

in IUPAC activities have encouraged us to follow their lead and contribute to IUPAC. IUPAC brings together people with similar interests and diverse professional skills, nurtures new professional connections, broadens our perspectives, and strives to make advancements.

While drafting this article, I first used the title “a voluntary organization offering an international stage”. Later I felt that “stage” was probably not the most suitable word since our volunteers do not come here to represent themselves, but to contribute to the development of chemistry, which we cherish as a lifelong career. We unite in an international family.

To make this point clearer, I would like to quote the president of the Polymer Division, Gregory Russell, from his report to the 98th Bureau Meeting: “IUPAC has to stand for quality, rigor and consensus. If one has good people, then all this will follow. By good people I not only mean intelligent, knowledgeable, personable and passionate people, but perhaps even more importantly I mean selfless people who are given to serving others,

rather than being people seeking self-gain, be it financial or reputational. IUPAC strategy must be underpinned by an understanding of this, in which context it is also important to remember without fail that IUPAC work is ‘for love not money’.”

I’m very glad to hear this resonance with the union founders’ ideal. I also believe that, with such selfless dedication from our volunteers, IUPAC will continue to prosper for a second century. Many thanks to our volunteers.

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Stamps International

Reaching Out for the Sun

According to a report released in 2011 by the International Energy Agency, enough sunlight hits the earth every 90 minutes to fulfill the world’s energy needs for an entire year. Only a small portion of the global energy supply for electricity generation, heating, and transportation is derived from solar energy, an unfortunate situation since the Sun is a virtually inexhaustible source of energy. This is essentially a technological problem that deals with the cost and conversion efficiency of solar cells and the development of new materials for batteries, both of which are areas of intense research today for chemists, physicists, and other scientists and engineers.



Dozens of postage stamps, including the two illustrated in this note, have been issued worldwide to underscore the importance and value of renewable energy resources, including sunlight, wind, waves, biomass, and geothermal heat. It is interesting to note that even oil-rich countries like Iraq and

Saudi Arabia have released stamps dedicated to solar energy, perhaps tacitly acknowledging that the future energy needs of the planet will not be primarily satisfied with fossil fuels.

The Solar Army, a multi-layered outreach project led by Professor Harry Gray, a beloved inorganic chemist at CalTech, aims to promote the understanding of key aspects of solar energy conversion and storage. Relatively inexpensive kits that can be used to screen metal oxides capable of water oxidation activity or to build dye-sensitized solar cells and explain photosynthetic processes have been widely demonstrated to the general public and distributed to secondary school and undergraduate students and their teachers. The hope is that training a new generation of scientists and engineers will help make solar energy utilization one of the cornerstones of a sustainable, efficient, and safe world for many generations to come.



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