



President's Message



We started the New Year with a successful 1040 Update seminar on January 9. Thank you to the 1040 Update Committee, chaired by Ralph Macdonald, EA, and all the speakers for their work in putting on this seminar. Mark your calendar for June 12, 2010 to attend our MaSEA annual meeting and conference. The June convention committee has been working hard to plan a great event for you at the Resort and Conference Center at Hyannis. You will receive 8 CPE credits taught by nationally recognized speaker, Beanna Whitlock, EA, CSA. Make a weekend of it and enjoy Cape Cod before the summer crowds totally take over Hyannis. Go to our website for more details, www.mseaconline.org.

Don't forget to tune into Money Matters radio every Tuesday during tax season at 11AM or at <http://www.moneymattersradio.net/> to hear our fellow colleagues discuss various tax topics. Thank you to Fred Brewitt, EA and the PR committee for getting this off the ground.

I am also excited about the opportunity we have with The Warren Group (TWG). As you will read from the minutes, the board approved working with TWG through June of 2010 to handle some of our public relations activities including doing a member survey, media placements, and promotion of our June convention. Please do what you can in responding promptly to the member survey when you get it via

email. This will help us understand better who our members are and what we can do to improve our society to better service our members.

The Safety Net for Our Society (SOS) program has been activated for one of our members who had surgery in December. We have 12 volunteers helping out. I am so proud to be a part of this society that will help a colleague in need (even during tax season!) to keep their practice running until they can come back. This is an incredible member benefit.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming monthly meetings at the Marriott Newton. We have great educational topics at these meetings, including the ever popular 'Share Shop' in March hosted by Nancy Goedecke, EA and Lorry Sorgman, EA, MST, USTCP. Go to our website to see all the upcoming topics. We have teleconferencing capability available for the monthly meetings if you cannot travel to the meeting. Just call the office to sign up.

I wish you all a healthy and productive tax season!

Terry Durkin, EA, MBA

Welcome New Members

Please welcome the following new members. We hope to see them at an upcoming meeting.

David Pinheiro, Roger Wolf, Myrna DeJesus, Patricia Heath, Patricia Burns, Joanne Cocco, Lloyd Silvia, Zachary Beyer, Diane Wilson, Sarah Reeves, Matthew Machuga, Robert Green, Lisa Boucher, Vickie Bouvier, John Brown, William Lefebvre, Joanne McCabe and Luis Pacheco.

Submitted by: Alice McElhenny, EA, Membership Chair

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MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING, January 18, 2010

Board Members:

Present: Sarkis A. Babikian, Kay Cassidy, Theresa Durkin, Janet Foote, Randy F. Hull, Jr.,

Stephen B. Jordan, Ralph Macdonald, Eunice A. Malkasian, Alice M. McElhinney and Shantilal T. Patel.

Absent: Joyce Mohr

Guest(s): Nancy Goedecke

Quorum present? Yes

Proceedings:

Meeting called to order on Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 3:35 pm by President and Chair, Terry Durkin. Durkin welcomed Alice McElhinney back from hip surgery. Durkin commented that Peg Larsen is home and recovering well from heart surgery. Durkin reviewed the snow policy for monthly meetings. The website will be updated, ideally by noon, if the monthly meeting is cancelled. Members who signed up for the meeting will be contacted by the directors. Hull requested broadcast emails be sent to members

the morning of the meeting regarding any snow storm situation. Durkin requested the initial draft of board meeting minutes be circulated to board members only and once a final version is approved, the MaSEA office will receive its copy.

December 17, 2009 meeting minutes were reviewed. No further corrections noted, approved by President and Chair Durkin.

Treasurer's Report provided by Treasurer Janet Foote:

Foote reported the Financial Statements for the six-month fiscal period ending December 31, 2009. Overall, Foote noted, the Society's Fiscal YTD total gross income was \$56,658, a favorable variance to budget of \$9,254 or 119.52% of budget and an unfavorable variance to the preceding year of \$(3,351) or (5.58)%. Foote noted the Society's Fiscal YTD net income/(loss) was \$11,656. This represented a favorable variance to budget of \$10,120 or 758.65% of budget and an unfavorable variance to the preceding year of \$(5,941) or (33.76)%.

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Interviews with the BOD....by Randy Hull, EA

Stephen Jordon EA, Secretary

First Car: 1964 Pontiac GTO
color Turquoise

Favorite Sports Team: Montreal
Barbarians

Last book Read: Tax Fraud &
War Stories by Donald Maep-
herson

Favorite Book: "Captains &
Kings" by Taylor Caldwell

"They were Expendable" by
William White

Favorite vacation place you have been more than once: My own
backyard

Favorite Vacation Place: Cruise Ship to Anywhere

Favorite Movie of all time: Brotherhood of the Wolf

From Here to Eternity

Most recent Theater: Boston Ballet

Favorite Pet: Alpaca, color Gray, named Anslow
(This pet owned by a client)

Sports or activity you do today: Swimming & Walking

Favorite Sports Stadium/Arena: Randall's Island (NYC) Park

Sports activity you have done in the past: Tennis

Favorite Quote: "I never met a man I did not like" Will
Rogers



Favorite Food: Salmon & Salsa

Number of States you have been in: 40

Randy F. Hull Jr. EA, Past President

First Auto 1983 Ford Maverick green with white vinyl top

Name of last book read: "The First Billion is the Hardest" by
T. Boone Pickens

Favorite Vacation Place you
have been more than
once: Bermuda

Favorite Vacation Place: Ber-
muda

Favorite Movie of All
time: Fantasia by Walt Disney

Most Recent Movie seen in
Theater: Star Trek

Favorite Pet : Greyhound,
color Black, name Tobie

Sports of activity which you do
today: Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot, Four on the Fourth,
Laurel Lake Canoe & Kayak Race

Sports Activity which you have done: Track & Field - Interna-
tional Decathlon Competition

Favorite Food: Sword Fish

Number of States you have been in: I did not know I was sup-
pose to keep count!



More Guidance on First-Time Homebuyer Credit

** Taxpayers who are claiming the First-Time Homebuyer Credit on their 2009 tax return cannot efile their return, but must file a paper return.

** 1040X Processing Delay – Last summer IRS started delaying the processing of Forms 1040X, resulting in a “normal” processing timeframe of 12-16 weeks.

** Taxpayers who purchased their home after November 6, 2009, MUST use the new revised version of the Form 5405. The instructions for the revised form will contain the items that must be attached to the return. So far IRS has said for homes purchased after November 6, 2009, taxpayers are required to attach a copy of the properly executed settlement statement to their return. Taxpayers who are claiming the first time homebuyer credit as a long-term resident are required to provide verification that they resided in their previous residence for at least five (5) consecutive years. The instructions for the revised Form 5405 will identify the acceptable documentation, once they are released.

IRS website contains Q&As dealing with the First-Time Homebuyer Credit. They can be found by going to

www.irs.gov by searching for “First-Time Homebuyer Credit.” There are at least two Q&A links. They are titled “First-Time Homebuyer Credit Questions and Answers: Basic Information” and “First-Time Homebuyer Credit Questions and Answers: Homes Purchased in 2009.”

Here are some of the Q&As from these two documents. (The question numbers are our numbers and provided merely to help keep the Q&As together for this article.)

Q-1. If a taxpayer purchases a mobile home (manufactured home) with land and qualifies for the credit, is the amount of the credit based on the combined cost of the home and land?

A-1. Yes. The total purchase price (mobile home and land) is used to determine the amount of the first-time homebuyer credit.

Q-2. Is a taxpayer who purchases a mobile home and places the home on leased land eligible for the first-time homebuyer credit?

(Continued on page 6)

Cell Phone Deduction Denied

After we sent out an email (June 8, 2009) regarding IRS' proposals for determining the amount to include in an employee's compensation for the personal use of a company provided cell phones, we were a little surprised to see the issue being talked about so much on the news, almost as if including the personal usage in the employee's compensation was new. The only thing that was new was the IRS proposals for simplifying the determination of the amount to include. Here are a few cases we're run across to show IRS is serious about taxpayers supporting their deduction for cell phones.

Tax Court, in the Senulis case (TC Summary Opinion 2009-97), denied the taxpayer the deduction for cell phone usage because the taxpayer couldn't substantiate his business versus personal use of the phone. The Court felt the taxpayer used his cell phone for business purposes. The taxpayer conceded he used his cell phone for to call his wife while he was away from home. The taxpayer produced copies of cell phones bills but was not able to show which calls were business as opposed to personal. Since cell phones are listed property, taxpayers are required to substantiate the expenses. Since the taxpayer did not provide the substantiation necessary, Tax Court was required to deny the expense deduction.

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Ms. Sorgman, president of **Small Business Accounting Services**, is an Enrolled Agent, holds a Masters in Taxation from Suffolk University and is admitted to practice before the U.S. Tax Court.

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FEBRUARY 18, 2010

TOPIC: CANCELLATION OF INDEBTEDNESS INCOME AND CREDIT ISSUES
SPEAKERS: Paul Montero of Montero Credit Management, LLC will discuss understanding your credit plus alternatives to bankruptcy; and Leonard Rea, EA will speak on Cancellation of Indebtedness Income.'

MARCH 18, 2010

TOPIC: ANNUAL SHARE SHOP
SPEAKERS: LORRY SORGMAN, EA, MST, USTC AND NANCY GOEDECKE, EA

APRIL 22, 2010

TOPIC: 1031 EXCHANGES
SPEAKER: MARK COUTURE

MAY 20, 2010

TOPIC: ETHICS
SPEAKER: CAROL THOMPSON

**Massachusetts Society of Enrolled Agents
2010 Meeting, Elections & Annual Conference**

- Friday Night** 7:00 pm Dinner with your colleagues (optional)
- Saturday** 7:00 am Check-in and breakfast
- 8:00 am Reasonable Compensation
- 10:00 am Payroll Tax Audits
- 12-1:30 pm Lunch and Annual Meeting
- 1:30 pm The Ugly 1040
- 3:30 pm How to Assist Our Aging Clients
- 5:30 pm Cocktails
- 6:00 pm Banquet Dinner
- 7:00 pm CPE: Let's Die and See What Happens: Executor/Executrix
- 8:00 pm Installation of Officers
- 9-11:00 pm Dancing to the music of the Anytime Band

LOCATION: Resort and Conference Center at Hyannis

35 Scudder Avenue (West End Circle), Hyannis, MA 02601

FEATURED SPEAKER: Beanna J. Whitlock, EA, CSA

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Non Member \$275 *Early discount by April 19th \$250*

Guest and non-conferee – Saturday banquet dinner & entertainment \$50

Guest – Breakfast \$15 Optional Friday dinner at Brazilian

Grill (per person) \$33 Member Annual Meeting only no charge

Lunch for non-conferees and guests \$23

MaSEA Meeting Schedule, 2009/2010

**PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW MEETING LOCATION:
BOSTON MARRIOTT NEWTON, 2345 COMMONWEALTH AVE., NEWTON, MA.**

JUNCTION OF MASS PIKE, ROUTE 128 & ROUTE 30

Regular Monthly Meeting Price: Members, Spouse, Guest & Member Teleconference Fee: \$55 (\$50 if registered by the Monday before the meeting). Non-Member Fee \$60 (\$55 if registered by the Monday before the meeting) To Register, call 800-342-0031, Fax 978-535-1954, email: MSEAOFFICE@aol.com, Register on Line at <http://www.maseaonline.org>. Pay by Credit or Debit on line only using Paypal. Teleconferencers must pay prior to meeting and supply phone-in number & email address.

3:30 Board Meeting; 5:00 Attitude Adjustment Hour; 5:45 New Member Welcome and Tax Corner; 6:00 Dinner, 7-9:00 CPE Program

MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY OF ENROLLED AGENTS

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS, 2009/2010

- PRESIDENT: Terry Durkin, EA
- 1ST VP: Eunice A. Malkasian, EA
- 2ND VP: Shantilal T. Patel, EA
- TREASURER: Janet L. Foote, EA
- SECRETARY: Stephen B. Jordan, EA
- IMMEDIATE PP: Randy F. Hull, EA

- BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
- Joyce Ann Mohr, EA
- Sarkis A. Babikian, EA
- Ralph Macdonald, EA
- Kay L. Cassidy, EA
- Alice McElhinney, EA

The *Briefcase* is published by the Massachusetts Society of Enrolled Agents, P.O. Box 2263, Peabody, MA 01960-7263 for the benefit of MaSEA members and affiliates. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is distributed with the understanding that neither the publisher nor author is engaged in rendering specific legal, tax or accounting advice or other professional services. If specific advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

MaSEA, P.O. Box 2263, Peabody, MA 01960-7263

Email: MSEAOFFICE@AOL.COM

Telephone: 800-342-0031 Fax: 978-535-1954

Internet: <http://www.maseaonline.org>

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A-2. Yes. A mobile home may qualify as a principal residence and it is not necessary that the taxpayer own the land to qualify for the first-time homebuyer credit.

Q-3. Can a taxpayer who purchases a travel trailer qualify for the credit?

A-3. A travel trailer that is affixed to land may qualify as a principal residence.

Q-4. Can an individual who has lived in an RV qualify for the credit?

A-4. An RV with a built-in motor is personal property that is not affixed to land and does not qualify as a principal residence. Accordingly, someone who has owned and lived in an RV within the past three years may still qualify as a first-time homebuyer.

Q-5. Can a minor buy a home and claim the credit?

A-5. Minors are generally barred from claiming the credit on home purchases after November 6, 2009. To qualify for the credit, a purchaser must be at least 18 years of age on the date of purchase. For a married couple, only one spouse must meet this age requirement. A dependent is not eligible for the credit, regardless of age.

For purchases on or before November 6, 2009, the tax law does not bar a minor from buying a home and claiming the credit. However, taxpayers who do not otherwise qualify for the credit do not become eligible for the credit simply by using a minor child's name. In addition, under state law, children under the age of 18 generally are not bound by any contract they sign and cannot be required to comply with the terms of the contract. Thus, it is extremely unlikely that a seller of a home, or a lender if financing is required, would enter into a bona fide sale of a home to a child. Merely using the child's name to purchase a home does not qualify the child for the credit if, in substance, the child is not a bona fide purchaser of a home.

Q-6. I purchased a home that qualifies for the first-time homebuyer credit. I will be renting two of the bedrooms and reporting the rental income on Schedule E. Will I still qualify for the credit if I use the home as my principal residence?

A-6. Yes, if you meet all first-time homebuyer eligibility requirements.

Q-7. I purchased a duplex home with two separate dwelling units. I will live in one dwelling and will rent out the other dwelling unit and report the rental income on Schedule E. May I qualify for the first-time homebuyer credit, and what amount do I use for the purchase price to determine the amount of the credit?

A-7. Yes, you may qualify for the credit for the dwelling unit that you use as your principal residence. To determine the amount of your credit, you must allocate the purchase price of the duplex between the two separate dwelling units. You may not use the entire purchase price of the duplex to determine the amount of your credit.

Q-8. Would I be considered a first time homebuyer if I owned a

principal residence outside of the United States within the previous three years?

A-8. Yes. A taxpayer who owned a principal residence outside of the United States within the last three years is not disqualified from taking the credit for a purchase within the United States.

Q-9. I'm already a homeowner. If I buy another home after Nov. 6, 2009, to use as my principal residence, do I have to sell my home to qualify for the homebuyer tax credit?

A-9. No. If you meet all of the requirements for the credit, the law does not require you to sell or otherwise dispose of your current principal residence to qualify for a credit of up to \$6,500 when you buy a replacement home to use as your principal residence. The requirements are that you must buy, or enter into a binding contract to buy, the replacement principal residence after Nov. 6, 2009, and on or before April 30, 2010, and close on the home by June 30, 2010. Additionally, you must have lived in the same principal residence for any five-consecutive-year period during the eight-year period that ended on the date the replacement home is purchased. For example, if you bought a home on Nov. 30, 2009, the eight-year period would run from Dec. 1, 2001, through Nov. 30, 2009.

Q-10. I am a long-time resident (have owned and used my current home as a principal residence for five consecutive years out of the eight-year period ending on the date of purchase of the new residence) but my spouse has lived there for only three years. Can we qualify for the long-time resident homebuyer credit if we purchase a new principal residence?

A-10. No. Both spouses must have owned and used the same previous principal residence for five consecutive years out of the 8-year period ending on the date of purchase of the new principal residence to qualify for the credit.

Q-11. I am a long-time resident and current homeowner and my spouse is a first-time homebuyer (has had no ownership interest in a principal residence during the three-year period ending on the date of purchase of a new principal residence) and we purchased a new principal residence. Can we qualify for either the first-time homebuyer credit or the long-time resident homebuyer credit if we purchase a new principal residence?

A-11. No. Both you and your spouse must be first-time homebuyers in order to qualify for the first-time homebuyer tax credit. Since you had an ownership interest in a principal residence during the three-year period ending on the date of purchase, neither you nor your spouse qualifies for the credit. Similarly, both you and your spouse must be longtime homeowners of the same previous principal residence in order to qualify for the long-time resident homebuyer credit. Since your spouse is not a long-time homeowner of your current principal residence, neither of you qualify for the credit.

Q-12. I am a long-time homeowner of a principal residence and my spouse is a long-time homeowner of a different principal residence. Can we qualify for the long-time resident homebuyer credit if we purchase a new principal residence?

A-12. No. Both spouses must have owned and used the same previous principal residence for five consecutive years out of the eight-year period ending on the date of purchase of the new principal residence to be eligible for the credit. Since you and your

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spouse owned and used different principal residences, neither of you qualify.

Q-13. How does the allocation provision work when unmarried taxpayers purchase a home together and both qualify for the first-time homebuyer credit under different tests?

A-13. Co-purchasers who are not married may allocate the credit using a reasonable method. A reasonable method is any method that does not allocate any portion of the credit to a taxpayer who is not eligible for that portion of the credit. The maximum credit for a taxpayer who qualifies under the long-time resident test is \$6,500, and the maximum credit for a taxpayer who qualifies under the first-time homebuyer test is \$8,000. One example of a reasonable method is to allocate \$6,500 to the long-time resident homebuyer and \$1,500 to the first-time homebuyer.

There are many more Q&As and other information on IRS' web site. Searching www.irs.gov for "First-time Homebuyer Credit" will lead you to this information.

We have pdf copies of each of the two Q&A documents discussed in this article. We can send you one or both of them attached to an email if you desire. We can also send you a Word copy of this article attached to an email if you would like.

This text has been shared with you courtesy of: David & Mary Mellem, EAs & Ashwaubenon Tax Professionals, 920-496-1065 (920-496-9111). davidmellem@yahoo.com, davidmellemea@yahoo.com, marymellem@yahoo.com, marymellemea@yahoo.com.

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Lorry Sorgman, EA, MST, USTCP
briEf mAil Editor
Massachusetts Society of Enrolled Agents
Po Box 2263
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Want higher profits and happier clients this tax season?

Sure you do! So I know you'll be interested in reading some tips I've put together from my many years of profit-building experience.

TEN STEPS TO HIGHER PROFITS AND HAPPIER CLIENTS

- **REMINDE YOUR CLIENTS THAT YOU DO MORE THAN PREPARE TAX RETURNS.** Let clients know all the things you can do for them. Nothing is more disheartening than hearing a client say, after the fact, "I didn't know you did estate planning, or financial planning, or tax planning, or provided management advisory services." Discuss

with your clients the kinds of services you can provide.

* **DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT BEING OVERWORKED.** If you tell clients that you are too busy, they will not refer business to you. Tax season may be your busiest time, but it's also the most effective time of the year to market your firm. Don't appear to be too busy, or business will go elsewhere - not just for tax preparation, but also for other services throughout the year.

* **PRESENT A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE.** Your printed material is one of the main ways to leave a lasting impression of your firm with your clients. Take a minute to look at your letterhead, report forms, business cards, tax return covers, and envelopes. Do they project a professional image? Are your office brochures and newsletters top quality? Your image helps establish the acceptable fee level your clients will pay.

* **SPEAK YOUR CLIENT'S LANGUAGE.** You need to speak your client's language to motivate him or her to action. Don't use terminology or concepts above or below your client's level.

* **READ WHAT YOUR CLIENTS READ.** Reading publications other than your tax and library updates (e.g., The Wall Street Journal, business and industry magazines, and popular financial magazines) will help you think a little more like your clients. Put these magazines and periodicals in your reception area. The articles in them may motivate your clients to engage you for services other than tax returns.

* **GIVE OUTSTANDING CLIENT SERVICE.** The most common complaint clients make about accountants is the lack of personal attention. Clients can get tax and accounting services from any firm in town; quality service is what keeps them coming back to you. Even during the height of tax season, make it a policy to return phone calls at least daily. If a client calls you, there is an 80% chance that the call will result in billable time. With such a high probability of selling more services, it seems that a policy of promptly returning phone calls would pay off nicely.

* **KEEP CLIENTS INFORMED.** Give clients more than just a tax return. Take the opportunity that tax season offers to put some useful information in your clients' hands - a brochure on retirement planning or 2010 tax planning ideas, for example. Encourage clients to regularly visit your website for the latest tax information.

* **LOOK FOR PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES.** As you interview your clients this tax season, ask questions about their overall financial health. Are their estate plans up to date? Do clients feel their current retirement plans will allow for a comfortable retirement? Have children's college funding needs been taken care of? When you discover areas of concern, schedule an appointment to get together after tax time. As

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More Guidance on First Time Homebuyer Credit

you prepare tax returns, note items that may evidence a need for follow-up tax or financial planning.

* **EDUCATE YOUR CLIENTS.** Tell your clients how your firm operates, who does the work, how you bill, and what they can do to keep the fee down. Let clients know they play a role in controlling costs.

* **ELIMINATE 20% OF YOUR CLIENTS.** You put a lot of effort into attracting new clients. After all, that's an essential part of growing a practice. But sometimes it's productive to review existing clients, and perhaps even get rid of a few. Most accounting offices can stand to lose the bottom 20% of their clients. You know who the bottom 20% are. They are the ones who take up all your time, never return your phone calls or bring in the materials that are needed, and then complain about the fee. They are also the clients who are most likely to give you bad publicity. Eliminating some clients may be counter-intuitive, but it can work wonders for your bottom line.

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MONEY MATTERS RADIO SHOW TIME SLOTS AVAILABLE

The MaSEA has some time slots available for EAs to be on the radio. We have had a number of presentations already. Two times are available that we would like to fill, Tuesday February 9 and March 9. The radio time is from 11:00 AM to noon and the subject is yours to pick. The presenter will be promoting their business and the Enrolled Agent name.

The program is broadcast in four - 10 to 12 minute segments and hosted by Chuck Nilosek. The EA will prepare questions to be asked during the show by Chuck (usually 10-12 question is sufficient). Some of the programs that have already been aired can be heard at the MaSEA web site. I suggest that you listen. For more information and to reserve your time, please contact Fred B. Brewitt, EA at 508-485-1040 or brewdomke@aol.com. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Fred B. Brewitt, EA

(Continued from page 4)

Cell Phone Deduction Denied

The Court also denied the deduction for cell phones in the case of Philip Jay Berg, 103 AFTR 2d 2009-249, stated "The Cohan rule does not apply to certain expenses, such as cell phones, automobiles and trucks, which are governed by the strict substantiation requirement of §274(d)." (The Cohan rule permits the Court to estimate a taxpayer's expenses in some cases.)

In the case of Hatem Elsayed, T.C. Summary Opinion 2009-81, the employers suggested that drivers might find cellular telephones useful but did not reimburse its drivers for a cellular telephone. Petitioner used the cellular telephone to contact other truckers, shippers, and receivers to discuss, among other things, the best routes for his particular destination considering his load type, load weight, and vehicle size, information that is not readily available from typical road maps. Petitioner also used the cellular telephone for personal calls. Petitioner did not keep a log of his calls, but he estimated that 80 percent of the calls had a business purpose. Tax Court stated the taxpayer is required, for listed property, to have adequate records or corroborative evidence that shows: 1) the amount of the expense, the time and place of the use of the listed property, and 3) the business purposes of the use. Since the taxpayer relied only on estimated use and did not have the required records or evidence, Tax Court was required to deny the entire deduction.

The same denial came in Alvin Floyd Cottrell, Sr., T.C. Summary Opinion 2008-101; and Moshe Shafir, T.C. Memo 2008-280.

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Lorry Sorgman, EA, MST, USTCP

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Macdonald reported the annual tax law update conference held at the Best Western Ballroom in Waltham on January 09th, 2010 generated \$18,340 income from 126 attendees. Macdonald stated of the 140 books ordered there are still a few for sale. Macdonald presented a recapitulation of the income and expenses of the seminar, thanked the speakers and suggested that the *1040 Update Seminar* scheduled for January 08, 2011 should probably stay at the Best Western in Waltham. Macdonald's decision for 2011 was based purely on economics, as the Burlington Marriott wanted twice the fees as the Best Western for our 2011 venue.

Durkin requested the Education Committee ensure any overlapping topics be eliminated between the 2011 *1040 Update Seminar* and our monthly meeting topics.

A task force, led by Joyce Mohr, was created at the December meeting and tasked with determining how MaSEA should proceed with The Warren Group (TWG). In December, Vincent Valvo and Sarah Cunningham of TWG met with Joyce Mohr, Terry Durkin, Nancy Goedecke, and Lorry Sorgman to discuss how TWG might help MaSEA. TWG works with a wide variety of associations running and managing conferences, maintaining and improving websites, producing newsletters and publications, marketing and branding organizations, and increasing membership.

Nancy Goedecke reported the findings of the task force and thanked the members of the task force for their work. The task force recommended that MaSEA engage TWG for the following three tasks between now and June 30, 2010:

Conduct a demographic information electronic survey of MaSEA members and compile results,

Engage public relations activities on behalf of the Society and

Work to secure sponsors and exhibitors for the Society's annual meeting in June.

Goedecke proposed that \$4,000, which is approximately the remaining PR budget for this fiscal year, be paid to TWG for these three tasks.

Durkin directed the Society's Strategic Plan be reviewed and updated particularly in the areas of developing new membership and offering an education venue to new tax preparer licensees.

MOTION by Durkin to utilize TWG for the following tasks to be completed by June 30, 2010 within our \$4,000 budget line item:

Conduct a demographic information electronic survey of MaSEA members and compile results,

Engage public relations activities on behalf of the Society and

Work to secure sponsors and exhibitors for the Society's annual meeting in June,

seconded by Patel; approved.

PR Committee Report provided by Janet Foote:

Foote commented on the 1120 AM WBW "talk radio" project, "Money Matters with Chuck Nilosek", Boston's Business and Financial Radio Show. MaSEA has filled time slots through the end of February and the Public Relations Committee is looking for EAs to fill the March/April weekly time slots on Tuesday's from 11:00am to 12 noon until April 15th. Foote emphasized the \$85 member fee for the appearance should be paid to the MaSEA prior to your appearance. The time slots are filled through the end of February and the Public Relations Committee is looking for EAs to fill the March/April slots.

Old Business

SOP Committee provided by Ralph Macdonald: MOTION by Jordan to vote as approved the following SOP sections:

Apex Conference Committee
MaSEA SEE Representative
Scholarship Committee

seconded by Foote; approved.

MOTION by Jordan to post the Society's SOP Manual to the Society's website, seconded by Cassidy, opposed by Patel, approved.

Durkin and Hull concurred that if specific SOP's need to be adjusted, the existing Chair of the SOP committee should be contacted with the relevant information. This notification process should be highlighted on the Society website and be self-explanatory.

MOTION by Foote to email broad-

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

cast the posting of the Society's SOP Manual to the Society's website, seconded by Malkasian, approved.

Babikian reported on the following IRS programs:

- LITC (Low Income Tax Clinic)
- VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)
- TCE (AARP) Tax Counsel for Elderly

Babikian stated Bentley has not yet responded to our query on any Grants.

Durkin suggested, and the board agreed, that we "table" any work on the LITC/VITA/TCE programs until our September 2010 meeting at which time it will be discussed

potential inclusion of these programs in our Society's venue for 2012.

Babikian reiterated grant applications for 2012 need to be made by July 10, 2011, should MaSEA decide to participate.

New Business

Babikian stated the Society collected \$2,678 from 41 *Tax Book* sales; \$5 of each book sale goes to the MaSEA Scholarship fund. There being no further business, the Thursday, January 21, 2010 Directors' meeting was officially adjourned by Terry Durkin, President, at 5:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary, Stephen B. Jordan

STAKEHOLDER LIAISON FILING SEASON LETTER

Dear Massachusetts Tax Practitioner,

As the IRS Stakeholder Liaison (SL) Area Manager for Massachusetts, I want to thank you for your past support and ask for your continued partnership with me and your local Stakeholder Liaisons. SL is proud to be in our fifth year as the practitioners' gateway to the IRS. We have had a busy year, holding practitioner events, conducting National Phone Forums and webinars, and establishing Web-based tax centers. Our local SLs have received thousands of phone calls from practitioners with suggestions on how to improve IRS systems. This partnership strengthens our mutual commitment to ensuring taxpayer compliance with federal tax responsibilities.

SL is committed to getting you the information you need. While we do not answer tax law questions or have access to your clients' tax accounts, we can steer you in the right direction.

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New Meeting Site

Meetings will be held at the Marriott Newton,
2345 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02466

Located at the Junction of the Mass Pike,
Route 128, and Route 30. It is 4 miles south on
Route 128 from our previous location.

Early Bird Discounts have been reinstated starting with the
October meeting.

Meeting price is: \$55 members/guest/spouse (discount price
\$50 if registered by the Monday prior to the meeting) \$60
non-members (discount \$55 for registration by Monday of the
meeting). Program details remain the same. Special dietary
requirements must be ordered in advance.

JANUARY MEETING NOTES

PHOTO BY PHILIP
WACHSLER, EA



Charles Markham, EA, was the guest speaker for our January meeting. He did a presentation of how to read the new HUD settlement sheets with emphasis on deductible loan origination fees. He also told us how to get abatements for our clients on property taxes.

How SL can help you navigate the IRS

The best way to stay up to date with what is happening at the IRS is to use our free products and services. Subscribe to e-News for Tax Professionals for weekly news briefs. Check out Tax Hints, and Key Messages for Tax Professionals. We offer practitioner “tax centers” that link from your organization’s Web site to ours, making it easy to find frequently-used Web pages. Join our free, educational [National Phone Forums](#) and webinars from the convenience of your office. And be assured that [IRS.gov](#) has more than just forms and publications. You will find the latest news, online tools, research services, guidance and contact information. Check out our new Tax Practitioner Video and Audio Presentations page, and visit [IRS.gov](#)’s Spanish counterpart IRS en [Español](#) for translated information.

How you can help your clients and colleagues

Tell us when you see a problem or have a suggestion to improve our processes. We introduced the Issue Management Resolution System four years ago and have had more than a thousand IMRS issues submitted. Check out some of the successes in our IMRS report on [IRS.gov](#).

Help us find ways to further our partnership. Work with us in reaching more practitioners through joint events or webinars. Include IRS information in your newsletter and Web site. Post a tax center on your Web site. Volunteer to teach a Small Business Tax Workshop in your community. Share what you learn with your colleagues.

And stay in touch with your local SL. If you need assistance in Massachusetts, contact one of the Stakeholder Liaison employees below.

Mary Hanson	Carl Young	Mary Marcotte
Phone: 617-316-2471	Phone: 617 316-2319	Phone: 617 316-2388
Fax: 617 316-2713	Fax: 617 316-2713	Fax: 617-316-2713
Email: Mary.S.Hanson@irs.gov	Email: Carl.F.Young@irs.gov	Email: Mary.M.Marcotte@irs.gov

You may also contact me, Joseph Wynne Area Manager for Stakeholder Liaison, at 203 781-3133 or Joseph.M.Wynne@irs.gov.

Filing season can be a challenging and stressful time. Together, we can make it easier. Use our free tools, products, and services, and raise your issues and concerns through your local Stakeholder Liaison.

Sincerely,

Joseph Wynne
Stakeholder Liaison Area Manager, Northeast Area
Joseph.M.Wynne@irs.gov

IRS Contact List for Practitioners

NOTE: Local Time – Alaska (AK) and Hawaii (HI) follow Pacific Time (PT)

Title	Telephone Number	Hours of Operation
Practitioner Priority Service	866-860-4259	M-F, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., local time
IRS Tax Help Line for Individuals	800-829-1040	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time
Business and Specialty Tax Line	800-829-4933	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time
e-Help Desk (IRS Electronic Products)	866-255-0654	M-F, 6:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. CT (non-peak) M-F, 6:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. CT (peak: 1/15/2010 – 4/17/2010) Saturdays 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CT (peak)
Refund Hotline	800-829-1954	Automated Service available 24/7
Forms and Publications	800-829-3676	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time
National Taxpayer Advocate's Help Line	877-777-4778	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time
Local Taxpayer Advocate – Boston, MA	617-316-2692	M-F, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., local time
Centralized Lien Payoff	800-913-6050	M-F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., local time
Centralized Bankruptcy	800-913-9358	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. ET
Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD)	800-829-4059	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time
Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) – for Businesses	800-555-4477	Automated Service and Live Assistance available 24/7
Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS) – for Individuals	800-316-6541	Automated Service and Live Assistance available 24/7
Government Entities (TEGE) Help Line	877-829-5500	M-F, 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. CT
Forms 706 and 709 Help Line	866-699-4083	M-F, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., local time
Automated Collection System (ACS) (Business)	800-829-3903	M-F, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., local time
Automated Collection System (ACS) (Individual)	800-829-7650	M-F, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., local time
Tax Fraud Referral Hotline	800-829-0433	Automated Service available 24/7
Employer Identification Number (EIN)	800-829-4933	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time
Excise Tax and Form 2290 Help Line	866-699-4096	M-F, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. ET
Identity Protection Specialized Unit (previously unresolved contacts with IRS)	800-908-4490	M-F, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., local time
Information Return Reporting	866-455-7438	M-F, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET
ITIN Program Office (Form W-7 and Acceptance Agent Program – Form 13551)	404-338-8963	Message Line: 24/7 hour operation
IRS Federally Declared Disaster or Combat Zone Inquiries Hotline	866-562-5227	M-F, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m., local time

Want quick access to more information? Click on the links below.

Appeals	Forms and Publications	Reporting Fraud	Taxpayer Advocate
ARRA Information Center	Help	Small Business/Self Employed Tax Center	Tax Professionals
Disasters	IRS.gov in Spanish	Standards of Practice	Tax Talk Today
E-file	News and Events	Subscription Services	The Tax Gap
Electronic Payments	Phishing and e-mail Scams	Tax Return Preparer Review	Where To File
Enrolled Agents	Quick Alerts		1040 Central
E-services			1040 MeF Program

Getting Ready for the 2010 Tax Filing Season

Communications

[IRS Key Messages for Tax Professionals](#): Use these messages in your publications and educational products for tax practitioners. Updated quarterly.

[Tax Hints](#) : Find information on changes in tax law, IRS regulations and tax policy administration, information on IRS structure, points of contact, phone numbers, and mailing addresses.

[IRS e-News for Tax Professionals](#): Subscribe to the IRS e-newsletter for tax pros, a weekly e-mail with news briefs and links to important information on IRS.gov/. Issued weekly.

Contacting Us

Your local Stakeholder Liaison office establishes relationships with organizations representing small business and self-employed taxpayers. They provide information about the policies, practices and procedures the IRS uses to ensure compliance with the tax laws. To establish a relationship with us, use [this list](#) to find a contact in your state.

Tools for You

Want to find the pages you need on IRS.gov more easily? [Basic Tools for Tax Professionals](#) is the place to look. This comprehensive list has what you need to help prepare your clients' tax returns and information on representation. [Electronic IRS Online Tools](#) will help you and your clients conduct business quickly and safely – electronically.