



May 2009 Newsletter

Next CCA Meeting: Thursday, June 11th at 3:30 p.m. During the Annual June Conference, there will be at least 6 Board positions up for election or re-election. Anyone wishing to throw their hat in the ring needs to notify the Secretary, Chris Herndon, in writing by June 1, 2009. It's a great opportunity to add your voice to the future of CCA.

Chris Herndon
herschweer@msn.com
Fax: 719-382-7383

Be sure to check our website for upcoming training and other great information:
Coloradocoroners.org

Presidents Message

Following the June General Meeting of the Colorado Coroners Association, I will be stepping down as President. It has been a great two years and I will miss this level of involvement with CCA more than you can imagine.

In the past two years this organization has taken giant leaps forward in cementing relationships with government and professional organizations that interact with our profession. The entire Board has worked hard to be responsive to the needs of the members. New by-laws and organizational documents will be presented for your input in June. When approved, they will allow the group to work within a framework that is professional and up-to-date.

I leave with some unresolved issues. **They are my personal issues** and only you can decide if they are also yours. I am concerned about more than

one person from a county being on the Board of Directors. I feel that more votes on issues should be one per county rather than the entire membership to make sure each county is equally represented.

I urge you to step up and take your place on the Board of Directors. If everyone does a little bit of the job, it does not take a lot of time. I guarantee you that you will get more than you give. You will develop close friendships and with a little effort, you will see your Coroners organization continue to grow.

Thank you for your support, your friendship and I'll still be around in the Past President's position and rocking chair.

Sharon Morris
Park County

We are still getting mail at older addresses; any thing going to the Treasurer should be mailed to:

Steve Stogsdill
CCA Treasurer
P.O. Box 40846
Grand Junction, CO 81504

By-laws:

Within the next week each Coroner's office will receive a copy of the new and revised Articles of Incorporation, by-laws and policy manual for the Colorado Coroners Assn.

As CCA expanded and developed its purpose, the by-laws have never changed, for twenty years. New laws have come into effect that govern non-profit organizations like CCA, a 501(c)(6) under IRS rules. The articles of incorporation and by-laws have now been brought up-to-date with those rules. In addition, a policy manual has been developed, at



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the suggestion of our attorney. A policy manual is a more fluid document that defines how the by-laws will be adhered to. It is essentially the guidelines as to how the organization operates on a daily basis.

Please read the documents carefully. There are changes in purpose, procedures and ways of handling CCA business. You are the judge of how these documents reflect the organization you wish CCA to be. The documents will be presented at the June 11th general meeting in Colorado Springs. Each of the three documents will be reviewed and can be amended at the meeting. Attorney Patrick Shilken will be present to answer questions regarding content and procedure and to offer suggestions when needed.

One burning question will be how this group deals with the actual incorporated name "Colorado Coroners" as opposed to the long used "Colorado Coroners Association". The CCA initials have been obtained through state trade name regulations by another organization and therefore cannot be legally used by the Coroners Association.

It is hoped that you can attend conference this year but if not, please try to attend the general meeting as the by-laws issue needs the attention of all member Coroners.

"Green" Burials:

More Colorado Coroners are visiting with their county commissioners regarding the issue of green burial, burial on personal property and now at-home funeral preparation.

Green burial, the practice of burying ones loved one without a casket, without embalming and often on personal property is a new movement. As

Coroners, we have to be concerned about this movement, not because of the philosophy, but because of our need to know who is buried, where are they buried and when they were buried. Documentation, now, will prevent time consuming and possibly expensive investigations in later years. At June conference, plan to discuss this issue with your fellow Coroners to see what measures they have taken.

Mike and Sandy Graeff in Elbert County have successfully been meeting with their Commissioners and Health Department and have come up with a policy to be adopted in their county. If you have been successful in your county please plan to share it with the rest of us!

See link to: <http://www.obit-mag.com/viewmedia.php/prmMID/6022#>

Continuing Education:

CONTINUING EDUCATION....IT'S THE LAW!!!!!!

As of May 5, 2009 twenty six Coroners had not fulfilled their continuing education requirements with the Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board (CCSTB). The requirements of the act establishing Coroner training specify that a Coroner obtain 16 hours of continuing education each year.

These requirements are for Coroners ONLY and are not the same as the requirements for certification as a death investigator by the Colorado Coroners Association. This further applies to all Coroners, no matter when they were elected or appointed.

The CCSTB has been open minded in their acceptance of continuing education for Coroners. They accept most CE's that apply to the position of



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Coroner from Incident Command and Emergency Preparedness to office management to death investigation classes. They also accept classes that may be specific to a certain county or area that the Coroner serves. The annual CCA conference in June qualifies for continuing education as does the Outreach Seminars held each year. Numerous on-line classes are available through FEMA and other organizations. Most of them are free. A practicing physician, forensic pathologist or dentist need only submit a copy of their current medical license with the proper form to document continuing education.

The form required for submitting continuing education is on the CCSTB section of the CCA website at coloradocoroners.org or it can be mailed to you to: Janet Larson, CCSTB, at 9008 N. Hwy 85, Littleton, CO 80125. Email: jl Larson@csoc.org

Reminder: Each certificate that you submit for credit against your 16-hour annual training requirement must be accompanied by a CE Application form? More than half are just sending the certificate alone. The application is an affidavit that you did attend the training. It can be scanned and emailed or faxed.

According to the statute, the CCSTB members are required to inform the County Commissioners when their Coroner is not in compliance with the law and ask that the Coroners' salary be suspended.

Congratulations:

Dan Marion, forensic sculptor, has often been a presenter at CCA June conference, in addition to helping many counties with unidentified person cases. He is to be congratulated on receiving his Ph.D. from Denver University this past fall. He will be honored at the DU graduation in June.

In addition to giving unidentified persons a face through sculpture, Marion is a certified forensic artist, able to develop sketches from descriptions and from the features found on unidentified remains.

For further information on the services that can be provided to your office contact:

Daniel Marion, Jr. Ph.D.: 303-377-6330.

Helpful Hints:

Maybe some other's know about this, but a few weeks ago, we had one of our favorite items be recovered...a decomp recovered from the Colorado River. After the postmortem examination, we double bagged the decedent in an attempt to mask the odors.

After a few days, the odor became so bad; it was going out into the hospital. Since the wonderful hospital odor eater did not seem to cut the smell, and in an attempt to handle the odor, since we were still working on ID etc. I purchased some cat litter and poured some inside the second body pouch. I then placed a small container with 3" of cat litter in it on the outside of the bags. The cat litter worked and helped reduce the odors.... Just something if you have a decomp and have to hold him/her...

Per the mortuary, the cat litter is not an issue during cremation.

Steve Stogsdill
Chief Deputy/Chief Investigator
Mesa County





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Committee Reports

Education Committee

The Education Committee duties are to develop programs for the Outreach Seminars, June Conference and any other education programs offered by CCA. The Chair is Chris Herndon.

June Conference is quickly approaching. I was late in getting things put together and information mailed out. Any irritation that you have because of the lateness should be aimed directly at me. There has been a huge response in applications for scholarships to the conference. The Board of Directors had budgeted for this and we were given money from The National Violent Death Reporting System that will help cover all of these. The Board had also decreased the cost of the conference by cutting it in half for members of CCA. The main purpose of CCA has always been to provide affordable education for Coroners and their deputies.

The conference has been approved for 18 hours of continuing education from POST, ABMDI and CCSTB.

I look forward every year to seeing everybody who comes for June Conference. It's always a great time to get reacquainted and swap war stories!

Chris

Our next outreach has been scheduled for October 1st and 2nd in Montrose. You can check the web site for registration information and forms or call Chris.

Legislation Committee

The Legislative Committee duties are to monitor legislation during the legislative session, develop legislation when needed, seek Coroner opinion on

legislation, work with the CCA lobbyist on legislative strategy, and organize testimony on legislation when needed. Sharon Morris, Park County is the chair.

There was no legislation considered or passed specifically regarding Coroners this session. Several bills presented dealt with accident prevention and CCA was asked for opinions and/or support some legislation.

Dr. Robert Bux, El Paso County Coroner, represented this organization at testimony on a bill making failure to wear a seatbelt a primary offense. This meant that a law enforcement officer did not have to have any other probable cause to stop a vehicle, other than the seatbelt offense. This bill failed in committee on one of the last days of the session.

Cell phones and text messaging was another hot issue during this session. The final bill awaiting the Governor's signature specified that anyone under 18 cannot talk on a cell phone without a hands free device, while operating a motor vehicle. Further, no one can text message while operating a motor vehicle.

Coroner Assist Team

The Coroner Assist Team coordinates requests for assistance and referrals from any Colorado County Coroner. The team maintains a list of available equipment, qualified personnel, and forensic specialists. The Coroner Assist Team is Co-Chaired by Darrel Brenner, Washington County and Steve Stogsdill, Mesa County.

By now I am sure that all the coroners have received their letter explaining the purpose and future of the Coroner Assist Team. As was mentioned in the letter, we are attempting to compile a list of available resources that could be used in the event of a disaster. The Team realizes



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that many of the small counties have little or no resources. In order to better assist the smaller counties, we feel that it is just as important to know that they have little or no resources as it is to know the many resources in the larger counties. The response has been discouraging as we have heard from only 7 counties. We know that many of you are busy with other jobs but strongly encourage each of you to help us in this endeavor. We also encourage any thoughts or suggestions on how the Coroner Assist Team can better serve you. Any correspondence can be directed to Darrel Brenner, P.O. Box 505, Akron, Colorado 80720, telephone 970-554-0404, fax 970-345-0143, or email darrelbrenner@mac.com.

Certification Committee

The Certification Committee is responsible for keeping the records of Certified Death Investigators, including new applicants and continuing education. Brenda Bock, Grand County is the Chair.

Please make sure to check the CCA website to see when your certification expires. Several people are getting the CCA certification (*can be a coroner, deputy coroner or investigator*) confused with the CCSTB (*coroner only*) requirements. They are completely separate. Just because you have one, doesn't mean you have the other.

Also make sure you have the right forms and address to send to me. Address listed below. To re-certify, it takes 35 contact hours within a three year period. Give me a call or email me if you have any questions.

Brenda Bock, Grand County Coroner
PO Box 828
Kremmling, CO 80459
970-724-0083 Office
970-724-0085 Fax
BBock@rkytmtnhi.com

CCA Representatives to other Committees

This committee coordinates representatives to: Donor Alliance, Child Fatality Review, GEERC, SEMTAC, and any other council that asks for or require a CCA representative. This committee is chaired by Sharon Morris, Park County.

Zane Laubhan, Gilpin County, is the Coroner representative to the state EMS committee (SEMTAC) and the state all hazards committee (SAHAC). Much of the work of these committees was specifically related to the Democratic National Convention for the past few months. SAHAC has been working on streamlining the group by reducing the number of committees and consolidating duties. The SEMTAC medical task force, of which Laubhan is a member, has been dealing with the legalities of various types of advanced directives.

GEERC – this Governors Emergency Response committee also dealt with DNC issues. Dr. Dobersen was not available for a report.

State Child Fatality Committee- no report, meetings will begin again in the fall

Ike Miller and Scholarship Committee

The Ike Miller committee is responsible for managing the award process for the special award created by Dr. Ben Galloway, and any other awards that the Board of Directors deems appropriate. Dr. Robert Bux, El Paso County is the chair of this committee.

The next cycle for scholarship applications to one of the major death investigation schools will begin in the spring of 2009. For the first time we have received more than one application. Four people have applied. The successful applicant will be announced at June conference.



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Marketing

This committee is responsible for providing a selection of merchandise for members to purchase. Mike Graeff, Elbert County is the Chair of this committee.

The Marketing Committee is busy getting all of the sale items ready for June Conference. Last year we targeted Coroner Specific items. This year we are getting more items for evidence collection (like GSR kits, paper bags for hands, buccal swabs, fingerprinting kits, etc), along with the t-shirts and sweat shirts that we usually have.

We have a special gift for a drawing for the last day of Conference: The Association is giving away a small laptop computer with 160 gig hard drive. There will also be daily drawings, on Thursday and Friday, for a filled Coroner Response Bag.

Sandy and Mike Graeff would like to hear from anybody who has any special requests or suggestions for items.

Website (coloradocoroners.org)

After a very frustrating few weeks, the Colorado Coroners website is up and running again. A change in webmasters fostered a change in domain, etc and that got complicated. All that is in the past and the website is up to date.

Suggestions for the website are always welcome. New ideas will just make it better.

The website has been averaging 180 to 220 hits a week. Contacts with CCA continue to be queries on education suggestions from persons wanting to enter the field, comments from Coroners from other states, persons seeking information on family or friends, interaction with other Coroner associations and persons representing products relative to the field. CCA is furnishing web space to the Colorado

Coroners Standards and Training Board for continuing education forms, requirements, meeting dates and updates on training. If you have a question or a suggestion and don't know who to contact, just link to contact CCA on the website and your question will be routed to the right person.