

President's column

By Dianne Miller, MCMA President, Eagan Assistant City Administrator

As a 10-year-old girl, I lived for "Donut Sunday." My mom was on the Mary Mother Catholic Church Parish Council, which in my mind, made me akin to church royalty. As part of my regal duties, I got to manage my very own donut station in the atrium of the church after Mass. I relished the opportunity. An added bonus was my mom let me skip wearing my hideous, brown, saddle-style church shoes, and instead I got to lace up my pink Punky Brewster hightops that would surely get me from the kitchen to my donut station in record speed.

Each Sunday, I aligned my donuts to perfection. The cinnamon-to-powdered sugar ratio was spot on, and the Tang in the industrial-sized cooler was chilled and ready for consumption. I loved the feeling of the sanctuary doors opening and thousands (OK, maybe hundreds) of parishioners rushing to get in my line for their weekly donut. Overseeing this whole operation was Sister Kathy, a woman of great wisdom and faith, but with one look, could scare the bejesus out of you. To say I wanted to impress her was an understatement. She would walk by my line, and give me a small, silent nod of approval if everything was going smoothly. I would stare her down until she gave me some kind of non-verbal affirmation.

When the rush was over and the donuts consumed, it was time to head

down to the kitchen to wash dishes to impeccable standards. As I put away my last plate, Sister Kathy would look at me through her small, silver glasses and say, "Thank you, my dear. Many hands make light work." I never really thought about what her words meant, but I valued the praise.

"I could hear the click of the heels on the cobblestone floor, steadfastly coming towards me. Gulp.

Sister Kathy was heading my way, and she did not look pleased."

I repeated this Donut Sunday ritual for months. I grew in my comfort level and I began thinking, how can I improve this operation? It bothered me that people had to wait 10 minutes to get their donut. Surely, there was a more efficient

way. And, as an added bonus, if I could speed things up just a bit, I could get home before the start of the second quarter of the Viking's game to watch Wade Wilson and Anthony Carter.

I'm not sure what possessed me to rock the boat of the Catholic Donut Sunday ritual, but one day, that's just what I did. I decidedly moved the table away from the wall in order to make space for two lines, and instead of serving each donut with a pair of tongs, I moved the napkin pile and let people grab their own donut. It was a win-win; my customers had their donut in record time and in a germ-free manner!

As I stood with my hands on my hips, marveling at how my line was half the length of the others, I could hear the click of the heels on

MCMA Annual Conference update

By Patrick Antonen, MCMA Board Member, Circle Pines City Administrator

Mark your calendars for Sept. 15-17, 2021!

At the Dec. 11 board meeting, the MCMA Board of Directors, with input from the Annual Conference Planning Committee, made the decision to postpone the MCMA Annual Conference originally scheduled for May 5-7, 2021. The conference has been rescheduled for Sept. 15-17, 2021, still to be held in Duluth!

This decision to reschedule the conference was made out of an abundance of caution and to ensure that we have the best chance of safely holding this conference in 2021.

While we have to wait a little bit longer to see each other in person, the Annual Conference Planning Committee is excited to move forward with the planning of a fall conference. Stay tuned in the coming months for more information on what is sure to be an awesome conference! 🍷

– Contact Antonen at pantonen@ci.circle-pines.mn.us

Appointments and other professional news

- **Pat Hentges**, city manager, Mankato, has retired.
- **Susan Arntz**, city administrator, Waconia, has been appointed city manager, Mankato
- **Alison Zelms**, deputy city manager, Mankato, has been appointed city manager, Rochester.

*Do you have a new appointment or other professional news to share?
Contact the secretariat at the information listed.*

MCMA Newsletter

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League of Minnesota Cities
145 University Avenue
West St. Paul, Minnesota
55103-2044

Contact:
Madison Hagenau
Member Engagement
Coordinator
mhagenau@lmc.org
(651) 215-4048
Fax: (651) 281-1296

MCMA Officers/Board Members

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Past President:

Scott Neal, City of Edina

APMP President:

Jared Voto, Washington County

Senior Advisors:

Bill Craig, St. Michael
763-367-0870 • peggcr@aol.com

Janice Fransen, Jackson
507-841-0974 • jfransen60@gmail.com

Tom Hedges, Eagan
651-895-7881 • dhedges23@comcast.net

Jeff Weldon, Sauk Centre
320-557-8006 • jtwelldone@gmail.com

Your Senior Advisors are here to help!

2021 Winter Workshop goes virtual – join us!

By GERALYN BARONE, 2nd VP of MCMA, Minnetonka City Manager

While we can't gather in person for this year's Winter Workshop, the Professional Development Committee has planned a great half-day virtual workshop for Friday, Jan. 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. View the agenda and register here by Jan. 22, 2021.

More about the workshop

The morning kicks off with an optional pre-conference social time from 8:30 to 9 a.m. After logging into the Zoom meeting, participants get placed into a breakout room to catch up with colleagues before the workshop begins.

The keynote speaker at 9 a.m. is Patrick Ibarra, a former city manager and co-founder and partner of the Mejorando Group, an organizational effectiveness consulting firm that brings fresh thinking, innovation, and next practices to help governments succeed. In a session titled "We've Always Done It That Way Is Over: What's Next?" Patrick will share the three degrees of change, along with next practices about reimagining your community, redesigning the consumer experience, resetting the workplace culture, and refreshing talent management practices.

Patrick's session will be followed at 10 a.m. by a moderated panel of our talented and resilient colleagues, who will share their recent experiences grappling with change.

The final hour of the program will consist of breakout rooms, led by members of MCMA's Women in the Profession Committee. Registrants will be asked to select which breakout room to participate in. The four options are:

1. Personal Wellbeing

What are you doing to stay healthy as a leader? What do you say after you've asked someone how they're doing? How are different personality styles faring through all the changes that 2020 has brought?


2. Community Wellbeing

What's our role in helping the community heal – from social unrest, election fallout, pandemic fatigue, etc.? How are you navigating difficult conversations? What measures have you put in place to facilitate difficult conversations and community healing?

3. Silver Linings of 2020

What's the best thing that's happened to you in 2020? Did you start any new/good practices or habits or eliminate bad ones? What did you learn in 2020 that you will carry forward?

4. Balancing Career Objectives with a Personal Life

What have been the most significant impacts on your career and personal life throughout the pandemic? Have your professional goals changed as a result of the unprecedented challenges that 2020 brought? 

– Contact Barone at gbarone@eminnetonka.com

Be sure to
check out
MCMA's
website:

www.mncma.org

APMP Annual Conference update

By Jared Voto, APMP President, Washington County Senior Strategic Planner

Like many things in 2020, APMP's Annual Fall Conference was done differently than we had done in the past. The conference, held via Zoom on Sept. 17, focused on virtual engagement best practices and strategies. With the assistance of Tane Danger and other members of The Theater of Public Policy, we heard about best practices for hosting virtual meetings and held breakout sessions to discuss how those practices could be applied to our own upcoming meetings. The over 35 local government professionals in attendance also heard from a panel of four local government communicators on how they have been handling virtual engagement during COVID-19, and new things they have been doing to adjust. Overall, it was a great morning to connect with, and hear from, our colleagues.

In late November, APMP launched a new book club for our members and friends. Twenty people signed up to read our first book — "A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota." Four small groups, led by the APMP Board, will meet three to four times to discuss the readings and how they relate to our work in local government.

Lastly, we are finalizing our topics and presenters for our monthly meetings in 2021. We plan to host sessions on public safety, making the next move, employee development programs, and preparing for the future of local government. Check our webpage on MCMA's website for more information on the schedule for the upcoming year and to RSVP for the meetings.

As always, reach out to me or any of the board members for additional information. ◻

– Contact Voto at jared.voto@co.washington.mn.us

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MCMA internship stipend recipients

By Madison Hagenau, Secretariat Officer

Every year the Education and Outreach Committee awards stipends to three jurisdictions to provide a talented young person with real-life experience working in local government management.

The Education and Outreach Committee of MCMA considers the following elements when selecting the recipients of the stipends: MCMA membership status, quality of the proposed work tasks, exposure to public administration and local government management, interaction with the organization's MCMA member, program supervision, and mentorship opportunities.

The 2021 stipends were awarded to the cities of Oakdale, Mankato, and Cottage Grove! ◻


MEMBER CONNECT UPDATE

By Noah Schuchman, MCMA Board Member, Duluth Chief Administrative Officer

MCMA Member Connect regional groups have started meeting!

So far, 79 MCMA members have signed up for a total of 11 regional groups from around the state, with more members joining as the weeks go by. If you're wondering what you're missing, the Member Connect program is organized regionally to encourage discussion on region-specific and statewide issues, best practices, and to provide a check-in on how you and your colleagues are doing in unprecedented times.

In addition, Member Connect virtual meetings have already provided MCMA members with the opportunity to connect with colleagues they had yet to meet, strengthen existing bonds, and reconnect with colleagues they have not seen in some time.

If you are interested in participating in your region, please email MCMA Secretariat Madison Hagenau at mhagenau@lmc.org to get connected with one of these regional groups. 

– *Contact Schuchman at nschuchman@duluthmn.gov*

Board meetings recap

By Madison Hagenau, Secretariat Officer

The MCMA Board met on Oct. 2 and Dec. 11.

Highlights of the meeting were:

- Review of Member Connect sign-ups and discussion of a plan for reaching out to meeting hosts.
- Appointment of Lisa Schaefer, Edina Assistant City Manager, to the Professional Conduct Committee.
- Review of plans for the 2021 Virtual Winter Workshop to be held on Friday, Jan. 29.
- Rescheduling of the 2021 Annual Conference from May 5-7 to Sept. 15-17.

Reaching the MCMA secretariat

For MCMA secretariat services, contact:

Madison Hagenau

Member Engagement Coordinator
(651) 215-4048
Fax: (651) 281-1296
mhagenau@lmc.org

League of Minnesota Cities
145 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55103-2044

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the cobblestone floor, steadfastly coming towards me. Gulp. Sister Kathy was heading my way, and she did not look pleased.

“Dianne, can you tell me how you served so many people so quickly?” she asked. I smiled, and confidently told her about my innovative measures. “I see,” was all she said. Insert lengthy, awkward pause. Sister Kathy then stoically asked me, “Dianne, without a line in which to wait, did your fellow parishioners have an opportunity to meet a new person?” I pursed my lips, tilted my head back and forth and thought, “No, probably not.” Sister went on and asked, “And Dianne, did your fellow parishioners receive a warm greeting from you when you chose not to serve them individually, and instead implemented a ‘serve yourself’ mentality?” Shoulders hunched, I repeated, “No, probably not.”

Sister Kathy moved on and left me standing next to my line-less donut station, feeling disheartened, yet admittedly grateful at some level for the valuable lesson. Suffice it to say, from that point forward my station was a single line, and nothing but tong-served donuts delivered with kindness. Despite her harsh but fair lesson, she still made sure to seek me out as I left church to thank me, and of course, remind me that many hands make light work.

Sister Kathy’s lessons have come back to me as I have been thinking about this pandemic and how it has forever changed our lives.

Finding innovations and building efficiencies has been essential as we serve our communities during this pandemic. Yet, we can’t ignore or undervalue the ancillary effects of processes — including providing time to build community, space for conversation and input, and creating connections through comfort and kindness. Think about how you can pick up the proverbial donut tongs and truly serve someone today.

Lastly, I am incredibly grateful for MCMA, and specifically the extraordinary work of our committees, the Board, and countless members over the past nine months who have stepped up in service to our organization. I am continually reminded of Sister Kathy’s words: Many hands do in fact make light work. Thank you for your service! 🍩

– Contact Miller at dmiller@cityofeagan.com

“Sister Kathy moved on and left me standing next to my line-less donut station, feeling disheartened, yet admittedly grateful at some level for the valuable lesson.”

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