

**Featured Chemist: Dr. Anita Meiklejohn**  
*Fish and Richardson, P.C., Boston, MA*

I was SO excited to learn about this month's chemist, Anita Meiklejohn. I hung up my lab coat, goggles, and gloves and went into the office where she worked. (She did let me put them back on for pictures!) Dr. Meiklejohn is a scientist and a lawyer. She got her Ph.D. in Biochemistry (became a doctor) and started her career as a scientist. This was exciting for her because her dad, a physicist, got her interested in science when she was a little girl. They even built a radio together! Like I do, she would listen to the music when everyone thought she was sleeping!

While working as a scientist, she became very interested in patents. A patent is an official certificate for an invention. It says the scientist who developed the idea (or the company they work for) owns the idea. No one else can use their invention without their permission. Patents are very important to companies, especially those who are making new medicines. Other inventions Dr. Meiklejohn helps with are diagnostic tests. Those are the tests used by doctors to tell if people have certain diseases. I wonder if my veterinarian uses any of the testing supplies for which she has helped get patents! Speaking of doctors and testing, keep your eyes



I help with e-mail while Dr. Meiklejohn talks on the phone with an inventor.

open for National Chemistry Week this October while we celebrate "Health and Wellness." We'll get to learn a lot more about diagnostic tests and the chemistry that makes them work!

To help scientists apply for a patent, Dr. Meiklejohn first has to learn all about their invention. She spends a lot of time talking to the scientists so they can teach her all about what they have made. This is her favorite part of her job. She enjoys trying to understand new things and writing about them in a way that is clear and exciting! She spends all of her time at work reading, writing and talking to scientists. She uses her computer and telephone the most. I'll have to make sure she uses her computer to visit my

website each month to see all the new fun activities our friends at the American Chemical Society have put together for everyone!



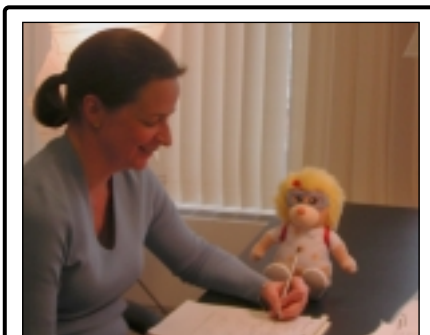
The most challenging part of Dr. Meiklejohn's job was learning to write like a lawyer and not a scientist. She had to work very hard to do this because even really good ideas are not worth much if you can communicate them well! She writes all about the scientists' inventions, telling how it works and why it is new and so important. She writes the "patent application" and sends it in to the US Patent and Trademark Office. In this office, people review the inventions and decide if they deserve a patent. If they tell her "no," she has to work even harder to get more information to them to hopefully make them change their minds.

I asked her why she would want to work so hard and what the best thing about helping scientists and companies get patents was. She told me that by getting patents, the companies that hire scientists stay strong and they can continue to do more research and develop many more products to help people.





What an interesting job Dr. Meiklejohn has! I didn't realize that there were special lawyers that are there just to help scientists with their inventions. Learning all about these exciting careers in chemistry is so much fun for me! I don't know how I'll ever decide what I want to do when I'm a grown up chemist! How about YOU?!!! If you have any questions about my visit, you can write to me at [meg@acs.org](mailto:meg@acs.org)



Dr. Meiklejohn and I read a new patent.

### Personal Profile: Dr. Anita Meiklejohn

What is your favorite movie?

I love all of the *Lord of the Rings* movies (and the books!)

What is your favorite pastime?

I love to read, especially mysteries set in other countries. They are fun and they teach you things about other places.

When is your birthday?

May 30th

How big is your family?

Two boys, 12 and 5, and a very nice husband. We like to travel and ride our bikes.

How could your work apply to a child's life?

Hopefully a medicine that I help patent will help a child who is ill.

What subjects were your favorites in school?

History and Science.

Were you interested in science when you were growing up?

I was very interested in science. I loved learning about the moon landings and all types of things in nature.

