

The Collector Treasurer

A publication of the Massachusetts Collectors and Treasurers Association

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Start Planning Now For 2009 June Conference and Annual School

The winter holidays are barely past and the cold weather is now upon us, but spring and summer are just around the corner and it is not too early to be making plans to attend the 60th Annual MCTA Conference on Local Taxation and Finance at the Cape Codder Resort Hotel and Conference Center in Hyannis, June 14th to June 18th. Hotel reservation forms have been mailed to all MCTA members, should you have questions, please call the MCTA office.

Information as to the agenda and registration forms for the conference will be forthcoming early in the Spring. Your Education Committee and Association staff is working to provide you with top quality subject matter and presenters. We will have lots of interesting educational sessions all three days, and some terrific entertainment after dinner both nights. We look forward to another great June Conference. **Look forward to seeing you!**

MCTA 38th Annual School At University of Mass. Amherst, August 18 - 21

Orientation, General Assembly and the Legislative Program will be on Tuesday. Review of New Legislation (201) will be on Wednesday, with the Certified Track on Tuesday and Wednesday. **Examinations will be held on Friday.**

CERTIFIED TREASURER RENEWALS:

Thomas Abel, T&C, Marlborough, **Carolyn Awalt**, Treas, Berkley, **Carol Baron**, Dist. Treas, So. Worcester Cty RVSD, **Tracy Blais**, T&C, West Newbury, **Debra Blanchette**, Treas., Barnstable, **Linda Blodgett**, Treas., Holland, **Joan Bousquet**, T&C, Winchendon, **Mary Bousquet**, T&C, Holliston, **James Dacey**, T&C, Franklin, **Margaret Dennehy**, Treas., Boxborough, **Teresa DeSilva**, T&C, Easton, **Grace Devitt**, T&C, Bellingham, **Arthur Flavin**, T&C, Melrose, **John Foster**, Treas., Wareham Fire District, **Melody Gallant**, T&C, Westminster, **Christine Brodeur**, T&C, Ashland, **Brenda Herbeck**, T&C, Mattapoisett, **Nancy Holt**, T&C, Marshfield, **June Hubbard-Ward**, T&C, Northborough, **Donna Judd**, Treas., Chesterfield, **Ann Marie Knox**, Treas., Huntington, **Sandra Larkin**, T&C, Great Barrington, **Jane Lepardo**, T&C, Scituate, **Pat Mielke**, T&C, Egremont, **Stephen Price**, T&C, Framingham, **David Reilly**, T&C, Andover, **Bonnie Ricardelli**, T&C, Dunstable, **Vicki Smith**, T&C, Harvard, **Sharon Summers**, Treas., Acton-Boxborough RSD, **Gabrielle Voelker**, Treas., New Salem, **Bonnie Yasick**, T&C, West Boylston, **Karen Walden**, Treas., Mashpee Water District. (con't.)

A Great Time Was Had By All Who Attended The 2008 Holiday Meeting

The Hogan Center at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester was decked out for the holidays with poinsettia plants galore for MCTA's Annual Holiday Meeting donated by Associate Member First Southwest Company.

At a Joint Session of the Membership of close to 300 attending the morning program opened with Kevin Blanchette, CEO of the Worcester Regional Retirement System. Kevin presented a detailed program on the make up of local retirements systems as well as an outline on the investment policies and general overall aspects of retirement benefits and law. He was followed by State Treasurer Tim Cahill who addressed the membership on legislation that he has filed regarding Security for Public Deposit. Treasurer Cahill was well received and the full membership voted to support his legislation. Closing out the day's agenda was Steve Richardson, Regional Communications Deputy Director of the Social Security Administration. Steve presented the membership with a thorough program of the issues with public employees retirement and social security benefits.

After lunch, MCTA President Joanne Savignac and DOR Property Tax Bureau Chief Kathleen Colleary awarded Certificates to Newly Certified and Re-Certified Collectors.

The President's Page

By

Joanne Savignac

**- President's Report –
Winter 2009**

Happy New Year and welcome to months of challenges. For some of us in the central and western parts of the state the challenges have already begun with the devastating ice storm of December 11-12. I enjoy camping, but after a week I got very weary of my camp stove and refilling, priming, and pull-starting a shared generator. I'm thankful I was able to have part-time use of a generator, as some folks in north central Massachusetts did not and endured many more days without any source of power.

I volunteered in my hometown, as I know many of you did in your own hometowns. I "worked the phones" at my municipal light department and most folks were cooperative and understanding. I heard the grateful "thanks yous" from a neighboring municipality when I delivered a large spool of much-needed electrical wire to their light plant. And my personal thanks to the Westfield and Chicopee light crews who finally brought power back to my house.

***Association Calendar
2009***

April 2009	Spring Meeting TBA
May 13, 2009	New Coll/Treas Day Littleton Municipal Bld Littleton
Jun14-17, '09	60th Annual Cape Cod Conference Cape Codder Resort Hotel Hyannis
Aug 18- 21 '09	40th Annual School University of Mass. Amherst
Sep 9 & 23, '09	Annual Staff School Littleton Adm. Building
Oct 21, 2009	Fall Conference The Log Cabin Holyoke
Dec 9, 2009	Holiday Meeting Holy Cross College

Unfortunately, there were a number of malcontents. We were all in the same situation and complaining didn't get them service any faster than the rest. This brings me to my point – we will all face financial tests in the upcoming months. The state will be cutting local aid and local municipalities will be forced to make budget reductions. We will all be asked to get by with less. Complaining will not get your budget increased. Cooperation will be necessary, inter-departmentally and regionally.

The MCTA's list-serve has become a popular forum. I suggest that if you or your other departments within you community have anything to share (remember not to dispose of recorded municipal assets!) to post it on the list-serve. (The Executive Committee has formed an ad-hoc "Web Site Content" committee and you will be asked at our next annual meeting to approve its permanent formation.) Have you completely computerized all your forms and have a stockpile of unused "Hobbs and Warren" forms? Perhaps another community can use them. That goes for any department that has generic forms. Now may be the time to think seriously about a mailing service, or perhaps joining together with other communities in your area to coordinate mailings and get a bulk rate. Does your municipality have in-house legal counsel? Get them to follow through with your tax takings instead of employing an outside firm. Rather than pointing a finger at another department, ask them if you could possibly split the cost of an item.

Your Education Committee members share your concerns and continually look for ways to present programs at a reasonable cost. The Association used to have a February meeting, but that has been put to rest for now. The Committee is always looking for timely and informative topics and encourages you to attend as many meetings as you can. Suggestions for topics or presenters cost you nothing! Another thing that won't break your budget is support of your Legislative Committee proposals. Unless your legislator's office is in a different area

code, the telephone call shouldn't cost an extra cent.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming meetings when possible and wish everyone a healthy 2009.

Joanne

Con't from page 1

CERTIFIED COLLECTOR RENEWALS

Cheryl Booth, Collector, Hamilton, **Carol Borden**, Collector, Westport, **Joan Bousquet**, Treasurer/Collector, Winchendon, **Richard Buffington**, Treasurer/Collector, Dennis, **John Duggan**, Treasurer/Collector, West Bridgewater, **Arthur Flavin, Jr.**, Treasurer/Collector, Melrose, **Geraldine Gozycki**, Collector, Merrimac, **Ellen Guerin**, Treasurer/Collector, Boxford, **Lynn Hathaway**, Collector, Charlemont, **Dorothy Jenkins**, Collector, Monson, **Donald Kaminski**, Treasurer/Collector, Oxford, **Deborah Kristoff**, Treasurer/Collector, Northbridge, **Carolyn Northon**, Treasurer/Collector, Plympton, **Janet Pierce**, Treasurer/Collector, Leicester, **Laurel Placzek**, Treasurer/Collector, Agawam, **D. Ann Pyenson**, Collector, Otis, **Richard Sardell**, Collector, Berlin, **Karen Stoddard**, Collector, Athol.

CERTIFIED ASSISTANT TREASURER RENEWALS

Gerald Lane, Assistant Treasurer, Dover

The Collector-Treasurer

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Education Committee Report

By First V-P Sue Kelley

Happy New Year! As I look out my window, the sky is dark and gloomy and the wind is blowing hard, the ground is frozen, Christmas is over and it's winter! However with this acknowledgement I get excited because it also means the start of a new year! This is your opportunity to make some new goals, clean up that office, lose a few pounds, and try out a new activity! With that I hope there is one more thing you will try and do and that is to get involved in your association! There are so many ways you can serve! If you find the legislative process interesting why not volunteer to be on the Legislative Committee. If its education that gets you cooking, come on aboard! Finally there is the Executive Board. They all three bring something different to the association and what it gives back is very rewarding! Knowing you have helped a new treasurer or collector can't help but make you feel good!

With that in mind, I want to update you a little bit on what your education committee has been working on. Anyone remember State House Day? We are trying to bring that back this year! We also have the Cape Codder Conference to focus on, with new ideas and classes that will keep you on your toes and challenge your minds to be creative in these economic times on how you can help your cities or towns to save money! I realize that many municipalities have frozen their budgets and that educational workshops might not be a possibility for some of you. We are going to try very hard to keep our costs constant and not go up – as everything around us continues to do.

If you have any ideas or suggestions on things you would like to see on an upcoming agenda please do not hesitate to contact me directly! I am always open to anything! Look forward to seeing everyone again!

Sue

Cont from page 1 – Holiday Meeting

Assistants. To close the meeting, President Joanne Savignac, Vice President Sue Kelley and Ex. Director Mike Hanlon awarded the door prizes that had been so generously donated by a number of our Associate Members

Holiday Meeting Door Prizes

The following is a list of the Door Prizes generously donated by some of our Associate Members.

SoftRight – Gift Box, Standard & Poor's – Yuletide Holiday Breakfast Gift Box, Kelley & Ryan – 2 Gift Baskets, Moody's – Gift Bag, MCC – Gift Basket, Eastern Bank – Gift Basket, TD Banknorth – Gift Basket, BNY Mellon – Gift Basket, Point Software – Gift Basket, First Trade Union Bank – Gift Card, UniBank – Poinsettia Gift Basket, Citizens Bank – Gift Basket, Webster Bank – Gift Certificate, ING Financial Advisers – Holiday Arrangement, Bartholomew & Company – Chocolate Basket, Arthur P. Jones & Associates – 2 Gift Certificates, Century Bank – Fruit Basket, Bank of America – 2 Gift Bags, Patriot Properties – 2 sGift Certificates, Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank – Gift Basket, Tarlow, Breed, Hart & Rogers, P.C. – Gift Box and Card, Berkshire Bank – Gift Bag, First Southwest Company – Gift Baskets, FIS Tax Services – Gift Card, The Bank of Western MA – Fruit Basket, Daniel J. Flynn & Company – Picture Book, Rockland Trust Company – Holiday Basket, MMDT – Gift Basket.

REMINDER: PACT Applications have been mailed. If you are eligible to take the exam in August, please fill out the application and return it to the MCTA office as soon as possible. Remember, applications must be received by May 31st in order to be considered for the exam in August.

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.)

Mary Hathaway is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Dighton, replacing Nancy Marshall.

Kathleen S. McMahon is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Middleton, replacing Anne Tentindo.

Jeffrey C. Towne is the new Treasurer/Collector in the City of Gloucester, replacing Charlene Pina.

Cheryl Robertson is the new Treasurer/Collector in the City of Newburyport, replacing Mary Latime.

Gerry Lane is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Dover, replacing Karen Jelloe.

Daniel M. Keyes is the new Treasurer in the Town of Easthampton, replacing Adrienne Booth.

Legislative Committee Report

By Second V-P Gene Spickler

It is with regret that we bid farewell to Claire McGinnis, Collector in Amherst, but we wish to **THANK** her for a job well done. I especially appreciated her effort, concern and taking the minutes as secretary for at least the time I have been on the committee. I also want to acknowledge and **THANK** Ann Guasterro, T/C in Methuen, and Janet Pierce, presently T/C in New Braintree, for their contributions to the committee and also for agreeing to contribute for another term. So, **now there is a vacancy** on the committee and I hope **a certified member will volunteer to join the team** and contribute their ideas and efforts to help pass legislation benefiting the municipalities and districts we serve. I also thank the 2 not yet certified

members that volunteered and hope they will do so upon their certification.

For the Legislature not being “officially” in session, it has certainly been a very busy several months. Joanne, Tony, Mike and Steve met with senior staff from the Treasurer’s office to discuss his proposed legislation for the protection of public deposits. State Treasurer Tim Cahill accepted our offer to address our members at our Christmas Conference, and later a motion to support his bill brought before the assembly by this committee passed unanimously.

Steve Roche represented us at the hearing before the Special Municipal Relief Commission and discussed the four proposals submitted earlier

Within the last several weeks, H. 5148 establishing local option acceptance of the creation of an OPEB Trust Fund for future liabilities to meet GASB 45 requirements, was passed and on the Governor’s desk. While we recognize the importance of this legislation and had supported similar legislation (H. 1140), the problem with H.5148 is that it added municipal light plants as having separate OPEB funding and required the involvement of the Division of Insurance. Several emails were sent to the Governor expressing our concerns that municipal light plant references should be deleted from the bill as they are a municipal department and the employees are already covered under Ch. 32. He returned the legislation with a suggestion that the Division of Insurance involvement be removed, but not that the municipal light plant references be deleted. Despite emails and calls to legislators, the bill was passed on the last night of informal sessions with the Division of Insurance deleted. Follow up emails with the Governor’s Office indicate he will probably sign the legislation. If signed, municipalities may establish OPEB Funds by local option acceptance of the law.

Last, but not least, NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP! Thanks to Steve Roche and others who contacted their legislators, we now have lead sponsors for all of our FY’09-’10 legislative bills that will be filed by 1/14/09. We have until 2/4 to have legislators sign on as supporting our bills. **Please contact your legislators and ask them to sign on to our legislation.** The summary of our bills is available on the website and can be easily emailed to your legislators. If you feel asking them to sign on to all the bills is a bit much, pick a couple that are of special interest to you and pitch sponsorship of those and ask for his support of the rest. Remember, these are to help the municipalities we serve and most, if not all, were adopted unanimously by our members. A follow up call a week or so later can do a lot to show your interest and gain a signature or at least some support. **THANKS.**

Gene **MCTA’s Legislative Update**

By Legislative Agent, Atty. Steve Roche
sroche@thevictorygroup.org

Hello & Happy New Year to all!

The end of a legislative session is a sight to behold. Legislators rush and rush to squeeze in action on dozens of bills before the clock strikes Midnight on the last day of the session. For departing members, it’s their last shot at leaving a legacy behind.

The 2007-2008 session officially ended at Midnight on January 6th and I worked through the holidays on a variety of tasks – from recruiting legislative sponsors for MCTA bills to seeking amendments to House 5148, a bill providing for the establishment of other post employment benefits liability trust funds in municipalities and certain other governmental units.

There were literally dozens of bills going back and forth between the

House and Senate during the final week or so of the session; to be honest, most of them were for a specific city or town.

It will be a while until the House and Senate Leaders name their committee chairs and other leadership positions. Once that happens, the joint (11 House members, 5 Senate members) committees will schedule hearings on matters before them. We expect that hearings will start in earnest in March.

Of course, all eyes on Beacon Hill are on our state budget these days. The Governor’s recent announcement that another \$1 billion in cuts is necessary during this fiscal year has caused great angst at the State House. Local Aid will take a hit in January as will many, many other state funded programs.

The Governor’s FY2010 budget will be out by the end of the month and more cuts are expected to be proposed for the next fiscal year.

There’s a lot of talk about the need to give municipalities new/better tools to manage the budget crisis at the local level. We are currently awaiting a report from a special legislative commission charged with recommending ways to help cities and towns during these difficult times. As I mentioned at the Holiday meeting, I testified before the Special Municipal Relief Commission on several MCTA proposals at the State House on Dec. 3rd. The Commission has yet to release its report but some of its recommendations will no doubt be considered for inclusion in the Governor’s FY2010 budget plan.

With respect to filing MCTA bills for the 2009-2010 session, we have Lead Sponsors for all the bills and continue to recruit co-sponsors. It will be a while before we get actual bill numbers to share with you – via the MCTA Website.

Steve