



Richard Ploch
LaSalle County Coroner

LA SALLE COUNTY FORENSIC CENTER

520 W. Walnut St.

Oglesby, Illinois 613548

Phone 815-434-8268

Fax 815-434-8306

coroner@lasallecountyil.gov or rploch@lasallecountyil.gov

***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: January 16, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

The individual who died in the Sunday, January 14, 2024, fire at 414 2nd Ave., Ottawa, Illinois has been identified as:

Jacob R. Faltin-Medina, age 29, of Ottawa, Illinois.

The preliminary autopsy findings indicate that the decedent died of smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide intoxication as the result of the fire.

This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Ottawa Police and Fire Departments, and the Illinois State Fire Marshall.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: January 22, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

The individual who died in the Saturday, January 20, 2024, car fire at 3110 E. 16th Rd., Ottawa, Illinois has been identified as:

Mary L. Friestad, age 89, of Ottawa, Illinois.

The preliminary autopsy findings indicate that the decedent died of smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide intoxication as the result of the fire.

This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office, LaSalle County Sheriff's Department, and the Illinois State Fire Marshall.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: January 22, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

The individual who died in the Saturday, January 20, 2024, fire at 124 Railroad Ave., Leland, Illinois has been identified as:

Jeffrey M. Hacker, age 60, of Leland, Illinois.

The preliminary autopsy findings indicate that the decedent died of smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide intoxication as the result of the fire.

This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Leland Police and Fire Departments, and the Illinois State Fire Marshall.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: February 9, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On the evening of Wednesday, February 7, LaSalle County Sheriff Deputies responded to a call at the residence of 3602 E. 1759th Rd. (Serena Twp.) Ottawa, Illinois for a deceased male individual. He has been Identified as:

Joseph Ostrega, Jr., age 57, of Plainfield, IL

This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office, LaSalle County Sheriff's Department, and Illinois State Police Crime Scene Investigations.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: February 27, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

The male and female deaths which occurred on 2-26-2024 at 1020 Second St. and 1040 Second St., LaSalle, Illinois were both isolated and unrelated. Preliminary investigation results indicate that both died of natural causes.

The names are being withheld, of both decedents, pending notification of next of kin.

The LaSalle County Coroner's Office, LaSalle Police Departments are both investigating each incident.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: March 4, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

The individual who died on Friday, March 1, 2024 due to a fall from the I-39 Abraham Lincoln Bridge, LaSalle, Illinois has been identified as:

Catherine M. Buck, age 57, of Oglesby, Illinois. Preliminary findings stated she died of injuries sustained from a fall from a height. No foul play is suspected.

This incident is still under investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Illinois Conservation Police Department and Illinois State Police Forensic Service.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: May 9, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Tuesday, May 7, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to the Rt. 251, ½ mile north of Rt. 52 in Troy Grove Twp., near Mendota, Illinois. The male decedent was identified as 64-year-old, James A. Staublein, of LaSalle, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating he died of multiple injuries sustained in the crash.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, LaSalle County Sheriff's Department and Illinois State Police Accident Reconstructionist. Accident details should be directed to the LaSalle County Sheriff's Office.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: May 13, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Friday, May 10, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to Rt. 251, in Dimmick Twp., near Peru, Illinois. The male decedent was identified as 25-year-old, Jerome E. Johnson, of Ottawa, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating he died of multiple injuries sustained from being struck by a motor vehicle.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Illinois State Police, and Illinois State Police Accident Reconstruction Division. Accident details should be directed to the Illinois State Police Troup 2.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: June 4, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Saturday, June 1, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to County Highway 31 (E. 30th Rd.) south of N. 4351st Rd., in Northville Twp., near Millington, Illinois for a single vehicle, rollover accident. The female decedent was identified as 69-year-old, Gloria J. Gunkelman, of Sandwich, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating she died of multiple injuries sustained from the motor vehicle accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and LaSalle County Sheriff's Department.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: June, 17, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On the early morning hours of June 15, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to 875 Opal St., Marseilles, IL. Upon entering the residence, the coroner determined that Leo A. Petre, age 54, was deceased. A forensic investigative autopsy has been conducted.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Illinois State Police Crime Scene Unit and the Marseilles Police Department.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: June 25, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

In the early morning hours of Monday, June 24, 2024, LaSalle County Coroner's Office responded to a call approximately 1000 ft. east of the railroad crossing near 151 Washington St., Marseilles, Illinois, for a deceased male individual who was struck by a train. He has been Identified as:

Brad C, Bukowski, age 52, of Marseilles, IL.

This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office, and the Marseilles Police Department.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: June 28, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Thursday, June 27, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to 2700 Airport Road in Peru, IL. at the Baker Lake east side parking lot area for an individual found deceased in an automobile. The female decedent has been identified as 39-year-old, Elodia Strait, of LaSalle, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy will be conducted on Friday, June 28th, 2024 with results pending. No foul play is suspected in this case.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and the Peru Police Department.

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LaSalle County Coroner
LaSalle County Forensic Center

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: July 5, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

In the early morning hours of July 4, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to N. 23rd Rd. and E. 1st Rd. near Cedar Point, Illinois, for a single vehicle (car), rollover accident involving two occupants who were both ejected from the vehicle. A female occupant was transferred from the scene to a hospital for treatment. The other male occupant was pronounced dead at the scene at 03:20 a.m. He has been identified as 19-year-old, Joel J. Rangel, of Granville, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries sustained from the motor vehicle accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and Illinois State Police Accident Reconstruction Unit.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: July 5, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

In the early morning hours of Friday, July 5, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office responded to the Emergency Department of OSF St. Elizabeth Medical Center, Ottawa, Illinois, for a deceased male individual who was fatally injured by fireworks. This incident occurred at a rural residence in Wallace Township.

The male decedent has been Identified as, Chance W. Ruger, age 25, of Ottawa, Illinois.

A forensic investigative autopsy is being conducted today with preliminary results pending. This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office, and the LaSalle County Sheriff's Office.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: July 9, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

In the early morning hours of Monday, July 8, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to Rt. 71 East of Cedar Point, in Eden Twp., near Cedar Point, Illinois for a two vehicle, accident.

The male decedent was identified as 56-year-old, Dewayne Chandler, of DePue, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries sustained from the motor vehicle accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and Illinois State Police Accident Reconstruction Unit.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: July 16, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Sunday, July 14, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to OSF St. Paul Medical Center Emergency Room for a male, individual. He was reported to have been driving south bound on Rt. #251 north of Mendota when he left the roadway and struck a tree. He was transported to the hospital by EMS. The decedent was identified as 47-year-old, David T. Gorman, of Steward, Illinois.

A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries sustained from the motor vehicle accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and LaSalle County Sheriff's Department.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: July 29, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

The individual who died on Saturday, July 27, 2024, due to a fall at Starved Rock State Park, Ottawa, Illinois has been identified as:

Albert Cramer, age 38, of Oswego, Illinois.

A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries sustained from the fall. No foul play is suspected.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Illinois Conservation Police Department and Illinois State Police Crime Scene Investigation Unit.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 2, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On the afternoon of Thursday, August 1, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to Illinois Rt. #18 and E. 15th Rd., Streator, Illinois, Eagle Township, for a deceased, male, individual. The decedent was identified as 21-year-old, Riley Kolesar, of Streator, Illinois.

He was reported to have been driving a pickup truck southbound on E. 15th Rd. when he failed to stop at the stop sign striking a westbound vehicle. The male, and only occupant of the westbound vehicle was transported to a Peoria area hospital.

A forensic investigative autopsy will be conducted today on Mr. Kolesar, with preliminary results pending.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Illinois State Police, and Illinois State Police Reconstruction Unit.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 5, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Friday, August 2, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to 1499 Illinois Rt. 71 for a male, individual who apparently lost his footing and fell into the Illinois River near this address. The Ottawa River Rescue Squad recovered a male decedent near the river's edge. He was identified as 78-year-old, Paul A. Forino, of Ottawa, Illinois.

A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted on Sunday, August 4, 2024, with preliminary results pending.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and LaSalle County Sheriff's Department.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 6, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On the afternoon of Monday, August 5, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to Illinois Rt. #251 and N. 17th Rd., Tonica, Illinois, Hope Township, for a deceased, female, individual. The decedent was identified as 86-year-old, Betty L. Gillette, of Ottawa, Illinois.

The deceased female was a passenger in an eastbound vehicle traveling on N. 17th Rd. when the driver failed to stop at the stop sign striking a northbound vehicle. The female driver in the eastbound vehicle was transported to an area hospital. The female driver of the northbound vehicle was transported to a Peoria area hospital by an OSF Life Flight Helicopter.

A forensic investigative autopsy will be conducted on Tuesday, August 6, 2024, with preliminary results pending.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, LaSalle County Sheriff's Office, and Illinois State Police Reconstruction Unit.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 12, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On the afternoon of Sunday, August 11, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to Interstate Rt. 80 near mile marker 73, Peru, IL, for a deceased, male, individual. The decedent was identified as 67-year-old, Ronald W. Hansen, of Tiskilwa, Illinois.

Mr. Hansen was traveling eastbound in a silver minivan on Interstate Rt. 80. Preliminary investigation indicates that for unknown reasons he left the roadway striking the overpass to Plank Road, Peru, Illinois. The female passenger, Mr. Hansen's wife, Theresa A. Hansen, age 66, also of Tiskilwa, Illinois, was taken to OSF St. Elizabeth Medical Center-Peru Campus where she was pronounced deceased.

Forensic investigative autopsies will be conducted on Monday, August 12, 2024, with preliminary results pending.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Illinois State Police, and Illinois State Police Accident Reconstruction Unit.

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PRESS RELEASE

DATE: August 20, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Sunday, August 18, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office responded to the LaSalle Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area in Marseilles, IL for a reported boating accident. The two male decedents who were recovered from the lake have been identified as Clarence B. Royster, age 80 of Gary, Indiana & Clarence B. Royster III, age 53 of Merrillville, Indiana.

This incident remains under investigation by LaSalle County Coroner's Office and the Illinois State Conservation Police.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 20, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Saturday morning, August 17th, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office responded to a single vehicle motorcycle accident, near Belle River drive and East 30th road in Northville township. The deceased male operator of the motorcycle was identified as Warren J. Kaforski, age 24, of Newark, Illinois. A forensic autopsy was conducted on Sunday August 18th, 2024, with preliminary indications he died from fatal injuries from the crash.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, and the LaSalle County Sheriff's Office.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 26, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Sunday afternoon, August 25th, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to East 24th road and N.14th road near Streator, Illinois for a single vehicle, rollover accident. The male decedent driver, and only occupant, has been identified as 26-year-old, Jesus Villafana, of Streator, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted on August 26th, with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries from the motor vehicle accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and LaSalle County Sheriff's Department.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: August 26, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Sunday, August 25, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to the Peru Boat launch area for a male decedent that was recovered from the Illinois River. The male decedent had been involved in an earlier motor vehicle accident that had occurred on the Interstate 39 Abraham Lincoln bridge. As a result of the accident, he was ejected from his vehicle and into the river below. The Peru River Rescue Squad made the recovery. He has been identified as John S. Smith 36 of Streator, Illinois.

A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted on Monday, August 26, 2024, with preliminary results indicating that he died from fatal injuries due to the initial motor vehicle crash. This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and Illinois State Police.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: September 3, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

In the early morning hours of Saturday, August 31, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to Route 71 and East 2631 road near Sheridan, Illinois for a single vehicle, accident. The male decedent driver, and only occupant, has been identified as 40-year-old, John S. Calder, of Yorkville, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted on August 31, 2024 with preliminary results indicating that he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound prior to the accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office and the Illinois State Police.

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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: September 4, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Saturday morning, August 31, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to number seven, Terminal Road in Peru, Illinois. The male decedent was identified as 59-year-old, William Kozeal, of Van Orin, Illinois. A forensic investigative autopsy was conducted on September 1, 2024 with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries due to the fall from a height.

Mr. Kozeal was reported to have been painting a commercial building at this address when he fell through a skylight to the ground below.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, Peru Police Department, & the Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

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Oglesby, Illinois 613548
Phone 815-434-8268 · Fax 815-434-8306



***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: September 13, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office & LaSalle County Sheriff Office

SUBJECT: Female "Jane Doe" from 1991 has been identified

On September 13, 1991, a farmer found an unidentified deceased female in a cornfield in Mission Township, (near Norway) in LaSalle County. She was found underneath a curtain with hooks, and was clothed in a men's style dress shirt with stripes, and black spandex pants. There were no shoes or personal effects. She had a significant amount of dental work, breast implants, and two tattoos on her body. Her medical cause of death was determined to be probable cocaine intoxication, but her manner of death was undetermined. She was later interred in the Oakwood Memorial Park. Her headstone reads: "Somebody's Daughter, Somebody's Friend." This case has spanned the timeline of three Sheriffs, Anthony Condie, Tom Templeton, and Adam Diss, and four Coroner's, Marion Osborne, Jody Bernard, William Wujek, and Rich Ploch. All have worked tirelessly on this case for over three decades. As well as their many staff members. Hundreds of leads had been vetted out, flyers and communications were sent across the U.S. and Canada hoping to identify the unknown "Jane Doe." But as time went on the case drew cold. In 2013 she was exhumed from her grave in order to obtain DNA, and re-examine the case findings. Many new investigative techniques were used in hopes of identifying her. Facial reconstruction modeling, age regression, radiocarbon dating, and isotopic diet studies were conducted on her skeletal remains. Although many of these techniques were helpful in providing new information on "Jane Doe," we were still unsuccessful in identifying her and again the case went cold. In 2019, Dr. Matthew Jhll, a professor at Illinois Valley Community College, offered to help work on the case. The new technique of Investigative Genetic Genealogy was used by the College in hopes of finding a living relative. Amazingly this produced a list of possible matches. This information was turned over to the Coroner's Office

for further review. This list was long, and required many more long hours of investigative work to narrow the list to more probable matches. Many new leads were developed from this research. In February, 2024, the Sheriff and Coroner's office were informed that the FBI had agreed to provide investigative assistance to our agencies with the "Jane Doe" case. In July, a possible living relative was identified and subsequently confirmed. We announce today that "Jane Doe" has been identified as PAULA ANN LUNDGREN. She was born in 1962, lived primarily in the Chicagoland area, and was 29 at the time of her death discovery. Now that she has been identified, the Sheriff's Office is hopeful that new leads can be developed as to how she came to be in the cornfield on September 13, 1991, and by who was responsible for placing her there. Coroner Rich Ploch and Sheriff Adam Diss want to personally thank all the agencies, investigators, family, friends, past sheriff's and coroner's and the general public that have helped solve this case. "Jane Doe" finally has a name after thirty-three years, PAULA ANN LUNDGREN.

Rich Ploch

LaSalle County Coroner

Adam Diss

LaSalle County Sheriff



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***** NEWS RELEASE *****

DATE: December 2, 2024

FROM: LaSalle County Coroner's Office

On Friday, November 29, 2024, the LaSalle County Coroner's Office was called to the Emergency Room at OSF St. Elizabeth Hospital, Ottawa, IL for a male victim of an automobile accident. The male decedent was identified as 57-year-old, David A. Camp, of Princeton, Illinois. Mr. Camp was the front seat passenger involved in a two-vehicle crash near the intersection of Route 23 and North 32nd road, Ottawa, IL. A forensic autopsy was conducted on Saturday, November 30th, 2024, with preliminary results indicating he died of fatal injuries sustained from the accident.

This incident is under further investigation by the LaSalle County Coroner's Office, LaSalle County Sheriff's Department and Illinois State Police Accident Reconstructionist Unit.

Richard Ploch,

LaSalle County Coroner