

MUNICIPAL CLERKS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY, INC.

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION as presented by Joan Moreland, 2009 President, at the Annual Business Meeting of the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey on November 18, 2009



I would like to thank everyone for being here today. I have been contacted by quite a few Clerks that their Governing Body would either not let them attend or wouldn't pay for the Annual Meeting ticket. Some Clerks have to use a vacation to attend and in some cases, they had already used their days for vacation! My five year journey to this point has been quite an experience. I've made a lot of friends along the way and for that I am grateful. It has been an honor to serve our membership and I thank you all for giving me the opportunity to do so.

The Association is progressing each year. Our treasury has grown thanks to us doing our own conferences at the suggestion of Past President Elaine Kennedy and we have been able to provide professional speakers for many of the educational sessions due to her belief that we could.

Attendance at Advisory Board Meetings has hit an all time low. I am disappointed because I believe the whole membership suffers when their County's Advisory Board Member cannot take information back to them, whether it be about new laws, legal problems and outcomes or seminars being offered. The website provides a lot of information, but I still feel some clerks are not getting all the information available to them.

I would like to thank the Executive Board for their support of me during the year. It has been a rough year personally and at the office. Vinny's unwavering support has been wonderful. As 1st Vice President, he took my place at several events when I was unable to represent MCANJ. I thank Joanne, Drew and Nancy for their work on behalf of all of you. Nancy worked through back surgery this year and I hope she continues to improve.

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LOOKING AHEAD TO 2010 by Vincent Buttiglieri, as presented on November 18, 2009 at the Annual Business Meeting of the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey in Atlantic City.

For those of you who attended last year's Annual Meeting, you may remember that President Moreland started off her address by quoting George Burns who used to say "The secret to a good speech is to have a good beginning and a good ending and make them as close together as possible". While I agree with that statement most of the time, today may be different. When putting this address together, the only advice I received from my "ever-supporting" wife was to try and not be too long winded. And, as every good husband does, I said "yes, dear, I'll do my best but I make no promises."

I stand before you today living proof that you can achieve your goals if you put your mind, heart and soul into it. Who would have thought back in 1995, I'd be standing here before you ready to take the reins as President of the most vital association in local government? Why 1995? That's the year I was elected to the South Plainfield Borough Council. I, very quickly, saw the light! I realized that EVERYTHING that happens in local government is a direct result of having a competent and knowledgeable Municipal Clerk. This is no insult to the many dedicated elected officials who serve their municipalities (especially those in the Township of Ocean), but we all know that nothing gets done unless the Municipal Clerk is involved.



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Sussex:	Lorraine Stark, Hopatcong Borough
Union:	Kathleen Wisniewski, Springfield Township
Warren:	Teresa De Mont, Belvidere Town

EDUCATION – IT'S A SLAM DUNK!!!!

2010 MCANJ Education Conference

March 22-25, 2010

Taj Mahal Casino Hotel



The 2010 Municipal Clerks Education Conference is fast approaching. For the first time, we will be holding this Conference at the newly renovated Taj Mahal Casino Hotel. This hotel features newly renovated accommodations, including the brand new Chairman's Tower. The rates for the Conference are \$99 for the Taj Tower and \$124 for the Chairman's Tower (plus occupancy tax of \$5 per night and hotel tax). It also features Restaurant Row that is sure to appeal to everyone's taste. Among the fine eateries are: the Sultan's Feast Buffet, Safari Steakhouse, IL Mulino New York & Trattoria, the Hard Rock Café, Sbarro's Pizzeria and Starbucks, among others. The Committee and our Administrative Consultants, Manny Hirshblond and Joel Popkin have worked hard to keep the registration fee reasonable, and will remain under \$300 for the full Conference. They deserve a special "thank you" from all of us.

The entire Conference Committee has been working very hard to put together the very best educational sessions ever. We have secured a world renowned keynote speaker - The Afterburners- as the opening General Session Speaker. The Afterburners have appeared at a recent IIMC Conference and have been the talk of everyone in attendance. I can assure you that you will not want to miss this! The Committee has lined up MCANJ favorites such as Joe Valenti, Lou Neeley, Patti DeCostanza, and Scott Steinman. Additionally, everyone has worked hard to secure some new speakers who bring a wealth of professional experience and tips that will enable us to perform our jobs more efficiently. You will not be disappointed.

The comments by previous attendees regarding some requested changes/enhancements have been heard loud and clear by this Committee. Here are just some of the notable changes you'll see at this year's Conference:

MEETING ROOM LOCATION - ALL meeting rooms are located next to each other. No long walks are required. Additionally, the registration desk and location of meals are also located in that same vicinity making it very "user friendly".

A WELCOME RECEPTION replaces the Dessert Reception on Monday Evening and will be held between 6:00 pm-8:00 pm and will include some light refreshments. Please join us for light fare and lots of fun!

CEU's have been applied for in ALL DISCIPLINES including RMC, CTC, CMFO, CPWM, CMR, RPPO, CMC, and MMC

As you can see, the 2010 Conference Committee has, and will continue to, work to make this the best MCANJ Education Conference ever. We look forward to seeing all of you at what will undoubtedly be a great educational experience in a great venue.

Sincerely,

Vincent Buttiglieri
MCANJ President

2010 President's Message: "Looking Ahead" (continued from page 1)

By Vincent Buttiglieri

2010 is going to be both a challenging year and an exciting one. The challenges before us are extremely important to our profession. However, I believe that in order to make positive changes, we must first look back at our history. While it is quite rich, there are a few people and events that have defined our profession. Let's remember John Carroll, from Plainfield, who in 1922 was appointed Chairman of a temporary association "for the purpose of effecting a permanent organization" and who led the fight to draft a bill providing for tenure of office for Municipal Clerk. In December of 1927, a motion was made and adopted that the Municipal Clerks Association join the New Jersey League of Municipalities. As they say in baseball, that was a home run. Let's not forget Mary Martin, from Asbury Park, who was the first woman President of our Association and paved the way for so many great female leaders who have worked tirelessly to elevate the Municipal Clerks Association to an even more prominent role in local government. The eighties brought about monumental changes to our profession. In January 1982, the statute governing the Municipal Clerk (N.J.S.A. 40A:9-133) was amended to state that all Municipal Clerks shall hold office for a three (3) year term. In 1985, the New Jersey Senate unanimously passed legislation professionalizing the office of the Municipal Clerk and in December of that same year, the first-ever Registered Municipal Clerks exam was held. The nineties brought about the law establishing the "core duties" of the Municipal Clerk and the new duty was thrust upon all of us – the running of the School Board elections.

The new millennium brought about significant changes to our profession as well. We no longer use words to convey thoughts but rather abbreviations such as HAVA, GRC, PARIS, and everyone's favorite, OPRA. We have paperless meetings, but still manage to compile more paper than the New York Times.

Through all the years and all the changes, the one constant has been the dedicated individuals that we call the Municipal Clerk.

Let's not be fooled. Change has not stopped. As I begin my term as the 84th President of the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey, I am deeply humbled, but also invigorated. To have the opportunity to guide us as we embark on what has become somewhat of a tumultuous time, is both exciting and quite daunting.

Although many issues arise during the course of everyone's Presidency, I believe there are two that need to be the focus during 2010. Both are of equal importance to our profession and both will demand that our entire membership work together in order that we may bring about the change necessary to protect each of us.

The first issue has to deal with the ever popular Open Public Records Act. On August 8th of this year, an Editorial appeared in the Star Ledger stating that "New Jersey OPRA has cracks". As my nephews say to me all the time – "DAH". Municipal Clerks have been saying that same thing since the inception of this law. The article asserts that many Clerks have been found "negligent" and some were even found to be guilty of "willful" violations and "unreasonable" denials. It also goes on to say that the Municipal Clerks "incorrectly withheld information because we don't understand the law, can't be bothered to learn it or just look for any loophole to reject a request." These accusations cannot be further from the truth. The time has come that we put on the boxing gloves and fight for our reputations and those of our fellow Municipal Clerks. At this very Convention, President Moreland co-sponsored a resolution asking the State Legislature to address the flaws on the Open Public Records Act. Since OPRA was signed into law, we have been pleading that we need to tighten this law up. We need to be uniform in the guidelines of what information can be provided and how we can provide it. This has all fallen on deaf ears. The Government Records Council, while doing the best they can, does not provide us with the guidance we need when those "gray" areas appear on a request. Many of us have called them to seek their guidance and their response is to talk to your municipal attorney. Well, we do and then we wind up in front of them, justifying our actions. Also, as it currently stands, a vacancy exists on the Government Records Council. A Municipal Clerk must be appointed to fill that vacancy. We need to have our voices heard when decisions are being rendered that affect our jobs. I vow that I will work tirelessly to see that we FINALLY get a seat at the table. Governor-Elect Christie has promised change, well let's see some change and give the Municipal Clerks a seat at the GRC table. Now THAT would be change.



2009 President Joan Moreland presents Incoming 2010 President Vincent Buttiglieri with the MCANJ President's Pin at the Annual Business meeting in Atlantic City on November 18, 2009

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2010 President's Message: "Looking Ahead" (continued from page 3)
By Vincent Buttigieri

Another prevalent issue that I plan on focusing during my term has to do with our tenure. In this very volatile environment that has become local government, it is even more important that we have protection against unwarranted removal from office. Total disregard of the tenure provision that governs our profession cannot and will not be tolerated. Over the past few years, attempts to remove tenured Municipal Clerks have become a major concern for this Board and should be for the entire Association. As I stated before, our predecessors fought to get the legislation passed, and we cannot let that go by the wayside. We need to get some teeth into the law and we will. You have my commitment.



THE 2010 MCANJ EXECUTIVE BOARD

As I stated earlier, 2010 is also going to be an exciting year. For the first time ever, our Education Conference will be held at the newly renovated Taj Mahal Hotel from March 22-25, 2010. The theme for this conference is: EDUCATION – IT'S A SLAM DUNK! The Conference Committee has been working diligently to finalize the education sessions and I promise it will be a great conference. I hope you will make every effort to attend.

I know that every President-elect stands up at this podium and urges each of you to get involved in the Association. I'm no different. While I realize that your time is precious and you have many responsibilities with your job and your family, I can say to you unequivocally that getting involved in this Association will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your professional life. I urge you to volunteer to serve on a committee or lend a hand in whatever capacity you're able. We cannot do this alone.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank L. Manuel Hirshblond, "Mr. Municipal Clerk" for his twenty plus years of service to our Association. I'd like to share my favorite Manny story with all of you. It was my first conference after coming onto the Executive Board and we were finalizing the number of meals we were going to order for the Annual Banquet. My mother, who we joke about, carries a dinner for twelve in her car, brought us up on the concept that you never want to run out of food. So we got into a discussion about the number of meals to order. Manny had one number in mind and needless to say, I had another. Manny, being the GREAT public servant that he is, deferred to me. Well, wouldn't you know it, we ordered about 30 meals too many. Manny never let me live it down and I never disagreed with Manny again. Manny, thank you for your guidance and friendship. You are one in a million and you are irreplaceable, but Joel's not too shabby either. Also, a special thank you to our President, Joan Moreland. Joan, you have led this Association through the year with grace and dignity. You have had to endure some obstacles but you never wavered from your commitment to MCANJ and for that, this Association owes you a debt of gratitude.

Thank you for this tremendous honor. You have my promise that I will work tirelessly for you and with you so that together, this Association can reach its full potential. Thank you again.

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STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION as presented by Joan Moreland

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Heather, thank you for your 6 years of service to the membership as a member of the Executive Board. You have always had a supporting word when things seemed tough.

One of the most rewarding times for me this year was when I received a call from Bill Dressel asking me to help a Mayor find a Clerk to help her out because her Clerk had just given her notice. I was at home with severe back problems and had plenty of time to spend on the phone. After talking with the Mayor extensively to find out exactly what she was looking for, I made many calls to Clerks in the area and asked if they could help. A few were unable to take on another town, but some were interested in trying it until a permanent Clerk could be found. A few days after my 2 day phone marathon, I received a call from the Mayor thanking me and saying she found the perfect person! I talked to her about MCANJ and she said I was a fine example! I told her, that all Clerks seem to have a personality that makes them want to do all they can for anyone! It's true – we all do!

Lastly, I would like to thank my husband Rich. When I was secretary he typed all the address labels for various meeting notices. When I was Treasurer he typed 566 + labels to be used when mailing the annual dues invoice and sat up with until after midnight when the dues checks started coming in! When I was 2nd Vice President he helped me sort the many conference registrations and understood my frustration when meals were checked off – with no choice picked! When I was 1st Vice President he did everything he could around the house to give me the time I needed to work on hotel reservations for the League. During my time as President, his support has been unwavering, simply saying “what can I do to help you?” Thank you Hon!

AT THE 2009 NJ LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES CONVENTION IN ATLANTIC CITY, DURING THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF MCANJ, THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WERE RECOGNIZED FOR ACHIEVING THE REGISTERED MUNICIPAL CLERK DESIGNATION:

October 2008 RMC

Suzanne Branagan; Lauren Mayer; Mary A. Canesi; Mark J McIntosh; Mary Ann Del Mastro; Kelley R O'Donnell; Susan M. Farrell; Michele A Rivers; Dale A. Forde; Margaret M Scanlon; Gale M. Gallo; Carolyn Scannelli ; Joann L. Graf; Melissa A Seader; Rayna E. Harris; Jay P Todd; David E. Hollod; Sharon L Tunis; Victoria Holmstrom; Phyllis A Twisler; Abubakar G. Jalloh; Catherine S Underwood; Annemarie Kruszni; Deirdre Vogel; Donna M. Manno; Terrence M. Wall; Paul V. Margiotta; Stephanie N. Yurko

April 2009 RMC

Lissette Aportela-Hernandez; Peter Gorbatuk; Laura P. Borchers; William S. Jett; Beth C. Brothman; Leticia M. Loeser; Nancy A. Burgess; Dawn M. McDonald; Carie A. Crone; Karen M. Padva; Traci L. DiBenedetto; Donna M. Phelps; Barbara A. Freijomil; Karen M. Romano; Christine A. Gatti; Lisa A. Tilton; Marcella Giampiccolo; Lauren R Vande Vaarst; Catherine J. Gleason; Gabrielle Voight-Cherna; Tanya L. Goodwin; Sercan Zoklu



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT!

On August 16, 2009, the Star-Ledger posted an On-line Editorial entitled "New Jersey OPRA Record Has Cracks". This editorial infuriated a large number of Municipal Clerks, to the point that 2009 MCANJ President Joan Moreland submitted a rebuttal to that editorial. TO DATE, THE STAR-LEDGER HAS SEEN FIT TO NOT PUBLISH OUR RESPONSE. We therefore provide that response to you here, together with the original Star Ledger Editorial, so you may have this information as a reference tool, and as an appropriate response resource regarding the position of New Jersey's Municipal Clerks in this matter.

The Star-Ledger Editorial Page August 16, 2009

There are 47 items on the agenda, and in a small meeting room in Trenton, on a Tuesday morning, the Government Records Council is slogging its way through the list of complaints from citizens who have been thwarted in their attempts to access public records.

An hour into the session, it's clear: New Jersey's Open Public Records Act is flawed.

Ruling after ruling by executive director Catherine Starghill goes against agencies that have denied -- wrongfully -- public access to their records. In the GRC's final orders, municipal clerks, board secretaries and other record custodians are found to be guilty of wide-ranging and unnecessary OPRA violations.

In some, the clerks are deemed merely "negligent." In others, they are found to be guilty of "willful" violations and "unreasonable" denials.

Some clerks have received requests for records from citizens and have totally ignored them. Others carelessly allowed deadlines to pass without responding. Several simply rejected requests out of hand, like an insurance company denying every initial claim.

Since its inception in 2002, the GRC has fielded 1,813 denial-of-access complaints, ruling on 1,503 of them, spokesman Chris Donnelly said. The GRC says it doesn't keep score, but observers -- like watchdog New Jersey Foundation for Open Government -- say many rulings are in the complainants' favor, proving the law is weak and confusing and that clerks are playing keep-away. But isn't one "willful" violation too many?

GRC rulings reveal that some clerks incorrectly withheld documents because they don't understand the law, can't be bothered to learn it, or look for any loophole to reject the requests, which they see as nuisances. In some cases, deviant motives are alleged: Clerks intentionally stonewall for political reasons, critics say.

"Most of the time, they just want to keep people from getting the records in time for the next meeting or the next election," says attorney Walter Luers, who has won OPRA lawsuits against several municipalities. "The people on the inside don't want the people on the outside to get the information. But basically, when you're John Q. Public, they try to screw with you."

Joan Moreland Rebuttal Letter August 19, 2009

On behalf of the 566 Municipal Clerks of the State of New Jersey, we wish to go on record stating our most strenuous objection and outrage at the Editorial printed in your newspaper on August 16, 2009, entitled "New Jersey OPRA Record Has Cracks".

There are three points in your editorial, upon which your Editorial Board and our Association are in agreement:

1. New Jersey's Open Public Records Act is flawed. Municipal Clerks in New Jersey have been pointing out that fact for years, only to be criticized in the very manner that your editorial has unjustly taken. In fact, municipalities across our state have endorsed resolutions calling on dramatic changes to be implemented in this statute, as has the New Jersey League of Municipalities. Somehow, that fact never seemed to reach the light of your editorial desk's attention.
2. When custodians of public records improperly deny access to public records, they should be, and are, held accountable for those actions.
3. Governor Corzine should indeed fill the vacant seats on the Government Records Council as soon as possible.

However, contrary to the distorted picture your editorial has painted, we would like to point out that since the year 2002, there have been OPRA requests sent to the attention not only of 566 Municipal Clerks, but also to over 620 School Board Secretaries, 21 County Freeholder Clerks, scores of Custodians of State Agencies, and various Commissions on all levels of government. Apparently, since you chose to zero in on our profession, you believe Municipal Clerks are a convenient target. Please allow us to disabuse you of that notion.

Even with the conservative estimate of receiving three OPRA requests a month, this still means that since 2002, there have been well over three hundred thousand OPRA requests made throughout the State of New Jersey. We respectfully point out that this estimate is, in our humble opinion, an extraordinarily low figure compared to what the actual figure would be, but let us use 300,000 for the purposes of making our point, which is this:

Taking the 300,000 OPRA Request tally, the 1,813 "Denial of Access" complaints you have mentioned (even if they are all valid complaints, which again is not the case) represents well less than one percent of the total volume of requests made since the OPRA statute became effective. Put in proper perspective, then, over 99% of all OPRA requests have been properly carried out since the inception of OPRA.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT!

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Star Ledger Editorial, Continued:

Most of these citizens just wanted minutes to a meeting, financial disclosures, salary lists or another record they were entitled to -- but had to fight to get. In some rulings, citizens are getting access to records after a two-year battle -- documents they should have received within a week. Once a month the GRC tries to clean up the mess.

Less than a month ago, public officials were rounded up in one of the biggest corruption stings in the state's history. New Jersey reinforced its slimy reputation for doing the public's business in backrooms and backseats, with the alleged crooks brown-bagging bribes like they were kindergarten lunches. Now, at a time when the state needs open government more than ever, it's still shrouded in a culture of secrecy, even when it comes to something as basic as public records.

Information is power, and that's why public officials and bureaucrats always have fought against surrendering the information they possess, even when the law demands it. They balk. They drag their feet. They make up their own rules. And when all that doesn't work, they hire lawyers to get in the way.

The state's OPRA law, passed in 2002, states that "government records shall be readily accessible for inspection, copying or examination by the citizens of this State, with certain exceptions, for the protection of the public interest, and any limitations on the right of access accorded . . . shall be construed in favor of the public's right of access."

But OPRA isn't flawed only at the point of request, it's also troubling at the GRC level. The panel is supposed to have five members. Currently, it has just three, and its inability to assemble a quorum has forced cancellation of two meetings this year, worsening the backlog and further delaying access to records. Gov. Jon Corzine must fill the two empty seats immediately.

Meanwhile, if the legislature wants to spend money wisely, it should commission a study of OPRA and the GRC: How many citizens are wrongfully denied access to records and why? How long does adjudication take, on average? And what does all of the ridiculous foot-dragging and unnecessary legal wrangling cost the taxpayers?

Lawmakers can make OPRA clearer, educate clerks and set stricter penalties for municipalities and agencies that wrongfully deny access to public records. (The irony: Taxpayers -- the same people denied access -- pay any fines and legal fees levied against their towns for OPRA violations.) Legislators can reduce the exorbitant fees charged for copying documents, too.

While OPRA has cracked the door to open government, someone should teach the most-reprimanded clerks something they don't seem to understand: They are custodians of the records, which -- with few sensitive exceptions -- belong to the people.

Joan Moreland Response Letter, Continued:

And yet, incredulously, your editorial speaks of a failed system in which "ruling after ruling" goes against agencies, and conclude that your findings disclose a "culture of secrecy".

You would dare to insult the intelligence of the New Jersey public, and impugn the integrity of our profession, by suggesting that a 99% successful disclosure rate represents a culture of secrecy?

Shame on you!

And again, we point to that same 99% success rate to illustrate the absolutely flawed and uninformed position you have taken to suggest that municipal clerks "don't understand the law, can't be bothered to learn it, or look for any loophole to reject the requests". This is a blatant misrepresentation, and it damns an entire profession without cause or justification.

We also respectfully point out a flaw in your representation that "taxpayers" are the individuals who make OPRA requests. The right of access to a public record has absolutely no bearing on whether or not a person owns property in the State of New Jersey. Citizens make OPRA requests, and as often as not, various and vociferous "public rights activists" of our state make burdensome and voluminous OPRA requests in towns where they are NOT a taxpayer, asking for records not because they want or need them, but simply to "test" the custodian and the OPRA statute. This, truly, is the "waste of taxpayer dollars" that you should be outraged about, and it represents a far greater degree of cost burden than the extremely small percentage of public custodians who fail to carry out their duties correctly.

And, finally, in your ignorance, you have incorrectly stated that the Taxpayers pay for OPRA fines and penalties. Please re-read the OPRA statute; you will learn what we "uninformed" clerks already know -- penalties are assessed directly against the individual custodian, not against the municipality.

So, yes, let the guilty pay. But please get your facts straight and present your information in its proper perspective before you wag your finger at us.

Joan D. Moreland, President,
Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey, Inc.

PEOPLE PAGE

by Sharon Brienza

Editor's Note: Being named "Clerk of the Year" was an honor that I will never forget. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has sent congratulatory cards, e-mails, telephone calls, etc. I would also like to thank the members of this wonderful organization for their support over the years.

WELCOME NEW MUNICIPAL CLERKS

Lauren Vande Vaarst, RMC, Borough of Jamesburg (Middlesex County). Lauren was the Deputy Passaic County Clerk leaving that position in 2006 for the private sector. She received her RMC in October, 2008 and is happy to be back in government and is enjoying her new position.

Richard Phoenix officially became North Plainfield Borough Clerk on March 9, 2009 following Gloria Pflueger's 2008 retirement. He had been the Deputy Clerk in North Plainfield since 1993.

RETIREMENTS

After 17 years as the Municipal Clerk for the Borough of Paramus, Ian Shore retired on July 15, 2009. Ian stated he wanted "to thank the Legal Defense Fund for its' support during the last 6 years of my service to the people of Paramus and my fellow clerks. I look forward to maintaining many of the relationships that I have made over the years and making new ones, as I hope to join the legion of retired clerks at the conferences in the future." Many of you may have seen Ian at the League of Municipalities Conference at the Munidex booth – his new employer.

A retirement dinner was held at the Cascade Lodge in Pennsylvania for Ellen Kluber's (Alexandria Township (Hunterdon County), who retired on August 31. Pictured: front row: Thelma Wilson, Laura Eidsvagg, Diane Schottman, Ursula Stryker, Karen Dysart, Noralie LaFevre, Bob Hauck; back row: Diane Seals, Marilyn Hodgson, Ellen Kluber, Cecilia Covino



WEDDING BELLS



Wedding Bells rang for Michele Auletta (Robbinsville Twp) and Mick Siegfried on September 25, 2009. The happy couple was married at sunset at the McLoones Restaurant in Sea Bright overlooking the Shrewsbury River. The couple set sail for their honeymoon on a Caribbean Cruise. We wish the couple all the best for a life time of love and happiness

TRI-COUNTY CLERK OF THE YEAR

The Tri Country Clerks of South Jersey that include Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland Counties have selected Rosemary Adams of Atlantic to be honored and appreciated for her hard work by being named Tri-County Municipal Clerk of the Year on September 18, 2009.



JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT

So...how does one tell her boss that she passed the RMC Exam? Nancy Hatten's Assistant Eileen DeFabis walked into Nancy's office with an enormous grin on her face so wide that she couldn't talk and handed her this note:

"I AM HAPPY AS CAN BE
NO MORE TAKING TESTS FOR ME
I AM NOW AN RMC"

Congratulations, Eileen!

PEOPLE PAGE, by Sharon Brienza, continued from Page 8

CONDOLENCES

It was with much sadness to announce the passing of retired Municipal Clerk Madeline Bucco (Borough of Matawan, Monmouth County). Madeline was Borough Clerk from January 1, 1970 until her retirement on June 30, 1997.

Former Municipal Clerks Victor Barbalinardo, 95, (Washington Township) and Earl Williams (East Orange) also passed away in September.

We also grieve the loss of Eleanor Dendy, Tenafly's first councilwoman and later Borough Clerk. Eleanor resigned her council seat in 1973 to be appointed borough clerk.

Retired Township Clerk and former Clerk of the Year (1997) Jean C. Pellicane, died Thursday, November, 19, 2009. She was employed by the Township of Franklin (Somerset County) for 30 years, retiring in 2003. Jean was past president of the Somerset County Clerks Association and was instrumental in re-editing the entire Clerk's Manual in 1996/1997 and came out of retirement a few years ago to help out again. Condolences can be sent to her loving husband Joe Pellicane, 30 Irvington Avenue, Somerset, NJ 08873. Memorial contributions may be made to the Franklin Township Food Bank, 60 Millstone Road, Somerset, NJ 08873.

(Editors note: This article was even more difficult than writing about Vicki McDonald. Jean and I and our husbands were very good friends and socialized often. She fought the cancer once and thought she had it beat, but it came back. Displayed at her viewing was the only picture she would allow Joe to display – the picture of her as Clerk of the Year! My only regret is that I never did get to play that round of golf with her!)



MCANJ 2009 RESOLUTION HONORING DECEASED MUNICIPAL CLERKS

WHEREAS, the strength and spirit of a community are often reflected in the activities and successes of its employees; and

WHEREAS, throughout their tenure, Municipal Clerks serve their communities with complete professionalism and at all times demonstrate an extraordinary dedication, enthusiasm and community spirit; and

WHEREAS, as a Municipal Clerk, knowing that you have shared in the growth and success of your community and this organization is a purpose fulfilled.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey, Inc., that we commend their dedication to the residents of their respective communities and this organization, and point to it as an example to be exemplified and emulated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend to these individuals a moment of silence dedicated to the memories of those who have left us for a greater service.

Bergen County: Virginia Michel, Borough of Haworth (retired); Eleanor Dendy, Tenafly Borough (retired)
Victor Barbalinardo, Washington Township (retired)

Cape May County: Albert J. Knoll, Township of Dennis (retired)

Essex County: Earl Williams, City of East Orange (retired)

Passaic County: Mildred C. Bird, Borough of Bloomingdale (retired)

Monmouth County: Madeline Bucco, Matawan Borough (retired)

Morris County: James O'Keefe, Morris Township (retired)

Ocean County: Margaret Boice, Ocean Gate (retired)

Somerset County: Vicki McDonald, Hillsborough Township (retired)

Sussex County: Norma B. Sisco, Sparta Township (retired)

Union County: Francis Senkowsky, Rahway City (retired)

2010 MCANJ Committees by President Vincent Buttiglieri

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

David Hughes, Chair, Summit City / 908-273-6400
Nancy Hatten, Tenaflly Boro / 201-568-6100
Harold Wiener, Irvington Twp. / 973-399-8111
Ann Marie McCarthy, Franklin Twp./732-873-2500
Eileen Gore, Hamilton Twp./609-890-3500

EDUCATION

MCANJ President's Appointments

Harold Wiener, Irvington Twp / 973-399-8111
Heather Mailander, Ridgewood Village/201-670-5500 x203
Sharon Young, West Windsor Twp/609-799-2400
Diane Pflugfelder, BethlehemTwp/908-735-4107
Jane Williams-Warren, City of Paterson/973-321-1310

Rutgers Appointments

Elaine Jasko, Chair, Perth Amboy City / 732-826-0290
Linda S. Wanat, Montclair Twp / 973-509-4900
Louise Palagano, Bloomfield Twp/973-680-4000
Nenette Perry, East Brunswick Twp/732-390-6810
Katherine Coletta, Mahwah Twp/201-529-5757

EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Sharon Brienza, Co-chair, Branchburg Twp./908-526-1300 x103
Heather Mailander, Co-chair, Ridgewood Village/201-670-5500 x203
Vincent Buttiglieri, Ocean Township/732-531-4968
Joanne Kwasniewski, Fair Lawn Borough/201-794-5310
Andrew Pavlica, Garfield City/973-340-2001
Nancy Saffos, Cherry Hill Township/856-488-7892
Joan Moreland, Haddon Heights Borough /856-547-7164 ext. 24
John Mitch, Woodbridge Twp/732-634-4500 x6404
Diane Pflugfelder, Bethlehem Township/908-735-4107
Barbara Nyitrai, South Brunswick Twp/732-329-4000
Cecilia Covino, Clinton Town/908-735-8616
Elizabeth Mastropasqua, Beachwood Borough/732-286-6000
Bernadette Standowski, Retired/732-244-5909
Michele Seigfried, Robbinsonville Twp/609-918-0002
Jane Gillespie, Spring Lake Borough/732-449-0800
Doreen Cali, Roselle Park Borough/908-245-6222
Andrea Lea Quinty, Princeton Borough/609-924-3118

Mini Conferences – 2 Spring, 2 Fall & Professional Development

North

Laura Graham, Oradell Borough/201-261-8200 x246

Central

Sharon Young, West Windsor Twp./609-799-2400
Diane Pflugfelder, Bethlehem Twp./908-735-4107

South

Debora Pine, Elk Twp./856-881-6525
Patricia Hunt, Moorestown Twp./856-235-0912

Committee Members

David Maffei, Pt. Pleasant Borough/732-892-3434
Ann Marie McCarthy, Franklin Twp./732-873-2500 x211
Bernadette Park, Stafford Twp./609-597-1000
Jim Rogers, Deal Borough/732-531-1454

ELECTIONS

Jane Williams-Warren, Chair, Paterson City/973-321-1310
Bonnie Leonetti, Long Beach Twp./609-361-1000
Amada Curling, Passaic City/973-365-5500
JoAnn Graf, South Plainfield Borough/908-226-7606

FINANCE

Nancy Saffos, Cherry Hill Township/856-488-7892
Andrew Pavlica, Garfield City/973-340-2001
Joel Popkin , Administrative Consultant/732-609-6441
Ferraioli, Wielkotz, Cerullo & Cuva – Auditors

FUNDRAISING

Doreen Cali, Co-Chair, Roselle Park Borough/908-245-6222
Rose Marie Saracino, Co-Chair, Old Bridge Twp./732-721-5600
Kathleen Wisniewski, Springfield Twp./973-912-2000
Dwayne Harris, Atlantic Highlands Borough/732-291-9725
Adeline Hanna, Midland Park Borough/201-445-3844
Joan Moreland, Haddon Heights Borough/856-547-7164
Barbara Hawk, Laurel Springs Borough/856-784-0500
Stella Ward, Old Bridge Twp./732-721-5600
Carol Shapner, Retired/856-293-7421

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/WEB PAGE

Bette Mastropasqua, Chair, Beachwood Borough/732-286-6000
John Mitch (Ex. Bd Liaison), Woodbridge Twp/732-634-4500 x6404
Sharon Brienza, Branchburg Twp./908-526-1300
Daina Dale, Harvey Cedars Borough/609-494-2335
Nancy Hatten, Tenaflly Borough/201-586-6100
Elesha Johnson, Camden City, (856)757-7000

LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Sharon Brienza, Chair (10), Branchburg Twp/908-526-1300 x103

North

Nancy Hatten (10), Tenaflly Borough/201-568-6100
Harold Wiener (12), Irvington Twp./973-399-8111
Alt.: Carol Dray (10), Emerson Borough/201-262-2380

Central

Rose Marie Saracino (10), Old Bridge Twp./732-721-5600
Sharon Young (12), West Windsor Twp./609-799-2400
Alt.: Dwayne Harris (10), Atlantic Highlands Borough/732-291-9725

South

Bette Mastropasqua (10), Beachwood Borough/732-286-6000
Constance Mahon (12), Cape May Point/609-884-8468
Alt.: Patricia Hunt (10), Moorestown Twp./856-235-0912

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

Elaine Kennedy, Co-Chair, Eagleswood Twp./609-296-3040
Lewis Thompson, Co-Chair, Millville City/856-825-7000
Michael Januska, Milltown Borough/732-828-2100
Sharon Brienza, Branchburg Twp./908-526-1300 x103
Bette Mastropasqua, Beachwood Borough/732-286-6000
Robin Kline, Vernon Township/973-764-4055
Dwayne Harris, Atlantic Highlands Borough/732-291-9725
Joel Popkin, Administrative Consultant/732-493-0436

Continued on Page 11

2010 MCANJ Committees by Vincent Buttiglieri (Continued from Page 10)

LAWS AFFECTING MUNICIPAL CLERKS

Michele Seigfried, Chair, Robbinsville Twp./609-259-7082
Sharon Young, West Windsor Twp./609-799-2400
Harold Wiener, Irvington Twp./973-399-8111
Barbara Nyitrai, South Brunswick Twp./732-329-4000
Kathleen Cunningham, Cranbury Twp./609-395-0900
Nenette Perry, East Brunswick Twp./732-390-6810
Richard A. Lustgarten, Legal Counsel

MANUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Joel Popkin, Coordinator, Administrative Consultant/732-493-0436
Deanna Bennett, Editor, Haddonfield Borough/856-429-4700 X204
Nenette Perry, East Brunswick Twp/732-390-6810
Michele Seigfried, Robbinsville Twp/609-259-7082
Joanne Monarque, Millburn Twp/973-564-7000
Judy Allen, Delaware Twp/609-397-3240

MEMBERSHIP—North

Sally Bleeker, Chair, Franklin Lakes Borough/201-891-0048
Jane Williams-Warren, Paterson City/973-321-1310
Neil Grant, Fort Lee Borough/201-592-3570

MEMBERSHIP—Central

Cecelia Covino, Clinton Town/908-735-8616
Sandra Bohinski, Helmetta Borough/732-605-9466
Karen Siano, Eatontown Borough/732-389-7621

MEMBERSHIP—South

Bonnie Leonetti, Chair, Long Beach Twp./609-494-5421
LaShawn Barber, Tabernacle Twp/609-268-1220
Cynthia Dalessio, Woodstown Borough/856-769-2200

PAST PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL

Bernadette Standowski, 2002, Chair
Joan Moreland, Haddon Heights Borough, 2009
Heather Mailander, Ridgewood Village, 2008
Barbara M. Hawk, Laurel Springs Borough, 2007
Elaine B. Kennedy, Eagleswood Township, 2006
Jane Williams-Warren, Paterson City, 2005
Joel Popkin, 2004 (ret.)
Allan Susen, Haledon Borough, 2003
Sharon Brienza, Branchburg Township, 2001
Nancy Hatten, Tenafly Borough, 2000
Bernadette Dubuss, 1999 (ret.)
Lynn Stanzlaus, 1998 (ret.)
Elizabeth Kiss, 1997 (ret.)
Joseph Favaro, 1996 (ret.)
Christina Wilder, 1995 (ret.)
Kathleen Thorpe-Holder, 1994 (ret.)
John Galvin, 1993 (ret.)
Barbara Camp, 1992 (ret.)
Elaine Wallace, 1988 (ret.)
Lewis Thompson, Millville City, 1987
Elizabeth Nolan, 1985 (ret.)
L. Manuel Hirshblond, 1981 (ret.)
Otto M. Bock, 1977 (ret.)
Alfred Reda, 1975 (ret.)
Joseph Valenti, 1974 (ret.)

PEER ALLIANCE FOR LEARNING

North: Cecelia Covino, Clinton Town/908-735-8616
Central: Ann Marie McCarthy, Franklin Twp/732-873-2500 x211
Jessie Joseph, Ocean Twp/732-531-5000 x322
South: LaShawn Barber, Tabernacle Twp/609-268-1220
Cynthia Dalessio, Woodstown Borough/856-769-2200

PUBLIC RELATIONS/BOOTH

Cecelia Covino, Co-Chair, Clinton Town/908-735-8616
Lydia Magnotti, Jefferson Twp/973-208-6131
Susan Caljean, Chatham Borough/973-635-0674 x203
Kelley Smith, Harmony Twp/908-213-1850
Karen Siano, Eatontown Borough/732-389-7621
Kathleen Hoffmann, Mt. Holly Twp/609-267-8155
Cynthia Dalessio, Woodstown Borough/856-769-2200

QUILL

Jim Doherty, Editor, Wantage Twp/ 973-875-7192
Sharon Brienza, People Page, Branchburg Twp/908-526-1300
Joel Popkin, Advertising/732-493-0436

RAFFLES

Yancy Wazirmas, Chair, Prospect Park Borough/973-791-7902
Heather Mailander, Ridgewood Village/201-670-5500 x203
Ann Marie McCarthy, Franklin Twp/732-873-2500 x211
Kelley Rhode, Ringwood Borough, 973-475-7100

RECORDS

Elaine Kennedy, Chair, Eagleswood Twp./609-296-3040
Harold Wiener, Irvington Twp./973-399-8111
Denise Szabo, Chair, Bernards Twp/973-595-7766
Jessie Joseph, Ocean Twp/732-531-5000 x322
Jeffrey Jotz, Rahway City/732-827-2000

RESOLUTIONS

Karen Hughes, Co-Chair, Westwood Borough/201-664-7100
Sandra Bohinski, Helmetta Borough/732-605-9466
All Advisory Board Representatives

SCHOLARSHIP

Bonnie Leonetti, Chair, Long Beach Twp./609-361-1000
Barbara Shepart, Boonton Twp./973-402-4012
Sally Bleeker, Franklin Lakes Borough/201-891-0048
Vita Mekovetz, Readington Twp./908-534-4051
Barbara Nyitrai, South Brunswick Twp./732-329-4000

MUNICIPAL CLERK CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

All persons interested in taking the Municipal Clerk Certification Examination this Spring should check the website of the New Jersey Division of Local Government Services for appropriate information on application deadlines, as well as to download an application form:

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/certunit/certmenu.shtml>

As of the publication of the January issue of the *Quill*, the RMC exam date and deadline for applications had not yet been confirmed. Plan on submitting your application in early March to ensure compliance with the deadline. Completed applications, together with the application fee of \$50, made payable to the State Treasurer, must be received by the Division **postmarked** no later than the deadline date established.

JUST CAN'T GET AWAY FROM OPRA – AND OTHER STUFF

By: Richard A. Lustgarten, 2010 MCANJ legal counsel

This article is being written pre-holiday but you will probably receive it after New Years so a happy belated New Year to everyone knowing that government service is going to be even more challenging in 2010 based on the budget crunch in Trenton.

OPRA continues to generate litigation and it is clear that many cases arise because the statute does not contain clear cut definitions and many requesters make requests that are overbroad and very difficult to comply with in the time frames mandated. To cover all the recent cases is beyond the scope and space allotted but there are a few of note.

If a newspaper makes an OPRA request which is ultimately denied by the Municipal Clerk and the newspaper fails to take action in Superior Court within forty-five (45) days of the denial is the newspaper barred from making the same request at a future time?

If you answered yes you are correct.

The New Jersey Supreme Court has ruled that the forty-five (45) day “statute of limitations” for prerogative writs applies not only to OPRA requests but also requests under the Right to Know Law. The facts must be, however, that the requests are the same with respect to the information requested.

In a recent unreported Bergen County case, the Court applied the Supreme Court rule even though the individual requesters were different reporters. Because they all worked for the same newspaper the actual requester was deemed to be the newspaper and it couldn't make a new request since it hadn't appealed.

Please note that the forty-five (45) day limitation rule has not yet been applied to complaints filed with the Government Records Council.

In another recent case arising out of Passaic County, Use of Force reports generated by a police department are subject to OPRA. These are reports that police officers are required to fill out and the Municipality is required to file with the County Prosecutor, with ultimate compilation by the Attorney General's office any time force is used by a police officer against an individual. It was argued that the reports were not mandatory because they were only set forth in the Attorney General's guidelines, but the Court rejected that reasoning indicating that the Attorney General's guidelines had the force of law and therefore the reports were a required, and hence governmental, record.

Under OPRA the GRC may impose a penalty against the Custodian of Records if it determines that the Custodian has knowingly and willfully violated (the statute) and is found to have unreasonably denied access to records under the totality of the circumstances. This is statutory language contained in N.J.S.A. 47:1A-7.

In at least one case occurring in a Municipality in Hunterdon County, the GRC did not find that the Municipal Clerk had violated this standard, but found that the particular clerk's actions appeared to be “negligent and heedless” since the clerk was “vested with the legal responsibility of granting and denying access in accordance with the law.”

Continued on Page 13

LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, by Sharon Brienza, Chair

For several years the LDF has provided assistance, guidance and support to Municipal Clerks who have encountered problems on the job. During 2009 the Committee paid more than \$7,000.00 to Municipal Clerks to help cover their legal expenses and we have several cases pending. During 2009, not only have we settled one case, two are still on-going and these two involve suspensions of *tenured* Municipal Clerks! We are also in the midst of dealing with another Municipal Clerk who also has tenure and her Administrator keeps suspending her for days at a time. I believe the Executive Board has MCANJ Attorney Rich Lustgarten looking at the statutes to see if there are any changes that can be recommend to stop this from happening.

Initial membership of \$75.00, with an annual renewal fee of \$25.00 thereafter, is a small price to pay to protect your future. Applications and renewal applications were included with your annual dues membership or you can download an application form from the MCANJ website. I urge you to complete the form as directed - hopefully, you will never need the assistance of the Legal Defense Fund, but if you do, this could prove to be your most valuable insurance coverage.

Please mail the completed application with your **PERSONAL CHECK** payable to MCANJ – LDF to:

Joel Popkin, Administrative Consultant, 13 Fair Oaks Lane, Ocean, NJ 07712

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at 908-526-1300, ext. 103.
Sharon L. Brienza, Township of Branchburg
LDF Committee Chair

JUST CAN'T GET AWAY FROM OPRA – AND OTHER STUFF

By: Richard Lustgarten, 2010 MCANJ legal counsel

Continued from Page 12

This conclusion is entirely gratuitous and imposes a standard on the clerk that does not exist in the statute. It is my opinion that if the GRC fails to find an unreasonable denial of access which is knowingly and willfully made by the clerk, then the complaint should be dismissed. In the instant case, the GRC did not impose any penalty against the Municipal Clerk.

It is my understanding that this particular municipality will move for reconsideration of the decision to delete the “negligent and heedless” language as being jurisdictionally deficient and unnecessary to the GRC’s ultimate decision.

I agree that that language should be deleted and request that if any Municipal Clerk is subject to the same kind of result, that MCANJ be notified so that we can determine how prevalent this approach, by the GRC, is.

In a non-OPRA context, if a notice of intention is filed with the Municipal Clerk under the recall statute but the requisite number of signatures is not obtained by the recall committee and the time to acquire same (160 days) has expired, can a new recall petition notice of intention be filed, assuming the statutory requirements are met?

In an unreported Bergen County case the Court ruled that the second notice of intention was appropriate.

I believe that the Court ruled correctly because the entire process of recall is the original notice of intention, the obtaining of the appropriate signatures within the statutory time frame, and actually having the recall election.

It is my opinion that if the election does not occur for one reason or another (deficiency in number of signatures, withdrawal of petition etc.) then the citizens’ right of recall has not actually occurred and a second petition can be processed assuming that it meets the other statutory criteria.

In the coming year, if anyone has thoughts on a topic that they would like to see discussed in an article, kindly email the request to Rich@gnlesq.com for consideration.

Once again, you will be called upon to do “more with less” and I leave you with thoughts of that old tune “Let a smile be your umbrella on a rainy day” of which, unfortunately, there may be many, until the State gets its financial house in order. Alternatively, for the optimists, (continuing the musical metaphor) “Every time it rains, it rains, pennies from heaven”. Are you listening Legislature?

QScend ADVERTISEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS 2009 CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERKS

AT THE 2009 N J LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES CONVENTION, THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WERE RECOGNIZED FOR ACHIEVING IIMC CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERK DESIGNATION:

**Linda Z. Dougherty
Kathleen West
Dina L. Zawadski**



Linda Z. Dougherty, Deputy Clerk of South Brunswick, was one of the Clerks honored at the NJ League of Municipalities Convention in Atlantic City for attaining the CMC Designation. Bravo!

Brown's River Ad

**CONGRATULATIONS
2009 MASTER MUNICIPAL CLERKS
And Participants in the Master Municipal Clerks**

**Kathrine Coletta
Carol L. Degrassi
Heather Mailander
Joan D. Moreland
Denise A. Szabo
Mary Ann Young**



Heather Mailander, Joan Moreland, and Carol Degrassi are recognized for attaining MMC Designation



Vincent Buttiglieri
President



Joanne Kwasniewski
1st Vice President



Andrew Pavlica
2nd Vice President



Nancy Saffos
Treasurer



John Mitch
Secretary



Joan Moreland
Immediate Past President

THE 2010 EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERKS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY STANDS READY TO ASSIST YOU! PLEASE CALL ON US TO MEET YOUR NEEDS AND ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.



The Sussex County Municipal Clerks Association Celebrated their Annual Christmas Luncheon on December 4, 2009 at Casa Bellissima in Andover, NJ



Joe Valenti received a special thanks from the MCANJ for his wonderful record of service to our organization



Mary Lynne Strata, President of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, offered a report for the MCANJ members at the Annual Business Meeting held in Atlantic City on November 18, 2009.

Coded Systems Ad

2009 RESOLUTION HONORING RETIRED MUNICIPAL CLERKS

WHEREAS, continued, unselfish service is the backbone of our society and is to be commended and exemplified; and

WHEREAS, as a Municipal Clerk, knowing that you have shared in the growth and success of your community and this organization is a purpose fulfilled,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Clerks' Association of New Jersey, Inc., that we commend your dedication to the residents of your community and this organization, and point to it as an example to be exemplified and emulated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend to you, upon the occasion of your retirement, our gratitude and best wishes for good health, success and prosperity for many years to come to those Municipal Clerks named herein:

Bergen County: Sarah Warlikowski, Ridgefield Park Village; Ian Shore, Paramus Borough
Burlington County: Joyce Frenia, Medford Township
Hunterdon County: Ellen Kluber, Alexandria Township
Mercer County: Candace B. Gallagher, Hightstown Borough
Monmouth County: Lynn Spillane, Shrewsbury Borough
Morris County: Marilyn Schaefer, Madison Borough; Joy Wiley, Chatham Township
Ocean County: Bernadette Standowski, Lakewood Township
Passaic County: Richard Moran, Clifton City
Sussex County: Louanne Cular, Franklord Township



2009 MCANJ President Joan Moreland making a special presentation to Manny Hirshblond at the MCANJ Annual Business meeting in Atlantic City on November 18, 2009



Past MCANJ Presidents leading the flag salute at the Retirement Tribute Dinner for Manny Hirshblond (see Pages 18-19)

“SOME DAY I’M GONNA WRITE A BOOK!”

You know you’ve said it. We all have. Each time we are contacted by members of the public with a memorable question, complaint or observation, we make ourselves that promise. In November of 1998, now-retired Plainsboro Township Clerk Patricia Hullfish shared with us 27 “Crazy Phone Calls” that her office fielded in a two week period. We do believe that list represents a record. I have included what I think are the top five from that list:

How do you call 911?

I’m an astronomer and I need a permit to use the park after dark

How often do the fire alarms go off?

Am I allowed to walk my dog on the other side of the street?

I don’t understand why I got a ticket for driving on the wrong side of the road. I was just helping the traffic flow.

I can’t top the above list within a two week period, but I have had a few doozies of my own while dealing with the public:

There’s a squirrel in the tree outside and he’s staring at me. What should I do?

(Same caller, calling back) The squirrel is now running around outside my house and I’m trapped inside. What should I do?

(my quick-thinking Clerk-typist responded, “First, sir, you need to get rid of the nuts”).

There’s an alligator in the pond at the country club. (There was!)

Is the municipal building for sale?

I am a Master of Universal Law, and I regret to inform you that you are no longer under my protection.

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN!

Help us celebrate our love of the unique perspective shared with us by the public we serve.

Send your “Top Five Doozies” (or more if you want!) to: administrator@wantagetwp-nj.org.

You know you can. You know you want to! By the time we’re done, I bet there’ll be a book!

Jim Doherty, Quill Editor

**How Do
You Call
911?**

SHARON BRIENZA NAMED 2009 MUNICIPAL CLERK OF THE YEAR



As Presented by Jane Williams-Warren at the Annual Business Meeting of the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey in Atlantic City on November 18, 2009:

This year's recipient began employment in the municipality as an Administrative Assistant and was subsequently appointed Municipal Clerk shortly thereafter. Our honoree received the Registered Municipal Clerk certification in 1990. Knowing that education was going to be a key component to any future success, this person went on to receive the prestigious Certified Municipal Clerk and Master of Municipal Clerk designations from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

The Clerk we honor today has over twenty years of distinguished service to our profession and a countless amount of their personal time has been spent serving the Municipal Clerks Association in one capacity or another. Our honoree has served on virtually every MCANJ committee, including the Legislative Committee, the Manual Review Committee, the Education Committee, the Legal Defense Fund, the Conference Committee, and the Information Technology Committee. Throughout the years, this Clerk has also volunteered to Chair a number of these committees, including various Conference Committees and the Legal Defense Fund. Our recipient has also been a constant contributor for The Quill. Wow, talk about getting involved!

On the County and State levels, this individual rose through the ranks of their County Association, eventually becoming President and, never having been known to rest on past accomplishments,

our honoree further showed the commitment to MCANJ by working up through the different positions and ultimately becoming President of the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey.

This Clerk was made a Contributing Member of the Department of Community Affairs, Board of Examiners for the Registered Municipal Clerks exam. Currently, this person spends prepares students to take the RMC exam as a teacher for Rutgers. Our recipient has also served as a panelist for many education sessions through the Association as well as the League of Municipalities.

This person has also demonstrated commitment to many other organizations, including coordinating annual fundraising efforts for the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days, the County Governing Official Committee, the committee that was successful in getting the municipality recognized as a mailing address and most importantly, as a "booth girl" at the country fair.

This Municipal Clerk exemplifies what this Association and our profession is all about – SERVICE to your family, SERVICE to your municipality and SERVICE to the Municipal Clerks Association.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the prestigious Municipal Clerks Association 2009 Clerk of the Year Award is presented to:

Sharon L. Brienza
Municipal Clerk of Branchburg Township

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR "CLERK OF THE YEAR"

HISTORY OF THE "CLERK OF THE YEAR" AWARD

The "Distinguished Service Award" was given only once, in 1976. Thereafter, it became known as the "Municipal Clerk of the Year Award" and is awarded annually at the League of Municipalities Conference during the MCANJ annual business meeting. The recipient is chosen by the members of the Executive Board for the MCANJ and is a well-guarded secret until the announcement is made by the previous year's recipient. Beginning in 2001, the April issue of the Quill contained a nomination form to be used by individuals or county associations who wish to nominate a Municipal Clerk for consideration by the Executive Board. This nomination form is now included in each April edition of the Quill, to meet the July 1st deadline for receipt of nominations.

MANNY HIRSHBLOND RETIREMENT TRIBUTE

Unless you've served on the Executive Board of the MCANJ or a conference committee, you may not know Manny Hirshblond personally, but his work as Administrative Consultant for the MCANJ has been immeasurable. Any president who served the MCANJ fortunate enough to have HAD Manny as their Administrative Consultant will attest to the help and assistance he was to them and their Executive Board. Many will even admit they would not have had as smooth of a year as president without him.

On October 16, 2009, many of those past presidents, friends, family and colleagues gathered for a retirement celebration for Manny. Presentations were made by William Dressel, Executive Director of the League of Municipalities, Ford Pfeiffer from the Tropicana, who Manny has worked with for several years and of course the Executive Board. The highlight for most of the attendees was a short film that starred Manny as Captain Joshua Huddy. Captain Huddy was the commander of a New Jersey Patriot militia unit during the American Revolutionary War. He was captured by Loyalist forces and was hanged by them in what was decried as a lynching. His death became the first international incident in the history of the United States and Captain Huddy (our beloved Manny) entered history as "the hero martyr of old Monmouth."



The Executive Board and several Past Presidents have offered their insight, thanks and congratulatory messages to Manny:

"Manny has been a wonderful Administrative Consultant to work with during my 5 years on the Executive Board, very supportive and knowledgeable. Manny, I wish you and Janet many years of traveling and golfing!" Joan Moreland (2009 President)



Manny with the Executive Board

"I firmly believe that the successes that this Association has realized over the past twenty plus years is a direct result of your dedication and commitment to our profession. Your efforts on behalf of the Municipal Clerks Association will continue to inspire all of us for many years to come. Now, my friend, it's time to relax and enjoy life with Janet. May God continue to bless you and Janet with health and happiness as you begin your 'real' retirement." Vinny Buttiglieri (2009 1st VP)

"Manny provided me with invaluable assistance since I became a member of the Executive Board. I relied on him to make sure things were being done properly. I wish him and Janet a wonderful retirement." Joanne Kwasniewski (2009 2nd VP)

"To say that it has been my pleasure to work with Manny would be a gross understatement. I wish him the very best and will certainly miss his presence and his bottomless wealth of knowledge; however I look forward to hearing about the many joys of blissful retirement. God Bless You, Manny and thank you for all you have done for our association." Nancy Saffos (2009 Secretary)

"Manuel Hirshblond has worked behind the scenes for over twenty years. During that time he was the backbone of our Association and guided us with his conservative approach. He will certainly be missed and has left his mark on the history of the MCANJ." Joel Popkin (Past President/Incoming Administrative Consultant)

"It was always a pleasure working with Manny, he always kept in touch with you, was a good sounding board and guided you through your duties as President. He is a true gentlemen and wonderful friend." Barbara M. Hawk (Past President)

"Manny was the ultimate professional with a 'can do' attitude. I was so privileged to be part of the Executive Committee when he came on board." Kathy Thorpe (Past President)

MORE PHOTOS AND TRIBUTES TO MANNY ON PAGE 19



Manny thanking everyone for attending and for the gift.

MANNY HIRSHBLOND RETIREMENT TRIBUTE, Continued from Page 18



“Manny handled all the behind-the-scenes stuff that rarely got recognized and was a truly integral part of the MCANJ. His assistance to me as President was immeasurable and I cannot thank him enough for his assistance with Legal Defense Fund. Manny, may you and Janet share wonderful times and memories during your well deserved retirement.” Sharon Brienza (Past President)

*Pictured at Left:
Manny receiving presentation
from Bill Dressel*

Picture At Right: Manny thanking everyone for attending and for the gift.



SPOTLIGHT ON: SOMERSET COUNTY **21 Stories of Our Garden State; 21 Stories to say “We’re Great”**

As one of America's oldest counties, Somerset is steeped in colonial and Revolutionary War history. The area was first settled in 1681, in the vicinity of Bound Brook, and the county was established by charter on May 22, 1688 with land conveyances dating back to 1651. Most of the early residents were Dutch. General George Washington and his troops marched through the county on several occasions and slept in many of the homes located throughout the area.

For much of its history, Somerset County was primarily an agricultural county. In the late 19th century, the Somerset Hills area of Somerset County became a popular country home for wealthy industrialists. The area is still the home of wealthy pharmaceutical industrialists.

Its 21 municipalities, (Bedminster, Bernards, Bernardsville, Bound Brook, Branchburg, Bridgewater, Far Hills, Franklin, Green Brook, Hillsborough, Manville, Millstone, Montgomery, North Plainfield, Peapack-Gladstone, Raritan, Rocky Hill, Somerville, South Bound Brook, Warren & Watchung) encompass 305 square miles and contain a diversity of landscape, population and development that reflects the varied lifestyles of its estimated 323,552 residents.

Located in the heart of the nation's largest metropolitan area, Somerset County contains a balance between urban and suburban neighborhoods and rural countrysides. Fine residential communities, beautiful parks, excellent shopping areas, extensive farmlands, numerous historic sites and outstanding business and industry all make Somerset County a desirable place to live, work and play.

The County's 10,285 acres of parkland include golf courses, picnic areas, hiking and bicycling trails, stables, a swimming pool, an Environmental Education Center and the County Fairgrounds, which each year hosts the Somerset County 4 H Fair. The County has preserved 7,210 acres of farmland through its Agriculture Development Program, and another 3,180 acres of greenways through the County/Municipal Open Space Partnership Grant Program.

The Atlantic League Somerset Patriots also have their Ball Park (TD Bank Ballpark) in Somerset County and has drawn visitors to central Somerset County for the ballgames and for shopping, restaurants, etc. The ballpark also is a good example of appropriate redevelopment of a brownfields site as this was built on the former American Cyanamid property.

Educational facilities include Raritan Valley Community College, Somerset County Vocational High School and Technology Institute. The college, a two year school in Branchburg Township, includes a library/theater complex and a planetarium.

(All Information collected by Sharon Brienza from the Somerset County Web Site.)



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS ADVANTAGES: A special message from the MCANJ Membership Committee

If you are enjoying this issue of the *Quill*, and would like to continue receiving future issues in the mail ...
MAKE SURE YOUR MCANJ 2010 DUES ARE PAID!

The 2010 Executive Board is continuing the practice of tying in the mailing list of the *Quill* with the dues list for 2010 MCANJ membership. So, if you have previously been receiving an issue of the *Quill*, and find that you are not receiving any more issues in 2010, check to make sure that your MCANJ membership dues are current and up to date.

Membership in the Legal Defense Fund also requires that your dues be paid and current.

Don't get left behind—Make Sure MCANJ 2010 Dues are Paid!

DATES AND LOCATIONS OF 2010 ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS:

January 22, 2010 at the Holiday Inn @ Tinton Falls, 700 Hope Road (one block off GSP at Exit 105) at 10:00 a.m.

March 25, 2010 at the Annual Education Conference, Taj Mahal Casino Hotel, Atlantic City

June 25, 2010 at the Holiday Inn @ Tinton Falls, 700 Hope Road (one block off GSP at Exit 105) at 10:00 a.m.

September 17, 2010 at the Holiday Inn @ Tinton Falls, 700 Hope Road (one block off GSP at Exit 105) at 10:00 a.m.

November 17, 2010 at the Royal Swan Ballroom of the Tropicana Hotel & Casino, Atlantic City

DEADLINES FOR NEWS ITEMS: The deadline for the April issue is March 5, 2010. Please send People Page news to Sharon Brienza, Municipal Clerk, Branchburg Borough, 1077 US Highway 202 North, Branchburg, NJ 08876. Questions or comments regarding this or any issue of the *Quill* should be directed to the Editor, Jim Doherty, Township of Wantage, 888 Route 23, Wantage, NJ 07461 or by calling 973-875-7192 or via email to: administrator@wantagewp-nj.org. Articles for submission should be prepared in Microsoft Word, using Times New Roman 10-point font, and sent as an email.

the *Quill*
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