

June 2020 eNews

Presidential Musings From James



So this is the last time I can reach out to you good folks. My year as VLGMA President has been vastly different than expected. Tedd left, then followed by Carmie, Deborah and Mel. From there we just rolled into COVID-19 and our first ever Virtual VLGMA conference. But, like I tell my staff, you don't get to choose the times, only how you handle them.

My clerk often keeps me grounded and focused and in one of my moments of "why does everything suck" she reminded me that people are grateful that this was happening while we were here. Rather than focusing on the challenges as an unfair intrusion, her perspective was that our community was fortunate that we were here to help. I pass that on to you: Virginia is better because this happened while we had your great leadership, compassion and capacity to handle it. Nobody can do it better and the final outcome will be better because your hands and hearts were involved. Your citizens and elected officials are looking at you not with a steely eye of judgement but with the gaze of trust and belief in your abilities. They are glad they have you during these times. Your measured actions and constant faith and passion are fuel for their endurance and your community's recovery.

On the other side of this crisis is a cadre of managers well seasoned in leadership, change management and innovation and I think Virginia will be well served for years to come.

I am grateful to have been your President, as I have felt a career long debt to VLGMA. It has carried me in the toughest of times, manifesting mentors (young and old) and solutions when most needed. All managers start with a touch of Imposter Syndrome (or should) and VLGMA eases us into believing in ourselves, our ability to build consensus, navigate challenges and empower staff. It helps us see ourselves not as the solution provider, but the convener of a process to find a solution. We become leaders because we stop thinking that we are the solution or the solver. The Imposter Syndrome evaporates when you realize you were never really there to give the answer, but to guide those who were. Even after this unusual year my debt to VLGMA continues as it has been a constant source of not just information, but energy, spirit, enthusiasm and a will to strive for that higher moral purpose. I hope it provides the same to you and that you too decide to be a part of the leadership of this great association.

Thanks goes to the Executive Board for struggling through this with me, to Charles for filling shoes that were surprisingly large given the stature of the person who owned them, to Molly for being the last woman standing on the deck as the Cooper Center endured a wave of retirements (and for not reporting me when I threatened to go rouge if she too left), to Janet for enduring a rewrite of our dues and dues paying methods as we drug VLGMA into the 20th century and to Shirley for joining our menagerie. Special thanks also go out to Ande and Ashton for an amazing winter conference that took the challenge of leadership and ran with it and to Sara and Bonnie for reinventing our summer event in a matter of days. I am sad that we did not get to see the outcome created by mixing Sara's drive and spunk with Bonnie's perspective and experience in an in-person event (I envisioned mechanical bull riding and Tai Chi classes with inspiring speakers while cruising the ocean!), but perhaps we can pressure them into chairing another event.

I look forward to your participation in our brief electronic gathering this month and to raising a glass with you at our winter event as your Past President.

Please join me in welcoming our newest VLGMA member Greg Lunsford, Town Manager, Town of Elkton.

[Contact James Ervin](#)

Tedd's Take



Fortunate Timing

Last April I retired from my full-time position with UVA and the VA Institute of Government. It just seemed like the right time to turn over the reins and start a new chapter in life with fewer obligations and more time for family and fun. Over the slow process of disconnecting from my job of 23 years, it became clearer that it was the right decision. No one could have predicted how fortuitous that decision would be.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

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Institute of Government Update

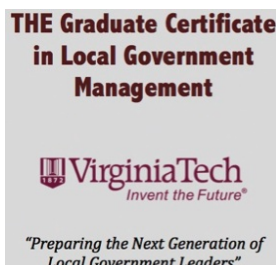


The unknown. The new normal. There are a lot of things out there that we just don't know yet. That being said, I do know that all of you still have the critical responsibility of leading your organizations and providing core services. Doing so requires resources that are in short supply.

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

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Certificate News



As we move into June and our new normal, the Certificate program continues to deliver timely, pertinent educational opportunities to our students. While the Virginia Tech campus shifted to remote learning in March, the Certificate courses continued to meet in their hybrid delivery format. Our courses connect students from across the state through Zoom weekly meetings and all of certificate courses continued without a hitch! Thank you to our instructors this Spring – Peter Huber, Anthony Romanello, John Budesky and Greg Kelly!

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Alliance for Innovation



ONLINE + JULY 28-30, 2020

Alliance for Innovation – TLG Conference is Moving to an Online Experience this Summer!

Local government is changing with each coming day. New forces and factors influence our work every day. New challenges present innovation opportunities and with those opportunities we are challenged to adapt, adopt, and progress. So it's time to get together – to learn from each other and hear stories from across the country.

A DAO in the Life



A Day in the Life of DAO amidst a pandemic

by Nichole Hair, Pulaski Deputy Town Manager

Most if not all of our Deputies, Assistants and other locality staff wear a multitude of hats in the course of everyday work. No single day is the same, especially today and over the past several months. 2020 is turning into a most unusual time for our communities, large or small. The uncertainty can be the most crippling for our citizens, for our elected leaders, for our teams and for each of us. Where each day brings new challenges, those very same days are full of opportunity.

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Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award Update



Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award on Pause Until Later this Year

The annual Mashaw Outstanding Assistant Award process has been postponed until later this year. The award is traditionally presented at the VLGMA Annual Conference but with the pandemic public health emergency response the VLGMA officers decided that the award process should be paused until later this year. Award nomination information will be re-sent to members at that time.

VRSA's Response to COVID-19



VRSA's response to COVID-19

By Peter Stephenson, VRSA Local Government Specialist

For 40 years, VRSA has provided auto, property, liability and workers' compensation coverage to a growing, diverse membership of Virginia political subdivisions. We remain committed to partnering with our members through education, training and consulting as they continue to serve their communities during these difficult times.

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McGill Associates



Six Guiding Principles for Managing Through a Crisis

McGill has advised local government leaders on a wide variety of challenges in the common interest of improving communities. Our expertise includes a wide spectrum of engineering services, land planning and recreation, as well as consulting services. "Shaping Communities Together" is more than a tagline, it is a culture. It is about collaborating and creating solutions together to improve the communities we love – those places where we live, work, and play.

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Mel's Poetry Corner

High Noon

Noon is a daily apex,



a peak moment before the humdrum of what's next,
a crescendo of light and energy
before afternoon's lethargy.

Our morning quest can relax
after this midday climax.

The sun, no longer beckoning overhead
illuminates from within instead.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

May 2020

- Brannon Godfrey has resigned as the town manager of Hartford, Vermont effective August 1. He previously served as city manager, deputy city manager and town manager in Virginia for 20 years.
- Jimmy Sydnor, town manager of Tappahannock since 2016, has announced his retirement at the end of June. He has served the town for 25 years, including 13 as assistant town manager.
- Bobbie Tassinari, King William County administrator since 2018, announced her retirement effective this September. She previously served as the deputy county administrator and director of finance.
- Mike Tolbert has been appointed as the town manager of Chincoteague. He previously served as the chief of management and operations for Accomack County Public Schools.

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