

## North Central Oil Chemists' Society

FOR several years a number of members of the American Oil Chemists' Society in the Chicago area have debated whether or not to establish a local group (the early discussions preceded the decision of the national society to authorize sections). There were arguments both in favor and in opposition. These arguments were concerned with the effect of such local groups on the national organization, and the contribution such groups could make to A.O.C.S. members and other interested people in the area.

Factors that weighed heavily in favor of the need of a local group were that there are more than 200 A.O.C.S. members in the Chicago area and that the majority of these are concentrated in a half-dozen companies. Obviously, many of these people had little or no direct contact with the national society other than through the Journal and those national conventions held in Chicago. Some of these people openly questioned the value of their membership in the Society; other people, who should have been members, chose not to join because they did not feel they derived sufficient benefit. A casual survey, especially among the younger people, indicated a rather high degree of enthusiasm for a local group.



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Positive action was finally initiated by three men (Nort Ziels, Jack Harris, and the writer) who invited 10 other men, representing a cross-section of the area, to meet with them to discuss the organization of a local group. These men were unanimous in their support of the proposal and agreed to serve as an organizing committee.

Then the work began! We were moderately surprised to find our list of prospects growing to in excess of 350. (Note that this includes nearly as many *prospective* A.O.C.S. members as present members!) For purposes of most effective contact, the names on this list were divided among the members of the Organizing Committee. By this means we attained a high proportion of direct contact in order to assure a good start.

To our complete amazement, and somewhat to the consternation of our people in charge of arrangements, 183 men and women came out for our first dinner meeting in February. Of these, 120 were members of the A.O.C.S. In response to a questionnaire distributed at this meeting, those present indicated a wholehearted enthusiasm and the majority said they wanted to take an active part in such a group. We believe that this expressed desire to take an active part is most significant, pointing clearly to a need that a local group can help fill.

At our two subsequent meetings this past spring we have had smaller but fully as enthusiastic turn-outs. Our organization has been semi-formalized by the election of officers and the appointment of committees for the next year. We plan, of course, to apply for section status at some later date.

Our objectives are simple and straightforward. First, we hope to provide adequate opportunity to take an active part for all those who so desire. Our group meetings will be planned, to the best of our ability, to stimulate interest and a freer association of ideas in the various aspects of fat chemistry and technology. We hope to provide a congenial and informative meeting place for all those chemists, technologists, and operating people in our area who are interested, but who may have little or no opportunity to attend A.O.C.S. conventions.

Our keynote is informality. Necessary business will be handled as painlessly as possible, with a firm 20-minute time limitation. Speakers will be asked to present talks of general and practical interest, rather than of a highly theoretical or academic nature. Time schedules will be so arranged that commuters who want to can catch the 9 o'clock trains.

We look to the future as a challenge. We will do our best to make a worthwhile contribution to our people in this area and are confident that direct benefits will accrue therefrom to the national society.

By the way, our tentative meeting dates for next year are October 27, December 2, January 26, March 23, and May 18. If you are in town any of these days, look us up. We'd like to have you at our meeting.

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President  
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