

# Public Invited to Influence of Serendipity on Chemistry Presentation at SWOSU

10.01.2014

The Oklahoma Section of the American Chemical Society will hold its monthly meeting at Southwestern Oklahoma State University on Thursday, October 9, and a presentation is open to the public.

“The Influence of Serendipity on Chemistry” is the title of the presentation by Dr. Allen Apblett, professor in the Oklahoma State University Department of Chemistry. His talk is from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the Memorial Student Center East Ballroom on the Weatherford campus, and the public is invited to attend free of charge.

Serendipity has played a fundamental role in science since a large proportion of significant and revolutionary discoveries have been influenced by it, according to Apblett. Serendipity can be defined as the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.

The term can be applied to science when scientists often find something of value while looking for something else. For example, Alexander Flemming discovered penicillin when a mold accidentally grew in one of his culture dishes and killed the staphylococcal colonies that surrounded the mold.

The role of serendipity in the discoveries made in the Apblett laboratory that have led to important technological compounds and even the establishment of an Oklahoma company, XploSafe, will also be discussed.

Apblett received a B.Sc. (Honours) degree from The University of New Brunswick in 1984 and then attended graduate school at The University of Calgary under the supervision of Dr. Tristram Chivers where he received a Ph.D. in March 1989. He was awarded a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship that he took up at Harvard University in Dr. Andrew Barron’s research group.

Apblett has been at OSU since 1997 and was named 2014 Oklahoma Chemist of the Year by the ACS.