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BY JOHN P. HARRISON, CAE, CMP



# Save the Date

## GSAE's Annual Meeting



**Macon, GA: May 31-June 2, 2017**  
**Sandestin, FL: May 30-June 1, 2018**



Known for its central location as the “Heart of Georgia,” Macon is an affordable meeting destination that caters to your meeting needs. Located 80 miles south of Atlanta, Macon offers traditional facilities and distinctive off-site venues for meetings of any size. Choose any one of the many meeting locations or mix and match Macon’s meeting spaces to fit your needs.

While you’re here, come explore Macon’s historic soul. Our story begins with Native Americans at the site of Ocmulgee National Monument, where you can see inside North America’s only reconstructed earth lodge. Be inspired by African American art, history and culture at the Tubman Museum. No matter where you go in Macon, you’ll hear stories of the legendary musical artists inspired by their hometown. Experience the beauty of our antebellum homes and architecture; 6,000+ National Register of Historic Places buildings that showcase Macon’s Southern charm and cultural significance. The revitalization of Downtown Macon is another story that is currently unfolding. Be on the lookout for Macon’s “Soul Stops” throughout the city to learn more of Macon’s stories.

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***connect, advance, achieve at GSAE Annual Meetings***

# Content Management

BY DAVID ELLIS, CAE



**WHEN STAFF TOLD** me the theme of the winter issue, I had to ask what she meant by “content management,” which is related to, but not the same as, content marketing. For example, wikis are the least complex way to manage content online, according to our trusty copy of the *CAE Study Guide*. A more complex way to manage and disseminate important information can be found in our feature story about the Georgia Poultry Federation’s campaign to educate and to change behavior of poultry farmers and processors in the face of a potentially devastating avian disease. While we may not all face such a stark scenario, we can learn from “how listening to members, recognizing the need for external help, and delivering on what [Georgia Poultry Federation] promised helped make their ‘All In or All Gone’ campaign a success.”

GSAE has a number of strategic initiatives this year to help our staff and volunteers manage our content more efficiently and to deliver it to you most effectively.

1. Watch for opportunities to tell us what you’d like to see via our crowdsourcing initiative courtesy of the Professional Development Committee. April’s workshop was chosen by a mix of stakeholders and volunteers.
2. Help us build a “wiki” to organize our collective knowledge. Based on the CAE Domains and our Leadership Academy curricula, this will be *the* GSAE hub of relevant community-built resources.
3. Connect with one another online and in person based on *your* professional interests. Several groups will meet in the first half of 2016—including Small Staff SIG, Meetings SIG, Emerging Professionals

- and the Supplier Council. Our website calendar is the best place to keep up with these opportunities.
4. Learn online and at your convenience. Our webinar series continues to offer association management programming designed to be considerate of your time. See page 7 for our top programs from 2015.
  5. Enjoy “edu-tainment” at its best. GSAEtv has expanded to include 10 other societies of association executives across the country. This partnership gives us even greater depth and scope to bring you success stories from your peers.
  6. Join us for an unprecedented single Annual Meeting workshop in Athens, Wednesday, June 1. Based on your feedback, we have arranged for J. Tripp Mitchell, CPP, to present one the most effective active shooter practices from our friends in the law enforcement community.

GSAE will continue to use innovative content management strategies to aggregate and distribute valuable, relevant, and timely information to our members. Our goal is to provide you with the tools and resources you need to be better at your job. Please don’t hesitate to contact me with your ideas and thoughts on how we can continue to improve your experience!

David Ellis, CAE  
Executive Vice President  
Greater Atlanta Homebuilders Association



## Save the Date for GSAE Events in 2016

To help you plan your professional development year, GSAE's current calendar of events is available below. We will offer more than **25 hours** of CAE-matched programming this year. GSAE is a Preferred CAE Provider through the CAE Commission. Our list of events is always available online at [www.gsae.org](http://www.gsae.org) (Learn/Calendar View). Various Shared Interest Group meetings and webinars will be added throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you in 2016!

- **APRIL 20 –**  
GSAE Quarterly Luncheon featuring **David Brooks**; workshop with **Beth Brooks, CAE** – sponsored by Richmond Region Tourism; hosting opportunity available
- **JUNE 1-3 –**  
GSAE Annual Meeting in Athens, Georgia – Book your room and explore sponsorship opportunities online; use the fax form to register today (online registration coming soon)
- **JULY 13 –**  
GSAE Summer Luncheon – hosting and sponsorship opportunities available
- **SEPTEMBER 21 –**  
GSAE Quarterly Luncheon, The Abit Massey Lecture Series featuring **John Graham, IV, CAE**, President & CEO, ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership – sponsored by Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau; hosting opportunity available
- **NOVEMBER 16 –**  
GSAE Tradeshow – hosting & sponsorship opportunities available
- **DECEMBER 14 –**  
GSAE Holiday Luncheon, Awards Show & Silent Auction – hosting & sponsorship opportunities available

## GSAE Sponsorship and Hosting Opportunities

**Luncheons** are the primary venue for networking in GSAE. About 180 members generally attend each luncheon, which is preceded by a 30-minute networking reception. Your exclusive sponsorship includes an exhibit table during registration and the networking reception, 2-3 minutes of podium time, rights to leave materials on each seat, luncheon registration for 5 people, recognition in promotional materials and post-event attendee mailing labels. July, November and December are still available for sponsorship.

The **host property** of each luncheon will receive an exhibit table during registration and the networking reception, the opportunity to place material at each place setting, podium time, significant exposure and an attendee mailing list following the luncheon. This is a great opportunity to showcase your property! All GSAE luncheons are on Wednesdays. Available 2016 dates are: April 20, July 13, September 21, November 16 and December 14.

The **Annual Meeting** remains GSAE's top professional development program. We expect a total conference attendance of close to 200 members and guests. The Annual Meeting runs from Wednesday afternoon through Friday afternoon. In 2016 GSAE will be in Athens, Georgia, June 1-3. All sponsors will be recognized in print and electronic promotional materials, in the annual meeting program and with signage and a gift during the meeting. Available sponsorship opportunities include general sessions, breakfast, breakout sessions and breaks.

Please visit [www.gsae.org](http://www.gsae.org) (Support/Sponsorships) or call the GSAE office at (404) 577-7850 for more details.

## 2016 GSAE Annual Meeting June 1-3 in Athens, Georgia

*See the paper registration form in this issue!*

- Up to 11 hours of CAE credit (with pre-con workshop)
- \$299 association executive members;  
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- Three keynote sessions, a preconference workshop on Wednesday afternoon and 16 breakout sessions
- 3K charity Fun Run Friday morning
- Silent Auction & Connections Sponsor Lounge
- Ends by noon on Friday

## ASAE's DELP Applications Open



ASAE has opened the call for association professionals to apply for the 2016-2018 class of the Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP). Deadline for submissions is Monday, March 14, 2016. The Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau is the exclusive sponsor of DELP since 2001. DELP is an accelerated leadership program of education, mentoring and volunteer service in the association community. Candidates who have at least three years of mid-senior level association management experience or at least one year of experience as an association CEO (as of the date of their application) and are members of a racial/ethnic minority group, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender, or have a disability are encouraged to apply.

During this two-year program, 12 DELP scholars will experience membership and volunteer service in ASAE and have access to industry leaders who could serve as career coaches or mentors. DELP scholars from Georgia receive complimentary GSAE membership during their appointment. For more information and to see the list of previous DELP scholarship recipients, visit [asaecenter.org/DELP](http://asaecenter.org/DELP).

## GSAE On Demand Learning

Did you know GSAE's bimonthly live webinars are recorded and converted to on-demand programs within 24 hours? If you missed any of our top webinars from the past year, it's not too late! Some of the most well-attended and well-reviewed courses of 2015 are listed below and are available online 24/7.

- Turning Millennials into Members
- Developing Your Association's Value Proposition
- The 6 P's of Social Media for Associations
- Creating a Strategic Thinking Board: 25 Tips in 45 Minutes
- UBIT: What You Need to Know
- The Art of Leadership: Unleashing Your Inner Superhero

Additional fun fact: Up to half of your CAE renewal (40 hours) or CAE application hours (100 hours) may be completed online with qualifying courses. Visit [education.gsae.org](http://education.gsae.org) to view the full catalog of upcoming live webinars and more than 80 self-study courses!

## Congratulations to GSAE's newest Certified Association Executives

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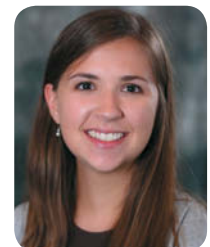
Kristi Keith-Hoffman, CAE  
VP Communications  
National Association Management Group, LLC



Timothy Kline, CAE  
Manager of Certification  
ASHRAE



Tangelia Monroe, CAE  
Assistant Director  
AIA Georgia



Jennie Nesspor, CAE  
Manager, Events & Administration  
Georgia Association of Convenience Stores

## GSAE Partners with Institute for Organization Management to Offer Scholarships

The Georgia Society of Association Executives is proud to partner with Institute for Organization Management, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's professional development program for non-profit executives, and offer two \$500 partial tuition scholarships to one of Institute's 2016 sites. The two scholarships, available to our members, will be awarded to students attending Institute for the first time to assist with enrollment fees and cannot be combined with any other Institute scholarships.

For over 90 years, Institute has educated association, chamber, and other nonprofit leaders across the country through its national program, highly rated curriculum and high caliber instructors. Thousands of executives have attended Institute sites across the country to strengthen their management skills, learn industry best practices, and gain a broad national perspective from peers. Institute has helped them build stronger organizations, become stronger business advocates and better serve their members. In addition, you will earn points towards your CCE or CAE certification as Institute's curriculum is directly tied to the bodies of knowledge of both the American Society of Association Executives and the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Upon completion of the Institute program, graduates receive the IOM recognition which allows them to use the letters "IOM" in public mention and professional correspondence. The IOM recognition signifies the completion of 96 hours of course instruction in nonprofit management and commitment to the industry.

If you are interested in this scholarship opportunity, contact Wendy at (404) 577-7850 or [wendy@gsae.org](mailto:wendy@gsae.org) by April 15th.

Early registration deadline for Midwest and Southeast Institute is April 22nd. Early registration deadline for West and Northeast Institute is May 27th.

For more information about Institute's curriculum, sites, and dates, visit [Institute.USChamber.com](http://Institute.USChamber.com) and Prospective Student Toolkit to help you gain insight into the program.



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Sales Manager  
The Westin and Sheraton  
Birmingham Hotels

**Elizabeth Baranik, CMP**  
National Account Manager  
Experient, A Maritz  
Travel Company

**Mary Bass**  
Student  
American InterContinental  
University-  
Atlanta Campus

**Jim Bennett**  
Director of  
Sales & Marketing  
Atlanta Marriott Buckhead  
Hotel & Conference Center

**Betty Carter**  
Student  
Kennesaw State University

**Priti Chopra**  
Sales Manager  
Ramada Plaza Atlanta  
Downtown

**Susan Clay**  
Director of Hospitality Sales  
and Catering  
Edgar's Hospitality Group

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Sales Manager  
Albany Convention &  
Visitors Bureau

**Abby Cowart**  
Executive Director  
Shareholder Services  
Association

**Domoni Craig**  
Sales & Catering Manager  
Hilton Garden Inn Albany

**Cheryl Delk-Le Good**  
Executive Director  
EnglishUSA

**Katherine Dempsey**

**Kelli Eidson**  
Marketing Manager  
MemberSuite

**Karen Ewing**  
Manager, Member Services  
Georgia Economic  
Developers Association

**Christel Ferrell**  
Administrative Assistant  
Greater Atlanta Home  
Builders Association

**Jan Finnegan**  
Marketing & Sales Director  
Savannah Lodging

**Ashley Goodin**  
Technical Services Manager  
Architectural Woodwork  
Institute

**Janel Grant**  
Member Services Manager  
Greater Atlanta Home  
Builders Association

**Laura Hanlin**  
Sales Manager  
Resort Collection

**Chris Hardman, MGHM**  
Member Development  
Executive  
Georgia Restaurant  
Association

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Senior Manager, Business  
Assurance Practice  
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**Alana Israel**  
Sales Manager  
Hilton Atlanta

**Jennifer Johnson**  
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Peachtree City Convention &  
Visitors Bureau

**Beth Kuzera**  
Group Sales Manager  
The Brice—A Kimpton Hotel

**Derek Leman**  
Creative Director  
501CiO Consulting, LLC

**Eric Matos**  
Group Sales Manager  
Peachtree City Convention &  
Visitors Bureau

**Simona Marcellus, MBA**  
Director of Marketing  
TAPPI

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**Jody McGinness**  
Executive Director  
Association for  
Information Systems

**Angela Mills**  
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Hyatt Regency Atlanta

**Christina Mimms**  
Manager of Content &  
Member Engagement  
SAIS

**Deborah Mitchell**  
Owner  
Accommodate ME

**Matthew Nelson**  
Association for  
Information Systems

**Sarah Osbourne**  
Specialist, Administration,  
Governance & Membership  
American College of  
Rheumatology

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True North Public Affairs

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**Tripp McKenney**  
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**Steve McWilliams, CAE**  
Principal  
Longleaf Public Affairs, LLC

**Morgan Stincer**  
Director of Sales &  
Marketing  
Hotel Indigo Savannah  
Historic District

# Georgia Poultry Federation Goes All In with **Avian Flu Communications**

BY MARY LOU JAY



### LAST SUMMER, POULTRY GROWERS

in Georgia faced the potential of economic disaster in the form of the avian flu—the largest animal health emergency in U.S. history. So the Georgia Poultry Federation took extraordinary measures to help deter an outbreak in the state. The Federation’s “All In or All Gone” communications campaign alerted poultry growers to the dangers of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) to their flocks and provided ongoing reminders of the biosecurity measures required to prevent its spread to their farms.

Georgia is the largest poultry producing state in the nation. The Georgia Poultry Federation has 12 broiler processor members and well more than 1,000 allied companies, including poultry growers, egg producers and other businesses that provide goods and services to the industry. The Federation’s primary missions are government relations, serving as liaison between industry and the state’s research universities and public education.

Most of the communications with the member processing companies are electronic, with updates on important issues sent as needed. Ordinarily the Federation does not

communicate directly with the 3,700 poultry growers in the state, relying instead on the processing companies to pass information on to their poultry growers networks.

The spread of HPAI required a different response. Avian flu isn’t a new problem; the U.S. saw serious outbreaks of the virus in the 1920s and in the early 1980s, when it devastated Pennsylvania’s poultry industry. The disease spreads from the droppings of wild birds, who carry the virus but are sometimes unaffected by it. If workers get these droppings on their shoes and enter a poultry house, or if wild birds get into houses, the virus spreads to the domestic birds.

Reports of the virulent HPAI strain of the avian flu started surfacing in Oregon and Washington state in December 2014. By the spring of 2015 poultry growers in Iowa, Minnesota and several other states reported devastating effects from the virus, including loss of flocks and a ban on poultry exports from the affected states.

“The level of concern in the poultry industry throughout the nation was very high,” said **Mike Giles**, Georgia Poultry Federation president. “We knew

## ALL IN or ALL GONE

**PROTECT YOUR FARM.  
PROTECT YOUR LIVELIHOOD.**

in early 2015 that our members would be communicating to their growers and to their company personnel about the things that they needed to do to improve biosecurity at the farm level and at company operations. So we asked what else we could do to reinforce the messaging and the education that growers are receiving from the companies and from other sources.”

The Federation researched the elements of effective behavior changing campaigns. It found that they use memorable, catchy messages to highlight a desired outcome. In crafting campaign messages, the first step is to establish why a behavior change is important to the target audience. For poultry growers, it was to protect the health of the flock on their farms, which equates to protecting their livelihood. The behavior change in effective campaigns also needed to be achievable by the target audience; for the growers, that change is to use good biosecurity practices all the time.

“We wanted the campaign to have a consistent theme with a frequent delivery of messages over a long period of time,” said Giles. “That’s how we came up with the weekly messages and with a web page ([www.ALLInALLGone.com](http://www.ALLInALLGone.com)) that would be a one-stop shop for all of the resources about HPAI and where growers could read in depth about biosecurity practices.”

The Georgia Poultry Federation worked with the Gainesville-based marketing agency Morton Vardeman & Carlson to develop the campaign. The theme, “All In or All Gone. Protect Your Farm. Protect







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Your Livelihood” reminds growers that everyone on the farm, including their family members and workers, must commit to taking precautions like wearing protective clothing or disinfecting or covering shoes each and every time they enter the poultry house. If they don’t, they risk losing everything.

To reach the growers electronically, the Federation obtained an email list of poultry farmers from the processing companies. It started sending out weekly messages in late summer 2015, beginning with an explanation of the program and a self-evaluation of farmer’s current practices with recommendations on improvements. Since then, the messages have continued to explain and reinforce various biosecurity practices.

The Federation’s 12 processing members have each appointed a campaign coordinator who reviews the message before it goes out.

Processing companies also receive the messages in pdf format (in English, Vietnamese and Spanish) so that they can print them out and distribute them to farmers and their employees on their weekly farm visits. One processing company has placed magnetic signs with the campaign theme on all its trucks.

The “All In or All Gone” has won farmers’ attention and gained favorable reviews from them and from processors. Some farmers have even shown that they are “all in” by posting photos of their children in protective clothing.

Poultry associations in other states began asking on the first day of the “All In or All Gone” campaign launch if they could use the materials. Today 11 states representing almost 70 percent of the country’s broiler production are taking part. Each state personalizes the messages and has its own space on the website where

they can post information for their growers. The other states share the ongoing costs of the site with the Georgia Poultry Federation.

Listening to members, recognizing the need for external help (the marketing firm) and delivering on what they have promised have all helped make the “All In or All Gone” campaign a success. The Federation’s efforts, in conjunction with those of government agencies, universities and processor companies, have helped keep HPAI out of the state to date.

“One day, if history is any indication, the avian influenza will be less of a threat,” said Giles. “I don’t know if we’ll continue to send out weekly messages after that, but maybe we could change the messaging. There are other diseases that are less catastrophic but still have an economic impact.

“I’d like to see this continue even beyond the immediate crisis.” <



An advertisement for Visit Norfolk. It features a large orange logo that says "distinctly NORFOLK". Below the logo, text describes Norfolk as a modern meeting city with state-of-the-art meeting services, dining, entertainment, and waterfront recreation. It includes the website "visitnorfolktoday.com/meet", the "VISIT Norfolk" logo, the tagline "The heart of the Virginia Waterfront.™", and the phone number "1-800-368-3097". The background of the ad shows a waterfront scene with people walking.





# Take AIM

## How to Implement a Successful Communications Plan in 2016

BY JILL ANDREU

### RESULTS OF NAYLOR ASSOCIATION SOLUTIONS' 2015 Association

Communication Benchmarking Report suggest that while associations are making great strides in their fight for member engagement, they still struggle with content relevancy, communication integration and using data advantageously to learn more about their members. And while staffing has increased slightly, it does not seem to be increasing sufficiently to handle the ever-increasing communication workload at today's association. With so many association initiatives tied to communication staff, creating and executing a formal and fully integrated strategy can be a daunting task.

But it doesn't have to be if you implement a simple Take AIM (Assess, Integrate, Measure) approach.

### ASSESS

**To build better content and greater engagement, you must start by asking *what* members want and *why*.**

Assessment through surveys and face-to-face interaction is a very basic content strategy step, yet it is often overlooked. In an already-cluttered communication space, associations fear they're asking too much of members and don't want to add a survey request that requires a decent bit of time and attention. But with communications strategy in a membership-based

organization, how can you give members what they want if you don't ask? Remember, members live and work in the industry every day and are your best subject matter experts. Administering a survey also involves them in your process, giving them a real sense of association ownership.

**Take a closer look at who your stakeholders are and what they are telling you – and what they're not – to uncover areas for improvement and set your goals.**

Members, staff and advertisers are all stakeholders when it comes to an association's communications program. An assessment that takes all these audiences into consideration can provide your team with an opportunity to



uncover previously unidentified areas for improvement.

Something as simple as looking at your membership demographics can help you make more informed decisions about the best ways to provide information consumption choices. If you were to ask members which competitive publications they read on a regular basis, and the one competitor your staff expected to find is hardly mentioned, then you've just uncovered an important factor that will help refine your future strategy.

**Particularly with small associations, the question remains: Are we employing a social media program just because? If you don't have a social media strategy, get one.**

Social media gives your association exposure, helps cement your status as an industry thought leader and offers a simple (and free) content integration opportunity. Use your survey to learn more about members' level of social media adoption. Again, stay away from general questions about whether or not they use it; learn *why* they use it, which channels are most important to them, and build strategy around their preferences.

**When it comes to your digital communications, make every message count.**

eNewsletters held their perch again this year as the most highly valued digital communication opportunity. And, while associations feel they are making progress in combating information overload, this challenge has remained the single most frequently cited communication challenge since we began our annual study in 2011. It's imperative that you have a plan and avoid a fire drill approach when it comes to your email communications.

Subject lines are no different than headlines; you need to grab attention and draw readers to click. Once they click, what will they find? Is the design attractive? Are the sources reputable? Are there content takeaways? How often do you include photos, graphics and video? Ask members what they think about the content.

**Stop under-utilizing video. Yesterday.**

According to Forrester Research, 74 percent of all Internet traffic will be video by 2017. While our own research found that only one-third of associations (37.9 percent) consider video part of their overall content strategy, continuing education, event memorialization, live streaming and integration opportunities make video an incredibly viable communication tool. Sponsorship and advertising opportunities also fit well into this vehicle,

providing your trusted vendors an opportunity to have considerable branding time in front of members.

## **INTEGRATE**

**Designate an Ambassador of Integration.**

Effective integration remains a pain point for associations of all sizes, with a paltry 6.3 percent of respondents to our annual Association Communication Benchmarking Study claiming to have a fully integrated communications program. Small associations feel they need to be more consistent; midsize associations want to know how to best utilize content across all channels; and large associations have trouble engaging new members, which can be improved by better communication integration.

No matter what your current integration challenge is, appoint someone who can interact with all other departments to ensure that your integration efforts are not in vain. Having one member of the team who can promote the benefits of integration while ensuring that it is happening on a daily basis will keep your integration goals top of mind for everyone.

**Review available communication vehicles and consider how much more powerful a message can be if it's repurposed across different channels.**

For instance, your pre-conference magazine is mailed to members well in advance of the event. That serves the dual purpose of enticing members and driving registration. How much more powerful is that effort if you create a video that brings the magazine to life, then use social media and your eNewsletter to push that video to members? Within the video, you can tease to stories in the magazine, talk up conference speakers and encourage viewers to follow you on social media. That one example gives members



an opportunity to consume information several different ways and gives you an opportunity to drive home your key messages and most important content.

**Make sure your content and communication vehicles are ready for consumption on the go.**

Integration also helps solve the mobile strategy issue many associations identified as a major hurdle this year. A mobile strategy doesn't have to be a difficult task – just keep members' mobile habits in mind as you create your strategy. However, with just half (55.2 percent) of respondents indicating their websites are optimized for mobile and one-third (33.5 percent) optimizing newsletter and blog content for mobile, the challenge seems to lie with technology and cost. Again, a proper assessment with the right questions (How often do members access information on the go?) provides you data to support potential financial investments.

## MEASURE

**Don't wait to measure – incorporate it as an everyday practice.**

So often, associations put a plan in place and run full throttle toward an end goal of better engagement. We advise that you look at this Take AIM approach holistically, and continually review the goals set in the assessment phase. Measure early and often, and chart how your different communication vehicles are performing so you'll know what's working best.

**Track your results, and if you didn't perform well in a certain area, ask for help.**

Associations are notorious for running lean. The great thing about having data that identifies members' wants and needs in comparison to what your staff is able to deliver is that you can make a case for a budget that includes vendor

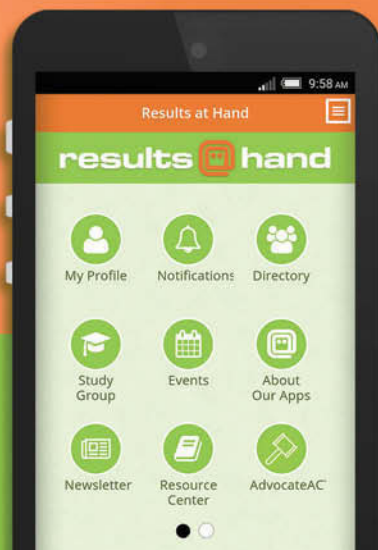
resources and/or additional staff. So, although it may feel cumbersome at first, the more comfortable you get with making measurement a part of your process, the more likely you are to get the help you deserve.

## CONCLUSION

As we said in our 2014 recommendations, avoid "shiny-object syndrome" and the temptation to be all things to all people. Consider how relatively simple a communications strategy can be with a Take AIM approach. Gather member feedback, deliver great content, monitor results, and watch engagement levels rise. <

*Jill Andreu, vice president of content strategy and development for Naylor Association Solutions, is responsible for the overall strategy, direction, leadership and management of Naylor's content department.*

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# Promoting and Leveraging Your Meeting Content

BY PHIL FORTE, BLUE SKY BROADCAST

**TIGHT BUDGETS AND** growing competition are prompting everyone, but associations in particular, to squeeze extra value out of their conferences. Web-based libraries of digitized abstracts and recorded sessions are dramatic value enhancers for members. As we'll see, they yield many other benefits, too.

## **The Evolving Event: Changing Success Metrics**

An important first step in developing a plan to leverage your meeting content is for your entire team to achieve buy-in on the premise that your conference content has value beyond the actual show. Once this occurs, it allows you to create a plan to efficiently cultivate a tradition that will benefit both the live and virtual audiences. Traditionally, when a presenter is selected for a particular presentation, the audience size is limited to the size of the meeting room. Now, that presentation can be delivered to a significantly broader audience.

You may have heard of the term "website impressions," which indicates the number of times a website ad was viewed or delivered. Presentation "impressions" can now be expanded beyond the four walls of the meeting room and include non-attending members,

as well as potential members who find value in your content. Even though a meeting has 100 attendees in the room, that presentation can be delivered as part of an online e-newsletter or an e-learning module. As a result, it is possible to multiply the presentation "impressions" by a factor of 10.

A few years ago, the American Institute of Architects set out to expand the conference participation of their event and was highly successful. Kevin Novak, vice president of new business development and digital strategies, saw a dramatic increase in involvement.

"We streamed 14 general and other sessions resulting in 2,200 onsite participants and more than 17,000 virtual participants. Our actions have resulted in the most positive feedback from the membership on any initiative in the recent memory of the organization," he said.

This initiative allowed AIA to grow its session's participation rate by a whopping 672 percent!

The American Association of Orthodontists has become very effective at managing its spoken word knowledge. AAO captures sessions from their live meetings and webinar series and has built an impressive content library that is only available for members.

This content can't be "Googled" and provides a significant value of membership.

Anita Craig, director of education and membership, explains, "Educational membership benefits have become increasingly valued by member doctors and their orthodontic staff teams. (We) provide continuing education through recording of conference sessions, an online distance learning program and webinars. We consider these products, as well as our live conferences, as the core of AAO's continuing education. The convenience these products have provided add value and CEUs for our members who increasingly take advantage of the any-time, anyplace access."

## **Creating a Content Lifecycle is Not a New Idea**

I am a member of several associations and look forward to participating at each group's annual meeting. However, many times I realize the show will occur during a time or place that makes it impossible for me to attend. Some organizations do not offer an alternative way to participate and learn from the event, so either you attend the conference in person or miss out on the opportunity all together. Other groups, such as the sports industry, deliver

their games via alternative means for viewers unable to travel to the live event. Why not association meetings?

A great example is how Hollywood recognizes the value of their content. They leverage the value of their movies by delivering their content through a very established life cycle that initially delivers via a theatrical release, which requires its audience to go to a specific venue to watch the content at a predetermined time. Not too different from our industry. However, that's where the similarities end. Hollywood then takes that content and delivers it through a number of other channels such as online services (iTunes/Netflix), pay-per-view, DVDs, premium cable, basic cable and then, eventually, network television. Theatrical revenues only account for about 25 percent of the total revenues of a typical movie!

### **Your Members' Content Expectations**

Today's professionals expect to be able to get access to meeting content anywhere, anytime, via any device. Meeting attendees are likely accustomed to getting access to most of their information immediately through their mobile devices. If meeting sessions are streamed live or available soon after a session, it can help attendees get more out of their busy conference schedules. Online access is also invaluable to members who cannot make it to a particular conference because of schedule conflicts.

Member recruitment and retention both benefit when your conference lifespan extends beyond the event itself. While nothing replaces the face-to-face networking value of attending an important conference or symposium, combining an on-demand library of meeting content with a well-developed social media outreach program,

sparks member conversations and interactions. These can continue long after the conference is over, turning up the volume for the association as a whole. Event sponsors likewise may be delighted to pay for a presence in this virtual market space.

### **e-Learning Statistics Show Growth**

In years past, association executives expressed concerns about cannibalizing meeting attendance if they put meeting content online. Quite the opposite has occurred, according to implementers. Early adopters have discovered that live audiences have remained steady. These associations have also built whole new audiences that are often willing to pay for online access.

According to the Tagoras June 2014 Association Learning and Technology Report, it is clear that e-learning has become critical for many associations. Here are some highlighted facts:

- The report found that 80 percent of the responding associations characterized their e-learning as very or somewhat successful.
- Eighty-five percent of associations with active e-learning programs are very or somewhat satisfied overall with their e-learning initiatives.
- When asked about the three key benefits associated with e-learning, the top responses were member convenience, cost-effectiveness and the ability to reach more learners.
- Fifty-one percent of associations report using a learning management system, up from 32.6 percent five years ago.

### **Best Practices and Getting Started**

Association executives are finding that the initial investment to create an online library increases overall returns to the organization through:

- New memberships
- Better retention of existing members

- Creating new revenue streams through virtual proceedings and extended sponsorships
  - Extending the reach of the brand
- Groups eager to begin often don't know where to start. We generally advise them to begin with one or two pieces of the total solution, such as recording the conference sessions or digitizing abstracts and posters. This is an easy way to increase your audience and leverage your content far beyond the meeting itself. When designing your online library for these materials, you can design for the seamless addition of audio and video materials, which can be readily added at any point. <

*Phil Forte has been involved in the formation and development of successful technology companies for the meetings industry for more than 20 years. He is the founder and president of Blue Sky Broadcast.*

### **More Resources**

Thank you to our friends at Tagoras, Inc., for sharing their resources page with GSAE members at [www.gsae.org/?page=Resources](http://www.gsae.org/?page=Resources). Tagoras provides expert guidance in strategy, learning, marketing, and technology to organizations in the business of lifelong learning. The firm was founded by Jeff Cobb and Celisa Steele, seasoned entrepreneurs with a unique blend of experience in marketing, technology, and education. Highlights of the resources include:

- The Association Learning + Technology report
- Exploring the Fringe: Flipping, Microcredentials, and MOOCs
- Social Learning Trends in the Association Space
- Mobile Learning and Associations: A Chance to Move the Dial
- 10 Key Trends in the Market for Lifelong Learning



# Why Every Leader Needs a Magic Wand and Glass Slippers

BY MONICA WOFFORD

**LEADING IS NOT** always easy. In fact many association leaders would say leading is anything but. Rewarding and a welcome challenge on most days, yes, but not easy. What would make it easier? Much like magic and glass slippers, knowing the tricks of the trade and ensuring there is a good fit just might do the trick. Here are some skills that will lead to leadership running smoothly, members feeling at ease and staff staying longer – no magic wand necessary.

## Communication

Communication as a leader is much more than just talking. Saying “just do your job and don’t ask questions” is about as effective as expecting mice to lead a carriage. It goes beyond sharing a message and hoping they get it. It’s about striving for clarity. To become a better leader, assess how often your team asks questions. Then, determine how often you have to repeat yourself. Take a close look at your agreement with this statement: My employees, bosses, board members, and co-workers seem to really *get it* and understand me. If your answer is anything less than “OH YES!” then communication is a leadership skill you want to address quickly. Clear communication that fits all team members is like finding the perfect glass slippers for all who help run the association.

## EQ Application

Ask any leader if he or she has taken a personality profile, and the answer will likely be a resounding yes. However, you have to know what to do with the label an assessment gives you. Leaders who know who they are, how they operate and the level of stress

they can tolerate find leading to be easy. They also can see how differences on the team have value. These leaders can assign projects based on natural skills and attributes, develop skills based on what motivates members of the team, and coach to more effective behaviors on every committee. EQ application is like having a magic wand when leading board members of an association.

## Boundary Creation

Whether a leader is practicing delegation, time management or prioritization, each concept boils down to the need for effective boundary creation. In one recent coaching conversation, an executive complained of not being able to get her own work done because of frequent interruptions. This is a boundary issue. Whether you close the door, teach an assistant how to protect you from an unnecessary phone call or delegate a new skill to an employee, you need to set boundaries. Leading becomes easier when you train employees to respect boundaries you set and when you actually set some in the first place. As a leader, set time aside that is not to be interrupted. Teach that employee a new skill and then give them the space to practice – even make yourself unavailable for a time so they can figure out a solution. Boundary creation lets you work your magic and find the right fit without having everyone in the association being involved in the process of leading it.

## Effective Management

Association leaders have employees, teams, boards and members to lead. All are not led the same. The central staff is often small, and those with much

heavier impact on the direction of the association are those who’ve been around (maybe) too long. Those legacy members or overly involved volunteers can seem like difficult people who drain your energy and whom you’d like to make disappear. Yet an association CEO who serves at the pleasure of a board is faced with the need for finesse and effective management, which is different than people leadership. Fail to lead confidently, and they might see you as a doormat. Fail to manage input from all directions, and you might be asked for more than an explanation. Lead by employing effective management, including transparent communication, swift decisions on all staff issues and consistent follow through. These efforts will make your difficult people disappear and show your fit for this role is even better than Cinderella’s glass slippers.

Can leading an association be easy? Does it really require a magic wand and glass slippers? The analogies work well to remind you of key leadership skills. When communication flows, leaders know who they lead, boundaries are put in place, and consistent management of all who wish to be heard is the focus, your leadership of your association will appear magical. ◀

*Monica Wofford, CSP, is a renowned leadership speaker. Author of “Contagious Leadership” and “Make Difficult People Disappear,” she shares how to lead and manage. Join us at the GSAE Annual Meeting, June 1-3 in Athens, GA, to hear Monica speak. To contact her directly, visit [www.contagiouscompanies.com](http://www.contagiouscompanies.com) or call (866) 382-0121.*



# GSAE Presents Annual Awards

**GSAE'S ANNUAL AWARDS** were presented during the Holiday Luncheon, December 9 at the Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center. On behalf of the GSAE Awards Committee, comprised of past GSAE and GSAE Foundation presidents, chairs, and previous recipients of the Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award, we are happy to share a few reasons *why* the committee chose this year's recipients. Videos featuring the award winners premiered at the ceremony and are available online at [www.gsae.org](http://www.gsae.org) About/2015 Award Winners. The contributions of these members help drive GSAE's continued success.



**2015 Clifford M. Clarke Award Recipient: Lori K. Spear, CAE,**  
Executive Vice President, SAIS  
The Clifford M. Clarke

**Award** is GSAE's highest recognition, bestowed upon a Georgia association executive who has demonstrated exemplary personal leadership and service. The award honors outstanding accomplishments and service in association management. Established in 1969, the award is named for the late Clifford M. Clarke, President Emeritus of the Arthritis Foundation. Mr. Clarke was the first Georgian to serve as Chief Elected Officer of ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership and served two terms as president of GSAE.

Wrote one of the members who nominated Lori for this year's award: "I don't know of a soul

(other than current staff) who has consistently embodied the spirit of servant leadership as it relates to GSAE more than Lori K. Spear, CAE. She has been recognized in the past with the Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader and Alan R. Johnson Awards, served on the Board of Directors and then as president of the association in 2009, served on probably every committee that ever existed, and so much more. The icing on the cake for me was the insanely selfless and phenomenal act of donating herself as de facto staff for the 2015 Annual Meeting in Charleston. While she may not know it, she is a mentor to so many in the industry, including me. She leads by example and seems to live with a philosophy of 'let's find a way.'"

Lori earned her Certified Association Executive designation in 2006. She is the recipient of several association awards including the Alan R. Johnson Award, The Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award, Affiniscape's Most Valuable Partner Award and two design awards from ASAE. She was named one of GSAE's 90 Movers & Shakers in 2007.

Lori's commitment to her local community is evident, particularly in historic preservation, including roles as a docent, event volunteer, and board member of organizations as varied as the Atlanta Preservation Center, Oakland Cemetery and Rhodes Hall. Her love of music is apparent to all who know her, and she is a frequent volunteer at Red Clay Theatre. She's also served as a mentor or panelist through several youth organizations including Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Future Business Leaders of America and

Year Up Atlanta. Finally, she's also found time to serve as an event chair for the DeKalb League of Women's Voters and to participate in a 3-Day Breast Cancer Walk.

Lori's many accomplishments and active community service make her a worthy recipient of GSAE's highest honor, named for one of our most influential and inspiring members, Clifford M. Clarke.



**2015 Alan R. Johnson Award Recipient: Mike Pennington, CAE,**  
Senior Account Executive, Kellen

The Alan R. Johnson Award, established in 1994 and named in memory of a past chair of the GSAE Foundation, is given to an association executive in Georgia who has demonstrated the qualities of teamwork, vision and servant leadership.

Mike has served the GSAE community on the GSAE Board of Directors and is currently Immediate Past Chair of the GSAE Foundation Board of Trustees. He has worked on several committees and is active with Professional Development, Web Warriors, Table Hosts and Peer Connections. He has either participated in or led a session in every GSAE Leadership Academy class since its inception. He is a well-regarded facilitator of the summer CAE Study Group sessions. Mike was the 2012 recipient of the GSAE Chair's Award for his help to develop GSAE's tiered dues structure, which has resulted in GSAE expanding our reach throughout the association community.

A leader in his local community, Mike is on several committees and groups at his church: Executive Committee, Administrative Council, Men's Ministry, Missions Committee, Finance Committee, and he chairs the Stewardship Committee and serves as the Usher Captain. He is involved with coaching youth sports, assisting with soccer, football and baseball teams.

Through his service to GSAE, his church and his community, Mike demonstrates all the best characteristics of teamwork, vision and servant leadership.



**2015 Peggy Seigler Corporate Member of the Year Recipient: Cheryl D.B. Talley, Sales Manager, Hyatt Regency Savannah**

Savannah

The **Peggy Seigler Corporate Member of the Year Award** is presented to the corporate supplier member who has demonstrated outstanding and continuous service to the association community in Georgia. Named in 2015, the award honors the many contributions of the late Peggy Seigler, MPA, CDME, a beloved and valued member of the community.

Cheryl has been with the Hyatt Regency group her entire career. She is well-known as an expert at helping association clients solve problems, create fantastic experiences and fill downtown Savannah with happy meeting attendees. A true highlight of the 2005 GSAE Annual Meeting in Savannah was the jaw-dropping reception Cheryl helped organize to show off their renovations and the increased functionality of their space.

Said one of the members who nominated her, "Cheryl is always ready with a smile and a hug, and she has been a great resource when I need help understanding the hotel sales world. To me, a person like Cheryl is what associations are

all about – she is warm, friendly, knowledgeable, professional, trustworthy and just plain 'ole fun to be around. People like Cheryl are why members renew their membership – to keep coming back for more."

It is fitting to us that Cheryl, who epitomizes the warm and welcoming spirit of GSAE, is the first recipient of the newly named Peggy Seigler Corporate Member of the Year Award.



**2015 Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award Recipient: Jacob Wilder, Director of Communications and Technology, Building Owners and Managers Association of Georgia**

The **Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award** is presented to an association executive with ten years or less experience in associations who demonstrates leadership through service to GSAE, their own association and to their community. The award was named in 2014 to honor past president Sharon Hunt, CAE, who mentored a generation of association leaders during her career.

Jacob joined GSAE and quickly became engaged and influential in our Emerging Professionals community. From taping GSAE promos and participating in the Millennial Infusion event to Co-chairing the EP Shared Interest Group this year, Jacob's contributions to GSAE have been numerous. He serves on the membership renewal campaign, on our Web Warriors Committee (assigned to Facebook), presented at the 2014 Annual Meeting, and has been a workshop panelist. He earned his Membership Management Certificate and Association Management Week certificate and completed the Florida Society of Association Executive's Qualified Association Specialist certificate program.

Jacob is a member of Cartersville First Baptist Church where he serves on the Men's Ministry and the Audio-Visual Team. He is active in the church's community missions, assisting in home repair, cleaning and moving. Since joining BOMA Georgia in 2010, Jacob has participated in the association's Community Service Construction Project. He also has volunteered his time with BOMA Georgia's chosen charity, Hillside, and participated in their annual Fleming's Fundraiser and Holiday Party.

Jacob is being recognized for the depth and breadth of his contributions to GSAE, to BOMA Georgia and to his community.



**2015 Chair's Award Recipient: Mary J. Wheatley, IOM, CAE, Executive Director, Rheumatology Research Foundation**

The **Chair's Award** is presented to the member that the chair feels has made a significant contribution to the Society, advancing the aims, ideals and standards of GSAE and association management.

Mary is well known in GSAE for her enthusiasm and strategic vision. She was the Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award recipient in 2010, the year after she graduated from the inaugural GSAE Leadership Academy. Mary is a past member of the GSAE Board of Directors and served as the lead volunteer organizer of last July's Millennial Infusion event. This year, she is Chair of the Professional Development Committee.

Mary is being recognized for her contributions to help GSAE create inspiring and engaging experiences for all of our stakeholders. Chair Jim Fowler, CAE understandably used adjectives like energetic and amazing when he described why he found Mary such a worthy recipient this year.





**2015 Skelton-Massey Award Recipient: Natalie Nardone, CMP, CAE, President, Nardone Consulting Group**

Renamed

in 2010, the **Skelton-Massey Award** recognizes the member who sponsors the most new members, strengthening GSAE in size and effectiveness. We hope the award, named after two legendary recruiters and GSAE past presidents, inspires members to promote GSAE's value and benefits loudly and often.

Natalie is being honored for her promotion of GSAE membership and involvement to her professional staff and others in our community. Natalie served on the GSAE Board of Directors (2014-15), and supports several of her staff members who are equally active in GSAE – as facilitators, committee and SIG chairs and all around,

go-to-members for a variety of projects. Natalie has not only sent a Nardone staffer to each Leadership Academy class, she also has hosted the CAE Study Group at her office for several years running.

For helping GSAE grow in strength and size, please join us in thanking Natalie Nardone, CMP, CAE.



**2015 Stephen Styron Award Recipients: Spence Downs, Solutions Advisor, MemberClicks**



**Amy Kane, CAE, Director, Awards and Grants, Rheumatology Research Foundation**

The **Stephen Styron Award** is presented in honor of one of GSAE's

past presidents. This award is given to the volunteer leaders the current chair feels have done the most outstanding job.

Not only have they helped new members become excited about and engaged in GSAE as Co-Chairs of the Member Orientation Committee, Spence and Amy have also examined the orientation program structure and made significant suggestions to improve the experience. Their enthusiasm and support of GSAE is contagious and helps us engage new members and guests in an authentic, personal way.

Chair Jim Fowler, CAE noted in his comments that Spence and Amy have set the bar high for future membership engagement programs. Spence and Amy have both served additional roles in GSAE—as our event photographer and as an Emerging Professional Shared Interest Group Co-Chair, respectively. ◀

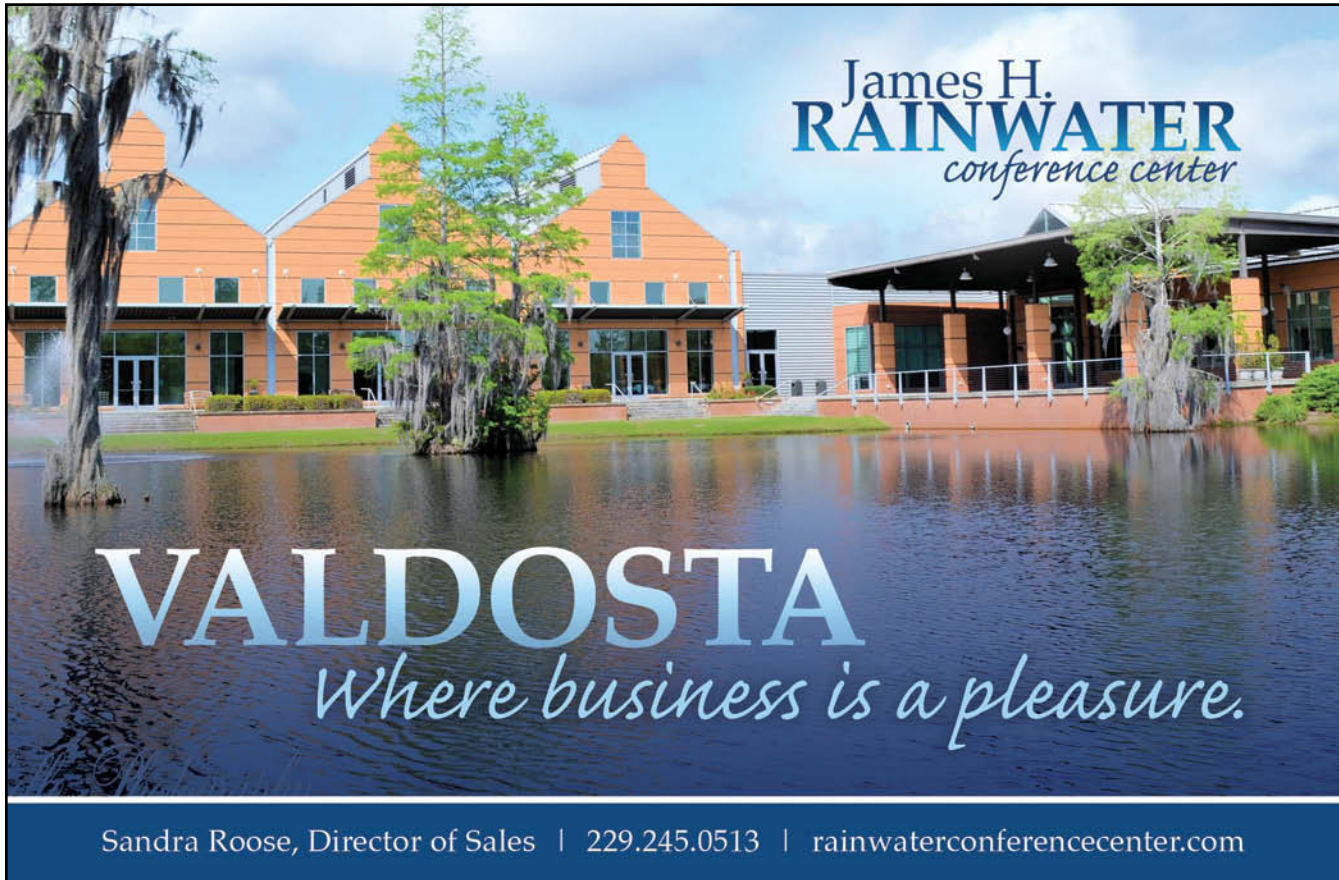
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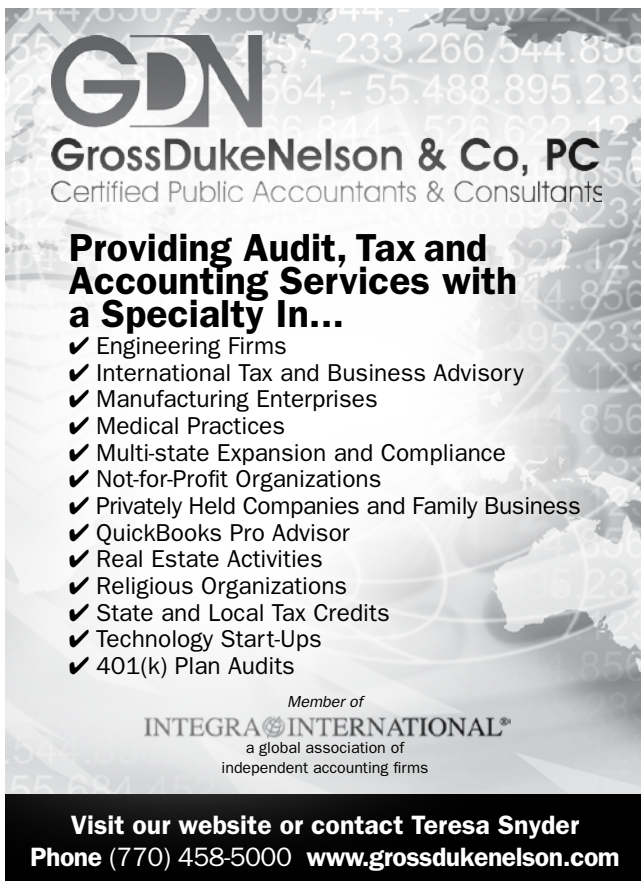




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# GSAE

# Luncheon & Tradeshow

**ON NOVEMBER 11**, GSAE members met at the Georgia World Congress Center for our annual Luncheon and Tradeshow featuring keynote speaker, **Jeff Saut**, Raymond James' chief investment strategist and a managing director of the firm's Equity Research department. The day began with three morning workshops followed by the tradeshow, featuring vendors eager to do business with associations. Thank you to our morning workshop presenters: **Justin R. Barnes**: *DOL's Proposed Overtime Regulations: Learn What May be Coming to Associations*; **Fiona Hendricks, CMP**, **Heather Hunt** and **Lori K. Spear, CAE**: *Strategies for the Savvy Meeting Planner (and a Mock Site Visit Too!)*; **Damian Kavanagh, Ed.S., CAE**: *Your Political Skills Inventory*.

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## Holiday Luncheon

**THE 2015 GSAE** Holiday Luncheon was held December 9 at the Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center. Thanks to the generosity of our attendees, 490 pounds of food and \$28 were donated to support the work of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, providing 520 meals to children, seniors and families in need. That spirit of giving didn't stop there—when **Lori K. Spear, CAE**, accepted the 2015 Cliff Clarke Award, she took that opportunity to encourage attendees to donate to Toys for Tots, raising more than \$700 for the charity in less than 15 minutes!

The Holiday Silent Auction raised more than \$9,700 to help support the high level, quality programming we all enjoy at our meetings and conferences. In 2015, the silent auction committee produced 137 donations and raised more than \$19,200! A huge thank to you committee co-chairs **Carol Hall** and **Karla Yeck**, along with the entire Silent Auction Committee and everyone who bid at either of our auctions!



Check out the highlights from the event, which featured a silent auction, awards presentation and officer installation.



Amy Kane, CAE, Abit Massey, CAE, and Mary Wheatley, IOM, CAE celebrated a great year at the Holiday Luncheon.



2015 Chair **Jim Fowler, CAE** receives a gift in appreciation of his service from **David Ellis, CAE**, 2016 Chair.



Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader award recipient **Jacob Wilder** (middle) with **Jim Fowler, CAE**, 2016 Chair of GSAE, and award namesake **Sharon Hunt, CAE**.



SAIS staff in attendance to cheer on **Lori K. Spear, CAE** as she accepted the Cliff Clark Award – complete with “Lori face fans” which were distributed throughout the audience!



2016 GSAE Foundation Board of Trustees: **Robin D. Lane, CAE**, Treasurer; **Pat Dunwoody, CAE, LEED AP**, Chair; **Mike Pennington, CAE**, 2015 Past Chair; **Mike Giles**, Past Chair; **LeeAnne Minnick**, Chair-elect; **Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP**, GSAE Board Representative.



2016 Board of Directors receive their oath of office from **Susan Cheshire, CAE**, past chair of GSAE.

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## The B in Fe&B



**IT'S NOT ACTUALLY** “booze,” but for our purposes here, let's just say it is.

Guests today are all about the craft cocktails, and 2016 is shaping up to be an interesting year. Anton Preslicka is a mixologist for the Lawrence, a hot Midtown Atlanta restaurant where what goes in the glasses figures as much into the mix as what ends up on the plates.

Mezcal, tequila's generally smokier, agave-based sister, is one to watch. “Most these days are less smoky,” he explains. “Aspects we're seeing can be peppery with fruit aspects, which makes it much more delicate.”

Like tequila, traditional mezcal is distilled from the agave plant, though generally not the same variety. It's interesting flavor means it's not necessarily a beginner's choice straight out of the bottle, but lighter variations – and the added benefit of a mixed cocktail – can make it

quite a delightful one. It pairs well with juices and herbs.

Also hot on Preslicka's list: sherry. “It's versatile, and while I love vermouth, it's nice to play with something different. Manzanilla sherry pairs with almost anything.”

And while we're on the topic of pairings, he said that juice/spirit pairings are easy to batch for larger cocktail receptions if necessary, but they aren't the only option.

“When we do events, often we'll pre-batch the classics—the Old Fashioned, the Manhattan, the Negroni—and if you do so ahead of time, they benefit from what I like to call ‘the chilly effect.’” Preslicka says the flavors meld beautifully. Much in the way that things like soup, sauce or chili often taste better the next day, pre-batching gives these classic mixes different profiles than the fresh-made variety.

“But they are no less enjoyable,” he adds. ◀

## Making Meetings like Music in Macon

**MEMPHIS MAY HAVE** Graceland and Beale Street, Nashville's got the Opry, but the Southern rock and soul roots of Macon run deep.

Historic Grant's Lounge is the place where legends, including the Allman Brothers and the Marshall Tucker band, have taken the stage. Soul fans come from far and wide to see Otis Redding's life-sized bronze statue and meditate on classics like “These Arms of Mine” or “Sitting on the Dock of the Bay”—and over at the historic Capitol Theatre, the music is still playing.

Built in 1916, the venue closed its doors after six decades spent as Macon's grand dame of entertainment. A 2006 renovation restored it to its original glory, and along with hosting a variety of entertainers, it's also available for very unique events and has an affiliated caterer to help you plan for refreshments.

Ideal for a variety of corporate gatherings, capacity is 165 seated on the floor, 305 in the balcony and 650 overall. ◀



## Living Well

**"HOLISTIC HEALTH IS** a mind-body connection," explains Rachel Brown, co-founder of **the Wellness Project NYC**. "It's a whole approach. Rather than just talking about something like food and nutrition and thinking of that as separate from something like self-care or mental health. Not just what you eat, but how you eat and why."

Along with fellow founder Sarah Jacobs, they're tapping into this idea with relevant workshops that run the gamut from digital to face-to-face. Their Holistic Hot List workshop is currently among the most popular of their creative offerings. At its center: the Top Five Change-Your-Life Holistic Health Hacks.

"It goes over really well," she says. "Anyone can do it but the information is so helpful, mind-blowing, really – and entirely rooted in science."

Covered therein: ideas about mental health, meditation, gut biology and balancing your microbiomes. But TWP NYC can hack out these hot topics for individual workshop coverage, as well. "Taking a total approach to wellness is really important," she notes, adding that clients are asking for it in their programming. "People are really responding to it." ◀

## Loopd: No Cards, No Pens, Just Networking



**EVENT BADGES? BANISHED!** That's what the future looks like with Loopd, a smart device attendees can wear – yes, like a badge on a lanyard – that connects him or her to *everyone else* at the event.

Forget your business cards? No problem. Loopd allows all sorts of information to flow freely from one person to another so no one has to look for a pen; it even tracks your circuit around the meeting or tradeshow floor. Users control what information is shared, and you can check out other people's profiles and determine whether or not they're folks with whom you should be networking.

It also puts a wealth of information at the fingertips of planners and coordinators: who's meeting who, where are my attendees, is there something I could plan based on all this information? And even more.

Impressed? You're not the only one. Loopd recently won IMEX America's #IMEXPitch competition, an event showcasing the latest in meetings-based technology. ◀



# New in Atlanta

**ATLANTA IS ON** the cusp of another development boom. In 2016, the city will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Centennial Olympic Games, which served as a catalyst for growth in Atlanta. As this trend continues over the next few years, Atlanta will open another \$2.5 billion in new hospitality development including several hotels, attraction expansions and two new stadiums. Here are some of the latest developments happening throughout the city this year. To learn more about what's going on in Atlanta, visit [www.atlanta.net](http://www.atlanta.net).

## Urban Food Halls

Travelers looking for a taste of Atlanta can visit Atlanta's three urban food halls – Kroger Street Market, Ponce City Market and Sweet Auburn Curb Market – where home-grown chefs have opened stalls and outposts from their regular businesses. Kroger Street Market is housed in a renovated 1920s warehouse in Atlanta's historic Inman Park neighborhood. Kroger Street features new dining concepts from Atlanta restaurateur Ford Fry and Top Chef Contestant Eli Kirshtein, alongside food stalls from local favorites. Ponce City Market is prominently located along the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail with the Central Food Hall that includes stalls from some of Atlanta's popular James Beard Award-winning chefs, including Anne Quatrano and Linton Hopkins. Dining and retail openings continue throughout 2016 including Boti, Biltong Bar, and Marrakesh. Sweet Auburn Curb Market is Atlanta's oldest public market filled with local vendors, chefs and restaurateurs own favorite stalls including Bell Street Burritos, Grindhouse Killer Burgers and Sweet Auburn Bakery.

## New Hotels

The new Hotel Indigo, which opened in January of this year, is located in one of downtown Atlanta's first office buildings, 230 Peachtree Street. The \$60-million project converted the first nine floors of 230 Peachtree into 206 guest rooms and suites. The hotel sits near the Atlanta Streetcar route and also connects to the Atlanta Convention Center at AmericasMart. It is



Atlanta's third Hotel Indigo, a lifestyle brand from InterContinental Hotels Group. In just a few months, the first AC Hotel by Marriott will open in Atlanta. AC Hotel Buckhead will be located at the intersection of Peachtree Road and Wieuka Road and adjacent to Nordstrom at Phipps Plaza. It will offer 166 rooms and suites and a variety of amenities, including the AC Lounge, 2,500 square feet of flexible meeting space, the AC Library, health and fitness center, as well as an indoor pool. Finally, Hilton Worldwide will expand its Home2 Suites by Hilton brand into downtown Atlanta in April. Set on the edge of Centennial Olympic Park, the extended-stay hotel is steps from World of Coca-Cola, the CNN Center and Georgia Aquarium.

## Just for Fun

SkyTower Atlanta will be a 225-foot-tall attraction overlooking Centennial Olympic Park and will feature three rides including the SkyTwist, which brings up to 20 riders from the street-level to the top of a 225-foot tall tower in a giant all-glass gondola that rotates; the SkyDrop, which sends riders on a free fall from 225 feet in the air; and the SkyShot, a sling ride that vaults riders over 200 feet in the air. This spring, the Georgia Aquarium will open the new Sea Lion Gallery, which will be home to two rescued sea lion pups and will include an exhibit and show. Also this year, Six Flags Over Georgia will renovate and expand Bugs Bunny World, which features rides for kids and visits by the Warner Bros. cartoon characters. The area will be reborn as Bugs Bunny Boomtown. Adjoining it will be a new area called DC Super Friends, with rides and attractions carrying the names of popular DC Comics superheroes. <

# With All Due Respect, Let Us Speak



BY JOHN P. HARRISON, CAE, CMP

**THIS IS A** column I'm not supposed to write, and you're not supposed to read. For you see, I speak here of politics, sex and religion. The three great taboos that we're not to talk about in today's world of censored conversation. I'm not surprised really, that there are—or were, depending on the shape of today's headlines—personalities drawing crowds in politics because of their ability to rail against the current ethos of non-speak about certain topics. I'm not sure which is unhealthier: the non-speak or the brash speak. In any case, let's speak about it.

First, politics. Once upon a time, our politicians were pretty much of the same demographic ilk. That was bad in that we missed diverse ideas, but at least we paid attention to ideas. Now, it's identity politics. People vote for "their" person. (What's the Chicago line, "Hey, we know he's a crook, but he's our crook"? ) Instead of voting for the person with the most proven policy ideas, we just vote for "our guy." How stupid is that? I've lived in countries with three or four official languages, and while that sounds clever and inclusive, it serves to divide and stratify the population—not to mention the cost. Pick a language, whichever one makes the most sense, and let's all just deal with it. We ultimately seek common values. It's the old "melting pot" versus the "mosaic" political assumption.

And here's a political assumption that needs to be examined: victims aren't always thus. In today's world we have crybullies. Now these would be those who seek profit they do not earn from some political situation which may have been long ago. I'm sure the



Normans must have mistreated my Angle ancestors, and I deserve retribution. However, somewhere along the line, we must have just “gotten over it.” A novel idea, I know. I’m sorry my friends, but everyone does not get the same trophy just for showing up over and over again.

Since we speak of everyone getting a trophy, this brings up religion. Hold on to your hats, but we cannot endlessly pretend all religious value systems are of equal value. Some, as judged by our constitutional standards (and that would be Western or Greco-Judeo-Christian standards, by the way) just don’t get the same trophy. Pluralism contains an inherent contradiction much as “there are no absolutes” is a blatant paradox. In fact, the whole bent toward pluralism is an admirable, self-inflicted feature of the religion dominant at our country’s founding. We can relate well and be respectful of others even more if we acknowledge our own history more honestly.

And, while we’re being honest about religion, you should know of a couple of big lies out there. One is that war has religion as a major cause. Of the thousands of wars fought in human history, only a relative handful had religion as a cause. Whenever very different ethnic groups clash for whatever reason, there is a good chance they may have differing religions (and they would be expected to invoke their religion in life or death matters). This does not make religion the reason they went to war.

The second lie is that somehow science sprang up as a force outside or against religion. Scientific inquiry grew up in the medieval church universities, an offspring of the reasoning nature of Western theology. Despite what Voltaire and his other anti-religion compatriots labeled as the Dark Ages, the scientific and social improvements of the West

during those centuries gave rise to even more discoveries sponsored by the scientists of the church. And, lo and behold, of the top 50 scientists of the 1600 and 1700s (as identified in Isaac Asimov’s encyclopedia) all but one (Halley, of comet fame) were at least sympathetic to or in many cases devout practitioners of religion. It is bunk that we must pretend religion is not a positive force in the fabric of Western society.

So now this brings us to sex—and for obvious sales technique I’ve saved this topic for last. If a visitor were to somehow parachute in from another planet, he, she or it, would think as a species we are suddenly confused as to how our race actually procreates. Now, take it from me—and I did actually graduate from a major university with a degree in biology (and even after the cell had been discovered)—that we are sexually dimorphic creatures who reproduce by the mating of males with females (or females with males, but something tells me more the former than the latter). So do you know then how long we can go without good old-fashioned heterosexual sex? You guessed it: one generation. I hope it’s not too much to ask that we remember and respect that from time to time.

Now, you can check the above to see if there are 800 words still left by the censors before this paragraph. Or they might have cut the whole thing, in which case, don’t bother counting. My point is this: There’s nothing wrong with understanding and respecting how we got here as a culture. We do well to be able to respectfully discuss all topics instead of pretending some emperors are wearing clothes when they may be rather scantily clad. Every now and then, let’s listen to the naïve little boy who had the courage to call out the emperor. We might even give him a trophy—just for showing up. ◀

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