

### In This Issue

Beachside with Becky

Position Changes

ICMA News

2016 Senior Executive Institute Program

Member Spotlight - Jodi Miller

Tedd's Take

Certificate News

A DAO in the Life - Garrey Curry

Civic Engagement Best Practices - Albemarle County Spotlight

Mel's Poetry Corner

Innovation Edge

Spring DAO Meeting

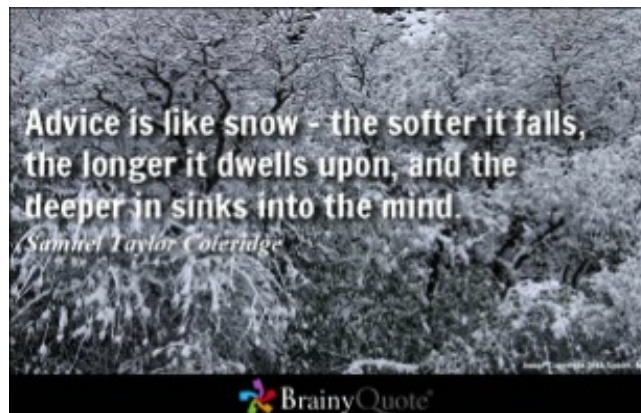
Calendar

### Beachside with Becky



**Becky Dickson**

### Beachside with Becky



Ok, so I just had to use a SNOW quote this month! Hope all that got snow took the time to enjoy it, sit under a blanket and sip hot chocolate. I sure did... then Sunday rolled around, it took a full day and a truck to the body shop for me to dig out.

Any hoo.....I love this quote about advice. I probably love it because it's the way I process advice. Probably the way most of us, our staff, even our family's process advice. Boards and Councils too. Don't push too hard. Offer it, then step back.

Now, I can't say I have always given advice this way, in the long ago past when I was young and full of myself, in an effort to impart my infinite wisdom (did I even have any then?), I probably resembled someone playing the "wack-a-mole" game at Chucky Cheese, returning to my victim time and again to ensure they heard me the first time, that my wonderful wisdom had sunk in and that they were stunned and amazed to received such words of wisdom!!

Today, I am more subtle and caring in imparting advice or suggestions, if asked. Usually the advice is delivered as a slow, soft pitch, dropping close enough to be paid attention to but not pounced upon. Sometimes posed as a question. It's often so soft that a week or so later the person returns to me with an idea that "they have come up with" which uncannily resembles the advice I softly offered. The best of all possible outcomes.

No matter who we are, we like advice that isn't forceful. Otherwise we retract and dig in. Sometimes we simply shun advice if delivered too directly even if it makes sense (do I need to say 20 year old daughter??).

So my advice for your organization, family and friends is to softly offer advice, perhaps in the form of a question, and let them take it from there. Folks work out their own paths and decisions just fine most of the time.

And one last snow quote that is NOT soft:

*"A snowball in the face is surely the perfect beginning to a lasting friendship."*  
.... Markus Zusak, The Book Thief....now go out and hurl some snowballs at someone!!!

Welcome to our new VLGMA Members - William G. Saunders, IV, Smithfield Planning & Zoning Administrator; Brent Fedors, Gloucester County Administrator; Alexander Ikefuna, Charlottesville Neighborhood Development Services Director and Mark Jinks, Alexandria City Manager.

Signing off,

Becky

[Contact Becky Dickson](#)

## Position Changes

January, 2016

- Ernie Hoch, Culpeper County administrator since May, 2015, resigned.
- John Egertson, Culpeper County assistant administrator and planning director, has been appointed interim administrator there.
- Jodi Miller, Williamsburg deputy city manager, has been appointed deputy manager for Durham County, North Carolina, effective February 1st.
- William (Bill) Whitley, former Gloucester County administrator and interim



administrator in several localities since his retirement, has been appointed interim manager for Onancock while the manager is on temporary leave.

- Carl Boggess, Bedford County attorney and interim administrator, has been appointed administrator there.
- Jay Stegmaier, Chesterfield County administrator, announced his retirement, effective July 1st.
- Stephen King, deputy county administrator for Rockingham County, has been appointed administrator there, succeeding Joe Paxton, who is retiring June 30th.
- Dave Hansen, deputy city manager for Virginia Beach, has been appointed manager there.

ICMA News



Two articles on ICMA's professional development and leadership programs:

### **In Ocea's Own Words -**

Since most of my career has been in private industry, the Mid-Career Managers Institute (MCMI) was the tool I needed to enhance my awareness on issues that plague many local government communities. By participating in facilitator led sessions, the students in the MCMI were able to engage in thought-provoking discussions, by sharing their real-life daily government experiences as leaders in their organizations.

For example, with so much media attention given to unethical behavior in all levels of government, one topic in particular focused on creating a culture of ethical intelligence, ethical courage, and ethical behavior in the workplace. The MCMI participants were challenged with exploring ways we could proactively change the way both employees and the general public view governmental agencies.

By discussing realistic strategies, I provided input on how I guided employees to retool their thinking on ethical behavior. As the Operations Manager of a utility division, I integrated into monthly 'All-Hands' presentations topics with questions/answers pertaining to ethics. The number of employee ethical dilemmas drastically decreased.

The utility administrator saw first-hand the difference the applied lessons from the MCMI were making on the division, so he recommended my appointment as the Director of Logistics and Asset Management, shortly thereafter.

The MCMI has definitely made a positive and lasting impact on my local government career and professional development. For those interested in catapulting their careers to the next level, I recommend participating in MCMI and applying what is taught in the sessions. You'll be glad you did.

[Learn more about the Mid-Career Managers Institute.](#)

### **GETTYSBURG LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

#### **AN EXPLORATION OF PERSONAL LEADERSHIP & LESSONS OF HISTORY**

Join other local government professionals at the Gettysburg Leadership Institute

to learn and be inspired by the leadership lessons of the battle of Gettysburg and the leadership styles of Lincoln and Eisenhower.

You'll leave the Gettysburg Leadership Institute more informed on the critical topics every local government professional should know. Like how to excel in leadership strategy... communicate with your staff and community... achieve organizational effectiveness... and more!

**What you'll gain by attending the Gettysburg Leadership Institute:**

- Good and bad examples of leadership;
- The importance of communication;
- Leading by example;
- Recognizing and appropriately utilizing talent and skill;
- Understanding the benefits and limitations of the tools and resources available.

*"An unparalleled opportunity to explore the capabilities of individual leaders and their teams to overcome all odds and be successful even in the most trying circumstances such as a battlefield."*

**Mark Watson, City Manager, City of Oak Ridge, TN**

[Learn more about the Gettysburg Leadership Institute.](#)

2016 Senior Executive Institute Program



Now is the time for the leadership experience of your life! There are still spots available in the **July 17-29, 2016 SEI Class**. More information including the SEI application and a sample schedule are available online at <http://www.coopercenter.org/leadership>  
[Contact Molly Harlow](#) with any questions

Member Spotlight - Jodi Miller



Jodi Miller

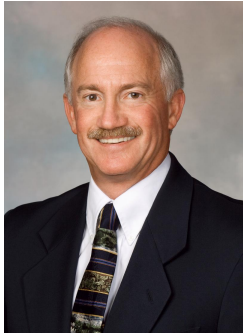
**Relationships Lift Miller from City Intern to Durham County's Deputy Manager**  
By Kirsten Petersen on January 28, 2016 WYDaily.com  
(Photo courtesy of Lisa W. Cumming Photography)

If a fellowship in Richmond had not fallen through for Jodi Miller 20 years ago, she may not be where she is today. It was in her "scramble" to find another internship while earning her master's degree at Virginia Tech that she learned of an opportunity in the City of Williamsburg, one she would later call a "life-changing experience."

"By the end of my internship here in Williamsburg, I was hooked," Miller said. "It kind of felt like I had found my calling." On Friday, Miller will conclude a 15-year career in Williamsburg city management before heading to Durham, N.C. to become the locality's deputy county manager. "I think my experience here really

put me in a place, professionally and personally, to take on the new challenge in Durham, most definitely," Miller said. "It's been an honor to serve this community." Miller, now the deputy city manager, interned with the City of Williamsburg in the summer of 1997 and worked on the city's performance management system, a project she would continue to work on when she was hired full-time a few years later. Read more [here](#).

## Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

## Following a Legend

Recent events have rekindled my long-held belief that local government CAOs who follow a highly successful predecessor are at much higher risk of a short tenure than other administrators. In fact, such managers may be regarded as potential "sacrificial lambs," and that it is better for those interested in that particular position to sit out the first hiring cycle.

The reasons for this are probably numerous, and fault may lie with both the hiree and the hirers. The successor needs to come into the job softly and humbly as the emotions of both the governing body and staff may still be a bit tender after the departure of their former leader. While everyone knows in their head that the successor is not the predecessor, it doesn't mean the staff and governing body don't miss that person, and even want him or her to still be in the "chair". Some new administrators feel they need to establish themselves and their management style quickly to show strength and decisiveness, but that can be extremely risky under such circumstances.

The hirers (governing body) also need to be fair to the new chief administrator by not asking him or her to be a clone of the recently departed. They need to admit that they may feel jilted if the former manager left for another community, or that they saw his/her retirement as untimely. Things are going to be different, and they need to keep an open mind that different is not necessarily bad.

I had the experience of following a "legend" and dealing with a jilted city council. I lasted 11 months in that job, and was never given a chance to establish myself. I now know there was no way I was going to measure up, and failure was virtually guaranteed. It's a frustrating thing to go through because you don't know what you are doing wrong, or why you are not succeeding.

Bottom line: sometimes it's best to come in second!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

## Certificate News

After the recent statewide pummeling by the snowstorm, everyone seems to be ready to think about something other than winter. Our Certificate students certainly have plenty to think about with the spring semester proceeding in earnest. Plus, all the brainpower is sure to keep everyone warm.

Of course, the best distraction during the winter is to think about spring. This spring, the Certificate program will be hosting one-day workshops featuring John Nalbandian and The Alliance for Innovation. Dr. Nalbandian will lead the program through an interactive discussion of the three leadership challenges facing local government managers today. The Alliance for Innovation will follow with an engaging session on how to build innovation in your organization. Attendees will complete an organizational readiness assessment prior to the workshop and the results from the survey will be discussed. These Contemporary Leadership Challenge workshops will take place on April 6th in Abingdon and on April 8th in Stafford. Stephanie Davis can provide more information.



Planning is also underway for the third Professional Development in Local Government conference next summer in Roanoke. Save the date for August 8 and 9! Dr. John Nalbandian will be the keynote speaker, and there will be sessions on lessons learned, media relations, and the Alliance for Innovation. For more information, visit <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/lgm/>.

If you are interested in any of the Certificate's courses or programming, Director Stephanie Davis is always willing to answer questions. Feel free to contact her at [sddavis@vt.edu](mailto:sddavis@vt.edu) or 804-980-5549.

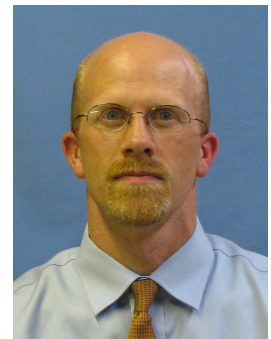
#### A DAO in the Life - Garrey Curry

Sometimes the pieces fall together ... I volunteered some time ago to provide this entry but said that we would have to wait until February for all of the pieces to fall into place. Little did I know that last month's "DAO in the life" entry would offer the perfect setup for what had been milling around in the deep recesses of my often fully taxed mind. The change at the top referred to last month is the foundation of this entry which hopefully you will find useful.

I've now had the opportunity to work in one locality for the last twelve years, but for six different County Administrators (seven if you count working for myself for a short stint). In complete contradiction I can also tell you that I have worked in a very stable environment. This is certainly a paradox of sorts, and one worthy of sharing with my peers.

When CAO transition comes knocking on the door of your community, and it will, it has become abundantly clear in my community that stability and calming influences are of paramount value. There will be community and political pressure to carry on during the search process for a new CAO with internal staff reassignments, but in a community like mine where I serve as the only Assistant/Deputy there are simply not enough hours in the day for this to be effective.

Having passed through two "transitions" I've come to learn that the single greatest thing a community can do during a time of staff concern over new direction and vision is to bring in a calming influence (or for my engineer peers out there a damping influence). After an ill-fated and short lived experiment with an



Garrey Curry

interim agent of change nearly a decade ago during my first brush with transition, my community quickly turned to a retired seasoned professional to provide the necessary calm and wisdom to keep the flywheel turning as an appointed Interim CAO until a new stable CAO was selected.

Last spring when our latest transition came calling I knew right away what we needed to do and I went about making a few back channel phone calls to get the right people talking with each other to bring in another retired seasoned professional to bridge the gap until a new CAO could be selected. With that process now just wrapping up and a new CAO on board since the beginning of the year, I can now pause to look back and reflect on the experience.

In a time when fear of the unknown is the inevitable path for staff, my community's now second use of a retired seasoned professional as an Interim CAO allayed those concerns allowing for a smooth transition. More importantly, this and the previous period of change provided a rather unusual opportunity to have a seasoned professional peek under the hood for six to eight months and impart the benefit of their wisdom gained through many years of trial and error. That input combined with the selection process and hiring of new CAOs has provided me and my community with nearly twice the access to expert review and input bettering the community at times that, if not careful, we could have stagnated or regressed. So, from me personally and from my community that benefited immensely, thank you to our Boards and the Interim CAOs they wisely hired. What will your community do during your next CAO transition?

[Contact Garrey Curry](#)

#### Civic Engagement Best Practices - Albemarle County Spotlight



Doug Walker

### **Albemarle County's Citizen Advisory Committees Get the Word Out (and Back In!)**

Here in Albemarle, we're making citizen engagement part of the routine. Engaging citizens across 726 square miles to keep them informed and part of the conversation for the myriad issues facing the County at any given time is a monumental task. Local TV, radio, periodicals, and e-news help to push out information, but those outlets do not provide a straightforward way for people to give feedback. To bring local government out to the community, Albemarle County implemented Community Advisory Committees (CACs).

Originally an extension of the master plan process, the seven CACs focus on issues facing their respective master plan areas - discrete geographic areas that are small enough to feel like a tight-knit community and large enough to bring a diversity of stakeholders to the table. Committee members represent neighborhoods, businesses, and other specific interests and each CAC includes a liaison from the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission. The Committees are citizen-run, with a Chair elected by the members to create the agenda and preside over the meetings, and meetings are held in the community - at libraries, schools, and fire stations across Albemarle.

CACs meet monthly and provide a regular venue for the community to get

together, learn about current issues, and, most importantly, weigh-in on rezonings and special use permits, parks and trails planning, and capital projects in their part of the County. CACs also serve as an established venue for discussing special countywide topics, like the budget, stormwater management funding and recycling. CACs do not have decision-making authority, but allow the Supervisor, Planning Commissioner, and staff the benefit of hearing directly from the community regarding their support and concerns on a particular issue, which helps craft recommendations and policy. But most importantly, it gives citizens a way to get involved in local issues close to home.

[Contact Doug Walker](#)

### Mel's Poetry Corner



**Mel Gillies**

### Gentle Presence of Snow

A Shangri-la with spiritual gifts to bestow,  
awaken to the dawn of untouched snow.

A gate way opens to slip outside  
and in the stillness of this moment abide.

For a messenger has descended from above,  
a greeting card delivered with divine Love,  
blanketing anxieties with ethereal purity,  
the call to experience Now's eternity.

Sunlight sculpts the undefined lines  
and a crystal palace comes alive.  
Each flake rejoices in its own identity,  
unity sings in the beauty of diversity.

From the infinitesimal to infinity,  
Coherence revealed within the great Mystery.  
Can you imagine a more perfect scene?  
God and I with no thing in between.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

### Innovation Edge

What do an onion, fire pumpers and public records have in common for the city of Phoenix? These are just a few of the topics that have been deeply discussed and examined for the past year as part of Phoenix's "CORE" - Comprehensive Organizational Review Evaluation.

CORE is a citywide program involving staff at all levels who are charged with reviewing key areas such as how we are doing business, what can be improved and what's hindering us from success.

Organizational reviews are not new. Numerous governments and corporate





entities use organizational reviews to examine structure and processes in terms of efficiency.

Read the complete article, **Positive Results for City of Phoenix's Customized Organizational Review Process** by Ed Zuercher, City Manager and Milton Dohoney, Assistant City Manager, City of Phoenix, AZ [here](#).

**About the Alliance for Innovation:** The Alliance for Innovation is inspiring innovation to advance communities. As the premier resource for emerging practices in local government, we are building cultures of innovation and connecting thought leaders in the profession with the help of our partners International City/County Management Association and Arizona State University. We are accessible and valuable to all levels of an organization. You can learn more about the Alliance at [www.transformgov.org](http://www.transformgov.org) or contact me at [saburnett@transformgov.org](mailto:saburnett@transformgov.org)

### Spring DAO Meeting



From the Planning Team Vivian McGettigan, York County Deputy County Administrator and Mark Bellamy, York County Public Works Director:

The County of York will host the Spring DAO meeting at the Yorktown Freight Shed - Riverwalk Landing, 331 Water Street, Yorktown, Virginia on April 8 from 10:00am through 3:00pm. Planning for the meeting is shaping up. The meeting topics include: County Administrator, Neil Morgan sharing his insights on emerging local government issues; we will then explore the seven primary motivations that affect every interpersonal, leadership and management interaction in the Unwrapping the Seven Gifts session; during the lunch break those who are interested in exploring York's beautiful Riverwalk can join a walking tour and discussion of this revitalization project and its positive impacts on York's economic development and quality of life; in the afternoon we will learn more about ICMA's and the Alliance for Innovation's Next Big Things and we will share how York used the materials for an interactive board retreat exercise; we will wrap up the day with a roundtable discussion. **Stay tuned as registration opens this week.** For more information about what Yorktown has to offer, please go to [www.yorkcounty.gov/tourism](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/tourism). For further information and registration, please go to [www.vlgma.org](http://www.vlgma.org)

### Calendar

#### Upcoming Events

VLGMA will be hosting its second break room during the VACo legislative day on February 11th, 2-4 p.m.

Place: 8th Floor West Conference Room in the General Assembly Building

Stop by between visits to legislators for coffee, soft drinks, & cookies, and a little down time!

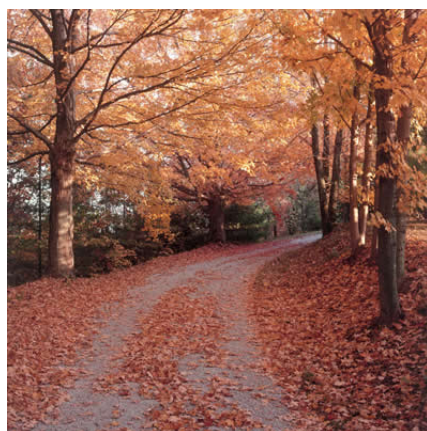
Winter Conference - February 17-19, 2016 at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville - registration is closed. Please contact [Molly Harlow](#) with questions.

Spring DAO Meeting - April 8, 2016 in York County - more info [here](#)

Summer Conference - June 8-10, 2016 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Sheraton Hotel. Mark your calendars now and look for more info in April.

[More Dates](#)

#### Future Newsletter Articles



A goal of this e-newsletter is to keep you informed on activities relative to our profession. As with any membership-based organization, contributions by members are welcome and encouraged. Topics can range from a recent achievement in your locality to an upcoming event with networking potential to human interest stories about current or retired members. To contribute simply send your brief e-newsletter content (~5 sentences or less) via email to [Molly Harlow](#).

#### Future Newsletter Articles

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

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