

CLERK'S CORNER

1st installment May 2015 (ready for May 7th and 14th edition, updated to fit in the 21st edition)

Why do Town Clerks do some of the things they do? For instance, why does the Clerk keep pestering us with these census forms? Well, the easy answer is because the law requires it. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 51 sections 4-7 state that each year the Town Clerk must collect the following data; name, date of birth, occupation, veteran status, nationality (if not a citizen of the United States) and residence of each person three years of age or older. Census information about children under 17 is not made available to the public. The information provided by the town census is statistically important because it is used by government agencies to ensure that each community has the sufficient amount of aid for their services such as education, public works, veterans' and senior benefits, to name some.

This information is also the basis for updating the annual Voter List as well as the street listing. In June, the Town Clerk is mandated to create the street list, sometimes known as the resident book or even the "nosey" book. This listing must include this requested information plus make note of the registered voters. Again, no information for persons under 17 is listed. This book is then available to all town officials and residents for a fee. A log of all those who have this book in their possession must be kept with the Town Clerk.

In Wenham, we start requesting census information in December in an effort to collect data before the busy holiday season and also because of Wenham's Canine Control Bylaw. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 140 section 137 states that all dogs over 6 months must be licensed with proof of a valid rabies vaccination. Dog tags are important to prevent a rabies outbreak and to provide animal control officers with the necessary information to reunite you and your pet. In Wenham the bylaw XXIII states that dog licenses are valid from January 1 through December 31 of each year. By requesting census and dog information in December, it assures that the dogs are properly licensed by January 31 before the late fee is assessed and the Town Clerk will have the necessary information to complete the required voter list and street listing in a timely fashion.

In other Wenham news, the New Town Administrator, Peter Lombardi started at Town Hall on May 18th. Pleasant Pond Passes are available for purchase to all Hamilton or Wenham residents at the Wenham Clerk's office and at the Wenham Police Station. The meetings of all boards and committees are open to the public. The agendas and meeting information is always listed on the calendar page of the website: wenhamma.gov.

Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Wenham Town Clerk April 11, 2014.