

The forth issue

Welcome to the spring issue of The Science Leader, the digital newsletter of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents, and my first opportunity to greet you as Chair of CSSP for 2009.

First of all, for those of you who are in your terms in the presidential succession of your organizations, let me congratulate you on the honor and wish you the best. My three years in the succession at the American Chemical Society were the best three years of my career. I hope yours are the same.

Of course, in those days, I wasn't attempting to manage through a financial crisis of biblical proportions. It is undoubtedly true that you are finding challenges and threats to your organizations from all sides -- challenges and threats that require you to be an even wiser and more charismatic leader than you might have been under ordinary circumstances.

To that end, might I slip in a brief commercial for our spring meeting? Many of you have attended our semi-annual Renaissance Weekends -- weekends filled with opportunities to hear from scientists in diverse fields, policy makers of importance and leadership experts. I never fail to come away enriched, and the meeting we have planned for May 2-5 is thoroughly in our successful tradition.

We will hear from two Nobel Prize winners -- Bill Phillips speaking on Future Quantum Technologies and Martin Chalfie on Tracking Differentiation of Cells. George Church of Harvard will be there speaking on synthetic biology: Design & de novo Creation of Living Minimal Cells. I'm looking forward to asking him about the growing group of young people who practice biotech in their homes the way some of us used a chemistry set, years ago.

On the policy side, Paula Dobriansky, former Under Secretary for Global Affairs & Science, US State Department, and the person most responsible for the program of placing scientists on loan to US Embassies around the world, will speak on Science & Statecraft. There is also the potential for high-level officials in the Obama administration from Energy and Interior, although they are not fully confirmed to speak.

We have renowned unconventional thinker Amory Lovins to speak on New Vehicles and the Oil Endgame, and Rufus Fears, Harvard & University of Oklahoma on the History of the Ideas of Freedom & Liberty. Prepare for provocation.

We have a full suite of committee meetings Sunday morning where we will discuss how we as science leaders can impact education, policy, the environment and other topics. I'm particularly asking all attendees to come prepared to discuss their Societies' programs related to employment. We can share best practices and innovative ideas for the benefit of our members (and maybe ourselves.)

I realize resources are tight. During my days in sales I urged people to focus on value and not just cost. The spring meeting is chock full of value, and I hope if you have any opportunity to join us, you will. Bill Carroll CSSP Board Chair