

**Municipal Clerks' Association of New Jersey
Annual Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2010 – Tropicana (Atlantic City)**

CALL TO ORDER: President Vincent Buttiglieri called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. On behalf of himself and the Executive Board, he thanked everyone for attending the annual meeting. He indicated that many important topics will be discussed and many people would be recognized for their valuable contributions to our association. He also informed the attendees about Administrative Consultant Joel Popkin's medical procedure earlier in the week and asked everyone to please keep him in their thoughts and prayers. He also thanked former Administrative Consultant Manuel Hirshblond for being available to cover for Joel during this time. He mentioned that Joel is expected to be back on his feet shortly.

FLAG SALUTE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE: Acting Administrative Consultant Manuel Hirshblond led the attendees in the flag salute followed by the invocation delivered by 2nd Vice President Andrew J. Pavlica.

ROLL CALL: Executive Board members present were President Vincent Buttiglieri, 1st Vice President Joanne Kwasniewski, 2nd Vice President Andrew J. Pavlica, Treasurer Nancy Saffos, Secretary John M. Mitch, Immediate Past President Joan Moreland, and Acting Administrative Consultant Manuel Hirshblond. Richard Lustgarten Esq. was also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Bette Mastropasqua, seconded by Elaine Kennedy, to approve the Annual Meeting minutes of the Annual Meeting held November 18, 2009. Motion approved unanimously.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Nancy Saffos presented the account balances as of November 15, 2010.

Checking / Savings	\$ 71,629.71
MCANJ Raffles	\$ 3,855.63
C.D.	\$ 100,000.00
Scholarship Funds	\$ 18,991.50
AC in 2013	<u>\$ 5,346.98</u>
TOTAL	\$ 199,823.82

The Legal Defense Fund account balances as of November 1, 2010 were reported as follows:

Smith Barney Investments	\$ 59,904.04
Central Jersey Bank C.D.	\$ 25,000.00
Central Jersey Bank Money Market	<u>\$ 33,087.61</u>
TOTAL	\$ 117,991.65

Treasurer Nancy Saffos provided an updated 2010 Budget Summary. She also presented the following membership summary:

Municipal Clerks	501
Deputy Municipal Clerks	237
Acting Municipal Clerks	10
Assistant Municipal Clerks	26
County Clerks	1
Deputy County Clerks	0
Clerk to Freeholder Board	0
Affiliate Members	<u>15</u>
TOTAL	790

She noted that six counties had 100% paid membership.

A motion was made by Joann Graf, seconded by Heather Mailander, to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion approved unanimously.

LEGAL UPDATE: Richard Lustgarten Esq. offered his congratulations to incoming President Joanne Kwasniewski and praised President Vincent Buttiglieri on an excellent and productive year. He advised MCANJ members that he will be providing some legal updates in the upcoming Quill on important issues like COAH. Mr. Lustgarten stated that there is proposed legislation that he is monitoring which would prohibit texting during council meetings.

President Vincent Buttiglieri deviated from the program and presented the 2010 Friends of the Municipal Clerk Award to Tropicana employee Ford Pfifer for all of his hard work with the municipal clerks during the past several years with the Annual Meeting, Education Conference and Region II Conference. President Buttiglieri stated that it is a pleasure working with Ford Pfifer and that his feelings are shared amongst conference committee members too.

INTRODUCTION OF CANDIDATE: Secretary John M. Mitch introduced MCANJ Secretary Candidate for 2011; Keith Kazmark (Municipal Clerk of Elmwood Park).

Keith Kazmark stated that he was proud to stand before them as a candidate. He spoke about the path he had taken after college to become a Municipal Clerk. He expressed his desire to work in local government and has continued to do so since. He concluded by asking the membership for their support in being the 2011 Secretary for MCANJ.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION AND BYLAW AMENDMENTS: David Hughes acknowledged the work put into the amendments that were proposed by the Executive Board and the review conducted by his committee members. A motion was made by Bette Mastropasqua, seconded by Jane E. Williams-Warren, to approve the amendments as proposed. Motion approved unanimously. (Copy attached to minutes)

RECOGNITION OF 2010 COMMITTEE CHAIRS: President Buttiglieri named the following committees and chairpersons and asked that the chairpersons present stand to be recognized for their hard work and commitment to MCANJ: (Committee reports in bound form included in minutes)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS: David Hughes (Summit)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Elaine Jasko (Perth Amboy)

EDUCATION CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: Sharon Brienza (Branchburg) and Heather Mailander (Ridgewood)

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE: Jane E. Williams-Warren (Paterson)

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE: Doreen Cali (Roselle Park) and Rose Marie Saracino (Old Bridge)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY / WEB PAGE COMMITTEE: Bette Mastropasqua (Beachwood)

LAWS AFFECTING MUNICIPAL CLERK'S COMMITTEE: Michele Seigfreid (Robbinsville) and Sharon Young (West Windsor)

LEGAL DEFENSE FUND COMMITTEE: Sharon Brienza (Branchburg)

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Elaine Kennedy (Eagleswood) and Lewis Thompson (Millville)

MANUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE: Deanna Bennett (Haddonfield) and Joel Popkin (Executive Board Coordinator)

MEMBERSHIP NORTH COMMITTEE: Sally Bleeker (Franklin Lakes)

MEMBERSHIP CENTRAL COMMITTEE: Cecelia Covino (Clinton)

MEMBERSHIP SOUTH COMMITTEE: Bonnie Leonetti (Long Beach)

MINI CONFERENCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NORTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTH):

NORTH: Laura Graham (Oradell)

CENTRAL: Sharon Young (West Windsor) and Diane Pflugfelder (Bethlehem)

SOUTH: Debra Pine (Elk) and Patricia Hunt (Moorsetown)

PAST PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL: Bernadette Standowski (Retired, Lakewood)

PEER ALLIANCE FOR LEARNING NORTH: Cecelia Covino (Clinton)

PEER ALLIANCE FOR LEARNING CENTRAL: Ann Marie McCarthy (Franklin) and Jessie Joseph (Ocean)

PEER ALLIANCE FOR LEARNING SOUTH: Lashawn Barber (Tabernacle) and Cynthia Dalessio (Woodstown)

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MCANJ BOOTH: Cecelia Covino (Clinton)

QUILL: James Doherty (Wantage)

RAFFLES: Yancy Wazirmas (Prospect Park) and Heather Mailander (Ridgewood)

RECORDS: Elaine Kennedy (Eagleswood)

RESOLUTIONS: Karen Hughes (Westwood) and Sandra Bohinski (Helmetta)

SCHOLARSHIPS: Bonnie Leonetti (Long Beach)

(The above individuals were enthusiastically supported by a round of applause.)

President Vincent Buttiglieri called Acting Administrative Consultant Manuel Hirshblond to the podium where together they announced the first-ever recipient of the L. Manuel Hirshblond Distinguished Service Award. The aforementioned name of the award was changed by former President Joan Moreland from what was called the President's Award. President Buttiglieri read a prepared statement as to this year's recipient who provided many years of contributions to MCANJ. He announced the recipient as Bonnie Leonetti (Long Beach Township) who was supported by a round of applause and standing ovation. Bonnie Leonetti came forward to accept the award. She expressed her appreciation for being the recipient. She stated she had a long career full of great memories and was looking forward to retiring.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS: Bonnie Leonetti (Long Beach) announced the scholarship winners as follows: (RMC) Emilia Strawder, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Borough of Longport; Elizabeth Merkel, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Borough of Atlantic Highlands; Cynthia Dziura, Assistant Municipal Clerk, Bordentown Township; Barbara Koveleky, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Holmdel Township and Tamara Brown, Deputy Municipal Clerk, Neptune City; (MMC) Ann Marie McCarthy, Municipal Clerk, Franklin Township and Patricia Frontino, Municipal Clerk, Borough of Glassboro;

TRIBUTE TO RETIRED MEMBERS: Sandra Bohinski (Helmetta) read the following Resolution:

Whereas, service to others is the best work of life; and

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 Clerk's Association of New Jersey, Inc., that we commend your dedication to the residents of your community and organization, and point to it as an example to be exemplified and emulated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Honorary membership is bestowed upon the below-named retired Municipal Clerks in accordance with Article II, Section 1.D of the Municipal Clerks' Association of New Jersey, Inc., Constitution and By Laws; 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

Nancy Hatten, Tenafly Borough
Nadine Conn, Teterboro Borough

Camden County

Barbara Hawk, Laurel Springs Borough
Jane Barber, Lindenwold Borough

Cape May County

James Alexis, Middle Township
Dorothy Tomlin, West Wildwood Borough

Cumberland County

Lewis Thompson, City of Millville

Gloucester County

Dolores Connors
Raymond Sherman

Mercer County

Annette Bielawski, Hopewell Township

Monmouth County

Irene Joline, City of Long Branch
Karen Mount-Taylor, Tinton Falls Borough
Rose Ann Weeden, Manalapan Township
Barbara Bascom, Upper Freehold Township

Morris County

Lydia Magnotti, Jefferson Township

Ocean Township

Virginia Lampman, Brick Township
Bonnie Leonetti, Long Beach Township
Marie Pellicchia, Manchester Township

Union County

Barbara Riepe, Scotch Plains Township
Kathleen Wisniewski, Springfield Township

Elaine Kennedy made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Patricia DeStefano. Motion carried unanimously.

TRIBUTE TO DECEASED MEMBERS: Sandra Bohinski (Helmetta) read the following Resolution:

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, although dearly departed many Municipal Clerks will always be in thought a part of their municipality.

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

Catherine Boel, Little Ferry Borough

Camden County

Regina White, Somerdale Borough

Cape May County

Fran Pettit, Woodbine Borough

Essex County

Marge Underhill, Cedar Grove Township (retired)

Monmouth County

Helen Marie Leming Mika, Allentown Borough (retired)

Charles Ormsbee, Belmar Borough (retired)

Mary Martin Vaccaro, Asbury Park City

Georgine Young, Lake Como Borough

Morris County

Marilyn J. Snow, East Hanover

Passaic County

Sylvia Ulmer, Paterson City (retired)

Somerset County

Thomas Brodbeck, Bound Brook Borough (retired)

Jean Pellicane, Franklin Township (retired)

May they rest in peace.

Terry Tighe made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Bonnie Leonetti. Motion carried unanimously.

Chris Wilder went to the podium to conduct the off-premise raffle drawing. The following winners were drawn:

Rose Marie Saracino (Old Bridge) \$ 965.00 1st Place

Pam Hoeland (Wayne) \$ 579.00 2nd Place

Susan Robestello (Millville) \$ 386.00 3rd Place

President Buttiglieri indicated that the net proceeds would benefit the IIMC 2013 Conference fund and thanked everyone who participated..

President Buttiglieri also announced that Heather Mailander would be walking around the room collecting business cards from members so that later in the meeting, fifteen (15) free conference registrations would be drawn.

STATE OF ASSOCIATION ADDRESS: President Vincent Buttiglieri delivered the following comments:

“When outlining my goals for 2010 at last year’s Annual Meeting, I was excited about the endeavor that was ahead. I knew that change was coming but I never, ever, expected 2010 to unfold the way it did. It certainly has been one hell of a ride and I would venture to say that the ride has just begun.

I recently heard a quote that I think sums up 2010 pretty well for us and it goes like this: *The only thing constant is change*. Well, MCANJ can certainly be the poster child for this.

In the course of a few short months, we’ve lived through changes dealing with pensions and benefits, the Open Public Records Act, Non-Partisan Elections not to mention the retirements of many of our most knowledgeable and giving Municipal Clerks. You have to wonder if we have ever had quite a year like 2010 before. And not that I’m a betting man, but I would bet we haven’t.

I can remember sitting in our January Executive Board meeting discussing what changes were on the horizon and wondering how these changes would impact our membership. Would our membership decrease due to budgetary constraints or would it increase because of all this uncertainty surrounding the times. Well I’m extremely happy to report that our membership in 2010 did not decrease, and in fact, we have more counties with 100% paid membership this year than ever before. I think this is a monumental accomplishment and we should be commended for our commitment to this association and the endeavors we undertake.

I’m also happy to report that the treasury and the Legal Defense Fund remain very sound. Due to the efforts of so many, past and present, MCANJ is in a position to provide educational opportunities to our membership at very reasonable costs - and in the end of the day, isn’t that the mission of the Municipal Clerks Association.

One of the goals I had hoped to accomplish this year was to finally get a representative from the Municipal Clerks Association on the Government Records Council. Lord knows – it’s long overdue.

Our Association, year after year, lobbied long and loud to anyone that would listen that we needed to have representation on that Board. Well we all know how that went. Since the inception of OPRA, our opinions have been ignored and even ridiculed. You may recall, Past President Heather Mailander even submitted the name of retired Municipal Clerk, Chris Wilder, to fill a vacancy that existed on the Government Records Council. Not only did Chris not get appointed, that request was never acknowledged. I knew in my heart that 2010 was the year that finally something needed to happen. I’m extremely happy to report that on January 12th, this year, Assembly Bill A1333, sponsored by my friend, Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan, was introduced. The legislation mandated that the President of this Association, or their designee, would be the permanent member of the Government Records Council. This legislation is currently in the Assembly State Government Committee waiting for action. Although we aren’t sitting yet, I can tell you that we have entered the building and a chair has been set up for us to take our rightful seat at the Government Records Council table – a table we should have been sitting at from the beginning.

I couldn’t help but to think that we were finally on calmer waters with regard to OPRA. Then, low and behold. Senate Bill S1352, sponsored by Senator Loretta Weinberg, surfaced. Amongst other things, this legislation was going to reduce the response time for OPRA requests to just a few hours while increasing the penalties for non-compliance. I wanted to pick up the phone and ask the question that was on everyone’s mind – what are these people drinking? Once again, legislation was being discussed that affected Municipal Clerks and we were never consulted. Well, thanks to input by many of you, we met with Senator Weinberg to express our frustration and dismay on not only the proposed changes but also the inaccurate portrayal of Municipal Clerks in the press. I have to tell you honestly, I never expected to be treated the way the Senator and her staff treated us – with the utmost respect, courteousness and professionalism. Senator Weinberg actually listened to our concerns, which we expressed to her over a three hour

meeting in her legislative office. She actually acted on some of our suggestions and we were able to convince her to include language in her Bill mandating the same that Assemblyman Diegnan's Bill mandated. Talk about change ! I must thank out attorney, Richard Lustgarten, who utilized persuasiveness, not to mention his friendship with Senator Weinberg, in securing a successful outcome to this matter. Thank you Richard.

2010 has certainly been a year of firsts for our Association. I've mentioned a couple previously and here's another. After many years of receiving comments from our membership about a need to change the venue for our Annual Education Conference, we did just that. As we were embarking on unknown territory, to say I as a little nervous would certainly be an understatement. This decision could have resulted in my Presidency being viewed as a disaster, or worst of all, having to listen to my wife telling me that I should've just left well enough alone and not mess with a good thing. Thank goodness for the sake of MCANJ and myself, it worked out well, wouldn't you agree? We were treated great and the event was a tremendous success. Close to 300 of our fellow Municipal Clerks enjoyed a great conference highlighted by presentations from Michael Kelly from Afterburners, as well as those we have come to depend on each and every year to enlighten and educate us, our friends Joe Valenti, Lori Buckelew, Scott Steinman, Patti DeConstanzo and of course, our own Elesha Johnson, who got the conference off to a phenomenal start with her presentation of Citizen Leadership.Com. Everyone knows you can't put an event on like this alone. I had a great committee to work with, under the leadership of my Co-Chairs Sharon Brienza and Heather Mailander, not to mention to best Executive Director any organization has – Joel Popkin and Manny Hirshblond. My sincere appreciation to all of you for a job well done.

The final comment about the 2010 Conference I'd like to make is "How about those cookies"? I know that everyone enjoyed them and actually, this is not meant to disrespect anyone but I would have to say they were the highlight of the conference. I want to thank the two special people for making them – my mother and father, Josephine and Charlie. I have to warn you both that rumor has it you just might be getting a request for more cookies for the 2011 conference. Do yourself a favor – change your telephone number. Joanne is not so easy to work with – she is a little more demanding than I am.

The success of this association has always been a result of the dedication of its members. None are more dedicated that the men and women that I have had the privilege to serve with: Past Presidents Jane Williams-Warren, Elaine Kennedy, Barbara Hawk, Heather Mailander and Joan Moreland, as well as the current Board members Joanne, Drew, Nancy, John and now Keith. It has, and will continue to be a pleasure to work together with you so that MCANJ can reach new heights.

Again, my special thanks to two extraordinary gentlemen, our Administrative Consultants, Manny Hirshblond and Joel Popkin. To see what these two men do on a day to say basis really makes you understand what the word service really mans. I have been lucky to be able to work with you both. Thanks for all you've done to make me look good, which as many can attest, is no small task.

Trust me when I tell you that this association is in good hands in 2011. Joanne Kwasniewski will be a phenomenal leader. Her knowledge, thoroughness and dedication will be a critical component as we move forward in these difficult times.

Finally, to my wife Ray Jean – the support and guidance that you've given me this year and throughout the past five years is something that I have valued and cherished. You have been my biggest ally and cheerleader and for that, I'm eternally grateful. I can now promise you that the minute I get home, I'm going to clean off the dining room table so it can be used for dinner and not my private office any more.

While my tenure as your President is coming to an end, my service is not. I've decided to submit my name for consideration for the IIMC Region II Director's seat that is currently held by our own Jane Williams-Warren. Rumor has it that another individual from another State will also be running so its extremely important that all New Jersey Clerks vote, as there will be an election. I'm hoping that I can count on your support.

In closing, I want to say what an immense honor and privilege it has been to serve as your President and I hope that you feel that I've made a positive contribution to this

Association and the profession we love so much. That was my only goal and I hope that I've achieved that.

Thank you and have a great conference.”

RECOGNITION OF 2010 CMC (CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERK) AND MMC (MASTER MUNICIPAL CLERK) AWARDS: Jane E. Williams-Warren Region II Director announced that Sharon Young has been awarded the MMC designation. She also announced that Heidi Brunt, Peter LoDica, Evelyn Rosario, and Rhona Bluestein have been awarded the CMC designation. President Buttiglieri thanked Jane E. Williams-Warren for her leadership in the state association and Region II. Jane E. Williams-Warren congratulated President Buttiglieri on a successful year and wished incoming President Joanne Kwasniewski well.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2009/2010 REGISTERED MUNICIPAL CLERKS CERTIFICATION RECIPIENTS: Elaine Jasko (Perth Amboy) announced the 2009 RMC recipients as follows: April E. Claudio, Lisa L. Dority, Nancy Ferrigno, Kathleen M. Jentsch, Robert Kenny, Diane L. Malloy, Colleen, M. Robbins, Meg Steeb, Eileen DeFabiz, Cynthia Eckert, Barbara J. Ilaria, Jeffrey K. Jotz, Amanda F. Lobban, Barbara Nagy, Mary A. O'Keefe and Yolanda M. Roberts. The 2010 recipients are Erin Barillas, Patricia Carpenter, Carole A. Chamberlain-Berman, Jennifer Crespo, Eugene Daddario, Joseph J. Delaney, Jr., Christine Dispenza, Deborah L. Karlsson, Judith L. Madden, Pamela McCartney, Maureen L. Murphy, Desrie W. Picinich, Madeline F. Smith, Carol J. Torres, Lois A. Yarrington, Denise L. Brouse, Kate D. Chambers, Susan Crosman, Lyla DeCastro, Jane M. Dietsche, Jaime L. Evelina, Kim J. Macellaro, Michelle C. Masser, Noreen L. Morris, Maggie A. Pereira, Fran Scordo, Bonnie L. Taft and Rhonda M. Williams.

RECOGNITION OF INSTRUCTORS OF MUNICIPAL CLERK COURSES: President Vincent Buttiglieri announced the instructors of RMC courses as Barbara Bascom, Jennica Bilecci, Sharon Brienza, Katherine Coletta, James Doherty, Lucy Samuelson, Elaine B. Kennedy, Gwen McCarthy, Mary P. Madonna, Vita Mekovetz, Joel Popkin, Bernadette Standowski, Linda S. Wanat and Kevin Yecco and thanked them for all their hard work and dedication.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2010 MUNICIPAL CLERK OF THE YEAR AWARD: Sharon Brienza (2009 Recipient / Branchburg) read a biography of the 2010 recipient; Municipal Clerk Harold Wiener (City of Irvington). Harold Wiener thanked the Executive Board and MCANJ for selecting him as the recipient. Harold received a standing ovation.

MOTION TO CAST BALLOT FOR SLATE OF OFFICERS: Secretary John M. Mitch announced the slate of officers for 2011 as follows: President Joanne Kwasniewski, 1st Vice President Andrew Pavlica, 2nd Vice President Nancy Saffos, Treasurer John M. Mitch, Secretary Keith Kazmark and Immediate Past President Vincent Buttiglieri. He made a motion to cast a ballot for the unopposed, seconded by 2nd Vice President Andrew Pavlica. Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE: Steven Weinstein, Deputy Mayor of Fair Lawn Borough installed the 2011 slate of officers.

INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT'S GUESTS: President Vincent Buttiglieri introduced his guests and thanked them, along with his fellow municipal clerks from Middlesex and Monmouth counties for their support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO PRESIDENT BUTTIGLIERI: Joanne Kwasniewski, President Elect called upon Karen Siano, President of the Monmouth County Clerks Association, who presented a gift to President Vincent Buttiglieri for his service to MCANJ on behalf of her county's members. She also presented President Buttiglieri with a plaque and gifts for serving as President.

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT-ELECT: Joanne M. Kwasniewski delivered the following comments:

“What an honor and privilege it is to stand before you today – as one of my Council members today said – on my inauguration as President of MCANJ, surrounded by fellow Municipal Clerks, family, my governing body and colleagues from Fair Lawn.

Our Association Counsel Richard Lustgarten and long time colleague and friend suggested that an appropriate title for my speech today would be “You Think You Are Stressed Now – Just Wait”. Unfortunately, I am afraid it is the truth. We have seen such a drastic change this year – furloughs, layoffs, mandatory deduction for medical benefits, proposed caps on sick leave and vacation time, quick escapes by many Municipal Clerks and others in government who are retiring in an effort to save what they have worked long and hard to attain before it disappears. Who could have imagined that local government employees and teachers would become the scapegoat for all the ills in New Jersey? Our colleagues have been summarily fired in direct defiance of the Department of Community Affairs, given raises less than other employees in violation of the statutes, retired after giving up the fight deciding health and sanity is more important than the job and “Rice” has become a staple in every community.

As State aid has been reduced and revenues decreased while expenses have continued to rise, many governing bodies have eliminated funding for education and conferences. Many of us, including my governing body and the others from Fair Lawn here today have had to pay their own way for the first time. We continue to be vilified in the newspaper claiming that the custodians of records deliberately seek to keep records from the public. No distinction is ever made between the other custodians of records so that it appears that the Municipal Clerks are the ones who do not understand OPRA and have no intention of following it.

If I hear the phrase “do more with less” one more time, I won’t be responsible for my actions. We have a joke in Fair Lawn that by this time next year it will be the four statutorily required employees who will be running behind the garbage trucks, collecting the taxes, covering the elections, holding court and paying the bills because there will be no one else left to do it. Every day another piece of legislation is introduced and none of it has been good news and we just don’t know what will happen next.

To those who were fortunate enough to have gotten out while the getting is good as they say, I wish you well. For those of us who remain I believe we have an opportunity to work within the changes that are coming and make things better. We can rise to the challenge that 2011 will inevitably bring.

On the bright side, President Buttiglieri and I were privileged to meet with Senator Weinberg to discuss the bill that she introduced to make changes to ORPA. She was willing to listen and took into account many of the things we brought to her attention. As a result of that meeting and our subsequent correspondence, some of the more burdensome portions of the bill have been reworked. In addition, MCANJ has made a valuable friend who can be our ally in the future. I attended a meeting where Senator Weinberg explained to those who criticized her for not moving the bill along fast enough that this was a balancing act and that our Association had pointed out some things that she was not aware of before. I believe she has been enlightened and that can only be to our benefit. I will take up the cause and continue our efforts to get a seat on the Government Records Council which is needed to make sure that our voice is heard. It is going to happen one of these days, we just can’t give up.

The theme of the 2011 Education Conference is Municipal Clerks... We Make It Happen! While I cannot take credit for those words – that belongs to the Municipal Clerk in Emerson, Carol Dray who uses it on her e-mail messages and consented to its use for the Conference – I definitely believe in those words and endorse them. As Municipal Clerks we are the gateway to our communities for our citizens. On a daily basis we provide the citizens with a direct link to their government. We serve the Mayor and Council and we are the ones who the governing bodies can count on to make sure public meetings, public records, and elections operate smoothly. When they let us, we save them from themselves. It is our finely tuned skills that help administer the laws and services that directly affect the daily lives of our residents. We need to promote ourselves more. We know we are good, but our governing bodies need to be constantly reminded.

The logo for the 2011 Education Conference is a puzzle piece. I believe that logo is very appropriate. Government is a puzzle in so many ways and not just because no one can figure out what is going on but because it is made up of many pieces. Without anyone of the pieces, government just does not work. The Municipal Clerk is one of the most vital puzzle pieces. We deal with the governing bodies, the other department heads and staff and the public. Often we are the first ones everyone turns to – unless it is to give out a raise, of course. The Municipal Clerks' professional skills are important to the effective and efficient functioning of the local government process.

So although everything is a challenge right now and most of it we can not control, you still have control over the most important element and that is your own attitude. We need to strive every day not to be negative about what is happening around us. We need to be enthusiastic in the things that we do which when you are completing the 900th OPRA request for the week it is not easy but the right attitude right now is the most important thing.

So I challenge you all to get involved in our Association even though you have no extra time because you have furlough days or your staff has been cut in half because when you are working to help others and striving to make improvements in the way we do things, you will discover that things are not so bad after all. You will discover a sense of satisfaction in your accomplishments that goes a long way toward making each day worthwhile.

Recognizing the difficulties that many of us face in getting out of the office, I have proposed and the Executive Board has agreed to change things a little bit for 2011. Instead of the five Advisory Board Meetings that we usually hold, we will only have three meetings in 2011. One will be at the Education Conference in April, one in September and one at the Annual Meeting next November. With the miracles of technology I believe that we can stay in contact with our members and keep them informed about what is happening without the necessity of physical meetings. You will receive more e-mail blasts keeping you up to date and I will be communicating through e-mails to our Advisory Board Representatives so that they can report to their County members. I am committed to improving communications with all of you. Many of our committees have been structured so that the work can be done at the office or after hours at home without meetings. It is my hope that this will make it easier for more people to get involved. It is extremely important that we have your correct e-mail address so that you will know what is going on. We are striving to be more environmentally conscious and reduce the amount of paper we distribute.

Although there will be less Advisory Board Meetings, there will be no such break for the Executive Board. The Executive Board will continue to meet and work in the same diligent manner that it is the custom and tradition of Executive Boards.

I also urge you to remember that as Philosopher John Dewey said "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself". So you need to keep on attending conferences, seminars and mini-conferences even if you are forced to pay for them yourself because that is one of the best ways to make yourself more valuable, harder to replace and out in front of the pack.

As far as stress, oh yes, it will be there but you can reduce it by remembering some very basic ABC's of success- take advantage of every opportunity, zestfully meet any challenge, value your health and take time for yourself because you are your most important asset.

It will be my privilege and honor to lead this great association as we face the on-going challenges in 2011 and I know with your help we will succeed.

In closing I ask you to raise your water glass (because unfortunately our budget does not include champagne) and join me in a toast to you – the Municipal Clerk because we make it happen.

Thank you for your confidence in me."

INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT-ELECTS GUESTS: Joanne M. Kwasniewski introduced her guests.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO PRESIDENT-ELECT JOANNE M.

KWASNIEWSKI: Vincent Buttiglieri made a presentation to President-elect Joanne Kwasniewski followed by Fairlawn Deputy Mayor Steven Weinstein who also made a presentation to the President-Elect.

A presentation of a bouquet of roses was made to RayJean Buttiglieri, wife of President Vincent Buttiglieri.

President Vincent Buttiglieri conducted the on-premise raffle. The winner won \$ 354.00.

President Vincent Buttiglieri also selected fifteen (15) business cards randomly. Each person received a free conference registration for the Spring Education Conference. The names selected were Karen Siano (Eatontown), Lynette A. Iannarone (Brick), Dwight Mitchell (Orange), Barbara Bascom (Retired, Upper Freehold), Kathleen West (Barnegat), Pamela Hughes Borghi (Red Bank), Maureen Iarossi-Alwam (Montvale), Susan Witkowski (Hawthorne), Deborah Iannaco (Winslow), Karen Sandorse (Lebanon), Diane Malloy (Harrison), Joanne Siedlecki (Corbin City), Jesse Joseph (Ocean), Jane Gillespie (Spring Lake) and Richard Phoenix (Plainfield). Alternates selected were Vita Mekovetz (Readington) and Teresa Sgro (Long Beach).

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by 1st Vice President Andrew Pavlica, seconded by 2nd Vice President Nancy Saffos to adjourn the annual meeting at 11:10 a.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by John M. Mitch
MCANJ Secretary (2010)