



Under the Microscope

Vol. 11 No. 1 Newsletter of IADE Winter 2026

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 **WELCOME 2026!** 

I believe that in America, a petition drive is the truest form of democracy - the chance for citizens to be heard and their ideas to be voted on - by The People. If only it were that simple. Whether it's an idea for a new law or a change to an old one - getting it on the ballot is a complicated process and continues to be made more difficult by the states all the time. The rules vary from state to state with some requiring nearly a million signatures to get an issue on the ballot. Those signatures don't always come easy. Or cheap. It could take hundreds of people standing in parking lots or walking door to door, eight hours a day for months at a time to get the number of signatures required *just to get on the ballot*.

You see them at the DMV, public libraries, an often Walmart parking lots - canvassers, petition circulators. They're carrying clipboards and asking you to sign their petition. These canvassers *or petition circulators* have most likely been hired by a committee that has registered with that state and are trying to get the required number of signatures to qualify their issue to be on the ballot in an upcoming election. They could also be volunteers, but it would be nearly impossible to get enough signatures for ballot qualification in any state without the help of professionals.

As Chief Quality Officer of a political consulting firm specializing in petition drives, my staff and I see hundreds - sometimes thousands of signatures in a day. My department is responsible for making sure that the signatures gathered by our teams of canvassers are valid - meaning they meet the guidelines of the state and that they were signed by actual registered voters.

We get digital copies of the voter registration files from the states our projects are in. These are loaded into our verification system, which is basically a name and address database search. We do not have access to the actual voter signatures. Only the election departments can see those. However, oftentimes petitions are challenged in court with many of those challenges being based on the validity of signatures. Once those signatures are entered as evidence, the (known) signature on file for that voter will also be revealed for comparison. I imagine many of our (IADE) members have been hired to examine handwriting for cases such as that.

While there are good circulators who are honest and really hustle for every signature they turn in, it's no secret that fraud is quite common in this industry. We hire hundreds of people all over the country to circulate petitions, and quite often the odds seem to fall in favor of temptation.

In more recent years since anything can be found on the internet, many of the states' voter registration lists are available for anyone to view online. Naturally, the more experienced canvassers are aware of this and can easily copy that information onto their petitions making it much easier for them to slip fake signatures through without being noticed. When the names and addresses match the database, there is no reason to think they aren't valid unless there is something about the handwriting that stands out and calls for attention.

Many states' petitions include affidavits to be filled out and signed by the canvassers with each petition they circulate. This may be the only exemplar we have of the canvassers' known handwriting. But we have nothing from the registered voters to compare the signatures to.



IADE

International Association
of Document Examiners

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We also have processors out in the field who are trained to look for anything unusual when the signed petitions are turned into them for scanning. The processors are usually good at spotting suspicious handwriting and bringing it to our attention.

When we begin to analyze a petition, we will first look at the affidavit if there is one, to examine the canvasser's handwriting. However, it is always possible that there is fraudulent handwriting but not written by the canvasser who circulated that petition. It is still fraud none the less. Our goal is to determine whether there is in fact fraud. Finding out who did it is secondary, and often never resolved or even pursued much further once the canvasser who turned in the petition containing fraud has been reported.

After reviewing the entire petition book from beginning to end examining all the signature lines for any handwriting that resembles that of the canvasser. This can help to eliminate the canvasser - or implicate them. If we have eliminated them but for whatever reason still suspect something isn't right, we then go back to the first page and look from beginning to end at all the signature lines for any similarities in handwriting amongst all the signature lines - usually starting with something that each would have had to write, such as the name of the city, state, zip code or the date. These are often the keys that lead us to fraud if it exists.

If the canvasser has forged signatures on their own petition, that of course makes it much easier to determine. Sometimes, we do get lucky. Other times the canvassers work together in groups, signing each other's petitions - which makes it much more complicated and time consuming to analyze, but usually patterns start to become evident. Still, without a great deal of certainty we am often left waiting for the day they just get lazy (or stupid) enough to give themselves away by making a critical mistake such as using their one-of-a-kind, fancy capital R when signing someone else's name or using little hearts to dot the i's of multiple signatures on one petition.

While none of the states allow someone to *sign* for another person, the rules vary on whether they allow someone other than the signer to fill out the other information on the signature line - such as the address or date. As a company, we have a policy that the canvasser must discourage anyone other than the signer from writing *anything* on the signature line. Often husbands or wives, other family members will want to fill out the address for each other or for the whole family. We call this "householding".

This may be legal in some states, but we don't allow our canvassers to encourage it, as it sends up red flags, immediately causing us to start looking for fraud - which can be very time consuming and unnecessary. Sometimes, fraud will be disguised as householding. So, quite often we must determine whether someone has broken a rule or broken the law.

I joined IADE in 2017 because I wanted to be better at analyzing handwriting and identifying fraud. So, I started attending Kathie Koppenhaver's Monday night class whenever I could. I learned so much there and really enjoyed the discussions. The class times and overall convenience of the Zoom meetings and the ability to show up when I was able and do the homework without pressure made it really enjoyable, and I loved that I was actually learning.

Although my job and experience are different than most other members, I have always felt welcome here. Everyone has been kind and always willing to help, and I definitely get a sense of "family" - especially when attending the annual seminar/webinar. It's been such a joy to meet so many people from all over the world and hear their stories and learn from them.

Of all the tools I have acquired here that have been so essential to my job and my journey, one of the most helpful and truly one of my favorites is Kathie's explanation of how simulated handwriting is actually being drawn rather than written. The way she described it, it made so much sense, and it continues to be a game changer time and time again.

Below are a few examples of the kind of carelessness that makes for easier conclusions. Sometimes they go all out, creating different fancy fonts for each signature line. And then other times - like these - they make zero effort to even disguise their own handwriting.

Although petition fraud - like all fraud - is a serious crime, I still can't help but laugh at some of these and wonder how they actually think they will get away with it!

Happy New Year to you all, and may you find many truths and great joy in 2026!

Monique Rosser

IADE Newsletter Editor



Shout out to all the members who joined us in 2025!

William Losefsky - Gilmanton, NH
Amy Leonhardt - Alberta, Canada
Meg Barrineau from Goose Creek, SC
Alec Kagure from Harare, Zimbabwe
Venetia Anastasopoulou from Greece
Patrick Sealy from Barbados
Ibraheem Bahiss - Kabul, Afghanistan
Kigongo Melvins Boaz in Uganda
Teresa Brooks - Birmingham, AL
Elizabeth Almeida from Somerset, MA
Saw Puikkee from Malaysia

2026 Membership Information (Mar 1, 2026 through Feb 28, 2027)

Required are:

1. CV
2. Continuing Education Points via Points Form attached.
3. Payment of dues via website under Membership, Info and Payments.
4. Completion of the Proficiency Test

Application Fee \$25.00

Dues \$100.00 Individual
(Annual, Pro-rated)

Lab \$100.00 First Individual
\$50.00 Additional Individuals

**FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Eileen Page

Eileen.Page@comcast.net
for New Memberships

or

Robert Farr

handwriting.robertfarr@gmail.com
for Renewals

Q

This is a picture of the circulator's affidavit demonstrating their known handwriting.

In addition to the numbers being almost identical, the lower case 'O's have a distinguishing triangular shape to them on both the known and the questioned samples.

K

to section 3501.382 of the Revised Code.

Sherano Sinegal
(Signed)

4608 castbury woods pr Apt 104
(Address of circulator's permanent residence)
Number and Street, Road or Rural Route

Columbus
City, Village or Township

OH 43230
State Zip Code

These signatures were turned in by the same circulator. Finding similarities between these and the known handwriting are more difficult than the previous sample, but once these two signatures were discovered, we felt there was no need to look any further.

Although it is ideal to determine who has committed actual forgery, my job is only to determine if fraud exists. The laws regarding petition fraud state that fraud is committed when someone knowingly turns in signatures that are not valid.

Mary Hannon
384 Indian Summer Dr.
Columbus Franklin 43214
Date of Signing 1-3-2024

Nirbia McKinnay
5825 Roche Drive Apt B
Columbus Franklin 43224
Date of Signing 1-3-2024

Melissa Wilson
5986 Chesterton Sq E
Columbus Franklin 43229
Date of Signing 1/3/2024

Russell Tier
201 Fenway Rd Apt E
Columbus OH 43214
Date of Signing 1/3/24



IADE Proficiency Test Due January 30, 2026

This year's proficiency test is posted in the Members Area for all to access. Go to our website, www.iade.us, and go to the Membership tab, click and go down to Member's Area, click, sign in and go to Members Blog Area and click and the proficiency test will be listed on the right side of the screen with the other available menu items.

There are instructions, so please make sure you follow them.

If you have any questions, please email Nathalie Bureau at nathalie@bureaufde.com



THIS IS REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!



**Kathy
Koppenhaver**

is working on the second
journal and accepting new
articles.

email her at:
fordocexam@comcast.net

**It's
coming...**



**Join Us on
Facebook**

To join, click the link below or copy
& paste it to your browser. Once you
join you will be able to invite other
IADE members.

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/
4960906200608916](https://www.facebook.com/groups/4960906200608916)

Less is More - An Up Hill Battle for Justice

By Beverley East

A few years ago, I was retained to examine a document. One document with a single signature.

How difficult could this assignment be? Only four known signatures were available for comparison. I asked the attorney for more but none were available at the time. I continued my examination and gave my opinion that the signature on the document in question was not authentic.

The signature on this document was on a lease agreement. The signature was not genuine based on the lack of habitual writing patterns evident in the known signatures. I submitted my report to the attorney.

A few months later I sat through a grueling deposition with the opposing side. All day long until the end of the day I was examined as if I were the guilty party. The main bone of contention was not my opinion but whether I had applied the SWGDOC rules appropriately. Earlier this year I was subpoenaed to court to testify on the same document. I travelled to NYC for a three day trial. The court room was next door to the infamous 'Diddy' trial, which had become a media circus, with journalists and social media influencers camping outside the court house for days, blocking my path to where I needed to be.

The opposition came with guns blazing a former secret service agent who had examined 26 signatures which he had found online. He opined that the signature could be a variation of the individual's signature and therefore deemed the questioned signature authentic.

The day before court I was asked to examine two originals which had surfaced in another's attorney's office. The two originals held the same habitual writing patterns as the known signatures that I had already examined. After an hour of objections that I should not be able to testify, as I had never testified in the state of New York, The judge insisted that I was qualified enough to testify in the state of New York, as I had testified before 68 judges in nine countries. As that strategy didn't work in the favor of the opposing side. I was asked to examine the original lease agreement in an office behind the courtroom with all the attorneys peering over my shoulder.

The original lease agreement had a different line quality heavier pen pressure than the known signatures of Mr. Hill. The questioned signature was heavier pressure. The known signatures had a lighter pressure and was the same as the previous signatures examined.

The pressure was on. The stakes were high. The Lease agreement was valued property over 250 million dollars. A total of 11 attorneys in the court room. Two experts battling it out. The courtroom was packed. I had never testified in New York before. The opposing side threw everything at me. Their position had shifted from the SWDOC methodology argument during the deposition to me not examining enough signatures therefore my opinion was flawed.

The opposing expert was calm and confident and went through his theory, defending the questioned signature as authentic. Of course he was smug he was a secret service agent. With years of experience so why should anyone much less an independent examiner a woman no doubt question his opinion.

An eyewitness came forward to testify that he had seen the signature being signed by the individual Mr. Hill. However, the more my team pummeled him with hard questions in cross-examination the more his story fell apart. His body language betrayed him, his voice tremored and his left leg shook.

Cross-examination was not easy for me either but I stayed calm. Took all the insults and sarcasm, although my team of attorneys objected to many of the questions from the opposing attorney. The judge limited the time of cross examination and she felt many of the opposing attorney's questions to me were redundant.

I came prepared with a projector – As a picture tells a thousand words.

Although I only had four signatures, I clearly showed what I could see in the known that was not evident in the questioned signature.

Have you discovered a book or tool that you found to be helpful for the trade and would like to share it with us? Send your book or equipment review to Monique Rosser via email: monique@amtpolitics.com. We would love to add it to the newsletter – and to our library!

... just
around the
corner



Whenever I have an opportunity to observe another expert's testimony and use it as a learning opportunity. Observations from the court: .

I. His Methodology was cognitive bias. His objective was to just look for similarities to show that the signature was the same and therefore, authentic.

Our role as examiners is to find the fundamental and significant features that deem the signature either authentic or not.

I was asked by my legal team to find the holes in his testimony. There were many. One of the notable observations was that the Opposing Examiner examined Q1a while I examined Q1. Of the original document

The only two originals from his known were K12 and K13, the rest were copies. Of course copies can be examined and an opinion reached, but he claimed he used a light table for examination. I am not sure how he used a light table and other lighting instruments when he was only examining copies. The light table and those instruments are only for examining originals.

He also examined and compared the originals with copies. That's not the proper procedure. Copies examined with copies and originals with originals. As the features are different in line quality.

I could not understand how the opposing expert believed that the questioned documents were consistent with the known signature. When he said there was such a wide variation within the known signatures of Mr. Hill

His statement that you cannot compare with fewer than ten signatures. I disagreed with ten sample being enough for examination when other experts, including myself, say one is sufficient. I have been successful in cases where no exemplars have been available.

Katherine Koppenhaver's book Handwriting Principles speaks of One signature is sufficient for an examination. And while you cannot get a full view of the writer's habit there are other characteristics that can be identified.

In my book "Whose Signature Is It Anyway? Complexities of Caribbean Fraud" I used a method of 'Working Backward', (page 65-66) where you can examine a questioned signature with no comparison and still arrive at an accurate opinion.

In my rebuttal

I disagreed with the expert's testimony because.

I. The use of Photocopies has been researched and tested to accept copies for examination.

Photocopies as good enough images for examination.

FBI research carried out in 1967.

Dawson research in 1988

W.P. Grosse 1999

Bryan Found in 2001 and in 2018 in my book the full details can be found on page 97.

Most significant aspect of his examination is the variation of signatures since 1988-2004. My method of examination is using signatures from the closest possible time frame to the questioned signature.

So many of the signatures of Mr. Hill from 1988-1993 would not be considered as close to the period of time of the questioned signature.

However, if we are going to include the entire range of signatures, then we have to look closely at the knowns and see how many variations are evident in these signatures.

I disagreed with this argument because when I examined the questioned signatures they were so uniform and consistent with each other, considering they were signed on the same day.

I considered these a clever simulation, albeit not authentic.

There is a structural difference in the center of the signature. Apart from the structural difference evident, I cannot identify the movement within the questioned signatures. Which is evident in the known.

Mark your calendar



Albert Osborn page 262

It also needs to be emphasized that two writings are identified as being the same writer by the absence of fundamental divergences as well as by a combination of sufficient number of similarities.

“In order to reach the conclusion of identity of two sets of writing, there must not be present significant and unexplained divergences. These divergences must however, be something more than mere trivial variations that can be found in almost any handwriting.”

Ordway Hilton

Non identity of writing page 11

Although many writers have certain habits in common each has developed personal peculiarities that mark his writing. These individualities many of them inconspicuous details, distinguish the writing of two people who write very much alike

If two writings are by a single person, then no fundamental differences should exist.

I also disagreed with how many exemplars an examiner needs.

In the real world, we live in, so many signatures are not available.

We are living in a digital age, so new methodologies have been developed on how to examine with less.

Not sure how his exemplars and comparisons were made. When photocopies were compared with originals. Not examining apples with apples

Within the known signatures, although there is variation, there are specific characteristics evident in the known signatures:

1. Height of the initial loop
2. Slant of the signature
3. Width of the signature
4. Center Formation

The opposing attorney kept speaking of the signature above the line which is different from the signature moving away in an upward movement off the signature line. This is different than what was being projected by him.

I do not believe both of us have examined the same original documents.

While the Opposing Examiner examined Q1a which shows different features in that signature The Opposing Examiner focused on Q1a (the amended document) in his report and not Q1.

I am not sure why such an important document would have two versions and not one is an amendment. But two sets of signatures on the same document which is not a copy of each other was Strange to me. When procedures are implemented and do not make sense I use it as an opportunity to question more, creating more doubt in the opposing expert's hypothesis.

When examining signatures, one must consider every characteristic within the signature holistically. And not just look at one characteristic and believe that can carry the weight of your argument.

Going to White Plains the day before court to examine the four signatures on site in another law office, further helped with examining the originals and observing line quality which was lighter on the four signatures of 1995 documents and 2004 documents over a time period while the questioned signature showed heavy pressure. The heavier pressure is an indication of the signature being careful created by another author. The indentation has nothing to do with the surface it was written on as the opposing attorney tried to imply.

This is suspicious because I am not sure why there would be two documents signed on the same day with two sets of signatures on it. Rather than one document and a copy of the signatures. Did they create the document twice?

There should only be one document unless there was an amendment. Then the amended document should have specific edits and initials approving the amendments.

The opposing examiner's opinion speaks of 'probability' and 'most likely' in his conclusion, While I believe in my opinion that the questioned signature was clearly not authentic. Even more so, after having examined the original.

Finally, although there was a wide range of known signatures in the opposing examiner's report there are several characteristics evident within these known signatures that are not evident in the questioned signature.

coming
soon...

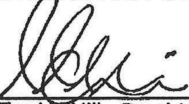


In this case Less was certainly More!!!

In August we received a verdict by the Judge that the signature was not authentic. A combination of good graphics, professional attorneys and staying clear and calm to your opinion. Not to be bullied and berated by the Opposing side. See Graphics below :

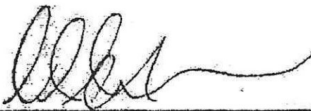
PICTORIAL VIEW OF KNOWN SIGNATURES

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President

K1 EX4 1.1.2020

Friedphil Realty Corp.


Fred H. Hill - Pres.

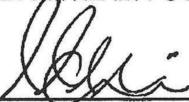
K2 Ex 3

Graphic 1

PICTORIAL VIEW OF KNOWN AND QUESTIONED SIGNATURES

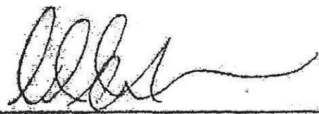
Known

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President

K1 EX4 1.1.2020


Friedphil Realty Corp.


Fred H. Hill - Pres.


K2 EX 3

Questioned

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President

Q1 EX 6 29.3.2005


Fred H. Hill

Q2 EX 7 29.3.2005

Graphic 2



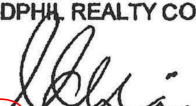
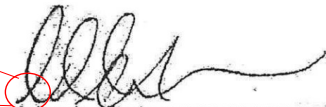


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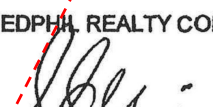



Don't miss
it!



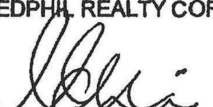


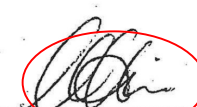
INCONSISTENT INITIAL STROKES WHEN KNOWN SIGNATURES ARE COMPARED WITH QUESTIONED SIGNATURES

Known	Questioned
<p>FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.</p> <p>BY:  Fred H. Hill - President</p> <p>K1 E4 1.1.2020</p> <p>Friedphil Realty Corp.</p> <p> Fred H. Hill - Pres.</p> <p>K2 Ex 3</p>	<p>FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.</p> <p>BY:  Fred H. Hill - President</p> <p>Q2</p> <p> Fred H. Hill</p> <p>Graphic 3</p>

COMPARISON OF INCONSISTENT BASELINE AND WIDTH OF SIGNATURE

Known	Questioned
<p>FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.</p> <p>BY:  Fred H. Hill - President</p> <p>K1 EX4 1.1.2020</p> <p>Friedphil Realty Corp.</p> <p> Fred H. Hill - Pres.</p> <p>K2 EX 3</p>	<p>FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.</p> <p>BY:  Fred H. Hill - President</p> <p>Q1 EX 6 29.3.2005</p> <p> Fred H. Hill</p> <p>Q1 EX7 29.3.2005</p> <p>Graphic 4</p>

COMPARISON: CONJESTED CHARACTERISTICS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE QUESTIONED SIGNATURES

Known	Questioned
<p>FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.</p> <p>BY:  Fred H. Hill - President</p> <p>K1 EX4 1.1.2020</p> <p>Friedphil Realty Corp.</p> <p> Fred H. Hill - Pres.</p> <p>K2 EX 3</p>	<p>FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.</p> <p>BY:  Fred H. Hill - President</p> <p>Q1 EX 6 29.3.2005</p> <p> Fred H. Hill</p> <p>Q1 EX7 29.3.2005</p> <p>Graphic 5</p>



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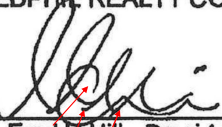
Save the
dates!



COMPARISON OF INCONSISTENT PEN LIFTS WITHIN THE QUESTIONED SIGNATURES


Known

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President

K1 EX4 1.1.2020

Friedphil Realty Corp.



Fred H. Hill - Pres.
K2 EX 3

Questioned

EDPHIL REALTY CORP.

: 
Fred H. Hill - President

Q1 EX 6 29.3.2005


Fred H. Hill

Q1 EX7 29.3.2005

Graphic 6

PEN LIFTS IN KNOWN SIGNATURES



K1 EX4 1.1.2020

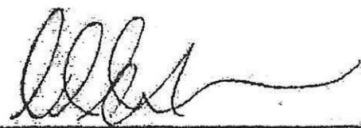


K2 EX 3 26.11.2001

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President

Friedphil Realty Corp.


Fred H. Hill - Pres.

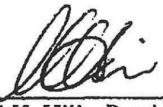
Graphic 7


PEN LIFTS EVIDENT IN QUESTIONED SIGNATURES

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President

FRIEDPHIL REALTY CORP.

BY: 
Fred H. Hill - President


Fred H. Hill

Graphic 8

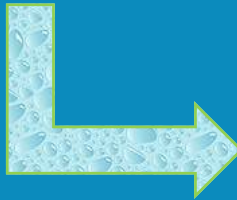
AUGUST

3rd

4th

&

5th !



Thank you, Beverley!

***Your contributions to the
newsletter are greatly
appreciated!***

IADE's ANNUAL WEBINAR

The IADE Board has set our 2026 Conference date! This year's Webinar is set for Monday through Wednesday August 3rd, 4th, and 5th. We already have secured some great speakers! The times are US times and are as follows:

Monday through Wednesday

12:00 PM - 4:30 PM EDT

11:00 AM - 3:30 PM CDT

10:00 AM - 2:30 PM MDT

9:00 AM - 1:30 PM PDT

It will be the same format we have used in the past; the first 2 hours with a 5-10 minute break in between the hour and a 1/2 break for lunch/dinner, then the remaining 2 hours with a 5-10 minute break in between the hour. Please plan on attending. A full day will be digital documents and AI generated documents/signatures and how to detect them. We have 4 spots open for members or students to present. If you are interested, please email me and let me know and I will put you on the schedule.

The cost will be the same as last year; \$200 for members, \$250 for non-members and \$100 for students.



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Q & A

Last issue's question: In 1791, John Jenkins became the first American to publish treatises on Handwriting in the USA, *The Art of Writing, Book 1*. How did Jenkins revolutionize the teaching of Handwriting?

A: By breaking it down to strokes

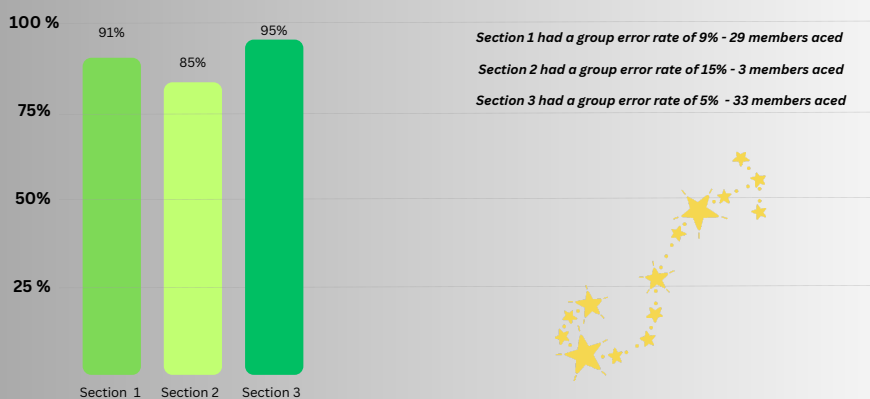
This issue's question:

Q: What is the term for the eyelet that is often used to form the middle of such letters as the cursive capital letters “K”, “R” and “B”, where an element of a letter connects, abuts, or is closely adjacent to the staff?

Submit your answer to monique@amtpolitics.com

Answer will be in the next issue

Proficiency Test 2025 Group Results



50 members took the test. Section one is the matching test (Mistaken Demography) . Section 2 is Denise Orr (Tremor). Section 3 is Anonymous Writing Test