

Accountability First! Integrity Foremost!



# The Baltimore Ledger

Association of Government Accountants Baltimore Chapter

FEBRUARY 2010



BALTIMORE CHAPTER

[www.agabaltimore.org](http://www.agabaltimore.org)

PO Box 11841 Suite 55  
Baltimore, MD 21207-0841

February Training Luncheon

Thursday, February 25, 2010

3 CPEs \* \$45 Members \* \$95 Nonmembers



## **Financial Leadership: Preparation and Presentation for Appropriation Hearings**

Don Hartline, Deputy Associate Commissioner for Budget,  
Social Security Administration

11:30 Networking

12:00 Lunch

1:00-4:00 Presentation

Four Points Sheraton BWI

7032 Elm Road

Baltimore, Maryland 21240

[www.starwoodhotels.com/fourpoints](http://www.starwoodhotels.com/fourpoints)

Refer to the website for detailed directions.



### *Inside This Issue:*

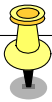
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# Congratulations!!!

**Paul Geraty, Partner, KPMG LLP**, of the Baltimore Chapter will be awarded a Private Sector Financial Excellence Award at the AGA National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. on February 18-19, 2009.

### **Upcoming Event:**

The Baltimore Chapter's Community Service Committee will be collecting art and school supplies, as well as men's and women's toiletry donations at the March 18<sup>th</sup> training luncheon. See page 8 for more details.



## President's Message



Happy February!

I am beaming from ear to ear. But, who wouldn't beam from ear to ear after getting a message from the AGA National office expressing, "Loved your January newsletter! We'd love to reprint your article on the early career event

..... and run a couple of photos in TOPICS. We'd like to show other chapters what you folks are doing to get the word out about government careers. Great stuff! ....Thanks for being such an awesome chapter!" Hearing those kind and glowing words reminds me of the tremendous value of the work we do to plan and carry out various chapter events. Kudos to all who help make this chapter great!

Speaking of great, we hosted quite a large crowd at our January training meeting, where the topics were the Recovery Act and government auditing standards. Our knowledgeable speakers brought us up-to-date information on what's going on with the Recovery Act and some ideas on how we can do our jobs even more effectively to monitor and report on stimulus spending. At our February training meeting, Don Hartline, Deputy Associate Commissioner for Budget at the Social Security Administration, will discuss Leadership. We look forward to hearing from Don and expect that the training will be valuable.

Please peruse the newsletter and website to learn of upcoming chapter activities. If you have not done so and work at the Social Security

Administration, please consider volunteering to mentor a student from Southside Academy on February 26<sup>th</sup> for the AGA Early Careers' Job Shadowing Day. There is information elsewhere in the newsletter and on the website about how you can volunteer for this worthy event. Also, be on the look-out for news of upcoming CGFM training to be sponsored by the chapter. We would love for you to participate. Finally, AGA's National Leadership Conference will be held on February 18-19th, in Washington, D.C. I plan to attend again this year and always find it a wonderful opportunity to network and hear the most up-to-date information on the issues that affect government accountability professionals.

In closing, I wish you a great February and a great rest of the year.

*"Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what. Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful."*

**Mark Victor Hansen**

Deborah Kinsey,  
Baltimore Chapter President 2009-2010  
Association of Government Accountants

### Staying Connected, Just One Click Away



AGA National

AGA D.C.

AGA Northern Virginia

AGA Montgomery/PG

AGA Membership

AICPA

ISACA

MACPA

CGFM Information

AGA Mid-Atlantic Region

## January Training Recap

Our first speaker was Mr. H. Glen Walker, the Executive Director of the Recovery, Accountability, and Transparency (RAT) Board. There are 12 board members plus Mr. Walker. The board members are from the Inspector General (IG) offices which received the highest amounts of Recovery money. There are 3 committees which make up the board. They are: (1) Recovery.gov, (2) Accountability, and (3) Recovery Funds Working Group.

The Recovery.gov committee was the RAT Board's main focus for the first several months. In addition, this committee instituted a sister web site for Federal agencies to use, FederalReporting.gov. The second committee is the Accountability Committee, and the third committee is the Recovery Funds Working Group. Mr. Walker explained the functions of the committees, some of the problems encountered, and their resolutions thus far. Some examples of resolutions were: Edit checks and alerts were added to the Federal Reporting data base. Recipients can now make corrections to their data from February 1, 2010 until March 31, 2010.

The Accountability Committee, the main focus going

forward, runs the hotline. When the committee receives a tip, it goes through triage (analysis). The committee determines if an audit should be performed and if it should, the audit is assigned to the appropriate IG. The IG reports its findings to the committee and the cycle is completed. In addition to this, the Accountability Committee reviews contracts and grants for completeness and also determines whether competition requirements have been met. They also review for wasteful spending, poor contract/grant management, and other abuses. One tool the committee uses is mapping complaints geographically to identify "hotspots".

The Recovery Funds Working Group committee is a liaison group and has several initiatives to date. Two of them are to provide an overview of planned initiatives and a monthly OIG progress report. The group is currently performing a survey of Federal Acquisition and Grant personnel, and will use this information to make government-wide recommendations regarding Recovery Act oversight. Finally the committee made recommendations to OMB to address funding State and Local Recovery Act oversight activities.

Continued on Page 5



## February Speaker Information

**D**on Hartline has been the Deputy Associate Commissioner for Budget at Social Security Administration since 2007. He came to SSA from the Federal Communications Commission where he served as the Budget Officer and Deputy Chief Financial Officer. He not only has an extensive background in budget formulation and execution, but also a broad government background including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Labor Relations Board, ACTION, Department of the Army, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.



Mr. Hartline will provide attendees with an overview of Congressional oversight within the context of the federal budget process. A major task of today's leaders in government financial management is to prepare and present budget justifications to legislators. Attendees will then split into groups of either committee members or government witnesses to participate in mock appropriations hearings. Briefing materials and initial questions will be provided for individual preparation before hearings commence. Similar mock hearings have been conducted with Senior Executive Service (SES) candidates.

## Presidential Kudos Awards



*I want to thank Letha Holliday, Keith Lewis, Matthew Belinki, Brenda Ramos-Jones, and Michelle Murrill for all of their hard work in procuring the facilities for our monthly meetings and for ensuring we receive proper certification for our CPEs.*

*Also, kudos go out to Eve Labador for heading up the charity event where the chapter sent candy and cards to the soldiers in Afghanistan. This was a first-time ever event for the chapter and many members and non-members participated.*

*Tehorah*

## January Training Recap-Continued

Hugh Monaghan was our next speaker and he discussed the Single Audits (OMB Circular A-133) and how the ARRA contracts and grants affect the audit scope. The Federal programs selected for audit in the single audit are considered "Major Programs." The auditor selects these programs by applying rules contained in the OMB Circular A-133 and its Compliance Supplement. OMB Circular A-133 and the 2009 Compliance Supplement may be accessed from: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>

The OMB Recovery Act implementing guidance contains two noteworthy provisions. OIGs will perform follow-up reviews of Single Audit quality with emphasis on Recovery Act funds, and report the results on Recovery.com. Also, as of Fiscal Year End, September 30, 2009, all Single Audit reports filed with the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) will be made publicly available on the internet.

Mr. Monaghan also mentioned that since Single Audits are currently the tool used to review for accountability of Federal awards, the Single Audits should also include steps to determine how the Recovery Act funds were spent, for what purpose and were the funds given to eligible persons/entities. Inspectors General are required to perform follow-up reviews of Single Audits quality with emphasis on Recovery Act funds.

Our third speaker was Eric Holbrook from GAO's Accountability and Standards Team. Mr. Holbrook also spoke about Single Audit and Recovery Act issues. The Federal government grants to state and local governments have risen substantially from \$7 billion in 1960 to \$500 billion budgeted in 2009 –before adding the Recovery Act dollars. Single Audits, conducted in accordance with OMB Circular A-133 and Government Auditing Standards (Yellow book), are intended to be a key accountability mechanism for the use of federal grants. However, in 2007, the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency (PCIE) issued a report disclosing that a high rate of Single Audits had unacceptable quality.

In 2009 GAO issued a report that found opportunities exist to improve the Single Audit process. GAO found that less than 3 percent of the audits covered more than 85 percent of the federal expenditures subject to single audit. GAO recommended that OMB evaluate the Single Audit process by designating a federal work group. The work group was to evaluate the current single audit process and identify simplified alternatives for meeting the accountability objectives of the Single Audit Act for the smallest audits, while achieving the proper balance between risk and cost-

effectiveness for all single audits. The work group is preparing a new Single Audit Guide and hopes to have it available summer 2010.

Our last speaker was Marsha Buchanan from GAO's Accountability and Standards Team (Yellow Book Team). She spoke about upcoming changes to the Yellow Book. The next revision is due out in 2011. We can expect to see the exposure draft about June 2010. There will be a 90 day comment period. Please read it and comment with your rationale for your comment. Ms. Buchanan stated that she really appreciated comments.

If you have not read the FY 2007 edition of the Yellow Book, chapter one is essential. Chapter one explains "must", "should," and "required." Each term triggers different documentation. As an example, "should" triggers a need to explain if it is done differently. Chapter three explains Continuing Professional Education (CPE). All auditors should complete every two years, at least 24 hours of CPE that relate to Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). This is very important, as peer reviewers look for this. Another area of the Yellow Book that Ms. Buchanan mentioned was Abuse. Chapter four states that if an auditor becomes aware of indications of abuse that could be material, auditors should apply audit procedures specifically to ascertain: whether material abuse has occurred, and, the potential effect on the subject matter of the audit. However, because the determination of abuse is subjective, auditors are not required to provide reasonable assurance for detecting abuse.

Also available on the Yellow Book web page are professional requirements tools helpful to ensure compliance with generally accepted government audit standards. They contain general requirements for audit organizations and specific requirements for different types of audit. There is also an extraction of the all "should" and "must" statements. This can be included in work papers and cross referenced to specific steps.

From now on the Yellow Book will reference the American Institute of CPA's rather than incorporating specific language. This will help avoid changes to the Yellow Book when the Institute revised its guidance. In addition, the next revision of the Yellow Book will probably eliminate Agreed-Upon Procedures (AUP), as AUP is not GAGAS. Instead auditors who perform AUP's will need to cite AICPA Standards, and General Standards for GAGAS.

## Early Career Job Shadowing Day Friday, February 26, 2010

The Early Careers Committee will be sponsoring a Job Shadowing Day held at the offices of the Social Security Administration (SSA) on Friday, February 26, 2010. The committee is still looking for volunteers to serve as hosts for the participating students. The event will begin around 9:00 AM and end around 12:00 PM. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please email Kelly Stankus at [kelly.stankus@ssa.gov](mailto:kelly.stankus@ssa.gov) and/or Rashad Holloway at [holloway.rashad@epa.gov](mailto:holloway.rashad@epa.gov) as soon as possible.

# Forensic Accounting Academy™

## and Certified Forensic Financial Analyst (CFFA) Proctored Exam

### Intensive, Five-Day Program

The National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts (NACVA), through its Consultants' Training Institute (CTI), and **financialforensics®**, have developed the only software-based civil/criminal financial forensics/forensic accounting methodology in existence, called Forensic Accounting/Investigation Methodology© (FA/IM©). The tools and techniques revealed in this methodology are applicable to auditing, tax, valuation, litigation, fraud and virtually every aspect of CPA services.

### Program Content

The Forensic Accounting Academy—the only program of its kind in the United States—takes participants from concept to detail and delivers specific accounting tools and techniques that are immediately applicable to virtually all aspects of the accounting profession. You will gain a working knowledge of the FA/IM© software process map and 200 to 300 specific tools and techniques to use in forensic accounting and related engagements.

For a detailed program description: [click here](#)

### Who Should Attend

CPAs, Auditors, Expert Witnesses, Attorneys, Judges, CEOs, CFOs, Economists, Bankers, Lenders, Credit Analysts, Stock and Market Analysts, Financial Analysts, Investment Bankers, Investors, Investigators, and Law Enforcement professionals.

CPE Credits: 40 hours	Fields of Study
Program Level: Overview	19 hours Auditing; 11 hours Accounting
Delivery Method: Group Live	5 hours Specialized Knowledge & Applications
Advanced Preparation: None	2 hours Business Law; 2 hours Communication; 1 hour Regulatory Ethics

Pricing	NACVA and IBA Members	Non Members
Individual Days	\$495	\$550
Five-Day Academy	\$2,475	\$2,750
Certified Forensic Financial Analyst (CFFA) Exam	\$295	\$295
First Year NACVA Membership with Training and Exam \$300		

### REGISTER NOW!

**Members of both NACVA and IBA receive an additional 5% discount.**

**Early Registration Discounts ♦10% if by January 15, 2010 or 5% if by February 15, 2010.**

Multi-person and full-time Academician and Government Employee discounts are available. Please inquire.

To register, print, complete, and mail or fax (801-486-7500) the Registration Form to the Consultants' Training Institute (c/o NACVA). Or print and complete the Registration Form, scan, and e-mail to [nacva1@nacva.com](mailto:nacva1@nacva.com) or call Member Services: (800) 677-2009. [Click here for the Registration Form to print and fax \(PDF\)](#) **Contact Information** For more information regarding refund, complaint, and/or program cancellation policies, please call our Director or Member Services at (801) 486-0600.

## ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS BALTIMORE CHAPTER

Annually, the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Baltimore Chapter awards the Timothy L. Trockenbrot, Jr. and Allan L. Reynolds scholarships to students matriculating at local colleges/universities. The Baltimore Chapter created these scholarships to recognize Mr. Trockenbrot and Mr. Reynolds' contributions to the government accounting profession. This year the chapter will be awarding 4 scholarships to students who meet our eligibility criteria:

2-\$500 scholarships for students attending 2-year colleges and 2-\$1,000 scholarships for students pursuing a bachelor's degree.

**Eligibility:** Candidates must:

- ✓ Be registered as a part/full-time student at a College or University in Baltimore or the surrounding counties and have completed a minimum of 30 college credits.
- ✓ Pursue a degree in Accounting, Finance, Business, Public Administration, or Other Financial Management related discipline.
- ✓ GPA Requirement: 3.0 or higher.
- ✓ Submit a complete application, which includes **faculty nomination, personal statement, resume, and official transcript.**
- ✓ Attend the AGA luncheon meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2010 at the Rolling Road Golf Club.

**Deadline:** Scholarship applications must be received by **April 23, 2010.**

**E-mail:** [awards@agabaltimore.org](mailto:awards@agabaltimore.org) (if you are submitting your application through e-mail, please provide an official copy of your transcript via USPS Mail)

### **USPS Mail:**

AGA Baltimore Chapter - Awards Committee  
Attn: Jared Martin  
P.O. Box 11841, Suite 55  
Baltimore, MD 21207

If you have any questions or need further information, please send an email to [awards@agabaltimore.org](mailto:awards@agabaltimore.org).

**Selection Criteria:** The Awards Committee will review all applications and select winners based on the following criteria:

- Faculty Nomination
- Personal Statement
- Resume
- Official Transcript

*See the chapter website for the  
application form and more  
detailed information.*



**Project PLASE, Inc. addresses homelessness by providing transitional housing, permanent housing and supportive services to homeless adults. They serve the most vulnerable and underserved, including persons with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, addiction, developmental disabilities, and ex-offenders, etc. Project PHASE, Inc. treats, restores and rehabilitates the whole person. They empower each individual to function at the highest level possible.**

**The Baltimore Chapter will be collecting art and school supplies, as well as men's and women's toiletry donations for Project PLASE, Inc. at the *March 18<sup>th</sup> Training.***

**Please come, donate, and be a blessing to someone less fortunate!**

## Community Service Activities for the 2009– 2010 Program Year

Our Daily Bread—Feed the Hungry	March 2010
Community Easter Egg Hunt & Bonnet Contest	April 2010
Avon Walk for Breast Cancer	May 2010
Fourth of July Games and Races	July 4, 2010

### Activities and Dates to Be Determined:

Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center  
March of Dimes—March for Babies



### Member News

Congratulations to **Jeff Broglie**, SSA, who was promoted to a GS-13 Systems Accountant position in the Division of Financial Policy and Reporting within the Office of Financial Policy and Integrity.

Congratulations to **Mark Wohlfort**, SSA, who was promoted to a GS-13 Systems Accountant position in the Division of Financial Integrity within the Office of Financial Policy and Integrity.

# JFMIP Federal Financial Management Conference

## Sponsors:

Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) Principals

**GS** GRADUATE SCHOOL  
Pathways to Performance and Success

Financial Systems Integration Office, U.S. General Services Administration

## Meeting the New Challenges in Financial Management

### JFMIP Federal Financial Management Conference

**Tuesday, March 23, 2010**

The Renaissance Washington DC Hotel  
999 Ninth Street NW • Washington, DC 20001

#### Keynote and Plenary Session Speakers

John Berry, Director, Office of Personnel Management

Jeffrey Zlents, Deputy Director for Management and Chief Performance Officer, Office of Management and Budget

Richard Gregg, Acting Fiscal Assistant Secretary, Department of the Treasury

Sallyanne Harper, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer, Government Accountability Office

Daniel Werfel, Controller, Office of Management and Budget

#### Awards

The Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Awards for Distinguished Leadership in Financial Management Improvement will be presented by the JFMIP Principals during the luncheon session.

[Registration & More Information Here](#)



Government financial managers are deeply committed to producing timely, reliable and useful financial information, with the goal of running government programs more efficiently. At AGA's National Leadership Conference (NLC), those sentiments are more than just words.

Join us Feb. 18–19, 2010 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. and show your commitment to a more accountable future. Take the lead in improving transparency for your government agency.

The NLC brings together a stellar lineup of respected government financial management and accountability leaders to share valuable insight, proven strategies, lessons learned, and discuss the newest management techniques and the most recent information on always-changing standards and regulations.

Stay on top of issues that affect you. Sessions cover current issues relating to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the effects of political transitions, a look at the first year of Obama's presidency, and what the future holds. This event also features the newest tools and innovations to help agencies do their jobs more easily and more effectively.

Don't miss this opportunity to earn 14 CPE hours, share best practices, find solutions to shared challenges, network with your peers and learn from the top financial management leaders and industry experts.

**Register Now!**

## AGA Audio Conference

### Understanding IT Audits for Program Managers and Auditors

February 10, 2010 • 2:00 pm—3:50 pm • \$249 per site • 2 CPEs

AGA, in conjunction with the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers and the Association of Local Government Auditors, is pleased to announce a new and increasingly important topic to our audio conference schedule—understanding information technology audits.

Audits have been conducted for many years. Many years ago, audits were performed using paper as evidence. Financial statement preparation has undergone a massive change since the introduction of computers. As such, one can no longer perform an audit without thinking about Information Technology (IT). Whether one is performing a financial statement audit for a large federal agency, state or local government, or even for a large publicly traded company – IT must be incorporated into the audit. Program managers can benefit greatly from knowing what the auditors are expected to do.

To share his expertise in IT auditing is **Jack Heyman, CGFM, CISA, CPA**, who has nearly 15 years of technical and leadership experience providing internal controls, systems auditing, consulting, financial auditing and accounting services to Fortune 500 companies, accounting and consulting firms, and government agencies. He offers hands-on experience leading and managing multiple engagements of varying scope and team composition. Jack is a solution provider with extensive experience assessing, planning, staffing and managing engagements for a diverse range of clients.

Jack's background includes operating his own consulting practice, serving as a senior manager within the internal audit department for a Fortune 500 company and manager for a Big 4 accounting firm.

Please join us for two hours of lively discussion about this important and timely topic. In addition to the speaker's commentary, there will be approximately 20 minutes for Q & A so participants can ask the speaker questions and share their own experiences.

[Register for Audio Conference](#)

# 2009-2010 Upcoming Training

Date	Location	Topic/Speaker	CPEs	Member Cost	Non-Member Cost
3/18/10 Thursday	Rolling Road Golf Club	<b>Early Careers Meeting</b> <b>Empowering Successful Professionals</b> Johnny Parker & Michael Robinson SSA, OIG Assistant Inspector General for Technology & Resource Management	3	\$45	\$95
4/21/2010 Wednesday	Maritime Institute	<b>Annual Fraud Conference</b> <b>Fraud Issues, Internal Controls</b> Scott Klososky Sam Mok	8	\$160	\$200
5/20/2010 Thursday	Rolling Road Golf Club	<b>Annual Awards Meeting</b> <b>Motivation for Career Success</b> Karren Alexander	1	\$15	\$35

## AGA National News



### Call for National Award Nominations

AGA's National Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the 13 National Awards that recognize the leaders advancing our profession and setting the standards of excellence. These awards will be presented during [AGA's Professional Development Conference & Exposition \(PDC\)](#) in Orlando, July 11-14. In many cases, individuals do not have to be members of AGA to be eligible. **All nominations are due by Friday, April 16.** Nomination forms and additional information is [available online](#) or contact [Louise Kapelewski](mailto:Louise.Kapelewski@agacgm.org), lkapelewski@agacgm.org.

### Wanted: Citizen-Centric Report (CCR) Reviewers

AGA offers a **Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting** for entities that prepare and distribute high-quality Citizen-Centric Reports. To be eligible for the certificate, governments must incorporate into their report the program's high standards of content, visual appeal, readability, distribution and timeliness in reporting.

The number of reports that we are receiving is steadily increasing and therefore we are looking for additional members to serve as volunteer reviewers of Citizen reports that are submitted for the [Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting](#).

#### *What Do Reviewers Do?*

Volunteer reviewers read four-page Citizen-Centric reports, evaluate them using [AGA's judging guidelines](#) and respond with recommendations for report improvements. Each report gets reviewed by three volunteer reviewers. Reviewers decide whether the report they judged merits the Certificate of Excellence.

#### *What is the Time Commitment?*

On average, reviewing/judging a report takes approximately one to two hours and it is all done electronically. More than likely, each reviewer will review one report a month.

Your help is needed! Please volunteer today! *Interested in Being a Reviewer?* Please contact [Susan Fritzlen](#).

## CGFM Announcement

### ***Are you interested in taking the CGFM training courses???***

The Baltimore Chapter of AGA would like to offer CGFM training courses during the spring of 2010 in the local area. These courses will help prospective candidates prepare for the CGFM examinations. The courses include:

Course 1: The Government Environment

Course 2: Government Accounting, Financial Reporting and Budgeting

Course 3: Government Financial Management and Control

The CGFM Committee is gathering names of individuals interested in taking these courses. If enough interest is gathered, we will host the training courses during the month of March or April 2010.

If you are interested in taking the CGFM training courses, please complete the [CGFM Training Request Form](#) below ***immediately***. Submit completed forms to [gary.hatcher@ssa.gov](mailto:gary.hatcher@ssa.gov) and carbon copy your Supervisor and Training Coordinator.

### CGFM Training Request Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Years in Government: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously taken any CGFM classes? If so, please provide the date in which the classes were offered and by which organization?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you registered for the CGFM exam? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer to take the classes during the month of March or April? \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit completed forms to [cfgm@agabaltimore.org](mailto:cfgm@agabaltimore.org) and carbon copy your Supervisor and Training Coordinator.

Thank you!

# Member Spotlight : Katie Beach

## *What is your current job title and what are your major responsibilities?*

My current job title is Financial Management Analyst in the Division of Central Accounting and Reporting for the Social Security Administration. I work with the Funds Control team to perform cash reconciliations and monitor component requisitions.



## *Where did you go to school?*

I attended the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina where I graduated in 2007.

## *How long have you been a member of AGA and why did you join?*

I am new to AGA! I joined AGA in September 2009. I knew AGA would provide me with great training and networking opportunities.

## *What does being an AGA mean to you?*

As a new employee at the Social Security Administration, my membership to AGA has helped me to understand the responsibilities and challenges of Government Accounting.

## *How has AGA helped your career?*

AGA has provided me with a multitude of training opportunities. Additionally, AGA has

encouraged me to meet other accountants who share common goals and interests.

## *Who has influenced you the most, personally and/or professionally?*

My parents have had the most influence on me both professionally and personally. My parents have encouraged both my brother and myself to always work hard and be a team player.

## *What activities do you enjoy in your free time?*

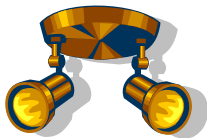
In my free time I enjoy shopping, exercising and cooking.

## *What is your favorite vacation spot?*

My favorite vacation spot is Seabrook Island outside of Charleston, South Carolina. I first discovered Seabrook while attending the College of Charleston and now I go there every year. The beaches are beautiful and the weather is always warm!

## *What is your favorite restaurant and what do you order?*

Currently, my favorite restaurant is Mezze in Fells Point. Mezze is know for their Greek small plates. I love their spinach fritters and hummus.



## Looking for members to spotlight!



If you would like to be featured in the next Member Spotlight or know of someone who could be interviewed, please e-mail [newsletter@agabaltimore.org](mailto:newsletter@agabaltimore.org)!

**State & Local Members Wanted for Future Spotlights**



*"The more members we have, the more we can do. With strength in numbers, we will be heard!"*

## **Share the Magic!**

The 2009–2010 "[Share the Magic](#)" of Membership Member-Get-A-Member Campaign offers you the opportunity to win great prizes just for sharing the value of your AGA membership with your friends and colleagues and persuading them to join.

The campaign runs from May 1, 2009–April 30, 2010 and encourages current members to recruit new members. Because we are a membership-driven organization, an effective membership program must be an on-going, year-round process. The power of your organization is directly related to the commitment and active participation of your membership. It is essential that your Association aggressively recruit, retain and engage membership in the organization.

Since you already know the benefits of being an AGA member and have contacts in the financial management profession, this is a great way to increase AGA's membership, which in turn expands your own professional network and allows AGA to better meet your needs. Prizes are awarded to show our appreciation of your support of AGA and your efforts to help the Association grow.

[View the complete list of Member-Get-A-Member Rules.](#)

## **How to participate:**

It's easy! Request membership applications by e-mailing membership manager [Rodneikka Scott](#) or by calling 800.AGA.7211. You can also download an application and give it to your friend or colleague, or direct the person to visit AGA's website to apply online.

## **What you can win:**

You only need to recruit 1 new member to win a prize! All members who recruit 6 or more new members before December 31, 2009 will receive free membership. Better yet, recruit the most new members and win the grand prize of a complimentary registration to AGA's **2010 Professional Development Conference & Exposition** in Orlando, FL, and **two one-day passes to an Orlando theme park**. There are many opportunities to win prizes for you and your chapter. [Click here](#) for a complete list of prizes.

Best of luck! And may the best recruiter win—for themselves and AGA!

## **Grants Management Training**



Are you receiving ARRA grant funds and struggling with the accounting and financial requirements? [AGA's onsite Grants Management training course](#) may help! This course provides a general overview of grants management, including preparation, review and submittal of proposals; negotiation and acceptance of grants; post-award financial and administrative management; closeout and audit; and relevant compliance issues.

For more details about Grants Management and all other AGA-sponsored training courses, including pricing and availability, please contact [Joe Jozefczyk](#) at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 307, or [Lynn Hoffman](#) at ext. 342.

# New Deductions, Credits for 2009 Taxes

by Carole Feldman  
Wednesday, January 20, 2010  
provided by Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More forms to file. New and expanded credits and deductions.

When taxpayers sit down to file their 2009 returns, they will find plenty new — some the result of adjusting for inflation, and others changes passed by Congress last year to try to bring the country out of recession.

"Depending on their individual situation, there could be good news and there could be bad news," said Amy McAnarney, executive director of the Tax Institute at H&R Block.

Some things affect all taxpayers. The personal exemption, for example, has increased, to \$3,650 each for the taxpayer and dependents, up \$150 from 2008.

And tax brackets have been adjusted upward by about 5 percent since 2008, said Greg Rosica, tax partner at Ernst & Young and a contributing author to the "Ernst & Young Tax Guide 2010." That means you might not jump to a higher tax bracket if you earned more.

"Certainly there are benefits there for all taxpayers," said Rosica. "There are ones that span the entire income spectrum out there."

Others revisions are more likely to affect low- and moderate-income workers. Income limits for the earned income tax credit have been raised and there's a new category — families with three or more children. The Internal Revenue Service says one in six taxpayers claim the credit.

Still other changes affect those at higher income levels. The exemption for the alternative minimum tax (AMT) has been increased once again, this time to \$70,950 for joint returns and \$46,700 for individuals. If your income is higher than these amounts, you could be subject to the AMT tax.

These changes are among those that happen every year, to keep taxes in line with inflation. But there are a host of other revisions, new for 2009, that will make filing your tax return this year a little more complicated.

For one thing, the standard deduction for taxpayers who don't itemize has become a little less standard.

The standard deduction itself has increased, to \$11,400 for married couples filing jointly, \$5,700 for individuals and \$8,350 for heads of household. As before, it is even bigger if you are blind or 65 or over.

But new this year, you can take more of a standard deduction if you paid state or local real estate taxes,



bought a new car and paid sales or excise taxes and met the income limits, or were a victim of a federally declared disaster.

If you choose to increase your standard deduction by one or more of these items, you'll have to file a new form Schedule L. Otherwise, you can just enter the standard deduction on Form 1040.

The three deductions — for state or local real estate taxes, sales or excise taxes on new car purchases or net disaster losses — also can be taken by people who itemize.

There are expanded tax credits for home purchases and education. And a tax credit for making your home more energy efficient has been reinstated.

Tax experts caution people to be careful that they're claiming every deduction and credit to which they're entitled. A credit reduces the amount of tax you owe; a deduction reduces the income on which taxes are assessed.

You're likely already receiving the benefit of the Making Work Pay credit under the stimulus bill that Congress passed last year. However, you may have to pay a portion back if you're a married couple and both spouses work, or if you have more than one job. If you're a low- or moderate-income worker, you might have some money due to you. A new form, Schedule M, will have to be filed to claim the credit.

"Each year carries with it changes in the tax law. It's important that people understand what has changed in their personal situation," Rosica said.

Did you get married or have a baby? Did you buy or sell stock? Did you inherit money, property or other goods?

Jeff Schnepfer, MSN Money tax expert, recommends that people sit down with a tax professional at least once every three years to review their life changes and financial situation.

"First of all, it's deductible," he said. "Second of all, if you're not a professional, you don't know the minutiae. You don't know all the things you can do right and you don't know all the things you're about to do wrong."

Experts point to common mistakes that people make, which could delay a refund.

Continued on Page 16

## New Deductions, Credits for 2009 Taxes—Continued

According to the Ernst & Young tax guide, some of these errors are mathematical. Others involve omission — like failing to include your Social Security number or those of your dependents. Make sure you pick the correct filing status — head of household or surviving spouse vs. single, for example. And don't forget to sign your return.

Last year, the IRS received more than 141 million tax returns. Of those, about 70 percent were filed electronically. More than 110 million filers were due refunds, averaging \$2,753 each.

The IRS encourages people to file electronically, saying it reduces errors and enables people to get their refunds more quickly. People who file electronically and use direct deposit can get their refunds as soon as 10 days after they file.

This year, the agency estimates that it will take taxpayers using form 1040 an average 21.4 hours to complete their taxes. That includes record keeping, tax planning, and completing and filing the return. The more complicated your return, the more time it will take to complete it.

One major thing that taxpayers will find different this year is the homebuyer tax credit.

"It's already gone through three iterations," said Mark Luscombe, principal analyst for CCH's tax and accounting group.

In 2008, the credit was actually an interest-free, long-term loan. For people who purchased a home in 2009, the credit is a true credit — it only has to be paid back if you stop using the home as your principal residence within three years of purchase. The credit is \$8,000 for first-time homebuyers, defined as those who haven't owned a home in the last three years.

Congress also added a credit for long-time homeowners who purchase a new principal residence — \$6,500. To qualify, a homebuyer would have had to live at least five years in a previously owned home.

There are income limitations for both.

There also is an expanded credit for college education.

The new American opportunity credit provides a maximum

annual credit of \$2,500 per student for each of the first four years of college. The Hope credit that the new credit replaces temporarily covered only the first two years and for most people was smaller. To be eligible, taxpayers would have to pay \$4,000 or more in tuition, fees and course materials.

The credit, which phases out at higher incomes, is 40 percent refundable. "This means that even people who owe no tax can get an annual payment of the credit up to \$1,000 for each eligible student," the IRS said.

What about those students who take more than four years to finish college? "If you're in your fifth year, you're out of luck," Luscombe said.

However, there is another credit — the lifetime learning credit — that may be available for students in their fifth or sixth year of college, or in graduate school.

Other changes include the reinstatement of the credit for making your home more energy efficient. The maximum credit has increased, to \$1,500 for \$5,000 in expenditures on things like insulation, storm windows or an energy efficient furnace.

For people who lost jobs, the first \$2,400 in unemployment benefits is not taxable.

To benefit from most of the tax breaks, you would have had to take action before the end of 2009. But there are a couple of exceptions.

You still might be able to claim the homebuyer credit if you have a signed contract by April 30.

And, if at the end of the day you find you owe the IRS money or want a bigger refund, you may be able to contribute to an individual retirement account until April 15 and take a deduction on your 2009 taxes.

If you're covered by a plan at work, you may be able to deduct a contribution of \$5,000 — \$6,000 if you're at least 50 — if your modified adjusted gross income is less than \$65,000 if you're filing as an individual, or \$109,000 if you're married filing jointly.

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## Correction to January Newsletter

*In the January newsletter, the Early Career Day at Southside Academy High School article should have read as follows:*

*On Friday, December 18th, 2009 the AGA Baltimore Chapter-Early Careers Committee hosted Career Day at Southside Academy High School. Michael Goode, Rashad Holloway, and Andrew Gibson volunteered from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of the Inspector General, Marvin Allmond and Tyrone Allmond of **Allmond and Company, LLC** CPA Accounting Firm (AGA DC Chapter members), Eric Barrington of Men's Wearhouse, Kyle Kinsey (son of Deborah Kinsey), and Deborah Kinsey, AGA Baltimore Chapter President participated as presenters for the Career Day workshops. The presenters made presentations on their careers and the importance of education to the students. Each presenter was inspiring and shared interesting personal stories of their lives with the students in attendance.*



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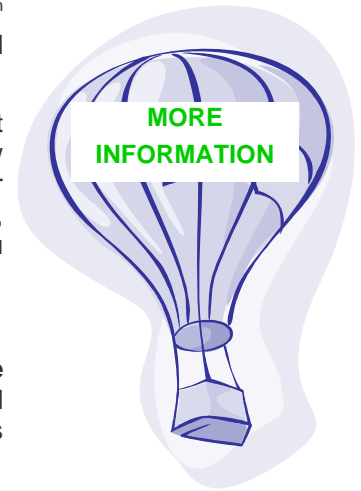
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The CGFM Committee of the AGA Baltimore Chapter will be issuing a survey to assess the Chapter's overall interest in the CGFM. The survey will be sent to both current CGFMs and non-CGFMs. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate your intent for pursuing the certificate, including derived benefits and expectations. The results of this survey will help our Committee develop new ways to promote the CGFM and provide useful information to prospective CGFM candidates.



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**Need CGFM study tips?**

- Purchase the [study guides](#).
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- Develop a study group with co-chapter members and/or local chapter members.
- Study, study, study.

**Are you interested in taking the CGFM Soon?**

AGA is offering an Intensive Review Course nearby in Alexandria, VA near King Street Metro on February 22-23, 2010. The CGFM Examinations will be offered by appointment only on February 24-25, 2010. The cost of the course is only \$249 for qualified participants, and it offers 18 CPE hours. **Special Bonus:** the CGFM Examinations are offered at no cost to course attendees.



[Click here](#) for registration, eligibility and examination information.

**Interested in joining the CGFM Task Force?**

To continue supporting the CGFM recognition process, the CGFM Committee at the National Office is looking for individuals to serve on the new CGFM Recognition Task Force. The Task Force would consist of CGFM leaders, preferably with experience of CGFM recognition, who can offer support, advice and encouragement to the AGA Chapters and members currently working on CGFM recognition. The Task Force will periodically hold telephone calls to discuss ideas and challenges and help develop new strategies and tools, as well as serve as mentors to individuals currently involved in the CGFM recognition process. If you are interested in serving on the CGFM Recognition Task Force (or know other individuals who would be great for this role), please inform Gary Hatcher, the AGA Baltimore CGFM Director at 410-965-0680 or [gary.hatcher@ssa.gov](mailto:gary.hatcher@ssa.gov).

For more information about the CGFM corner, you may contact [Gary Hatcher](#), your CGFM Director.

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