



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY-ASSOCIATION OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGISTS

Winter/Spring 2022

Editor:

Claire Parda

### President's Update

NICOLE VAN VONDEREN, CST, FAST

Happy New Year Everyone! I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! With us starting a new year we should all reflect back on all things and set new goals.

These past 2 years we have struggled with COVID. Some of us had our surgeries cancelled and we were utilized in other areas. Some of us are experiencing this again now. It is difficult, we can do this working together.

Thank you all for your understanding and patience with our spring zoom meeting. We had some great presenters, and it was nice to see some familiar faces! Look for more information about our October 1st business meeting in Eau Claire, WI.

Our National Conference is scheduled June 2-4 in New Orleans. I hope everyone stays safe and stays healthy!

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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

CLAIRE PARDA, CST, BSHCA

WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR/NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Welcome to 2022! I hope the beginning of the year has brought some new insight into all our daily lives. I have been holding it together between traveling, family strains/priorities, and all the things in-between. I will say it was a joy to see so many friendly and familiar faces at our Spring Meeting. Thank you to everyone who attended!

I also want to thank everyone for supporting and voting for me last fall to return to this wonderful opportunity of Board of Directors. I will be continuing with the newsletter; and as always if you have ideas, thoughts, or information (article, news around WI, etc) to share please send it to wiaastnews@gmail.com.

## New Faces on the Board of Directors

### WELCOME BACK TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHRIS SUTTINGER, CST, CSFA**

**WI-AST SECRETARY**

I became a surgical technologist in April 1991 through the U.S. Army. Upon completing the program, from April, 1991 to June, 1992, I was stationed at the 43rd M.A.S.H in South Korea. Yes, the same M.A.S.H. that the television series was based off of. During that time, I spent 6 weeks in Thailand during Operation Cobra Gold. Because I had a security clearance, my primary job was the hospital commander's driver. I wound up traveling over most of the country which became a blessing in disguise. Delivering paperwork and medical test to 121st Evac hospital in Seoul almost every weekday.

From June 1992 to Sept. 1995, I was stationed in Ft. Bragg, N.C. on the 82nd Airborne Forward Area Surgical Team (F.A.S.T.). We were the U.S. Army's first F.A.S.T. plus we were deployable within 18 hours to anywhere in the world via parachute. The F.A.S.T. performed front line life or limb surgery. We were the soldiers first line surgical operation. The U.S. Army's F.A.S.T. has since replaced all M.A.S.H. units.

From Oct. 1995 to Sept. 1997 I was in Ft. Jackson, S. Carolina where I got to work in my first brick building. I did not take me long to learn to love buildings. I spent 12 months as the manages of their Central Materials Supply, (C.M.S.)

From Oct. 1997 to Jan. 2001 I was stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska. GODS country. I became the assistant manager of the Operation Room. I was in charge of purchasing for the Operating room and Anesthesia departments. I scrubbed every day, pulled call, plus worked as an Artic Survival Instructor from Oct. to March for three straight years.

I was medically retired from the military in Oct. 2001 where I moved to Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin and worked for Fort Health Care for 15 years. After that I worked for the Orthopedic Associates of Wisconsin (O.A.W.) for 9 months until they were partnered with Aurora. Afterwards, I became employed with Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin where I am currently working at the Froedtert Surgery Center.

**#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!

## New Faces on the Board of Directors



### BUNNY WOLOVER, CST

WIAST had an opportunity to sit down with the newest member of the Board of Directors, Bunny Wolover- a Level 3 CST from Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee.

We first met Bunny when she was sworn into office in October of 2021, but we wanted to get to know this heavily tattooed 38 year old with electric fuchsia hair, and a high voltage personality to match.

We heard her music blaring from OR 24 in Froedtert's Integrated Procedure Platform, and knew she couldn't be far behind, so we took the opportunity to catch her by the tail during a turnover.

WIAST: "So how long have you been here?"

BW: "It'll be six years in September"

WIAST: "What's your specialty?"

BW: "I started out as a Generalist and became a jack-of-all-trades, but a master of none... but I fell in love with Plastic Surgery and joined the pod about three years ago."

WIAST: "What's your favorite procedure in Plastic Surgery?"

BW: "ALL OF THEM. I love Plastic Surgery as a whole. Most people think it's all boobs, butts, and 'Dr.90210', but there is a lot more to Plastic Surgery than that, and I find the ability to reconstruct the body with its own tissues fascinating. I'm really into the micro portion of DIEP flaps, and for some reason I love fat grafting cases."

WIAST: "So what makes you famous around here? What are you known for?"

BW: "Quick wit, biting sarcasm, the uncanny ability to find the perfect music for every surgeon, every time. I've been told my rooms are always fun and have good energy, and allegedly I'm a very good preceptor because I know my service and love to teach. I'm the very first CST Peer Supporter in Froedtert's program history, am a part of the Froedtert Dignity and Respect Committee, and I was in charge of the Staff Development Committee portion of Shared Governance in our department. COVID kind of put the kibosh on those meetings, but I got a lot accomplished in a very short amount of time. Let's see, what else? I believe you should 'dress for the job you want' so I managed to sneak in one of my old pageant headshots for our staff directory, and it got printed, tiara and all. And last but not least, I am the only person who goes by 'Bunny' so that kind of makes me quickly recognizable in these parts."

## New Faces on the Board of Directors

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE:

WIAST: “Speaking of names, how did you become known as ‘Bunny’?”

BW: “Back when I first started and was actually a good employee, I came in for an inservice on my day off. I was running behind due to traffic, and didn’t have time to change, so I threw on a giant bunny suit and some shoe covers over my flipflops, and sprinted to our Hybrid room. Upon my arrival, I tripped over my own feet and slid through the open doors on my butt, BUT I WASN’T LATE! Two of our nurses, (Justin Schneider from Neuro and Derek Utzinger from Colorectal), started calling me Bunny because of it, and it stuck! I love it.”

WIAST: “So what IS your actual name?”

BW: “I’ve had surgeons that I have known and worked with for the past five years have absolutely no idea that my name is actually Tiffany. No one calls me by my government name, ever. If they do, I immediately think I’m in trouble for something!”

WIAST: “So what do you hope to accomplish while on the Board of Directors?”

BW: “I’d like to have a focus on recruitment and retention in our field. If I can help figure out a way to make CST’s more visible in the healthcare marketplace, I’ll know I have accomplished something awesome. We are the unsung heroes of the OR. We work hard and have skills that can only come with being a CST. We deserve equity and recognition for that.”

WIAST: “Last question- If you could give new techs one piece of advice, what would it be?”

BW: “I always tell clinical students and new techs the same three things: No one is ever a truly good tech until they’ve been scrubbing for at least two years, own your (expletive)- meaning if you make a mistake, own up to it, learn from it, and move forward, and when starting out as a CST, start out as a generalist. You will have the best possible exposure to just about every service your hospital has to offer, and the skills you learn in all of those services stay with you and have a way of being incredibly valuable when you least expect it. Once you get the hang of being a generalist, then you can choose a service that you prefer with the knowledge that you won’t grow tired or bored of it quickly. When I was in clinical, I thought my favorite service was going to be ENT, but that all changed once I became a generalist. I discovered that my wheelhouse was Trauma and Plastic Surgery, so I made the switch after my maternity leave with my daughter (Olive, 2 1/2) was over. I really feel it made me a better tech in the long run, and it stopped me from feeling burnt out. I love what I do, and I hope to continue doing this for a long time.”

And, almost right on cue, we heard a voice call out “Bunny! It’s all yours. We’re done.” and she was greeted with a hug from her “favorite Greg” in EVS. With a smile from behind her mask, she departed with her case cart and ventured into OR 24, ready to do what she loves all over again.

## New Faces on the Board of Directors



**ELECTION TIME!**  
**CORAL BRENNAN, CST**  
**WI-AST BOARD OF DIRECTOR**

Hi I'm Coral! I am new to the board, and have been a tech for 6 years now. I have done mostly OBGYN and general. I recently started at the VA hospital in Madison, where I scrub general, uro, hearts, vascular and ortho and have learned a ton! In my free time I like to hang out with my 2 mini's. We love to go camping and do anything outside! I am looking forward to this new experience and being on the Board of Directors!

## 2021-2022 Board of Directors

*President:*  
Nicole Van Vonderen, CST, FAST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

*Treasurer:*  
Ilea Cornelius, CST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

*Board Director:*  
Claire Parda, CST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

*Vice President:*  
Shanna Liebel, CST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

*Board Director:*  
Coral Brennan, CST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2022

*Board Director:*  
Terri Scheel, CST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

*Secretary:*  
Chris Suttinger, CST, CSFA  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2022

*Board Director:*  
Bridget Hanson, CST, CSFA  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

*Board Director:*  
Tiffany Wolover, CST  
Oct 2021 – Oct 2023

## Items for Sale



Socks: \$5

Decals:  
\$10



Plus sweatshirts and more!

## Board Member Blurbs



### A DYING PROFESSION?

**BRIDGET HANSON, CST, CSFA**  
**WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR**

At my hospital, about once a week at morning report someone will ask if there has been any applicants for the multiple surgical tech jobs that are currently posted. And every week the response by our team leaders is exactly the same “nope, nothing yet”.

This got me thinking. Why?!? Why are there no applicants for these openings? Is it because of COVID-19 burnout? Is it because some companies are making the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory? Is it because of the number of lucrative paying traveling positions available? Is it the schedule and/or the amount of call? Why?!?

I just don't have the answers as to why are these positions so hard to fill. So I started to ask around and do some of my own research. Not too surprisingly, I found it wasn't just my facility that was having a hard time filling surgical technologist positions. In fact, in the state of Wisconsin alone, of the 176 hospitals and 90 ambulatory surgery centers, almost every single one currently has a job posting for a surgical technologist. To add insult to injury, according to Indeed there are currently about 569 surgical technologist positions posted right now in the state of Wisconsin!!! You guys...there are 569 of us needed in our state right now!!!

Currently, there are only 10 accredited surgical technologist programs in the state of Wisconsin. With smaller graduating classes, that's definitely a huge gap to fill. So, what does that mean for our field in the future? What's going to happen when the aging population of surgical technologist that are currently nearing the end of their career's and actually do retire? How are hospitals/surgery centers/health care companies going to handle this disparity?

What's going to happen to us?

Are we a dying profession?

Sources:

[www.dhs.Wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.Wisconsin.gov)

[www.healthcaregraduate.com](http://www.healthcaregraduate.com)

[www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

# Board Member Blurbs



## WHAT WE DO WI-AST BOARD MEMBERS

We talked at the Spring Meeting about the different duties we have as members of the WI-AST Board of Directors. We wanted to share that with the everyone, in hopes it will spark the interest of those within our organization. Feel free to contact us with any questions you may have!!!

### President

- The President shall be the official representative of the State Assembly at all times and places. He/She shall be responsible in discussions with the State Assembly Board of Directors for the activities of the State Assembly and shall preside at all meetings of the State Assembly, the Annual July Business Meeting and Board of Directors (BOD).

### Vice-President

- The Vice-President shall, by active aid to the President, acquaint himself/herself with the duties and responsibilities of the presidency. Shall perform the duties of the President during his/her absence or inability to serve, and shall perform other duties as delegated to him/her by the BOD.

### Secretary

- The secretary shall maintain a record of the proceedings of the BOD and the Annual Spring/Fall Meetings and Elections. He/She shall forward to the President for distribution to the BOD and membership all minutes and correspondence related to the State Assembly business.

### Treasurer

- The treasurer will bear responsibility to assure that all Wisconsin State Assembly funds be collected, safeguarded, disbursed, and accounted for in a manner determined by the BOD pursuant to the Wisconsin State Assembly of AST, Inc. Policy Manual. He/She will deliver an annual report to the membership at the Annual Spring/Fall Business Meeting and Elections.

### Board of Director (x5)

- Read and review the State Assembly’s Bylaws annually and any other materials as directed by AST.
- Have the authority to transact business between meetings of the active members.
- Formulate policies and procedures to be included in the *State Assembly Policy Manual*. No state assembly policy or procedure may supersede or take precedence over the State Assembly Bylaws.
- Foster the growth and development of the State Assembly

## News Around Wisconsin



### PROHEALTH OFFERS ADVANCED TREATMENT FOR STRESS URINARY INCONTINENCE IN WOMEN

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

ProHealth Medical Group urogynecologists Sarit Aschkenazi, MD, and Katherine Stevenson, MD, performed the first Bulkamid urethral bulking injections for stress urinary incontinence at ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital on Sept. 9.

ProHealth Care is the first health care system in southeastern Wisconsin to offer Bulkamid injections as a treatment option for mild to moderate stress urinary incontinence in women. The water-based gel is used to help stop or significantly reduce accidental urination.

Stress urinary incontinence impacts more than 13 million adults in the United States, most of them in women. It can occur during coughing, laughing, exercise or straining of the pelvic muscles, as a result of childbirth, chronic straining, hysterectomy or aging. Minimally invasive urethral bulking injections have been widely available to treat the condition. They help relieve stress urinary incontinence and urethral insufficiency by restoring the natural closing of the urethra.

Bulkamid hydrogel was approved by the Federal Drug Administration in 2020 and has been in use in Europe and Britain for many years. It is made up of 97.5% water and 2.5% polyacrylamide, a polymer used to create a thick gel that adds volume to the urethral walls. There are many other applications for the hydrogel, including treating joint pain and reducing facial wrinkles.



Dr. Aschkenazi and Dr. Stevenson

“Injections are often a simple fix to an issue that many women experience but may not seek care for,” said Sarit Aschkenazi, MD, a urogynecologist with ProHealth Medical Group. “The Bulkamid hydrogel and delivery system provide an effective treatment option, which can be given in an office setting with minimal discomfort, representing an advancement in this treatment option.”

The Bulkamid procedure takes less than 15 minutes during an office visit. Topical lidocaine is used to alleviate discomfort, and most patients feel no more than a slight pinch. Results are immediate. Patients may experience mild urinary urgency for a day after their visit.

Additional treatment options offered by ProHealth’s Urogynecology team include pelvic floor therapy, continent pessaries, surgical stitches, or surgical placement of a midurethral sling below the urethra to support it and maintain a seal. Patients can be eligible for more than one type of treatment.

Bulkamid urethral bulking injections are offered at ProHealth Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital and ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital. Treatment for stress urinary incontinence is commonly covered by health insurance.

Retrieved from: ProNews September 27, 2021

For more information about treatment of incontinence in women, email Barb Olstad, manager of women’s health. To learn about Urogynecology, visit [ProHealthCare.org/Urogynecology](http://ProHealthCare.org/Urogynecology).



## One of the 10% - Dr. Ljiljana Bogunovic

**CLAIRE PARDA, CST, BSHCA**  
**WI-AST BOARD DIRECTOR/NEWSLETTER EDITOR**



Dr. Ljiljana (Lily) Bogunovic is an Orthopedic Surgeon from Mukwonago, WI who specializes in sports medicine at Orthopaedic Associates of Wisconsin in Pewaukee, WI. I had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Bogunovic while on assignment there this past year. Now, I haven't worked at many places in my traveling or surgical technologist career; but I do know that there are not but a few female orthopedic surgeons. I thought it would be an incredible experience to ask her how she came to be with us in Pewaukee.

Dr. Lily was born and raised in Mukwonago, WI and completed her Bachelor's at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. She continued onto Weill Cornell Medical College; with her residency at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. She then went to Chicago, IL and completed her Orthopaedic Sports Medicine Fellowship at Rush University. I hope to work with Dr. Bogunovic in the future at OAW's surgery center.

*Claire: Thank you for taking these few minutes to ask you about your path to becoming a surgeon. I watched your short video on the OAW website about female orthopedist's being only 10% and that really struck me. Is there one experience that stands out that made you who you are today?*

*“Orthopedics is a guys world—there’s only about 10-11% of surgeons who are women. So, there’s not a lot of us out there to begin with.”*

*Dr. Lily Bogunovic*

There's a preconception that for females to be orthopedic surgeons you need physical strength, won't have a family life, etc. That's not entirely true. Although you do need the skills and ability to manipulate joints, etc; you don't need to be a body builder to do what I do. The job is physical, but a lot of jobs are. I think one of the biggest things is that there aren't a lot of female mentors, and in a guys world that can be hard. Dr. Lily's grandfather was a physician, she spent a lot of time with him, so she had the experience or early exposure to medicine and what he did for a living. Her father and grandfather were goal oriented, which really paved a path for who she is today. They 100% supported her to be and do whatever; and were active participants in her life and goals.

*C: At what point did you know you wanted to specialize in orthopedics?*

In medical school, Dr. Lily talked about how she did research but more importantly with orthopedics there's immediate results. Patient's come in with a problem, and most of the time there's a solution. It's not always surgery, but through PT, etc. She also was aware and noticed that the other orthopedics' enjoyed their job.

Dr. Lily continues to talk about how she enjoys research in cartilage restoration, ways to preserve joints, and improving current outcomes of long researched procedures (i.e. longevity of total joint replacements). *C: What would you say to a young girl who wants to be an orthopedic surgeon?*

*C: What would you say to a young girl who wants to be an orthopedic surgeon?*

Being an orthopedic is a great job, it's satisfying, and fun. Sports medicine is a great career to get into, and you can still have a family and satisfying home life. Do not be intimidated, find a mentor who supports your drive.

## Education Updates



### FALL 2022 MEETING!

**SAVE THE DATE FOR SATURDAY OCTOBER 1,  
2022 IN EAU CLAIRE, WI!**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HOSTING A MEETING,  
PLEASE LET A BOARD MEMBER KNOW!**

**I AM A  
SURGICAL  
TECHNOLOGIST.**

You are a PPE perfectionist. A sterile expert. A safety advocate. You work tirelessly on behalf of the patient to ensure they receive the highest quality of surgical care.

It's time that everyone knows just how important a surgical technologist is to patient safety. Scan the QR code to learn more about The Essential Surgical Technologist campaign and how you can help spread the word. #EssentialSurgicalTechnologist #AegerPrimo



SCAN ME ast.org

## National Conference



### 52ND AST SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE JUNE 2-4, 2022 | NEW ORLEANS

Join us in the **Big Easy** in June as we connect you to the elements you need to enhance your career. From premier surgeons speaking about the latest techniques, social events to expand your professional network and opportunities to explore the latest surgical technology, AST's Surgical Technology Conference provides you the opportunity to connect, learn and grow.

In addition to earning **15 CEs**, you'll be able to take advantage of professional resources and connections during the Exhibit Hall as you meet with industry partners from around the country.

Are you a state assembly leader looking for some guidance or tips and tricks on how to make your meetings more successful? Make sure to register for the **State Assembly** Leadership Forum.

Are you a **student** or an **educator** hoping to bring your class to conference? Then you'll want to sign up for the AST Student Association Forum, where content has been customized specifically for those preparing to enter the profession.

And, of course, you won't want to miss our social events where you can catch up with long-time friends and celebrate with new ones. Start preparing now - masks and feathers are encouraged at our Opening Night Party!

All this and more at AST's 52nd Surgical Technology Conference - **the only event designed specifically for surgical technologists.**

[More Info and Registration](#)

#### NEXT ISSUE

- Fall Meeting 2022
- National Conference 2022 Recap
- "Your Article Here!!!"

Submit articles to [wastnews@gmail.com](mailto:wastnews@gmail.com)

# THANK YOU WISCONSIN!!!



# I AM A SURGICAL TECHNOLOGIST.

You are a PPE perfectionist. A sterile expert. A safety advocate. You work tirelessly on behalf of the patient to ensure they receive the highest quality of surgical care.

It's time that everyone knows just how important a surgical technologist is to patient safety. Scan the QR code to learn more about The Essential Surgical Technologist campaign and how you can help spread the word. #EssentialSurgicalTechnologist #AegerPrimo



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