

Phoenix AGA Today

2008/9 Issue 5

December 5, 2008

Lynne Davis, President's Message



I hope everyone enjoyed their Thanksgiving holiday and are getting ready for the flurry of activity that comes with the holiday season – shopping, wrapping, decorating, as well as eating great food and spending time with family and friends. There are many traditions associated with the holidays

and our Phoenix Chapter will continue with our tradition of having a December holiday social and community service event. Instead of Christmas Angels this year, we will be collecting food, clothing, gifts and toys for Vista Del Camino. For all those attending the December meeting, the Phoenix Chapter will also donate \$5 to a local charity. In this season of giving, I ask that you think of those who are less fortunate, and donate a food or gift item.

After our holiday social we will be hosting an AGA National audio conference entitled “21st Century Financial Managers: A New Mix of Skills and Education Levels”. We have also added a new audio conference to our schedule on February 25, 2009 – “Cost Recovery Auditing with a High Payback”. This audio conference will explore several areas that have resulted in large refunds to government entities, specifically how to take advantage of tax exemptions and how auditors can perform reviews of construction contracts, as well as credit card

purchases, to identify hidden opportunities. I believe all of us can gain some interesting information from this discussion. This conference will be held at ASU's SkySong, and more information will follow prior to the event.

Also as a reminder, the deadline to submit applications for the \$500 Education Scholarship is December 31, 2008. Candidates will need to complete an application and submit a copy of his/her transcript along with a brief essay answering the question: Why do you think it is important for accountants and financial managers to consider public service as a career? I encourage anyone who knows a student who is at least a sophomore at a community college or university, and enrolled in an Accounting or a Finance curriculum, to apply. The Phoenix Chapter will be awarding three \$500 scholarships, and who these days couldn't use an extra \$500?

I hope to see you at our December meeting!

Have a safe and happy holiday,

~ Lynne



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December CPE - 12/10/08

RSVP Today: eventreg@agaphoenix.org Street, Tempe, AZ 85281 (See map on back page)

12/10/08: 21st Century Financial Managers new Mix of Skills and Education Levels

CPE: Two

Location: Maricopa Community College District Office, 2411 W. 14th

Cost: \$20 members / \$25 non-members

Holiday Lunch Social: 11:00am-Noon

Audio Conference: Noon-1:50pm

Menu: Chicken Picatta, Tortellini Alfredo, Red Potatoes, Green Beans, Salad, Drinks & Dessert

Elisa Gin, CPA - Member Spotlight



Elisa Gin has been working to provide scholarships to motivated students as AGA's Scholarship Chair. She works as a Fiscal Analyst in the City of Mesa's transportation department. The following are some answers to a few questions recently asked of Elisa:

Years Experience: Certified Public Accountant since 1998. A decade of classifying debits/credits or assets/liabilities, preparing audit

workpapers and spreadsheets...such is the number-crunching life of an accountant. People sometimes find it hard to understand but I find this to be rewarding, especially when I can balance to the penny, don't you?

Degrees: Bachelor of Science, Accounting Arizona State University

Professional Titles Held: Auditor, Auditor II, Accountant, Senior Accountant, Business Manager, Fiscal Analyst

Why Is AGA valuable to you? The most practical reason of all: affordable CPEs with a delicious lunch thrown in. What can be better than that?! It is also a great way to network in our specialized field of Governmental Accounting. Plain and simple: it's GASB not FASB!

What activities do you look forward to most in AGA? Currently, I enjoy serving on the Executive Committee and being a part of the Board. I forged some new friendships and was given creative freedom to initiate a new application form for the Scholarship Committee. In trying to post announcements and recruit student applicants for AGA's annual scholarships, I've come across students from ASU, U of A, NAU, as well as Maricopa Community College financial aid/scholarship administrators who have been extremely supportive and helpful. As chair, I look forward to being able to choose and announce our three winners at a future meeting. In the meantime, if you know any Finance/Accounting students who may be interested, please encourage them to apply or contact me. The forms and eligibility requirements are available at our local chapter website www.agaphoenix.org. The deadline is 12/31/08.

What is your favorite hobby? Too many to name. Currently, I enjoy photography, scrapbooking, reading and attending Marching Band performances. My son is part of the Chandler High School Wolfpack Pride Marching Band. This coming New Year, the school will again be participating in the Fiesta Bowl Marching Band Championships.

Why Certification Matters. Why CGFM.



By: John Radford, CGFM, CIA, CFE, Oregon State Controller

People often ask me why certification is important. I tell them it's all about accountability.

Employers prefer staff members who are certified because they have undergone a rigorous testing procedure, proving they have specialized skills and knowledge. Certification also shows that the employees are committed to continuing their professional education and upholding high ethical standards-requirements for maintaining their credential.

The pluses extend beyond the workplace, though. Citizens benefit from knowing the public's work is being done by professionals who have demonstrated their

expertise. Certification boosts public confidence in government.

That's why I'm a big supporter of AGA's Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) certification. If there was a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for government finance professionals, this would be it. The CGFM is the mark of excellence. It is fast becoming the certification of choice for financial and fiscal employees at all levels of government.

Earning the CGFM requires a bachelor's degree, a minimum of two years of professional level government financial management experience, and passing three tough examinations that cover all three levels of government. Passing the exams is just the beginning. CGFMs must follow AGA's strict Code of Ethics and complete at least 80 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) every two years. (Continued on Page 3)

Continued From Page Two: Why Certification Matters. Why CGFM.

Anyone who works in government finance will tell you that their work differs significantly from what their counterparts are doing in the public sector. People who have passed the exams tell me that the process has helped them see more clearly how all the pieces of government financial processes fit together.

Consider what one new CGFM, an auditor for the Commonwealth of Virginia, said: "It has given me a better appreciation for the big picture. When you're new to working in the governmental environment it's such a strange animal compared to public sector accounting."

William D. Brown, who earned his CGFM credential after more than 20 years in New Jersey's most challenging fiscal offices, says: "If you are planning a career in government fiscal management, you need to earn this certification. It is the only program broad enough to measure the knowledge needed by today's professionals at the federal, state and local levels."

The demands on government financial managers are only going to increase. No longer relegated to back rooms, finance professionals are key members of decision

-making teams for government programs. Government financial managers are constantly updating their skills to make financial information reliable, instantly accessible, and easy for program managers to understand to make everyday decisions and plan for the long term.

The field of government financial management will be far different tomorrow from what it is today. Having broad knowledge, a recognized professional designation and a requirement to stay abreast of the latest developments will be the way to distinguish you from the crowd.

Governments across the country are likely now entering a period of potentially great change. Our national regulatory environment may change, well known human capital challenges are already being felt, and state agencies may face renewed calls for efficiency and effectiveness. Now may be the time for state agencies and employees to consider making a commitment to the AGA's CGFM program.

For additional information, please visit the AGA CGFM Certification web site <<http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/>>



Karie Tepper, WebMaster

Over the next few months, AGA Board Member Elisa Gin will be helping me out with maintaining the AGA Website as I will soon be going on maternity leave. I would like to give a warm thanks to Elisa

for volunteering to take over the website in my absence. Thank you Elisa!

Please continue to click the "[Having technical problems? Click here to contact the webmaster.](#)" link at the bottom of any page to send us an email with issues that may arise on the website. We will do our best to get them taken care of promptly. You can also find the webmaster@agaphoenix.org email address link on the **Contact Us/Board Member Info** page.

Once again, please be sure to share our website www.agaphoenix.org with any co-workers or friends you think might be interested in joining the AGA Phoenix

Chapter. They can check out the **Our Purpose** and **Becoming a Member** pages for details on what AGA is; our vision, mission and goals; the benefits of joining; as well as links to the member application and dues.

I hope everyone has a great holiday!

Karie Tepper

AGA Webmaster



ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS - PHOENIX CHAPTER

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**Map to December 10th CPE:
2411 W. 14th Street, Tempe, AZ 85281**



Name That Governor

Benjamin B. Moeur
Bruce Babbitt
Daniel E. Garvey
Ernest W. McFarland



Evan Mecham
Fife Symington
George W. P. Hunt
Harvey Wesley Bolin



Jane Dee Hull
Janet Napolitano
John C. Phillips



John Howard Pyle
John R. "Jack" Williams



Paul J. Fannin
Raul H. Castro
Rawghlie C. Stanford
Robert T. Jones



Rose P. Mofford
Samuel P. Goddard
Sidney P. Osborn
Thomas E. Campbell





Registration which includes lunch, is as follows:

**AGA Members: \$20 each EVENT or
\$50 for 3 EVENTS or
\$180 for 12 EVENTS**

Non-Members: \$25 each EVENT

**Please email this completed form to: eventreg@agaphoenix.org
(Please note that registration must be received by registration deadline)**

REGISTRATION FORM - (One form per person)

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Are you a member of AGA:

YES _____

- I am registering for a Single Event
- 3 Events
- 12 Events

NO _____

Method of Payment: **Cash** or **Check** payable to **AGA Phoenix Chapter**

Checks can either be handed in person on day of event, or mailed with the completed form to:

**AGA Phoenix Chapter
PO Box 64911
Phoenix, AZ 85082-4911**

Check Number: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

Separate registration will be required for Professional Ethics (4hours CPE) to be held in January 2009 and the Phoenix Chapter Professional Development Conference (8hours CPE) on April 24, 2009. These two events are not included in the special event pricing listed above.

For more information and details visit our website at: www.agaphoenix.org

Please use the check box below to mark your Event registration.

AGA Phoenix Chapter - Monthly CPE Calendar 2008 -2009

Check Box	Date	Time	Event	Topic	CPE Credit	Registration Deadline	Location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aug 20 2008	10:30-12:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Everything you wanted to know about Performance Mgmt and Reporting But Were Afraid to Ask	2	8/15/08	Maricopa Community Colleges, 2411 W 14th Street, Tempe AZ 85281
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sept 10 2008	10:30 - 12:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Fraud Prevention and Detection	2	9/5/08	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sept 24 2008	11:30 - 2:00	Chapter Meeting/Educational Conference	Excel	2	9/22/08	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oct 15 2008	10:30 - 12:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Results of AGA's Research on Performance Based Mgmt and Reporting	2	10/10/08	TBD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nov 12 2008	11:30 - 1:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Internal Controls	2	11/7/08	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dec 10 2008	11:00 - 1:50	Chapter Meeting/Holiday Social/Audio Conference	21 st Century Financial Managers new Mix of Skills and Education Levels	2	12/5/08	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jan 15 2009	11:30 - 2:50	Chapter Meeting/Educational Conference	AZ State Retirement System, AZ State Tax Update and Federal Tax Update	3	1/12/09	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jan 21 2009	11:30 - 1:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	How XBRL Can Enable Improved Financial and Performance Reporting	2	1/15/09	TBD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feb 11 2009	11:30 - 1:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Fraud	2	2/6/09	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mar 11 2009	10:30 - 12:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Internal Controls	2	3/6/09	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apr 8 2009	10:30 - 12:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Auditing	2	4/3/09	Maricopa Community Colleges
<input type="checkbox"/>	May 13 2009	10:30 - 12:50	Chapter Meeting/Audio Conference	Ethics	2	5/8/09	Maricopa Community Colleges
				TOTAL CPE HOURS	25		