

NHJPA Newsletter

Welcome to the NHJPA Spring Newsletter for 2025!

We're excited to share all the latest news and updates with you. Enjoy reading!



Greetings from the President's Corner

James McKim was our speaker at our meeting in March. What a lot of Artificial Intelligence information he provided! Now that I better understand it, I am seeing it being used more and more often. If you would like to have him back, let us know! He is an amazing, well prepared speaker.

We have another great speaker booked for our November 9, 2025 meeting. I know you will want to hear what she has to say about marketing your business. Mark your calendar now!

There have been many changes in the wedding industry! You will want to see what surveys have to say about the changes later in this newsletter. When I first started Officiating, it was not unusual for the wedding party to take longer to come down the aisle than it took for the ceremony to take place! Now, often, it is just the bride and groom in front of me. Right now, I am seeing a lot of debate about favors. Are they worth the money? Do people take them home or just leave them behind on the table? Are they even necessary? Or meaningful? Are they cost effective?

If only the time spent discussing favors was spent exploring the variety of Ceremony Inclusions available! Is one necessary.....no. Is one meaningful.....absolutely! A well chosen Ceremony Inclusion is very memorable for everyone there. And, yes, it is very cost effective!

Do you have a respected friend who is a Justice of the Peace? Is this someone who could take over for you if you get sick, come down with a stomach bug or have a death in the family? All of these have happened to me, and thanks to my good friends who are members of NHJPA, my booked weddings were successfully held. Being a member of NHJPA is like having an insurance policy. You have a list of friends who can cover for you if you cannot Officiate. If you have a temperature of 102 the day before a booked wedding, you will definitely feel that access to our Membership List and a friendly helping hand, is the greatest Membership Benefit of all!!

We are always eager to include you in special events and welcome ideas for gatherings and activities! Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts. Contact Nancy Lavalley at nhjpaorg@gmail.com with your suggestions.

Best regards,
Judith Wilhelmy
President and Founder, NHJPA





Member Spotlight



Meet “Kim the JP” Kimberly Steward

*NHJPA Member from Intervale, NH
– courtesy of the Conway Daily Sun*

Kimberly “Kim the JP” Steward officiates a wedding at Cathedral Ledge in North Conway. (Tim Shellmar Photography)



Kim Steward of Intervale has been a NHJPA member since 2014 and is a justice of the peace who has done more than 1,200 ceremonies — “everything from just a couple with no witnesses to the Omni Mount Washington Hotel, all types of venues, all types of ceremonies.” She’s done weddings with only a few minutes’ notice as well as large weddings that take months to plan.

That experience really makes a difference she said in both big and little ways, including things as simple as knowing when to tell guests to sit down. “It’s the little details that make things go smoother,” she said.

Her motto is “Your wedding your way,” and she provides guidance for those who want it. “It’s something very personal. I want it to be something they want,” she said.

Steward says she has a very full website with sample ceremonies, license information and vendor links. For more, go to kimthejp.com.





March 30th meeting - Resounding Success!

"Justice Evolved: How AI is Revolutionizing the Role of Justices of the Peace"

James McKim, PMP, ITI

Guest speaker James McKim, Jr., gave an outstanding presentation to NHJPA members and guests, exploring the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) technology from as far back as 1943, marking the beginning of machine intelligence. He guided us through the advancements in AI up to the present day.

He highlighted various resources, such as Grammarly AI, ChatGPT, and Perplexity AI, among others. He discussed the potential benefits of AI, including increased efficiency and innovation, while also addressing concerns related to privacy and job displacement. Overall, his presentation offered valuable insights into the changing landscape of artificial intelligence.

Mr. McKim addressed the topic of AI applications for Justices of the Peace. We were truly inspired by the possibilities for and beyond enhancing our work writing customized wedding ceremonies through the use of AI. This led to a very active conversation leading to a very productive question-and-answer session.

To learn more about Mr. McKim and his organization, Organizational Ignition, as well as his published book titled "The Diversity Factor," which is available on Amazon, please visit <https://organizationalignition.com/>. He also shared 'inside' information that he has written another book, which is expected to be published by June 2025.

March 30th Meeting Results

NHJPA Board members presented their annual reports on activities since March 2024.

Three NHJPA positions for 2025 were up for nominations and elected by unanimous vote with the following results.

Vice President - Nancy Lavalley

Secretary - Susan Miele

Bylaws, Nominations & Elections - Patricia Berger

Annual Elections take place at the Annual Meeting. If you are interested to be considered in a position please contact Patricia Berger, Chairperson of Elections at seacoastnotary@gmail.com





Celebration of Life Ceremmony

by Dan Soucy, NHJPA Chairperson of Education and Partnerships

At the March 30th meeting, NHJPA's Dan Soucy shared his experience of conducting a Celebration of Life service. This special event provides an opportunity for family and friends to come together to honor the memory of a loved one in a meaningful way. When a Justice of the Peace is asked to lead such a service, they can guide the ceremony by incorporating personal stories, reflections, and shared experiences.

The service may include elements such as readings, music, and tributes, allowing attendees to express their feelings and celebrate the individual's life. Many families appreciate this type of service because it emphasizes joy and remembrance rather than focusing solely on loss.

For those interested in finding additional resources or guidance on planning a ceremony, you can visit [NHJPA.org/news-resources](https://www.nhjpa.org/news-resources) for further information and ideas, or reach out to one of your fellow Justices of the Peace.



NHJPA NH Food Bank Donation

At the NHJPA meetings, we host a raffle where participants can donate whatever they are able. The cash donations are then forwarded to the New Hampshire Food Bank. The Food Bank prefers cash donations over food donations because, for every \$2 received, they can purchase \$10 worth of food items. Thanks to the generosity of those who attended the meeting on March 30th, we have donated \$66 to the NH Food Bank. [Click here](#) to read more about the NH Food Bank.





Wedding Market Grows by 4.2%

Provided by Shane McMurray
CEO @ The Wedding Report, Inc.
wedding.report

The wedding market grew by 4.2% from 2023 to 2024, with spending on attire and accessories increasing, particularly for tuxedos and suits (+5.3%) and wedding dresses (+2.1%). However, couples are becoming more budget-conscious:

- 66.5% are trimming their wedding budget to some extent.
- 50% are reducing their guest list, prioritizing quality over quantity.
- Average guest counts are declining—from 134 in 2023 to 131 in 2024, with early 2025 data showing a further drop to 127 guests.

Couples today are spending smarter, focusing their budget on what truly matters to them. The guest list reduction reflects a shift toward more intimate, curated wedding experiences rather than large-scale celebrations. While costs are being cut in some areas, couples continue to invest in meaningful, high-quality purchases – attire, photography, and premium experiences.

For wedding businesses, this means a fundamental shift in how couples approach spending:

- Smaller guest lists mean more per-guest spending.
- Luxury and personalization take priority over traditional large weddings.
- Vendors who offer flexible, high-value packages will have the advantage.

The latest results are based on 19,914 data samples including behavioral and survey data collected in 2024.

All markets have been updated to 2024 data and 2025 and 2026 forecasts have been updated as well. Number of weddings will be updated later this year as we still do not have final numbers on weddings.

You can view the differences between 2023 and 2024 in this spreadsheet.

<https://twr-content.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/2023to2024.xlsx>

The Wedding Report Survey

This year the wedding report is continuing the wedding business survey series. Please use this link to participate: <https://survey.wedding.report/s3/2a7256ae75b2>. They are gathering anonymous wedding industry data on 2025/2026 bookings, guest counts, couples' budgets, business positions, and struggles. It should only take about 2 to 3 minutes. Your information is anonymous and cannot be tracked back to you or your business. Results will be shared in May 2025 via email.

Please use this link to participate: <https://survey.wedding.report/s3/2a7256ae75b2>



Upcoming Events

Save the Date

Fall Meeting Announced!

Save the Date

Mark Your Calendar!
Sunday, November 9, 2025



Marketing for Success !

**- Presenter: Heather Turner
of SCORE Granite Region**

www.score.org/graniteregion/profile/heather-turner
www.score.org/graniteregion

Puritan Backroom (Canotas Room), Manchester

Time: 1:00 PM

Cost: \$30 per person

(Includes lunch from a select menu and a non-alcoholic beverage)

More information coming in the next NHJPA Newsletter
and the NHJPA website nhjpa.org.



Summer Get Together !

Check your emails for a Summer get together. Get out your picn-a-nic basket and join us.





A Wedding Day Memoire

by Paul LaFerriere, NHJPA member



The Double-Double Ring Ceremony Extravaganza!

Last summer, 2024, I had the opportunity to perform a double ring ceremony. It all began when a couple reached out to me through my wife. She knew the groom's mother, and they didn't have a venue for their ceremony and needed a Justice of the Peace. Coincidentally, the date chosen was during the week we were on vacation at our camp at Lake Winnisquam. With the Airbnb host's permission, I was able to proceed with the ceremony.

A week before the wedding, the groom's best man contacted me with a request. Since he and his fiancée had been lifelong friends, they wanted to get married as well, making it a double-double ring ceremony. I reached out to the first couple, and they were thrilled about the idea.

To make the occasion even more special, my wife decided to create a handmade bouquet for the bride. The brides shared the bouquet made during their vows and photography. We also brought along a bottle of champagne to celebrate.

I held the ceremony on our dock, where the couples faced the water as I officiated. I had already written the vows for the original couple, and quickly wrote a second set of vows the night before, for the second couple. One of the gifts I do for the Bride and Groom is print it on parchment paper scroll and notarize it and frame it for them. I did this for both couples. It was an incredible experience!



Member News



Welcome

A warm welcome to our new NHJPA Members

Stafford – Bruce Baxter

Manchester – Brian Fanning

[Click here for the online NHJPA Listing](#)

Join the New Hampshire Justice of the Peace FB group.

[Click here to submit your request.](#)



Honoring our Dedicated Long-Term NHJPA Members

Ten Plus Years

Judith Wilhelmy

John Scuto

Nancy Lavallee

Katella Dulmage



5 Plus Years

Susan Miele

Paul Calabria

EAnn Poole

Wayne Sevin

Daniel Soucy

William Bryk

Elizabeth Calabria

Patricia Berger



Membership Renewal invoices will be sent out in early July.





We want to hear from you!

We want to hear from you! NHJPA, established in 2014, aims to educate and network with New Hampshire Justices of the Peace. Please participate in our survey so we can better serve our members. For membership inquiries, visit nhjpa.org. If you haven't already please [Click here](#) to take a brief survey!

At the NHJPA meetings, we have a raffle with participants donating what they can. The cash donations are then sent to the New Hampshire Food Bank. Food Banks prefer a cash donation over food donations. For each \$2 donated they can purchase \$10 of food items. [Click here](#) to read more about the NH Food Bank.

SCORE Granite Region is home to dedicated volunteers who provide expert guidance for small business growth. They offer a variety of resources, including free workshops and webinars covering essential small business topics. By connecting with SCORE, you can benefit from the knowledge and experience of your own personal small business mentor, who can help you navigate challenges and seize opportunities in your entrepreneurial journey. Whether you're just starting out or looking to expand your business, SCORE Granite Region is here to support you every step of the way. [SCORE Granite Region](#)



Meet your Board of Directors

President and Founder

Judith Wilhelmy, Nashua

watersideweddings@gmail.com

Chairperson of Membership

Nancy Lavallee, Danville

nhjpaorg@gmail.com

Vice President and Co-founder

Nancy Lavallee, Danville

loveknotsjp@gmail.com

Chairperson of Education and Partnerships

Dan Soucy, Hudson

alvirnechapelpj@yahoo.com

Secretary

Susan Miele, Nashua

nhweddingsbysusan@gmail.com

Chairperson of By-Laws, Nominations and Elections

Patricia Berger, Raymond

seacoastnotary@gmail.com

Treasurer

Patricia Berger, Raymond

seacoastnotary@gmail.com

Annual Elections take place at the Annual Meeting. If you are interested to be considered in a position please contact Patricia Berger, Chairperson of Elections at seacoastnotary@gmail.com

**NHJPA Mission Statement**

The New Hampshire Justice of the Peace Association promotes Professionalism and Integrity by requiring members to comply with a Code of Ethics and provides Education through meetings, workshops and networking.

New Hampshire Justice of the Peace Association

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Suggestions for Officiants

- Always check the Marriage License before signing. Ensure it does not have a watermark stating, "This is not a valid Marriage License." If possible, bring this to the couple's attention when they receive it from the City/Town Clerk.
- Always make a copy of the marriage license before submitting it to the City/Town Clerk.
- Take a picture of the couple for your records.
- Keep tissues or a handkerchief on-hand for tearful brides and grooms!
- If the wedding is to be held in the same room as the reception, strongly encourage the couple to keep the bar closed until after the ceremony. If the bar is open, guests may gather around it, and many may choose to order another drink instead of sitting down for the ceremony. This can make it difficult to get everyone seated in a timely manner when it's time for the ceremony to begin.

What Makes a Great Officiant?

To be a successful Justice of the Peace, you need to develop key skills: public speaking, listening, organization, resourcefulness, reliability, patience, humor, and flexibility. You also need a good understanding of wedding styles, options, and laws. NHJPA offers helpful information in these areas.

We are ready to help you! Join us at our upcoming meetings to meet and connect with other Justices of the Peace.

Member Benefits

- Support and Encouragement from fellow members.
- Listing and Referrals on our website.
- Referrals from other members.
- Use of NHJPA Logo for website and professional use.
- Up to date information in the Marriage Law.
- Subscription to NHJPA Times Newsletter.
- The opportunity to have legal papers signed and/or notarized at our meetings.
- Social events and tours.

For more on NHJPA Member Benefits and Membership [click here](#)

