**Tribology’s big show**

STLE’s Annual Meeting & Exhibition is our industry’s largest event and packed with technical content.

THE END OF FEBRUARY IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE always brings for me the feeling that the hardest part of winter is over and spring is on the way. The coming of this spring means STLE’s 2012 Annual Meeting & Exhibition is right around the corner. This is a big event for our society in more ways than one.

The annual meeting was the vehicle for my first interactions with STLE in the early 1990s. I remember going from session to session in awe of the quantity and quality of research being presented. At the time I needed to come up to speed rapidly on solid lubricants, and fortunately for me the organization had a Solid Lubricants Technical Committee (now known as the Materials Tribology Committee) with a lot of content. I subsequently became paper solicitation chairman, got involved in committee leadership and so on. You could say that my journey to the STLE Executive Committee began many years ago at an annual meeting.

The STLE Annual Meeting today is as great as ever in terms of technical content, with a lot to offer including exciting new events. The 2012 conference is May 6-10 at the Renaissance Grand Hotel and America’s Center in St. Louis, Mo. This location is very convenient for participants from organizations in the Midwestern United States, as well as providing easy access for international participants.

There are about 350 technical presentations planned in sessions ranging from nanotribology to engine and drive train. Popular sessions such as wind energy tribology are continuing as well. We also are planning a session to discuss emerging technologies in tribology, such as alternative fuels and the relationship between tribology and energy efficiency in several market sectors. The Annual Meeting Program Committee, chaired by Lewis Rosado with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, has done a terrific job assembling this year’s technical program.

The 2012 Annual Meeting & Exhibition includes 10 one-day education courses, all held on Sunday and Wednesday to enable students to participate in more of the technical sessions. Regular course offerings on metalworking fluids, synthetic lubricants and condition monitoring are joined by a new course on diesel engine fuels and lubricants and a free half-day short course on nanotribology. Another new educational offering has resulted from our recent partnership with ASM International. The course, titled Principles of Metallurgy, is intended for the non-materials scientist and provides a basic understanding of microstructures, strengthening mechanisms, mechanical property determination and other topics useful to anyone working with lubrication of wear or coatings on metals. STLE’s Education Committee and our headquarters staff have worked hard to create a broad program of education for this year’s meeting.

For example, Sunday afternoon features a special evening panel session titled Best Practices for Local Section Leaders, led by STLE Vice President Jerry Byers. Local section members are encouraged to come and learn about activities that STLE local sections have found to be very successful.

Another special program event is the Monday morning keynote address by Dr. Margaret Stack of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. She will discuss her work on the relationships between tribological and corrosion processes.

These events plus a 70-exhibitor trade show, a student poster competition, a full suite of certification exams, the popular Commercial Marketing Forum and more create an event that promises to provide a huge return of information and knowledge for every participant's investment. On top of all this, the meeting is an unparalleled opportunity for you to network with some 1,200 of your industry peers from around the world. You can see the entire technical program and register for both the meeting and your sleeping room at the Renaissance Grand at www.stle.org.

I look forward to seeing you in St. Louis!