



The Baltimore Ledger

Association of Government Accountants Baltimore Chapter

MARCH 2009



BALTIMORE CHAPTER

www.agabaltimore.org

Early Careers Session

"Tomorrow's Professional and Technology"

Presented by Business Learning Institute, Inc.

Thursday, March 19, 2009

11:30 Registration and Networking
12:00 Lunch
1:00-4:30 Presentation



\$30 Member
\$95 Nonmember

Rolling Road Golf Club
814 Hilltop Road

Catonsville, Maryland 21228

Register online by March 12th
<http://www.agabaltimore.org/registration>

<http://www.rollingroadgc.org/>

The Early Careers Committee will hold random drawings at the training including Open Season Oriole Tickets and more!

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<http://www.agacgfm.org/pdc2009/index.htm>

Jazzing It Up.
Best Practices in Government Accountability
June 21-24, 2009
New Orleans Marriott Hotel and Sheraton New Orleans
New Orleans, LA



Upcoming Events

- March 28, 2009
Our Daily Bread Community Service Event
Time: 9am to 1pm
Place: Baltimore City
- April 4, 2009
Annual Easter Egg Hunt
Catonsville High School
- April 29, 2009
Annual Fraud Conference
Maritime Institute
8am to 4 pm



President's Message



Dear Members,

Wow, there is just so much going on that I don't know where to start. Or maybe it's just me. Sometimes we go through cycles of craziness and calm. But even though so much is happening right now, it is also exciting. For example, I watched President Obama address Congress and the nation for the first time the other day and it seems like I have never been more interested in our nation's politics more than I am now. Obviously electing our first African American president has something to do with that, but also a likely reason is that more people seem to care about politics when we need politicians to help us. And that is true now more than any other time that I remember.

The President focused on three major initiatives: 1) energy, 2) health care reform, and 3) education. The impact of each one can have dramatic consequences for our nation, but combined and carried-out, they

can really change our nation for the better. There will also be an impact on you as government financial managers. We will be called upon to manage government funds better, more efficiently, and be able to report on expenditures in order to justify our continued existence. The President has said, "Those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account - to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day - because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government." Our jobs will be essential to report on how government funds have been spent. So even though this results in a crazy, busy time, it is also very exciting. So enjoy it and do the best job you can as government financial managers to support your programs, your government, and your nation!

Sincerely,

Stephanie

Stephanie Bosworth

President, Baltimore Chapter of the AGA

Congratulations to James Patton of the Social Security Administration and Early Careers Committee member. James received a promotion at the Pension Guaranty Corporation and will be leaving SSA in March. Best of luck Jim!

Staying Connected, Just One Click Away ...

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March Speaker Information

Our first March Early Career Speaker is **Mario Armstrong**, *NPR Technology Contributor, Radio & TV Technology Talk Show Host and Co-Founder, Urban Video Game Academy*. Mario Armstrong--much like the technology he loves--has always been an amalgamation of many different things: media personality, motivational speaker and social entrepreneur. At his heart, Armstrong is just your typical case study of a kid from Baltimore who just wanted to hack his Rubik's cube and glue robot stickers to the front of his binders. Never wanting to be "boxed-in" as just the "tech guy", Armstrong's CV is filled with forays into politics, business, media and press endeavors and ultimately as co-owner and chief technology advocate for Mario Armstrong Media, LLC.



In his public life, Armstrong was appointed by erstwhile Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, now Governor O'Malley, to the position of technology advocate for the city from 2002-2007--a one-of-a-kind post which was one of the first of such appointments in a major American city. Armstrong also served as the IT Director for the State of Maryland's Tourism Department and was one of six chosen in the United States to be a part of a Technology Delegation to meet with tech entrepreneurs in Seoul Korea to discuss new international business partnerships between the United States and South Korea.

In his media life, Mario delivers national television segments for Comcast's "Your Morning" and "Money Matters" and on WBAL-TV, a top ranked local NBC affiliate. He is a technology correspondent for National Public Radio heard on NPR's Morning Edition and NPR's News and Notes programs. He hosts a national radio show for XM and two regional technology talk shows "The Digital Café and "The Digital Spin".

He hosted and co-produced a business magazine TV show entitled "Business Pulse" interviewing industry leaders. Some of Mario's radio and television guests include: Spike Lee, Ted Waitt, Tavis Smiley, Stedman Graham, Russell Simmons, Sid Meier, Michael Dell and Dr. Cornel West to just name a few. He has been seen on CNN, CNBC, TV-One, Comcast, PBS, AOL.com & C-Span.

In the same breath, Mario's passion is to bridge the digital divide between the haves and the have-nots. To that end, Mario has delved into the world of social entrepreneurship by touring the nation and delivering an interactive showcase of technology and fun for youth called "Mario Armstrong's Dream. Create. Go!"™. The goal of the project is to morph kids from passive users of cell phones and laptops into the next generation of digital scientists and activists. He is also a co-founder of the Urban Video Game Academy - an educational non-profit program that uses the allure, interactivity and development process of video games to increase student interest and academic achievement in Science, Technology, English and Math. The program has been featured in USA Today, CNN & Newsweek magazine. His voice is featured in a fun and educational video game entitled "SpaceStation Sim" developed by Vision Videogames for NASA.

Mario has been recognized as: "Best Technology Guru" 2006 City Paper Best of Baltimore; "Best Cable TV Host"-Beacon Award Winner; One of Baltimore's "Top 25 Young Rising Stars" - Baltimore Times; "Service Above Self Award" - Rotary Club of Maryland; "Technology Advocate of the Year" - Urban League; "Baltimore's Leading Expert In Technology" - Baltimore Times and Hope for Today, Visions for Tomorrow award - Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland.

Our second Early Career speaker is **Joe Jozefczyk**. Joe has been AGA's National Director of Education since June 2006. Prior to his appointment, there was little in the way of an organized education program and no on-site classroom-type classes were available. Currently, AGA offers 19 such courses covering financial management, fraud detection, ethics, internal controls and grants and contract management with gross sales of about \$120,000 for this fiscal year.



Joe retired in May 2003 from the United States General Accounting Office (now the Government Accountability Office) after a 30+ year career. His last position with GAO was as an Assistant Director with the Tax Policy and Administration group. Joe also served as a Human Resource and Operations Director for a 450+ member operating division, as a staff member of the Office of Program Planning and as an audit manager in GAO's Latin America Office located in Panama City, Panama. As the Human Resources/Operations Director, he managed a large staff that was responsible for a myriad of areas including recruiting, hiring, counseling, appraisals, training, audit assignments, etc.

Speaker's Bio continued on page 4

March Speaker Information Continued...Joe Jozefczyk

During his career at GAO, Joe testified before Congressional committees on various issues including taxpayer use of offshore tax havens, IRS collection of delinquent taxes, and reported taxpayer abuse by IRS employees. He also developed training and education programs and served as an instructor and facilitator. After retiring from GAO, he worked on several government-related management contracts.

Away from his AGA office, Joe is certified as a developmental coach by the United States Professional Tennis Association and coaches boys and girls high school tennis at The Potomac School in McLean, VA. He is also very active in his community in Northern Virginia as the President of his homeowner association and as an appointed member of the Fairfax County Athletic Council. He has also been the President and member of the Board of Directors of the Braddock Road Youth Club, which is the "athletic home" of over 12 sports and about 6,000 families, and the President of the Bishop Ireton High School Athletic Boosters.

February Training Recap

Ethics is a topic that no matter how much we like it, we have to become educated on because of many licensing requirements. The training session for February 2009, "Caesar's Wife: Tipping Point Ethics," was presented by Greg Conderacci of Good Ground Consulting LLC. The session focused on difficult ethical dilemmas leaders face and the "tipping point" between right and wrong decisions.

The "Tipping Point", as defined by Malcolm Gladwell, author of "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference, is, "the dramatic moment when everything can change all at once." Greg stated that 90% of things adults do is automatic which is considered a state of unconscious competence. This is when there can be problems with ethical standpoints, as we are not thinking about decisions because things become so automatic.

The instructor then asked the audience to define ethics. Some answers included, "how you should act, your core values, right vs. wrong, and how you should act when no one is looking. He then provided us with a working definition of ethics, "standards of conduct or principles arising from core values which indicate how we ought to act or decide." There is an overlap when it comes to things that are ethical and things that are legal. For instance, the act of breaking in and releasing animals being used for testing is an ethical act to some, yet it is illegal, whereas abortion is legal yet some would argue that it is unethical.

The main point of this session was based on Caesar's wife. According to the instructor, Caesar's wife, Pompeia, was having a gathering with many of her female friends and a male showed up. Pompeia made the male leave, however Caesar found out about it and believed that Pompeia had done something with the male. Upon divorcing Pompeia, he stated, "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion." CPA's and auditors are viewed in the same light. They are trusted and above suspicion. Therefore, they must make ethical decisions when conducting business.

The instructor also talked about how ethics is not so simple for everyone. Even if you believe you are making

an ethical decision, others involved may not believe that it was ethical. For example, Socrates believed in one god although everyone else believed in many. Socrates expressed his beliefs and was shunned for it. He was put on trial and convicted with a punishment of death.

Trust is a very crucial part of ethics. Trust is defined as "one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the other party is (a) benevolent, (b) honest, (c) open, (d) reliable, and (e) competent." Trust is made up of credibility, intimacy, and risk. To demonstrate this point, the instructor used examples of how people chose which doctors they go to. He stated that, "we have to know that you care about our well being before we care about what you know." For most people, when they choose a doctor, they look at availability and possibly recommendations from other. Rarely do people decide on doctors based on what number the doctor graduated in his class. We look to the intimacy factor of trust before the credibility factor.

Many ethical issues create gut reactions for everyone. Issues such as lottery, drugs, smoking, and aliens crossing into the United States are all issues that create different gut reactions for different people. Those gut reactions are what play a big role in ethical decisions. There are many issues that are more important to some individuals than they are to others.

The class then discussed various ethical issues. The instructor split the class up and had different groups argue different sides of the issue. For example one case stated, "Your company has accidentally discovered the cure for river blindness, a dread disease that causes it victims to gradually go blind. The only people who get this disease are too poor to pay for the medicine that cures it." One portion of the audience had to argue against providing the drug to the poor individuals with the disease and the other portion had to argue in favor of providing the drug to the individuals. We went through several issues discussing both sides.

Overall, the ethics session was very informative. The instructor used great examples and demonstrations.

Volunteers Wanted for Our Daily Bread Community Service Event

AGA Baltimore will be volunteering to work at Our Daily Bread soup kitchen on Saturday March 28, 2009 from 9 am to 1 pm. Seven volunteers are needed to assist. All volunteers interested need to contact Tonia Hill at tonia.hill@ssa.gov or 410-965-9916.

Our Daily Bread is located at 411 Cathedral Street in downtown Baltimore. Their mission is to provide a hot, nutritious lunch for anyone in need. They serve weekday breakfast to the elderly and those with special needs. In addition, groceries are made available to members of the 'Food Club' and serves as the mailing address for guests who have no permanent residence. Recognizing that their guests often need more than food in their quest for self-sufficiency, Catholic Charities has established two additional services at Our Daily Bread that provide emergency services and employment assistance.

To learn more about Our Daily Bread visit <http://www.cc-md.org/emergency/our-daily-bread.html>.



Talks begin on possible legislative enhancements to the TSP

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt bballenstedt@govexec.com
February 17, 2009

Thrift Savings Plan officials have started discussions with Congress on proposed legislative improvements to the retirement savings program, including adding a Roth Individual Retirement Account option.

During the February meeting, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board officials said they have been in contact with the new leaders of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which has jurisdiction over the TSP. They are hoping to meet next week with Rep. Steven Lynch, D-Mass, the new chairman of the panel's subcommittee on the federal workforce, according to Tom Trabucco, legislative director for the federal employee plan.

On the table are proposals discussed earlier this month during a meeting of the Employee Thrift Advisory Council, which is made up of federal unions and other worker organizations. The council supported automatically enrolling new federal workers into the TSP, adding a Roth feature, authorizing immediate employer matching contributions, and allowing spouses of deceased federal workers to leave their savings in TSP. Other potential legislative items TSP and ETAC are considering include changing the default fund for indecisive investors and creating a window for participants to access a variety of specialized mutual funds.

Trabucco said an aide to Rep Henry Waxman, D-Calif., former chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, asked for information about TSP provisions the House passed in 2008 because Waxman remains interested in the addition of a Roth feature. It's possible the TSP provisions would get attached to a larger bill, Trabucco said. He noted that plan officials will work with

ETAC to prepare a formal legislative proposal to send to Capitol Hill.

Trabucco recently received a phone call from the White House of Presidential Personnel to discuss concerns over the fact that the terms of the TSP board's five members have expired. They are serving as holdovers, but could be replaced at any time. Board members are supposed to have staggered terms to ensure continuity. "This is the first time in the 22 years that there has been such outreach from presidential personnel", Trabucco said.

Pamela Jean Moran, TSP's director of participant services, said TSP expects to have a new demonstration web site online by September, and participants should be able to "test drive" the site early in 2010. An upgraded website might garner more favorable ratings of the TSP from younger participants, officials said.

Meanwhile, officials commended Serco Group of Reston, Virginia, for ensuring a smooth transition after acquiring SI International, which managed one of TSP's two call centers and provided imaging, data entry and forms processing support. Serco will assume SI International's contract agreements with the plan. "We're very impressed" said Greg Long, executive director of the TSP. "We're working with SI and Serco in such a way that doesn't create bumps in the road for us."

Mark Hagerty, chief information officer for the TSP, noted that a two-year plan to upgrade technology capabilities is on track. Officials struck an agreement with Switch & Data of Tampa, Florida in December 2008 to expand operations to a new data facility in Northern Virginia. The plan involves replacing mainframe computers with newer technology offering more memory and faster processors, consolidating and replacing servers, modernizing IT networks and improving storage capacity. Officials began moving equipment into the new center last month and is expected to be fully operational by September.

2009 Call for 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.? Considering applying for an AGA National scholarship. Each year, AGA awards:

- Up to four \$3,000 academic scholarships for full-time study to AGA members and their family members.
- One \$1,000 academic scholarship for part-time study to AGA members and their family members.
- One \$3,000 scholarship for community service accomplishments to AGA members and nonmembers.

The deadline for receipt of AGA National scholarships is **March 31, 2009**. Apply now and take full advantage of your AGA membership. [Visit the website](#) for more details and an application.

AGA March Audio Conferences

March 11, 2009

2:00 pm—3:50 pm

Building Fraud Risk Assessment Into Audit Planning

\$249 per site 2 CPEs

By now most people understand the need for internal controls. But do they know how to implement these concepts? What are the underlying reasons that intelligent, hard working people simply circumvent such checks and balances? Is it a matter of inadequate resources or laziness? Should poor leadership be tolerated? How can poor internal controls lead to fraud?

Once we have recognized the need for internal controls in most organizations and have developed a comprehensive set of internal controls, how can an agency's investment in compliance help it reduce total cost of controls and regulatory compliance as well as improve performance, thereby reprogramming resources in support of mission initiatives.

To share their views on these internal control questions are, Terry Carnahan, CGFM, CPA Managing Director for Federal Internal Audit and Regulatory Compliance Services, KPMG LLP and Robert Gray, CGFM, CIA, CFE, Consultant, Robert Gray Training. Please join us for two hours of lively discussion about this important and timely topic.

[Click Here To Register](#)

March 25, 2009

2:00 pm—3:50 pm

SEA: Taking Accountability and Transparency to a New Level

\$249 per site 2 CPEs

Service, Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA), Performance Reporting, Performance-Based Budgeting—Did you ever wonder when and why these initiatives begin? AGA Past National President Sam McCall, CGFM, CPA, CIA, Tallahassee City Auditor, is finishing his Ph.D. in public administration. His dissertation discusses the history of performance initiatives by governments, the AGA Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report Review Program, and the impact that the Governmental Accounting Standard Board's (GASB) 16 suggested criteria has had on the quality of performance reports submitted.

McCall will be joined by Ken Smith, Ph.D, CPA, professor at Willamette University in Oregon, and AGA's academic advisor for the SEA program, who has been instrumental in creating a website that explains, with examples, each of the 16 suggested criteria. Governments looking to prepare performance reports as well as those entities recently having their report reviewed by AGA will benefit from our new Performance Reporting 2.0.

[Click Here To Register](#)

Early Careers Bio

Name: Tonia Hill

Current Position: Tonia is currently an Auditor in the Financial Audit Division of the Office of the Inspector General for Social Security Administration.

Major Duties: Tonia's primary responsibilities are to conduct financial audits of Agency programs, including the review of Agency accounting records and the evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of accounting controls reflected in policies, system, procedures, methods, and related practices.



Education: Tonia Graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Morgan State University. In 2007, Tonia received her Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

Previous Jobs: Prior to joining SSA, Tonia worked as an Accountant at Global Payments, Inc. for two years. In this capacity, she managed payable and receivable ledgers and assisted with mid-year and year-end audits.

Personal Information: Tonia is a native of Baltimore, Maryland but also lived in various states such as Alaska, Louisiana and Texas. She relocated to Baltimore in 1996 to attend Morgan State University. Tonia is currently pursuing a CPA and regularly volunteers at her local church assisting with various outreach programs.

6 Tricks for a Recession-Proof Résumé Robert Half International

It's no secret that today's job market is extremely challenging. With more and more job candidates applying to fewer and fewer open positions, it may seem nearly impossible for you to get a potential employer's attention.

How can you move your document to the top of stack? Consider the following suggestions for writing a recession-proof résumé:

1. Don't just update your old résumé

If you haven't been on the job hunt for many years, it can be tempting to simply pull out the last résumé you used, add your most recent accomplishments and send it out. But the document could be many years old, which means the content is likely outdated.

At the very least, give your résumé a thorough review and weed out any information that is not applicable to your current career goals. You may, for example, remove positions you held in college or delete the mention of an old computer application. You might even find the best course of action is to prepare your résumé from scratch.

2. Consider your form

A chronological résumé, in which you list your work experience in reverse chronological order, has long been the standard format that job seekers use. But in a downturn it may not be the best style for showcasing your skills and experience.

If you have frequent or large gaps in your employment history, you may want to use a combination résumé instead. A combination résumé places the most emphasis on your skills and accomplishments, downplaying your previous positions and dates of employment. Rather than having a section called "Work Experience" serve as the bulk of your résumé, for instance, you might have sections titled "Administrative Experience," "Computer Skills" and "[Management](#) and [Training](#) Skills." A combination résumé still details your work history, but this information is abbreviated and placed near the end of the document.

A combination résumé also could be a good choice if you are hoping to switch careers. If you don't have experience that relates directly to your new path, this format allows you to highlight transferable skills that are applicable to the position you seek.

3. Focus on the bottom line

Companies today are looking for ways to reduce expenses and increase efficiencies. When detailing the positions you've held in the past, be sure to mention how you've helped boost a former employer's bottom line. If you worked as an administrative assistant, rather than saying "filed documents" or "answered [phones](#)," try something like this: "Identified new office-supplies vendor, resulting in cost savings of 25 percent." Be as specific as possible when describing your achievements.

Continued on Page 9

2008-2009 Training Schedule

Date	Location	Topic/Speaker	CPE's	Member Cost	Non-Member Cost
4/29/09 Wednesday	Maritime Institute	Annual Fraud Conference Fraud Issues, Internal Controls Jeffery Gross—Computer Forensic Associates Other Speakers TBD	8	\$160	\$200
5/21/09 Thursday	Rolling Road Golf Club	Annual Awards Meeting Mary Glenn-Croft, Chief Financial Officer SSA	1	\$15	\$35

6 Tricks for a Recession-Proof Résumé Continued

4. Customize your content

One of the most important steps when crafting your résumé is to target your content to each company and position. Rather than creating a standard document for use with every opportunity, customize your résumé so it speaks directly to a potential employer's unique needs.

This may mean highlighting different accomplishments or going into greater detail about certain contributions, for instance. Doing so might take a little extra time and effort, but submitting a targeted résumé demonstrates your knowledge of and interest in each position and will help you stand apart from other job candidates.

5. Use your cover letter

Like many job seekers today, you may have extended gaps in your work history due to current economic conditions. The cover letter allows you to address any concerns an employer may have about these gaps. In it, explain how you've kept your skills up-to-date since your last full-time

position, whether through temporary assignments, volunteer work or professional development courses.

6. Check for mistakes

In a Robert Half survey, 84 percent of executives polled said it takes just one or two typographical errors on a résumé to remove a candidate from contention for an open position. Employers see typos, misspellings and grammatical mistakes as a sign you lack professionalism and attention to detail. And in today's environment, hiring managers are less willing to take a chance on applicants who seem unqualified. Use the spell-check function and ask friends and family to [proofread](#) your résumé before you send it out.

One last piece of advice: Use your network to your advantage. Even if your résumé is solid, having a professional contact who can refer you for an open position or personally hand your document to a hiring manager could be key to landing the role you seek.

Looking for Training? AGA Comes to You!

AGA now has 19 courses to help you and your staff meet their education and training needs. Learn more and get detailed information. Taught at the location of your choice, the courses include lectures, group discussion and exercises, and class problem-solving. They can be customized to meet your needs and participants are awarded CPEs based on the length of each course. For course pricing and additional information about course content, please contact **Joe Jozefczyk**, AGA's National Director of Education, at 800.AGA.7211 ext. 307, or **Bekka Gehrmann**, Education Manager, at ext. 309.

Federal Financial
Management
Conference



Financial
Management
in Transition

Federal Financial Management Conference

Thursday March 12, 2009

Sponsored by the JFMIP Principals,
Financial Systems Integration Office,
General Services Administration,
and Graduate School, USDA

Keynote Speaker

- Gene Dodaro, Acting Comptroller General of the United States,
Government Accountability Office

Session Topics:

- Auditing Information System Controls in the Federal Government
- Standardize, Consolidate and Optimize Financial Management
- Improving the Relevance of Financial Reports-PAR Pilot
- Federal Financial Accounting –Changes on the Horizon
- Human Capital Best Practices for the Financial Community
- Fiscal Turmoil: The Role of the Auditors in Oversight and Accountability
- Implementing the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act
- Forensic Auditing: Are You Up to Speed?

Location:

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

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More information and Register today
at <http://www.fsio.gov>

Interviewing: The Power of Two by Sefton Boyars, CGFM, CPA

Many songs and sayings use the word “two”: Two For Tea, It Takes Two To Tango, two’s company, and two heads are better than one. That last saying also applies to conducting interviews.

Often auditors conduct interviews without a partner. This requires a great deal of multi-tasking. The auditor must ask questions, record answers, repeat questions when receiving inadequate responses, follow-up on indications of problems, and be alert to inappropriate body language. While this is going on, the auditor should indicate that she is paying close attention to what the person is saying (I will assume the auditor is a woman for writing ease). Unfortunately, in practice, the interviewer spends much of the time looking at her notebook recording responses.

When you are looking down at a pad of paper, concentrating on recording what was said, you may find it difficult to consider the content of the answers and to think of unplanned questions. In addition, you may find it almost impossible to be aware of body language. For that reason, I recommend that if possible you have a second person at all interviews. The second person provides a number of advantages.

Accurately recording responses—The auditor who writes down the answers while also conducting the interview may abbreviate the response. If we don’t say anything for 30 seconds while we record what was said, we feel guilty (perhaps justifiably) about wasting the person’s time. As a result, we sometimes shortcut our notes, believing that we will expand them later. But later, we may not recall those points we did not write down.

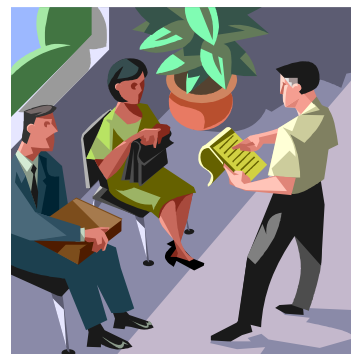
Following Up on Inadequate Answers—Occasionally, a person doesn’t answer the question asked, but manages to disguise the evasion. People rarely state that they won’t answer a question; they usually talk around it. The auditor must be alert to word choices and recognize the failure to answer questions. Of course, if people want to avoid a question, the auditor should be thinking of asking other questions to properly explore the subject. Again, unless the auditor is listening carefully to the responses, she may miss the fact that the person did not answer the question being asked.

Pursuing Possible Leads—When responding to questions during interviews, people sometimes mention something that warrants further follow-up. However, that something may not be highlighted during the discussion; it may just be noted casually. As a result, if the interviewer is not paying careful attention, she may not notice it. Again, when the auditor is concentrating on recording answers accurately, she may miss the comment.

Watching for Body Language—When the main interviewer can focus directly on the speaker, she notices hesitations, changes in speaking style, facial expressions, etc. Imagine the question: “How is morale in this organization?” Then imagine the response: “just fine.” Would you perceive that response differently if it were delivered with a nod and a smile, versus a grimace and rolling of the eyes? If you are looking at your notes when you heard the response, you may have no idea of the nonverbal communication.

Having a Second Set of Eyes and Ears—Even if the second person has the responsibility of taking notes, that auditor still hears and sees. Your colleague may very well notice something you missed, or connect the information with some other data with which you are not as familiar. Of course, the second person can also verify what was said in the event of a dispute.

In summary, I recommend that you always try to secure the services of another auditor when you conduct an interview. That second person frees you to concentrate on the real job at hand, asking questions and considering the answers. Even if you are conducting a one-person audit, try to borrow someone to go on interviews with you. You can always promise to repay the favor in the future. I think you will find that the power of two in interviews rewards you far more than the additional cost involved.



Sefton Boyars, CGFM, CPA, CIA, CFS, retired in 1996 from a 35 year career as a government auditor and audit manager. He had been the Regional Inspector General for Audit for the US Department of Education for 16 years at the time of his retirement. He currently teaches continuing education classes for many organizations, including federal, state, and local governments, professional associations, the USDA Graduate School, and Management Concepts. He received AGA’s National Education and Training Award in 1998.

Ways to Get the Job You Want -- in Any Economy

Brian Tracy, author of "**Reinvention**"

With all the bleak economic news and reports of massive layoffs, it's easy to lose sight of an exciting fact of work: There have never been more opportunities and possibilities for talented people than exist today. The rate of new business formation in the United States has passed more than 1 million new companies per year. Employers everywhere are looking for bright, resourceful and committed people to help their businesses grow. The best way to help the best companies find you is to become a self-directed job searcher.

Regardless of your employment experience, your target industry or the economic climate, you can get a job -- a great job -- if you are willing to work hard and know how to work smart. Here are some of the very best ideas, strategies and methods for putting your career back on the fast track.

1. Take control of your career

The average person starting work today will have 11 full-time jobs and as many as five different careers over the course of his or her lifetime. To weather the storms of lifelong career change, you must be proactive, not reactive. Begin by seeing yourself as self-employed. See yourself as the [president](#) of a company with one employee: you. See yourself as having one product to sell in a competitive marketplace: your personal services. You are completely responsible for research and development. No matter who signs your paycheck, you are always on your own payroll. This attitude is the starting point for getting the job you want for the rest of your career.

2. Take stock of yourself

Before you go out and look for a job, do some self-reflection. Make a list of all the things you can do for which someone would be willing to pay. What have you done especially well at your previous jobs? What sort of activities in your work and your personal life do you most enjoy? The good news is that you will always do the very best at

something that makes you the happiest. To help yourself follow the right career track, describe your ideal job. The greater clarity you have about exactly what it is you want to do and how much you want to earn, the easier it is for someone to hire you.

3. Understand the job market

All labor, including your own, is subject to the economic [law](#) of supply and demand. The only way to ensure you get a rewarding job is by doing something important for which there is a demand in the marketplace and in which you are difficult to replace. A change in technology, consumer preferences or the economy can make a particular talent or specialty obsolete almost overnight. You must continually upgrade your knowledge and skills and adjust your efforts so that they conform to the needs of the current job market. In a free society such as ours, everybody works on [commission](#).

4. Don't mistake unemployment for a vacation

Look at your job search as a full-time job, taking 40 to 50 hours a week. Get up and get dressed each weekday morning as if you were going to work, eat a light, high-energy breakfast and then get going. Looking good and staying productive not only improves your attitude, but also impresses other people, both those inside your own house and those on the outside. Remember, you should never see yourself as unemployed. You are a fully employed person in a [temporary](#) state of transition.

5. Sow seeds everywhere

Most of the jobs available are not [advertised](#). They are hidden and waiting for you to discover them. Along with regularly surfing Internet job sites, be sure to list your qualifications and interests on every site that might attract employers seeking someone like you. Visit community job fairs and talk to exhibitors. Keep an eye out for news of new product releases and then seek out key people in the company. A business expansion represents job opportunities. Gather information about a prominent individual in an organization you would like to work for. Ask that person, by phone, by e-mail or in a letter, to grant you a 10-minute informational interview. Almost invariably, your interest, knowledge and gratitude will pay off in a job offer.

AGA Baltimore Chapter			
Financial Statement as of January 31, 2009			
Assets		Liabilities and Fund Equity	
Checking	\$ 13,182	Accounts Payable	\$ 0
Certificates of Deposit	14,746	Fund Equity Balance	<u>30,943</u>
Miscellaneous Receivable	3,015		
Total Assets	<u>\$ 30,943</u>	Total Liabilities & Fund Equity	<u>\$ 30,943</u>

Member Spotlight : Michael Furst

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

I am a Senior Auditor with the HHS, OIG. Currently, I am working on Medicaid related issues. My responsibilities include developing audit programs, and coordinating and monitoring regional audits. I am also the project officer for contracted medical review services to support one of our current audits.

Where did you go to school?

I attended the Baltimore City Community College and received a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Baltimore.

How long have you been a member of AGA?

I have been a member since 1988.

How long have you worked for the government?

It will be 38 years in June—9 1/2 years with SSA; 5 1/2 years with the Office of Child Support Enforcement; 2 years with the Defense Contract Audit Agency and coming up on 21 years with HHS, OIG.

How has AGA helped your career?

Not only does the training help fulfill our yearly CPE requirements, but the subject of many of the training sessions has addressed work issues and been very helpful.

What does being a member of AGA mean to you?

When I left SSA, I was in the Division of Finance so it's nice to see many 'old' co-workers at meetings. The same holds true for the SSA, OIG, auditors that I knew before SSA became independent of HHS.

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

My family. Beginning in May 2007, our son underwent 15 months of treatment for cancer. That journey influenced not only our family, but many who knew him.

What activities do you enjoy in your free time?

Family time, especially the time with our children when they are home. Listening to "my" music. I am also the Director of Youth Activities at my Knights of Columbus Council. I have helped organize a soccer shoot-out, free throw contest, and a substance abuse poster contest within the last year.



What is your favorite vacation spot?

Puerto Rico is nice, but it could be our upcoming trip to Tokyo.

What is your favorite restaurant and what do you order?

Serpico's Pizza & Pasta. So much pasta, so little time. When you see the owner of another restaurant there, it can't be bad!

What is your favorite TV show?

I don't watch much TV but I try to watch Motorweek.

What is your sport to watch and what's your favorite team?

Football—The Ravens.

Are you married? Children? Pets?

Mary and I have been married for 21 years as of February 14th. Her employer is Stevenson University. We have two children, Brittany (19) who is attending the U.S. Naval Academy and Kevin (18) who is attending Stevenson University.

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If you would like to be featured in the next Member Spotlight or if you know of anyone who is interested, please e-mail [newsletter@agabaltimore.org](mailto:newsletter@agabaltimore.org)!  
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Frequently Asked Questions About CGFM Renewals



Q: How often do I have to renew my CGFM designation?

A: The CGFM certification is renewed annually. You should soon receive a renewal invoice and the payment is due by March 31. If you do not receive an invoice in February, please call AGA at 800.AGA.7211. You can also renew your CGFM now in the "[Members Only](#)" section of AGA's website. If your address has recently changed, please be sure to update your contact information and pay your dues in the "Members Only" section of AGA's website.

Q: What are the requirements for maintaining the CGFM certification in an active status?

A: To maintain the CGFM certification in an active status, CGFMs are required to:

- Pay the CGFM renewal fee by the due date every year.
- Complete at least 80 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) every two years in government financial management topics or related technical subjects.
- Maintain and, if requested by AGA, provide detailed information on CPE hours completed.

To retain the CGFM certification, all CGFMs must adhere to the AGA's *Code of Ethics*. By submitting their annual renewal payment, CGFMs affirm that they have and will continue to abide by AGA's *Code of Ethics* and that they have fulfilled the minimum CPE Requirements.

Q: How do I determine my CPE cycle?

A: Your first two-year CPE cycle starts on Jan. 1 of the year following the one when your CGFM was awarded. (For example, if your CGFM was awarded in 2001, your first CPE cycle was Jan. 1, 2002-Dec. 31, 2003). The award date is listed on your CGFM certificate. Your current CPE cycle is listed on your renewal invoice. [Find a table of all CPE cycles.](#)

Q: My two-year CPE cycle just ended on Dec. 31, 2008, but I did not complete 80 CPE hours in 2007-2008. Can I make up the deficiency?

A: Yes. CGFMs who have not completed 80 CPE hours in the 2007-2008 cycle have until **March 31, 2009** to make up the deficiency. Any CPE hours completed toward a deficiency in one period must be documented in the CPE records and may not be counted toward the requirements for the next two-year period. [Read more about CGFM CPE requirements.](#)

Q: I just retired. Do I need to do anything to adjust my CGFM status to "retired"?

A: Yes. Individuals who have permanently retired AND are not working in the field of financial management can request an adjustment of their status to "retired" by contacting AGA's Office of Professional Certification by mail or e-mail at agacgfm@agacgfm.org. Please provide the date of retirement and confirm that since retiring you have not worked in the field of financial management. CGFMs in retired status are not required to remit the CGFM renewal fee or earn the 80 CPE hours, but must clearly indicate their retired status by using "CGFM-Retired" after their name and using "Retired" or "Retired status" on a resume, bio or other statements of qualification. If retired CGFMs return to work in the field of financial management, they must contact AGA to change their status back to "active."

[Click here to find more information on CGFM renewal policies](#)

March is CGFM Month in Baltimore!

PROCLAMATION

BY

MAYOR SHEILA DIXON
DESIGNATING MARCH 2009

AS

“CERTIFIED GOVERNMENT
FINANCIAL MANAGER MONTH”
IN BALTIMORE

WHEREAS, the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) is a professional organization that has a network of 15,000 members in 97 chapters in the United States and around the world; the Baltimore Chapter consists of approximately 300 active members representing state, federal, municipal, and private sector accountants, auditors, and financial managers; and

WHEREAS, the Baltimore Chapter’s members have responded to AGA’s mission of “Advancing Government Accountability,” by continuing their broad educational efforts with emphasis on high standards of conduct, honor, and character as stated in the Code of Ethics; they are making significant advances, both in professional ability, and in service to the citizens of Baltimore by mastering increasingly technical and complex requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) program of AGA provides a means of demonstrating professionalism and competency by requiring CGFM candidates to have appropriate educational and employment history, to abide by AGA’s Code of Ethics, and to pass three examinations requiring expertise in several pertinent areas; they are also required to maintain certification by completing at least 80 hours of continuing professional education in government financial management topics or related technical subjects every two years.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SHEILA DIXON, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BALTIMORE, do hereby proclaim March as “CERTIFIED GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGER MONTH” IN BALTIMORE, and do urge all citizens to join in this celebration.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set the Great Seal of the City of Baltimore to be affixed this first day of March, two thousand nine.



Sheila Dixon

Mayor

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To all of the members who submitted articles for the monthly newsletter, we say Thank You! For **April**, please make any submissions by **March 20, 2009** by contacting the Editorial Committee, Newsletter@agabaltimore.org.