

THE INDIANA INVESTIGATOR™

An electronic publication of the Indiana Society of Professional Investigators, Inc.

April 2004

LET LEW KNOW! Let him know that you're attending the May 7 seminar in Columbus. We need an accurate count at least one week before the seminar. Lew LaMaster's at sentry22@voyager.net or phone 812-752-6386.

In this issue...

- **President's Report**
- **Secretary's Report**
- **Legislative News**
- **INsPI Spring Seminar**

Other News...

- **Reality TV show looking for PI families**
- **HIDDEN GOOGLE FEATURES**

President's Report by [Robert Hopper](#)

Mark your calendars !

May 7 is rolling around and before we all know it, our Spring Seminar will be upon us. It is a one day event, on a Friday. A perfect agenda. Coffee and doughnuts for the most discriminating tastes. What more can you ask? Sure would like to see a large gathering. Our membership has grown to over 85 members. Early registrations tell us we will have a good size group of us at the seminar. It will be a good time to get to know the faces behind the names. See you there.

Our summer activity is in the planning stages. A night out in Indianapolis to see the Indianapolis Indians play baseball. We'll be treated to hotdogs, hamburgers and drinks before the game in the picnic area. If you haven't attended a function there, you have missed a real treat. More will follow as the plans develop.

In the last newsletter, I requested that each of the members give some thought to future programs and seminars and the topics they would like to see presented. For those who responded, I thank you. I know there are other ideas out there. Call or e-mail me on you thoughts.

A special thanks goes out to J.P. Renner for being our contact point with the Indiana Public Defenders Council. Also, Don Johnson will be our point man on a coalition of groups concerned

about our state's access laws, including the Hoosier State Press Association. Being in contact with these and other organizations is essential on keeping up to date on key issues. If any member is interested in taking the lead with another organization let me know.

On the national front, INSPI is an association member of the National Council of Investigation and Security Services (www.nciss.org), our national voice in Washington, D.C. Also, many of us are individual members of NCISS, quickly becoming one of the largest national organizations of established professionals. If you're not a member, I urge you to consider joining. NCISS is leading the fight to protect our access to credit headers. More of that in our legislative report below.

I hope to see you at our Spring Seminar.

Robert Hopper
rhopper@iquest.net
317-773-7900

Secretary's Report by [Raymond T. Myszak](#)

Greetings! Well, it's that time of year to "clean" the membership rolls. We had a great renewal rate this year, plus several new members already for 2004. However, we have not heard from about six members who did not renew their dues, and we have not been able to reach them. We are working on getting our new web site up, with an even better membership directory on the site. Those who have not paid their 2004 dues will not be listed when the web site is launched early next month. If you have any membership questions, give me a call or e-mail. Hope to see many of you May 7 at the seminar in Columbus.

Raymond Myszak
Star Security & Investigation
7034 Indianapolis Blvd.
Hammond, Indiana 46324
Office: 219-554-0100
Fax: 219-554-0101
Web: www.starsecurity.org

Legislative News by [Don C. Johnson](#)

NEW RULES IN EFFECT FOR CONDUCTING WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

On March 31st, Title VI of the reauthorized Fair Credit Reporting Act went into effect. This section is the original "Sessions Bill," introduced in the Congress by Representative Pete Sessions of Texas. Originally known as the "Civil Rights and Employment Investigation Clarification Act," the bill was designed to remove the harsh notice and reporting requirements of the 1996 amendments to the FCRA. Widespread panic had resulted from the amendments when it was learned that investigative firms and attorneys conducting workplace investigations would have to not only get the permission of a suspect, but would have to provide perpetrators of sexual harassment or other misconduct with a copy of the investigative report, including the names of all complaining witnesses and others. Representative Sessions led the fight to overturn the amendments, with support from a coalition of business and professional organizations, including the National Council of Investigation and Security Services.

The most important new rule protects from disclosure the investigative report provided to an employer by a private investigation firm or outside legal counsel. In taking an adverse action against a suspect employee, the employer need provide to the employee only a summary report

with the "nature and substance" of the communication received from the investigation. The new FCRA can be found at the FTC's web site, www.ftc.gov.

OUR ACCESS TO CREDIT HEADERS IS IN DANGER--MORE LETTERS ARE NEEDED

Here is an excerpt from a recent NCISS legislative report:

"The most threatening of the bill in Congress affecting investigators is Rep. Clay Shaw's HR2971. This bill would prohibit obtaining credit header information without the written permission of the subject, and make it a federal crime to buy or sell a Social Security number. To counter the effects of this legislation, the National Council of Investigative and Security Services and many state associations mounted a letter and fax writing campaign, which has resulted in over 500 investigators and associations notifying us they have sent letters to Congress opposing the bill. At this writing, we have seen no movement from the bill's sponsors. NCISS past presidents Bruce Hulme and Syd Huckvale have made trips to Washington to augment our September meeting with the Ways and Means Committee, where this bill rests. Legal investigator Brian McGuinness of Florida is trying to bring pressure to bear in Florida, and his Florida colleague Jean Mignolet, a constituent of Clay Shaw, recently had a face-to-face meeting with the congressman. Shaw has given no indication of changing his mind or the language of HR2971. Brian is doing a yeoman's job of marshalling allies in Florida to get the message to Rep. Shaw. Members of the Florida Association of Licensed Investigators are assisting Brian."

If you think 500 is an impressive number of letters, think again. It is estimated there are about 65,000 licensed investigation and security firms in the U.S., yet we can only marshal 500 letters in an effort to protect our access to one of the most important resource tools at our disposal. It is my opinion that credit headers are gone by the end of this congressional season. Congress is catching up on its privacy barrage, which slowed down in the aftermath of 9/11. Unless we can generate thousands of letters in the next few months, kiss your access to headers good bye. If you haven't sent a letter yet - - pardon my bluntness but this needs to be said - - get off your lazy bottom, cut and paste the sample letter below, and send it in an email to your Representative today. You can find your Rep. at the following web link:

<http://clerk.house.gov/members/index.html>

SAMPLE LETTER

Honorable _____

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

I am writing to express my concern with HR 2971, the Social Security Number Privacy and Identity Theft Prevention Act of 2003.

Although many sections of the bill are meritorious, I'm very concerned that Section 108 would drastically limit my company's ability to conduct lawful investigations. The section would eliminate access to the non-financial information attached to credit reports.

This non-financial "credit header" information (name, address, etc.) has been an invaluable resource for investigators to locate witnesses, heirs, debtors, and to employ in all manner of fraud and theft investigations. I urge that Congress consider eliminating Section 108 of this bill or in the alternative amend it to include exemptions for business to business use.

There are appropriate uses for credit header information which are critical not only for private investigators but for attorneys, journalists, medical researchers, insurance companies, self-

regulatory bodies, as well as government and law enforcement agencies. Header reports are used in fraud prevention, child support enforcement, uniting separated families, locating heirs to estates, locating pension fund beneficiaries, locating organ and bone marrow donors, significant journalistic endeavors, apprehending criminals, aiding citizens in obtaining access to public record information, and in assisting the very individuals that this legislation seeks to protect.

I would also like to point out that many private investigators handle criminal defense investigations, gathering evidence to assure a fair trial for those accused of a crime. One of the primary and most cost-effective tools available to locate witnesses is the credit header. Law enforcement agencies have NCIC and many other means at their disposal. Surely, Congress cannot intend to deny this critical investigative tool to the legal representatives of defendants.

Investigators are also concerned that Section 107, which prohibits the sale of Social Security Numbers, would also deny us the data we need for the purposes listed above. We agree that the display of SSNs to the general public should be banned. But a broad prohibition against the sale of SSNs would have the same impact as a loss of access to credit header information. We urge Congress to amend the section to permit investigators and others with a legitimate need for the information to continue to receive it.

Thank you for your consideration.

PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTER TODAY. THE FUTURE OF YOUR BUSINESS MAY DEPEND ON IT!

INSPI Spring Seminar, May 7, Columbus at Courtyard by Marriott

ON SR46, just west of I-65. FREE to INSPI Members. All others - \$25.00
RSVP to Lew LaMaster at sentry22@voyager.net or call (812) 752-6386.

AGENDA

8 am - Coffee / Doughnuts

8:30 am - POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION, GARY HALL of Clarksville, IN. Mr. Hall is a retired Chief of Police w/over 20 years of experience as a polygraph examiner.

10:30 am - HANDWRITING ANALYSIS, STEVE SLYTER of Louisville, Kentucky. A well known "questioned document examiner" will bring us up to date on this unique area of forensics. Mr. Slyter is a published author, teacher and expert witness.

12 NOON - Lunch (on own)

1:00 pm ARSON INVESTIGATIONS, PYR-TECH of Murphysboro, Illinois. Specializing in commercial, residential and vehicle fire losses around the U.S. They are members of the Association of Arson Investigators and their staff includes certified fraud examiners.

3:00 pm - COLLECTIONS, GENE PLUMMER of RSA Investigations (Straughn, IN). With many years in the collections and repo business, Gene can tell you what you need to know about these fields.

3:30 pm - BAIL BONDS / BAIL AGENTS, LES SEBRING - USA Surety. Les has agents in about 12 states. If you are interested in possible new income opportunities, Les will tell you the ins and outs of the bail business.

3:45pm - DUI DEFENSE INVESTIGATIONS, RANDY BENNETT / DUI CONSULTING, Indianapolis, IN. He started out as a cop, now he assists defendants and attorneys in fighting the odds, by uncovering reasonable doubt. Randy will introduce us to the dynamics of DUI Defense.

4:30 Acquitted (Program Ends)

OTHER NEWS...

Reality TV show looking for PI families...

The following message is from Jimmie Mesis, publisher of [PI Magazine](#):

Greetings,

A New York City-based television production company is looking for real-life private investigators who are part of the same family (i.e., mother/daughter, father/son, brother/sister, husband/wife) for a television pilot.

Anyone interested should e-mail Sanford Marcus at sanford@emoticonproductions.tv with a short bio, photos (if available) and contact information (phone, e-mail).

Please do not contact PI Magazine. Respond directly to sanford@emoticonproductions.tv

Good luck,
Jimmie Mesis

(Note: INSPi members get a discount to PI Magazine.. If you haven't subscribed yet, we will have discount coupons at the seminar on May 7.)

HIDDEN GOOGLE FEATURES

The following is courtesy of Robert Scott, Los Angeles PI and editor of "The Investigator's Little Black Book 3," one of the most handy resource tools you will every slip into your back pocket or briefcase. Order the book at <http://www.crimetime.com/BB3central.htm>:

"Did you know that you can type a VIN into google and it will link you to information on the year, make and model of the VIN? Likewise with several other number sets including UPS/Fed EX tracking numbers, UPC codes, telephone area codes, patent numbers, FAA tail numbers and FCC equipment IDs. For more details go to google.com and click the What's new at Google? link and then scroll down to search by numbers. Now, I'll really be impressed when you can type in a SSN and get back info!"

This Google trick is from Mary Ellen Bates, Bates Information Services, Inc. (www.batesinfo.com):

"Google has a synonym feature that lets you search for not only the word you type in the search box but also for some common synonyms of the word. The syntax is ~word, so, for example, if you type ~food in the search box, you will also retrieve web pages that have the word cooking, nutrition, recipe, or restaurant. Use this tool when you are looking for a broad category of concepts, and be prepared for a few unexpected results."

And from one of the sharpest researchers in the business, Cynthia Hetherington, Hetherington Information Services, LLC (www.data2know.com):

"Google does a very good job of displaying current (within 30 days) local news. They offer approximately 4,500 news sources worldwide. (<http://news.google.com>) Newslibrary.com and Newsbank.com claim to be the world's largest news archives. Search by location topic or specific source. Dates for each are offered under source search."

JOIN US IN COLUMBUS MAY 7, AND STAY TUNED FOR OUR SUMMER BASEBALL OUTING AT VICTORY FIELD!

Copyright 2004. All rights reserved. Indiana Society of Professional Investigators, Inc. This newsletter edited by [Don C. Johnson](#). Articles on the authority of the author. Nothing herein should be construed as legal advice. For questions on employment law or other legal issues, consult the appropriate legal authority.
