

# Young Forensic Scientists Forum Newsletter

## **Excitement is in the Air**

The AAFS meeting is right around the corner and we are getting so excited to see all of you. You can register for the YFSF Special Session when you register for the AAFS Annual Meeting. The Special Session includes a day long event plus Bring Your Own Poster, Bring Your Own Slides, and a Breakfast Session. In the past, we have filled every seat so don't wait to get yours. The Special Session is going to be the best we have put on yet. The Special Session Chair Tanisha Henson has put together a diverse group of speakers that specifically want to impact the lives of young forensic scientists. Also, if you have some new research that you would like to share with the forensic science community, the BYOP and BYOS are still taking submissions. Both are an excellent opportunity to get your research and your name out there. We all know the first time we present can be nerve-wracking and these venues provide a supportive atmosphere. Bring Your Own Slides is a great option for those who have presented posters in the past and want to take the stage on a different platform. The Breakfast Session is going to be especially helpful this year with a presentation on ways to look and be perceived as a professional. Everyone has put in a lot of hard work to make this year outstanding, so don't forget to register soon and we'll see you all in Seattle!

*Arliss Dudley-Cash*  
President YFSF

## **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" Session. The goal of the YFSF is to assist 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 support, both monetary and educational, 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, please contact the Contributor Liaison, Samantha Neal, at [Samantha.Neal@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Samantha.Neal@mail.wvu.edu) for more information.

*Samantha H. Neal*  
YFSF Contributor Liaison

## **AAFS at a Glance: Experience the Forensic Sciences**

Greetings and welcome to 2010! This past year has been a whirlwind and we are excited about the New Year. In just a short time we will all be in Seattle for the 62nd Annual Scientific Meeting. On Tuesday, February 23, we have an exciting agenda planned for you at our day long Special Session. Please don't forget to register for the Special Session so you won't miss out on any of the fun we are going to have that day. The Special Session not only includes the wonderful presentations by our speakers on Tuesday, it includes a luncheon on Tuesday and the Breakfast and Resume Panel Session on Thursday. The YFSF is specifically geared towards students and professionals with 5 years or less of work experience, and is the only place where you will find a Special Session, Poster Session, Bring Your Own Slides Session, and Breakfast Session all focused on you! It is a fantastic opportunity to gain a tremendous amount of knowledge as well as an opportunity to network, meet your future colleagues and others. While Tuesday is our "main event" (and we would love each and every one of you to attend), we want to remind you that we also have a Bring Your Own Slides and Bring Your Own Posters Sessions that you are all invited to participate in either by presenting or by attending. As a young forensic scientist, you can't get a better deal at the AAFS Annual Meeting than the YFSF Special Session. The planning has been in full force for months, the presentations are scheduled, and the times are set. Now all we need is you. See you in Seattle! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to

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contact us at any time at [Tanisha.henson@yahoo.com](mailto:Tanisha.henson@yahoo.com) or [Rachael.lehr@gmail.com](mailto:Rachael.lehr@gmail.com).

*Tanisha Henson, BS*  
*YFSF Program Chair*

*Rachael Lehr*  
*YFSF Program Co-Chair*

### 2010 YFSF Breakfast Session

When most people hear about the job “Forensic Scientist” images of immediate DNA results and Hummers come to mind. This is because the general public only sees what is on television and naturally expects the real world to emulate fiction. When people hear about what we do their first question generally is “Is it like CSI?” And of course, the response is always a resounding “NO!”

Our job is not strictly crime scene investigation. We work with all kinds of evidence that are not portrayed on television. There are several positions in a crime laboratory that never receive airtime. For example, I work in the Technical Assistance Section. We receive all evidence from agencies around the state. Audiences see DNA analysts and fingerprint examiners receiving results at the snap of the fingers. This is not an accurate portrayal of what we do for a living.

For the Breakfast Session this year, we have **Greg Schmunk**, Chief Medical Examiner for Polk County in Des Moines, IA. He will answer questions about what a real pathologist’s role is in a death investigation. On television, the medical examiner is often portrayed as someone who is fixated on death and has a very “quirky” sense of humor. Dr. Schmunk is a consultant on the television shows “Bones” and “CSI.” He will explain how the realness of his job gets translated into what we see on television.

Following Dr. Schmunk will be **Anjali Swienton**, President of SciLawForensics. She will be speaking on the CSI effect. Are juries really swayed by what they see on television or is it a matter of juries becoming smarter due to the advancement of forensics in today’s criminal justice system? She will explain how television shows such as CSI, Bones, and NCIS are affecting our legal system.

This will be a wonderful session for young scientists to attend. It will give you a true understanding of today’s forensic scientist, what roles are real, and which ones make for “good television.”

In addition to these two speakers, we will also have a resume panel. This resume review panel is for college students who are preparing for graduate school as well as those who have already graduated and are ready to start a career in forensics. We will have representatives from the various sections to at the resumes and offer advice on what would help them to become “hire” material. Students and graduates are encouraged to email their resumes as soon as possible so that we will be able to start sorting them by section. If you know which section you want to discuss/join, please include that information in the email so we will know what sections to have represented at the session. We would like to have more than one or two sections represented. Send resumes, section requests, and questions to **Melissa DeBerry** ([mdeberry@mcl.state.ms.us](mailto:mdeberry@mcl.state.ms.us)) or **Jenna Oakes Smith** ([jloakes-smith@slmpd.org](mailto:jloakes-smith@slmpd.org)).

We look forward to hearing from you and can’t wait to see y’all in Seattle!!

*Melissa DeBerry*  
*YFSF Breakfast Session Chair*

### 2010 YFSF Bring Your Own Slides Session

The 2010 Annual Meeting is almost upon us. As you look into whether you will be able to attend, give some thought to presenting your research or an interesting case. The Young Forensic Scientists Forum (YFSF) will be hosting a Bring Your Own Slides (BYOS) Session on Wednesday evening, directly after the Annual Business Meeting and is still accepting applications for presenters. The presentations are ten-minute PowerPoint presentations with time for questions after all presenters are finished. This is to an audience of your peers so you will get the benefits of a smaller, more intimate environment while still being on the national stage. A note for students, many of your universities have travel grants for sending presenters to scientific meetings, so by presenting at the YFSF BYOS session you can help fund your trip to the Seattle meeting. If you are interested, please send an abstract no longer than one page and CV by January 20th to [casandra.l.hernandez@gmail.com](mailto:casandra.l.hernandez@gmail.com) or [dade.chisler@gmail.com](mailto:dade.chisler@gmail.com).

*Cassandra Hernandez*  
*YFSF BYOS Chair*

### 2010 YFSF Poster Session

The YFSF would like to invite new forensic scientists and students to present their research at the 2010 YFSF Bring Your Own Poster Session. The YFSF strives to bring new and exciting aspects of forensic science to students. At the YFSF, students will learn about the different sections of AAFS and the specialties within the forensic community. Along with the YFSF Poster Session, there are many other events that will exhibit research and casework of new forensic scientists during the 2010 Annual Meeting.

Our goal is to bridge the gap between students, new scientists, and professionals. In the past, we have had a large turnout for the YFSF Poster Session, which will be held on February 23. This session is an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research or casework. If you have already decided to present in one of the AAFS Poster Sessions, take the opportunity to present with the YFSF as well.

To participate in the YFSF Poster Session, please register as soon as possible. You can register by submitting your curriculum vitae and a one- to two-paragraph abstract to [YFSFPoster@gmail.com](mailto:YFSFPoster@gmail.com). Please feel free to submit any questions you may have. The YFSF Poster Session strives to represent many different aspects of forensic sciences and many institutions. All types of research are welcome; so please don’t hesitate to submit your abstract. Space is limited, please submit your abstract soon!

*Anthony Sutter and Stephanie Crider,*  
*YFSF Poster Session Co-Chairs*