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A. Cover Page, Title Page, Table of Contents, and Forward

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The Pacific Polymer Federation

2004
The History
of the
Pacific Polymer Federation

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In cooperation with Kenneth J. Wynne
The Pacific Polymer Federation

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The Pacific Polymer Federation (PPF) was created in the mid '80's as an active regional organization. It was designed as an organization to advance and benefit polymer science and technology. The objective of PPF was to encourage and facilitate the interaction between polymer organizations of the Pacific Rim and also to provide a mechanism for the exchange of scientific knowledge, participation in national polymer meetings, and visits of polymer scientists among counties of the Pacific.

We must remember how slow and complicated it was in the late '50s and early '60s to interact with colleagues abroad. The written word was the main process of presenting one's accomplishments. Publications took months and years to become available. Travels over long distances that were required for personal interactions and exchange of information were cumbersome. Travel times were not counted in hours but in weeks and months. Frequent meetings, especially on an International level, did not exist or very rarely; e-mail had not arrived on the scene.

Polymer science was from the beginning an International science. It was started in Europe, had its roots in industry, in rubber, natural products and its early explorers were in European academia. After the second world war much of the emphasis and thrust shifted to the United States, but there was essentially no connection with countries of the Far East, such as Japan.

In the '50s and '60s professional organizations interested in polymer science started to evolve in the U.S. and in Japan, much of the science in Australia was connected with the Commonwealth, England.

The first interaction in polymer science with the Orient were early contacts with Japan, young post doctoral fellows came to the United States and a few Japanese students worked for their Ph.D.s in American Universities, but all these fledgling contacts were on individual bases.

The introduction of travel by jet airplanes improved this situation significantly. In the '60's personal contacts intensified with the Orient, some scientists learned to know and understand each other. Cultural differences and historic backgrounds had to be overcome. An IUPAC Symposium was held in Kyoto in 1966 which allowed tile development of more individual contacts.

Several bilateral seminars first organized by small groups of polymer scientists of Japan and the U.S. based on narrow subjects, helped develop scientific interactions and personal relationships. Some of these bi-lateral seminars became more organized, regular and of broader scope.
The flow of post doctoral research associates from Japan to the U.S.A. increased in years to come. This pattern was followed by Korean and Chinese scientists. The initial interaction developed into close cooperation between scientists and research groups and closed the gap in polymer science between the Western world and the Orient. The common scientific language, English, became an important driving force for this development.

The U.S. Japan Agreement of Cooperation between the Polymer Division of the ACS and the SPSJ in 1974 set the stage for a novel idea of interaction that led ultimately to the creation of the Pacific Polymer Federation.

The Pacific Polymer Federation has now been in existence for almost 20 years and includes 17 organizations from 14 countries. It is a regional organization encompassing 30,000 to 40,000 scientists and industrialists from organizations of the Pacific Rim involved in polymer science.

In this booklet I have described the background and pursuit that was needed to create PPF and bring it to a functioning organization. After the general description, I have also included edited Pacific Polymer Newsletters and articles that have been written in Polymer News describing additional PPF activities and the Pacific Polymer Conferences.

Otto Vogl, Amherst MA, July 2004