

Next Meeting

The John Carver Inn, Plymouth



Justice Journal

Massachusetts Justices of the Peace Association, Inc.

A Publication of The Massachusetts Justices of the Peace Association, Inc.

March 2018

President's Letter

April 8 is coming quickly. We are within two weeks of our meeting and so far, we have over 30 attendees registered. If you haven't already done so, please go onto the website and register for the meeting and make sure if you are planning on joining us for the evening reception at 7 pm on April 7, that you let us know (we don't want to run out of cookies).

The Executive Board voted to change the agenda for the meeting. Rather than go through a second reading of the By-Law changes and proceed to a vote at the April meeting, after reviewing the text, and hearing from some of our members, it was clear the By-Law Committee needed to review the changes and postpone a reading until after the June election. In its place will be expanded training for new JPs as well as extended training in Notarial Services.

According to Justice Terri Orr, chair of the Scholarship Committee, her team is currently reviewing three applications. There is still time (limited, but still time) to get your application in if you have child or grandchild who qualifies for the MJPA Scholarship. Requirements are posted online on the MJPA website.

Let's get involved! April is the beginning of the Nominations process to prepare for the Annual Meeting in June. We have two two-year Director positions available as well as one one-year Director position. You can read about the roles and responsibilities of EBoard Directors in the By-Laws. Directors work with the Officers in the management of the MJPA and are responsible for chairing the standing committees of the association. I would like to see some of our newer members become actively involved in our work. The more hands the better!

I'd like to thank all of you for joining our Facebook member page! We're getting a lot of lively conversations online and for those of you who are not on FB, we'll keep the Forum up to date with the same information, along with the website. And you can always use email or, God forbid, the phone to get in touch.

Best Regards,

**Justice Donna Michael
President**



Legally Speaking

by Melinda Drew

Wacky Wedding Customs – Part 2

In a previous issue of the Justice Journal I wrote about some of the strange or wacky wedding laws in the United States. In this column you will find some similarly strange or wacky wedding laws in the U.S. and in other countries. I hope you enjoy them!

1. In Mobile, Alabama, it is against the law to throw confetti or spray silly string.

2. In Saudi Arabia, there is no minimum age for marriage. In 2008, a Saudi court refused an 8-year-old girl, who asked for a divorce from her 58-year-old husband.

3. The only two places where divorce is illegal are the Philippines and The Vatican.

4. There is a law in South Carolina called the no “mock proposal” law, which states that anybody above the age of 16-years-old is not allowed to perform a proposal if they do not mean it.

5. In Utah you can marry your cousin, but only if you are both over the age of 65. Because, you know, when you turn 65 you’re known to have impeccable judgment.

6. In Utah, a husband is responsible for his wife’s actions as long as he is with her at the time of her “actions.”

7. In Greece, if anyone wants to get married, the law requires them to publish their wedding notice in a newspaper (written in Greek) or on the City Hall notice board.

8. In France, it is said to be illegal to marry a dead person. (Hmm, I wonder why such a law is needed?)

9. In Southern Sudan people of the Neur tribe believe that the marriage is not complete until the woman has had two children. If she fails to do so, the groom is able to seek a divorce.

10. In Sweden, whenever either the bride or groom leaves their table to use the bathroom the other gets kissed...a lot. If the groom has to go then every male in the reception will get a chance to kiss the bride and vice versa. (Caveat: I’ve been to a wedding in Sweden and this was not done so I’m not so sure about this one.)

Please note: I got these from the internet so, while I think they are true (except I have doubts about # 10), I am not guaranteeing their accuracy!

In my next Justice Journal column I’ll write about some of the legal questions I have received in the last few months.

Member Profile – Dale Desmarais

by Richard Authier

(Editor's Note: Richard Authier recently volunteered to take an active role on the EBoard temporarily as Director and Chair of the Communications Committee.) He suggested that we profile new members as a way of introducing them to the Association at large.



Dale Desmarais

Born in 1973, Dale is a business professional that has had his roots in Western Massachusetts. He was born and raised in Chicopee and received his Business Management Degree from Westfield State University in 1995. Dale has held sales and management roles over the past twenty (20) years that have helped him perfect his public speaking ability. Dale has the ability to keep the ceremony professional and serious or entertaining (or somewhere in between) depending on the wishes of the couple that he is working with and their personality. His professionalism and energetic personality puts him at the top of the referral list for Banquet Halls, DJ's, Photographers and, of course, his many satisfied couples that he has had the opportunity to work with. He has been a Justice of the Peace since 2007 and in that time has performed over one hundred Ceremonies.

Welcome Dale!

I have a set of ten (10) questions for you.

1.- What made you decide to become a Justice of the Peace?

It started many years ago with a one (1) day pass for a friend who had asked me to officiate at a wedding. I had sung in groups and spoken in public, then did research and practice and was able to officiate at that ceremony. Many people

had come forward asking him to do their Weddings. Another wedding and same situation. More people asking if I was available to perform their wedding. Wife eventually suggested that I find out what was necessary to become a Justice of the Peace. there was an opening, I filed, was lucky enough to be accepted

2.- What has been your most memorable Ceremony and why?

I have doing this for about 13 years, and was asked to do an Emergency ceremony. The Bride's Mother was dying and I was asked to officiate. TVs were set up and monitors et al. A very private ceremony. Had to choke back tears due to the mother's situation. It was only four or five days after the wedding that the Mother passed away. We don't do this for the money but to help people on the best day of their lives. That mother went to her grave knowing her daughter was happily married and she had lived to see it happen. I share in the emotions of the day: happiness of the Marriage and the Sorrow of losing the mother.

3.- Have you officiated any Same Gender Ceremonies and how did you handle them?

I have done several and handle them the same as a conventional ceremony but change words here and there. I grew up Roman Catholic and had some conflicting reactions to this issue. I believe that people have a right to do as they believe (within reason.) Guests were invited to a Pizza Party, but the real reason was the marriage of these two men. The emotions of knowing that I was now practicing a new territory felt amazing.

4.- What was the most fun you have had as a Justice of the Peace?

I think one of the reasons with me is that I am more energetic and active. I tend to attract more people that want a more energetic and/or enthusiastic time. I use my TV voice as I introduce the couple so I can use my voice to keep it fun and entertaining and allow the couple to be more personal and open, allowing guest to do the same.

5.- What does your family think of you being a Justice of the Peace?

I have younger kids. My daughter is 14 and my son is 12. It's cool to be involved in extra curricular activities. I can go do the ceremony and it is usually only 15-20 minutes. Kids may complain as to why Dad has to go away for an hour or two, but I have explained that the extra monies are what allows us to do the extra things to keep the family together and enjoy each other. My wife acts as money keeper and organizer. Someone has to keep me organized.

6.- What convinced you to join the MJPA?

I am comfortable speaking in front of people but was not sure what do as a Justice of the Peace. At my first meeting I was the youngest guy in the room but was made to feel right at home. People were friendly, offered suggestions and warnings. It was a round table discussion and you (Justice Authier) introduced yourself and took me under his wing as well as other JP's

Here I found some tips and tricks. I received encouragement and it was just a natural progression to join such an active, educational group.

7.- How has MJPA helped you?

The consistent method of education and problem solving. It is difficult to call the Sec'y of States office and get an answer. They quote you the appropriate statute, but I am not a Lawyer, so I have no interpretation of what I have heard. Now I can post on Facebook or the MJPA.org and have the answer I need in practically no time and not in Legalese.

I love the fact that if I should be laid up, I have 475 members I can call in to fill in and do a professional job for me and the client

8.- How has the Mentoring Program helped you?

Rich, you were one of the first guys to come over and offer to help. I was helped tremendously by several JPs. There are a lot of customers out there that we share but having others available to help me has been really great.

9.- As you know this question was to be, What is you least favorite vegetable, but Dale, you don't dislike any. What is your most favorite vegetable?

Broccoli I hated it as a kid but I love it now. When I cook Broccoli on the grill I have to fight with my daughter to get any for myself.

10- Any further comments?

I feel really blessed to have this position, it is not an easy thing to get. There is value in numbers. If someone has a commission and does not use it, they should resign and sent it back to the Secretary of State's office. I love to make the couple feel at ease. One of the biggest joys is when random unknown people come up to you after the ceremony and say that that was the best and most pleasant ceremony they have attended in a long time.

I want to thank the Justice Journal for offering me the opportunity to be the first to be interviewed

And we thank you Dale for such a candid interview.