

# SCALACS

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A Joint Publication of the Southern California and San Gorgonio Sections of the American Chemical Society



Southern California Section Dinner Meeting Honoring Our Agnes Ann Green Distinguished Service Award Recipient Bob de Groot November 17, 2010 See Page 3

San Gorgonio Section Professional Development Workshop "General Health and Safety" December 3, 2010

See Page 11





# SCALACS

A Joint Publication of the Southern California, Orange County and San Gorgonio Sections of the American Chemical Society

Volume LXIII

November/December 2010

Number 7

#### **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA** SECTION 2010 OFFICERS

Chair: Paul Shin Chair Elect: Joe Khoury Secretary: Violet Mislang Treasurer: Barbara Belmont Councilors: Rita Boggs, Bob de Groot, Herb Kaesz, Tom LeBon, Stanley Pine, Eleanor Siebert

#### SAN GORGONIO SECTION 2010 OFFICERS

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#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

So. Cal. Chair's Message	2
So. Cal. Meeting & Notices	3-7
This Month in Chemical History	8-9
S. G. Chair's Message	10
S. G. Notice	11-12
Index to Advertisers	13
Chemists' Calendar	bc

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# **Chair's Message**



In the coming months where we consider what we have to be thankful for and then share our lives with others, I do indeed have many people whom I am grateful for as friends who are supporting me in this time of need. I was recently diagnosed with stage 3 liver cancer and am currently awaiting insurance approval for treatment to begin. What's more important, is the love and kindness so many individuals have expressed because

I have touched their lives in some way: professionally, via my volunteerism, through friendship and family. Many of these friends are even virtual (i.e. Facebook)! Through my work in the ACS/SCALACS, I have been able to forge relationships with both national level organizations like COPUS (Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science) and local ones like SoCal Science Café. From my teaching at LA City College and previous employers and friends at Occidental College and Bruker BioSpin, I am incredibly lucky to count them as my supporters! And, as an extension of my professional volunteerism, the members of my LAPD HazMat Unit have even offered assistance should I need any! True friends are those willing to put any amount of time and effort in expressing their concern and support for what we go through in life. This is a form of Karma, I believe, for all the time I invest in sharing my love of chemistry and science with everyone I can through my volunteerism. During this holiday season, please take the time and effort to express your gratitude to all those who have made a sincere effort to improve your life or for those around you and you too will benefit from your altruism!

I would like to acknowledge the long list of those who have generously donated their time in helping ensure the success of SCALACS and its events provided in this newsletter. It doesn't take much to make a strong, positive impact on someone else's life!

I am especially proud to endorse this year's recipient of the SCALACS Agnes Ann Green Distinguished Service Award: Bob de Groot! Not only has he been a good friend, Bob is an outstanding representative for the power of volunteerism! Through his Section leadership and service, Bob has demonstrated an unswerving dedication to our outreach programs and supported others' outreach efforts as well. His efforts are well summarized in a quote from Buddha: **"Teach this triple truth to all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity."** 

Congratulations Bob!

Lastly, I thank each and every one of you members for your support of SCALACS through the years! Enjoy the holiday season and look forward to another outstanding year of SCALACS activities with our incoming Chair, Joe Khoury - and excellent leader! Cheers!

- Paul Shin, Chair, alchemy@csun.edu

## **November Dinner Meeting**

# Agnes Ann Green Award for Distinguished Service Bob de Groot

# Wednesday, November 17th, 2010

## Taix French Restaurant

1911 Sunset Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90026

6:00 pm check-in 7:00 pm dinner 8:00 pm presentation

Bob de Groot has been an integral part of the Section for many years. He started as our National Chemistry Week Chair and expanded that program to become the very active, year-round outreach program we have today. Bob is also a Councilor for the Section as well as past-Chair. We are pleased to honor Bob de Groot with the Agnes Ann Green Award for Distinguished Service to the Section. Please join us in recognizing Bob and his efforts on behalf of the Section and the community at large.

**Biography of ACS Service:** While in graduate school at Northern Arizona University, Bob was the National Chemistry Week coordinator for the Central Arizona Local Section. Upon returning to California in 1998 to pursue a Ph.D. in science education at USC, he joined SCALACS and assumed a leadership role in the section's outreach program. For nearly 12 years he has planned NCW, CCED, and other events. In 2009 he was elected councilor and also served as the chair of the section. He is general co-chair of the 2011 Western Regional Meeting in Pasadena, CA. Bob became a member of the ACS Committee on Public Relations and Communications in 1998. In 1999 he joined the ACS Committee on Community Activities - CCA and he currently serves as co-chair of the Program Development and Promotion sub-committee.

**Cost:** There is a choice of Coq au Vin or Beef Bourguignon for dinner. Vegetarian entrée available upon request. The cost is \$32 including wine with dinner, tax, and tip, payable at the door with cash or check. There is a \$2.50 valet parking charge for parking in the lot. There is some parking on the street.

**Reservations:** Please call Nancy Paradiso in the Section Office at (310) 327–1216 or email office@scalacs.org by Monday, November 15, 2010.

**Directions:** To access Google maps from their website, go to http:// www.taixfrench.com/contact.html

*November/December 2010* 

# The 2010 Agnes Ann Green Distinguished Award Recipient: Robert de Groot

#### Nanos Gigantium Humeris Insidentes Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

When I was informed that I was the 2010 recipient of the Agnes Ann Green award I immediately thought of a quote taken from a letter from Sir Isaac Newton to Robert Hooke where he describes how his work was built on the knowledge of those who had gone before him. "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." The quote originates from a 12<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher Bernard of Chartres and I was amused to learn that the Latin translates literally into "Dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants."

While an individual is being honored I think this award is a celebration of our overall success as a local section in how we are collectively fostering leadership, commitment, and a tradition of service to ACS members and the community. Dr. Agnes Ann Green embodied all of these qualities and I am very honored to be counted among the luminaries who have received this award since 1988.

It would take many pages of the SCALACS newsletter to recognize all of the ACS giants who have allowed me to stand on their shoulders. I owe the genesis of my ACS service to Dr. Chris Craney (Occidental College), my research mentor and Alpha Chi Sigma advisor. Chris inspired me to pursue a career in science education. Dr. Paul R. Jones (University of North Texas) helped me launch my career in ACS governance by nominating me to be a member of the Committee on Public Relations and Communications.

I have stood on the shoulders of many executive committee giants in my time with SCALACS. Sometimes those giants have carried me along so I could learn the landscape and others have caught me as I was about to fall. All of them have shared wisdom, insight, and an occasional a dose of constructive criticism. They have challenged me and have reminded me that "yes" is good in moderation (i.e. it is okay to say no sometimes).

I am proud to accept this great honor and I hope that like my SCALACS colleagues I too will someday become a "giant."

Page 4

# Second Call for Nominations 2010 Richard C. Tolman Medal

The Tolman Medal is awarded each year by the Southern California Section of the American Chemical Society in recognition of outstanding contributions to chemistry. These contributions may include achievements in fundamental studies; achievements in chemical technology; significant contributions to chemical education; or outstanding leadership in science on a national level. The nominee need not be a Southern California resident; however, most of the award-related accomplishments must have been made in this area.

The Southern California Section of the American Chemical Society and the Tolman Award Committee are now seeking nominations for the 2010 award. There is no official nominating form for this award; nominations are accepted from any member of this Section or of cooperating Sections. The nomination package should include:

- an up-to-date curriculum vitae or resume of the candidate
- letters of support from colleagues in the profession describing the candidate's major achievements
- if the candidate is being considered for outstanding teaching, letters of support from former students should be included.

It is preferred that nomination packages be electronically transmitted to the Chair of the Tolman Committee at **office@scalacs.org**. We are also deleting the requirement for copies of publications. Rather, a list of representative publications would suffice. *The deadline for receipt of nominations is December 15, 2010.* Inquiries should be directed to the Chairperson at (310) 327-1216 or via e-mail at office@scalacs.org.



November/December 2010

#### Thanks to all 2010 Volunteers

The many programs and services of your Section are provided by the volunteers of the various committees. We would like to acknowledge and thank all of you who volunteered your time and talents during this year.

Chair: Paul Shin Chair Elect: Joe Khoury Tom LeBon Secretary: Violet Mislang Treasurer: Barbara **Belmont** 

**Bylaws Committee** Virgil Lee Stan Pine

# **Elected Members of**

**Executive Committee:** Brian Brady Virail Lee Yumei Lin Derek Marin Gil Mislang Sofia Pappatheodorou Paul Shin William Welker Li Zhang

#### Councilors

Rita Boggs Bob de Groot Herb Kaesz Tom LeBon **Stanley Pine** Eleanor Siebert

#### Alternate Councilors:

Henry Abrash Joe Khoury Virgil Lee Paul Shin Maria Tellez

#### Agnes Ann Green Award Herb Kaesz, Chair

Henry Abrash Norm Juster

Expanding Your Horizons Eleanor Siebert, Chair Barbara Belmont Barbara Gonzalez **Dorothy Nguyen-Graff** Mount St. Mary's Student Veronica Jaramillo Chapter (WISH) **CSUN** Students

#### **Educational Affairs**

Paul Shin, Chair Henry Abrash Judie Baumwirt Debbie Bennet Bob de Groot **Dorothy Nguyen-Graff** Barbara Sitzman

#### **High School Olympiad**

Gerald Delker, Chair Henry Abrash Barbara Belmont Bob de Groot Paul Groves Tom LeBon Michael Morgan Eleanor Siebert Barbara Sitzman Li Zhang

**Community Activities:** NCW, CCED & others Robert de Groot, Chair Henry Abrash **David Abrecht** Barbara Belmont Froseen Dahdouh Gerald Delker Erika Garcia Frank Gomez Sossina Haile Herbert Kaesz Tom LeBon Mary Louie Angel Luna Jacquie Malette Derek Marin Tim Mui Natalie Muren Dorothy Nguyen-Graff Sofia Pappatheodorou Lisa Paradiso Meghan Paradiso Nancy Paradiso Morgan Putnam Armando Rivera-Figueroa Scott Roberts Nancy Rodriguez Christine Romano Marina Rueda Eleanor Siebert Paul Shin Eric Stemp Aaron Varga Tameka Watson Jasmine Wills Li Zhang (Continued on Page 7)

Page 6

#### Thank You List (Continued from Page 6)

#### **Community Activities** (Continued)

#### **Community Activities** (Continued)

ACS Student Chapters: WISH Organization at Mt. St. Mary's College Chemistry Club - Cal State Caltech Los Angeles Chemistry Club - Cal State Northridge Chemistry Graduate Students—Caltech Science Society—Cal State Dominguez Hills Science Club - East Los Angeles College Organizations Supporting

Section Community Activity Ezra Pryor Efforts: ACS Office of Volunteer Support ACS Office of Public Affairs Oral Cagler California Science Center -Los Angeles Cal State University, Los Angeles - Department of Chem. & Biochem. Cal State University, Northridge - Department of Herb Kaesz Chemistry East Los Angeles College **Chemistry Department** 

Occidental College Department of Chem. Center for the Science and Brian Brady Engineering of Materials -Materials Research Society Student Chapter-Caltech L. A. County Museum of Natural History

Boy Scout Jamboree: Derek Marin-Coordinator Randy Dingwall Lenda Geddes Art Marms Mark Davis Marv Davis Michael Beliciu

**Publication Committee** Barbara Belmont Harold Goldwhite Norman Juster Jim Kilgore Jodye Selco, SG Section Eleanor Siebert Sandra Thompson, OC Section

Nominations, Elections & Awards Barbara Belmont

#### Senior Chemists

Henry Abrash, Chair Norman Bilow Norman Juster

#### Science in the Cinema

Tom LeBon Bob de Groot Eleanor Siebert

#### **Tolman Award**

Armando Rivera-Figueroa, Chair Confidential list. but you know who you are!

#### Undergraduate Research Conference Henry Abrash, Chair Kaliu Kahn & faculty at UCSB

Webmaster Barbara Belmont

As you can see, it takes a lot of people's time and efforts to make our programs work. We as a Section, and the community at large, sincerely appreciate the dedication of these people and invite you to participate if you haven't already! This Section would be nothing without your volunteer efforts.

We tried to get everyone on the list, if we missed you, please accept our thanks for a job well done!

*November/December 2010* 



# This Month in Chemical History Harold Goldwhite, California State University, Los Angeles hgoldwh@calstatela.edu

In the previous column I surveyed the scientific career of the chemist Alfred W. Stewart 1880 – 1947) whose pen name was J. J. Connington. I now turn to the work of the novelist.

Connington wrote 27 novels, all quite popular in their day which was from 1923 until 1944. A number of his books were translated into Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. His productivity may be attributed to his using the time from mid-morning to early afternoon for science and then returning home to write. I must add that he was frail, suffering from a heart condition; he was only 67 when he died. His first and by far his most popular novel, "Nordenholt's Million", first published in 1923, he called a "pseudo-scientific thriller". It is a story of the future (somewhat like some of H. G. Wells' books) and is replete with chemically-related themes including the importance of nitrogen in agriculture, and a vision of atomic energy. The book became of interest again after World War II and was republished in paperback in 1946 and 1948. "Almighty Gold", his next novel published in 1924, is about manipulation of high finance and might be worth another look in our current climate of concern about such matters. Connington then turned to mystery fiction; his remaining novels are in that genre.

The first of these, "The Dangerfield Talisman" appeared to good reviews in 1926. I haven't yet read this novel, but I have read five of Stewart's mystery output and several of them show the scientific background of the writer. In a collection of essays "Alias J. J. Connington" published in 1947 Stewart Writes: " My Publishers have asked me if there is any connection between my work as a scientific investigator on the one hand and my detective-story writing on the other. There is not the slightest parallelism between these two lines, except that in both a logical mind is required". I respectfully choose to disagree. I will present a number of examples from "The Four Defences" published in 1940, to underscore my point that Stewart's chemical background inevitably influenced his mystery writing.

Unlike R. Austin Freeman, whose Dr. Thorndyke is an exemplar of scientific detection, or Arthur Conan Doyle whose Sherlock Holmes *(Continued on Page 9)* 

# This Month in Chemical History (Continued from Page 8)

frequently used scientific methods in solving mysteries, Connington did not have a single identifiable sleuth at the heart of his mysteries. Two characters do appear each in several novels: Sir Clinton Driffield, a Chief Constable (both active and later retired); and Mark Brand, a radio commentator known as The Counsellor. It is Brand who appears in "The Four Defences". Here he is at work in this novel. "Have you ever tried burning a box of Swan vestas? [matches]. ...match heads are mineral matter. They don't burn away to gas".

More chemistry is evident in an inquest report. "The doctor was followed by an analytical chemist....Analysis had revealed the traces of sulphur and phosphorus on the glass...Some white powder found in the remains of the car and near the body gave tests for calcium and chlorine."

The following is reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes and his monograph on varieties of cigarette and cigar ash. "He's a toothache collector, or something. Bitten [ouch!] with the notion of writing a large and learned work on teeth and what can go wrong with 'em. Fully illustrated, it's to be, with photos of every tooth he's drawn from the public."

Later in the book there are discussions of the white powder containing calcium and chlorine (bleaching powder); of the analysis of paint stains; of the different chemical compositions of motor oils; and of establishing the provenance of samples of mud. A plethora of analytical chemistry. Here's the comment on motor oils: " ... [the analyst] took the specific gravities, the Redwood viscosities at different temperatures, the closed flash points, the carbon residues, and the sediment insoluble in carbon disulphide."

So far I have read four Connington mystery stories and they all show evidence of the author's knowledge of chemistry. I look forward to reading more of this interesting author's productions.

**HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY COURSE:** Harold Goldwhite will be offering a history of chemistry course, Chemistry 480 (4 quarter units), at Cal. State, Los Angeles, on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:10 to 7:50 p.m. for 10 weeks beginning in January 2011. For further information email to: hgoldwh@calstatela.edu.

# San Gorgonio Section

# Chair's Message



This is my last chair's message; as of January 2011 Eileen DiMauro from Mount San Antonio College will succeed me as chair of the San Gorgonio Section.

This past year, the 61<sup>st</sup> year of the section, has brought many exciting things. We are still in the

process of developing a web page for the section. You can find it at http://www.sgsacs.org. Our intent is to use the web site for meeting registration, communication with our section members, and sending meeting notices as well as other communications to members of the section. You will be able to register for each of these functions so that you have control over which messages to receive. Please consider registering at the website as a member to facilitate communication. We promise not to sell your information or use it in any other way.

Our last meeting of the year is the beginning of a series of professional development workshops for academic laboratory workers. We welcome anyone that might be interested in participating! We intend to have one workshop a quarter; the first one will be held at Chaffey College on Friday, December 3rd. The section is indebted to Joyce Oakdale at Chaffey College for helping apply for the ACS grant that is sponsoring these workshops and for hosting the first workshop in the series. Please help us spread the word about this exciting venture.

Section elections will occur soon. Watch the mail for your ballot. The Executive Board is currently hard at work updating the section bylaws; one of the changes will be to allow voting to occur in ways besides the US Mail. If you have any other suggestions, please contact me at jiselco@csupomona.edu or send the Board a message via the new website: http://www.sgsacs.org.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your chair. I hope that everyone has a wonderful and relaxing holiday season.

- Jodye Selco jiselco@csupomona.edu

Page 10

# San Gorgonio Section

# Professional Development Workshop "General Health and Safety"

Friday, December 3, 2010

# Chaffey College Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91737-3002

8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

# We Want YOU!

If you are an **academic laboratory technician**, **department chair or head**, **chemistry teacher**, **or school district risk management director**, you should attend these **free** workshops intended to make your job easier, and your students safer!

The San Gorgonio Section of the American Chemical Society has received a grant to provide a series of workshops (one a quarter) for you about laboratory safety. The planned topics include **General Health** and Safety Issues, Human Resources and Lab Management, Regulations and Risk Management and Strategies for Choosing Appropriate Lab Experiments. Participants will work with each other to update and make useful Chemical Hygiene Plans and learn about how you can make your workplace safer.

The agenda is:

8:15 – 9:00 am 9:00 – 10:00 am	Coffee, Tea and Light food Meet and Greet
10:00 – 11:00 am	Speaker: Dave Patterson, EH&S, Cal Poly Pomona
11:00 – 11:30 am	Question and Answer
11:30 – 12:15 pm	Box Lunch – Provided
12:15 – 12:30 pm	Introduction
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Speaker: James Morris, Cal OSHA
-	Fullerton EH&S – What to Expect in an OSHA Inspection
1:30 – 3:30 pm	Break-out Sessions
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Closing
(Continued on Page 12	2)

November/December 2010

Page 11

# San Gorgonio Section

Professional Development Workshop (Continued from Page 11)

This workshop is **TOTALLY FREE** to the first 100 registrants. There is no parking or registration fee; if you are not one of the first 100 registrants, all you need to pay for is lunch (or bring your own). Register at http://www.sgsacs.org for the academic technician workshop. During the registration process, you will need to upload an electronic copy of your current Chemical Hygiene Plan so it can be shared with other institutions. When you come to the meeting, bring a hard copy of your Chemical Hygiene Plan.

For further information see http://www.sgsacs.org or contact Jodye Selco at jiselco@csupomona or (909) 869-4552 or Joyce Oakdale at Joyce.Oakdale@chaffey.edu.

Who should come: Laboratory support or stockroom managers/workers, Risk Management Personal, Department Chairs, District High School H&S personal and teachers

How to Register: http://www.sgsacs.org

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Page 12

### **INDEX TO ADVERTISERS**

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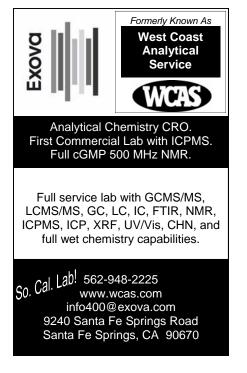
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November/December 2010

Page 13

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#### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY 14934 S. FIGUEROA STREET GARDENA, CA 90248

# PERIODICAL

#### IMPORTANT Do Not Delay!

Contains Dated Meeting Announcement

# Bi-Section Chemists' Calendar November 15 SC Outstanding High School Chemistry Teacher of the Year nomination deadline—see October issue 17 SC Agnes Ann Green Award Dinner honoring Bob de Groot—see page 3 December 3 SG Professional Development Meeting at Chaffey College—see page 11 15 Tolman Award Nomination Deadline—see page 5 Have a Great Holiday Season!