

In This Issue

Greetings from Greg

Position Changes

Member Spotlight - Pat Coffield

Member Spotlight - Kim Payne

Member Spotlight - Kim Payne

August DAO Meeting and VT Professional Development

Tedd's Take

Certificate News

Summer Conference Recap

A DAO in the Life - Cody Sexton

Civic Engagement Best Practices - Town of Rocky Mount

Mel's Poetry Corner

Innovation Edge

Calendar

Greetings from Greg



Greg Kelly

Greetings from Greg "You Can't Make This Stuff Up"

As my daughter and I sat on the beach the day after the summer conference was over, I couldn't help but be proud to be President of such a great organization as VLGMA and reflect on my own professional journey to get to where I am. While I sat and watched the crowded beach full of soccer tournament kids, I listened to one of my favorite songs by the Rolling Stones, *You Can't Always Get What You Want*. I especially like the chorus to that song:

*You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes you might find
You get what you need*

To me that chorus resonates with our professional need to learn that everything that we want doesn't always happen the way we want it to. But if we are patient we can learn much from our experiences, whether good and bad, and that we should always desire to find what we need to get us through the tough times that we all face, not just personally, but professionally. I bring this up because I view

mentoring as an important and valuable aspect of any profession. What makes it such is not just one sided on the part of the mentor, rather, it is the obligation of the party being mentored to seek out and try to find "what they need" in this profession. I encourage us all, especially those just now beginning their local government careers, to consistently seek out the wisdom that our mentors and others have in this profession. I can assure you that for every situation you will likely deal with in local government, there is someone in VLGMA who has experienced it first hand and who can guide you through even the deepest of troubled waters. I personally have dealt with two unimaginable situations in the past two years and I sought out advice from several of my VLGMA colleagues and friends and I have gotten good sound advice that worked out very well for me. If nothing else, just sharing the experience and knowing that someone is willing to listen and try to help you is comforting in and of itself, but when you have the wealth of knowledge that VLGMA has collectively, you can usually "get what you need". So, with all of that in mind and that Stones chorus echoing through your mind, let me briefly retell the story that I told at the summer conference when I was elected President. Many of you have commented to me about what a neat story it was, so I felt the need to share it with our full membership. Here goes.

Shortly after I was put on the VLGMA Executive Committee, our first meeting was set for the VML Insurance Building in Richmond. Mindful of the fact that I had a DHCD neighborhood block grant to rehab an aging and blighted section of Abingdon, I planned a trip to Richmond to coincide with my first Executive Committee meeting. Accordingly, I headed to Richmond a day before my committee meeting to meet with my DHCD block grant consulting firm. Shortly after I checked into my hotel room, I discovered an email from Kim Payne, City Manager of Lynchburg, who was an officer on the VLGMA Executive Board. Kim's email asked me if I came through Lynchburg on my way to Richmond, and if I did, he would enjoy getting to know me by having me ride to the Board meeting with he and Bedford County Administrator, Kathleen Guzzi, who had just become President of VLGMA. After drafting my initial response of "thanks, but I'm already in Richmond on other business", I rethought pulling the trigger on that email and quickly responded that I did not usually come through Lynchburg but I would this time as I would love to ride to the meeting with he and Kathleen. So, to make a long story short, I got up early the next morning and drove from Richmond to Lynchburg, joined up with Kim and Kathleen for the ride to Richmond and then returned back to Lynchburg with them later that afternoon. After faking it a bit and asking for some directions out of town Southward, I made a U-Turn when I was out of sight, and headed back to Richmond to finish my business. While this story may sound crazy to many of you, it made good sense to me at the time and I have gotten many chuckles thinking about it over the years. That, I suppose was my first real attempt to realize that while I may never get all of the knowledge that I want, if I tried real hard I just might get what I need. And who better to get what you need than from two seasoned and well respected administrators who had been around the local government block a time or two and proven to be very successful. I had always wanted to share that story with Kim and Kathleen and the summer conference proved to be the perfect venue as I became President of the organization and both Kim and Kathleen were becoming life members. I share it again here so that those who were not at the conference can hear the story and to perhaps inspire others to always be willing to seek out what they need, even in somewhat inconvenient and unexpected times. Some asked me after the

conference if this was really a true story and in response, as my newsletter clearly states, "You Can't Make This Stuff Up".

As I stated when I was elected President, I think VLGMA is a wonderful organization of a truly unique professional family that is always willing to help not just its current leaders but to help in preparing for the next generation of leaders. The wisdom of those of you who were mindful enough to create the Graduate Certificate Program is perhaps the biggest legacy for our organization to leave behind, as it will assuredly continue to grow top notch local leaders for generations to come. So, those of you who thought this up and those of you who got it off the ground and continue to support it, make it grow, my hat is off to you. In fact, I am personally indebted to you, as I was one of the first to graduate in the program's first inaugural class. VLGMA's act to create this program was indeed a "pay it forward" act. That being said, one of my goals as President is to continue to push for further growth in the program. So let me take this opportunity to encourage and challenge each member to enroll at least one new student from your respective locality into the Graduate Certificate Program in the upcoming year. Likewise, I would also encourage and challenge each member to recruit at least one new employee from your respective locality to become a member in VLGMA in the upcoming year. Trust me, this is not the last that you will hear from me about this challenge. I'm confident that we can collectively grow the Certificate Program and our VLGMA membership significantly throughout the year.

Let me conclude by saying that we all need to be willing to reach within, reach out and share from our own life's lessons. In other words, desire it, learn it, and pass it on to the next generation. And yes, if I had it to do over again, ten (10) years later, I would have still taken that crazy Richmond/Lynchburg journey with two (2) well-seasoned leaders of local government. I'm pretty sure I found some of "what I needed" that day.

Until next time, please join me in welcoming Patrick G. Roberts, City Manager of Suffolk and Michael T. Hudgins, Police Lieutenant from the Yorktown Police Department as our newest members to VLGMA. I would also like to send out a thank you to Thomas Mattis, City Manager of Colonial Heights, who, has agreed to take over for Ed Daley as support coordinator for District 19.

[Contact Greg Kelly](#)

Position Changes

June 2016

- Reid Wodicka, town manager for Woodstock since 2013, has been appointed assistant administrator for Bedford County, effective August 1st.
- William Kerbin, Jr., director of community development for Oneonta, NY, has been appointed town manager for Onancock, effective July 5th.
- Barry Thompson, interim town manager for Vinton since December, 2015, has been appointed manager there.
- William Johnson, III, former Petersburg city manager, has joined the Credit Adjustment Board, Inc. as senior vice president/governmental affairs.



- John Budesky, deputy administrator for Hanover County, has been appointed administrator for Goochland County.
- Rebecca Layman, treasurer for the town of Middletown, has been appointed manager there.
- Peter Huber, administrator for Pulaski County for the past 16 years, announced his retirement effective January 1, 2017.
- Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., community development director for Danville, has been appointed deputy city manager there.
- Pat Murphy, town manager for Big Stone Gap, will officially retire effective June 30th, but will be retained as a contract employee for 3 months.
- Margaret Schmitt, HR director for the city of Lynchburg, has been appointed interim deputy city manager there. Heather Brown, senior HR manager, has been appointed interim HR director.

Member Spotlight - Pat Coffield



Pat Coffield

Coffield earns lifelong public service award from JMU

by Bob Stuart, Daily Progress

Recently retired Augusta County Administrator Pat Coffield has been honored by James Madison University for his more than four decades of public service. Coffield, a 1975 graduate of Madison, last month received the lifelong achievement in public service award from JMU's school of public and international affairs. The award recognizes an individual who meets several criteria that include serving the public, advancing professional excellence in his or her career and demonstrating professional integrity. Read the full article [here](#).

[Contact Pat Coffield](#)

Member Spotlight - Kim Payne

From: The News & Advance

Hillcats game honored retiring Lynchburg City Manager

Posted: Tuesday, June 21, 2016 6:07 pm

At 6:30 p.m. June 23, the public was invited to attend the Lynchburg Hillcats game for Kim Payne Appreciation Day at Lynchburg City Stadium, in honor of retiring Lynchburg City Manager, L. Kimball Payne, III. The game started at 6:30 p.m. and the city manager threw out the first pitch.



Kim Payne

Payne has served the City of Lynchburg for more than 15 years and retired July 1. Kim Payne Appreciation Day was the team and the community's opportunity to thank him for his tireless service and his work to make Lynchburg a great place to live, work and play.

- Amy Trent

[Contact Kim Payne](#)

Member Spotlight - Kim Payne



Kim Payne

From: The News & Advance

Kimball Payne set to pass the reins of city after 15 years

Sherese A. Gore | Posted: Tuesday, June 7, 2016 5:25 pm

Shortly after being named county administrator of Spotsylvania County, Kimball Payne met with a local developer. Speaking of the incident nearly 30 years later in his office in Lynchburg City Hall, Payne said he was unsure whether the meeting ended on its own accord or whether he ended the meeting himself. But he well remembers hearing about a particular comment the developer made later. "I guess he thinks he's pretty hot stuff now that he's county administrator." It was a moment in which Payne said he realized he needed to change his behavior if that was the impression he gave. "Basically, don't take yourself so seriously," he said.

Payne has served as Lynchburg's city manager for the last 15 years. He is set to retire June 30.

Read the full article [here](#).

[Contact Kim Payne](#)

August DAO Meeting and VT Professional Development

We are excited to announce, for the third year, the partnership opportunity between VLGMA DAO and VT Professional Development. This year the DAOs are invited to attend either one or both days of the now full two day conference. The agenda topics and speakers are very relevant to our DAO's professional development as well as responsive to the requested topics we have received from past meeting evaluations.



John
Nalbandian

In addition, there will be two great DAO only events; one on each day in case you can only attend one of the days. The first is a networking opportunity at the Monday evening reception and the second is a breakfast "Idea Exchange" on Tuesday morning. So come prepared with new programs, policies, initiatives to share with fellow DAOs over a continental breakfast. No idea is too big or too small.

Please pass this information to other DAOs in your locality.

Here is the how's for registering for this great conference (no separate DAO registration fee):

Registration is now open for the 3rd Annual Professional Development Conference in Local Government in Roanoke, VA on August 8th and 9th, 2016. After a successful two years, we are extending the conference to two full days!

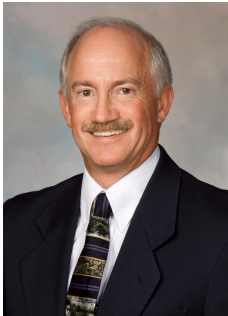
Dr. John Nalbandian, University of Kansas, Mr. Bob O'Neill, ICMA, and Kim Payne, Lynchburg City Manager highlight the conference agenda speakers!

Over 100 participants representing over 40 localities have attended the conference and recommend this conference to anyone working in local government in Virginia.

Register NOW!!! <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/lgm/>

Questions? Please contact Stephanie Davis sddavis@vt.edu

Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Three quick items - VLGMA Member Support and Virginia Institute of Government

Given that there has been quite a bit of turnover among chief administrators and deputy positions of late, it seems a good time to reacquaint folks with important services available to Virginia local governments from VLGMA and the VA Institute of Government.

1) VLGMA has an active member support program including Support Coordinators and Senior Advisors. The former are current administrators assigned by planning district to be a first line of contact between localities' staffs and the association. Senior Advisors are retired administrators available to all active administrators and staff for confidential consultation on personal and professional matters. Go to:

http://icma.org/en/va/resources/support_coordinators and
http://icma.org/en/va/resources/senior_advisors

2) The Virginia Institute of Government, a membership organization, provides quick-time information on "nuts and bolts" issues, and training services. 188 Virginia localities are members. If yours is not a member, we want to talk to you! More info? Go to: <http://vig.coopercenter.org/>

3) The Institute also administers the statewide, on-line salary and benefit database known as the Compensation Survey System (CSS). 73 localities currently participate in this subscription-based service, providing 24/7 access to salaries and benefits for many local government positions. We want to grow this program into a universal HR tool. For more details, go to:

<http://vig.coopercenter.org/content/compensation-survey-system-css>

Contact for all of the above:

Tedd Povar, Assoc. Director, VA Inst. of Govt.

804-371-0202 Email: tep3e@virginia.edu

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Certificate News

Summer is here! As most of us are focusing on our upcoming vacations, the Certificate students are hard at work approaching the midpoint of the session. Of course, even though we are still in the middle of the summer session, now is the perfect time to be thinking about the possibilities for involvement with the Certificate program. There are a number opportunities this summer to provide more information and professional development.

The highlight of the summer will be the Third Annual Professional Development

THE Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management



"Preparing the Next Generation of
Local Government Leaders"

Conference in Local Government. The conference will be held at the Hotel Roanoke on August 8th and 9th, 2016. We have a unique mixture of offerings that will appeal to managers, deputies/assistants, and employees at all levels of your organization. Keynote speakers include Dr. John Nalbandian, Mr. Bob O'Neill, and Mr. Kim Payne. For our managers, please consider sponsoring one of your employees to attend the conference. The Alliance for Innovation will also present the Next Big Things report. Moreover, manager attendance is important at this conference. Many of the attendees are "up and coming managers and leaders", and your connection with the next generation is very important. Your attendance will demonstrate support for the next generation of local government leaders and managers.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Certificate student, Stephanie Davis is always willing to reach out to you or anyone else in your organization. Also, she will be holding an interest session in Lynchburg on July 13th. Applications for the fall semester are due by August 1. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Stephanie at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.

Summer Conference Recap

Summer Conference Recap

The Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA), Professional Development Committee (PDC) spent the majority of the past year focusing our energy towards designing the 2016 Conferences to clearly align with the Association's vision and purpose - to support local government managers building great communities through inclusion, innovation, and leadership; and strengthen the quality of local government professional management. One only needs to look at the VLGMA web page, specifically position changes, to recognize the great importance of having professional development events such as the conference in order to achieve this vision. A safe, relaxing environment where members can network, learn from each other, share stories, and consider how they might be a good fit in the future serving the cities, counties, and/or towns in Virginia.

David Hansen, the new Virginia Beach City Manager and his office really partnered with us this year. What an amazing kick off at the Virginia Aquarium and Science Center. It was so exciting to see attendees strolling thru the various exhibits with their families. Children running freely, learning, laughing and playing. The sound of the steel drum in the background as the sun set, free flowing food and spirits, all contributed to great connections and conversations. This event really set the tone for the theme "*There's no place like home, the local government managers role in the making of place*". This was my first VLGMA summer conference, in addition to my first conference as a co-chair. I know I heard from many individuals that it had been a long time since we had been to the aquarium. For me, it was a very memorable experience, like Greg Kelly's June



newsletter message, one I do not think I will ever forget.

The intention was to provide thought provoking speakers to impart some current, relevant, and timely information on topics that we deal with in local government on a daily basis, in addition to providing some useful tools on how to achieve work life balance. The challenge of pulling off such an action packed agenda while competing with near perfect beach weather conditions was a bit daunting. I am happy to say that all of the workshops from the kick off session on Wednesday thru the conclusion of the conference were well attended and that speaks volumes to the dedication and commitment of the attendees. It is clear that the VLGMA members are committed to their communities and the ideal of being a part of making their communities a great place to live, work, and play. Hopefully the conference helped some more clearly recognize the need to be visionary and creative in order to ensure our communities thrive despite wildly changing demographics, unstable economies, and crisis events.

A few new items were added to the conference agenda that were big hits. Bonnie Svrcek led a book discussion on *The Confidence Code*. The participants thought this session was great and intend to continue doing this at future conferences, with a book by Amy Cuddy on the agenda for the winter conference. Also the *Speed Coaching for Aspiring Local Government Managers* facilitated by Pat Pate was a huge success. Some thought provoking ideas such as Niam Yaraghi's prediction about how in the future we will have to go to a track just for the thrill of driving a car and Bob O'Neill closing thoughts about the future and the development of the fourth element.

There's no place like home has a connotation a person has always been in one place. As Dr. Roberts so adeptly pointed out she kicked off the conference, many, if not most of us are not actually from the places we currently serve. Transplanting the energy, emotion, and vigor required to treat wherever we serve now, like it's always been home, is one of the many tools managers in this profession must possess. For those who attended their first conference to the conference to the veteran VLGMA attendee, we hope there was enough of a blend of the old and new to appeal to everyone's palate. We hope that everyone made some new connections and left the sunny Virginia Beach shores energized and ready to add go forth and manage!

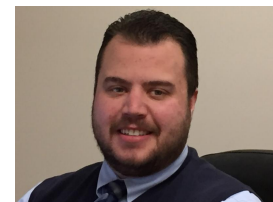
[Contact Sandy Harrington](#)

A DAO in the Life - Cody Sexton

Everything and Nothing

Being an information junkie, I am excited almost every day to come to work and learn more about the people and happenings of my community. Working in local government gives us all a special purview to much information, some we can share and some we cannot. While nothing about this is surprising, what is surprising is the *expectation* of knowledge and information that we as local government professionals should have. Unfortunately, that expectation often creates a less-than-ideal scenario.

So, how can the expectation of knowledge cause such a conundrum? The issue is focused on the fact that we are called to be everything and nothing at the same time. On one hand, as administrators, we must possess the technical and managerial skills necessary to ford political streams, to balance budgets, and to



Cody Sexton

execute projects. All of this work takes time, effort, and money, and our communities are better for the work that we do. On the other hand, when the "real" decisions need to be made by the political leaders, we are often expected to be silent or are even admonished for speaking up. Citizens who benefit from and praise our work one month would rather we completely go away when a budget public hearing rolls around. The expectation is that our knowledge is invaluable when it is necessary and useless when it is not. We are called to be everything and nothing.

But, is this entirely true? I am sure that not even the greatest cynics among us would accept these scenarios fully. Even in some of our darker days, I have always found local government administrators to be quite an optimistic lot. The reason for this and the reason we can get out of the "everything and nothing" paradox is a sincere belief in the good work that we do collectively.

In the past few months, throughout a difficult budget season and some public information nightmares, I began to question the work that I do for my community. Am I working for the best interests of the citizens? Am I working to carry out the path laid by the elected leaders? Am I being effective in what I do? Then, I realized the issue was with the pronoun. Local government does not rely on "me"; it relies on "we". Only by working together and playing all of parts and sharing all of our knowledge with each other and the community can we overcome the challenges that we face. Individually, my role may shift; collectively, we all fill each other's gaps and provide support to one another. While each wave on the ocean may rise or fall, the ocean stays the same.

[Contact Cody Sexton](#)

Civic Engagement Best Practices - Town of Rocky Mount



James Ervin

Smaller localities often struggle to translate successes or methods used by larger localities. Loudon County has more employees than Rocky Mount has citizens. What is civic engagement like in a small town and how can it be improved?

Grasp the massively different ratios at play. With an equal number of elected officials, the citizens-to-elected-officials ratio in a smaller locality is considerably smaller. How does that impact civic engagement?

Elected officials practice civic engagement every day at the grocery store, church, the ball game, at Rotary meetings and Masonic Lodges (and don't forget the barber shop!). Some days, it is a mixed blessing as being accessible often results in the typical "you know who cornered me at the grocery store..." report. More often than not, though, this engagement results in more questions than complaints such as "how are we going to tackle the flooding at the rail trestle?"

Ratios also come into play at meetings. Statistically, we reach a significantly larger percentage of our citizenry with regular meetings, public hearings and special meetings. We include an opportunity for citizens to be involved at every meeting. If your policy or approach is out of touch, you won't have the luxury of being uninformed for long.

We leverage our special ratios with Town Hall meetings where citizens can hear a summary of current projects, challenges and opportunities by each department. If you have a problem with policing, nothing is better than a direct chance to talk with the Chief about your ideas and complaints.

Secondly, smaller localities offer access not only to elected officials, but to

staff. Aside from modest security precautions, all departments are open and welcoming to those with ideas, complaints or suggestions. You don't need an appointment to see your Town Manager, the Assistant Town Manager or any department head. We are typically also available on the phone, electronically and via social media. If there is an issue in our community you will typically find the leadership team addressing questions directly on the Town's website or on the Town's Facebook page. Our leadership staff, like our elected officials, is "in the community" and if the complaints-to-praise ratio is off, you know something isn't working.

With a smaller sized workforce comes a shorter chain of command. Employees become great conduits for collecting citizen issues. If you mention to the crew picking up your trash that you have an issue with your water or a public safety concern, the information passed along has gone full-circle by the end of the day. The narrow chain of command also results in inter-departmental communication that moves issues along as the departments in smaller localities are not as isolated as in larger ones and typically share information easier. A meter reader has no problem calling a police lieutenant regarding a public safety issue or alerting Community Development if there is a code violation.

Though we have a lot of the bases covered with our great ratios and access, we still try and go the extra mile with deliberate engagement opportunities. These are often open houses regarding specific issues or specific meetings in areas where we are trying to coax community input around a complex issue. Size helps here in that we can cover the entire community with two or three meetings/input sessions.

In short, many civic engagement best practices are incorporated by default in a smaller community. Our staff and elected officials are engaged locally and our citizens are accustomed to a high level of access. Much like modern developments mimic small towns in their store fronts, larger localities mimic smaller ones when they try to engage the citizens. The one shortfall in the small locality model is that if unguided, it can be mostly one-way communication. The burden falls on the locality to even up the flow with dedicated outreach.

[Contact James Ervin](#)

Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Breath of the Universe

Inhale, exhale, the cycle repeats.
Our heart synchronizes with the universal beat.
The ocean's waves sing in rhythm.
Winter, spring, summer, autumn.

Wakeful activity, restored with sleep,
rising and falling ever more deep.
Expanding, contracting the universe bestows
the movement in which our being flows.

Chaos in the dark of night,
dawn restores the memory of light.
Birth brings form, death flows back,
the musings of nature's almanac.

Reversing, matter begins to fade,
Spirit replacing what illusion made.
Awareness awakens from the dream of time,
home again within the un-manifest fabric of Mind.

Now duality cannot persist
for opposites no longer exist.
Listen for the beckoning Call,
to experience the Oneness of All.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Innovation Edge

Award Winners at TLG!!

TLG was a great success, and I know those of you that attended enjoyed the conference. The city of Olathe, Kansas and the city of Tempe, Arizona were awarded for their innovation and excellence in local government. The city of Charlottesville was also recognized for outstanding achievement in innovation for their Job-Driven Workforce Development program. Congratulations Charlottesville!! Read more [here](#) to learn about all of the award winners. Another shout out to Charlottesville for your 2016 Innovation Academy graduates! Learn more about the academy [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

Calendar

Upcoming Events

VLGMA Executive Committee Meeting - October 10, 2016 in Virginia Beach as part of the VML Conference.

[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](#)

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