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A Life Lesson From the Side Line



Randy Wheeler

If you have read some of my previous columns you know that one of the things that I enjoy most is coaching youth sports. There are a lot of parallels between coaching a team and "coaching" an organization, but as my own kids get older and move on to different opportunities I find myself increasingly on the side line as a spectator.

This provides a different perspective and has helped me gain additional insight as a leader, particularly in the area of public engagement. I can boil it down to four life applications:

Communication: As a coach one of the most basic and important elements of feeling like we are part of a good organization is communication. Timely and concise information on practices, games, and registration is a prerequisite to being on a good team. The same can be said for being part of a good local government team. Simple things like listing Council agendas on the web and posting community calendars or timely information on social media help our citizens to see us as an information resource and transparency is a cornerstone to good government and maintaining the public trust.

Response: A good coach encourages honest communication between players and their families. Whether it is a question of coaching philosophy, playing time or technique, the best coaches take the time to provide honest feedback in a

constructive and non-defensive manner. As a local government leader we are challenged to do the same thing. Whether it is an employee or a citizen that has an issue and no matter what else is on your plate, taking the time to focus on their question or concern and dealing with it honestly, quickly and clearly promotes understanding, confidence and conveys the message that every person is important. I frequently tell my staff every time we get a complaint or question, it is an opportunity for us to exceed someone's expectation.

Explanation: For me this lesson was brought home recently when my son started playing lacrosse. I know almost nothing about lacrosse which is true of most of the parents on the side line with me. We often are at a loss to understand what just happened. The best referees and coaches take the time to explain penalties and techniques to both the parents and the players. The same is true for local government leaders. I have found that regardless of how many times the Council or City has dealt with an issue a few minutes of explanation helps make sure that everyone is up to speed. This promotes both understanding and informed participation.

Leadership: The best coaches are exceptional leaders. From the way they run practice, make personnel decisions, promote team building and accountability for performance, good coaches are easy to spot. They are attentive, consistent, engaged and passionate. This looks like a pretty good job description for a local government leader to me. Your organization looks to you as its coach. You are expected to exhibit these same leadership skills every day. For the local government manager or administrator, we often think of ourselves as serving a unique position within our communities which in many ways is true, but I would encourage you to look for examples of leadership (or lack thereof) in your community and in your life that can help you hone your leadership skills. I have found that some of the best life lessons I have learned have come from unexpected places.

I would also like to welcome our newest members Mallory Stribling, Fauquier Management Analyst and Bryan Freeman, Wytheville Planning and Com. Dev. Coordinator. Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

Jack Tuttle to Receive Prentis Award



Jack Tuttle

Tuttle to Receive Prentis Award

Williamsburg City Manager Jackson Tuttle will join an

amazing array of civic-minded stalwarts as the 2014 recipient of William & Mary's

A DAO in the Life

Spring has finally sprung! The flowers are blooming and the grass is growing! So now it is time for us to consider our growth in terms of professional development. As busy as a DAO's life can be we can overlook the importance of scheduling professional



Cindy Mester

Prentis Award.

The award, which is given each year to recognize those individuals in the Williamsburg community for their strong civic involvement and support of the College, will be presented to Tuttle on May 13 at 5:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Wren Building.

Read [more](#).

Contact [Jack Tuttle](#)

Daley Appointed City of Emporia Assistant City Manager



Ed Daley

Daley Appointed City of Emporia Assistant City Manager

Emporia City Manager Brian S. Thrower has announced the appointment of Dr. Edwin C. Daley as Assistant City Manager.

Daley has 40 years of experience in local government management. He presently serves as Projects Administrator for the City.

Thrower believes Daley will do an outstanding job as the City's new Assistant City Manager. Thrower states, "Dr. Daley's educational background and extensive local government management experience make him the perfect choice for the position." Mayor Person states, "I look forward to Dr. Daley's continued work with the City and his leadership on the various projects he is coordinating. His extensive knowledge in local government will make him a valuable asset to the City of Emporia."

Daley is working with other City staff members to coordinate capital projects such as the W. Atlantic Street Neighborhood Improvement Project, East Atlantic Street Widening Project, the Belfield Business District Revitalization Project, the South Main Street Enhancement Project, and the West Atlantic Street Sanitary Sewer Replacement. He is also assisting staff with coordinating animal shelter improvements,

development time, but we know that is not good for the organization we support or for our work life balance.

But have no fear, we have a solution for you! Come join the next DAO bi-annual meeting on June 3rd in Roanoke at the Hotel Roanoke. John Nalbandian, from the University of Kansas School of Public Affairs & Administration will be helping our minds bloom and grow. As a follow up to his presentation at a recent VLGMA conference session, Mr. Nalbandian will take the concept of the Manager/Administrator working the gap between political acceptability and administrative sustainability and apply it to the DAO's role. The presentation will identify three leadership challenges: 1) department heads working the gap without becoming politically compromised or losing support of staff; 2) aligning structures of authority (boundaries) with problems to be solved; and 3) connecting engagement emphasis with his four values.

Check out the VLGMA website for registration information (coming soon). I look forward to seeing everyone for a great professional development opportunity in the DAO in the Life.

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

Certificate News

The April showers have finally come, albeit late and with a

vengeance, and they are bringing with them more than May flowers. When the storm clouds finally break, the Certificate program will



storm drainage improvements at the Emporia Industrial Park, and an emergency power connection for the Municipal Building.

Daley and his wife Karen have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Contact [Ed Daley](#)

Tedd's Take



Trust in Government

A recent report about a Gallup Poll conducted in late 2013 caught my eye. It talked about the relative level of trust citizens had in their state governments.

Tedd Povar

Let's get the elephant out of the room quickly-Virginia ranked somewhere in the middle with 62% responding that they trusted state government either "a great deal" or "a fair amount." (The other answer options were "not very much" or "not at all.")

The most positive responses were in North Dakota at 77%, and the worst (no surprise!) were in Illinois at 28%. The next lowest were in Rhode Island and Maine at 40%.

Noteworthy in all this was the direct correlation between a state's population and its average trust percentage. The ten most populous states had averages of 52%, while the 10 least populous states received averages of 63.1%.

These numbers serve to reinforce the truism that citizens trust and appreciate government that is closest to them. Not surprisingly, being able to see the direct relationship between taxes paid and services received is key. The more populous states, and certainly the federal government, have a higher bar to cross to achieve citizen satisfaction as their functions and services are more remote and less recognizable. When services trickle down from on high, it is harder to answer the question, What am I getting for my tax dollars?

To see the full report, visit:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/168251/illinois->

have a new crop of newly minted graduates. Whether they move on to the MPA program or invest more in their localities, these students are armed to make a difference in local governments throughout the Commonwealth.

We at the Certificate program, however, know that the four-course program is just one component of our mission. We strive to make continuous education and constant development extend beyond the classroom. As a result, the Certificate's first professional development conference will be at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center on June 2nd and 3rd. This will be an excellent opportunity for future and current students to expand their education and for alumni to reengage with professors and the local government community. Some of the local government luminaries who will be in attendance include: Bob Stripling, Certificate Program Director; Bonnie Svrcek, Past-President of ICMA and Lynchburg Deputy City Manager; Kim Payne, Lynchburg City Manager; Rob Stalzer, Fairfax Deputy County Executive; Cindy Mester, Falls Church Assistant City Manager; Stephanie Davis, former Powhatan County Finance Director and Certificate professor; and, Dr. John Nalbandian. Registration and more information for the conference are available here:

<http://www.cpe.vt.edu/lgm>.

As is evident, the Certificate program truly is thriving, but it can only continue to do so with new students who are energetic about engaging with the profession. Bob Stripling is currently recruiting for the fall courses when not planning

[residents-least-trusting-state-government.aspx](#)
[Contact Tedd Povar](#)
Innovation Edge



With the TLG conference behind us, it is a very good time to reflect on the outstanding case studies that were presented, available to all Alliance members on the TLG Conference web site [here](#). Many session rooms were SRO, even flowing into the halls!! The keynote presenters were on point, and their messages resonated with all attendees. As usual, the networking opportunities were exceptional. If you were not able to attend the conference, please check out the [web site](#), take a look at the case studies and join in the buzz that only the Alliance can create!

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.

Facebook Update

March may have continued our cold winter, but that gave our Virginia Local Government Facebook News Group the opportunity to post record activity with 158 articles posted. Mary Jo Fields posted our best month ever, with 69 individual posts of news stories of interest to local government administrators. Bill Rolfe added 44 articles, Matt Hankins 39, John Edwards five and Judson Rex one. Articles focused on local and state budget impacts, environmental issues and of course, the winter weather.



As April warmed us up, activity cooled down to only 75 posts of local government news. Mary Jo again led the way with 43 articles (a cool 112 articles in two months - way to go!), followed by John Edwards with 14, Matt Hankins at 13, Charles Hartgrove at 2, and Bill Rolfe, Brannon Godfrey and

his next great vacation. He is currently scheduled to be in Newport News (700 Town Center Drive, 2nd floor conference room) on May 9th at noon. If you are interested in attending or want him to come visit your locality, he can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Little Things of Spirit

My spiritual garden is filled with invisible little things that live and dance and leap and flash and whirl and beneath a mushroom curl.

My friends chant and hum and keep in rhythm with the birds' symphonic tweet. They shine every morning, glow in the night and perform a tango in the moon's entrancing light.

They have found a door that lets them pass into my receptive consciousness. I'm sure they'd love to visit you if you are willing to let them through all the seriousness of the day for only with the childlike do they play. Sometimes they plant an idea or two just to surprise and awaken you.

You can't see them but you can feel

Garrett Jackson with one each.

As always, we encourage you to post to this closed group so we can share information of interest with one another. It just takes two clicks to share a link that could help one of your colleagues be more informed! Members of VLGMA are eligible to join, and if you need instructions, [email Molly Harlow](#) for help. Happy posting!

[Calendar](#)

Upcoming Events

DAO Meeting - June 3
Materials coming soon by email and on the [VLGMA website](#).

VLGMA Summer Conference - June 18-20, 2014 at the Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel - materials available [here](#)

[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](#).



their wispy breath
and sense that you have been blest
by these little moments
that arise and spark
the fire of love deep in your heart.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Host Region Discount and State-Based Scholarships

Host Region
Registration
Discount



ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

Any ICMA member from the host region who is attending his/her first annual conference is eligible to receive \$200 off the conference registration fee. The host region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Also, any nonmember in the host region who joins ICMA can receive the \$200 registration discount PLUS half-price ICMA membership for a year.

Quick Links

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