Well, this year has surprised all of us, and it’s sad to say that many of our best laid plans for tours, Science Cafés, and mixers have been canceled or delayed. We will keep tabs on the Covid-19 situation and as soon as opportunity allows, we will get together. Obviously planning ahead is fraught with uncertainty. So please watch your email inbox for any new/last minute developments. Earlier this year we reserved a room at the Richland Community Center for our annual social in November, but as spring turned to early summer, and now late summer, it is increasingly clear that the social will not occur as planned. We are keeping the date open for now, as the Section board is considering other alternatives to celebrate our membership.

ACS continues to provide useful information on the chemistry related to Covid-19 (see Chemistry in Corona Virus Research Virtual Link). Apparently good old-fashioned soap is excellent for destruction of the corona virus lipid layer—so wash your hands, a lot. Check out this video that does a great job explaining how that works.

On a lighter side, if you are stuck at home and looking for something to do, I recommend author Sam Kean’s podcast Sam Kean podcast (author of The Disappearing Spoon, Caesars Last Breath, The Violinists Thumb, The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons). He has spun insightful stories around specific science topics and puts voice to them.

We are investigating opportunities for setting up our Government Affairs Committee virtually. If you have strong opinions or preferences for the length or format of Zoom meetings, please contact Kristin Omberg at Kristin.omberg@pnnl.gov.

If you have other ideas that will bring us together in a safe format, please let a board member know.
The Richland Section held a Science Café in conjunction with the voting for our 2020 Budget and Bylaws update on February 19 at the Richland Public Library with a Skype link so that members from our outer reaches could join us. Approximately 24 members participated.

Janet Bryant described the drivers behind the bylaws update as well as a synopsis of what was changed. After a few questions, the vote was held and the new bylaws were passed unanimously.

Dr. Deepika Malhotra discussed the proposed budget for 2020. Two amendments were requested: 1) the newsletter budget (item 16a) was increased from $750 to $1100 to cover the unexpected increase in costs and 2) the 2019 Strategic Planning Retreat budget was increased from $0 to $1250 to cover a late arriving bill from ACS for hosting SPR. ACS covered $5000 and our section was charged $1250 for the SPR event. Both amendments passed unanimously. The full budget and section fiscal resources were further discussed. The proposed budget passed unanimously.

Dr. Mariefel Olarte completed the night with her talk Many Kinds, Many Ways: Thermochemical Conversion of Biomass to Liquid Hydrocarbons. She described her research and those of colleagues at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in biofuel development. Her talk was of high interest as evidenced by the number of students attending and the lively discussion that followed.

The WSU Tri-Cities Chemistry Club and the ACS Richland Section co-hosted ACS’ Program-in-A-Box webinar entitled, “The Future of Food” on February 25, 2020 at the E.S. Floyd Building at the WSU Tri-Cities Campus. This PIB was part of ACS “Celebrate 50 Years of Earth Day!” activities. The event was attended by 32 participants from different areas of the Tri-Cities community. There was representation from the WSU Tri-Cities Chem Club members (25 students and two faculty members), the Columbia Basin College (three students and one faculty), the ACS Richland Section leadership team (three members) and members of the section and the community. Everyone who participated in the webinar was engaged with the presentation and the trivia questions. Some attendees went home with some ACS swag. This was the third time that the local section co-hosted this event and the attendance keeps growing.
SATURDAY SCIENCE
The EOU Student Chapter partnered with Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC) and Frontier STEM Hub to offer a day of chemistry explorations in Ontario, Oregon on March 7, 2020. Open to students in grades 5 through 8, this year's event revolved around the theme of "Marvelous Metals" and highlighted different properties of metals related to their ability of emitting light, generate electricity through chemical reactions and display magnetic properties. An additional station focused on making polymers and bioplastics such as edible water pods intended to replace plastic bottles. Divided into small groups, over forty children rotated through seven different stations facilitated by teams of EOU and TVCC science students. The day ended with a magic show that generated much enthusiasm among the young audience. Children received copies of Celebrating Chemistry in English or Spanish and other giveaways provided by the Richland Section. Over 20 volunteers assisted with the activities. Staff in the EOU College of STMHS helped with registrations, TVCC provided classrooms and labs in their science building and Frontier STEM Hub provided food for participants and volunteers.

EOU AND WSU RECEIVE INTER-CHAPTER RELATIONS GRANT FROM ACS
The EOU Student Chapter was awarded an Inter-Chapter Relations Grant from ACS to partner with the newly established chemistry club at Washington State University (WSU) Tri-Cities campus. The goal will be for EOU to share expertise in running a successful chapter and, specifically, for the WSU Chapter to become active and to hold an outreach event on the WSU campus. The two student groups held their first joint meeting on the EOU campus on February 8, 2020. Two WSU faculty accompanied a group of eight students. After introductions, EOU student members shared a presentation highlighting the club structure and functions and some of the most popular outreach events. After sharing lunch together, the group headed to the lab where several demonstrations were set up for the WSU students to practice. Instructions for the demonstrations as well as guidelines for safety were provided. Following this initial meeting the two clubs started planning for a large outreach event on the WSU campus which was to have taken place in April 2020. Unfortunately, all these efforts were stopped by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, plans for continued interaction and the organization of the outreach event will resume in fall.

The Richland Section played a major role in the planning of the Inter-Chapter Relations Grant. It was through the Section that the EOU Chapter was able to start communication with the WSU students and faculty and plan for the joint events. The Richland Section also provided matching money for the grant.
It’s fun to enjoy Sidney Harris’s cartoons at their most basic level. But Harris’s cartoons typically include several levels of humor that are particularly relished by “insiders.” Regarding the chemicals mentioned in this cartoon, Harris “think[s] these actually are from canned soup. Maybe more than one. Generally I make up names that I don’t even know exist. Once I had an equation in a cartoon for the New Yorker, and they wanted me to assure them that it was gibberish. If it wasn’t, they said they’d get a lot of angry and critical mail.”

~Jeffrey I. Seeman, University of Richmond

**OFFICER NOMINATIONS REQUESTED**

*If not you, who? If not now, when?*

Have you ever thought of running for office in the ACS Richland Section? The above quote, attributed to Hillel the Elder, may apply to you. The positions of section chair, secretary and treasurer are up for election this fall. For information or to apply, please contact Kristin Omberg at (509) 375-2934 or kristin.omberg@pnnl.gov.

**ACS AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE**

Do you know an outstanding chemist who deserves an award? Browse the many awards presented by the ACS and its divisions at https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/awards.html. Nominations for most national awards are due by November 1.

**MID-COLUMBIA SCIENCE FAIR**

The ACS Richland Section continues to proudly sponsor and support the annual Mid-Columbia Science Fair (MCSF). This year’s fair was smaller and slightly different than in years past, most noticeably with social distancing in mind. Judges and students wore PPE and focused on safety while showcasing outstanding science by the next generation of scientists and engineers. Ten of our local section members signed up to judge this year, helping over 300 regional middle and high school students who presented their science projects in the life and physical sciences. Volunteer judges scored the students on a variety of categories ranging from biology, computer science, math, physics and of course, chemistry.

This year’s Grand Prize winners were Nikhita Bontha from Hanford High School, for “Evaluating and Improving Novel Bipolar Membranes for use in Fuel Cells,” and Zoe Gotthold from Richland High School for “Engineering GENTOO (Green Emulsion Nullification Through Oleophilic Objects) – A Device for Efficient Oil Spill Emulsion Remediation.”

This year, our section renamed our individual outstanding chemistry awards to the “Karen Grant Memorial Excellence in Chemistry Award.” This year, we chose to recognize one middle school and one high school student for the award. This year’s winners as voted by our local section members were: Ethan Gotthold, Carmichael Middle School, for his project “How Does the Amylose Concentration of Different Starches in a Biopolymer Affect Its Mechanical Properties?” and Andrea Penafiel of Sunnyside High School and her project “Can carbonated drinks be carbonated?” Our two awardees were given a $50 cash prize and certificate recognizing their outstanding chemistry projects. Sadly, the awards ceremony was canceled due to the ongoing pandemic, though both recipients received their prizes in the mail.