



Energy Takes Center Stage in Boston

It seems like a lot has been written about energy in these pages in all the years I have been the Editor of this magazine. While the national budget deficit and fiscal gap issues have pushed energy and environment discussions to the back, it is hardly debatable that the energy sector may prove to be an engine for job creation and economic growth in the months and years to come. This opens up a unique opportunity for the Society to assume a leadership role in energy-related discussions and technical debate.

Commendably, the Society leadership has done just that with the upcoming meeting in Boston this October. This meeting features the first-ever Electrochemical Energy Summit and a panel discussion on Monday where invited experts on various aspects of energy R&D will discuss important issues and developments surrounding energy and electrochemistry. I have the privilege and pleasure to serve as the moderator of this blue-ribbon international panel. Approximately 100 posters will be presented in a special session on energy spanning the first three days of the meeting. Finally, a symposium entitled "Grand Challenges in Energy Conversion and Storage" will be held from Monday through Wednesday.

If this is not enough to whet the appetite of the energy aficionado, there are several other symposium options in Boston that have direct relevance to energy conversion R&D. For example, a quick glance through the program would reveal important symposium topics such as "Electrochemical Utilization of Solid Fuels," "Electrochemical Capacitors: Fundamentals to Applications," "Electrochemical Processes for Fuels," "Photovoltaics for the 21st Century" (the seventh edition in a very successful series), and "Large Scale Energy Storage for Smart Grid Applications." These symposia will be held in addition to the usual plethora of heavily-subscribed gatherings on lithium batteries and fuel cells that the Society organizes every year in its biannual meetings. Clearly, ECS meetings have evolved as the place to be to learn about the latest developments, and to network in most areas related to energy R&D.

In a nostalgic vein and coincidentally, Boston was also the venue of the first-ever ECS meeting that I attended as a post-doctoral researcher in the late 1970s. I vividly recall listening with awe to the leading researchers talk about the then "hot" topics in electrochemistry such as chemically modified electrodes, semiconductor photoelectrochemistry, and electronically conducting polymers. Even back then, the Energy Technology Division (ETD) was a vibrant group of individuals engaged in diverse topics ranging from batteries to fuel cells and solar cells. As a newly-minted researcher in energy, I could not have asked for a better and more welcoming environment than this group. I would hope that we have maintained (or even enhanced) the spirit of collegiality and inclusiveness not only in ETD but also in all the other Divisions that are the lifeblood of this Society. I have regularly attended the Executive Committee meetings of the ETD through the years, and as John Hiatt sings, "...the faces have changed but the song remains the same..." within that group.

Batteries are an integral part of energy R&D and lithium rechargeable batteries have been at the leading edge of that frontier, especially for consumer electronics and electric vehicle applications. This particular issue of *Interface* features state-of-the-art *in situ* characterization and diagnostics of the Li electrode/electrolyte interface. Stay tuned.

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