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ACS President-Elect
Oral Report to Council
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In 1876, the first assembly of chemists crafted the charter that guides my perspectives on where we lead our society, in particular “the advancement of chemistry and all its branches,” and “the promotion of research in chemical sciences and aiding the development of our country’s industries.”

1876 was also an important year in American literature, when writer and science advocate, Mark Twain, published his first major novel, “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer;” a tale that helped inform and influence me in my youth ... mostly for the good.

Ten years later, Twain began formulating a new novel, combining his passions for adventure and science: “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court.” In this story, the protagonist, Hank, a 19th century manufacturer of munitions and an industry leader, finds himself accidentally transported back 1300 years in time and uses his knowledge of science to influence leadership in the 6th century court of King Arthur. In order to save his own skin, Hank summons the power of his knowledge of the event of a solar eclipse to change Arthur’s views on science versus magic, ultimately to help Arthur understand how he could improve people’s lives through the transforming power of technology. Perhaps it’s time to capitalize on another solar eclipse to influence our nation’s leadership to embrace the transforming power of chemistry. I will continue to build on our momentum with the bicameral, bipartisan Congressional Chemistry Caucus to do just that.

The stories of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn taught me about adventure, problem solving, and the need to understand and embrace the spectral rainbow of diverse people, each with a unique perspective on solving problems and addressing global challenges. Between today and the end of 2018, the ACS Scholars program will realize its 300th PhD alumna or alumnus. I am committed to celebrating this important milestone by building our endowment to support scholarships for more outstanding emerging chemical professionals, and I ask you to join me as a benefactor.

I really can’t claim, like Hank did, that I affected our recent solar eclipse, but I can hope that you practiced safe viewing on Monday. Embrace safety in all you do – practice it, teach it, lead it. When we interact with the public, our students, or our colleagues, let us be the change that we hope to see in others.

I have enjoyed this first year of my presidential succession engaging so many of our members and Boy Scouts at the Jamboree, and I look forward to an exciting 2018. Thank you for all you do for ACS and our profession.

Madam President, this concludes my report.