



Lighting the Way for Lab Professionals in NJ

ASCLS-NJ Legislative Symposium
Delegation: (left to right) Andreea Nagy,
Susan Kusic, Charles Sansone, Arsheen Khan,
Susan Mikorski, Elaine Keohane, Scott Aikey,
Mohammad Toor, and Elissa Passiment.

New Jersey Delegation Visits Capitol Hill

By Susan Mikorski, M.Ed., MT(ASCP)SM

On March 21st and 22nd ASCLS-NJ representatives attended the annual Legislative Symposium in Washington, D.C. sponsored by ASCLS, ASCP, CLMA and AMT. On Day 1 New Jersey delegates along with the 144 people representing 36 different states, attended a full day of presentations by lobbyists from the sponsoring organizations. Presentations focused on the law-making process, current law-making actions of consensual concern to all four laboratory organizations, and appropriate lobbying etiquette. Delegates were given an opportunity to practice presenting their views to their colleagues. On Day 2, the entire New Jersey delegation visited with aides from Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Frank Lautenberg's (D-NJ) offices. Delegates then split up and visited with congressional aides from their respective districts. All indications were that delegates were able to express our profession's concerns thoughtfully and that they were received positively.

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The 2011 Spring Seminar

By Lucia Wang, MAS, BSMT

This year, once again, the Annual Spring Seminar Committee and the ASCLS-NJ Board of Directors have outdone themselves by *"Putting the Pieces Together...Providing Diagnostic Solutions."* Exceptional rosters of scientific sessions with excellent speakers were organized and put together to provide presentations and information on various disciplines.

The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science - New Jersey held its 2011 Annual Spring Seminar and Industry Expo on April 14, 2011 at the Forge Inn in Woodbridge, New Jersey. More than 200 individuals, including 95 members as well as non-members from around the state, attended the seminar. Non-members are always welcome at our functions and are encouraged to become members and get involved to support their chosen profession.

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Special points of interest:

- Legislative Symposium
- Spring Seminar
- Scholarship Recipients
- Membership Renewal in July

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President's Farewell

By Nancy Cicalese, MAS, MT(ASCP)

Dear ASCLS- NJ Members,

Thank you. It has been a great year for ASCLS-NJ. I truly enjoyed being your president and would like to thank all of the seasoned members who have mentored and guided not only me, but the other newer board and committee members. ASCLS-NJ has a strong leadership foundation and the members are supportive and encouraging. I would challenge other members to become involved. Learn about your professional organization and grow to your full potential.

I would like to encourage the student members to renew your membership! ASCLS has a lot to offer: continuing education, networking, employment opportunities, leadership training and so much more. Our profession needs you! So visit the national website at www.ascls.org and update your profile and learn about all the activities and opportunities available to you! Visit the NJ website at www.ascls-nj.org and get involved in your clinical laboratory science organization. It's about taking pride in your profession or "putting a face to the profession".

The Spring Seminar was a great success! The sun was shining, the speakers were remarkable, and the attendance was phenomenal. Thank you to our dedicated members for all their hard work in planning and implementing this educational opportunity and our industry partners for their support. The student basket raffle raised an unprecedented \$1,002 for the Children's Miracle Network charity.

We already met for our Annual Leadership Conference on May 14 at Sue Mikorski's home in Belle Mead, NJ. I would like to thank Sue for hosting. James Adams, President-Elect, presented several talking points for recruitment and retention of members. We reviewed our strategic plan for the year, which will be published in the fall issue of *The Analyzer*, and we discussed events for the coming year. If you missed the meeting don't worry; come to the monthly Board Meetings starting in September.

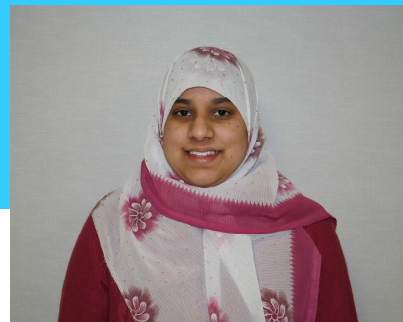
Finally, I would like to thank James Adams for his outstanding contributions to this organization. He is very persuasive (getting others to volunteer), organized (his timeline for the spring seminar was on track) and efficient (he is to the point). He is a true leader and it was a pleasure working side by side with him. Please join us in welcoming James as your 2011-2012 President and come to the monthly Board Meetings.

"I truly enjoyed being your president."

STUDENT FORUM

Student Forum Update

By Fazana Insanally



Spring Seminar



Student Management Symposium



In a student's world winter quickly ends and spring just flies by. As summer rolls around, most students are well entwined in their clinical rotations, and some of them are near graduation. Those who participate in a 3+1 program also have the opportunity of walking in their cap and gown at their home university or college. One thing is for sure; the year may be ending, but the heat is rising! Students are preparing for final exams and, most importantly, the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) exam.

ASCLS-NJ held several events in the spring in which students were actively involved. The Spring Seminar was a first-class opportunity where students had the ability to mingle with other professionals and participate in several informative lectures pertaining to their upcoming career. Sitting through the sessions and correlating topics to what we have learned throughout the year was quite the fulfilling feeling. The Spring Seminar also gave students the opportunity to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network. Each school donated one or more raffle baskets, which ultimately raised over \$1000.00. Raffle baskets ranged from picnic items, beauty items, and even a Kindle and BluRay player. Altogether, it was a great event. Some students even walked away with scholarships. ASCLS-NJ awarded three scholarships to MLS and MLT students (see photo below).

Another major spring event held through ASCLS-NJ was the Management Symposium. The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) requires educators to include leadership and healthcare topics in their curriculum. This year students were honored to learn of these topics from Elissa Passiment, the Executive Vice-President of ASCLS. All New Jersey students gathered at the UMDNJ campus for two days to hear remarkable stories of how laboratory science impacts the entire healthcare world and where the future will be taking the laboratory. Most students were tested on this material, and expect to see questions pertaining to the topic on their final exams.

During the next few months, students will be raising the tempo and gearing up for their certification exam. It has been a long year, but hopefully by the time the next issue of *The Analyzer* is released we will all be certified.



ASCLS-NJ would like to congratulate our scholarship recipients:

Sarah Bekheet from UMDNJ

Anita Abraham from Middlesex County College

Andreea Nagy from the Florence M. Cook School of Medical Laboratory Science

The 2011 Spring Seminar (continued)

Thank you to all the vendors! The ASCLS-NJ Spring Seminar was a success through their participation and support. As partners in our profession, the vendors from some of the leading laboratory and technology companies had the opportunity to exhibit and to interact with clinical laboratory professionals throughout New Jersey.

This was a full day of continuing education opened by a high caliber morning keynote speaker, Nadine A. Fydryszewski, PhD, MLS, of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) School of Health Related Professions. Her presentation was titled, "Climbing the Ladder of Success: Strategies for Career Development (Holding the Keys – Opening the Doors)."

Dr. Fydryszewski's presentation was so encouraging and heartening! It made me hold on to my keys, pause, think, and assess again, which door to open to make my personal and professional career dream a reality.

The afternoon was headlined by a keynote address on "Healthcare Reform and the Laboratory" by Atlantic Health System's Laboratory Director, Michael Overa, MBA, MT(ASCP). Mr. Overa described healthcare reform and the positive and negative effects on the laboratory. He also defined Accountable Care Organization (ACO) and described healthcare reform's affect on the environment and laboratory. One of the attendees, Joann Rittersbach, MT(ASCP) an educator from UMDNJ said, "Michael Overa's presentation was informative and provided an applicable overview of healthcare reform."

I, like most people, am confused when it comes to healthcare reform but after Mr. Overa's presentation I feel I have a better understanding of how it will impact the hospital, laboratory, and medical records. For our students it provided insight to the future of the laboratory profession and responsibilities for laboratory professionals. Mr. Overa was entertaining and engaging in his delivery while sharing valuable information.

Scholarships were awarded to students for academic achievements in New Jersey's laboratory programs. Omicron Sigma Awards were also presented to outstanding members and professionals for their service to the medical laboratory science community. Omicron Sigma is the ASCLS-NJ President's Honor Roll for Outstanding Service. It provides lasting recognition of those dedicated members who volunteer their personal resources, time, and energy to the ASCLS-NJ. Katie DeMenna and Lucia Wang (yours truly) were awarded the Keys to the Future Award. This award serves to recognize and reward ASCLS members who have demonstrated their leadership potential to the organization. Nancy, thank you for trusting in me. I'm looking forward to furthering my leadership development while holding the treasurer position.

Nancy Cicalese, MAS, MT (ASCP), Director of the Atlantic Health School of Medical Laboratory Science and President of ASCLS-NJ, gave her President's address and was presented a gift on behalf of ASCLS-NJ members as a token of appreciation for all her hard work during her presidency. James Adams, MSHS, MLS, ASCLS-NJ President-Elect was announced to take presidential office in August 2011.

In addition, raffles were held with the proceeds going to a good cause. ASCLS-NJ supports the community by participating in charity work including annual donations to the Children's Miracle Network. The students from the various medical laboratory science schools in New Jersey donated theme baskets for the raffle.

The whole day provided stimulating discussion and networking opportunities with good food, good company, and great information; not to mention perfect spring weather.



Michael Overa, MBA, MT(ASCP)



New Jersey Delegation Visits Capitol Hill (continued)

The four topics that were discussed with members of Congress were:

- A request for CMS to modernize the Medicare reimbursement schedule for laboratory tests. This schedule has not been revised since 1984 and does not reflect the 2011 cost basis for test performance. Delegates offered their expertise to review and revise this schedule.
- Ask CMS to seriously consider our previous request to rescind the regulatory requirement for a physician signature on every test order. This requirement was scheduled for implementation on April 1st. *(CMS has since rescinded this regulation.)*
- Support the Workforce Reauthorization Act to authorize funds in support of healthcare workforce training and education with a special need for laboratory education.
- Ask the FDA, who will be regulating Laboratory Developed Tests (LDTs), to seriously consider emergency use authorizations (as occurred during the H1N1 outbreak) and personalized medicine for esoteric testing when designing regulatory processes.

Some delegates were also able to take in a few sights while visiting Washington, including Arlington National Cemetery and the Library of Congress. They are both awe-inspiring and a testament to the courage and ingenuity of our predecessors and the great country in which we are privileged to live.

Meridian Health Celebrates National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week

By Mary Jane C.Schaefer-Weg, MS, MPA

National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week brought a myriad of activities to the five Meridian Laboratory sites: Bayshore Community Hospital, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Ocean Medical Center, Riverview Medical Center and Southern Ocean County Medical Center. We all participated in a clothing drive with written good wishes attached for our courageous wounded service personnel at the NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan. "Meridian Mascots" (talking figurine pens) were hidden throughout the laboratories on all shifts and enthusiastically searched for by every team member. Lab trivia questions were sent out electronically via the Sunquest Laboratory Information System for all to answer, with perhaps a little help from Google! We traveled to FirstEnergy Park on a clear, star-filled night to watch the Lakewood Blue Claws defeat the Charleston River Dogs. We even saw our name on the jumbotron. All of our sites were treated to breakfasts and lunches compliments of our many generous donors. Some sessions provided continuing education credits. Guessing contests, theme days, treating all team members to cake in the cafeteria, and "Marvelous Massages" stimulated both our minds and bodies throughout the week.

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Meridian Health Celebrates National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (continued)

The highlight of the week came on Friday when thanks to the Meridian Laboratory Physicians, we gathered at the Crystal Point Yacht Club in Point Pleasant for a buffet dinner and an evening of merriment. The *2011 Meridian Laboratory Professional of the Year Award* was given to one team member from each site. This coveted award recognizes laboratory professionals who pursue continuing education, adjust to change, implement team concepts in meeting goals, demonstrate community service, and in general embody "The Meridian Way" on a daily basis. Next came Meridian's version of *Minute to Win It*, each site team participated in performing five games. We named them: STACK ATTACK (stack 36 cups into a perfect triangle shaped structure, then return them to a single stack), SEEK AND STACK LYTES (Na, K, Cl, and CO₂ cartridges from a bag of empty cartridges must be stacked vertically without falling over), PING TAC TOE (bounce ping pong balls into a grid of specimen cups to get three in a row), UNICORN STACK (four specimen cups must be stacked on the player's head while the player is standing and leaning back) and EXTREME HANKY PANKY (using a designated hand for each box, the player must remove all the tissues from two Kim wipe boxes). As laughter permeated the room, our brave volunteers strove to perform these tasks in a minute.

All in all, it was truly a memorable week at Meridian.

A New Academic Endeavor: A Histotechnology Program in NJ

By Anna C. Navarrete, BSBA, HT(ASCP), QIHC, SLS

As a positive approach to alleviating the nationwide laboratory personnel shortage, the Histology Department at Jersey Shore University Medical Center (JSUMC) has partnered with Hartford Community College (HCC) in Bel-Air, Maryland, to provide a 10- month comprehensive on-line program designed to make students eligible for the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) histotechnician exam. This National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) approved program features an online classroom venue with an assigned instructor, linked with a clinical laboratory section at JSUMC whose results are sent to the instructors for feedback. Certified histology professionals are the clinical laboratory mentors. Prerequisites include high school courses in biology, chemistry, and math.

An opening for a histology technician served as the catalyst for the creation of this program. Once established, lab assistants were eligible to apply for the position with the requirement that he/she completes the program and achieves certification within 4 years. Jose Varela was the first student, and is scheduled to sit for the certification exam this summer. Xavier Mendez also completed the program, and will soon be taking the certification exam. Both are currently employed at JSUMC as histology technicians.

As there are no local histology schools and the qualified applicant pool is rapidly dwindling, the establishment of this unique program is a win-win situation. This alliance with Hartford Community College gives us the ability to "grow our own" and promote from within our ranks.

The Hartford Community College Online Histotechnology Certification Program is a way for students to prepare for the BOC exam. Those who pass the exam are certified as histology technicians (HT). Certified HTs usually work in human health care, veterinary, industrial, or research laboratories.

Learn more about this highly sought-after credential. Look at the online program or contact HCC at HTonline@harford.edu or 443-412-2498.

A Multidisciplinary Conference: Fighting Bad Bugs

By Susan Mikorski, M.Ed., MT(ASCP)SM

Antimicrobial resistance continues to be a growing problem, both within the health care setting and in the community. In an effort to increase awareness of the problem and to continue exploring best practices in controlling the rise in resistance, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) Public Health, Environmental, and Agricultural Laboratories and the Communicable Disease Service are sponsoring a conference entitled "Fighting Bad Bugs: A Team Approach" on June 22, 2011 at Mercer County Community College in West Windsor, NJ. This conference is being co-sponsored by the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Sciences - New Jersey (ASCLS-NJ), the Southern New Jersey Association of Professionals in Infection Control and Prevention (SNJ-APIC), and the New Jersey Pharmacists Association (NJPhA).

The conference will focus on a multidisciplinary approach to diagnosing and treating infections due to multidrug-resistant microorganisms (MDRs) as well as controlling the spread of these problematic bacteria. Concepts of antimicrobial stewardship will be explored as a coordinated effort, which is essential to control the improper use of antimicrobial agents and to minimize the emergence and spread of resistance. Prevention is key since treating patients with infections due to MDRs is challenging, often relying on uncertain strategies.



In the afternoon a panel of experts will present state-of-the-art approaches to confronting MDRs in the laboratory, patient care settings, pharmacy and beyond. Edwina Cariati, Supervisor of Microbiology, and Jamie Figueredo, Manager of Infection Control from Newton Medical Center in Newton, NJ will present "The Multidisciplinary Approach to a Predominantly Hospital-Wide MRSA Active Surveillance Program: What We Have Learned and Where We Need to Go Next." Afterward, Nancy Kerr Wagner, Manager, Infection Prevention at Ocean Medical Center in Brick, NJ will present "Fighting Bad Bugs: It Can't Be Done with an Army of One." Both presentations offer real-world views of the challenges faced by healthcare institutions with regard to MDRs as well as some of the successful approaches that can be replicated.

For more information go to www.aphl.org/courses/Pages/033-11.aspx
The registrar may be contacted at 240-485-2727 or registrar@aphl.org



Growing in Your Profession

By Anthony Suarez, MLT(ASCP)

By the time you finish your degree, you've gone through the curriculum of microbiology, hematology, blood bank, serology, clinical chemistry, and urinalysis. There's been some exposure to the real laboratory setting, but it's still a controlled environment.

It's when you start working in a laboratory that you have to grow in your knowledge as a medical laboratory technician (MLT) or medical laboratory scientist (MLS). There will be things to learn that can't be taught in the textbooks. Among those things are the unique demands of that laboratory, how to prioritize, and handling stress of the heavy workloads and time constraints. Finally, what do you do when there are instrument problems? These are the things that are only learned through experience.

Over the years my discernment has improved. In hematology, I have found cells that have blast-like attributes. I perceived them to be malignant. When more experienced colleagues look at them, they have showed me that the cells were not. I've been able to recognize more of these kinds of cells myself.

There are several guidelines to help as you go from student to MLT or MLS. First of all, be teachable. There are people with decades of experience who can fine-tune your technical skills.

Second, and this a universal deal maker or deal breaker, in a work setting be social. It's hard to come to work when you feel like you don't belong there. Being social helps you learn about some of the topics your co-workers are interested in.

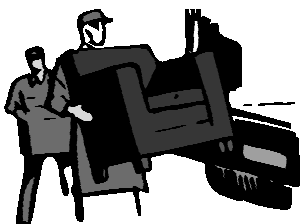
Third, this is part of the Hippocratic oath, if you make a mistake and know about it, take responsibility for it. It's for the good of the patient that you do so.

There are more scenarios I've yet to see. As a new MLT or MLS in the profession, be willing to learn from those with more experience. Someday, you'll be the experienced one. When that day comes, don't forget where you came from.

Public Health Laboratory Move Begins

By Susan Mikorski, M.Ed., MT(ASCP)SM

On May 2nd, the administrative staff of the New Jersey Public Health and Environmental Laboratory moved to a new laboratory facility in West Trenton. This included staff of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Services, Laboratory Outreach, training, and administrative services including purchasing and human resources. The CLIA federal inspectors moved also. The atmosphere throughout the first week of May was one of excitement and anticipation. Some staff expressed mixed feelings; sadness at closing a chapter at the Health and Agriculture Building in Trenton and appreciation for the opportunity to work in a brand new state of the art facility.



The individual laboratory testing units, including Environmental Chemistry, Microbiology, Virology, Automated Immunoassays, the BioThreat Response Laboratory, and laboratories from the Department of Agriculture will be moving during a phased in process throughout the summer to avoid interruption of services. As the move progresses all clients, including hospital laboratories, will be notified of changes in contact information and sample submission procedures.

DATES TO REMEMBER

ASCLS-NJ BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Board meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of every month at New Jersey Blood Services. **ALL** are welcome to attend. Look for the full 2011-2012 schedule in the next issue.

Address: New Jersey Blood Services 167 New Street New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Time: 6:30pm

Upcoming Events:

June 15-16, 2011 BioConference Live

June 22, 2011 Fighting Bad Bugs: A Team Approach in West Windsor, NJ

July 26-30, 2011 79th Annual Meeting and ASCLS/AACC Clinical Laboratory Expo in Atlanta, Georgia

July 31, 2011 Membership Renewal

October 14, 2011 Student Forum & Election

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2011 ASCLS Annual Meeting
July 26–30
Omni Hotel at CNN Center

(Rumor has it that ASCLS-NJ will be receiving several awards at the Annual Awards Ceremony on Thursday July 28, 2011)

Clinical Laboratory Expo
July 26–28
Georgia World Congress Center



Lighting the Way for Lab Professionals in NJ

ASCLS-NJ

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Comments, questions
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article submissions for
The Analyzer, please
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Mission Statement

The mission of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) is to promote the profession of clinical laboratory science, provide beneficial services to those who practice it, and enable its members to provide quality services for all consumers. The society is committed to the continuous quest for excellence in all its activities and:

- Promotes high standards of practice in the workplace;
- Advocates professional autonomy;
- Ensures professional competence;
- Supports worthy educational efforts at all levels;
- Encourages laboratories in their pursuit of expanded roles and responsibilities;
- Enhances the public's understanding and respect for the profession and its practitioner.

ASCLS-NJ

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