



MCM Solutions



6/9/2014

Message from the Editor:

When the alumni newsletter was revived in 2006-7, it was hoped that it would allow us, the current faculty members, to form relationships with you, our alumni, and to let you know what is going on at McMurry in the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry and how we are continuing to uphold the excellent reputation that you helped establish. It was also seen as an opportunity for chemistry alumni to re-connect to their alma mater. I hope that in some small way the annual newsletter has helped you feel as though you are still a part of the McMurry chemistry family.

At this time I would like to begin establishing a new connection between our alumni and our current students. For this purpose I am going to borrow an idea from my colleagues in physics. For the past few years they have invited alumni back to campus to give informal talks to the Society of Physics Students titled "What I did with my McMurry Physics Degree". I would like to extend the same invitation to you to speak to the members of the chemistry club about what you did with your chemistry degree. Don't feel apprehensive if your career path perhaps has veered away from chemistry. In fact, it is important for our students to be exposed to a wide variety of career options. The chemistry club usually meets every other Thursday at noon, but other dates/times could be arranged. If you are willing to give such a talk about how your chemistry degree helped you get to where you are today, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edward Donnay

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Alumni News:

One of our earliest recorded chemistry department graduates passed away on April 29th. Dr. Marshall D. Turnbull ('46) was a member of Kiva Social Club and came to McMurry right out of high school, but his college career was interrupted by his service as a B-24 navigator in WWII. After graduation and a short stint teaching chemistry in Hobbs, New Mexico, he decided to become a doctor and attended the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He returned to Abilene in 1952 to set up his medical practice and did not fully retire until 2009. He was instrumental in obtaining and administering the polio vaccine to Abilene High School students when it first became available. He was recognized by his peers with the prestigious Gold Headed Cane Award for his achievements and contributions to the medical field.

We were also saddened to learn of the passing of Mr. Steven Dee Sample ('66) on July 27, 2013. Steve was a native of Abilene and after graduation from McMurry attended Purdue University to pursue a PhD in chemistry, but his education was abruptly interrupted due to illness. He later received a Master's degree in Chemistry from ACU in 1978. He worked as a staff chemist at Aileen Corporation in Abilene and taught at Cisco Junior College for a time. Steve was very active with local church congregations and maintained a long-standing relationship with at least three of them. After being on our list of alumni with no address when this newsletter was revived in 2007, he surprised Dr. Veltkamp at a church function and visited the department in 2008-9.

Dr. Ralph McCleskey ('65) attended the Presidential inauguration ceremony in March.

Mr. Roger Allen ('74) and his wife stopped by the department in the summer of 2012 as they were passing through Abilene. Roger has worked for Dow Chemical for 39 years, first in the IT department and now with Inductively Coupled Plasma instruments.

Mr. Jon Rowland ('85) stopped by the department while celebrating his daughter's graduation as a Psychology/Criminology major. He lives with his family in Farmington, New Mexico, where he teaches high school chemistry. We enjoyed talking with them and showing them that while some things have changed, some things have remained constant in the science building.

We occasionally run into recent graduates in Abilene. Katie Neal ('10) has taken a position at the City of Abilene Environmental Laboratory. Brandon Randell ('10) continues to teach chemistry at both Cisco College and for the Abilene Independent School District at Cooper High School. He was voted by the Class of 2014 for the Faculty "C" Award (Teacher of the year). Erica (Rawls) Wilson ('11) and Amanda Genzling ('13) were both seen on the McMurry campus at graduation to celebrate with friends and family.

The McMurry Science/Math Advisory Board (SMAB) sponsored the second annual golf tournament this spring to benefit the math and science departments at McMurry. They are thinking of moving the event from Abilene to the Dallas/Fort Worth or San Antonio area next spring. If you would like to know more about this event or SMAB, you can find a link to their website on our webpage, www.mcm.edu/chemistry or contact the chair Dr. John Manning ('79) at jmanning@sw.org.

Departmental News:

The department is happy to introduce four new graduates: Joshua Brooks, Brandon Copeland, Sara Ploetz, and Bradley Rowland! Josh Brooks is from Abilene and while earning his B.S. degree in Biochemistry he traveled to the Galapagos Islands and New York City as part of the Model UN program. He also worked two summers doing research with Dr. Donnay and shared the W. Norton Jones Scholarship. He is currently interviewing for jobs in the chemical industry. Brandon Copeland is a US Navy veteran who transferred to McMurry from Cisco College. He finished his B.S. degree in Chemistry in just two years while working to support his family. He plans to gain employment in local industry or obtain a teaching certification. Sara Ploetz is from San Antonio and was a member of the McMurry swim team while she obtained her B.S. degree in Biochemistry. She performed research with Dr. Shin in the summer of 2012 and shared the W. Norton Jones Scholarship; she is undecided about her future plans. Brad Rowland was a double major in Biochemistry and Biomedical Science and won the Outstanding Senior Award in both areas. Brad was a University Honors Program graduate (*magna cum laude*) who did research at the Texas Tech School of Pharmacy in Abilene under the direction of Dr. Irene La-Beck. He also served as president of the chemistry club. He plans to continue to work at the pharmacy school while he applies to graduate and professional schools.

The McMurry University Student Affiliates Chapter of the American Chemical Society (ACS) was awarded an Honorable Mention from the national organization for the 2012-13 academic year. The club last received an award from the ACS in 2007-8 for Meritorious Service.

We are happy to announce that Dr. Hyunshun Shin is returning to McMurry University after a one year leave of absence. Dr. Shin took leave to be with her new husband in Chicago where he works for the Federal Aviation Administration. Fortunately his job with the FAA was relocated to Texas and they are looking to move into a house in Abilene this summer. Dr. Shin has been a member of the McMurry Department of Chemistry since 2008 and teaches organic chemistry.

While Dr. Shin was away, Dr. Donnay switched over from teaching general chemistry to cover organic chemistry. Although trained in organometallics and having previously taught a few organic laboratories ten years ago at another school, it was a significant teaching challenge. New

department chair, Dr. Paul Pyenta, found Ms. Glenda Bowden to step in and teach general chemistry. Ms. Bowden recently retired from Jim Ned ISD as an elementary school principal, but she has a master's degree in chemistry and had previously taught high school chemistry for many years. We sincerely thank her for postponing her retirement and helping us in our year of need. Dr. Pam Veltkamp kept busy helping Glenda transition to teaching college level chemistry. We all survived the unusual circumstances caused by Dr. Shin's absence and we are looking forward to the usual chaos of a "normal" school year this fall. With Dr. Shin's return the department faculty will remain Drs. Veltkamp, Pyenta, Donnay, and Shin.

The department was successful in obtaining a three-year renewal of our Welch Departmental Grant for \$25,000/year that supports students and faculty doing research. The grant from the Welch Foundation is conditional on completion of an acceptable yearly report. This grant is essential for maintaining research activity in the department. Work being done under the Welch grant is described below.

This past spring, Dr. Veltkamp was involved in teaching the Leadership in Math and Science course with Dr. Ann Lewis, the geosciences instructor. The students in the course learn about scientific ethics and leadership qualities while participating in a laboratory project with a service component. This year the class focused on working with teachers at the private, non-profit Kenley School, a school near campus which enrolls students in first through eighth grade who have learning disabilities. The students in the Leadership class worked to find various hands-on science and math activities that would enable the Kenley students to better understand math and science concepts. Each of the McMurry students also taught at least one of their activities to the children at Kenley School.

Dr. Donnay and Dr. Tikhon Bykov in the Physics Department have almost finalized an agreement with the University of North Dakota to allow McMurry students to obtain an ABET-certified B.S. Degree in Chemical or Mechanical Engineering through mostly online courses while obtaining a B.S. Degree in Chemistry or Physics from McMurry University. Obtaining two bachelor's degrees simultaneously will take five years for a student to complete and students would have to spend one or two summer terms at UND taking engineering laboratory courses, but the agreement would represent the first certified engineering program in Abilene. The online engineering program at UND is designed to expand the opportunity to pursue engineering at smaller schools and may eventually grow to include civil, electrical, and petroleum engineering programs. If your career path after McMurry has led to experience in chemical engineering, we would like to hear your input on the establishment of this program.

Departmental Research:

Drs. Veltkamp, Donnay, and Shin attended the 247th National American Chemical Society (ACS) meeting in Dallas in March with a group of seven students. The chemistry club applied for and received a travel grant from the national ACS organization to help defray expenses. Besides listening to informative scientific talks and browsing the wares at the exposition, the faculty and students visited Dealey Plaza, the JFK memorial, and the Old Red Museum of Dallas County. Senior Josh Brooks presented a poster about his work with Dr. Donnay entitled "Photophysical Properties of Chromium Tris-Diimine Complexes that Contain Ligands with Hydrogen Bonding Capability."

This summer the department has four undergraduate students conducting research on the Welch Foundation Departmental Grant. Dr. Hyunshun Shin will work with Damon Rose and Parker Coyle on projects targeting two enzymes: ornithine decarboxylase and histone deacetylase. Dr. Edward Donnay will be supervising two students part-time: C. Stephen Anyasor and Sophie Southwell. Both students just finished their freshman year and will be starting on synthetic projects

concerning chromium tris-diimine complexes. This type of compound with the right properties may be useful in photodynamic therapy to treat cancer and other diseases.

School and Miscellaneous News:

The renovation of Old Main, including the auditorium, is almost complete and new sidewalks in front and on the east side of the science building were a part of the project. The new sidewalks are wider and a small green space will be left between Old Main and the Science building when the landscaping is completed. The noise has been a mild distraction, but we are all hoping that it will be worth it this fall when Old Main re-opens after four years of construction.

Dr. Sandra Harper took over as the 12th President of McMurry University effective on October 1, 2013. The official inauguration was on March 20, 2014. Dr. Harper came to McMurry University from Our Lady of the Lake College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she served as President since 2006. Prior to that, she served in administrative posts at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Oklahoma City University. Dr. Harper started her academic career at McMurry in 1985 as an assistant professor of communication, eventually rising to the rank of full professor and becoming Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Harper has already made important decisions upon coming back to McMurry such as the return to NCAA Division III athletic competition and a pivot to focus on the academic mission of the university as part of centennial vision planning for 2023.

40 Years Ago in the Department

(Below are news items and excerpts from the department newsletter from May 1974. The entire newsletter can be seen under the "Department News" tab on our website, www.mcm.edu/chemistry)

"Perhaps our most significant activity to report is the sabbatical leave granted Dr. Jones. ... During his absence Dr. Floyd Bird has been instructing general chemistry." Dr. Klassen was awarded tenure from McMurry. "Dr. Klassen and Dr. Sonntag will be working on a research grant from the R.A. Welch Foundation and they will be assisted by two McMurry students."

Senior chemistry major Mr. Toby Williams was honored by the Gamma Sigma Epsilon fraternity after submitting a research paper for the John F. Conn Awards. McMurry student award winners were: freshman- Mr. Greg Fabian, sophomore-Mr. Roderic Fabian, senior-Toby Williams. Mr. Williams was recognized as an Outstanding Senior by the Texas Chapter of the American Institute of Chemists as well.

"Dr. Harris visited South Plains College in Brownfield. While at the college he purchased a surplus analytical balance for the department and consulted with the staff of the college."

Alumni Search:

The following list 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.

Jack Shultze '62

Gail Hart Long '64

Conley Goines '76

Mohamad Dareshori '63

Susan Arth '75

Laurel Van Winkel '81