

1989–1998: The good times

Membership rises, finances improve, divisions multiply

New Orleans' motto when Mardi Gras time arrives is "laissez les bon temps roulez"—let the good times roll. For AOCS, the 1990s proved to be the good times: membership would peak, financial surpluses would return, and international activities would increase. AOCS' ninth decade also became the first without an AOCS annual meeting in New Orleans.

George Willhite

AOCS Treasurer Robert Burton had bad news for members attending the 1989 AOCS annual meeting in Cincinnati. The Society had an operating loss of approximately \$268,000 in 1988, Burton said, and a total loss of \$360,000. AOCS had operated in the red for three straight years and four out of the last six, Burton reported, but the overall balance sheet was healthy and the Governing Board had ordered personnel cuts and budget revisions the previous fall designed to avoid future operating deficits.

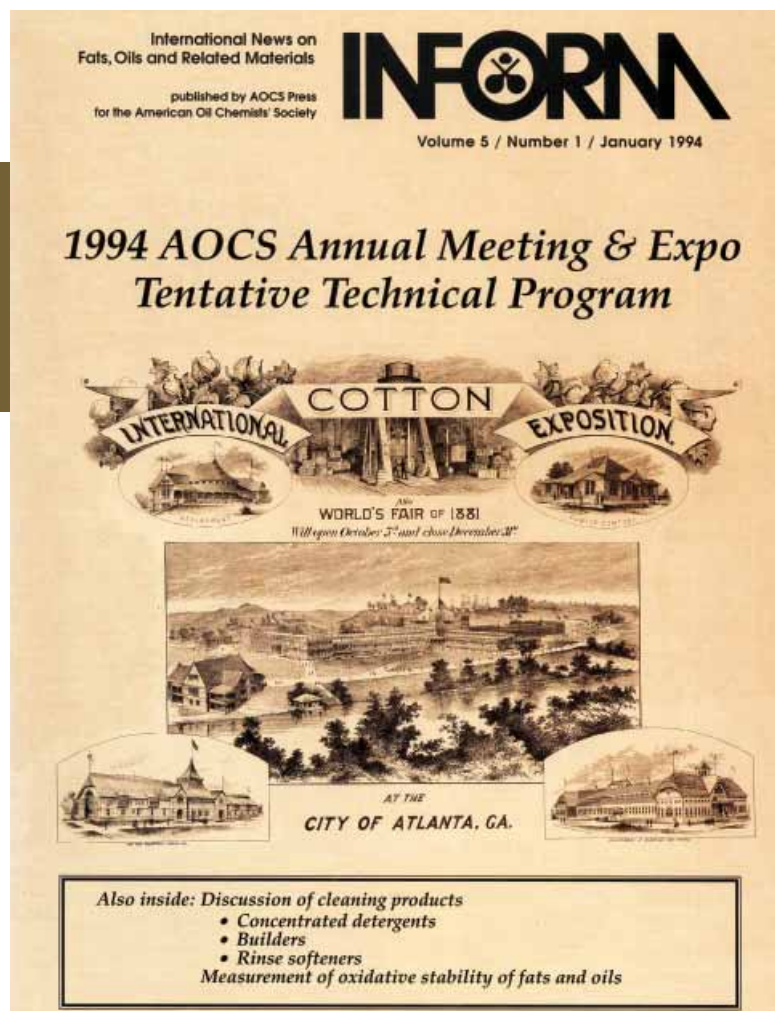
Burton's optimism proved justified when AOCS' operating income exceeded expenses in seven of the next eight years—rising to an operating surplus of nearly \$450,000 in 1998. Budgets were surpassing \$4 million.

AOCS thrived during the 1990s, and expectations were high for the following decade. The number of staff persons was increasing. In the late 1990s, a space crunch led AOCS' four-person technical staff, which was responsible for uniform methods, Smalley, and approved chemist programs, to move to rented office space in a nearby office park.

In anticipation of a need for even more staff, the AOCS Governing Board in 1995 began to consider expanding the eight-year-old Champaign headquarters building. Jim Lyon, AOCS' chief staff officer, recalls that long-term considerations made expansion on Broadmoor problematic when planners realized that "projections pushed our staffing projections to a point beyond the scope of future available parking." In 1998, the board decided the Society should build a new headquarters rather than expand the old one. The eventual site chosen was 2.85 miles (4.6 kilometers) north, still in Champaign. The new structure would be more expensive, but the outlook seemed to justify the cost.

MULTIPLYING VIA DIVISIONS

The nine AOCS founders in 1909 were a relatively homogeneous group—analysts who worked with cottonseed products. In the 1990s, the 5,000+ members comprised a diverse group in terms of disciplines and geography. Over several decades, AOCS members



A 1994 INFORM cover promoting that year's AOCS Annual Meeting & Expo. INFORM was one of two AOCS publications that debuted during the 1990s.

had begun to coalesce into informal common interest groups—processing, soaps and detergents, protein, analytical, and others. An AOCS protein and co-products specialty section had organized formally in 1982, followed by a surfactant and detergent specialty section in 1987 and a plant and microbial lipids specialty section in 1989. From the 1920s until the late 1940s, AOCS had included a “soap” section. The new specialty sections were a revival of that type of division within the membership.

In 1992, AOCS changed its bylaws to encourage creation of common-interest “divisions.” Within one year, AOCS had nine divisions: Analytical, Biotechnology, Edible Applications, Health and Nutrition, Lipid Oxidation/Quality, Phospholipids, Processing, Protein and Co-Products, and Surfactants and Detergents. In 1994, an AOCS Division Council was organized with representatives from each division meeting to discuss mutual problems and opportunities. The division council chairperson became a non-voting Governing Board member.

INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR

As the new topic-oriented divisions, which crossed international boundaries, flourished, so did geographic sections outside the United States.

A Canadian AOCS Section had been formed in 1985, followed by a Latin American Section in 1987. An AOCS India section was authorized in 1993. AOCS sections in Australia and Europe would hold their first meetings in 1996. The first AOCS section outside the United States had been formed in 1965 in Monterrey, Mexico, but it had become inactive by 1975.

During the decade, there were four AOCS world conferences in Europe, three in Asia, and one in Istanbul, which straddles both continents. The 1992 oilseed conference in Budapest, Hungary, was AOCS' first such venture into eastern/central Europe. Also in 1992, Vyaly Kljuchkin became AOCS' first member from the Soviet Union; he was general director for a research institute in Leningrad.

AOCS took on secretariat duties for the International Society for Fat Research (ISF) that same year. ISF previously had operated with a secretary-general as its only staff member, with host-country volunteers handling organizational details for meetings, usually held biennially. With AOCS as a secretariat, ISF gained staff to handle membership records, meeting logistics, and promotional services. There were four ISF congresses during the decade: 1992, Toronto; 1995, The Hague; 1997, Kuala Lumpur; and 1999, Brighton.

If AOCS' international activity, including international sections, was increasing, domestic geographic section activity was diminishing. Relatively inexpensive domestic long-distance telephone service, fax machines, and e-mail gave US members ways to communicate rapidly rather than waiting for a monthly dinner meeting or annual symposium.

One new domestic section did form in the decade. After a successful 1989 annual meeting in Cincinnati, an Ohio Valley Section was formed, providing that meeting's organizers with a chance to continue the fellowship they had enjoyed. But elsewhere geographic sections were fading. In 2008, the two remaining US geographic sections, the North Central Section and the Northeast Section, would merge into a single United States section.

PUBLICATIONS

Two AOCS periodicals were introduced during the decade. *INFORM*, a new member monthly publication, published its first issue in January 1990. At the end of the decade, the *Journal of Surfactants and Detergents (JSD)* debuted.

INFORM, an acronym derived from International News on Fats, Oils and Related Materials, was intended as a monthly business and science news magazine for AOCS-related disciplines. Former AOCS Director of Publications Dick Baldwin suggested the title during a publications committee meeting at the 1989 AOCS annual meeting in Cincinnati. Tom Applewhite, the founding editor for *INFORM*, was succeeded in 1993 by Tim Mounts. *INFORM* contained the news and advertising content that previously appeared in *JAACS*, which continued as a monthly journal publishing only peer-reviewed technical papers. The late Bert Princen (see "In Memoriam," p. 38) became editor of *JAACS* in 1991, succeeding Applewhite. William H. Tallent was named *JAACS* editor in 1997 when Princen stepped down. James Rat-tray became *INFORM* editor that year following the death of Tim

Timeline for 1989–1998



1989////AOCS discontinues "individual associate" member classification, making all full members eligible to vote and hold society offices.

1990////AOCS publishes first issue of *INFORM* (International News on Fats, Oils, and Related Materials).

AOCS installs first internal computer network for word processing; spreadsheet software installed at AOCS.

US detergent industry begins introducing superconcentrated powder and liquid laundry detergents, dishwashing gels, and other cleaning products.

1991////First Stephen S. Chang Distinguished Service Award presented to John Kinsella.

L.H. Princen becomes editor of *JAACS*, succeeding Thomas H. Applewhite.

Oxygen bleach activators discovered; structured liquid detergents introduced by US industry.

AOCS publications department begins operation of an Apple computer network for desktop publishing.

1992////First Samuel Rosen Memorial Award presented to Robert Laughlin.

1993////First Ralph Potts Student Award presented to Jonathon Blitz.

AOCS Analytical Division creates and presents first Herbert J. Dutton Award to Dr. Dutton.

1994////Howard Knapp becomes editor of *Lipids*, succeeding Wolfgang Baumann.

First Frank Naughton Award presented to Chaitali Adhikare.

AOCS hires first information technology systems manager.

First genetically altered oilseed crop—40% laurate canola—planted by Calgene near Dawson, Georgia

1995////Alkyl polyglucosides commercialized by Henkel.

Canadian AOCS Section presented its first lifetime achievement awards in field of fats and for contributions by Canadians to Robert Ackman, Joyce Beare-Rogers, Kenneth Carroll, John deMan, Arnis Kuksis, and Ted Mag.

1996////First M. Eijadi Student Award, AOCS Foundation, Lever and Unichem scholarship awards presented.

For the rest of this decade's timeline and other historical sidebars, log in and visit www.aocs.org/press/inform/.

Lorenzo's Oil: The fats and oils movie

Lorenzo's Oil is likely to be the only major Hollywood film ever to have a plot revolving around triglyceride structure.

The 1992 film is based on the true struggle of Augusto and Michaela Odone to save their son, Lorenzo, who was diagnosed in 1984 at age 6 with X-ALD (adrenoleukodystrophy) in the brain. Susan Sarandon, who portrayed Michaela Odone, received an Academy Award nomination as best actress.

The disease involves destruction of the myelin sheath around nerve structures by accumulations of very-long-chain fatty acids (VLCFA), disturbing nerve function. The Odones eventually obtained a pint of pure, food-grade oleic-acid oil from the late Russell McIntyre, an AOCS member who worked for Capital City Products in Columbus, Ohio. McIntyre recalled in 1993 that he remembered a phone call from Mrs. Odone seeking the oil, but couldn't remember the research project that had produced the surplus pint of pure oleic acid oil that he sent to her.

Use of the pure oleic-acid oil in Lorenzo's diet reduced his serum VLCFA levels and slowed the disease's progress. He did not die within two years as doctors had said was inevitable, surviving until 2008. One research report noted that only about 10% of a group of young boys who began taking Lorenzo's Oil after having been determined to have the gene leading to X-ALD later showed symptoms of the disease.

After Lorenzo Odone died May 30, 2008, at age 30, his father, Augusto, said he planned to write a book about the struggle to save Lorenzo. An article about the movie appeared in the April 1993 *INFORM*.

Mounts in 1996. Larry Johnson had filled the post on an interim basis during the latter part of 1996.

With the advent of *INFORM*, the AOCS news staff ceased publication in December 1989 of *I.N.F.O.* (*International Newsletter on Fats and Oils*), a limited circulation monthly created to share information among national fats and oils groups in North America, Europe, and Asia.

Paul O'Dea was named AOCS staff director of publications in 1988, retiring a few years later to be succeeded by Mary Lane.

AOCS Press, the Society's publishing arm, was created in 1993 to give a distinctive identity to the publications program, as well as to provide a vehicle to form a for-profit subsidiary if the need should arise. Thus far it hasn't.

The quarterly *Journal of Surfactants and Detergents* began in 1998, publishing technical papers, news, and advertising. Ten years later it became a journal solely for peer-reviewed technical papers. Surfactant and detergent industry news is published in *inform* (which now uses lower-case letters in its acronym title). *JSD* was championed by AOCS' surfactant and detergent contingent, with founding editor Michael Cox leading the way.

MEMBERSHIP REVISIONS

AOCS opened the door wider to full active membership in 1989. Until then, "active members," those entitled to vote and hold office, had to have at least five years' scientific training or its equiva-

lent. Others could join as "individual associate members," which entitled them to virtually all privileges except voting or holding executive office. At the spring 1989 annual meeting, members voted to dissolve the difference. Henceforth, all full members would be eligible to vote and to run for office.

The AOCS Fellows program began in 1997. Previously, long-time members being recognized for long-term outstanding service had been designated as "Honorary Members." Now they would be known as "Fellows."

Henceforth, the honorary member designation would be bestowed on nonmembers who had provided unusual service to AOCS or its fields of interest, which had been the criteria for honorary members during AOCS' early decades.

MILESTONES

The 4th edition of *AOCS Official Methods and Recommended Practices* was completed in late 1989, a culmination of the program that had begun in the 1970s to update AOCS' methodology. AOCS Technical Director David Berner and Uniform Methods editor David Firestone decided another useful task would be to revive Section I of the AOCS methods book. By 1997, the updated Section I, providing physical and chemical characteristics for hundreds of fats, oils, and waxes was completed. Since 1999 it has been published in book form.

In 1990, scholars outside North America became eligible for AOCS Honored Student Awards. Honored Students from around the world now receive support to attend the AOCS annual meeting to present a research paper. In 2008, eight of the twelve Honored Students were born outside the United States, with four receiving awards for work done in Argentina, Canada, France, and New Zealand.

Students attending the 1994 annual meeting in Atlanta had a unique chance to have breakfast with "mentors," AOCS members who offered to buy breakfast for two or three students and to discuss what might lie ahead after graduation. During the 2008 AOCS meeting in Seattle, the mentor event was held during a lunch break and allowed students to visit with more than one professional AOCS member.

At the 1991 annual meeting in Chicago, Executive Director Jim Lyon was honored for two decades with AOCS. During his first 20 years, AOCS membership had risen by more than 33%, the budget had more than doubled, and the number of staff members had tripled to 36. During those 20 years AOCS also had grown from a primarily domestic organization into an international society.

The first Stephen S. Chang Award was presented in 1991 to John Kinsella for outstanding research. Chang had come to the United States after World War II and become active in AOCS after doing graduate studies at the universities of Kansas and Illinois under Fred Kummerow. He became head of the Department of Food Science at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, where the agricultural college's library is named for Chang and his wife, Lucy. The Changs became generous benefactors to AOCS, making the first individual \$25,000 contribution to the 1986 building fund drive as well as endowing the Chang award for research of importance to the fats and oils industries.

AOCS had hired its first information technology staff person in 1994 and two years later established a home page on the Internet, a bland display compared to the current version, but one that drew enough attention to make it, at the time, one of the most

viewed pages among not-for-profit US chemical organizations. At the time, few AOCS staff members realized how important the Internet would become.

In 1997, AOCS changed the name of its Smalley Check Sample Program to the Laboratory Proficiency Program (LPP). AOCS co-founder and Southern Cotton Oil chief chemist Frank Smalley had shared his check sample program with other AOCS members during the Society's first decade. After his death in 1921, the program was named in his honor. But at the cusp of the 21st century, AOCS leaders decided few domestic members, let alone the approximately 40% outside the United States, knew the origins of the program's name. Laboratory Proficiency Program was chosen as a descriptive title that might attract more enrollees.

AOCS decided in 1998 to add two members-at-large to the Governing Board, effective in 2000. AOCS membership had peaked at 5,400+ in 1997 and adding two Governing Board members was seen as a way to provide greater diversity on the board. Roberto Rodriguez became the first person from outside the United States and Canada to serve on the board in 1991. There has been at least one such representative, and sometimes two, ever since.

SMOUSE, MOUNTS DIE

AOCS lost two relatively young past presidents when Tom Smouse died in 1995 at age 59 and Tim Mounts died in 1997 at the same age. Former AOCS President Robert Hastert described their deaths as "tragic" and a major loss to AOCS "leadership and *esprit de corps*."

Smouse had been in the second class of AOCS Honored Students (1964) and served in numerous capacities on his way to serving as AOCS president in 1983–1984, the Society's 75th anniversary year.

Mounts was among the most popular members in AOCS. He became *INFORM* editor after serving as AOCS president in 1988.

"Tim and I were elected to the Governing Board the same year and we served together on that body for eight consecutive years thereafter." Hastert said. "During that time, even though we were dealing with numerous issues of tremendous importance, I cannot recall that we ever had even a trace of a significant disagreement."

THE CURRENT DECADE

AOCS' ninth decade had been full of good news. Membership, meeting attendance, and income had been rising. The next decade would be quite different.

And no one anticipated September 11, 2001.

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