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Stimulating Thought and Promoting Dialogue

When I applied for the position of editor-in-chief, I submitted an editorial vision statement to the Publication Committee. My vision revolved around publishing high-quality articles that provide useful information for the chemical engineering community — useful perspectives for staying abreast of important trends; useful technical articles that provide how-to problem-solving guidance; useful information for learning about new technologies; and useful means for staying connected. I also explained that I planned to experiment — for example, with different types of articles and topics, more inviting graphics and layouts, and new ways of gathering information.

One of the ways *CEP* has been experimenting is through the introduction of several new columns. Bio Beat is a joint venture with the Society for Biological Engineering (SBE), as Spotlight on Safety is with the Center for Chemical Process Safety (CCPS). These appear quarterly, and rotate with Terry McMahon's Process Automation Corner. When changes in patent law or outcomes of litigation might affect chemical engineers, Henry Heines keeps us informed through Patent Update. Kevin Swift, chief economist at the American Chemistry Council (ACC), shares his insights in Chem Economics. Last month, Arjun Gopalratnam kicked off his bimonthly column, YPOV, which is intended to provide the young professional's point of view.

An important element of a column is that, in addition to reporting and discussing news and ideas, it reflects the personality of the author. A column often expresses an opinion and might even issue a call to action.

You might argue that because columns are inherently biased they do not belong in a magazine like *CEP*. Indeed, several AICHE members took exception to the Dec. 2011 Process Automation Corner article, "The Great Job-Creation Myth (or, In Praise of Private Greed)," calling it a "politically right-leaning diatribe" and "blatantly politically motivated and biased." Other members wrote to say that the article was "spot on" and wished there were more like it. Turn the page to read a few of their letters. We appreciate readers taking the time to write and share their thoughts, and we hope *CEP*'s content stimulates thought and dialogue among our members.

This issue contains a Spotlight on Safety article (p. 23) in which CCPS staff consultant John Herber explains why he is passionate about process safety. He points out the importance of learning from past safety incidents, and the need to share the lessons learned with the chemical engineering community. An excellent way to do this is by participating in the Global Congress on Process Safety, which takes place Apr. 1–4 in Houston. The article on pp. 19–21 gives a preview of the Congress and the AICHE Spring Meeting, and the preliminary technical program grid appears after p. 48.

Because *CEP* is the flagship publication of AICHE, it's natural for you as members to feel a sense of ownership in the magazine, and to expect it to reflect your views and the chemical engineering profession as you envision it. Of course, AICHE's membership is very diverse and members' opinions diverge widely, so at times *CEP* may seem to reflect others' views more than yours. Maintaining the right balance is challenging, and we count on you to let us know when we're out of balance — and when we get it right.

Rest assured, even though our columnists get a bit of leeway in expressing themselves, that the *CEP* editorial staff strives to maintain overall objectivity in all that we write, edit, and publish.

Cynthia F. Mascone, Editor-in-Chief

