

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

On the basis of your response to the first issue of the *Bulletin*, the Executive Committee of HIST will be meeting at the Fall National ACS Meeting in Los Angeles to evaluate the trial issue and to decide on whether (and how) to support the publication in the future. If the vote is favorable, we should have a great deal of news to report next issue, including the selection of an editorial board and an assistant editor, the subscription rate for libraries, the impact on Divisional fees, etc. Until then, we hope you will sit back and enjoy this issue as much as you apparently enjoyed the first.

William B. Jensen, University of Cincinnati

LETTERS

Comments on the First Issue

Your *Bulletin* looks great! I hope a lot of readers remember to tell you this, and perhaps even realize that it is a lot of work to produce. Fun perhaps, too.

Elizabeth A. Moore, Eastern Michigan University

I would like to congratulate you warmly for your effort in producing the *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry* - it has been needed for a long time. The format, the production, and the contents are just right. Keep on with this excellent work.

Fathi Habashi, Laval University

I thoroughly enjoyed the new format for the *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry*. I am an educator who believes the history of chemistry has significant use in the classroom, and the *Bulletin* is easy for students and teachers to read and interpret.

Karen M. Morris, University of Notre Dame

I was very impressed with the *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry* which I picked up at the Toronto ACS meeting. It is a handsome publication which, I feel, uses the techniques of desk-top publishing to great advantage. We here at *CHEMTECH* have passed it around to each other and to our art people as an illustration of something very special. I am looking forward to seeing more copies of the *Bulletin* and would be happy to tell our readers about it via our Heart Cut column.

Marcia R. Dresner, Senior Editor, CHEMTECH

More on the Grotta del Cane

Dr. William D. Williams of Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, has sent in a number of additional items relating to the Grotta del Cane. Of particular interest is the description in the 1821 edition of Samuel Parkes' *Chemical Catechism* which points out (p. 250) that the floor of the cave "is lower



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than the door and this hollow is always filled with fixed air, which can rise no higher than the threshold, but flows out like water" and further suggests yet another site "... the Lake of Averno, which Virgil supposed to be the entrance to the infernal regions [and which] evolves so large a quantity of this gas, that birds, flying over it, drop with suffocation." Dr. Williams also points out that the woodcut of the Grotto in Paul Bert's text was revised the next year - the Italian peasant being replaced by a tourist in a bowler hat. In passing, it should be noted that all of the mentioned examples of massive carbon dioxide build-up are connected in some fashion with regions of volcanic activity. The Grotta del Cane is not far from Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius, the site of the famous eruption in Roman times; Java is an island of intense volcanic activity; and Lake Nios is actually a water-filled volcanic crater.

QUESTIONS AND QUERIES

Many of you may remember the controversy a few years ago between Alan Rocke, Bert Ramsay, John Wotiz, and Susanna Rudofsky concerning the reality and function of Kekulé's "dream" accounts in the formulation of the structure of benzene. John Wotiz has scheduled an interesting "Benzol Fest" symposium for the Boston ACS meeting in 1990. I would like to summarize the accounts of where dreams (or daydreams) have played a role in the formulation of scientific (and especially chemical) ideas. I would be interested in receiving any documentation of such accounts. Please contact Dr. O. B. Ramsay, Department of Chemistry, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Phone (313) 487-0304.