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- Important Announcements, Departmental Dates and Events, and much more!

BUILDING UPDATES

No new reports this quarter.

Important Dates & Events

January 7, 2013: Classes Begin (Undergraduate & Graduate Students)
February 2: Groundhog Day
February 14: Valentine’s Day
February 15: National Flag of Canada Day
February 18: Family Day (AB); University Buildings Closed
February 19-22: Winter Term Reading Week
March 10: Daylight Savings Time Starts
March 17: St. Patrick’s Day
March 29: Good Friday; University Buildings Closed
April 1: Easter Monday; University Buildings Closed
April 1: April Fool’s Day

About the Artist
Zonglin (Vincent) Yang

Vincent is currently an MSc Chemistry student starting his 3rd year of studies. Vincent works with Dr. Chris Le’s research group in the Clinical Sciences building.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Laura Pham

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

• Mike Downey (Dr. Cairo) passed his MSc defense October 2, 2012
• Parnian Lak (Dr. Lowary) passed her PhD candidacy exam October 9, 2012
• Chris Lohans (Dr. Vederas) passed his PhD candidacy exam October 10, 2012
• Jeff Bunquin (Dr. Stryker) passed his PhD candidacy exam October 11, 2012
• Xunchen Liu (Dr. Xu) passed his PhD defense October 15, 2012
• Yonghoon Kwon (Dr. West) passed his PhD candidacy exam October 22, 2012
• Ping Cheng (Dr. Clive) passed her PhD defense October 25, 2012
• Adrian Murray (Drs. Tykwinski/Veinot) passed his PhD defense November 6, 2012
• Yiman Wu (Dr. Li) passed her PhD candidacy exam November 16, 2012
• Chiao-Li Tseng (Dr. Li) passed her PhD candidacy exam November 20, 2012
• S.M. Ibrahim Al-Rafia (Dr. Rivard) passed his PhD defense November 27, 2012
• Wenmin Ye (Dr. Harrison) passed his PhD defense December 3, 2012
• Jerry Fereiro (Dr. McCreery) passed his PhD candidacy exam December 6, 2012
• Lydia Chen (Dr. Le) passed her PhD defense December 10, 2012
• Nikolai Sinkov (Dr. Harynuk) passed his PhD defense December 11, 2012
• Brandon Weber (Dr. Harynuk) passed her PhD candidacy exam December 14, 2012
• Hiofan Hoi (Dr. Campbell) passed her PhD defense December 19, 2012

Congratulations to Dr. Sylvain Bernard and his wife, Vikie, who also gave birth to a baby boy, Elliot Bernard, on December 10th, 2012. Elliot is Sylvain and Vikie’s first child and Elliot is making sure that his parents are on their feet around the clock. Sylvain is a PDF with Dr. Dennis Hall’s research group.

Elliot Bernard

Congratulations to Bela Reiz and his wife, who gave birth to a baby boy, Daniel Nicolas Reiz. To the excitement of his parents and big sister, Daniel was born at 11:30 on Christmas morning (December 25th, 2012). Daniel weighed in at 7 pounds 9 ounces and measured 53 cm in length. Bela is an Instrument Technologist with the Department’s Mass Spectrometry Lab.

Daniel Nicolas Reiz

At Fall Convocation, Nicole Oro (doctoral graduate, Dr. Lucy) received the Governor General’s Gold Medal. The Governor General’s Gold Medal is awarded for academic excellence at the graduate level. At the University of Alberta, it recognises the doctoral graduate who achieves the highest academic standing. Nicole’s doctoral research was on the Analysis of Nitrogen Species in Gas Oils using High Performance Liquid Chromatography and Fourier Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance Mass Spectrometry. Nicole was co-supervised by Drs. Chuck Lucy and Randy Whittal, in collaboration with Syncrude Canada. Nicole is currently on an NSERC Visiting Fellowship at the Canmet Energy labs in Devon.

Nicole Oro received the Governor General’s Gold Medal in Fall
FAREWELL TO...

Farewell to Randy Benson! A Fabricator in our Machine Shop, Randy was appointed in the Department of Chemistry on March 9, 1981. At the time of his retirement, Randy will have been in the department just under 32 years of service! During that time, his duties have evolved from a period when he was exclusively a “Master Welder,” where he would design and fabricate research equipment for our faculty, to become a “Master Vacuum Pump Repair Technician.” This skill set has proven to be an invaluable resource for our faculty and many campus clients, to ensure the longevity and continuous running of their vacuum pumps. For the past 18 months, Randy has been cross training Paul Crothers on vacuum repair, who will assume this duty upon Randy’s retirement.

On behalf of the department, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Randy for his many years of loyal service and support to our faculty members, staff and students. His helpful personality and enthusiasm to assist our students and researchers in any capacity will be sorely missed and we wish him all the best as he begins a new chapter of his life. Of course, Randy, being Randy, isn’t really retiring as he has accepted a position as a groundskeeper for the Devonian Botanical Gardens.
FAREWELL PARTY...

The Department held a farewell party for Diane Dowhaniuk on Thursday, November 1st, 2012. As was previously announced, Diane decided to retire after almost 39 years of service to the Department. Diane’s 3-tiered fondant cake pictured in the photos below was made by Corrine Chorney (all by hand and from scratch).

Contributions Welcome

This newsletter belongs to the department of Chemistry. So submissions of interest to our department are welcome.

Submissions can be up to 1000 words and are subject to editing. Send your submissions to:

newsletter@chem.ualberta.ca
ANNOUNCEMENTS, continued from page 4

Chemistry Winter Social on December 6 at Lister Conference Centre
“Time seemed like it just flew by,” says Fabricator/Vacuum Technician Randy Benson about his near-32 years in the Chemistry Department. Before Randy retired from Chemistry, he took some time out to talk about his career, his passions and the next chapter in his life, which, incidentally, is still with the university.

**Was working in a machine shop your first career choice?**

Oh this is funny. You know when you’re a little kid they always ask you what you want to be when you grow up? My brothers they wanted to be policemen and firemen and all these other things and I thought, ‘This is not representing our society very fairly.’ So I said, ‘I want to be a bank robber.’ I held on to that until I was about 13 years old. And then I found out more about bank robbing and thought, ‘No, not such a good career choice.’ So no, actually…I fell into the metal business from working in the oil field. I had an opportunity to take an apprenticeship either as a crane operator or a welder…so I told my employer, ‘I would like to be a welder.’ I started an apprenticeship and that was it. That was back in the early ‘70s.

**How did you end up working at the UofA?**

I saw an ad and they wanted a first-class journeyman welder, somebody with a minimum of five years’ real work experience and so I went into the office and I told the lady there – it was Canada Manpower – I told her I wanted to make contact with this job. And she said, ‘No. You don’t meet the
requirements.' And I said, ‘Yes I do.’ And I showed her my papers and stuff. And she said, ‘But you don’t look like you’re old enough to have that much experience.’ So when I started working here I was the youngest guy working in the machine shop. But I was actually a journeyman with experience – with quite a good background. I started as a metal fabricator... and I think later on it got reevaluated.

While I was working for the university I used to work in the evenings; actually, I started work almost immediately after I left here and then I would run skating rinks. I used to do all the clearing of the snow and scraping the ice and then flooding the ice and opening and closing the place....all by hand. I used to wear my skates on the weekends for 12 hours a day sometimes. I can even drive a car with skates on. I’ve had some other jobs that I worked at outside of the chemistry department. I was a language program coordinator . . . I taught literacy for 3-4 years. And I do volunteer work. I think because I’ve always been really active, if I’m not doing something I feel like there’s a big hole in my life that should be filled with doing something. Yah, I couldn’t just lay on the sofa and watch tv.

What have the major changes been during your career here in Chemistry?
Mostly what we do is support physical and analytical chemistry. People come to us and explain what they want to accomplish and we make suggestions on how to get there. A lot of the stuff has gone mainstream. That’s been a big change. All of the people who I originally started with have all gone. They’ve all retired and some have even passed away.

What are your most memorable moments?
It’s the friendships. We used to play hockey and baseball with the people here and go skiing. I can remember taking some grad students just new to the country canoeing so I’ve always been interested in people from other cultures....I’m always happy to show them more things, teach them some Canadian stuff like fishing and canoeing and stuff like that... I think the relationships with people is the big thing that I really value about my job at the university. All the technical stuff – that’s all a given. I know what I’m doing, my colleagues know what they’re doing, and we work together. But the relationships are the big thing. How people are with one another is more important than the scenery or climate or anything: that’s what it’s really all about. And I’ve travelled quite a bit; I’ve been in quite a few countries and I’ve worked with a lot of different cultures and I find that people are basically all the same. I think that we have to stay in touch with other people and not lose sight of that and not become so self-absorbed and self-serving and stuff. We should really look to see what we can do to help other people.

What’s next for you?
Actually, I’m moving out to [UofA’s] Devonian Botanical Gardens and I’ll be [working and] living onsite. I’ll be living within the gardens. So I’ll do some light janitorial duties; I’ll clean some classrooms and labs and I’m also in charge of snow removal so I get to drive a big plow truck. I actually get to drive a quad with a snow blade on the front. And I have all the tools and everything and a big heated shop. I have a three-year contract with an option to renew it. And I’ve got some other options within the organization too. I’ll live there 24-7. I’ve been working off and on for a month and a half. I know that the physics department is definitely going to want me to come in and help them out with some projects. And if Chemistry may need me from time-to-time, I’ll be available for that.

What do you think you will miss most?
I’ll miss the people. My new position will keep me fairly busy with my duties and I’ll be in a new environment but yah, I think it’s going to hit me... there’s a lot of people that I’ve worked with here at the university that when I think of them, I can’t help but smile.

Is there anything you’d like to add?
Yah, I do. Just that how much I appreciated working for the Chemistry department. I really think that [I was treated] with a lot of respect and kindness over all those years. There were a few times that I had some problems. – I had some health issues and family problems and the way that the people here – even the administrative personnel – they stood behind me and backed me up. They went beyond what they really had to do. So I never thought of it as a contract; I thought of it as more of a relationship.

Congratulations on your retirement, and all the best in your new position, Randy. Lucky for us, you won’t be going far.  
Bonnie Gover
Mindfulness
Catherine Clark-Shnider, Homewood Human Solutions
Wednesday, January 16, 2013—Education South 315

Mindfulness has been defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn as a means of paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally. Research has proven benefits of mindfulness to be in decreasing stress, increasing resilience, improving personal productivity, developing enhanced communication and connection with others and augmenting the ability to experience more joy and ease. This session focuses on understanding mindfulness and practicing techniques that can be implemented into everyday life at work and at home.

Eating Well to Optimize Performance
Adela Delgado, Homewood Human Solutions
Thursday, January 24, 2013—Room TBA

This session is designed to motivate participants to improve their eating habits and optimize their health, energy and performance. It will also focus on prevention and management of stress through balanced meals/snacks and tips on specific foods that induce or reduce stress.

Effective Communication in Groups
John Stevenson, Homewood Human Solutions
Tuesday, January 29, 2013—Room TBA

Successful work groups are comprised of individuals who know how to communicate effectively with multiple stakeholders in a variety of settings and circumstances. This session reviews the key skills that enhance our ability to work well with others by providing information about speaking confidently and assertively, creating a supportive communication climate & listening effectively and asking clear questions.

Human Rights 101: Understanding the University’s Human Rights Policy
Wade King, U of A, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights
Thursday, January 31, 2013—Room TBA

Human Rights matter. We often talk about Human Rights but rarely do we ever stop to consider how this applies to our daily lives. In this introductory course, you will gain a basic understanding of how Human Rights can be applied in your work, living and study environment at the University of Alberta. This session will help you understand the newly created Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy at the University of Alberta including what is the responsibility for managers, faculty and staff. There will be opportunity to learn more about where to go for more information on human rights issues.

Bring your lunch and join us for these informative sessions. Seating is limited—please register at www.learningshop.ualberta.ca. For information about the Lunch & Learn program, contact the Health Promotion and WorkLife Services office: hpaws@hrs.ualberta.ca.