

Talk on "Chemistry in Comics" well received - Lydia Hines

It was a cool Tuesday, March 26, when about 90 curious listeners - High School students and parents, High school teachers, WMU faculty and graduate and undergraduate students, other ACS members - gathered in a large lecture hall in the Chemistry building at WMU to listen to the titled talk by Dr. Al Hazari Director of Undergraduate Laboratories of the Univ. of Tennessee-Knoxville, co-author of a book "Common misconceptions in Chemistry" and recipient of several awards for his Public Outreach activities. In addition to the unusual title, there were pizza and snacks available to attract listeners - these were enjoyed by a major portion of the audience, too. By way of slides, books, and "toys" Hazari kept our interest in the thought that chemical concepts, from the elements to their properties and reactions, can be found described in comics and in appropriate lighthearted comments in the popular press; these, then, can be used not only to pique but also to engage students' interest and more permanent understanding of chemical/scientific concepts. Dr. Hazari is not given to slow, deliberate presentations, so we were kept actively entertained as he presented his slides. He ended this talk with the demonstration of electrical conductivity by way of his little "travel companion doll "singing" ring around the rosey..." when the circuit is complete. In the morning of the same day Dr. Hazari offered to speak to a 5th grade class at Haverhill Elementary School in Portage; it was a pleasure to see the children respond with great interest as they participated in his enthusiastic explanation and demonstration of the scientific method and some "unexpected" observations - Dr. Hazari acts on the belief that children are "born scientists" who need to be encouraged to **ask questions** and **learn how to look for answers**.

Science Cafe' - "Patents - Why Bother?" - Lydia Hines and Elke Schoffers

The Dow Building at Kalamazoo College hosted a Science Cafe' presentation by our own Section's Chair-Elect, Dr. John Englemann, of Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone, on Wednesday, February 27. An audience of about 25 learned the importance of patents not only in terms of protecting one's invention (something New, Useful and Non-obvious) but also the benefit it can bring to the balance sheet of a business and of an *academic institution*; as Dr. Englemann showed us, there is levity even in a field such as this by giving several examples of "silly patents" which have been granted. He used an invention for which he was the attorney who filed and secured a patent - a flat easy-to-carry podium. He also answered questions from the audience, and at least one attendee expressed an interest in pursuing patent law as a career!