



**In Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the**  
**SOCIETY FOR APPLIED SPECTROSCOPY**

**A Brief History of the Early Years**



By Marvin Margoshes, 25 Maple Ave.,  
Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706  
and  
Leopold May, 10217 Lorain Ave., Silver  
Spring, MD 20901

# The Early Years of SAS

During World War II there was a rapid increase in the use of spectroscopy, to meet the need for the rapid manufacture of war materials. New kinds of spectroscopic instruments were developed. They became commercial products soon after the War, including the Beckman IR1, the Baird IR and Emission Spectrometers, and the ARL Quantometer. Many scientists became involved in spectroscopy with little or no prior experience. Many were not eligible for the American Chemical Society as they were trained as physicists. Those who were trained as chemists were not eligible to join the American Physical Society. Local groups formed so that the members could share their knowledge. For example, the group that later became the New York Section of SAS had its first meeting in the Summer of 1945, as WW II neared its end. Shortly afterwards, the Baltimore-Washington Spectroscopy Society was started including some who had moved from New York to the Baltimore Washington Area.

## FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY

In 1954 a number of spectroscopists, recognizing the existence of several regional societies of spectroscopists, organized a committee to promote a stronger exchange of information among these societies. The efforts of this committee resulted in the formation of the Federation of Spectroscopic Societies on March 1, 1956 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Federation was made up of nine local groups,

The temporary officers at this meeting were Dr. Eugene Rosenbaum, Chairman, and Mrs. Sarah Degenkolb, Secretary. The Societies adopted a Constitution at this meeting. Five other societies were represented at this meeting including the Canadian Association of Applied Spectroscopy. The officers elected for one year were Edwin Jaycox, Chairman, Grace Marsh, Vice Chairman; and Rev. James J. Devlin, S.J., Secretary-Treasurer.



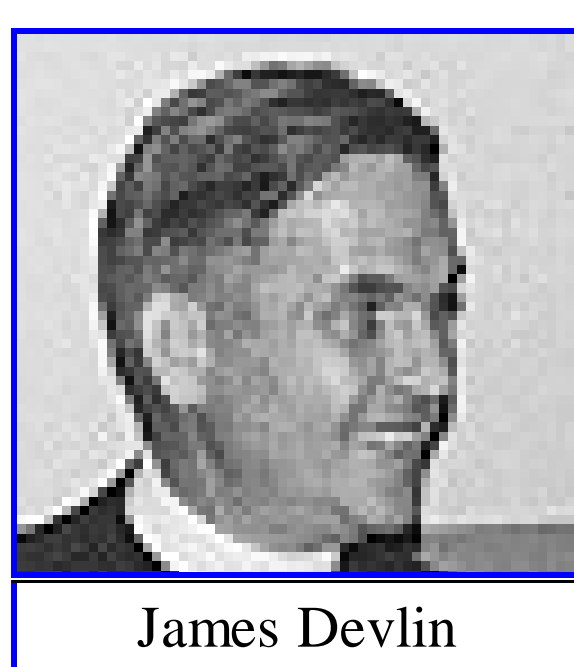
Eugene Rosenbaum



Sarah Degenkolb



Edwin Jaycox



James Devlin



William Poehlman  
Founding President  
1957-1959

On March 7, 1957, the Federation held a meeting of the representatives of the member societies in Pittsburgh. The new officers elected were Mr. William J. Poehlman, President; Mrs. Sarah Degenkolb, Vice President; and Rev. James J. Devlin, S.J., Secretary-Treasurer. The major business of that meeting was the appointment of a fact finding committee to consider the advisability of founding a National Society of Applied Spectroscopy. After due inquiry, this committee reported a widespread interest in forming a national society and proceeded to draft a constitution.

The enthusiastic response to the proposal of a national society and the expressed willingness of the New York area group to relinquish its name and journal, culminated in the foundation of a National Society for Applied Spectroscopy at a meeting of the Federation of Spectroscopic Societies at the first Eastern Analytical Symposium in New York, on November 4, 1958. One of the first matters to be debated was choosing an appropriate name. The proposal to replace the word "Federation" with "Association" was rejected with not much debate after it was pointed out that the new initials for the society would be ASS. The New York SAS graciously gave its name and journal, *Applied Spectroscopy*, to the new national society.

On November 7, 1960, the Society was incorporated in the State of Pennsylvania with its legal residence at Mellon Institute, 4400 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as a nonprofit corporation.

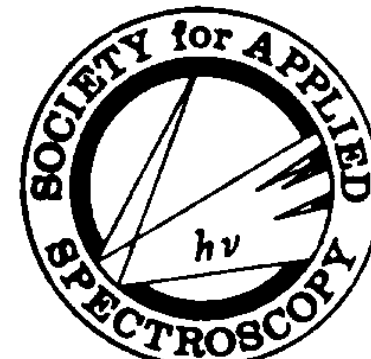
## APPLIED SPECTROSCOPY, THE JOURNAL

The first issue of *Applied Spectroscopy* was in 1945, as a newsletter of the just-formed New York area group. It was in a newsletter format, but it included technical articles, mostly of a tutorial nature. After Vol. 6 the name was changed from *Bulletin of the Society for Applied Spectroscopy* to *Applied Spectroscopy*. The national society assumed the responsibility for publishing the journal with Vol.12 in 1960. Dr. Frederick Strong III, who was editor at the time of transfer, continued in that capacity until 1961.

In 1966 the Society became an affiliate member of the American Institute of Physics. At that time, the responsibility for publication of Applied Spectroscopy was assumed by the American Institute of Physics, but the editorial management remained under the Society for Applied Spectroscopy. In addition to publishing and printing the Journal, the American Institute of Physics also processed membership forms and handled other routine matters such as balloting and dues collection. In 1971, the Society retained its affiliation with AIP but transferred the printing and publication of the journal, together with the managerial services to The Williams & Wilkins/Waverly Press Company. Subscription and managerial services were transferred to the office of the Executive Secretary of the Society in January 1982. In 1984, the printing services were transferred to Allen Press, Inc. in Lawrence, Kansas.

## LOGO

The logo was designed in 1960 by Rockwell Kent, III.



There were seventeen Founding Sections: Baltimore-Washington, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Delaware Valley, Detroit, Indiana, Milwaukee, New England, New York, Niagara Frontier, Northern California, Ohio Valley, Pittsburgh, San Diego, Southeastern, Southern California.

## NATIONAL MEETINGS

In 1962 the Baltimore-Washington Section was host to an International Conference on Spectroscopy. The Tenth Colloquium Spectroscopicum Internationale was also designated the First National Meeting of the Society for Applied Spectroscopy. The surplus funds from this meeting were donated to establish a fund for use by other Sections of the Society sponsoring national meetings. National meetings have been held annually since that time. In 1974 the Society began holding its Annual National Meeting in conjunction with the Federation of Analytical Chemistry and Spectroscopy Societies (FACSS).



Neil Gordon  
President 1961



Charles Pepper  
President 1964



John Ferraro  
President 1965



Marvin Skougstad  
President 1966



From the left: James Devlin, Secretary 1957-64; Edwin Hodge, Treasurer 1957-61; Isabel Tipton, Treasurer 1962-64; Neil Gordon (in the back), President 1961; Donald Johnson, President 1963; John Hansen, President 1962.



Jan (Jack) Hurwitz  
Secretary 1965-67



Walthew Barnes  
Treasurer 1965-66

Sarah Degenkolb, whose picture is elsewhere on this poster, was the second President of SAS. Nine other women have also served as President: Jeanette Grasselli, Patricia Roush, Nancy-Miller Ihli, Kathryn Kalasinski, Robin Garrell, Rina Dukor, Rachael Barbour, Cynthia Mahan, and Rebecca Dittmar.

## Memories of the First Decade Marvin Margoshes and Leopold May

When SAS was founded in 1958, I (Marvin Margoshes; MM) was in the early years of my career. It was four years after I received a Ph.D. at Iowa State, and one year after I joined the National Bureau of Standards, then still in the District of Columbia, from a post-doc at the Harvard Medical School. The Baltimore-Washington Section (BWS) was one of the Founder Sections of SAS, and I joined it soon after I arrived at NBS. I quickly began to attend meetings and make friends. Leopold May (LM) became a Contributing Editor of *Applied Spectroscopy*, and he talked me into joining the journal's staff as proofreader. I figured I could do the work evenings, when I'd be reading journals anyway. The staff were all volunteers, and the operation was somewhat disorganized. I got galley proofs from the printer, (together with the corresponding manuscript pages, and my job was to mark up the proof pages and send them to the authors for their review before publication. Quite often, the galley proofs pages were not in order, and pages from different articles were intermixed. When I asked the printer about this, he said that the Editor, Fred Strong, sent him the pages mixed together, so that is how he set the type. It was not unusual to have to wait for the next set of galley proofs before I could assemble complete articles that I could send to the authors. In a few cases, in order to meet a deadline for the next issue, an article was published before I could send proof sheets to the authors. In spite of these glitches, *Applied Spectroscopy* was published regularly, and its reputation grew.

I was chosen as the Section's Delegate to the SAS Governing Board. At that time, Governing Board meetings often lasted until well after midnight, in efforts to resolve contentious issues. One such issue was whether or not SAS should have its own national meeting. The Pittsburgh Conference (it was only later called PittCon after it moved from Pittsburgh) was on the rise as a national meeting that included spectroscopy. And regional meetings, such as the Eastern Analytical Symposium, were growing in number and attendance. Some members thought the existing meetings were sufficient, while other thought that there was a need for a national meeting that was specifically about applied spectroscopy.

## How the First National Meeting Came to Be

While driving north on the Jersey Turnpike one day in early 1960, on the way to a meeting of the *Applied Spectroscopy* staff, we talked about this matter. We both favored a national meeting for SAS, and we decided that something should be done to break the deadlock on the subject. We conceived a plan. The Colloquium Spectroscopicum Internationale (CSI) had by then had eight meetings at two-year intervals, all in Europe, and the ninth was planned. We thought that it was time to have one of those meetings in the United States, and the fledgling SAS could make itself known worldwide by sponsoring one. We brought up the idea at the next meeting of the Baltimore-Washington Section, where it was enthusiastically received. The Section petitioned the SAS Governing Board to endorse the idea. The Board did so, and authorized the Baltimore-Washington Section to carry out the idea.

The Section turned to Bourdon Scribner to head up the meeting. To hold the meeting as a CSI, someone had to convince the European triad who managed that series of meetings: A. C. Menzies in England, H. Kaiser in Germany, and E. Loeuille in France. Scribner knew them all well, and he got the endorsement. The Baltimore-Washington Section advanced \$500 as seed money to get the plans in action. The equivalent in 2008 dollars would be about \$3000. A key early decision was to hold the meeting at the University of Maryland. That made the meeting more affordable to organize and for the attendees. For one thing, the University printed and mailed brochures to announce the meeting, and delayed billing us until after the meeting. They also gave invaluable advice and assistance on logistics. The \$500 "kitty" proved to be enough.

As we advertised the meeting in advance in 1962, we called it variously the International Conference on Spectroscopy, the Xth CSI, and the 1<sup>st</sup> National Meeting of SAS. That was a nervy act, since we hadn't told the SAS officers or Governing Board that we would do it, and the question of a national meeting hadn't been settled. But no objection was made. The meeting, held June 18-22, 1962, was a great success, with nearly a thousand attendees from 28 countries. The papers by invited speakers were published in a 806 page *Proceedings*. The meeting was a financial success as well. A \$5000 profit was donated by the Baltimore-Washington Section to SAS as a revolving fund that other sections could use to host SAS National Meetings. These meetings took place every year until 1973 when FACSS became the National Meeting of SAS.

This story shows how one or two persons can make important things happen, especially in times of change. LM went on to be Editor-in-Chief of *Applied Spectroscopy* from 1962 to 1964 and President 1971. MM was president in 1974, Treasurer from 1996 to 1998, and Newsletter Editor 1999 to 2004.

## A National Office?

Another contentious question at Governing Board meetings was whether or not SAS should have a national office. Fr. James Devlin was both Secretary and Business Manager in the early years, in addition to his duties in the Physics Department of Boston College. That meant that he was responsible for key functions that were done by the national office in most scientific societies. But there was concern about how well one person could handle this workload, especially on a part-time basis. The Governing Board heard too often from members who paid their dues but were not receiving the journal, or were not assigned to a local section. There were heated discussions about how to solve this recurring problem. Unfortunately, it came to be centered around Fr. Devlin personally. He was a personable, well-liked man, but many GB members thought the two jobs should be separated or else shifted to a national office. Fr. Devlin did not agree and he had many supporters. The debate continued until 1964, when Charles Pepper became President. He appointed Alvin Bober, to replace Devlin as Business Manager. There were fears that the way the contentious issue was resolved would split the Society, but fortunately that did not happen. Bober was Business Manager until a National Office was set up in 1982.



Alvin Bober  
Business Manager  
1964-82



The Officers and Committee Chairs of the 1st National Meeting: From the left, W. H. Stahl, G. E. Ashby, H. J. Rose, H. M. Fales, E. R. Lippincott, C. W. Hench, Mrs. Lippincott (Rita), R. E. Michaelis, B. F. Scribner, T. H. Zink, A. F. Rekas, M. Margoshes, Mrs. Margoshes (Miriam), L. May. A few were not available when the photo was taken: A. Bober, E. A. Gorlock, R. H. Stottler, and G. A. Wheeler.



Velmer Fassel with  
Evelyn and Leopold May



Velmer Fassel and Richard Jarrell  
with unidentified person.



Attendees and wives enjoying the pleasant evening air of Maryland.



Attendees enjoying a boat trip on the Potomac River.



Alan Walsh on left, Fred Brech and wife on right. At this meeting, Brech described the first laser-probe emission spectrometer; it is probably the first commercial device of any kind that incorporated a laser.



Bourdon Scribner's friends and associates thought he would remain a bachelor for life. But then he met Sally Mount, a spectroscopist at the U. S. Customs Lab in Baltimore, who was a volunteer in the meeting organization. These photos are from their wedding in February 1963. Velmer Fassel toasts them in the photo on the left.



PHOTOS FROM LATER SAS NATIONAL MEETINGS

FOURTH NATIONAL MEETING  
Denver 1965



Edward U. Condon, Heinrich Kaiser



Presentation of Honorary Membership Certificate to Edwin Jaycox (left) by John Ferraro



Alfred Myers, Marvin Skogerboe (Co-Chairmen), and Merlyn Salmon, Program Chairman



TENTH NATIONAL MEETING  
St. Louis 1971



Presentation of Honorary Membership Certificate to Charlotte Moore Sitterly by Leopold May, SAS President



Rod Skogerboe  
Fred Brech



Committee Members, Dick Brobst, Norma Field, Emmet Kaelble, Program Chairman, Joan Steffen, Dave Schmidt, Louis Linder, Jim Ogilvie, Joan Westermeyer, Bill Koerner, Byron Field, and Mary Lou Hoevel.

SEVENTH NATIONAL MEETING  
Chicago 1968



Lester Strock, Cy Feldman



Andy Rekus,  
Dr. and Mrs. McGinnes,  
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bober.,

ELEVENTH NATIONAL MEETING  
DALLAS 1972



C. Pepper, A. Rekus, A. T. Myers,  
and V. G. Wheeler



Rekus, I. Glaze and Mrs. Glaze, J. Marling,  
R. Knisely, J. Hwang

SECOND FACSS MEETING  
INDIANAPOLIS 1975

FACSS has been designated as the SAS National Meeting since 1974



J. Ferraro and L. Basil  
receiving the Meggers Award



M. Parsons,  
T. Lanigan

[A Full Page from Arcs & Sparks  
Volume 15, No. 2 1970](#)

9th National Meeting  
Society for Applied Spectroscopy  
October 5-9, 1970 New Orleans, Louisiana

*The mixer was held Tuesday evening aboard the steamer "President" on the Mississippi River.*



Hessler Award recipient (second from right) R. Castaing, Faculty of Science, University of Paris, Orsay, France. From left, Dr. V. A. Fassel, Jennie Grasselli, Mr. Castaing and Dr. K. Heinrich.



Dr. Strock, Mrs. Ferraro, Dr. Ferraro, Dr. Cheney, George Alexander.



Dr. Phil Kane, Mrs. Kane, Dr. Jim Robinson, Charles Waters, Mrs. Robinson, Dr. Herik, Mrs. Herik and Dr. J. M. Vandenbelt.



Will Parson, W. E. Edgel, F. Lytle, J. Matson, N. Winograd.



Seated: Vanie Mello, Brazil, S.A., C. J. Leistner, Ruth Carrenas, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Standing: Del Hughes.



Dr. Roger Tanner, Dr. Jon Baldwin, Marilyn Baldwin, Bob Michaels, Marge Michaels, Cecil May, Messotti, Victor Messotti, Elma Lenterman.



Seated: Mary L. Hoevel, Varron Wheeler, Joan Westermeyer, Mrs. Leopold May; Standing: Dr. Leopold May, Iris May, Abe Davis, Marie Singer.

FOURTH FACSS MEETING  
DETROIT 1977



The Three Beards: H. Waugh,  
C. Allemand, O. Joensun



C. Galle, A. Rekus,  
J. Hurwitz, C. Leistner



G. Morrison, E. Dunlop, J. Grasselli,  
E. Peck

The authors thank Ben Smith, Chemistry Department, University of Florida, for his advice and technical assistance in preparing these posters.