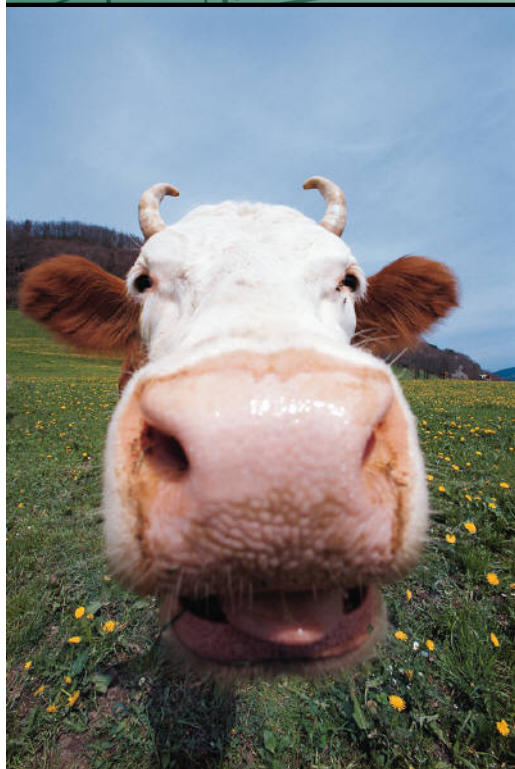


2011 january/february

a monthly publication of the  
department of chemistry  
university of alberta

# chemNEWS



## Inside This Edition:

Congratulations to:

- Successful students who passed their MSc/PhD Defense
- Award-winning professors

Featured articles:

- Women Sharing a Critical Moment in Time, Jan 18
- Are Cows more Trustworthy than Chemists? Jan 27
- CGSS Chili Cookoff
- HR Lunch and Learn
- Important Departmental Dates and Events, and much more!

## BUILDING UPDATES will return



### Important Dates & Events

- |                        |                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>February 14:</b>    | Valentine's Day / CGSS Chili CookOff |
| <b>February 21-25:</b> | Reading Week – No Classes            |
| <b>February 21:</b>    | Family Day – University Closed       |

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CONGRATULATIONS TO....

**Nicole Beckers** (Dr. Buriak) passed her PhD defense December 2, 2010

**Naresh Tuls** (Dr. Cairo) passed his MSc defense December 2, 2010

**Sayed Nagy** (Dr. Buriak) passed his PhD defense December 3, 2010

**Casey Costello** (Dr. Bundle) passed his MSc defense December 7, 2010

**Aleisha Rosse** (Dr. Harynuk) passed her MSc defense December 9, 2010

**Victoria Cooper** (Dr. Wong) passed her MSc defense December 9, 2010

**Shimal Fernandopulle** (Dr. Clive) passed his PhD defense December 9, 2010

**B.J. Medos** (Tykwinski) passed his MSc defense January 5, 2011

**Fang Wu** (Li) passed her PhD defense January 7, 2011

**Kevin Guo** (Li) passed his PhD defense January 11, 2011

**Brenna Brown** (Veinot) passed her PhD Candidacy exam January 12, 2011

**Yang Liu** (Xu) passed his MSc defense January 12, 2011

**Jesse Li** (Vederas) passed his PhD defense January 17, 2011

**Andrea De Souza** (Li) passed her PhD defense January 18, 2011

**Andy Lo** (Li) passed his PhD defense January 24, 2011

**Michael Hass** (Bergens) passed his MSc defense January 24, 2011

**Matthew Sirtonski** (Veinot) passed his MSc defense January 31, 2011



## CONGRATULATIONS TO....

**Dr. Chris Le**, an adjunct professor with the Department, who was one of three University of Alberta researchers admitted into the Royal Society of Canada (RSC). Dr. Le was inducted to the RSC in a ceremony on November 27, 2010 in Ottawa, Ontario. He was elected to the society by his peers in recognition of outstanding scholarly and scientific achievement.

**Dr. D. Jed Harrison**, who was awarded the J Gordin Kaplan Award for Excellence in Research in December 2010. The award pays special tribute to J Gordin Kaplan, the first Vice-President (Research) at the University of Alberta. This award is considered the most prestigious University of Alberta research award.

**Dr. Chris Cairo**, who received one of ten awards from the Interdepartmental Science Students' Society (ISSS) at its first Annual Professor Appreciation Night on January 13th. The event was a celebration of "every day difference-makers that go above and beyond to help students in their undergraduate science careers."

**Dr. Fred West**, who has been awarded the CSC 2011 Alfred Bader Award. This award is presented as a mark of distinction and recognition for excellence in research in organic chemistry. Dr. West will be presenting an Award Lecture at the 94th CSC Conference in Montreal in June.

**Amgad Albohy**, a graduate student (PhD, Chemical Biology) with Dr. Cairo, was awarded an AHFMR Studentship Award from Alberta Innovates, Health Solutions in October 2010.

**Dr. Jennifer Chaylor**, a post-doctoral fellow with Dr. Vederas, was awarded an October 2010 AHFMR Fellowship Award from Alberta Innovates, Health Solutions.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO....

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) announced that 34 University of Alberta researchers will share in more than \$7.1 million for 24 projects supported by the Leaders Opportunity Fund. This fund is designed to support key research at Canadian universities by giving these institutions the resources needed to attract and retain top researchers in a competitive international research market. Congratulations to **Dr. John Klassen** and **Dr. Michael Serpe** who were 2 of the 34 researchers at the U of A to receive this funding!

**Dr. John Klassen** will receive \$439,887 for "Mass Spectrometry for the Analysis of High Molecular Weight Protein Complexes."

**Dr. Michael Serpe** will receive \$128,000 for "Facility for the Fundamental Characterization and Application of Advanced Materials."

In addition to his CFI support **Dr. John Klassen** was also featured in the December 13, 2010 issue of Chemical & Engineering (C&E) News. You can read the article using the following link:

<http://pubs.acs.org/isubscribe/journals/cen/88/i50/html/8850scic2.html>

## WELCOME TO....

**Dr. Igor Leonov**, a visiting professor from the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Applied Physics, who will be working within the research lab of Dr. Yunjie Xu for the next two months.

# Are Cows More Trustworthy Than Chemists?

An Evening with Dr. Joe Schwartz, January 27th

Review by Joel Kelly and Sarah Regli,  
Veinot Group Graduate Students

In honour of the official kick-off of the International Year of Chemistry (IYC2011), the Edmonton local section of the Chemical Institute of Canada hosted Dr. Joe Schwartz, Director of the McGill University's Office for Science and Society, at the Telus World of Science. It was great!

Dr. Schwartz is one of the most recognizable Canadian faces for outreach in chemistry—in addition to his weekly Montreal-based radio show where he answers questions about any kind of chemistry from the general public, he also has written ten books on the chemistry of everyday life.

Delivering an hour-long lecture inside the IMAX theatre, Dr. Schwartz gave an engaging story of how chemistry has become synonymous with toxic pollutants and industrial additives in the eyes of the public. He gave several examples of how the popular sentiment of "don't eat it if you can't pronounce it" is often misplaced. A discussion on the history of "bad" chemicals (including DDT, BPA and phthalates) was presented, showing that there are no "good" or "bad" chemicals, just safe and hazardous ways

to use them. Furthermore, the incredible limits of detection provided by analytical tools in chemistry can also confuse understanding of the risks associated with many chemicals with a bad reputation—Dr. Schwartz pointed out several examples illustrating that the dose indeed makes the poison.

Dr. Schwartz ended his talk by encouraging the audience to engage the general public and seize the opportunity presented by IYC2011. If we all help to educate our non-chemist friends and family to dispel many of the unfounded fears they have about chemicals, we can reverse the public perception of chemistry and get back to "better living through chemistry."

The Edmonton local section of the CIC is planning several more events as part of IYC2011. You can stay up-to-date by visiting their website (<http://www.cicedmonton.org/index.php>) or by joining the excellent "Recycled Electrons" mailing list put on by Dr. Lucio Gelmini. You can email Lucio at [GelminiL@macewan.ca](mailto:GelminiL@macewan.ca).

## Contributions Welcome

This newsletter belongs to the department of Chemistry. So submissions of interest to our department are welcome.

Submissions can be up to 1000 words and are subject to editing. Send your submissions to: [newsletter@chem.ualberta.ca](mailto:newsletter@chem.ualberta.ca)

Please send submissions by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to ensure they can be featured in the next month's newsletter.

## Café CIC 2011

Date: Thursday March 24

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: University of Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean

Title: "Science of Fun of Cheese"

The Edmonton local section of the CIC's signature event is the Cafe CIC. This outreach event is a public lecture on chemistry with a twist. It usually features a popular food or beverage as a topic with an accompanying practical laboratory component (i.e. a tasting) that can be enjoyed by participants. It is always a bit hit with venues packed to capacity.

Past Café CIC topics have included: Wine, Chocolate, Beer, Tea, Coffee, Scotch



# Women Sharing a Critical Moment in Time: 7:30 a.m., January 18, 2011

Bonnie Gover

While some of us were still rubbing sleep from our eyes, room 3-25 in the Gunning/Lemieux building was abuzz with activity. That's because 40 women chemists were gathered together over breakfast to take part in a worldwide networking event in celebration of the International Year of Chemistry. Thirty-six countries in total participated, the local event being hosted by the Edmonton section of the Chemical Institute of Canada. In addition to sharing enthusiasm for their work and reflecting on the current role of women in chemistry, attendees commemorated the presentation of the Nobel Prize to Marie Curie – the first woman to receive it – 100 years ago.

During the breakfast, links to other breakfasts were made through skype™, creating what the Australian organizer and chemistry professor, Mary Garson, described as “a global chemical handshake.” Photos from the individual breakfasts were collected and put together as a collage, to be shown a week later at the official UNESCO launch of IYC2011 in Paris.

Here in Edmonton, Margaret-Ann Armour pulled the breakfast together for the enthusiastic attendees, who ranged from undergrads to those with established careers in chemistry. As Margaret-Ann says, “It was absolutely amazing. Exceedingly good.” The time difference was a challenge since the only breakfasts that Edmonton could hook up with were those in the northern hemisphere. However, even with time zone and language difficulties, the event was hugely successful. Edmonton chemists skyped with other women in Bagota, at Bryn Mawr College, and in Boston. Paraguay called later to chat too, says Margaret-Ann. For her, the

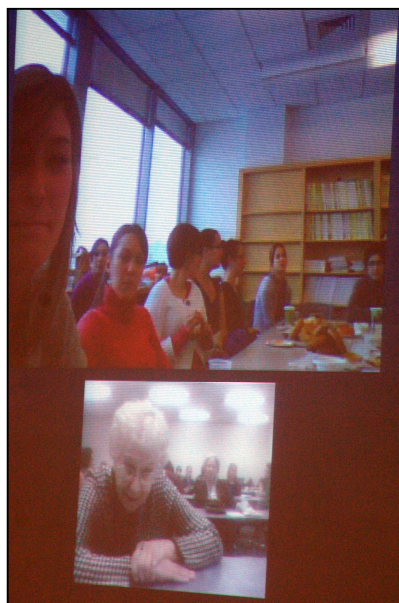
sense of coming together was “quite an unexpected excitement.”

Among interesting observations during the event, one finding of note was shared: 100 years after Marie Curie's outstanding moment in history, the challenge she expressed still exists: how does one balance having a family and a chemistry career at the same time? A question for the ages, to be sure.

More information about CIC can be found at <http://www.cicedmonton.org>



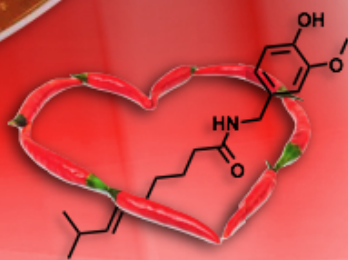
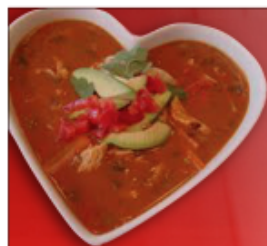
At left: skype™ projection; Top: Margaret-Ann skyping with students at Boston breakfast; Bottom: Boston breakfast being waved goodbye; Edmonton Breakfast attendees



Photos courtesy Dr. Haley Wan



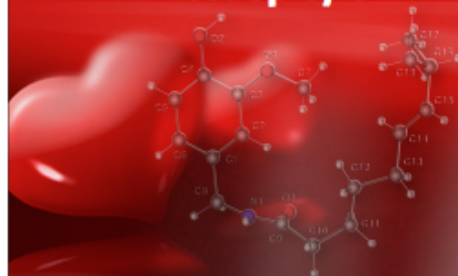




The Chemistry Graduate Students' Society  
invites you to the  
**“Burning with Love”  
Chili Cookoff**

**Best Chili Wins  
a New Slow Cooker!**

**Prizes Also Awarded for  
“Best Spicy Chili”**



**February 14th, 2011**

**Chem E3-25**

**Tasting from 11:30am - 1:30pm  
Only \$5 to try them all!!**

**We provide a bowl and spoon  
just bring your appetite!**

**Also available:  
pop & hot dogs (\$1 each)**

**To enter your chili, e-mail: [cgss@chem.ualberta.ca](mailto:cgss@chem.ualberta.ca) before Feb. 11**

### ***Burning with Love....***

The CGSS will be holding their Second Annual Chili Cook Off from 11:30am to 1:30pm on Valentine's Day (Monday, Feb. 14th). Last year's cook off was a huge success, and they expect this year to be even better!

The categories for the competition are: "Best Spicy Chili" and "Best Chili Overall". The Spicy Chili victor will be showered with praise, and own bragging rights for the year. The cook responsible for the "Best Chili Overall" will win a slow cooker!

So, plan to come on by E3-25 on February 14th. Bring \$5 and we'll get you a bowl and a spoon. BYOM (bring your own milk), but we will be offering pop and hot dogs for \$1 each.

To enter as a contestant (we still need more!), send an email to the CGSS ([cgss@chem.ualberta.ca](mailto:cgss@chem.ualberta.ca)) by February 11th. All contestants eat free!

### **Do You Have an Idea...**

...for a cost-saving measure or revenue-generating plan? We now have a new e-suggestion box.

Email: [suggestions@chem.ualberta.ca](mailto:suggestions@chem.ualberta.ca)

### **Did You Know?**

The University of Alberta has more than 210,000 alumni worldwide and has alumni branches or branch contacts in 46 areas around the world.

From *UofA Facts*



Health Promotion and WorkLife Services (HPaWS)

# LUNCH & LEARN

**February 2011**

**12:05 – 12:55 p.m.**



---

**\*\*Please note that staff and faculty will receive priority Lunch and Learn registration, with others being accommodated if space permits. To ensure a quality learning environment for all participants, registrants are asked to please endeavour to arrive at Lunch and Learns on time to minimize class disruption.\*\***

---

## **Finding New Meaning in Work**

**Theresa Williams, Human Solutions**  
**Thursday, February 3, 2011—CAB 373**

The objective of this workshop is to offer participants the opportunity to reflect on the place work occupies in the overall context of their lives. Participants are invited to think about the satisfaction that they get from work and about the different ways they can give new life to their career.

---

## **Coping with Negative Thoughts**

**Irene Spelliscy, Human Solutions**  
**Wednesday, February 9, 2011—Education South 177**

This Lunch and Learn will give an introduction to the basics of how to cope with negative thoughts. Participants will learn about common thinking traps and explore some basic self-help tools and strategies to help them challenge negative thoughts.

---

## **Insight Meditation (Vipassana)**

**Kat Boehm, Campus Recreation**  
**Wednesday, February 16, 2011—Kiva Room (Education North 2-103)**

Insight Meditation (Vipassana) is the art of using the breath to stabilize the mind. Once the mind is centered and calm, observation can be present. Noticing what is happening moment-to-moment enables awareness to arise. Seeing very clearly how the mind responds to simple thoughts, sounds, feelings and images allows for understanding.

*\*To best ensure an environment conducive to meditation, latecomers will not be permitted entry.\**

---

## **Protect Your Health—Facts About Heart Disease and Stroke**

**Mike Hoffman, Heart and Stroke Foundation**  
**Thursday, February 24, 2011—CAB 373**

*\*\* February is Heart Month! \*\**

Are you at risk of a heart attack? What about a stroke? Take some time away from your work responsibilities and focus on your own health and wellbeing. Join us as we learn how both the heart and brain work. Participants will also explore the risk factors and warning signs of heart attacks and strokes.

---

Bring your lunch and join us for these informative sessions. Seating is limited—please register at [www.learningshop.ualberta.ca](http://www.learningshop.ualberta.ca). For information about the Lunch & Learn program, contact the Health Promotion and WorkLife Services office: [hpaws@hrs.ualberta.ca](mailto:hpaws@hrs.ualberta.ca).