



# Analytical Advisor

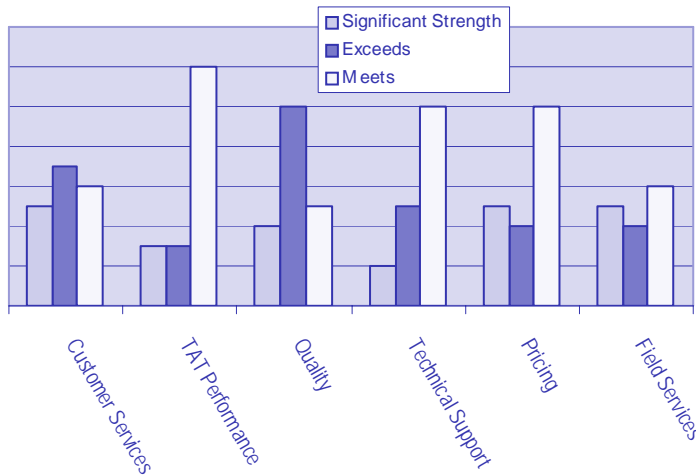
An informational newsletter offered by Analytical Laboratory Services, Inc.

Volume 2, Issue 1

September 2004

## President's Message

In the beginning of July we sent out a *Customer Satisfaction Survey* to a random portion of our clients to rate us in six categories: Customer Service, Turnaround Time, Quality of Results, Technical Support, Pricing and Field Services. Although most of the overall responses for each category were "meet", "exceeds", and "significant strength", there were some notable concerns which I would like to summarize.



One example in the Quality of Results category is "data quality". ALSI is one of three (3) laboratories in Pennsylvania that maintain full NELAC certification, US Army Corp and Navy accreditation, and A2LA (ISO) accreditation of ALL matrices of testing. While we feel this is an attractive reason, based on liability issues, to use our services, the majority of responses showed this service to be of little value. We are not sure if this is because the perception is that "all labs are equal" or if it is because of the lack of understanding of what it takes to provide high quality accurate results. Nevertheless, we feel it is our responsibility to educate the client on how to "kick the tires" of the laboratory they are using. Look for more information on this topic of concern in future newsletters.

A second area of concern was our Customer Service category. Even though the overall rating was "exceeds," the item of "response time" was only satisfactory. Again, this raised my level of concern because we know how important quick and timely responses are to the client. Because of the added growth of new clients this year, we added a fourth Customer Service Representative to handle both new and existing client

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## ALSI is a Small Business

By Scott Brunk, National Accounts Manager

Analytical Laboratory Services, Inc. (ALSI) is pleased to inform our customers that effective January 28, 2004 "The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has adopted its proposed increase to the size standard for the Testing Laboratories industry (North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code 541380) from \$6 million to \$10 million in average annual receipts. This action will better define the size of businesses in this industry that the SBA believes should be eligible for Federal small business assistance programs."

This new classification effects ALSI because it allows our firm to compete on a more regional and national level for both state and federal laboratory projects. For both ALSI's current and potential clients, this means the opportunity to team with and/or utilize ALSI in an expanded role as our firm can now be utilized to meet often stringent regulatory set aside requirements. Ultimately, ALSI believes this opportunity will make our firm even stronger and more able to service your needs as we increase our services, instrumentation, and staff to better meet your environmental needs during this period of growth.

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## INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE GROUP MOVES TO PROGRESS AVENUE by Dan Larson, IH Group Manager

**A**LSI's Industrial Hygiene Consulting Division of Analytical Laboratory Services, Inc. has moved to a new and improved location in Harrisburg, PA. Our new address is 3544 North Progress Avenue, Suite 100, Harrisburg, PA 17110. Phone number is (717) 540-3424 Fax (717) 540-3428.

ALSI-IH Group specializes in providing the following services:

- ✓ Indoor air quality evaluations
- ✓ Mold inspections
- ✓ Radon testing
- ✓ Asbestos inspections
- ✓ Right to know documentation and training
- ✓ Lead based paint testing
- ✓ Industrial hygiene plant surveys
- ✓ Safety assessment and training
- ✓ Special projects and investigation

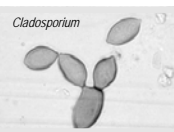
In fact, mold problem resolution has become a major environmental concern in the last couple of years. Did you know that mold contamination in buildings is one of the leading concerns among building occupants and management? Fungal contamination in buildings is a serious issue and can result in health concerns as well as serious liability and financial consequences.

Let me summarize some problems associated with mold investigations. Fungi are a natural part of the environment and are normally present in ambient air. Moisture problems can increase the levels of airborne fungi by several orders of magnitude, from hundreds to tens of thousands of times greater than ambient. Inhalation of elevated levels of airborne fungi can cause allergenic or toxic response and occasionally causes infection in an otherwise healthy individual. High levels of fungi in an indoor environment are of particular concern where immune-compromised or otherwise susceptible individuals are exposed. Individual susceptibility to fungi varies.

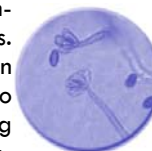
*For more information on mold testing, please contact our IH Group Manager— Dan Larson, CIH at 717-540-3424.*

Mold health concerns can be broken down into three different types: allergy, toxin, and infection.

- ✓ Allergy is the most common effect and can range from hay fever and asthma all the way to very particular reactions and diseases in certain organs or tissues. Hay fever like symptoms are probably the most common health effect attributed to mold in indoor environments. Major indoor allergens include: *Cladosporium*, *Alternaria*, *Ulocladium*.



- ✓ Toxin effects can manifest themselves in a wide variety of ways. Most research up to now has been directed at effects that have to do with ingestion (such as by eating contaminated grain), and comparatively little has been studied about



inhaled effects. Major indoor toxin producers are: *Stachybotrys*, *Memnoniella*, *Trichoderma*, *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium*, *Fusarium*.

- ✓ Infections are potentially the most dangerous and deadly of mold health effects, but mold in general has an inherently difficult time infecting an uncompromised immune system. Many molds won't even grow at normal body temperature. While these infections are rare, infections in compromised individuals are much more common and can be very dangerous and problematic due to the lack of treatment options. Compromised individuals include those whose immune system systems are weakened such as (but not limited to) those with AIDS, certain cancers, the very old, the very young, and those undergoing certain drug therapies. Major infectious indoor molds include: *Aspergillus*, *Fusarium*, *Zygomycetes* (includes *Mucor* / *Rhizopus*).



If you have any questions or would like additional information on our IH services, please give us a call at 717-540-3424.

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accounts. For this reason, you may be asked if it is okay to transfer your account so that we may spread out the customer base and more equally distribute the workload which will allow us to respond more quickly to each client.

Under technical support, it appears that many of our clients are not aware of ALSI's website for retrieving results, generating electronic results, downloads of data and printing lab reports. Please visit our website at [www.analyticallab.com](http://www.analyticallab.com) and try the Remote Client Access (RCA) module to see if this is a service that may fit your needs. It is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, making it an easy way to monitor your account from any internet connection. If you would like a more detailed demo, please contact me to arrange an on-site demonstration.

For the clients who completed the survey, I say "Thank You!" Clients who participated in the survey were selected on a random basis and if you did not receive one and would like to participate, please let us know. We value our clients input on all matters. As always I offer an open door to our clients. If you have any issues or concerns you would like to discuss, please e-mail me at [mfarlling@analyticallab.com](mailto:mfarlling@analyticallab.com). Thank you for your input and we at ALSI look forward to making our company more "user friendly."

**CONTACT US BY PHONE AT 1-800-794-7709 OR BY FAX AT 717-944-1430!**

# QA Group News

by Helen MacMinn, QA Manager



## Accreditations and Certifications

ALSI is now certified to perform wastewater and solid and hazardous waste from the State of West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Division of Water and Waste Management. This certification encompasses both Acid Mine Drainage and UST programs. ALSI is certified for Metals by EPA 200.7/SW-846 6010, Mercury by EPA 245.1/SW-846 7470A, Pesticides/PCBs by SW-846 8081A/8082, VOCs by EPA 624/SW-846 8260B/8021B, BNAs by EPA 625/SW-846 8270C, Wet Chemistry Methods, and DRO/GRO by SW-846 8015B. Our certification number is 343.

ALSI has also added additional analytes and methods to its NELAC accreditation through New Jersey and New York.

## EPA Approved Methods

EPA is proposing changes to analysis and sampling procedures in wastewater regulations and drinking water analysis and monitoring which will effect 40 CFR Parts 122, 136, 141, 143, 403, 430, 455 and 465. These changes include proposal of vendor-developed methods; new EPA and voluntary consensus standard bodies (VCSB) methods; updated versions of currently approved methods; revised method modification and analytical requirements; withdrawal of certain outdated methods; and changes to sample collection, preservation, and holding time requirements. The addition of new and updated methods to the wastewater and drinking water regulations will provide increased flexibility to the regulated community and laboratories in the selection of analytical methods.

## Pennsylvania Environmental Laboratory Accreditation

The Environmental Quality Board proposed to amend 25 Pa. Code by adding Chapter 252 (relating to environmental laboratory accreditation). The proposed rulemaking will add a new chapter delineating the requirements for accreditation of environmental laboratories. Presently, in Pennsylvania only the Drinking Water Program and the Oil and Gas Program address the issue of data quality through a laboratory accreditation program. The proposed regulations will apply to environmental laboratories that test or analyze non-potable water (wastewater), solid and chemical materials, or drinking water samples. The Chapter 252 regulations would transfer the laboratory accreditation program, currently 25 Pa Code Chapter 109, to these regulations.

## Performing TO-14 and TO-15

ALSI has recently added air testing capabilities to its wide variety of testing protocols. ALSI is using a new state-of-the-art Finnigan GC/MS system equipped with an Entek air sampling train to perform air analyses. Current methods utilizing this system include EPA TO-14, Determination of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in Ambient Air Using Specially-Prepared Canisters With Subsequent Analysis by Gas Chromatography, and TO-15, Determination of Volatile Organic Compounds in Air Collected in Specially-Prepared Canisters and Analyzed by Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry, as well as modified lists for specific compounds of interest. TO-15 is a method description for sampling and analyzing volatile organic compounds (VOC) in ambient air. The method is similar to the popular TO-14 but incorporates five different features: (1) a water management technique compatible with the analysis of polar VOCs (2) a large potential target list; (3) a sole reliance on GC/MS for analysis; (4) inclusion of formal QA/QC procedures; and (5) method performance standards. Feature 5 allows the use of alternative but equivalent methods.

ALSI has also invested in a modern summa-canister cleaning system to ensure the sampling vessels are cleaned properly before the client uses them. If you would like to visit the laboratory to see this new technology or would like more information concerning our capabilities, please contact Ray, Mike or Scott at 1-800-794-7709.



Summa-Canister Cleaning System



New Finnigan GC/MS

### Employee Spotlight



**Clark Dougherty** has worked at ALSI for approximately 6 years. While everyone at ALSI plays a major role in total customer satisfaction, Clark's primary responsibility here is the supervisor of the Gas Chromatograph (GC) and Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) volatiles group. As such, Clark is responsible for the large workload of samples distributed among the GC and GC/MS volatile instrumentation in order to maintain the required turnaround time (tat) along with the demands of daily instrument maintenance and the rigorous quality control standards of ALSI.

When at home, Clark enjoys spending time with his wife Dawn and two children Anna and Jonah who are 4 and 2 respectively. By the time this newsletter is published this number may increase, as Dawn and Clark are expecting a third child on September 15. Good luck to the entire family. Clark also likes to spend his time away from work gardening at his recently purchased home, scuba diving, and mountain and road biking. For those clients who have visited our laboratory and have noticed the fish tank in the lobby you will be amazed that most of these saltwater fish have been personally provided by Clark during one of his many diving expeditions to his favorite vacation spot in the Florida Keys.

If Clark had the luxury of spending one day away from work (yes, just one Clark) he would like to spend it heading south to the Caribbean, renting a boat and diving all day. When asked what his most memorable ALSI experience is to date, Clark remembered walking into the lobby on a Monday morning only to discover the saltwater fish tank had lost about 5 gallons of water to the lobby carpet. What a way to start the week!



**Analytical  
Laboratory Services, Inc.**

Environmental • Industrial Hygiene • Field Services

34 Dogwood Lane • Middletown, PA 17057

Fax name and address changes to  
717-944-1430 or call 717-944-5541.

**In This Issue...**

**ALSI IS NOW PERFORMING TO-15 ANALYSIS. See page 3 . . .**



**2004-05  
Conferences and Shows**

- Friday, October 8, 2004**  
SBIR/STTR Seminar, Penn State University
- Monday-Wednesday, October 11-13, 2004**  
S.A.M.E., 2004 North Atlantic Region,  
Baltimore, MD
- Friday, October 15, 2004**  
SETAC Fall Workshop, Rutgers University, NJ
- Thursday, October 28, 2004**  
PA Chamber at HACC, Harrisburg, PA
- Friday, November 12, 2004**  
EPWPCOA, Maiden creek Township,  
Berks County
- Tuesday, December 7, 2004**  
Virginia Public Procurement Forum,  
Richmond, VA
- Friday, March 18, 2005**  
EPWPCOA, Orwigsburg Borough,  
Schuylkill County



**Holidays  
Coming Up!**

- Thursday, November 25, 2004**  
Thanksgiving Day
- Friday, December 24, 2004**  
Christmas Eve (1/2 day)
- Monday, December 27, 2004**  
Christmas Day
- Monday, January 3, 2005**  
New Year's Day

**Plan your  
sampling schedule  
for 2004-05.**

**CONTACT US BY PHONE AT 1-800-794-7709 OR BY FAX AT 717-944-1430!**