



THE EXAMINER

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Winter 2009

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I found myself thinking about John Stanley today. Not the man with a ready smile who was a friend to so many, but the leader. John was a person who set high standards for public service and who shared his knowledge and experience with others. What a gift such a person is to those who know and associate with him (or her). And what a loss to the group when that leader is gone.

Are you a leader? A leader is generally defined as a person who motivates others to work toward a common goal or vision. They are the people we trust to have the answers to our questions and to get the tough problems solved. Leaders do not work in a vacuum; they have to have people who are motivated and work together as a team. A good leader with a group of motivated people can accomplish almost anything.

Each of us in the WCMEA has the opportunity and potential to be both a leader and a follower. Perhaps you are already a leader in other areas of your life: in church, as a volunteer, on a work committee. Your leadership skills are also valuable to the WCMEA. Maybe you have never taken a leadership role before, and feel it is time to spread your wings. Your opportunity awaits you in the WCMEA.

Every one of our members has the same opportunity to serve on the board of directors, work on a committee, or give a presentation at the conferences. You can also contribute your skills by promoting the mission of the WCMEA in your own county. Offer to mentor a new death investigator. Seek out new training opportunities and share that information with your peers.

Serve as a resource to your neighboring C/ME offices. Tell everyone you meet about the work we do and why it is important to educate and train professional death investigators.

Great leaders are not born, they are made. The Association needs great leaders to carry on our mission of professional standards and continuing education for our members. Are you ready to share your skills for the benefit of your profession? My friend John Stanley was a leader who inspired me to do more than just follow. I invite you to do more. Just imagine what you might accomplish and whom you might inspire.

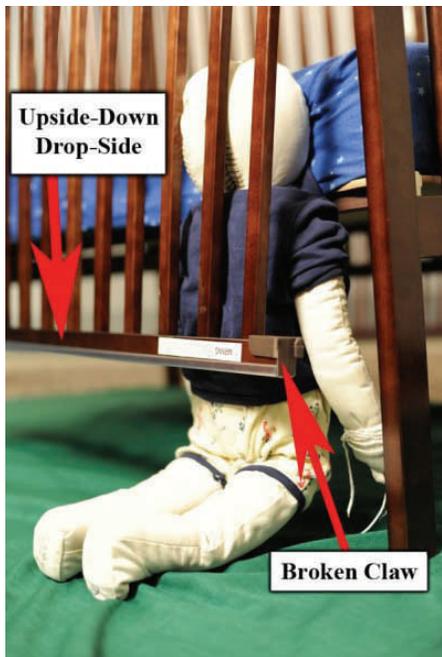
Respectfully,

Jenifer Keach, President



A Fond Farewell to Former Lincoln County Coroner

David Haskins, the former Lincoln County Coroner, died at his Merrill residence on Saturday, November 28, 2009 surrounded by his family. He began working for the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department in 1969 as a deputy, and retired as Detective Sergeant in 1993. To compliment his law enforcement career, Haskins had been a mentor and instructor in crime scene investigation at the North Central Technical College. Haskins was elected and served as coroner for Lincoln County for 18 years (1989-2007).



Stork Craft Crib Recall

On November 23, 2009, The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Stork Craft Manufacturing, Inc. announced a voluntary recall of more than 2.1 million drop-side cribs. This is being tagged as the largest recall in United States history and comes in the wake of tragedy. There had been 110 incidents reported of drop-side detachments. The detachment creates space between the drop-side and the crib mattress. As a result, 15 children became entrapped in the space (see image). Four of the entrapments ended in death from suffocation.

Free repair kits are available to parents; however, a recall on such a grand scale can strike fear into parents. This is disconcerting given the apparent increased incidence of co-sleeping and the fast approaching winter season . . . a time when we typically see a higher number of infant deaths.

Please visit the website for the CPSC to obtain additional information regarding the recall at www.cpsc.gov.

A Silent Mass Disaster

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) refers to the number of missing persons and unidentified remains as a national crisis . . . a "mass disaster over time." In the United States, there are as many as 100,000 active missing person cases at any given time. And, according to the latest statistics, there are 4,400 unidentified remains found each year. Of these, 1,000 remain unidentified after 12 months. Experts have estimated that there may be over 40,000 unidentified remains to date. Though federal databases are available to assist in solving these cases, only approximately 15 percent have actually been entered. This is due in part to a lack of time and resources for law enforcement agencies.

Thanks to the support and funding of the NIJ, there is help. The Center for Human Identification (CHI), located at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, has become a national resource for the identification of missing persons and unidentified remains. The CHI uses the combined services of their Laboratory for Molecular Identification and Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology for nuclear and mitochondrial DNA testing as well as anthropological examinations. All of their services and testing are offered free of charge to all law enforcement agencies and to the medicolegal community.

For additional information regarding the services provided, or the submission of samples, please visit the website for the CHI at www.unthumanid.org, or call (800) 763-3147 for the Laboratory for Human Identification and (800) 279-1399 for the Laboratory of Forensic Anthropology.

December is National 3D Month

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) are teaming together for the month of December to raise awareness against drunk and drugged driving (3D) and take a stand against impaired driving.

According to the NCADD, the holidays are generally characterized by an increased rate of traffic fatalities and a higher proportion of deaths involving impaired driving. Efforts therefore, will be made to reach the public regarding safe, sober driving. In addition to the radio spots and television ads, communities will see increased police presence on their highways and heavily traveled areas.

Did you know?

In 2008, the state of Wisconsin had 7,235 alcohol related crashes, and 234 alcohol related fatalities.

Sobriety checkpoints enhance the visibility of overall impaired-driving enforcement efforts and contribute to deterrence.

Only 38 states nationwide authorize sobriety checkpoints . . .
. Wisconsin is not one of them.

National Updates..Winter 2009

- Actress Brittany Murphy, 32, collapsed at her California home and was rushed to the hospital where she was pronounced deceased. Her cause and manner of death have not been determined.
- A 29 year-old man was killed in San Diego, California. He was walking and wearing headphones when he stepped in front of a trolley and was killed.
- In Florida, a nineteen year old male who received his license to fly in October, crashed his single-engine plane into a lake, killing himself, and his brother, sister and mother. The cause of the crash is under investigation.
- In San Diego County, California, the medical examiner's office has recently relocated to a new 84,000 square foot facility.
- In Washington State, a 76 year-old male died from being burned when his clothing caught fire. The man was at his residence and in a wheelchair, when he backed his wheelchair into an open flame heater and his clothing caught fire.
- In Chicago, a man was found unresponsive and pinned between a fence and a van. It was later determined that he died of multiple gun shot wounds.
- In Santa Clara County, California, a 68 year-old female who went missing approximately one year ago, was found deceased in her vehicle by a hiker. She was positively identified by dental records.
- In Phoenix, Arizona, a dust storm caused multiple motor vehicle accidents, killing three people.
- In Lakewood, Washington, four officers were shot and killed, when a gunman opened fire on the officers while they were seated in a coffee shop. The gunman was killed a few days later in a shoot out with an officer.
- Actress Alaina Reed-Amini, who played Olivia on Sesame Street, died of breast cancer at the age of 63.
- In Des Plaines, Illinois, a 24 year-old male was shot and killed by a police officer. The 24 year-old was wielding an axe and refused the officers commands to drop the axe as he approached the officer. The officer then opened fire, killing the man.
- Actress Connie Hines, 78, best known for her role on "Mister Ed", died from heart problems at her residence.
- In Seattle, Washington, a mother and her 13 week-old infant were found shot to death in their residence.
- Luis Francisco Cuellar Carvajal, governor of the department of Caqueta, Colombia, was kidnapped and found murdered the following day. His throat had been cut.
- In Westland, Michigan, a man who had an urn of his father's ashes in his truck, reported that his vehicle was broken into and the urn was stolen.
- In Ferndale, Michigan, an argument erupted at a "Sweet 16" party. Gunshots were fired and a 16 year-old boy was killed.
- In Jacksonville, Florida, a 37 year-old male, attempted to break into a sandwich shop via the roof. He became stuck in a fryer vent, where he died. He was discovered the next morning by workers who saw his feet dangling from the vent. His cause of death is probable asphyxia.
- In Augusta, Georgia, a man who was attempting to break into a residence was shot and killed at the residence.

Winter 2009 Interesting cases handled by Wisconsin's death investigators...

- In Milwaukee County, a 24-year-old man died in a hit-and-run accident; a 17-year-old male later turned himself in. The driver didn't have a license, was speeding and driving a borrowed car.
- In Sawyer County, two burned bodies were found at two separate locations; the deaths were believed to be a murder/suicide.
- In Milwaukee County, the body of a 61-year-old woman was found in Lake Michigan.
- In Wisconsin, through October, traffic fatalities were at 441, down 57 (11%) from the same time last year, when 587 people died. Last year had the fewest fatalities in 64 years. The 10-year period with the most fatalities was from 1964-1973, with more than 1000 fatalities annually. 1168 people died on Wisconsin roadways in 1972, the highest ever.
- In Milwaukee County, a 38-year-old man was sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of killing a 58-year-old female bartender in the city. The man, a regular patron at the bar, committed robbery to support a cocaine habit; he then killed her with an ax in the basement of the bar.
- In Brown County, a 19-year-old man was killed with fatally shooting a 29-year-old man to death. Three men had gone to the home of the shooter to confront him about an earlier incident.
- In Marinette County, human remains were found in the village of Crivitz.
- In Milwaukee County, a 17-year-old male died and a 21-year-old man was wounded in a shootout in the city.
- In Milwaukee County, a man was pronounced dead after he had been shot; he was transported to the hospital in a private car.
- In Milwaukee County, a 29-year-old man pleaded no contest to the hit-and-run death of a 78-year-old woman last June. The man fled the scene, claiming he didn't know he had struck the woman, and because his license was revoked and he didn't want to be arrested.
- In Milwaukee County, a 30-year-old woman has been charged with second-degree reckless homicide after police say she was too drunk to remember putting her infant daughter to sleep on a couch; the baby died while co-sleeping with the woman. Sadly, the woman also had another child die that she was sleeping with in April, 2008; the third co-sleeping death in her family. The woman's grandmother had a child die while co-sleeping with her in 1993.
- In Dane County, an unidentified man died 10 days after being found unconscious on a Madison street. The man's head injuries were consistent with a fall.
- In Milwaukee County, a Milwaukee man already convicted of trying to bribe another man not to testify in a 2007 shooting case has now been charged with paying two hit men to kill the man when he refused thousands of dollars to keep quiet.
- In Waupaca County, a 69-year-old man may have been blinded by the sun when he went through a stop sign on a county road; he was struck by a pickup truck and died of multiple trauma.
- In Outagamie County, a former Appleton fire fighter accused of shooting his wife to death in April, learned that an outside jury will hear the case due to pre-trial publicity.
- In Waupaca County, a three-year-old boy died of injuries suffered when he was trapped under an overturned all-terrain vehicle.
- In Manitowoc County, Steven Avery's attorney's have asked for a new trial. Avery and his nephew were convicted of murdering a 25-year-old freelance photographer after she went to their business to photograph a vehicle. The woman was raped before she was killed and her body burned in a barrel on the property. Her vehicle was found in the salvage yard at the site.
- In Dane County, a 60-year-old man was killed when a large branch broke loose and fell on him as he was knocking down a tree with a tractor.
- In Grant County, two people died after their truck struck a deer, then went down an embankment and hit a tree. Both the 24-year-old man and the 14-year-old girl were wearing their seatbelts.
- In Dane County, the body of a 44-year-old woman who had been reported missing a few days earlier was found in a wooded area of Madison. Foul play was not suspected.

- In Washington County, the body of a 14-year-old boy was found in a vehicle at a Germantown WalMart store. His stepfather was arrested and charged with homicide after he turned himself in to authorities, who then went to the scene and found the body. The man allegedly had hit his wife with a hammer multiple times a week earlier; police attribute the homicide of the boy as “payback” to his wife for reporting the alleged hammer attack.
- The cause of a 2008 plane crash that killed a 41-year-old man and his two sons, ages 9 and 15, was ruled to be the pilot’s failure to maintain control during its final approach for landing for undetermined reasons. The plane crashed in a Marshfield backyard.
- In Milwaukee County, police found the body of a 68-year-old woman inside her home after a 28-year-old relative turned himself in and told police he’d killed her. The man told police his aunt after \$65,000 and two rocks of cocaine that he’d given her for safe-keeping were gone. The man has a history of being convicted of arson after he torched his cousin’s house when she wouldn’t pay him the money he said he was owed. The man “told investigators that when it comes to money, his family knows not to play games with him.” Indeed.
- In Milwaukee County, authorities recovered the body of a 63-year-old man from the Menominee River. The death did not appear to be suspicious.
- In Brown County, the bodies two men, both missing since October, were found on the same day. Both deaths were attributed to suicide; the cases were not related.
- In Marinette County, a 31-year-old woman died and a 22-year-old man was critically injured when a motorcycle driven by the man collided with a van.
- In Waukesha County, a 35-year-old woman was sentenced to 10 years in prison for providing methadone on separate occasions to two people who died.
- In Dane County, a 27-year-old man who had been drinking and perhaps driving without his headlights on was sentenced to three years in prison and six years of extended supervision after he was convicted of the hit-and-run death of a Madison high school student in September. The man was driving without a license.
- In Sheboygan County, a 70-year-old man died after suffering a heart attack which caused him to drive his truck into a building.
- In Outagamie County, a 55-year-old man died in a construction accident.
 - In Dodge County, a 17-year-old male was bound over for trial, accused of causing the death of a 16-year-old girl when the vehicle he was driving left the roadway and hit a tree. The teens had smoked marijuana prior to the September crash. Police estimate the vehicle was traveling more than 100 mph when the hood of the vehicle popped up, obstructing his vision, contributing to the crash.
- In Fond du Lac County, a 48-year-old man pleaded no contest to helping to burn the body of a 28-year-old woman, who had been strangled. The man then helped another man dispose of the woman’s ashes in a frozen Lake Winnebago by pouring the ashes through holes that had been cut in the ice.
- In Fond du Lac County, the body of a 65-year-old man was found inside a business in the city of Fond du Lac. Death was attributed to a self-inflicted gunshot wound.
- In Sheboygan County, an 89-year-old woman died after being struck while crossing a highway by a car driven by a 79-year-old man. Authorities report the man had been drinking alcohol before the accident.
- In Washington County, a 36-year-old man charged with master-minding the fatal beating of a co-worker at a dairy farm has been sentenced to 27 years in prison. The man forced two other dairy workers to attack two brothers who also worked at the farm; one of them later died of the injuries that were inflicted in the attack, which happened in December 2005.
- In Rock County, authorities discovered the body of a 36-year-old deer hunter, found in the woods.
- In Sheboygan County, the body of a 35-year-old woman was pulled from a river. The death was ruled a suicide due to drowning; the woman had been reported missing from a group home.
 - In Manitowoc County, a 40-year-old man was charged with homicide after the body of his 50-year-old wife was found by deer hunters. It appeared the woman had been killed with a sharp object.
- In Brown County, the body of a man was found at an Allouez cemetery. The death was ruled a suicide.
- In Racine County, a 60-year-old woman died in a house fire.

Sawyer County is Moving Forward

On November 17, 2009, Governor Doyle appointed David Dokkestul as the new coroner for Sawyer County. The news came nearly three months after the tragic death of Dr. John Ryan. Dokkestul resides in Hayward and has been the chief deputy coroner in Sawyer County. He was expected to begin his new position immediately.

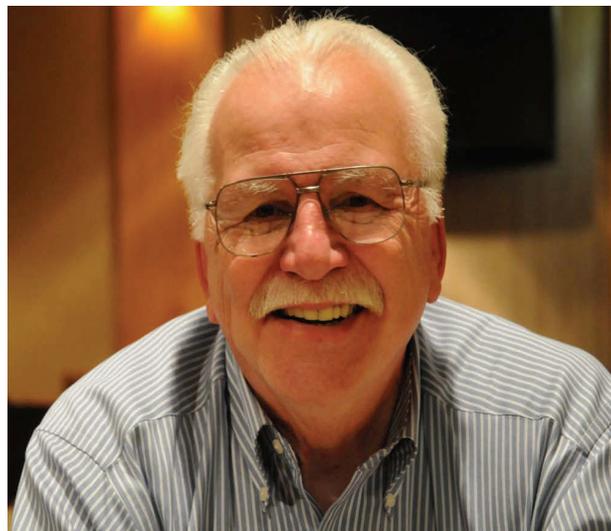
Governor Doyle describes Dokkestul as an “experienced medical professional” listing his credentials, which range from EMT, firefighter, to instructor at Wisconsin Indianhead and Chippewa Valley Technical Colleges.

The WCMEA would like to extend its congratulations to David Dokkestul and Sawyer County.



A Familiar Face Emerges Amidst Tragedy

Within days of John Stanley’s death, Governor Jim Doyle appointed a new coroner for Dane County. The announcement came September 24, 2009, informing Wisconsin that Mr. Ray Wosepka would return as coroner with a term ending January 2, 2011. With 13 years as the county’s coroner already under his belt before retiring in 2001, there is no one better suited for the job. On behalf of the WCMEA, congratulations Ray Wosepka and welcome back “home.”



Training Opportunities

WCMEA Annual Winter Conference “Beyond the Initial Call...” January 11-13, 2010
at Grand Lodge by Stoney Creek, Rothschild, WI
Registration deadline is 1/2/10

The next ABMDI test sitting will be arranged for the June WCMEA conference. Dates for the June conference are June 7-9, 2010. This will give you time for those of you interested in sitting for the exam, to complete your skills and the needed paperwork. Information for the completion of your pretest will be provided at the January WCMEA conference. Completion of the pre-test requirements takes time and must be completed before you sit for the test. Any questions please contact Angela Hinze angela.hinze@co.columbia.wi.us or <http://medschool.slu.edu/abmdi>

Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course, April 26-30,2010
Sponsored by Saint Louis University School of Medicine, Division of Forensic Pathology. To be held in St. Louis, MO.
CONTACT: Mary Fran Ernst or Julie Howe, Saint Louis University School of Medicine, (314) 977-5970

Forensic and Cold Case Investigations, January 17-19, 2010
Presented by Dr. Henry Lee and Dr. Leah Bush. Sponsored by George Mason University. To be held at the Hyatt Fair Lakes in Fairfax, VA. CONTACT: Lynn Ryan (703) 993-8335
www.ocpe.gmu.edu/forcoldcase.html

Outdoor Recovery Course, June 7-11, 2010
To be held at the Forensic Anthropology Center, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. CONTACT: Rebecca J. Wilson
250 South Stadium Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-0720
fac@utk.edu

Forensics: Big Changes on the Forefront

Acknowledging that significant changes are necessary in the forensic sciences in order to establish consistent professional standards, a study was initiated by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) which began in 2007. In February 2009, the NAS published a report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*, discussing the findings from the study and laying out 13 recommendations for the forensic science community.

First and foremost, NAS suggests that a new and independent National Institute of Forensic Science (NIFS) be established to develop forensic science into a mature field and enforce best practice standards for its professionals. Another important recommendation focuses solely on improving medicolegal death investigations and is outlined below:

To improve medicolegal death investigation:

(a) Congress should authorize and appropriate incentive funds to the (NIFS) for allocation to states and jurisdictions to establish medical examiner systems, with the goal of replacing and eventually eliminating existing coroner systems. Funds are needed to build regional medical examiner offices, secure necessary equipment, improve administration, and ensure the education, training, and staffing of medical examiner offices. Funding could also be used to help current medical examiner systems modernize their facilities to meet current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-recommended autopsy safety requirements.

(b) Congress should appropriate resources to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and NIFS, jointly, to support research, education, and training in forensic pathology. NIH, with NIFS participation, or NIFS in collaboration with content experts, should establish a study section to establish goals, to review and evaluate proposals in these areas, and to allocate funding for collaborative research to be conducted by medical examiner offices and medical universities. In addition, funding, in the form of medical student loan forgiveness and/or fellowship support, should be made available to pathology residents who choose forensic pathology as their specialty.

(c) NIFS, in collaboration with NIH, the National Association of Medical Examiners, the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators, and other appropriate professional organizations, should establish a Scientific Working Group (SWG) for forensic pathology and medicolegal death investigation. The SWG should develop and promote standards for best practices, administration, staffing, education, training, and continuing education for competent death scene investigation and postmortem examinations. Best practices should include the utilization of new technologies such as laboratory testing for the molecular basis of diseases and the implementation of specialized imaging techniques.

(d) All medical examiner offices should be accredited pursuant to NIFS endorsed standards within a timeframe to be established by NIFS.

(e) All federal funding should be restricted to accredited offices that meet NIFS endorsed standards or that demonstrate significant and measurable progress in achieving accreditation within prescribed deadlines.

(f) All medicolegal autopsies should be performed or supervised by a board certified forensic pathologist. This requirement should take effect within a timeframe to be established by NIFS, following consultation with governing state institutions.

These recommendations, which are strongly endorsed by NAME, could have an enormous impact in Wisconsin where 55 out of the 72 counties have existing coroner systems. That is an overwhelming 76 percent.

The NAS believes that individual certification of forensic science professionals should be mandatory and that all professionals have access to a certification process. Coincidentally, efforts began in 2007 by Mary Fran Ernst to create the Society of Medicolegal Death Investigators (SOMDI), a professional death investigator association based in St. Louis. SOMDI has been trademarked, and the website has been licensed but not yet functional. According to Ernst, the organization is expected to start operations in January 2010 and is for medicolegal investigators who are ABMDI certified and currently working in coroner and ME offices.

For further information regarding the NAS recommendations and/or NAME endorsements please go to the NAME website at www.thename.org.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU AND YOURS

And as always, please forward any entries for future publications to:

Patrice Plungis or Jennifer Schroeter

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pplungis@waukeshacounty.gov or jschroeter@waukeshacounty.gov

