

Editorial

2006 has passed very quickly. It is good and bad. Good because it means we are reasonably happy and enjoy what we are doing and time seems to pass quickly. Bad because the pace is so hectic and we have hardly enough time to catch our breath. So the year-end holidays are a welcome respite for us to slow down a little, relax and re-charge our batteries.

As our President says in his message, 2006 has brought many changes to the SHE scene. The Workplace Safety and Health Act (WSHA) has forever changed the way we do our business in Singapore. Perhaps our industries are more prepared than others to deal with the changes. But we cannot be complacent. We have to live with the constant realization that a BIG ONE will hit us even when we think we are prepared. Witness the big disasters that have taken place in the recent past in USA and Britain. These countries do not lack in legislation and human resources.

SLP has been cognizant of these risks. Our Technical Talk in September was on the siting of buildings – temporary and permanent – in process plants. This re-look at existing standards took place as a result of the BP accident in Texas City in March

2005. The new standards that are being proposed will dramatically increase 'safe distances' and structural (blast resistance) standards. All process – chemical, petrochemical, petroleum refining – plants around the world will need to take urgent action to review their existing situations as well as to include these considerations in their new designs. This will not be a cheap exercise.

In the same vein, readers should read the article by Jacob on the lessons from the BP accident. It makes for sombre reading. There is no room for complacency.

We are organizing a Technical Talk in February 2007 on Security Vulnerability Assessment (SVA). In this day and age, security cannot be far away from the minds of any management. This tool, SVA, developed by the Center for Chemical Process Safety (CCPC), is a systematic way for us to manage security risks and to identify opportunities for improvement.

As a matter of record, the talk in September was the best attended SLP event of its kind. This is an indication of the degree of interest in building siting. We expect the same response for SVA. So please respond

early when we make the announcement on the date.

Our Technical sub-committee will be implementing an exciting program of talks, training courses and seminars in 2007. Watch out for our announcements.

We cannot end this editorial without paying a tribute to Richard Gillis, our Immediate Past President. As some of you know, Richard has retired from ExxonMobil Chemical and has returned to Melbourne. He has had a long and fruitful association with us. For the six years that he was President and for many years before that, Richard contributed his time, talent and expertise to SLP and the community at large. He was and is a really hands-on person. He recently received a Merit Award from SPRING Singapore for his many contributions to SPRING and its predecessors. He was a regular contributor to our conferences, seminars and training courses – paper writer/presenter, instructor and workshop leader. He ably represented SLP to our outside audiences. Fortunately for us, he plans to regularly visit Singapore. So we can still tap on his knowledge. To Richard and Kay, we wish you a long and happy time in Melbourne.

To all our members and readers, have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season and throughout 2007.