

Southwest

REPORT

November
2009

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- Ph.D. Program -

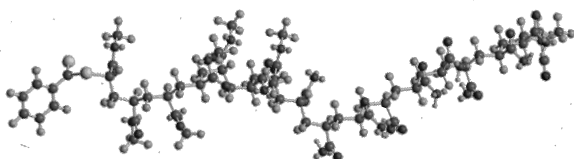


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DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

Opinion by John Spessard

johnspessard@yahoo.com

"A New Normal. Record Unemployment Requires a Realistic Attitude and Creative Thinking." *C&EN*, Nov. 2, 2009, p. 45.

Reading this section brought back memories that I would have just as soon kept buried. I did have enough "realistic attitude" and "creative thinking" to have survived. I found nothing new or surprising in that section.

I wonder if ACS's 4% unemployment rate for chemists is accurate. I attend local section meetings of ACS and AIChE, and from listening to people, I feel that 4% may be low. Also today (Nov. 10, 2009) Pfizer has announced that they are closing 6 of 20 research sites. (Pfizer is counting multiple facilities in an area as one site and has already closed some sites.) Today P&G announced that they are "consolidating" their R&D by closing laboratories in Massachusetts and Ohio. These actions are the rule rather than the exception.

The ACS story "Courting Generation Y" (same issue, p. 53) makes it clear that employers are laying off experienced employees so that they can hire entry level potential "superstars." This is as predicted in my paper "The Very Model of a Modern Profession" (*The Southwest Retort*, May-June, 2005, pp. 5-9).

I was in an industrial research group, and I had become an authority on an obsolete process. I realized that this made me an endangered species, and I earned a night school MBA. This helped. Later I found a home in the environmental field, and I earned a Professional Engineer license. This also helped. When I was approaching age 61, I was downsized; and consulting was the only option. (This firm went bankrupt a few years after I had left.) Consulting worked out

fairly well, and I am still getting some work while well past the normal retirement age. I have also earned a Certified Safety Professional credential.

I have found my experience and perspectives from other fields to have been of immense value in the fields I was now in. This was not reflected in my pay. Going into a new field you are in a buyer's market and won't do much better than entry level wages. Of the four "successes" in the *C&EN* pieces, pay was not mentioned in three and described as "shockingly low" in the fourth. Adjunct and other

non-tenured faculty (a possibility) are also poorly paid. My experience was that I did not want to look at the salary figures in *C&EN*. It made me feel bad.

ACS, the perpetual optimist, has predicted that the situation will improve but not soon. If so, my model and experience predicts that today's displaced professionals will be at a competitive disadvantage to the new entry level professionals. The only comfort I can provide is that survival is achievable while doing interesting work.

Letters to the Editor

Editor's Foreword. *In the May, 2009, Retort, pp 8-9, I wrote a piece called "A Councilor's Dilemma" about my conflicted feelings concerning a petition to have petition candidates for ACS president become instead petition nominees to be voted on by Council as part of the final slate. Because that petition contained two separate items, Council voted at the August meeting to recommit the petition to the Committee on Nominations and Elections for revision. The petition will come up again for vote at the March, 2010, meeting in San Francisco. Dr. Carroll's letter is in response to my piece. Regarding his comment in the letter on the petition candidacy of Dr. Mary Virginia Orna, it should be noted that Dr. Nancy Jackson was elected ACS president, thus keeping the standard ACS succession intact.*

Dear Editor:

Thanks very much for writing that. I realize that our votes in Washington will be very contentious. Some will characterize the discussion as "power" vs. "people," an argument that remains from the Alan Nixon era. In these days I believe it is largely an obsolete argument.

I am thinking about speaking at the mike at council---something I really try not to do. I have a voice. Most of the other 500 councilors do no, and this is their turn. But I have a very strong feeling.

The town meeting and the three minute speech to Council are a microcosm of the President's job. I know from uncomfortable experience that the President must answer extemporaneously tough questions from reporters, councilors, members, legislators and the public. This is the only time anyone gets the chance to hear how those nominees will handle themselves, and it truly matters. There is history of wonderful nominees on paper who were poor in person and on their feet---and Council rightly passed them over.

In addition, while it's not on the agenda, I'm concerned about the petition process as it is being executed this year. We have two sharp, articulate, dedicated women from the industry sector, one of whom is of native American extraction. Alternating presidents from industry and academe helps keep industry engaged---no

mean feat in these days. I love Mary Virginia, but I wish she, an academic, had not put herself forward this year.

I'm voting to have petition nominees face council and the town hall meeting. In my opinion it is the only fair thing, and it is a very useful thing.

Bill Carroll

Editor's Note. *This is a side bar from author Lyman Caswell concerning his article in the Mar., 2009, Retort on "How I Came to Texas."*

Dear Editor:

Here is one more job application story. When I started looking for a new position, one of my professors from Michigan State advised me of an opening in one of the smaller public colleges in the Upper Midwest. I sent an application and my credentials to the chair of the college's chemistry department. After some two months of no response, I received a letter from the school's dean, acknowledging my application and inviting me for an interview. The letter was apparently typed by the dean himself on a

typewriter very much in need of a new ribbon. I don't recall what excuse I gave for not interviewing when I replied, but I'm sure it was tactful. If the dean can't afford a secretary or even a new ribbon for his typewriter, could the chemistry department afford to buy a new test tube?

One might note that first impressions work both ways. Not only does the interviewee need to give a good impression, but the prospective employer does also.

Lyman Caswell

CHEM GEMS & JOULES

New Wing at Bishop Lynch High School Honores Sr. Cecilia Sehr. The importance of science has been marked at Bishop Lynch High School in Dallas with the construction of Phase 1 of a new science wing. The planned project will include nine more science labs with appropriate storage areas. This new wing is called the Sr. Cecilia Sehr Science Pavilion, honoring long-time Bishop Lynch science teacher Dr. Cecilia Sehr, and ACS member and a former winner of the

D-FW section's Schulz award. The building was dedicated on Sept. 13, 2009, with Bishop Kevin J. Marrell presiding.

Two of the lecture-lab rooms in the new wing are designed for biology classes with gas and electrical connections and hot and cold water at each lab table. The third room is multi-functional with two large fume hoods as well as gas, electrical, and hot and cold water at the table. All of the labs have Smart Boards and large amounts

of cabinet space. The hall leading to the classrooms will feature a 14 x 14 Periodic Table of the Elements with each element framed separately. In keeping with the Dominican heritage of the school, there is a one meter Cross of St. Dominic at the end of the hall, which is painted a lively green to remind all that this is a science area.

Biennial Conference on Chemical Education Coming Soon!

The 21st Biennial Conference on Chemical Education (BCCE) will be hosted by UNT in Denton Aug. 1-5. Sponsored by the ACS Division of Chemical Education, BCCE's are the largest gathering of chemical educators in the world. Representative symposia include "Chemical Education Around the World," "Cognition in Chemistry Education," "Food and Cooking in the Chemistry Curricu-

lum," "Survival Skills for 1st to 5th Year Chemistry Teachers," "Research in Effectiveness of Active Learning Pedagogies," and many more. Early registration begins Mar. 2, 2010. Early registration fees are \$250, general; \$200, pre-college; and \$125, graduate student. At the close of early registration, a \$50 fee will be added to all non-student categories. Abstract submissions open Nov. 21, 2009 and continue until Feb. 12, 2010. Workshop proposal deadline is Dec. 11, 2009.

To get the most recent information, join the 21st BCCE listserv by adding your name to the list at <http://chemed.tamu.edu/bcce2010>.

Submit material for the column to Mary Teasdale at owlcritic75@yahoo.com or to Tom Strom at tomstrom@juno.com.

Around-the-Area

University of Arkansas

Paul Adams received an administrative supplement to his NIH grant for two years. **Jack Lay** received an ASTA grant and gave an invited lecture in Jefferson on "Biomedical Mass Spectrometry at the Arkansas State-Wide MS Facility." **Joshua Sakon** gave two presentations at the Society for Bone and Mineral Research meeting held in Denver Sept. 10-15. **Roger Koepppe, Joshua Sakon, and Julie Stenken** attended the Arkansas Bioscience Institute Fall Research Symposium held Sept. 25 at Arkansas State. Presentations were given by **Denise Greathouse,**

Postdoc **Anna Daily**, and graduate student **Brandon Suttles**. Photos by Assistant Research Professor Denise Greathouse were on display through Oct. 30 at the Mullins Library. The departments of chemistry and biochemistry, physics, and biological sciences hosted the Arkansas INBRE (Idea Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence) Oct. 23-24. **Joshua Sakon** and **Suresh Kumar** gave a workshop on determining 3-D structures of proteins; **Colin Hayes** gave a lecture; and **Dan Davis** participated in a panel discussion.

East Texas

The October section meeting was held at Texarkana College. The speaker was **Ethan McBride** of the Texarkana College Chemistry Club. His topic was "Our Bodies Should Be Unleaded." The November meeting was held Nov. 16 at Stephen F. Austin State University. **Dr. Donald M. Burland** spoke on "What Happened in That 'Warm Little Pond'---The Search for the Molecular Origins of Life."

Congratulations to three ACS student chapters in the East Texas Section for awards for the 2008-2009 academic year. The Texarkana College Chemistry Club received an *Outstanding* rating. North Texas Community College and UT-Tyler both received *Commendable* ratings. The Texarkana Club also was recognized as a Green Chemistry chapter for the second year in a row. The awards will be presented at the ACS meeting this March in San Francisco.

Heart o' Texas

Oct. 9-10 the department hosted 22 students and 8 faculty from 10 different schools for their 4th Annual Advanced Instrumentation Workshop. **Drs. Pat Farmer, Kevin Pinney, Kevin Klausmeyer** and **Charles Garner** attended the Welch Conference Oct. 26-27. Nov. 9 Dr. Charles Garner and grad student **Jason Bell** spoke to the Chemistry Club at the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor. Nov. 7 the ACS student affiliates and **Dr. Riz Klausmeyer** presented a Chemical Magic Show at the Mayborn Mus-

eum. **Melanie Wilson, Dr. Elky Almaraz, and Dr. David Pennington** served as group mentors to 76 Invitation to Excellence students who participated in a problem solving exercise on "Going Where No One Else Has Gone---Planning a Trip to Mars."

Dr. Richard Philp of the University of Oklahoma presented a seminar on Nov. 4 as an ACS tour speaker. Colloquium Speakers: **Oct. 30**, Bill Hase, Texas Tech; **Nov. 6**, Carlos Garcia, UT-San Antonio; **Nov. 30**, Jeffrey Rack, Ohio Uni.

Dallas-Fort Worth

Local Reporter Dr. Tracy Hanna, t.hanna@tcu.edu.

Alcon Labs. Danny Dunn Retires. **Dr. Danny Dunn** retired Oct. 2 after 31 years of service. Danny earned BS and MS chemistry degrees from Wichita State. He received his Ph.D. in organic chemistry from North Texas State University in 1976 and then was a post-doc for two years in the biochemistry department at UT-Southwestern. He joined Alcon as a Senior Scientist in Analytical Chemistry R&D in 1978.

Danny participated in almost all of Alcon's major ophthalmic and optic/nasal products. Following the retirement of Dr. Ed Dorsey in 2003, Danny became head of the R&D Analytical Chemistry Group and was promoted to Vice President. Danny and his wife Nancy, a physician, have two children, Wendy and Andrew, and two grandchildren, Addison and

Drew. In retirement Danny plans to travel, play with his grandkids, pursue his photography hobby, and continue as Solutions Editor for the international chess problem magazine *Strategems*. Danny's successor is **Dr. Rex Hall**.

SMU. The first three Ph.D.s from the SMU chemistry department were awarded this summer to **Andrew Vogt**, mentor **Brent Summerlin**, "Macromolecular Design via Combinations of Controlled Radical Polymerization Techniques and Click Chemistry"; **Christianna Rissing**, mentor **David Son**, "Synthetic Approaches to New Multidentate Pyridyl Ligands and Sulfur-Containing Organosilicon Dendrimers"; and **Chinwon Rim**, mentor David Son, "Synthetic Approaches to Multidentate Thioether and Pyridyl Ligands."

John Buynak attended the CHI Healthtech's Institute's conference in San Diego, giving a talk on "Optimization of a Carbapenem/Beta-Lactamase Inhibitor Combination against Resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Acinetobacter baumannii*." **Brent Summerlin** gave an invited talk at the Washington ACS meeting on "Responsive Polymer-Protein Conjugates by Grafting from via RAFT Polymerization." A recent manuscript from his group in *J. Poly. Sci.* was recognized by Wiley as one of the hottest in polymer chemistry in terms of recent citations. **Mike Lattman** attended the 10th International Conference on Calixarene Chemistry in Seoul, Korea where he

presented "Bidentate Phosphorus Calix[5] Complexes of Platinum and Palladium. Structure, Reactivity, and Catalysis."

UT-Dallas. **Dr. Jie Zheng** was awarded an NIH R21 grant from NIBIB to investigate the underlying principles that govern the cellular permeability of nanomaterials. Researchers from UTD (**Drs. Ray Baughman, Anvar Zakhidov and Myron Salamon**), Clemson, and Yale were awarded a \$3 million grant from the Air Force to invent new superconducting wires based on highly engineered nanomaterials. **Dr. Mihaela Iovu** presented a seminar at Duquesne University, and **Dr. Paul Pantano** delivered seminars at TCU and UT-Arlington.

UT-Arlington. **Dr. Christopher O'Brien** coauthored a paper in *Angewandte Chemie* on "Recycling the Waste: The Development of a Catalytic Wittig Reaction." The paper was highlighted in the Sept. 7, 2009 issue of *C&EN*. UTA coauthors of the paper were **Jennifer Tellez, Zacharay Nixon, Lauren Kang, Andra Carter, Stephen Kunkel, and Katherin Przeworski** plus **Gregory Chass** of the University of Wales. **Dr. Charles Baker** of Southwest Research Institute gave a special seminar at UTA on "Experiences with Sponsored R&D" in connection with the naming of a UTA Fellowship in honor of Baker. His former classmate **Keith Crandell** of Arch Venture Partners decided to sponsor a scholarship in Baker's honor.

DECEMBER D-FW ACS MEETING JOINT WITH FORT WORTH LIFE SCIENCES COALITION

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9, ARTS 5TH AVENUE (1628 5TH STREET)

“We’re Here”

A Unique Program to Inform the Local Life Sciences Community Of the Resources and Opportunities Available in the Metroplex

About the Program: It’s no secret that our local life sciences community, although growing, is still fragmented. As recently as a few months ago, erroneous public statements that North Texas does not have the resources to bring projects to fruition were rampant. Unfortunately, many still believe this. To begin closing the gap between perception and reality---in all aspects of local life sciences---“We’re Here” will showcase Metroplex resources. The program will be ‘pitches’ by organizations/ corporations/inventors/investors/scientists/companies seeking to fill positions, etc., who will speak for two minutes each about what they do, what they can provide, and, if applicable, what they’re looking for in this area. Display tables for participants’ PR materials will be provided. Contact info for all the presenters will be collated into a spreadsheet which will be distributed and also posted on www.fwlsc.org. Presenters will be able to add a slide to Scroll-a-Rama.

Bonus: Dr. Susan Carson of Strategic Placement has generously offered to provide ‘pitch coaching’ to presenters. At least 30 minutes of advice will be available for \$20 (in addition to event donations) plus the first three presenters who contact Dr. Carson will receive complementary coaching. Contact Dr. Carson directly at www.splacments.com or at scarson@splacments.com or by phone at 817-742-0380.

Location: Arts 5th Avenue is at 1628 5th Ave. at the NW corner of 5th and Allen Avenues in the Fairmount Southside Historic District of Fort Worth.

Details and Deadlines: To Attend: \$10 cash or check at the door. Students with valid ID-\$5. Please respond by Monday, Dec. 7 to info@fwlsc.org. **To Present:** \$20 cash or check at the door; students with valid ID-\$10. Sign up to present by Friday, Dec. 4 by contacting: info@fwlsc.org. All slides due Dec. 7 to info@fwlsc.org. **To Scroll without Presenting:** \$10. Students and student groups-\$5. All slides due Monday, Dec. 7 to info@fwlsc.org.

Many thanks to our Sustaining Co-Sponsor, Fresnel Technologies, our Co-Sponsor, the Office of Research at UNTHSC, and to our Supporting Organizations: Dallas Forum for BioMedical Technology, The Health Industry Council, bioDFW, NTEC, Inc., and TechFortWorth.

December Metroplex Seminar Schedule

Seminars are occasionally postponed or can-celled. Call or check departmental websites before attending.

UT-Arlington. Dec. 4, Kevin Schug, UT-Arlington, "Mass Spectrometry is a Versatile Research Tool." Seminars are normally at 2:30 p.m. in Room 114, Baker Chemical Research Bldg.

UNT. Dec. 4, Wes Borden, UNT, "Tunneling in Organic and Organometallic Chemistry---Calculations Tell Experimentalists Where to Look and What to Look For." Seminars are normally at 3:30 p.m. in Room 106, Chemistry Building.

UT-Southwestern Biological Chemistry. Dec. 8, David Gin, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, TBA. Seminars are normally at noon in L4.162

TCU. Dec. 3, Adam Urbach, Trinity University, TBA. **Dec. 8,** Dieter Cremer, SMU, TBA. Seminars are normally at 11 a.m. in Lecture Hall 3, Sid Richardson Science Bldg.

Not the Post Office!

You readers, like I, must have fumed when your October issue arrived so late. Eighteen days after our printers had delivered the October issue to our mailers, I still hadn't gotten my magazine! I had written in my mind a nasty piece about the postal service. However, when our printers contacted our usually reliable mailers, they found that the October issues were still in the mailer's warehouse. Under the gun, the mailers got the issues to the post office that same day, and I received my mailed issue the very next day. Moral: It isn't always the postal service.