

N.Y.S.A.C.C.M.E.
New York State Association of County Coroners and Medical Examiners

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We're on the web!!
www.nysaccme.org



SPRING 2014 CONFERENCE – March 21 - 23, 2014

The POST...A Forensic Publication



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Show me the manner in which a nation or community cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender sympathies of its people, their respect for the law of the land and their loyalty to high ideals.

GLADSTONE

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Susan J. Ernst
Administrative Assistant

President's Message by Scott M. Schmidt, CFSP Chief Coroner--Orleans County, New York

Sometimes, WE NEED a Reality Check

While talking with Ontario County Coroner Kevin Henderson about his speaker line-up for the Fall 2013 Conference, he expressed concern about a speaker for the dinner presentation. We chatted about a few ideas and had some interesting conversation about speakers in the past and finally, he somewhat sheepishly mentioned an idea he had been thinking about for quite some time.

Kevin methodically described one of his cases which left a lasting impression upon him. The case involved a suicide of a young man who was found by his (the deceased's) brother after he had not reported to work. Kevin thought that perhaps hearing the story from the 'other side' (meaning from the surviving brother's point of view), might be an interesting topic for our dinner speaker. I pondered this and told him that usually we try to keep the dinner presentation light and up-beat after a day full of lectures. I suggested that he might find someone who was up-beat to end the day on a 'high note' and leave people excited to go back on Sunday morning. However, I also told him that it was his conference and I would go along with whatever decision he would make. Kevin made his decision and this is what happened.

Mr. Thomas Burns, a Codes Investigator for the NYS DDSO in Macedon, provided us with some hard-core reality. He shared a

story about his brother John Burns, the jokester of his family. John had some personal problems, but had turned his life around and was working to achieve his full potential in life, carrying the mantle of adult responsibility proudly. Tom also shared a video with us showing John reciting a "thank-you" message of sorts for his parents on the occasion of their anniversary. His message was from the heart, delightful, funny and in every regard priceless to his parents, because it was a genuine gift which could not be bought or duplicated.

As Tom continued with his presentation, he described in painful detail how he received a phone call to check on John as he had not reported to work as usual. Tom re-lived for us verbally, and with great precision, creating for us a horrifying visual representation of seeing his brother on the couch and discovering that he was not, '... wearing a hat..' but rather the after-effects of taken his life with a gunshot wound to the head. He continued his story about the interrogation that ensued by law enforcement, EMS, and finally by Coroner Henderson who, after the requisite and obligatory questions and investigatory interview, did something human. Kevin gave Tom his phone numbers and as a human being--not a Coroner, extended the invitation to call him anytime to talk or meet for coffee.

We all know that we have 'routine' cases. We have routine unattended deaths, routine homicides, routine this and routine that. We all get into our routine mode and sometimes callously do what we need to do to get our job done and put it behind us. We often lose sight of the fact that a death of someone's family member is NEVER routine to them! Our interaction with that family during one of the most difficult, emotional and devastating times of their lives is of utmost and paramount importance. Not for the sake of the case, but for the sake of their emotional well-being and moving on with life in a healthy direction. By taking a few extra moments to care, to share that we are also human beings and not robots, it can and does make a world of difference.

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1

For those of you who were at conference and experienced Tom Burns talk about the death of his brother John, you heard, saw and felt that difference. You learned how important that difference was in the life of Tom and you learned how simple it was to make that difference. There wasn't a person in that room during the presentation, who didn't feel an emotional connection with Mr. Burns and who at some point throughout his talk, didn't have their eyes well-up with a tear or two.

I thank you Tom Burns for having the courage to share the story of your brother John and of your journey through tragedy and grief with us. I thank Ontario Coroner Kevin Henderson for having the courage and wisdom to be a human being...a friend to this man, during the most difficult time in his life. And I thank both of them for showing us that we NEED to stay grounded in reality because our immediate and long-term actions can influence people beyond belief...good or bad. We must constantly remember that our job IS a terrible reality for many people. Taking an extra moment to assure the families we serve that we too, are human and genuinely care, is such a powerful and compassionate thing to do. That action alone, verbally and in-person, can help a grieving family more than you could ever imagine. Take a moment next time you have the chance and privilege to do so, to keep yourself grounded, keep it real, and extend your human side to someone who needs it.

And on behalf of my wife, Aleka, with daughters Hayley and Danielle, I hope you had a most enjoyable Holiday Season and wish you all health, happiness and prosperity during the upcoming year!

SPRING 2014 CONFERENCE....

The March 2014 conference to be held in Syracuse, NY will present a board spectrum of death investigation related to animal encounters. Featured at the conference will be; Forensic Pathology, Veterinary Medicine, Psychology, Legal, Anthropology, and animal transmitted diseases (Infectious disease) by presenters from near and far. This promises to be entertaining, interesting, and appropriate, especially for those who are faced with the occasional complicated death involving animals.

John "Jack" Prindle, M.D.



Directions to Genesee Grande Hotel

1060 East Genesee Street Syracuse, NY 13210

From NYS Thruway (I-90) and Points East: Exit 34A to 481 S toward Syracuse. Merge onto 690 W via exit 4 toward Syracuse. Take Exit 13, Townsend St. toward downtown. Turn left onto N Townsend St. Turn left onto E Genesee St. The hotel will be on the left.

From Points South and Route 81: Exit onto Almond Street. Turn right onto E Genesee St. Hotel is approximately 4/10 mile on the right.

From NYS Thruway (I-90) and Points West: Exit 36 to I-81 S toward Syracuse. Exit onto Harrison St. Turn right onto S Townsend St. Take first right onto E Genesee St. Hotel is approximately 1/2 mile on the right.



NYSACCME AFFILIATES WITH IAC&ME

At NYSACCME's Board of Directors meeting held in Rochester during our Fall 2013 Conference, it was decided that we as an Association become a member of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners.

For over 70 years, IAC&ME has been holding yearly educational seminars promoting excellence in Medicolegal Death Investigation with workshops, training, workgroups, and publications. As per their Mission Statement, "The IAC&ME is committed to advancing the accurate determination of the cause and manner of death through the utilization of science, medicine and law."

While NYSACCME is an Affiliate Member, you are invited and ENCOURAGED to join on a personal level. Your first year membership is FREE. After that, the cost of membership is similar to that of NYSACCME's. They hold the educational seminars in Las Vegas during the summer – July 27-31. With more and more issues coming up nationwide with Coroner-vs.-ME systems both pro and con, IAC&ME is on the cutting edge and has a wealth of resource documents to assist us in these discussions not to mention researched and developed protocols for almost anything we are involved with... investigation-wise.

To learn more about the IAC&ME you can visit their website which is: www.theiacme.com or contact the current President Elect, Frank DePaolo, NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner at: fdpaolo@ocme.nyc.gov

They are a great resource for any Coroner or Medical Examiner!

“A Forensic Buffet”

Welcome to the Fall 2014 NYSACCME Conference being held for the first time ever in the rolling hills of the Southern Tier at Ellicottville, New York on September 19th to 21st. We will be staying in the newly built Tamarack Lodge, overlooking the very picturesque Holiday Valley Ski Resort. Although “The Meat and Potatoes” of this conference will be “Cold Related Deaths” there will be a variety of topics presented. Speakers will include Forensic Pathologists, Death Scene Investigators and Profilers both local and state wide. Also, Mr. James Meany with the New York State DOH will discuss the upcoming implementation of the EDRS (Electronic Death Registration System) and what it will mean to us in addition to presenting some “Death Certificate Bloopers”.

This same weekend The Ellicottville Chamber of Commerce is also hosting Ellicottville’s “Rock-N-Roll Weekend”. There will be live music all weekend in the village, a car show, the Seneca Allegany Casino is close by to take a chance at, and even the “Falling Waters Spa” just to relax at, for all those who will not be attending the meetings or even after the meetings.

This conference should prove to be a “Delight” and the speakers should “Wet Your Whistle” and leave you with “Food for Thought” (no pun intended). We in Cattaraugus County are extremely excited to host this conference in the Southern Tier and look forward to seeing you there!!!

Your Conference Host, Bradley M. Spink, Cattaraugus County Coroner

SAVE THE DATES

Fall 2014 Conference – September 19-21 - Ellicottville

Spring 2015 Conference – March 20-22 - Owego

Fall 2015 Conference – September 18-20 - Lewiston

Spring 2016 Conference - March 18-20 - Watkins Glen

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

True or False? Only the wealthy can make a significant gift to NYSACCME.



FALSE! Interestingly, the wealthy are less likely than others to give. Many of our supporters are not wealthy, but are interested in making a sizeable donation to support NYSACCME and its efforts in Medico-Legal Death Investigation Education. But to be practical, they must maintain their current income and cash flow levels. They want to give, but aren’t sure how to give wisely. A planned gift to NYSACCME is a wonderful way to make a differ-

ence in the Educational efforts of your organization while also enhancing your own financial and estate plans. Bequests, trusts, gifts of life insurance, and retirement assets—these giving vehicles can benefit you regardless of your level of wealth. And, with a planned gift, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have truly made a difference in the future of Forensic Science. Why not remember NYSACCME in your will or estate planning

or with an outright donation now, to ensure that your interests in NYSACCME will endure through the years. Your attorney and/or financial advisor can help you with the options available to you. NYSACCME is a Not-for-Profit Organization and your gift is tax deductible. Thank you.

THANK YOU

**New York State Funeral Directors Association
Family Assistance Commission**

...for your sponsorship at our
FALL 2013 CONFERENCE

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

In the hopes of expanding long-term membership in the Association, during its September 20, 2013 meeting, the Board of Directors approved a series of proposed Amendments to the NYSACCME Bylaws that would authorize the creation of a student membership. To become a student member, an individual must be enrolled at an accredited institution in a Premed undergraduate program, Medical School (residency), Mortuary Science program, Forensic Investigation program, or Criminal Justice program, or such similar program as approved by the Board. Students who wish to become a member will have to submit an application, which will include proof of enrollment in a qualifying educational program. Further, the student must be nominated for membership by a current member of the association. A majority of the Board must then favorably pass on the application. If the student fails to maintain enrollment in a qualifying program, then his /her membership will be terminated.

Under the Bylaws, the Board will determine the student membership fee, which may be lower than the standard membership fee. The Board is also discussing whether student members should be charged the same rate to attend conferences as other members who are already practicing in their respective fields and earning income. The Board welcomes input from any members who wish to share their opinion regarding student membership fees and rates. The issue will be discussed at the Board's next regular meeting, to be held in January of 2014.

THANK YOU

**New York State Funeral Directors Association
Family Assistance Commission**

...for your sponsorship at our
FALL 2013 CONFERENCE

NYSACCME MEMBERSHIP

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO BECOMING A MEMBER OF NYSACCME?

- ▶ Reduction in Conference Registration Fees
- ▶ Accreditation from NYSACCME in Medico-Legal Death Investigation
- ▶ Creditability when involved in court cases
- ▶ Endless networking opportunities with colleagues and other professionals
- ▶ Learn from top-flight speakers presenting cutting edge topics and techniques
- ▶ A resource for questions and information regarding every day cases to that complex one of a kind case that leaves you grasping for straws
- ▶ The opportunity to raise awareness in your own community by gaining knowledge and technique that can be passed on to others who don't know
- ▶ To become an advocate for the Forensic Sciences
- ▶ Continuing Education Credits for Medico-Legal Death Investigators, Physicians, Funeral Directors, on occasion Attorneys

OUR MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO:

- ▶ Elected and appointed County Coroners and appointed Medical Examiners and their deputies
- ▶ Officers and members of organizations where there is significant interaction with NYSACCME
- ▶ Persons who have significantly advanced the causes of forensic sciences
- ▶ Sworn law enforcement officers involved in death investigations, and official investigators for Medical Examiners
- ▶ Licensed Funeral Directors, Embalmers, Undertakers
- ▶ Retired/Emeritus (former members, no longer in office due to retirement)
- ▶ Students

Membership is effective from January to December. Yearly membership dues are made payable to NYSACCME. Applications are available on our website:

NYSACCME MISSION STATEMENT



The Mission and Goals of the NYSACCME are to assist in advancement of Forensic Science and its application to death investigation by providing education to those who interact during a death investigation. We strive for the improvement of quality in death investigations in NY State and the advancement of support by the

State of NY, as well as County and Local governments for the death investigators. By organizing Coroners and Medical Examiners throughout the State, we support promulgation of standards for death investigation. We hope to maintain a greater quality of death investigation by accrediting our membership via training, and we

strive to assist with the writing of new laws and/or changing of old laws by maintaining liaison with legislative bodies, representatives, and the State DOH. We are ACTIVISTS for Forensic Science.