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APRIL MEETING: THE DUPONT STORY

JAMES B. PORTER, JR.

**CHIEF ENGINEER AND VICE PRESIDENT - ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS
(RETIRED)**

E.I. DUPONT DE NEMOURS & CO. INC.

[WEBEX MEETING NUMBER 276 141 101](#) (further directions on page 7)

THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 2015

9:00 pm EDT, 8:00 pm CDT, 7:00 pm MDT, 6:00 pm PDT;

UTC/GMT 0200 24 APRIL 2015



ABSTRACT: At the dawn of the 19th century, Éluthère Irénée du Pont de Nemours (left), Lavoisier’s most successful student, fled the French revolution and settled with his family in the new democracy,

the United States of America. An experienced industrial gunpowder chemist, du Pont had a vision of supplying high-quality powder to his new government and to settlers who were establishing farms and needed to remove tree stumps from their fields. In 1802, he founded his company on the banks of the Brandywine Creek a few miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware. Little did he realize that the firm that bore his name would start with one product, black powder, would transform itself at least 3 times, and would still be in business over 210 years later. One of the oldest companies in the world, DuPont has invented thousands of materials, played critical roles in both World Wars, supported the defense of the USA and Western Europe during the Cold War, and has indirectly saved the lives of thousands of police officers and firefighters with its aramid fibers, Nomex® and Kevlar®. The broad scope of the transformations is apparent when you consider that today, DuPont is one of the world's largest manufacturer of seed corn.



Speaker: Jim Porter, retired DuPont Vice President of Engineering and Operations and Chief Engineer, will share the history of the DuPont Company with the Virtual Local Section. Jim is a former AIChE Board Member, and is a Past President of the AIChE Foundation. He was employed by DuPont for over 42 years, and has many stories to share!

More information may be found on the [VLS Events Website](#).

PDH CREDIT FOR VLS MEETINGS

LAURA J. GIMPELSON, P. E.

Attendees of the Virtual Local Section Meetings can receive up to 1 hour of professional development credit that meets the continuing education requirements of most state professional engineering registrations. To receive the certificate documenting your attendance, the attendee must send an email to the VLS secretary (virtualexecutive@aiche.org) with the following information:

1. Name of the Presentation and Speaker
2. Attendee's name as listed on the registration certificate
2. Attendee's registration number and state/providence of issuance

The certificate, in pdf format, will be issued within 30 days of the receipt of the request.

IN THIS ISSUE: BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE AND MEN!

Jennifer I. Brand

April is upon us and April has long been noted as a month of changes, with its “showers piercing the droughts of March” (Chaucer), the pesky tax deadlines (at least here in the US), and, of course, the eventual May flowers (in the northern hemisphere, anyway). This month’s newsletter reflects some of these changes that we all experience, some planned and some unplanned.

Few engineers spend their entire careers doing what we thought we would be doing when we began our freshman year or started our first or latest jobs. Sometimes, even our plans from an hour ago have to change due to circumstances.

Not all change is unexpected or unplanned. As AIChE members, we have some unique and valuable resources to help us prepare for the opportunities presented by both expected and unexpected changes. Our VLS chair, **Amanda Scalza**, reflects in her column on lessons she has learned so far in her evolving career. Our VLS secretary, **Laura Gimpelson**, is processing requests from interested meeting attendees for earning Professional Development Hours by attending VLS meetings. The national AIChE actively supports members as we plan and execute changes throughout our careers. For example, on May 13, they sponsor the **Spring 2015 Virtual Career Fair**. This and other resources are discussed below.

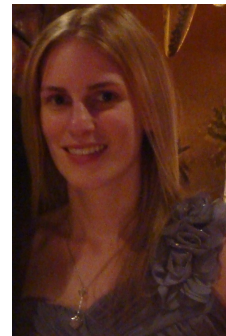
Changes happen even in the well-laid plans of our hardworking VLS Programming Committee. This month’s meeting is the next installment in our touted chemical industry history series, where we will learn about the development of the DuPont Company, started by a refugee from the fallout of the French Revolution. Talk about adapting to change! The refugee, **E. I. du Pont**, was a French chemist who became a publisher and a prisoner before transforming himself into a very successful American industrialist!

His company, too, has changed with the times, and the VLS was scheduled to hear this story from the DuPont corporate historian, Justin Carisio. Due to unexpected schedule complications, however, this is not to be. Instead, the VLS will have a rare treat: the substitute speaker for this meeting will be **Jim Porter**, who has seen lots of changes since he joined DuPont in 1966 as a recent chemical engineering graduate of the University of Tennessee.

FROM THE CHAIR: LESSONS LEARNED FROM CAREER CHANGES

Amanda Scalza

Springtime for me means moving time. Taking inventory, I realize it’s gotten to be a rather terrible habit, since I’ve lived in eleven different dwellings in six different



zip codes over the last seven years. Luckily, I live in a city of citizens who sympathize with my story well. Houston is full of workers from throughout the world, both fresh from school and with vast experience, who have come here to enjoy the benefits of the shale gas boom.

So how do you take advantage of this new economic growth, no matter where in the world? Here is what I have experienced and observed along the way.

1. *Everyone is a salesman, you are the product. Create the customer.*

There are numerous books, motivational speeches, and other materials out on this subject. This works whether you are hunting for a new job or just meeting new colleagues. Though I know some who have, I myself have never obtained a job, or other general leadership position, except through a network contact. I generally don't think it's because people like to hire their friends. It's simply an easier, safer choice to hire someone recommended by a trusted colleague rather than a person you know only from a CV and an hour-long interview.

2. *Be willing to think outside the box.*

Just because you are in research or academia right now doesn't mean your next job has to be. Think about what attributes make you successful in your current job instead of your ability to complete your daily responsibilities. For myself, being detail-oriented as a researcher in my previous role has been the key to my success completing my current duties in environmental compliance. My industry, location, and daily job functions were all

completely new to me, but by using my core strengths I have found great success.

3. *Satisfied employees are successful employees.*

If you are in the hunt for a job, settling for the first offer simply for the security of having a job is almost never the best plan. We spend most of our lives at work, so it better be something you enjoy, that you feel you are being compensated fairly for, and that has some growth potential. It is no way to start out a relationship with an employer if you feel you have been given a low compensation package. But if you find yourself two weeks into the job and wanting to leave, wait it out. New jobs are always hard to get used to, for you and your new employer.

Looking back, moving to Texas has still been the craziest decision I have ever made. I certainly never imagined myself being part of the "bigger is better" lifestyle during my days in small town New England. But my life and my career have gone in exciting ways I could have never expected to happen, simply because I took such a chance. So maybe "*be willing to take a chance*" is the best career advice of all!!

AICHE VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR AND OTHER RESOURCES

Jennifer I. Brand

"One of the most important benefits a professional society can give its members is career development services. These services are important to all our members,

regardless of the segment of the industry they work in or what stage they are in their careers, from students to seasoned veterans,” said [Nathan Lott](#), AIChE’s Global Sales Manager, Recruitment, Advertising, and DIPPR®. Nathan, who holds a B. S. in chemical engineering from Brigham Young University, where he first worked with DIPPR®, was enthusiastic and helpful in explaining all [the resources](#) which are posted at the career section of the AIChE website. These valuable services are free to AIChE members seeking jobs.

I had called to find out more about the May 13, Spring 2015 Virtual Career Fair. Virtual Local Section members are used to real-time, online, interactive meetings, where we can share ideas in the comfort of our own homes on the fourth Thursday of each month. A virtual career fair seemed like a natural idea for our geographically far-flung members. But how does it work, exactly?

The May 13 event will be the third standalone [AIChE Virtual Career Fair](#). These events, held twice a year, have replaced the old “online career fairs” which were linked to the recruiting events at the Spring and Fall AIChE national meetings. Like the in-person meetings, employers can have “booths” where, among other things, company information and job openings can be posted and where booth occupants can talk to jobseekers, via text chat rooms. Applicants can identify the people they are most interested in chatting to from employer info on the website and can “line up” for the most appropriate person.

[Detailed information for employers](#) is posted and includes an instructional video, demographic information about previous attendees, and registration links as well as Nathan’s [email](#) and phone number.

At the website for jobseekers, there is [more information about this fair](#), as well as a video, links to webinars to help you in your job search and career planning, registration links, template for resumes and much more.

Other free jobseeker resources that Nathan suggests are:

- Post a resume to our job board, and look through the jobs posted there by employers. Link:

http://careerengineer.aiche.org/home/home.cfm?site_id=1932

- Enroll to receive our weekly e-newsletter “AIChE SmartBrief” which has a career section with tips and featured job postings, in addition to many other sections with news relevant to the field. Link:

https://www2.smartbrief.com/signupSystem/subscribe.action?pageSequence=1&briefName=aiche&campaign=aiche_website

- Be sure to attend a virtual job fair, and to check out the resources which can be found in the career section of our website. Link:

<http://www.aiche.org/resources/careers>

I would add one piece of advice for those attending virtual fairs with the text chats or giving phone interviews: dress and sit or stand like you would for an in-person interview – even though the person at the other end won’t see you, your professional

attire and posture will help keep your conversation crisper and more professional. It sounds silly, but it works!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

VLS Meetings are the fourth Thursday of the month:

--- Thursday, May 28th ----

[James Bagian, MD, PE, astronaut](#)

---- Thursday, June 25th ----

Mark Jones, DOW (History Series)

Thursday, July 23rd

Thursday, August 27rd

AIChE Presidential Candidates

Thursday, September 24th

Student Paper Competition

--- Thursday, October 22nd ----

[Vice Admiral Joseph Dyer, USN \(ret\)](#)

2015 is [European Industrial and Technical Heritage Year](#)

[2015 Spring Meeting and 11th Global Congress on Process Safety](#)

April 26-30, 2015, Austin, TX

[AIChE Spring Virtual Career Fair](#)

13 MAY 2015

1:00 – 4:00 EDT

Information for [Employers](#) and for [Jobseekers](#)

HELP WITH SPECIAL PROJECT, PLEASE

Not all chemical engineering graduates end up practicing traditional chemical engineering. Chemical engineers have pursued careers as doctors, lawyers, financial executives, and farmers. An article is in preparation for later this year, exploring which aspects of their chemical engineering education and experience are useful for these people in “non-traditional” careers. If you are a chemical engineer who is working or has worked in a “non-traditional” career like this, I would like to hear from you. Please write me about your experiences and let me know if you would be willing to be interviewed or quoted (with or without attribution) in the article.

Contact me at jbrand@unl.edu using “VLS Non-Trad” in the subject line. Please pass this message along to others who might be non-trad chemical engineers, as well. Thanks, Jennifer

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VLS NEWSLETTER

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Professional announcements, ads, or opportunities? Contact the editor at jbrand@unl.edu using “VLS Newsletter” in the subject line.

ATTENDING A VLS MEETING

- **Join by internet:**
 - <https://aiche.webex.com/aiche/j.php?MTID=m8a0766c5d03559acce05542a78513954>
 - Meeting number 276 141 101

- **Join by phone:** Access code: 276 141 101
 - 1-866-469-3239 Call-in toll-free number (US/Canada)
 - 1-650-429-3300 Call-in toll number (US/Canada)
 - [Global Call-in numbers](#)
 - [Toll-free calling restrictions](#)

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