

Young Forensic Scientists Forum Newsletter

Integrity, Intelligence, & Ingenuity

The statement which I have deemed noteworthy and would like to pass on to young forensic scientists is: "The three I's of forensic science are: integrity, intelligence, and ingenuity." This proclamation has remained in the back of my mind since it was relayed to me as an undergraduate at the University of New Haven. These three words are not just words; they are fundamental qualities that are essential in a forensic scientist. Integrity is the firm adherence of an individual to a set of moral values. Intelligence demonstrates the ability of an individual to make rational and logical decisions. Ingenuity describes the creativeness and inventiveness of an individual to problem solve. From the beginning, a forensic scientist must possess these qualities and thus practice the values and lifestyle which maintain this level of character. It is essential that young forensic scientists understand not only the meaning of these words but also the practice of these principals in everyday life. Forensic science is not a job; it is a career. Thus, as the focus of the AAFS annual meeting will be on ethics in the field of forensic science, this year's YFSF Special Session, "Forensic Science in an Age of Advancing Technology: Maintaining Scientific Integrity and Ethics," will focus on a variety topics in the field and the ethical requirements of each area. The program is continually growing and changing in order to provide students and scientists with five years experience or less with the most quality information possible. The 2007 Young Forensic Science Forum Special Session is a must see event for any "young forensic scientist" who will be attending the AAFS meeting in San Antonio, TX. *Don't forget that participation in the YFSF events require pre-registration for the YFSF Special Session.* I hope to see some new faces at this year's session, and look forward to seeing some old ones as well. See you all in San Antonio!

— Allison M. Curran, PhD
YFSF President

2007 YFSF Theme

The theme for the 2007 YFSF Special Session in San Antonio is "Forensic Science in an Age of Advancing Technology: Maintaining Scientific Integrity and Ethics." The theme also ties well into events planned for the 2007 AAFS Annual Meeting. The theme "Forensic Science in a Global Community: Issues and Advances," focuses on the globalization of forensic sciences through collaboration, standardization, ethics, certification, accreditation, as well as the sharing of information and resources across borders and between disciplines. The Young Forensic Scientists Forum chose to focus on how we as students and new professionals in the field can contribute to continuing scientific and technical advances while maintaining basic scientific virtues and equitable behavior. We hope that each of us can utilize this knowledge to incorporate the skills and qualities necessary to work in the global forensics community.

On a basic level, we all feel that learning right from wrong is plain common sense. However, there are many controversial issues we face in our respective fields every day — the so called gray areas. As students, we entrust our academic programs to teach us skills we need to be successful in our jobs after graduation. We learn from our first academic experiences. When learning a new skill set it is only natural to question the procedures of the laboratory and new techniques. The academic environment is often about experimentation and active questioning to develop the best procedure for an experiment. When working for an accredited laboratory, the procedures have already been developed and require strict protocols. As new professionals we need to embrace both environments for the valuable educational and training experiences each provide and ensure we follow the guidelines set forth by our work environment ethically and scientifically.

We will learn more and develop our expertise as we gain years of experience. However, we may initially have to learn to rely on our "gut instinct," and common sense to help us answer difficult questions. Not only will we have to adjust to different working

environments, but we will continually be exposed to issues in which we will question integrity and ethics as the technology in our field moves forward. There are hundreds of examples and situations in which we may rely on our basic knowledge of scientific integrity and ethics in place of experience. The 2007 YFSF Special Session plans to represent a variety of disciplines and expertise to help address many of these ethical issues in the various fields of forensic science as well as provide insight into new techniques relevant to these fields. If you have any questions regarding the 2007 theme or the YFSF Special Session please contact **Marrah Lachowicz** (gradpath@aol.com) or **Amanda Frohwein** (a_frohwein@hotmail.com). We look forward to your participation in the YFSF sessions this year.

– Marrah E. Lachowicz, MFS
YFSF 2007 Program Chair

2007 YFSF Special Session Update

We have an exciting and diverse special session planned for the Young Forensic Scientist Forum in San Antonio! A varied group of speakers will focus on our theme “Forensic Science in an Age of Advancing Technology: Maintaining Scientific Integrity and Ethics.” AAFS President **James Young** will address the session. From the Physical Anthropology Section, we will hear about new advances in forensic anthropology from **Heather Walsh-Haney**. From the General Section, we have distinguished member **James Adcock** speaking on the ethical concerns and challenges for the young forensic scientist. **Scott Batterman**, the board representative from the Engineering Sciences Section, will provide an overview of forensic engineering and accident reconstruction at the session. We will also have Sini Panicker speak on the global issue of heroin production in third world countries which also ties our session to the 2007 AAFS meeting theme. Once again, we are glad to invite the Emerging Forensic Scientist Award Recipient to speak. **Laurel Freas** will discuss the presentation she presented at last year’s AAFS meeting for which she received this award – *Scanning Electron Microscopy of Saw Marks on Bone: Assessment of War-Related Features of the Kerf Wall*. From the Jurisprudence Section we have distinguished member **Gregory Hill** presenting how law enforcement handles evidence thus maintaining the same standards in different jurisdictions. The Pathology/Biology Section will be represented by **Jason Byrd**, a Board Certified Forensic Entomologist, to discuss current issues and advancements in forensic entomology. We are happy to invite a representative from the FBI, **Scott McMillion**, who will address the section on forensics, the FBI, and child abduction investigations. **Jeannette Fridie** from the Physical Anthropology Section has again been invited to speak at our session. She will provide an insider’s view into the medical examiner’s office and how each department works together to investigate cases. We also have several additional events planned including the poster session and a BYOS presentation session. For our breakfast session, we will have another distinguished AAFS member from the Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section, **Richard Rosner**, speak on the question “are there meta-ethical foundations for the normative ethical guidelines of the AAFS?” We hope you will enjoy the events and learn a great deal from the diverse speakers represented at the YFSF Special Session. If you have any additional questions regarding the session please feel free to contact **Marrah Lachowicz** (gradpath@aol.com) or **Amanda Frohwein** (frohwein@dps.state.ia.us). We look forward to seeing you all in San Antonio in February.

– Marrah E. Lachowicz, MFS
2007 YFSF Program Chair

YFSF BYOS

The 2007 YFSF Bring Your Own Slides presentation is taking shape! We are still in need of a few more 10-minute presentations about casework, research, or issues in forensic science. Although the audience is composed of “young” forensic scientists, everyone is welcome to share experiences. Keep in mind, “young” = in the field for less than five years. We hope that you will consider participating in this excellent program. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact **Robin Bowen** (robin.bowen@mail.wvu.edu) or **Missy Smith** (msmith@ocme.nyc.gov). A brief abstract and CV are requested to be turned in by January 12, 2007. What are you waiting for? It is fun and a great experience!

– Melissa Smith, BS and Robin Bowen, BS
YFSF BYOS Program Co-Chairs

2007 YFSF Annual Breakfast Meeting

Don’t mess with Texas! An approach to getting your first job and keeping it!

The 2007 YFSF Breakfast Session will not only provide techniques for those students looking to obtain their first job, but will also provide skills and tools for those emerging forensic scientists already in the field!

To begin this year’s meeting, we have planned to bring in a number of presenters covering a range of topics. These topics include:

- Resume review, cover letter writing, interview preparation, and techniques to make the best first impression.
- The application process.
- Importance of an internship and the temporary position.
- Laboratory job requirements and salaries and benefits.
- Courtroom testimony skills and how one becomes an expert witness.
- Building your Curriculum Vitae.
- Getting a promotion - avenues on how to get “them” to choose you over someone else.

A resume review panel, consisting of forensic scientists and managers in different disciplines including, serology/DNA, chemistry, criminalistics, toxicology, fingerprints, bomb and arson, and trace analysis will be utilized. Time will also be set aside between bites of Texas Toast for any questions you may have.

In closing, we will present an interesting case study, from crime scene to court room testimony, which we hope you all will enjoy! We look forward to you getting the most out of this session by acquiring new techniques and finding answers to questions in order to apply them to your real-life circumstances.

Any suggestions or comments about what you may want to see at this year’s breakfast session, please feel free Erica Blais (Erica.blais@pol.state.ma.us).

– Erica Blais, BS
YFSF Breakfast Session Chair

YFSF Poster Session

On behalf of the Young Forensic Scientists Forum, I would like to invite all students and new forensic scientists to participate in the 2007 YFSF Poster Session. The YFSF is geared toward introducing students and new forensic scientists to the wide and interesting field of forensic science and integrating them into their respective sections of the Academy. This will ideally occur at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. We are all looking forward to the Texas hospitality.

As part of our goal of introducing you to the field of forensics, we have designed several events focused on bringing your research and casework to the attention of the many meeting participants. Last year, both the YFSF Poster and Bring Your Own Slides Sessions attracted a large crowd interested in meeting the fresh faces of forensic science. In addition, the AAFS President **James Young** has made one of his primary goals bringing YFSF to a more prominent position in the AAFS organization, recognizing we are where the future of forensic science starts.

This year the YFSF Poster Session is tentatively scheduled for February 20. The Poster Session offers a comfortable and educational environment for students and new forensic scientists to present their work. This session is an appropriate time to present undergraduate or graduate research or to share unique cases encountered in the field. If you are already presenting in another AAFS session, then you may also share your presentation as a poster at the YFSF Poster Session.

The Poster Session requires registration with the program chair at least two weeks before the meeting. A limited number of board spaces are available so submissions received by January 1, 2007, will be given preferential treatment before later submissions. Please send your curriculum vitae and a 1 to 2 paragraph abstract for review to **Jennifer Mercer** (Jennifer.W.Mercer@gmail.com) or **Melissa Ely** (MelissaGEly@gmail.com).

The YFSF Poster Session hopes to represent as many institutions and fields as possible, thus students from all academic institutions and laboratory systems are encouraged to submit an abstract.

—Jennifer Mercer, BS and Melissa Ely, BA
YFSF Poster Session Co-Chairs

About the YFSF

The YFSF is dedicated to the education, enrichment, and professional development of young forensic scientist. YFSF participants can be non-AAFS-members while organizers must be AAFS members from any section within the AAFS. The Forum provides a medium to educate and network with young forensic scientist to facilitate their establishment within the forensic science community. The YFSF is composed of a Special Session, a Poster Session, a Bring Your Own Slides Session, and a Breakfast Session during the AAFS Annual Meeting. In order to participate in YFSF events, pre-registration is required! Outside the Academy meeting the YFSF works to further the endeavors of young forensic scientists through the YFSF newsletter and the YFSF website (<http://www.aafs.org/yfsf/index.htm>). YFSF President **Allison Curran** (amcurran@gmail.com) and YFSF Secretary **Jeannette Perr** (jeannette.m.perr@usdoj.gov) can answer any questions about the YFSF and are looking to many different levels of young forensic scientist participating next year's session.

—Jeannette Perr, PhD
YFSF Secretary

Corrections

The "Eye on Forensic Microscopy" article in the September 2006 YFSF Newsletter was contributed by Missy Smith. The YFSF Special Session update in last month's newsletter was contributed by Marrah E. Lachowicz, not Amanda Frohwein.

**Do you have something to add
to the YFSF Website?**

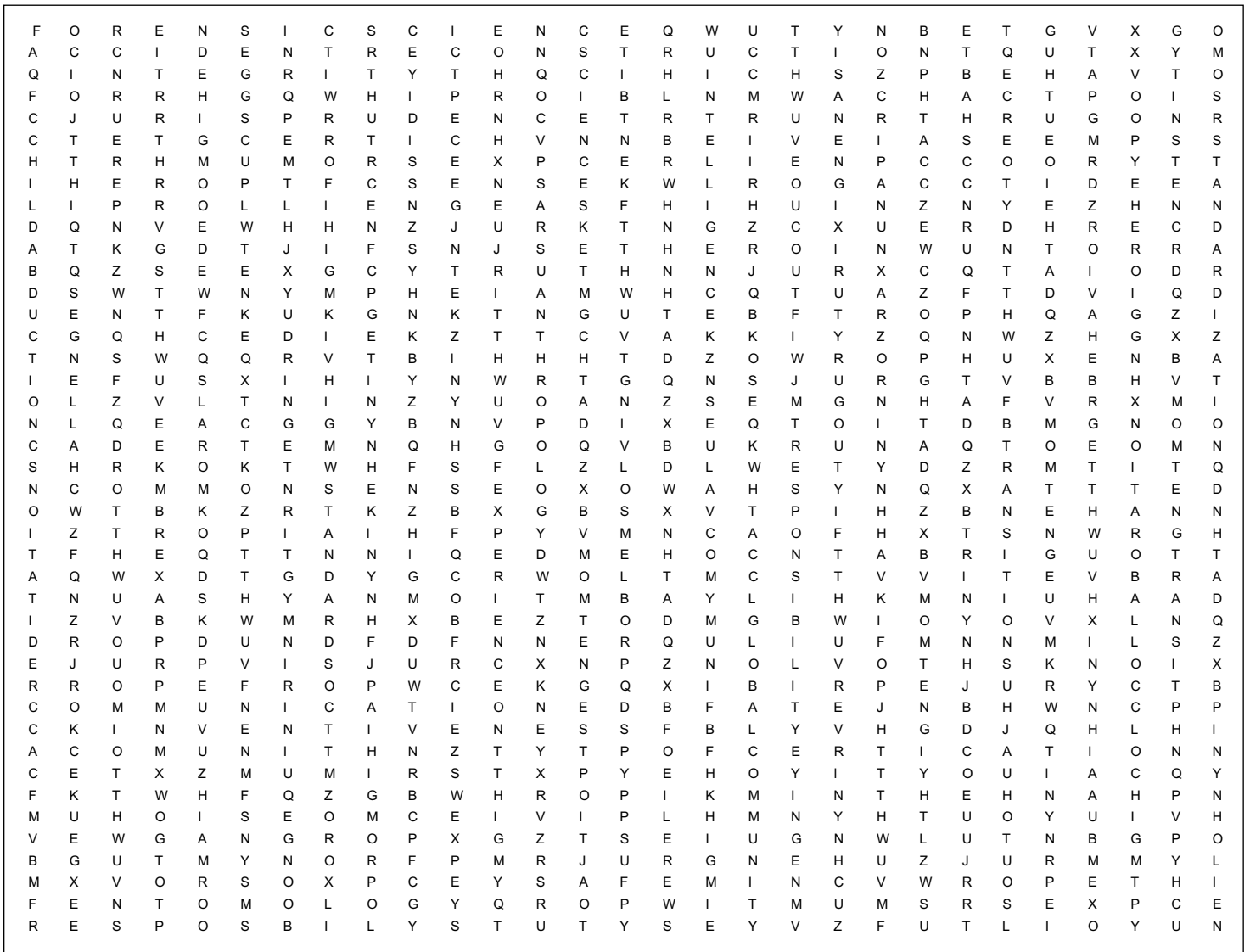
**The YFSF is giving its website a
new look and we want to include you!**

We are looking to add the following:

- photos from previous YFSF sessions
- advertisements for internships
- potential forensic science mentors
- any other contributions you feel are interesting or important

**Please send all contributions to:
Amy Aylor
amyaylorr@gmail.com**

YFSF Word Search (contributed by Missy Smith)



Try to find the following words:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| INTEGRITY | PROBLEM SOLVING | ANTHROPOLOGY | COMMUNICATION |
| INTELLIGENCE | RESPONSIBILITY | MORALS | BEHAVIOR |
| INGENUITY | TRUTH | VALUES | GLOBAL COMMUNITY |
| ETHICS | RIGHT | INVENTIVENESS | TRANSITIONS |
| COMMON SENSE | WRONG | SCIENCES | EXPERIENCE |
| HEROIN | CHALLENGES | STANDARDIZATION | EDUCATION |
| COLLABORATION | ACCIDENT RECONSTRUCTION | CERTIFICATION | GUT INSTINCT |
| STANDARDS | ENTOMOLOGY | ACCREDITATION | JURISPRUDENCE |
| SEM | CHILD ABDUCTION | FORENSIC SCIENCE | |