

Chapter President's Message

Wow!

I can't believe how much is going on in the chapter right now! We have the AGA/ASMC Spring 2010 Conference planning and preparation wrapping up and are anticipating another successful joint venture with our friends at ASMC. The AGA National Awards submissions for our chapter are being prepared for review before we send them off and elections are on the horizon. On top of all, there are lots of events being planned and YOU are all we need to make it all come together!

I am looking forward to the Joint AGA/ASMC Spring 2010 PDC being held at the Chesapeake Conference Center on March 16th and 17th – the keynote speaker is the Honorable William H. Campbell, Chief Operating Officer of Atlantic Financial Navigation, LLC. I am sure ALL of the speakers will be wonderful! Make sure you get your registration forms in because time is running out! A copy of the registration form will be included in this newsletter. The conference provides the opportunity for everyone to receive 16 CPEs and CPAs can earn their annually required ethics course.

We will be continuing our new tradition of holding a networking dinner open to everyone the first night of the conference. It will be held on the evening of March 16th around 5:30 pm at Paradocks (<http://www.paradocksgrille.com/va.html>), which is a fun place nearby. I hope you will all be able to join the planning committee members, chapter officers, and speakers in an evening of getting to know each other. Please RSVP with me by March 1st at d.l.miller@frontier.com if you plan to attend so I can make the necessary arrangements! I look forward to seeing you all there!

Ellen Silvela earned free dues for the 2010-2011 membership year as a National recruiting incentive. CONGRATULATIONS for a job well done!

There are only two more meetings this year – I really can't believe it is drawing to a close. I am both elated we have had so many fine people contributing their time and energy and saddened that my time as your leader is drawing to a close. Keep up the efforts and examine what you can offer to the chapter and the membership as a participant or one of its leaders.

Well, until next month, take care and stay well! Be sure to check the events coming up and make sure you let someone know if you want to help out or participate. Volunteer – we need you!

Thank you,

Donna L. Miller, MSAC
President
AGA VA Peninsula Chapter



Chapter President
Donna Miller

NEXT MEETING

March 16 & 17

VA Peninsula
Spring Conference with
American Society of Military
Comptrollers

Chesapeake
Conference Center

16 CPEs

It's not too late to register. Check out the agenda and look for the registration form inside this newsletter. The conference offers CPAs an opportunity to earn their annually required ethics.

Networking dinner
March 16th, Paradocks Grille
(801 Eden Way North),
5:30pm. Pay as you go.

RSVP to
d.l.miller@frontier.com

Hospitality Suite
At the Marriott, hosted by
Kearney & Co.

If you'd like to stay at the Marriott call 888-245-2617 and ask for the Professional Development Conference rate or [click here](#) to make reservations.

Upcoming Chapter Meetings:

April 15, Embassy Suites,
Hampton

May – Chapter Awards Night

Education

*Association of Government Accountants and American Society of Military Comptrollers
Spring 2010 Professional Development Conference -- "Making a Difference"
Chesapeake Conference Center -- March 16th and March 17th, 2010*

Wednesday, March 16th, 2010

7:30-8:15 Registration and Breakfast

8:15-8:30 Announcements

8:30-9:20 "Preparing To Make A Difference"

Honorable William H. Campbell, Chief Operating Officer,
Atlantic Financial Navigation, LLC

9:20-10:10 "A-133 Environment"

Joseph Kull, CPA, CGFM, Director,
PricewaterhouseCoopers

10:10-10:25 Break and Door Prizes

10:25-11:15 "Experiencing Emotional Intelligence"

Cathy Kreyche, Communications Strategist,
Management Concepts

11:15-12:05 "Citizens! Do You Care?"

Mary Lechner, CPA, CGFM, Vice President,
Savantage

12:05-1:05 Lunch Sponsored Cherry, Bekaert & Holland

1:05-1:55 "Government Accounting and Auditing Update"

Bill Cole, Partner, Cherry, Bekaert & Holland

1:55-2:05 Break

2:05-2:55 "Emerging Issues in Federal Financial Management"

David Zavada, CPA, Partner
Kearney and Co.

2:55-3:25 Break and Door Prizes

3:10-4:50 "2010 Required Ethics for Virginia Registered CPAs"

Douglas E. Ziegenfuss, Accounting Department Chair,
Old Dominion University

OR

3:25-4:15 "Differences between Planning and Implementing Financial Transformation"

CAPT Mark Rose, Commanding Officer,
US Coast Guard Finance Center

4:15-5:05 "US Coast Guard Audit Readiness"

5:30 – Networking Dinner, Paradocks Grille

Post Conference Hospitality Suite – Hosted and sponsored
by Kearney & Co. at Marriott (next door)

Thursday, March 17th, 2010

7:30-8:15 Registration and Breakfast

8:15-8:30 Announcements

8:30-9:20 "A Brief History of Federal Financial Management"

David Norquist, Partner Kearney & Co.

9:20-10:10 "Identity Theft!

What Your Bank Is Not Telling You!"

Ken Roebuck, President, The Roebuck Company

10:10-10:25 Break and Door Prizes

10:25-11:15 "Challenges To The Fiscal Warfighters"

ADM Greenert, Vice Chief of Naval Operations

11:15-12:05 "The Power of 8"

Dave Weinberg

12:05-1:05 Lunch Sponsored by Deloitte Consulting, LLP

1:05-1:55 "Internal Controls and Financial Reporting-- Making the Connection"

Michael Ralph, CPA, Senior Financial Manager,
KForce Government Solutions

1:55-2:05 Break

2:05-2:55 "Best Practices in ERP Implementation"

Sherry Weir, Partner,
Kearney & Co.

2:55-3:25 Break and Door Prizes

3:25-4:15 "Effective Marginal Costing: Know Your Resource Needs"

Larry R. White, Executive Director,
Resource Consumption Accounting (RCA) Institute

4:15-5:05 "Total Ownership Cost: Using Commercial Practices to Achieve Greater Transparency and Enhance Analytics"

Brendan Mahon/Michael C. Jones, Senior Managers,
Deloitte Consulting LLP

Please Support the Community Service Raffle!

*Don't forget to bring your checkbook or some extra cash to conference so you can participate in the community service raffle. The money raised will go to the **March of Dimes**. As you know, the March of Dimes works to give all babies a fighting chance against premature birth, birth defects, and low birth weight*

Opportunities for Participation

Join Emerging Leaders for Sports and Volunteering

The next emerging leaders event is fast approaching -- Saturday, March 13th. Join fellow AGA members and friends as the Norfolk Admirals take on Bridgeport at the Norfolk Scope. Game time is 7:15pm -- however, we will be meeting **outside the will call box at 6:45pm**. Tickets have already been purchased for those that RSVP'd by Friday, February

Mark your calendars for an exciting volunteering activity for the March of Dimes on April 25th. Emerging leaders will be joining chapter volunteers in handling walk up registrations, collecting money, and being the official money counters on the day of the Walk-A-Thon along the Virginia Beach boardwalk on Sunday, April 25th. Watch your e-mail for additional details. If you have any questions about emerging leaders or these events, contact Allison Shoemaker at ashoemaker@kearneyco.com

Volunteer Opportunities at AGA's PDC in Orlando

Interested in volunteering at AGA's 59th Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition (PDC) (July 11-14, 2010) in Orlando, FL? AGA is seeking PDC 2010 Orlando Host Committee volunteers to share their time and talents, and provide assistance during the conference. The Host Committee plays an essential role by helping with bag stuffing, registration, session monitoring and other tasks during the conference.



In appreciation for your time, AGA will provide volunteers with a complimentary conference registration. *AGA does not reimburse for airfare, hotel accommodations, parking, bus fare, taxi or any other travel expenses incurred by getting to and from the PDC.*

The Host Committee is limited to 30 individuals. Preference is given to AGA members who are able to work multiple five-hour shifts from Saturday, July 10 through Wednesday, July 14, 2010. Great care will also be taken to ensure the committee is diverse, includes both new and past Host Committee participants, and represents AGA chapters and regions. Submitting an application does not guarantee you will be selected; however, we appreciate your interest and willingness to help.

If you're interested in volunteering, please complete and return the [Host Committee Application](#) by e-mail to meetings@agacgfm.org by April 16, 2010.

CGFM Intensive Review Course

The next CGFM Intensive Review Course will be held preceding AGA's Professional Development Conference in Orlando, FL in July. This also includes an opportunity to immediately take the CGFM Examinations. [Learn more.](#)

Ready to Start Studying? Borrow the Chapter's CGFM Study Guides! They are available to be checked out for up to two weeks at a time on a first come first served basis. To check out a study guide, contact our Director of Professional Certifications, Steve Reagan via e-mail at sreagan01@verizon.net. If you're planning to apply to be a CGFM, please let the chapter know by e-mailing Steve.



Your Input is Needed to Improve Chapter's Community Service Program

Please take a few moments to consider the chapter's community service activities and respond to the following questions. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

1. Of all the community service activities that our chapter participates in, which ones would you like to see again next year?
2. What new community service activity would you like to see our chapter be a part of?
3. Are there any community service activities that you would like to chair?
4. Are there any community service activities that you would like our chapter to discontinue?
5. Which community service activity is your favorite?

Please send your answers to:
Helen.M.Brooks@uscg.mil

Continue the Excellence –Leaders Sought for Key Roles

It's hard to believe, but the AGA chapter year, only has a few more months left. In preparation for April's election of officers, the chapter is soliciting volunteers. While interest and service in any area is appreciated, the chapter is specifically seeking someone to fill the positions of:

Webmaster – Keeps our chapter webpage up to date with information such as contact information, conferences, meetings, other upcoming events, and newsletters.

Membership Director - Develops chapter programs encouraging member recruitment and retainment. Overall serves as the chapter's advocate and cheerleader.

Meetings/Publicity Director – Books chapter meeting sites and coordinates logistics such menu and attendance by taking member RSVPs. Handles on-site meeting sign-in and registration.

If interested, contact Brad Smith at Brad.Smith@norfolk.gov

Membership

By Ellen Silvela

Welcome New Members!

Alan Bardwell, Student * Winona Green, Navy
Rodolfo Ricafort, US Coast Guard

Fun and Games with Emerging Leaders

It was great seeing some of our members and their guests at Jillian's this past Saturday at the February Emerging Leaders event. We had dinner together before we went off and played games. I enjoyed getting to know the other AGA members better -- hearing about what's going on with their careers and even a little of their life outside of work. Networking plus food and fun -- what more can you ask for??! I will be running/walking in the Disney Princess Half Marathon on March 7th in Disney World (this'll be my first half marathon!). After I get back from my vacation in Florida, I am looking forward to the next Emerging Leaders - the Admirals hockey game on March 13th. See you there!

Final Month of Sponsor a New Member Challenge

March is the last month to take on the "Sponsor a New Member Challenge." The member who sponsors the most new members from September 2009 to March 2010 will win a free AGA membership for the 2010-2011 program year. To get credit for sponsoring a new member, be sure the new member includes your name and AGA member ID in the "sponsor section" on their membership application. The winner of this Challenge will be announced at the April monthly meeting. It will not be necessary to be present to win but membership status must be current to win.

In addition to our chapter's recruitment incentives, the AGA National office is offering great prizes for sponsoring new members with the 2009-2010 Member Get a Member Campaign. Check out the AGA website for additional details on this recruitment campaign http://www.agacgfm.org/membership/mem_campaign.aspx.

RENEW NOW! Save Time, Save Effort and Save the Environment by renewing your AGA membership online. Going Green is easy in 2010 when you renew your membership online. It's not only safe and quick, but it's also the fastest renewal method! To renew your membership and keep receiving member benefits, please login to the "Members Only" section of the website. Remember your membership ID number is your login and the first initial of your first name followed by your entire last name is your password. You can locate your membership number on your membership card, e-mailed renewal reminder and mailed renewal form. The due date for renewal payments is March 31st, 2010. Don't wait...*Renew Now!* If you have any questions on membership renewal, please contact me ([Ellen Silvela](mailto:Ellen.Silvela)) or the AGA national office.

Member News

Check out member **Angela Sandelier's** blog -- called (CPA) Mom on a Wire -- at <http://cpamomonawire.blogspot.com/>

Longtime members **Doug Sexton** has retired! He says, "I want my friends at the Virginia Peninsula Chapter to know that today, February 1, 2010 is my last workday with DCAA. 42 and 1/2 years is enough. I am proud to have been the Chapter President and Regional Vice-President. My new e-mail will be dsextoncpa@gmail.com.

Lura B. Colangelo, former accountant at the USCG Finance Center, has taken a new job with TSA Accounting Branch in Washington DC. She says, "I truly want to thank all of my mentors, friends and chapter members for the growing opportunities you have given me in my three years." She plans to transfer her membership to the Washington DC chapter after getting settled into her new job.

Our much beloved past chapter president, current National Treasurer, formerly known as Mary Lechner, now goes by her maiden name, **Mary Peterman**. Her new e-mail address is mpeterman@mediacombb.net

Ellen Silvela has earned free membership by recruiting six or more new members through an AGA National recruitment incentive.

Shanelle Donovan, a recent graduate of ODU, will be starting her first real full-time job in the government accounting field in March, as an Internal Revenue Agent for the IRS, Norfolk office. She will be working with the small business/ self employed division. Congratulations Shanelle!



New member Alan Bardwell (left) enjoys February's meeting with Leland Jordan.



Carleen Bennett spoke at the February meeting about her experiences on the front lines of tracking down ARRA funds in the state of North Carolina.

ARRA Topic of February Meeting

The Virginia Peninsula chapter enjoyed its annual joint meeting with the Tidewater chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) on February 11th. More than 50 financial professionals, including some with dual membership in both associations, met at the Norfolk Holiday Inn Express to hear what it's like being on the front lines of auditing Recovery Act Funds.

Carleen C. Bennett, Assistant Director Defense Capabilities & Management US Government Accountability Office, talked -- humorously at times-- about her experiences being part of the GAO team auditing the state of North Carolina's plans for and compliance with the use and reporting requirements of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

In talking about ARRA grant recipients, Ms. Bennett said ultimately, that when you get a gift of value, you have to be accountable for it.

At left, Dr. Doug Ziegenfuss, is an active member of both organizations hosting the February meeting, as a member of both the local AGA and IIA local chapters' boards of directors.



Member Spotlights

By Wanda Witherspoon



Dale Walker

Director of Finance and Purchasing, City of Suffolk

What is your job position? Director of Finance and Purchasing

Give us a brief description of your job. As the Director of Finance, I am responsible for accounting, bond issuance, and financial reporting.

What do you like most about your job? Being able to make a positive difference in people's lives and careers. Having the ability to "crunch" numbers is one thing but adding value to an organization of people through values, integrity, and ethics is priceless.

What is your favorite perk of AGA membership? The Certified Government Financial Manager designation and the respect it holds within the financial community.

What is your most memorable AGA experience? While working in Washington DC, belonging to the Washington DC chapter allowed me to hear and learn from some of the best minds in governmental finance.

What are your hobbies? Having played basketball and football in my earlier life has given me an interest in sports. Reading is relaxing and the latest book I have read is "Leading at a Higher Level" by Ken Blanchard. As professionals we should be reading one professional related book per month to keep us on the cutting edge of thought.

What was your best vacation? Finding a place on the lake or ocean where it is peaceful and quiet with a good book.

Anything else you'd like to share about yourself? One of the highlights of my career was having the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Board for the Michigan Municipal Employees Retirement System for a number of years. It allowed me enhance my leadership skills and to learn more about retirement systems plus meet and work with dynamic people. As a recent transplant to Virginia, I am looking forward to getting to know the people involved in governmental finance in the next chapter of my life.



Betty Burrell

CFO/ Deputy City Manager
City of Portsmouth

What is your job position? I am the Chief Financial Officer/Deputy City Manager for the City of Portsmouth, Virginia.

Give us a brief description of your job. As the Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager I lead the Finance, Procurement, Risk Management and Management Services Departments as well as Information Technology and Golf Enterprises. My Departments manage a host of City financial functions including; providing financial information to the City Manager, Council and operating departments; preparing the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; managing accounts payable and payroll functions; managing City grants and Debt Administration; and preparing the City's biennial budget.

What do you like most about your job? As a City official it is my job to make the City of Portsmouth a better place for its citizens. I truly enjoy making a positive contribution to the City I live in.

What is your favorite perk of AGA membership? I like the newsletters and audio training opportunities. They allow me to keep abreast of information that is not always readily accessible.

What is your most memorable AGA experience? Each experience I have had with the AGA has been memorable. I have a very demanding job but have enjoyed the few meetings I have been able to attend and meeting other AGA members.

What are your hobbies? love reading non-fiction books and traveling to new places. I try to take a new trip every year. I also like riding amusement park rides like roller coasters, high thrill rides and sky diving.

What was your best vacation? In 2007, I went to Disneyland with my daughter Katrina and granddaughter Cheyenne. We had a great time.

Anything else you'd like to share about yourself? I love to learn.

Career Opportunities

The United States Coast Guard is currently recruiting for a Senior Executive Position, Director of Financial Operations/Comptroller. The Director of Financial Operations/Comptroller reports to the Deputy Chief Financial Officer in the Resources Directorate. [Read the complete announcement here.](#)

A Different Perspective – The Tough Road of Seeking Employment in Bad Economic Times

By Clement Mikowski

There is a whole culture out there that is familiar to people looking for employment that is probably not known or familiar to people who have been fortunate enough to not have to seek employment in the last year or two. I contacted Opplnc. One-Stop Workforce Center (861 Glenrock Road, Norfolk) a support agency recommended by the Virginia Employment Commission. I have also been using a Virginian-Pilot article entitled, *Getting Your Job Search Back In Gear*, as a guide for the process I have been following this year which advised:

- Pursue rehire opportunities with former employer(s)
- Get away from behind the computer and spend time at professional association meetings where people who do what you want to do gather
- Don't be shy about publicizing your job hunt – tell everyone
- Be positive and professional – potential employers are turned off by whining and anger

Their message was difficult for me since accountants and finance professionals are not the best promoters or sales people. It is somewhat outside our nature. I know I have to do this out of necessity but it is not always comfortable for me.

I feel jobs is proving to be the number one issue in the country and all professional groups have to step forward to meet the challenge if we want to work our way out of this recession. As stated by the *President, jobs have to be our highest priority at this time.*

I just attended a meeting of the Hampton Roads Association of Finance Professionals on February 16th that included presentations by Adam York, Economist-*Wachovia Bank*, Robert W. McClintock, Jr., Research Director-*Virginia Economic Development Partnership*, and Jean McGowan, - *Tattersall Advisory Group*. Their message was clear and concise that the first order of business is job creation if we want to work out of this recession. They were speaking in agreement with Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, Lt. Governor Bill Bolling, and Secretary of Commerce & Trade Jim Cheng, who have said that this is their highest priority. The momentum here is growing. I would prefer not having to take this path but destiny has chosen this for me.

Let's put our professional network to work in support of a fellow member. Please keep Clement in mind if you know or hear of any government financial employment opportunities. He can be reached at 757-635-6605 or by e-mail at cmikowski@cox.net.

Out of Site - Go Exploring on Mark's Website of the Month

By Mark Morehouse, CGFM

AGA can bring together financial management professionals from all walks of life, geographic localities, educational backgrounds, certification credentials and levels of government. We as members are fortunate to converse with this assortment of individuals in attending chapter meetings, Professional Development Conferences and member events. These networking opportunities give us time to better understand one another and learn new techniques that make our positions easier and enhance our careers.

Lately, with all the weather concerns we have had—mainly too much snow here or more recently Washington, D.C.—you may have had the chance to watch the Weather Channel. We all have seen it change much over the years. Today it brings us “Weather on the 8’s” as well as in-house programs that help us understand the weather and how it impacts us. I especially like watching ‘the fools’ standing on the beach front, sometimes right here in Hampton Roads, reporting on a hurricane while they hold onto a rail.

Did you ever consider what goes on in the background of the Weather Channel? They are basically like any other business needing leaders, lawyers, contractors and accountants. Recently, I ran across an advertisement for a Staff Accountant at the Weather Channel. The link is: <http://jobview.monster.com/GetJob.aspx?JobID=85842092&from=indeed>. Makes one think, wow maybe I can help make the Weather Channel better than it already is? Think of all the celebrities you would meet such as Al Roper. The position description reads like one for most for accountants—but this opportunity offers perks not offered traditional accountants. Who knows the accountant selected may become a celebrity his or herself!

Imagine some day in the future, AGA initiates a new channel called the “Accounting Channel.” Can you imagine all the spell bounding documentaries offered to the public? I can imagine programs such as: CSI: Forensic Accounting, New Trends in Accounting, accounting soap operas, and Accounting for Adults (PG-13 rated program). Wow, the possibilities are endless. The staff accountant that the Weather Channel hired would be fully trained in the matters of accounting relating to TV station productions and could become the Controller for the Accounting Channel. Talk about managing one's career.

Treasurer's Report



Financial Report Summary ...or, How Much \$ Do We Have?

By Curtis P. Joachim

Oh my! I can't believe it's that time again, signaled by that dreaded email from Kelly letting me know that my submission for the monthly AGA Newsletter is "almost" late. But hey, as long as the clock has not ticked away the last minute, there's still time, right? So here's my two cents.

Another month gone by, at least this time, I have a genuine reason to gripe about not having enough time. That's because this month, I had only 28 days to do what I couldn't get done in 30! But you can be assured that I made the most out of every second!

There were a few significant events in February that made it memorable, like Valentine's Day, events commemorating Black History Month and the opening of the Winter Olympics in Canada (I still don't get that ice curling thing).

One such event was the annual Black History Month breakfast that was held at the Chesapeake Conference Center on February 24th. The Guest of Honor was Rear Admiral Errol Brown U. S. Coast Guard, Retired. Rear Admiral Brown is heralded as the first African American to flag officer rank in the United States Coast Guard!

I remember the times when the phrase "the first African American to..." was common. Thankfully, because of the tenacity and pioneering spirits of those like Rear Admiral Brown, and others like Rosa Parks, George Washington Carver, Marcus Garvey, Mohammed Ali, Booker T. Washington, Oprah Winfrey, General Colin Powell and President Barak Obama, who refused to accept mediocrity, refused to take no for an answer, but chose to take their destinies into their own hands and re-write history, this phrase is no longer common.

I could talk about those who ignored threats to their own lives, stared down the barrels of shot-guns, fire-hoses and police clubs, those who went on before us, chopped down the trees, cleared the forest and blazed a trail that now allows us to safely make the journey down the road to success. Sometimes that road is bumpy, but a few bumps are sometimes necessary to test our resolve and cause us to appreciate our achievements even more.

So, what are you doing with the opportunities that lie within your grasp? I've heard it said that we only have two, maybe three opportunities in a life-time to achieve something great, to make a significant difference in our world and the lives of others.

Can you look back and recognize some of those opportunities? Has number one, two or hopefully not three, past you by? We all know the common phrase that there are three types of people in this world: Those who make things happen. Those who watch things happen. And those who wondered what happened!

AGA VIRGINIA PENINSULA CHAPTER STATUS OF FUNDS AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2010

Balance Brought Forward February 1, 2010	\$11,947.31
<u>Operating Income</u>	
February Luncheon Fees	370.00
Spring 09 PDC Surplus	10,911.00
Fall 09 PDC Surplus	2,049.00
Total Income	\$13,330.00
Total Funds Available	\$25,277.31
<u>Operating Expenses</u>	
February Luncheon	756.64
Microsoft Office 2007	278.99
CHKD McDonald House	106.86
Samaritan House	100.00
Union Mission	100.00
ASMC (Spring 09 Surplus)	5,455.50
Total Expenses	\$ 6,797.99
Balance 28 February 2010	\$18,479.32

To which group do you belong? Hopefully you're one of the movers and shakers. If not, here's your chance to switch groups.

In the next month or so, our local chapter will be holding elections for officers. Get involved; throw your name in the hat, be one of the ones who make things happen. Is there something different you'd like to see done in the chapter? Volunteer, take charge and make it happen.

It doesn't even have to be in the chapter, it could be in your neighborhood, your work place, your church, your city, your state, your country and yes even your world. Yes, you can make a difference in your world. How you say? It's simple. Just impact one life in a positive way. Give of your time, energy and talents, expecting nothing in return.

Don't be a "no show".....For February's luncheon there were 39 attendees with two no shows and six people who showed up without a reservation. Although this was good in that we didn't have to absorb any unnecessary costs, however, by not pre-registering you take the risk of showing up and there not be enough lunches for everyone. So please do take the time to pre-register when the notifications are published for the monthly functions.

If you have any questions, e-mail me at cjoachim@thejoachimgroupcpas.com.

You Don't Have to be a "Born" Leader to be a Great Leader

By Dr. Alan Zimmerman

Since the beginning of time, people have wondered if leaders are born or if leaders are made. Hundreds of books and hundreds of research studies have addressed this question as well. I know. I've read them.

So what is the RIGHT answer? I think I know ... and that is ... a few people are "born leaders." They're more "naturally inclined" to be leaders. But most leaders are "made." Somehow or other they learned how to be leaders. And I believe leadership is teachable and leadership skills are learnable.

If you do a few simple things, you will become a leader ... and a very effective one at that. You've got to ...

1. Show a brighter future.

Now that sounds pretty fancy and theoretical. But it's not. It's simply a matter of letting people know there's something out there that is better than what they have right now. Help them see it, feel it, smell it, taste it, and touch it. The more vividly they "see" a brighter future, the more excited they become in helping you make that future a reality.

In fact, you may have used this strategy and didn't even know you were doing it. If, for example, you were working lots of extra hours to complete a project, and if your spouse was having a hard time with your schedule, you may have reminded your spouse of the week's vacation that was coming right after the project was turned in. You were showing a brighter future. Whether you use a brighter future to boost productivity, change behavior, or just plain encourage someone, it almost always works. So your leadership begins by painting a picture of a brighter future, and then ...

2. Reinforce the brighter future over and over again.

It's one of the key things author Warren Bennis discovered when he interviewed 90 leaders. The effective leader does not offer some vision of the future a single time and leave it at that. No, he repeats it over and over again.

It's what the Captain of the Australian yacht team did to wrest the America's cup away from the United States ... a cup the U.S. held for 132 years. As silly as it sounds, the Captain got his team to visualize every night for 15 minutes for two years ... being out in front ... winning the cup. The more they visualized it, the more real their dream became. In fact, they finished many of their visualizations with their hearts racing and pulse pounding, and they finished the race ... out front and winning.

3. Emphasize the negativity of the alternative.

Consultant Michael Podolinsky gives several examples of that. For example, if you've got a second shift that keeps outperforming the first shift by 10%, you might say something like this to your crew, "If we can beat the second shift in the next quarter, I will give each of you an extra day off for your annual leave. If we miss the target and the second shift still outperforms us, we'll have to work weekends the following month until we equal their production." As Michael says, "It's a big incentive to win, a bigger incentive not to lose."

If you've got a child who is coasting in school and wearing a highly inappropriate hair style, you might try, "I'll make a deal with you. If you get your grades up to an 'A' level and keep them there until the end of the year, I'll get you a new iPod Nano and back off about your hair style. If you don't get your grades up, I get to say how your hair will look for the rest of the year." As Michael puts it, "If you lose the bet, you have an 'A' student with weird hair. If you win, you have a clean cut 'B' student. Seems like you win either way."

4. Empower people with choice.

Effective leaders aren't control freaks. They encourage and empower people to be co-creators of the brighter future. It gets them excited. And as famed auto maker Walter P. Chrysler noted almost 100 years ago, "I feel sorry for the person who can't get genuinely excited about his work. Not only will he never be satisfied, but he will never achieve anything worthwhile." One of the ways you get people excited is to empower them with choice. In other words, you don't simply shove your vision down their throats. You don't say, in effect, "Take it or leave it." You ask them for their input on shaping the future.

And this is critical!!! You don't ask how they would do it. That will only get you ONE answer, and they'll resent it if you don't accept and implement their ONE answer. Instead, ask for THREE RIGHT answers. That way, when you pick or incorporate some or all of their RIGHT answers, their commitment to implementation and follow-through goes through the roof. So ask people for their input and choices and right answers, and then listen. And that's tough for a lot of leaders. As American author Alice Duer Miller noted, "People love to talk but hate to listen."

5. Turn mistakes into lessons.

If you're going to empower people to think more and do more without your direct supervision, they're going to make some mistakes. It's an inevitable part of the learning process. But the research on effective leaders makes an interesting point. Effective leaders don't use the word "failure." Oh sure, they talk about mistakes, but they don't talk about "failure." That's a road leading to nowhere. As one leader said, "A mistake is just another way of doing things."

Effective leaders legitimize mistakes and illuminate mistakes. One leader did that by setting up a cannon-like device in the company. Every time someone made a mistake, they were to write down what they learned from that mistake and set off the cannon. The explosions could be heard throughout the plant throughout the day ... letting people know that mistakes are okay ... just as long as you learn from them. And finally ...

6. Acknowledge the contributions of others.

No one ever outgrows the need for acknowledgement, appreciation, and approval. And wise leaders know that. They know they can't expect people to be innovative, self-starting, peak performing, company-minded players if they, the leaders, aren't sincere and generous in their recognition and rewards. Whether or not you're a "born" leader, you can do any and all of the 6 leadership behaviors I've just outlined. Now it's your turn to do it.

AGA National & Regional News

Call for 2010 National Academic Scholarships

Are you or a family member pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies in disciplines such as accounting, auditing, budgeting, economics, finance, information technology, public administration, etc.? If so, consider applying for an AGA National Academic Scholarship today! Each year, AGA National awards up to four \$3,000 full-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members; one \$1,000 part-time merit scholarships to AGA members and their family members; and one \$3,000 community service scholarship. The **deadline for receipt of applications is Wednesday, March 31, 2010.** [Download a copy of the application](#) or contact [Louise Kapelewski](#).



I'm Cecelia Smith, your Regional Vice President for the Mid-Atlantic Region of AGA. Each month I will bring you various topics of interest from a regional perspective as well as keep you updated on AGA national news. If there are other topics of interest you would like to hear about from a regional or national perspective, please send me an email at cecelia.smith-1@nasa.gov.

National Award Nominees Solicited

AGA's National Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for National Awards that recognize the leaders advancing our profession and setting the standards of excellence. These awards will be presented during AGA's 59th Annual Professional Development Conference and Exposition in Orlando, July 11 – 14, 2010. In many cases, individuals do not have to be members of AGA to be eligible. All nominations are due by **Friday, April 16, 2010.** [Nomination forms are available online.](#) For more information, contact [Louise Kapelewski](#) Help Us Recognize Visionary Leadership, Innovative Management, and Educational Commitment to Our Profession and Our Association!

VA Peninsula Chapter Well Represented at AGA's National Leadership Conference

Chapter members **Garnise Dennis, Allison Shoemaker, Cecelia Smith, Mary Lechner and Kelly Stefanko** were amongst the more than 700 AGA members and government finance professionals gathered in Washington, D.C. mid-February for AGA's National Leadership Conference. The two days of educational sessions were devoted to leadership issues facing all levels of government and included a number of timely and thought provoking sessions on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the economy, particularly the struggle states are having in balancing their budgets. Read comments by the NLC's keynote speakers in [AGA's blog](#).

Mid-Atlantic Region Members on AGA National Slate of Officers for 2010-2013

AGA's National Nominating Committee has selected its slate of officers to serve on the National Board of Directors for 2010-2013, with **Richard O. Bunce Jr., CGFM**, selected as National President-Elect Designate. Bunce, a member of AGA's Richmond Chapter, is the executive director of Assurance Services at Virginia Commonwealth University. Denise Wu, of the Baltimore chapter was selected as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President -designee

Continuing Education That Meets Your Needs

AGA now offer 41 courses, which are currently available for delivery at your organization. Newer courses include:

[Administration of ARRA Grants](#) - [Building a Productive Team](#) - [Collecting Testimonial Evidence](#) - [Effective Writing Skills for Accountants and Auditors](#) - [Ethics in the Workplace](#) - [Fraud Detection and Prevention](#) - [Powerful Presentations and Briefing Techniques](#) - [The Government Audit: Basic Concepts Through Resolution](#) - [Working Papers and Audit Evidence](#) - [Writing Reports More Effectively](#)

These AGA-sponsored courses are developed and taught by experts in their field of study. These up-to-date courses are cost efficient, convenient and meet the growing demands of the government financial profession. Also, if your organization's training needs are larger in scope or require a more customized approach, we can help assemble a tailored program that fits your needs.

For pricing and additional information, contact [Joe Jozefczyk](#), at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 307, or [Lynn Hoffman](#) at ext. 342.



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