

CH302 Random Musings April 24, 2007

1. First, a big thank you to Vanessa for subbing for me last week. It is much appreciated.
2. Time is growing short—here is the rest of the semester in bullet form:
 - Today, April 24: a lecture on the main group and its chemistry
 - Thursday, April 26: quiz 6 and a lecture on transition metals and their chemistry
 - Sunday, April 30: Dr. Laude's Exam 3 review session in Welch 1.308 at 6:30
 - Tuesday, May 1: famous chemistry stuff, like batteries and catalysts, plus liquid nitrogen ice cream, musings on grading and final exam prep, "what you want Dr. Laude to know" forms
 - Thursday, May 3: Exam 3
 - Friday, May 4: Exemptions announced
 - Monday – Thursday, May 11-14: Lunches with Dave, review for final exam
 - Friday, May 15: Final exam
3. Quiz 5 had an average of 66% although there were no questions that really stood out as being an issue. I have had a couple of queries and am considering them. In one, the balanced equation wasn't given to work the problem for calculating K, but that turns out not to need a balanced equation to be solved. The other issue is whether wrong answers resulted in some of the calculations because the constants used had a different number of significant figures than those used to calculate the correct answer for the data base. Be aware that especially when you have exponential functions in a problem it tends to amplify the uncertainty in the answer. E-mail me if you think this was an issue for you.
4. You have three extra credits. Get them in. It is worth your while to see the cutoff for your grade lowered by 3%. I have to have the extra credits by the time I do exemptions, which means, Friday, May 4 at 6 am. Please make sure you follow instructions on how to submit your extra credits. You have to have the correct subject heading so that I can filter for you extra credits. Go back and make sure you have done this correctly, a bunch of you have not followed instructions.
5. Quiz 6 is Thursday. The quiz will consist of sitting in your seat and bubbling in your uteid correctly. Mazen will take it from there and award you 40 points for the effort. You have earned it.
6. Note that exam 3 is coming soon and that I will have a review session on Sunday evening in Welch 1.308. Neal will prepare a last worksheet that will be a practice exam 3 and have it ready for this weekend.
7. My office hours next week will be in the classrooms as interest in studying chemistry awakens with the upcoming exam.
8. A comment on the new material from exam 3. Note that a reading through the material from chapters 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 is immense, like all of chemistry. So I can't practically make you learn everything. Instead, the last 13 questions will be built solely on my lectures. So it would be a good idea to attend them. You might think you can rely on my notes, but honestly, though I will do my best, I am unsure how soon I will get these posted since I am writing them utterly from scratch at the very busiest time in the school year. So you may have to do things the good old fashion way like downloading the videos of my lectures for stuff you miss. Anyway, I will do my best to get everything up but can make no promises.
9. You have no idea how outrageous what I am doing now it. In the history of my taking or teaching a course, I have never gotten to the end of a text book. I am sure you know that standard operating procedure in most classes is simply to get about 2/3rds of the way through a text and forget the end of it. And yet, it is the end of the text which is usually the most useful materials—like when you take a course on world history and never get

to the 20th century, or when you take calculus and never learn numerical methods or when you take physics and never learn optics (wait, never mind, there are exceptions to everything.)

Anyway, the material at the end of this text is actually real and practical chemistry, unlike all that theory and physical foundation you have learned so far this year. It is the field of descriptive chemistry, which used to be all that was taught in a chemistry course, and now is relegated to the dreaded last third of the book where no one ever learns it. And yet, it is the place you learn what makes a glass or a semiconductor or a laser or an antacid. I will do my best to survey it, and hope to relearn some stuff myself that I haven't seen in the 25 years since I took this course.

10. Public Service Announcement. The Brothers of Delta Epsilon Psi are proud to present the 8th Annual Project Come Together on Friday May 4, 2007. Project Come Together is a great way to bond with other organizations at UT while helping the underprivileged youth of the Austin community. We would like to invite you to share this opportunity to reward hardworking elementary school children for outstanding academic achievement and attendance while participating in the **LARGEST SINGLE DAY OF SERVICE AT UT**. Last year, over 60 student organizations assisted with hosting over 2,800 elementary school students on campus. As the children are enjoying the carnival we will need your support and creativity in planning and running activities. We would like your organization to be part of this great event. Organizations or groups typically run a booth with a fun activity for kids. Booth idea examples: dunking booth, musical chairs for prizes (candy, goldfish, etc), face painting. For more information including pictures of last year's event visit www.projectcometogether.com If you would like to be a part of Project Come Together, please contact projectcometogether@gmail.com with your organization, booth idea, contact name, phone and e-mail. Individual volunteers can sign-up on the website.

10. Poetry Corner. Arbor Day just happened. Did you know we have Nebraska to thank for Arbor Day? Arbor Day is a nationally celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and tree care. It was started by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska in 1872. Although the actual day changes from state to state and even city to city, National Arbor Day is celebrated each year on the last Friday in April. (Arbor Day is not to be confused with Earth Day which is celebrated in many countries on April 22—I think it is possible for Earth Day and Arbor Day to occur on the same day, and like, wow, I can't even comprehend what that might mean.) Anyway, the first Arbor Day was celebrated in the state of Nebraska in 1872, in response to a state proclamation urging settlers and homesteaders in that prairie state to plant trees that would provide shade, shelter, fruit, fuel, and beauty for residents of the largely treeless plains. Evidently Arbor Day failed in Nebraska.

By the way, do you have any idea how much poetry has been written about trees? Ranks right up there with love poetry I think. To give you an idea, I can actually find poetry by species of tree. For example, listed below is some oak tree poetry. For the tree huggers, a poem by Walt. For those of you who have been dying because of all the oak pollen or those of you who have to rake oak leaves, which simply refuse to be raked, a poem with at best a tinge of grudging admiration from Edna.

What category do I fall in? Well by default I am a tree hater because I at one time consorted with a known tree killer. The story is long and complicated, and basically forced me to take a stand (and the stand in a criminal court proceedings) for the integrity of science over the integrity of the Treaty Oak. Yes, at one time in my life, I was the only witness called to defend the man who danced naked around Austin's once-glorious Treaty Oak, chanting black magic incantations and pouring gallons of herbicide on the poor tree so he could win back a spurned lover. I got sucked into it because I was asked to argue that the way the herbicide was tested wasn't valid scientifically. I didn't realize at the time that I was the only one in Austin defending a man that most people wanted to execute. It didn't help that as I left the stand, the guy jumped up, grabbed my hand, and said, "thank you for believing in me." Not when it made it on to the evening news. Somehow I still got tenure.

Walt Whitman- "*I saw in Louisiana a Live Oak Growing*"

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone it stood and the moss hung down from its branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near,
for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than them.)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend or lover near,
I know very well I could not.

Edna St. Vincent Millay- "*The Oak Leaves*"

Yet in the end, defeated too, worn out and ready to fall,
Hangs from the drowsy tree with cramped and desperate stem
above the ditch the last leaf of all.
There is something to be learned, I guess, from
looking at the dead leaves under the living tree;
Something to be set to a lusty tune and learned
and sung, it well might be;
Something to be learned---though I was ever
a ten-o'clock scholar at this school---
Even perhaps by me.
But my heart goes out to the oak-leaves
that are the last to sigh
"Enough," and lose their hold;
They have boasted to the nudging frost
and to the two-and-thirty winds
that they would never die,
Never even grow old.
(These are those russet leaves that cling all winter,
even into the spring,
To the dormant bough,
in the wood knee-deep in the snow
the only coloured thing.)