The Villanova Chemist
“Christmas 2008” Edition

From the Chair

I apologize for the lateness of this and have been gently reminded that this is a Christmas newsletter, so I hope this 'Winter' edition finds you and yours well!

As it has for everyone else, the economy and its effects on day-to-day life arrived on campus and our days (and some nights) have revolved around issues of budgets and spending. I am happy to say that while we have felt its effects, prudent management by Dr Selinsky and continued fiscal responsibility has us in decent shape for the near future, although there are several areas that may be affected more than others. One area that may feel an immediate impact is our ability to support undergraduate research activities, especially summer support. Independent research can be one of the most important activities undertaken as an undergraduate and often puts our students at an advantage when they graduate. I commend my colleagues for their mentoring and grant writing efforts, and I will continue to pursue support for our undergraduate research program, from increasing institutional support to securing additional resources from local industry to working with our Development office. I am always open to ideas and would appreciate any help or contacts that you might be able to offer.

In other news, we welcomed Ms Brooke Bright as our new building superintendent in the fall. Brooke brings a great deal of experience and her influence on building maintenance and normal operations is evident. I for one appreciate her efforts and look forward to working with her the years to come.

Faculty News

I am very happy to welcome Dr Jared Paul to the Department! Jared arrived from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill where he earned his PhD working with Dr Holden Thorp before working as a post-doctoral researcher with Dr T. J. Meyer. Jared's research interests are in inorganic chemistry with emphasis in bioinorganic chemistry and spectroscopy.

I am very pleased to announce that Dr Brian Ohta was granted tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of Chemistry. Congratulations to Brian!

In March 2008, Dr Amanda Grannas lead a group of researchers to Barrow, Alaska for fieldwork in support of her research. She was so successful and enjoyed it so much that she and her graduate student Alexis Torres returned this spring for another round. You can follow their progress (and adventures) on the Thirty Days of Light blog at http://villasnowva.blogspot.com. I also want to congratulate Dr Jennifer Palenchar on the award of a NIH R15/AREA grant. This is an outstanding accomplishment! There were also 18 publications within the Department this past year. I congratulate our entire faculty on their research efforts!

I also want to congratulate Jim Barnes and welcome Ms Heather Egolf-Fox. Jim was the recipient of the Pohlhaus–Stracciolini Adjunct Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, which was presented during Graduation in May. His dedication and service over the years is greatly appreciated. Heather joined the Department in the fall as a full-time instructor and has been teaching in the general chemistry program.

Students

Our primary aim is to educate and to that end we are extremely proud of our graduates! The Chemistry class of 2008 and their affiliations follow:

BS Graduates: Lauren M. Delery (CHM & BIOC - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School), Neil W. Howard (BIOC - Medical School Plans), Alexander J. Knihnicky (BIOC - Pennsylvania University Hospital Medical Research), Kim P. Lao (BIOC - Plans to work in Industry), Allison Hue Yang Sing (BIOC - BS/MS Chemistry Program, Villanova), Andrew T. Slye (BIOC - Officer in the U.S. Military/Military Intelligence), Alexis S. Torres (BIOC - BS/MS Chemistry Program – Villanova), Amy R. Cantilena (Biochemical Research/National Institute of Health), Julianna
M. Cebollero (BS/MS Chemistry Program - Villanova), Heather L. Dague (University of Illinois, College of Medicine), Lauren E. Dobbs (Drexel University Nursing Program), Rami S. El-Yousef (Ross University School of Medicine - Dominica, West Indies), Jason Haag (Western Wholesale Meat - Graduate School in Future), Joseph T. Hawkins (Villanova MA Program Secondary Education), Paul J. Karagiannis, (Jefferson Medical School), Daniel J. Neary (CHM, Merck & Co.), Megan M. Quigley (DuPont - Central Research/Chemical Science), Alexander J. Reif (CHM, Merck & Co.), Thomas M. Scupp (Volunteer- Health Care Clinic in Alaska/Medical School 2010), Courtney S. Shedden (BS/MS Chemistry Program - Villanova), Marta Szmacinski (PhD Program - University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Katelyn R. Walk (Material Chemist/DuPont Experimental Station, DE).


One last thought: Even in these difficult economic times, we have a lot to look forward to in the future. We continue to have outstanding students, we have a talented and energetic faculty dedicated to our students, the Department, and University, and we continue to have the support of the College and University. Our present and future are bright!

Scott Kassel
Associate Professor & Chair

Alumni Notes
Volume 28, started January 2008

Roger Logan 42 sends a packet of information about his Logan-Koch esterification reactor, along with a great note describing his work, starting at duPont in 1942 on military explosives. In 1986 he formed OCA Corp (Old Chemical Associates) with a bunch of retired colleagues. They have built esterification plants in Malaysia, Canada, South Carolina, and Europe. He writes: I want to express my gratitude to the Villanova Chemistry Department for a wonderful education which has allowed me to work in chemistry and chemical engineering for sixty-six years.

Prof Edward Fenlon at the Department of Chemistry, Franklin & Marshall College, writes: I am writing a review article about molecular knots and have a question for you. It turns out that the first written record that I have found of someone mentioning the idea of making a molecular knot is by William J. Ambs ’52, an undergraduate at Villanova. He published this in Villanova’s Mendel Bulletin in the Spring 1953 issue. This was eight years prior to the famous "Chemical Topology" paper in JACS by Frisch and Wasserman! My question is whether you have any further information about him (when he graduated, a photo, etc.). I would like to have a footnote in the review about him. I would also love to contact him, although I see from your website that he is listed under missing alumni. I believe he may have gone on to work for the National Bureau of Standards. As a side note, you may be interested in a Commentary that appears right after Ambs’s article (and perhaps after all articles). It is by the Rev. Joseph Laverty, the Moderator of the Bulletin. He says that, "Our publication makes little pretense of originality; it would be highly presumptuous, for most of the work is not original from the standpoint of subject and procedure. The authors of the papers contained in this issue were all undergraduates at the time the articles were written. Undergraduates, in a time so limited, can not be expected.
to be equipped to set forth some hidden phase of knowledge which would appreciably contribute to the vast bulk of knowledge which is science today. It is interesting to me that in this case Rev. Laverty appears to be wrong; an undergraduate did make a contribution to science!

Best Regards, Ed. [Your editor replied to him as best he could, but if anyone knows more, you can contact him at: edward.fenlon@fandm.edu]

The Chem major class of '57 met in microcosm for lunch this month: Joe Clark, Hank Whelan, and your editor enjoyed a beer, burgers, and reminiscences, while regretting that the rest of the class was missing: Ed Tomezsko in Panama and Herb Rammrath skiing in Colorado.

From Joe Giannovario '70, MS '74 PhD '75 It's been a while since I've been in contact with anyone at VU. Just received the last Chem Dept newsletter and saw notes from several classmates. So, I thought it might be time to catch up. I worked at GE Space Systems in King of Prussia for 16 years after graduation. We were working on the Space Station when Challenger blew up. I was Science Manager for the space station laboratory. After Challenger was destroyed, the space program went into meltdown while everyone tried to figure out why Challenger was destroyed. It was devastating. I decided to leave. In 1994 I started a web-hosting business with two friends from California. It's still going strong although I have little day-to-day contact with it.

Remember the twins born in the Dept. in 1974? Dr. Wójcik's wife had twin boys and my wife had one fraternal twins, and there was another set of twins born that year to another grad student. The Wójcik twins and my kids went to high school together. In 2001, I decided to take Joseph Campbell's advice and "live the dream". I have always been interested in model trains having had them since I was one year old. I started a model train magazine and it has been quite successful (all that desktop publishing experience came in handy). Take a look at the site www.oscalemag.com.

I was fortunate to see Bob Grob shortly before he passed away. He was like a second father to me in graduate school. It's a strange path we take and mine has wandered far from its chemistry roots. But I know that it was my time at VU and specifically during grad school that I developed the tools that gave me a successful and happy life. I have very fond memories of your quoting W C Fields. I even have a photo of you at a Halloween party at Ron Husk's apartment. Joe. (BS 1970, MS 1973, PhD 1974) - Am I the only one to ever do that? [No – see the note below on Mary Ann Quarry.]

The Villanova Magazine informs us that Tom Schmucker'72 has died.

Frank Villani '75 PhD '93 dropped by to visit when he was here at the Maryanoff lecture last January.

Jim Hagarman PhD '75 writes: After 30 years in the chemical business and five years at Drexel, I find myself attempting to work in adjunct teaching. I've taught at Drexel in adjunct capacity while working in the administration of the Goodwin College of Professional Studies. I've taught Chemistry, Nanotechnology, Measurements (lab), and Manufacturing Engineering for the Applied Engineering Technology program at Drexel and Burlington County College (for Drexel).

Sal Salmone '76 dropped by for a visit in October. He's CEO and founder of Saladex, pioneer in Personalized Chemotherapy Management, monitoring drug levels in individual patients rather than prescribing on the basis of body surface.

Tom Burgess PhD '76 visited his old "haunts" at VU in May, but unfortunately our paths didn't cross. He mentions how things have changed since his days. Mendel Hall has been gutted and rebuilt, and there are a third more buildings on campus nowadays, to say nothing of the faculty turnover. (For 25 years your editor was the newest hire, now is the last still-working survivor from Tom's days.) Tom is Technical Director of Quest Diagnostics and lives in Georgia.

We all were saddened to learn of the death of Ron Magolda '76. He died as the result of injuries suffered in a bicycling accident. He was 54. Jim Barnes MS '82 comments: Wow. Two students from that class (that I know of) have now died prematurely – Gene McIntire and Ron. And both in sports-related activities. What
a shame for their families and friends and Villa-
nova. Two smart guys (BS, Villanova; PhD, Penn) who were climbing the corporate ladders of the pharmaceutical industry. This makes you stop and think about how precious life is. So sad. Jim, by the way, is adjunct prof here and has won the Pohlhaus-Stracciolini Adjunct Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching and was acknowledged at the Commencement this May.

From Mary Ann Quarry ’75, MS 79, PhD ’84, MBA [Four Villanova Degrees!] writes about Ron’s death. Years ago, Ron was the one who told me about Gene McIntyre’s unfortunate accident (wind surfing at the Outer Banks) when we both worked at duPont. Their class was a year behind mine, but I was the TA for their organic analysis lab and knew them better than some of my own class. Mary Ann

Srirat Ho-Ampawanwong Kokpal PhD ’79 is Chair of the Chem Dept at Chulalongkorn University (Bankok) as the University changes to an autonomous status. Think of all the "fun" committee meetings!

David Mazzo ’79 has been named President and CEO of Regado Biosciences. He has had almost 25 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, most recently as President and CEO of AEterna Zentaris and earlier as President and CEO of Chugai Pharma USA. He received his MS and PhD degree in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He was also a research fellow at the École Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne, Switzerland.

Srihari Keshavamurthy MS’89, Associate Prof of Chem at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, India writes. I chanced upon Villanova’s homepage and saw myself listed as a "missing alumini". That's no good, and so the email. I still remember the classes that I took with you, Prof De La Vega, and others. My association with Villanova was special and it would be great to visit on my next trip to the U.S. Best, Srihari

From Ed Donahue ’85: I received your newsletter this week. You have done a great job of collecting and distributing the information about our alumni. An amazing group, these chemistry grads – reflecting, in my opinion, the impact that our wonderful teachers/role models at VU have had in our lives. And some of the grads are in the Chemistry arena! Well it is Sunday morning. I’m off to the desert for my weekly hike: 90 minutes of quiet time with the jackrabbits, quail, and occasional coyote. No snakes yet, too cold. Take care, Ed. [Ed is an MD and recent past President of the Maricopa County Arizona Medical Society.]

Nicaraguan Ambassador Ricardo Alvarado MS ’90 PhD ’92 is now Dean of the Danish Diplomatic Corps in Copenhagen.

We hear from the Villanova Magazine that Pete Iovine ’94 got his PhD at Penn and is Assistant Prof of Chem at the U of San Diego. He received an NSF Career Award to support research and teaching by untenured faculty.

Brian Gauvin ’96 is head coach of the Science Olympiad at Harriton High School near VU (and teaches chemistry to 10th thru 12th graders). His team is perennial PA state champ and has been in the top ten nationally every year since he began coaching. The school has had two of its three national victories since Brian became coach in 1999.

Anthony Broccolo ’99: I can’t exactly recall if you taught one of my classes, I think perhaps a lab. But I definitely interacted with you a good deal. I think you put out a newsletter for the Chem Department, no? If so, I am a personal injury attorney in a downtown NYC firm, and I was just married in September 2008. Not to a Villanova grad though. :-)

Your editor’s VU classmate, Dan Bartolini ’57 informs us that his grandnephew, Maurice Marsini ’03 is completing his doctorate at UC Santa Barbara. He has a post doc commitment at Princeton.

More from the Villanova Magazine: Chris Cummings ’04, while a grad student at Yale, was an extra in two scenes of Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, Mike Werner ’04 has switched from chemistry teacher to environmental chemist at a firm in Charlottesville VA, and Meghan Klarcic ’04 received her MS from USC and is at VU Law School.

From Amy Cantilena ’08: The NIH is going well. I’ve only been working here for a few
weeks at this point, but I’ve already made some progress on a few of my projects. Generally speaking, I’m working on determining the locations of viral insertion sites for gene-therapeutic purposes on the pluripotent bone-marrow stem cells. Hopefully the work I will do could have implications for the advancement of SCIDS treatment, or sickle-cell disease. But who knows? I’m also in the process of applying to medical school for the 2009 Admissions year, so that is taking up every moment I’m not in the lab. Hope your summer continues to go well, and that the next groups of Chem majors to go through P Chem aren’t as thick-skulled as I was! Best, Amy. [Historically, it seems that P Chem requires thick skulls … and skin. ;-) ]

Retired Prof Mike Spritzer writes in April: Kay and I moved out to Garden Spot Village, a retirement community in New Holland, PA, Lancaster County. We’ve been here about three years. There are a couple of other Villanovans out here: The Zajacs moved out shortly before Walt died, Mary still lives here and we see her occasionally; John and Peg Edwards also live out here and we see them very often. Later Mike writes: Some of us retired faculty/wives are planning to get together for dinner or lunch. So far, Jose and Georgina de la Vega, John and Peg Edwards and Mary Zajac and Kay and I are involved. We are trying to locate Pete Spadafora. Mike.

Well, I hope you enjoyed reading of the events in the lives of our fellow Chemistry alumni. If you haven’t contacted us recently, pleas do so we may bring the 1000+ Chem alumni up to date.

All the best. … Ol Ludwig ’57 610/519-4848 (v); 610/519-7167 (f) http://chemistry.villanova.edu

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Chemistry Department
Villanova University
800 Lancaster Ave
Villanova PA 19085-1699

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