



# Double Bond

The Newsletter of the Western New York Section of the American Chemical Society

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## THE 2010 SCHOELLKOPF AWARD

*Nominations for the 2010 Schoellkopf Award will be accepted through August 1, 2010*

The Jacob F. Schoellkopf Medal is the oldest award of the American Chemical Society given by a Local Section. The purpose of the award is to recognize a person who has fostered the objectives or activities of the American Chemical Society. The medalist's contribution might be a discovery pertaining to chemistry, or an invention of a plan, process, or device, useful, valuable, or significant in the theory or practice of chemistry, or distinguished service to the Western New York Section. The nominee's work must have been performed in Western New York.

Please consider nominating one of your colleagues for this prestigious award. Any nominations received after the August 1 deadline date will be considered for next year's award. Nominations should include a letter stating the candidate's contributions and a recent CV of the candidate. Additional letters (at least 2) supporting the nomination are an important factor in awardee selection.

This year's Schoellkopf committee chair is Dr. Sherry Chemler. For further information you may contact the chair directly at 645-4225 or [schemler@buffalo.edu](mailto:schemler@buffalo.edu).

Please send all nominating documentation for the Schoellkopf Award to:

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## PROFESSOR FRANK DINAN TO RETIRE

Long-time Canisius College organic chemist, Frank Dinan, will retire this spring after teaching in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry for 45 years. Prof. Dinan's name is recognized by doctors around the Western New York area who prepared for medical school exams under his careful tutelage.



Dinan received his Ph.D. in organic chemistry working with Howard Tieckelmann at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. He worked as a post-doctoral fellow at Cornell University and worked at Carborundum Metal, Hooker Chemical and E. I. DuPont before beginning his teaching career at Canisius College in 1965.

His accomplishments include 23 scientific articles and award of 4 patents. His interest in effective teaching strategies has led to 15 articles on case studies in teaching and active learning techniques, and he has become a sought-after speaker for workshops on team learning in the sciences. Most recently, Dinan received the 2008 Canisius College Arts and Sciences Faculty Teaching Award.

If you do not know Frank Dinan, your editor suggests that a trip to many a doctor's office in the area will find a Canisius College graduate who will remember with trepidation their organic chemistry class, but who will remember Prof. Dinan with great appreciation for his efforts to make chemistry accessible to them. As friends and colleagues, Frank, we wish you all the best.

Tim Gregg  
Editor, WNYACS Double Bond

## 60 YEARS AGO IN THE DOUBLE BOND

*The following is from the June, 1940 Double Bond*

### An Investigation of (\*!!\*), the C Factor by Chas. Rehm

There is one factor of universal importance and ubiquitous applicability, which, strangely, has not received the investigation its gravity merits. It is that which makes the best laid plans of mice and men do odd things, and sometimes assumes the shadowy shape of destiny. It is elusive, eternal and all-pervading. It is that phenomenon which is called, "The Incomprehensible Cussedness of Inanimate Objects," and is expressed by (\*!!\*), the Cussedness or C factor. It is more than a phenomenon or a factor, but is a vital property of matter.

It is a discouraging commentary upon scientific initiative that this property has been mentioned only by humorists and comedians. Has science then become so involved in the intricacies of obtuse specialties that it is completely blind to fundamentals? Has it become so enamored of its subtleties and minutiae that it will no longer deign to notice that which is primal? It is time we abandoned our effete ways and returned to the stern austerities of the old science.

I had long noted this property, often vehemently, and gradually my curiosity regarding its significance and value became aroused. My first observations on hammers and nails, nuts and wrenches, screws and screwdrivers nearly misled me into the fallacy that this property was peculiar to metals of the genus Hardware. Fortunately, an exasperating experience with a deck chair corrected this view. A subsequent rather harrowing encounter with a blanket which insisted upon sliding to the floor convinced me of the universality of this property. All of these manifestations, however, were of such transitory and diverting character that they precluded careful analyses and it was for long that I searched for an occurrence which would permit leisurely observation.

Finally, the happy opportunity arrived through the purchase of an electric shaver. When this appliance was ready for use, the cord, from its beginning at the wall outlet to where it joined the shaver near my face, described a deep catenary down toward the basin. It was, when I noticed the persistency with which the lowest point of this curve would hook over the handle of the faucet, that I realized that I had found my experimental equipment for an exhaustive study of (\*!!\*).

Morning after morning was now spent in the compilation of data, instead of the unremunerative, faintly disappointing task of studying my countenance in the mirror. The problem was studied from all angles. Electromagnetic effects were soon

eliminated as were Newtonian attractions, dipole moments, adhesive forces, etc. Variables were conceived and tried. At one point I introduced the variation of placing the handle on the stem of the faucet in different quadrants, but feminine objections soon terminated this line of experimentation. (This, by the way, brings up another unevaluated factor which must remain to be solved by a far more intrepid and ingenious investigator than myself.)

The brevity of this communication makes it impossible to present any data or an analysis thereof. I will therefore confine myself to a presentation of the results with a brief annotation thereon in the hope that it will encourage other investigators to carry on the work.

A careful study of my data showed that the C factor is a correction of the law of probability:

$$N = U(*!!*)p$$

Where N is the number of times an event will occur; U is the number of times allowed by probability;  $p$  is a component of the C factor, empirical as yet, which I call the perversity term and which varies with different types of bodies. For the shaver cord it was close to one, but I have seen pajama strings in which it was as high as four, and dice (somebody else's) in which it was as low as minus three.

(\*!!\*), itself, can be further broken down;

$$(*!!*) = A[1 + (Tr - Ta) 3/4]$$

Where Tr is the time required for the job and Ta is the time available; A is the annoyability term:

$$A = [\Delta pH/1.43 + (8 - S) + (V/11.37) \times (td - tf)^{-1/2} + 1/2 + 1] E/R + 1 + e^{im}$$

This, as can be seen, is an equation of state -- a state of exasperation. Here  $\Delta pH$ , a digestive term, is the change in stomach acidity. S is the sleep obtained in hours; V is the volume of alcohol, in c.c., consumed before retiring, td being the time, in hours, before retiring at which the imbibing started and tf when it was finished. E/R is a ratio, which is a constant for a given individual, and must be carefully determined. E is an excitability term and R is a risibility term.  $e^{im}$  is in the nature of a flourish as anyone familiar with the ramifications of De Moivre's Theorem will recognize. An examination of recent physical formulae shows that few worth their salt do not contain e.

*Editor's Note: Murphy's Law is said to have originated with engineers in the aerospace industry in the late 1940's. No connection between it and the above derivation of (\*!!\*) is known. See: Bloch, Arthur. Murphy's Law, and Other Reasons Why Things Go WRONG (1977), Methuen Paperbacks Ltd:London.*

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