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Brenda Garton

Brenda's Bytes

Gratitude. That's what I'm feeling today. The word has gotten overused, popularized. We're supposed to keep a gratitude journal. The hype makes it seem trite.

But, it really isn't. How much lovelier a world would we live in if we all started our days with an attitude of gratitude? If we focus on what we HAVE and what is good, instead of what we don't have and the problems and issues. Seriously. I don't mean that you can or should ignore the problems and issues -- just that if the underlying foundation is focused on the good, don't those problems and issues seem less earth shattering and more solvable?

As I leave my post in Gloucester County, I have been running on high speed for weeks - taking care of details, leaving information for the Interim Manager, packing up my office, trying to reach closure, saying goodbye. Now that my last day has come and gone, I can

take a deep breath and reflect.

I am thankful for many things professionally. I am thankful for being blessed for the last 6 ½ years with Department Directors who are capable, bright, cooperative, supportive, committed, and motivated. I'm grateful for Board members who sincerely have the good of the community in their hearts. I appreciate an entire staff where folks know, love, and support their co-workers, care about their children's accomplishments, enjoy community events together, and participate in employee events to send cards to military folks serving our country and gift bags to residents of nursing homes. I am lucky to have a new locality where the governing body has decided that I'm the right person to serve their community. I am thankful for a wonderful profession with hugely supportive colleagues. I'm thankful for having even landed in this profession and for being able to make a good living and provide for my family.

On a personal level, I am thankful for my husband who loves, supports, and "gets" me. I am blessed with a mother who would literally walk through fire for me and always has. I appreciate my two sons and the two special ladies in their lives who couldn't make a mother more proud. My brother and his wife and family add richness to my life that can only happen with a loving sibling who had the same experiences growing up as I did. And, certainly, our three canine children add joy to our lives every day.

I have food to eat, a comfortable place to live, places to go, and things to see. I mean - ice cream. How can something BE that delicious? And, when was the last time you went to a national park? I didn't even realize how many national parks there ARE in this country until I looked it up. How awesome is it that our country has set aside huge tracts of land for us all to enjoy?

On a broader level, I feel so lucky and blessed to have been born in this country and in this state. It really doesn't get any better, does it?

When I take the time to pay attention, I am inevitably blown away by the simple beauty of a flower, the complexity of a hovering tiny hummingbird, the richness of color in a breathtaking sunset, the refreshing smell of the ocean and the soothing sound of the waves, the tinkle of a baby's giggle, the quiet of a nighttime sky full of an unimaginable number of tiny stars.

I suspect your list is pretty similar to mine, but with different details. So, I encourage you to stop right now and think about your life - the whole of your life. Forget the stressors, the negatives, the pressures, and the problems you have to solve. In this moment, stop, take a deep breath, and think about (or maybe even write down) the positives, the loving people in your life, the blessings, the beauty around you, the WONDERFULNESS that is your life.

Maybe that gratitude journal isn't such a bad idea after all. Now, where is that journal and a pen.....

-Brenda

Contact Brenda Garton

Tedd's Take



Cleaning up the Parking Sign Mess

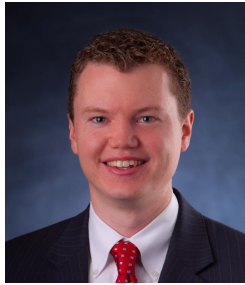
Once in a while, the ICMA Smartbrief has an item or two that hit a nerve. The one issued on April 9th carried two such items: 1) how certain

Tedd Povar cities in California are seriously considering desalination plants to address the growing drought, and 2) how Los Angeles is implementing a trial project using new parking sign designs.

New Yorker Nikki Sylianteng has her masters in fine arts in interactive design, and apparently has gotten a few too many parking tickets. She's taking on the issue of confusing, frustrating municipal parking signs, trying to make the world just a little easier to live in.

I think we can all easily recall many incidents where we looked at multiple parking regulatory signs and could not make heads or tails out of what was or was not permitted in that particular spot. These new sign designs go a long way toward deconstructing and simplifying these mysteries. The title of the article referenced by the Smartbrief clip is, "LA's New Parking Signs are Brilliant, and Every City Should Copy Them." I could not agree more, and here's a sample (there are more for different applications).

A DAO in the Life

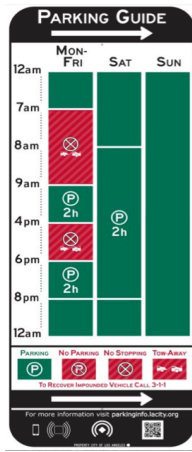


Danny Davis

A large group of Deputies, Assistants, and Others (DAOs) showed up in Fredericksburg on April 24th for the spring DAO meeting. The meeting began with an icebreaker "quiz," where attendees learned that Fredericksburg was founded in 1728, is approximately 52 miles from Washington, D.C., and hosts about 1.1 million visitors a year. The big draw of the day was hearing from an esteemed panel of experienced managers: Tony Griffin (retired Fairfax County Executive), Art Anselene (Town of Herndon Manager), and Bob Middaugh (former James City County Administrator and current Loudoun County Asst. Administrator). The panel discussed issues such as dealing with an elected body, managing work/life balance, differences between large and small jurisdictions, and even the dreaded question: how to handle being a "manager in transition." The group really appreciated the panel's insight and honesty about the enjoyment and challenges of sitting in the "big chair."

The final session of the day extended some of the morning's themes by considering how to empower staff by giving control for decisions. A great leadership video (found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqmdLcyES_Q) described that authority can be pushed down to those with the best information when a culture is built on competence and clarity. The group discussed the principles of this idea, challenges in implementing it in an organization, and ways to support our managers in promoting this mindset.

The next DAO meeting will be held in historic Abingdon on October 16th. More information to follow, as Abingdon Manager Greg Kelly



[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Position Changes April, 2015



- Mark Reeter, administrator for Bedford County since 2013, has announced he is stepping down from that post effective April 30th.
- Neil Morgan, former Newport News city manager, and currently senior fellow for Virginia Tech's Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement, has been appointed York County administrator, starting June 15th.
- Jim Spencer, Tazewell County administrator, is retiring from that post effective May 1st. Jim has served the county for 22 years in several capacities.
- Patricia Green, deputy administrator for Tazewell County, has been appointed interim administrator there.
- Kenny Eades, long-time Northumberland County administrator, has announced his retirement effective December 31st.
- John Rowe, city manager for Portsmouth, was terminated. He had previously announced his retirement effective June 30th.

promises great topics, a beautiful setting, fall leaf peeping as well as an opportunity to stay over for some R&R and family time.

[Contact Danny Davis](#)

VLGMA Summer Conference June 10-12, 2015



The VLGMA Summer Conference is slated for June 10-12 on the Virginia Beach Oceanfront at the Sheraton Hotel. The committee has a great

event in store focusing on community resiliency and sustainability. The 2015 Summer Conference will begin on Wednesday with a 2.5 hour ICMA mini workshop led by Felicia Logan - a great opportunity to gain credentialing credits.

The Wednesday session is included at no additional cost. After that session, Wednesday night activities will follow and we hope to have a little extra fun in store! Stay tuned for more details. Thursday a full day of enrichment is planned beginning with interactive discussion from a local police department on the value of mindfulness, then moving into an eye opening presentation about human bias and building trust in our communities facilitated by a variety of law enforcement professionals. After lunch we will hear from one of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities that is located right here in the Commonwealth, the City of Norfolk. Closing out Thursday will be a facilitated session on the book "To Sell is Human" by Daniel Pink followed by a panel discussion on Poverty in Virginia. This book gives insight into perspective and how to offer a clearer message when communicating on a daily basis. Friday morning Nick Carnes, the Co-Director of the Scholar Strategy Network at Duke University will lead a dynamic session, entitled Inclusion and Decision-Making on the role of political leadership in building strong, resilient communities. The program will conclude right before the business meeting with an interesting twist on the "How I Manage" series, with Ron Carlee on the Emotional Resilience of Managers.

- Brannon Godfrey, deputy city manager for Portsmouth, has been appointed interim city manager there.
- Selena Cuffee-Glenn, city manager for Suffolk since 2008, has been named chief administrator for the city of Richmond by Mayor Dwight Jones, pending city council approval.
- Mark Jinks, deputy city manager for Alexandria, and interim manager since January 2nd, has been appointed manager there.
- Jim Spencer, former Tazewell County administrator, has been appointed community and economic development director for the city of Bluefield, West Virginia.
- Garrey Curry, assistant administrator for Gloucester County, will serve as acting administrator until the Board formally appoints an interim administrator.
- Carl Boggess, attorney for Bedford County, has been appointed interim administrator there.

Certificate News



Stephanie Davis

May has finally come, and the end of the semester is here. Even though there are still some lingering chills in the air, when the newest Certificate alumni graduate in a few weeks, all of our hearts will be warm with pride. The students have worked hard the past few months, and we are happy to see them go back to their local governments armed with new knowledge.

Our graduating students are not the only ones, however, who will be transitioning this month. Bob Stripling's

The full conference schedule and registration form are online [Here](#)

Online registration is encouraged and credit card payments can only be accepted through the online system.

[Contact Amanda Lickey](#), Conference Co-Chair
[Contact Wyatt Shields](#), Conference Co-Chair
Jack Hobbs: Getting Good Services in a Small Town



Jack Hobbs

by Su Clauson-Wicker

Things have been going well in the little Virginia town of Amherst, VA. Ongoing work is keeping the once problematic water and sewer lines in good form, even during February's record-breaking cold snap. Two new health clinics are opening, and Amherst's fine local restaurants are luring visitors. Best of all, town council was able to suspend real estate and personal property taxes due to a healthy general fund.

Then Sweet Briar College announced its closing.

Sweet Briar provides 10 percent of the town's water revenue; combined with sewer revenue from the school, almost \$150,000 may not be coming in. Clearly, Amherst (population 2,231) could be hurting from the lack of revenue and the diminished ability to get loans for upcoming construction work, loans which are dependent upon the town's utility revenue.

"It's a blow," said Amherst Town Manager Jack Hobbs. "As our mayor says, we're going through the five stages of grief. Right now our thoughts and prayers are with the college community, but we should think about what's next and prepare for it. Sweet Briar has a 3,250-acre campus of beautiful buildings with auditoriums, a natatorium, horse stables, and pasture - surely, it's a wonderful opportunity for the right organization."

In 22 years at Amherst's helm, Hobbs has seen a lot of ups and downs. He started at a low

tenure as Certificate Program Director will end this month. While we are sad to see him go, we are excited for what he may do next and even more excited that he can pass the torch to a great new leader. Stephanie Davis, a familiar face in local government and a former local government practitioner, has been appointed to be the new program director. Stephanie has been teaching in the program for a number of years, working on her doctoral studies in public policy with a focus on local government, and has spearheaded the recent development of the online Certificate program. She has also been an integral part of developing the Public and Non-Profit Finance Certificate at Virginia Tech. We know that Stephanie is a great choice to lead the next chapter of the Certificate program, and we wish her the best.

With so many transitions and accomplishments this month, people can often lose perspective on what started their journeys in the first place. The hardest part of any endeavor is usually deciding to begin. Bob will continue actively recruiting through August (or until his VT polo shirts wear out) and can be reached at 540-448-1102 to help anyone begin the journey. Stephanie can be reached at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549 for future information.

Find the Certificate online:



Certified Public Manager Program(CPM)
School of Policy, Government and
International Affairs
George Mason University



ebb, when the town was dealing with frequent water main breaks. Water and sewer rate increases combined with a controversial annexation resulted in all the town's elected officials being voted out of office. Hobbs feared for his job.

"I looked at my week-old son and wondered what would happen to us," he said.

But everybody pulled together to fix the problems, Hobbs said. The annexation doubled Amherst's population, increasing revenue. Eventually all major water and sewer facilities were renovated and/or expanded. Citizens grew to understand that even iron pipes have finite lives and the need to replace infrastructure is constant. Hobbs, a civil engineer, learned the complexity of competing demands on the water system, from rate-payers to firefighters to environmental regulators to land developers.

As the commercial, educational, and legal hub of Amherst County, the town now serves almost three times its population during the working day. Today, Amherst maintains 40 miles of waterline and about 20 miles of sewer pipe, and current projects include installing two miles of 12-inch waterline and rehabilitating nine miles of sewer line.

Hobbs holds a B.S. in civil engineering from Virginia Tech, a master's in engineering from UVA, and an MBA from William & Mary. He and his wife, Peggy, who works for a global energy company, have a son, Jay, a junior at William & Mary.

[Contact Jack Hobbs](#)

[VLGMA Civic Engagement Article](#)



Cindy Mester

April 2015 Local Government
Education Week:
What did our Virginia
Localities do to Spread the
Word?

As described in the January edition of this newsletter the first week of April is Local Government Education week honoring the formation of the Council-Manager

On January 8th, George Mason University's School of Policy, Government and International Affairs (SPGIA) had its first class for the newly-created Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program. This Program is designed to enhance the careers of those in public service management. The curriculum meets the criteria to be certified by the National CPM Consortium and is calibrated to provide management and leadership theory and practice to all enrollees.

The curriculum focuses on the 12 critical topics including strategic management, public budgeting and finance, governance and ethics. Students meet in person twice a month for 12 months to enable working professionals to spend meaningful class time with a cohort of peers exploring public administration management theory and strategy. Successful participants will earn the distinction as a Certified Public Manager enabling the use of the trademarked logo CPM following their name.

The first class was recruited from public safety agencies in Northern Virginia. With the experience gained from administering the first class, GMU will look to expand the CPM Program statewide. It is anticipated that the Program will be offered by region when a sufficient number register for the CPM Program. There is an Advisory Board for the Program to which VLGMA has appointed Cindy Mester, Assistant City Manager, Falls Church. The Program is directed by Tonya Neaves, Ph.D., at the Mason's Center on the Public Service (703-993-9377 or psc@gmu.edu). Dr. Neaves can be reached at tneaves@gmu.edu.

UVA Cooper Center Center for Survey
Research (CSR)

Dear VGLMA

form of government in the City of Staunton, VA. Celebrating this 1908 milestone helps to acknowledge good community building work, educate on all local government services provided at the local level, and to increase student's awareness of career opportunities in local government. This also helps us strengthen interest in local government management/public service as a viable career.

VLGMA/VML and VACo partnered together to ask our locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring this week. This is the third year, since the General Assembly designated this week and our participation rate increased significantly from 5 localities to 15. The adopting localities represented a variety of towns, cities, counties and ranged from large to small as well as rural to urban, quite diverse. We are pleased with this outcome but we still only reached about 3% of possible localities so next year we will strive to increase the participation rate as that translates to more students learning about their local government services as well as about the career field. If you haven't forwarded your proclamation to myself, as the Civic Engagement Committee chair, is not too late as the final report will be presented at the VLGMA summer conference.

However, adopting a proclamation is not enough to really engage with the local school district and the young people of our community. Many localities have developed specific engagement plans and activities that meet your local need. This year there were a great variety of activities such as service learning projects, citizen academies, mock council meeting, high school work programs, 101 educational series, shadowing and reading about "City Hall" to elementary students. Additional resources are also posted on the [website](#) that include a great elementary school level book, high school teachers' resource guide with lesson plans and a report of various civic engagement best practices used by VLGMA members.

Feel free to contact me at cmester@fallschurchva.gov with additional ideas or questions.



Tom Guterbock

members and friends,
It seems everyone is doing a survey these days, but all surveys are not created equal-and some of them don't work out that well.

Perhaps the results aren't quite as relevant as you'd hoped, or you question the meaning of some of the statistical analysis. Technology is changing, and so is the world of surveys. How can you be sure you are getting up-to-date, representative, and accurate data about your community?

The Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia is here-right in your own backyard-to help. We are a "survey shop" with some unique tools to offer. Most important, we customize your locality's project, from beginning to end:

We ask questions you want asked.

We custom-design the sample used, to emphasize coverage of the variety of groups in your locality.

We customize the data-gathering methodology to suit your needs:

- Our telephone surveys incorporate the latest sampling design to ensure cell phone and landline coverage, fully capturing the diversity of your community.
- Our web-based surveys are hosted through Qualtrics, a user-friendly but sophisticated platform for survey design, data collection, and data-analysis. Qualtrics also facilitates direct collaboration with your agency and staff.
- We offer paper-and-pencil surveys, using the Tailored Design Method to enhance response rate.
- For in-depth exploration of an emerging issue, we organize and facilitate focus groups in your

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

VLGMA Marcia Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award

VLGMA Marcia Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award

Nominations are being sought for the 2015 VLGMA Marcia Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award. Completed nominations are due by May 15th to [Janet Areson](#). Please contact Janet for the form and with questions. **Harvard Kennedy School Scholarship Available to ICMA CAO's and Assistants/Deputies**



Bonnie Svrcek

Harvard Kennedy School Scholarship Available to ICMA CAO's and Assistants/Deputies

A few years ago I had the extraordinary opportunity of attending the three week in-residence "Senior Executives in State and Local

Government Program" at the Kennedy School at Harvard. This leadership program is a great complement to the Senior Executive Institute.

It was one of those defining moments in my lifelong learning journey. As and ICMA member (CAO or Deputy/Assistant) you are eligible to apply for a fully funded tuition scholarship valued at \$12,400. The scholarship is funded by The Ferguson Group. If interested, I encourage you to apply as soon as possible as the application deadline is May 8th and the session dates are July 6-24, 2015. For More information, [Click Here](#)

Innovation Edge



Imagine a football team without an inspiring coach, where none of the players know what plays will be run, or where communication is so bad that each player develops and runs his own plays independent of the others. Sure, opposing

locality.

- And of course, we can combine any and all of these modes to provide just the survey design your locality needs.

We provide just the kind of report you want, from a simple basic summary to a full published report, complete with tables, graphs, and statistical analysis. We offer in-person presentation of results to your locality.

In short, our specialty is in-depth exploration of issues that concern your locality. Don't hesitate to give me or my staff a call if we can answer questions or be of service to you or your staff. Perhaps our most important benefit is that we are in your backyard: we are a local organization that is well-positioned to understand the needs of Virginia counties, cities, and agencies.

Cordially,

Thomas M. Guterbock
Director, Center for Survey Research
Professor of Sociology and Public Health
Sciences
University of Virginia
Phone - 434-243-5223

Summary of Benefits Offered by CSR:

- Expertise in survey methods since 1988.
- Unparalleled reputation for rigor and independence.
- Staff with expertise in a variety of academic disciplines.
- Proven experience with a variety of public sector projects, including needs assessment.
- Expertise in sampling design for complex studies.
- Leading providers of mail and telephone survey data collection services.
- Proven process skills for building consensus around survey objectives, methods, and

players might be blocked, wide receivers would possibly run down the field, the quarterback would probably throw a pass or two or hand the ball off to a running back, and maybe even a touchdown would be scored. But would the team's hope of winning games and becoming champions of the sport ever be realized? Of course not! A successful team must have a coach who leads, great communication among its players, and an understanding by all that the actions or inactions of individuals can affect the overall success of the group. These same principles can be applied to the practice of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM). Read more about Yuma County's journey [here](#).

If I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at saburnett@transformgov.org, or 800-777-2509. [Contact Sallie Ann Burnett](#)

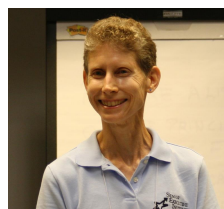
Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA)



Registration for our June 10th workshop Partnership Leadership: A Focus on Culture & Trust is now open. Please click on this link to register: <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/partlead/>

Please contact [Rosa Castillo Krewson](#) with any registration questions you might have.

Rosa Castillo Krewson
Program Coordinator for Professional Programs
rosac@vt.edu
Mobile: 703-895-3694
[Mel's Poetry Corner](#)



Mel Gillies

Let It Be

Breathe deeply and just let it be...
Release the impulse to control anything.
Resist resisting and instead with faith go

- techniques tailored to local needs.
- Experience in effective communication of survey results to decision-makers, elected leaders, and citizens.
- Resources of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.
- Reputation and legitimacy of UVA encourages respondent participation. Charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative and a charter member of the Association of Academic Survey Organizations (AASRO).

Find us on the Web: surveys.virginia.edu
 Find us on Facebook: University of Virginia Center for Survey Research
 Find us on Twitter: @uva_csr

Calendar

Upcoming Events

2015 VLGMA Summer Conference - June 10-12, 2015 at the Sheraton

Deputies, Assistants and Others (DAO) Meeting - October 16, 2015 in Abingdon
[More Dates](#)

Quick Links

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)

[ELGL](#)

[Website Contact](#)

allowing life to gracefully flow.

Where habits, judgments, beliefs had once been,
 the unknown and sacred can now gently seep in.

The willingness to become new precipitates a transcendent view, revealing the panorama of eternity, beyond the predictable, the solid and heavy, transparen..see.

By letting the Light shine through, all things, illumed.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

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](#).



[Forward email](#)



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