



# Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists

## NEWSLETTER

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I had the opportunity to represent the NWAFS at the Regional Associations meeting in Boston during the week-long American Academy of Forensic Sciences meeting in mid-February. For those who are interested, the following is a brief report of the meeting and my comments. NEAFS, MAAFS, NWAFS, CAC, and MWFS were represented. There were no individuals representing SWAFS, SAFS, or the AAFS in attendance at the meeting. Several topics were discussed which were of mutual interest.

Discussion was held as to how to disseminate information of regional meetings. Suggestions were made to keep the flow of information via the Association newsletters. It was agreed that this was less than successful in the past. The American Academy Newsletter and the Crime Lab Digest were two other suggested publications for dissemination of information.

Reports were made of upcoming workshops to be held this Spring. Compared to some other associations, my opinion is our organization has great workshops for the price involved. Some workshops in other areas of the country may, for example, cost upwards of \$500 to \$1000 for a two day course.

Another area of discussion during the meeting was certification. It may be the perception in the NWAFS that the members of other forensic associations are 100% in favor of certification. My viewpoint was certainly changed when I heard comments that even in NEAFS there were and are strong opinions on both sides of the issue. As was stated in Roger Ely's last editorial in the last newsletter issue, the NWAFS is basically in a holding pattern and will debate the issue again in the Spring of 1994.

Until that time, I'm sure there will continue to be strong opinions on both sides. I believe it is healthy to keep the dialogue going. One forensic scientist recently told me that he didn't have the opportunity to state his views regarding certification in the newsletter. I know that if a member writes a reasonable letter to the editor, it will be published.

Most likely, some forensic scientists in the NWAFS will take the ABC general and specialized tests for their certificate. For those who obtain their certificate, I hope it is for more reasons than to hang a piece of paper on the wall and to be able to state in court that you are certified.

*Ken McDermott*

## AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL NWAFS MEMBERS

My term as Member-At-Large on the ABC Board of Directors expires next February following the AAFS Meeting in San Antonio. At that time, the NWAFS needs to decide what its position is regarding certification. To me, certification looks like a process which is not going to fade away and, in fact, seems to be gaining a lot of momentum if one is aware of the acceptance and expectations within the forensic science community as a whole. Certification and accreditation were often spoken in the same sentence by panel members discussing "Quality Assurance In Forensic Science - A Discussion Group" at the past AAFS meeting. Legislation is afoot in several states and federally to require individual proficiency testing in DNA. There is a strong movement developing to educate the criminal justice system as a whole about the certification process specifically, and quality assurance measures in general.

I feel that as individuals, we are obligated to participate in a total quality development program. Quality assurance/quality control has many facets and more than one program will be necessary to cover all these facets. The ABC Certification is a tool to let you as an individual know what is expected by your peers in terms of general and specific knowledge. It encourages continuing education and active participation in the field of forensic sciences. It requires self-testing in the form of proficiency testing. Forensic sciences has historically been free from external controls and we as professionals should be interested in some system of self-inspection. There are, however, no guarantees that certification is the cure-all or that it will prevent the

unqualified from certification. Accreditation does not guarantee that your laboratory is perfect, however, laboratories that have been through the process generally feel it has improved to some degree the quality of the services they offer. The ABC Certification program should do the same.

In a poll taken of NWAFS membership in 1989, 41% of the responders said "yes" when asked if they personally would participate in a certification program. Can the NWAFS turn it's back on this sizable fraction of the membership? Historically, the NWAFS has not hesitated to enhance the skills of it's membership (improving the quality of the product) by sponsoring topical workshops and seminars in conjunction with the semiannual meetings. Thousands of dollars have been allocated without a second thought for a single workshop which is of interest or is potentially beneficial to only a few people. I feel that the same consideration should be given to this 41% of the membership who has identified a tool which they feel can improve the quality of their work.

It is up to each of us to do what they can to improve the quality of the service we offer to the criminal justice community. It is up to each of us to find out what the ABC certification process is, what it can do for us, and whether the NWAFS should support it.

Sincerely,  
Dale C. Mann

### NWAFS OFFICERS - 1993

#### Executive Committee

President .....	Ken McDermott, WSP Crime Lab - Kelso, WA
President-Elect .....	Don Wyckoff, ID Bureau of Forensic Services - Pocatello, ID
Secretary-Treasurer .....	Lionel Tucker, Jr., DEA Western Lab - San Francisco, CA
Member-at-Large .....	Larry Campbell, Regional Coroner - Vancouver, BC
Past President .....	Mike Howard, OSP Forensic Lab - Bend, OR

#### Committee Chairmen

Continuing Education .....	Arnold Melnikoff, WSP Crime Lab - Kelso, WA
Historical .....	Brad Telyea, OSP Forensic Lab - Portland, OR
Membership .....	John Bowden, CA Criminalistic Institute - Sacramento, CA
Technical Advancement .....	Robert Thompson, Genelex Corp. - Seattle, WA
Editorial .....	Roger Ely, DEA Western Lab - San Francisco, CA

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

### *FALL 1993 BOISE MEETING*

The Fall 1993 NWAFS meeting will be held in Boise, Idaho during the week of October 18-22 with workshops planned for the 18th - 20th. The "Buried Body" workshop originally scheduled for the Bend meeting has been rescheduled to Boise on October 19-20. A half day seminar, "Insects on Bodies" will be presented in conjunction with the workshop by Dr. William Rodriquez of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, DC.

Other workshops still tentatively planned are:

1. Smith and Wesson armorer's school.
2. Footwear / tire track evidence collection.

For offers to present papers, contact Rocky Mink of the OSP Forensic Lab - Ontario at (503) 889-3831.

For further information about the meeting or workshops, contact Donna Shepherdson or Michell Bird at (208) 334-2231.

### *SPRING 1994 CONCORD MEETING*

The Spring 1994 meeting of the NWAFS will return to the San Francisco Bay area and be held at the Concord Hilton in Concord, CA. The Concord Hilton was the site of the ill-fated Fall 1989 meeting which was disrupted by the Loma Preita earthquake. This time around, though, we promise no natural disasters will coincide with the meeting. This meeting is being jointly sponsored by numerous Bay area forensic labs including the DEA Western Laboratory, the CADOJ DNA Laboratory, the San Mateo County Crime Lab, and the CA Department of Fish

and Game Laboratory. The meeting dates are set to be April 26-29, 1994.

The meeting is being held at the Concord Hilton. Room rates are \$64 for single or double occupancy rooms. The room rate includes a complimentary cook-to-order breakfast each morning in the newly remodeled restaurant. Tax exempt forms for government employees will be furnished at the desk at the time of check-in - be sure to bring your government ID. Room rates will be available the weekend before and after the meeting. To make reservations, contact the hotel at 1-800-826-2644 or (510) 827-2000 - be sure to mention you are with the NWAFS meeting group.

The meeting is still in its early planning stages; but more information will be available soon. So, bring your hard hat and wine glass, and see what might be shakin' ...

For more information, contact:

Roger A. Ely  
DEA Western Lab  
390 Main Street Room 700  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 744-7051 ext. 29  
(415) 744-7055 fax

### *FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY SEMINAR*

The Department of Anthropology and Criminal Justice at Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pennsylvania will present a two-day seminar in Forensic Archaeology on May 28-29. The seminar will expose participants to state-of-the-art techniques employed by forensic anthropologists in the search and recovery of unlocated

### ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER ...

The Newsletter is the official publication of the Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists. It is published 4 times a year in the months of March, June, September, and December. The Newsletter welcomes submissions from its membership such as technical tips, case studies, literature compilations, workshop or training notices, reference citations, commentary, historical accounts, and other topics of interest to the membership. While not required, it is requested written material submitted for publication to the Newsletter be word processed using WordPerfect 4.2 or greater, WordStar, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Word for Windows, or AmiPro on either 5.25 or 3.5 inch floppy disks. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month before publication, however, exceptions can be made. For more information regarding the Newsletter, contact:

Roger A. Ely, Editor  
DEA Western Laboratory  
390 Main Street Room 700  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 744-7051 - voice

human remains. Topics to be covered include: systematic search and site mapping techniques in various terrains, forensic archaeological and house fire excavation techniques, collection of entomological specimens, and forensic osteological and odontological analyses.

For more information, contact:  
Dennis C. Dirkmaat, Ph.D.  
Department of Anthropology, Mercyhurst College  
Glenwood Hills  
Erie, PA 16546  
(814) 824-2105, (814) 821-2594 fax

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## JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

### *FORENSIC LAB ANALYST*

The South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Forensic Lab Analyst in their Miller-Matthews Forensic Laboratory in Pierre. The candidate must possess a Bachelor of Science degree in criminalistics, chemistry, biology, physics or a related field and two (2) years experience in examining documents, shoeprints, tireprints, and/or fingerprints; or have equivalent combinations of relevant education and experience.

Salary: \$20,800 - 25,000

For more information, contact:  
Rex Riis, Criminalist  
SD Forensic Lab  
%500 E. Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-3673  
(605) 773-4629 fax

### *QUESTIONED DOCUMENT EXAMINER*

The Personnel Bureau of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is now accepting applications for the position of Questioned Document Examiner in our Forensic Laboratory Section. Minimum qualifications include a Bachelors degree in criminalistics, forensic science, chemistry, or a closely related field AND three years full time professional work experience as a Questioned Document Examiner whose primary duties involved the examination of handwriting for authorship and other document related matters; AND must be certified or be eligible for certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners. Deadline for applying is April 30, 1993, or until a sufficient number of qualified applicants have applied.

Salary: \$41,219 - 54,242.

For more information, contact:  
Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department  
Personnel Bureau  
400 E. Stewart Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89101  
(702) 795-3111

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## NWAFS MEMBER NAMED TO FORENSIC SCIENCE OPERATIONS AND PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Judy (Erickson) Brummond, manager of the Washington State Patrol's crime laboratory in Seattle, was recently named to the Forensic Science Operations and Program Committee (FSOPC), an advisory group whose role is to help ensure that the FBI's Forensic Science Research and Training Center (FSRTC) is meeting the needs of the crime laboratory community. The FSOPC consists of eight members from ASCLD, one from AAFS, one from the Medical Examiners Association, and FSRTC Section Chief Jim Kearney.

At a recent meeting at Quantico, the FSOPC helped plan future symposia and was provided with detailed updates of the FSRTC's training, research, and bomb data center programs,

which are used by the FBI, DEA, and law enforcement agencies and crime laboratories from various countries. New courses this year include AMP-FLPs, Forensic Infrared Spectrometry, Laboratory Quality Assurance, and Detection and Recovery of Human Remains; a training film on explosive detectors was developed and one on collecting physical evidence in child abuse cases is planned; evidence Response Teams are being established in the FBI's larger field offices; the visiting scientist program is soliciting applications, particularly for work on projects other than DNA; the Forensic Science Information Resource System (FSIRS) performs literature and computer data base search for information regarding trademarks, trade names, background information on defense experts, etc. (contact FSRTC librarian

Colleen Wade at 202-324-4384); portable analytical instrumentation has been developed to assist in the detection of drugs and explosive residues.

Call Judy Brummond at (206) 464-7073 if you'd like her to communicate to the FSRTC your training or research needs or your suggestions for improving the Training Center's existing

programs. She also has a copy of the Center's February 1992 *Current Research Projects Status Report*, covering topics from "Gasoline Comparison by Capillary Gas Chromatography" to "Identification of Photocopiers from Fusing Roller Defects", and she would be glad to share (all or portions of) that report with you.

## ONE OF THESE DAYS WE OUGHT TO....

GEORGE ISHII  
WSP CRIME LABORATORY DIVISION  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

Jan Beck and I would have coffee almost every morning and we would often suggest, "One of these days we ought to get the forensic scientists (we called them criminalists in those days) in the northwest together for a meeting. We could swap stories, methods, and find out what's going on in their part of the country."

In the late spring or early summer of 1971, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), forerunner of the DEA, held a workshop for law enforcement in Seattle. Bill Gowans was a co-host for the meeting as he operated the ATF laboratory in Seattle at the time performing drug and alcohol analysis for Federal agencies. After the meeting, I gave Bob Lawson from Boise a ride to his hotel. During the drive, we talked about getting forensic scientists together "... one of these days ...."

In September 1971, a notice went out from Boise announcing a meeting of Pacific-Northwest Drug Analysts on October 7, 1971. Finally, "one of these days..." happened!!

The Idaho Department of Health, under the direction of Dr. Darrell Brock and Bob Lawson, sponsored the meeting. Nine people showed up for the meeting: Dr. Brock, Bob Lawson and Rick Groff of Idaho; Arnie Melnikoff, Montana; Bob Sager, BNDD; and John Anderson, Bob Dews, Don Phillips, and Ron Kuest from Washington. I was mistakenly included on the roster since I was scheduled to go, but at the last minute was unable to attend. The one day meeting was a sharing of methods, evidence handling procedures, lab organization, etc. The main thrust of the meeting was to establish a permanent organization. Thus,

plans were laid for the first meeting of the Northwest Association of the Forensic Sciences.

John Anderson and I sent out a notice announcing the first meeting of the Northwest Association of the Forensic Sciences on March 17, 1972, to be held on April 6 - 8 in Spokane. We discussed a charter and by-laws, appointed a committee to write the charter and report back to the group at the next meeting in Seattle.

The Spokane meeting featured papers by:

- Bob Dews, Seattle Lab, on hair analysis. We thought it was pretty easy then. And it was, we made very few conclusive statements. The reports read like weather reports... "rain, if not otherwise."
- Bill Gresham reported on Fast Blue 2B, a hot, new technique for marihuana (it was spelled marijuana then).
- John Anderson talked on recent advances in blood grouping. The technology moves so fast that we need a talk on recent developments in serology at every meeting.
- Ron Skinner, University of Washington Department of Pharmacology talked about a mass spectrometer. Pretty heady stuff. Ron did such a good job Finnegan hired him.
- George Ishii talked on report writing and he's still talking about reports, reports, reports.

The big thrill of all this is that we had 29 people in attendance from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon, and California. The attendance was beyond our wildest dreams. It showed the need for an Association and more than a few of us were thinking, "One of these days we ought to..."

## THE AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATE

*DALE C. MANN*  
*ABC BOARD OF DIRECTORS*  
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE*

In the last year several developments have taken place within ABC which seem to indicate a general acceptance by more of the scientific community:

- The Criminalistics Section of AAFS has applied and was accepted as a permanent voting member of the ABC Board. Current representative is Ron Singer from the Tarrant County Medical Examiners Office, Fort Worth, Texas.
- Development of a blood alcohol specialty exam has begun with Jay Siegel, from Michigan State University, as the national peer group chairman.
- A liaison has been established with ASCLD/LAB to begin work on proficiency testing protocols for several specialty areas, beginning with DNA, to avoid duplication of efforts.
- A \$37,643 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Grant was awarded to ABC in October, 1992 to assist in the final development of the six specialty exams which will be offered initially at the AAFS San Antonio Meeting in February, 1994.

The ABC certification process has become a reality as of the AAFS Boston Meeting this past February. ABC administered it's inaugural General Competency Examination to 64 applicants at that meeting. Another 40 or so certificate holders from CAC have also applied to have their certificates transferred to ABC.

Several Regional Forensic Associations are planning on hosting ABC General Competency Exams in the next few months: SAFS in May, NEAFS in October, MWAFS in October, and SWAFS also in the fall. CAC will continue to host the exam as they have over the past few years. I will ask the NWAFS Executive Committee make the decision to likewise host a sitting for the ABC General Competency Exam at our Fall 93 meeting in Boise.

There is a real advantage for people who are interested in the certification process to take the exam prior to February 1993. Those who successfully take the General Exam before the AAFS San Antonio Meeting will have one sitting fee waived for the specialty exams. Since more than one specialty exam can be taken at a sitting (each sitting is projected to cost \$50.00), there is a real cost savings for the individual. I ask that those individuals who are interested in taking the General Exam within the next year contact someone on the Executive Committee or contact me. I will pass the this information on to the Executive Committee.

ABC application packets are available free and with no obligation by simply asking for one by mail or FAX from:

ABC  
PO Box 209  
Greenlawn, NY 11740  
FAX 516-261-2120

The application packet provides basic information on the certification process (past newsletters provides even more), requirements, flow sheet, and a study guide. You may also call me and I can provide you with the application packet and/or information.