

From the Desk of the Past Chair

By W. Christopher Boyd

Past Chair of the ACS Cleveland Section

Greetings all,

2019 has been an exciting year as Chair of the Cleveland Section, and I owe thanks to all of my colleagues at Cleveland State University who suggested that I dive into the ACS as a young assistant professor. ACS leadership has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to network and collaborate with colleagues throughout the region, and I'm honored to have been able to serve the section's membership. Throughout this past year, our section has been working to increase participation in meetings by industrial, as well as academic, chemists; to encourage chemistry students to attend meetings, especially those who are considering graduate school or careers in chemistry; and to coordinate events with nearby technical associations. We have had great attendance at our meetings, and some of our highlights are as follows.

We kicked off our year with our Past Chairs' Night in January, held at the Flat Iron Café in Cleveland. Prof. Anthony Berdis of the Cleveland State University Chemistry Department and Center for Gene Regulation in Health and Disease gave a fascinating presentation on the history of chemistry in cancer treatment, from its origins in the observation of white blood cell suppression in those exposed to mustard gas in World War I, to present-day immunotherapeutic approaches.

February's meeting was held jointly with the Fluorine Chapter of Iota Sigma Pi, a national honor society for women in chemistry. Our two groups enjoyed the fine cooking at the Creekside Restaurant & Bar in Brecksville, and heard a presentation from Tanaga A. Boozer, Program Advisor in the Office of Education and Outreach of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. This presentation focused on resources for high school STEM teachers to help their students learn about the patent and trademark process. In addition, Scott Hawkins, chemistry teacher at Saint Ignatius High School, spoke on the benefits of the American Association of Chemistry Teachers.

March's meeting was our annual Meeting-in-Miniature, held this year at John Carroll University. Talented students from area colleges and universities presented their research, with awards granted to some of the best presentations. Our plenary lecture was given by Prof. Regan Silvestri of Lorain County Community College, who discussed his collaboration with the local distillery Cleveland Whiskey to start a student research program focused on analyzing various flavored whiskeys and bourbons for the relevant flavoring molecules, which helps distillers refine their recipes.

In April, we held our annual Education Night at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (CMNH). We gave awards from the annual Northeast Ohio Science and Engineering Fair, and the awardee students brought their posters for an encore presentation. That evening's presentation was given by Dr. David Saja, mineralogist at CMNH, about the geological history of the Cleveland Area. In addition, Richard Kawolics of the Laurel School was honored with the year's Heller-Dabrowski Award for Outstanding High School Teacher.

May's meeting, held as usual at the Michelson and Morley restaurant at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), honored the year's Edward W. Morley Medal recipient, Prof. Daniel

Scherson of CWRU and director of CWRU's Ernest B. Yeager Center for Electrochemical Sciences. A delicious meal was followed by Prof. Scherson's presentation on his award-winning research.

After the summer months, our section reconvened in September, with our meeting once again at the Creekside Restaurant & Bar, in a joint meeting with the Akron section. That evening's presentation, given by William Zawiski, Water Quality Supervisor at the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, discussed an interesting – and infamous – aspect of local history: the pollution of the Cuyahoga River, which led to its surface catching on fire multiple times, a phenomenon whose notoriety helped spur the passage of the Clean Water Act and the formation of the federal and state EPAs. Fortunately, since the mid-20th century, the Cuyahoga has been cleaned up significantly, with a concomitant resurgence in plant and animal life – a real environmental success story.

October's meeting was the year's Industry Night, held jointly with the Akron and Northeast Ohio sections at Olon Ricerca Biosciences in Concord. Olon Ricerca's General Manager, Michael Contenza, spoke about the site's impressive abilities in synthetic, process, and analytical chemistry, and invited attendees to tour some of the facilities after dinner!

Our final meeting of 2019, held in November at Cleveland's Market Garden Brewery, featured a presentation by Prof. Anna Samia of CWRU, who discussed her research group's fascinating work in the materials chemistry field, focusing on the “nanoengineering” of stimuli-responsive materials for biosensor and environmental sensor applications.

In addition to this past year's wonderful meetings, I would be remiss not to celebrate our section's recent move to a new website, at <https://www.acscleveland.org/>. This site now lists past and upcoming events with a streamlined registration process, with postings for new job opportunities and links to related technical organizations. Much thanks to all whose hard work got our new site up and running!

Happy new year to all, with wishes for a happy and productive 2020,
Chris Boyd