



# TECH TO TECH

## Newsletter

of the College Laboratory Technician Chapter of the PSC/CUNY

Vol. 7

Fall, 2004

No. 5

## INVEST IN YOUR CUNY FUTURE

### From The Chair

Welcome to a new academic year. Hopefully, it will be a year of change for the better. Much of our effort this year will be focused on contract negotiations and strengthening contract enforcement.

In case you need reminding, here are some of the important topics being discussed in negotiations: salary, promotions, job security, the Welfare Fund, workplace safety.

While the PSC leadership and the CLT Executive Committee are working hard to secure advances in all the above-mentioned issues and more, you are needed to play a vital role beyond negotiations. The Chancellor, the Board, the Mayor and the Governor all need to see and hear the strength of our solidarity and the passion of our insistence for a worthy contract.

Perhaps, you are waiting for management to give you a 10% raise or an excellent dental plan or a promotion to Chief, because you feel you have earned it. Well, you might as well bring your ice skates to hell and wait.

Griping to your co-workers does nothing but tick them off.

Consider chapter/union participation as investing in your future at CUNY. This is not about money. Well, indirectly, money- salary, benefits, etc.- enter into it. But it's not about putting up your money.

Investment is all the rage these days; even union members are talking about stock prices, P/E ratios and inflation-proof portfolios.

### MARK THE DATES

**Expanded Exec. Meeting** (Exec. Comm. & Campus Reps)

**Sept. 14 and Nov. 9**

6 PM at PSC offices, 25 W 43 Street, 5th Floor

**General Membership Meeting** (All CLTs)

**Oct. 5, 7 PM** meeting place TBA

Unfortunately, you can't invest money to ensure a prosperous future at CUNY. Giving dollars to the Chancellor or the Board will not guarantee a good contract, better working conditions or promotions!

It's about investing your time and effort. Now, you already invest time and effort in CUNY. After all, you work there. But ask yourself, "What have I invested to make certain my salary and welfare benefits will be inflation-proof? Does my present investment have a respectable E/P (Effort to Pay) ratio?"

There is only one organization that handles this type of investment: our union, PSC/CUNY. Only the PSC negotiates our contract and fights for our workplace rights. Only through union action can we strengthen our status and improve our futures at CUNY.

Here are some of the ways to build a powerful "portfolio:" march arm-in-arm, rally, pack meetings (especially Board meetings,) voice our demands in solidarity, lobby locally and in Albany.

So, invest in your own future by strengthening the PSC. When the calls come, march, rally, meet, lobby, vote, ratify. PARTICIPATE! You will be pleased with the returns.

**Shelly Mendlinger**

## Contract Negotiations Update

Contract negotiations between the PSC and CUNY have continued throughout the summer. We are hoping to meet regularly during the upcoming semester.

Each side has completed presentation of their demands and some fruitful discussions have taken place. All of our CLT issues remain on the table, including salary improvements, promotional opportunities and procedures and welfare fund stability.

---

## Become Activists: Support the PSC Contract Campaign

---

We still have not received a financial offer but we are continuing to press CUNY to go beyond the minimal terms that have been offered to other city unions. We continue to battle CUNY's serious demands for givebacks and increases in workloads. There is still a long way to go.

We will also be active away from the bargaining table. There will be several activities taking place this Fall in support of our efforts to win a good contract. You will hear more about this soon. I urge all of you to become activists and support our contract campaign when the opportunity arises.

Several PSC members have attended the negotiating sessions as observers. If anyone is interested in attending a session s/he should contact either John Hyland or Iris Delutro at the PSC (212-354-1252) for information.

A little good news for those of you who are wondering what happened to the printed version of our last contract: we expect that printed copies of the PCS/CUNY Agreement will be available early this Fall!

**Steve Trimboli**

## Professional Development Fund

I urge all CLTs to take advantage of the CLT/HEO Professional Development Fund. This is a great benefit. There is a large pool of untapped resources available for you. Take a course, attend a seminar, do some research! Any reasonable proposal is worth making. Very few applicants have been denied.

You can receive up to \$2,000.00 per academic year for approved activities. A few of our members have already taken advantage of this program more than once. Don't be left out!

If you have any questions about the program you can call Linda Slifkin at the PSC (212-354-1252) or you can get information at the PSC website ([www.psc-cuny.com](http://www.psc-cuny.com)). Please, let's not waste this wonderful opportunity.

**Steve Trimboli**



## Prudent Practices in the Laboratory:

### Spill Containment

*continued from page 4*

**Neutralizing agents for acid** spills such as sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate.

**Neutralizing agents for alkali** spills such as sodium bisulfate and citric acid.

**Large plastic scoops** and other equipment such as brooms, pails, bags and dust pans.

**Appropriate personal protective equipment**, warnings, barricade tapes, and protection against slips or falls on wet floors during and after cleanup.

*Prudent Practices in the Laboratory: Handling and Disposal of Chemicals*

ISBN#-0-309-05229-7, 1995, 427 pp.

**Ezra Seltzer**

[ See your campus Chemical Hygiene Officer for details. Ed.]

# To Your Health

## The Microbial Menace

### The Return of Infectious Disease and What It Means to our Indoor Environment

In 1958, when I was taking an advanced microbial metabolism course in graduate school, I came across an interesting photomicrograph. In it, two bacteria of very different strains had formed a common bridge and were sharing genetic material. When I showed it to my instructor he said “the bugs are smarter than we are.”<sup>1</sup>

For more than half a century scientists have known that during conjugation, microbes of different species can exchange genetic material. This leads to all kinds of possibilities.

One such is hybrid vigor. Over a period of time, genetic variations can, and do, become immune to antibiotics. This problem is particularly obvious in hospitals. Nobel Laureate Joshua Lederberg warns us that “patients are dying because we no longer, in many cases, have antibiotics that work.”<sup>2</sup>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 90% of our time is spent indoors. Concentration of many air pollutants are frequently higher indoors than outdoors. Bioaerosols (fungi, fungal spores, bacteria, viruses, pollen, etc.) are major indoor air pollutants.

Water damaged carpets or ceiling tiles can enhance the growth of microbes (fungi, bacteria, viruses, etc.). A contaminated heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system can distribute millions of microbes into offices and laboratories, as well as residential dwellings.

Some microbes cause diseases. Others cause allergic reactions and weaken human immunity, so that our bodies are more susceptible to microbial disease and toxicity.

In the past decade we have witnessed the return of infectious disease. A combination of the

weakening of vaccination regimens, poverty and poor sanitary conditions, improper use of antibiotics and the natural selection process has resulted in outbreaks of diseases believed to be conquered and the production of new and particularly virulent strains of diseases-causing microorganisms.

In subsequent issues we will discuss in more detail:

- \* Water intrusion into buildings and the fight against fungal growth.
- \* The return of infectious diseases and what it means to our indoor environment.

- 
1. Prof. M. Belsky, Biology Dept., Brooklyn College, 1958
  2. *Microbial Threats to Health*, Lederberg, et al., 2004

**Ezra Seltzer**

## Get Out Now

The National Fire Protection Association asked 500 Americans how long they thought they had to escape a fire. Fifty- eight percent said 2 minutes or more—and that includes 24% who figured they would have more than 10 minutes to escape.

A typical room fire can threaten an entire area in just a few minutes by producing life-threatening conditions. Unless everyone is prepared to respond quickly and without hesitating, the spread of deadly fire effects may make escape and rescue impossible.

In that same survey, only 7% of the people assumed that an alarm was a real fire, 55% of those who had been in a public building when an alarm sounded admitted they had failed to leave immediately. 50% of those surveyed were familiar with the escape plan, but only 16% said they had practiced it.

Smoke detectors and alarms can cut your risk of dying in a fire in half, but you have to follow the proper evacuation procedures immediately.

*Environmental Health and Safety*

Medical College of Georgia, April 2004

# Lab Safety- Don't Touch That Hotplate!

## Prudent Practices in the Laboratory – II

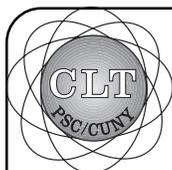
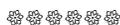
### 5. C. 11. 5 Spill Containment

Every laboratory in which hazardous substances are used should have spill control kits tailored to deal with the potential risk associated with the materials being used in the laboratory. These kits are used to confine and limit the spill if such actions can be taken without risk of injury or contamination. A specific individual should be assigned to maintain the kit. Spill control kits should be located near laboratory exits for ready access. Typical spill control kits might include these items:

**Spill control pillows.** These commercially available pillows generally can be used for absorbing solvents, acids and caustic alkalis, but not hydrofluoric acid.

**Inert absorbents** such as vermiculite, clay, sand, kitty litter, and OilDri®. Paper is not an inert material and should not be used to clean up oxidizing agents such as nitric acid.

*continued on page 2*



**TECH TO TECH is the newsletter of  
the College Laboratory Technician  
Chapter of the PSC/CUNY**

© 2004 Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

#### PSC/CUNY

President Barbara Bowen

#### Newsletter staff

Managing Editors Shelly Mendlinger  
Randy Smith

City Editor Ezra Seltzer

Layout/design Shelly Mendlinger

OPEIU #153

## Names and Numbers

### CLT Executive Committee

Shelly Mendlinger . Chair ..... (718) 951-5721  
Ellen Steinberg ..... Vice Chair, Grievance Counc. ....  
(212) 481-5056  
Randy Smith, ret. ... Secretary, DA, Membership Chair .....  
Steve Trimboli ..... Cross Campus Officer, Grievance Chair. ...  
(718) 960-8644  
Louis Rivera ..... Officer-at-Large ..... (212) 220-1490  
Keith Rowan ..... Officer-at-Large ..... (718) 982-3278  
Tom Shemanski ..... Officer-at-Large ..... (718) 631-6271  
Robert Suhoke ..... Officer-at-Large ..... (212) 650-6973  
Joy Johnson ..... DA ..... (718) 270-6210  
Robert Wurman, ret. DA, .....  
Freelun Maria Chen, ret. Alt DA .....  
Camille MacIntyre . Alt DA ..... (212) 481-5057  
Ellen Steinberg ..... Alt DA ..... (212) 481-5056  
Marion Saccardi ..... Alt DA ..... (718) 368-5198  
Ezra Seltzer, ret. .... Communicator ..... (718) 209-0416

### CLT Campus Representatives

Campus	CLT Rep.	Phone
Baruch .....	Alan Pearlman .....	(646) 312-4492
BMCC .....	Louis Rivera .....	(212) 220-1490
BxCC .....	Lourdes Rosario .....	(718) 289-5219
Brooklyn .....	Shelly Mendlinger .....	(718) 951-5721
City .....	Derek Quinlan .....	(212) 650-6060
COSI .....	Marie Larsen .....	(718) 982-3967
Grad Center .....	Barry Carr .....	(212) 817-2523,7336
Hostos .....	Marisa Rodrigues .....	(718) 518-6548
Hunter .....	Camille McIntyre .....	(212) 481-5057
John Jay .....	Nikolay Azar .....	(212) 237-8155
KCC .....	Marion Saccardi .....	(718) 368-5198
LaGuardia .....	Marge Lesser .....	(718) 482-5779
Lehman .....	Michael Baxter .....	(718) 960-8237
Medgar Evers .....	Joy Johnson .....	(718) 270-6204
NYCCT .....	Albert Sherman .....	(718) 260-5837
Queens .....	Alan Bartow .....	(718) 997-4181
Queensboro .....	Tom Shemanski .....	(718) 631-6271
York .....	Joel Gomez .....	(718) 262-2596

### PSC/CUNY

Central Office ..... (212) 354-1252  
Central Office Fax ..... (212) 302-7815  
Credit Union ..... (212) 354-2238  
Welfare Fund ..... (212) 354-5230

### E-Info

PSC web page ..... [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org)  
CLT Info-list ..... [cunyclt-l@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:cunyclt-l@hunter.cuny.edu) (to send e-mail)  
To subscribe send e-mail to:  
[majordomo@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:majordomo@hunter.cuny.edu)  
In body of message type the command:  
subscribe cunyclt-l  
CLT Discussion-list [psc-clt@groups.yahoo.com](mailto:psc-clt@groups.yahoo.com) (to send e-mail)  
To subscribe send e-mail to: Ellen Steinberg at  
[esteinb@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:esteinb@hunter.cuny.edu)  
Ask to be subscribed to psc-clt.