

The Filter

Fall 2003

Newsletter of the Nebraska Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

NSCLS 2003 – 2004 BOARD

President	Roxanne Alter
President-elect	Pending
Past President	Courtney Olson
Treasurer	Karen Keller
Secretary	Martin Steinbeck
Senior Board Member	Sandy Latshaw
Junior Board Member	Amy Stanley

The roster of officers and committee chairs has not been completed. That information, along with addresses, phone numbers, and e-mails will be published when available.

The society is looking for a president-elect for 2003 – 2004. If you are interested, or if you know of someone that would consider the position, please contact Roxanne.

If you are interested in any committee positions or in an office for next year, please contact Roxanne ralter@unmc.edu.

FILTER DISTRIBUTION

The best way to ensure that you get The Filter is to be a NSCLS member. It is also sent to lapsed members for a period of time and hospital, clinic, and referral laboratories across the state. If you want a copy to be sent to a particular address that currently is not receiving the Filter, please contact Shirley Noble – snoble@alltel.net OR 402-423-3050.

Please submit information for The Filter. You can let us know of activities in your area, new occurrences in your laboratory, or an unusual event or case. The following dates indicate the deadlines for the 2003 – 2004 issues:

Winter Filter	Deadline January 2, 2004
Spring Filter	Deadline March 26, 2004

NSCLS 2004 Spring Meeting

Make plans now to attend the 2004 Spring Meeting, held in conjunction with CLMA and ASCP April 14 – 16, 2004. The Hilton Omaha hotel is attached to the new Omaha convention center at 1001 Cass Street. A block of rooms has been reserved and may go quickly. The deadline for hotel reservations is early so don't forget to make those reservations. The conference rate is \$99.00 + tax per night.

The theme for the combined organizations is "Back to the River". Exhibits will be held on Wednesday evening. There will be at least two sessions that evening as well. Thursday will end with a dinner at the Upstream restaurant for an additional charge. Hope to see you there.

Information provided by Roxanne Alter

REGION VI WEB SITE

The web site for ASCLS Region VI is www.regionVI.ascls.org. Nebraska along with Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, and Iowa make up this region.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the 16 new members who joined ASCLS this summer and fall. These new members are all students and we are glad to have you as part of the organization. Maybe you could begin your professional involvement by attending the NSCLS Fall Board Meeting. Look for information in The Filter.

STUDENT FORUM ISSUES

The 2003-2004 NSCLS Student Forum representatives have been chosen for this year's class. They include Janet Schmidt (UNMC- chairperson), Maria Mauricio (UNMC), Liz Doll (Methodist), Kevin Loontjer (Methodist), Sean Conroy (North Platte), Jennifer Stanton (Grand Island), and Lacey Dokken (Lincoln). We have a very enthusiastic group and have already begun several projects. We are just finishing our raffle of NU football tickets for the Texas A&M game. Thank you to Shirley Noble and Phyllis Muellenberg for the donation of their tickets! We are expecting about 40 students to attend our fall social at Vala's Pumpkin Patch on Saturday the 11th from 12-5pm.

Future fund raising ideas include a basketball tournament in January, pie contests, and the annual t-shirt/polo shirt. Ask your local representatives for details!!

WINNER: Diane McCormick was the lucky winner of the set of tickets given away in Omaha.

-Mellissa Helligso

Clinical Laboratory Educator's Conference

February 26-28, 2004

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

National Medical Laboratory Week

April 18 – 24, 2004

ASCLS Annual Meeting

July 27 – 31, 2004

Los Angeles, California

NSCLS Fall Board Meeting

October 17, 2003

Wittson Hall, UNMC Campus

5:00 PM

Open to all members

Schools of Clinical Laboratory Science in Nebraska

Mid-Plains Community College

Medical Laboratory Technician Program

McDonald-Belton Campus
601 West State Farm Road
North Platte, NE 69101

Phone: 308.532.8980 or 800.658.4308 (ext. 254)

Medical Advisors: Dr. Byron Barksdale and Dr. Lyle Barksdale

Program Director: Martin Steinbeck, M.Ed., MT(ASCP)

Email: steinbeckm@mpcca.cc.ne.us

Nebraska Methodist Hospital

Clinical Laboratory Science Program

8303 Dodge St.

Omaha, NE 68114

Phone: 402.354.4563

Medical Director: Christine Reyes, MD

Program Director: Julie Richards, MPA

Email: jrichard@nmhs.org

Southeast Community College

Medical Laboratory Technician Program

Lincoln Campus Admissions

8800 O Street

Lincoln, NE 68520-9989

Phone: 402.437.2760 or 800.642.4075

Medical Director: Aina I. Silenieks, M.D.

Program Director: Janis Bible MT(ASCP)

University of Nebraska Medical Center

Clinical Laboratory Science Program

983135 Nebraska Medical Center

Omaha, NE 68198-3135

Phone: 402.559.8366

Medical Director: James Wisecarver, MD

Program Director: Phyllis Muellenberg, M.A.

Education Coordinator: Linda Fell, M.S.

Email: bkouba@unmc.edu

The following information was submitted by Kathy Leinenkugel. She is the Region VI Government Affairs Representative, and the NSCLS chair.

NAACLS DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

NAACLS presented the concept of a Masters requirement for future entry into the profession to the educators. At the same time, ASCLS has been discussing future practice models and has a task force investigating the feasibility of these models as well as the educational requirements. The question about entry level requirements has come up in this task force. Therefore, it is important that the ASCLS membership consider this question. The issue was presented to the 2003 House of Delegates in Philadelphia and now to all ASCLS members. A summary of the discussion from the House will be posted on the web site. All members will be able to submit comments. Please encourage members to read and comment about the qualifications for entry into clinical laboratory science.

The ASCLS Nominations Committee is looking for nominations for 2004-2005. Check out the posting by the ASCLS Committee Appointments on the September leadership mailing on the ASCLS web site (www.ascls.org) members section under the leadership link. You can nominate yourself or someone else to be part of committees at the national level. Deadline for nominations to be submitted is November 21, 2003. There is also an opening for an elected position in Region VI on the Nominations Committee and an open position for the Judicial Committee.. Candidate submission forms are also located in the leadership mailing and need to be submitted prior to November 25, 2003. If you are unsure of the requirements or position duties, contact the name listed on the web site or Kathy Leinenkugel, kvleinen@cox.net .

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Government Affairs Issues – Kathy Leinenkugel, ASCLS Government Affairs Committee (GAC), Region VI and NSCLS.

You can find a copy of the Washington Beat Summer 2003 on the ASCLS web site under the current events link. (<http://www.ascls.org/currentevents/documents/WashingtonBeat.pdf>). It provides a nice summary of the issues that were highlighted at the 2003 Legislative Symposium held in Washington D. C.

I would like to bring you up-to-date on a few issues. Many of you are aware of the efforts of ASCLS and other laboratory groups to influence legislation that would have funded a prescription drug plan for Medicare by introducing a co-pay on lab testing, shifting funding for services to seniors and the disabled from one benefit to another. The co-pay would also increase the cost of doing business for the laboratories. At this time the legislation is stalled in congress, but look for it to surface again next spring.

Another issue addressed covered the shortage of laboratory professionals and the need to have continued or increased funding from the federal government to support educational programs. Title VII funds are one avenue of funding for allied health programs. The following information was sent to the GAC contacts and is from mid September:

The Senate FY 2004 Labor-HHS appropriations bill was passed Wednesday evening by a 94-0 vote. Neither the Reed amendment (SA 1594) restoring Title VII funds nor the Kennedy amendment (SA 1599) restoring the Title VII diversity funds made it to the floor. The Mikulski amendment (SA 1552) did pass by voice vote, adding \$50 million to the Title VIII nursing programs.

It has been reported by Frist's staff that Frist, Specter and Harkin submitted for the record a colloquy stating their support for restoring the health professions money.

Rep. Diana DeGette is reported to be taking the lead on a House sign-on letter, asking that conferees restore the Title VII money to the FY 2003 level. The Laboratory Coalition is pursuing a number of Republicans to be a co-lead: Norwood, Burr, Whitfield and Bilirakis.

To build on this issue, I would like to mention funding that will be sending a number of grants to Nebraska that have an impact on the clinical laboratory communities. These include a number of grants just announced in the past month:

- UNMC received two research grants from the National Institutes of Health for a total of more than \$20.5 million. These grants will fund the study of genes in neurosensory systems and cancer-cell research. The research will also involve partnership with Creighton University, Boys Town National Research Hospital, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Creighton University received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for its Health Careers Opportunity Program, which helps disadvantaged students prepare for health careers.
- UNMC received a bioterrorism training and curriculum development grant for over \$695,000 over two years from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. UNMC was one of 12 institutions to receive funding for curriculum development and one of 19 receiving funding for continuing education grants. Phyllis Muellenberg, of the Division of Medical Technology at UNMC was quoted in the Omaha World Herald, stating that UNMC students across all disciplines will receive training in bioterrorism. The medical center will also provide educational materials to other schools once they are tested at UNMC.

- The U.S. Senate gave final congressional approval September 25 to the 2004 defense spending bill previously approved by the House and being sent to President Bush. UNMC is expected to receive \$2.5 million in funding to further develop automated equipment that could be transported around the country by truck to rapidly process thousands of diagnostic samples following a biological attack or other disease outbreak. Nebraska is projected to receive a total of almost \$24 million for a variety of projects related to defense, some of which have the potential of impacting the clinical laboratory.

More information regarding these grants can be found at the Omaha World Herald web site (www.omaha.com). Use the search engine and enter key words Creighton grant and UNMC grant. Excerpts from online stories were used for this article.

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Please take note! The dates for the Legislative Symposium are March 22 & 23. These dates represent a change from what was published at the Annual Meeting. The agenda for the Legislative Symposium will center on the Medicare payment issues that have been consuming Congress for much of this session. This will be a very crucial Symposium. Congress has been considering the reintroduction of a laboratory co-payment as part of Medicare reform. The Senate has already passed such a provision. Since the House's Medicare bill didn't have a laboratory co-payment, the bill is in conference and the Senators on the committee are trying to convince the House members to agree to the co-pay. And ASCLS, its members, along with all of the other associations in the Clinical Laboratory Coalition, have been taking out ads, planting news stories, writing Congress and the AARP, etc. Regardless of the outcome, we must spend time with Congress this March to make them understand how destructive a co-pay for laboratory services is. This is a great event for any of you that are interested in learning more about the issues that affect our profession and our nation. I encourage you to plan on attending with me in March. For more information about the symposium or other GAC issues, contact me at kvleinen@cox.net.

Want to be part of the issues update in Nebraska? Drop me an email and I will add you to my e-mailing list. Whenever I get info from ASCLS GAC or questions from our congressional contacts, I will forward it to you. We would like to build an extension contact network across the state that will keep you informed, disseminate information to our members and colleagues, and give NSCLS and ASCLS feedback from people in the field. Please consider being part of this network and drop me a note at kvleinen@cox.net or Kathy Leinenkugel 326 S. 154 St. Omaha, NE 68154

Leadership Mailing

The leadership mailings are now available to all members on the ASCLS web site. Choose the "Members Only" box at www.ascls.org. This is a great place to see what your membership dues are being used for. If you need a password, or have forgotten yours, follow the directions at the site.

NSCLS ON-LINE

It has recently come to the NSCLS Board's attention that the old web server for NSCLS's website is no longer available. So, we have moved our website to a new server. ASCLS has made their server available to all the state organizations to host their websites for an annual fee of \$ 50.00. The NSCLS Board has decided to pay this nominal host fee and move the webpages to their server. So, please take a moment to check out our new website at <http://nebraska.ascls.org/>, if you have not already done so, and to be sure and change your bookmark/favorite link on your web browser to reflect the new web address. Our webmaster, Carol Larson MSED, MT(ASCP), is hoping down the road to give our website a "new look" and would like your suggestions and ideas on what you would like to see included. Please contact Carol via email at larsonc@unk.edu or phone her at 308-865-1524. Thank you.

Submitted by Carol Larson

OLD WEB SITE

As the NSCLS web address changes, I checked the counter on our old site. Since fall of 2001, there have been 1,256 hits on the web site. Since this is many times our membership, it is great to know that people, and we hope, laboratory professionals are checking here for information about laboratory science in Nebraska.

Submitted by Shirley Noble

NATIONAL STUDENT FOURM CHAIR IS A NEBRASKAN

Robbie Peetz was elected national student forum chair for the 2003 – 2004 year at the ASCLS annual meeting in Philadelphia. Robbie will participate on the ASCLS Board of Directors and will oversee student activities in all states. Look for her articles in the national newsletters and journal. She will have a very busy year as she represents the student view to the national organization. Congratulations, Robbie.

NSCLS FALL BOARD MEETING

Please plan to attend the NSCLS Fall Board Meeting. It will be held October 17 with dinner at 5:00. The meeting will be held in Wittson Hall room 3042, the Dean's Conference room, on the UNMC campus. Wittson Hall is on 42nd between Emile and Dewey. Although this is called a Board meeting, it is open to all members. Some of the discussion topics will include: possible name change, legislative issues, advertising in The Filter. No – you won't be given a "JOB", (unless, of course, you want one). We just want to have input from as many of the members as possible. This organization exists because you care enough about your profession to belong.