



# THE EXAMINER

www.wcmea.com

Volume 8 Issue 2 Spring 2008

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Presuming this will be my final "Message from the President", I want express my gratitude to each of you for allowing me to represent you. This has been a challenging yet wonderful two years as President. As a 55-year-old association we have experienced much change. Current day expectations of the office most certainly are well beyond what was experienced by those from the early years. Investigation numbers are higher and more complex, disease and crime are rampant and funds available for getting the job done are scarce. All things considered it's a wonder why we do this job.

As President I have had the opportunity to work with wonderful people that are dedicated to keeping this association strong through recruitment, legislation, fund raising and education. It is important for you to understand that without the efforts of the few, things would be very different for the many. We must continue to grow and to learn, to adapt and to share. This will require each of you to get and remain involved, if not by running for office then by supporting those that are elected to those positions. New board members are traditionally selected for roles such as Sergeant-at-Arms or Member-at-Large giving them an opportunity to become accustomed to the "ways of the association" prior to graduating to more active positions.

In the past we as an association have recruited perspective board members on the day preceding the annual meeting, which automatically limits us to those that are attending the conference. I believe that recruitment needs to start earlier. In the future I would like to see a process that would allow interested members to express their willingness to run for office well in advance of the general meeting. This would give

the membership an opportunity to make an informed decision on Election Day. What is most important is matching people to right roles not just to fill a spot.

I anxiously look forward to serving the members of the WCMEA as "Past President" knowing that my role will be vital to the association. I also look forward to mentoring the newly elected President, as there are many things to learn and accomplish. Please consider joining us in a leadership role, as it is very fulfilling and there is much to do.

### ONE DAY DEATH INVESTIGATION

Wednesday, May 14, 2008 8:00 – 4:30  
Waukesha County Technical College

*Topics include:*

**Introduction to Forensic Pathology**  
*Dr. Peterson, Waukesha County Medical Examiner's office*

**Approach to the Death Scene/Evidence Recognition and Preservation**  
*Jim Yoghourtjian, Racine Police Department*

**The DA's Perspective**  
*Brad Schimel, Waukesha County District Attorney*

**Team Approach/Incident Management**  
*Cpt. Phil Horter, Brookfield Police Department*

**Postmortem Change/Time of Death**  
*Dr. Peterson, Waukesha County Medical Examiner's office*

**Panel/Case Discussions**  
*This training is free for participants, as it is funded by a grant through the Department of Justice.*

To register, please go to:  
[www.wctc.edu/cj\\_training](http://www.wctc.edu/cj_training)

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Courtesy of:

RTI Donor Services

# EMBALMING A TISSUE DONOR – THE FUNERAL DIRECTORS ROLE

*By Joseph Licata, RTI Donor Services*

The decision to donate a loved one's tissue is one of the hardest decisions a family has to make, typically at a time when they are at their lowest point in life. These families have just learned of the death of a family member when they are faced with making monumental decisions, including funeral arrangements and the option of tissue donation for transplantation.

The families who can look past their pain to think of helping others through donation are truly brave and in my mind, heroes. The tissue from a single donor can significantly help 75 to 100 people live longer, healthier lives. As science progresses, more and more patients can benefit from this selfless gift. Today, almost a million people are impacted through tissue transplant surgeries done each year in the United States, none of which would be possible without the generosity of the donor families and the cooperation of their funeral directors.

The life-saving and life-changing impact tissue transplantation has on patients, and the selfless act of these donor families, is what I hope funeral directors focus on when being faced with the prospect of embalming a tissue donor. While embalming a tissue donor does present some challenges, there are some techniques to help simplify the process:

- If an autopsy has not been done, you may start normally and raise the common carotid artery. You may want to check the condition of the arterial system before cutting into the jugular vein.
- Start injecting at a low rate of pressure and begin to open the arms and legs. Clamp off as many of the bleeders as possible. At this point you may determine to open the jugular vein.
- From this point on, if all is going well, it is a normal embalming. Now you can determine how well the limbs are taking the fluid. Usually it is not necessary to hypodermically inject the fluid, but you may if needed.
- Rub on embalming gel and pack with hardening compound before proceeding to suture. A waxed ligature works the best to prevent breaking.
- Follow the same steps for each of the arms and legs.

Families who have made the decision to donate have expressed that they are better able to go through the

bereavement process and focus on the good that came from a tragic loss. By supporting a family's decision to donate, funeral directors are providing another service to their families and their communities.

*Joe Licata is a licensed New York State funeral director and embalmer who grew up in the funeral industry. Currently, Joe is the Area Director/ Northeast Region for RTI Donor Services, a national tissue recovery agency and is a certified tissue-banking specialist by the American Association of Tissue Banks.*

## WCMEA SUMMER CONFERENCE

*by Jenifer Keach*

The WCMEA Annual June Training Conference will be held on June 2 – 4, 2008 at the Heidelberg House Resort in Green Lake, WI. A Board of Directors meeting, open to all WCMEA members, will be held at the same location on Sunday evening, June 1. The meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.

The cost for the conference will be \$225 for members and \$250 for non-members. There will be an additional cost of \$20 for guests at the banquet dinner who are not registered for the conference (spouses, friends, etc.).

Contact the Heidelberg House for reservations at 1-800-444-2812. Deadline for reservations is May 1st to guarantee room availability. Ask for the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners room block.



*We hope to see you at the Summer Conference*

# WISCONSIN TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORTER

*The following information was reported in the Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter:*

- Wisconsin ended 2007 with 741 deaths in 659 traffic crashes, according to preliminary data. Traffic fatalities were 29 more than in 2006 but 47 fewer than the five-year average of 788 deaths in 709 crashes.
- In 2007, 111 motorcyclists (106 drivers, 5 passengers) were killed, compared with 93 motorcyclists (91 drivers) in 2006.
- According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), red-light running in 2005 caused about 165,000 crashes, 176,000 injuries and 800 fatalities nationwide. About half the people who are killed in such crashes aren't the signal violators. The cost to society is estimated at \$14 billion annually. Currently, Wisconsin law doesn't allow the use of "red-light cameras," but Assembly Bill 528, if passed, would specify how they could be used.
- A July, 2007 statewide survey found that 75.3% of passenger vehicle occupants were buckled up. Wisconsin enacted a seat belt law in 1987. Belt use is the lowest (66.6%) among drivers ages 16-25. This group was 16% of all licensed drivers but accounted for 27.8% of drives in crashes in 2006.
- At 39%, Wisconsin has the highest underage drinking rate in the nation. For more information, contact Blinda Beason, BOTS Youth Alcohol Program Manager at 608-264-7337 or [blinda.beason@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:blinda.beason@dot.state.wi.us)

## WANTED: NEW "PAPER BOY" (OR GIRL)

The Examiner has been published quarterly in recent years. This issue will be my last as editor/writer/photographer. I would like to thank the WCMEA board of directors and the membership for all of the positive comments, article submissions and suggestions. If you are interested in a "career in journalism," please contact WCMEA President Al Klimek at [KlimekAG@co.brown.wi.us](mailto:KlimekAG@co.brown.wi.us)

The upcoming Summer Conference would be a great time for you to meet people and start working on ideas for stories.

## MARVIN (MARV) NELLES

Marvin (Marv) Nelles, former Marathon County Coroner and WCMEA member, died quietly at his home with family by his side on March 1, 2008.

Marv Nelles was appointed Marathon County Coroner by then Governor Patrick Lucey in 1971. Marv was appointed to serve the remainder of William O'Connor's term as O'Conner died while holding the office of Coroner. Marv went on to serve as Marathon County Coroner for six consecutive terms.

Marv will be remembered fondly as a very professional, pleasant and jovial man who enjoyed life abundantly. Marv was well known in the Wausau area for many years, not only as Coroner, but also as a radio personality and news director at WRIG radio in Wausau. Marv was also known for his tenacity in the successful sales of raffle tickets and booster calendars. Marv was an avid Packer and Brewer fan, enjoyed fly fishing and gardening. Marv will also be remembered for (to quote his obituary) "His appreciation for food was legendary".

I will always remember Marv as the man who helped me produce and read radio ads during my campaigns for Coroner. His advice and guidance to me during my early years in office were appreciated. It was always a pleasure to see Marv at social functions; he would often inquire how things were going in the "Coroner Business" and we would share the occasional humorous antidote. Thank you Marv.

Marv Nelles     March 7, 1923 – March 1, 2008

*Submitted by John Larson, Medical Examiner, Marathon County*

## GOODBYE, DR. ALEXANDER

The Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office has announced that after 2 ½ years as an Assistant M.E., Dr. Russell Alexander has left the office, accepting a similar position in Baltimore, MD. WCMEA members wish him well!

## Seminar Agenda

### Sunday June 1, 2008

6:00-8:00 PM.....Board Meeting

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### Monday June 2, 2008

8:00-8:45 AM.....Registration & Breakfast

8:45 AM.....Al Klimek  
Welcome

9:00 AM.....Dr. Neal Haskell  
Entomology Field Exercise

Briefing for the day's events and directions to site prior to leaving.

Please dress appropriately as we will be outside. This is an ALL DAY field exercise. Lunch will be provided on site.

5:00 PM.....Wrap Up & Evaluations  
at Heidel House

**Social Event – To Be Announced**

### Tuesday June 3, 2008

8:15-9:15 AM.....Registration & Breakfast

9:15 AM.....Annual Meeting

10:30-10:45 AM.....Break

12:00 PM.....LUNCH  
(Provided)

1:00-4:00 PM.....Thomas Fassbender  
& Mark Wiegert  
Steven Avery Case from an  
Investigative Standpoint

5:00 PM.....Wrap Up & Evaluations

7:00 PM.....Annual Banquet

\*\*\*\*\*

### Wednesday, June 4, 2008

8:30 AM.....Peggy Peterson  
Vital Records update

9:30 AM.....Dr. Dave M. Wilson  
HRD/Forensic Recovery K-9 Teams &  
How They Can Benefit an Investigation

12:00 PM.....Seminar Adjournment



#### Seminar Objective:

- To provide continuing education for practicing death investigators, and material suitable for law enforcement, funeral directors, attorneys, physicians, and those interested in the field.

#### Continuing Education Credits for:

- ABMDI  
Wisconsin Funeral Directors  
Wisconsin Law Enforcement
- Certificates of Attendance will be provided upon completion of the Seminar.

#### Seminar Faculty

Neal Haskell, Ph.D., B.C.E.  
Associate Professor of Biology &  
Forensic Science  
Saint Joseph's College, Indiana

Thomas J. Fassbender  
Special Agent, DCI

Mark Wiegert  
Investigator, Calumet  
County Sheriff's Department

Peggy Peterson  
Field Representative, Vital Records  
Office

Dr. Dave M. Wilson

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Accommodations:

The Heidel House Resort  
643 Illinois Ave.  
Green Lake, WI 54941

800-444-2812 or 920-294-3344

The Heidel House has made rooms available at a reasonable rate of \$62.00 per night single or \$92.00 double for the seminar. Reservations should be made by contacting the hotel directly. The Heidel House is holding a block of rooms for our seminar until May 1, 2008.



## Wisconsin Coroners & Medical Examiners Association

Presents:

### Bones, Bugs and Death Investigation Part II

2008 Annual June Training  
and Conference

June 2-5, 2008  
at

The Heidel House Resort  
Green Lake County, WI



For Directions Go To:

[www.heidelhouse.com](http://www.heidelhouse.com)

and click on directions link in top left corner or try your preferred map website.

Please submit a separate registration form for each attendee.

Send registration and checks to:

WCMEA Conference  
c/o Rock County Coroner  
3715 N. Newville Rd.  
Janesville, WI 53545

**Make checks payable to:  
WCMEA**

**\*\* Registration deadline is May 25<sup>th</sup> \*\***

# PROPER DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- Take unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers and throw them in the trash.
- Mixing prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and putting them in impermeable, nondescript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags, will further ensure the drugs are not diverted.
- Flush prescription drugs down the toilet only if the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs doing so.
- Take advantage of community pharmaceutical take-back programs that allow the public to bring unused drugs to a central location for proper disposal.
- The FDA advises that the following drugs should be flushed down the toilet instead of thrown in the trash:

Actiq (fentanyl citrate)

Daytrana Transdermal Patch (methylphenidate)

Duragesic Transdermal System (fentanyl)

OxyContin Tablets (oxycodone)

Avinza Capsules (morphine sulfate)

Baraclude Tablets (entecavir)

Reyataz Capsules (atazanavir sulfate)

Tequin Tablets (gatifloxacin)

Zerit for Oral Solution (stavudine)

Meperidine HCl Tablets

Source: [www.ondcp.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper\\_disposal.html](http://www.ondcp.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html)

## DAVE "GUS" GUSTAVUS RETIRES

March 21st was a somber day for the Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner's Office as Chief Investigator Dave "Gus" Gustavus retired after 10 years with the office. Gus had retired from the Fond du Lac Fire Department in the late 1990's when he accepted the position of Chief Investigator for the Fond du Lac County Coroner's Office.



When the office converted to a Medical Examiner's Office in 1998, and entered into a relationship with the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, Gus stayed on as the Chief Investigator. Although the office ran with oversight from the Milwaukee office, few would dispute that it was Gus who orchestrated the day-to-day operations of the office.

In February 2004, Gus again rode out the winds of change, and stayed with the office, when it parted ways with Milwaukee. Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner Doug Kelley attributes much of the success of the Fond du Lac office to Gus' broad experience, flexibility and powerful work ethic, as well as, a strong commitment to Fond du Lac County and its ME's office. A retirement celebration held in Gus' honor on March 27th was a testament to Gus' importance to Fond du Lac County, as scores of friends, coworkers and colleagues turned out to wish him well. "Those able to attend Gus' retirement party make up only a fraction of his friends," said Dr. Kelley. "There are many people who are going to miss him greatly, but none so much as myself."

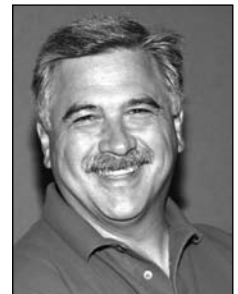
We all wish Gus well in his retirement (and wonder if the retirement will "take" this time!).

## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- May 14 – Death Investigation Training (free) at Waukesha County. [www.wctc.edu/cj\\_training](http://www.wctc.edu/cj_training)
- June 2 - 4 – WCMEA Annual June Training, Green Lake County.
- October 6 – 10 – Saint Louis University Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course, 314-977-5970 or e-mail [mldi@slu.edu](mailto:mldi@slu.edu)



Virginia Douglas,  
Lafayette County Coroner



Barry Tomaras,  
Waupaca County Coroner

# WISCONSIN UPDATES...

- In Marathon County, an 11-year-old girl died of untreated diabetes as her parents prayed for healing, rather than seeking medical care.
  - In Dane County, a former state worker pled guilty in February to killing his wife in 1976. He was sentenced to five years in prison in exchange for telling prosecutors how he killed wife by clubbing her with a paperweight and then strangling her. He hid the body in a tent in the woods before burying it, where it stayed for 24 years. In 2001, he dug up the body and cut it in two pieces, then stored it in a storage locker. Four years later, after learning authorities were actively working on the case, he buried the remains in a Juneau County landfill.
  - In Walworth County, a man was found guilty of using antifreeze to poison his wife and convicted of first-degree murder. The incident happened in 1998.
  - In Dane County, two people were killed on January 6 when about 100 vehicles were involved in a smash-up on fog-bound I-90, east of Madison. Three people were critically injured. The Wisconsin Traffic Safety Reporter noted, "A similar foggy crash, the worst in Wisconsin's history, occurred on October 11, 2002 on I-43 in Sheboygan County with 49 injured – 10 fatally."
  - In Oconto County, a man died after he lost control of his car on slippery roads and collided with a school bus.
  - In Milwaukee County, three men were charged with homicide in the fatal shooting of a Miller Brewing Co. executive outside a downtown nightspot.
  - In Door County, a UW-Green Bay professor died in a four-vehicle crash.
  - In Dane County, a woman was convicted of homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle and sentenced to four years in prison in regards to a crash that killed a UW-Whitewater professor.
  - In Brown County, a 43-year-old woman who was the principal of an elementary school, collapsed and died while leaving Lambeau Field after the NFC Championship game in January.
  - In Trempealeau County, a man was charged with homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle after he hit and killed a 5-year-old child who was sledding.
  - In Portage County, a sheriff's deputy was charged with homicide by negligent operation of a vehicle after he reportedly ran a red light while responding to a call, striking another car and killing the 18-year-old driver. Crash reconstructionists from the Wisconsin State Patrol estimate the officer, who did have his lights and siren operating at the time, was traveling 52 mph. The posted speed limit was 25 mph.
  - In Milwaukee County, a mother was charged with homicide and attempted homicide after an incident where she drowned one son in a bathtub and attempted to do the same to the other. The boys were fraternal twins.
  - In Vilas County, a Chicago-area TV anchor was killed when the snowmobile he was riding went out of control, becoming airborne for at least 20 feet before striking a tree. The driver of the snowmobile was intoxicated.
  - In Oconto County, a man was sentenced to 30 years in prison for fatally shooting his wife in the church office where she worked.
  - In Racine County, a man operating a backhoe died when the machine fell through the ice of a pond in a gravel pit.
  - In Douglas County, OSHA fined a company more than \$4000 for safety violations in a case where four men died of toxic fumes in a manhole at the company's landfill.
  - In Brown County, a 21-year-old male collapsed and died while playing basketball at the Boys and Girls Club.
  - In Eau Claire County, a pharmacist pled guilty to second-degree reckless homicide in the Fentanyl overdose death of his wife, who was a physician.
  - In Sheboygan County, a railroad worker was killed when he was pinned between two train cars.
  - In Jefferson County, a 71-year-old realtor was found dead in a home she was showing to a man who has been arrested in the case. A fire had also been started in the residence; the woman died of smoke inhalation but also was found to have severe head trauma.
  - In Brown County, a drunken driver who drove home with a man pierced through the windshield of his vehicle was sentenced to 15 years in prison.
  - In Burnett County, a Minneapolis firefighter has been accused of killing his girlfriend's former boyfriend by shooting him twice in the chest.
  - In Marathon County, officials reported 23 suicides in 2007, which exceeds state and national averages. The county's suicide rate in 2007 was 17.5 deaths per 100,000 people.
  - In Oconto County, a man shot and killed himself after shooting and seriously injuring two others in a bar.
  - In Outagamie County, a 17-month-old girl drowned in a bathtub.
  - In Milwaukee County, a man was arrested after striking and killing a married couple as they stood beside their vehicle, chatting with relatives.
  - In Grant County, a Milwaukee couple was charged with driving a shooting victim across the state to burn a body
-



# WISCONSIN ORGAN DONOR REGISTRY

Gov. Doyle is expected to soon sign Senate Bill 310, which was sponsored by Sen. Fred Risser, D-Madison, and Rep. Steve Wiecek, R-Appleton. The bill will establish a donor registry, which will allow people to sign up at any time. Previously, people usually only were presented with the opportunity to sign up when they renewed their driver's license, once every eight years. The bill also will lower the age of consent from 18 to 15.

On March 10, 2008, the Associated Press reported that if it is unclear whether someone wanted to be a donor, the "bill elevates the consent-granting power of appointed health care agents over family members." Dr. Tony D'Alessandro, director of the University of Wisconsin Organ Procurement Organization, was quoted as saying, "It allows people who make their wishes known to be honored and not overridden." For pledged donors, "it makes it stronger that we're not asking for consent from the family. We're talking with them and telling them 'here's how we will proceed'."

Dr. D'Alessandro said that more than 110 people on the transplant waiting list died in Wisconsin last year. The Wisconsin State Journal, in an editorial dated March 10, 2008, reported that about 1,500 people in Wisconsin continue to wait for transplants.

## WISCONSIN UPDATES (CONTINUED)

and then dump it after a \$300 marijuana deal went bad. The victim died of a gunshot wound.

- In January, a Wisconsin Senate committee heard emotional debate on a bill that would legalize assisted suicide in the state. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Fred Risser and Rep. Frank Boyle.
- In Racine County, a man was charged in the shooting death outside a bar of a 16-year-old girl. Authorities have said she probably was not the intended target of the shooting.
- In Chippewa County, a man working with another person tearing down a house trailer died when he became trapped when it collapsed and then burned.
- In Washburn County, a man, 72, died after a shootout with police.
- In Milwaukee County, a man drowned after his car struck a deer and he was ejected into a water-filled ditch.
- In Kenosha County, a woman died after crashing her car into a tree. Officials ruled she likely died of exposure.
- In Ozaukee County, a worker died when a crane came in contact with overhead power lines.
- In Milwaukee County, a prostitute was sentenced to 12 years in prison for killing a potato farmer she met at a casino. DNA evidence linked her to the killing of the man, age 77. They met in the casino after she saw him win a slot-machine jackpot. He was found half-naked, shot to death in his pick-up truck.
- Wisconsin DNA analysts processed 1,900 cases in 2007, compared with 1100 in 2006. The current backlog is approximately 1800 cases, Gannett Wisconsin Media reported.
- Bill Smith, chief deputy coroner of Green Lake County, proudly announced that their office now has e-mail capability at [Coroner@co.green-lake.wi.us](mailto:Coroner@co.green-lake.wi.us)
- In Green County, a worker died after his clothing became entangled in farm machinery.
- In Outagamie County, an inmate died in the county jail.



Ron Sturmer, Grant County Coroner



Richard Schleifer, Clark County Coroner



Ruth Wolgaert, Outagamie County Coroner

Jon Hagen  
 2139 W. Glendale Avenue  
 Appleton, WI 54914  
 jonhagen@aol.com

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Wisconsin Coroner and  
 Medical Examiner's Association



Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Check One of the Boxes Below:*

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP: \$30.00**  New  Renewal  
 For: Active Coroners, Deputy Coroners, Medical Examiners, Deputy Medical Examiners, and Medical Examiner Investigators

**CONTINUING MEMBER: \$30.00**  New  Renewal  
 For Retired or Past Members who wish to remain affiliated with the WCMEA

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER: \$30.00**  New  Renewal  
 For: Funeral Directors, Law Enforcement Personnel, Other Agencies and persons interested in W.C.M.E.A.

Please make membership checks payable to WCMEA or  Bill me  
 Attach a copy of this application and remit to:

WCMEA  
 c/o Thomas Wastart, Treasurer  
 P O Box 237  
 Oxford, WI 53952

[For Internal Use Only]

Check # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Invoice Sent \_\_\_\_\_

This form may be duplicated; Separate forms are necessary for each individual membership.

## SNOWMOBILE FATALITIES AT 25

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reported that 25 snowmobilers died on Wisconsin trails this year, compared with 26 last year and two fewer than the 10-year average of 27. At least 16 of the fatalities involved alcohol. The fatal crashes occurred in 17 counties. The record number of fatalities is 39, in 1999-2000.

2007-08	25
2006-07	26
2005-06	36
2004-05	37
2003-04	25
2002-03	26
2001-02	15
2000-01	26
1999-00	39
1998-99	20
1997-98	21
1996-97	34
1995-96	22

13 seasons 352 total deaths