



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Drew Harmon
City of Roanoke

Happy New Year to everyone. I look forward to my year as president of the VLGAA. I hope to keep the VLGAA as an excellent resource tool for sharing ideas throughout audit offices in Virginia and to also see that the VLGAA continues to provide quality, low cost, government training. As such, I invite all VLGAA members to utilize the association to discuss issues and suggest ideas for potential training topics. Your board members can be far more effective through your involvement, so please know that suggestions are not just welcomed, but are encouraged.

The first thing on the plate will be to select a new Vice President. Randi Ricco-Clifford has taken a new position with the State of Virginia and has left the Richmond City Auditor's Office. We wish Randi the best in her new position. At the time of this publication we are still in the process of trying to fill this board position. Anyone with interest in helping to serve the VLGAA can contact me. In addition, while we look forward to having the Fall 2008 seminar hosted by the Richmond City Auditor's Office, initial plans for a spring seminar fell through last fall. The association has been approached about co-hosting a seminar in the Richmond area and we will e-mail everyone as soon as possible should such a function materialize.

With the new Yellow Book changes taking place effective January 1, 2008, the timing of this topic during last year's fall roundtable meeting was especially relevant. Continued discussion as to the new requirements and the impact and effect that their implementation is having on offices throughout the state is something that I hope to pursue during my year as President.

In addition, recent VLGAA meeting discussions have been held on the topics of fraud, fraud reporting, and ethics. In Fairfax County our ethics policy was revised last year for the first time since 1963 and our county executive placed a great deal of emphasis on having it not become just a piece of paper, but rather on promoting awareness of the policy and having a phone "help line" created which fields employee's questions as to ethical decisions and also takes complaints regarding potential ethical violations. While our initial hope was that proactive employee questions would be the most frequent use of the help line, we have found that only recently a few questions are starting to be asked. Since its kick-off at the beginning of October we have already received 16 allegations, which is well ahead of our normal one or two fraud allegations received per month. I share the above as an example of a current topic that has been a large emphasis recently for my office. During my time as a VLGAA member I have learned that there are certainly differences in the size, reporting structure, hot topics, and types of audits performed among the many local government audit offices within Virginia; but I have also come to realize that many common interests exist and sharing information and promoting the importance of having independent, professional audit offices in jurisdictions throughout the state should remain a focus of the VLGAA.

I look forward to serving the entire VLGAA membership during 2008.

Chris Pietsch, VLGAA President

Welcome New Members

Linda Billingsley Stafford County
Katrina Flowers City of Virginia Beach
Martha Palacino Stafford County
Kenneth Rinehart City of Newport News
Chandra Shrestha City of Richmond

From the Newsletter Committee:



This is last edition of the VLGAA Newsletter that Wanda and I will publish. We look forward to turning over our task to Drew Harmon and the City of Roanoke. They did a great job with the Newsletter 16 years ago when I joined the VLGAA, and I am sure that under Drew's capable leadership that will be the case again. Thanks again to everyone for working with us on the

Newsletter. Special thanks to Wanda Joyner for pulling it together for the past 10 years. Please forward any items for the Spring edition of the Newsletter to Drew Harmon at Drew_Harmon@ci.roanoke.va.us.

Jay Poole
City of Chesapeake



This fall's conference will mark the 20th anniversary of the VLGAA's first meeting. The Fall 2008 Conference will be held on Friday, October 17th at the Sheraton Richmond South. The conference will feature Gary Blackmer of the City of Portland, Oregon and regular columnist in the A.L.G.A. Newsletter. We are also hoping to have a presentation by the Baltimore, Maryland Inspector General. The conference will provide 6 CPEs.



The VLGAA is still exploring options for a spring conference or meeting. The membership will be notified once a decision is made.



**ALGA 2008 Conference
May 19 – 20, 2008
Philadelphia**

Preliminary Schedule

It's ALGA's 20th conference and we are returning to the site of the very first conference – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania!

Conference - Members	\$425
- Non Members	\$525
Half Day Workshops	\$135
Full Day Workshops	\$270

Pre-Conference workshops – Sunday, May 18th

Peer Review – full day
Advanced IT auditing – half day

Conference: Monday, May 19th – Tuesday, May 20th

Sunday night welcome reception – Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

Monday night event - National Constitution Center

General Sessions

Mark Funkhouser, Mayor, Kansas City, former ALGA member (Geezer status)
David M. Walker, Comptroller General, GAO
Barry Webne – Fraud Detection and Prevention Solutions from a Former Offender
(for more information see www.barrywebne.com)
Dr Bruce Weinstein, "The Ethics Guy" (www.theethicsguy.com)

Concurrent Sessions

- Peer Review Team Leader
- Auditing Grants
- Construction Contracts
- Auditing What Matters
- Excel Pivot Tables
- AGA Citizen Centric Program and SEA Review
- Panel – ALGA Charter Signers
- Auditing in Web 2.0 Environment
- How to Motivate Employees Within the Civic Service
- Law Enforcement Audits Part 1 – Richard Brady, Matrix Consulting Group
- School Audits Roundtable
- Auditor Involvement in Implementing Recommendations

Post Conference workshops – Wednesday, May 21st

- Auditor Roles in Government Performance Measurement
- ACL

For more information go to www.governmentauditors.org

A PIONEER RETIRES

Joanne Griggs talks about the beginnings of the VLGAA and ALGA

By Jay Poole, Chesapeake City Auditor



Joanne holds up the original sign-in sheets from ALGA's first conference in 1989.

On March 1, 2008, Joanne Griggs will retire as Virginia Beach City Auditor after more than 23 years of service to the City. Joanne was a pioneer who strived to improve the quality of local government auditing. For this reason, she was instrumental in the formation and development of both the Virginia Local Government Auditors Association (VLGAA) and the National Association of Local Government Auditors (N.A.L.G.A.)

In 1986, a group of local government auditors in Virginia began meeting informally to discuss areas of mutual concern. They had been meeting at National Intergovernmental Audit Forum (NIAF) conferences and decided that they needed to have a statewide organization. "I hosted a meeting in 1988 and we talked about local government audit issues," Joanne recalls. "We realized that local government was a unique animal. Therefore, we wanted to create an organization specifically for local government auditors". Joanne co-authored the VLGAA by-laws, which were approved in October of 1988, and the VLGAA held its first meeting in November of 1988.

At approximately the same time, a group of auditors from across the country was experiencing a similar revelation. In June of 1988, an organizational steering committee submitted a grant request of \$6,000 to the NIAF to "explore the feasibility of forming a group tentatively called Local Government Auditors". The committee did receive the grant, and the organizational meeting for what was to become N.A.L.G.A. was held in June of 1989.

The VLGAA members who had worked to form their own organization immediately recognized the value of the national group. "We wanted to make sure we had some kind of a voice in it", says Joanne. Terrell Ramsey, the Richmond City Auditor, became the first VLGAA member to serve on the N.A.L.G.A. board in 1990. One year later, Joanne followed with her election as national Secretary. That same year, she served as VLGAA President.

One of the reasons for the creation of both organizations was to reduce the cost of peer reviews. The VLGAA had been developing its own peer review process, but N.A.L.G.A. was curious as to how other peer processes worked. Therefore, Joanne volunteered with Doug Norman to participate on a state auditor-conducted peer review of the New York State Comptroller's Office. "One of the things we learned was that we needed to have a flexible process for the local governments, so we tried to incorporate that into our peer review procedures," Joanne recalls. Joanne continued to be active on the Peer Review Committee until 2006.

By 1995, Joanne had advanced to national President-Elect, and she was hosting the national conference in Virginia Beach. The 1995 conference was the first joint conference with the VLGAA, which sponsored the conference reception. The next year, she served her term as President. "Lots of times, we had to cut off the tape recorder in the meetings because it was so crazy" she says. "They were a great group."

Subsequent to her presidential term, Joanne began traveling on behalf of N.A.L.G.A. One of the places she visited was Sweden where she and Gary Blackmer spoke to members of the Organization of Local Government Auditors (yes, OLGAI!). "They were fascinated with our peer review program," she says. "They were also fascinated with the premise of why we did the audits we did".

Joanne's most memorable international experience, however, came on a trip to Puerto Rico. She had been asked to do a presentation to a group of auditors. There were approximately 500 people in the room, and there was an overhead projector that was being used for the presentation. The first overhead slide had the 'NALGA' acronym on it. Just before her presentation started, her Puerto Rican host looked down at the first slide and whispered to Joanne, "Ms. Griggs, I must tell you that NALGA means 'r--- e--' in Spanish". Before Joanne could react, however, the slide was placed on the projector, and the entire audience exploded in laughter. Not surprisingly, Joanne later agreed to chair the committee that changed the N.A.L.G.A. name to ALGA.

In addition to her VLGAA and ALGA work, Joanne served on committees for the NIAF, the Association of Government Accountants, the Government Audit Training Institute, and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, where she helped develop standards for government audit committees. Joanne is very grateful to her staff for allowing her to pursue these interests. "I'm fortunate because I have a high performance staff with Gretchen (Hudome), Chris (Ford), and Sharon (Hayes). They allow me to do all this".

Congratulations on a great career Joanne, and thanks for all your help in showing the way. Your contributions will be greatly missed!



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