



Eleven Years After

I was mulling over possibilities for the title of this column when the British rock band named Ten Years After (of the Woodstock “I’m Going Home” fame) crossed my mind. Actually it has been exactly eleven years since I took over the editorial reins of this magazine from my predecessor, Jan Talbot. What has happened not only within the Society but outside of it during these years? Let me begin with the home front. Our two daughters have grown up with one finishing her master’s and the other entering college as a freshman this past year. So my wife and I are quasi-empty nesters now—“quasi” because our older daughter has come back to live with us at home.

Much has changed in the world outside. The city where we live (Arlington, Texas) and the greater Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex are quite unrecognizable from eleven years ago. There seem to be more people and more cars everywhere; to keep up with this growth; infrastructure (new roads, mega shopping malls, huge stadia and the like) continues to be built. Perhaps the most drastic changes have occurred in the technologies that we use in our everyday life: personal digital assistants for communication and entertainment, flat-screen TVs, global positioning systems, etc. Our vehicles have become increasingly “smart” and fitted with advanced sensors for everything from fluid levels to service/safety alerts. In fact, I (like most others) have not checked the engine lubricant, radiator fluid, or the battery electrolyte levels in years. The prices of gasoline and fuel have fluctuated wildly and gone up and often enough to remind us once more (as if the oil embargo in the 1970s wasn’t enough!) that fossil fuels are not inexhaustible and energy security is a key issue of strategic import. Global warming, greenhouse gases, sustainability, and climate change have joined the lexicon of words in drawing room conversations, and hybrid motor vehicles have become commonplace.

Country-wide many events have been cataclysmic and have had repercussions beyond the borders. We have seen a steady erosion of jobs, and manufacturing has shifted abroad although in some sectors (e.g., auto), the traffic has also flowed in the opposite direction with foreign companies setting up assembly in the U.S. The Internet continues to spawn new industry behemoths (think Google) and upstarts. Social networking also has become big business thanks to the Web. On the other hand, homeland security has taken on a more sinister meaning and it all came to a head that fateful day in September 2001. Airline travel has never been the same again, not just here in the U.S., but in the rest of the world as well. The economy took a beating with the sub-prime home loan fiasco and Wall Street was vilified in the process. The aftershocks are being felt elsewhere (e.g., Greece) underlining the fact that the world we live in is increasingly interconnected and intertwined (or “flat” in Thomas Friedman’s parlance). Border tensions and civic unrest continue to simmer in many parts of the globe and even with all the technological progress that has been made, illiteracy, poverty, and disease continue to pose challenges. Tsunamis and earthquakes are a reminder that the human race is pitted against forces far more powerful than itself, a fact that some folks, especially the geo- and climate-engineering community, overlook.

How about The Electrochemical Society itself? It has definitely become more “international” in its reach and scope. The biannual meetings have gone back not only to Hawaii and Paris, France, but also to new venues in Cancun, Mexico, and Vienna, Austria. The members are now drawn from 61 different countries flung across the globe and non-U.S. members comprise ca. 46% of the total membership. (My thanks go to Ellen Tiano for furnishing these statistics.) Sections of the Society have sprouted up in Europe, Israel, and Brazil. Submissions to the Society’s journals continue to climb (e.g., an increase of 19% in 2009 relative to the preceding year) and a new rapid communications vehicle (*Electrochemical and Solid-State Letters*) was spun off from the journal in 1998. The proceedings volumes have been successfully replaced with *ECS Transactions* with John Weidner, the Guest Editor of this issue of the magazine, assuming editorial duties. Meeting attendees no longer carry around a bulky book of abstracts but thanks to microelectronics advances, all this information can be condensed and compressed into a tiny USB flash drive they can put in their pockets.

This magazine has evolved and new features and editors continue to be added to enhance content; and the Pennington staff is constantly tweaking the page design and layout for better visual appeal. Let me close by simply reaffirming my original pledge to continue providing the most timely information, technical content, and service to the readership. Stay tuned.

Raj K.

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Editor



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