



International Occupational Hygiene Association *NEWSLETTER*

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Colleagues,

I hope all of you had either a nice summer or a nice winter. Anyway, I am sure you are all rested and ready to go over this rather long Newsletter.

Since our last Newsletter, the most important occupational hygiene event was the Bergen Conference, which was great, both professionally and as a personal experience. The warmth and kind hospitality of our Norwegian colleagues made their beautiful country even more charming. The quality of the presentations and the enthusiastic atmosphere among the participants made it possible to have a real exchange of knowledge and positive experiences. Our President, Dave Zalk, prepared excellent summary, as you will see. Kurt Lechnitz, our past president, sent us a summary of an important presentation he made in Bergen about EU projects. Moreover, you may find the programme, abstracts and photos on the web at: <http://www.nyf.no/bergen2002/>

In Bergen, we also had the IOHA Board meeting and some of the highlights are also presented. Some colleagues, including our President, suggested that I should share with those of you who were not in Bergen some thoughts I presented there under the title "The Making of the Occupational Hygienist", when I received the Life-Achievement Award that IOHA was kind enough to honour me with. I would be grateful if this would trigger some ideas on how to reach beyond us, in order to make our profession more widely known. Please, do send me some ideas so that we may brainstorm, through the Newsletter on innovative approaches to further promote occupational hygiene worldwide.

In view of the close dates (with Bergen), I did not personally attend the 2002 AIHCE, held this year in San Diego, Ca., USA, but I have news that it was, as always, an excellent meeting. The proceedings are already available and you may obtain information at: <http://www.aiha.org/conf.html> We must congratulate our colleague Brian Davies for having received the William P. Yant Award, in San Diego.

As to training, an important initiative was started in Mexico, and our colleague Rafael Echavarria sent us a report on it. Please, colleagues who have started, or know about education and training initiatives in your countries, send us similar information. It is important to share experiences in this respect since, we all know, training is the basis for the proper development of the profession.

As to Certification, the IOHA Committee has been very active and some of their documents have been posted in the IOHA website.

Concerning recent meetings, you will find some information on the 3rd Session of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, which I attended on behalf of IOHA. A very important future event is the Workshop on Control Banding, taking place in November 2002, in London. Please, colleagues who would like to report on an interesting meeting they attended or wish to inform

on a future event in their countries or region, send me the information to be posted on the issue of the Newsletter.

I would be most grateful to receive contributions, even if very short, from our readers. Feedback from you, including constructive criticism, is important to ensure that IOHA Newsletter does bring material of interest to all of you and that it may somehow contribute to the development of occupational hygiene worldwide.

Best greetings to all colleagues,

Berenice Goelzer
Editor of the IOHA Newsletter
berenice@goelzer.net

IOHA Board Meeting, Bergen, Norway, 8 and 9 June 2002

Some highlights are hereby presented, as well as some photos, starting with the Board members who attended.



IOHA Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

It was decided that it would be important to have a written statement on these items, and K. Gardiner presented a first draft, which was discussed at the Board meeting and is now being finalized; it will be presented in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Membership Report/Co-Operation Programme

I am pleased to announce that the Netherlands Registered Occupational Hygienist Society was accepted into IOHA membership. As to Romania, Dr Branisteanu gave a detailed verbal report of the situation of occupational hygiene in his country. As to Thailand, there have been contacts with IOHA. As to Estonia, the Finnish Association is assisting in the establishment of an occupational hygiene association. It was reiterated that IOHA would support, as much as possible, the development of our profession and the establishment of national associations, wherever needed and wherever there is a genuine interest by national professionals.

It is very rewarding to see occupational hygiene associations being organized and flourishing around the world, but one sad note was to learn that the Danish Society will cease to exist after 31 December 2002.

6th International Conference

The proposal from the South Africa was discussed and accepted; therefore we now know where our next Conference will take place. Congratulations to our South African colleagues !

Collaboration with other organizations

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, ICOH is having its Congress – ICOH 2003, for the first time, in South America, at Iguassú Falls, Brazil (information in French, English, Portuguese and Spanish at: <http://www.icoh2003.com.br/>). IOHA will participate and collaborate, particularly in organizing a Session on Silicosis.

Collaboration is also being established with the International Ergonomics association (IEA).

Collaboration with the ILO and WHO continues, as described in detail in the last issue of this Newsletter.

Elections

Ton Spee, from the Netherlands was elected Vice-President (2002-3) and Kerry Gardiner, from the UK, was elected as Secretary-Treasurer (2002-2005), both unanimously. Congratulations to both !

Change of Presidents



Kurt Lechnitz passed the gavel to David Zalk, who is now President of IOHA



David then presented Kurt with a personal memento in recognition of his hard work for IOHA. In fact, all of us greatly appreciate and thank Kurt for the excellent job he has done, not only this year as president, but over the years, for IOHA and for our profession.

Kurt Lechnitz presented his President's report to the Board, accounting for the activities of the 2001-2002 period.

Acknowledgement of Outgoing Officers

Vern Rose and Gun Nise have retired from the Board; their hard work on behalf of IOHA is also greatly appreciated.

New Subject: Expanding the role of occupational hygienists

Michel Guillemin, from Switzerland, brought up the relevant and timely subject of the necessity for occupational hygiene to consider expanding its role and responsibilities to become involved in multidisciplinary assessments. David Zalk expressed his support; one example of action in this respect is his personal efforts to establish links and cooperation between occupational hygiene and ergonomics, through contacts with IEA.

Notes from Bergen 2002 – The World Cup of Occupational Hygiene

It is said that the children of Norway are born with skis under their arms, however those in Bergen are born with an umbrella instead. This was a difficult concept for many of us at Bergen 2002 to understand as the first many days we were treated to beautiful, hot, sunny days that seemed endless in the true Norwegian fashion. However, in keeping to the longstanding Bergen tradition, those who were wise enough to make room in their luggage for umbrellas were duly rewarded.

It was both a joy and an honour to be in Bergen, Norway this past June. This should come as no surprise to the over 300 attendees and participants who played a part at IOHA's most impressive 5th International Occupational Hygiene Scientific Conference. On behalf of the IOHA, I would like to take this opportunity to thank conference chair Ms. Bjorg Eli Hollund, the full conference committee, and the Scientific Committee for their outstanding efforts in making this event possible. IOHA would also like to say "tusen takk" to the Norwegian Occupational Hygiene Association for acting as our most gracious hosts and for bringing us to the beautiful city of Bergen.

To me it was of no great coincidence that this conference occurred in synch with another equally important international event, the World Cup. For were we not also bringing together among the best the world has to offer in mutual appreciation for the profession we are all a part of? Whenever a triennial event occurs at the same time with an equally important quadrennial event it is indeed a most special occasion. Not until 2014 will this happen again. It is for this and other important reasons that I refer to Bergen 2002 as the "World Cup" of occupational hygiene. On a personal level, I can honestly say that my passion for playing football (or as it is known in my country, soccer) every week is only equalled by my passion for my chosen profession of occupational hygiene (ibid, industrial hygiene). Knowing that more than a few of us at the conference made sure to poke our heads into the local pubs to root on our favorite teams during the week, I cannot help but feel that I am not alone.

As a field practitioner in occupational hygiene, it is indeed a privilege to be a part of, in the words of Jeff Lee (a founding member of the IOHA), this truly NOBLE profession. The week of Bergen 2002 only intensified this feeling. The conference treated all those fortunate enough to attend to an amazing variety of the latest technical and scientific achievements as well as the newest cutting edge techniques practiced around the world. Included that week were presentations focusing on new methods in our profession, bioaerosols, extreme

environments, engineering and new technologies, visualization of real time exposure, maritime environments, and occupational medicine as well as some tried and true topics such as exposure assessment strategies and risk assessment. Additionally, in expanding the horizons within the greater occupational health professions, we were also fortunate to have our first ever section on Ergonomics as presented by the International Ergonomics Association. It is my feeling, which I soon learned is shared by many, that there is truly a future for combined efforts between occupational hygiene and ergonomics that will come to benefit many workers and their employers alike.

It was with this emphasis on the greater occupational health professions, and a vision toward the future of our profession, that Bergen 2002 came to a close. The closing session on Friday was presented in the theme "Toward a new era! – A world vision." The first half of the session began with outstanding presentations that expanded on the issues and challenges facing the future of both the occupational health and environmental health professions. Taken together, a path forward could be drawn that would unite these fields under the umbrella of the science and technologies that are a part of the protection of the greater Public Health. The last half of the session reflected how occupational hygiene and the IOHA fit into the greater occupational health scheme internationally. The essence of the IOHA Board of Directors meeting, held the previous weekend, were presented to the audience. The focus of these presentations was the current role of occupational hygiene and how it fits into the WHO 2002 – 2005 Work Plan. Details of these efforts can be found within the current IOHA Plan of Work available on our website. You are encouraged to not only review these efforts, but also to assist us in fulfilling our part within the greater occupational health scheme throughout the world.

In true World Cup fashion there were 35 countries present at this conference, 16 of which are not members of the IOHA. To each and every one of the countries without membership we put forward to you an opportunity. Please contact us to learn how your country can join the IOHA. We would love to add a seat for your country's representative at our Board of Directors table. IOHA is playing an important part in the future of this noble profession and we would like to present an opportunity for each and every one of you to play a part. Once again, to all those who braved the heat and the rain in this beautiful city and made the IOHA Bergen 2002 5th International Scientific Conference possible: TUSEN TAKK!

David M. Zalk
President, IOHA
ACGIH Representative

Strategy of the EU Commission on Health and Safety,
Summary of a paper presented on the IOHA 5th International Scientific Conference,
10-14 June 2002, Bergen in Norway, by Kurt Lechnitz

Safety and health at work now constitute some of the European Union's most important social policy sectors. In a Communication Document "**Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2002-2006/COM 2002 EU Document - 0118 final**", the EU Commission has set out the details, such as:

- Keeping pace with changes in the world of work.
- Changes in the society.
- An increasingly feminised society.
- An ageing active population.
- Global approach to well-being at work.
- Strengthening the prevention culture.
- Education, awareness, anticipation, improving people's knowledge of risks.
- Better application of existing law.
- Preparing for enlargement with Countries of Central and Eastern Europe.
- Developing international cooperation.

International activity means that the EU Commission will continue its active collaboration with WHO and ILO. It also means cooperation with developing countries – more particularly those of the Mediterranean Basin, ASEAN, NAFTA. Exchange of experiences on occupational health and safety issues, already initiated with the USA under the Transatlantic Pact, will be strengthened.

For details of this EU Communication Document see:
<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en> and go to "Legislation in Preparation".

In line with this EU Communication document there are "**grants for the provision and dissemination of effective good practices that reduce safety and health risks in small and medium-sized enterprises**", which are offered by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (<http://agency.osha.eu.int/sme2002>).

To provide the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (ACs) with technical assistance in approaching legislation issues, the **Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX)** has been set up by the EU Commission. The list of beneficiary countries includes all Candidate Countries (CCs) for EU membership, namely: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey.

TAIEX offers a range of services, such as: workshops in the beneficiary countries and in EU Member States; study visits of CCs representatives to the EU Commission and to Member States; assistance to training programmes; assistance to private sector associations (<http://www.carlbro.be/intro.asp>).

The **Strategy for a future Chemicals Policy** has been laid down in a White Paper: the EU Commission Document COM (2001) 88 final. The political objectives of this strategy are:

- Protection of human health and the environment.
- Maintenance and enhancement of competitiveness of the EU chemical industry.
- Prevention of fragmentation of the internal market.
- Increased transparency (access to information on chemicals).
- Integration with international efforts.
- Promotion of non-animal testing.
- Conformity with EU international obligations under the WTO.

This Document is shown on the afore given website “Legislation in Preparation”.

The year 2003 will see the start of the **Sixth Framework Programme 2002-2006**. The EU Commission will support research activities with 16 Billion Euros and has established a forum for discussion, in order to invite reactions to this Programme. The EU Directorate-General for Research will make sure that all incoming comments are analysed and made accessible to those who will be involved in the decision-making process. A dedicated e-mail address has been created to which comments and suggestions may be sent: research-nfp@cec.eu.int .

The Making of the Occupational Hygienist,

by Berenice I. F. Goelzer

(I had chosen to speak about “the training” of the occupational hygienist, because this is a fundamental issue. However, I opted for “the making” instead, because training is only part of it).

The “making” of the occupational hygienist requires knowledge, experience and a code of ethics, as well as great commitment and perseverance. Only a strong commitment to protect workers’ health and the environment, as well as the belief in the indispensable role of our profession, may give us the perseverance to fight for it.

Adequate training is the basis

Through training and experience, occupational hygienists should be able to perform many tasks, mainly:

- To foresee and prevent occupational and environmental health hazards through, for example, adequate planning, selection of cleaner technologies, guidelines for the safe operation and maintenance of work processes
- To recognize hazardous agents and factors (chemicals and dusts, physical agents, biological hazards, ergonomic and psychosocial factors), which may be associated with different work processes, and understand their effects on the health and well-being of workers
- To assess – qualitatively and quantitatively - workers’ exposure to hazardous agents, and to evaluate the results, with a view to eliminating exposure, or reducing it to acceptable levels

- To design and/or recommend, effective/economical prevention and control measures, within the framework of well-managed and sustainable programmes
- To recognize agents that may have environmental impact, and contribute to environmental protection.

Moreover, occupational hygienists should be able to work well integrated in multidisciplinary occupational health teams.

Occupational hygiene training should be thorough. To start with, it requires a solid knowledge base, drawn from many sciences and professions, including: Chemistry, Physics, Toxicology, Physiology, Statistics, Epidemiology, Ergonomics, Psychology, Engineering (Technological Processes), Safety, Medicine (Work-related Health Effects), Public Health, Environmental Sciences, Communication, Management.

Specific topics should cover from the *historical evolution and legal aspects of occupational hygiene* to **strategies, methodologies and techniques** for the:

- anticipated preventive actions
- recognition of all types of hazards
- exposure assessment and interpretation of results
- hazard prevention and control (including programmes and management systems)

Needless to say that practical experience is also a *must*.

My vision of a “comprehensive practice” occupational hygienist is like a GP physician of the workplace, able to perceive it as a whole (comprised by work processes and workers, as well as the facility itself and its surroundings), to identify if and what is wrong, and to which extent and, then, recommend what should be done to “treat and cure it”, calling on other specialists, as needed.

There are also those professionals who prefer to focus on one or more very specific aspects and who should then work with colleagues having complementary skills.

Quality is a critical issue

Competence must be attained, verified and maintained. Therefore, accreditation of courses and certification of professionals are definitely essential.

Courses must meet defined requirements for curriculum, faculty, facilities and infrastructure (including information systems). Professionals must prove continued competence. Through the dedicated work of its Certification Committee, IOHA has contributed to this important issue, by developing a Model Certification Programme and by promoting efforts to harmonize certification procedures in different countries.

A space for occupational hygienists

The *making* of occupational hygienists is not enough. In many places, there is still a need to create conditions for their existence and acceptance, side by side with all the other recognized occupational health professionals.

The positive impact that occupational hygiene may have, not only on workers' health, but also on environmental protection, sustainable development and *decent* globalization, has not yet been fully perceived by all involved with these issues.

One hears many simplistic approaches, such as "*technology is responsible for the destruction of the planet*", or, "*ban toxic chemicals and workers will be protected*". Nevertheless, everybody continues to eat, and to wear clothes and shoes, and to live under shelter, and to ride cars, buses and planes, and to read and watch TV, and therefore somehow requiring the use all kinds of chemicals, plastics, cement, glass, wood, and so on. Why not face the reality of our daily needs (*including for leisure*) and find a *formula* to fulfil them without adversely affecting workers' health and the environment? An essential ingredient for this *formula* is the prevention and control of hazards associated with work processes.

Even so, there are many initiatives and projects, which aim at goals requiring the contribution of occupational hygiene, and yet fail to include the availability of occupational hygienists in their agenda.

Some Specific Examples

Workers' Health: For example, there are many idealistic people who fight for **workers' health**, but do not consider all that it takes to actually ensure it, and (*amazingly to me*) do not seem concerned by a shortage, *or even a lack*, of adequately trained occupational hygienists in their countries.

Even workers' organizations seldom include the development of our profession among their priorities. A recent public statement by a leader in the fight for workers' health was very upsetting to me, and that was: "it is obvious that occupational hygiene has failed in protecting workers' health"; this **is not true**, (*in this case*) legislators and other occupational health professionals *have failed* in understanding the importance of occupational hygiene and what it takes to practice it.

We still see paradoxes, such as what is happening now in a certain country, where a national standard requires that workplaces have programmes for the "***anticipation, evaluation and control of occupational hazards***", while occupational hygiene is far from being officially recognized as a profession, and is, *in fact*, often ignored and even blocked. There is a legal requirement, but no provisions to ensure the availability of competent professionals to implement it.

In this particular country (*as in many others around the world*), the result has been that the protection of workers' health, well-being and even life, is often left in the hands of persons who do not have the required training and skills.

Why does this happen ? Don't people wish to have specialized professionals to treat them when they are sick ? or to defend them in court ? or to build their houses ? why not, to protect their health at work ?

Environmental Protection

As to the general environment, occupational hygiene, *if well practiced*, may greatly contribute to its protection. If a harmful chemical is eliminated from a work process, or is used under strict control, it will neither affect the workers, nor go beyond and pollute the environment.

Effective risk management in the workplace, including adequate waste disposal, can appreciably limit the negative impact of industrialization on the environment.

Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to see conferences, or publications on environmental protection and even on cleaner production, with no mention of the important link with occupational hygiene, or, environmentalists ignoring the need for occupational hygienists in their programmes.

Sustainable Development

"It is possible to have development that meets the needs of the present world population for food, water, energy and shelter without causing adverse effects on health and on the environment, and, without depleting or damaging the global resource base, hence without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This is the paradigm of sustainable development and, here again, occupational hygiene has a role to play.

Occupational hygienists should include, in their practice, concerns for sustainable development, and should *also* be involved in many of the related issues (*the latter is not easy to achieve!*). There is much need for better intersectoral understanding and collaboration.

Globalization

Globalization may contribute to better living standards across the world, *provided* that trade policies duly account for social issues such as human rights, workers' health, environmental protection and sustainable development. Certain technological advances, which have enabled the globalization of the economy, can also be used for the improvement of working conditions and environmental protection, worldwide. Safer and cleaner technologies can and should be increasingly developed and used everywhere. Information technology has greatly contributed to the sharing of knowledge and experience, including on the occurrence of hazards, their prevention and control.

Unfortunately financial markets often rule and economic gain often prevails over concerns for the social dimensions of globalization. For example, it happens that, as standards become more stringent and compliance more costly in certain countries, hazardous and polluting work processes are transferred elsewhere (*mostly from developed to developing nations*) thus creating *unethical* globalization.

Proposals to solve or attenuate the associated problems should include the protection of workers' health, as this is a key social issue. If, for example, occupational hygiene practice is considered as an indispensable "companion" to any work process, *wherever it goes*, part of the negative aspects of globalization, for developing countries, can be eliminated. In fact, this could even serve as a bridge for transferring preventive technologies.

I would like to say, though, that it is not only a matter of taking occupational hygiene along with companies that cross borders, but of promoting it locally, *everywhere*, as we cannot overlook the fact that about the worst working conditions are usually found in small enterprises and the informal sector. These often flourish around larger companies (both multinational **and** national). Some companies outsource certain hazardous tasks to small and even home industries, in order to have cheaper production, as well as evade legal requirements for the protection of workers' health and of the environment (*less controls on wages and hazards, much lower costs*).

Some difficulties and proposed actions

We have to face the fact that something is wrong, somewhere, with the protection of workers' health. Although there is *nowadays* enough science and technology to prevent most occupational hazards, workers still get sick, disabled and die at work, everyday, everywhere. Even occupational diseases *known for centuries* still haunt and kill workers today.

A recent ILO report stated, "*about 270 million workers are involved in occupational accidents annually, while another 160 million workers incur occupational diseases* (and remember, these are extremely under-diagnosed). *Worse still, 12,000 children die each year working in hazardous conditions.*"

In my opinion, one of the drawbacks (*which are many*) is the fact that more often than not the multidisciplinary approach, which is indispensable for the successful practice of occupational health, has not been adequately followed. This multidisciplinary work **must** include occupational hygiene, thus giving due importance to primary prevention (which is the only way to stop occupational diseases).

On our side, and with a view to contributing to the improvement of this unsatisfactory situation, it is important to think about what is wrong with the development of our profession and with the approaches that have been followed to establish it worldwide.

In my experience, **difficulties** hindering the progress of occupational hygiene stem from a number of factors, which I would divide into internal and external to the profession, and which include the following:

As external factors:

- occupational diseases are very much under-diagnosed and under-reported, and this does not help to trigger political will to effectively avoid their causes
- occupational hygiene and its possibilities are not well known everywhere, and misconceptions abound, thus making its recognition, as an indispensable occupational health profession, rather difficult

I have heard statements such as, “an occupational hygienist is someone who measures” (and this was not a bad one because measuring is one of the occupational hygiene tasks, although it is only a component of its practice).

I have seen workers mistrusting us because they believe that we are “on the employers side”, and employers waiving our advice because we fight for workers’ health, emphasizing primary prevention and source control, not always as easy as giving a mask.

Some of the **internal factors** are:

- lack of internationally harmonized and accepted minimum criteria for the development and practice of the profession
- still, too much emphasis on quantitative evaluations (*sometimes leading to unrealistic sampling requirements and delays in preventive interventions*)
- inadequate preventive approaches, such as too many “end of pipe” control measures, and insufficient workers’ participation

In theory, and in our minds, occupational hygiene is a profession – but is it really so ? In many countries **it is not**; it is not recognised, *hence not properly developed*. The resulting scenario (*in these cases*) usually is: **“inadequately trained persons practicing it – unsatisfactory solutions - people not trusting the profession – blockages to its recognition”**.

What can we do about it ? I do not have all the answers and can only present some suggestions for overcoming the problems just mentioned. I must say that much is already being done, however, I believe that certain key aspects still need to be further elaborated and more widely promoted.

As to the “making” of the occupational hygienists, more efforts should be put towards having:

- a clear and universal definition of the role of occupational hygienists and their scope of action
- stricter and universally harmonized minimum requirements for occupational hygiene training
- wider implementation of certification schemes, at the country level

As to **occupational hygiene practice**, more emphasis should be placed on:

- pro-active prevention (*before harmful consequences occur*) particularly hazard anticipation and source control (through, for example, substitution and work practices)
- workers’ participation
- pragmatic control solutions applicable in small enterprises (*in this respect, we should be proud that IOHA has a leading role in the ILO Toolkit project, to be tested shortly in a number of developing countries, in collaboration with the ILO and WHO*)
- more cost-benefit studies on preventive interventions.

There is no doubt that a strong scientific and technical basis is needed for the practice of occupational hygiene. However, let's not dwell so much on issues such as, if an OEL should be 0.20 or 0.25 mg/m³ (*which most analytical procedures being used cannot distinguish anyway*) – or, if a sophisticated direct-reading instrument will measure a concentration (*which is constantly fluctuating anyway*) with 3 or 4 decimal places. Let's worry, *even more*, about *if and how effectively*, these guidelines and findings are being translated into actual preventive interventions at the workplace level.

It should be said that the fact that there is much need for simple solutions does not mean that we can afford less training for occupational hygienists - much to the contrary, we need even *better* training. Sound knowledge and experience are required to solve problems in new and unique situations; it is more difficult to design simple, efficient, cost-effective and innovative control solutions than to measure, compare results with a list, and recommend some ready-made solution from a ventilation book.

As to **raising awareness and promoting political will** to support the establishment of occupational hygiene worldwide, there should be increased efforts concerning:

- multidisciplinary studies aimed at better estimating the magnitude of adverse effects associated with occupational exposure (*in fact, collaboration with other occupational health professions, such as occupational medicine and epidemiology, needs to be strengthened*)
- more assertive action and innovative ways to spread our message, *beyond our peers*, in order to *effectively* reach governments, relevant institutions and organizations, employers and workers.

In this context, let's not overlook donor and funding agencies, that very often grant funds more easily to programmes aiming at treatment, rehabilitation and "counting bodies" than to those aiming at preventing disease, disability and deaths.

We should speak to the general public, to young people in schools, to the media, to other professionals - such as engineers, physicians, economists, lawyers, administrators, in fact, to anyone who, at a time or another, will act as a decision maker.

There must be considerable mentality changes, in many places, if occupational hygiene is to be recognized as a profession, across the world.

The importance of international collaboration, between relevant organizations and associations, countries and individuals, cannot be overemphasized. In fact, this is what IOHA is about.

Conclusion

Industrialization and economic development, which may bring numerous benefits, including to health and quality of life, do not necessarily need to be linked with adverse effects on health and on the environment. Such deplorable consequences can and should be avoided, and occupational hygiene can make a significant contribution in this respect.

The theme of this Conference (our first in the new millennium) - “**A New Era of Occupational Hygiene**” - was very well chosen. We must definitely enter a new era; there must be some changes in our focus.

Ample knowledge on hazard identification, prevention and control has been accumulated so far. The outstanding challenge now is to create conditions to apply it, timely, efficiently and universally.

So, along with the quest for a continuously improved development of our profession (*which is indispensable for such a dynamic field*), let's strive for more visibility and wider understanding of the contribution it can bring to the achievement of healthy and sustainable development for all nations.

The struggle to develop and establish a new profession is not an easy one. However, even when successes are slow and sparse, we must not give up. Remember that victory is not only measured in terms of achievements. I recently ran across a definition for victory (*which I liked very much*): “victory is the art of persevering when others decide to stop trying”. And that is what I ask from you - colleagues from all over the world: no matter how difficult the challenge, let's keep trying and, *if only for this*, victory will certainly be ours. *Thank you.*

News from the IOHA Certification Committee

The IOHA Certification Committee, under the leadership of Vern Rose, has been very active. In view of the acute need for quality assurance in the practice of occupational hygiene worldwide, and the few existing certification schemes around the world, this is indeed a very timely and highly appreciated action. Relevant documents produced by the Certification Committee - namely, Minutes from the June 2001 Committee Meeting, Notes on the June 2002 Committee Meeting, Report of the IOHA Certification Committee (June 8, 2002) and Certification Committee Charter, were recently posted on the IOHA Website (under Certification), in addition to previous documents.

William P. Yant Award 2002

This year, during the AIHCE in San Diego, our colleague Brian Davies, from Australia, was honoured with the 2002 William P. Yant Award. This Award, from the American Industrial Hygiene Association, is given to a person residing outside the USA, who has made outstanding contributions to occupational hygiene. We all know how much Brian has contributed to our profession over the years. Brian was IOHA President in 1998-1999 and IOHA Board member for a long time. He was the chairman of the 4th IOHA Scientific Conference in Cairns, which was a great success. His Yant Lecture was entitled “Diesel Particulate Control Strategies at Some Australian Underground Coal Mines”. Congratulations Brian!

Speaking about the Yant Award, Heather Jackson kindly sent us a picture taken (by Linnea Lillienberg) at the Dinner in Bergen, where four past recipients of this award happened to be together, which is not likely to occur often since they are from Australia, Brazil, England and Switzerland.



From left to right: Brian Davies (2002), Berenice Goelzer (1996), Michel Guillemin (1998) and Paul J. Oldershaw (2001)

Industrial Hygiene Diploma Programme in Mexico, **by Rafael Echavarría**

Between August 11, 2001, and April 27, 2002, a “*diplomado de Higiene en el Trabajo*” was held in Irapuato, State of Guanajuato, in central Mexico.

This academic program was jointly organized by the Instituto Tecnológico Superior de Irapuato (ITESI; www.itesi.edu.mx), the Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS; www.stps.gob.mx) Guanajuato State Office, and AREC Consultores www.arec.com.mx). The Asociación Mexicana de Higiene Industrial (AMHI; www.amhi.org.mx) also played an important role by validating and promoting the program.

A total of 41 students participated in this 8-month Diploma program that included 330 hours of theory and practice classes. A group of 17 enthusiasts and experienced instructors (14 Mexican, 2 American, and one Colombian) made this event, first of this type in Mexico, a wonderful learning experience. Student dedicated 56 Friday evening and Saturday morning sessions to learn the basics of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, and controlling occupational hazards to workers' health.

AIHA's International Affair Committee sponsored this academic program in Mexico through its International Development Fund (IDF). The moneys donated from the IDF were invaluable resources for the:

- Calibration of one sound level meter, owned by the Guanajuato State H&S authorities (this instrument is now ready for use in field studies by STPS);
- Translation of 210 non-ionizing radiation (NIR) slides into Spanish;
- Simultaneous translation English-Spanish for the biological agents and the NIR classes (4 sessions of 5 hours each);

Other sponsors included SKC, 3M Mexico (Occupational Health & Environmental Safety Division), NARDA, and Pfizer. The following eight AIHA members participated in the program: Fernando Araujo, MD (instructor), Stephen Chiusano, CIH (instructor and sponsor, by providing NIR books, including AIHA NIR Guide Series and NIOSH NIR books), Debbie Dietrich, CIH (instructor and sponsor, by providing SKC equipment and 2001 ACGIH's TLV booklets), Rafael Echavarria, CIH (instructor and Diploma's technical coordinator, AMHI President 1998-1999), Ruben Peña (instructor), Juan Rodriguez, CIH (instructor; AMHI President 1995-1997), Keith Tait, CIH (sponsor, by providing shipping of printed materials), Mauricio Vizcaino (instructor; AMHI President 2000-2001).

This program can be now replicated in other regions of the country, since the program, instructors, and materials have already been developed.

Rafael Echavarria, CIH
Technical Coordinator
E-mail: rechavarria@arec.com.mx

3rd Session of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, Geneva, 10-12 July 2002

(by B. Goelzer)

I attended this Sub-Committee meeting on behalf of the International Occupational Hygiene Association, as an observer. It should be said that this Sub-Committee has been carrying out an excellent and dedicated work.

Our past president, Kurt Lechnitz, had sent them a letter explaining what IOHA is about and asking that IOHA be granted consultative status. IOHA's request was presented as a working document, considered by the Sub-Committee and unanimously accepted. It should be mentioned that Isaac Obadia (representing the ILO), Jennifer Silk (from the USA delegation), and Roque Puiatti (delegate from Brazil) strongly supported IOHA's request.

It is important that all of you are well informed about this topic of great relevance to our work. Occupational hygienists are both users and contributors to Hazard Classification and Communication Systems as these are indispensable tools for occupational hygiene practice. For example: Hazard Classification is key to the anticipation and recognition of hazards, as well as for the establishment of priorities for action. Hazard Communication is essential in Prevention and Control programmes.

Occupational hygienists and other occupational health and safety professionals (such as physicians, nurses, safety engineers) are in a privileged position to collect information and to disseminate knowledge on hazards. IOHA, as well as other associations of occupational health and safety professionals, can and should contribute to the dissemination of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals*, as well as to capacity building and training for its use, at all levels. An internationally adopted and effectively utilized Hazard Classification and Communication System may, in some cases, make the difference between life and death.

So that this important work is better known by our readers, I would like to inform you that the Report of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, on its 3rd Session, is already available online at: <http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2002/ac10c4/ST-SG-AC10-C4-06e.doc> (On this Report, it can be seen that the "Sub-Committee agreed to grant consultative status to IOHA").

The agenda, previous reports, working documents, informal documents and list of participants are available at: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/dgsubc4/c4age.html>

Future Events

**Workshop on Control Banding,
4-5 November 2002, London, UK**

The British Institute of Occupational Hygienists (BIOH), the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) and the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are hosting a Workshop on Control Banding to be held 4th and 5th November 2002 in London, England. The Workshop is supported by the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Office (ILO).

There is now much practical experience on the use of generic strategies for the control of exposure to chemicals. Knowledge has been gained in many industries, particularly the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, and initiatives are under development internationally. There is a global programme being taken forward through collaboration among WHO, ILO, IOHA and HSE. This Workshop will greatly contribute to gathering and sharing practical experiences already gained by industry, scientists, health professionals and regulators, thus enabling further advances of this promising approach.

The **banding approach** has particular practical relevance to the control of chemical hazards in developing countries, and WHO is piloting a version of it through a Global Workplan (see "Toolkit", under *News from the ILO*, in the March 2002 IOHA Newsletter).

The HSE scheme – "**COSHH Essentials - Easy steps to control health risks from chemicals**", is available online (free of charge) at: <http://www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/>
The importance of this contribution from the HSE to the occupational health international community, hence to the protection of workers' health worldwide, cannot be overemphasized and is most appreciated.

**Annual Meeting of the Brazilian Association of
Occupational Hygienists (ABHO)**

ABHO is having its 9th Annual Conference in São Paulo, 22-24 September 2002. *Training in Occupational Hygiene* and *Certification* are included among many other subjects to be covered. ABHO has prepared a proposal for a Certification Scheme, which will be presented and discussed at this meeting. You will be kept informed on its development. It would be desirable that national associations involved in elaborating and implementing certification schemes kept a dialogue for the exchange of views and experiences.
