



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Spring 2014



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Greetings from Madison where spring is still trying to make an appearance. It appears that we might have a chance to see some reasonable spring weather in the next few days. This will be a welcome change after this long winter. My sympathy to those in the northern part of the state who just had a measureable amount of snow the week before the conference.

We just closed the spring 2014 WCMEA conference in Marathon County. The conference was great, full of learning opportunities on timely topics. It was also a great opportunity to network and discuss what our counterparts across the state are experiencing. At the conference we had an update regarding the proposed 979 legislation, more appropriately described as a wrap up of the legislative session.

I want to share some information about the status of 979 as we know it now. The Board of Directors received an update at the meeting Sunday and have made some decisions in an effort to continue our forward movement. Unfortunately, our *'bi-partisan'* bill was caught in some political crossfire. Although we had support by both parties, we couldn't get it out of committee. I am truly disappointed that such a needed bill has fallen to political brinksmanship. Since I shared the legislative update with the membership, I won't spend more time on this.

The WCMEA Board has determined that the Association will continue to move forward.

We plan to continue our relationship with Lenzendorf Winters and Associates. Based on information shared by Republican leadership we feel that we could have success in 2015, finally.

The WCMEA Board has also decided to resolve a couple of the remaining political concerns. One of the biggest concerns brought to light during this last session was whether it was legal to statutorily mandate training for someone that holds a constitutional office. Although we felt that we had this resolved, it is still a point of concern for some who oppose the bill. To take this objection off the table, the Board has decided that the best approach is to remove the requirement and that the elected official ONLY will be excluded from the mandatory licensure and continuing education requirement. Chief Deputy Coroners, Deputy Coroner's and investigators in Coroner offices will not be exempt.

Of course, the hope is that the leadership in the individual Coroner offices will want to promote professionalism and will voluntarily get the training that will be mandated for their investigators. It also follows that if the Coroner wanted to remain the Coroner, he or she would not want to be taken to task at election time by a challenger who may have the training. The bill as written will continue to provide adequate funding that will allow the Board created at DSPS to provide outreach training to Counties in an effort to reduce the burden on those individual offices. The bill will also provide funding so that the elected Coroner could receive the training at no cost to their respective County.

The other concern we had was that we proposed the friendly amendments that I have shared previously. We didn't want to give either party a reason to send us back to the drafter in this last session.

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President's Message Continued from Page 1

Now, because we have the time between the recent end of the session and the next session, we can have those amendments included as the bill will go back to the drafter on behalf of whomever we end up having as an author.

The last comment I have on this unfortunate situation is that I believe we owe a debt of gratitude to Amy Sue Vruwink who has been working with the WCMEA for literally years to help us move 979 forward. If you have a chance to reach out to her and voice your appreciation I would hope you wouldn't pass it up.

I also want to share that our Association really depends on the membership to be successful. Attendance at the educational conferences over the last several years has been less than what we would hope for. I acknowledge that we are all dealing with budget cuts and staffing difficulties. Having said that, we all need training, and we all benefit from information sharing and networking with our counterparts across the state.

I am asking all members to please communicate with me, via whatever medium you find convenient, what the Association can do to elicit your participation. Tell us what we need to improve or to continue to make it worth your while to participate. The success of the Association is dependent on the participation of the membership.

The Association is providing a huge service (in my opinion) to its members and to all Coroners and Medical Examiners in the state. The money invested in the legislative effort alone has been substantial. The positive impact from the proposed legislation will impact every C/ME office in the state. The training provided at the conferences is valuable and diverse. I am asking that you all get involved, support your Association and encourage those that aren't members to join.

We have 281 Members from 57 Counties. The Association would benefit from having those leaders and investigators from non-member Counties involved in the Association. The WCMEA Board is committed, and open to suggestions for improvement. It's your Board and your Association. If we don't participate or contribute, we can't expect change or improvement.

Finally, we are still making efforts to reach all of our members electronically. If you aren't getting an occasional email from me or someone on the Board please send me your email address so I can add you to the list. If there are people in your office that aren't getting the emails please send me those addresses as well. We are trying to communicate but we need your help! Also, if you would like to be added to the WCMEA Google groups let me know. The Google group is a forum for discussion that us underused but still available to those who want to use it.

Have a great summer and take good care,

Barry E. Irmén, WCMEA President

irmen@countyofdane.com

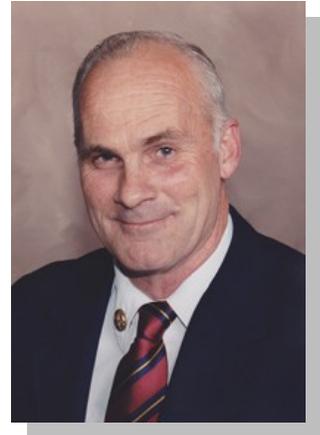
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Iowa County Coroner Dies

Long time Iowa County Coroner Bill Finley, 65, died on October 18, 2013 following a battle with cancer.

Finley started in the coroner's office in 1982 as deputy coroner. In 1996 he was appointed chief deputy coroner until he assumed the position of coroner in 2003. He resigned for health reasons in September 2013.

Finley was well respected throughout the Iowa County area. He was active in the Mineral Point Fire Department where he had served as chief.



The WCMEA extends its sincerest sympathies to the friends, family and colleagues of Bill Finley.

Governor Walker Appoints New Coroner

In the wake of John Griebel's death, Governor Scott Walker appointed Captain Ronald Person as the new Walworth County Coroner. The appointment was effective March 18, 2014.

Person is a veteran of the US Air Force and graduated from Milton College with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. He has 30 years of experience with the Walworth County Sheriff's Department where he has served as a Patrol Officer, Juvenile Officer, Detective and Lieutenant of Detectives.

Congratulations to Ronald Person on his appointment!

New La Crosse County Medical Examiner Named

Following the retirement of John Steers in April 2013, Tim Candahl was acting as the interim Medical Examiner for La Crosse County. The county officials then contracted with the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office to review operations and oversee the office through the year's end. Though Dane County will continue to be used for autopsies and consults, La Crosse County officials decided to keep its own medical examiner.

At the La Crosse County Board meeting on January 16, 2014, Tim Candahl was named the new Medical Examiner. Candahl has been a firefighter/EMT for 22 years. He started his career in medicolegal death investigation in 2007 as a deputy medical examiner for La Crosse County. In 2008 he took on the position of chief deputy medical examiner which he held until 2013.

According to Candahl, getting the office fully staffed is first and foremost. His long-term goal while in tenure is quite simply to "raise the bar." Candahl hopes to improve the level of professionalism and investigative standards and is looking forward to the challenge.

Congratulations to Tim Candahl on his new position!



Interesting Deaths in Wisconsin.....

- In **Marathon County**- a 43-year old man was killed following a home explosion. The man was the homeowner, and was found beneath the rubble one day after an explosion almost instantly leveled the one-story home. Marathon County investigators found 5 explosive devices, including 2 in separate vehicles outside, 1 in a nearby storage building, and 1 in a camper. The devices were connected by timed fuses throughout the property. Authorities believe the explosion was deliberate; however, the motive is unclear.
- In **Outagamie County**- A 56-year old female died in a rollover crash in the Town of Center. A passerby found the vehicle around 12:30 a.m. with the woman was partially ejected. She was pronounced at the scene.
- In **Dane County**- A 40-year old construction worker died at the site of The Edgewater Hotel renovation in downtown Madison. The man fell to his death; however, details regarding the incident were not released.
- In **Polk County**- Two pedestrians, both Wisconsin men, were killed in a hit-and-run crash. The two men were hit by a pick-up truck that was traveling southbound on County Highway E in northeastern Polk County. The men were involved in an altercation at a nearby residence that spilled out onto the roadway just before they were hit. The driver of the truck stopped briefly at the scene before leaving. Authorities went to the public for help in finding the vehicle.
- In **Racine County**- A 78-year old woman died after being pulled from her burning house. Shortly after 8:00 a.m., the Racine Fire Department received a report from a neighbor of smoke coming from the front window of the home. When firefighters arrived, they found smoke pouring from the windows and flames inside. The woman was found inside the home and transported to a nearby hospital where she died. The cause of the fire is under investigation; however, it is not considered suspicious.
- In **Waukesha County**- a 60-year old man was found shot to death in his basement. His body was wrapped in a blanket. The man's 27-year old son has since been charged with first-degree intentional homicide in connection with the death. Just one day before the man's death, he had been treated at a hospital after a beating at the hands of his son. The man had confronted his son about loud music and the two began to argue when his son punched him in the head, knocking him out of the recliner which fell on top of him. The man's son continued beating him. At the hospital, the man told police that he was threatened by his son and was afraid to go home. He had filed and received a temporary restraining order.
- In **Milwaukee County**- An armed robbery suspect was fatally shot by a Milwaukee police officer. Two beer delivery men were robbed at gunpoint. After the robbery had been reported, police saturated the area and an officer spotted the suspect who began to run. The officer chased the suspect, who ran behind a house where the officer caught up to him and attempted to arrest him. The two began to struggle, the suspect pulled a loaded Glock semiautomatic handgun on the officer. The officer pulled out his service weapon and shot the suspect who was pronounced dead at the scene.
- In **St. Croix County**- A driver of a septic truck was killed in a collision with a freight train. The crash happened at a railroad crossing in the Town of Hammond. The truck driver died at the scene. No one on the train was hurt. The railroad crossing has yield and railroad crossing signs, but not a crossing arm. The crash remains under investigation.
- In **Washington County**- A 20-year old man was stabbed in the Town of Hartford by his 17-year old brother. The stabbing was reported following an argument at the residence shortly before 2:00 p.m. The man was taken to Aurora Medical Center in Hartford before being flown by helicopter to Aurora Medical Center in Summit where he died from his injuries. ***Continued on next page..***

Interesting Deaths Continued...

- In **Sheboygan County**- A 41-year old man died of a depressed skull fracture. The man's 17-year old son has since been charged with first-degree intentional homicide in connection to the death. The man's body was found wrapped in a vinyl shower curtain and duct tape and was hidden beneath a box spring from a bed inside the apartment. The boy is accused of hiding his father's body for nearly a week inside of their apartment. There is no known motive, and no murder weapon was named in the criminal complaint.
- In **Wood County**- a 20-year old man cutting timber in the Town of Sherry died when a tree fell on him. A co-worker found the man pinned under the tree. He was pronounced dead at the scene.
- In **Rusk County**- A 28-year old man was killed by a train. Police say the man was walking just before noon when he was struck by a train traveling through Ladysmith.
- In **Dunn County**- A 32-year old man died during an early morning confrontation with authorities. Members of the Dunn County Sheriff's Department, West Central Drug Task Force and Eau Claire County Regional Tactical Team were searching for methamphetamine at his town of Red Cedar home at 1:45 a.m. The man was shot and killed.
- In **Manitowoc County**- A 26-year old died in a fatal crash. A pick-up truck crossed the center line on Highway 10 and hit a vehicle coming in the opposite direction. The driver of the vehicle was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the pick-up truck was jailed on suspicion of homicide by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle and knowingly operating a motor vehicle with a suspended driver's license while causing death.
- In **Racine County**- A 61-year old man dies in a house fire. Firefighters were called to the home just before midnight and found fire coming from the roof. Once firefighters were able to force their way inside, they found the man on a couch in the living room where the fire started. Authorities say that careless use of smoking materials caused the fire.
- In **Milwaukee County**- A 39-year old West Allis Police Detective, Stacie Napoli, died suddenly due to complications from childbirth. She went into labor at 27 weeks and delivered twins. Detective Napoli died soon after they were born.
- In **Milwaukee County**- A 6-year old boy was killed by a vehicle. A mother had been walking with her son just before 7:00 a.m. when a car slid up onto the sidewalk and struck the child. The child was pronounced dead at the scene.
- In **Brown County**- Two people were found dead due to a murder-suicide on the city's southeast side. The bodies of a 52-year old man and 47-year old woman were found in a 4-unit building. Police were called just after 11:00 a.m. after the woman's employer asked for a well being check. The woman had missed 1-2 days of work. The first officers on scene discovered the bodies on the floor of the couple's apartment. The couple had been in a relationship for about 10 years. The man shot his girlfriend before turning the gun on himself.
- In **Dane County**- A 43-year old woman was shot to death. The woman's body was discovered in her home by a family member. No suspects have been identified, but police do not believe it was a random act. The woman had been a victim of domestic violence and was in the process of obtaining a temporary restraining order.
- In **Sheboygan County**- A woman was killed and 3 others were injured in a mobile-home fire. A 911 caller reported that a mobile home was on fire and someone was trapped inside just after midnight. Firefighters broke through the door and searched for the woman who was found in a hallway. The 3 other people in the home, all adults, made it out and were taken to a local hospital with minor injuries. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Statewide Vital Records Information System Tips

The Statewide Vital Records Information System (SVRIS) is successfully up and running thanks in large part to the participation of Wisconsin coroners and medical examiners. By now you probably have had the opportunity to use many of the functions in the electronic system. Our office has put together some tips that will help you successfully complete and amend records in the system. We hope you find this information helpful.



SVRIS Help Tips

Tip 1: Call or email the Wisconsin Help Desk if you have issues using SVRIS. The Wisconsin Help Desk can be reached at 1 866-335-2180 or by email at helpdesk@wi.gov. Our call volume has significantly decreased since implementation and most calls are returned within minutes by staff from the State Vital Records Office.

Tip 2: You can access the SVRIS User Manual and other helpful documents at the SVRIS Help Page. To access SVRIS help, select the Help menu on the SVRIS home page and then select the option for 'SVRIS Help Page'. You will be prompted to enter your SVRIS User Name and password. Be sure to enter WIEXT\ in front of your user name.

To log in to the SVRIS Help Page



Record Entry Tips

Tip 1: If indicating that the manner and/or cause are pending, be sure to mark the Medical Information Complete field with a Y and sign the record. A death record with a pending manner or cause of death is a legally fileable record and should be registered.

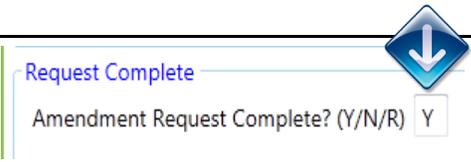
Tip 2: Do not list a specific address in the Place of Injury field. The Place of Injury should be a generic location such as home, street, farm, etc. The specific address should be entered in the Location of Injury field.



Requesting Amendments Tips

Tip 1: If a change needs to be made to an existing record, it is important to note the status of the record. SVRIS will not allow you to save any change to a registered death record. If the record has a status of 'Registered,' you can only make a change to the record by requesting an amendment.

Tip 2: When creating an amendment request, be sure to mark the request Complete. The amendment request will only appear in a work queue for processing if the request is marked Complete. The Amendment Request Complete field is located on the Completion tab of the amendment record.



Tip 3: It is not necessary to repeat information in an amendment request. The only information that should be entered in the 'New Value' column is information that is different from what is currently in the death record.



General Tips

Tip 1: Funeral homes should not be required to fax the Fax Attestation for Medical Certification to your office. All coroners/medical examiners have access in SVRIS to view the fax image from the physician. To view images, select the Actions Menu and then Display Image/Document.

Tip 2: Please remember to check your work queues and respond in a timely fashion. The Wisconsin statutes governing completion of the medical certification have not changed with the implementation of SVRIS. By law, the medical certification must be completed within six days after the pronouncement of death.

Continued on next page....

SVRIS tips continued....**General Tips**

Tip 3: Do not share your SVRIS user ID or password. Sharing of User IDs and passwords is prohibited. All users must have a unique user ID and password(s) to gain access to SVRIS. Additionally, you are responsible for safeguarding and not disclosing SVRIS user IDs and passwords to anyone. Vital Records staff will not ask for your password, but will need to know your SVRIS user ID in order to help with issues related to SVRIS.

Big Changes Ahead for Jefferson County

At the county board meeting in January 2014, Jefferson County Supervisors decided to eliminate the coroner's position at the end of this year and move to a medical examiner system.

Over the next several months the county will be working on establishing compensation and a recruitment timeline for the medical examiner.

We Are Grateful!

The Infant Death Center receives support in many forms. In addition to financial gifts, individuals serve time on child death review teams, local health departments, and community workgroups that reach out to bereaved parents and families statewide. Most importantly is the referrals we receive from the coroners and medical examiners, without which we could not reach out to families statewide. The support given to families by professionals after the death of an infant is sensitive, appropriate and provides that familiar face during difficult times.

For all the people who have generously given of themselves, we want to acknowledge and thank you. We could not provide the level of service, care and attention to families without your continued partnership and support. Thank you.

Vivian Jackson, Children's Health Alliance of WI Infant Death Center

Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin's 20-year Anniversary Celebration**The Power of Partnerships****Save the Date: June 5****10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.****Country Springs Hotel, Waukesha**

Please mark your calendars for this exciting event. Attendees will enjoy national and state leaders, explore the growth of the Alliance and be inspired by the power of partnerships. More information will follow.

Overnight rooms: A room block has been secured at the Country Springs Hotel for \$99 on June 4. Call (877) 937-0994 and request the Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin room block.

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(262) 653-3869

Forget Me Not!

Time to let your talent blossom! 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 stories to editors Patrice Hall or Jennifer Schroeter by **May 16, 2014**.

Forward submissions via e-mail:

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jennifer.schroeter@kenoshacounty.org

Or via USPS to:

Kenosha County Medical Examiner's Office
8600 Sheridan Road



Training Opportunities

Fall WCMEA Conference & Annual Meeting
Radisson Hotel LaCrosse
October 27-29, 2014

NAME Annual Meeting
September 19-23, 2014
Portland, OR

Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course
August 18-22, 2014 at St. Louis, Missouri
www.medschool.slu.edu/mlidi

Free Online Forensic Training
National Institute of Justice
www.nij.gov/training