



# ASTEE

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May 2023

ASTEE Newsletter

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## Message from the President

Greetings Trace Examiners,

We are excited about our first-ever joint meeting between ASTEE and the Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists (NWAFS).

The conference will be held in Salt Lake City, September 25th through 27th, 2023 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, 3524 S. Market Street West Valley City, Utah 84119. Please go to the NWAFS website for more information at [www.nwafs.org](http://www.nwafs.org). ASTEE is hosting two workshops. One workshop will be “Is Gasoline

*Present? - Using a statistically based method to graphically display the support for gasoline in an unknown sample*” taught by our own **Kelsey Winters** and **Brenda Christy**! The other is “*Human Hair: A Review of Features Related to Ancestry and Somatic Origin*” instructed by our own **Sandra Koch**! This is your chance to head to the Northwest and receive some excellent instruction and comradery.

One of my greatest concerns as a Trace Analyst and a Laboratory Director is the reduction of trace examinations across the country. We see laboratories reducing staff and eliminating trace disciplines in favor of DNA. They don’t seem to understand the consequences this will have. We must continue to support and strengthen trace evidence sections, and stop the trend of losing the ability to assist investigations and present crucial evidence in court proceedings. Instead, we should educate police investigators regularly about the invaluable assistance we can provide. In addition, we need to support more research in Trace Evidence procedures to enhance the specificity of Trace Evidence in the future.

Therefore, we have created a new Committee in ASTEE called the Outreach Committee! Our objective will be to advocate for the value of Trace Evidence and advance the awareness of what Trace Evidence can provide. Materials (e.g., PowerPoints, information



## Message from the President continued...

sheets, etc.) will be developed and made available for ASTEE members to present to anyone willing to listen, from lab directors to police chiefs or politicians. In particular, the investigators who actually collect evidence. As a member of ASCLD, I feel the push away from Trace Evidence and many directors use expense as an excuse. I am giving a Poster Presentation this year at ASCLD on making a Case for Trace. I know you share my concern that Forensic Laboratories are diminishing their Trace Evidence Sections. I feel if we inform our customers about the wonderful things we can do, they will be more interested in requesting Trace analyses.

The new ASTEE Outreach Committee will consist of **Tatiana Trejos** from WV University, **Candie Shegogue** from the FBI, **Michelle Mercer** from Monroe Co. NY, **Sandy Parent** from DPS Texas and OSAC Outreach Committee, **Daniel Mabel** from USACIL, **Skip Palenik** (or a representative from Microtrace) and myself.

Please consider supporting this new Committee by sending ideas, PowerPoints, Information sheets, or anything you can think of to help spread the word about Trace Evidence. The OSAC Outreach Committee has already created an excellent Trace Evidence app. Please share that with all your investigators.

Thank you and Blessings!

Michael A. Trimpe

Hamilton County Coroner's Crime Laboratory Director

2023 ASTEE President

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## Important Dates

June 1st	Deadline for submissions for ASTEE Edmond Locard award
June 13—16th	Inter/Micro meeting, Chicago, Illinois
August 8th	Deadline for submissions to ASTEE Travel Award to NWAFS/ASTEE
August 8th	Deadline for submissions to ASTEE Research Grant
September 25 – 27th	Joint ASTEE and the Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists (NWAFS) meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah (see <a href="http://www.nwafs.org">www.nwafs.org</a> )
November 20 – 24th	23rd Triennial Meeting of the International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS) Sydney, Australia (see <a href="http://www.iafs2023.com.au">www.iafs2023.com.au</a> )



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## ASTEE at a Glance – Committee Updates

### Awards Committee

Congratulations to our winners:

- Kim Freeland, Criminalist II, Trace Evidence Department, Rhode Island State Crime Laboratory, for the Hooke College of Applied Sciences Training Award
- Kourtney Dalzell, West Virginia University, Forensic and Investigative Science – 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD student, for the Scholarship Award

Other Awards that are being offered soon:

Edmond Locard Award for Excellence in Trace Evidence: Nominate a colleague that has been a mentor to you. Deadline is June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Travel Award to NWAFS/ASTEE joint meeting: Meeting is being held in Salt Lake City, Utah September 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. ASTEE is offering a travel award to attend. Please visit the ASTEE website for more information and to apply. Applications are due August 8<sup>th</sup>.

Research Grant Award: Apply for a \$1000 award for funding your research in Trace Evidence. Application Deadline August 8<sup>th</sup>.

Question about an award? Ask us at [ASTEEAwards@gmail.com](mailto:ASTEEAwards@gmail.com) More information about our awards can also be found at <https://www.asteetrace.org/awards>

Thank you to Jennifer Chen, Michelle Drake, Dr. Geraldine Monjardez, Luther Schaeffer and Chad Schennum, for their continued service on the ASTEE Awards committee.

Also, a thank you to Darrel Hall at the Oregon State Police Laboratory for his years of service as Chair of the ASTEE Awards Committee and also for helping the transition to the new Awards Committee chair.

### Education Committee

We are partnering with the Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists (NWAFS) for the joint conference this year, which will take place September 25-27, 2023 in Salt Lake City UT! We are organizing at least two workshops for this conference, so please save the dates and consider submitting a presentation or poster! More information to come!

Be sure to visit the ASTEE member forum! We have been posting various journal articles, conference materials, and online resources for your enjoyment. Please post anything you would like to share with the membership! If you have any questions, please contact the committee at the e-mail listed below.

If you have ideas for potential webinars, you can recommend someone (including yourself) who may be able to offer a workshop or webinar, or you or your laboratory are interested in hosting a workshop (virtual or otherwise), please send an e-mail to [astee.edu.commited@gmail.com](mailto:astee.edu.commited@gmail.com).



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## ASTEE at a Glance – Committee Updates continued...

### Communications Committee

The Communications Committee would like to officially welcome the former AAFS Fire Debris Discussion Group to the ASTEE Forum! Thank you very much to Brenda Christy for requesting to give this group a home within ASTEE. If you have any questions, thoughts, or theories about fire debris, please share them in the Fire Debris Discussion Group.

The current existing Forum categories include General Discussion, Employment Opportunities, Training and Continuing Education, Educational Resources, Research Needs, Forensic XRF, OSAC Implementation, Fire Debris, and the ASTEE Store. If you have an idea for another discussion category or topic, please email the Communications Committee at [asteetrace@gmail.com](mailto:asteetrace@gmail.com) so we can get it added!

### Publications Committee

#### Newsletter

We are always looking for new content to share with ASTEE Members! Please send any ideas for ASTEE Newsletter content, including *News You Can Use* topics, to Kiersten Coffin ([Kiersten.Coffin@dps.texas.gov](mailto:Kiersten.Coffin@dps.texas.gov)).

#### JASTEE

The most-recent JASTEE issue (12-1) was published in December and is available at <https://www.asteetrace.org/jastee>.

Do you have a Trace Evidence case study to share? Have you started some original research that would benefit our community? Please consider submitting your completed work to JASTEE for publication in an upcoming issue. Manuscript submissions and questions may be directed to the Journal Editor, Heidi Prough ([ProughH@michigan.gov](mailto:ProughH@michigan.gov)).

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## News You Can Use

### OSAC ASTM's now free to access

OSAC recently decided that the standard forensic methods (Subcommittee E30) published by ASTM are now **freely** available.

The standards that have already made it to the OSAC Registry are available via this link <https://www.nist.gov/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/osac-registry>

By clicking on the respective standard you are redirected to a page where you can directly download the pdf-version of the documents. It also shows when the standard was issued/available.

As of April 4, 2023, the OSAC Registry contains 141 forensic science standards (100 published and 41 OSAC Proposed Standards) within various disciplines, many applicable to the work of ASTEE members who contribute to their development.







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**May we introduce you to... Nick Plumley** Laboratory System Quality Specialist (Trace Technical Coordinator) and Forensic Scientist with the Pennsylvania State Police

**What Trace Evidence sub-discipline(s) are the focus of your work?** Explosives, fire debris, glass, GSR, paint and fibers, in addition to vehicle lamp examination and general trace analyses (chemical/material identification and comparison).

**What is your favorite quote?** *"And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."* –Unknown

**What is the top activity on your bucket list?** There's nothing more important to me than my family. So the top of my bucket list would definitely include a LONG family getaway, to either a remote cabin surrounded by mountains, or to a secluded tropical island with nothing but sand and ocean as far as the eye can see. Oh, and leave the electronic devices behind.



**What do you like to do in your down time?** Outside of the lab, my favorite thing to do is spend time with my family and friends, whether it be camping, hiking, playing games, movies, or just sitting around a fire chatting. I also enjoy the occasional DIY project. Over the last couple of years - with the tremendous effort and planning on the part of my parents and the willing assistance of my wife and two children, this has resulted in the conversion of the house deck to composite, as well as the construction of a shed – which is still a work in progress.

**May we introduce you to... Wayne Moorehead** Criminalist/consultant/instructor (*forensicTRACE*)



**What Trace Evidence sub-discipline(s) are the focus of your work?** Miscellaneous and unknown trace evidence, fire debris analysis, explosives analysis, forensic microscopy

**Who has been a mentor to you and how have they helped you?** I have had several excellent mentors in my career and these are only a few:

- Dr. Walter McCrone and Skip Palenik – Provided analytical microscopy instruction, direction, and encouragement in analyzing trace evidence materials
- Dr. John DeHaan – Helped me in fire science and fire debris analysis and we taught the California Criminalistics Institute Low Explosives Analysis course from 1992 to 2010.
- Sgt. Charlie Stumph – Taught me about and invited me to training in explosives and improvised devices to be a better explosives analyst.

**What is the top activity on your bucket list?** I don't have a bucket list. I have projects to be completed including a database of pyrotechnic and firework compositions, establishing a database of optical properties, finishing the longevity of refractive index liquids project, and eventually posting videos on [The Microscopy Lab](#), my YouTube channel (see link or search themicroscopylab)

**What is the most interesting place you have been?** Singapore – I will always be grateful to Fred Tulleners (deceased) for recommending me to the government to teach microscopy and trace evidence to their forensic scientists for two weeks. I proposed to my girlfriend (now wife) over the South China Sea on our way there, and had an incredible experience in the rain forest. Sunny when we arrived, but in about two hours a downpour started soaking us. We ran through and out of the forest to a bus where we dripped and sloshed onto the bus with dry people cringing away from us to avoid our drippings. By the time we reached our destination and got off the bus, our clothes were nearly dry.



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