



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Spring 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| President's Message | 1 |
| Training Highlights | 2 |
| The Winner's Circle | 2 |
| Board of Directors | 3 |
| Water Related Deaths | 4 |
| Fetal Infant Mortality Review | 5 |
| Washington County | 5 |
| Gift of Donation | 6 |
| Training Opportunities | 6 |
| Kewaunee County | 7 |
| Website Updates | 7 |

Hello everyone.

I hope this letter is finding each of you in good health and of sound mind. The weatherman certainly gave us an opportunity to stay on the bright side this winter and hopefully spring will be equally as kind.

As an association we have been rather busy in the last couple of months preparing for the April Conference and finalizing legislative issues. By the time you read this, many of you will be aware of the fact that we have a bill circulating asking for co-sponsors for the proposed revision of Chapter 979. This has been a longtime coming, and perhaps will be one of the most important items that we have been involved with in many years. Also, some of you will be registered for and preparing to attend our April Conference in Appleton, which will once again provide an outstanding opportunity for education and networking. So much of whom and what we are as an association is defined at these conferences, so we really emphasize the need to occasionally attend and participate.

In the next coming months there will be much conversation regarding the leadership structure of the association.

It has been suggested that we deviate from our current configuration to that of creating regions with regional representatives. I personally like this idea, as I believe it will provide better representation to all corners of the state. This change will require input from the membership and approval at the association's annual meeting in October (Madison). If you have comments about this; good or bad, please contact one of the BOD members.

In closing, I have the opportunity to work with many wonderful people throughout the years; people who are dedicated to keeping this association strong through recruitment, legislation, fundraising, and education. It is important for you to understand that without the efforts of these dedicated individuals, things would be very different for many of us. We must continue to grow and to learn; to adapt and to share. This will require each of you to become and remain involved, if not by running for office then by supporting those that are working for you. Hope to see you soon.

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Training Highlights

The 2011 Annual Training Conference was held in beautiful Sturgeon Bay from October 3, through October 5, 2011. There were 68 attendees who enjoyed presentations from local and national names on topics ranging from explosion related deaths and the morphology of arsonists to cold water drownings and alternative medicine deaths.

It was announced that the 2012 Spring Conference will be held April 2, through April 4, 2012 in Appleton. The Fall Conference and Annual Meeting will be hosted by Dane County and held in Madison. Looking ahead to 2013, the Fall Conference will be held in Manitowoc. . . Please stay tuned for more details! Many thanks to Angela Hinze, Columbia and Adams County Medical Examiner, for her hard work in making this conference a huge success. The WCMEA would also like to thank our host Door County, the Stone Harbor Resort, as well as the many presenters, sponsors, and exhibitors for their time, hospitality and expertise.



The Dane County Office



Centennial Vendor Table



Bio-Tec Vendor Table

The Winner's Circle

The WCMEA awarded two \$600 training scholarships. Each year scholarships are awarded to deserving WCMEA members for the purpose of receiving training in a program, course or seminar related to medicolegal death investigation. The 2011 scholarships were awarded to Jennifer Cramer of Dane County and Krista Siels of Rock County. Congratulations to you both!



Pictured (left to right) Al Klimek, Jennifer Cramer, Krista Siels, and Angela Hinze.

The 2011-2012 WCMEA Board of Directors

The annual meeting held on October 4, 2011, ended with elections for the new 2011-2012 WCMEA Board of Directors. Congratulations are in order for the following members on their newly acquired positions:

President: Al Klimek, Oconto, Door and Brown Counties

1st Vice President: Angela Hinze, Columbia and Adams Counties

2nd Vice President: Curtis Green, Manitowoc County

Sergeant-at-Arms: Paul Matlin, Portage County

Treasurer: Robert Kulhanek, Sheboygan County

Secretary: Jon Hagen, Outagamie County

Member-at-Large: Mary Ricci, Barron County

3-year Trustee: Barry Irmen, Dane County

2-year Trustee: Laurie Parisey, Brown County

1-year Trustee: John Steers, LaCrosse County

Past President: Dr. Doug Kelley, Fond du Lac County

A Haunting They Will Go

This marked the first October Conference for the WCMEA. It was welcomed in style with a Halloween-themed party sponsored by PuroClean. Party-goers put their imaginations and good humor to work coming up costumes that were to die for!! Musical entertainment was provided by Pat Pederson, a one-man band. Kathy Kohuto, Juneau County Coroner, joined Pat for a number that wowed the crowd and lifted spirits. A good time was had by all.



An Investigator's Guide to Water-related Deaths

With a mild Wisconsin winter under our belt, drowning deaths become a concern for coroners and medical examiners. Determining safe travel over icy ponds, lakes, etc. can be difficult. Ice must be at least six inches thick before it can maintain the weight of a person. In order for ice to freeze to an ideal thickness, the temperature must be well below freezing for weeks. To complicate matters, ice strength can be affected by a number of factors including the depth and size of the water body, the chemical make-up of the water, the distribution of weight on the ice, and the local climatic factors.



As Dr. David Herbert Lawrence stated, “The human being is a most curious creature.” It is that inquisitive nature that often times leads to dangerous outcomes. As death investigators, we see the worst case scenarios. It is our investigations that assist the forensic pathologist in determining not only the cause, but manner of death.

Drowning deaths can be difficult cases to investigate, as the circumstances are like no other. . . The scene is challenging to process. There is an assumed manner, accident, in most cases before an investigation begins. For those “suspicious” cases, trace evidence can be washed away. Depending on the length of time the individual has been submerged, decomposition can hinder the scope of an autopsy. Listed below are a few things that can be observed and documented during the course of the death investigation to help ensure an accurate determination:

- If possible, note any injuries to the body prior to removing the decedent from the water. Often times during the body recovery additional injury occurs due to the type of terrain or adverse weather conditions.
- Document evidence of decomposition, and collect maggots if present.
- Note the presence of tache noire, or drying to the sclera. This is atypical in true drownings and may indicate extenuating circumstances.
- Sketch the scene and include landmarks.
- Look for a “suicidal headstone.” This is a location near the water where the decedent would have left personal effects, forms of identification, suicide note, etc.

Drownings occur any time of year, but the transition from winter to spring proves to be disconcerting here in Wisconsin.

For additional information regarding water-related death investigations, please visit the three-part series by Kevin Erskine featured in Evidence Technology magazine at www.EvidenceMagazine.com.

Jennifer Schroeter, Chief Deputy Medical Examiner for Kenosha County

Fetal Infant Mortality Review

Wisconsin is beginning its journey to implement a comprehensive Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program. Much like Child Death Review (CDR), the ultimate goal of FIMR is to prevent future stillbirths and infant deaths. FIMR teams review the death of any baby who shows signs of life, no matter the gestation, who dies before their 1st birthday and any stillborn baby weighing greater than 350grams or ≥ 20 weeks gestation. Wisconsin currently has two active FIMR teams.

You might be wondering why your community needs both a CDR and FIMR team. Although CDR and FIMR have the same ultimate goal, the methods used to achieve this goal are very different. FIMR teams review abstracted cases. All identifiers are stripped from the case. Additionally, a critical component of FIMR is a maternal interview in which the mother has an opportunity to tell her story.

In order to build a comprehensive FIMR system, additional resources were necessary. Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin, in partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin and City of Milwaukee Health Department, was awarded a three-year grant, *Preserving Infant and Child Health (PICH)* with funding from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Wisconsin Partnership Program. The goal of PICH is to establish a strong collaboration between FIMR and CDR. PICH will target five Wisconsin counties (Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock and Wood). PICH has three primary purposes:

1. Expand/implement FIMR in each of the targeted counties.
2. Implement strategies for improving data collection, quality and interpretation.
3. Ensure all FIMR/CDR teams have experience translating data into best practices for prevention.

Although PICH focuses on five counties, the partners are committed to assisting any county interested in learning more about FIMR. The partners are offering a webinar on March 17 which will feature a member of the City of Milwaukee FIMR team. Participants will have an opportunity to learn more about the positive impacts of FIMR. To learn more, contact Abby Collier at ajcollier@chw.org or (414)339-7169.

Abby Collier, Injury Prevention and Death Review Project Manager for Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin

Big Changes for Washington County



Kelly McAndrews left her post as Medical Examiner for Washington County after nearly seven years. McAndrews graduated with a law degree from Marquette University in 2010 and has resigned from Washington County to pursue a new career path.

Bob Posont, Chief Deputy Medical Examiner for Dodge County, was appointed the new Medical Examiner effective January 31, 2012, by the Washington County Public Safety Committee and Administrative Coordinator. Posont has 26 years of experience in emergency medical services, and had worked for the Dodge County Medical Examiner's Office since June 2008. Congratulations on behalf of the WCMEA to both Kelly and Bob on their new endeavors.

The Gift of Donation

In Wisconsin, you can visit the online registry at www.YesIWillWisconsin.com to legally authorize donation. You also may sign up when you apply for or renew your driver's license or ID.

There are more than 112,000 people on waiting lists for organ donations in the United States and more than 1,500 individuals still wait in Wisconsin. Hundreds more wait for their sight to be restored through eye donation and thousands wait for the chance to live without pain through a bone or soft tissue transplant. Eighteen people will die today because they didn't get a transplant in time. You can make a difference. Make the decision to be a donor today, and go to www.YesIWillWisconsin.com

This story is an example of one of our many families who worked with a medical examiner or coroner to help fulfill the family's wishes of donation, ultimately enhancing the lives of others. We value our relationships with these medical professionals who make the gift of life through tissue donation possible every day.

Patrick Peterson passed away very suddenly of a blood clot in the heart at the age of 51. "Patrick was my husband of 34 years," said wife Kay. "We have two boys."

Patrick owned his own bridge construction business for most of his and Kay's lives together before he later became a crane operator. Kay said Patrick was fun loving, strong physically and emotionally, and extremely attentive to his family.

"Patrick and I had never really discussed what to do," said Kay about organ and tissue donation. "But I remembered that Patrick had read an article in Reader's Digest about it and had made the comment that he thought it was a very honorable thing to do and what better way to help someone."

Kay recently found out that, through Patrick's donation, his tissue was able to help 43 other individuals. "One of the most surprising things about the donation was how many people our gift helped," she said. "It was a comfort to know that Patrick's generosity continued even after death."

Kay says that the option of donation is extremely important to offer to families who may want to help others live a better life.

We hope this true story, and the impact this donation had on this donor's family, will inspire you.

RTI Donor Services is a not-for-profit tissue recovery network dedicated to serving donor families and the donation community in perpetuating the circle of life. In addition to offering families the option of tissue donation, RTI Donor Services supports their wishes as a responsible steward of human donated tissue gifts, provides family services, and offers community information and awareness.

Jessica Schrauth, Development Specialist for RTI Donor Services

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Wisconsin Association of Homicide Investigators
2012 Annual Training Seminar
April 24-27, 2012 at Wisconsin Dells
www.wi-homicide.org for more information

St. Louis University School of Medicine
Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course
August 6-10, 2012 at St. Louis, Missouri
Www.medschool.slu.edu/mldi for more information

WCMEA Annual April Conference
April 2-4, 2012 in Appleton
www.wcmea.com for more information

Wayne State University School of Medicine
Medicolegal Investigation of Death
May 2-4, 2012 in Dearborn, Michigan
www.med.wayne.edu/cme for more information

Website Update

Greetings from Dane County! The new "Members Only" side of the website is up and working. We took some time with our web host to make some major changes to the secure side. The revamped site has information and resources that all Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners can use. The secure side contains more than 50 individual pages on everything from reference material to information about our association. It also has forms and links to other pages that may be of interest.

Your old usernames and passwords are no longer valid for access. The easiest way to get on the new secure site is to go to the WCMEA home page at <http://wcmea.com>. Hit your refresh button on your browser so that you have the most current page. Click on the blue and bold "[Sign Up For New Member Site](#)". This will take you to a page that requires you to provide some basic information, choose a username and password, and submit the form. After you submit the form I need to go into the system and grant you access authorization. The only requirement is that you are a WCMEA member in good standing with your membership dues up-to-date.

After access is granted, I have been trying to send members an email to let them know when they are able to get to the secure side. Be patient. After your request, it may take me some time to go in and take care of the access.

There is ample room on the website for additional information, and your Board of Directors wants to include as many resources to the membership as they can. If you have an idea for the site, feel free to email me at the Webmaster tab on the website, or directly at irmen@countyofdane.com.

There is always room for improvement as well. I can make some improvements, but the more complicated changes have to go through our programmer for a fee. This is basically why the secure side is somewhat less flashy than the public side. I appreciate the feedback I have received so far and look forward to hearing your suggestions.

We hope you enjoy the site and find it useful. Again, if you have suggestions let me know and we will see how we can improve the site together. Stay Safe!!

Barry Irmén, Director of Operations at the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office

Kewaunee County and the WCMEA Suffer Another Great Loss



Long-time Kewaunee County Coroner, David Hudson, died on Wednesday, January 4, 2012.

Dave graduated and earned his degree in Mortuary Science, becoming a licensed funeral director. He began working for the Wiesner-Massart Funeral Homes in 1972 and continued there until the present time. Dave also worked as the Kewaunee County Coroner, a position he held for 14 years.

Dave received two kidney transplants in his lifetime, the first over 20 years ago. He was a courageous man, and an inspiration to all who knew him.

Patrice Hall & Jennifer Schroeter
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Shower us with your Talent!

The Examiner is looking for interesting case investigations, as well as special WCMEA members to highlight in the summer publication. Please submit your case reports or personal entries to editors Patrice Hall or Jennifer Schroeter by **May 11, 2012**.



Forward submissions via e-mail:
patrice.hall@kenoshacounty.org
jennifer.schroeter@kenoshacounty.org

Or via USPS to:
Kenosha County Medical Examiner's Office
8600 Sheridan Road
Kenosha, WI 53143