

TOXTALK



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



TATE YEATMAN, M.S., F-ABFT
SOFT PRESIDENT

Summer is upon us and time to shake off the doldrums of the winter. Kids are out of school and time for families to enjoy each other's company, rest, and recharge while enjoying the great outdoors. I can't believe that we are half-way through the year, but here we are. Meeting hosts Justin and Sarah, Beth, CC, and the entire planning committee have been hard at work since the beginning of the year to plan an outstanding meeting for St. Louis. Registration and the hotel block open on June 26th so mark it on your calendars! Make sure you check out Justin and Sarah's updates below. In addition, make sure to check out the announcement of the **President's Skull and Crossbones Ball scheduled for Halloween night!**

The voices of membership have

been heard. Future meetings will not be scheduled during the week of Halloween so this will be your last chance to celebrate with your SOFT family. I hope to see you at the *Skull and Crossbones Ball wearing your boldest Halloween themed formal attire ready to Eat, Drink, and Be Scary!*

SOFT Committees have been active over the first part of the year with several of them holding well attended open meetings. Committee chairs and vice-chairs also participated in our first Committee Activity Update Meeting of the year where they shared their activities with the membership. Several other open committee meetings are scheduled over the remainder of the year, and I encourage you to attend these meetings to learn more about their wonderful work. Hopefully, you will be inspired to apply to become a member of one of these committees when applications are sent out toward the end of the year.

The Board has been active over the last several months working with committees on revisions to the Committee Handbooks and Policies and Procedures. The Board has also started work on revisions to the Code of Conduct policy with our Accountability Officer Paula Brantner. The revised policy will include clear conduct expectations for our membership;

TOXTALK

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

directions for reporting of infractions; and a fair, unbiased procedure for investigating and resolving such infractions. Although such a policy is necessary, I know that I speak for the Board when I say that the hope is this policy will be seldom used, if ever.

Tate Yeatman

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time"

– John Lubbock, The Use of Life.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK



BETH OLSON
SOFT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we approach the halfway point of 2024, I wanted to take this opportunity to give an update on SOFT's committees. After years of work on the restructuring of SOFT committees, we have finally reached the point where the membership has been diversified, and, where other than some specialized committees, members serve on only one committee. **There are currently 179 of 1,593 SOFT members on committees. This is more than 10% of our membership actively serving!**

In our first five open committee meetings of the year, we had 242 SOFT members in attendance. We also had 135 SOFT members view the Committee Activity Update Meeting live or recorded. As always, I encourage everyone to attend these meetings, if possible, to learn about all the great work SOFT's committees are doing to contribute to SOFT and to the field of forensic toxicology.

Of course, the second half of the year is always marked by Annual Meeting preparation. I am so excited for this year's meeting because the St. Louis Union Station Hotel is a perfect fit for

SOFT! With the size of the property and the number of sleeping rooms, SOFT will take over most of hotel during the meeting, so the experience should feel more "SOFT like" than times we've been at a larger property/convention center. That being said, there are so many dining and attraction options at the hotel, that attendees may never feel the need to leave! In addition to nine eateries, the hotel contains the St. Louis Aquarium, and an indoor ropes course and mirror maze. Outside, there is a lake, ferris wheel, midway area, mini golf, a carousel. The lake features a fire and light show 10 times throughout the day. The 3D light show each evening in the Grand Hall is not to be missed! Room reservations will open on June 26.

While planning is ongoing for SOFT 2024 St. Louis, we are also at work on future meetings. We are in the early planning stages for **SOFT 2025 in Portland, OR**. Hosts Sara Short and Amy Miles, along with myself, will travel to Portland in a couple of weeks to tour venues, select a location for the Wednesday night event, and begin working with our representatives at the hotels and convention center.

SOFT 2026 Chicago will be a joint meeting with TIAFT. Hosts Luke Rodda and Andre Sukta have planning well underway. Their creative ideas are going to make the joint meeting an experience to remember!

Providence, RI, was recently selected as the location for SOFT 2027.

I traveled on a site inspection in March, and was pleased with the location, with dozens of restaurants in walking distance, as well as the convenience to the airport, the Amtrak station, and the bus station (offering service to/from New York City, Boston/Logan Airport, Hartford, and various other cities in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut).

As we work on securing future locations, I wanted to mention what a tricky position SOFT is in with selecting meeting sites. Our meeting is too large for most hotels that have self-contained conference space. However, we are not large enough to take over most convention centers. This means that cities/properties try to fit us in around larger group and, as you can imagine, this is tricky logistically and oftentimes they aren't willing to provide us with a proposal if there isn't that "perfect" group for us to fit around. In fact, we only received one viable proposal for our 2027 and 2028 meetings.

The goal of the Meeting Resource Committee is to identify sites for the 2028 and 2029 meetings by the end of 2024, and begin work on securing sites for 2030 and 2031 in 2025. Stay tuned for more information about upcoming meeting locations in the coming months!

Beth Olson

SOFT OPEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

We are thrilled to extend an invitation for you to join us at SOFT's 2024 Open Committee Meetings. These meetings serve as a platform for our members to gain valuable insights into the exciting developments and initiatives underway within our various committees.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

SCHEDULE

June 12: Oral Fluid Committee
June 26: Postmortem Committee
July 9: Culture, Values and Diversity Committee
July 16: Young Forensic Toxicologists
July 31: Publications Committee

SOFT TREASURER'S REPORT



JERI ROPERO-MILLER
SOFT TREASURER

It is that time of year again to "show you the money"! It has been a full year since I first addressed the SOFT membership as your new Treasurer. Since this time the SOFT leadership and the Finance Committee continue to be very active in serving its membership to include fiduciary oversight and financial management. In other words, our "books are balanced and remain strongly in the black". We applaud and thank all members and nonmembers alike who make timely payments for meeting registrations and membership dues, serve on committees, plan the meetings, contribute to other activities that necessitate mindfulness of costs and proper documentation of financial transactions as it "takes a village" to run a non-profit organization with financial acuity and strength. But a special gratitude goes to **Beth Olson** and **CC Watson** for their continued diligence and dedication to keeping the SOFT finances sound.

As the Finance Committee Chair, I would like to recognize the rest of the committee and thank them for their service to SOFT: **Tate Yeatman, SOFT President and Past Treasurer, Robert Johnson, Denice Teem, MaryLynn Heffington, Chris Heartsill, and Steven Fleming.**

In 2023 notable fiscal accomplishments included: 1) establishment of SOFT activities that allow us to take advantage of our 501c3 tax status; 2) first year of full operation with our new investment policy and investment firm, Fiducient Advisors; 3) completion of quarterly, policy-driven internal financial reviews and audits with no findings identified; and 4) development of 2024 budget which is provided in this TOXTALK Treasurer's Report.

A few ongoing activities that will contribute to SOFT finances include establishing a public-facing donation portal on the new SOFT website; reviewing the investment policy to document needed revisions; and continuing to encourage membership to contribute to and replenish the SOFT ERA/YSMA Fund to its highest level yet. **Remember, not only are you helping our future scientists experience the greatness of SOFT, but you may do this with a tax deduction (seek tax advisor for more information).** Donations to fund SOFT's Educational Research Award and Young Scientist Meeting Award can be accessed to the right.

SOFT remains in a strong financial position. The SOFT board unanimously approved the 2024 budget at the interim board meeting in February and as of April 24, 2024, SOFT's budget totaled \$1,544,585 in revenue. Please take a moment to review the budget vs. actuals since 2022 and the approved budget for 2024. Please contact me to discuss further.

Jeri R. Miller

SOFT FINANCE COMMITTEE

Jeri Roper-Miller, Chair
Tate Yeatman, Past Treasurer
Robert Johnson
Denice Teem
MaryLynn Heffington
Chris Heartsill
Steven Fleming

2023 FISCAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Establishment of SOFT activities that allow us to take advantage of our 501c3 tax status
2. First year of full operation with our new investment policy and investment firm, Fiducient Advisors
3. Completion of quarterly, policy-driven internal financial reviews and audits with no findings identified
4. Development of 2024 budget which is provided in this TOXTALK Treasurer's Report

[DONATE TODAY!](#)

SOFT TREASURER'S REPORT

Account	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Revenue				
Membership	\$173,539	\$183,865	\$196,835	\$218,150
Annual Meeting	\$1,073,054	\$1,290,565	\$1,136,926	\$1,267,413
Advertising	\$0	\$0	\$600	\$0
Continuing Education	\$20,155	\$30,000	\$8,220	\$10,000
Contributions	\$4,615	\$3,500	\$4,172	\$5,000
Interest	\$2,154	\$500	\$429	\$400
Rebates/Credits	\$2,183	\$2,183	\$2,631	\$2,500
Grants	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total Revenue	\$1,280,700	\$1,515,613	\$1,354,813	\$1,508,463
Expense				
Payroll	\$150,794	\$165,468	\$162,582	\$170,497
Occupancy	\$4,273	\$4,000	\$3,754	\$6,632
Office	\$686	\$1,350	\$1,884	\$2,350
Administrative Expenses	\$89,410	\$94,258	\$84,850	\$90,147
Insurance	\$9,824	\$25,000	\$20,638	\$24,766
Annual Meeting	\$788,542	\$1,179,105	\$1,010,182	\$1,076,165
Board and Committees	\$20,763	\$75,000	\$33,410	\$68,000
Legal and Professional Services	\$13,417	\$7,950	\$22,346	\$33,692
Membership	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
Awards	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Meals and Entertainment	\$47	\$500	\$72	\$250
Appreciation Gifts	\$855	\$1,500	\$663	\$1,250
Bank Charges	\$7,411	\$7,500	\$7,493	\$8,500
Total Expense	\$1,108,022	\$1,586,631	\$1,372,874	\$1,507,248
Net Income/(Loss)	\$172,678	(\$71,018)	(\$18,061)	\$1,215

SOFT MEMBERSHIP

Unlock an unparalleled realm of professional growth with the Society of Forensic Toxicologists. We extend a warm invitation to individuals seeking excellence in their forensic science careers. Take your career to new heights by exploring the diverse membership options we offer:

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP: Elevate your academic journey with SOFT for just \$40! Join as a student member and embrace a wealth of educational resources at discounted rates.

ASSOCIATE & FULL MEMBERSHIPS: Unleash the full potential of your professional growth for \$150. Associates and Full members gain exclusive access to a spectrum of benefits designed to advance their careers. Full members having voting rights at the Annual SOFT Business Meeting.

EMERITUS & RETIRED MEMBERSHIPS: For those with a legacy of contributions, the application and renewal fee are complimentary. For just \$40, subscribe to the Journal of Analytical Toxicology (JAT) to stay abreast of cutting-edge industry advancements.

MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION: Are you ready to promote your membership? Apply today for free!

Ready to take the leap towards professional distinction? Delve into the detailed information by clicking on the options to the right and uncover the enriching world of opportunities that SOFT has meticulously curated for your success. Your professional journey begins with SOFT!

[BENEFITS](#)

[REQUIREMENTS](#)

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[APPLY](#)



ERA/YSMA DONOR WALL

PATRON: \$250+

MATTHEW SLAWSON
TATE YEATMAN

THANK YOU!

We are deeply grateful for your generous support of the **Educational Research Award (ERA)** and the **Young Scientist Meeting Award (YSMA)**. Your contributions play a crucial role in advancing educational research and fostering the next generation of scientists. Thanks to your support, we can continue to recognize and nurture outstanding talent and innovation in our field. **Thank you for your unwavering commitment and generosity!**

FUNDER: \$100 - \$249

TIMOTHY APPEL	MICHELLE PEACE
TYSON BAIRD	JERI ROPERO-MILLER
VANESSA BEALL	KARL SCHEIDWEILER
MARISOL CASTANETO	EUGENE SCHWILKE
AYAKO CHAN-HOSOKAWA	KAREN SCOTT
ANTHONY COSTANTINO	ERIN SPARGO
DEMI GARVIN	PETER STOUT
CHRIS HEARTSILL	DIANA WILKINS
DAYONG LEE	

ERA/YSMA AWARDS

These prestigious awards, given out annually, play a crucial role in advancing educational research and fostering the next generation of scientists.

The ERA recognizes exceptional contributions to educational research, promoting innovative ideas that enhance our understanding and practices. The YSMA supports young scientists, providing them with opportunities to present their groundbreaking research and engage with leading experts in their fields.

SOFT is honored to give out these prestigious awards each year. Both awards reflect our commitment to fostering excellence in research and supporting the continuous advancement of knowledge and innovation in the fields of education and science. Through these awards, we strive to recognize and nurture outstanding talent and dedication, contributing to the betterment of society as a whole.

Stay tuned for Issue 3 of ToxTalk, where we will feature the 2024 Award Recipients!

CONTRIBUTOR: \$31 - \$50

DAN ANDERSON	NIKOLAS LEMOS
WILLIAM ANDERSON	AMY MILES
LUCINDA BERNARDINO	MADELINE MONTGOMERY
SIMON ELLIOTT	HALEY MULDER
ANN MARIE GORDON	ADAM NEGRUSZ
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MATTHEW LAMBING	JAVIER VELASCO

SUPPORTER: \$1 - \$30

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KARI MIDTHUN	

BECOME A DONOR!



ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE - ST. LOUIS, MO

The SOFT annual meeting is less than five months away! We recently had an awesome site visit to St. Louis with SOFT's Executive Director, Beth Olson, Operations Manager, CC Watson, and AV Coordinator Frank Wallace. Once again, we were impressed with the meeting venue – Union Station Hotel. We're confident that this historic facility will contribute to the success of the meeting.

The meeting program is taking shape! **Workshop Coordinators, Alex Krotulski and Vanessa Meneses**, have succeeded in securing a diverse range of workshops. This year's format will showcase exclusively half-day workshops, offering attendees numerous options and increased flexibility on both Monday and Tuesday.

Scientific Program Coordinators, Sara Dempsey and Matt Juhascik, are currently organizing this year's scientific program. We're excited to announce a trial of shorter presentation times; presentations are now set at 12 minutes. This adjustment will enable us to accommodate a greater number of oral presentations at the meeting.

JAT Special Issue Editor, Erin Karschner, is hard at work crafting an issue brimming with outstanding scientific content.

YFT Chair, Erin Strickland, along with her committee, is diligently preparing for a successful Sunday evening event. They are also preparing the Student Enrichment Program (SEP).

Karla Moore Memorial Fun Run/Walk Coordinators, Kimberly Karin and Madison Beffa, have already mapped out an exciting route. Run participants will have the opportunity to pass by the iconic St. Louis landmark, the Old Courthouse, and circle around the majestic St. Louis Arch.

The offsite social event will take place at the **Anheuser-Busch St. Louis Brewery on Wednesday evening**, offering both indoor and outdoor areas with ample space. "The Brewery" is so much more than a brewery, it is a beautiful historic institution.

Attendees will be able to take a tour of the grounds, including the Clydesdale stables (built in the historic Brew-house in 1889), the beechwood aging cellars, and Old Schoolhouse Museum. But that's not all – there will also be a Clydesdale experience! Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and greet (and get a selfie) with one of the legendary Budweiser Clydesdales. We will also enjoy live music from an iconic St. Louis jazz band and taste a fantastic menu that reflects the vibrant flavors of St. Louis. There is no other brewery experience in the world like Anheuser-Busch!

While we are planning a fantastic program and looking forward to all the opportunities to learn and network, we hope you will have some time to explore St. Louis. St. Louis is an affordable family friendly town. Near the hotel and meeting space, there are many activities including the aquarium, ropes course, putt-putt, carnival games, and a Ferris wheel. The St. Louis Cardinals Busch Stadium and Ballpark village are within walking distance. Also nearby are the St. Louis City Major League Soccer facility. History enthusiasts might enjoy the Old Courthouse, the Central Library, the Old Post Office, and the Soldier's Memorial. Restaurants, bars, pubs, and local breweries can all be found downtown. And of course, no visit to St. Louis is complete without a visit to the Arch!

Registration & Hotel Room Block will open on June 26, keep an eye out for email updates and check the SOFT website for the latest information.

Volunteers are always needed so feel free to contact the Hosts or Volunteer Coordinators. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to the hosts or other members of the planning committee.

Hope to see you in St Louis,
Justin and Sarah



OCTOBER 27 – NOVEMBER 1, 2024
UNION STATION HOTEL

PLANNING COMMITTEE



CO-HOST
JUSTIN POKLIS



CO-HOST
SARAH RILEY

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM COORDINATORS
SARA DEMPSEY AND MATT JUHASCIK

WORKSHOP COORDINATORS
ALEX KROTULSKI AND VANESSA MENESES

FOOD & BEVERAGE COORDINATORS
ANN MARIE GORDON, DENICE TEEM, AND
DELISA DOWNEY

MOBILE APPLICATION COORDINATORS
RUSTY LEWIS, ROXANE RITTER, AND
SUNDAY HICKERSON

AV COORDINATOR
FRANK WALLACE

YOUNG FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS
ERIN STRICKLAND

JAT SPECIAL ISSUE EDITOR
ERIN KARSCHNER

VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS
JORDAN CASPER AND EMILY SMELSER

FUN RUN COORDINATOR
MADISON BEFFA AND KIMBERLY KARIN

ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR
TONYA MITCHELL

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE - ST. LOUIS, MO

REGISTRATION



REGISTRATION RATE INCREASES:
Early Bird Rate: June 26 - September 11
Late Rate: Begins September 12
Onsite Rate: Begins October 10
Registration Opens June 26!

Discover the latest in Forensic Toxicology at SOFT 2024 in St. Louis, MO! Registration opens on June 26, offering various registration options to suit your needs. Dive into cutting-edge research and network with experts in the field. Please see below for SOFT 2024 Registration Rates and Inclusions. Payment for SOFT 2024 is due by October 4. We hope you will join us for an enriching experience at SOFT 2024!

2024 RATES & INCLUSIONS

	Early Bird (June 26 - Sep 11)	Late (Begins Sept 12)	Onsite (Begins Oct 10)
Member	\$599	\$799	\$899
Student	\$299	\$499	\$699
Non-member	\$799	\$999	\$1,099
Exhibitor	\$600	\$600	\$600
Guest	\$500	\$500	\$500
Workshop (Member)	\$150	\$175	\$200
Workshop (Non- Member)	\$200	\$225	\$250
Workshop Only	(workshop fee only)	(workshop fee only)	(workshop fee only)
Fun Run	\$30 Donation	\$30 Donation	\$30 Donation

	WS Participants Only Breakfasts & Breaks (M/T)	Breakfasts, Lunch & Refreshment Breaks (W/TH/F)	Networking Events (T/W/TH)	Scientific Sessions (W/TH/F)	Digital Program Book	SOFT Bag	SOFT Giveaways
Member	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Non-member	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Workshop only	X						
Guest		X	X	X	X	X	X
Exhibitor		X	X	X	X	X	X



REGISTRATION OPENS JUNE 26!



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ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE - ST. LOUIS, MO

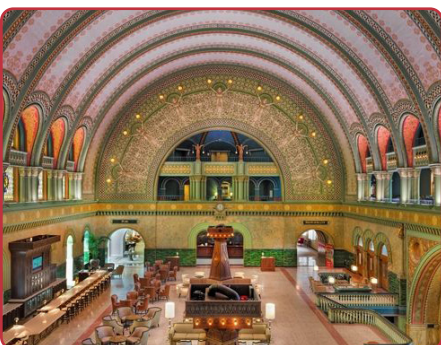
HOTEL

Union Station Hotel
1820 Market Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63103
Room Rate: \$189

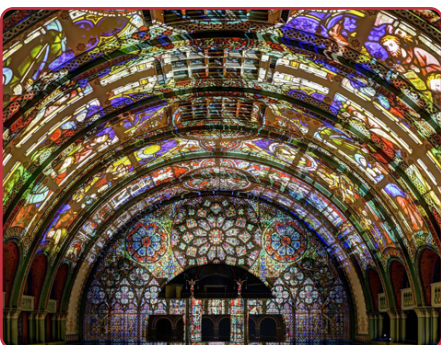
ROOM BLOCK OPENS JUNE 26!!!



SOFT 2024 will take place at the iconic Union Station Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, a unique venue that seamlessly blends historic charm with modern amenities. Originally **built in 1894**, Union Station's architecture stands out throughout the hotel, from its towering archways to its intricate details.

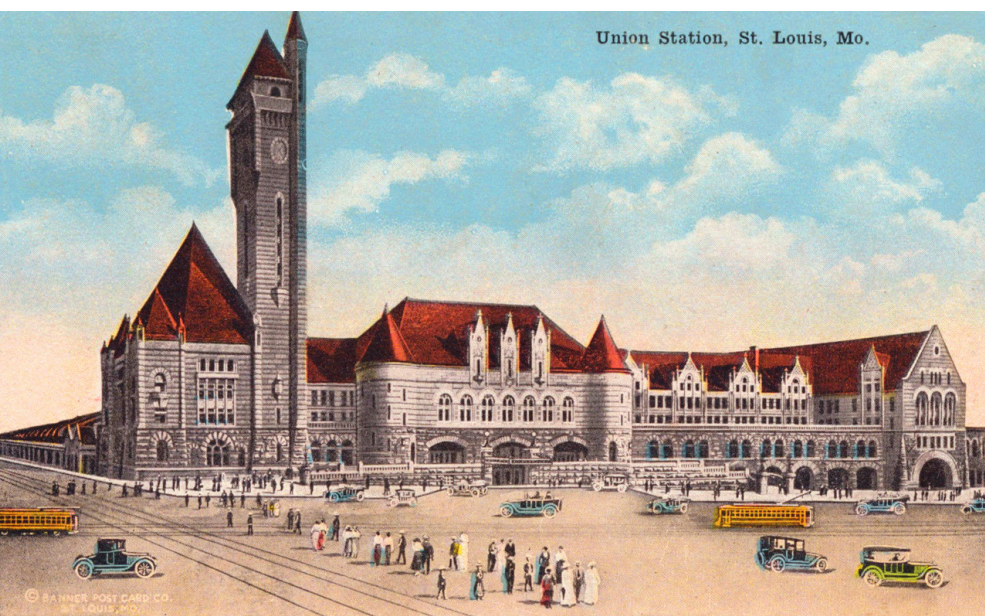


The gem of the property is the **Grand Hall Lounge**, featuring **breathtaking 65-foot vaulted ceilings**, a **stylish bar**, and **nearly 9,000 square feet of space** ideal for networking and socializing.



As a special treat, attendees can experience a **captivating 3D light show that illuminates the Grand Hall**, transforming the classic architecture into a vibrant canvas of color and animation. This remarkable venue offers an unforgettable setting for SOFT 2024!

**CHECK THE SOFT WEBSITE
AND YOUR EMAIL ON JUNE
26 FOR THE SOFT 2024
ROOM BLOCK LINK!**



Union Station, St. Louis, Mo.



**OCTOBER 27 – NOVEMBER 1, 2024
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ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE - ST. LOUIS, MO

HOTEL HIGHLIGHTS

GRAND HALL LOUNGE 3D LIGHT SHOW

Experience the color and wonder of a stunning 3D light show when you stay at the St. Louis Union Station Hotel. Created by Technomedia, an award winning collaborator with entertainment company Cirque du Soleil, the 3D light show is the first of its kind in the US. Hotel guests of all ages will enjoy flying birds, an aquarium scene and other vibrant animations projected across the historic lobby in 30 video vignettes set to music. Shows run on the hour from 5pm-10pm daily!

THE ST. LOUIS WHEEL

The St. Louis Wheel™ is a 200-foot high observation wheel with 42 fully enclosed, climate controlled gondolas that seat up to eight riders each. Wheel passengers will take three to four rotations high over the St. Louis skyline. The St. Louis Wheel™ is a new iconic attraction on the St. Louis skyline and is operational every day of the year.

ST. LOUIS AQUARIUM

Visit the 120,000-square-foot aquarium that is located on property! Packed to the gills with over 13,000 animals across 44 exhibits. Guests can explore aquatic life from sea to shining sea, without venturing out of the 63103 ZIP code.

FIRE AND LIGHT SHOW

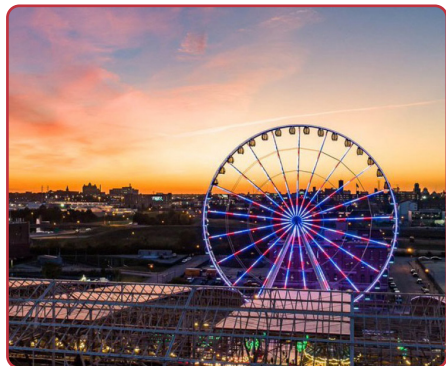
Watch a breathtaking fire, water, and light music show features a 100 foot long waterfall with 50 nozzles that spray water 40 feet down into the lake. Lights will turn the water into a variety of glowing colors accented by the icicle lights decorating the surrounding trees. Get ready to see and feel the explosive power of the lake's fire feature during the show. Eight lotus shaped pods on the lake shoot flames 25 feet into the air. The dancing lights, water and fire features are set to music to create a sights and sound spectacular that is sure to impress!

ROPES COURSE

Test your agility, strength and nerves on our indoor Ropes Course overlooking historic Union Station. More than 90,000-cubic feet of climbing space and 30 obstacles!

MINI GOLF

Visit the beautifully-landscaped 18-hole course, which features a variety of interactive elements, a fun yet challenging design and is ADA-accessible.



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SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

Abstract submissions for SOFT 2024 closed on June 6. Scientific Program Coordinators, Sara Dempsey and Matt Juhascik will begin their review and final decisions will be sent on August 5. **Thank you to all that submitted an abstract for SOFT 2024!**

As a reminder, there are new platform presentation guidelines for SOFT 2024. This year, we have revamped our Platform Presentation guidelines to enhance the quality of discourse and

maximize engagement. **Platform presenters will be allocated 12 minutes, with 10 minutes dedicated to the presentation and an additional 2 minutes for questions.** We encourage speakers to streamline introductory content and prioritize the presentation of results for a more impactful delivery.

Please Contact the [Scientific Program Coordinators, Sara Dempsey and Matt Juhascik](#) with any questions. We look forward to seeing you in St. Louis!

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

SOFT extends its heartfelt appreciation to Workshop Program Coordinators, Alex Krotulski and Vanessa Meneses, for their invaluable contributions in crafting an exceptional workshop program for SOFT 2024.

SOFT 2024 workshops are offered on **Monday, October 28 and Tuesday, October 29 from 8:00 am - 5:30 pm.** The program will focus on half day workshops with some offered in two parts (parts I & II).

Below you will find a concise overview of the Workshop Program. Further details, including abstracts and supplementary workshop information will be posted to the [Workshop Program Webpage](#).

2024 WORKSHOP RATES

	Early Bird (June 26 - Sep 11)	Late (Begins Sept 12)	Onsite (Begins Oct 10)
Workshop (Member)	\$150	\$175	\$200
Workshop (Non- Member)	\$200	\$225	\$250
Workshop Only	(workshop fee only)	(workshop fee only)	(workshop fee only)



Alex Krotulski



Vanessa Meneses

SOFT 2024 Workshop Program Coordinators
Alex Krotulski & Vanessa Meneses
[Contact the Coordinators HERE!](#)



OCTOBER 27 – NOVEMBER 1, 2024
UNION STATION HOTEL

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ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE - ST. LOUIS, MO

2024 WORKSHOP PROGRAM

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28
MORNING WORKSHOPS, 8:00 AM -12:00 PM

Workshop 1: Psychedelics: Promising Treatment Applications and Concerns for Impaired Driving

Chairs: Kristin Kahl & Michael Wagner
Audience: Basic

Workshop 2: More Likely Than Not: Navigating Civil Cases in Forensic Toxicology

Chairs: Madeleine Swortwood & Curt Harper
Audience: Basic

Workshop 3: Forensic Aspects of Doping

Chairs: Pascal Kintz & Anne-Laure Pélissier
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 4: Chasing Impairment – Advancement in Technologies or a Paradigm Shift? – You be the Judge!

Chairs: Suman Rana & Jasmine Maxwell
Audience: Intermediate

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28
AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS, 1:30-5:30 PM

Workshop 5: ASB Standards: Overview, Implementation, and Updates

Chairs: Robert Johnson & Kei Osawa
Audience: Basic

Workshop 6: Breath Alcohol Testing Program Operation and Management

Chairs: Nita Bolz & Jasmine Maxwell
Audience: Basic

Workshop 7: Are we Entering the Post-fentanyl Era – Or Have We Already Entered It?

Chairs: Marthe Vandeputte & Sara Walton
Audience: Intermediate

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29
MORNING WORKSHOPS, 8:00 AM -12:00 PM

Workshop 8: Laboratory Development: Where to Start and How to Continually Improve

Chairs: Dani Mata & Luke Rodda
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 9: Recent Research on the Semi-synthetic Cannabinoids Δ^8 -THC, THCO, and HHC

Chairs: Szabolcs Sofalvi & Svante Vikingsson
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 10: Presenting Oral Fluid Drug Testing Results in Court

Chairs: Amanda Mohr & Nathalie Desrosiers
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 11: The ABCs of ABFT Certification – Part I: General Information

Chairs: Marissa Finkelstein & Erika Phung
Audience: Basic

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29
AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS, 1:30 - 5:30 PM

Workshop 12: The ABCs of ABFT Certification – Part II: Study Topics in Forensic Toxicology

Chairs: Marissa Finkelstein & Erika Phung
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 13: How Am I Suppose To Analyze That?! A Master Class in Sample Preparation

Chairs: Victor Vandell & Sarah Bartock
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 14: Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS): Streamlining Forensic Toxicology Workflows

Chairs: Hunter Fleming & Allie Mannella
Audience: Intermediate

Workshop 15: Come as You are: Building a Diverse and Accessible Organization

Chairs: Oliver Grundmann & Samantha Tolliver
Audience: Basic



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SOFT 2024 EXHIBITORS & SPONSORS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed exhibitors and sponsors whose consistent support and dedication have been instrumental in making our event a resounding success! Through your partnership and collaboration, we have collectively fostered an environment of learning, networking, and growth. We deeply appreciate your investment in our community and look forward to continuing this fruitful relationship in the future. **Thank you for being invaluable contributors to our event's success!**

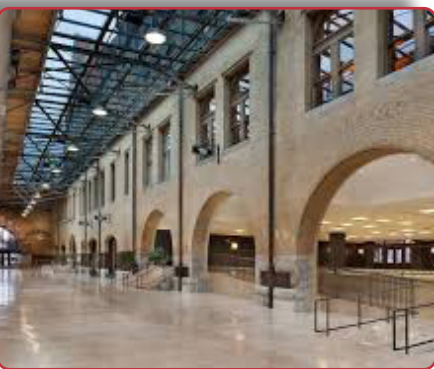
THE MIDWAY WEST EXHIBIT HALL



Experience the elegance of the SOFT 2024 Exhibit Hall, set within the captivating ambiance of **The Midway West Exhibit Hall at Union Station Hotel**. Originally a bustling train stop, this historic space has been artfully transformed into a stunning venue for trade shows.



We extend a warm invitation to join us for the Welcome Reception on Tuesday, October 29th, marking the commencement of our event. This evening promises to be a highlight, drawing together attendees and exhibitors. The Exhibit Hall will continue to welcome guests on Wednesday and Thursday, offering ample opportunities for exploration and engagement.



Exciting developments are underway as sponsors and exhibitors are currently being assigned to booths. **Stay tuned for the unveiling of our Exhibit Hall map, which will soon be available on our website.** This comprehensive guide will navigate you through the bustling aisles, ensuring you make the most of your visit.

There are still booths available for purchase! Don't miss the chance to connect with a diverse audience of professionals in the field of forensic toxicology. Visit our [Exhibitor Information Page](#) for more details on securing your spot in the Exhibit Hall.

BECOME A SOFT 2024 EXHIBITOR!



SOFT 2024 EXHIBITION RATES:

- 10'x10' Booth Space - \$2,500 (Includes one badge)
- Exhibitor Registration Badge - \$600
- Drink Tokens (Customized set of 10 tokens) - \$150
- Abstract/Program Book Full Page Advertisement - \$650
- Single page advertisement OR item in complimentary bags - \$750
- Tier I Sponsorship - \$15,500
- Tier II Sponsorship - \$7,500
- Tier III Sponsorship - \$3,500
- Tier IV Sponsorship - \$1,500
- Tier V Sponsorship - \$1,000
- Karla Moore Fun Run Sponsorship - \$250



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TIER III SPONSOR: \$3,500

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TIER IV SPONSOR: \$1,500

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*Thank you for
your support of
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KARLA MOORE FUN RUN/WALK



Join us for the Karla Moore Fun Run/Walk bright and early on Thursday, October 31 at 6:30 am! Participants may run or walk the route. Volunteers with signage will be along the route to help direct you. Prizes are not provided for winners but you get bragging rights! **Your \$30 donation includes a Fun Run shirt & lapel pin. Proceeds are donated to the American Cancer Society in Dr. Moore's memory.**

FUN RUN/WALK HISTORY

The original Tox 'N Purge run was created by Dr. Karla Moore in 1997 for the Salt Lake City meeting. In addition to her involvement in the field of toxicology and participation in SOFT, she was an officer in the United States Air

Force. After her passing in 2008, the run was memorialized in her honor. The proceeds from the run are donated to the American Cancer Society in Dr. Moore's memory and expenses for the event are supported by our SOFT exhibitors.

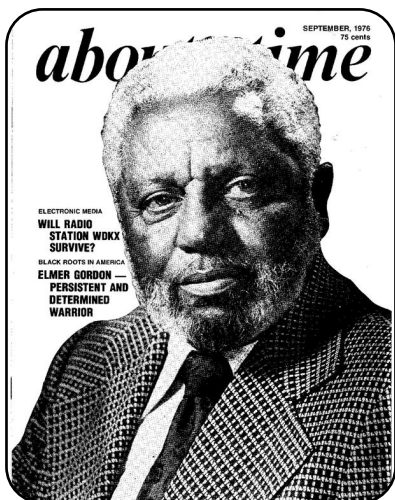
KARLA MOORE FUN RUN/WALK SPONSORSHIP - \$250

Sponsor the Fun Run/Walk! Sponsorship of the fun run is available to all exhibitors. The sponsor's company logo will be placed on the back of the Fun Run shirts worn by the participants. Special recognition of the sponsors will appear on displays in the General Session, the SOFT Abstract/Program Book, and the mobile application. Attendees may participate in the Fun Run by making a \$30 donation, the proceeds are donated to the American Cancer Society in Dr. Moore's memory.

[BECOME A KARLA MOORE FUN RUN/WALK SPONSOR!](#)



ELMER GORDON FORUM & SOFTOPICS



**ELMER GORDON
SEPTEMBER 1976**

SOFTopics and the Elmer Gordon Forum are teaming up again this year at the 2024 SOFT Meeting in St. Louis, MO! Join us on **Tuesday, October 29** after walking through the Welcome Reception and meet some of the people you've gotten to know over our virtual discussions. Check the SOFT Mobile Application or program for exact time and location.

Similar to previous years, don't be shy in asking your fellow toxicologists in the room your burning questions or letting us all know about some interesting observations from your laboratory. This year, we are also taking any suggestions for topics or questions you'd like to submit for discussion during the forum before the meeting. Please send them to Dani Mata, Vanessa Meneses or Alanna de Korompay. We look forward to seeing you in St. Louis or at our virtual events before!



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YOU'RE INVITED TO PRESIDENT YEATMAN'S

SKULL & CROSSBONES BALL

LIVE BAND & DANCING
FOOD & DRINKS
DRESS TO IMPRESS!



OCTOBER 31

UNION STATION HOTEL • 7:00 PM



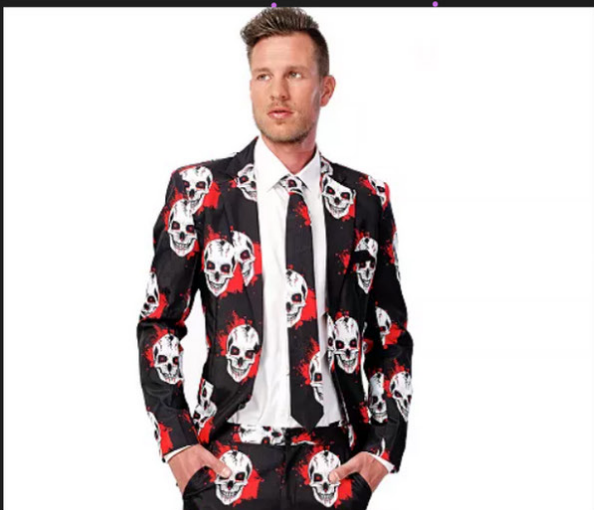
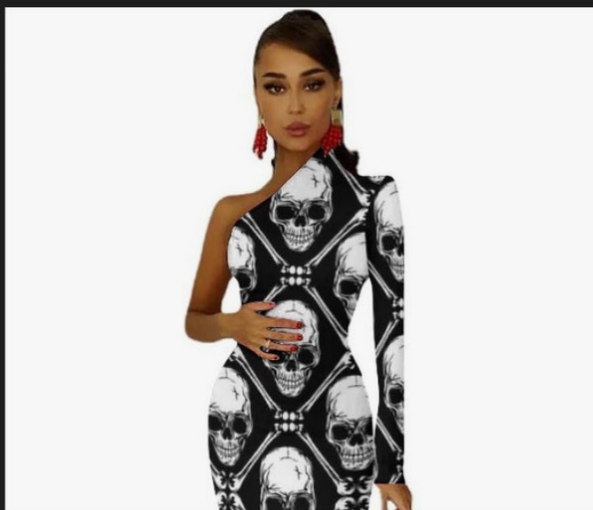
EAT, DRINK AND BE SCARY!



WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE SKULL & CROSSBONES BALL

★ SUGGESTED ATTIRE ★

We encourage SOFT attendees to **DRESS TO IMPRESS** as we celebrate together! Cocktail attire is suggested with a playful emphasis on skulls, bones, and Halloween. Examples are included below:



EAT, DRINK AND BE SCARY!

YOUNG FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS (YFT)

Hello Fellow Forensic Toxicologists!

The Young Forensic Toxicologist (YFT) committee is actively preparing for the annual meeting in St. Louis, MO this October! No specific updates at this time, however, we are looking forward to another panel led discussion at the YFT Symposium on Sunday, October 27 from 5-9 pm and hope to see many of you there!

The YFT committee strives to be a resource for young forensic toxicologists, either those still in school and wanting to get involved in SOFT or those who are early in their careers and want to further their involvement within SOFT. As such, committee members get asked many questions throughout the year. As a resource to the YFT community, we will start responding to common questions in ToxTalk so the information is available to everyone. If anyone has questions they would like answered, please submit them to yft@soft-tox.org and we will be happy to answer them.

Question Theme: Career Development

What are qualifications for a method development/validation coordinator?

Method development and validation is a critical portion of a forensic toxicology laboratory especially with the proliferation of novel psychoactive substances or needing to update an existing method (e.g., add new analytes, moving from GC to LC) laboratories are always undergoing some level of method development and validation. If you are interested in a position that does this task for a laboratory, here would be potential starting qualifications:

- Higher level of instrumentation experience. This is obtained through any troubleshooting needs in the laboratory and being involved in any of your laboratory's current validations.
- Understanding of method development and validation requirements. If possible, attend any method development and validation workshops offered by SOFT. Remain up to date on recent publications related to method development and validation (e.g., validation papers in peer-reviewed journal articles, ASB Standards)
- Higher education (PhD level). Some laboratories may require a PhD for this position.

I'm interested in becoming a supervisor. How can I prepare myself for this role? How can I get supervisory experience? What are potential interview questions?

The job duties of a supervisor in a toxicology laboratory vary from laboratory to laboratory. At its core, a supervisor should be prepared to oversee the day-to-day operations of the laboratory, be able to address issues regarding operation or casework flow, and be prepared to address personnel, either in a laboratory wide meeting or on an individual basis. Supervisors are also involved in personnel management that involves the hiring process and performance evaluations. Some parts you can prepare for, others you can't until you gain that experience.

Here are tips for preparing for this role:

- Be interested in all aspects of the laboratory. If there is an opportunity to take on additional responsibilities, volunteer.
- Be an independent thinker. If you have a problem with a case or an instrument, come up with a solution and then present it to your supervisor rather than asking them how to resolve it.
- Work on time management skills. As a supervisor, you will be required to complete multiple tasks a day and get assigned tasks that need to be completed as soon as possible. Develop skills to prioritize your assignments and your day.
- Attend leadership training if able. Some organizations offer this for employee growth. If your organization doesn't have leadership training available, there are courses and webinars available through a variety of sources online.

Potential Interview Questions:

1. Will you describe some specific components of your education, training, and experience that will make you successful in this position?



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Committee Members oversee the planning and coordination of the YFT Symposium, Professional Development Fair, Student Enrichment Program, and the Leo Dal Cortivo Awards at the annual SOFT meeting

YOUNG FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS (YFT)

2. You oversee [insert activity here]. Describe the various components of that activity from start to finish. How would you communicate the plan to staff? What if a staff member told you they were too busy to participate?
3. Give us an example of how you have reached out for additional responsibility.
4. Give us an example of an analytical problem that you have solved in the laboratory.
5. How does technical review and/or administrative review of casework improve the quality of our work?
6. If a conflict arose between two colleagues, what steps would you take to address the issue and resolve the conflict? And other similar personnel situation questions.
7. If seeking a promotion within a lab, how would you handle transitioning from being a colleague/peer to being a supervisor?

How do you stay motivated in a lab with limited room for growth?

Focus on improving and growing yourself so that when an opportunity arises, internally or externally, you are prepared to take the next step. Get familiar with the requirements and job duties of the higher positions in your laboratory and focus on building those skills (e.g., soft skills, laboratory skills, education, etc.). Try to attend training to develop your toxicology knowledge as well as leadership skills, so when opportunities for growth come up, you set yourself apart from other candidates.

Offer to learn other analysis methods or instrumentation that your lab is currently using. Let your supervisor know you are interested in helping out more around the lab and volunteer for projects, as this will give you a variety of tasks to do on a daily basis. Get more involved in professional organizations outside of your laboratory. Always keep it interesting!

How can I promote myself within the field and better network to find opportunities for career advancement?

You attend meetings, attend continuing education webinars, and now you want to be the one giving the presentations, but it seems daunting. It's not! The SOFT community is very welcoming with many opportunities to get involved, whether through committees or volunteering at the conference, that provide opportunities to meet people! Ask questions when you have the opportunity, even if it is finding the individual to talk after their presentation/workshop. If you attend the SOFT conference with a co-worker or supervisor, ask them to introduce you to people.

The biggest opportunity is by attending the annual meeting and, if possible, present at the meeting. This can be a poster on a recent validation, a presentation on a series of cases, or, if you are a student, an update on the research you are doing.

If funding is limited and making it to the annual meeting is hard, try attending a meeting for a local organization.

- Southwestern Association of Toxicologists (SAT): represents laboratories in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas, Arkansas, Colorado, and Louisiana (<https://saot.wildapricot.org/>)
- Midwest Association for Toxicology and Therapeutic Drug Monitoring (MATT): represents laboratories in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin (<https://www.midwesttox.org/>)
- California Association of Toxicologists (CAT) (<https://cal-tox.org/>)
- Midwest Association of Forensic Scientists (MAFS) (<https://www.mafs.net/>)

If travel is limited, look out for virtual/remote opportunities through email:

- Volunteer to be an abstract reviewer for the annual meeting
- Participate in the SOFT Mentoring Program
- Apply to be on a SOFT committee
- Attend open committee meetings
- Attend SOFT topics



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Committee Members oversee the planning and coordination of the YFT Symposium, Professional Development Fair, Student Enrichment Program, and the Leo Dal Cortivo Awards at the annual SOFT meeting

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Explore available continuing education opportunities in SOFT's Learning Center! Unlock a wealth of knowledge through our live and on-demand webinars, specially crafted for both SOFT members and non-members. Enhance your expertise in diverse topics ranging from postmortem toxicology challenges to the latest advancements in instrumentation for NPS detection. **Webinars are offered at an exclusive rate of \$25 for SOFT Members and \$35 for non-members.**

The Continuing Education Committee plays a crucial role in overseeing SOFT's continuing education program. This dedicated committee is focused on organizing educational opportunities outside of the annual meeting, ensuring that all educational offerings meet high standards of quality and relevance to the field of forensic toxicology. They are responsible for curating content, selecting qualified presenters, and maintaining a robust schedule of events that cater to the evolving needs of professionals in the industry.

By participating in SOFT's continuing education program, members and non-members alike can stay abreast of the latest developments, techniques, and best practices in forensic toxicology. **Take advantage of these opportunities to advance your skills, broaden your understanding, and contribute to the excellence in forensic science.**

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

[Roadside and Laboratory Oral Fluid Drug Testing](#)
[Pros and Cons of Various Instrumentation Types for NPS Detection](#)
[Navigating the Current Challenges in Postmortem Toxicology](#)

SOFT MEMBERS ONLY:

[Current State of Culture, Values and Diversity in SOFT](#)
[Legacy Luncheon Series](#)
[JAT Editor's Choice Article](#)

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[SOFT LEARNING CENTER](#)

WEBINAR: THE WHAT, WHERE AND HOW OF NOVEL PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES
THURSDAY, JUNE 27 AT 10:00 AM PST/1:00PM EST - \$25 MEMBERS, \$35 NON-MEMBERS

Please join us for an upcoming webinar sponsored by SOFT's Novel Psychoactive Substances Committee!

CHAIRS:

Celia Modell

Forensic Toxicologist

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

Lana Goodson

Drug ID Technical Lead/Criminalistics Manager

Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center

ABSTRACT:

As our understanding of novel psychoactive substances (NPS) grows within the forensic toxicology field, there is a persistent quest for answers regarding their origins, pathways of exposure, and their appearance in the street or marketplace. This workshop aims to address these inquiries by drawing upon insights from experts, covering a

spectrum of NPS-related topics leading up to their detection in toxicology casework. By offering valuable information and fostering dialogue, the workshop endeavors to enhance awareness and understanding of the emergence, distribution, and characteristics of novel psychoactive substances in contemporary society.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Identifying the sources of NPS entering the market.
2. Explore the physical and chemical characteristics and their synthesis methods.
3. Acquire skills in recognizing key indicators of trending NPS in casework.
4. Investigate patterns involving the combination of specific NPS.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

The Society of Forensic Toxicologists

Presents the

LEGACY LUNCHEON SERIES

ABOUT THE LEGACY LUNCHEON SERIES:

Our series seeks to go beyond the conventional boundaries of education, offering a space for the exchange of stories, advice, and historical insights. This is an opportunity for current toxicologists to connect with and learn from esteemed veterans who have played pivotal roles in the evolution of our field. The series will feature speakers who will share their journeys, including the triumphs, challenges, and valuable lessons learned along the way.

The Legacy Luncheon Series is more than just a webinar – it's a celebration of our collective history, a testament to the enduring spirit of learning, and an opportunity to connect with the pioneers of our field. We look forward to your active participation and the exciting journey that lies ahead.

SERIES DETAILS:

- Webinar Format: 1-hour sessions.
- Presentation Structure: 40-45 minutes presentation followed by Q&A with the speaker.
- Scheduling: 10 AM PST/1 PM EST
- Cost: FREE for SOFT Members!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage Active Engagement: Foster connections between veteran toxicologists and current members of the field.
2. Facilitate Knowledge Transfer: Provide a platform for veterans to share stories, advice, and historical context with newer generations.
3. Engage in Non-traditional Learning: Offer a unique and engaging format for the transfer of knowledge beyond traditional education methods.
4. Expand Continuing Education Opportunities: Introduce a committee-sponsored activity that goes beyond formal education realms.



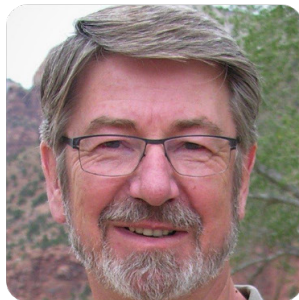
BILL ANDERSON, PH.D., F-ABFT

"Toxicology: Rocky Top to Reno, A 50-year Journey"
On-demand Recording



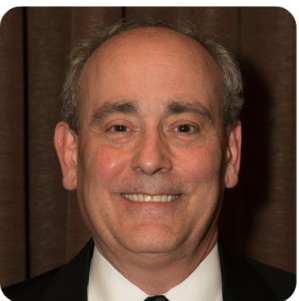
VINA R. SPIEHLER, PH.D., F-ABFT

"From Beckman Instruments (BI) to AI Expert Systems"
On-demand Recording



GRAHAM JONES, PH.D., F-ABFT

"(Why) I never wanted to become a Forensic Toxicologist"
July 23 at 10:00 AMPST /1:00 PM EST



BRUCE GOLDBERGER, PH.D., F-ABFT

"Synergy in Forensic Toxicology"
August 21 at 10:00 AMPST /1:00 PM EST

[ON-DEMAND RECORDINGS](#)

JULY & AUG REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN JUNE

PROFESSIONAL MENTORING PROGRAM

PROFESSIONAL MENTORING PROGRAM: BUILDING YOUR INFLUENCE

For the first webinar of the mentoring program, the focus was on building and developing influence. Building influence is important at any stage of a career and can help develop leadership skills and confidence.

WEBINAR 1: DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS/LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Improving Your Influence by Greg Cox

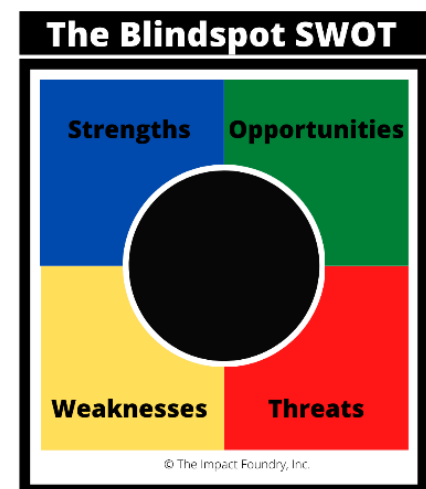
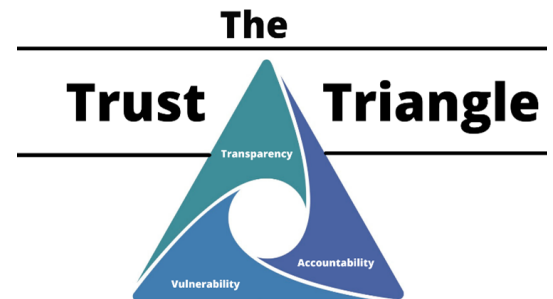
The webinar focused on discussing what influence is, why it is important, why it's sometimes difficult to influence, and how to "influence where you are." Four ways to increase influence were mentioned in the webinar and summarized below.

1. Build Trust First
 - be transparent, vulnerable, accountable
2. Pay attention to Blindspots. Identify these using tools such as:
 - SWOT analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Threats)
 - CliftonStrengths Finder
3. Go outside your comfort zone
4. Take Action

The overall take home message was that building your influence is a process. There are several ways to foster professional relationships and increase influence but it does take practice! Growth opportunities typically require stepping out of your comfort zone; leading with clarity of vision, being kind and empathetic, and realizing the potential in others fundamental to growing your sphere of influence.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER: After years of coaching, Mr. Cox founded The Impact Foundry, where he can apply his vast knowledge and creativity to solve challenges his clients are facing. Mr. Cox has presented to the mentoring program in the past and it's been well received. He is willing to provide insights to assist mentors to be accessible, welcoming, and understanding; and assists mentees to be confident and well prepared with active listening skills.

Materials and images provided with permission by The Impact Foundry.



NDEWS TOXICOLOGISTS NETWORK

We are writing to you today at the suggestion of Dr. Bruce Goldberger at the University of Florida, Co-Investigator on the National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS). The NDEWS Coordinating Center is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to track emerging drug trends across the United States. Based at the University of Florida and NYU Langone Medical Center, NDEWS serves as a vital source of scientific information about emerging drugs and drug trends, with a specific focus on synthetic compounds and other Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS).

To enhance our efforts, NDEWS is incorporating a Toxicologist Network into our Network model. If you agree to participate, you will receive a quarterly email that prompts you to tell us about overdoses in your area. You will also be asked to submit ad hoc messages to us at any time if something is happening in your area. These results will be aggregated by region without any identifiers. If there are occasions where we might want to note a specific region, we will request your approval. If you are interested in participating in the Network, please send an email to ndewsnews@gmail.com so we can include your name on the quarterly prompts.

Additionally, we invite you to subscribe to our free Weekly Briefing sent every Friday at 9 AM ET. If you wish to subscribe or share the briefing with others, you can do so by [clicking here](#). For more information on NDEWS efforts, visit our [website](#)!

In March 2024, the RTLs held a webinar workshop series focusing on method development and validation. We were joined by several of our colleagues who had expertise in the focus areas. A huge thank you to the following SOFT members. Without them, we could not have held a successful workshop series:

Becky Wagner

Virginia Department of Forensic Sciences

Tate Yeatman, SOFT President

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

Bart Gray

Arizona Department of Public Safety

Carrie Hodges

Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Dani Mata

Orange County Crime Laboratory

Heather Barkholtz

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Ryan Pieters

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Samantha Beauchamp

Michigan State Police

The workshops commenced with insights from subject matter experts on specific topics, providing attendees with a wealth of knowledge. In the final hours, participants were able to engage in breakout sessions tailored to the instrumentation used in their laboratories. This unique format allowed for in-depth discussions and problem-solving. We are also grateful to Agilent, Sciex, and Waters for their presence and contributions during these breakouts.

As the RTL program plans to expand into more states in the coming months, please let the RTLs and Project Manager know of any special topics, technical assistance, or training requests you may have. This program is for you, the toxicologist, and we want to hear from you!

Amy Miles

[VISIT THE RTL WEBPAGE!](#)

A SNAPSHOT OF GHB AND DRUG-FACILITATED CRIMES

BY CELESTE WAREING, M.S., D-ABFT-FT, FOR THE SOFT DFC COMMITTEE

SOFT-DFC Snapshots are short reports of critical information about the more common drugs associated with drug-facilitated crimes (DFCs). They are not complete literature reviews about the drug or drug class. One key aspect is their focus on the ability to detect a drug after a single-dose administration, as is often the situation in DFC investigations. As such, these summaries also point out instances in which available data is limited in the hopes that this will encourage further research studies. Finally, SOFT-DFC Snapshots point to the use of these drugs in actual DFC cases, as cited in the medical and open literature.

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) was originally developed in the 1960's for use as an anesthetic.¹ In the 1980's, it was sold as a nutritional supplement to weight builders to aid in building muscle mass as well as a sedative.² Its increased abuse and public health risk resulted in its ban by the FDA in 1990.³ Continued use as a "Club Drug" or "Date Rape Drug" led to it being scheduled to a Schedule I drug in 2000.⁴ As it pertains to DFC cases, it's odorless and tasteless nature allow it to be easily and covertly added to alcoholic drinks of unsuspecting victims.⁵ Its rapid onset of action, strong sedating and memory impairing effects, as well as its ability to increase libido make it a favorable drug of choice in DFCs.^{6,7}

Drug Class:	CNS Depressant ⁸
Generic Name:	Sodium oxybate (sodium salt of GHB and Schedule III) ⁹
Brand Name(s):	Xyrem® (immediate release solution), LUMRYZ® (extended-release suspension)
Dosage Forms:	Immediate release (initial, 4.5 g divided into two doses per night, max of 9 g divided into two doses per night). Extended release (initial 4.5 g per night, titrated max of 9 g per night) ¹⁰
FDA Approval:	GHB is not approved for medical use by the FDA. Sodium oxybate is used to treat cataplexy and excessive daytime sleepiness associated with narcolepsy. ⁹ The exact mechanism of action is not well understood but agonism of GABA _B receptors at noradrenergic and dopaminergic neurons, as well as at thalamocortical neurons is thought to play a role

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in its treatment of narcolepsy.^{11,12} There is also evidence that it binds at a GHB specific G protein-coupled pre-synaptic receptor.¹³

International Approval:

Alcover® (sodium oxybate) Used in Italy and Austria for treatment the of alcohol detoxification and withdrawal.^{14,15}

Illicit Use:

Low GHB doses produce sedative and euphoric effects, but higher doses can result in loss of consciousness, seizures, bradycardia, and lowered body temperature, decreased respiratory depressions, coma, and death.⁸ Combining it with other CNS depressants such as ethanol can result in increased CNS depression.^{8,16,17}

Gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) is a precursor in the illicit manufacture of GHB and if ingested it can be converted to GHB within the liver.⁸ 1,4-butanediol (BD) can also be metabolized to GHB after ingestion.¹⁸ GBL is regulated as a List I chemical while BD remains uncontrolled.^{18,19} Both analogues are abused due to their sedative and euphoric effects.

Metabolism/Elimination:

The major metabolic pathway for GHB is via oxidation by GHB dehydrogenase which produces succinic semialdehyde. This is then oxidized to into succinic acid which then enters the Krebs cycle and metabolized to water and carbon dioxide. The secondary pathway is beta-oxidation followed by Krebs cycle metabolism.¹⁵ GHB has an elimination half-life of 0.5 – 1.0 hours.^{11,12,16} The half-life, however, appears to increase with higher doses or be absent with intravenous administration which is suggestive of zero-order or saturation kinetics.^{17,20} Only about 1-5% of unchanged GHB is eliminated in the urine.¹⁵

Single Dose Studies:

Endogenous levels of GHB are present in the body and established thresholds of 10 mg/l for urine and 2 mg/l for blood are currently used.^{21–24}

Urine:

ANSI/ASB Standard 121, 1st Edition 2021, Standard for the Analytical Scope and Sensitivity of Forensic Toxicological Testing of Urine in DrugFacilitated Crime Investigations, recommends not testing urine samples for GHB when more than twelve hours has elapsed between the alleged incident and the time of collection.²²

In one study, 16 adults were administered an oral 50 mg/kg dose of GHB (Xyrem®) alone and combined with 0.6 g/kg of ethanol. 12.5% of urine samples collected from 3 to 6 h, 81.3% of samples collected from 6 to 12 h, and 100% of urine specimens collected from 12 to 24 h after dosing were below the 10 mg/L threshold level. It concluded that the detection time for GHB in urine may be shorter than the previously reported 12-h window in some people taking therapeutic doses of GHB.²⁵

Another study involving 11 naïve volunteers that were administered an oral 25 mg/kg dose, resulted in urinary t_{max} of one hour and a mean c_{max} of 67.6 (32.6 – 161.3) mg/L.²⁶

Abanades et al., administered oral doses of 40, 50, 60 and 72 mg/kg to eight volunteers and yielded urinary c_{max} of 31.8, 61.7, 45.8, and 85.5 mg/L and t_{max} of 0 – 3 hours, respectively.²⁷

Blood/Plasma/Serum:

Exogenous GHB is only detectable in blood for up to eight hours.¹⁷

An Italian study using single doses of 12.2, 25 and 50 mg/kg were administered orally to 8 volunteers and yielded peak plasma concentrations of 23, 46, and 80 mg/L with median t_{max} 25 (20-30), 30 (20-45) and 45 (30-60) minutes, respectively.²⁸

Another study involving 12 naïve volunteers that were administered an oral 25 mg/kg dose, resulted in t_{\max} of 24.6 minutes and a mean c_{\max} of 48.0 mg/L in whole blood while the serum resulted t_{\max} of 23.3 minutes and a mean c_{\max} of 59.4 mg/L.²⁶

Abanades et al., administered oral doses of 40, 50, 60 and 72 mg/kg to eight volunteers and yielded plasma c_{\max} of 79.1, 83.1, 113.5 and 130.1 mg/L and t_{\max} of 0.7, 0.6, 0.6 and 0.9 minutes, respectively.²⁷

Hair:

Currently, there isn't a consensus on endogenous GHB levels in hair due to high intra and inter-individual variation.²⁹

In 2020, Strickland et al., drew the following conclusions and recommendations for testing hair. "(i) the collection should take place 8 weeks or more after the suspected dosing event and a length of at least 3 to 5 cm be gathered from the scalp; (ii) GHB ratios are discouraged as a test for GHB ingestion, especially for male subjects; (iii) based on our data, a concentration above 2 ng/mg along with a positive indication from the adjacent segment difference is likely to indicate exogenous dosing; and (iv) hair preparation should be standardized/limited for parameters such as segment length and we recommend using 1 cm segments."²⁹

DFC Cases:

A 2016 publication reported the death of 6-year-old girl who was the victim of a DFSA following sedation by GHB. The following levels were reported: cardiac blood: 150 mg/l; bile: 292 mg/l; vitreous humour: 58 mg/l; liver: 100 mg/kg; kidney: 124.5 mg/kg, brain: 110 mg/kg. Segmental hair analysis showed very high GHB levels found in the proximal part of the hair sample (~40.9 ng/mg).²⁰

In 2016, Stephen Port was convicted of the murder of four men and numerous rapes and sexual assaults. He spiked his victims' drinks with GHB.³⁰

A 2009 report documented a case involving a 24-year-old woman that was repeatedly and unknowingly dosed with GHB and morphine while studying abroad for a year. After returning home, she received video clips capturing the assaults. She had her hair tested and both morphine and GHB were detected.³¹

Another case involved a 38-year-old woman that exhibited symptoms of confusion, hyperactivity, and slurring. She also appeared to be experiencing hallucinations and convulsing. She also claimed to have experienced memory loss. A blood sample that was collected within 8 hours of the assault contained 3.2 mg/L of GHB as well as other CNS depressants.

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TOXTALK

TOXTALK® is the official publication of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists and is published quarterly.

2024 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue 3: Submissions due by 08/14, Publishing week of September 8

Issue 4: Submissions due by 11/17, Publishing week of December 16

NEW FORMAT OVERVIEW

ToxTalk will be formatted to include organizational information such as SOFT updates, Annual Meeting information, committee updates, award opportunities and continuing education opportunities.

All science related submissions will now be included on their own webpage on the SOFT website. They will be stored there indefinitely and can be accessed at any point by both members and non-members. Scientific submissions will now need to include an abstract, a template has been included on the ToxTalk Webpage. The abstract will be included in the issue of ToxTalk and a link will be included to direct readers to the full article.

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FUTURE MEETINGS



SOFT 2025

Oregon Convention Center
October 26–October 31, 2025
Hosts: Amy Miles and Sara Short



SOFT/TIAFT 2026

Hilton Chicago
September 19-24, 2026
Hosts: Luke Rodda and Andre Sukta

2024 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Continuing Education Committee

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