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Greetings from Greg



Greg Kelly

Greetings from Greg "You Can't Make This Stuff Up"

I had already written the February Newsletter a few weeks ago, which had an appropriate theme for the impending Groundhog Day on February 2. However, in light of recent unforeseen circumstances that have shaken our organization with sadness, I thought it more appropriate to draw upon the loss of our former VLGMA President, Becky Dickson. I will therefore save my Groundhog Day themed article for March, especially since it feels as if February is way early this year given the unseasonably warm weather that we have been enduring. That being the case, let me offer my insight on what it means to be a real "Leader" in our profession. In doing so, I will borrow from an acronym that I learned and used in my Business Law course in college some thirty plus years ago. A true Leader is the following:

L- One who is more willing to **LISTEN** before offering an opinion or giving a directive.

E - Someone who embraces **ENTHUSIASM** and **ETHICS** in the workplace and among their colleagues and constituents.

A - A possessor of a great **ATTITUDE** about the challenges confronted in day to day life and work.

D - A player who is ready, willing, and able to **DEVELOP** the talents of all of the players on the team.

E - One who recognizes that there is always more to learn about work and people through continuing **EDUCATION**.

R - A person who, both shows and earns **RESPECT**.

What I took away from this so many years ago was that if you are true to yourself and others and refuse to sell out your work ethic and your inner moral compass, you can become a great leader and even much more than that... you can teach others to become great leaders. I offer this acronym and example for you this month because we are mourning the loss of our friend and colleague, Becky Dickson.

Remember Becky as the great leader she was in her community and the great teacher she was for those who follow in her footsteps. For me she epitomized all of those qualities in the acronym above. Becky was always willing to elevate me and so many others above herself to help us gain the added knowledge and the confidence in ourselves so that we could move onward toward being a good leader and one who would pass it on just as she did. As the great musical entertainer and successful business entrepreneur, Dolly Parton once said, *"If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader"*. Becky did just that and was and still is a great leader.

I will leave you this month to your own reflections of Becky and many of our other fallen friends and colleagues in years past and the qualities that made them all great leaders. And likewise, how they have all left lasting legacies for future generations to come in local government. The best thing we can do to honor their memories is to continue to tell their stories and teach the things that they taught to us. VLGMA and ICMA put a lot of emphasis on preparing the next generation and the best way I know to continue to prepare that generation is to try to pass along those things that I have been taught along my journey. So I encourage us all to share the teachings and the stories of our mentors, such as Becky, every chance we get to others in our profession. With the Winter Conference coming up February 15-17, it is the perfect opportunity for us to reflect and share our stories. I look forward to seeing many of you then.

Until next time, please join me in welcoming Mandy Belyea, Deputy Town Manager of the Town of Woodstock, as our newest VLGMA member. I look forward to meeting Mandy in person in the near future.

[Contact Greg Kelly](#)

Position Changes

January 2017

- John Rowe, former Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Emporia city manager, has been sworn in as mayor of Portsmouth.
- Art Anselene, town manager for Herndon since 2007, and, prior to that, parks and recreation director for 30 years, has announced his retirement effective February 28th.
- Dennis Carney, planning and zoning administrator for the town of Windsor, has been appointed manager/clerk for the town of Keysville. He is Keysville's first



town manager.

- Jim Chandler, assistant city manager for Caribou, Maine, has been appointed deputy town manager for public works for the town of Amherst.
- Jack Berry, former Hanover County administrator, CEO for Venture Richmond, and Richmond mayoral candidate, has been appointed interim assistant city manager for Petersburg.
- Bill Ashton, information technology director for the town of Herndon, has been appointed interim manager there.
- Robert (Bob) O'Neill, former ICMA executive director, Fairfax County executive, and Hampton city manager, has joined Davenport & Company.
- Joshua Farrar, deputy manager and interim manager for the town of Ashland, has been appointed manager there.
- Clarence Monday, recently retired administrator for Pittsylvania County, has been appointed interim manager for the town of Appomattox.
- Douglas Smith, city manager for Margate, Florida, has been appointed city manager for Colonial Heights, effective in March.
- Rebecca "Becky" Dickson, former deputy administrator for Chesterfield County and administrator for Goochland County, passed away after a valiant battle with cancer.
- Doug Fawcett, Fredericksburg's director of public works since 1997, and a CAO in several localities prior to that, has been appointed assistant city manager there.
- Ande Banks, acting deputy city manager for Harrisonburg the past 7 months, has been appointed deputy manager there.

Implementing LEAN

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for Operational Excellence



Speakers from all over the country share their knowledge about implementing lean principles, changing culture and tackling leadership challenges.

March 1-2, 2017

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Please contact Erin Burcham for more information erinb1@vt.edu or 540-767-6145.

Cyber Security a Growing Risk for Local Governments



Cyber Security a Growing Risk for Local Governments

A cyber breach can be caused by something as simple as a stolen laptop.

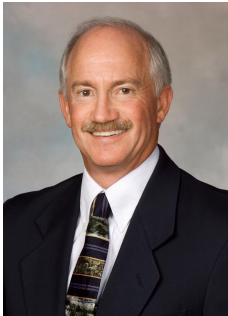
Recently, a school insured by VML Insurance Programs (VMLIP) filed their first cyber claim based on just that - *a stolen laptop*. The laptop contained personal information, including the names, social security numbers, and bank account numbers of more than 10,000 current and former employees.

Thankfully, they purchased VMLIP's Cyber Coverage and have access to privacy liability, recovery expenses and resources to assist them throughout the process - such as notifying customers, providing credit monitoring services, and obtaining public relations or crisis management services.

VMLIP members purchasing Cyber Coverage also have access to YourCISO, an information security portal providing security health checks; personalized consulting; cyber news and data; sample policies; training materials and more.

Be proactive about your cyber security. Contact VMLIP today for more information on protection through Cyber Coverage, recovery resources and prevention through YourCISO. Visit: www.vmlins.org for more information.

Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Developing a Thick Skin

Recent events have highlighted the need for politicians and other high profile government officials to develop a "thick skin," meaning the ability to absorb negative comments and press, or at least, keep them in context and perspective. For those new to government, and other very public positions, learning to withstand criticism can be difficult.

Here are a few thoughts and suggestions:

- 1) We all hear the negative more loudly than the positive. Don't give the negative disproportionate attention.
- 2) Only a small percentage of the population reads a newspaper, and even less listen to the radio. If you read or hear something via one of these outlets, remember that it's not reaching a large audience. Again, keep it in perspective.
- 3) Be careful when taking on a newspaper's editorial writer. Editors have unlimited supplies of ink or web page space.
- 4) There is a large silent majority out there. Most likely, the loud voices that you hear at government meetings do not represent the whole community. They are the exception, not the rule.
- 5) You take what's expressed in a blog, newspaper, radio, or on TV more seriously and more to heart than the average individual. To most, it's just one story among many.
- 6) Check the source on blogs and Facebook and Tweets...it's easy for these to be highly emotional opinions and not facts. Read in moderation and verify by alternative sources, and certainly don't respond. Treat them cautiously.

It's hard not to react or respond to untruths and misinformation. By developing a thick skin, you can keep your eyes on the ball, and avoid the distractions that, unfortunately, will always be there.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Thirty Years of VLGMA

Thirty years of VLGMA

June 30, 2017 is the thirty year anniversary of the merger of Virginia county administrators, city managers and town managers into VLGMA. Some sessions at our Summer Conference will relate to this celebration. As preparation, some

of our members will reflect on our past and their future expectations in the newsletter.

Brenda Garton is a recent VLGMA Past President of VLGMA. She served on the VLGMA executive board and served as our association president in 2014-2015. Brenda is the current Frederick County Administrator. She previously served as County Administrator of Gloucester, Orange and Prince George. Brenda is a dedicated member of the VLGMA Professional Development Committee.



Brenda Garton

New Member of VLGMA - A Look Back to 1994

By Brenda G. Garton
Frederick County Administrator

When I started as a County Administrator in Orange County in December of 1993, I was coming from the private sector. Having been a high school mathematics teacher, a CPA working for an accounting firm, and the controller for a manufacturing plant, I had a variety of background skills to help me make the transition. But, of course, local government is a different animal! So, someone suggested that I join the Virginia Local Government Management Association, and I joined in July of 1994. I really cannot recall all of what I expected upon joining, but I know that I wanted to be part of a group of professionals and I wanted to learn from others in this new profession I'd chosen.

I can recall the first VLGMA conferences I attended - there was a sea of men, and not many women. Believe it or not, I'm an extreme introvert, so it was VERY hard for me to reach out to meet new folks. On top of that, everyone seemed to know everyone else really well. Initially, I honestly felt very peripheral and that I would never fit in with this obviously very close-knit group. WRONG! Every member of VLGMA was SO welcoming and warm. Twenty-three years and four localities later, the change was so gradual that I'm not sure I can tell you how/when it happened that I ultimately felt like part of the group, made some wonderful friendships, and fit right in.

ICMA data will tell you that we have a long way to go with women in the profession. Every single manager that I know - most of which belong to VLGMA - work hard to welcome ALL new folks into the profession, offer to help, mentor young professionals, and do everything within his or her power to promote the profession and encourage folks to join the ranks of local government managers.

I cannot emphasize enough how wonderful and welcoming VLGMA has been to me, how much the support and camaraderie from the members has meant to me over the years, and how much I have learned from other local government managers. There just is no way to place a value on it. I ALWAYS come away from interactions with other VLGMA members and from our conferences with a boosted morale and new ideas. I ALWAYS feel supported and valued. Always. Every single time. Thank you all!

So, what's the future of VLGMA? We all need to do our best to encourage new managers, as well as aspiring managers, to join the organization. The profession and the organization need youth, new ideas, and diversity to survive and grow. I

know, without any shadow of a doubt, that VLGMA will keep changing to meet the needs of its members going forward. For me, I feel truly honored to belong to such a professional group with such wonderful members. I know that those who are considering joining or who are new to VLGMA will soon feel the same way as well. Don't be intimidated by us old-timers! We were once newbies too!

[Contact Brenda Garton](#)

Spotlight - City of Chesapeake



Chesapeake An American City & Counties 2016 Crown Community

One of 6 recognized for extraordinary projects.

The article is [here](#).

Certificate News

THE Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management



*"Preparing the Next Generation of
Local Government Leaders"*

The Certificate program is off to a great spring semester. And, with every semester, there are always changes. This spring, the Certificate program welcomes York County Administrator Neil Morgan as a new professor. Also, Staunton City Manager Steve Owen is also beginning to teach in the classroom at Blue Ridge Community College, offering another in-person location for the program. In a change of format this semester, Program Director Stephanie Davis and Henrico Deputy County Manager Anthony Romanello are team teaching a course. This will give our students twice the opportunity to hear from seasoned professionals in the field. In addition to the new and revamped professors, the Certificate program has also added a new site in Fauquier County. As new technology becomes available, the Certificate program is able to reach out to even more areas across the state. The opportunities are proving to be almost endless.

If you are interested in any of the Certificate's courses or programing, Stephanie Davis is always willing to answer questions. Feel free to contact her at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.

John Thomas and the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

As many of you know, John Thomas, has stepped down as director of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. In that capacity, he also served as the director of the Virginia Institute of Government. In answer to the question, "Where is he now?" he has provided the following statement:



John Thomas

John Thomas has brought to a close his twenty plus years as Director of the UVa Weldon Cooper Center and Virginia Institute of Government. Effective January 2017 he begins the next phase of his career as a partner in the Richmond-based public service consulting firm DecideSmart. In this role, he joins long-time professional colleagues Lane Ramsey, Bob Holsworth, Bill Leighty, and Will Davis as they provide their experience and expertise to the complex problems of Virginia state and local government. John can be reached at: jpthomas121@gmail.com or the decidesmart.com website.

A DAO in the Life - Laura Fitzpatrick

Getting Results as an Assistant While Keeping the Manager in the Loop

I have spent the past twelve years as an assistant or deputy in three different cities working for five different city managers. Though these experiences have each been unique, a common thread is the importance getting results on behalf of the city manager while keeping her informed.



Laura Fitzpatrick

Communicate regularly.

Regular communication is the cornerstone of being a good assistant. A tool I have employed with many city managers is a standing weekly meeting at which I run through an agenda of updates. These meetings serve to keep the manager in the loop and can also be opportunities to collaborate. Typical agenda categories include topics sorted by department, elected official inquiries, citizen issues, and special projects. When appropriate, it is also helpful to delineate topics using the categories of background, next steps, direction requested (when needed), and options (see below). I draft the agendas with the principle in mind that you never want your boss to have to take detailed notes in a meeting with you. As such, the agenda should have the critical points outlined. This creates a useful takeaway for the city manager.

If a standing meeting is not a good fit for your manager, carving time out for an update at lunch is another option. Regular communication using the aforementioned parameters can also be accomplished in other discussions and over email.

Present options and recommend one.

A city manager is relying on her assistant to assess situations and analyze issues. For some issues, we need the city manager's concurrence on a course of action. In these instances, I present options after laying out the facts. I always recommend an option and explain why said option is preferred. Make it easy for the manager to make a decision by providing good information and well-thought out options!

Invite input, but keep it moving.

One of the potential pitfalls for results in an organization is the CAO Office becoming a bottleneck while waiting for a decision by the manager. An assistant city manager can preempt unnecessary bottlenecks by inviting input while keeping an issue moving. I do this in email messages by presenting the intended

course of action and indicating, "Unless you say otherwise I am proceeding this way." Or, invite the boss to weigh in by stating, "I am proceeding as outlined herein unless you would like me to change course." Welcome city manager input and make it easy for her to weigh in, but do not require it to move to next step. Obviously, use judgment when employing this tactic. It may not be appropriate for major decisions that the manager might want to discuss in person or delay.

Caveat

Each assistant/manager relationship is unique. Every manager is different. Your work approach should be tailored to what works best for your boss as she is the one that signs your paycheck! When in doubt, ask the city manager how she would like you to proceed as you work to get results on her behalf.

[Contact Laura Fitzpatrick](#)

Civic Engagement - Chesterfield County

A Guide To Effective, Meaningful Engagement

Most agree that civic engagement is an integral part of good governance. The ideas and knowledge gained by engaging with the public we serve drive improvements and ensure that decision makers, including elected leaders, are well informed throughout the decision-making process. But with so many engagement options to consider, engaging with the public in an effective and meaningful way is often a daunting task. Our fast-paced world, replete with so much information at our fingertips, and even on our wrists, means we're busier than ever before. And it's no different for the people we serve. The days of scheduling a public meeting - the standard-bearer for engagement as we used to know it - are all but over. But that doesn't mean that some of the tried-and-true methods of gaining the public's input are dead. Often, it's just the opposite. It's all a matter of how we apply a host of engagement tools, some old and some very new. The key is no different than it's ever been: identifying your audience and selecting the right tool for the job.



To provide departments with an edge when it comes to planning an engagement strategy, Chesterfield County enlisted a team of individuals from departments that regularly engage with the public. An idea hatched from their discussions: Let's build a guide that helps departments build engagement strategies. Today, Chesterfield County departments with a need for the public's vast knowledge use a playbook, the "[Seven-Step Guide to Community Engagement](#)." The guide helps departments and teams:

- Drill down topics and identify resources
- Define target audiences and determine desired levels of engagement
- Identify engagement tools and facilitation techniques
- Develop a communication outline or plan
- Make the most of an engaged audience
- Maintain open communications with the audience(s)
- Develop short- and long-term criteria to measure results

To build the guide, the team boiled down engagement from a seemingly endless array of possibilities to just seven easily digested steps. They recognized that a

lengthy document, though well intentioned, probably wouldn't get much attention in the reality of the modern workday. Best of all, the guide, which is delivered to employees via the county's intranet site, is designed to be fluid. The beauty of the guide, we believe, is that the information and techniques it includes can be applied no matter how robust the engagement needed. Use one step, three steps, all seven steps. It's up to those applying it to take from the guide what they need, use it, and then assess how well it worked. All the while, members of the county's Communications and Media Department, which led the guide's development, are available to consult departments and teams on their engagement efforts. The guide has helped departments recognize that social media isn't the only way to engage in 2017. Like other things, it's a tool that has its place and time. Most successful engagement efforts incorporate multiple tools, because in local government, there's often a need to engage with multiple audiences, the needs of one audience sometimes being vastly different from another.

Arguably there's no department with as great a need to engage regularly with the public as our Planning Department. Members of the department were heavily involved in developing our Seven-Step Guide to Community Engagement, and they've also applied much of the guide to their daily efforts to engage on many projects, including several special area plans designed to be part of the county's comprehensive plan. A great example of Planning Department staff changing how to engage was their efforts to take their message to their audience, rather than expecting their audience to come to them. For instance, they cooperated with our public library to have staff attend children's story times at the library. While the kids were listening to the stories, planning staff engaged with moms and dads about a special area plan focused on their community. Planning also worked with schools to engage similarly at PTA meetings and back-to-school nights. They even attended pizza night. Another effort saw planning staff visiting a popular restaurant in a community - a great way to strike up conversations and gain meaningful input from citizens living in the area. For another project focused on bikeways and trails in the county, planning took its engagement efforts to area YMCAs. They recognized that YMCA's mission for healthy communities melded with planning's efforts to incorporate more opportunities for active living in the community through bikeways and trails.

Just when we thought government meetings were passé, we realized they were still needed among our engagement efforts. But rather than the typical speaker-Q&A format, we adopted open-house style workshops. Citizens come when it's convenient to them over the course of three or four hours. There, they find opportunities to talk one on one with county staff. County leaders, including elected supervisors, often attend these workshops, too. Citizens who shy away from approaching a mic and addressing a panel of government officials in a regular meeting format often find their voice with the individualized attention available at these workshops. And it's not just planning staff who have realized the benefit of holding such workshops. When our Budget and Management Department realized a need to engage citizens to define county priorities, they used similar workshops held at libraries and other easily accessible facilities. Complementing such efforts all the while was information being distributed via social media, email and the county's website, making the most of engaging with audiences in various ways.

Through our efforts to redefine how we engage with the public, we've learned that what's even more valuable than the information gained is the lasting relationships successful engagement helps to build with the community we serve. Like so many things, effective engagement is a moving target. Those relationships help to ensure we stay aimed in the right direction.

Thanks to Dave Goode, Public Information Manager for Chesterfield County (author of article) Joanne Simmelink and Heather Barrar for contributing to the article.

Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

A Priceless Pearl

A priceless pearl to find
the stillness of an open, receptive mind.
Abiding in this home, what sublime rest
from all of the day's mesmerizing worldliness.

The silence within is the reveille
that awakens our soul from earth's fantasies.
The temporary, aging, fragile, ephemeral
tastes the real and eternal.

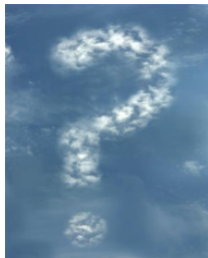
In this timeless, liberating state
unconditional Love permeates
with an invitation to
our Oneness, preview.

How healing is our willingness
to realize our inner-connectedness.
All life revealed to be
a spiritual, integrated, harmonious symphony.

We give this priceless pearl
whenever we offer unconditional love to the world.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Innovation Edge



What are other local governments doing in this area? Where do you go when you need help? How do you access the knowledge needed to tackle new challenges? Can I be of assistance? In this article series, we look at some of the

[questions in the Knowledge Network](#) so that you can see what is on

the mind of other local governments and lend your expertise. The Alliance network is defined by its innovative, thoughtful, and public service oriented members and friends. Your contributions to the profession are endless, but so is the need for continuous learning. By sharing your answers and questions...read more [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

Calendar

Upcoming Events

VLGMA Winter Conference - February 15-17, 2017 at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton. **Registration closes February 1st!** Conference materials and registration [here](#).

VLGMA Executive Committee Meeting - February 15, 2017, 11 a.m.-12:45 p.m. at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton.

VLGMA PDC Meeting - February 17, 2017, 12:30 p.m. at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton.

[More Dates](#)

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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