



TACLS News

TACLS Business Meeting



Linda Speights

TACLS Board Members met in San Antonio at the Brooke Army Medical Center on Saturday, February 1. Linda Speights, Laboratory Manager at BAMC, presented on B-Type Natriuretic Peptide and its value in the diagnosis and treatment of congestive heart failure. Linda reviewed the pathophysiology of CHF, the structure of BNP, laboratory measurements, and case studies.

Following Linda's presentation, the TACLS board members discussed legislative activities and

recruitment of new members. A public service announcement video will be developed with assistance from members in the Houston area. Phil Kostroun presented a report from the nominations committee. The nominees are: President-Elect Christina Thompson; Treasurer: Candace Schaper; Board Member at Large: Karen Chandler and Dave Falleur; Nomination Committee: Sandra Tijerina and Melissa Bowen; Member of the Year: Thomasine Newby, Duncan Samo, and Sandra Tijerina. Ballots will be mailed in February to TACLS members.



TACLS Members and Officers

National Medical Laboratory Week, April 20-26

It's time to order your buttons, posters, coffee mugs, and t-shirts for National Medical Laboratory Week. You can order them on-line from the ASCLS website, www.ascls.org. Expect 2 weeks for delivery. Show pride in your profession and help promote the clinical laboratory by sponsoring activities in your health care facility.



Was it Luck?

Shirlyn B. McKenzie, Ph.D., CLS (NCA), Region VII Director

We hear plenty from those who consider themselves as “just bench techs”. It is not unusual to hear them complain that working in a clinical laboratory is a dead-end career. Yet, if you ask these people what they have done to improve their opportunities for advancement, you get an excuse – not enough time, no opportunities available, etc. I venture to guess that most of them do not belong to their professional organization, ASCLS.

I have been in the CLS field for over 30 years. During that time I held many different jobs as my husband was in the military. I always started at the bottom of the pay scale and in odd jobs like temporary staff CLS in hematology, temporary instructor in a CLS program, fill-in for CLS on vacation, and even a Red Cross volunteer when there was a regulation in place prohibiting hiring of US citizens for the laboratory positions. I enjoyed each new position and welcomed the opportunity to work in different places. When I arrived in San Antonio, where I now live, the pay I was offered for positions was so low that I would not have much left after paying for day care. It was then that I made the decision to go back to school. Before I graduated with my MS, I was offered two laboratory manager jobs and a job teaching at the University. It was a tough decision, because I had always wanted to be a lab manager. However, my family situation at the time made it more feasible to take the University job. That eventually led to my current position as Chair of the Department of CLS.

Along the way, I was fortunate to meet some won-

derful people in the field who served as my mentors. One in particular urged me to join ASCLS. I did and have been a continuous member for over 20 years. It was one of the best professional moves that I made. The networking is incredible. I know CLS in almost every state. Through ASCLS, doors opened for me everywhere I went. Those doors are still opening. The professional meetings I attend give me more opportunities to expand my horizons. At an ASCLS national meeting a few years ago, I met a wonderful person from another country and now consult with his company. I love this organization.

Why is it so difficult for the complainers to see the benefits of professional organizational membership? If we could just get them to join and encourage them to get active, I’m sure they would have a new perspective on the CLS career field. I realize that not everyone has the time to hold offices in their state or national organization, but hopefully some day the opportunity will arise and they will step forward. I challenge each one of you to pick out a person you know who is not an ASCLS member and make it your goal to convince them that membership in ASCLS is a smart career decision. Then let’s hear your success stories, including the challenges, in this newsletter.

I love my job and my career field and do not hesitate to tell people this. After they hear my story, it is not unusual for people to say, “Well, you were just lucky!” I don’t consider it luck.

Upcoming Events

- Clinical Laboratory Educator’s Conference, March 6-8, New Orleans
- ASCLS Legislative Symposium, March 17-18, Washington, D.C.
- Texas Association for Clinical Laboratory Science, Annual Meeting, April 3-5, Austin
- National Medical Laboratory Week, April 20-26
- American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science Annual meeting, July 22-26, Philadelphia

Moving?

Please send the attached address label and your corrected or new address to TACLS News, P.O. Box 474, Edinburg, TX, 78540-0474