



# MLGMA

<http://www.mlgma.org>

## Michigan Local Government Management Association

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# MANAGER

Affiliated with the Michigan Municipal League

Summer 2009

## Note from the President

*By Theodore J. Staton, 2009 MLGMA President*

As I'm sure past presidents will attest, the year as MLGMA president goes by fast to the extent that there is much to do and not enough time in which to do it. Nonetheless, the 2009 Board of Directors is making tremendous progress toward achieving its many goals and objectives.

As you know, we are now in the second year of implementing MLGMA's Strategic Plan. It was rolled out in January of 2007 and in 2008 the various committees provided progress reports. "Committee" work is often thought of as a pretense for actually getting things done. However, this could never have been said of MLGMA committees! If I could share with you one overriding observation about my first six months as MLGMA president, it would be that the committee work all of you do throughout the year is tremendous and helps to make MLGMA the progressive organization that it is.

The MLGMA Board of Trustees has now met four times, each time with a very full agenda. Included in every agenda is an update from each of the Dimensional Committee Liaisons and clearly, establishing these positions has been extremely helpful in terms of flow of information and accountability. I would also note that the committees have made great use of the Strategic Plan as a guiding document.

With that, I will share with you some highlights of the Board's activities for 2009:

- With Bryan Murphy's assistance, we are moving forward with the U of M Dearborn, LGMI program. Members of the Board, along with MML staff, attended a presentation on the program on June 26. We will hear more in Sault Ste. Marie.
- We have asked the Advocacy Committee to intervene in the Walled Lake situation. Last year, Walled Lake effectively changed its form of government by elimination of the manager through the budget process.
- We allocated \$15,000 to the Advocacy Committee for the continued development of educational materials to promote, reinforce and defend the council-manager form.
- We have agreed to partner with the Michigan Parks & Recreation Association (MRPA) in what promises to be a great Winter Institute and, after no increases in five years, the member Winter Institute Registration fee will go from \$199 to \$225 in order to preserve the quality of program offerings. Please note that any future increases will be incremental.
- We have approved a request from the Experience Committee to develop a model city manager contract and handbook for the development of same.
- We have greatly enhanced the website – check it out when you get a chance!
- We are prepared to launch new awards, some of which will be conferred during the summer conference.
- The Experience Committee will be conducting an experience survey to highlight the many talents of our membership.
- We are working to expand executive coaching opportunities pursuant to the Winter Institute 2009 session on this topic.
- We have retained Ed Everett, former city manager of Redwood, Ca. as our Patriarche Colloquium speaker. He will lead a general and follow-up session on citizen engagement, and has agreed to be available for one-on-one discussions regarding professional coaching.

As you can see, thanks to the excellent work of the various committees, the 2009 Board of Directors has been able to move forward on a number of initiatives in its first six months and I look forward to more of the same for the second half of 2009. In the meantime, registration for the 2009 Summer Institute is open! Under the leadership of Spence Nebel, the Summer Institute has been hard at work planning a substantive and enjoyable conference and I look forward to seeing you all there!

Respectfully submitted,  
Theodore J. Staton  
2009 MLGMA President



# MANAGER PROFILE

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Summer 2009

## Jack Schumacher

### After 40 years in Local Government, Jack Schumacher is Still Looking Ahead

Ask Jack Schumacher what he's most proud of after spending the past 40 years in local government and the past 25 years as the City Manager of Marysville and he'll jokingly say "surviving." Simply surviving four decades and three major recessions would be an accomplishment for most Michigan Managers. But Jack has much more to be proud of than just his longevity.

"I'm really proud that Marysville has been progressive as an organization," Schumacher said, "we're always looking two to three years ahead and thinking: how can we spend money to save money?"

Such strategic thinking has allowed the City of Marysville to maintain an excellent financial condition and provide excellent services. Recently, the City took advantage of the State Revolving Fund's new Reverse Interest Loan Program (basically a grant called a loan) to finance a \$20 million wastewater treatment plant upgrade. For Jack, keeping the big picture in mind and looking ahead has contributed to a successful run of 40 years of local government service in Michigan.

Jack didn't start his career with the idea of being City Manager. "I was basically a GM brat, attending

General Motors Institute, when I was asked to work in the City of Vassar, helping out with assessing and building inspection."

Since that day in 1969, Jack has served four local governments in Michigan, going from Vassar to become the first Township Manager in Fort Gratiot Township, to an 8 year stint in Imlay City before landing in Marysville for the last 25 years.

When asked what wisdom he could impart on the less seasoned manager, Jack offered three pieces of sage advice:

1. **Use common sense.**
2. **Look at the big picture.** Others are focusing on their departments or their pet project – you have to consider the impact on the whole town. "Think about how you can do a project in such a way that it helps achieve your other objectives on other projects."
3. **Know your Council,** what they want, what makes them tick, what their hobbies are, and how they really feel about key issues. "Don't just listen to what they say at the Council table, flush out all the issues and find out how they really feel."

Jack balances his desire to take the ball and run ("tell us what you want done and let us do it") with a healthy respect for the roles of elected officials.

"Respect your Council and protect your Council. Never show them up. Make them feel part of the success, give them the credit they deserve."

"I always tell my people, you may not agree with a councilmember, you may not like what they do, but *you will* respect their position."

On the personal side, Jack says managers shouldn't try to be something they aren't. "Be yourself, know who you are and be

comfortable with that and others will be comfortable with you."

While you have to keep an objective distance from some people and some issues, he cautions not to get isolated. "What you see as being objective might seem stand-offish to others." Jack, who has been married to wife Freda for 34 years, encourages new managers to put their families first even though he admits that his love of the job and his dedication to his community sometimes meant less time than he would have liked to spend with his family. Jack sees the newer generation of managers maintaining a better balance between their personal and professional lives – a positive change.

Another change is the level of involvement today's Council members want to have in the day to day affairs of the City. "They want to bring their expertise to the table and be involved in the change. Your job is to make them feel that they are a part of your city's success."

Jack is a regular attendee at the monthly meetings of the St. Clair Area Managers Association. As the "Dean" of that group, Jack regularly holds court with managers from surrounding communities and shares the commiseration that only other managers can appreciate. Lots of good jokes and free advice.

If the advice is coming from Jack, it's backed by forty years of forward thinking, hard work, and dedication to his community.

## ICMA-GETTYSBURG INSTITUTE – AN EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

By Al Vanderberg

Please E-mail  
Articles of Interest  
for the  
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Let's say that you are a manager of a city of 2,400, we have many such managers in Michigan. Imagine a three-day battle descending on your city leaving 51,000 casualties (dead, wounded or captured) in the hot summer sun after the end of the battle. Thus was the reality of life for the municipal leadership of Gettysburg in the aftermath of the pivotal battle of the Civil War. A total of 165,000 Union and Confederate soldiers fought on July 1, 2, and 3 in 1863 at Gettysburg in the largest battle ever seen on the North American continent.

I had the privilege of attending the ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute from May 6-9. The purpose of the Institute is to study the impact of decisions that were made on the battlefield and in the town during this epic clash. There were 28 participants from around the country including ICMA Executive Director Bob O'Neill, Felicia Logan and Martha Perego from ICMA. The only other Michigander in attendance was Saginaw City Manager and incoming ICMA President Darnell Early. One additional note for those who are not fond of the acronym MLGMA, the Utah City Management Association (UCMA) has it much worse! We were quartered at the Hotel Gettysburg on the town square.

The program began in the mid-afternoon on May 6<sup>th</sup> and the first session involved getting to know each other and watching the movie *Gettysburg*, which was based on the historical novel *Killer Angels*, by Michael Shaara. On Thursday, we spent the entire day on the battlefield beginning with General Buford's defense of the "high ground" northwest of Gettysburg near the Lutheran Seminary. We then walked the sites of the second day of fighting at Culp's Hill, Little Round Top and Devil's Den, and ended up walking the course of Pickett's Charge up Cemetery Ridge.

Prior to the program I was curious as to how lessons from a battle that occurred almost 150 years ago could be applied to modern management of local governments. I'll include a few examples to whet your appetite but not enough to ruin the experience. Prior to May 10, 1863, the "executive team" of the Army of Northern Virginia included General Robert E. Lee as the overall commander, General Stonewall Jackson and General James "Pete" Longstreet.

Lee was the visionary who had a battle record of nine wins, zero losses and one tie when Gettysburg began. Lee was not known for giving clear instructions and left the details to his generals. Jackson was a "creative implementer" who could read through the lines of Lee's sometimes vague instructions and almost always implement the right course of action. Longstreet was considered to be the best battlefield commander in perhaps both armies and was very detailed in his approach.

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Jackson's death, eight days after wounds received from the battle of Chancellorsville, VA was a huge loss to Lee and the Confederate Army. Jackson's death left Longstreet as Lee's next most valuable infantry general in the Army of Northern Virginia. However, the reorganization that occurred after Jackson's death did not take into account how the "executive team" would communicate. The gap between Lee's visionary "git 'er done" approach clashed with Longstreet's emphasis on details, facts and careful planning. This was punctuated by Pickett's charge, ordered by Lee and opposed one on one by Longstreet to Lee. This disastrous charge turned the course of the battle and ultimately the war.

Another example of poor communication occurred when Lee ordered General Ewell to take Seminary Ridge "if practicable" on the first day of battle. Considering the condition of his soldiers and estimation of enemy strength, Ewell decided that it was not "practicable" to continue his forward thrust at that time. This gave the Union forces time to regroup on Cemetery Hill and likely saved the Union from a major first day defeat. Lee was later critical of Ewell's inaction. Stonewall Jackson would have known that Lee was really asking Ewell to continue the forward surge and to take Seminary Ridge. This highlights how very important it is for managers to clearly communicate our intent to those on our team.

General Lee looked inwardly when making decisions and was definitely not a collaborator. He sought the opinions of his "executive team" but those opinions rarely changed his course of action. This is in stark comparison to General George Meade, named only three days before Gettysburg as Commander in Chief of the Army of the Potomac. After two days of inconclusive fighting, Meade held a council of his top generals and actually put the question of whether to fight for a third day to a vote. The vote passed and the Union forces remained to win a decisive victory at Gettysburg.

Bob O'Neill facilitated a leadership discussion at the Gettysburg Museum Ford Education Center and dozens of excellent observations relating the action at Gettysburg to modern local government management were discussed. Bob also did an excellent job of tying concepts contained in Daniel Pink's book *A Whole New Mind* into this discussion.

I very much appreciate the support of both the Michigan Association of County Administrative Officials (MACAO) and the Michigan Local Government Management Association (MLGMA), each of which paid half of the \$750 registration fee. MLGMA had approved a scholarship the previous year for me to participate in the ICMA International Exchange Program but I asked that the scholarship be rescinded when a match could not be found. Heavy rains the week before the Gettysburg Institute this year almost prevented my attendance but drier weather came and it was an excellent week.

I'd certainly recommend participation in the Gettysburg Institute to MLGMA and MACAO members. The time commitment is lighter, at three and one-half days. The cost is much lower than other opportunities. In my case, I paid for travel, MLGMA and MACAO paid for registration and Ottawa County paid for the hotel.

Please E-mail  
Articles of Interest  
for the  
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## Ethics and You

Your Board has had discussions on the ethics of participating in sponsored and hosted activities at state and national conferences.

The issue arose out of the dinner events hosted by various vendors at both the Winter and Summer sessions. We asked ICMA to weigh in and they did. If the event is part of the official program, no issue. If it is not, use good judgment. If it doesn't feel right to you, it probably isn't. You certainly wouldn't want to be involved in anything that would tarnish your own reputation or that of the MLGMA and our noble profession.

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## SUMMER Workshop

Hey! If you haven't signed up yet, HURRY. The Annual Summer get together is set for July 28 through July 31 in Sault Ste. Marie. Spence and the Committee have put together a great program that includes something for everyone. I know budgets are tight, but this is an investment in you and your family. Please attend if you can if only to witness your President (Staton, not the other guy) climb to the top of the Bridge!

## WHO's Where?

**Bill Ross is retiring from Jackson.**  
**John Szerlag is back in the saddle for Troy.**  
**Brian Murphy is heading to Illinois (where Jim Hock and Tom Barwin are toiling away.)**  
**If you know of any other moves, please let me know.**

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