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Greetings from Greg



Greg Kelly

Greetings from Greg

"You Can't Make This Stuff Up"

Let me start my first newsletter by saying that time really flies and I was not fully prepared to assume this role a few months earlier than normal. After all, I had no photo, no catchy newsletter title, no theme and no thought of what to say to an elite group of local government professionals who have already seen or heard much of everything that could come down the pike about leadership and experiences in local government.

However, with Becky leaving early and me being put to the early test it only reiterated to me exactly what we all do for a living. We prepare for the known and we improvise and adapt to the uncertain and the unknown. That being said, I will do my best to deliver a decent message to you each month and I will try to put my quirky twist on how I deal with those unknowns and uncertainties. While we "can't make up" what we see and deal with on a regular basis, we can share our experiences and hopefully continue to grow and learn from each other. Accordingly, I will try to use "You Can't Make This Stuff Up" as my theme for sharing some interesting things that have happened to me over the years in my

journey through local government.

I will write more about me personally and my revelations and insights on local government in upcoming editions of the newsletter, but now it is time to reflect upon the legacies of the great leadership that VLGMA has had since 1947. And we should all feel proud and blessed by the wisdom of all of those who have led and been a part of this organization since its creation many years ago to help create and prepare the next generation. To endure and continue to grow for this length of time is a testament of just how important VLGMA is to our professional growth and sustainability.

While I am now your Acting President, it is a bitter sweet moment for me because I assume the duties of President a few months earlier than anticipated. As we embrace Becky's early retirement, let me say, quite frankly, that Becky has been a great President and representative of our organization. She is one hell of a ball of enthusiasm to have to follow. I have big shoes to fill, despite her actual small frame. I hope you will all join me in wishing Becky well in her retirement and in all of her future endeavors. I hope she nails all of those wild turkeys out there that we laughed about at the Winter Conference and she continues to draw wisdom from nature's beautiful owls she loves so dearly. Hats off to Becky and kudos for a job well done on the VLGMA Executive Committee, Board and as our President. You did a great job girl, and I am sure much more greatness is on the horizon for you. It has been a pleasure for me to work with Becky on the VLGMA Executive Board and to get to know her better over the past few years. She is indeed, in her own words, "sassy, classy and a bit kick assy". Now who can really follow that???

Let me leave you this month with the words that a resident of my community sent to me in an email after I was recently villainized in the media over a contentious rezoning issue. "*Greg you're doing a great job and I appreciate it. **Illegitimi non carborundum***". Translated from my four (4) years of Latin means, "Don't let the bastards grind you down". So, accordingly, we keep on keeping on.

Until next time, write your stories down, because you really can't make this stuff up. And to all, ***Illegitimi non carborundum!*** Peace and Love to Becky! Good job girl!

Please join me in welcoming Nicole Hair, Deputy Town Manager, Town of Pulaski; Robert Huff, Regional Planner/GIS Manager, Central Shenandoah PDC; Matthew L. Johnson, Director of Planning, Town of Abingdon and Andrea P. Madden, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Manassas as our newest members to VLGMA. I look forward to meeting you all and hearing your stories.

[Contact Greg Kelly](#)

Position Changes

March, 2016

- Clarence Monday, Pittsylvania County administrator, has announced that he

- intends to retire effective December 31, 2016.
- William Johnson, III, Petersburg city manager, has been terminated.
 - Lee Hood Capps has been appointed interim town manager for Warsaw. John Slusser, town manager there for over 16 years, is retiring at the end of the month.
 - Keith Harless, a former member of the Pennington Gap town council, has been appointed town manager there.



Member Spotlight - Becky Dickson



Goochland County Administrator Rebecca Dickson drew a laugh from the Goochland County Board of Supervisors and county staff members during the supervisors' March 2 meeting, when she respectfully asked that a particular agenda item be deleted. The reason? The item in question was a resolution honoring Dickson, who will be retiring effective April 1, after six years of service. Introducing the measure, board chairman Bob Minnick thanked Dickson for her leadership and her guidance during her time with the county. "This is a bittersweet day for this board, the county, and Ms. Dickson," Minnick said. "The impact of her tenure in Goochland is demonstrable and lasting." Minnick's were the only official words concerning Dickson's departure delivered by the board. But if Dickson was hoping to end her last board meeting without fanfare, she was likely disappointed. After she was presented with a copy of her resolution and bouquet of flowers, Dickson, a widely-beloved figure in Goochland who has been praised by numerous local and regional leaders for her management abilities, was treated to a tribute video created for her by county staff.

Dickson, who was hired by the county in July 2009, previously served in Chesterfield County for 19 years, primarily in the roles of budget director and deputy county administrator for human services. She announced her retirement on Nov. 5, 2015, saying in a statement that she was stepping down to focus on her family and her health.

Speaking after she was presented with the resolution, Dickson told those in attendance that she had been concerned about leaving too early, but also "didn't want to make the mistake of doing it too late." She had only the highest praise for the board members she has worked with and for county staff, noting that it was largely their work - not hers - that has helped to make Goochland the community that it is. She probably won't be coming to board meetings and workshops in the future, she laughed, but she does plan to remain a part of the community. "I've always been told to leave a place better than it was when you found it," Dickson said, "and that's what I've tried to do with Goochland - I know that's what Goochland has done for me."

There is a great article about Becky from the Goochland Gazette online [here](#).
[Contact Becky Dickson](#)

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

2016 Summer Conference Registration Open



The 2016 Summer Conference Planning Co-Chairs cordially invite you to attend the 2016 VLGMA Summer Conference. This promises to be a fantastic gathering at the beach focused around the theme of "There is No Place Like Home". It is a deftly crafted balance of amazing fun (we are going to the Aquarium!) and thoughtful sessions including "Creating our Hometown, Home Team Advantage" by Deborah Roberts, an overview of the fast paced changes we are facing in dealing with the sharing economy presented by the Brookings Institute, a local government oriented primer on Cyber Security presented by Karen Jackson, Virginia Secretary of Technology and a wrap up keynote by Virginia's own Robert O'Neill as he prepares to leave the helm of ICMA. Also returning for this event is the popular speed coaching session and the annual Kite Flying Extravaganza.

A conference schedule is [online](#). We, the event Co-Chairs Sandra Harrington and John Wack and the the PDC Chair James Ervin hope to see you at the beach and don't forget to bring your best beach themed attire for the two receptions!

Registration is open [online](#).

Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Authoritarianism

I read a very interesting piece about why a certain significant portion of this country's electorate is supporting a nonconforming, nontraditional candidate this primary season. The article is long, and attempts to verify and re-verify its findings eight-ways-to-Sunday, so I thought it might be benevolent to provide the Cliffs Notes version rather than simply sending along a link.

(We all know that any generalization about a group of people is

not universally correct, but is rather a finding of apparent tendencies found in a large portion of that group. With that qualifier, we can address the report.)

Many people believe that the followers of this nontraditional candidate must be xenophobes, ultranationalists, or otherwise think they "know" the person after years of celebrity status and a high profile lifestyle. Supporters are described as angry about the status quo, "the establishment," and weak leadership.

While the above may be true, in whole or in part, with some followers, the study says that the real element at play is "authoritarianism". Americans, it postulates, are worried about both internal threats (examples: immigration, shifting demographics, imbalanced wealth distribution) and external threats (examples: ISIS, foreign countries' unfair trade practices, Russian and Chinese military expansion). They want a super tough, no-nonsense leader to "protect" them from all perceived threats. Nothing else, like being factually accurate or definitive about policies, really matters.

History is replete with examples illustrating the exploitation of a fearful mindset by a charismatic populist. It'll be interesting to see if those voters that are currently embracing authoritarianism are just a vocal, motivated minority, or it is more generalized than most pundits believe. Stay tuned!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Certificate News

THE Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management



*"Preparing the Next Generation of
Local Government Leaders"*

The flowers have finally bloomed and the weather has begun to brighten. As our students finish their semester and prepare their final assignments, the prospect of the coming summer keeps spirits high. In fact, with summer will come the next Professional Development in Local Government conference in Roanoke on August 8th and 9th. Be sure to join us and learn more about the next challenges in the profession.

Sooner, though, 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 about registering before time runs out.

In addition, the deadline for registering the fall and summer semesters is quickly approaching. Information about upcoming recruiting sessions will be available soon. If you are interested in any of the Certificate's courses or programing, Director Stephanie Davis is always willing to answer questions. For any questions, feel free to contact her at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.

A DAO in the Life - Matt Hankins

As servant-leaders, we expect ourselves to point out great things in others to develop their abilities, confidence and capacity. It is time again to point out great things about other assistant managers in nominating those Virginia assistant managers worthy of the VLGMA Marcia Mashaw Assistant Manager of the Year award.

I was happy to receive the award in 2015, not just because it showed the appreciation of my manager and peers for projects I've led, but because it is an opportunity to reflect on what we as public servants can achieve by building consensus, coalitions and action plans.

We have many Virginia assistant managers who do great work in their communities. We often see their communities, large and small, recognized by VML, VEDA and other peer groups. We consider the Mashaw Award particularly special, though, because other managers have the opportunity to review and consider accomplishments of a career, a particular project or special circumstances and reward outstanding effort accordingly.

The nominations are due May 2, and will be reviewed by a committee made up of the three most recent winners of the award. The committee encourages you to submit nominations of peers. Recognize their achievements, and in considering the nomination, consider what about their work makes you and your organization better through their efforts.

Contact VLGMA Executive Secretary Janet Areson at jareson@vml.org for the nomination for or to ask questions about the process.

We look forward to a difficult choice.

[Contact Matt Hankins](#)



Matt Hankins

Civic Engagement Best Practices - Town of Ashland Budget



Charles Hartgrove

Civic Engagement and the Budget

Charles Hartgrove, Town Manager | Town of Ashland

The annual budget, like the comprehensive plan and the capital improvement plan, is another process that provides guidance to the community. The work of creating a local government operating and capital budget begins long before the initial staff meetings, public work sessions, advertising, and public hearings. Budget decisions have a significant impact on the lives of the public, and therefore should be informed by the views and values of citizens. Citizen engagement can help to ensure that government is responsive to the needs, views, and values of citizens.

While engaging citizens and other community stakeholders in the budget process is important, the work to gain the trust of those same parties must be done long before the first spreadsheet is updated. That relationship should be strengthened by visionary community strategic planning and effective operations and service delivery. By excelling at these two critical organizational goals, there

is a better chance to build trust between the government and the citizens. This history allows the local government entity and the community to build consensus together of what the prioritized goals should be.

The goal of each local government should be to collaboratively define a clear and concise vision, objectives, initiatives, key indicators, mission, and values that determine the community's path. Encouraging active civic engagement leads to more targeted and evidence-based allocation of resources. The next step is to actively monitor and assess these relationships, plans, and initiatives throughout the fiscal year.

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Spring Floral Symphony

A quickening, a stirring, a change in pace,
a subtle movement begins to escalate.

Light stretches and teases
and the dark squeezes.

Beneath winter's cold, icy skin,
musicians practicing.

The Conductor with maestoso taps a baton
and all of nature awakens and responds.

Snowdrops and crocus, a prelude
to what is about to ensue.
White lilies' fanfare,
glorious exposition without compare
to resonate and chime
in Easter time.

Leaves appear and begin
as the concert's violins,
clothing the trees
with notes of greenery.

Birds sustain the melody
throughout the symphony.
Inspired by all the fun,
bees buzz and hum.

All hearts applaud with grateful praise
for spring's dynamic, symphonic days.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Innovation Edge

A unique partnership indeed!! And that's the partnership between the Alliance, ICMA, and Arizona State University. For students at ASU that are planning a career in local government, this union deepens and enhances their knowledge and drives the intention and desire for innovation. Read more about the US News & World Report article and the full report [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 or contact me at saburnett@transformgov.org

GMU VCPMP Update



George Mason University's School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs and its Centers on the Public Service are proud to offer the Virginia Certified Public Manager® Program (VCPMP). The VCPMP is designed to enhance the careers of those in or dealing with the public service by providing a comprehensive, competency-based executive education and training. By connecting communities of learning with practice, the VCPMP advances the principles of professionalism, excellence, and quality in public management leadership. Benefits of the program are far reaching, such as an improved ability to manage within the organization and expanded network of professional colleagues.

The VCPMP is currently accepting application for its second cohort to begin April 29.

Individuals working in and across all sectors - public, nonprofit, and private - are welcome to apply. Applicants need a high degree of conceptual ability, reading comprehension, and written and oral communication skills. Further, applicants who do not currently supervise staff but have responsibility for managing, coordinating, or overseeing a program area whose deliverable has an impact beyond their current work unit will also be considered.

Modules meet in-person, twice a month and are comprised of approximately 300 hours - that is a combination of program orientation, readings, instruction and assignments, assessments, and a capstone. To enroll as a candidate, please submit a completed application form.

For more information about the VCPMP, please contact Dr. Tonya T. Neaves, Program Director, at (703) 993-9377 / tneaves@gmu.edu or visit <http://psc.gmu.edu/cpm>.

VT P3 Leadership Workshop



CREATING VALUE THROUGH EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP(P3) LEADERSHIP

Friday, June 17, 2016

9 AM to 1 PM

Virginia Tech Research Center

900 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA

Join the leaders and stakeholders of the Liberty Crest at Laurel Hill, an Adaptive Reuse Project and Wiehle-Reston East Garage and Reston Station developments in Northern Virginia, and learn how to successfully navigate a Public-Private Partnership (P3) venture. The following key representatives will be on hand to lead these dynamic panel discussions:

- Liberty Crest at Laurel Hill
 - James L. Perry, Regional Partner/Vice President, Elm Street Development, Inc.
 - Dave Vos, Development Project Manager, The Alexander Company
 - Chris Caperton, Project Coordinator, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning
- Wiehle-Reston East Garage and Reston Station
 - Chris Clemente, CEO, Comstock
 - Maggie Parker, Vice President, Communications, Comstock
 - Rob Stalzer, Deputy County Executive, Fairfax County

[Early Registration](#) - \$250 includes light breakfast and lunch

(After May 31, 2016, registration costs \$275)

Group Discount - 10% off for organizations with four (4) or more participants

** If you have a disability or require special accommodations, please contact Rosa Krewson at rosac@vt.edu at least ten (10) business days prior to the event to ensure your needs are met.**

Calendar

Upcoming Events

Summer Conference - June 8-10, 2016 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Sheraton Hotel.

[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](mailto:Molly.Harlow).

Future Newsletter Articles

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)

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