

News @ CHEM/BIOCHEM

Newsletter #8

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Winter 2005-06

The glass shop is empty in so many ways...

Robert J. Ponton Glassmeister, Scholar, Teacher, Colleague, Friend Retires After 25 Years of Dedicated Service

“Dear Bob,

Your friends and colleagues in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry wish to express their heartfelt gratitude for all that you have done for them, the Department, and the University over the past quarter of a century. To say “you will be missed” is a tremendous understatement, and a woefully inadequate expression of the way all of us feel about your departure. Over the past few weeks, as the Department came to terms with the knowledge that our beloved glassblower was leaving, I had the opportunity to share with others stories, thoughts, and feelings about you. In relating some of them to you, I hope that you will see just how much you will be missed, and how much you affected the lives of so many in the UWM community.

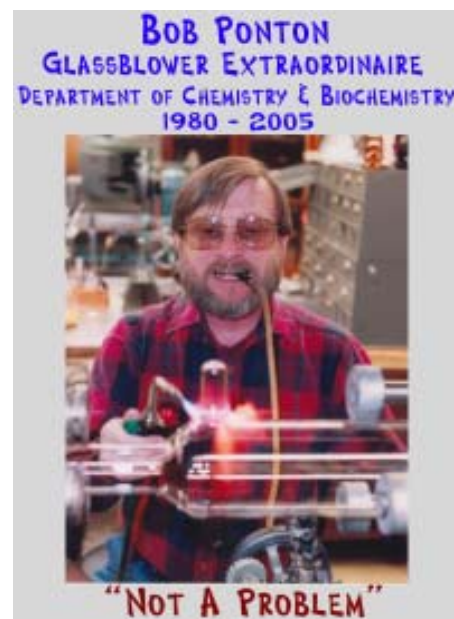
The glass shop will be empty in so many ways...”

So began our goodbye letter to Bob, written by Dr. Dennis Bennett on behalf of the department. He compiled and edited comments submitted by department students, faculty and staff into a beautiful letter which, when read aloud at Bob’s retirement luncheon, left nary a dry eye in the place.



Earlier this fall, Bob announced that he had accepted a position at the University of Akron in the Polymer Institute. In moving to Akron, he will be more centrally located between his grandkids and his father in Buffalo, New York.

In late November, the Department held a retirement luncheon in his honor at Pandl’s in Bayside. All who attended enjoyed the time for not only a great meal, but the chance to say goodbye and wish Bob the best. We will miss him!!! Luckily, we have his forwarding address and email, so if you wish to contact Bob to offer your congratulations or to simply say hello, just contact the department (email or phone) and we’ll get him in touch with you.



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Notes from the Chair

"The Glass Shop is empty," said Professor Bennett to the Department several days ago at Pandls. And it is. Bob Ponton, our beloved and distinguished glassblower, our flake and friend extraordinaire, our affordable analyst, has retired after a quarter-century of us. The passing of his mother and how fast grandchildren grow overwhelmed even him. He wanted to be closer to his dad and children and accepted a position at Akron. It wasn't easy -- even for him -- and Lynne made it go right. I'm old enough to remember when Buddy, Richie and Big Bopper didn't make it out of Iowa -- you know, the day the music died -- and there wasn't any "bye-bye Miss American Pie" to it: it was a mournful, mournful "Gee we're gonna' miss you" culminating with the appearance of three new stars in the skies. It was the sad, funny, old, 'haven't got a clue' 1950's, with Ike and all that industrial military complex mumbo jumbo; when emotions ran deep, deep, deep, until Sun Records went belly-up and we all began to get it. And now that's how I feel about Bob.

Let's begin life after "The Empty Glass Shop" with scholarship awards: Carl Hick is the first recipient of the Durward Layde Fellowship. Carl is a deserving undergraduate chemistry major who is financing a family and his education simultaneously. We are happy to help him with \$3,000 from our late Professor Layde and his wife Mary.

Jalal Siddiquee and Kayunta Johnson-Winters are the first recipients of the Sosnovsky Award. Both are graduate students in the Department. We are happy to help them with \$1,000 from our still active Emeritus Professor Sosnovsky. Both of these will be added to our Awards Day celebration!

I'm writing this on

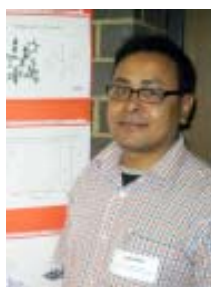
Thanksgiving Day so it's even easier than usual to thank all of you for your support. It has been my pleasure and privilege to have watched more than 25 years of students and postdoctorals steadfastly build our Department. We have reason to be proud of all of you, and we are. Our future is filled with more hope than ever. Top priority for our new Chancellor Carlos Santiago and his Cabinet is to support and build even better UWM research programs. We are beginning a truly novel intramural program to seed faculty for extramural support. Our Chancellor is pushing a Biotechnology Center for southeastern Wisconsin. The next few years will be exciting and we'll keep you current.

Physically, we're becoming more and more a campus with good rapid transit access and a broader neighborhood for more student residences. The former is highly affordable to all students and employees and runs well even while Milwaukee is the road

construction capital of the universe. The latter is changing the city's face. You wouldn't recognize Kenilworth



The 2004-05 Durward Layde Fellowship winner, Carl Hick (above) and the 2004-05 George Sosnovsky Award Winners Jalal Siddiquee and Kayunta Johnson-Winters (below).



and its enclosed boutiques and graduate student apartments just south of North Avenue near the old water tower and Lake Michigan. Or the riverfront condos and apartments stretching from downtown to the dam between Brady Street and North. Since many of them have private boat docks and easy access to the Lake, faculty and graduate students are quickly filling them (yeah!).

Our newest colleague, Professor Jian Chen, is busily setting up his labs and talking to students. Professor Chen left Zyvex Corporation (a nanotechnology company) in Texas to join our faculty. He is an organic chemist with ability to synthesize nanoscale. I wish you could see physicists and physical chemists and engineers hanging with our 'organicker'. Times are truly wonderful and exciting.

The Department and UWM Administration have finalized arrangements for a Departmental Beowulf Cluster. We'll start the nuts and bolts business after the New Year and you'll hear more details later. (That is, if I ever actually clear out my area donated to Capt. Schwabacher and his Space Pirates!) It is a giant step for Departmental computing and instrumentation.

Did computers ever really occupy centers for pilgrims bearing punch cards? Yep. I still have some just in case! Thank you for the good work leading to this, Professor Holme. Maybe you'll finally get a real office!!



Continued, page 3

Letter from the Chair, cont'd.

The Department and UWM Administration have finalized arrangements for a Chemical Education MS program which aims in particular to suit our UW System colleagues. This will involve faculty recruitment (probably next fall). It will be developed by Professor Holme. (OK! He gets an office.)

We also have renewed administrative commitment for keeping the ACS Exams Institute headquartered here at UWM. Sweaty palms with #2 pencils reaching for chemical truth and excellence will be watching the UWM logo! Thanks again to Professor Holme.

There's nothing like Holme for the Holidays. Send your donations to the rest of us.

And what can I send you? How about this?

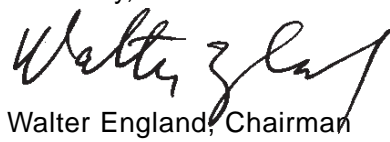
May the heavens bless and keep thee

May the stars shine on thee and the universe be gracious

May the wonder uplift thee and give thee peace.

Best wishes to all of you.

Sincerely,



Walter England, Chairman
Department of Chemistry
and Biochemistry



A BIG Thank You!

A BIG "Thanks!" to all of you who have contributed over the past year to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Funds from our Foundation accounts are used for department events, including our annual "Awards Day" poster competition - with scholarship prizes for the top posters.

The fund also supports our "Alumni Travel Award" program that assists graduate students with travel expenses to nationally recognized meetings to present posters. And, as some of you may remember, last year the George W. Keulks Memorial Fund helped us put together a first-rate Symposium in George's honor!

Enclosed with this newsletter is a business reply envelope and a gold-colored donation card; please consider beginning 2006 with a gift to the department. Last year Chemistry/Biochemistry tied with the English department for the most donors in the campaign! Let's see if we can beat them this year! Also, Physics received the largest single gift last year, let's see if we can top them!

DONATIONS UP TO \$500

Dr. Thomas Holme, Mrs. Susan Krezoski, Dr. Gene Hiegel, and Dr. Ralf Vanselow.

**Funds matched by employer.*

Alumni News

Patricia J. Dolhun, MD (BS 1978), has joined Madison Medical Affiliates, Inc. and is seeing patients in both downtown Milwaukee and in Mequon. She has discontinued her obstetrical practice and is concentrating on her gynecological practice, which includes general gynecology, gynecologic surgery, infertility, and menopause counseling.

Dr. Aaron Roerdink (Ph.D. 2004, Dr. Aldstadt) is the proud new father of a daughter, Alivia Rose born April 20th. Congratulations!

DON'T FORGET!!!!



Please use the reverse side of the enclosed donation card to let us know what you've been up to.



Or, better

yet, go to our web site and fill-out our on-line Alumni Contact form at:

www.uwm.edu/Dept/Chemistry/alumni/

While you're on our alumni page, you can update your mailing address, let us know if you've spotted any of our "missing" alumni, or just say "Hello".

If you live in the area or if you're heading back to town for business or to visit family - please feel free to stop by for a visit!

News@Chem/BioChem (formerly the UWM Chemist) is written and edited by Laura Hall. The Faculty Advisor is Dr. M. Mahmum Hossain. To share alumni news or to provide feedback to the editor, please email ljhall@uwm.edu. We'd love to hear from you!



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Alumni Spotlight

This issue of the Alumni News takes a look at three of our alumni who have returned "home".

"And the student shall become the teacher..."

Dr. John Picione was hired as an associate lecturer last year.

John was an undergraduate student here at UWM, and took classes with Ms. Freschl, Dr. Sorensen and Dr. Hossain. He graduated with a B.S. in 1997. He received his Masters (2000) and his Ph.D. (D. Crich, 2003) from the University of Illinois at Chicago. John, his wife and son moved back to Milwaukee from France where John completed a one year post-doc with professor Janine Cossy at the Ecole Supérieure de Physique et de Chimie Industrielles in Paris.

John writes "I really enjoy working with students and teaching them how to problem solve. Teaching the non-science majors is a challenge at times, but they are quite energetic and open to learn. To date, the engineers have been my toughest group to teach and keep interested in the material. As a

note, I still have to call Dr. Sorenson as such, 'Tom' is just too hard to say :)." John is

currently teaching 100 level courses, and in conjunction, working with Dr. Holme and the ACS Exams institute. Their research centers on determining how students problem solve - using web based problems. John has also been handling some of the outreach for the Chemistry & Biochemistry Department, including coordinating the annual Chemistry Week activities and the Chemistry/Biochemistry booth at the UWM Open House.

Dr. Tom Sorensen (Ph.D.1989, Professor England) teaches General Chemistry and Physical Chemistry Laboratory. He also coordinates the assignment of the teaching assistants to laboratory and discussion sections.

When Dr. Sorensen is not teaching, he can be found calculating Feynman diagrams for polymers, surfaces, or solids that may be associated with a lattice.



Dr. John Picione makes slime for a 2005 Discovery World demonstration.



Dr. Sorensen serves up homemade ice cream at UWM Open House, October 2004.



Dr. Kristen Murphy and a UWM Chemistry Grad Student at a Chemistry Week demonstration in 2004.



Drs. Murphy and Picione judge the 2005 UWM Chemistry Poster Contest as part of National Chemistry Week.

Dr. Kristen Murphy (Ph.D. 2002, Professor Bennett) currently teaches Chemistry 100 (Chemical Science) and General Chemistry for Engineering. She previously taught Basic Chemistry for Teachers. However, as she was recently appointed Associate Director of the ACS Examinations Institute, she's been hard at work with Dr. Tom Holme the Exams Institute's Director. She was invited to sit on the 2007 ACS General Exam Committee where she helped write the ACS General Chemistry Exam.

Kristen says "I am really enjoying myself. It's weird working here after being a student; both were great experiences! It is exciting and fun to get other people excited about what you do... I do miss the research, but it's very rewarding to "see the lightbulbs light up" as students "get" the concepts I'm teaching in class.



Dr. Kristen Murphy gives a lecture in Chem 180.



Dr. Tom Sorensen shares "The Joy of Toys" with students, as part of the ACS' theme for National Chemistry Week 2005.