

Welcome to Family Science Night -Bret Harte Middle School- Hayward October 2009!

The California Section returned to Hayward, CA to celebrate National Chemistry Week with another fabulous Family Science Night on Tuesday 20 October 2009 at Bret Harte Middle School. The Scientific Jam opened the show and proved once again that science rocks. Principal Lisa Davies welcomed the ACS, and Dr. Alex Madonik, NCW Coordinator, thanked the crowd of over 400 for their enthusiasm, saying that Bret Harte students are the next generation of chemists who will find solutions for environmental and medical problems. Dr. Bryan Balazs of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory took the stage with his favorite question, "Does anyone have a pet elephant?" He and a couple of student volunteers delighted the audience with a fountain of "Elephant's Toothpaste," followed by a thrilling ride on the acrylic oxygen rocket. The eager crowd then set out to explore a dozen hands-on activities, including several based on this year's NCW theme, "Chemistry, It's Elemental." Jeanne Pimentel donated her ACS commemorative Periodic Table beach blanket, which became the scene of the "Great Element Hunt" as kids of all ages tried to locate the elements matching symbols on their game cards. Visitors learned about elements in household products with the help of an XRF analyzer, assisted by Christina Medina of the Center for Environmental Health, and heard from Jeanne Pimentel about the Mariner 6 and 7 spacecraft that measured the chemical makeup of Mars using infrared spectroscopy (her husband, the late Professor George Pimentel, designed this instrument with his group at UC Berkeley). Outside, students from the Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity at UC Berkeley created colorful flames to demonstrate the unique spectroscopic properties of simple metal salts. Visitors also learned about "Plants in Their Element" with Dr. Margareta Sequin of San Francisco State University, exploring plant scents and learning to make molecular models. Dr. Kent Campbell entertained visitors with his own chemistry magic. A pH laboratory, UV-sensitive beads, a DNA/RNA base-pairing game, Slime, and the ever-popular Liquid Nitrogen Ice Cream

rounded out the action. It was a night to remember for kids of all ages. Bret Harte Middle School has a diverse student population of over 600 students, including a significant number of English language learners. We again provided programs and other materials in both English and Spanish. Special thanks to Bret Harte Principal Lisa Davies and science teacher Adriana Gilmete, who took the lead to host Family Science Night, as well as the entire Bret Harte staff who turned out and opened their classrooms for this event. Thanks also to our other volunteers, including the slime team from Chevron Corporation (Michael Cheng, Sheila Yeh, and more) and Dr. Margareta Sequin and her students at San Francisco State University, for a great show. Thanks as well to Lam-Kiu Fong, Tom Bischof, Evan Lockwood, Margaret Nguyen, Michael Quan, and the entire volunteer team from AXE at UC Berkeley, and to ACS members Anne and John Frazer, Birgit Drews of Celera Corporation, Blanca Domingo, and Nancy Samec. Special thanks to newly arrived ACS members Janet and Charles Tarino, who welcomed visitors at the ACS table. Special thanks also to Robert Curtis, Science Coordinator at the Alameda County Office of Education, for making the initial contact for us at Bret Harte Middle School. With the generous donation by Merck and Co., we were able to give all three science teachers at Bret Harte a brand new copy of the Merck Index 14th edition. We also thanked our two dozen college student volunteers with their own copies, and they were thrilled! Our friends at the Alpha Chi Sigma once again took National Chemistry Week to the pre-football game crowd at UC Berkeley on Saturday 24 October. Fans were delighted with NCW souvenirs, especially Nanomoles and Periodic Table view-scope key-chains, as well as Mole tattoos, and Periodic Table wallet cards. Go Bears! The California Section invited students to submit entries in the NCW poster contest, and we received some excellent work from several schools across the Bay Area. The winners are: **Lauren Kim**, 10th grade, Albany High School, Albany, CA; teacher Ms. Margaret Carlock **Amy Luong**, 8th grade, Presidio Middle School, San Francisco, CA; teacher Ms. Irene Hirota Dr. Alex Madonik National Chemistry Week Coordinator California Section, ACS



Spokane at Family Science Night, Bret Harte Middle School, Hayward, CA - 20

