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Maurice's Musings



Maurice Jones

Maurice's Musings

As I have chronicled in my last two articles, it has been a trying year for Charlottesville. We have on several occasions been the focus of national and international attention. Slowly but surely we are moving forward as a community, but we have learned some valuable lessons along the way about how to handle the glaring spotlight of the media and the world while not losing focus on our own residents. I certainly hope you will never have to experience this level of scrutiny however if you do, please consider a few words of wisdom from someone who has been through the ringer.

- Develop a communications strategy for emergency situations. Unfortunately we have had our fair share of national news stories since I became the City Manager in 2010. Two high profile murders in the Yeardley Love and Hannah Graham cases. Plus the Rolling Stone rape story involving the University of Virginia and of course the various rallies from this past summer. Through those events we have created a checklist of sorts for how to interact with the media, how to prioritize responses and who would be best in what situations. For criminal cases, your police chief should be the top communicator for your local government. In our situation this summer several city Councilors and I also played a role in communicating with the media, through press conferences and during numerous local and national interviews with TV, radio and print journalists.

Monitor social media but avoid being drawn into every debate or discussion about your actions. We could have spent every waking hour chasing down every rumor on the web but focused instead on communicating clearly through the media and on our website about the processes we were taking in the days and weeks before and after August 12th.

- Engage your community at every step. This has been a painful learning experience for us as we have tried to balance getting information out to the public while trying to find the right tone for each occasion. With the KKK rally back in July we tried to encourage folks to avoid directly engaging with the Klansmen. Many attended other counter events around the City but over 1,000 people showed up at Justice Park to denounce the hate that had invaded our community. It was obvious that most of the folks who turned out simply wanted to send a powerful message that hate would not win out here in our town.

After August 12th we changed our procedures during City Council meetings to allow for more speakers to voice their opinions and concerns. It was painful for a couple meetings as speaker after speaker called into question the City's response to the tragic events of August 12th however those moments led to some important discussions with the public that helped to lay the groundwork for continued dialogue. Lesson learned? Open the door to criticism and try to meet people where they are.

- Take advantage of the kindness and goodwill of outside experts. We have had an opportunity to utilize the talents of outside legal counsel, public relations firms and community relations professionals to assist us with moving forward. Deciding upon which groups to work with and managing your time with them can be difficult but it is well worth the effort. They can be lifelines during turbulent times.
- Learn from your mistakes and successes. We have undertaken several reviews both internal and external to see what we did well, what we need to improve and how we can implement those changes in our policies and procedures. We have also committed to providing a full accounting of our actions publicly later this year.
- Continue to do the people's business. We have focused on continuing our efforts to deliver high quality services to our residents, businesses and visitors to Charlottesville. Yes we are forever changed by what happened this summer, but we have re-committed to addressing the challenges in our community while also touting what we are doing, and will continue to do, to effectively address those problems.

ICMA Conference

I certainly hope to see many of you at the ICMA Conference in a couple weeks in San Antonio. I had the pleasure of being on the Planning Committee for the conference and I know there are plenty of interesting topics for you to consider and glean wisdom from. Also please plan to attend the VLGMA/SEI Reception on Monday, October 23rd from 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Hard Rock Café - San Antonio (111 West Crocket Street). It is always a great time to relax and catch up with your VLGMA colleagues!

Please help me in welcoming our newest VLGMA Members Fred Presley, Stafford Deputy County Administrator; Gary Shanaberger, Appomattox Town Manager; Leander Pambid, Henrico County Planner; Matt Hanratty, Blacksburg Assistant to the Town Manager; Matt Reynal, Ashland Operations Manager and Mike Smith, Stafford Deputy County Administrator.

[Contact Maurice Jones](#)

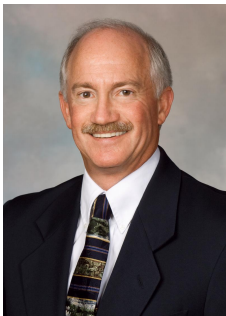
Position Changes and Other Events

September 2017

- Peter Huber, retired Pulaski County administrator, has been appointed interim manager for the town of Amherst.
- Jeffrey Richardson, administrator for Cleveland County, NC since 2013, has been appointed Albemarle County administrator effective November 6.
- Danny Davis, Purcellville assistant town manager, has been appointed president of One Loudoun center, a senior living facility.



Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Turning 65

We all cross over important thresholds in our lives-birth, first steps, language, school, teen years, adulthood, etc. But none may be as traumatic as reaching 65 and becoming eligible for Medicare.

It'll never happen to me...it'll never happen to me. Well it's happening. (I know this will come as a total shock to most, as I look younger than 50 ;-)) But this month, it becomes a shocking reality.

Reaching 65 used to be the standard for "becoming old." I don't know when the norm changed, but 65 must be the new 45. My eyes still work, my hearing is adequate, and I still work out on average five times a week. Sure, my energy level is not what it once was, and running around after grandkids is now exhausting; but, overall, it doesn't seem that this age is much different from being 45 or 55.

I'm lucky. I've got great genes on both sides promising longevity. Both of my parents departed this world at the age of 93 without suffering long-term illnesses. In fact, through the age of 90, they were remarkably active and "with it."

As soon as I finish writing this message, I'll do my duty and apply for Medicare. Think I can do it online. They say enroll 3 months before your 65th just to get your name on record. I've procrastinated-my subconscious has been resisting.

Please keep telling me this age is just a number. My memory is not what it used to be.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

VIRGINIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION/SENIOR EXECUTIVE INSTITUTE RECEPTION

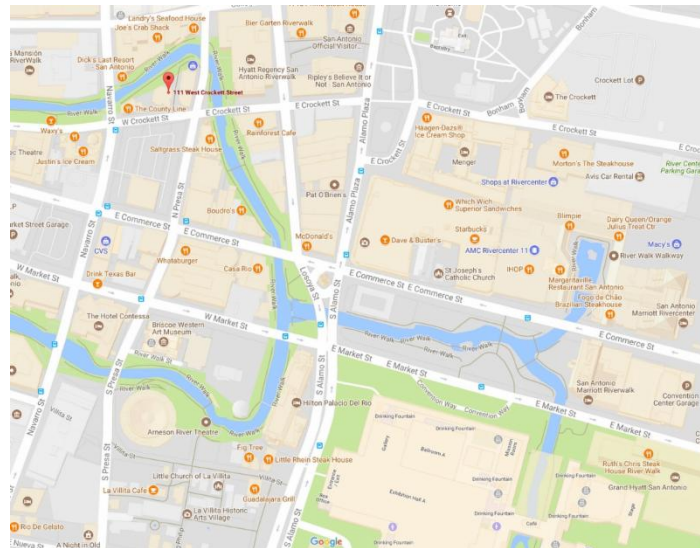
If you are attending the ICMA conference in San Antonio, please put the following on your calendar! Join your friends and peers at the Monday evening reception!

DATE: Monday, October 23, 2017
TIME: 5:15pm - 7:30pm

PLACE: Hard Rock Cafe - San Antonio - 111 West Crockett Street (see map below)

SPONSORS:

The Springsted Group: Public Finance Advisors, Investment Advisors, Human Capital Advisors, and Executive Recruitment and Davenport & Company - Public Finance



Fall DAO Meeting Recap

Hanover County and The Town of Ashland jointly host DAO's in The Center of the Universe

The Pamunkey Regional Library was the setting for the approximately 45 DAO's that enjoyed a day of sharing and learning as the trains rolled by outside. Hosted jointly by Hanover County and the Town of Ashland, it was truly a day that showcased the partnership the County and Town enjoy. Collaboration seemed to be the theme of the day.



Janet Lawson, Director of HR for Hanover County, and Jim Taylor, Deputy County Administrator, began the day with a presentation on the Public/Private Partnership they have developed with Bon Secours for a unique employee health clinic, occupational health facility, and wellness program. The presentation showed there are many ways of looking at working with partners and employees to address a growing need for employee wellness and measures we can take that will affect our insurance premiums.

Douglas Goodman, Chief of Police for the Town of Ashland, gave an eye-opening presentation about the issues created when "budget motels" become a long term living arrangement for families with children. Working with Hanover County, many church and faith based groups, and non-profits, enabled the Town to shut down the worst of the motels and transition 32 families to permanent housing. Ingrid Stenbjorn, Ashland Town Engineer, gave a presentation about permeable paver projects recently completed in the Town of Ashland. These nationally recognized projects have resulted in fewer pollutants in the Chesapeake Bay and fewer flooded streets in Ashland.

Kathy Seay, Deputy County Administrator, facilitated an informative panel discussion, "Deputy County Administrator Today-County Administrator Tomorrow," with John Budesky, Goochland County Administrator; Joe Casey, Chesterfield County Administrator; and Josh Farrar, Ashland Town Manager. Questions asked by Kathy made for an interesting discussion about moving to the "Big Chair" and all the challenges and opportunities that coincide with transitioning to the position. From moving your place of residence to the different way in which you are treated by your staff, Joe, John, and Josh shared their valuable and sometimes humorous experiences transitioning from a DAO to the top position in our field.

Lunch was provided by "Homemades by Suzanne" and was enjoyed outside at the picnic tables around the library. The weather was beautiful, the food was great, and the discussions were even better. Back inside after lunch, Owen Matthews, Finance Director for Kings Dominion, spoke to the group about the importance of "Delighting Our Customers". Customer service with a smile and all the new happenings at the Park were the highlights of his presentation.

A Best Practice Roundtable discussion was opened by Wanda Cornwell, Ashland's Assistant to the Town Manager. We heard several interesting new projects from all the DAOs. Donald Robertson, Asst. County Administrator from Isle of Wight, described his County's new "How To Videos" on their website, which walk citizens and developers through a multitude of County related processes. Fred Presley, Stafford Deputy Administrator, spoke about building their new Courthouse and creating a downtown area. From drone technology to career development initiatives and staffing at parks, it was a great exchange of ideas from all in attendance.

Rounding out the afternoon, the group walked across the railroad tracks to visit the Center of the Universe Brewery's new brewing lab, "Origins". Chris Ray, co-owner of the brewery gave a tour of the facility and explained some of the brewing processes involved in the creation of new brews. Samples were enjoyed by all!

[Contact Kathy Seay](#)



Certificate News

As the autumn air comes rushing in, the Certificate students have been eagerly turning in their first assignments of the semester. Case studies, group presentations, and guest speakers abound as our professors transfer their decades of knowledge to the next generation. The process can be intimidating, so if you know a Certificate student this semester, be sure to offer him or her some support to push on to the end.

We are also always looking for ways to support our students. In addition to hosting internships and recruitment sessions, one of the key ways that VLGMA members and localities can support the program is through scholarship donations. Since the program's inception, scholarships have been used as a way to encourage mid-career professionals to become a part of the next generation of local government leaders. Any support to this program is greatly appreciated, and the benefits reaped will be innumerable in the years to come.

The Certificate program is an excellent opportunity to start looking to the future for your organization. Over the next two months, the director will be planning the recruitment sessions and conference visits for the calendar year 2018. These programs are great ways to introduce up and coming staff to the Certificate program and to help strengthen the leadership of tomorrow. If you are interested in hosting a recruitment session for your employees, please contact Stephanie Davis. sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.



A DAO in the Life - Matt Hankins



Matt Hankins

A DAO in the Life Matt Hankins Rocky Mount Assistant Town Manager

I'm in the middle of my 26th season as the football stadium announcer for my alma mater, Division III tradition Emory & Henry College. At least five Saturdays each autumn, I trek three hours down Interstate 81, climb the stairs to the press box and key the microphone to manage the game-day experience for thousands of college football fans.

Over the course of three decades, I've learned a lot about watching and listening to how people respond not just to what happens in the game but how they react to their environment. When teams win, more fans show up; when they lose, even the most dedicated faithful find other things to do. Happy fans respond better to game

announcements, eat more concessions, and find more creative ways to support their teams; when their team is losing, the environment suffers and gloom creeps.

Our communities can be the same way. When a community suffers job losses, hits challenging retail environments, faces difficult and divisive public choices, or endures an lengthy recession, the pom-poms get put away and the community boo-birds are the loudest voices left in the room.

As DAOs, we have to guard ourselves against putting away the pom-poms. We are our community's cheerleaders, those loud voices who support our elected and appointed bodies to ensure the community follows the action, supports the team and stays engaged.

Staying vocal, engaged and supportive takes more energy. Leading our team to the goal always requires planning, executing and following through on plans. Doing so cheerfully, with clear purpose and a supportive heart makes winning that much sweeter.

[Contact Matt Hankins](#)

Innovation Edge

Culture of Health Prize - Richmond

The city of Richmond has been selected as one of eight communities to receive the 2017 Culture of Health Prize from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. More than 200 other communities applied for the award, which comes with a \$25,000 prize.



One of the areas of focus is engaging residents in the decision-making process as well as encouraging communities to be racially and socioeconomically integrated.

"It's a commitment to this idea that integrated communities are better for everybody, and that to plan that requires thoughtful investment of capital," said Dr. Danny Avula, director of the Richmond City Health District. Read more about the recognition [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.

Mel's Poetry Corner

Storms of Life

There are storms that appear and seem
to screw up everything.



Mel Gillies

The unpredictable blows fiercely and relentlessly,
knocking out power lines, crushing all the daisies.
Even our most treasured dreams get smashed.
Nothing seems to survive and last.

And yet there is within us,
a Power that we can forever trust.
A Love that never wavers no matter what
comes swooping down to try and interrupt.

Conditions do not create our essence.
We are Love's unceasing presence.
Embrace the storms knowing that our spirit will
remain forever untouched, still.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Calendar

Upcoming Events

Winter Conference - February 14-16, 2018 at the Charlottesville Omni Hotel. More info in November.

Summer Conference - June 20-22, 2018 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Sheraton Hotel. More info in the Spring.

[More Dates](#)

Update Email Address



Making a change? To continue to receive the monthly eNews and other VLGMA notices, please email [Molly Harlow](#) to update your contact information.

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](#)
[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)
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