



CAPITOL TOPICS

NOVEMBER 2012

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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PRESIDENT MESSAGE

November, already... As I write this, I think about the demands on our time; work, professional organizations, outside commitments, family, etc. Certainly not in that order, but at times that's the way it falls. The upcoming holiday season adds more to the load, and let us not forget legislative session around the corner. Certainly a lot to think about, right? So before I forget, let me thank (and be thankful for) your Austin Chapter executive committee. Dedicated individuals from whom we ask much - thanks all.

I'm going to encourage you all to take a breather, and then put one more thing on your calendar. We'd like to thank YOU for your hard work and involvement. On November 7th, 4:00 p.m., we'll host our now-annual **Member Appreciation and Recruitment Mixer** at Central Market North Lamar. Free food and drinks! Bring a friend who may be interested in AGA, we'd love to meet them. There will be some giveaways; drawings for a free luncheon and one year of membership for some lucky individuals. Did I mention the free food? In addition, we are hosting **Evelyn Brown, AGA National President**, who will speak at our November 8th luncheon. Her topic is "Our Professional Journey" and I'm excited to hear about Evelyn's experiences as well as her perspective on a career in government finance. We hope to see you at both events - and I hear there might even be birthday cake on Wednesday evening. You'll have to attend to see who is getting older.

I also want to tell you about two recent donations made by the Austin Chapter on your behalf. The Executive Committee voted to make a donation of \$150 to Wreaths Across America and, through the Combined Federal Campaign, a donation of \$150 to the local Ronald McDonald House. We couldn't make these donations without your membership and participation, so thank you for making this possible.

So, on we march into November. More to come - hope to see you all very soon.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul Morris
President, AGA Austin Chapter

Upcoming Event



Scholz Garten
1607 San Jacinto Blvd.
Austin, TX 78701

Thursday, November 8th, 2012 - 11:30am-3:00pm

Our Professional Journey

(By Evelyn Brown, CGFM-Retired)

1 CPE's

AGA Member

\$20

Non Member

\$25

Data Mining to Prioritize

Investigations of Contract Fraud

(Audio Conference)

2 CPE's

\$25

\$30

Both Sessions

(By Evelyn Brown and Audio Conference)

3 CPE's

\$45

\$55

Registration: Send email to Adana Barry - Adana.Barry@austintexas.gov
(If you prefer a vegetarian dish, please let Adana know when registering)



HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the September 27th, 2012



AGA is the premier association for advancing government accountability

Call to order

Paul Morris called to order the Executive Committee Meeting at 12:00 PM on Thursday, September 27, 2012.

Roll call

The following members were in attendance physically at the ERS Conference Room – Longhorn Annex: Paul Morris, Kadie Weyer, Patti Aguilera, Sharita Coyle, Debi Weyer, and Eddie Chan. The following members were in attendance via conference call: Autumn Bellfield, Adana Berry, Kristen Gonzales, and Mara Ash.

Approval of Minutes

- The Treasurer's Report was approved via e-mail by the majority of Executive Committee as of today's date.
- Five Executive Committee Members approved the Executive Committee Minutes for the August 16, 2012 meeting via e-mail.

Update: If a Executive Committee Member does not approve or suggest changes to chapter reports or meeting minutes within a week of distribution, his/her silence will be taken as approval.

Chapter Historian

- **Sharita Coyle** has volunteered to be our chapter historian. She will provide an end of year summary on chapter events as well as the backup the secretary for meetings and luncheons.
- A motion was made to purchase a voice recorder for the AGA Austin Chapter secretary to record luncheon speakers and assist in preparing chapter minutes. This motion was seconded and approved by the Executive Committee.

Open position – President Elect

- The President Elect position is now vacant. Responsibilities of the President Elect includes handling awards nomination process as well as keeping track of chapter points on a regular basis.
- Paul Morris is tracking the chapter's points until the position is filled.

Treasurer's report

- The audio conferences have been purchased.
- In the latest report, the expenses and revenue for the first AGA luncheon on September 20, 2012, is detailed.

Early Careers – Membership Mixer

The AGA National President, **Evelyn Brown**, will be a special guest at the membership mixer.

- **\$181.00** has been deposited into our account from National for our upcoming **membership mixer** that will be held on **November 7, 2012** at Central Market on North Lamar from 4:00 PM – 7 PM.
- **Benefits** of attending the membership mixer include networking, free luncheon raffle for current members, free AGA membership raffle for non-members.
- Pictures will be taken at AGA luncheons and events, and placed on the chapter's Facebook page to show chapter events, interest non-members, and for Historian reports.

First luncheon feedback

- The surveys reported good feedback for the chapter's first luncheon on September 20, 2012.
- For future luncheon events, attendees will be able to park on the top floor of Garage B for free.

Outreach efforts

- A list of our chapter events has been sent to the San Antonio AGA chapter. This not only earns our chapter points for reaching out to other AGA chapters, but helps us build a relationship with other chapters.
- The San Antonio AGA chapter has challenged the Austin AGA chapter to fund wreaths for Veteran's headstones this holiday season. Our chapter has accepted the challenge.

For details of our meeting minutes, please visit our website at:

<http://www.agaAustin.org/ECMinutes.html>





November Upcoming Events

Membership Recruitment Mixer

you're invited to a

Networking Social

*With AGA National President,
Evelyn Brown*

Wednesday, Nov 7,

4p-7p

complimentary hors d'oeuvres

Central Market, Lamar

4001 n. lamar blvd. austin, tx 78756

*Members: enter to win a
free luncheon.*

*Non-members: enter to win
membership for a year.*

(rsvp at bit.ly/TjcDTZ)



Luncheon

November 8th, 2012

Data Mining to Prioritize Investigations of Contract Fraud (Audio Conference)

- To understand how the USPS uses data mining to reduce and minimize fraud, waste and abuse.

Our Professional Journey

Course Objectives:

- Learn how to acquire adequate skill sets for career development
- The importance of participation with determining career paths
- How to plot goals and objectives at different levels in an individual's career path and the importance of flexibility
- Technical skills for financial management
- Human resource management.



Evelyn Brown, CGFM-Retired
AGA 2012-2013 National President

Evelyn Brown, who has more than 34 years of government financial management experience, retired as Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO) of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in September 2006.

Membership News



Let's **Welcome** our new members:

- Patricia Pratt** with the Texas Association of Counties.
- Sharita Coyle** with the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services has volunteered to be our chapter historian. She will provide an end of year summary on chapter events as well as the backup the secretary for meetings and luncheons.

Anniversaries

1 year

Ms. Patricia A. Robinson, CGFM

Ms. Priscilla Suggs

30 Years

Mr. Pete Rose, CGFM

If you have an anniversary approaching, please let us Know.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Austin Chapter will host a **Thanksgiving Dinner food drive** that will benefit a low-income family in the Austin area. Our Chapter is collecting non-perishable food and monetary donations for the Capitol Area Food Bank. For **each dollar** that is given, **3 pounds of food** can be purchased by the Food Bank. Let's give a family a great **Thanksgiving** by bringing canned goods and other non-perishable items or monetary donations to the November luncheon.



AGA Donated a gift of \$150.00 on 10/23/2012 to Ronald McDonald House of Charities of Austin and Central Texas. The services they provide to over 1400 hospitalized children and their families each year can be attributed in many ways to people who generously support their mission.

Wreaths Across America *"A San-Antonio AGA Chapter Challenge"*

The Austin Chapter is joining the San Antonio Chapter in inviting you to sponsor Christmas Wreaths for military graves across America from **October 1st through December 10th**. This year, Wreaths Across America has asked CAP to help secure sponsorships for additional wreaths to be placed in over 240 veteran's cemeteries across the country. Visit the link below to get more information, including a how-to guide and video from the 2006 ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. You will also be able to download a sponsorship order form. The sponsor cost is **\$15** a wreath of which **\$2** of that amount is donated to the local Civil Air Patrol Squadron.

If you wish to participate please donate wreaths at <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/store/> and email Lynda Baker at bright_sunny_disp@yahoo.com with the number of wreaths that were donated on our Chapter's behalf.

FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE AND BIG SCARY NUMBERS



When the spending of public money is at issue, fraud, waste and abuse are almost always lumped together--and joined with big scary numbers to make our society seem worse and government more incompetent. Better policy responses depend on drawing appropriate distinctions among fraud, waste and abuse and on placing their impact in proper context.

Fraud is theft. Fraudulent acts are intentional violations of law committed for the personal benefit of the perpetrator. The benefit sought is usually monetary and involves some sort of subterfuge or attempt to avoid detection. A classic case is the recent one in which a garage attendant at the Air and Space Museum's facility near Dulles Airport undercounted cars and pocketed about \$400,000 in parking fees over the course of several years.

Abuse also is intentional and also involves some sort of direct benefit to the abuser. But while abusive acts are often committed in violation of internal policies and procedures, they are not violations of law and therefore cannot be prosecuted. Abuse involves taking beyond reasonable limits privileges and resources that employees or officials need to enable them to carry out their responsibilities. The acts committed by General Services Administration officials in the agency's Las Vegas conference scandal are examples of abuse. Abuse, when it is detected, usually results in disciplinary action, as it did at GSA.

Waste is simply the suboptimal use of resources. Because human decision-making cannot be perfect and we cannot precisely predict the exact amount and types of resources needed to carry out a particular program or activity, a certain amount of waste occurs in every human endeavor. When large amounts of waste occur, they are usually just the result of bad decisions with no particular intent on anyone's part to personally benefit. Examples of significant amounts of waste might be buying more vehicles than an agency actually needs or buying the wrong type of equipment.

Grouping these three different types of problems together conceptually, as critics of government spending so often do, makes them more difficult to deal with because minimizing their damage requires three completely different approaches. For each of these types of problems there are well-known tools that work.

Please follow this link to read more about the article.
<http://www.governing.com/gov-institute/funkhouser/col-fraud-waste-abuse-distinctions-policy.html>