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Randy Wheeler

One thing that is certain in our line of work is that no matter what you do (or don't do) someone is going to have a problem with it. Recently I received a phone call from a citizen who was complaining that the City crews had cleared the streets following a snow storm too fast. The citizen had taken the afternoon off to engage in one of Poquoson's more dangerous pastimes i.e. pulling a sledder through the snow covered City streets behind a four wheel drive vehicle. Apparently, City staff had done such a great job on the streets that they were too clear for sledding. While I know the citizen who called me was half joking, it got me to thinking about the "darned if ya do - darned if ya don't" paradox.

This paradox is certainly not unique to our profession, but as I think you all would agree it is pretty much always in play for a local government manager. While this can at times be an exhausting part of our work, if you think about it, it is perhaps one of the most important and empowering elements of our jobs and an important part of the value of professional management. What do I mean by that? Well, since it is a given that nothing we do will likely ever make everyone equally happy, it frees us up to concentrate on doing what is right. While what is right is itself often debatable, at the end of the day doing what I perceive to be the right thing helps me sleep at night. People will respect and understand your decision-making even when they don't agree with it if you follow a consistent,

understandable moral compass, especially if you take the time to explain your thinking. It also provides an important platform for discussion of differing points of view. Finally, a key element of always pursuing what is right is the acknowledgement and acceptance of the fact that you don't have the market cornered on always knowing what that is. None of us wants to be known as a person who always thinks he's right. It is much better to be known as a person who always strives to do the right thing.

I would also like to welcome our newest members William L. Vaughn, Rockingham Assistant County Administrator; Nelsie Smith, Alexandria Dir., Office of Mgt. & Budget; Randy Wingfield, Christiansburg Assistant Town Manager; Jay D. Kimble, Ashland Management Analyst; Kimberly A. Winn, VML Executive Director and Andrew McRoberts, County Attorney for the Counties of Mathews and Richmond.

Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

Tedd's Take



It's tough to be optimistic when you're lying flat on your back!

There's been lots of talk of late about surveys of people's perspective on the condition of the nation, and the vast majority of that feedback has been negative. Words such as "divided" and "dysfunctional" and "crumbling" are common.

I was wondering if things are really that bad, or is something else in play. Sure, there's plenty to be concerned about, but isn't there always? Why does it appear that people are more pessimistic about the future than ever before?

My thought is that at least a good part of the pessimism is a reflection of the 24 hour, multi-directional bombardment of information and opinion society has inflicted upon itself. News, by definition, is the reporting of important events that may or will impact one's life. What affects society more than high crime rates, natural disasters, war, or sags in the economy? The consequences can be

A DAO in the Life

"Does this add value?"

This simple question was posed during a presentation on employee engagement I attended at a recent conference. My utility colleagues in Southern Nevada were asking their employees this question to engage them in crafting a new strategic plan to improve their organization. While their new strategic plan was still a work in progress at the time of the presentation, my colleagues were pleased with the information they were learning by asking this question.

"Does this add value?" This simple question has relevance on multiple levels. At a macro level - "Does operating a library add value to our community?" - it can spur community conversation about what services are important. At a micro level - "Does requiring these paper forms add value to our ability to serve our customers?" - it can help us improve our business processes and become more efficient.

When I returned to Portsmouth, I posed that same question to my team to get them thinking about what it is we do



Bryan Foster

realized quickly and by many, and is sometimes devastating for those in a particular place. Good deeds that generate good news, by contrast, usually have a much smaller footprint, are of less consequence to the general population, and require much more time to be "felt". It's hard for good stuff to become newsworthy.

So, I'm not willing to accept that things are as bad as the opinion surveys indicate. I think, to a certain extent, we're reflecting the beat down we get from what we read in the newspaper and see and hear on TV, talk radio, the internet, and twitter, just to name a few outlets. It's constant, and virtually unavoidable.

No wonder a lot of folks feel like they've been in a heavyweight boxing match and lost! It's tough to be optimistic when you're lying flat on your back!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)
[Innovation Edge](#)



The Alliance wants to send a team of two from your organization to the Transforming Local Government Conference to share in the unique learning experience, and it's on us!!

Enter the 2nd Annual TLG Video Contest to show how your organization has transformed as a result of attending TLG. The winner will receive two registrations and a hotel package to the 2015 TLG conference. The deadline for submissions is March 28, so start working those innovative wheels!! More details can be found on the Alliance for Innovation web site [here](#).

This year's conference will be held in Denver, April 23-25, 2014.

As your regional director, I encourage you to reach out to me at saburnett@transformgov.org, or 800-777-

and why it is important. Although the question may seem simple, the conversations it has generated have been rich and beneficial. As a water utility, we face increasing pressure with flat or declining water sales, increased regulatory requirements, and an aging infrastructure that needs replacement. These are challenges that won't be solved overnight, so it is important that we maximize our efforts, resources, and talent in order to make the best decisions. I am pleased with my team's efforts and engagement at tackling these critical issues for our organization.

Most of us are in throes of preparing our budgets for the new fiscal year and we are all facing similar challenges of increasing demands and dwindling resources. Increasing the engagement of our employees and citizens will be paramount to our success. You might want to start out by asking this simple question. You may be surprised by the answers and solutions generated.

[Contact Bryan Foster](#)
[Certificate News](#)

The spring semester has begun, yet winter is surely in full force. The Certificate students can take comfort knowing that they do not have to walk across campus in the blistering cold, but they still have to make a tremendous effort to get to class and focus on their studies. They deserve a lot of encouragement because cold weather can quickly lead to academic despair.

Nothing, however, eases that wintry pain like thinking about summer. For the first time ever, the Certificate program will be launching an annual professional development event for Certificate alumni. The event will be held June 2-3 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center and will feature Dr. John



2509 with any questions.

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

[Calendar](#)

Upcoming Events

VML/VACo Day - February 6, 2014 in room 4 East, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

[VLGMA Winter Conference](#) - February 19-21, 2014 at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville - **Registration is closed.**

VLGMA Summer Conference - June 18-20, 2014 at the Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel

[More Dates](#)

[VLGMA Virginia Local Government News Group](#)

Seven VLGMA members supplied content to the Facebook News Group in the run up to holidays. Mary Jo Fields led the way with 39 posts. Major topics of interest to members included wildlife (vultures, deer, chickens), major capital projects (parking garages, sewer treatment facilities and redevelopment structures) and retirements from local governments, both by administrative and elected folks. In total, VLGMA members posted 99 articles in the month.



December

Mary Jo Fields	39
Matt Hankins	35
Bill Rolfe	14
Judson Rex	5
Charles Hartgrove	4
John Edwards	1
Brannon Godfrey	1

As the page turned to January, Mary Jo kept up her torrid posting pace even as the legislative season got into full swing. Topics are turning to budgeting, staffing changes and pending lawsuits

Nalbandian, courtesy professor of practice in the Certificate program. Dr. Nalbandian is the leading scholar in the world of local government and has always been more than willing to share his years of experience and academic study. More details will come, but this event will surely be a way to grow professionally and to interact with local government professionals from across the state.

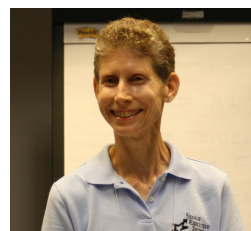
So, the Certificate program continues to move forward and serves as valuable resource for future local government leaders across the state. Bob Stripling is ready to start recruiting the next class of students for the coming semesters. Whether you want to start in May or in August, Bob is ready to share his passion for local government and the Certificate program. He will be visiting localities and HR offices across the state. There is no better time to get involved, so if you want Bob to come visit, he can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



[Mel's Poetry Corner](#)

Passion



Mel Gillies

Passion brings all
the colors
of love alive
and arches the
rainbow in the sky.
The pulse vibrating
our heart strings
so our whole being awakens and
with the birds, sings.
Calling us out of our lethargy
to be all that we can be.
No longer are we earth bound
for our heart with

involving a number of Virginia localities. As a group, VLGMA posted 89 local government new articles for the month.

January

Mary Jo Fields	43
Matt Hankins	28
Judson Rex	14
Bill Rolfe	2
Reid Wodicka	2

The Communications & Networking Committee encourages you to join in and post news relevant to local government from your area. We can all learn from what our colleagues are experiencing in other areas, and ask for your help in posting content to enrich our knowledge base. Look for the Virginia Local Government News group on Facebook. This group is only open to VLGMA members, and is closed to protect the content. For instructions on how to join, contact [Molly Harlow](#).

VLGMA Members Meet on VML Day (Today!)

There will be a meeting room with refreshments provided by the VLGMA Communications and Networking Committee. The room is the 4 East Conference Room in the General Assembly Building on VML Day (Feb. 6th), 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Also, please feel free to invite your legislators to stop by and meet with you and partake in some of the refreshments.

VLGMA thanks the Virginia Institute of Government for their sponsorship of this event.

ICMA Seeking a Southeast Regional Director

ICMA is currently seeking a dynamic and knowledgeable member who is a resident of the Southeast region to be the Southeast Regional Director. This is a part-time position. The Southeast region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South

passion is aroused.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

2014 ICMA Regional Summit

2014 ICMA Regional Summit Dates and Locations:

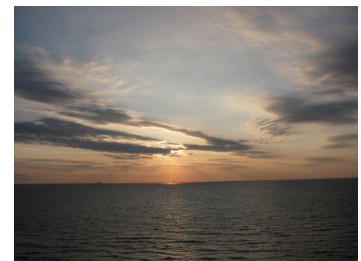
Mark your calendars now for the 2014 ICMA Regional Summit in your region. The dates and locations have been set. Information on hotels and registration for these professional development, networking, and ICMA informational events will become available in the fall.

- **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 Institute.

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](#)

Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. [Harlow.](#)

The ICMA Southeast Regional Director is responsible for coordinating all ICMA activities in the Southeast Region; driving outcomes in the region based on association priorities; and building relationships with members and state/affiliate organizations. Position reports to the ICMA Executive Director and serves on the Membership and Professional Development Team. Requires significant local government experience; excellent communication, presentation, & interpersonal skills; knowledge of ICMA programs, mission, & priorities; and willingness to travel. As mentioned, the successful candidate must be an ICMA member who resides in the Southeast region. Position is part-time with competitive salary and benefits.

HOW TO APPLY:

Send resume & cover letter to recruitment@icma.org. Please use SERD in the subject line!

Quick Links

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