Science Forum of the German Chemical Society

An integral part of the Science Forum of the German Chemical Society (Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, GDCh; Frankfurt 30.8.–2.9.2009) is the presentation of awards for outstanding achievements in chemistry.

Baeyer Medal to G. Erker

Gerhard Erker (University of Münster) received the Adolf von Baeyer Medal for his work on catalysis and surface chemistry. In particular, his group works on the development of new catalysts, such as for polymerization and metal-free activation of molecular hydrogen (a review on this topic will appear soon in *Angewandte Chemie*), and also the application of catalysts in organic chemistry. Erker recently reported in *Angewandte Chemie* on the metal-free catalytic hydrogenation of enamines, imines, and conjugated phosphinoalkenylboranes [1a] and answered the question as to whether interacting atoms form a chemical bond by spectroscopic and theoretical investigations into dideuteriophenanthrene.[1b]

Erker completed his doctorate in 1973 under W. R. Roth at the University of Bochum, and then worked as a postdoctoral fellow with M. Jones, Jr. at Princeton University. In 1981, he completed his habilitation at the University of Bochum, carried out research in the years 1984–1985 at the Max Planck Institute for Coal Research in Mülheim/Ruhr, and took up a professorship at the University of Würzburg in 1985. Since 1990 he has taught and researched at the University of Münster.

Karl Ziegler Prize for P. Knochel

Paul Knochel (Ludwig Maximilians Universität München, LMU) has received the Karl Ziegler Prize from the GDCh. The focus of Knochel's research is the development of organometallic reagents and methods of organic synthesis and asymmetric catalysis. His group uses main group elements in particular, but also late transition metals, for the formation of challenging synthetic building blocks. He recently reported in *Angewandte Chemie* on the lithium chloride mediated synthesis of functionalized benzylic indium(III) halides and the chemoselective palladium-catalyzed cross-coupling in a protic co-solvent,[2a] and in *Chemistry—A European Journal* on the synthesis of functionalized aryl magnesium, aryl zinc, and benzylic zinc compounds by using magnesium in the presence of lithium chloride.[2b]

Knochel finished his studies in chemistry in 1979 at the École Nationale Supérieure de Chimie in Strasbourg and completed his doctorate in 1982 at the ETH Zürich under D. Seebach. He then worked in the groups of J. F. Normant (CNRS and Université Pierre et Marie Curie) in Paris and at Princeton University with M. F. Semmelhack for several years. In 1988 he was made Assistant Professor and then Full Professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (USA). In 1992 he returned to Europe, to the University of Marburg. Since 1999, he has been Professor of Organic Chemistry at the LMU in Munich. Knochel is a member of the advisory boards of *Advanced Synthesis & Catalysis* and *Chemistry—An Asian Journal*.

W. Leitner Receives Wöhler Prize

The Wöhler Prize for processes that conserve resources for 2009 goes to Walter Leitner of Aachen University (RWTH). He is thus honored for his work in homogeneous catalysis with transition metal complexes and for the use of alternative solvents in catalysis. The synthesis of nanoparticles and their application in catalysis are also topics of interest to his group; they recently reported in *Angewandte Chemie* on the use of rhodium nanoparticles in selective hydrogenations.[3a] In the *European Journal of Organic Chemistry*, Leitner et al. described nickel-catalyzed hydrovinylations that use Lewis acid activation.[3b]

After completing his doctorate under H. Brunner at the University of Regensburg in 1989 and a postdoctoral stay with J. M. Brown at the University of Oxford in 1990, Leitner carried out research with E. Dinjus at the University of Jena, where he completed his habilitation in 1995. In the same year, he moved to Mülheim/Ruhr as a group director at the Max Planck Institute for Kohlenforschung, where he also took over the directorship of the school of technology in January 1998. In 2002, he took up a professorship in technical chemistry and petroleum chemistry at the RWTH; in the same year, he was named external scientific member of the Max Planck Institute for Kohlenforschung.

Arfvedson Schlenk Prize for C. Strohmann

Carsten Strohmann (Technical University of Dortmund) has received the Arfvedson Schlenk Prize for his work on polylithium compounds as synthetic building blocks and on organosilicon compounds and polar alkyl metal compounds. His group is particularly interested in diastereomerically enriched α-metalated organosilanes and the bonding situation and reactivity of silacycles. He recently discussed the structure formation principles and reactivity of organolithium compounds[4a] in a Review in *Chemistry—A European Journal*,

Awarded...

G. Erker

P. Knochel

W. Leitner

C. Strohmann

M. Veith

and in the *Angewandte Chemie* he described the path from monomeric *t*BuLi·(*R*,*R*)-TMCDA to α-lithiated (*R*,*R*)-TMCDA.[4b]

Strohmann completed his doctorate in 1990 under R. Tacke at the University of Karlsruhe and worked at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with D. Seyferth in 1990–1991. He completed his habilitation in 1995 at the University of Saarland under M. Veith, and in 1998 he moved to the University of Würzburg. Between 2006 and 2008 he temporarily filled positions at the Universities of Rostock and Würzburg being made professor at the TU Dortmund in 2008.

Wilhelm Klemm Prize to M. Veith

For his work on molecular chemistry and materials sciences, Michael Veith (University of Saarland) was awarded with the Wilhelm Klemm Prize from the GDCh. Veith finished his doctorate in 1971 under N. Wiberg at the University of Munich and completed his habilitation in 1977 at the University of Karlsruhe. In 1979 he took up a professorship at the Technical University of Braunschweig; since 1984 he has taught and researched in Saarbrücken. He has had stays at the Universities of Bordeaux, Utah, Toulouse (from where he received an honorary doctorate in 2008), Nice, and at the Ecole Polytechnique (Palaiseau). Veith is a member of the International Advisory Board of the *Zeitschrift für anorganische und allgemeine Chemie* (ZAAC).

M. Veith's group deals with organometallic and structural chemistry, and in particular with metal amides and alkoxides. They use sol–gel and MOCVD processes and surface and monolayer analytical techniques. Recently, Veith et al. had a contribution featured on the cover of the *European Journal of Inorganic Chemistry* on trivalent thienyl-substituted methoxides of rare earth metals,[5a] and he reported in *Angewandte Chemie* on the structure of magnesium bis(tetrahydridogallate(III)) and its reactivity with *tert*-butyl alcohol.[5a]

Last but not Least:

Apart from those named above, the GDCh presented the following awards: Honorary membership to **G. Ertl** (Fritz Haber Institute, Berlin; Nobel Prize for Chemistry 2007),[6] August Wilhelm von Hofmann lectureship to **D. G. Nocera** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; see Issue 16/2009), Ziegler Natta Lectureship to **V. Busico** (Università degli Studi di Napoli), Fresenius Prize to **U. Karst** (University of Münster) and **U. Panne** (Federal Institute for Materials Research, Germany and the Humboldt University Berlin), Klaus Grohe and Hellmut Bredereck Prize to **P. Hammann** (Sanofi-Aventis), and a Dr. Herrmann Schnell Stipend to **H. Menzel** (TU Braunschweig).

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[4] a) V. H. Gessner, C. Däschlein, C. Strohmann, *Chem. Eur. J.* **2009**, *15*, 3320; b) C. Strohmann, V. H. Gessner, *Angew. Chem.* **2007**, *119*, 8429; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2007**, *46*, 8281.

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[6] a) G. Ertl, *Angew. Chem.* **2008**, *120*, 3578; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2008**, *47*, 3524; b) G. Ertl, *Angew. Chem.* **2009**, *121*, 6724; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2009**, *48*, 6600.

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