

# The POST...A Forensic Publication



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Summer-'09

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

*I can't say THANK YOU enough to our many conference sponsors. Money is tight in all areas, not to mention in the area of donations to not-for-profit organizations. NYSACCME has been blessed for many years by so many generous benefactors which assist us in keeping conference expenses down so that you...our members can learn, relax, and participate in unique educational opportunities twice a year.*

*Susan Hayes, from the Albany Lion's Eye Bank has been a steadfast and devoted member of NYSACCME and has also been an ever-present pillar with the continued financial support of her organization. So too, have been Dr. Susan Sullivan and Kim Hersperger from Upstate New York Transplant Services, Tammi Sharpe from the*

*Rochester-Finger Lakes Eye and Human Parts Bank, and Joan Burke from Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation.*

*We have MANY sponsors but these four groups/5 people have NEVER WAIVERED in their support regardless of the financial climate of the day. Sometimes it may seem that we take our sponsors for granted but speaking for the entire Membership and for the Officers and Directors, we don't. Truly, in some manner, some shape, and in some form, we work with these agencies everyday and they benefit from learning about what we do. We too, have learned a great deal about what they do. It is a mutual understanding and appreciation of the duties of ALL PARTIES which makes these relationships so vital in our*

*every day professional lives. That relationship is also important to the families we serve. They...the families, are the ones who benefit from our relationships.*

*We continue to need financial support as costs of conference continue to rise and without the help of ALL our sponsors, our fees would easily double.*

*It is my hope that as membership increases and our conference attendance continues to rise, that our sponsors will continue to help propel the Mission of NYSACCME with their financial and personal support. While at conference, say THANK YOU to ALL our sponsors who have helped make such a unique learning opportunity available for all of us.*



## REVISITING SPRING 2009 CONFERENCE "Murder, Mystery and Mayhem"

*NYSACCME was indeed privileged to have had the chance to hold a conference at The Barton Hill Hotel & Spa this past April. Combining history with a stellar program put together by NYSACCME member and conference host Kim Hersperger from Upstate NY Transplant Services, turned out to be a*

*perfect combination! There were so many comments not only about the program, but about the accommodations. Once again, our group filled the hotel to capacity and our speakers provided a wonderful weekend filled with knowledge and expertise. NYSACCME conferences are an excellent way*

*to further your knowledge of Medico-Legal Death Investigation and many areas of Forensic Science. You don't have to be a Board Member to be a Conference Host. Thank you Kim and friends at Upstate NY Transplant Services for a most educational and wonderful weekend in Lewiston, New York!*

## FALL CONFERENCE – ROCHESTER, NEW YORK September 18-20, 2009

### Mass Fatality Management



The NYSACCME Fall Educational Conference will be held at the Woodcliff Hotel and Spa located in Fairport, New York...just North of the I-90 near Rochester.

Our host for the Fall Conference will be our friends from The Monroe County Medical Examiner's Office. Bob Zerby and Dr. Caroline Dignan have put together a program concentrating on Mass Fatality Response. How timely this topic is after many of our members

have been intimately involved in recent Mass Fatality events. With the crash of Continental Flight 3407 in Buffalo, and the shooting in Binghamton just before Easter, it can't be stressed enough that having a plan and being prepared is paramount. We will be applying to NYSDOH for CEUs for our Funeral Director Friends and again for AAFP credits for our physicians. The Woodcliff Staff is excited to have us and you'll marvel at the views from this property. To learn more

about The Woodcliff, go to: [www.woodcliffodge.com](http://www.woodcliffodge.com)  
PLEASE REGISTER EARLY as this is a Boutique Hotel with limited room space. Remember, reservations MUST be made through the NYSACCME office for our group rate! The staff will not accept private bookings for our event.

## HIGHER DEGREE PROGRAM FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS

NYSACCME is blessed to have many Funeral Directors as members. We have continually tried to obtain CEUs for them through the NYSDOH. One of our members and frequent speakers, Ralph Klicker, has embarked on a new position as Director of Funeral Service Administration at SUNY Canton. One of his initiatives is to offer a Bachelor of Technology

Degree to Funeral Directors without having to attend classes on campus. Further, he plans to offer credit for life experience AND to offer as part of the program, specialty classes just for Coroner Funeral Directors. SUNY Canton also has Forensic and Death Investigation courses already being taught through their Criminal Justice Program. If you would

like to further your education and obtain a higher degree while still working, please contact Ralph Klicker at 1-800-238-5187 or email him at: [rklicker@thanosinstitute.com](mailto:rklicker@thanosinstitute.com)



## 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.

## INTRODUCING NYSACCME PUBLIC INFO OFFICERS

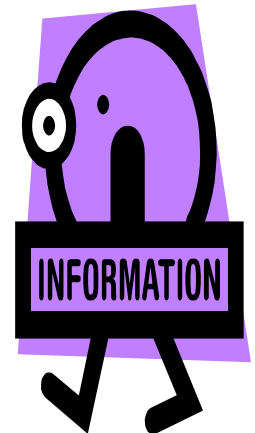
President Schmidt has appointed Ralph Klicker, PhD and Kevin Costigan as Public Information Officers (PIO's) for NYSACCME. They will jointly handle all press releases, interviews, and any official press conference briefings should they occur. We are pleased that both gentlemen are NYSACCME members with extensive experience in handling sensitive material and dealing with the media during tragic times.



Dr. Klicker is a licensed NY Funeral Director, President of Thanos Institute, and Director of Funeral Service Administration at SUNY Canton. He has written six text books including, Forensic Pathology for Funeral Directors. He is a member of DMORT 2 and of the Erie County Specialized Medical Response Team.



Kevin Costigan is a licensed NY Funeral Director, retired Lieut. of NYPD, former Oceanside FD Fire Chief, and a DMORT 2 member since 1996, (Adm. Off. '02-'05 & Commander since '06.) Kevin belongs to several fraternal and professional organizations including the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.



## The Woodcliff Lodge and Spa: Preview



Experience Woodcliff Hotel and Spa, a premier Rochester Hotel, Conference Center, and Spa located close to the scenic Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. As a guest, you'll enjoy beautiful hilltop views and creative cuisine in the distinctive Horizons Restaurant. There is a 9-hole regulation golf course only steps outside the door, and the Spa Elan and

Rochester Health Clubs encourage health and wellness programs to benefit mind and body. We are most fortunate to have been able to reserve space at this premier property as Fall is prime time for weddings and this property offers views and scenery which is coveted for such events. Register early as this is a boutique hotel with not as many room offerings as most

chain-properties. Again, ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE THROUGH THE NYSACCME OFFICE. For more information visit their website at:

[www.woodcliffodge.com](http://www.woodcliffodge.com)

## “Look on the Sunny Side...” NYSACCME's SUNSHINE FUND

NYSACCME Board Member Dr. John Cooley is the chairperson of The Sunshine Fund. He writes the following: “The Association's Sunshine Fund is a way we can show our respect and care for our colleagues in times of distress or transition. Our treasurer keeps account of the money raised by our drawings at conference. The Fund is

used for a member or member's family when there is a special need. The Fund works best when we share news of members regarding suitable occasions. If you know of a member with a need, please let us know by contacting Fund Chair John Cooley at: [jhcooley@aol.com](mailto:jhcooley@aol.com) or 607-592-0773 or P.O. Box 66, Dundee, NY,

14837. You can also notify the NYSACCME office or President Schmidt via contact info already in this newsletter.”



## BECOME A CONFERENCE HOST...INTERESTED??

NYSACCME has over 200 people on the membership roles. We have two (2) Educational Conferences each year. Historically, our conference Host has been one of our Board Members or Officers. This DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE CASE! As a member of NYSACCME, you are encouraged to offer your time and talents to further the objective of providing continuing education in the areas of Forensic Science. You are encouraged to become an ACTIVIST for Forensic Science. You are encour-

aged to become active in YOUR organization. We need fresh blood in the Conference Host pool! NYSACCME President Scott Schmidt along with any Officer or Board Member will be more than happy to assist you with this task. Our Administrative Assistant will work with you hand-in-hand while you get your bearings and will provide you with a Conference Host Handbook to help you with some of the early details. After choosing a topic and obtaining speakers, that's pretty much it...until

conference. Then you'll have the OPTION of doing introductions or letting the NYSACCME Administration take care of that. It's pretty simple and not too complicated. If interested, contact Scott or Susan at: [nysaccme@rochester.rr.com](mailto:nysaccme@rochester.rr.com) And THANK YOU for helping out NYSACCME!

NYSACCME needs your email address. Please include it on your membership and conference registration forms so we can have up-to-date member information. We DO NOT and WILL NOT sell our email lists to companies and outside agencies for solicitation of products and/or services. You can also just reply to: [nysaccme@rochester.rr.com](mailto:nysaccme@rochester.rr.com)

## THANKS FOR THE DONATION!!



NYSACCME is always in need of additional funding. Many individuals donate time and talents, others make monetary donations, and yet others make donations in a physical form. Such was the case this past Spring as David Mitchell, owner and President of Christopher Mitchell Funeral Homes, Inc. of Albion and Holley, donated a

1997 Plymouth Voyager LE Minivan to NYSACCME. The van was well maintained and had high mileage, but ran exceptionally well. David donated the vehicle to NYSACCME in exchange for a receipt which he'll use for tax deduction purposes. The Board decided to sell the van via auction and following some clean-up and parts procurement, the van sold at

auction for \$750 which netted NYSACCME \$675 after auction fees. THANK YOU DAVID for this most generous gift. NYSACCME is a 501c 3 organization and your donations are tax deductible.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

As we look ahead to future conferences, NYSACCME is in good shape. Fall 2009 takes us to Rochester, NY where Bob Zerby and the Monroe County ME's Office will host. Spring 2010 takes us to Binghamton where Dr. Jim Terzian and Dr. Jack Prindle will host. In the Fall

of 2010, we travel to Syracuse where Dr. Mary Jumbelic will host our Conference. Looking ahead to 2011, we are in need of a Conference Host for both the Spring and the Fall. If you are at all interested in developing an educational program for NYSACCME, now is the

time!

PLEASE email President Schmidt at: [sschmidt6278@yahoo.com](mailto:sschmidt6278@yahoo.com)

or

Susan Ernst, the NYSACCME Administrative Assistant at: [nysaccme@rochester.rr.com](mailto:nysaccme@rochester.rr.com)



## Guest Point of View

**A new feature of The Post, this space is dedicated to any member who wants to share valuable/useful information to our membership that has an application to our daily professional lives. Please submit text in Word format to Pres. Schmidt for consideration of being placed in the next issue of The Post. Content may be edited for space.**

### Every Scene-Every Death-Every Time

by

**Susan Hayes, Coroner/ME Liaison-Lions Eye Bank at Albany**

In 1998 the Federal Required Referral Law went into affect which required all deaths that occurred in a hospital be referred to their federally designated Organ Procurement Organization. To ensure compliance it was attached to the Conditions of Participation under Medicare and Medicaid Service. This law was created to ease the shortage of much needed organs and tissues because hospitals failed to voluntarily cooperate to develop policy and procedures that would refer these deaths.

The New York Alliance for Donation is starting a large Public Awareness Campaign to promote the Donor Registry and give people the information needed to make their decision to register as an intended or consented donor. Public transportation, college campuses as well as the Voter Registration Bill have been targeted. According to DMV, 8000 New Yorkers a week are designating themselves as donors. Many of these people will register as donors, all for naught if they die outside of a hospital.

While some counties have adopted policy and procedures to refer all deaths pronounced at the scene, many have not. Every day in the news we learn about a 16 year old killed in a crash, or pedestrian verses car death, snowmobile accidents, motorcycle fatalities, skiing mishaps, sudden cardiac deaths with minimal down-time. All these scenarios fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner or medical examiner and represent a lost donation opportunity for families. Were these people on the Donor Registry? We will never know because their deaths were not referred and their right to decide to donate was taken away from them.

We all live and work within the confines of law, mandates and requirements in our jobs. Most laws, mandates and requirements are rigid and inflexible with no "wobble room". We still have "wobble room" and have the opportunity to create unique policies and procedures based on a County's configuration, i.e. coroner system, ME system, central morgues and autopsy hospitals, central ME offices, or contractual agreements with surrounding counties.

Now is the time to voluntarily create policy and procedures in conjunction with your local recovery agency to recognize the efforts of those who have taken the time to consider all types of donation. Their legacy lives on for their family and the family of the recipient. The Counties who have been pro-active and have already created policies and procedures are well ahead of the game and when legislation is enacted, their referral module can affect the way the mandates are created. Voluntarily creating policies and procedures now to recognize the NYSDOH Donor Registry could stall rigid legislation (already in the works) that would take away your control over your County's procedures.

We, as coroners and medical examiners, are fortunate to have an organization such as NYSACCME that has provided on-going education concerning donation. Steadfast support from the donation community bringing updated education to the membership has been increasing over the years.

In the end, this is not about *you (as coroner/ME) or about me (OPO or recovery agency)* it is about a person having a right to make the decision to donate, whether they die in a hospital or outside the hospital setting. Now is the time to work with your recovery agency to create policies and procedures that encompass "**Every Scene – Every Death – Every Time**". As public officials your communities are depending on you to protect their rights.

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

New York State Association of County Coroners  
and Medical Examiners

**BUSINESS OFFICE**

4721 Pine Hill Road  
Albion, New York 14411

We're on the web!!

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



**SAVE THE DATES FOR FALL CONFERENCE**

September 18-20, 2009

**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 difference 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.