

## March 2026 Newsletter



---

### **Pittcon 2026**

*Contributed by John Wasylyk*

Pittcon 2026, held in San Antonio, Texas, from 8 to 11 March 2026, brought together analytical scientists from around the world. The Society for Applied Spectroscopy had a strong presence throughout the meeting, with members presenting research, organizing sessions, and engaging new prospective members.



Recent SAS Fellow Award winner **Suresh Kumar Kailasa** helped open the session *Advancements in Bioanalytical Detection and Monitoring Methods* with a presentation on ligand chemistry of nanomaterials for analytical applications. His talk focused on how surface modification can improve optical and physicochemical properties while enabling analyte-specific recognition.

SAS Honorary Member **Ken Marcus** organized *Atomic Spectroscopy: Beyond the ICP*, a session highlighting advances in atomic spectroscopy. Presentations included air-based plasma systems as alternatives to ICP, laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy for molten-salt reactor analysis, glow-discharge optical emission spectroscopy for single-particle and single-cell analysis, and liquid-sampling glow discharge ionization coupled with high-resolution Orbitrap mass spectrometry for ultra-trace elemental detection and isotope ratio analysis.

In a session organized by **Bhavya Sharma** and **Marc Porter**, SAS members explored new strategies to improve the reliability and reproducibility of surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy. Topics included porous silica as a

non-plasmonic route to more consistent biomolecule measurements, automated nanoparticle fabrication through "Robosynthesis," and the use of SERS and plasmonic nanosensors to monitor proteins in brain tissues and biofluids.

SAS President **John Wasyluk** also chaired *Spectroscopy and Sustainability: A Perfect Match*, a session focused on spectroscopy's role in more sustainable analytical practice. Presentations ranged from molecular fingerprinting of mAbs from small sample volumes to label-free tissue characterization, sustainable photo- and electrochemistry, portable spectrometers for CBRNE applications, UAV-based crop analysis, and modular automation for laboratory sample preparation. Together, these talks demonstrated the many ways spectroscopy can support greener, more efficient analytical science.



### **Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh: April 2026 Meeting** *Contributed by the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP)*

The Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP) invites all SAS members to its April 2026 meeting.

Date: 22 April 2026

Time: 7:15 p.m. Eastern

Meeting information: [Monthly Meeting - Chemistry Outreach](#)

Speaker: Dr. Joseph S. Francisco, Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Earth and Environmental Science, University of Pennsylvania

Title: *Chemistry in the Sky and Beyond*

Speaker bio:

**Joseph S. Francisco** is the President's Distinguished Professor of Earth and Environmental Science and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, followed by research appointments at the University of Cambridge, MIT, and the California Institute of Technology. Over the course of his career, he has published more than 820 journal articles, written several book chapters, and co-authored the textbook *Chemical Kinetics and Dynamics*. He has received numerous honors, including the Willard Gibbs Medal, the Centenary Prize of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Linus Pauling Medal, and the Pittsburgh Spectroscopy Award. He is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina.



In this talk, Prof. Francisco will explore how atmospheric chemistry, and modern spectroscopy can deepen our understanding of climate on Earth and beyond. The presentation will cover ozone depletion chemistry, efforts to develop environmentally benign replacements for chlorofluorocarbons, and the broader implications of this work for planetary science, including Mars. He will also discuss how experimental and theoretical approaches are revealing new details about chlorine- and sulfur-containing species in Venus's atmosphere, offering insights that may help deepen our understanding of Earth's future.

#### **SSP Virtual Broadcasting Grants**

SSP offers Virtual Broadcasting Grants to help institutions host a live broadcast of SSP's virtual monthly Technical Programs. The grant can cover up to \$300 for dinner and soft drinks. Application: [SACP-SSP Virtual Broadcasting Grant - Chemistry Outreach](#)

---

#### **Jürgen Popp Receives the 2026 Lippincott Award**

*Contributed by John Wasylyk*

The Society for Applied Spectroscopy congratulates Jürgen Popp on being named the recipient of the *2026 Lippincott Award*. His pioneering work in Raman-based biomedical spectroscopy has advanced new approaches to

disease detection and treatment, especially in the diagnosis of infectious diseases. More recently, his integration of spectroscopic measurement data with machine learning has contributed to progress in rapid pathogen identification, studies of drug-cell interactions, and early cancer detection in clinical settings.

Members are encouraged to read Popp's recent gold open-access review in [ACS Photonics](#) on applications of Raman spectroscopy in pandemic virology, for which he is the corresponding author. The article offers a timely illustration of the impact and reach of his work across the spectroscopy community.

Please join us in congratulating Jürgen Popp on this well-deserved recognition as the 2026 Lippincott Award recipient!

---

### **Call for Nominations: 2026 EAS Undergraduate Student Research Award**

*Contributed by Steven Ray/ Bernadette Taylor/ Monica-Joshi Kumar*

[The Eastern Analytical Symposium and Exhibition](#) is accepting nominations for the 2026 EAS Undergraduate Student Research Award, with submissions due by **30 April 2026**. Faculty may nominate one student who will be a senior in November 2026 and is already involved in research in the broad field of analytical chemistry.

Award recipients will receive an all expenses paid trip to EAS, recognition at an award luncheon, and the opportunity to present their research in a poster session. Professors who nominate winning students will receive free full conference registration, and all professors submitting nominations will receive free admission to the exposition. EAS also has an award for Graduate students with additional details available [here](#).

The 2026 EAS will be held from 16 to 18 November 2026 at the Crowne Plaza Princeton Conference Center in Plainsboro, New Jersey.

Nominations should be submitted by email to [student.awards@eas.org](mailto:student.awards@eas.org) and should include an appraisal of the student's research abilities and engagement in the research process, along with the student's current postal and email addresses. Questions may be directed to **Monica-Joshi Kumar** at the same email address or by phone at 305-934-3504.

---

### **Member Spotlight: Alexis Weber Featured in Spectroscopy**

*Contributed by Ellen Miseo*

A recent Spectroscopy feature spotlights SAS member **Alexis Weber** and her path into analytical science. In her article, [When Career Plans Change: Finding My Place in Analytical Science](#), Weber reflects on how an early interest in forensic science evolved through her academic training into a PhD-level career in spectroscopy and, ultimately, her current role as a Field Applications Scientist at PerkinElmer.

The piece offers an encouraging perspective on nontraditional career paths in science and highlights the many directions a career in analytical chemistry can take. It is also a welcome reminder of the accomplishments and visibility of SAS members across the broader scientific community.

---

**Contribute to the Newsletter!**

Interested in contributing to our newsletter? Please send your article as a word file to our newsletter editor Dr. Ayush Agarwal at [ayush.agarwal@epfl.ch](mailto:ayush.agarwal@epfl.ch), with a subject "SAS Newsletter - [Contributing Section Name]"

---