

**Susquehanna Valley Section
American Chemical Society**

**Annual
Education Awards
Banquet**



**Pine Barn Inn
Danville, Pennsylvania**

May 2, 2023

5:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

- I. Welcome and Introductions*Dr. Daniel McCurry***
- II. 50/60 Year ACS members*Dr. Daniel McCurry***
DR. MICHAEL C. CANN 50-year member
DR. WILLIAM H. SIMPSON 60-year member
DR. WILLIAM J. SNYDER 60-year member
DR. JOE A. VINSON 60-year member
- III. Joseph Priestley Service Award*Dr. Daniel McCurry***
DR. ERNIE TRUJILLO
- IV. Ron Blatchley High School Chemistry Teacher of the Year Award*Mr. Ronald Blatchley***
MS. ADRIANNA RUPPRECHT Old Forge Jr/Sr High School
- V. National Chemistry Week Award*Dr. Allison Saunders***
- K-2 Category
BLAISE GASPER Drums Elementary
Teacher – Ms. Cathy Tombasco
- Blaise also came in second place for the ACS national competition.
- 3-5 Category
GARRISON REINER Upper Dauphin Elementary School
Teacher – Ms. Emily Renn
- 6-8 Category
KAILEY NEMETH Drums Middle School
Teacher – Ms. Catherine Tombasco
- 9-12 Category
FAITH GOMBITA Honesdale High School
Teacher – Ms. Michelle Tonkin
- VI. David H. Frederick Memorial Awards in High School Chemistry*Dr. Charles Mahler***

EXAM A RUNNERS-UP

ROY ANDREW SASSAMAN	Selinsgrove Area High School Teacher – Ms. Tracy Hepner
EMILY KIME	Williamsport Area High School Teacher – Mr. Chase Smith
CAEL KRUSHNOWSKI	Old Forge Junior Senior High School Teacher – Ms. Adrianna Rupprecht
NICHOLAS PANE	Western Wayne High School Teacher – Ms. Maria Masankay
DAVYN PIATT-FERREIRA	Hanover Area Jr/Sr High School Teacher – Dr. Jocelyn Holodick-Reed
DEREK DANG	Marian Catholic High School Teacher – Mr. Robert Valente

EXAM A WINNERS

AUBREY FLUMAN	Mifflinburg Area High School Teacher – Mr. Jeffrey Kiss
ADDISON CONFER	Montoursville Area High School Teacher – Mrs. Natalie Smith
WILSON HE	Scranton Preparatory School Teacher – Mrs. Donna Barrett
LIAM MILLER	Honesdale High School Teacher – Ms. Michelle Tonkin
BRAEDYN HARASCHAK	Berwick Area High School Teacher – Mrs. Christine Readler

EXAM B RUNNERS-UP

CASSANDRA SNYDER	Line Mountain High School Teacher – Dr. Shelley Herb-Fausey
MACKENZIE VASBINDER	Mifflinburg Area High School Teacher – Mr. Matthew Wells
MERCEDEZ FARR	Milton Area High School Teacher – Mr. Jonathan Bixler
ELLA OAKES	Shikellamy High School Teacher – Mrs. Jenna Mowery

EXAM B WINNERS

MATTHEW HE	South Williamsport Area High School Teacher – Mr. Matthew Easley
TYLER MCDERMOTT	Mid Valley Secondary Center Teacher – Dr. Jacob Banik

VIII. College Award Winners *Dr. Ernie Trujillo*

CONNIE CHEN	Bucknell University
JESUS VAZQUEZ HERNANDEZ	Lycoming College
KYLE BOHLIN	Misericordia University
HANNAH CHANTAVORALAK	University of Scranton
LAUREN STETTLER	Susquehanna University

IX. "Squaring Up the *f*-Block"

Dr. Matthew Polinski, *Commonwealth University - Bloomsburg*

The *f*-elements, comprised of the lanthanides and actinides, represent approximately 25% of the Periodic Table and are some of the least studied and understood elements. Their technological importance, however, cannot be understated as they find uses in a variety of modern technologies, such as optical, magnetic, electronic, and nuclear energy. As the lanthanides and the transplutonium elements are nearly identical in size and all share a preference for the trivalent oxidation state, it has been standard practice to use the lanthanides as nonradioactive surrogates for the later actinides in order to gain preliminary understanding of their physical and chemical properties. However, within the last decade, a handful of systems that display nonparallel chemistry between these

two series have emerged, leading to the idea that the use of lanthanide surrogates should be met with skepticism and not be a substitute for studying the transplutonium elements. One system providing nonparallel chemistry is the trivalent *f*-element squarate series. These new families of trivalent *f*-element squarates, including all of their similarities and differences, will be discussed.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Matthew Polinski earned his B.A. from Washington and Jefferson College (2010) and his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Notre Dame (2013) under the direction of Dr. Thomas Albrecht-Schonzart. His dissertation is titled "Syntheses, Characterization, and Fundamental Studies of Novel Trivalent Lanthanide and Actinide Borates". After his graduate studies, he was a post-doctoral researcher at Florida State University in the lab of Dr. Albert Stiegman studying the mechanism of the Phillips polymerization catalyst.

In 2014, he joined the Department of Biochemistry, Chemistry, Engineering, and Physics at Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania – Bloomsburg where he is currently a tenured Associate Professor and teaches General Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, and Advanced Inorganic Chemistry.

Dr. Polinski has won a variety of awards for both teaching and research. Nationally, he was awarded the American Chemical Society's Nobel Laureate Signature Award in 2016. He has been named the inaugural Aronstam Family Research Fellow (2021), awarded the Dean's Faculty Recognition Award for Research (2019), the Provost's Award for Excellence in Research/Scholarly Activity (2019), and an Influential Professor four times as selected by BU student athletes. Dr. Polinski is an expert in solid-state chemistry, *f*-element chemistry, structural chemistry, and materials science, with an emphasis on X-ray crystallography.

2023 ACS SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY SECTION OFFICERS

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The American Chemical Society (ACS) is a nonprofit scientific and educational association of professional chemists and chemical engineers. Although the Society is primarily an American organization, virtually every nation is represented among its over 151,000 members.

Some of the many programs sponsored by the ACS are meetings, publications, education, awards, and public service activities, including National Chemistry Week. Each year, 1,500 ACS meetings are held at the local, regional, national, and divisional levels. Over seventy-five ACS journals are the leading resources in the chemical field. Educational activities include services to high school and college chemistry students and continuing education programs for its members. The ACS presents numerous awards for outstanding achievement in various fields of chemistry through national, regional, divisional, and local channels. Fellowships and research grants for basic research are administered by the society.

The Susquehanna Valley Section of the ACS includes members from eight counties in central to northeastern Pennsylvania.