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### Greetings from Greg



Greg Kelly

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

I left you the last two months hanging on my musical love and the real drive in my theme for writing. I also informed you that this month would be a continuation of last month's message about "community". And both are intertwined in my world from youth until now, so here goes. "Music" is "community" and vice versa

when you really think about it. Without either, we sit in silence and solitude without a voice and question silently why the world is the way it is. At least that's my take on it. Music asks questions, gives us hope and even offers us advice if we listen closely enough.

During my lifetime have met and chatted with some of the most famous musicians of all time.....country, pop, rock & roll, blues, gospel and classical. Whether it was Johnny Cash or Minnie Pearl, they all left a great impression in my mind and they all gave their hearts and souls to every "community" that they shared their spirit and love of wit and song with. Yes, I actually met them both when they both were in their prime. And I met hundreds more. They all were much more about the world around them than their world within. They gave back to the world much like we, in local government, do. The main difference is that they achieved great fame and made lots of money in giving themselves back to all of the "communities" that they graced, told their stories to and shared their souls with. So in a sense, while we may not have achieved fame or fortune on their level, we are as genuine in giving a piece of us back to the world around us, regardless of how big or small. We are the story tellers of our travels inside our "communities".

So how did I get to meet and talk to these famous community story tellers? It goes back before I was even born. Back in the 1950s my father, as a teenager drove a Pepsi Cola truck from the City of Norton, VA to the City of Bristol, VA. Occasionally on his route, he would pick up a hitchhiker or two around Carfax, VA who would be walking with instruments in hand on their way to Bristol, to perform live on the local radio station there. Once in a while they would even play on Abingdon's WBBI AM station. They went on to become members in the Blue Grass Hall of Fame and became members of WSM's Grand Ole Opry. One is now deceased and the other plays on into his golden years.....Jim and Jesse McReynolds. Jim, now deceased never forgot about my dad's generosity of helping him and other people throughout the community. Soon after Jim & Jesse had made it to the big league musically there was a new Country Music Organization on the rise and Jim & Jesse, according to my dad, were able to secure him a lifetime membership into that organization, known today as the Country Music Association (CMA), to which he and I created a Music Production company that still exists beyond his death and still casts votes each year at the CMA Awards. I have attended at least twenty (20) CMA awards shows in my lifetime, and as a result I have grown to love music of all genres and respect all of the communities that these famous people came from and respect all that they, so humbly, gave back to their respective communities.

So as I tried to articulate to you last month, "community" can be our driving force and our friend that brings us all together in ways that we do not realize at first but we grow and mature to understand. As I ended last month, "community" can give a stranger a break and a helping hand who is trying to become part of the community or it can reward you beyond belief or expectation for generations to come, much as it has for my father, me and my children with an ever growing love of music.

With Thanksgiving just behind us, join me in giving thanks for where each of us is, for where we came from and for where we can go as a "community". While I love music and always will, I love the story behind the music more. And every biography that I have ever read about famous musicians all go back to the common theme of telling stories able their journeys from the community where they began and all of those that they traveled and wove their stories in and out of. So, that said, let me conclude by encouraging us all to be true to where we came from and to spread that seed with the next generation. And, lastly, have a Pepsi Cola kind of day.

Until next time, please welcome: Kathleen Seay, Deputy Administrator for Hanover County; Nancy Vincent, Director of Human Resources for the City of Falls Church; Julie Kaylor, Deputy County Administrator of Mathews County and Vincent Jones Deputy City Manager for the City of Portsmouth as our newest members to our VLGMA community. I look forward to meeting you each in person and sharing our community stories in the near future.

On a final note, as we close out another year, I want to personally wish all of our VLGMA community and their families a very Merry and Blessed Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

[Contact Greg Kelly](#)

## Position Changes

November 2016

- Steve Burke, Front Royal town manager since 2011, has been appointed public works director for the city of Manassas, effective November 28th.
- Ernie Hoch, former Culpeper County administrator, has joined Jarrell Properties, Inc., a real estate development company.
- Robert Ritter, town manager for Chincoteague for the past 10 years, was terminated.
- Kimberly Murray, economic development director for Winchester, has been appointed town manager for Haymarket.
- Joseph Waltz, energy services director for the town of Front Royal, has been appointed interim manager there.
- Deborah Davis, Sussex County administrator, resigned. Vandy V. Jones, III, deputy county administrator, is serving as interim administrator.
- David M. Smitherman, senior consultant with Bear Strategies, and former city manager for Elizabethtown, NC, has been appointed administrator for Pittsylvania County, effective January, 2017.



### VLGMA Conferences Survey Overview

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) was interested in feedback from the VLGMA membership to ensure we develop conference programs that reflect your interests and professional development needs. The survey was sent out in the early Fall requesting your feedback about conferences, including reasons for attendance, location, and topics of interest. We received responses from approximately 40% of the VLGMA membership. For more detailed information regarding the survey results, please visit the VLGMA webpage at <http://icma.org/en/va/home>.

Approximately 80% of respondents identified themselves as County/Assistant Administrator or Town/City Manager. 85% of respondents have attended a VLGMA conference in the past, while about 33% indicated they attend both the Winter and Summer Conferences annually. Nearly half of respondents indicated that they would attend the Summer Conference anytime and regardless of the location. The survey responses indicate, however, that individuals have an interest in moving the conferences to different regions around the state.

For those respondents who have never attended a conference or have stopped attending, the primary reasons were cost of attendance, conflicts with the council/board, family priorities, lack of support from current employer, personal vacations, work-related time constraints, competition with other conferences, distance, lack of interest in the topics, or being new to local government, the profession, or their position. Factors that might entice an individual to attend for the first time included continuing education credits, cost, networking opportunities, proximity/location, different time of year, quality professional development and relevant topics.

For the question "to ensure quality content for both the Winter and Summer VLGMA Conferences, please indicate the top 5 topics that would interest you," key responses included:

- Relationship Building (board, council, citizens, state, intergovernmental cooperation, border communities, media, police, private sector, and schools)
- Leadership (change management, collaborative thinking, crisis management, how I manage, organizational culture, place-making, developing soft skills, coaching, mentoring, and storytelling)
- Personnel and Personal (attracting and retaining good employees, building high-performing teams, career development, compensation and benefit strategies, managing multigenerational staff, succession planning, employee development, discipline, motivation, engagement, appreciation, and performance management; retirement planning, coping with stress, self-improvement, wellness programs, and work-life balance)
- Service Delivery Core Services (affordable housing, air/ambulance service, alternatives to incarceration, blight, combined career/volunteer fire/ems systems, drug/alcohol issues, elderly, health care, transportation, public safety, sustainability, water, and ensuring good quality of life for the community)
- Budget/Finance (bond referendums, budget tools, providing services with limited funds, capital improvement plans, annexation, aging infrastructure, economic development, debt service, fee structures for utilities, fiscal management, grants, performance metrics, service districts, private vs. public and public/private partnerships, case studies of effective regional/3P projects, and strategic planning)
- Legal (legal issues associated with new regulations, compliance issues, conflict of interest, ethics, legislative updates, lobbying and influencing members of the General Assembly, proffer legislation, and impacts to zoning)
- Technology (broadband solutions for rural localities, cyber security, GIS, innovation, new technologies and open government, next Gen 911, smart cities, and social media tips and trends)

Overall, the survey results were very positive and provided a great deal of information for the PDC to consider, including the diverse needs of our membership. Additional recommendations included offering dual tracks, more specific conference topics, and/or activities that address unique groups such as retirees, new managers, DAOs, and managers serving similar types of jurisdictions.

Thank you again for participating in the VLGMA PDC survey. Now that you have this information, we encourage you to spread the word about the benefits of attending a VLGMA conference. The PDC will continue to consider your input as we design agendas, workshops, and networking activities that reflect the desires of the membership.

For more information about this survey or to discuss survey results, please contact me at [Sandra.harrington@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Sandra.harrington@fairfaxcounty.gov). We look forward to seeing you all in Staunton and in Virginia Beach in 2017!

## Tedd's Take

### Change

What seems to come in droves, returns to its cave laying dormant, and then shows itself again when least expected?  
Change!

Right now, I'm in the first phase of that after literally years of relative stability, and mostly positive, unstressful change! Lots of



Tedd Povar

adjustments, which is unsettling to a "STJ" like me. I'm used to making a plan, following that plan, and anticipating those things that can disrupt THE plan! I stress out when something or someone changes those PLANS!

So, what's happened to create that anxiety? My boss for the last 20 years is retiring, my wife changed career paths, my last parent passed away, my work/life strategy was (slightly) altered, our primary vehicle became unreliable, the national election happened (need I say more?), and the list goes on.

OK - so some of you can relate to my angst, and others will say "what's the big deal?" (There are times I wish I was more into meditation!)

We are nearing the end of the year (where did 2016 go??), and it's time to take a step back and reassess and de-stress. Most of us can take comfort in knowing that we are exceedingly fortunate to be where we are personally and professionally, with whom we are, and to dwell in this state, in this nation, and simply, to experience being a member of the human community.

But now it's time to make plans for 2017!!!! Or maybe, this time, just go with the flow?

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

### Certificate News



Another fall semester is coming to a close as students and professors are preparing for their final classes and assignments. This fall has been busy for all involved with the program, but the reward at the end is surely worth the effort.

As we come together with family and friends this coming month, take the time to look to the future. After all of the ups and downs of 2016, perhaps next year will be the time to make a positive change for both you and your community. The Certificate program offers such an opportunity for anyone willing to put in the effort. The next step is just a phone call away.

As the year ends, Stephanie Davis is getting ready to recruit the next batch of Certificate students. The deadline to apply for the spring is January 1, so the time is now to start thinking about taking that step. Moreover, Stephanie is eager to schedule recruitment sessions for the spring with interested localities. For any questions, she can be reached at [sddavis@vt.edu](mailto:sddavis@vt.edu) or 804-980-5549.

### A DAO in the Life - Steve Burke

November is always a month that is associated with change. Autumn has brought a wonderful display of leaves changing colors to enjoy. Holiday decorations begin to appear. And elections can bring a change to those guiding of government. My thoughts here are





focusing on local government as that is where I work to improve the lives close to me.

Steve Burke

Election change is always viewed with trepidation by those in management. I am or rather was one of those who evaluated the potential impact of those changes, and sought to change the course of my career. As President Barack Obama said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

As I write this, I am in the final weeks of transitioning to a new position as a Director of Public Works with the City of Manassas. Leaving the Manager position is bittersweet, but I am looking forward to the new opportunities with the City.

Change can be what you make of it.

I leave you with inspiring words from the main character in "Dan in Real Life", "Instead of telling our young people to plan ahead, we should tell them to plan to be surprised." Happy Holidays.

[Contact Steve Burke](#)

#### Mel's Poetry Corner



**Mel Gillies**

#### Grinch & Scrooge Anew

The Grinch had a transformation  
from a life of self-centered isolation.  
He learned nothing could dim  
the light of love within.

Thinking joy was materially based,  
all his efforts were misplaced.  
Every devious attempt the Grinch made  
could not ruin Christmas day.

Scrooge had a similar empty life  
preferring self-inflicted strife  
and in his malaise, would others abuse  
and like the Grinch, his dog, misuse.

Scrooge had spiraled so far down,  
it took great digging for the light to be found.  
Scrooge and Grinch both learned so much  
from a child's forgiving touch.

For even in the darkest mind,  
a ray of hope forever resides,  
waiting patiently until the choice  
to hear the still small Voice

and Rejoice!

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

## Innovation Edge

At the recent BIG Ideas meeting in Dublin, Ohio, the Alliance Board of Directors approved a plan to be the catalyst for vibrant communities through local government innovation. Our focus over the next four years will be on supporting and growing a network of local government innovators, leveraging research to identify leading practices and emerging issues, inspiring innovative cultures and practices in local government, and being a major force in the innovation space. **Zelos**, a consulting firm in Alexandria, Virginia that serves many local governments, led the strategic planning process alongside Alliance Board Members, staff, local government professionals, and representatives from the academic community. Read more about how the Alliance charts a path for the future [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)

## Calendar

### Upcoming Events

VLGMA Winter Conference - February 15-17, 2017 at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton. Conference materials and registration [here](#).

[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

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[ICMA Website](#)  
[Alliance for Innovation](#)  
[Virginia Municipal League](#)

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