



April Meeting: Green Chemistry and Materials.....1  
 From the Chair: “AIChE Local Section Leader Workshop” .....2  
 FFrom The Editor: Chemical Engineering: Hidden from History? A Minor Mystery.....3  
 VLS Leadership Meeting Highlights .....4  
 Mark your Calendar .....4  
 Contributions to the Newsletter .....4  
 Attending a VLS MEETING .....4

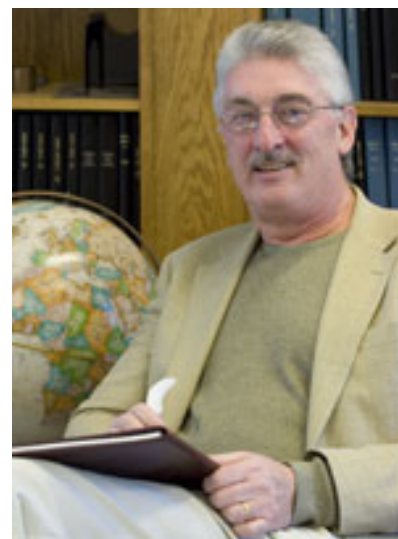
## APRIL MEETING: GREEN CHEMISTRY AND MATERIALS

<http://fuze.me/2120303> (detailed directions on page 4)

**THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014**

**9:00 pm EDT, 8:00 pm CDT, 7:00 pm MDT, 6:00 pm PDT**

In the wake of the Earth Day, Dr. Richard Wool will speak to the VLS about his award-winning work using biobased feedstocks, ranging from chicken feathers to vegetable oils, to make adhesives, composites, foams, artificial leather, and even circuit boards. Among his recent accolades for this work are the Affordable Green Chemistry Award from the American Chemical Society, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the BioEnvironmental Plastics Society and the 2013 US EPA Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Academic Award. He was the keynote speaker at the 2012 Green Chemistry and Engineering Conference and a keynote lecturer at the 2012 EUBIOCHEM Conference; he gave the keynote address at the EcoChem Conference in Basel Switzerland, November 21, 2013.



Dr. Wool is a professor of chemical engineering at the University of Delaware. His undergraduate degree is from the University of Cork, and his graduate degrees are from the University of Utah. He has several seminal patents and many publications in the field of biobased adhesives, foams, plastics and composite resins.

More information on the [VLS Events Page](#)



### FROM THE CHAIR: "AICHE LOCAL SECTION LEADER WORKSHOP"

I was privileged to attend the annual AIChE Local Section Leader Workshop in conjunction with this year's Spring Meeting. As a first-time attendee for this workshop, this was a great experience for me to connect with AIChE staff, elected leadership, and local section leaders from around the country and even a few international leaders as well. Besides the networking, there were some important lessons presented and ideas generated. The speakers covered the spectrum of organizational leadership, from finances to recruitment to programming. However, some key lessons and key people that I met are summarized below.

1. Organizations like AIChE and the local sections function in a highly competitive space, and demands on members' time and resources have increased over recent years. Employees are often working longer hours for lower wages with less company support for professional societies. In order to be sustainable, local sections must deliver valuable programming to their members.
2. Local sections, whether conventional or virtual, provide a place for AIChE members to connect personally with each

other and volunteer leaders. They are also places for members to develop their own leadership skills and interests and simultaneously find a "home" in the national AIChE as well as their local section.

3. Building a sustainable local section requires developing a broad and deep bench for future section leadership. Having many volunteers who contribute just a little can accomplish much more than a few volunteers working overtime.

While the networking was enjoyable across the board, some key people I had a chance to meet included:

1. *Otis Shelton, AIChE President.* We note with pride that there was only one local section he held up as an example to the others in attendance, and that was the VLS.
2. *Brian Daly, Local Section Committee Chairman.* Brian has worked as a liaison between AIChE staff and the local sections to make sure struggling LS are connected with the appropriate resources.
3. Established local section leadership from places like Chicago LS, South Texas LS, and East Tennessee LS discussed the programming that they host.
4. New local section leadership. Perhaps the most inspiring folks were college seniors preparing to graduate and with plans to revive a San Diego area LS.

In all, this was a very worthwhile meeting to attend. I would highly encourage all AIChE LS leaders to attend future events such as this.

-- Noah Meeks

## FROM THE EDITOR: CHEMICAL ENGINEERING: HIDDEN FROM HISTORY? A MINOR MYSTERY

An old book that crossed my desk recently has me wondering. *Great Engineers and Pioneers in Technology Volume I: From Antiquity through the Industrial Revolution*, by St. Martin's Press, 1981, is definitely of its time. The format is simple, just a number of essays about engineering as in different time periods, each followed by short biographies about key engineers and discussions of their accomplishments, contributed by reputable historians of science and technology. The illustrations are all black and white, some pen and ink sketches, some from the original notebooks, etchings, and illustrations of the time period and some non-glossy photographs of structures like Hadrian's Wall where the original drawings are hard to get. Most entries have references for the reader who wants further information.

There is also a "Chronology of Important Engineering Events" – not a sophisticated, glossy timeline of a modern book or website; just seven pages listing important milestones spanning 4.5 millennia. Glancing at this was disheartening. Of course, there were lots of military, civil, architectural, and mechanical feats, even before those disciplines were called "engineering". But where were the chemical accomplishments, the work of the practical alchemists and craftsmen, the applied or industrial chemists, or the proto-chemical engineers?

When I counted all events which were even vaguely chemical or chemical engineering events, (including all things metallurgical and some real stretches like the introduction of commercial gas lighting or the publication of Daniel Bernoulli's *Hydrodynamica*), only 12% of the momentous events could be counted as chemically related. (LeBlanc's sodium carbonate process and Roebuck's sulfuric acid process did make the list. Believe it or not, these were the "green" alternatives for raw materials for many manufacturing processes of the time where more organic and noxious chemicals were used.)

What happened to soap, salt, acids, bases, underwater cement, ink, or lubricants for the machines that drove the industrial revolution? Or leather processing? Or the chemicals for the great textile mills, where raw materials, fibers, and cloth needed cleaning, bleaching, washing, dyeing, fulling, and printing?

So why is this? It can't all be the demise of alchemy and the rise of modern mathematics. All engineering was empirical at first and has been revolutionized by new discoveries and theories. Is it because we are process and materials oriented, not leaving monuments which inspire awe in the uninitiated, like the Roman roads or the Gothic and Renaissance cathedrals?

And does this matter? Is it simply an artifact of the past, or is it an indication that we need to think about our image, past, present, and future, for the sake of the profession and beyond? ***Any thoughts from you, gentle readers?*** -- Jennifer Brand

## VLS LEADERSHIP MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, just like on every second Thursday of an even-numbered month, the VLS Leadership was held. While some talk was about nitty-gritty details, such as mechanics and timing for announcements and newsletters (earlier next month!), some longer range planning was also discussed, such as ways to help graduating students transition to local sections, using the VLS as a supplement to local sections, and what role the VLS can play in encouraging international engagement. For those of you who would like to become more involved, or are just curious about how the workings of the VLS, attending one of these meetings is a good first step.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

*Every Fourth Thursday – VLS Meetings*

**May 22, 2014 VLS Meeting:** Otis Shelton, AIChE President

**June 12, 2014 VLS Leadership Meeting**

**June 26, 2014 VLS Meeting:** TBA

**July 26, 2014 VLS Meeting:** The AIChE National Elections Information Meeting (with Candidates)

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Want to congratulate a colleague? Announce an achievement? Form an interest group, real or virtual? *As space is available, the VLS Newsletter will, on a trial basis, publish professional, non-commercial notices from individuals next month.*

Notices and other contributions gratefully accepted by the editor at [jbrand@unl.edu](mailto:jbrand@unl.edu) using "VLS Newsletter" in the subject line. Deadline: May 2, 2014.

## ATTENDING A VLS MEETING

Go to <http://fuze.me/24120303> and follow directions. (The "name" requested would be the name displayed to other meeting participants.)

- For audio only: (If prompted, enter the meeting number: 24120303, then press #)
  - From a browser, select the internet audio option after joining.
  - From a phone:
    - US: +12014794595 or +18553463893
    - International access numbers <https://www.fuzebox.com/extras/symphony>
- Having problems? Follow the meeting link from our website [virtual.aiche.org](http://virtual.aiche.org)
- Need more help? You can connect to the Customer Support Team or access self-help tools at [www.fuzebox.com/support](http://www.fuzebox.com/support).

*Attendance at a Virtual Section Meeting is open to AIChE Virtual Local Section Members, AIChE members and other interested people.*