



VLGMA December eNews
Supporting local government managers
building great communities through
inclusion, innovation and leadership

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Randy's Ramblings



Randy Wheeler

Randy's Ramblings

ICMA is Having a Birthday Party and You're Invited

Recently I had the opportunity to represent our organization at the conference planning meeting for the 100th Anniversary Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. This was the kind of touchy-feely, group process, high energy brainstorming type of session that normally sends introverts like myself into a "I really need some alone time" coma. But, as I told my wife, this is so far outside my normal duties and natural tendencies that I was really looking forward to it. I find that I often learn the most when I am outside my comfort zone and sometimes just being part of a group rather than

having to lead it can be a welcome change of pace. I was not disappointed.

The amount of energy and commitment to planning what we all hope and expect to be the best ICMA conference ever permeated the room. I found the group to be very receptive to the feedback and suggestions that I have received from VLGMA members as part of my listening tour of Virginia's regional CAO meetings, most recently in Northern Virginia.

100 years is a big deal! A significant part of the conference will be spent celebrating that fact but an equal focus will be planning for the next 100 years along with an emphasis on small community issues, urban management issues, personal leadership and new trends and challenges in public administration. In short there will be something for everyone. I strongly encourage each of you to come and be part of this memorable event. If all that wasn't enough, the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County together will be an outstanding backdrop for our celebration. Charlotte has changed so much since I went to high school there some three decades ago. It is a beautiful, vibrant (and for many of you drivable) host community and will add its energy to our event. If you have not had an opportunity to attend an ICMA conference or maybe just haven't done so in a while, please don't pass up this opportunity to participate. One thing that I always take away from these events is a sense of how lucky we are to work in Virginia, the birthplace of the Council-Manager form of government and it always is nice to have an opportunity to brag about all of you!

Another important item I wanted to bring to your attention is a soon to be released member survey from the Communications and Networking Committee (CNC). The CNC will be sending each of you a request to participate, via Survey Monkey, in a short survey regarding how well our new website is meeting your needs and soliciting suggestions for future enhancements. I commend the CNC for their outreach and thank each of you in advance for your participation.

I would also like to welcome our newest members David N. Quesenberry, Pulaski Assistant to the Town Manager and Patrick Pate, Manassas City Manager. Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

Tedd's Take

First off, safe & happy holidays to one and all!

A DAO in the Life

A Bristol Herald Courier sportswriter wrote a feature story



I figure the best way to wrap up the year is with a "good news" item. In this case, it is singing the praises of VDOT, and making the point that government can and does get things right!

For the last many, many months, VDOT has been working on the restoration of 11 bridges in Richmond between mile markers 77 and 82 on Interstate 95. While there are two more bridges to be replaced before the total project is complete, all the spans in and just north of the city are done. It's my commute route, so I've been watching and reading about this major endeavor with great interest.

Sure, it's been a headache for folks traveling at night and non-rush hour periods for a long time, with one or two lanes shut down in one or both directions, resulting in multi-mile backups. Bridge sections had to cut out, new precast surface sections lifted and placed, and substructures rebuilt all while trying to maintain at least one lane of heavy traffic flow in both directions. I don't believe I-95 ever closed or the traffic detoured. They worked around and with the vehicles as best they could.

Well folks, my commute route is now done for all intents and purposes. To me, at least, it's a feat that deserves a

about me earlier this month, encapsulating 22 years (so far) as the football announcer at my alma mater, Emory & Henry College near Abingdon, Va.

These 22 years mark a lot of Saturday afternoons spent in the announcing booth, accumulating stories and memories to numerous to count. Molly Harlow asked for some insights gained from 22 years, particularly ways that service informs my managerial practice. Here's my Top 6 ways these threads of my life tie together:

- Earning the best seat in the house requires demonstrated talent first and hard work thereafter. Most people don't see the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure that all aspects of game day work as they should.
- Make sure people stay involved. A lifeless stadium - or workplace - becomes toxic. Build, support and sustain an energy level that others feed from to make their own roles enjoyable.
- Get the right people to the right places. Whether it's a weather emergency or a staffing vacancy, getting the right people to the right places at the right times makes all the difference in meeting your objectives. (Thanks, Jim Collins!)



Matt Hankins

hearty "well done". The new concrete has been milled smooth, new asphalt laid, and the temporary jersey barriers are gone. It's a pleasure to drive I-95 thru Richmond, a huge change from the nightmarish road conditions before this extraordinary effort.

So, this IS government in action, not inaction. Many folks won't care about the major complexities involved or really take notice of the improvements. But isn't that just like every other day in our business?

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

[Innovation Edge](#)



Challenge or opportunity? It can be both when searching for a new city or county manager. The city of Dallas, Texas is currently engaged in this search. Dr. James Svara's article, "[Look Hard for a Leader with Must Have Qualities](#)," offers an excellent perspective of the council-manager form of government and how it is designed to give long-standing service with the public trust in mind. The article also gives a good overview of the type of manager Dallas (and all cities/counties) should look for.

Dr. Svara is a research professor at Arizona State University and visiting professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. As your regional director, I encourage

- Know the right thing to say and the right time to say it. Knowing when to say the right thing means listening intently, measuring feedback and using it correctly. Sometimes, that means saying nothing; other times, it means you fill the silence with your voice. Knowing the difference is key.

- Remember the people who get you where you want to go, and give them credit whenever you get the opportunity. A coach took a chance on me, and I still credit him for the opportunity; people who put their trust in you merit the effort to make their investment a good one.

- Never guarantee results; always guarantee effort. In the end, we're only in control of the things we can do. We should do them well, with the maximum effort, regardless of our own suspicions of how things will turn out.

[Contact Matt Hankins](#)

[Certificate News](#)

In the next month, the holiday season will come and go, winter should finally arrive in full force, and yet another semester for the Certificate program will come to a close. It is hard to imagine this frantic semester finally ending. With nearly 100 students and five instructors teaching across the state, the sheer logistics have been crazy enough not to mention that



you to reach out to me at saburnett@transformgov.org, or 800-777-2509 with any questions.

Visit the [Alliance for Innovation](#) for more information.

VLGMA Members in the News

**Doug Walker,
Albemarle County**



Doug Walker

Doug Walker, Assistant Executive for Community Services, Albemarle County was profiled by Charlottesville Tomorrow.

Where were you born (and raised, if different)?

I was born and raised in Henrico County.

When and why did you move to the Charlottesville/Albemarle area?

I accepted a job offer from Albemarle County in February, 2013 and started work on April 1st. Having spent over twenty years in local government management in Virginia, I thought the time was right to move to a large, diverse and vibrant County which has high quality of life for me personally and would provide a rewarding and challenging experience for me professionally.

What neighborhood do you live in now?

I still reside in my house in Waynesboro

actual academic work. But, as 2013 unwinds in a flurry, it is always important to remember the good work that the Certificate program does.

Recently, the program celebrated with alumna Jane Dittmar. Jane, who graduated last spring, was just elected as a Board of Supervisors member for Albemarle County. Now, as an elected leader, Jane will get to see how the other half lives in local government. Furthermore, while some governments could be afraid to have a board member knowing the administrative tricks of the trade, Albemarle County is lucky to have someone on the board with the education provided by the Certificate program. Jane will know the ways in which managers process information and make decisions. If board members and managers better understood how the others operate in those manners, then there would be no stopping local government. As a result, Jane is sure to do great things in Albemarle, and we look forward to keeping up with her.

The Certificate program does not guarantee professional success, but there are more happy stories every day. It is not too late to get involved with the Certificate program. With so many other things to think about at this time of year, school could easily go to the back of everyone's mind. Bob Stripling, however, is ready to bring it to the fore if you are ready to take the next

and hope to make the move "over the mountain" this Spring/Summer if the housing market is kind.

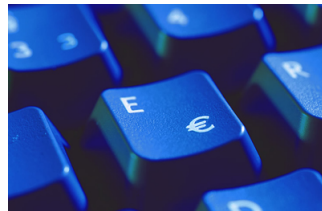
Family (spouse, kids, etc,)?
My daughter is a senior at Kenyon College. I'm pretty sure she expects to graduate in May. I am also owned by a rescued greyhound who keeps me in good health with lots of walking.

To continue reading this article, please click [here](#).

[Contact Doug Walker](#)

[VLGMA Facebook Update](#)

Government structures dominated the VLGMA Local Government News Facebook Group



this month. Martinsville is thinking about changing its structure; Bristol's city hall structure is in trouble after a water main break caused the building to be evacuated. Bedford's July reversion is causing Bedford to build a new school; Rocky Mount's former water plant low-head dam structure is coming out, thanks to U.S. Fish & Wildlife. Strasburg is looking to grow, while Halifax is looking to create regional alliances.

Thanks to this month's posters, who gave us 133 articles covering Virginia local government topics of interest. The month's posters:

step. He can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



Mel's Poetry Corner

Your Eternal Optimist



Mel Gillies

An uplifting note on this Holiday Eve to offset all the griping about the volatile economy.

The health care conundrum, budget woes, the next tea party time

gives me the perfect opportunity to remind

that all our negative prophesies ignore our divine destiny for we are not doomed to the darkness of the night

but are spiritual Beings of radiant Light.

Our true Source of supply is inexhaustible and ever-present.

We are all heirs of a divine endowment.

Inspiration, creativity, opportunities ceaselessly arise.

Divine Love forever provides.

The in-powering message

that sets us free

is the truth of our Divinity.

Let Spirit awaken your soul to sing and with the Angels, glad tidings bring.

Bill Rolfe
 Mary Jo Fields
 Matt Hankins
 Judson Rex
 Tom Harris
 Mark Flynn
 *Anne Marie Green
 Charles Hartgrove
 *Sabrina Martyn
 * New this month

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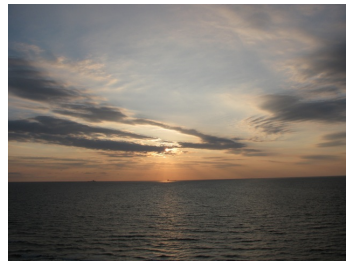
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 2
 1 VLGMA Winter Conference - February 19-
 1 21, 2014 at the Omni Hotel in
 1 Charlottesville - **please look for**
 1 **materials in the next few weeks!**

Thanks for keeping us up to date. For those of you who haven't joined, [email Molly Harlow](#) for instructions or search for Virginia Local Government News on Facebook. (Please note: due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the cutoff for calculating this month's contributions was 5 p.m. on 11/27. All postings submitted afterward will count toward December's postings.)

[Contact Matt Hankins](#)

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



[More Dates](#)

2014 ICMA Regional Summit

2014 ICMA Regional Summit Dates and Locations:

Mark your calendars now for the 2014 ICMA Regional Summit in your region. The dates and locations have been set. Information on hotels and registration for these professional development, networking, and ICMA informational events will become available in the fall.

- **Southeast: March 6-7 (YPLI* March 5-6) - Williamsburg, Virginia**
- **Midwest: March 20-21 (YPLI* March 19-20) - Iowa City, Iowa**
- **Northeast: April 3-4 (YPLI* April 2-3) - Princeton, New Jersey**
- **Mountain Plains: May 1-2 (YPLI* April 30-May 1) - Grapevine, Texas**
- **West Coast: May 8-9 (YPLI* May 7-8) - San Jose, California**

*Young Professionals Leadership

members. To contribute simply send your brief e-newsletter content (~5 sentences or less) via email to [Molly Harlow](mailto:Molly.Harlow). Institute.

Quick Links

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[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)
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