



# TOXTALK

Publication of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists

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## Forensic Toxicologists Meet

The fourteenth Annual Meeting of SOFT, held in St. Louis as a joint meeting with SAT, was an overwhelming success. Those who were not able to attend missed an outstanding program. Congratulations to Al Poklis, the meeting host.

The two workshops, "Computers in Toxicology" and "Advanced Toxi-Lab" generated the interest of nearly 100 participants.

Special symposia included "Murder by Poison" and "Driving Under the Influence - Drugs Other than Alcohol and Marijuana". The former included a discussion of deaths involving succinylcholine and lidocaine. In each presentation the prosecuting attorney was a participant in the panel.

The business meeting was, as usual, quite lively. The minutes of this year's business meeting are included elsewhere in this issue of ToxTalk. The officers for 1985 are:

President: Richard Prouty  
Vice President: Rosemary Kincaid  
Treasurer: Michael McGee  
Secretary: Horton McCurdy

By now you should have received a ballot for voting on the by-laws changes. We are hoping for a good response.

Many members present at the meeting expressed interest in reading the letter composed by Richard Phillips soliciting funds for the SOFT Educational Research Award. A sample of this letter is enclosed with this issue.

On September 12-15, 1984, toxicologists from all over the world had a chance to meet and exchange their ideas on forensic, as well as other branches of toxicology during the tri-annual meeting of the International Association of Forensic Toxicologists. The meeting was of great success and was particularly enjoyable in the charming atmosphere of victorian Brighton, England. The next TIAFT meeting will take place on this side of the Atlantic Ocean in 1987 in the beautiful surroundings of Banff, Canada.

The next opportunity for the forensic toxicologist to meet is in Las Vegas, Nevada, February 12-16, 1985. The Toxicology Section program will include two workshops. The workshop on "Drugs and Driving" will address current analytical methods of drug detection, drug concentrations, and their relationship to driving impairment, current legislation directed at the drug impaired driver and new legislative concepts. The second workshop will discuss the use of capillary columns in gas chromatography. A joint session with the Jurisprudence Section will focus on the impact of toxicological findings and the role of the forensic toxicologist in the adversarial arena.

## Support SOFT

# Minutes of the 14th Annual SOFT Meeting

at St. Louis, Missouri, on the 11th of October 1984

## I. Introductory Remarks

The meeting was called to order by President Joseph Monforte at approximately 10:35 a.m., CST, on Thursday, October 11, 1984, after the Secretary had determined that a quorum of the voting membership was present. President Monforte called for the approval of the agenda which was accepted unanimously. The members present were asked by the President for a show of hands of all those involved in the Department of Transportation Blood Alcohol Survey. The President expressed concern over the origin of the questionnaire that asked if the respondents would object to having the results of their participation in the DOT program given to any source that might request them. President Monforte had previously determined that the information was requested by an attorney on behalf of other attorneys. The DOT has agreed to possibly releasing a mailing list of participants to the requesting parties but the President questioned the wisdom of releasing any information at all of this type and wanted the membership to be aware of the situation. In other matters, President Monforte discussed a letter he had received from NIDA asking SOFT to cooperate in a questionnaire that will be forthcoming that relates to the computer capability of toxicology laboratories at medical examiner offices. He expressed his pleasure in the fact that toxicologists were contacted first in this regard and asked the members present if they would please respond punctually to the questionnaire when it is received.

## II. Reading and Approval of the Minutes

The reading of the minutes of the October 13, 1983, annual business meeting was dispensed with since they had been published in ToxTalk previously. The President called for approval of the minutes which were accepted as published.

## III. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report (which follows this paragraph) was given by Mr. Michael McGee. Mr. McGee reported that the income for the last fiscal year was \$6341.76 which added to the previous balance gave a total sum of \$9317.94 for the year. Total expenses for the year was \$6510.42 leaving a balance in the checking account as of June 30, 1984, of \$2807.52. Of this amount, \$2122.81 is earmarked for the ERA fund. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded and was passed unanimously.

### TREASURER'S REPORT FISCAL YEAR 1983-1984 AMENDED REPORT

Balance in checking account,  
July 1, 1983 . . . . . \$2976.18

## INCOME:

\$2781.00	Dues and application fees
2206.57	1983 Meeting income after expenses
500.00	Repayment of 1983 Meeting advance
500.00	Repayment of 2nd 1983 Meeting advance
204.14	Interest from checking account
<hr/>	
\$6191.71	Total Income . . . . . \$6191.71
	<hr/>
Total funds available . . . . .	\$9167.89

## EXPENSES:

\$1491.58	Newsletter
1000.00	5th and 6th ERA (\$500 each)
587.58	Legal fees
556.75	Membership directory
500.00	1984 Meeting advance
500.00	2nd 1983 Meeting advance
441.95	Bylaws printing and postage
400.00	President's reception at AAFS meeting
282.88	Treasurer's office expenses
202.94	Board of Director's meeting
150.00	In Memoriam (R. Harger, H. Sunshine, J. Spikes)
112.02	Printing of stationery
97.75	Audit and Budget Committee
83.02	President's office expenses
51.00	Survey: Toxicology Report Writing
34.00	Bank fees
18.95	Secretary's office expenses
<hr/>	
\$6510.42	Total Expenses . . . . . \$6510.42

Balance in checking account,  
June 30, 1984 . . . . . \$2657.47

N.B. \$1972.81 of the balance in the checking account is allocated to the ERA Fund.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael P. McGee, Treasurer

## IV. Summary of the Board of Director's Meeting

President Monforte gave a brief summary of the Board of Director's meeting held on October 10, 1984. He reported that the Board discussed the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, the Treasurer's Report, certain bylaw changes that will be discussed in detail later on today as well as other important committee activities. President Monforte made some additional remarks concerning Vice President (President-Elect) Richard Prouty as overseer of the President's committees. President Monforte praised Mr. Prouty for his excellent leadership and coordination of the activities of the various committees during the past year. The successful performance of the committees and their productivity was due in part to the efforts of Mr. Prouty.

## V. Committee Reports

### A. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee report was given by Mr. William Anderson. Mr. Anderson reported that the slate along with a brief resume had been published in ToxTalk. He then read the names of the individuals selected by the Nominating Committee for the offices for which there would be a vacancy in the coming year.

### B. Membership Committee

The Membership Committee report was given by Mr. Mark Lewis. He reported that the Society has received, processed, and approved 15 full members, 4 associate members, and 5 student members during the past year. Mr. Lewis then read the names of each new member and asked that they stand and be recognized.

### C. Evaluated Methods Committee

This committee chairman, Dr. Rosemary Kincaid, according to the report given by Mr. Robert Bost, has now set guidelines for methods evaluation. The next step will be now to receive a procedure for the analysis of benzodiazepines by gas chromatography and make that evaluated procedure available to the Society.

President Monforte alluded to the difficulty of such a project and said he looked forward to the results of this committee's first evaluated method.

### D. Budget and Financial Management Committee

This report was given by its chairperson, Dr. James Valentour. He stated that the committee's main function was to review and audit the Treasurer's records. The Treasurer's records have been audited and have been found to be in proper order. The committee made several recommendations concerning fiscal responsibility for consideration. The first was that when SOFT funds are requested for unbudgeted activities, the requestor should then submit to the budget committee information regarding the amount of money requested, the purpose or application of the funds, and the savings benefit, if any, to the Society. The budget committee would then advise the Board of Directors by phone of the availability of such funds or the impact on the budget if approved, but not on the merits of the request. Secondly, the committee advised that a more detailed account of the Treasurer's Report be published in ToxTalk especially those items which are unbudgeted. The idea behind this recommendation would be to put more peer pressure on those individuals requesting SOFT funds to hold themselves more accountable. The third recommendation by the committee was that the membership give consideration to raising the limit of funds the President may spend without prior approval by the Board of Directors. The present limit is now \$250.00. The

committee suggested that the limit be raised to a maximum of \$500.00 or more. The fourth recommendation by the committee was that the President and Treasurer of the Society as well as the current meeting chairman of the year be bonded as insurance against any loss of SOFT assets.

Dr. Neal Reading asked what would be the expenses involved in bonding of the officers. Mr. McGee replied that one bid he had received would bond each of the officers for a period of three years with a maximum coverage of \$10,000 per person for approximately \$325.00 for all three years or \$120.00 per year. Dr. Fred Rieders questioned whether the SOFT assets (i.e., the current SOFT assets of \$2000) were sufficient enough to warrant the relative high cost of such bonding. President Monforte replied that he felt the bonding cost would be in the best interest of the Society.

#### E. Educational Research Award Committee

This report was given by Dr. Yale Caplan, committee chairman. The committee has aggressively endeavored this year to increase the solicitation of applicants for this award. Hopefully the amount given for each award will be in the future sufficiently high to be monetarily meaningful to the recipient. Dr. Caplan also reported that one application is now pending for a second appointment for the award.

#### F. Endowments and Grants Committee

Dr. Richard Phillips, chairman, reported that a letter has been written explaining the Society of Forensic Toxicologists and what the purpose is of the Educational Research Award. The letter has been sent to date to 46 pharmaceutical houses, 16 instrument and diagnostic companies, and 4 national laboratories. Dr. Phillips said a great deal of effort was made to determine the appropriate individual in each company to whom the letter should be sent. To date six responses have been received with one positive response in the amount of \$500.00. Dr. Phillips stated that he would be gratified if 10% of the companies responding were to make a contribution to the award fund. President Monforte praised Dr. Phillips for his articulate and excellently constructed letter requesting donations to the ERA.

#### G. Surveys Committee

Mr. Wade reported on the progress of the Surveys Committee. He stated that thus far approximately 20 replies to the survey sent out in August have been received. When all of the survey questionnaires are in, the results will be tabulated and published in ToxTalk. It is hoped that this survey will shed some light on the toxicology workload.

#### H. Bylaws Committee

Dr. Kurt Dubowski, chairman of the committee, reported on six proposed changes to the bylaws which would be voted on by the membership by mail ballot. Briefly, the proposed changes were as follows:

1. Raise the expenditure limit that would not require prior approval by the Board of Directors from \$250.00 to \$1000.00.

2. Amend the bylaws to allow for the smooth and orderly succession of vacated offices.

3. Establish the fiscal year as July 1 to June 30.

4. Allow the Secretary to serve on the Membership Committee ex officio without decreasing the members currently serving on the committee at large.

5. The elimination of the notification by mail of the slate of officers 30 days in advance of the annual meeting and provide instead a posting of the slate of nominees at least 1 day (or sooner if possible) prior to the regular business meeting.

6. Any proposed bylaw changes may be adopted by one of two methods:

A. By two-thirds of those voting in favor of passage at any regular meeting provided 30 days written notice of such changes have been given, or

B. By mail vote in which two-thirds of those members returning their ballots within a stipulated time (e.g., 30 days) vote in favor of adopting the amendment to the bylaws.

The report by Dr. Dubowski generated considerable discussion. In response to a question by Dr. Joseph Balkon, Dr. Dubowski emphasized that a quorum of mail ballots is not necessary since every member has an opportunity to cast his ballot if he so desires. Otherwise, only a two-thirds majority of those voting by mail is all that is required. Dr. Reading addressed several points on the proposed bylaw changes. He questioned the advisability of making the Secretary a voting member of the Membership Committee and thus possibly giving the Executive Board 50% of the controlling interest on a committee that is composed of four individuals. Dr. Dubowski reminded Dr. Reading that it would require 3 out of 4 votes to accept or reject an applicant applying for membership. Dr. Reading also pointed out that proposal number 5 would limit the input or voice of the membership in the selection of officers if we were to adopt a policy of posting for a minimum of 1 day the slate of officers. Mr. Robert Eberhardt pointed out the inequity of the present system which requires a slate of officers 30 days before the annual meeting but allows nomination of officers from the floor just minutes before the actual voting is to take place. Dr. Reading replied to several questions in this same vein that nominations from the floor were necessary to make the organization more democratic. Dr. Reading further addressed proposal number 6 in which he felt there should be some safeguard regarding the mailing of ballots. There should be assurance that the ballots were mailed to each and every member in the organization. Dr. Dubowski replied that the cost of signed receipts (e.g., \$1.50 per ballot) is not economically justifiable and furthermore is not necessary. Dr. Reading, however, averred that some validation that a mail balloting actually occurred before a mail vote can be considered to have been valid.

Dr. Ronald Backer asked if there should not be a stated deadline for which the mail ballot should be returned. Dr. Dubowski agreed that there should indeed be a stated deadline in the mail balloting procedure.

Dr. Reading stated that this Society has always been a popular based organization and that any changes in the bylaws should retain and even perpetuate the spirit of this concept.

Dr. Dubowski said he was very much in accord with that philosophy.

President Monforte said that he expected the chairman of the Nominating Committee (regardless of the time frame imposed on his committee) would prepare the slate of officers well in advance of the annual business meeting. President Monforte also spoke in favor of proposed bylaw change number 4 which would facilitate the functioning of the Membership Committee by making the Secretary an ex officio member of that committee.

Mr. McGee asked if it were not possible for the sake of parity if nominees other than from the Nominating Committee could also come 30 days before the annual meeting. Dr. Reading replied that the democratic spirit of the organization would be compromised if this were the case.

Dr. Joel Milzoff asked if the Secretary could not be made a nonvoting member of the Membership Committee since four members in that committee could have the possibility of a tie vote. As a nonvoting participant of the committee, the Secretary would still be involved in the processing of membership applications. President Monforte replied that any problem with the processing of an application for membership, whether a tie vote or some other problem, can always be brought before the Board of Directors for final disposition.

Dr. Balkon pointed out that if the Nominating Committee happens not to meet its 30 day deadline for the publication of the slate of officers in ToxTalk, the committee still retains the right to proffer their selection of officers at the annual meeting from the floor.

Dr. Backer made a motion that the more controversial elements of the bylaw proposals be eliminated from the mail ballot. Dr. Bost made a countermotion that a synopsis of the discussions this day be constructed and sent along with the proposed bylaw changes so that all members could have a chance to review and consider the pros and cons of each proposal. Each proposed bylaw change would then be voted on as separate issues. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberhardt and was passed without dissent or further discussion.

#### H. Toxicology Report Writing Committee

Dr. Ted Siek, the committee chairman, said that this committee's future activities would involve itself in making an assessment of laboratory reports used for forensic purposes for publication in ToxTalk. Dr. Siek stated that his committee preferred not to be involved in the setting of any guidelines or recommended practices for toxicology report writing. In further discussion, Dr. Fred Rieders suggested that the various examples of toxicology report writing could be published anonymously in ToxTalk while Dr. Backer proposed a poster session of the various examples of toxicology report writing.

#### I. Policy Committee

Mr. Eberhardt stated that the function of the committee was not to set policy but to review all the available minutes of business meetings and glean out all those items which appeared to make, change, or affect policy.

Mr. Eberhardt acknowledged Mr. James Oehldrich among others who aided in the preparation of this committee's report which was distributed to the members present. All statements which seemed to affect policy were broken down into categories and will be used now and in the future for possible incorporation into bylaw changes.

**J. Newsletter Editor Report**

President Monforte on behalf of the ToxTalk editors, Dr. Marina Stajic and Dr. Yale Caplan, reminded those present that the newsletter is a good mechanism for the dissemination of information or for any member wishing to communicate with the membership. The newsletter is appearing on schedule and operated within budget.

**VI. Old Business**

President Monforte wished to thank Dr. Michael Peat for his time and effort as the SOFT editor for this year's special issue of the Journal of Analytical Toxicology.

**VII. New Business**

Vice President Prouty reported under new business that the next annual meeting will occur in Montreal, Canada, as a joint meeting between the Canadian Society of Forensic Sciences and the Society of Forensic Toxicologists.

**VIII. Election of Officers**

A. The nominee for the office of President was Mr. Richard Prouty. As there were no other nominees, a motion was made that nominations for President be closed and Mr. Prouty was elected President of SOFT.

B. The nominee for Vice President was Dr. Rosemary Kincaid. Nominations for Vice President were closed and Dr. Kincaid was elected Vice President.

C. The nominee for Treasurer was Mr. Michael McGee. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations for the office of Treasurer were closed. Mr. McGee was re-elected as SOFT Treasurer.

D. The Nominating Committee nominated Dr. Al Poklis for the Board of Directors. A motion was made to close further nominations and Dr. Poklis was elected to the Board of Directors.

**IX. Adjournment**

Before adjournment, President Monforte thanked his executive staff and the Board of Directors for their support and thanks by all were also extended to Dr. Poklis and his staff for hosting this year's SOFT Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m., CST.

Respectfully submitted,  
H. Horton McCurdy, Ph.D., DABFT  
Secretary, SOFT



We regret to announce the passing of Vincent Depaul Lynch, Ph.D., earlier this year. Dr. Lynch, a charter member of SOFT, was instrumental in establishing the SOFT Educational Research Award. He will be missed.

# JAT Special Issue

The September-October 1985 "Special Issue" of the Journal of Analytical Toxicology will be once again dedicated to Forensic Toxicology. The 1985 Special Issue Editor is William H. Anderson.

To meet the September-October publication date the following deadlines must be adhered to **FIRMLY**:

- March 15 - Receipt of titles and abstracts
- April 15 Manuscripts due
- June 1 Manuscripts requiring revision returned to authors
- July 1 Final forms of manuscripts forwarded to JAT
- August 1 Galley proofs forwarded to authors
- September 1 Galley proofs returned to JAT
- October 1 Publication

Titles, abstracts, manuscripts (original plus four copies) and any correspondence should be forwarded to:

William H. Anderson  
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
901 North Stonewall  
Oklahoma City, OK 73117  
(405) 239-7141

## New Members

SOFT welcomes our following colleagues as:

**FULL MEMBERS**

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Jeanne Beno      | Douglas Bricker |
| Wellon D. Collom | Keith Coonrod   |
| Frank Dolejsi    | Bradford Hepler |
| Brian Joynt      | Barry Levine    |
| Kenneth Kempfert | Ann Pettrey     |
| Drew Richardson  | Donna Semple    |
| Laura Shevlin    | John Snyder     |
| Vina Spiehler    | Craig Sutheimer |

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Mark Anderson   | Paula Childs      |
| Allen Greenspan | James A. Kosinski |
| Joel Mayer      | Joel Sexton       |
| James Wigmore   |                   |

**STUDENT MEMBERS**

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Bruce Goldberger  | Paul Hale Jr.    |
| Daniel Isenschmid | Elizabeth Marker |
| Teri Stockham     |                  |

## Reply to

# Research Query

Comparison of Ethanol in Pre and Post Embalmed Blood Specimens  
(ToxTalk, Vol. 8, No. 2)

As would be expected, embalming fluid will lower a postmortem blood ethanol level unless the fluid contains ethanol. We analyzed 28 embalming products and found ethanol to be in 14% of the products with concentrations varying from 0.2% to 5%. The mere presence of ethanol in any fluid used for embalming makes any subsequent analysis and interpretation invalid since there is no way of predicting how much ethanol is from consumption prior to death and how much ethanol is contributed by the embalming fluid.

Even with the absence of ethanol in embalming fluid, the interpretation of alcohol concentrations is difficult in an embalmed body. The article in ToxTalk revealed a mean blood level decrease of 52% with a range of 35 to 66%. The percent decrease in blood levels due to dilution by embalming fluid will depend upon the following: (1) the amount of embalming fluid instilled, which will vary from case to case according to the person's size and age, the embalming technique, and whether an autopsy was performed prior to embalming; and (2) the time from embalming to sampling.

In reference to the time between embalming and sampling, we found that within two hours embalming fluid will perfuse to all organs and tissues of the body including bile, bone marrow, and vitreous humor. Although blood is immediately diluted once the embalming process begins, a delay exists before vitreous humor is contaminated. Hence, vitreous humor retrieved during or immediately following embalming could be used to predict a blood level with better accuracy than trying to convert a diluted blood level to a level prior to embalming. Our research into how long a vitreous humor sample remains uncontaminated is continuing.

Charles L. Winek, Ph.D.  
Dept of Laboratories  
County of Allegheny  
Pittsburgh, PA

The Society of Forensic Toxicologists, Inc. is an organization composed of practicing Forensic Toxicologists and those interested in the discipline for the purpose of promoting and developing Forensic Toxicology. Founded in 1970, the Society is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization which sponsors many different programs during the year. These include a national meeting, workshops, newsletters, proficiency testing and technical publications. An additional program is the Forensic Toxicology Educational Research Award (ERA) presented yearly to a deserving graduate or post-graduate student pursuing studies in forensic toxicology.

The increasing sophistication of analytical methodologies and the enhanced understanding of the underlying physiological and pharmacological factors governing our knowledge of the effects of these substances continues to add to the judicial process information which was not thought possible just a few years ago. The Society of Forensic Toxicologists has dedicated its efforts to continuing effective education in this field and as such supports research projects which advance the foundations of science in an academic setting. Awards are made in the amount of \$500 and are considered on a continuing basis throughout the year. Recent awardees of the 5th and 6th ERAs are Bruce Goldberger and Daniel Isenschmid, graduate students in Forensic Toxicology at the University of Maryland, Department of Pathology, Division of Forensic Pathology.

The financial basis for the Forensic Toxicology Educational Research Award is from the contributions made by private industry and governmental organizations. Various instrument and reagent manufacturers in the US, as well as pharmaceutical houses have all contributed in the past. Their justifiable feelings were that Forensic Toxicology, in its analytical quest for determining what drug or drug metabolites are in a particular specimen, must use today's instrumentation and reagent kits to make these analyses, and thus support reagent and instrument sales in the U.S.

By way of this letter, we are seeking your company's financial support of the Society of Forensic Toxicology's Educational Research Award. If you feel that you can help, please have your tax deductible check made payable to: SOFT-Educational Research Award, and mail to the ERA chairman at the address below. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Richard N. Phillips, Ph.D.  
Society of Forensic Toxicology  
Chairman, Education Committee,  
Endowments and Grants

