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## ISTEM Program an Epidemic Case of Fun

The State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa, in collaboration with the Iowa Mathematics and Science Education Partnership, held an exciting festival of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activities for Iowa's elementary and middle school students and their families. The Event was held on Sunday, September 18, 2011, at the State Hygienic Laboratory at the UI Research Park in Coralville, Iowa. Over 800 grade school and middle school students and their parents attended this event.

ASCLS-IA, ASCP, The University of Iowa Dept. of Pathology and the VAMC Dept. of

Pathology in Iowa City sponsored a booth called "Diagnostic Detectives". Students were given a case study of "Good Food Gone



Bad", a case of E.coli food poisoning and were given hands-on instruction on how to streak chocolate syrup (the "specimen") on jello plates. Students were also given instruction on the importance of hand hygiene.

The booth was staffed by laboratory scientists who explained how the laboratory helps solve the mystery of disease to assist doctors in diagnosing and treating patients.

The following members volunteered to make the booth a huge success during the festival: Jan Friedrichs, Sue Zaleski, Lindsey Davenport-Landry, Linda Diggelman, Court Menke, Theresa Ortner, Sarah Beerends, Callie Ostwinkle, Whitney Burkart, Katie Simon, Emily Schwager, Jessica Moser, and Beth Burgess.





## FROM THE PRESIDENT



‘Twas the season to be jolly!... Fa la la la la la la....”

(You should be happy that this is a news letter and I am not actually singing to you) So, this is the time of year where we are all supposed to be jolly, but people start acting more like humbugs. Why is this? Well, it is dark out when we go to work, it is dark out when we leave work, we need to make the turkey, put up the tree, go pick up Aunt Hazel for her hair appointment, wrap the presents for your holiday of choice and we still have to go to work. I know that I love spending time with my family, but it is a lot of work coordinating schedules, getting time off of work and getting to who ever is hosting the gathering house. So why do we do it every year? Because we love putting ourselves through the ringer? No, it’s because we want traditions we have grown accustomed to and want to spend time with those we enjoy.

Now, isn’t it the same with work? Why do we put ourselves through the stress of fighting with physicians about hemolysis, the orders that need to be placed, taking a critical value, and the supervisor that will not get off of your case? Because we love the tradition of the laboratory! I consider the laboratory the heartbeat of the hospital, the hospital can not function without us. The physicians need us to make a

diagnosis, and set a treatment plan, the nurse needs us to tell her that the patient really is dehydrated and needs more fluids, the pharmacy needs us to tell them if they should adjust a coumadin or phenytoin dose, the ER needs us to tell them which way to aim when treating the patient who came in with shortness of breath. The laboratory tradition is rich. We have many stories about the day when we did such and such and helped so and so. So we come in and work those holidays that we would rather be spending with our families and friends to help our patients.

The laboratory at our hospital makes sure that we celebrate the season, with potlucks, and parties and secret Santa. These things help to keep up our morale when it is dark out and we are spending time indoors all day. Now, we are not ordinary party planners, we are extraordinary party planners. It takes a Lab Scientist to organize their party by creating a chart of who is bringing what, and having a template to fill in every year for who is in charge of what, like calling for tables, organizing the decorations, and sending out invitations to our retired employees. When party day comes, we make sure that we have our work done so we can enjoy each others company and the feast! We can chat with the retired employees and show them the cool new technology we got this

last year. They can tell us about their trip to Florida, and how they used to do a manual CO2, and then, “there was this instrument that they had to change the membrane on, do you remember that?”

So I am asking you to tell me what your laboratory did for the Holiday’s and I will get it in the next journal so we can share stories and ideas with each other. If you had one of those Chicken Soup for the Lab Soul moments over the holiday share that with me too! My e-mail is [kldavenport@gmail.com](mailto:kldavenport@gmail.com) I look forward to hearing from you.

Some more serious talk about the Lab and ASCLS;

- Our Region VI director Tim Randolph will not be looking for re-election this next term, and we are looking for people who are interested in running for his position.
- We are looking for members who would like to become more active and participate with the journal, career recruitment, and promotion of the profession at the state level. Please let me know if any of these things interest you, or someone you know.
- ASCLS and CLMA are still in due-diligence in discussing a possible merger.
- ASCLS has a new website, head there and look around, it has a very different layout, more great updates to come!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

- If you have had trouble renewing your membership this last year contact Sherry Miner at the ASCLS main office. When transferring to the new system some e-mails had trouble transferring correctly.
- ASCLS/CLMA Spring Meeting will be at the Hotel at Kirkwood Center on April 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Watch the ASCLS-IA.org website for updates and registration information.

Thank you all for everything you do for the laboratory community throughout the year!

*K. Lindsey Davenport-Landry*

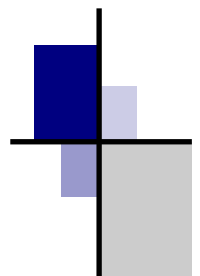


## LITTLE KNOWN MEDICAL FACTS.....

Curvy hips indicate smart women who will deliver intelligent children. After age 30, the brain shrinks a quarter of a percent in mass each year. Wearing headphones for an hour increases the bacteria in your ear 700 times. Your ears secrete more earwax when you are afraid than when you aren't. Women have a better sense of smell than men. The lifespan of a tastebud is 10 days. It takes 20 seconds for a red blood cell to circle the whole body. You inhale about 700,000 of your own skin flakes each day. When your face blushes, the lining of your stomach turns red, too. If your stomach didn't produce a new layer of mucous every 2 weeks, it would digest itself. A toothbrush within 6 feet of a toilet can get airborne bacteria from flushing. Fidgeting can burn about 350 calories a day. There are as many hairs per square inch on your body as on a chimpanzee. You use 200 muscles to take just one step. The human heart creates enough pressure to squirt blood 30 feet. Every tongue print is unique. Right-handed people live, on average, 9 years longer than left-handed people do. Urine was once used as a detergent. Your thumb is the same length as your nose. If you squeezed out all the bacteria in your intestines, you could almost fill up a coffee cup. The storage capacity of your brain exceeds 4 Terabytes.

Just a fun little article about strange things! What I want to know is how they determined these facts!!

Ewww!!



## What Does E&R Fund Do For You?

By Dan Southern, chair  
ASCLS E&R Fund

The ASCLS Education and Research (E&R) Fund is a 501 (c), (3) fund managed by 8 trustees appointed by the ASCLS President and approved by the ASCLS Board of Directors. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible. Dan Southern (NC) is the E&R chair for 2011-12. Ginger Weeden, ASCLS Board liaison and Elissa Passiment, ASCLS Executive Vice President advise the E&R Board of Trustees. The other seven trustees are Angela Foley (LA), Sally Pestana (HI), Susie Zanto (MT), Rebecca Rogers (TN), Dwight Bowlin (AR), George Fritsma (AL) and Marcia Lee (OH). These ten people meet face to face at the national meeting and by conference call three times during the year. They are also in contact with each other by email as needed.

### Mission Statement

The ASCLS Education and Research Fund is the pre-eminent foundation supporting awards, scholarships, and research grants that benefit the clinical laboratory profession and improve health care services provided to society by clinical laboratory professionals.

### Tax deductions

When members renew their membership each year, they have the opportunity to contribute to the tax-deductible E&R Fund.

Members can also donate to the fund any time during the year and take advantage of the tax deduction.

So, what can E&R do for you other than provide a tax break for your donations?

### Scholarships

If you are a student member (undergraduate or graduate) E&R supports four scholarships and two research grant-in-aids. Three undergraduate scholarships of \$1500 each are given annually to deserving applicants. When students apply, the application goes to Joe Briden, Executive Secretary for Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity (AMTF) who partners with E&R to receive application and choose scholarship winners. All student applications are considered for the E&R-sponsored scholarships and also those sponsored by AMTF. This is much more convenient for Students to apply once and be considered for many scholarships that are awarded at the annual meeting. If you are a graduate student and student member, E&R offers a \$3000 scholarship for you. Application for the graduate scholarship is made through AMTF who administers all E&R scholarships. Scholarship Applications are available on the ASCLS website. Search for scholarships.

### Graduate Research Awards

If your graduate program requires a research component and you are a student member, the E&R fund offers two \$3000

graduate research awards to support your research project. Application for both awards (Cardinal Healthcare Award and the I. Dean Spradling Award) is made directly to E&R. One application makes the student eligible to receive both awards. Application forms are available on the ASCLS website. Search for Education and Research Fund and open Graduate Research Awards application.

### Research Grant-in-Aids

If you are ASCLS member interested in doing research, E&R offers three grant-in aids of \$5000 each. Application is made electronically to Elissa Passiment at ASCLS headquarters. Application forms are available on the ASCLS website. Search for Education and Research Fund and open restricted and unrestricted grant applications.

### Awards

If you are a member and you publish in the CLS Journal, your article is automatically eligible for the Joseph J. Kleiner Memorial Award. Five E&R trustees serve on the Kleiner Selection Committee. They nominate articles from the four journal issues and the Educational Scientific Assembly supplement each year and choose the winner who receives a plaque and \$1000. The Kleiner family funds this award through E&R.

Any ASCLS professional members can be nominated for the Gloria "Mike" Gilbert award

(\$300 and a plaque) sponsored by the Georgia Society as a memorial to Gloria who died in office as the Region III Director in 1982. Hassan Aziz and Ed Peterson are the most recent winners of this award given by the E&R Fund. An E&R selection committee judges the nominations and chooses the winners. The highest award that ASCLS gives is the Mendleson Award. E&R funds the plaques for winners chosen by the ASCLS Board of Directors. Nominations should be channeled through your Region Director. Go to the ASCLS website, search for Education and Research Fund and click on the Gilbert Award nomination form.

### In Summary

ASCLS E&R Fund is all about you, the member. A group of 8 trustees and advisors work very hard all year to provide our members with the opportunity to apply for scholarships to help you graduate, graduate research awards to help you finish you MS or Ph.D., grant-in-aids to help members complete their research and recognition awards for those who publish or are leaders in ASCLS. Each member has the opportunity to make a tax-deductible contribution when they renew their membership or any time during the year. Industry partners can help by contributing to the E&R fund



## ASCLS LEGISLATIVE SYMPOSIUM

ASCLS is proud to work with CLMA, ASCP, and AMT on the 2012 Legislative Symposium. Joining an ASCLS tradition since 1989, CLMA, ASCP, and AMT members will meet with their Representatives and Senators on Capitol Hill as an united front on behalf of our profession. **WE NEED YOU!** - committed lab professionals and leaders- to come to Washington to provide a visible and informed voice and make concerns known to our Congressman. Registration for this extremely exciting adventure can be found on the website [www.ascls.org](http://www.ascls.org). Legislative Symposium is located under the calendar heading along the right side of the home page. The dates are March 19 and 20th, 2012. Join us and make a difference!



## A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS.....NOT!

As Maria Von Trapp, played by Julie Andrews sang of a few of her favorite things, this was once one of my favorite things ~ a nibble of raw cookie dough. As a kid we had to sneak it because no matter how much we were lectured about how sick it could make us, we risked it. With the introduction of pre-packaged cookie dough, well, of course they had to make it so it was safe enough to sneak, right? Whoa, Nellie! The latest perpetrator of E. Coli has been linked to ready-to-bake prepackaged cookie dough. The discovery was made following a 2009 investigation of

a nationwide outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing E. Coli. A new study published online in the *Clinical Infectious Diseases* describes the outbreak and provides suggestions to prevent the bacteria in a strong message for consumers: The pre-packaged cookie dough **MUST NOT** be eaten before baking. E. Coli food-related illnesses have been linked to various foods such as leafy greens, sprouts, unpasteurized apple cider, melons, salami, and ground beef. Investigators were unable to trace the bacteria back to any single source, the prime suspect is the flour used to

produce the dough. The culprit might have been just one purchase of E. Coli-containing flour that was used to produce several lots and varieties of dough. In contrast to other ingredients in the cookie dough, flour is typically not subject to a “kill step” that eliminates potentially present pathogens. Researchers have suggested that manufacturers consider using heat-treated flour in their products to eliminate the dangers of a “sneak” here and a “sneak” there being life-threatening.

# SAVE THE DATES

**ASCLS-IA/CLMA SPRING MEETING**  
**HOTEL AT THE KIRKWOOD CENTER,**  
**CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA**

**APRIL 11-13, 2012**



## STRESS : THE REAL DEFINITION

Stress: is the measure of their internal forces acting with a deformable body.

When I started to research this article, that wasn't the definition that I expected to pop up on Wikipedia. There were all sorts of diagrams and equations to go along with it. As stress is one of the leading ailments most talked about, I wasn't expecting a mathematical and scientific definition to be the first on the list. Upon further browsing, I found the one I was expecting:

Stress: the body's reaction to change that requires physical, mental, or emotional adjustment or response.

Now that's more like it. Although, looking at them, the definitions aren't exactly worlds apart. Merged together, they do make sense.

Stress: the measure of the body's internal forces that are acting within a deformable body requiring an adjustment or response.

I can relate to stress. I am a busy mother of 4 kids. I have 1 night job, 1 day job and I volunteer countless hours to whatever things my kids are involved in. I even find time to throw in a few hours for myself. There aren't many "free" hours. My conversations with my mother always include a "you have to slow down or you'll kill yourself" comment. As I started reading articles on this subject, I might concede that my mommy might be right!

Stress can be a positive thing at times. It keeps us alert and ready to avoid danger. Working in the laboratory, we need that stimulation at times to keep ourselves on task and focused in saving lives. Stress becomes a negative when a person faces continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between challenges. That happens every day in the laboratory! As a result, the person becomes overworked and stress-related tension builds. This can lead to many different physical problems such as headaches, gastric distress, elevated

blood pressure, chest pain, insomnia and irritability. Chronic stress can lead to depression, diabetes, hair loss, heart disease, obesity, infertility, hyperthyroidism, anxiety disorder, ulcers, sexual dysfunction, and possibly cancer. That is a menu for disaster that I myself would like to avoid. To be able to do the stressful job as laboratorians, it is so important for us to take care of ourselves. I found a few suggestions to help us lower our stress level and keep us in the game. Everyone has their own unique response to stress so there is no "one size fits all" solution to managing it. Experiment with different techniques and focus on what makes you feel calm and in control.

### 1.) Avoid unnecessary stress.

- ✓ Learn to say "no". Know your limits and stick to them.
- ✓ Avoid people who stress you out. Not always easy, but try to limit time spent with that person and always maintain a professional working relationship.
- ✓ Pare down your "to-do" list. Distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts" and drop the truly unnecessary tasks to the bottom of your list or eliminate them entirely.

### 2.) Express yourself.

- ✓ Easy?! Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. Be willing to compromise. Be more assertive. Manage your time better.

### 3.) Adapt to the stressor.

- ✓ Reframe the problem and try to look at it in a positive perspective. Focus on the positive: when things are at their worst, reflect on all the things you appreciate

in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts.

### 4.) Accept the things you cannot change.

- ✓ Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Learn to let them go and move forward.
- ✓ Look for the upside. How many times have we heard "what doesn't kill us makes us stronger"? That is true. Look at challenges in your life as opportunities to grow and learn from your mistakes.
- ✓ Learn to forgive. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Negative energy is stressful.

### 5.) Make time for fun and relaxation!

- ✓ This is the best one!! Don't get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life and forget to live! Set aside relaxation time! Connect with others. Do something you enjoy every day. Have a sense of humor and laugh regularly. Eat healthy (most of the time). Reduce caffeine and sugar. GET ENOUGH SLEEP!

These are a few techniques that I believe can help us take care of ourselves and reduce the risk of becoming a patient and not the caregiver!

It's been a rough week but I made it - how about you?



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ASCLS-IA BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS WISH YOU ALL A  
HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 2012. MAY ALL YOUR CALIBRATIONS  
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AUTOVERIFY, BUT MOST OF ALL, MAY ALL YOUR TIME SPENT IN  
THE LABORATORY REMIND YOU OF HOW SPECIAL YOU ARE .  
SAVING A LIFE DEPENDS ON US AND WE ARE

AWESOME!

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