



# VMCTA *News*

NEWSLETTER OF THE VERMONT MUNICIPAL CLERKS' AND TREASURERS' ASSOCIATION

**CELEBRATING  
OVER 80 YEARS!  
1936-2018**

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## VMCTA Newsletter / PR Committee

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<http://www.vmcta.org>

**Welcome to the tenth edition of the VMCTA newsletter.**  
Your submissions are welcome — or feel free to contact a member of the committee with an idea.

As the result of Town Meeting elections in March, new clerks and treasurers have joined our ranks. We welcome all of them and offer any help they may need.

Here are some of the names, provided by the Vermont Secretary of State's Office:

- Tiffany Mays, Arlington
- Ray Bowen, Bloomfield
- Julie Howlett, Bridport
- Daniela (Dani) Nystrom, Brookline
- Beth Anderson, Burlington
- Sandra Ferver, Calais
- Nancy Trudo, Castleton
- David Barlow, Coventry
- David Specht, Duxbury
- Jessica Sweeney, Glover

- Melissa Boutin, Grand Isle
- George Blakeslee, Guildhall
- Penny Marine, Guilford
- Jody Troumbley, Hancock
- Edward Berliner, Hubbardton
- Andrea Ogilvie, Huntington
- Kimberly Eckhardt, Landgrove
- Lucie Daley, Lemington
- Priscilla Matten, Lowell
- Bob Champagne-Willis, Maidstone
- Brian Vogel, Manchester
- Pete Johnson, North Hero
- Linda Eggleston, Orange

*continue to page 7* ➡

## Spring Educational Opportunities Hands-On Educational Opportunities and More!

VMCTA's one-day spring training is a great opportunity for new clerks and treasurers, as well as a refresher (you can always learn something) for those with experience. Each day will have a similar program with panel presentations and discussion on a broad range of topics. You can benefit from the experiences and insights of your colleagues - great networking opportunities!

Early registration fee is \$25 per person and includes lunch: April 26 (West Rutland). After this date, the fee is \$35. You can still register for Fairlee, too!

Come for one session or the whole day. Pick the location that is best for you.

**Thursday, April 18, 2019**

Fairlee Town Hall, 75 Town Common Road



**Thursday, May 2, 2019**

West Rutland Town Hall, 35 Marble Street

### SCHEDULE

- 8 am Registration
- 8:30-11:45 Clerk & Treasurer Workshops
- 11:45-12:45 Lunch
- 12:30-3:15 Clerk & Treasurer Workshops

For more information or to register: [www vmcta.org](http://www.vmcta.org). Registration form is available at the end of this newsletter.



## Executive Board

### PRESIDENT

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

### PAST PRESIDENT

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

### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

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

### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

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

### SECRETARY

Dawn Custer  
Hubbardton Town Clerk & Treasurer  
(802) 273-2951; Fax (802) 273-3729

### TREASURER

Audra Girouard, Concord Treasurer  
(802) 695-2910; Fax (802) 695-2552

### AUDITOR

Julie Graeter  
Colchester Clerk & Treasurer  
(802) 214-5521; Fax (802) 264-5503

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

*Two Years Term until 2019*  
Stacy Jewell  
St. Johnsbury Town Clerk  
(802) 728-4331

Diane Judd

Holland Town Clerk & Treasurer  
(802) 885-4440; Fax (802) 895-4440

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

*One Year Term until 2019*

Debra Hawkins, Pawlet Town Clerk  
(802) 325-3309, Ext. 1; Fax (802) 325-6109

Charlie Degener, Woodstock Town Clerk  
(802) 457-3611; Fax (802) 457-2329

# Legislative Day in Montpelier



VMCTA had a prime presence at the Local Government Day in Montpelier on February 27. This was the first time that the Association has been in the card room to meet, greet and inform our legislators on important topics for clerks and treasurers and, in my opinion, it was a huge success.

We got to talk about the "ex-officio" role and why it is so important, discussed the recording fee bill, stormwater runoff fee that they want to put on the tax bill as well as the school consolidation.

It was nice seeing legislators coming to look for their clerk and treasurer. The memo holders were a big hit and hopefully will sit in their committee rooms on their desk as a reminder of the VMCTA.

Here are some photos from the day and I apologize that we were not able to get a photo of everyone who was there on Friday.

I have put in a request for next year and hopefully we will be drawn in the lottery again.

—Donna Kinville,  
VMCTA President

## Congratulations!

**Priscilla Aldrich**, Burke Town Clerk, who earned her MMC (Master Municipal Clerk) from the IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks) in January. In Vermont, six active clerks have this prestigious designation; in the United States, there are 1386. The MMC program is the second and more advanced of the two professional designations granted by IIMC. The MMC program is an advanced continuing education program that prepares participants to perform complex municipal duties. The program has an extensive and rigorous educational component and a professional contribution component. The MMC applicant must demonstrate that they have actively pursued education and professional activities.

## Athenian Dialogue at NEMCI

IIMC has just approved the Athenian Dialogue scheduled for July 14, 2019 at NEMCI&A. Anita Doucette is returning as the facilitator.

The book is JOHN F. KENNEDY ON LEADERSHIP:

THE LESSONS & LEGACY OF A PRESIDENT. It'll be a popular event and will fill up fast. Register soon.

Go to the NEMCI&A website and download the application form: [www.nemcia.org](http://www.nemcia.org).

## Certification & Continuing Education Committee

Tracy Borst, Thetford (Chair)

Deb Beckett, Williston

LaDonna Dunn, Westfield

Clyde Jenne, Hartland

Diane Judd, Holland

Donna Kelty, Barre Town

Patti Lewis, Fayston

Heidi Racht, Huntington

Deb Hawkins, Pawlet

## The Time is Right!

### Pawlet Treasurer Judy Coolidge Retires

Judy Coolidge has been more than a Treasurer/Tax Collector for the Town of Pawlet. She has dedicated 38 years to serving the town including a short stint as Town Clerk. She has commanded the skills necessary to run several accounting programs and online programs linked with the State of Vermont. As with all of the jobs here in the offices, the laws and changes to protocol and procedures as handed down by the state are constant and ongoing. Judy has masterfully kept up with the pace.



A wealth of knowledge about our little town, I found myself referring to her when it came to historical tidbits. Speaking of historical, Judy played a pivotal role in leading the town in a successful 250th birthday celebration. She spent many, many hours working on it and enlisting the time and talents of many townspeople...including myself! While it was cut one day short by Irene, we still had a fantastic celebration that was enjoyed by many near and far thanks to Judy's diligence and hard work. On a personal level, Judy was a great mentor to me when I came on board as Town Clerk. She was very patient as I learned the ropes and we became a strong team. We both became Grandmothers for the first time, share a love of Lancaster County, love to craft and both love our town.

I recently discovered that she is an expert knitter and I know of a few Barbie dolls that need some special outfits. Judy is looking forward to her retirement but also leaves her office as treasurer with feelings bittersweet as she has loved her job and the people! However, she feels the time is right. She is staying on for a month or two after Town Meeting to make sure that everything is in place and of course she is not far away if we need to tap into her expertise.

*Contributed by Deb Hawkins, Pawlet Town Clerk*

# Paddles Up!



Free your inner dragon and paddle for charity. This year, the Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival is Sunday, August 4, 2019, at the Waterfront in Burlington. If you are interested in paddling with the Town Clerk Boat FREEDOM & UNITY contact Jessica Alexander, Town Clerk for Jericho, or Diana Vachon, Town Clerk for Shelburne.

Last year was the first time we put together a boat of Town Clerks and Treasurers as well as family and friends. If we get more than 20 people, we will fill another boat. I am going to invite Governor Scott to join our boat this year. The cost is \$45 and then raising at least \$40 in sponsors (per person). In addition our team can collect team donations. Last year our boat raised money to help support UVM Integrative Therapies. This year the pledge partner for the festival is the McClure Miller Respite House.

Last year, Deb Beckett from Williston was our drummer. She wore a go-pro camera on her head and recorded our races. If I figure it out, I will create a YouTube video and send the link to the Listserve. You can see how much fun we had and it will be a nice way to think about summer.

Here is a dragon boat mantra for a bit of inspiration, penned by Phil Chan of Melbourne Australia:

*Play the game for the games sake; be modest in victory and generous in defeat.*

*The most important thing in dragon boating is not to win, but to take part, just as in life – it is not the triumph but the struggle.*

*Be true to your fellow paddler.*

*Paddle not for yourself but for your team.*

*Work hard. Be strong. Expect no reward and reward will come.*

—Jessica Alexander, Jericho

Jessica Alexander, Jericho Town Clerk  
899-4936 x1  
jerichovermont@yahoo.com

Diana Vachon, Shelburne Town Clerk  
343-3145 dvachon@shelburnevt.org



# Democracy Today Meeting Report

by Donna Kinville, VMCTA President

**D**emocracyFund is a bipartisan foundation established to make sure that the election integrity remains a high standard as well as ensure voter rights. During this meeting I never heard anyone mention the D or the R word– it was truly a thinktank of what issues we have, sharing thoughts on what we each do as well as possible training and resources. I came away thoroughly excited as a whole new world opened up before me as a way to get more information on elections outside of the Secretary of State's office.

They listed three objectives of the meeting:

- 1) Better opportunity for learning and idea sharing
- 2) Strengthen peer to peer learning
- 3) Resilience key to new threats

At this meeting, there were about seven other states participating as well as many of their affiliated groups (last page) and we discussed everything from what keeps us awake at night up to the voter's mind when they decide to vote. We discussed what issues we have at the local level and most of us had the same issues – retaining good poll workers, issues with counting machines, the expectation from candidates and voters that at 7:05 who think that the final results should be ready and voters who think we throw out or tamper with or ignore absentee ballots....

The conversations were flowing and we jumped around a lot as the same topics kept popping up throughout. The topics are listed below:

## 1) Education and communication

Communication: how do we reach our own members as well as our citizens.

Annual meeting: use facilitator to discuss election differences and come to a consensus – so we speak as a group

Possible trainings that could be brought to your association meetings/ trainings that could further the integrity of the election – ALL FREE OF CHARGE. These trainings topics are wide open and would be of our choice but could range across all topics from running the election all the way through voter registration and outreach.\*

## 2) US Postal Service

Use of intelligent barcodes which the postal service can use to track a ballot (I have already inquired at the Secretary of State's office how we can add this to our mailing labels if a town wishes to and if this is at a cost to the town). That way we can track a ballot that was mailed out to see where it is and even how long it took to get there.

How to report a USPS issue and when it is appropriate to report an issue

## 3) Legislators

I had the opportunity to meet someone from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and she inquired about our voter registration. After I explained election day voter registration requirements, she was amazed as she believed that new voters had to show some sort of proof.

*\*The VMCTA Conference and Annual Meeting will have representatives of this group present a session on elections.*

Most legislators really don't understand elections and therefore have no idea what ripple effect a small change in election law will have. So how do we make them understand?

NCSL is a national group that can help us understand how to get things passed in addition to our lobbyist who understands Vermont legislators. They would do this by studying the issue and helping us coming up with a game plan. Our current lobbyist goes a great job for us but can only do so much under the contract that we have (and can afford).

Sometimes where the voice comes from is more important than the message.

## 4) Poll Workers

Some precincts use an "Adopt a precinct" – where non-profits get staff to work the polls and the pay that they would receive would go to their non-profit. That way the non-profit gets the money and they make sure that the staff they get can do the job.

Aging of poll workers and the possible issues that arise

Finding any poll workers – whether qualified or not

## 5) Future of elections?

They also heard from many of us that we are afraid of all the little tweaks that are made in election law have a huge ripple effect throughout the elections cycle

Mail in only voting or all electronic ballots – polls only open to process ballots

Longevity of clerks/election workers – younger generation switch jobs much more frequently than their predecessors.

This is just a quick summary of what was discussed but truly amazed me are the resources that are out there if we only know where to look for them. I've listed below a few links to some of the resources that are out there, please feel free to browse them. I've already added myself to a few of their mailing lists or liked them on FaceBook so I am interested to see what I will get.

I haven't had the time to delve into each of these websites but at this meeting they all were very interested in the integrity of the election while maintaining voter rights. Some of the content is more than Vermont needs but other information can be relevant.

Bipartisan Policy Center: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/search/democracy+project?start=&end=&orderby=>

Center for Civic Design: <https://civicdesign.org/>

Center for Technology & Civic Life: <https://www.techandciviclif.org/electricity/>

National Conference of State Legislatures: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns.aspx>

Democracy Works: <https://www.democracy.works/>

## Legislative Committee

Carol Dawes, Barre City (Chair)  
Deb Beckett, Williston  
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Marshfield  
Curry Galloway, St. Albans City  
Stacy Jewell, St. Johnsbury

## Website Committee

Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington  
(Chair)  
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Marshfield  
Donna Kelty, Barre Town

## Fundraising Committee

Nellie Noble (Chair), Granby  
Karmen Bascom, South Royalton  
Priscilla Aldrich, West Burke  
Susan Johnson, Cornwall  
Diane Judd, Holland  
Betty Ritter, Cabot

## Scholarship Committee

Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset (Chair)  
Audra Girouard, Concord  
Tammy Legacy, Roxbury

## Nominating Committee

Tracy Borst, Thetford (Chair)  
Priscilla Aldrich, Burke  
Donna kelty, Barre Town

## Membership Committee

Priscilla Aldrich, Burke (Chair)  
Sara Haskins, Morrystown  
Patti Lewis, Fayston  
Nellie Noble, Granby  
Diana Vauchon, Sherburne

## Tip Top Tips

I have my own copy of the town report that I use 'daily' so to speak, and I take the back inside cover and make notes thru out the year of things that I want to include in the next years report. It has become my life saver as hard to remember things a year later...

Nellie Noble, CVC/CVT—*Nellie Noble*, Town of Granby

## All in a Day's Work

Brandon Town Clerk Sue Gage got a phone call from one of her residents earlier this month. He was in New York for work and his wife, the town's new representative, was in Montpelier for the week. His oxen got out somehow and his first call, the Town Clerk.

Gage reported, "I gave him some names of folks with large animals, and said I would head over to keep them out of the road. Well, I sat in the road with my blinkers on for a bit, and then thought maybe I could just round them up myself, so I grabbed a sap bucket and some grain, and went out on their front lawn, which was pretty chewed up as you can imagine, and shook the bucket. Well, both boys came running and I tore around the corner of the house and opened the gate, keeping myself on the other side of it, and in they went."

Just another day in the clerks world!

## NEMCIA Registration Now Open

The New England Municipal Clerks Institute and Academy is an intensive program of continuing professional education and advancement where Clerks develop and maintain a high level of administrative expertise needed for the successful operation of increasingly complex municipal government.

Registration for the upcoming session (July 13 -19, 2019 at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, New Hampshire) is now open.

For more information, visit the website at [www.nemcia.org](http://www.nemcia.org) or contact Curriculum Chair and Thetford Town Clerk Tracy Borst, (802) 785-2922 or [town-clerk@thetfordvermont.us](mailto:town-clerk@thetfordvermont.us)

## VMCTA Committees

The following is the VMCTA Committee List:

- Awards
- Budget
- Certification & Continuing Education
- Constitution
- Curriculum
- Fundraising
- Legislative
- Membership
- Municipal Records
- Nominating
- Public Relations/ Newsletter
- Scholarship
- Website

Check out the VMCTA website for a description and find one that suits your interests and talents. And get involved!

## Next Issue

Best guess is mid to late summer. Feel free to make a submission at any point to go into the next newsletter.

## New Clerks & Treasurers

continued from page 1

Angela Eastman, Orange

Bryan Young, Orwell

Ticia Fyer, Pittsfield

R. Scott Henry, Putney

Julie Smith, Rochester

Kirsten Hathaway, Rutland Town

Sandra Reidy, Sandgate

Lori A Shepard, Stamford

Rose Keough, Sunderland

Paul Harlow, Westminster

Kathy Scott, Windham

Alex Anastasi-Hill, Winooski

Linda J Martin, Wolcott

Candace Coburn, Woodstock

## Emergency Planning for Town Clerks

by Tim Arsenault, Vernon Town Clerk

Let's face it, all of us live in a world where the unthinkable can happen on a moment's notice. Just before Brattleboro's annual Representative Town Meeting, a despicable human being phoned law enforcement to claim there was a shooting at a budget information night. There was no shooter, and ten law enforcement officers from three area police agencies responded to make sure there was no problem.

Such an incident brings to mind the question, are we prepared for an emergency? It's good policy for all of us to have a Town Constable on hand during an election, or at the very least, have the nearest law enforcement agency on speed dial. But, are you ready for an emergency of any type at your polling place?

Emergencies do not have to be the one described above. There could be a heating problem, or power outage in the building housing the election, or maybe a fire or flood. What do you do?

Your most immediate concern is the security of the already voted, or to be voted ballots. Two election officials, if possible including yourself, should secure all the ballot information, check in and check out sheets, in a locked vehicle. Have you selected an alternate polling place? It's important to think about that kind of detail in advance, and have someone in charge of that building notified that you are on the way.

Proper signage is important. Signs to direct voters to the alternate polling place, and signs outside the new polling place are, of course, a must. Alerting all applicable media about the polling place change would also be in order.

While all of the above is taking place, get advice from the Election's Division at the Vermont Secretary of States office. One of the questions I've had is whether, in such a scenario, you can extend the polling place hours. You cannot, unless you are allowed by a judge.

For a Town Meeting, your best bet is to recess until a pre determined time. Those of us who have also served as moderator, have been forced by weather to make the call at least once.

The same kind of all hazards planning should be in place for every day work at your office. What happens in case of a fire? Are your most vital records safe from fire or flood? Do you and your staff have a second exit?

Take some time and talk about these issues with your staff, select board and emergency responders. Our town's emergency management director is also a retired fire chief, and his expertise has been invaluable. Proper planning can help preserve priceless records, and save lives.

## Clerk of the Year



*Tammy Legacy, Roxbury Town Clerk, was named the 2018 Vermont Clerk of the Year. She received this award from by Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, right, at the banquet at the VMCTA Annual Meeting in September 2018, while Priscilla Aldrich looks on. Photo: Heidi Racht*

## News from Westford

Sue Adams tendered her resignation as Assistant Town Clerk in November. She served from September 2008 to January 2019. She and her husband, Dave, moved to Denver, Colorado in January. The firm that Dave works for asked him to open an office in Denver, an opportunity they couldn't pass up. Sue is deeply missed but her friends in Vermont are excited about her and Dave's newest chapter in their lives and wish them well.

In December Callie Hamdy was hired to fill the vacancy. Callie grew up in Essex and now lives in Westford with her husband Haney and their two dogs. She is super excited about the position and is settling in very well. Callie is looking forward to meeting fellow clerks and assistants at the training in April.



*Westford Town Office staff, from left: Callie Hamdy (Assistant Town Clerk), Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), Kate Lalley (Zoning Administrator), Greg Barrows (Treasurer), Marge McIntosh (Delinquent Tax Collector), Mary Jane "MJ" Featherstone (Bookkeeper), Sue Adams (Assistant Town Clerk), Nanette Rogers (Town Clerk/Town Administrator)*

## PR for You

Members of the PR Committee were able to get out information for to newspapers after the annual meeting about awards and recognitions. However, we still need help to get the word out!

If you are a new clerk or treasurer - or asistant - please take the time to fill in the spreadsheet that was sent to the VMCTA listserv or download it from the website (hopefully, a one-time effort that can be merely updated) and send it back soon. It is a spreadsheet, rather than a PDE, so the information can be typed in and edited efficiently, copied and inserted into a release and doesn't have to be retyped. It will take some time to put in the information, but, please remember, it will help the Committee to do this easily, which means it will actually get done.

If you have a photo of yourself that we can keep on file, please send it in, too. Visuals in a newspaper ALWAYS create more interest.

Thanks very much.

—Heidi Racht  
for the Newsletter/PR Committee

## Treasurer of the Year



*Deb Beckett, Williston Town Clerk/Treasurer, was named the 2018 Vermont Treasurer of the Year. Here, she receives a celebratory corsage from Patti Lewis at the banquet at the VMCTA Annual Meeting in September 2018. Photo: Heidi Racht*



# VMCTA SPRING TRAINING

*New, nearly new  
& more seasoned*

## Clerks & Treasurers

**Thursday, April 18, 2019**

Fairlee Town Hall, 75 Town Common Road, Fairlee

**Thursday, May 2, 2019**

West Rutland Town Hall, 35 Marble Street, West Rutland

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address Town / City / State / Zip Code

**\$25 Early Registration\* by**  
**April 9 (Fairlee)**  
**April 22 (West Rutland)**

**\*Registration includes lunch**  
\$35 Registration After Dates at Left

**Please mark which training you will be attending and CIRCLE which sessions you will be attending.**  
This allows us to have the appropriate number of handouts available. The detailed agenda appears on the next page.

\_\_\_\_\_ **APRIL 18 IN FAIRLEE (8 am to 3:30 pm)**

Please indicate your quiche choice: plain \_\_\_\_\_ vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ meat \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if you have any special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **MAY 2 IN WEST RUTLAND (8 am to 3:30 pm)**

Please indicate your wrap choice: Ham \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if you have any special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

**8 am Registration**

8:30-10 Clerk Workshop or Treasurer Workshop (circle one)

10:15-12 Clerk Workshop or Treasurer Workshop (circle one)

noon Lunch

1- 1:45 Treasurer Workshop or Clerk Workshop (circle one)

1:50-3 Treasurer Workshop or Clerk Workshop (circle one)

3 pm Return trip home

**Check one date.  
Make lunch choice.**

**Circle sessions.**

**RETURN THIS FORM WITH A CHECK, PAYABLE TO VMCTA, TO:**

Diane H. Judd, Holland Town Clerk/Treasurer  
120 School Road ~ Holland, Derby Line, Vermont 05830  
802-895-4440 / holland1805@hotmail.com

**BACK!**  
by Popular Demand  
**SWAP TABLE!**  
SEE REGISTRATION  
FORM FOR DETAILS

Spring  
cleaning?  
Clerks & Treasurers:  
bring unused  
supplies to share.