



Heather Autio

1. What professional designations do you have and what school and city did you attend for your lab education? I got my RT at NAIT in Edmonton graduating in 1983. I have my ART in Hematology from 1994 and a MHA from University of Regina in 2017.
2. After you graduated and started working, what surprised you most about your profession and/or those things that continue to surprise you? That no matter how much I have learned and continue to learn there is always something new every day to learn. I have had so many opportunities to learn and to share knowledge and the entire group of professionals is so willing to share their knowledge and learn together.
3. Tell us about your BCSLS contributions and experiences? I was invited by my former lab manager to be the treasurer for BCSLS Congress 1996 which was at Harrison Hot Springs. From there I went on to the BCSLS board for the 1997 term, I can't recall but I might have started on the board as the treasurer. I co-chaired the congress in Whistler in 1998. I went through the presidential chain as it was then and finished up as past president in either 2002 or 2003. I chaired the congress in Richmond the following year. After my time on the BCSLS Board I represented BC on the Council on National Certification for a few years until I took on the role of CNC chair. I then went on to chair the CNC for several years and then my volunteering moved to CSMLS roles for quite a few years.
4. Describe what your current role is and what a typical day looks like for you? Currently I am Interim Operations Manager for Fraser East laboratories covering Fraser Canyon Hospital in Hope, Chilliwack General Hospital, Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre, Mission Memorial Hospital and Langley Memorial Hospital labs. Typically I am based out of Abbotsford three days a week, spend one day every week rotating through each of the other labs I support and one day at regional meetings. Mostly I support the Site Supervisors for each of the sites with financial and human resource issues.
5. What do you like most about your position? I love that I get to support where I live. I love that I work with such a wonderful group of people across the entire region to create solutions to continue provide the top quality services that we do.

6. Which career accomplishments are you most proud of? I think I am most proud of the growth as both a laboratory technologist and as a person that I have experienced. I must say that some of my best memories would be the times that I looked down a microscope and made the discovery of malaria, a new found leukemia. Leavening work on those days and knowing that you made a difference that will start a patient on the road to getting the appropriate treatment needed to conquer an illness that until then they could not define.
7. What are your plans after retirement? I plan to get a long arm sewing machine to further my quilting hobby and hopefully walk the Camino de Santiago again. Travel when I can, sleep, read and eat when I want and enjoy time to do all the crafts and hobbies that I have put on hold.
8. What do you like to do in your spare time? I enjoy many crafts with textiles, I also enjoy refinishing old furniture, hiking (not crazy hikes probably mor walks in the wilderness), riding my Vespa, spending time with my little old dog and my adult kids, family and friends.
9. If you could go back 20 years to visit yourself, what advice would you give? Keep going, it gets better.
10. If you could live anywhere, where would that be? I am really lucky to live where I do. Every day I get to see Mount Baker, Mount Cheam, the Fraser Valley and I am a short drive to the ocean. I don't think life gets better than living in lower mainland BC.
11. What is the funniest thing that has happened to you at work? In the good old days we would lug these 20 liter saline boxes over head onto a shelf for the cell washers in Transfusion Medicine. We had to remove the plug and put on the spout before we put them up. One time I forgot to remove the plug before lifting it into place and not thinking I pulled the plug intending to put the spout on while it was already on the shelf. I ended up having a 20 liter saline shower in the middle of Blood Bank and to my mortification the pathologist walked into the department and saw the whole thing.
12. What is your favourite holiday/time of year and why? Most people who know me will say that my favorite time of year is Christmas but that's not exactly true, I like the countdown to Christmas. I love the decorating, the finding of perfect gifts for people, the baking the music and the sense of joy among humans. It is the anticipation that I love.