



# NALTEA

The National Association of Land  
Title Examiners and Abstractors

## Message from the President

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Happy New Year and I certainly hope everyone had a safe and Happy Holiday Season. I start this year with a guarded optimism and thinking we should see an improvement in our overall economy. This year should show us an accelerated recovery according to some economists. We should see an end to the recent downturn that has been attributed to ongoing MERS and foreclosure process reviews along with new mortgage banking regulatory requirements.

NALTEA has kicked off the New Year with a Meet & Greet in Rockford, IL at the Clock Tower Resort on January 16<sup>th</sup>. At last count more than twenty local abstractors from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin were going to be in attendance. The NALTEA Certification Review Class and onsite Certification Testing are going to be available that day. We hope to see you there.

We are hoping to see several Meet & Greets across the country this year. If you are interested in hosting a Meet & Greet please email me at: [president@naltea.org](mailto:president@naltea.org). We can provide assistance in planning and materials for an event. NALTEA currently has over twenty NCA or MCA Trainers that have attended the NALTEA Train the Trainer Sessions.

We encourage those members to use your skills to effectively recruit and train others for NALTEA membership and certification.

Those of you who attended our 2011 annual conference got some great information about vendor agreements and E&O coverage. We are currently seeing vendor agreements coming from all sides of the industry. They all are placing heavier burdens of responsibility on the abstractors. In addition, we are seeing requests for higher E&O coverage. These all appear to be linked to new mortgage banking regulatory requirements.

It's never too early to plan for the NALTEA Annual Conference. We will be back at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort in Clearwater Beach, FL October 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>. This year promises to be one of our best.

We look forward to hearing from you on issues that affect the independent abstractor and the land records research industry.

## **Board of Directors Update**

Patricia Roberts

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The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of NALTEA was held via telephone conference on December 19, 2011 at 6:00 pm EST. Present for the meeting were Board members Ed Gunther, Dave Pellegrinelli, Jill Kissell and Patricia Roberts. Also in attendance was Board Secretary Tamikio Veasely. The November 2011 minutes, the revised 2011 Treasurers report and the November 2011 Treasurers Report were approved.

On behalf of the Planning committee Ed Gunther reported that the next Meet and Greet will be held at the Best Western Clock Tower Inn on Monday, January 16, 2012 with a special rate for attendees. An email blast will be sent to researchers in Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois. The planning and events committee is already focused on finding sponsors for the 2012 conference, both to defray costs and to bring together members and potential clients.

Patricia Roberts reported the Membership committee will be reviewing the membership rolls for non-active members and is anticipating a new membership drive this year. Membership is at 86 active members with four new members in November and none in December.

Dave Pellegrinelli said the Public Relations committee is putting together a position paper on quiet title actions to remove lenders security interest in property. Another topic that was suggested was LPS Default and the Nevada lawsuit by the state of Nevada.

Jill Kissell shared on behalf of the Publications committee that Joel Kissell will be moving on from publishing the newsletter in a few months. The board is considering who might be interested in taking over this position.

A suggestion was made that the Board look into the International Right Of Way Association as an organization NALTEA may want to work with in the future. The Board is taking a closer look with plans for discussion at the next meeting, on January 23, 2012 at 5 PM CST.

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).

## **“Non-Traditional” searches becoming more mainstream**

David Pelligrinelli

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For years more experienced title abstractors have included a good mix of non-traditional title searches into their business. Cell tower searches, environmental liens, light commercial, and mineral rights orders occasionally found their way into the order bank. In today's market, these may represent a more significant portion of the search orders an abstractors finds them self working on. In fact, if you count foreclosures as a type of non-traditional search, the majority of title searches performed could be those other than traditional residential current owner or full searches.

This trend continues to be an opportunity for professional abstractors who have the knowledge and experience to handle more complex projects. Based on the wave of foreclosures still to hit the market, it does not appear that the trend will change in the near future.

Because more complex search types need thorough inspection and analysis of actual documents, most of these searches cannot be done by offshore providers or at-home searchers who use only online records. This is a welcome trend for the abstractor who provides in-person records office service and deals with clients who truly need genuine search results.

Even title insurance underwriters are turning to on-shore abstractors more frequently for searches on foreclosures and more frequently understand that these files are not standard cases. Short deadline ETA's and low dollar pricing are less of a concern when the client is aware of the complexities involved.

There are even trade associations now for searches involved in these narrow markets. One of the NALTEA officers recently came across a group called the National Right of Way Association, who's members deal specifically in ROW's and related easements. Landmen performing subsurface rights searches have had their own industry for years. Specialized search types are becoming significant industries in these narrow markets, and abstractors in certain geographic areas or those with specific skills can realize professional success by being part of the growth in these areas.

## A Good Thing in January?

### What's Up With That?

Jill Kissell

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January is typically the slowest month of the year for my abstracting business. I have one continuous 31-day panic attack every January when the fax machine stops ringing and the e-mails don't come and I still have to pay salaries and employment taxes and cell phone bills and insurance premiums and utility bills and internet service providers and office supply companies and income tax estimates and property taxes and everything else on the list that never ends (even though the title orders seem to have done just exactly that ... ended).

Every year I hold a month-long pity party in January while I re-assess the prior years' business and make whatever changes appear imminent, which often include really difficult decisions that make me even more depressed – such as cutting back on unnecessary travel expenses (and don't even get me started on that ... as far as I am concerned every time I travel it is because it is "necessary") or laying off employees that have dedicated years of their lives to me and this business .

So, it being January and all, I did of course start this year in the midst of such a panic attack and pity party. And on top of all of the regular January fiasco that I deal with, yesterday, on a highway 100 miles from home, the brakes on my vehicle went out. It was 3:30 in the afternoon, I was on my way home after having spent hours driving and putting more than 300 miles on my car that day. And there was not a mechanic in town that could fix my problem and get me back on the road in less than two days. So I played my last ace and called Triple A who sent a tow truck and gave me a lift home.

The tow truck driver was a pleasant enough gentleman with decent conversation skills and as we drove along for two hours in the darkness on the country highways of Iowa, he proceeded to tell me the story of the last 20 years of his life.

Those 20 years had not been boring. He had met a beautiful woman whom he blamed for ruining his life in two years ... introducing him to drugs, ruining his credit, and leaving him penniless.

But he had been blessed enough to meet another beautiful woman who dragged him up off the street, helped him get clean, and with whom he started a family and made a home. Like many middle-class Americans, in the early 2000s he took a second mortgage on his home in order to make some much needed improvements ... a new water main, replacing a driveway, etc. Then, after paying only two years on that 10 year second mortgage, he lost his \$40,000 a year job and found himself driving a tow truck and his income cut by more than half. He managed to modify the second mortgage to a monthly payment that he could afford, but now his second mortgage would not be paid off until he was 93 years old!

As I listened to the driver's stories of his life swinging from high to low and back again, I told myself silently "You don't have it so bad, girl. This is how business goes ... this is how life goes ... there are going to be good times and there are bad times. Enjoy the good and deal with the bad!" As my mother often said "pick yourself up and go back to life sister." (Actually, my mother was a pretty good pep talker when I was down, but her favorite thing to tell me to do to pick up my spirits was "go outside and get the stink blowed off you." Thanks for the support mom!)

As we pulled into my driveway, the tow truck driver glanced at his odometer and announced with a wide smile "98 miles ... Triple A pays for the first 100, so you're home free by 2 miles." WOW – a good thing in January? What's up with that?

## Membership Update

Patricia Roberts

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Naltea proudly welcomes our newest members:

- David Jenkins, Atlanta Georgia
- Michael Dalton of Monarch Title Company, Inc. of Columbia Missouri
- Norman R. Dasinger, Jr. of Southern Land and Title, LLC of Gadsen Alabama

Naltea now has **86** active members. The membership committee is in the process of reviewing the membership rolls. If you have not paid your dues but would like to continue to be an active member now is the time to bring your dues current.