

# From the ISSA Chattanooga Chapter President

Welcome to the first issue of the Chattanooga Chapter Newsletter.

I have been sitting trying to come up with a pithy, humorous, intelligent opening for a "President's Message" for this new Newsletter. I mean, what could be so hard. Grab a few witticisms from other sources, don't plagiarize too heavily, add a dash of humor, leaven with some forward looking statements about our industry, and voila!

Or, maybe not.....

The truth is, I want this to go well. This is the chapter's inaugural newsletter, something the Board wishes to make a fixture of our chapter, along with providing news, events, and just plain good reading to our members.

So, I decided to take a 360 approach. That is to look back a little, to look present day a little, and to look forward to the future a little.

## The Beginning

In late 2011, 10 people signed a letter of intent to form the Chattanooga Chapter of the ISSA. At that founding meeting, I do not think anyone had a definitive idea of what a successful chapter should look like for Chattanooga. I had just come from the Phoenix Chapter, a very strong, large chapter with more than 200 registered members, terrific support from sister organizations, the educational community and sponsors alike. In the relatively short time I was part of that chapter, I learned what real cooperation and activity could accomplish.

Chattanooga on the other hand had a real opportunity. There had never been a chapter here. With large drawing chapters surrounding Chattanooga (Atlanta, Nashville, etc.) we had no idea if there was even enough population to support a local chapter. But we persevered and submitted our organizing documents to ISSA International.

What did we have going for us? Well, we had some terrific sponsors (several of whom I am happy to say have been consistent supporters up to this day). For those of you in Security, you can well appreciate how unusual that is. With business names changing, marketing budgets juggled, and staff turnover (even in the vendor space), I believe our chapter has been extremely fortunate with our sponsorships.

We also had going for us a team of enthusiastic members who agreed (much to their dismay at some points I am sure) to serve as board members. While I had served as a board member, and eventually chapter president previously, none of the others had. Welcome to ISSA!

Even though we started with only a kernel of an idea about what we felt we should be growing and doing as a chapter, we were determined to do it. With no educational agenda, no outreach program, and no membership activities ready to present, but we knew we could do it.

## Today

Fast forward six years to see where we are. We have a solid base of 69 active members, including 11 student members. I must point out that this is double or triple what some other chapters have, even when twice our age! We have provided a consistent series of member activities for six years. Just think on that for a moment. Realize the effort it has taken and the support of the membership that was required for us to provide 24 quarterly events, several after-hour vendor specific events, and outreach in the form of meeting with educators,

encouraging student participation, and reaching out to our “sister” organizations and providing joint support for their activities.

So, when I started this message, I said I was going to look backward, at today, and then forward. Well we have looked at the first two, but this third one was stumping me. Looking forward?

### Going Forward

I am not a prognosticator, (though I wish I could claim to be the long lost descendent of Nostradamus sometimes) but I think that I can look at least twelve months into the future and lay out for you some of the things I see from the chapter point of view.

I see another fantastic year. With our increased Board representation, we will be able to take on more tasks. We also have more closely defined the roles we need to make our chapter a continued success.

Our local efforts will be well founded and served this year. Our events will continue to provide you with excellent SMEs and topical speakers for interesting, timely presentations of what is happening in the industry. We will be trying new things to keep and perk your interest (like having more of our “at night” sessions if possible). Of course, we also need to hear from you on what we are doing right and what we might do better for you, our members.

One of the big items I see in our near future is our 2018 International Conference in Atlanta! With it being “right down the road”, we are hoping to get a large number of our members to go and enjoy the sessions and the networking that comes with every international conference. Mark your calendars for October!

In the meanwhile, the Chattanooga Chapter will start the year off with a bang. Our International ISSA President, Keyaan Williams, (no relation) has graciously agreed to address our first quarterly event. So make sure to mark your calendars for the Q1 event, February 6, 2018.

As we look forward into 2018 and beyond, I think one thing can be safely said and that is the Information Security community will continue to grow and evolve, and we all should continue to experience “full employment” in our chosen profession.

Welcome to the New Year! Welcome to the first issue of the Chattanooga Chapter’s New Letter! Welcome to the only organization in our area devoted to the practice and profession of Information Security!

I hope to see all y’all at ISSA events during this coming year.

*Mark Williams*