellareese Morton-Smith  
AGA Baltimore Chapter Membership Director*

## Prepare a Citizen Centric Report

Every Chapter that participates will receive a certificate, chapter points, and will contribute to the region's points. Reports deemed excellent will receive the Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting.

### What is a Citizen-Centric Report and how do I prepare one?

The Citizen-Centric Report is a four-page document reporting specific information. Content guidelines and templates are on the AGA website at <http://www.agacgfm.org/citizen/downloads/>

Options in developing a Citizen-Centric Report include:

1. Prepare a report for your chapter;
2. Prepare a report for your agency; and
3. Assist a local agency, non-profit company, church, etc. in preparing a report.

If you are preparing a report for your chapter, your chapter directors will have the data you will need. If you are preparing a report for your agency, you will need to contact your finance and budget offices as well as your strategic planning office. If you are assisting a local agency, non-profit company, etc., you should be able to work with the information they already have prepared for their business. You can then insert the information in the templates referenced above. Microsoft Publisher software is the most commonly used software for preparing the Citizen-Centric Report.

### Why should I prepare a Citizen-Centric Report?

This is a great opportunity to expand the public's knowledge of valuable information in an easily read short document. It also increases the awareness of AGA and gives your Chapter an opportunity to receive a certificate, increase Chapter points and increase points for the Mid-Atlantic Region.

AGA offers a Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting for those entities that prepare and distribute high-quality Citizen-Centric Reports. In addition, there is a Certificate of Achievement in Citizen-Centric Reporting for those entities that fall short of incorporating all of the requirements for the Certificate of Excellence but still produced a four-page report. Once you create a Citizen-Centric Report, you will find it extremely rewarding.

## Interested in Volunteering as a Performance Report Reviewer?

The CEAR helps federal agencies produce effective Performance and Accountability Reports (PARs) and help leaders rethink the way agencies do business( read more at <http://www.agacgfm.org/performance/cear/>).

The SEA encourages state and local governments to prepare and issue high quality Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reports (also called performance reports) (read more at <http://www.agacgfm.org/performance/sea/>).

This is an excellent opportunity to learn AGA's criterion is for annual reporting documents. By reviewing other agencies' reports, you could make valuable suggestions to improve your agency's report. In addition, as a reviewer, you will network with people from other institutions and AGA National Officers.

As a CEAR reviewer, you will:

- **read** a PAR;
- **evaluate** it using AGA's Reviewers Guidelines;
- **develop** detailed recommendations for improving the report;
- **discuss** all recommendations during a team meeting; and
- **vote** on who will receive the Certificate of Excellence award.

As a SEA reviewer, you will:

- **read** a performance report;
- **develop** recommendations for improving the report; and
- **decide** if the report merits the formal SEA recognition of achievement award.

Federal agencies will be submitting their reports for CEAR consideration soon. Training for reviewers is scheduled for December 9, 2010 in Washington, D.C. SEA (performance) reports are submitted on a rolling basis. Therefore, this is a great time to submit your name for consideration as a candidate to review one of these high-profile reporting documents and help determine which agencies will receive the distinguished CEAR or SEA award.

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Honorable  
Mention

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