



no. 12

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# Catalyzer

44th International Chemistry Olympiad United States of America

## Celebrating the Conclusion of the 44th International Chemistry Olympiad



It has been a privilege for the American Chemical Society to organize the 44th International Chemistry Olympiad. One of the goals of ACS is to "Foster the development of the most innovative, relevant, and effective chemistry education in the world." The International Chemistry Olympiad exemplifies innovation in chemistry education by challenging students to devise creative solutions to complex theoretical and practical problems. We would like to applaud all of the students, all whom are champions in our eyes, who participated in this year's Olympiad! Thank you to all the students, mentors, observers, and guests for being part of the 44th IChO.

Above and left: Closing ceremony in Gaston Hall at Georgetown University. Top right: Bryan Balazs, Chair 44th IChO passes the IChO flag to Valery Lunin, President of the 45th IChO, Moscow, Russia. Bottom right: Michael Doyle congratulates first place winner, Florian Berger of Germany.



Photos by Peters Cutts Photography

*Celebrating International Excellence in Chemistry*

## Moments from the 44th IChO



Photos by Michael Tinnesand

# Closing Ceremony and Banquet



## Past Participant

**Seth Brown**, PhD Professor, University of Notre Dame, 1984 16th IChO, Silver Medalist.



When I arrived at the 16th International Chemistry Olympiad in Frankfurt am Main, much of what I saw I had expected. I expected the long, difficult, even occasionally incomprehensible chemistry tests. I expected to visit the local sights—Goethe's birthplace, the river Rhine—of which our hosts were justifiably proud. But the smaller aspects of the local culture caught me by surprise; the notion that the vending machines in the Sportschule where we stayed would carry beer, and that it would be cheaper than water, was almost shocking to a fifteen-year-old American boy.

And I had not expected the deep sense of connection that I felt to the other student participants. They were supposed to be my competitors, after all. And communication was not always smooth; while we were on the Rhine, the attempt by the German speaker to enunciate in French the notion that the first drink would be free came out memorably garbled, not as "La premiere boisson est gratuite" but as "Le premier poisson est libre"—the first fish is at liberty.

But we students—if you'll excuse the expression—bonded. We shared a common passion for, and abilities in, chemistry. We may not have shared these traits with all our compatriots back home, but it did not take us long to discover that at the IChO we had found our kin. It was a joy that to me, at least, was as sweet as it was unexpected.

**On the cover masthead:** The Liberty Bell located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is a national symbol of freedom and liberty for all Americans.



**Contact Information**  
Cecilia Hernandez  
IChO2012@acs.org  
1.202.872.6169  
www.IChO2012.org

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## Q. What is the main memory will you take home of this Olympiad?



**Jasmina Büchel**  
Lichtenstein



**Henry Yuen**  
New Zealand



**Walter Kähm**  
United Kingdom

Photos by Michael Tennesand

**A.** *I was very surprised that there was no competition among various teams. The participants seemed much more interested in making friends and sharing experiences, rather than being wary or focusing on rivalries."*



**Manav Alani**  
India

**A.** *I will remember the way all the events worked to bind us together. Even though some participants were not crazy about this event or that, I think we all agree that it was worth it for bringing people together."*

**A.** *I never expected that all the participants would be so open to fun. It is not what I've come to expect of scientists, but I've come to learn that expectation was wrong. I know I will not remember the 'hiccups' in the schedule or events, but I will always remember the fun we had.*

Much has changed since 1984. The country that I visited in that Olympiad—West Germany—no longer exists. But much is still the same. Now, in 2012, I hope you enjoyed the sights and the culture in Washington, D.C., of which we are justifiably proud. Most of all, I'm sure you enjoyed the company of your fellow chemists, with whom you share so much.

Seth Brown

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Police/Fire: 911  
Annapolis Hall Hospitality Desk: 301. 314. 2662  
Guide and Student Support: 252.529.9339

**Editors:** Mary Kirchhoff  
Cecilia Hernandez  
Keith Lindblom  
Michael Tennesand  
**Designer:** Cornithia A. Harris

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