

## PUBLISHER

David H. Colby  
(212) 591-7125  
davec@aiche.org

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kristine Chin  
(212) 591-7662  
krisc@aiche.org

## MANAGING EDITOR

Cynthia F. Mascone  
(212) 591-7343  
cynthm@aiche.org

## SENIOR EDITOR

Rich Greene  
(212) 591-8677  
richg@aiche.org

## SENIOR EDITOR

Rita L. D'Aquino  
(212) 591-7317  
ritad@aiche.org

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

Karen Simpson  
(212) 591-7337  
kares@aiche.org

## ART DIRECTOR

Fran Fresquez  
(212) 591-8669  
franf@aiche.org

## PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Andrew Triana  
(212) 591-7987  
andrt@aiche.org

## ILLUSTRATOR

Alice Schwade

## WASHINGTON EDITOR

Darlene Schuster  
(202) 962-8690  
dc@aiche.org

## REGULATORY EDITOR

William A. Shirley  
(888) 674-2529  
envtllaw@earthlink.net

## PATENT LAW EDITORS

M. Henry Heines  
(415) 576-0200  
mhh@townsend.com

Frank C. Eymard  
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eymardfc@arlaw.com

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Malvin Moore  
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THREE PARK AVENUE  
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#### AIChExtra

Senior Editor  
Scott J. Hamilton  
(212) 591-7660  
scoth@aiche.org

Managing Editor  
Sarah Fewster  
(212) 591-7257  
saraf@aiche.org

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## Editorial

# Chill Out!

**W**e're not talking about heat transfer here. If you're the parent of an adolescent, you know that expression means "relax" — as in "Chill out, Mom, this purple hair dye will fade."

We can all benefit from that advice — relax. We're working longer hours in a more competitive business environment with a tremendous amount of uncertainty. Just when you think you're stressed to the max ... along comes something else that ratchets up the stress one more notch.

How do you deal with stress on the job? We posed that question to you in the June issue and asked you to share your favorite stress-reduction techniques with our readers. Judging by the response — yes, *one* response — that we received, chemical engineers are indeed a very stressed-out bunch. Perhaps you have no outlets for managing your stress. Or maybe you're under so much stress that you couldn't find the time to write to us. (Could it be that you have no stress?) In any case, I'm sure you'll find Bob Bly's article on dealing with stress (p. 86) valuable. Please take the time to put at least two of his suggestions into practice.

That one *CEP* reader who did write to us has a very interesting idea. George Jarvi, principal process engineer with Ambitech Engineering Corp., proposes the "Shouting Bag." This is a hood made of a special fabric that allows the passage of breathing air but restricts the passage of sound. It fits over the head and draws close around the neck, without choking. When in place, the Shouting Bag allows the wearer to vent a primal scream without bothering the occupants of adjacent cubicles. "I have not registered the invention, and if anyone can invent the necessary fabric, they are welcome to the patent. However, they had better do it quickly, because publication in *CEP* starts the one-year clock toward disclosure in the public domain," he says.

One of my favorite ways of managing stress is exercise. Unfortunately, I've fallen out of the habit of spending my lunch hour at the gym. So I was thrilled to find the book "Too Busy to Exercise," by Porter Shimer. This book explains how everyday activities can add up to fitness, and it is crammed full of ways to fit "exercise" into your daily routine. For example: park farther away from your destination and walk to it; take the stairs instead of the elevator; walk to a coworker's desk to discuss a question face-to-face instead of back-and-forth by e-mail; do shoulder rolls and leg lifts while you're sitting at your desk; do isometric (squeezing/pressing) exercises when you're waiting in a line; play sports, or even just hide-and-seek, with your children ... the list goes on and on ...

Shimer points out that the most important ingredient in getting fit is imagination. If you use your imagination, there's no limit to the ways you can fit movement, stretching and strengthening into your everyday routine. Think of it as just another problem to be solved. How can you optimize your everyday routine to squeeze in the most physical activity in the most enjoyable ways at the lowest cost? Are you up to the challenge? Let us know how you do. (Feel free to disregard Shimer's suggestion about cleaning your own house. I don't care how many calories scrubbing and vacuuming burn. This is one task that screams "outsource me.")

Cynthia F. Mascone  
Managing Editor  
cynthm@aiche.org