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Randy's Ramblings



Randy Wheeler

Randy's Ramblings The Last Rambling

It is with a sense of sadness that I share with you the last "Rambling". As I prepare to join the ranks of the past VLGMA Presidents at our summer meeting, I wanted to take just a moment to say thank you to all of you for your hard work and dedication to VLGMA and to our profession. Ours is not an easy calling, but it is a rewarding one and it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as President

this past year.

As I was thinking about a subject for my last article I stumbled upon a recent piece from the ICMA entitled "When things go wrong, should you sack the culprit?". This specific article peaked my interest because I once had an experience that tested me and my organization but helped define me as a leader despite receiving a fair amount of criticism. In my case, I had an employee who had her laptop stolen from an unsecured conference room. Given the nature of this employee's position, it was possible that personal information for both employees and some citizens may have been compromised and in this age of identity theft may have caused a real problem for hundreds of people. We moved quickly to alert those that may have been affected and took extraordinary and expensive steps to protect them from identity theft. We dealt with the problem clearly, publically and honestly. Our efforts were, in my opinion, the right thing to do. They were also embarrassing for the organization. In deciding how to react to the situation we had to weigh the embarrassment and cost of acknowledging the problem and dealing with it pro-actively against the risk of the alternative strategy of laying low on the chance that the information would never be used. There was a good chance nothing would occur as a result of this theft, but if it

did the impacts on those affected might have been disastrous. Given these two choices, I think that it is easy to understand why we made the choice we did. In fact we never really considered the second option.

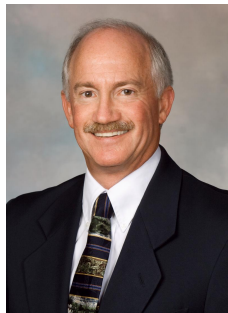
One nagging issue throughout the whole process was questions/demands relative to the responsible employee being fired. I chose not to do this and here's why. In this case, the employee immediately brought this issue to our attention. She was very forthcoming and honest with us, which in turn helped to identify the potential problems and deal with them. Her actions following the theft of her computer were exactly what you would hope for. She risked her reputation and her job by coming forward when she could have turned a blind eye in the hope that nothing would happen, exposing the organization and the individuals affected to great risk, but she didn't - much to her credit. In addition had we terminated her for coming forward with bad news, what kind of message would that have sent to the rest of the employees about how they might be treated if in the future they were faced with the same choice. We did the right thing, in a difficult situation and in the face of harsh criticism at times. That is what leaders do. When I look back on my career one of the things I am most proud of is how we dealt with this situation. At no time did we take the easy choice, but I would like to think at all times we made the right one.

I would also like to welcome our newest member India Adams, County of Albemarle Fellow. Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Home v. Dillon Rule tested in West Virginia

A recent newspaper article highlighted a trial program on Home Rule involving 4 localities in West Virginia. I downloaded the special report dated November,

2012, and think it might be of interest to Virginia's local government community.

The report by the West Virginia Legislative Auditor - Performance Evaluation and Research Division (similar to Virginia's JLARC) contains some very interesting findings. A summary of that report follows. (Spoiler Alert! The program's success in the initial 4 cities has resulted in the West Virginia legislature authorizing an expansion to 20 localities.)

Program description:

In 2007, the Legislature created the

A DAO in the Life

"Stepping up to the Plate"

I am a baseball fan. In my house we root for the Pittsburgh Pirates (Go Buckos!) and growing up I was a New York Mets fan. My interest in baseball goes back to my teen

years when I was a certified umpire with the Eastern Virginia Officials Association. The game of baseball has taught me many life lessons. One that stands out is the notion of "stepping up to the plate." As Deputies, Assistants and Others (DAOs) we have the opportunity to take on new challenges at our own request or sometimes at the request of our CAOs or elected officials. We as DAOs are "next in the batting order" and have a chance to "step up to the plate."

For me "stepping up to the plate" has



Jodi Miller

Municipal Home Rule Pilot Program and the Municipal Home Rule Board to oversee the program. The program gave broad-based home rule authority to participating municipalities (Bridgeport, Charleston, Huntington, and Wheeling) by allowing them to implement ordinances, acts, resolutions, rules and regulations without regard to state laws, rules and regulations, with the exception that proposals had to comply with the U.S. Constitution, the West Virginia Constitution, federal law, chapters sixty-a ("Uniform Controlled Substance Act"), sixty-one ("Crimes and Their Punishment"), and sixty-two ("Criminal Procedure") of the West Virginia Code.

Results:

The Board has been diligent in its review of each municipality's application and subsequent proposals. The Board also facilitated dialogue between the pilot cities and affected state agencies, and it monitored the progress of city proposals through quarterly reporting.

The Board approved all 25 proposals. Of these, 20 proposals, or 80% of the total, were either fully or partially implemented. These proposals have proven beneficial to the participating municipalities by increasing revenue, streamlining administrative matters, strengthened city fee collections practices, simplified business licenses, and more. The program has also proven beneficial to the entire state, as several proposals were either implemented into state law or resulted in the modification of state regulations.

Given the success of the program and the benefits to the participating municipalities and the state, the Legislature should consider granting broad-based home rule to all Class I, II, and III municipalities. The Legislative Auditor assumes that the intent of the

meant taking on new challenges or assignments with the City even when I was not sure I was the "right batter" for the job. Every time I decided to "step up to the plate" I learned something, both professionally and personally. I have hit "home runs" and have "struck out," but in the end it was a growth experience for me. In the season of America's national pastime, I challenge each of us to "step up to the plate" more. Take on new assignments and be willing to take on the difficult challenges. As Babe Ruth said "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from coming up to bat."

At the end of the game, your willingness to "step up to the plate" will benefit you and your community. Batter Up...

[Contact Jodi Miller](#)

Innovation Edge



When was the last time you took an hour-or a day-to think about the future? What will your community or your office be like 10, 15, 20 years? And what changes do you need to make now to be prepared for the changes that are coming?" These and other thought-provoking questions will be what Rebecca Ryan asks at her workshop, Manage Like a Futurist in Cary, NC on July 30 at SAS. The cost is \$75 for Alliance members, and \$99 for non-members. Either way, it's quite a value for a day-long workshop with Alliance's resident futurist. Read her full [article](#) from the Alliance May Newsletter. I hope to see you in Cary.

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.

Mel's Poetry Corner

Legislature was to determine if home rule authority could be expanded to all Class I, II, and III municipalities without the continuation of the Home Rule Board; therefore it is recommended that the Home Rule Board be discontinued if home rule is expanded statewide. The Legislature can choose to maintain the current restrictions on home rule authority or further restrict the authority if it believes it desirable or necessary; however, the Legislative Auditor does not find it immediately necessary for the Legislature to further restrict home rule authority.

Something Virginia should consider?

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Certificate News

This past month, the Certificate program celebrated another great milestone as it welcomed another class of students into the ranks of alumni. The past academic year has offered many challenges and rewards for all of the students' hard work. Our newly-minted alumni all deserve hearty congratulations.

Perhaps the best part about graduation, though, is seeing the young alumni enter into the professional ranks. While we are proud of all alumni, the young Certificate alumni truly represent the next budding generation of local government leaders. Three recent Certificate alumni, all of whom have also earned their MPAs, stand out as rising stars in the field. Cody Sexton, the former graduate assistant for the Certificate program, accepted a job this spring in the Botetourt County Administrator's Office as the Information Specialist. He is in charge of research, data analysis, public information, and special projects for the office. "I love



Mel Gillies

Summer Soulstice

Light stretches, touches,
and probes
the nothingness of dark,
exposed.

A surrendering to the
present tense,
past and future into
now dispensed.

The deepest yearning of my soul
hungering to be whole.
Not a journey of the mind
but an experience of a holy kind.

Ah, therein lies the leap,
the risk to peep
into what awaits beyond the sky,
am I immortal or doomed to die?

Perhaps die to a self-image
stagnant and glued
to yesterday's habituated attitudes.
What will I be when spiritual energy
is fluently expressing me?

Summer stillness to ripen
and mature
and to be rendered
gently fruitful for
a divine purpose revealed
to a soul now receptive, healed.

When imminent, ready, ripened, you
cannot miss
your summer soulstice.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Facebook Update

May slowed down for your Facebook group posters. Mary Jo Fields led the way with 38 posts to the VLGMA Virginia Local Government News group, followed by Matt Hankins with 20 and John Edwards and AnneMarie Dimond Green with one each.



local government, and I am excited to be working for Botetourt on high-level projects. The Certificate program truly prepared me well for hopefully a long career in public service," said Mr. Sexton. Before coming to Botetourt, Mr. Sexton interned and worked for Stafford County in the County Administrator's Office and the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities.

Joining Mr. Sexton in the ranks of young professionals in local government service are Brandon Gann and India Adams. Mr. Gann is returning to intern in the Town of Vinton this summer after a tremendously successful internship last summer with the Town Manager. He has also just finished interning with Montgomery County's Economic Development Department. Mr. Gann truly is passionate about local government and is excited to be learning more in order to launch his career. Lastly, India Adams will be joining the Albermarle County team as the Local Government Fellow. Ms. Adams has lived all across the state and recently worked as the Legislative Liaison Graduate Assistant for Virginia Tech in Richmond. Her knowledge of the state and the political process will surely make her an asset for any local government.

These three young professionals are just a small sampling of the members of the next generation of leaders preparing to spread their wings. If you are interested in learning more about the Certificate program and its students, contact Bob Stripling. He is currently filling the entering fall class and can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



Topics of note included local government reactions to the U.S. Supreme Court's prayer ruling, the retirement of Roanoke County administrator Clay Goodman, and setting of tax rates and budgets throughout the Commonwealth.

Please help us out by posting news from your corner of the Commonwealth. If you're not a member of the group, search for the group on Facebook or contact [Molly Harlow](#) for instructions. This closed group gives administrators and staff the opportunity to share news that could be helpful in other communities, so help build knowledge within the profession by pitching in with your news!

[Contact Matt Hankins](#)

[Calendar](#)

Upcoming Events

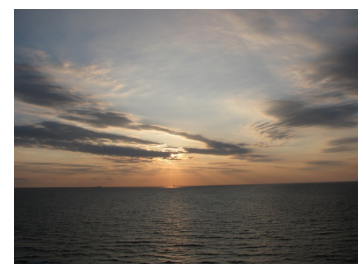
DAO Meeting - June 3 at the Hotel Roanoke

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

[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](#).

Quick Links

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