

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

.....

The following letter was written to Susan Leclair, Editor-in-Chief.

Part of my lunch time reading today included the Winter 2003 issue of *Clinical Laboratory Science*. I just wanted to send a note of appreciation for your editorial. Just before lunch, I presided at one of my college's Open Lab days, a recruitment tool where high school students tour the building, visiting the various health programs we offer. Our college has three big programs: nursing, dental hygiene, and radiography. Students tour FOUR programs, so even if they choose the big three, they have to visit CLS, or nuclear medicine, or respiratory care, or something else that may be better suited to their interests.

I had a small but very enthusiastic group this morning. I had set up microscopes with various blood smears and bugs to look at. We had some agar plates with bacteria, and an expired unit of RBCs to examine. I described how chemistry was highly automated and that we taught students how to use automation on campus. As they moved from station to station, the CLMA recruitment video played in the background.

It's amazing how some of these enthusiastic students can turn into such depressing professionals. You are absolutely right about how many of us isolate ourselves in the lab, refusing to look at the big picture of healthcare except as something that threatens us. The students thought that doing the testing MIGHT BE fun. I often feel guilty that we spend so much time stuffing factoids into their heads that we don't demonstrate how rewarding our jobs can be.

I am firmly in favor of licensure and professional recognition. You are absolutely right that we prevent our own success by trying to pass the perfect bill, or objecting to paying \$50 a year for a license that would increase our incomes by several thousand dollars. I think we may need to work first on raising our self esteem. We ARE professionals, we DO contribute, and our work IS rewarding. Our recent grads do see themselves as part of the healthcare team. It concerns me that many of the practicing techs try to keep them from succeeding.

Barbara Ross MT(ASCP), Ferris State University, 200 Ferris Drive, Big Rapids MI 49307-2740

.....
The Dialogue and Discussion Section is a forum for editorials, short articles, commentaries, and letters to the editor on clinical laboratory science topics and professional issues of general interest to readers including ASCLS activities and position papers. For more information about submissions to the Dialogue and Discussion section contact: Susan Leclair PhD, CLS Editor-in-Chief, Clinical Laboratory Sciences Editorial Office, Attn: Dialogue and Discussion, PO Box 5399, Coralville, IA 52241-5399. (319) 351-2922, (319) 351-2927 (fax). cls@ia.net