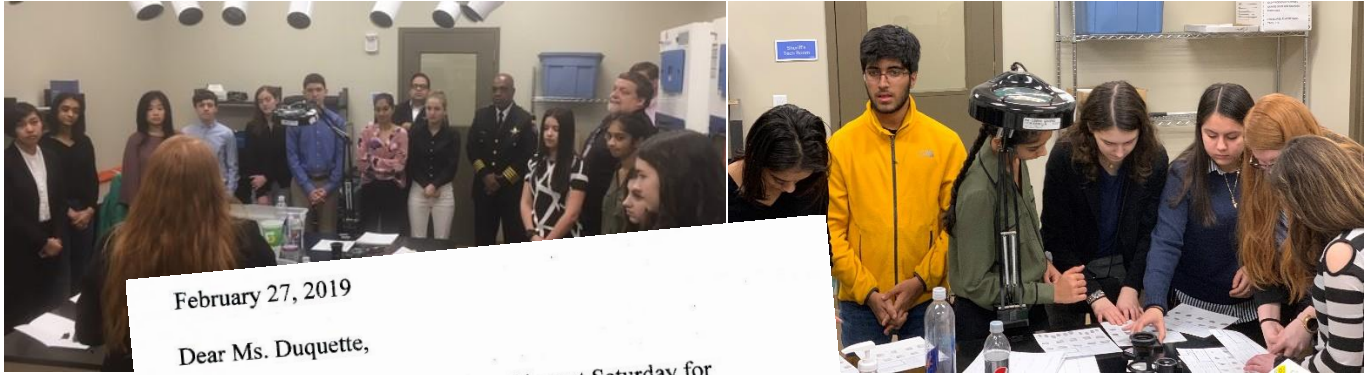




# The NIRCL Update

Spring 2019

The Quarterly Report of the Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Laboratory



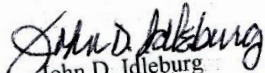
February 27, 2019

Dear Ms. Duquette,

Thank you for assisting my team this past Saturday for Congressman Schneider's STEM Scholars program. The students were thrilled by your presentation and hands on activity.

As you might know, engaging our youth through these types of events is important to me, and I wanted to extend my deepest gratitude to you and the Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Lab for being an excellent partner in giving these students a well-rounded presentation.

Gratefully,

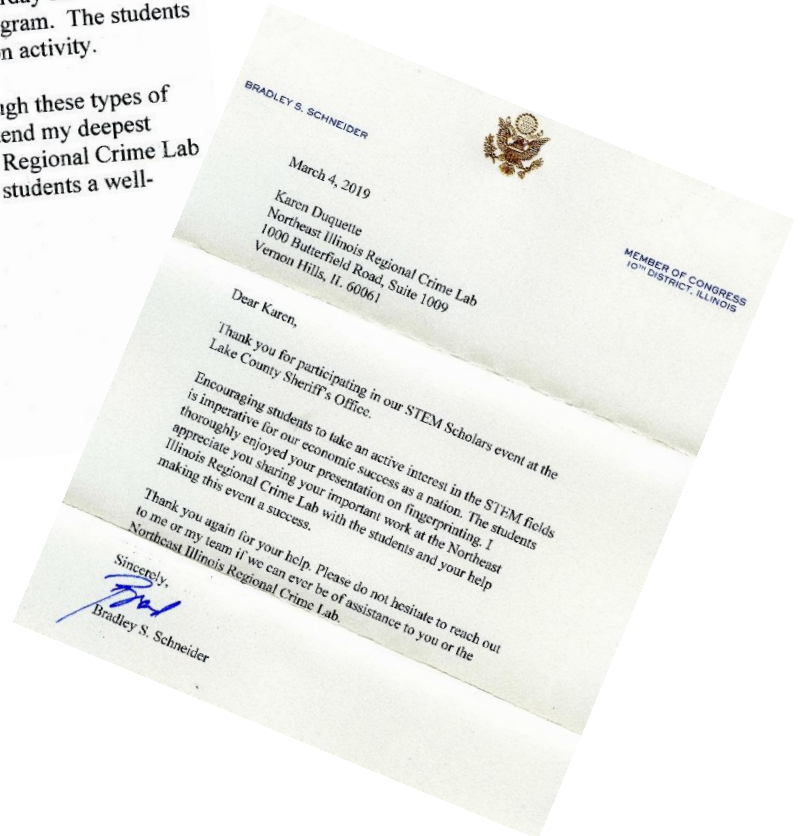
  
John D. Idleburg  
Sheriff

## In this issue:

- Director's Message
- Staffing Update
- Casework Trends
- Submission and Testing Policy Updates
- Training Corner
- Impactful Evidence

## Director's Message:

One of the ways our laboratory staff serve your communities is through the volunteering of their time in support of special programs. One recent event was a STEM Scholars event at the Lake County Sheriff's office where **Karen Duquette** of our Latent Print Section made a presentation and provided hands-on activities for the students. Her efforts were greatly appreciated by **Lake County Sheriff Idleburg** and **Illinois Congressman Schneider**. **Thanks for making us look good Karen!!**





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Our Board of Directors met recently at the Vernon Hills Police Department (thanks for the space **Chief Kreis!**) for a lab update and to review and approve the laboratory budget. The budget and other laboratory business will be presented at the upcoming **General Meeting** scheduled for **June 27<sup>th</sup> at 12:00**, location **TBD**. This year's meeting will include the election of Executive Board Members. While this year's meeting will be pared back from last year's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary *extravaganza*, we look forward to a good turnout and being able to share the good work of the lab and a pizza lunch with all of you.

Please look for important information in the **Submission Policy Updates** section of this Report. As always, if there is any information you would like to see added to this report, or if you have any comments or questions, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Lastly, **Gun and Drug Destruction** season is fast approaching. Look for details soon. The drug destruction run will likely be in mid-June. There were two runs made last year for gun destruction. The lab will be reaching out soon to determine if both runs will still be needed.

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

Philip T. Kinsey, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

### **Staffing Update:**

**The short story is that our current staffing level is adequate to effectively process the evidence submitted to the lab.** One of the great things about our laboratory is that we can be extremely nimble in making operational decisions. As was discussed in earlier reports, we have been keeping an eye on the Firearms and Latent Prints sections as they have worked through increasing backlogs and turn-around times. We announced that we would be exploring options to incorporate the use of forensic technicians into our workflow. Early efforts showed promise that the concept would work, but as we began interviewing candidates, as the staff worked diligently, the need for technical assistance waned and so we have put those ideas on hold and will keep them in mind for future needs. For now, as is shown below in **Casework Trends**, the lab's current capacity can handle the work load.



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### Casework Trends:

In this report, data for the fourth quarter of 2018 and for the first quarter of 2019 are presented.

As was hinted at in the last Quarterly Report, I'm pleased to report that backlogs and turn-around times in the Latent Prints and Firearms sections are down significantly. In fact, **Backlogs and Turn-around times are down** for all sections except DNA. The good news from the DNA section is that its backlog is near the lowest its been for the last year and a half.

	Requests Received		Requests Completed		Final Backlog		Average TATs (days)	
	2018 Q4	2019 Q1	2018 Q4	2019 Q1	2018 Q4	2019 Q1	2018 Q4	2019 Q1
<b>Chemistry</b>	604	537	588	594	93	36	15	7
<b>DNA</b>	273	207	252	300	135	67	38	45
<b>Latent Prints</b>	343	299	395	436	255	119	62	59
<b>Firearms</b>	206	188	285	263	127	51	71	54
<b>Toxicology</b>	136	114	135	122	20	12	13	10

### Submission and Testing Policy Updates:

#### Gamma-hydroxybuterate (GHB) confirmation in drug facilitated sexual assault (DFSA) investigations

GHB is a naturally occurring metabolite that is thought to play a role as a cerebral neurotransmitter. The effects of an administered dose, which include among others: drowsiness, euphoria and unconsciousness can occur within 15 minutes and can last about 3 hours. Due to GHB's rapid metabolism and half-life elimination the drug is undetectable in urine by 12 hours post administration. For these reasons, the lab's GHB testing policy is that GHB testing will be done on DFSA urine samples if:

The urine was collected **within** 12 hours of the assault **and** the urine collected was the **first** void since the assault.

Read more at: [http://nircl.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/NIRCLGHBPolicyUpdate.106124300.pdf](http://nircl.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/NIRCLGHBPolicyUpdate.106124300.pdf)

#### Consumption of DNA evidence in No Suspect, Property Crime Cases ONLY

When sampling DNA evidence for testing, the laboratory policy is to preserve half of the evidence for possible independent testing. However, in more and more cases (over 50% of property crime cases), the entire item of evidence needs to be consumed for the best chance to develop a DNA profile. Although current procedures are working, in an effort to produce more informative DNA profiles from these samples that have very low levels of DNA while not impacting case turn-around times, the lab will be taking a slightly different approach.

The policy of preserving half of the evidence for independent testing will remain. However, if in the expert opinion of the forensic scientist, the evidence will require consumption to develop a useful DNA profile, they will be given the latitude to make that decision and consume evidence from No Suspect, Property Crime Cases ONLY.



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To reiterate, to be good stewards of evidence submitted to the lab and to maintain the lab's outstanding turn-around times, **beginning June 1, 2019 - for No Suspect, Property Crimes ONLY**, the laboratory will continue to make every effort to save half of the evidence, but if it is deemed necessary by the lab scientists that the evidence should be consumed in testing to develop a DNA profile, the evidence will be consumed.

### Firearms Open Case Requests

The firearms section will be phasing out **Open Case Requests** beginning **May 1, 2019**. These files consist of fired evidence from crimes against persons in which no firearms were recovered. No leads have been developed in this system since 2012 and since that time significant advances made with the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) improving the success rate of linking fired cartridges cases between shootings. Additionally, the lab has seen a significant decrease in the cases that would benefit from such requests (cases with only bullet fragment evidence). Agencies should expect this evidence to be returned in the coming months. The lab will continue to provide microscopic comparisons between submitted items.

### Vaping Cartridge Testing

Please see an updated memo on the topic of analyzing vaping cartridges for THC:  
[http://nircl.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/NIRCLVapingMemo.106124339.pdf](http://nircl.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/NIRCLVapingMemo.106124339.pdf)

### Training Corner:

Please contact the laboratory if you have personnel interested in our **Detection, Collection and Preservation of Latent Print Evidence** training. This two-day course was offered last summer and was very successful by all accounts. This year's training is coming up quick and is scheduled for **8:00-5:00 May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>** at the **Lake Zurich Police Department** training facility (thanks for the space **Chief Husak!**). There are a few slots still available. Please contact the laboratory as soon as possible to sign up for this valuable training.

Laboratory staff are also available to provide in-service presentations on any of our laboratory disciplines as schedules and workloads allow. **Firearms Examiner Gary Lind** and **DNA Analyst Sarah Owen** recently provided a well-attended few hours of in-service training on the capabilities of those laboratory sections to the **Lake County Major Crimes Task Force**. Please contact the laboratory to make requests for presentations.

### Laboratory Communication:

**Please take a few seconds** to make use of the staff directory when calling the lab. We are still experiencing too many calls from people asking to speak to a specific person. This is the perfect circumstance to make use of that directory. If you would like a list of staff phone extensions, please contact us at [clerical@nircl.org](mailto:clerical@nircl.org) and we will be happy to send you one. **Thank you for supporting the lab in this regard!**

**Thank you** for continuing to use 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.





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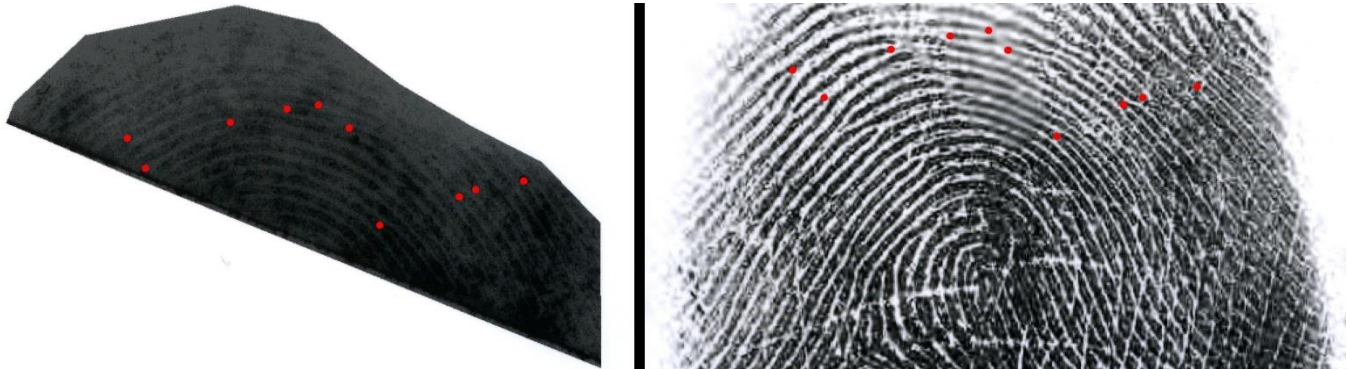
## Impactful Evidence:

Sometimes it's what you don't do that makes the biggest impact. Recently an envelope that had contained a threatening letter was submitted to the Latent Prints section. Even though there was tape on the envelope that could have prompted **Cook County Sheriff's Det. Kozlar** to have the evidence fumed or dusted with black powder to develop latent prints, he made the right choice in deciding to submit this particular evidence to the lab unprocessed because the lab has a larger set of processing techniques to be brought to bear on paper evidence. As such, **Latent Print Examiner Barry Adams** was able to develop a latent print (pictured below) from the underside of the tape and identify the suspect using the labs recently purchased **iAFIS** terminal which allows a broader search for matching latent prints.

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**Shown left:** Latent print developed from the evidence with Galton detail points noted in red. **Shown right:** Standard print card latent of suspect with corresponding Galton detail points noted in red.

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**Great Job Barry! Great Job Det. Kozlar!**

**Thank you** to all our Chief's for your quick responses with contact information for those intended to receive NIBIN Lead Notifications. This has allowed for more immediate notification of this critical crime fighting information. We hope your experience receiving these notifications has been helpful.

**If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact**

**Phil Kinsey at [pkinsey@nircl.org](mailto:pkinsey@nircl.org),  
(847) 362-0676 x102 or (406) 493-8083.**

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