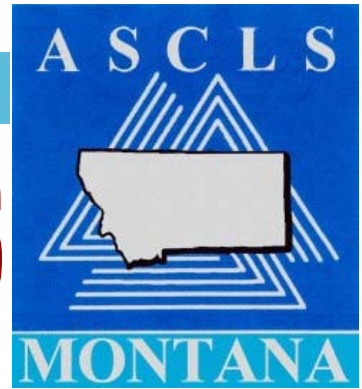


# Montana Laboratory News



Spring 2008



**Save the Date!**  
**April 9 –12, 2008**  
**ASCLS-MT Spring Meeting**

## Licensure Renewal

The Park Plaza in Helena is the site of this year's 2008 ASCLS-MT Spring Meeting.

**Capitalize on Your Future** by attending the educational sessions, visiting the exhibitors, participating in the silent auction for the Children's Miracle Network, and networking with colleagues. ASCLS President, **Rick Panning** will be the keynote speaker. A block of rooms have been reserved at the Park Plaza. Call 443-2200 and ask for ASCLS-MT rate. The Friday night social is an evening at Exploration Works, Helena's new interactive Children's Museum. A historic motor tour of Helena before the social will be available to the first 29 takers. **Barbara Hudson** and the faculty of the new Montana Medical Laboratory Science training program will be available Friday morning to meet with managers and education coordinators, and to talk about the clinical training in a plenary session. We hope to see you all in Helena. The program offers something for everyone – LEAN and SixSigma, Patient Safety, Molecular Testing, Pharmacogenetics, Blood Banking Updates, Renal and Pulmonary function, Antimicrobial Resistance, Newborn Screening for genetic disorders, Eating Disorders, Thrombosis, and Point of Care testing. If you have questions, please direct them to the following members of the Planning Committee.

**Denise Higgins**, General Chair  
**Vicki Rice**, Registration Chair  
**Susie Zanto**, Program Chair  
**Carrie Biskupiak**, Exhibits Chair  
**Kathy Martinka**, Publicity Chair  
**Vivian Schaffer**, Finance Chair  
**Jeannine Pembroke**, CMN Silent Auction Chair

Visit the ASCLS-MT website to download the registration form, see the Final Schedule-At-A-Glance, learn about the social activities, and obtain lodging information.

<http://ascls-montana.asclsregionviii.org/annualmeeting2008.htm>

Remember, it's time again to renew your state license. It's easy to do online using your credit or debit card or straight out of your checking account at [LicenseRenewal.mt.gov](http://LicenseRenewal.mt.gov) or at [cls.mt.gov](http://cls.mt.gov). You must have the renewal notice that was mailed to you in order to renew online. After the renewal process is completed, you can print your license documentation right then and there.

You may renew your license online up to 45 days after the renewal deadline date of May 1. **But** a penalty fee of 100% will apply after the May 1 deadline. In addition, disciplinary action may be taken against a licensee who practices with an expired license.

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# President's Message

**Linda Masin**



**I hear you.** Throughout this year as President of ASCLS-MT, I've had the opportunity to talk with clinical laboratory scientists across the state. It is simple; the outstanding people in this profession are the most dedicated professionals that I have ever met! No group surpasses you over the long haul. You see the value in your work and your contributions to patient care even if no one else sees you, knows what you do, and sometimes calls you "the lab girl". You understand the connection between quality laboratory work and quality patient care. You work uncountable weekends, nights, and holidays during your CLS career. You don't even count the extra hours that you put in at work on a regular basis. You are paid a "professional" salary even though you work in a demanding laboratory where flexible scheduling is not possible, and staying late one night is not compensated by being able to leave early the next night. You regularly work past 7pm even though your shift theoretically ends at 530pm. You work night shift, and then flex back to an evening shift in the same 24-48 hour period. Temporary CLS services are called in to cover your duties when you want to take a vacation. You worry about the expense to your laboratory so you rarely take a vacation for yourself. On a dark and very cold night when a motor vehicle accident referred to as the "Bad 57" occurs, you work systematically to provide crossmatched blood as FIVE critically injured teenagers fight for their lives. You keep going even though you admit that you are actually not getting younger. You carry a heavy burden without complaint; you make personal and family sacrifices to make it all work. You are the dedicated CLS professionals in hospitals, clinics, and other laboratories in Montana. I thank you and I honor you for what you do.

**CLS Staffing and Hope on the Horizon** The US Bureau of Labor concludes there are not enough clinical laboratory scientists or clinical laboratory technicians for the demands now and the need in the future. Nationally, the shortage of CLS professions is at a critical level. The U.S. Dept of Labor statistics projects that ~15,000 medical laboratory professionals will be needed each year through 2014. Academic institutions produce 4,200 graduates annually, and approximately 40% of the laboratory workforce is within 10 years of retirement. The shortage of CLS has occurred in all areas of Montana. Smaller facilities and large hospitals throughout the state are having trouble finding CLS staff, and many are engaging temporary services to staff at minimum levels. The average age of a CLS is 47 years old, and a good portion of the work force, particularly in Montana, is nearing retirement age.

ASCLS has been actively working through its' state societies to get this issue and other issues in front of legislators at a state and national level. In 2008 March, Joni Gilstrap, Amy Steinmetz and I will go to Washington DC to join other members of ASCLS, CLMA and ASCP to directly lobby members of Congress for important issues such as Medicare Reimbursement, Competitive Bidding, Title VII and Title VIII Funding, and the Personnel shortage. ASCLS has been going to the HILL in DC since 1989. Last year, Joni Gilstrap, Susie Zanto and I spoke with Max Baucus, Jon Tester, Brian Schweitzer, Bill Kennedy and Denny Rehberg about the critical shortage of CLS professionals in our great state of Montana. We asked for their support of our MLS program in Montana. We told them about the MLS program dream.

*Continued on Page 3*

## President's Message, continued from page 2

We go to DC to represent you, and the issues important to clinical laboratory scientists.

**Montana Success** In Montana, we must boast of our incredible success with the Montana Laboratory Sciences (MLS) program that is on the track and ready for 12 students this May. The MLS program began as a dream of Barbara Hudson when she was ASCLS-MT President. Nearly 5 years later, her dream is reality. There is no doubt that "A Perfect Storm" of many factors came together to make this happen. This program marks a first-ever undergraduate collaboration with University of Montana, Montana State University- Billings and Montana State University-Bozeman who worked with the Board of Regents to get funding for a Medical Laboratory Sciences Program. In the spring of 2007, Benefis Health Care announced the closing of their clinical laboratory scientist training program after many years of operation. That closing left Montana with no in-state training for clinical laboratory scientists. Students are literally forced out of Montana to complete their CLS education. Many students ventured to North Dakota for the last portion of their training, while others went to Colorado, Washington, and other locations outside of Montana. The migration of students is a classic case of "brain drain" from Montana. Through five years of work by Barbara Hudson of Montana State University and ASCLS-MT, the vision of an in-state medical laboratory sciences training program (MLS) was born. In spring 2007, a grant was submitted by Montana State University in alliance with the University of Montana, Montana State University-Billings and eight major Montana Hospitals to develop a clinical laboratory science training program that required funding from the state legislature and workforce development funds. This venture is unique because it involves three universities in Montana for an undergraduate curriculum. Everyone knew it was not going to be easy to get the funds, but the stakeholders knew the importance of persevering. To the credit of laboratories throughout the entire state, \$300,000 of in-kind contributions and \$63,000 in cash were made by hospitals as matching funds for the grant. Bad news was initially announced because the recommendations for funding did **not** include **any funding** for the MLS program. However, strong voices of concern were expressed by many including Dick Brown of the Montana Hospital Association and the Allied Healthcare Task Force. The distribution of the funds was re-evaluated by the Commissioner for Higher Education and the MLS program was fully funded on August 6, 2007. Besides Barbara Hudson, several other people made funding possible and they include Kristianne Wilson, Dick Brown, Tim Ford, Linda Hyman, and Kristen Juliar of the Allied Healthcare Task Force. In addition, Senator Max Baucus issued a letter of support for the MLS program. The two grants totaled nearly \$1 million dollars.

What this program means for Montana is that our students are able to complete their CLS training in the state of Montana. Training in Montana is important for students because it reduces their expenses and it keeps Montana students in Montana for all of their schooling. Many hospitals with the students near the end of their training hire these graduating students to work as CLS at their hospitals. The presence of graduating students in hospitals gives Montana hospitals a pool of qualified applicants.

**Spring 2008 and Proposed Financial Support** I hope you will make every effort to join your clinical laboratory colleagues and friends in Helena April 9-12, 2008 at the Park Plaza Hotel in the historic Last Chance Gulch for the ASCLS-Montana Spring Meeting/Convention. The Theme says it all, "Capitalize on Your Future". As President, I am proposing changes to make it possible for more members (new or current) to consider an Officer or Board of Director's position in ASCLS-MT. Currently, many expenses (though not all) incurred by the ASCLS-MT Officers and BOD members for various activities are paid out of personal funds of the Officer or BOD member. I am proposing specific financial support of ASCLS-MT Officers and Board of Director Positions. I believe that in order to keep our society functional, we must support the officers and BOD members financially by covering their expenses. The positions remain volunteer and uncompensated positions, but expenses would be covered. I researched this issue and found no other professional organizations that expect their Officers

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**President's Message, continued from Page 3**

and BOD members to pick up expenses for work done for their organization. Overall, ASCLS-MT is a fiscally responsible group. We have managed our funds very well, and currently have net assets that are nearly \$30,000 over what we had in 2002. My proposal includes a clause that prohibits "double dipping". If the officer or BOD member receives funding by an employer or any other source, ASCLS-MT will not pay as that expense is already covered and therefore not an eligible expense. ASCLS-MT Officers and BOD members will continue to car pool, and share hotel rooms when possible. The goal in mind --- is making it possible and feasible for more of our hard working clinical laboratory scientists to be able to justify paying their yearly ASCLS dues, joining ASCLS, and seriously considering a running for an ASCLS Office or Board of Director Position. It is my goal to remove the financial burden on Officers and BOD members to encourage more members to serve in a variety of capacities. Our Officers and BOD members sacrifice family time and free time to do the volunteer work for ASCLS-MT. In my work with ASCLS for the last 10 years or so, serving as an officer or as a board of director member has been rewarding work both personally and professionally. I hope this support will make it easier for **you** to consider running for an officer or BOD position.

**Students are the Future** Let's face it, retirement will happen some day. As a patient or family member of a patient, I want qualified clinical laboratory scientists performing complex laboratory tests! ASCLS-MT's record is clear: we invest in students for the good of the profession and for patient care excellence. ASCLS-Montana supports our students in a variety of ways. For example, ASCLS-MT will award three \$1000 scholarships to students of the MLS program during the Spring Meeting/Convention. ASCLS-MT has set aside over \$11,000 marked to go to the MLS program in its third year of operation. As president, I appointed Amy Steinmetz as the ASCLS-MT Student Liaison. Amy is a bridge to the students scattered across Montana in various programs. These students are often hard to find and contact. It is important to bring the students into ASCLS during their training year and the best way to do that is via the Spring Meeting/Convention. In addition to financial support of the ASCLS-MT Officers and Board of Directors, I am proposing that ASCLS-MT support the **ACTIVE** CLS students in Montana to help them attend the Spring Meeting / Convention. As students, they are financially strapped. If ASCLS-MT desires to cultivate and grow up the next generation of involved ASCLS members, we must financially support these students.

**Linda's Vision** Overall, it is my vision that more clinical laboratorians will join ASCLS and become more involved. Please renew your membership and pass on the suggestion of joining ASCLS to a friend or colleague. As we lose members due to retirement, it becomes critical to renew and bring in new members. In order to support the Officers, BODs, and Students, ASCLS-MT must budget for the costs involved in such financial support. During our general membership meeting, the budget will be discussed. All members of ASCLS-MT are invited and encouraged to attend the general business meeting.

When ASCLS membership numbers grow, we have a larger cumulative voice on shaping policies that affect our business, reimbursement, and other factors. Nationally, ASCLS membership is down slightly from last year. As our colleagues retire, we are losing members. It is critical to bring those numbers back up again to make our cumulative voice stronger. Our grassroots efforts by volunteers of ASCLS inform policy-makers about the reality and challenges of the laboratory. ASCLS works for the profession by taking our messages forward, creating a vision for the advancement of the clinical practice field, and promoting the value of the profession to other health care professionals and the general public.

**Farewell** With the coming of the Spring Meeting/Convention2008, I will transition from president to past president. Thank you for the honor and opportunity to serve you this last year.



# Meet the Candidates

Elections will take place at the Annual Business Meeting on April 10, 2008 in Helena.

**President-Elect:** Vicki Rice

Vicki has been a member of ASCLS since 1980 when she first worked in Montana for the Indian Health Service-recruited for the job by Ed Adams: she was also recruited to ASCLS by Ed Adams! Shortly thereafter, she moved to a position at the VA at Fort Harrison (Helena) where she has been ever since. Over the years with ASCLS-MT she has helped with several annual meetings, served as ASCLS-MT treasurer for two terms and served as Board Member at large. She has two kids, now 21 and 24 and enjoys outdoor fun such as rafting, kayaking and hiking. She now works as the Lab Manager for the Fort Harrison Lab in the VA Montana Healthcare system; former positions were at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio (where she trained), Bonfils Blood Center in Denver and Denver General.

**Director:** Marty Guthrie

Marty has been in the laboratory professional since 1970 and is registered by MTCLS, MTASCLS, and ASA. He was trained in the US Air Force as a Medical Technologist and has a bachelor's degree and MBA. He worked in Great Falls, Glasgow and in Missoula, where he has been with NW Andrology and Cryobank for over 11 years. He is married and between them, they have 6 children and 10 grandchildren. He was born and raised in Great Falls and enjoys the outdoors....fishing, hunting and boating in Holter Lake. He is a Trustee in his church and a leader in ARC-an addiction recovery program through that church. He campaigned for a Missoula City Council position last fall (but lost). He would enjoy being on the Board of Directors for ASCLS and believes he has the experience and caring for the profession to bring to the position.

**Director:** Jeannine Pembroke

Jeannine works at the VA Medical Center in Helena as the Microbiology Section Leader. She has been a member of ASCLS for 10 years and has served at the state level as Secretary, President-Elect, President, Past President and has been a member and Chair of the National ASCLS Committee for Professional Affairs. She has also been active on several state educational planning committees and the IMSS planning committee. She is married with two children-one in high school and one in college. Her husband is currently serving overseas for the US Army in Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Secretary:** Chelsea Wallace

Chelsea works at the Billings Clinic, and is the current ASCLS-MT Secretary, having been appointed to fulfill a previous term.

**Scholarship and Awards:** Renee Kloser

Renee has been in Montana since high school and has a degree in "Combined Sciences, Biology and Chemistry" from Carroll College and a degree in Medical Technology also from Carroll in conjunction with St. Vincent Hospital in Portland, Oregon where she did her internship. She works at the Western Montana Clinic laboratory in Missoula where she is the Main Chemistry Tech. Her interests include horseback riding, travel, golf and musical theater to name a few.

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**Member** – New Position  
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Continued on Page 6

## Meet the Candidates, continued from page 5

### Audit and Finance: Robert Senecal

Robert graduated from the University of Montana with Bachelors' degrees in Microbiology and Medical Technology. He is employed with St. Peter's Hospital in Helena. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and two daughters. If there is other spare time, he is found in the woods hunting or out fishing in the Montana lakes and streams. He believes in ASCLS because he feels that he would like to play some part in the activities that shape the future of our profession.

### Nominations District II: Rhona D'Antuono

Rhona received a BS in Microbiology from Montana State University and a MS in Management from Troy State University. She completed her Medical Technology internship at Columbus Hospital in Great Falls. She has been employed with American Red Cross for 13 years and has been Laboratory Manager for the past 3 years. She is married with 2 beautiful daughters who easily fill up all the rest of her time. She enjoys playing golf (not well) and spending time with friends and family.

### Nominations District IV: Robyn Temple-Smolkin

Dr. Robyn Temple-Smolkin Ph.D., CLSpMB (NCA) is a clinical molecular diagnostics specialist at the genetics laboratory of Shodair Children's Hospital in Helena, MT. Prior to joining Shodair she completed her Ph.D. in Molecular and Cellular Biology at the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center and a post-doctoral fellowship in transplant pathology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Her post doctoral work addressed pharmacogenetics with respect to pediatric heart transplant patient outcomes and during this time she authored a textbook chapter on the subject with several colleagues. She holds certification as a Clinical Laboratory Specialist in Molecular Biology from the National Credentialing Agency and State of Montana licensure as a Clinical Laboratory Specialist. She is also a Clinical Faculty Affiliate of the University of Montana Scaggs School of Pharmacy. In addition to ASCLS, she maintains active membership in several other professional societies.

She has developed and currently manages the Pharmacogenetics testing program at Shodair, serving as a professional resource for physicians throughout the region and has provided continuing medical education lectures for physicians throughout the region and has provided continuing medical education lectures for physician and pharmacist audiences throughout the Mountain States region. She is committed to fostering opportunities to expand community understanding of science and medicine giving public lectures to various types of audiences during the past year. Robyn feels the Nominations Committee offers a unique opportunity to become further involved with ASCLS and that it would be a privilege to serve District IV and foster dialogue among members of ASCLS-MT through the nominations process.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Calendar of Events</i>
<i>April 9, 2008</i>	<i>ASCLS-MT Board Meeting</i>
<i>April 9 – 12, 2008</i>	<i>ASCLS-MT Spring Meeting</i>
<i>April 10, 2008</i>	<i>ASCLS-MT General Business Meeting</i>
<i>April 20 – 26, 2008</i>	<i>National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week</i>
<i>July 29 – August 2, 2008</i>	<i>ASCLS National Meeting, Washington DC</i>
<i>September 17 – 21, 2008</i>	<i>Intermountain States Seminar</i>

## CLS STUDENTS IN MONTANA

**This is the second part of a series of articles on the CLS Students. The first article highlighting CLS students ran in the Fall/Winter Issue of the MLN.**

**Kelly Bryn:** Kelly attends the University of Montana and is graduating with a B.S. in med tech. She has a biology degree from Montana State University-Billings. After graduating from MSU-Billings where she played soccer, she took a semester off to see what she wanted to do and discovered the med tech world. So then it was time to go back to school again and attend UM to get a med tech degree and here she is today. She is doing her clinical rotation at Community Medical Center in Missoula where she was born and raised. Kelly is not sure where she wants to go after graduation, but would like to live somewhere where she can enjoy the outdoors to ski, hike, ice fish, and soak up the sun.

**Jayne Lehman:** Jayme was interested in Pharmacy and that's why she went to the UM in Missoula and then she became very interested in microbiology, so she started to look into job areas that would allow her to work in that setting. She came across MT/CLS because it dealt with microbiology, as well as other areas of interest to her such as hematology. Once she started to get into the classes she discovered that she loved it! How the human body works fascinates her and she loves being able to work in a profession that allows her to study it. It is also a great starting out point, if she ever decided to pursue another health profession such as a physician's assistant. School has been a long journey and she is excited to be almost done and out in the workforce. She loves to participate in outdoor activities including everything from hiking to skiing. She plays intramural softball when she has time. She also loves to read both fiction and nonfiction. She loves animals too, especially dogs, and tries to work and be around them as much as possible. She grew up in Eastern Montana (Glendive) and although she loves the beauty of it, she found the mountains of Western Montana are where she would like to end up in life. There is nowhere like Montana and she hopes she will be able to live and work in the state she grew up in.

**Ashley Rogers-Thompson:** Ashley has been a student at the University of Montana for 6 years now. She did not always want to be a Medical Technologist or Clinical Lab Scientist. In fact, she really wanted to get her doctorate and do research in virology and microbiology. She always loved science and had taken a liking to microbes and things that made people sick. However, after spending a few years at the University she decided that being a researcher though fascinating was not for her

Ashley found out about CLS through her advisor. When told of Ashley's dilemma, she suggested the profession. When Ashley finally did some research about CLS, she thought it would be great to have a career that dealt with sickness, but would be maybe a little more rewarding. So here she is today. She has just finished her first semester of her rotation and she loves it. Her interests aside from CLS are dancing (swing and tango), hiking, golfing, traveling, and having fun with her husband, family and friends.

**Melissa Siemsen:** Melissa was born and raised in Chandler, Arizona. From there she moved to Huntley, Montana, her husband's hometown. She actually found out about the CLS program from a professor at Montana State University Billings. He suggested this program, and she researched it on the computer that night. After reading about the field she decided that this would be an exciting field to get into. From there she studied two years at MSU-Billings and then completed the summer program at the University of North Dakota. Currently she is really enjoying her internship at Saint Vincent's Hospital in Billings, Montana. Her interests outside of school are rodeoing with her husband, Ryan. While she has not really competed competitively in the last few years, being so busy with school, she would love to get back into competition. She ropes with Ryan at home, and takes her young mare to some of the local barrel races around Billings. During the summer she travels with Ryan to the Montana Pro Rodeos and Northern Rodeo Association rodeos to cheer him on. They also enjoy camping and fishing on the weekends.

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## Montana Medical Laboratory Science Training Program

By Barbara Hudson, Program Director

Faculty from Montana State University are developing the Montana Medical Laboratory Science (MMLS) training program and will begin training 12 students in May of 2008. Students will participate in a student laboratory during the summer at MSU and then move for clinical rotations during the fall and spring at nine major hospitals in Montana. Students attending the program will be from MSU, MSU-Billings, and UM. Five students from MSU, five from UM and two students from MSU-B have been selected for the first class. Students will also do a two week rural rotation near the end of their clinical training. The program will become a NAACLS approved program. Students can complete their training in four years and become certified Clinical Laboratory Scientists and work in clinical laboratories throughout Montana.

Funding for program development was obtained through state legislative appropriations and the Workforce Development Funds (\$568,000). MSU received the funding on August 6, 2007 and began planning for the first group of students. Equipment for the program was also obtained through an Equipment grant from the state (\$265,000). The program received in-kind and cash donations from 16 different medical facilities in Montana (\$364,500) and the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science-Montana chapter which donated \$12,000 in cash.

During the fall of 2007, faculty were hired to develop 37 credits of curriculum for the summer, fall and spring semesters. Rhonda Craver, MS, CLS was hired as the associate director of the program. She will be the instructor for chemistry and assist the director in developing the program and gaining the accreditation. She brings with her over 25 years of experience in the Montana veterinary diagnostic laboratory (hematology and chemistry). Donna Gollehon, MS, CLS was hired to work part time and develop the hematology portion of the curriculum. She is the laboratory manager of the student health service at MSU and will help purchase and house the clinical instrumentation that students will use in the summer. Karen Flint, BS, SBB is from St. James Healthcare and will be the blood bank expert for our students. She has over 30 years experience as a technical specialist in Blood Banking. Barbara Hudson, MS, CLS from MSU will develop and teach the clinical microbiology portion of the curriculum.

Since there is such an acute shortage of clinical laboratory professionals, it is the hope of all three universities that this program will begin to help alleviate a critical healthcare workforce need in Montana and nationally. After the first year of development, it is anticipated that 15 students a year will complete their training.

If any of you know and meet your state legislators, thank them for providing us with the opportunity for developing this program. You can truly say that your tax dollars are at work for a most important program for the people of Montana.



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