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Randy Wheeler

Well, 2014 is finally here. The general theme of the New Year's Eve party I attended was, "I'm glad that 2013 is over. Hopefully, 2014 will be better." Two things stood out, one was a general recognition that 2013 had more than its share of problems, but the second and more encouraging thing was that folks really did seem to have a sense of optimism for the New Year.

I had the same sort of feelings but really couldn't put my finger on why. I was still pondering the "why" when I got back to work and there waiting in my e-mail queue was a New Year's card from my friend and long-time VLGMA colleague, Brenda Garton. The card began this way, "A New Year is a reminder to celebrate all the good in your world."

I spent some time thinking about that simple message and how it applies to my life and the more I thought about it the more optimistic I became. I challenge each of you to take a moment to reflect on the good things in your world, to consider how fortunate you are to live where you do, to have the privilege of serving your community and to be in a position to make a difference in the lives of others. Feeling optimistic yet? I am. May God bless you and your family in the New Year!

I would also like to welcome our newest members Mark Haley, Hopewell City Manager; William Vaughan, Rockingham Assistant County Administrator and Wayne

Strickland, Roanoke Valley-Allegheny Regional Commission Executive Director.
Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

Tedd's Take



Do not legislate by anecdote

With the new year comes rekindled hope that things will get better, and those who hold much of our localities', states', and nation's future in their hands will exercise enlightened leadership to plot a prudent course for the future.

In that vein, I heard a one-line statement not long ago that resonated strongly with me, and I sent myself an email to use it in an upcoming "take". It is...

"Do not legislate by anecdote."

While it is always important to add the human element to important discussions, and relate a policy or programmatic issue to how it will impact individuals in the short and long runs, we have all experienced "legislation (decision-making) by anecdote". It also seems there is more and more going on all the time.

Decisions are made to take action, enact a new or revised policy, or even pass a law based on individual/one time events and limited or no other input. Events that may impact a very few or actually be of minor consequence are accelerated to a level of prominence by any number of methods including social media, a noisy talk-show host, or noted op-ed writer, just to name a few. Legislators, regardless of governmental level, feel immediate and intense pressure to "do something" without thorough analysis, consideration of precedent, or debate.

If I had access and opportunity, I'd put

A DAO in the Life

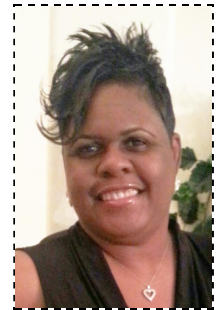
I've been with the City of Portsmouth for over 20 years, and this is the first time that I've written an entry for publication. My initial response was to panic, and eventually realization set in and I was able to gather my thoughts to explain one of the many roles of a DAO.

The responsibilities of a DAO are many and vary among municipalities. Though it's a challenging and highly demanding job, the responsibilities of a DAO are equally interesting with no two days being the same. Our contribution to the organization is significant, especially as it relates to the communication process between city officials and the general public. For example, sometimes our officials are quite naturally consumed with the day-to-day operation of running the government and they need to hear a different perspective. This is where DAO's must be able to focus on solutions for merging the goals of the community with the goals of the organization. With this understanding and without political agendas, our communities will continue to grow and prosper as, together, we achieve the common goal.

[Contact Dee Wright](#)

Certificate News

Happy New Year! In this time of reflection and new beginnings, the Certificate program sits between one semester ending and another beginning. We celebrate the



a little sign in front of every city/town council member, every county supervisor, every state and federal representative stating; "do not legislate by anecdote". Just step back, take a breath, and examine the issue in a timely, efficient, and considered manner. Let the noise be just that - noise, and allow time to determine whether something is a mature issue in need of attention.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Innovation Edge



At the TLG Conference in Denver, April 23, 2014, up to ten Alliance for

Innovation members will be selected to receive awards in excellence in local government innovation. Among these awards are the J. Robert Havlick Award for Innovation and the Thomas H. Muehlenbeck Award for Excellence in Local Government. One of the many benefits of Alliance membership is your eligibility to apply for one of these prestigious awards. Applications will be accepted through January 24, 2014. Find out more about applying for an Innovation Award [here](#).

As your regional director, I encourage 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.

Calendar

Upcoming Events

[VLGMA Winter Conference](#) - February 19-21, 2014 at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville - **materials available online**

VLGMA Summer Conference - June 18-

fact that last semester had a record enrollment for the program across five courses with two new professors. This put us on track for another all-time high number of graduates this year and our alumni ranks burgeoning to approximately 130. Next semester, we look forward to welcoming new students, a new faculty member, a new course location, and a new graduate assistant. This truly is a great time for the program!

Success stories abound in the program. One student from last semester gave the program particular praise. Heather Childress in the Lynchburg Fire Department said that "this program was so enjoyable that it prompted [her] to finally apply to graduate school and work on a Master's degree." Heather has just begun her work on an MPA, and she says, "I know I am just one person, but I hope the program remains strong and continues to get people excited about obtaining graduate degrees." We are proud of Heather and all of our alumni and look forward to hearing great things from them in the future.

So, if your New Year's resolution has anything to do with self-improvement, the Certificate program is in the perfect position to help. While it is too late to start this spring, it is never too early to start planning for the summer or fall. Bob Stripling, when he is not skiing the slopes on the holidays, is always ready to talk about the Certificate program.

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

Find the Certificate online:



Mel's Poetry Corner

January

Two faces gazing

20, 2014 at the Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel

[More Dates](#)

VLGMA Members In the News

Folks in Southwest Virginia know Jonathan Sweet as a county administrator; he's been managing Grayson County for almost five years, after six years at the helm of Bland County.

At 24, he was the youngest county administrator in VA. But unless they stumble across the fall issue of the National Fitness Trade Journal or another fitness magazine, few realize the Grayson County native is also a model.

"Yes, that's me," Sweet says. "I've done some fitness modeling for Nautilus' new product ads."

Read more [here](#).

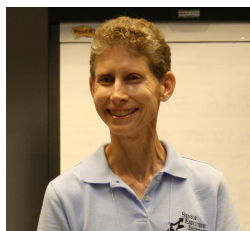
[Contact Jonathan Sweet](#)

VLGMA Members Meet on VML Day

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.

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 Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.



Mel Gillies

upon me,
the implications
of January.
The past, trailing all of
history behind
lingering on my present
time.

Future beckoning
loudly ahead,
attend to me instead!
I will occupy your mind
in a hypothetical virtual time.

January loves to teach
and each moment speaks -
my gifts are cold, dark, and pure
to be treasured even more.
For if beauty is experienced now,
it is possible all year round.

Calendars attempt to map out
and out earthly sojourn to count.
Infinity cannot so easily be contained
in a twelve month frame.

[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-**

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!

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 Harlow](mailto:Molly.Harlow).



Quick Links

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)

[Website Contact](#)



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