

American Chemical Society – Kalamazoo Local Section Newsletter

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2013 KACS Executive Officers

Chairperson

Dr. Elke Schoffers, WMU – Chemistry
elke.schoffers@wmich.edu

Past-Chairperson

Vacant

Chairperson-Elect

Dr. John H. Engelmann, Miller Canfield
jengelma@hotmail.com

Secretary

Carolyn Pugh, Perrigo
carolyn.pugh@perrigo.com

Treasurer

Dr. John Miller, WMU – Chemistry
john.b.miller@wmich.edu

Councilor

Dr. Lydia E. M. Hines, WMU – Chemistry
lemhwgh@gmail.com

Alternate Councilor

Dr. Doug Williams, Kalsec, Inc.
dWilliams@kalsec.com

Comments from the Chair

Elke Schoffers

Dear Colleagues,

KACS held its final event of the year on November 1, when more than 200 people visited the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts to attend "Chemistry & Culture: Elements of Dance". A brief summary has been included in this newsletter and an extended report will be made available online. Our next event will be in January,

titled "Chemistry & Culture: Food – Sense-ational Molecules in Nutrition". Details will be announced soon.

On December 31, 2013, I will bow out as KACS Chair. Dr. John Engelmann will take over for 2014 and I wish him best of luck as he oversees upcoming activities.

Over the last two years it has been a pleasure to work with local area chemists. I appreciate the work put forward by every volunteer and was pleased to see so many participants at our events. I would like to give special thanks to all the Local Section officers and four local chemistry student groups: the ChemClubs at Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University (WMU), the WMU Chemistry Graduate Student Association (CGSA) and the WMU Chapter of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemist and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE). Lastly, our events would not have been successful without collaborators and donors.

I will continue to volunteer for KACS as Past-Chair and will work with two new members in 2014: Dr. Brian Eklov (Chair-Elect) and Angela Willson (Secretary). Please stay in touch with KACS, I hope to see you in 2014 and wish you a Happy New Year!



Elke Schoffers, Ph.D. (2013 Chair, photo by Denis Billen)

KACS website: <http://kalamazooacs.org/>

Do you have questions, comments, or would like to contribute to this newsletter?
Send an email to: ACSkzoo@gmail.com

Announcements

Comments from the 2014 Chair

As the Chairman of the Kalamazoo section for 2014 I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and tell you about some of the Section activities for 2014. I am John Engelmann and have been a member of the ACS for many years. I did my undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, and I got my Ph.D. at the University of Illinois.



Dr. John Engelmann
(2014 Chair)

Our Section Councilor, Lydia Hines, and I were at the University of Illinois at the same time and actually worked in labs close together. After a number of years of going our own ways we now find ourselves working together in the Kalamazoo Section of the ACS!

In addition to my love for chemistry I have always been interested in law. I got my law degree from the University of Illinois and found a way to combine my interests by becoming an Intellectual Property attorney.

We have a number of interesting Section activities lined up for 2014: Our January meeting will relate to food chemistry, with samples. In early April we are having the High School Science Symposium and later that month we have a small outreach in connection with Chemists Celebrate Earth Day. We supervise a competitive exam, and in May we have the Awards Gathering where high school teachers and students and others are recognized for their educational and volunteer activities. In June we will anticipate participating in the WMU Chemistry Graduate Student picnic. In October, as part of National Chemistry Week, we have a Saturday afternoon (Chemistry Day) at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, an event in which we reach out to the community to encourage an interest in chemistry. Once again Zoetis is supporting a poster session, in October or November, where members can exhibit posters displaying their work – it is a wonderful way to discover the great diversity of work being done by chemists of our Section. In addition to these events we will have meetings where we invite speakers on various topics, so stay tuned. You will receive meeting announcements as the date of each event approaches.

Please accept my personal invitation to attend some or all of these events, and introduce yourself to me; I look forward to meeting you. Greater participation makes for greater enthusiasm at each meeting. I would welcome any suggestions for other chemistry-related events you would like to see in our Section, so please contact me at jengelma@hotmail.com.

John Engelmann

KACS Elections

By Elke Schoffers

Dear Colleagues,

KACS could not have accomplished much without the efforts of its volunteers. That is why I would like to thank Carolyn Pugh who has served as Secretary over the last two years. I herewith welcome two new Executive Committee officers beginning January 2014, Dr. Brian Eklov (Chair-Elect) and Angela Willson (Secretary). Below please find additional information.

Brian Eklov, Ph.D. – KACS Chair-Elect 2014

Dr. Eklov received a B.S. in Chemistry with honors from the University of Michigan in 1998, and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 2005 (T. R. Hoyer). After post-doctoral studies at the University of Illinois (S. E. Denmark), he joined the staff at Kalexsyn as a research chemist in 2007, and is currently associate director of chemistry. During his time at Kalexsyn, he has led a large team of scientists in collaboration with a major pharmaceutical company to search for inhibitors of mTOR. He also is collaborating with a major chemical supplier to develop chemistry that enables academic discoveries to be translated into marketable reagents.



Brian Eklov, Ph.D.
(KACS Chair-Elect)

Angela Willson – KACS Secretary 2014

Angela Willson may be a new WMU Graduate Teaching Assistant and student pursuing her Masters in Chemistry and PhD in Science Education through the Mallinson Institute for Science Education, but she is neither a stranger to Kalamazoo nor the ACS. Angela was born and raised in the Kalamazoo area and attended Portage Northern High School. She then went on to attend Saint Mary's College and received her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 2012. At Saint Mary's College, Angela acted as co-President of the Saint Mary's Affiliation of the American Chemical Society (SMAACS). She then spent a year in Minneapolis, MN working in food science with Cargill. Most recently she has spent time in the area attending KACS events and volunteering for Chemistry Day at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.

Report

Chemistry & Culture: Elements of Dance 2013

By Elke Schoffers

With Photos by Denis Billen (DB) of *DB Family Photography DJ*
and by Roxana Manta-Bielanski (RM)

The connection between *chemistry* and *culture*, especially *chemistry* and *dance* may not be obvious to everybody. However, there are some interesting aspects to consider when contemplating these combinations. John Bohannon (<http://www.johnbohannon.org/>), a biologist and science journalist, has collaborated with AAAS to create the "Dance Your PhD" competition. It is in response to a dreaded situation that scientists encounter when they try to explain their research to laymen. How does one respond to "So, what's your PhD about?" For the fourth year running, PhD scientists can compete to win up to \$1,000, and they are required to dance. Bohannon has also performed at TEDx Brussels (<http://www.tedxbrussels.eu/>). With the help of the Black Label Movement dance troupe he proposed to replace Powerpoint software with live dancers. Zafra M. Lerman of the *Institute for Science Education and Science Communication* thinks that the "arts can play a valuable role in reversing [a negative] public perception" and help "improve the public understanding of chemistry" ("CHEMISTRY: AN INSPIRATION FOR THEATRE AND DANCE" *Chemical Education International*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2005). A notable example is the play "Oxygen", written by Carl Djerassi and Nobel laureate Roald Hoffmann. And "Nobel laureate John Planzy has referred to molecular movement as 'the dance of the molecules'".

On November 1, over 200 people were curious enough to find out about "dancing chemists" when KACS connected "atoms and molecules to exercise science" in the lobby, while offering showcase dances, line dances and open dances in the auditorium of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts during "Chemistry and Culture: Elements of Dance". Mayor Bobby Hopewell was the "Surprise Celebrity MC".

Many chemists dressed in elegant evening attire and joined local ballroom dancers and the general public. The lobby featured refreshments and several displays as part of an exhibit that explained exercise chemistry:

Amino Acids, Peptides, Proteins, and Endorphins
Doping in Sports
Steroids
Chemicals Used in Sports Attire
Chemistry, Body Odor and Pheromones

Participants were able to win prizes. For example, correct crossword puzzles, based on the science in the exhibit, were entered into a drawing for trial gym memberships, T-shirts, Meg-A-Moles, and dance passes, among others.

There was also a computer set up and dedicated to playing a YouTube video of “Chemists Can DANCE! The first ever dancing periodic table of elements”. It was produced by ACS (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg54Tp85S-Y>). Another demo showed how one can isolate iron from cereal; iron being critical for muscle function. Last but not least, there was a special poster as a tribute to Dr. Alfred Bader, founder of Aldrich Chemicals. He is an avid art collector and philanthropist. The event was made possible through generous donations by AAAS, WMU, Aldrich Chemistry, Alfred Bader Fine Arts, and WMU-BTR. It was also a collaboration of KACS with the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Southwest Michigan Ballroom Dance and the Kalamazoo Chapter of USA Dance.



The KIA lobby featured exercise chemistry posters and refreshments, among others (RM).



Chemistry students began the Cupid shuffle (left, RM), before the audience joined in (right, DB).



WMU Chemistry major Sarah Ellison read the display to fill out the crossword puzzle (RM).



Showcases performers, from left: Gus Guzinski and dance partner Jenny Grunberg, a Kalamazoo dentist, and Elke Schoffers with Art Downey, a professional dance instructor; shown with celebrity MC mayor Bobby Hopewell (right, DB).



Drs. Isabelle and Alfred Bader (Chemist, Entrepreneur, Art Connoisseur & Philanthropist)

A Thank You

This is a public note of thanks to **Dr. Sherine Obare of WMU** who has responded affirmatively to my several requests in past Newsletters for an **Awards co-chair** for the 2015 Joint Great Lakes Central Regional Meeting (JGLCRM), which we are co-hosting with the Western Michigan Section in May of 2015 in Grand Rapids. She joins our other Section members on the Organizing Committee - Drs. James Kiddle, Program co-chair, John Miller, Exhibits and Fundraising co-chair, Elke Schoffers, Publicity co-chair.

Lydia Hines
General co-chair

A Report on Kalamazoo College Mole Day 2013

By Amanda Bolles

We are very happy to report a recent successful Chemistry Club outreach on our campus: In an effort to promote chemistry and membership in Kalamazoo College's Chem Club a *Mole Day* Event was held in the Dow Science building on *October 23, 2013*. Over fifty students participated in the activities, which included mole jokes, donuts, fun mole facts, and mole-related games. This was an opportunity for chemistry and biology majors to socialize and learn more about the Chemistry Club, as well as explore future activities. Thirty students took a guess at how any moles of glucose were in a graduated cylinder full of candy – the winner's guess was within 2 moles of the correct number! As a bonus, the Chem Club gained 5 members!