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Maurice's Musings



Maurice Jones

Maurice's Musings

We are now about a week away from the 2018 VLGMA Winter Conference. This year's theme "Brave Leadership During Challenging Times" is an honest assessment of the world we find ourselves in these days and the growing need for true leaders. At every turn there seems to be another threat to face down - the opioid crisis, strained race relations, the growing wealth gap between income classes. At times, it feels as though democracy itself is under attack. However as I have expressed in previous newsletters, there is hope. It resides in city and town halls and county office buildings around Virginia. It resides in each of us. We just need the time to put the noise of our busy days aside. To stop putting out fires and focus on what we need to do to sharpen our tools and strengthen our resolve.

This conference, any conference really, is a perfect opportunity to get away from the day to day operations of local government and to pick up some tips from leading experts and practitioners, and just as importantly to exchange ideas and commiserate with your colleagues. While attending a VLGMA or ICMA conference I know I will find an empathetic ear around every corner. I have gained invaluable insight from those ten to fifteen minute conversations with my colleagues in the

hallways of the conference center or at dinner or a social event. It's time well spent.

For me personally these conferences are also an opportunity to recharge my batteries. I have them circled on my calendar because I know I will come back refreshed, armed with new ideas to improve my organization or to help me take better care of myself and my family. Professional development is the top priority for these gatherings but personal growth must be considered as well. Finding that ever elusive "work-life balance" is difficult. VLGMA has endeavored to offer at least one session each conference centered on managing the stress of our professional lives and our needs as human beings. Next week, Allison Linney from Allison Partners, LLC will lead a discussion on "remaining calm and reflective" - an appropriate topic for these difficult times.

These conferences simply would not happen without the help of your peers and colleagues from around the state. Thanks, as always, to the wonderful staff who support VLGMA, the Professional Development Committee (PDC) and the Winter Conference co-chairs, Leslie Beauregard, one of my Assistant City Managers here in Charlottesville and Laura Fitzpatrick, the Deputy City Manager in Chesapeake, for making this a special event for our members. I have been directly involved with producing three conferences during my ten years with VLGMA. It is a worthwhile experience that I highly recommend. And we are still searching for co-chairs for the Summer Conference. Please let the PDC Committee Chair, Craig Meadows, know if you are interested in co-chairing the conference. I promise you will meet a ton of good people and learn a lot in the process.

I hope to see each of you in Charlottesville next week. If for some reason you cannot make it to the winter conference, please consider putting the summer conference, June 20th - 22nd in Virginia Beach, on your schedule now. It will give many of us something else to look forward to as we continue our efforts to solve the complex challenges that we all face.

Please help me in welcoming our newest VLGMA Members Ron Carlee, Dir., Center for Regional Excellence, Old Dominion University and Samuel Finz, Town Manager, Town of Lovettsville.

[Contact Maurice Jones](#)

Position Changes and Other Events

January 2018

- Mark Reeter, administrator for King William County, resigned. Deputy administrator and finance director, Bobbie Tassinari, has been appointed administrator.
- March Altman, deputy city manager for Petersburg, has been appointed city manager for Hopewell, effective February 5.
- Carol Steele, parks, recreation and tourism director for Gloucester County, has been appointed assistant county administrator for community services there.
- Bret Schardein, director of community development for Powhatan County, has been appointed assistant county administrator there, effective February



1.

Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Get Ready!

Congress recently passed "tax reform" (read "cut"), and is making a wild assertion that it'll be revenue neutral over the long term. On the contrary, what it will do is explode the deficit by \$1.5 trillion unless an unprecedented sustained growth, never before experienced by the US economy, magically materializes. This "reform" also comes at a time when business is already healthy. It's about as valuable as giving sugar to a hyperactive child.

Enter phase two of the grand plan, which is to take immediate, across-the-board actions to attack the self-expanded red numbers. The mantra will be: The deficit is going to ruin the country if strong and decisive action is not taken right away.

So what gets nailed?

1) **Entitlements** Medicare, not an entitlement but referred to as such, may become need based, even though everyone who has worked has paid into it and expects equal benefits. Same with Medicaid, which serves our most vulnerable populations. Social Security? Again, not an entitlement, but probably not in the crosshairs since it is protected by federal legislation requiring a super majority to make programmatic changes.

2) **Domestic programs** Programs like Community Development Block Grants (enacted in 1975), and all other grants and aid to localities, will be under strong attack. Federal education support will not be immune. Get ready to hear, Education is the responsibility of states and localities. The list of vulnerable programs will be endless- from the national parks to public broadcasting to research.

3) **Foreign aid** Regardless of the political and health consequences around the world, the cuts will be numerous.

Bottom line: everything but the Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice Departments will be subject to massive cuts.

As former ICMA executive director Bob O'Neill noted prophetically some years back when speaking to local government administrators from across the country, "be ready to be on your own."

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Spring DAO Meeting



ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

Save the Date for the Spring DAO Meeting

Date: Friday, April 13, 2018

Host: County of Arlington

Url: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/>

Stay tuned for more information!

New VLGMA Website is LIVE



Please bookmark the new VLGMA website at:

<https://icma.org/virginia-local-government-management-association>

Weldon Cooper Center on Social Media



On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WCCPS/>

On Twitter: @UVACooperCenter

Certificate News

The spring semester is in full swing. The students are busy at work getting their first assignments turned in and looking forward to the brief respite of spring break right around the corner. In addition to the class work, though, the Certificate program also focuses on collaboration and networking among students and local government professionals.

For our students in class this semester, there will be three classes meeting during the VLGMA Winter Conference on Thursday afternoon. This will be a group class to help the students network and interact with each other. Anyone in attendance at the conference is welcome to stop by and meet the next generation of local government leaders.

**THE Graduate Certificate
in Local Government
Management**



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

If you or someone you know is interested in the Certificate program, Director Stephanie Davis will be planning recruiting sessions this spring. Feel free to contact her at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.

DAO in the Life - Cecile Rosenbaum

Is Time Really Up?

We have all heard in the news lately of the "Time's Up" movement that originates in Hollywood and focuses on equality and safety for females in the work place. As fate would have it, I recently had to tell my Mom about an incident of sexual harassment that I faced since working for the Town of Abingdon. The subject of Matt Lauer and his dismissal from the Today Show came up while we were having dinner and my Mom quietly asked, "Cile, have you ever been sexually harassed at work?" I debated about telling her but then I reminded myself that she loves me unconditionally and dammit, I did not do anything wrong. So, I told her about the day I got in the elevator at the Town Hall with a male employee and he pushed me against the wall and tried to kiss me. I shoved him backwards and luckily the doors opened and I ran to my car and went home. When I returned to the office, I mentioned the incident to a male colleague. The response was "why did you get in the elevator with him? You know his reputation."



Cecile
Rosenbaum

Certainly not the answer I wanted, but never having faced this before, I was not prepared. I am wondering if others out there in local government have had a similar incident or, as a manager, have you dealt with an incident like this in your workplace and are you satisfied that it was dealt with in a fair and caring manner?

My Town Manager, Greg Kelly, refers to me often as "the hammer" because I tend to confront things head on so everyone can get over it and move forward. However, in my particular incident, my inner hammer disappeared and did not make waves in my workplace. Was that the right way to handle it? No, but at the time I did not push the matter and I did not want to show any signs of weakness.

We, as Managers/Administrators, females and males, have to ask if we have done enough to protect our female employees, our female department heads and female administrators. Is Time Really Up? Are the females in our organizations paid equally for the same positions as males or are they supervising male employees who make more money than they do? Is Local Government immune to a very loud movement originating in Hollywood, of all places? I think not. If the recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia have taught us anything, it is that national, politically charged issues can happen right here in our beautiful Commonwealth of Virginia and they can rock those of us in local government to our very core.

As an Administrator or a DAO we must wake up and be aware that these types of events exist despite them often going unnoticed or unreported. We must all be brave enough to make bold decisions in spite of political consequences.

Sometimes, Time Really Is Up, and our profession ethically demands us as leaders to step up and confront injustice so that we can prepare a better working environment for the "next generation" of local government leaders. So, today, for me as a female Assistant Town Manager I have to ask Is Time Really Up? Is local government in Virginia doing its part to make females in our organizations equal and safe? Let us all take a hard look and be prepared in case Hollywood comes to visit us.

And as I often remind Greg, my calm, cool, collected Town Manager, always remember, "hammers are people too!"

[Contact Cecile Rosenbaum](#)

Civic Engagement - Chesterfield County



Sarah Snead

Email is a survivor among engagement tools **Sarah Snead, Chesterfield County**

Sometimes, it's the tried-and-true methods of engaging that make all the difference. As social media consumes increasingly more of the time we spend working to engage, it's important to not overlook the effectiveness of one of the oldest communication technologies at our disposal: email. Though social media garners a lot more discussion, email is still a mainstay for how we communicate at work and with the masses.

Savvy communicators know email is still the king of communications technology, despite social media's rise, and despite the fact that email traces its roots to the early 1970s. And it's not going anywhere soon. Who would want it to? It works. For most, email is critical to navigating their professional and personal lives. As local government employees, we complain about how much email fills our inboxes and how much time it takes to digest it. But we digest it, anyway. The public does, too. Aside from spam, email is where we maintain a bit of control over the barrage of information we receive, and that equates to trust. We place more trust on an email from a known or selected source than we do for most of what clogs our social media feeds. Judging by the strong open rates achieved by Chesterfield County's weekly email newsletter, Weekly Update, the public also maintains a lot of trust within their inboxes, which is why we continue to value email as an engagement tool and invest in its use.

Chesterfield County has long provided residents a newsletter, which has gone through many changes over time. Once a print product of various forms and under different names - for several years its equivalent was even printed among the pages of a local shopper publication - the newsletter's one constant has been its ability to be recognized as a trusted source of county-specific information. And perhaps nowhere else has our county newsletter garnered more attention than as a newsletter delivered via email. Among all the things competing for Chesterfield residents' attention, Weekly Update upholds a fairly high status. It regularly achieves open rates exceeding 30 percent - industry experts say anything over 20 is outstanding - and subscription numbers continue to rise, with few choosing to unsubscribe. In fact, percentages of county residents subscribing to Chesterfield's e-newsletter compare to the likes and follows on our Facebook and Twitter sites. Considering the amount of time invested daily among staff to develop social media

content, then post and tweet it, our e-newsletter's return on investment is arguably higher because, collectively, it takes much less time to produce.

As social media users figured out long ago, online readers have short attention spans. So, we keep content pieces in Weekly Update brief and link to details for readers who choose to absorb more, driving readers to our website. We save time by using an email marketing service and the templates it provides, making it efficient to plug in text, images, video links and graphics. While the main portion of the e-newsletter carries countywide information, links are maintained to individual pages on the county's website that carry readers to information specific to their magisterial districts. Because those district pages are updated regularly, production of the e-newsletter is seldom hindered by the need for fresh content. We also use Weekly Update to cross promote popular local government services and programs, as well as our social media feeds. Social media content is often repackaged for the e-newsletter and vice versa, another significant timesaver. Boil it all down, and our e-newsletter carries a truckload of engagement potential that shows its - and email's - worth each week.

The e-newsletter isn't the only way we engage with email. Residents who want to receive notices about upcoming community meetings and other programs receive email notifications, as well. At most meetings and programs, we solicit contact information from residents, especially email addresses, to keep building our audience. Best of all, residents choose what, if anything, they want to receive by email, further building trust. Subscribing to Weekly Update and other email notifications is easy at chesterfield.gov/enews.

Over time, we've learned that the best engagement plans include lots of tools, new and old. For more information about Chesterfield County's e-newsletter, contact the Chesterfield County Department of Communications and Media at 804-748-1161. *Or, even better, email us at cm@chesterfield.gov.*
[Contact Sarah Snead](#)

Innovation Edge

Registration is OPEN for the 2018 Transforming Local Government Conference

Register now for the [2018 Transforming Local Government Conference](#) (April 3-6 in Tacoma, WA). As the premier thinking conference for local government, TLG is recognized for its dynamic content, which encourages team building, free things and fosters unprecedented ideas.



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.

Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Feel the Push

Times of change push us to realize
that we have reservoirs of strength inside.
And a spiritual acuity that beckons us to explore
beyond our habitual door.

We want to scuffle for the familiarity of the known
rather than salute the mystique of the unknown.
Our true Self emerges in response to suffering and pain
supporting our venture into the spiritual domain.
Without our worn-out crutches, wings appear
to lift us out of depression and fear.

Change isn't happening TO us.
It's happening FOR us.
It's pressing us to discover and use
our untapped, limitless attributes.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Calendar

Upcoming Events

Winter Conference - February 14-16, 2018 at the Charlottesville Omni Hotel.
Online registration is closed.

Summer Conference - June 20-22, 2018 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Sheraton
Hotel. More info in the Spring.

[More Dates](#)

Update Email Address



Making a change? To continue to receive the monthly eNews and other VLGMA notices, please email [Molly Harlow](#) to update your contact information.

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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