



'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIFTING

In this special end-of-year edition, a collection of GMC members share stories about the best gifts they've been given and how those (sometimes unexpected) blessings have influenced their careers.

THE PROPOSAL DEBRIEF
**QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER**

QUARTER FOUR // DECEMBER 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings GMC Members!

Where has the year gone? It seems like just yesterday it was New Years and now it's almost Christmas and the end of 2021!

For this newsletter, I was asked to think about GIVING as our theme. Merriam-Webster Dictionary has many definitions, but a few that spoke to me were: to make a present of, to execute and deliver, to offer as a pledge, and to enter wholeheartedly into an activity.

I hope that you feel that you have received the gift of our chapter offerings, including GMC Gives Back, Webinars/Lunch and Learn, Meet-ups (whether in person or virtually), Book Club, Virtual Networking Group, participated as a mentor or mentee, took advantage of our Certification Study Group, or attended our first Virtual Symposium. These are all important chapter initiatives which we hope have brought great value to you as members. And we don't plan on stopping!

As the year comes to a close, so too does my time as your Chapter Chair. It has been my privilege to serve the GMC Chapter membership in this capacity. Our members are what make us such a great chapter!

All the best,

Andrea

Andrea has more than 10 years of proposal management experience and is a longtime supporter of APMP. She is APMP Foundation certified and has been serving the APMP GMC board in multiple capacities since 2012. She's involved with the organization and invested at the chapter level because she believes APMP helps instill best practices in the industry and provides networking opportunities with other proposal professionals you can't get elsewhere.



Andrea Dunger, CF APMP
GMC Chapter President

Can I get off the ride now? I don't like this rollercoaster.

Marcus Hammond | *Kansas City, Missouri*

I'm going to be really transparent for a few lines. If I drew you a picture of my 2021, it would look like a rollercoaster track that would give anyone vertigo with its loops, high peaks, and stomach churning plummets. As a proposal professional, years like the last one could have completely derailed me mentally. But there's no derailment here because **I was lucky to have a strong support structure of mentors around me.** Without them, I'd probably end 2021 crying in a corner.

When I joined APMP and the GMC, I was working as a lone proposal strategist and knew I needed help validating the proposal processes I was creating. I joined the mentorship program and was matched with a person that undeniably provided me with everything a mentee could hope for. I needed someone who had experience with a mature proposal process but also understood that I had to build the process to fit my specific situation. I really lucked out because I was paired with incoming Chapter Chair Kat Becchina. For one hour each week, she let me go through my processes, provided critical feedback or praise when needed, and talked me through ways to keep growing.

But that's not all mentoring provided me this year. Through Kat, I met many of the members of APMP GMC and that became an outlet for networking and another path for feedback on processes. **I began to see that I wasn't the only team of one out there.** I began having conversations with other APMP members like Kent Rothemeier, Cate Stambaugh, Loni Hawks, Kati Stutsman, and Alexa Ramsey. My rollercoaster car was starting to fill up with amazingly knowledgeable proposal professionals.

This full rollercoaster car willingly gave out anecdotes and advice about proposal management that helped build up confidence in my own skills. To this day, I talk about my reservations in taking the Foundation Certification exam (I'm a notoriously bad test taker). But because I have this amazing mentorship network that reminds me of my strengths and weaknesses, I am fully aware of why I'm "notoriously bad" at test taking and am working to counteract these habits.

The lessons I've learned from all the amazing people that have become my professional brothers and sisters in arms has made me see the importance of giving the gift of mentorship back to others. I see the importance of being active in our communities. It's important to share our experiences, our processes, our worries, our failures, and our successes. Every person I've met over the last year has helped me to grow and learn.

Proposal management is not an easy career. My 2021 was crazy. I saw personal and professional successes and failures. Throughout every moment though, I had a support structure to help me through it. Do yourself a favor and find a mentor – he or she will support you. Once you feel comfortable, make yourself available as a mentee because **you never know how impactful you can be.**

Finally, I just want to say that I honestly cannot thank the mentors in my life (whether they know they are my mentors or not) enough. Your support, patience and knowledge has left a lasting mark on my personal life and career.

Marcus has been a proposal manager for six years. Prior to jumping head-long into a life of go/no-go conversations, Marcus taught English at several Kansas City area community colleges and wrote content for a pop-culture website. Marcus has a master's degree in liberal arts from Baker University with an emphasis in literature and a bachelor's degree in English and communication studies from the University of Kansas. His free time is spent sharing a love of Legos, Pokémon, and comic books with his son and traveling, reading, and creating art with his wife. You can reach him at **marcus.hammond46@gmail.com**.





a safe space

Mercedez Thompson, MA, CP APMP, Shipley BDC |
Jeffersonville, Indiana

for working parents

Last month, I hosted a webinar for marketing professionals on the topic of cover letter writing from the comfort of my home office. Full disclosure: my home office happens to be a corner of our living room. Don't get me wrong, after nearly two years of this work-from-home thing, my office is well-equipped. I have the essentials: a stand-up desk, printer, ergonomic chair (lesson learned), filing cabinet, and plenty of pens, staples, and paper clips. Still, our two-bedroom apartment is compact, and so my office — decked out as it is — bumps up against real life. During video conferences, it's not uncommon to see our nanny walk past, sleepy baby in tow. And even without guest appearances, there are the squeals, wails, giggles, and otherwise unintelligible infant sounds that parade through any given work meeting.

This is my office. By now, I take it for granted.

The webinar went well. No technical difficulties. An engaged audience. Thoughtful questions. Another reminder that I'm good at my job, respected in the industry, and enlivened by the chance to share my knowledge and experience.

Then, just a half an hour after I'd thanked the participants and unplugged my webcam, I received an unexpected LinkedIn message.

It read: Thank you. I watched your webinar with my three-month-old. I'm not sure if you heard her coo in the background, but you made me feel so comfortable. It's the first time since becoming a mom that I've turned on my mic and asked questions. Thank you for creating that safe space for us moms!

Thank me? Safe space? Had my little guy made an appearance without me even realizing it? Luckily, the webinar had been recorded. I logged in to replay it. And there it was, in the first three minutes of the presentation.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm so pleased to be here. As you know, I'll be discussing cover letter writing and the critical role it plays in winning work. Before we get started, I just want to let you know that I have an infant son. If you happen to hear and/or see my baby, I'm not sorry. He's awesome and terribly cute. In fact, you're welcome. Now, cover letters...

My go-to introduction — something else I take for granted.



This hadn't always been how I began meetings. For several months, like many parents who found themselves juggling work and home life during the pandemic, I had hidden in my corner, back against the wall, displaying a pre-made corporate background and racing to the mute button every time my son cried out. Each time he took me by surprise, I launched into sheepish apologies, begging my coworkers to forgive me.

Forgive me for what, exactly? For being a mom? For being a mom who worked? For having a family? For having a life outside of work? For being human? What exactly was I apologizing for? **So, I stopped.**

I decided that to be a working mother who ran meetings, hosted webinars, coordinated deadlines, tracked down missing content, and submitted winning proposals — while also changing diapers, reading stories, refilling bottles, rocking and shushing, shushing and rocking, managing bath times, and don't forget the endless laundry — was **nothing to apologize for**. And, after all, this wasn't just me. This was the reality we were all living.

COVID had given us an unexpected gift: the **freedom to be a whole human** at work, a human who could prioritize family and also be a rockstar at their job.



Mercedes is a proposal manager with more than nine years of experience in writing and marketing for diverse industries including engineering, education, and law. Additionally, she has taught English courses at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and University of Nevada, Reno. Subscribe to her blog at simplywritingblog.com.

a dad's perspective

marcus
hammond



Working from home in 2020 greatly changed the way I interacted with my family. Before that, I'd wake up in the morning before everyone else and leave for work. By the time I came home, it was time for the nightly routine of dinner, clean-up, and bed. With the work-from-home situation, I have been able to take part in the daily events that I missed out on — waking my son up, eating lunch together, helping with schoolwork. Furthermore, my son had an opportunity to see me work. Instead of having a dad that came home, cranky from an 8-hour workday, whatever "work" meant to a young child, my son became part of my everyday work life. Zoom bombing became a real thing. My colleagues realized that I was more than the person they came to for professional tasks; I was also a dad that loved sharing my work with my son. COVID was a lesson in the connections I had missed with my family while being in the office. In turn, this realization has helped me keep connected as I find myself back in the office.

Control what you can and let the universe do the rest

Kati Stutsman, CF APMP | Michigan City, Indiana

"Sure, it feels like a tragedy... but this is a blessing in disguise."

"Yeah, this is a pretty big challenge... but everything happens for a reason."

We've all heard this kind of support from friends, family, and colleagues. We've even said it as we try to convince ourselves that it's all fine. This "cup half full" mentality can feel like a load of crap - lies that keep us from spiraling into a hole of self-pity or fear. But a little dose of optimism, *c'est la vie*, and hindsight usually proves that those platitudes aren't total lies... and that **challenge or conflict can actually be a gift.**

As a kid, I was the one people wanted on group projects (= guaranteed A). Teachers loved me, I thrived in school, and I was used to achieving success. Even in college, the curriculum came easy and I fast-tracked my way to completing a liberal arts degree in three years.

When I graduated, the country was headed into recession. Companies were retreating from the job market and, even with a *magna cum laude* communications degree under my belt, I was stuck in an endless cycle of applications, email black holes, and dwindling savings.

Since I had no other prospects and needed to do something with my life, I applied and was accepted into the Peace Corps. It made my parents nervous but I was excited to spend a couple of years in Africa teaching English. I moved my things into storage and gave away furniture that I wouldn't need. Then, a few weeks before my assignment and deployment date, I received a message from my recruiter saying the organization accidentally admitted too many applicants and would be delaying me until the following year.

I was back to filling out applications... this time with no furniture.

I ended up interviewing for and accepting the first full-time offer I received: corporate receptionist role at a pharmaceutical company. It required moving out of state and starting fresh in a place where no one knew me. It was scary and expensive. But the hardest thing I had to overcome was my colleagues' perception of what a "support" role meant about me, my education or my level of ambition. I was expected to be invisible and deferential. While I didn't mind serving coffee to guests and transferring calls from a switchboard, I quickly felt trapped with no outlet for my creativity.





Kati is a marketing and creative communications specialist with a background in value-add content development and exceptional client experiences. She is APMP and Shipley certified in proposal management best practices. Kati specializes in designing attractive, easy-to-evaluate proposals and incorporating client-focused strategic messaging to help improve win and capture rates. You can reach her at kati.stutsman@gmail.com.



My voice wasn't needed and my ego was bruised when bosses or colleagues didn't want me to participate in special projects or were unwilling to give me more challenging tasks when I expressed interest.

I lasted about two years before I worked up the courage to quit. Unfortunately, I found myself on an executive support path that I didn't truly want, even though I was good at it. Eventually, I volunteered myself into a special project that exposed me to decision-makers in marketing and communications spots. I was able to course-correct to better align with my skills and interests... and I eventually stumbled into proposal management.

It was a jagged journey – one that didn't look at ALL like what I envisioned for myself when I started my career path. I had to prove myself in a way I never had to before. And I had to battle some unflattering (and incorrect!) preconceived notions about what I was capable of. It felt unfair at the time. There were times where I felt undervalued, underappreciated, and underutilized. I was dissatisfied with my employers and mad at myself for settling for something I hated just for a paycheck.

However, with some time, distance, and maturity, these challenges at the beginning of my career really were gifts. I proved to myself that I could literally **work myself up from the bottom**. I had to **self-teach certain skill sets** when I couldn't find a mentor or advocate who was willing to give me a chance. Those skills (including photography) became really fulfilling personal hobbies and freelance opportunities.

I learned to **respect and value EVERY team member regardless of "rank"** or perceived skill set. It has helped me to **work better in team settings** and to **embrace collaboration** – when I once dominated group projects. That ability to engage and encourage has laid the foundation for my style as a proposal manager.

Most importantly, **I trust myself more because I know I am capable**. I know that I am worthy of respect and that I offer valuable skillsets to my employer.

It's hard to say what kind of employee I may have become if I landed a cushy job right out of college... or where in the world I'd be right now if I spent two years in Africa. But right now I have an amazing team, love what I do as a proposal manager, and I have a supportive partner at home who cheers on my successes and new ideas.

Those are gifts I wouldn't trade for anything... even the years I spent feeling like someone I wasn't meant to be.

How Vitality saved my life

Paul Lockwood, CF APMP |
Chicago, Illinois

This story first appeared on the Vitality Insights Blog on October 13, 2021.

In 2011, at the age of 51, I thought I had a very good work-life balance. After being laid off from my previous place of employment of over 13 years, I had recently started a new job at Vitality and was active in my church and community theater. One of my thoughts at the time was that the incentive-based wellness program could motivate me to increase my physical activity, which was previously limited to a fast-paced walk from the train station to the office. So, I joined a Vitality walking club, got a wearable fitness device, and began increasing my physical activity and earning points and rewards for doing so.

When our office Vitality Champs encouraged participation in a local "Elvis is Alive" 5k along the Chicago lakefront (and when I found out that you could jog or walk the route), I signed up. The actor part of me was particularly excited about dressing up like Elvis Presley for the race as well. After a challenging 3.2 miles running and walking with my coworkers, I eventually crossed the finish line and – due to a lack of chairs and a desire to not get grass stains on the white jumpsuit – stayed on my feet for another half-hour cheering on the other participants before heading home.

Early the following week, while rushing to catch the train, I felt chest pains. I slowed down my pace, and once I was seated on a train, the pains went away. But the same thing happened a couple days later, so I set up an appointment with my doctor. After an EKG in which he noticed

a couple of blips, he ordered a stress test and nuclear photos of my heart. The photos didn't show anything, and neither did the stress test, although I was feeling increased pain.

My doctor said that despite the normal test results, if I was still feeling symptoms, I should see a particular cardiologist. At that appointment, the doctor walked in the examining room after looking through my charts and seeing nothing of concern and pointedly asked, "Why are you here?" I said that my late father and two of my three older brothers had all experienced heart problems and I wanted to make sure I was doing everything I could for my health. The cardiologist then grudgingly said the only way to know for sure if there was a cardiac issue would be to do an angiogram. The cardiologist didn't feel there was any urgency in scheduling the test, but I advocated for myself and got an appointment for the very next day. Almost exactly 4 weeks after the 5K that pushed my body to its limits, the test was performed.

The result: I had a 95-98% blockage in my left anterior descending artery, commonly known as the "widowmaker." The cardiologist said that I had come extremely close to having a severe or massive heart attack. They say that everything happens for a reason. I know this to be true:

- If I hadn't lost my previous job in mid-January, I wouldn't have found my way to Vitality.
- If I hadn't accepted the job at Vitality that June, my limited physical activity would have continued.
- If I hadn't embraced the physical activity part of the Vitality program, I never would have considered participation in a 5K.
- If I hadn't increased my physical activity, I would likely have had a heart attack at the age of 51.
- If I hadn't taken part in the 5K race, my body might not have sent any warning signals.
- If I hadn't pursued all of the tests needed to determine the presence of a heart problem, I might not still be here 10 years later.

The moral of my story is two-fold: 1) embrace the opportunities for physical activity, whether those opportunities are doable or even a bit challenging, and 2) listen to what your body is telling you – if something feels wrong, get the help or tests you need. **Be your own superhero; save your own life.**



Paul Lockwood, a senior sales operations analyst for Vitality, continues to maintain his work-life balance, participating in Toastmasters, acting in a children's theater repertory group, writing occasional reviews of Chicago area plays and musicals, serving in various ways at his church (e.g., singing, reading scripture, Church Council member), and crafting a monthly column ("A Musing" – sometimes it's a serious thought [a musing], sometimes more light-hearted [amusing]) for his community's weekly newspaper. He and his wife Diane are servants to a darling calico cat. The "greatest gift" Paul's received? The new lease on life he received as a result of his actions in 2011 – having a "stent in" changed his life in an "in-stent."

Kat Becchina, CF APMP | *Kansas City, Missouri*

I've never owned a dog. Or any "real" pet, for that matter. My childhood consisted of beta fish, rabbits in a pen we built out of chicken wire, and the occasional hamster. My dad is severely allergic to cats and dogs, so we never had any growing up. My husband grew up having dogs throughout his childhood, and when we got married, it was on the top of his list. It seemed the timing wasn't ever right, and I was concerned about having a dog and my dad not visiting.

During 2020, I worked insane hours and spent 99% of my time in the house. I was unbalanced. I was stressed. I felt like there was more to life, and I wasted away the days. I'm sure a lot of people can relate. Slowly, my work environment started getting better, and in April 2021, we planned our first "post COVID" trip. We packed up the car and went camping with a few friends. It rained the entire time. But, we were out of the house and spent some time with friends we hadn't seen in over a year, so it was a success overall.

Earlier that week, mutual friends told us they had friends that lived on a farm in Paola, Kansas, and had an accidental litter of puppies. We decided that we would "swing by" and check them out on our way home from camping. I should have known it would be trouble when I pulled up. A pen full of little puppies in the garage were all snuggled up for nap time. The owner let us pick them up and play with them. I, of course, found the little runt in the corner who was buried under a rather plump brother. **It was love at first sight.**

I was surprised when she told us we could take him home that day. **It was the most spontaneous, random, unprepared, or unplanned thing I have ever done in my life** – and that's saying a lot coming from a proposal manager!

PUPPY love



Finding a routine

We packed up little Remy and headed straight to the pet store to get the essentials. My routine changed drastically from then on out. My husband and I have been together for 14 years, and we don't have any children. So, we are used to picking up and heading out whenever and wherever we want to. We adopted Remy at the perfect time. I needed to restructure my life and **learn to set boundaries.** Having an animal (or another human) to take care of can provide that opportunity.

He's taught me patience. Between potty training and house training, I learned quickly having a routine will make or break you. I learned to apply this to my personal life as well. I realized I had no boundaries between work and life and needed to establish **a routine that provided a "turn off" option.** Having a puppy forced me into that routine. I pack up on time because I know he's waiting for me to let him out of his pen and looking forward to a walk.

Happier and healthier

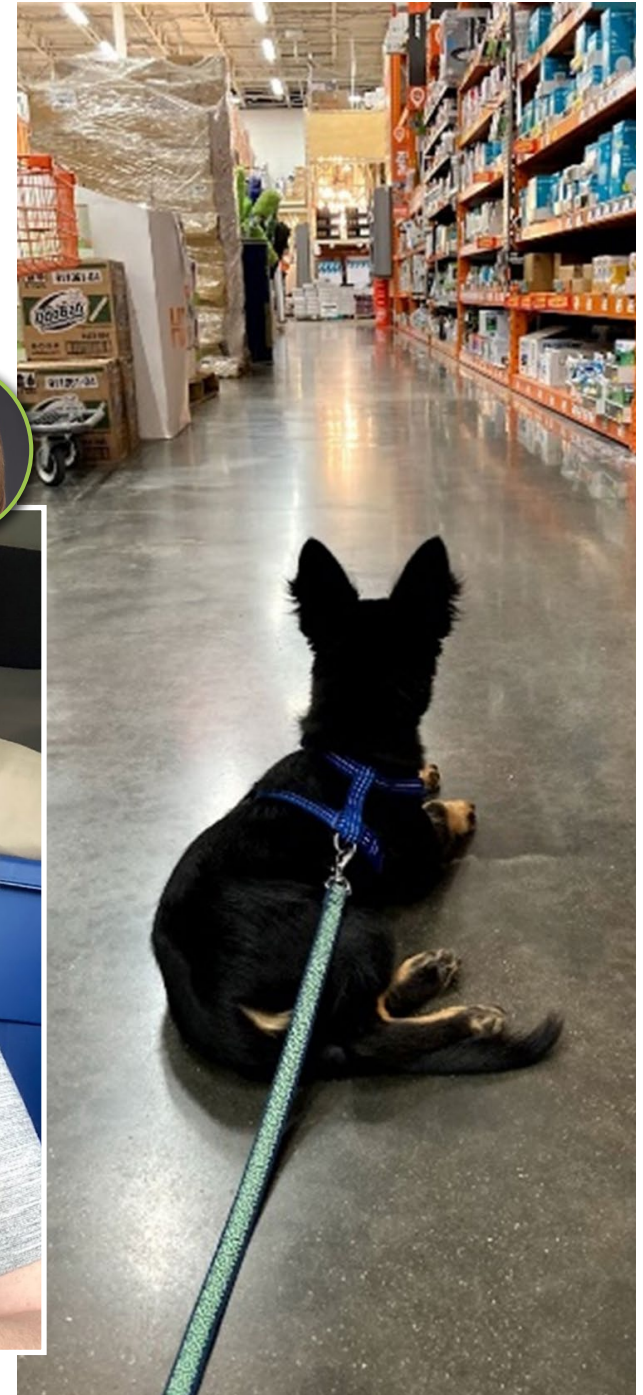
That's another benefit. He's forced me out of the house and looking for **new ways to exercise and be active.** Just this past weekend, we found a hidden trail spent most of the morning exploring. When you're an adult, you tend to forget the simple things like exploring the outdoors.

Remy has also helped me to de-stress. My husband usually beats me home by a few minutes and gets Remy out of his pin. When I come home from work, I can hear the pitter-patter of his little paws at the top of the stairs. He's crouched down with his tush in the air wagging his tail like crazy. I don't know about you, but I will never get tired of seeing someone that happy to see me. I can feel my heart swell like in *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* and feel the stress of the day melt away.

My husband and I are happier people now. I think we both felt like we were stuck in a rut and missing something in our lives. Who knew a little fur ball could change that? He has so many little quirks and quite the personality that he provides us with an endless entertainment supply. My favorite thing is to hear my husband use his "puppy voice" with Remy. He would die if

anyone else overheard him, but it brings me a lot of joy. Remy was an unexpected gift for our family this year. It seems silly to talk about how much he's impacted our lives, but sometimes the smallest packages can have the biggest impact.

Kat brings 10 years of experience in event planning, strategic proposal and marketing management in the architectural, engineering and construction (A/E/C) industry. She is currently serving as the Vice Chair for the GMC and looks forward to serving as President in 2022. Kat can be reached at klbecchina@burnsmcd.com.



Winning by LOSING

Mistakes provide us with an opportunity to rewire our behaviors. The valuable proposal management lessons I have learned from failing now influence all the pursuits I support today.

Alexa Ramsey, CP APMP | Minneapolis, MN

As I near the 10-year mark in my journey in my proposal career, I can look back and say a majority of my greatest professional gifts and proposal know-how's have come from my biggest mess ups. I'm only "good" at my job because I've fallen on my face. I've lived out the Cardinal sin of a proposal not being delivered on time (and if we're being brutally honest, several actually), I've supported teams where no one is on the same page and where the entire proposal is redone the day before it's due.

To many scenarios, I can say, "I won't do that again, because I've done it before." Some of the key blunders I've stumbled through and what they've taught me are listed below. I'm hoping these imperfect scenarios can help a new proposal professional.

FAILURE TO MEET DEADLINES

Mistake: Not getting the proposal delivered on time.

Outcome: Bid is thrown out due to disqualification.

Lessons: Always plan to deliver early. Even digital uploads need to be delivered early. Contingency plans are necessary for both printing production and shipping/delivery. You always need to be aware of all holidays, not just the major ones, where clients may be closed (like Presidents Day). Expect weather delays.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE REVIEWS

Mistake: Skipping color team reviews because the pursuit team or proposal isn't ready.

Outcome: Eleventh hour chaos because red flags and non-compliance issues were not pointed out.

Lessons: Schedule color team reviews and stick to them (even if you aren't ready). It's better to check in and get buy in from the team.

FAILURE TO MANAGE MY TIME

Mistake: Take on too much work.

Outcome: Poor quality work deliverables.

Lessons: Be realistic about workload capacity and delegate as often as possible. If over-booked, have the ability to say no.

FAILURE TO SET TEAM EXPECTATIONS

Mistake: Failure to set pursuit team expectations.

Outcome: No one understands who is responsible for what. This leads to team members doubling up on work or no one completing content needed for the proposal.

Lessons: Individual responsibilities need to be verbally agreed upon in a kickoff call and followed with a detailed list of team member assignments.

FAILURE TO ORGANIZE CONTENT

Mistake: Not having a content library.

Outcome: Constantly digging through old proposals to find "where we included that information before."

Lessons: Create a simple library for commonly used content materials. Track frequently used stats.

FAILURE TO DOCUMENT PROCESSES

Mistake: Lack of a proposal process.

Outcome: All proposal management team members lead efforts differently. Subject matter experts and other pursuit team personnel have no understanding of the workflow or expectations.

Lessons: Define proposal processes and team member role responsibilities in writing. Make sure all personnel involved in the proposal process are aware of the workflow.



Alexa is a marketing strategist specializing in proposal development for architectural, engineering, and construction firms. Since 2014, she's helped sales teams develop easily-digestible marketing materials for technical projects. Alexa is an APMP Certified Practitioner and is currently the APMP Greater Midwest Chapter Publications Co-Chair. Contact her at amramsey@burnsmcd.com.



DEAR GMC:

Q

I'm relatively new to the proposal industry, and I've been so appreciative and impressed by other APMP members who are willing to help out and give me advice. I want to help give back to my chapter, but I don't know what a newbie like me could possibly offer. Is there any way I can contribute? How would I get started?

Sincerely, Wanda B. Helpful

A DEAR WANDA,

The success of the GMC and APMP is dependent on members like you who raise their hand to make a difference! Indeed, the majority of what gets done at APMP is by volunteers giving their time and talent, from people who contribute content, lead webinars, all the way to the board members. Whatever level you are at in your career or whatever skills you can share, there are many ways you can give back. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Are you the life of the party? Always making connections? Host a Local or Virtual Meetup to get people in your area together for fun and networking.

2. Are you a master of Teams? Want to stretch your hosting skills? Want to promote the proposal profession and help grow the pipeline of talent? Join Tony Des Chenes on the Webinars Committee to work the magic behind the scenes.

3. Do you love planning? Reach out to next year's Event Chair, Andrea Boger, to help plan the next symposium using our email below.

4. Are you a writer at heart? Want more ways to express yourself outside of proposals? Write an article for the GMC Blog or Newsletter — email us at the address below to get started.

5. Do you have a little experience with website design or want an excuse to dabble more? Contact our Webmasters (Bruce Farrell and Alexa Ramsey) and put your technical skills to work.

There are so many ways that you can get involved. Not only can you give back to your chapter, but you'll get to meet new people, develop your network, and learn new skills as well. Just reach out to us at info@gmcapmp.org to get started. The first step is just raising your hand!

Do you have a proposal problem? A sticky situation with a submission? Send your questions to Dear GMC at info@gmcapmp.org.

Heather Finch, CF APMP // Dear GMC Columnist

Just a little disclaimer: The advice offered in this column is intended for informational purposes only. Use of this column is not intended to replace or substitute for any professional, financial, medical, legal, or other professional advice. This column, its author, and APMP GMC are not responsible for the outcome or results of following any advice in any given situation. You, and only you, are completely responsible for your actions.



Heather first encountered the acronym "RFP" when seeking ways to diversify funding sources for a human services company in 2012 and hasn't looked back since. Since then, she's moved on to lead proposal teams in both the commercial and government sectors, refining processes and developing efficiencies along the way.

BOOKISH

Karin Olson Held, CP APMP // Fargo, North Dakota

If you know me, it's likely no surprise that books are among my favorite gifts to give people. I research book recommendations, especially for children's and young adult literature, to match titles with my young family members. When my son falls in love with a new series I found for him, I am so thrilled that he loves what he's reading. (Book recommendation for 8 to 12-year-olds who like graphic novels: *The Lucy and Andy Neanderthal* series by Jeffrey Brown) I pay attention to what my family is reading, and keep a running list of books I think they might enjoy, drawing inspiration from The New York Times Book Review and awards finalists. This is how I came to gift my younger brother *Norwegian Wood: Chopping, Stacking, and Drying Wood the Scandinavian Way* by Lars Mytting.

Though it became a global bestseller, Norwegian Wood might for a niche audience, and he fit it. We have Norwegian heritage and, at the time, my brother was living in the mountains while working on his masters in creative nonfiction. He regularly chopped wood for a supplemental heat source, but mostly for stress relief. *Norwegian Wood* is about more than the mechanics, though. The best nonfiction writing effortlessly weaves stories and facts, and Mytting does just that as he writes about Scandinavian culture. You may have heard of "slow TV" where you can watch a train ride across Norway or knitting on Netflix. This is the relaxing book equivalent.

Opening *Norwegian Wood* on Christmas, my brother (and the rest of my family) gave me a quizzical look. But it was the right book at the right time. In his portfolio of essays for his graduation a year later, he wrote about chopping wood, and how I had placed this book into his hands. I made a brief appearance in that essay, too, as he recalled me giving him books a bit advanced for his young age and then discussing them. He brought that memory full circle to *Norwegian Wood*. We continue to exchange books as gifts at our birthdays and Christmas. And they are rarely the usual suspects. (Book recommendation: For my birthday this year, he gave me *Susan, Linda, Nina & Coke: The Extraordinary Story of the Founding Mothers of NPR* by Lisa Napoli, a book I might not have picked up on my own, but devoured.)

Books I'm giving this holiday season include:

- *The Golden Compass Graphic Novel, Volume 1* by Philip Pullman, adapted by Stéphane Melchior
- *A Little Bit of Runes: An Introduction to Norse Divination* by Cassandra Eason
- *Where the Deer and the Antelope Play: The Pastoral Observations of One American Who Loves to Walk Outside* by Nick Offerman
- *Hell of a Book: A Novel* by Jason Mott
- *Ariadne: A Novel* by Jennifer Saint

Jolabokafloð: An Icelandic Bookish Tradition

Icelandic people have a lovely holiday tradition called Jolabokafloð (Christmas Book Flood) where they exchange gifts of new books on Christmas Eve and settle in for a cozy evening of reading, alone but together. During World War II, paper was not rationed, and this tradition began, leading to a nation of prolific readers. While I haven't convinced my family that we should follow suit, my favorite cozy nights are spent curled up with a book, a blanket, and a cup of tea. Maybe you'll find some bookish inspiration from Jolabokafloð to incorporate into your holiday traditions or to fill the long winter nights.



Karin has 16 years of experience in federal, state, and nonprofit proposals, and she currently works in the healthcare industry. Her experience includes proposal management, writing and editing, and internal process development. An active member of APMP, Karin has attained APMP Foundation and Practitioner Certifications and serves as the GMC Book Club Chair. She was recognized as a member of the 2020 class of APMP 40 Under 40 award recipients. Outside of work, Karin loves to read, knit, and camp with her family. You can reach her at karin.olsonheld@noridian.com.



GET TO KNOW YOUR APMP GMC COMMUNITY

DAY OF SERVICE // Thank you to everyone who joined us for our first Day of Service on September 30. In this joint effort between the GMC Gives Back and Local Engagement committees, we assembled 40 Kynd Kits to support career readiness and literacy for people who need it. We had virtual participants throughout our chapter, with in-person meetups joining us from Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Stay tuned for more opportunities to give back to your community while networking with fellow proposal professionals!



BPC DENVER - OCTOBER 2021 //

Thank you to all GMCers who were able to enjoy BPC, stopped by the First Timer session, or the TARA social event! Our own Karin Olson Held spoke about how to get the most from your red team reviewers (left).

We're excited to introduce our 2022 board! Keep an eye out for new and exciting content and information on programs focused on career development.

Board Members

- Chair: Katherine Becchina
- Vice Chair: Megan Kean
- Secretary: Hayley Watkins
- Treasurer: Alan Minnick
- Membership: Jen Roemer
- Mentorship: Karin Olsen Held
- GMC Gives Back: Heather Finch
- Events: Andrea Boger
- Webinars/Lunch and Learn: Tony Des Chenes
- Certification Study Group: Lindsay Lange & Kaitlin Kousaie
- Publications: Kati Stutsman
- Local Engagement: Silke Cole
- Consultants Virtual Networking Group: Stacey Duwe

- Social Media: Loni Hawks
- Communications: Karen Hansel & Andrea Dunger
- Technology: Bruce Farrell & Alexa Ramsey

Committee Members

- Chang Sanders, Heidi Romero, Caryn Kent Dean, Dena Stukenberg, Marcus Hammond, Biana Girazian, Gina Kutsch, Taylor Grimes, Dawn Kujawa, Christine Sowinski, Steve Spitier, Becky Petty



INVEST IN YOUR CAREER IN THE NEW YEAR

2022 PROGRAMS // The GMC Mentorship Program will kick off in the first quarter of 2022. Watch our GMC communications for information on how and when to sign up to participate as either a mentor or mentee. In 2022, elements of the GMC Book Club will be incorporated into the Mentorship Program. Quarterly zoom book chats will continue to be open to ALL GMC members! For those who like to plan ahead and have some time for reading coming up, our first book of 2022 will be *Bridging Differences for Better Mentoring* by Lisa Fain and Lois Zachary.

CERTIFICATION // If you are pursuing the Practitioner certification, a great place to start your quest is on the [APMP website](#), where you can watch a one-hour webinar about the ins and outs of taking the exam, download the preparation guide, and even take a practice exam.



ABOUT APMP GMC

Founded in 2003, GMC serves the Greater Midwest region, which is comprised of the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Although

we officially serve these 12 states, we have members all over the map. Any APMP member can join our chapter and/or meetings.

Our mission is to provide value to our members through engaging content, professional development, and networking. We strive to engage our members with valuable education, tools, and resources that not only advance your professional knowledge and experience in the proposal industry but also increase your engagement with APMP and our membership overall.

819 MEMBERS
across 12 states

34 NEW MEMBERS
in December 2021

RECENT APMP CERTIFICATION

Congratulations! Mary Pokrzywinski, Alyssa Voboril, Sam Racine, and Rebecca Casarez all achieved Practitioner certification. Sara Tegge, Carley Crook, and Kathy Isaacson earned Foundation certification.

8 PROGRAMS
chapter committee members support eight programs, including mentorship opportunities and career development initiatives.



Looking to become APMP certified? Learn more about the requirements by visiting the [APMP Certification Program](#) page online.

2021 APMP GMC BOARD

Andrea Dunger, CF APMP	President
Katherine Becchina, CF APMP	Vice President
Alan Minnick, CF APMP	Treasurer
Megan Kean	Secretary
Jen Roemer	Membership Chair
Hayley Watkins, CP APMP, CCMP	Mentorship Chair
Nichole Reber, CF APMP	Monthly Webinar Series Chair
Heidi Romero, CP APMP	Event Chair
Silke Cole, CF APMP	Local Engagement Co-Chair
Liz Megli, CF APMP	Local Engagement Co-Chair
Kati Stutsman, CF APMP, Shipley BDC	Publications Co-Chair
Alexa Ramsey, CP APMP	Publications Co-Chair
Courtney Lamensky	Marketing Chair
Bette Sturnio, CP APMP	Communications Co-Chair
Karen Hansel, CP APMP	Communications Co-Chair
Heather Finch, CF APMP	GMC Gives Back Chair
Dena Stukenberg, CP APMP	College Outreach Co-Chair
Madeleine Redman, CF APMP	College Outreach Co-Chair
Lindsay Lange, CP APMP	Certification Study Groups Co-Chair
Kaitlin Kousaie, CP APMP	Certification Study Groups Co-Chair
Karin Olson Held, CP APMP	Book Club Chair
Caryn Kent Dean, CP APMP, MLIS	Consultants Virtual Networking Group Chair
Bruce Farrell	Webmaster Co-Chair
Stacey Duwe, CP APMP	Webmaster Co-Chair



QUESTIONS?

Contact us at info@gmcapmp.org