

## December 2019 eNews

### Presidential Musings From James



#### **Changing Demographics, looking ahead and keeping up**

Demographics change so slowly that you can watch it from afar. Two categories are especially interesting and intertwined: Race and Age.

The most common or median age for non-Hispanic “whites” in the US is 58. The most common age for non-whites is 27. Put another way and removing the clarifiers, the race identified as “white” in the US is on average over twice as old as the average age of the other races. Not only is the US becoming more diverse, that portion that is diverse is vastly younger.

When we talk about diversity and inclusion, we are bumping our heads up against absolute reality. Our workforce and very often our elected bodies are not a reflection of the demographics at play in the communities we serve. I will call my own organization out: If you work in Finance, there is a 100% chance you are a white female. If you work in Public Works, there is a 90% chance you are a black male. If you treat water or wastewater there is a 100% chance you are a white male. I once worked for a locality that had an electric department that was comprised of 100% white male line workers and I have never worked for an elected body that was not at least 85% white male. In a diverse community, the only way you achieve these outcomes is via unrecognized bias. It is statistically impossible to get to where we are without bias.

These incumbents, elected and appointed, are also older. By not rooting out that unrecognized bias at the hiring level, we are setting ourselves up to fail. There are many comparisons to the private sector that are invalid, but this one strikes home. The private sector is way ahead of us on this issue. Urbanized localities are also well ahead of the more rural sections of the state.

Not only are we approaching the 50% non-white level in the US, those that are not white are vastly younger and they vote. If you think this will give us some relief in the near 50/50 split between the D’s and R’s, it may. Consider the forecast by the Brookings Institute:

“Like other simulations, these Democratic win margins expand further into the future. Assuming higher 2012 levels of turnout among blacks, Florida and Georgia flip by 2024, resulting in a 338-200 Democratic win, with Arizona falling into the Democratic column by 2032 for a 350-188 electoral vote advantage.

By 2036, Republicans would hold Texas by just 2.2 points.”

That may make policy easier, but imagine how hard those 188 electoral vote casting states will protest under the perceived yoke of the 388? Will the vitriol decrease or become perhaps more violent? The disgraced televangelist Jim Baker has threatened a “Christian Civil War” if his president is impeached. Is this a sign of where things will go? Instead of getting better can they get worse? As the nation changes demographically, will some groups and states that feel marginalized dig their heels in and say, “no way, no how”?

One way we can lead into the future is by making diversity and inclusion more than a check box that merits lip

service. That future is coming at us and it is full of young diverse people that want government to be like them and to understand them. If we get it right, perhaps those voices that call for disunity or even violence may be quieter or even disappear. As you get flooded with ICMA information on diversity and inclusion, stop and think before you hit delete and move on to a “real” task or challenge. It IS one of your top priorities even if you don’t know it. Solving and addressing it could help many other issues in your community from gun violence, unemployment and the opioid crisis.

How? Diversity gives you capacity, resilience and the ability to build a better consensus and get to a better more meaningful outcome across all your policy challenges. In place of struggling to adjust to the future, you become the future.

Please join me in welcoming our newest VLGMA members: Aaron Grisdale Woodstock Deputy Town Manager and Charles Forbes Chase City Town Manager.

[Contact James Ervin](#)

## 2020 VLGMA Winter Conference



From VLGMA Winter Conference Co-Chairs Ande Banks and Ashton Harrison:

Balancing leadership and management is the underlying theme of the 2020 VLGMA Winter Conference to be held February 12-14, 2020 in Charlottesville.

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## Upcoming ICMA Events



[Leadership ICMA Class of 2021 starts May 17-24, 2020 College of Charleston, SC](#)

Class of 2021 will begin their leadership journey by attending the ICMA Leadership Academy May 17-22, 2020 at the College of Charleston, SC with seasoned managers.

[ICMA Athenian Project October 11-17, 2020 Airlie House, Virginia](#)

Participants embark on a 9-month journey to transmit their self, their community, and the profession greater and more beautiful than each was transmitted to them as they connect with other servant leaders, re-ignite their passion, define their legacy, and gain a stronger understanding of the responsibility behind the defining questions of... If not you, who will lead in these times? If not now, when?

[ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute May 13-15, 2020](#)

With civil unrest and growing leadership challenges we think of the 3-day battle of Gettysburg and get curious about the problems faced there that mirror our challenges in public sector leadership today.

## Tedd's Take



### Retirees' Luncheon - Take 2

On October 10, 2019, 30 VLGMA retirees gathered at the Three Notch'd Brewing Company in Charlottesville to meet, greet, and reconnect at the Virginia Local Government Management Association's Retirees' Luncheon. This was the second of what has quickly become a regularly scheduled event on VLGMA's annual calendar.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

## A DAO in the Life



### Does anyone speak Mandarin?

**Jeff Stoke, Prince George Deputy County Administrator**

“There has been a bus rollover accident on I-95, two fatalities known at this time, we need Mandarin Chinese translators to talk to survivors at the County’s Reunification Center.”, stated the Prince George County emergency response staff person.

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## Civic Engagement - County of Chesterfield



### Citizen Engagement – Chesterfield County Government Citizens Academy

**Sarah Snead, Chesterfield Deputy County Administrator**

Citizen engagement is an integral part of good governance. It ensures that community members have contributed ideas and knowledge to the decision-making process, and that decision makers, whether elected leaders or appointed staff, are well informed. Chesterfield County is committed to citizen engagement, and one way that it demonstrates this commitment is through its Government Citizens Academy. This academy provides a hands-on learning opportunity for residents and is designed to enhance and grow the county’s communication efforts and increase citizen engagement.

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## Mel's Poetry Corner



### To My Little Ones

Oh, my little ones, come to me.

I can feel you trembling.

My branches bend beneath the weight  
all your cares and troubles make.

They become meaningless if you could only see  
the truth of your divine spiritual identity.

Time and space you invented  
to keep you out of Heaven  
and this body of beliefs, you so religiously treasure  
hampers your every endeavor.

I sense your heart shut down  
and with the thorns of unforgiveness surround.

You think you are alone,  
lost and wandering far from home.  
Fear not, my little ones, I am always here,  
listening to your joys and fears.

My arms encircle you and all.

I will never let you fall.  
And for all the terrors of the night,

I give you my healing Light.

Love waits patiently for the start

of the opening of your heart.  
My angels are on perpetual call  
to escort you to the celestial ball.  
And so, my little ones, never forget,  
in my tender loving care, you are forever kept.  
I wish you good Light,  
good Light.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



## Position Changes And Other Events

### November 2019

- James Halasz, Halifax county administrator, has been hired as the new Lexington city manager effective November 8th..
- Neil Showalter has been appointed Mount Jackson town manager. He has been serving in an acting capacity since the beginning of October.
- Hanover county administrator Rhu Harris to retire in May 2020.

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