I wish I could say that I always wanted to be a tribologist, but as a young chemist right out of college I had no exposure to lubrication or the needs of industry. In fact, a career in industry didn’t seem all that exciting. I wanted to be a teacher! But one day a letter arrived offering me a job at Cincinnati Milling Machines, a company making metal cutting and grinding machines, and—oh, yes!—they had an industrial chemical division, too. My father-in-law worked in the automotive industry and bought machines from that Cincinnati company. He said it would be a good place to work, and he was right!

After a year or two, the Cimcool division manager advised me to get involved with something called ASLE—the American Society of Lubrication Engineers—which had a local section in town (the society’s name was changed to STLE in 1987). I learned that my company had been a long-time supporter of the society. In fact, the Cincinnati section’s very first chairman was Dr. Eugene Merchant, a Milacron employee. He was also the society’s eighth president.

Each month at the local meetings, I met both local and national experts in lubrication and tribology. Not only did they help expand my knowledge of the field, but I now had names I could contact with questions. Before long, the company decided to send me to STLE annual meetings where I attended various education courses and technical sessions. The company also encouraged me to present talks in the technical sessions, and then turn those talks into journal articles for *Lubrication Engineering* (now TLT). This led to becoming an instructor in the education courses.

The Cincinnati section officers requested that if you want your newer employees to grow, get them involved in STLE!

Now as I move into the presidency, I am indebted to Dr. Mike Dugger for easing the way as I have followed him into each new responsibility. He is very organized and a great teacher.

There are several initiatives already begun that I plan to focus on in the coming year. These include expanding our activity outside of the U.S. (remember, we are not the American Society of Lubrication Engineers anymore). I am excited to continue our relationship with the Tribology Society of India (TSI), and I will be going there in December as an instructor for STLE’s educational courses. STLE recently offered its CLS exam in India for the first time!

Efforts also are in process to expand our presence in Europe. Our relationship with the Chinese Tribology Institute (CTI) remains a strong one. Just as we are active with TSI and CTI, we are also looking for ways to work jointly with other associations in the U.S. We are becoming involved with STEM Teacher Camps through ASM International. These camps give school teachers the tools they need to teach children about science and introduce tribology. Maybe some of these students will grow up wanting to be tribologists! We also are conducting research into how STLE can be of service to more end-users.

It is an exciting time for STLE! Thank you for the honor of letting me serve as your president!

Jerry Byers is manager of research and development for Cimcool Fluid Technology in Cincinnati. You can reach him at jerry_p_byers@cimcool.com.