



The Pennsylvania Newsletter

Official Publication of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science-Pennsylvania
"Your Professional Organization for over Seventy Years"

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Message from the President

Marianne Downes
ASCLS-PA President

Greetings, ASCLS-PA Members! When I accepted the nomination for President-Elect of this constituent society, in the spring of 2018, I hoped to do more internet-based communication. However, the current situation brought to us by the global COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown, stay-at-home, safer-at-home, and virtual meetings was not what I had in mind!

I am so impressed with you all and proud to be part of this profession whose members have risen to the challenges presented by this pandemic. You have worked LONG hours to continue meeting the needs of patients, providers, and students. You have taken to social media and government officials to promote and advocate for our profession. Many of you have continued to ensure quality patient care while facing deep personal struggles including furloughs, shift-changes, childcare needs, burn-out, and family needs. I am grateful that in the middle of this pandemic, many of you are looking for ways to reach out and be of help. Several have reached out recently to find out how to get more involved with ASCLS, which I've decided to make the topic of my first newsletter article.

As you know, ASCLS is a grass-roots organization. It is the members who are the driving force of the organization, its outreach, and its direction. I've been getting inquiries as to how members can be more involved. This is such an excellent question to ask externally while internally asking yourself, "How do I want to contribute to the community?" Membership in the professional society is much more than paying dues and collecting what the society gives to you (CE opportunities, professional identity, connections, advocacy, swag, etc.). While we are grateful and mindful to use the funds collected through your dues wisely, we want your talents, your voice, and your actions to move the society forward. Let me outline several methods to get more involved.

#1. Follow what we're doing and what we're involved with. Ensure that you are getting communication through the ASCLS Connect Community, the ASCLS-Pennsylvania Facebook page, this newsletter and the ASCLS-PA website. To ensure you are receiving communication please ensure that the contact infor-

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If you have renewed your membership, we thank you!
If you have not, this may be your last issue.
Go to www.ascls.org and renew your membership today!

**The Pennsylvania Newsletter is the official publication of
The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science – Pennsylvania**

President: Marianne Downes

President-elect: Travis Blcher

Past President: Joshua Cannon

Editor: Joshua Cannon

Editorial Staff: The ASCLS-PA Board of Directors

Website: www.ascls-pa.org

mation that you've listed in your membership application or renewal is accurate so we can keep you up to date with meetings and events.

#2. Show up. Once you know what's going on, plan to attend. We will broadcast the ASCLS-PA board meetings virtually so you can attend from anywhere. At our recent summer planning meeting, we set the calendar for the three ASCLS-PA board meetings and the annual business meeting which are posted in Upcoming Events section in this newsletter. As an ASCLS-PA member, you are entitled to attend these meetings and bring business before the board. The annual business meeting is scheduled to be held in conjunction with the annual CE event. All ASCLS-PA members have the right to vote at annual business meetings. Information on how to attend these meetings virtually will be posted in the Connect Community and emailed to the membership.

#3. Find your passion. We have many committees you can get involved with. You can find the roles of these committees and the committee chairs on the ASCLS-PA.org webpage. Do you want to help with selecting scholarship and awards winners? Join the awards committee with Mary Gourley. Do you want to help with promoting the profession? Join Jean Buchenhorst in the Career Recruitment committee. Would you like to launch a membership drive at your place of work? Contact Marianne Downes of the Membership Development committee, and I'll be happy to support your efforts! Have an idea for an upcoming newsletter or CE event? Joshua Cannon and Sharon

Strauss would appreciate your ideas and help in the Newsletter or Annual Meeting committees. Do you want to be involved in the governance of this society at the state level? Run for one of the office openings this year. Treasurer, Secretary, President-Elect, and a Board member position will be elected at the next annual business meeting in May. More information about these positions can be found on the ASCLS-PA.org webpage. Under the "About ASCLS-PA" drop-down menu, navigate to "Documents" and read the description in the current ASCLS-PA Handbook or the process and requirements in the current ASCLS-PA ByLaws and SOPs.

If you are not sure where you'll fit in, just come to our meetings (virtually for the time-being) and watch for opportunities that you want to be a part of. You are welcome and we are happy to have you. Again, the #1 way to get started is to get connected. As a Gen-X, I was hesitant to even start a Facebook page or connect my personal and professional life. However, this is the way the world connects now and as laboratory professionals, we learn and adapt to changing times. I hope to leverage this to host a few virtual connection events throughout the year. However, announcing these and participating will require connection via email and the connect community pages. If you're new to the connect community, ASCLS staff member Andrea Hickey has created ASCLS Connect tutorial videos to help orient you to the settings and features of the connect community pages at <https://connect.ascls.org/browse/resourcelibraries>.



Follow us on Facebook

If you haven't yet "liked" us on Facebook, please go to our Facebook page and "like" us.

We can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/ASCLSPennsylvania>

or just search for ASCLS Pennsylvania.



Follow us on Instagram

@asclspa





ASCLS and ASCLS-PA Awards

Mary M. Gourley
ASCLS-PA Awards Chair

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to hold the ASCLS-PA Annual Business Meeting virtually. As a result, the Awards Ceremony was not held. The award recipients were announced during the Annual Business Meeting.

The 2020 ASCLS-PA Award recipients are:

ESTOLLE GROSS: Sharon Strauss

KEENER MEMORIAL: Travis Bicher, Khadidja Derrouche, Marianne Downes, Katie Franz, Mary Gourley, Nassouh Mourabet, Sharon Strauss

KEYS TO THE FUTURE: Emily Kamieniecki

At the 2018 Fall Board of Directors meeting, the board approved the recommendations of the task force reviewing the awards, which included revision of the membership award. The Sustained Membership Award is to be given starting with ten years of membership and every five thereafter.

SUSTAINED MEMBERSHIP:

75-yr – Jane Wilson

60-yr – Nellie (Patsy) Bering

55-yr – Mary M. Gourley

50-yr – Rose Evans

40-yr – Susan Mindler

35-yr – Scott Aikey, Dina Gribbon

30-yr – Ana Ortiz

25-yr – Kim Cattie, Margaret Reinhart, Peggy Rey

20-yr – Joanne Grant

15-yr – Rebecca Blankenship, Gloria Bringas, Alayne Fessler

10-yr – Elaine Venuti

Also recognized were:

Pi Alpha Recipients:

Scott Aikey, Edwin Beitz, Travis Bicher, Jean Buchenhorst, Khadidja Derrouche, Marianne Downes, Katie Franz, Mary Gourley, William Hunt, Emily Kamieniecki, Jonathon Meyer, Mary Beth Miele, Nassouh Mourabet, Stephanie Noblit, Gabriella Peterson, Barbara Snyderman, Sharon Strauss, Diane Valentin, Tierra White

The ASCLS Annual Meeting was held June 28 through July 2, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually.

In addition to the above-mentioned recipients, the following ASCLS-PA members were recognized.

Omicron Sigma: This year, members could be nominated at various levels:

Those members receiving recognition at both the **National** and **State** levels were: Scott Aikey, Joshua Cannon, Katie Franz, Mary Gourley, Stephanie Noblit, and Barbara Snyderman.

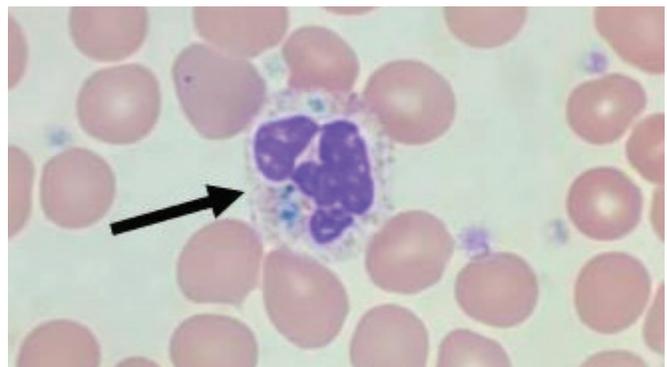
Those members receiving recognition at the **State** level were: Scott Aikey, Edwin Beitz, Travis Bicher, Jean Buchenhorst, Khadidja Derrouche, Marianne Downes, Katie Franz, Mary Gourley, William Hunt, Jonathon Meyer, Emily Kamieniecki, Nassouh Mourabet, Stephanie Noblit, Gabriela Peterson, Barbara Snyderman, Sharon Strauss, and Tierra White.

Receiving **Alpha Mu Tau Fund Scholarships** were: Amani Adeeb Abushamma and Afaf Maslh.

The recipient of the **ASCLS Lifetime Achievement Award** was Rick Panning of Minnesota.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE AWARD RECIPIENTS! TO BE NOMINATED BY YOUR PEERS IS INDEED A GREAT HONOR.

Name that Finding!



Try to identify the finding at the arrow. The answer will be posted to the ASCLS-PA Facebook page approximately one week after newsletters have been mailed.



Latest ASCLS-PA Motions

Travis Bicher
ASCLS-PA Secretary

Board Meeting Motions Zoom Virtual Meeting May 3rd, 2020

MOTION 1: Moved by Strauss, seconded by Downes, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors approve the Board Meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.

MOTION 2: Moved by Downes, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors accept the Secretary's Report of the January 25th, 2019, Board Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

MOTION 3: Moved by Franz, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors approve the cancellation of the 2020 Annual Educational Meeting and reschedule at the same hotel in May 2021. Motion carried.

MOTION 4: Moved by Bicher, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors approve three virtual CE sessions, with an honorarium of \$100 to be offered to each speaker, to be taken from the Annual Meeting budget. Motion carried.

MOTION 5: Moved by Franz, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors close nominations for Board Director (sole nominee = Jonathan Meyer). Motion carried.

MOTION 6: Moved by Marianne, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors close nominations for President-Elect (sole nominee = Travis Bicher). Motion carried.

MOTION 7: Moved by Franz, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors adjourn at 4:02pm. Motion carried.

Annual Business Meeting Motions Zoom Virtual Meeting May 3rd, 2020

MOTION 1: Moved by Strauss, seconded by Gourley, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.

MOTION 2: Moved by Strauss, seconded by Gourley, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business

Meeting approve the Secretary's Report of the 5/5/19 Annual Business Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

MOTION 3: Moved by Downes, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting approve the budget of the 2019 Spring Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

MOTION 4: Moved by Hunt, seconded by Downes, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting approve all remaining funds from fiscal year 2019 being moved to the Reserve Fund for FY21-22. Motion carried.

MOTION 5: Moved by Aikey, seconded by Hunt, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting accept the Treasurer's Report for the period ending 4/30/20 of the Operating Fund as amended and file for audit. Motion carried.

MOTION 6: Moved by Aikey, seconded by Snyderman, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting accept the Treasurer's Report for the period ending 4/30/20 of the Scholarship Funds as amended and file for audit. Motion carried.

MOTION 7: Moved by Gourley, seconded by Hunt, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting close nominations for Board Director. Motion carried.

MOTION 8: Moved by Snyderman, seconded by Gourley, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting close nominations for President Elect. Motion carried.

MOTION 9: Moved by Gourley, seconded by Hunt, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting elect by acclamation the slate of nominees (Travis Bicher for President-Elect and Jonathan Meyer for Board Director). Motion carried.

MOTION 10: Moved by Snyderman, seconded by Strauss, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting grant \$1,000 each to Joshua Cannon and Emily Kamieniecki for the ASCLS 2021 Annual Meeting. Be it noted: this allocation is in lieu of the travel/lodging funds for the cancelled in-person 2020 Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

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MOTION 11: Moved by Gourley, seconded by Snyderman, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting approve the following list of delegates to the 2020 ASCLS House of Delegates:

At-Large Delegates: Travis Bicher, Sharon Strauss, and Scott Aikey
Alternate Delegates: Barbara Snyderman and Mary Gourley

Motion carried.

MOTION 12: Moved by Snyderman, seconded by Downes, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting adopt the FY20-21 Operating Fund Budget as amended. Motion carried.

MOTION 13: Moved by Snyderman, seconded by Hunt, that the ASCLS-PA membership at the Annual Business Meeting adjourn at 6:43pm. Motion carried.

**Email Motion
June 25th, 2020**

Moved by Downes, seconded by Cannon, that the ASCLS-PA Board of Directors approve the expenditure of no more than \$300 from O&A funds on items to be donated to the E&R Silent Auction from ASCLS-PA.

Yes: 10 – Downes, Cannon, Strauss, Bicher, Meyer, Franz, Kamieniecki, Derrouche, Peterson, Mourabet
No: 0
Not Voting: 0

Motion carried.

ASCLS-PA Welcomes New Members

ASCLS-PA would like to greet those who joined the society this calendar year. If you work with any of these folks, please let them know how much they are appreciated and help them take advantage of everything ASCLS has to offer!

Julia Bell	Shanandoah, PA	Iris McLane	Fayetteville, PA
Dawn Hauser	Williamsport, PA	Rachel Hunte	Pottstown, PA
Christina Weixel	Bethel Park, PA	Ronald Yonetama	Allentown, PA
Alex Jones	Lusby, MD	Traci Houtz	Lamar, PA
Carolin Altomonte-Reinoso	Newark, NJ	Ma Aurora Angelika Neira	North Bergen, NJ
Robert Elverson	Doylestown, PA	Maria Villalon de Davila	McAllen, TX
Jonathan Rotger	Allentown, PA	Puja Mistry	Memphis, TN
Sofia Soares	Effort, PA	Ahlam Murshed	Memphis, TN
Evan Hayes	Lenhartsville, PA	Sally Ondiek-Ogot	Penn Hills, PA
Tyler Hembd	St. Augustine, FL	Charlotte Dolan	Tuscaloosa, AL
Alexandra Rothman	North Wales, PA	Francesca Grasso	Philadelphia, PA

Did you forget to renew your ASCLS-PA membership? It happens to the best of us, especially in a year like this one has been. However, the events of this year have demonstrated just how necessary laboratory professionals are to protecting the healthcare of people and providing quality test results patients can trust. It is critical to continue to support this profession and voice that ASCLS gives you. The membership year expired July 31, 2020 and after 30 days, you've lost connection to the Connected Communities and access to many valuable and timely webinars. This could also be your last newsletter if you do not renew. You can renew online at members.ascls.org.



An Introspective of the Art, Science, and Mystery of Clinical Microbiology

Diane M. Valentin, MS, MT(ASCP)MB^{CM}
ASCLS-PA Member

We all have our favorite bench, instrument, or assignment in the lab. In the hematology lab, it may be reading manual diffs; in chemistry, it may be doing monthly QC; in the blood bank, it might be antibody screening. When I worked in the clinical microbiology lab, my favorite bench to work on was the respiratory/stools bench.



In my formative years as a newly christened medical technologist (before we were called Medical Laboratory Scientists) I started in the clinical microbiology lab in a not-for-profit 467-bed community hospital in Palm Beach County, Florida. This facility has a range of patient ages and needs so I was exposed to pediatric, maternity, surgical, and geriatric patient samples. As I rotated through the benches, I started to become fond of the respiratory and stools bench. My coworkers gladly assigned that bench to me because they did not like it. Others preferred the wounds bench where you have to analyze and compare the aerobic and anaerobic cultures. So what drew me to the respiratory/stools bench? The mystery and art wrapped up in science.

In my mind, these cultures made sense and I revel in the challenge of solving a mystery, like I was the Sherlock Holmes of the clinical microbiology lab. I enjoyed comparing the Gram stains of the respiratory cultures to the growth on the plates, matching up the organisms seen on the smear to the colonies on the media, establishing them as either acceptable or rejectable by their telltale squamous epithelial cell/neutrophil combinations. I enjoyed seeking out *Haemophilus influenzae* on the chocolate agar plate, its presence betrayed by its characteristic mousy odor and *Moraxella catarrhalis*, rendering their little pink diplococoid bodies on the Gram stain. I gained excitement at the sight of the glistening green donuts of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and admiring the beauty of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*'s iridescent shimmer on sheep's blood agar plates.

Stool cultures were no less exciting. The patient's bacteria was telling me a story. Was the patient taking

strong antibiotics causing the normal flora to be eliminated and the only living microorganism growing was *Candida albicans*? Did the patient have a healthy salad at a restaurant only to have it be cross contaminated with chicken juice while being prepared in the kitchen and his gut is now home to a few million cells of *Campylo-*

bacter jejuni? Or perhaps the patients are children in summer camp whose drinking water has been contaminated by sewage water, infecting them with *Shigella*. Ahh, the memories! I would line up the stool culture plates side by side, comparing each with the next, looking for little black and green colonies on the HE plates indicative of *Salmonella*. Maybe, searching among the bright fuchsia pink of *E. coli* and *Enterobacter* on the MAC plates for clear colonies that just might be *Shigella* or it might be *Hafnia alvei*. Who knows? Or perhaps eyeing a beta hemolytic *Aeromonas sp.* on the blood plate, confirming my suspicions with a positive oxidase test, knowing all too well I can't perform an indole until I have it isolated from the *E. coli*.

At the end of a long day of looking at and comparing plates, confirming intuition with Gram stains, performing mini chemical reactions with indoles and oxidases, catalases and PYRs, setting up E-tests and Kirby Baurers, ID and MICs, I knew that I was doing my little part in giving back. Yes, I was getting paid for it, but getting to fill the need to solve a mystery and, at the same time, performing science while witnessing the beauty of bacteria even in the face of illness and disease, gave me such joy and pleasure.

So, now, as I stand in front of a classroom of wide-eyed and eager students in my second career as an educator of clinical microbiology, I get to impart my excitement of respiratory and stool cultures that I once had while working on the bench. I show these students that clinical microbiology is a mix of biochemistry, chemistry, and art. The sample is the paint and the agar is the canvas and, together, the biochemical reactions make masterpieces.

Upcoming Continuing Education Webinar

Do you need CE credits for work or certification maintenance? ASCLS members and non-members will receive 1.0 P.A.C.E.® credit for this one-hour session. Session details (date, time, link to join webinar) will be posted to our Facebook and the ASCLS-PA Connect Community.

We hope to see you there!

Experience Implementing Vanadis NIPT, A Novel Fully Automated Cell-Free DNA Platform

Madhuri Hedge PhD, DABMG, FACMG

This webinar will cover what cfDNA and rolling circle replication are and how they can help detect fetal aneuploidies. Additionally, we will discuss what the advantages are for hospitals and physician office laboratories to provide cfDNA screenings in your laboratory.

Coming Soon—New ASCLS-PA T-Shirt

Show off your pride as a medical laboratory professional and ASCLS-PA member!

Look out for details on how to order your shirt in an upcoming newsletter or on our Facebook





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Upcoming Events

ASCLS-PA Board Meeting

January 23, 2021 at 10:00 AM (Zoom)

ASCLS National Meeting

June 27–July 1, 2021 (Louisville, KY)

All members of ASCLS-PA are welcome and encouraged to attend any meeting of the Board of Directors.

To get involved, please email Marianne Downes at mtdownes@hsc.wvu.edu

Stay in Touch with us on our Website

Make sure you bookmark www.ascls-pa.org to stay in touch with us. You can find numerous updates and information on the web site about upcoming meetings