



# AICHE Orange County

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORANGE COUNTY SECTION, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERS

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April, 2002

## APRIL DINNER MEETING

### ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS OF ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS

**Hal Taback, PE, DEE, QEP, REA**

**Tuesday, April 23, 2002**  
**5:30 PM**

Beginning with a definition of ethics and explaining the difference between ethics and morals, Mr. Taback will discuss the conflicts a person faces in life that often influence their ethical behavior. The object of his presentation is to raise the awareness level of the attendees to the need for ethical practice, to suggest some priorities, offer a value system and demonstrate an approach for solving ethical dilemmas. The presentation will be conducted as an interactive discourse with the audience using commonly faced moral dilemmas as the basis for discussion.

Mr. Taback believes that the first priority for an engineering professional is to protect public health. Seldom if ever during the pursuit of a scientific or engineering curricula is this notion introduced. He will present six ethical obligations; Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Justice & Fairness, Caring and Civic Virtue & Citizenship. Finally he will present moral dilemmas to the attendees and facilitate a discussion to solve typical dilemmas to demonstrate his approach for pursuing an ethical practice. ***“There are no easy solutions to ethical problems. If the solution is easy, it is not an ethics problem.”***

Hal Taback is president of a Los Angeles environmental consulting firm that bears his name. He works on the national and international scene having over 30 years of professional engineering practice. He specializes in regulatory and engineering issues related to reducing the risk from toxic air pollutants and hazardous waste and all air compliance issues.

Mr. Taback holds a Master of Science in Engineering from Princeton and a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Rochester. His interest in the ethics of his profession grew out of the day-to-day problems experienced by him and his staff in their environmental consulting practice. He has chaired ethics workshops and has lectured on the ethics to technical and Bar Associations across North America. His

papers on ethics have been published in the book **Engineering & Environmental Ethics**, the **Environmental Manager**, where he has a regular column called **Ethics Corner**, and many other venues.

### Meeting Schedule:

5:30 p.m.	Social Hour
6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:20 p.m.	Break
7:30 p.m.	After-Dinner Program

**Place: Wyndham Garden Hotel, Costa Mesa**

**Directions:** From Interstate 405, go north on Bristol Ave., right on Anton, left on Avenue of the Arts. The Wyndham is on the right at 3350 Avenue of the Arts, Costa Mesa.

**Reservations: Please make a reservation at (949) 261-2622 by voice by Friday, April 19. Or, you may email your reservation to [janice.west@ps.ge.com](mailto:janice.west@ps.ge.com).** Please specify your preference for either the main menu or the vegetarian menu when making your reservation.

**Cost:** Members, **\$20** with a reservation, **\$25** at the door; Non-Members, **\$25** with reservation, **\$30** at the door; Students/Unemployed/Retired, **\$15** with reservation, and **\$20** at the door.

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### WHAT'S NEXT:

A joint meeting of the Southern California Section and Orange County Sections will be held on **Wednesday, May 29**, at the Petroleum Club in Long Beach. The topic will be **Planning Your Technical Career**. Sorry, but no vegetarian meal at the May meeting.

On **June 25**, at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, **Mike Sarna** will present our long-term outlook for the oil refining industry in Los Angeles

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### Southern California AIChE Meetings

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The Southern California Section has a dinner meeting in LA County on the third Tuesday of the month at the Quiet Cannon Restaurant in Montebello. On April 16, James Kilgore will discuss the use enzymes in the synthesis of optical isomers for improved drugs. For reservations call (800) 274-3847. Visit their web site [www.geocities.com/aiche\\_sc](http://www.geocities.com/aiche_sc)

### Legal Corner

by Peter Hsiao and Siegmund Shyu,  
Morrison & Foerster, LLP

#### Supreme Court Declines To Review Nuclear Medical Monitoring Case

The United States Supreme Court has declined to review a federal court of appeals decision that upheld the dismissal of a lawsuit seeking to make the federal government fund a medical monitoring study of people exposed to contamination from the Hanford Nuclear facility in Washington State (*Pritikin v. Department of Energy*, No. 01-892). The Hanford facility was established in 1943 to produce plutonium as part of the Manhattan project. Until at least 1957, the facility had documented releases into the air and water, which exposed people to radioactive material. The Department of Energy ("DOE"), which was responsible for the facility, agreed in 1989 to clean it up and funded health assessment completed by the Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry ("ATSDR"). However, DOE balked at funding further medical monitoring studies, which were estimated to cost more than \$100 million. The previous court of appeals decision had concluded that the plaintiffs lacked standing to force DOE to appropriate the funds, since there was no statutory requirement that ATSDR had to spend the money for the medical monitoring.

#### California Attorney General Takes Steps To Implement New Proposition 65 Requirements

As reported in the January 2002 newsletter, new provisions of California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 ("Proposition 65") went into effect on January 1, 2002, in an attempt to reduce frivolous lawsuits. However, only the bare minimum changes actually went into effect by use of the California Attorney General's emergency regulation

powers. In February, the Attorney General proposed more detailed regulations for the new Proposition 65 requirements, which will undergo the normal notice and comment process before being implemented. These new regulations include detailed provisions for a certificate of merit before sending notice to sue and guidelines the Attorney General will use in deciding whether to approve a Proposition 65 settlement. Furthermore, in response to the over 3,000 Proposition 65 notices filed in the final days of 2001 to avoid the new requirements, the Attorney General issued a series of letters to the private plaintiffs requesting that they provide evidence that they had a reasonable basis for bringing the suits. The Attorney General's actions have already resulted in one of the private plaintiffs, Citizens for Responsible Businesses, to withdraw a substantial number of notices.

#### Something Completely Different

Scientists at Oxford University are trying to win a little respect for the dodo, which has been extinct since at or around 1681. As reported by eNature.com, the dodo has been long ridiculed in the annals of history for being fat, flightless, and stupid. Although blamed for its own extinction, the dodo's demise has been more correctly tied to European sailors' introduction of rats, dogs, pigs, and guns into the dodo's natural habitat. Now, Oxford scientists have analyzed DNA from a preserved dodo, and concluded that the dodo was an "evolutionary success," which was well-adapted to its natural environment. Apparently a relative of the pigeon family, the dodo had traded its ability to fly for the capacity to store the fat it needed to survive through the many famines that occurred in those times.

*Legal Corner reports on recent news, and is not intended to be legal advice. The reader should consult an attorney about the specific facts before acting upon this information.*

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### Deadline for Abstracts – April 30

Presenters wanted for dinner topics and poster sessions on a special technical series tentatively scheduled for this summer. Warm-up for a national meeting, or just present your Senior Project. Please contact the Program Chair with your topic.

### Professional Engineering Employment Update

AIChE's Career Fitness Conference, scheduled for April 7-8 in the Chicago area, has been canceled. Despite AIChE's very best efforts, they have learned the same thing that job-seeking engineers are learning: It's a very tough market right now.

**Job Seeking Members** can receive a list of web sites of area companies that sometimes hire ChEs. Contact the Newsletter Editor to receive this list by e-mail.

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## Job Opportunities

① If you have an employment opportunity in Southern California for a chemical engineer, the newsletter will advertise it for free.

**American Institute of Chemical Engineers**  
ORANGE COUNTY SECTION  
P.O. Box 19362  
Irvine, CA 92623

**DATED MATERIAL**

***ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED***

