

## Regional Meetings Draw Crowds to Chicago and Galveston

Last month, two successful regional conferences brought AIChE's technical programming close to home for hundreds of engineers.

The 2010 Midwest Regional Conference, Sept. 30 – Oct. 1, attracted more than 200 professionals to the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) campus in Chicago, IL, where AIChE's Chicago Local Section hosted a slate of technical sessions and networking activities customized for chemical engineers and scientists in the central U.S.

The following week, Oct. 7–8, AIChE and the South Texas Section (STS) conducted the 2010 Regional Process Technology Conference at the Moody Gardens Hotel in Galveston, TX. Like the Midwest event, the Process Technology Conference drew strong attendance, with nearly 400 engineers and other chemical processing and petrochemicals industry professionals from the Texas Gulf Coast region convening near Galveston Bay.

Regional conferences allow the Institute to deliver tailor-made programs to members in distinct geographic regions and segments of the profession. Regional conferences — like most of AIChE's programs — would not be possible without the leadership and enthusiasm provided by member volunteers, who program the sessions, recruit sponsors and exhibitors, and provide the venues for these meetings.

### Midwest

Now in its third year, the Midwest Regional Conference focused on the critical subjects of energy, sustainability, refining, process development, and environmental, health and safety issues. The program chair for the Midwest Conference was the Chicago Section's Patrick Shannon of Middough, Inc., with general arrangements handled by IIT's Don Chmielewski. Additionally, representatives from

Northwestern Univ. organized a poster session — the first for the regional conference — which included three dozen posters on a range of topics.

The conference began with a keynote by Bill Hoback of Illinois's Office of Coal Development, which described efforts to deploy clean coal technology. A second keynote took place Oct. 1, when Maria K. Burka, AIChE's President-Elect and a program director at the National Science Foundation (NSF), discussed engineering initiatives at the NSF.

Topping off the conference was the Midwest region's signature event — the High School Engineering Career Outreach Program — where more than 400 middle school and high school students were introduced to career opportunities in engineering. Former Space Shuttle astronaut Al Sacco, a professor of chemical engineering at Northeastern Univ., was the featured speaker at the student event — fielding questions as diverse as “have you ever seen a UFO?” to inquires about how space travel has a youthful effect on the shuttle passengers.

Some of the Conference's corporate sponsors allocate funds directly to this annual student outreach effort, attesting to the program's impact and popularity.

### Process Technology

The Second Regional Process Technology Conference targeted the needs of Gulf Coast industries. One of the main program tracks explored developments in process safety, with topics ranging from practical applications of process safety to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) compliance programs. Another program block was devoted to challenges in the refining industry, and included a discussion of cap-and-trade legislation and its impact on refinery energy-conservation economics. The topic of catalysis and reaction engineering was new to this year's conference, with speakers in this session addressing advances in catalyst development and reactor design. Additional topics included new petrochemical technologies; distillation and separation; process simulation; energy efficiency; and environmental issues impacting the industry.

The conference kicked off with a keynote address by Joseph B. Powell, Chief Chemical Engineering Scientist at Shell Global Solutions, who spoke on “Future Energy and Chemicals in an Interdependent, Carbon-Constrained World.” Later in the evening, during the STS dinner meeting, 2010 AIChE President Henry Kohlbrand offered his insights on the future of chemical engineering and the key



▲ At the Regional Process Technology Conference, young professionals mingle during a social event sponsored by the South Texas Section.

## Regional Meetings (cont'd)

role AIChE will play. This talk was transmitted online to AIChE members, and this webcast also served as a pilot test for AIChE's virtual local section meetings — which will debut in 2011.

In a bonus program track, Alan Rossiter, chair of the STS and co-program chair (with Todd William) of the Regional Process Technology Conference, delivered a session on engineering ethics. Another session was aimed at young engineering professionals. The exhibition component of the Process Technology Conference attracted more than 30 service and equipment vendors and provided yet another opportunity for attendees to learn and develop business connections.

Plans for the 2011 Midwest and Process Technology Conferences are underway. Details will be posted at [www.aiche.org/conferences](http://www.aiche.org/conferences).

► Alan Rossiter (left), program co-chair for the Regional Process Technology Conference, presents the South Texas Section's Distinguished Service Award to Norman Carnhan, an active Section member and organizer of the Offshore Technology Conference.



## Langer Receives NAE's Founders Award

Robert Langer, the David Koch Institute Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been awarded the National Academy of Engineering's (NAE) 2010 Founders Award, in recognition of his innovative contributions to biomedical engineering. The award was presented during an Oct. 3 ceremony at the NAE's annual meeting in Washington, DC.



The NAE's Founders Award honored Langer for "the invention, development, and commercialization of methods and materials for drug delivery and tissue engineering, mentoring of young scientists, and the promotion of the nation's health." The award recognizes outstanding professional, educational, and personal achievements to the benefit of society.

Langer is widely known for his work on controlled-release formulas in drugs. His breakthrough in this area allows drugs to be released into the body on a sustained, periodic basis. He also pioneered research that resulted in the field of tissue engineering.

In addition to being a member of NAE, Langer has also been elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine. Among his many honors, Langer received AIChE's Founders Award in 2008.

## Manfred Gans, AIChE Fellow, Liberated Parents from WWII Concentration Camp

Manfred Gans, age 88, died on Sept. 11, 2010, in Fort Lee, NJ. In addition to his career as a chemical engineer, Gans is noted for his service with the British armed forces during World War II, and for the compelling story of his separation from his parents in Nazi Germany.

Gans was born in 1922 in Borken, Germany. In response to the rise of the Nazi regime, his parents sent him to England at the age of 16. At 18, he was chosen to join the elite group of British Commandos known as X-troop. He landed with the Allied armies on D-Day, and fought throughout the European campaign, rising to the rank of captain.

In 1944, he was among the troops who liberated Borken, where he discovered that his parents, Moritz and Elsa Franekel Gans, had been taken away to a concentration camp. After the armistice was signed, Gans was one of the first Allied soldiers to arrive at Czechoslovakia's Theresienstadt concentration camp, where he found his parents alive.

After the war, Gans returned to England and studied

chemical engineering at the Univ. of Manchester, before immigrating to the U.S. to attend MIT, where he completed a master's degree in chemical engineering. He moved to New York City and joined Scientific Design Co., where he specialized in design and startup. His career took him around the globe, and in the 1970s he was among the first wave of professionals to conduct business in China and East Germany. He also consulted for the United Nations, with assignments in Cuba, Turkey, Vietnam, and Pakistan. In the 1980s, he started a consulting practice in Hoboken, NJ.

In 1993, AIChE honored Gans with its award in Chemical Engineering Practice.

Gans is survived by a son, a daughter, his companion, Esther Okin, and three grandchildren. His wife of 43 years, Anita, died in 1991.

In 2009, Gans published a memoir, *Life Gave Me a Chance*, which chronicles his experiences as a German Jew in the Allied armies.

