The Villanova Chemist  
“Christmas” 2004 Edition

Your editor just came across Volume 1, Number 1 of The Indicator, published in Spring 1950, E.F. Jenkins OSA, Editor. The intent was to apprise Villanova Chemistry Department graduates of the activities of the department and of its alumni – and now alumnae as well. With a few lapses, this publication attempts to carry on Fr Jenkins’ – and later Dr Quam’s – work.

From the Chair

TBA

Barry Selinsky,  
Chair  
Chemistry Department

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Alumni Notes

Oliver Ludwig ’57, Editor  
Volume 21 begin March 2004

Just as in last year’s edition, the bad news leads. Frank Lazorik ’72 [my dermatologist] died on 13 March 2004 and Jim Markham just told me that Rev Sean McArdle ’59 died on 5 December 2004. If you go to chemistry.villanova.edu/alumni/chemdec.htm you may get a few sad surprises as did I. Pray for them all.

Gleanings from the Villanova Magazine: Joe Donahue ’85 is President of Lion Bioscience in Cambridge MA, working on software for pharma to improve the drug discovery process. Gary Speier MS ’91 is a patent attorney in Minneapolis. [Thanks for the Christmas card, Gary!] Mary Kaiser PhD’76, Research Fellow at duPont in Wilmington, received the ACS Analytical Division award. Pat Grohar ’95 got both MD and PhD at Wayne State and is a Johns Hopkins/NIH Fellow in pediatric hematology/oncology.

Here’s what I/we have heard about and from my fellow Chemistry alumni: [My own comments in brackets.]

Jim Markham ’50, Emeritus Dean & Prof at VU is keeping his hand in by continuing to teach at Graterford Prison. [Talk about a captive audience!]

My Classmate Joe Clark ’57 emails: Our highlights of 2004 revolved around my re-retirement, from ACS this time, and from the Federal Government [NBS/NIST] in 1996. This led to selling our home of 40 years in Maryland, and moving to a condo in Pompano Beach, Florida. The four hurricanes didn't bother us, but did some damage to the home of our eldest son Ken (VU ’83) a few miles north in Boca Raton. Hank & Barb Whalen will be here for their 2nd visit in January, and Herb Rammrath has promised to toot the horn on his new boat when he passes by next Fall.
The other highlight was the remarkable 47th Reunion in June of the VU Class of '57 diehards [Joe, Herb Rammrath, Hank Whalen, me] – rumor has it that none of us can count to 50 – and seeing Jim Markham there. Coincidentally, I was visiting [former Prof] Ken O'Driscoll at his northern Ontario cottage a few weeks previously, when Jim Markham called Ken.

From Charlie Bartish ‘69: I saw on the VU Chemistry Alumni website you are missing contact information for Thomas Santossusso, MS, ‘66. Tom and I worked together when he was at Air Products. Tom recently retired from Air Products and has moved to Nazareth, PA, where he runs an Art Gallery. [The web site Charlie refers to is chemistry.villanova.edu/alumni/chemlost.htm. You might want to visit it to see if you know of any of the missing persons.]

Irv Ostrich MS’69, PhD’77, although retired, is a ham radio operator and is his (Missouri) county emergency coordinator.

From a U of Minnesota press release: Oct 2004: James P. Riehl, Dean of the UMD College of Science and Engineering, has been awarded the McKnight Presidential Leadership Chair by the University of Minnesota. This award, newly established, honors the scholarly achievements of the recipients as well as their role as respected leaders and mentors. [Our congratulations to Jim, Class of 1970.]

Walt Gerasimowicz MS ’77 PhD ’82 got an MBA and has moved from chemistry to finance. [I'll bet he gets fewer acid holes in his clothing.]

From Sister Elizabeth Worley MS ‘79 This is early and is not really the "formal" announcement, but I wanted you to know that my term on the Board at Mercy Hospital concludes at the end of December and I will be leaving Mercy Hospital. Although I have various other responsibilities at Mercy Hospital, my primary role and the reason I was first sent to Mercy is the role of Chairperson of the Board. I am now completing my 19th year as Chairperson and will finish the term at the end of December. As for me, it appears that I may remain in ministry in Miami. There have been several very interesting opportunities that have arisen outside the State but I have declined each because of the distance from my religious Congregation. Several volunteer opportunities at Mercy and the Cathedral are expected to continue along with the responsibility to oversee the Pension Trust for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

As of January 1, 2005, I will be serving at Catholic Hospice full time. The route to Catholic Hospice has certainly been an interesting one. Once the decision was made that I would not be continuing on the Board, I shared my resume with several friends in other Catholic health systems who encouraged me to apply for positions as VP of Mission. Several systems responded with wonderful offers at facility or system levels, and other opportunities also came to light that would have provided significant ministry roles. Unfortunately there were no positions available in Catholic Health East, the system of which Mercy is a member, and none of the offers were in Florida. Because I administer my Congregation's pension funds, living in TX, MI, CA, VA or SC (where the various offers had originated) would have added several complications to continuing that service to the Congregation. At the same time, Catholic Hospice was searching for a CEO and I was the chair of the Search Committee, having also been the Chair of Catholic Hospice Board. After interviewing several possible candidates for the CEO position without a satisfactory
selection, the Board asked me to consider accepting the position, even though I had not applied for the role. Recognizing the need, I completed my term as Board Chair and accepted the position as CEO. The decision was announced in early October in order to begin addressing issues needing management attention in the organization -- even though I have only been able to work part time until January.

**Terry O’Laughlin ’84** emails: I work for Niacet Corporation in Niagara Falls, NY as the Maintenance Manager. Niacet is a small privately-owned chemical company which manufactures metal salts (Sodium Acetate, Sodium Diacetate, Calcium Acetate, Calcium Propionate) and surfactants. I been working here for four years. Married for the past 21 years to Joan, three kids: Meghan is a freshman at St John Fisher College, Rochester majoring in Chemistry – she’s hoping to go into pharmacy. Ryan is a junior in high school & Chelsea is in 7th grade. I’m still in the Naval Reserves and drill with a Submarine Staff unit in Washington, DC. [A long commute!] I coach swimming, basketball and softball in my spare time. I have a nephew attending VU & majoring g in EE.

**Mike Byrnes ’89** responds to my email about his use of Chemistry in his job as an FBI agent: As far as using chemistry in my job, I would have to say that I do not use it in the strict scientific sense on a regular basis. That being said, I can say that my chemistry training has been invaluable on a number of occasions. For example, I am often called upon to be a liaison between the non-scientific street agents and the laboratory doing analysis, whether it be the DNA analysis unit, explosives unit, HAZMAT, and infrequently the drug or toxicology unit. Also, I am often called upon as the "chemistry" or "science" guy in the office to answer questions or help direct others in their investigations as to what is possible and how it can be done scientifically. Often, fellow agents are unaware of the power of chemistry or science and can be given ideas which can help their case move forward. More directly, I am the guy who has been trained and has experience in DNA collection (blood collection scenes) and its uses and benefits from a scientific standpoint and have therefore been called upon to train other law enforcement officers or just give presentations to other groups on the subject.

While in Africa (1997?) investigating the Embassy bombings in Tanzania, I was asked to assist the explosives unit and their chemists in collecting and analyzing residue samples from the crime scene. This was most definitely because of my chemistry background and the fact that I could be counted on to perform analyses with minimal prepping while having a clear understanding of the concepts required.

I also wanted to mention how excited I am to be able to assist the department there in refining the forensic course. Forensic science is a fascinating area of study and is becoming more visible to "John Q Public". I hope that I am helpful to Drs Rucker and Bessel and also hope that I am able to continue to assist in some way in the future. Specifically I am helping them understand the "real-life" crime scene and what is entailed in an investigation by honing their fingerprinting and evidence collection skills and how they impact subsequent analysis. I am also attempting to create points of contact for them to continue their course refinement.

Again, I am very excited to be a part of the course. For me, it is (almost) the perfect fusion of science and state-of-the-art crime fighting techniques. I wish I could do a little more lab work, but I also greatly enjoy being "on the street".
Ricardo Alvarez-Noguera MS’90, PhD’92 is Nicaragua’s Ambassador to both Finland and Denmark. [That’s a lot of languages to learn!]

Mike Cooney MS ’90 married in June 2002 and is teaching chemistry at James M Caughlin HS in Wilkes Barre PA.

From Tanya Momtahen MS’92: I now work at Sanofi-Aventis (Malvern PA) as a Senior Director in Project Direction department. I basically manage a product in R&D called rimonabant. I live in West Chester, PA and am married for 16 years and have one son who is 15 and a student at Archmere Academy. I hope you are well and the chemistry department is still fun and strong as it was when I was there.

Rob Rizzo ’95 emails: A quick note to let you know that I have just started a tenure-track faculty position in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics at Stony Brook University on Long Island. I am just getting settled in and my wife Elizabeth will hopefully be joining me soon once she has secured employment in the area. This semester I am teaching a new course titled "Introduction to Computational Structural Biology and Drug Design" and starting to develop a research group directed towards development and application of computational methods for drug design. Rob [Think of it: a chemist in an applied math and statistics department teaching biology. Renaissance men still exist!]

Joe Pickel ’98 and his wife dropped into the Chemistry Department while they were at the ACS meeting in Philadelphia. Having received his PhD at the U of Akron, he now works at Oak Ridge.

Recent grad Michelle Criscuoli ‘xx writes to the Department: Greetings from Los Angeles! Yup that's right – I'm now an Angelino with the 14 million other crazies who love to sit in traffic on the freeway. My head's been spinning over the past few months – nothing new there – and I've lost touch with a bunch of people in the transition, so I just wanted to throw out an update in the hopes of hearing back from some of you.

So Med School – yey!!! Med School – although not so much right now since my first set of exams are coming up in two weeks. I'm going to USC (Keck School of Medicine) and so far it’s awesome and I love it – 3rd and 4th year will be insane since I'll do most of my rotations at LA County Hospital. I'm shadowing in the ER on Friday night, October 1st... I hear there's a full moon that week so I'm sure it will be an experience to remember...

Classes are going well for now... but holy cow am I glad its all review, because I really need to re-learn how to study. It’s very disheartening that I'm using the same Biochem book I've had for six years and most of the chapters have notes in blue pen (spring semester sophomore year), black pen (fall semester junior year), pretty pink highlighter (oh yeah... summer after sophomore year), and now I guess I have to go with red – and why do all these concepts still look brand new?!?! Ok maybe that's a slight exaggeration... but not by much... Well I guess the fifth time around it will stick... it has to right??

I really miss all of you and can't wait until I get a break (and an income) to do some traveling... unfortunately though, I don't think it will be any time soon. Go Trojans! (still a cheerleader at heart.) Mikki
Prof Carol Bessel tells me that she received some happy news from Julie Burke MS'04. In September she became engaged to Michael Hamill (Gettysburg College).

If you enjoyed reading about us, please consider letting your classmates – and the Department – know of the good things that have happened in your lives. Just write, phone, email, visit and you will see your story appear in our next annual edition.

Alumnaically, Oliver Ludwig ‘57
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