



VMCTA *News*

NEWSLETTER OF THE VERMONT MUNICIPAL CLERKS' AND TREASURERS' ASSOCIATION

CELEBRATING
over
75 YEARS!
1936-2014

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Elections Are Upon Us!

As Vermont Town and City Clerks sprint into the November 4 election, all know that it is all over when the polls close. Right? Ha!

Among the post polls work of the clerks is the reporting of election results.

1. Secretary of State's election portal - On election night, clerks can enter their results on this website by using their HAVA information (user name, password) <http://vt.bpro.com/login.aspx>
2. Report to AP (Associated Press) - AP
3. Report to Reuters News Agency - (see article on page 3 about this new opportunity)

3. Report to your local newspapers and televisions stations - these requests have been arriving in the mail and by emial.

4. Express Mail Envelopes - Mandatory! An express mail envelope and label for you to overnight your General Election ORVs back to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office were sent by mail to all clerks the week of October 20. No postage is necessary when you return your ORV as the Elections Division has already paid the postage. Make sure you get your Express Mail Envelope to the Post Office Before noon on the Wednesday after the election to ensure it arrives on Thursday.

Fundraising for the 2015 NEACTC Conference in Woodstock, Vermont

Submitted by Tammy Legacy

This November, we need to sell raffle tickets for the annual basket fundraising. We need lots of baskets, buckets, bags, boxes and other creative containers of fund merchandize and prizes to woo the money away from our fellow clerks. I would love it if you would donate something to this wonderful cause. It can be a themed basket or single items.

If you are interested or willing to help with this cause, you can bring your item to the November Conference in

Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

If you are not able to come, take

your items to one of the following clerks who will bring them to New Hampshire. Please contact me and let me know that you want to donate something.

You can take your items/baskets to:

- Donna Kinville, South Burlington
- Donna Kely, Barre Town
- Priscilla Aldrich, Burke
- Alison Kaiser in Stowe
- Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset
- Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Fairlee
- Pattie McCoy, Poultney
- Patti Lewis, Fayston
- Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington
- Tammy Legacy, Roxbury

The goal is to have 40 baskets ready to raffle in November.



An array of baskets at the 2014 VMCTA Conference. Vermont baskets will also be featured at the 2014 NEACTC Conference on November 19-21. Photo: Heidi Racht



Executive Board

PRESIDENT

Tammy Legacy, Roxbury Town Clerk
(802) 485-7840; Fax (802) 485-9160

PAST PRESIDENT

Sandra Pinsonault, Dorset Town Clerk
(802) 362-1178, Ext. 2; Fax (802) 362-5156

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Lucrecia Wonsor
Killington Town Clerk & Treasurer
(802) 422-3243; Fax (802) 422-3030

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Donna Kinville
South Burlington City Clerk
(802) 846-4105

SECRETARY

Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Fairlee Town Clerk
(802) 333-4363; Fax (802) 333-9214

TREASURER

Patti Lewis, Fayston Town Clerk & Treasurer
(802) 496-2454, Ext. 23; Fax (802) 496-9850

AUDITOR

Kathie Felch, Orange Town Clerk
(802) 479-2673

MEMBERS AT LARGE*

Tracy Borst
Thetford Town Clerk
(802) 785-2922, Ext. 10; Fax (802) 785-2031

Karen Richard
Colchester Town Clerk & Treasurer
(802) 264-5500

Donna Kelty, Barre Town Clerk & Treasurer
(802) 479-9391; Fax (802) 479-9332

Stacy Jewell, St. Johnsbury Town Clerk
(802) 728-4331

**Term until 2015*

Website Committee

Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington
(Chair)
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Marshfield
Donna Kelty, Barre Town
<http://www.vmcta.org>

President's Message

A message from VMCTA President Tammy Legacy

Once again, I would like to thank the members of VMCTA who have enough confidence in my abilities to lead this organization to elect me for another year. This has been an interesting year. Sometimes I felt a little overwhelmed, didn't really know that people may think of me as someone who had something important to say. But you just never know what people are thinking.

I want to thank the Executive Board for all their hard work during the year. I would also

year. I look forward to finding out what you have planned for 2015.

The Legislative Committee deserves some praise, too. Karen Richard and Carol Dawes spent many hours working with our lobbyist on some very important topics. As always, they did a great job.

I have to thank Deb Beckett from Williston and Heidi Racht from Huntington for agreeing to be on the Newsletter Committee and providing us with some great newsletters to read and learn from. You have no idea how happy I am that these newsletters are once again being created on a regular basis.



John Cushing, Milton Town Clerk/Treasurer, enjoys some fun stories at his expense related by Alison Kaiser (Stowe) and Karen Richard (Colchester) at the VMCTA banquet in September. Photo: Heidi Racht

like to thank the Certification and Continuing Education Committee for providing us all with some wonderful and worthwhile educational sessions. These sessions were provided at the Town Officers Educational Conference (TOEC) and at the annual conference in September.

Making the decision to participate in the TOEC was not an easy decision. Lucrecia Wonsor, Donna Kinville and I went to several meetings planning for the conference. The Ed Committee spent countless hours planning for the trainings and participating in all three locations. You all did an amazing job this

I would like to thank Priscilla Aldrich from Burke and Bobbi Brimblecombe from Marshfield for all their work on the Executive Board. I enjoyed working with you over the past few years. I know that you will continue to work hard for this association and on committees.

A special WELCOME TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD to Kathie Felch from Orange and Stacy Jewell from St. Johnsbury. I look forward to working with you.

The annual meeting and conference in September went relatively smoothly. At the an-

continued ➡

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nual banquet, Karen Richard and Alison Kaiser roasted (no not cooked) John Cushing for his many years as Town Clerk and Town Treasurer to the Town of Milton and for his many years of service to the Vermont Municipal Clerks & Treasurers Association. John has been a valuable source of knowledge to many of us; I will miss him when he takes that walk down a different path. I hope he enjoys his retirement - he certainly deserves it. And thank you Alison and Karen for such an entertaining presentation.

Congratulations to Susie Haughwout from Wilmington for being the VMCTA Clerk of the Year.

Congratulations to Karen Richard from Colchester for being the VMCTA Treasurer of the Year.

You both are so deserving of these awards. You are wonderful municipal officials who work hard for your community and are always there to help your fellow clerks and treasurers.

The Executive Board has made the decision to have the 2015 Annual Meeting/Conference at Stoweflake Resort in Stowe. We are all excited about this chance to visit this beautiful town especially during foliage season. Stoweflake will offer our organization the price of \$125 per night for rooms. In Stowe, during foliage season, for \$125 a night, I guess I am staying over. Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington Town Clerk and 1st Vice-President, and I toured the resort and were very happy with the accommodations. The resort has everything we will need to host a wonderful conference. I think the attendees and vendors will be pleased with Stoweflake. It is an AAA 4-Diamond property, IACC-Certified and award-winning year after year. It will be a great place to learn, reconnect with friends and hopefully leave happy and re-energized. I hope we will see you there.

The New England Association of City & Town Clerks conference is November 19-20 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. I hope you are able to attend.

I send my wishes for everyone to have a safe and happy holiday season. I hope you all get to spend time with your loved ones.

<http://www.vmcta.org>

Motley Crew



Five Town Clerks gathered in September to discuss the logistics of a school merger vote. From left: Linda Parent (Richmond), Jessica Alexander (Jericho), Amy Grover (Bolton), Heidi Racht (Huntington), Sherri Morin (Underhill). Photo: Stephanie Colburn

Invitation: Election Night Returns

As a follow up to attending the Vermont Town Clerks' Conference, I am writing to confirm that Reuters News Agency, in collaboration with Ipsos Public Affairs, will be collecting and publishing unofficial election night results to the public for the midterm General Election on November 4, 2014 for the state of Vermont. Kaitlin, Guy, and I enjoyed getting to meet many of you personally while attending the conference. We learned that the Town Clerks in Vermont are not only professional but they also know how to have a great time! We are looking forward to building a long-lasting relationship with each of you personally and with the Town Clerks' Association.

On election night, Reuters will either send a person to your town hall or be requesting that you call, fax or email us results, at the below addresses. We do not want to add to the Election Night burden, and as such will happily take the results in any existing form or template you are already using. If you would like to receive a ballot from us, please reach out to the addresses below.

To call-in results: 888-800-6359

To email results:
ReutersElection@ipsos.com

To fax results: 888-663-8426

If you have any questions, about the program, please contact Bo Rosser at bo.rosser@thomsonreuters.com or 646-315-0577.

History Highlight

During the Civil War, Pawlet native Marcellus Jones fired the first shot at the Battle of Gettysburg.

—Deb Hawkins, Pawlet Town Clerk

A woman from Rhode Island came in to do some research, and it turns out that she is a direct descendant of the Town Clerk George Briggs, who was town clerk in 1868.

—Susan Gage,
Brandon Town Clerk and Treasurer



Cemeteries: Ongoing Challenges & Solutions

by Heidi Racht

At the 2014 VMCTA Conference, Bob Brown, President of the Vermont Funeral Directors Association and manager of Green Mount Cemetery in Montpelier, talked about cemeteries. With a range of rules and systems, Vermont's 1900 cemeteries pose a challenge to a variety of people in the business, including Town Clerks.

Cemeteries cost a lot of money to manage. Many towns have their cemeteries in their General Fund budget; others are run by associations. Perpetual care and endowments often play a role in funding the operation of cemeteries. By law, cemeteries cannot be operated for private gain.

Cremated Remains and Records Vermont Statutes Title 18: Health, Chapter 121 address cemeteries, from an issue of health, which has been the foremost concern as history wends. However, in ten years, cremation and the interment of ashes, has gone

from 40% in Vermont to 65%-70% of all placements in cemeteries. The question of "health" can be disputed, but cremated remains (cremains) are still part of the records of towns.

Thus, the dilemma of cemetery commissions and Town Clerks to manage this information. Since it is not an issue of the burial of a body and public health, and ashes can be spread in the woods, in water bodies and on mountaintops, the records of disposition for cremains do not need to be filed anywhere. There is no required paperwork trail as no one is required to send the cremation certificate to the Town Clerk. This, Brown pointed out, would take a legislative change. Placement in a cemetery, however, is a process that supports record keeping. "It might not be important now,

but in 50 or 100 years, genealogists can find [the record]," he said. Even if the ashes are scattered and not buried, there is a marker in the cemetery and a record in the Town Clerk's office. Funeral homes have a lot of

Endowment/Perpetual Care Fund:

a cemetery investment fund in which only the annual earnings are used in the financing of a cemetery budget including maintenance, equipment purchase, capital projects and future land acquisition.

information on families.

Information Availability Most cemeteries do not have a full time staff and families visiting the cemetery can be at a loss as to what is that particular cemetery's protocol. Often visitors arrive on weekends, when the Town Clerk's Office is closed. Brown noted that he



Best seat in the house on Burke Mountain. Photo: Cathi Feeley, Assistant Treasurer, Town of Burke

had seen a rural mailbox on a post in a small cemetery; it held cemetery information sheets for visitors - convenient and low cost. Having the cemetery information on the town's website is also an inexpensive way to make information available. Having the open hours here would also be beneficial.

What to do about the plastic flowers, the bane of a cemetery staff's existence. Brown pointed out that 99.9% don't come back after they install plastic flowers. He advocated for not allowing them in the cemetery. Plastic flowers have

wired pieces that can get caught in mowers (wrecking machinery and potentially causing injury), fall apart, and, after a couple of weeks, become discolored and unsightly. In other words, they are garbage that is then disposed of at the cemetery's expense.

How do we know who has the right to a lot? In the best of all possible worlds, good cemetery commissioners have records. Anyone making a claim should have paperwork showing a genealogy line to the original owner. Most important: all other heirs need to sign off on any claims to a lot. Brown asserted that the cemetery should have a regulation on how to determine who can be buried in a lot. And, burial rights should be granted at the time the lot is purchased. The deed should specify what each lot is going to be used for.

Records. Brown shared his systems for records: a copy of the obituary, an interment or burialcard for the deceased (great infor-

Legislative Committee

Karen Richard, Colchester (Chair)
Deb Beckett, Williston
Dawn Custer, Castleton
Carol Dawes, Barre
Wendy Wilton, Rutland City

Quilt Raffle at NEACTC Conference



Detail of quilt made by Karen Richard (Colchester). Its size if a throw, but will also fit a twin bed. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5. The funds raised will benefit the 2015 NEACTC Conference to be held in Woodstock, Vermont.

mation for researchers) and lot cards.

Maintenance and Mowing. Brown noted, "The intent of the people who created cemeteries in the 1800s was not to have them mown and weed-whacked." Sheep grazed them. Writing was near the top of the stone so the inhabitant could be ascertained over the tall grass. Mowing and trimming is a huge part of the cost of cemetery maintenance. There is no indication that allowing grass to grow would be an acceptable maintenance course at this point in time. He pointed out that there are "no laws requiring fencing," but if a fence is there, it must be maintained.

Disinterment. All adult siblings (children of the deceased) need to sign off on removal before it takes place. The role of the Town Clerk is addressed in detail: Title 18, Chapter 10-7, Section 5212. Brown said he would consider cremated remains in this category as well.

Buy-backs of lots. This comes up from time to time as families move

around and most cemeteries do not allow the transfer of lots outside the family (remember, no private gain...) Brown said that Green Mount Cemetery buys back lots for 50% of the ORIGINAL price paid. Of course, he has the records that have this information.

Maps of the Cemetery Grounds. This is addressed in great detail in section 5310 of Title 18, Chapter 121, Sub-Chapter 1.

Purchase of multiple lots, most of which won't be used. Brown suggested adding to the price of the lots that are stated to be unused to make up for burial fees that the cemetery will never see.

Cemeteries have their own personalities and challenges. In Green Mount Cemetery, there is now a rule that you cannot rappel on the cemetery grounds. Brown shared an anecdote about finding a father teaching his son how to rappel on the ledges at the back of the cemetery. They quickly exited the grounds when he appeared.

Cemetery management is a fine recipe of working with families under stress and maintaining control, so the cemetery can be safe, preserved and cost-efficient.

Clerk of the Year



Susie Haughwout of Wilmington, 2014 Vermont Clerk of the Year, with VMCTA President Tammy Legacy, left, and First Vice-President Lucrecia Wonsor, right, at the 2014 Conference in Killington. Photo: Heidi Racht

Going to the Dogs!



South Burlington's Top Dog and First Feline for 2014. Photo: Donna Kinville

Tip Top Tips

We ran a contest for the South Burlington Top Dog and First Feline this spring. We drew a name out of all the registered dogs as of April 1 and the same for the cats at the first council meeting following April 1. We have special frames made that will stay on the lobby wall in City Hall and the proud winner's name placed underneath it.

Now is the time to think about making some fun out of the doldrums of dog registration.

—Donna Kinville, City Clerk

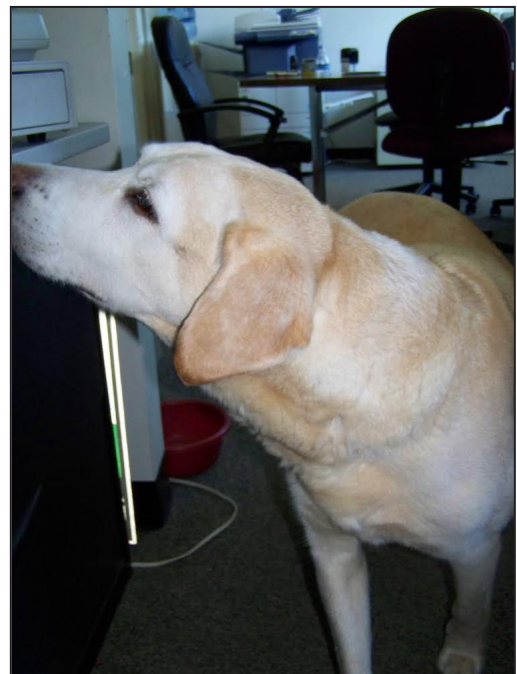
To keep the crowds in Huntington down during the last week of March leading up to April 1, we did a drawing of all the owners for all the dog licenses purchased in January. The prize was a free registration for 2015. We also did one for all the dogs registered at Huntington Town Meeting. (It didn't work - getting the crowds down - but it was a lot of fun!) The winners were thrilled.

—Heidi Racht, Town Clerk



Phoebe, who often can be found napping in my chair at the Bolton Town Office after exhausting mornings of greeting visitors, and watching the traffic out my window at the Bolton Store!

—Amy Grover, Bolton Town Clerk



Dover's loyal office dog, Sully, who is nearly 15 years old. He is the sweetest, gentlest yellow lab who warmly greets our "customers" in hopes that they have brought him a treat!

—Jeannette Eckert
Dover Assistant Town Clerk

Fundraising Committee

Nellie Noble (Chair), Granby
Karmen Bascom, South Royalton
Donna Berry, Concord
Priscilla Aldrich, West Burke
Alison Kaiser, Stowe
Diane Judd, Holland
Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset