



# Vital Interests

## Welcome to Our 2009 Inaugural Issue!

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April 29, 2009
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The Minnesota Office of the State Registrar is pleased to introduce our

new quarterly online newsletter, *Vital Interests*. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with helpful information about vital records and to discuss topics of interest for all of our partners.

“Partners” include county offices, hospitals, funeral homes and our own em-

ployees here at the Minnesota Department of Health, Office of the State Registrar.



In future issues, we will profile a county office, a funeral home and a hospital.

Also in coming issues, we will provide statistics such as the number of birth and death records registered. We think you will be amazed at how many records we issue in just one year!

## The Minnesota Fathers' Adoption Registry

### Unmarried fathers also have rights

There are times when an unmarried woman making an adoption plan may conceal the pregnancy from the biological father. If the father is not aware of the pregnancy and/or the adoption plan, he may lose the opportunity to exercise any rights in decision-making regarding adoption placement decisions about the child. Most unmarried fathers either consent to an

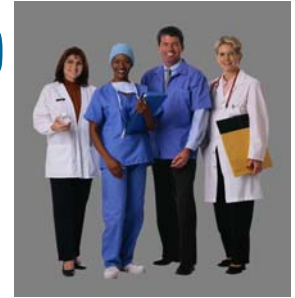
adoption placement or do not contest the termination of their parental rights. However, there are those who want to establish paternity and parent their children. The Minnesota Fathers' Adoption Registry (MFAR) provides a way for an unmarried father to receive notice of the adoption plan. MFAR registration is required within **30 days** after the birth of the child. Signing up on the MFAR is an important step for unmarried fathers of all

ages, including those under age 18, who want to establish paternity and parent their child.

To learn more about MFAR and unmarried rights in the adoption process, visit our website:  
[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/registry/top.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/registry/top.htm)



## 2nd Annual Birth Registration Conference 2009



### Who Should Attend?

Birth Registrars, Midwives, Hospital Administrators, Hospital Social Workers

### Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify and understand why birth data registration and collection is important to healthcare facilities, practitioners and families.
2. Recognize and understand common problems with birth data collection to increase accuracy and timeliness in filing registrations.
3. Identify support systems and resources available to help with accurate data reporting in special circumstances.

### Guest Speakers Include

University of Minnesota  
Wendy Hellerstedt  
Associate Professor,  
School of Public Health

MN Department of Human Services  
Molly Crawford  
Paternity Program Administrator

Deborah Beske-Brown  
Foster Care Program Consultant

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**Wednesday**

**April 29, 2009**

**7:30a.m.- 5 p.m.**

**AMHERST H. WILDER  
CENTER**

451 Lexington Parkway North  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

(651) 280-2000

## MR&C Project 2010 Update

On Jan. 1, 2010, Minnesota will replace its VRV 2000 database with a statewide, web-based registration and issuance system, the Minnesota Registration and Certification System (MR&C).

Specifications for the birth and death systems have been completed. We are currently in the middle of

requirements gathering for the customer service/issuance module. Our vendor has delivered the first set of processes or functions for our testing. Initial testing looks good.



As always, our staff will be here to assist you in any and every way possible. We hope you are all just as excited about this project as we move Minnesota once again to the forefront of electronic birth and death registration and certification.

Thank you for your continued support!

**Interested in having your office or facility highlighted in upcoming issues?**

**Send us an E-mail at:**

**[Latia.deamparo@state.mn.us](mailto:Latia.deamparo@state.mn.us)**

## Changing of the Guard: Death Registration



By John Marino

**Ron Peterson** is a busy man. In addition to fielding about 70 to 100 phone calls a day, he supervises 13 people in two work units: Birth Certification and Death Registration. On top of that, he is our Fraud Prevention Coordinator.

Ron said a lot of his time is spent "fielding questions by office staff and telephone customers, as well as dealing with problems that arise with all the various trans-

actions." He also gets some odd questions.

"For example," he noted, "a guy calls up and says he just got his birth certificate and it said he was a female."

In addition to processing cause of death amendments, Ron also takes care of death certificate amendments and corrections. He said the best way to decrease the need for corrections, whether you're working here at the state, or out in the field, is to be more careful when entering data.

**Roxanne Somers** has been with the state for 29 years, and is always learning new things. That's why she recently jumped at the chance to become the new Death Records Coordinator. "I like it," she said. "A lot of people think 'Oh, really, you're going to work with death?' But, it's really important and people really need the certificates."

She works with doctors to ensure that a cause of death is on each certificate, and with funeral home directors to make necessary corrections to death certificates.

She's looking forward to the switch to the new web-based MR&C system next year. "There was some resistance to VRV in 2001, but most have adjusted pretty well." That makes her think next year's change should go pretty smoothly.

-J.M.

## Meet Bridget Woitas, your new Death Registration Field Representative



**Bridget Woitas** is the new Death Registration Field Representative for the State of Minnesota specializing in death records. Her primary focus is to recruit physicians to become electronic registers for death records.

In addition, her training objectives will be directed towards physicians, administrative staff, funeral directors and birth registrars on the new MR&C web-based system. She also intends to visit our local registrars and assist them in maintaining a secure environment for vital records. Her attention to detail and maintaining accurate death records is her priority. Bridget has worked in the Office of the State Registrar as a lead worker in the data entry of death records for the past three years and has been working as a field representative for the past 8 months.

Prior to this position, Bridget worked for the state in Corrections and Revenue as an Administrative Assistant. On a personal note, Bridget enjoys quiet walks on the beach with her husband and playing volleyball with her girls.

Bridget Woitas  
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Field Representative  
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## Remembering Tom Golla (1948-2007)

By Jim Andre

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "It is not length of life, but depth of life." Tom Golla worked for the state of Minnesota for 20 years. He was my colleague in OSR for the past five years, and worked with physicians and funeral home directors to correct errors on death certificates. He graduated from the University of Minnesota and taught English and Latin. An avid sports fan, Tom had season tickets to Gophers hockey for 40 years. His nieces, nephews and godchildren thought of Tom as a Santa Claus figure. He will be missed by his co-workers. Tom was a good friend; I will miss him.





## Education & Outreach

### Data Protection Act & Fraud Prevention Tips

Under the **Data Protection Act**, we have a legal duty to protect any information we collect from you. We use leading technologies and encryption software to safeguard your data, and keep strict security standards to prevent any unauthorized access to it.



“All Minnesota registration employees, both local and state, **need to be sensitized** to the possibilities of fraud and fraud prevention.”

-Steve Elkins  
Minnesota State Registrar

#### Did you know?

- Fathers want to connect!
- Ninety-nine percent of unmarried fathers interviewed at the birth of their child reported that they want to be involved with their children.
- In 2006, 31.7% of births in Minnesota were to unmarried women; nationally it was 35.8%, which is a 20% increase since 2002.

Footnotes (3)\*



#### Footnotes \*

1. Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Research brief and findings at: [www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/](http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/).
2. Minnesota State Demographic Center, Minnesota births and fertility rates rise in 2006, 2007. Available at: [www.demography.state.mn.us/documents/MNBirthsFertilityRatesin2006.pdf](http://www.demography.state.mn.us/documents/MNBirthsFertilityRatesin2006.pdf).
3. Hamilton BE, Martin JA, Ventura SJ. Birth: Preliminary data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Report 2007; 56 (7). Available: [www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56\\_07.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56_07.pdf)