



Opinions

Office of the Vermont Secretary of State

Vol. 11, #8

September 2009



Page 8

Quote of the Month

When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on.

Thomas Jefferson

In this Issue

- Quote of the Month.....1
- Voice From the Vault.....2
- Tip of the Month.....3
- Opinions of Opinions.....4
- Nonprofit Awards.....8
- Civics Behind the Scenes....9
- Upcoming Events.....10
- Municipal Calendar.....11

A Message from the Secretary

September 17th is Constitution Day; a day to celebrate the foresight of our country’s founders for drafting a document that has endured so well over time. It also provides an opportunity to discuss with our children the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. It is easy to point to examples of how our constitution continues to be relevant today, more than 200 years after its adoption.



In my household this is particularly true. Two of my children attend Montpelier High School, where the Westboro Baptist Church from Kansas plan to protest on the day Vermont’s marriage equality law goes into effect. The church’s press release explained it was picketing a “fag infested and pervert-run school” full of students that are “violent, freakish, worthless, brute-beast children.”

As you can imagine, the announcement of this protest (and the offensive description of the school and students) led to a particularly lively discussion around the dinner table. On the one hand our constitution guarantees free speech and the right to assemble. On the other hand the speech is hateful and purposefully provocative. The kids quickly understood that the Westboro group has a right to protest – even if their views are outrageous. In a free society we cannot pick and choose which messages may be heard.

But then the conversation turned to how they should respond. As citizens don’t we have an obligation to respond to hateful speech? My son (who loves to argue) said he was looking forward to debating them. My daughter mentioned that some of the kids were planning to bring super-soakers (water pistols) to school and she thought that maybe they should be planning a counter protest instead. It proved to be an interesting discussion which included motherly advice (just ignore them) that was soundly rejected, and some advice that was not (you will be in big trouble if you participate in any super-soaking of protesters.)

We are not alone in struggling with the issue of how to respond to the Westboro group. On the one hand, they are here because they want attention, so ignoring them may be the best approach. But that is a lot to ask of high school students. In fact, the blessing of a free society and of our constitution is that each of us gets to make that decision for ourselves. Each of us has the right and, indeed, an obligation as citizens to participate in the public dialogue; whether it is by standing in protest, writing letters to the editor or using the incident to raise money for charity (as some high school students proposed.)

What an important lesson to give students on Constitution Day.

Deborah L. Markowitz, Secretary of State

This year to help our schools observe Constitution Day we have published a new booklet **Revolution, Rights and Rules: A Student’s Guide to the Vermont Constitution**. This free publication, written for middle school students, is a comprehensive study of Vermont’s constitution. It covers the historical context and the role of a constitution, and, using language from the primary source, it helps students understand the content of the constitution and how it is still relevant today. For a copy of this new publication call the Secretary of State’s Office at 802-828-1296.

Voice from the Vault

by Gregory Sanford, State Archivist

A Dutch Treat: Accessible Information

The oil embargo of the 1970s focused everyone's attention on energy issues, including conservation. The Dutch, for example, noticed that within a suburb of Amsterdam some houses were using a third less energy than their neighbors. The houses were single family dwellings, all built at the same time. They were all the same except for one thing: some houses had their electric meters in the first floor hallway, the rest had them in their basements. The houses with the meters on the first floor were the ones that had the lower energy use. Since the families in those houses regularly walked by the meters the information they needed to make energy use decisions was accessible and visible.

That is one of the outcomes we at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) are striving to achieve: put government information and records on the "first floor" where it can be more accessible and visible; where it can support decision making. This goal is shared by many. The federal government has, for example, <http://www.data.gov/> through which government information is made easier to find and use. The goal of data.gov is "to improve access to federal data and expand creative use of those data beyond the walls of government."



Maryland has created <http://www.statestat.maryland.gov/> to make "state government more accountable and efficient." Within the StateStat site users can navigate through information on how federal stimulus funds are being spent, where; the government budget; and the status of environmental clean up efforts in the Chesapeake Bay.

While these two examples are government-sponsored, in Vermont a similar effort comes from a partnership between the Ethan Allen Institute and the Public Assets Institute. That partnership created a Vermont Transparency website (<http://www.vttransparency.org>). Jack Hoffman of the Public Assets Institute explained that while the information on the website is all public it is often difficult for the average citizen to locate within the various agencies that create it or through the numerous agency websites.

While these are worthy goals there are certain barriers that have to be overcome before they can be achieved. Paul Cillo and Jack Hoffman of the Public Assets Institute recently discussed, from their perspective, some of these barriers. Their perception is that agencies primarily create or acquire records and information that only meet their specific functions and mandates. A broader vision of how that information may be of use to other agencies or to the public is frequently absent. As a consequence it is difficult to share or use that information across bureaucratic boundaries.

For their specific interest in presenting information on government budgets and budget making, for example, they discovered that legislative and executive branch data did not use consistent criteria or categories, complicating the ability to compare how the two branches developed their budgets. Even within single government units they found that some databases were built in ways that limited how they could be queried; in other words, even though the data existed its use is limited by how the database was designed.

These experiences, while limited to trying to gather and comprehend budget information, are not uncommon. Trying to overcome them and to develop a more global view of recordkeeping touches on what VSARA is attempting to do. I recently discussed some of our activities in my June column (http://vermont-archives.org/publications/voice/pdf/VSARA_Year1.pdf). I won't reiterate those points here, other than to note our efforts to develop a common vocabulary so government functions, activities, and records are consistently described across government.



One of the benefits of replacing distinct archival and records management programs with VSARA is the ability to develop active partnerships with agencies. In the past, for example, the Archives was largely a passive repository for whatever public records agencies, usually under specific statutory mandates, chose to deposit with us. Those records often came long after they had accomplished their immediate purpose; gubernatorial records, for example, only came to the Archives once an administration ended. The context of record creation, the arrangement of the records, etc., were often unclear or lost.

Now we actively work with those who initially create and use the records. This allows records to be consistently managed, in accordance with legal requirements and business and administrative needs, across the continuum

of their existence. VSARA's record analysts assist agencies in making decisions about their records by helping identify legal requirements, understanding business processes, etc. While the records are under the legal custodianship of the creating agency the analysts provide a more global context for making decisions about the records, breaking down some of the barriers identified earlier.

Managing all records from point of creation also helps identify the approximately two percent that are archival and will eventually come under the custodianship of the Archives. Point of creation management is also essential in a digital world. Digital records provide all sorts of advantages, particularly in terms of access and use, but they also are dependent on transitory hardware and software, are easy to alter (intentionally or not), and can, as noted above, be locked into systems that limit how they can be queried and shared. Therefore it is impractical if not impossible to wait until they are at the Archives to manage them.

All of which leads back to those Dutch houses. We are now renovating our house of government records against a context of an economic downturn that is leading to a rethinking of government itself. The decisions agencies make about managing their records through our Targeted Assistance Program will determine how accessible and useful that information will be. It is admittedly slow and occasionally tedious work. Most of you will never see that work. And yet we hope someday soon you will notice that the information you need is right there in the first floor hallway.

Tip of the Month

Attention: Town Clerks and Board of Civil Authorities Important reminder of September 20, 2009 DEADLINE

Not later than September 20th of each odd numbered year, every BCA through its town clerk must notify the Office of the Secretary of State that it has complied with the requirements of 17 V.S.A. §2150(d)(7) that the BCA has reviewed its voter registration checklist and has directed the town clerk to send challenge letters to each person that the BCA believes has left the town and no longer resides in town. The statewide checklist online system allows each town clerk to update the individual record and print a challenge letter that must be mailed with either a postpaid pre-printed post card (available from Eastern Systems and paid for by the Secretary of State) OR the challenge response form and a postpaid return window envelope for the voter to use to return the response form (window envelopes can be ordered from the Secretary of State by emailing mhodge@sec.state.vt.us).

If you need assistance with any part of the voter challenge process which is used to maintain an updated accurate list of current resident voters, please contact Melanie Hodge at (802) 828-0175 or at the email above.

If you have a tip to share, contact John Cushing at jcushing@town.milton.vt.us.

Opinions of *Opinions*

by Secretary of State Deb Markowitz

- 1. Voter checklists must be purged by September 20th.** Vermont law provides that by September 20th of each odd numbered year, the town clerk shall send a letter to the secretary of state to confirm that the BCA has completed purging the checklist. 17 V.S.A. §2150 (d)(7). A memorandum explaining the process to challenge and purge (checklist maintenance) was sent to all town and city clerks on April 8, 2009, and the memorandum is also posted on our website. To purge the checklist, the BCA must review your checklist to ensure that the clerk has removed the names of voters who have died, who have provided notice of voter registration in another jurisdiction, who have submitted a DMV change of address form indicating residence in a new town, or who have provided any other written notice (response to a challenge letter or other written notice). The BCA must also review the checklist in order to designate those voters that have not provided notice to the town of moving but who the BCA believes to have moved from your town so that the Town Clerk will be authorized to send a challenge letter to all voters who the BCA believes are no longer living in your town.
- 2. Some voters who have moved from town do not get purged.** The law establishes certain voters who can move out of town but may remain as voters in the town. These include members of the military who are on active duty and voters living outside of the United States. This only applies when the voter resided in a Vermont town or city immediately prior to joining the military or moving overseas. Until the voter leaves the military or returns to reside in the United States, the voter can remain on the checklist and vote by absentee ballot in the town in which the voter last resided before joining the military or moving overseas.
- 3. Towns should have policies on use of municipal buildings.** It is good practice for the legislative body to adopt a policy about non-municipal use of town or school property. It is constitutionally permissible for a board to prohibit any and all use by outside groups. However, it is not good policy, and may cause discrimination claims, to allow use of the buildings by certain categories or types of groups and not others, unless there is a real difference in the type of use being requested. For example, it is reasonable and acceptable to limit use of certain rooms or spaces to groups of less than 30, or to prohibit food or alcohol from being served, or to require meetings to end not later than 9 p.m. However, it may be discriminatory to allow the boy scouts to meet in a room, but to turn down a political caucus or a religious organization.
- 4. Town agent and listers are disqualified from participating on tax appeals as members of the BCA.** In the event that a town agent or a lister is also a member of the board of civil authority, the agent or lister is prohibited from serving as a member of the board when it is conducting tax appeals. The law provides that “listers and agents to prosecute and defend suits wherein a town is interested shall not be eligible to serve as members of the board while convened to hear and determine such appeals...” The law goes on to say that “listers and agents to prosecute and defend suits wherein a town is interested shall be given the opportunity to defend the appraisals in question.” 32 VSA § 4404 (d).
- 5. BCA can convene tax appeal hearings and then schedule individual hearings by continuing the hearings to a later date.** Vermont law requires the board of civil authority to begin tax appeal hearings no later than 14 days after the



last date allowed for the notice of appeal. 32 V.S.A. §4404 requires the hearings to start within the 14 days but does not require that the hearing be completed on that date. Consequently, if there are too many appeals for the board to be able to hear all of them at this first hearing date the board may convene and then continue individual hearings to a later date. In towns that have held town wide reappraisals and have a great many appeals, it makes sense to use the initial hearing date as an organizational meeting to explain the process to appellants and to schedule individual cases to be heard at a later date.

6. Tax appeal hearing may be postponed at request of appellant. A person bringing a tax appeal may request that his or her appeal date be changed to a time that is more convenient. The board may choose to go forward with the tax appeal on the scheduled date, but if it decides to postpone the hearing, the board should obtain a written waiver from the appellant of the 14 day requirement.

7. The law requires an inspection committee to visit every property whose tax assessment is being appealed. A three member inspection committee must be appointed by the BCA to inspect the property subject to tax appeal. 32 V.S.A. §4404. The listers are not entitled to attend the site visit, but may do so if the property owner permits. It is best for the committee to view the property as a group – but it is not required by law. The committee must look at both the inside and the outside of the property and then report back to the full BCA their observations within 30 days from the hearing. If, after notice, an appellant refuses to allow the inspection committee to inspect whatever parts of the property (both outside and inside) it wants to inspect, the appeal shall be deemed withdrawn.



8. The tax appeal may be conducted even if the appellant fails to attend the hearing. There are some instances in which an appellant (the landowner) is unable to attend a tax appeal hearing. When this happens the BCA must still hold the hearing, consider the landowner's written submission, inspect the property and render a decision. If the appellant wishes, he or she may ask someone else to represent him at the hearing. This appointment should be in writing – but so long as the board feels reasonably sure that the person is acting with authority of the landowner the board should allow the appeal to proceed and then confirm with the landowner after the fact that the person had authority to act on the landowner's behalf.

9. Vacancies in the office of justice of the peace are filled by the governor with recommendations from the political party except when the justice was an independent. Vermont law does not tell us who can make recommendations to fill a justice of the peace vacancy created by the death or resignation of an independent justice. 17 V.S.A. §2623 was not amended when section 2402 was changed to allow citizens to petition for the office of justice of the peace as independents. Section 2623 provides that the town committee of the political party of the justice who created the vacancy may make recommendations to the governor, and then the governor may appoint a qualified person, whether or not the appointee is recommended by the party committee. The law does not suggest a procedure for recommendation for filling the vacancy of an independent justice, although the vacancy will be filled by appointment by the governor.

10. Incompatible office rules apply to village offices. Although 17 V.S.A. §2647, the law on incompatible offices, speaks only of town officials, these rules will also apply to village offices. 1 V.S.A. §139 provides that the laws that apply to towns in Vermont also apply to all municipal corporations including villages. Just as a selectboard member cannot be the tax collector, a trustee cannot be the village tax collector.

- 11. Village BCA is made up of different officials than the town BCA.** The board of civil authority of a village consists of the justices of the peace from town who reside in the village, the trustees of the village, and the village clerk. Other justices of the peace who reside in the town but not in the village cannot be involved in administering village elections. 17 V.S.A. §2103(5).
- 12. Village voter checklist comes from the town.** There is no need for a voter to apply separately to the village clerk to get on the village voter checklist. Rather, the village clerk must refer to the town checklist and include in the village checklist all voters living within the village who are registered to vote in the town. 17 V.S.A. §2126.
- 13. If one voter is elected both as a selectboard member and a justice of the peace, that person is only entitled to one vote on the board of civil authority.** The number of board members on the full board is also reduced by one for purposes of calculating a quorum. For example, if a town normally has a BCA made up of five selectboard members, 15 justices and a town clerk, the board would be 21 members and a quorum for other than election purposes would be 11. If, however, in the same town, two selectboard members were also elected Justices of the Peace, the board would be 19 members. A person cannot cast two votes by virtue of being elected to two different offices. **NOTE: For tax appeals, at least three members must be present and then there must be a majority vote of the board members present.**
- 14. Selectboard records and school board records should be maintained separately in the town clerk's office.** The town school district is a separate municipal corporation from the town or city. The records for each municipal corporation should be maintained separately to avoid confusion.
- 15. Municipal boards must allow the public reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters considered by the public body during the meeting, subject to reasonable rules established by the chair.** 1 V.S.A. §312(h). The statute makes it clear that a board cannot eliminate all public comment, but boards and citizens may differ in interpreting how much comment and what type of rules provide "reasonable opportunity." We think that it very much depends on the particular subject and circumstances of the meeting. Different rules regarding time and type of participation may be appropriate for different matters under consideration. We recommend that the chair outline the procedures and the board's rationale for the procedures at the beginning of any meeting at which there are large numbers of citizens who are interested in being heard at the meeting.
- 16. Unruly citizens may be removed from a public meeting.** The chair of a board may ask a citizen to refrain from using inappropriate language or from shouting out and disrupting the meeting. The chair may call for assistance from a constable or other law enforcement officer if a person refuses to abide by the reasonable request for order by the chair. If a person refuses to comply or becomes threatening, the chair may temporarily adjourn the meeting to call for assistance. A public official need not accept or allow inappropriate behavior from the public.
- 17. There is no state statute that requires towns or town cemeteries to use a public bid process.** No law requires public bidding by towns (however, schools must follow bidding rules.) That being said, it is good practice for towns to adopt bidding policies. It is important for townspeople to have confidence that the board is getting the best deal possible for the town, In addition, in small communities when public officials, family members or friends may be interested in selling goods or services to the town, the public bid process allows the public to have confidence in the selection process. (Obviously, a board member cannot vote on the selection decision if he or she or a family member is one of the bidders.)



18. Schools must follow bidding requirements. School boards must publicly advertise or invite three or more bids for all items or services expected to cost over \$15,000 for the construction, purchase, lease, or improvement of any school building and for the purchase or lease of any item or items required for supply, equipment, maintenance, repair, or transportation of students. 16 V.S.A. §559. There are additional requirements for school construction contracts which exceed \$500,000 set out in subsection (b) of section 559.

19. Landowners can petition for road reclassification. 19 V.S.A. §708 (a) provides that voters and/or landowners in a town can bring in a petition of five percent of the voters to force the selectboard to consider reclassifying a particular highway in the town. The law is clear that a class four highway need not be reclassified to class three merely because there exists within a town one or more class three highways with characteristics similar to the class four highway, and if the town decides to reclassify it can require the landowners who petitioned for the reclassification to pay all or part of the cost of upgrading the road. If the selectboard decide against reclassification the landowners can appeal the decision to court which might order reclassification if it believes that the selectboard's decision was discriminatory.

20. Road reclassification appeals go to district court. If citizens are unhappy with a board decision to reclassify a road the citizens may appeal the decision to the district court. 19 V.S.A. § 726. The voters may not petition for a public vote on the matter since highway decisions are left to the discretion of the selectboard. The district court will appoint a three member commission to review the board's decision about whether the reclassification is in the public interest and then will make a recommendation to the court.

21. Only landowner may cut growth in the highway right of way without town permission. 19 V.S.A. § 901 provides that “a person, other than the abutting landowner, may not cut, trim, remove or otherwise damage any grasses, shrubs, vines, or trees growing within the limits of a state or town highway, without first having obtained the consent of the agency for state highways or the board of selectboard for town highways.” In some cases a utility may be given an easement that includes the right to trim or cut the shrubs and trees.



22. Town may not remove shade or fruit trees from highway right of way if set out or marked by abutting landowner unless safety or utility requires. The selectboard of a town are required to remove trees and bushes which obstruct the view of the highway ahead or that cause damage to the highway or that are objectionable from a material or scenic standpoint. The law provides, however, that shade and fruit trees that have been set out or marked by the abutting landowners must be preserved if the usefulness or safety of the highway is not impaired. Young trees standing at a proper distance from the roadbed and from each other, and banks and hedges of bushes that serve as a protection to the highway or add beauty to the roadside, must also be preserved. 19 V.S.A. § 904.

23. Timber cut from right of way may belong to underlying landowner. One town asked whether timber cut by a utility company and lying on a roadside is owned by the town or the owner of the property? The law is not specific. However, if the town only has a right of way or easement (and has not been deeded the land outright) - depending on the language of the easement the timber will belong to the landowner. The town must look at the deeds to know for sure.

In our monthly Opinions, we provide what we believe the law requires based upon our legal judgment, years of observing Vermont's local government practices, and Vermont Court decisions. This information is intended as a reference guide only and should not replace the advice of legal counsel.

Centennial Nonprofit Awards

Please join us in honoring Vermont's oldest nonprofits at the Centennial Awards ceremony on Wednesday, September 23, at 3:30 p.m. at the Vermont State House.

The Vermont Centennial Nonprofit Awards program honors Vermont's oldest nonprofits. Any nonprofit that has operated continuously for 100 years or more in Vermont is eligible to participate in the Centennial Awards program. This year we will be honoring four nonprofits celebrating 100 years, plus 25 organizations founded in 1898 or earlier.

We believe that it is important to recognize Vermont's oldest nonprofits for their many contributions to the State of Vermont. It takes a tremendous amount of dedication and support to keep a nonprofit active for 100 years or more. We hope that this program will deepen our understanding of how Vermont's nonprofits have enhanced our community life during the last hundred years.

The 2009 honorees include:

<u>Foundation Date</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1909	Champion Fire Company of South Londonderry
1909	Dover Center Cemetery Improvement Association
1909	Vermont Bankers Association, Inc.
1908	Bennington Park Lawn Cemetery
1898	Christian Science Society, St. Johnsbury
1898	Crescendo Club Library Association, Jeffersonville
1898	Enosburgh Falls Main Street Cemetery Association
1898	Goodrich Memorial Library, Newport
1898	Home for Aged Women of St. Johnsbury
1898	Manchester Historical Society
1898	Moore Free Library Association, Newfane
1898	Mountain View Country Club, Greensboro
1898	Tenney Memorial Library, Newbury
1898	Tyson Congregational Church, Plymouth
1898	Weybridge Cemetery Association
1897	First Universalist Parish Of Derby Line
1897	Jericho Center Cemetery Association
1897	Mark Skinner Library, Manchester
1896	Gill Odd Fellows Home of Vermont, Chester
1896	Pine Grove Cemetery Association, Newport
1896	Rutland Regional Medical Center
1895	T. W. Wood Gallery and Arts Center, Montpelier
1894	Fanny Allen Hospital, Hotel Dieu, Colchester
1894	Gilbert Hart Library Association, Wallingford
1893	Blake Memorial Library Association Of Corinth
1893	Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association Inc
1862	St. Francis Xavier School, Winooski
1853	Orleans County Historical Society, Inc.
1823	Platt Memorial Library, Shoreham



**If you would like to attend the event, please RSVP to
Ginny Colbert at 802-828-2148 or gcolbert@sec.state.vt.us**

Civics Behind the Scenes

by Missy Shea, Civics Education and Voter Outreach Coordinator

Our office is a veritable flurry of activity preparing for back to school. In our ongoing effort to prepare future voters, the Secretary of State's Office provides resources for Vermont students from kindergarten through college. Below is a brief description of a few key resources available to Vermont teachers and students free of charge. We are especially excited about two new endeavors, so please check them out!

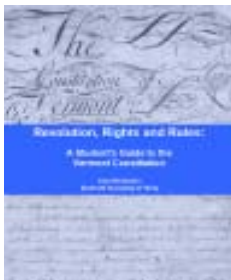
Service for Service Project - NEW!

The **Service for Service Project** was created to support families of deployed National Guard soldiers. The concept is for schools to provide assistance to families through service learning projects. Some ideas for projects include direct service such as babysitting, stacking wood, or mowing lawns. Or students can solicit donations or raise money to purchase needed items for guard families and/or soldiers. The first Service for Service venture was called **The Guard Card Project**. Through a generous donation from Verizon, and with the assistance of the USO, the Secretary of State's Office established the Guard Card Project to distribute long distance phone cards to deployed soldiers. Schools across Vermont are organizing fundraising activities to assist with the distribution of the cards.



Revolution, Rights and Rules—A Student's Guide to the Vermont Constitution - NEW!

This new booklet helps middle school students understand the 220 year-old document on which Vermont laws are based and how it continues to shape our lives today. This booklet includes questions, writing assignments, and activities that encourage students to use analytical and critical thinking skills to express their own ideas about concepts like justice. It concludes with an exercise where the class creates its own constitution.



State House Tours

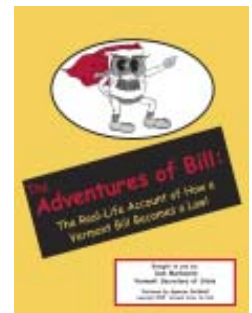
Our office works with State House staff to provide resources for fun experiences at the Capital. The publications below help students understand the important work that goes on in that beautiful, historic building:

Under the Golden Dome: A State House Tour Booklet

This booklet has activities to make a tour of the Vermont State House fun as well as educational for elementary students in grades 3 - 5. Play "legislative chutes and ladders," hunt for fossils, and learn how to turn your ideas into laws.

The Adventures of Bill: Life Account of How a Vermont Bill Becomes a Law

A comic-like booklet that makes learning about Vermont's legislative process a whole lot of fun! Middle school students will discover just how many people it takes to make a bill become a law. They will also learn how they can become involved.



Legislative Role Play

This is a dynamic way for middle school and older students to learn the processes of committee work and floor debate. Our office has developed scripts and resources for students and teachers to prepare for their visit to the State House. These tours are facilitated by a State House tour guide. This type of tour teaches young people the complexity of law-making and highlights a variety of ways in which citizens can participate in the process.

Please visit our website, www.sec.state.vt.us, for more information or to order materials.

Upcoming Events

Advanced Lister Training

Thursday, September 17, 2009 – Royalton Academy, Royalton

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tuition: \$125.00 VT town officers, \$150.00 others

This class is designed for listers who have had three or more years of experience in their office. It will cover the equalization study and a brief introduction to the various statistics, tracking the market, reappraisal requirements, and utility valuation. Offered by the **Vermont Tax Department**. For information and registration go to <http://www.state.vt.us/tax/pvrlistereducation.shtml>

NEMRC Basics Computer Lab

Monday, September 14, 2009 – Rutland Town Hall

Monday, September 21, 2009 – South Burlington Garage

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tuition: \$ 50.00 VT Town officers

\$ 75.00 Firms and others

This session is for Listers who are new to their position or need to learn the basics. Students will learn basic data entry skills and have the opportunity to enter a property into the system. Minimal computer skills Maximum of 12/session Offered by the **Vermont Tax Department**. For information and registration go to <http://www.state.vt.us/tax/pvrlistereducation.shtml>

Apex Sketching

Wednesday, September 16, 2009 – Rutland Town Hall

Wednesday, September 23, 2009 – South Burlington Garage

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tuition: \$ 50.00 VT Town officers

\$ 75.00 Firms and others

This session is for Listers who are new to their position, are planning to purchase the CAMA 2000 system or have just had the system installed. Students will complete basic sketching and will have the opportunity to enter a property into the system. A Marshall and Swift introduction will precede the computer lab. Limited computer skills are acceptable. Maximum of 12/session. Offered by the **Vermont Tax Department**. For information and registration go to <http://www.state.vt.us/tax/pvrlistereducation.shtml>

New Lister Training

Thursday, October 22, 2009 – Hartford Town Hall, WRJct

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tuition: \$ 75.00 VT Town officers

\$ 100.00 Firms and others

These sessions are for newly elected listers or those who have never been through an entire year of listing activities. You will learn about the various responsibilities of the office including lodging a grand list, downloading homestead declarations, and the obligations of the office. Attention will be given to schedules, exemptions, current use calculation and property valuation. Offered by the **Vermont Tax Department**. For information and registration go to <http://www.state.vt.us/tax/pvrlistereducation.shtml>



VLCT Town Fair

October 1, 2009

Location: Barre Municipal Civic Center, Barre, Vt

Contact: Jessica Hill (jhill@vlct.org)

Phone: 802/229-9111

Fax: 802/229-2211

Web site: <http://www.vlct.org/eventscalendar/townfair/>

The 2009 VLCT Town Fair (Annual Conference and Trade Show) will take place on October 1st at the Barre Municipal Civic Center. Up to ten training sessions will be offered on a variety of topics including the VLCT Annual Meeting. Attendees can enjoy a wonderful, traditional turkey dinner prepared by the students at the New England Culinary Institute.

Municipal Calendar

September 2009

1 - Marriage Equality Law takes effect. Act No. 3, 2009 Session

7 - Labor Day. 1 V.S.A. § 371(a)

10 - First day for members of political party to meet in caucus in their respective towns. 17 V.S.A. § 2302

15 - Last day for town clerk to remit to state treasurer an accounting of dog and wolf-hybrid licenses sold and remit the license fee surcharge for a rabies control program. 20 V.S.A. § 3581(f)

15 - By September 15 of each odd-numbered year the board of civil authority shall review the most recent checklist name by name and consider, for each person whose name appears on the checklist, whether that person is still qualified to vote. 17 V.S.A. § 2150(c)

16 - (This could change depending on what the date of the caucus is set for.) Last day for the chairman of a state committee of a political party to mail a notice of the date and purpose of the caucuses to each town clerk and to each town chairman of the party. 17 V.S.A. § 2302

20 - Last day for the board of civil authority to certify to secretary of state purging of the checklist has been completed. 17 V.S.A. § 2150(d)(7)

30 - Last day for members of a political party to meet in caucus in their respective towns. 17 V.S.A. § 2302 Within 72 hours of hours after the caucus, the chairman and secretary of the town committee shall mail to the secretary of state, the chairs of the state and county committees, and the town clerk a copy of the notice calling the meeting and a certified list of the names and mailing addresses of the officers and members of the town committee and delegates to the county committee. 17 V.S.A. § 2307

October 2009

12 Columbus Day. 1 V.S.A. § 371(a)

15 - Last day for U.S. Congressional candidates to file FEC quarterly reports for the October quarter (July 1-Sept. 30). 2 U.S.C. § 434(a)(2)

25 - State Withholding Tax Return is due (actual date by which return must be postmarked is shown on the printed form) if reporting less than \$2,500 per quarter. More than \$2,500 requires monthly report; more than \$9,000 requires semi-weekly report. 32 V.S.A. § 5842

31 - Last day to file Form 941 (Quarterly Withholding Return) with the IRS.

The Municipal Calendar is provided by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns/Chittenden Bank and the Secretary of State's Office.

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September 2009

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