

ASPA

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Times

A powerful voice for public service...

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Paying For It

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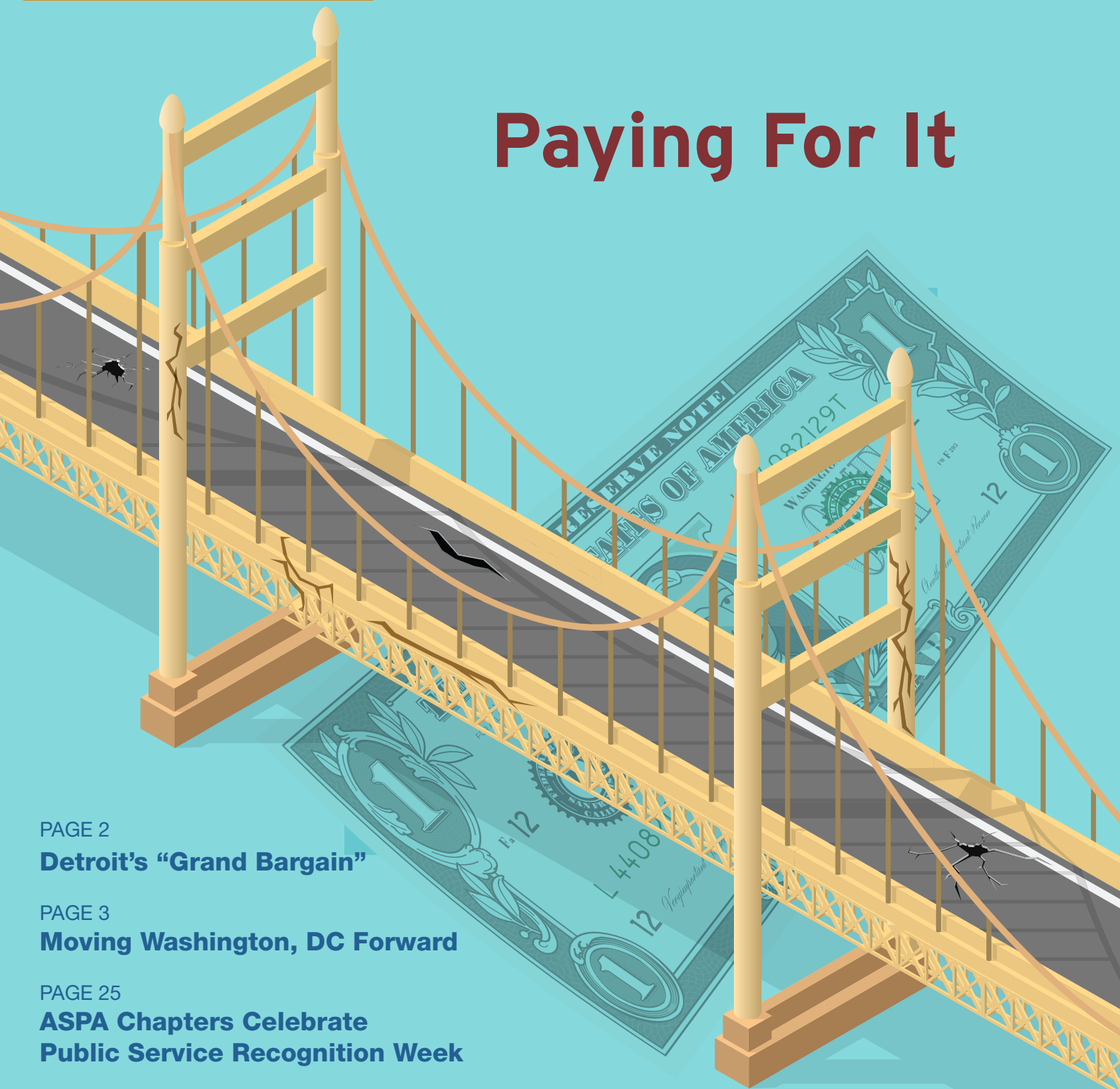
Detroit's "Grand Bargain"

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Moving Washington, DC Forward

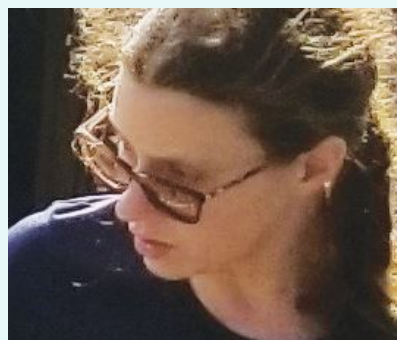
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**ASPA Chapters Celebrate
Public Service Recognition Week**



Rosaleen Nogle

Rosaleen Nogle is assistant principal engineer with Buffalo Sewer in Buffalo, New York. In this role, she is project manager for million-dollar-plus contracts to optimize and upgrade the 850-mile Buffalo Sewer collection system, the second largest treatment facility in New York State. Nogle is a licensed professional engineer in seven states and New York State-certified collection system operator with 12 years of experience in the water and wastewater industries. Active in professional societies at the state and local levels, she holds a MS and BS in civil engineering and BA in anthropology from the University at Buffalo; she is pursuing her MPA from Indiana University. Nogle can be reached at rnogle@buffalosewer.org.



Given your professional experience and expertise, you see “infrastructure” through a different lens than most observers. What is infrastructure doing well? Where is there room for improvement?

Infrastructure does a fantastic job of continuing to provide Americans with the first world quality of life we have come to expect. Every day, people drive on roads and over bridges and water, gas and sewer lines, safely. They turn their taps and clean water comes out. They flush their toilets and sewage goes away. They flip a switch and lights come on. Even during rainstorms, our streets stay passable and our citizens can continue their lives uninterrupted. We do such a good job that most Americans do not think about infrastructure until one of these things does not happen.

This brings me to where I see room for improvement. We have become so good at making high quality infrastructure part of our landscape that people no longer notice that it is there and they have stopped valuing it. This means that much of our infrastructure suffers from years—decades, in some cases—of deferred maintenance. The devaluing of infrastructure also means it can be difficult to recruit new employees willing to take on the mentally and physically challenging work of maintaining these systems.

Many have a list of *this would be fun to do* projects; but, most of the time we do not get to spend time on them given other priorities, unexpected threats and political considerations. What is on your list?

My list of fun to do projects generally falls into Stephen Covey’s Quadrant II of tasks—that is, important, but not urgent. For years, these tasks have been placed on the back burner in favor of urgent and important tasks. Due to recent strategic management decisions at Buffalo Sewer, I have been able to begin to address them.

The first item is to track down sewer planning and construction documents. These records often are missing because they are more than 150 years old

and were dismissed as unimportant or misfiled. However, they frequently exist in our off-site records repositories or can be reconstructed from historical documents. I am working with a junior engineer to restore the records.

A related item is to use historical system mapping to identify critical points within the system that provide the greatest opportunity to optimize our system and present the greatest risk of causing damage if they fail.

A final item is helping those with whom I work to do their jobs better through locating and making use of training resources or developing them in house.

Describe the path you took to reach your area of expertise. What fascinates you about it?

I started out by working on plans to ensure that rainwater falling on large wastewater treatment facilities did not pick up contamination and then take it to the waterways. Alongside wastewater treatment operators, I spent most of two years physically inspecting the condition of each piece of mechanical equipment at pumping stations and treatment facilities. I also spent six months as a regulator, working with operators to make sure they delivered water to customers that was safe and healthy to drink. As my career progressed, I have taken on positions managing multi-million-dollar design and construction projects, developing design standards for new sewer connections and managing sewer maintenance staff.

Throughout my career, I have been fascinated with the importance of these systems for human health and welfare and their invisibility to the rest of society. More recently, I have loved my time at Buffalo Sewer when I spread out a 125- to 175-year-old drawing and read the work of generations of engineers, operators and construction workers as they built, altered and repaired the system.

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CAROLYN FRANCIS-ROYER

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What advice would you give to public administrators entering the profession? What should they expect? How should they prepare for it?

Public service is very rewarding, but it comes with many challenges. Begin each day with the end result or goal in mind. That gives you the motivation to push through. Be strategic when making decisions. Although you want to get daily tasks done, you must think about long-term implications of today's

decisions and policy implementation. There often is a shortage of manpower in public service, so be prepared to wear many hats. In a single workday, you may be the manager, coordinator and clerk. Working in affordable and public housing, I assumed the role of social worker or counselor on many days. Be open and receptive to tasks outside your job description. Helping the organization achieve its public service goal makes it worth it.

ROSALEEN NOGLE

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What advice would you give to public administrators entering the profession? What should they expect? How should they prepare for it?

Do not do anything you would not want to hear about on television. This advice may seem cliché, but much of what we do in the public sector is highly regulated and subject to public access laws. If something does not pass the smell test, even if it is technically legal, do not do it.

As for expectations, expect a constant churn of change. Political leaders will change as do their priorities. It is the public administrator's job to meet regulatory requirements and keep your staff safe doing it. Making sure you address those priorities will be important, too.

CAMILLE STEWART

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The paper, "Full Court Press: Preventing Foreign Adversaries from Exfiltrating National Security Technologies through Bankruptcy Proceedings," will be released in Volume 10.2 of the *Georgetown Journal of National Security Law & Policy*. TCIL and I are partnering with George Mason University's National Security Institute to develop a pilot training program for judges based on my research. This has been interesting and rewarding because I have been able to study and illuminate the threat, then propose and pilot a solution.

Recruiting the next generation of public servants remains one of our field's biggest challenges. What has it meant for your area of work? How have you and your colleagues sought to address and overcome it?

I am passionate about making sure we bring everything we have to bear to promote and protect this country, so I mentor and promote *anyone* seeking my assistance. As practitioners, we all should devote some of our time and talent to cultivating the next generation, whether in one-on-one settings or groups. Yet for me, this

challenge has a number of dimensions beyond recruiting public servants.

Finding individuals focused on cybersecurity is more difficult. It is further complicated when considering the representation of women and minorities—and then made even worse at the intersection of those two demographics. As a board member of Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security, I have started a working group on cybersecurity and emerging technology. It convenes experts of all backgrounds who are passionate about the impacts of cybersecurity and emerging technology on communities of color, especially women of color. It identifies, amplifies and augments work being done to explore the impacts; promotes engagement of communities of color in the national and international discourse; and explores equipping the communities to enter the workforce of the future. I am also involved in other efforts to increase diversity in national security and foreign policy spaces broadly.