



Meets & Bounds

July-August 2014

Maine Association of Assessing Officers

President's Message

The last time I wrote this letter I was so looking forward to the start of the season for our Red Sox! Oh well, at least training camp has begun for our New England Patriots. Back in April we still had plenty of snow on the ground and things were looking pretty bleak. Today as I write to you I am looking out of my window and I can barely see the buildings across the street because of the dense fog that is surrounding our Town Hall. A perfect day to commit taxes!

I'm sure many of us will be dealing with commitments over the next few weeks. Just remember there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. That light takes on many different forms, sometimes it is realizing that the tax rate came in lower than expected, encouragement from your Tax Collector, a sympathetic Town Manager, or better yet knowing that the MAAO Annual Conference is just around the corner!

Bill and Sue have done a great job once again and the conference looks to be another superb offering of

classes and fellowship time! As promised we will be offering continuing education for Code Enforcement Officers along with a number of other quality sessions. Please make sure to get your registrations in as time is getting close. One of the highlights of the conference is our Silent Auction. We have some great items already, but it's never too late to make a donation. Just drop me a line to let me know what you will be bringing.

Please mark your calendars for the MMA Annual Convention, October 1st and 2nd. MAAO will be partnering with the Maine Chapter of IAAO to provide an informational booth and an educational session. Dave Sawyer will be presenting "Using GIS to Update Wetlands Maps" on Wednesday at 10:30 am.

Hope to see you all at Sebasco! ▲

–Rick Mace, President

Upcoming Event!

2014 MAAO Fall Conference

Sebasco Harbor Resort
Sebasco Estates, Maine

September 3-5, 2014

For more information:
www.maineassessors.org

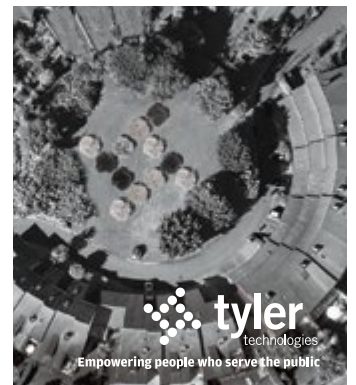
MAAO Meeting/Training Calendar 2014

Sept. 3, 4, 5	Fall Conference/ Annual Meeting	Sebasco Harbor Resort
Oct. 1 & 2	MMA Annual Convention	Augusta Civic Center
Dec. 5	Board Meeting	MMA - Augusta

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MEMBER PROFILE: Phillip Drew, Bangor



Phil attributes his enjoyment of assessing and math to his 4th grade teacher. Not the young teacher who started the year and would put her head down on the desk just after lunch and cry, but to her replacement. This replacement was a veteran and she emphasized the importance of math. After high school in Milo, Maine Phil worked at Bailey Lumber Company for three years. Since the owner had two sons Phil decided his future was limited and so in 1985 he decided to attend the University of Maine and study Agricultural and Resource Economics.

With a BS in Economics his first position was with Farm Credit in Dayville, Ct. At that time, Farm Credit loan officers also performed real property appraisals. Imagine that! The person making the loan was required to determine the collateral value. Phil enjoyed the appraisal activities but not the lending side especially after suggesting to the Branch Manager not to renew lines of credit of some of the best farmers in Connecticut. I guess it is as difficult to get accurate income and expense information from a farmer as it is any owner of income-producing property.

In 1990, Phil returned to UMO for a Master's Degree in Economics. In 1991, Phil met and married his wife Mary along with her four children. Due to the responsibility of family life Phil completed all the course work but never completed his thesis and then set his sights on the appraisal/assessing field. In 1992, Phil sat for the assessor review course and passed the CMA exam (taught by highly trained assessor's with humor) on his first attempt. He attributes his success to the cushion he brought from his grandmother's kitchen chair to reduce the discomfort of those wooden seats for the 7+ hour exam. That same year Phil became a residential appraiser with an exam that did not require a seat cushion.

Having the education but lacking in real world experience, Phil volunteered with Allen Thomas in Veazie. In 1993, Ben Birch hired Phil to be on the staff in Bangor. Over the years, Phil moved from a part-time employee to an appraisal technician and then to appraiser.

In 2004, Phil traded the time he was using to perform private appraisals to become the Assessor for the town of Glenburn. Phil was honored to be the individual chosen by Glenburn to replace Mr. George Mayo (a former State of Maine Tax Assessor and another wonderful individual from Milo, Maine). Phil enjoys all aspects of the municipal assessor/appraiser work and often describes the Bangor office as the Friendly Tax Assessors – which often makes the most upset taxpayers/property owner smile. When called upon to help with teaching courses Phil will often lend a hand. When asked about his professional high points he would talk about Bangor's Assessment Ratio being about 95% for 20 straight years. The valuation model instituted by Mr. James Phillips in the 1980's has worked wonderfully all these years. Phil's personal philosophy is to always make fair and equitable decisions and treat all taxpayers with respect.

And did you know Phil was highlighted in the April 28th edition of the Bangor Daily News for his act of kindness toward the Maine Savings and Federal Credit Union employees on Broadway in Bangor. Phil heard the

(Continued on Page 3)

MAAO Secretaries Report

▲ By Tammy L. Brown

The MAAO Board met on May 9th, 2014. At that meeting the board discussed the educational offerings that were held in Lincoln and Presque Isle. Both workshops were well attended and the responses from the participants were very helpful for future workshops. Thank you to those who organized and attended these workshops. It is the goal of the MAAO Board to offer educational classes that are timely and current to the present day situations. If you have any suggestions regarding a future topic for a workshop, please contact a board member.

On May 8th MAAO hosted another Board of Assessment Review workshop. We would like to thank those who attended. Speakers Sally Daggett and William Dale have agreed to hold another BAR Workshop in Machias. Be watching for the upcoming brochure regarding the date and time for this workshop.

A large part of the meeting was spent on continuing plans for the Fall Conference that will be held at Sebasco Harbor Resort once again this year. The conference committee has been hard at work finalizing the sessions. The following is a list of sessions being offered at this year's conference:

“IAAO Update & Website Review” - **Bill Healey, Scarborough Tax Assessor**

“The Good, the Bad & the Ugly – Dealing with the Media” - **IAAO President Kim Lauffer** “

“Session Title to be determined” - **Rob Crawford and N. Joel Moser of Bernstein Shur**

“Sales Ratio Analysis” - **IAAO National Instructor, Tom Frey**

CEO Training – “Less than Ideal – The Relationship Between the Assessing Office and the Code Enforcement Office” - **Duward Parkinson, Bergen & Parkinson, LLC**

“Assessing 101 – Deed Reading and Plotting” - **Rick Mace, Assessor of York, Maine**

“Assessing 101 – Changing Assessing World” - **Jim Murphy Jr., Murphy Appraisal Services**

MAAO Membership Meeting – Listserv Topics

“Legislative Update” - **Dave Ledew, Maine Revenue Services & Geoff Hermann, MMA**

We will be once again holding the MAAO Annual Meeting at the luncheon on Thursday afternoon. We hope you can plan to join us.

The Board reviewed a scholarship application that they had received. That scholarship has been granted and we look forward to being able to meet the needs of anyone who may need to use this scholarship in the future.

The next MAAO Board Meeting will be held on August 9th at MMA in Augusta at 10:00. If you have anything you would like the board to take up, please contact any board member.

Until next time..... ▲

Member Profile – Continued from Page 2

branch bank had been robbed so he brought in a bouquet of flowers to cheer up the employees. When asked why he did it his response was, “If someone’s robbed, I would imagine that for the next few days or weeks, I would always be looking at that next person to walk through the door differently.” “I thought wouldn’t it be nice if they saw the next person walking in with flowers instead of a weapon.” As the story points out, this is not the first time Phil has done this, he has done it on two other occasions.

This just shows that not only are Assessor’s friendly but compassionate as well. ▲



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MAAO
2014 Fall Conference
September 3rd – 5th



April 1, 2014

Dear Merchant and Friend of MAAO,

The Maine Association of Assessing Officers is a nonpolitical, nonprofit organization founded in 1960. Today, MAAO has more than 230 members throughout the State. Our mission is to promote the fair and equitable appraisal and proper administration of property assessment through continuing education and exchange of ideals and information for its membership.

The funds raised at this year's Silent Auction, to be held at our Annual Conference from September 3rd to 5th at Sebasco Harbor Resort, will be used to continue our educational goals.

Your donation to this effort will be greatly appreciated and your business' contribution will be prominently acknowledged at the conference and in our subsequent newsletter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information regarding this year's Silent Auction.

Sincerely,

Rick Mace, Chair
MAAO Silent Auction Committee
rmace@yorkmaine.org

MAAO is an affiliate member of the International Association of Assessing Officers



Visit us at our website: www.maineassessors.org

MEMOIRS IN THE ASSESSING FIELD

▲ By Ruth E Birtz, Town of Lincoln

I am sure everyone out there is familiar with the sergeant's slogan on the TV show Hill Street Blues, "Let's be careful out there." I would just like to pass on a little advice to fellow assessors that I have learned over the years, you might say these are my David Lettermen's top ten:

1. Never approach an irate property owner that has a live weed whacker pointed at you.
2. Never back up to take a photo of a property in the winter without checking for ice. The older you get the harder you hit the pavement.
3. If there is a tree across the road to prevent you from getting to the property you are trying to inspect, you aren't necessarily doing the property owner a favor by moving that tree. Believe it or not it actually might have been put there to prevent you from accessing their property.
4. If you see a mobile home with a piece of the skirting removed, don't assume it's a maintenance issue. Approach the trailer with caution; you never know when a mother pit bull and her puppies will appear.
5. Do not ever complete a property inspection on someone who is going through a hostile divorce and his former spouse's name is the same as yours.
6. If you knock on a door and the property owner opens the door and a cloud of smoke that smells



like marijuana greets you, tell the property owner it is obviously an inconvenient time to complete the inspection and you will reschedule.

7. Act like nothing is out of the ordinary when a huge German shepherd walks under you skirt between your legs and lifts you off the ground while you are asking questions about his owner's home. Just maintain balance.
8. Always wonder why a taxpayer keeps you on an inspection for an unusual amount of time with questions that don't appear relevant to the inspection. It could be that you too have a wardrobe malfunction and your camera strap managed to unbutton your shirt to your waist while walking between houses. Not quite as famous as Janet Jackson but I assure you just as embarrassing.
9. Do not try to complete an interior inspection on a residence that has all its windows covered and a series of small propane tanks hooked up as fuel.
10. If you're walking through the woods to find a seasonal hunting camp and there is a series of camouflage tents half way up the trees throughout the property, leave. You probably do not want to know what is under those tents.

I encourage other assessors to share their learning experiences from their years of assessing. ▲

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CMAAO Spring Training

The following pictures are from training sponsored by the Central Maine Assessor’s Association in April. This was a daylong course for Assessors and focused on the use of the TRIO program. Mary Hauger and Lillian Smith reported they had over 60 people in attendance and were very pleased with the attendance and the course material. They wanted to extend a special thanks to Jim Murphy who stepped in for Joe Salley who had to cancel out because his wife who was expecting their second child was having complications. Mom and baby girl are doing fine now. Congratulations Joe. ▲



MAAO Spring Training, Lincoln Maine

A new training event this year was Assessing and Code Enforcement training in Lincoln. The event was held on a Saturday in hopes of reaching more selectmen. Approximately 40 people attended. The group included Assessors, Code Enforcement Officers, Realtors, Town Managers, Property Inspectors and Selectmen/women. The training was held at the local Region III Vocational and Technical School. The Culinary Arts program served lunch an exceptional lunch for the attendees. Again a special thank you to Mike Rogers who filled in for Joe Salley on the BETR – BETE session. ▲



What's Happening Up North

▲ By Lewis Cousins, Assessor - Code Enforcement Officer - Towns of Mapleton, Chapman, Castle Hill

Lona LaFrancis, Tony Levesque, and Louis Cousins were essential to organizing the Northern Maine Spring Workshop that was held on May 2nd. The workshop was held at the Northern Maine Development Commission in their conference room. This facility came equipped with smart board system, which they offered free, as a part of their support to municipalities. The room is wonderfully comfortable for groups of up to 30 and Cindy's sub shop provided a very nice soup and sandwich layout. Many nice comments were made regarding the facility and lunch.

As for attendance, there were 14 CMA's in the room. I can only think of two others in the county, so we got to most everyone. The good news is there were 4 people interested in the profession in attendance. Steve LeMay has agreed to conduct training sessions with these 4 folks, as he has done with so many of us up here. We need them all and Steve has been an outstanding mentor for us individually and for the profession as a whole. He deserves an article to ensure credit due is delivered.

For presentations, Sewall Company sent a GIS specialist and their Northern Maine Engineer to speak on what services they can offer in digitizing, mapping, and planning. Several projects done and in use in other municipalities were demonstrated and discussed in great detail and the processes that happened to get these projects up and running.

Mike Rogers made the trip up and stood in for Joe Salley and gave a update on the Maine Revenue stance on BETE, as well as an overview of the state of the program, effects it having on Maine Revenue, and how the truly proper means of administration is more than likely going to be determined by a judge in some lawsuit that is bound to happen. Mike also gave an update on the tax calculator, enhanced BETE, and Tif's.

Tony Pinette of Maine Revenue Services and Christy Sirois gave a presentation on TRIO reports for the Municipal Valuation Report and the use of excel as a tool for assessors after lunch. Many good tips were shared and a very useful handout was given to all.

We wrapped up with the folks from Maine Revenue Services, Steve LeMay, Tony Pinette, Ardis Brown holding a open discussion with questions from the floor, issues in assessing, issues in management, issues in government, and so on. Plenty of good information was exchanged.

Caribou: In November Beth O' Bar resigned from the City of Caribou. Penny Thompson moved from the as-

sistant assessor to the assessor. Tony Michaud took the Assistant Assessor position in Caribou.

Presque Isle: Tony Michaud resigned to work in Caribou. Lona LaFrancis retired May 1st.

Van Buren: Colby Doody resigned to take a position as an appraiser in Massachusetts.

That's pretty much all I know for now. ▲

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