



NEWS & VIEWS

NOVEMBER 2005

Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Holiday Greetings! As I write this, it's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is a week away. This year has gone by amazingly fast and I want to thank all of you for giving me the privilege of serving as the President of the Academy. It has been an honor to work with you and for you.

The Academy is doing well and I think we have had very productive year. We continue to develop excellent LMPGs that are increasingly recognized by the laboratory and medical community. This year's program on tumor markers, chaired by Eleftherios Diamandis, was superb and we look forward to two new LMPGs for 2006 on pharmacogenomics (to be presented at the AACC annual meeting and chaired by Roland Valdes) and cardiac risk markers (which will be presented at the Beckman Conference and chaired by Gary Myers). The Board has chosen the topic for 2007 which will be newborn screening by mass spectrometry and will be chaired by Michael Bennett. The Education and Scientific Affairs Committee (ESAC) is currently investigating new topics for 2008 and we also have several LMPGs which will be up for renewal/updating in the near future. Your suggestions about future topics are always welcome and we do appreciate your input. I would like to thank ESAC and our LMPG chairs for all the incredible work they did this year.

The Board has been busy this year, working on the Academy finances including discussions on the issues of printing vs. CD distribution of our LMPGs to members, our decreasing ability in fundraising, additional opportunities for NACB members in areas other than the LMPGs and future activities of the Academy. It is clear that our financial resources can and have limited our ability to become engaged in other areas outside of the LMPGs. In the future we hope to become more engaged in activities involving education in clinical chemistry, and the various aspects of our practice of clinical chemistry including all of the venues where we practice (hospital lab, clinic lab, POCT, industry, research, etc).

In the near future, you will receive information from the Officers and the board regarding a much closer relationship with AACC. The Boards of both organizations have held many discussions on this topic and we are very excited about the opportunities that such an association will bring to the Academy—and to AACC. We are very interested in hearing your comments and feedback on our proposal.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve you and the Academy this year. I wish you a good rest-of-the-year and a very Happy Holiday Season.

MARY BURRITT, PH.D., FACB
President

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**IN MEMORIAM
MAX E. RAFELSON JR.
(1921-2005)**

The NACB wishes to recognize the passing of Max E. Rafelson, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor and Chairman of the Biochemistry Department at Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago and a former Academy member. Dr. Rafelson's professional career is notable in many ways, and his avid pursuit of basic research, teaching and mentoring touched many physicians and scientists. He was the author of several biochemistry textbooks and often was the first to test new clinical laboratory equipment. He was one of the first to implement a commercially available LIS. These accomplishments led him into becoming the Vice President of Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago serving as director of Information Systems and Associate Dean of Rush Medical College. One of his marks on the Academy was that he was, *inter alia*, co-editor with Julian Rosenthal, MD, of "Clinical Physiology and Biochemistry," the official journal of the Academy from 1983 – 1988. In 1990, he retired and in 1999 spent his retirement in San Antonio. He is survived by his wife, Trudy Rafelson, and two children, Anne Rafelson and Mark Rafelson, both of Chicago.



BUSY YEAR FOR ESAC AND LMPG COMMITTEES

This past year, 2005, has been busy for the Education and Scientific Affairs Committee, as well as for all of the Committees developing Laboratory Medicine Practice Guidelines. First of all, after some discussion, the structure of the committee was modified to include three members who are not currently chairing LMPG projects. These individuals are charged with monitoring the progress of the groups and recommending future topics to the board of directors. Current executive committee members are Drs. Shirley Welch, Robert Dufour, and Mike Bennett.

In April, the *Pharmacogenetics Committee* held the first open discussion of their work at the International Association for Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology meeting in Louisville. The sessions were well attended and became the focus of a CAP Today article. Committee members have since presented preliminary recommendations at several additional meetings. The first drafts of their efforts are slated to be posted on the web site in the near future. AACC has committed two days at the 2006 Annual Meeting for the full public presentation and discussion.

In July, we had a very full one-day presentation at the International Congress of Clinical Chemistry meeting in Orlando thanks to the efforts of the *Tumor Markers Committee* under the direction of Drs. Catherine Sturgeon and Eleftherios Diamandis. Dr. Sturgeon has organized the written documents available for review on our web site. Dr. Rob Christenson reports that the revisions of the *Cardiac Markers* recommendations are nearing completion, and he expects the next version of draft guidelines to be posted by the end of the year. I encourage you to take time to review and comment on either or both of these sets of documents.

In early fall 2005 you should have received the CD edition of the *Emergency Toxicology Guidelines*. Dr. Alan Wu and the members of his committee deserve a round of thanks for their time and commitment to seeing the project through to fruition. Two additional committees are also on the verge of wrapping up their projects: the Maternal-Fetal Health Risk Assessment and the POCT guidelines under the directions of Drs.

John Sherwin and Jim Nichols, respectively. These committees also deserve sincere thanks. To give you an idea of the amount of work that goes into these projects, these three represent the efforts of over 100 committee and sub-committee members. Over 1400 references are cited as the basis for the recommendations. Although it varies from topic to topic, in general for every reference used, at least three more are read in-full and at least 5 more are abstracted. The number of hours contributed by committee members is mind-boggling. After all the public presentations, revisions, comments, and more revisions, each set of documents undergoes one more bit of scrutiny before being declared complete. Dr. Jerry Yeo and the Publications Committee review the material and makes sure it is formatted consistently. If you have compared the posted drafts with the final products, you'll realize this involves more than correcting punctuation and spelling. It is a major effort.

The committee focusing on Markers of Inflammation and Ischemia (Dr. Gary Meyers) reports their work is progressing on schedule. This committee will present at the 2006 Beckman Conference. Dr. Mike Bennett is in the early stages of organizing a committee regarding Expanded Newborn Screening for Metabolic Diseases by Tandem Mass Spectrometry and Follow-up Testing. Although newborn screening was part of the Maternal-Fetal Health Risk Assessment, the executive committee and board of directors felt that the advances afforded by the use of tandem mass spectrometry in this area warranted its selection.

While all of the documents are open for public review and comment, please contact me if you are interested in serving as a formal reviewer for any of the projects in process. Also, we are looking for volunteers to assist in the updating and revision of several existing guidelines. Contact me if you are interested in working on those for Hepatic Injury and Therapeutic Drug Monitoring. And it's not too early to start volunteering for Thyroid and Diabetes - our documents must undergo a review every five years in order to be listed in the National Guideline Clearinghouse database (<http://www.guideline.gov>).

A couple of you have asked about the committee selection process. Generally, we tend to give considerable autonomy to the chairs. However, they are asked to create a group composed of both clinical laboratory scientists and clinicians appropriate to the topic. Usually, this involves collaboration with other clinical organizations and it is expected that committee members will be appointed by or recommended by the participating organizations. There will be times when an expected expert is not included. Their exclusion may reflect a conflict of interest or the individual may have declined participation due to other commitments or conflicts. All committee chairs are given a copy of the SOP for LMPG Preparation, a relatively detailed outline of the process. Although the SOP includes a brief description of the final format, Dr. Yeo's committee has begun refining that portion of the document in hopes that it will facilitate their work. Please submit your ideas for LMPG topics to the ESAC or Executive Committee and consider volunteering to work on these projects. While the commitment may require a significant amount of time, the benefits to the laboratory community and the patient are truly rewarding.

NACB ANNOUNCES NEW OFFICERS FOR 2006

Election results were announced at the 2005 Orlando lunch meeting. President-elect Tom Annesley announced the new officers for 2006:

President-elect	Catherine Hammett-Stabler
Treasurer	Roger Bertholf
Nominating Committee	Greg Tsongalis Ingo Kampa Rob Christenson (chair)
Members-at-large	Marty Fleisher Ken Blick

Congratulations to the new officers.

NACB AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE DECEMBER 13, 2005

Nominations for the Professor Alvin Dubin Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Profession and the Academy, the NACB Distinguished Scientist Award, and the George Grannis Award for Excellence in Research and Scientific Publication are requested.

How to submit: Nominations must be submitted in writing to the chair of the NACB Awards Committee and are due by December 13th, 2005. Submissions must include a letter of nomination and a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae in addition to the following:

Dubin Award: A nomination for the Professor Alvin Dubin Award should include three letters supporting the nomination.

Distinguished Scientist Award: A nomination for the NACB Distinguished Scientist Award should include copies of each of the nominee's ten most important research papers.

Grannis Award: Students may be proposed for consideration for the George Grannis Award by a mentor or by the director of a ComACC-accredited program. Student nominees must have published a paper indexed in *Index Medicus* during the three years prior to the year of the award. The NACB Awards Committee will consider the scientific merit of the student-authored paper in selecting the award recipient.

2005 Award Recipients: Charles Hawker, PhD (Professor Alvin Dubin Award), Leonard Jarett, MD (Distinguished Scientist Award), and Jennifer Snyder, PhD (George Grannis Award), are the most recent recipients of the NACB Annual Awards.

Please submit nominations to:

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