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## Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh

April 22, 2009

The April SSP Meeting was called to order at 7:58 pm by Chairman David Pensenstadler. 57 members and guests attended.

### Technology Program Dedication

Dave reminded the members that this year's Technical Program is dedicated to those scientists who have won the prestigious Pittsburgh Spectroscopy Award and went on to win a Nobel Prize. They are as follows:

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

Dave said that on a sad note, we lost 2 people since our last meeting. Most recently John Graham, and Bruce LaRue, who passed away in March. John was the SSP Chair in 1979 and the Pittcon President in 1981. Bruce LaRue was the SSP Chair in 1962 and the Pittcon President in 1965. Both were long time members of SSP and will be sorely missed.

Dave noted that SSP honors 2 people with awards at the Pittsburgh Conference: the Pittsburgh Spectroscopy Award, presented for outstanding contributions to the field of spectroscopy, and the Hasler Award, presented every other year to a scientist having notable achievements in spectroscopy that have resulted in significant applications of broad utility. The Spectroscopy Award went to Ira Levin of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease, in Bethesda, Maryland, and the Hasler Award went to Gary Hieftje, from Indiana University.

As tradition has it, Ira Levin will be our September speaker, to discuss the important and interesting work he's doing.

### Liaison Reports

**Pittcon 2009:** President Ed Ladner reported that even during this struggling global economy, Pittcon 2009, held March 8 – 13, 2009 in Chicago, Illinois was a success. Ed announced that we drew just over 19,000 attendees this year. While attendance was a little down from 2008, there was a 6% increase in actual conferee attendance, while the number of exhibitors was down slightly. The exposition drew over 1,000 companies presenting their innovations in over 2,200 booths. Thanks to Program Chair Mitch Johnson, the Technical Program drew over 2,400 talks. There were 15 workshops. The Technical Program included the presentation of the Chemical Heritage Award to Dr. Alfred Bader, the founder of Aldridge Chemical Company, and the Plenary Lecture was delivered by Dr. George M. Whitesides, Woodford L. and Ann A. Flowers University Professor at Harvard University.

The number of Conferee Networking sessions increased from 27 last year to 34 this year. There were over 100 Short Courses with 1,474 participants. Ed provided a special thanks to Science Week Chair Charlie Holifield, for a great Science Week program, with 105 teachers and over 80 schools represented. Each teacher was given a grant of \$500. There were approximately 500 elementary and secondary school students and 1,000 plus that attended the lecture demonstration by Lee Merek, titled, "Weird Chemistry".

Pittcon 2009 was a success due in large part to a number of people in this room. Ed asked that committee members raise their hand as he thanked them all for a successful conference, and said he was hopeful that there would be more funding for next year's SSP Programs.



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**Pittcon 2010:** No report.

**Pittcon 2011:** No report.

**SACP:** Dave noted that Bill Sharpe was unable to be here, and asked that Dave present the following information. The next SACP meeting is the combined SACP/ACS Awards meeting on Monday May 11. Folks must make reservations as the standing reservations to not apply.

**ACS Pittsburgh Local Section:** Fu Tyan provided a report.

**SAS Annual Meeting:** John Jackovitz reminded the members that SSP is the Pittsburgh Section of the Society of Applied Spectroscopy, a national organization. John mentioned that in honor of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PITTCON, the SAS presented two symposia focusing on atomic and vibrational spectroscopy.

**Carnegie Library:** Dick Obrycki reported that the two societies provide grants to the Carnegie Science Library & Technology Department. Rich Kaplan is the Director of Reference Services. The two societies will meet with him and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to determine the best use of the funds that the societies provide, so they can be spent prudently.

## **Council Reports**

**SSP Secretary Report:** Maggie Hall noted that this is her last meeting as Secretary and she very much enjoyed this opportunity. It was interesting to learn more about the Society and see what makes it such a successful endeavor. Plus as one becomes more involved in the SSP they learn that we are a family. She read a touching thank you card from John Graham, who just recently passed away. John wanted to thank the membership for their gift and many well wishes. He noted that the work that our Society does is most important in furthering science education.

**SSP Treasurer:** Melissa Visnikar noted that she knew John Graham from when she first started, and that he was a very special person. It's hard to think of the words to say and John we miss you. Melissa thanked the members for supporting her in any requests that she asked of us and said it was a pleasure working with us.

Dave Pensenstadler asked for a Motion to Approve the Treasurer's Report. John Jackovitz moved and Bob Witkowski seconded. The Motion carried.

## **Committee Updates**

**Meeting Arrangements:** Jan Pifer reminded folks that for the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting there are no standing reservations, therefore, members MUST call the Office to make a reservation by May 13. If anyone has award winners attending that night, make sure you make a reservation for them. We need that information also on May 13. Please see Jan if you need parking chits.

**Membership:** Manny Miller reported that we have one new member in attendance tonight: Richard Thomas, a Pharmacist. Richard stood and was recognized. He added that there are 2 dozen people that have not yet paid their dues for next year. If you do not pay before May 20<sup>th</sup> your name will be dropped from the membership rolls. He noted that there are still about 20 remaining member badges that have not been picked up. They can be picked up at the Pittcon Office on the corner of Emily Concannon's desk where they are prominently displayed. When you pick it up just check your name off the list. They will also be brought to the Awards dinner on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Aids to Education:** No report

**Next Monthly Meeting:** Hub MacDonald noted that our next meeting will be the Awards Banquet and Former Chairman's Night, where we recognize our grant, scholarship, and equipment award winners and we also recognize the Former Chair of the Society at this meeting. So please on May 20<sup>th</sup> come and celebrate with us. The banquet will be held in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Ballroom at



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Duquesne University.

**Employment:** No report

**College Equipment Grant:** Bob Baudoux noted that there were 22 applications and we decided to sponsor 10 of those. They will receive their checks on May 20<sup>th</sup>. He added thank you to the committee.

**Keivin Burnes Outstanding High School Teacher Award:** Bob Witkowski reported that there were two awards given. Rick Imler from Holidaysburg Area Senior high School, and Susan Gillette Meer from Mt. Lebanon High School, will be presented with their awards at the Annual Awards Banquet in May.

**Elementary School Science Excellence Award Report:** Larry Irr reported that there were 3 outstanding awardees. They will receive a check for \$1,000. Special thanks to Emily Concannon for all of her help

**Technology Forum:** Dave Vanischak reported that tonight's speaker was Bonnie Sanford of Meadowcroft Rock Shelter. The title of her talk was "Meadowcroft: 16,000 Years in the Making". There were 43 members and guests in attendance.

**SSP Starter Grant:** Fu-Mei Lin reported that there were 13 proposals for the Starter Grant. They were evaluated by 8 committee members. Assistant professors who have accepted an appointment at a U.S. college or university since December 31, 2006 are eligible to apply for the 2009 Starter Grant. Fu-Mei was pleased to announce Professor Elsa Yan from Yale University, Department of Chemistry as the grant recipient. She will receive a \$40,000.00 grant. She will also be invited to attend the SSP's Annual Awards Banquet and Former Chairman's Night on May 20, 2009. Fu-Mei thanked her committee for their hard work.

**Carnegie Science and Engineering Fair:** Maria Ferguson noted that there were a record number of projects for the science fair. The awardees will be announced at the Annual May meeting. Maria noted that all members of the committee took part in evaluating the Jr. level award applications too. They will bring their posters to the May Awards Dinner.

**Tripartite:** Jim Manner noted that the Tripartite meeting will be 2 weeks from today at Pitt. There will be an excellent program on May 6<sup>th</sup>. This was advertised in the Pittsburgh Magazine.

**J. Keivin Scanlon Award:** Tom Conti is chairman of the committee. This award is given to an educator or retired educator who has made outstanding and continued unpaid efforts to enhance science education. Tom, who could not attend the meeting asked Dave to announce this year's winner – our own Charlie Holifield. Charlie was recognized by the members with applause.

**Elementary School Science Olympiad Program:** Cathy Cubelic, Co-Chair, noted that they met on February 9<sup>th</sup>, and processed 24 grant applications, and approved all of them.

Chairman Dave Pensenstadler asked if there were any other announcements. Dean Tzeng reminded folks to send him any awardee results so he can post them on the website.

Dave Pensenstadler noted that this is our last regular monthly meeting. Our Awards Banquet and Former Chairman's Night will be held on May 20<sup>th</sup> at Duquesne University. Dave took this opportunity to thank members for their support through the year, particularly the committee and committee chairs for all their hard work.

Dave said it was his pleasure, privilege, and honor to serve as Chairman, and added it has been a good year. We increased support to some programs, and the By-laws were revised in a small but very significant way. We found out late last year that the Society officers were not covered by any liability insurance. We thought they were covered under the Pittcon insurance policy. He was pleased to announce that the officers now have liability insurance in the event a there is a tragedy, so they do not lose their homes.



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Dave also noted that we attempted to have the new Directory issued in February, but it was delayed so as not to conflict with printing of PITTCON material. The comprehensive Directories will be sent out today.

Finally Dave added he had hoped to bring in more new members this year. In the last couple of years there has been a pretty significant increase in membership (30 to 40 members annually). That was the reason for the Chairman's pass, so that we could invite our co-workers and colleagues to a meeting (and dinner) to see what we're all about. Dave added, "We weren't as successful as I would have liked, but we did get a reasonable number of new members". Now we have 18, with about 10 more to be approved by the end of this year. Dave is happy with the way our membership is heading.

**Old Business:** Dave Pensenstadler noted that the February Meeting Minutes were put up on the SSP web site in the last couple of weeks. Dave asked for a Motion to accept the Minutes, Jim Manner moved, and Dean Tzeng seconded. Dave asked if there were any other Old Business.

Mitch Johnson reminded us to get our ballots in for the election. Dave added that we could also bring them to the Awards Banquet.

**New Business:** Having heard no New Business, Dave asked for a Motion to Adjourn. John Jackovitz moved and Ed Ladner seconded. The Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm. Dave Pensenstadler then turned the meeting over to the Technical Program Chair Hub MacDonald, who introduced Sandy Asher, who in turn introduced the Technical Program speaker, Dr. Gabor A. Somorjai. His talk was entitled, "Molecular Studies of Surfaces Under Reaction Conditions; Sum Frequency Generation Vibrational Spectroscopy, Scanning Tunneling Microscopy and Ambient Pressure X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy"

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Marie Hall  
SSP Secretary 2008-2009

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