



**A  
MESSAGE  
FROM  
THE  
CHAPTER  
PRESIDENT**



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**Happy CGFM Month!**

Lots happening this month here at your local chapter.

First... it's March so that means it's time for another full day of training at our Spring PDC. Registration is about to close so please head on over to our website. You can find details on our topics and speakers in the newsletter and on the website.

Our Great Lakes Regional Vice President, Brian Mosier, will be one of our speakers. We will also be honoring three individuals as we present our Excellence in Government Leadership Award, Community Service Award and Professional Development Award during our awards luncheon.

March is also CGFM month. We honor our members who have obtained their certification. A lot of hard work, time and dedication is required to obtain and maintain their certification. Study materials are available to be checked out for anyone wishing to take the exam. Please see Dan Wawiernia to get more details.

Our program year is quickly drawing to a close and our President-elect will soon be putting together the slate of officers nominated for the 2017-2018 program year. If you have any interest in serving on our board, please contact Anshu Varma or myself and let us know what you are interested in. The Greater Lansing chapter is the success it is due to the volunteer work completed by the board and the great participation from all of our members.

On a personal note: Spring is just around the corner, time is flying faster every day. Please take a moment to remember to cherish the simple things in life and appreciate those who are in our lives. We only have so much time together. Make every moment count!

**Vision**

AGA is the premier association for advancing government accountability.

**Mission**

AGA fosters learning, certification, leadership and collaboration for professionals and stakeholders committed to advancing government accountability.

**Core Values**

Service, Accountability, Integrity, Leadership



*Julie*

**Eye Opener**



**More than 90%**

Portion of Michigan's dams that will reach or exceed their life span by 2020. None of them, however, are as tall as California's Orville Dam, which has the potential to collapse soon and cause catastrophic flooding.

SOURCE: Tribune News Services | February 16, 2017, 2017



Happy St. Patrick's Day!



# 2017 SPRING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

**Wednesday, March 8, 2017**

8:00am to 4:55pm

Causeway Bay Hotel and Conference Center  
6820 South Cedar Street  
Lansing, Michigan

REGISTRATION ENDS MARCH 1, 2017

[Click Here to Register](#)

\$50 for AGA members  
\$70 for non-members  
**ENDS FEBRUARY 17**

\$70 for AGA members  
\$100 for non-members  
**AFTER FEBRUARY 17**

7:30 – 8:00	<b>Registration. Coffee, tea, danishes.</b>
8:00 – 8:05	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>
8:05 – 8:55	<b>2017 GASB Updates</b> Marie Stiegel, CPA, Plante Moran 1.0 hour CPE Accounting
9:00 – 9:50	<b>Multi-Generational Appreciation</b> Kyle Dymond, Michigan Department of Treasury 1.0 hour CPE Management
9:50 – 10:10	Break
10:10 – 11:00	<b>GASB 77 and the Uniform Guidance</b> Brian Mosier, CPA, Clark Schaefer Hackett, AGA Great Lakes RVP 1.0 hour CPE Accounting
11:05 – 11:55	<b>Hacking Elections, and Recounts</b> Dan Lohrman, Security Mentor 1.0 hour CPE Management
11:55 – 1:00	<b>Lunch and Awards Presentation</b>
1:05 – 2:45	<b>Ethics</b> Stephen Blann, CPA, CGFM, CGMA, Rehmann 2.0 hours CPE Ethics
2:45 – 2:55	Break
2:55 – 4:35	<b>Communication</b> <b>Wendy Day</b> 2.0 hours CPE Other

### Payment

- can be made by credit card when you register on-line
- checks can be sent to AGA at PO Box 12159, Lansing, MI 48901
- checks or cash will be accepted at the conference
- MAIN ID 2521858718-005
- Registrants are responsible for payment unless a cancellation is received by the deadline.

This event qualifies for 8 hours of CPE.

### Questions?

contact  
Rachelle Breeden  
rbreeden@michigan.gov  
517-241-6388



The Mark of Excellence  
in Federal, State, and  
Local Government

## Chapter Community Service Project

## Volunteers of America

accepting donations for coats and blankets (used or new),  
and cash or checks  
contact Cora Schimanski at 517-335-2127 with any questions



**WEB CONFERENCE  
MEMBERS ONLY  
THURSDAY**  
March 16, 2017  
2:00pm to 3:00pm

Your Desk

### DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE LINKEDIN PROFILE

#### REGISTRATION

Register on-line at [agacgfm.org](http://agacgfm.org)  
Click on Training and Events

Are you maximizing LinkedIn? You will learn exactly, step by step, how to use profile updates, postes and groups to easily and quickly position yourself as a subject matter expert and thought leader, and attract opportunities. The webinar will provide examples so you can maximize and improve your results.



**WEB CONFERENCE  
WEDNESDAY**  
March 29, 2017  
2:00pm to 3:50pm  
Van Wagoner Building  
Lakeshore Room  
Lansing, Michigan

### CFO/CIO COLLABORATIONS

#### REGISTRATION

Register on-line at [www.aga-lansing.org](http://www.aga-lansing.org). Click on events.

Register before Monday, March 27, 2017  
Details are not yet available.

#### COST

AGA members - FREE  
non-members - \$20

Registrants are responsible for payment unless cancellation is received by the registration deadline.

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

**SAVE** time, money & paper. [> renew now](#)

Renew online in three easy steps!

visit [agacgfm.org](http://agacgfm.org)

## Membership

### Member Benefits Really Add Up

As an AGA member, you gain access to a variety of benefits designed to support your career growth and success. We have hundreds of members who love their AGA membership so much, they've hit membership milestones with us like 20, 30, or even 40 years of membership!

AGA is the membership organization for government financial management professionals.

Key membership benefits, to name a few, include:

- Leadership and volunteer opportunities at the chapter and national level
- Chapter meetings and training with quality CPE opportunities and a low cost
- Many other benefits on the National AGA website

Contact Shawna Hessling, Chapter Membership Director for more information at [hesslings@michigan.gov](mailto:hesslings@michigan.gov) or 517-335-8917.

# HOW TO STEAL LIKE A BOSS

## How do fraudsters think and act?



CPA-SCRIBO  
MOVING CPAS FORWARD

Charles B. Hall, CPA, CFE

Can you steal like a boss? White collar crime takes special skills and thoughts. Do you have what it takes? Here's my tongue-in-cheek look at how I would steal.

To steal, I need to:

1. Be Believable
2. Have a Cause
3. Calm My Conscience
4. Develop My Plan
5. Execute My Plan
6. If Caught, Settle of Court

### 1. Be Believable

I must be seen as trustworthy. The more age, experience, and education I have, the better. The longer I work for the organization, the more I will be trusted.

And while I'm at it, I'll do what I can to move to positions of higher authority which will provide me with greater opportunities. Being the boss will enable me to steal like a boss.

If possible, I will gain the ability to authorize or initiate purchases. Kickbacks (paid to those who authorize payments) are difficult to detect, even by professional fraud examiners, and the dollars can be significant. Like stealing candy from a baby.

### 2. Have a Cause

Any financial pressure will do – a gambling or drug habit, an affair, medical bills, or maybe I just want to appear more successful than I am. If I don't have a need, I will create one. I am my own cause.

My unshareable need (cause) must not be known by others lest the suspect my need for cash.

### 3. Calm My Conscience

I have when that little voice starts talking: "Charles, you can't do this. Your grandmother would be so ashamed." It takes skill and fortitude, but I must calm my conscience. All the more reason to have a cause (see point 2). The more noble I can make my cause, the better. Something like, "I've earned this. The company should realize my greatness and provide me with appropriate compensation. I have three kids in college, and they need this. You know I really want to be a good provider for my family." I may need to start stealing borrowing or compensating myself in small amounts and then

build up. This will make it easier for my conscience to adjust.

I need to think correctly. When that little voice speaks, I will reword those thoughts. I know I am right.

### 4. Develop My Plan

I will pay attention to control weaknesses. Our auditors have told us for years that we lack appropriate segregation of duties. Opportunity awaits.

If I am going to steal be compensated appropriately, I need to make it worth my while. Be bold. Think big. I have noticed that one of our key vendors has been very kind to me, a free week-long trip to Las Vegas for the last three years. And a key contract renewal is coming up. I think cash would be better this year. Besides, I know the CFO received an even sweeter trip than I did last year. And bribes gifts don't hurt anyone; the vendor pays for them (though I have noticed the vendor's pricing seems to be increasing . . . actually, exploding).

### 5. Execute My Plan

Take Compensate myself in a steady under-the-radar kind of way. Most folks get greedy. I must be diligent to work in a measured way, not taking receiving more than would be noticed. Greed is my enemy, the element that land good guys like me in newspapers.

Also, I think I can consistently steal borrow money from the receipts cycle since I am in charge of daily deposits and all related accounting duties. This might cost me my vacation though. I need to be on the job to continue hide perform by duties. But if the funds taken compensation is enough, I can forgo the Las Vegas trip.

### 7. If I Get Caught, Settle Out of Court

If I am discovered someone notices that I have borrowed funds, then I may have to be beg for forgiveness and promise to pay it back. And of course, I need to make sure the company understands my concern for its reputation; news like this does not coalesce well with the company's mission statement: Honesty and Compassion for Those We Serve.

I don't need a criminal record, especially if I need to steal borrow funds from my next employer.

# membership

## NATIONAL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Are you or a family member pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies in disciplines such as accounting, auditing, budgeting, economics, finance, informaton technology or public administration? If so, considering applying for an AGA Academic Scholarship today!

This year AGA will award:

### Rising College Freshman

One Full Time \$3,000  
One Part Time \$1,500

### Current Undergraduates

Three Full Time \$3,000  
Two Part Time \$1,500

### Graduate Students

Two Full Time \$3,000  
One Part Time \$1500

**Community Service:** AGA can award two \$1500 scholarships amongst the three collegiate categories above.

**The deadline for applications is  
Friday, April 14, 2017**

In addition, other opportunities to learn include:

**National Collegiate Scholarship Program:** Provides full-time college student oportunities to attend the National Leadership Training or Professional Development Training.

**Young Professionals PDT Scholarship:** The Young Professionals Focus Group annually selects five young professionals to attend the Professional Development Training.

Visit [agacgfm.org](http://agacgfm.org) to learn more about the qualifications and apply on-line.



**WHEREAS**, the Greater Lansing Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) is a professional organization, part of the Association of Government Accountants which has a network of 15,000 members in 100 chapters in the United States and around the world and approximately 110 active members representing state, federal, municipal and private sector accountants, auditors, and financial managers in Michigan; and,

**WHEREAS**, AGA Greater Lansing Chapter members have responded to AGA's mission of Advancing Government Accountability, as it continues its broad educational efforts, with emphasis on high standards of conduct, honor, and character in its Code of Ethics, and are making significant advances both in professional ability and in service to the residents of Michigan 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 Governmental Environment, Governmental Financial Management and Control and Governmental Accounting, Financial Reporting and Budgeting. The program also requires that each CGFM 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, Rick Snyder, governor of Michigan, do hereby proclaim March 2017 as Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Month in Michigan.



**The Mark of Excellence  
in Federal, State, and  
Local Government**

CGFM is the professional certification recognizing the unique skills and special knowledge required of today's government financial managers. It covers governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls, and budgeting at the federal, state, and local levels.

### Are you interested in becoming a CGFM?

To learn more visit [agacgfm.org](http://agacgfm.org) and participate in AGA's free webinar on March 15, 2017 to learn what it takes to become a CGFM.

Your Greater Lansing AGA Chapter has Study Guides for your use. In addition, the chapter offers a scholarship. Contact Dan Wawiernia, Chapter CGFM Director at 517-241-2768 or [wawarierniad@michigan.gov](mailto:wawarierniad@michigan.gov).

### CGFM Certification Process:

- Step 1: Read AGA's Code of Ethics
- Step 2: Apply for the CGFM Program
- Step 3: Submit Required Degree Documentation
- Step 4: Receive and Eligibility Letter
- Step 5: Submit a Work Verification Form
- Step 6: Prepare for the CGFM Examinations
- Step 7: Schedule the CGFM Examinations
- Step 8: Take the CGFM Examinations
- Step 9: Receive CGFM Award Letter
- Step 10: Receive Your CGFM Certificate

# THE STATE WITH THE MOST STRUCTUALLY-DEFICIENT BRIDGES RETAINS ITS TITLE

By Dave Nyczepir, News Editor



More than 20 percent of its 24,184 bridge inventory is compromised.

Iowa continues to have the most structurally deficient bridges of any U.S. state, a symptom of the broader trend of compromised state infrastructure, according to an American Road & Transportation Builders Association analysis.

ARTBA crunched the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2016 National Bridge Inventory data for the fourth year and found there are 185 million daily crossings on nearly 56,000 bridges with one or more key elements in "poor" or worse condition.

The Hawkeye State has 4,968 compromised bridges—20.5 percent of its 24,184 bridge inventory. That's second only to Rhode Island's 24.9 percent with 192 structurally deficient bridges out of 772 total.



Rainbow Bridge, Lake City, Iowa

"The report's key takeaway and the most important thing to focus on is that 1,900 bridges on the National Highway Freight Network are structurally deficient," Alison Premo Black, ARTBA chief economist, said in a statement. "That's America's Economic Expressway. Bridge failures or restrictions on that 66,000-mile network should not be an option."

Premo Black went on to say that any new federal infrastructure initiative should focus on improving the performance of bridges and the freight network while minimizing economic disruptions.

After Iowa, Pennsylvania (4,506), Oklahoma (3,460), Missouri (3,195), Nebraska (2,361), Illinois (2,243), Kansas (2,151), Mississippi (2,098), Ohio (1,942), and New York (1,928) had the most structurally deficient bridges.



Three Sisters Bridges, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania

The District of Columbia (9), Nevada (31), Delaware (43), Hawaii (64), and Utah (95) have the least compromised bridges, with Nevada also having the lowest percentage of its total inventory deficient at 1.6 percent. Repairs on 263 are expected to cost the state \$744 million.

About 13,000 Interstate bridges need replacement, widening or major reconstruction across all state transportation departments.

Federal funding provides an average 51 percent of state transportation departments' capital outlays for highway and bridge projects, per the analysis.

The most-traveled, structurally deficient bridge in the U.S. Interstate 110 over Dominguez Channel near Los Angeles, which sees 273,760 crossings daily and was built in 1960.



US 110 Bridge over Dominguez Channel, Los Angeles, California



## WHAT THE U.S. CAN LEARN FROM INDIA'S MOVE TOWARD A CASHLESS SOCIETY



Vivek Wadhwa  
Distinguished Fellow at  
Carnegie Mellon University

Silicon Valley fancies itself the global leader in innovation. Its leaders hype technologies such as bitcoin and blockchain, which some claim are the greatest inventions since the Internet. They are so complex that only a few mathematicians can understand them, and they require massive computing resources to operate — yet billions of dollars are invested in them.

India may have leapfrogged the U.S. technology industry with simple and practical innovations and massive grunt work. It has built a digital infrastructure that will soon process billions more transactions than bitcoin ever has. With this, India will skip two generations of financial technologies and build something as monumental as China's Great Wall and America's interstate highways.

A decade ago, India had a massive problem: nearly half its people did not have any form of identification. When you are born in a village without hospitals or government services, you don't get a birth certificate. If you can't prove who you are, you can't open a bank account or get a loan or insurance; you are doomed to be part of the informal economy — whose members live in the shadows and don't pay taxes.

In 2009, the government launched a massive project, called Aadhar, to solve this problem by providing a digital identity to everyone based on an individual's fingerprints and retina scans. As of 2016, the program had issued 12-digit identification numbers to 1.1 billion people. This was the largest and most successful I.T. project in the world and created the foundation for a digital economy.

India's next challenge was to provide everyone with a bank account. Its government sanctioned the opening of 11 institutions called payment banks, which can hold money but don't do lending. To motivate people to open accounts, it offered free life insurance with them and made them a channel for social-welfare benefits. Within three years, more than 270 million bank accounts were opened, with \$10 billion in deposits.

And then India launched its Unified Payment Interface (UPI), a way for banks to transfer money directly to one another based on a single identifier, such as the Aadhar number.

Take the way that credit-card payments are processed: When you present your card to a store, the cashier verifies your signature and transmits your credit-card information to a billing processor such as Visa, American Express or MasterCard — which works with the sending and

receiving banks. The billing processors act as a custodian and clearing house. In return for this service, they charge the merchants a fee of 2 to 3 percent of the transaction. This is a tax that is indirectly passed on to the customer.

With a system such as UPI, the billing processor is eliminated, and transaction costs are close to zero. The mobile phone and a personal identification number take the place of the credit card as the authentication factor. All you do is to download a free app and enter your identification number and bank PIN, and you can instantly transfer money to anyone — regardless of which bank he or she uses.



There is no technology barrier to prevent a UPI from working in the United States. Transfers would happen within seconds, even faster than the 10 minutes that a bitcoin transaction takes.

India has just introduced another innovation called India Stack. This is a series of secured and connected systems that allow people to store and share personal data such as addresses, bank statements, medical records, employment records and tax filings, and it enables the digital signing of documents. The user controls what information is shared and with whom, and electronic signature occurs through biometric authentication.

Take the example of opening a mobile-phone account. It is cumbersome everywhere, because the telecom carriers need to verify the user's identity and credit history. In India, it often took days to produce all the documents that the government required. With the new "know-your-customer" procedures that are part of India Stack, all that is needed is a thumb print or retina scan, and an account can be opened within minutes. The same can be done for medical records. Imagine being able to share these with doctors and clinics as and when necessary. This is surely possible for us in the United States, but we aren't doing it because no trusted central authority has stepped up to the task.

India Stack will also transform how lending is done. The typical villager currently has no chance of getting a small-business loan, because he or she lacks a credit history and verifiable credentials. Now people can share information from their digital lockers, such as bank statements, utility bill payments and life insurance policies, and loans can

[continued on page 8](#)

Cashless Society continued from page 7

be approved almost instantaneously on the basis of verified data. This is a more open system than the credit scoring services that U.S. businesses use.

In November, in a move to curb corruption and eliminate counterfeit bills, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shocked the country by announcing the discontinuation of all 500- and 1,000-rupee (about \$7 and \$14) notes — which account for roughly 86 percent of all money in circulation. The move disrupted the entire economy, caused pain and suffering, and was widely criticized. Yet it was a bold move that will surely produce long-term benefit, because it will accelerate the push to digital currency and the modernization of the Indian economy.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz said at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, that the United States should follow Modi's lead in phasing out currency and moving toward a digital economy, because it would have "benefits that outweigh the cost."

Speaking of the inequity and corruption that is becoming an issue in the United States and all over the world, he said: "I believe very strongly that countries like the United States could and should move to a digital currency so that you would have the ability to trace this kind of corruption. There are important issues of privacy, cybersecurity, but it would certainly have big advantages."

We are not ready to become a cashless society, but there are many lessons that Silicon Valley and the United States can learn from the developing world.



**The Mark of Excellence  
in Federal, State, and  
Local Government**

CGFM is the professional certification recognizing the unique skills and special knowledge required of today's government financial managers. It covers governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls, and budgeting at the federal, state, and local levels.

## Governor Rick Snyder has proclaimed March as CGFM Month

**As part of CGFM Month, let's take an opportunity to recognize members of the Greater Lansing AGA chapter who have the CGFM designation.**

- Joseph Asghodom, CGFM
- Robert Brackenbury, CGFM
- Deborah Christopherson, CGFM
- Beth Colosimo, CGFM
- Tom Colosimo, CGFM
- Vickie Crouch, CGFM
- Mary Cupp, CGFM
- John Daly, CGFM
- Annette Eustice, CGFM
- Eric Formberg, CGFM
- Mary Elizabeth Gienapp
- Kenji Griffith, CGFM
- Michelle Hiliker, CGFM
- Elden Lamb, CGFM
- Leo LaPorte, CGFM
- Jackie Lawson, CGFM
- Janet Luplow, CGFM
- Margaret Maday, CGFM

- Joseph Asghodom, CGFM
- Robert Brackenbury, CGFM
- Deborah Christopherson, CGFM
- Beth Colosimo, CGFM
- Tom Colosimo, CGFM
- Vickie Crouch, CGFM
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- Eric Formberg, CGFM
- Mary Elizabeth Gienapp
- Kenji Griffith, CGFM
- Michelle Hiliker, CGFM
- Elden Lamb, CGFM
- Leo LaPorte, CGFM
- Jackie Lawson, CGFM
- Janet Luplow, CGFM
- Margaret Maday, CGFM

### NEW! Research Series



**RESEARCH SERIES**  
**An Agency Guide for**  
**ERM Implementation**



Following the private sector's lead, numerous government agencies are adopting enterprise risk management (ERM) as a decision-making tool to help keep risks and rewards in balance.

Visit [agacgfm.org](http://agacgfm.org), click on resources to visit the on-line library. The on-line library features research reports, survey series, executive reports, and intergovernmental reports. You will find research reports such as Control Challenges over Federal Grants and Benefits and Mobile Transactions. In addition the library has tools to prevent fraud and reduce improper payments. Both series have more topics to benefit you and your agency.



Lisa Grottodden



Posted  
October 26, 2016

## FIVE WAYS TO SMASH STEREOTYPES OF JOBSEEKERS OVER 50

If you are in a job search over the age of 50, chances are you have encountered challenges due to conscious or unconscious biases based on perceptions of the more mature worker. Some of these beliefs may include; you have an antiquated skill set, you exhibit lower drive and initiative or that you may not stick around and be worth the company's investment in training. Below are strategies to better understand how to highlight your strengths and counter negative images of a seasoned worker. When you feel empowered, it shows!

### Build a dynamite LinkedIn profile:



Nothing says, "I'm not current" like a weak or non-existent LinkedIn profile. When you submit an application and resume to an employer, your LinkedIn profile will be also be viewed. Make sure you have a sharp, professional profile photo, an engaging tagline, summary and experience. Don't recreate your entire resume on your LinkedIn page. Use an easily readable format, highlighting awards and accomplishments.

### Be a subject matter expert:

Demonstrate you can bring new and relevant expertise to an organization. Read, take classes, and participate in networking groups. Be able to show you are a person in-the-know and how you can help the company achieve its organizational goals.



### Don't forget to smile:

Regardless of age, being unemployed can truly drain confidence. If you are an older worker, it is important to guard against appearing tired or lacking energy.



Nervousness often gives the face an overly stern or tense expression. It is amazing how a bright smile and great posture projects self-assuredness, strength and enthusiasm.

### Look good, feel good:

Like it or not, physical appearance affects how up-to-date you present even with skills and abilities. Are your eyeglasses, interview suit and haircut from this century? This is an investment you cannot afford to ignore. Looking good and feeling good will help you exude more competence and confidence and can help an employer focus less on age and more on relevant hiring criteria.



### Name it, own it:

Do you feel your age is the "elephant in the room"? Find a way to sell yourself in the interview using this to your advantage. For example, employers know "Boomers" have a great work ethic and are loyal employees. Through your research you learn a company with which you are interviewing has struggled with turnover. Highlight that you value a long-term relationship with an employer and reference work history if supports this statement.

**Editor Note:** The article above suggests building a dynamite LinkedIn profile. Be sure to register for AGA's free member only webinar on March 16, 2017, about developing an effective LinkedIn profile. See page 3 for details.

# Early Career Center

## SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE SMALL TALK LESS AWKWARD

By: Courtney Belme, GovLoop, February 9, 2017



We all dread this moment. You walk into the kitchen at the same time as a “more than acquaintance but not quite friend” coworker and you are both going for the coffee machine. You know that you will have to say something. But it’s a Wednesday and too late to ask what they did over the weekend but still too early to inquire about their upcoming weekend plans. You probably smile – somewhat nervously – and chat about the first thing that comes to mind, then go about your day wishing that small talk didn’t always have to be so awkward.



While small talk around the office can be difficult, especially for millennials who are new to the workforce and not quite sure where they fit into the office social structure, it doesn’t always have to be painful. For this week’s First 5, we wanted to give you some tips on how you can make small talk in the office a little less awkward.

Here are seven ways to make better small talk:

1. **Leverage your immediate surrounds.** Simply saying something to start a small talk conversation can be the hardest step. One good way to get a conversation going is to comment on something around you. For example, if you and a coworker are both a little early for a meeting and sitting in a conference room alone together, comment on something in the room. Bring up something neutral that conversation can organically stem from.
2. **Demonstrate interest in the conversation.** Even if you don’t care at all about what your conversation partner is saying, try to be engaged. This will allow you to continue the conversation and end it on a natural note instead of an awkward one. Additionally, most people love to talk about themselves so sometimes all you have to do is listen.
3. **Stay up to date.** If you’re not sure what to talk about initially, you can always ask if the person you are talking to has seen the latest big headline. Staying up on current events can also help facilitate a conversation already happening, as you can continue engaging with a conversation partner no matter what they are talking about. However, it is important to steer clear of controversial issues, like politics, that may cause conflict.
4. **Share something about yourself.** This doesn’t mean divulging all of the details of your personal life. However, most coworkers will genuinely care about some of the surface level things going on in your life. For example, if you got a new pet, moved, or even just went to a really great restaurant, these things can all be easy conversation starters when you are in a situation that demands a little small talk.
5. **Ask open ended questions.** Questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no often lead to dead ends in a small talk conversation. On the other hand, asking open ended questions let your conversation partner know that you are interested in the conversation and allow a brief discussion to flourish.
6. **Search for commonalities.** Discussing shared interests with a colleague is one of the easiest ways to connect with them. Without getting too deep, discussing a common interest allows you to have a more personal conversation that goes beyond the weather or what you ate for lunch. For example, do you both have kids or pets? Or maybe you know your conversation partner also loves Mexican food. These commonalities allow you to easily start a conversation about the latest PTA meeting or the great new Mexican restaurant that went in down the street from your office.
7. **Know when to end it.** Perhaps the hardest part of a small talk conversation is knowing when to end it. Most of the time this comes naturally and you and your conversation partner can part ways. However, if you need to gracefully exit a small talk conversation tell your partner you have to get going on some work or have a meeting to attend in a few minutes. Most people will understand, allowing you to easily exit the conversation and preserve the relationship you have started to build.

# CHAPTER EDUCATIONAL EVENTS



You can register for all chapter events at [www.aga-lansing.org](http://www.aga-lansing.org). Click on events.

Check the chapter website and upcoming newsletters for more information.

**September 14, 2016**

## Webinar Conference

Internal Controls  
Grand Tower, Dempsey Room  
2 hours CPE

**February 21, 2017**

## Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Maintaining Your Professional Certifications  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
1 hour CPE

**September 20, 2016**

## Professional Development Seminar

Managing Transition in Government  
Library of Michigan  
4 hours CPE

**February 22, 2017**

## Webinar

Fraud and Risk  
Ottawa Building, Conference Room 3  
2 hours CPE

**October 12, 2016**

## Webinar Conference

Cyber Security: The New Norm  
Constitution Hall, ConCon Room A/B  
2 hours CPE

**March 8, 2017**

## Professional Development Seminar

Training for Government Professionals  
Causeway Bay Hotel and Conference Ctr.  
8 hours CPE

**October 18, 2016**

## Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Impact of Retirement Savings  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
1 hour CPE

**March 29, 2017**

## Webinar

CFO/CIO Collaboration  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
2 hours CPE

**November 16, 2016**

## Webinar Conference

Tools and Strategies for Fighting Fraud  
Ottawa Building, Conference Room 6  
2 hours CPE

**April 12, 2017**

## Webinar

Ethics  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
2 hours CPE

**November 17, 2016**

## Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Office of Performance and Transformation  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
1 hour CPE

**April 18, 2017**

## Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Senate Fiscal Agency Budget Update  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
1 hour CPE

**December 7, 2016**

## Webinar Conference

Ethics  
Ottawa Building, Conference Room 3  
2 hours CPE

**May 16, 2017**

## Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Bobby Derrick, AGA National Office  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
1 hour CPE

**January 23, 2017**

## Monthly Luncheon Meeting

Tax Update – Joint with SAAABA  
Library of Michigan  
1 hour CPE

**June 14, 2017**

## Webinar

Fraud and Data Analytics  
VanWagoner Building, Lakeshore Room  
2 hours CPE



## MEMBER NEWS

### CONGRATULATIONS! Member Anniversaries

Jerry Herman	37 years
Darlene Workman	25 years
Jon Wise, CGFM-Retired	22 years
Amy Zimmerman	20 years
Connie Jones	17 years
Susan Fisher	7 years
Heather Wells	7 years
Camille Wood	6 years
Robert Brackenbury, CGFM	5 years
Dan Jaroche	4 years
Sean Borawski	1 years
Andre Cascaddan	1 years
Roger Gargano	1 years

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

James Duso, Department of Natural Resources  
Shuang Troyer, Department of Treasury



## CHAPTER FINANCES

### Balance Sheet at December 31, 2016

#### Assets

Current Assets:	
Checking Account	\$ 30,002
Pay Pal Account	\$ 1,193
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 31,195</b>

#### Liabilities and Net Assets

Beginning Fund Balance	
Unrestricted	\$ 26,582
Restricted	\$ 4,515
Income (Loss)	\$ 98
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>	
Unrestricted	\$ 26,680
Restricted	\$ 4,515
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 31,195</b>



## OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



### National AGA

To register for events, visit [www.agacgfm.org](http://www.agacgfm.org)

#### March 16, 2017

#### FREE Members Only Webinar

Developing an Effective LinkedIn Profile  
Your Computer  
1 hour CPE

#### June 8, 2017

#### FREE Members Only Webinar

Developing Your Personal Brand as a Leader  
Your Computer  
1 hour CPE

#### July 9-12, 2017

#### Professional Development Training

John B. Hyne Convention Center  
Boston, Massachusetts  
24 hours CPE



Education is the most powerful weapon  
which can cause change to the world.

Nelson Mandela

### West Michigan AGA

To register for events, visit  
[www.agawestmichigan.org/home/events](http://www.agawestmichigan.org/home/events)

### Governmental Accounting Training Series (GATS)

#### March 21, 2017

Level 2: Digging Deeper (8 hours CPE)

#### April 18, 2017

Level 3: Advanced Topics

Knowledge will bring you the opportunity  
to make a difference.

Claire Fagan



## CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**January 10, 2017**  
**Lewis Cass Building**

### **CEC Members Present:** CEC Members

**Present:** Chris Bayley, Rachelle Breeden, Anthony Edwards, Shawna Hessling, Dan Jaroche, Anna Lewis, Cindy Osga, Karen Stout, Anshu Varma, Dan Wawiernia

**CEC Members Not Present:** Julie Chrysler, Dan Jaroche, Julie Salman, Cora Schimanski

**Call to Order and Acceptance of Agenda:** The meeting was called to order at 12:08pm. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the agenda.

**Minutes:** The December board minutes were approved via email on December 13, 2016.

**Budget and Financials:** A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the December 2016 financials and expenditures in the amount of \$102.

**Membership:** The chapter currently has 117 members.

**Education:** The Spring PDT has been moved to March 8, 2017 because of a double booking situation. Options for the alternative venue are the Kellogg Center or Causeway Bay Hotel and Conference Center. Rachelle is leaning toward Causeway Bay because of the large cost difference. Other considerations are food for lunch and breaks. Rachelle will work on this. After much discussion, Rachelle decided on Causeway Bay. We are looking to offer an early bird rate. A motion was made and approved to have early bird rates for \$50/\$70 for AGA member/nom-member through February 17. After that rates will be \$70/100 for AGA member/nom-member.

**Program Luncheons:** The January 23 luncheon is the annual AGA/SAAABA Tax Update at the Historical Library Auditorium. SAAABA is taking the lead this year. Anshu will be at the registration desk representing AGA. The February 21 luncheon is about maintaining your certifications with a representative from Becker presenting. There is no March meeting because of the PDT. April 18 is Ellen Jeffries on the budget. Still looking for a May speaker.

**Awards:** Anna has the letters ready to send for the March awards but was waiting on the final date and location of the PDT. Nominations are due February 10, 2017. Anna will get a flyer to Anthony who will send out a mass email. Will do our best to get it out to the entire State of Michigan financial management community.

**Communications – Newsletter and CCR:** Cindy will get the newsletter out today now that the PDT date and location have been finalized.

**CGFM and CPE Events:** The March 8, 2017 webinar will be canceled due to the PDT. Dan W. will look into an alternative date/topic.

**Webmaster:** Anthony is settling on a date for working AGA National to have them walk us (Anthony, Julie, Anshu, and Chris) through the migration from our current host to having National AGA host the chapter website.

**Community Service:** No report.

**Chapter Recognition Program:** Julie C. and Anshu will sit down and over the CRP process.

**New Business:** None.

**Old Business:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn at 12:58 pm.

**Next Meeting:** February 14, 2017  
Location: Constitution Hall  
Host: Julie Chrysler



**EXCLUSIVE OFFER**  
for AGA members

Now through March 31, the CGFM application is only \$35 for AGA members — that's a 50% savings!

**50% SAVINGS**

**apply today**



# Chapter Executive Committee 2016-2017

Platinum  
Chapter

### President

Julie Chrysler, CIA, CCSA  
Natural Resources  
chryslerj@michigan.gov  
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### Membership

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### President Elect

Anshu Varma, CPA  
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### Community Service

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### Treasurer

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### CGFM, Audio Conferences

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### Secretary

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### Past President

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### Awards

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### Great Lakes Regional Vice President

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**See the Chapter's Annual Citizen Centric Report  
on the website.**

The Chapter's Citizen Centric Report was awarded a Certificate of Excellence by National AGA.

[www.lansing-aga.org](http://www.lansing-aga.org)

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