

Conference Call

Polymer Gels and Networks

by Miroslava Duskova and Michal Ilavsky

Polymer Gels and Networks was the 44th Microsymposium in the series of Prague Meetings on Macromolecules. The conference, organized by the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, took place in Prague from 10–14 July 2005—a fitting tribute to the 75th birthday of Prof. Karel Dusek. The event was sponsored by IUPAC, the Polymer Networks Group, and NANOFUN-POLY, the European Network of Excellence.

The conference, which attracted 188 scientists from 32 countries, featured 43 lectures over four days and 112 posters presented during two evening poster sessions. During the opening session, Prof. R.F.T. Stepto (UMIST, Manchester, UK), president of the IUPAC Polymer Division, introduced IUPAC aims and gave a very good overview of activities of the Polymer Division. The presentations covered a wide range of topics pertaining to synthetic and natural gels, and to crosslinked polymers addressed from the point of view of synthesis, structure, properties, applications, and modeling. Special attention was focused on the application of hydrogels in medicine. From the early history of poly(N-isopropylacrylamide) (PNiPAAm), to how Karel Dusek and others influenced the scientific community, to more recent work, all the lectures were engaging. The closing lecture, “Fifty Years with Polymer Gels and Networks and Beyond,” presented by Karel Dusek, was joyfully applauded by the audience.

IUPAC Poster Prizes were awarded at both evening poster sessions. The best posters were selected by an international committee chaired by Prof. Henryk

Galina from Rzesow Technical University in Poland. The poster prizes went to T. Gotoh from the Department of Chemical Engineering of Hiroshima University, Japan, and to Irena Kroutilova of the Prague Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences.

Some of the lectures and posters will appear in a special issue of *Polymer Bulletin*. Dr. Petr Stepanek of the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry in Prague is organizing the 45th Microsymposium on “Structure and Dynamics of Self-Organized Macromolecular Systems,” which will be held 9–13 July 2006.

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Ionic Polymerization

by S. Sivaram

The biennial **IUPAC Symposium on Ionic Polymerization** was held 23–28 October 2005 in Goa, India—the first time this specialized symposium was held in India. The conference provided an opportunity for the Indian scientific community to interact with leading scientists from around the world working in the area of ionic polymerization. A total of about 150 participants from USA, France, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, and India attended the symposium, which took place at The Leela, a resort hotel near Colva Beach in Southern Goa.

Dr. S. Sivaram, director of the National Chemical Laboratory in Pune, India, gave a brief welcome

Participants at the 68th Microsymposium on Polymer Gels and Networks 2005.

