



# The Southern Essex Registry of Deeds Recorder



Register John L. O'Brien

HOW MAY WE HELP YOU?

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## Shetland Business Park Homestead Outreach

As Register of Deeds for Southern Essex District and also as a neighboring business, John L. O'Brien took the opportunity to reach out to Shetland Park employers and their employees concerning the benefit of filing a Homestead Declaration on their primary residences. After explaining the homestead benefits in a personal letter to Shetland employers, Register O'Brien assembled a team of Registry employees who visited each business and distributed informational booklets containing an application for the Homestead Declaration. Register O'Brien urged the employers to hand out the booklets to their employees and encouraged them to contact his Customer Service Team with any questions or for assistance in filing a Homestead Declaration. This forward thinking outreach program resulted in over 1500 informational booklets being handed out to Shetland Park business employees. To date, many have already taken advantage of the program and it is expected that participation will continue throughout the following weeks.

## Getting the Word Out

Where better to get the word out to the residents of local towns than at their Annual Town Meeting? Once again, Southern Essex District Register John L. O'Brien has initiated a unique Homestead Outreach Program geared to promote the Homestead Act to residents. Throughout this fall, the Register will be sending his team of homestead specialists to towns across the district to educate residents on the importance of placing a Declaration of Homestead on their primary residence. The team will also have Homestead booklets, which include an application, and answer any questions residents may have, relating to the Homestead Act.

## Topsfield Fair

The Registry of Deeds staffed a table at the Topsfield Fair to spread awareness of the Homestead Act. The last weekend of the fair, Registry staff was on site handing out booklets and literature regarding the importance of Homesteads. Additionally, they handed out information about the Census and registered people to vote.



Registry employees: Robin Harvey, Rosemary Martin, Kevin Harvey, and Dottie Hersey.

## Topsfield Seniors Visit the Registry of Deeds

On Tuesday, October 26, 2009, several members of the Topsfield Council on Aging visited the Southern Essex Registry of Deeds. Assistant Register Robin Harvey conducted a tour of the facility explaining the overall function of the Registry of Deeds as well as providing insight into how each department coordinates to fulfill the function of the Registry as a whole.

Following the tour, the seniors were given an hour long presentation by Kosta Psiakis, a member of the GIS and IT departments. This presentation consisted of educating the seniors on access and use of the Registry's website and databases for researching property, in particular their own homes. An overview of the Native American Deeds project and accompanying website ([www.nativeamericandeeds.com](http://www.nativeamericandeeds.com)) was

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also presented, explaining the importance of these historic documents as well as pointing out some of the still visible landmarks from that time period.

Each attendee received a commemorative packet of information relevant to Topsfield history, which included copies of historical documents, maps, and illustrations, as well as information about the Homestead Act and the historic information available at the Registry.

Registry tours are available to groups of any size but must be scheduled in advance. To schedule a tour for your group, please contact the Registry of Deeds at 978-741-0201.

## Mechanic's Lien Law Protection for Southern Essex Residents

Currently, Southern Essex District Register John L. O'Brien, in cooperation with Representative John Keenan (Salem), is working on revising the current Mechanic's Lien Law. Register O'Brien feels that "The law on Mechanic's Liens, as it now stands, does not afford sufficient protection for either the party filing the lien or the homeowner. "I would like to protect homeowners against fraudulent, unfair liens being placed on their homes as well as provide specific procedures and standardized forms to assist and protect those who are legitimately owed monies." Clarification on automatic extinguishment of unperfected liens, a required Notice of Lien to homeowners and penalties for fraudulent, unfair liens and failure to provide a discharge have also been requested for inclusion in the new legislation by the Register. For further information, suggestions or comments on this bill, please contact the Registry of Deeds at 978-542-1704.

## Attorney Regnante Celebrates Milestone 100 Years Young

Theodore Regnante celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on Wednesday, November 4, 2009. Ninety nine years ago, Attorney Regnante emigrated from Italy to the United States. He attended Northeastern University Law School evenings while working days to help out his mother with living expenses. Graduating with honors in 1931, Regnante was one of the youngest to receive a law degree at 22 and was admitted to the bar that same year. It was shortly after this that he created his own law firm, which is now located in Wakefield under the name Regnante, Sterio & Osborne, LLP.

Throughout his life, Attorney Regnante spent much of his time in public service. He served on the Board of Registration for the Draft as the Government Appeal Agent, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Union Hospital, Public Administrator of the Commonwealth and a member of the Commonwealth Commission of Council Against Discrimination.

Here at the Southern Essex Registry of Deeds he is most well known for his work in land recordings. Using the Polk Directories, Attorney Regnante could locate past owners of properties so that his client's property titles would be completely clear of encumbrances. In 2008, Register of Deeds John L. O'Brien honored Attorney Regnante by naming the Polk Directory Department after him. Family, friends, and colleagues joined the Register in a ceremony and reception honoring this remarkable man and his achievements.



Attorney Theodore Regnante and Register John L. O'Brien at the dedication of the *Theodore Regnante Polk Directory Department*

## One of Our Own

On September 25, 2009, Denis “Digger” Dunn, an employee of the Registry of Deeds, passed away at the age of 73. He was a GIS Consultant for multiple years after having retired from the Massachusetts Lottery.

Denis was a friend to everyone he met, and left a lasting impression on all of those he encountered. He was a kind, caring, and generous man, always there to lend a helping hand. There wasn’t anything that he wouldn’t do for you, and if he couldn’t do it himself, he knew someone that could. He was always out and about, never the type of person to sit and relax. Running errands, or visiting friends and family, he never stopped.

At the Registry Denis worked in the GIS department, and although he wasn’t familiar or comfortable with computers, he was eager to learn. He would never let a mistake get him down; show him how to do it again, and he would learn the pattern and complete the task. He always had the sharpest memory, and was a quick study. Whether you were asking if he knew which plan he scanned two weeks ago, or what the name of the little shop on the corner down the street was 20 years ago, he always knew the answer.

Denis will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him; he will always be in our thoughts.



## New Plan Room Equipment



The Plan Room Staff: *Pictured: Scott Mooney and Kathy Wilson, not pictured: Alden Clark*

After a brief breakdown of the wide format printers in the Plan Room, Register John O’Brien purchased new state of the art equipment to help bring the Registry of Deeds further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The new plotters utilize new technology that expedites the scanning and printing processes. The plan room staff has been trained on the new equipment, and the Plan Room is back up and running at full capacity. The plotters are able to print all page sizes, 24”x36”, 18”x24”, 11”x17”, and 8.5”x11” (fax size).

The new equipment incorporates the scanner and plotter into one machine along with a control station with a touch screen interface. These advancements benefit the user by giving him much more control in the scanning, printing and copying processes. The prints come out much clearer with text that appears crisper and more readable. The increase in scan options means that the scanned plans are of a better quality, which again leads to better prints as well as better viewing online. All of this is a result of Register O’Brien’s drive to better assist the customers of his Registry, after all, our motto is, “How May We Help You!”

If you need a plan, please contact Kathy, Scott, or Alden in the Plan Room at (978) 542-1758.