



A New World View

The juxtaposition of the ECS meeting held in San Francisco the first week in September and the events of the following week—with the terrorists attacks on September 11 and the turmoil since—is striking. It is difficult for me to reconcile my thoughts concerning these sets of events. This second joint meeting between ECS and the International Society of Electrochemistry (ISE), attended by over 2,000 people, was the successful realization of several years of planning. It was also a unique and momentous experience for me to share leadership with another woman society president, Dr. Erica Kálmán, of ISE. The meeting exemplified not only international cooperation, but also equality of opportunity, regardless of culture, race, religion, and gender. The following week, terrorist violence shattered our sense of cooperation, security, and peace in the world.

In the shadows of the news of the world's response to the terrorist attacks, the winners of the Nobel Prizes for achievements in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, economics, and peace were announced. Alfred Nobel invented dynamite in 1866, but efforts to promote peace were close to his heart, as is reflected in his legacy of the prizes, which have been given over the past 100 years. One of the Society's own members, Professor Rudy Marcus, was informed at our 1992 meeting in Toronto of winning the Nobel Prize in chemistry for his contributions to the theory of electron transfer reactions in chemical systems. These prizes set the highest of standards as they are awarded for those who "shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind." In addition, the prize in chemistry is given to the person who "shall have made the most important chemical discovery or improvement" and the prize in peace is given to those who "shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." Linus Pauling won both: In 1954 for chemistry, for his research into the nature of the chemical bond and its application to the elucidation of the structure of complex substances; and for peace in 1962. Only a few can win the Nobel Prize, but all can aspire to work to benefit mankind and to promote peace and fraternity among people. One way to do this is through international scientific societies, such as ECS.

With the Society's Centennial fast approaching, we have spent a great deal of time reviewing its challenges, and those of the international scientific community in general. During

the past 100 years, the Society's history has reflected Nobel's concerns, such as promoting the beneficial and peaceful use of technology, addressing the fear of the unknown in science on the part of the general populace, and dealing with oppressive governments that deny freedom to do honest research. Scientists themselves have always continued to do their work and have found ways to work together across borders.

Global collaborations have the appearance of being relatively easy, given the ease of communication with e-mail and the Internet. However, being part of an international community of scientists and engineers, individually or as a professional society, brings many responsibilities as well as opportunities. ECS is an international society with Sections in Canada, Israel, Japan, Korea, and Europe, in addition to those in the U.S. Our collaboration with other societies throughout the world grows. ECS cosponsored, and our staff managed, a topical meeting in 2000 in Lake Como, Italy (the 10th International Meeting on Lithium Batteries) and in 2001 in Shanghai, China (the First International Semiconductor Conference). We have had encouraging discussions with the current presidents of La Sociedad Mexicana de Electroquímica, La Sociedad Iberoamericana de Electroquímica, and ISE, to initiate plans for a collaborative technical meeting to encourage participation from our colleagues in Central and South America.

As we celebrate the ECS Centennial in Philadelphia, May 12-17, 2002, I propose that this also be an occasion for all of us to join in a shared process of healing, of rebuilding security and peace, and of regaining hope for a better future for our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan B. Talbot".

Jan B. Talbot
President