

# 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**

## NYSACCME

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

### Don't Bother Me!

As a Funeral Director for almost 30 years, and as a Coroner for over 20, I'm used to the phone ringing all hours of the day and night. Whether it be a death call for the Funeral Home or a request Coroner response from the Sheriff's Dispatch Center, part of my job is to answer the phone in a professional manner and to respond accordingly...politely, to the needs of who is on the other end of the phone.

The County I work for, contracts with another County for all the autopsy and toxicology work, like many other Counties in Western New York. It's a situation that has many benefits, the major one being financial. It is also a partnership which has some downfalls, one of the major ones being the time it takes to obtain final autopsy reports. This is primarily due to the fact that the County we contract with does their own reports first, and then works on the other 7-8 Counties that contract with them as they are able. While this isn't the optimum situation, it's the way it is and you learn to live with it. We as Coroners, accept this time frame because we understand why the delay happens. We explain to our families about the time delay and

expect them to understand as well.

However, for the families...it's not that simple. When someone dies unexpectedly, EVERYONE wants answers. When an autopsy is completed and the death certificate lists as a cause and manner of death; Pending-Pending...nobody is content. Medical Examiners, Coroners, EMS, and Law Enforcement all want answers. The family is the one who wants and needs the answers the most. We often times lose sight of that. I often times find myself getting annoyed with people even AFTER I've told them to call me every couple weeks to see if I've had any updates on their case. When I see messages left for me at work to return a family's phone call regarding an autopsy report I've often thought, "...what don't they understand?" I find myself saying quietly, "...don't bother me!" What a shameful way to feel.

While as Medico-Legal Investigators and Officials charged with determining the cause and manner of death of deceased individuals in certain circumstances, we are first and foremost public servants and human beings. The

Golden Rule for many of us has tarnished and needs some major rehab. The families affected by sudden deaths look to us for help. They look to us for guidance, compassion, and support but more importantly...they look to us for answers. How dare we fault them for wanting to know what happened. Shame on us for not putting ourselves in their shoes; wandering aimlessly day after day with question after question and the pain of the death just festering...not knowing what happened. We need to open our eyes, open our ears, extend a hand and open our hearts to the people we serve in our communities...the people who are counting on us to help them through one of the most painful and difficult times in their lives. We need to allow our fellow human beings, to 'bother' us until we can give them the answers that we can, not just because it's the proper thing to do, but because it's the professional and compassionate thing to do and it will ultimately help them continue on with their lives in a healthier way. Remember the Golden Rule!



# FALL 2011 CONFERENCE "STRANGE AND BIZARRE" by Alan Kesten

A wonderful spring weekend in Watkins Glen is now a part of NYSACCME history. Everyone that attended enjoyed a great conference, pleasant atmosphere and wonderful accommodations.

Now we move forward to our Fall Conference "Strange and Bizarre" hosted by Sullivan County Coroners Michael Speer and Alan Kesten. September will bring NYSACCME to beautiful Sullivan County and the fantastic Villa Roma Resort and Conference Center.

The Villa Roma is a full-service resort nestled in the hills above Callicoon, New York. Only 5 minutes from the scenic Delaware River, and less than 10 minutes from the site of the famous Woodstock Festival in 1969. For those NYSACCME members that might be aged hippies and remember that period, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is now a world class music venue built on the grounds of the Woodstock Festival and The Museum at Bethel Woods is a spectacular dis-

play of music and art of the Woodstock Era.

Our conference will have some interesting speakers. Our great friend, Dr. Richard Callery, Chief Medical Examiner from the State of Delaware will be presenting "Dela-Weird" and an "Interactive discussion" on "Interesting and Unusual" cases. Dr. Michael Sikirica, Chief Medical Examiner of Rensselaer County will be presenting cases on Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. There will be a two-hour presentation from NaMus on missing and unidentified remains by Suzanne Stiltner and Dr. Richard Scanlon, a Forensic Odontologist.

Keeping in line with "Strange and Bizarre", we have invited some local speakers from Sullivan County to present some of our finest stories. Our former District Attorney, Stephen Lungen was the second longest sitting DA in New York State when he decided to retire last year. In almost four decades as the Prosecution in Sullivan County, Steve has some great stories

to tell. He will be presenting two of the most bizarre! You can only imagine! Senior Investigator Terry Mullins of the New York State Police Troop F Forensic Unit will be presenting a triple fatality carbon monoxide case. Truly a strange story! One of Sullivan County's worst auto accidents involved 5 teens and a camp counselor. We will see a presentation of the events leading up to the accident and the aftermath.

And, last, but not least, Ms. Deborah Orecki from the NYS Bureau of Funeral Directing will do a two-hour laws presentation.

For those driving up on Friday afternoon, Sullivan County has some wonderful sights to see. Be sure to check in early at the hotel to enjoy your surroundings. Your Friday night dinner is included with your weekend package. You must be seated by 8:30 p.m. for dinner. We look forward to seeing you all in Sullivan County in September.



## 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.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING... Even in Buffalo ☺

NYSACCME...let's get ready to visit the second largest city in New York State!! The Spring 2012 NYSACCME conference will be held in fabulous downtown Buffalo.

Buffalo has lots to offer and this spring will be no exception! The Erie County Medical Examiner's Office is planning a weekend of delight, camaraderie, and of course excellent, practical and relevant information for everyday practice. We will be focusing on the pediatric side of forensics in an effort to enhance everyone's understanding of the forensic applications and nuances that make the pediatric population more than just 'little adults'. We are expecting speakers from several disciplines to include forensic anthropologist, forensic dentist, attorneys, law enforcement, child advocacy, and experts in pediatric trauma.

In keeping with the high level of excellence we demand of ourselves and the high level of expectations from you, our venue for the conference will not disappoint.

The Adam's Mark Hotel will be your home for the weekend. Located in the heart of Buffalo's downtown business district, the Adam's Mark Hotel is deluxe accommodations at the Waterfront. It is fifteen (15) minutes from Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and twenty (20) minutes from Niagara Falls and Casino Niagara. Within walking distance of the hotel are the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center, theatre, and major sports complexes. Providing luxurious accommodations, fabulous amenities, chic restaurants and lounges, exceptional gift shop and extensive meeting facilities is how the Adam's Mark Hotel treats their guest to first class treatment. For more information and to further increase your excitement for a fun weekend, go to [www.adamsmark.com](http://www.adamsmark.com) to see what they have to offer. We can assure you that we will handle the educational part...it will be well worth the trip!

Can't wait to see you in the Spring!

Dianne, Jonrika and Steve (our new doc☺)  
Erie County Medical Examiners



### Correction

In the Winter 2011 edition of The Post, an article appeared giving a preview of the Spring 2011 NYSACCME Conference in Watkins Glen. In that article, also appeared information about one of our speakers, Dr. Erik Mitchell. The article shed light on his background and experience to include participation in the formation of NYSACCME. It, (the article,) inadvertently and totally without malice, mentioned Dr. Mitchell as the Founder of NYSACCME. While Dr. Mitchell was a member of the group who started our wonderful organization, he was not the Founder per say, but one of the Founders...along with Mr. Ronald Keough who spearheaded the effort to form the organization which is now known as the New York State Association of County Coroners and Medical Examiners. NYSACCME strives to provide the most up-to-date and correct information possible in all its publications and regrets any hard feelings this error may have caused.

# Directions to the Villa Roma

## **From New York and Metropolitan Area:**

(2 Hours) George Washington Bridge to New Jersey Palisades Parkway to New York Thruway North. Proceed on Thruway to Exit 16 and proceed west on Route 17 to Exit 104. Route 17B (Raceway Road). Go West to Cochection 17 miles, at the blinking light turn right at the intersection on Route 17B West and 52A, then follow the signs to the Villa Roma.

## **From Binghamton, Rochester and Upstate Area:**

Interstate Highway 490 South to the New York Thruway (90) East. In Syracuse leave Route 90 for Interstate 81 South to Binghamton. Here pick up Route 17 East (Quickway) to Hancock Exit Route 97. Follow this to Callicoon. Turn left at traffic light before bridge onto 17B which becomes Route 52. Follow the signs to the Villa Roma.

## **From Connecticut:**

Route 84 West to Route 17, West to Exit 104, Route 17B (Raceway Rd.) Go West 17 miles to Cochection turn right at the blinking light at the intersection of Route 17B West and 52A, follow the signs to Villa Roma.

## **From Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia:**

New Jersey Turnpike to Exit 11 Garden State Parkway North to New York State Thruway North. Leave Thruway at Exit 16 and proceed to Route 17 to Exit 104, Route 17B (Raceway Rd). Go West to Cochection 17 miles, there turn right at the blinking light at the intersection of Route 17B West and 52A. Follow the Villa Roma signs.

## **From Boston and the New England States:**

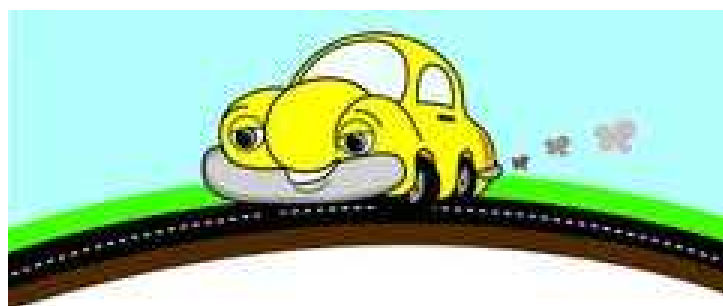
Mass. Turnpike to Sturbridge Exit. Route 86 South to Route 84 West. Proceed to New York Exit 4W to Route 17 Quickway West to Exit 104. Route 17B (Raceway Rd.) Go West to Cochection 17 miles, at blinking light turn right at the intersection of Route 17B and 52A, then follow signs to Villa Roma.

## **From Albany Area:**

Take New York State Thruway to Exit 19 (Kingston Exit) Take 209 South to Ellenville. Take Route 52 West to Jeffersonville. Then follow signs to Villa Roma.

## **From Stewart International Airport:**

Follow signs to Route I-84 (left on Rte 207 East 9 mi., left on Rte 300 N. 2.1 mi.) Route I-84 West to Middletown (Exit 4) and Route 17, West to Exit 104, route 17B (Raceway Rd). Go West to Cochection 17 miles. At the blinking light turn right at the intersection of Route 17B and 52. Follow signs to Villa Roma.



**N.Y.S.A.C.C.M.E.**

New York State Association of County  
Coroners and Medical Examiners

**BUSINESS OFFICE**

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We're on the web!!

[www.nysaccme.org](http://www.nysaccme.org)



*FALL 2011 CONFERENCE— SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2011*

**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.