

William Farrell Leads the Way



One Grandfathered Diplomate doesn't have to worry about being tested. William Farrell voluntarily took the same test new Diplomate applicants take the last time his certificate was up for renewal. Why did he walk where the rest of us need to be pushed? To answer that we need to understand his history.

William Farrell, Jr. graduated from Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana, with a degree in chemistry and physics. He later attended graduate school at George Washington University, Washington DC, and received a Master of Science in Forensic Science. He always had a strong interest in criminal investigation, and, while making inquiry about the FBI Laboratory, he was told that he had the academic qualifications to test for a Special Agent position with the FBI. After agent training, he was assigned to the Cincinnati office of the FBI and spent a year or so in the field before being transferred into the FBI Laboratory in Washington DC. He admits now that he was a bit disappointed at the time to be placed in the Questioned Document Section and not in the Physics and Chemistry Section. However, as he learned more about questioned document work, he became fascinated as a new world opened up. He had the opportunity to be involved in many major cases of the Bureau and has testified in state and federal courts throughout the United States.

In 1980, William was certified by the ABFDE under the grandfather clause and has maintained his certification ever since. When his certificate came up for renewal in 2000, he volunteered to take the test given to new applicants. In recent years, he has been asked in court whether he was tested or grandfathered. William has always felt that being certified carried much weight with judges, juries and attorneys. It helps in Daubert hearings

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From the Editor

Susan Morton
San Francisco, CA



Time to Step Up to the Plate Again

The Board of Directors of the ABFDE has made the difficult decision to test all of the grandfathered Diplomates in order to meet the requirements of the FSAB. This has not been a crowd-pleaser among the said grandfathered Diplomates. Many and loud have been the moans of "Why do I have to do this? I have been a document examiner since (take your pick—1. rotary telephones, 2. penny postcards cost a penny, 3. sunsets were in black and white.)" There is a veiled implication that the Board members, most of whom are younger and were tested, are doing this for the sadistic pleasure of watching their elders squirm and sweat large caliber ballistic projectiles. As one of the grandfathered (or in my case, grandmothered) Diplomates, I would like to comment on this testing and the reaction to it.

Unlike most people, I just love to take tests. Yes siree, there is nothing I enjoy more than sitting down to answer a bunch of brain-wrenching questions while someone peers at me in stony silence. Unless, of course, I can persuade the IRS to audit my taxes for the last 45 years or talk my dentist into a whole mouth root canal. So you can see how much I relish this prospect. But I am going to do it, and I am not going to kvetch about it. (Well, maybe a *little* kvetching.)

Firstly, the Board is not doing this frivolously. They have compelling reasons to put themselves and us through this process. The FSAB does not look kindly on grandfathering. Over half of the presently certified Diplomates were grandfathered. Not good numbers. Who knew that document examiners were so durable? Twenty-five years ago when the Board was organized, there just wasn't any way to get it going without grandfathering. Most of us didn't like it much at the time, but we did it to get the process launched and with the expectation that the grandfathered Diplomates would dwindle away. Hasn't happened. The first certificates were issued in 1978; twenty-three years later many of us who got them are still here. We grandfathered/ grandmothered Diplomates have stubbornly refused to die off. So given the choice of being tested or..., I'll take the test. It's like getting old—pretty awful, but better than the alternative.

I can't think the Board members are looking forward to this any more than I am. It will strain their resources to the very limit. They are volunteers with busy lives like the rest of us.

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Editor Susan Morton

Advertising Editor Kathleen Storer

Board Reports

The Gavel Jan Seaman Kelly

Continuing Education David S. Moore

Recertification Paige E. Doherty

Contributors

Randy Gibson

Dr. Sandy Giles

Sandra Ramsey Lines

Thomas Riley

Composer

IntelliType

Mail or fax contributions to:

Susan Morton, Editor
ABFDE News

San Francisco Police Department
Crime Laboratory
850 Bryant Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: (415) 671-3196
Fax (415) 671-3280

semortonsf@aol.com

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March 20th

Advertising matter that appears in the ABFDE News implies
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Campaign 2002

Under the new bylaws of the ABFDE, Diplomates will be electing new Board members. Tom Riley and Randy Gibson have been nominated to fill the vacancy opening this spring. Here is some information about them so that you may make an informed choice.

Thomas Riley



Thomas Riley has been a Diplomat of the ABFDE since 1996. He holds a B.S. degree from Florida International University. He is a member of the Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists, currently serving as Section Coordinator of the QD

Section. He has been a very active member of MAFS, in the past serving on the Executive Board, the Awards Committee, and the Training and Education Committee. Tom is a provisional member of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, a provisional member of the Questioned Document Section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and a member of ASTM.

Tom began his career as a law enforcement officer in 1979. He was a police officer with Metro-Dade Police in Miami, Florida, for five years. He was hired by the Michigan State Police in 1987, starting as a trooper at the Jackson Post. In 1990, he was assigned to the Forensic Science Division, East Lansing Headquarters Laboratory. He completed the QD Unit training program under the watchful eyes of Thomas Nelson. Tom continues to work in the new MSP Lansing Laboratory, a state-of-the-art laboratory facility completed in 2001.

In addition to casework demands, Tom has assisted in the development of equipment and reference materials for the laboratory. These include a typewriter ribbon reader, an imaging system, and the compilation of a database of materials on hand in the State Police laboratory (patterned after the INS, with a big thanks to Jim Larner!). Tom continues to conduct research and remains a dedicated and active member of the profession.

While working for the state police crime lab, Tom developed a passionate commitment to the field of questioned documents. In 1996, addressing a need in the local legal community, Tom worked very hard to co-found a full-service private forensic

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Randy Gibson



My name is Randy Gibson. I've been working in government crime labs since 1979. Ten years ago, I began training in the QD Unit of the San Diego Police Department Crime Lab, with David Oleksow as my primary trainer. I've been a member of

the Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners since 1995, and was ABFDE-certified in 1998. I've been published in the International Journal of Forensic Document Examiners and have given presentations to SWAFDE and the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, as well as local schools and private organizations. I helped create QMUM and the electronic version of the ABFDE Resource Kit. Currently, I'm an ASCLD/LAB inspector and act as assistant manager for our lab. I also serve as Webmaster for the ABFDE website.

I see two issues as very important to ABFDE members right now. The first is validation of the certification process. Of course we need to prove that our certification is meaningful, but there may be many paths to that goal. If I were asked to serve on the Board, I would try to insure that the decisions made in this regard bring the greatest benefit with the least sacrifice. The second issue concerns public education. As has been proven by other organizations, sometimes your abilities aren't as important as your marketing. We need to make sure people know what we have to offer, as well as warn them of others whose qualifications may fall short of their claims. Diplomates should be writing articles and giving interviews on a regular basis. I would like the opportunity to help increase our exposure. We can't afford to hide our light under a bushel while other groups praise themselves from the highest parapet. A Board member is entrusted to seek out and do those things that will best serve not only the Diplomates, but also the field of forensic document examination. I hope that you feel I've earned that trust.



The Gavel

A Message from Our President

Jan Seaman Kelly
Las Vegas, NV



“Our pleas for new practical tests and written test questions have basically fallen on deaf ears.”

Password

The ABFDE website will have password-protected areas beginning January 1, 2002. Randy Gibson, web editor, will provide the password upon request to any Diplomat. To request the password, you may call Randy at (619) 531-2624 or e-mail QDMAN@home.com.

Getting the Word Out

Lloyd Cunningham participated in a moot court exercise at the ABA seminar in November. During the seminar, he distributed 400 of the ABFDE Profile of a Forensic Document Examiner pamphlets.

The United States Attorneys are having a forensics seminar at the end of January 2002. Kirsten Jackson has made arrangements to have the ABFDE Profile of a Forensic Document Examiner pamphlet and the ABFDE Resource Kit distributed to the prosecutors who are attending.

Public relations is a cornerstone of the survival for any profession. As a discipline, we are coming under attack from all sides. The Board of Directors extends their deepest appreciation to Lloyd Cunningham and Kirsten Jackson for promoting our profession and the ABFDE.

Coming to Your Mailbox in the Near Future

The ABFDE Resource Kit has been revised and should be ready for distribution in February, 2002. The date of distribution will be posted on the ABFDE site (password protected). If you do not receive your CD within two weeks of the distribution date

posted on our website, please contact me.

Revised Syllabus

Paige Doherty has completed the Syllabus, and it will be posted on the ABFDE site (password protected). If you are unable to access it, a floppy disk or a paper copy can be mailed to you. You may contact Peggie at the Administration office for either item after January 15, 2002.

2002 At-Large Election for Director

Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) requires at least one-half of the Directors of the Board to be elected by mail ballot. At the 2000 Board meeting, the BOD amended the Bylaws under Article IX, Section 4a, to meet this FSAB requirement.

It was agreed that to meet the number of directors who are to be elected at large, each vacancy would be filled by the mail ballot process until we are in compliance with the FSAB requirement.

The Board has one director vacancy in 2002, and it will be filled by the mail ballot process.

The Nominations Committee was created to prepare the nomination lists. As past president, Frank Hicks, chaired this committee. Committee members Paige Doherty and Rich Dusak worked with Frank to ensure equal representation of all Diplomates by maintaining an equal number of directors in private or government practice as well as geographical representation. From a list of several nominees, the committee has nominated

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A New Register – A New Professionalism

*The Forensic Science Society's Questioned Documents Group Meeting
October 17, 2001; Birmingham, England*

**by Dr. Sandy Giles, The Giles Document Laboratory
Amersham, UK**

Forensic Science in the UK is at last on the move on the issue of Competence—though a preliminary glance at the programme for this gathering might have suggested that this Questioned Documents Group Meeting was just going to be another session with the familiar format of Part 1, agonising over standards; Part 2, peeling back the edges of the frontiers of science.

But **Alan Kershaw** (Chief Executive of the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners [CRFP]) announced major progress had been made. From March 2001, a government-backed scheme has been introduced to register forensic practitioners in the United Kingdom. This is by means of:

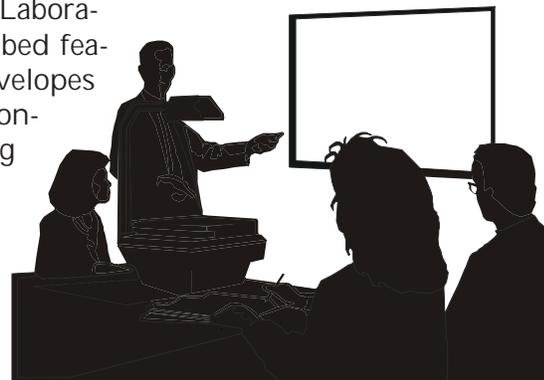
- A published register of competent forensic practitioners ensuring, through four-yearly revalidation, that they keep up to date and maintain competence
- Initially covering drugs, toxicology, marks, particulates and other traces, human contact traces, firearms, incident reconstruction and... questioned documents
- Assessment is based on peer review and an assessment of recent work, journals, log books, appraisal results, portfolios and courses.

So far there have been 350 applicants to the register. Eighteen of them are document examiners—and two of those document examiners are already successfully on the Register. "The role of the CRFP is to promote public confidence in forensic science practice in the UK," stated Kershaw, but he warned, "This is not a short-term programme—it may take us 5 to 10 years to get there. And we fully recognise it may not be perfect yet, but we believe it's better to get started and improve it rather than refine it and never get going."

Certainly there was discussion—and not a little agonising! What should be the definition of a document examiner? Who will assess the assessors? Isn't this just another form of quality management? Michael Fereday (chair, Standards & Qualification

Sub-Committee of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Forensic Science Sector Committee) provided some amplification, dealing with the definition of a forensic document examiner and stressing that a standard defines what one has to achieve, not how one achieves it. "This is a standard not about quality or training—it's about Competence: your knowledge, your skills, your behaviour and attitudes, and how you apply all those," he said. And at the risk of running before walking, Steve Day (Forensic Science Service) started to speculate on life after registration. "How do we organise ourselves to ensure that standards are readily identifiable and consistently applied?" he asked, whilst presenting some thoughts on an over-arching body of document examiners linking with the CRFP and defining standards. Certainly Dr. Jim Thorpe (University of Strathclyde) provided the meeting with some focus on this topic when describing means of professional assessment of candidates for the Forensic Science Society's Diploma.

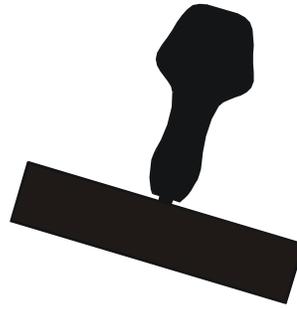
On the scientific side, the meeting received an update from Dr. Peter White (University of Strathclyde) on In-situ SERRS (Raman Spectroscopy) analysis of inks, showing it to have serious potential for the discrimination of inks. Kirt De Coteau (Document Evidence Ltd) summarised recent research on modes of disguise by those forging their own signatures. Dr. Audrey Giles (The Giles Document Laboratory) described features of envelopes and their contents having passed through automated letter-opening machines, while Dr.



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Recertification Report

Paige E. Doherty
Denver, CO



“...there is a variety of activities in which a Diplomat may participate to earn recertification points.”

As outlined on the Notice of Points Awarded (NOPA) issued annually to each Diplomat by the Recertification Committee members, there is a variety of activities in which a Diplomat may participate to earn recertification points. The Recertification Committee Report, in the September 2001 issue of the ABFDE News, described the categories of “holding an office or serving on committees, training provided to non-document examiners, passing the written/practical examination and participating in miscellaneous activities.” In this issue, I’d like to explain the criteria a Diplomat must satisfy in order earn recertification points in the categories of *professional meetings, papers presented, professional memberships, panel and plenary discussions/poster presentations and papers published.*

Panel and plenary discussions/poster presentations

A Diplomat may obtain points by participating in a panel discussion or poster presentation at a conference sponsored by a professional organization recognized by the ABFDE. Five points per event may be earned with a maximum of 10 points during the five-year recertification period. In order to receive the points, a Diplomat must include documentation which verifies his or her involvement, such as a copy of the program or a speaker’s certificate, with the Annual Update form.

Papers Presented

Another option for Diplomates is to present a paper at a professional conference sponsored by a Board recognized organization. The topic of the presentation must be related to questioned documents, and a hard copy of the paper must be distributed at the meeting. Inclusion of the article on a CD distributed to meeting attendees is acceptable. Ten points per paper may be earned with a maximum of 30 points during the five-year recertification period. For points to be awarded, a copy of the paper must be included with the Annual Update the Diplomat submits to the Recertification Committee member.

Papers published

Recertification points are also awarded for publishing an article in a journal recognized by the ABFDE. Examples are the Journal of Forensic Sciences, Journal of the American Society of Questioned Documents, and the Canadian Society of Forensic Sciences journal. Fifteen points per published article may be earned with no maximum during the five-year recertification period.

Points earned for publications and paper presentations may dovetail. If a Diplomat is seeking credit for presenting and publishing the same paper, then only five points will be granted under this category. The Diplomat still receives ten points for presenting the paper at a conference,

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Farrell

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and gives the expert more standing in court. He has seen instances where he was fairly sure an inexperienced opposing expert had been bullied or trapped into making unfounded statements by a wily attorney. Being certified, and the knowledge it entails, helps an expert avoid such manipulations. Knowing your subject helps you stand your ground.

It was after his career with the FBI that William Farrell came to understand the importance of testing. He returned to his native Louisiana and began teaching at St. Mary's Dominican College, a small heretofore women's college which had just become coed. The male students in his classes were mostly seasoned homicide investigators returning to college to get degrees. The young women were mostly in pre-med. That must have been one of the most interesting mixes in academic history! Nonetheless, it worked. The two groups meshed well and brought a wide variety of insights. William says he learned more during his years teaching than he did in his years with the FBI.

It was during this time that he came to understand the importance of tests. They are part of the process of learning and developing the mind and memory. Although he understands the fear they may present, he feels they demonstrate one's command of the language and tools of one's profession. Any professional must know and understand the language and tools of his or her field in order approach and solve problems. Without that understanding, there is no place to begin. William also points out that industry uses testing—not just formal testing, but informal problem solving as well. A boss will often assign a problem to a new recruit to see how he or she handles it. The boss may already know the solution but be interested in how the recruit will approach it. Such a test will quickly show whether a new employee really has the knowledge and skills listed on the resume.

William Farrell strongly encourages new document examiners to seek certification and grandfathered Diplomates to hang in there with the testing. He feels that being certified has helped him in his career and that it will be even more important in the future.

Riley

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document laboratory in mid-Michigan. Along with Todd Welch (who recently became a Diplomat), the firm of Riley, Welch & Associates Forensic Document Examinations, Inc., was established. This firm offers services worldwide in document examination, ink dating, and latent fingerprints.

Tom has been married for sixteen years. He and his wife Laura, have a very lovely and wonderful daughter, Caitlin. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, boating, community volunteer work, home improvement projects (known to his family as "Mr. Fixit or Make It Worse," guaranteed!), motorcycles and music. He is a long-time musician and is currently working with two bands on various projects. Tom's most recent endeavor is with his younger brothers, taking up the fine art of enduro stock car racing—in the dirt—resulting in the establishment of Riley Brothers Racing in 2001. Look for him on SpeedVision soon!

New Register

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Sandy Giles (The Giles Document Laboratory) described the use of a document scanner as an adjunct to the routine forensic document examination arsenal. Dr. Kate Barr (Document Evidence Ltd) provided a helpful and comprehensive review of automatic handwriting and signature recognition systems, and Elizabeth Zientiek (Forensic Science Service) assessed the evidential value of roller marks from Konica photocopier machines.

Convenor of the meeting, Mike Allen (Document Evidence Ltd), was delighted with the participation at the meeting. "Everyone can see that it is time for our profession to come under some control, and the Register now provides the framework for us to go forward," he said. Presenting results from a questionnaire sent out some months ago, he showed that document examiners are dissatisfied with the *status quo* and are in favour of a means of demonstrating knowledge, competence, case management skills and the ability to give oral evidence. "I ask everyone to work with the CRFP and co-operate with them to make it a success," he concluded. "It represents the direction and future of our profession."

Continuing Education

David S. Moore
Fair Oaks, CA

February 2002

11-16 American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting

*"Certification, Accreditation, Education,
Competency and Personal Professional Integrity"*

Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel, Atlanta

Contact: Betty C. Gayton, Chair
QD Section, Division of Forensic Sciences
Post Office Box 70808, Decatur, GA 30037-0808
(404) 244-2831 / Fax: (404) 244-2642 /
betty.gayton@gbi.state.gov.us

May 2002

12-17 16th Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science International Symposium

National Convention Centre, Canberra, Australia

Contact: Mr. Tony Speldewinde
School of Forensic Investigation
Australian Federal Police College
+61 2 62870636 / Fax: +61 2 62870270
tony.speldewinde@afp.gov.au

26-28 Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners

Town & Country Resort & Conference Center -
San Diego

Contact: David Oleksow / Sandy Homewood
Forensic Science Laboratories, LLC
1901 First Ave., 1st Floor, San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 595-7095 / Fax: (619) 238-6122

August 2002

4-10 International Association for Identification 2002 Educational Conference

Riviera Hotel - Las Vegas, NV

Contact: Candy Murray, Conference Coordinator
20601 Netherland Street, Orlando, FL 32835
(407) 568-7436 / Fax: (407) 568-7689
Conference@theiai.org

14-18 American Society of Questioned Document Examiners

Doubletree Hotel - Mission Valley, San Diego

Contact: Howard C. Rile, Jr.
100 Oceangate, Suite 670, Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 901-3376 / Fax: (562) 901-3378 /
HCRODE@aol.com

September 2002

2-7 International Association for Forensic Science Convention Centre Le Curum - Montpellier, France

Contact: Societe Internatinal du Congres et Services
337, rue de la Combe Caude,
34090 Montpellier, France
+33(0) 4 67 63 53 40 / Fax: +33(0) 4 67 41 54 27 /
www.iafs2002.com

October 2002

3-6 Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners (SWAFDE)

Fall 2002 Meeting, Honolulu, Hawaii

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

David S. Moore
Moore Document Laboratory
9010 Barrhill Way, Fair Oaks, California 95628
(916) 980-3205 / Fax: (916) 989-9674
dmoore@mooredocs.com

Editor

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Dreaming up a special test, finding suitable practical problems and then arranging the logistics of administering these tests to large numbers of surly, grumbling silverbacks will not be easy or pleasant. So why are they pulling themselves through this knot-hole? Is FSAB Accreditation so important? Yes, it is. Remember O'Block? Don't you want the courts and the public to know there is a difference between the "certification" he offers and the one you hold? I do. Also, another QD group is motoring along toward FSAB Accreditation—ever heard of AFDE? Their certification program is pretty righteous, and they are moving right along. I don't want them to beat the ABFDE. The FSAB Accreditation requirements are very strict, and I have no problem with any group who can meet them. But I also want to be in a group that has. I appreciate the willingness of the Board members to put themselves to the extra work of carrying out this testing.

As to the question of "Why do I need this?", it is the same question that was widely asked in 1978 when certification was first offered. At the time, I had the privilege of working in a very highly regarded lab with some of the finest document examiners in the country. Verle Truman, George Lewis, and I were fairly new examiners, but we operated in the golden glow shed by John Shimoda and his predecessors, Simeon Wilson and James Conway. We had the confidence of the courts and the respect of colleagues. We were asked to arbitrate disputes in those rare cases of truly opposing opinions. So when certification was first offered, we gathered around the donuts and discussed whether we needed to acquire it. We all agreed that as individuals, we probably didn't need it. Considering the reputation of the lab we worked in, we figured we could putter along just fine without it. And we all agreed to apply for it. We all realized that certification would ultimately benefit the profession, if not us personally. We felt strongly that applying would be a show of support for it. Maybe we didn't need certification, but certification needed us. Professionals do things that help their professions. Doctors write standards of care; lawyers serve in Bar Courts; engineers police themselves. In that spirit, John, Verle, George and I applied and let it be known widely that we were doing so. And we were certainly not alone. Document examiners of the highest

stature became certified, knowing full well it offered them little benefit at the time.

It is again time for that spirit. By my reckoning, any grandfathered Diplomate has at least 26 years of experience. Most of us are near the ends of our careers. We probably could muddle along without being certified (although I personally can't see myself explaining in court why I used to be certified, but am not any more because, Oh my Gosh, they wanted to *test* me). To my fellow grizzled veterans, I say our profession once again needs us. What would happen to the ABFDE if half of its Diplomates dropped out? It wouldn't survive. It wouldn't be there to set standards and provide leadership for future generations of document examiners. We can't let that happen. As one who has been a document examiner for 30 years and can remember when stamps were 3 cents, televisions required antennas to pull in all three stations on the air and Hula-Hoops were the rage, I think I have some perspective. I also remember a cold day in January, 1960, at the height of the Cold War, watching a live broadcast of John F. Kennedy's inauguration. He admonished the nation, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." Make that your profession.

It is time to step up to the plate again. 

Recertification

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making the point total for these activities equal fifteen.

Professional meetings

Another activity for which a Diplomate may earn points is attending a conference sponsored by an organization recognized by the ABFDE. The theme of the conference must be related to forensic document examination. One point per half day of registered attendance at a technical session may be earned with a maximum of 30 points during the five-year recertification period. Documentation of attendance such as a copy of the program, receipt of registered attendance, or an ABFDE Seminar/Workshop Attendance Record should be submitted with the Annual Update.

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Gavel

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Randy Gibson and Tom Riley as candidates for this vacancy. Their names will be on the ballot, as well as a space for write-in candidates. A brief biography from each candidate is in this newsletter. When voting, please keep in mind the Board of Directors is a "working" board. Committee work takes a great deal of time and commitment. Each candidate has acknowledged that he understands this and agrees to meet the demands required in serving as an ABFDE Director.

By February 25, 2002, each Diplomate will receive a ballot and a stamped return envelope. The Diplomate should check or mark the box designating which candidate he/she wishes to vote; place the ballot in the return envelope; print your name and certificate number on the space provided on the outside of the envelope, and, drop it in the mailbox. The envelopes must be postmarked no later than March 25, 2002. The return envelope goes to the Administration office in Houston. Peggie will verify that the Diplomate name and certificate number reflect the information of an Active Diplomate, open the envelope and remove the ballot. Only the ballots will be forwarded to Frank Hicks. Envelopes not bearing the name and certificate number of the Diplomate will not be opened, and the ballot will not be included in the count. Mr. Hicks will count the votes and notify me as to who won the election. The counted ballots will be forwarded to me for presentation to the Board of Directors.

The process described in the above paragraph assures confidentiality in the voting process and gives every Diplomate a "voice" in deciding who they want to represent them on the Board of Directors. I encourage you to take this opportunity to participate in the election of future Directors.

The Test Preparation Presentation

The first Test Preparation presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, February 13, 2002, at the AAFS meeting in Atlanta. Several of the grandfathered Diplomates and those interested in seeking certification have placed reservations. Director Fred Panhorst has prepared a PowerPoint presentation that describes the testing process, what ABFDE expects from the test candidate and what the test candidate can expect from ABFDE. The *Objectives For Training* and the Syllabus on a floppy disk will be given to registered attendees. If you are inter-

ested in attending, please notify Fred Panhorst. This presentation is free for those wishing to attend.

Sample practical tests or examples of written test questions will not be given during this or any other presentation. The low number of practical tests and written questions the Board has use of is the primary reason we are unable to provide sample tests. Our pleas for new practical tests and written test questions have basically fallen on deaf ears. Our current campaign of offering bonus points for preparing certification tests has yielded one or two practicals and a few sets of written questions. Due to the low number of tests, the Board cannot retire any old practical or written questions, as we do not have replacements.

The Directors have "full plates" due to their numerous responsibilities stemming from committee assignments. Preparing a practical test or a set of written questions is a task every Diplomate can perform. A practical handwriting or signature test takes two to four hours to prepare. I implore each of you to prepare a practical test that can be used in the certification testing process. It doesn't matter whether you are grandfathered or certified by testing. You'll earn 5 points toward recertification.

Challenges

Daubert hearings and opposing testimony from Saks or Denbeaux are becoming commonplace.

As a community, we need to support, encourage, and assist (with all of our resources) examiners who are facing these type of court challenges. Criticizing those who testified in past cases where Saks obtained his victories is not benefitting our profession, nor is it assisting the next examiner who is facing future challenges. Do not err in assuming the profession's loss in a particular case was due to the examiner who testified. Saks and Denbeaux have gained their victories as a result of our lack of organization, unity and effective strategy. We need to pull together and offer a helping hand to anyone who is being challenged.

Thought for the New Year

"I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving—we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it—but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

—Oliver W. Holmes 

Opportunities in Forensic Science Careers

Author: Blythe Camenson

Publisher: VGM Career Books, div. of The McGraw Hill Companies 2001

Price: U.S. \$12.95 / Canada \$18.95

A Book Review by Sandra Ramsey Lines

Those of us working in the forensic science fields are asked often for information on how to pursue a career in forensic science. In lieu of giving a long dissertation that may omit some important facts, we can now recommend a book by Blythe Camenson. Ms. Camenson very aptly explains the role of the forensic scientist and identifies the various fields of expertise in her first chapter of *Opportunities in Forensic Science Careers*.

The various disciplines are discussed in chapters titled, "Forensic Evidence," "Accident and Fire Investigation," "Forensic Medicine," "Forensic Anthropology" and "Forensic Psychology and Psychiatry." Questioned documents is mentioned very prominently in Chapter 2, with (at last) appropriate mention of the "Osbornian" type organizations. For example, one paragraph begins with:

"Many qualified examiners are members of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, and are certified by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners...."

All right. I confess. This reviewer did assist with providing some information and received acknowledgment from the autor (no residuals, how-

ever). In addition, I was quoted extensively (almost four pages), giving a "Firsthand Account" involving how I got started, what the work is like, salaries, and even a little advice to prospective applicants.

Although I am flattered by being quoted in this great little book, I am really most pleased with specific inclusions (and obvious omissions) in Appendix A. Under the heading, "Professional Organizations," the names and addresses are listed for the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Forensic Sciences Foundation, American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, American Society of Questioned Document Examiners and Canadian Society of Forensic Science. Under Appendix B, "Further Reading," there are four listings, two of which are the *Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners* and the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*.

As a law enforcement officer and later a forensic document examiner, I believed forensic examiners did not have an adequate avenue to educate the public about the realities of who they are and what they did. Now, I believe, Mrs. Camenson's book is a positive step in providing that avenue. I hope you join with me in recommending this book to those who have questions pertaining to forensic science. ☺

Recertification

(continued from page 9)

Professional memberships

A Diplomate may also earn points through membership in a professional organization recognized by the ABFDE. One point per year per membership may be accrued, with a maximum of ten points during the five-year recertification period. For example, if a Diplomate belongs to the American Academy of Forensic Sciences - Questioned Document Section, the Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners and the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners during 2000-2001, then s/he would earn a total of three points.

These are just a few of the categories in which a Diplomate may participate to accumulate points. The final article of this series discussing recertification points will highlight the categories of *conducting workshops for document examiners, attending document-related workshops, serving a primary trainer for novice examiners and issuing written summaries of journal articles* in the next issue of the ABFDE News.

As always, if any of you has questions, comments or new ideas about these topics—or any recertification issue—please contact any Recertification Committee member (Fred Panhorst, Joyce Lauterbach, Dave Moore and myself). I can be contacted by telephone at (303) 239-4305 or e-mail at paige.doherty@cdps.state.co.us.

ABFDE Syllabus Progress Report

by Paige Doherty

The ABFDE Syllabus/Bibliography update is completed and will be distributed to each Diplomat in early 2002. The ABFDE originally published this Syllabus in 1979 to assist document examiners preparing for the written portion of the certification test. This resource has been updated to include more recent literature and has been transformed into a computerized database.

The Syllabus will be available to Diplomates in both printed and electronic form as a database, using Microsoft Access, chosen for its versatility and compatibility with other database programs, such as AskSam, and word-processing software, such as Microsoft Word. A user can search the database using either Access or AskSam by subject, author, title, journal or training objective. If the user does not have a database program, he or she can still scroll through the reference list or do a limited search using word-processing software such as MSWord. Instructions for using the database will also be provided in hard copy and as a MSWord file.

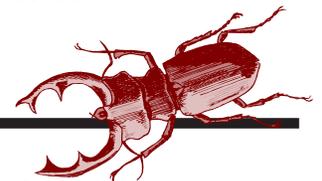
Please remember that this bibliography is not intended to be exhaustive, but to distill the wealth of printed information available to us into a list of practical references. While reviewing articles for inclusion, we also strived to correlate the Syllabus with the ABFDE Objectives for Training by associating literature in the Syllabus with specific training objectives. Future testing candidates may find this valu-

able as they study for the certification exams with both of these publications in hand.

I would like to thank everyone who assisted in locating and reviewing voluminous materials for the Syllabus. I will not list individuals for fear of omitting a valued contributor, but nearly twenty Diplomates and non-Diplomates assisted with this task. You all know who you are: take your right hand, reach around to your left shoulder, and give yourself a well-deserved pat on the back! Locating and reviewing document-related literature published over the past 20 years was a tremendous undertaking, and the willingness of these examiners to donate their time and expertise certainly expedited the completion of the Syllabus and enhanced its quality. I would not have been able to complete the Syllabus without the diligence of these examiners and am indebted for their assistance.

If you have any questions or comments once you receive your copy of the Syllabus/Bibliography, please feel free to contact me at:

Colorado Bureau of Investigation Crime Lab
690 Kipling Street
Denver, CO 80215
(303) 239-430
paige.doherty@cdps.state.co.us



In the Next Issue...

Much of the next issue will be devoted to dealing with Saks/Denbeaux and Daubert hearings. They have not gone away. We have won some battles and they have won some battles, but the war is still very much going on. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of being ready to fight. It takes only one unprepared document to set a precedent that the rest of us have to live with for years. You will soon be getting your new Resource Kit. Know its contents and be ready. They like to take us by ambush, and you may have only a few hours to get ready to stand up their attacks.

VIRUS ALERT!!!

Several FDE's have recently been infected with a very nasty virus called Magistr.b. It will not only wipe your hard drive but will whack your chip as well. Before it does, it finds all the e-mail addresses it can in your Address Book and Mailbox and sends itself to your correspondents in your name. It finds bits of text and clothes itself to look like something familiar. Since FDE's often e-mail each other, we are all at risk.

The good news is that both Norton and McAfee will find it, and it won't get you until you open the infected attachment. So make sure your virus definitions are up to date, keep your data backed up, and don't open any attachments you are not expecting, even if they appear to be from a friend and about a familiar subject. If you are sending an attachment to a friend or colleague, notify them first by phone or separate e-mail.