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Maurice's Musings



Maurice Jones

Maurice's Musings

I had the privilege to represent VLGMA at ICMA's Southeast Regional Conference a few weeks ago in Mountain Brook, Alabama. There were several important topics covered during the two and a half day conference, but one of the major themes of the conference was "Leading Courageously During Turbulent Times". We were blessed to hear from many of our colleagues around the country who provided excellent leadership during experiences of hardship for their governments and communities.

Another critical issue that was not on the agenda but definitely on the minds of managers in attendance and the representatives from ICMA was diversity in our workforce. The association presidents were given the opportunity to brief ICMA President David Johnstone, City Manager of Quebec, President Elect Karen Pinkos, Assistant City Manager of El Cerrito, CA and Executive Director Marc Ott on the state of affairs in our respective states. Diversity and inclusion was at the forefront of our conversation. Of course diversity conjures up different images for different people.

More often than not when people talk about diversity in their workforce they are focused on increasing the numbers of people of color or women or both in their

ranks. All of us in that room discussed how committed we are to growing diversity throughout our organizations but we all struggled with how to ensure that happens. I believe there are four important steps to take to effectively address diversity - Declare, Recruit, Retain and Promote.

Declare throughout your organization that diversity is important and explain why. Talk about implicit bias and how that may affect the way we hire and mentor people. Be prepared to address pushback from some in our organizations. These can be uncomfortable conversations at times but as leaders we need to set the standard and be steadfast in producing results.

Expand recruiting efforts to include associations that support people of color and women. Post your job ads on those websites. It ensures more people from different backgrounds are exposed to vacant positions and it sends a message to prospective applicants that your locality is committed to diversity.

Once you have more diversity in your workforce take steps to ensure those employees feel supported and given opportunities to contribute to the team in meaningful ways. Also encourage them to take advantage of career development and training opportunities within the organization. They need to obtain the skills necessary to be competitive for senior level jobs when they become available - which segues nicely to "promote".

Giving qualified candidates from different walks of life the opportunity to prove themselves in positions of leadership within your organization is critical. When looking to promote make sure to have a deep pool of qualified applicants to choose from, and make choices that support your vision of a more inclusive local government.

We all know increasing diversity in our ranks is not easy, it will not happen overnight and it will not be solved with a few paragraphs written by your state association president but it is absolutely necessary as the demographics in our country continue to shift. The expectations of an inclusive workforce that properly represents the communities we serve will continue to rise and it is crucial that we meet those expectations. Plus, it's simply the right thing to do.

Welcome to our newest VLGMA members Steven Sandy, Franklin County Director of Planning & Community Development; Sara Carter, Amherst Town Manager; William Kerbin, Jr., Onancock Town Manager; Carol Steele, Gloucester Assistant County Administrator; David Whitlow, Retired Manager; Ann Harranty Shawver, CPA; Eric D. Campbell, Harrisonburg City Manager and Stephen Willoughby, City of Richmond Director of Emergency Communications.

[Contact Maurice Jones](#)

Position Changes and Other Events

April 2018

- Cody Sexton, management assistant for Botetourt County, has been promoted to assistant to the county administrator there.



- Greg Kelly, Abingdon town manager, resigned effective May 7th. Police chief Tony Sullivan has been appointed interim town manager.
- Charles Hartgrove, deputy city manager for Lynchburg since 2016, resigned.

Tedd's Take



Tedd Povar

Thank a Reporter

One of the toughest jobs in local government isn't in local government at all—it's that of newspaper reporter. My perspective has been shaped by working with small town reporters for weekly publications as well as having conversations with a beat reporter for the major daily newspaper in Richmond. While certainly different, the jobs face the same fundamental challenges.

I can't imagine having to learn about, and accurately report on, a complex local government issue one day, and then having to move to an entirely different subject the next. The reporter has to become knowledgeable enough about each subject to write a clear and understandable article without significant factual errors. The issue may be something the city administration and/or elected officials have been working on for weeks or months; but the reporter must quickly try to understand the basics and nuances of the matter in order to produce a clear presentation of the facts and highlight the critical elements. And, in many cases, it all has to be done in just a few hours.

It's no surprise that many in the press look a bit disheveled occasionally. After all, they run from appointment to appointment, knowing that at the end of the day, their notes must be converted to fit into a well written, finite number of column inches.

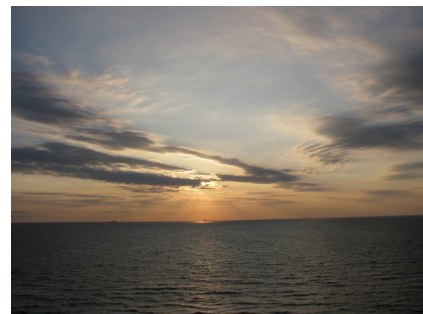
Sure, we've all had heated disagreements with the press because of misreporting, distortions, or contrary editorials, but the vast majority of reporters I've known have tried to be fair, representing the issues without prejudice. For members of the Fourth Estate, their job is both thankless and wrought with tripwires but absolutely critical to the health of our system of government.

Take a moment to thank a reporter for the job they do...they receive praise about as frequently as you do!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

2018 VLGMA Summer Conference

Join us for the 2018 VLGMA Summer Conference June 20-22 at the Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel! This conference continues and builds off of our amazing winter conference with the theme: "The Doctor is In: Facilitating Healing and Growth in the Midst of Conflict and Controversy." Our focus is on how we, as managers, can be agents of reconciliation and relationship-building in our organizations, communities and world.



- Deborah Roberts will lead a pre-conference workshop, "Courage: Strategies for Stability Amid Chaos" that you do not want to miss! She will share how we can proactively employ strategies for success despite the odds.
- Dr. Blue Wooldridge of the National Academy of Public Administration and VCU' Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs will share insights into what creates perceptions of inequality and injustice and how managers can influence reform and healing and reduce the possibility of conflict.
- Stephanie Davis of Virginia Tech will present findings from her research into the benefits, barriers and considerations around regional collaborations in Virginia.
- A panel of experienced retired and active managers will share frank lessons learned from their successes (and, perhaps, failures) dealing with community conflicts.
- Speed coaching and Roundtables are back!
- Jeff Mincks, Chesterfield County Attorney, will present "How Elected Officials Think," an illuminating and engaging session based on true stories.
- Ken McFadyen, President of the Virginia Economic Developers Association, will speak to localities' perspectives on economic development and changes at the Virginia Economic Development Partnership as well as General Assembly items.
- And something new...come ready to compete in our first ever Paint Night! Enjoy an evening of food, music, fellowship and creative expression!

The conference schedule is online. Join us for a time of focused learning, networking and much needed recharging!

Bret Schardein and David Moorman, Conference Co-Chairs

[Conference Website](#)

[Online Conference Registration](#)

[Online Sheraton Hotel Reservations](#)

A DAO in the Life - Diane Rebertus



Diane Rebertus

What's so bad about being third?

Diane Rebertus, Director of Library Services
Gloucester County, VA

Everybody wants to be first...winner takes all, winning isn't everything but it sure beats second, win because no one remembers a loser...there are more than just a few quotes that describe the woes of losing. No one really talks about second place and is third place even given a second thought? Why, yes, Virginia, there is a third place and it's not so bad. Actually it's quite good.

Research shows that communities are strengthened by "third places." One's home is considered "first place." Workspace is considered "second place" and there's a myriad of "third places" ranging from churches to beauty parlors that play roles in community building. These spaces are often mainstays in the community where

relationships are built. Several variables are necessary for a particular space to be considered a third place. Location and accessibility play essential roles. Trust and a sense of neutrality are keys to success. What's a third place in each of our communities? Why, our public libraries, of course!

Most citizens have a personal history with a public library. A recent Pew survey found that more than 90 percent of adults view public libraries as "welcoming and friendly places," and about half have visited or used a public library in recent months. Almost two-thirds of adults say that closing their local library would have major impacts on their community. Public libraries are hubs in our communities. Public libraries create partnerships with other organizations to connect people with services and assistance. Libraries don't just lend books anymore. They offer everything from tech support to finding a great new book series. It's not uncommon to see staff and patrons talking for 15 minutes or so developing a relationship. And these are person-to-person relationships not public and consumer. While, it's true that online and digital services have captured a group of distance library users the physical library still stands as a beacon in the night offering so much more than books and the community loves it! Libraries have a responsibility to use their position as a third place to create networks and support other community members beyond the brick and mortar facility. To do this libraries offer outreach services in the community, visits to senior centers, Boys & Girls clubs, Head Start classes, to name a few.

Libraries continue to evolve and staff responsibilities evolve as well. Staff helps community members figure things out...from understanding how to navigate the health care system to filling out a job application to learning how to decipher all the buttons on a cell phone. These new roles have influenced library programming and events by connecting people with community resources: health, wellness, exercise, crafts, literacy, gardening, service clubs, and countless other resources. Libraries often partner with community members to provide free, interactive and engaging activities, classes, and events. Public libraries as third places are in unique positions to attract potential partners that lead to increased resources and information to share with the public. Partnerships are essential to meet community needs and to offer an active and engaging environment for patrons. Neighborhood partners and advocates abound.

"Third places" provide meeting and working space for small business customers, independent professionals, startups and mobile workforce people. Community growth benefits are realized when libraries build relationships with small businesses on creative projects. Homeschooling groups frequent the library to work on projects and to study. Young parents bring their children to storytime or to play and make lasting friendships with other parents. Laughter and fun times are the norm in children's libraries! Staff works hard to make a comfortable, warm and welcoming environment for its patrons. For many young children the library is their first playground. Bringing young children into libraries at early ages ensures that the children are comfortable playing, learning and asking librarians questions and for help as they get older. Early literacy programming is the public library's claim to fame. Staff creates, develops, and implements an assortment of developmentally age appropriate classes for our youngest learners. We make learning fun!

Public libraries develop relationships with its users. There aren't many places where folks can hang out all day, are welcoming to everyone, free of charge, warm in the winter and cool in the summer, offer clean restrooms, comfy seating, magazines, newspapers, best sellers, Wi-Fi and internet access...why, the list goes on and on! And speaking of Wi-Fi and internet access, libraries have a growing responsibility to provide access to these services and help patrons navigate them in this digital age. Ensuring that access is available and lifelong learning opportunities for digital literacy are available are important cornerstones of what libraries offer. Citizens must be able to use technology effectively for it to have value. Libraries have a responsibility to help patrons learn how to use technology. Making unfamiliar technology accessible to patrons is important to make non-users feel comfortable. Technology classes and trained staff help to bridge this gap.

A University of Pennsylvania study determined that "public libraries are dynamic, socially responsive institutions, a nexus of diversity, and a lifeline for the most vulnerable among us." Public libraries are characterized by informal atmospheres despite complicated staffing structures and behind the scene procedures that require a college degree to understand!

Author Ray Oldenberg, in his book *The Great Good Place*, determined eight characteristics that make a third place. 1) There is no obligation to stay or go. 2) Social status does not matter. 3) The main activity is conversation. 4) The space is accessible and accommodating. 5) "Regulars" set the mood. 6) The establishment is not pretentious or ostentatious. 7) The tone is friendly and welcoming. 8) Feelings of warmth, possession, and belonging are present.

Public libraries remain strong but the need to update and redefine services and how spaces are used continues every day. The stability and framework that the public library offers in the community is the mainstay and makes it a "third place" destination. Library staff believes that the public library is the heart of the community...and hopes that others do too! We don't mind being third.

[Contact Diane Rebertus](#)

Spring DAO Meeting - Recap

Recap: April 13th DAO Meeting in Arlington

By: Michelle Thomas, County of Arlington, MPA Candidate,
Old Dominion University



The Deputies, Assistants, and Others (a.k.a., DAO) Meeting held in Arlington County on April 13th was amazing! It was our pleasure to welcome Mark Schwartz, County Manager, Shannon-Flanagan Watson, Assistant County Manager, and Deborah Warren, Department of Human Services Deputy Director who kicked us off! Our presenters, Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield, Wendy Zenker, Tara Palacios, and Alex Held showcased their talent. Our keynote speaker, Katie Cristol, Arlington County Board Chair, expounded upon the complexities of leadership and being a changemaker within academia and throughout every phase of one's career journey. Our theme, *Building Capacity Through Innovative Models & Community Partnerships*, offered a daily reminder that we could not do the work that we do without our partners.

Strategic partnerships equate to a stronger voice when advancing advocacy efforts with allies. They also offer new perspectives, ideas, skills, capacity building, and an enhancement of resources. With the support of our partners, we make impact on the local, state, and national level.

We would be remiss if we did not send sincerely thank all of the DAO's who provided representation from Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax, Goochland, Leesburg, Prince William, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, Virginia! To our next generation of leaders, we were thrilled to welcome you from the College of William and Mary, George Mason University, and Old Dominion University!

Lastly, the Arlington Planning Committee sincerely appreciates the guidance provided by leadership within VLGMA's Civic Engagement Committee and are thrilled to be:

- The first to host a DAO Meeting in Arlington County
- The first in 13 years to have the highest number of attendees (50), and
- The first to include college students

Cheers to the VLGMA network!! It was our pleasure to host here in Northern VA.

For meeting information, resources, and access to the speaker presentations [click here!](#)

To stay informed about Arlington County, watch programs on [You Tube](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), friend us on [Facebook](#), and tune into County Board Meetings, Work Sessions, and Planning and Commission Meetings LIVE on the [County website!](#)



Certificate News

Another academic year is winding down, and graduation is just around the corner. The Certificate students have worked hard in their classes, and for the soon to be alumni, a well-earned rest comes with commencement. This is truly a time to celebrate with our students, graduating or not, for all of their accomplishments. And, for the lucky ones who get to come back to class next semester, there is still fun to be had.

This semester, we have the following students graduating from the program:

Riaan Anthony
Emma Buchanan

City of Charlottesville
Town of Culpeper

**THE Graduate Certificate
in Local Government
Management**

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Local Government Leaders"*

Karen Jennifer Cobb	Henrico County
Kayla Symone Coleman	Henrico County
Dennis Lee Dorsey	City of Charlottesville
Susan Elliot	City of Charlottesville
Lesley Rae Hunley	Mathews County
Heather Elaine Jenkins	Fauquier County
Ashleigh Kinch	Fairfax County
Joshua Caleb Lowder	Loudoun County
Susannah Catherine Lunsford	Fairfax County
Ericka Marshall	Chesterfield County
Mark Wayne Moore	Pittsylvania County
Rachael Carina Perrott	Fairfax County
Matthew George Reynal	Town of Ashland
Brandy Rosser	Warren County
Annie C. Sechrist	City of Charlottesville
Amrit Pal Singh	Fairfax County
Shawn Sorrells	Roanoke County
Marchelle Sossong	Henrico County
Karen Thomas	Roanoke County
Jason Towery	Stafford County
Jason Leon Tyree	City of Lynchburg
James Melvin Watkins, Jr.	City of Charlottesville
Deirdre Rose Williams	State of Virginia
Mary Finnigan Wyckoff	Fauquier County

If you or a coworker is interested in the Certificate program, Stephanie Davis is focusing on attending a number of conferences this year, so be on the lookout for her. For information, please contact Stephanie at sddavis@vt.edu or 804-980-5549.

Civic Engagement - LGEW Results

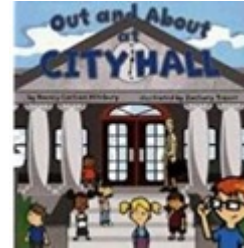
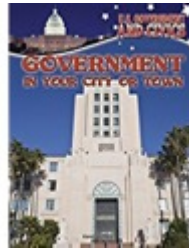
VLGMA Civic Engagement Committee Newsletter Article: 2018 Local Government Education Week- How Did We Do?

Prepared by Vivian McGettigan, Civic Engagement Committee Chair

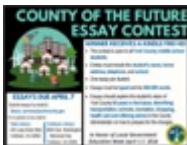
In 2012, the Virginia General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution #93 proclaiming the first week of April as Local Government Education week recognizing the formation of the Council-Manager form of government in the City of Staunton, Virginia. In honor of Local Government Education Week, the VLGMA promotes tools to engage students - our future leaders - in order to acknowledge good community building work, provide education on local government services at the local level, and to increase student's awareness of career and service opportunities in local government.

As a part of this effort, VLGMA asked each locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring Local Government Education Week and to develop engagement plans to get schools and students involved in their local governments. The Civic Engagement Committee thanks VLGMA, VML, VACo, and the Clerk's

Association for spreading the word through emails and magazine articles. I am pleased with the response this year, which I am sure doesn't represent every government's proclamation that was adopted this year as I will continue to receive proclamations for the next few weeks. At the summer conference, three localities will be drawn from the list of those who have submitted proclamations and the winners will receive a copy of an elementary school reading level book which can be used to read to students in your community. For several years we have used *Out and About at City Hall* for our drawings which is an outstanding book but we thought it was time to offer some other choices. A group of library employees were asked to provide recommendations. Their selections included:



Even more exciting is the breadth of great activities that were undertaken during the first week of April and year round. The Civic Committee wants to share your community stories, so please email me with your initiatives. Stay tuned for highlights in upcoming eNews articles. To share an example: this year, York County embraced Local Government Education Week by continuing for the second year our essay contest. To engage middle school students, Kevin Smith, York County's Library Director, introduced the essay contest which was focused on our upcoming comprehensive plan update. The students were asked to explore their vision of York County 50 years in the future, describing transportation, schools, recreation, shopping, health care and offer advice to the County Administrator on how to prepare for the changes. The responses were fascinating and very creative! The essay winner was recognized in conjunction with Local Government Education Week and received a \$50 Amazon gift card.



As a reminder, here are some ideas to further develop your year round program:

1. Place in school and public libraries the elementary-level book.
2. Conduct guest readings of the books to elementary classes
3. Participate in "If I were Mayor/County Administrator" essay contest
4. Conduct 7th grade website scavenger hunt to learn about public services
5. Develop a high school service learning program
6. Conduct mock Governing Body meetings
7. Share the Teacher's Resource Guide, including sample lesson plans designed for upper middle/high school students, to be used as part of the curriculum for meeting civics/social studies standards of learning
8. Be a guest speaker to middle or high school students regarding your career as a County/City or Deputy Manager and/or discuss community projects (e.g., annual budget, redevelopment effort or capital infrastructure improvements) that the students will see occurring or read in the news.

Check out this website link www.icma.org/vlgma for additional great resources and feel free to contact us with questions or to share additional ideas.

Vivian McGettigan, Vivian.mcgettigan@yorkcounty.gov

Innovation Edge

Live Virtual "Give 5" Event



About 10,000 Baby Boomers will turn 65 every day over the next 19 years!! Even at retirement, they are looking to retain meaning and purpose in their lives. Is your community ready for this wave of talent? Are your nonprofits ready with meaningful volunteer opportunities? Attend the Alliance's live virtual learning event on May 17 at 1pm EDT, showcasing the "Give 5" program in Springfield, MO to learn about an innovative approach to civic matchmaking to meet both the social service needs of the community and the community engagement desires of the local retiree population! Member registration is \$49, and more info is [here](#). Fill the conference room and learn more about this timely program.

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

Joy

Like champagne, joy bubbles up from deep inside
in celebration of the gift of being alive.
In joy, we were spiritually created.
Our divine disposition is to be elated.

The joy that nothing can take away
despite the challenges of the day
is the awareness of a Presence that will always respond
even if, to the depths of hell, gone.

This joy is impossible to disguise
for Home is now that secret place most high.
Our divine spiritual Self has awakened and sees
the truth of Love as our Reality.

Life is silently jubilant.
Being blossoms in stillness.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Upcoming Events

Summer Conference - June 20-22, 2018 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Sheraton Hotel. More info [here](#).

[More Dates](#)

Greater Lynchburg Community Trust Update

The Greater Lynchburg Community Trust has changed its name to Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation, and has moved to 1100 Commerce Street, Lynchburg, VA 24504. The Foundation is where the VLGMA Scholarship Fund is housed.

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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