WI Department of Justice

Volume 1, Issue 3
October 15, 2014

Crime Laboratory Bureau

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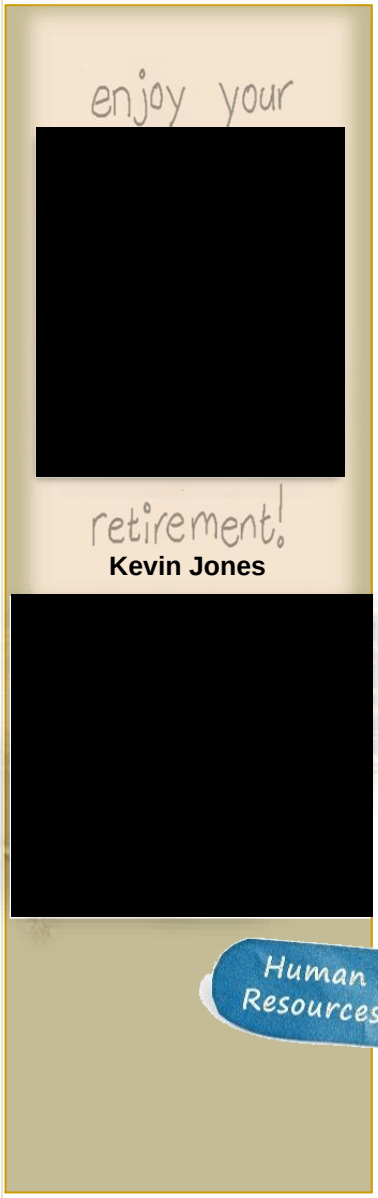
The mission of the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Bureau is to provide quality forensic analyses in the interest of criminal justice, performed in a timely manner, communicated in a clear and unbiased fashion, and to complement that with nonbiased, effective, and competent expert testimony for the trier of fact.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CHANGES



2015 A New Beginning

As we move closer to January, not only are there thoughts of snow and cold but there are changes on the horizon for the Department of Justice and the Crime Lab Bureau (CLB).

CLB Director Kevin Jones will be moving on into a life of leisure. As CLB Deputy Director, I would like to thank Kevin for his leadership and guidance throughout his tenure of the last four years. We wish him well in his future endeavors [redacted]

Jana Champion

We are also looking towards a new Attorney General. That transition always brings a new philosophy and a different way of doing things. I ask that you be patient as we work through these upcoming changes.

Our Human Resource Department is undergoing change as two key positions are currently vacant and probably will not be filled until after the new administration takes over.

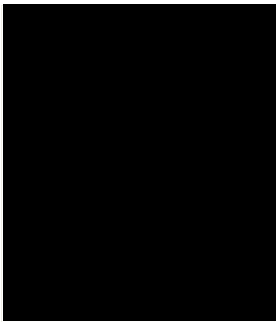
New Employees

Please join in welcoming the new staff to the CLB!

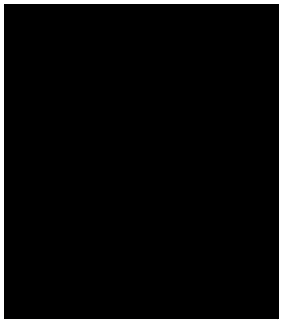
Loretta comes back to the Madison Lab to assist with front office duties. She is a great addition and will help stabilize the front office until all positions are filled.

Pat comes back to assist the AFIS Unit in keeping current.

Loretta Docken
LTE-Madison



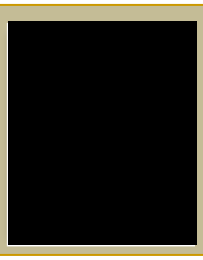
Pat Lutz
LTE-Madison



PROMOTION

Please congratulate Mary Odden on her promotion to Advanced AFIS Technician.

Mary Odden



We are working through a lot of recruitments within the CLB. Here is a status update:

Lab Manager-Madison-Interviews are on-going

Toxicologist-Madison-Interviews completed, hope to extend an offer soon

Imaging Specialist-Madison-Interviews to begin soon

Forensic Program Technicians-Madison-Waiting on background checks to be completed

Forensic Program Technician Senior-MKE - Interviews are on-going

Fingerprint & Footwear Examiner-MKE-waiting on background checks to be completed

Change Management: How to Cope With Change

A change in job duties is something some have experienced here at the Laboratory. This change may be due to work overload, promotion, lateral movement or welcomed assignment due to necessity. Regardless the circumstance, we must quickly undergo the necessary transitions and stay focused in order to accomplish the many tasks set before us. Even as we undergo change, we continue to strive for increased efficiencies, excellent quality and a good, respectful workplace environment that allows us to provide timely service.

"Don't find fault, find a remedy" – Henry Ford

Change appears to be routine here in the Crime Laboratories. Often times you have no authority to stop or probably shouldn't try to stop change. However, you can most definitely choose how to react to it.

Some choose to embrace and cope with change and are often seen as flexible and adaptable team players. They also often see change as potential career opportunity in the workplace and even as opportunity to learn and grow. Others repeatedly resist change and sometimes are perceived as problems of change. These individuals sometimes fear change or merely choose to avoid it at all cost.

Often, it is usually your behavior towards change that determines your emotions and your experience of it. This is why it is so important to know how to cope with change especially since we have seen a lot of it here in the Crime Laboratories recently.

Coping has been defined as a "process by which an individual attempts to minimize the negative emotions that arise from the experience of negative events." In simple terms, coping is just a way we think about and deal with stressful events.

Many know that change can bring amazing opportunities; however, some are aware of the reality that it can definitely bring forth defeat. It can lift an entire team up, or it can drive individuals away.

A couple strategies that have been identified by researchers are control-oriented coping and escape coping.

Control oriented coping is "represented by positive thinking coping, direct action coping, and support seeking." Direct action coping means the individual directs more attention to solving one's problems on the job, thus giving more attention to the current job. Support seeking generally involves individuals seeking and receiving support from immediate supervisors. Control oriented coping has been described as positive and proactive. You refuse to feel like a victim of change; instead you take charge and do whatever you can to be part of the solution to change. This includes managing your own feelings well.

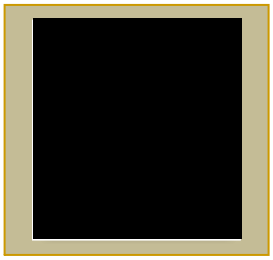
Individuals who practice control oriented coping tend to focus more on their present job, and they spend more time in dealing with issues associated with that job rather than attempting to escape.

Escape coping is generally based on avoidance. Individuals experience thoughts and emotions, or take specific actions, that help to avoid the difficulties of change. For instance, you might deliberately avoid being a part of an activity as a measure to cope with the change occurring. You may choose not to participate in new committees or groups formed.

Of the two types of coping strategies, control-oriented coping is reported to appear to yield the most productive results for individuals. Escape coping is reported to appear to be associated with negative results. Even as it assists your measure of coping, others around you perceive you as dealing with the change negatively. Control-oriented coping strategies have been reported to help individuals avoid escape coping, have a sense of empowerment, and deal with change more effectively.

However, people can use both strategies simultaneously when coping with change. Control coping is clearly described here as the best option to choose, because it puts you in a position of positive control. Here, you proactively search for a way to be a part of the solution, instead of reacting to, and avoiding or escaping the change.

Quality Corner with Casey Collins



Casey Collins

Hello Quality Staff,

This corner's topic is the document change process controlled in Qualtrax. All documents require an annual review to ensure they are still current. For the technical manuals, this duty falls to the Technical Unit Leader. For the APM, QPM and SPM, the QAC performs this duty. Whenever edits are needed, the document change process begins. The process involves the Edit, Review, Approval and Publish stages.

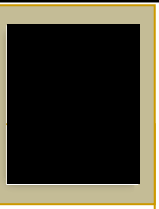
The Edit stage starts by checking out a changeable copy of the document, making changes and checking it back into Qualtrax. The editor must be a reviewer or approver of the document. Then the document is released for a Review period. The review period is important because we need to know if the changes are understandable or if there are other issues with the revision. As a reviewer, this is your chance to add constructive comments. If you shun the review period, any complaints you have after publication will hold little weight. Please be aware these reviews are recorded permanently in the documents history tab so consider contacting the editor directly with long comments/questions. After the review period, the editor can make small changes and release for approval or make larger changes and re-release for review. The approvers for technical manuals are the TUL and the Supervisors. For the APM, QPM and SPM, the approvers are Top Management. After approval, the document is put into effect and the affected staff gets a "CHANGED and PUBLISHED" email.

Keep up the good work!

- Casey

DNA Section Technical Bulletin

Gretchen DeGroot



Important Update from DNA Bureau Technical Lead

I was asked to provide direction on whether or not it is necessary to examine smears microscopically if sperm are id'ed from a differential pellet. The answer is no. This will save time for the DNA analyst who works the case. I am sorry to say that our Screener will need to continue to examine all smears. I do not want our Screeners to make pellets from swabs and possibly waste sample especially since the hospital has already prepared slides to be examined. Remember it will still be necessary for an analyst to go back and examine the smears if the differential pellet is negative.

I recently received an email that asked the following question "when we are allowed to do mixture deconvolution (dosing). Based on what the procedure manual says, I was under the assumption that dosing could only be done on intimate items or with differentials. However, in talking with some other analysts, they mentioned that it could also be done on non-intimate samples with 2 person mixtures if you could call a major. (The major would then be considered the "known" profile and you could do dosing to determine the minor.)" I responded to the analyst with the following information; the manual does imply that you can deconvolute a minor if the major is determined (See 14.2.2.3 second paragraph). The manual does not state that this was acceptable specifically in 14.2.3.2 since the focus of that section is intimate samples where you could not call the unknown as the major. I also pointed out to the analyst that if the minor profile is determined from a mixture it should be done with caution because it would be easy to make a mistake.

From the memo to the DNA Supervisors on the expanded core loci kits "I recommend that the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Bureau validate and use the Promega PowerPlex Fusion amplification kit. There are a number of factors that went into this recommendation including the STR kit comparison study performed on the Promega Fusion and the Life Technology GlobalFiler amplification kits.

The comparison study demonstrated that the GlobalFiler kit has a cleaner baseline with fewer artifacts present. This kit was also somewhat more informative for mixture interpretation. With the exception of the artifacts observed in the Fusion kit there are minimal differences between the two kits based on the comparison study but there are other critical technical issues that I have had to consider. One key consideration is the compatibility with the majority of the current STR profiles at SDIS (a total of almost 150,000 offender and casework profiles). The Fusion kit includes all 15 loci that are present in the PowerPlex 16/ 16 HS kits thus allowing the comparison of the full profiles from the existing database to all profiles obtained with the expanded multiplex amplification data. The Fusion kit will also provide efficiencies by only requiring a single spectral and performance check to be performed on the CE instruments after annual preventative maintenance or repair.

The final factor that went into this recommendation is Promega's customer service and responsiveness to technical issues. Promega has excellent customer service when compared to Life Technologies and have responded quickly to technical issues that arise. The presence of Promega in Madison has the advantage that a technical support person and even a research scientist can be (and have been) sent to the laboratory to assist with challenging technical issues. Although Life Technologies offers a similar service they have not done so for our laboratories to my knowledge."

In this memo I also informed the Supervisors that I did not see a technical benefit to go to 3500's for casework.

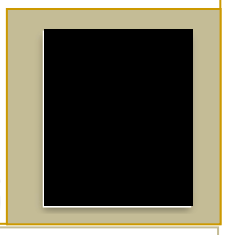
PowerQuant^{tm} System: An Overview of Promega's Latest Quantification System-Margaret Ewing, Promega Corporation

Power Quant-Continued

Promega's new Power Quant system, scheduled to launch in January of 2015, has new and improved features to better match the robustness of new STR kits. The new selling feature is the addition of a degradation/quality indicator which assesses the overall DNA quality. An autosomal/degradation ratio equal to or around one would indicate a high quality DNA sample. An autosomal/degradation ratio exceeding 2 would indicate poor quality of degraded DNA.

Additional features include a faster cycling time of ~ 1 hour which increases through-put. A new 4-point standard curve (50ng/ul to 3.2pg/ul) which allows for more samples to be run per plate because even with standards run in duplicate, only one column of a 96 well plate is used. The overall workflow starts with a 5 dye spectral calibration that is compatible with 7500 real time PCR instruments. It is followed by the reaction set up which varies from current methods (10 ul of 2X master mix, 1 ul of primer/probe/ipc mix, 7ul of water, and 2ul of sample). The next step is running the 7500 amplification. Initial analysis is done on the 7500 software and secondary analysis is exported into Excel. There are editable flag parameters for auto/y ratio, auto/degradation ratio, and it continues to flag IPC's. The PowerQuant claims to have more consistent auto/y ratios, an IPC that more closely resembles the inhibitor tolerance of new STR systems, and a zero quant indicative of no interpretable STR results.

Overall, the new features of Promega's PowerQuant system could help make more informed decisions regarding sample processing. Attended and reported by **Aimee Thoms**



New Strategies for Overcoming Inhibition: Steve Lee, San Jose State University-Promega Tech Tour – 8/26/14
by **Brittany Paulson**

The main focus was on new strategies to enhance amplification which typically is due to low quantity, degradation, and inhibitors. Further, PCR inhibitors are heterogeneous and concentration dependent, and some are sequence specific, and for some the mechanism remains unknown. He stressed that quant IPC may not be the best way to monitor target inhibition as the IPC is not the same sequence as the target (IPC ≠ Target), and therefore may not show effects of inhibitors on other targets in the assay.

Two new strategies to overcome inhibition include the use of PCR Boost (which enhances PCR overcoming inhibition by humic acid, bone, and Phenol Chloroform) and Mutant taq (which partially overcomes inhibition by hematin & Phenol Chloroform). Also, PCR inhibitors can mimic degradation with the loss of larger alleles and sequence specific binding of DNA, further causing more loss of alleles.

PCR Boost and STR Boost amplification enhancers were compared along with Omnitaq, a mutant inhibitor-resistant DNA polymerase enzyme. With PCR Boost, one simply replaces water with PCR Boost in the amplification run. One test showed the recovery of 15 alleles with PCR Boost, when previously ran without and only 3 were detected. Specific sample types involved profiles from Molotov Cocktails, humic acid, hematin, 300 year old bone, and indigo dye. Overall, they had nearly a 3-fold enhancement obtained for some alleles.

New Strategies for Overcoming Inhibition (continued)

They found better peak heights (up to by 66%) and heterozygous peak height ratios had improved as well. PCR Boost also improved results from Phenol Chloroform inhibition, up to a 4-fold enhancement for some alleles.

Denim with indigo dye also showed improved heterozygous peak height ratios. Another direction of the test involved enhanced detection of the minor donor in a 1ng 1:9 mixture with the aid of PCR Boost. Steve Lee stated it may not be the best to use on mixtures, but could be a good last ditch effort to obtain the minor contributor. Within PCR Boost and STR Boost is a sugar molecule called Trehalose. It lowers the temperature Tm, stabilizing the DNA polymerases and neutralizes inhibitors. Lastly, Steve Lee tested Omnitaq, the "mutant taq" polymerase. Two samples shown were a semen stain and sample from humic acid that each had no profile detected, and after the use of Omnitaq, complete recovery was obtained in both samples. Overall, it was determined increasing Omnitaq increased PCR efficiency, therefore partially overcoming inhibition in samples. Omnitaq improved PCR amplification on standard samples also. PCR Boost improves amplification as well but Omnitaq appears to yield better results.

PowerPlex Fusion Implementation at Michigan State Police: Scott Bruski, Michigan State Police

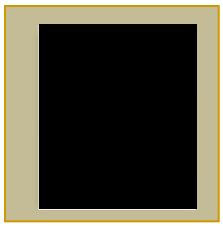
by **Brittany Paulson**

Scott Bruski's talk was about the validation of the punch method with the Fusion amplification kit for processing CODIS samples at the MI State Police Lab. Their laboratory has six Forensic Scientists and two Forensic Technicians and they process an estimated 17,000 convicted offender samples each year. They had to come up with a shortened DNA procedure to process these samples. They use 90 samples that are punched into a 96-well plate, which is then incubated with 100ul of TE and then subjected to a water wash prior to amplification and allowed a fifteen minute dry time. Then a 10ul amp volume was used for punch samples (and manual samples as they had to compare both processes however only referencing punch samples throughout). The thermal cycling parameters for the punch samples were 25 or 26 cycles while manual extractions had 29 cycles. Both sample types had a 40 minute extension time. The results include that all injection times experienced samples with oversaturation, but it decreased as the injection time decreased. They concluded that the 10 second injection time would be used as the standard injection time, which would allow more data to be collected for lower RFU samples on the first pass. A 6 second injection time would be retained for oversaturated samples while an 18 second injection could be performed if 6 and 10 second injections failed to yield adequate data. The minimum peak height for all channels was determined to be 300RFUs while the CCS ILS 500 was set at 60 RFUs, the stutter threshold was determined to be 20% for all loci, and the peak height ratio was determined to be 50% for all sample types at all loci. The sensitivity for the 25 cycle punch protocol was able to detect down to 0.3ng of DNA while the 26 cycle protocol could detect down to 0.15ng of DNA, and thus 26 cycles thus chosen as the main protocol for high throughput sample processing. The 25 cycle protocol would be retained for samples experiencing oversaturation.

In analyzing the data they found the following differences from using Fusion versus PP16 amplification kits. The Fusion kit showed improved allelic imbalances, calling of OL alleles previously not labeled, and decrease elevated stutter. Improved recovery of samples was noted as well when previously several attempts were required with the PP16 amp kit. Disadvantages noted included one example of an allele call of 12.1 at D8 that was called with PP16 but not amped with Fusion, however this was due to an amp primer issue at that location. Lastly, they performed a contamination assessment to determine if commonly used lab reagents and ingestible substances would have any affect on the amplification of database samples. They tested ingestible substances (food dyes, caffeine, sugar, chocolate, salt, mouth wash and breath mints) and laboratory reagents (bleach, TE, Envirocide, and fingerprint ink). Overall, the Fusion amp kit with the punch method handled the tested contaminates well; the main contaminate that experienced problems was cheese coated snacks (i.e. Cheetos). This new workflow will decrease the amount of sampling time to about 8 hours and is more cost effective over time.

Examination of Proposed Manufacturing Standards Using Low Template DNA

Attended and reported by



Sarah Ozanick

A new ISO standard, ISO 18385, is being developed that will create requirements for manufacturers of products used in forensics to minimize contamination during production. Products meeting these standards will be able to be labeled "forensic DNA grade." The USA has recently become a "participating country" in ISO so that American manufacturers can provide their input and be able to vote on the standard.

Kris Pearson from Promega gave a talk about what Promega has done to determine what is achievable and practical from a manufacturer's point of view. Using diluted amplification product, ~3% of the total possible alleles were called with 2.5pg DNA using a 3500 genetic analyzer with an injection time of 15 seconds and a 175RFU threshold; ~2% of total possible alleles were called with only 0.5pg DNA using enhanced detection conditions--a 3500 genetic analyzer with an injection time of 24 seconds and a 90RFU threshold. Under these enhanced detection conditions, 96% of alleles were called with 5pg DNA ("one cell"). In addition to testing diluted amplified product, Promega also performed low-template amplification reactions and found that ~2% of total possible alleles were called with only 0.067pg template DNA using either: a 3130 genetic analyzer with a 5 second injection and 25RFU threshold; a 3500 genetic analyzer with an injection time of 24 seconds and a 175RFU threshold; or a 3500 genetic analyzer with an injection time of 24 seconds and a 90RFU threshold. Promega also tested quantitative PCR as a method to detect contamination, as this would be faster and more economical. They found that the limit of detection was .25pg DNA using the Plexor qPCR system at 45 cycles.

In conclusion, Promega and other manufacturer's hope to find a way to be able to satisfy the new ISO standard (still in the draft/comment stage) while also providing affordable products to forensic labs.

"A bird does not sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song."
~ Maya Angelou

Audit

The DNA technical audit was completed and there were no findings! This is an awesome accomplishment. Thanks to everyone for their great work in making us a leader in DNA.

CRIMINALISTICS

Firearms/Toolmark Section Update

All firearms casework has been consolidated into the Milwaukee Laboratory.

Firearms/Toolmark Examiner Xai Xiong has completed his firearms training and is currently working supervised casework.

Firearms/Toolmark Examiner trainees Sarah Clemens and Nick Drake completed the National Firearms Academy training. They have been competency tested and will start supervised casework soon.

The Milwaukee destruction gun project is almost complete. We have successfully reduced the number of guns from 12,000 firearms to fewer than 245.
Great team effort within the firearms section!

Fingerprint/Footwear Section Update

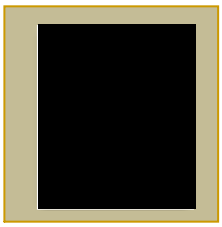
Stacy Gordon and Tiffany Vickman are signed off to perform mentored casework.

Madelyne Weismantel will complete her training by the end of this year. From start to finish her training will have taken 18 months, which is a testament to her determination to learn and Melisa Graf's mentoring abilities. This trainee-mentor relationship should be modeled throughout DOJ.

Bureau-wide Reporting

Number of Ident cases worked for 2014	
# Cases closed	**1066**
# Cases with suitable friction ridge detail	**635**
Total # of cases with ID's	**336**
Total # of ID's	**1268**

Imaging Section Update



Bob Sanders

At the International Association for Identification Annual Educational Conference held in August in Minneapolis there were two imaging workstations that were demonstrated in the vendor area and in use in workshops that are useful to accomplish advanced and efficient enhancement of photographs of latent prints.

The first workstation is the Foster and Freeman DCS4 Latent Fingerprint Enhancement Workstation with Visual Lighting Kit. I highly recommend this be purchased for all three Imaging Units. The cost is approximately $70,000 per system with on-site training. In addition to many other advantages, this system can enhance latent prints better than what we can do with our current hardware and software. It includes a camera calibrated in combination with Image Pro Plus to produce files scaled to 1X when photographed at set magnifications. The system includes contrast control filters and cross polarization filters for the light source and the camera.

The Image Pro Plus has been customized to automate some of the latent print enhancement to be able to do it better and faster. There are three color models, in addition to RGB, that do not exist in Photoshop. These three color models are Hue Saturation Value (HSV), Luminance Phase Quadrature (YIQ) and Hue Saturation Intensity (HIS). The Hue channel of the HSV and HIS color models are used to enhance ninhydrin (nin) prints on black text. The Quadrature channel in the YIQ color model has two very significant uses. First, with the use of the Quadrature channel, nin prints on paper money can be enhanced better than anything we can do now. In many situations, it could mean the difference between a photograph that is either not suitable for comparison or difficult to use for comparison versus a latent print photograph that is suitable for comparison. Second, a combination of photographing nin prints on brown paper bags and then using the Quadrature channel to process the images produces significantly better results than we can achieve now. The other important feature in their custom software interface is what you could describe as automatic processing macros for enhancing latent print images on several difficult surfaces.

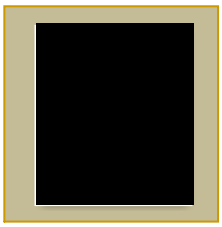
The photographs are an example of background elimination to enhance a latent print with the Foster and Freeman DCS4 Latent Fingerprint Enhancement Workstation.

The second workstation is the Arrowhead Forensics Full Spectrum Imaging System [short wave ultraviolet (UV) through infrared (IR)]. Each system costs approximately $45,000 with training. Although it can be configured for field used, it is more appropriate as a laboratory camera system. The most useful features are its UV capabilities. This would add high resolution imaging of latent prints similar to what can be seen with the RUVIS system.

Imagination is more important than knowledge"-*Albert Einstein*

Chemistry Section Update

"It's Shake 'N Bake and I Helped"



Billie Robbins

The most commonly seen methamphetamine (meth) labs in our area are "one-pot" or "Shake 'N Bake" labs. These labs first appeared on the internet around 2003. They are called one-pots because the entire reaction takes place in one bottle. Gatorade bottles appear to be the bottle of choice with your average meth "cook", probably due to the wide mouth and thicker plastic of the bottle.

Typical ingredients for the reaction are: crushed pseudoephedrine tablets, ammonium nitrate (cold packs) or ammonium sulfate (fertilizer), lye, Coleman fuel or ether (engine starter fluid), torn lithium strips (lithium batteries) and a capful of water. When the cap is placed on the bottle pressure begins to build up and a rolling or mixing can be seen. Periodically the cap is loosened to relieve the pressure. This is called burping the bottle. After about an hour the cap is slowly removed and the cook is complete.

A hydrochloric acid (HCl) gas generator is then used to make the meth crystallize and fall out of the liquid, or "salt out". An HCl gas generator is going to be some kind of plastic bottle, generally with a hose coming out of the top. A mixture of sulfuric acid and rock salt or muriatic acid (pool acid or brick cleaner) and aluminum foil will be in the bottle to produce the gas. This gas is then pumped into the liquid in the Gatorade bottle through the hose and the meth turns into crystals. The liquid is then filtered through coffee filters to get the meth out.

There are many dangers associated with meth labs in addition to the chemicals used and the gases produced. The plastic bottles used are not designed to be under this kind of pressure and often rupture causing flaming chemicals to spew from a skyrocketing bottle. Some meth cooks have tried to rectify plastic bottle failures by using glass bottles. In one particular case, the glass bottle exploded and sent glass shards flying like shrapnel into the cook and slitting his throat. The lithium metal also poses hazard concerns. The lithium strips are reactive with the water in the air and the water that is added to the reaction bottle. This causes fires and may be a contributing factor to bottle failures.

There have been many reports across the country of the one-pot bottles being discarded on the side of the road or found when snow melts. It is important to note that a one-pot meth lab is always dangerous. Never handle one directly as the bottle can fail at any time. The reaction may look like it has stopped, but if the pressure is released and air is introduced it may start back up. If a strip of lithium comes in contact with a bubble of water it could ignite. If an agency calls with a suspected meth lab (one-pot or any other kind) or you encounter one in any way, contact your local DCI office. All meth lab samples submitted to the CLB must be rendered safe through DCI by a Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement and Response (CLEAR) team member. Agencies should never submit active reactions, reaction vessels or apparatuses. For meth lab submission questions, feel free to contact Michelle Gee, Madison Kniskern, or me (Billie Robbins), who are currently certified and actively involved in CLEAR.

Figure 1

Typical one-pot meth lab courtesy of

http://www.neighwatch.soull.com/

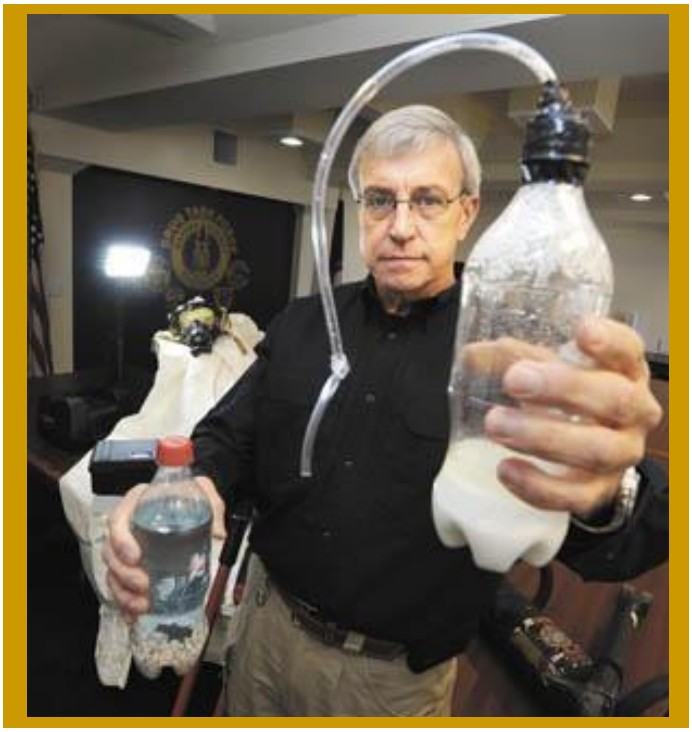


Figure 2

Typical one-pot meth lab in right hand and typical HCl gas generator in left hand courtesy of http://www.neighwatch.soull.com/

NEVER handle either bottle like this man in the picture is doing.

See the link below for videos of one pot meth lab failures…

X:\private\dles\CrimeLabs\Controlled Substances\One Pot Meth Lab Failures

Odds & Ends

When a witness knows a juror

If you are in a courtroom or on the stand and you recognize a juror, you need to bring it to the court's attention, or the prosecutor's attention. Basically you could just say, "Your Honor, I need to speak with you for a moment" or if as you are walking into the courtroom and recognize a juror, you should mention it to the prosecutor and they can mention it to the judge before you take the stand. However, once you are on the stand you need to let the court know.

360 Evals have been completed on two of the Bureau technical leads. The others will be coming soon. The feedback has been very positive and helpful in evaluating this new position. Thank you for participating in this process.

2014 Grant Update

Both the Coverdell and DNA grants have been approved and the monies released.

Coverdell grant $128,610.00, with $25,000 to be share/split between the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, the Kenosha County Health Lab and the State Lab of Hygiene. This grant closes 09/30/2015.

DNA grant $935,577.00. Note the grant period has been extended from 18 months to two years, so this grant closes 09/30/2016.

CLB Newsletter

To find previous versions of the CLB newsletter they are located on the X: drive under private/dles/CLB Newsletter

Advanced Positions

We are still working out the details for additional advanced positions within each unit. Stay tuned…

Final Thought

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." -Abe Lincoln