



The Property Times

Texas Association of Property And Evidence Inventory Technicians (T.A.P.E.I.T.) Newsletter

August, 2017

A message from our President Gayla Robison:

Hello everyone hope your summer has been a great one, speaking of summer where did it go? It is hard for me to believe that in just over 2 months it will again be time for the annual TAPEIT conference. I get so excited each year around this time, pulling all the stuff together to finalize the agenda lining up all the speakers to make it a great **conference. Wow how time has passed...20 years since that first small group of individuals** sat in that room at Hurst PD and planned the first meeting. Thank you Kolene for the vision then.

Your board has worked hard this year to make this a special event for you the attendees at the conference. We have some amazing speakers set for this year. I am sure all of you have heard of the Morton law from 2014 and how it has impacted our daily lives in the property room, well this year we have Michael Morton himself as our keynote speaker on Friday morning. He will explain how important it is the job that we do, if it had not been for a very good property person holding ALL of the evidence from his case, he would still be in prison.

We also have returning our first speaker at that first conference, Sharon Wilson, Tarrant County District Attorney speaking on Tuesday morning. We will have our certification classes on Thursday this year.

As you see we have a full agenda of training lined up for this, we look forward to seeing each of you there.

Can't wait to see old friends again along with the opportunity to make new friends. Enjoy the rest of your summer but make your reservations to attend the conference and don't forget that late registration deadline of Sept 1st.

Respectfully
Gayla Robison
T.A.P.E.I.T. President

Our new official address from this point forward will be:
T.A.P.E.I.T.
c/o Jamie Murphy
Texas A&M University Police Department
1231 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1231



We Pay Tribute - Honoring TX Officers Who Left Us...

Source: [Officer Down Memorial Page](#)

[Corporal Monty D. Platt](#)

West Texas A&M University PD, TX
EOW: Tuesday, August 8, 2017
Cause of Death: Animal related

[Detective Elise Ybarra](#)

Abilene Police Department, TX
EOW: Sunday, August 6, 2017
Cause of Death: Automobile crash

[Deputy Sheriff Jason Fann](#)

Yoakum County Sheriff's Office, TX
EOW: Saturday, August 5, 2017
Cause of Death: Automobile crash

[Police Officer Miguel I. Moreno](#)

San Antonio Police Department, TX
EOW: Friday, June 30, 2017
Cause of Death: Gunfire

[Corrections Officer Shana Tedder](#)

Texas Department of Criminal Justice
EOW: Friday, June 9, 2017

[Border Patrol Agent Isaac Morales](#)

US Border Patrol
EOW: Wednesday, May 24, 2017
Cause of Death: Stabbed
Location: Texas

[Asst Chief Deputy Clinton Greenwood](#)

Harris Co Constable's Office, Pct 3, TX
EOW: Monday, April 3, 2017
Cause of Death: Gunfire

[Detective Jerry Ronald Walker](#)

Little Elm Police Department, TX
EOW: Tuesday, January 17, 2017
Cause of Death: Gunfire



Being able to locate evidence, equipment, and files efficiently and effectively is not an option in law enforcement – **it's an imperative.** A single piece of lost evidence could mean the difference between a solved or unsolved crime. PADtrax RFID technology was designed to remove the possibility of lost evidence, while mitigating your security



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The Folks Behind The Scenes: Your 2016—2017 officers and board members—all working for T.A.P.E.I.T. members because....
They're members too!

Officers		Board
President	Gayla Robison - Burluson PD	Tommie Hastings —Humble PD
1st VP:	Danny Barfield - Killeen PD	Connie Jordan - Jasper County S.O
2nd VP / Treasurer	Linda Roberts - Longview PD	Steve Yancey - Forest Hill PD
Secy:	Jamie Murphy - TX A&M PD	Christina McDaniel - Richardson PD
Sgt. At Arms	Bob Killingsworth - Nacogdoches PD	Wendy Large - LaPorte PD
Web/Editor	Melinda Strange - Huntsville PD, retired	Paula Donato - Coppell PD
Historian	Lynne Sinclair - McKinney PD	Founding President: Kolene Dean
		Past President: John Stevens, Cedar Hill PD
		Past President: Paul Szendrey, Georgetown PD

If you are interested in serving as a board member please go to the TAPEIT Documents tab on our website or contact any officer / board member for information regarding the requirements.



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Law Enforcement Services

IFL offers law enforcement a level of service in laboratory testing that is unheard of today.

Information You Can Use—Forensic Science Commission Expires

Excerpt below, read the article at:

http://www.evidencemagazine.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2425

On April 10, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a new approach to "advance forensic science and help combat the rise in violent crime." This approach includes allowing the National Commission on Forensic Science (NCFS) to expire. The NCFS held its final meeting on April 10-11, 2017.

Several days ahead of the announcement, six members of the NCFS wrote a letter to Sessions — obtained by the Washington Post — encouraging the renewal of the commission's charter.

"This Commission's existence is an indispensable way for the DOJ to communicate its commitment to high quality and rigorous forensic science," they wrote. "We believe that the Commission's charter must be renewed for the forensic science community to realize the benefits of the work that has been initiated, but will be left incomplete, should the Commission be allowed to end."

Sessions' April 10 announcement explained that a new forensics subcommittee will be formed under the Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety. The subcommittee's aim will be to "increase the capacity of forensic science providers, improve the reliability of forensic analysis, and permit reporting of forensic results with greater specificity," according to the press release.



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Something to think upon and share...

Focus on Evidence Management Needs

excerpt below, read more at:

http://www.evidencemagazine.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2394&Itemid=26

Property and evidence management at law enforcement agencies—once a slow, tedious, and inefficient process bogged down by manual record keeping—has been greatly automated. Yet, even with automation, evidence management nationwide remains fragmented. Some agencies do it well while others flounder because they still use outdated methods, have poorly trained staff, or simply have not made evidence management a high priority. Ineffectual evidence management practices may also be tied to the fact that many agencies under-use their evidence software, thus missing key steps and capabilities vital to protecting chain of custody as evidence is received and eventually checked out for processing or presentation in court.

There are weekly news accounts of police departments whose evidence rooms have been jeopardized due to lost or stolen evidence. What is fueling this troubling trend? A key factor is that some administrators recognize the necessity of a property and evidence operation, but fail to acknowledge the need to supply that operation with proper training and resources. All of this means evidence-room custodians must persevere with every tool they have to secure evidence—for their protection and the **agency's protection, as well.**

Because software is so integral to an evidence department's ability to navigate the many steps of receiving, processing, storing, and checking out evidence, this article will examine how some automated solutions prove highly effective—whether they are evidence modules embedded in records management systems, or standalone software solutions. The article will also address the need for proper evidence-control guidelines, procedures, and training—all essential to making an automated system successful.

Commentary: Are you allowed to "improvise" when it comes to property / evidence preservation / storage depending on your storage limitations? If so, how and, if not—how do you handle situations that warrant different packaging, handling or storage is out of the norm for your department? For those that were "in the job" before property / evidence room inventory software programs were available, what did you use? A manual log? Excel? Another database?

TAPEIT.NET Message Board Questions

Have input? Have a question? Have an answer? See these and more at <http://www.tapeit.net> and visit the "How do you do it?" forum on our message board.

How do you do it?

I have a question regarding Article 18.19, returning a firearm to owner. We have a case in which the suspect was charged with "discharging a firearm in a municipality," to where he plead guilty and served his time. It's well after a year from the date of conviction and he has called requesting the gun be returned. I was reading through the Article and came across a clause that read the court shall order the weapon destroyed if "(2) the person has been previously convicted under Chapter 46, Penal Code." This individual is not a felon, but he does have a previous conviction of unlawful carry, which is under Chapter 46 of the Penal Code. I plan on consulting with our DA's office, but I wanted to consult with other Evidence Custodians as well, to see whether or not his gun should be returned.

Hi All, I was wondering if anyone has dealt with Gerdau Steel in the Houston area regarding bringing items to be destroyed?

Can someone go through the process of their department's annual audits? My supervisor would like me to help create a form to use for ours. It needs to be tapered towards a smaller department that does not use an Evidence Management System. (I currently utilize paper documents and excel).

Returning Found Property: Does anyone have a policy/procedure in place about returning found property, owner unknown, to the person who found it and turned it in? Do you return any type of property to include firearms, cash, or jewelry or just general merchandise? Just looking for info. Thanks



TAPEIT Scholarship / Grant Fund / Technician of the Year Recipients—2016



TAPEIT Scholarship — 2016

Congratulations to:

Greg James Joe Ortega Ryan Roberts Taylor Stevens

All received a \$500.00 scholarship

For more information on how to apply for TAPEIT’s Grant or Scholarship fund awards visit www.tapeit.net.

Grant Fund Recipients—2016

(Photos posted on www.tapeit.net)

Congratulations to: Hearne PD, Live Oak PD, Longview PD, Magnolia PD, Nacogdoches PD, Nacogdoches S.O., Weatherford PD.

Congratulations to our 2016 Property Tech of the Year Award recipient: Sue Dinero with the UNT PD

Congratulations to Linda Roberts on receiving the President’s Choice Award.



Generous member donations to our silent auction helps fund TAPEIT’s Scholarship and grant funds.



CRIMINAL OBJECTS (And other weird things in property / evidence rooms)...

A reporter that was doing a story on a property / evidence room highlights some of the strangest objects and dug up their stories.



DISCO BALL

This disco ball peeked out from a box stored on the tallest shelf in the warehouse, catching the glare of fluorescent lights. It used to hang in an illegal club run out of Old Town's Star Theater. In August 2009, undercover cops discovered the theater was selling drinks until dawn with no liquor permit, slinging pre-poured cups of Red Bull mixed with vodka to people who paid \$10 a cup and knew to show up at the theater after other bars let out. The disco ball, clearly, was essential to the mood. When the place was busted, the mirrored ball was seized from an unpermitted stage lighting rig. It will likely be destroyed.



HILLBILLY JETPACK

In December 2010, a police officer stopped a subject for a traffic infraction. When the officer realized the car driven by the subject was stolen the routine stop led to a massive bust of a robbery ring. This strange jetpack—actually an Ultralite motor used for motorized paragliding—was found in the garage of the subject's grandmother, along with dozens of items ranging from a chainsaw to a college plaque. Police still aren't sure who owns this thing. No one's claimed it in the year and a half since it came in—but since similar paragliding motors fetch over \$6,000 online, the state will likely sell it off.



This can of tomatoes is still a mystery. The case number associated with the can is for a dine-and-dash at a restaurant. But the case "did not have anything to do with a can of tomato sauce," according to police.



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Southwest Solutions Group

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Questions from the Message Board...

Does anyone have a form that the Chief signs for authorization for agency use of property?

I need information if anyone can tell me what are you doing with the liquids brought in from Meth Labs that need to be destroyed. I have checked with every known company, even those that were mentioned at the conferences and no one will take the liquids.

Looking for SOP manual for property and evidence room. We are in the process for writing an SOP for our Property room and would like to know if anyone has one they would be willing to share? Thank you!

I was under the impression that you cannot store live ammo in an evidence room. I don't know who advised me of this and I can't find anything on it anywhere. Is this true and if so, where do you store ammo that is evidence?

Our agency has money that cannot be tied to an owner and that we've had for several months and longer. Do we need any sort of special documentation or court order to take possession of it and submit it to the city's general fund?

When you get case dispositions and are ready to dispose of evidence? Does your agency have the prosecutors sign off on them as well as the judge?

Who develops film and takes cell phones to be downloaded?

Paraphernalia: I am writing to see how other agencies handle the submission of paraphernalia in both county and class "C" offenses. I've been asked from officers if taking a picture of the paraphernalia and then disposing of it on the scene instead of submitting the actual physical evidence is an acceptable practice.

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Foray Technologies:
A must-have for any serious forensic
team...Evidence Management
Software

Veteran Virginia Beach police officer cleared of embezzlement charges:

VIRGINIA BEACH

Charges accusing a longtime Virginia Beach police officer of stealing three gun bags from a property and evidence room were dismissed at trial Friday by a visiting judge. Master Police Officer Mark Rowe, a 17-year veteran of the department, had been charged with misdemeanor embezzlement of items valued at less than \$200. He could have faced up to a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine if convicted.

Suffolk General District Court Judge James A. Moore Jr. granted defense attorney Kristin Paulding's motion to strike the charges immediately after prosecutors rested their case. A visiting judge was asked to preside because it involved a city employee.

"It's a sigh of relief," Rowe said afterward. "Finally an ending point to a nightmare not just for me, but for my family."

The charges were filed in August while Rowe was on temporary assignment in the property and evidence unit. The 50-year-old patrol officer had recently undergone knee surgery and was sent to work there while he recovered.

A citizen had found three canvas long gun bags, along with some guns and tactical vests, in a dumpster and reported it to police. The items were placed in storage in case someone came to claim them. Items not claimed within 90 days are either destroyed, auctioned, or given to another city agency that can use them, according to testimony.

When the 90 days expired, it was decided the gun bags would be destroyed, and that is what Rowe recorded in a department database. But a surveillance camera showed him leaving the building with the bags. Police later found them at his home.

Paulding said Rowe planned to take the bags to the Fourth Precinct, where he normally worked, to be used by marksmen there. Evidence showed he had already offered a police training center the tactical vests.

In arguing for dismissal, Paulding said prosecutors failed to prove anyone had been deprived of their property, which is required for an embezzlement conviction.

"The bags were garbage," she said. "They were in a dumpster. They did not belong to anyone and no one came to claim them."

Ron Smith and Associates



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T.A.P.E.I.T.
c/o Jamie Murphy
Texas A&M University Police Department
1231 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1231

Our TAPEIT 2017 Conference will be held at the Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade October 17—20th. Details and conference registration are on the **website so register now if you haven't already!**

Hope to see you all in October!

The T.A.P.E.I.T. Officers and Board would like to thank all of the members, vendors and others who support our mission for being a part of T.A.P.E.I.T. - making it the best it can be. See updates and more at www.tapeit.net.