

1959–1968: Everything is changing

AOCS marks 50th birthday with a new interest in lipids

AOCS celebrated its 50th anniversary as its new decade began. Membership had jumped by more than 1,000 during the past 10 years to 2,749. AOCS was outgrowing its office space on the banks of the Chicago River. Dietary fats and oils were becoming more prominent in research papers. To draw more lipids researchers, AOCS would create a new journal and a new award.

AOCS' sixth decade began with a gala 50th anniversary celebration at a favorite meeting site—the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. Twenty-four of 29 living past presidents attended, along with a record 635 participants from 14 nations. The hotel put a fresh coat of gold gilt on its banquet room chairs for the occasion.

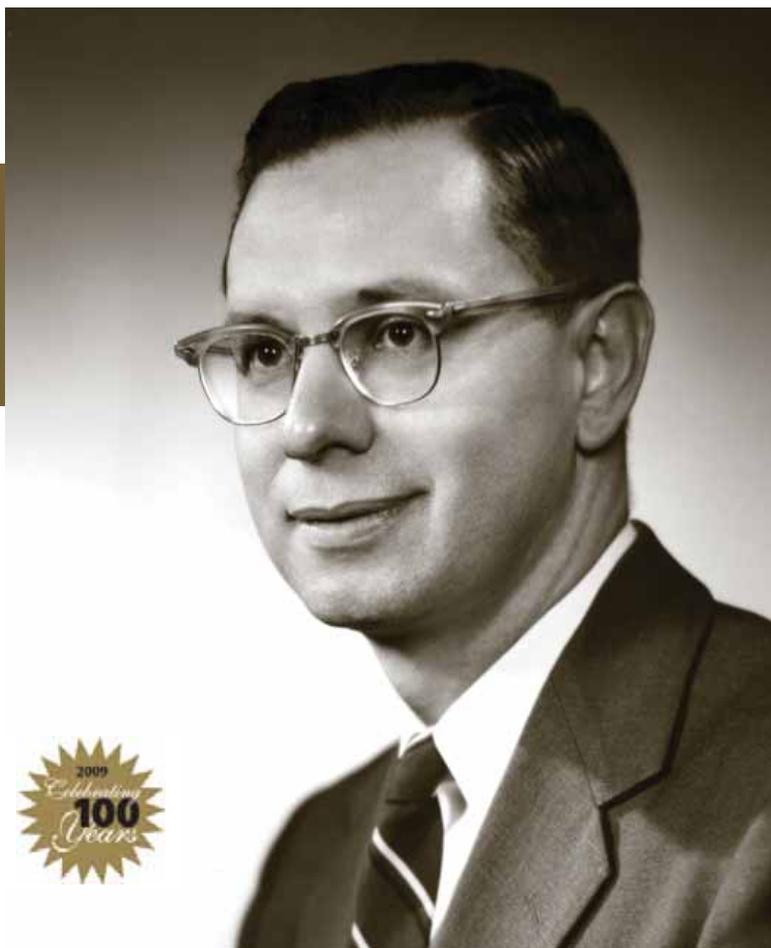
It was a celebratory look backward before a decade of momentous change. There would be a new journal to lure academic researchers, new awards, the retirement of the society's first executive secretary, the society's first national meeting outside the United States, and a decision to move out of downtown Chicago.

“We are now witnessing a growing interest in various biological aspects of fats and other lipids,” outgoing president Walt Lundberg said at the 1964 annual meeting. Lundberg was director of The Hormel Institute, which had been founded in 1942 as one of the first US lipids research centers.

AOCS leaders wanted to provide a professional home for the growing number of lipids researchers. In 1963 AOCS member Carter Litchfield suggested that the society make overtures to become the publisher of the three-year-old *Journal of Lipid Research*. Within a year it was clear AOCS' overture would be rebuffed.

Instead, AOCS started its own bimonthly journal, *Lipids*, in January 1966, with A. Richard Baldwin as the founding editor. The associate editor roster included researchers from five European nations as well as Japan, an indication of the growing importance of international networks to lipids researchers. Walt Lundberg became *Lipids* editor in 1967. He had been AOCS president in 1963 when discussions began about sponsoring a lipids journal. In 1970 *Lipids* became a monthly publication, as it is today.

During the 1964 annual meeting in New Orleans, Nicholas Pelick, Noel Kuhrt, and George Rouser gathered in a hotel room to discuss how to persuade AOCS to approve a new award for lipid chemists, Pelick would recall in 2007. Pelick said his belief was that lipid chemists “would be able to mix well with the chemists



A. Richard Baldwin. For a full list of this decade's timeline, AOCS meeting locations, sources for further reading, and other historical sidebars, log in and visit www.aocs.org/press/inform/.

and engineers from industry and be able to work together on common interests in the fields of fats and oils.

“The society had become a great meeting place where many good things began to happen in lipid chemistry and nutrition. The sharing of ideas became international and many services were being provided worldwide.”

At that 1964 meeting, the Governing Board approved the award proposal and agreed to have the first presentation during a 1964 AOCS short course on Quantitative Methodology in Lipid Research being held August 3–7 at Penn State University in State College, Pennsylvania. Applied Science Laboratories, also of State College, provided a \$2,500 stipend to accompany the award. Erich Baer of Canada, whom Pelick recalls was known as “the Father of Phosphatide,” was the first recipient. The award now is known as the Supelco/Nicholas Pelick-AOCS Research Award, and brings with it a \$10,000 stipend.

Lucy Hawkins retires

When Lucy Hawkins retired as AOCS executive secretary in 1961, AOCS had three full-time employees and one part-time employee. Her interim successor as executive secretary was Ted Rettger (he had spelled his name "Roettger" when he joined AOCS about four decades previously while a laboratory chemist for Frank Smalley at Southern Cotton Oil). Rettger had retired from Procter & Gamble.

Rettger "had agreed to 'sit in' (for a year) when Lucy Hawkins retired (to give AOCS time to find a new chief executive)," Carl Hauber, Rettger's successor later recalled.

Rettger took over in June 1961 and told the Governing Board at its October 1961 meeting that he had encountered major problems, partly because he had no opportunity to learn from his predecessor. Rettger said the staff organization was highly personal, and there were temperamental conflicts between employees. In the spring of 1962, Rettger reported that there had been a complete turnover in staff personnel, except for Doris Kann, who handled advertising records.

"Ted told me he had been informed that his primary role would be to edit manuscripts and the staff would handle the rest with a little oversight," Hauber wrote in a 2006 letter recalling his AOCS years. "As a matter of fact, it didn't turn out that way. Would it be polite and politic to say that Ted was very, very happy to see me? He was."

At least in part because of Rettger's situation, Hauber began work at AOCS on March 15, 1962, about a month and a half before his official starting date.

"The AOCS barely fit into the seventh floor space and we soon got approval to rent a considerably larger space on the 23rd floor of the same building, so that more of the classic staff functions could be assumed," Hauber recalled in 2006. "Under Dick Baldwin's tutelage, I soon improved and adjusted my editing skills, which had been learned in undergrad and law school.

"The bookkeeping system was manual—in the charge of the late Josephine Metz, who was the last (Chicago) staff member to leave the AOCS staff (after helping mentor new staff members in Champaign)."

AOCS' activities grew during Hauber's tenure. The 2,500 square feet of office space at 35 E. Wacker Dr. became too cramped. That triggered a 1970 decision that would change AOCS forever. Hauber died August 4, 2008, in Naples, Florida, to which he had retired in 1999 after 20 years as executive director for the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (see page 689 for his obituary).

Three other awards were first presented during AOCS' sixth decade—the Alton E. Bailey Award, the Bond Award, and the MacGee Awards for outstanding graduate students.

The Bailey Award was begun by the five-year-old AOCS North Central Section in 1959 to recognize "outstanding research as exemplified in publications or outstanding service to AOCS." Virgil Mehlenbacher received that first Bailey medal. Mehlenbacher, a former editor of the *AOCS Book of Methods*, had spearheaded

a 1946 revision of the methods book, the first complete revision since the book's initial publication in the 1920s. Bailey, AOCS' 1951 president, had been a dynamic researcher and prolific author before his death in 1953.

During its 1959 50th anniversary meeting in New Orleans, AOCS presented its first Bond Award to Joseph Coleman for his presentation of a paper, co-authored by Daniel Swern, during the 1958 fall meeting. The award was to encourage improved presentation of research papers.

The MacGee Awards debuted in 1963 following extensive lobbying by university researchers for an award program that would bring more students—who might later become members—to AOCS meetings. The Governing Board approved the student awards for an initial two-year trial run. Five students were cited in 1963 and another five in 1964. One of the 1964 honorees, Thomas Smouse, became AOCS' 1984 president; two others among the first ten honored students, R.G. Krishnamurthy and Randall Wood, would become Governing Board members.

The Governing Board agreed to continue the program beyond two years, with a stipulation that it should be funded by donations, rather than by AOCS general income. The award initially was named in honor of A.E. (Doc) MacGee, AOCS president when the program began. By the 1967 fall meeting, honorees had begun to be referred to as Honored Students, as the honorees are known today. Through 2008, nearly 400 graduate students have been recognized as AOCS Honored Students.

AOCS also added a second award in 1961 to its Smalley Program, which tests participants' analytical proficiency. The Barrow-Agee Award was created for best analysis of whole cottonseed. AOCS founders E.R. Barrow and G. Worthen Agee both were among the early presidents of AOCS. They had merged separate independent analytical laboratories in Memphis into a single company that continues today under the Barrow-Agee name. The Smalley Program's first award, for best moisture-protein-oil analysis of cottonseed meal, had been named in the 1920s for program founder Frank Smalley. In 1965, Ed Hahn, an independent laboratory owner in Columbia, South Carolina, became the first person to win both the Smalley Award and the Barrow-Agee Award in the same year.

AOCS was mulling other changes. After a thorough committee study, the Governing Board decided in 1963 to continue with two national meetings per year, rather than revert to the pre-1927 pattern of only one. The question would be revisited in the 1970s with a different outcome.

A major decision in 1968 would result in the move of AOCS headquarters to downstate Illinois three years later. AOCS was growing and so was its staff—numbering 10 persons by 1964. Long-time executive secretary Lucy Hawkins had retired in 1961 (see separate article). Leasing adequate office space in downtown Chicago was becoming more expensive. In 1968, the board decided it wanted to buy a building to serve as a new headquarters facility. Still to be resolved was the question of where that building should be—in the Chicago area or elsewhere.

MILESTONES

AOCS' last surviving founding member, T.C. Law, died in May 1962. He attended the May 20, 1909, founding meeting at Memphis' Jockey Club and was one of the initial members of AOCS' Uniform Methods Committee.

The 1962 AOCS fall meeting in Toronto, Canada, was the first time AOCS had held a national meeting outside the continental United States. AOCS now meets approximately once each decade at a Canadian location.

In 1965, AOCS acquired its first international affiliate when a local AOCS section formed in Monterrey, Mexico, with Frank Khym as the founding president.

One year later in 1966, the AOCS fall meeting encountered an unexpected obstacle. Hotel service employees at Philadelphia's Bellevue-Stratford Hotel went on strike on Friday, September 30. AOCS' fall meeting was to begin that weekend in the hotel. Intrepid AOCS registrants held what was deemed a very successful meeting despite having to make their own beds, survive without hotel eateries for lunch, and with minimal help preparing rooms for technical sessions and committee meetings.

In 1967, Lois Crauer became the first woman elected to AOCS' Governing Board. Crauer was chief chemist for what was then the De Laval Separator Co. in Poughkeepsie, New York. Two years later she was elected AOCS national secretary. She is still an AOCS member 41 years later.

In 1968, Minoru Saito of the Japan Oil and Vitamin Inspection Institute in Tokyo became the first AOCS certified chemist from outside the United States. He was certified for proficiency in analysis of soybeans, tallow, and grease.

In addition to adding *Lipids* to its publications lineup, AOCS also revamped the *Journal of the American Oil Chemists' Society (JAOCS)*. The cover design was altered to feature listings of the topics covered by the journal. *JAOCS* also asked authors to start providing an abstract to appear at the start of each article, and to

Walt Lundberg's presidential style

"When (AOCS) President Walt Lundberg (1963) got tired of listening to all the less significant arguments among (AOCS) Board members, he would reach down to the box on his chest, which controlled his hearing aids, and simply tune all the sound out.

"Then he would begin to speak—referring to the next agenda item and would continue on until the board members would, one-by-one, settle down and listen to him and catch up to his place on the agenda. Never saw this technique before or since, but it worked!"

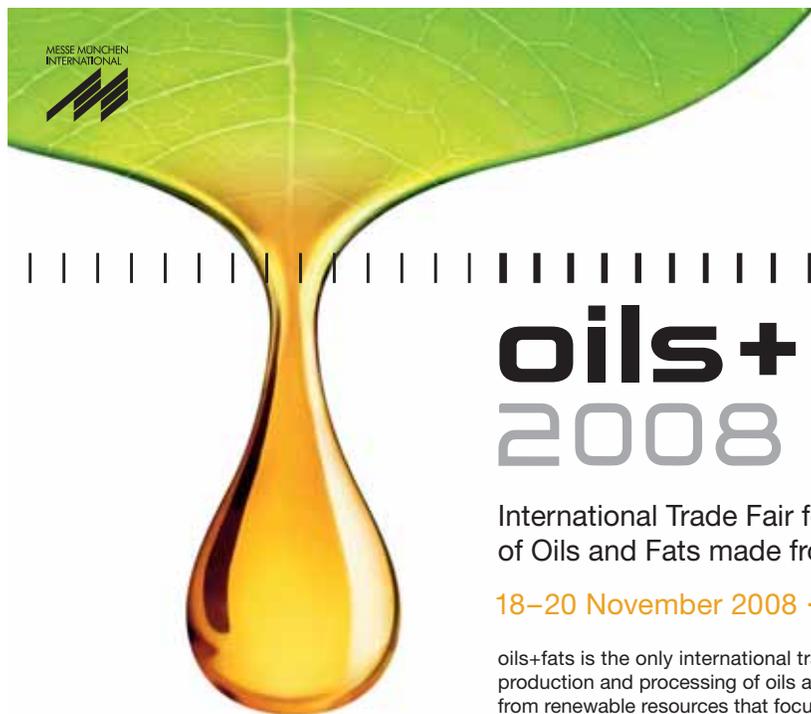
--Carl Hauber, personal letter, 2006

eliminate any summary at the end. Optional page charges also were begun to help cover rising printing and mailing costs.

AOCS' sixth decade was ending after many changes. The seventh would have even more—a new headquarters facility, a completely new staff, and a decision to boldly go where no AOCS meeting had gone before.

George Willhite, who is preparing this series of articles as AOCS' centennial historian, retired from AOCS in 2002 after 27 years as a member of its publications staff. He is an honorary member of AOCS. He can be contacted via e-mail at: willhite@aocs.org.

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