



# WATAI NEWSLETTER

2005 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Issue

The official publication of the Washington Association of Technical Accident Investigators

## Newsletter Information

By William Butterfield

With the New Year upon us, I have decided to attempt to start the newsletter back up on a bi-annual basis unless we obtain enough articles and notifications to make in worthy of publishing more. On behalf of the Publications and Reports committee, I am asking you, the membership, to please forward any ideas or articles that you would like to see in the newsletter. If you plan to forward an article please send it in Word format to me at [www.crashmank9@msn.com](mailto:www.crashmank9@msn.com). Thank you.

## In This Issue:

Newsletter Information  
Fall 2004 Conference  
Membership, get the word out!  
President's Corner  
WREX 2006  
Guest Section:  
ACTAR...Then & Now

## Fall 2004 Conference

By William Butterfield

October 2004 brought all of us back together again for the Fall 2004 membership meeting/conference in Tacoma. Four current Board Members decided not to seek re-election. Those positions included the President, Secretary, Board Positions #2 and #4. Three new faces were voted by the membership to fill these positions, including myself as Secretary. Ron Sanders, the then current Vice-President sought the Presidents position and was voted to take that position. Outgoing Officers and Board Members were given plaques expressing the appreciation of the entire membership for their hard work and time that they gave to the membership.

Following the General Membership meeting the conference began. The first speaker was Rob Obenauf from the Washington County (Oregon) Sheriff's Office. Rob gave a verbal presentation on general math review, touching on several subjects including, drag factor adjustments, minimum speed & combined speed. Kari Arguello, also from Washington County, gave a PowerPoint presentation on proper identification of roadway tire marks.

Daniel Filiatrault of ICBC gave a very interesting PowerPoint presentation on a study that his office completed on altered vehicles. Mr. Filiatrault's presentation showed how a vehicle owner installing after-

market “lift kits” to trucks could dramatically change vehicles handling characteristics. The presentation also showed examples of the different “lift kits” that are available today.

The second day of the conference was devoted entirely to John Hunter from Investigative Training Services. Those who know Mr. Hunter know that he is wealth of knowledge when it comes to the proper use of Momentum, PDOF, Crush Analysis and Delta V. Mr. Hunter explained in great detail how to properly use these formulas and how they are intertwined with one another.

## Membership

Latest figures indicate the total number of members at 150 for 2005. Several other agencies have expressed a desire to become members. Mel Knittel is coordinating with them to assist them with the application process. Please continue to get the word out and encourage those who should be members to become members. Contact Mel Knittel at [mknittel@hctc.com](mailto:mknittel@hctc.com) for membership application information.

## Presidents Corner

**By Ron Sanders**

Our association’s secretary, Bill Butterfield, has taken on the arduous task of compiling and disseminating an “electronic version” of our biannual Newsletter. Those of you involved in WATAI a few years back may remember those periodic WATAI Newsletters of the “snail mail” era. While a invaluable and necessary means of communication just a scant few years ago, the paper version of the newsletter lost its luster in the technological revolution that was the internet, email notification and dare I say, “instant messaging”! For better or worse when our association went kicking and screaming into the technologically advanced new millennium the Board of Directors bid the paper version of the WATAI Newsletter a sad farewell.

I’ll set aside “WATAI History 101” for the moment and tell you that Bill asked me, as president of the association, to provide an ongoing column for the “new” (read electronic) WATAI Newsletter. While some may question Bill’s wisdom in allowing me a forum to offer my two cents (*and justifiably so I might add*), I have nonetheless accepted the task as presented. I hope as time goes on this forum will offer some insight and/or spark discussion on topics affecting you, such as our association’s direction – both short and long term, discussion of challenges or concerns faced by the Board of Directors, topics of interest within the field of collision reconstruction, and the like. Above all I will strive to continue and build upon the fine tradition of dedicated service to this great association. (As an aside – I’m sure Bill won’t mind me throwing a “plug” in for solicitation of WATAI Newsletter topics, articles or authors. As is true with any volunteer-led association, WATAI can only be as good as the efforts of those willing to be involved. Together we can bring a meaningful and viable energy to this organization few others could ever match. One way to get involved is by becoming a contributor to the newsletter. Please consider it!)

As a means for me to get the ‘ol ball rolling, I’ll bring you up to speed on a few things that have happened within WATAI since the 2004 Fall Conference.

- The minutes of each Board of Directors meeting (starting with the 11/04 meeting) are now available online at our website: [www.watai.ws](http://www.watai.ws) (Members Only Section). For those that have an interest in the

“behind the scenes” goings on at WATAI, this resource should be invaluable. (Plus you’ll have a “heads-up” on upcoming events.) Note: If you’re a current member but have forgotten the “members only” password for 2005, please contact us at [info@watai.ws](mailto:info@watai.ws)

- A photo of each Board Member will be added to that section of the website. Several association members have commented about not being able to put a board member’s name together with their face.....(of course maybe that’s a good thing if your initials are MK.....just kidding Mel). Seriously though, I hope this proposal will assist new and old members alike in seeking out someone from the Board of Directors and sharing their perspectives on WATAI related topics.
- The Board of Directors recently granted me authorization to sign a contract with TAARS – the Texas Association of Accident Reconstruction Specialists on behalf of WATAI agreeing to add our association on as a Co-Sponsor for their big crash conference slated for September of 2006. Our association has contributed \$500 towards to the conference to date with another \$500 (final payment) due by September 1, 2005. A tentative conference schedule can be found at the following link: <http://www.taars.org/schedule.htm>

Finally, I’d like to ask your assistance in providing some direction for WATAI over the next couple of years. I’d like to do that by getting your feedback to the following questions. Please note that if the question asks for a rating from 1 to 10, assume 1 = poor, worst, no good, bad idea, etc. and 10 = good, great idea, outstanding, etc. Please expound upon your ratings where appropriate and necessary.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 = Excellent and 1 = Poor, please rate WATAI’s current performance of its mission statement “*to promote education and research in the field of accident investigation; to encourage interdisciplinary communication between the practitioners of accident investigation; and to cooperate and participate with other organizations dedicated to the science of accident investigations*”.
2. If you didn’t rate WATAI performance as a “10” in question #1, how can we improve?
3. With regards to recent WATAI conferences you’ve attended - please limit your response to conference within the last 2 years - please rate the conferences on their “best bang for the buck” value. (10 = well worth it, 1 = I’m expecting a refund from somebody!)
4. In your opinion, what can we do to make WATAI conferences more appealing? (Stated a different way, if you were calling the shots what would you do to get every member to attend?)
5. What types of training topics would you like to see WATAI address?
6. Who would you like to see WATAI bring in as a presenter/instructor at an upcoming WATAI conference?
7. If WATAI were to sponsor an AI training class of some sort, what type of class would you be interested in attending?

Here’s some background information for the next few questions. WATAI’s checkbook is not limitless. Our association has had a very distinguished history of providing quality AI training at a very affordable member price. Unlike similar AI associations, WATAI has not charged conference attendees a fee above and beyond their annual membership dues. The costs associated with each conference have been borne solely by the

payment of those annual dues. Though I cannot speak for the entire 25+ years of WATAI's existence, I can say with all confidence that over the past few years WATAI's conference budgets has never exceeded its available resources (though it has been closer that I'd like on a couple of occasions.) It stands to reason that if WATAI had access to greater financial resources, more testing and training opportunities could be offered to the membership. Please offer the Board of Directors your input on the financial state of WATAI by responding to the following questions.

8. True or False WATAI's current funding is sufficient to provide quality training at an affordable price.
9. True or False I am willing to pay a conference fee above and beyond the annual membership dues to offset expenses associated with highly instrumented testing, conference presenters/instructors from outside our geographic region or investment in other AI related training opportunities approved by the Board of Directors?
10. True or False I am willing to pay increased amount in annual membership dues to offset expenses associated with highly instrumented testing, conference presenters/instructors from outside our geographic region or investment in other AI related training opportunities approved by the Board of Directors?

Please respond to the above questions then cut and paste the entire questionnaire onto a separate document and email it to us at [info@watai.ws](mailto:info@watai.ws)

Best wishes to all of you for the New Year,

Ron Sanders  
WATAI President

## WREX 2006

Mark your 2006 calendars!!! As President Ron Sanders advised us, TAARS has announced that once again they are putting on a conference similar to the one that they conducted in 2000. The conference is scheduled for September 17-21, 2006 in Houston, Texas. TAARS contacted WATAI and offered us to become co-sponsors of conference. With the permission of the general membership, the board reviewed the co-sponsor agreement and agreed to become co-sponsors.

## Guest Section

Our first article in the newly created "Guest Section" is an article that Dick Chapman wrote a few years back.

## **ACTAR... Then & Now**

**By Dick Chapman**

The year was 1990. A bunch of us were sitting around in a local pub in College Station, Texas. The occasion was a combined seminar that the Texas boys (TAARS) were hosting. These were annual gatherings hosted alternately by WATAI and SOAR and TAARS. The heat of the day had settled on the campus of Texas A&M and those of us Northwesterners had escaped indoors for an adult beverage. WATAI's president, Bill Cooper, turns to me and says, "Dick, how'd you like to go to Chicago as WATAI's rep?" We had been talking about a national accreditation program for recon folks and WATAI had been asked to send a representative. I don't know if it was the heat or the Electric Ice Tea I was swilling that had dulled my senses but I broke one of life's cardinal rules and volunteered. Thus began WATAI's involvement in the organization known as ACTAR (Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction).

I joined eleven other folks representing organizations like WATAI in Chicago that year. It was a dedicated group. We settled on a name and a process then started accepting applications and within a couple of years the first test was offered. The list of member organizations to the ACTAR board of directors has grown to 23 but WATAI will always be known as a founding organization. Currently there are 22 people in the state of Washington who are accredited by ACTAR as Reconstructionists. To date, ACTAR has received 1565 applications from men and women all over the world but primarily in the United States. Of those who have applied, 914 have passed the exam.

You must keep in mind that ACTAR does not have members. Being accredited by ACTAR does not make you a member of an organization. Being accredited by ACTAR means that you have a solid foundation of training and education and experience in the accident reconstruction discipline and you have demonstrated your knowledge by successfully passing the ONLY accreditation test in the accident reconstruction field in the world today.

If you would like to know more about ACTAR, check the web site at [www.actar.org](http://www.actar.org) or contact me at [dickchapman1@comcast.net](mailto:dickchapman1@comcast.net). WATAI tries to host an ACTAR exam before WATAI's May meeting each year. Get your application in to ACTAR as soon as possible if you would like to take advantage of that local test date.

**Contact Us At:**  
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