



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Spring 2024 Issue



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings WCMEA Members,

Please join me in thanking our Secretary Jennifer Schroeter and 1st Vice President Crystal Schaub for their work on the January conference. As always, the effort put into this conference showed. We appreciate the hard work you did in finding speakers and topics to improve our understanding of death investigation.

Creating a conference of this magnitude is a tremendous amount of work. Other state C/ME organizations usually take a full year to produce a single conference each year. And it is a HERCULEAN task even with 12 months to prepare! As a spectator, you rarely think about the months of work and planning which go into a conference like this, especially when the lectures all hit the high notes. Why would you? A good conference pulls you in, and you don't have time to think about the logistics! However, it bears mentioning that creating such a conference IS hard work which begins many, many months in advance.

Ideally, we'd be a year ahead of any conference. But our greatest limiting factor is availability of speakers. Many of you in the audience have said "I don't have anything interesting to talk about?", or "This isn't really a teaching case." However, on breaks, anyone in the room can hear numerous tales of investigators overcoming odds, using new equipment, discussing new trends, sharing lessons learned, and just plain discussing interesting cases that everyone wants to hear about. The goal of a conference is to provide enjoyable material. But it doesn't have to be earth-shattering, or bizarre. There is value in passing down what you know, or presenting the "classic" case of something for the new investigators in the audience, or as a refresher for those of us who haven't been students for a while.

So, I challenge the membership to come forward with your unique, interesting, or classic cases and present at the summer 2024 or the winter 2025 conference! The membership is made better by the experience shared amongst each other. Please reach out to any Board of Directors member if you have an interesting topic, case or presentation.

Dr. Agnieszka Rogalska, WCMEA President

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VOTE 2024!

This year, being an audience member will be an equally meaningful way to help the WCMEA. Two thousand twenty-four is an election year not only for the Nation, but also for the WCMEA. In order to maintain depth of experience in the Board of Directors, while still maintaining a cycle of renewal and opportunity for the membership, the WCMEA amended the Bylaws IN 2022 by extending officer terms and staggering the elections.

At this Annual Meeting in June, the positions of President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, and 3-Year Trustee are open to Nominations. Other than the 3-Year Trustee (who serves for three years, rotating to the Two-Year, then One-Year Trustee positions each year), each of these positions will serve a two year term. Your vote matters! Please consider attending the Annual Membership meeting and placing your vote. If you can't make it in person, please take advantage of the mail-in ballots. Please contact any of the Board of Directors, or review the current Bylaws for more information on the voting process.

Also up for a vote are additional proposed Bylaw amendments. As soon as we picked ourselves up after the pandemic, the WCMEA focused on completing a several yearlong task of updating the Bylaws. Although the core of the Bylaws will stay the same, the proposed changes will deal with emergence of electronic communication, legal updates, and modernization of protocols and expectations of an organization.

With the help of attorneys from Stafford and Rosenbaum LLP, specializing in non-profit organization law, we are in the final stages of streamlining the Bylaws. We hope to have this to the membership in the coming weeks for review. In addition, we will dedicate time during the conference for discussion of the proposed changes, and answer any questions. A two-thirds majority of the members in good standing present at the Annual Meeting is required to pass these changes. So, if you can only make on meeting this year, please consider attending in June.

As a reminder, you do NOT need to sign up for the conference to attend the Annual Membership Meeting or to vote. (You DO need to register for the conference if you intend to go to any of the lectures or other scheduled events.)

Dr. Agnieszka Rogalska, WCMEA President

New Ozaukee County Medical Examiner

On March 6, 2024, Ozaukee County Board Supervisors approved the appointment of Whitney Feiertag as Medical Examiner.

Whitney has been a Forensic Investigator with the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office since February of 2016, and is excited to start a new chapter come April 1, 2024.

When asked about her goals and aspirations for her office, Whitney shared: "Ozaukee County Medical Examiner's Office is a young department that just made the change over from a coroner system in January 2023. I want to utilize my years of experience with the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office and the knowledge I have gained that allowed me to become F-ABMDI certified to enhance the quality and professionalism of death investigation in Ozaukee County. I am eager to be the Medical Examiner for Ozaukee County. I want to continue to develop and improve public health, safety, and awareness by collaborating with other offices and agencies. I want to encourage investigative staff to become accredited with ABMDI and promote continued education. I want to foster an engaging and innovative environment with my employees." Congratulations Whitney!



Rescue to Recovery: A Wisconsin EMS Initiative for Enhancing Organ/Tissue Donation Awareness

"Rescue to Recovery" is a Wisconsin EMS initiative aimed at maximizing donation awareness and availability. The project addresses the urgent need for improved understanding and proficiency among EMS professionals regarding organ, tissue, and ligament donation and increasing and building local community awareness of organ, tissue, and ligament donation. Most EMS departments lack explicit protocols/guidelines or knowledge regarding organ, tissue, and ligament donation.

The project plans to develop an educational series covering topics such as Understanding Brain Death and Cardiac Death in Organ Donation, Preservation Techniques for Organ Viability, and Clinical Indicators and Contraindications for Tissue and Ligament, targeting an estimated 14,000 active EMS professionals across Wisconsin's roughly 800 licensed EMS departments. The initiative also seeks to establish statewide standardized organ, tissue, and ligament donation protocols/ guidelines through collaboration with OPOs and related key stakeholders.

The final component focuses on community outreach, including a social media graphics kit for EMS departments to maximize community engagement and promotion of organ, tissue, and ligament donation. Anticipated outcomes include increased knowledge amongst EMS professionals around organ, tissue, and ligament donation, a standardized or a baseline protocol/guideline across departments, and increased community engagement and awareness around organ, tissue, and ligament donation. The project deliverables involve the development and distribution of an educational series, formulation of approved protocols/guidelines, design of outreach materials, and ongoing support to ensure continued use of resources.

The project timeline is focused on establishing a committee, compiling documentation related to donation protocols/guidelines to be tailored for EMS provider use and creating a protocol/guideline for EMS departments to use across Wisconsin related to organ, tissue, ligament donation and promoting and launching protocol/guidelines to all EMS departments in Wisconsin.

In addition, the project includes coordination with local instructors/ experts on the different topics for EMS education related to organ, tissue, and ligament donation with a local videographer to create and develop on-demand training for EMS providers, and the promotion and launch of these trainings to all EMS departments in Wisconsin. Lastly, a social media toolkit will be created and promoted for EMS departments to utilize on different social media platforms to build and increase awareness around organ, tissue, and ligament donation within their respective followings/ communities that they serve.

This project is being funded by a grant awarded by Donate Life Wisconsin.

Submitted by American Tissue Services Foundation and Versiti Organ and Tissue

Be Aware of Cyber Attacks!

There have been many cyberattacks and false emails circulating in Wisconsin. The WCMEA is not immune to such electronic scams. Please watch the email addresses which may attempt to represent the WCMEA members, which often include anagrams of wcmea or slight misspellings like wcma. Please be aware that although the Treasurer may reach out to you regarding membership or conference dues, we will NEVER ask you to pay for something on our behalf! Likewise, we will not ask you for banking account or personal information via an email (we don't need your email if we emailed you!!). If you ever have concerns about the authenticity of an email, please confirm the identity of the sender by reaching out to the BOD member using their link on the WCMEA website; **do not click on the links or reply to that email.** We will be happy to answer any of your questions to prevent you being a victim of fraud.

January 2024 Conference Highlights

The 2024 Winter WCMEA Conference was held in Stevens Point at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center January 22nd through January 24th. There were approximately 70 registered attendees who enjoyed presentations on topics ranging from forensic anthropology and forensic odontology to infant death investigations and hypothermia/environmental death investigations. There were a total of 18.25 ABMDI credits available!



This conference proved to be a wonderful opportunity to highlight forensic experts that may be new to many WCMEA members. Dr. Elizabeth Douglas, Brown County Medical Examiner, provided a presentation complete with great case examples from multiple states. Dr. Janamarie Truesdell, Forensic Anthropologist, and Dr. Gabe LeGros, Forensic Odontologist, were able to highlight their specialties with great case applications. Dr. Truesdell shared the exciting new opportunities at UW-Platteville in the realm of anthropology and death investigation and the impact for Wisconsin coroners and medical examiners.

The WCMEA would like to thank Crystal Schaub, Oneida County Medical Examiner's Office, for all of her hard work and commitment in putting together an amazing seminar. Additional thanks to the staff at the Holiday Inn and Conference Center, as well as the many presenters and exhibitors for their time, knowledge, and generosity.

The association would also like to acknowledge our generous sponsors: American Tissue Services Foundation, Life After Disaster Strikes, and Versiti Organ and Tissue. Without their continued support, the WCMEA would not be able to continue providing training opportunities for its members.

Please mark your calendars for the next WCMEA training opportunity! The 2024 Summer Conference will be held June 24-26, 2024 at the Hilton Appleton Paper Valley in Appleton. Stay tuned for more information!

Introducing Dr. Keith Biddle

Dr. Biddle, Forensic Anthropologist, began his career with UW-Parkside in the summer of 2023 where he now manages the Human Identification/Forensic Anthropology lab.

Dr. Biddle received his MA in Forensic Anthropology and PhD in Molecular Anthropology from the University of Montana. He wrote his PhD dissertation on the best places to get DNA from human bones, and has over six years of Forensic Anthropology and DNA experience.



The Human Identification/Forensic Anthropology lab is available to assist coroners/medical examiners and/or law enforcement agencies with current cases, cold cases, as well as historic and archaeological cases to provide a full biological profile of unknown decedents.

What Kind of WCMEA Member Am I??

The Bylaws of the WCMEA, like any organization, clearly defines the expectations, status, position, and rights of its membership. Our organization has 4 main categories of membership, though the language isn't always clear. For example, we use the word Member/Membership when addressing the WCMEA as a whole, but don't specify whether the topic applies to Active, Continuing, or Associate Members. The following synopses of the Bylaws will help you identify your current and appropriate status. Your eligibility to vote and the validity of your ballot is determined by accurate information about your membership status. Please be accurate! The WCMEA has an obligation to ensure the veracity of any voting member status, and may re-classify you to a more appropriate membership. Do not assume that your initial application had the correct status. If we don't have your contact information, we can't inform you of needed changes! So, please take the time to read through these categories, and make sure you use the appropriate designation.

ACTIVE MEMBER:

Duly elected or appointed Coroners, Deputy Coroners, Medical Examiners, Deputy Medical Examiners and Medical Examiner Investigators shall be eligible to become Active members in the Association. This does NOT include former positions. This does include the right to vote in elections and serve on the Board of Directors.

CONTINUING MEMBER:

For Past Coroner, Deputy Coroners, Medical Examiners, Deputy Medical Examiners, Medical Examiner Investigator who wish to remain affiliated with the WCMEA, provided they held Association membership during their term in office. Continuing members can vote in elections. However, they are not able to serve on the Board of Directors.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER:

All persons that have an active or retired professional relationship with medicolegal death investigations. Commonly identified fields that fit into this category include morgue technicians, office administrative staff, Funeral Directors, Law Enforcement Personnel, Secretarial/Support staff, Vital Records Personnel, Organ/Tissue Procurement agencies/personnel, Physicians, Nurses, EMS/Paramedics, EMS/Paramedics, Morgue Technicians, Anthropologists, Odontologists, Vendors/Vendor Associates, and persons otherwise interested in WCMEA.

HONORARY MEMBER:

Eligibility for an election to Honorary Membership shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The qualifications shall include, but not be limited to, having performed notable service to the public or to this Association. Honorary members will pay no dues. Honorary members are encouraged to attend Association Meetings; however, they will have no voting privileges. Honorary members may not hold office or serve on the Board of Directors.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP	Definition	Voting Right	Board of Directors
ACTIVE	CURRENT death investigator/ Coroner/Medical Examiner	Yes	Yes
CONTINUING	PAST death investigator/ Coroner/ Medical Examiner	Yes	NO
ASSOCIATE	Other forensic fields, medical fields NOT forensic pathology; vendors	NO	NO
HONORARY	By Appointment Only	NO	NO

Interesting Deaths in Wisconsin.....



- **In Taylor County-** One person died following a single vehicle crash. The Taylor County Sheriff's Office received a 911 call reporting the crash. The caller indicated that the vehicle was off the road and there was a large amount of blood in the vehicle. Upon deputies arrival it was determined the vehicle operator, a 41-year old man, was deceased. The death was not the result of the crash, but instead the result of a self-inflicted gun shot wound.
- **In Waukesha County-** A 77-year old man was found dead inside of his residence following a welfare check. Law enforcement had been contacted by Ozaukee County, where sheriff's deputies said a woman was partially clothed and running through backyards in Cedarburg. The woman was found in someone's garage and gave information to investigators that led to the welfare check. The death is being investigated as a homicide.
- **In Dane County-** Three people were found dead, and a fourth person was shot inside a home in Middleton. A 34-year old female shot members of her family with a handgun. The woman shot and killed her 8-year old daughter and 5-year old son before turning the gun on herself and taking her own life. A 31-year old male, the father of the children, had been shot multiple times, but was able to exit the residence.
- **In Milwaukee County-** A 62-year old woman died and two others were hospitalized following an apartment fire. According to the Red Cross, the fire impacted 39 units of the apartment building, and 40 residents have been displaced. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.
- **In Fond du Lac County-** A 30-year old woman was found dead inside a car after crashing. Initially the call was for "someone overdosing" however it was later discovered she had been stabbed in the chest. It was learned that the woman had made arrangements to sell drugs to a 20-year old woman. A witness reported seeing the two women argue in a fast food parking lot. The witness saw the 20-year old woman attack the 30-year old woman who then drove off.
- **In Jefferson County-** A semi and SUV collided head-on in the Town of Oakland. The wreck happened in the early morning hours. The driver of the SUV was pronounced deceased on scene. The driver of the semi was not injured. Road conditions were a contributing factor in the crash.
- **In Outagamie County-** A two-year old child died in Freedom. First responders were called to a home for a child who wasn't breathing. Lifesaving efforts were started but the child died after being taken to a hospital. The cause of death was determined to be the result of a Fentanyl overdose. The 28-year old mother has since been arrested and referred on a charge of Neglecting a Child- Consequence is Death.
- **In Manitowoc County-** The body of a 30-year old man was pulled from the Manitowoc River. Family had reported him missing the day prior. Police say they used sonar to locate his body and a dive team to retrieve him from the icy water. Police don't suspect foul play and say they believe the man's death was an accident.

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Interesting Deaths Continued

- **In Clark County**– Nine people were killed and one person was injured in one of the deadliest crashes in Wisconsin history. According to the Clark County Sheriff’s Office, a semi truck and passenger van collided at the intersection of two highways. The driver of the semi and eight of the nine people in the passenger van were pronounced on scene. The lone survivor, a two-year old child, was transported to a hospital for treatment.
- **In Oneida County**- One person died following an officer-involved shooting. The Oneida County Sheriff’s Department received two hang-up 911 calls. Three sheriff’s deputies and two Rhineland-er Police officers went to the home for a welfare check. Upon arrival to the residence, law enforcement determined that there were two individuals inside. Law enforcement entered the home where they were met with gunfire. One of the deputies returned fire. All law enforcement retreated outside of the residence and established a perimeter. Tactical members responded to the residence. Verbal commands were attempted without success, and non-lethal tactics were deployed. Eventually one individual came out of the residence and was evaluated by medical personnel. The tactical team entered the home and located the other subject who was deceased. The death remains under investigation.
- **In Milwaukee County**- A 55-year old man was found dead in a dumpster outside of a South Milwaukee Pizza Hut. A garbage truck driver alerted police after finding a garbage can behind the dumpsters that appeared to have a body. The decedent had been shot in the head. It is believed that he had been killed inside of the Pizza Hut.
- **In Brown County**- A person died following a shooting with a police officer. The Green Bay Police Department responded to a weapons violation call. An officer located a vehicle believed to be involved. Authorities believed a person in the suspected vehicle fired their weapon. The person and the officer exchanged gunfire. The subject was injured and lifesaving measures were performed. The subject was transported to a local hospital and later died as a result of the injuries. The investigation remains ongoing.
- **In Outagamie County**- A pedestrian was killed after running in front of a semi. Witnesses say a person got out of a car on I41 and ran into the path of a semi-truck.
- **In Dane County**- Three people were killed in a police chase that ended in a crash. Officers with the Monona Police Department pulled over a suspicious vehicle. After being pulled over, the vehicle drove away from the scene. During the chase, a Dane County deputy deployed a tire deflation device that caused the vehicle to crash. The three people in the vehicle died at the scene. No law enforcement officers were injured.
- **In Dodge County**- An 85-year old man killed his wife, and then turned the gun on himself. A Columbus police officer was dispatched to Prairie Ridge Health for a report of a man outside the entrance with a gun. When the officer arrived, it was reported that the man shot himself in the emergency room waiting area. Medical aid was immediately provided but the man died from his injuries. Columbus police officers requested that Dodge County deputies respond to the subject’s residence to check the status of the subject’s wife. Deputies arrived at the address and found a deceased female inside of the home. The female died from a gunshot wound.

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Training Opportunities

WAHI Annual Conference
Kalahari, Wisconsin Dells
April 23-26, 2024

<https://wi-homicide.com/conference-registration>

WCMEA Summer Confernece
Hilton Appleton Paper Valley, Appleton
June 24-26, 2024

<https://wcmea.com/>

Human Remains Recovery
June 3-7, 2024

San Marcos, Texas

<https://www.txst.edu/anthropology/facts/workshops/fieldrecovery.html>

Death Investigation Academy
Online Training

[Death Investigation Academy
\(ditacademyonline.org\)](http://ditacademyonline.org)

2024 IACME Training Symposium
July 15-25, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada & Virtual

<https://theiacme.com/page/2024TrainingSymposium>

2024 Masters Conference
June 3-6, 2024

St. Louis, Missouri

<https://www.slu.edu/medicine/pathology/masters-conference/index.php>
