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NEXT MEETING: CHEMICAL ENGINEERS ARE HEROES

<http://fuze.me/23188555>

(detailed directions on page 4)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2014

9:00 pm EST, 8:00 pm CST, 7:00 pm MST, 6:00 pm PST

Many of us have had awkward conversations that begin with either, “I don’t want any products with chemicals!” or “You’re a chemical engineer? Ugh!” Wouldn’t it be great to have a real conversation, even just a short one, which at least begins the process of enlightening folks outside the industry about the omnipresent and net-positive impact of the chemical industry on their lives? That’s what inspired the Steve Brown to adopt the above slogan and encourage his fellow chemical engineers to proactively have one-on-one or one-on-several conversations about what we do. The discussion will cover what’s been done so far, the feedback, and future possibilities.

Presenter Steve Brown is Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Chemstations, Inc, a leader in chemical process simulation software. He is responsible for directing company strategy as well as the day to day operations within sales, marketing, customer support, and software development. He started his career with Chemstations and has worked in customer support, sales, and sales management. As a huge fan of the profession, he started a “Chemical Engineers Are Heroes” campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of the chemical industry. He holds a BSChE from the University of Houston and an MBA from the University of Texas at Austin. He is a 20 year member of AIChE. He enjoys spending his free time with his wife and two daughters, but occasionally escapes to hunt; fish; turn a wrench on, or drive fast in, a car.



<http://www.aiche.org/community/sites/local-sections/virtual-local-section/events/chemical-engineers-are-heroes>

FROM THE CHAIR



Since its inception three years ago, the AIChE Virtual Local Section (VLS) has experienced tremendous growth in numbers and activity. We are not a substitute for conventional local sections, and encourage our members to participate in local sections that are available, but we strive to be a local section experience for all chemical engineers regardless of geography. We are one mechanism through which AIChE is truly the global home of chemical engineers.

As we enter 2014, we have some new officers who will build upon the work of the founding officers. This year is the first in which members who were not involved in the founding have been elected as officers, based upon their involvement in the section and the profession. *Our new vice-chair/chair-elect, Amanda Scalza*, first joined the VLS in 2012 and was involved with the newsletter and managing membership. *Our re-elected treasurer Neil Yeoman* is a founding member of the VLS and is known throughout AIChE as a conscientious and active member of the Institute and his community. *Two new VLS Directors* (joining four others who are on a rotating three-year terms) are *Deb Grubbe* and *Dr. Sujata Bhatia*, who are both welcome additions to the VLS team. Grubbe has been active in AIChE including serving a term on Board of Directors; she previously helped me organize some initiatives around involvement of Young Professionals. Bhatia, a biomedical

engineering professor at Harvard, has both a chemical engineering Ph.D. and a M.D., and she has a demonstrated passion for teaching and global engagement. With the election of new officers, *Dan Lambert is once again serving as past-chairman*. Dan is the founding chairman of the VLS and has been a mentor and leader without whom the VLS would not have made it this far.

This coming year, I have **four goals** for the VLS. First, the VLS will provide *quality programming* for the membership, and this is an interactive goal that requires the feedback of VLS members. As we try various kinds of meeting topics, we solicit your feedback. Second, we will *expand and activate our membership*. Not only will we have more members of the VLS, but our goal is to activate them within the diverse AIChE communities. From technical divisions to societal impact to young professionals to women or minority affairs, AIChE has many opportunities for a global membership to pursue their passions. We want VLS members to be the most active in all areas of the Institute. Third, on a practical level we will use the best practices that have been developed since our founding to create *standard operating procedures* (we are engineers, after all!). With so many VLS parts moving in virtual space, this effort will be a tremendous benefit in the years ahead as leadership changes. Finally, we want to *collaborate with other AIChE communities* to develop the virtual space with them and support both their virtual and conventional activities.

It's going to be an active year for the VLS, but it will be worth it, and I hope you'll get involved. Thanks for all you do.

-- Noah Meeks

FROM THE EDITOR: HEROES?

When I first heard about our VLS meeting this month, I had mixed feelings. Usually the VLS speakers are really worthwhile, but I am pretty firmly in T. J. Oshie hero camp. (Just in case anyone missed this, Oshie is the hockey player who was called a hero for a brilliant athletic performance in the Olympics. He responded "The American heroes are wearing camo. That's not me.")

I reserve the word "hero" for describing brave people (military or civilian) who voluntarily and intentionally go above and beyond the call of duty, taking unplanned, unavoidable, and serious physical risks for a significant greater good, without the expectation of personal gain. Mastering fugacity, the Navier-Stokes equations, and Fick's Laws don't seem to qualify as heroic acts. Maybe getting out of o-chem alive is a little closer to heroism, but that is open to debate. (Just for the record, even though my lab coat ended up with some pretty impressive stains, it wouldn't have been mistaken camo.)

Then I read Brown's abstract. Even though I am not sold on this use of the word "hero", Brown's talk might be useful. Like most chemical engineers, I have been in those conversations. My reaction is often quite unheroic: either changing the subject or just leaving the scene of the crime.

Looking for more information, I turned to the dictionary, which told me a hero is "a person, typically a man, who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities" or "a

submarine sandwich". The well-executed sandwich can certainly be admirable, as can the products of chemical engineering, from energy to pharmaceuticals and biomaterials, to the monitoring and control of industrial effluents. But is admirable or even life-enhancing really enough to merit the word "heroic, even using the dictionary definition?

My other problem with "hero" is that it seems to be overused and devalued due to indiscriminate application. Google N-Gram viewer (<http://books.google.com/ngrams>) quickly convinced me otherwise. If the Google book database is at all representative, the use of the word "hero" entered its present decline about the third quarter of the 20th century

I was right about one thing: I have already learned a lot from Brown's talk, so I am looking forward to learning more by attending the talk Thursday evening.

Hope to see you all there.

-- Jennifer Brand

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The 2014 [AICHE SPRING MEETING](#) and 10th Global Congress on Process Safety will be held in New Orleans from March 30 - April 3, 2014.

2014 [Local Sections' Leadership Workshop](#) will be held in New Orleans from March 29 - March 30, 2014. Noah Meeks has more information.

Every Fourth Thursday – VLS Meetings.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Want to improve the monthly reading material? Got an opinion to share? An announcement? A general interest query?

Want to learn to edit or interview? Contact the editor at jbrand@unl.edu using "VLS Newsletter" in the subject line

ATTENDING A VLS MEETING

- Go to <http://fuze.me/23188555> and follow directions. (The "name" requested will be the name displayed to other meeting participants.)
- For audio only: (If prompted, enter the meeting number: 23188555, then press #)
 - From a browser, select the internet audio option after joining.
 - From a phone:
 - US: +12014794595 or +18553463893
 - international access numbers <https://www.fuzebox.com/extras/symphony>
- Having problems? Follow the meeting link from our website virtual.aiche.org
- Need more help? You can connect to the Customer Support Team or access self-help tools at www.fuzebox.com/support.

Attendance at a Virtual Section Meeting is open to AIChE Virtual Local Section Members, AIChE members and other interested people.