

# American Chemical Society – Kalamazoo Local Section Newsletter

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## Comments from the Chair

John H. Engelmann

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Spring is upon us and chemistry is all around us. Grass comes to life, flowers bloom and alas the weeds have their moment in the sun. All of this is driven by light from the sun and the chemistry of the soil. The rain which falls from the sky is slightly acid and this acid reacts with rocks in the soil freeing minerals needed for plant growth. This acid arises from many sources.

It used to be that a chief source of acid in rain was lightning strikes which produced nitrogen oxides. Today much of the acid is manmade coming from a wide variety of sources. In addition to acid breaking down rocks, the residues of last year's plants are being broken down to release minerals and form humus. Even the difficult cellulose eventually yields to bacterial and chemical degradation. So go stand in your backyard. You are standing on a chemical operation as amazing and as interesting as any chemical factory.



John H. Engelmann,  
Ph.D. (KACS Chair)

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](mailto:ACSkzoo@gmail.com)

# Chemists Celebrate Earth Day Report

April 19 and 26, 2014 and Illustrated Poem Contest

By Maren Zanotti and Lydia Hines

The Kalamazoo Section received 4 entries for the Illustrated Poem Contest from 2 high schools in the area (Allegan High School and Heritage Christian Academy). One was selected and submitted to the National contest for evaluation. Each of the two students, one from each school, whose posters were considered winners in the local evaluation, was awarded a \$15 Jet's Pizza gift card.

It was the first Spring-like day on Saturday, April 19, in Kalamazoo, MI, so there was a very small number of visitors indoors at the Oshtemo branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library for their Earth Day program; nevertheless, youngsters and their parents who were there did stop to avail themselves of the experiments presented by Lydia Hines as well as free copies of ACS materials for Grades 4-6: copies of Celebrating Chemistry from the past several years of CCED, along with this year's "The Wonder of Water"; another "hit" were the stickers and the UV exposure card which everyone was glad to be able to use in the bright outdoor sun, in anticipation of time at the beach when summer arrives.

Saturday, April 26th was a gorgeous spring day for the Kalamazoo Nature Center's (KNC) Earth Day Celebration. For the sixth consecutive year the Kalamazoo American Chemical Society was able to participate in the KNC's Earth Day festivities. We had a very successful turnout with approximately one hundred youngsters stopping by the KACS table. We presented a crowd-pleasing color chromatography experiment that fit well with this year's "The Wonders of Water" theme and allowed kids to make a chromatography flower that they were able to take home as a keepsake. We also provided free copies of the ACS Celebrating Chemistry handout, which presented great information about the properties of water, the importance of water in our environment, and gave instructions for chemistry-related, child-friendly water demonstrations. As always the KACS table was one of the most popular tables at the event! Several parents and KNC staff members complimented us on our exciting demo and informative handouts and as always, all of the kids loved making a chromatography flower. The KNC educational staff also approached the WMU Chemistry Club to ask if we would be interested in participating in other educational science demonstrations at the KNC throughout the upcoming year, which is a very exciting opportunity!

Several student volunteers participated in this year's Chemist Celebrate Earth Day celebration. Jager Hartman, Evan Rasor, Casey Wright and Maren Zanotti from the Western Michigan University Chemistry Club, as well as Katherine Mattison from Kalamazoo College were tremendously helpful in making this event a wonderful success!

(See pictures of event on page 3)

# Chemists Celebrate Earth Day Report

April 19 and 26, 2014 and Illustrated Poem Contest

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Evan Rasor (WMU Chemistry Club) assists a participant in making a chromatography flower. (Photo by Maren Zanotti)



Katherine Mattison (Kalamazoo College), Jager Hartman, and Casey Wright (WMU Chemistry Club) volunteering at the KACS Chemists Celebrate Earth Day Table. (Photo by Maren Zanotti)



(Photo by George Hines)

# Final thoughts

## 2014 Kalamazoo Section Awards Night

By Lydia Hines

Our annual Kalamazoo Section Award gathering **will be held on May 12**, Monday, at 6 p.m.; once again, the atrium in the Chemistry Building at WMU (between the Waldo Library and Wood Hall) will be the place to gather for hors d'oeuvres and informal visiting and camaraderie with other members, teachers, and students and their parents. This social time will be followed by our presentation of awards to our Section's High school students, College students, a High school teacher, certificates to 50-year members, and awards to members. So that we can have enough food available we encourage a **response ASAP or by May 6 regarding your positive participation; send your reply to Mrs. Robin Lenkart** either at [robin.k.lenkart@wmich.edu](mailto:robin.k.lenkart@wmich.edu) or 387-2922. We hope to see you there!

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## 2015 Joint Great Lakes Central Regional Meeting – Call for Sessions

By James Kiddle

The co-program chairs are soliciting suggestions for technical session topics for the 2015 Joint Great Lakes Central Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society to be held May 27 - May 30, 2015 in Grand Rapids. The overall theme of the meeting is "**Chemistry - A Grand Enterprise**" and will focus on three main areas: Food, Health, and the Environment.

Please follow the link to submit your suggestions.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1eyX-D50xt\\_0z9Ownlx0a587L4x9vq3p4tSqWuFcJvu0/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1eyX-D50xt_0z9Ownlx0a587L4x9vq3p4tSqWuFcJvu0/viewform)

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