

THE CAPITAL CHEMIST

 | Chemical Society of
Washington Local Section

A Publication of the Chemical Society of Washington Section of the American Chemical Society

CSW Dinner Meeting – October 22, 2026 - featuring Homero Dominguez and Lauren Ragle

Meeting Logistics

Date: Thursday, October 22, 2026

Time: 6:00 p.m. Check-in / Social Hour

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Speaker Presentation

Location: ACS Headquarters - Marvel Hall
1155 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036

Menu:

Meal will be catered by W. Millar and will feature Cuban mojo Chicken Breast, Rum glazed Flank Steak, Citrus-seared tuna, Freshly baked bread board, cookies & bars. Beverages are included. Vegetarian option **available by request only**: *Thai Veggie Skewers*.

Cost: \$26 (1/2 price for students and high school teachers)

An RSVP is required for dinner so we can plan appropriate seating and meals. Deadline to register is noon on Tuesday, October 20th.

Registration is required if you wish to participate virtually via Zoom:

<https://tinyurl.com/38arctfm>

RSVP by noon (ET) Tuesday, October 20, to csw@acs.org.

Please provide the names in your party as well as your contact information when you RSVP. The public is invited to attend. You may attend the talk only at no charge, but reservations are appreciated. If you need any further information or would like to make a reservation, please contact the CSW office by email at csw@acs.org.

Volume 76, Number 7
October 2026

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- RSVP for the 50-, 60-, 70-year Member Luncheon
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- Encourage someone to enter the Illustrated Poem Contest

Section News

- Keep an eye out for info on the Chemistry Olympiad
- Vote in the CSW Election!

Awards / Opportunities

- Help plan MARM 2028
- Nominate a CSW member for the Hillebrand Prize, Gordon Award, or Schubert Award
- Apply for the CSW Student Travel Award
- Apply for the Division of Analytical Chemistry YCC Travel Award

Speaker Bio: Homero Dominguez, BCCE 2026 Award Recipient

Homero was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. He went to UT Austin for his undergraduate degree in Biochemistry and University of Notre Dame for his master's degree in Chemistry. He is currently in his third year teaching at West Springfield High School in Springfield, Virginia. He teaches general and honors chemistry. Homero has taken a liking to teaching since college, where he served as an undergraduate teaching assistant for general chemistry classes. During his time in graduate school, he won the graduate student teaching award, which is given to 3% of the department. He was also able to publish as a first author in peer-reviewed work under the guidance of Dr. Shahriar Mobashery, a leader in antibiotic development that targets the cell wall. After graduate school, Homero worked briefly in industry before making the switch to teaching. Homero is interested in finding new methods to engage and foster better understanding in a high school setting. He recently connected and learned with many educators during his time at the Biennial Conference on Chemical Education. Outside of the chemistry classroom, Homero enjoys spending time with his wife and friends, resistance training, playing tennis, swimming, playing flute, and going to concerts!



Abstract: *A Synopsis of Techniques and Methods in Chemical Education*

The fundamental content of chemistry remains consistent across educational contexts and geographic settings; however, the ways in which chemistry is presented and experienced can substantially influence student learning and engagement. This presentation draws on four learning experiences and emerging ideas from BCCE 2026 that have implications for chemistry teaching across secondary and post-secondary education: integrating General Chemistry I and II to strengthen curricular coherence, incorporating metacognitive micro-practices to support student learning, fostering inclusive and engaging classroom experiences, and connecting chemistry learning with local communities and real-world contexts.

Together, these approaches highlight opportunities to reconsider how chemistry is taught, learned, and connected to broader educational and societal contexts. The goal of this presentation is to bring together chemistry educators, education researchers, and practitioners to exchange ideas, examine innovative approaches to chemistry education, and build collaborative connections that can inform teaching and learning across educational settings.

Speaker Bio: Lauren Ragle, 2025 Gordon Award Recipient

Dr. Lauren Ragle is a Professor of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry at George Washington University and the recipient of CSW's 2025 Gordon Award. She was born and raised in Memphis, TN, where she was a first-generation bachelor's graduate of the Chemistry Department at the University of Memphis in 2011. Lauren stayed on for graduate school, studying bioactive lipid signaling to earn her Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in 2016. From there, she served as a CRTA Postdoctoral Fellow at the National Cancer Institute before launching her faculty career in 2020. Driven by a love for scientific discovery and mentorship, Dr. Ragle works to make STEM education more accessible and supportive for all students. When she isn't teaching or mentoring in the lab, you can find her leading local community outreach initiatives or working on craft projects at her neighborhood makerspace in Loudoun County.



Abstract: *Double-Edged Sword: Ethical and Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence*

The sudden ubiquity of generative artificial intelligence (genAI) has sent shockwaves through the scientific and educational enterprises. While early organizational responses often defaulted to institutional

anxiety or absolute bans, a deeper look reveals that genAI is neither purely a utopian savior nor a dystopian shortcut. In this presentation, we explore the "double-edged sword" of genAI through the practical lens of postbaccalaureate premedical chemistry education, demonstrating how we can leverage these tools to drive student-led innovation while protecting vulnerable populations.

Using personal case studies—ranging from how a busy faculty member optimizes administrative workflows to create time for systemic community service, to how a student engineered an interactive, gamified AI bot to scaffold complex metabolic pathways—we will look past the digital screen to see the true human element of computing. We will critically evaluate the "helps" of cognitive scaffolding alongside the hidden "hurts," including the technical flaws of automated plagiarism detectors that disproportionately misclassify neurodivergent student syntax, and the real-world infrastructure strains placed on our local Northern Virginia power grids. Ultimately, this talk moves beyond reactionary tech panic to offer a unified vision for the future of our field. A vision where our shared definition of scientific integrity safeguards human authenticity, centers classroom equity, and ensures our future scientists are always sharper than the algorithms they use.

Parking: Parking is available in nearby commercial parking garages. Please be aware that garage closing times vary. Parking is also available on the street after 6:30 pm, but be aware that most parking meters are in effect until 10:00 pm and may be limited to 2 hours. You should check the individual meters for details and payment methods as some are no longer coin-operated.

Metro: Blue/Orange/Silver Line: McPherson Square or Farragut West. Red Line: Farragut North

2026 CSW Elections

The Chemical Society of Washington will conduct its election with electronic ballots. CSW members will receive an email before October 15th from vote-now.com if an email address is on file, and a paper ballot by mail if CSW does not have an email address on file. As in previous elections, voting will close at 11:59 pm on November 15. The candidates currently confirmed for the ballot are provided below.

President-Elect

Aditya Savara

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Councilor/Alternate Councilor

Raychelle Burks

Andrei Gakh

Neal Golovin

Ravinder Paul Lall

Wilton Virgo

Alexander Zestos

Manager-At-Large

Steven Cummings

Jason Schaff

Volunteer for Chemistry Demos at the Spooky Mad Science Expo

What: Science demos with CSW at the Spooky Mad Science Expo

When: Saturday, October 17th, from 1 pm to 7 pm

Where: Patrick Henry Recreation Center (4653 Taney Ave Alexandria, VA 22304)

The Chemical Society of Washington (CSW) will be celebrating National Chemistry week at The Spooky Mad Science Expo on 10/17. CSW will be doing chemistry demos this year at Patrick Henry Recreation Center (4653 Taney Ave Alexandria, VA 22304) on Saturday October 17th (October 24th rain day). We will start setting up at 1pm and the expo runs from 3 pm to 7 pm.

More information about the Spooky Mad Science Expo can be found at <https://chrysalisdg.org/spooky-mad-science-expo>.



The theme this year is "Chemistry Under Construction". We will be doing science activities with kids and families around the theme. We'll also be advertising our poem contest and handing out stickers, tattoos, and *Celebrating Chemistry* magazines. Find more resources around this year's National Chemistry week at this link: <https://www.acs.org/education/celebrating-chemistry-editions.html>

If you would like to volunteer with us, please fill out this form (<https://forms.gle/hUatxUrxW582gWo77>) to let us know when you are available. Folks usually join us for either the 1st half or the 2nd half of the day. ACS now requires volunteers at youth events to register by getting a background check. Please read about ACS's policy and request a background check at <https://tinyurl.com/anhxrxeu>.

Express your creativity and love of chemistry with the Illustrated Poem Contest

Celebrate National Chemistry Week with the American Chemical Society Illustrated Poem Contest. This is a fun activity for students to combine art and science. The key steps are:

1. Create an illustrated poem around the theme "Chemistry Under Construction"
2. Submit your poem and entry form to CSW@ACS.org by **October 25th** using this form: <https://tinyurl.com/yrv72eea>

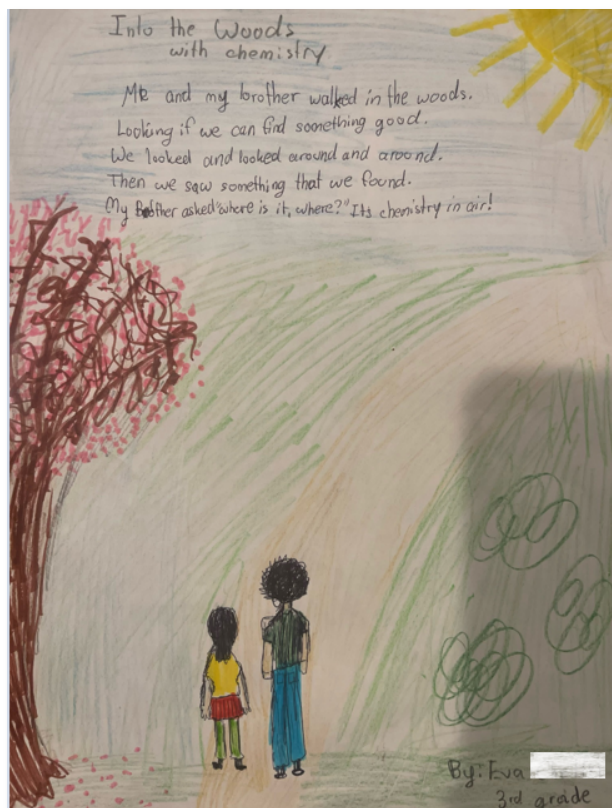
Poems will be judged by grade level (K-12) and prizes will be awarded for our winners.

CSW has had national winners before for the Poem Contest activity, so every student is strongly encouraged to participate.

All the details can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/38p5fxjx>.

2026 Illustrated Poem Winners

Congratulations to all the 2026 Poem Winners!



Eva (left): 1st place winner in the 3rd to 5th grade category

Timur and Sahar (right): Best Poem Collaboration (poem and song)

Music: Link to musical illustration:

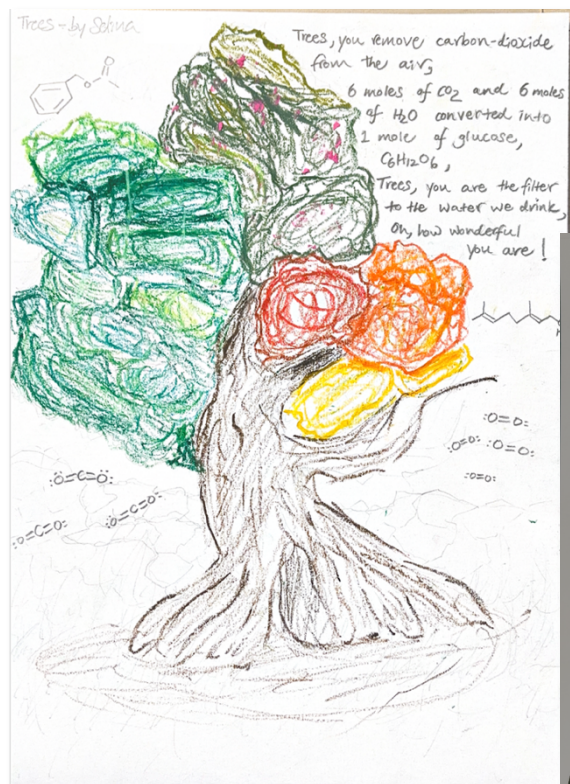
<https://youtu.be/NOpITgRLBqE>

Poem:

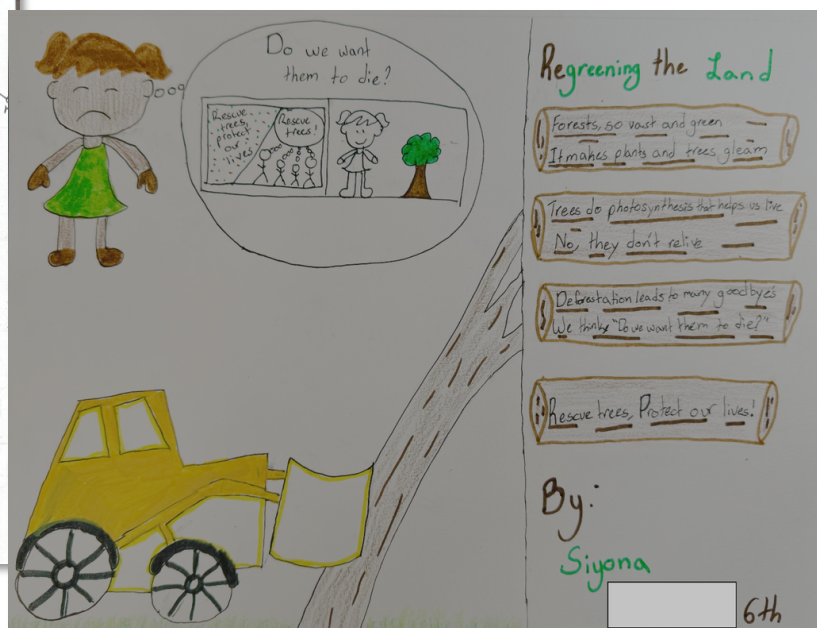
Into The Lab

into the lab to test the thing
that makes sense of everything
the chemicals work
and please make sure
everything's the right weight
into the lab to start the class
today we're learning about mass
into the lab out of the lab
with all great materials!

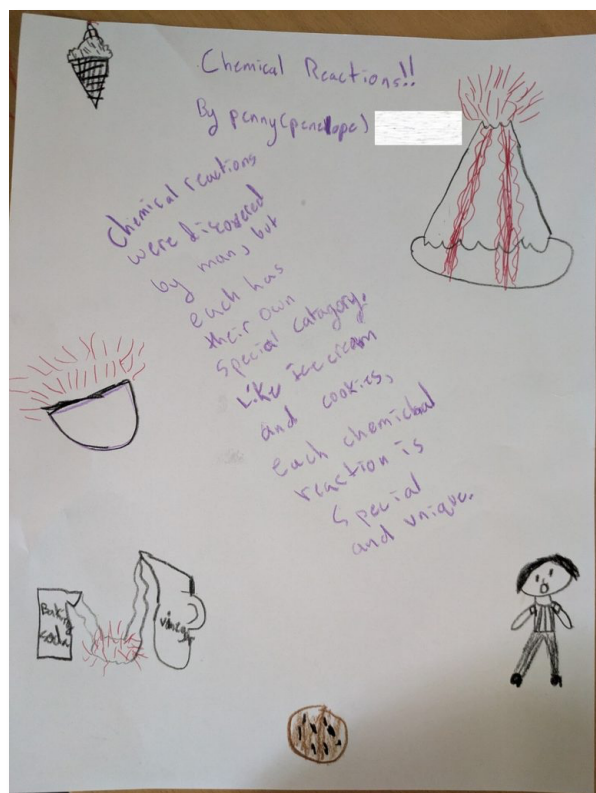




Selina (left): first place winner for the 6-8th grade category



Siyona (right): 2nd place winner in the 6 to 8th grade category



Penny (left): 2nd place winner in the 3rd to 5th grade category

Volunteer Opportunity: Help Plan MARM 2028

The Chemical Society of Washington has been selected as the host of the 2028 Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting (MARM) of the ACS. An organizing committee has been established, and preparations are already underway. The meeting will be held right in the heart of Washington, DC, at historic Howard University June 8 – 10, 2028. Howard was selected for its prime location, favorable accommodations, and historic nature as one of the first HBCUs established in the United States after the Civil War by General Oliver Otis Howard. While we plan to include many of the symposia you are used to from other regional and national ACS meetings, we will also work to include symposia geared towards government labs and policy making given our unique location. We hope you can make this meeting to share and hear about great chemistry happening in the Mid-Atlantic area, but even more so we hope you can assist in our preparations!

So far, the organizing committee is composed of the following volunteers: Prof. Wes Farrell of the US Naval Academy is the General Chair, Prof. Lauren Ragle of George Washington University and Prof. Jacqueline Smith of Howard University are the Co-Program Chairs, Dr. Alessandra Zimmerman of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences is the Communications Chair, former CSW President Dr. Jason Schaff is the Treasurer, Prof. Alex Zestos of American University is the Outreach and Volunteering Chair, and our CSW Past President Dr. Allison Aldridge is the Fundraising Chair. Additionally, Prof. Steven Cummings of Howard University is hard at work serving as a liaison between the committee and Howard University officials.

The local organizing committee is currently seeking to fill additional roles which require different levels of commitment. Furthermore, we hope to have volunteers to organize and preside over symposia, and make suggestions for plenary speakers. We encourage you to share your thoughts or volunteer using our Google survey: <https://tinyurl.com/yjtcvaxr>.

CSW Luncheon Celebrating 50-, 60-, and 70-year members on December 5th

Date: Saturday, December 5, 2026
11:30 a.m. Check-in
12:00pm - 2:00p.m. Lunch

Please RSVP by noon on Wednesday, December 2, 2026 to csw@acs.org. Please provide the name(s) in your party with your response. Space is limited and will be taken on a first come basis.

Location: Wildfire – Tysons Corner
2001 International Dr, McLean, VA 22102
<https://www.wildfirerestaurant.com/tysons>

Cost: \$0.00 Honorees with one guest (by invitation only)
\$40.00 Members / Nonmembers
\$20.00 Students / High School Teachers

View the flyer for more details: <https://tinyurl.com/4p9xsfp2>

View the list of Honorees: <https://tinyurl.com/2xi6ex4a>

Chemistry Olympiad: Coming Soon

If you have students interested in the US National Chemistry Olympiad next spring, the registration should open around November. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please reach out to Lauren Ragle (lragle@gwu.edu). For more information about the US National Chemistry Olympiad, please visit <https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad.html>.

On the USNCO website, you will note that there are several useful tabs across the top of the page. If you would like to encourage students as a mentor, please learn more information about being a mentor at <https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad/volunteer/mentors.html>. The role and responsibilities will start in December. Lauren is happy to connect with new potential mentors to discuss the role and responsibilities to our wonderful high school students.

We also have coaches for our students. Current and past coaches have recorded useful videos for our students who need to study for the exam. You can find these tutorials at <https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad/prepare-for-exams/coaching-program.html>.

If you are interested in participating as a student or encouraging a student to participate, your school does not need to have a Chemistry Club. At Chemical Society of Washington, we host the local exam for any students who are home schooled or do not have a host teacher at the national ACS headquarters building in DC. Learn more about how to apply when the application opens at <https://www.acs.org/education/olympiad/participate.html>.

The exam is very rigorous. I know many students enjoy learning new information. Even if you do not participate, the resources are free from ACS and you can share with any high school (and college) students you mentor or happen to otherwise be connected with.

The local exam will take place across our local section with any interested students able to participate. The national exam will take place at Montgomery College in April. We can only send 17 students (maximum 2 per school) to the national exam. More information will follow for the students who qualify.

Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Hillebrand Prize: Recognizing original contributions to the science of chemistry by a member or members of the Chemical Society of Washington (CSW)



William Francis Hillebrand
December 12, 1853 – February 7, 1925

American Chemist
ACS President 1906

Nominations are being accepted for the 2026 Hillebrand Prize Award.

Nominations are invited for the 2026 Hillebrand Prize, awarded annually for original contributions to the science of chemistry by a member or members of the Chemical Society of Washington (CSW), the local section of the American Chemical Society. The Hillebrand Prize is the most prestigious honor given each year by CSW and is recognized nationally as a mark of significant accomplishment in chemistry. The Hillebrand Prize originated in 1924 and is named for Dr. William F. Hillebrand (1853- 1925), an internationally-recognized pioneer in analytical chemistry and one of Washington's most distinguished early chemists.

The prize carries an honorarium of \$2000. Many previous Hillebrand Prize recipients have won numerous other national and international awards, including three who have received the Nobel Prize.

View the list of past award winners: <https://capitalchemist.org/2018/06/hillebrand-prize-recipients-by-year/>

The nominating package should contain the following:

Nominating Letter – limited to 1000 words

The letter should focus broadly on the chemical accomplishments of the nominee, rather than their bio, leaving the finer points to those submitting seconding letters. Biographic details (degrees, positions held, major activities, etc.) will be given in the nominee's CV. The letter should begin with the major theme(s) in the nominee's research career with perhaps a summary of how these evolved over the years to create breakthroughs or push the field in a new or very productive direction.

Describing the nominee's major contribution(s) is extremely important and should be the bulk of the letter.

There is no preference or restriction for the specific area of contribution so long as it represents a significant accomplishment in chemistry. Anything is fair game: synthetic or analytical, experimental or theoretical, bio- or inorganic, etc. This section might detail such things as: the major techniques used in their research and how these were applied to a specific area to bring about significant results not previously achievable; if their research resulted in the development of a new experimental/instrumental technique or use of an existing technique in an innovative new way; how techniques the nominee developed became standard in that area; the impact the nominee's work had on influencing other areas of research; development of new reagents, catalysts or reaction conditions; development of a new computational method or theoretical approach; etc. The nominator should provide evidence in support of these statements. This could include information about the number of citations, impact factors of certain articles (or aggregate numbers), especially influential articles/book chapters, important invited talks, previous awards by other societies, patents, funding, important leadership positions, etc. Mentioning an extremely productive collaboration is possible so long as the role/contributions of the nominee are clear. The award is not given for mentoring students (as a specific criteria) but nominators often mention if this has occurred, especially if these students have gone on to significant positions of their own.

Two Seconding Letters – limited to 500 words each

It is helpful if these be from established experts in the nominee's field, and best if they are from experts at institutions other than the nominee's unless a notable expert in the nominee's area is also from the nominee's institution.

Curriculum Vitae – the candidate must be a member of CSW

The CV should strongly emphasize individual academic backgrounds, appointments, publications, presentations, and patents.

List of Publications

This is critical in determining the specific scientific contribution of the nominee or team.

Proposed Citation – limited to 25 words

This is a brief statement that should be understood by chemists in almost any area. It should avoid highly specialized language but still give the reader the area of accomplishment and why this is a significant accomplishment in chemistry. In some ways it is a one or two sentence abstract of the first paragraph of the nominating letter. Since this is only 25 words, you may simply want to provide 1 or 2 examples of previous awardees.

We strongly recommend that the nominator collect all materials and forward in one email, preferably as PDF files(s), to csw@acs.org. Nominations will be active for three years.

If you would like to verify the eligibility of an individual as a nominee or nominator, please contact the CSW Administrator at csw@acs.org. All materials must be received by November 15, 2026. The Prize will be presented at a CSW dinner meeting in Spring 2027, or on a date mutually agreeable.

If you have any questions about the award or the procedure for nominating someone for the award, please contact our office at csw@acs.org.

Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Charles L. Gordon Award: Recognizing Excellence in Service

Named after Charles Gordon for his years of service as managing editor of the *Capital Chemist*, the Charles L. Gordon Memorial Award is given in recognition of exemplary service by a CSW member to the profession of chemistry, to the science of chemistry, and/or to the Chemical Society of Washington. Nominations are invited for this award, consisting of a plaque that will be presented at a CSW dinner meeting to be announced in 2027. A written nomination should include a description of the accomplishments on which the nomination is based. Additional documentation that includes seconding letters and the nominee's CV are welcome.

The nomination should be submitted electronically to csw@acs.org. Please contact CSW (csw@acs.org), if you have any questions.

Accepting Nominations for the 2026 Leo Schubert Award: Recognizing Excellence in Chemistry Teachers

The Chemical Society of Washington (CSW) is pleased to announce the call for nominations for the Leo Schubert Memorial Award to recognize an outstanding high school chemistry teacher in the Washington, D.C. area. The award was established in 1979 to honor Dr. Leo Schubert (1916-1978), a chemistry professor at American University who devoted much of his career to developing programs for high school teachers and students. The Schubert award consists of a \$500 honorarium and a certificate, which will be presented at a CSW dinner meeting to be announced in 2027.

Nominations for the award must be comprehensive in describing the nominee's accomplishments in areas such as innovation in teaching, writing curricula, outside teaching, papers published, involvement in science fairs, and postgraduate study. The application may also include supporting letters, as well as any supporting documents that concisely illuminate the nominee's accomplishments.

To be eligible for the CSW Schubert award, the nominee must currently teach chemistry at a secondary school in the geographic region of the Chemical Society of Washington, which includes metropolitan Washington, D.C. and the neighboring counties in Maryland (Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties) and Virginia (Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties). The region of CSW also includes six counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland: Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset.

The CSW Schubert Award nomination form is available via our website: <https://tinyurl.com/29k2vvh4>

Alternatively, a pdf version of the nomination form can be obtained by an email request to csw@acs.org. Completed nomination forms can be sent directly to csw@acs.org. Please contact csw@acs.org if you have any questions.

ACS Division of Analytical Chemistry Younger Chemists Conference Travel Grant

The ACS Division of Analytical Chemistry is offering travel awards for Younger Chemists (under age 40) to travel to a meeting to present the results of their research. Individuals who may not have previously been able to participate in professional meetings are particularly encouraged to apply. Applications are due Nov 1st for winter and spring meetings and May 1st for summer and fall meetings. More information is available at <https://acsanalytical.org/award/younger-chemists-conference-travel-grants/>. The application forms will be available when the application period is open.

Committee on Minority Affairs Meeting Schedule

The Committee on Minority Affairs (CMA) had a great start with our first meeting in February! We're excited to announce that we'll now be hosting monthly meetings via Zoom and would love for you to join us.

Upcoming Dates

- October 1, 2026
- November 5, 2026
- December 3, 2026

Meeting Details

Topic: CSW CMA Committee
Meeting
Time: 7:00 PM

Join via Zoom

Meeting ID: 958 2100 7951
Passcode: cswcma

The Capital Chemist

A Publication of the Chemical Society of Washington Section of the American Chemical Society

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The **Chemical Society of Washington (CSW)** is the local ACS Chapter for the Washington, DC area and serves approximately 3,500 members.

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CSW Calendar of Events

- October 1: CMA Meeting
- October 17: Spooky Mad Science Expo
- October 18 – 24: National Chemistry Week
- October 23: Mole Day!
- October 22: CSW Dinner Meeting
- October 25: Deadline to enter Illustrated Poem Contest
- November 5: CMA Meeting
- November 15: Voting ends for CSW Election
- November 18: CSW Board Meeting
- December 3: CMA Meeting
- December 5: 50-, 60-, 70-year Member Luncheon

The following CSW members contributed content to this month's newsletter: Wesley Farrell, Stephanie Moffitt, Lauren Ragle, Aditya Savara, Jason Schaff, and Nevart Tahmazian.