President’s Messages

Myrna Keplinger

President 2014-2015
December 2014

“I ALWAYS WONDERED WHY SOMEBODY DIDN’T DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, THEN I REALIZED, I AM SOMEBODY”

I saw these words in a meme recently and I wondered, “How can we convey this sentiment to our members?” I often hear that people wish things would go differently or that they’d really appreciate it if some piece legislation was changed, etc. We all have issues that we deal with on a regular basis within the title industry, such as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), legislation, educating ourselves and our employees and running our title businesses. No matter who you are, there is something near and dear to your heart. Members, it is time for you to be Somebody!

This year, why not give yourself the gift of Change for Christmas? Sign up, volunteer and make a difference to the industry and to yourself. Give just a little bit of yourself each month to the changes that you want to see happen in our industry. This year, be the change that you want to see in the title world. Volunteer to write an article for the Examiner or join a committee. For those of you who would like to join a committee, here is a brief overview of each committee.

Communications Committee
The Communications Committee prepares and reviews (in conjunction with the Executive Director) press releases, public relations brochures, publications, advertising, social media, personal appearances and other media to promote a better understanding of the land title industry and the Association and the services they provide.

Education Committee
The Education Committee has the responsibility of exploring, recommending to the Board, and then implementing Board approved programs of, training and education that will benefit the land title industry and assist the members of this Association in fulfilling the objectives of the Association. To that end, the Education Committee secures speakers for Association events involving education; secures education content for online courses, webinars and digital education content; plans and reviews available educational opportunities through the Association; and ensures that the Association is a leading provider of land title education in Virginia.

Event Committee
The Event Committee offers recommendations for social activities, themes, etc. for all events in coordination with the Executive Director. They will assist with all the social activities for all events.

Examiner Committee
The Examiner Committee publishes three times a year an Association news publication. The Examiner magazine reflects the mission and vision of VLTA, and is reviewed and shaped by the Board of Directors through the Director of the Examiner.

Legislative Affairs Committee
The Legislative Committee has the responsibility of analyzing and recommending appropriate action with respect to all proposed legislation affecting ownership of real property (and interests therein), or that may affect the land title industry in any way

Member Resources Committee
The Membership Committee endeavors to increase and retain membership in, or affiliation with, the Association.

So give yourself the Gift of Change for Christmas and volunteer for VLTA. Our Executive Director, Katie Herndon, vlta@vlta.org will be more than happy to assist you all. May everyone have a wonderful Holiday Season!
November 2014

Congratulations go out to our Executive Director, Katie Herndon, on the birth of her healthy baby boy, August Aleksandr Herndon, on Tuesday, October 28th. Katie and baby are both doing well. She was amazing at our Fall Seminar October 9 & 10th fulfilling all the Executive Director’s responsibilities!

I am pleased to announce that Joy Herndon, Owner of Cardinal Abstract Company in Warrenton, VA has been awarded the very prestigious professional designation of ALTA’s National Title Professional (NTP). There are only 38 National Title Professionals in the entire country. Congratulations to Joy who worked very hard for this designation. She is an inspiration to us all.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Fall Seminar this year and helped to make it one of our best! We were so fortunate to have Anne Anastasi, Diane Evans, Kevin Pogoda and Chad Perrine present their sessions. Lori Silverstorf won the I-pad donated by Kaufman & Canoles at the Welcome Reception.

Bella Trowbridge won the HA&W audit certification at our Keynote Lunch. Julie Rutledge was presented with the Distinguished Service Award for her 17 years of service as an educator, as a volunteer and as Editor-in-Chief of the VLTA Examiner. Congratulations Julie! It was an enjoyable time for everyone in attendance. We had amazing presenters, great sponsors and vendors, fabulous giveaways and spirited networking. For those of you who could not attend the Fall Seminar, our talented Executive Director, Katie has created a very entertaining You Tube video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZFa5z_qKjk&feature=youtu.be

Our next big event will be our VLTA Annual Convention to be held at Williamsburg on June 4-6. Please mark your calendars as you don’t want to miss it! The sponsorships are already filling up. The Education Committee and the Event Committee are putting plans in place for the 2015 VLTA Annual Convention.

I would like to remind everyone of the Annual Outstanding Professional Award. This award has a $250 case prize as well as a free registration to our VLTA’s 2015 Annual Convention. The award will be presented to one Virginia Certified Title Examiner and one Virginia Certified Title Settlement Agent. We have many knowledgeable Virginia Certified Title Examiners and Virginia Certified Settlement Agents who could easily win this prize. The application must be submitted by March 1, 2015. The entries will be reviewed by the CCE Committee between March and April with the winner being announced on May 1, 2015. Remember, the winners will receive $250 and a free registration to the Annual Convention.

The application can be found at this link:
Let the applications roll in.

Several members of our VLTA Association attended the American Land Title Association Annual Convention in Seattle Washington October 14th - 19th. Those attending from the Board were Joy Herndon, NTP; Judy Blackwell, Heather Meahl and myself. Accolades were given to our VLTA Board of Directors and Executive Director by other state executive directors for our forward thinking and the changes we have made this past year.

November is a month to give thanks and I want to thank every Board Member and our Executive Director for all their time, wisdom, insight, and ideas on how to make VLTA a better association. I am so blessed to be President of this great association.
I am pleased to announce that VLTA is instituting a new award to recognize individuals in our industry who have gone above and beyond standard practices to improve the quality of our industry and reduce title claims. The Annual Outstanding Professional Award has a $250 cash prize as well as a free registration to VLTA’s 2015 Annual Convention in Williamsburg, Virginia. The award will be presented to one Virginia Certified Title Examiner and one Virginia Certified Title Settlement Agent. I’m so excited about this award as we have many knowledgeable Virginia Certified Title Examiners and Virginia Certified Settlement Agents who could easily win this prize. The application must be submitted by March 1, 2015. The entries will be reviewed by the CCE Committee between March and April with the winner being announced on May 1, 2015. Remember, the winners will receive $250 and a free registration to the Annual Convention.

Let me give you a quick overview of the application:

- The first section is called About You. I think it is self explanatory that we need your contact information.
- You will need to check a box as to whether you are a Virginia Certified Title Examiner (VCTE), or Virginia Certified Title Settlement Agent.
- You sign the form stating you give permission for VLTA to use your material for educational purposes.
- The second page is for summarizing a specific situation or case where you have gone above and beyond standard procedures to ensure high quality work product. Your narrative should be between 1-5 pages.
- The last step is for summarizing how your extra efforts may have been instrumental in reducing the risk of a potential claim. You can attach supporting documentation to the form that you believe will demonstrate how your knowledge as a VCTE OR VCTSA helped in this situation.

The application can be found at this link:

I look forward to the applications rolling in.

*Myrna Keplinger, President*
September 2014

When I was a little girl, I remember sitting in my grandma's kitchen telling her how boring the summer had been and I could hardly wait to get back to school. She warned me that there would be a time in my life that I would wonder where the days had gone. Well, let me tell you, this has been that summer of where have the days gone!

As the fall approaches, VLTA starts working diligently on membership for the upcoming year. The question I hear most often is “Why should I be a member of VLTA”. The answer is “You want to be in the KNOW.” To keep our members in the “Know,” we have a great Fall Seminar planned. The Fall Seminar starts October 9th with a Welcome Reception and October 10 will be the Education Sessions. Since most of our members are focused on the 7 Pillars of Best Practices, the Fall Seminar will be full of information on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Best Practices. Diane Evans, President-Elect of ALTA, will be presenting Best Practices in Depth. Anne Anastasi, Past President of ALTA will be presenting Practice Application of Best Practices and the Integrated Mortgage Disclosure Rule. Kevin Pogoda, Old Republic Title, will be presenting The CFPB Files: What Not to Do. Chad Perrine, WFG, will be presenting Off Record Title Matters. This will be a day of learning and networking. There will be an iPad given out to a very lucky attendee! Our hand-selected vendors will also be knowledgeable in the 7 Pillars of Best Practices. Come to Fall Seminar and continue to be in the “Know”.

VLTA continues to keep the members in the “Know” with Legislative Affairs. This past year, we informed our members about the Transfer on Death Act, the Manufactured Home Titling Bill, Sand Replenishment Bill and Correcting Errors in Deeds Bill. This year we are working on getting the Legislative Affairs information on the website to help keep our members in the “Know”.

We are putting more of our education sessions online to make them more affordable and convenient for our members. There will be webinars on the CFPB and 7 Pillars of Best Practices.

We have had meetings this summer with our regulators talking about issues important to our members. All of our members, no matter what size of company, are concerned about the new regulations and what the regulations will mean to them.

VLTA is here to help our Title Examiners, our Agents and Underwriters to build a stronger more knowledgeable Association. Please reach out and continue to let us know your concerns. We are working to keep all our Title Insurance Professionals in the “Know.”

*Myrna Keplinger, President*
August 2014

My first month as President of VLTA has been wonderful but busy. I have been out and about in Northern Virginia talking to our members, listening to their concerns and answering questions about the VLTA. I thought I would share some of the questions.

Q. How much money does the VLTA Board of Directors make annually?

A. The Board of Directors volunteer our time, energy and ideas to the betterment of our title industry and association. If we, the members, don’t work to maintain and improve our industry, who will?

Q. Will VLTA keep members informed on the updates from CFPB?

A. Yes, we are working very diligently to keep up with all the updates coming from CFPB and will inform our membership as new information develops. This week, the CFPB has posted two new comments periods. The first comment period is a 30 day notice for Proposed Policy Statement Consumer Complaint Narrative Data. This comment period closes on August 22, 2014. As of now, the complaints are for issues with a financial product or service. CFPB has proposed a new policy that would allow consumers to publicly complain about financial services companies. According to CFPB, “The purpose of the Consumer Complaint Database, as stated in the Bureau’s two previous policy statements, is to provide consumers with timely and understandable information about consumer financial products and services, and improve the functioning, transparency, and efficiency of markets for such products and services. As a general matter, the Bureau believes that adding additional information to the Consumer Complaint Database, such as narratives, is consistent with and promotes this purpose”. The Bureau believes that publishing consumer narratives could help people shop for financial institutions or let consumers know they are not alone in a situation. One of the concerns about the Consumer Complaint Narrative Data is the complaint may be published before the complaint is validated. Trade groups have asked CFPB to extend the 30 day comment period to a 60 day comment period as the proposal raises legal and practical issues.

The 2nd comment is a 90 day comment period for a rule to Improve Information About Access to Credit in the Mortgage Market. This ruling is about updating the reporting requirements of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act. Per Director Richard Cordray “The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act helps financial regulators and public officials keep a watchful eye on emerging trends and problem areas in the mortgage market. Today’s proposal would help us understand better how to protect consumers’ access to mortgage credit while simplifying the reporting requirements for financial institutions.”

While these comment periods do not have anything directly to do with the title industry, we never know what the outcome of these comment periods may produce. It is important to be aware of all proposed actions so that the title industry is not taken by surprise by proposals that may affect us indirectly. To become more informed on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau go their website http://www.consumerfinance.gov.

Q. Will VLTA have webinars regarding the 7 Pillars of Best Practices or anything on CFPB?

A. We will definitely be presenting information on ALTA’s Best Practices and how the CFPB affects our industry. VLTA is in the process of planning all our webinars now. We expect to have our first webinar ready by October.

Q. Will there be any sessions at the Fall Seminar regarding Consumer Financial Protection Bureau?

A. Yes! We have a very exciting Fall Seminar planned for October 9th and 10th at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. October 9th will be our Welcome Reception and October 10th will be our day of Education Sessions. The Events Committee and the
Education Committee have worked tirelessly to make this Fall Seminar outstanding. Our speakers for the Education Session are:

Anne Anastasi, Past President of the American Land Title Association, will present on the application of the New Rule to everyday business practices, the details of drafting a Best Practices Manual, and the nuts and bolts of moving forward in this new era of regulation. An amazing professional, and a nationally-recognized expert, Anne is the perfect person to help VLTA's members perfect their understanding of the changing landscape of the industry. (2.0 hrs. CE/CLE/VCTSA)

Diane Evans, President-Elect of the American Land Title Association will present on the toughest Pillars of ALTA's 7 Pillars of Best Practices. Covering pitfalls and policies, Diane will demonstrate how good planning can save you and your business a lot of time and trouble in the long-run. Diane will expand on her materials from the VLTA 2014 Annual Convention, and carry the discussion much farther in this 2-hour intensive session on the Best Practices. Hour 1 will focus on Pillars 4 & 7, and hour 2 will focus on Pillars 2, 3, & 5. Come prepared to take notes! (2.0 hrs. CE/CLE/VCTE/VCTSA)

Chad Perrine, underwriting counsel for WFG National Title Insurance Company, will present on the ever-interesting stumbling block of off-record title matters. If you're looking to write a sound policy and prevent claims, this session will cover those sticky issues some agents and examiners may miss. Have you run into a hand-written map stuffed in the back of a family Bible that might have changed your entire view of a title matter? Chad will talk about how to find these pieces of evidence, and how to handle them. (1.0 hrs. CE/CLE/VCTE/VCTSA)

Kevin Pogoda, Vice President of Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, and Northern Virginia State Manager for Old Republic, will be presenting on lessons learned from actions taken by CFPB since its inception. Keep your business from making the mistakes of others by learning about some of the pitfalls others have made. Kevin will help guide students through the specific mistakes made by various businesses across the US, and will talk about how CFPB responded to these mistakes. (1.0 hrs. CE/CLE/VCTSA)

I look forward to seeing you all at the Fall Seminar. Come be part of our great VLTA!

If you have any comments or questions regarding VLTA or our title industry, please send them to us.

_Myrna Keplinger, President_
Wow!! It is such an honor to be elected president of Virginia land title association and to be working for you, our members. I have had the privilege and pleasure of serving on the board of directors for a number of years. Following in the footsteps of many great past presidents is a challenge all in itself.

I want to thank a few people, just like you would at the Oscars as this is the VLTA Oscars. My husband of 46 years, Steve, who has been my sounding board, my rock and my better half. My children-Debbie, Brian & wife Bethany, Fallon and friend, Sean, Brooke and husband Josh. Our grandkids Krysta, Harley, Justice, Patrick and Ethan with one great granddaughter-Kloe. And yes, we do have 3 grand dogs. Brodie, Lovey and Henry. All part of the family.

I also want to thank my TSG family. While I’m away from the office, my staff is there holding it all together. I couldn’t do this without them.

Let me tell you a little more about myself. I was born in the Midwest. I was taught that you treated people the way you wanted to be treated and that you lead by example. I love to use the phrase “warm and fuzzy”

Kevin Pogoda and I were laughing about how the title industry becomes your life. He remarked he felt as though it was a calling. I agree with him wholeheartedly. We are in an industry that changes daily. We never have a boring day. We are blessed that we can help people with their biggest investment of their life. How wonderful is that!!!

That being said, as an industry, we are facing new challenges every day. In the last few years we have seen the Dodd-Frank act passed which created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in 2010

In April 2012 the CFPB released a bulletin 2012-03 labeling the title industry as a service provider and assigning lenders for the liability of our work.

January 2013 brought the ALTA best practices guide, which gave us direction to be better able to comply with the CFPB requirements in protecting consumers, promoting quality service, providing for ongoing employee training and meeting legal and market requirements.

ALTA went on to release version 2.0 of the best practices in July of 2013. In November 2013, the final TILA-RESPA integrated disclosure rule was released, all of its 1888 page glory. Just three months ago the CFPB released the TILA-RESPA integrated disclosure rule small entity compliance guide, which is meant to be an easy to use summary of 1,888 page TILA-RESPA rule.

Wells Fargo released in March 2014 a newsletter to its network of settlement agents stating “Wells Fargo supports ALTA’s best practices and considers them to be guidelines for sound business practices that should ideally already be in place for business providing title and closing services to our customers” which further reinforced the necessity of understanding and complying with ALTA best practices.

In April, the CFPB released the TILA-RESPA integrated disclosure guide to the loan estimate and closing disclosure forms. This lovely 95 page guide provides the instruction for completing the new loan estimate and closing disclosure.

With the dramatic changes the title industry is facing in the upcoming year, the word “education” takes on a new meaning. We don’t know what the new normal will be, but what we do know for sure is that vhta is here to help our members as we go forward. Hopefully, your company is already working towards compliance in this area. At the ALTA 2014 business
strategies conference in Nashville it was stated that “compliance is not a destination, but a journey”. Let VLTA guide you on that journey! Let VLTA help you obtain the education that you need to face the future!

You spoke, we listened. The new face of VLTA is working smarter for our members. We are providing education in which VLTA has the Virginia certified title examiner (VCTE) course now online. This course was just recently approved for 16 CLE and the 16 CE credits are pending.

The Virginia certified title settlement agent (VCTSA) course was just recently approved for 16 credit hours with the 16 CLE's pending. We are working on getting more of our educational classes on line, which means more convenience for you and less time away from your office.

VLTA will be conducting a contest this year. One for Virginia certified title examiners and one for Virginia certified title settlement agents. There will be prize money involved. We are finalizing the rules for the contest and will have an email blast to all our members soon.

Remember, VLTA is here to help you, our members. Please let us know your ideas, wisdom, guidance or suggestions for VLTA, and thank you once again to everyone that has worked so hard to make this convention this best ever! Also, want to thank you for electing me to be your president. Thank you and have a great rest of the evening!

Myrna Keplinger, President