



# Solutions



7/2/2007

## Message from the Editor:

You now hold in your hands the second issue of the newly revived newsletter of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. A new issue will arrive each spring (hopefully) to keep you informed about the department, school, and the lives of your fellow alumni. Note that a majority of the content is generated from our contact with the alumni. If you happen to be in the area or will be attending homecoming, we would love for you to stop by. Just call ahead first.☺ Alternatively, send us a letter or email about what you are doing. As a department, we hope that through this newsletter you will feel more connected to your Alma Mater and the current students who are following in your footsteps. If you have any suggestions to improve the content or format of this newsletter, please contact me at the address on the last page or via email.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edward Donnay

[donnay.edward@mcm.edu](mailto:donnay.edward@mcm.edu)

## Alumni News:

Charles Harris ('40) sent a wonderfully informative letter in response to the first newsletter. He has had many adventures and traveled worldwide since graduating from McMurry. He reports that he originally intended to go to medical school, but was diverted due to an illness in the family. He found his way to Phillips Petroleum, and worked with that company in many different capacities until retirement in 1984, save for a stint with the U.S. Navy during World War II. During his time in the Navy, he was trained as an engineer, and this served him well in his subsequent work with Phillips. Charles fondly remembers Dr. H.G. Burman, who taught chemistry and physics here, and with whom Charles worked as a physics lab assistant.

Jerome (ex '62) and Bobette ('62) Doerrie stopped by at Homecoming. Jerome majored in chemistry while he was here, and Bobette was a Math/Computer Science major. Both have taught middle and high school science and are now retired from teaching. Bobette now works in an administrative position at Frank Philips College. Jerome is farming and doing research on the restoration of beneficial soil microbes to farmland.

Dr. Sterley Bob Cole ('69) is currently with the Supelco Division of Sigma-Aldrich. Dr. Cole visited in October and made some excellent suggestions to the department about hosting alumni at Homecoming.

Jack Graham ('69) wrote and commented that his class was one of the last to have chemistry classes in the old quadrangle building. (We have heard from other sources that that was quite the experience to have classes in that building! If you have some other good stories about our departmental history, we would love to hear them!) He also had classes in the current Finch-Gray Science Building. Jack also had a tour with the Navy and then worked in the CIA. Following that, he worked as a research chemist in a variety of manufacturing companies, eventually working his way up to President of Coroplast. He earned an MBA from UT-Arlington in 1992, and is now President of Corbi Plastics in Wisconsin.

In November, Geof Whitley ('01) was in town for the month to visit family and friends. He was recovering from surgery in which he donated a portion of his liver to a friend. Geof was married last summer to Megan, and they currently live in Boston. Geof was applying to graduate school in psychology when we last spoke.

Another Homecoming attendee, Kay Younggren ('02) is now Dr. Younggren, having graduated from Baylor College of Dentistry in May 2006. She is now in private practice in Artesia, NM.

Nathan Rife ('04) wrote that he was finishing a Master's degree in Chemistry at TAMU, and then would be deciding whether to pursue a Ph.D. in chemistry or perhaps switching to engineering or even dentistry.

Eric Palmer ('05) has been working at the Trinity River Authority water treatment facility in Dallas as an aquatic toxicologist. He was also looking into graduate programs in biochemistry or molecular biology at University of North Texas and UT-Dallas.

Sean Smith ('06) visited Abilene a couple of times in the past year to prepare for his marriage to Courtney Hendricks, a current McMurry biology major. Sean had a good first year as a graduate student at the University of Missouri-Rolla, studying polymer chemistry.

Rusty Sliter ('06) stopped by while he was in town for his sister's wedding. Rusty is enjoying his first year at the University of Southern California, studying physical chemistry. At the time of this writing, he should be in Japan as part of a research collaboration effort.

Thanks to all who have written or visited. We look forward to more visits and letters during the next year!

### **Departmental News:**

We are happy to introduce two new graduates, Dylan Everett and Catrina Reed. Dylan will be attending the Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas, which is part of the Texas A&M Health Sciences System. Catrina will be entering graduate school at Texas A&M in College Station to begin studies in molecular biology. A report on the Honors thesis that she wrote about her research is located below.

We would also like to welcome the newest member of the McMurry Chemistry family, Lorraine (Rainey) Pyenta, born February 14, 2007. She was 7lbs. 10oz. and 20in. long. She joins her older brothers Adam, Nathaniel (Natty), and Gabriel (Gabby) in the Pyenta household. Congratulations, Paul and Josie!

We regret to report that Mrs. Roberta Jones, widow of Dr. W. Norton Jones, passed away at the age of 91 on December 9, 2006, in Albuquerque, NM. We current faculty members did not have the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Jones, but perhaps many of you reading this did know her. Mrs. Jones is survived by her nephew and nieces. If any of you wish to send condolences to her family, we can assist you with contacting them.

Some of our more recent graduates knew John Wallace, who began a major in chemistry a few years ago. We were all saddened by his death two years ago from cancer. Just recently, his family established an endowed scholarship in his memory. The John Oliver Wallace Memorial Scholarship will be given annually to a student pursuing a major or minor in chemistry. The Chemistry department is grateful for the Wallace family and their commitment to McMurry University in memory of their son.

We would like to send along our best wishes to Mrs. Alecia Eppley who is leaving the department after serving as an adjunct for three years. She was instrumental in developing the two

semester chemistry sequence for nursing majors. Alecia and her family are moving to Pennsylvania, where her husband took a position in the religion department at Thiel College. A search for a new adjunct has just begun, but we will have a hard time finding someone as good as Alecia.

### **Departmental Research:**

Catrina Reed, a recently graduated senior, completed and orally defended an honors thesis based on her work with Dr. Pyenta. The title of her thesis was “Transformation of *Bacillus thuringiensis* with GFP Encoding Vectors via Electroporation.” Katrina describes her work as follows:

Dr. Pyenta and I have researched how to efficiently transform the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* with a plasmid that contains encoding for GFP. The bacterium is a bioinsecticide that produces a delta-endotoxin upon sporulation. The toxin has varying toxicity to some insects. By transforming the bacterium with a plasmid that encodes for GFP, the bacterium can be tracked through the intestinal tract of insects, and the effectiveness as a bioinsecticide can be studied.

While we don't usually teach classes during the summer, that doesn't mean that the department is on vacation! We are committed to using research as a tool to teach interested students. We have been fortunate to have a Welch Foundation Departmental Research Grant since June 1999 which has enabled us to carry out research during the summer, usually involving a handful of students. This summer, Dr. Paul Pyenta will be advising two students who will be continuing on the project that Katrina advanced over the past year. In the effort to setup his lab and begin doing some synthetic research, Dr. Edward Donnay will be assisted by a student. Meanwhile, Dr. Arlen Jeffery will be continuing his work with anti-viral agents and Dr. Pam Veltkamp will be working on changing the direction of her research.

### **School and Miscellaneous News:**

On March 24, the science departments at McMurry were pleased to co-host Professor Frank Wilczek as a Nobel Laureate speaker. Dr. Wilczek received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2004 for his work on the fundamental properties of mass. His visit here was sponsored by McMurry's Science/Math Advisory Board (SMAB). This Board is a group of science, math, and computer science alumni who voluntarily assist the science and math departments at McMurry with a variety of support, such as obtaining speakers like Dr. Wilczek and sending students to professional conferences. Our department has benefited from SMAB's help when they raised matching funds for a grant. If you would like to know more about SMAB, you can visit their website at [mcmurrysmab.org](http://mcmurrysmab.org) or by contacting the current chairman, Dr. Max Wynn ('80, Chemistry and Biology) at 760 Treadwell, Hurst, TX 76053.

The SMAB also sponsors the McMurry Science and Mathematics Wall of Honor into which Dr. Roy W. Sonntag ('60-'96) was inducted this past year. He joins Dr. W. Norton Jones ('48-'76), who was inducted in 1997, as former chemistry faculty so honored. Dr. Sonntag could not attend the ceremony, so Dr. David Klassen ('69-'06) accepted the award on Dr. Sonntag's behalf.

During the coming year McMurry University will undergo some organizational restructuring. The College of Arts & Sciences where the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry currently resides is being broken into three new schools. The new home of the department will be the School of Natural and Computational Sciences. Along with this new change, the university is eliminating department chairs. Some of the duties of the current chair will be taken over by the dean of the new school, with the rest divided amongst the current members of the department. Everyone is a little apprehensive about the change and how it will affect the day-to-day activities of the department.

### **Alumni Search:**

The following table contains the names of alumni for whom we have incomplete, incorrect, or no address. If you know the contact information for any of these alums, we welcome your sharing that information with us, or you might contact that person and ask him/her to contact us. Thank you!

Greg Mamikunian '56	Peter Morford '75
David Neel '58	Mary (Shooter) Real '75
James Tingle '59	Tommy C. Taylor '75
Jack Shultze '62	Dr. Roderic Harold Fabian '76
Dr. Reynold Carlson '63	Conley Goines '76
Mohammad Dareshori '63	Dr. Norman Carl Sulser, Jr. '76
Gail (Hart) Long '64	Eugene Weitzel '78
Steven Sample '66	Gregory Guy Alexander '79
Dr. James Ira Duff '67	Mark B. McClure '80
Dr. Mary Jane (Matthews) Wray '67	Laurel Van Winkel '81
Sharon DuBoise '69	Kirk Arthur Brooks '82
Dr. Carolyn Nell (McCoy) Cutaia '69	Mansel Harris '82
Dr. Carl Wayne Hudson '72	Rosalind Rankin '83
George E. Bernard '73	Dr. Mary Linda Sellers-Hann '83
Roger Keith Allen '74	Gregory Aguilar '85
C. Randall Cotney '74	Johnny Duane Rowland '85
Dennis J. Smiley '74	Kerry Kyle Clark '86
Susan Arth '75	Marcus Von Babb '94
Richmond Cullins '75	Mirela Zimic '97
Robert C. Loyd '75	Dr. Doug McEwen '01

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