

## NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 4

August 1969

As you know, much has occurred since the last issue of the Newsletter. I do not want to go into the happenings of April here since I don't think this is an appropriate place and also many of you have already received much information about the events at Cornell. The one interesting thing to me was the quality (and often lack of it) of the news reporting. Some beneficial results of the happenings are that, within this Department, there have been better communications and a better understanding of the concerns of members of the Department. Over the summer, we have been examining in depth the role of the chemist in the modern-day world. Discussions on such current problems as pollution, the race problem, chemical-biological warfare, research funding and the population problem have been held.

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We have decided to experiment a bit with the Social Hour and have scheduled the Cornell Social Hour for Monday, September 8th, at 5:30 p.m. in the Louis XVI Center of the Waldorf-Astoria. I hope to see many of you there and would like to hear your comments about having the Social Hour on Monday rather than Tuesday.

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The Phase I renovation of Baker Laboratory is proceeding right on schedule and the completion date of December 1, 1969 looks entirely realistic. Some of the flavor of the "new" Baker is becoming apparent. The building will really be outstanding and one which we can continue to be proud of. We are fully expecting to do our

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## Chairman's Column

Having grown up in awe of the great Berkeley Chemistry Department of the thirties and forties, I was pleased to have the opportunity to spend the first six months of this year as a Visiting Scientist there. The visit was profitable and provided me with the opportunity to appreciate the fact that it is still a fine department. But even more, I now fully appreciate the greatness of the Cornell Chemistry Department.

By being away from Cornell during the spring semester, I missed the excitement that occurred on campus; however, Berkeley supplied more than its share of similar excitement. Comparison of the crises at the two schools provides some interesting points. In each case, the university administration was widely criticized for its response to the crisis. Yet, the responses of the administration at the two schools were almost complete opposites. At Cornell, the administration was criticized for being soft while, at Berkeley, the administration was criticized for being unduly harsh. Although each of the responses brought temporary quiet to the campuses, almost no one believes that either situation has been solved. Thus, it seems that however an administration responds at the time of crisis it cannot solve the basic problem. The problems are deep enough that no last-minute superficial solution is possible. No one will deny that planning is superior to patching. The problem is one of making beneficial changes without weakening the fundamental tradition of the university, which has slowly evolved over centuries.

Furthermore, it is unfortunately not true that only a small minority of students were involved in the crises. At Cornell, it was a gathering of a majority of the total student body who nearly unanimously insisted upon a reversal of the first faculty decision to uphold the judicial code. At Berkeley, 85 percent of the largest turnout for a referendum in the history of the university voted to oppose the university authorities in the use of the People's Park land. Although campus confrontations may well be engineered by a tiny minority of the student body, issues are raised which have

strong appeal for large numbers of students and young people generally.

Certainly no university administration nor faculty can conduct business as usual if it is opposed by a majority of its students. In order that the educational process can continue, we must find ways to unify students and their teachers. Only then can we achieve the common dedication necessary for our task which is more important today than ever before. Although this will certainly not be easy in view of the increasing complexities of our society, I am encouraged by what I find on my return to the Cornell Chemistry Department. Within the Department, I sense a great feeling of mutual trust, common purpose and unity between students and faculty. I am sure that this attitude is the result of a state of general good health of the Department. However, I am sure also that everyone at Cornell worked long and hard during the critical spring months to make sure that the healthy state of the Department was maintained. In this regard, I want to especially thank Jerry Meinwald who filled in as chairman during my absence and Bill Gurowitz whose considerable talents and strenuous efforts were just what was needed.

Although I am certain that we have not seen the last of disturbances on this or other campuses, based on the spirit that I found to pervade the Cornell Chemistry Department on my return, I am cautiously optimistic as to the outcome.

In closing, let me note that scientifically my stay in Berkeley was worthwhile. Not only did I complete 90 percent of the writing I had planned but managed to learn some biochemistry and did experiments on the role of manganese in photosynthesis. Much of the time the lab where I worked was almost under siege — sometimes from suspected rioters, sometimes from gas-spewing helicopters. So it's fair to say that my stay in Berkeley was exciting in many ways.

Bob Plane

teaching in Baker in the spring term of the next academic year. I invite each of you to visit us and inspect the new facilities. We are hoping to start the final phase of the building program next spring with the renovation of the teaching labs and the addition of a new moderate-size auditorium. This decision will, of course, rest on obtaining the necessary funds.

CORNELL SOCIAL HOUR

ACS Fall Meeting

Monday, 8 September, 5:30 p.m.

Louis XVI Center

Waldorf-Astoria

New York City

See you there!

The size of the Department is actually slightly smaller than a year ago. There are still 35 faculty members and about 70 post-doctoral associates. The shrinkage comes in the number of graduate students. The incoming class numbers 28 instead of the usual 45 to 50. This decrease is due mainly to reduction in federal research support funds. We hope (although not too optimistically) that this trend will reverse itself and that support will increase so that we can keep the incoming class at a normal size. This reduced federal research support, coupled with rapidly-rising costs, has had a significant and deleterious effect on the research projects.

One new program we will be instituting this fall is to bring the incoming graduate student class to campus a few days earlier than usual. The purpose of this will be to outline what their teaching assignments will be, what their responsibilities will be and to actually go through classroom situations and laboratory experiments from the courses they will be assisting. This idea grew out of suggestions by a number of graduate students who have been working closely with Professor Wilcox in planning the new integrated laboratory curriculum. Many of these same graduate students will actually be working with Professor Wilcox in carrying out these workshop sessions for the new graduate students. I think it will be a real plus for our teaching program and should improve the quality of teaching by these graduate students. As mentioned in previous Newsletters, Professor Wilcox has been hard at work on the new integrated laboratory program. Over the summer, he has met with interested graduate students and is actually redesigning much of the laboratory instruction and experiments. Many of these experiments are being tried out in Summer Session this summer and more of them will be incorporated into the normal programs in the fall. As many of you know, there has been a lot of talk about integrated laboratory programs but very little action. We hope to be fully underway with our integrated laboratory curriculum within the next few years. In these days of campus unrest, it is important to note that much of the initiative and planning of the integrated laboratory curriculum has come from our graduate students on a strictly voluntary basis. I know that Professor Wilcox has been helped immeasurably by them and looks forward to their continued help and advice.

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Besides the integrated lab program, the undergraduate curriculum has undergone quite a revision. The changes were made in an effort to improve the curriculum and also to make it more flexible and somewhat less demanding, especially for those people who while interested in chemistry have broad interests in other scientific disciplines. It is anticipated that the "serious" chemistry major will still end up taking about the same number of

## Lauby's Cornell Recollections



Henry Feehan

In his 46 years as stockroom clerk of the Chemistry Department, Henry Feehan achieved a unique place in the memories and affections of faculty, students and alumni.

Born in County Lough, Ireland, in 1856, Henry came to the United States when he was 24 and joined the Chemistry Department in 1882. This was only four years after instruction in chemistry was initiated at Cornell and the budding Department was located in a temporary wooden building where Goldwin Smith Hall is situated now. So Henry was contemporary with Ezra Cornell, Andrew D. White and the original chemical faculty (see the picture in the March 1969 Newsletter). As new quarters for chemistry appeared,

Henry moved his stockroom to Franklin Hall, then to Morse Hall and finally to Baker Laboratory. He retired in 1934 and died in 1936. Several generations of faculty and many, many generations of students visited his stockroom window and came to know this wiry, slightly built, genial man, and appreciate the twinkle in his eyes and dry wit, and to look forward to his stories about early Cornell told in a rich Irish brogue. His friendliness and strong loyalty to the Department made it a better place.

I first visited his window in the fire-scarred remains of old Morse Hall as a bewildered freshman in 1917. When the move to the spanking new Baker Laboratory was made in 1923, I returned to start graduate work just in time to help Henry move. He introduced me to the catacombs under Morse Hall where dusty shelves held all manner of intriguing chemical ware: retorts, wicker-covered demijohns, gas fired tube furnaces, Kipp gas generators, and even a few alembics. (Yes, most of this was junked.)

Since the lab in which I did my graduate work and later, my office, were adjacent to Henry's stockroom, my association with Henry was close. I always looked forward to his cheery "Top of the marnin' to yez" on my way to my eight o'clocks.

Henry was always a ready friend in need. In one winter's morning's last-minute rush to make my eight o'clock lecture, my wife discovered that I had left with one brown and one black shoe. (In those days professors dressed more meticulously than now.) So Grace frantically phoned Henry in the hope he could intercept me. But I was already lecturing (fortunately, behind the huge lecture table in Baker 200). After the lecture, Henry alerted me to the problem but he took great delight in adding the incident to his fund of "professor" stories.

Henry always carried his lunch and in summer he frequently wandered around the campus, thriftily collecting mushrooms. The first time he offered me some I accepted with reservations, but then decided that Henry was well on his way to a healthy old age.

In winter, after finishing lunch, Henry usually took part in a spirited card game of "500" with younger members of the faculty.

Henry always took a very real interest in conserving his chemical stores. When a graduate student came for supplies, Henry would peer at him skeptically over his glasses and say "What does yez want it for? Yez don't need that much."

The friends Henry made at Cornell always looked forward to seeing him again. "Dusty" Rhodes tells of a party, staged by Cornell alumni at a meeting of the American Chemical Society at Washington, D. C., to honor Henry shortly after he retired. When Henry arrived, the committee told him the city was his and he could go any place and see anything he wished. Henry allowed as how he would like to visit the Chinese Ambassador. Quite dumbfounded, the committee took Henry to the Embassy but were told firmly by the staff that the Ambassador was very busy and not available. Then Henry took over, telling the secretary to inform the Ambassador that Henry Feehan wanted to see him. Almost immediately, the Ambassador (Dr. Alfred Sze) came out, greeted Henry by name, shook hands, drew him to a divan and chatted with him for ten minutes. Dr. Sze, when a student at Cornell, had lived in Henry's home. The Ambassador regretted he could spend no more time with Henry but he placed an Embassy limousine and chauffeur at Henry's disposal for his stay. So Henry and his friends travelled in style and enjoyed great courtesy from the police.

Sturdy, thrifty, and hard-working, Henry put his five children through college although his salary was always very small. He was always grateful for the opportunities available in his adopted country. I often wonder, in these uneasy, socialized days, what Henry's reaction would be?

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Any of you have other stories about Henry?

A. W. Laubengayer



courses. This new major, however, will allow them more flexibility in planning their programs. The required courses for the new major can be completed without overloading in three years, leaving the senior year free for either advanced course work or research.

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Visiting Lecturers. We look forward to a very exciting fall series of lecturers. Professor H. C. Brown of Purdue University will be the Baker Lecturer. He will be lecturing from September 30 through November 20. His topic has not been fully decided as yet, but will probably deal with aspects of his research on steric strain.

Professor F. A. Cotton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will be the Debye Lecturer and will present a series of three lectures on the subject of "Cyclopentadienylmetal Compounds with Unusual Structural and Dynamical Properties" and "Strong Metal-to-Metal Bonds, Parts I and II" on November 12, 13 and 14.

The NIH Training Grant Lecturer will be Professor William P. Jencks of Brandeis University. He will present a series of lectures over the period December 2 through December 18 on mechanisms of catalysis of enzymatic and chemical reactions.

All of these special lectures are in addition to our usual weekly general chemistry and organic seminar series.

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News of the Faculty. As you can see from the Chairman's Column, Bob Plane has returned from his sabbatic leave at Berkeley and has again resumed his duties as Chairman of the Department. One of the people who was especially happy to see Bob return was Jerry Meinwald who had served as Acting Chairman. Congratulations are due both to Bob Plane and Jerry Meinwald; Bob Plane has been elected Faculty Trustee and is already heavily involved with his new duties. Jerry Meinwald was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Science this past spring.

Another faculty member who will be "returning" to the Department is Frank Long, who will continue his duties as Professor of Chemistry and also institute a new program in Science, Technology and Society. He is concluding six years as Vice President for Research and Advanced Studies.

This summer the Department is at full strength but only briefly. There will be a number of people on sabbatic for either one term or the entire academic year in 1969-70. Simon Bauer will spend the academic year at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C.; Bob Fay will divide his time during the academic year at the University of East Anglia and the University of Sussex in England; Jack Freed will spend the academic year dividing his time equally between Tokyo University and the Weizmann Institute in Israel; and Harold Scheraga will spend the spring semester at the Weizmann Institute in Israel also. Al Blomquist and Bill Miller will spend the academic year pursuing their research interests both at Cornell and elsewhere, as will Hans Muxfeldt who will be on sabbatic during the fall semester.

In addition to the awards mentioned in the previous Newsletter, Roald Hoffmann has additionally won the Harrison Howe Award of the Rochester Section of the American Chemical Society. At this writing, George Morrison is anxiously awaiting the delivery of the moon sample from Apollo 11. George is one of the chemists chosen by NASA for sample analysis. It is hoped that one of the fringe benefits of being in this Department will be a look at the sample (green cheese anyone?). Fred R. Scholer, who is currently doing postdoctoral work at Harvard, will be joining the faculty this fall as an Assistant Professor of Inorganic Chemistry.

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That wraps up this edition. I hope to be hearing from or seeing many of you soon.

Bill Gurowitz

Faculty Members

(Academic Year 1969-70)

A. C. Albrecht	M. J. Goldstein	G. H. Morrison
S. H. Bauer	W. D. Gurowitz	H. Muxfeldt
A. T. Blomquist	G. G. Hammes	R. A. Plane
J. M. Burlitch	J. L. Hoard	R. F. Porter
R. A. Caldwell	R. Hoffmann	R. R. Rye
W. D. Cooke	R. E. Hughes	H. A. Scheraga
V. du Vigneaud	E. S. Kostiner	F. R. Scholer
E. L. Elson	F. A. Long	M. F. Semmelhack
R. C. Fay	F. W. McLafferty	M. J. Sienko
M. E. Fisher	J. Meinwald	D. A. Usher
G. A. Fisk	W. T. Miller	B. Widom
J. H. Freed		C. F. Wilcox

Emeritus Faculty

J. R. Johnson	M. L. Nichols
A. W. Laubengayer	J. Papish

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