

raphy is "Scientist as Catalyst".

At the close of his book, Djerassi confides to us how he believes that his life is about to undergo a phoenix-like rebirth wherein he will conclude his activities in the laboratory and now embark on a very strong artistic focus with special emphasis on serious literary works. One senses that he may be an almost unique individual able to bridge C. P. Snow's two cultures. Already, his first major effort in this direction, the novel *Cantor's Dilemma*, has attracted critical acclaim, with more novels in the works.

In this reviewer's opinion, by taking serious risks involving candor and self-expression (in a way that mirrors his own life history), Djerassi has managed to write an intensely personal document that not only describes his own career, but also manages to orient the reader toward the significant struggles that have gone on at the interface between organic chemistry and society at large. In effect, this book provides thought-provoking reading for contemporary scientists who are troubled with the controversial image that so much of society has of the chemical enterprise. *John Belletire, Department of Chemistry, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221.*

LETTERS

The Mines of Schwaz

Readers of the review of the *Schwazer Bergbuch* (Issue 8, Winter 1990) may like to know that the old mine workings at Schwaz can be visited. Silver was mined there for about 500 years, until 1900, and several of the many kilometers of galleries inside the mountain are accessible to the public in complete safety. The entrance is just above Schwaz, about 35 kilometers east of Innsbruck in the valley of the River Inn, and as the route is itself attractive and Schwaz has some fine old buildings, a visit makes a good excursion by car or bus for anyone on holiday in that part of Austria. The *Silberbergwerk* is open from 9 am to 5 pm every day except from 1 November to 26 December each year, and there are frequent guided tours, for a small charge, lasting about an hour.

William A. Smeaton, University of London

The Nascent State

The article on the nascent state (Issue 6, Spring 1990, pp. 26-36) cited Priestley in 1790 as an early user of the term, antedating an *Oxford English Dictionary* citation for Kirwan of 1796. I have often wondered if the term was not part and parcel of phlogistic doctrine; both Priestley and Kirwan were phlogistonists and I have the impression that the theory was much involved (in ways that are hard for me to understand) with ideas of birth and death. I have never checked Becher or

Stahl to discover if they, perhaps, worried about "nascent" (*freiwerdend*) materials. I have also been struck with how often the term "nascent" appeared in areas other than natural philosophy in 18th century England. Perhaps one reason it caught on so firmly in chemical literature was because the same term found such frequent use in general speech. Readers might also be interested to know that Davy first discussed the ability of the voltaic pile to generate "nascent" hydrogen in 1800:

If the ratio between the quantities of the oxygen and the hydrogen produced from different wires be always the same, whatever substances are held in solution by the water connected with them, this nascent hydrogen will become a powerful and accurate instrument of analysis (*Nicholson J.*, 1800, 4, 281).

June Z. Fullmer, Ohio State University

FROM THE CHAIR

Conventional wisdom has it that scientists seldom show an interest in the history of science until their active research careers are over and then only because they are interested in securing a place for themselves in the historical record. Were this really true, one would expect that histories of chemistry would be written only by chemists in their 60s and 70s and that the Division of the History of Chemistry would be largely populated by retirees. As Colin Russell has recently shown (*Brit. J. Hist. Sci.*, 1988, 21, 3-13), the first of these premises is definitely false and, in fact, many of the outstanding histories of chemistry written in the 19th century were authored by chemists at the beginning, rather than the end, of their active research careers. Similarly, the results of a recent demographic study by the ACS fail to show any preponderance of sexa- and septuagenarians in the Division. Indeed, the age profile is about what one would expect for any group of scientists, with a maximum for chemists in their 40s and 50s and smaller numbers as one moves toward both younger and older age brackets. About 14% of the Division is between the ages of 21-30, 17.2% between the ages of 31-40, 19.4% between the ages of 41-50, 20.9% between the ages of 51-60, 14.9% between the ages of 61-70, and 9.8% above 70 (these figures do not total to 100% because not everyone reported this information). The data also show that 23.3%, or nearly a quarter, of the Division has joined since 1986, reflecting our rapid growth in recent years, spurred in part by the decision to begin publication of the *Bulletin*.

Other statistics are less surprising. 81.5% of the Division is male, reflecting the general preponderance of males in all fields of chemistry; 91.1% of the Division is domestic; 52.6% hold doctoral degrees in chemistry, with 82.2% holding chemical degrees of some sort. The single largest occupational group in the Division is university and college teachers,

with a share of 27.3%, followed by chemists engaged in applied industrial research, with a very weak second of 6.0%. Likewise, the largest percentage (18.2%) of the Division listed their primary area of concentration as chemical education, followed by organic chemistry at 13.7%.

The age profiles and growth statistics are pleasant surprises and the verification that our primary audience consists of teachers of chemistry, as we suspected all along, is a satisfying confirmation that both the Division's current policies in programming and the format of the *Bulletin* are correctly targeted.

William B. Jensen, 1991 HIST Chair

EVENTS OF INTEREST

* The Eastern Analytical Symposium is planning a special session at its November 1992 meeting entitled "Christopher Columbus Celebration: Serendipitous Discoveries in Chemistry and Spectroscopy." For further information, potential contributors should contact EAS Program Committee, P.O. Box 633, Montchanin, DE 19710-0633.

* The July/August 1990 issue of the *Chemiker-Zeitung* carries an article on pages 244-246 by G. Dannhardt and M. Lehr on "Antiphlogistische 2,3-Dihydro-1H-Pyrolizine". Your editor was quite interested to note that the debate over Lavoisier's system was apparently still in full swing in East Germany until he realized that the term was being used in its literal sense and that the compound in question was a potential anti-inflammation drug.

* Travel grants are available from the Beckman Center for the History of Chemistry to enable interested individuals to visit Philadelphia to make use of the Othmer Library, the Edgar Fahs Smith Collection, and other associated facilities. The grants, which may be used for travel, subsistence, and copying costs, will not normally exceed \$500. Applications should include a vita, a one-paragraph statement on the research proposed, a budget, and the addresses and telephone numbers of two references. Deadlines are 1 February for grants covering the period April-June, 1 May for July-September, 1 August for the period October-December, and 1 November for the period January-March. Send applications to Lisa Kazanjian, Beckman Center for the History of Chemistry, 3401 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6228, (215) 898-4896.

* The Oesper Collection in the History of Chemistry of the University of Cincinnati is looking for donations of old chemistry texts, photographs, prints, molecular models, and chemical apparatus to add to its collections. Interested parties should contact Dr. William B. Jensen, The Oesper Collection in the History of Chemistry, Department of Chemistry, ML 172, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221.

FUTURE MEETINGS

San Francisco 5-10 April 1992

Five copies of 150-word abstract (original on ACS Abstract Form) by 1 December 1991. Title of paper by 1 November 1991.

* *General Papers*. Contact J. L. Sturchio, Corporate Archives, Merck & Co., Inc., P.O. Box 2000, Rahway, NJ 07065-0900, (908) 594-3981, FAX (908) 594-3977.

* *Bay Area Biotechnology: History As It Happens*. Contact H. Lowood, History of Science & Technologies Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94066, (415) 723-4602 or J. L. Sturchio (see address above).

* *The Role of Chemistry and Materials in the Rise of Silicon Valley*. Contact H. Lowood, History of Science & Technologies Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94066, (415) 723-4602 or J. L. Sturchio (see address above).

* *Chemical Genealogy*. Contact P. R. Jones, Department of Chemistry, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824, (603) 862-1550.

* *The Role of Chemistry in Science Fiction*. Contact J. H. Stocker, Department of Chemistry, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70148, (504) 286-6852.

Geneva 22-24 April 1992

* *100th Anniversary of the Geneva Conference*. Organized by J. G. Traynham, Department of Chemistry, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, (504) 388-3459.

Washington DC ... 23-28 August 1992

Five copies of 150-word abstract (original on ACS Abstract Form) by 15 April 1992. Title of paper by 1 April 1992.

* *General Papers*. Contact M. D. Saltzman, Department of Chemistry, Providence College, Providence, RI 02918, (401) 865-2298.

Denver ... 28 March - 2 April 1993

Five copies of 150-word abstract (original on ACS Abstract Form) by 1 December 1992. Title of paper by 1 November 1992.

* *General Papers*. Contact M. D. Saltzman (see address above).

Chicago 22-27 August 1993