



It's a Small, Small World

Many years ago, not long after Disney World opened, my wife and I had the (mis)fortune of being on a ride that had a mechanical breakdown. We were stranded just outside the exhibit that played the song "It's a Small, Small World" over and over, without stopping. After hearing that song for what seemed an eternity, the idea of a small world is imprinted on my brain. Thus the number of new international initiatives and activities of ECS comes as no surprise to me. In back-to-back meetings, we traveled to Honolulu to have a joint meeting with The Electrochemical Society of Japan (ECSJ) and the Japan Society of Applied Physics (JSAP), and then we met in Toronto, Canada. These meetings come between our joint meetings with the International Society of Electrochemistry (ISE), first in Paris and then in San Francisco next fall. In Phoenix, we honored the winner of the student poster session of the Congreso de la Sociedad Iberoamericana Electroquímica, which ECS helped cosponsor in Oaxaca, Mexico. After the Hawaii meeting, we managed the International Meeting on Lithium Batteries (IMLB) in Como, Italy. This spring, we will be managing the ECS International Semiconductor Technology (ECS-ISTC) meeting in Shanghai, China. Meanwhile other ECS members lobby to hold a meeting in South America as soon as practical.

Taken together, these events illustrate several significant trends for our Society. First is the greater recognition that we are indeed an international society, that our members reside around the globe, and that we need to locate our meetings accordingly. Second is the expansion of the number of meetings and symposia that are co-sponsored with our sister societies. The third trend is the increased flexibility of the Society to manage stand-alone meetings and workshops. These stand-alone meetings are focused, have an organizing committee that is independent of ECS, and can have their meetings in locations and countries that might not be able to host our larger biannual meetings.

One of the important recommendations of the Long-Range Planning Committee had been that the ECS must take further steps to actualize its position as an international society. Not only must we hold our meetings in locations that are easily accessible to members from all over the world, but we must also diversify the committees and leadership of the Society. I am pleased to report progress in both areas. We are committed to having regular meetings in Europe, the Pacific Rim, and Canada. In addition, other international locations for our meetings are being discussed and considered. We have engaged new associate editors of the *Journal* and elected a vice-president from outside North America. New com-

mittee appointments were made with an emphasis on diversity. At the Phoenix meeting, we provided teleconferencing for the first time so those committee members who were unable to make the long-distance travel were still able to participate. We hope electronic communication technologies will allow a wider number of members to play an active role in our committees.

Fragmentation of the technical community and the corresponding proliferation of technical meetings pose serious problems. Both time and money limit how many meetings a person can attend. Meeting attendance and quality suffer when overlapping groups hold meetings on similar topics. Thus the increasing number of jointly sponsored meetings and symposia is a refreshing trend. We have already established good working relationships with ECSJ, JSAP, and ISE; jointly sponsored meetings have been record breakers in terms of attendance and papers submitted. We have all benefited from major symposia that were cosponsored with other societies like IEEE, SPIE, ACerS, NIST, and the Gordon Conferences. Co-sponsorship of our *Letters* with IEEE helps to increase its circulation and quality. Joint meetings require more coordination and logistical planning; nevertheless, our growing experience is that the increased investment on our part is well worth it.

The management of stand-alone meetings throughout the world opens up exciting new possibilities for ECS to serve the international technical community. Until recently our focus had been entirely on our large biannual meetings. Yet smaller workshops serve an important, complementary role. Because of their focus, they often can attract a large fraction of those people working in that field. They often involve papers, organizers, and attendees that might not come to our regular meetings. As a society we are approaching this new role cautiously, to ensure that we are able to run a high quality event and that our investments of time and effort are in important growth areas. Despite these cautions, we have identified a real need where ECS can make significant contributions to the worldwide community.

Indeed, it is a small world, and ECS is making it smaller. ■

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