

# Editorial



## 2012: The Year After the International Year of Chemistry

In Switzerland, under the auspices of the International Year of Chemistry 2011, hundreds of successful chemistry-related events were organized. There were Open Door days in industry and at Universities; there were experimental workshops for children and public forums organized on chemistry-related topics – such as the future of our energy needs, food safety, clean air and water. There were top-level scientific symposia (e.g. at Novartis and at Syngenta) and popular chemistry shows. At the University of Geneva there was the creation of a ‘chimiscope’ – a laboratory set up to receive groups of the general public as well as school classes at all levels. All Swiss events were staffed by volunteer workers and involved a huge number of students, teachers, and professors. My thanks go out to them for a magnificent job well done. Their efforts have given a breath of fresh air to a scientific branch that has been too often marred by negative connotations. We must now seize the opportunity to ride on the wave of energy and optimism that 2011 has given us.

With this renewed public acceptance of and interest in chemistry, we must continue to advance on many levels chemistry’s essential participation in solving the world’s most challenging problems in the sectors of health, environment, and energy. We must continue also to fulfill the chemist’s central role – that of creation and invention: creating new compounds and materials, and inventing new techniques to study the infinitesimally small and infinitesimally fast.

By simply doing our job well, we can make every year a successful Year of Chemistry.

The SCS Fall Meeting 2011 was again organized under the auspices of the Division of Chemical Research of the SCS and was held at the EPF Lausanne on September 9. The 518 scientific contributions (oral and poster) attracted about 700 participants to plenary sessions, eight parallel oral sessions of presentations and eight extensive poster sessions. The excitement of the presenters (mainly PhD students and postdocs) and the participants was palpable. The EPFL organizers had done everything to make this event attractive for both academic and corporate visitors. Beside the scientific know-how exchange the event focused also on social components and provided an excellent opportunity to meet academic colleagues and to enlarge the personnel network. It is always an excellent sign when the opening session in the morning as well as the final lecture at 5.30 p.m. take place in front of a full house.

The Fall Meeting was a perfect platform to honor scientists for their outstanding contributions:

The Werner-Prize was awarded to Professor Dr. **Xile Hu**, Institute of Chemical Sciences and Engineering, EPFL, in recognition of his excellent contributions to the discovery and development of selective and efficient cross coupling and C-H activation reactions.

The Grammaticakis-Neumann Prize was given to Dr. **Marina Kuimova**, Department of Chemistry, Imperial College London, UK, for innovative use of photo physical techniques to make in-site measurements in living cells. The Dr. Max Lüthi Award was given to **Michael Brand**, Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften „für die Synthese und medizinalchemische Optimierung von Tetrazyklinanaloga“.

This issue of CHIMIA contains articles by the Werner prizewinner Prof. Xile Hu, the Grammaticakis-Neumann prizewinner Dr. Marina Kuimova, the recipients of the SCS-Metrohm Foundation Awards for Best Oral Communication and the winners of the SCS-DSM Best Poster Awards.

I congratulate all prizewinners, thank the authors for their contributions, the Metrohm Foundation and DSM for their generous sponsorship of the awards, and wish all good reading.

### Best Oral Communication award articles sponsored by the Metrohm Foundation

- Daniela Abgottsporn, University of Basel
- Jonathon Beves, University of Edinburgh
- Basile Curchod, EPF Lausanne
- Piotr de Silva, Jagiellonian University, Poland
- Mateusz Donten, University of Zurich
- Adnan Ganic, University of Basel
- Tolga Goren, ETH Zurich
- Ludovic Gremaud, University of Geneva
- Selena Milicevic Sephton, ETH Zurich
- Tanguy Saget, EPF Lausanne
- Christian Seiler, ETH Zurich
- Erin Sheepwash, EPF Lausanne
- Prashant Sinha, University of Geneva
- David Tonoli, University of Geneva
- Hao Wang, Paul Scherrer Institute

### Best Poster Award winner articles sponsored by DSM Nutritional Products

- Soura Challal, University of Geneva
- Filippo De Simone, EPF Lausanne
- Emma Johansson, University of Edinburgh
- Masafumi Nakanishi, University of Geneva
- Fivos Perakis, University of Zurich

Finally, I sincerely thank MER Dr. Sandrine Gerber (EPFL) and her team for the very successful and smooth organization of the SCS Fall Meeting 2011 and the sponsors of the event listed at <http://isic3.epfl.ch/scsfallmeeting/>.

We are looking forward to the 2012 edition, which will be organized at ETH Zurich on September 13, 2012.

Prof. E. Peter Kündig  
President of the Swiss Chemical Society  
University of Geneva

**“Stay hungry. Stay foolish!”**

The author of this statement is Steve Jobs (1955–2011). It's from a speech given in 2005 at Stanford University. Even today there is a lot of truth in that statement. I would like to set it in context with something typical for students: Creativity. Creativity arrives from being hungry for new things. Creativity might also arrive from asking foolish questions while not accepting given facts. Creativity is nothing that can be learned. Creativity needs an environment in which it can grow. Being creative is what propels research and what drives development.

Metrohm being a company that produces analytical instruments in the field of ion analysis asked a few years ago a huge variety of customers what their needs for future instruments would be. We tried to trace down the features, needs, performance facts that would be needed in the foreseeable future. Three different groups were interviewed: Industry, Government, and Academia.

“Keep things as they are”. “Lower the price”. “Improve the user interface”, “Help us to comply with regulatory demands”, “Help us to keep up with demands of the market *i.e.* health and environment”. Of course these are honest answers. But they reflect reaction and by no means action. These answers come from Industry and Government.

“Voice control of instruments”. “Remote access from wherever you are”. “Smart interaction among instrument components x-checking their functionality”. “Autonomous optimization of parameter settings to improve performance”. To name only a few: These are the (creative!) answers coming from Academia.

If a company wants to drive innovation and be innovative with its products, this company has to listen carefully to what happens at the universities. The science departments and – being a chemist myself – most importantly the department of chemistry, provide a lot of ideas, innovation and ways to think out of the box. Supporting universities and supporting their students is the key to success for innovative companies.

People who want to stay “hungry and foolish” deserve support. And that is why it's a pleasure for the Metrohm Foundation to sponsor this year's student's award!

We congratulate this year's winners for the best oral presentation at the 2012 Fall Meeting of the Swiss Chemical Society.

Dr. Kai Henning Viehweger  
Executive VP Sales & Marketing  
Metrohm International head Quarters

Dear CHIMIA readers,

DSM Nutritional Products would like to congratulate all winners of the Best Poster presentations at the Fall Meeting of the Swiss Chemical Society 2011! This event took place once more in the beautiful setting of the EPFL in Lausanne on September 9th, 2011.

Over 500 PhD students from academia as well as numerous members of the chemical- and pharmaceutical industry took the opportunity to present and discuss the most important results of their research activities. The diverse lectures and posters from all areas of chemistry highlighted the high level of chemical research being carried out in Switzerland.

DSM just recently completed a major transformation process that has turned the company into a global life sciences and materials sciences company, where we focus on addressing the world's most pressing issues, such as climate change and human health. To keep up with the challenges ahead of us we feel that scientific excellence is one of the most important elements of such a journey and this is visibly emphasized through our rebranding which has introduced 'Bright Science' to the tagline of our new company logo.

In this spirit DSM Nutritional Products continues its strong commitment to science, especially in the fields of chemistry and biotechnology, to continuously support young scientists by acknowledging their outstanding contributions to an event such as the last Fall Meeting of the Swiss Chemical Society (SCS) where bright science was definitely on display.

Dr. Georg Kau  
Director R&D  
DSM Nutritional Products