

## President's Message

*David L. Oleksow*

The annual ABFDE Board meeting was held in Charlotte, North Carolina on April 30 through May 2, 2010. Interspersed within this time period and one day before, the ACT panel also met to work on the validation blueprints for the tests of our certification body. Both activities put the contributing participants through stressful days. In particular, I give much credit to Carl McClary for the successful completion of this first meeting for the ACT team. Carl was tireless. I did note that in his 15th hour of work on Friday night his eyes were glazed over, but he was still semi-lucid. Our directors worked hard on your behalf, and I commend them—as you should—especially those participants in both endeavors.

Contributors to the ACT Project were Donna Eisenberg, Bill Flynn, Lisa Hanson, Frank Hicks, Brian Lindblom, Carl McClary, David Oleksow, Joe Parker, Jerry Richards, and Farrell Shiver. Dr. Cindy Hill headed the Practice Analysis Task Force and brought us through the process successfully. I believe that she was quite bewildered at times, but survived and succeeded to get us to the first finish line. Shortly you will receive a survey to assist with the process. This is part of the first part of the project. You will receive points for returning the finished surveys. The number of points will be significant and will be set by the Recertification Committee and Board soon. We encourage you to be active in this process, as your help will enable us to maintain our FSAB accreditation.

The Board meeting was laced between the ACT meetings and was accomplished in near record time. The weekend was very productive. I thank the entire Board for a pleasant and congenial interaction. Kathy Nicholaides presented the finished Speaker's Bureau package. I can only say it was outstanding. She will be contacting speakers to inquire about participation in the near future. Thank you, Kathy, for bringing this project to a successful completion.

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# New President's Message

Kirsten Singer  
Washington, DC

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dave Oleksow for helming ABFDE for the past year. He has been a calm, steady-ing force and deserves much thanks and gratitude. In my opinion, the greatest legacy he is leaving behind is the validation testing that ABFDE has initiated with ACT, Inc. As Dave described in his outgoing message, all Diplomates will soon receive an email survey as the first phase of this validation project. The survey is extremely important. Please participate!

As I accept the gavel from the past president, I recognize all that we have done as a profession and the ongoing challenges that lie ahead. The 2009 National Academy of Sciences report entitled, "Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward," continues to reverberate throughout the forensic and legal communities. The report has fostered hope that necessary attention and funding will become available to strengthen ALL of the forensic sciences. After all, science is more than "common sense at its best." It is a constantly evolving process, and recognition by NAS may provide the impetus for forensic science to evolve beyond what we've been able to do on our own.

One of the primary recommendations of the NAS report is mandatory accreditation and certification of the forensic sciences. The ABFDE's partnership with ACT, Inc. is a huge step toward enhancing the strength of our existing certification testing process. And ABFDE's commitment to complying with FSAB requirements underscores our embrace of accreditation.

Once again, the ABFDE Board of Directors is an excellent group of individuals. The 2010-2011 ABFDE BOD and ABFDE committee assignments have been made and are listed on the ABFDE website (abfde.org). Please feel free to contact any of us if you have questions or suggestions for the Board.

**Editor Lisa M. Hanson**

**Contributors**

- President David L. Oleksow**
- President-Elect Kirsten Singer**
- Donna O. Eisenberg**
- A. Frank Hicks**
- Jane A. Lewis**
- Sandra Ramsey Lines**
- Carl McClary**
- Kathleen Annunziata Nicolaides**
- Jeffrey Taylor**

**2009-2010 Board Officers**

- PRESIDENT** .....David L. Oleksow
- VICE PRESIDENT**..... Donna Eisenberg
- SECRETARY** .....Carl McClary
- TREASURER** ..... Jeffrey Taylor

**2009-2010 Committee Chairs**

- CONTINUING EDUCATION** .....A. Frank Hicks
- CREDENTIALS**.....Carl McClary
- FSAB (Advisory Position Only)**..... Dennis Mooney
- HISTORIAN** .....Carl McClary
- NEWSLETTER EDITOR** ..... Lisa M. Hanson
- NOMINATIONS**.....A. Frank Hicks
- PUBLIC RELATIONS**..... Kathleen Nicolaides
- RECERTIFICATION** .....Jan Johnson
- RULES & PROCEDURES**.....A. Frank Hicks
- TEST PREPARATION & VALIDATION** ..... Carl McClary
- TESTING**..... Donna Eisenberg
- WEBMASTER**.....William Leaver
- WORKSHOP COORDINATOR**.....L. Jim Josey

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**Deadline for the next issue is:**

**September 20<sup>th</sup>**

**[www.abfde.org](http://www.abfde.org)**

# Exposing the Nonqualified “Expert”

by Sandra Ramsey Lines

Most of us have at one time or another encountered an “expert” who claimed to be a trained forensic document examiner. When these encounters occur, it is my belief that the qualified forensic document examiner has an opportunity (if not an obligation) to assist his or her client and the court by exposing an “expert” who does not meet the American Society of Testing and Materials International Standard Guide for Minimum Training Requirements for FDEs.

It is not sufficient to explain to your client that the “expert” on the other side is not qualified. I would suggest drafting a memorandum to the client (with his or her knowledge, of course) that clearly demonstrates the shortcomings in the “expert’s” qualifications. Begin by obtaining the curriculum vitae (CV) of the “expert” and carefully examining every aspect of the CV, including associations listed, training claims, publications, and education. In my experience, every non-qualified “expert” exaggerates his or her credentials, and many omit potentially damaging information such as lawsuits against them or a graphologist background.

Requesting assistance from other examiners who may have encountered the “expert” can yield excellent information that can be used in the draft to your client. Here is a word of caution: do not put opinion in your draft, and avoid a tone of bias. Stick to facts that can be supported by attached exhibits to the draft. It is fair to suggest to the client, however, that the “expert” should provide certain documentation to support unproven claims on the “expert’s” CV. On one occasion an “expert,” who was a medical doctor, claimed to have testified in several states and countries. He was asked to supply a testimony list before his deposition. During the deposition, the doctor admitted that he did not actually testify in the states and countries listed on his CV but claimed to have been contacted by potential clients in those states and countries.

On another occasion, I was provided with three different CVs for an “expert.” Using a timeline, I was able to demonstrate numerous dis-

crepancies that showed the expert could not have completed all of the training she claimed, including the fact that her trainer was deceased at the time she claimed she was trained.

You may want to begin by explaining the Board you are certified by. For example:

Dear Mr. or Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Regarding your request for me to review the credentials of “Ms. Expert,” please know that “Ms. Expert” is not a certified Diplomate with the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners (ABFDE). ABFDE, established in 1977, is the only certifying body that can claim sponsorship by the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, Canadian Society of Forensic Science, Southeastern Association of Forensic Document Examiners, and the Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners. In addition, ABFDE is recognized by the International Association of Identification and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists. The ABFDE is the only certifying body that can claim such sponsorship and, as such, should not be confused with any other organization having a similar sounding name.

Requirements for certification as an ABFDE Diplomate include (Exhibit A) (<http://www.abfde.org/>):

- a) A minimum of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited academic institution.
- b) Proof of a minimum two-year full-time apprenticeship program in a Board-recognized forensic laboratory.
- c) At least three references from Board certified FDEs who can attest to his/her qualifications for certification and high ethical character.
- d) Completion within two years of comprehensive written (proctored), practical, and oral examinations based upon the broad range of problems encountered by FDEs.

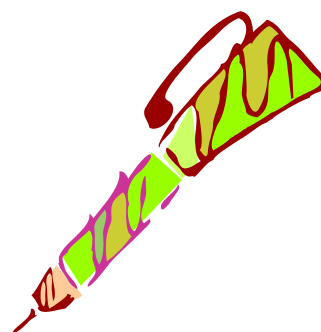
Regarding members of another board, you may want to incorporate one of the following paragraphs in your draft:

The Board of Forensic Document Examiners (BFDE), that “Ms. Expert” reports to be a diplomate of, has 14 members according to their website (<http://www.bfde.org/>). ABFDE has over 125 certified members in the United States and Canada. Although BFDE’s “Eligibility Requirements” (Exhibit B) for certification mention the American Society

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# From the Board Room

Carl R. McClary, Secretary  
Atlanta, GA



## Minutes of the ABFDE Board of Directors Meeting

Charlotte, NC - April 30 - May 2, 2010

### In Attendance:

Dave Oleksow, Donna Eisenberg, Jeff Taylor, Dennis Ryan, Frank Hicks, Kathy Nicolaidis, Jim Josey, Kirsten Singer, Grant Sperry, Lisa Hanson, Carl McClary, Jan Johnson

“Kirsten Singer was elected President by acclamation.”

Meeting called to order at 7:23pm.

Motion to adopt the agenda made by Donna Eisenberg, seconded by Jeff Taylor; motion passed unanimously

### Treasurer’s Report – Jeff Taylor

Treasurer’s report handed out and submitted for the record (see page 6). It was noted that the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs two-year report will be due January 15, 2012.

#### Account Totals

Ames fund.....	\$ 4,462.26
Dues received.....	30,750.00
Late fees collected .....	275.00
CD balance .....	52,320.50
This year’s interest.....	2,320.50
Checking balance .....	3,666.72
Savings .....	39,835.88

A payment was made to the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) of \$1,500. An overpayment refund of \$500 was received from the 2009 maintenance fee. \$480.20 was paid for travel expenses for the FSAB representative to attend the 2010 annual meeting.

The Profit and Loss Statement for April 2009 to March 2010 was handed out, as well as the Profit and Loss Statement for the previous year.

The Executive Committee met and reviewed the Treasurer’s Report on April 30 and reported no irregularities.

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# Response to AAFS Book Review of: *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States – A Path Forward*

(*Journal of Forensic Sciences*, March 2010, Vol. 55 No. 2)

by Jane A. Lewis, MFS

Make no mistake. This report is an example of junk science. Tom Bohan's positive review of the National Research Council of the National Academies Report "Strengthening Forensic Science – A Path Forward" (NAS) report, is inaccurate, incomplete, and biased. Let us consider the treatment of forensic document examination by the NAS report from Chapter 5, pp. 166-167:

*The scientific basis for handwriting comparisons needs to be strengthened. Recent studies have increased our understanding of the individuality and consistency of handwriting and computer studies and suggest that there may be a scientific basis for handwriting comparison, at least in the absence of intentional obfuscation or forgery. Although there has been only limited research to quantify the reliability and replicability of the practices used by trained document examiners, the committee agrees that there may be some value in handwriting analysis [sic].*

*Analysis of inks and papers, being based on well-understood chemistry, presumably rests on a firmer scientific foundation. However, the committee did not receive input on these fairly specialized methods and cannot offer a definitive view regarding the soundness of these methods or of their execution in practice.*

Tom Bohan describes the NAS Committee as "a diverse group of legal scholars and scientists." The NAS Committee did not include a single forensic document examiner. He also describes how the group met over two years and received oral testimony in open hearings, closed-door deliberations, and conference calls. The NAS Committee did not hear oral testimony from a single forensic document examiner, yet they were willing to offer an assessment of the handwriting

comparison portion of the work of forensic document examiners. Since no forensic document examiners presented to the Committee, they had no good source of the most current research in the field.

The NAS Committee was not willing to comment on the foundations of ink and paper chemistry because they did not have sufficient input. They should have given similar treatment to forensic document examination, since they obviously did not get presentations from experts in the field.

Tom Bohan's discipline-accident reconstruction-was not assessed in the NAS report. He feels free to write as a forensic critic about areas like forensic document examination, outside his area of expertise.

The maxim, "Write what you know," applies to the NAS Committee and Tom Bohan. They are unfamiliar with the methods of forensic document examination; and instead of immersing themselves in all of the current literature and consulting with experts in the field, they proceeded with biased presumptions.

Tom Bohan's book review of the NAS report is a rehash of opinions about various forensic science disciplines expressed in his essay published in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, January, 2010, Vol. 55, No. 1. We readers of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* deserve to hear a variety of authors. Tom Bohan has been allowed to filibuster his point of view as a forensic science critic in two issues already this year.

This report and Tom Bohan's review are incomplete, inaccurate, and biased — junk science. ❏



# Treasurer's Report

Jeffrey Taylor  
Charlotte, NC



## ABFDE

Profit and Loss Standard  
April 2009 through March 2010

### Income

Application Fees.....	\$ 750.00
Diplomate Dues.....	31,025.00
FSAB Refund.....	500.00
Hilton Book Royalty.....	722.60
Monograph Sales.....	15.00
Savings Account Interest.....	40.25
<b>Total Income.....</b>	<b>\$33,052.85</b>

### Expenses

Annual Board Meeting.....	\$ 10,876.01
Accounting Fees.....	550.00
Administration.....	5,840.40
Advertising/Brochures.....	87.07
Bank Fees.....	3.00
Equipment.....	7.99
FSAB Dues and Meeting.....	1,980.20
Insurance.....	7,920.00
Legal Fees.....	1,850.22
Newsletter.....	3,428.48
Oral Boards.....	1,105.31
Plaques.....	128.40
Postage and Delivery.....	686.62
Supplies and Materials.....	15.99
<b>Total Expense.....</b>	<b>\$34,479.69</b>
<b>Net Income.....</b>	<b>-1,426.84</b>

As of April 1st 2010, there was \$39,835.88 in the savings account; \$3,666.72 in the checking account; and \$52,320.50 in the CD. \$50,000 of the CD will be used by the end of 2010 for the test validation project being conducted through ACT, Inc. The remaining portion will be allocated to the Ames fund which is currently at \$4,462.26.

As reflected in the Profit and Loss Statement, the ABFDE operated in the red last year. One of the reasons for this is that insurance coverage for both 2009 and 2010 was paid out in the same year. The delay on the 2009 payment was due in part to an extensive review of the ABFDE's insurance coverage, which was conducted by the EC. Another higher expense was the annual meeting in Houston. This additional expense was anticipated by the BOD; however, it was decided that the higher cost was less important than the desire by the Board to meet with Corporate Assets, which is the company that handles our administrative functions and maintains our Diplomate's files. In addition, the BOD also felt it was important to actually meet with our legal counsel.

It is, of course, my intention to continue to try to keep costs to a minimum; with the validation project in full swing, it is imperative that we do so to remain solvent. If anyone has any questions or concerns regarding ABFDE finances, feel free to contact me.



## Minutes

(continued from page 4)

Discussion was held on the future of the newsletter and an online edition was considered. It was noted that IntelliType does all printing and mailing of newsletter, and an online version would save considerable time and funds. No change in the current procedures was formally proposed.

Jeff investigated the use of a merchant PayPal account but encountered difficulty in the implementation of that particular product for various reasons to include his employer's guidelines on internet usage. This product may be of use in the future.

Motion to accept Treasurer's Report made by Dennis Ryan, seconded by Donna Eisenberg; motion carried unanimously.

### Committee Reports

#### *Credentials - Carl McClary*

Four applications were received and all were cleared as "candidates for certification." All are in various stages of the testing program.

Motion to accept report made by Frank Hicks, seconded by Jim Josey; motion carried unanimously

#### *Continuing Education - Franks Hicks*

Workshops that have been approved were reported.

Motion to accept report made by Donna Eisenberg, seconded by Jeff Taylor; motion carried unanimously.

#### *FSAB Report*

Dennis Mooney, representative, not present, but his report was previously disseminated and discussed at this meeting.

No vote required.

#### *Public Relations - Kathleen Nicolaides*

A PowerPoint presentation to be used for the ABFDE speaker's bureau was given.

A cadre of forensic document examiners will be available to present ABFDE information at bar associations and other organizations, and an ad will be placed on our website announcing the bureau. A resource center to include Daubert/NAS information, as well as other timely information relevant to our profession, will reside on the website.

Motion to accept report made by Kirsten Singer, seconded by Jim Josey; motion carried unanimously.

#### *Recertification - Jan Johnson*

It was reported that there are currently 126 Diplomates. Two new Diplomates were certified this past calendar year. Eleven Diplomates were recertified, and 17 are currently due for recertification and are pending recertification applications and acceptance.

Motion to accept report made by Jim Josey, seconded by Frank Hicks; motion carried unanimously.

#### *Rules and Procedures - Frank Hicks, Carl McClary*

An extension to the testing period was discussed, and the recommendation was to extend the length another six months.

Motion made by Frank Hicks to change section 4B to read: "an applicant shall... 2 and 1/2 years," seconded by Kathleen Nicolaides; motion carried unanimously.

Motion to accept report made by Kathleen Nicolaides, seconded by Kirsten Singer; motion carried unanimously.

#### *Test Preparation and Validation - Carl McClary*

A review of the progress made during the previous days with the American College Testing International panel consisting of a group of ten Diplomates and ACT staff was given, as well as a review of the remaining tasks by ACT and a second panel that will be needed before the completion of the new test blueprint.

Motion made by Frank Hicks, seconded by Dennis Ryan; motion carried unanimously.

#### *Workshop - Jim Josey*

Courtney King assisted with a survey of trainees on types of supplemental training they would like to have. It was noted that ASQDE currently provides breakout sessions for trainees.

Jim reported that the grant registration with NIJ was successful. This will allow ABFDE to apply for subsequent grants. (Details on this issue are given later in the Minutes.)

Motion to accept report made by Donna Eisenberg, seconded by Jan Johnson; motion carried unanimously.

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# Testing Committee

Donna Eisenberg  
McLean, VA



**“The (testing validation) process will ultimately require the involvement of the entire Diplomate body...”**

From May 2009-2010, the following statistics have been accumulated:

- Two candidates completed all three phases of testing and have been added to the Diplomate body.
- Sixteen candidates were enrolled in various stages of the testing process.
- Of the 16 candidates, three were dismissed from the testing process for failing to successfully complete all phases of testing in the allotted time. Another three candidates voluntarily withdrew from the testing process.

The Random Test Generator software package continues to be used to generate individual written tests, which include a variety of questions regarding handwriting, typewriting, famous court cases, research/studies, ink, history, photography, and digital technology. All written tests continue to be comprised of 100 multiple-choice questions. The practical tests are used to evaluate each candidate's ability to apply the principles of forensic document examination to case work. The Testing Committee employs objective methods to evaluate each candidate's practical tests by maintaining the anonymity of every candidate and using established minimum criteria for practical examination answers. The oral board test continues with this objective method and is used to insure that the candidates can clearly express themselves regarding the case (practical problem) being presented and their knowledge of related principles of forensic document examination. Feedback from each tested candidate is always sought at the conclusion of the oral boards, and valid suggestions (both positive and negative) are routinely incorporated into the testing program. The certification program is designed to be fair, but challenging, and to maintain a high level of expected performance so that a Diplomate can feel proud of his/her achievement in passing the ABFDE testing process.

As mentioned in the April 2010 ABFDE newsletter, the testing program is currently being validated with the help of American College Testing International (ACT), a professional organization which specializes in creating, improving, and developing test blueprints. A group of 11 Diplomates was assembled in April to engage in this long, tedious and difficult process, which is also costly and necessary. The process will ultimately require the involvement of the entire Diplomate body, whose participation is crucial for the test blueprint development. The result of this effort by the assembled panel, you and ACT will be an improved certification testing program, which will then be officially validated, as mandated by the requirements of our FSAB accreditation.

The Testing Committee continues to request new test questions and practical problems from the Diplomate body. Fortunately, several questions and

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## “Expert”

(continued from page 3)

of Testing and Materials International (ASTM) Standard Guide for Minimum Training Requirements for Forensic Document Examiners (Exhibit C), they do so only in referencing the training syllabus as outlined in the standard and appear to ignore the requirements for the trainer, trainee, and the “minimum 24 months full-time training.”

In her (date) curriculum vitae (Exhibit E), “Ms. Expert” reports she is a certified diplomate with the National Association of Document Examiners (NADE). According to their website (<http://www.documentexaminers.org/certified>), NADE has a membership of 34 private examiners. Certification by NADE or BFDE would not qualify one for employment as an FDE in any state or federal crime laboratory in the United States or Canada. On their website NADE does not specify any training requirements and offer: “NADE does not endorse any specific training or educational program in document examination (Exhibit F).”

One “expert” wrote on her CV that her training consisted of “Self-study in handwriting identification and document examination through textbooks, papers, practical exercises.”

This same expert failed to mention that in 2009 she was president of the American Handwriting Analysis Foundation (AHAF), a graphologist organization. As you know, graphology is an attempt to predict character/personality traits from handwriting examination and is not an accepted science by the forensic science community. Comparing graphology to forensic document examination is like comparing astrology to astronomy. Although many graphologists choose to call themselves handwriting analysts or document examiners, they should not be confused with trained FDEs. In *U.S. v. Bourgeois*, 950 F. 2d 980 (56<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1992), the court rejected the testimony of a proffered handwriting examiner, in part, because his training was completed through a correspondence school and its strong emphasis on graphoanalysis. The court also pointed out the witness was not certified by the ABFDE.

In *Wolf v. Ramsey* (2003 Civil Case 1:00-CV-1187-JEC) the judge ruled that a former vice president of NADE was not qualified to testify and specifically cited ABFDE as “the sole recognized organization for accreditation of qualified forensic document examiners.” Here is an excerpt of the ruling:

Wong has never taken a certification exam, completed an accreditation course in document examination, been an apprentice to an ABFDE-certified document examiner, or worked in a crime lab. (Wong Dep. at 87-112.) She does, however, claim nearly ten years of experience in the field. (Pl.’s Br. In Opp. To Defs.’ Mot. In Limine [87] at 9.) She, however, is not a member of the ABFDE, the sole recognized organization for accreditation of qualified forensic document examiners. Although she is the former vice president of the National Association of Document Examiners (“NADE”), (PSDMF’ 2), defendants note that this organization does not meet ABFDE certification requirements, has no permanent office and has no membership requirements other than the payment of a fee. (Defs.’ Mot. In Limine [68] at 6.) Wong, herself, admits that NADE does not require specialized training or experience for its certification (Wong Dep. at 87-89). Finally, even Epstein, plaintiff’s other expert, testified that Wong is not qualified to render opinions in this case (Epstein Dep. at 32-33). Accordingly, the Court concludes Ms. Wong is not qualified to provide reliable handwriting analysis in this case. Therefore, the Court GRANTS defendants’ motion in limine to exclude the testimony of Ms. Wong and the Court does not consider Ms. Wong’s testimony in its analysis of defendants’ summary judgment motion.

Correspondence courses are often mentioned on “experts’” CVs as their training experience. Courses by Andrew Bradley, et al., are not administered by ABFDE-certified examiners, and these courses have never been accepted as training by any mainstream FDE organizations.

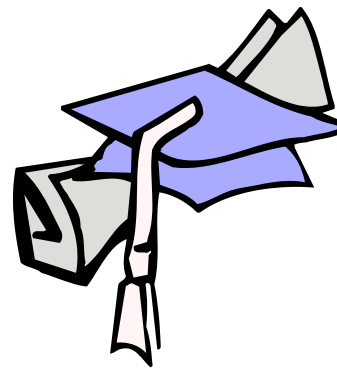
Membership in the American Society of Testing and Materials International (ASTM) is also mentioned on many “experts’” CVs. Membership in ASTM is “unrestricted and limited only by the boundaries of your interest in a particular area of standardization (<http://www.astm.org>).” ASTM International is one of the largest voluntary standards-development organizations in the world and is the source for technical standards for materials, products, systems, and services (including forensics) with a myriad of committees. It is hoped that individuals on a particular committee have the expertise to provide valuable input. Unfortunately, that is not always the case.

The good news is once you have completed a draft on an “expert,” it can be used as a template

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# Continuing Education

A. Frank Hicks  
Long Beach, CA



## August 2010

2-5 "Impression and Pattern Evidence Symposium: Conduits for the Future"  
  
Sponsors: National Institute of Justice, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the FBI Laboratory Division

Sheraton Sand Key  
Clearwater Beach, FL

For more information:  
<http://projects.nfstc.org/ipes/>

8/28-9/2 American Society of Questioned Document Examiners and Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners Joint Meeting

The Fairmont Empress  
Victoria, BC

Samiah Ibrahim  
[samiah.ibrahim@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca](mailto:samiah.ibrahim@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca)

Tobin Tanaka  
[tobin.tanaka@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca](mailto:tobin.tanaka@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca)

## October 2010

4-8 Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists Meeting

Marriott Kansas City Downtown  
200 West 12th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64105

Malinda Combs  
Johnson County Crime Lab  
Mission, KS 66062  
(913) 826-3270  
[Malinda.Combs@jocogov.org](mailto:Malinda.Combs@jocogov.org)

## February 2011

21-26 American Academy of Forensic Scientists  
  
"Relevant, Reliable and Valid Forensic Science: Eleven Sections–One Academy"

Hyatt Regency Chicago  
151 E. Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 66062

This list of opportunities available to Diplomates seeking recertification credits may not be all inclusive. Provide details of upcoming meetings or workshops for this newsletter to

A. Frank Hicks  
Rile & Hicks  
100 Oceangate, Suite 670  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(562) 901-3376 / Fax (562) 901-3378  
[afhqde@yahoo.com](mailto:afhqde@yahoo.com).

# President

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Dennis Ryan and Jim Josey are working on various training workshops and trainee programs, and you should assist if asked. Thank you, guys.

Donna Eisenberg was recognized for her considerable attention and efforts on the Testing Committee and as vice president. The Testing chair is, in my estimation, one of the most difficult positions on the Board. Donna is to be commended for her tireless and focused attention to this most important job. Donna leaves the Board on July 1, to be replaced by Lisa Hanson, newly elected vice president. I know Lisa can handle this task. She proved herself in the trenches as newsletter editor-in-chief. She would surely qualify for a congeniality award, if we had one. Frank Hicks and his nomination team gave us a solid slate of Diplomates for the filling of vacated positions. Any of the presented Diplomates would have been a definite asset to the organization. I thank the slate for putting their hats in the ring. Thanks, Frank, for all that you quietly do for the Diplomate body. We on the inside do notice your contributions even though you never make a big deal about what you do!

As for the incoming directors, I can only say we are blessed to get them. Marie Durina and Rick Horton were appointed to the Board. I wish them well and know they will mesh well with the current Board of Directors. I have enjoyed working with this fine group of people, and I will miss the fellowship afforded by all. Jeff Taylor has been a leader and solid accountant. He will laugh when he reads



Dr. Cindy Hill of ACT.



this. He has learned how to use Quicken on his own and basically accepted the responsibility of the treasurer's position during a period of time when trust was hard to find. He worked along with Joyce Lauterbach to restore our coffers and respectability. Thank you, Jeff, for allowing yourself to be re-elected to this very important job for another year.

I am at the end of my term on the Board and have no concerns about turning the president's job over to Kirsten Singer. She was elected by acclamation to the position. This means that she was unopposed and was elected unanimously. Kirsten is another one of those people who can step into a position and shine. Her previous time on the Board, along with her pleasant demeanor, will afford the Board an able leader.

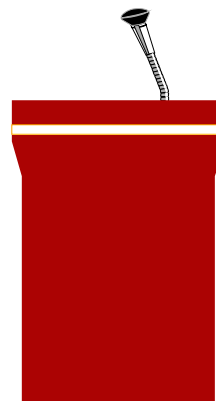
Just another quick thank you to Bill and Lauren Leaver for their continuing efforts in keeping our website current.

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# Public Relations Committee

Kathleen Annunziata Nicolaidis  
Phoenix, AZ



**“...the Public Relations Committee decided that education was the priority for the year.”**

Mindful of the repercussions of the National Academy of Sciences Report, the Public Relations Committee (Grant Sperry, Jim Josey, and I) decided that education was the priority for the year. We wanted to educate two groups: the attorneys and judges who benefit from the services of forensic document examiners; and ourselves, forensic document examiners facing Daubert and NAS challenges. To accomplish these goals, we implemented the following actions:

1. A PowerPoint presentation was compiled using material from similar presentations given by diplomates as well as a highly informative and detailed presentation created by SWGDOC and the FBI. The latter presentation contains copious amount of data for both Daubert and NAS challenges. Jim Josey was able to obtain a copy for us through his work on the SWGDOC committee.

The PowerPoint presentation created by the PRC is to be used by the Speaker's Bureau. Efforts in the coming year will be on establishing a core cadre of speakers and setting up engagements.

The Speakers Bureau will also be advertised on the ABFDE website.

2. Although there is a great deal of information available on Daubert/NAS challenges or current issues facing the field, it is not always accessible to diplomates. For instance, as a member of SWAFDE, you may get one gem of information, but miss five others because you are not a member of ASQDE or AAFS. To provide one central repository for pertinent and timely information, a plan was drawn for an ABFDE Resource Center.

Upon President Oleksow's approval, the Resource Center's implementation began. Elements of the center have been identified and are currently being compiled.

The Resource Center will reside on the ABFDE website.

The PRC wishes to thank Kirsten Singer for her invaluable assistance in this endeavor. Any other volunteers are welcome!





## Minutes

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### *Historian – Carl McClary*

Relatively few issues of major concern were brought to the Board during the past year. One complaint against a Diplomate was handled by the president, per regulations. Great strides have been made with respect to the validation of our testing program, and this will continue possibly into 2011.

Motion to accept report made by Jan Johnson, seconded by Dennis Ryan; motion carried unanimously.

### *Testing – Donna Eisenberg*

Two applicants have been certified: Laura Hammond and Elaine Wooten. Three candidates were terminated from the program for not completing the testing within the allotted time period. Three additional candidates voluntarily resigned from the program because of not completing the testing within the allotted time period.

Motion to accept report made by Frank Hicks, seconded by Jeff Taylor; motion carried unanimously.

### *Secretary – Carl McClary*

Four applications were processed and forwarded to the Testing Committee.

Motion to accept report made by Dennis Ryan, seconded by Donna Eisenberg; motion carried unanimously.

### *Nominations – Frank Hicks*

List of appointed nominees and CVs were passed out. The slate will be submitted at the end of the 2010 annual meeting for voting.

Motion to accept report made by Lisa Hanson, seconded by Grant Sperry; motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned for the day at 9:20 p.m.**

**Meeting resumed at 1:00 on May 1, 2010 at the Hilton Garden Hotel, Charlotte, NC**

Consideration of the 2009 annual meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Frank Hicks, seconded by Jeff Taylor; motion carried unanimously.

### **Old Business**

#### *International Examiners Report – Dennis Ryan*

Dennis contacted 29 possible members and

received four positive responses. Discussion held on pros and cons of international certificants. Benefits included bringing in additional members who could assist in workshops and other knowledge and the possibility of gaining those members and their colleagues. A testing phase period would not, however, be lengthened for these applicants. Training in English would possibly be required. The translation of transcripts, verification of credentials, and training records were taken into consideration

Requirements recognized:

Examinations would be in the English language and the candidate's primary written and spoken language would be English. The majority of examinations would be in English.

Motion made by Carl McClary to refer to committee the assignment of detailing the requirements of international applicants to be published in the RPG. Second by Jim Josey. Vote: 3 in favor, 4 against, 4 abstaining; motion failed.

#### *Specialty Certification Report – Dennis Ryan*

Discussion was had on the viability of a specialty certification. Grandfathering members in was suggested with the tests to be taken at a later time. Dennis noted that an informal survey of approximately 15 Diplomates revealed that most were not in favor of pursuing the specialty certification.

Motion made by Dennis Ryan to not pursue the issue, seconded by Carl McClary. Vote: 10 in favor, 1 abstain; motion carried unanimously.

#### *Assignment for Updating Official Diplomate Listing*

A change to the treasurer and vice president (Testing chair) SOPs to reflect this responsibility was suggested. A copy of the listing will be given to the treasurer from the Test chair with an additional copy to Public Relations chair.

#### *ACT Project*

Review of progress of ACT test validation project was given by Carl McClary. ABFDE is on track with the current schedule to have the national survey and KSA linking surveys disseminated and a new test blueprint developed. It was decided that a second panel would convene in mid-October to review the survey results and other progress.

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## Minutes

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### *Application for Workshop Approval – Jan Johnson*

Questions have come up regarding what workshops have been approved for recertification points. How stringent should the Recertification Committee be on approval forms? Frank suggested that approvals be copied to the Recertification Committee chair. It was also suggested that if no approval form was obtained for recertification points, Frank's committee should be questioned whether the workshop was approved.

The chair of Continuing Education Committee will forward copies of all approved workshops to the Recertification Committee chair.

1. Discussion of points awarded for return of ACT survey and discussion on participation on an ABFDE project committee. Ten points was suggested as the maximum.

Passed without objection

2. Training Syllabus Update Committee. Five continuing education points would be awarded for the return of an update on an assigned topic list.

Passed without objection

## New Business

### *ABFDE Workshops – Jim Josey*

Jim now receives notifications of all grant opportunities. Our registration is now up to date with Grants.gov for eligibility to apply for training grants. These will help fund workshops sponsored by the Board that will assist with the training of QD trainees.

There is a NIJ grant for the development of training programs. Our application would be accepted even though we are outside of the targeted area. This would provide funding for training of state and local agency trainees. Private examiners, however, would not be eligible.

With help of Courtney King, Jim came up with a three-week trainee program if the grant was awarded. There may be a financial commitment on our part up front, and that would be based on the type of grant. It may take only 60 days to get a grant approved after submission. Dennis Ryan noted that an average award is \$500,000 and that 25% of applications were approved in FY 2008-

2009. A May 17 deadline for application may be problematic for this particular grant, as well as the possibility to front up to 20% of a \$100,000.00 request.

It was recommended that the committee continue to be on the ready for future grant possibilities.

### *Appeals to Practical Test Failures - Dave Oleksow*

There were three appeals on a recent practical test failure. Two voluntarily withdrew their complaints. Donna made the point that our SOPs now do not allow for appeals.

### *Certificate Extension Seals – Dave Oleksow*

An issue regarding recertification certificates and the "expiration" of our certificates as initially issued was discussed. It was suggested that a card can be mailed to a recertified Diplomate with a new expiration. This can then be framed or displayed in any manner. This would resolve the issue of having new certificates made.

### *Printing of Durina's Paper/Ames Fund – Oleksow*

A Diplomate requested that Ames fund money be spent on the above research, including having a monograph printed. ASQDE has first refusal, and AAFS then has refusal. Inclusion of the process and statistics is desired.

Dave Oleksow recommended that Marie approach the society to publish other background information. No objections were heard.

### *Annual Report for FSAB – Carl McClary*

The annual report for FSAB was sent to that board's secretary on April 29, 2010 via FedEx.

### *ABFDE Certification Presentation in Clearwater, FL – August 2, 2010*

Lisa Hanson will be attending and volunteered to present.

### *Training Syllabus Disk for Applicants – Johnson*

The syllabus is now automatically being forwarded to all applicants by Anne Roper, Corporate Assets, in our Houston office.

## Elections

### *Directors*

Discussion was held on the committee's recommendations. Rick Horton and Marie Durina elected by written vote. Frank Hicks, chair, will notify the new members via phone.

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## Minutes

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### *Executive Committee*

Discussion was had regarding a suggestion that elections should be for the filling of positions for remainder of the term only. This would allow officers to stay on a similar two-year rotation.

### *President*

Kirsten Singer nominated by Donna Eisenberg, seconded by Dennis Ryan; elected by acclamation.

### *Vice President*

Lisa Hanson nominated by Donna Eisenberg, seconded by Jeff Taylor; Grant Sperry nominated by Frank Hicks, seconded by Carl McClary; Dennis Ryan nominated by Kirsten Singer, seconded by Dave Oleksow. Nominees left room and discussion ensued; Lisa Hanson elected by written vote.

### *Treasurer*

Jeff Taylor nominated by Donna Eisenberg, seconded by Frank Hicks; elected by acclamation.

Terms will begin on July 1, 2011

Committee assignments will be made by the new President before the new terms begin.

### **Arrangements for Next Meeting**

It was suggested that the last of April is a good time for most members to meet, and the 29th of April was tentatively scheduled.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted on July 9, 2010  
Carl R. McClary Secretary

## President

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They are in the process of updating and changing the carrier. If you have any content suggestions, please contact them through the site.

I thank the Board and Diplomate body for the opportunity to see the inner workings of the Board and the many subtleties of the job of President. Thank you for accepting the position, Kirsten!! I hope that the next year will be as rewarding and fruitful as my past year as President.

Best regards to the Diplomates of ABFDE,  
Dave

## Testing

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problems have been contributed in the last year, which is greatly appreciated and extremely helpful. However, more are needed; all such contributions should be submitted to Carl McClary, Test Preparation and Validation Chair. As an incentive, for every test question that is accepted, one point will be earned toward recertification; and for every practical problem accepted, five points will be earned toward recertification.

At the annual BOD meeting, changes were proposed by this Testing chair and adopted by the Board. The changes are reflected in the revised Testing Committee's RPGs and SOPs. Some of those changes include an extension of the two-year time limit to complete all phases of testing to two and one-half years, and the requirement of each candidate to sign a letter before a notary stating that s/he agrees to accept the rules and procedures of the ABFDE.

Since I am stepping down on June 30, 2010 as vice president and Testing chair from the ABFDE Board of Directors, this will be my final newsletter. I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to express how grateful I am to the Diplomate body and the Board of Directors for entrusting me with this important job. I have learned a great deal about compromise, egos, patience, and dedication and continue to be impressed by the devotion required, accepted, and implemented by Board members. It has been an honor to serve and give back to the community from which I earn my living.

## “Expert”

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for future drafts. It should be mentioned that on occasion I have reviewed the CVs of qualified examiners whereby inaccuracies were noted. One examiner claimed to be a member of the AAFS when this was not the case. Another examiner listed under “Papers Published” several presentations that were never published. It is incumbent on all of us to insure that our CV's are completely accurate.

I hope this information is useful. Please feel free to copy any of the paragraphs above verbatim.

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