

Aquinas College Chemistry Department

Alumni Newsletter 2008

Greetings! We publish this annual newsletter to stay in touch with all our alumni, especially those of you who have not been back to campus recently. The chemistry department currently occupies the second floor of Albertus Hall. Whenever you are in the neighborhood, please stop in to see us!

Summer Research 2008

Chemistry major Molly Soper ('10) will be working with Assistant Professor Elizabeth Jensen this summer. They plan to study liquid crystal compounds. This and six other Aquinas student-faculty summer research projects, are being funded through the bequest of Dennison and Marguerite Mohler and a gift of Ted Thompson.

Congratulations to our 2007-2008 Graduate!

Lianne Griffiths - scientist, Amway Corporation

Alumni Profile: John Morris ('91)

John Morris majored in chemistry at Aquinas from 1987 to 1991. John is from Ithaca, Michigan. He was on the basketball team while at Aquinas as well as working for W.W. Engineering. After graduation, John attended Notre Dame University, earning a Ph.D. in physical chemistry in 1996. He did postdoctoral work at the University of Wisconsin at Madison before becoming a professor of analytical chemistry at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. In 2001 John, received a National Science Foundation CAREER Award for \$502,000 over five years. His research project was entitled, "Reaction Dynamics of Hydrogen Halides on OH-Functionalized Surfaces and Development of Guided-Inquiry Experiments for Analytical Chemistry". In the same year he received an Army Research Office Young Investigator Award. John has presented papers at regional and national ACS meetings as well as several other colloquia and conferences. His published papers are listed on his web site www.chem.vt.edu/faculty/morris.php. John is married and has one daughter. His family endured the loss of their son this past spring.

Annual Events

Benzene Banquet—24 October 2007; St. Albert's Day—14 November 2007;
Poje Banquet—13 April 2008; General Chemistry Poster Session—23 April 2008

Instrument Purchases

Thanks to generous donations made to the Science Initiative (see below), the department was able to purchase a new Ultraviolet-Visible scanning spectrophotometer. The Thermo Scientific Evolution 300 double-beam instrument with Peltier temperature-controlled sample cell was installed in May 2008. This instrument replaces an older instrument and will be used routinely in organic, analytical, and biochemistry courses.

2007-2008 Faculty Activities

Li-Heng Chen - employed Spartan software for quantum mechanical calculations on molecules used in biodiesel fuel in order to establish the theoretical basis for sensors. He continues to advise the Chemistry Society (our ACS Student Affiliates chapter)

Sr. Katrina Hartman - presented "Atoms, Electrons and God" at the Grand Dialogue in Grand Rapids in February. She attended the Dominican Colloquium at Edgewood College in June 2008 and presented a paper on mineral and water rights/uses. She continues her work on the history of the chemistry department.

Elizabeth Jensen - presented a poster at the Central Regional ACS meeting in Columbus, Ohio, with student Shannon Henderson ('10). In November, she presented at the Michigan College Chemistry Teachers Association meeting in Detroit, Michigan. She also was selected to be a reviewer of ACS Student Affiliates chapter reports in Washington DC.

The Aquinas College Science Initiative

This two-part project was begun in 2003 to increase financial support for the science departments and to improve the science curriculum at Aquinas. We appreciate input from our alumni, based on your experiences after graduation. How did your Aquinas education help you pursue your career goals? What were the strengths and weaknesses of your education?

Has your address changed? Did you change jobs, get married, have children, or retire?

Do you know someone who should be added to our mailing list? Send your news and comments to Sr. Katrina Hartman, hartmkat@aquinas.edu or

1607 Robinson Road SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506!

Visit us on the Web!

<http://www.aquinas.edu/chemistry>