



## FROM THE EDITOR

In lieu of an editorial comment this time,<sup>1</sup> I would like to call your attention to a very useful and entertaining book I came across at the ACS national meeting in New Orleans earlier this year. It is published by the ACS, but distributed by Oxford University Press. The title is, *America's Scientific Treasures - A Travel Companion*,<sup>2</sup> authored by Paul and Brenda Cohen. The Cohens are on the staff of the College of New Jersey, and Paul serves as an ACS councilor from the Trenton Section, but the book is far from a dry, technical tome.

The Cohens present material only on sites that they have visited, and place the following additional requirements for inclusion in the book: the content or completeness of the collection must be special; the site must have an educational component (and they make it clear that they are aiming the book at adults, although children may enjoy many of the places described); and the presentation of the exhibits must be beyond the ordinary. Each of the approximately 200 entries includes interesting historical information, a description of the highlights of the site, and logistical information (address, driving directions, whether or not a fee is charged, whether the site is handicapped accessible, etc.). As I randomly thumbed through the geographically organized listings, I ran across many familiar places, but far more that looked interesting but were unknown to me. Clearly, the Cohens enjoy traveling, and they demonstrate a broad knowledge of the history of science and technology in the U.S.

I was impressed with the Cohens' thoroughness, as well. I have worked in Washington, D.C. since 1974 and I thought I knew the area pretty well. Even so, this book alerted me to the National Museum of Health and Medicine right in the city, and to some other places I would like to visit in nearby Baltimore. While the book first appeared in 1998, the information it contains is still highly useful. I will be referring to it several times in the coming months. You may want to check into it, too.

-- Dennis Chamot

<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid any possible violation of ACS bylaws while I am a candidate for re-election as a Member-at-Large of the ACS Board of Directors, I have not included in this Bulletin any personal commentary on ACS activities or developments.

<sup>2</sup> *America's Scientific Treasures - A Travel Companion*, Paul S. Cohen and Brenda H. Cohen, American Chemical Society, Washington, D.C., 446 pp (1998). Distributed by Oxford University Press.

# PAVING YOUR WAY TO CAREER SUCCESS: HOW THE ACS CAN HELP

A SYMPOSIUM PRESENTED BY THE DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS  
NEW ORLEANS, MARCH, 2003

## Introduction

**John K. Borchardt**

Many of us, as either new members or members happy in their jobs, are not familiar with the many services ACS offers to help us find jobs, keep those jobs and progress in our careers. Yet today we are more likely to need these services because of long-term trends in corporate restructuring and current economic conditions. The intent of the symposium, "Paving Your Way to Career Success: How the ACS Can Help," was to help familiarize members with these services. The speakers included members of the ACS Office of Career Services and members who have been helped by these services. Below are brief versions of comments from two of the speakers.

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## My Professional Partner

**Margie St Germain**

**EPA Region 7**

Do you use a bank? Checking? Loans? Investments? This is an ordinary occurrence for you. You get back what you put in. Occasionally, you get more. If you invest time and money for your personal life, do you also invest in your professional life? I do. Here is my story about my professional partner, ACS.

In 1978, I graduated with a double major in chemistry and biology. I saw myself as a chemist. After one interview I got my first job! The first thing I did after graduation was to register with the American Chemical Society(ACS). My supervisors were active in the local section, so I was swept into the society. I attended the monthly meetings. As membership chair, I met and

greeted new members. What they didn't tell me was that the "once every three year directory" was due out the next year. The Kansas City Section had over 800 members that year. What a great way to meet most of the members!

Meet chemists, make connections with companies, a worthy goal for a new member. As I became comfortable with the society, I participated in more activities of the local section. If I invested my time in the society, I figured I could tap its resources. I needed leadership experience. I found the local section a great opportunity.

In a short period, I was Secretary, Chair-Elect, Chair,

and Nomination Chair. Throughout these years, I had the support of other older chemists, some PhD chemists and some experienced BS chemists. They offered recommendations on handling difficult situations, a helping hand in times of need, and congratulations for a job well done. The most memorable challenge was convincing the membership to increase local dues from \$2 a year to \$5. The local section was a great resource for greater involvement at the regional and national levels. Unknown to me, one of the counselors nominated me for a national committee, the Younger Chemist Committee. As a YCC representative, I attended national meetings, discovering tools needed for

promotions, tools needed for career development, technical contacts for future work, and a broader networking opportunity.

As an experienced chemist, I had been provided many leadership experiences, teamwork and networking skills that would prepare me for the unexpected. Everyone has something happen in their career that is unexpected. I had been at my first company for over 17 years. I thought I was successful. New management arrived, and they did not agree. The fateful day came; I was forced to resign or be fired. I had no job.

The first few days were extremely emotional: feelings of anger, fear, frustration, guilt, low confidence. I picked myself up and proceeded on. First, I registered to take Calculus III. It had only been 19 years prior that I had completed Calculus II. As expected, I failed my first test, missing a D by two points. No worry, I was right on schedule with the reviews. As the instructor returned the second test, he did a double-take. I had gotten a B, missing an A by two points. By the end of the semester, I had accomplished an A average, and had built myself-confidence. Second, I worked with the state employment agency, I read the newspaper, I sent unsolicited letters and resumes to companies in Kansas City. Throughout it all, ACS was there helping me. After contacting the national staff, I received a package filled with wonderful career publications, such as *Tips on Resume Writing, Interview*

*Techniques, Targeting the Job Market,* and insurance opportunities.

As I planned my future, I was able to evaluate my finances. Based on the 1994 ACS survey, I learned that the average unemployment time for a chemist was 12 months. Because I was not able to relocate, I planned for 18 months of unemployment. I identified alternate health insurance coverage from ACS. I planned for continuation of my membership without a financial burden. Did you know that if you are unemployed, you could request a waiver of your annual dues and still remain a member?

I used the national meeting resources. The National Employment Clearing House and the Regional Employment Clearing Houses are wonderful resources to identifying the prospects in the job market, as well as practice the new skills. If you are unemployed at the time of national, and most regional meetings, you can request a waiver of the meeting fees. I made several contacts, and discussed my prospects with the ACS staff. I tapped into my local contacts. I obtained inside information about upcoming positions within the local companies. Bad news: no job. Good news: I had the respect of other chemists. I used these contacts as references when I finally went on job interviews.

In six months, I had applied to 100 positions, had six job interviews, and finally got a job with the Environmental Protection Agency. Besides

taking classes, I remained active in my local section. We hosted the 1994 Midwest Regional Meeting of ACS, and I was the general chair. It was the most successful with over 900 attendees, and a profit of \$7000.

During my time of need, I took a lot from the society while returning very little. ACS was there helping me throughout the process. Since that fateful year, I have been returning the favor to ACS. I became one of the first local career contacts in the nation. From my experience, and from the poor economy, I requested multiple copies of the ACS career publications. When I receive a call, the person has a package in two days.

I am involved at the national level. As a counselor and career consultant, I review resumes at NECH, review new web sites for career development, and review ACS literature. Personally, I continue to give talks to students about career directions, especially in the sciences. The general theme is that in order to be successful, you need to love the work you do. Goals, dreams, and your passions have no boundaries. So why should the society have those boundaries? The society doesn't have them? It's only a perception. A BS chemist may have different goals and directions than a PhD chemist. The society has value to both types of chemists. Don't let perceptions prevent you from accomplishing your goals and dreams. I am still looking for other ways to invest my time with the ACS.

Are you just a member? Consider this regular checking for your profession. Have you used the services of ACS such as NECH and insurance? This is

the loans and services. Are you an active member participating in more than one level of the society? This is the investment group. If banking is so

important to your personal life, shouldn't you also invest in a professional partner -- the ACS?

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## Job Survival Skills – ACS Was There!

**Michael J. Brownfield**  
**Staff Chemist**  
**Raytheon**

Over the past 30 years, there have been many changes in my professional career. My career has included teaching, both at the college and high school levels, supervising chemical technicians, and managing a chemical laboratory in a non-chemical environment (the electronics industry). In each of these positions, the American Chemical Society and its Department of Career Services plus other ACS units have played a major role in helping me define and adjust my career path.

My first encounter with the American Chemical Society occurred as a student affiliate during my junior/senior years at college. ACS information on graduate schools guided me through the many choices available and aided in helping me choose the University of Wisconsin for my graduate work.

My first job out of graduate school was teaching science and mathematics at the high school

level. By using the information available through the ACS Department of Career Services, I was able to stay abreast of the chemical job market, and salary information from economic surveys made it possible for me to have the necessary knowledge when I decided to accept an industrial job with an electronics company.

After switching to the industrial environment, interaction through the use of local section activities and participation in national ACS meetings made me aware of the various career opportunities and potential new positions available. The ACS and in particular the Department of Career Services were there when job prospects were dim and being "laid off" became a reality. The Division of Professional Relations offered me an avenue to meeting and talking to other chemists as well as support during difficult times. As I found employment in another electronics firm, my contacts and knowledge of chemistry that I had acquired

through ACS meetings and participation on national committees, kept me one step ahead of the layoff list. During several transitions, mergers, and downsizing operations, the resources and information available only through the American Chemical Society assisted my career moving into a new position of responsibility which eventually developed into a twenty-five year career.

Later at the college level, using the information available through the ACS member services, including the Division of Chemical Education, I was able to enhance my teaching skills and stay current on the changes occurring in the chemical world.

Throughout my career path, the American Chemical Society and the people I have met through the ACS have assisted me both in a professional and personal sense. Truly, the ACS was always there for me.



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