



RHODE ISLAND CRIMINALISTICS ASSOCIATION
c/o Rhode Island State Crime Lab
048 Fogarty Hall – URI
41 Lower College Road
Kingston, RI 02881
Phone: 401-874-2893

February 24, 2025

TO: ALL RICA MEMBERS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
FROM: DENNIS C. HILLIARD, TREASURER
RE: ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF RICA

The **ANNIVERSARY Meeting** of the Rhode Island Criminalistics Association will be held on **Thursday, March 20, 2025**. This is the **71st Anniversary of RICA**, having first met in East Providence in May 1954.

The meeting will be held at the Madeira Restaurant, 288 Warren Ave. Cocktails at 6:00 PM, meeting at 6:30 PM and dinner at 6:45 PM. **Cost is \$45.00 per attendee.** [The Madeira Restaurant](#) is located at 288 Warren Ave, East Providence, RI 02914, 401-431-1322. There are only three weeks to get the number of attendees to the restaurant, so get your reservation in promptly.

Please call the Laboratory at 874-5056 or email dhilliard@uri.edu with your reservation(s) by COB Monday, March 17, 2024.

You can send a check made payable to RICA to: Dennis Hilliard, 41 Lower College Road, 048 Fogarty Hall, Kingston, RI 02881-1966. You can also pay by cash or check at the door. Venmo is also an option: use @Dennis-Hilliard-1, put RICA Dinner in the “What’s it for?” line and make the transaction private.

Remember to bring raffle cash with you.

MENU

***Appetizer:* Portuguese Soup (vegetarian choice-kale soup)**

Entree (buffet style):

Pasta Primavera

Mixed Vegetables

Seafood Rice

Baked Chicken in garlic sauce.

Marinated Pork w/potatoes and clams

Roast Beef

***Dessert:* Flan**

RICA Annual 2025 dues of \$15.00 are due by 1/1/25. RICA 2025 dues will be collected at this meeting.

• SERVICE & TRAINING

The December RICA meeting, held at Richard's Pub and restaurant, was well attended by seventy members and guests; everyone enjoyed the food and the raffle and auction. Special thanks to Wakefield Liquors, Len Andrews, and Walter Williams for raffle contributions, and to Barbara Fraiser for assisting with the dinner attendee sign-ins. The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer were present. A motion was made and passed to donate \$250.00 each to: the Lawing Family Fund (in memory of Michael Lawing ('07) Richmond PD), Amos House, the RI Food Bank, the Child and Family RI, and the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale (in memory of Helen Palmer). The RICA/RISCL challenge coins were given to members who had not yet received one. Nominations for officers: President: Tino Natale ('14); Vice President: Barbara Frasier ('03); Treasurer: Dennis Hilliard ('77). No other nominations were offered, so each nominee was voted into their respective positions for the following year. For Secretary nominees were: Jane Northup ('11) and Karen Haar ('24). By a hand count, Karen Haar received most votes and was installed as Secretary for the 2025 year. RICA Directors are: John J. Dube ('91), Michael P. Clancy ('96) and James Clift ('02).

Progress Report for 2024 January – December: There was a 21.7% decrease (422 vs. 539) in the number of new cases and a 25.2% decrease (2,226 vs. 2,976) in the number of exhibits submitted to the Laboratory from January 1 to December 30, 2024, compared to the same period in 2023. The RI State Crime Laboratory Commission met on October 23, 2024 and on January 23, 2025, at the Attorney General's Office in Cranston. Chief Thomas Oates, Woonsocket PD, who serves on the Commission, was installed as President of the RI Police Chiefs Association at the Association's meeting on January 12, 2025.

Laboratory staff made twenty-four (24) presentations during this period. Laboratory staff members attended more than forty-six training, on-line and in-person. There were twenty-two tours of the State Crime Laboratory. There were five media or student interviews provided. The Laboratory hosted an Expert Witness Testimony Workshop, and a monthly meeting of the RI Detectives Association. The Laboratory provided two internships between June and August 2024 to a student from Roger Williams University and a student from Penn State University.

Alec Wyers continues his training as a Firearm and Toolmark Examiner. He is attending the ATF's National Firearms Examiner Academy in Maryland until May and expects to complete the training in September. The process to complete cases using contracted Firearms examiners continues with Matt Parlow and Chris Painton each working at the Laboratory 20 to 30 hours a week. The search for two Firearms and Tool Mark examiners continues with only partial success. There have been only two potential qualified applicants and only one remains a viable applicant. Hopefully, we will be able to fill one of the positions by April. The positions remain open until filled.

The 2024-2025 BCI course began on September 6, 2024, with 35 attendees. They will complete their training on April 4th. The 2025-26 class is already filled.

The Forensic Science Partnership (FSP) is in its 26th year of seminar programs relevant to criminal investigations and forensic science. Many of the previous seminars were recorded and are available for viewing through the [FSP website](#). The schedule for the Spring 2025 seminars is posted at the website. A particularly interesting presentation was provided by Matt Zarrella on February 21st. You can view his presentation here: [Search Dogs](#)

• FUNDING

The FY2025 budget is in progress, and we have submitted the FY2026 request. If you meet with your State Representatives and/or Senators, remind them of the work of the State Crime Laboratory and ask them to support our FY2026 budget request. We have applied for two Byrne/JAG Grants to assist with the contracting costs of firearm examiners and to replace our Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) program.

As always, if you have an opportunity to speak with our Federal Senators and Representatives or their staff members, remind them of the importance of federal grant programs. We rely on Byrne/JAG and Coverdell Grant awards to maintain our accreditation and provide equipment, supplies, and training opportunities not covered in the budget.

• PERSONALS

Kyle Rekas ('07) was sworn in as Chief of the Narragansett PD on December 2, 2024.

Jason Ryan ('13) was sworn in as Chief of the Middletown PD on December 16, 2024.

Kevin Greenough ('12) of the Woonsocket PD retired in January 2025.

Jane Northup's ('11) father, Richard Bourbonnais, passed away on January 25th. Richard was a Dispatcher for the URI Campus PD.