

Chemistry Newsletter



Special events in the Department

- *Movie Night in March*
(Details to come)

A New Look, A New Approach

You've talked and we've listened!

I have heard many of you say that you did not find a lot of value in the weekly Chemistry Newsletter, but for those of you who do read it, the seminar announcements were important. I think so too, but it's important for you to know what is going on in the Department and how it might impact you. To address those needs, the administrative team has come up with a new approach to disseminate information.

Effective today, the **seminar announcements will now be lifted out and sent around to the department separately under the subject heading of "Chemistry Seminar Sheet"**. They will still come out on a weekly basis and Jeannette Loiselle has come up with a jazzy new format to capture your interest.

The Chemistry Newsletter will still be distributed, but on a monthly basis instead and that will occur on the first Friday of every month. This will be a lengthier, more newsy document that will highlight incoming and outgoing

staff, upcoming social events, articles that promote healthy lifestyles (i.e. Anita Weiler will include healthy tips as a part of another new initiative - details to follow), articles from our HWC Safety Committee and a 'get to know your staff' feature. Contributions from your respective research groups and service units are welcome - the newsletter would be your venue to promote activities or people in your area. If you write it, we would be happy to post it - you would simply need to send your article to newsletter@chem.ualberta.ca by the close of business on the Wednesday before the newsletter's distribution. As with the seminar sheet, Laura Pham and Jeannette have come up with a visually brilliant format that I'm excited to share with you all later today.

A couple of other tweaks: the "Employment Opportunities" section will also be lifted out and **a link to those jobs will now be found on our website**. Mike Ferguson and I are still working on the logistics of that item; I

will send a URL once everything is finalized. Finally, to reduce the size of the bandwidth required to send out several hundred emails that have the newsletter as an attachment, **we will no longer be distributing the newsletter as an attachment**. As Jeannette has already been doing the past few weeks, we will simply provide you with a direct link to where the newsletter is located on our website (you can always navigate to it from the Chemistry homepage). That change will also take place effective today.

Comings and Goings

For those of you who use our Biological Services Laboratory located in E3-61, you will recall that **Dr Sandra Marcus** went on a 12-month parental leave as of December 2008. The Department was fortunate to hire **Mr Gareth Lambkin** in her place to cover her parental leave. When Sandra decided not to return to her position as Biochemistry Technologist, the Department began a lengthy recruitment process to replace her. I am pleased to announce that effective March 1, 2010, Gareth Lambkin appointed into this full-time continuing position.

Gareth obtained his Master of Science degree from the University of Alberta in 2001; his thesis involved researching peroxisomal biogenesis in the yeast *Yarrowia lipolytica*. He went on to spend the next five years working for Dr Luc Berthiaume in the Department of Cell Biology and then as a technician in the lab of Dr Laszlo Bajzar in the Department of Pediatrics for three years. Gareth brings a wealth of experience to this position and indicated that he has found great personal and professional satisfaction from performing his duties in the Biological Services Laboratory. It is his goal to continue to improve and expand upon the range of services offered by this lab.

Mrs Lai-Chu Kong joined the department's NMR lab in March 1, 1973 (as Miss Lai Lil) and worked her way up from Chemical Technologist I to her current position as Grade 11 Instrumentation Technologist. During her over 37 years of service in the Department, Lai married, had two children, represented Alberta Table Tennis Team in 1977 and spent numerous hours volunteering as an interpreter at various prestigious events, the most recent being the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. On behalf of the Department, please join me and her NMR colleagues in thanking her for a very long time of service for the betterment of NMR in this Department and wishing her the very best for her retirement.

Another long-time Chemistry employee, **Mr Edwin (Ed) Feschuk** will also leave at the end of March. Ed joined the Department in November 1976 as an Electronics Technician. At the time of his appointment, Ed had training as a microwave technician (back in 1963!) and as well, held an

Electronic Technology diploma from DeVry Technical Institute. By 1996, he was appointed as supervisor of the Instrument-Electronics Services Shop where he held that role until his retirement in August 2008. Ed came back on a post-retirement contract so that he could continue to support the needs of the Department. Please join me and his Electronics Shop colleagues in thanking him for his over 33 years of service in this Department and in wishing him the very best for his retirement.

Lastly, **Mr Gerald Streefkerk** of the Glass Shop will complete his post-retirement appointment with the Department at the end of March. Gerald joined Chemistry in February 1974 as a Glassblower. A point of interest about Gerald's appointment is that he was convinced to immigrate to Canada from Holland by Chemistry's then Glass Shop Supervisor, **Mr Cor Brusselers** with the specific intent that he take on this position. At the time, Gerald had just completed a five-year apprenticeship at Rijks Universitat and was all set to emigrate to Australia (*after experiencing Canadian winters, I wonder if he ever regretted his choice?*)! In reading past performance evaluations, Gerald's strengths were cited as "...being a first class glassblower, highly skillful, well versed, very devoted, and knows his training inside out. We are fortunate to have him around." Gerald remained that first-class glassblower until his formal retirement this March. As with Lai and Ed, the Department extends a hearty thank you for Gerald's 36 years of service to the Department of Chemistry. Quite literally, I wish him "happy trails" as Gerald can devote even more of his time and energy to the Iron Man competition that he annually participates in Penticton BC.

It should be noted that all three individuals have opted to quietly depart from the Department rather than being lauded at a celebratory event. If you do wish to say your goodbyes to them, please drop by their respective shops before the end of March to do so. Gerald works Mondays and Tuesdays; Ed works Thursdays and Fridays; Lai is still at the Olympics, but will return near the end of March to wrap things up.

Welcome to **Dr. Pablo Bianucci** who has joined the Department as a Post Doctoral Fellow under the supervision of Dr. Jon Veinot. Pablo's research interest includes the physics and applications of photonic devices, the interaction of nanomaterials with confined optical systems, and the experimental implementations of Quantum Computation.

Please extend a warm welcome to **Ms. Simone Gagne-Cote**, who will be volunteering for the Department from March 8th to 26th. Simone will be spending some of her time assisting Lynne and the remainder of her time assisting Laura with equipment inventory.

Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

For those of you who have personally experienced the frustration of walking up the photocopiers in E3-43 and seeing them be "Out of Order", you will be happy to know that they will be replaced. **Two, brand new Ricoh MP9901SP series copiers will be installed as of Wednesday, March 11.**

Members of the administrative team were consulted as to the photocopying needs and wants of the Department and the Ricoh vendors worked with us to meet them. The new copiers will do 90 pages per minute and will also have the ability to hole-punch and staple. Another exciting feature is that machine in mail

room will have the capacity to scan documents directly to your email as a PDF (once we've done a network drop)!

Training sessions will be arranged in near future so that you can become acquainted with the full scope of abilities of these new copiers. To confirm, the same photocopy codes that you use now will be transposed to the new system.

Accepting the Grand Challenge

Article taken from the University of Alberta's "Dare to Discover Report" for the Academic Year 2008-2009 (Page 34)

To receive a no-strings-attached grant to develop your novel and untested idea is a dream come true for any researcher. But that's exactly what happened to the researchers at TheraCarb Inc., an Edmonton biotechnology spinoff co-founded by the university's Dr. David Bundle, professor of chemistry.

TheraCarb's project was one of 104 grants announced by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the first funding round of Grand Challenges Explorations—an initiative to help scientists around the world explore bold, new solutions for health challenges in developing countries. The company received \$100,000 to test its promising PolyBAIT technology to fight the cholera toxin.

Current global fatality rates for cholera fall between 30% and 50%, but according to the World Health Organization, proper treatment of the disease could decrease the rate to below one per cent. Phase I of the project is now nearing completion with promising results, and TheraCarb plans to apply for the \$1 million Phase II grant from the Gates Foundation. To quote Tachi Yamada, president of the Gates Foundation's Global Health Program: "Projects from this initial pool of grants have the potential to transform health in developing countries, and I will be rooting for their success."

Our Congratulations to Dr. Bundle and TheraCarb Inc.!



Dr. David Bundle