



Northern Virginia Chapter
of the Association of Government Accountants
P.O. Box 44079
Washington, DC 20026-4079

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2 OCTOBER 2005

Join the Montgomery/
Prince Georges County
Chapter for their
October 19 Dinner
Meeting

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**Wednesday
October 19th**

Double Tree Inn
1750 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Md

6:00 – 6:30 pm Reception
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Dinner & Speaker

Topic:
**Lessons Learned from Major IT
Modernization Initiatives**

**Laurance Alvarado, Managing Director
Bearing Point**

Cost:

\$30 – Checks made payable to “AGA”

Please RSVP by Friday, Oct. 14th
Limited availability so RSVP early
Reservations:

E-mail Ed Mendez, Meeting Director
for Montgomery/PG County Chapter
at meetings@marylandaga.com or
call him at **301-443-0574**

Parking. Self-parking is \$1.75 in the hotel
garage. Metered parking is available
behind and on either side of the hotel.

**Across from Congressional
Shopping Center**

or

**Take Metro Red Line to
Twinbrook**

Menu Selections:

Mixed Field Greens Salad
with Two Dressings,
Frenched Breast of Chicken with
Sundried Tomato Saffron Sauce
Chef's Choice of Vegetable, Starch
and Dessert

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MAJOR IT MODERNIZATION INITIATIVES - OCT 19TH JOINT MEETING

Compiled from Montgomery/PG County
Website & Newsletter

Laurance Alvarado is a Managing Director in
the Border Security and Global Trade
Management Practice at BearingPoint,
Inc.

The practice provides near- and long-term
benefits and Return on Investment to global
commercial clients, international
customs/revenue agencies, and international
airport/port authorities and intermediaries
through a range of service offerings
from strategy to process improvement,
systems integration, and managed services.

These services have a direct impact on
critical client needs for cost take-out, business
integration, and risk mitigation in global
operations and customs organizations.

Mr. Alvarado is also responsible for Global
Public Services Competency Development,
which links the six main BearingPoint
competencies across the Americas, Asia-
Pac, EMEA, and Emerging Markets.

He maintains a practice, which provides
largescale customs modernization efforts;
global trade management and supply chain
analyses and improvement efforts for
multinational companies; global passport
initiatives; trade consultation to international
governments; and port efficiency and
modernization.

Prior to joining BearingPoint in 1995, Mr.
Alvarado served as an officer in the United
States Air Force.

November 16th Virginia CPA Ethics Training Evening Personal Tax Planning Meeting

Mark your calendars now for extra special training at the Alexandria Embassy Suites

Don't Lose Your CPA License!

3-5 pm Mandatory Virginia CPA ETHICS
Training Provided by Virginia Society of CPAs
\$30 Early Registration (by Nov 4th),
\$50 Late Registration (by Nov 11th)

RSVP with Visa or Master Card Number &
Expiration Date to **Karen Ulatowski**
at kulatowski@dodig.osd.mil.

"The Virginia Board of Accountancy (BOA)
now requires ALL Virginia CPAs to take a two-
hour ethics course annually to maintain their
CPE license, and the required course must
follow certain guidelines established by the
BOA. Are you prepared for this new
requirement?"

NOVAGA, in conjunction with the VSCPA, the
premier authority on ethics requirements for
Virginia CPAs having worked hand-in-hand
with the BOA over the past year to shape the
new regulations, will be presenting this last
chance course on 11/16.



**Evening NOVAGA Meeting
Personal Tax Planning**
Registration 5:15-6, Meeting 6-7

After the VSCPA Ethics training, join us for our
Personal Tax Planning Update.

We also have a speaker from **VITA** to gear us
up for tax season and we will collect for **Toys
for Tots.**

NOVAGA Members and guests please mark
this After-Work Good-Time Event on your
calendar and enjoy Hors d'oeuvres for \$15.
RSVP to Email **Karen Ulatowski**
at karen.ulatowski@dodig.mil or
call Karen at 703-604-9169 by November 11th.

Check out our newly revamped website

www.novaga.org

Ideas and suggestions can be provided to our webmaster, Heather Keister, at keisterh@gao.gov

Minutes from the September 21 meeting

NOVAGA President, Pat Brannin opened the chapter's first meeting of the program year to a stunningly packed room of over 50 attendees. She issued a hearty welcome and gave an overview of the upcoming program year (see page 3). She encouraged the attendees to review the September 2005 newsletter for additional information and to keep as a handy reference the post card they would get with the 2005-2006 programs.

Dave Styres, from the **Points of Light Foundation** began our community service program. The Foundation serves as a volunteer center national network. He encouraged participation at next month's dedication of the new national monument, The Extra Mile. The new monument will be dedicated October 12, 2005. The Extra Mile tells the story of great Americans who through their caring and personal sacrifice, reached out to others, building their dreams into great movements that have helped people across America and throughout the world. Oddly, The Extra Mile is not a structure. Upon completion, 70 custom designed bronze medallions will form the mile long pathway. Our 50/50 raffle resulted in \$121 for the foundation programs, due to the generosity of attendees and the lucky winner that donated their share back to the Foundation.

The program presenter, **Pamela Varner**, Project Manager for the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, data mining division, gave a lively presentation that was peppered with exceptional good humor. Ms. Varner shared lessons learned and state of the art techniques for identifying control issues with government purchase, travel, and fuel cards using data mining techniques. She used DOD stats to illustrate the impracticality of conducting a 100% manual review of 12 million transactions a year involving roughly \$10 million annually. As a result, in 2001 DOD developed an automated oversight program using data mining technology to identify purchase card transactions having a high probability of fraud or abuse. It was noted that one of the most difficult fraud to detect was cardholder conspiracy with the vendor. Equally important, it was noted that rarely is a single indicator sufficient...we should identify several sources (internal and external) and assess several combinations. Also, in our current Sarbanes Oxley/A-123 internal control environment, internal controls are more important than ever when managing these types of programs to detect inappropriate transactions.

A Board meeting followed the monthly meeting. The NOVAGA Chapter will donate \$500 to the AGA Katrina Relief fund to assist AGA members who have lost much from the devastating hurricane. The Board also approved a nominal \$20 fee for the December training on Financial Reporting Requirements, OMB Circular A-136 (4 CPEs). In addition, the Board approved the purchase of the NOVAGA "presentation coin" (see related article on page 4).

Message from the President

Well. We got off to a great start to the new program year with record attendance! Pam Varner gave not only an informative, but a very entertaining presentation on what the Office of the Department of Defense Inspector General has been doing – and finding – when using data mining techniques to look at DoD purchase and other credit cards. As Pam said – you don't have to make the stories up. You can find her presentation on our website at www.novaga.org

For the next meeting, October 19, we will be joining the Montgomery/Prince Georges County Chapter in Rockville. I hope you take this opportunity for a good meal, networking and a challenging topic. There are a limited number of spaces so RSVP early.

You will notice that we have a much abbreviated newsletter this month. Don't despair. It is temporary. Our newsletter editor, Robyn Stanley, is getting married and honeymooning. Congratulations and best wishes, Robyn!

Looking forward to seeing all of you at future meeting and events.



Patricia A. Brannin, CGFM
NOVAGA President, 2005-2006

Sneak A Peek at the 2005-2006 NOVAGA Program Year

If you missed the September meeting – Don't Despair. There are plenty more “**After Work Good-Time and CPE Events.**” Join your colleagues and friends at the following events from **5:15pm** until **7:00pm** – at the Alexandria Embassy Suites located directly across from the King Street Metro – on the **THIRD WEDNESDAY** of each month (unless otherwise noted):

Menu:

Cocktail buffet of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, Iced Tea and Water Service
Domestic and imported beers, Copperidge Chardonnay and cabernet wines are available at additional cost.

Wednesday, October 19, 2005

Lessons Learned from Major IT Modernization Initiatives - 1 CPE
Joint Meeting with Montgomery/Prince Georges Chapter, 6:00-8:00pm
Double Tree Inn, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville MD

Wednesday, November 16, 2005

VSCPA Ethics Training - Embassy Suites, 3-5 pm -2 CPEs
Personal Tax Planning – 1 CPE
Embassy Suites, Registration 5:15-6:00pm, Meeting 6:00-7:00pm

Tuesday, December 13, 2005 1-5 pm

Financial Reporting Requirements – The Impact of OMB Circulars A-123 and A-136 – 4 CPEs – only \$20
Andrew C. Lewis, CPE, Senior Manager at KPMG & Adjunct Professor at The George Washington University
Hal I. Steinberg, CPA CGFM, Technical Director, AGA
Julie V. Bryant CGFM CPA MBA, Director of Performance Reporting at the AGA
KPMG 2001 M St. Washington DC – RSVP by 11/21 to Latisha Marshall (202-533-5666)

- *Learn the status of the progress of other Federal agencies in implementing the requirement of OMB Circular No. A-123.*
- *Identify effective ways to document and test controls as your agency assesses and reports on its effectiveness of internal controls over financial reporting.*
- *Learn about the other changes required by OMB Circular No. A-136 for FY 2005 and FY 2006, and their impact on your agency's Performance and Accountability Report.*

Wednesday, January 18, 2006

Getting to Audit in DoD – 1 CPE -- Embassy Suites, Registration 5:15-6:00pm, Meeting 6:00-7:00pm

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Congressional Issues – 1 CPE -- Embassy Suites, Registration 5:15-6:00pm, Meeting 6:00-7:00pm

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

NOVAGA All-day Educational Event – 8 CPEs - Hilton, Alexandria VA.

Wednesday, April 19, 2006

Professional Etiquette and Dress – 1 CPE -- Embassy Suites, Registration 5:15-6:00pm, Meeting 6:00-7:00pm

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

NOVAGA Annual Awards Banquet, Embassy Suites

Want to provide input? Stay for our Executive Committee Meetings immediately following each (home) monthly meeting at the Embassy Suites, 7-7:30 pm

Chapter News

Welcome New Members!

Compiled by David Karian
NOVAGA Early Careers

We invite our new members to attend our monthly chapter meeting. NOVAGA pays for its new members' first home meeting (you must RSVP & let us know it's your first meeting). We hope the new members will find out for themselves that the meetings are entertaining and great for socializing, networking, and learning. We want you back again, and again, and again...

Welcome to our members who joined in Aug and Sep:

- Mr. Roger Dent
- Mr. Russell East
- Mr. Thomas Fraser
- Mr. Stephen Hartwell
- Mr. Janssen Scott
- Mr. Kenneth Lambert
- Ms. Catherine Lemaster
- Mr. Mark Macnamee
- Ms. Carol Phillips
- Mr. Joel Rives
- Ms. Elizabeth Shockley

Early Careers

The **DC Chapter** is sponsoring a series of early career luncheons. The objective of these luncheons is to share career experiences with our early career members, those members with generally less than 5 years experience in the government accounting and accountability field.

The first one will be held on **October 18**. The speaker will be Angela Antonelli from Deloitte.

If you are interested, contact your Early Career Program Coordinator, **David Karian** at David.karian@gt.com or (703)637-2789

Where: Deloitte Consulting, 555 12th St. NW (near the Metro Center Orange/Blue/Red line Metro) Washington, DC

When: **October 18, 2005, 11:30-1:00**

Cost: **Free**, lunch will be provided

OR you can contact Laura Glass at 703.364.2545 or laura.glass@oracle.com to register for this event.

The Northern Virginia Chapter Mints "Presentation Coin."

Compiled by Don Bloomer, DODIG,
NOVAGA At-large Board member

The Presentation Coin will be given at the November and subsequent meetings to new members, members who reach their 25th, 30th or 50th anniversary with the AGA, and members who return to the monthly meetings after 3 years or more. The Board may from time to time choose to recognize other NOVAGA members with the coin for special acts.

Such presentation coins, although used today for many reasons, are rooted in military history and tradition. Following is the history of the military coin. We hope to challenge the new and returning members to be active participants in the NOVAGA chapter which strives to serve government accountability professionals and advance government accountability and to thank the long term members for their support in meeting our challenges over the years.

During World War I, American volunteers from all parts of the country filled the newly formed flying squadrons. Some were wealthy scions attending colleges such as Yale and Harvard who quit in mid-term to join the war. In one squadron, a wealthy lieutenant ordered medallions struck in solid bronze and presented them to his unit. One young pilot placed the medallion in a small leather pouch that he wore about his neck.

Shortly after acquiring the medallions, the pilot's aircraft was severely damaged by ground fire. He was forced to land behind enemy lines and was immediately captured by a German patrol. In order to discourage his escape, the Germans took all of his personal identification except for the small leather pouch around his neck. In the meantime, he was taken to a small French town near the front. Taking advantage of a bombardment that night, he escaped. However, he was without personal identification.

He succeeded in avoiding German patrols by donning civilian attire and reached the front lines. With great difficulty, he crossed no-man's land. Eventually, he stumbled onto a French outpost. Unfortunately, saboteurs had plagued the French in the sector. They sometimes masqueraded as civilians and wore civilian clothes. Not recognizing the young pilot's

History of the Military Coin (continued)

American accent, the French thought him to be a saboteur and made ready to execute him. He had no identification to prove his allegiance, but he did have his leather pouch containing the medallion. He showed the medallion to his would-be executioners and one of his French captors recognized squadron insignia on the medallion. They delayed his execution long enough for him to confirm his identity. Instead of shooting him they gave him a bottle of wine.

Back at his squadron, it became tradition to ensure that all members carried their medallion or coin at all times. This was accomplished through challenge in the following manner - a challenger would ask to see the medallion. If the challenged could not produce a medallion, they were required to buy a drink of choice for the member who challenged them. If the challenged member produced a medallion, then the challenging member was required to pay for the drink. This tradition continued on throughout the war and for many years after the war while surviving members of the squadron were still alive.

Today, the military coin is still a "Challenge Coin" in the Special Forces, Rangers and especially the Airborne community's "Jumpmaster Coin" but is more commonly used as a coin for excellence in achievements that don't quite meet the requirements of an official military award. Coins are primarily given by Army commanders LTC (05) and above.

Thanks to *Major Dewayne McOsker* with the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General for the history of the "Challenge Coin"

Capital Region Events

Special email from Marguerite Neelson, DC AGA chapter, region newsletter editors, and Karl Boettcher, Capital Region Member Services

Photo Alice Arielly



Capital Region members enjoy last year's Oktoberfest celebration – come join us this year!

To find out what's happening at other AGA chapters in the area:

Visit the Washington DC chapter's Web site at <http://www.agadc.org> to learn about their upcoming events.

Visit the Montgomery/Prince Georges chapter's Web site at <http://www.marylandaga.com> to learn about their upcoming events.

Oktoberfest on October 29, 2005

The AGA Washington Chapter, Member Services in partnership with the Baltimore Chapter is sponsoring an "Oktoberfest" at Blobs Park on Saturday, October 29, from 6 p.m. until 11 p.m. Come and enjoy the "Gemütlichkeit" with German food, drink and dancing along with the entertainment provided by the original Bavarian dance club (Schuhplattler Verein) starting at 7 p.m. and the Rheinlander's Polka band starting at 8 p.m. The Blobs Park Pavilion is located in Jessup Maryland just off the Baltimore/Washington Parkway and RT 175E on Blobs Park Road. Admission at the door is \$7.00 per person and \$11.00 for the all you can eat traditional German buffet, including bratwurst, sauerbraten, dumplings, sauerkraut, and red cabbage along with roast beef or ham. Traditional American menu selections are also available. Drinks and deserts are extra. The charge for children 5 to 12 is ½ the price and no charge for children under 5.

Send your electronic response or direct any questions to karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov (202-874-6131).

Visit the National Zoological Park

AGA Washington DC Member Services in partnership with the Northern Virginia and Montgomery/Prince Georges Chapters are sponsoring a "Tour of the Smithsonian's Zoological Park" on Sunday, November 6. We will meet at the visitor's center (Connecticut Avenue entrance) by 1:30 p.m. Animal buildings are open until 4:30 p.m. This will give us three hours to visit with the animals, and browse the gift and bookshop.

AGA members will be able to enjoy a soft drink and a snack compliments of our **Sponsors**. The Zoo is

accessible via the red line - Woodley Park -Zoo metro stop. Ample parking should be available in parking lot "A" for a \$5 fee. There is no charge for entrance to the Zoo. Wear comfortable clothes and walking shoes. If you are interested in this activity, please let us know.

Send your electronic response or direct any questions to karl.boettcher@fms.treas.gov (202-874-6131). For more information, You can also contact the Zoo at (202-673-4800).



Earning the CGFM and Spreading the Word

By: Christina M. Camara
AGA National

When state of Michigan employee Doreen Brown earned her CGFM certification, she naturally wanted her immediate supervisor to know about it. But she didn't stop there, asking AGA to also notify other top state officials, including the governor herself.

Brown, who is an accounting manager for the Michigan Department of Management and Budget's Financial Services Division, said her goal was to spread the word about AGA's certification program.

After passing all three CGFM examinations, her achievement was announced at a staff meeting of 80 employees, it was written up in the local newspaper, and she received a letter of congratulations from Governor Jennifer M. Granholm.

"Serving the public is one of the noblest occupations one can choose, and your career doing so speaks volumes about the greatness of your character," Granholm wrote. "From the beginning, your record of dedication shines brightly and this achievement is just another highlight in your already outstanding career." Granholm went on, "Greek dramatist Sophocles once said, 'Success is dependent on effort.' Judging from the consistent quality work and the unwavering commitment you have demonstrated over the years, you are a model of effort and example of success."

New CGFMs can follow Brown's example. Consider announcing the accomplishment to the governor, treasurer, controller and/or state auditor. AGA sends out information about the CGFM with every personalized letter that is sent. It's a great way to raise awareness of the CGFM designation.

Brown noted that Granholm had previously shown support for the CGFM by signing a proclamation naming March as CGFM Month in Michigan. Brown's Greater Lansing Chapter has also been active in encouraging members to earn their CGFM. In fact, the chapter reimbursed Brown for \$500 of the costs of her examination fees and preparation materials.

Howard Pizzo, Past Chapter President and Director of Financial Services, is also a new CGFM, having earned his certification during the Professional Development Conference & Exposition in Florida in July. Pizzo and other chapter members are actively promoting the CGFM in Michigan, and Brown is helping co-workers who are studying to earn their certification. "We have a lot of interest," she said.

If you are a new CGFM, be sure to fill out and return your supervisor notification form to the National Office so we can notify others of your accomplishment. The forms are mailed with the new CGFM award packages. AGA chapters can contact Katya Silver (ksilver@agacgfm.org) about ways to recognize new CGFMs and educate others about the CGFM certification.

NOVAGA CGFM Study Group & Contest!

by Robin G. McCoy, CGFM coordinator

The Certified Government Financial Manager (**CGFM**) designation recognizes the unique knowledge and skills of certification holders and has become the mark of excellence in government financial management. Each year the CGFM Program continues to grow and earn greater recognition from federal, state and local government. Virginia is one of seven states that formally recognize the CGFM designation, giving **CGFMs preferred status in hiring**, making the CGFM a substitute for one year's experience or offering pay increases to those who pass the exam.

So, if you are looking to improve your career opportunities, don't delay any longer. **Begin earning your CGFM credential by joining the NOVAGA CGFM study group.** If you are interested joining the study group please send you name and e-mail address to NOVAGA CGFM Coordinator, Robin G. McCoy, at Robin.McCoy@Navy.mil.

NOVAGA members who recommend colleagues and friends to complete the CGFM application (and the application is completed and submitted during the contest period) **are eligible receive prizes and awards** from the chapter. The drawing will be held at the November, 2005 meeting. For more information contact the NOVAGA CGFM coordinator, Robin G. McCoy at Robin.McCoy@Navy.mil.

Positions Available!

Information from www.projecthope.org



Project HOPE is an international not-for-profit NGO working in the health education field in 34 countries around the world. They have some large grants from USAID as well as corporate grants where they act as a prime or in other cases as subcontractor. Their headquarters is in Millwood, Virginia ... about 15 minutes from Winchester. More information about the organization is at www.projecthope.org. They currently have two positions available as Director of Grants Compliance and Director of Internal Audit. Email our president for position descriptions at patricia.brannin@dodig.mil. Email your resume to recruitment@projecthope.org.



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Newsletter Deadline:

Deadline for articles for the November Newsletter is **October 23**

Please submit information to our Newsletter Editor at robyn.n.stanley@usdoj.gov

We welcome your input!



Northern Virginia Chapter
of the Association of Government Accountants

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<http://www.novaga.org>

Reservations email:
kulatowski@dodig.osd.mil
or Phone 703-604-9169

The NOVAGA is an association with approximately 800 members from the federal, state, public and private practices, with a mission statement to serve professionals in the government financial management community by providing quality education, fostering professional development and certification and supporting standards and research to advance government accountability.