



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Summer 2010

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Annual Membership Meeting has come around again, and we reflect on another year of growth and progress for the WCMEA. We accomplished a lot this year and opened the way for greater recognition of our profession.

EDUCATION is part of our mission statement and we have had some great conferences with wonderful speakers due to the efforts of Angela Hinze. We helped more of our members become certified through the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. We increased our annual scholarship award to two \$600 prizes this year to be used toward continuing education in death investigation. We have been developing new, low cost educational opportunities for new death investigators, and I hope to see those plans come to fruition in the coming year.

LEGISLATION is the other focus of our association and I am pleased to say that we have made new progress with the revisions to s.979, thanks to the tireless efforts of Scott Rifleman. He really shouldered those duties after the loss of John Stanley, and we owe him our sincere thanks. Our profession was also honored by our state legislators this year when they passed a resolution that I drafted to recognize Medicolegal Death Investigators Week every year at the end of October. I gladly accepted a very nice plaque of the signed resolution from Rep. Kim Hixon, who sponsored the resolution.

VITAL RECORDS is moving forward with the development of the electronic death certificate program, and last fall I represented the WCMEA at a series of meetings to discuss and plan the actual computer program. It was very interesting to work with the design specialists, and I am confident we will all enjoy the new process when it is finally underway.

THE ASSOCIATION got a bit of a facelift as well. Our hardworking Board of Directors met last fall to revise and update our Constitution and Bylaws. New ideas include a revised code of ethics, a more accessible election process, better definition of the roles of elected officers, and clarification of the duties of our committees. The membership will vote on the proposed changes this June.

Thanks to WCMEA member and tech guru, Marc Playman, the WCMEA website has a great new look with more information on it than ever before. Speaking of communications, our newsletter went digital this year and is now available online at the website. I'd like to thank Jennifer Schroeter and Patty Plungis for their ongoing efforts to keep the newsletter interesting and on time. We had great new merchandise available this year – thanks to Lou Brady and PJ Schoebel – and they have some great plans for new items.

I must thank our secretary Jon Hagen for keeping our minutes and our meetings on track. He also contributes to each and every newsletter. Bob Kulhanek is the best treasurer we could ask for. He keeps track of every penny and we should definitely keep him! Our Past President Doug Kelley made great contributions to the revised bylaws and has been a wonderful resource. Al Klimek and Richard Schleifer also deserve our thanks for their contributions to the Association as board members. Finally, I'd like to thank our members for supporting the Association and for the phenomenal work you do every day. You are the reason we have the WCMEA, and it is here to work for you.

I have enjoyed serving as your President, and it has been an honor to work with so many of you. Thank you for the opportunity.

Jenifer Keach, WCMEA Past-President

The Annual Summer WCMEA Conference

Training Highlights

The 2010 Annual June Training Conference was held in the beautiful Wisconsin Dells from June 7 through June 9, 2010. There were approximately 74 people in attendance with conference-goers ranging in experience from coroners and medical examiners to forensic nurses and students. Attendees enjoyed presentations from local and national names on topics ranging from investigative and autopsy techniques in sexual assault fatalities, to facial reconstruction and gunshot wounds. Other topics included prescription drug abuse and the choking game.



Liz Feagles (left), Retired Special Agent, stands with Dr. Don Simley and Betty Hinze, Sauk County Coroner, all of whom were instrumental in solving a missing persons case based on facial reconstruction.



Dr. Kristen Gilmore Roman from the NYC Chief Medical Examiner's Office. Dr. Roman's trip was sponsored by MTF.



Scott Metheny (right), Pennsylvania Police Officer and GASP Representative, stands with the parents of Kyle McCarthy, a child casualty of the "Choking Game".

Past-President, Jenifer Keach from Rock County, addressed the membership at the annual meeting. She expressed her gratitude and praise to the WCMEA board of directors for their hard work and accomplishments. She led the membership through the major changes to the constitution and bylaws. These changes were discussed at length and voted upon by the membership. Please refer to the WCMEA website to view the constitution and meeting minutes.

It was decided that the annual conference dates will change effective 2011 to better accommodate busy work schedules. Instead of a winter and summer conference, the trainings will take place in the spring and fall. It was announced that the 2011 Spring Conference will be held in April (dates TBA) at the Mead Inn located in Wisconsin Rapids. The Fall Conference and Annual Meeting will be hosted by Door County and held in October. Looking ahead to 2012, the Fall Conference will be held in Kenosha . . . Please stay tuned for more details!

Many thanks to Angela Hinze, Columbia County Medical Examiner, for her hard work in making this conference a huge success. The WCMEA would also like to thank our hosts Columbia and Adams Counties, the Chula Vista Resort, as well as the many presenters, sponsors, and exhibitors for their time, hospitality and expertise.

Cruising

Monday evening at the Conference, guests enjoyed a beautiful boat cruise along the Wisconsin River. An incredible spread of hors d'oeuvres was provided by ATSF and the WCMEA. The view was picturesque, and fun was had by all who set sail.



Paul Mattlin, Portage County Deputy Coroner, helps himself to the goodies while others take in the view.



Boys will be boys! Myron Odegard, of Vernon County, leads the pack in rocking the boat.

The Winner's Circle

The WCMEA awarded two \$600 training scholarships. Each year the 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 2010 scholarships were awarded to Amanda Thoma of Green Lake County and Karen Kohutko of Juneau County. Congratulations to you both!



Kathy Kohutko



Amanda Thoma

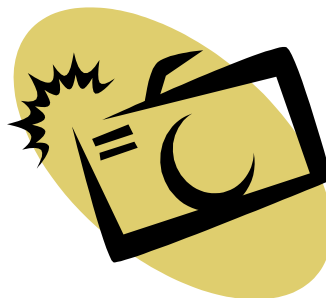
The John Stanley Award

John Larson, Marathon County Medical Examiner, presented the "John Stanley Lifetime Achievement Award" posthumously to Ray Wosepka at the awards banquet. Ray Wosepka was honored for his untiring compassion, and years of dedicated public service, most notably for the Dane County Coroner's Office and the Madison area tissue banks (RTI, ATSF). Accepting the award on Ray's behalf was his lovely wife, Michelle, who was joined by her children and grandchildren. It was an emotional tribute to a wonderful man.



The Family of Ray Wosepka after accepting the "John Stanley Award"

The nominating and voting parameters for the "John Stanley Lifetime Achievement Award" have been established and will be posted on the WCMEA website. This award is meant for those members who have **continually and consistently** made significant contributions to their specific area of expertise, has furthered the goals of the WCMEA, and has promoted professionalism throughout the death investigation community. The official nomination form can be obtained from the website, and should be submitted directly to Jon Hagen at jonhagen@aol.com, or via US. Mail at 2130 W. Glendale Avenue, Appleton, WI 54914.



Special thanks to Jon Hagen for submitting the outstanding photographs from the 2010 Annual Summer Conference!

Picture at left: A gorgeous sunset along the Wisconsin River.

The Votes Are In!

On Tuesday, June 8, 2010, the annual meeting ended with the elections for the new 2010-2011 WCMEA Board of Directors. Congratulations are in order for the following members on their new positions:

President: Al Klimek (Brown, Door, Oconto Counties)

1st Vice President: Angela Hinze (Columbia County)

2nd Vice President: P.J. Schoebel (Dodge County)

Secretary: Jon Hagen (Outagamie County)

Treasurer: Robert Kulhanek (Sheboygan County)

Sergeant-at-Arms: Richard Schleifer (Clark County)

3-year Trustee: Laurie Parisey (Brown County)

2-year Trustee: John Steers (LaCrosse County)

1-year Trustee: Barry Irmen (Dane County)

Past-President: Jenifer Keach (Rock County)



The WCMEA Board of Directors from left to right: Jon Hagen, John Steers, Laurie Parisey, Al Klimek, Angela Hinze, Robert Kulhanek, P.J. Schoebel, Barry Irmen, and Richard Schleifer

Dane County and the WCMEA in Mourning



Only a few short months after assuming the position of Dane County Coroner, Ray Wosepka died on March 20, 2010, of natural causes. This is a devastating loss to both Dane County and the WCMEA, as Ray had been appointed Dane County Coroner by Governor Jim Doyle following the death of John Stanley in the fall of 2009.

Ray Wosepka's incredible smile, compassion, and grand expertise made him perfect for the job as Coroner. He was familiar with the post, as he had served as the Dane County Coroner for thirteen years before retiring in 2001 following a bout with throat cancer.

Wosepka's career in public service may have ended with the Coroner's Office, however, his career included a much broader spectrum. He had worked as a police officer for the City of Madison, a correctional officer, court liaison, and as a liaison between two Madison tissue banks.

In the wake of Ray Wosepka's death, the position of Dane County Coroner has been taken over by Chief Deputy Coroner Barry Irmen until a replacement is appointed. A job, unfortunately, Irmen has fulfilled before but undoubtedly, with incredible strength and integrity.

Ray Wosepka was well loved and well respected both personally and professionally. The following sentiments were sent in by fellow WCMEA members and colleagues. Please take a moment to reflect upon and remember the late Ray Wosepka:

"I liked that Ray was a quiet man and treated me with respect, even when I was a new coroner. He also could laugh at himself, and I loved learning all the funny stories about Ray from the people that knew him longer than I did." **Jenifer Keach, Rock County Coroner**

"Some of my fondest memories of Ray are his bright smile, the twinkle in his eyes, and his jovial laughter. Ray was welcoming and accepting of everybody. He was willing to listen to others concerns and opinions more than he wanted to be heard. He would offer his thoughts in a straight forward manner with out judgment or contempt for others. Ray genuinely cared for others and their well-being and would put them before himself. Ray was a true and loyal friend to many. I think Ray was like family to many of us. I know I felt Ray was like a brother to me with unconditional caring. I will always hold dear in my heart hearing John Stanley call Ray "Dad". Ray probably got more than his share of teasing though he enjoyed it and participated in it . . . These are some of the ways I remember Ray; very simply, I respected, and admired Ray, I looked forward to, and enjoyed spending time with Ray. What a pleasant man. Thank you Ray. You did make the world a better place by sharing your life with us." **John Larson, Marathon County Medical Examiner**

Continued on Next Page....

Dane County and the WCMEA in Mourning....Continued from previous page

"Ray's passion for helping others was truly inspirational. He is deeply loved and sadly missed by those of us who had the pleasure of calling him colleague and friend."

Lori Shinstine, RN, VP, American Tissue Services Foundation (ATSF)

"Ray Wosepka was a person committed to the WCMEA. I cannot remember a time when he was not present at the BOD meetings and conferences. Occasionally, he would voice his opinions or concerns to the Board. The respect he had earned was apparent from the attention and serious consideration his comments received. If Ray had something to say, it was important. I think his experience as a Coroner, as well as his long history as a member of the WCMEA, was regarded with great reverence by the rest of us. Personally, I always felt that Ray had much to teach us, if only we would listen.

On a personal note, Ray was a great friend. A kinder, more courteous person you will be hard-pressed to find. In a word, he was truly a gentleman. Always genuine in his treatment of others, you always knew where Ray stood. I liked that about him—I never had to think about whether Ray was "playing" me. It wasn't his style.

When Ray was diagnosed with cancer recently, he was relieved to hear that the doctors had diagnosed it as the 'same type as before'. "No problem", he told me. "I've beat that one before." That's genuine Ray. Even when he was doing poorly, he sounded positive. Whether he did this for the benefit of his worried friends and family or whether he did this to keep up his fighting spirit, really doesn't matter—his upbeat attitude was just who he was. The glass was always more than half full and, with the lemons, he figured to make lemon meringue pies.

We will all miss him. His warm, wide grin, his fatherly manner, even his (often) terrible jokes. And, I will miss him always calling me "Doc". At one time, I hated when people called me that, and despite years of telling him to call me "Doug", Ray decided that he just liked "Doc" better. And, somehow, he made the nickname not only acceptable to me, but endearing. Ray was the kind of guy that could get away with that—good friends always can get away with such things."

Dr. P. Douglas Kelley, Fond du Lac County Medical Examiner

A Message from our New President

Greetings from Green Bay! I hope each of you is enjoying the beautiful summer and taking some time away from the normal grind to rejuvenate yourself! Let me start by thanking you for electing me President of the association for a third term. Two years ago when Dr. Kelley was elected President, I must admit that I was in need of some down time because the position of President can at times be very demanding. Since then, I have taken the opportunity to sit back and allow others provide leadership. This has been truly refreshing knowing that we have continued to grow as an association. Now, with new found energy and focus, I promise to you, to continue to work hard to represent you in a sincere and professional manner. I also want to thank Jenny Keach for her year of service as President. Jenny dedicated many hours to the WCMEA and she has earned some much needed vacation.

I have three goals in mind during this next term. The first is to continue with the legislative changes to Chapter 979. We have come so far and worked so hard on these revisions to the point where we are eagerly anticipating success this next legislative session. Second, I want to continue to provide good educational opportunities for our members. Hopefully due to the change of dates of the conferences to April and October, we will get greater participation. ***Continued on page 7***

Juneau County Coroner Resigns

Howard Fischer, Juneau County Coroner, resigned effective April 30, 2010 after 27-years. No explanation was given for his resignation according to the Star-Times; however, other sources report his desire to devote more time to his family. Fischer was up for re-election next November, as coroners in Juneau County serve four-year terms. Governor Jim Doyle will appoint his replacement to fulfill the remainder of his term. Howard Fischer was the first WCMEA member to make an attempt at establishing and managing a website for the association.

Thank you Howard Fischer for your many years of service. Best wishes on your retirement.

Picture at right: Former Juneau County Coroner Howard Fischer with his wife Carol Fischer, Deputy Coroner for Juneau County.



New Medical Examiner for Milwaukee County



After accepting the appointment of Medical Examiner for Milwaukee County in August 2008, Dr. Christopher Happy abruptly resigned from his post on April 23, 2010. Though initially Dr. Happy cited personal reasons for his resignation, he later acknowledged strained relationships within the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office.

Dr. Brian Peterson, then Assistant Medical Examiner, served as acting medical examiner in Dr. Happy's absence. On May 13, 2010, Scott Walker, Milwaukee County Executive, named Dr. Peterson the new Milwaukee County Medical Examiner.

Dr. Peterson was previously the Associate Medical Examiner in Waukesha County until joining forces with Dr. Christopher Happy in September 2008. He has also served as president of Forensic Medical Group, Inc., a corporation providing autopsy services in northern California. This following many years of service in the U.S. Navy where he was the Regional Medical Examiner on the west coast for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner's Office.

Dr. Peterson, in a statement, said, "It is an honor to be appointed Milwaukee County's fourth medical examiner, particularly as I have known all the previous M.E.s. I remember attending lectures given by Dr. Chesley Erwin while a student at the Medical College of Wisconsin from 1976-1980. I have known Dr. Jeffrey Jentzen for years, and just spent a year working with Dr. Chris Happy. We are truly fortunate in Milwaukee to enjoy a combination of superb staff and an urban case mix that makes for terrific experience and training opportunities. I hope to uphold the exemplary standards for which this office is known."

Congratulations to Dr. Peterson on behalf of the WCMEA on his new position.

Legislative Committee Update

Your Legislative Committee has been diligently working in an attempt to re-introduce our 979 legislation. Given the financial crises that are upon us due to the national economy, we have had to change some of the language. Dropped from the 979 bill is the implementation of the oversight board and mandatory training standards. Instead, we have opted to move forward with just cleaning up language items in 979 rather than adding to it.

Given this, we were approached by the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) with concerns that they had regarding language items. On April 9, 2010, a meeting between the legislative committee and the WHA was held in the office of Representative Vruwink at the State Capitol. The WHA outlined the following five concerns:

- The statutes should have clear death reporting requirements.
- The statutes should not ask mandatory reporters to make subjective judgments.
- The statutes should clearly define who has a duty to report a death.
- The statutes should establish a uniform reporting requirement for all counties.
- The statutes should be consistent with current confidentiality laws.

A good, constructive discussion took place educating both sides as to their intent. The WHA plans to make some suggestions that we shall consider. It is our hope this will be coordinated by the fall of 2010, with the intent of re-introducing the bill in the next legislative session.

The WHA has also suggested that we follow Minnesota's statutes for "Reports of Death." This can be found at www.leg.state.mn.us/statutes (the statute number is 390.11 Investigations). Though we saw no problem in how it was written, some of the bullet points would be dropped due to better suit our legislation.

Our future goal is to continue to pursue an oversight board and then move toward training standards. If there are any questions or concerns, you are welcome to contact me at riflema@co.portage.wi.us

Submitted by Scott Rifleman, Coroner for Portage County and WCMEA Legislative Committee Chair

Additional photos from the Summer Conference....



Boat trip on the Wisconsin River, sponsored by ATSF



John Larson, Marathon County Medical Examiner with Michelle Wosepka. John presented Michelle with the John Stanley Award, which Ray was awarded posthumously. John and Ray had been good friends for many years.



Members of Ray Wospeka's family. Ray was presented the John Stanley Award posthumously.

Incoming President's Message Continued from Page 5...

Lastly, I want to address compensation issues for death investigators across the state. There is much disparity from county to county pertaining to wages; some of which I suspect doesn't meet state and federal guidelines. This will not be popular among county boards, but is necessary to address.

Have a wonderful summer. If you need to contact me for anything you can reach me at klimek_ag@co.brown.wi.us

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Training Opportunities...

National Association of Medical Examiners 44th Annual Meeting, Renaissance Cleveland Hotel in Cleveland, OH. October 1-6, 2010. For more information contact: Mary Fran Ernst (314) 422-6846 or ernstmf@slu.edu

Cyril H. Wecht Institute of Forensic Science and Law 10th Annual Conference - Cause and Manner of Death. November 19-20, 2010 Hosted by The Cyril H. Wecht Institute of Forensic Science and Law.

To be held at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: wechtinstitute@duq.edu(412) 396-1330 www.duq.edu/forensics

Child Fatality Investigations, July 19-23, 2010
Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, Wisconsin
www.fvtc.edu/childprotecttraining
Phone: 800-648-4966

27th Annual Forensic Science Seminar, October 14-15, 2010, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota.

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

International Homicide Investigators Association presents the 17th Annual Symposium, Sparks, Nevada. August 8-13, 2010

Visit www.ihia.org for more information

37th Annual Florida Association of Medical Examiner's Education Conference, Ritz Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes, FL. July 28-30, 2010

Visit <http://maples-canter.ufl.edu> for more information.

Basic & Advanced Training in the Medicolegal Investigation of Death. Hosted by the New York City's Office of the Medical Examiner and funded by the National Institute of Justice. Multiple dates in 2010 and 2011. Email Barbara Butcher at BButcher@ocme.nyc.gov or <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ocme/html/training/courses.shtml>

Patrice Plungis & Jennifer Schroeter
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In an attempt to encourage growing membership, we invite you to participate in a contest. Write an essay, 2-3 paragraphs in length, about the WCMEA . . . what your membership means to you, or how the organization has helped or influenced you. Please submit your entries by August 30, 2010. The entries will be forwarded, to the board of directors (BOD) for review. All identification information will be known by the editors only. The editors and BOD members are excluded from the contest. The BOD will vote on, and select the top 3 essays. The winning essays will be featured in a special edition newsletter, and each of the three finalists will be awarded a valuable prize!!

Please submit your essay to the editors:

Patrice Plungis and/or Jennifer Schroeter

515 W. Moreland Boulevard, Waukesha, WI 53188

pplungis@waukeshacounty.gov or jschroeter@waukeshacounty.gov