



Department of Chemistry

Chemistry Newsletter

Number 264

Friday, 1 June 2007

It seems amazing that we are nearly at the end of the first semester. Not only has the year flown past, but the weather is ridiculously warm for this time of the year. The feeling is not helped by the fact that many of the annual administrative tasks are being shifted increasingly earlier. We have to prepare mid-year test and exams earlier than ever before, and Dave and I are already starting work on the 2008 budget.

I don't have much to report in later sections of this issue, but I do want to highlight three events in this introduction: (1) this is the first issue of the Department of Chemistry Newsletter going out to 200-level Chemistry and Biochemistry students. Their addition to the mailing list was made on the recommendation of the student reps on the 200/300-level liaison committee (which met earlier this week). To all you new readers, I hope you find some of the items (not necessarily in this issue) useful, or at least entertaining; and I advise you to read right to the end. (2) I am delighted to see the resurrection of this newsletter's companion publication, the *Burbling Beaker*, a much more entertaining read than this, but with a more notorious past. Well done to the new editorial team, whoever you are. (3) Good news about *Sue Bradley* - read on.

Department administration news

Guest Department

For a few weeks over the mid-year break, we will be hosting some academic staff members and research students from the *Department of Communication Disorders* while they shifts from the prefabricated huts on Kreyke Road to new accommodation in Montana Avenue. The rooms they will occupy are the fifth-floor computer suite (542), 730 and 748. Please make our guests feel welcome during their stay.

Congratulations



There's something in the water

Readers will know that *Sue Bradley* left the department several weeks ago to take up a permanent position in the Department of Communication Disorders (there's that department again). If she hadn't gone for that reason, there is another for which she would have left us early. I am delighted to share the news that Sue gave birth to Sophie May at 1.17pm on Tuesday 29 May in Christchurch Women's Hospital. According to Wayne Riggall (Sue's partner) it was a difficult birth due to Sophie's size (9lb 1oz). But after a night of observation, both mother and daughter are doing well. Congratulations to Sue, Wayne and Sophie's older sisters. (As I've noted before in this newsletter, there is something about room 532. Sophie May is the fifth child born to someone working in that room over the last three or so years!)

People

Student Visitor

Welcome to *Clémence Buisan*, who will be working with *Jim Coxon*. She writes "I am a French student from Bordeaux, in the South West of France, and I am visiting for two months. I play basketball and water-ski in competitions. I enjoy sport and the outdoors, including tramping and kayaking. I am in an engineering school, which specializes in chemistry, and will finish my degree next year. I have come to New Zealand to for my internship. On graduation I plan to continue with PhD studies and would like work in a research laboratory as a career. Coming in New Zealand is a good way to perfect my English, and to meet new people. Furthermore, I will learn how to live far from my home (22 hours by plane...) and in a country with a foreign language. Coming in New Zealand was a dream because it's a country with beautiful wilderness, with a lot of sights to see and outdoor sport opportunities. But I am also here to learn more organic chemistry, to have fun and to meet people. I think it will be an enriching experience for me." Please introduce yourselves to Clémence and help to induct her into our friendly department

Comings and Goings

Bruce will be away today, *Gill* is away next week and *Sandy* will be back on Tuesday. *Peter Steel* is away for a month returning 12 July.

Recent publications

Paulik, M. G., Brooksby, P. A. Abell, A. D. and Downard, A. J. Grafting Aryl Diazonium Cations to Polycrystalline Gold: Insights into Film Structure Using Gold Oxide Reduction, Redox Probe Electrochemistry, and Contact Angle Behavior. *J. Phys. Chem. C*, 2007, 111, 7808-7815.

Physical Sciences Library News

CAS Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), a division of the American Chemical Society (ACS), celebrates its 100th anniversary this year as the global leader in chemical information. CAS provides access to the world's chemical and scientific literature and patents, with indexes built around the world's largest compendium of chemical substances. Chemical Abstracts contains more than 27 million bibliographic records and the CAS Registry comprises more than 31 million records of organic and inorganic substances. These two massive databases, along with related databases of 13 million reactions, plus citations, Markush structures, and other data, form the backbone of SciFinder. Online access to this information has revolutionized the way chemists and other scientists conduct research. For the full press release, visit

<http://www.cas.org/newsevents/releases/casanniversary.html>

Career and job opportunities

Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor - Department of Chemistry, University of Canterbury

Applications are invited for a continuing position of Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor in Organic Chemistry. Applicants should have a Ph.D. and post-doctoral or equivalent experience in Chemistry. They should have demonstrated record of excellent teaching, high research productivity and academic leadership. The appointee will be required to teach and co-ordinate undergraduate and post-graduate courses in organic and biological chemistry, to contribute to teaching in other core areas, and to supervise graduate students. The successful applicant should be able to inspire and motivate students and work within a collegial environment. She or he will be expected to publish regularly in high-impact journals and will be expected to obtain external funding in support of research. Enquiries of an academic nature may be made to Bryce Williamson, HOD and Chair of Selection Panel, at bryce.williamson@canterbury.ac.nz. Further details, including position descriptions and instructions on how to apply, can be found at <http://vacancies.canterbury.ac.nz/>. Applications for this position should include a curriculum vita, a completed University of Canterbury application form (www.canterbury.ac.nz/hr/vacancies), the names and contact details of three referees, university transcripts, evidence of research productivity and a detailed summary of research and teaching interests and expertise. Applications quoting A183-07J must be sent to

Degenerate states

Word Games

Several people have explained the pattern for the word list I presented in last week's Degenerate States. But only **Jan-Yves Ruzicka**, a 300-level student, has met the challenge of filling in one of the missing words. I've also found a word that I accidentally omitted last week and have added a better word in another position. The expanded (and adjusted) list is: *extraordinary; doubt; scissors; judge; Wednesday; halfpenny; campaign; rhubarb; parliament; know; calf; mnemonic; solemn; foetus; receipt; cadre; debris; castle; buoy; sword; quixotic; Czech*. There are four further words missing. I will provide a free cookie from the departmental tea room for anyone who gets one. (Jan-Yves, feel free to claim your cookie whenever you desire).

Getting back to vowels, **Owen Curnow** has written "If we're going to allow Hawaiian words [as suggested by **Peter Steel** last week], there is a town named *Kaava* with three consecutive occurrences of a." Of course, this only ties with the English word *aiee* for the number of consecutive occurrences of the same vowel.

Prize Winner

Trevor was a farmer in the fertilized egg business. He had several hundred pullets and about ten roosters to service them. He kept records of his roosters' performance; any that weren't up to scratch went into the soup pot and were replaced. To track the roosters' performance he attached to them tiny bells, each with a different tone. He could sit on the porch and fill out an efficiency report simply by listening.

Trevor's favourite rooster was Gordon, a very fine specimen and a strong performer. But one morning Trevor realised that Gordon's bell hadn't rung, so he went to investigate. The other roosters were chasing pullets, bells-a-ringing, but the pullets, hearing the bells, were scuttling for cover. To Trevor's amazement, Gordon was holding his bell in his beak so it wouldn't ring. He'd sneak up on one pullet, do his job and then sneak on to the next.

Trevor was so proud of Gordon he entered him in the County Fair rooster competition. Gordon was a sensation with the judges and they gave him two awards, the No-Bell Piece Prize and the Pullet-Surprise. The talk around the fair was that Gordon was a great politician in the making: after all, he had won two coveted awards by simply screwing the populace when they weren't paying attention.

Contact details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Chemistry newsletter, then contact Alice Prendergast before noon on Thursday at: alice.prendergast@canterbury.ac.nz or phone 364-2100 / extension 6100.