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## Liquid Crystals Today

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## From the Membership Secretary

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# From the Membership Secretary

**A**s of April, 1996, paid membership of the International Liquid Crystal Society totalled 745. Over the past three years we have adopted a system of mailing renewal notices quarterly; members therefore receive their renewal notices in one of four mailings each year. Additionally, we have adopted a policy of deleting a former member's name if no response is received to a follow-up reminder letter. Therefore, the current membership total reflects an ACTIVE membership base, and a clear growth for the Society.

Argentina	2	Ireland	1
Armenia	1	Israel	4
Belarus	15	Italy	25
Belgium	3	Japan	62
Brazil	17	Rep. of Korea	10
Bulgaria	8	Malaysia	2
Canada	11	Mauritania	1
Chile	1	Mexico	1
P.R. China	21	Netherlands	9
Rep. of China	31	Philippines	8
Croatia	1	Poland	21
Czech Republic	2	Portugal	2
Egypt	1	Romania	2
Finland	1	Russia	35
France	16	Slovenia	9
Georgia	3	Spain	7
Germany	39	Sweden	11
Greece	2	Switzerland	4
Hong Kong	1	United Kingdom	41
Hungary	17	Ukraine	26
India	112	United States	159

Members come from 42 countries and territories, as shown in the table bottom left.

Additionally, three regional societies are formally affiliated with the International Society, viz., the British, Indian, and Hungarian Liquid Crystal Societies.

We very much hope that you continue as active members in the Society, and encourage you to involve your colleagues in the Society as well. In addition to discounted registration at the International Conference and a subscription to *Liquid Crystals Today*, your membership supports our World Wide Web server, facilitates communication and exchange of ideas among liquid crystal scientists and engineers around the world, and supports historical projects of relevance to the liquid crystal community. A membership form may be found elsewhere in this issue,

Finally, as I approach the end of my fourth year as membership secretary, I would like to acknowledge Elaine Landry at Kent's Liquid Crystal Institute for her cheerful assistance with the mailings over the years. It's been a pleasure to work with Elaine and the entire Society.

**Chuck Rosenblatt**  
Membership Secretary

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## Liquid Crystals in Literature

The visual beauty attached to many aspects of science is well known to the scientific community, but is a feature often ignored or neglected in our presentation of science to the world at large. Liquid crystals are a rich source of visual wonderment, and liquid crystals have been promoted as a new art form (D. Makow, 1992, *Liquid Crystals Applications and Uses*, Vol. 2, edited by B. Bahadur (World Scientific, Singapore), p. 122), but the complex concept of liquid crystals has also found a place in literature. The description of a chiral nematic liquid

crystal by Edgar Allan Poe in his "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" is now part of liquid crystal history (H. Stegemeyer and H. Kelker, 1991, *Liquid Crystals Today*, 1(2), 3). There are earlier references to liquid crystals, and the earliest recorded is in the works of Petrarch (1304–1374) (see 1991, *Liquid Crystals Today*, 1(2), 5). A new literature reference to liquid crystals has come to light from the researches of Alistair Elliot (Newcastle, UK, private communication). The celebrated Spanish poet Góngora (1561–1627) used the phrase líquidos cristales in his description of a village decorated with branches of trees, presumably in anticipation of a fiesta. The description appears in *Las Soledades*, I, lines 701–4:

*Estos arboles, pues, ve la mañana  
mentir florestas, y emular viales  
cuamos muró de líquidos cristales  
agricultura urbana.*

This is translated as (Alistair Elliot):

*Next day the eye of morning sees  
pretended groves made of untruthful trees,  
avenues that the farming of their town  
has walled with liquid crystals and not  
stone.*

Perhaps there are more references to liquid crystals in the works of other authors; it is apparent that had not liquid crystals existed, they would have had to have been invented to satisfy the descriptive demands of poets ... or was it the other way around?