

SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP ON BLOODSTAIN PATTERN ANALYSIS
(SWGSTAIN)

Spring Meeting
March 26-28, 2002
Quantico, VA

March 26, 2002

The following minutes document the first meeting of invited participants in bloodstain pattern analysis which resulted in the formation of the Scientific Working Group on Bloodstain Pattern Analysis (SWGSTAIN). Those in attendance were:

Rhonda Craig, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
Rod Englert, Englert Forensic Consultants
Bart Epstein, Laber & Epstein
Ross Gardner, Lake City Police Dept.
Tom Griffin, CBI
Jeff Gurvis, N. Illinois Police Crime Lab
Vince Hawkes
Jane Homeyer, FBI
Paul Kish, Forensic Consultant & Associates
Jennifer Luttmann, FBI
Tony Onorato, FBI
Kelly Robbins, Kansas Bureau of Investigation
Heather Seubert, FBI
LeeAnn Singley, Pennsylvania State Police
Bob Spalding, Spalding Forensics
Toby Wolson, Miami-Dade PD Crime Laboratory

The meeting started out with an official welcome from Jane Homeyer. Jane presented a PowerPoint program on the concept of FBI sponsored Scientific Working Groups, or SWGs. Existing SWGs include SWGFAST (Friction ridge Analysis, Study and Technology), SWGMAT (MATERial analysis), SWGDRUG (analysis of seized DRUGs), SWGDAM (DNA Analysis Methods), SWGIT (Imaging Technologies), and SWGDOC (forensic DOCUMENT examiners). Significant aspects of SWGs include the following:

Each SWG has an ASCLD (American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors) representative.

A SWG has no authority to set standards, only guidelines, but a body such as ASCLD LAB (Laboratory Accreditation Board) may adopt these guidelines as standards.

SWGs are sponsored by the FBI, while TWGs (Technical Working Groups) are sponsored by NIJ.

We need to remember that we are in the bigger area of forensics and interact with many other disciplines. Epstein suggested a bloodstain pattern working group have a serology subcommittee.

Onorato presented proposed SWGSTAIN bylaws modeled on the SWGDAM bylaws. A goal of the meeting will be to have our bylaws in a final draft form for consideration at the end of this meeting. Variations of the name for this SWG were presented (SWGSPAT, SWGSPAM and SWGBLOOD) and discussed, with agreement being reached on SWGSTAIN.

The afternoon was spent in a lively discussion moderated by Gurvis modeled after the television show Jeopardy except the questions and answers were reversed. The four topics were "Who Am I?", "Into the FRYEing Pan," "At the Crime Scene," and "Spot Luck." Each column had several questions associated with the heading with different dollar amounts. Attendees were divided into teams for the friendly competition. The game was devised to present the goals and issues involved in BPA work.

March 27, 2002

Homeyer presented material about the FBI Virtual Academy. SWGs are using the virtual academy for communications within their groups as well as for the dissemination of information. Homeyer will serve as this group's training manager. All SWGs have a subcomponent for education and training. Guests Dean Fletcher and Ginny Field talked about being a Subject Matter Expert (SME).

Onorato led the afternoon discussion on the proposed SWGSTAIN bylaws. The proposed document was projected on a screen and this allowed it to be considered word by word. Among the points of discussion was the concept of SWGSTAIN as a consensus building body with a subcommittee structure.

March 28, 2002

Onorato headed up the morning discussion about possible subcommittees. This included summarizing all of the topics listed so far and how these topics can be grouped into the following subcommittees.

- I. Terminology
 - Taxonomy
 - Glossary/Definitions

- II. Quality Assurance
 - Report writing
 - Proficiency testing

Certification

SOPs

Methodology (that you must follow one)

Personnel Qualifications

Peer review

III. Education and Training

Resources and references

Personnel qualification

Certification/Proficiency/Competency

Levels/Areas/Topics – Scope and depth

Instructor qualifications

Education

Training

Experience

Continuing education/training

Peer reviewer qualifications

Research/Publications/Presentations

IV. Research

New methods development

Standards development

Validation

Error rates

V. Legal

Admissibility

Widespread acceptance

Peer review

Publication

Testing

Rates of error

Existence of standards

Reliability of principles and relevance

Qualifications/Credibility of witness

Ethics

Fair/Unbiased witness

Code of ethics

This session was followed by Gurvis and Onorato leading a discussion on membership, both in terms of the aforementioned subcommittees, and SWGSTAIN in general. There was unanimous agreement that any discussions regarding an individual for potential membership stays inside the meeting room and the SWGSTAIN members present at that time. We need to have non-U.S. attendees in order to ensure an international approach. SWGSTAIN meetings will be a minimum of once a year, but probably two times a year. The majority of the time at meetings will likely be spent in subcommittee work. The idea of offering an ex officio membership to IABPA and IAI will be explored.

The afternoon was devoted to a detailed review of the proposed bylaws conducted by Onorato. The decision to form SWGSTAIN was unanimous and the proposed bylaws were accepted. The meeting adjourned with the next day being a travel day.