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Brenda's Bytes



Brenda Garton

I'm changing jobs.

There may be some managers out there who have worked for their entire professional careers for one locality, but most managers have moved and some of us have changed jobs more than once. Unless you are one of those folks who has stayed put, then you know what I'm dealing with!

At any given moment, there are three trains barreling down the tracks in my head. I have heard of dual tracking, but triple tracking is almost more than I can bear.

Train 1: What do I need to do to leave my current county in the best possible place before my last day?

I'm an INTJ - and about as extreme a "J" as you can get on the "P-J" spectrum. I'm compelled to make lists and organize my office for the next person. I want to make it as clear and succinct as possible for the Interim Manager where things are, what projects are outstanding and who is responsible, and what the obligations are. I just would not feel good about myself if I didn't do that for the next guy/gal. So, until the last day of work in my current locality, that locomotive is dominating my brain.

It's a stressful time - but it's good stress, I guess. On the one hand, there's this need to let go. I've worked in my current community for 6 ½ years, continuously striving to make the local government organization as good as it can be, adjusting to newly elected Board members with different priorities, and working with the staff to ensure quality service to citizens. But, now I'm leaving. I have to let go of all of that - release the ownership I feel and pass it along to someone else. I know the new manager will come in and change or even reverse some of the things I have done - that's just the nature of management. That's hard. But, change is good - it's good for the individual and it's good for the organization. Change is healthy, natural, and unavoidable.

Along with that letting go is a certain sadness. I know that I will leave some folks behind that I fully intend to stay in touch with, but that I will not do as good a job of it as I intend. Of course I also now have a cadre of friends in this part of the state!

Train 2: What do I need to do so that I can hit the ground running when I start my new position?

That second train - the "I'm so excited about my new job!" locomotive - is gaining momentum, wanting to attract my attention. But, it has to stay over on its track until the time is right and not derail Train 1. Still, I'm excited! I want to start! I want to move into my new office, get settled, start meeting staff, get to know the Board members and their priorities, and learn about the community. I just can't focus on that quite yet.

Train 3: When and how in the world am I going to pack up all the stuff in my house and move?

I have too much stuff. Don't we all? Books, spare blankets and pillows, dishes, shoes and purses. Christmas decorations, clothes I think I just might fit into some day, stuff belonging to my now-grown children, boxes and boxes containing I'm not sure what - the paraphernalia of life. I feel a trip to Goodwill coming on!

While the two professional locomotives whistle and steam along, demanding my attention, the personal train still needs to keep moving. My husband and I have to find a place to live, pack all my stuff up, arrange the move, unpack it all, and find a place to put it all so that the new house feels like home. I'm one of those people who has to draw the rooms, measure the walls, and figure out where all the furniture goes before I get there. I think it's a disease. My husband spent a smart \$11.99 and bought an app to help me out. Yes, there's an app for that!

Well, there's one thing I know for sure. I am only human and I can only concentrate on one thing at a time. Now....where is that set of minutes I need to review?

And that third train? Anyone interested in helping me pack?

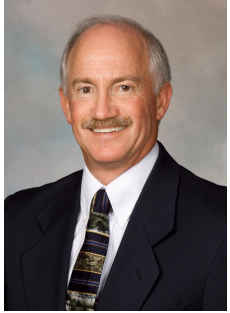
The Nominations Committee is seeking expressions of interest from members interested in serving on the VLGMA Executive Board. Interested members should contact the Chair of the Nominations Committee, Randy Wheeler, at randy.wheeler@poquoson-va.gov.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our new VLGMA members: Laszlo Palko, Lovettsville Town Manager and Steven Bond, Hampton Assistant City Manager.

-Brenda

[Contact Brenda Garton](#)

Tedd's Take



Divergent Views of Law Enforcement

Recent, but very distinct, national and local events have exposed me to the extremes by which policing is perceived by certain members of society.

First, we all are aware of the very serious Ferguson, Missouri, controversies that led to the resignation of the city manager. The reported reason was evidence that he had encouraged the police to write tickets and otherwise enforce laws with the expressed goal of enhancing the city's revenue stream rather than improving the safety and security of the city's citizens and businesses. In the Ferguson case, police activities were allegedly fraught with unethical practices, like heavy-handed targeting of the poor and minority populations and preferential treatment for others. Simply put, law enforcement distorted.

On the other end of the spectrum is an organization called "CopBlock." While it purports to be for such red, white, and blue standards as equal treatment under the law, and rooting out corrupt public officials, a little digging shows that it is really an anti-police, anti-public official, uber-libertarian association with chapters around the world. Members and supporters think that most police and public officials are corrupt and believe that ticketing for victimless violations, like speeding and running red lights, is dishonorable and abusive policing. Their philosophy is "If no one gets hurt, where's the crime?" They feel that enforcement of such laws interferes

A DAO in the Life



Sunshine Torrey

A few weeks ago, I read the book *Bowling Alone* by Robert D. Putnam as a part of my dissertation literature review. The concept of the book was quite fascinating: Putnam's groundbreaking study focused on the increase in disconnect in today's society.

Neighborhood gatherings, attendance at civic association meetings, and boards and commissions memberships are all on the decline...more and more people are even bowling alone! *Bowling Alone* had me considering how this concept of "social capital" is impacting surrounding communities. It also sparked an interest in finding a solution for the decline in civic engagement.

As government leaders, we diligently seek the input of our citizens. This input is invaluable and can help shape policy development, guide capital investments, and help to ensure we understand the dynamic needs of the communities we proudly serve. As a member of the City of Hampton City Manager's Office, I have had the privilege of leading many of the City Manager's citizen engagement initiatives. Citizen engagement and participation is at the foundation of everything we do here in Hampton, and Budget Season provides ample opportunity for our citizens to get involved. During this time of year, you will frequently find our team conducting stakeholder engagement sessions on the capital budget, partnering with schools at public forums regarding the operating budget, or even running online campaigns where citizens have the opportunity to voice their concern from the comfort of their own home.

Citizen engagement is exciting and can be our most valuable resource. *Bowling Alone* points out many factors such as "changes in work, family structure, age suburban life, television, and computers" that may have contributed to the decline in social capital. Even with these mitigating factors, enhancing civic engagement opportunities within our communities is doable and I am confident that the reward will far exceed the effort. In the words of Lew Feldstein, "We need to look at front porches as crime fighting tools, treat picnics as public health efforts and see choral groups as occasion of democracy. We will become a better place when

with a person's right to travel without being "harassed."

Luckily, most localities are not like Ferguson, and most citizens think CopBlock proponents are nuts. But they exist, and both are extremely dangerous to our social fabric.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Position Changes

March, 2015



- * Brenda Garton, Gloucester County administrator since 2008, has announced that she is resigning to accept another post, effective April 30th.
- * K. Charles Griffin, director of utilities for Smithfield, NC, has been appointed administrator for King William County.
- * Brenda Garton, Gloucester County administrator, has been appointed Frederick County administrator, effective May 18th.
- * Barbara Donnellan, manager for Arlington County for the past 5 years, announced her retirement effective this June.
- * Mark Schwartz, deputy manager for Arlington County, has been appointed interim county manager there.
- * James J. L. (Jay) Stegmaier, Chesterfield County administrator, has taken medical leave, and is expected to return in a few weeks. Deputy administrator William Dupler will serve as acting administrator during Jay's absence.
- * Brent Manuel, Woodstock's assistant town manager of operations and director of planning and community development, has been appointed manager for the town of Cape Charles.
- * Ernie Hoch, Madison County administrator for the past 3 years, has been appointed Culpeper County administrator effective May 1st.

assessing social capital impact becomes a standard part of decision-making".

[Contact Sunshine Torrey](#)

VLGMA Summer Conference June 10-12, 2015



The VLGMA Summer Conference is slated for June 10-12 on the Virginia Beach Oceanfront at the Sheraton Hotel. The committee has a great event in store focusing on community resiliency and sustainability. The

2015 Summer Conference will begin on Wednesday with a 2.5 hour ICMA mini workshop led by Felicia Logan - a great opportunity to gain credentialing credits (at no additional cost). After that session Wednesday night activities will follow and we hope to have a little extra fun in store! Stay tuned for more details. Thursday a full day of enrichment is planned beginning with interactive discussion from a local police department on the value of mindfulness, then moving into an eye opening presentation about human bias and building trust in our communities facilitated by a variety of law enforcement professionals. After lunch we will hear from one of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities that is located right here in the Commonwealth, the City of Norfolk. Closing out Thursday will be a panel discussion on Poverty in Virginia followed by a facilitated session on the book "To Sell is Human" by Daniel Pink. This book gives insight into perspective on how to offer a clearer message when communicating on a daily basis. Friday morning Nick Carnes, the Co-Director of the Scholar Strategy Network at Duke University will lead a dynamic session on the role of political leadership in building strong, resilient communities. The program will conclude right before the business meeting with an interesting twist on the "How I Manage" series, with a potential surprise guest speaker.

[Contact Amanda Lickey](#), Conference Co-Chair

[Contact Wyatt Shields](#), Conference Co-Chair

VLGMA Civic Engagement Article

April 2015 Local Government Education Week

Reminder: The first week of April is Local Government Education week and VLGMA requests that all localities governing adopt a proclamation as well as develop a student engagement

Certificate News

Spring is the time of rebirth and renewal. As each cycle of the seasons begins anew, we are often reminded of the passage of time and the fact that, no matter how hard we work or wish otherwise, all good things come to an end to allow for something new to grow. In a sense, this is the lesson of the Certificate program. The great leaders of yesterday and today, who are still doing great work for the Commonwealth, must eventually step aside and allow the next generation to have its spring.

Leading by example in this instance is Bob Stripling. The Certificate's beloved founder, wise professor, outspoken champion, and true friend has chosen to step down at the end of this semester to allow new leadership to take the helm of the program.

After an outstanding career in local governments across Virginia and in Texas, Bob decided to dedicate his "official" retirement to preparing the next generation of local government leaders. Thanks to his tireless efforts as program director, nearly a dozen local managers serving as professors, and the support of the local government community in Virginia, hundreds of students and alumni have been prepared to take the reins of local government in the coming years. The Ancient Greek philosopher Plato wrote, "A hero is born among a hundred, a wise man is found among a thousand, but an accomplished one might not be found even among a hundred thousand men." To the boon of the profession and the people of counties, cities, and towns everywhere, we may surely say that Bob is an accomplished man.

Of course, never one to let grass grow under his feet, Bob is still out recruiting



Cindy Mester

program in coordination with their school districts. Proclamation template and additional resource materials are posted on the VLGMA website

at: http://icma.org/en/va/resources/civic_education
. More details can be found in the January VLGMA eNews edition archived

at: http://icma.org/en/va/resources/past_newsletter
[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

Innovation Edge



Peter Kageyama is an Alliance Senior Fellow and author of *Love Where You Live*. In his article this month, he states, "Activate is an interesting word. It is not the same as "start", "launch" or even "begin". All of the latter words imply a more focused effort, perhaps even a Herculean one, on the part of someone to make something happen. Think about launch. Many of us imagine a rocket and that explosive moment of inception, followed by a river of jet fire that hurls the rocket skyward. A launch is an exciting moment because of its grand spectacle, display of power and potential danger. People come out to watch a rocket launch." Read more [here](#) in the March issue of *Transformations*.

Reminder: TLG Conference is April 13-15 in Phoenix, AZ. Questions? Comments? Please reach out to me at saburnett@transformgov.org, or 800-777-2509.

[Contact Sallie Ann Burnett](#)

Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)



Virginia Tech's School of Public and International

the next class of Certificate students. Clad in his embroidered Virginia Tech polo, he will be traveling across the state over the next month meeting with potential students to ensure that his successor will have the best students possible. As always, though for perhaps the last time in an official capacity, he can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



Certified Public Manager Program(CPM)
School of Policy, Government and
International Affairs
George Mason University



On January 8th, George Mason University's School of Policy, Government and International Affairs (SPGIA) had its first class for the newly-created Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program. This Program is designed to enhance the careers of those in public service management. The curriculum meets the criteria to be certified by the National CPM Consortium and is calibrated to provide management and leadership theory and practice to all enrollees.

The curriculum focuses on the 12 critical topics including strategic management, public budgeting and finance, governance and ethics. Students meet in person twice a month for 12 months to enable working professionals to spend meaningful class time with a cohort of peers exploring public administration management theory and strategy. Successful participants will earn the distinction as a Certified Public Manager enabling the use of the

Affairs (SPIA) has announced the second of a three-par series exploring P3 Leadership on "Partnership Leadership: A Focus on Culture and Trust" has been rescheduled due to multiple snow days and closings. Many schedules have been impacted by the weather, including some of our speakers. To ensure that participants have a rich experience, we have decided to reschedule the P3 Leadership Workshop on March 26th to **Wednesday, June 10, 2015.**

To Register: <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/partlead/>
Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Spring Cleaning

Oh, what a relief
to clear my mind of moldy beliefs.
I can feel my whole being lighten up
as inspiration clears away all my
negative dust.

Cobwebs of old habits resist.
Dead bugs of fear and resentment persist.
But my spiritual vacuum is a must
because when turned on, it really sucks,
allowing the Light to shine through
and make all things new.

Selfishness and cynicism can leave a residue
that tarnishes my natural joy, humor, and gratitude
smearing my consciousness
with grimy ideas about aging, limitation, helplessness

Spring cleaning every day ensures I see
with uncluttered clarity.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)
Calendar

Upcoming Events

Deputies, Assistants and Others (DAO) Meeting - April 24, 2015 in Fredericksburg

2015 VLGMA Summer Conference - June 10-12, 2015 at the Sheraton

[More Dates](#)

Future Newsletter Articles

trademarked logo CPM following their name.

The first class was recruited from public safety agencies in Northern Virginia. With the experience gained from administering the first class, GMU will look to expand the CPM Program statewide. It is anticipated that the Program will be offered by region when a sufficient number register for the CPM Program. There is an Advisory Board for the Program to which VLGMA has appointed Cindy Mester, Assistant City Manager, Falls Church. The Program is directed by Tonya Neaves, Ph.D., at the Mason's Center on the Public Service (703-993-9377 or psc@gmu.edu). Dr. Neaves can be reached at tneaves@gmu.edu.

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.



Quick Links

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[ICMA Website](#)

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