



To: New England Association of City and Town Clerks  
From: Board of Directors, New England Municipal Clerks' Institute and Academy  
Date: November 14, 2007  
Subject: 2007 Annual Report

The Board Members for 2007 (see attached) were:

Laura Francis, CMC, CT – Chairman  
Leslie Cotton, MMC, CT – Curriculum  
Yolande “Tody” Justice, CMC, ME – Treasurer  
Connie Brown, ME – Evaluations  
Deborah Dami, CMC, MA – Vice-Chair, Logistics  
Cheryl Johnson, MA – Information  
Carol Johnson, CMC, NH – Secretary, Logistics  
Debra Patrick, CMC, NH – Promotion and Marketing  
Michelle Hardy, CMC, RI – Food & Banquet, Brochure  
Karen Allen, RI – Graduation  
Sandra Harris, CMC, VT – Registration  
Linda Spence, CMC, VT – Scholarship & Orientation

The Institute and Academy was held on July 15-20 at Saint Michael's College. A total of 121 students attended.

The new Board first met in November 2006 with a 50% turnover. Although we were a very “young” board, I am pleased to report that NEMCI&A had a successful year both academically and financially (see attached Treasurer's Report). We determined that our focus for the year would be on curriculum and to update the policies and procedures manual. Little did we know on then that due to the retirements of Professor Kate Ackerman and Al Borsodi, faculty would also be a major focus.

**Meetings** - During 2007, the Board met numerous times, but in person only two other times after the November meeting. We continued to use “Live Meeting” and conference calls for most of the meetings.

**Curriculum and Faculty** – We had several challenges this year regarding faculty, curriculum and IIMC accreditation. I’m pleased to say that the Board and Faculty managed these challenges with professionalism, creativity and always with the best interests of NEMCI&A in mind.

Our first surprise was a retirement announcement from long-time professor Kate Ackerman. Our initial reaction was “How could we ever replace Kate?” Thanks to the personal connections of Curriculum Chair Leslie Cotton and NEMCI&A alumna Wilma McDonald, we had two candidates within a month. After interviewing Pat Vaillancourt and Cheryl Lounsbury, Leslie Cotton and I knew that both instructors would fit in perfectly with our program. Fortunately we did not have to choose. Pat and Cheryl were so academically versatile that we decided to hire both of them to allow for some scheduling flexibility.

Our second surprise came late in the planning process when computer guru Al Borsodi announced that he would be unable to attend NEMCI&A due to health related issues. Fortunately, through another personal connection, we were able to find Kathleen Slivka who was able to handle the Microsoft Suite for Clerks Academy as well as technology classes in the Institute. We also said farewell to two other instructors who have served us well, Jim Daniels and Tom Joyce due to different programming in the Academy. The three new faculty members were very well received by the students and other faculty members. All three are interested in returning to NEMCI&A next year.

The Board of Directors and Faculty met in February in Manchester, NH to discuss improvements in curriculum and scheduling. We debated several options to incorporate the additional hours required for CMC certification (required for the 1<sup>st</sup> year class) and decided to add more hours to the current schedule mainly for budgetary reasons. However, I highly recommend to the new board to seriously consider altering the schedule and budget to accommodate the increase in hours in a less compact fashion. This will be especially important next year and the year after when all three Institute classes will be subject to the increased hours.

There were two new Academy classes offered; Personnel Management and Microsoft Office Suite for Clerks (Computer) along with Intro/Intermediate Access & Excel and Fit for Duty. All Academy classes were well attended and received very high reviews. Unfortunately, after much negotiating with IIMC, the Director of Education did not approve MMC credit for the computer classes. Because I had hoped to rectify the situation prior to the beginning of class, I did not notify the students until the first day of class. I made the decision to proceed as planned and seek the assistance of the students and professors to wage an appeal. I am pleased to report that we have reached a compromise with IIMC. The students in Academy A and B will receive MMC credit upon completion of a group project.

The problem we had with accreditation this year is a result of a change in educational guidelines that were passed several years ago but just recently implemented. In my opinion, the guidelines are based more on an academic model than a continuing education model, which is more suitable

to our needs. When I attended the IIMC Conference in New Orleans in May, I was pleasantly surprised that most of my counterparts from across the nation agreed. In fact, that was the beginning of a storm of communication between the IIMC Board of Directors, Director of Education, the IIMC Director and Institute Directors and Educational Chairs. There was a great deal of disillusionment with IIMC.

You might remember the cry "Bye, Bye to II". Although that sounds catchy, I want to caution both NEACTC and NEMCI&A to have patience. The good news is that our voices have been heard. We received communication from the President of IIMC who has appointed a Task Force to review the guidelines. Our own NEMCI&A board member, Linda Spence has been appointed to serve on the task force. We need to give the Task Force a chance to do its work.

In the meantime, I recommend staying the course and continue to run our Institute and Academy as we have always done. If the guidelines do not change, a decision has to be made regarding our technology classes in particular. We can continue to run them for those people who either are not interested in MMC or want to use them for CMC. We can also incorporate more technology in the Institute program. Our Board would like to meet with the NEACTC board and discuss what direction is best for the New England Clerks.

**Logistics** – We continue to feel welcome at Saint Michael's College. It is an affordable venue and the administration is very accommodating. We continue to address some logistical issues regarding room and board, but on balance, we can report that Saint Michael's College remains a good host school. Next year's Institute and Academy will be held on July 13-18, 2008.

**NEMCI&A Board:** It's been an honor to serve on this board of talented clerks. Each member brought a unique gift to the board. No one knows how big a commitment this is until you do it. The Board unanimously voted in July the following officers for the 2007-2008 board: Tody Justice, Chairman, Carol Johnson, Vice-Chairman, Sandy Harris, Secretary and Connie Brown, Treasurer. I discussed the timing of the election with the Chairman of NEACTC who questioned the wisdom of electing officers before the board is appointed. The NEMCI&A board unanimously agreed that the best time to elect officers is during the Institute and Academy week. Therefore, we respectfully recommend that perhaps the NEACTC board change the timing of appointment to coincide with that week. I wish both the NEACTC and NEMCI&A boards all the best next year. There will always be challenges, but I have the utmost confidence in the ability of the New England Clerks to achieve.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Francis  
NEMCI&A Chairman