



# THE RETORT

APR 2011

## From the President

It is shaping up to be an exciting spring for the Chemists' Club! The Penn Club has offered a warm welcome to Chemists' Club members, many of whom have joined the Penn Club as full-fledged members due to the elegance of the facilities and the extensive resources on offer, including a Business Center, a Fitness Center, a pub, fine dining, and first-rate rooms for guests from out of town. Board members meeting in this new venue have been inspired by the surroundings to find new ways to revitalize some of our longstanding traditions, including industry-related awards, annual functions, and impromptu events. Read about some impending happenings in this issue of the *Retort*.

In addition to the option of the Penn Club for many of our Club's needs, the Chemists still enjoy a strong relationship with 3 West, our recent address, as well as with Club Quarters and the many fine facilities it offers to members and affiliates.

We are also pleased to announce that the Chemists' Club now finds itself in a strong position to introduce new management of various crucial operations of the Club, including administrative and event-coordinating roles. More details will follow as we strive to maximize the Club's potential in terms of logistics.

Watch our website for news, announcements, membership information, upcoming events, items of historical interest and many more aspects of where we've come from, who we are, and where we're headed in the Club, in the greater New York City area, and in the industry worldwide!



International Year of  
**CHEMISTRY**  
2011

## **WINTHROP-SEARS MEDAL DINNER RETURNING TO NY**

The Winthrop-Sears Medal is slated to be given in New York this September 15<sup>th</sup> as part of the exciting revitalization of the Chemists' Club. As many longstanding members will recall, the Winthrop-Sears Award is awarded annually "to recognize individuals who, by their entrepreneurial action, have contributed to the vitality of the chemical industry and the betterment of humanity". It has been awarded jointly with the Chemical Heritage Foundation since 2003. Named in honor of two of colonial America's earliest chemical entrepreneurs, John Winthrop, Jr., and John Sears, the award has honored such notable chemical-industries leaders as Sol J. Barer, Herbert W. Boyer, Gordon Cain, Robert W. Gore, Jon M. Huntsman, James Mack, Ralph Landau, Leonard Pool, George Rosenkranz, Zsolt Romy, Phillip A. Sharp, Harold A. Sorgenti, Daniel Terra, Haldor Topsøe, and Alejandro Zaffaroni. Last year, the Winthrop-Sears Medal was awarded to Peter McCausland, founder and CEO of Airgas.

The recipient of this year's medal will be determined, as usual, by the selection committee, consisting of three members of the Chemists' Club and three members of the Chemical Heritage Foundation. The Chemists' Club trustees are former president Paul Pendorf, Edward Werner Cook, and Warner Babcock. CHF members are Bob Kenworthy, Sarah Reisert, and Tom Tritton, President of CHF.

An interesting historical fact about John Winthrop: in addition to his early chemical experimentation, he was

a colonial governor who traveled to London to convince Whitehall to unify the New Haven and River (Connecticut) colonies into Connecticut Colony.



## **LIFE SCIENCES ENLIVENING NEW YORK CITY**

After decades of witnessing the flight from New York of companies in the chemical industry, there have been some recent signs of new life, both from the commercial world and academia. A new commercial development was recently opened on the east side of Manhattan to house corporate offices and laboratories of companies in the life sciences. Not to be outdone, the academic world in New York is also expanding in the life sciences. For example, both New York University and Columbia University have recently opened new laboratory and teaching facilities dedicated to the life sciences.

At the official opening of the commercial center built by Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Mayor Bloomberg commented on the importance of the development: "New York City has all the makings of a major center for

commercial life science--an unparalleled work force, top academic and medical institutions and prime access to investment capital--but we've lacked sufficient state-of-the-art commercial lab space to capitalize on those advantages.....The new world-class complex, which is already attracting both established and startup entities, will foster innovation within a growing life science industry.....".

The first phase of the development was completely occupied by tenants, including: Eli Lilly's ImClone Systems, Kadmon Pharmaceuticals, Firmenich and others. This initial phase of the development consists of a 15 story building with 310,000 sq. ft. to be followed by two more buildings bringing the total area to 1.1 million sq. ft. To encourage collaborative exchange, the development also includes a state-of-the-art digital conference and event center.

**HISTORIC OPENING of THE CHEMISTS' CLUB BUILDING  
17-18 MARCH 1911**

*You are cordially invited to attend the  
celebration of the opening of the new Chemists'  
Building, 50-54 East 41<sup>st</sup> Street, New York City,  
on Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1911.*

*The program of this celebration will be  
found on the following page.*

*owing to the limited accommodations  
admission will be strictly by cards and tickets,  
application form for which is herewith enclosed.*

*Ladies are invited to attend all of the  
functions with the exception of the banquet.*

*Chemists' Building Company.*

*Chemists' Club.*

*New York Section of the American Chemical Society.*

*New York Section of the Society of Chemical Industry.*

*New York Section of the American Electrochemical Society.*

*New York Section of the Verein Deutscher Chemiker.*

## **CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS**

### **The First Clubhouse**

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, The Chemists' Club will hold a special luncheon to mark the centennial of the opening of the club's first clubhouse in 1911. The clubhouse played a critically important role in the development of the many professional organizations that serve the chemical industries today.

In the early twentieth century, Dr. Morris Loeb, a New Yorker who had studied under Hoffman in Berlin, knew what America needed to foster the development of the chemical industry. He was inspired by the Hoffman House in Berlin which housed both academics and industry. Loeb had been a charter member of The Chemists' Club and saw both the club's need for a home as well as a home for all American chemists. He generously funded The Chemists' Club's Building which became the meeting place for academics and industry. The American Chemical Society's library became the library of The Chemists' Club which developed into the largest chemistry library in the Western Hemisphere.

The new clubhouse was the birthplace of several important industry organizations and was home to monthly meetings of the New York sections of the American Chemical Society, the Society of the Chemical Industry, Societe de Chimie Industrielle and Verein Deutscher Chemiker. The clubhouse also hosted meetings of the American Electrochemical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the International Congress

of Applied Chemistry. At various times, the clubhouse was home to the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the Salesman's Association for the American Chemical Industry. The Society of the Chemical Industry in London held their annual meetings at the clubhouse in 1912 and 1928.

In addition to being the crossroads of industry and academia, with all of its potential for open communications, the club had its own radio station, all of which helped foster the rapid growth of the American chemical industry throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Loeb Centennial**

Tragically, Dr. Morris Loeb passed away in 1912 at the untimely age of 49, just one year after the opening of The Chemists' Club's new home, which he both inspired and financed. But Dr. Loeb's legacy goes far beyond the clubhouse, and we plan to mark the centennial of his passing with a special dinner event in 2012. We have invited several organizations from both industry and academia in which Dr. Loeb played a pivotal role to participate in honoring this great visionary, teacher and leader.

## LEGENDARY MEMBERS

Hart O. Berg was a longtime foreign member of The Chemists' Club, having joined about the time of the opening of the Club Building in 1911 and was still a member in 1939 with a Paris address in the fashionable 8<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement or Élysée section, a fitting complement to his New York Club address: 50-54 East 41<sup>st</sup> Street

The Chemists' Club has always had very eclectic membership and Hart O. Berg is ample evidence of a grand entrepreneur. A native of Hartford, in 1897 he was Director of External Affairs for Fabrique Nationale (FN) of Liège, Belgium and returned to Hartford to investigate latest techniques of bicycle manufacture as FN had considerable spare capacity and skilled workers. At Colt's in Hartford he met John Browning and secured European rights for FN to manufacture his newly designed gun, eventually known simply as FN's *le Pistolet Browning*. Years later, an FN Browning pistol was used to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, plunging Europe and America into war.

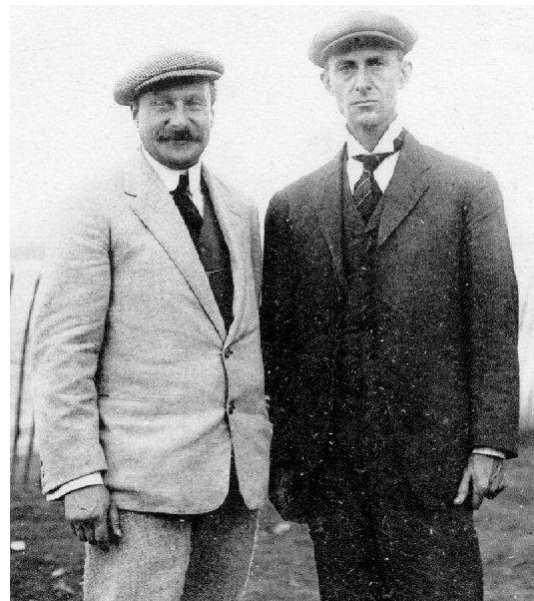
Berg later founded the Berg Automobile Company in Cleveland in 1903 and sold the firm in 1905.

However, Berg's most notable adventure was with the Wright Brothers. Following dismal response to their invention in America and disbelief in Europe – particularly with the French – Wilber Wright travelled to Europe with one of their aeroplanes and retained Berg as agent. Berg arranged for Wright's flying exhibitions at Le Mans Aero Club in 1908 with admission tickets personally signed by him and all of Europe was electrified by the performances. Hart's

wife, Edith, was the first woman ever to fly when she went aloft with Wilber. Tying the bottom of her ankle-length skirt for modesty, she inadvertently invented the famous hobbled skirt.

The eventual commercial success of Wrights' aeroplanes was due to Hart O. Berg's commercial acumen, in true Chemists' Club spirit!

He was a *Chevalier Légion d'honneur*.



Hart O. Berg and Wilber Wright  
Aero Club Le Mans

## The Chemists' Club

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