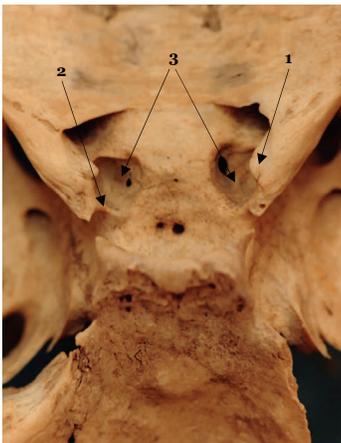




Facial reconstruction provides an image that can be posted to web pages and published via local media. This image of a 1986 John Doe recovered in Fort Worth, Texas was created from a morgue photograph

OsteoTrivia

There are several variations of features around sella turcica involving partial and complete bridging of the anterior clinoid processes (1) and the bridging of a middle clinoid process (2). Here is an example of both contributing to the formation of bilateral caroticoclinoid foramina (3).



Best Practices for Cold Identity Cases by Dana Austin, PhD, D-ABFA

The creation of CODIS(MP) provided a tool for the resolution of long-standing unidentified cases. It generated discussion among forensic anthropologists, medical examiners, law enforcement and families of missing persons and helped us come together to resolve the issue of putting names to the remains we examine. This article reviews suggested practices for handling cold identity cases.

All cases should be entered into NCIC and NAMUS. DNA samples, fingerprints, photos of faces, tattoos, personal effects, dental charts and radiographs should be searched for among police and medical examiner files. Each of these has proved beneficial in ascertaining identity.

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is a law enforcement database maintained by the FBI's CJIS division. Medical Examiners can obtain terminals; however, the requirements and cost may be prohibitive. UNID cases should have an associated law enforcement agency that can assist in NCIC entry. Many state's Missing Person's Clearinghouses will also aid in this process. Although the number and availability may vary by state, all personnel are supported with training through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

NAMUS began as UDRS, a pilot-site created by Randy Hanzlik, MD, in 2005. In 2007, the Department of Justice took over operations and changed the moniker to NAMUS. Access to this database is offered to members of the National Association of Medical Examiners or a designee. Currently, nearly 4000 MP and 6600 UNID are stored in NAMUS. By May 2010, NAMUS had directly assisted in fifteen identifications—a number that will continue to grow. NAMUS allows for the use of dental information with radiographs, body and facial

Official Newsletter

SOFA is dedicated to:

- Facilitating Communication and Cooperation Among Practicing Forensic Anthropologists
- The Continued Establishment of Scientific and Ethical Standards of Practice
- Encouraging Certification of Its Members and Accreditation of Their Labs

images, scanned documents, more detailed description of postmortem interval and other data not supported by NCIC.

The Biometric Support Center (BSC) is operated by the Department of Homeland Security and provides fingerprint support 24/7 to law enforcement and medical examiners. Operators have access to the FBI-maintained Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement IDENT fingerprint databases. When fingerprints are available on cold identity cases, it is recommended that they be run through the BSC and the local state AFIS system at regular intervals. Since utilizing BSC, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner has made sixteen fingerprint identifications on cases of long standing non-identity.

DNA samples must be submitted through an approved laboratory to be utilized in the CODIS(MP) database. Contact a local FBI office to ascertain the nearest approved laboratory for your area. Many of us use the Center for Human Identification at the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center in Fort Worth.

Cold Case Resources:

www.fas.org/irp/agency/doj/fbi/is/ncic.htm

National Crime Information Center

www.missingkids.com

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

www.NAMUS.gov

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System

www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1214422497220.shtm

Biometric Support Center

www.unhumanid.org

University of North Texas Center for Human Identification



Welcome to the SOFA Inaugural Newsletter

The current level of activity surrounding the practice of FA is unprecedented. It is clear that FA is heading in an exciting new direction. For the most part this is due to the impetus of the 2009 National Academy of Sciences report titled “Strengthening the Forensic Sciences: A Path Forward.” While the report does not address the FA community specifically, it has catalyzed us to reflect on the state of the field and start asking ourselves important questions regarding our standards of practice, certification and accreditation of laboratories. Another positive trend can be seen in the competitive research and development grants granted by the NIJ over the past several years.

In many jurisdictions across the country forensic anthropologists have taken a lead role in utilizing federal initiatives under the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to give names to the thousands of unidentified remains discovered across the United States. Programs such as the NIJ-sponsored online National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS) database and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Combined DNA Index System for Missing Persons or CODIS(MP) DNA database are two important examples.

In this light, I am proud to present SOFA members and our colleagues with the inaugural issue of the SOFA newsletter. SOFA coalesced in 2003 with a small nucleus of practicing forensic anthropologists working full time for an ME or Coroner. Since then SOFA has expanded to accept all practicing anthropologists. SOFA membership is a representative cross section of the field with DABFA, PhD and MA/MS level members numbering 39 at most recent count. For membership information please see the last page of this Issue.

The newsletter was created to cover topics and events that impact the practicing forensic anthropologist as well as various items of interest relating to human identification and the investigation of suspicious deaths from the anthropologist’s perspective.

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In this issue you will find a discussion on Federal resources for assisting in cold case identifications as well as a new online bibliography of articles relating to forensic anthropology. This month’s highlight on a forensic anthropologist is Donna Fontana with the New Jersey State Police. An update of the recent Scientific Working Group on Forensic Anthropology (SWGANTH) meeting is also included as well as a summary of the efforts of JPAC CIL lab to develop an accreditation program for human identification labs through the existing program developed by ASCLD LABS.

If you would like to contribute or report important developments in the field please contact me or co-editor Dana Austin for consideration in the next installment.

Brian Spatola, MA

Editor and Chair, SOFA

Email: BrianSpatola@Gmail.Com

SOFA Forensic Anthropology Bibliography—Now Available through online through ZOTERO

SOFA members have created a vast bibliography for forensic anthropologists with over 1600 references. In order to use the bibliography you have to do two things, both of which are free:

1. become a member of Zotero at www.zotero.org
2. download the helper application (It works only with the Firefox browser.)

Once you do this you will be able to freely search the bibliography at the following link:

http://www.zotero.org/groups/society_of_forensic_anthropologists_sofa_-_forensic_anthropology_bibliography



Synopsis of DNA: Why Molecular ID Matters by Gwen Haugen, MA, F-ABDI

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2010 / 2011

From August 6-8, 2010 Syracuse University Dialogues in Forensic Science presented “DNA: Why Molecular ID Matters.” This was the second installment of their wonderful conference series generously sponsored by the National Institute of Justice. The mix of attendees included anthropologists from both academic and applied settings (SOFA was well represented) with a wide-range of knowledge on the subject matter.

The guest speakers for the conference were Lynn Jorde, Ph.D, Professor and Chairman, Department of Human Genetics, Eccles Institute of Human Genetics, University of Utah, Suni Edson, M.S., AAFS, Supervisory DNA Analyst, Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), and Thomas Parsons, Ph.D., D-ABP-FP, Director of Forensic Science, International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), Sarajevo Headquarters. The conference began with a thorough

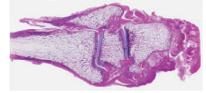
overview of human population genetics and recent developments in the field presented by Dr. Jorde. Whole genome sequencing efforts were also discussed with an eye towards how this could impact identifications in the future. Suni Edson of AFDIL took a more practical tone as she detailed the best procedures/practices for the sampling and processing of human skeletal remains. Several AFDIL case studies were used to better demonstrate advances in the technology and practical lessons learned over the years. Dr. Parsons took the topic global as he discussed how the integrated role of anthropology and DNA at the ICMP has been the key to identification success in the former Yugoslavia. The ICMP’s involvement in disaster victim identification from other international incidents explored the unique coordination and preparedness challenges faced and the progress which has been made by employing an interdisciplinary team approach.

The format for this conference series is unique in that ample time is provided during and after each session for attendees to ask questions of the speaker leading to further discussion. Keeping the number of attendees small lends itself to more involvement of the group as a whole which provided for some very lively discussions. If that wasn’t good enough, the picturesque Minnowbrook Lodge and Conference Center in the Catskill Mountains provided a beautiful backdrop for making new acquaintances, catching up with old friends, or just relaxing between scheduled events.

The last installment in the Dialogues in Forensic Science series – Trauma I – took place November 5-7 at Syracuse University. Look for a review of that session in the next newsletter. Sessions are also planned for 2011. For more information, please access the conference website at www.suforensicconferences.com.



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Synopsis of SWGANTH Meeting Held June 1-3, 2010 BY Angi Christensen, PhD, Secretary (Guest Contributor)

The Scientific Working Group for Forensic Anthropology (SWGANTH), co-sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Defense Central Identification Laboratory (DOD CIL) has held six meetings since its formation in January, 2008. These meetings have consisted primarily of discussing and drafting best practice guidelines for the discipline of forensic anthropology.

The most recent meeting was held January 1-3, 2010, and was the most prolific meeting to date. After more than two years of work, discussion and debate, the Board voted to approve ten best practice documents for publication which can be found on the Documents page of the website. Documents approved for publication included: Code of Ethics and Conduct, Qualifications, Laboratory Management and Quality Assurance, Facial Approximation, Skeletal Sampling and

Preparation, Determination of Medicolegal Significance, Age Estimation, Personal Identification, Sex Assessment, and Pathological Conditions and Anomalies. This meeting also had the greatest turnout in SWGANTH meeting history, with more than thirty anthropologists in attendance.

Other accomplishments included the approval of a SWGANTH logo (currently undergoing minor revisions), and the formation of several new committees: The Education Committee will be working to identify basic components of forensic anthropology graduate and continuing education programs, the Gap Analysis Committee will be working to identify research needs in the field of forensic anthropology, and the Self-Assessment Committee will be working to develop a self-assessment checklist that laboratories and practitioners can use to evaluate their compliance with SWGANTH guidelines.

But there is still much work to be done. We welcome and encourage participation in SWGANTH efforts, including meeting attendance. Many members of the forensic anthropological community have participated in drafting SWGANTH documents and working on other committees, and their contributions have been valuable and appreciated. The meetings, however, are a great opportunity for face-to-face conversation, real-time discussion, and hands-on work. We hope that anthropologists (and their employers) recognize the importance of community-wide participation in this effort, and support attending these valuable and productive (and fun!) meetings. For more information about previous an upcoming meetings, as well as other activities and opportunities for participation, please visit the SWGANTH website (www.swganth.org) or email secretary@swganth.org.

We welcome and encourage participation in SWGANTH efforts, including meeting attendance.

Inroads to Accreditation by Vince Sava, MA (Guest Contributor)

An accreditation program that specifically covers forensic anthropology laboratories is currently unavailable. In the absence of Human Identification as an accredited discipline, the Joint POW/MIA Command, Central Identification Laboratory was initially accredited in Trace Evidence by the American Society of Crime Lab Directors, Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD-LAB) in 2003, making them the first accredited human identification laboratory.

In 2008, the CIL was re-accredited in Trace Evidence under more stringent ASCLD-LAB criteria, collectively known as the International Program, which is based on ISO 17025 standards. The CIL has

since taken measures to establish Human Identification as an accredited discipline within ASCLD-LAB. This discipline includes forensic anthropologists, odontologists, and pathologists, and other related technical disciplines.

One of the goals in this endeavor is to demonstrate the human identification profession's widespread support of quality assurance by having its members complete the ASCLD-LAB International Program Assessor Training Course. The result of the July 2010 Assessor Course in Hawaii was an increase in the number of assessor trained anthropologists, odontologists, and related technicians to approximately twenty. Human Identification professionals

from both academia and government agencies were represented.

Any laboratory or facility that is thinking of accreditation, or simply wanting to improve the quality of its operations and products to its customers, should have one, or more, of their staff complete the course.

Until then, a laboratory or facility will not know what it does not know. For those who are interested in taking the assessor course and participating in this effort please contact Vince Sava at the CIL at 808-448-1746 or visit www.asclldlab.org/trng/assessorcourse.html



Anthropologist Profile of the Month; Donna Fontana, MS

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2010 / 2011

Donna A. Fontana is the Forensic Anthropologist for the New Jersey State Police Office of Forensic Sciences (NJSP OFS) in Hamilton, New Jersey and a statewide educator on the role of the Forensic Anthropologist in victim identification. She began her career as New Jersey's first forensic anthropologist with the New Jersey State Medical Examiner's Office in 1981. She has completed over five hundred cases of skeletal identification from twenty one counties throughout the state. She is also the case manager and medical examiner designee for data entered into NAMUS for New Jersey's unidentified bodies.

In 1993, Donna joined the New Jersey State Police Criminal Investigation Bureau where, in addition to continuing anthropological analysis, she became proficient using the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. This allowed her to assist law enforcement (LE) with their NCIC entries and extended her expertise into missing persons and cold case investigations.

In 2005, she became Director of the newly established Forensic Anthropology Laboratory/Human Remains Repository within the Office of Forensic Sciences, New Jersey State Police serving the entire state. The function of the laboratory is to provide expertise to county medical examiners (MEs) and Law Enforcement agencies in the analysis of skeletonized, decomposed, or otherwise unrecognizable human remains. The laboratory processes approximately thirty to forty human identification cases annually.

The lab also provides field investigation and recovery of human remains to LE agencies state-wide as well as manages a centralized repository of dental records of New Jersey's missing and unidentified persons. With the assistance of a team of qualified forensic odontologists, these records are digitized, accurately coded and uploaded into several national databases.

Recently, with assistance from NJ law enforcement and county MEs, the laboratory submitted sixty two human skeletal samples from cold case unidentified

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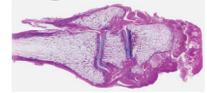


Donna A. Fontana is the Forensic Anthropologist for the New Jersey State Police Office of Forensic Sciences (NJSP OFS) in Hamilton, New Jersey

remains from across the state for DNA analysis and entry into CODIS Missing Persons Database. The lab also provides anthropological and metadata assistance to the NJSP FBI-partnered regional mtDNA lab.

Providing three-dimensional clay facial reconstructions in cold case investigations has also been instrumental in victim identification. The Laboratory provides this service and also assists in providing composite drawings of the face based upon analysis of the skull.

Donna is a Fellow in the Physical Anthropology section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. She also is a member of DMORT (Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team) Region II, having worked in the identification process of victims of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 in New York City, American Airlines Flight 587 on November 12, 2001 in Queens, New York as well as EgyptAir 990 plane crash on October 31, 1999 off Rhode Island.



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Criteria for Membership (SOFA Bylaws Section 1):

MA/MS or PhD in Anthropology with emphasis in Physical Anthropology and graduate training in Forensic Anthropology. (Related degrees will be considered on a case by case basis)

Demonstration of active engagement in forensic anthropology case work as an employee or consultant with a government agency

Sponsorship from a current SOFA member

A Note from Treasurer, Pamela Steger, MS

As of 2010, SOFA is registered in the District of Columbia as a non-profit organization. Our new membership application is available upon request. Please follow the instructions and determine if you meet the criteria for membership. Members must agree to adhere to the SOFA Ethics Guidelines which accompany the form.

Members can pay using a check or by PayPal. If you select the PayPal option you will receive an email request for dues payment that must be completed within 10 days. The annual fee is \$50.00 plus a \$3 processing fee. Our primary goals this year are to finance application fees for tax-exempt status with the IRS and to develop and maintain the SOFA website (which should be online sometime early next year).

I encourage all current members to invite others who might be interested in joining SOFA. Thank you all for joining and contributing to our society.

For Membership questions or to receive an application by email, contact Pam Steger, Treasurer at: pamelasteger@yahoo.com



SOFA Editors:

Brian Spatola
 Dana Austin

Editorial Assistant:

Ariel Singer

Photo of the Month:

Demineralized Fibula.
 Photo by Merissa Olmer.
 Courtesy of the National Museum
 of Health & Medicine