



MARCH

1980

We're Back!

RESEARCH NOTES:

INFORMATION HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED CONCERNING A NEW ELEMENT!

LEONIUM

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

111 protons and 53 neutrons surrounded by 111 hit and run electrons.

ATOMIC WEIGHT: 163.9857

ATOMIC RADIUS: 5.11

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS:

This element is odd both in appearance and behavior. Extremely abnormal for its group. Definitely non-volatile: has a very high boiling point, demonstrated by the fact that no one has been able to get it to boil yet despite repeated attempts. Also known to have a low melting point and is fluid at most temperatures. Mixes well with all other known substances especially science majors. Does not form polar molecules as its name does not end in "ski." Reacts spontaneously.

First synthesized in Pittsburgh by Mr. & Mrs. James Herbert Leone who continued their research on this element in Detroit, Michigan until 1967 at which time it appeared in Buffalo, New York on its own. There it may often be found at the front of college classrooms and, at such locations, it is generally highly charged. Has shown a strong affinity for chalk, chalkboard erasers, slate chalkboards, and students. Often emits strings of numbers and alphabetical letters in series strongly resembling the English language but occasionally misspelled and frequently difficult to comprehend. Molecules of H₂O which have been heated (and occasionally to which molecules of caffeine have been added) are rapidly absorbed by Leonium, especially in the morning. This element does not occur in nature and has only been successfully synthesized by Mr. & Mrs. James Herbert Leone and by them only once. However, it appears to be self-perpetuating and has created three little Leoniums at sporadic intervals. It has been unproductive for nine years and scientists are uncertain as to whether it will reproduce again. Before creating these new Leoniums, it converted an atom of Stauffernium into Leonium to aid in the syntheses of the other Leoniums. These new Leoniums are all isotopes of the original Leonium and are subclassified as Nicolus Leonium, Gabriellous Leonium, and Davidic Leonium. These isotopes were first synthesized 14, 10, and 9 years ago respectively. This element was at first thought to be a noble gas but has since disillusioned scientists who have concluded that it is, to a large extent, hot air.

Much work is being done with this interesting element and most budding chemists enjoy working with it. Some have a bit of difficulty with it because it moves so quickly, hesitating only briefly to absorb hot H₂O before rushing into new material. However, after going through a few tests with this element, these flunkies are expected to discover a purpose for the element's velocity and a need to try to keep up with it. Much is still unknown about Leonium causing much handwaving in scientific circles. If any further information is desired concerning this element, Leonium may be observed at its lowest entropy state at:

15 Summit Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14218

CAUTION: The surgeon general has determined that megadoses of Leonium may be hazardous to your mental health.

Data collected and compiled by:

RUSSELL E. CARSON
MELINDA R. BURGWARDT (McELHINNEY)

ALCHEMIST CONTEST #1

Correctly name each member of the Canisius Chemistry Department staff in this cartoon. The winner will receive a free lunch at the Locker Room with the staff of THE ALCHEMIST. Submit your entry to Room 203. All correct entries will be placed in a random drawing on March 27.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone#: _____



K. Baryza

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

As probably everyone knows, the Philosopher's Stone was the secret for transforming base metals into gold. It was an elusive substance which defied isolation and most attempts at forming gold left only what is still a common occurrence in labs today: goop.

Of course, as the name implies, there was a metaphysical idea at the root of alchemy. The alchemist also sought to transform his base existence into a more enlightened, golden existence. It is only fitting that this publication have a philosophy column. It is the reader's task to determine if the column is serious, tongue-in-cheek, hoof-in-mouth, trench mouth, or what have you. What will the result be? Will you be enlightened or will your brain become goop? Either way, it will be considered a success.

---Simplicity at its Most Complex

It so often seems that the most complex things in life are always the most difficult to put up with and understand. For example, understanding women, or men, depending on your gender or preference, is a task which is just plainly impossible. Then there is international politics and economic policies propounded by an ex-peanut farmer. Then again, there is P-Chem. Details, laws, exceptions, and just plain old irrationalism contribute to the befuddlement one experiences when faced with complexity. The most confusing aspect is flux. Everything is constantly in a state of change; sometimes minor and progressive and at other times immediate and radical.

How can we comprehend something when it changes? At times, we must begin again and form an entirely new framework. What is so difficult about that? There is only one problem: memory. We can easily recall the way things or people were in the past and we want to retain that past, especially if it is more pleasant than the present. How often do we ask, "Why can't things be like they were?" or "Why are you acting differently now?" The past is always impinging upon the present and, thus, affecting the future. What should be is consequently not running its natural course.

Certainly we must make plans for the future. We must build our character upon the foundation of the past. We cannot vacillate.

Whatever moral fibre we weave must maintain its integrity or it is worthless. However, the present must be judged as it is, not as we expect or wish it to be. The important concept may usefully be labelled as "spontaneity." It is like a mirror. What occurs is there and reflected in the being of the mirror. There is the act and then it is gone. There is no use in trying to repeat something which you may have done incorrectly. It is over and done. The same holds for something good. Of what use is trying to maintain it indefinitely? The point is to do and act and move on. Remember, the mirror has a frame. It is limited. Its orientation may be adjusted. Likewise, a person must not act indiscriminately. If an action goes against your personal grain, pass it by but don't dwell on it.

It sounds so simple and that is what is so difficult about it. We are accustomed to complexity and try to make things as complex as possible. Simplification is all too often complex in itself.

Back in the '60s, the "in" thing was to leave it all behind and go off alone for a while to "find yourself." How complex can you get? Can a flame burn itself? It's like trying to find the horse when you are already riding it. Our actions define ourselves. Perhaps we may not be able to put all of our feelings into words, but is that always necessary? We are what we do even if we don't always know why we do it. It's all too simple to write about.

"NOTHING IS MORE HATEFUL TO WISDOM
THAN TOO MUCH CUNNING"

-Seneca

DR. STAFF

Have you ever wondered just who this mythical character is that teaches all those courses each semester at Canisius? He seems to be a tenured member of the faculty, yet no one has ever seen him. Why? Does he have something to hide or is he an immediate relative of the late Howard Hughes? Just what is it with this guy? I can't imagine who he is. I don't even know what he is.

Fr. McCarthy claims that this character is a Jesuit Priest that died 50 years ago and who still walks the halls at night moaning in pain. You know, the Jacob Marley type, but dragging rosaries instead of chains.

It's also possible that he's the brainy type. I'm talking about the guy that you'd sit next to in class with a massive head the size of a large beach ball. The kind with a map of the world printed on it (usually his name is Norman). Norman is very typical. Upon being given a 20 page exam, you proceed to write your name across the top of your paper. In between your first name and last name, Norman hands his paper in. It's very understandable why such a person would hide from the rest of mankind. What would you do in this weather if the only thing that would fit your head for a hat was a hefty (Heffley?) garbage bag? [

Dr. Stanton, the midnight marauder of the ivory tower, has often been mistaken for this strange person. We have evidence though to prove that he's not. Damien carried the mark of the devil in the form of three 6's on the back of his head. In much the same way, Dr. Stanton carries the mark of an organic chemist led astray in the form of a triple integral ($\int\int\int$) in his left armpit.

I suppose one of the most unsettling things about this mysterious Dr. Staff is when you notice that he's slated to teach the course you were supposed to teach in the coming semester. It sends chills down your spine to think that you'll have to tangle with this monster. Just the sound of his name alone conjures up images of an infection you might catch from a dirty toilet seat. It's enough to make anyone shiver.

Can you imagine what the students might think of this? Consider a young girl fresh from a prep school like Sacred Heart. The look on her face must be something when she sees that she's got Staff for a course. Freudian images and thoughts of perverse acts leap to mind and scare the daylights out of her. Worst of all, how do you tell mom that you got Staff for class? She'd blister your hide.

So it seems that this critter we call Dr. Staff has nothing but an ill-effect on people. The question is how do we get rid of this lecherous monster before he can strike again? Your questions and replies are invited.

THE CRUCIBLE

Narrator: It is August, the year of our Lord, 1979. The medieval art known as chemistry begins its slow emergence from the dark ages. Yet the ancient practices in many cases, still hold sway over the minds of the superstitious lot who call themselves chemists. Still they are not entirely a united group, but a collection of fractions described by such terms as organic, inorganic, analytic, biological, and a host of others. The loose coalition is now threatened and hastens to pool its resources against a heresy which seeks to gain sway over impressionable minds. This horror hides under the label of PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY!

A solitary figure stands handcuffed to a rail in the courtroom. It is the prophet of heresy, Sir Richard of Stantown. The Grand Inquisitor, the Bishop of Chichester, enters the room. The Prisoner covers covers in fear for a moment but regains his composure.

Bishop: Sir Richard, I am aghast!

Sir R: Real or Ideal? $PV=nRT!$

Bailiff: Be thou silent, heretic!

Bishop: Sir Richard, your teachings are mathematical mumbo jumbo capable only of causing a degenerative disease of the brain.

Sir R: But our place is to seek understanding. Quantum makes the electron go round. The atom is not flat!

Bailiff: A regular Columbus.

Bishop: The powers that be have ordained that some things are only to be believed, not understood.

Sir R: The powers that be? Annino?

Bailiff: Silence, Dick!

Sir R: Belief has its place but some concepts which are now clouds on the horizon, I have the power to comprehend.

Crowd: Oxidize him! Oxidize him!

Bishop: Sir, you leave me no choice. You offer no defense.

Sir R: What of my visions of Boltzmann and Ehrenfest. They guide my steps.

Bishop: Soon you may be forced to follow in their footsteps, Sir Richard.

Sir R: Holy shit!

Crowd: Take him to the quad! To the quad with him!

Bishop: Shall I hand you over to the crowd? To they who would use that diabolical contraption, the bomb calorimeter, on your very person?

Sir R: Please have mercy. They would probably compute with the wrong signs on the correction factors anyway.

Bishop: Very well. The leniency of this court sentences you to coordinate the chemistry seminar.

(GASPS OF HORROR FROM THE CROWD AND SIR R)

Sir R: Oh, where have I failed?

Bishop: In addition, the first three seminars are to be based solely on organic chemistry. Your mind must be purified of your heresy.

Sir R: No! No! Not organic! Hand me over to the crowd.

Bishop: It is too late. It has been said, so shall it be done!

A MOMENT IN FJD'S CLASS

It is 9:29 on a Monday morning. Frank J. Dinan strolls briskly into his bio-organic class with a cup of coffee in one hand and the overheads for today's class, forty-three of them, in the other. The class is in its usual mournful state. Most eyes are bloodshot from the weekend drinking binge. Others are still waiting to come down to earth after numerous experiments with No-Doz. Frank Dinan begins with a few "humorous" remarks but the students continue to mumble to one another not hearing the attempts at jokes by the professor.

Student X: Well, we know what kind of class we're in for today. He didn't even start lecturing and already no one is paying attention.

Student Y: We always know what kind of class we're in for. How many pens did you bring today?

X: Just three. I'm a little short on cash.

FJD: OK, let's get to work. Student X, what is the structure of methionine enkephalin?

X: I don't know. All I remember is it first came out of a pig's head.

Y: Tell him the structure of a pig's head.

(Self-indulgent laughter by X and Y)

FJD: OK, next overhead.

Class: Slow down!!

FJD: Oh.....kay.....next.....(Self-indulgent laughter by FJD) Doesn't anyone appreciate good humor?

Here is the outline on this week's opiate lab experiment. All the products are to be turned in to me for grading. Don't expect to get them back. OK, next slide.

Class: Wait! I only copied down the first six reactions!

FJD: The rest all follows logically. You can work it out yourself. As I've said before, what actually happens in vivo is quite complex, but we can look at a model for many reactions that occur. Reality is just too complex for us to comprehend.

X: It seems that such a statement reveals a deep seated lack of security. What would Freud say?

Y: I have no idea. I hear this guy even likes Genesee Cream Ale!

X: Oh my God! From quart bottles?

FJD: Let's slow down for a second.....

Class: Whew!

FJD:and see if there are any questions. (Pauses for a few seconds) I mean, is this stuff making any sense to you?

Class: No.

FJD: OK, let's move on then. Oh I forgot. Before the next slide, I'll give you your tests back. You really botched this one up.

A: I think it was too long to finish.

B: I think we should get a list of possible questions before the test.

FJD: Think about it and we'll take a vote before the next test. Whatever you decide, I'll do the opposite. Yes, question?

X: Going back to reality being too complex, do you mean that just from a chemical standpoint or metaphysically as well?

FJD: I think we covered that point in discussing the big bang theory.

Y: I'm a bit confused on the apparatus you showed us for some experimentation last week.

FJD: Wh^{ic}h one?

Y: The smooth muscle stimulator.

FJD: It makes perfect sense to me.

Y: Exactly what smooth muscles are we discussing?

FJD: I believe that is something for your parents to talk to you about. Now let's get moving. The class is already four minutes old and I'm still on the third overhead.

BOOZE WHO INDUCTION COMMITTEE CHEMISTS

Booze Who is the honor society of chemists. Induction into this club is considered a high honor and a sign of recognized accomplishment. This honor is bestowed upon a candidate by his fellow chemists.

This society is open to all students, staff and faculty. In order to break into the ranks, a candidate must be nominated by one of his colleagues. This nomination is to be submitted to the Booze Who Induction Committee composed of Jim Barren, John Chodkowski, and Frank Dinan (Chairman). Final decisions as to acceptance of members lies in their hands. The nominations must include the candidates past drinking history and related events. All Special Awards such as stolen shot glasses, ashtrays, bottle -openers, beer mugs nad etc. from bars, should also be mentioned in the nomination. Counted heavily are the nominee's long history of imbibication and numerous funny stories related to these periods of time.

More than one winner will be chosen for each issue of the ALAN. Winners will receive a free picture of the beer of his choice at the Lock Room, every given day with the Admissions Committee and other fellow members. Along with this the winner's name will go in the Booze Who Register with a list of his drinking accomplishments. Personalized membership cards will also be distributed.

This month's inductee is Dr. Joseph Beeron who earned his place in our organization by his ability to give off CO_2 in industrial size volumes after the consumption of 1/4 keg of Genesee Cream Ale. Hence the tongue twister in his honor: "Bieron blabbers bilingually between beer belches." This man's contribution to science is phenominal. He is responsible ofor more dry ice production than any other source in the U.S. and Canada. He has also been one of the prime testers of alcohols as fuels in the internal combustion engine with a pretzel catalyst. ~~Congrat~~ Congratulations Dr. Bieron and keep up the good work!