



SCASM NEWS

The Newsletter of the American Society for Microbiology - Southern California Branch

Winter Edition

Editor: Mark Dubar

January 2012

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Meetings, Workshops, and Symposia

- Susan Novak
- Beth Marlowe
- Diane Citron
- Janet Hindler
- Margie Morgan
- Ann Grasmick

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- Lee Borenstein

Newsletter

- Mark Dubar
- Membership
- Mickey Amos

Exhibits

- Thomas Brewer
- Website
- Stuart Smith

Fundraising

- Paul Colonna
- Student Chapters
- Ann Grasmick

Nominations

- Anita Dolce
- Constitution & Bylaws
- Maurice White

President's Message

Many changes have occurred over the last year, one being that I had the great pleasure of starting my tenure as president of SCASM in July of 2011. I am very thankful to follow Diane Citron who led our organization so well over the last two years as president and continues to provide me advice. This year I will move further into my term with talented and dedicated board members and committee chairs who are devoted to the continuing advancement of SCASM. I am looking forward to involving more members as volunteers in the planning of meetings and in the operation of our organization. If you are interested in volunteering you can contact any board member; our email addresses are contained in this newsletter and can be found on the SCASM website.

This year's Annual Meeting year was a wonderful educational and social event. I thank everyone for coping with the late venue change, and I am grateful to the La Jolla Hyatt for providing us with a new home for our Annual Meeting in 2011. We were educated by nationally known speakers delivering diverse topics and challenging us with case histories and questions to answer. And of course we appreciated the review of new and updated CLSI standards to keep us thinking and providing improved patient results. The 2011 Annual Meeting will be a hard act to follow, but the meeting planners will do their best to provide another educational jamboree for 2012. The new technologist mentor program celebrated its second year, providing scholarships for 17 new technologists to attend the Annual Meeting. Thank you to the mentors who spent time relating their experience and passion for microbiology to our future microbiologists. We viewed and admired the 22 student posters and congratulated them for their fine work. The Birch Aquarium reception was a great way to end our first day of education with food, drink and music. Who knew microbiologists could sing? All of our education, socializing, and singing could not have taken place if it were not for the many generous companies that supported our Annual Meeting. They filled our exhibit hall with exciting new products and gave generously of their time.

Two spring symposia, one each in Burbank and San Diego, and a wine social to promote membership in our society rounded out our educational programs. We will again have the popular spring symposia in 2012, returning to the Gen-Probe facility in San Diego and we will have a new locale in Los Angeles, the Siemens facility.

This last year has been a personal growing experience and a time of change for SCASM. It has been a gratifying experience working with the members of the SCASM board, committee chairs, the many volunteers that make this organization work, and the companies that support our efforts. Thank you to everyone for making 2011 a successful year for SCASM. I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events in 2012.

Margie Morgan, Ph.D.
President, SCASM

Visit the SCASM Website!

Please take a minute to visit the SCASM website located at

<http://www.scasm.org>

See the latest material that our Webmaster Stuart Smith has posted, including SCASM Meetings, Student Activities, Microbes in the News, Online SCASM Membership and Membership Renewal, and web links to a wide variety of Microbiology related organizations and resources. . .

SCASM Sponsors

SCASM gratefully acknowledges those who sponsor our organization. In addition, ASM provides us with outstanding services.

SCASM would especially like to acknowledge our Platinum sponsor for the past three years:

bioMerieux, Inc.

Thank you!

~ 2011 Election Results ~ Congratulations!

Congratulations are in order for the following recently elected SCASM officers:

Councilor-Elect:

Marie Pezzlo, MA, MT (ASCP), F (AAM)

The position of Councilor-elect is for two years, beginning July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2014. The Councilor-Elect will be responsible for attending ASM Council meetings in the event of the absence of the current Branch Councilor, Ann Grasmick.

On July 1, 2014, Marie will become the Councilor for the Branch. In this capacity, she will be responsible for attending all ASM Council meetings and have the authority to vote on Council matters. She will report on the proceedings of the Council sessions at the Branch meetings and prepare written reports suitable for publication in the SCASM Newsletter.

Elected Board Members:



Marilou F. Cruz, BS, CLS
Assistant Director of Laboratory Services
Immunology Department
SCPMG Regional Reference Laboratories
North Hollywood



Juan Ybarra, CLS, MT (ASCP)
Technical Specialist
San Diego VA Healthcare System

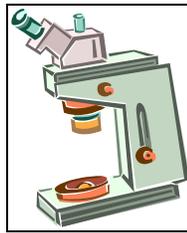
The newly elected Board members will begin their two year term July 1, 2012, and serve until June 30, 2014. Their duties include attendance and participation in discussions during Board Meetings.

Submitted by Anita Dolce
Chair, Nominations Committee

- Job Opportunities -

To view job opportunities posted on the SCASM website, click on -or- go to

<http://www.scasm.org/employment.html>



Infectious Disease Updates From Quest Diagnostics

From the January 2012 issue
of Quest Diagnostics' "Infectious Disease Update".
Used with permission of the Senior Editor.

CDC Now Tracking Antibiotic Use in Hospitals

"Get Smart about Antibiotics Week" 2011
Spotlights Importance of Appropriate Antibiotic Use

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is launching a new antibiotic tracking system allowing hospitals to monitor antibiotic use electronically, make better decisions about how to improve use, and compare themselves to other hospitals. Before now, CDC was only able to track antibiotic use in doctors' offices.

This new system is a powerful tool that will enhance providers' ability to monitor and improve patterns of antibiotic use so that these essential drugs will still be effective in the years to come.

The antibiotic use tracking system is part of CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network [<http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/healthcare>], the nation's premier tool for monitoring infections in health care facilities, which includes over 4,800 hospitals. CDC has funded four health departments and their academic partners to implement the tracking system in 70 hospitals. In addition, any hospital that participates in the National Healthcare Safety Network can utilize this tool by working directly with its pharmacy software vendor to transmit data electronically from drug administration or bar-coding records. There is no manual entry of data, thus saving a facility time and money.

Mycobacterium porcinum Isolated from Public Water Supplies

Researchers at the University of Texas Health Science Center conducted a five-year study of cases of *Mycobacterium porcinum*. This is a rarely encountered rapidly growing member of the genus which is capable of causing disease. They studied isolates from 24 patients and came to the conclusion that many of them were related to strains that have been detected in public water supplies.

Brown-Elliott, B.A. et al. 2011. A five-year community/hospital outbreak of Mycobacterium porcinum related to public water supplies. Journal of Clinical Microbiology

Bacteria Found in Mouth May be Related to Pneumonia Risk

Researchers at Yale University in New Haven have produced evidence that the composition of oral bacteria found among ventilated patients in intensive care units may play a role as to which patients develop ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP). It appears that the proportions of three groups of microorganisms, *Enterococcaceae*, *Micrococcaceae*, and *Mycoplasmataceae*, rose sharply among cases of VAP. At the same time, the proportion of *Streptococcaceae* declined.

Joshi, S. et al. 2011. Divergent profiles of oral microbiota are associated with risk of healthcare associated pneumonia in humans. Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA) 49th Annual Meeting Abstract 879

Federal Agency to Award \$34 Million to Fight Healthcare-Associated Infections

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently announced that it will award \$34 million to study new modules to fight the following infections: [1] Catheter-associated urinary tract infections, the most common healthcare-associated infection; [2] Surgical site infections, which can occur at the incision site or deeper within the body; [3] Ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP), which can occur in patients who require mechanically-assisted breathing.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/news/press/pr2011/haify11pr.htm>



~ Celebrating our Vendor Sponsorship in 2011 ~

2011 was a very successful year for SCASM. We hosted many wonderful educational events for our members ranging from our Spring Symposia to our Annual Meeting in beautiful La Jolla. Our event at the Hyatt Regency in La Jolla turned out to be a great success, which was largely due to the generous support of our vendor partners both from a monetary perspective and exhibitor perspective. Vendor support does not stop there - both **Gen-Probe** and **Siemens** partner with SCASM by allowing us to use their venues for our Spring Symposia. For the first time, the March 2012 Spring Symposium will be hosted by Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics at their Los Angeles facility. The April 2012 Symposium will be hosted by Gen-Probe in San Diego, as has been a tradition for many years. We are very excited to offer our high caliber educational programs in these wonderful facilities. In 2011 we were fortunate to have several Platinum/Gold vendor supporters. Their support is a testimony to their commitment to clinical microbiology education.

Platinum Supporter - \$10,000

bioMerieux – bioMerieux has been a generous supporter of SCASM for many years. bioMerieux partners with SCASM to fund two student travel awards to graduate level students who present posters of their work at the SCASM Annual Meeting. This has been an exciting partnership over the last several years. The students are presented with plaques from bioMerieux noting their awards and accomplishments for their scientific work.

Gold Supporter - \$5,000

AdvanDx, BD Infection Prevention & Management, Bruker Daltonics, Gen-Probe Inc., Meridian Bioscience Inc., Roche Molecular, and Siemens

As costs continue to increase, to provide our high quality educational meetings we more than ever appreciate our vendor supporters and will rely on them into the future. We hope that other vendors choose to partner with SCASM at the generous levels listed above so these programs can continue to be offered to our clinical microbiology community. We also acknowledge the many Silver, Bronze, and Supporter level donors that also helped to make our annual meeting such a great success this past November.

**Submitted by Susan Novak-Weekley, PhD, D(ABMM), Paul Colonna, and Diane Citron, M(ASCP)
Co-Chairs, Fundraising Committee**



SCASM Spring Symposia ~ Los Angeles and San Diego March and April 2012

You are invited. . .

Below are the topics to be discussed during this year's programs, which will help fulfill SCASM's mission of increasing, refining, and perpetuating the microbiologist's body of knowledge. Please plan to attend!

LOS ANGELES MEETING: SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2012

Siemens Diagnostics

5210 Pacifica Concourse Drive Los Angeles, CA 90045

7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. [4 CEUs]

- ◆ **Susan Sharp PhD, D(ABMM) – Regional Director of Microbiology, Kaiser Permanente – NW**
WHAT - The Gram Stain is Important? Who Knew? And Additional Aids for Timely, Cost-Effective Approaches to Clinical Bacteriology
- ◆ **Jim Dunn, PhD, D(ABMM) – Director of Microbiology, Cook Children's Medical Center Department of Pathology**
Update on Laboratory Diagnosis of Viral Infections
- ◆ **Carey-Ann Burnham, PhD, D(ABMM), F(CCM) – Medical Director of Microbiology, Barnes Jewish Hospital**
Diagnosis of Invasive Fungal Infections: Correlation of Histopathology with Mycology Laboratory Findings
- ◆ **Nicole Green, PhD, D(ABMM) – Assistant Director, Public Health Laboratory, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health**
Focus On Foodborne Investigations: A Public Health Microbiology Update

SAN DIEGO MEETING: SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 2012

Gen-Probe Incorporated

10210 Genetic Center Drive San Diego, CA 92121

7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. [4 CEUs]

- ◆ **Steve Miller, MD – Director of Microbiology, University of California San Francisco**
The Future of Diagnostic Microbiology: Microarrays and Deep Sequencing in Clinical Virology
- ◆ **Chris Doern, PhD, D(ABMM) – Director of Clinical Microbiology, Children's Medical Center of Dallas**
Update on ASTs
- ◆ **Mickey Amos, MBA, CLS, MT(ASCP)SM – Assistant Director of Laboratory Services, Bacteriology, SCPMG Regional Laboratories**
Stories from South Africa
- ◆ **Mike Saubolle PhD, D(ABMM) – Director, Infectious Disease Division, Laboratory Services of Arizona**
Case Studies

"Building Bridges" to Improve Patient Outcomes - Collaboration with APIC

This past year, APIC launched *"Building Bridges" to Improve Patient Outcomes*. To date, it has three initiatives, one of which includes ASM as a Collaborative Partner - **The IP Col-lab-oration Project**, in which leaders in Infection Prevention and Lab professionals work together for better patient outcomes. This project started early last year and goes through to summer of 2012, and is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Roche.

The goals of the project are:

- ✓ Increase communication and understanding between health care personnel (HCP) in the lab and Infection Preventionist (IP)
- ✓ Equip IPs and Lab professionals with compelling educational resources and tools that will lead to improved outcomes
- ✓ Educate HCP in the area of microbiology, the importance of surveillance via diagnostics/screening, and the role of the IP in diagnostic decisions

To facilitate this project, APIC and ASM have convened a panel of the nation's five leading infection prevention and microbiology experts: Lance Peterson, MD; Lillian Burns, MT, MPH, CIC; Marc-Oliver Wright, MT(ASCP), MS, CIC; Kathy Aureden, MS, MT(ASCP), SI, CIC; and Marty Evans, MD.

The educational kit produced by the expert panel will be released free to all APIC and ASM members mid 2012:

- ✓ Ready Reference Materials including Detailed Chapters on Specimen Collection and Microbial Immunology
- ✓ Live and On-Demand Webinars, featuring Members of the Expert Panel
- ✓ Download Ready Presentations
- ✓ The Latest Regulatory and Public Policy information

At APIC's 2011 Annual Conference, there was a Round Table Event in which the panelists discussed their experiences and suggested steps that facilities can take to improve the collaboration between IP and Lab professionals. A recording of this event may be found on the APIC website: www.apic.org/labproject

The experts bring diverse backgrounds with a common goal to the table. Excerpts from the panel discussion include:

We've developed...having a planned and ongoing relationship between the laboratory and infection control... On a weekly basis we meet for two hours. The first hour is devoted towards microbiology issues that are related to infection control... The second hour is focused on infection control issues. Having everybody at the table, having everybody discussing in a way that we respect each others' opinions and act on each others' opinions really helps us, I think, to produce a better product when we're done, and having this as a planned, ongoing interactive meeting keeps it going. We don't forget about projects that we've started to bring them to completion and I think that by doing it together we've come up with novel ideas that none of us would have thought of on our own.

Lance Peterson, MD

My interest in this collaborative is because I have been both a laboratory person as well as an IP, so I have worked at the bench and I understand the complexities and issues that confront laboratory personnel as well the complexities and issues that IPs are confronted with on a daily basis ...

I think it is very important that there be a bridge between the laboratory personnel as well as the IP, because as we go forward into the future, with the changing climate of healthcare, we need to work together for the common goal of achieving better patient outcome and that can only be achieved by having open dialogue ...

...at this point, even though there are very good relationships between both groups, I feel that they are working in parallel to one another, and that both of them understand the issues of hospital-acquired infections, but I do not feel that they understand all of the issues surrounding the change in healthcare climate in which we are faced with today.

Lillian Burns, MT, MPH, CIC

Marty and Kathy used the same word which caught my ears – expensive. We are two cost centers to the organization. And oftentimes our goals, even our specific objectives, are the same, but if we're operating in silos and we're trying to get additional resources in silos, we're almost certain to fail. But when we go down the path of shared interests, shared goals, shared needs, shared resources, we can go up the chain of our administration from two different angles. In order to effectively do this, we need to be able to have the skills to develop a business case... for new technology... We're not economists here... and what I would just like to see specifically in this next year... [are] tools that relate to... these two programs... [with] common goals...

Marc-Oliver Wright, MT(ASCP), MS, CIC

Lab and Infection Prevention play powerful roles separately and jointly in HAI prevention, in MDRO surveillance, in patient outcomes and in patient safety. I am proud of and rely very strongly on the partnership that I do have with the laboratory in my healthcare facility and I believe that the relationship is important and obtainable by everyone who works as an Infection Preventionist and who works closely with a laboratory...

The APIC Lab IP project is exciting to me because I foresee this to be a win-win for all involved... as we move forward with new diagnostic testing venues that include molecular microbiology and other more sophisticated testing that I believe is the future for all of us and will help us in preventing HAIs and multi-drug resistant organisms' transmission.

Kathy Aureden, MS, MT(ASCP)

You cannot survive without the laboratory ... I believe the lab really enjoys working with Infection Control Practitioners and Infection Control personnel because I believe it gives them a sense of why their work is important and where it's going and what difference it makes.

Marty Evans, MD

Student News from SCASM's 75th Annual Meeting...

Winners of the SCASM 75th Annual Meeting Collegiate Poster Session were:

- ✍ **James Wong**, University of California Riverside, PhD Level Award for his poster: Analysis of Differentially Expressed MicroRNAs and their Targets in Soybean during *Phytophthora sojae* Infection
- ✍ **Courtney Cavaco**, San Diego State University, Masters Level Award for her poster: Utilization of a Novel Immunostimulatory Peptide in the Control of Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Infection
- ✍ **Aaron Louie**, University of California San Diego, Undergraduate Award for his poster: Modulation of Hypoxia-inducible Factor Expression by Leading Gram-positive Bacterial Pathogens

The collegiate poster session was held on Saturday, November 5 at the SCASM Annual Meeting where 19 posters were presented by students from universities in Southern California. Winners of the competition won a fully paid trip to the National 2012 ASM Meeting in San Francisco where they will present their posters. Three awards are granted for an undergraduate level, master's level, and PhD level poster. Two of the grants were funded by **bioMerieux, Inc.** and one was funded by SCASM.

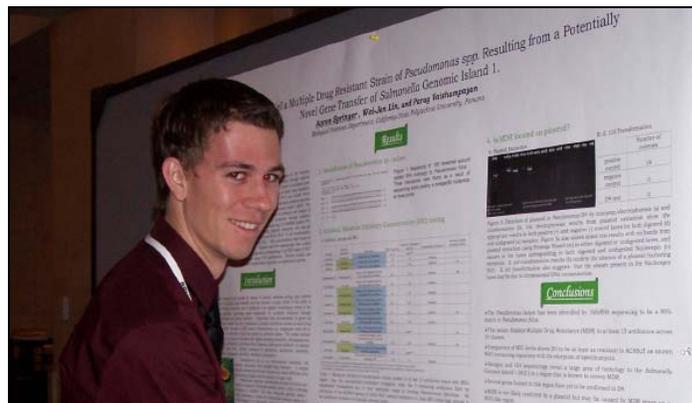
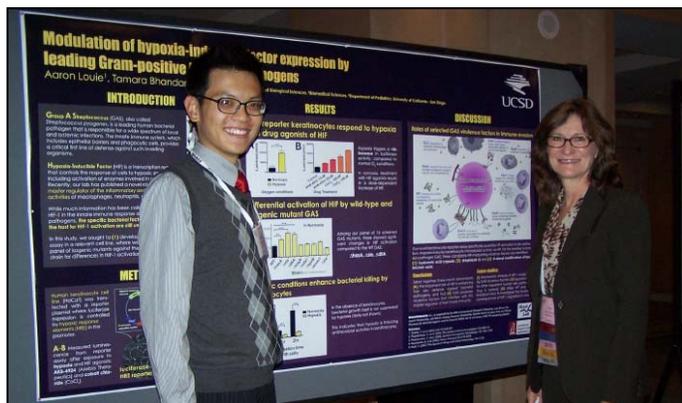
Thank you to the judges for their poster review: Dr. Brian Mochon, Dr. Maurice Exner, Dr. Lee Borenstein, Dr. Susan Novak-Weekley, Dr. Carmen Giltner, Dr. Omai Garner, and Dr. April Bobinчек.

SCASM is pleased to continue the tradition of providing a forum to support the students' research, as they are this nation's future scientists.

**Submitted by Ann Grasmick
Chair, Student Chapters**



Beatrice Grinius, Regional Business Manager, bioMerieux, Inc.; **Courtney Cavaco**, San Diego State University, Master's Level Award; **Aaron Louie**, University of California San Diego, Undergraduate Award; **James Wong**, University of California Riverside, PhD Level Award; **Margie Morgan, PhD, D(ABMM)**, SCASM President.



The 2011 SCASM 'Young Tech Scholarship' Winners Report

Janet A. Hindler, MCLS MT(ASCP)

With an ongoing concern for identifying and developing tomorrow's leaders and exposing younger microbiologists to professional organizations, SCASM offered a second 'Young Tech Scholarship' Award Program in 2011. This program recognizes young clinical and public health microbiologists who have been working in the field for less than two years through scholarships to attend the two-day SCASM Annual Fall Meeting in La Jolla, California. A blast email was sent to all SCASM members asking them to encourage any microbiologists who fit the criteria to apply for the scholarships, which covered registration fees and lodging. Seventeen young microbiologists qualified and were awarded scholarships. Prior to the meeting, seventeen "seasoned" SCASM members were recruited to act as mentors for the scholarship winners. Each mentor contacted their mentee in advance of the meeting to explain the event. Then at the meeting the mentors connected with their mentees at scheduled breakfasts and lunches where tables were reserved for mentors and mentees. Many also met with their mentee between the sessions for wide-ranging professional discussions.

Following the meeting, the mentees submitted a summary of their experiences. Excerpts from their reports follow. SCASM thanks the mentors for their involvement in the Program and their continuing relationships with their mentees. And we look forward to seeing all the Young Tech Scholarship awardees at upcoming SCASM events and programs.

"The conference was well-organized, informative, stimulating, entertaining and educationally fulfilling... I hope to build more professional relationships."

**Olympia Alvarez, VA San Diego
Margie Morgan, Mentor**

"My mentor was very resourceful and gave me plenty of advice on jumpstarting different career paths. I am blessed to have the opportunity to experience this wonderful event."

**Josephine Cura, UCI Medical Center
Susan Vergara, Mentor**

"Speaking with professionals from many different clinical settings made me feel that I was entering a new era of microbiology... I cannot wait to see what lies ahead."

**Joanna Garcia, Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital/Pacific Diagnostic Labs
Susan Kolano, Mentor**

"This was a great opportunity to get to know experienced and knowledgeable technologists. These are valuable relationships that will last a lifetime [and] the advice they shared was helpful and encouraging."

**Candi Grado, University of Arizona Medical Center
Janet Hindler, Mentor**

"The meeting brought together many outstanding experts in Microbiology and Molecular Biology, and I was able to gain a more accurate perspective on the current topics in the field."

**Maryam Hosseini, UCLA Medical Center
Beth Marlowe, Mentor**

"Being paired with a mentor with years of experience provided valuable insight on the dynamics of lab leadership and the different paths I could travel as a laboratory scientist, and the vendor showcase left me optimistic for the future of clinical microbiology."

**Brian Hoxeng, UCLA Medical Center
Paulette Medina, Mentor**

"The entire program was awesome. Many knowledgeable speakers gave presentations on a variety of leading issues in the field. What impressed me most was how enthusiastic and willing to share these people were. I will definitely go again next year!"

**Sidney Huang, UCLA Medical Center
Nina Yates, Mentor**

"Everyone was very friendly and seemed to go out of their way to make me feel welcomed. The networking, sponsor booths and lecture topics gave me updates on up and coming technological advances in the field."

Sherri Hurd, Santa Barbara Public Health
Zaffar Hussain, Mentor

"It was a wonderful networking experience. I had the chance to hear lectures from leading professionals about their new research findings and case studies."

Yiling (Kathy) Liu, University of Arizona Medical Center
Susan Novak, Mentor

"I wanted to bring back the PowerPoints and information to share with my colleagues. Everyone had an enthusiasm for microbiology and wanted to share their knowledge. I would go again in a heartbeat."

Aisling Morgan, Orange County Public Health
Susan Wei, Mentor

"Being very new to the field, I was able to gather positive reinforcement that made me feel I am on the right career path. I also met a fine mentor who I know I can contact in the future. I will be sure to attend in 2012."

Kim Ng, St. John's Health Center
Romney Humphries, Mentor

"I was able to apply the knowledge gained at the meeting to my everyday work and also to make suggestions for improvement. After the meeting I am even more inspired to learn new techniques and technology coming in the near future."

Jasmine Pangalangan, VA San Diego
Mickey Amos, Mentor

"What I enjoyed most was having the opportunity to meet so many people excited about this field, from new technologists such as myself to experienced veterans and even retired professionals. I am definitely planning to return next year and hopefully convince some of my coworkers to join me."

Claudia Polanco, Children's Hospital Los Angeles
LaRonda Frazier, Mentor

"I really enjoyed visiting with the vendors and talking about their products. There is so much happening on the technological side and I am excited to be part of this field. Overall I came away from the conference feeling like I was part of something really special."

Kathryn Steelman, Orange County Public Health
Stella Wylie, Mentor

"All the lectures were informative and stimulating. The opportunity to network and meet other professionals was invaluable. The meeting provided a chance to learn, laugh, connect and recharge."

June Suh, UCLA Medical Center
Rosemary Bender, Mentor

"As a newcomer to clinical microbiology, I found the SCASM meeting to be a gem. The size of the group and the agenda were perfect. You can be 100 percent engaged in learning and socializing throughout the entire event."

Shangxin (Shaun) Yang, Children's Hospital, Los Angeles
Nicole Green, Mentor

"The meeting was educational and enjoyable. There were numerous lectures, some were directly in my field and others taught me something completely new. And the social activities allowed me to meet technologists from all over southern California, and to gain insight and advice from experts in many specialties. I highly recommend that new technologists attend SCASM meetings and I look forward to participating in future events."

Julie Zamarripa, UCLA Medical Center
Heidi Kokkinos, Mentor

Photos from SCASM's 75th Annual Meeting . . .

~ A Sampling of SCASM's Annual Meeting Supporters ~

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BD Infection Prevention & Management



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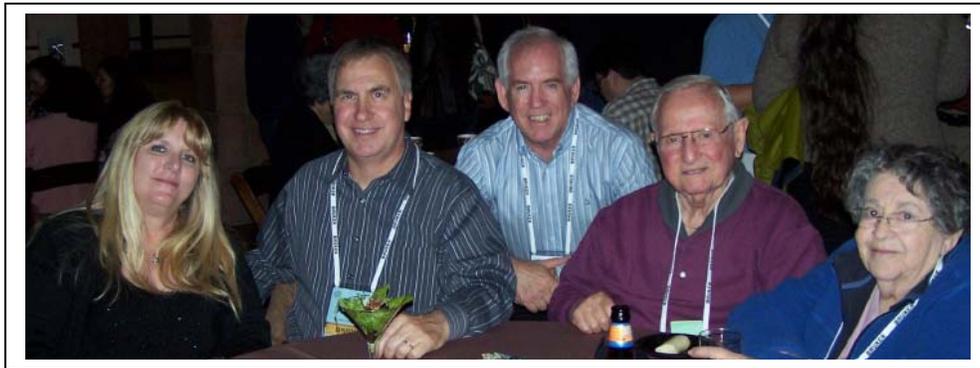
Roche Molecular



Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics

Photos from SCASM's 75th Annual Meeting . . .

~ Assorted Photos from a Busy SCASM Meeting ~



Beth and Mark Dubar, Tom Brewer, and Maurice and May White re-connect during a break



Paulette Medina, two of this year's mentees, and Nina Yates



LaRonda Frazier and Tom Brewer prepare for the ever-popular SCASM Raffle!



Sherri Hurd enjoys a quick snack with mentors Zaffar Hussain, LaRonda Frazier, and Stella Wylie



Kathy Liu and mentor Dr. Susan Novak



Greeted with a smile at the AlphaTec Exhibit



Janet Hindler and mentee Candi Grado



Two honored guests visit with Dr. Rosemary She

2011 Membership Drive and Wine Social at Agua Dulce Winery

Did you know that the yeast present in the fermentation of grapes to wine is a natural yeast unique for each winery? And that you can actually see it as a light, white film on the grapes? This and other fun facts were slowly disclosed to our group while we toured the vineyard of Agua Dulce on a warm July Sunday as we once again met for fun, networking, and the welcoming of new members into our Society. A great time was had by all. We hope to see you next time!

Submitted by Mickey Amos



~ Public Health Highlights ~

Laboratory Response Network Laboratories, Southern California

Diagnostic laboratories in Southern California have partners in the largest contingent of CDC-sponsored Laboratory Response Network (LRN) local laboratories of all 50 states. Of fourteen county health department LRN laboratories in California, six serve the counties of the south - Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo and Tulare.

These Public Health Laboratories perform specialized assays for the confirmation of agents of anthrax, plague, tularemia, brucellosis, melioidosis, glanders, as well as the toxin, ricin. This responsibility means that hospital and clinical reference laboratories can submit specimens and culture isolates that cannot be ruled out as agents of these infections and intoxications. A full decade after the anthrax letter events of 2011, LRN laboratories regularly test white powders delivered by FBI agents for analysis

Although clinical laboratories are the primary submitters to the LRN laboratories, other diagnostic laboratories, such as food, agricultural and veterinary diagnostic laboratories may also submit specimens and culture isolates that cannot be ruled out as one of these agents. Specimens and isolates submitted to the LRN labs must be shipped or carried by courier according to federal shipping and handling requirements. As needs arise, LRN laboratories provide training in the recognition of bacterial agents of bioterrorism and their proper packaging and shipping, which will enable clinical labs to have Select Agent certification allowing staff to possess and handle these agents. Most LNR labs have Biosafety Level 3 facilities for safe handling and testing of biological agents. Furthermore, the Los Angeles Public Health Laboratory can perform confirmatory testing for smallpox virus and also test for agents of chemical terrorism. For further information about LRN-C, see, please see <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/lab/labct.htm>.

The Laboratory Directors of this group actively seek a dialogue with the clinical laboratory colleagues. Contact information can be obtained at www.caphld.org.

Author: Dr. Jim Beebe, San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory, jbeebe@co.slo.ca.us, 805-781-5512

Leadership Change:

Los Angeles County Public Health Laboratory – Dr. J. Michael Janda

Public Health Microbiology [PHM] Training Opportunities:

Please inquire directly with laboratory directors for labs of interest, at www.caphld.org

Upcoming Conferences and Learning Opportunities:

- ✓ Mark your calendar, annual meetings of CAPHLD are planned for April/May and October of 2012
- ✓ APHL Annual Meeting and Sixth Government Environmental Laboratory Conference, May 20 ~ 23, 2012
- ✓ Annual PulseNet Update Meeting and 8th Annual OutbreakNet Conference, August 27 ~ 30, 2012

Submitted by Susan Wei, PhD



Notes from the Editor. . .

Special thanks to Betty Lindgren for assembling the newsletter.

We appreciate your feedback.

Please forward any comments on this newsletter to Mark_Dubar@bd.com

Thank you!

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SCASM NEWS

The Newsletter of the American Society for Microbiology - Southern California Branch
January 2012



Save the Date!

SCASM's 76th Annual Meeting
Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine
November 1-3, 2012