

OBJECTIVES (continued from page 1)

However, there are some objectives that are not really acted upon during the course of a typical year and that should be strongly considered for action to improve the benefits of membership, to encourage new members, to meet professional obligations, and to strengthen the Division. For example, there does not appear to be a great deal of effort directed towards coordinating activities with other societies in the broad field of safety and health. This Newsletter might be considered one small step in that direction since it now contains news items of interest to members of the ACS Division of Health and Safety (CHAS). The Newsletter does fall short of being a true joint publication, however. Some joint programming is now being considered for the 2008 Spring National Meeting since both AIChE and ACS will be meeting in New Orleans during the same time period in April. But joint efforts with other societies seems to be quite limited.

Regarding another objective, recommendations to the AIChE Board of Directors on positions relating to safety and health have not really been made in any recent period.

Without reviewing any of the other objectives, it does seem that the Division works very hard as necessary to put together the technical programming for the Spring National Meetings, but that efforts in other directions to meet objectives are quite limited. Perhaps some thought and discussions are needed here, particularly to encourage new members and to enhance the benefits of membership.

The objectives of the ACS Division of Health and Safety (CHAS), as stated in the Division Administrative Manual, are:

- to focus information on the properties of chemicals that affect humans directly or through the environment;
- to monitor the technical aspects of the above;
- to develop symposia and general sessions on topics related to above at national, regional, divisional, and other meetings of the Society (ACS);
- to foster publications and other modes of dissemination of information pertaining to the above; and
- to provide expertise in chemical health and safety to the Society and, in the public interest, to others as specified in the Charter of the Society.

Emphasis here is on providing key technical sessions and appropriate publications, including the *Journal of Chemical Health & Safety*. Technical sessions are planned for each of the two National ACS Meetings each year, and more effort is now being placed in bringing health and safety sessions to the regional ACS meetings.

Perhaps there is a real benefit in presenting the objectives of the two Divisions here at the start of the year as new officers and directors become heavily involved in respective Division affairs. With the two Division Executive Committees meeting soon (CHAS in March in Chicago; AIChE Safety and Health in April in Houston), new ideas, thoughts, and directions should be on the table for discussions. Strong consideration should be given to enhanced member benefits for professional and technical development, and to increasing the membership of the Divisions.

Your ideas and comments, as members, are sincerely solicited. Refer to page 12 for e-mail addresses of the appropriate Chairs.

Sam West

PRODUCT SAFETY IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY

Readers of this Newsletter are largely chemical-based professionals concerned with product and process safety among other safety issues. It might be interesting, then, to have a look at new thoughts and approaches in a different industry regarding specific product safety.

Research on auto accident statistics has shown that the driver is the single most important factor as the root cause of accidents, and is the most unpredictable - no surprise here. Focus of research, then, is on helping good drivers get better. The current high structural crash stability of modern cars suggests that safety research should be focused on accident avoidance.

Near-term research is centered on technology that enables vehicles to "see" and react to potential dangers by either warning or assisting the driver, or by taking control of the car. For example, rapid advances in sensing technology permits delivery of appropriate data regarding an imminent impact.

The worldwide technical success of electronic stability control (ESC), despite the proven benefits, has not been widely accepted by customers, probably because there is a lack of public awareness of this feature.

Another goal is to use technology to reduce traffic congestion and accidents. There is a major project sponsored by Nissan regarding this issue in Yokohama, where there are about 63,000 accidents each year. Various drivers have been selected to participate in this project as part of their normal driving routines. The project will certainly provide these drivers with an increased appreciation of the technology involved. ■