

Fall 2010 Newsletter

Next CCA Board of Directors Meeting:

Saturday October 9, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. in Kremmling. Call Brenda Bock 970-724-0083 if you are going to attend.

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

Coloradocoroners.org

Presidents Message

What an honor it is to be serving as your CCA President. Elections were held at our June conference and the officers and members are: Dr Pat Allen, Vice President; Chris Herndon, Secretary; and Steve Stogsdill, Treasurer. Members at large are: Art Nordyke, Bob Fowler, Bruce Campbell, Darrel Brenner, George Crocket, Mike Graeff, Sandy Graeff and Steven Lance.

Remember we are here to serve you and if you have any concerns, suggestions or need help with anything, please let us know. Our contact info is listed on the web site. Please check it often for updated information on the happenings around the state.

There will be a number of new coroners coming aboard in January 2011 and a few of our valued and respected coroners stepping down or retiring. We need to offer our experience and support to the new ones coming in.

It was decided at the general meeting in June that each coroner and their staff should sign a code of ethics to be kept on file. I will be sending one to each of you before the end of the year. Public confidence in the integrity of county and state government demands that public officials demonstrate the highest ethical standards at all

times. The coroner and deputy investigators must address the forensic needs of the state while maintaining the respect, dignity, and rights of individuals.

Brenda
Brenda Bock
CCA President
Grand County Coroner

From Dorothy Twellman, MD, Fremont County Coroner

Thank you!

Dear CCA board and members,

Chris very thoughtfully offered me a little space in the Newsletter to send out my thoughts to all of you. It's still very hard to put those thoughts into words, but I'll give it a try. It's been almost 3 months now since our home, barn and much of our land was destroyed by a wildfire. We are still feeling very devastated and emotionally labile. We're staying in a small cabin about 1 mile from our property entry and feel very sad each day when we return to our ranch to feed and care for our horses. Their pastures and shelters were not destroyed by the fire, though much of the fencing did burn.

We are not sure of future plans, but want to give ourselves time to begin to heal from the pain before making any major decisions.

We have learned a few things that I'd like to share: keep a copy of important documents somewhere other than in your home; keep a copy of precious photos etc somewhere other than in your home; if

you have a "fireproof" safe that will protect your valuables to 1500 degrees--that's not enough; if you think your trees are far enough from your



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home/buildings to prevent damage by fire--you're probably way too optimistic.

Lastly, the most important thing we learned is that there are a lot of wonderful, generous people in this world and the members of CCA are certainly among them. We were truly overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of the CCA membership. You are a wonderful group of people and I am so very proud to be one of you. I am especially grateful to our leadership for supplying me with a camera, equipment bag and clothing with the CCA logo, as well as some \$ to purchase other needed items.

Just know that we are forever grateful and you are forever special. Dorothy Twellman, M.D.

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, Washington County

Mark the Date! Wed 6/8/11 – Fri 6/10/11

At the 2010 June General Membership meeting a vote was held as to where to have the 2011 June Conference. It was between the Vail area and Blackhawk, Blackhawk won. We have met with the Ameristar Hotel/Casino. They have new hotel rooms and conference facilities that just opened last year. There is also a pool on the top floor and a beautiful spa. The conference facilities are great and we've heard great things from other groups who have been there.

Because this is a hotel/casino it would have cost more to have the conference on our usual days of

Thursday, Friday and Saturday. They are usually booked to 80% of capacity during the week and sold out on the weekends. So, the conference will be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. June 8, 9 and 10, 2011.

This is very important!

You have to reserve your room no later than **May 11, 2011** or I can't guarantee you a room. It's better to reserve one and not need it than to scramble around trying to find one at the last minute. In the past I've been able to help the procrastinators, but I won't be able to this time.

You can make your reservations one of two ways:

The first option is by calling 720.946.4000 and speaking with one of our Guest Service Agents at the front desk. Give the group code **GCCAF11** with group name **23RD ANNUAL DEATH INVESTIGATION CONFERENCE**.

The second option is to go to Ameristar.com. Once you have reached the home page you will click on the 'Reservations' tab at the top. Then select 'Black Hawk' and then 'Reserve now'.

This screen will also have a calendar and a few pictures to reference room types. In the 'Special Offer Code' slot you will enter the group code **GCCAF11**. At that time you will be able to make their reservations.

Outreach Training: We will not be doing any Outreaches in 2011. The CCSTB has required that



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all new coroners attend a 24 hour basic medicolegal death investigation training (MLDI) in addition to the 40 hour New Coroner Institute that is required by statute. They have asked that CCA put on the MLDI and we have agreed to. There will be 2 MLDI classes one in the spring and one in the fall. They will be on the eastern slope and on the western slope. We are still working on the details and will get them out as soon as we know more.

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 Darell Brenner, Washington County and Steve Stogsdill, Mesa County.

The website has been updated with phone numbers of the Assist Team and Forensic Experts.

In the event, someone has a Haz Mat incident and needs to do some research etc. here's the link to an interactive Emergency Response Guide.

<http://wwwapps.tc.gc.ca/saf-sec-sur/3/erg-gmu/erg/ergmenu.aspx>.

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.

Remember to check out your current certificate to see when it expires. I am trying to get the certificates all on a quarterly rotation. It takes 35 contact hours within the last three years to re-certify. You have to send me a copy of your

certificate as proof of those hours. If you have any questions please let me know.

BBock@rkymtnhi.com

Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board (CCSTB)

Brenda Bock and Darrel Brenner have been attending the quarterly meetings of the CCSTB.

Elected or Appointed Coroners, remember that you need to turn in your documentation for at least 16 hours of continuing education to the Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board. This applies to all coroners, regardless of the length of time that you have been in office. The forms for submission are on the CCA website at coloradocoroners.org. This does not apply to deputy coroners and is not the same as the CCA death investigator certification.

NCI – (New Coroners Institute) will be held the week of December 12-18, 2010. For the new coroners being sworn into office in January, 2011 *and any coroner's who have been sworn in since the last NCI in 2007*. You need to mark your calendar with those dates. Any questions, you can email Janet Larson at: jl Larson@csoc.org

Brenda Bock-CCA Certification Chair

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.

Zane Laubhan, Gilpin County, is the Coroner representative to the state EMS committee (SEMTAC) and the state all hazards committee (SAHAC).



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GEERC – this Governors Emergency Response committee. Dr. Mike Dobersen is CCA's representative.

State Child Fatality Committee- Funding has run out for this committee.

Ike Miller

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 deem appropriate.

The 2010 winner is Jennifer Nestor, the Lincoln County Coroner. She will be attending the St. Louis class in April.

This special funding has paid for training, room and board at the medicolegal death investigation classes in either St. Louis or New Mexico. This funding is available again this year. Don't let this pass you by! Contact Chris Herndon to get an application if you need one.

The next cycle for scholarship applications to one of the major death investigation schools will begin in the spring of 2011. The successful applicant will be announced at June conference.

Legislation Committee

On Friday 8/27/10 Drs. Bob Bux and Pat Allen attended the Metro Area Commissioners Conference (MACC) in Denver. The purpose of this meeting is to allow all of the Colorado elected officials organizations (assessors, clerks, coroners, treasurers, etc) an opportunity to present proposed legislation for the 2011 session. These presentations give the larger front range counties a heads-up about upcoming proposed bills so that the counties can get behind any of the proposals that they deem appropriate.

The Colorado Coroners Association is proposing two pieces of legislation for 2011, both of which were unanimously passed by the CCA board and approved without comment by the general membership at the annual meeting held during June conference in Colorado Springs. They are:

1. Legislation requiring that all forensic autopsies in Colorado be performed by a board certified/eligible forensic pathologist. A "grandfather" allowance to be made for any physician currently recognized as being in full time practice as a forensic pathologist.

2. Legislation regarding standards/guidelines for performing forensic autopsies for all coroners' offices in Colorado.

The bills have not yet been written. This is only one of the first steps in formulating the wording of the bills.

Contact Brenda Bock, Dr. Pat Allen or Dr. Bob Bux if you have questions or comments regarding these proposed bills.

Marketing

This committee is responsible for providing a selection of merchandise for members to purchase during our conferences. Mike and Sandy Graeff prepare all year, finding new things for you. If there is anything that you think would be beneficial for other Coroner's to have please let them know.

Website

Hits to the website continue at an average of 180 per week. Queries come from high school students and others wanting to know about employment in the field, from vendors, from other Coroners associations and from the public. We are posting



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training announcements as we get them so check the website frequently.

TO FLUSH OR NOT TO FLUSH

By Darrel Brenner, Washington County Coroner

Comings and Goings



Kit Carson County Coroner Tony Olaiz retired on August 31st and Randy Gorton was sworn in as the new Coroner. A retirement party was held for Tony and several CCA members attended. Here's wishing Tony a long and happy retirement!

Rio Blanco County Coroner Ran Cochran has packed up and moved to Alaska for a new adventure! After he won the primary election Albert Krueger, MD was sworn in as the new Coroner.

Congratulations to Randy and Albert, welcome aboard!

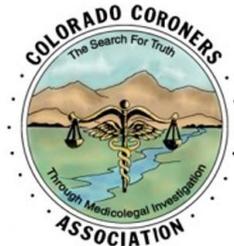
Guest Article

I have all these drugs retrieved from homes where a family member has died. What do I do with them? The collection is growing larger, taking up space, and I am concerned about security issues. I just want to get rid of them but I also want to dispose of them in a correct and proper manner.

Even though I can't give you a definitive answer I can tell you what not to do. **DO NOT** dispose of expired or unwanted medication by:

- Flushing medication down the toilet, or
- Pouring medication down the sink

Managing unused medications is a safety as well as an environmental concern. Traditionally, we were told to flush unwanted medications down the drain or toilet rather than keeping them around so they would not be misused by the patient for the wrong symptoms or by someone else who was not prescribed the medication and who might use the drugs recreationally. Although effective in removing the medication from potentially being misused, flushing creates a new and growing problem in the environment. Antibiotics and other medications in a septic system can destroy beneficial bacteria necessary for the system to operate. The EPA has deemed flushing medications—otherwise known as PPCPs (pharmaceuticals and personal care products) in domestic sewage systems as the “least desirable way to dispose of any drug.” According to the EPA, “If you throw your PPCPs down the drain or flush them down the toilet, and if your home is connected to a municipal sewage system, some of the PPCPs would typically be discharged into lakes, rivers, or oceans, because most waste water treatment plants are not designed to remove or destroy PPCPs from wastewater



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Various Methods of Drug Disposal

1. Check with your pharmacy to see if they have a drug take back program.
2. Find out if there is a special collection for unused and expired drugs in your area.

Even though there are other methods of properly disposing of expired or unwanted medications, this appears to be one of the best.

1. **For solid medications, such as pill or capsules:** take out of their original container and place them in a disposable container such as a plastic milk container. Add water with bleach to container until contents are completely covered.
2. **For liquid medications:** add cat litter, dirt, charcoal, or nontoxic powdered spice, such as turmeric or mustard to make a pungent, unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.
3. **For blister packs:** wrap the blister packages containing pills in multiple layers of duct or other opaque tape.
4. **Unused ampoules, vials, and IV bags** should not be opened (other than to scratch out the patient's name). Wrap the item with duct or other opaque tape to minimize breakage, and then place in an opaque plastic container (such as an empty yogurt or margarine tub).
5. **Close the lid** of the disposable container or medication container and secure with duct or packing tape.
6. **Double bag** the contained drugs in a closable plastic bag, or put in another container with the lid taped closed. This helps prevent immediate identification that the package contains drugs and helps contain any leaks if

the container breaks during the disposal process, e.g., when plastic garbage bags tear, the trash can tips over, etc. Avoid putting drugs into any material or food that might be attractive to pets or wildlife.

7. **If the container is glass** put it inside a sturdy cardboard box and seal the box to prevent breakage before placing in trash.
8. **Just before trash collection,** put the medications into the trash container for removal.

FOR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS: BE SURE TO SCRATCH OUT, COVER WITH TAPE, OR USE PERMANENT MARKER TO MAKE PERSONAL INFORMATION UNREADABLE.

On Saturday, September 25, 2011, the U.S. Dept. of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration will coordinate a collaborative effort with state and local law enforcement agencies to remove potentially dangerous controlled substances from our nation's medicine cabinets.

Collection activities will take place from 10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. at sites established throughout the country. To learn more about the program and find a collection site near you, visit www.dea.gov/diversion/takeback (new collection sites are being added daily).

Attached is Larimer County's drug collection and disposal policy for you to browse over also.

If you read this far, thank you and now please take a moment to let Brenda and Chris know if you like the way we've been doing newsletters. We want to provide the information that you want to read about. But we have to guess and we'd really like some feedback. Please!!!
herschweer@msn.com; bbock@rkymtnhi.com