



# The NIRCL Update

Fall 2018

The Quarterly Report of the Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Laboratory

## In this issue:

- Director's Message
- Staffing Update
- Casework Trends
- Submission Policy Update
- Training Corner
- Laboratory Communication
- Impactful Evidence

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*Pictured left: **Isabella Elizabeth Fleischhauer**, born September 28, 2018.*

*Pictured right: **Isabella** and her big sister **Grace**.*

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## Director's Message:

The summer ended with great news as **Sherry Fleischhauer's** family welcomed their newest to the world! **Isabella Elizabeth** was born on **September 28<sup>th</sup>**. All are doing well and we look forward to Sherry's return.



# The NIRCL Update

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It has been a busy summer for the laboratory which means it's been a busy summer for all of you. I hope you all used your vacation time well. My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the area's fishing lakes and ended the season in Three Forks, WI where we caught Blue Gill, Crappie, Perch, Walleye, Northern Pike and even a Muskie! Thanks for the tip Sarah Owen!!

One of my primary duties is to ensure that the laboratory can maintain its outstanding level of service as we admit additional police departments. As such, we look at crime rate data, inquire into past evidence submission rates, ask for feedback from our various laboratory sections and speak extensively with potential members on the topics of the lab's capabilities and expectations for evidence submission so that we enter into these new agreements with a full understanding of the impact of the additional work. We had these very fruitful discussions recently with **Country Club Hills Police Department** representatives and we are asking for a slight delay before they join the laboratory (until January 1, 2019) to allow us to implement new ideas for improving the backlog situations in Latent Prints and Firearms; more on these new ideas below.

The big news for the laboratory this quarter was the successful completion of a laboratory accreditation assessment. Accreditation is critical for forensic services as it ensures a standard of quality and performance that provides our end users, the court system, the confidence to rely on the testing conducted at our laboratory. Our accrediting body, in keeping with international standards, sends out assessors every other year to review the laboratory's policies and procedures and how well we are adhering to those policies and procedures. Laboratory management and quality systems were assessed along with the Firearms and DNA sections. All areas showed very well. The DNA section passed their assessment with no findings of non-conformity. This is the first time a perfect assessment has been achieved for the NIRCL DNA section – CONGRATULATIONS!!

Thank you and thanks always for your support of the laboratory.

Philip T. Kinsey, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

### Staffing Update:

Our Firearms section and especially our Latent Print section have been inundated with evidence recently (see below). To offset some of that work, we are cross-training available staff to help in Firearms and developing part-time forensic technician positions (NIBIN Technician for Firearms and a Processing Technician for the Latent Prints section) to provide relief from some of the more basic work in each of these disciplines. Additionally, we are implementing temporary evidence submission policies to ensure that our Latent Print Examiners have all the information they need to complete your cases in a timely and efficient manner (see Submission Policy Update below). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



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## Casework Trends:

	Requests Received		Requests Completed		Final Backlog		Average TATs (days)	
	2018 Q2	2018 Q3	2018 Q2	2018 Q3	2018 Q2	2018 Q3	2018 Q2	2018 Q3
Chemistry	657	719	690	706	64	77	9	8
DNA	248	290	305	317	60	80	45	36
Latent Prints	362	490	349	342	161	307	42	50
Firearms	276	301	212	234	137	206	28	55
Toxicology	114	145	125	140	13	18	13	11

- The **Chemistry** section continues to perform very well despite steadily increasing submissions.
- The **DNA** section continues to improve Turn-Around Times as demand for services increase.
- The **Latent Print** section saw a **25% increase in submissions** this quarter! Please see Staffing Updates for new approaches to processing this additional work.
- The **Firearms** section learned recently that the part-time firearms examiner expected to resume duties this fall, will not be able to do so. Please see Staffing Updates for the approaches to be taken to reduce the workload in this section.
- The **Toxicology** section continues to handle its workload admirably.

## Submission Policy Update:

The Latent Print section is experiencing a substantial increase in the submission of property crime evidence which is typically made up of items handled by the property owners. Without the submission of elimination prints, the lab is often put in the position of conducting unproductive work. This impacts everyone's cases. The laboratory has been informing evidence custodians for a few weeks now of an upcoming Latent Print Evidence Submission Policy Update. Therefore, to assist the Latent Print section with their unusually large backlog of cases, we are temporarily implementing the following submission policy:

**Elimination prints will be required to submit property crime evidence for Latent Print Examination as of November 15, 2018.**

**Exceptions to this policy will require authorization by laboratory management.**

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation while we focus on completing our backlogged cases as efficiently as possible.

## Training Corner:

The lab intended to provide a one-day training covering the **Detection, Collection and Preservation of Footwear Evidence** this fall. However, due to the casework demands on the section and the extent of time and effort required to update the Footwear Evidence presentation, **this training has been postponed**. Part of the root cause for the increase in the Latent Print backlog pointed back to the amount of time required to prepare the Latent Print Training this summer. The training has been and will continue to provide benefits, however, the middle of the busy season



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was not the best choice for scheduling the training. As the hard work for the Latent Print Training Course has been completed, we will consider offering this training later this winter as casework demands allow.

Laboratory staff are also available to provide in-service presentations on any of our laboratory disciplines as schedules and workloads allow. Please contact the laboratory to make requests for presentations.

## Laboratory Communication:

Please let us know how we are doing by taking **2 minutes and 17 seconds** to complete our Customer Service Survey. Yes, **2 minutes and 17 seconds** was the average time spent completing the surveys to date. Here is the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5T57K55>.

It's not just good business practice to get feedback from our customers, but it's also an accreditation requirement. To that end, thanks to those of you who helped the lab pass its assessment by taking **2 minutes and 17 seconds** to complete the survey! One of those who helped was **Hawthorn Woods Police Chief Jennifer Paulus**.

I met with Chief Paulus recently and after chatting among other topics, about report wording, we quickly came to the same conclusion that laboratory reports, as a necessity, contain nuanced technical terminology and the surest way to understanding report content is to contact the laboratory staff to explain their results. Access to laboratory reports through SharePoint is working well for Hawthorn Woods and hopefully for everyone else; please let Mark Milford ([mmilford@nircl.org](mailto:mmilford@nircl.org); (847) 362-0676) know as soon as possible if not.

**Thank you** for using the [clerical@nircl.org](mailto:clerical@nircl.org) email address when requesting information for non-urgent matters. Please continue to let us know what you need along with any pertinent information that would help us get you your information more quickly. This has been very helpful in reducing interruptions to our scientists in the laboratory. As always, for urgent matters, please call the lab directly.

## Impactful Evidence:

Thank you to **East Dundee Police Chief George Carpenter** for singing the lab's praises recently in the press, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/elgin-courier-news/news/ct-ecn-east-dundee-burglary-solved-st-1017-story.html>.

Thanks also to **Lindenhurst Police Chief Tom Jones** for another good news story in the press, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/lake-county-news-sun/news/ct-lns-lindenhurst-robbery-arrest-st-1102-story.html>.

Finally, thanks to **Lake County MEG Director Christopher Sullivan** for a very nice letter of gratitude to our **Latent Print Examiner Nancy Keel** for great work done on a big case of theirs.

The lab continues to receive inquiries from police agencies considering joining the lab and with good press like this, we expect more! We are certainly aware that our work isn't possible without the great work done by evidence personnel and crime scene specialists at our member departments. To that point, the lab can also assist your agencies in providing advice and training on the collection, preservation and submission of evidence.



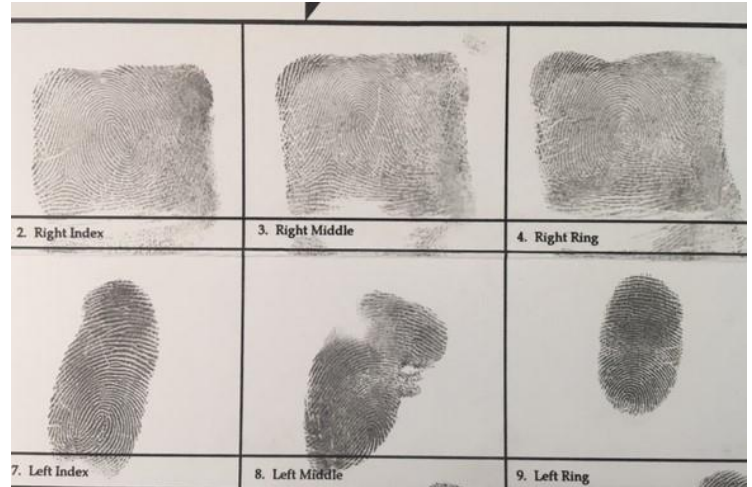
# The NIRCL Update

Fall 2018

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A little bit more on the utility of elimination prints in processing latent print evidence. While laboratory staff are more than happy to help with processing and examining the evidence you need analyzed, we are looking to provide this service as efficiently as possible for all of us. Providing elimination prints when evidence is submitted, allows our analysts to move through the entire case, without the need for stopping lab work to make requests and wait for additional information or for elimination prints to be collected and submitted. Great elimination prints will allow us to improve our services to your agencies.

The lab has been advertising in our evidence intake area, a convenient kit to collect elimination prints at the scene (pictured to the right). These convenient “dry” pads are inexpensive and easy to use to collect elimination prints on the spot. Clean up is as simple as rubbing one’s fingers together to wipe off the “ink”. These pads are available at [http://www.safariland.com/products/forensics/fingerprinting/fingerprint-pads/perfect-print-pad-F\\_160.html#start=1](http://www.safariland.com/products/forensics/fingerprinting/fingerprint-pads/perfect-print-pad-F_160.html#start=1).



*Good examples of rolled elimination fingerprints are shown in the boxes for the Right fingers (top row) while poor examples are shown in the boxes for the Left fingers (bottom row).*



***Stay safe and thanks for reading!***