Carrie Raycher, Histology Technician Marshfield Clinic

What was a typical workday like for you? Are there any daily tasks that you started out doing that over the years went away or completely changed as practices changed?

Accessioning specimens in the morning and writing out all of the cassettes for them. Now it is done case by case, no prewritten anything.

Technology is one of the biggest changes in the last few decades, inside and out of the lab. What were some of the big technology changes that had the biggest impact on your work?

Fully automated microtomes have been a huge change also, software to print our blocks, then scanning the block to produce your slide. I still remember diamond pencil etching.

How did you stay up on new techniques and share information with others in the field before the instantaneous answer age where you can google or email a friend for the answer?

As we have moved forward with technology, our budgets have gotten smaller and smaller. It used to be that we would send one or two representatives to the state and National meetings and then they would report back what they learned. Now, if we want to go to a conference, we have to take paid time off and pay for the trip ourselves.

How have the educational requirements changed since the time you first entered the field?

Most of the techs that I have worked with in my career were trained “on the job’ and started their training right out of high school. Now most of the students in our program come from our affiliated 4-year schools

What is something that was common practice at one point in your careers that now would be almost comical to today’s techs?

Early in my career I worked with pathologists that didn’t wear gloves when handling specimens, or doing autopsies.

Where do you see the profession heading in the future? What predictions would you like to make or, if you had a crystal ball, what would you see?

I think as we learn more about disease on the molecular level, some of our testing will drop off. My hope is that there will be a cure for cancer, and we won’t even be needed, but with cures for the old, come new forms of disease.