



# WATAI NEWSLETTER

2006 1st Half Issue

The official publication of the Washington Association of Technical Accident Investigators

## Spring 2006 Conference

By William Butterfield

The spring conference was opened up by our esteemed President, Ron Sanders. He welcomed all of those who attended and gave us a brief “rundown” of the day’s events.

This year’s presenters were Greg Russell and Lenny Simpson. Greg and Lenny have come all the way to the Great Northwest once before in 2004, where they presented a day long presentation followed by a week long 40-hour class on Excel. Greg and Lenny went over several topics including, proper PDOF determination, Delta-V in collision reconstruction (with case studies), crush profiling using tape measures & Excel and how to use the NHTSA vehicle database. The day long presentation was an excellent starting point for those members that were going to attend Greg & Lenny’s Crush class the following week.

Lunch was catered once again by the same group that has been used in the last two conferences. Again, the food was superb and was a great deal for only \$ 5.00.

WATAI would also like to say “thank you” to the entire Seattle Police Departments traffic section for their continued hospitality in allowing WATAI to use their facilities and helping in the background to make sure the conference runs smoothly.

## Membership

The latest figures from Mel Knittel indicate that once again WATAI is a strong, thriving organization. The entire association board staff thank you for your continued participation with WATAI. Remember, WATAI is “About you” and “For you”. Don’t forget to keep “networking” and spread the word about WATAI.

## Presidents Corner

By Ron Sanders

Greetings fellow WATAI members. As usual the latest edition of our association newsletter has been in limbo waiting for yours truly to get his act together and write the latest installment of the President’s Corner. Once again Bill, I apologize for my tardiness.

### In This Issue:

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I trust everyone who possibly can is planning on attending our upcoming Fall Conference. The festivities will start October 10<sup>th</sup> when our very own Dick Chapman will proctor the ACTAR Test in Seattle. October 11<sup>th</sup> we'll kick off the conference with a series of staged crashes. The primary purpose of those crashes will be to create "real-world" scenarios for conference attendees to see first-hand the latest and greatest tools in collision investigation, reconstruction and analysis. Several vendors from across North America will be on hand to employ their wares using the staged crashes as actual case studies. The vendors will also be able to use this setting to provide hands-on exposure to current and potential customers. On October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> we will have formal presentations from the various vendors. The staged crashes on October 11<sup>th</sup> will be held on the grounds of Wild Waves/Enchanted Village, located at 36201 Enchanted Parkway S. in Federal Way. The classroom portion of the conference on October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> will be held in the City Council Chambers at Federal Way City Hall, 33325 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., Federal Way. We will start each morning with a social hour and continental breakfast beginning at 8am. The conference will begin promptly at 9am each day and conclude in the late afternoon. A delicious catered lunch will be available on-site for a nominal cost of \$5 each day.

In addition to the subject matter listed above, a small portion of our Fall Conference will be set aside for the annual association Business Meeting. The offices of President, Secretary and Sergeant-at-Arms plus Board of Directors Positions #2 and #4 are up for election at this meeting. A current member in good standing can fill each of these positions. In addition to these elections there may be proposals for changes to the association by-laws during this Business Meeting that require membership consideration. Whether running for an open position on the board, nominating a candidate or simply having a say in the direction of the association by voting on matters before the membership, please plan on participating in the process to keep the rich traditions of this association alive and vibrant.

Here are some upcoming training opportunities, both locally and otherwise, that we thought you should be aware of:

1. Motorcycle Collision Investigation by Wade Bartlett: September 11-15, 2006 – Aberdeen, WA. Sponsored by the WA. State Traffic Safety Commission – **LE Only**  
To register contact Myra Rockwell at Aberdeen PD, 360-533-4966 (M-F 0800-1630)  
[mrockwell@apdinfo.com](mailto:mrockwell@apdinfo.com)
2. F3T2 Conference: September 17-21, 2006 – Houston, TX. Cost: \$550 (until 9/1) \$700 after 9/1. To register go to: <http://www.taars.org/registration-1.htm>
3. IPTM's Human Factors Course: September 18-22, 2006 – Federal Way, WA. Sponsored by the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission – **LE Only**  
To register contact Officer Ron Potts at FWPD, 253-835-6839 (M-Th 0700-1700)  
[Ron.Potts@cityoffederalway.com](mailto:Ron.Potts@cityoffederalway.com)
4. Collision Reconstruction by Accident Analysis & Reconstruction, Inc. (Greg Russell and Lenny Simpson) – 80 hours: October 2-13, 2006, Hosted by Edmonds PD, Cost: \$595  
Register at: <http://accidentanalysis.net/>
5. ACTAR Test: October 10, 2006 - Seattle, WA.  
To register contact: <http://www.actar.org/>
6. WATAI Fall Conference: October 11-13, 2006, Federal Way, WA. Hosted by Federal Way PD. Cost: No Charge for conference with current WATAI/FARO membership. \$5.00 per day for on-site catered lunch.

7. CDR User's Conference: January 29-31, 2007, Houston, TX. Sponsored by CSI, the ARC Network and Collision Publishing, LLC. Cost: \$575 thru 12/15/06, \$775 afterwards. Register at: <http://www.crashconferences.com/>

On the horizon in 2007, look for Bruno Schmidt to be our featured speaker for the 07 Spring Conference and Wade Bartlett to be our featured speaker at our 07 Fall Conference. We've had several inquires from members about the return of Greg Russell and Lenny Simpson to the area for another 40-hour Crush Class. We're working with them to try for a return visit sometime in the late Spring. Expect to see a 40-hour Advanced Reconstruction course from them during that timeframe as well.

As always our goal is to provide opportunities for our members to experience quality training at an affordable price. If you have ideas for training topics or resources please contact us at [info@watai.ws](mailto:info@watai.ws)

That's all for now. I trust each of you have been enjoying the summer months with family and friends. I look forward to seeing you at the Fall Conference.

Sincerely,  
Ron Sanders  
WATAI President

## **Book Review**

The following is a book review that was sent to me to include in this newsletter.

### **Another Book Review from the desk of Joseph E. Badger, Bloomington, Indiana**

International Network of Collision Reconstructionists member, author, 33-year RCMP veteran, traffic crash investigator, reconstruction consultant and all-around good guy R.W. (Bob) Rivers has just penned his 11th and – he says – final book. He spent a lot of time writing the title. EVIDENCE IN TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION AND RECONSTRUCTION: Identification, Interpretation and Analysis of Evidence, and the Traffic Crash Investigation and Reconstruction Process.

A blurb of the book posted at the publisher's Web site indicates the book has 324 pages. Well, that's a stretch. To be honest, the last numbered page is 295. But gee, it has the "About the Author" page, a title page, list of contributors page, a dedication page, a forward AND a preface.... And it has a "Note," a "Disclaimer" and a word about the Metric System. Then a 10-page table of contents. So, yeah, 324 pages.

It also has 175 illustrations and 13 tables.

Rivers has always maintained that there is a lot more to traffic crash investigations than "speed analysis," and therefore for his ultimate text he covered the entire investigation/process in his new manual. And yet he still covers most of the essential ingredients of speed analysis.

One thing I like about the book aside from its contents is that it's full of friends and memories.

For example, Russ Arend wrote the Foreword. I remember Russ from his heading the "Long Course" at Northwestern University Traffic Institute (now the Center for Public Safety). He went on to establish the Institute of Police Technology & Management (IPTM) at the University of North Florida.

Rivers dedicated his book to Dr. R.C. (Dick) Hodge, IPTM's editor and without whom my own book *Trailer Underride: Conspicuity, Human Factors, and Rear Bumpers* would never have found the light of day.

Contributors to Rivers' "Evidence Manual" include two INCR members, Al Baxter and George Bonnett. Another contributor and colleague of mine, with whom I was embroiled in a few cases, was the late Bernard Abrams.

Rivers also acknowledged INCR members Frank Navin, John Ruller and my friend the late Charlie Kirk.

The fact that on page 31, Bob Rivers listed one of my articles under the heading "Recommended Reading" didn't hurt.

Speaking of recommending reading, the bibliography in the back of the book lists a whole bunch of people you know and whom I consider personal friends... Besides the folks whose names I dropped earlier, you will find Tony Becker, Bob DuBois, James Collins, Vic Craig, John Daily & Nate Shigemura, Mike Lofgren, Rudy Limpert, Jim Mitchell, Dan Parkka and Gary Stephens. (Yes, I know, I didn't list Nate's name alphabetically because he is inexplicably firmly fixed to John Daily.)

Now that we have all that out of the way, I suspect you'd like to know what's actually IN the book.

It begins with an Introduction to Traffic Accident Investigation. This is not a three or four paragraph description of the investigation process. It's almost 30 pages explanation of the investigator's duties, the accuracy and errors involved, an expert's responsibilities, plus there's a nifty checklist – a "Series of Events" – to make sure you don't miss anything.

The Introduction goes on to define the difference between a fact witness and a lay witness. It explains what the investigation should be prepared to do for trial. Also it presents a history of the Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction (ACTAR) taken straight from the ACTAR Web site. (Except Rivers chose to substitute "Crash" for "Accident" even though most English-speaking lay persons still calls them accidents. And Bob, we're not changing the acronym to ACTCR. I mean how would you pronounce that?)

Chapter Two is all about the human element in accident investigation and reconstruction. Written by Martin Kurke and Anne Corbin the chapter delves into human reliability, error, and risk-taking.

Bernard Abrams wrote Chapter Three, "The Role of Vision, Visibility, and Discernibility in Driver Performance."

Okay, so there's no such word as discernibility. Abrams was an optometrist, not a lexicographer, so I'll cut him some slack. We all know the word is discernability, a noun meaning "distinctness that makes perception easy."

Bernie gets into photopic and scotopic vision, acuity, and factors that can affect vision.

Chapter Four is a two-part chapter dealing with pathology (written by James Ferris) and the medical examination (written by Los Angeles County Medical Examiner Dr. Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran). And while the name Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran doesn't fall trippingly off the tongue, you may recall the name mentioned a time or two in the infamous O.J. Simpson trial.)

There are at least two people named Michael Sweet. Probably the more famous Michael Sweet is a Christian rock singer and co-founder of perhaps the most popular Christian rock band ever, Stryper. He had absolutely nothing to do with Bob Rivers' book. The other Michael Sweet – the Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Consultant Michael Sweet – from Edmonton, Alberta, wrote Chapter Five. Which, not surprisingly, is all about Bloodstain Pattern Analysis.

Chapter Six, "Forensic Photography and Scene Measurements," is in two parts. Robert Wyman handles the photographic applications section while Bob Rivers covers scene measurements and plan drawings.

Rivers managed to write Chapter Seven, "Trafficway Evidence," all by himself. Trafficway Evidence is what some of us might refer to as "Facts from the Road." This chapter covers traffic control devices, signals, detectors, timing, pavement edges, glare, debris, scrapes, scratches and grooves, chips, chops and gouges..., and all sorts of tire marks. Bob includes pages of great photos to assist the reader in identifying physical evidence on the roadway.

Chapters Eight (Vehicle Examinations) and Nine (Speed Analysis and Determinations) are both by Rivers. These two chapters – which make up 40 percent of the text – may be why you bought the book in the first place. Each chapter could be a book all by itself.

At Chapter Ten, we have Al Baxter's "Evidence Manual [for] Motorcycle Crash Investigation." This chapter discusses, among other things: rake, trail, acceleration, braking and turning. And it explains the dreaded lean angle equation for determining the amount of lean required to successfully negotiate a curve.

There's a section on calculating the minimum speed of a skidding or sliding motorcycle (and a sliding rider, whether he's wearing leathers or, heaven forbid, polyesters).

The book's appendices offer all manner of U.S. and SI conversion tables and they are followed by a "Quick-Find Index" which refers to particular paragraphs rather than page numbers. That way, you go straight to what you're looking for rather than just a page where you would have to scan the whole page to find what you wanted.

"Finally," quoting the publisher's blurb, "there is a comprehensive quick-find index that takes the reader directly to any topic, formulae, or subject matter - or any combination of these."

The book – EVIDENCE IN TRAFFIC CRASH INVESTIGATION AND RECONSTRUCTION: Identification, Interpretation and Analysis of Evidence, and the Traffic Crash Investigation and Reconstruction Process – comes in both hard cover (\$86.95) and soft cover (\$56.95) and is available through Charles C Thomas, Publisher, LTD., 2600 S. First St., Springfield, IL 62704. (<http://www.ccthomas.com>) Or you may e-mail questions to [books@ccthomas.com](mailto:books@ccthomas.com).

## **Crush Class**

The week following our spring conference, 30 members of the association made the trek to Edmonds PD to attend Greg & Lenny's 40-hour crush class using Excel. The class was not only an excellent "refresher" in the proper use of crush but it showed how versatile Excel can be used. Class attendees not only had "hands on" classroom participation but also practical "hands on" field participation. Once again, Greg and Lenny proved that the class cost was worth it when you considered the valuable information and training that you received. Look for WATAI to sponsor more classes involving Greg & Lenny in the future.

## **Fall 2006 Conference**

The fall 2006 Conference is coming together nicely. With only a month or so before the conference, a meeting site and crash testing site have been secured. Federal Way Police have been gracious enough to "open their doors" to WATAI. We are still looking for donated vehicles. If you have one or know of someone who might be interested in donating a vehicle to WATAI, please call President Ron Sanders.

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