

# Executive Director Reports to AOCS Membership



*At this year's 67th Annual Spring Meeting, AOCS executive director James C. Lyon addressed the membership. This is his report.*

The 1976 Spring Meeting in New Orleans marks a milestone for me. Five years ago this month I traveled to Houston to meet my brand-new bosses—the members of this Society. Each year since then I've given a brief hired help's report of the year past, strategically speaking most briefly about those things which did not go so well.

This year I will extend the review to the entire five year period of my tenure, but I promise again to be brief, especially when talking about the disappointments. The major accomplishment over these years has been the assembly of an extremely capable staff. It is a staff which takes its work very seriously and with good humor. Many of you have met a number of those individuals who work for the Society, and I think you will agree that the daily routine in Champaign is handled extremely well, indeed.

A lot of the progress over these five years has been hidden in that there have been many attempts to make things operate more efficiently and to provide better communication between the headquarters and the leadership of the Society. For example, the accounting and business procedures have been entirely revamped. The result has been better financial reports, more accurate budgeting, and a savings of time to be used to better purpose both by staff and by AOCS working committees. It has also helped put AOCS funds to better uses.

The inventory and sale of AOCS official supplies has been moved to the national headquarters, improving service to users and increasing net income to AOCS by almost 100%.

The AOCS Directory of Membership has been expanded to include phone numbers, making it a more useful tool. New production methods have decreased costs of the annual directory to a level lower than five years ago.

*JAACS* and *Lipids* are now produced, except for printing, 99% by AOCS office staff. Mailing schedules are a full two weeks earlier than they were five years ago, and the schedules are regularly met. In midsummer of this year, mailing schedules for both publications will be further improved by one full week.

These and other improvements in efficiency and service have made it possible for us to stay afloat financially. We've had more income than expenses for the past four years. It's significant that this has been done in an inflationary economy without raising dues to the individual members. It is our hope to keep dues at the lowest possible level in future years.

Professionally, too, the Society has been at work.

In 1971 membership had bottomed out at 2,750 members—down 500 from the peak year of 1966. Today membership has reached the 3,200 mark again and we're still growing. Your colleagues are becoming more and more interested in your professional organization, and, thus, the Society's base of support has broadened considerably.

The AOCS Book of Methods is undergoing significant improvement. There are plans to make many changes which will ensure that AOCS methodology maintains the leadership position in fats and oils and related fields.

The Society has embarked on an ambitious and, to date, successful publication program. Two monographs have appeared in the last two years, a third will appear in the fall, and another two or three are in the planning stage. The Society is growing as a disseminator of scientific information.

The Society is taking steps to increase cooperation with sister organizations by establishing new lines of communication with other groups of similar interest. Through an aggressive effort in this direction, AOCS will assume a stronger leadership role in the industry and in basic scientific endeavors.

The potential of the Society as a major force in our areas of interest is most recently evidenced in the World Conference on Oilseed and Vegetable Oil Processing Technology in Amsterdam. While the cooperation of a great many trade and professional organizations was necessary to pull it off, especially that of VERNOF, our Dutch hosts, the basic fact is that it was an AOCS idea, backed by AOCS capital, AOCS organizational experience, and AOCS leadership that led to the Conference's success. We can be justly proud of this effort.

Now we talk about future world conferences both in the areas of processing and in other subjects of interest to our membership and related segments of the industry. Further and stronger ties with our friends in other countries and related organizations are essential to continued Society growth and influence.

Using these few minutes to look back over the past five years has been more than just a bit of nostalgia. It has given me the opportunity to present a better perspective of the extent of the Society's forward movement. Being the executive director of AOCS has been fun and lively because, as I've tried to point out, the Society has been a going, growing organization.

Now to the negative side. There are a couple of lines from a very popular song from recent years that almost perfectly fit my feelings about the failures and disappointments: "Regrets, we've had a few, but then again, too few to mention..." So I won't, and nothing can be briefer than that. ■