

IYC2011 Keeps Rolling

The International Year of Chemistry, IYC2011, is well under way across the globe. The celebration began in France and then moved to the United States and many other countries around the world. During the last week of January, academics, industry leaders, Nobel laureates, and officials of many governments gathered at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to celebrate IYC with speeches, concerts, and social events.

After the UNESCO event on 27 and 28 January, a different group gathered at the Sorbonne on 29 January to honor Marie Curie. The year 2011 is the centennial of Curie's Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Curie also won a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903. Speakers throughout the day talked about Curie's life, the difficulties she faced and overcame, and the many sacrifices she made on her path to immortality.

In the United States, the celebration began just two days after the festivities in Paris ended. On 31 January, the evening before the official launch of IYC in the United States, The Dow Chemical Company—one of the IYC2011 Global Partners—and the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF) hosted a dinner for 180 leaders in the chemical enterprise in the United States at the CHF Conference Center in Philadelphia.

The next morning, 1 February, a six-member panel discussed how the chemical enterprise could solve the daunting problems that face the world in the 21st century. The main topics, and the themes for IYC2011, were energy, food, health, and water. The six panelists were the following:

- Dan Nocera (moderator), Henry Dreyfus Professor of Energy and professor of chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Joshua S. Boger, former chair and CEO, current board member, Vertex Pharmaceuticals
- Rita Colwell, professor, Johns Hopkins University, and former director, National Science Foundation
- Janet Hering, director, Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology

- Ellen J. Kullman, chair and CEO, DuPont
- Andrew N. Liveris, chair and CEO, The Dow Chemical Company

The two-hour event began with each panelist giving his or her perspective on how chemistry could help to solve the huge challenges that face the world today and in the future. Following the opening talks, the six panelists had a lively discussion. For the final 30 minutes, the panelists took questions from the 200+ audience at CHF as well as from those watching live on the web. The entire two-hour presentation is available online. Just click on the IYC2011 logo at www.chemheritage.org.

The next evening, 2 February, in collaboration with Headhouse Books, CHF hosted a book discussion of *The Emperor of Scent* by Chandler Burr. Chemist Joseph Rucker, project leader, Biosensors-Integral Molecular, Inc., Philadelphia, led the discussion of the sense and sensibility of smell.

On Thursday, 3 February, Professor James Armstead, a historical recreator, came to Philadelphia in the character of Percy Julian, the great 20th-century chemist who was the subject of a two-hour documentary titled *Forgotten Genius*. Released in 2005, this award-winning feature-length film tells the story of Julian's long and improbable life.

Armstead is an actor of considerable range. He has recreated many characters and spends the day "in the role" of the men he portrays. Armstead spoke to student groups at the African-American Museum in Philadelphia and at The College of Physicians.

On Friday, 4 February, *Elemental Matters*, a new exhibit of seven contemporary artists responding to the periodic table of elements, opened to the public for the first time. All of the artists, even



Joshua S. Boger, former chair and CEO, current board member, Vertex Pharmaceuticals.



Rita Colwell, professor, Johns Hopkins University, and former director, National Science Foundation

from as far away as Germany, traveled to CHF for the opening. Nearly 250 visitors came to CHF to meet the artists and participate in the opening. Their work will be on display in CHF's Hach Gallery through December of this year (see feature page 4).


Separate from these activities, CHF made chemistry part of celebrating Valentine's Day by hosting "Science on Tap" at Philadelphia's National Mechanics bar and restaurant on 14 February, featuring Sam Kean, author of *The Disappearing Spoon and Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of Elements*.

CHF has also launched "It's Elemental," a national high-school video competition that invites students to submit videos inspired by a single element for an interactive periodic table. Nearly 700 student teams submitted videos. To watch, go to www.chemheritage.org/elementalvideos.



Ellen J. Kullman (left), chair and CEO, DuPont; Andrew N. Liveris (middle), chair and CEO, The Dow Chemical Company; and Dan Nocera, Henry Dreyfus Professor of Energy and professor of chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

And this report just covers the opening weeks of IYC. For events throughout this important year, go to the website below.

 www.chemistry2011.org
www.chemheritage.org/iyc2011

Big Splash for the IYC Global Water Experiment

by *Rovani Sigamoney*

On the United Nation's World Water Day, 22 March 2011, UNESCO and IUPAC launched the International Year of Chemistry (IYC) Global Experiment: "Water: A Chemical Solution." The event occurred at Ratanga Junction, Cape Town, from 22-25 March 2011 and was organized in collaboration with the City of Cape Town Municipality.

The IYC Global Experiment, entitled "Water: A Chemical Solution," consists of four component activities: pH measurement, salinity measurement, filtration/disinfection, and desalination. Each can be carried out by children of all ages in schools around the world and no special equipment is needed (all experiments can be done with laboratory equipment at schools).

The activities are adaptable to the skills and interests of students of various ages and use equipment that is widely available.

