

July 1980

TOX TALK

This Newsletter is published on a quarterly basis as the official communication of the Society of Forensic Toxicologist, Inc., A portion of the annual dues supports this publication and mailing costs. Subscriptions for non-members may be obtained at a cost of \$7.50 per year by contacting the editor.

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EDITORIAL

The editor received from at least six different sources, copies of an article which appeared in the American Bar Association Journal in a section entitled, "In Brief". The article has a "catchy" title, Faulty Test, and goes on to say, "When 39 labs were unable to identify a commonly prescribed painkiller in a 1978 test, the three million postmortem tests made annually became suspect. A \$100,000 National Institute of Justice program has been launched to assess the performance of the country's 200 forensic toxicology labs. Incorrect detection, according to John Sullivan of the institute, is of 'grave concern' to the criminal justice system."

I can still hear the echoes of concerned forensic toxicologists that even though the procedures used in the American Academy of Forensic Sciences sponsored program ensured anonymity, the profession would have to live with the data generated in proficiency tests. In New York state toxicologists had already experienced a similar "black eye", when results on State sponsored proficiency testing were released to the press. Criminalists had also suffered the negative publicity when crime laboratories' proficiencies were tested by the National Institute of Justice and the results had been released to the press.

The explanations for a "marked disparity among laboratories" are numerous: the sample submitted (blood), the condition of the sample (a few were decomposing on arrival), etc. I favor the use of "proficiencies" in a laboratory. If you do not already have an internal quality control, you should. (Many people have excellent systems. I have seen some and was most impressed with programs such as Milton Bastos' in New York City and Tom Rejent's in Erie County). There are many programs providing external quality control. (CDC, State programs, CAP, etc.)

What is the purpose of a proficiency program? Should it be a learning experience, a method to achieve accreditation of a laboratory, or a test to be scored so that your laboratory can be compared to others? Certainly proficiencies which list analytical methods can provide for an evaluation of various techniques. The outline on the N.I.J. proposal includes:

"Assess the analytical accuracy of forensic toxicology laboratories in detecting drugs and chemicals in selecting specimens.

Analyze those results.

Prepare a series of recommendations.

Construct a nationwide proficiency testing model for the laboratories."

In my opinion Len Bednarczyk and his staff should be applauded for providing the testing program that SOFT offers. Your executive board has offered the consultation and recommendations of that proficiency testing committee to Mr. Sullivan at N.I.J. He has not yet availed his organization of SOFT's experiences.

Although N.I.J. and Mr. Sullivan's ultimate goals may be desirable, this editor finds initial press releases unnecessarily negative and destructive. An emphasis on the positive and productive aspects of the program certainly would be more appropriate. Toxtalk will provide more information as it becomes available about NIJ's program. In the meantime, what are your feelings and comments? Let's see some letters to the editor in response to this editorial.

JOHN HEBB, JR.
recipient of
THE FIRST S.O.F.T. EDUCATION AWARD

The Education Committee is pleased to announce that the first SOFT Education Award will be presented to Mr. John Hebb, Jr. of the University of Maryland. Mr. Hebb, under the direction of Dr. Yale Caplan, will investigate "Forensic Interpretation of Tricyclic Antidepressant Drug Deaths". The proposal includes evaluation of analytical methodology, a study of isolated perfused heart and the design of an overdose model. The goal of the research is to provide some diagnostic guidelines to tricyclic antidepressant deaths.

The award of \$500 is to be used for supporting graduate research in the area of forensic toxicology. SOFT is indebted to Roche for helping us establish the fund and welcomes any suggestions concerning other corporations interested in similar contributions.

Our congratulations go out to John Hebb, Jr., as the first recipient of this SOFT Education Award.

Future proposals should be sent to Dr. Vincent Lynch, Dept. of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York, 11439.

SOCIETY OF
FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS

- and -

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF
FORENSIC SCIENCE

JOINT MEETING

Place: - Westbury Hotel, Toronto, Ontario
Date: - September 30th to October 3rd, 1980

416-924-0611

Plans are in progress to present an afternoon seminar on capillary GC with a special presentation on Drug testing at the Olympics.

Deadline for papers is July 30th for inclusion in the printed program.

Papers should be kept short, as the format will be as informal as possible with a maximum time available for discussion.

Meeting registration and hotel registration cards will be mailed out in August.

For information contact: -

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Scientific Program Chairman
Centre of Forensic Sciences
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Toronto, Ontario - M7A 2G8
(416) 965-9278

Bill Robinson
Local Arrangements Chairman
Centre of Forensic Sciences
25 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario - M7A 2G8
(416) 965-9507

Please note the July 30, 1980, deadline for papers. Sit right down and send your abstracts. Please don't delay.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM OF JOINT MEETING

Tuesday, Sept. 30

9:30 - Noon	Executive (CSFS)
2:00 - 5:00 pm	Board (CSFS and SOFT)
4:00 - 10:00 pm	Registration (CSFS and SOFT)
7:00 - 10:00 pm	Reception (CSFS and SOFT)
5:00 - 9:00 pm	Exhibits

Wednesday, Oct. 1

9:00	Opening Ceremonies
9:15 - Noon	Plenary
1:00 - 5:00 pm	General Sessions
	CSFS Tox. Business Meeting
6:00 - 7:00 pm	Exhibitors' Cocktail
9:00 - 5:00 pm	Registration
12:30 - 7:00 pm	Exhibits

Thursday, Oct. 2

9:00 - Noon	General Sessions
1:00 - 4:00 pm	General Business Meeting (CSFS)
6:00 - 7:00 pm	Cocktails (CSFS and SOFT)
7:00 - 10:00 pm	Banquet (CSFS and SOFT)
9:00 - 5:00 pm	Registration
12:30 - 7:00 pm	Exhibits

Friday, Oct. 3

9:00 - Noon	General Sessions
12:00 - 1:30 pm	Board (CSFS)
1:30 - 4:00 pm	Section Business Meetings (CSFS)
	General Business Meeting (SOFT)
4:00	Closing Ceremonies
9:00 - Noon	Registration

SOCIETY OF FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS, INC.
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL - NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
February 20, 1980

The meeting was called to order at 2:18 PM by Pres. Leonard Bednarczyk. Those present were L. Bednarczyk, J. Bidanset, Y. Caplan, A. McBay, T. Rejent, J. Balkon, and E. Solomons.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:

The minutes of the Board Meeting held in Williamsburg, Virginia were not available. These will be requested of the past secretary by Pres. Bednarczyk and a copy filed at a later date. J. Bidanset moved (seconded by A. McBay) that the minutes be dispensed with. This was unanimously approved.

LETTERHEAD AND LOGO (Report by Joe Balkon):

J. Balkon noted that degrees had been left off the letterhead of the SOFT stationery. After discussion and a motion by J. Bidanset (seconded by Y. Caplan), it was unanimously approved that degrees should appear on the letterhead.

Two samples of SOFT stationery bearing the recently designed logo (a

small and a large imprint) were presented to the group by J. Balkon. After discussion the consensus was to delete 1975 and place Inc. after Toxicologists. It was further moved by J. Bidanset (seconded by A. McBay) that the larger version also be approved. All were in agreement. It was further the consensus that J. Balkon should take the necessary action to have professional printers prepare the final form of the SOFT stationery and print it.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS:

No report

EDUCATION:

A report was submitted in writing by the Chairman of the Committee, V. Lynch. Six inquiries had been received. An application for a SOFT educational award has been received and is being processed.

J. Balkon indicated that the Board should decide on an amount for the award. After discussion, T. Rejent moved (seconded by A. McBay) that the Board establish an award amount of \$500.00. This was unanimously approved.

Other discussion concerning the educational award included:

- (1) Possible future uses of award monies:
 - a. Formal toxicology training
 - b. Workshops
 - c. Seminars
- (2) It was indicated that R. Bath and R. Simon are in the process of seeking further funding of the award program.
- (3) It was underscored by T. Rejent that the purpose of the award to individuals would be for allaying the expense of graduate studies.
- (4) The mechanism for issuing the award would probably involve notification by means of a letter and payment by check. In the future, the award could be presented at a national SOFT meeting.
- (5) Publicizing the award might include a notice in the Journal of Analytical Toxicology and the Journal of Forensic Sciences.

MEMBERSHIP:

A question concerning final approval of new members was put forth by the President. It was indicated by T. Rejent that in the past the Membership Committee has made the final decision. However, the Committee has asked for consultation with the Board as needed.

WORKSHOP:

J. Bidanset reported that a SOFT sponsored workshop on TLC-GC had been held January 7-10. There were 14 attendees and J. Bidanset assessed the workshop as having been "well attended and well received". The workshop was held jointly with NEAFS and joint workshop arrangements were considered to be worth pursuing in the future.

SOFT/ABFT:

Pres. Bednarczyk reported that he had responded to ad hoc committee's nominations of J. Bidanset and T. Rejent by submitting appropriate curriculum vitae and recommendations of these candidates to the American Board of Forensic Toxicology.

PROFICIENCY TESTING:

(1) Current SOFT Program:

Pres. Bednarczyk intends to continue the proficiency testing program, however, the number of mailings will be reduced from twelve per year to six.

Pres. Bednarczyk also pointed out that he has petitioned the State of Florida to approve the proficiency testing program as an accepted form of proficiency testing for his own laboratory. The State's reply was that approval should be first obtained from the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. Further inquiry into such an approach is currently being pursued.

(2) Future LEAA Funded Program:

In view of the announcement of "a grant or co-operative agreement of \$100,000" from the LEAA for the purpose of "a nationwide assessment of the performance of forensic toxicology laboratories by means of proficiency testing", discussion of this matter was initiated.

Pres. Bednarczyk expressed concern that the final results might be similar to that of a previous LEAA sponsored testing program.

Yale Caplan expressed concern that SOFT may not currently be in a position to institute such a program.

A. McBay indicated that forensic toxicologists could act as a group to review the program. It was also indicated that SOFT may choose to sanction or not sanction such a program as it develops.

Pres. Bednarczyk concluded by stating that the present proficiency testing program would be continued, that Mr. Sullivan of the National Institute of Justice would be informed of the new members of the SOFT proficiency testing committee, and that this committee will be available as needed for consultation and recommendations.

TOX TALK:

At the suggestion of Pres. Bednarczyk, quarterly mailing dates have been established as follows:

- 1 March (extension granted)
- 1 June
- 1 September
- 1 December

Inquiries will be made concerning the possibility of acquiring a new format to improve the appearance of the Newsletter without incurring exorbitant production costs.

DUES INCREASE:

Pres. Bednarczyk indicated that the expenditures of the organization may exceed income during the current fiscal year if the organization intends to operate in the usual fashion. One of the major expenses cited was that of interim Board meetings. An increase in dues was proposed by the President.

J. Bidanset moved that the dues be increased from \$20.00 to \$30.00 (seconded by J. Balkon). Discussion followed.

J. Bidanset pointed out that several forensic organizations are operating in the black with dues as low as \$7.50 - \$15.00.

Further discussion produced a general response that revenue should be generated in some other fashion, e.g., a membership drive.

The vote was four to one against increasing dues.

ANNUAL MEETINGS:

The next four meeting sites have been established as follows:

- (1) Toronto, Canada 1980
- (2) Chicago, Illinois 1981
- (3) Orlando, Florida 1982
- (4) Detroit, Michigan 1983

The 1980 annual meeting will mark the 10th anniversary of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, Inc. It was the consensus that J. Balkon should investigate the procurement of an anniversary memento (e.g., keychain or paperweight) to be given to the attendees of the 1980 meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The report was submitted by J. Balkon and approved by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,
Everett T. Solomons, Ph.D.
Secretary, SOFT., Inc.

PROPOSED RIA WORKSHOP

John Hevernan of Roche Diagnostic has expressed an interest in supporting a seminar/workshop on "Applications of Radioimmunoassays to Forensic Toxicology Problems."

The format of the day-long activity is still flexible, with a suggestion that a portion of the day's activity should include presentations by forensic toxicologists.

A proposed first meeting site is St. John's University in the fall.. Other sites will be considered for similar seminar/workshop activities. If interested, please contact Jesse Bidanset, Ph.D., Dept. of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York, 11439.

ANNUAL DUES

Annual dues notices have been mailed to each member of the Society. Joe Balkon requests prompt responses to that billing, to avoid the cost associated with a second mailing. Send your \$20 check today.

NEWEST DIPLOMATES TO ABFT

The American Board of Forensic Toxicology has announced that the following candidates have successfully completed the requirements for certification:

Mark B. Lewis
Thomas J. Manning
Michael P. McGee
Raymond W. Machalek
Leroy Mohn
Harold W. Peel
Theodore J. Siek
Marina Stajic
James M. White

Congratulations from SOFT!

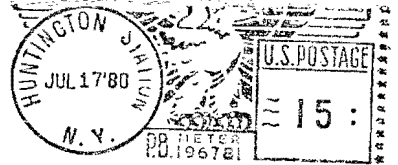
AAFS MOVE NOW COMPLETE

As of April 1, 1980, the new headquarters for the American Academy of Forensic Sciences is: 225 South Academy Boulevard, Suite 201, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80910. Telephone - 303-596-6006

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) August 2, 1980 - Sacramento, Ca. (Host International)
(CAT)
Randall Baselt
Department of Pathology
School of Medicine
University of California
Davis, Ca. 95616
- (2) October 24-25, 1980 - Northeastern Association of Forensic Sciences
6th Annual Meeting
Mark B. Lewis
Scientific Laboratory, State Campus
Bldg. #22, Albany, New York, 12226
- (3) November 7-8, 1980 - Las Vegas, Nevada (Sahara Hotel)
(CAT)
Thorne Butler
Department of Pathology
Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital
Las Vegas, Nevada, 89102
(Joint meeting with Southwestern Association
of Toxicologists)
- (4) February 17-20, 1981 - AAFS Annual Meeting
Held at Los Angeles Hilton

TOX TALK NEWSLETTER
THE SOCIETY OF FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS, INC.
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