

The Public Recorder



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Report of the President, Sally M. Hayden

Sea Crest 2008

By Sally M. Hayden, President

This was our 25th year at Sea Crest Oceanfront Resort & Conference Center in Falmouth, Ma. A record 276 registered Town and City Clerks were met with high temperatures and bright sunshine!

Wednesday afternoon session "Image of the Town Clerk" was presented to us by Peter Chisholm, government relations representative for Framingham State. A visual boost was provided by Michael Palmer, Falmouth Town Clerk. Michael presented a power point presentation with excerpts of various newspaper clippings. These clippings were examples of how Michael uses the press to promote himself and his office. Nancy Talbot, Town Clerk Ware and Maddie Daoust, Town Clerk Southbridge contributed to the panel.

Thursday's presentation began with Election Leadership, Where Do I Begin & Vitals from A-Z. All were well attended. At noon time we held our annual meeting and awarded the Legislator of the year award. We were joined by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, introduced new town clerks, and announced the recipients of the scholarships to St. Michael's. Afternoon classes were Where Do I Begin II, Primary Preparations and Public Records, Public Information & Identity Fraud. Classes were well received. Public Records, Public Information & Identity Fraud, was a breath of fresh air. The class wavered from the usual venue and I found it very interesting.

Thursday evening was our banquet. Entertainment during the cocktail hour was provided by Joe Bradley, Assistant Town Clerk Lucia Fulco's son. Our scheduled entertainer for after the banquet, Michael Callahan, comedian, was unable to attend. No worries – Bill Campbell, City Clerk of Woburn began the "Open Mike" session. This proved to be very enlightening. Not all clerks are as they seem!

Friday morning we had our state officials give updates. As we drove home the sun was still shining. This has to be a first. The sun was out when we arrived and shown the entire three days! Let's hope for a repeat in 2009.

A huge "Thank You", to all who participated in the planning of our conference, and to those who attended. We have already started to plan our fall conference that will be at Jiminy Peak, Hancock, MA. See you on September 24th!

MTCA LOBBYIST REPORT – MAY 2008
By Stephen Roche

MTCA LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR – REP. VINNY DEMACEDO

As those who attended the conference at Seacrest, we honored Rep. Vinny deMacedo (R-Plymouth) as “MTCA Legislator of the Year.” I thought that I would take this chance to share more detail on how Rep. deMacedo came to be chosen. This award is based upon a state legislator’s support, responsiveness to, and effectiveness on issues and legislation that affect and concern the Massachusetts Town Clerks’ Association.

You may recognize Vinny’s name from a prior recognition by the MTCA in 2005 when he assisted us in securing passage of the “Unenrolled Voter Bill.” Representative deMacedo is very familiar with the various duties and responsibilities handled by town clerks. What’s more, Rep. deMacedo is a sponsor of several MTCA legislative proposals, including Senate 455 (street list), House 680 (ID for local elections), House 2213 (vitals), House 640 (check-out table), House 3222 (electronic record fees), and House 2218 (vitals).

As the Ranking Republican member of the House Ways & Means Committee, Rep. deMacedo carries a lot of weight on Beacon Hill on fiscal matters. He generally sits on the state budget conference committee and is also appointed to other key study groups that involve state expenses and revenues. As a state representative from Plymouth, he works closely on many matters with his State Senate counterpart, Senate President Therese Murray.

Most recently, the Representative assisted the MTCA in securing a meeting with the Senate President to discuss town clerks’ concerns with Election Day Registration (EDR). After that meeting, Representative deMacedo assured us that he would work hard to protect the interests of town clerks on EDR, especially funding for this state mandate.

Vinny deMacedo has an easy-going, unassuming personality and is well liked on Beacon Hill. His friendship and commitment to protect our interests at the State House are much appreciated - an appreciation evidenced by naming him the MTCA’s Legislator of the Year for 2008.

FY 2009 STATE BUDGET UPDATE

The state Senate made fairly quick work of its budget debate, wrapping up debate on nearly 900 amendments before Memorial Day weekend. It was somewhat surprising that there was no attempt during the Senate budget debate to add funding for Election Day Registration (EDR). Given how hard advocates for EDR have been pushing for action on the EDR bill before the General Court breaks from formal sessions on August 1st.

The final Senate budget is **Senate 2714** and the House and Senate have each appointed three members to reach a compromise budget to put before Governor Patrick.

Here’s a look at the budget appropriations of note for the State Secretary’s Office for FY 2009:

0511-0270	For the state secretary who may contract with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute to provide the commonwealth with technical assistance on United States census data and to prepare annual population estimates.....	\$800,000
0511-0420	For the operation of the address confidentiality program.....	\$113,269
0521-0000	For the operation of the elections division, including preparation, printing and distribution of ballots and for other miscellaneous expenses for primary and other elections; provided, that the state secretary may award grants for voter registration and education in the cities of Boston, Springfield, Lawrence and Worcester; provided further, that the registration and education activities may be conducted by community-based voter registration and education	

organizations; and provided further, that the secretary shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means not later than February 2, 2009, detailing the amount appropriated for the purposes of providing reimbursements for the costs of extended polling hours from this item to each city or town; and provided further, that the secretary shall investigate issues relative to preservation and storage of vital municipal records in cities and towns in the commonwealth and shall report to the general court by June 30, 2009 with recommendations on how to fund and staff a grant program for cities and towns to facilitate preservation of such records.....\$7,800,543

0521-0001 For the operation of the central voter registration computer system; provided, that an annual report detailing voter registration activity shall be submitted to the house and senate committees on ways and means on or before February 2, 2009.....\$6,156,294

0524-0000 For providing information to voters.....\$1,782,807

ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

Secretary Galvin spent considerable time discussing this issue at Seacrest and the likelihood that there will be a big push on the Senate side to pass EDR before the end of formal sessions at midnight on July 31st. This is similar to what I have been hearing at the State House for the past few weeks, so we are waiting to see what emerges. Also, as noted above, the Senate did not take up EDR during its budget debate – I interpreted that non-action as a sign that a commitment has been made by the Senate Leadership to move the bill after the budget.

The fact is that we won't know what the bill looks like until it comes out. The Secretary advised us that the Senate has sent a number of different drafts of EDR to his office for input. The MTCA Legislative Committee met last month at my office to outline our strategy for EDR. Once it comes out of the Senate Ways & Means Committee, we will analyze the new draft and work the House side hard to make any necessary changes.

EDR has so much support on the Senate side that our best chance of making any changes will be on the House side.

Note: As many of you know, Andrian Walker, a Boston Globe columnist, wrote a piece last month on EDR. His column was factually incorrect (he said 30 states have EDR) and insulted clerks everywhere when he stated that "a minority of clerks" who oppose EDR do so out of laziness. MTCA Legislative Chair Larry Pizer, several other clerks, and I drafted and Larry submitted a "Letter To The Editor" in response to Mr. Walker's outrageous comments. And here we are, nearly a month after that piece ran, and the Boston Globe has not run our LTE while running another LTE in support of EDR.

So much for the press being accurate and objective!

DOGS – SENATE 2450

I have written previously about the massive bill that is sitting in the Senate Ways & Means Committee. There are 120 sections to this bill. Most of **Senate 2450** deals with dog control, but it also puts you in the business of raising money for the state's program by substantially increasing the fees that clerks would be required to charge, including a surcharge:

SECTION 17. Said chapter 140 is hereby further amended by striking out section 139, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

Section 139. The fee for every license shall, except as otherwise provided, be determined by a city or town, provided this fee is not less than \$6 for a spayed or neutered dog and not less than \$20 for an intact dog. Three dollars of the license fee for a dog is a surcharge which shall be transferred to the commissioner for the purpose of animal control. Not less than one third of the surcharge fee shall be deposited into a spay/neuter fund to operate a spay/neuter program. The department shall establish rules and regulations relating to the spay/neuter program to distribute these funds in an effective manner targeting low-income pet owners and feral cats.

Now may be a good time for you to call your local state legislators to express your opposition to this bill.

MTCA BILLS

Several of our bills are still in play and may see action before the break on August 1st; among them are:

- H. 639 – cancellation device
- H. 680 – voter ID for local elections
- H. 2218 – vital records
- S. 455 – street list

But we really don't know how much the House and Senate will achieve before they head off Beacon Hill to seek re-election or higher/other office. There are a number of substantial issues that they would like to finish before campaigning. The good news for us is that most of our bills could move during "informal sessions" that will run through the end of the year.

CONFERENCE DEADLINES

We are adding a deadline for the conferences of the future for only one reason – we have to. We have an early registration date wherein you can register for the conference for \$50.00 and after that the cost is \$60.00. But what has happened is so many people are waiting until a day or two before the event to register, that we find we cannot accommodate all your needs.

Therefore, in order for all clerks to be able to attend each session of their choice, have a chair, a table, proper handouts, water, etc., we are making a final deadline 10 days prior to the event. All checks must be received by the registrar on that date and all classes must be registered with the Education registrar as well.

At Sea Crest, we had a large problem with late registrations and we did not have a deadline in place – but those extra people made a difference in the size of the classrooms and availability of meals, handouts, etc.

We hope you understand that this is not trying to punish anyone – it is to help all of us to make your conference experience the best. Also we do ask that if you sign up for a class you take that class and not change your mind and attend another one at the last moment. Please give your class signups some good thought – mark off what you want to go to and attend that class.

Many clerks work to make your conferences a great learning and sharing experience, so we ask that you help us by taking the time to fill out your registrations as soon as you get your brochure. You will save money and secure your place.

We also want to note that when you use your credit card to hold your reservation at a hotel – you may be charged either the full amount or the holding fee (usually half of the total charge). When you go to the conference, if you have a town check for the full amount, – the hotel will take the charge off of your credit card. This is standard procedure for most hotels and resorts. I had a clerk complain that she would be charged an interest charge on her account – that is what happens. You have choices, personal checks, town checks, credit cards. Hotels need to secure your room and this is the method to do it.

The officers and executive board members learn from each and every conference. We take what is learned and we use it to make your conference experience better and better. Thank you for coming to Sea Crest and we look forward to seeing you at Jiminy in September.

Linda Hutchenrider/Sally Hayden
June 2008



Scholarship Committee Report

June 11 – 13, 2008

On behalf of the Scholarship Committee, we are happy to announce that the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association was able to fund nine clerks who will be attending the New England Municipal Clerks' Institute & Academy at St. Michael's in Winooski, Vermont from July 13 - 18, 2008.

Before I announce the Clerks who received scholarships, I would like to thank the County Associations and vendors who very generously contributed to our scholarship fund. Their generosity was overwhelming and without them, there would not have been a scholarship fund.

Middlesex County Clerks Association	Donated two full Scholarships
Tri-County Clerks Association	Donated two full Scholarships
Worcester County Clerks Association	Donated one full Scholarship
Cape & Islands Clerks Association	Donated a partial Scholarship
Western Clerks Association	Donated a partial scholarship
Berkshire County Clerks Association	Donated a partial scholarship
General Code	Donated one full scholarship
LHS Associates, Inc.	Donated one full scholarship

The following clerks will be attending the New England Municipal Clerks' Institute at St. Michael's with a full scholarship:

Carla Vitale, Winthrop Town Clerk
Kathleen P. Connolly, Asst. City Clerk, Beverly

Beverly Neeley, Shelburne Town Clerk
Mary-Ann O. Nichols, Tewksbury Town Clerk

Sharon George, Wilmington Town Clerk has been awarded a partial scholarship as requested.

The following clerks have been awarded partial scholarships to the New England Municipal Clerks' Academy at St. Michael's. The unfunded balance and their applications were forwarded to the N.E.A.C.T.C. for consideration and it is my understanding that the balance will be paid for by the New England Association.

Wendy Houle, Sunderland, Town Clerk
Tara W Ward, Ashland Town Clerk

Nancy M. Blackmer, Orange, Town Clerk
Mary K. Galvin, Wakefield Town Clerk

Respectfully,

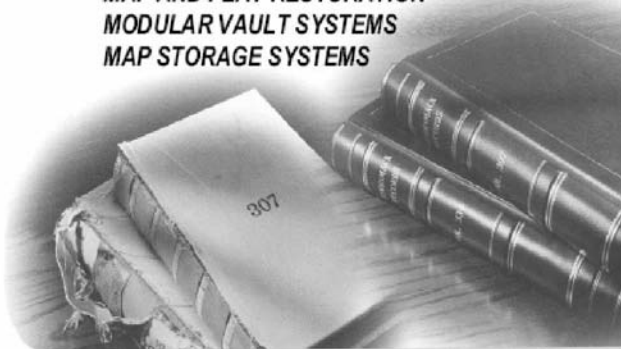
Theodora K. Eaton, Scholarship Chair
Marlene Chused, Member
Sandra Burgess, Member

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