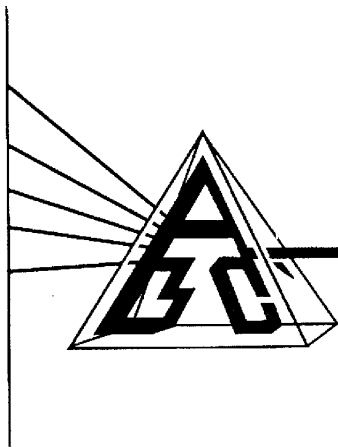


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P.O. Box 1123
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New
Address!
See Page 3



Certification News

Volume 5 Issue 1 Summer 1998

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Time of Thanks

My first president's message. The cursor blinks at me, urging eloquence and insight. You read these words, expecting the same. I'll try not to disappoint you!

The American Board of Criminalistics was led to this point in time through the diligence of our Past President Karolyn Leclaire Tontarski. Kary provided the ABC with excellent leadership during the last three years, and through her efforts and those of the members of your elected Board and Examination Committee, we find ourselves in the unique position of being the largest legitimate certification organization for forensic examiners in the world. Each of you - the 400+ Diplomates and Fellows - should be extremely proud of your accomplishment in meeting the difficult certification challenge.

I am humbled by, and thankful for, the opportunity to serve you as we set out on the next phase of the journey that never ends.

It's All About Connections

Legitimate forensic **Certification** provides an independent measure of examiner preparation and knowledge, and serves as one side of the triangle that defines quality forensic practice. The other two sides of this triangle are **Accreditation** and **Standardization**. Accreditation provides an independent measure of the laboratory's quality assurance program and allows the lab to measure its organizational ruggedness against peer-based standards. Forensic Standardization relates to the development of consensus guidelines for the proper design, performance and reporting of examinations, handling of evidence, and terminology for discussing forensic principles. Forensic Certification, Accreditation and Standardization work together to provide independent assessment and direction for virtually all critical factors in forensic practice.

As a representative of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), I am the first ABC President elected from an organization other than a national or regional forensic association. Committee E-30 on Forensic Sciences has made substantial progress in developing standards and guides for forensic practice. As we studied the needs of forensic practitioners, we recognized that the connection to certification and accreditation was essential in fashioning appropriate standardization documents.

When ASTM applied to join ABC as a member organization,

there was a lot of head-scratching at first. What would ASTM - an international organization promulgating standards related to everything from asphalt to prosthetic arms to wingnuts - add to the ABC? By studying, and being involved in the development of, the Job Descriptions (JDs) and Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) that underlie the development of certification examinations, ASTM Committee E-30 has gained a better appreciation for the standardization needs of forensic examiners. And ABC can use the connection to determine in an on-going way whether JDs and KSAs reflect the current practices as found in ASTM forensic standards and guides.

ABC has now accepted another organization onto its Board that is not predominantly comprised of forensic examiners. After having many years of presence at ABC Board meetings as a non-member liaison, the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) joined the ABC as a member organization at the end of 1997. We had the pleasure of ASCLD representatives' company and formal (voting) input for the first time at the February 1998 Board meeting.

Now, this is **not** the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB). But the connection of ABC certification to laboratory accreditation through ASCLD is a strong one. Laboratory directors making up ASCLD founded ASCLD/LAB and spun it off as a separate organization for the purpose of accrediting forensic laboratories. The ABC appreciates the insight that ASCLD offers into the certification needs of laboratory directors, and our certification programs have already been strengthened by the ASCLD connection. **What are the Next Connections?**

The ABC is now in discussions with several organizations in order to access the expertise and direction of federal Technical Working Groups (TWGs). These TWGs develop guidelines for forensic practice which address needs for standardization, provide direction for personnel qualification and competence assessment (including certification), and provide definitive technical standards which may be incorporated into accreditation programs. The JDs and KSAs used in ABC certification in forensic disciplines must track the peer-based determinations of TWGs. It is possible that ASTM

Committee E-30 will adopt standards of forensic methodology
President's Message (Continued)

developed by TWGs, and serve as a peer-based and cost-effective forum for keeping these standards up-to-date.

In addition to this TWG connection, there has been significant focus lately on the international "harmonization" of accreditation, certification and standardization programs. Harmonization programs go by many different initials, including ISO, NCCA and others. But the goals are all very similar - to hold all legitimate programs to high standards of traceability, effectiveness and freedom from conflicts of interest.

ISO 25 guidelines may be incorporated by forensic laboratory accrediting organizations (like ASCLD/LAB) to bring the accreditation program into compliance with the international harmonization requirements. ABC has been studying a program offered by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), which would independently assess the quality of the ABC program. In essence, NCCA can "accredit the certification organization". In February, 1998, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences began development of a specialized program to offer this accreditation of certification bodies specifically in the forensic sciences. The ABC will continue to chart the progress of these efforts, and take appropriate steps to insure the continued strength of our certification program. We intend to assist in any way we can in the development of the AAFS program.

Once harmonization efforts reach their fruition, it becomes easier to compare programs and judge their strength. Through the use of this independent assessment of other certification programs, the ABC may create liaisons that broaden the scope of available specialty certifications for criminalists. And the use of the ABC General Knowledge Exam in competency assessment programs throughout the world - such as the recent piloting of this idea in England - will be facilitated through compliance by ABC with the harmonization standards.

The Bottom Line

We live in a connected age. The world of forensic science has become a set of interdependent groups linked by common needs and limited resources. The ABC has benefited from strong leadership in the past. Through the efforts of the members of the Board and Examination

Committee, and every single Diplomate and Fellow, we are in an excellent position to use these new connections to provide certification programs of the very highest caliber into the future. Thank you for your contribution.

Carl

The Mark of Accomplishment

So, is it to be:

D-A. B. C. and F-A. B. C.

D.-A. B. C. and F.-A. B. C., or

D. A. B. C. and F. A. B. C.?

I have thought long and hard about this topic, and even wrote a letter to the ABC Board prior to being on it. Just a lowly Diplomate looking for guidance. After researching other reputable certification bodies and the AAFS, I have become persuaded to specify the use of:

D-ABC and F-ABC

to distinguish our Diplomates and Fellows. Some of the reasons for this determination are:

- (1) "ABC" stands out clearly from the D or F, and that's the host organization for the certification;
- (2) Typing a bunch of periods will not enhance the reader's understanding that "ABC" are the initials of the certification organization; and
- (3) It's faster and easier to type without periods

When you add your certification nomenclature to your signature block, we encourage you to use D-ABC and F-ABC as appropriate. Let this mark of distinction bring you recognition for the effort you put into meeting the certification challenge!

C.A.R.L., D-ABC

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Changes in Rules of Professional Conduct

A committee, chaired by Vice President Julia Dolan, was charged with reviewing the ABC Rules of Professional Conduct, in order to make the rules apply to supervisory activities as well as bench-level analyses. At its February meeting, your Board of Directors made minor changes in the Rules of Professional Conduct to effect the recommendations of the Committee.

New Board & EC Members

The ABC Board of Directors has two new members. Kevin Lothridge was appointed by The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors' President Frank Fitzpatrick to serve as ASCLD's representative, and Gregory B. Matheson was elected to the at-large position vacated by retiring President Karolyn Leclair Tontarski.

ASCLD President Fitzpatrick also appointed Frank E. Schehr to serve as ASCLD's representative to the Examination Committee.

Gregory B. Matheson has served as the Assistant Director of the Los Angeles Police Department Crime Laboratory since 1994. Greg joined the department in 1978, shortly after he received his BS degree in Criminalistics from California State University at Long Beach.

Greg worked in both toxicology and serology, and was one of the first certified criminalists in the country, having been certified by the CAC in 1989. Greg was one of the originators of the CAC certification program, and is one of the signatories of the American Board of Criminalistics' incorporation papers. Greg served as the first Vice President of the ABC. At that time, he was the representative of the California Association of Criminalists. At the February meeting, the representatives of the member organizations chose Greg as the new Board member at-large from a field of outstanding candidates.

Greg was certified by the CAC and has been an ABC Diplomate since 1993.

Kevin Lothridge was the Director of the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory in Largo, Florida from 1988 through 1998. He first joined the staff of the laboratory in 1984. Kevin has recently accepted a full-time position with the National Forensic Science Technology Center as Special Projects Director. One of his first projects will be to assist in achieving consistency in the organization and output of the various TWGs sponsored by the FBI.

Kevin received his BS degree in Forensic Science from Eastern Kentucky University and his MS in Management from National Louis University in Chicago.

Kevin has been a student of certification and has studied the entire process since it began in 1977. His master's degree thesis described differences in atti-

tudes between management and bench analysts with respect to certification. Kevin attended many ABC Board meetings while preparing his master's thesis, which was published in 1991.

Kevin served as President of ASCLD in 1997. He has been an ABC Diplomate since 1995 and is a Fellow in Fire Debris Analysis.

Frank Schehr is the Assistant Director of the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division, a position he has held since 1993. Frank received his BA degree in chemistry from Miami University of Ohio in 1969, and went to work for the US Army Crime Lab in Ft. Gordon, Georgia from 1970 through 1973.

Frank joined the staff of the Michigan State Police in 1973. He received his master's degree in Forensic Science from Michigan State University in 1976, and a master's in Public Administration from MSU in 1980.

Frank was first certified by the CAC in 1991, and was one of the first ABC Diplomates when his certification converted in 1993. In 1991, Frank was elected at-large ABC Board member and served as the Board's Vice President from 1991 to 1993. During (and after) that time, Frank was the Grant Administrator for a National Institute of Justice grant to the ABC that assisted the Board in developing our specialty examinations.

Frank returns to the ABC as ASCLD's representative to the Examinations Committee. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and is a Past President of the Midwest Association of Forensic Sciences.

The ABC Board is pleased to welcome these three talented individuals.

New Registrar

In an effort to improve the quality of services provided by the ABC, the Board of Directors voted at its February meeting to contract with Michael A. Haas to be the new ABC Registrar.

The Forensic Science Foundation has served as the home of the ABC Registrar for the last 3 years, and made a valiant effort to administer a complicated program. Several unexpected personnel changes resulted in a frequent need to retrain the Registrar, and ultimately, this problem caused numerous complaints from ABC Fellows, Diplomates, and applicants. The Board appreciates the ef-

forts made by the FSF in attempting to serve the ABC's needs, but it was ultimately decided that someone familiar with the ABC process would better serve the needs of our Diplomates and Fellows.

Mike Haas is certainly familiar with the ABC process, having served as an at-large Board member and Board Secretary since 1994. Mike was re-elected to the at-large position in 1997.

Since 1991, Mike has been the Director of the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory in Wausau. He has been with the Wisconsin system for 28 years.

Mike received his BS degree in Chemistry and Mathematics from the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire in 1969. He has been an ABC Diplomate since 1993. Mike's forensic specialties are Trace Evidence and Fire Debris Analysis.

As Registrar, Mike will have the able assistance of his wife, Kathy. Please note that the **new ABC address** is P. O. Box 1123, Wausau, WI 54402-1123. The ABC Registrar can be reached by phone at 715-845-3684 or by fax at 715-845-4156 or e-mail at abcereg@dwave.net.

ABC Goes International

On November 11, 1997, 9 members of the British Forensic Science Service sat for the GKE at a special offering in Birmingham, a city in the midlands of the United Kingdom. The offering was arranged by Keith Hadley of the FSS, who has been the FSS liaison to the ABC for a number of years. Former ABC Board member Marie Samples acted as Test Site Manager.

Keith is a leader in the Comprehensive UK project to create National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for the forensic scientists there. The ABC GKE is being evaluated as a means of measuring the knowledge of the scientists, thus fulfilling some of the requirements of the NVQs. This could ultimately result in the GKE being a requirement for all publicly employed forensic scientists in the UK.

The examination process went very smoothly, but some of our British friends did not understand some American terms and required a little translation. For example, one GKE question mentions "butcher paper," a term unfamiliar to the Brits. The ABC wishes to thank Keith Hadley for his work in bringing the GKE to the United Kingdom and to the nine forensic scientists who sat for the exam.

ABC CALENDAR

PLEASE POST ON YOUR LAB BULLETIN BOARD

Date/Deadline	Event	For More Information, Contact:
Jul 24-27, 1998	ABC Board & Exam Committee Meeting Holiday Inn, Livonia West, Livonia MI	Charles Barna 517-336-6371
Oct 6, 1998 <i>Deadline Aug 6, 1998</i>	All ABC Exams, Anne Arundel Co. PD 8495 Veteran's Hwy., Millersville, MD	Jane Cooke 410-222-8531 Julia Dolan 301-762-9800
Oct 7, 1998 <i>Deadline Aug 7, 1998</i>	All ABC Exams, MAFS Annual Meeting Crown Plaza Hotel, Ann Arbor, MI	Lee Brun Conti 517-336-6364 Charles Barna 517-336-6371
Oct 17, 1998 <i>Deadline Aug 17, 1998</i>	All ABC Exams, CAC Meeting Clarion Hotel, San Diego, CA	Jim Stam 619-531-2605 Greg Matheson 213-237- 0043
Nov 5, 1998 <i>Deadline Sep 5, 1998</i>	All ABC Exams, NEAFS Meeting Doubletree Islander Hotel, Newport, RI	Mary Beth Raffin 203-639-6444 Judy O'Connor 212-477-9789
Feb 13-15, 1999	ABC Board & Exam Committee Meeting Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando, FL	Julia Dolan 301-762-9800
Feb 17, 1999 <i>Deadline Dec 17, 1998</i>	All ABC Exams, AAFS Annual Meeting Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando, FL	Bob Parsons 561-462-4765 Mike Haas 715-845-3684

To arrange to sit for an examination, you must contact the Registrar by letter or fax (715-845-4156) by the deadline listed.

Local contacts are provided for conference information only.

To arrange for ABC Exams to be administered in your laboratory, contact your regional representative.

**American Board of Criminalistics
P. O. Box 1123
Wausau, WI 54402**

RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Article IV.5 of the By-laws of the ABC allow for disciplinary actions by the Board including denial and revocation of Certificates. Articles IV.5.a through IV.5.c state reasons for such action as follows:

- a. An intentional misstatement or misrepresentation, or concealment or omission, of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the Board or its representative(s).
- b. Conviction of an applicant for certification or holder of a certificate by this Board by a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude.
- c. Issuance of a certificate contrary to or in violation of any of the laws, standard rules, or regulations governing the Board and its certification programs at the time of its issuance; or determination that the person certified was not in fact eligible to receive such certificate at the time of its issuance.

Article IV.5.d also allows for disciplinary actions for the following reason:

- d. Violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct of the ABC by an applicant or holder of a certificate of this Board.

The following are the Rules of Professional Conduct of the ABC, as referred to in Article IV.5.d, and together with Articles IV.5.a through IV.5.c, they stipulate situations and rules which may, if violated, cause disciplinary action by the Board to be taken.

These rules describe conduct in the profession of forensic science (criminalistics) and are meant to encompass not only work done by Applicants, Affiliates and Diplomates, but to the extent possible, work supervised by them as well. They meet general acceptance by peers in the profession. They specify conduct that must be followed in order to apply for, receive, and maintain the certification status provided for by the American Board of Criminalistics.

Applicants and Diplomates of the ABC shall:

1. Comply with the By-laws and regulations of the ABC.
2. Treat all information from an agency or client with the confidentiality required.
3. Treat any object or item of potential evidential value with the care and control necessary to ensure its integrity.
4. Ensure that all exhibits in a case receive appropriate technical analysis.
5. Ensure that appropriate standards and controls to conduct examinations and analyses are utilized.
6. Ensure that techniques and methods which are known to be inaccurate and/or unreliable are not utilized.
7. Ensure that a full and complete disclosure of the findings is made to the submitting agency.
8. Ensure that work notes on all items, examinations, results and findings are made at the time that they are done, and appropriately preserved.
9. Render opinions and conclusions strictly in accordance with the evidence in the case (hypothetical or real) and only to the extent justified by that evidence.
10. Testify in a clear, straightforward manner and refuse to extend themselves beyond their field of competence, phrasing their testimony in such a manner so that the results are not misinterpreted.
11. Not exaggerate, embellish or otherwise misrepresent qualifications, when testifying.
12. Consent to, if it is requested and allowed, interviews with counsel for both sides prior to trial.
13. Make efforts to inform the court of the nature and implications of pertinent evidence if reasonably assured that this information will not be disclosed to the court.
14. Maintain an attitude of independence and impartiality in order to ensure an unbiased analysis of the evidence.
15. Carry out the duties of the profession in such a manner so as to inspire the confidence of the public.
16. Regard and respect their peers with the same standards that they hold for themselves.
17. Set a reasonable fee for services if it is appropriate do so, however, no services shall ever be rendered on a contingency fee basis.
18. Find it appropriate to report to the Board any violation of these Rules of Professional Conduct by another applicant or Diplomate.