

Young Forensic Scientists Forum Newsletter

Becoming a More Active Member in the Forensic Science Community

Now that we have submitted our abstract for this year's session, "*The Future of Forensic Science: Where We Are and Where We Are Going*," we are looking for ways to help young forensic scientists become a part of the forensic science community. With this goal in mind, the next big deadline coming up for the Academy is October 1, 2009; the deadline to apply for AAFS membership. We ask that all young forensic scientists consider becoming members of AAFS. Information about the different types of membership and how to apply can be found at the AAFS website (www.aafs.org). Through our education and training we are taught to respect the great forensic scientists of the past and present but what we may not realize is that we are the future! AAFS is aware of how important young forensic scientists are and how important it is for them to be included in the forensic science community from the beginning. One way to transition into the Academy is through work with YFSF. Many new YFSF committee volunteers meet each year to plan the next year's session. We are always looking to raise the bar and we do so with new and inventive ideas on how to get young forensic scientists inspired. If you would like to become part of the YFSF Planning Committee for next year please contact me a dudleycash@gmail.com. Don't let the October 1st deadline pass you by!

Arliss Dudley-Cash
President YFSF

The Future of Forensics: Where We Are and Where We Are Going

Hello Young Forensic Scientists! We are very excited about the theme we have chosen for the 2010 YFSF Special Session! In our last issue we announced our theme would be "*The Future of Forensics: Where We Are and Where We Are Going*." We selected this theme because we are the next generation of forensic scientists. The schedule is set and with that comes a wonderful group of professionals who will share with you their knowledge of the past of forensics, where we currently are, and some of the amazing advances that are on the horizon. We are excited about the wide range of topics that will be sure to satisfy your curiosity and pique your interest. The speakers will be covering such topics as biometrics, digital forensics, animal related crimes, and much, much more. We will also have a special presentation by the 2009 FSF Emerging Forensic Scientist winner. The fun doesn't stop after our Special Session, it continues on to the evening Poster Session, then into Wednesday with the Bring Your Own Slides Session, and culminates with a great Breakfast Session on Thursday. If you haven't signed up to submit a poster or slides, you still have plenty of time to sign up to be a part of the fun. We will keep you updated as we get closer to Seattle, WA. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us at any time: **Tanisha Henson** (Tanisha.henson@yahoo.com) and **Rachael Lehr** (Rachael.lehr@gmail.com).

Tanisha Henson
YFSF Program Chair

2010 YFSF Financial Support

Every year the YFSF relies on the financial contributions and support of the forensic community to make our Special Session a success. The events held at each meeting include a day long scientific session, a working breakfast session, a poster presentation, and a “Bring Your Own Slides” presentation. The goal of the YFSF is to assist young scientists in establishing a solid foundation in their field; these sessions are critical in the professional development of our audience.

At previous annual meetings we have received both monetary and educational support from the AAFS sections, various forensic science vendors, and universities. If you or your group would like to provide support for the 2010 Young Forensic Science Forum Special Session at the 2010 AAFS Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, please contact the Contributor Liaison, Samantha Neal, at Samantha.Neal@mail.wvu.edu for more information.

Samantha H. Neal
YFSF Contributor Liaison

2010 YFSF Breakfast Session

Whenever I tell someone what I do for a living the response is usually the same: “Oh, like on TV?” I usually smile in response and give a polite “Well no, not exactly”. This exchange happens often between people in forensics and people outside of the field. Shows like CSI (and all of the spin offs), NCIS, and Bones have become cultural phenomena. The popularity of these shows has even lead to reality shows such as “Forensic Files”. All of these shows, however, can give the public a skewed sense of what forensic science is. Results come back in an hour’s time, databases flash with the entire life history of the criminal at the click of a button, and everyone looks perfect all the time- even at the scene of a murder.

People in the field know that this just isn’t the case. Results take longer, labs aren’t as well equipped, and no one looks that good at a crime scene. So how much of our shows are fiction and how much is reality? There is usually some science mixed in all of these shows, right? Where does the science end and the flash for TV begin?

What effect do these shows have on the public? The public is definitely more aware of forensic science. More students are interested in going into forensics in school and many labs are no longer struggling with recruitment. However, that same awareness has created some expectations when people sit on juries. Prosecutors and members of the news media coined the phrase the “CSI Effect” to explain why juries were demanding more science in the courtroom. But is there really a CSI effect?

We are hoping to answer some of these questions in this year’s YFSF Breakfast: “*CSI Fact and Fiction: The Effect of Forensics in the Media.*” We will have a speaker discuss where the reality of these shows end and the fiction begins. We will follow this with a discussion about how CSI is affecting the court system. We are very excited about these speakers and the topic in general.

We believe it will be a lot of fun and will help all of us to get a better idea of how the fiction of CSI can blend into the reality of our daily lives. In the upcoming newsletters, we will be sharing more about our speakers and their presentations. Until then, think about how forensics in the media has affected you. Did it help you choose the field? Do you need to explain to your relatives that you don’t get to ride around in a Hummer or lead a SWAT team? We would love to hear how your life has been affected by these shows. Send an email at jloakes-smith@slmpd.org to share your stories, ask questions, or if you have any ideas about the breakfast this year. Until next time...

Jenna Oakes-Smith
YFSF Breakfast Session Chair

2010 YFSF Bring Your Own Slides Session

The time has come to start thinking about presenting at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences meeting in Seattle. The YFSF Bring Your Own Slides session is currently looking for presenters. This is a great opportunity to work on your presentation skills with a group of your peers in a national yet casual environment. Subjects including research projects and interesting cases from all sub-disciplines are welcome. If you would like to present or just want more information, contact **Casandra Hernandez** (chernandez@nlcl.org) or **Dade Chisler** (Dade.Chisler@mail.wvu.edu). Presenters will be required to submit a one page abstract and their curriculum vitae. We are looking forward to a great slides session in Seattle!

Casandra Hernandez
YFSF BYOS Chair

2010 YFSF Poster Session

As an undergrad, graduate student, or new forensic professional are you interested in presenting at the 2010 AAFS Annual Meeting in Seattle? If so, the YFSF Poster Session is the perfect opportunity! Set on a smaller scale than the larger AAFS Poster Sessions, it provides a great way to get your feet wet in presenting research to your professional peers. The poster topics can range from research in any of the forensic disciplines to interesting casework - but all research topics are welcome! With 26 posters presented at the last conference, we are hoping to surpass last year’s numbers in both topics and the number of institutions presenting research.

In order to register for the YFSF Poster Session, please submit your curriculum vitae and a one to two page abstract by January 1, 2010, to YFSF Poster Session at yfsfposter@gmail.com. Should you have any questions, feel free to e-mail those as well. We’re looking forward to a great poster session in Seattle.

Anthony Sutter
YFSF Poster Session Chair

Stephanie Crider
YFSF Poster Session Co-Chair