

Chair's Message

UNPRECEDENTED – this is the word that has been flooding the media lately. As I am writing this message the Vancouver 2010 Olympics has already finished. Canada has won gold for the very first time while hosting the winter games. Go Canada, Go!



Despite past performances and the predictions of statisticians, the odds were beaten and the results show otherwise. Some have commented that the Canadians have displayed unprecedented performance. Hmmm – unprecedented – that is quite a choice of word. My thoughts quickly shifted to our students who are still in the CGA program of professional studies, who may be feeling a bit overwhelmed. While I was still glancing at the television screen, one of the sports psychologists who has been involved in coaching Olympic athletes, commented that the last few moments before the races the athlete's main focus is not beefing-up training efforts but strategizing. This can also be a very effective method to apply when preparing for examination.

I can certainly empathize with you when you only have very limited amounts of time to study. But, all is not lost. Give yourself permission to out-perform to an extent that goes beyond your wildest expectations. Let your mind wander into what's possible and not what has been. After all, at the end of your journey you may just be using the term "unprecedented" to apply new meaning to what you have achieved. Will you believe?

Here we go again, singing the word "unprecedented" in another context. The Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hamilton and Burlington Bowl for Kids Sake is on in March. Let us make CGAs' involvement in this community activity be considered unprecedented for this year. The events will be running for the entire month and you can visit www.callbigbrothers.com for detail. There are two ways in which you can get involved as a chapter, by participating as a bowler or by volunteering as a pledge accountant. Contact me at hamilton@cga-ontario.org and I will share more details, or you can view our archived January 2010 newsletter online in Hamilton Chapter's page on the CGA Ontario website. This year, we are planning to increase our involvement with this charity to an unprecedented level and we are counting on you to join in.

Tax Preparation Services

Who are Big Brothers Big Sisters?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hamilton and Burlington are serving **more than 1,000 children** in this community. There continues to be a high demand for their services. Right now there are **more than 250 kids** waiting to be matched with a mentor.

Mentoring works! Children who receive mentoring services are:

- 80 per cent more likely to attain a secondary school diploma.
- 78 per cent less likely to rely on social assistance as adults.
- 46 per cent less likely to start using drugs.

Can you make a difference in the life of a child? Yes you can. If you are not able to participate in either the bowling or the pledge accounting, you can be a donor. Please contact me and I will suggest how you could donate to sponsor a bowler, you could serve on a committee or maybe even become a mentor.

The annual community income tax preparation services will be underway in March. Do not miss out on the opportunity to volunteer your time in the community. I am encouraging you to please fill out the volunteer and feedback form that is attached to the monthly e-bulletin and you will be scheduled for one of the sessions. Last year, more than 250 tax returns were prepared for lower income earners and seniors. This year, we can top that number with your involvement. The we can say "we have prepared an unprecedented number of returns as a chapter". Please get involved.

Every month we have been inviting members and students to keep in touch with the chapter board. I appreciate receiving the responses that have come in. Please continue to communicate with us. We value your comments and we encourage you to share your thoughts with us. We are here to serve you and we can only deliver service to match your expectations, but that's after hearing from you. Tell us where you see us going in the future. Let's keep in touch via email at hamilton@cga-ontario.org.

The Latest Word is published
by the Certified General Accountants
of Ontario, Hamilton Chapter.

The Latest Word

Editor: Matthew Gerard, CGA
Copy Editor: Christopher Stephenson
Graphic Designer: Megan Sanderson

Visit us online at www.cga-ontario.org or
by email at hamilton@cga-ontario.org.

Exam Invigilation

Hamilton Chapter would like to extend our gratitude to those members who volunteered to invigilate examinations for the March 2010 session.

Carol Tristani, CGA
Cheryl Stevens, CGA
Erik Andersen, CGA
Gershom Moyo, CGA
Katherine Cardwell, CGA
Margot Varszegi, CGA
Nanci Virginillo, CGA
Nicole Kalsbeek, CGA
Phil Watkins, CGA
Rosario Bellucci, CGA
Rose Celio, CGA
Sarah McConnachie-Shaw, CGA
Venecia Francis, CGA

The next examination period is from Monday, June 7, 2010 to Saturday, June 12, 2010. If you are interested in invigilating, please email Corina Thomas, CGA, at corina.e.thomas@gmail.com.

New CPD Policy of Self-Declaration

CGA Ontario is pleased to announce the implementation of a new continuing professional development (CPD) policy of self-declaration. This policy, which was approved by the board of governors in November 2009, will replace the current reporting policy as of January 1, 2010. The new policy does not change current CPD requirements. It changes the method by which CGAs report CPD to the Association.

CGAs have until March 31, 2010, to declare the fulfilment of mandatory CPD requirements for the 2009 calendar year, ending December 31, 2009. CGAs will be responsible for the tracking of CPD, including the recording of verifiable and non-verifiable hours, and the maintenance of supporting documentation. These records shall not be submitted to CGA Ontario. A random audit process of the membership will ensure compliance with mandatory requirements.

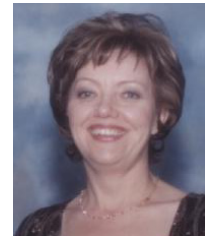
Members may declare their CPD fulfilment online as of February 1, 2010. CGA Ontario has provided a helpful tracking form to assist in the recording of CPD activities, which may be downloaded from the professional development page of CGA Ontario's website. CGA Ontario will also send declaration reminders to members prior to the deadline of March 31, 2010.

This policy, which is administratively efficient and in keeping with the best practices of professional associations, recognizes the commitment of certified general accountants to the practice of lifelong learning. If you have any questions or require more information regarding self-declaration, contact Laurel Shaw, program assistant, mandatory professional development, at lshaw@cga-ontario.org, or by telephone at 416-322-6520 or 1-800-668-1454, ext. 8259.

Solving the Mystery of "CGA"

By Bozena Glinska, CGA

During my first accounting class at the now defunct campus of Sheridan College located at Dundas and Hurontario streets in Mississauga, the instructor surveyed the students on the reasons why they registered for that particular class. The majority of the attendees wanted to become bookkeepers but some wanted to be CGAs. At that time all I was interested in was gaining a very basic knowledge of accounting that I thought would be useful in complementing my "secretarial" skills and help me land a new job.



The year was 1993, Canada was in the middle of a deep recession (very similar to the one we are experiencing now) and I had just immigrated to Canada. I had no idea what a CGA was and I was too afraid to ask anyone around. From my conversations with other students I later learned that CGA is an abbreviated version of the words "certified general accountant", which was one of the three accounting designations in Canada.

I decided to continue my schooling and with time became a certified bookkeeper. I was working for a pension plan in Mississauga. One of my work colleagues held a CGA designation and gradually I realized that I could become a CGA myself. My goal seemed achievable and realistic in spite of the fact that my degree from the University of Warsaw, Poland was in Spanish Philology and had little to do with accounting, except for courses in economics. Of course, I would not be able to do it without the support of my colleagues and my family.

I still remember Joyce Evans, FCGA, speaking at the New Members' night in 2004 and telling the audience that about only one per cent of people starting the CGA program from the very beginning finish it. How proud I was to be one of those few Joyce was referring to.

I am sharing my story with a hope that some of you can learn a lesson from my story:

1. Students – Even though it seems like light years away, the designation is within your reach. Just keep going and don't give up. And remember that you are pursuing a certified general accountant designation and not a meaningless "CGA".
2. Members – Be proud of your designation and ensure that you promote the organization's brand by correctly using its name and logo. You want people around you to recognize the CGA logo.

CGA Profile

Lynda Murdoch-Furchner, CGA



Lynda has been an accountant, it seems, forever. Her first job fresh out of high school was as an accounting clerk at the local branch of a large insurance company. After a couple of years where she did gain some additional responsibilities, she realized that the only way to move up was to get more education and transfer to another branch office. One of the main benefits of the CGA program of professional studies was that Lynda could keep her full-time job and take courses part time towards her designation.

Within four months of enrolling in the CGA program, Lynda's immediate supervisor left the company, resulting in a promotion to branch accountant for Lynda. She was now working with more senior level financial staff at various branches, and had the opportunity to travel to other branch offices to train branch accountants and accounting support staff. Her new goal was now to work in the head office of the company in a senior financial position, and she knew that pursuing the CGA designation was the pathway to get her there. During her third year in the program, the company underwent a major reorganization, and Lynda was promoted to regional accounting manager with responsibility for three branch offices. The key to Lynda's promotion was that she was the only accountant enrolled in a program of professional studies.

The company reorganized again during Lynda's final year of studies, with the offices across the country being rolled up into three regions for administrative and accounting functions. Lynda, still the only accountant enrolled in a professional program was given the position of division accounting manager for the Ontario-Maritimes Division.

Lynda was admitted into membership in 1993. Her new boss, a fellow CGA, sent notification of this achievement to all the branches in the region. Lynda received many notes and cards of congratulations, which only reinforced her feeling that achieving the CGA designation would be the key to her successful future and the realization of her goals. She now had the credentials to back up her hard work, and would earn the respect of her peers.

A few years later, a large insurance company expressed interest in buying Lynda's company. It was a global company with its Canadian Head Office in Toronto. Lynda was heavily involved in the due diligence process, where, thanks to her designation, she was able to present herself as a knowledgeable, interested and positive professional. She made such a good impression that she was the only accounting person who was offered a job with the new company.

Once Lynda earned her designation, she decided to get involved in the chapter. She served on various committees, and became Chapter Chair in 1996. She remained involved in the chapter after her year as chair, serving as the chair of the social program committee for many years. In the meantime, she also enrolled in the CIM program, where thanks to her CGA designation she received advanced standing. Lynda received her CIM

designation in 1996, and promptly joined the local board for that organization. In her role as Publicity Director, while serving as Social Committee Chair for the local CGA chapter, Lynda was instrumental in forging ties between the two associations. Many joint social activities were planned and executed by Lynda. The Hamilton branch of CIM won two national publicity awards in 2005 and 2006, primarily due to Lynda's efforts.

Lynda credits her experiences in the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Army Cadets with giving her the confidence, and the fundamental leadership skills to pursue her other goals. She achieved her Master Cadet (Gold Star) in 1980, became the first female cadet commanding officer of the corps in 1981 and was promoted to the rank of cadet captain. She then became an adult instructor with the Cadet Instructors List. In recognition of her long service she received the Canadian Forces Decoration (CD) in 1995.

In 1997 Lynda decided to join the RHLI Veterans Association. Having her CGA designation made her a valuable asset to the organization. She served in the positions of executive member, secretary, second vice-president, first vice-president and became the first female president in July 2008. Throughout her service, Lynda's sense of professionalism has shone through. She has been able to use the skills developed through the CGA designation to serve the community. Lynda has also served as treasurer for the RHLI Veterans Association Ladies Auxilliary. Her friends on Facebook frequently get invitations to the events held at the RHLI Veterans Club. One of Lynda's strongest supporters is her husband Doug, who is also a big supporter of the Hamilton Chapter. Doug and Lynda were the organizers of the Golf Tournament and Day at the Races, events that were aimed at not only our Hamilton Chapter members but also the members of the Hamilton Branch of CIM.



Lynda is an ardent supporter of the CGA designation. She wears her designation with pride, and knows that others appreciate its value. She goes out of her way to promote CGA at work, in the community through her volunteer work and everywhere she goes. Although she is not an active board member of the Hamilton Chapter, she still serves on several committees and is always ready and willing to answer the call for volunteers. She is definitely a CGA of whom the chapter can be proud.