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Celebrating the Chemistry-Engineering Nexus

This year offers a unique opportunity to spread the word about chemical engineering. The United Nations has designated 2011 the International Year of Chemistry. The IYC 2011 festivities have started even before the official International Launching Ceremony in Paris Jan. 27–28, and will culminate with the Closing Event in Brussels Dec. 1. Philadelphia will play host to the U.S. opening of IYC 2011, which features a panel discussion, “Global Challenges, Chemistry Solutions,” at the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF) on Feb. 1, volunteer-led chemistry experiments at the Franklin Institute on Feb. 5, and other events during the week (see pp. 51–52 and p. 64).

Activities are planned around the world, ranging from technical conferences and trade shows, to art exhibits and book displays, to student gatherings and competitions, and much more (www.chemistry2011.org/participate/ events). For example:

- The Univ. of Aveiro in Portugal will observe “Twelve Months of Chemistry” — featuring a different event each month, such as a chemistry olympiad and summer academy for secondary school students, a symposium on food chemistry, a photography contest, and a chemistry in fireworks display.
- During “Women Sharing a Chemical Moment in Time” on Jan. 18, simultaneous breakfast meetings in different locations will be linked via Skype or videoconferencing, allowing women to network globally and celebrate the pivotal role of Marie Curie in chemistry.
- A French-Polish commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Curie’s Nobel Prize in Chemistry will be held at La Sorbonne in Paris on Jan. 29.
- Also on Jan. 29, Grand Valley State Univ. in Allendale, MI, will host “Super Science Saturday: Celebrating Chemistry — Past, Present, Future” to provide students and their families opportunities to experience the science of chemistry through demonstrations, guest speakers, hands-on laboratory activities, poster displays, and more.

• The American Univ. of Beirut, Lebanon, plans to videotape its Feb. 7 “Undergraduate Organic Competition,” where teams of two students earn points for correctly answering multiple-choice questions and for the speed at which they do so, then post the videos on YouTube.

• On July 28, the “Australian National Chemistry Quiz,” an annual event currently held in 15 countries and in seven languages, will test the reasoning ability of middle- and high-school students with 30 multiple-choice questions covering the diverse applications of chemistry to life.

• Serving as an IYC 2011 cornerstone event, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) World Chemistry Congress, whose theme is “Chemistry Bridging Innovation among the Americas and the World,” will take place July 30 – Aug. 7 in Puerto Rico.

National Engineers Week marks its 60th anniversary this year, Feb. 20–26. What better time to celebrate our profession — at the nexus of chemistry and engineering — and our role in turning chemistry ideas into reality? You can find ideas for activities at www.chemistry2011.org, and www.eweek.org/GetInvolved/GetInvolved.aspx, as well as www.aidhe.org/about/iyc/default.aspx. Why not use some of those ideas as raw material to synthesize your own educational and fun IYC-EW celebration?

Cynthia F. Mascone, Editor-in-Chief

