

Young Forensic Scientists Forum Newsletter

Greetings Young Forensic Scientists!

As we head into the summer months most of you are probably not thinking about February's AAFS meeting in Denver. For the organizers of the YFSF, that is exactly what is on our minds! The 2009 Program Chairs have already been hard at work putting together a great program for the February meeting, one that you definitely will not want to miss. The Special Session is sure to provide everyone with a broad view of the forensic sciences by showcasing speakers from each section of the AAFS as well as international presenters. In addition to learning from presenters, you are all encouraged to consider doing some teaching yourselves. Whether it be presenting an interesting case at the Bring Your Own Slides event, highlighting your research at the YFSF Poster Session, or submitting your unique forensic experiences for publication in this newsletter; be sure to take advantage of your peer audience in a pressure free setting that allows you take the leap from attendee to presenter. To round out the week, another great breakfast session is being planned which focuses on professionalism, an often times overlooked yet truly important key to success in this field.

As the YFSF behind the scenes work continues there is something you all can do before your trip to Denver. Take some time to check out the AAFS website at www.aafs.org and look into becoming a member of the organization. The YFSF Committee is here to focus on giving you an opportunity to get involved in the AAFS through providing sessions geared toward people new to the field. We aim to provide you with both resources and networking opportunities, but it is you who needs to take the step to fully get involved in the organization. Membership in professional organizations shows your desire to immerse yourself in the field of forensic science and to keep up to date on the ever changing and improving aspects of this field. If you are serious about a career in forensic science then

membership in the AAFS is a great step for you to take! As you check out the different sections of the AAFS, also stop by the YFSF website and see how you can get involved with our events. We are here to help you all transition into the field and we would love to hear from you and to help you in any way possible. Please feel free to contact YFSF President **Amanda Frohwein** (frohwein@dps.state.ia), or any of the other organizers with comments, suggestions, and questions you may have. Until next time, enjoy the summer sun!

— *Amanda K. Frohwein, BS*
YFSF President

Bridging the Gap

At times we feel as if our shift from academia to our first job may be a bridge over troubled water. However, your affiliation with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences is the bridge you need to make this transition. This year, I would encourage you to go out and explore what the Academy has to offer. Attending the Young Forensic Scientist Forum Special Session is the first step of many across that bridge. You can meet with peers and discuss your academic careers as well as learn about job opportunities in the field. Talk to the program committee; many of us have been involved with the YFSF for 4-5 years now and know a good deal about the Academy! But, the most important resource to tap is the distinguished members of the academy. Do not hesitate to engage these individuals during the meeting or even set appointments to meet at the Denver meeting. Also please contact the program chairs for the sections to learn about the programs they plan to offer this year!

— *Marrah E. Lachowicz MFS, GCCP*
AAFS Section Liaison

AAFS at a Glance: Experience the Forensic Sciences

The theme for the 2009 Young Forensic Scientist Forum Special Sessions has been decided and we couldn't be more excited about it. The theme we have chosen is *AAFS at a Glance: Experience the Forensic Sciences*. We have selected this theme because we wanted to provide a broad overview of this amazing organization we are a part of. We want to show what the field of forensics has to offer and this is especially important to those who are uncertain about which area of forensics interests them the most. We are working diligently on getting a speaker from each of the 11 sections to speak to us. We want the participants to get excited about all forms of forensics, and attending this session allows the participants to not only learn more about their specific area of interest, but to learn about other areas they may not be aware of or may not have a lot of information on. Keep your eyes open for more updates throughout the year and please do not hesitate to contact us with any ideas and suggestions. You can contact **Arliss Dudley-Cash** (dudleycash@gmail.com) and **Erica Blais** (erica.blais@pol.state.ma.us).



— *Arliss I. Dudley-Cash, BA*
YFSF Program Chair

2008 Breakfast Session

When beginning your first position straight out of an undergraduate or graduate program, you may feel like a fish out of water. It is hard to recognize the fine line between having fun at work and acting immature, fake, or unprofessional. First impressions are difficult to overcome and unprofessional behavior can affect how likely you are to succeed. This is especially true in forensic science because of the small nature of our field. With this in mind, the 2009 YFSF Breakfast Session will revolve around various aspects of **professionalism**.

This year we are aiming to provide participants with a better sense of the word **professionalism** as it applies to the field of forensic science. We will explore how to be professional while testifying and the benefits of networking. We all realize how critical these are, but sometimes knowing what to say can be frightening. Have no fear! We were all there once. Also, since many of our attendees are still in various educational programs we feel it is important to ease anxieties on job hunting, the interview process, and resume dos and don'ts. In addition, a resume panel will be held again this year, giving attendees an opportunity to have resumes reviewed by various people in the field.

If you have any comments, questions, or ideas please feel free to contact either **Melissa Smith** (msmith@ocme.nyc.gov) or **Jenna Oakes-Smith** (jloakes-smith@SLMPD.org). We would love to have your input.

— *Melissa E. Smith, MSFS*
YFSF Breakfast Chair

2009 YFSF Bring Your Own Slides

It's that time of year to begin planning for the YFSF Bring Your Own Slides and we are looking for great presenters! YFSF Bring Your Own Slides is a wonderful opportunity to share any interesting cases, case studies, and research you may have worked on. The presentations are short and casual and are a great way to build your resumes and your communication skills. If you are interested in presenting or have any questions, please contact **Tanisha Henson** (t.v.henson@hotmail.com) or **Rachael Lehr** (rachael.lehr@gmail.com). See you in Denver, CO!

— *Tanisha Henson, BS*
YFSF Bring Your Own Slides Chair

2009 YFSF Poster Session

After a successful YFSF Poster Session at the 2008 conference, we are looking forward to another great session in Denver. The poster session is a perfect opportunity for undergraduate students, graduate students, and new professionals (regardless of age) in the forensic science discipline to present information on their laboratories, research, or casework. The YFSF Poster Session is run similar to the large AAFS Poster Sessions, only on a smaller scale - a perfect opportunity to get your feet wet in presenting research to your professional peers.

Please contact YFSF Poster Chair **Anthony Sutter** (yfsfposter@gmail.com) with any questions or suggestions. Stay tuned for more details about registration, and we are excited about your participation in the next session.

— *Anthony M. Sutter*
YFSF Poster Session Chair

Opportunities to Speak Out

I wanted to take a moment to outline how new forensic scientists (both young and old) can speak out to their peers. YFSF is designed for forensic scientists with five years or less in the field to learn more about their new and exciting profession. As such we offer many opportunities to hone the skills that will help you succeed. As you will read in this newsletter, we are looking for scientists interested in sharing their casework, research, and experiences at the 2009 AAFS Annual Meeting. However, there is an opportunity to reach your peers throughout the year of which many may not be aware. If you are a forensic scientist with a great experience to share (such as obtaining an internship, preparing for your first testimony, or landing a great job), please write up a short article and submit it for publication in the YFSF Newsletter. Please send all newsletter questions and submissions to jennifer.w.mercer@gmail.com.

Jennifer W. Mercer, BS
— *YFSF Secretary*