

American Chemical Society

Form: Part II - Annual Narrative Report
Organization: Chattanooga
Year: 2007

A. Activities

Please describe and rank up to ten of your section's activities during 2007. Provide (a) the title of the activity, (b) a one paragraph description of the activity, and (c) an indication if this activity was new in 2007. If you wish to provide details beyond these paragraphs, please do so in Appendix 1.

Activity #1

a) Title: OUTREACH TO OTHER TN ACS SECTIONS

Description
(Please limit to
b) one paragraph):

With funding from an Innovative Progress Grant (IPG), the Chattanooga Section designed and managed an event to bring members from all seven Tennessee Sections together in a common activity--a one day tour of the world-class science facilities at Oak Ridge in January. Approximately 45 persons saw the Graphite Reactor (world's first operational nuclear reactor), the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Computer Center (one of world's top five), the \$1.4 billion dollar Spallation Neutron Research Facility, and K-25 Uranium Enrichment Plant (largest manufacturing plant under one roof in world). All participants were excited and grateful to have this unique opportunity for social interaction and a special learning experience.

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #2

a) Title: OUTREACH TO LOCAL COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

Description
(Please limit
b) to one paragraph):

At the beginning of 2007, a plan was designed to involve every area major college and university in Chattanooga ACS Section monthly programs. Consequently, at least one monthly section meeting was held at each of the following schools: The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, The University of The South at Sewanee, Dalton State (GA) Community College, Lee University, Chattanooga State Technical Community College, and Covenant College. With an average attendance of 41 persons, the meetings attracted students as well as faculty members. Response to the meetings, each of which included a catered dinner as well as an interesting, chemistry-related presentation, was very enthusiastic. ACS National Tour Speakers were utilized at four of the meetings.

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #3

a) Title: OUTREACH TO LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Two officers of the Chattanooga Section (Maurice Smith, Councilor, and Bill Seymour, Chair) are members of The Coalition for Mathematics and Sciences Excellence. This is a sixteen person advisory group to the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Public Schools, and is composed of professionals and educators. As part of this Coalition liason, the Chattanooga ACS Section has created two new programs to assist the public secondary schools; 1) "First Encounters", funded by a \$2000 ACS IPG, in which charismatic college chemistry students are recruited to introduce chemistry to third graders, using a course of instruction developed by the National ACS Education Office. This pilot program for ten elementary schools is in response to the generally recognized weak introduction of science in elementary schools by often poorly qualified teachers (coaches and education majors). 2) A SILVER CIRCLE Group, composed of retired chemists, is being established within the local ACS section with the purpose of raising funds and soliciting used laboratory equipment for the area high school science laboratories.

Description
(Please limit

b) to one paragraph):

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #4

a) Title: AWARDED/IMPLEMENTED TWO IP GRANTS

I. With a \$3000 Grant awarded the previous Fall, the Chattanooga Section brought together 45 ACS members from the seven Tennessee Sections for interaction in a common activity during January-- a one day tour of the internationally renowned scientific research facilities at Oak Ridge, TN. The tour included the world's first operational nuclear reactor (The Graphite Reactor, a national historical site), The Oak Ridge National Laboratory Computer Center, one of the world's most advanced, and the K-25 Uranium Enrichment Plant, the world's largest manufacturing plant under one roof, and the \$1.4 billion Neutron Spallation Research Facility. II. With a \$2000 Grant received in April, the Chattanooga Section implemented a "First Encounters" Program to strengthen the teaching of chemistry in the third grade of local public schools (the third grade is the first time that substantive science is introduced to elementary school students). Attractive college chemistry students are recruited, trained with a course syllabus prepared by the ACS Education Office, and brought into selected classroom to give interesting and exciting one-hour chemistry presentations.

Description
(Please limit

b) to one paragraph):

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #5

a) Title: AWARDED SERACS HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

The nominee of the Chattanooga ACS Section for ACS Southeastern Region High School Chemistry Teacher of The Year, Mr. Tom Boyd of The McCallie School, was

selected as the the winner of that award in very strong competition. Tom has been an exceptional leader in the field of chemistry education, a strong character example for his students over the years, and has produced more national chemistry olympiad winners than any other teacher

Description
(Please limit

b) to one paragraph):

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #6

a) Title: JOINT ACTIVITY WITH ASTRONOMY GROUP

For each of the past two years, the Chattanooga ACS Section has encouraged one interdisciplinary meeting program with the Barnard Astromomical Society at The Clarence Jones Observatory, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Speakers and program topics have been chosen to appeal both to chemists and astronomers. For example, in 2007 Dr. Harold McAlister of Georgia State University and research director of the world famous Mt. Wilson Observatory in California gave a presentation.

Description
(Please limit

b) to one paragraph):

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #7

a) Title: SET UP SILVER CIRCLE AND GOALS

Bill Seymour, the outgoing 2006-07 Chattanooga Section Chair and a retired chemist, has agreed to be the Chair of a Silver Circle Committee. The focus will be to organize and mobilize the numerous section retirees toward a common public service goal-- to raise funds and obtain surplus equipment from industry for public high school science laboratories.

Description:
(Please limit to

b) one paragraph):

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #8

a) Title: EIGHT SUCCESSFUL MONTHLY SECTION MEETING

With an average attendance of 41 persons, the Chattanooga regular monthly ACS Section meetings have included a dinner/social and a program topic selected for broad chemistry audience appeal. Feedback and participation (question and answer sessions and comments after the meeting) has been very enthusiastic and positive. The representation of college students at monthly section meetings has been excellent, ranging from 20% to 60% of the attendees. This has had the effect of publicizing the ACS to the student population, particularly the science students who are likely to attend these types of programs.

Description:
(Please limit to

b) one paragraph):

c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #9

a) Title: COUNCILOR ACTIVE ON NATIONAL ACS LEVEL

- Description:
(Please limit to
b) one paragraph):
- Dr. Maurice Smith, Councilor of the Chattanooga ACS Section, participates in the national ACS Local Activities Committee (LSAC). He also takes a prominent part in chemistry olympiad programs at the local and national level. Dr. Smith usually attends the two yearly national ACS general meetings in the United States, and reports and coordinates back to the Chattanooga Section Executive Committee after each one.
- c) This activity was new in 2007

Activity #10

- a) Title: OTHER PROMINENT PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Description:
(Please limit to
b) one paragraph):
- Provided Judges for Area Science Fairs; sponsored awards for science fairs; participated in U. S. National Chemistry Olympiad; participated in National Chemistry Week at the state level in proclamation ceremony with the governor; conducted National Chemistry Week at both the college and high school levels
- c) This activity was new in 2007

B. Summary - Overall Section Activities

Please summarize in *1,000 words or less*, the activities of the section in 2007 which have not been already described. Outstanding events should be described in some detail and appropriate attachments included in Appendix 3. Programs described here may be featured in publications produced by the ACS Membership Division and/or at the Local Section Leadership Conferences.

I. CONDUCTED A WRITTEN SURVEY OF SECTION MEMBERSHIP

Using a professionally designed membership survey from at The University of Cincinnati, the Chattanooga Section sent out via e-mail a three page questionnaire requesting feedback on leadership and programs, and asking for responses and suggestions.

As expected, the proportion of respondents was very low-only 15 replies out of approximately 220 members.

Only one criticism, by one person, was voiced--the long driving time to outlying college campuses in the region as the regular monthly section meetings were spread around among the major colleges and universities.

Otherwise, the responses were very complimentary of the section leadership, the programs, the speakers and subjects, and the food at the meals.

One underlying theme was present in all survey responses--the hurried lifestyle of persons

in modern life with generally "too many irons in the fire." This translated into NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR THE ACS.

Although this survey represented a small and statistically insignificant sampling, it is believed to be VERY SIGNIFICANT in pointing to the biggest problem that local ACS sections have--the low level of member participation. It is not that persons stay away because of some grievance or because they are disinterested. As one ACS member said in her survey response--"I do not participate in local section activities for one simple reason: not enough time in my life."

(Note: the issue of ACS members and the conflicts with personal time demands will be addressed further in the section below requesting help from the Local Section Activities Committee (LSACC).

II. TOOK STRONG MANAGEMENT STEPS TO AVOID ANOTHER DECLINE IN SECTION ACTIVITIES BY RECRUITING CAPABLE LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE

Waiting for volunteers to fill key positions is usually a very weak management posture. So, just as the Section Councilor, Dr. Maurice Smith took the strong step in 2006 to recruit Bill Seymour (a chemist with extensive executive experience in private industry) as chair to turn around a declining section, so Maurice and Bill have now recruited two exceptional individuals to lead the Chattanooga Section for the next two years. Dr. Mitchell Rhea, the 2008 Chair, is professor of chemistry at Chattanooga State Technical Community College. Keith Sanders, the 2008 Chair-Elect, is the lead chemistry teacher at Girls Preparatory School. Both of these persons have the scientific background, the interpersonal skills, and the management experience to be an excellent chair.

C. Local Section and Chair Goals

2007 Goal Attainment. The Local Section Activities Committee strongly encourages local section planning. As a result, the 2007 local section annual report should follow-up on the attainment of goals. Please list the goals you set at the beginning of your term for your section and yourself, and report on the attainment of the

1. goals.

a) Local Section Goals and Assessment:

Goal: Revitalize the Chattanooga Section

Assessment--Early in 2006, there had been a decline in leadership from the section chair (who had severe time constraints from her career) and consequently a marked decrease in section programs and activities. When the ineffective chair resigned early in her

tenure, the Councilor brought in as new chair Bill Seymour, a retired chemist who also had considerable executive experience in private industry. Things began to turn around immediately, due in no small part to the large amount of time which Bill was able to devote to the job of section chair. This revitalization continued through the 2007 year as well, resulting in a very eventful year for the Chattanooga Section, as detailed elsewhere in this annual report.

b) 2007 Chair's Goals and Assessment:

Goal: Focus the Energy and Resources of
The Chattanooga Section on Chemistry
Outreach to the Surrounding Geo-
graphical Region

Assessment: Rather than having its activities turned inward on itself in 2007, the Chattanooga Section reached out in Chemistry-related activities (as detailed elsewhere in this report) to numerous groups and organizations, as follows--the other six Tennessee ACS sections; the major colleges and universities in the region; the local public school system; high school chemistry teachers; local astronomy group; chemistry professionals who are retired; and regional science fairs with interdisciplinary sponsorship.

2008 Goals. (This section should be completed by the 2008 local section chair.) Please list below at least 2. three goals that you and your local section plan to accomplish during your term as local section chair.

a) 2008 Local Section Goals (Include at least three goals):

- I. Continue the momentum achieved in the section revitalization efforts during 2006 and 2007.
- II. Increase the participation of section members in the regular monthly meetings and in special section initiatives.
- III. Continue the two special initiatives begun in 2007: "First Encounters" for Elementary School Chemistry Education, and Silver Circle Fund Raising and Surplus Equipment Collection for High School Science Laboratories.
- IV. Develop new section special initiatives for 2008.

b) 2008 Chair's Goals:

SAME AS ABOVE.

D. Suggestions/Concerns

List any suggestions you have for the Local Section Activities Committee (LSAC). How can LSAC specifically help your section?

HOW DOES THE LEADERSHIP OF A LOCAL ACS SECTION DESIGN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WHICH EXCITE ITS MEMBERS AND BRING UP DECLINING ATTENDANCE AND LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION?

AS DISCUSSED IN SECTION B. ABOVE, A SURVEY OF CHATTANOOGA SECTION MEMBERSHIP DURING 2007 HAS SUGGESTED THAT LACK OF PERSONAL TIME IS THE MAIN REASON FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION IN SECTION ACTIVITIES. WHAT IS "WRITTEN BETWEEN THE LINES" IN THESE RESPONSES IS OBVIOUSLY THAT THE MEMBER HAS INVESTED HIS OR HER AVAILABLE TIME IN SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE ACS.

IN EVALUATING SUCH RESPONSES FROM ACS MEMBERS, TWO THINGS ARE APPARENT: 1) AS PERSONS HAVE A FIXED AMOUNT OF TIME TO DIVIDE AMONG MANY DEMANDS FOR THEIR ATTENTION IN OUR MODERN CULTURE-SUCH AS CAREER, FAMILY, RECREATION, HOBBIES, ETC., THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY MAKING CONSCIOUS PERSONAL DECISIONS TO INCLUDE CERTAIN ACTIVITIES AND EXCLUDE CERTAIN OTHERS, AND 2) THE ACS, LIKE IT OR NOT, IS IN THE POSITION OF COMPETING FOR A MEMBER'S TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN ACS ACTIVITIES.

CERTAINLY, THE ACS IS NOT ABOUT TO INTRUDE INTO THE LIVES OF ITS MEMBERS AND DICTATE TO THEM HOW THEY SHOULD PRIORITIZE THEIR PERSONAL TIME. RATHER, THE KEY TO THE SITUATION SEEMS TO BE IN FINDING ACS LOCAL SECTION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WHICH DO THE FOLLOWING: 1) MESH WITH THE VERY BUSY SCHEDULES OF MOST MEMBERS AND, 2) ARE SO ATTRACTIVE TO MEMBERS THAT THESE ACS EVENTS COMPETE FAVORABLY WITH MANY DISCRETIONARY (NON-ESSENTIAL) ATTRACTIONS FOR A PERSON'S TIME.

IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE LOCAL SECTIONS IN IMPROVING THE RESPONSE, PARTICIPATION, AND ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS, COULD THE LSAC DO THE FOLLOWING: 1) DESIGNATE A FEW REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL SECTIONS FOR A PILOT STUDY OF MEMBER PARTICIPATION 2) WORK WITH THE SECTION OFFICERS AND MEMBERS TO DESIGN ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE MORE ATTRACTIVE AND APPEALING (EFFICIENT) FOR THE INVESTMENT OF A MEMBER'S TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MIGHT BE DETERMINED THAT THE MEMBERS PREFER CERTAIN TYPES OF PROGRAMS SUCH AS PLANT OR LABORATORY TOURS AS OPPOSED TO LECTURES AT EVERY MEETING. OR, MORE SOCIAL EVENTS TO VISIT WITH AND GET TO KNOW PERSONS. OR, MEMBERS MIGHT PREFER A FORMAL MEETING EVERY OTHER MONTH WITH A SOCIAL EVENT IN BETWEEN, i.e. NETWORKING.

SUCH AN INTENSE EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LOCAL SECTION AND ITS MEMBERSHIP AND THE RETUNING OF ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS WOULD CERTAINLY REQUIRE THE CLOSE

INVOLVEMENT OF THE LSAC. BUT, THE FINDINGS
OF A PILOT STUDY INVOLVING A FEW SELECT
LOCAL SECTIONS COULD BE VERY VALUABLE
IN REVERSING ANY FUTURE DECLINES IN MEMBER
PARTICIPATION FOR ALL SECTIONS OVER THE
ENTIRE NATION.