



Arizona Branch AALAS Newsletter

Vol. 24 No. 3
August 2011

Arizona Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science

Have You Checked Out the AALAS Learning Library?

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President's Message

TIM??

[Feel free to contact me](#) if you have any additional suggestions and/or concerns. - Tim Martin, (602) 406-4003.

Important Dates

Fall Fun Event - October - BBQ
Potluck at Tim's house in Mesa

Holiday Installation Event - 12/3
- Flagstaff, AZ

Arizona Branch AALAS News

Your Board of Directors

Tim Martin, President
timothy.martin@chw.edu

Jane Criswell, Secretary
criswell@email.arizona.edu

Grace Aranda, Treasurer /News editor
garanda@email.arizona.edu

Cindy Madura, TBR
madurac@email.arizona.edu

Tom Greene, N Board Member
Tom.Greene@nau.edu

Emily Radomski, C Board Member
emily.radomski@chw.edu

Paula Johnson, S Board Member
pauladj@email.arizona.edu

Frank McFadden - Vendor Liaison
Frank.McFadden@Getingeusa.com

P.O. Box 210101
Tucson, AZ 85721-0101
(520)621-3931 fax: (520)621-8833
www.azaalas.org

Member Profiles by Sandra Schenone

Nathan Lawyer, Lead Technologist, Arizona State University

Nathan was born in St. Louis, MO, and moved to Arizona in 2006. He holds a BS in Biology, an MA in Educational Leadership, and is certified at the LATG level. He is married with 4 children, and currently works as a Lead Technologist at Arizona State University, where he has been since 2006. Nathan started working in labs at an age younger than most, accompanying his father to work when he was only 4 years old, and says his father was his greatest influence. This early lab experience included US facilities like Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas and Walter Reed in Washington, DC, as well as the Kenya Medical Research Institute in Nairobi Kenya.

Nathan has worked with a wide variety of animals including rodents, rabbits, NHP and reptiles. Even though he started his career early, his ambitions were initially to become a veterinarian or a pirate. He finds this field fascinating and is especially interested in selective breeding and phenotyping. When not at work, he enjoys reading Fancy Nancy books to his girls, and turning it into a big show. His pets include a beagle, corn snake and fish. He also moderates a fish keeping web forum, enjoys hunting and fishing, and geocaches.

Nathan would encourage others to follow in his footsteps by presenting a positive outlook on his chosen profession. He enjoys what he does, tries to have fun, and speaks highly of his job.

Maggie McTighe, Clinical Veterinarian, Charles River Laboratories

Maggie was born in Memphis, TN and hoped to be an astronaut or a veterinarian. She attended the Auburn College of Veterinary Medicine. Maggie currently works as a Clinical Veterinarian at Charles River Laboratories and is working toward ACLAM certification. She worked at Vanderbilt University prior to working with the chimpanzees at Alamogordo Primate Facility, and has worked with a large variety of animals. She credits the grasp of a galago (bush baby) with most influencing her interest in nonhuman primates. The areas of veterinary medicine that are most important to her include surgery and imaging. Her dream is to work at a zoo (other than the one in her own yard).

Maggie is currently in New Mexico, has two grown children, 3 dogs and 2 mules. She enjoys “hoarding junk” and making things from what she collects. Something that people wouldn’t guess about her is that at one time she was a paratrooper, working in Special Operations.

Maggie would encourage others to follow in her footsteps by having them spend time working at a vet clinic or following a lab animal vet for a while

Past Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the May/July Board Meeting - JANE??

New Benefit for Arizona AALAS Members: You Can Now Access the ALL

The AALAS Learning Library (ALL) provides training that is essential for technicians, veterinarians, managers, IACUC members, and investigators working with animals in a research or education setting. Emphasizing the appropriate handling, care, and use of animals, the courses are designed to meet training mandates of regulatory agencies, improve knowledge in technical areas, and help technicians study for AALAS certification

examinations. Launched in 2003, the ALL has grown from 60 courses in 2003 to 157 courses today, with more added every year. The Animal Care and Use Library has courses on certification, regulatory mandates, bioethics, biotechnology, biosafety, and management. The JAALAS CEU Test Library offers you the opportunity to earn continuing education units (CEUs) by taking the self-administered test based on the scientific articles in *Journal of the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science (JAALAS)* online.

Why use the ALL? You can access the training courses on your own schedule and set your own learning pace. It is available 24 hours a day and can be accessed from any computer with internet access, whether it is at work or at home (or at Starbuck’s). You can also review courses as often as needed -repetition

is a great learning tool! It also provides easy documentation of your learning on a transcript, either to meet work training requirements, for professional growth, or to document CEUs for the AALAS Technician Certification Registry.

It is up to you to decide what your career goals are and how you will meet those goals. The AALAS Learning Library can be one tool to help you meet those goals. Contact your Technician Branch Representative, Cindy Madura, at 5 2 0 - 6 2 6 - 6 7 0 2 o r madurac@u.arizona.edu for access to ALL through the Arizona Branch.

Twelve Common Workplace Behaviors that Drain Energy

The source of your exhaustion might not be the tasks

you're doing or the hours you're working—it may be the actions of the people laboring beside you. Jon Gordon identifies twelve draining behaviors to watch out for—and explains what you can do to counteract them and create a more nourishing workplace.

If you're like most people, you're tired, depleted, and quite frankly just done with "business as usual." You're laying the blame for your fatigue squarely at the feet of the increased responsibilities and long hours you faced. But according to Jon Gordon, you might be wrong. He insists that working hard—when done with a good attitude in the right environment—can actually be quite invigorating.

"Most people wrongly assume that their tasks and responsibilities are what's grinding them down," explains Gordon, author of the book, *Soup: A Recipe to Nourish Your Team and Culture*. "However, while 'work' is a convenient scapegoat, the real culprit is often the negativity of the people you work with and for, their constant complaining, and the pessimistic culture that is now the norm in a lot of workplaces."

Don't fret, though: Gordon promises that if managers are able to identify the offending behaviors and fix them, they'll be able to spend more time nourishing their companies' cultures—which will, in turn, make employees happier and more productive, thus increasing the bottom line.

1. The Energy Vampire Attack

DON'T: Let negativity become your go-to response. There's nothing more draining than a boss or coworker who is constantly negative. Gordon calls these folks "energy vampires." They are never happy, rarely supportive, and constantly nay-saying any and all ideas and suggestions that aren't their own. According to them, you might as well give up before you start.

DO: Respond constructively when someone offers up an idea. Even if you know more about a particular project, have more experience than the rest of your team, or are positive that the suggestions

others are making are off the mark, hear them out. Let employees and coworkers know that when they come to you with their ideas, they'll be heard with an open mind and received with respect.

2. The Out-of-Control Complain Train

DON'T: Give in to the temptation to whine. It's a well-known phenomenon that can have catastrophic consequences: One person's complaint resonates with someone else, who then proceeds to add grievances to the pile...and so on. Before you know it, everyone is complaining, and any work that gets done thereafter is marred by a bad attitude.

DO: Push for solutions. The next time a water-cooler conversation threatens to barrel out of control into Complaint Central, step in and ask the complainers how they would make things better.

3. The Vicious Voicemail (or Email)

DON'T: Leave critical or harsh messages on voicemail or send them to an email inbox. Nine times out of ten, these critiques seem much more vehement and condemnatory than they actually are. Plus, any communication you send via electronic methods can potentially last forever.

DO: Suck it up and conduct the tough talks in person. If you need to have a stern talk with someone, or if you need to talk through a conflict or problem, do it in person if at all possible. You'll be able to ensure that your words and tone aren't misinterpreted, and you'll be able to immediately have a constructive dialogue with the other person.

4. The Loaded Monday Morning Inbox

DON'T: Overwhelm your team with a mountain of emails before the week is underway. If you're finishing up your own to-do list late on a Friday night, or if you're simply trying to get a jumpstart on the week ahead, it can be tempting to dish out the details and to-dos as you think of them.

DO: Boil down and bundle your communication as considerately as

possible. Be sure to flag any urgent emails so that your teammates know which tasks to tackle first—and include as many details as possible so that 1) you won't forget them, and 2) the recipient can get started as quickly as possible. If you can, combine as many of the tasks and questions as you can into one document.

5. The Busy Bee Bamboozle

DON'T: Confuse activity with progress. You know the person. She's always soooo busy but doesn't ever seem to meet deadlines or get anything done. She's living proof of the fact that just because your day is full of things to do doesn't necessarily mean that you're getting them done.

DO: Set goals and hold yourself and your employees accountable for results. Most importantly, don't put your team in situations where the lines are blurred. If the goals are crystal clear, they'll be easier to accomplish.

6. The Low Performer Look-Away

DON'T: Let sub-par work slide. Simply put, low performers drag the rest of the team down. They are like a cancer inside your organization, creating resentment and generating more work for everyone else. And if you allow them to linger and thrive for too long, your best employees will move on to a more productive environment.

DO: Institute a zero-tolerance policy for low performers. Hold your entire team accountable for meeting their goals and adhering to the same performance standards. If one person consistently misses the bar, then you need to take swift action. Let your employees know that you value their hard work and that you will not allow others to do less and get away with it.

7. The Unclear Communiqué

DON'T: Assume others have all the information they need, or that something you know isn't really all that important. These hastily drawn conclusions that result from chronic poor communication can lead to serious mistakes and major missed opportunities. Plus, lack of clarity is incredibly frustrating to those who

must work with you. When employees, coworkers, or supervisors have to spend their time tracking you down for clarification, rather than getting the communication from you that they need, productivity falls and creativity is stifled.

DO: Make a concerted and proactive effort to make sure that the right people are in the know. You'll set your entire team up for success and ensure that your clients get the service they deserve. Also, make sure you copy the right people on emails, promptly return voicemails, and are clear about directions and expectations. And if you say you are going to do something, mean it.

8. The Disorganization Drag-Down

DON'T: Allow disorganization to impede productivity. If you're managing or leading a company, heading up a big project, or traveling non-stop, it's likely you've lost an email, important paper, phone number, or pie chart or two in your day. You're busy, and that's understandable. But constant disorganization can drain your employees and coworkers if they always have to cover your tracks.

DO: Make a concerted effort to keep up with your tasks and responsibilities. And if you can't immediately put your hands on something you need, don't automatically ask others for help. Take a few minutes to try and find what you need on your own. Better yet, try to think of better systems and processes than the ones you're using (or not using) now.

9. The Hasty Plate Clear-Off

DON'T: Sacrifice quality on the altar of expediency. There's a lot of work to do, and you (understandably) want to get your own tasks done so you don't hold up others. If you've rushed, you're more likely to have made mistakes and been sloppy, which isn't fair to the person who gets the assignment after you.

DO: Take the time you need to do the job right. Rather than rushing through a report or clicking "send" just because it's 5:00 p.m., get

focused and make sure you do your best work the first time. Pay attention to details, check over your work, and make sure you've followed the proper guidelines.

10. The Chronic Deadline Dodge

DON'T: Allow unmet deadlines to throw everything and everyone off-track. When people chronically miss deadlines, it's a sure sign of a cultural issue. Either people aren't giving it their all—or they're truly overburdened. Either way, your company's productivity will suffer.

DO: Set reasonable, clear deadlines for everyone involved (and hold them accountable). Once something gets off-track, nobody is willing to own it. Make sure you set reasonable deadlines that you and your teammates can meet in order to avoid setting folks up for failure. And even if it takes some extra elbow grease from time to time, make a conscious effort to meet every deadline every time (and hold your team accountable for meeting them, too!).

11. The Unattainable Atta-Boy (or Atta-Girl!)

DON'T: Get so caught up in what's coming down the pike that you forget to acknowledge what's happening now. Most managers and business leaders would agree that they feel a lot of pressure. However, when responsibilities give you to-do tunnel vision and cause you to skimp on the "job well done," employees can get discouraged in a hurry—especially if you immediately ask about another goal that's gone unmet or push more work at them to try and make up for losses in other areas.

DO: Express appreciation and admiration when appropriate. Employees don't need a pat on the back and a round of applause at every turn. What they do need is to know that you can be satisfied. If, like a hamster running in a wheel, an employee feels as though no amount of hard work or hours spent will ever garner the boss's approval or satisfaction, his energy and self-motivation will be zapped.

12. The Blame Game

DON'T: Point fingers at others in order to take the heat off of yourself.

A mistake is made, the boss is mad, a deadline is missed. If all eyes are on your team and you start pointing fingers, you could be making a huge mistake. If your employees or your coworkers don't think you shoulder your share of the blame or are unapproachable when it comes to constructive criticism, they'll start to shut down toward you.

DO: Accept responsibility for your actions gracefully and humbly. Nobody likes to be the one at fault. But owning up to your mistakes and learning from them are big parts of working together and being successful. If you make a mistake, be the first to own up to it and try to do things differently in the future. Also, be open to suggestions and criticisms—they may make the going much smoother!

If some of these behaviors sound all too familiar, don't despair. The cusp between the year that's just passed and the one that's to come is the perfect time to take stock of what's making your culture less than nourishing—and resolve to make it better.

Jon Gordon is a consultant, keynote speaker, and an international best-selling author. He holds a master's degree in teaching and works with numerous businesses, professional sports teams, schools, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

([ALN Magazine](#), May 2011)

Free Online Biocontainment Course

As recently as 10 years ago, the number of biocontainment labs throughout the world could be counted on two hands. But since then, the number and size of these facilities have been increasing due to global awareness and preparedness for bioterror threats, and recognition of pandemic-possible emerging infections.

In response to the growing number of biocontainment laboratories and the public's trepidation about them, Frontline

Healthcare Workers Safety Foundation, Ltd., is now offering a free online course.

AALAS Live Learning Center

NEW For the 2011 AALAS National Meeting

AALAS has introduced a new product for attendees called the. This center is an interactive web portal that will house up to 100 hours of multimedia content from the National Meeting, including downloadable MP3 sessions. Users can earn CE credits from listening to presentations at home, and the center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To register for the AALAS Live Learning Center, simply choose the "best value" package when registering for the National Meeting. In previous years, audio files for sessions cost \$250. With our new partner, Content Management Corporation, we are offering this improved service for only \$99.

[Register for Live Learning Center](#)

"This course provides non-laboratorians a glimpse at how dangerous microorganisms are safely worked with in containment laboratories," said course instructor Richard J. Green, MSc, CTM, a biosafety professional with 30 years experience working in/around containment laboratories. "It serves as a great introduction to describe the

types of work done in biocontainment environments and how these labs are constructed and operated to protect both the public and the lab employees. We want everyone to understand that these labs are not only designed with safety as the utmost priority but also that these labs, in part, conduct research essential in eradicating deadly diseases."

Although there are no tests, the course is imbedded with questions so that students can test themselves. The free online course

can be accessed at anytime. It takes about an hour to complete, and upon successful completion of the course, participants will be able to:

- describe a biohazard;
- discuss the characteristics of BSL- 1, BSL-2, BSL-3, and BSL-4 laboratories;
- discuss standard laboratory practices, and
- describe how to safely enter and exit a biocontainment laboratory.

"Introduction to Biosafety and Biocontainment for Non-Laboratorians" is being offered exclusively by Frontline Healthcare Workers Safety Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit research and education foundation headquartered in Atlanta, GA, with offices in Bethesda, MD, Frederick, MD, and Chicago, IL. Frontline Foundation is dedicated to building national and international biological security and cooperative threat reduction through training, education, and ongoing research that allows communities and nations to best respond to natural and contrived biological incidents, emergencies, and pandemics. Learn more about Frontline Foundation at www.frontlinefoundation.org.

([ALN Magazine](#), 6/29/11)

A Knockout Resource for Mouse Genetics

An international consortium of researchers report in *Nature* that they have knocked out almost 40 per cent of the genes in the mouse genome. The completed resource will power studies of gene activity in models of human disease.

The results are founded on a novel, efficient production line that is able to target each specific gene in turn. The consortium has cracked all the challenges of generating mutations of each gene in mouse embryonic stem cells, and has already knocked out 9,000 genes in the mouse genome as part of an international effort to knockout all 21,000. This developing resource will be essential in our understanding of the role of genes in all mammals - including humans.

The cells generated by this approach will allow researchers to ask and answer questions about the roles of genes at the scale of the whole mouse and human genome. The gold-standard method to uncover that role is to mutate a gene in mouse embryonic stem cells: the biochemical and developmental behaviour of the mutated cells can be studied in test tubes or in mice. Until this production system was developed, conducting gold-standard research on this scale was impossible.

The problem to be overcome was: how do you scale this approach to tackle the whole mouse genome? "We have pioneered novel methods that enable us to deliver the most complex and accurate high-throughput functional genomics platform yet attempted," says Dr Bill Skarnes, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute researcher and lead author of the study. "We believe that our work raises the standards of achievement and expectation for genome-scale programmes. "It is an investment for the future: the genome-engineering technologies developed here for the mouse will drive future model systems, including work on human stem cells."

Genomics was transformed in the 1990s from individual-based research to large-scale commodity resources: an equivalent success was needed for mouse mutagenesis - to provide resources efficiently and consistently and to release them freely. Previously attempted strategies to develop mouse models on a large scale suffered the twin disadvantages of not producing precise genetic changes and favouring only the genes that were active during the experiment, leaving the remainder unaltered.

The present work solves these problems. The team exploited a system called homologous recombination within mouse embryonic stem cells, which can deliver very precise alteration of any gene in the genome. It is founded on choosing the correct recombinant DNA molecules (vectors) to target genes efficiently.

However, some genes are essential to life of the cell or

organism: disruption of these might cause the cell to die and so the mutation would be 'lost' from the project. Crucially, to ensure that all genes can be disrupted, the team developed DNA vectors that create a mutation only when required: gene targeted by the mutation can be identified, but the mutation activated only when it is to be studied.

But in the essential step to realize its ambitions of a comprehensive, freely available resource, the team designed and delivered a 'pipeline' that systematically designs and constructs the vectors, and efficiently introduces the engineered DNA molecules into the mouse embryonic stem cell line developed specifically for these projects.

Finally, by employing a modular approach to the vector design, a number of other valuable resources are created en route to the generation of targeted ES cells: the paper reports that the consortium had produced vectors for more than half of the genes in the mouse genome. All of these outputs are being made available to the mouse research community through the consortium's web portal at <http://www.knockoutmouse.org/>.

"We are producing mutations in embryonic stem cells with greater efficiency and speed than we predicted and at well above the historical average," says Allan Bradley, senior author of the study and Director Emeritus of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. "We have taken careful steps to ensure we deliver quality resources of maximum utility that will stand the test of time. Indeed, we expect our systems will be increasingly adopted by researchers using human and other cells to seek advances in the understanding of disease."

The methods the team have developed will also accelerate studies on human stem cells - cells that have the potential to grow into many different types of adult tissue. Research into producing such induced pluripotent stem cells from adult tissues (forgoing the need for embryonic stem cells) is expected to be vital in understanding human

disease and therapies. The systems developed for mouse stem cells are transferable to human cells and could drive research into mutation in the human genome and its biological and medical consequences.

"Biomedical research needs biological resources on a scale that match genomics resources," explains Colin Fletcher, Ph.D., Program Director of the Knock Out Mouse Program at the National Institutes of Health, a part of the international knockout effort. "Such knockout resources are the foundation for producing thousands of valuable mouse mutants for future large-scale international phenotyping programmes and will serve the biological and biomedical research community worldwide."

([ALN Magazine](#), 6/22/11)

AALAS Foundation Offers Online Learning Resources

While book-filled backpacks are still a common sight outside of American schools, today's students are increasingly learning via the Internet. The AALAS Foundation is adapting to shifting student preferences by continually adding to our collection of online learning resources.

School Resources Library - The School Resources Library on the AALAS Learning Library (ALL) houses free educational materials tailored for middle and high school students.

The library currently features *Careers for Laboratory Animal Veterinarians*, *Careers for Laboratory Animal Technicians*, and *Working with Frogs*, a series of two courses that teach high school students about the biology, physiological adaptations, anatomy, evolution, and ecology of frog and toad species in the United States.

Future additions to the School Resources Library include *Introduction to the Field of Laboratory Animal Science* and *Caring for Animals: A Guide to Animals in the Classroom*.

Whyville - The AALAS Foundation joined forces with the award-winning Whyville website to develop the Community Animal Research Environment (CARE), a series of

games in a virtual laboratory that teaches young people how animals help scientists in research — and how research, in turn, benefits animals.

In our most popular game, Critter Care, Whyville citizens take on the role of a laboratory animal technician and earn "clams" for keeping animals healthy.

Kids 4 Research.org - The Kids 4 Research website provides information to students, teachers, and parents on responsible laboratory animal care and use in biomedical research, testing, and education.

The website includes age-appropriate information on topics ranging from: animal welfare, the biomedical research process, careers in laboratory animal science, animals in research, and the benefits of biomedical research.

The site, sponsored by Charles River, also includes a series of puzzles, games, and posters for students in elementary school and middle school.

Our Future - The Foundation educates the public about the essential role of animals in research by providing students and teachers with a variety of resources to enhance classroom learning experiences.

You can help advance our mission by volunteering your time or making a donation to the Foundation. With your help, we can continue to develop new avenues to encourage today's students to become tomorrow's laboratory animal professionals.

Visit www.aalasfoundation.org for more information about how you can help bolster the AALAS Foundation's arsenal of online learning resources.

On the Web:

[Whyville](#)
[School Resources Library](#)
[Kids4Research](#)

- Ray Butler, AALAS Foundation Board of Directors

Since You Asked..."How do you determine appropriate workloads

for technicians?"

This question was sent in by a reader and is no doubt one that many people are dealing with on a daily basis. We asked Michele Whelan with The Jackson Laboratory to provide a few thoughts in response to this question.

Bronze Membership Scholarships Available in the TBR Corner

by Cindy Madura

AZAALAS is awarding bronze National AALAS memberships to technicians who are financially unable to pay for membership themselves and interested in becoming AALAS certified. Two scholarships per region will be awarded.

To apply, you must be an Arizona branch member and preparing to take your AALAS certification exam. Interested applicants should email the scholarship committee at: azaalas@ahsc.arizona.edu stating why they wish to be granted the award.

Not sure what to write? A few things you can include in your letter are: when you plan to take the exam, why you would like the scholarship and your future goals.

If you are planning on taking the exam this year it would be best to get your letter in as soon as possible. The membership expires at the end of the year.

If you are taking it next year you should get your letter in by the first week of December so that you have the benefit of a full years membership.

As always, any comments, questions contact me at 520-626-6702 or madurac@u.arizona.edu.

An appropriate workload for a technician and/or team is going to be based solely on how you, the manager, want it to be and how the group/department operates. It might help to envision the workload distribution as an equation: (A) Total Time Available – (B) Non-study work = (C) Workload

For portion A of the equation,

you need to consider each technician's daily rotation. Many have the standard 40 hours/week at 8 hours/day for 5 days, but there seems to be a high demand for requesting the 40 hours/week at 10 hours/day for 4 days. You may also have alternate schedules as well, instead of the regular Monday through Friday. In terms of time available, you can use the time technicians are on site just the same. In regards to the non-study work, portion B, this should encompass the time that is not spent in the animal facility. These would be tasks such as meetings, individual and/or group trainings and deskwork. While they are important facets of the day to day operations, the time required does not get included. Also in this category would be lunch time and breaks, however long they may be. By the end, for portion C, you should have the remaining time estimated for the animal work and study specific support. Animal work can be cumbersome if it needs to occur at multiple times throughout the day. Study support is not limited to just the hands on work (injections, monitoring, etc.) but you should also consider paperwork set up and any prestudy prep and communication. Something that tends to be overlooked is other assigned projects such as supply monitoring, sanitization, etc.

For example, a technician that works Monday through Friday, 8 hours per day starts with just that. Let's say that they receive 30 minutes for lunch and two 15 minute breaks throughout the course of the day. This particular individual also has a 1 hour meeting on Friday morning. All in all, this specific technician is available on Mondays–Thursdays for a 7 hour workload and on Friday for 6 hours.

Following the above equation will assist in the time allotment of a workload, but you will still need to consider the capacities in which you fill that workload. In the previous technician example, she/he is available for 6 or 7 hours of work, depending on the day of the week. It is important that what is expected of them does not exceed that. For this, begin by defining the job responsibilities that each individual carries, as well as the team as a whole. Each task will have its own

estimated time in which it is expected to be completed in. You may find by doing this that each technician may have a different possible volume of assigned work. This is absolutely acceptable. It would be valuable to include the members of your team in this part of the process to ensure that you include all potential time required tasks. It would also be advantageous, for current and even future purposes, to make sure that you have a basic framework for both minimum and maximum workload instances.

ALN thanks Michele Whelan, JAX® Services Project Manager, for taking the time to respond to this question. The Jackson Laboratory; www.jax.org.

(ALN Magazine, May 2011)

[Nominate Someone Great for Member or Technician of the Year](#)

Know someone who would be a great Arizona branch AALAS Officer?
[Nominate someone today!](#)



**It's not too early to get started on the Louise Brooks Memorial Raffle...
[Check out the raffle page for more info now!](#)**

Sponsor's Pages

Your handy reference page of our supporting vendors

We ask that members patronize their business and show them our support too!



Diana Kelsey
cgartland@allentowninc.com
www.allentowninc.com
(800)762-2243

Tim Dickinson
tim@appliedinst.com
www.appliedinst.com
(949)661-9900



Kendra Minkler
kendra@aquaneering.com
www.aquaneering.com
(858)578-2028



Colleen Kander
colleen_kander@andersoninc.com
www.bedocobs.com
(419)377-3639



Al Liebholz
aliebholz@nsc.betterbuilt.com
www.nsc-betterbuilt.com
(604)777-9988



Karena Thek
kthek@bio-serv.com
www.bio-serv.com
(800)996-9908



Russell Braxtan
rbraxtan@netzero.com
www.braxtanscientific.com
(619)888-5765



William Britz, Jr
billbritz@britzco.com
www.britzco.com
(307)322-4040



Anna Herrera
anna.herrera@crl.com
www.criver.com
(858)722-8995



Ken MacLeod
cms@colmedsupply.com
www.colmedsupply.com
(888)446-8427

Jeff Rasposa
jrasposa@cemanage.com
www.cemanage.com
(480)836-7032



Frank McFadden
frank.mcfadden@getingeusa.com
www.getingeusa.com
(760)518-9198



John Firreno
jfirreno@harlan.com
www.harlan.com
(800)473-6423



Bo Smith
bo@innoviveinc.com
www.disposablecages.com
(858)309-6620



Skeeter Georgeson
skeeterg@labexofma.com
www.labexofma.com
(508)755-2243

Sponsor's Page (cont.)

Your handy reference page of our supporting vendors

We ask that members patronize their business and show them our support too!



Jeff McGlothlin
jeffmcglothlin@earthlink.net
www.labproductsinc.com
(760)752-1494



Teresa Woodger
teresa@lomir.com
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