

# Link and White Address Members in New Orleans



William E. Link  
President,  
1975-76

Recently I read a quotation attributed to Thomas Mann that seemed appropriate to this occasion: "Time has no divisions to mark its passage; there is never a thunderstorm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols."

For this country two centuries have slipped by, and with much fanfare we are in the midst of our bicentennial. The American Chemical Society has observed its centennial. And our Society, while younger, has passed the 67th year, quietly on the way to the century mark. My tour of duty has been, by comparison, the twinkling of an eye. In fact, it is difficult to believe that a year has passed so quickly.

In my inaugural message a year ago I made a point of referring to changes that were taking place in professional societies and implied that some of these were under way in ours. I also suggested that we should be more receptive to changes, and that we should make them work for us. I might add that when changes are successful they are regarded as progress.

This past year has not been one of profound changes, but there have been some worth noting and others that are about to happen. Let's take a look at these. For the first time we have convened in the middle of the week. Also, for the first time, at least within memory, we will break with tradition and, instead of the formal banquet of previous conventions, will highlight our meeting with a dinner and cruise on the Mississippi River.

On the technical side, there have also been innovations. Poster sessions were introduced in Cincinnati, with apparent success, and will continue at this meeting, allowing for more one-to-one discussions and opportunities for questions and answers. *Official and Tentative Methods* has been revised, and provisions have been made for the incorporation of a new type of method—Recommended Practices. This type of method carries with it no official connotation but may be of considerable use to the analyst. Our technical committees have regained their momentum and are again promulgating methods for our methods book. The Uniform Methods Committee, for another first, has changed its policy and will now consider for publication those procedures recommended to us by other organizations, provided our own rigid criteria for acceptance are met.

Last year saw the introduction to the national meetings of the placement center, which provided a forum for employers and job opportunities for chemists. The initial success of this venture is assurance that the innovation will last. Next year the Society will hold only one national meeting, in the Spring in New York City. This change was made to accommodate the wishes of the membership, and with it will come all of the real and imagined problems that were said to accompany this change.

The most important event of the past few months was, of course, the World Conference in Amsterdam. By any means of measurement, financial, technical, or otherwise, this meeting was a resounding, unqualified success. The

World Conference on Oilseed and Vegetable Oil Processing Technology, the first of its kind anywhere, attracted around 850 registrants, 165 spouses, and 200 exhibitors and representatives, for a total of more than 1,200 participants from 66 countries, surpassing our highest expectations. This conference has done more to enhance our prestige and image overseas than anything we have done previously and has made the AOCS a truly international organization. Of course, this conference was made possible only by the vision and confidence of our director of publications and the extraordinary efforts of our executive director and our cochairmen, Drs. Applewhite and Meershoek.

This initial success does give us something to worry about, however. What can we possibly do as an encore? But, never fear, our Governing Board and Directors are already planning for the second conference.

On the other hand, some things have remained the same. In spite of inflation and higher costs, we are happy that our income has exceeded expenses again this year by a modest amount. This means no increase in individual membership dues for at least another year. Undoubtedly, however, there are new programs that the Society should consider, and it is totally unrealistic to expect to provide them without due consideration for the budget. This means we must make provisions for increasing our income.

I am pleased to find that committee activity in the Society has increased, and I am gratified to report that we have not created any new committees this past year. In my opinion we already have an adequate number. Instead of proliferation, we should be concerned with the adequate staffing and productivity of our existing committees.

Everything considered, it has been a good year for the Society and an enjoyable one for me. Continuing the policy established last year, the president visited each of the local sections (by invitation, of course). He was privileged to represent the Society at the conference in Amsterdam and talk about his favorite subject, the AOCS methods. And this month he was honored to represent your society again and present your greetings to the ACS at its centennial meeting. [See story on page 428A]

Yes, it has been a good year, but I confess I am looking forward to retirement. Becoming a past president is a good and pleasant event. It is the time that he is gently pushed off the stage, but then he is given a comfortable front seat as a spectator, and if he has played his part he is more content to sit and watch. I hope that I have played my part. In any event, I have enjoyed doing it. I thank all of you for helping me. ■



Francis B. White  
President,  
1976-77

I'm honored to be here today as your new president, and somewhat surprised, too. You may not realize it, but I am one of a minority group in the AOCS—an engineer more than a chemist. This must be the first time in more than twenty years that an engineer has been so honored. The last time was probably when that jack-of-all-trades, Charlie

Morris, was president in 1954.

Some years back, our journal was known as *Oil and Soap*. When that earthy name was changed to *Journal of the American Oil Chemists' Society* to reflect the broadened scope of the Society interests, I felt a little sad. However, imagine my surprise when a new journal was born—*Lipids*. I had to go to the dictionary for a definition so that I could learn more about this new chemical being made from oils and fats. I disclaim all responsibility for the name *Lipids*.

If Drs. Holman and Baldwin propose to resurrect the old name of our journal as a modern substitute for *Lipids*, I won't fight it.

Engineers are supposed to be pragmatic and we are. We think everyone should be "on the ball," but we're not so bullheaded that we won't listen to wiser heads—younger or older—which brings to mind the following tale.

I was playing golf the other day with one of my co-hackers. He hit a pretty bad drive from the first tee, and was off the fairway; his ball rested squarely upon an anthill. He took out an 8-iron and whiffed. The ball did not move, but he killed a thousand ants. He drew back his club and whiffed again. This time he killed two thousand ants, but the ball did not move. At this point I could just hear the small voice of a young smart alec ant saying to his father, "And you always said, if you want to get anywhere, you'll have to be on the ball."

As many of you here today, I have been a member of several AOCS technical and administrative committees. At all times, I have been impressed by the willingness of AOCS members to contribute their time, effort, and skills for the benefit of our Society. But, I have concerns. Looked at another way, these are opportunities.

First, there are administrative responsibilities in our Society that would suffer if key individuals were unavailable to continue their work or to give advice.

Second, our members do not take sufficient advantage of the excellent forum provided by our technical committees to keep abreast of the times.

Third, our administrative committees are not always used as much as they could be for the overall benefit of the Society.

Fourth, the voice of the membership is not always heard by our Governing Board.

Fifth, the costs of running our Society continue to increase. What can we do about it?

My first concern developed after I became chairman of the Finance Committee and subsequently chairman of the Membership Committee. As a novice in these areas, in attempting to be innovative, I could not be certain I was not reinventing the wheel.

I wondered and worried about what would happen to the complex operations of the Smalley Program, which is so useful to both individuals and industry, if those administering the program suddenly were not around to help. The same thought ran through my head with respect to the office in Champaign. These and other vital functions of the AOCS need to be identified—and then described in comprehensive operating manuals for successor chairmen and officers to use. With the help of concerned committee chairmen, and their committees, I hope to ensure the orderly continuity of AOCS activities.

My second concern is that many of our members do not take advantage of the unique availability at national meetings of up-to-the-minute technical information—too new to have reached published literature. This intellectual nourishment makes our technical committee meetings valuable, and these meetings are open to all AOCS members. Here in New Orleans, there have been about thirty technical committee meetings. I urge you to remember this opportunity when you go to the next annual meeting in Chicago.

My third concern relates to the goals of our administrative committees. This concern really uncovers an important opportunity. Administrative goals are well expressed in the short definitions of committee scope which are found in the AOCS directory before each listing of committee members. Yet there undoubtedly are occasions when planning by one committee does not adequately take into account the broad interests and needs of the entire AOCS. I believe that administrative committees that consciously seek to serve the needs of other committees will find the results of their efforts magnified immensely. This isn't a wild thought. Take, for example, how the Public Relations Committee can help the Membership Committee, how Ways and Means can interact with Long Range Planning, how Education and Local Section committees can benefit each other. To obtain this synergetic action, I urge all of you, particularly those of you who are committee chairmen and committee members, to reflect upon this thought and to take appropriate action to implement it.

My fourth concern is that lines of communication between our members and the Governing Board are not used often enough, in spite of the fact that when they are used the results can be dramatic. You have heard from Bill Link about the AOCS sponsored world conference on vegetable oil technology held last month. This was a fine conference, the origin of which may interest you. In early 1974, I was told by two AOCS friends that it was time for another AOCS short course on vegetable oil processing. This recommendation received favorable consideration from the AOCS Executive Committee, and at the suggestion of Dr. Baldwin was transformed into the hugely successful World Conference so ably chaired by Tom Applewhite.

What is the moral of this story? Practical suggestions from AOCS members to their Governing Board produce results. It is my intention to listen to those of you who have constructive suggestions—or gripes—about the activities of our Society. Please tell our committee chairmen, tell our Governing Board, or tell me.

My final concern relates to a fact of life. Your Governing Board and its Finance Committee have been painfully aware of the inflating expenses facing the AOCS. Yet, there has been no increase in dues in the last six years. This paradox has been made possible by generating revenues other than dues, and, of equal importance, by careful and prudent administration in the AOCS headquarters by our executive director, Jim Lyon. Can this paradox long continue? We, the members—all of us can prolong it by making our Society grow.

What will increased membership do for us, who already are AOCS members? Because fixed costs of running the AOCS, such as debt service, salaries, printing, and general administrative expenses, change little with increasing membership, the dues income from new members reduces the support needed from existing members.

We are a Society that is unique! We are *the* professional society in the USA which is devoted to the technology and pure science of fats, oils, and their derivatives, and—would you believe it?—lipids. Since we are a unique society, I propose that we make this better known and understood by our nonmember friends who can profit from membership—those who are chemists, those who are engineers, and those in administrative management. We want them as active members, active juniors, individual associates, and corporate associates. New members and old—all will benefit.

Together, we can make the paradox continue. If each one of us in the AOCS brings in just one new member during 1976, I venture to say your Governing Board will continue to hold the lid on dues for this year, next year, and more years to come. I hope each of you will accept this as a challenge. ■