



# THE LAB REPORT

VOLUME 2 NO. 2



FALL 2016

WEST VIRGINIA  
STATE POLICE  
FORENSIC  
LABORATORY

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Backlog Corner
- Employee Spotlight
- Fentanyl
- Road Show!

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## DRUG IDENTIFICATION FOCUS

This issue of The Lab Report will feature a number of different articles on the Drug Identification Section of the forensic laboratory. This will include updates about staff, trends in casework, safety notices, and other various articles.

If you have feedback about what area of the forensic laboratory you would like to see as our 'focus' next issue please send us feedback:

[Blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov](mailto:Blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov)

Please see page 5 for important information regarding case acceptance policy changes involving the Drug Identification Section.

## NEW ANALYSTS IN THE DRUG SECTION!

Jared Vititoe  
**Quality Assurance Manager**  
**Drug Identification Section**

On August 17, 2015, the Drug Identification Section hired two new forensic analysts. At that time, they began the extensive Forensic Chemist Trainee Program for Drug Analysis at the laboratory, and on August 8, 2016, both analysts were approved by the laboratory's Quality Assurance Board to begin casework in the sub disciplines of vegetation, pill, and powder analyses. As they begin casework in these disciplines, they will continue the last sub discipline of their training in the area of clandestine laboratory sample analysis.

Tiffany Neu is from Salyersville, Kentucky, and she attended Eastern Kentucky University in

Richmond, Kentucky, where she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Forensic Science, with concentrations in Forensic Biology and Forensic Chemistry. Prior to employment with the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory, (**continued on page 2**)

Pictured:  
**Tiffany Neu**



Link:

[WEST VIRGINIA STATE POLICE FORENSIC LABORATORY FIELD MANUAL](#)

# CONT: New Analysts

she was employed as an Ultraviolet Chemist in the research and development section of the Collins Inkjet Laboratory and as a laboratory analyst for petroleum dyes at AC&S, Inc.

Lydia Hakola is from Uniontown, Ohio, and she attended Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, where she graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Forensic Science. Prior to employment with the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory, she was employed as a laboratory technician at SD Myers, Inc., performing electrical transformer oil analysis.

As these new analysts begin case work and complete the last area of their training, they will be a great asset to the forensic laboratory and law enforcement agencies across the state. The addition of two new trained analysts to the Drug Identification Section will allow a greater number of cases to be ana-

lyzed at the laboratory. This will also reduce the number of cases backlogged awaiting analysis, the time between submission by investigators, and the return of evidence and the associated laboratory report.

**Pictured:**  
**Lydia Hakola**



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: Alisha B. Neal



**Hometown:** Clay, WV

**Education:** WVU, BS Forensic and Investigative Science (emphasis forensic chemistry & biology) and BS Biology

**Work Experience:** I've been employed by the WVSP Forensic Laboratory since March 2010 and I'm trained in the Drug Identification Section.

**Role at the WVSP Forensic Laboratory:** I work as a forensic chemist in the Drug Identification Section of the laboratory. I analyze cases that are submitted to the laboratory as suspected controlled substances, issue reports, and then testify in court if necessary. I am the technical leader of the section, where I am responsible for all instrumentation maintained in the section, including validations of new

procedures and new instrumentation before it can be utilized in casework. Additionally, I'm a qualified ASCLD/LAB-International assessor and I am a member of the Clandestine Laboratory Investigating Chemist's Association.

**Favorite part of the job:** I enjoy that I have to be constantly learning about new instrumentation and other applications arriving on the market for drug analysis. I also enjoy that I have to be learning about emerging drugs due to the ever evolving drug world. I like the work that has to be put into researching and validating new substances. New drugs emerging may pose a public health threat, so sometimes identification of substance is essential in an investigation and it needs to be done quickly.

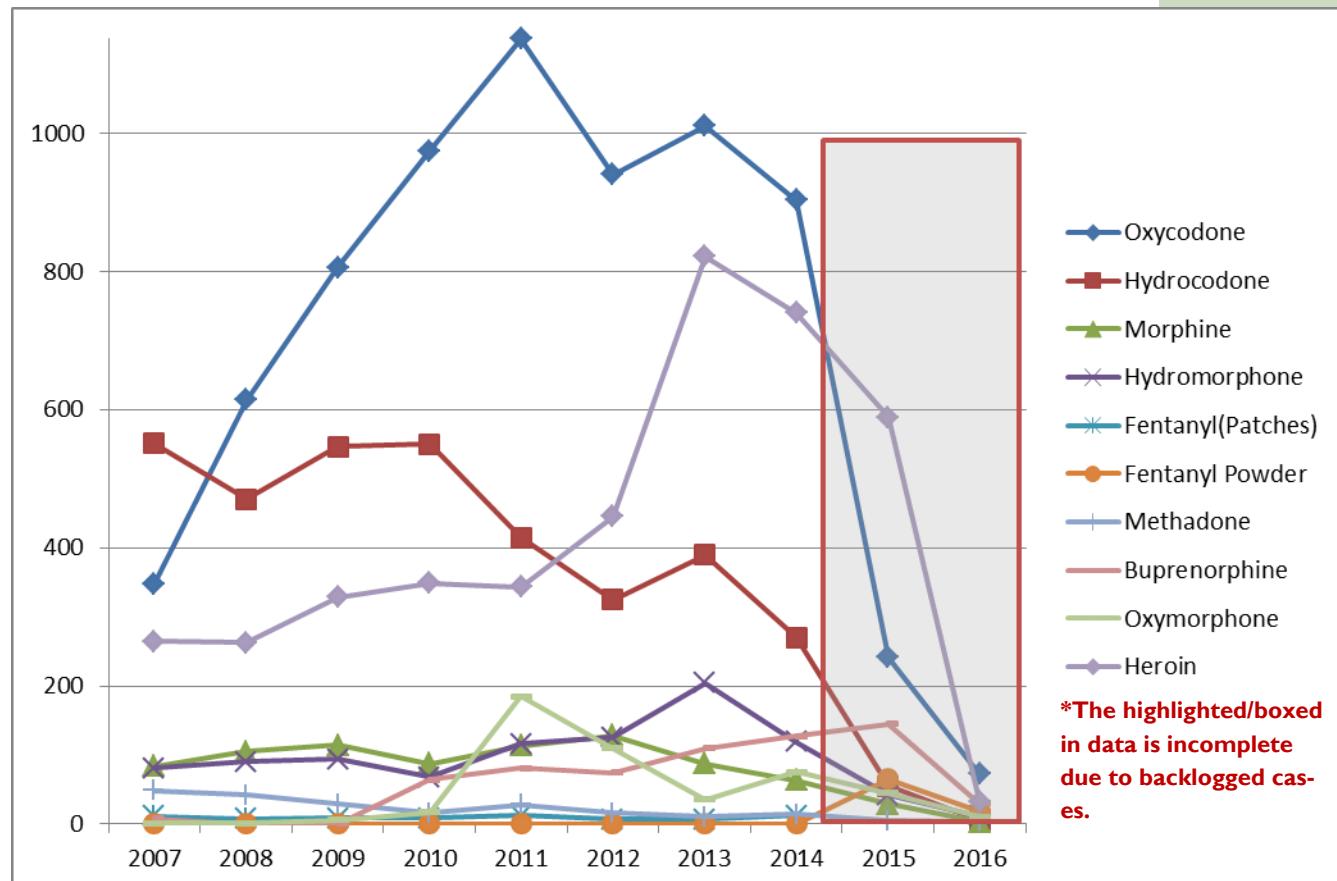
# DRUG TRENDS

Carrie Kirkpatrick

Section Supervisor—Drug Identification Section

Drug trends in the drug world are constantly changing. The chart below shows some yearly totals for some of the substances that the Drug Identification Section sees on a daily basis. The Drug Identification Section has seen an increase in the heroin and fentanyl cases over the past few years.

## YEARLY TOTALS



Above are photographs of Fentanyl (left) and Heroin (right). These two drugs are being seen more frequently in casework at the WVSP Forensic Laboratory.

# CAUTION: FENTANYL EXPOSURE CAN KILL

**Blake Reta**

**Technical Leader—Firearm/Toolmark Section**

Fentanyl is a drug rising in popularity that is dangerous, having deadly consequences, when improperly handled. Due to the focus of this current issue of The Lab Report it is important that information regarding this drug is made available to our readers.

A link to the Drug Enforcement Administrations ‘Warning to Police and Public: Fentanyl Exposure Kills’ is below:

<https://www.dea.gov/divisions/hq/2016/hq061016.shtml>

Law Enforcement, Attorneys, Judges, and all readers of this newsletter are encouraged to educate themselves on the importance of safe handling of Fentanyl.

A section of the above article is included below:

**“Risks to Law Enforcement** Fentanyl is not only dangerous for the drug’s users, but for law enforcement, public health workers and first responders who could unknowingly come into contact with it in its different forms. Fentanyl can be absorbed through the skin or accidental inhalation of airborne powder can also occur. DEA is concerned about law enforcement coming in contact with fentanyl on the streets during the course of enforcement, such as a buy-walk, or buy-bust operation.

Just touching fentanyl or accidentally inhaling the substance during enforcement activity or field testing the substance can result in absorption through the skin and that is one of the biggest dangers with fentanyl. The onset of adverse health effects, such as disorientation, coughing, sedation, respiratory distress or cardiac arrest is very rapid and profound, usually occurring within minutes of exposure. Canine units are particularly at risk of immediate death from inhaling fentanyl. In August 2015, law enforcement officers in New Jersey doing a narcotics field test on a substance that later turned out to be a mix of heroin, cocaine and fentanyl, were exposed to the mixture and experienced dizziness, shortness of breath and respiratory problems. If inhaled, move to fresh air, if ingested, wash out mouth with water provided the person is conscious and seek immediate medical attention. Narcan (Naloxone), an overdose-reversing drug, is an antidote for opiate overdose and may be administered intravenously, intramuscularly, or subcutaneously. Immediately administering Narcan can reverse an accidental overdose of fentanyl exposure to officers. Continue to administer multiple doses of Narcan until the exposed person or overdose victim responds favorably.”

Again, the full length article can be read using the link above.

## QUOTES FROM OUR CUSTOMERS:

“The turn-around-time on ATF finger-print comparison requests are amazing. Couldn’t hope for better service. Thanks!” - Heather Kozik, Special Agent, ATF

“Please pass along to Korri Powers that Charleston PD and ATF appreciate her hard work.” - Canden Sharp, Charleston PD

“...Rebecca Harrison testified in federal court on one of my drug cases and she did AWESOME! Her testimony was professional, clear and easy to understand.” - Sgt. J. D. Rogers, WVSP

# CASE ACCEPTANCE POLICY CHANGES

**Carrie Kirkpatrick**

**Section Supervisor—Drug Identification Section**

Currently, cases are worked in the order received unless the prosecuting attorney's office sends a letter to expedite testing. As it continues to be our mission to provide both quality and timely laboratory services to the West Virginia Law enforcement agencies, we feel with the current volume of submissions it is necessary to implement a case acceptance policy for the Drug Identification Section.

In order to provide law enforcement officers with the highest quality service in the shortest turn-around time, the West Virginia State Police Forensic laboratory Drug Identification Section is implementing the following case acceptance policy with a projected effective date of October 10, 2016:

## **General Information**

Cases without a known suspect will not routinely be accepted for analysis.

Clothing shall not be submitted for analysis. Remove suspected material from the clothing and place it into separate, marked containers.

The Drug Identification Section does not currently have validated methods to perform quantitative analysis (drug purity) therefore these requests cannot be accepted.

Items consisting of marked tablets or capsules in a prescription bottle for that drug with the bottle marked with the defendant's name will not be accepted for analysis. (Exceptions would include suspected tampering cases)

Used syringes, with or without needles, are potential sources for the transmission of infectious disease such as AIDS and hepatitis. Further, the presence of bodily fluids in drug samples may cause rapid decomposition of the drug(s) present in the sample and may be unsuitable for analysis. In all situations, syringes with or without needles will not be accepted for analysis. Suspected syringe tampering case items are the only exception.

Electronic cigarettes utilize an oil that is vaporized using a heat source. The presence of the heat source can create a fire hazard in the laboratory. Prior to submission, the oil should be removed and submitted without the electronic cigarette. If the oil cannot be removed, then the heat source of the electronic cigarette (i.e. battery) shall be removed. If neither can be removed, the electronic cigarette will not be accepted for analysis.

No items will be tested for residues when large quantities are also submitted.

Drug paraphernalia will not be accepted. The crime laboratory will only receive and analyze this evidence when the prosecutor needs a laboratory report to prosecute the case. This request must be made in writing from the prosecuting attorney.

Factory sealed, tamper proof, or sealed blister-pack items will not routinely be accepted. Information is already provided on the packaging, so as long as the packaging is uncompromised, analysis is not needed. The information can be looked up by the agency.

# CONT: CASE ACCEPTANCE POLICY CHANGES

## Multiple buys on the same suspect

All controlled buys of similar suspected controlled substances should be submitted together in the same outer package for the same suspect. The case submission form should indicate how many buys are contained within the outer package.

There should only be one agency case number listed on the case submission form for these submissions. Items should be listed out with the buy/crime date beside each item.

## Search Warrant (more complex cases)

In all cases containing multiple items the investigating officer and/or the prosecuting attorney will be required to identify the probable cause item. The Drug Identification Section will only accept the top five items to be tested. The remaining items should be stored with the investigating officer and can be submitted at a later date, if necessary, for prosecution of the case. Items that are deemed questionable, non-essential, or contrary to these policies will not be examined.

If you have an additional item to be worked for a case already submitted to the laboratory, you must submit the additional item as a separate case with separate case submission form.

## Vegetation Cases

For controlled substance evidence likely to be categorized as a misdemeanor offense, i.e. possession of marihuana under 15 grams the crime laboratory will only receive and analyze this evidence when the prosecutor needs a laboratory report to prosecute the case. Law enforcement agencies are required to hold these misdemeanor cases and submit them to the laboratory only when a request is made by the prosecutor in writing.

The analysis of suspected marihuana weighing a total of greater than 15 grams, will be performed until a total weight of greater than 18 grams is reached. Once the total weight of confirmed Marihuana is greater than 18 grams, analysis on additional samples will not be performed.

## Expedite analysis requests

It is the responsibility of the investigating officer and/or the prosecuting attorney to determine whether or not a lab report has been received for a submitted case with an upcoming court date. Request to expedite testing of drug evidence should be submitted at least 90 days prior to the scheduled court date. These requests must be made by the prosecuting attorney in writing. It is recommended the Prosecuting Attorney verify with the investigator whether or not the evidence has been submitted to the laboratory prior to requesting expedited testing.

# UPDATE: CRIME LAB ROAD SHOW

**Blake Reta**

**Technical Leader—Firearm/Toolmark Section**

The Crime Lab Road Show has kicked off by providing training to the Kanawha County Public Defenders Office. This was a great opportunity for both the laboratory and the attendees. This training was tailored to address the needs of the Kanawha County Public Defenders Office and involved training from the Central Evidence Processing Section and Drug Identification Section of the laboratory.

A second crime lab road show took place in September with the Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and local law enforcement. This was also a great success and featured training from multiple sections of the laboratory including the Central Evidence Processing Section and Drug Identification Section.

Please remember that this training takes time to schedule and to please contact the laboratory in advance so that all details can be worked out. We are grateful to those who are wanting to participate and host our laboratory in an effort to provide training to attorneys and law enforcement.

Any questions or comments are welcome. Depending upon the requested areas of training, training may only be offered every 1-2 months. Contact: [blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov](mailto:blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov); 304-746-2171

## BACKLOG CORNER

We wanted to provide a friendly reminder to all our submitting agencies that when cases are submitted the analyst does not typically know the details of the investigation. Often the case can sit unworked in our backlog and said case has been dismissed for one reason or another without the knowledge of the lab. These cases that no longer need analysis can greatly reduce our backlog number, if that information is reported to us. We ask you be mindful of those with active cases who are waiting to be worked behind cases that may be inactive. Please notify the laboratory when a case no longer needs analysis!

### INCOMPLETE CASES PER SECTION:

- Biochemistry: 492
- Central Evidence Processing: 458
- Drug Identification: 2916
- Firearm/Toolmark Identification: 65
- Latent Prints: 69
- Questioned Documents: 2
- Toxicology: 536
- Trace Evidence: 28
- Total: 4566**



# The Crime Lab Road Show

The West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory is starting to provide training opportunities for law enforcement, attorneys, and judges! To help us do this we need volunteer agencies to host a one day training opportunity. If you are an interested party please contact Blake N. Reta. (contact information below)

- One day training opportunity for any law enforcement agencies, attorneys, and judges.
- Maximum of 30 attendees.
- Training will feature 1 to 2 sections of the forensic laboratory for lecture and hands on experience with evidence collection.
- The sections that will be providing training will be agreed upon by the forensic laboratory and the volunteer host.



**Note:** The training provided will be free to the attendees!

**What we are asking of the host agency:**

- Provide an area (local school, department complex, etc) for training to occur
- Provide material needed for the training

**West Virginia State Police  
Forensic Laboratory**

Blake N. Reta  
Email: blake.n.reta@wvsp.gov  
Phone: 304-746-2171

**Sections of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory that can provide lecture / training include:**

- |                        |                       |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| - Biochemistry         | - Drug Identification | - Evidence Processing |
| - Firearm/Toolmark     | - Footwear/Tire Track | - Latent Prints       |
| - Questioned Documents | - Toxicology          | - Trace Evidence      |

## LABORATORY STAFF:

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## FEEDBACK

We always welcome feedback for the upcoming newsletter!

Have comments or suggestion?

Want to know how we do something?

Need to know how we recommend to collect a specific type of evidence?

Feel free to contact the editors and suggest topics and provide us with any comments or feedback.

Your Editors,

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Stephen C. King — [stephen.c.king@wvsp.gov](mailto:stephen.c.king@wvsp.gov)



## Laboratory Mission and Goal

### Mission:

It is the mission of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory to provide accurate and impartial scientific support services to all criminal justice agencies operating in the State of West Virginia.

### Goal:

The goal of the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory is to generate accurate, impartial, and timely scientific examinations and opinions for the criminal justice system of the State in the interest of public safety. Establish and maintain a database of convicted felons, sex offenders, case work profiles, and missing persons.

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