

The Collector Treasurer

A publication of the Massachusetts Collectors and Treasurers Association

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No. 3

MCTA's Annual Fall Conference to be in Holyoke October 21

The Log Cabin will again be the site for this year's Fall Conference. Do come and enjoy this beautiful facility and the spectacular view of Mt. Tom and across the valley. The fall foliage should be a delightful site.

We are pleased to have two of our Associate Members from the western part of the state participate in sponsoring events for the Fall Conference. The Bank of Western Massachusetts has generously offered to sponsor the Continental Breakfast. Berkshire Bank has offered to sponsor one of our guest speakers and complimentary coffee mugs. The Association appreciates their partnership and contribution to our Fall Conference.

The meeting will start with a presentation from Melanson and Health on the implications of SAS 112 and how it relates to municipal finance. This will be followed by a guest speaker whose presentation will focus on "How to Have Fun With Difficult People".

Following an intermission, the next two concurrent panel sessions will discuss timely topics. The Collectors panel will discuss Postage and Mailing Options, and the Treasurer's panel will discuss Creating and Content of Investment Policies.

Holiday Meeting set for College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, December 10

The Hogan Center at Holy Cross College will again be the site of MCTA's Holiday Meeting for December 10. Set the date aside on your calendar for a day of educational presentations, discussion and socializing.

The Education Committee is developing a program, which will feature speakers and topics centering around public retirement issues and finances.

MCTA Staff School

Annual Staff School was held at the Littleton Municipal Office Building on September 10th and 24th. The September 10th classes attended by over 60 staff members offered the Basics to Collectors & Treasurers staff, while the September 24th Session, which was attended by 100 staff members offered Advanced classes. MCTA would like to acknowledge and thank all the Faculty members who gave their time, knowledge and experience in making the Staff School a very successful educational event. MCTA would also like to thank SoftRight for their contribution to the Continental Breakfast, as well as Don Armstrong, Treasurer of the Town of Littleton.

Newly Certified Treasurers

Virginia Boutchie, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Essex,
Christine N. DeFontes, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Seekonk,
Leigh A. Martinelli, Treasurer, Town of Orange,
Eleanor Doros, Treasurer, Town of Webster,
Lisa J. Edinger, Treasurer, Town of Chester,
Lynn S. Greene, Treasurer, Town of Wales,
Denise M. Marlborough, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Millbury,
Mary T. McIsaac, Treasurer of the Barnstable Fire District,
Marilyn J. Thompson, Treasurer/Collector, Town of East Bridgewater.

Newly Certified Collectors

Brian P. Ballantine, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Southborough,
Kathleen A. Burgess, Collector, Town of Bourne,
Marie Chmura, Collector, Town of Hatfield,
Mary C. Day, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Lincoln,
Denise M. Dembkoski, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Swampscott,
Margaret A. DeSantis, Collector, Town of Lee,
Melinda Ernst-Fournier, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Southbridge,
Victor Garofalo, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Bedford,
Christine A. Kupstas, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Mendon,
Kevin Merz, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Ipswich,
James R. Murgia, Finance Director, Town of Canton,
Cheryl J. Ouillette, Collector, Town of Sutton,
Rebecca R. Smith, Collector, Town of Wales.

The President's Page

By

Joanne Savignac

From the President:

The fall season has arrived. We can see it in the landscape, feel it in the air, and know it's here by the frenzy of activity happening within our communities – with pre-budgeting sessions and special town meetings.

The economy in general has also taken on an autumn funk. None of us can avoid the market turmoil, whether it's with municipal income or borrowing, or our own personal finances. It's times like these that we all need the support of our Association's programs geared to current events and legislation to help us do our jobs more efficiently. Your Education Committee has put together a great program for the upcoming fall conference, including a session on workplace productivity. They are also finalizing plans for the December meeting and the main topic of the day should be of interest, at work and at home, to everyone.

The Association offers you the choice of attending only the business sessions, so please consider this option if your budgets have been cut. Just the opportunity to gather with peers and talk about issues is a priceless bonus.

With recent banking news, the Legislative Committee continues to work on getting our legislative agenda heard and voted. Treasurer Cahill is a friend of this Association, and he has been contacted for his support. Please back up the work of the committee by contacting your own legislators for their support.

Is it all doom and gloom? Certainly not! Hearty congratulations to all who passed the latest round of exams at the Annual School in August. Your notification letters have gone out, and included in each was sheet with volunteer opportunities. Why not consider joining a committee (it doesn't have to be a "major" one to start) and sharing your ideas? You've got nothing to lose and everything to gain by meeting your peers.

I look forward to seeing all who can attend the Fall Conference at the Log Cabin on October 21st. Let's hope for a sunny day to view the gorgeous western hills!

How to Access the "Member Only" tab (including "Ask the Membership") on the MCTA Web Site:

The MCTA is now using Virtual Town Hall to power its web site. If you have not already logged on and created a password for the private side of the site, here are the instructions for first-time access:

User ID – will be mcta, followed by the first initial of your first name and your full last name, **up to 15 characters**. So, user Mary Sanderson would be mctamsanderson, but user Alex Andrianopolis would be mctaaandrianopo.

Temporary password – will be the same as your user id **up to 12 characters**. Mary Sanderson would be mctamsanders and Alex Andrianopolis would be mctaaandrian.

Once you log on initially, you will then be asked to change your password and establish one of your own, matching the 15-character criteria.

Joanne

DUES, DUES, DUES

SECOND NOTICE DUES INVOICES HAVE BEEN MAILED. PLEASE SEND PAYMENT BY NOV. 1 TO AVOID SUSPENSION. DON'T JEOPARDIZE YOUR CERTIFICATION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Newly Certified Assistant Treasurers

Donna R. Bowse, Assistant Treasurer, Town of Dedham, **Timothy Donovan**, Assistant Treasurer, City of Woburn, **Mary K. Murphy Guerrero**, Assistant Treasurer, Town of Topsfield, **Sharyn M. Klein**, Assistant Treasurer, Town of Adams.

Newly Certified Assistant Collectors

Donald J. Carter, Assistant T/C, Town of Ipswich, **Sandra M. Driscoll**, Assistant Collector, City of Northampton, **Maureen Gibson**, Assistant T/C, Town of Millbury, **Jennifer Loven**, Assistant Collector, Town of Amherst, **Geraldine R. Manser**, Assistant Collector, City of West Springfield, **Deborah J. Morse**, Assistant T/C, Town of Sturbridge, **Patti Querim**, Assistant Collector, City of New Bedford, **Carol A. Winters**, Assistant T/C, Town of Dover.

Association Calendar 2008 - 2009

Oct. 21, 2008	Fall Conference The Log Cabin Holyoke
Dec. 10, 2008	Holiday Meeting The Hogan Center Holy Cross College Worcester
Feb. xx, 2009	Winter Meeting TBA
April xx, 2009	Spring Meeting TBA
May xx, 2009	New Collector and Treasurer Day
June 7 to 10, '09	60th Annual Cape Conference
Aug 17 to 20, '09	39th Annual School U Mass Amherst
Sept. 9 & 23	Annual Staff School Littleton Municipal Office Building

The Collector-Treasurer

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Education Committee Report

By First V-P Sue Kelley

With UMASS School behind us, the Education Committee has been working hard on getting your fall conference finalized! It promises to be very educational with timely topics, and refreshing, with a presenter who specializes in helping us deal with our “difficult” employees and customers! We had another successful year of Staff school with a large attendance for the 2nd year track. Thanks to all of our colleagues who volunteered to teach. Our Association would not be such a great asset if it weren’t for you.

The Education Committee is turning its’ attention to the Christmas meeting and future conferences! We have been exploring other possible venues for Sea Crest which could break us out of the “same old – same thing” mold and bring us to a new area with other possibilities. Did you know we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of our MCTA Cape Conference? We hope to make it a special celebration! Also some other ideas we are kicking around is bringing back “State House Day”. It’s been a while since we have visited our legislators and perhaps this spring could be the year to say “Hello” again!

As you are all aware the State Elections are coming up Tuesday, November 4, 2008. Hopefully everyone understands how important it is for us to go out and vote, particularly on Question #1. The question, if you haven’t heard, is “Are you in favor of

eliminating the State Personal Income Tax?” A yes vote would reduce the state personal income tax rate to 2.65% for the tax year beginning on Jan 1, 2009 and would eliminate the tax for all tax years beginning on or after Jan 1, 2010. We need to be educating our communities, friends and family on how drastic this passing of the law would be on our State! It would force dramatic cuts for State aid to cities and towns and funding for local public schools. It would threaten public safety by cutting funds for police, fire and EMT’s. Ultimately our communities would have to face drastic lay-offs or raise property taxes to help compensate and in these horrific economic times this added pressure would not be in anyone’s best interest! OK enough about that, all I can really ask is that you do your civic duty by participating and vote your conscience.

We are also looking for some new Education Committee members. You must be certified. If you are interested please contact Mike Hanlon, our Executive Director, or give me a call to chat about it! It’s very rewarding! I would like to acknowledge Donald Kaminski, T/C of Oxford, John Duggan, T/C of West Bridgewater and Holly Denault, T/C of Adams for serving on the Education Committee. Their terms have expired but they have been a tremendous asset to the committee, you will be missed.

Sue

Comings - - - - - And Goings - - - - -

(This feature in *The Collector-Treasurer* is intended to help our members keep abreast of changes taking place within our professional community. With your help in sending us late-breaking changes by fax or e-mail, we will be able to keep current on the whereabouts of our members and friends. Please tell us of changes you have not yet seen in print)

Comings & Goings
(for the Autumn 2008 newsletter)

Lucia A. Blanchette is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Palmer, replacing Bruce Turner.

Peter Roy-Clark is the new Treasurer of the Gill-Montague Regional School District, replacing Cindy Penniman.

Diane M. Murphy is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Stoneham, replacing Thomas Cicutelli.

Mary Beth Sussmann is the new Collector in the Town of Granville, replacing Sharon Nobb.

Karen Jeloe is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Wrentham, replacing Barry Yeaw.

Judith Jardin is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Aquinnah, replacing Audrey Jeffers Mayhew.

Sheila Tracy is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Winchester, replacing David McGurl.

Valerie Mitchell is the new Treasurer of the Pentucket Regional School District, replacing Anthony Repucci.

Stephen Price is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Framingham, replacing Dennis O’Neil.

Diane Cush is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Hudson, replacing Stephen Price.

Richard Wade is the new Collector in the Town of Middlefield, replacing Kris Monson, who has retired.

Shannon Lyonnais is the new Collector in the City of Fall River, replacing Betty Clark.

Joan Port-Farwell is now the Collector and Treasurer in the Town of Hanover, replacing the Treasurer, Robert C. Haley.

News From Beacon Hill

By MCTA's Registered Agent, **Steve Roche**
MCTA LOBBYIST REPORT – FALL 2008

The Market's up. The Market's down. I don't envy local treasurers these days as we suffer through extraordinary times for our world, our country, and our state. The crisis has gone from Wall Street to Main Street to City & Town Halls.

You know better than most how the financial crisis is affecting municipal finance - tighter credit and reduced returns on investment. You also know that our state revenues are already down by over \$200 million and we've just closed the 1st quarter of FY2009 – could we be facing a \$1 billion dollar hole by the end of the fiscal year. I've been on Beacon Hill for 30 years and I don't recall the serious talk that we hear now of possible cuts in Local Aid – this has always been untouchable.

Now for the "third witch" if you will – Question 1 on the state ballot to repeal the state income tax. If it passes – and many folks think it will given how angry voters are today – we will lose 40% of our state revenues at a time when other revenues – sales tax and capital gains tax - are slipping away. When you look at the areas of the budget where we cannot cut – like debt maintenance - some believe that the impact of the passage of Question 1 could be state budget cuts on the order of 70%. Wow, talk about your "budget buster."

It is this possible dismantling of state and local budgets that has prompted the MCTA Board to vote to oppose Question 1. This is the right call in my opinion.

In the meantime, we continue to work to get State House leaders to take action to protect local deposits. MCTA President Savignac has sent the State Treasurer a letter asking for his help in protecting your deposits. This is just one of several steps we're taking to raise this issue on Beacon Hill – we believe now is the time to act – especially in light of

the continuing uncertainty after the Wall Street Bailout.

We are also readying the MCTA's 2009-2010 Legislative Package for filing. All bills for next session must be filed by January 14, 2009.

Steve

Legislative Committee Report

By *Second V-P Gene Spickler*

For the first time in many months, the Legislative Committee has no vacancies to fill. A **BIG WELCOME & THANK YOU** to Tom Connolly (T/C Hull) and Teresa DeSilva (T/C Easton) for volunteering their services. I also want to **THANK** the existing committee for their input, support and help in putting our FY'09-'10 legislative package together.

We want to thank all of you that attended the General Assembly at MCTA school 8/12 and voted overwhelmingly to support the legislative package put forth by this committee and approved by the Executive Board. Our legislative consultant, Steve Roche, will cover those bills in his column.

Joanne Savignac and Tony Logalbo are working with Steve to set up a meeting with State Treasurer Tim Cahill concerning the protection of public deposits. Based on Tim's recent public comments concerning the safety of public funds being more important than the rate of return, and the current state of financial institutions, we hope, with his support, to impress upon the legislators, the urgency of protecting public deposits. In addition, to working on final drafts of our bills, we are tracking H.2990 that deals with a community's liability for common area condo fees from the date of tax taking to foreclosure. We are also following legislation for a local option allowing an OPEB Trust Fund for GASB 45 future liability. Please keep in mind that we still **need all of you to help** by asking your legislators to consider signing on as sponsors of legislation we will be filing by January 14, 2009. The more

that will sponsor or co-sponsor, the better, but at least ask them to sign on to the one(s) you consider most important.

Since the last newsletter where I mentioned the ability to **change the Demand Fee, the DOR/DLS has issued Bulletin 2008 - 09B** indicating the outside section of the FY 2009 state budget and the procedures to change the amount. You may also find **Bulletin 2008 – 10B** concerning the due dates of tax bills interesting.

If you are a community whose offices are closed all or part of a day other than Saturday or Sunday, this bulletin states: **"A due date falling on any other day is not extended, for any reason, including, the closure of municipal offices for all or part of that day."** It goes on to discuss the requirements of indicating such due and abatement dates on the front of the tax bills. Both of these bulletins are easily accessed through our website link to the DOR, and type DOR Bulletins in the Search Box on the upper right.

Last, but not least, I would like to remind everyone that there is a very important binding proposition on the 11/4 state ballot. Question 1 calls for the state personal income tax rate to be reduced to 2.65% for calendar tax year 2009, and to eliminate the tax in 2010 and following years. While I am sure most, if not all of us, would like to not pay state income taxes (or federal for that matter), I am not convinced that the 40% (12 Billion) reduction in state revenues would not lead to massive cuts in state aide and have a drastic affect on our communities. Proponents for passage believe there is a 41% waste factor in our state budget and it would mean no cuts. The Information for Voters booklet contains websites and greater detail about this question as well as question 2 – replacing the criminal penalties for possession of 1 oz or less of marijuana with civil ones, and question 3 – prohibiting dog racing where any form of betting occurs.

Gene