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PERIODICAL

Fifty Years Ago in The Southwest Retort

The ACS tour speaker for the month of March is **Dr. Harold F. Walton** of the University of Colorado. His topics will be "Studies in Uranium Geochemistry" and "Ion Exchange Separations."

University of Texas (now UT-Austin) Chairman **Dr. Norman Hackerman** visited ten cities in the Southeast in January as an ACS tour speaker. His topics were *Mechanism of Corrosion Inhibition*, *Metal Passivity*, and *The Electric Double Layer at Solid Metal-Solution Interfaces*. **Drs. G. H. Ayres, Allen Bard, and B. A. Ferrone** attended the Symposium on Modern Methods of Analytical Chemistry held at LSU in January. **Dr. Royston Roberts** spoke at the 3rd Biennial Symposium on Hydrocarbon Chemistry held Jan. 22 in Houston. His topic was *Novel Rearrangements of Alkylbenzenes Catalyzed by Aluminum Chloride*. **Dr. John McKetta** attended the AIChE National Directors Meeting in New York City Jan. 7-8.

D-FW Section Chairman **E. R. Alexander** made the following committee assignments for 1959: Membership, **Trueheart Brown**, Chairman, Members **Russell O. Bowman, Morton Jones, Warren McMordie, Bill Skelton, Russell C. Walker, Dale Clark, Richard Escue**; Program, **Tom Burkhalter**, Chairman, Members **Harold G. Burman, Floyd Lisle, Gerald E. Perkins, Tom Kenner**; Social, **Pat Lightfoot** Chairman, Members **George K. Abel, Norris Brown, Bruce Hart, Francis D. Meluso, Margaret Willoughby**, Affiliates, **Robert Higgins**, Chairman, Members **Roy Beauchene, Dorothy**

Gibson, Harold Jeskey, Sam McKenna, John T. Murchison, W. E. Ward, Education, **Homer Hix**, Chairman, Member **W. H. Watson**.

In the Southeastern Texas Section, **Dr. Herman Pines** of the Ipatieff Lab visited Monsanto in Houston. **J. L. Franklin** of Humble Oil has returned from spending 18 months on loan to the National Bureau of Standards. Seven papers from his time there have been published in *JACS*, *J. Chem. Phys.*, and *J. Res. Nat. Bureau of Standards*.

The new wing of the Chemistry Building at Texas A&M is now in use. It includes three 120-seat lecture rooms, laboratories for general chemistry, numerous research laboratories, offices for faculty members, shops, library, and special equipment rooms --all air conditioned! **Dr. A. F. Isbell** was an ACS tour speaker in February, speaking on organophosphorus chemistry to local sections in the Tennessee-Alabama-Georgia area.

At Baylor, fire destroyed the Chemistry Annex on Jan. 4, the day before the start of classes after the Christmas holidays. The building, a temporary barracks building, housed all the freshman chemistry classes. Fortunately, only two weeks were left before final exams. A similar building has been constructed to take care of spring term classes.

Dr. Samuel Siegel of the University of Arkansas gave lectures at Universal Oil Products, Lion Oil Co., the South Arkansas ACS Section, and the St. Louis ACS. Section.



Southwest Retort

*Published for the advancement of
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and Chemistry in this area.*

Published by

The Dallas-Fort Worth Section, with the cooperation of five other local sections of the American Chemical Society in the Southwest.

Vol. 61 March, 2009 No. 7

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Southwest Retort (USPS 507880) is published monthly, September through May by the Dallas-Ft. Worth Section of the American Chemical Society, Inc., for the ACS Sections of the Southwest Region. Subscription rates are \$3.24 per year. Periodical postage paid at Dallas, Texas. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to American Chemical Society, Southwest Retort, Box 3337, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

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40 Zr 91.224	41 Nb 92.906	42 Mo 95.94	43 Tc (98)	44 Ru 101.07	45 Rh 101.07	46 Pd 106.36	47 Ag 107.87	48 Cd 112.41	49 In 114.82	50 Sn 118.71	51 Sb 121.76	52 Te 127.60	53 I 126.90
72 Hf 178.49	73 Ta 180.95	74 W 183.84	75 Re 186.21	76 Os 190.23	77 Ir 192.22	78 Pt 195.08	79 Au 196.97	80 Hg 200.59	81 Tl 204.38	82 Pb 207.2	83 Bi 208.98	84 Po (209)	85 At (210)
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Southwest Retort

SIXTY-FIRST YEAR

March 2009

How I Came To Texas: A Final Random Reminiscence

by Lyman Caswell
ruthandlyman@earthlink.net

Editor's Foreword. Retired Texas Woman's University Professor Lyman Caswell, now living in Des Moines, WA, has been contributing his "Random Reminiscences" to The Southwest Retort for many years. He says this is the final one. Let's hope it isn't so.

The first thing I read in each issue of *The Southwest Retort* is the column headed "Fifty Years Ago." In the last few years, some of the names that have appeared in this column were those of long-gone friends. My own name is due to appear in the column in a couple of years, on the fiftieth anniversary of my joining the faculty of Texas Woman's University.

I spent only one year in the institution in which I experienced my first year of college teaching. Since the year was not a happy one, it is best that I do not identify the school. All four of the members of the chemistry department were new at the start of the fall semester. It should have been a warning to me that the entire chemistry faculty had resigned the previous year, but in those days I was young, naïve, and foolishly optimistic. At the end of the

spring semester I was still young, but I had been cured of the other two problems. I resigned and departed with no wish ever to see the place again.

I joined the faculty of Upper Iowa University in the fall of 1956. Upper Iowa was, and is, a fine little liberal arts college in a small town in northeast Iowa. I was the head of the chemistry department, which sounds impressive, except that I was also the only member of the department for the first three years I was there. I look back on my years at Upper Iowa with a degree of nostalgia. The classes were small, and teaching them was a pleasure. There was a friendliness and camaraderie among the faculty and the students that is not enjoyed at many schools. But there was also one frustration: there was no opportunity for research, and I

had some ideas I wanted to try out.

I participated in an NSF-sponsored program at the University of Iowa in the summer of 1959 and got some research started, but it was only a start; and having to leave it unfinished at the end of the summer enhanced my frustration. I went back to the U. of Iowa in the summer of 1960 to teach quantitative analysis as a substitute for a professor on leave. During that summer I was able to bring the research to the point of an initial publication. I also decided that it was time for me to move on.

I discussed my goals with Ralph Shriner, who was chairman of the Iowa chemistry department at that time. He called my attention to an opening for an analytical chemist, probably because I was currently teaching quant, but I was too much of an organiker to move in that direction. He also gave me some good advice. "Don't go to a college in the South," He said. "We've found that people who go there don't fit in. But," he added, "Texas is an exception." He told me that Texas would be a good place to go. At that time I dismissed that advice, for I doubted that I would fit in Texas any better than I would in, say, Alabama.

I knew what I wanted. I wanted to find a position at a medium-sized liberal arts college in a decent chemistry department with an emphasis on good teaching, an opportunity to direct undergraduate research, and do a little research on my own or in partnership with an undergraduate. Such places do exist. I knew people who taught in them, and I had visited their campuses. While I wanted the oppor-

tunity to have a modest research program, I was not interested in and probably not qualified for the "publish or perish" pressure of a research university.

In the fall of 1961 I put out inquiries and got a few nibbles. On my first interview, I visited a college where the reputation of the chemistry department fitted what I had in mind. I was surprised, therefore, when it turned out that the school's administration was more interested in what church I went to than in whether I could teach chemistry. I had had more than I needed of church-domination of a college in my first teaching job. I also did not belong to the right denomination for them, so the turn-down was mutual.

One of my former professors at Indiana University, my alma mater, urged me to apply for an opening at Virginia Military Institute. I did not think that I would fit into the culture of a military school, but I respected his judgment and applied. At the interview it turned out that the academic environment was quite attractive, and I believe I would have enjoyed being a part of it; but Professor Shriner was right: I would not fit into a traditional Southern environment. As the interview wound down, I was treated to a little speech about "observing traditions," and how "reformers" who wanted to change them were not welcome. I received it

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politely, but as soon as I got home, I sent a withdrawal of my application.

My next interview was at another liberal arts college. This one had an excellent reputation for the humanities, but I had never heard anything about its chemistry department. The interview was puzzling. I did not get to meet all of the members of the chemistry department; in fact, the department chairman did not seem to know all of them. He did not show me the facilities where the laboratory classes were taught. Then, at the end of the interview, the president of the college offered me a position of full professor with a salary so large that I was astonished. I was saved from accepting it on the spot by my commitment to one more interview in Texas!

In my previous interviews I did not meet any of the faculty of the college I was visiting until I reached the campus. I had not been asked to demonstrate my speaking abilities by giving a seminar or teaching a class, nor had I been given an opportunity to talk about my research interests. On my visit to Texas, Robert W. Higgins, the chairman of the chemistry department at Texas Woman's University, met me at Love Field, drove me to Denton, and put me up for the night at his home. In the morning I presented a seminar on my research interests to his sophomore organic class. TWU offered a master's degree in chemistry as well as a bachelor's, so there was an opportunity to direct some graduate research. The research facilities in the old Science Building were dark, damp, and smelly --- but there were research facilities!

On my previous interview, I had endured snow, ice, and freezing rain. The day of my interview at TWU was

in late March and a beautiful spring day---balmy temperature, bright sun, blue sky, and blooming flowers. Everything went well, including my interview with the president of TWU, Dr. John A. Guinn.

There was an ACS local section meeting that evening at what was then Arlington State College. Bob Higgins took me to it with him. Across the room I saw Charles S. Rohrer, who had been on the faculty of Indiana University when I was a student there. Bob Higgins told me that he was now chairman of the chemistry department at East Texas State University, and he insisted that I go and say "hello" to him. I was a bit reluctant to do that, since my only personal interaction with Dr. Rohrer had been to drop his kinetics course when I realized by the third class meeting that his teaching style and my learning style were incompatible. His response to my meeting him, however, was to tell Bob Higgins about me with such positive effusiveness that I was almost embarrassed. I don't think he remembered me.

I came away from TWU with a signed contract. I took a loss of rank, from associate professor to assistant professor, balanced by a significant increase in salary over what I had been making at Upper Iowa. I made the permanent move to Texas in mid-summer of 1961 and was well settled in by the start of the fall semester. I discovered that I had been misled by the beautiful spring weather of the day of my interview. I had traded frigid

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Iowa winters for torrid Texas summers. But the friendliness and courtesy of the people I met in Texas provided a nicer kind of warmth.

Besides Bob Higgins, my new colleagues were Helen Ludeman, William L. Mecay, Harold T. Baker, and Anne Terry. Within a few years, Harold Baker and Anne Terry left to teach in other colleges. Bob Higgins, Helen Ludeman, and Bill Mecay have passed away. Replacements for these old friends came and went. I taught chemistry and did a bit of research at TSU for 33 years. I retired in 1994.

A few years after I moved to Texas, Ralph Shriner in retirement moved to Texas also and affiliated with Southern Methodist University. He knew what he was talking about when he recommended relocating to Texas.

****Continued from page 11****

Southern Methodist University.

April 17, Michael J. Fevola, Johnson & Johnson Consumer Co., Inc., "A New Approach to Mild Cleansing: Mitigating Irritation with Hydrophobically-Modified Polymers." **May 1**, Michael F. Mayer, Texas Tech, "Efforts Toward the Development of Mobile (Slip-Link) Cross-Linked Polymeric Material." Seminars are normally at 3 p.m. in Room 152, Fondren Science Hall.

UT-Southwestern Biochemistry.

April 2, Lewis Cantley, Harvard, "P13K Signaling." **April 9**, Raymond Anderson, University of British Columbia, "Isolation and Structure of

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Novel Metabolites from Marine Organisms." **April 16**, Victoria Derosé, University of Oregon, "RNA Metallo-biochemistry and General RNA Structure and Function." **April 23**, Mikiko Siomi, Keio University, "miRNA, siRNA, piRNA." **April 30**, Rustem Ismagilov, University of Chicago, "Microfluids to Better Understand Organic Chemistry." **May 7**, Zissimos Mourelatos, University of Pennsylvania, "Human RNA Interference." Seminars are normally 12 noon, Biochemistry Lecture Hall L4.176 **UT-Southwestern Biological Chemistry.** **April 14**, Gui-Dong Zhu, Abbot Laboratories, TBA. **April 28**, Mukund Sibi, North Dakota State University, TBA. Seminars are normally at 12 noon, Biochemistry Lecture Hall, L4.176.

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Around-the-Area

University of Arkansas

Distinguished Professor **Robert Gawley** has been named Secretary of the Chemistry Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Graduate students **Jason Martin** and **Quan Yuan** successfully defended their doctoral dissertations. Martin's mentor is **Peter Pulay**, and Yuan's is **Frank Millet**. Graduate students **Abby Hubbard** and **Maha Shrestha** have passed the appropriate number of cumulative exams and are admitted to candidacy. Hubbard is in the Gawley lab, and Shrestha is in the McIntosh lab.

Peter Pulay traveled to Tokyo Mar. 3-7 to give an invited seminar in honor of Professor K. Hirao. Pulay also gave a seminar at the University of Puerto Rico on Mar. 16. He and graduate students **Juliette Rivero-Castro**, **Maha Shrestha**, **Silvana Dormi**, and **David Clay**, attended the Salt Lake City ACS meeting. **Ryan Tian** gave a seminar Feb. 18 at the University of Cincinnati. **Roger Koeppe** presented a seminar at Oxford University Mar. 20. **Joshua Sakon** presented a seminar at Amgen on Mar. 2.

Last fall 57 undergraduate chemistry majors made the Dean's List. About 24% of the department majors were in the top 10% in the Fulbright College for coursework last fall.

East Texas ACS Section

Chair-Elect **Justin Briggie** and wife **Dawn** are the proud parents of son **Marcus Christian**, born Feb. 23. **Dr. Jay Huebner** was the speaker at the March meeting held Mar. 9 at Kilgore College. His title was

"Astronomy Matters for Chemistry Teachers." The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15 (*note change of date*) at Texarkana College in Texarkana, TX. The speaker will be **Dr. Gary D. Christian** on "A Brief History of Analytical Chemistry."

Three student affiliate chapters in the East Texas Section will receive awards at the Salt Lake City ACS meeting on Mar. 22. The Chemistry Club of Northeast Texas Community College will receive a *Commendable* award, while the Texarkana College Chemistry Club and the Chemistry Club of the University of Texas at Tyler will both receive *Outstanding* awards. The Texarkana College Chemistry Club will also be recognized as a *Green Chemistry* chapter.

Heart o' Texas

Baylor University. The new Chair of the Chemistry Department will be **Professor Patrick J. Farmer** of UC-Irvine. He received his B.S. degree from UT-San Antonio and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. He had postdoctoral appointments at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and at Cal Tech. His research interests are in inorganic chemistry and bioinorganic chemistry. He will take his new post on July 1.

The department hosted prospective graduate students Feb. 20-21. Postdocs **Shou Feng Chen** and **Shen-En Chen**, graduate student **Basu Panthi**, and **Professor David Pennington** served as judges at the Central Texas Science Fair held Feb. 24 at Texas State Technical College.

Colloquium speakers were: Feb. 27, **Stephen Link**, Rice University and Mar. 9, **Rasika Dias**, UT-Arlington.

South Plains Section

Texas Tech University. The Texas Tech Student Affiliates of the ACS were awarded an *Honorable Mention Award* for their activities during the 2007-2008 academic year. They also have been awarded a travel grant by the ACS so that club officers **Sean Lee, Darshana Patel, Bryan Carlson** and **Kheim Tran** and club advisor **Dr. Bob Blake** can attend the Salt Lake City ACS meeting, where the chapter will receive its award on Mar. 22. Dr. Blake also gave a seminar on "The Chemical Scholars Program: Increased Performance of Chemistry Students" at UT-San Antonio on Feb. 19.

Assistant Professor **Dr. Dmitri Pappas** received a New Faculty Award from the Texas Tech Alumni Association. The award is based in part on letters of recommendation from both faculty and students. **Dr. Michael Fuertes** is the 2009 recipient of the Hemphill Wells New Professor Excellence in Teaching Award. The award from the TTU Association of Parents goes to a professor who has been at Texas Tech no more than four years and whose excellence in teaching has been attested by students, faculty, and administrators.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences has recently launched a new journal, *Molecular Plant*, which they hope will become one of the premier journals in the area of plant science. During the first year all issues will be on special topics and will contain only invited articles. An article from **Professor David Knaff's** lab has been chosen as the featured cover article for the

special issue on electron transfer processes in plants.

D-FW Section

In Memoriam Dr. Wilson Orr. Renowned geochemist **Dr. Wilson Orr** died Feb. 18 at age 86. He was born in New Mexico and received his undergraduate degree from Bethany College. There followed an M.S. degree from Purdue and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. He lived in California for many years before moving to Dallas to work for Mobil Research and Development Corp. He retired from Mobil after working there 30 years. He was a prime mover in the establishment of the ACS Division of Geochemistry. One of his important discoveries was the finding of large amounts of adamantane and higher adamantanes in gas from Mobil's Mary Ann field. However, due to proprietary considerations Mobil never allowed him to publish this work. He was also an accomplished artist. He is survived by a son, Wilson L. Orr, Jr. a daughter Linda Juergens, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Meeting-in-Miniature. UNT is hosting the section's meeting-in-miniature on Saturday, May 2, in the UNT chemistry building. There will be sessions for both undergraduate and graduate students. Session areas will include analytical, biochemistry, computational, inorganic, organic and physical chemistry. Abstracts should be no longer than 150 words and use the standard ACS format. Abstracts should be submitted online to www.chem.unt.edu/AbstractSubmission.htm. The deadline is no later than Friday, April 17. The registration fee is \$10 and includes a box lunch. Payment must be made by cash or check only and is

accepted at registration the day of the event. For updated information, go to the website at <http://www.chem.unt.edu/acsmim.htm>.

UT-Dallas. For the fourth consecutive year the student affiliate chapter at UT-Dallas is being honored for their accomplishments. They received a *Commendable* rating this year to go with their three previous ratings of *Commendable*, *Outstanding*, and *Outstanding*. The group will be honored at the Salt Lake City ACS Meeting. Their chapter advisor is **Dr. John Siebert** and their chapter president is **Liz Schmiedel**.

Texas Christian University. **Professor Manfred Reinecke** presented a seminar at Texas Wesleyan in February on "Medicinal Herbs as Leads for Drug Development." Undergraduate **Kasun Jayarathna** in **Tracy Hanna's** group received a TCU Science & Engineering Research Center grant for a project on "Synthesis of Bismuth Aryloxides."

UT-Arlington. Graduate student **Jaime A. Flores** from the Rasika Dias group has received an ACS Division of Inorganic Chemistry travel grant.

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April/May Metroplex Seminar Schedule

Seminars are occasionally postponed or cancelled. Call or check department websites before attending.

UT-Arlington. **April 3**, Amy Walker, Washington University, St. Louis, "Construction of Complex Two and Three Dimensional Devices: Adventures in Molecular Electronics." **April**

10, James Simpkins, UNT Health Science Center, "Estrogens and Mitochondrial Projections: Mechanisms and Consequences." **April 17**, Vincent J. Catalano, University of Nevada, Reno, "N-Heterocyclic Complexes of Au(I)." **April 21** (*Note change of day*), Scott Snyder, Columbia University, "Lessons in Chemoselectivity: Total Synthesis of Polyphenolic Natural Products." **April 24**, Ali Shilatifard, Stowers Institute for Medical Research, "Lessons Learned from Yeast about Human Leukemia." **April 30**, (*Note change of day*), Satomi Niwayama, Texas Tech, "Interplay of Chemistry and Biology." **May 1**, Lesa Beamer, University of Missouri, Columbia, "Conformational Change and Catalysis in a Phosphohexomutase from *Ps. aeruginosa*." **May 5**, (*Note change of day*), Diana Aga, University of Buffalo, "Fate and Removal of Pharmaceuticals and Hormones in the Aquatic System."

UT-Dallas. **April 3**, James Batteas, Texas A&M University, TBA. **April 17**, David Chung, UT-Southwestern, TBA.

University of North Texas. **April 3**, Brian Frost, University of Nevada, Reno, "A New Twist on an Old Ligand: Recent Developments in the Coordination Chemistry and Reactivity of PTA." **April 17**, Wesley Allen, University of Georgia, "Theoretical Advances for Hydrocarbon Reactions: A Homodesmotic Hierarchy, a Multi-reference Breakthrough, and a Tunneling Marvel." **April 24**, William Tong, San Diego State University, "Knocking on Avogadro's Door: Ultrasensitive MultiPhoton Laser-Based Detection Methods." **May 1**, John McLean, Vanderbilt, "Structural Separations by Ion Mobility-Mass Spectrometry: New

Prospects for Complex Biological Systems.” Seminars are normally at 3:30 p.m. in Room 106, Chemistry Bldg.

Texas Christian University. April 7, Chris O’Brien, UT-Arlington, TBA. **April 14**, Mihaela Stefan, UT-Dallas, “Polythiophene-based Materials for Organic electronics Applications.” Seminars are normally at 11 a.m. in Lecture Hall 4, Sid Richardson Science Building. ****Continued on Page 8****

APRIL MEETING

JOINT MEETING ACS D-FW SECTION AND FORT WORTH LIFE SCIENCES COALITION

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, ARTS 5TH AVENUE (1628 5TH AVE.)

“DATA---SCIENTIFIC METHOD,
EXPERIMENT DESIGN, DATA ASSESSMENT
AND REWORKING IN
THE COMPLEX WORLD OF TRADITIONAL AND HIGH-
THROUGHPUT SCIENCE”

Confirmed Panelists: Mary E. Anderson, Texas Woman’s University; Nelson E. Claytor, Fresnel Technologies, Inc.; Jeffery P. Demuth, UT-Arlington

Moderator: Pat Cappelletti, Manager, Product Safety Surveillance-Alcon R&D

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May Meeting. Meeting-in-Miniature, Saturday, May 2, UNT.