



newsletter

the official quarterly newsletter of the American College of Medical Toxicology

American College of Medical Toxicology

Editor

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Winter 2004

# The President's Perspective

Keith Burkhardt, MD, FACMT



Thanks for the honor of being your seventh President. My immediate predecessor, Michael Kosnett, MD, has certainly elevated the visibility of Medical Toxicology. Please thank him for his successful presidency and leadership that forged our cooperative agreement with The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and led to the award from the CDC/ATSDR entitled Partner in Public Health. Read more about this award in the newsletter. Obviously, I personally benefited from this relationship as the ATSDR and CDC are now my employer. I just completed my first year as a Regional Medical Toxicologist. I am based out of Region 3 headquarters in Philadelphia, but also serve as Pennsylvania's State Medical Toxicologist in Harrisburg, PA. In the next newsletter I will discuss my new job in greater detail, as I hope many more medical toxicologists develop consultant roles or employment with state

and federal governments.

This issue of the newsletter highlights many more examples of ACMT's success. One of the greatest strengths of the College has traditionally been in Education. Dr. Lewis Nelson has been the Chair for many years now. Read about our accomplishments at NAACT. The Board Review Course in October in Dallas, Texas was another booming success. With about 150 attendees, half of the attendees were not taking the Certification or the Recertification examination just given in Chicago, IL.

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## ACMT Honored with Award by CDC/ATSDR

The American College of Medical Toxicology has received the 2004 Centers for Disease Control and ATSDR Honor Award as a Partner in Public Health Improvement. The award was presented to ACMT at the ACMT General Membership Meeting in Seattle, in September, by Henry Falk, MD, MPH, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. The plaque accompanying the award, received on behalf of ACMT by President Michael Kosnett, included the following citation: "For outstanding contributions toward improving public health and medical capacity to deal with issues related to toxic environmental threats."

In receiving the award, ACMT was recognized for the multiple educational and consultative activities it presented in recent years under its 5-year cooperative agreement with the Agency for



**Michael Kosnett, MD, MPH, FACMT, accepts CDC/ATSDR "Partner in Public Health Improvement" award on behalf of the ACMT.**

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## ACMT Inducts New Officers

After the ACMT General Membership Meeting at the September North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology, in Seattle, the 2004-2006 terms began for the new Executives of the ACMT Board of Directors. *Dr. Keith Burkhart, MD, FACMT*, is the College President, assuming duties from Past-President *Michael Kosnett, MD, MPH, FACMT*. His inaugural "President's Perspective" column appears elsewhere in this newsletter. *Paul Wax, MD, FACMT*, has relinquished his role as secretary-treasurer for the College to become Vice President. *Erica Liebelt, MD, FACMT*, has been elected the new Secretary-Treasurer. Three newly elected ACMT members have been appointed to the Board of Directors: *Dr. Christine Haller, Dr. Steven Seifert*, and *Dr. Suzanne White*. ACMT members are encouraged to participate on one or more of the College's numerous committees and educational programs, and each of the Board members are interested in hearing from individuals with ideas for advancing the College.



*Past and present ACMT Directors (left to right) Curtis Snook, MD, FACMT; Suzanne White, MD, FACMT; Kevin Osterhoudt, MD, MSCE, FACMT; Stephen Borron, MD, FACMT; Michael Kosnett, MD, MPH, FACMT; Keith Burkhart, MD, FACMT; Christine Haller, MD; Lewis Nelson, MD, FACMT; Paul Wax, MD, FACMT; Robert Hoffman, MD, FACMT; Erica Liebelt, MD, FACMT; Steven Seifert, MD, FACMT*

### *Profiles of the New ACMT Board Members*

**Christine Haller, MD**, holds a joint academic appointment in the Departments of Medicine and Laboratory Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco; and is the Assistant Medical Director of the California Poison Control System, San Francisco Division. In addition to training in medical toxicology, her professional background includes chemical engineering and clinical pathology. She devotes the majority of her professional time to clinical research studies pertaining to the pharmacology and toxicology of botanical stimulants contained within dietary supplements marketed for weight loss and energy enhancement. She also serves as the Chief of the Toxicology Service in the Biochemistry Division of the San Francisco General Hospital Clinical Laboratory.

Prior to moving to Omaha in 2001, **Steven A. Seifert, MD, FACMT, FACEP**, practiced emergency medicine in Tucson, Arizona, for over 20 years. In that time he picked up the habits of wearing bolo ties, shaking his boots out in the morning for fear of scorpions, and watching for snakes. Currently, he is the medical director of the Nebraska Regional Poison Center, and a Professor in the Section of Emergency Medicine, Department of Surgery, at University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. He still wears bolo ties and is generally grateful for the paucity of scorpions in Nebraska, but misses the snakes. Research interests include medical error, regionally-related exposures, and native and non-native envenomations.

**Suzanne White, M.D., FACMT, FACEP**, is currently an Associate Professor in the departments  
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## Board of Directors

### President

Keith K. Burkhart, MD, FACMT

### Vice President

Paul M. Wax, MD, FACMT

### Secretary/Treasurer

Erica L. Liebelt, MD, FACMT

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### Executive Director

Gerald M. Galler

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## 13 Awarded with FACMT Status

The American College of Medical Toxicology offers a credential, the designation as a “Fellow, American College of Medical Toxicology [FACMT],” as a peer-reviewed recognition of excellence in Medical Toxicology. To be eligible to apply for the FACMT designation, a toxicologist must have been a Member, International Member, or Member Emeritus of the College for at least 4 years. Additionally, the applicant needs to provide evidence of significant contributions to the field of Medical Toxicology in at least two of the following five categories: clinical practice, teaching, research, public service, and/or service to the College.

At the General Membership Meeting of the ACMT, at the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in Seattle, the following 13 members were inducted as Fellows of the College:

**Dr. Lydia Baltarowich**, Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, MI

**Dr. Leslie Boyer**, University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, Tucson, AZ

**Dr. Philip Edelman**, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington, DC

**Dr. Andis Graudins**, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, NSW, Australia

**Dr. Christopher Holstege**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

**Dr. Andres Lugo**, Texas Tech University, El Paso, TX



*These ACMT members were recognized as new Fellows of the American College of Medical Toxicology at the 2004 NACCT on Seattle, WA: (left to right) Lydia Baltarowich, Daniel Sudakin, Andis Graudins, Marco Sivilotti, Andres Lugo, Jeffrey Suchard, and Michael Wahl.*

**Dr. Marco Sivilotti**, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON, Canada

**Dr. Jeffrey Suchard**, University of California – Irvine, Orange, CA

**Dr. Daniel Sudakin**, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR

**Dr. Anthony Tomasoni**, Northern New England Poison Center, Portland, ME

**Dr. Christian Tomaszewski**, Carolinas Medical Center, Charlotte, NC

**Dr. Michael Wahl**, Illinois Poison Center, IL

**Dr. Philip Walson**, Cincinnati Children’s Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH

Application materials for Fellowship status in the ACMT can be found on the College website at [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net), in the “Members Only” section. Applications for 2005 induction are due January 31, 2005.

## Do you know a medical toxicologist who is not involved with the ACMT?

The ACMT is the only professional society devoted exclusively to advocating on behalf of the physician’s role in toxicologic health! Membership Categories include: **MEMBER** For physicians with previous Board-certification in medical toxicology. **INTERNATIONAL MEMBER** For physicians, outside of the U.S., who practice medical toxicology. **MEMBER EMERITUS** For those individuals who have been members for ten or more years, who have now attained the age of 65 or retired from active practice. **ASSOCIATE MEMBER** For those physicians in fellowship training, or for those who have finished fellowship training but have not yet become Board certified. **RESIDENT MEMBER** For those resident trainees with a special interest in future careers in medical toxicology. For more information about membership categories, dues structures, or member benefits, please contact the ACMT office.

## Toxicology Images of Interest

The first photograph (at right) depicts a mature Jimsonweed plant (*Datura stramonium*), as it appears in the early fall, in Pennsylvania. The leaves, the flower, and the seed pod are all clearly demonstrated. The second photograph (below) shows a closer view of the seeds and pod. Photographs courtesy of Dr. Robert Poppenga (University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine)



and Dr. Francis DeRoos, FACMT (University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine).

ACMT members are welcome to submit interesting images of toxicologists, or representing medical toxicology, for publication in future ACMT newsletters to [info@acmt.net](mailto:info@acmt.net).



The ACMT, as part of a cooperative agreement with ATSDR, maintains the Internet Library of Images on Toxicology in the Member's Only section of [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net). Individuals are also encouraged to consider contributing images to this library.

## ACMT Honored by CDC/ATSDR

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Toxic Substances and Disease registry. The nomination citation read as follows:

*The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) has partnered with ATSDR for 4, going on 5 years, to develop educational activities to enhance preparedness for chemical terrorism and related mass chemical exposures and to provide education on environmental toxicology to medical toxicologists nationally.*

*Under the first category, ACMT has developed an intense one-day course, Chemical Agents of Opportunity, which deals with the medical and psychological aspects of toxic industrial chemicals. This course has been presented to well over 750 persons at meetings in Atlanta, New York City, Barcelona, Cincinnati, and Washington, DC. This included a special briefing for U.S. Congressional staff on Chemical Agents of Opportunity for Terrorism on Tuesday, January 13, 2004. Some of the presentations from this course are posted on the EPA website at [epaossc.net/atcdr](http://epaossc.net/atcdr). ACMT and ATSDR have formed a national educational and consultation network*

*linking together the 10 ATSDR regional offices with ACMT medical toxicologists in their areas. Using this network, ACMT has presented symposia to regional offices on chemical preparedness; offered presentations at public meetings associated with NPL sites; responded to citizen inquiries regarding health issues; prepared a briefing on ricin for the ATSDR national office; and conducted meetings with regional staff to facilitate cooperation in the event of emergency response actions. ACMT provided a special consultation to ATSDR on chemical threats, March 31 – April 1, 2003, where Dr. Edwin Kilbourne, Associate Administrator of ATSDR, convened a two-day meeting with 8 ACMT members from around the country who are experts in chemical threats. A "black hat exercise" was conducted and potential scenarios were reviewed. After a solicitation and competitive review, ACMT has awarded mini-grants of \$7500 each to two medical toxicology fellows in training to carry out research on preparedness for chemical terrorism or mass chemical exposure incidents.*

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## ACMT Educational Activities Across the U.S.

### Medical Toxicology Board Review - Dallas

The premiere offering of the ACMT Medical Toxicology Board Review course proved a tremendous success. The course, held on October 1-3, 2004, in Dallas, attracted nearly 150 participants, about half of whom were taking the boards with the remainder interested in a comprehensive review of the field. Numerous ACMT members were involved as faculty in this educational offering, including: John Benitez, Jeff Brent, Michele Burns, Jason Chu, Fred Fung, Dan Goldstein, In Hei Hahn, Kennon Heard, RJ Hoffman, Chris Keyes, Kurt Kleinschmidt, Eric Lavonas, David Lee, Chuck McKay, Steve Munday, Lewis Nelson, Kent Olson, Holly Perry, Cyrus Rangan, Patti Rosen, Michele Ruha, Rob Sharma, Mark Su, Larissa Velez, Janet Weiss, and Luke Yip.

Personal comments after the course, as well as the written formal evaluations, indicated that the speakers were uniformly outstanding and the material relevant and complete. The ACMT Education Committee is currently reviewing whether this course should be provided semi-annually – please provide any feedback or thoughts to the Education Committee. We wish success to all of those who took the board exam on November 6!

### TICS and TIMS - Detroit

Detroit hosted a successful ACMT Chemical Agents of Opportunity: Toxic Industrial Chemicals and Toxic Industrial Materials course October 7, 2004. Over 300 participants with varied backgrounds in

public health, nursing, pharmacy, and medicine attended. The course was adapted to meet the needs of the largely healthcare-oriented audience and a new talk “Toxic Industrial Agents in Your Community” focused on local hazards and resources such as 302 sites, local emergency planning committees and Poison Centers. The free course offered CME and was made possible by generous sponsorship from ATSDR, ACMT, Children’s Hospital of Michigan Regional Poison Control Center, Wayne State University, the Michigan Department of Community Health, and the Southeastern Michigan Weapons of Mass Destruction and Bioterrorism Preparedness Consortium-Special Volunteer Project Grant. Speakers included: Drs. Curtis Snook, Beverly Blaney, Lydia Baltarowich, Cynthia Aaron, Michelle Watters, Suzanne White and fellows Saima Qureshi and Kelly Klein.”

### Chemical Agents of Opportunity – Rocky Mountain States

The ACMT recently presented its *Chemical Agents of Opportunity for Terrorism* courses in Colorado and Montana. The first conference was held on September 29, 2004 at the Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge Colorado. The ACMT course was part of the Public Health in the Rocky Mountains Conference organized by the Colorado Public Health Association. New ACMT faculty for this course included Denver natives Scott Phillips, Javier Waksman and Jeff Brent.

On October 20, 2004, 93 public health, medical, first responder and law enforcement folks attended a *Chemical Agents of Opportunity for Terrorism* course in Helena Montana. Through a video conferencing link organized by the Montana State Health Department, the conference was simultaneously broadcast to an additional 90 people at 11 remote sites including, Billings, Bozeman, Havre, Kalispell, Livingston, Miles City, Missoula, Plentywood, Poplar and Sidney, and West Yellowstone Montana. Alvin Bronstein joined the faculty for this conference. New talks were provided by Scott Phillips, on Agri-Terrorism, and Tom Martin, on Vulnerability Assessment.

### ACMT Honored by CDC/ATSDR

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*Under the second category, ACMT has carried out educational programs, including the Second Annual Medical Toxicology Spring Course, held in Atlanta, GA, from April 3-5, 2003; as well as the Risk Assessment Workshop for ACMT members held in June, 2003, in Chicago. ACMT has also established the ACMTnet, a moderated list server that enables several hundred medical toxicologists and other public health professionals to rapidly communicate on matters of environmental health and toxicology. A searchable archive of postings is maintained on the ACMT website. Finally, ACMT has published the Internet Journal of Medical Toxicology (www.ijmt.net/contents.html) since 1998. It is an open access, peer reviewed medical toxicology journal.*

*In its association with ATSDR, ACMT has demonstrated great energy, initiative, dedication and expertise in its efforts to enhance public health and medical capacity to deal with issues related to toxic environmental threats.*

### Board Review Course Syllabi Available

We have a limited supply of syllabi from the popular ACMT Board Review Course. If you weren't able to attend the Board Review Course this year and would like to purchase your own copy of the educational materials, please contact the ACMT National Office.

## IJMT Appoints New Editor

The Internet Journal of Medical Toxicology, the official journal of the ACMT, is proud to announce that Scott D. Phillips, MD, FACMT, has been appointed as Editor-in-Chief. Dr. Phillips is an Associate Clinical Professor of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Since completing his Medical Toxicology fellowship training at the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center in 1992, Dr. Phillips has had a distinguished academic career with contributions to acute care toxicology, occupational and environmental toxicology, and risk assessment and communication. He has had an instrumental role in grant-funded research on fomepizole therapy and antidepressant drug overdose, and currently serves as a Senior Associate Editor on the Poisindex Editorial Board, a peer reviewer for several medical journals, and an editor for several popular textbooks of medical toxicology.

ACMT members are encouraged to assist Dr. Phillips in his efforts to further increase the quality and prestige of the Journal. In response to the requests of the membership, the ACMT Board has recently recruited a new software specialist to reformat the presentation of the IJMT, and the Journal will soon offer high-quality PDF versions of published manuscripts. Keep checking for other planned improvements to the Journal in the coming year!

Information for authors interested in submitting manuscripts to the IJMT may be found on the ACMT website at [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net). The electronic address for submissions to the IJMT is [IJMT@acmt.net](mailto:IJMT@acmt.net).



*Scott D. Phillips, MD, FACMT is appointed Editor in Chief of the Internet Journal of Medical Toxicology.*

## Good Reasons to Publish Your Research, Reviews, and Case Reports in the Internet Journal of Medical Toxicology

- The IJMT is the official journal of the American College of Medical Toxicology
- The IJMT offers *free, worldwide*, distribution providing your important work with an unlimited audience
- The IJMT is distributed via email to all members of the ACMT, rapidly targeting your important work to a dedicated audience
- The IJMT offers a quick review process and speedy publication
- The IJMT allows opportunity for enhanced publication of interesting graphics in a wide variety of formats

### Did You Know...

that you can update your Contact Information, Professional Interests, and Professional Specialties AND you can list yourself in the "Find a Physician Medical Toxicologist" Public Member Directory?

You can do all this all online in the Member's Only Section of the ACMT website at [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net). If you don't have your login and password, please contact the ACMT National Office by email at [info@acmt.net](mailto:info@acmt.net) or by phone at (703) 934-1223.

You can also find this information on your 2005 Membership Dues Renewal notice. If you haven't received your dues renewal notice, or would like to expedite your renewal payment, please contact the ACMT National Office.

## ACMT Has Spirited Presence at NACCT

### Pre-Meeting Symposium

The ACMT Education Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Lewis Nelson, presented a clever symposium with the theme of "Toxicology – Is It On the Level?" Both attendance figures, and post-meeting written evaluations, denote this endeavor as a success! The symposium was moderated by Drs. Michele Burns, Erica Liebelt, and Nelson; and featured lectures pertaining to the relationship between toxicokinetics and toxicodynamics, and the proper use and interpretation of the toxicology laboratory. Invited speakers also included: Stephen Borron, Eric Lavonas, Petrie Rainey, Jeffrey Nemhauser, Charles McKay, and Robert S. Hoffman.



*Erica Liebelt, MD, FACMT, Lewis Nelson, MD, FACMT, and Michele Burns, MD, organized the ACMT Pre-Meeting Symposium at the 2004 NACCT.*

### CPC Competition

The ACMT, thanks to the organizational efforts of Jeffrey Suchard, MD, FACMT; and Fermin Barrueto, MD; hosted the annual CPC competition. Case presentations were made by Drs. Jen Hannum, of the Carolinas Medical Center, Rachel Haroz, of Drexel University, and Ziad Kazzi, of Emory University and the CDC. The faculty case discussions were offered by Drs. Eric Lavonas, Michael Greenberg, and Brent Morgan.

Each of the presentations provided a blend of wit, wisdom, and bravery, and each of the participants are to be commended for their excellent efforts! This year, the Carolinas Medical Center swept the Best Presenter and Discussant awards. Jen Hannum, MD, a senior Emergency Medicine resident, presented a case of a woman found unresponsive, with hypertension, bradycardia and a puncture wound to the epigastrium. The patient was a veterinary technician, who attempted suicide by injecting xylazine, an imidazoline commonly used as a veterinary anesthetic and euthanasia agent. The puncture wound was from an intraperitoneal injection, since that is a common method of euthanizing small animals. Medical toxicology fellowship directors take note: Hire this woman!

Also, Eric Lavonas, MD, prevailed in his second shot as discussant at the CPC in as many years, and is still sometimes heard grumbling that his last case (severe cardiotoxic effects and hypokalemia from an intentional amantadine overdose) was impossible to solve. This year Eric faced a middle-aged ex-mechanic with a depressed mental status and recurrent cardiac arrhythmias, including bidirectional ventricular tachycardia. Eric's discussion and differential diagnosis were right on the money. He ultimately decided that his best answer was "Inadvertent Iatrogenic Digoxin Toxicity," working on the assumption that the patient was given Lanoxin(R) rather than naloxone. Quoth Eric, "I might not be right, but if I'm not, at least my answer is cooler than yours!" The actual diagnosis was chloral hydrate toxicity, but Eric's answer may have indeed been cooler.

Faculty and fellows-in-training are encouraged to start thinking of challenging cases to present in 2005.

### ACMT Scientific Symposium

Suzanne Doyon, MD, FACMT, was instrumental in the development of this year's Scientific Symposium, "Mitochondrial Toxicology." The goal of the ACMT Scientific Symposium is to offer cutting edge information related to the basic science principles of medical toxicology, and often recruits expert speakers from outside of the ACMT. Dr. Serge Przedborski, of Columbia University, presented a thought-provoking lecture on toxin-induced mitochondrial dysfunction. The always popular speaking talents of Dr. Steve Curry, FACMT, encored with an intriguing talk de-mysticizing mitochondrial energy utilization and metabolic acidosis.

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*ACMT Scientific Symposium speakers, Serge Przedborski, MD (left) and Steven Curry, MD, FACMT (right), with Dr. Suzanne Doyon (center), the organizer of the Scientific Symposium.*

## Dr. Richard Dart Honored by ACMT with Ellenhorn Award

In honor of the distinguished medical toxicologist Matthew J. Ellenhorn, MD, the ACMT has offered an award since 1997 bearing his name. The award is offered annually to recognize outstanding career achievements in medical toxicology.

Previous recipients of the Matthew J. Ellenhorn Award were:

- 1997 Helmut Redetski, MD
- 1998 Lewis Goldfrank, MD
- 1999 William O. Robertson, MD
- 2000 Frederick H. Lovejoy, Jr., MD
- 2001 Barry H. Rumack, MD
- 2002 Howard C. Mofenson, MD
- 2003 Carol R. Angle, MD

The ACMT Awards Committee, in 2004, presented the Ellenhorn Award to Richard C. Dart, MD, PhD, of the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center. Although still in his academic prime, Dr. Dart has earned well-deserved international renown for his expertise and accomplishments in the treatment of *Crotaline* snake envenomation, and in the evaluation and treatment of acetaminophen overdose. Dr. Dart has also had numerous significant contributions to other aspects of medical toxicology related to clinical care, research, teaching, and poison center development and organization. Kudos to Dr. Dart for his inspirational work and mentoring!

The ACMT Awards Committee accepts nominations for future Ellenhorn Award candidates. Nominations can be forwarded to the Committee at [info@acmt.net](mailto:info@acmt.net).



*Dr. Richard Dart, MD, PhD, FACMT, recipient of the 2004 ACMT Ellenhorn Award.*

## ACMT Has Spirited Presence at NACCT

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*Dr. R.J. Hoffman provided insights into performing toxicology research with a limited budget at the ACMT Fellows-in-Training Luncheon.*

### ACMT Fellows-In-Training Luncheon

This luncheon symposium is offered by the ACMT as part of the College's ongoing support of the training of future medical toxicologists. The 2004 symposium was moderated by Drs. Mark Su and Erica Liebelt. Chosen from a competitive review of proposals, Dr. Robert J. Hoffman of the Beth Israel Medical Center, presented a talk titled, "Research on a Shoestring Budget: Strategies for Conducting your Research at Minimal Cost."

### ACMT Practice Symposium

The ACMT worked collaboratively with the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology (AACT) to provide a symposium on, "Medical Monitoring and Surveillance of Occupational and Environmental Exposures." ACMT members speaking or moderating in this venue included: Jeffrey Burgess, Charles McKay, and John Osterloh.

## President's Report,

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There appears to be a lot of interest in holding this course every two years, please give us your feedback. Additionally, Dr. Paul Wax has given the College countless hours coordinating the courses provided under the ATSDR Cooperative Agreement entitled Medical and Psychosocial Consequences of Toxic Industrial Chemicals (TICs) and Toxic Industrial Materials (TIMs). Many members have spoken and met the more than a thousand people who have now attended these courses given in multiple regions. Attendees have included first responders, public health, law enforcement, homeland defense and others.

Research is another thriving strength of the College. Look at the list of new inductees as Fellows of ACMT, as many have long lists of research publications. The research efforts of our 2004 Matthew J. Ellenhorn Award Recipient, Dr. Richard C. Dart are a model for all of us. Dr. Erica Liebelt has led the Research Committee's effort to increase the number of research awards the College is able to offer.

The publication of our educational efforts and research endeavors is the goal of our society's journal, The Internet Journal of Medical Toxicology. Scott Phillips is taking over as the new Editor. A possible name change, new alliances and a new future are at hand. Please support Scott and ACMT by submitting your manuscripts to [ijmt@acmt.net](mailto:ijmt@acmt.net). Also, thank Dr. Kevin Osterhoudt for assuming responsibilities of the Publications Committee including this newsletter. We also have a new webmaster who you will be hearing about very soon.

The clinical practice of medical toxicology is evolving. We have seen expansion and growth of our specialty into occupational medicine and environmental toxicology, as well as laboratories, industry, and governmental agencies. Our fellowships have grown. Certainly as President, I will advocate for the creation of more toxicology treatment and consultation centers across the country. The delivery of the best in bedside care of the poisoned patient will always be at the core of medical toxicology. With a critical mass, funded multi-center trials will no longer be just a dream. Chuck McKay has provided steady leadership and will be continuing as Practice Committee Co-Chair with Stephen Borron.

I must also give recognition to our outgoing Board members who brought us to where we are now. With the ACMT now more than a decade old, the Board says thanks to its last original member, Robert S. Hoffman. I am sure Bob will keep giving us welcomed advice though. We are also thankful for six years of service from Thomas Martin and three years from Curtis Snook. Read about the newly elected Board members, Christine Haller, Steven Seifert, and Suzanne White in the newsletter on page 2. Your Board wants to hear from you about how we can serve and meet your needs, so email any of us at anytime at [board@acmt.net](mailto:board@acmt.net). At 5 AM, Lewis Nelson or I might answer right away, while at midnight, Paul Wax might answer.

ACMT's finances are turning around in large part due to our successful educational efforts. The more detailed report of the

December 2003 year end report that was provided at the annual member Business Meeting, as well as the 2004 year-to-date report are now available on the Members Only section of the ACMT website, [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net).

Finally, I want to rally the medical toxicologists so to speak. I want to encourage all of you to join a Committee. The ACMT Committee and Task Forces and their Chairs to consider are as follows;

**By-laws:** Eric Lavonas and Board liaison Erica Liebelt

**Ethics:** Jeffrey Brent

**Education:** Lewis Nelson

**Grants and Contracts:** Steven Seifert

**Liaison:** Michael Holland and Board liaison Christine Haller

**Membership:** Suzanne White

**Publications:** Kevin Osterhoudt

**Practice:** Chuck McKay and Stephen Borron

**Research:** Christine Haller

Visit <http://www.acmt.net/about/committees.htm> to learn about the goals of each of these committees. ACMT and the future of Medical Toxicology are in your hands. Please join one of the Committees or Task Forces and determine what it will be.

Sincerely,



Keith Burkhardt, MD, FACMT  
President

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## ACMT Inducts New Officers

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of Emergency Medicine & Pediatrics at Wayne State University School of Medicine. She is a practicing emergency physician and medical toxicologist, and serves as the Medical Director of the Children's Hospital of Michigan Regional Poison Control Center and the Director of the WSU Medical Toxicology Fellowship program.

Dr. White was born in Michigan and graduated from Adrian College and Wayne State University School of Medicine. She subsequently completed residency training in Emergency Medicine at Detroit Receiving Hospital, and fellowship training in Medical Toxicology at Wayne State. Her professional interests have focused around curricular development, particularly in the areas of emergency preparedness and poisoning prevention. Suzanne's husband, Bill, practices family medicine. In addition to caring for 2 1/2 year old twins, Suzanne enjoys distance running and is still trying to qualify for the Boston Marathon!

## TOXICOLOGIST PROFILES: NEWS and NOTEWORTHY

### Toxicologists Do Field Research at NACCT

Amid frequent media reports of heavy metal and organic chemical pollution of our waterways, and of hormone-supplementation practices within fish farms, several ACMT members took to the Puget



Sound during the 2004 NACCT to closely examine the Sound's coho salmon population. Dr. Sage Wiener, Dr. Howard Greller, Dr. Kevin Osterhoudt, and Dr. Fred Henretig are pictured with the rest of their field team. Several barbecues later, the researchers are happy to report not a single episode of erethism or acrodynia. The investigative team's conclusion was summarized on a local bumper sticker, "SAY NO TO DRUGS: Don't Eat Farmed Salmon."



### Medical Toxicologist Hits The Gameshow Circuit

by Jeff Suchard, MD, FACMT

Last December my wife Julie and I tried out to be contestants on "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire". Ever since the age of 9 or 10, when I saw Thom McKee's amazing run on "Tic Tac Dough" I had wanted to be on a TV quiz show. In high school I was on the trivia bowl team, and the girl who was to become my wife was the team captain (yes, we were high school sweethearts - how cute!). When the syndicated version of WWTBAM with Meredith Vieira started, I remarked to Julie that it was almost as if they were handing out checks for \$32,000. So when the opportunity came up to go to an audition, we packed our bags and flew to New York City.

We both took the 30-question, multiple-choice test on a freezing day in NYC. Eight people out of ~150 passed, and both of us had; Julie was the only woman in our group. After viewing the taping of two episodes, the assistant producers interviewed us. I thought my interview went fairly well, and when I was done I waited for Julie. It was clear, though, that her interview was going great. The producer loved her stories and her personality and was making marks all over her application; none of that good stuff happened with my interviewer.

Just a few days later, Julie received a postcard stating that she was placed in the pool of potential contestants for the TV show. And just a few days after that she received a call from WWTBAM inviting her on a special set of shows to be taped at Disney-MGM studios in Orlando, Florida. Julie went to Florida in January with her best friend, and I stayed home to be a Phone-A-Friend. To make a long story short, she won \$32,000 and her segments aired on TV last April. And yes, I was called as a Phone-A-Friend and helped Julie get the \$32k question correct.

I followed-up by attending a Jeopardy! Brain Bus event in Las Vegas in February. This event is where they bring out a mobile home bedecked in Jeopardy regalia and hold tryouts in a remote location. I was about the 50th person in a line that eventually had over 600 people. After getting 10 questions correct out of 10 asked on a screening test, I was invited back for a 50-question test the next day. If I passed that test, I knew from the Internet that I would be interviewed and asked to talk about why I would be a good contestant on television. Julie suggested that I avoid calling myself simply a "doctor", but instead call myself a "toxicologist"; this was much more likely to intrigue the contestant coordinators and force them to make a follow-up question ("A toxicologist, huh. What exactly is that?").

The 50-question test is run almost like a PowerPoint presentation. They project the clues onto a screen while Johnny Gilbert (the announcer) reads the category and the clue out loud. After each person got their chance to respond to a few clues, they stopped the game and asked each person to talk about *continued on page 11*



"ACMT members on Jeopardy for 1,000, Alex." The question is, "Who is Jeff Suchard?"

## ACMT at the Poison Control Center Stakeholders' Meeting

ACMT Directors Kevin Osterhoudt and Paul Wax represented the ACMT at the HRSA-sponsored Poison Control Center Stakeholders' Meeting in Washington, DC, June 30-July 1, 2004. Other stakeholders represented at the meeting included the: AAPCC, AACT, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Emergency Physicians, American Society of Health System Pharmacists, Association of Maternal and Child Programs, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Emergency Nurses Association, National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Directors, National Conference of State Legislatures, State and Territorial Injury Prevention Director's Association, CDC, CPSC, and EPA.

The primary focus of this stakeholders' meeting was to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Battelle Report on the effectiveness of the HRSA PCC Stabilization and Enhancement Grant Program; and the Institute of Medicine report, "Forging a Poison Prevention and Control System" (available at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)). Of considerable interest to medical toxicologists is that despite the ACMT position statement on medical direction of poison control centers

(available at [www.acmt.net](http://www.acmt.net)), the IOM found that the median supported time of medical direction to poison centers is only 0.5 FTE. Additionally, the IOM report states that many poison centers "count unpaid medical toxicologist backup... as volunteers," and that "all centers use consultants as backup medical toxicologists and other medical experts, and these are often not paid." The ACMT will continue to advocate on behalf of the physicians' roles in the PCC system.

Overall, the IOM report emphasized that: a) poisoning is an under-appreciated public health problem (second only to motor vehicle collisions as an injury-related cause of death), b) poisoning prevention merits at least a 5-fold increase in federal funding support, and c) the North American Poison Centers do not currently interact in a manner that meets standard definitions of a "system." In discussion of the IOM findings, the stakeholders' visions for the future were organized into the following categories: 1) Education and Outreach, 2) PCC Certification, 3) Data, 4) Integration of Services, and 5) Operational Management.

Any ACMT members with suggestions or ideas for improving the HRSA-sponsored federal funding of Poison Control Centers are encouraged to contact an ACMT Board Member as well as their government legislators.

### Toxicologist Profiles

*continued from page 10*

themselves. I told them I was a toxicologist, which immediately produced the desired response of more questions about what I do. They seemed impressed that I was a consultant for unusual diseases.

When I got the call inviting me to be a contestant on the show, I found out that there was a stupendous player who had won several games, and might even be there by the time I went to a taping. Before the beginning of last season's shows, there had been a rule that once a player won 5 games, they gave them a car, sent them home as an undefeated champion, and invited them to return for the Tournament of Champions. This rule had been changed to allow returning champions to keep going as long as they kept winning. The previous biggest winner had won 7 games, but apparently this new guy was doing even better. I met Ken Jennings when I showed up for the taping of the last week of shows for season number 20. He had won 43 games by that time, amassing more than \$1.3 million. Ken was a powerhouse, and handily defeated everyone they sent up against him. He had such skill with the buzzer, even the smartest opponents had little chance against him. But he had never faced an ACMT member before!

I got the first Daily Double very early on a Science clue, so there was no way I wouldn't bet everything I could. I wagered \$1000 on the clue, which asked which things a guy named Muller won a 1946 Nobel prize for that caused mutations. Unfortunately, I must have been absent (or absent-minded) the day they named Muller as the guy who discovered that X-rays caused mutations in *Drosophila melanogaster*,

because I responded with, "What are radioactive elements?" It was a good guess, but wrong. However, by the first break I had recovered well and even had twice Ken's score.

Next came the interview section where Alex talks briefly with the contestants. The stories that Alex might ask you about have been predetermined, although he can use any one out of several that he likes, or even make something up on the spot. I was pretty sure Alex was going to ask me about my NEJM Letter to the Editor about bites from dead rattlesnakes. I had practiced responding to this question while driving to the studio that day, and I think it came across fairly well. Alex then asked a follow-up question pertaining to why it was that snakes inject 'venom' whereas the treatment is 'anti-venin'.

Ken then got his momentum back in the second half of the Jeopardy round, and had regained the lead by the next commercial break. I could tell that Ken knew I was a tough competitor, and certainly the only other contestant he'd vied against with a decent shot at beating him for a long time. I was certainly within striking distance when we faced-off in Final Jeopardy. Then they showed us the final category: POETS. Unfortunately, Ken was an English major, and I was a toxicologist. I congratulated Ken on his victory, and he and I walked over to stand by Alex for the closing credits. Alex asked if I knew the joke about a guy with a snakebite.

#### ***Can you answer Jeff's Final Jeopardy question?***

Name two innovative American 18<sup>th</sup> century poets, one of whom did not read the other because she said "he was disgraceful".

***Answer: Who were Dickinson and Whitman?***



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# ANNOUNCEMENT

## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

### 2005 ACMT EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR FELLOWS-IN-TRAINING

The Education Committee of the American College of Medical Toxicology invites its members to submit proposals for the keynote presentation at the seventh annual ACMT-sponsored Fellows-in-Training Luncheon at the 2005 North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in Orlando, FL. Realizing that fostering the education of our trainees is important, we want to give medical toxicologists an opportunity to present topics of interest and/or innovative and creative modalities that focus on the educational aspects of medical toxicology. Dr. Robert J Hoffman from Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City gave an excellent presentation on performing research with limited funds at the 2004 meeting. Past presenters have included Dr. Daniel Sudakin, Dr. Richard Clark, Dr. Michael Greenberg, Dr. Scott Phillips, Dr. Gideon Koren and Dr. Ian Whyte.

This session should consist of a 50 minute presentation during a luncheon for fellows-in-training and their fellowship faculty representative(s). Proposals will be blinded and members of the Education Committee will select one proposal.

#### Requirements:

Eligible participants must be ACMT members.  
Submission guidelines as shown on proposal form must be followed.

- I. Topic / Title
- II. Proposed speaker (s)
- III. Background / Objective/Method
- IV. Contact person/Address/Phone/Fax/E-mail

Deadline for receipt of submissions is January 31, 2005.  
Please mail to the ACMT National Office:  
11240 Waples Mill Road, Suite 200 – Fairfax, VA 22030

For any questions regarding this announcement for proposals please contact Mark Su, MD, at 718-245-4790 or email: [marksu@pol.net](mailto:marksu@pol.net).