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The Working Papers

Chapter Newsletter

Advancing Government Accountability

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February 2008

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MEETING

Topic:
Property Market
Conditions and Cost
Accounting for
Governmental
Employees

February 21, 2008
Thursday

Speaker:
Lawrence Stone
Assessor
Santa Clara County

**Time: 11:30 AM -
1:00 PM**
1 hour CPE

Place: Pedro's
Restaurant
3935 Freedom Circle,
Santa Clara, CA.
2nd Floor
Tel. (408) 496-6777

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Speaker: Lawrence Stone, Assessor County of Santa Clara



Mr. Lawrence Stone, Assessor of County of Santa Clara, graciously accepted our invitation to speak at this month's Professional Development Meeting. He will talk on Property Market Conditions and Cost Accounting for Governmental Employees.

San Jose Magazine named him one of Silicon Valley's 100 most powerful leaders. Larry Stone remains a permanent fixture in the ever-changing high-tech landscape. During that time he has been interviewed by scores of newspapers, magazines and books. He contributed to Pulitzer Prize winning author and Washington Post reporter Haynes Johnson's two best selling books, *The Best of Times* and *Sleepwalking Through History*.

With more than 30 years of leadership experience in both the public and private sectors, Larry Stone has been successfully applying the principles of effective government management to Santa Clara County since he was first elected in 1994 and overwhelmingly reelected in 1998, 2002 and 2006.

In addition, Stone has been a financial manager on Wall Street and was the founder of a successful Bay Area real estate investment and development firm. He also served 16 years as a council member and Mayor of Sunnyvale during the period the City earned an international reputation for effectiveness and became a model for President Clinton's efforts to reform the federal bureaucracy. President Clinton said, "The National Performance Review was modeled in part upon the remarkable reinvention efforts pioneered by the City of Sunnyvale, where Larry Stone served as Mayor."

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Jerry Gandara, JD, MBA



Colleagues and friends, I hope you are all enjoying the

New Year and faithfully following own New Year's Resolutions. You can add another Resolution of joining AGA and attending our Monthly Professional Meetings. AGA Silicon Valley Chapter is here right in your reach to assist you in our continuing professional development. Take advantage of this and I bet you will gain much education for the small sum of dues you pay.

AGA Silicon Valley continues to be on the move, starting off with January speaker **Mr. William "Bill" O'Brien, MBA, CPA**, a professor of San Jose State University and Santa Clara University. Mr. O'Brien gave a very informative and interesting presentation on "Where in the World is Accounting Convergence?" Along with Bill's knowledge and full of humor, those presents begun to understand where accounting convergence is heading. We will expect so many changes in our profession in this decade. On behalf of our Chapter Board, I thank Mr. O'Brien for coming back to speak.

For this month of February, our speaker is **Mr. Lawrence Stone, Assessor of Santa Clara County**. Mr. Stone has very extensive career leading up to his position in the County Assessor's Office. Pulitzer Prize winning author Haynes Johnson called him "a bright, articulate, an American rarity... and a proven Political Success." Mr. Stone's presentation should inspire and add food for thoughts to everyone, with his topic on the work of county assessor and the current property market.

Our March 21, 2008 speaker is from the California Franchise Tax Board (FTB). Representing FTB is **Mr. Roger Oakland, CPA**, who will present an update on Franchise Tax. Plan to attend and bring your tax questions relative to your self or job.

Speaker, Mr. Larry Stone - continued from page 1

As County Assessor, Mr. Stone has overseen remarkable improvements to streamline the operations of his office, eliminate backlogs, and achieve higher levels of public service, all while consistently operating substantially under budget. The State Board of Equalization acknowledged his office as one of the best-managed assessors' operations in California. Recognized as an innovative leader in Assessment practices and management, Mr. Stone was elected President of the California Assessors' Association in 2002.

Larry Stone also has been an active and effective civic leader in many fields ranging from the arts, to education, to the environment. Author Haynes Johnson described him as "bright, articulate; an American rarity...a proven political success."

A native of Seattle, he has an MBA from the University of Washington and has studied at the Institute of Politics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He and his wife Carmen have lived in Sunnyvale since 1970 where they raised three sons.

President's Message - continued from page 2

Our April 2008 meeting will be held on April 10th, rather than the usual 3rd Thursday of the month. Our guest speaker is **Mayor Jose Esteves**, Mayor of the City of Milpitas. He will talk on Ethics and Public Accountability.

Please mark your calendar and make early reservation. I am looking forward to seeing and meeting you all at our Professional Development Meeting at Pedro's Restaurant.

On behalf of AGA Silicon Valley Executive Board, I would like to extend our congratulations to our own chapter member, **Ms. Sharon Erickson, CGFM**, who was recently chosen as City Auditor by the Mayor and the Council of the City of San Jose. Sharon is the City Auditor of the City of Palo Alto. Best wishes Sharon on your new role!

AGA is again honoring all CGFM holders by designating nationwide the month of March 2008 as CGFM Month. Our Northern California and Chapter CGFM Coordinator, **Alex Guiang, CGFM**, is again spearheading the efforts of requesting our governor and our local city mayors to join AGA and issue CGFM Proclamation.

Our Chapter Board has voted to encourage all our chapter members to recruit and bring new members to our Monthly Professional Development Meeting. A member who brings a person to our PDM and that person joined AGA membership will receive a half-price registration toward the Professional Development Meeting. The new member will receive One-Free PDM registration, a saving to \$25, for joining the AGA membership. This membership promotion runs through April. This is such a good deal! The recruiter name is also entered into the AGA national drawing for a free attendance to AGA Professional Development Conference, which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on July 26 to July 30, 2008.

GUIDE TO RECEIVING CGFM CERTIFICATION

CERTIFIED GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGER - WHY EARN?

Since its inception in 1994, the CGFM has become the standard by which government financial management professionals are measured. Its education, experience and [ethics requirements](#) have served to elevate the most seasoned financial professionals.



More than 14,000 individuals have received the designation so far. Now it's your turn. Experience the benefits of certification first hand - the CGFM is the mark of excellence in your profession. Be included to the distinguished list of Certified Government Financial Managers - Mark of Excellence in Federal, State and Local Government.

In a 2001 survey by Robert Half International, a financial management placement firm, 85% of the 1400 CFOs surveyed "believed that a professional certification...can boost career advancement opportunities."

HOW TO BECOME A CERTIFIED GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGER? WHERE DO I START?

Step 1 - Applying for the CGFM Program

Read the AGA's [Code of Ethics](#) – (<https://www.agacgfm.org/about/codeofethics.aspx>)

Submit a CGFM Program application form with the application fee and required degree documentation. Follow this link [CGFM Application Form](#) (<https://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/Registration.aspx>)

Fax (703.562.0361) or mail to AGA (2208 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301) the required degree documentation (see Education requirement below). Note: this documentation must be submitted within six months of submitting the application form.



Education Requirement

To take any of the Certified Government Financial Manager 3-part examinations, you must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and completion of at least 24 semester credit hours (or 36 quarter credit hours) of study composed of courses in one or more of the following areas:

- Accounting
- Auditing
- Budgeting

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- Economics
- Electronic Data Processing
- Finance
- Information Resources Management
- Public Administration
- Other Financial Management or Related Topics

REQUIRED DEGREE DOCUMENTATION: a copy of your transcript from an accredited college or university. The transcript must show that a degree (bachelor's or higher) was awarded and must list at least 24 semester credit hours (36 quarter semester hours) of study composed of courses in financial management or related topics. Official transcripts are not required, but your name and the name of the college or university must appear on all transcripts. Please note: CPA card or license is not acceptable as proof of degree.

Step 2 - Eligibility Letter

Once your application, payment and degree documentation are received and processed by the Office of Professional Certification, AGA will mail you an eligibility letter with instructions on how to purchase your CGFM examinations. The letter is usually sent out within 2-3 weeks of receipt of your CGFM application and proof of bachelor's degree.

Your eligibility for taking the CGFM examinations will expire in three years from the date of processing your CGFM application.

Step 3 - Work Verification

Submit a Work Verification Form as soon as you have at least two years of professional-level experience in the government financial management field (you do not have to submit this form before taking the examinations, but it must be submitted before the designation can be granted). You can still take the examination even if you currently do not have the two years required work experience. Please click the [Required Professional Experience](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/start/verification.aspx) (<http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/start/verification.aspx>) for more information.

Step 4 - Studying for Examinations

Prepare for the examinations by attending a classroom course, purchasing a study guide or studying on your own.

Click to see:

[What Do Exams Cover - http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/exams/default.aspx?](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/exams/default.aspx?)

[How Do I Prepare - http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/default.aspx?](http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/prepare/default.aspx?)

Step 5 - Exam Purchase

Following the instructions on your eligibility letter, purchase CGFM examination(s) on the AGA website. Upon payment, print the Test Authorization Letter. Examination fees: \$109 for each of the three examinations.

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Step 6 - Taking the Exam

Follow the instructions on the Test Authorization Letter to make a testing appointment at a Prometric Center near you -

<http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/purchase/examlocations.aspx>. There are Prometric Test Centers all over California; six sites in the San Francisco/San Jose Bay Area.

To find the closest center near you, click on the "Testing Centers"
<http://securereg3.prometric.com/> and follow these steps:

- 1) Select "Academic, Professional Licensure & Certification, Government, and Corporate Programs" and "Net Certification" from the pull-down menu in Step 1 and "United States" and your state in Step 2. Click on "Next".
- 2) Click on "Locate a Test Site"
- 3) In the Exam Selection menu select "2 hour appointment time block" exam. Click on "Next".
- 4) A page should show the test centers within the state.

See: [Exam Procedures](#) and [How Do I Purchase Exams?](#)

Step 7 - Score Reporting

After you complete a CGFM examination at a testing center, you will immediately receive a pass or fail score on your computer. AGA does not provide numerical scores for CGFM Examinations.

If you did not pass your exam, there is a 30-day waiting period before you can repurchase and retake the examination; if you failed this exam more than once, the waiting period is 90 days.

See [Exam procedures](#)

(http://www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/purchase/cgfm_examprocedures.aspx) for more information.

Step 8 - Award Letter

Once you pass all three-part CGFM examinations, and your Work Verification Form has been submitted and accepted by the Office of Professional Certification, AGA will send you an official award letter announcing your new CGFM designation. The letter is usually sent out within 2-3 weeks. Note: the candidates may not use the "CGFM" after their name until after they receive an official award letter from AGA.

Step 9 - CGFM Certificate

Within 6-10 weeks of receiving the award letter, you can expect to receive your CGFM certificate in the mail.



AGA Sacramento Chapter News

The State Controller's Office awarded **Angie Lowi-Teng** the Employee of the Month (December 2007). State Controller John Chiang awarded Angie for her outstanding contributions to the success of the State Controller's Accounting and Reporting Division. Angie has been a very active member of AGA Sacramento Chapter. She chairs the Sacramento Chapter Membership Committee and is one of the top national recruiters of AGA members. Congratulations Angie for your leadership and well deserved recognition!



Photo: With Angie Lowi-Teng are from left to right - Al Quint, AGA Sacramento Chapter Past President, and AGA Sacramento members Joel Hall and Mike Havey.

AGA SILICON VALLEY CHAPTER
Treasurer's Report
January 31, 2008

Checking Account	\$ 1,034
Savings Account	\$ 1,726

Chapter Membership Drive – January 2008 to April 2008

Recruitment of new members should be on the forefront of our chapter members. Bring a new prospective member between January 2008 and April 2008 to our luncheon Professional Development Meeting and if they join AGA, our Chapter will cover their first PDM registration for fee and you, too, as recruiter get one half price PDM registration. It's such a good deal!

As recruiter, your name is entered into the AGA national drawing for a free attendance to AGA Professional Development Conference (PDC), which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on July 26 to July 30, 2008. You could be the person to attend the PDC for free, saving you around \$900.

From AGA National - Membership Renewal

The due date for membership renewal is March 31, 2008. Please continue to support AGA be renewing your membership. After all, AGA exists because of you. AGA would like thank you for your continued support of AGA! As we progress into 2008, we look forward to continuing to serve you by providing exceptional value for your membership!

Soon you will receive a package including your 2008-2009 AGA membership and CGFM renewal in the mail. Please pay your dues by the due date of March 31st, 2008. But why wait? Take a few minutes and renew [online](#) right now. Visit AGA National Office at www.agacgfm.org and go to membership page. Login as member using AGA ID number and your password is your first initial immediately followed by your last name (no spaces), unless you have changed it.

Once you login, you will see your AGA profile. Press the 'billing' button at the right hand corner of the screen to renew with a credit card on our secured server. While you are logged in, please take a moment to review your membership information and update any incorrect items. If you need assistance, please call the AGA Customer Satisfaction Center at 800-242-7211 or contact Kimberly Ferguson, AGA Membership Manager at kferguson@agacgfm.org.

**Upcoming Professional
Development Meeting
Speaker and Topic**

March 20, 2008 (Thursday)

Roger Oakland, CPA

Franchise Tax Board

Topic: Franchise Tax Updates

April 10, 2008 (Thursday)

Mayor Jose Esteves

City of Milpitas

Topic: Ethics and Public Accountability

Please mark you calendar!

**Planning to attend the
February 21, 2008 Professional
Development Meeting?**

To register, contact: Gary Epstein, CGFM,
gary.Epstein@vta.org, (408) 321-5683
or Bill Brown at william.brown@vta.org

Meal Selection:

All served with Spanish Rice, Refried Beans, and a Beverage (Coffee, Tea, or Soda)

- Flauta Gringa (Crisp Jack Cheese-Filled Flour Tortilla)
- Chicken or Vegetarian Burrito

Cost: Members/Students \$20, Nonmembers \$25