

From the Editor

CHEMISTRY International

The News Magazine of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC)

www.iupac.org/publications/ci

Managing Editor: Fabienne Meyers Production Editor: Chris Brouwer Page Layout: CB Communications Design: Purple Zante, Inc.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

The Editor, *Chemistry International (CI)*IUPAC Secretariat
PO Box 13757
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-3757, USA

E-mail: edit.ci@iupac.org Phone: +1 919 485 8703 Fax: +1 919 485 8706

Printed by:

Cadmus Professional Communications, Easton. MD. USA

Subscriptions

Six issues of *Chemistry International* (ISSN 0193-6484) will be published bimonthly in 2003 (one volume per annum) in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The 2003 subscription rate is USD 99.00 for organizations and USD 45.00 for individuals. Subscription orders may be placed directly with the IUPAC Secretariat. Affiliate Members receive *Cl* as part of their Membership subscription, and Members of IUPAC bodies receive *Cl* free of charge.

Reproduction of Articles

Unless there is a footnote to the contrary, reproduction or translation of articles in this issue is encouraged, provided that it is accompanied by a reference to the original in *Cl.*

Periodicals postage paid at Durham, NC 27709-9990 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chemistry International*, IUPAC Secretariat, PO Box 13757, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-3757, USA.

hen I first read about the Open Door initiative launched by the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) last year (see article p. 4), memories of my open door days from college surfaced instantly. These were days of fun, and their anticipation quite exciting. I studied in a small, mostly regional and relatively young university, the University of Mons-Hainaut in Belgium (Hi there!). The open door event was, as I recall, on Saturday when the labs usually were closed. For that day however, we cleaned up the hallways a bit, prepared posters,



and arranged for fun displays of chemical experiments and more serious presentations of our scientific research. It was our chance to show off. High school and potential students accounted for a large portion of visitors, but not all. Parents and relatives of current undergraduate

and graduate students often found their way to the school; among them were always a few teachers and engineers.

Then, from time to time, there was the unexpected visitor, such as the professor who worked on another floor, but who, until then, had never found a good reason to pay us a visit. Alumni who were now teachers or professionals—some working in the chemical industry—were often quite inquisitive about their former lab and school. Then, there was *Monsieur et Madame* from down the street or next block; they were just curious to learn about our topics of research. They didn't know if we were chemistry or physics students, and to them it made no difference. Our job was to show them around, and hopefully to leave them with the impression that the school was a good and safe neighbor, and the realization that science can be fun and yet very practical.

To read now that the CEFIC initiative is a success is no surprise, and don't try to tell me that it has anything to do with the Belgian weather (see M. Devisscher's article . . .)! Before one can understand, or simply appreciate the value of science, and chemistry in particular, one needs a certain level of awareness. A guided tour of a chemical plant can be an eye opener, as can the visit to a research laboratory. I imagine that for those who work in such places, an open door event can be a friendly way to share with visitors what their jobs entail.

The same sentiments behind these open door initiatives can be seen in the issues to be addressed at the symposia organized by the Subcommittee on the Public Understanding of Chemistry during the next IUPAC Congress in Ottawa. (See the program on page 6.) As the organizers note, "Chemistry cannot flourish in isolation, but must develop within a context of public understanding and mutual trust." If you want to participate in such debate, mark your calendar for 14 August 2003—the symposia will be "open door," i.e., open to the public!



Fabienne Meyers fabienne@iupac.org www.iupac.org/publications/ci