

## Message from the President

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The organization welcomes input from the membership. You can contact the board members or the various committee chairpersons at the e-mail addresses found on the NALTEA website at [www.naltea.org](http://www.naltea.org).

Pat Scott, President

Email: [president@naltea.org](mailto:president@naltea.org)

Well, this is it. This is my final message to the members as president of NALTEA. As such, I think it's fitting to take a look the things we've tried to accomplish over the past two years – where we have made progress, and where we, as an organization, have yet to hit our mark.

I think our biggest accomplishment over the past couple of years has been with the certification program. It had been a long time in the making, and getting it up and running smoothly has required constant effort by the Education Committee and the Board of Directors. I believe it's also, perhaps, our most worthwhile venture. Indeed, bringing quality customers together with quality abstractors is a cause worth pursuing.

But, I don't think we've gone far enough in terms of building and promoting an abstractor who will be in high demand. At present, our designations are only an assurance of a minimum of field experience, and a sufficient understanding of a broad range of real estate terms and concepts. What about our business practices? Do our customers regard us as more professional than the next abstractor? Do we make it easy for them to do business with us? What kind of a reputation can we build as NALTEA abstractors?

I don't think competence is enough in this day and age. I would like to see NALTEA work with our members on improving our business practices, as well. I would like any customer to be assured that, when he contacts a NALTEA abstractor, his entire experience, from ordering to billing, will be one marked with professionalism. Advocacy in the regulatory arena is something that NALTEA needs to be

involved in more frequently. Keeping up with legislative developments in 50 states is a considerable task. Too often, when we find out about industry changes in a particular state, it's already too late to have any real impact. NALTEA has been fortunate of late to begin a conversation with NAILTA, the National Association of Independent Land Title Agents. Our two associations have much in common where industry best practices, and leveling the playing field for industry participants, are concerned. NAILTA is also adept at reaching government officials, and has offered us opportunities to get our message to those officials also. With the help of our members in all states, we can improve our readiness to join, or start, the conversations, at the times when we can make a difference.

There is power in numbers. As chairperson of the Membership Committee, I have watched as our numbers have grown steadily throughout the year, only to see them drop back to around zero at membership renewal time. Then, the numbers gradually rise, but we lose a few members along the way. I plan to stay on with the Membership Committee, and with more time available, I hope to be able to devote more time and energy towards recruiting new members, and to help populate committees.

I said it in my very first message as president of NALTEA, and it's still true today. We've come a long way, and we still have a long way to go. I have the utmost confidence in the remaining board members and officers. We'll get there.

**Contact:**

NALTEA  
7490 Eagle Rd.  
Waite Hill OH 44094  
Fax: 216-771-7077  
E-mail: [info@naltea.org](mailto:info@naltea.org)

## **Industry Trends**

David Pelligrinelli

[daveafx@gmail.com](mailto:daveafx@gmail.com)

As predicted, 2011 is turning out to be a breakthrough year for title search industry. Foreclosures continue to lead the market activity for many title agents and transactions, and professional searchers are adjusting to the trend. One result is that clients are less attached to the "thin search" current-owner product and are interested in more thorough investigation of the title.

Dozens of agents for various insurers are reporting that underwriters are seeing more issues from overseas searches, in the form of claims and errors. Most of these are from searches performed in years past, but it may give the insurers pause in shifting more search volume to Asia.

I have been in 8 states in the past 60 days, and inside 12 different records rooms. In talking to recorder's office employees there are a few common trends. Obviously, recording volume is down, but that is expected. With municipal revenue lower many recorders are talking about the prospect of asking for retroactive fees from lenders who processed assignments through nominee trustee systems such as MERS. How far this will go is unknown.

Another common trend is fraud, and not just on foreclosures. Even with recordings at a lower level, many recorders are still seeing deed fraud at surprisingly high levels. Most are quit-claim deeds on properties with no open mortgages, Presumably the fraudster would forge an owners name and then attempt a low LTV financing or sale to turn equity into stolen cash. Abstractors can catch this if they see obvious discrepancies in signatures from prior deeds or other red flags.

Last, most recorder's offices are dealing with staffing issues because of municipal budget cuts. We have not seen recordings backing up at all, but in some areas where the clerk makes copies there has been delays for copy runs.

I am looking forward to seeing as many NALTEA members as possible at the Clearwater Conference.

## **Train the Trainer Class**

Jeanne Johnson will teach a "Train the Trainer" class at the NALTEA Conference ([www.NALTEA.org](http://www.NALTEA.org)) in Clearwater, FL on October 21st in Clearwater, FL. The class is designed to help those knowledgeable in the Title Insurance, Abstracting and Closing industries techniques in training very technical products to industry students. "To be really good in the title industry requires a tremendous amount of technical legal knowledge, as well as investigative skill" says Johnson. While some think the skills are mundane, Johnson sees those who are good at the job as title sleuths. "In this day and time, most titles are flawed, and the title abstractors and examiners are charged with a heavy responsibility to investigate and uncover the problems."

Her "Train the Trainer" session will focus on making the experience of a title student interesting and fun. She says most people know more than they think they do about real estate titles. They know about real estate taxes, they know what an easement is, they recognize title ownership and mortgages, the key is to put them all together into a coherent pattern and lead them through the process of the investigation. "It's great fun - I am proud to be a title geek!"

**Look for Jeanne at the Conference!!**

## **Abstractor Certification**

Debi Merrill

Email: [sqi@charter.net](mailto:sqi@charter.net)

CONGRATULATIONS go out to our newest NALTEA Certified Abstractors. Alicia Messer and John DeAngelis have both passed the NALTEA National Certified Abstractor Exam. They will be awarded a certificate and can now use the NCA designation after their name. In addition, their membership on the Source of Title website will show a star by it, indicating they are NALTEA Certified Abstractors. Again, congratulations to you, Arlene & John, on being one of the elite NALTEA members to have achieved this designation.

If you too, would like to be a NALTEA Certified Abstractor, consider taking the exam at our Annual Convention October 21-23, in Clearwater, FL. There will be at least two Study Sessions held to refresh your skills and the test will be given Sunday afternoon. If you are successful in passing the Exam, your Certificate will be awarded at that time, no need to wait.

## **Membership Committee Update**

NALTEA proudly welcomes our newest members:

**Linda K. Webb**

**Julia D. Thomas** of **Athena Research, Inc.**

**Benjamin A. Luke** of **Benjamin Luke Abstract & Title Company**

**Jacque Cottrill** of **Innovative Ventures**

**John F. Wilbanks**

**Christopher M. Maschino** of **Locus Dynamics Research, LLC**

**Frank A. Domenico**

**Nancy L. Walker** of **American Insurance Professionals, LLC**

**Anita Backlund** of **Warranty Title**

NALTEA now has **82** active members.

Why the sudden decrease in membership? The NALTEA membership cycle runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Those who have not renewed their membership by paying their dues by September first are no longer considered active members.

Dues invoices are sent initially via email. Unfortunately, there is always the possibility that our email messages may end up in the spam folders of some members. If you are a NALTEA member and have not received our email communications recently, please check your spam folder and take the necessary steps to ensure that NALTEA communications are welcome in your email box.

The Membership Committee will soon send a letter via the US Postal Service to all members who have yet to renew, given the possibility that their dues invoices were not received electronically. After a reasonable opportunity to respond, the committee will send a list of still-delinquent members to the board of directors with a recommendation that the memberships be terminated.

We look forward to the busy year ahead bringing in new members and welcoming back those who have yet to renew.

Find us online at Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn!! Just search NALTEA and join the conversation!

## **Board of Directors Update**

Tamikio Veasley

Email: [tveasley@infotrackinc.com](mailto:tveasley@infotrackinc.com)

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of NALTEA was held via telephone conference on September 17th, 2011, commencing at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Present was the Board of Directors Pat Scott, Ed Gunther, Debi Merrill, Jill Kissell & Dave Pelligrinelli. Also in attendance were Vice President Doug Gallant, Treasurer Wanda Steudel & Secretary Tamikio Veasley.

The August 2011 minutes will be reviewed and approved via email. Both the April and August 2011 Treasurers report was approved unanimously.

The Education committee will assign the Continuing Education credit for the presentations during the NALTEA Conference and will be posted to the Agenda.

The Planning and Events committee extended the Early Bird Registration for three additional days and anyone registering at the conference should still be able to get a room with no problem. All speakers have now confirmed and we will again feature the Train the Trainer Session, the Certification Review Class and the Certification Testing. This will be an Educational Event you don't want to miss and as an added benefit attendance at the conference counts for your Continuing Education Credits.

Again this year there will be Round Table Discussions and Town-Hall Meetings if you have any suggestions or would like to discuss a specific topic please email any topics to the Board that you may have. Title Pac will host one of the Round Table Discussions this year so make sure you bring all your E & O Insurance questions.

Keep a look out for the position paper on Off shore and Outsourcing of title abstracting which is being finalized and will be published in the next few weeks.

The Board will meet again on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 5:00 PM central time.

