



WISCONSIN CHAPTER-ASSOCIATION OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGISTS

Winter 2021

Editor:

Claire Parda

### PRESIDENT’S UPDATE

DANIELLE COOK, CST

Happy New Year to all! I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday and was able to find joy and peace in this difficult time. The beginning of a new year is a time for reflection and setting personal goals. This looks very different to me this year. I started 2020 full of excitement of what was to come and what challenges awaited. Clearly, the challenges far outweighed the excitement.

We have experienced physical, mental, and emotional fatigue, loss of loved ones, social isolation, and unbelievable amounts of stress. My heart goes out to everyone one of you and I appreciate putting yourself in the front line and continuing to do your best every day for your patients. If 2020 has taught us anything, it is how little control we truly have and the importance of stepping back and prioritizing our lives. As a healthcare worker, this is just an everyday occurrence. We need to prioritize tasks based on the case that we are doing and, just when we think everything is going smoothly, something changes. Whether it be an add-on, delay, change in rooms, or patient emergency, we need to respond in a calm, positive manner. These are situations that are out of our control and getting worked up not only affects your professional performance, but also your mental and physical health. The next time you feel yourself getting worked up, take a deep breath and think of the reason you are a Surgical Technologist, the patient. You are making a positive impact on the quality of life of another person and that is amazing, as are you!

Registration is now open for our “Spring Retreat” on March 6<sup>th</sup>. This event will be held via Zoom, and you will receive 4 Advanced Credits by attending the event. You can register on the WI AST website, [www.wiast.org](http://www.wiast.org). The cost is \$30 for AST members, \$35 for non-members. Registration ends on March 1<sup>st</sup>, **no exceptions**. We look forward to seeing everyone in March!

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WRITE FOR US! WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR INTERESTING ARTICLES AND NEWS FROM AROUND WISCONSIN! SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS TO:

WIASTNEWS@GMAIL.COM



WI AST



wisconsin.ast

## Editor's Note

### BROKENNESS

CLAIRE PARDA, CST, BSHCA

WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR/NEWSLETTER EDITOR

*“That porcelain plate I once feared dropping has broken into pieces more times than I can count. But I actually find more beauty in the jagged edges that have replaced its delicate lines. There seems to be more freedom in a life that’s pieced together in a way that actually honors the things that bring us genuine fulfillment. Even though that plate will inevitably crack again, it has been my experience that **where there is brokenness there is also an abundance of grace.**”*

*-Joanna Gaines*

As I put together the content for our newsletter, I try to reflect on the past 6 months in my personal, work, social, political, and worldly life. What changes have I seen? How can I be a better friend, partner, mother, co-worker, neighbor, and person? I have been encouraged to read more after accepting the position of editor, to not only secure content for our newsletter, but for exposure to the outside world that isn’t electronic or dare I say... persuasive in nature.

With that being said... the graphic presented really hit me. Are we broken? As a nation? Culture? Humankind? When did thinking for ourselves become... obsolete? Doing what is right an afterthought? What our world has seen this past year is the epitome of brokenness. Not only have we endured a pandemic, but we as a nation have forgotten what America stands for. To be honest, the only ones to blame is ourselves. We don’t need a leader to lead us, to show us what being American means. We need to extinguish the hatred which has stemmed from emotion, and instead replace the frustration with giving and love for one another. We are struggling as a nation to understand... well the roulette of life we are experiencing. Instead of putting each other down (whether for wearing or not wearing a mask, or political affiliation), why can’t we be proud to be American and fight for all of us to feel that?

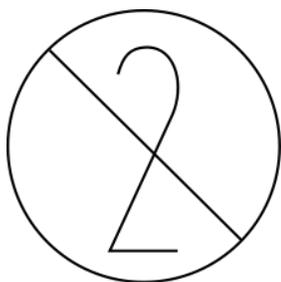
Which brings me back to the graphic; “Where there is brokenness there is an abundance of grace.” I cannot decipher what this means to each of us; but I can tell you this. Within all of this, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. There always is. And in this struggle there is perseverance and self-achievement. We will come out stronger individually and collectively, because we have to.

In the last issue I talked about my New Year’s intention of taking opportunities I wouldn’t have considered. Well I am here to report that the opportunity has presented itself with becoming a traveling surgical technologist. I have stayed in Wisconsin, which has brought me to the west central part of the state. Networking with others has helped me be a better board member for our AST chapter. I have definitely re-defined my comfort zone with certain procedures, while getting to do my favorite things at the same time. I hope to grow and share my experiences with my board of directors, readers of this newsletter, and future students and techs along the way. I have learned so much from travelers I have gotten the opportunity to work with, as well as CS and instrument tech staff that I work closely with. I am looking forward to what this year has to offer me and my family. Peace and Love in 2021.

(Photo originally in Magnolia Journal Fall 2020)



## Board Member Blurbs



### LOWERING OUR STANDARDS??

**BRIDGET HANSON, CSTFA**  
**WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR**

In the past 11 months, all you have had to do is turn on the television, pick up a newspaper or open your newsfeed to see the term ‘PPE shortage’. But for those of us who are actually living in it every day, this phrase has taken on a whole new meaning. I guarantee we will ALL look at those little brown paper lunch bags, that once held our bologna sandwiches on school fieldtrip days to the zoo, a little bit differently now. But who would have ever thought that we would be told to wear the same mask all day?

Personally, this is something that my brain never thought was a possibility. But it is today, on the tails of the latest reports of a national glove shortage, that has really got me thinking. When I receive e-mail after e-mail from my administration asking, practically begging me, to “limit use of exam gloves” or to “use gloves beyond their manufacture’s shelf life” or “consider only using one glove for cleaning” or here’s my personal favorite “avoid double gloving”, it makes me question whether or not we are being forced into lowering our standards.

I can remember as a surgical tech student learning the guidelines of best practice and aseptic technique and thinking to myself that these rules were pretty much black and white. ‘Only sterile members of the OR team at the field, face back to back while moving about the room, only use instrumentation that has been sterilized, etc. ect.’...right, we know this stuff. But nowhere in my education was I ever told that in my career would I need to wear the same mask all day and clean with only 1 glove!!

Now, please do not get me wrong, I completely understand that these are unprecedented times and that no one was either prepared for or planned for a global pandemic; however, my question to you and every other health care worker is this: Are we being forced to lower our standards of practice due to these national shortages, and will our profession ever fully recover from this? Personally, I am super hopeful that this chaotic time in our lives will all be a distant memory. I am hopeful the opportunities given to us to slow down have taught us all something. I am hopeful that soon my kids will be allowed to return to school and to play sports again. I am hopeful that my sister and I can soon go to a concert, and I am hopeful that I can one day double glove and change my mask after every case.

### NOMINATIONS: TECH-OF-THE-YEAR

**DANIELLE COOK, CST**  
**WI-AST PRESIDENT**

We are currently looking for nominations for the WI State Assembly Tech of the Year. To nominate a tech, please email [wisconsinast@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinast@gmail.com) with your recommendation, including the reason why you are nominating the person. The selected “Tech of the Year” will receive free registration for one meeting, valid for one year.



## Board Member Blurbs



### A CASE OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

**KAREN BISESI, CST, CSFA**  
**WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR**

Has your charge nurse asked you to do a case outside your comfort zone? Does it seem like the world is officially ending? Remember, there are a few things to get you through it, and not all cases are scary. Just take a moment to use problem solving skills our instructors taught us. First, I would Google the procedure the night before (if possible) and be prepared. The internet is a great way to learn many different methods on how a procedure is done. After you have an understanding of what could happen, look for a co-worker that you are comfortable with and ask them some questions. What is this doctor's preferences? Is there anything about this case that I should know? What instruments, suture, or dressings should I get? What do they hate? Another great resource is the pick sheet. Look at the supplies and instruments that are picked and become familiar with them. If you know all of them it looks like you are going in the right direction. Lastly, talk to the surgeon. Let them know you are not familiar with the case and willing to learn. Stay positive! Take notes and smile. If none of that will work, ask for help. It's never a sign of weakness if you ask someone to scrub with you, or to be nearby. It's all for the patient's safety, Aeger Primo!



### STAT!!!

**NICOLE VAN VONDEREN, CST**  
**WI-AST VICE PRESIDENT**

Being a Surgical Technologist, we must always be on the ready. Whether we are at a Level 1 Trauma Center and the trauma pager goes off or at a Level 3 center and getting ready for a stat C-Section. I work at a small rural hospital and one day I had finished my case and was looking at our surgery board. I heard our scheduler say they are on their way down from OB NOW. I ran to our C-section room and opened my pack, gloves and suture and scrubbed in. By now our patient was in the room, we prepped, draped and the patient was put to sleep. There was no time for counts, as they were prepping, I set the instruments I would need on my mayo stand, loaded my scalpels and suture. I was not able to bring in my mayo stand much as the OB nurse was under the drapes holding the head of the baby and the cord in the vagina. From the time they entered the room to the baby was delivered was 7 minutes. This critical event took a whole team effort and everyone that was available jumped in to help. These cases do not happen all the time, so we always need to be prepared and ready. Thank you for all you do!!

## Board Member Blurbs



### REFLECTIONS

**SUE MCNEELY, CST, FAST  
WI-AST SECRETARY**

Looking back at 2020 and Covid I am glad I am here. I certainly never expected to be captive in my home for six months and unable to do what I love. I had plenty of time to reflect on my career and how to proceed. I missed teaching students and being in the operating room. Everything I enjoyed doing came to a sudden halt and I had to revise my lifestyle and game plan. I was ready to step down in October from WIAST however AST had other plans. When I finally made it back in August with students in surgery, I wondered what experiences they will remember and share in the future.

Fifteen years ago when I completed my MS for integrating technology in education, my college and co-workers said Surgical Technology was not the place for online education; well 2020 sure proved them wrong! 2020 also demonstrated how we all adapted to a new normal while still doing our job. Surgical Technologists always have to adapt, and that was achieved in changing situations. We all made it to 2021 and will continue to be resourceful in our lives.

Happy 2021



### START THINKING NOW!

**SUE MCNEELY, CST, FAST  
WI-AST SECRETARY**

The Fall 2021 WIAST meeting will be held at Froedtert Hospital. All nine Board positions will be on the ballot. With the new requirements for recertification attending meetings are required. Step up and be involved in your future. More information will be in our July news.

## Items for Sale



Socks: \$5

Decals:  
\$10



More info to come!

## News Around Wisconsin



### FELLOWS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGISTS (F.A.S.T.)

**SUE MCNEELY, CST, FAST**  
**WI-AST SECRETARY**

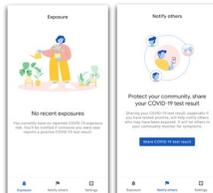
AST awards the Fellow of the Surgical Technologists (FAST) designation only to those surgical technologists whose professional activities have been devoted to the practice of surgical technology, and who abide by the AST Code of Ethics and standards of practice. Individuals awarded the FAST will commit and adhere to these ethics and standards of practice. The FAST began in 2006 as an opportunity to recognize surgical technologists who have achieved the highest professional standards. [www.ast.org](http://www.ast.org)

Currently, AST has 208 members with this distinction. Last year, Sheryl Blaschka was awarded the FAST. Because the AST National Conference was canceled this year, she will proudly be on stage in Las Vegas with the other recipients. She joins JoAnn Steffes, Ruth Collis, Linda Beine, and Susan McNeely as the five Wisconsin members who have this recognition.

Sheryl will be representing Wisconsin as a delegate this year at Nationals, so please give her your congratulations.



WI Exposure Notification  
 State of Wisconsin - Department of Health Services  
 Medical  
 Everyone



### COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING APP

**SUBMITTED BY: CLAIRE PARDA, CST, BSHCA**  
**WI-AST BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has introduced a mobile application designed to help people quickly and anonymously send and receive information about COVID-19 through their smartphones.

The optional WI Exposure Notification app allows users to self-report positive COVID-19 test results. With the permission of those who test positive, the app also notifies users if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus. The app identifies someone as a close contact if they have been within 6 feet of another app user for more than 15 minutes in the previous two weeks.

Nearly 1 million people in Wisconsin have enabled the app since it launched Dec. 23. Consider encouraging your patients, friends and family members to use the app. Users can help prevent the virus from spreading by limiting social interactions when they know someone they have been around has tested positive for the virus. For the app to work properly, Bluetooth must be enabled on your device, and the WI Exposure Notification app must be downloaded and enabled before a positive test result is received. The notifications will be sent from Google to Android users and from Apple to iPhone users. Identities are not shared, just news of potential exposure.

Bluetooth anonymously shares signals with other smartphones using the app. It does not use, collect or store any GPS data or personal details such as a user's name, contact information, location, movements or contacts' identities.

Technical assistance for the app is available at 833-941-1652.

Retrieved from: ProNews December 2020.

## News Around Wisconsin



### COVID 19: THE END MIGHT BE IN SIGHT, BUT DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN!!!

**MARK H. ERETH, MD**  
**AMS ANESTHESIOLOGIST**

As we cross the threshold of the new year humanity finds itself in an unbalanced dichotomy. We have hope and the promise of a remarkable recovery by dominating the SARS-CoV-2 virus. We have also entered what is perhaps the most dangerous phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We enter the most critical pandemic phase for a number of reasons. First, we all suffer from COVID-19 Fatigue, not the disease-induced clinical fatigue, but we all are tired of the news of the resurgence, the active or looming shut-downs, social isolation, the politics of disease, the information and misinformation, and the lack of physical touch. Family and friends miss holding hands, hugging, or just the pat on the back we all know and need. Who doesn't just want the pandemic to end! Secondly, we have deep virus penetration across all populations and communities and of course reports of a new mutations from across the globe that may be even more contagious. Third, we are in a "twin-demic", as coined by Dr. Gregory Poland of the Mayo Clinic, we have the combination of our annual flu epidemic overlaying the current pandemic. Fourth, we are confined indoors where the virus is more easily transmitted, especially in the northern climates as the temperatures drop. We need fresh air more than ever.

In parallel with the riskiest phase of the pandemic is the enormous hope of mass vaccination successes. It's wise to remember that no vaccination provides immediate or absolute immunity. Vaccination remains only part of the global solution. Unfortunately some of us believe that once vaccinated we are free to behave in any fashion. Not so!

We do not fully understand the exact nature of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in all settings. While I may no longer become infected due to vaccine-induced immunity I can certainly remain a vector for disease transmission. It's still easy to pick up the virus from a contaminated surface such as a grocery store refrigerator door, the gas pump handle, or the credit card. Then we can unknowingly transfer the virus to an unvaccinated person with a handshake, pat on the back, or embrace. Airborne contamination remains the least controllable source of the virus and disease. Whether from current or former occupants or from resuspension of fomites from surfaces these ubiquitous viral nuclei and aerosols remain a threat within indoor settings.

With the new year and a new phase of the pandemic we've extraordinary hope coupled with increasing risk. For the millions of us already vaccinated who may have varying degrees of immunity remember we still have the ability to spread virus even while not infected. Until we reach the tipping point in combating the COVID-19 pandemic don't let your guard down.

Keep on masking, hand-washing, distancing, avoid touching your face, and continue to sneeze and cough into your sleeve. By continuing to do what the experts have told us the summer of 2021 could be the best ever.

*(Article used with permission from the author)*

**#wisconsinAST**

**THE GRAM!!!**

Instagram! Do you know that we are on it?

Our username is Wisconsin.ast. Look us

up and send us pictures. Find out what

we are doing. Learn

who the board

members are. Share

with us!

# Journey Through ACL Surgery

**CLAIRE PARDA, CST, BSHCA  
WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR**



2-25-20

\*exhale, breathe\*. You’ve got the puck in your defensive zone. You have control now, Claire. I skate back towards my goalie so I can send it around the boards to my teammates changing players across the way. It’s the second period; we’re up against our rivals, Top Shelf. I send the puck hard behind the net and around the boards, changing directions I start skating fast straight up the middle of the ice. *\*blood curdling scream\**

I’m lying on the ice facing the back boards slightly behind my goalie. Throbbing pain comes from my right knee as I feel it swelling exponentially per second. I think to myself the last time I felt this pain was with my left knee is 2012 while hiking in the backcountry of New York. Teammates surrounded me, even players from the other team. I continue thinking, “I came back from that, and maybe it isn’t as bad”. I get help up, and off the ice, and thoughts cycle my mind.

The game ends, we win, but the journey for me is just beginning. A couple friends came to watch me play that day, so I headed to the ER to get checked out. Not broken, but “follow up with orthopedic in a few days”. Well, luckily I work with a lot of great orthopedic surgeons, and I knew this was bigger than just a sprain.



2.28.20

The following day I visited our orthopedic center, got it scanned and braced for the news. I had never had an injury to my right knee, although my left knee had seen its fair share of injury over the years. MRI indicated a “discontinuous and torn” ACL. I was devastated. I work on my feet, am an active outdoorsy person, and now (in my mind) I’m done for. The following months would include lots of physical therapy, and a decision on whether or not to reconstruct my right ACL.

Physically I was broken, emotionally I wasn’t much better. I let my team down, my coworkers down, my family down. Since finding out my left knee is compromised (on that nice little backcountry trip I partially tore my left ACL), I decided to get reconstruction on my right ACL. Surgery was set for February 19, and I was going to be non-weight bearing for four weeks. I had physical therapy 3x a week for six weeks, then 2x a week for another six weeks. I felt helpless and disconnected from my work team. I would need to overcome these physical challenges but also the emotional and mental ones.

When my surgery date finally came, I was nervous...but not like patients who’ve never had surgery. I come from the world of surgery, so I knew exactly what was going to happen, who my team was, and everything in-between. I was anxious about recovery. I kept telling myself “You’re an athlete, you’ve had other injuries, and you’ve got this.” Covid-19 hit when I was on medical leave; I joke and say that “I was in quarantine before it was cool”.

Almost a year later, and I feel better every day. I am so very thankful for my surgeon, Dr. W. Davies, my therapists, staff at the orthopedic hospital, and my manager at the time. One of the biggest reasons I made it through was my amazing partner Joel and our daughter Autumn. They helped me every day get stronger, be diligent about my therapy, but also emotionally put me back together. This journey would have been very different without them. I know I might not play competitive ice hockey anymore, but my goal is to get as close as I can as it is a big part of my life. For now, I’m going to keep scrubbing and getting stronger and see where the path takes me.



1-28-21



3.27.20

**HIKING BIG  
FALLS IN  
CHIPPEWA  
FALLS, WI.  
OCTOBER  
2020**



# Education Updates

## SPRING ANNUAL MEETING



Hello Fellow Wisconsin AST members,  
Here is our Agenda for our Spring WIAST meeting being held via Zoom on March 6, 2021.

7:50-8:00	Danielle Cook WIAST President	Welcome
8:00-8:55	Dr. Kevin Schultz	"Whole Body Wellness"
9:00-9:55	Dr. James McNeely	"Patient Safety"
10:00-10:55	Dr. Kris Ferguson	"Interventional Pain Management"
Break		
11:30-12:25	Michael Weis MS, CRNA, APRN	"Anesthesia review: Notes for the OR staff"
12:30-1:25	Danielle Cook MS CST	"Precepting ST Students"
1:30-2:25	Dr. David Meister	"Upper Extremity Procedures"

## AGENDA



Cost

\$30 for members / \$35 nonmembers

Students Free

Registration closes March 1<sup>st</sup>  
NO late registrations will be accepted.

Here is the link to register:  
<http://www.wiast.org/sp-event.html>

After registration you will receive the link to the Zoom meeting the day before via the email you have registered.

## National Conference 2021



### 51ST AST SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Join AST in Las Vegas in 2021 and experience the night lights while you hear from surgeons and researchers who are shaping the future of surgery.

Learn about the latest products, services and equipment for the operating room or talk to the nation's top surgical technology recruiters. Compare stories and strategies with certified surgical technologists from around the country.

Registration info and more can be found at <https://www.ast.org/AboutUs/Conference/>. More information to follow. Can't wait to see you in the Entertainment Capital of the World!!

Conference Hotel: Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas

### NEXT ISSUE

- Fall Meeting 2021
- 2021 Board of Directors
- National Conference 2021
- "Your Article Here!!!"

*Submit articles to  
wastnews@  
gmail.com*

# THANK YOU WISCONSIN!!!

The WI-AST Board of Directors would like to thank everyone for their patience and willingness to deploy to other departments during this pandemic. We thank educators for doing their best to educate our future surgical technologists and stepping out of their comfort zones with virtual learning. We hope everyone stays safe and healthy during these uncertain times. As hospitals start up with elective cases, we are among those who have been furloughed, on the front lines, deployed to other departments, and we empathize with our Wisconsin surgical technologists. Stay safe, healthy, and here's to 2021!

Danielle Cook, CST-President

Nicole Van Vonderen, CST-Vice-President

Susan McNeely, CST FAST-Secretary

Channa Liebl, CST-Treasurer

Karen Bisesi, CST, CSFA-Board Director

Ilea Neri Cornelius, CST-Board Director

Bridget Hanson, CST, CSFA-Board Director

Claire Parda, CST, BSHCA-Board Director

Kimberly Schauer, CST-Board Director

