

THE VICTIM'S INFORMER

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE

VOL. 14, NO. 4 – DEC 2009/JAN 2010

4th Annual Crime Victims' Conference Offers HELP, HOPE, HEALING to Area Crime Victims

by Jaime Esparza
District Attorney
34th Judicial District of Texas



EL PASO IS WORKING HARD to provide outreach to victims of crime in unprecedented measures, and this year was an important year for area victims and the HELP, HOPE, HEALING initiative. Earlier this fall, the City of El Paso unveiled an impressive granite memorial, in tribute to all who have lost their lives to crime in our community. Over 1,200 names are forever etched in the large granite structure designed and constructed by an artist from Colorado. It is a remarkable site and meaningful way to honor those we have lost. El Paso's law enforcement entities, service providers, help organizations, and victim advocates are all part of a growing movement of service and outreach to victims called the HELP, HOPE, HEALING project. The geniuses of the project derived from an understanding that we should be doing more to reach out to crime victims and their surviving family members.

On October 24, 2009, victims of crime gathered to share their stories at the 4th Annual HELP, HOPE, HEALING Conference, sponsored by the El Paso District Attorney's Office, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Center Against Family Violence, Region 19 Education Service Center, and the West Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Department. With almost 700 in attendance, the conference offered victims an opportunity to interface with service providers, guest speakers, and each other. The day-long event was free and included childcare, meals, counseling, and simultaneous Spanish translation. Victims were encouraged to bring photos and mementos to a temporary memorial set up at the conference to honor their

loved ones. Several also participated in an ongoing project where they could memorialize their loved ones with photos and mementos on the HELP, HOPE, HEALING Quilt, a colorful fabric mosaic of stories woven together.

This year's conference hosted guest speakers from across the nation, on hand to share their personal messages of hope and healing. Monica and Brady Jordan of Alabama, who were featured on last season's episode of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, spoke about the loss of their two children. Their daughter was murdered by her fiancé just before she was to begin military training, and their son was killed eight years later by a drunk driver. The Jordan's shared details of their journey and how they continue to cope with the tragedy of losing their children. Another featured guest speaker was poet and author, Kathleen Sheeder Bonanno from Pennsylvania. Mrs. Bonanno read from

continued on next page



Help Hope Healing; *continued from front page*

her book, *Slamming Open the Door*. This collection of poetry speaks about the aftermath of the slaying of her young daughter, Leidy Bonanno, strangled by an ex-boyfriend. Her powerful message resonated across the conference hall as she artfully described her immense grief and her journey to celebrate love and find healing. Other guest speakers included Gene Stewart, Assistant Deputy Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Victim Services Division, who presented the benefits of their Restorative Justice Program, and the Reverend Rick Matty of St. Patrick Cathedral, who encouraged hope to those grieving by taking hold of their strengths. Every conference speaker was unanimous in their message that victims are not alone and that there is help available. Our partners in this important project work hard to reach out and offer help, foster hope, and begin the healing process for those in need.

The year-round HELP, HOPE, HEALING program is our key outreach to victims of crime in the El Paso community. The initiative is gaining momentum, and it is our hope that it will give crime victims a voice and empower them to make great strides in the process of recovery and healing. If you would like to talk to someone in my office about the HELP, HOPE, HEALING initiative, please contact Amy Lujan at 915-546-2059 ext. 3073 or by email at lujan@epcounty.com.

Photos. Front page: District Attorney, Jaime Esparza addresses attendees at the 4th Annual Crime Victims' Conference; Upper Left: Help, Hope, Healing Quilt; Above: Mementos of loved ones lost to violent crime in El Paso.

Kathleen Sheeder Bonanno's poem, "The Hair," is included in this issue of *The Victim's Informer* on page 9. Visit her website at ksbonanno.com.

Help for the Holidays: Ideas for the Bereaved

by **Laura Slap-Shelton, Psy.D.**

reprinted with permission from www.griefandrenewal.com

ICAN'T CLAIM to have immediately known what to do during my first year of bereavement. I was 35 years old with a one-year-old daughter. I remember seeing my doctor for a regular check up and complaining of anxiety symptoms but not knowing what they were (and I'm a psychologist). She looked at me and said, "OK, let's review: You are taking your 16-month-old daughter to Florida alone to visit your in-laws; you are teaching a graduate level psychology course; and Thanksgiving is two weeks away." I had to laugh at myself.

It took me awhile to get the hang of the holidays and grief. The solution seemed to involve being aware that I would be likely to experience some intense emotions during this time even if I had been feeling pretty good in general, had been setting some parameters for what would work for my daughter and myself, and was being clearer with others about what I wanted and did not want.

Inspired by friends who surprised me with a huge Christmas tree one snowy night, I started a tradition of having a Christmas tree decorating party and inviting all of my friends and family. I had found that I felt lonely and isolated during the holidays. This party created a great sense of connection with others, and it was a way of giving something to my wonderful friends and family. My daughter loved it too. It was always fun.

It's been over 10 years since my early experiences with grief and the holidays. Here are some ideas which may be helpful for others.

8 Ideas for the Approaching Holiday Season

1) Stay connected to your feelings.

Give yourself time to express your emotions.

Find out how you best express your feelings—by doing or writing or sharing with another, meditating, or being active.

Everyone has their own style.

2) Think about what will be helpful for yourself and your family in the present.

Do not continue old traditions if they do not work for you. Especially the first year, it is often good to do something different. For example, one family I spoke with decided to take a trip and celebrated the holidays in a different country. The following year they had a more traditional Christmas at home. Another person went to Florida and swam with the dolphins. She reported that the experience changed her life.

3) Incorporate memories of the person into your holiday traditions.

Have someone read a poem or prayer in their honor.

Create a memory quilt.

Light a candle.

4) Do not feel guilty for how you feel.

If you find that you are happy or enjoy some aspect of the holiday it is OK. If you are not feeling happy it is still OK. Don't try to live up to others expectations of how you should feel. Sometimes family and friends will disapprove of the bereaved person if they do not seem to have the emotions that the family expects. Sometimes we carry our own expectations for how we should be instead of accepting how we feel.

It is normal to have many mixed emotions during the bereavement process and especially so on the holidays.

5) Find ways of giving to others.

When you are feeling sad and empty inside it can help to give and reach out to others in more need than yourself. Some families go to soup kitchens on Thanksgiving or other holidays. Others create a memorial fund and raise money to help others.

continued on page 5

Capital Area CrimeStoppers Helps Law Enforcement Agencies Fight Crime in Austin and Travis County

If a tip to the CrimeStoppers hotline leads to an arrest or charges filed, the caller is eligible for a \$1,000 reward. All callers remain anonymous.

You can see the Crime of the Week on KVUE-TV and on KVUE.com.

New Crime-Fighting Tool

Austin police have a new hi-tech crime fighting tool—now you now can text tips to Capital Area CrimeStoppers. The new service will allow cell phone users to relay important information about crimes to Austin police.

The software program promises anonymity for anyone texting from a cell phone. Capital Area CrimeStoppers hopes tips via text messaging will appeal to the younger generation.

Now in addition to the 24 hour anonymous tips hotline number, citizens can securely submit their tip online at www.austincrimestoppers.org or text “TIP103 + YOUR MESSAGE” to CRIMES (274637).

If you have any information about the incident, call the hotline at 472-TIPS (8477) OR 1-800-893-TIPS (8477).

History

The very first CrimeStoppers program began in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976. Several months later, the city saw a significant increase in the number of violent crime cases being solved and a decrease in their rate of occurrence.

In 1979, Joe Jerkins, then General Manager of KVUE-TV, approached Austin Police Chief Frank Dyson about the idea. Soon after, a civilian CrimeStoppers Board of Directors was established and operations began on October 30, 1979.

For more information, visit:
www.austincrimestoppers.org.

Help for the Holidays; cont'd from page 3

6) Avoid overindulgence with alcohol and food during the holidays.

Eating and drinking too much are often ways of avoiding or masking underlying emotions.

Eating and drinking too much are risks during periods of bereavement in general.

7) Explore the traditions of your faith concerning mourning and remembering.

Many of the holidays specifically involve light. Try lighting a candle for the person who has died or even creating a candle lighting memorial part of the celebration.

8) Don't be afraid to ask for professional help if you are feeling overwhelmed by negative emotions, are finding yourself immobilized by your grief, or are having other adverse experiences or behaviors.

The holidays present unique challenges for those who are grieving. By taking special care in planning for them and being aware of your emotions, you will be able to survive them, and maybe find a new meaning in them for yourself and your family.

Gift from Within (GFW) is a non-profit organization with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) information and healing resources for mental health providers and survivors. Founded in 1993, GFW helps everyone with PTSD by sharing ideas, improving morale, and reducing the stigma of the diagnosis and its treatment. The website has articles written by authorities in the field, poetry and art gallery for trauma survivors, peer support pal network, personal coping and inspirational stories, a Q&A, videos, book reviews, list of retreats for survivors, global list of trauma survivor support groups, and other educational materials and resources. www.giftfromwithin.org.

Dispelling Strangulation Myths and Legislative Changes to the Assault Statute

by Aaron Setliff

Policy Director

Texas Council on Family Violence

It takes 30 pounds of pressure to open a soda pop can. It only takes 11 pounds of pressure placed on both carotid arteries for 30 seconds to cause unconsciousness.¹

The Texas Council on Family Violence championed a bill in the 81st Legislative Session that made intimate partner strangulation chargeable as a third degree felony on the first offense. With an overwhelming vote in support of the measure, the legislature joined the call to take intimate partner strangulation seriously. Increasingly across the country and in Texas, allies in the field of family violence have drawn a line in the sand when it comes to intimate partner strangulation. But a need for increased awareness and attention continues to exist because of misconceptions, outdated notions and just plain wrong information.

So I ask, “What do you think of when you hear the word strangulation?”

Maybe the word conjures an image of death in your mind. Although death certainly too often results from strangulation, the fact is that is not always the case. Medically speaking, strangulation is a lack of oxygen to the brain as a result of outside pressure on the neck, which in turn closes off air passages and blood vessels.²

You may think that a ligature like a rope or electrical cord must be used for the act to be considered strangulation. Although “ligature strangulation” causes serious damage to victims, “manual strangulation” also carries with it serious consequences.³

Conceivably you may think strangulation is no worse than any other kind of abuse. The fact is that strangulation occurs far more often than you may realize and often indicates previous and continued abuse. An intimate partner that has been strangled is nine times more likely to be subsequently killed than one who has not.⁴ Abusers batter their victim prior to strangling in 90 percent of cases. In one study, victims who had been strangled had previously been victimized by their intimate partner.⁵ In a study of 218 victims of intimate partner violence that presented to a large public hospital, 23% of respondents reported being victimized by strangulation.⁶ In a smaller study, the percentage

rose to 68%.⁷ These numbers combine to underscore the seriousness of strangulation as compared to other forms of abuse.

It is possible you have the impression that visible injuries to the victim always result from strangulation. In one study of 300 victims of strangulation, only 50% showed visible injury and of those only 35% had injuries that could be captured by a camera.⁸ Too often, injuries occur internally: sore throat, blurred vision, dizziness, weakness, headache, collapsed trachea, urinary incontinence, miscarriage and subsequent difficulty speaking, swallowing, and breathing can all result from strangulation. Yet they may not be visible on the outside.⁹

You may also believe that a strangulation victim experiences all the injury she will experience at or near the time of the assaultive event. The fact is that many injuries, both external and internal, do not manifest right away. Strangulation victims have a greater chance of suffering a stroke up to 36 hours after the assault.¹⁰ As with all trauma to the body, swelling in the neck area may take hours or days to fully develop.¹¹ Injuries to the brain including memory loss and posttraumatic stress disorder by their nature may not be detected immediately.¹² Couple this with the tendency by investigators, prosecutors and victims to minimize strangulation, and the likelihood of immediately realizing the true level of injury diminishes.

New Felony Strangulation/Suffocation Statute

Realizing the dire need to emphasize the continuing dangerousness of intimate partner strangulation, the legislature passed Senate Bill 82. Authored by Senator Jane Nelson (R-Lewisville) and sponsored by Representative Pete Gallego (D-Alpine), this change to the assault statute felonizes intimate partner strangulation and suffocation. A first offense is a third degree felony, punishable by two to ten

continued on page 10



Victim Impact Statements: Original to New

Janice Harris Lord

Texas Board of Criminal Justice Board Member

Victim advocate Jo Kolanda describes a sentencing hearing she attended in the 1970's:

I went to court for the sentencing of a defendant who had been convicted of homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle. The mom and dad of the young woman killed were with me. The offender's parents, friends, and pastor told the court what a wonderful guy he was. The victim's parents then requested that the Assistant District Attorney ask the judge if they could tell the court about their daughter. The judge told them no because their statements would be inflammatory. He then added that he didn't understand why this simple traffic case was cluttering up his calendar in the first place.

EVERY NEW IDEA BEGINS AS A SEED in someone's mind. Victim Impact Statements were the idea of James Rowland, a chief probation officer in California in the late 1970's. Rowland believed that it was not fair for convicted offenders to use every means to cast themselves in a favorable light before the court, while victims and their families remained gagged in silence about the effects of the crime on their lives. Rowland's opinion spread, culminating in a recommendation of President Ronald Reagan's 1982 Task Force on Victims of Crime that "each state pass legislation requiring Victim Impact Statements at sentencing hearings." That same year, the Federal Omnibus Victim Witness and Protection Act required that Victim Impact Statements be considered in federal criminal cases.

That was only the beginning. Judicial debate followed on whether Victim Impact Statements violated the rights of offenders. The most heated debates involved death penalty cases since they represented the greatest risk to offenders. The debate reached the Supreme Court in 1987 when the court agreed to hear the case of Booth v. Maryland. Convicted offender John Booth had been found guilty of two counts of first-degree murder and other charges. In the Supreme Court oral argument, Booth's attorneys argued that their client's Eighth Amendment rights had been violated by the Victim Impact Statements presented at the trial by the victims' family members. The court agreed. In summation, Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell stated, "...The admission of these emotionally-charged opinions as to what con-

clusions the jury should draw from the evidence clearly is inconsistent with the reasoned decision making we require in capital cases."

This was not the end of the story, however. The U.S. Supreme Court addressed the issue two more times before finally concluding in the case of Payne v. Tennessee (1997):

The states remain free, in capital cases, as well as others, to devise new procedures and new remedies to meet felt needs. Victim impact evidence is simply another form or method of informing the sentencing authority about the specific harm caused by the crime in question, evidence of a general type long considered by sentencing authorities...victim impact evidence serves entirely legitimate purposes.

It was a long and toughly-fought battle, but today judges in all 50 states are compelled by law to give victims and their family members an opportunity to address the court, in written or oral form, about the impact of the crime. In 49 states, this right is afforded during sentencing of convicted offenders. In Texas the oral right is given following sentencing, but many Texas judges allow the statement during sentencing.

Honoring the Supreme Court's language of "new procedures and new remedies," the Texas legislature has designated that the Crime Victims Clearinghouse within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division revise and update the written Victim Impact Statement form every two years. This year, the revision committee included 10 Victim Assistance Coordinators

continued on page 11



SPOTLIGHT on Victim Services Division

EVERY DAY THE CARING AND KNOWLEDGEABLE VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION STAFF HELP VICTIMS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS FIND THE INFORMATION AND PEACE OF MIND THEY WANT AND NEED. MANY VICTIMS WRITE LETTERS EXPRESSING HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE STAFF WHO HELPED THEM. SOMETIMES STAFF ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND SINCERE DEDICATION.

THIS PAST OCTOBER, TDCJ-Victim Services Division and the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse hosted the 3rd Annual National Association of Victim Service Professionals in Corrections (NAVSPIC) Conference at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. At the conference luncheon, Oliver J. Bell, Chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) presented Jack Hamilton with a Chairman's Coin.

To recognize "significant acknowledgment of appreciation from the Board," Chairman Bell began presenting his coins in October 2008 to TDCJ staff during his visits to units and departments across the state. He also has presented coins at Board meetings and during special events held by the agency; he has given coins to other TBCJ members for their use when they want to recognize TDCJ staff.

A former Army commander, Chairman Bell adapted this historic heritage from the military into a new tradition for TDCJ. Although the coins are small tokens, they convey deep appreciation and significance from Chairman Bell to those few who receive them.

Jack began working for the Victim Services Division in 1995 as an analyst. He had previously worked in what is now the Review & Release Section of the Parole Division. Way back in 1988 when Jack started with TDCJ, it was called Parole Selection and TDCJ wasn't yet called TDCJ.

For several years now, Jack has been the Senior Analyst for the Victim Services Division. His vast wealth of knowledge of the complex parole review process has benefitted many, many victims over the years as they have tried to express their fears and concerns to the Board of Pardons and Paroles. He is truly worthy of receiving this notable recognition from Chairman Bell and the entire Texas Board of Criminal Justice.



Top: Jack Hamilton conducting training on the complex parole review process; Above: Jack with Chairman Bell.



VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATORS

at your side . . .

Coalitions . . . Help for the Victim or the Advocate?

by **Jill Hargrove**

Victim Assistance Coordinator

Bell County District Attorney's Office

President, Bell/Coryell County Crime Victim Coalition

THE BELL COUNTY CRIME VICTIM COALITION was created in 1995 during preparation of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. That year, many organizations in Bell County worked together to plan the numerous events. Each organization sponsored an activity on a different day of the week. Months were spent planning and completing the week-long project. During that time, we discovered we were all basically doing the same things for our victims, just at different times.

As we worked together, we began a follow-up on the progress victims make as they complete the cycle in the criminal justice system. Suddenly we saw some closure for the advocates as well as assurance that no victim was "falling through the cracks." When National Crime Victims' Rights Week was over, we felt that it was extremely important to continue our monthly meetings and networking with one another.

This is not a remarkable concept in 2009. But, believe me, back in 1995 we felt very fortunate that each of our organizations recognized the importance our "oneness" meant for the benefit of the victims and allowed us to continue our monthly meetings. Almost 15 years later, we are still meeting every fourth Thursday of the month, setting aside this one afternoon just to stay together. We start with a pot-luck lunch, and, with a counselor on hand who donates her time, we discuss the hard cases and the good

and bad outcome of those cases. We laugh, we cry, and we understand what the others feel. It is hard to be a parent or a grandparent and not become paranoid with all we, as advocates, see and hear. It helps so much to have others who do the same exact thing and have the same thoughts going on. What started as a help for the crime victim has extended to include help for the crime victim advocate. We share the progress of our victims as they go through the system from police to court to probation, which helps bring some closure for the advocate. The non-profit organizations are so important in this process: MADD, Legal Aid, Children's Advocacy Center, and Fort Hood Family Advocacy. Where would we be without their input and support? As you can see we truly are the definition of coalition.

As the years went by, we were able to start taking donations from several resources including jury duty reimbursements. With that

money, we have been able to assist victims with certain expenses not covered by crime victims compensation. The Coalition has sponsored the Tree of Angels every December for the past five years, having 300 plus in attendance. We have grown from one county and now have two, Bell & Coryell.

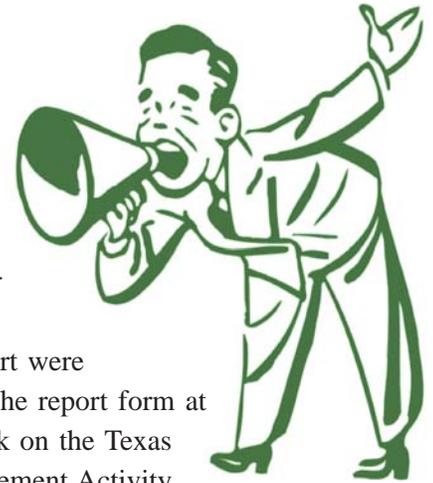
I have been with the Bell County District Attorney's Office for almost 24 years, and I truly feel that the camaraderie I have with the Bell/Coryell County Crime Victim Coalition has not only been wonderful for the crime victims here, but has helped me be a better advocate.

This is not a remarkable concept in 2009. But, believe me, back in 1995 we felt very fortunate . . .

Attention:

Victim Assistance Coordinators

Victim Impact Statement



The state-mandated Victim Impact Statement (VIS) Activity Reports are due January 15, 2010. This report will cover the periods of July 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009.

A copy of the completion instructions and Victim Impact Statement Activity Report were mailed to all District and County Attorneys in November. You may also download the report form at www.tdcj.state.tx.us, click on Victim Services in the Quick Links box, and then click on the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse. Scroll down the page then click on Victim Impact Statement Activity Report. You will find the activity report and instructions toward the bottom of the page.

Beginning January 2010, the statistical reports will be collected on a quarterly basis. New Activity Reports will be mailed out and, of course, will be available for download from our website.

With quarterly reporting, we will be able to analyze VIS return rates more efficiently. We also can adjust our reporting for calendar years and fiscal years more easily. We appreciate your adjustment to the new process.

Statewide training on this very important issue will begin early 2010 and will include notable and mandated specifics about the Victim Impact Statement. We will conduct brainstorming sessions on how we can help you increase the VIS return rates in your area. If you would like to schedule training in your area, email us or give us a call.

Please contact the TxCVC staff for assistance at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931. Send email to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.state.tx.us

Kathleen Sheeder Bonanno is an award-winning author and poet who received the Beatrice Hawley Award for her book of poetry, *Slamming Open the Door*, published by Alice James Books in April 2009. *Slamming Open the Door* is a collection of poems re-

counting the true story of the murder of her daughter, Leidy Bonanno, in 2003.

Bonanno's heartrending collection inspires both compassion for and awe of the human spirit. Of all the losses we may be asked to bear, the murder

of one's child must be the most terrible. These poems evoke that keenly, seeking justice but transcending judgment as they grieve loss, celebrate love, and find healing.

The Hair

Bernadette in blue jeans,
and Suzanne in her swishy skirt and boots,
in another time
would have worn veils
and wailed at the wall for her,
or washed her gently
and prayed for her Victorian soul,
or put pennies on her eyes
for the ferryman.

Today they work with what they've got—

one healthy hank of hair,
chopped off the back of her head
by the funeral director.

They shampoo it three times
until it smells like honeysuckle,
brush it and tie it and lay
the curling bundles
on the dining room table.

They put one in an abalone box,
one in an amber box,
one in a wooden box,
and one in a locket for me,
to fasten around my neck.

MADD services help victims of drunk driving crashes

By Quita Culpepper

KVUE News

Story aired Monday, October 26, 2009; reprinted with permission

It's a nightmare no one ever wants to experience -- being injured by a drunk driver.

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT HOPES to let people know that one well-known organization is there to provide free help to survivors who need it.

Long after a crash, survivors still feel the impact. The physical and psychological scars don't just disappear, and for many, wading through the legal, medical and emotional mess can be too much to handle on their own.

Tiffani Ragan is a survivor, and now she's featured in a public service announcement for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). After being run down by a drunk driver in a parking lot in 2007, Ragan says she couldn't have gotten through the ordeal without MADD's free victim's services.

"They have been the only ones to understand what I've been going through; they've been by my side from day

one," she said. "I survived for a reason, and I think my reason was to get my story out there and help others."

She hopes the Public Service Announcement telling people about her experience will help others understand there's a place to turn if they need help.

MADD's free victim's services include support groups and grief counseling. MADD advocates are also there for victims through the entire court process, helping them navigate their way through the system, find help with important paperwork -- including accident and coroner's reports -- and give lawyer referrals.

MADD says it's best to get in touch with them as soon as possible after being involved in a drunk driving accident, so they can be there for you through every part of the healing process.

Strangulation; *continued from page 4* years in prison. A subsequent conviction may be charged as a second degree felony, punishable by up to 20 years in prison. The statute defines the offense as causing pain by "intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of the person by applying pressure to the person's throat or neck or by blocking the person's nose or mouth."

Beginning September 1, 2009, prosecutors across the state had the option of using this valuable additional tool to increase victim safety and hold batterers accountable for their actions.

¹Gael Strack, JD, George E. McLane, MD, How to Improve Your Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases, national College of District Attorneys (2004, updated 2007).

²Strangulation: a full spectrum of blunt neck trauma. *Ann Otol Rhinol Laryngol.* 94:6:1, Nov. 1985, 542-46. Strangulation: a review of ligature, manual, and postural neck compression injuries. *Annotated Emergency Medicine*, 13:3, March 1984, 179-85. K.V. Iverson.

³Gael Strack, JD, George E. McLane, MD, How to Improve Your Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases, national College of District Attorneys (2004, updated 2007).

⁴Jacquelyn C. Campbell, et al. Assessing Risk Factors of Intimate Partner Homicide, National Institute of Justice (2003).

⁵Gael Strack, JD, George E. McLane, MD,

How to Improve Your Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases, National College of District Attorneys (2004, updated 2007).

⁶Ellen Taliaferro, MD, Health Consequences of Strangulation (paper presented at the Fort Hood, Texas, Family Advocacy Program Stop Abuse and Violence Escalation Symposium (October 29, 2009).

⁷Wilbur, L., Hugley, M., Harfield, J., Surprenant, Z., Taliaferro, E., Smith, J., & Paolo, A., (2001). Survey results of women who have been strangled while in an abusive relationship. *Journal of Emergency medicine*, 21(3), 297-302.

⁸Gael Strack, JD, George E. McLane, MD, How to Improve Your Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases, national College of District Attorneys (2004, updated 2007).

⁹Ellen Taliaferro, MD, Health Consequenc-

Victim Impact Statements;
cont'd from page 6

from across the state, two victims, a national crime consultant, and a representative from the Board of Pardons and Paroles, Texas Youth Commission, TDCJ's Community Justice Assistance Division, Texas District and County Attorney's Association, Office of the Attorney General, and the TDCJ Victim Services Division. After three monthly meetings this summer, the newly revised Victim Impact Statement was introduced at the Texas Victim Services Association (TVSA) Annual Conference in El Paso.

Victims may download the Victim Impact Statement at www.tdcj.state.tx.us. Click on *Victim Services; Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse* and then *Victim Impact Statement*.

es of Strangulation (paper presented at the Fort Hood, Texas, Family Advocacy Program Stop Abuse and Violence Escalation Symposium (October 29, 2009).

¹⁰Wilbur, L., Hugley, M., Harfield, J., Surprenant, Z., Taliaferro, E., Smith, J., & Paolo, A., (2001). Survey results of women who have been strangled while in an abusive relationship. *Journal of Emergency medicine*, 21(3), 297-302. Gael Strack, JD, George E. McLane, MD, How to Improve Your Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases, national College of District Attorneys (2004, updated 2007).

¹¹Ellen Taliaferro, MD, Health Consequences of Strangulation (paper presented at the Fort Hood, Texas, Family Advocacy Program Stop Abuse and Violence Escalation Symposium (October 29, 2009).

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PLEASE NOTE:

Texas law requires that TDCJ-Victim Services Division request readers to notify us annually, in writing, that they wish to continue receiving *The Victim's Informer*.

THE
VICTIM'S INFORMER

**OUR GOAL IS TO PRINT NEWS OF INTEREST
FOR VICTIMS AND VICTIM ADVOCATES**

Angie McCown, Director

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THE VICTIM'S INFORMER

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE

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What's the difference between a Parole Board Member and a Commissioner?

PAROLE BOARD MEMBER.

- Seven members appointed by the Governor of Texas to six year terms with the advice and consent of the Texas Senate.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER.

- Twelve members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles employed by the presiding officer.

The primary distinction between a Board Member and a Parole Commissioner is that Board Members are vested with the sole responsibility of promulgating policy relative to parole and mandatory supervision considerations; vote on cases requiring the full vote of the Board; and vote on clemency matters.

Both Board Members and Parole Commissioners determine which offenders are to be released on parole or mandatory supervision; determine conditions of parole; modify and withdraw conditions of parole and mandatory supervi-

sion; determine the continuation, modification, or revocation of parole or mandatory supervision violators; issue subpoenas; conduct offender interviews; conduct victim interviews; and conduct interviews with other interested parties, such as family members or attorneys.

Both Board Members and Parole Commissioners devote their time to other activities, which include: revisiting and updating their policies, guidelines and procedures; training peers and designees; and educating offenders, victims and other members of the public about the parole process.