EIGHTH ANNUAL ASA MEETING SCHEDULED FOR LAS VEGAS

ASA EVENTS AT 2006 CONFERENCE
A preconference workshop is scheduled for surgical assistants on Tuesday, May 30. A total of eight continuing education credits will be awarded. The members’ registration fee for the ASA Preconference Workshop is $165; nonmembers: $190.

PRECONFERENCE SURGICAL ASSISTANT WORKSHOP
8–11 am  Neurosurgery: Special Considerations
11 am–Noon  Chest Trauma
Noon–1 pm  Lunch
1–2 pm  Orthopedic Specialty Session
2–3 pm  Surgical Assistants: Third Party Billing and Other Issues
3–5 pm  Surgical Assisting: An Open Panel Forum

The Association of Surgical Assistants will also be the sponsor of several advanced practice workshops that will be presented on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at the AST 37th Annual National Conference. Each ASA-sponsored workshop will be designated by the ASA logo in the conference handbook and signage.

In Las Vegas, a reception is planned for surgical assistants on Monday, May 29 from 6–7 pm. Additional details will be provided in the conference registration guide that will be mailed in early 2006 or online at www.surgicalassistant.org.

ASA MEMBERSHIP CHANGES ANNOUNCED
ASA is pleased to announce that significant changes have recently been made to the membership structure of ASA, allowing any AST member who is a surgical assistant to become a member of the ASA group free of charge with no additional dues payment. This change is intended to foster new growth and participation from the surgical assisting community in the many activities and efforts sponsored by ASA.

If you are receiving this newsletter, you most likely are already a member of the Association of Surgical Assistants or have identified yourself as a surgical assistant. If you received this message from a friend, and you would like to join ASA, please call 800–637–7433, and choose option “3” at the prompt. You will be connected with an AST representative who can enroll you as a member in AST, or who can sign you up as a member of ASA, a free benefit to AST members.

ACCORDING TO AST RECORDS, the number of affiliated surgical assistants is 2,320; the National Surgical Assistant Association reports 805 active surgical assistants and the American Board of Surgical Assistants shows 948 active surgical assistants. Almost 4,000 surgical assistants are now practicing, exclusive of RN, PA and MD surgical assistants.

Inside this issue, see how so many other surgical assistants are helping advance the practice.
WHAT’S HAPPENING IN SURGICAL ASSISTING EDUCATION

SECOND EDITION OF CORE CURRICULUM FOR SURGICAL ASSISTING IN DEVELOPMENT

Recently Kevin Frey, CST, AST director of continuing education, met with the Subcommittee on Accreditation of Surgical Assisting (SASA) to discuss the revision of the Core Curriculum for Surgical Assisting. The curriculum was first published by AST in 1993 and updated in 2002.

Five schools now offer CAAHEP-accredited surgical assisting programs and others are undergoing the accreditation process. In order to meet the needs of future schools as well as the established programs, it is an optimal time to revisit the curriculum and publish a second edition.

A team of surgical assistants has been organized to develop the new edition. The group will revise the Core Curriculum, review changes and work until a final manuscript is produced. They have already drafted a table of contents that reflects an exciting and positive direction that is being taken for the revision. The Core Curriculum for Surgical Assisting will have a new look and reflect the advanced education of the surgical assistant. Tentatively, the date for completing the manuscript is December 2005. Publication is anticipated for late spring 2006.

ASA members who have assisted in revising the Core Curriculum for Surgical Assisting include: Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA; chair, AST Education and Professional Standards Committee; chair, SASA; surgical assistant program director, Madisonville Community Technical College, Madisonville, Kentucky. Diane Gerardot, CST, CFA; member, SASA; surgical technology program director, St Louis Community College, St Louis, Missouri. Chris Keegan, CST; vice president, Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist; surgical assistant program director (in development), Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana. Stacey May, CST; member, SASA; surgical assistant program director, South Plains College, Lubbock, Texas. Kathy Mendoza, PhD; member, SASA. Karen Powell, RN; former director, surgical assistant program, Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, Virginia. Steve Valand, PhD; member, SASA; vice president, academic affairs, Greenville Technical College, Greenville, South Carolina. Jeff Ware, CST, CFA; Board of Directors, Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology.

FIRST EDITION OF SURGICAL ASSISTANT CERTIFYING EXAM STUDY GUIDE

AST has begun developing the long awaited Surgical Assistant Certifying Exam Study Guide. The schedule for this publication correlates with the revision of the Core Curriculum for Surgical Assisting to ensure that the information and questions in the study guide will reflect the information in the Core Curriculum. Questions in a practice exam will be proportional to the content outline of the Job Analysis for Certified Surgical Technologists and Certified First Assistants published in 2002 by the Liaison Council on Certification for Surgical Technologists (LCC-ST). The survey analyzes the tasks performed in the field, as well as their fre-
quency. The information derived from the survey, which forms the basis for questions on the exam, ensures that the content areas covered by the exam are current.

Many surgical assistant program directors have been contributing multiple-choice questions for inclusion in the study guide. Tentatively, the date for completing the manuscript for the study guide is December 2005. Publication is anticipated to occur in late spring 2006.

**SURGICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EXAMINATION BEGINS**

The Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology (ARC-ST) implemented outcomes-based accreditation for CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology programs in 2002. One of the outcomes' indicators that was established is an exam that provides additional feedback demonstrating that the students are being taught and are learning the information contained in the *Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology*.

ARC-ST approached AST to develop and administer the exam referred to as the Program Assessment Examination—Surgical Technology (PAE-ST). The questions on the exam are written and reviewed by the AST PAE Committee. AST contracts with a testing company to perform statistical analyses of exam questions in order to validate the questions and test formats.

ARC-ST is moving forward and considering the implementation of outcomes-based accreditation for surgical assisting programs. Again, one of the outcomes' indicators is an exam that AST will be administering, the Program Assessment Examination—Surgical Assisting (PAE-SA). The PAE-ST and PAE-SA each have 150 multiple-choice questions that reflect the various content areas of their respective core curricula. The current version of the PAE-SA reflects the current edition of the *Core Curriculum for Surgical Assisting*, but upon completion of the second edition, a new test for the PAE-SA will be developed. Programs are required to report the overall test results for each graduating class on the ARC-ST annual report.

The PAE-SA Committee includes Anthony Adams, CST; Connie Bell, CST; Angie Burton, CST; Clifford Smith, RN, CNOR; Lisa Szewcyczky, CST; Grant Wilson, CST; and Roy Zacharias, CST. Tammy Mangold, CST, CFA, served as a consultant to the PAE-SA committee. The PAE-SA exam will be administered for the first time to CAAHEP-accredited surgical assisting programs in 2006 and will only be offered through web-based testing.

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**UPDATE ON THE AST STANDARDS OF PRACTICE (SOP)**

In November 2004, AST organized the first meeting of the Standards of Practice (SOP) panel with the mission of beginning the process of researching and authoring a comprehensive set of SOPs. The panel developed a draft of the table of contents and formulated the following goal statements:

- Create SOPs that provide guidance to the surgical technologist practitioner, student, educators, and health care environment.
- Promote and contribute to the enhancement of quality care for the surgical patient.
- Inform the public of the standards of care they are entitled to receive from the surgical technologist.

A unique aspect of the SOP will be the inclusion of competency statements for several of the standards. The competency statements will range from a general nature, such as statements addressing the profession on an overall basis, to specific statements directly related to the surgical technologist or surgical assistant.

Members of the SOP panel are Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA, Jinnie Cook, CST, CFA, Tracey Ross, CST, and Jamey Watson, CST.

Cook and Watson were recently appointed to the AST Education and Professional Standards Committee and join current committee members, Bidwell and Ross. Consequently, the SOP panel has dissolved, and responsibility for the publishing of the Standards of Practice is now the responsibility of the Education and Professional Standards Committee.

During a meeting at the 2005 National Conference, the AST Board of Directors reviewed and approved the AST *Guideline Statement for Safe Medication Practice in the Perioperative Area*. Additional position statements, guidelines statements and Standards of Practice will be submitted to the Board of Directors for review. The Education and Professional Standards Committee projects that publication of the book should be completed in less than two years.
ASA, working under the auspices of AST, and together with state-level surgical assisting groups, such as the Illinois Surgical Assistants Association and national groups, including the National Surgical Assistants Association, continues to have an active and successful government affairs program.

While we are currently in the summer off-season legislatively, the work in states that are carrying over is, of course, ongoing, and we are preparing for the spring 2006 sessions.

**ACTIVE LEGISLATION 2005-2006**
- Florida—Surgical Assistant and Surgical Technologist Registration proposed for 2006
- Georgia—Surgical Assistant Licensure, ongoing effort now in its third year
- Illinois—Surgical Assistant Registration now being issued to applicants
- Indiana—Gearing up for a surgical technologist regulatory effort
- Michigan—Surgical Technologist and Surgical Assistant Delegation Regulation, ongoing
- Missouri—Surgical Assistant Registration and Title Protection proposed for 2006
- Oklahoma—Surgical Assistant and Surgical Technologist Registration proposed for 2006
- Oregon—Surgical Assistant Licensure or Registration effort now in its fourth year
- Several other states are in the beginning stages or exploring legislation.

**RECENT LEGISLATION PASSED**
- Kentucky Surgical Assistant Licensure—2004
- Surgical Assistant Reimbursement—2001
- Illinois Surgical Assistant Registration and Title Protection—2003
- Surgical Assistant Reimbursement—2003
- Texas Surgical Assistant Licensure—2001

All of ASA’s successful legislative efforts result from the development of a small group of volunteers willing to provide the grassroots support necessary for the passage of a bill into law. In Texas, AST worked with Wendy Evans-Conca on early efforts in 1997 and 1999, before a small group, including Ken Campbell, CFA, and Terry Morris, CSA, established the Texas Society of Surgical Assistants in 1999. The group included both AST/ASA members and members of the National Surgical Assistants Association (NSAA). Their work with this group, supported by ASA, which jointly funded the lobbying efforts of Bob Kamm, lead to the successful passage of a surgical assistant licensure bill in 2001, the only law of its kind currently on the books in the US.

Similarly, a group of surgical assistants in Illinois began to work in the late 1990s (supported by ASA) on several different legislative efforts. The group, which included Fernando Garza, SA-C, Anton Sahattichiev, CSA, Luis Aragon, CSA, Fred Fisher, CST, CFA, CSA, and many others worked, with the support of lobbyist Margaret Vaughnn (funded by the members and by ASA), on an effort that included several different iterations of legislation. The effort succeeded with the passage of a surgical assistant registration and title protection act and a surgical assistant reimbursement act in 2003.

In the late 1990s in Kentucky, a small group of surgical assistants, including Rodney Henderson, CSA, Derrick Renton, CSA, Annette Coxon, CST, CFA, together with many others, worked on an effort to secure third-party reimbursement. The group partnered directly with AST/ASA on the effort, which was successful in 2001. This was followed by a renewed effort with much larger grassroots support for surgical assistant registration in that state. AST/ASA supported the effort by funding lobbyist Kim Nelson at that time, and Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA, who directs the CAAHEP-accredited surgical assisting program in that state coordinated the work. That effort was finally successful in 2004, and the group continues to work on rules and educational aspects of the law that they would like to see improved.

Additionally, AST/ASA have retained the services of lobbyist Bill Finerfrock and Capitol Associates for the last 10 years, and his primary focus has been on Medicare reimbursement issues for the surgical assistant, although he has also served a monitoring function as well. The organization has also retained the services of Washington lobbyist Lee Bechtel, who monitors all legislative and regula-
tory changes at the state level and analyzes proposals that might affect the surgical assisting profession.

Obviously, this is a very active schedule, and does not take into account the ongoing legislative efforts to improve or protect legislation already passed, or to protect surgical assistants from legislation that would negatively affect the profession.

Our efforts always focus on patient care and safety, and to that end, we generally have concentrated on licensure or registration legislation that requires graduation from a CAAHEP-accredited school of surgical assisting and subsequent completion (and holding) of a national certification through the LCC-ST or NSAA. Additionally, as mentioned above, we have successfully pursued third-party insurance reimbursement in several states.

If your state is not yet active, or you would like to find out more, contact ASA at 303-325-2500.

GEORGIA SURGICAL ASSISTANTS CONTINUE LICENSURE EFFORT

ASA continues to work with, and support, the Georgia Society of Surgical Assistants in their licensure effort, now in its third year. ASA has supported GSSA by funding lobbyist William Wingate. The bill has been introduced to the Georgia legislature, but stalled last year in their Government Operations Committee, which failed to meet in the 2005 session. The bill will again be put forth for review by this committee in the 2006 legislative session.

The bill provides for the licensing of all surgical assistants in Georgia, defining a scope of practice and creating an advisory committee under the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners. The proposed new law would grandfather currently practicing surgical assistants but provide for a certain date in the future after which new surgical assistants would have to follow a state-prescribed route of entry into the profession which would include completion of a formal education program. Additional-

ly, surgical assistants entering the profession in the future would, under the proposed law, need to hold and maintain certification by either the Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist (LCC-ST) through their Certified First Assistant credential or hold the Certified Surgical Assistant credential offered by the National Surgical Assistants Association (NSAA).

ASA believes the proposal would provide for strong entry-level standards in Georgia, and the state would, by passing this law, begin to define such important areas as scope of practice for what is already a fairly large profession that has been practicing in the state for many years. Additionally, the new law would begin to hold surgical assistants accountable to the state, by allowing the Board to discipline surgical assistants, limit their license, or in some circumstances, provide for license revocation. In support of this bill, ASA has partnered with the National Surgical Assistants Association to work toward quick passage. Dan Baird, CSA, president of NSAA, has assisted with strategy and planning, and his organization has been supportive throughout the process.

A small group, including Georgia Carter, CST, CSA, (also an AST Board member), Ann Shaker, representing the Georgia Society of Surgical Assistants, AST/ASA Government Affairs Director Ben Price, and lobbyist William Wingate—met Abel Ortiz, Health Policy Advisor to Governor Sunny Perdue, on September 21 in Atlanta. The bill was received positively by Ortiz, who was presented with an outline of our basic strategy and goals. Ortiz questioned whether the goals of the organization could be met by a simple change to Georgia hospital licensing policy, requiring all hospitals to hire only properly credentialed surgical assistants. The group's response was affirmative: the goal of certification as a condition of employment could be met, but that such a change in hospital policy would only cover that part, and would not cover accountability or scope of practice. Ortiz has pledged to get back to the Georgia group with a recommendation in the coming weeks.

Surgical assistants interested in participating in the legislative process in Georgia, which will begin again in the spring of 2006, should contact Georgia Carter at wvu70@aol.com.

ACCIDENT TO LCC-ST, 154 candidates took the Certified First Assistant exam in 2004, and 73 passed. In 2005, 175 candidates took the Certified First Assistant exam, and 91 passed.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Along with our practitioner-focused newsletter, ASA members receive access to www.surgicalassistant.org, an informative and soon-to-be-redesigned web site that includes an online discussion, important legislative alerts, and opportunities for surgical assistants to participate in a vibrant and growing community of surgical assistants nationwide.

ASA will be implementing a new member card system. New members will be able to immediately print a temporary card from our web site at www.surgicalassistant.org while their membership is activated. Each member will subsequently receive a more permanent ASA membership card. This system will be up and running in the very near future, so stay tuned. If you are already a member, you will receive your card soon.

These changes have been initiated to encourage greater participation in ASA. Everyone has something to offer, such as writing talents (we need newsletter authors); communication skills for grass-roots campaigning for our many legislative efforts; or just a commitment to participate in one of our annual national meetings. Every bit helps, and everyone counts! Our goal is to provide the highest quality patient care by growing our profession and supporting the highest standards in education and certification for surgical assistants in our country. But, we can’t do it without you.

Go to our web site at www.surgicalassistant.org and click the “participate” button or call us at 303-325-2502, and let us know how you would like to get involved.

CFAS REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS AT ALL LEVELS OF THE PROFESSION.

AST is fortunate to have so many committed Certified First Assistants who are ensuring patient care and advancing the profession in a variety of areas, including elected positions, committee service, state assemblies, test development and legislative involvement.

These individuals represent the broadest interests of the profession. In addition, the practitioners who have earned the CFA credential represent your interests as well and are readily available to fellow CFAs to discuss your concerns in surgical assisting. These are just the CFA members of these boards and committees.

AST Board of Directors
James Bell, CST, CFA; Georgia Carter, CST, CFA, LPN; Tammy Mangold, CST, CFA; and Margaret Rodriguez, CST, CFA.

AST Bylaws, Resolutions, and Parliamentary Procedures Committee
Mary Freidel, CST, CFA.

AST Education and Professional Standards Committee
Jeff Bidwell, CST, CFA and Jinnie Cook, CST, CFA.

AST Government and Public Affairs Committee
Debbie Turner, CST, CFA; Reba Revan, CST, CFA; Rebecca Picknik, CST, CFA; and Donna Henderson, CST, CFA.

AST Program Assessment Exam Committee
Tammy Mangold, CST, CFA (CFA consultant)

Accreditation Review Committee on Education for the Surgical Technologist Board of Directors
Jeff Ware, CST, CFA.

Subcommittee on Accreditation for Surgical Assisting
Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA and Diane Gerardot, CST, CFA.

Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist Board of Directors
Mike Delano, CST, CFA; Susan Fisher, CST, CFA; and Mary Kennedy, CST, CFA.

LCC-AST CFA Exam Review Committee
Mitch Moffat, CST, CFA; Cheryl Simmons, CST, CFA; and Mary Sutton, CST, CFA.

ASA is proud to acknowledge the earlier contributions of surgical assistants to the advancement of the profession. Please visit www.surgicalassistant.org to see more of the people who volunteered their time and efforts to promote this specialty. Click on “About Us” to see a complete list of all those practitioners who have made such a commitment on behalf of surgical assisting.

ASA AND STATE SURGICAL ASSISTANT ORGANIZATIONS ADDRESS CONCERNS

ASA benefits by partnering with several state surgical assistant organizations on issues that affect the specialty. These organizations are valuable partners in our efforts to gain more recognition for surgical assisting and respond to the challenges presented at the various state levels. If ASA members in your state are interested in forming a surgical assistants’
organization, these states can provide useful information.

Colorado Surgical Assistants Association
Don Lough, DLoughSA1@aol.com

Florida Surgical Assistants Association
Kathy Zorn, kjaw1@aol.com

Georgia Society of Surgical Assistants
Ann Shaker, 678-566-2783

Illinois Surgical Assistants Association
www.ilsaa.net/index.shtml
Margaret Vaughnn, 217-793-8635

Texas Society of Surgical Assistants
Ken Campbell, 806-441-5274

Virginia Association of Surgical Assistants
The Surgical Assistant Program, Office of Health Professions, Lewis Hall, Norfolk, VA 23507

ASA NEW SURGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FORMING

The AST Board of Directors is considering the appointment of a Surgical Assistants Advisory Committee. Committee members will assist in the planning and execution of the annual ASA meeting, provide content for the ASA Newsletter and ASA website, monitoring the ASA discussion board, and assist with the building and functioning of this subsidiary group of AST.

Writers who would like to contribute clinical articles to the ASA Newsletter should consult the author guidelines on www.surgicalassistant.org. A one-page article only requires 500 words.

In the past, the Surgical Assistants Advisory Committee has been active in planning and speaking at the various annual ASA meetings, participating in and planning lobby days in Washington, DC, and authoring the quarterly newsletter.

As we move forward as an organization, these volunteers will be increasingly called upon to participate in legislative efforts, assist with membership drives and membership retention, and help to build a stronger network of surgical assistants nationwide. Members of the committee may be asked from time to time to travel to national meetings at their own expense.

Previous members of the Surgical Assistant Advisory Committee from 1998-2003 are: James Bell, CST, CFA; Cathy Clark, CST, CFA; Shontel Coffey, CST, CFA; Elizabeth Kirchner, CST, CFA; Don Lough, CST, CFA; Kim Noyes, CST, CFA; Duane Rosse, CST, CFA; Greg Salmon, CST, CFA; Cheryl Simmons, CST, CFA; Karyn Songer, CST; Mary Sutton, CST, CFA; Stacey Walker, CST, CFA; and Jeff Ware, CST, CFA.

If you are interested in serving on the Surgical Assistants Advisory Committee, please go to www.surgicalassistant.org, click the “participate” button, and fill out the required form stating your interest.

LCC-ST ELIMINATES CE CATEGORIES

The LCC-ST Board of Directors has voted to waive the continuing education (CE) certification renewal requirements that have previously specified that a particular minimum or maximum number of credits be earned in AST’s presently defined categories 1, 2, and/or 3. In other words, at the time of renewal, the LCC-ST will only determine if the candidate has earned the total number of credits needed without respect to whether or not credits were earned in categories 1, 2, or 3.

HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS SCHEDULED AT AST NATIONAL CONFERENCE

AST will be offering two wound closure workshops, a venipuncture workshop and a casting workshop as part of the preconference education events at the AST National Conference that will be held in Las Vegas.

Bruce Gruenewald, CST, CFA, aided the efforts in organizing the casting workshop, and surgeons from his clinic are supporting AST by donating the casting supplies.

Instructors for the hands-on workshops include: Jeff Anderson, CST; Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA; Jinnie Cook, CST, CFA; Fred Fisher, CST, CFA; Bruce Gruenewald, CST, CFA; Joe Harris, CST; and Greg Salmon, CST, CFA.

HANDS-ON SPECIALTY WORKSHOP IN WASHINGTON, DC

AST is sponsoring a hands-on workshop to be held at the Jurys Hotel in Washington, DC, November 19 – 20. The first day of educational events features a choice of two tracks. The first track is a wound closure workshop, and the second track is a venipuncture workshop. On the second day, attendees will learn techniques in interpreting EKGs. These workshops are focused on providing advanced skills to the surgical technologist and surgical assistant.

Instructors include: Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA; Jinnie Cook, CST, CFA; and Jeff Ware, CST, CFA.
CURRENT CAAHEP-ACCREDITED SURGICAL ASSISTING PROGRAMS ARE TRAINING FUTURE PRACTITIONERS

Eastern Virginia Medical School
Office of Admissions
Surgical Assistant Program
700 W Olney Rd, Norfolk, VA 23507
757-446-6100, 757-446-8951 (fax)
www.evms.edu
Robert Clinton Crews, MPH
Program Director
surgasst@evms.edu

Madisonville Community College
Surgical First Assistant Program
Health Campus, 750 N Laffoon St
Madisonville, KY 42431
270-824-7552, 270-824-8642 (fax)
www.madcc.kctcs.edu
Jeff Bidwell, CST, CSA, MA
Program Director
jeff.bidwell@kctcs.edu

Meridian Institute of Surgical Assisting
PO Box 758, Joelton, TN 37080
615-299-1416, 615-299-1418 (fax)
meridianinst@aol.com
Denis Stover, CST, SA-C
Program Director

South Plains College
1401 S College Ave, Levelland, TX 79336
806-885-3048, ext 4642
Stacey May, CST
Surgical Assisting Director
smay@southplainscollege.edu

William Beaumont Hospital
3601 W Thirteen Mile Rd
Royal Oak, MI 48073
248-898-7685, 248-898-0112 (fax)
www.beaumonthospitals.com
Rebecca Pieknik, CST, CSA
Program Coordinator
rpieknik@beaumonthospitals.com

JOIN THE ASA FACULTY TEAM Practitioners willing to share their expertise are needed to present at the ASA Annual Meeting and advanced practice level workshops at conference. ASA is also searching for authors for short clinical articles for the ASA quarterly newsletter. Author guidelines are available on www.surgicalassistant.org. Please contact Ben Price, bprice@ast.org.