



## VLGMA October eNews

Supporting local government managers building great communities through inclusion, innovation and leadership

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### Randy's Ramblings



**Randy Wheeler**

### Randy's Ramblings

Sometimes writing a newsletter article or a speech is a lot like crafting a sculpture. You stare at the marble for a long time and then the work of art that is inside takes shape in your mind and the artist inside you simply releases the creation. Other times, the hunk of rock stays just a rock. This is one of those times.

This month I will celebrate my 25th year in public service in Virginia, most of them as a member of VLGMA. As I look back on my journey so far I am mindful of how much has changed. For some of our younger members you might be surprised to know that 25 years ago the PC's and fax machines were emerging technologies in the work place and the internet, e-mail, social media and smart phones had not been invented yet.

Citizens used to write City Hall or schedule an appointment if they had an issue or concern and the tone and tenor of communication was respectful and business like. Today the nature of public interaction with local government mirrors society in general. Many of the people we deal with choose to communicate with us electronically. They expect immediate answers. They are direct and to the point

and are often confrontational. As the public's opinion of government has declined, particularly as it relates to the federal level, increasingly public discourse has become more agitated. As I write this our national government remains closed due to a political tug of war in which the average citizen seems to have been forgotten. At times this public service can feel like a real challenge but in reality it is a fantastic opportunity.

Each day we are afforded the opportunity to exceed the expectations of our citizens and to set that type of example for our staff. A promptly returned call, an empathetic ear or simply doing what we say we're going to do can go a long way in restoring public confidence. As professional local government managers, we play a key role in making this type of responsive public service a guiding principle of our organization, and our citizens deserve no less! We are, after all, the one level of government that citizens can reach out and touch and our efforts on behalf of the communities we serve are front and center for the public to see and enjoy.

Public service is its own reward, but it ain't easy. As we move toward the holiday season, I challenge each of you and myself to look for those opportunities to exceed expectations, to go the extra mile, even when something less will do, because as local government servant leaders that's what we do. As Bob O'Neill said recently this is "The Decade of Local Government." Our cities and counties enjoy the highest level of citizen trust of any level of government. That's why they will lead the way despite the fiscal challenges to come." I agree with Bob wholeheartedly. With the myriad of state and national issues impacting our communities, now's our time to stand out even more positively.

I would also like to welcome our newest member Matthew W. Reges, Charlottesville Human Resources Assistant. Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

### Tedd's Take



#### ICMA Conference

I got to go to the ICMA conference in Boston last

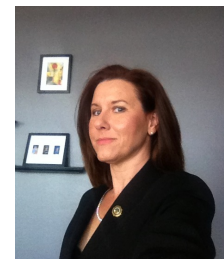
week!

While anyone who attended learned about new ideas and processes, I chose

### A DAO in the Life

#### Get in the Game

It's Fall baseball season. In my household, this means providing taxi service to a 12 year-old lefty who can pitch and play first base. My son also insists that I pay strict attention during all games and practices and provide feedback (preferably positive) on his performance. In our County, every team has about 20 kids because there are so many children who want to play and the kids sign-up knowing that they will most likely not get to play every inning of every game. Nevertheless, after a game or practice is over and bench time exceeded play time, I frequently hear the disgruntled refrain, "I wanna' play! What good is being on a



Jerri Wilson

the words in that first line for a reason. It represents my biggest "takeaway".

A presenter on the topic of stress management drew a huge audience, indicative of the current political and managerial environment. She described how a person can manage stress by "changing the narrative" in his/her mind using certain language, thereby adopting a new perspective. Sounds too simple, right? Well, it actually is that easy!

Here's the deal. It's all about the way you think about things, and the story that goes on in your head-over which you have total control. I've been practicing what I learned ever since attending the presentation.

When you get up in the morning, you might normally say to yourself: I have to get up and go to the office. Before a meeting or a trip, you might think: I have to go to a meeting at 10:00am or I have to go to Richmond.

In lieu of that language, verbalized or not, change it to: I get to go to the office;

team if you don't play?"

Ok. So, where am I going with this? Well, although for a 12-year-old this is a teachable moment about the benefits of learning to be part of a team and being prepared for when they need you, it reminds me of how critical it is for team members to WANT to play. In our offices lately, we hear so much about the importance of engagement but it's not always easy to recognize who is truly engaged and who is not. My son is engaged in baseball: he practices to improve his skills, he supports his fellow team members, and he plays every chance he gets. Can we say the same about ourselves in our profession? Do we work to improve our skills and support our colleagues? Do we want to play or are we content to sit on the bench? How often is listing a membership or affiliation on a resume the extent of our engagement? Of course, in our daily lives, each of us balances many demands of our time and skills. For me, this often means getting put-in to one game while sitting the bench for another; but for the teams to which I choose to belong, even when I can't, "I wanna' play!" As a member of VLGMA and a DAO, there are several opportunities to be engaged and get in the game: committees, conferences, DAO meetings (writing articles for the newsletter - LOL). Of course, you have to WANT to.

[Contact Jerri Wilson](#)

### Certificate News

Lights! Camera! Action! As the fall movie season starts building to its holiday peak, another low-budget yet high-impact film has been successfully creeping across the country. The Local Government Management Certificate program in conjunction with ICMA-TV has produced a promo video that was broadcast at the ICMA conference in Boston. While the video may never be as big as a Tom Hanks blockbuster, it has brought international attention to the great efforts and successes of our students.

Our students and alumni, in fact, are doing great things in the world of local government. Amanda Glover, a member of the first Certificate cohort, has recently been appointed the Economic Development Director for Augusta County. She previously has served as the assistant director in Staunton and is excited for the new opportunity. Also, Shawn Utt, a current Certificate and MPA student, has recently been appointed Town Manager of Pulaski. Shawn has been serving as the Community Development Director for Pulaski County and will take his new post in mid-October. Both Augusta County and the Town of



I get to go to a meeting; I get to go to Richmond today. Changing one little word transforms an obligation into an opportunity, a task into a privilege, or a negative emotion into a positive one.

I don't know how this might affect you, but it really makes a difference in my mindset. I've always been a glass-half-full type person, grateful for many things, especially to have been born into my family and in this country. I have had great opportunities as a result.

This is just another tool to maintain a positive outlook and attitude, something we all need. Try it! You may like what it does for you and its effect on those around you.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

[Innovation Edge](#)



Hopefully you were able to attend ICMA's 99th Annual Conference in Boston. We

Pulaski will truly benefit from the knowledge and experience of our Certificate students.

So, the Certificate program is waiting to help you move forward. Whether you get your information from the new ICMA video or directly from Bob Stripling himself (and there are no guarantees that in-person will be better), learning more about the Certificate program is guaranteed to help you begin the next step in your local government career. If you would like more information, contact Bob at [chars08@vt.edu](mailto:chars08@vt.edu) or 540-448-1102.

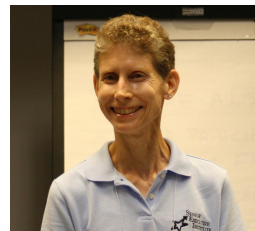
The video can be found here:

[http://icmatv.com/news/preparing\\_the\\_next\\_generation\\_in\\_local\\_government/](http://icmatv.com/news/preparing_the_next_generation_in_local_government/)

Find the Certificate online:



[Mel's Poetry Corner](#)



Mel Gillies

[Calendar](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[DAO Meeting](#) - October 18, 2013 - please note the date change

[More Dates](#)

[Future Newsletter Articles](#)

### Letting Go

Oh, my tree friends, how you teach me  
from your lofty perspective, how to be free  
of worries and fears and dis-ease and woes  
that we harbor and cherish and won't let go.

Your leaves simply blow away  
and with the wind, dance and play.

No strings attached  
to bring them back.

You allow the new to emerge and be  
your ever changing, changeless reality.



got to hear about new and exciting things that are happening in our cities and counties world-wide.

Ted Gaebler, the City Manager of Rancho Cordova, California, presented a session on the continued impact of his book at the conference in Boston. Ted, co-author of Reinventing Government, is a man of many secrets, yet will share them with you gladly! If you were not able to attend the conference or missed out on his session, you may be interested in reading the article Ted Gaebler's Most Important Secret by Troy Holt, Communications and Legislative Affairs Manager for Rancho Cordova.

As always, if I can be of any assistance, please reach out to me at [saburnett@transformgov.org](mailto:saburnett@transformgov.org), or 800-777-2509.

Visit the [Alliance for Innovation](#) for more information.

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](#).

### 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.

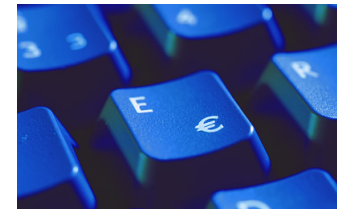
- **Southeast:** March 6-7 (YPLI\* March 5-6) - Williamsburg, Virginia
- **Midwest:** March 20-21 (YPLI\* March 19-20) - Iowa City, Iowa
- **Northeast:** April 3-4 (YPLI\* April 2-3) - Princeton, New Jersey
- **Mountain Plains:** May 1-2 (YPLI\* April 30-May 1) - Grapevine, Texas
- **West Coast:** May 8-9 (YPLI\* May 7-8) - San Jose, California

\*Young Professionals Leadership Institute.

### VLGMA Facebook Update

The Virginia Local Government News Facebook Group had another big month with 162 total posts of news with local government interest. Topics ranged from retirements and resignations to legal resolutions to the impact of the state fair. Thanks to all who posted this month, including Henry County administrator Tim Hall, who made his debut on the big board.

This month's posters:





Bill Rolfe	56
Matt Hankins	46
Mary Jo Fields	36
Tom Harris	14
Judson Rex	7
John Edwards	1
Tim Hall	1
Charles Hargrove	1

This is a closed group for the benefit of VLGMA members. We encourage you to join the group and share links. If you'd like to see this page opened up or done differently, please contact a member of the Communications & Networking Committee with suggestions. To join, look for the group name on Facebook or [email Molly Harlow](mailto:Molly.Harlow@virginia.edu) for assistance.

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### Quick Links

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)

[Website Contact](#)



[Forward this email](#)



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