

*Susquehanna Valley Local Section  
American Chemical Society*

**Annual  
Education Awards  
Banquet**



*Pine Barn Inn  
Danville, PA*

*6 May 2026*



# PROGRAM

- I. Welcome and Introductions** .....Dr. Megan Youmans
- II. *The Chemistry of Cheese*** .....Dr. Jeanne Berk  
This talk explores the fascinating chemistry behind cheese, from the molecular makeup of milk to the transformations that occur during cheese production. We'll examine how proteins, fats, and microbes interact to create the wide range of textures—from soft and creamy to firm and crumbly—and the chemical processes that form the complex flavors that develop during aging. By connecting science to everyday foods, this talk reveals how small chemical changes lead to the rich diversity of cheeses we enjoy. The talk will conclude with a guided cheese tasting to help participants directly experience the flavors and textures discussed.
- III. 60 Year ACS Members** .....Dr. Megan Youmans  
Dr. David E. Horn
- IV. 50 Year ACS Members** .....Dr. Megan Youmans  
Mr. David A. Komar  
Mr. William A. Levinson
- V. Joseph Priestley Service Award** .....Dr. Donald Mencer  
Dr. Allison H. Saunders *Lycoming College*
- VI. Ronald Blatchley High School Chemistry  
Teacher of the Year Award** .....Mr. Ronald Blatchley  
Mr. Alex Hunter *Jersey Shore Area School District*
- VII. National Chemistry Week Award** .....Dr. Holly Bendorf  
Raegan Fox *Western Wayne High School*

## VIII. David H. Frederick Memorial Awards

in High School Chemistry .....Dr. Charles Mahler

### EXAM A RUNNERS-UP

Claudia Martin	Mr. Matthew Wells <i>Mifflinburg Area High School</i>
Madison Maneval	Ms. Tracy Hepner <i>Selinsgrove Area High School</i>
Payton McNaughton	Dr. Jennifer Flint <i>Williamsport Area High School</i>
Makenzie Liniger	Ms. Adrianna Rupprecht <i>Old Forge Jr. Sr. High School</i>
Kashvi Patel	Dr. Jacob Banik <i>Mid Valley Secondary Center</i>
Tyler Costanzo	Ms. Christine Readler <i>Berwick Area Senior High School</i>

### EXAM A WINNERS

Kimberlyn Smith	Ms. Jenna Mowery <i>Midd-West High School</i>
Aliyah Bell	Ms. Abbey Gerasimoff <i>Williamsport Area High School</i>
Robert Gillette	Ms. Donna Barrett <i>Scranton Preparatory School</i>
Madeline Davis	Mr. Robert Valente <i>Marian Catholic High School</i>
Abigail Cummings	Mr. Paul Dennehy <i>Danville Area High School</i>

### EXAM B RUNNERS-UP

Blake Rothermel	Dr. Shelley Herb-Fausey <i>Line Mountain High School</i>
Lael Bradley	Mr. Matthew Eisley <i>South Williamsport Jr. Sr. High School</i>
Jace Thomas	Dr. Jocelyn Holodick-Reed <i>Hanover Area Jr. Sr. High School</i>

## EXAM B WINNERS

Ashley Xu

Mr. Paul Dennehy  
*Danville Area High School*

Mithil Joshi

Ms. Carolyn Siwak  
*Abington Heights High School*

### IX. College Award Winners.....Dr. William Kerber

Alexis Norfolk

*Commonwealth University - Bloomsburg*

Grace Ifiegbu

*Bucknell University*

Emilee Schultz

*King's College*

Zoie V. Dodson

*Lycoming College*

Thomas Edward Marine

*University of Scranton*

Laura Mace

*Susquehanna University*

Jake Middleton

*Wilkes University*

### X. Final Remarks.....Dr. Megan Youmans

## 2026 ACS SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY SECTION OFFICERS

Chair	Megan Youmans <i>Wilkes University</i>
Past Chair	Allison Saunders <i>Lycoming College</i>
Secretary	Sydney Bachman <i>Stellant Systems</i>
Treasurer	Holly Bendorf <i>Lycoming College</i>
Councilor	Donald Mencer <i>Wilkes University</i>
Alt. Councilor	Dee Ann Casteel <i>Bucknell University</i>

## 2026 ACS SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY SECTION COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Education	Charles Mahler <i>Lycoming College</i>
National Chemistry Week	Karen Castle <i>Bucknell University</i>
Undergraduate Awards	William Kerber <i>Bucknell University</i>
Government Affairs	Donald Mencer <i>Wilkes University</i>
MARM Delegate	Donald Mencer <i>Wilkes University</i>
Webmaster	Sydney Bachman <i>Stellant Systems</i>

## ACS SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY LOCAL SECTION

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 250,000 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.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER: DR. JEANNE BERK



Jeanne Berk, PhD, is a scientist and educator known for her work in chemistry and science communication. Dr. Berk teaches Organic Chemistry at Cedar Crest College, where she is recognized for her dynamic teaching style and commitment to student learning. In addition to her work in the classroom, she has contributed on making complex scientific concepts—particularly in areas like food chemistry—accessible and engaging to broad audiences through lectures and study abroad opportunities. She has also been actively involved

with the American Chemical Society at both the national and local level as part of the Lehigh Valley section.



**AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY**