

# International Association for Identification



## May, 2010 – IAI Monthly Update

FYI, this update is sent each month to all IAI board members, officers, committee chairs, regional representatives, division secretaries, certification board chairs and secretaries, division editors and IAI staff. This update contains information that is of particular interest to these groups. It is also available on the “Members’ Area” of the IAI’s website. Please see the last page of *Identification News* for login and password information.

Hello again from the IAI office.

### ***Message from Board Chair Bob Garrett - 2010 Spokane Conference***

The world economy has been slow to recover from the recession of recent years. Individual, corporate and government resources have been stretched, to what may seem to some, the breaking point. The tightening of financial resources means that some planned expenditures have been eliminated or severely restricted. Unfortunately, there are those who believe that training and training budgets are non-essential expenditures. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We find ourselves, the forensic science community, under scrutiny as never before. The National Research Council’s report, “Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward,” recommended the infusion of money and increased training and accreditation/certification requirements for forensic services providers. The report’s findings and recommendations, while seeking to bolster forensic science practices, came at a time when few resources were available to address the NRC’s concerns. Unfortunately, the council’s criticisms are being used to cast doubt on the credibility of current practices. Criticizing costs nothing. Addressing those criticisms in a productive and substantive way can be expensive.

Each of us, who practice in one of the forensic disciplines, has a choice to make. Do we rely on others to fix the problem or do we pro-actively address the issues that confront us? For many that means having to provide for ourselves when our employers or sponsoring agencies no longer can. To that end, the IAI has strived to offer its members and the forensic science community the biggest bang for its training buck.

The Annual Educational Conference of the IAI is organized to provide attendees the latest information about the forensic disciplines they practice. Workshops are offered to help acquire new skills or hone existing ones. Additionally, the venue is chosen to provide affordable lodging and sponsors help defray individual costs by providing meals and social events throughout the conference week.

Registration is now open for this year's conference, which is being held in Spokane, WA, July 11-17, 2010. All registration material is now available on the IAI's website at [www.theiai.org](http://www.theiai.org). The on-line catalog will guide you through the meetings, lectures and workshops available.

The IAI is dedicated to addressing the needs of its members and their disciplines. We hope that you will be able to take advantage of this important and affordable educational experience.

Bob Garrett, Chairman  
Board of Directors, IAI

The registration information can be found at:

<http://www.mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?i=35050>

### ***Draft Legislation***

The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (CFSO) is working with Congress to craft legislative language to implement many of the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Forensic Science Committee. That draft legislation is attached as a .pdf file to this *Monthly Update*. Note especially the makeup of the recommended oversight body, now called the Forensic Science Commission (FSC), and particularly the makeup of the subcommittees that will set policy, standards etc. for the various forensic disciplines. The fact that as set out in this draft, the members of those subcommittees need not be practitioners in the discipline and need to only be "knowledgeable" about the discipline. In addition, the Deputy Director of the new FSC, a person who will be detailed to the FSC by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), will appoint all sub-committee members. The director of the FSC will come from the Justice Department but that department will have scant influence on the decisions and appointments to the various subcommittees. It is no secret that the Innocence Project greatly influenced the direction of this proposed legislation.

Some of the provisions of this legislation are fine, others are most troublesome. This is still "work in progress" and will undoubtedly go through changes before being introduced in Congress. Nonetheless all IAI members need to be aware of what's occurring with this matter and stand ready to contact your legislators if necessary changes are not made.

### ***Institute for Law Enforcement Administration – Plano, Texas***

I was recently invited to make a presentation regarding forensic science aspects of wrongful convictions at the above institute. The title of the two-day program was *Best Practices in Law Enforcement Investigations, the Role of Leadership in Avoiding Wrongful Convictions*. Most of the speakers were law enforcement executives involved in investigations or relating incidents of wrongful conviction that involved such things as false confessions, eyewitness mis-identifications and other investigative failures. My topic was how law enforcement leaders need to be aware of how forensic science can be used to minimize false convictions and what practical steps those law enforcement leaders could take to support the use of forensic science in their respective departments.

Christine Mumma, the Executive Director of the North Carolina Actual Innocence Project gave a riveting presentation cases in her state involving wrongful convictions in her state. In addition, a panel presentation by a victim, her alleged perpetrator who spent 20 years in prison but was innocent and the detective who handled the case was one of the highlights of the meeting. There were a number of presenters from law enforcement who gave examples of good and bad events

that occurred in their agencies. Irma Rios, the crime laboratory director from Houston and her boss, Executive Assistant Chief Martha Montalvo provided an insight to the problems in the Houston Crime Laboratory.

It was a terrific experience and the message of all the presenters seemed to be well received. In this day and age, given the visibility of forensic science through forums as the NAS report, the Innocence Project and others, it is imperative that law enforcement administrators have a base of knowledge of forensics. Given that more than 66% of all pattern evidence analyses and certainly almost all crime scene investigations are done in law enforcement agencies, the time has long passed when those functions can almost be lost among other law enforcement priorities.

### ***FBI CJIS Training Catalog***

The following was recently received from the FBI CJIS Division:

The FBI/CJIS Spring/Summer Training Catalog has been released and is now on the Internet. Please check it out and share with your networks!

Go to [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

Click on the word "fingerprints" (on the left side of the screen)

Scroll to the bottom and click on "Fingerprint & Criminal History Record Training"

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### ***ATTN: Division Secretaries – Spokane Conference***

Each year many IAI divisions set up a display at the annual conference to sell merchandise advertise upcoming division conferences etc. Any division interested in obtaining display space to set up a display at the Spokane Conference, please contact the IAI Exhibit Coordinator, Jim Murray. Jim can be reached at (407) 568-7436 or by e-mail at [conference@theiai.org](mailto:conference@theiai.org)

As always, don't hesitate to contact the IAI office if there is anything we can do to assist you.

***Joe Polski***