

Conference Call

quality studies centered on the eastern Mediterranean. These studies would require extensive data production on both primary air pollution emissions from the cities, industries, and agricultural activities in the region as well as ambient air-quality data across the region. The aim of the project would be to help coordinate the collection of regional emissions and air-quality data for use in regional air-quality model inputs and evaluation studies.

Closely allied to the activities of the air and water-quality workshop was the working group on Regional Water Quality Assessment in Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Israel referred to earlier in this report (see IUPAC project 2008-003-3-600; www.iupac.org/web/ins/2008-003-3-600). Participants recommended that the initial study area be expanded to the north to include Lebanon and Syria, which share many of the same water sources. It was also agreed that the results of the initial study be widely disseminated and used to motivate further studies to include Egypt, Libya, and Sudan to the west, and Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf States to the east. A full report on this project can be found in the March-April 2010 *CJ*, p. 22.

Conferees presented about 30 oral papers during the workshop sessions, as well as 20 contributions to well-attended and highly stimulating poster sessions that included contributions on water, energy, bioremediation, desert crops, air quality, virtual screening in drug discovery, and science education innovation. These provided participants with an overview of work in the region related to scientific and management strategies. Private discussions will undoubtedly lead to collaborations that would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish under normal circumstances. It was evident that all those present made a contribution to promoting the chemical sciences for peace, diversity, and human rights by building friendship, trust, tolerance, and cooperation in a very turbulent part of the world.

It is well worth recording that the organization of Malta-IV required several additional obstacles to be overcome compared to previous conferences. These included, for example, problems obtaining visas for some participants, and only the strong relationships forged in those earlier meetings enabled such problems to be solved. Without these relationships, an already difficult conference organization would have made matters even more burdensome. The numerous positive comments from participants at the end of the meeting more than justified the efforts made to ensure that the conference took place.

UNESCO will host Malta-V in Paris as a contribution towards the International Year of Chemistry in 2011.

Stanley Langer <stanley1910@yahoo.co.uk> was vice chair of the organizing committee for Malta-IV.

Another Organic Synthesis Boost

by Leiv K. Sydnes

The **18th International Conference of Organic Synthesis** (ICOS-18) was held in Bergen, Norway, from 1-6 August 2010. The meeting was attended by almost 500 delegates from 48 countries, which is quite decent considering the fact that a large number of people who intended to participate, had registered and even paid, had to withdraw because their employer, in most cases university departments, cut the funding. The academic predominance was therefore considerably lower on this occasion than what has usually been the case at previous ICOS meetings, and it is quite noteworthy that more than 75 percent of participants from countries like Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland came from chemical industry.

The main ingredients of the meeting, following the ICOS tradition, were lectures, including the Thieme-IUPAC Prize Lecture, poster sessions, exhibitions, and a Wednesday afternoon conference trip. Due to very valuable input from members of the International Advisory Board, plenary and invited lectures were delivered by chemists from 22 different countries from all around the world. The talks covered most aspects of modern organic synthesis, from new delicate methodologies based on mechanistic understanding, via greatly improved synthesis technologies and exciting total syntheses, to the application of organic synthesis to meet challenges in bioorganic chemistry and the life sci-



Professor Phil S. Baran, the winner of the Thieme-IUPAC Prize in Synthetic Organic Chemistry, gave a wonderful lecture about the ideal synthesis. (Photo: Adnan Budnjo, University of Bergen).

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ences. A synthesis of most of these aspects was presented by Phil S. Baran in his splendid Prize Lecture entitled "Aiming for the Ideal Synthesis," which in a powerful way illustrated his dedication "to the study of fundamental organic chemistry through the auspices of natural product total synthesis."

There were two new features at this meeting. One was a section of five parallel sessions with short talks given mainly by young chemists. Given the potential for difficulties with the timing of talks, the speakers' showed exemplary discipline, allowing the chairs to be lenient in a firm fashion. Collectively the short presentations showed that a wide range of new and brave ideas are being investigated by these young colleagues, indicating that organic synthesis is heading towards a bright future.

The second new feature was the awarding of Thieme-IUPAC Poster Prizes, five in total, to the best posters presented at the conference as judged by an international committee of outstanding synthetic chemists. There were a large number of excellent posters, so the committee had a difficult job, but a unanimous decision was reached and the prizes, a one-year subscription to *Synfact* (from Thieme) and Barry Trost's book on stereocontrolled organic synthesis (from IUPAC), were awarded to Marianne L. Rosenberg from Norway ("Highly *cis*-Selective Rh(I) Catalyzed Cyclopropanation Reactions"), Fabian Pfrengle from Germany ("Synthesis of C-Branched Amino Sugars via Lewis Acid Promoted Rearrangement of 1,2-Oxazines"), Tsz Ying Yuen from New Zealand ("Synthetic Studies towards the Marine Fungal Metabolite Paecilospirone"), Fumika Yakushiji from Japan ("First Total Syntheses of Thiomarinols A and B"), and Sonia Paz from Spain ("Synthesis of Tetrahydrobenzothiophene Derivatives from a Stable Ozonide as Inhibitors of an Essential Enzyme in *Helicobacter pylori* Survival"). These were certainly excellent picks as judged from the big applause the winners received from the audience.

A meeting like this would of course never have taken place without sponsors. Financial support from various sources, particularly the Research Council of Norway, is highly appreciated. But one sponsor has to be mentioned in particular, Georg Thieme Verlag. Thieme's dedication to the ICOS series of meetings has been consistent and outstanding ever since 1992.



Thieme-IUPAC Poster Prize winners surrounded by officials (from left): Sonia Paz (Spain), Julia Stötzner (Germany, Thieme Verlag), a fellow student receiving the prize for Tsz Ying Yuen (New Zealand), Leiv K. Sydnes (Norway, ICOS-18 chair), Fabian Pfrengle (Germany), David StC. Black (Australia, IUPAC representative), and Marianne L. Rosenberg (Norway). Fumika Yakushiji (Japan) was not present during the ceremony. (Photo: Adnan Budnjo, University of Bergen).

ICOS-18 certainly nourished organic synthetic chemists' professional development through lectures, poster presentations, and discussions dealing with the cutting-edge advances in organic synthesis. There are many that are looking forward to the next meal, to be served when ICOS-19 opens in Melbourne, Australia, on 1 July 2012, less than two years from now (www.icos19.com).

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Erratum

The caption on page 33 of the July-August 2010 issue incorrectly identifies the individual in the middle of the photo who is accepting the Paul J. Flory Medal 2010. The photo is of Hans Wolfgang Spiess (left), co-recipient of the medal, and not Andrezej Galeski (right), who was also a co-recipient of the medal.

