



# FMA Chapter 14 Newsletter

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<https://fedmanagers.org/chapter->

**May 2023**

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## Message from the President

Esteemed Members,

In March, Chapter 14 sent 6 representatives to the FMA Nationals Convention. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find a report from some of your representatives on how that went. We met with 10 of the 12 Washington Congressional Reps. As a Chapter, we outlined several objectives and focus points for our meetings including the new hot topic of "Health Care in Japan" and the discussion on the FERS deposit buyback.

Last week we hosted Derek Kilmer at Olympic College as a follow-up and he added a few local items to discuss. One of the topics was the money and the plan moving forward to improve the highway in Gorst. He expressed significant concern about a natural disaster taking place in circumstances that would place many PSNS workers on the wrong side of Gorst. Oddly enough after our meeting and on the way home, there was an accident in Gorst which helped drive his point and the understanding of the need.

If you did not know, Nominations for the 2023-2024 Executive Board are now closed. One of our E-board members is now retired (lucky) and planning on spending much of his family's time traveling around the country. Due to this, he is stepping down from the E-board. The Board wishes Fair Winds & Following Seas, with gratitude to William Lehman for all his time and efforts with Chapter 14.

With E-board members leaving, open spots for new members existed! We will be announcing the 2023-2024 E-board members to include some new faces in the near future.

I am looking forward to the new board and putting together the plans for next season. But before we sunset this year, we will have one more dinner on June 13 at the Elks in Bremerton, with announcements regarding this event coming soon.

**We look forward to serving you in this upcoming term and value your membership, enthusiasm, and engagement.**

## Editor's corner

I would like to thank the Chapter for the opportunity to have served you these past five years, and I would also like to thank James and the board for their kind words. This will be my last issue of the newsletter, I am turning it over to the very capable and esteemed hands of Trustee Kyle Denton.

While I am leaving the board, I am not leaving the FMA, when we are in town, you may still see me at meetings. V/R William Lehman

## Have feedback or suggestions? Send us a message on Facebook!

Chapter 14 Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FMAchapter14/>

FMA national Website

[WWW.fedmanagers.org](http://WWW.fedmanagers.org)

Email at: [office@fmachapter14.org](mailto:office@fmachapter14.org) for any questions  
and/or information

**The FMA Chapter 14 mission:** Participate with management, union, and employee organizations to promote the welfare of Federal Government employees; proactively address issues affecting our members; build relationships with the community; work cooperatively with the national office and other FMA organizations, and provide the organization with financial integrity.



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Advocating Excellence in Public Service

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**Reports on the national convention****by Trace Grose, and Tyler Lucke.**

Trace: Attending the National Convention this year was a great learning experience. The two days of FMA business and training were both enlightening and productive. I learned a lot about the organization that I otherwise would not have known, and had the chance to voice my opinion on several matters pertaining to current issues the FMA is facing. I was pleasantly surprised to discover how receptive everyone was to my viewpoint and perspectives. The first day of training gave me a much greater understanding of how the FMA operates. As a result, I feel I am now more capable of voicing ideas to the right people, and taking action in areas the FMA is struggling with, both at a local, and national level.

The second day of training, which focused primarily on individual skill development, was very valuable for me. I am not regularly exposed to training targeted at the audience this was tailored to. I had several people talk to me about specific ideas that I had for particular issues. I felt like a valued member of the organization with a unique point of view that many attendees had not previously considered.

I believe that I successfully accomplished the goals I had established when I first applied to attend the convention, to do my best to represent a large demographic of people, both members, and non-members, who do not see the FMA as approachable, or worth it. I hope I can continue to represent my generation in future conventions.

The day on the hill went well for my team. Every meeting went according to our plans, and we were able to meet with someone to address our issues from almost every representative. As a first-time attendee, I was unfamiliar with the process, however, after observing a few meetings, I was able to speak up about the issues that I had personal experience with. Our chapter's representatives broke into two teams to cover more ground, then met up for the final meeting of the day with Derek Kilmer. For me, it was the most enlightening meeting of the day. I was able to see action being taken on the issues we brought forward.

Tyler: My team's first meeting was with Suzan DelBene's office. We met with one of her staffers at the main office. The meeting was less than ideal since other lobbyists were passing through during our meeting, making it noisy at times. She did the best she could and took notes on our various positions. From her comments, I gathered she was unaware of our concerns beforehand. She was very accommodating to having our picture taken with her in front of the congresswoman's front door plaque.

Our meeting at Senator Maria Cantwell's office went especially well. We were able to meet with 3 of her staffers in a private conference room devoid of any interruptions. All 3 of her staffers were very engaging and attentive, and actively took notes as we spoke. They were not aware of our Yokosuka health care issue and asked many questions. We were all able to get a group picture with them in front of their main office.

Next, we met with Senator Patty Murray's office. Jerry had made arrangements to meet with two of her staffers; however only one of them was available. We met with her in a huge meeting room across the aisle from the main office. Her staffer was very attentive: While she was also unaware of the Yokosuka health care issue, she was very interested in learning more about it and assured us that she would investigate it and our other issues. As before; we were dutiful in getting a picture with her in front of the Senator's office.

Our last meeting was with Congressman Derek Kilmer and two of his staffers. In Kilmer's case, he was fully aware of our issues including the Yokosuka health care issue. One of his staffers commented that they were following the issue quite closely. For my team; this was the only meeting where we met the actual representative. We kept the staffers busy at the end of the meeting taking group pictures with our various cameras. To note: One of the props we noticed in both Senator Murray's and Congressman Kilmer's offices were the Wheaties cereal boxes with their pictures on them. It seems Wheaties has become quite popular in Congress these days.

Trace: Overall, the convention was a catalyst for my ability to participate effectively in the FMA. By seeing how the process works, from discussing what issues to include in the briefs several weeks before the convention, to the days of training on how to conduct ourselves to deliver the information, to the actual meetings with representatives and their staff, I feel I am now able to more effectively bring up and address issues. The convention has given me the chance to be a more proactive member of the FMA.



## **Congressman Derek Kilmer's visit with Chapter 14 FMA**

Congressman Kilmer addressed a range of issues during his recent appearance at a meeting hosted by the Federal Managers Association in Bremerton, Washington on May 04 2023. Focusing on the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and surrounding counties, Kilmer emphasized the importance of addressing concerns about access to healthcare for military personnel and civilians in Japan. To that end, he noted that a letter had been sent to the Secretary of Defense to address these challenges.

Kilmer discussed the FAIR Act (HR 536 Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act) and the need to adjust federal employee salaries to keep up with inflation, as well as efforts to address retirement fairness and expand family leave provisions for federal workers. On the topic of infrastructure, Kilmer emphasized the need to protect the shipyard and secure funding for military construction projects. In particular, he highlighted the importance of fixing the Gorst traffic problem, which poses a risk to the navy and the region's resiliency.

The congressman also spoke about the importance of upskilling the workforce to keep up with changing technology. This included discussions on recategorizing and redefining trade skill designations. He emphasized the need to invest in the workforce for national security, and addressed concerns about improving compensation and benefits for federal workers. Kilmer's team of caseworkers was also mentioned as a resource for constituents grappling with federal agencies.

During the meeting, Kilmer also addressed dysfunction in Washington DC regarding the debt ceiling and passing funding bills on time. He emphasized that failure is not an option, as defaulting on the debt could result in job losses and a significant loss of wealth. Kilmer mentioned a possible solution to this issue and talked about a debt prioritization bill that is being considered.

Kilmer's appearance at the Federal Managers Association meeting provided valuable insights on a range of issues that are of concern to federal employees and retirees, military personnel, and civilians in the Puget Sound region.



**Why the Shipyard and Federal Managers Association Matter to Me****By Kyle Denton, FMA Chapter 14 Trustee**

This isn't a usual biography because it shares a story. For a long time, I never talked about this story because I was ashamed. But I realize it needs shared, so that others who are struggling know they have options for making a difference. The shipyard changed my life.

Nearly two decades ago, my high-school counselor looked me square in the face, and said, "You should just drop out." And I did. Coming from a poor family, school never made sense. College was something for rich people. I still remember the summer my brother and I slept in a pop-up tent trailer, and the Thanksgiving Dinner we ate at a soup kitchen. I learned a lot from people who cared, but never the right mindset for "excellence."

I developed a lot of bad habits, which made life more difficult. You've all probably had an employee like me. They'd be good if they just showed up. Or they do something really stupid and you're left scratching your head wondering why and how.

But then things changed. I got the opportunity to go to a job fair for Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in January 2009. Later that year I started as an Electronics Apprentice in Shop 67. Then the really hard part started. I had to unlearn all of those bad habits. It was a long road, with a lot of struggles, but there were a lot of positive influences. People like Margie Rowland, Dwight Otis, Rob Gorman, and April Mills who inspired me, pushed me harder, and who asked more of me than anyone else ever had.

The Shipyard took me from high-school dropout to my first college degree, and shortly after graduating the Apprenticeship, Margie handed me a stripe and an application for the FMA. I started learning about leadership and federal service. While no-one ever raved about the meals, I gained so much from attending the meetings, networking with other managers, and hearing senior leaders speak.

The FMA changed my perspective on what it meant to be a supervisor, which helped when I underwent major challenges: investigations, firing employees, discipline, union grievances—I even had 50 direct reports at one point. But the FMA gave me a network of like-minded managers who could help coach and mentor me through it all.

And I found continued motivation to learn and develop myself. 11 years after dropping out of high school, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Workforce Education and Development.

13 years after dropping out of high school, I graduated with a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership. I traveled the world. My degree took me on journeys through 12 countries, 2 international forums in Brussels, tours of NATO Headquarters, I studied abroad, and climbed a few mountains for good measure.

My self-development kept lock-step with my opportunities to help others and build teams. I had the opportunity to lead amazing teams and build the Career Paths, Coaching, and Workforce Development Programs. For five years, I got to work across the shipyards, serving a lead role in the NAVSEA Electrical Community of Practice. My teams took on bigger and bigger challenges. The NAVSEA Fiber Optics Program was a watershed moment, where my team-building and challenge-taking skills kicked into over-drive: saving the shipyards \$14M over 5 years, standing up five certified facilities across the US, earning a Seattle Federal Executive Board award for Public Service Excellence, NAVSEA Commander's Innovation Award, U.S. Patent for novel Blown Optical Fiber Clamps, and a cover page on the Salute.

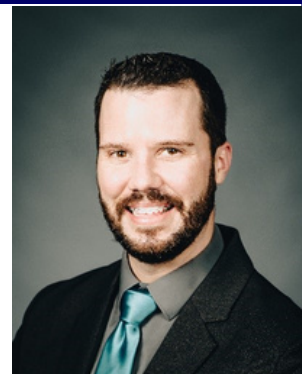
Now, 19 years later, the Shipyard and the FMA continue to shape the course of my life, as I continue to push myself and spend time with amazing teams. We're building Code 900 Digital Transformation (900DX) and working across the shipyards to build a corporate strategy to bring digital tools to the deckplates, finding ways to give time back to the mechanics and supervisors on the deckplates. I spent 6-months in the Executive Development Program, building invaluable relationships while traveling across Navy organizations, learning from 281 SES, Flags, and senior leaders. This last week, I reached a new milestone for a high-school dropout: I submitted a 233-page first draft proposal for my PhD dissertation, focused on how to lead in the face of technological change.

**All of this happened because of one thing: amazing people. Amazing people at the shipyard and in the FMA, building teams and focused on tackling big challenges. Amazing people taking the time to mentor and instill a focus on lifelong learning and development. Amazing people pushing me harder and seeking to do and be more than I thought possible.**

**That's how the shipyard and Federal Managers Association changed my life. Together, these two groups took me from the mindset of a dropout to doctoral candidate. So, the next time you see someone struggling, reach out to help. Give them a challenge and expectations—along with a mentor and a team—and then see what happens.**

Connect to find out more at [www.skdenton.com](http://www.skdenton.com)

About the author: Kyle Denton is a husband to an amazing nurse, Tara, and father of Annabelle, 9, and Kaiden, 6. He is an avid hiker, mountaineer, trail runner, published photographer and videographer. He has volunteered across domestic and international non-profit organizations, the Washington State Governor's Office, and with local schools teaching STEM. In his free time, he is a grad assistant teaching in Gonzaga University's Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership program and is a candidate for PhD in Gonzaga's Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies, with a planned graduation date of May 2024.







### Navigating the VUCA World:

#### Embracing Factfulness for Better Decision-Making in Federal Management

By Kyle Denton

In an era characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), federal managers face immense pressure to make effective and timely decisions. Operating in an environment marked by rapid change and unpredictability, these leaders must navigate a challenging landscape to successfully fulfill their roles. One resource that can help them in this endeavor is the book "Factfulness" by Hans Rosling. By embracing a fact-based and open-minded perspective, federal managers can improve their decision-making processes and better serve their constituents.

#### Understanding the VUCA Environment

The VUCA concept emerged in the 1990s to describe the post-Cold War world, but its relevance has only grown since then. Today, federal managers must contend with diverse challenges, such as geopolitical tensions with Great Power Competition and "Cold War 2.0," accelerating technological advancements, and social and environmental issues, which often intersect in complex ways. Examples abound, including major upheavals with the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program, maintaining new and old ship platforms simultaneously, changing ways of working with telework, and the opportunities and challenges with recruiting, retaining, and training a new generation of the workforce. This volatile landscape demands adaptable and resilient leaders who can make sense of the chaos and guide their organizations effectively.

#### Embracing Factfulness

In his book "Factfulness," Hans Rosling encourages a mindset shift that promotes evidence-based thinking and challenges our assumptions about the world. For federal managers, adopting this approach can lead to improved decision-making, as it:

- A. Encourages critical thinking: By questioning prevailing narratives and assumptions, managers can better identify the true drivers of a situation and make informed decisions accordingly.
- B. Cultivates a balanced perspective: Factfulness helps managers recognize the limitations of their knowledge and avoid the pitfalls of binary thinking. By acknowledging the nuances and complexities of a situation, they can make more accurate assessments and avoid oversimplifying issues.
- C. Reduces bias: Factfulness helps federal managers identify and mitigate the impact of personal biases, cognitive distortions, and misinformation, enabling them to make more objective decisions.

#### Applying Factfulness in Decision-Making

To adopt a factful mindset, federal managers can follow several steps. First, they should seek diverse perspectives by consulting multiple sources of information, including dissenting opinions, to broaden their understanding of an issue and avoid echo chambers. Second, they need to question assumptions, challenge their preconceived notions, and be willing to revise their beliefs based on new evidence. Third, embracing humility and open-mindedness allows them to acknowledge the limits of their knowledge and expertise while accepting the possibility of being wrong. Fourth, prioritizing evidence over intuition is crucial, and while intuition can be valuable, federal managers should emphasize data-driven analysis and exercise caution when dealing with anecdotal evidence. Finally, cultivating a learning culture by encouraging their team to embrace factfulness and fostering an environment where curiosity, inquiry, and learning are valued will lead to more effective decision-making.

#### Overcoming the VUCA World

As federal managers navigate the VUCA world, of SIOP, Cold War 2.0, hybrid work, and a changing workforce, they must balance the need for decisiveness with the realities of complex and ambiguous situations. By embracing factfulness, they can cultivate a more accurate understanding of the world and make better-informed decisions. Ultimately, this approach can help leaders not only navigate uncertainty but also create an environment in which their organizations can thrive amid change.

#### Reference

Rosling, H., Rosling Rönnlund, A., & Rosling, O. (2018). Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World--and Why Things Are Better Than You Think [Kindle Edition]. Flatiron Books. <https://amzn.to/3pbb0Qi>