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From the SelectedWorks of Otto Vogl

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F. Growth of the Pacific Polymer Federation

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III. Growth of the Pacific Polymer Federation

When the first presidential term ended, the President became the Past President for the term of the second presidency. When the third President was in office, the Past President became the Former President. All responsibilities and authority at that time ceased, including a possible Membership in the Council.

When Otto Vogl became the first Past President of PPF in the beginning of 1991, the next President, Takeo Saegusa, his Japanese successor, in a gallant gesture, immediately appointed him Special Advisor to the President. President Saegusa used him as advisor a number of times when policy questions arose which required the knowledge of the Past President.

This type of transition between presidencies avoided any possible interference of the past president with the policies and practices of new "administration". Former presidents were always welcomed at Council Members and at Council deliberations when they attended meetings at which Council Meetings were held. Under Salamone's presidency, a non-binding resolution was adopted to have past presidents being non-voting members of the Council.

Saegusa's competent and imaginative leadership relied on the support and guidance of SPSJ. The initial period of the PPF was solidified and strengthened. New organizations joined PPF and, what is more important, the cooperation within PPF became a reality and the Council became a functioning unit. It should be emphasized that the combination of several organizations of different cultural backgrounds, size, financial and scientific capabilities, and tradition was not an easy endeavor.

The Membership Committee was the most active committee at the beginning of PPF. The Committee Chairman had the responsibility of identifying, contacting and inviting qualified polymer organizations of the Pacific Rim countries of polymer interest to join PPF. In some countries, groups with polymer interests had capable scientists but had no formal organizations. The PPF encouraged them and helped them to form appropriate organizations. Examples are the new PPF member organizations from Mexico, Thailand, Vietnam and Chile.

During Saegusa's presidency six more organizations were accepted as new Members of PPF: Macromolecular Division of the Chemical Society of Chile, Indonesia Polymer Association, Division of Polymers and Organic Materials, Mexican Academy of Materials of Sciences, The Polymer Society of Thailand, Division of High Polymer Physics, The American Physical Society, Division of Polymer Science, Chemical Society of Vietnam.

Let us look at the progress stories of the Membership Committee advances. The number of PPF organizations had reached 17; all of them had scientific and technical competence.

The Council decided to look very carefully at admitting additional organizations. It was rather believed that the younger/smaller organizations should be appropriately incorporated before any further additions be made.

The third President of PPF was James H. O'Donnell representing the Polymer Group of the Royal Australian Institute of Chemists. The Australian Group decided that they wished to keep the presidency only for one year. This decision allowed the next President (J.C. Salamone of the ACS Division of Polymer Chemistry) to assume his position in 1994, and to have more time to devote to the PPF presidency and to have plenty of time to prepare for PPC-4. This way the presidency ended with the organization of PPC-4. Very soon after his term of presidency at the end of 1994 James H. O'Donnell died after a short illness. He was greatly missed by all of us involved in PPF.

After the presidency of J.C. Salamone, the presidency went from the "Founding Member Organizations" to the larger, well established but "newer" member organizations, Korea and China.

After that, smaller organizations felt they could handle the responsibility of the PPF Chairmanship: Mexico (Takeshi Ogawa) and Thailand (Supawan Tantayanon). More recently, the PPF Council decided to call on the Founding Member organizations to again assume the responsibility for the PPF presidency and James E MacGrath (Division of Polymer Chemistry Inc., American Chemical Society) became the 9th President of PPF (2004-2005), probably to be followed by a Japanese candidate for President.

One of the major activities of PPF is holding of a major International, but regional Conference called Pacific Polymer Conference (PPC). The conferences bring together usually 400-800 conferees, frequently 40-50% from the organizing country. It is one of the objectives of PPF to allow young people of the host country to interact with foreign conferees and to learn from the International flavor. Eight Conferences have been held under the Chairmanship of the acting President of PPF. The PPCs are held in interesting places that allow convenient scientific and personal interactions.

The following PPC's has been held:

PPC-1 Otto Vogl (Division of Polymer Chemistry Inc., American Chemical Society) in Maui Hawaii, USA in 1989; PPC-2 Takeo Saegusa The Society of Polymer Science, Japan) in Otsu, Japan, 1991; PPC-3 James H. O'Donnell, (The Polymer Division, The Royal Australian Chemical Institute) at the Gold Coast, Australia in 1993; PPC-4 Joseph C. Salamone (Division of Polymer Chemistry Inc., American Chemical Society) in Kauai, Hawaii, Japan in 1995, PPC-5 Chung Yup Kim (The Polymer Society of Korea) in Kyongju, Korea in 1997; PPC-6 Fosong Wang, (The Polymer Division of Chinese Chemical Society) in Guangzhou, China in 1999; PPC-7 Takeshi Ogawa (Mexican Polymer Society) in Oaxaca, Mexico in 2001, PPC-8 Supawan Tantayanon (The Polymer Society of Thailand) in Bangkok in 2003,

PPC-9 James E MacGrath PPF President (Division of Polymer Chemistry Inc., American Chemical Society) is planned for Maui, Hawaii, USA in 2005.

A detailed description of the PPCs are presented in the later chapters of this booklet under Newsletters and Polymer News Articles about the first PPF presidencies.

The Publication and Information Committee, needed to publicize PPF, was a strong committee and a committee that involved representatives of all organizations represented in the Council. In the formative years of PPF activities, it approached local Newspapers, prestigious Journals, like C & E News and had PPF activities and the PPC meetings appropriately announced. The Newsletter was in the hands of an especially appointed Newsletter team, different from the Council, or the "cabinet" or the President's staff. PPC meetings were announced with Flyers and Circulars. Now, much of the communication is done on the Internet. Registrations, reservations and accommodations are mainly handled on the Internet. We only hope it is equally effective than the printed word.

As the PPF became a "modern" organization, financial resources became less available. With the presidency of smaller country organizations many of these activities were taken over by individual teams or their organizations that were able to organize the PPC meetings.

The Awards Committee decided to give two Awards for Distinguished Service in PPF at PPC-3. The two co-founders of PPF, Otto Vogl and Takeo Saegusa were the recipients of these awards. James H. O'Donnell was given the Award posthumously by Otto Vogl (to D.J.T. Hill) at the meeting in Kauai. No other Award has been presented since. The initial idea of the award was for outstanding scientific contributions and service to PPF. Since the awarding of these honors, the Award Committees did not feel that this combination of requirements justified another Award.

Let me summarize the development of PPF. The PPF was conceived 20 years ago with three member organizations. Now there are 17 member organizations from 14 countries around the Pacific Rim and the Pacific Islands. About 2 billion people live in these countries and 30-40,000 people belong to professional organizations involved in polymer science.

What we can say is that our initial goal has been accomplished. New organizations have been brought into the activities of PPF. PPF now really occupies the Pacific Rim in geographic terms. The Rim spans a crescent of over 10,000 miles from Cape Horn in Chile to the Gulf of Thailand and including the island nations of Australia, Japan, Indonesia and New Zealand.

PPF is and was designed as a regional organization of individual organizations, not countries. Some countries have more than one member, The U.S.A. has the ACS Division of Polymer Chemistry, and the Polymer Division of the American Physical Society as its members. China has three members, the polymer organizations of the Chemical Society of China, but also the Member Organizations of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In the early stages of the creation and existence of PPF polymer scientists and those active in professional societies were relatively limited. Most people knew each other well

as cooperators or competitors and could afford to travel. It was this generation that was able to create PPF. Now newer objectives that are tailored to the needs of our present scientific and technological society have to be recognized. PPF will have to adjust and appreciate the change in time. Still the principle of a regional organization of organizations is a shining light for the future.

Some comments to the structure of this article: I have written the first part as Beginning, Presidency of Otto Vogl and Growth and continued purpose of the Organization. In order to be factual I have added an appendix of Newsletters. These Newsletters were written by the publication team and authorized by the corresponding President. I have edited the Newsletter by eliminating trivias. The comments of the Presidents and the Minutes of the Council Meetings have not been altered. This presentation should retain the flavor of the proceedings and development of PPF.

I have attended, as an invited guest all the Council meetings that were held from PPC-2 to PPC-6 and made occasional comments when it was appropriate. Under my initiative, we also wrote commentaries for Polymer News for PPC-1 to PPC-6. I would like to thank my co-authors for their help. Copies of the articles are also included at the end of this article. Some issues that did not come out properly in the Minutes are more extensively addressed in the Polymer News articles. It should be remembered that the Minutes of Council Meeting were sometimes taken and written by persons whose primary language were not English. This tends to provide only minimum accounting of the proceedings.