

**Report of the President # 9  
by Judy St. Croix**

**CONFERENCES – So Why Go?**

Perhaps you are a new clerk, have been a clerk for many years but have never attended a conference, or perhaps you have been to some but don't go often. After all, you are busy with meetings, customer concerns, paperwork, and all the daily problems that take up all your time right? Don't you need to get away from the "daily grind" and reflect a little on what's happening in the world of the clerk? What's really going on beyond your own sphere of influence, and what effect will it have on you and your position? Attending the conference can answer these questions and many more. You will come away feeling that it was time well spent and you will be able to put into practice the ideas and facts that you learned, even if you only learned one new skill or idea.

Conference attendance is an excellent way to improve your knowledge and skills. Many educational opportunities exist in a wide variety of topic areas. An important way to gain more from your attendance is to plan what you intend to do at the conference before going. Your conference brochure is your agenda. You should select the sessions you want to attend; make notes on the vendor exhibits you want to see and products you want to evaluate; and plan time for organized networking opportunities. Preparation will make your attendance a more valuable experience. Planning can be an excellent way to sell your finance committee on why you should go to the conference. A list of things you intend to accomplish will go a great deal farther in getting budget approval than just saying you'd like to go.

Two of the best reasons for attending a conference have nothing to do with the sessions. The first is the networking potential from the contacts you make with other attendees. Cultivating and maintaining these contacts is one of the best reasons for attending a conference. Planning can extend to networking too. List some challenges you are facing in your office. Who is likely to be at the conference that may provide some useful information in helping with those challenges?

The second reason is the value of getting away from your work environment. A conference is not a vacation, but you don't have the day to day pressures of constant phone calls and demands for your attention that are present in your work place. This getting away aspect can also affect perspective. When we see situations we deal with in our work location every day, we can lose our ability to sort out the important from the insignificant. The experience of a conference with our professional peers can remind us why we went into this profession in the first place. This can lead to gains in our performance when we return to work even if we didn't learn anything new. Time spent talking to others is at least as important as time spent in classes.

**Education**

One day of classes given by leaders and instructors chosen by the MTCA Education Committee will give you the opportunity to learn about what you do, why you do it, or how you can better do it. You choose the topics that best match your needs, attend the classes, interface with others, and take home material for future reference. You will learn of new laws that effect the way you conduct business in your town and new bills that are before the Legislature that are being debated and watched by your Legislative Committee that if passed, will impact our offices, our towns, and our lives as town clerks.

## **Exhibits**

Where else can you see many of the providers of products and services that are essential to our daily activities? They will be all under one roof with plenty of time to talk to you and demonstrate their products. You can't find a more efficient way to spend your time than getting updated on what tools are available for you to do your job better.

## **Networking**

Many of your fellow clerks will be gathered together in one building to discuss and learn about needs and trends in municipal government and the service and support business. There will be ample time to meet in groups of one, or more than one, to share your experiences and/or problems. You can establish friendships, share a room, arrange alliances, meet new people, and see old comrades.

## **Relaxation**

All is not work and no play. The conference locations offer many amenities. Every conference is a learning experience – an important part of professional development for each of us. You should return to your office after a conference with renewed enthusiasm for your profession.

The Worcester Conference was a big success with attendance topping 180 and was a time for us to hear speakers, to take informative educational sessions, to network with fellow clerks, and to get away from your work environment. I am grateful to our team of players who worked so many hours in putting together the conference especially the Education Committee, Instructors, Executive Board Members, Officers and especially you – the clerks who attended. We are already planning, organizing and coordinating the Summer Conference. This is our annual meeting, the swearing in ceremony for officers and executive board members, a joint conference with the City Clerks, and it will be our 23<sup>rd</sup> year at the Sea Crest Resort and Conference Center. I know that it is only March but try thinking about Cape Cod, the beach, warm sunny days, a slight breeze, a cool drink, friends and colleagues, both old and new, who have gathered by the sea to be together, to laugh, to learn, and to share and exchange ideas. Mark your calendar – June 14, 15, and 16, 2006. Plan now, work together, invite a neighboring clerk who perhaps has never attended a conference, and let's try to make this our largest conference ever!

*“Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes” – Oscar Wilde*

<p><b>MTCA LOBBYIST REPORT – FEBRUARY 2006</b> <b>By Stephen Roche</b></p>
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## *ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION*

There have been several recent developments on this issue. First, the stalemate on Beacon Hill around health care access has been broken. The final details of the deal struck between the Speaker of the House and the Senate President on March 3<sup>rd</sup> have yet to be worked out, but a final plan is expected soon.

Once that package is wrapped up, we could see some action on the supplemental budget that contains our Elections Task Force proposal by the end on March. We remain concerned the House leadership will seek to strike many outside sections<sup>1</sup> proposed by the Senate late last year.

In the meantime, we have seen two new TASK Force proposals floated at the State House: one from the chairs of the Election Laws Committee and one from Secretary Galvin. They are fairly similar and both contain the core ingredients that we are seeking. One area of difference is who will chair the Task Force – the Secretary's plan has the Secretary chairing the Task Force while the Committee chairmen think they should chair the Task Force. The Secretary is also looking for state funding for the study.

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<sup>1</sup> Outside section refers to the sections found in a state budget after the line item appropriations; they are generally used to set policy for those matters funded in the line items.

Most recently, the House and Senate chairs of the Election Laws Committee stated that they do not believe that legislation is necessary to create the EDR task force. They have invited the MTCA President and Legislative Chair to a March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting at the State House to kick off the study effort. Their letters contained several reasons that Massachusetts needs to act to “reform” our elections process. Those letters prompted a strong response from Secretary Galvin who states his disagreement with the deficiencies mentioned in the invite letter and reminds the chairmen of the fine work of local election officials.

Where is this thing heading now? We will see how these competing approaches develop during the next few weeks and will keep you posted as best as we can.

#### *NEW CLERK LEGISLATION*

Our list of sponsors has grown. We now have both chairmen of the Election Laws Committee as sponsors and Representative Peter Koutoujian has added his name to the list.

Here’s the updated list of legislators who have offered their assistance:

- Senators Ed Augustus, Susan Fargo, Brian Joyce and Susan Tucker
- Representatives Anthony Petrucci, Robert Coughlin, James Eldridge, Barry Finegold and Susan Pope

The Committee chairmen have also offered to try to expedite action by tacking our language onto other bills moving through the legislative process. This is a generous offer and could make the difference in our proposals being adopted this session.

#### *HOUSE 1680 – CPA MONEY FOR RESTORING HISTORIC DOCUMENTS & ARTIFACTS*

The State Senate joined the House of Representatives in giving final approval to House 1680. The bill should arrive at the Governor’s Desk by March 10<sup>th</sup>. The MTCA Legislative Committee is drafting a letter of support to the Governor, urging his swift approval of House 1680.

#### *MTCA PROPOSAL - HOUSE 92 - MOVES THROUGH HOUSE INTO SENATE*

House 92 received final approval in the House of Representatives on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The bill is now before the Senate Committee on Ethics & Rules. Here’s a summary for House 92:

By Alice H. Peisch: Requires all persons who registered to vote by mail, or who have not previously voted, to present identification when asserting a right to vote in all elections; repeals provisions limiting said identification requirement to persons seeking to vote in presidential elections.

#### *ODDS & ENDS*

How important is the designation “public way” to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC)? Well, it was very important in a case where a truck driver struck and killed a police officer. In Commonwealth v. Angelo Todesco Corporation, the SJC reiterated the importance of finding of “public way” in a motor vehicle homicide – without a finding of a “public way”, the conviction for vehicular homicide could not stand.

### **MASSACHUSETTS STATE ETHICS COMMISSION**

Carol Carson, Chief, Communications and Public Education Division  
Massachusetts State Ethics Commission  
One Ashburton Place, Room 619, Boston, MA 02108  
[www.mass.gov/ethics](http://www.mass.gov/ethics)      [ccarson@eth.state.ma.us](mailto:ccarson@eth.state.ma.us)  
617-371-9501      617-723-5851 (fax)

The most recent addition to the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission’s educational materials.  
***Advisory 06-01: Consultants and Attorneys Who Provide Services to Government Agencies May Be Public Employees Subject to the Conflict of Interest Law, [www.mass.gov/ethics/adv0601.htm](http://www.mass.gov/ethics/adv0601.htm)***



**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – NEW FORMAT**  
**From Michelle Tassinari, Director of Elections**

Remember the blue and white reporting forms we send you every year? You know, the ones on which you report the number of registered voters, number of people who voted, names of selectmen and town clerk, and elected town officers. Well, you won't be getting them this year! Instead, you will report electronically.

In an effort to simplify reporting requirements, we have partnered with the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services. Clerks will now be able to report certain information relative to their town elections through the reporting system for clerks within DOR. Their website is: <https://wfb.dor.state.ma.us/dlslod/Public/WebForms/Browse.aspx>

Pursuant to state law, each town must report the following information to the Secretary of the Commonwealth:

- . **Number of Registered Voters (required by General Laws chapter 51, section 61)**
- . **Number of People Who Voted (required by General Laws chapter 54, section 132)**
- . **Names of Selectman and Town Clerk (required by General Laws chapter 41, section 19A)**
- . **Town officers Elected (required by General Laws chapter 41, section 15)**

Once you have entered the information after your local election, please print the report, sign it (of course we need a signature!) and mail it to the Elections Division, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1705, Boston, MA 02108.

We hope you will take every advantage of this new reporting system and look forward to working with DOR and all the clerks on this project.

**TREASURER CAHILL, GOVERNOR ROMNEY, LEGISLATORS' LAUNCH**  
**“WELCOME HOME” BONUS PROGRAM FOR VETERANS**  
**From MTCA President , Judy St. Croix**

Thanks to Mary Lou Murzyn, Chair, Legislative Committee, for putting together the following notice to all. I did two of these today so you may be receiving requests in your office.

BOSTON (February 15, 2006) – Treasurer Tim Cahill announced on this date the launch of the “Welcome Home” Veterans Bonus, a tax-free cash payment available to eligible United States service members activated since September 11, 2001. Treasurer Cahill was joined by Governor Mitt Romney, Secretary of Veterans Services Thomas G. Kelley, Massachusetts National Guard Adjutant General Oliver Mason, and Representative Anthony J. Verga (D-Gloucester) and Senator Stephen M. Brewer (D-Barre), Co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

With the support of Representative Verga and Senator Brewer, the “Welcome Home Bill” was signed into law by Governor Romney on Veterans Day, November 11, 2005. The bill contains a number of provisions that benefit Massachusetts veterans, service members and their families. The “Welcome Home” Bonus program is administered by Treasurer Cahill’s office and provides a onetime \$500 or \$1000 tax-free payment to service members activated since September 11, 2001. Those who have served in Afghanistan or Iraq will receive \$1000, and those who have served domestically or in any other foreign country for a period of six months or more will receive \$500.

To apply for the “Welcome Home” Bonus program, service members or their families must submit an application, which is available from Treasurer Cahill’s office; a Residency Certificate; a copy of Discharge Papers (DD214); and a W9 form.

The certificate to prove residency must be signed by a Town Official including the Town Clerk who would verify residency from the street lists, the Treasurer who would have past excise bills, or the Police Department who may have issued FID cards. The date on the form needs to be where they resided six months before the date that they were activated or took part in the Iraq/Afghanistan conflict after Sept 11, 2001, not the date they entered the military.

It appears that the majority of forms being certified are being done by the Town Clerk so please be aware that you may encounter this in your community. Please note that the application is worded incorrectly because it gives the impression that they have to go back to the town where they lived when they enlisted and not the date six months before they were activated. That would not help someone who has been in the service a long time or who enlisted from another state but has lived in MA for many years now. The reason they are bringing in the DD214 is because it lists when the date that they took part in the particular campaign. You don't really have a problem if one goes into the service from high school because you would certify his parents residency.

For more information about the "Welcome Home" Bonus program, or for an application, please contact Alison Mitchell at the State Treasurer's Office (617)367-6900.

**From Marcia Cole, Halifax Town Clerk:**

Not that I'm reading this for the first time but I just found out that those veterans from WW II, Korea and Vietnam are also eligible though for a reduced amount.

WELCOME HOME BONUS BILL - CHAPTER 130 of the ACTS OF 2005

It has recently come to our attention that this bill was signed into law on November 11, 2005, and was a portion of an act providing benefits to service members, veterans and their families. Basically, the bonus bill establishes a monetary payment to certain veterans meeting eligibility requirements for qualified active service since September 11, 2001.

Accordingly, you may have veteran residents of your community requesting the completion of the "Residence Certificate" on their application forms (similar to what we did for the Persian Gulf War vets.) Domicile is certified to January first of the year prior to entry into active service since 9/11. Additional information regarding the form and process may be obtained by calling 617-367-9333, (Veterans Bonus Division of the State Treasurer's Department). Chapter 130 is found at [www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw05](http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw05) <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw05>>.

**BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL FINANCE LAW**

**By: Kathleen Colleary, Chief**

A new name for the Division of Local Services' (DLS) legal bureau  
**changed:** from the Property Tax Bureau  
**to:** the Bureau of Municipal Finance Law.

The Bureau of Municipal Finance Law serves as the legal bureau for the Division of Local Services, which has statutory responsibilities regarding the assessment and collection of property and other local taxes, municipal budgets and debt, and municipal accounting and other financial management practices. Under the previous name, the Bureau received numerous inquiries that did not relate to legal issues. We believe the new name accurately reflects the area of law practiced by attorneys in the Bureau.

Bureau of Municipal Finance Law  
Division of Local Services  
Massachusetts Department of Revenue  
P.O. Box 9659  
Boston, MA 02114-9569

Phone: 617-626-2400  
FAX: 617-626-2379  
E-mail: [DLSLAW@dor.state.ma.us](mailto:DLSLAW@dor.state.ma.us)



**JANE L. CHEW, CMC  
TOWN CLERK OF BURLINGTON**

Jane L. Chew, CMC, has been accepted into the first Level Membership of the IIMC Master Municipal Clerk Academy.

The Master Municipal Clerk Academy was established to further professional education of municipal clerks to enhance their skills as needed to meet the challenges of the office of municipal clerk. Every one to four years, Academy members must demonstrate active educational and professional participation that keep them aware of changing events in the local government scene.

**CHRISTINE E.G. FURNO, CMC  
TOWN CLERK OF DOUGLAS**

Christine E.G. Furno, CMC, has been awarded the prestigious designation of "Certified Municipal Clerk" (CMC).

The IIMC Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) Program aids municipal clerks in improving job performance and recognizes the professionalization of the Municipal Clerk's Office.

FRANCIS D. DONOVAN – former Town Clerk and Town Historian of Medway passed away December 9, 2005. Mr. Donovan was Town Clerk of the Town of Medway from 1970 until his retirement in 1990. He authored numerous historical books and articles, was an avid railroad buff and a climatologist for the National Weather Service



**APRIL**

Parliamentary Law Month & School Library Media Month

- 1<sup>st</sup> All Fools Day
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Veterans of WWI Hospital Day & Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 9<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday and Bataan-Corregidor Day and Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day
- 13<sup>th</sup> Passover
- 16<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday
- 19<sup>th</sup> Patriot's Day (Commemoration of the opening events of the Revolutionary War)
- 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> Licensed Practical Nurse Week
- 28<sup>th</sup> Exercise Tiger Day (In recognition of the 30,000 servicemen who left Truro, England on an exercise mission for the D-Day invasion.) & Arbor and Bird Day (Planting of trees shrubs and plants particularly those attractive to birds.)



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☎ 1-800-775-3107 ext. #2 for John W. Dresch, or # 5 for Jeff Gasparini

### MTCA & NEACT CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

2006 - 2007

IIMC	60 <sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE MAY 14 - 18, 2006 ANNAHEIM, CA	NEACTC	39 <sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 16, 17, 18, 2006 THE MARRIOT, NEWPORT, RI
MTCA	SUMMER CONFERENCE JUNE 14, 15, 16, 2006 SEA CREST, FALMOUTH, MA	MTCA	WINTER CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 7, 8, 9, 2007 STURBRIDGE HOST, STURBRIDGE, MA
MTCA	FALL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 4, 5, 6, 2006 JIMINY PEAK, HANCOCK MA		

### MASSACHUSETTS

State Dog (1979) BOSTON TERRIER

State Cat (1988) TABBY CAT

Source: Massachusetts facts 8/1/05

**The Public Recorder**

**Newsletter of the MTCA**

**1009 Main Street  
Tewksbury, MA 01876**



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