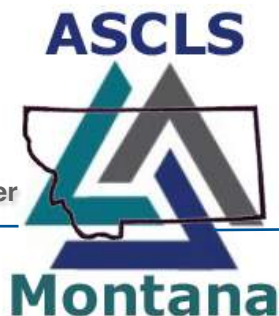


# Montana Laboratory News

Summer 2021



Editor Cara Bushmaker

## Board of Directors

### President:

Holly Weinberg

### President-Elect:

Sadie Arnold

### Past-President & Leadership Development:

Abbey Wichman

### Secretary:

Kay Rasmussen

### Treasurer:

Tori Rensink

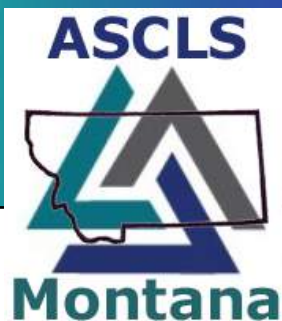
### Board of Directors

#### 1st Year:

Kelly Amidei

#### 2nd Year:

Deb Pratt



## The ASCLS Lifetime Achievement Award

Holly Weinberg/Joni Gilstrap/ASCLS-MT

The purpose of the ASCLS Lifetime Achievement Award is to recognize and honor an ASCLS member who has “made a difference” in ASCLS and the profession of clinical laboratory science. This award provides special recognition to an individual who has provided dedicated and outstanding service at all levels of the organization over a sustained period of time. In addition, the individual has demonstrated outstanding career achievements in clinical laboratory science and has significantly promoted the profession to the public and other health care professionals.

"It is our pleasure and privilege to nominate Susanne (Susie) Norris Zanto for the 2021 ASCLS Lifetime Achievement Award. Susie exemplifies all that ASCLS stands for. She is the ultimate professional and inherently exhibits the ASCLS values and vision. Susie promotes professionalism, compassion, and joy in all that she does.

Susie first became aware of ASCLS and interested in being a part of this organization when Montana began its quest for state licensure. She was impressed with the passion that she saw in ASCLS members and understood the need for licensure in our profession. She jumped in with both feet and became a VOICE for Montana's effort. Licensure passed in 1993 due to the efforts of the ASCLS-Montana members. Susie was hooked at this point and went on to serve as Montana's President in 1998. She served as Region VIII Director from 2001-2007 and ASCLS President from 2014-2015, incorporating the Blue Ocean Strategy in her platform as President."

# Lifetime Achievement Cont...

This recognition illustrates a devotion to Clinical Laboratory Science that reaches far beyond ASCLS. It involves sacrifice and support from family and loved ones. It leaves a mark on a society that is not fillable. Susie will absolutely HATE the focus on her alone AND us making such a fuss :) Which is the very core of why she's so deserving. We often describe Susie as a force of nature. Her countless hours of time to ASCLS were never seen as a burden and have made her both a friend and mentor to most if not all who meet her. I can't imagine anyone more deserving and we can't wait to honor her in person. Thank you Susie, for all you've given to our profession, our society and to each of us individually!

"Susie is committed. She is always the first to raise her hand and volunteer for task forces, committees, leadership roles, whatever is needed to succeed. She served as the Chair of the Workforce Shortage Position Paper task force which produced an outstanding product, taking a massive amount of information and distilling it into a format that is succinct yet thorough enough to convey the critical state of the workforce in its current state. The position paper was printed in a 7-page booklet that was used the following March as a leave-behind for the 2019 Legislative Symposium and legislative representatives were very impressed with the scope and presentation of the data. As an attendee at that symposium, I was proud to have that document to share with our legislative representatives. Susie did an outstanding job pulling this task force together, keeping everyone on track and organizing the work to produce a quality position paper in the allotted time.



IN  
THIS  
ISSUE:

---

[Region VIII Leadership Academy](#)

[Spotlight on Safety](#)

[IMSS](#)

[Legislative Days](#)

[President's Message](#)

Susie with Jeanette Rankin Statue Washington, D.C. Legislative Days



Region Council Meeting

Chelsea Wallace, Cara Bushmaker, Anne Weber, Vicki Rice, Amy Steinmetz, Susie Zanto, Joni Gilstrap Washington, D.C. Annual Meeting 2008



Susie and Dr Rohde presentation Charlotte JAM



Gilma Roncancio-Weemer Susie Zanto Paula Garrot



Holly Weinberg, Susie Zanto, Abbey Wichman, Mabel and Ellis Wichman Award Presentation Summer 2021



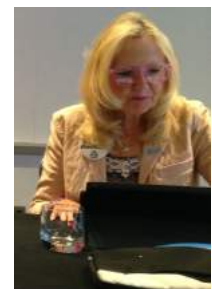
Deb Rodahl Susie Zanto



Susie Zanto Anne Weber Urban Beach



IMSS 2001 (Post-9/11)



ASCLS BOD Hard At Work

## Legislative Days is Just Around the Corner! It's Moved to the Fall!

---

The following is provided by the ASCLS website:

ASCLS is proud to work with Clinical Laboratory Management Association (CLMA), American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Association of Genetic Technologists (AGT), American Medical Technologists (AMT), the National Society for Histotechnology (NSH), and the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists-USA (PAMET-USA) on the Legislative Symposium each year.

Through this ASCLS tradition that originated in 1989, the members of these organizations meet with their representatives and senators on Capitol Hill as a unified front on behalf of our profession. Each year these leading organizations urge their members and leaders to come to Washington to provide a visible and informed voice, and make our concerns known inside Congress.

### Education, Experience, Leadership

The Legislative Symposium provides a great education on the how-tos of lobbying. Attendees are coached on presentation techniques so they can effectively talk to their congressional representatives during their appointments. They are well received in the congressional offices. Attendees return home from Washington with first-hand knowledge of the political system in action and confidence that they make a difference.

The 2021 Legislative Symposium is scheduled for October 25-26 at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town in Alexandria, VA. Each attendee will receive pre-meeting emails describing the issues to be discussed with their congressional representatives as well as extensive information to be left with each office.

### Wondering what the Legislative Symposium is like?

Laboratory professionals at all stages of their careers attend the Legislative Symposium. Programming is built to accommodate everyone's experiences, from first-time attendees to those who know all the secret passages to get around The Hill.

---

Legislative Days is the backbone for our profession and is also one of the most important assets of your membership. Once again we need our ASCLS-MT voices to unite behind the two members we are sending to Capital Hill in the Fall. Workforce shortages, poor public health infrastructure, licensure, DCLS career advancement, and education are just some of the important issues facing us and we need to convey that to our representatives! Writing to our senators is such an important support to what we do on Capital Hill during Legislative Days. It's something all of you can do to support these efforts from your own labs. The more our collective voices are heard, the more our story will resonate.

This year we have the publicity of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the light that has shown on our expertise. This opportunity provides us with a primed audience to explain the importance of our profession and to **SHARE YOUR STORIES**. There are so many factors that feed into making our profession successful and allowing us to provide the best quality results possible, we need to relay that complexity. Let's come together and ensure our voice is heard in the "room where it happens".

ASCLS-MT





## Stay in touch virtually!

As members of ASCLS one of your most valuable resources is the [ASCLS Connect Community](#)! Each year you can customize your member community to receive email updates regarding our state society news/updates, any laboratory specialty of interest, and hot topics in the laboratory world. Stay connected to our membership across the US and across our big sky state. The most resources are at our fingertips via the [Connect Community](#), download the app today.

### ASCLS Connect Community and Mobile App

Connect through the Online Community  
at [connect.ascls.org](https://connect.ascls.org)

#### Download a New App to Access the Connect Community on Your Mobile Device

Convenient. The app keeps you logged in, making the entire Connect Community (and all its functions) just an icon away.

Accessible. Look up other members in the directory, send and respond to messages, and monitor community discussions in real time.

Fun!



**MemberCentric**  
Results Direct  
Social

#### To download the app:

1. Go to the **Google Play store** or the **Apple App Store** and download the **MemberCentric** app.
2. Search for ASCLS when prompted to "Find your organization."

INSTALL

3. Log in using your credentials for your ASCLS member account.

## FROM THE EDITOR:

Holy Hot Summer!

I hope you all are managing to stay cool and safe this Summer. Every Summer I think, it can't get much drier than this....or hotter...(face palm). I have to say though, it makes me appreciate working in my Laboratory with a sliver of a skylight and air conditioning that makes the walk-in cooler seem warm. I have to focus on the positives. And with that, I am focusing on a little revamp to our newsletter this year. I hope you all will send me your suggestions and ideas for things you'd like to hear about. In turn, I hope to include MTPHL news and links, safety tips, updates from the society and news about what our ASCLS-MT board is hard at work on. That board works incredibly hard each year and they make our organization successful. I'm hoping that each of you will share this newsletter with your Laboratories, as well as the benefits of our society membership. I perpetually feel like I'm up on my soap box but that's what happens when you get to do what you love for a living. You want to share it with everyone whether they want to hear it or not ;) No but seriously, our profession is on the precipice of great opportunities right now and we need a strong voice. One way to do this is through membership, promotion of the profession, and supporting education. Things I know each and every Laboratory Professional in Montana is good at! So keep in touch on our website, through the newsletter, and on our Connect Community and we'll give you quick access to all the resources you need to do your part!



Happy Hot Summer Ya'!!!

Cara Bushmaker, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>



BLOG from "[Dan the Lab Safety Man](#)"

---

### 3 Unwritten Rules Every Lab Should Follow

Many years ago, a woman purchased a cup of coffee in a restaurant drive-through. Not having a cup holder available in her car, she placed the cup between her legs to hold the coffee while she reached for money to pay for it. She burned her legs, sued the restaurant, and actually won her court case. Now such restaurants are required to warn customers with signs stating the obvious; “coffee served hot.” Before this regulation came to be, however, many people were aware of the possible danger of placing a hot cup near their skin. Does having a posted sign make customers safer? What about in a medical environment? There isn’t an explicit safety regulation written for every action that could create an unsafe situation. So, what are a few of the hidden and maybe no-so-obvious things might your staff need to know in order to keep safe while performing lab testing?

You can’t chew gum in the laboratory. It’s true, but sadly, it had not written down anywhere as a regulation. OSHA’s Bloodborne Pathogen standard says that “eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited (in the lab).” It says nothing about gum, throat lozenges, hard candy, or even chewing tobacco. The unwritten rule is that OSHA is trying to prevent hand-to-face contact while working in an area where infections can be acquired easily this way. There are multiple routes of entry via mucous membranes- a major source of pathogen exposure- your mouth, nose, and eyes. Laboratorians should always keep their hands away from their face when working in the department. These activities are just another opportunity for hand- to-mouth contact. While you might be able to show the safety officer you are putting these things in your mouth outside of the lab, you would not be able to prove that to an inspector, and they will rightly cite you for it. If you need help enforcing this, and you work in a CAP-accredited laboratory, there is now a specific regulation that prohibits gum chewing directly.



MONTANA  
COMMUNICABLE  
DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY

Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 case counts, hospitalizations, and active cases by county. The state laboratory has expanded hours 7 days a week. Watch for updates via email!

[\*\*Montana Response-COVID-19\*\*](#)



### 3 Unwritten Rules Continued...

How long should staff wear PPE? During the COVID-19 pandemic, many have asked about the effectiveness of various PPE and have looked for written guidance discussing how long it should be worn. In general, studies show that gloves lose barrier effectiveness in about two hours. Wear them that long if they are not visibly soiled while in use in the lab. Lab coats- disposable or reusable- can be worn for one week in the general lab setting unless something is spilled on them. Once a new coat is worn, the outside is considered contaminated, but that does not mean it cannot be re-used. It is wasteful to change coats every day unless there is a reason to do that (i.e. in a specialty lab where cross-contamination will be an issue). Face shields worn by staff can be reused as well, and they can be cleaned with alcohol-based products for disinfection. Rarely should a wearable face shield or goggles be used only once before disposal.

Mesh shoes are not allowed to be worn by lab personnel. Again, other than in CLSI guidelines, it will be difficult to find that written clearly in lab safety regulations. Laboratory footwear should “be comfortable and cover the entire foot, including the instep and the heel. Because canvas shoes will absorb chemicals or infectious fluids, they are not recommended. Leather or a synthetic, fluid-impermeable material is suggested.” OSHA’s PPE standard does insist that employers take measures to protect the feet of employees. In the healthcare setting, that means footwear needs to protect from biohazard materials, chemicals, and even sharps. Mesh or canvas shoes do not fit the bill, and neither do clog-style shoes (even if they have a heel strap). If you need to, set your department’s footwear policy through the dress code or maybe the Chemical Hygiene Plan. If staff tells you they can’t find this type of footwear, tell them to look harder. All across this country, hundreds of healthcare employees are wearing the appropriate shoes, and they are available at several different stores or on line.

Often, because these safety rules are “unwritten,” staff will challenge you on them. It can be difficult to try to enforce these important safety measures if you can’t properly educate the staff about why they exist. Be sure to know your regulatory resources, and don’t be afraid to dig deeply into the references to find the answers you seek. Lab leaders can write their own policy, and it can go above and beyond what the regulations state if needed. The safety standard may not be clear and direct, but it these are still important measures to take. Just like that lady may have needed a sign to prevent her from putting hot coffee in her lap, your staff needs clear safety guidance to keep them safe from a healthcare-acquired injury or exposure. Provide the tools they need to remain happy and healthy members of your team.

# President's Message:



As I write this in the dog-days of summer, realizing 2021 is already halfway behind us, I like to focus on the positive things that have happened so far this year and the amazing opportunities ahead. Of course, number one is seeing a light at the end of the COVID tunnel, we are certainly not out of the woods yet but the fact that we can now cautiously get together in person for meetings and begin to resume dining out, social activities, travel, etc is such a positive thing! I have to thank all of the ASCLS-Montana members who have been so strong through this difficult time and those of you who have worked so hard to be a voice in your community. Cara Bushmaker has worked tirelessly to be the face behind the science and the voice of reason in her community. ASCLS-Montana is another absolute positive in my book! We are so fortunate to have so many strong leaders in our Montana society. The recent past-presidents Ashlee Ketchum, Tori Rensink, Cara Bushmaker and Abbey Wichman have done an incredible job leading our state, maintaining the enthusiasm and vitality of our organization. Cara and Abbey did this through the beginning and depths of the pandemic, always maintaining a positive, upbeat, and compassionate attitude. We also have many up-and-coming leaders which is so exciting! I know Montana is well positioned to continue to mentor new leadership and keep our society strong.

I come to you as an Idaho transplant. I was raised in Billings but left the state after high school, attending college in Spokane and then completing my NAACLS internship in the Air Force in San Antonio, Texas. I was in the service for 4 years and my final base was Mountain Home, Idaho. 2 weeks after separating from the service, I started work at St. Luke's in Boise, Idaho. I started on evening shift, then was Educational Coordinator of our School of Medical Technology, later became Hematology Supervisor, and finally System Technical Coordinator for Hematology/Hemostasis/Flow Cytometry – a perfect job! I retired in 2014 and returned to my beloved Montana!

I have held many roles in ASCLS through the years but to me, the biggest thing that stands out to me about this organization and the reason I am still dedicated to ASCLS is the friendships I have gained over the years. Many years ago, I was the Registration Chair for our ASCLS-Idaho spring conference. The Regional Director was going to be attending the meeting and I was so excited to think that someone from the NATIONAL Board of Directors was going to be there in person. I made a special name badge for her and was really nervous to meet her. The day came when the RD arrived and here came this amazing ray of sunshine with a big smile and heartfelt welcome to all she met. Susie Zanto was that RD and to this day, I remember meeting her for the first time and thinking this is where I want to be - with people like Susie!

[CONT....PAGE 11](#)



# REGION VIII Leadership ACADEMY



- Grow your Leadership Skills
- Build your resume
- Prepare for leadership roles in ASCLS or your workplace
- Positive support
- New network of experienced Laboratory Leaders at your disposal
- Apply by August 15th at the Region Eight Website!
- No experience needed!

[APPLY HERE!](#)



## PODCASTS

The Off the Bench podcast series discusses scientific and not-so-scientific ideas in laboratory medicine. Join the **ASCLS Off the Bench Facebook Group** to continue the discussions and share your feedback. Let's share ideas and talk nerdy.



P  
O  
D  
C  
A  
S  
T  
S

ABOUT

S  
C  
I  
E  
N  
C  
E



## ASCLS Proposal to Restructure the Board of Directors



The ASCLS Board of Directors has been in the process of critically assessing the current organizational makeup of our Board, our constituent societies, and our regions. Is there a better way to do things or is our current structure adequately serving our needs? A taskforce was developed to look at the health of our constituent societies and that taskforce is now a standing committee. Meanwhile the Board tasked the Executive Committee 3 years ago to review regional functions with a close look at regional council makeup, to include financial health. The position of the ASCLS Board of Directors is to: “standardize the function of ASCLS Regions to better support harmony and the mission of ASCLS and its constituent societies. The main focus of the region should no longer be viewed as one of communication. Instead, the region should be an organizational tool (that the) constituent society can leverage to improve collaborative efforts that enhance member value. In addition, each regional council should have a standardized structure and composition.”

At the March, 2021 Board of Directors’ meeting, a proposal was made by the BOD to strike the word Regional from Regional Directors in the ASCLS Bylaws, resulting those directors now being Directors at Large. This was going to come to the June, 2021 House of Delegates for a vote but has now been deferred to the January mid-year House of Delegates. There is also discussion to standardize the make-up of the Regional Councils, to cap the amount of funds a region can hold in their treasuries, and ultimately to remove the regional structure entirely. The first step in all of these discussions is removing the word “Regional” from Regional Director.

For more detailed discussion of this proposal, click on this link [\*\*ASCLS Proposal to Restructure the Board of Directors\*\*](#). This discussion outlines the talking points put out by the ASCLS Board of Directors; pros and cons brought to the HOD by delegates at the June, 2021 House of Delegates; and next steps as known so far. Watch for more information and Zoom Town Hall meetings to discuss this proposed change. Please don’t hesitate to speak up with your thoughts on this – ASCLS is a grass roots organization for the members and by the members.

Overview provided by Holly Weinberg



Watch  
Facebook  
for more details  
and teasers of  
what's to  
come!

IMSS has  
**THE  
BEST  
FOOD**  
and the Tetons look epic  
any time of  
year!

**PRESENTS**

*The 58th Annual Intermountain States Seminar*

October 3-5 2021  
|  
Snow King Resort  
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

<b>Continuing Education</b>	Each day begins with informative General Sessions followed by breakout sessions on a variety of topics and disciplines in the practice of clinical laboratory science
<b>Industry Engagement</b>	Our Exhibit Hall will showcase new or enhanced instrumentation, reagents, and supplies used in the laboratory every day!
<b>Networking</b>	There are multiple breaks and exhibitor sessions allowing plenty of time to network with your colleagues

Visit: <http://asclsregion8.org/IMSS/> for more information and to book your stay



# Inter-Mountain States Seminar

CE

Labucate

Promotion of the Profession

Skills Building

Networking

Fun

**IMSS '21**

OCTOBER 3-5 2021  
Snow King Resort, Jackson Hole Wyoming

Join us this October 3-5th for a special address from none other than Aziz Hassan the president for the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science! This past year has been one of many challenges that have rippled through medical laboratories nationwide. Come listen as Doctor Hassan discusses how we can turn crises into opportunities for growth and advancement.

**OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE:**

<b>K</b> Blaine Mathison Malaria	<b>Q</b> Dr. Jean Patel Antimicrobial Resistance Threats	<b>J</b> Many other speakers from around the country
--	--	---

Make your reservations **NOW!**  
at the beautiful  
Snow King Resort

Go  
All  
In  
@  
IMSS



The value of this organization is beyond any list I can make. We're asked all the time to explain the Return on Investment for membership in ASCLS. I look at the friends I have gained, both professional and personal, local and national, and I know that I have riches beyond anything I can put a dollar value on. I look at the skills I have gained, technical, management, leadership all through my time in ASCLS. I can pinpoint the beginning of my career advancement to my membership and activities in ASCLS. The value of belonging to the premier professional organization, ASCLS, is so much more than just dollar signs.

I'm looking forward to an exciting year with a very full and engaged Montana leadership. We have a wonderful cross section of experience including work place, ASCLS activities, leadership, etc. We have several task-forces this year: DCLS opportunities in Montana; wage survey across the state; bylaws and SOPs updates; and promotion of the profession opportunities. There are so many avenues to get involved – don't hesitate to speak up and say Pick Me! Watch for opportunities to join in this year, renew your membership today if you haven't already done so, and mark your calendars for IMSS in Jackson October 3-5 – See You There!

Holly Weinberg, ASCLS-MT President 2021-2022

---

### Research Corner: Epigenomic Landscape of Lyme Disease Spirochetes Reveals Novel Motifs [Full Article Available HERE](#)

#### ABSTRACT

*Borrelia burgdorferi*, the etiological agent of Lyme disease, persists in nature through an enzootic cycle consisting of a vertebrate host and an Ixodes tick vector. The sequence motifs modified by two well-characterized restriction/modification (R/M) loci of *B. burgdorferi* type strain B31 were recently described, but the methylation profiles of other Lyme disease *Borrelia* bacteria have not been characterized. Here, the methylomes of *B. burgdorferi* type strain B31 and 7 clonal derivatives, along with *B. burgdorferi* N40, *B. burgdorferi* 297, *B. burgdorferi* CA-11, *B. afzelii* PKo, *B. afzelii* BO23, and *B. garinii* PBr, were defined through PacBio single-molecule real-time (SMRT) sequencing. This analysis revealed 9 novel sequence motifs methylated by the plasmid-encoded restriction/modification enzymes of these *Borrelia* strains. Furthermore, while a previous analysis of *B. burgdorferi* B31 revealed an epigenetic impact of methylation on the global transcriptome, the current data contradict those findings; our analyses of wild-type *B. burgdorferi* B31 revealed no consistent differences in gene expression among isogenic derivatives lacking one or more restriction/modification enzymes.



## ASCLS UPCOMING EVENTS:

1. ASCLS-MT BOD Orientation

August 21, 2021

1000 AM

2. ASCLS-MT BOD Fall Meeting

September 18, 2021

Bozeman, MT

3. Region VIII Leadership Academy Opens

October 1

Jackson Hole, WY

4. [IMSS](#)

2021 Intermountain States Seminar - October 3-5

Jackson Hole, WY

5. [Legislative Symposium](#)

2021 Legislative Symposium - October 25th

Alexandria, VA

ASCLS-MT is on social media...be sure to check us out!



Follow us to stay up on the latest news affecting our profession, conference updates, technology, government affairs and society updates.

If you have haven't already, follow us, like us and show us some love! You can also stay connected with us and other laboratorians with:

#WeSaveLivesEveryday #IAmASCLS #UnitedAgainstCOVID19 #ASCLSMT #ASCLS #Lab4Life #EveryTestIsOurPatient  
#IMSS #AintItGreatInRegionEight

Explore the ASCLS-MT web



site by clicking on the graphic

