

January 2009



# Newsletter

## *Please answer the call*

## Your help is needed to pass our legislation

A bill has been introduced in the legislature (again) that calls for funding a Cold Case Team at the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) with money that is presently being used to prosecute and defend Colorado's little-used death penalty. This is our best chance for action to address our unsolved murders.

We will be calling many of you to help pass this bill by coming to the capitol to talk to your legislators or to testify when the bill comes up in the Judiciary Committee.

When you come, bring a picture of your loved one. Tell the committee your story. Tell them you seek justice for your loved one. Express support for Rep. Weissmann's bill.

We thank the many members who wrote their legislators after receiving our request with the video of our Summer of Forums.

At the January meeting of the Cold Case Task Force, Chair Kathy Sasak informed us that the Department of Public Safety would oppose our legislation. They propose instead to train law enforcement in the "hinterlands" about cold cases.

But this ignores the fact that 86% of our victims of unsolved murders were killed here on the front range. And 90% of those were murdered in the Denver Metropolitan Area.

FOHVAMP supports more training about Cold Cases for law enforcement. However that is but one piece of the solution to our dilemma. The key ingredient in this unsolved murder recipe is carefully selected detectives with abundant homicide experience, patience and a bulldog, never-give-up attitude. These investigators must be given uninterrupted time and resources to pursue leads, examine

evidence, question witnesses and do other tasks required to crack these tough cases.

In spite of DNA and other advances in the scientific processing of evidence, a great many more people are getting away with murder in our state than ever before.

Some local law enforcement agencies have been trying mightily to respond to our calls for justice for our murdered loved ones. But the weight of so many violent crimes has overwhelmed their limited resources.

Unsolved murders are a threat to the safety of all our citizens. Killers of these victims still walk among us. The murderers live in our neighborhoods. But the state continues to offer timid responses where bold action is obviously required.

The Department of Public Safety proposes to gather a team of expert investigators to review cases submitted by law enforcement agencies and make recommendations. This group would meet for three days twice per year. But how many cases can they review?

There are 1,430 unsolved murders! So many unsolved murders pose such a huge threat to public safety they deserve a team of investigators working on them **full time**.

Some in state government have expressed the opinion "some murders just can't be solved." Such statements are a cop out. Those who mouth these excuses should not be counted on to put forth viable solutions.

Other opposition to our proposal comes mostly from the Attorney General and some District Attorneys whose objections seem to us to be based on protecting their turf.

*[Continued on page 3]*

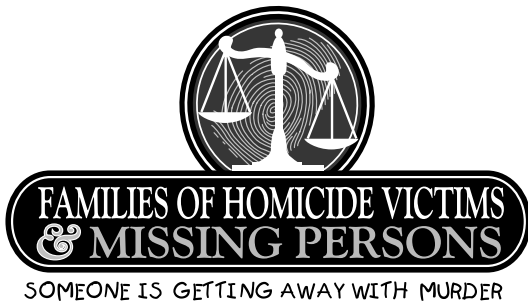
## Mission Statement

Families of Homicide Victims and Missing Persons, Inc is a nonprofit organization working in Colorado to find, support and empower family members and friends suffering from a loved one's unresolved murder or long-time disappearance.

## On The Web

Our website, *unresolvedhomicides.org*, now lists the names, dates of death and law enforcement agencies for 1,430 victims of murders that remain unsolved. Visit the website and click on *View Victim Database*.

This newsletter is published quarterly. It is the official publication of Families of Homicide Victims and Missing Persons, Inc.  
Send letters and comments to:  
FOHVAMP, P.O. Box 145, Pine, CO 80470



## OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President.....Sherry Lee Burt, Denver, CO  
303-777-0745  
Executive Director.....Howard L. Morton, Pine, CO  
303-838-1337  
Vice-President ..... Mark S. Reichert, Greeley, CO  
970-352-8937  
Secretary .....Celestina Terry, Colorado Sprgs  
719-388-9399  
Treasurer.....Stephanie O'Bryan, Littleton, CO  
303-895-9484  
Director.....James D. Stewart, Denver, CO  
303-936-1586  
Director .....Kathy S. Anderson, Windsor, CO  
970-686-0309  
Director ..... David A. Fisher, Jr., Denver, CO  
720-913-6037

## Howard's Notes

There are laws, rules and obligations that govern the conduct of law enforcement. These are hard-won by the experience of others. They have been handed down for generations. They tell cops and prosecutors how to do their jobs. They are expected to follow these rules.

There are times when the old ways don't work. Such as when interrogators used to intimidate suspects with physical abuse. Wrongful convictions led to Miranda and other restraints. Now, along comes video in police cars. Change has not always been readily accepted.

You and I have experienced murder from a point of view that law enforcement has not, that coroners have not, that prosecutors have not, that judges have not.

We have come together and shared these experiences. We have found some commonalities. We have learned from one another. We are frequently the unrecognized stakeholders in the search for cold case solutions.

Yet it feels like our suggestions are blown off by the authorities. Prosecutors shudder at giving up the death penalty. They say it is a necessary tool. Bureaucrats in the Department of Public Safety resist our entreaties.

They seem to ask "What could they possibly know about our jobs?" And truly, we have not walked in their shoes. Nor have they walked in ours.

The number of unsolved murders have grown at an alarming rate in our state and in the nation. FBI figures show that the number of homicides committed in the U. S. climbed from 4,566 in 1963 to 14,811 in 2007.

However, the homicide clearance rate dropped from 91 percent in 1963 to 61 percent in 2007. But law enforcement, which has been slow to recognize this problem, has offered only cosmetic change. They seem to be protecting their turf.

We have come up with an answer that deserves to be implemented. It is reasonable and carries its own source of funds.

We have called for a carefully selected group of seasoned homicide investigators to be commissioned at the state level to focus exclusively on our unsolved murders. We have offered to give up the seldom-used death penalty to provide the needed funding.

Prosecutors, in particular, don't want this change. But what do they know about unsolved murders? They only prosecute the ones they think they can win!

We need to hang in there and keep pushing. If not us, who? If not now, when?

## Remembering...

Anonymous, honoring the memory of Steven E. Wickliff, 56, July 22, 1996

Diane Clayton, in fond memory of high school friend, Connie Paris, 18, March 31, 1968

Michael Radelet, in memory of all our murdered loved ones

Julia Dixon, in loving memory of her daughter, Gay Lynn Dixon, 17, January 30, 1982

Sue Kirkham, lovingly remembering her daughter, Nancy Lynn Begg-Shoupp, 26, April 28, 1990

Hazel & David Brewer, remembering their beloved daughter, Rhonda Holland, 46, January 18, 2004

Don & Jerri Reichert, in loving memory of their son, Michael Reichert, 36, October 10, 2000

Patrick Furman, honoring all our murdered loved ones

Paul & Ramona Blee, in fond memory of their beloved daughter, Marie Blee, 15, Nov. 21, 1979

Bill & Esther Loughrey, lovingly remembering son, Michael Joseph Loughrey, 29, Oct 17, 1983

Carol & Gerald Peebles, in loving memory of her son, H. Gregory Jukiewicz, 19, November 26, 1994

Howard & Virginia Morton, in loving memory of their son, Guy Oliver Morton, 18, June 00, 1975

Mark Reichert, fondly remembering his beloved brother, Michael Reichert, 36, October 10, 2000

Prabha Unnithan, honoring all our murdered loved ones

James Wollan, fondly remembering his brother, Melvin Wollan, 20, December 19, 1960

Ramona Martinez, in loving memory of her brother, David John Rivera, 54, August 30, 1994

Connie & Dave Elliott, lovingly remembering their daughter, Patricia Elliott, 19, April 11, 2001

James Stewart, in fond memory of his daughter, Cynthia "Cindy" Stewart, 43, July 6, 1999

Judith Hemschemeyer, fondly remembering her husband, Morton Rosenfeld, 43, May 19, 1979

Jean Brickell, lovingly remembering her sister, Elizabeth "Betty" Frye, 45, June 9, 1973

Ruth Muth Grenard, honoring the memory of her brother, Robert Muth, 47, July 10, 2001

Vivian Bogdanowicz, in memory of her nephew, James Springer, Jr., 29, January 27, 2002

Eleanora Ciari, lovingly remembering her daughter, Ellyn Leslie Hoge, 36, April 7, 1992

*[Continued on back page]*

## Who speaks for whom?

Unsolved murders can create fractionalized families. Cold cases wear on us. We some times stop speaking to our family members. Anger, guilt, arguments, estrangement, business failures and divorce are often companions of our journey. But how does this affect our case?

These situations can disrupt communications between that family and the authorities. Surely cops expect that when they answer one question from a family member, that person will inform the others. But that doesn't always happen, does it? We need to appoint one person as the contact and promise to talk to each other.

We must ask ourselves: Do we really expect law enforcement to spend their time chasing down each member of the victim's family? Or would we rather have them investigating?

Conversely, a cop meets with us or returns our phone call and says something negative about the case that offends us. Does he/she speak for that whole department? Is this a fact?

We should always pick up the phone and call the chief or sheriff (or the person-in-charge of investigations) if we have a question or legitimate complaint. Emails don't always get answers. Be sure to make notes about each call.

This is serious business. We want answers. But we must be reasonable.

### ***[Legislative plans—Continued from page 1]***

But even these opponents have not addressed how Colorado's little-used death penalty has wasted the taxpayers' hard-earned money.

We laid off the 2008 legislative session. We wanted to see if those who said they support our cause would introduce a bill to fund it. But no bill was introduced to fund the cold case team,

Rep. Weissmann did attempt to amend the long bill which funds the state's annual operations by doing away with the Attorney General's Capital Crimes Unit. It lost 31 to 33 with one vacancy. That would have directed about \$300,000 to the CBI's Cold Case Team which Representative Rice's bill established in 2007.

So let's hitch up our belts and get ready for this all-out effort. It's going to mean coming to the state capitol, sitting through committee hearings, maybe even calling your legislator. But, as some of our members have said, our loved ones would do it for us if the situation were reversed.

## New workshops, record attendance

# We ask questions, learn, at Seventh Annual Meeting

### We had a great Annual Meeting October 4th!

There were more people in attendance (250), more different workshops (8), more people on panels (38), more meals (2), more evaluations turned in (118) than ever before.

There were 207 family members and friends of the victims. The rest were mostly law enforcement and victim service people.

About half the family members and friends experienced their first Annual Meeting.

Many of these first-timers were enthusiastic about discovering this organization as well as attending our Annual Meeting: **"You have no idea how much I appreciate FOHVAMP...I have felt very powerless all these years"** wrote the sister of a 1977 Lakewood victim.

Another first was: we offered scholarships to help people attend who otherwise would not have had the means come here. We were able to help family members of Colorado victims attend from Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Idaho, Wisconsin, Arizona, California, Oregon and Nevada. And we had a bus to bring folks in from Pueblo and Colorado Springs.

These scholarships were underwritten by the Office for Victims of Crime in the U. S. Department of Justice. Board Member Kathy Anderson worked on this for five months to make it happen, assisted by Victim/Family Coordinator Kelly Fernandez-Kroyer.

A new workshop, "How I Managed My Own Cold Case," drew an attendance of almost 100 people. It was interesting to see some law enforcement in attendance as selected FOHVAMPers told how they were able to make a difference in solving the murders of their loved ones.

A different approach to the Investigations workshop was taken when Denver Police decided to bring in about a dozen of their investigative personnel including their Cold Case unit. These folks met individually with family members to discuss their cases. We were able to let Denver know in advance

whom to expect because you sent in your reservations. Let's do that again next time.

Among attendees, 22% stayed overnight in the hotel and enjoyed the very comfortable rooms. Meals got high marks too. Thanks, Leigh Van Duyn, for these arrangements.

Another workshop that drew a crowd was Victim Rights for Cold Case Families. We are including a card summarizing your victim rights which was distributed at the luncheon. Read 'em and use 'em.

Other interesting results of the evaluations included about 80% of respondents who want FOHVAMP to educate law enforcement. We are collaborating with Colorado State University's Center for the Study of Crime and Justice to do just that. Professors from that Center are currently doing interviews of some of our members regarding their communications with law enforcement about the unsolved murder of their loved one. From these, we plan to publish a booklet for law enforcement

Our eighth Annual Meeting will be Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Four Points Sheraton Hotel at I-25 and Hampden in Denver. This is the same hotel we have used for the past four Annual Meetings. It is easily accessible to all who attend and features free parking and nice rooms at a reasonable rate.

### *[Remembering...continued from page 3]*

Bob & Nancy Kegresse, in fond memory of their beloved daughter, Pamela Edwards, 38, November 23, 2003

Evelyn Wardlow, in loving memory of her aunt, Orma B. Smith, 94, July 10, 1982

Ron Golla, fondly remembering his beloved daughter, Erin Golla, 26, January 27, 2002

Russ & Mary Van Duyn, lovingly remembering their son, Rick Van Duyn, 27, Oct 19, 1986

CeCe Merrow, in fond memory of her beloved sister, Jessica Bejarano, 25, April 6, 2007

*Our organization benefits from the gifts made by family members and friends listed above. If you would like to make a donation in memory of your loved one, please send a check payable to FOHVAMP at P.O. Box 145, Pine, CO 80470*