

# SPECTROSCOPY SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH



300 Penn Center Boulevard, Suite 332, Pittsburgh, PA 15235-5503

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**October 15, 2008**

Chairman Dave Pensenstadler called the October SSP Meeting to order at 7:58 pm. Dave welcomed all our members and guests. Our meeting was a Joint meeting with the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh. There were 38 members and an estimated 50 guests.

**Amateur Astronomer's Association of Pittsburgh:** Dave introduced Ed Moss President of the AAAP.

Ed thanked us for inviting him saying he looks forward to this meeting.

Ed provided the following background information on the AAAP:

- Founded on June 9, 1929 by Leo Scanlon and Chester Roe.
- Four guests attended the first meeting. They now have 500 members.
- Their monthly meetings are at the Carnegie Science Center. He welcomed us to attend one of the meetings, held the second Friday of every month.

Information on the Facilities and Public Star Parties:

- Wagman Observatory in Deer Lakes Park
  - They have a 21" Manka telescope.
  - It is named for SSP member Tim Manka's parents Louise and Dan. Tim donated funding for the scope in the name of his parents. The Manka's were active in the SSP for over 40 years. Tim shared with Ed that today would have been their 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Mingo Creek Park Observatory in Washington County
  - They have had 17 public star parties, and 4 for requesting groups.
  - Numbers were down because weather this year was too cloudy.
  - They finished building the observatory, and installed the new 24" telescope, putting the older one in another room.
  - All of their plans for the observatory have been completed/ built.
  - They have a planetarium at the Observatory. They currently have a 10ft dome. At present they can have 18 people in for a show.
  - They're looking forward to possibly raising \$3,500 in funds next year to get a 20 ft dome. After that they will look at getting a better projector, and sell their present projector.

It is great when kids look through the telescope and say Wow! Ed said you know you've done your job when they say that.

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Ed showed a photo of the new awesome mount for the 24-inch telescope at the Mingo Creek Observatory. Ed pointed out that it is higher than it used to be. A person can get closer than before and with the new multiple ocular holder, a person can get great views of a celestial object at different magnifications, and so it's more impressive. The glorious thing is that you never have to be on the right side to look at it, all of the viewing is from the left side. You can now sit in a chair, or stand. It's easier for handicapped people to use the telescope.

## Other locations:

- They hold star parties around western PA and even central PA from Raystown Lake to Ryerson Station State Park.
- They also give lectures to scout groups, church groups, civic organizations, nature centers and to anyone interested in having a star party.

## AAAP Activities:

- Wagman- they have used the Brashear refractor and have been looking at Venus or other planets.
- Winterfest will be held in early February. It will be cold but clear for observing.
- They held 10 Star Parties for groups and have 3 more scheduled for the end of the year.

## Regional Events:

- They are involved with the Allegheny Observatory Open House with the University of Pittsburgh.
- Astronomy Week at the Carnegie Science Center
- They are one of the leading clubs in the Night Sky Network. They have a program to bring astronomy to schools. AAAP is usually in the top 10, sometimes the top 3 in the network.

They have a couple of members in the Dominican Republic, part of the Dominican Republic Astronomical Society. Al Paslow is one, and we converse by email.

Ed said that we would like to have a picnic at Mingo Creek next summer with the SSP and SACP, so that we can visit and enjoy the observatory and see the great views. Ed said they'd set it up so that we can use the spectroscope for which the SSP donated funds. They will show us how astronomers get data the same way the SSP people get their data, spectrographs, which are the only way to get information. You can tell a lot about the elements from their spectra. When you get the star's spectra, you can figure out what elements are in the star.

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Ed showed a photo of the Edmund Star and Planet Finders, which are purchased with SSP funds. It allows people to learn something about the night sky.

Ed ended by thanking the SSP and all of the members very much for all the support over the years. Thank you all!

Dave Pensenstadler provided the annual check from the SSP to support the AAAP. Ed again thanked us very much.

## Technology Program Dedication

Dave reminded the members that he introduced the Technical Program Dedication last month. Both Al Sharkins and John Jackovitz updated the list of scientists that received both the Spectroscopy Award and the Nobel Prize with a fourth scientist.

This year is dedicated to the following:

	Spectroscopy Award	Nobel Prize
• Gerhard Herzberg	1962	1971
• Kai Seigbahn	1982	1981
• Paul Lauterbur	1987	2003
• Ahmed Zewail	1997	1999

**Old Business:** Chairman Dave Pensenstadler asked for a motion to approve the September Meeting Minutes. The motion carried.

## Liaison Reports

Pittcon 2009: Ed Ladner noted that he wasn't here last month. The committee went to Chicago for the site trip. The visit was excellent. They expect another trip for December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. At present booth sales are over 2,000, which is very good. They're looking forward to a very successful year.

Talking about award winners, Ed mentioned the passing of Paul Wilks. A lot of members knew him and he was a recognized expert in IR spectroscopy. He had his Wilks Enterprises booth at Pittcon for many years. Paul actually attended every Pittcon except for the very first one. Paul had many friends and will be sorely missed.

Pittcon 2009 will be March 8 – 13. Please join us as the Pittsburgh Conference celebrates 60 years of showcasing scientific innovations.

Pittcon 2010 and 2011: No report.

SACP: Charlie Holifield noted that on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dr. Milton Lee, the H. Tracey Hall Professor of Analytical Chemistry at Brigham Young University would speak on "Analytical Separation Techniques Utilizing Axial Force Gradients."

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**Faraday Demonstration:** Charlie added that the 21<sup>st</sup> Faraday Demonstration will be the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November. Of particular interest is that the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> is open to the public. The speaker will be Bob Becker, whose topic will be Chemistry Demonstrations to Knock Your Sox Off. Bob has given the demonstrations before and they do knock your sox off! We would like to have everyone come. If interested in volunteering for this joint SSP/SACP event, there are volunteer forms on the table outside. It's not too late to sign up, send the application in, and feel free to send the brochures out to help us advertise.

**ACS Pittsburgh Local Section:** Fu Tyan Lin noted that we received the ACS ChemLuminary award for 2007 Project SEED program. The ACS Pittsburgh Award and Distinguished Service Award will be on November 5 at Pennsylvania Athletic Association to celebrate recipients Dr. Steven Weber and Mr. Richard Howe. Everyone is welcome to attend.

National Chemistry Week will be at Carnegie Science Center on October 24-25. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please see the Crucible for a detailed program.

On November 12, a joint symposium of ACS and AIChE will be at Duquesne University. The title is "Energy of the Future". Registration is open until November 7, 2008. Please attend.

**SAS:** John Jackovitz noted that he attended the Governing Board Meeting held in Reno this month. He will submit a written report and there will be information in Specks. He said it was a very good meeting, and they're very gracious to us and he was happy to be involved.

**Carnegie Library:** Dick Obrycki noted they would be meeting after the first of the year to see how the money that we give to the library will be used to extend science education in this area.

**Carnegie Science Center:** No report

## Council Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Maggie Hall reported that we received two thank you notes, one from the family of Dr. Melnick thanking us for our contribution to Young Israel Synagogue. The second was from Mrs. Leston.

**Treasurer's Report:** Melissa Visnikar suggested members see her if they need a Warrant, she always has them on hand. She noted that any warrants over \$100.00 are on hold until we receive our first budget distribution. If you have any questions, please

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do not hesitate to call or email her. Dave Pensenstadler noted we would get that done as quickly as possible.

## Committee Updates

**Meeting Arrangements:** Dave thanked Jan Pfeiffer and her committee for tonight's arrangements to applause. If you need a Parking chit, see Charlie and Jan.

**Technical Program/ Technology Forum:** Hub MacDonald thanked the SSP and SACP for coming out. He noted that the November meeting would feature Dr. Gary Glish from the University of North Carolina who is well known in mass spec. Dr. Glish is the President of the American Society for Mass Spectrometry this year and is very active in organizing for that group. The topic will be "Photons and Electrons as Alternatives to Collisions for Obtaining Chemical Structure Information Using MS/MS". The talk should be very enjoyable, so please come out.

Dave Vanischak reported that tonight's Technology Forum speaker was Dr. Jennifer Loveland-Curtze of Penn State University. The title of her talk was "The Real Survivors, Microbes in Frozen Environments". There were 41 members and guests in attendance.

Our speaker for the Nov 19<sup>th</sup> Technology Forum at 5:30 pm will be Dr. Daniel Wagner of Nutrifarmacy, "Natural Medicine from Three Continents". Dr. Wagner was recently named one of the most influential pharmacists in America. We invite all of you to attend this very interesting talk.

**Membership:** Manny Miller noted that we have 2 new members, Mark Sparrow of R.J. Lee Group and Vladimir Kovalchuk from McKeesport Area High School. Manny noted that he planned to distribute nametags but there were some problems with the engraving. He'll bring them next month.

**Aids to Education Committee:** Chuck Gardner reported that we've made grants to the ACS Pittsburgh Section in support of their National Chemistry Week Activities. Grants have been made to the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, the DOE Energy, Environment & Economics Seminar, and the Ohio River Watershed Celebration. Chuck added that he would be holding a Committee meeting in early November. Committee members will be contacted in the next week or so to schedule the meeting date. Chuck thanked us for the support and noted they're off to a good start.

**Mass Spec Discussion Group:** If you're members you already received an email about the Monday November 24<sup>th</sup> event at Duquesne in the Union. It will cover the basics from a chromatographer's perspective in developing MS.

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**Elementary Science:** Penny Gardner discussed the fact that this program started 4 years ago. It targets grades 3-6 to engage them with hands on activities to get them excited about science. On November 14<sup>th</sup> there is a workshop for teachers in elementary schools. If you have students or know teachers in elementary schools we'd like to have them come to the Grand Concourse event on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Contact [hubertm@comcast.net](mailto:hubertm@comcast.net) by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Dave asked if there were any other committee Reports?

**Publicity:** Melissa Visnikar noted that the Faraday Lecture would be advertised in the October edition of Pittsburgh Magazine. There will also be an ad for the SSP and our website in the November issue.

Melissa suggested we tune into WQED FM 89.3 on Saturday October 25<sup>th</sup> from 11-12 to hear our very own Dave Pensenstadler during WQED's Radio Challenge.

In addition to Dave's interview, our Faraday radio spots will air November 3-7, November 10-14, November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

On WQED TV Channel 13, our standard sponsorship ads for Nova, Nova Science New, and the Antiques Roadshow will be temporarily replaced with ads for the Faraday Lecture. The airing dates will be October 21, 28, November 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

Also, check the neighborhood section of the Pittsburgh Tribune Review for the monthly SSP meetings, workshops and the Faraday lecture announcement. Thank you.

## **New Business**

Dave Pensenstadler noted that last month he mentioned the Chairman's Pass to cover dinner costs. If any of the members would like to have 1 or 2 of the passes, see Dave. If you have colleagues or co-workers that you think would be interested, please see him.

Dave asked if there was any other Business.

Dave Pensenstadler noted that if not, he'd like to entertain a Motion to Adjourn. Tim Manka moved and Nick Barsic seconded, all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Dave then turned the meeting over to Chair-Elect, Hub MacDonald who introduced Bob Witkowski, who, in turn, introduced our speaker for the evening, Dr. Michael Zolensky, NASA Johnson Space Center, who talked about "Hydrogen Nanoglobules: Finding One of Life's Building Blocks in Meteorites and Implications for the Mars Phoenix Mission".

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Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Marie Hall  
SSP Secretary 2008-2009

cc: D. Pensenstadler, H. MacDonald, Melissa Visnikar, M. Johnson, file