

A Brief History of the Chromatography Forum of Delaware Valley

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On April 28th, 1966, ten local scientists interested in chromatography met at the University of Pennsylvania and organized a structure for the Chromatography Forum, much of which continues to remain in place today. The organization was designed to be volunteer run, remain independent from manufacturers and suppliers, with meetings to take place five times per year at different restaurants and meeting rooms in the Delaware Valley area. Meeting format was to have four or five short talks followed by discussion. A one-hour lecture followed by “half-hearted” discussion with coffee was voted against.

The first president of the then titled “Delaware Valley Gas Chromatography Forum” was Joseph Touchstone from the University of Pennsylvania. The organization officially changed its name to the “The Chromatography Forum” by vote of the general membership in May of 1968. The original meetings were held in the afternoon, but were switched to evenings to accommodate the 102 members who joined for \$1 per year during the first year of the organization. Typical charges for the first meetings were \$2.50 to \$3.25 for lunch and \$3.75 to \$5.25 for dinner, \$3.00 for the social hour.

From the original constitution, the Chromatography Forum was to be an autonomous non-profit organization that could hold joint meetings with other professional organizations as desired. Its purpose was to:

“... foster a spirit of fraternity among those engaged in chromatography work and to promote their educational and professional development.
... to assume a place in the general scheme of professional bodies by participating with them in exchange of information and discussion of mutual problems.”

In 1967, the second year of its inception, Stephen Dal Nogare became the first elected president of the Chromatography Forum, dues were raised to \$2.00 per year, and the budget included expenses for guest speakers of \$39.35, and secretarial help of \$94.75. The organization had \$89.90 in its bank account and \$6.50 in cash. The list of members was broken down into Areas of Employment: GC Suppliers, 22 members, Drug Industry, 8 members, Government, 14 members, Medical, 17 members, Chemical Industry, 14 members, Oil Industry, 7 members, Universities (other than medical), 3 members, Food Industry, 5 members, and Other, 17 members. Stephen Dal Nogare, passed away while serving his presidency as well as developer and organizer of the first CFDV short course. The prestigious Dal Nogare award is given yearly to an individual with great achievements in chromatography in recognition of this Chromatography Forum founding father.

This first Chromatography Forum short course was held preceding the MARM-ACS meeting on January 30th and 31st, 1968 in Philadelphia. The topics included Introduction and Principles, Current Instrumentation, Good GC Practice, Identification Procedures, Quantitative Procedures, Column Components—Selection, Packing and Absorbants, Derivatization and Limits of GC; Noise and Trace Analysis. The 2-day course fee was \$50, which included two luncheons, a social hour and dinner.

Step forward to 1975, the April meeting was held at the “new” Pagano’s at 38th and Chestnut in Philadelphia where \$8/person provided a buffet dinner and unlimited beer. The presentation of the Dal Nogare award to Barry Karger of Northeastern University took place at the dinner. The meeting was an “Open Forum” where the members and attendees asked the local experts questions and brought their problems forth to the general body. General dues are still \$2/year.

By 1975, the Forum was receiving royalties from three books derived from their popular short courses. The books were *Modern Practice of Gas Chromatography*, Robert L. Grob, editor, *Modern Practice of Liquid Chromatography*, J.J. (Jack) Kirkland, editor, and *Quantitative Thin Layer Chromatography*, Joseph C. Touchstone, editor. The first Liquid Chromatography short course was initiated in April, 1970 and had 138 participants. The GC course ran twice annually coordinated by Professor Robert L. Grob of Villanova.

And academicians were soliciting the Executive Committee to support chromatographic research. The Chromatography Forum budget supported the Dal Nogare award, symposium at local ACS and MARM meetings as well as an award to the Philadelphia Science Council, individual research was not funded.

By 1985, there were 40 life members and 400 general members in the Chromatography Forum. The LC and GC courses continued on a yearly basis, with the TLC course sponsored every 2nd or 3rd year. The cost for a three-day course was \$205. Symposia were sponsored at the FACSS, MARM and ACS meetings, one each year for Students from the local area working in Chromatography who received a plaque and an honorarium. An ACS course entitled "Maintaining and Troubleshooting Chromatographic Troubleshooting Systems" for members only was also sponsored. The Dal Nogare awardee in 1985 was James Lovelock, with the award symposium being held at the FACSS meeting in Philadelphia. The CFDV award was given to Gerald Umbreit, one of the Forum's founding fathers, at the West Chester Country Club. The buffet dinner for the award ceremony, including one ticket for an alcoholic beverage, cost \$14.00. Total Chromatography Forum assets as published in the May meeting minutes were approximately \$66,000, and an accountant was hired to set up a permanent bookkeeping system. Annual membership was \$3/year; life membership was \$30.

By 1995, the Chromatography Forum had celebrated its 25th year as an organization. The D'Ignazio's Towne House in Media Pennsylvania, became home base for the Chromatography Forum meetings, and 10 meetings were held each year from September to June. Dinner costs were \$16 and a choice of 3 entrées was available at each meeting. In 1995, there were standing committees within the Chromatography Forum with a chairperson for each. These included one for each of the courses (LC, GC and Advanced LC (first presented in 1995)), the Program Committee, Student Symposium, Dal Nogare Award and Chromatography Forum Award committees, as well as committees to represent the Chromatography Forum at the Philadelphia Science Council, MARM and EAS. The Forum also became a full affiliate of the Chemical Heritage Foundation and the Chemical Instrumentation Museum Group. Internal operating committees included: Membership, Nominating and Finance. Yearly dues for the Chromatography Forum were \$10; life membership was \$100.

The Advanced LC course was offered as an outcome of the success of the Introductory LC course and included topics of: ion chromatography, mass spectroscopy, supercritical fluids and size exclusion. Twenty-three distinguished chromatographers had received the Dal Nogare award, now internationally recognized and presented at the Pittsburgh Conference yearly. In addition, nine Chromatography Forum members had received the Chromatography Forum award for exceptional contributions to the science of Chromatography as well as service to the Forum itself. As a provisional sponsor for EAS, CFDV organized and chaired symposia, along with setting up, maintaining a booth with pictures and descriptions of Chromatography Forum activities and distributing the 25th anniversary brochures.

Current day, the Chromatography Forum celebrated its 40th year in 2006 with a dinner meeting at the ACE Center in Lafayette Hills, PA. Tom Chester from Proctor and Gamble spoke on the topic "Unifying Chromatography to Meet Business Needs". The Forum continues with its short courses and affiliations and has provided financial support to HPLC 2004 in Philadelphia, where it runs the Advanced LC short course and other symposia. It also provided financial backing to HPLC 2006 in San Francisco. The GC and LC courses continue to train the area newcomers in separation science as well as act as profit generators for the Chromatography Forum. Each course is now offered annually: the GC course is in its 38th year, the LC course its 36th year and the Advanced LC course its 11th year. A new course in LC/MS was offered for the first time in April of 2003. A course in Capillary Electrophoresis was offered from 1997 to 1999. A one-day symposium is organized each year in the spring, with a changing theme. Area scientists and suppliers are able to meet in an informal setting to discuss chromatographic progress.

The Chromatography Forum is an extremely active and engaging organization and continues to fulfill its original and current day object of fostering a spirit of fraternity among those engaged in chromatography. It promotes practical use and theoretical knowledge for educational benefit and professional development of its members.