

New Jersey



Assessors

Bulletin



MEMBER
International Association
of Assessing Officers



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SUMMER 1997

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

submitted by Bill Birchall



On May 1, 1997, Assembly Bill No. 2777 was introduced by Assemblyman Amone. The bill, described as "The Third Omnibus Mandate Relief Act", was entitled An Act Revising Certain Mandates, Requirements and Procedures for Local Governments and School Districts and Amending Supplementing and Repealing Various Parts of the Statutory Law. A-2777 relates to some 89 issues. Looking at the title and

reading the reports in the newspaper, we would never suspect that the bill pertains to Assessors. The press reports I have seen all focused on the school district portion of the bill.

The League of Municipalities sent a Legislative Alert to its Mayors on May 14 requesting that it be distributed to, among others, all department heads. This notice included "Mandates Relief - Round III" along with several other issues. Judging from the response we received, very few Assessors were copied on this material. During the business meeting on Tuesday, June 3, at the Rutgers Conference, I was asked what I knew about A-2777. My answer was nothing, because, having read the title, I thought it did not affect Assessors.

As quickly as possible after the conference, I had my first copy of the bill and learned that it definitely did have a major impact on Assessors! The sections below relate to our position. (The section numbers are from the Committee Substitute A-2777).

Section 35 - Amends 40A:9-166 to add the following sentence:

"The appointing authority may, by resolution or order as appropriate, set appropriate hours of operation of the tax assessor's office and the work hours of the tax assessor, commensurate with the compensation of the tax assessor."

Section 36 - Amends 40A:9-148 and adds the following to the description of an assessor's term:

"...however, the first 12 months of any initial term shall be a probationary period during which time the municipal tax assessor or deputy assessor, as appropriate, *may be removed from office for unsatisfactory performance or FOR ANY OTHER REASON by the appointing authority.* (Emphasis added.)

Removal during a probationary period shall be considered a vacancy due to expiration of term."

Section 37 - Amends 40A:9-165, which now reads in part:

"No such ordinance shall reduce the salary of, or deny without good cause an increase in salary given to all other municipal employees to, any tax assessor, chief financial officer, tax collector or municipal clerk during the term for which he shall have been appointed."

The proposed change would result in the following language:

"No such ordinance shall reduce the salary of, with out good cause, any tax assessor, chief financial officer, tax collector or municipal clerk..."

THESE ARE MAJOR CHANGES!!!

The only other sections relating directly to us are sections 53 and 54 which change the mailing of the assessment notice from annual to annual or biennial at the direction of the governing body. I am aware that there are

(Continued on page 9)

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publisher

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS

by Brian Vigue, Editor

Here it is Summer. Time sure flies when you're having fun. We've just concluded another June Conference. It was a rousing success. Now the planning is going on for the League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City in November. It will be held in the new Atlantic City Convention Center. It is really something. I imagine that some of us will get lost in the building and travelling from the hotel to the Convention Center.

Here it is July, and I'm writing about November. I seem to always be in a rush. But Tempus is Fugiting.

November will see the inauguration of a new AMANJ President, Frank Bucino. President Burnham will get to slow down a little bit and act as the revered elder statesman. Frank's car will learn how to get to Trenton by itself. He'll get to drive from High Point to Cape May for Tri-County meetings. Good Luck!

The annual luncheon will be held in the Convention Center. Attending the luncheon will also entail registering for the convention.

Chris Wahl, the AC Committee Chair, is on top of everything. The Committee will have some excellent meetings and classes planned. Recertification credits should be available for those who need it for licensing.

The Committee has a lot of expenses and needs donations from each of the County Associations. Hosting the hospitality room costs big bucks. So make that motion to donate \$100 or \$150 from your County Association to the AMANJ Hospitality Fund. Send your donations to:

AMANJ Hospitality Fund
P.O. Box 609, Millville, NJ 08332
ATTN: Kathi Meale



**KEN BECK
SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS**

Submitted by Mike Barker, Chairman

During the Rutgers/Ramada/June conference, because I was unable to attend the conference, Leo Midure had the pleasure of announcing this year's winners of Ken Beck Scholarships. The winners were announced during the annual dinner on Wednesday evening. This year we chose not to have the winners in attendance at the dinner. We felt that



we would be able to offer more scholarships this way. Besides, most of these kids were bored to tears to hang around us old fogies. The winners are listed below:

Melinda Etschman, Williamstown, Gloucester County, Lebanon Valley College.

April Fijalkowski, Pitman, Gloucester County, Rowan U.

Theodore Gibbs, Irvington, Essex County, Seton Hall.
Jason Henbest, Toms River, Ocean County, University of Maryland - Baltimore Co.

Melissa Hesley, Philadelphia, Penn State.

Richard Kalusa, Berlin, Camden County, Rutgers.

Nicholas Nagle, Bayville, Ocean County, Rowan U.

Brian Toth, South Plainfield, Union County, West Chester University.

Tyler Vigue, Pleasantville, Atlantic County, Brigham Young.

Jamie Vituscka, Westmont, Camden County, Cook College (Rutgers).

Courtney Whiting, Clifton, Passaic Co., U. of Delaware.

Lindsey Whiting, Clifton, Passaic Co., U. of Richmond.

Congratulations to all the winners.

MS 150 CITY TO SHORE BIKE TOUR

Submitted by Terri Paglione

What's easier than dealing with your worst taxpayer? How about cycling 150 miles in two days to support the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Join "Team Tax" for the 1997 MS 150 Bike Tour, September 27 & 28.

Last year, Tom Glock, Cherry Hill Assessor, decided to take on the challenge for the first time and ride in the MS 150 Bike Tour. Terri Paglione, Willingboro Assessor, participated in the ride for the fourth time, but did not know that Tom was one of the other 3500 cyclists. After running into each other in Ocean City, they decided to form a team of Tax Assessors for the 1997 tour.

The mission of the Multiple Sclerosis Society is to end the devastating effects of MS through research and provide the necessary services and programs to those in need. The 1996 MS 150 City to Shore Bike Tour was very successful, resulting in the organization raising over one million dollars. As part of the commitment to participate in this ride, each cyclist must collect a minimum of \$150 in pledges. Both Tom and Terri decided to be a part of the Gold Club and pledged to raise \$1000 each. In the end both riders were pleased when they together collected over \$3000 in pledges.

If you can ride a bicycle, you can do the MS 150. Is it challenging? YES. Will you have sore muscles? YES. Will you have fun? YES. Please contact either Tom Glock @ 609-688-7899 or Terri Paglione @ 609-235-5203 to join "Team Tax." If you can't participate because either you or your bike has a flat tire, please support the team by making a commitment to pledge for "Team Tax." Make your check payable to the National MS Society and mail to:

Terri Paglione
6 Sheffield Ct.
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

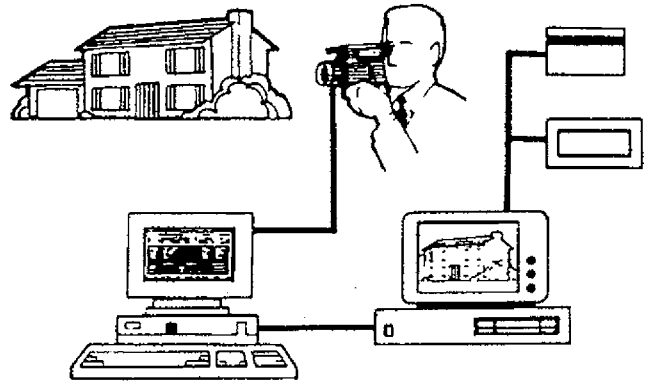
Points To Ponder . . .

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.

Most people who fail in their dreams fail not from lack of ability, but from lack of commitment.

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DON'T DO IT HALF FAST.*

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FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

from Bill Birchall & Walt Kosul

The New Jersey Legislature is on the internet. The address on the World Wide Web for their home page is:

<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us>

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NRAAO Prez Tom Glock with Judge Rimm.



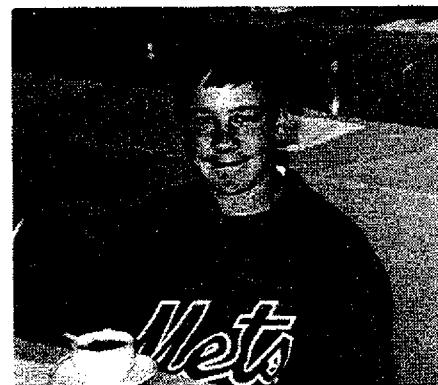
Cape May County's gift to women.



NRAAO Veep Dottie Kreitz and President Tom Glock.



A refugee from a bad French movie.



John Cohen, Lacey Township, Ocean County. A future assessor!



Mingling at the cocktail hour before the inauguration dinner.



NRAAO 1997 ATLANTIC CITY

Submitted by Tom Glock, Past President NRAAO

AMANJ had the pleasure of hosting the North Eastern Conference at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, May 18-21. As President of NRAAO for 1997 I had the pleasure of heading the committee. The conference was a success. The highlight of the conference was the annual banquet with Judge Rimm as the featured speaker. Afterwards the delegates danced to The Fabulous Grease Band.

The Sherry Vermilya Memorial Award was presented to Frank Bucino, President Elect - AMANJ, by the NRAAO "...in recognition of outstanding service to the assessment profession." Each member state and province of NRAAO can submit a candidate for the award. Frank represented New Jersey in 1997. I had the honor of presenting the award to Frank personally at the annual Rutgers/Ramada Conference.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for their hard work in making the conference a success.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About It! Burlington County Assessors Host Tri-County Meeting

Submitted by Terri Paglione

As the photos below prove, Burlington County finally hosted a Tri-County meeting. A dinner meeting was held at the Trenton Thunder Stadium Club on April 23, 1997. At the gathering the members from the three counties (Burlington, Monmouth, Ocean) gave unanimous support to a resolution endorsing Senate Bill #1564. The proposed legislation will enact a recertification and continuing education program for New Jersey Assessors.



A good time was had by all.

Photos by Terri Paglione



OFL and Mike Sheridan enjoying the game.



Bundling up and cheering for the Thunder.

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RUTGERS/RAMADA '97



Full house was the norm.



Will the mystery guests sign in please?



Daydreams & prayers.



Attentive listeners at class.



*Our Fearless Leader
exorting the troops.*



Serve yourself and save. Buffet dinner at the Ramada.



Basically the long and the short of it.

MORE FROM RUTGERS/RAMADA



Coffee break.



President Elect Frank with his entourage.



"Put your head on my shoulder."



Superman putting on his Clark Kent glasses.



Catching some rays at break.



Trader Vic and Babs enjoying the sun.



Peter E. Sockler, MAI
Principal

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ATLANTIC CITY REPORT

Submitted by Chris Wahl, Chairman

This year's League meetings will be held in the new Convention Center in Atlantic City. The Assessors Luncheon will also be in the new Center. Therefore all luncheon attendees **must register for the League**. If you need to register contact the League at the address below:

New Jersey State League of Municipalities

407 W. State Street

Trenton, NJ 08618

609-695-3481

(Fax) 609-695-0151

(E-Mail) njslom.com

Bill Dressel or Mike Darcy regarding registration.

On Thursday, November 20, AMANJ will participate in a Joint League Session entitled:

"Tax Appeals – Making Lemons out of Lemonade"

An overview of state wide climate of tax appeals, including strategies employed to defend appeals and respond to the financial impact of adverse decisions. Includes a case study of one town's experience managing tax appeals. Addresses the establishment of a tax "SWAT" team and strategies for dealing with more than 400 outstanding appeals resulting in \$12,000,000 in refunds. Includes strategies for financing tax refunds and a review of current tax laws concluding with a discussion on needed tax law reforms.

Presiding . . . Muriel M. Shore, Mayor, Fairfield (Essex)

Speakers . . . Burnham Hobbs, President, AMANJ

Edw. Rosenblum, Esq., AMANJ General Counsel

David Evans, Auditor, Fairfield

Jos. Catenaro, Administrator, Fairfield

Romeo Longo, Tax Assessor, Fairfield

James Piro, Esq., Attorney, Fairfield

Judy Tripodi, Asst. Dir., Div. of Local Gov.

Serv, NJ Dept. of Community Affairs

At The Ken Beck Dinner



Where's the food?



"Psst, Victor. Don't order the linguini."



"Don't Bogart that . . ."



"If they don't bring some food soon, I'm gonna kill somebody."



A thorn midst the roses.



Pepsodent smiles.

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Legislative Alert

(continued from page 1)

differences of opinion within our group, so I will only remind everyone that the purpose of the notice is to inform taxpayers of their assessments so that they might be able to determine the need for an appeal.

On June 9, the Monday after the Rutgers Conference, A-2777 was heard and amended by the Assembly Local Government Committee. At that time Assemblywoman Murphy and Assemblymen Augustine and Weingarten were added as sponsors. Upon release from the committee, the bill, now know as Assembly Committee Substitute for A-2777, was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. On Thursday, June 12, Senate No. 2205, sponsored by Senator Scott, was introduced in the Senate and referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

On Wednesday, June 18, we became aware that a hearing was scheduled in the Assembly Committee for Monday, June 23, at 9:30 a.m. A telephone call program was implemented to recruit assistance from Assessors around the state in contacting committee members to explain our position. On Friday, June 20, we were advised that the Senate version would be heard in committee 10:00 a.m., June 23. Late that afternoon it was decided that AMANJ President Hobbs, Attorney John Lloyd and I would be in Trenton for both hearings.

Fortunately our efforts and the efforts of other affected groups were able to result in both bills being held in committee "at the request of the sponsor." Beyond that A-2777 was scheduled for a floor vote on Thursday, June 26. This also did not occur.

The pressure is temporarily off. These bills could and probably will move again when the legislature returns in the fall. All of us need to express our concerns to those members of the legislature with whom we have good relationships. The independence of future Assessors is at stake!



NRAAO '97 - Dancin' to the Fabulous Grease Band.

NJAAO



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TO JOIN

PLEASE CALL

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NRAAO 1997 ATLANTIC CITY



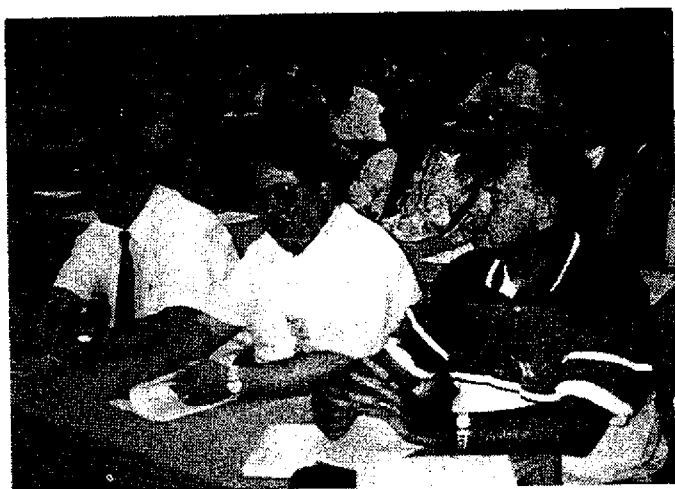
Judge Rimm and John Lloyd, Esq.



Passing on the baton. President Glock giving the gavel to 1998 President Frank Lally, Delaware.



Beverly Bova-Scarano addressing one of the sessions.



Cape May County's gift to women. (Redux)



NRAAO '97 Committee Members. Where's the food?



Conference attendees enjoying a break in the meetings.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE ISSUES REPORT

Submitted by Betsy Barr, Past Pres., AMANJ

The nominating committee issued its report at the annual board meeting at the June Conference. Chair Betsy Barr reported that the Committee met and unanimously endorsed the following candidates:

Secretary: Vicky Mickiewicz, Dover Twp., Island Heights (Ocean)

Vice President - Burlington, Monmouth, Ocean: Fred Millman, Brick, Tuckerton (Ocean)

Vice President - Essex, Morris, Union: Victor Lupi, Summit (Union)

Vice President - Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset: Jean Jacobsohn, Plainsboro (Middlesex)

Nominations will also be accepted by petition.

The election will be held at the annual meeting in Atlantic City in connection with the League of Municipalities in November.

Top Ten Ways to Avoid Investigation by the Lord High Directorate

submitted by the Atlantic City Committee

10. Move out of Glen Rock.
9. Keep ratio at 10%.
8. Register Republican.
7. Hire Local Property Field Rep to do your NJ-1040
6. Go "on-line" with Vital.
5. Wash Christie's helicopter.
4. Give Chuck Haytaian a big hug and kiss.
3. Have a "Florio Free" bumper sticker on your car.
2. Never file an SR-6.
1. Stay in bed.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by Walt Kosul & Bill Birchall

Senator Robert J. Martin's bill to revise access to public records (S-332) was on the agenda for a meeting of the State Budget and Appropriations Committee on Monday, June 23, 1997. We were concerned about the bill because of the nature of some of the information we collect in the course of the assessment process. While we were prepared to testify in opposition to the bill, a pre-meeting conference with the sponsor made us aware that our concerns were addressed by one of the proposed amendments scheduled to be adopted at that meeting. The amendment in question is contained in section 14 of the bill as amended. This section begins with the general statement: "Nothing contained in this act shall be construed to require or permit disclosure of . . ." A long list of specific items follows, outlined alphabetically. Item "v" in this list reads:

" . . . property record cards maintained by municipalities or tax assessors; provided, however, that a requestor who has filed a tax appeal shall not be prohibited from obtaining through the ordinary course of discovery in the tax appeal the property record card of the property under appeal as well as the property cards of any properties being used as comparables."

We believe that this amendment should alleviate any concerns regarding property record information and when signed into law, should be helpful to us.

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Assessors Bulletin
c/o Brian Vigue, Editor
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Pleasantville, NJ
08232-2647

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September 10, 1997



Hey! It's Rutgers/Ramada/June Conference. Hope you made it. We came, we saw, we learned, we mourned the Flyers' loss.

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