



ECS Centennial

Celebration of Our Past and Future

I am intrigued by the life stories of centenarians and the reasons for their longevity. Did they live to this old age due to great genetics, a healthy lifestyle, a special diet, a particular outlook, or some spiritual path? What was the quality of their life as they approached the 100-year mark? Although the “miracles” of modern medicine and healthier diets may keep us living longer, we may even ask if we want to live to be 100 and beyond? One of my favorite remarks on the topic was from Beatrice Wood, a famous California potter and artist, who lived an active life up to 105 and claimed that “chocolate and young men” were her keys to longevity.¹

Although the Society’s centenary mark is a year away, we can pose the same kinds of questions of ECS. Why we have been a viable society to our membership for so long? One answer is that our past long range planning efforts have performed the necessary “check-up” and goal-setting for the future health of our constituent parts. Perhaps a society turning 100 years old is not as wondrous as it is for an individual, but it is definitely a benchmark and cause for celebration. In the time leading up to this important benchmark for ECS, we will have the opportunity to reflect on how our society was born, and has grown and matured.

Three years ago, as third Vice-President, I was immediately appointed to the ECS Centennial Committee, chaired by Bob Frankenthal. Planning was already in full swing, but in the past year, we have seen the plan come together. So what do we have planned for the ECS Centennial Meeting to be held in Philadelphia, May 12-17, 2002? I would like to give you some of the highlights of our plans. More detail will be given in upcoming issues of *Interface* and the Centennial meeting program, which will also describe the record number of exciting technical sessions—about 57 symposia!

Philadelphia was chosen as the meeting site because it was where the first organizational meeting of the Society was held on April 3, 1902. The Society was founded by an enthusiastic group of distinguished “young men”.² At this first meeting, 20 technical papers were presented to 52 attendees. The Society had a membership of 337, and was already interna-

tional in nature, with representation from nine countries!² The history of our Society will be presented to attendees during the meeting, in a number of ways. There will be a plenary lecture on Monday by Arnold Thackray, President of the Chemical Heritage Foundation; several historical exhibits; and a complimentary history book for each ECS member. Two other plenary lectures will be given, looking toward the future of science and technology, to be presented by Carver Mead of the California Institute of Technology (solid-state), and Janet Osteryoung, formerly Director of the Division of Chemistry at the National Science Foundation (electrochemical). The main celebratory event will be a Centennial party on Wednesday evening at Wanamaker’s Crystal Tea Room, complete with a delicious dinner and some light entertainment.

If you have memories of ECS you would wish to share for the Centennial celebration, I encourage you to give them to Bob Frankenthal or Mary Yess at the Society headquarters. I cordially invite you to come to Philadelphia next May to celebrate in wishing ECS “Happy 100th birthday and many happy returns of the day”!

Jan B. Talbot
President

1. www.beatricewood.com and www.craftsreport.com/may98/beatricewood.html.

2. “A History of The Electrochemical Society 1902-1976,” R. M. Burns, Ed., The Electrochemical Society, Princeton, NJ (1977).