

## President's corner

*By Mark McNeill, MCMA President, City Administrator, Shakopee*

Snow and cold have returned to Minnesota. We all choose to live in this state for a variety of reasons—however, if you're like me, winter is not one of them.

Before too much additional time passes, I want to say how fabulous the 2011 Milwaukee ICMA conference was. I hadn't spent much time in downtown Milwaukee previously, and I was pleased with both the Conference's venues and the social program put together with their Host Committee.

Having served on the 2005 Minneapolis Conference Host Committee, I have a true appreciation for the amount of work that went into those preparations. While I still think our conference was the best ever, the Wisconsinites did well.

I was especially happy with the turnout at the Monday evening MCMA dinner. In keeping with the new, "leaner" MCMA budget, for the first time our association did not foot the bill for dining. Nonetheless, we had nearly 100 folks in attendance.

I was also honored to join the other Presidents of the Midwest Region in announcing a \$200,000 pledge to ICMA's Life Well Run campaign. Fortunately, MCMA's share of that commitment (\$28,000) was almost totally covered by funds that were originally set aside—but ultimately unneeded—for hosting the 2005 Minneapolis ICMA Conference.

Perhaps the true highlight of the Conference was the closing session, when Dr. Craig Waldron, Oakdale's ace City Administrator, received the L.P. Cookingham Award for Professional Development. As most of you are aware, Craig has gone out of his way over the years to prepare many young people to come into our profession, both through education and internship opportunities. It was wonderful that the ICMA Awards Committee recognized Craig.

All in all, Minnesota has a very talented group of local government administrators. However, as I looked back over the last ten years of ICMA award recipients, it seems to me that we are significantly under-recognized in terms of the number of our members who have received an award commensurate to that of Craig's.

I doubt that it is because we haven't done award-winning caliber work. Instead, I suspect that it may be the "Minnesotan" in us that causes us to be modest about trumpeting our accomplishments.

We need to change that! Think about unique projects that you or one of your professional associates has undertaken, and how those might fit into the ICMA Award criteria. Nominations for the 2012 awards will be solicited again in the spring—please consider submitting a nomination.

In other news, plans are in place for the MCMA Midwinter Conference, which will be held February 10-11 in downtown Minneapolis. It will be a great setting, is reasonably priced, and will allow you an opportunity to network, learn, and grow.

Along with my spouse (OK, partner), Sheila, I also look forward to your thoughts at the Midwinter on reinvigorating an MCMA "Partners Program." MCMA has done some implementation of this in the past. The question for you (and your partner) is what, if anything, would you like from such a program? Could it be for social connections, support during a time of difficulty on the job, or ... what? We want to determine if there is sufficient interest in forming a formal MCMA partners program.

I look forward to discussion on that and other topics at the Midwinter. If you have thoughts and can't be there, please feel free to contact me directly.

Thanks for doing what you do! ☐

# Board meeting recap

By Kevin Frazell

The MCMA Board met on October 21 in New Ulm and December 9 in Waite Park. Highlights of Board actions include:

- Reviewed the existing strategic plan and determined that most items are on track. Agreed to consider developing a new plan in the next MCMA business year.
- Directed Secretariat Officer Kevin Frazell to take a look at the ICMA Knowledge Network to see how its capacities might be integrated with the MCMA website.
- Voted to enter an affiliate partnership agreement with the national Alliance for Innovation.
- Agreed to form a subcommittee to meet with the Association of Public Management Professionals (APMP) to discuss the benefits of a possible organizational merger, while retaining the distinctive identity of “the Assistant’s group.”
- Entered an agreement with GTS to add management of a sponsor’s component to the 2012 annual conference. Considered feedback from the planning committee on ways to appropriately manage sponsorships.
- Reviewed use of the MCMA listserv by “outside” groups. Directed staff to continue taking a cautious approach while awaiting a new policy by the League of Minnesota Cities on listserv administration. ○

**Your  
Range  
Riders  
are here  
to help!**

## MCMA Officers/Board Members

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Mark McNeill, City of Shakopee

### First Vice President:

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Matt Stemwedel, City of Coon Rapids

### LMC Executive Director:

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# 2012 ICMA Conference Planning Committee Report

By Phil Kern, MCMA First Vice President, City Administrator, Delano

First off, I want to thank MCMA for the opportunity to represent Minnesota managers at the 2012 ICMA Conference Planning Committee meeting. In addition to my attendance, Bill Malinen (City Manager, Roseville) also participated and provided input from Minnesota at the Planning Committee meetings.

Next year's ICMA Annual Conference will be held October 7-10 in Phoenix, Arizona. Phoenix is in the middle of an urban renewal project in its downtown area. In recent years, the city has invested more than \$600 million in downtown improvements, including the renovations and expansion of the Phoenix Convention Center—which will host the ICMA Conference next fall. It contains more than 900,000 square feet of convention space, ranking it as one of the 20 largest convention complexes in North America.

Much of the Planning Committee's work involved the development of a curriculum for the conference. Members brainstormed themes and breakout session opportunities for small city representatives, assistants, and senior/credentialed managers. The Committee's final platform focused on managing within political extremes, partnerships and resource sharing, human resources, economic development, and the family impact of the profession. The importance of the family impact theme was foreshadowed by ICMA President Sam Gaston's speech to ICMA membership at the 2011 Annual Conference.

The Planning Committee and ICMA staff were welcomed by a very excited and energetic Host Committee. The Arizona City/County Management Association (ACMA) and Phoenix/Maricopa County staff are in process of arranging a wide array of social, cultural, and entertainment options to accompany the conference's educational format. As part of the Planning Committee's experience, the Host Committee coordinated a tour of the Heard Museum—which consists of more than 90,000 square feet of exhibits and galleries highlighting the history, artifacts, and culture of American Indians in the southwest. The Host Committee is providing an evening reception and tour of this museum as part of the conference program options.

The MCMA Monday evening dinner has already been set for the 1130 Restaurant, which is very near all of the downtown hotels.

All in all, the 2012 ICMA Annual Conference is sure to be an excellent professional development opportunity and an enjoyable conference event. The Planning Committee, Host Committee, and ICMA staff are continuing the work of identifying keynote speakers and finalizing the conference program. I encourage each member of MCMA to consider attending this event next fall! ☐

## Appointments and other professional news

- **Judy Bodway**, Assistant City Manager, Winona, has been appointed Interim City Manager.
- **Mark Casey**, City Administrator, Annandale, has been appointed City Manager, St. Anthony Village.
- **Mike Ericson**, former City Administrator, Hugo, is in transition.
- **Bart Fischer**, Assistant Administrator, Chaska, has been appointed City Administrator, Falcon Heights.
- **Bruce Messelt**, City Administrator, Lake Elmo, has been appointed Administrator, Chisago County.
- **Justin Miller**, City Administrator, Falcon Heights, has been appointed City Administrator, Mendota Heights.
- **Aaron Parrish**, City Manager, Crookston, has been appointed City Administrator, Forest Lake.
- **Calvin Portner**, Administrative Services Director, Plymouth, has been appointed City Administrator, Elk River.
- **John Remkus** has resigned as City Manager, West St. Paul.
- **Matt Stemwedel**, Assistant to the City Administrator, Woodbury, has been appointed Assistant City Manager, Coon Rapids.
- And a welcome to Minnesota to **Charlene Stevens**, former Deputy County Administrator of Sedgwick County, KS, who was recently named City Administrator of Willmar. Charlene was among those recently commended by the ICMA Credentialing Advisory Board for her exceptional annual professional development report.
- **Larry Thompson**, City Manager, Winona, is in transition.
- **Dan Tolsma**, City Administrator, Tyler, has been appointed City Administrator, Spring Park.

## APMP Update

*By Matt Stemwedel, APMP President  
Assistant City Manager, City of Coon Rapids*

It was a very busy fall season for the Association of Public Management Professionals (APMP), and the pace of our activities will only pick up in speed from here. Since starting our monthly meetings again in August after taking the summer off, the group has heard from a number of great speakers on a wide range of topics. The APMP has also continued to make connections with the next generation by attending the University of Minnesota's Government and Nonprofit Fair, and we have plans to attend similar fairs in the near future.

Our most noteworthy piece of news, however, is that the APMP is seeking a formal partnership with MCMA to provide structure to its financial classification and to increase opportunities for members of the groups to work together on their many shared goals. The associations already have several strong connections, including:

- A partnership between the Next Generation Committee and APMP to promote the profession at career fairs and in college/university classrooms.
- APMP-funded scholarships for members to attend MCMA's annual spring conference.
- The APMP's homepage is located on the MCMA website.

At their December 9 meeting, the MCMA Board agreed to create a small committee of MCMA and APMP board members to explore the details of a formal partnership arrangement. On behalf of the APMP, I would like to thank the MCMA Board for their initial support of this idea, and I look forward to working with the Board to make this partnership a reality.

Finally, if you or someone you know may be interested in joining APMP, please visit [www.mncma.org](http://www.mncma.org). Click on the Affiliated Groups tab and then APMP to find more information about the association. And of course, you can always find us on Facebook by searching APMP. ☐

## Annual Conference Stimulus Package

*By Jason Ziemer, City Administrator, Maple Plain, and  
Brian Heck, City Administrator, Shorewood, Annual  
Conference Planning Committee Co-Chairs*

Our annual conference is coming up quickly—the event is May 2-4 at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa. You asked for a conference with more practical meaning, while still preserving the strong networking opportunities, and your annual conference planning committee is working hard to create a conference that stimulates the senses. It is our hope this year's conference will provide all of us with a few new—or renewed—ideas to bring back to our organizations. For May 2012, the session topics include:

- Rapid Innovation, featuring the Alliance for Innovation,
- Lean Thinking,
- Speed Coaching for All Generations,
- Succession Planning Through Mentoring, and
- How to Become an Ethical Survivor.

Former Senator Dave Durenberger will join us as our Thursday evening keynote speaker to talk about servant leadership, and Ross Bernstein will both open and close our conference by discussing life lessons of value, integrity, team-building, and leadership through a sports lens.

Keep a look-out for more information on the 2012 annual conference soon, and make plans to attend now. See you soon! ☐

### Reaching the MCMA Secretariat

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You can also contact Amy Mansager, Event Coordinator (amansager@lmc.org), or Jim Miller, Executive Director (jmiller@lmc.org).

All can be reached at (651) 281-1200.

# Memorandum from the edge

*Jon Hohenstein, Community Development Director, Eagan*

You don't hear much about honor these days. Yes, we honor commitments, we do things in honor of someone—but when was the last time you thought about someone behaving honorably or actually being an honorable person? To be clear: when I say honor, I mean something different from, and greater than, having respect or being respectful. Whether it seems fair or not, everyone is entitled to respect, even those who behave as if they don't.

No, I'm talking about honor, something Samuel Johnson described as "nobility of soul, magnanimity, and a scorn of meanness." I particularly like that last phrase. Johnson also spelled it honour, which you can excuse because he was living in the eighteenth century, when spelling was just being invented and they hadn't worked out all the details yet. By that standard, though, a culture of honor is one that is driven by principles and personal integrity—living up to a high standard of behavior, like codes of ethics. In contrast, a culture of law codifies consequences of bad behavior that are to be avoided. The two can coexist, but they are different.

One illustration from my own experience occurred during my freshman year in college. I lived in Wigglesworth Hall, Entry B, Suite 32. In this case, suite only described the arrangement of four rooms around a bathroom, no posh furnishings or room service. You can imagine our surprise when the three strangers and I who spent our first year there found that out.

Two floors down, the suites on the first floor stood between the entry door and the stairs to the upper suites. Two residents of the first floor, Rudy and Al, took it upon themselves to take in the comings and goings of the other residents. Based on their observations, the time of day and the demeanor of those observed, Rudy and Al felt they had a pretty keen understanding of the study habits, dietary patterns and social life of pretty much everyone in the building. Then one night, following a kind of scientific method, they decided to move from simple observation and deduction to experiment.

Harold, who lived on the second floor of Wigglesworth B, was on his way home from the library that evening. When he walked through the entry door, he was met on the landing by Rudy and Al in boxer shorts brandishing broom handles, shouting, "Halt! Who goes there?" Not wanting to be run through by cleaning tools, Harold responded, "Friend ... naturally."

"Be that as it may," the pair said, "before you can pass, we need to know whether you are honorable or not." They conferred for a moment and arrived at a suitable test. "Let's say your roommate invites a friend over and it turns out the friend is a real putz and won't leave. What would you do?"

Harold responded, "I'd toss the bum out." Rudy and Al looked at each other and said nearly in unison, "That's pretty darned honorable." At which point, they shouldered their broom handles, turned, and marched into their room. Harold's response met their 18-year-old perceptions of a high standard of behavior.

That is not to say that Rudy and Al were the arbiters of honorable behavior in all cases. They were also among the instigators of the legendary Wigglesworth B Entry Spring Water Fight, the genesis of which rose from the same janitor's closet in which they had found the brooms. It involved a mop sink, hose, several dozen metal trash cans, a lot of shaving cream, and eventually three campus police cars that were attracted to the scene by something resembling a rushing river that flowed out from under the entry door and cascaded down the steps in front of the building. Another story for another day.

Wigglesworth B Entry is significant for something else, too. It sits above Dexter Gate, one of the entries to Harvard Yard. On the Massachusetts Avenue side, the inscription reads, Enter to Grow in Wisdom. As you leave the Yard, the inscription reads, Depart to Serve Better Your Country and Your Kind. That sounds pretty much like public service. That, to me, is pretty darned honorable. ◻

**Be sure to  
check out  
MCMA's  
web site:**

[www.mncma.org](http://www.mncma.org)