



The Examiner

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Fall 2009

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope all of you have enjoyed our brief Wisconsin summer, and that you made some time for yourselves to relax and recharge. The WCMEA also slows down a little, but the work never stops. Since the June conference, I have been focused on two things for the Association: the Board of Directors retreat and a resolution recognizing medicolegal death investigators in Wisconsin.

The Board of Directors has recognized that some of our bylaws are vague, confusing or incomplete. The Board of Directors retreat is a working meeting to revise the bylaws and draft some new ones. Our election process will likely face some major revisions to make it more accessible and open. We will also address the ethics bylaws and the executive secretary position. The goal is to complete the revisions to a working draft that can be presented to the membership in January, and voted on next June at the annual meeting. We planned the retreat to coincide with the fall Board meeting and some committee meetings. As always, members are welcome to attend the board meeting. The fall Board meeting will be held on September 28th at 6:00 pm, followed by the retreat meetings on September 29th and 30th at 8:00 am.

We negotiated with the Heidel House for the location, and were able to satisfy our obligation to host a future event at the resort.

In June, the membership supported an idea to have a Medicolegal Death Investigators Day in Wisconsin. Nurses, EMS, and law enforcement are some groups that already receive public recognition for their work. I have been working with Representative Mike Sheridan to get a resolution drafted to recognize our profession. I hope to have a draft of the resolution soon for the Board to review. Medicolegal Death Investigators Day is for everyone working in a coroner's or medical examiner's office. I have suggested the date of October 15th. We should all be proud of the service that we provide, and we certainly deserve a day of recognition each year.

Fall brings a return to school and the flu season, hunting and holidays, and cooler weather. I love the fall months, at least until I have to start scraping my windshield. It seems like fall is a time for getting back to business. The WCMEA is getting back to business, too. This fall we hope to get our legislation moving forward again in Madison, and our legislative committee has been working hard toward that goal. The Association will also continue to work on developing a death investigator training program. I look forward to the challenges and wish each of you a pleasant and productive season.

Jenifer Keach, WCMEA President

October Awareness Breast Cancer

October is the official start of the fall season for many of us. Autumn colors become prevalent in the beautiful Wisconsin landscapes. Halloween brings out the jack-o-lanterns and trick-or-treaters that litter our neighborhood streets. October, however, also proves to be an important month in terms of education. It is the official awareness month for breast cancer and domestic violence. Keeping in the spirit, we will highlight a few facts about both topics.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), aside from skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women. The incidence in women here in the United States is about 13% . . . that is 1 in 8. What's worse, is that the breast cancer death rates are higher than those for any other cancer besides lung cancer!

There is some good news, however. The death rates have been decreasing since 1990, in part due to the great strides in community education. Keeping in tune to our bodies, as well as understanding and addressing the risk factors, are just as important. Here are some of the factors that increase the risk of breast cancer: Getting older, starting menopause at a later age, family history of breast cancer (mother, sister, daughter), using oral contraceptives, drinking alcoholic beverages and not exercising regularly.

Please visit the CDC website for additional information at www.cdc.gov

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence results in physical injury, psychological trauma, and sometimes even death. As reported by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. The majority of domestic violence cases are never reported to the police . . . chronically one of the most underreported crimes in the US. In reviewing homicide statistics, the NCADV found that almost one-third of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner. In approximately 70-80% of intimate partner homicides, the man physically abused the woman prior to the murder.

In becoming familiar with the national and local domestic violence programs/resources, we can be of greater assistance to those in need. With an incident rate so high, chances are we know of someone. . . someone who is silently suffering.

Refer to the NCADV website for more details at www.ncadv.org

A Hero Among Us

It is not often that you hear the terms *deputy medical examiner* and *hero* in the same sentence. John Folstad; however, is an exception to the rule. Mr. Folstad is a Deputy Medical Examiner for Eau Claire County, and a registered nurse by trade. In addition, John works as a physician recruiter and business development specialist for Sacred Heart Hospital.

With these astounding credentials, it is no wonder that John Folstad was recently involved in saving a life. It was Thursday, May 28, 2009 when Mr. Folstad and his wife (also a registered nurse) were in Marshfield, Wisconsin to watch their son compete in a WIAA tennis match. Their attention quickly turned from the tennis match to a man lying unresponsive near the courts. This man, Adam Bassak, is a 30-year old assistant tennis coach who suffers from a hereditary heart defect.

The Folstads, as well as another coach and an athletic trainer, ran to offer their assistance to Mr. Bassak. According to the Leader-Telegram, a news publication out of Eau Claire, Mr. Folstad and the other coach began CPR and rescue breathing. The athletic trainer, from the Marshfield Clinic, had an automatic external defibrillator on site. This device was unpacked and used to administer a shock to Mr. Bassak's heart. John Folstad and the coach started CPR again until Mr. Bassak began to awaken and start breathing on his own.

The Leader-Telegram reports that Mr. Bassak was transported to the local hospital where he has since received an internal defibrillator. Because of the selfless, heroic acts of John Folstad and others, Mr. Bassak is alive and well today.

Let me extend my gratitude to John Folstad for all that he has done. It is an honor to have him representing the nurses and deputy medical examiners of Wisconsin!



John E. Stanley

February 8, 1946-September 13, 2009

It's an odd feeling to switch places with the grieving families we deal with every day, and yet here we are. If the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association is anything like a family, then John Stanley was its patriarch. His dedication to his profession, hard work for the Association and unshakable support of his colleagues will be remembered and missed. But, above all else, it is the loss of his friendship that will be mourned by this family.

As I read through the press releases following John's death, I was not surprised to find so many public servants, from the Dane County Executive and the Mayor of Madison to the District Attorney and Chief of Police, honoring him with their praise and admiration. It is not surprising that a man such as John, with almost 20 years of public service, can leave such a void in his community with his passing. That void will be felt not only because of the myriad of responsibilities he assumed in his community and profession, but because he touched so many people as a friend and colleague. An anonymous friend of his said it best: "We have lost one of the true 'Good Guys'."

I could go on for pages, recounting John's resume of accomplishments and awards. I could spend a great deal of time telling you about all of the things he did for the Association and its members, without seeking any recognition or gratitude—things he did because he felt a responsibility to his profession, his colleagues and his friends. But, I won't, because that's only his resume; and, I'm sure we will be remembering those things continually as we carry on as a group.

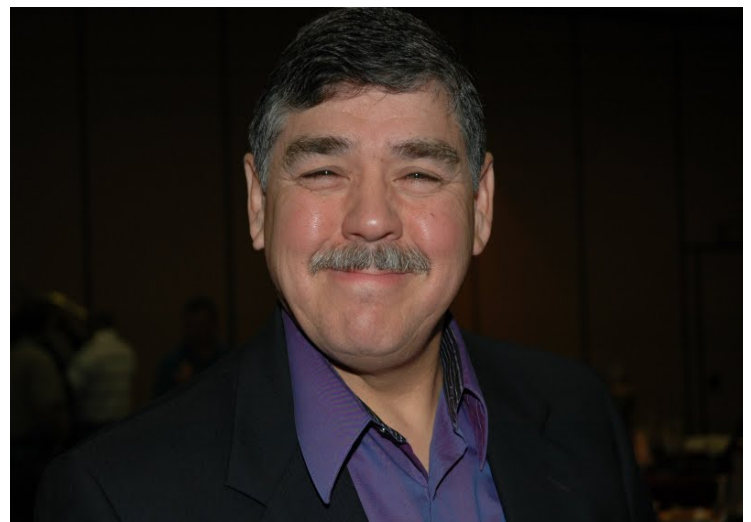
What I'd rather remember right now is the friendship that John offered. His humility and compassion served as an example to everyone that knew him. He was fair, always interested in the thoughts and opinions of others, and ever open-minded. At the same time, he was unwavering in his convictions and unafraid to stand his ground, even when standing alone in opinion. Simply put, he was a unique individual that deserved and received the respect of his friends and opponents, alike.

John and I spoke regularly in the years that I knew him; and, I often relied upon him for sage advice and sensible discussion. Beyond that, however, it was simply a pleasure to spend time with him. Any business we had to discuss somehow got accomplished within a conversation streaming with laughter, anecdotes and a range of other subjects. Having lunch with John was like being at a cocktail party—amusing, entertaining, informative, and inspiring—and, his type of friendship made spirits unnecessary.

We all have treasured memories of John, and each of us will miss him in our own way. I will think of him often in the future and consider myself a better person for having known John Stanley.

Doug Kelley, M.D.

Fond du Lac County



AUGUST 2009 UPDATES....interesting cases handled by Wisconsin's death investigators.....

- In Ozaukee County, authorities have reported that equipment failure most likely led to the drowning death of a 48-year-old man in June. The man was diving in 300 feet of water nine miles southeast of Port Washington in Lake Michigan.
- In Brown County, a 21-year-old died after jumping from the roof of the 8-story Cofrin Library on the campus of UW-Green Bay. The man was both a student and employee at the school,
- In Waukesha County, a 29-year-old man suspected of providing and injecting morphine into a man who died from an overdose has been charged with first-degree reckless homicide.
- In Jackson County, a man who helped hundreds of searchers look for his missing ex-wife has pleaded guilty to killing her. He shot her in the face at their home, then dumped her body in a rural area.
- In Waukesha County, a 56-year-old former surgeon was sentenced to 30 years in prison for the 2008 crash which killed a high school principal, her unborn child and her 10-year-old daughter, as well as injuring two more children. Toxicology results showed the man had Ambien, Xanax and Oxycodone in his system at the time of the crash, which occurred in April 2008.
- In Milwaukee County, a 41-year-old man died two days after he drank rubbing alcohol at the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility, where he had been incarcerated. He had a history of attempting suicide by drinking cleaning fluids.
- In Waukesha County, a man who had been identified a suspect since the start of the case, was charged with two counts of homicide. In this case, the bodies of two 25-year-old men were found chained at the bottom of a lake. The men had also been shot multiple times and their necks had been cut. The incident happened in 2002.
- In Milwaukee County, a man who is now 37 was charged with first-degree reckless homicide in a case from 1990. The 26-year-old woman died of a gunshot wound to her face; her body found outside a Milwaukee apartment complex. The couple had met at a club, used drugs and had sex; the man feared being charged with rape when he wouldn't give the woman more cocaine.
- A 76-year-old man who was living in Kentucky has been charged in the killings of 19-year-old high school sweethearts in Jefferson County. The couple disappeared from a wedding reception and their bodies were found 76 days later.
- In Washington County, a 49-year-old man was charged in the 1999 stabbing death of a 22-year-old woman outside her workplace. She had been stabbed 45 times.
- Near Three Lakes, divers recovered the body of an 18-year-old camp counselor from Long Lake. The man was from Illinois.
- In Manitowoc County, a man committed suicide by jumping from a boat into a lake; he had attached boat anchors to both legs.
- A Wisconsin appeals court says a 31-year-old Green Bay truck driver who has been sentenced to 45 years in prison, cannot withdraw his pleas. He fatally stabbed a man and wounded his ex-girlfriend in 2004 after finding the two in bed. The woman died of a drug overdose in 2007.
- In Richland County, three sheriff's deputies who were forced to open fire on a 51-year-old drunken man who challenged them to a gunfight from horseback in July, have been cleared of any wrongdoing in the case.
- In Jefferson County, an 18-year-old man died in a fiery crash that seriously injured another person.
- In LaCrosse County, a 54-year-old man died when he lost control of the ATV he was operating and it rolled on top of him.
- In Washington County, a 4-year-old boy drowned in a private pond.
- In Winnebago County, a 43-year-old woman died while competing in the swimming portion of a triathlon. She is the third to die in Wisconsin triathlons this year. The others were a 33-year-old male and a 54-year-old female. USA Triathlon estimate 23 people nationwide have died in events sanctioned by their agency since 2004; all but 5 died during swims.
- In Dane County, a 38-year-old woman died while training for a triathlon after being pulled unresponsive from Lake Monona, Wisconsin's fourth triathlon-related death this summer. The woman was an experienced triathlete.
- In Shawano County, a 69-year-old man died of medical issues before crashing his vehicle into the Cecil post office.
- In Chippewa County, a 28-year-old man is dead after he was struck by a vehicle while apparently lying in the middle of a highway. A passerby noticed the man and drove a short distance away to get cell phone service to call 911; another driver, who was charged with drunken driving, struck the man before the passerby could return.
- In Milwaukee County, a 13-year-old girl stabbed her 41-year-old step-grandfather in the neck, severing his carotid artery, after the two argued and the man refused to give her milk for her cereal.
- In Oconto County, an 18-year-old man died when the ATV he was driving hit a tree.
- In Sheboygan County, a man accused of crashing a minivan into a convenience store and killing an 18-year-old clerk pleaded not guilty of negligent homicide. Authorities say the 32-year-old man was driving the van while sitting in the passenger seat. **Continued.....**

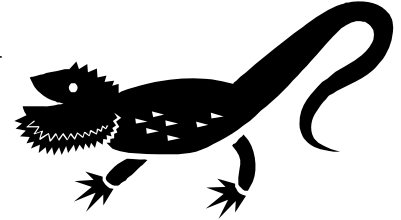
- In Marathon County, a 47-year-old man was found guilty of second-degree reckless homicide in the death of his 11-year-old daughter, who died of untreated diabetes. The man's 41-year-old wife, the girl's mother, had been convicted of the same charges previously. The couple prayed for the girl's recovery instead of seeking medical attention.
- In Shawano County, a 79-year-old man and his wife, 78, died when they failed to stop at an intersection crossing Hy. 29. A 72-year-old male hit their vehicle; he was not hurt.
- In Fond du Lac County, the body of a 55-year-old man was found in the Fond du Lac River, the second body found in that river within just a few weeks. Foul play was not suspected.
- In Ozaukee County, a 43-year-old man died when his car crossed the centerline and hit a semi.
- In Florence County, a three-year-old boy died after he fell from a utility trailer and was run over by an ATV.
- In Kenosha County, a 37-year-old woman died after being stabbed several times. A male was found at the same location with multiple stab wounds and critical injuries.
- In Dane County, police do not suspect foul play after the "mostly mummified" remains of an elderly woman were found inside a Madison residence. The body was found after authorities were contacted with concerns that the woman hadn't been seen recently.
- In Milwaukee County, a store employee was shot and later died during a robbery.
- In Marathon County, a 54-year-old man who shot and killed his ex-girlfriend last January was convicted of first-degree intentional homicide.
- In Waushara County, a 31-year-old man and a 29-year-old woman drowned in Kusel Lake. The two jumped into the lake when they noticed the man's 7-year-old son struggling in the water; the boy made it to shore safely.
- In Marathon County, a 6-week-old girl died after the Amish buggy she was riding in was struck from behind by a suspected drunken-driver on a Marshfield street.
- In Outagamie County, a 25-year-old man was taken into custody in connection with the death of a 2-month-old boy in May.
- In Dunn County, three brothers ranging in age from 13 – 32 were shot and killed at a birthday party; the shooter later died of self-inflicted injuries. Police say the shooter was a guest of a female relative of the slain men.
- In Brown County, a man's body was found in a DePere park. His death was ruled a suicide.
- In Milwaukee County, a 34-year-old man being chased for shoplifting, drowned after jumping into the Milwaukee River.
- In Kenosha County, three men have been arrested in connection with the shooting death of an 18-year-old employee of a drive-in during a robbery. Another employee was also shot but survived.
- In Milwaukee County, a 17-year-old boy was shot and killed by the boyfriend of a woman he and another man were attempting to hold up.
- In Marinette County, a 50-year-old intoxicated man died when the ATV he was driving on the roadway, crossed the center line and he was struck by a semi.
- In Milwaukee County, two masked gunmen who tried to rob a local food mart were shot and killed by a customer.
- In Fond du Lac County, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has created a Facebook page for "Jane Doe." Three deer hunters found the still unidentified body of the woman in a wooded area in November 2008. Neal Haskell, a forensic entomologist believes the woman died between mid-summer and Labor Day 2008, based on bugs found at the scene.
- In Marathon County, a judge vacated the first-degree reckless homicide conviction of a 28-year-old man in a 2005 shaken baby case. He had been convicted of killing his 4-month-old daughter. An autopsy showed injuries consistent with shaken baby syndrome and the man had confessed to police.
- In Dane County, two physicians have accepted discipline for "botching" a procedure that led to the death of a patient in 2005. The physicians were attempting to obtain bone marrow from the man's sternum using an improper device; his aorta was punctured and the man died.
- In Grant County, a 45-year-old man died when the lawnmower he was using rolled on top of him. He was using a riding mower on an incline.
- In Rock County, two people died when their vehicle struck another, then rolled over.
- In Milwaukee County, a 33-year-old man died in a house fire that authorities believe was intentionally set by a 31-year-old man with a "history of fire fascination". The men were friends previously.
- In Dane County, a 50-year-old man drowned in Lake Monona; alcohol played a significant factor.

Salmonella—An Unlikely Source

Initially it appeared to be a typical SUID investigation. The infant, a 15-week old girl, was found dead in her crib just hours after a feeding and being put to bed. The mother had a normal pregnancy and a normal delivery at 38 weeks. The child weighed 6 pounds 11 ounces at birth and had been otherwise healthy. The infant was bottle fed, and had been receiving 6-10 ounces of formula with a mix of whole milk.

The home was unkempt and cluttered, but nothing in particular stood out. The only pets in the home were a lizard and tortoise. The sleep environment appeared to be safe and appropriate for an infant of 15 weeks. Some inconsistencies were noted in regards to the timelines and medical information provided by the parents, which had prompted further investigation. There was nothing, however, to indicate anything criminal or suspicious. In the meantime, a full autopsy had been ordered and performed. The initial examination was negative, with the routine specimens being obtained for toxicology testing and cultures.

Within days of the autopsy, cultures came back and had revealed salmonella. The cause of death was determined to be salmonella sepsis. After further investigation, it was determined that the family's pet bearded lizard had been the source of the salmonella. The mother later admitted that she had handled the lizard just prior to giving the child a pacifier and then fixing the child's bottle. This case is one that reiterates the importance of cultures in pediatric cases, as well as the danger of reptilian pets.



Case information Submitted by Tom Terry, Racine County Medical Examiner

Tragic Death for Sawyer County Coroner

According to various news sources, Sawyer County officials were notified by the Ontario Provincial Police that their coroner, Dr. John F. Ryan, had died in a boating accident.

It was reported that Dr. Ryan, 73, and a 15-year-old boy were fishing on the Bad River late afternoon on August 26, 2009. Their boat encountered turbulence on the water following heavy rains. Dr. Ryan reportedly lost control of the boat, which overturned and ejected both occupants into the water. The boy, who had been wearing a personal flotation device (PFD), was able to swim to shore. Dr. Ryan was not wearing a PFD and had apparently drowned. An autopsy was to be performed in Canada.

Dr. Ryan had been the coroner in Sawyer County for the last three years.



Newly Introduced Legislation

First Candle announced this summer that the Stillbirth and SUID Prevention, Education and Awareness Act of 2009 was filed on July 14th by New Jersey Senator, Frank Lautenberg. This bill would improve the collection of critical data, increase education and awareness, and expand support services for families. According to First Candle's fact sheet:

- Each year there are more than 25,000 stillbirths in the United States. For more than half these deaths there is no known cause. The bill would expand activities to identify the causes of stillbirth, identify ways to prevent it in the future, and increase education and awareness about the issue among healthcare providers and parents.
- In addition, there are more than 4,600 sudden unexpected. Infant deaths each year (including SIDS) and 200 sudden unexpected deaths of children between the ages of one and four. This bill encourages states to complete scene investigations to better understand why these children died, establishes a national database to track these deaths, identify risk factors to prevent them in the future, supports more comprehensive reviews, and creates a national public awareness campaign to educate both parents and caregivers.

You can help support this legislation simply by contacting your representative in the House and two Senators, urging them to co-sponsor this bill. The more co-sponsors the bill gets, the more likely it is to pass through the House and Senate. First Candle has made it easy by providing a sample letter, a copy of the fact sheet, and various links to obtain contact information for our representatives. Please visit the website www.firstcandle.org for more details.

Letter writing does make a difference! All public officials read what their constituents send whether it be a letter or e-mail. In general, when a public official receives a letter about a specific issue, s/he believes that 25 other people share the same sentiments. So write already!

Internships Prove to be Invaluable

As the summer winds down, students and parents alike prepare for the start of another school year. For UW-Milwaukee students, the fall semester can also mean the start of an internship. The university offers a voluntary field placement program allowing its Criminal Justice (CJ) students to apply academics in a professional setting. I had the opportunity to interview Mr. Bryan Bubolz, Field Placement Project Assistant, regarding this program.

According to Bubolz, students must be at least a junior standing and willing to invest a minimum of 96 hours (3 credit hours) at the agency in which they are placed in order to qualify for the program. The students are provided with a list of agencies who had previously expressed a willingness to participate (i.e. local police departments, sheriff departments, coroner/medical examiner offices, etc) and asked to prioritize their top three choices. From there the Field Placement Project Assistant, a position which is held by a CJ graduate student, oversees and assigns the placement. The students themselves arrange an interview with the agency and their field supervisor to ensure the placement is a good fit for both parties. When an adequate match is made, the student and field supervisor coordinate a schedule. Throughout the internship the students keep a journal to document their daily experiences, and writes a paper at the completion of the program. Both the student and field supervisor complete evaluations which are then provided to the Field Placement Project Assistant. All of these factors are taken into consideration before the student receives his/her final grade.

Bubolz believes that the field placement program is beneficial to students and agencies alike. He explains, "The students benefit immensely by gaining experience in varying areas within the criminal justice system before they begin applying for jobs. It also helps students gain a network of contacts within the field which can later serve as valuable references when applying for jobs. This experience is also valuable for agencies because they are able to scope out potential employees and get to know them individually before the hiring process begins....Overall the field placement program has helped many people cope with the anxieties of transitioning into the job market as well as potential employers who are able to become professionally introduced to potential job candidates."

Though the field placement program is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged. The program has become widely accepted among students with an ever growing demand. According to Bubolz, between 75 and 100 students are placed over the course of a year. Of those students, a large proportion has an interest in forensic pathology or death investigation. Bubolz believes the growing interest is, in part, due to the fact that UW-Milwaukee offers a certificate program in Death Investigation, Forensic Science, and Forensic Toxicology.

Unfortunately; however, the demand is not supported by community interest. Bubolz states "Ironically our department would benefit from having more medical examiner offices that are willing to take on student interns." He explained that only one coroner/medical examiner office has a field placement relationship with the CJ program. Bubolz feels that "with the current student demand in this particular area, our students would benefit from having more agencies willing to become actively involved with our field placement program."

To learn more about the CJ field placement or certificate programs, please visit the UW-Milwaukee website www4.uwm.edu. For those of you interested in becoming a part of the internship program, Stephanie Sikinger will be taking over as Field Placement Project Assistant for the 2009-2010 academic year and can be reached at sikinge2@uwm.edu or (414) 229-4973.

Submitted by Jennifer Schroeter

Featured Article

Dodge County Medical Examiner, P.J. Schoebel teamed up with Sanford Weiss, Certified Evidence Photographer and author, to pen an article for the May-June 2009 issue of *Evidence Technology Magazine*. The article, entitled Photography of Medicolegal and Forensic Autopsies, highlights some of the dos and don'ts when photographing internal examinations. To view the article in its entirety, please visit the publication's website at www.EvidenceMagazine.com.

Training Opportunities

Forensic Science Seminar

November 2-3, 2009

Presented by the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office. Contact 414-223-1200 for more information

Forensic Science Seminar

October 8-9, 2009

Presented by the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office and Minnesota Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Association. For more information please visit:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~mc-mea>

Basic Training for the Medicolegal Death Investigator

October 20-22, 2009

Presented by The New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator. For more information please contact Yvonne Gomez at 505-272-8894 or ygomez@salud.unm.edu

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WE WANT YOU!!!

Have an interesting or unusual case to share? Know of a special person you would like to have highlighted in an upcoming issue of the Examiner? We want to hear about them! Please send us, your friendly editors, case information or personal profiles for consideration in the upcoming publications.



Entries can be sent to:

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