

# The Collector Treasurer

A publication of the Massachusetts Collectors and Treasurers Association

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## ***MCTA's 38th Annual School to be at U Mass, Amherst, August 12-15***

School Registration information and Forms were mailed with President Savignac's letter of invitation the last week of June. If you did not receive your mailing, or if you just can't find it, go to the MCTA web site at [www.MassCTA.com](http://www.MassCTA.com) and down-load the Annual School information.

You can fax (413-545-0050) your registration to the school or just show up and take the forms with you. But, please **do not send your Annual School Registrations to the MCTA Office.**

Even if you miss the July 31 deadline and have to add the \$35 late charge, MCTA's Annual School is still a bargain in terms of the educational and professional benefits you will receive. Do not miss this year's Annual School.

Remember, Assistant Collectors and Assistant Treasurers may now sit for the examination and become Certified. A great many assistants have been taking courses for years, but have not been allowed to sit for the Certification Exam. With the new rules for eligibility, 20 Assistant Collectors and 16 Assistant Treasurers have become Certified.

**A previously approved PACT application is required to attend the Thursday review classes and to sit for the Friday Examinations**

If knowledge is power, take this opportunity to become more

powerful. Come with us at the Annual School, August 12 – 15

## ***MCTA New Website & List Serve***

With a great deal of effort from Association President Joanne Savignac and Past President Nancy Holt, as well as Vadar Systems/Virtual Town Hall, our new website is serving our membership with much praise. We appreciate your cooperation in this effort to bring this added feature to the Association.

The Association is pleased to receive encouraging feedback from a number of Collectors & Treasurers regarding the List Serve feature on the members portion of the website. The List Serve has allowed Collectors & Treasurers to post general questions as well as procedural questions and receive timely and helpful responses from their colleagues.

We will continue to add to the website and look forward to servicing your needs. Should you have suggestions or comments, please email us at [masscta@aol.com](mailto:masscta@aol.com).

***MCTA Staff School ....  
Will be held on Sept. 10 & 24 at the  
Littleton Municipal Office Building***

***Save the Date***

## ***59<sup>th</sup> Annual June Sea Crest Conference Was A Big Success***

### ***Seventy Nine Certified Members Earned Credit For Re-Certification***

This was the third year of a program change that now awards re-certification credit for attendance at Sea Crest. The requirement continues to be attendance at Course #201 (Review of New Legislation with Atty. Gary Blau of MA DOR) and five hours of additional approved classes, the same as re-certification at Amherst.

When the Education Committee and the Executive Board approved the new re-certification rules, no one knew how our members would respond. But the decision to develop this alternative was made to encourage more Certified members to send their Assistants to Amherst for Annual School and the potential to become a Certified Assistant. This year's participation was nearly twice that of last year.

We also enjoyed a variety of speakers and social events, thanks to the generous support of several associate members and other sponsors. And our exhibit floor was sold out, with 50 vendors present.

**Next year's** location and dates have been set: the **Sea Crest** on Old Silver Beach in North Falmouth, Sunday, **June 7** to Wednesday **June 10, 2009.**

So mark the dates in your calendar now, for the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual MCTA Conference on Local Taxation and Finance.

## The President's Page

By

Joanne Savignac

### From the President:

Welcome to my first column as MCTA President. So far it's been a busy term. As you may have heard, Paul Nowicki, Treasurer/Collector of Ware and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President-elect, had to resign from the board due to unforeseen circumstances in his municipality. On June 23 the Executive Committee, under MCTA By-Law guidelines, elected Susan Kelley, Treasurer of Lee, as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, and Gene Spickler, Collector of Tyngsboro, as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. Gene will serve as Chairman of the Legislative Committee, and has experience in the MCTA's legislative arena as he was a valuable committee member for a number of years. Thanks to Sue and Gene for stepping up and saying, "Yes!" when asked.

#### Association Calendar- 2008-9

Aug 12-15, '08	38 <sup>th</sup> Annual School University of Mass. Amherst
Sep 10 & 24, 08	Annual Staff School Municipal Office Bldg Littleton
Oct. 21, 2008	Fall Conference The Log Cabin Holyoke
Dec 10, 2008	Holiday Meeting Holy Cross College Worcester
Feb XX, 2009	Winter Meeting Location TBD
April XX, 2009	Annual Meeting Location TBD
May 13, 2009	New Coll/Treas Day Forbes Municipal Bld Westborough
May 29, 2009	PACT Form Deadline
Jun 7-10 '09	60 <sup>th</sup> Annual Cape Cod Conference Sea Crest Hotel North Falmouth

Summer has finally arrived, as witnessed by the beautiful weather (in fact, the best in years) we experienced during the annual Cape conference. Proof of the outstanding program offered this year was the overflow attendance at each seminar, despite the sunshine and beckoning beach. Kudos to the Education Committee for timely and informative sessions.

In addition to the Education Committee's work on the class material for the annual school at UMass, Amherst, the Legislative Committee is hard at work on finalizing the MCTA legislative package for your approval during Tuesday's General Assembly. If you are not able to attend all four days at UMass, try for one or two. With the many topics offered, you shouldn't be disappointed.

Finally, don't forget to help me with this year's goal of getting everyone involved in YOUR Association. The Association's new "Ask the Membership" list-serve offers the perfect opportunity to contribute and assist your fellow members, with no strain on your department's budget. Another idea that won't dent your budget is offering a municipal site (town or city hall, COA activity room, or fire department meeting room) for an MCTA board or committee meeting. The Littleton office offers a fairly central location, but can be a bit cramped when all committee members are in attendance. As an example, Unibank recently hosted an Executive Committee meeting. Thanks to Pat Baker for making the offer and to Ken Redding for allowing us to take over the

bank's board room. Your site doesn't have to be fancy; just large enough to accommodate up to 15 people. The MCTA provides all the rest. If you're interested in extending an invitation, please contact me or the MCTA office.

I look forward to seeing many of you at UMass in just a few weeks.

Joanne

### " 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)

**Warren G. Sproul** is the new Treasurer/Collector in the City of Quincy, replacing Gloria Williams.

**Barbara Miller** is the new Treasurer in the Town of Worthington, replacing Diane Sturtevant.

**Kathleen O'Malley** is the new Collector in the Town of Clinton, replacing Bernard Walsh.

**Bruce Turner** is the new Treasurer/Finance Director in the Town of Easthampton, replacing Dan Keyes.

**Donna Erickson** is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Sterling, replacing Bruce Turner. (continued page 3).

#### The Collector-Treasurer

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## **“Comings ..... And Goings”, continued**

**Kathleen A. Shivone** has been appointed Acting Collector in the Town of Halifax, replacing Beverly Pratt who has retired.

**Clare English** is the new Treasurer in the Town of Sandisfield, replacing Joseph Riccio.

**Caitlin McGuire** is the new Treasurer of the Buzzards Bay Water District, replacing Angila MacLeod.

**Nancy Giardina** is the new Treasurer in the Town of Lanesborough, replacing Donna Forgea.

**Clare English** is the new Treasurer in the Town of Sandisfield, replacing Joseph Riccio.

**Caitlin McGuire** is the new Treasurer of the Buzzards Bay Water District, replacing Angila MacLeod.

**Nancy Giardina** is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Lanesborough, replacing Donna Forgea.

**Nancy Marshall** is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Dighton, replacing Susan Medeiros.

**Brenda Putney** is the new Treasurer in the Town of Royalston, replacing Sally Zettel.

## **Education Committee Report**

*By First V-P Sue Kelley*

I would like to first start off by introducing myself as your newest 1<sup>st</sup> Vice president. My name is Susan Kelley and I am the treasurer for the Town of Lee. Through a whirlwind of unexpected incidents I have passed from your elected 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P. to being 1<sup>st</sup> V.P. all within 3 weeks! WOW! I have been trying to get caught up to speed through our director, Mike Hanlon, and President, Joanne

Savignac, on exactly what the education committee has been planning for upcoming events! Busy Busy Busy and exciting is all I can say!

Right around the corner is our 38th Annual school at UMass, Amherst (August 12th – 15th). I am so excited about seeing everyone again and I hope you will find the courses being offered as challenging and fresh as I believe our education committee does! If you were not able to attend Sea Crest then I really hope you plan on coming out to school – even for one day! Taking the time to update yourself on new legislation, changes in our positions, etc, school is the place to be! You can really enhance your job by taking the time to get informed. Learning from others and bringing back that information to your local officials and office staff can improve your work flow tremendously.

I would also like to encourage everyone to share with each other problems, concerns, and unresolved issues. I find that we are our biggest asset to the association. Each one of us has something to offer which can improve our productivity or workflow. You are a source of information that can really help. I would like to touch on the new list serve product that our MCTA web site now offers. If you haven't checked out the web site I would strongly encourage you to do so. You can find it at [www.MassCTA.com](http://www.MassCTA.com). It is full of information and we now have a question/answer site. If you need help with something, just go type it in and send it out to your colleagues. You will be amazed

at the information you receive back and at how simple it is!!!! I have found that I keep learning from all the questions that are answered, some I didn't even know about.

I also want to just touch base on what's ahead for us! The Annual Fall Conference on Tuesday, October 21, 2008 at the Log Cabin in Holyoke is always a great choice for a get-together. We currently have on the agenda a review of investment policies. We've all been reading the papers and know how some of our communities had some trouble in these difficult “banking days” so we thought a refreshment on creating your own investment policy for your community is a very timely issue. We are also looking at postage and mailing information for our collectors. Perhaps we could offer helpful tips in saving your community money by changing the way you currently send out your bills. It's worth a look!

I would like to close by saying I am excited about chairing this important committee and working with a great group of people who have the same goals as I do - wanting to serve our members in the best possible way. What you want is what I want! Please look me or your education committee members up to share your ideas or concerns about what you would like to see happening within our organization!

See you in August at UMass!

*Sue*

## Legislative Committee Report

By *Second V-P Gene Spickler*

I was surprised when I received the call informing me of Paul's resignation, Sue's elevation to 1<sup>st</sup> V-P and the inquiry as to whether I would still be interested in accepting the 2<sup>nd</sup> V-P position. We thank Paul for his service and he will be missed. Thank you for this opportunity to serve you and the Association in appreciation for the years of support it has provided me.

Please bear with me as I just wing this report, as we haven't had a meeting, and although I was a member of this committee for many years, I have not been actively involved for several years.

From my perspective, the most significant event since Paul's resignation is the amending of Section 15 of Chapter 60 that became effective immediately with the signing of the State Budget by Governor Patrick. This legislation strikes out the words "five dollars" in line 5, "For each written demand...five dollars; and replaces it with the words "not more than \$30.00". I contacted the DOR for clarification as to whom sets the fee? The verbal response was that it reverts to the governing body of the community since it is not specified in the legislation. ( In Tyngsborough's case it would be Town Meeting). GOOD LUCK WITH THIS ONE!

As most of the legislators the committee met with recommended that we not file so many bills, it was decided last Fall to feature the following four bills: S. 1205 – Municipal borrowing, H. 2549 – Optional Health Insurance, S. 1813 – Collection of Personal Property Taxes, and H. 1372 – Uncashed and Abandoned Checks. Please review our current legislative agenda, a summary is easily accessible on our website, and pick three or four bills that you consider the most important to refile this year. We will be seeking your input at the Legislative Program Review on August 12<sup>th</sup> at the Annual School. Also, if you have any new legislative proposals that you believe should be considered, please send them to me or a committee member before our August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, so that it can be presented to the General Assembly on opening day of the Annual School on Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>. You may email your legislative proposals to me at [gspickler@tyngsboroughma.gov](mailto:gspickler@tyngsboroughma.gov) or to the MCTA Office at [masscta@aol.com](mailto:masscta@aol.com). And finally, we still have vacancies (2) on the committee and would really like to have you join in the fun. It is important to have as many involved as possible, to let the Legislators

know that our legislation is important to us and we care about getting our bills passed into law. I hope all of you will keep that in mind, and when asked to help you will take a few minutes out of your hectic day to write, call or talk to your State Legislators.

I look forward to working together with all MCTA members in the upcoming year.

*Gene*

## News From Beacon Hill

By MCTA's Registered Agent, **Steve Roche**

As I write this column, the General Court is poised to wrap up its last week of formal sessions for this session. Matters that require roll call votes (like bond authorizations, budget veto overrides, and land takings) or controversial matters (you name it) must be acted on by Midnight on July 31<sup>st</sup>. It's a busy time at the State House but we also spend a lot of time waiting for the House or Senate to act – its hectic trying to figure out what will actually be taken up.

Most of the issues that I work on for the MCTA do not fall into the categories above and we will continue to work on several of our initiatives through the end of the year. You can read elsewhere in this newsletter about several issues that will be our focus, written by Gene Spickler, our new Legislative Committee Chair.

One issue that I have worked on recently that isn't likely to pass before July 31<sup>st</sup> is **House 2990**, "An Act Relative to Charges Associated With Condominiums in Tax Title." This legislation was filed by Rep. Bob Koczera (New Bedford) to address the *Milford decision*; municipalities holding condos in tax title would not be required to pay condo fees and other costs unless they rented the condos.

The bill was ready to move out of the House in late June until condo associations blanketed the State House with calls & letters in opposition. Rep. Koczera remains committed to this issue and will refile

this bill for the next legislative session; he would welcome the MCTA's active support next session.

Gene's report includes reference to the new demand fee contained in the final budget signed by the Governor; **Section 15 of Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008**. A bigger concern for many on Beacon Hill is how the state revenues will hold up with a slowed economy and several unresolved fiscal issues.

Another major area of concern is that the budget assumes federal approval of \$600 million in state health care requests – the state continues to operate under an extension in the hope that an agreement is reached soon. Chaos will result if an agreement is not reached for \$600 million and budget cuts or tax increases would be needed to fill budget gaps.

If state revenues slump or the feds don't agree to the Medicaid waiver, we would be looking at substantial cuts in the state budget. In fact, the Governor requested additional budget cutting powers in his budget veto message in the event that our fiscal situation worsens.

The state budget includes nearly \$500 million in revenues from the recently passed corporate tax bill. That bill includes creation of a "municipal relief commission"; **Section 97 of Chapter 173 of the Acts of 2008**:

It will be interesting to read this report later this year but there is some disappointment that representatives of municipalities, including the MCTA and MMA were struck from this commission in the final version sent to the Governor.

Other "municipal finance" bills moving recently include: H.1949 and H.1950. Both of these bills passed the House during the week of July 21<sup>st</sup>, we'll see if the Senate takes the time to approve them before the end of the formal session.

*Steve*