

The Reactor



New Orleans Section, American Institute of Chemical Engineers

Volume 13, Issue 4, January 2001

Fourth Meeting of the 2000-2001 Year

Our fourth meeting will feature Bliss Higgins, as our speaker. Bliss will be speaking to us about "Regulatory Issues".

Bliss is with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

His presentation is sure to be of interest to our members.

Please call **Brian Mitchell at 862-8257 {Tulane University}** or your Company Contact before the meeting to reserve a place if possible.

Meeting January 9, 2001 at Steak & Ale - 3870 Veterans Blvd. Metairie, LA

Cost is \$15/person.

5:00 - 6:00 P.M.	Social Hour
6:00 - 6:45	Dinner
6:45 - 7:00	Meeting
7:00 - 7:30	Speaker, Bliss Higgins
7:30 P.M.	Planned Meeting Ends

Future and Proposed Meetings

- February 20** - Dr. Kim O'Connor, Tulane, "BioTech Overview"
- March 13** - "OxyChem Plant Tour"
- April 10** - Mario Diva, Hyprotech, "Dynamic Modeling"

If you have a suggestion, please call **Keith Henderson at 846-6407 {Albert-Garudy}** All meetings are subject to change, please read future newsletters for updates.

Election Notice



It is time once again to start thinking about the approaching elections.

The section is seeking candidates for the office of Treasurer. The current officers will each advance to the next office.

Requirements for treasurer are: Willingness to serve, Ability to attend the meetings, Acceptance of being on officer ladder for successive positions - Secretary, Vice-Chairman, Chairman, Immediate Past Chair.

As Treasurer, you shall be charged with the collection and disbursement of funds as authorized by the Executive Committee. At the first Section meeting of each fiscal year he/she shall present a financial report.

(See "Election" on page 4)

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The Reactor

A.I.Ch.E. New Orleans Section - Local Officers

Chairman

Greg Tragitt KBC 837-9228

Vice-Chairman

Keith Henderson Albert-Garudy 846-6407

Secretary

Dr. Brian Mitchell Tulane 862-8257

Treasurer

Robert Sharshan XXXX 467-8339

Membership Chair & Director

Bill Boutall Wink 243-4539

Finance Chair & Director

Open Open Open

Professional Development

Dr. J.B. Phillips Eng. Dev. Inst. 825-7046

Newsletter Editor

Anthony Fregosi Cytec, Ind. 431-6598

Several positions are open within the section for those who would like to take on a leadership role within the section. Please contact, the Section Chair or Vice-Chair listed above if interested in serving.

A.I.Ch.E. on the Internet

Visit the New Orleans Section Home page at:

www.tulane.edu/~bmitche/aiche/aiche.html

Also check out the National AIChE Home page at:

www.aiche.org

Anyone interested in this activity, please contact

Dr. Brian Mitchell (AIChE Webmaster) at

862-8257, brian@che.che.tulane.edu or

Anthony Fregosi, Anthony_Fregosi@fo.cytec.com

If your company does not have a contact, please contact **Jim Dean at 576-7174**

Company contacts act as a contact for AIChE inside their own company.

New Members are always welcome at **A.I.Ch.E. New Orleans**, local dues are only \$12 per year and includes this newsletter.

Please call **Bill Boutall at 243-4539**

COMPANY CONTACT LIST

These people are aware of our activities. If you think you have missed a newsletter, activity date etc., please contact them.

<i>Company/Person</i>	<i>Phone</i>
<i>Chevron Chemical</i> Christopher Day	391-6584
<i>Cytec Industries</i> Anthony Fregosi	431-6598
<i>DEQ Baton Rouge</i> Freddie Touro	225-765-0202
<i>Entergy</i> Jim Dean	576-7174
<i>EDG, Inc.</i> Leon Barnett	445-0858
<i>KBC Advanced Technology</i> Don Hoppens	837-9228
<i>Monsanto - Luling</i> Mike Valentine	785-4511
<i>Nalco/Exxon</i> Joy Usener	1-800-366-2526 Ext. 1285
<i>Occidental Chemical</i> Linda Bergeron	783-7365
<i>Petro- Marine Engineering, Inc.</i> Robert Brown	364-4257
<i>Shell Chemical</i>	<u>Contact Needed</u>
<i>Steimle & Associates</i> Dr. Steve Steimle	831-2574
<i>Tulane University</i> Dr. Brian Mitchell	862-8257
<i>Union Carbide</i> Larry Mercier	783-4780
<i>Walk, Haydel & Assoc.</i> Jasper Westbrook	586-8111
<i>W. H. Linder & Associates, Inc.</i> Herb Roussel, P.E.	835-2577 Ext. 3143
<i>Wink Engineering, Inc.</i> Bill Boutall	246-7924

The Reactor

Volume 13 Issue 4, January 2001

New Orleans Section, American Institute of Chemical Engineers

Editor's Soap Box

I hope everyone had a pleasant and safe holiday and I welcome them back to the continuing program year.

We are into the home stretch of our meeting year but there are still several interesting meetings ahead.

In addition to this month's environmental topic we still have topics on Biotech, process modeling and a plant tour scheduled for the remaining meetings.

Also, please note the election notice. It is not at all too early to start thinking about becoming more involved in section planning and leadership. Being a section officer is one of the best ways to gain leadership experience. This is an activity that is good for both your personal and professional development.

Included in this issue of the newsletter is a survey being asked for by the Tulane Mentoring Program. Please take the time to fill out the survey and return it to Garnett Bedenbaugh. All members input is requested and will go along way toward improving a very worthwhile and exciting program.

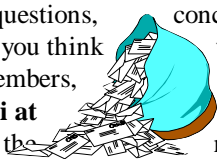
I have had several people approach me regarding the call for volunteers for the 2002 Spring National Meeting. I will be contacting all of you soon to insure that when planning starts, that everyone will be kept informed. Planning will likely start in the next couple of months. Look to future newsletters for further information.

Note too that the section approved the November meeting for PDHs. When appropriate the section will continue to approve such hours.

Please join us by attending a future section meeting.

Anthony F. Fregosi, Editor

If you have any questions, concerns or information that you think would be of interest to the members, please contact **Anthony Fregosi at 431-6598** to have it placed in the newsletter.



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For more info contact Marvin Haydel at

Phone: **(504) 727-9770**

Fax: **(504) 674-0955**

Email: **marvin@leghornlearning.com**

Web: **www.leghornlearning.com**

SECTION AWARDS PDH'S

The section board of directors has authorized awarding 1.0 Professional Development Hours for the November 14th presentation: "What Can the Internet Do for You?" by Tom Grady of ebase, llc.

Do not forget it is the individuals responsibility to maintain all relevant documentation with regard to Professional Development Hours.

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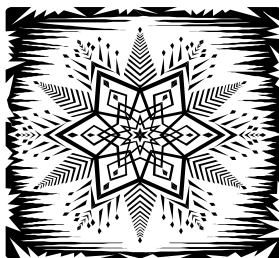
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Election

In addition per National and Section Bylaws all officers must be members of the national organization.

The elections will be held at the April 10th meeting.

If you have any questions or would like to be considered for treasurer please contact **Greg Tragitt**, Chairman at **837-9228** or e-mail **gtragitt@kbcac.com**.



Newsletter Advertisement Charges

Size	\$/Issue	9 Issues	\$/Year
Business Card (2" x 3.3")	\$ 16.00	\$ 100.00	
1/4 page (5" x 3.5)	\$ 40.00	\$ 250.00	
1/2 page (10" x 7.5")	\$ 80.00	\$ 500.00	
Full Page (10" x 7.5")	\$ 160.00	\$ 1000.00	

To order an advertisement, send the original of the advertisement (e.g. business card) and a check made out to "AICHE" New Orleans Section to **Anthony Fregosi, Cytac Industries 10800 River Road Westwego LA 70094**

Other Meetings

2001

AICHE Management Conference - Scottsdale, AZ
March 7 - 9

AICHE Spring National Meeting & Annual Ethylene Producers' Conference - Houston, TX
April 22 - 26

33rd Annual Engineering & Construction Contracting Conference (ECC) - Scottsdale, AZ
September 6 - 7

46th Safety in Ammonia Plants and Related Facilities Symposium - Montreal, Quebec, Canada
September 17 - 20

The 6th World Congress of Chemical Engineering - Melbourne, Australia
September 23 - 27

AICHE Annual Meeting: "Exchanging Ideas for Innovation" - Los Angeles, CA
November 12 - 17

N. O. Section Finances 2000-2001 (As of November 14, 2000)

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$ 4,692
<u>Income</u>	
Dues/LES Proceeds	\$ 2,136
Section Allowance/Misc. Bank credits	
Meals	195
Total	\$ 2,331
<u>Expenses</u>	
Meals	\$ 170
Newsletter	249
UNO Science Fair Registration	
Awards & Plaques/Bank Charges	6
Total	\$ 419
<u>Ending Balance</u>	\$ 6,541
<u>Net Gain/(Loss)</u>	\$ 1,912
<u>Meeting Costs Gain/(Loss) YTD</u>	\$ (230)

Humor

Nothing Comes Between this Man and His Chair

When you try to introduce workers to new safety gear, it seems there's always someone who doesn't want to give up the old stuff.

Well, we know one worker who became so attached to his favorite chair that he went to extraordinary measures to keep it.

This worker had a favorite four-legged chair. Unfortunately, according to OSHA regulations, chairs must have five legs to be compliant. That meant his chair had to go.

Upon hearing the news, the worker chained his chair to his desk to keep it safe. The next day, after realizing maintenance workers had pried the chair loose and thrown it away, the worker actually retrieved the chair from the garbage bin and refused to work without it.

Now that's what we call refusal to accept change.

[Ed—If you have any material for this column you would like to share, please send it to me. My email address is Anthony_Fregosi@fo.cyttec.com]

Tulane Mentoring Program **Questionnaire**

Enclosed in this month's newsletter is a questionnaire that we are asking our members to fill out and return as directed.

Your participation will be used to help the students of the Tulane Chemical Engineering program understand what Chemical Engineering is all about.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and offer help to the future of our profession.

Thank you for sharing your knowledge with the Tulane students.

Why Consultants Need Professional Liability Insurance

As the millennium turns, two events portend a significant change in the liability that chemical engineers face in American society. This spring's movie "Erin Brockovich" tells the exaggerated story of a paralegal's role behind the largest settlement in a non-class action case in American legal history. Over 600 residents of Hinkley, California sued Pacific Gas & Electric for injuries resulting from PG&E's alleged contamination of the groundwater with chromium wastes from a generating facility. After a two-year trial, PG&E settled for over \$330 million. While this move may have distorted the facts, the outcome remains the same. Outside Hollywood, the 1984 Bhopal tragedy began winding its way through the U.S. court system. Plaintiffs' attorneys and environmental organizations claim the accident was the result of poor plant design and operation. Some experts estimated that 30 tons of lethal methyl isocyanate had been blown out of a containment vessel, devastating the surrounding countryside.

These two events demonstrate that large corporations, and the consultants they retain, face increased scrutiny for large public-health claims. These are the most dramatic, but not the most serious, threats to chemical engineering consulting practices. It's not the rare, large tragedy that may present the greatest threat to AIChE members. Instead, it is the "small" case that can take the lifeblood out of a consulting practice. Every case, no matter how ill founded must be defended. This defense requires commitment of two different types of resources.

The most obvious resource is money; including money for defense lawyers and expert witnesses to investigate, analyze and explain how the chemical processes work. Even a small lawsuit can quickly

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AIChE.....
Serving Chemical Engineers
Who Serve the World

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Liability

cost tens of thousands of dollars on this first resource. Less obvious is the commitment of time and energy by the consultant-defendant. A lawsuit takes a toll, as hours are spent working with lawyers and experts to prepare the defense. Time spent on a lawsuit is time that cannot be spent working on client projects. This time can never be recovered, nor can the time spent worrying about the financial effect a lawsuit can have on a professional practice. Quantifying the effects of these lawsuits is difficult. Chemical engineers and their insurers are, understandably, reluctant to participate in attempts to quantify the amounts spent on lawsuits. Published jury verdicts tell part of the story.

In a California case, a suburban couple obtained a \$650,000 judgment against a number of defendants, including a cleaning company and a chemical manufacturer as a result of exposure to cleaning chemicals used in the plaintiffs' home. The jury agreed that the chemical manufacturer and the company had a duty to advise the homeowners to leave the home during the cleaning procedure. The plaintiffs' medical damages were minor, and included non-specific claims of rashes, chronic fatigue and "cognitive impairment." The medical expenses were also relatively minor, totaling \$30,000 for both homeowners.

Even successful defenses are expensive.

In another case, an oil pipeline fitting ruptured. The oil field operator sued the manufacturer who designed and built the pipeline, claiming over \$1.7 million in damages. After a three-week trial, the defendant was exonerated. However, three attorneys working for the defendant probably worked 12-hour days for a month defending the case in trial. The defense costs alone probably represented a third of the plaintiffs' total damage claim.

These are just two examples of a larger group of lawsuits that involve chemical engineers. While in neither lawsuit a chemical engineer was sued for

professional liability, the trend is clearly towards adding these professionals as defendants. In these examples, and a number of other lawsuits involving consumer products, chemical engineers appear as experts for the litigants. Today's expert may become tomorrow's defendant, as plaintiffs seek additional "deep pockets" and corporate defendants seek to shift their liability to their consultants. Of course, with 95 percent of all civil lawsuits settled before trial, the extent of the exposure to the consultant is significantly under-reported. However, given the wide range of activities directly affected by chemical engineers, it is only a matter of time before the liability explosion affects thousands of AIChE members. Thirty years ago, lawsuits against design professionals were rare. Now it is the rare architect or engineer that has never been sued.

The wise chemical engineer will start to build protection now, before the litigation tide permeates the profession. The best protection is a comprehensive risk management program. A key component is an effective liability insurance program that provides sufficient coverage for the range of exposures faced by the consultant. However, if a chemical professional has never had professional liability coverage before, many insurance policies limit coverage to only those acts committed after the date that the consultant was first insured. This "retroactive date" means that the time to start building the insurance program is before the creeping tide of liability starts to engulf the profession. Waiting until chemical consultants are exposed to the same frequency of lawsuits as other design professionals will leave an exposure for all of the acts prior to the first insurance policy.

Another component of a comprehensive risk management program is a thorough review of office practices and procedures. This review begins with the contractual relationship between the consultant and the client. If written contracts are not standard operating procedure, they should be. Oral agreements let the court (or the jury) decide what duties the

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Liability

consultant was supposed to perform. Regular reviews of the work in progress prevent "mission creep." Any changes initiated by the client, either on fundamental parameters, or scope of services should also be in writing. The explosive growth in litigation does not give any signs of ending. To properly face the future, AIChE members who work as consultants should begin to plan now. The American Institute of Chemical Engineers Professional Liability Program for Chemical Professionals in Consulting is an affordable means of securing the right protection now.

For information on the AIChE Professional Liability Insurance Plan, contact the Plan Administrator at **1-800-445-3393**, or visit **www.aiche.org**.

Government Relations Committee Approves MTBE Statement

In September, AIChE's Government Relations Committee approved a position statement on Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE), the gasoline additive that has recently appeared in groundwater supplies across the nation.

MTBE has been used in gasoline since the early 1970s, but became widely used in the mid 1990s with the implementation of the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990. The Clean Air Act amendments were enacted in part to address the growing number of metropolitan areas which were not attaining air quality standard goals. The amendments required the use of oxygenates in gasoline to enhance fuel performance, lower emissions and bring those areas into attainment.

After extensive study of the use of MTBE and its policy drivers, AIChE's Environmental Subcommittee led by vice chair Trey Fleming, determined that, while MTBE should be phased out as a gasoline additive, any replacement standard should be subject to a high level of scrutiny, including a full

Call for Volunteers

Would you like to become more involved in AIChE?

The General Arrangements Committee for the 2002 Spring National Meeting to be held in New Orleans is being formed. You may think that it is too early to be thinking about a meeting in 2002, but that is not the case. It takes many months of planning to successfully host a national meeting. The Baton Rouge and New Orleans Sections have hosted this meeting several times. The two sections have a proud tradition of well organized meeting planning to uphold.

There will be several committees from which to choose to serve. If you are interested in becoming involved in this most rewarding activity, please contact **Anthony Fregosi** at **(504) 431-6598** or email at **Anthony_Fregosi@fo.cyttec.com** for further information.

life-cycle analysis of any new fuel mandate.

Fleming told *AICHExtra* that "many new technologies are being developed to achieve the same emissions reductions as the oxygenate mandate. We expect some of these technologies, including fuel production, engine design, emissions controls, and new additives, will at least meet and possibly even surpass oxygenate use, without the downside of MTBE."

Fleming added, "the Clean Air Act should be modified to account for new technological development."

A copy of the position paper is accessible on the AIChE Web site listed below.

<http://www.aiche.org/government/priorityissues>

Look What's Coming!

Future issues of the *The Reactor* will feature articles on several topics of interest.

Along with our regular sections on Humor, Meeting updates and more!

The Reactor



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**1995 “Randall D. Sheeline Award”, for excellence in public relations activities.
1999 “Catalyst Grassroots Award”, for support of the grassroots advocacy program.**

Meeting Notice!

***Date: January 9, 2001
Time: 5:00 P.M.
Place: Steak & Ale
3870 Veterans Blvd.
Metairie, LA***



“The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra.”

— Unknown

TULANE MENTORING PROGRAM

JOB QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information for the Tulane Chemical Engineering students so they can have a better insight into what their career as a chemical Engineer might be like.

1. Describe three assignments you have had as chemical engineer (title, one or two sentences on duties). Were they “traditional” or “non-traditional” as a Chemical Engineer?
2. If you have had overseas assignments, where and what was your job?
3. Do you know a second language? If so, which one?
4. Have you had assignments where it would have been very helpful to know a second language? Where and what language? How were communications handled?
5. What courses, other than chemical engineering courses, would you recommend that today’s student take? Why?

Please answer the questions and either mail or e-mail your answers to:

Garnett Bedenbaugh
42366 S. Range Road
Hammond, LA 70403
(h) 504-345-1566
(F) 504-345-1566
E-mail: garnettb2@aol.com

If you would like to become more involved in the Tulane Mentoring program, or have some suggestions as to future topics for the students, Please contact Garnett or Dr. Brian Mitchell.