



# 2011 Fall Newsletter

## Board Member Resignation

### **Next CCA General Membership Meeting:**

Monday, October 3, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. At the Clarion Inn in Grand Junction. Dinner will be served, please let Chris Herndon know if you will be there.

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

[Coloradocoroners.org](http://Coloradocoroners.org)

### **CCA Board of Directors**

The Board is comprised of 12 individuals who listen to the whole membership and carry that voice forward. There will be one vacancy on the Board of Directors for someone to fill out a term that will expire in June of 2013. Now is your chance to get involved. Either run for the CCA Board or get on a committee. You can make a difference. The Board needs people who are willing to work hard for something they believe in.

Anyone who is interested needs to send a letter of interest describing why he or she would like to be on the Board by October 1, 2011 to the Board Secretary, Chris Herndon at [CHerndon@douglas.co.us](mailto:CHerndon@douglas.co.us) or Fax 303-633-0120.

The Board will consider all eligible applicants and make a decision at the 10/03/2011 Board Meeting.

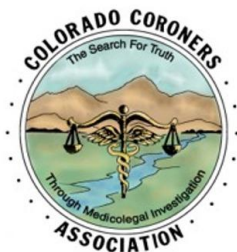
If you have always been one those who are critical about CCA, you have no excuse to miss this opportunity to become involved.

In the summer of 1986, I received an intriguing letter from Rudy, the Lake County Coroner, suggesting that all the Coroners should get together and see how we could help one another. At that point, I had been the Park County Coroner for a year and had been doing the job by the seat of my pants with no training and no one to look to for advice. At that first meeting in Leadville, I met people who have become lifelong friends and mentors. There are not many of us left anymore who were at that meeting. Since then the Colorado Coroners Association has been a huge part of my life and I have loved every minute of it. I have seen Coroners come and go, deputies move up to Coroner and Coroners become Commissioners. I have had personal contact with every Coroner in the State and many have become very good friends. I am so proud of how far CCA has come from those humble beginnings.

This is incredibly difficult to write, but I have decided that I would like to enjoy a little more time off. As of the Board of Directors Meeting on October 3, 2011, I will be resigning from the Board of Directors and as Chair of the Education Committee. I am sure that there are other people out there who want to help CCA continue to succeed and will step in to my shoes.

I am not going anywhere and I am not retiring from work, I would just like to enjoy being a grandma and relaxing a bit more. I've heard that it is better for your health if you only work 40 hours a week and take vacations! I am probably going to have withdrawal DT's for a while! My phone numbers and email are not changing.

*Chris Herndon*



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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.

The next MLDI class will be in Grand Junction on October 3 -5, 2011. This is a great basic death investigation class, we hope to have about 40 people in attendance.

### 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. Pat Allen, MD, Larimer County (CCA President) is the chair.

On Friday August 26, Dr. Allen and our lobbyist, Peg Ackerman, attended the Metro Area County Commissioners (MACC) meeting in Brighton. This meeting is the annual meeting for state organizations such as the CCA, the County Sheriffs, Clerks and Records, etc. to present upcoming legislative issues to the collective Metro commissioners so that they are informed of any proposed legislation coming in the next legislative session and can decide to support issues that they deem important.

Dr. Allen presented the CCA agenda for the upcoming session. Namely, revising the Colorado statutes as regards the Coroners of the state. This new legislation would consolidate all references to Coroners in one place, making the laws easier to access; would update/modernize statutes to make them applicable to 2012; would be more specific regarding what a coroner can and cannot do in the performance of duties. Note that this last part- the performance of duties part- is exactly what we proposed initiating in the annual meeting in

Blackhawk in June. It will eventually result in statewide standards for all Coroners and will also address the concerns of the CCSTB regarding the "Standards" part of their mission. The CCA hopes to get support from both the County Sheriffs of Colorado and the Colorado District Attorneys Council on this bill.

### 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.

For assistance or more information, please feel free to contact:

Co-chair – Eastern Slope Region  
Darrel Brenner  
Washington County Coroner's Office  
Eastern Slope Region  
970-554-0404  
darrelbrenner@mac.com

Co-chair - Western Slope Region  
Steve Stogsdill, D-ABMDI  
Western Slope Region  
Delta County Coroner's Office  
970-201-9015  
sjstogsdill@bresnan.net

The Coroner Assist Team will soon be sending out a questionnaire asking for information regarding what resources each county has available in the event of a disaster. This could prove very helpful for those needing help in the future. We would appreciate your prompt response.



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## **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).

GEERC – this Governors Emergency Response committee also dealt with DNC issues. Dr. Mike Dobersen, Arapahoe County, is the CCA representative.

State Child Fatality Committee - Dr. Amy Martin, Denver County, and Dr. Kelly Lear-Kaul were appointed by the Governor to be the Coroner representatives on this committee.

Legislative Salary Committee – Bob Fowler, Otero County, was appointed by the Governor to sit on this Committee as the Coroner representative. This committee has been meeting over the past year to compile salary recommendations for County elected officials. They are proposing a 3-year plan for giving elected officials a raise. Contact Bob for more information.

## **Ike Miller and Scholarship Committee**

In 2010, the Ike Miller Scholarship was awarded to Jennifer Nestor, the Lincoln County Coroner. She picked the August 2011 class in St. Louis as her choice to attend. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend the class. No one submitted an application in 2011.

## **Marketing**

If anyone has any ideas for items they would like to see available please contact us.

Feel free to call us at 303-646-5599 Elbert County Coroner's office. Or you can e- mail us at [mbsbs1@msn.com](mailto:mbsbs1@msn.com)

Mike and Sandy Graeff  
Elbert County

## **Website (coloradocoroners.org)**

The website continues to get many hits. Hopefully you are all using it to get information on training that is available, CCA meetings, etc.

Did you know that past Newsletters and Meeting Minutes are posted on the website?

If you have any suggestions of how we can improve the website please contact Brenda.

## **Drug Abuse that is Legal**

By Pat Allen, MD

### Designer Drugs- Focus on "Spice"

Recently our office has had a death associated with the use of the designer drug known as "Spice", also known by many other names, including K2, Space, Pot-pourri, Genie, Buzz, Mr. Smiley, and many others. This product is a blend of synthetic cannabinoids and is legally sold in many places such as gas stations, truck stops along the Interstate system, smoke/head shops, etc. I have seen it at the counters of a number of gas stations in the region, including neighboring states. They are sold as incense or as herbal smoking blends. A growing number of emergency room visits due to adverse reactions and deaths have been associated with its use. Many countries have banned its sale as well as some but not all states in the USA. Colorado coroners need to be aware of this drug and its potential to be associated with sudden death.

I have attached a number of recent references and articles for your files. Some of the national



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laboratories can now test for this complex of synthetic cannabinoids.

this point, but keep in mind that we will be asking for 2011 most likely early next year.

## Guest Articles

The Colorado Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) has been working with all Colorado Coroners to receive BAC and Drug data for people involved in traffic-related fatalities throughout the State of Colorado. I represent the CDOT's FARS Program and with the help of my FARS's Analysts, Kevin Dietrick and Charles Keep. The information collected from the Coroners gets reported to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Presently, every County Coroner is contacted twice each year for BAC and drug data and for the most part, the County Coroner Offices cooperate with us.

All data pertaining to auto-related fatalities are housed and kept confidential at CDOT, but as part of our multi-year Cooperative Agreement with NHTSA, the data received is disseminated through the FARS System.

This critical data is analyzed by the NCSA to prepare Reports for Congress who have the authorization to allocate funds for State Counties needing assistance in DUI enforcement. Certainly, for the Counties that cooperate with the Colorado FARS program, there is a great benefit not only in reducing the fatalities, but also in possible financial incentives.

The attached spreadsheet shows the status of the 2010 BAC collection from all Colorado Coroners as of today. Please note, the ones with the blank "status" have not responded to us and that we can only assume their name and contact is accurate, at least that is what we show in our system. The 2010 FARS dataset officially closes on December 30<sup>th</sup> 2011, therefore we only have a few months to collect the data. The 2010 is our major focus at

## **M. R. Marandi, PE II**

Colorado Department of Transportation  
HQ Traffic Engineering Branch  
Data Management Unit/Colorado FARS Program  
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Denver, CO 80222  
303-757-9876 Voice  
303-512-5113 Fax

[Rm.Marandi@dot.state.co.us](mailto:Rm.Marandi@dot.state.co.us)



Angel Eyes is a resource for coroners throughout Colorado when they have a case of a death of an infant or toddler in a sudden, unexpected and, perhaps, an undetermined fashion. Angel Eyes, formerly The Colorado SIDS Program, is the only organization in Colorado that provides bereavement and support services to support SUID families. Although the determination of the final cause of death, at times, is now SUID, SUIDI or Undetermined, the grief of these families is the similar. Coroners have initial contact with these parents – a contact that these families always remember. They appreciate the sensitivity with which you treat them – as do we. Your respect for their child and for their loss lays a foundation for them to begin to come to grips with what has happened to their family.

We provide a next step for these families. We contact them as soon as we hear from you. We reach out to them, let them know that we exist, tell them what services are available for them, and listen to what they might need. Our initial contact, information and literature provide some structure for them as they try to navigate their way through a bewildering experience. Our social worker is also available to answer any initial questions they have and/or to personally meet with them at their home or our office. As families have said, "we never knew we'd have to figure out how to bury our child".



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We also provide on-going services for these families. As we check in with them over time, we are able to inquire if they need additional services such as local support groups or mental health interventions. We have an extensive referral base throughout the state for bereavement groups, individuals and mental health centers that are available for them. We hold monthly support groups both in Denver and in Colorado Springs, offer peer contacts, an annual Memorial Walk and continuing support as they walk through this unexpected and difficult period of their lives.

Contact us to report a death by calling us at 303-320-7771. Some coroners prefer to fax us the basic case information including D.O.B, D.O.D., family contact information and a basic narrative about the circumstances of the death. Our fax number is 303-320-2827. We are happy to meet with you and tell you more about Angel Eyes and our services. You can also find out more information about Angel Eyes by visiting our website at [www.angeleyes.org](http://www.angeleyes.org).

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Denver, CO 80246  
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[jenny@angeleyes.org](mailto:jenny@angeleyes.org)  
[www.angeleyes.org](http://www.angeleyes.org)