



Valentine's Day Story in Silicon Valley

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COUPLE'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH CHOCOLATE

By S.L. Wykes
Mercury News

Chemist Howard Peters can be forgiven for his obsession with chocolate — even when it's not Valentine's Day. He grew up on a farm about 80 miles from Hershey, Pa. — the place where chocolate actually does scent the air.

Later, as if Peters needed any encouragement, his wife's father taught him how to appreciate a Hershey bar sandwich. That's one Hershey bar sandwiched between two others.

And what hangs in a place of pride over the Peters' family television set? Yes, it's a giant model of a Hershey bar.

This chemist's affection for chocolate took him beyond eating and into voracious learning. So he knows more than a lot about chocolate, and he and his wife, Sally, a chemical information specialist at PARC for 20 years, will do their best to share much of that knowledge at a lecture Thursday in Palo Alto.

The Menlo Park couple's lecture will be part of the monthly meeting of the Santa Clara Valley section of the American Chemical Society.

Howard Peters has a long list of little-known chocolate facts — it was a melted chocolate bar that led to the development of the microwave oven, for instance. And he delights in explaining why dark chocolate is good for you.

Their talk always includes some history, modern as well as ancient. After the Aztecs made it part of their pleasures, chocolate was kept as a secret delight for the European aristocracy and enjoyed in liquid form until a Nestle chemist figured out how to remove enough cocoa butter to make chocolate solid.

And where was that famous "I Love Lucy" assembly line chocolates episode filmed? Right in the See's facility in Pasadena.

Howard Peters has his favorites, of course. The Berkeley-based Scharffen Berger dark bittersweet is at the top of his list, with See's and Guitard's a close second. Hershey's, he said, he now eats only "if nothing else is available."

His wife and children share his obsession, Peters said. "There was one Christmas when 10 pounds of chocolate passed through the family." And for his 50th birthday, his wife presented him with several things he likes to eat, including a 10-pound bar of chocolate, with a cleaver for handy chopping.

"Some people like golf," Sally Peters said. "Howard likes chocolate."

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Chocolate-Covered Kudos for Howard Peters

Howard Peters Elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (London)

Last year at the Atlanta American Chemical Society Meeting, Dr. Howard Peters, a co-founder of the Division of Chemistry and the Law, joined the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC). The 175 year-old Society is headquartered in London and has about 48,000 members. (see www.rsc.org).

Other ACS members are also members of the RSC, and it was decided to see if the RSC was amendable to electing as Fellows, chemists/attorneys. The process requires submitting technical and career accomplishments and recommendations of three existing Fellows of the RSC. The formal election occurred December 1, 2006 and the announcement was printed in a list with other newly-elected Fellows on December 20, 2006 in the Times of London.

Peters and his wife Sally are planning to attend the RSC event in London on July 4, 2007. It has been confirmed that Sally refuses to call him "Sir Howard".

CHAL congratulates Howard on his fantastic accomplishment!

Howard Peters to Receive the American Chemical Society Henry Hill Award This August

Dr. Howard Peters, co-founder of CHAL, and now a member of the American Chemical Society Board of Directors has been selected to receive the 2007 Henry Hill Award of the Division of Professional Relations at the Boston ACS National Meeting. The Henry Hill Award is named for former ACS President, Henry Hill, to recognize efforts and accomplishments to advance chemistry as a profession.

Peters, a founding partner of Peters Verny, LLP in Palo Alto, CA (www.pvjsa.com) earned a PhD in Chemistry from Stanford University and a law degree from Santa Clara University. He served as Chair of CHAL in 1993, and has received the Roger Middlekauff Service Award from CHAL.

CHAL congratulates Howard on his fantastic accomplishment, and thank you for keeping CHAL in the news!

HOWARD M. PETERS, Ph.D., J.D.

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