

NEWSLETTER

March 1968

Greetings! This brief newsletter will have many purposes, the main one being to be informative and useful. One purpose it will not have is to be a fund-raising instrument. Many people have approached me and others in the Department about setting up some kind of an informal group or association of people who have been associated with the Cornell Chemistry Department. To start things off, I thought that we would put out a newsletter which would be published infrequently — maybe twice a year. Above all, I would like to keep the newsletter very informal. I would also like to suggest that as another part of this association we have a social function once or twice a year, probably connected with the National ACS meetings. This too could take many forms; it could be the usual social hour which we have at every ACS meeting; or it could be a beer party during the ACS meetings, or an informal dinner, or something of that nature. In other words, I would like the whole organization to be primarily for fun. Along with this I would very much like any and all suggestions that you might have. I personally do not care for this type of an organization to have any formal structure, such as officers, dues, fancy publications, membership lists, etc.; however, if many of you feel differently I would like to know that and we would investigate other possibilities.

First, let me introduce myself; my name is William D. Gurowitz and last July, I assumed the position of Executive Director of the Department of Chemistry. My job is to provide continuing leadership of the Department in contrast to the Chairman who is appointed for a five-year term. I view my job as one which assumes as much of the

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Chairman's Column

My first year as Chairman has been a busy one. Harold Scheraga turned the reins over in excellent order (although still quivering). I never cease to be amazed at how he found time to get all the many jobs done. Bill Gurowitz and I work hard trying to keep up the pace he set.

Occupancy of the new Research Building has been relatively painless. The facilities which it has provided us for graduate research are in every way proving to be all that we had expected. You must realize that our expectations were extremely high because we knew of the great planning that Bill Miller and others had done for this Building. However, we are delighted and I think it is fair to say that the new Building follows in the Cornell tradition set first by Morse Hall and followed by Baker Laboratory of leading the way for university research facilities. If any of you are in the area, please stop by and we will be happy to show off our new facilities. If you want the trip to include a nostalgic visit to your old lab in Baker, better plan it quick, because the present schedule calls for the building to undergo extensive renovation starting this summer. The total renovation of Baker is estimated at \$6 million and I learned recently that the total floor area of Baker, including attic, is six acres. So even at current real estate prices, it will be a pretty thorough renovation, budgeted at \$1 million an acre.

During the year, our faculty has been joined by "Dee" du Vigneaud, who retired from the Cornell Medical School in New York to become Professor of Chemistry at Cornell. He has proven a most congenial addition to our faculty. He has wholeheartedly taken part in all important departmental functions, such as graduate student beer parties. He seems to be just as happy to be here as we are to have him here.

Our Baker Lecturer during the Fall term was Vladimir Prelog of the Eidgenossische Technische Hochschule. True to Baker Lecturer

standards, we got to hear a series of fine lectures and all of us — students and faculty alike — had the opportunity to become friends with a great man. During February, we were visited by Henry Eyring, who was here as a University Messenger Lecturer and talked on "The Scientific Models We Live By". This gave him an opportunity to talk on a number of controversial topics in chemistry in his down-to-earth manner. He also talked to freshman classes, seminar groups, and any group of students he found. Also, in February, Manfred Eigen paid us one of his regular visits as a Cornell Professor-at-Large. His visit was a most stimulating one and one which was widely appreciated, not only by chemists, but by biologists, physicists and others who came to the lectures just to see a Nobel prize winner at close range.

The latest incident of unrest on the campus is that which exists in the minds of our first-year graduate students and seniors. Although they hold widely varying attitudes on the Vietnam War, they are nearly unanimous in wanting a draft program that they can count on. Implementation of the present law will, at least, face them with the uncertainties inherent in leaving final decisions with local draft boards and may mean that each student, sometime prior to receiving his Ph. D., will be inducted. This policy has grave consequences, not only for individual students but for the future of both graduate education and undergraduate education. Universities, such as Cornell, rely heavily on the teaching by graduate students. Although this policy is frequently criticized, I believe that some of the best teaching done today is done by graduate students. By speaking the same language as the undergraduate and knowing his problems fully, graduate teaching assistants are able to communicate with the present generation in a way not possible for those of us on the other side of the generation gap.

No matter what the future may bring in terms of selective service for our graduate students, we have a dedicated faculty who will see that we continue to produce the best undergraduate majors and the best graduate alumni to be found anywhere.

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burden of running the Department as possible, so that the Chairman can do what he is best at, namely teaching and research. I came to Cornell after more than seven years in industry as both a research chemist and administrator. I have found out two things so far: one is that I am enjoying the work; and two that anyone who thinks that the pace of academic life is a leisurely one is surely mistaken!

The Department continues to grow, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. We are now teaching approximately 3,000 undergraduate students per week. This is a bit taxing on Baker Laboratory, but so far we have been able to do it without getting into massive numbers of students in lectures and recitations. Cornell remains one of the leaders in the number of chemistry majors graduated each year, with the average graduating class being approximately 50. We are also among the very top in the quality of chemistry majors produced.

The graduate enrollment in the Department is just under 200 graduate students, with this number being bolstered by approximately 75 postdoctoral associates. The research carried on by the faculty and graduate students covers not only the four classical areas of chemistry but has evolved into two relatively new areas — theoretical chemistry and molecular biology. Theoretical chemistry is an area with strong interplay between mathematics, physics and chemistry, while molecular biology cuts across the fields of biology and chemistry.

News of Faculty: Harold Scheraga, who is Walter Todd Professor of Chemistry, stepped down as Chairman of the Department last July 1st and was succeeded by Robert A. Plane. Frank Long, as many of you know, is serving as Vice President for Research and Advanced Studies. In addition, Don Cooke is Dean of the Graduate School.

Four of the faculty are on sabbatic for all or part of this academic year. Jerry Meinwald is at Stanford learning even more about high resolution mass spectrometry, in addition to writing and lecturing. George Morrison is at the University of California at La Jolla, associated with their atmospheric sciences group. He writes back that his office is located between the offices of two Nobel prize winners — wonder if George is hoping that it's contagious. Bob Hughes is with the Laboratory for Molecular Biology at Cambridge University in England and is quite excited about some of the applications of x-ray crystallography to biological systems. Mel Goldstein is spending the Spring semester of this year at the ETH in Zurich, Switzerland.

Professor Laubengayer has now added the title of Emeritus to his name. He still actively pursues his many interests and has, in addition, undertaken the formidable job of writing a history of the Chemistry Department. He will also be a regular contributor to this newsletter, writing a column entitled "Recollections".

Besides our usual two seminars each week which bring outstanding speakers to the campus, we've had a number of truly excellent invited lectureships. Specifically, Professor V. Prelog of the ETH delivered the Baker Lecture Series this past Fall on "Chemical Topology". In December, Professor Alexander Rich of MIT delivered the Debye Lecture Series, dealing with the general area of protein synthesis on a molecular basis. The first two weeks in February were very busy ones here as we were fortunate enough to have Professor Manfred Eigen, the most recent Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, deliver his annual lecture series as Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large. His topic was "Molecular Control in Biology". At the same time, Professor Henry Eyring was here as a Messenger Lecture, which is a University-wide lectureship. He spoke on "The Scientific Models We Live By". Furthermore, Professor Ephraim Katchalski of The Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, is scheduled to be here during the first two weeks in

April as a combined Baker and Molecular Biology lecturer, speaking on "Synthetic Polymers of Biological Interest". So you can see, it has been a very active, busy and stimulating time.

Along these same lines, the Debye Symposium, which is jointly sponsored by the Division of Physical Chemistry of the American Chemical Society and the Division of Chemical Physics of the American Physical Society, will be held at Cornell June 24-26, 1968. The topic of the Symposium will be "Laser Scattering". We hope to see some of you here for that Symposium.

As many of you know, we just completed a seven-story Research Building and moved in to it last summer. It is quite an impressive Building. It is connected to the northeast corridor of Baker and has proved extremely functional. Plans are now well along for the complete renovation of Baker Laboratory, starting this summer. The basic construction of Baker will be left untouched; that is, the outside walls and most of the inner walls will remain but new plumbing, wiring, benches, lighting, air conditioning, etc., will all be installed. It is hoped that Baker will be returned to its original stature of being one of the most outstanding laboratories in the world. The total project cost of the Research Building, the renovation of Baker, plus a small amount of additional construction (mainly housing a new large lecture hall of the same size as Baker 200) is \$10 million. Many members of the Chemistry Department and the University have been hard-at-work on planning, fund-raising, moving, etc. We are grateful for the help of many Cornellians in these efforts.

The schedule calls for the renovation to start this summer with the completion of the first phase by summer of 1970. The first phase includes essentially all of the area in Baker except for the large undergraduate teaching laboratories. These laboratories plus the small amount of new construction will be renovated in a second

phase, which will start in the summer of 1970 and be completed one year later. The new undergraduate teaching laboratories will all be the small teaching module that was planned by the faculty and was built two years ago. This teaching module, which has had a number of write-ups and inquiries, accommodates 20 students at a time and has been so successful that the decision to make all of the new laboratories the same was very easy.

CORNELL SOCIAL HOUR
ACS Spring Meeting
Tuesday, 2 April, 5:30 p.m.
Argonaut Room
Mark Hopkins Hotel
San Francisco, California
See you there!

I think this is enough for this issue. I'd very much like to get your thoughts and comments. You can do this in several ways — by writing to me, by visiting the Department (please do), or by talking to me at the Cornell Social Hour at the ACS meetings.

I am reasonably sure that my mailing list is not complete or correct in all cases. I would ask you to send me your current address if our mailing address was wrong and also to send me the names and addresses of anyone who did not get this newsletter who should.

I look forward to meeting and talking with you.

WDG

Lauby's* Cornell Chemical Recollections

The first years of retirement have been filled with decision-making, which I had hoped would become minimized. One has to choose from the many things one has long wanted to spend more time with. Writing, consulting, wine making, figure skating, square dancing, sailing, gardening, travel; all interesting and good fun. Another item high on my priority list has turned out to be the collection and organization of material dealing with the history of the Cornell Chemistry Department and the Cornell Baker Lectures. (Those of you who endured my lectures when you were at Cornell will note that my strong bias for the historical approach still survives.)

The more I dig into the records the more I am impressed with the very important place which chemistry has occupied at Cornell right from the start, one hundred years ago. Ezra Cornell, with his practical, hard-headed but idealistic approach to education, naturally was intensely interested in seeing science applied widely to agriculture and industry. And Andrew D. White, our first president, was a pioneer in incorporating science into university education. It was no mere chance, then, that of the first four professors appointed to the faculty of Cornell two were chemists. The following hundred years have seen tremendous expansion of chemistry at Cornell to one of the top-flight positions in the world. The history of this development from the day when the first batch of students climbed the Hill to Ezra's cow pasture is most intriguing.

Professor Emil Chamot, a student at Cornell in the 1890's, then joining the faculty and becoming Emeritus Professor in 1938, was the first to gather together material on the early days of chemistry at Cornell. He carried his record of building of the faculty and curriculum up to 1933. After Dusty Rhoades retired in 1957 he added to the historical material, with emphasis naturally on the events leading to the establishment of the School of Chemical Engineering. So I have very distinguished predecessors in the game of collecting the history of chemistry at Cornell and I approach it with appropriate modesty.

It is my hope to add to and bring up-to-date the history of Cornell chemistry. For instance, one untouched area concerns the Baker Lectures and their profound influence on the Department. I invite all of the alumni of Chemistry from Cornell to help with this project. Please canvass your memories of your days at Cornell and write me of interesting recollections of the Cornell scene in your day; the Chemistry Department the faculty, the curriculum, your fellow students, the Baker Lecturers you knew. Dry details can be dredged out of the Cornell archives. What I need to make the material come alive are intimate details, anecdotes, attitudes. Recollections such as: the King arriving majestically in Baker Court in his Cadillac, Banty dragging his green baize bag of books to cover his lecture table and never using it, Tommy's elegant lectures, Cavanaugh's keen Irish wit, Browne gargling liquid air, Henry Feehan's grilling of graduate students attempting to get apparatus from his stockroom, Sidgwick's adoption of Cornell, Debye's lending library of detective stories, and so on and on. Don't worry about fancy writing. Send me your recollections and I'll see that they are assimilated.

I'm particularly interested in locating photographs, snapshots and movie films to add to our collection. So when you sort through your closets and studies don't discard anything which touches on Chemistry at Cornell but send it on to me. If you can't bear to part with such Cornelliana, let me know what you have so we can consider reproducing items which will help fill the gaps.

In return for your help I'll engage to contribute to the periodic newsletter the Department plans to circulate a selection of the historical materials you forward. So here's your chance to join the fun.

*A. W. Laubengayer: a member of the B. Chem class of 1921 and awarded the Cornell Ph. D. in 1926. Joined Cornell faculty in 1927 with successive appointments as lecturer, assistant professor; retiring as Emeritus Professor in 1966, still in residence in Baker Lab.

Faculty Members

(Academic Year 1967-68)

A. C. Albrecht - Physical
S. H. Bauer - Physical
A. T. Blomquist - Organic
J. M. Burlitch - Inorganic
R. A. Caldwell - Organic
W. D. Cooke - Analytical
V. du Vigneaud - Organic
R. C. Fay - Inorganic
M. E. Fisher - Theoretical
J. H. Freed - Physical
M. J. Goldstein - Organic
W. D. Gurowitz - Organic
G. G. Hammes - Physical
J. L. Hoard - Physical
R. Hoffmann - Theoretical
R. E. Hughes - Physical
E. S. Kostiner - Inorganic
F. A. Long - Physical
J. Meinwald - Organic
W. T. Miller - Organic
G. H. Morrison - Analytical
H. Muxfeldt - Organic
R. A. Plane - Inorganic
R. F. Porter - Physical
H. A. Scheraga - Physical
M. J. Sienko - Inorganic
D. A. Usher - Organic
B. Widom - Theoretical
C. F. Wilcox, Jr. - Organic
J. J. Zuckerman - Inorganic

Emeritus Faculty

J. R. Johnson

A. W. Laubengayer

M. L. Nichols

J. Papish

New Faculty

(Fall 1968)

E. Elson - Physical

G. A. Fisk - Physical

M. F. Semmelhack - Organic

