

Conference Call

The closing ceremony was held 18 July right after the 25th Special Lecture by G. Juska (Lithuania). At this time it was announced that the next meeting (10th International Conference of ERPOS) would be held in 2005 in Angers, France. Jean-Michel Nunzi (Université d'Angers, France) will be the organizer of the meeting.

The 9th conference was attended by 126 participants from 24 countries; just the right size and mix for this kind of conference on interdisciplinary research top-

ics. The organization was superb and the meeting went as scheduled without a single interruption. Most of the credit for the success of this conference should go to Stanislav Nespurek, Jiri Pflieger, and their colleagues at the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry.

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Polymer Networks

by Robert F. T. Stepto

Polymer Networks 2002, the 16th Polymer Networks Group Meeting, was held 2 to 6 September 2002 in Autrans, France, near Grenoble. It was organized under the auspices of IUPAC by the Polymer Networks Group, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, and the Université Joseph Fourier de Grenoble. Ninety-seven active participants, of whom 20 were students, attended the conference. Notably, the conferees came from 22 countries, showing the worldwide appeal of this specialized conference.

The conference chairman was Professor Erik Geissler of the Laboratoire de Spectrométrie Physique at the Université Joseph Fourier de Grenoble. Financial support was gratefully received from the Ministère de la Recherche, France, the Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique, the Université Joseph Fourier de Grenoble, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, the Région Rhône-Alpes, and Nestlé, Switzerland.

The conference was held in the Maeva Centre at Autrans, a purpose-built conference center in beautiful surroundings in the Vercors National Park. The conference facilities, accommodations, and catering were excellent. The social program included a musical evening in Autrans village church, with an outstanding performance of Mozart, Grieg, Mendelssohn, and Ravel by the Armaiti wind quintet. The program for accompanying persons consisted of a trip through the spectacular Gorges de la Bourne, with a visit to the Grottes de Choranche, and to the picturesque town of Pont en Royans.

The conference was one of a series of biennial conferences organized primarily by the Polymer Networks Group. It maintained the tradition of presenting papers of a high standard on subjects of present-day importance and future potential, combining both fundamental studies and applications. Indeed, the main theme of the meeting was Functional Networks and Gels. The

conference program consisted of 13 main lectures (40 minutes), 30 lectures (20 minutes), and two poster sessions, covering 57 posters.

The conference began with two main lectures: Eric Amis (NIST, USA) on Combinatorial Chemistry Applied to Polymer Systems and M. W. Husseini (Université Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg) on Molecular Tectonics as Building Blocks for Solid Polymeric Materials. The functional network topics were varied, covering amphiphilic, high-swelling networks for use as super-absorbing materials; the encapsulation of magnetic and conducting moieties in networks; the biological application of reversible physical gels; and the biomedical drug-release applications of microgels and nanogels, and thermally and pH responsive hydrogels. There were also contributions on filled and nanocomposite polymer network materials and the formation and properties of thermally reversible gels. The conference contained fundamental experimental, theoretical, and modelling papers on the behavior of gels at interfaces, microgels, polymeric network coatings, polymerization and network formation, swelling in gels, and optical properties of polymer networks.

The posters were of an excellent standard and reflected the wide range of topics of the lectures. Importantly, student registrants presented most of the posters and the discussions at the poster sessions were very lively.

Refereed papers from the lectures and posters will be published in a forthcoming volume of *Macromolecular Symposia*. The next meeting in the series, Polymer Networks 2004, will be organized by Eric Amis and Ferenc Horkay and will be held at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA.

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