



Coblentz Society Newsletter

October 2020

Welcome to our Society's new Newsletter Editor, **Savitha Panikar**, and our first monthly eNewsletter. Savitha received her Ph.D. in physical chemistry as a member of Jim Durig's group at the University of Missouri - Kansas City. She was elected to the Society's Board of Managers in 2019 and is currently a PAT scientist at Hovione, LLC. Savitha will be putting out our Society's monthly Newsletter - look for it in your inbox around mid-month from here forward. Thank you for taking on this role, Savitha! ~*Mary Carrabba, Office Manager*

President's Message

Contributed by Ellen Miseo, Coblentz Society President

Looking back on the last President's message I wrote in March I am surprised at how much has changed but also how much has remained the same.

In that newsletter, I wrote about the session that we were planning for SciX 2020 in memory of Clara Craver. I also mentioned that we were looking at ways to make the Coblentz libraries more useful to the greater community and that we were going to assure that Coblentz was recognized as a sponsor for the vibrational spectroscopy sessions at SciX.

Looking at that draft, I wrote it on March 17. By the following Monday, Massachusetts had shut down, my lab team was packing spectrophotometers for all of us to work from home and normal life had changed.

Conferences are now virtual, and it is routine to conduct business using virtual tools. But we are all committed to, as Tim Gunn says, "Make it Work". So, what does that mean for the Coblentz Society?

In June, we learned that SciX was not going to happen in person. We adjusted to the idea of a virtual meeting and started new efforts to replace the in-person ones. For the Coblentz Society that meant a number of changes. The [Craver Award plenary](#) will still take place, but virtually as one of the opening events of vSciX.

The funds that would normally have been allocated to support vibrational spectroscopy speakers at SciX, were rerouted into a program called the [“Global Welcome Initiative Sponsored by the Coblentz Society”](#). This initiative is using the allocated funds to pay the registration fee for researchers, particularly students and post-docs, who are not able to afford the registration fee and is aimed at geographies where attendance at an in-person SciX would be impossible. This novel use of the funds was suggested by **Mike George** and I am very grateful for his out-of-the-box thinking.

The change to a virtual SciX brought about a change in how we intended to construct a session in memory of Clara Craver. Rather than a traditional set of talks, we hit on the idea of interviews. For those of you familiar with *“Story Corps”* on National Public Radio, we are planning to do something similar. We will have some of our members “interview” spectroscopists who knew Clara and whose thoughts and ideas we want to preserve. One of the interviewees is **André Sommer**, who worked closely with Clara on a number of Coblentz initiatives. The other two are well known senior vibrational spectroscopists, **Jennette Grasselli-Brown** and **Robert Hannah**, who both knew Clara and whose experiences in the field of vibrational spectroscopy should be captured. These interviews will be part of the vSciX program and be archived on the Coblentz website. We hope to make this an ongoing effort to have the thoughts of our long-time members recorded and archived. A volunteer who can coordinate this effort would be very welcome.

To make up for the fact that there will not be an exhibit, where the societies can interact with potential members, the conference has put in place two efforts. There will be a President’s Panel, where the various FACSS member societies will describe themselves and their mission. But more exciting, we were given the opportunity to do a two-minute video describing the Society that will be available. You can view it now [here](#). Kudos to **Mary Carrabba** for getting this entire effort (from concept, then vendor, through to the final video) completed in less than three weeks!

[Speed mentoring](#) will happen and **Jim Rydzak** has been actively working with the Talley conference team to identify a tool to facilitate the event. Jim will soon be actively soliciting potential mentors and mentees. Please help him make this a success by volunteering.

Education is our mission and, as you may have noticed, in July the Coblentz Society and SAS in cooperation with *Spectroscopy Magazine*, did a 2-day virtual symposium called *“Molecular Spectroscopy in Practice”*. The focus was on vibrational spectroscopy education. It was well attended and everyone was invited to join both societies. The presentations are [archived](#) on the SAS website but every speaker is a Coblentz member and committed to educating the community.

So, things changed, but we adapted and may be the better for it. We will have a new approach to archiving important contributions to vibrational spectroscopy. We are reaching out to an audience that would not have met us in person but will benefit from the society actions. We have a new tool for member recruitment. We will be able to interact and provide mentoring in a virtual world. And, last but not least, we will continue to carry out the education mission of the Society.

Wow, when I started to write this, I thought maybe there was not much to say, but there is and it never would have happened without the efforts of committed volunteers. Stay tuned for the description of how we deal with a virtual Eastern Analytical Symposium!

Coblentz Members

Welcome to our newly joined members! By joining the Coblentz Society, you can continue your contributions in a more collated manner towards our mission of *fostering the understanding and application of vibrational spectroscopy* in academia and industry. Moving from the biannual paper-based newsletter format, this electronic Newsletter is aimed at bringing monthly news digests to your email inbox so that you can read them from the comfort of your preferred electronic device(s). If you have not been receiving Society emails, you can contact the Society's office manager at Mary.Carrabba@coblentz.org.

The Society would like to introduce its newest lifetime members, **Professor Rajeev Ram** of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and **Professor David E. Thompson** of Sam Houston State University. Welcome!

SciX 2020

[SciX 2020](#) is now virtual! Due to the impact of COVID-19, the conference will be held virtually from 12 – 15 October 2020. This new format will still include familiar events such as the plenary lectures by award recipients, invited talks by researchers, and Coblentz's speed mentoring program. The Coblentz Society, being one of the member societies of SciX, will be providing financial assistance to those interested in attending the conference, even in this difficult year, via the [Global Welcome Initiative](#). Simply fill out the registration form and, if you are approved, you will receive a unique code to use during the SciX registration process. This program is limited to 50 registrants, so register early. The initiative is aimed at scientists in remote geographies, so please forward the information to friends and colleagues who you believe could benefit from attending a virtual SciX.

Annual Membership Meeting

Save the date! Rather than compete with vSciX, the Coblentz Society will hold its Annual Membership Meeting (AMM) via Zoom immediately following the conference on **Monday, 19 October 2020 at noon Eastern**. Bring your lunch (on the East Coast), your coffee (on the West Coast), or your cocktails (you lucky European members!) and join us for an hour of updates on the Society and social networking. Details and Zoom link will follow in October - watch your inboxes!

Call for Nominations

The Society is seeking candidates for two positions on the Board of Managers and for Treasurer. If you are interested in serving your Society in one of these roles, or know of someone who is, please contact the Society's office manager by 30 September. Elections will be held in October.

[The Lippincott Award](#) - Nominations for the 2021 Award are currently open, and will be accepted until 1 October 2020.

[The Craver Award](#) - Nominations for the 2021 Award are currently open, and will be accepted until 31 October 2020.

Coblentz Society Awards

The Coblentz Award

2020 Awardee - Dr. Benjamin P. Fingerhut

Dr. Benjamin P. Fingerhut studied chemistry at the Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) in Munich, Germany. In 2011 he completed his Ph.D. in Theoretical Physical Chemistry under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Regina de Vivie-Riedle. He joined the group of Prof. Shaul Mukamel at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) as a postdoctoral fellow in September 2011. In 2014 he moved to the Max Born Institute for Nonlinear Optics and Short Pulse Spectroscopy (MBI), Berlin, Germany, where he is currently heading the Biomolecular Dynamics research group. Additional details can be found [here](#). Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the award is tentatively planned to be presented to Dr. Fingerhut at the 2021 [ISMS](#) meeting.

The Craver Award

2020 Awardee - Dr. Claudia Conti

Dr. Claudia Conti is a senior researcher at the Institute of Heritage Science (ISPC) of the Italian National Research Council (CNR) where she leads the Raman Spectroscopy Laboratory. Through her Ph.D. in Material Engineering (Milan Polytechnic, 2010), under the direction of Professor Giuseppe Zerbi, and her research at ISPC-CNR, she established expertise in the area of advanced applications of vibrational spectroscopy to material analysis, particularly in the area of Cultural Heritage. Dr. Conti's research output includes 64 peer-reviewed publications and 16 oral presentations at conferences (8 invited). Additional details can be found [here](#). Dr. Conti will present her award address "*Discovering the Subsurface of Materials by Intact Methods: The Contribution of Micro-SORS*" [Tuesday morning at vSciX](#).

The Lippincott Award

2020 Awardee - Dr. Volker Deckert

The 2020 Ellis R. Lippincott Award will be presented to **Dr. Volker Deckert** "for ongoing contributions to high-resolution Raman spectroscopy, in particular the realization of tip-enhanced Raman spectroscopy, allowing label-free structural surface characterization down to the single-molecule level." Dr. Volker Deckert is a Professor for Physical Chemistry at the Friedrich-Schiller University and jointly a department head at the Leibniz IPHT, both in Jena. He obtained his Diploma and his Ph.D. from the University of Würzburg, working on Raman spectroscopy. After a postdoc at the University of Tokyo, he started his research on near-field optical spectroscopy, first at the ETH Zurich, then in Dresden and Dortmund before he finally came to Jena. Additional details can be found [here](#).

Coblentz Student Award

2020 Awardee - Cynthia Pyles

Cynthia Pyles began her research career in physical and analytical chemistry at Boston University (BU). She used Surface Enhanced Raman Spectroscopy (SERS) to study the metabolomic behavior

of samples including *E. coli*, T-cell leukemia, and cervical carcinoma cells. The data collected served as a spectral library for clinical diagnostics. In 2015, Cynthia received her B.A. in Chemistry with a minor in Japanese from BU. She began working with Dr. Aaron Massari in the spring of 2016 before starting graduate school at the University of Minnesota, and continued in his group for the duration of her graduate career. Additional details can be found [here](#).

William G. Fateley Student Award

2020 Awardee - Ewelina Mistek-Morabito

Ewelina Mistek-Morabito is a Ph.D. student in Chemistry at the University at Albany, State University of New York and a National Institute of Justice Graduate Research fellow. She obtained an Academy Profession Degree in Chemical and Biotechnical Science from the Business Academy Aarhus, University of Applied Sciences in Denmark. During that program, she pursued a one-year internship in a forensic science laboratory with the Lednev Research Group at the University at Albany. After returning to Europe, Ewelina continued her undergraduate program in Forensic and Analytical Science at the Robert Gordon University, earning her Bachelor of Science with Distinction. In 2016, she returned to the University at Albany to pursue her doctorate degree under the mentorship of Professor Igor Lednev. She obtained her master's degree in chemistry simultaneously while pursuing her Ph.D. degree in May 2019. Additional details can be found [here](#).

The Williams-Wright Award

2021 Awardee - Dr. Ian R. Lewis

The Society is proud to announce **Ian R. Lewis** as the winner of the 2021 Williams–Wright Award (to be presented at Pittcon 2021). The Williams–Wright Award is presented annually to an industrial spectroscopist who has made significant contributions to vibrational spectroscopy while working in industry. Ian has spent more than 20 years contributing to the field of optical spectroscopy, specifically Raman spectroscopy, including, but not limited to the publication of many influential peer reviewed publications, training and education of Raman spectroscopy, book chapter contributions, and editor of the Handbook of Raman Spectroscopy. In addition to his technical prowess, many Coblenz and SAS Members know Ian's significant contributions to Coblenz, SAS, FACSS and other scientific organizations.

Obituary

Paul N. Bourassa, long-time Coblenz and SAS member, SAS Distinguished Service Awardee, SAS Fellow, former SAS Treasurer, and friend, born July 12, 1947, passed away from cancer on July 19, 2020. Paul was equally involved with FACSS/SciX, serving in multiple roles including General Chairman and Governing Board President. He received the FACSS Distinguished Service Award in 2011. From the time of its founding until his death, he served on the editorial advisory board of Spectroscopy Magazine. He was Vice-president of Blue Moon Inc., his wife Linda's public relations firm. He was also Clerk of Session at Farmington Presbyterian Church in Memphis, concluding his nineteen-year term in 2015. Paul is survived by his wife Linda and daughter Rachel.

Contributed to the Society for Applied Spectroscopy (SAS) by Alex Scheeline, SpectroClick. This is an abridged version of the tribute, the full version can be found [here](#).

We would like to hear from you!

Your stories, information and, especially, feedback would add to the diverse perspective we aim at sharing via the eNewsletter to trigger meaningful discussions at conferences (even at virtual ones!) or to simply be distributed for the public's general knowledge. Your submissions can be emailed to Mary.Carrabba@coblantz.org.

Thanks for reading!

Savitha Panikar

Coblantz Society Newsletter Editor