



ABFDE News

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“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

John Adams (1735-1826)

Argument in Defense of the Soldiers in the Boston Massacre Trials, December 1770.

THE GAVEL

KIRSTEN SINGER, PRESIDENT



ABFDE Reaccreditation

Greetings Diplomates! Great news -- ABFDE has been reaccredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) for five more years. During the reaccreditation process, some changes were made to the Rules and Procedures Guide (RPG), and they are now posted on the Board’s website as the “Outline of Substantive Changes” document. In getting with the e-times, the RPG is now a single, searchable document. While the entire Board of Directors contributed to the Board’s reaccreditation, Carl McClary and Kathy Annunziata Nicolaidis did the vast majority of the work to get us there. Thank you again, Carl and Kathy!!

Workshops - Share the News!!!

ABFDE VP and Testing Chair Lisa Hanson has launched a new series of Board workshops entitled **Certification 101 – Demystifying ABFDE Board Certification**. The first one was held at last September’s MAFS meeting in Chicago and was a great success. In this full-day workshop, attendees learn about the history of the Board, and are provided with sample written and practical test questions. They also learn what Test Evaluators are looking for when reviewing Candidates’ work product and conclusions. The next workshop is scheduled for the ASQDE meeting in Charleston. Please pass this information along to examiners you know who are thinking about becoming ABFDE Certified! For more info contact Lisa Hanson or go to www.ABFDE.org.

Annual Meeting of ABFDE

The Board of Directors’ annual meeting was held May 4-6, 2012 in Phoenix, AZ. Meeting minutes will be included in the next ABFDE newsletter (September), but will be posted before then on the ABFDE website. I will let the Diplomates know the minute the Minutes have been posted. It was a very productive meeting, and the new Directors you voted for fell right into the groove. The most significant decision made by the BOD was to allow FDEs from Australia and New Zealand to participate in ABFDE certification testing. *(Editor’s Note: See page 9 of this ABFDE News.)*

(The Gavel continued on page 3)

NEW LEGAL LIBRARY FOR ABFDE DIPLOMATES!

By Marie E. Durina, D-ABFDE

We are happy to announce a new resource available only to ABFDE Diplomates! Please take time to view our new "**Legal Library**" on the "**Diplomates Only**" section of the ABFDE website! Topics include:

History

FDE Timeline

Landmark Cases – Summaries

Computer Tools

FISH

FLASH ID

Daubert Study Guide

(donated by Courtney L. King, Indiana State Police Lab)

CEDAR-FOX

NAS Report

Critical Articles – Summaries

Daubert Questions

Bayesian Logic



It is our hope that the **Legal Library** will become a "one-stop shopping" site for FDEs who wish to quickly access information on a variety of QD-related topics.

Please remember that the content in the **Legal Library** allows for peer review and the submission of additional topics from FDEs. Many thanks to Kathy Nicolaidis and Laura Hammond for their invaluable assistance in the editing process, and to Lauren Leaver for her work in posting the sections to the website.

If you have any comments or additions you would like to see added to the **Legal Library**, please don't hesitate to contact me at marie.durina@sdsheriff.org.

ABFDE

logo Coffee

Mug



Available now for \$15. To order, contact
Kirsten at Kirstensinger1@gmail.com.

(The Gavel continued from page 1)

To that end, the BOD also decided to expand the Board by two additional Directors. A **Special Edition** Newsletter will be issued in June listing the candidates and their bios along with instructions and forms for voting for two new Directors. A third Director will be appointed by the BOD to replace Grant Sperry who is stepping down for now.

JFS response letter

In May 2011 the JFS published two articles that addressed the judicial exclusions of four forensic disciplines, including forensic document examination. ABFDE President Kirsten Singer and ASQDE President Linton Mohammed co-authored a letter of response to the authors, and JFS approved the letter for July 2012 publication. Kirsten and Linton were compelled to update the authors on the progress that FDE has made since Daubert, and to strongly disagree with the authors' final conclusion that "none of the issues discussed in this paper can be successfully addressed by the legal community." Kirsten and Linton emphasized the fact that poorly qualified and purely unqualified examiners are continually permitted to testify because they have been able to build a CV of testimonies. The response letter ends with the strong recommendation that judges review the credentials of every expert witness, and in reviewing the credentials of an FDE, the judge should seek ABFDE certification and membership at testing organizations such as ASQDE.

ASTM E30.02

On April 6, 2012 by community vote, the ASTM officially dissolved the Subcommittee E30.02 for Questioned Documents. The ASTM standards will be moved to the jurisdiction of E30.90, with no ballot activity permitted. The options for the standards are: remain with E30.90 until the standards expire; reactivate the subcommittee; transfer the standards to another subcommittee; or have another organization acquire the standards.



AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT!!!!

Attention Diplomates! It is time once again to nominate Diplomates whom you find deserving of the most esteemed and lately neglected ABFDE awards. Presentations will be made at the upcoming ASQDE meeting in Charleston, SC.

The **New Horizon Award** is given to the Diplomat who has made a significant contribution to Forensic Document Examination via research.

The **Charles Scott Award** is given to the Diplomat who has made significant contributions in the judicial arena, usually in the form of education of the judiciary and assistance to FDEs.

Please send your nominations, with a brief justification for your selection, to Frank Hicks at afhqde@yahoo.com by **June 30, 2012**.



GLOBAL EDUCATION EVENTS

BY ROSALIND J. SPENCER, D-ABFDE

AAFS Interdisciplinary Symposium – Global Research: The Forensic Science Edge

This year the AAFS invited 10 speakers from around the world, specializing in various forensic disciplines, to talk about what is happening in their country at the top of their profession. In a brief global overview, using valuable input from other examiners, I outlined the ways in which Canadian research, together with American and international partners, is taking our work to the next level. Hot topics included our involvement of the computational forensics, pattern recognition (see next article on ICDAR2011) and data mining communities to examine forensic document and handwriting evidence. Other areas included chemometric/hyperspectral imaging, profilometry and neurophysiology. The symposium was very well attended and well received, with over 150 attendees.

“Hot topics included our involvement of the computational forensics, pattern recognition...and data mining communities...”



ICDAR2011 and AFHA

The 1st International Workshop on Automated Forensic Handwriting Analysis was held as a 2-day satellite workshop and tutorial at the International Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition 2011 in Beijing, China last September. Researchers in the field of automated handwriting analysis and signature verification and experts from the forensic handwriting examination community had the opportunity to interact directly to try to understand the demands of each other with specific reference to forensic handwriting analysis. About 10 forensic handwriting examiners (FHEs) from Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Greece, Hungary, South Africa, and the Netherlands participated in the event. Remaining participants included experts and students from pattern recognition (PR) community of different countries including Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Tunisia, and USA.

For the FHEs it was a great opportunity to have a look under the hood of various automated handwriting analysis systems. PR people were encouraged to explicitly focus on the demands of FHEs so that automated systems developed by them should fulfill their true casework requirements. Terminology for different types of handwriting forgeries was clarified with input from both communities, and computer science/pattern recognition and forensic science people will use this terminology in future for improved communication. Overall both camps felt less hesitant to use each other's experiences for possible future research and joint funding of projects. More workshops are planned for the future.



Continuing Education

June 2012

- 25-27 Forensic Science Education Conference**
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, OK, USA
Contact: Nancy Jackson
AAFS Director of Development
njackson@aafs.org

July 2012

- 22-28 IAI Annual Educational Conference**
Phoenix Convention Ctr
Phoenix, AZ, USA
www.theiai.org/conference

August 2012

- 18-23 ASQDE 70th Annual Conference**
"Globalisation and Questioned Documents"
Doubletree Guest Suites in the Historic District
Charleston, SC
Tobin Tanaka, Program Chair
tobin.tanaka@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca
Jason Lee Miller, Site Chair
Jason.miller@ci.irs.gov

September 2012

- 19-21 15th Symposium of Questioned Document Examination**
Wroclaw, Poland
Rafal Ciesla, PhD
Department of Forensic Sciences
Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics
University of Wroclaw, Poland
rciesla@prawo.uni.wroc.pl or
katkrym@prawo.uni.wroc.pl
<http://www.kryminalistyka.uni.wroc.pl/>
- 24-28 MAFS Annual Meeting**
Hilton Milwaukee City Center
Milwaukee, WI
Sandy Koresch, Program Chair
koreschsm@doj.state.wi.us

February 2013

- 18-23 American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)**
Washington Marriott Wardman
Washington, DC, USA
<http://www.aafs.org/aafs-2013-annual-meeting>



Meeting announcements may be submitted to the Editor at TolliverD@aol.com

REVIEW – QD WORKSHOP ON CONCLUSION SCALES AND LOGICAL INFERENCE

BY CHARLES L. EGGLESTON, D-ABFDE

ABFDE Diplomates Brent Ostrum and Tobin Tanaka presented a full-day QD workshop at the Canadian Society of Forensic Science Conference in Burnaby, BC at Simon Fraser University on May 9, 2012.

The workshop – *Questioned Documents: Conclusion Scales and Logical Inference, Part 1* – focused on understanding concepts of logical inference and likelihood ratios (LRs) in the evaluation of evidence and how this might be practically applied in FDE work. It also covered the evolution of thought on conclusions and conclusion scales in FDE work, key considerations underlying the expression of conclusions, and current FDE practices in Germany, Netherlands, North America, Sweden and the United Kingdom with respect to expressing conclusions.

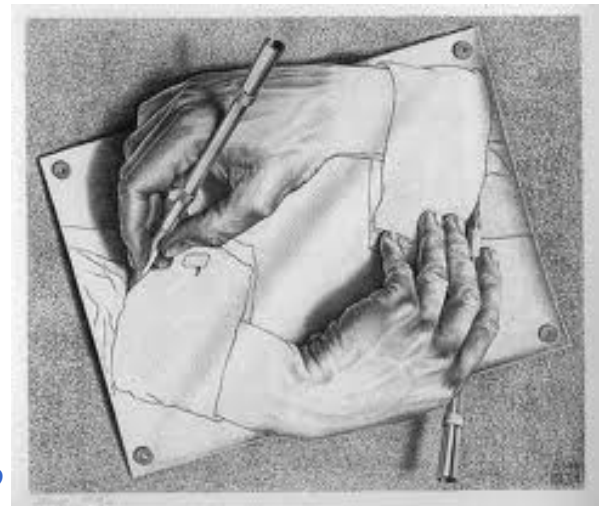
The conclusion scale currently used by FDEs in North America has been the subject of some criticism particularly with respect to logic and probability. An alternative approach – coherent logical inference and likelihood ratios – has been suggested. There is a lack of understanding about this approach by FDEs in North America. The workshop aimed to raise awareness and increase knowledge about this alternative approach.

This reviewer was the only non-Canadian participant at the workshop. I found the presentation thought-provoking and very much worth the time spent and costs incurred. The presenters fully achieved their stated goals of the workshop. Throughout the workshop, I experienced a number of “ah-ha” moments (i.e., enlightenment) as Mr. Ostrum methodically explained complex topics and their inter-relationships with simplicity and clarity. This workshop greatly exceeded my expectations. I highly recommend it to my fellow Diplomates.



[Drawing Hands](#) is a lithograph by the Dutch artist M.C. Escher. First printed in January 1948, it depicts a sheet of paper out of which wrists that remain flat on the page, two hands rise, facing each other and in the paradoxical act of drawing one another into existence. Source: Wikipedia.

[Escher originally trained to be an architect then switched to graphic arts. All of his work is about perception vs. reality; unusual perspectives, and challenging viewers to study what they see.](#) Source: Yahoo Answers.



ASQDE Workshop
Certification 101 – Demystifying ABFDE Board Certification

Instructor: Lisa Hanson, D-ABFDE and various other ABFDE Diplomates
August 18, 2012; Charleston, SC; 8am – 5pm; Cost: \$175 (Lunch included)

(Please note, this workshop is not only for examiners who are interested in Board Certification; it is also an instructional workshop for those looking for a workshop that focuses on how to work multifaceted, complex questioned document cases.)

Prior to coming to the workshop, all participants must engage in pre-attendance examinations of practice Practical Tests.

The morning session will describe the ABFDE Certification Process: from How to begin the Application Process through the final Oral Boards. Benefits of becoming Board Certified will be discussed, as well as the atmosphere that has developed in the courts concerning QD in this post-NAS Report world. The practical problems will be the basis for the second half of the day. Attendees will be divided into smaller groups to exchange observations regarding each of the problems.

For more information, visit www.asqde.org

VOTE FOR NEW ABFDE DIRECTORS!

**A Special Edition Newsletter will be distributed in June 2012
announcing the candidates for two additional Board of Directors
positions established by the BOD at the May 2012 Annual Meeting.
Instructions and voting forms will be included.**



BREAKING NEWS

Australian and New Zealand FDES Now Eligible For ABFDE Certification

Dear Diplomates,

The ABFDE Board of Directors has voted unanimously to allow forensic document examiners (FDEs) from Australia and New Zealand to apply for ABFDE certification. **At this time**, the ABFDE is only accepting applications for certification from qualified forensic document examiners in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

This decision was reached after much discussion and careful consideration. As many of you know, the ABFDE has been approached numerous times by overseas examiners and this topic has been previously debated at Board of Directors' meetings.

We were persuaded to extend certification to FDEs in Australia and New Zealand because of the correlations in their training, their use of ASTM standards, their commitment to the field, and, last but not least, because English is their first language. This same rationale led the Board to discontinue offering certification to Mexico and the territories and possessions of the United States.

It is the Board's belief that ABFDE has nothing to lose and much to gain by extending certification to FDEs in Australia and New Zealand. While helping international courts distinguish between qualified and unqualified examiners, ABFDE will distinguish itself from other certifying bodies by being recognized internationally.

Applicants from Australia and New Zealand must meet the same requirements as applicants from North America, with the following additional requirements:

- An additional \$50 USD to offset administrative costs (such as mailing).
- The Written Test and Oral Board phases must take place in the US or Canada, preferably at a professional meeting.
- Should FDEs from Australia and New Zealand choose to appeal any phase of ABFDE testing, and select the option of an oral presentation, this must also occur in the US or Canada.
- Kathy Annunziata Nicolaidis, the current Board Secretary and Credentials Chair, will serve as liaison with a selected Australian FDE who can assist in establishing equivalencies with regard to education degrees and training requirements.

Once certified, Diplomates from Australia and New Zealand must also meet the same recertification requirements as Diplomates from North America.

We believe that our expansion to include these qualifying countries can only strengthen the ABFDE and is an important step in strengthening the profession worldwide.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

Kirsten A. Singer
President, ABFDE
May 14, 2012



IN MEMORIAM

MATT FALCO, D-ABFDE



Matthew Falco, 53, D-ABFDE, was killed in a skiing accident at Windham Mountain Saturday, February 4, 2012. Matt, from West Brighton, NY, was skiing the Upper Warpath trail, listed as an intermediate level trail, according to police reports. He exited the trail just above the Wall St. trail intersection, at the ski resort around 11:30 a. m. on Saturday when he passed through a culvert ditch causing him to strike an embankment, according to eyewitnesses, police reported.

A joint investigation into the fatal skiing accident was conducted by the Catskill Police Department and the Town of Windham at Ski Windham Mountain Resort. Matt was treated at the scene by Windham Ski Patrol and Windham paramedics until he was pronounced dead, according to state police.

Matt had earned a bachelor of science degree from Wagner College, Grymes Hill.

A New York Police Department forensic document examiner, Matt was a civilian employee for 30 years. He began as a forensic chemist in the department's laboratory. He provided expert testimony as the result of the examination of different types of controlled substances. He then joined the department's Questioned Documents Unit where he later took a leadership role. Matt testified as a witness for federal prosecutors in the 2006 case involving Ronell Wilson. Wilson was later convicted in the murder of two police officers.

Matt's wife, Karan, described him as a fitness fanatic, a "fantastic cook" and a sports enthusiast who coached his daughter's basketball team. He was also an avid New York Rangers and New York Yankees fan.

"He had a fantastic, sharp-witted personality," Mrs. Falco said. "He was very passionate about everything that he did, everything that he touched."

In addition to his wife of 21 years (the former Karan Arslanian), surviving are his daughter, Natalie Falco; his parents, Matthew Sr. and the former Patricia Rossiello, and his brother Gary.

KAREN RUNYON



Karen S. Runyon passed away on March 24, 2012. She had thirty years experience as a forensic document examiner, consulting in both criminal and civil cases. Her formal apprenticeship training was conducted at Indiana State Police from 1978 through 1982, with Clarke Mercer.

She had received a Bachelor of Arts degree in The Administration of Criminal Justice and Sociology from Anderson University in Indiana. She provided training and lectures to numerous organizations and institutions, including the University of Minnesota, Hamline University, the Minnesota Bar Association and the Minnesota chapter of the International Association for Identification.

Memoriam continued on Page 11

(Memoriam continued from page 10)

She served as adjunct faculty for Hamline University, regularly teaching in their Forensic Science undergrad program and in the correlated law school curriculum. An advocate for access to reliable forensic science for all parties, Karen served on the Minnesota Innocence Project Advisory Board and participated in MNIP-sponsored educational seminars.

Since 1982, Karen provided testimony in approximately 230 cases in ten U.S. states including criminal and civil trials in state and federal courts, arbitrations, NASD hearings and depositions. Active in professional groups, Karen was a proud member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Questioned Document Section, and a past member of the Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists (MAFS). She served on numerous committees with MAFS, as well as chairing the Document Section and representing MAFS on the F.B.I.'s Scientific Working Group on Forensic Document Examination (SWGDOC). Continuing to serve on SWGDOC where forensic document examination standards are drafted, Karen was actively involved in the subsequent publication of standards through the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM), an international publisher of standards. Since 2005, she served as Secretary for the ASTM E30 Forensic Science committee, as well as continuing her participation in the E30.02 Questioned Document subcommittee.

As part of her private practice, in 2006-2008 Ms. Runyon acted as a contractor to the U.S. Secret Service Forensic Services Division, examining current casework in the Questioned Document Branch, conducting peer reviews, mentoring new examiners in training, and assisting with F.I.S.H. (Forensic Information System on Handwriting) cases and contractors.

Karen's mentor and friend, Clarke Mercer, said: "We lost a friend today (Saturday). The profession lost one of its best. A quiet private person that would not want this said publicly but it is necessary it be said. I am so saddened for the personal loss and the loss of a giant in our field. Remembering the very first days of training, the thirst for knowledge, the development over time of the highest level of expertise, commitment and passion for the work should make all of us proud of her contributions and impact on the field.

"The long battle with a devastating disease that showed no mercy finally overcame this little giant and sent her to be with her God. Rest peacefully my friend. We will meet again one day. You shall be missed by so many." Clarke Mercer, Greenfield, IN.



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2011-2012 Board Officers

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WEBMASTER.....William Leaver
WORKSHOP COORDINATOR.....L. Jim Josey

Send contributions to:

Diane K. Tolliver, Editor
ABFDE News

TolliverD@aol.com

Deadline for the next
issue:

September 15, 2012

www.abfde.org



ABFDE Testing Schedule

The written and oral boards will be offered at the following national and regional forensic document conferences:

August 2012 ASQDE, Charleston, SC
September 2012 MAFS, Milwaukee, WI

Testing may also be available at other regional conferences during the year. If interested, contact Testing Chair Lisa Hanson at Lisa.Hanson@state.mn.us.

