



VLGMA September eNews

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

In This Issue

A Memo from Randy

Tedd's Take

Innovation Edge

2014 ICMA Regional Summits

VLGMA Facebook Update

A DAO in the Life

Certificate News

Mel's Poetry Corner

Calendar of Upcoming Events

A Memo from Randy

Randy's Ramblings

Being a City, County or Town Manager is a tough job. It is also a great job. For me, and I suspect most of you, your days as a professional manager are spent somewhere on this continuum. Earlier this month I had a really unique and interesting week that was tilted almost completely towards the great job end of the scale. As I shared with a couple of people, I realized that my experiences that week, in addition to being fun, were a metaphor for my life as a public sector manager. Let me share them with you and see what you think.

My first experience that week was riding in an airboat (think swamp boat) with several of my Council members. It was fast, it was exciting and it could easily overcome any obstacle that came our way. In that moment there was a real sense of we were all in it together. This experience reminded me of those "sweet spot" days when everything seems to be going right and every goal is achievable.



My second experience of the week was helping to hold a 100 plus pound snake. So you are probably asking yourself, how in the world is being a public sector manager like holding a giant snake. Here's how. The snake in question was part of a library program for kids. Both the kids and my staff got a kick out of seeing the boss hold the snake. Remember Steve Owen's recent column about working on the trash truck. Holding the snake needed to be done for the program to be successful. It was a little scary, definitely outside my comfort level and could only be done correctly as part of the team. You'll also note from the picture, I got the end that bites. As managers we are often called upon to move outside of our comfort zones. We tackle heavy and difficult to manage (squirmy in this case) issues and to do it well we need the help of others in our community and staff to help "lift the snake" and more often than not we get the end that bites.



My final experience of the week was perhaps the most applicable to my life as a manager. I got to ride a Jetovator (think James Bond jet pack - powered by water). Riding a Jetovator is hard, it is uncertain, it is rewarding, it is fun and it can hurt. It requires balance, persistence and a real determination not to watch life from the sidelines. If you don't over think it, it

sounds a whole lot like what we do. There is the thrill of getting up, the joy of soaring and then when you least expect it, you get a kink in the hose and your face is planted into the water's surface. That's the part that hurts. Anyone who has ever been a Manager in Transition (MIT) has a strong sense of what that last part feels like. Then, after checking to see if one's teeth are still in place, you climb back on the Jetovator a little wiser, a little more experienced and soar even higher.



As we move into fall, I wish all of you many successful "airboat rides"; encourage you to share your community's "holding the snake" stories with your VLGMA colleagues; and commend you for your leadership and professionalism each time you mount the "Jetovator".

I would also like to welcome our newest members Randall Simmons, Roanoke Parking Coordinator; James Bourey, Newport News City Manager; Patricia Harrison, Fairfax Deputy County Executive; David Molchany, Fairfax Deputy County Executive and Garrey Curry, Gloucester Asst. County Administrator/Community Development. Welcome to the family!

--Randy

[Contact Randy Wheeler](#)

Tedd's Take



Demographics

If demographic changes are an important issue in your community, I'd like to acquaint you with a really cool new tool for anyone to use to investigate the demography of a given region, state, or even locality.

Go to:

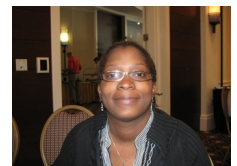
<http://demographics.coopercenter.org/DotMap/index.html>

Dustin Cable, a policy researcher and statistician with

A DAO in the Life

"Not a Public Servant?"

An article published on July 21, 2013 by USA Today titled "Poll: Public Service Valued; Politics not so much" caught my eye. The poll results indicated that 2-1 Americans say that the best way to make a positive difference in the community is to work for a non-profit organization not government, on any level. Throughout the article it seems to imply that those working for the government are not providing a "true" service that benefits



Rosylen Oglesby

the Demographics and Workforce Group at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, created this rather incredible instrument.

For example, bring up the map and center it on Richmond, VA. Zoom in and add the "map labels" and you'll get a pretty neat graphical look at where folks of various ethnicity live in the Greater Richmond area. Find your community and do the same. It may confirm certain perceptions, and probably challenge others.

You and virtually all other staff should find this mapping system both interesting, enlightening, and useful. I'm sure that's exactly why Dustin devised it!

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

[Innovation Edge](#)



New at the Alliance!

Hello everyone!! I am Sallie Ann Burnett, the new East Regional Director with the Alliance for Innovation. As you know, Toni Shope transitioned into a new role with the Alliance as the Strategic Initiatives Director.

Some of you may remember me from ICMA where I spent 15 years working with city and county managers in the southeast, as well as coordinating special events at the ICMA conference and managing logistics for ICMA regional summits. I work from my home office in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

I have direct responsibility for a wide variety of member services with our approximately 100 local government members in the East. I assist our member organizations with Knowledge Network research as well as make regular site visits to existing and potential new members. Last week I gave a presentation to the city of Richmond Budget Department and met with the VLGMA Planning Committee in Charlottesville. In the coming months, I will host

the public. I disagree with this. We often find ourselves working, living, and breathing the problems that plague our community. I have colleagues who work daily in the areas of homelessness, addressing the needs of our poor, and other "worldly" problems. Our work as public servants is never easy. In fact, the word "public servant" is defined as (1) employment within a governmental system and (2) a service performed for the benefit of the public. Does this not speak directly to us? I think it does. So I asked myself another question, what is wrong with this poll? To piggyback off of what Ted Povar wrote last month, I believe it is public perception, but what is being done to counteract this perception. We need to be more proactive in telling our story. Often times, we are working with limited resources due to budget constraints. Unlike businesses or organizations, we cannot simply close our doors if there is no money to help support the service that is needed or required by our community. We still have to provide the service because it is what the citizenry demands. We just have to find creative ways to continue to do the work. Our Director of Marketing is always talking about "branding" what you do and how important it plays a role in public perception. So let's brand what we do! We ARE true public servants that make a positive change for our communities.

(Article source: retrieved online July 21, 2013 from <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/21/public-service-valued-politics--not-so-much/2573743/>)

[Contact Rosylen Oglesby](#)

[Certificate News](#)

The small burst of cold weather recently has begun the unfortunate herald that summer is coming to a close. As people everywhere try to squeeze in one last vacation, the Certificate program is busy preparing for the new semester. Moreover, the program is proud, and little nervous, to welcome its largest enrollment ever! Just over 90 students total will be enrolled throughout our five course



regional workshops, learning events and develop partnerships with local government affiliates at the state and local level.

I look to seeing you all at the ICMA Annual Conference in Boston. Please contact me with any questions: saburnett@transformgov.org or 800-777-2509.

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

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 VLGMA Local Government News Facebook Group had a big month in August, both in terms of the number of articles posted and in



sections being taught in 11 different locations. The good word about the program truly has gone forth.

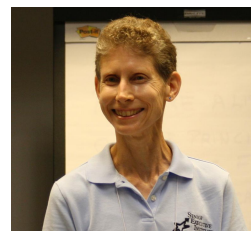
In addition to our record enrollment, the program is also proud to welcome two new professors. Cindy Mester, a Certificate alumna, is the Assistant City Manager of Falls Church and will be teaching the economic development and planning course. Cindy has a lot of energy and is excited to be joining the team. Also, signaling the program's growth, Larry Hughes, the Interim (and former) City Manager of Manassas, will be teaching a second section of the introductory local government manager course. When joining us, Larry thought that he was retired from that career, but sometimes duty calls. The students surely will be well prepared thanks to both the new and returning faculty.

With everything happening in the program, it is never too early to start thinking about the next semester. Bob Stripling is happy to connect with anyone who is interested in the program. Also, for the folks attending ICMA, there will be a special commercial for the program on ICMA-TV. I am sure Bob did not ham it up too much, but if you would like to contact him about it, he can be reached at chars08@vt.edu or 540-448-1102.

Find the Certificate online:



Mel's Poetry Corner



Mel Gillies

Gift of Life

To live in this culture and not be sucked into its meaningless superficialities.

To work and play with love and gratitude without a long list of in-posing have-to-dos.

To let each day unfold in moments spontaneous seeing and savoring the miraculous.

To bless all unconditionally,

Love expresses silently and viscerally.

And to cultivate our intuitive harmony

the number of members posting. Nine members of the group posted 150 links to news stories of interest to local government leaders. No one theme dominated the month, but many of our localities received positive coverage for planning and projects. The increasing friction between the City of Bristol and Washington County over the Falls regional shopping center development is worth noting.

The month's posters included:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Bill Rolfe, range rider | 55 |
| Matt Hankins, Rocky Mount | 41 |
| Mary Jo Fields, VML | 34 |
| Tom Harris, Henrico | 9 |
| Judson Rex, Strasburg | 5 |
| Mark Flynn, VML | 2 |
| Charles Hartgrove, Ashland | 2 |
| Fred Ramey, Norton | 1 |
| John Edwards, West Point | 1 |

are all goals worthy of the gift of Life's
infinite inexhaustible treasury.
Sweet, silent, dazzling, selfless Being.
Home in Eternity.

Calendar

Upcoming Events

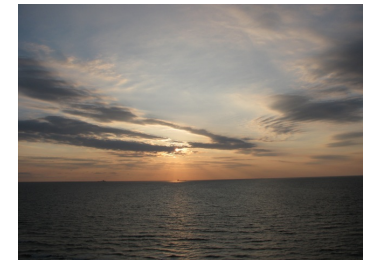


[DAO Meeting](#) - October 18, 2013 - please note the date change

[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

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)

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