



## Organizing the SRA Annual Meeting A Team Effort

### I Coordinate the Chaos

What does it take to put on a Society for Risk Analysis Annual Meeting? A lot of work by a lot of people. One of the many jobs is the organization of the presentation of papers and posters in the sessions. Stanley Levinson (AREVA NP Inc.) shared with the RISK newsletter staff how he has “coordinated the chaos” to make this part of the meeting run smoothly.

#### **Please describe your role and activities in the process of planning, preparing for, and putting on an SRA Annual Meeting.**

**Levinson:** I have participated in the planning process for the SRA Annual Meeting since 1993. Initially, my role was to review and organize the engineering papers into sessions. Over the years as the number of engineering papers decreased, I picked up responsibility for papers related to infrastructure and extreme events. My current practice is to review every abstract presented (regardless of the topic under which it was submitted) to (1) find papers that have been miscategorized or that fit well with others, (2) review papers with no category specified, and (3) create cross-disciplinary sessions on common themes, for example, statistical methods. At the meeting held in the summer to plan the actual program, I have organized the conference schedule: looking at how many papers, poster-platforms, and platforms are in each subject area, ensuring the presentations will “fit” into the slots available, and then organizing the specific sessions into the time/track slots.

#### **With whom do you work in the SRA Annual Meeting process?**

**Levinson:** I have always worked with the incoming president, who chairs the Annual Meeting Committee (AMC). It is this individual who really does all the work necessary to ensure a successful meeting. There is a lot of preparation and post-meeting activities performed by the chair. Obviously at the meeting itself, there is interaction among all the committee members as

responsibility for certain papers is switched and as the program schedule is developed.



**Stanley Levinson explains his role in planning an SRA annual meeting.**

#### **Is there anything else you would like members to know about your involvement in the SRA Annual Meeting?**

**Levinson:** My involvement is just one small piece of a very long, complicated process that is required to put on the SRA Annual Meeting technical program. This process starts almost as soon as a meeting ends, looking at successes and opportunities for improvement. The process involves the development of the theme and Call for Papers, identification of plenary speakers, finding volunteers for symposia, etc.—all that must occur to prepare the Call for Papers and well before the meeting. Success is based on the coordinated effort of a large number of individuals—I am just one of many.

#### **Are there ways members could be of help with SRA Annual Meeting planning and preparation?**

**Levinson:** SRA members should always be alert for ideas that can be provided as abstracts to the SRA Annual Meeting. I encourage SRA members to participate in the activities of the specialty groups. If you are not a member of a specialty group, then try to find one that matches your interests, and if you don't see a good fit, then please consider approaching the Council or any SRA officer to ask about how to start a specialty group. Of course, SRA members who submit abstracts should get them in on time and fill out all the forms completely, particularly indicating key words and the specialty group(s) that might find the abstract of interest. For those members who are submitting symposia, it is important to get the abstracts for all the papers that you wish to include in the symposia submitted prior to the deadline. These actions help facilitate the process of putting the technical program together. Finally, please provide feedback to the AMC to ensure that the SRA Annual Meeting continues to improve every year.

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## President's Message

The Society for Risk Analysis is multidisciplinary and international in scope. SRA started with a strong North American base and over time has expanded to include sections and chapters in Europe, Japan, Russia, Australia, and Taiwan. As this process unfolds, I expect that each geographically based portion of SRA will become equal partners as risk professionals. A key challenge, as well as opportunity, is regarding how SRA should best grow as an international society. This is a topic that has been discussed for a number of years by many of SRA's outstanding leaders in various countries. This is also a topic that I plan to address. This topic has wide-ranging implications and potentially can touch upon all aspects of the Society, including the existing governance, sections, chapters, specialty groups, and committees, as well as the various other activities and services associated with SRA. I welcome and invite your suggestions for ways that SRA might better define itself as an international society.

There are many opportunities for members to get involved in defining and promoting our profession. One area that is often mentioned is the need for terminology and definition of concepts. Currently, SRA has an online glossary that is unofficial. Given the interdisciplinary scope of the Society, it can be a significant challenge to harmonize on any one set of

terms. On the other hand, with increased internationalization, there is growing need for clarity of terminology. Furthermore, as the risk profession develops in different geographic areas, there may be an opportunity to promote such development by providing a starting point for key terms and concepts. If you are interested in contributing your talents on this topic, please let me know.

Finally, with increased internationalization, there may be an opportunity to consider augmenting the scope of SRA in terms of specialties. For example, in some countries, issues of finance or insurance may be a main focus of risk assessment methodology. If you see opportunities for SRA to create critical mass in new areas of risk analysis, please let me know.

In summary, I welcome your input regarding ideas for making SRA more responsive to the needs of its members and helping it to provide greater service and value to various stakeholder communities worldwide. A big task, no doubt, but one that makes being a risk analysis professional all the more exciting.



H. Christopher Frey  
SRA President

*(Annual Meeting, continued from page 1)*

### The Role of the President-Elect, Annual Meeting Committee, and Members

Since its creation, the SRA has relied on its president-elect to chair (or designate a chair for) the committee responsible for planning the SRA Annual Meeting, a committee now called the Annual Meeting Committee.

Not surprisingly, much of the responsibility for the actual planning falls on the shoulders of the SRA Secretariat, and particularly on Dick and Sue Burk and Lori Strong. For those of you who wonder about who works behind the scenes to bring everything together elegantly year after year, Lori is the one who manages the meeting logistics, hotel contracts, meeting plans to put the program together, printing, food, and questions, etc.

Of course the AMC also includes over a dozen dedicated SRA members who read the submitted abstracts and who meet in June to sort through them to map out the entire program.

Putting together an annual meeting for a society as large and diverse as the SRA represents a team effort. Some of the tasks for planning the meeting get repeated each year. Current President-elect Kim Thompson is extremely grateful to benefit from the institutional memory and experience of Past President Gail Charnley, Steve Lewis, and Stanley Levinson, who bring continuity to the process.

Each year, key tasks for the president-elect include lining up speakers for the plenary sessions. The AMC also prepares the annual Call for Papers. Since the SRA moved to electronic submissions of abstracts several years ago, the process of developing the Call for Papers includes coordinating with SRA Webmaster Jim Butler and Ruedi Birenheide, who manages the SRA membership database and online meeting submission forms.

### Planning the 2006 SRA Annual Meeting

The AMC, chaired by Kim Thompson, spent time in January reflecting on the comments received from last year's SRA Annual Meeting and working on responses to improve the meeting. This year, the AMC is trying a few new ideas.

For example, this year's meeting will include a dedicated session for posters and exhibits on Monday evening with food and no competing meetings. During the Monday evening poster/exhibit reception, all attendees will have the opportunity to cast their votes for the five Best Poster Awards that will be presented during the award luncheon and business meeting on Tuesday. The AMC has also changed the Monday lunch to a format that will allow people to attend business meetings for the specialty groups.

You will notice that this year the AMC updated the abstract submission forms. Please check them out and submit your abstract(s) any time between NOW and close of business on 1 June 2006. The forms will now automatically link papers submitted for symposia with the symposia abstract. This means that symposium organizers will need to submit their symposium proposals early and plan to coordinate with their speakers. In addition, the forms now automatically include the additional questions required for submitters to apply for SRA Annual Meeting student and travel awards—so there is no way that you can miss the chance to apply if you would like to do so. The AMC is very pleased that it has also coordinated the student travel and specialty group merit awards and that this year all of the specialty groups will offer a student merit award. Please encourage any students you know to apply for these awards, which include a waived fee for the SRA Annual Meeting and some support for travel.

Also new this year, in appreciation for your role in organizing a symposium for the meeting, you will get to serve as the chair of the session if it's accepted for the final program. The AMC is

implementing a more formal process to contact and coordinate with all session chairs this year to ensure that sessions begin and end on time.

This year's AMC includes Sue Burk, Lori Strong, and other members of the Secretariat, Steve Lewis (past chair), Stanley Levinson (master scheduler), Kara Morgan (responsible for student and international travel awards), and leaders of the specialty groups: Todd Bridges (Ecological Risk Assessment), Dale Hattis (Dose Response), Sue Ferenc (Economics and Benefits Analysis), Jim Lambert (Engineering and Infrastructure), Igor Linkov (Decision Analysis and Risk), Gary Marchant (Risk Science & Law), Bob O'Connor (Risk Communication), Donna Vorhees (Exposure Assessment), and Felicia Wu (Biological Stressors and Risk Communication). The AMC may also include a few additional members who will assume responsibilities for recruiting sponsors.

The SRA Annual Meeting will again feature workshops just prior to the meeting (on 2 December 2006). Please contact Scott Ferson, chair of the Conferences and Workshops Committee (scott@ramas.com), if you are interested in organizing a work-

shop and submit the forms available from the SRA Web site to the Conferences and Workshops Committee by 1 June.

Calling all authors—the AMC hopes to feature the largest exhibit of risk-related books at the meeting so if you've written a book (whether it's new or a classic), please consider submitting it for the book exhibit. The AMC also hopes to recruit more sponsors for the meeting this year, so if you're interested in sponsoring or you have any suggestions of potential sponsors, please contact Lori Strong or Kim Thompson. Also, if you'd like to volunteer to help at the meeting, please let Lori or Kim know about your willingness to help.

Typically, the president-elect recruits the plenary speakers. Thompson reports that she is excited to already have four of the speakers confirmed. We won't divulge any secrets at this point, but expect to read more about the program in the next newsletter!

The committee is actively seeking input on ways to improve the SRA Annual Meeting, so if you have ideas please email them to Thompson at kimt@hsph.harvard.edu. This year plan to get your abstract(s) submitted early and to spend 3-6 December in Baltimore.

## **Risk Analysis in a Dynamic World: Making a Difference 2006 SRA Annual Meeting Call for Papers**

Mark your calendar and submit your abstract now for the 2006 Society for Risk Analysis Annual Meeting 3-6 December 2006 at the Renaissance Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland! With the theme of "Risk Analysis in a Dynamic World: Making a Difference" this year's meeting promises to bring together nearly 1,000 international scientists and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines who share an interest in risk analysis. Representing academia, government, industry, NGOs, private firms, and ourselves, we recognize the value of diverse perspectives and a shared commitment to high-quality risk analysis methodology and practice. This year's meeting will include plenary sessions focused on the theme of making a difference and the role of risk analysis in a dynamic world. Of course it will also include technical sessions in the form of oral presentations, posters, and poster-platforms. The Call for Papers is now open, and it describes the process for submitting abstracts for consideration for spaces in the technical sessions.

### **SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS, SYMPOSIA, AND WORKSHOPS—DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2006**

This year the Annual Meeting Committee has introduced a few improvements in the abstract submission process.

First, an author may coauthor any number of submissions but may submit a maximum of one abstract as presenting author for consideration for an oral presentation, one abstract for consideration to organize a symposium, and one abstract as presenting author for a poster. Symposia represent complete 1.5-hour sessions with multiple speakers and they should address an interdisciplinary subject or theme. All individual speakers for a symposium must submit an individual abstract and the new online submission forms now require submitting the title and number of the symposium with the individual abstracts—so please get your symposium abstracts in early. As always, freestanding individual abstracts (not submitted as part of a symposium) that get accepted for oral presentation will be grouped by subject and assigned to a session. Each oral presentation should take 15 minutes, followed by five minutes for audience questions and comments.

Second, this year the meeting will feature a dedicated evening poster and exhibitor session and reception. Given the limited number of slots available for oral presentations, many of the abstracts submitted will be presented as posters in the dedicated poster session. All posters will be automatically eligible for consideration for one of the five Best Poster Awards to be awarded during the Tuesday awards luncheon. Individuals may submit a symposium proposing a poster-platform session, in which the first 45 minutes of the session will be divided equally to allow one author of each poster to briefly describe the poster and the remaining 45 minutes of the session will allow for poster viewing and individual discussions.

Third, the SRA will sponsor half-day (four hours) and full-day (eight hours) educational workshops on Sunday, 2 December, one day prior to the regular meeting sessions. The SRA Conferences and Workshops Committee is currently evaluating proposals for workshops, which must include a syllabus and budget submitted following the instructions on the SRA Web site. If you have a workshop that you'd like to run, please submit your information to the Conferences and Workshops Committee by 1 June 2006.

Fourth, the SRA will again offer several types of awards associated with the annual meeting, including Travel Awards (Student or International) and Specialty Group Student Awards. New this year—anyone interested in applying for one or more of these awards must apply by checking the appropriate boxes and providing the additional information requested at the time of abstract submission.

Fifth, we're working to develop sponsors and exhibitors and we hope to have the largest book exhibit ever this year. If you're the author of a risk-related book, please consider submitting your title to the annual book exhibit. For information about sponsorship and/or exhibiting, please contact Lori Strong at lstrong@burkinc.com by 1 June 2006.

For complete submission instructions and to submit online visit [www.sra.org/events\\_2006\\_meeting\\_call.php](http://www.sra.org/events_2006_meeting_call.php).



## Committees

### Communications Committee

*Rick Reiss, Chair*

In the last issue of the *RISK newsletter*, we introduced the idea of switching the newsletter to electronic-only format and asked for comments from the membership. After receiving input from a number of members concerned about receiving only electronic copies of the newsletter, the SRA Council has decided not to proceed with the change for now. We will continue to provide print copies of the newsletter to all members.

### Education Committee

*David M. Hassenzehl, Chair*

The Education Committee plans to sponsor several events at the 2006 SRA Annual Meeting. These may include workshops on Risk Analysis Basics and Teaching Risk Analysis, an annual committee meeting, and a roundtable to discuss needs and norms for risk analysis training and certification. Anyone interested in participating should contact Education Committee Chair David M. Hassenzehl ([david@hassenzehl.com](mailto:david@hassenzehl.com)).

### Conferences and Workshops Committee

*Scott Ferson, Chair*

#### Strategies for Risk Communication Evolution, Evidence, and Experience

The Society for Risk Analysis invites you to attend the symposium "Strategies for Risk Communication: Evolution, Evidence, and Experience" to be held at Montauk, Long Island, New York, 15-17 May 2006.

The symposium will explore practical methods and robust theories of risk communication arising from recent research in risk perception, neuroscience, and the evolutionary social sciences. Questions to be addressed include:

- What kinds of risk information can humans readily process and appreciate? What kinds are likely to be misunderstood?
- Are some risk communication efforts bound to result in failure and increased controversy?
- What does recent brain-imaging research imply about the perception of uncertainty versus variability?
- Is our persistent interest in "worst case" possibilities a result of our human evolutionary history?
- What is communication in an evolutionary context, and how has it changed in the modern technical world?
- Do risk analyses misrepresent or even underestimate risks if they do not account for perception issues?
- Are our prior probabilities and the ability to make decisions fundamentally tied to our emotions?
- What features improve a risk communication effort's likelihood of success?

The format will allow ample time for open discussion. Confirmed speakers include Ann Bostrom (Georgia Institute of Technology), Adam Finkel (Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton), Joe Kable (New York University), Elke Kurz-Milcke (Max Planck Institute), Ellen Peters (University of Oregon and Decision Research), David Ropeik (Harvard Center for Risk Analysis), Alan Sanfey (University of Arizona), Andy Sterling (University of Sussex), W. Troy Tucker (Applied Biomathematics), X.T. Wang

(University of South Dakota), and Karli Watson (California Institute of Technology).

Further details and references are available at the symposium's Web site (<http://www.ramas.com/riskcomm.htm>).

#### Forum on OMB Draft Risk Assessment Bulletin

SRA will hold a public forum on the risk assessment guidance recently proposed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). When finalized, these guidelines could materially affect the practice of risk assessment across the US federal government, and perhaps affect practices across the nation and around the world.

The SRA Forum will be held 23-24 May 2006 at the George Washington University Cafritz Conference Center in Washington, DC.

Experts from around North America will gather to examine and analyze the most salient provisions of the draft guidelines across a wide range of areas including:

- Agricultural import and export.
- Food safety.
- Chemical and biological hazards.
- Communicable disease.
- Engineered facilities and systems.
- Transportation.
- Ecological assets.
- Global climate change.
- Terrorism.

In addition, experts will address the provisions in the draft guidelines that would apply to "influential" risk assessments, as well as risk assessments used for regulatory purposes.

Dr. John D. Graham, Dean of the Frederick S. Pardee RAND Graduate School, former administrator of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and past president of SRA, will deliver a thought-provoking luncheon address: "Reflections on the Role of OMB in Risk Assessment and Regulatory Analysis."

You do not want to miss this timely and informative meeting. For further information, see this Web site: <http://www.sra.org/omb>.

Watch your email for further information and instructions on how you can register online. Space will be limited, so plan on registering early.

### International Task Force

*Pertti (Bert) Hakkinen, Chair*

The non-US ("international") chapters of SRA include Australia, Saint-Laurent (Eastern Canada, <http://chapitre-saint-laurent.qc.ca/>), Kiev (Ukraine), London (UK), Russia (<http://www.sra-russia.ru/russian/index.php>), and Taiwan, while the sections include Europe (<http://www.sraeurope.org/>) and Japan (<http://dss.sys.eng.shizuoka.ac.jp/srajapan/>). Many thanks go to Greg Paoli of the SRA Council for facilitating extensive interactions in early 2006 with the Japan Section and the Australia and New Zealand Chapter, including in-person visits or local phone conversations combined with his business trips to Australia and Japan. Further, following the SRA annual meeting in Orlando, SRA President Chris Frey visited with a member of SRA Australia during a trip to Sydney in December 2005.

As highlighted here and described in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter, some of the international chapters and both sections have been very active. For example, the Australia Chapter is in the process of restaging itself as the Australia and New Zealand Chapter (to become a future section per SRA bylaws?), and SRA members are invited to attend the inaugural conference of this “new” chapter 17-19 July 2006 at the University of Melbourne.

The Saint-Laurent (Eastern Canada) Chapter will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at its annual symposium 1-2 June 2006 in Quebec City.

SRA-Europe will have its annual conference 11-13 September 2006 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The author had the pleasure of attending SRA-Europe’s executive committee meeting in Paris last January and was very impressed by the commitment of the committee toward having a strong, active, and growing section. This meeting included discussion about finalizing a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) between SRA and SRA-Europe, which could end up having SRA’s Webmaster, Jim Butler, handle support for SRA-Europe’s Web site, together with SRA-Europe receiving support from SRA for automating SRA-Europe’s membership applications and annual meeting activities, for example, the Web-based submission of abstracts. SRA-Europe also wants to learn more about how SRA manages efforts via its committees.

SRA-Japan will have its annual spring symposium 16 June 2006 at the University of Tokyo and its 19<sup>th</sup> Academic Congress 11-12 November at Tsukuba. It is worth noting that the Japan Section now has more than 600 members, with a goal of over 1,000 members in the near future! Further, SRA-Japan’s interna-

tional collaboration interests are global, that is, with SRA and SRA-Europe and with other Eastern Asian countries.

While the above activities are noteworthy, looking at a world map and thinking about risk-related issues of local, regional, and global importance suggests that SRA’s sections, chapters, and members could (and should) be even more international.

Finally, the 2005 SRA Annual Meeting’s internationalization roundtable topics such as SRA’s possible international role in providing training and certification (or some form of “registration” or professional recognition of expertise beyond membership in SRA and its chapters/sections) and SRA’s existing and possible international collaborations (for example, with other professional societies and organizations) have not been forgotten. Also needing consideration for possible follow-up from the roundtable are the suggestions from the attendees (for example, establishing an international core body of literature in risk analysis and possibly developing training workshops to be offered as global Webcasts). Please feel free to contact the author (European Commission, [perti.hakkinen@jrc.it](mailto:perti.hakkinen@jrc.it); effective 9 May 2006: [perti.hakkinen@ec.europa.eu](mailto:perti.hakkinen@ec.europa.eu)), Greg Paoli (Decisionalysis, [gpaoli@analyzerisk.com](mailto:gpaoli@analyzerisk.com)), or other members of SRA’s Council if you are interested in becoming involved in SRA’s International Task Force efforts or want help in starting, highlighting, or organizing SRA-related activities in your country or region. Remember that this help could include utilizing SRA’s Speaker’s Bureau, which makes available a modest fund to assist SRA’s chapters and sections with the travel and lodging expenses of bringing a current or former SRA official to speak at a meeting (please see [http://www.sra.org/about\\_speakers\\_bureau.php](http://www.sra.org/about_speakers_bureau.php)). 



## Journal Notes

### Chuck Haas Appointed *Risk Analysis* Area Editor for Microbial Risk Assessment

Chuck Haas has been appointed as Area Editor for Microbial Risk Assessment for *Risk Analysis*. “With the increasing number of manuscripts addressing microbial risk assessment, we recognized the need to create a new area editor’s position,” said Editor-in-Chief Betty Anderson. “Microbial risk assessment is not a new area to the journal but rather a topic of increasing current interest as reflected in the increasing number of manuscripts we have received. In the past the journal has published numerous papers on microbial risk assessment. It is the number of manuscripts submitted on this topic that identified the need for a new area editor. We asked for nominations for the new area editor position; the editorial board chose Chuck Haas as our leading candidate. His name was forwarded to the Publications Committee, which completed the selection process. We are delighted that Dr. Haas has accepted the position. I look forward to working with him in the future.”

“I received my undergraduate degree in biology and my graduate degrees in environmental engineering, so I have a good familiarity with the basics of life sciences, as well as quantitative methods underlying microbial risk assessment,” Haas said when explaining the background and training that have prepared him for his role as Area Editor for Microbial Risk Assessment. “I have been doing microbial risk assessment since 1983,



when I published my first paper on the topic (in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*). My colleagues and I and students have looked at microbial risks from food, water, aerosol, dermal, and wound exposure. I have been an editor of several other scientific journals and editor-in-chief of two others, so I am familiar with the basic duties of a journal editor.”

Haas described his plan to take this part of the journal forward: “My first step is to assess what significant communities are doing related work that could find a home for papers in the journal. Then I will make personal solicitations to key folks. The idea of theme issues or clusters of papers makes sense as well. I have been a member of SRA since the late 1980s, and I remember when I presented my first microbial paper at the annual meeting, there were virtually no other microbial papers. We have since brought in the food and water folks (to the point where there is now a specialty group on biostressors). I expect the journal, like the Society, will grow by accreting other communities of interest to our fold.”

“If there are members of your own organization who are doing microbial work that bears on risk assessment, tell them about SRA and the journal,” Haas said, “or let me know who they are, and I will invite them to consider *Risk Analysis* as a venue for submission of their work!” 

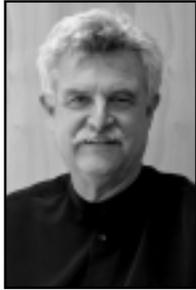


## Chapter News

### Northern California Chapter

<http://www.sra.org/ncc/>

*Raymond Richard Neutra, President*



**Neutra**

On 13 March 2006 the Northern California Chapter of SRA co-sponsored with the California Department of Health Services a teleconference on pandemic flu planning and lessons from the swine flu debacle of the mid-1970s. Dr. Howard Backer described California's plan. Dr. Harvey Fineberg, president of the Institute of Medicine, joined the 200 people in the auditorium of the California State Laboratory by phone to summarize his book with Richard Neustadt on the swine flu. Chapter President Dr. Raymond Richard Neutra described some efforts in Albany, California, to convert its Earthquake Preparedness Block Captain system into neighborhood and family preparedness for pandemic flu. Dr. Joyce Lashof, Dean Emerita of University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health, provided comments from her perspective as former health officer of Illinois and head of the now-disbanded Office of Technology Assessment.

The Northern California Chapter is planning to experiment with noontime phonebridge seminars to more effectively engage its 80-some members.

### New England Chapter

[www.sra-ne.org](http://www.sra-ne.org)

*Jo Anne Shatkin and Tom Angus, Copresidents*

It's been a busy 2006 for the New England Chapter. Our January meeting featured a past president and our current president-elect of national SRA. Past President Dr. Gail Charnley of Health Risk Strategies presented an interdisciplinary view of issues related to power plants, children's health, mercury exposure, and public policy, providing a great platform for a lively discussion of ongoing mercury research. President-elect Dr. Kimberly Thompson, visiting professor at MIT's Sloan School of Management, presented a historical review of the first 25 years of SRA and led an excellent discussion of issues for the future of SRA.

Our February meeting was a joint meeting with the Licensed Site Professional Association of Massachusetts. Dr. Ken Finkelstein of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration presented his analysis of sediment toxicity data compiled from a number of sites and demonstrated that chronic tests are significantly more sensitive than acute tests. Tom Angus followed up with a discussion of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) new sediment toxicity testing technical update. The talks were followed with a dialog on the strengths and weaknesses of sediment toxicity testing for ecological risk assessment.

Our March meeting featured Mary Ballew of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ballew discussed risk assessment under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and also provided a fascinating overview of EPA's ongoing efforts with the Hurricane Katrina cleanup in the Gulf region.

April's meeting featured Dr. Michael Hutcheson of Massachusetts DEP speaking about his agency's research on spatial and

temporal trends of mercury concentrations in Massachusetts' freshwater fish. In May, Ragnar Löfstedt of Kings College, London, will speak about the changing nature of environmental regulation in Europe. Our June meeting will be a poster session.

With a few exceptions, the meetings are typically held on the second Wednesday of each month from 4:15 to 6:30 at CDM in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The upcoming seminar dates are 23 May and 14 June. We draw attendees (and speakers) to our meetings from New England generally, not just the Boston area. Membership is not necessary for attendance at meetings and activities; however, those interested in becoming members or in reading our electronically distributed monthly newsletter should communicate with Secretary Karen Vetran, [kvetrano@trcsolutions.com](mailto:kvetrano@trcsolutions.com), or with copresidents Jo Anne Shatkin, [JShatkin@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:JShatkin@cadmusgroup.com), or Tom Angus, [thomas.angus@state.ma.us](mailto:thomas.angus@state.ma.us). We also have a Web site, which is linked to the national SRA site and stands alone at [www.sra-ne.org](http://www.sra-ne.org).

### National Capital Area Chapter

*Tee L. Guidotti, President*

The National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) provided a highly successful series of talks, seminars, and jointly sponsored events in 2005, including a lecture by Dr. Robert Buchanan (Food and Drug Administration) on microbial risk assessment of food, a field which he pioneered, and Dr. Patricia Meinhardt on biological threats and water safety and security. We also cosponsored joint programs with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), during which AAAS Risk Policy Fellows presented on their work, and the Society of Toxicology NCAC.

The NCAC is moving toward a two-year planning cycle for speakers and events. For 2006, the NCAC plans a one-day conference to explore the implications of the recent, highly controversial proposed federal directive that would have the effect of allowing alternative models of risk assessment depending on the application.

The NCAC is also implementing a membership outreach to determine the best opportunities for practical, skill-development, and career-building programming for its junior and midlevel members in fields such as risk communication.

### Taiwan Chapter

*Kuen-Yuh Wu, Secretary General*

The Monte Carlo probabilistic distribution model was used to estimate the risk of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or mad cow disease) contamination from imported US beef to human beings, and the risk is found to be de minimus. It is the first time this type of risk analysis has been conducted in Taiwan, based on a similar methodology developed by the risk assessment community in the United States. Dr. Dennis Hsieh, a senior researcher in NHRI (National Health Research Institute) of Taiwan and a member of Taiwan Chapter SRA (TCSRA), performed the risk analysis on BSE which is reviewed by fellow members of TCSRA—Dr. Winston Dang and Dr. Kuen-Yuh Wu. In order to conduct a strict, professional evaluation and reconsider whether to reopen the imports of US boneless beef, the Department of Health (DOH) in Taiwan commissioned experts

to review its decision-making process. Hsieh's assessment was provided to the governmental review committee along with other epidemiological reports. Based on the related documentation and information, the committee concluded that the estimated risk for Taiwanese people to be contaminated with BSE from US beef is negligible. The Taiwan government announced the lift of the ban to imported US beef at the end of January. Taiwan suspended beef imports from the United States in December 2003 due to safety concerns over BSE after the discovery of a single case of mad cow disease on a ranch in the US state of Washington. It is great to learn that risk analysis is used as one of the tools for governmental policy decision making.

### **Chapitre Saint-Laurent/SETAC-SRA** **<http://chapitre-saint-laurent.qc.ca>**

*Stéphane Masson, President; Christian Gagnon, Past President; and David Berryman, Vice President*

The SETAC-SRA Chapitre Saint-Laurent held its ninth annual symposium at the Nouvel Hotel in Montréal 2-3 June 2005. This year's theme was "Environmental Problems: The Role of the Citizens, Scientists and Decision Makers." The symposium was a great success, with over 170 participants from academia, government, industry, and private consultants.

The symposium started with plenary keynote speakers Patrick Cejka from the City of Montreal, Linda G. Webster from SETAC's North America board, Nicolina Farella from the International Development Research Center (Montreal), and Dr. Émilien Pelletier, from the Institut des sciences de la mer (Rimouski, Québec). Following was a dynamic poster session (41 posters) and 39 platform communications presented in three parallel sessions. The Chapitre Saint-Laurent held its annual corporate meeting during the symposium and elected its new board of directors.

Claudie Laliberté-Bonnet (Université du Québec à Rimouski) and Isabelle Poulin (Université Laval) received \$2,000 Excellence Awards respectively for their MSc and PhD research. Four other students received \$200 prizes (\$150 from Chapitre Saint-Laurent and \$25 from the SRA) for best posters and best oral presentations during the symposium: Cécile Guillemart (Institut des sciences de la mer de Rimouski), Priscilla Pouschat (École Polytechnique de Montréal), and Mari-Lou Breton and Élyse Gagnon (Université du Québec à Montréal).

We would like to thank all the members of the organizing committee and the volunteers who helped us make this symposium a success. We also thank the speakers and participants for their essential contribution. The Chapitre Saint-Laurent is also grateful to the sponsors for their generous financial support: Réseau de recherche en écotoxicologie du Saint-Laurent, Hydro-Québec, Noranda, Centre d'expertise en analyse environnementale du Québec, LR Services—Conseil, QSAR Inc., Eaglebrook, Lab Bell Inc., INRS-ETE, Sanexen services environnementaux inc., Centre Saint-Laurent/Environnement Canada, Institut de recherche en biotechnologie du CNRC, SRA, and SETAC.

The Chapitre Saint-Laurent will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the next annual symposium, which will take place in Québec City (1-2 June 2006). For more information: <http://chapitre-saint-laurent.qc.ca>.

### **Chicago Regional Chapter** **[www.sra.org/chicago](http://www.sra.org/chicago)**

*Serap Erdal, Secretary*

Chicago Regional SRA held a seminar on career options in human health risk analysis on 17 March 2006 in the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The announcement for the event was disseminated to students in universities and colleges around Chicago, including the University of Illinois, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago. In this event in the form of a pizza lunch, representatives from government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, consulting, and academia talked about career opportunities in risk analysis and presented typical projects managed in their respective workplaces. The students were advised to take advantage of various internship opportunities as a stepping stone to full-time employment. This informal event also served as an opportunity for students from various disciplines to meet each other and to discuss public health and environmental science program opportunities.

The Chicago Chapter held a seminar on risk communication on 26 April at USEPA Region 5 headquarters in downtown Chicago. The presenters were Captain Alvin Chun, who is the director of the National Center for Risk Communication and Public Involvement at USEPA, along with Arnold Den, who is the Senior Science Advisor at USEPA Region 9 in San Francisco, California.

The Chicago Chapter sponsors seminars, workshops, or presentations on a monthly or bimonthly basis throughout the year and a full schedule of upcoming events can be accessed at [www.sra.org/chicago](http://www.sra.org/chicago).

Alternatively, interested parties can contact Heidi Hartman with Argonne National Laboratories at [hmhartmann@anl.gov](mailto:hmhartmann@anl.gov) or Dr. Serap Erdal with the University of Illinois School of Public Health at [erdal@uic.edu](mailto:erdal@uic.edu).

### **Australia Chapter**

*Nick Linacre, President*

SRA members are invited to attend the inaugural conference of the Australia and New Zealand Chapter of the Society for Risk Analysis to be held in Melbourne, Australia, 17-19 July 2006 at the University of Melbourne.

The conference is hosted by the new Australian Centre for Excellence in Risk Analysis (ACERA). Conference details can be obtained by emailing Dolla Boutros, ACERA's manager, [dollab@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dollab@unimelb.edu.au).

The first day of the conference will focus on issues in biosecurity risk analysis, with the remaining two days providing a discussion forum on risk issues in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.

The registration fee is AUD \$110. Melbourne boasts an unparalleled conference experience with a diverse multicultural and natural environment.

For more information on the attractions of Melbourne see <http://www.melbourne.visitorsbureau.com.au>.



**Update your SRA membership information on the Members Only page  
of the Society Web site—[www.sra.org](http://www.sra.org)**



## News and Announcements

### Call for Nominations for 2006 SRA Awards—Deadline 6 May 2006

The Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) Awards Committee invites nominations for the following 2006 awards:

The **SRA Distinguished Achievement Award** honors any person for extraordinary achievement in science or public policy relating to risk analysis.

The **SRA Outstanding Service Award** honors SRA members for extraordinary service to the Society.

The **Outstanding Risk Practitioner Award** honors individuals who have made substantial contributions to the field of risk analysis through work in the public or private sector. The 2006 award will be for the public sector.

The **Chauncey Starr Award** honors individuals age 40 and under who have made exceptional contributions to the field of risk analysis.

The **Fellow of the Society for Risk Analysis Award** recognizes and honors up to one percent of the Society's membership whose professional records are marked by significant contributions to any disciplines served by the Society and may be evidenced by one or more of the following: (1) Recognized, original research, application, or invention, (2) Technical, scientific, or policy analysis leadership in an enterprise of significant scope that involves risk analysis in a substantial way, (3) Superior teaching or contributions to improve education and to promote the use of risk analysis that are widely recognized by peers and students, or (4) Service to or constructive activity within the Society of such a quality, nature, or duration as to be a visible contributor to the advancement of the Society. Nominees for Fellow must have been SRA members for at least five years and must now be members in good standing.

Please submit nominations and a brief paragraph supporting each by **6 May 2006** to Stephanie Cross, SRA Secretariat, 1313 Dolley Madison Blvd., Suite 402, McLean, VA 22101; fax: 703-790-2672; email: [scross@burkinc.com](mailto:scross@burkinc.com).

### Society-Sponsored Proposals

As noted in the First Quarter 2006 issue of the *RISK newsletter*, the Society for Risk Analysis is pleased to announce that it has limited funds available to support new programs or initiatives. Any member of SRA can submit a proposal for a new program or initiative. The SRA Council has established a regular form for submitting your proposal. It is posted on the SRA Web site ([www.sra.org](http://www.sra.org)) in the members-only section under the last bullet, "Review SRA Documents."

#### Criteria for Society-Sponsored Proposals

In June 2004 the SRA Council approved a Society for Risk Analysis Resources "New Initiatives Funds" to provide start-up resources to enable new programs to get off the ground pending their development of permanent sustaining resources.

In June 2005 the Society established a regular, transparent process for soliciting and reviewing proposals for projects and activities. The following process will be used to develop the SRA budget and its programs:

SRA groups, committees, or individual members will be asked to submit proposals by 15 October, using the standard form that is available on the SRA Web site. The Council encourages a standing SRA group or committee to sponsor projects and work with a member of Council to complete the form. Completed forms should be submitted to the SRA Secretariat with a copy to the current SRA treasurer. Groups developing proposals should also work with SRA staff or treasurers to estimate potential resources for the project/activity and include this information with the proposed project.

SRA's Executive Secretary and staff will review the forms for completeness and contact project sponsors by 1 November to confirm that their forms are complete or additional information is needed.

The Executive Committee (EC) will review the proposals in November and make recommendations to the Council at its December meeting on sponsoring and/or funding any new programs.

Recommended projects will be submitted to the Council for approval. For projects that are not recommended at this time, the EC will provide written feedback to the project sponsor to consider in revising the proposal for future consideration.

Final Council vote on programs will occur at or shortly after the December meeting and projects will be included in the next SRA fiscal year budget.

Our overall goal is to enhance the programs offered to members and increase the value of SRA membership. Please don't hesitate to contact us ([pwilliams@chemrisk.com](mailto:pwilliams@chemrisk.com), [leslie.j.hushka@exxonmobil.com](mailto:leslie.j.hushka@exxonmobil.com)), SRA's Executive Secretary ([rburk@burkinc.com](mailto:rburk@burkinc.com)), or any member of the Council for assistance as you develop your proposals and budget requests.

### Information Technology: Using RSS and Atom Feeds to Help Receive Information

*Pertti (Bert) Hakkinen*

The Internet has been used for years to "push" information to users. An early example was signing up for emailed alerts of the tables of contents of journals, often delivered with links to the abstracts, keywords, and a free or "for pay" means to download the full publication. The current generation of push technologies includes RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. RSS, first used in 1997, is a lightweight XML (eXtensible Markup Language) format designed for sharing headlines and other Web content and is the technology behind those clickable orange (and sometimes blue) icons being found on more and more Web pages ("Atom" is a format similar to RSS). Like the emailed alerts, RSS and Atom feeds can alert you to new issues of the journals of interest to you, along with providing easy access to other new information, for example, new stories and updates of blogs (another interesting recent Internet technology development!). In addition, many Web sites use RSS to display headlines from other Web sites to provide additional content for their readers.

One source of RSS feeds of interest to SRA members is [www.IngentaConnect.com](http://www.IngentaConnect.com), via which an RSS aggregator (or “reader”) can be used to receive the RSS feed (table of contents and abstracts) for the latest issue of *Risk Analysis* (Blackwell Publishing, <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/risk/latest>). Other journals available via IngentaConnect include (1) *Annals of Occupational Hygiene* (Oxford University Press), (2) *Food Additives and Contaminants*, *International Journal of Toxicology*, *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Part B: Critical Reviews*, *SAR and QSAR in Environmental Research*, and *Toxicologic Pathology* (Taylor and Francis Ltd), (3) *Health, Risk & Society* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group), (4) *Toxicology and Industrial Health* and *Human & Experimental Toxicology* (Hodder Arnold), (5) *Journal of Analytical Toxicology* (Preston Publications), and (6) *Toxicological Sciences* (University Press).

Bloglines ([www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com)) is an example of an RSS and Atom feed aggregator. Bloglines is a server-based aggregation system. This means that we run and manage all of the software and technologies necessary to collect the syndicated feeds from tens of millions of online information sources on our own computer servers and databases and deliver that amazing content to you as a free, easy-to-use online service. After you join Bloglines you simply search for the content you are interested in and identify the feeds you want to track. Once you “subscribe” to those feeds (a single-click maneuver in most cases), Bloglines will constantly check those feeds for changes or additions and direct new information onto your Bloglines personal page. In addition, Google has developed Google Reader (<http://reader.google.com>) to “help you keep up with the firehose of info coming your way from blogs and Web sites. New on Google Labs, it automatically gets the latest news and updates from sites you pick.” Information about other aggregators/readers is available at <http://allrss.com/rssreaders.html>, and this Web site divides them into the platforms they can be used for (for example, Windows, Mac, Linux/Unix, Cross-Platform, Web-based, Blackberry, Pocket PC, Mobile Phones, email, and other).

### **Interpretation of Biomonitoring Data Using Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic Modeling**

A course on Interpretation of Biomonitoring Data Using Physiologically Based Pharmacokinetic (PBPK) Modeling will be held at CIIT Centers for Health Research (Research Triangle Park, North Carolina) 25-29 September 2006. This event is co-sponsored by the SRA.

Biomonitoring is the process that identifies and measures the concentrations of chemicals in human tissue or excreta. To interpret the health implications or reconstruct exposure from biomonitoring data requires quantitative tools to describe the exposure-tissue dosimetry-adverse effects relationship. PBPK modeling is an effective tool that can be used to relate the concentrations observed in the biomonitoring studies to exposures associated with adverse health effects in toxicity studies. In five days, the workshop will cover key areas of PBPK modeling and risk assessment through comprehensive lectures and extensive hands-on practice. Participants will have an opportunity to explore complex and important issues with pioneers and leaders in the field of PBPK modeling. Industrial, regulatory, and public health professionals responsible for conducting or evaluating biomonitoring studies are encouraged to take advantage of this unique training opportunity.

A brochure with the tentative agenda and registration form can be found from the following links: <http://www.ciit.org/research/centers/chha.asp> or [http://www.ciit.org/news\\_events/events.asp](http://www.ciit.org/news_events/events.asp).

### **2006 Midwestern States Risk Assessment Symposium**

The 2006 Midwestern States Risk Assessment Symposium (MSRAS) will be held 21-25 August at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel in Indianapolis. The 2006 MSRAS will focus on the complex toxicology and cleanup issues surrounding trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene. For more information see <http://web.enterprise.purdue.edu/wps/portal/Environment/msras>.

### **Risk Management Tools for Port Environmental Security, Critical Infrastructure, and Sustainability Summary of the NATO Workshop**

*Richard Wenning, Igor Linkov, Stefano Della Sala, Abou Ramadan, James Valverde, Todd Bridges, Jose Figueira, Greg Parnell, Greg Kiker*

Effective risk assessment and management at industrial ports and harbors require consideration of environmental security, which includes the protection and maintenance of critical infrastructure, emergency response planning, and the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.

This was the opening statement for nearly 60 environmental risk assessment, industrial port security, engineering, maritime shipping, environmental regulation, and military defense professionals representing 16 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member and partner countries at the three-day NATO Advanced Research Workshop titled “Risk Management Tools for Port Environmental Security, Critical Infrastructure, and Sustainability.” The workshop was held 16-19 March 2006 at Venice International University on Isola di San Servolo in Venice, Italy. The workshop was directed by Dr. Igor Linkov and hosted jointly by the Venice Port Authority, SRA (European Section and Decision Analysis and Risk Specialty Group), Cambridge Environmental, and ENVIRON. The meeting was an event supported by the NATO Programme for Security through Science.

This was the sixth meeting in a series of workshops that began in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2000 on the use of advanced risk assessment and decision analysis tools to understand environmental security. All these workshops were supported by the Society for Risk Analysis. This meeting focused on the needs of industrial ports which must balance economic, social, and political pressures with environmental protection and public safety. Participants discussed how the risk assessment process can provide port and government authorities with the appropriate tools to prioritize security needs and to evaluate a wide range of scenarios that have the potential to adversely impact the environment, cause injuries or fatalities among port workers and residents of surrounding communities, and result in short- or long-term economic impacts.

With an emphasis on lessons learned from environmental disaster response, vulnerability assessment, environmental impact assessment, and port security planning in the United States, Western and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, it was increasingly evident to participants that available risk frameworks developed in the United States and elsewhere have, in

the past, often been applied to regional problems inappropriately and without adjustment for unique environmental, social, political, and economic conditions. Moreover, most of these risk frameworks were reactionary in nature and driven in response to country-specific regulatory/political situations. It was clear from examination of several case studies that the implementation of environmental security programs at ports must be flexible and capable of adapting to new or unanticipated environmental and man-made threats.

Participants reviewed various environmental risk and decision-analysis models and case studies to understand how retrospective and prospective evaluations of various security threats can be used to improve port operation practices and reduce the consequences of either natural or man-made disasters. While environmental risk assessors have an enormous library of methods and guidance documents, risk managers do not have an equivalent toolbox from which to obtain needed decision-making methods that are useful for promoting either the enhancement or development of programs addressing environmental protection, environmental security, or critical infrastructure projects. The workshop concluded that a framework that combines risk assessment and multicriteria decision analysis would be appropriate to address multiple challenges in managing a whole spectrum of port security issues.

### Toxicology Information Resources Sourcebook

Anyone want to be an author for a new edition of a toxicology information resources sourcebook?

Please contact coeditor Pertti (Bert) Hakkinen as soon as possible if you would like to be considered as an author for a topic (or topics) in the new (fourth) edition of *Information Resources in Toxicology*. The third edition was described as a "sourcebook for anyone who needs to know where to find toxicology information. It provides an up-to-date selective guide to a large variety of sources—books, journals, organizations, audiovisuals, Internet and electronic sources, and more. This comprehensive, timesaving tool is ideal for toxicologists, pharmacologists, drug companies, testing labs, libraries, poison control centers, physicians, legal and regulatory professionals, and chemists." Examples of topics for the new edition, all requiring a global perspective, include books, newsletters, organizations, software tools, legal and regulatory information, toxicology testing, poison control centers, and physical hazards.

Please see the publisher's Web site for detailed information about the contents of the third edition: [http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws\\_home/675254/description#description](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws_home/675254/description#description).

Any volunteers for consideration as authors should contact: [pertti.hakkinen@jrc.it](mailto:pertti.hakkinen@jrc.it) (effective 9 May 2006; [pertti.hakkinen@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pertti.hakkinen@ec.europa.eu)).

### TERA to Convene Voluntary Children's Chemical Evaluation Program (VCCEP) Peer Consultation on Benzene

TERA (Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment) has tentatively scheduled a Voluntary Children's Chemical Evaluation Program (VCCEP) peer consultation meeting on benzene for Thursday and Friday, 15 and 16 June 2006.\* The meeting will be held at the Northern Kentucky University METS Center located near the Greater Cincinnati International Airport. The public is invited to attend and to provide written and/or oral comments. The meeting also will be available in real time to registered off-site observers via a Web cast. More information regarding the meeting logistics, registration for attending the meeting or observing the Web cast, and procedures for submitting comments will be provided soon on TERA's Web page (<http://www.tera.org/peer/VCCEP/benzene/benzeneWelcome.html>).

The goal of VCCEP is to enable the public to better understand the potential health risks to children associated with certain chemical exposures. Companies volunteered to collect or develop health effects and exposure information on 20 chemicals and then to integrate that information into risk and "data needs" assessments. The assessments are evaluated by a group of scientific experts using a peer consultation process, which is organized and operated by TERA. Panels include experts in toxicity testing, exposure evaluation, and risk assessment. More information about VCCEP is available at EPA's Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/chemrtk/childhlt.htm>).

TERA's VCCEP responsibilities include selecting panel members, convening and chairing meetings to evaluate sponsors' submissions, and preparing reports of the meetings. Information on policies and procedures, updated schedules, and meeting reports are available on TERA's Web page (<http://www.tera.org/peer/VCCEP/VCCEPIntroduction.html>).

\*This meeting is not sponsored by SRA.



## Member News

### Robin Cantor



Robin Cantor has been promoted to managing director within Navigant Consulting's Insurance & Claims Services practice. Robin specializes in environmental and energy economics, statistics, risk management, and insurance claims analysis.

In addition, she leads the firm's Liability Estimation practice, which helps companies and financial institutions better understand asbestos and other product liability exposures.

Robin received a BS in mathematics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in economics from Duke University.

### Pertti (Bert) Hakkinen

Effective 9 May 2006, Pertti (Bert) Hakkinen will have a new email address: [pertti.hakkinen@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pertti.hakkinen@ec.europa.eu).

Pertti is the chair of the SRA International Task Force Committee.

### David M. Hassenzahl

David M. Hassenzahl has been awarded the 2006 Distinguished Teaching Award at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This award recognizes his contributions to environmental education in general, and in particular recognizes his efforts in the area of risk education.





## Regulatory Risk Review

### Internal Memo Details Possible EPA Staff Concerns with OMB Risk Guide

Steve Gibb, Editor, Risk Policy Report

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff members have identified key concerns they hope to address in upcoming agency comments on the White House's controversial draft bulletin on risk assessment practices for EPA and other federal agencies, despite strong political support for the bulletin's proposals.

Several of the items identified by the staff could spark heated debate with EPA science chief George Gray, who is working to implement many of the items that staff are questioning. Gray will also play a key role in crafting the agency's comments as chair of the Science Policy Council (SPC), which is responsible for developing the comments by the end of the month.

The document shows staff members are focusing on a number of provisions in the draft bulletin, including its requirements that regulators present risk ranges instead of single numbers for chemical potency estimates, analyze the uncertainty surrounding any risk estimates, and examine alternative approaches to setting the estimates.

An email accompanying the document describes these topics as "areas that may present particular challenges to the agency." The document, attached to a 21 February email distributed within the agency, was prepared to help staff develop agency comments on the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) risk guide.

Former OMB regulatory chief John Graham released the Proposed Risk Assessment Bulletin 6 January, calling on federal agencies like EPA to conduct additional analysis in support of its risk assessments of major industrial chemicals. The guidance requires agencies to present central and high-end estimates of risks, consider allowing alternative risk models, and weigh the possibility of delaying decisions to conduct additional research to resolve remaining uncertainties.

Since he took office 1 November, Gray has prioritized many of these items and launched plans to implement them. For example, he is calling for the development of risk ranges for the agency's review of naphthalene and other chemicals. EPA's fiscal year 2007 budget also includes an initiative to broaden reliance on uncertainty analysis in risk-based decision making.

But Gray's call for more uncertainty analysis and other time- and resource-intensive evaluations to supplement EPA chemical risk reviews is controversial.

Some EPA staff scientists have already criticized many of these proposals, saying, for example, that OMB's calls to evaluate alternative "models" for how chemicals affect health may force the agency to accept "junk science" and unjustifiably lower environmental standards.

Their concerns were heightened when a key White House regulatory official, Nancy Beck, was transferred to the agency on temporary detail, prompting charges that she could play a key role in developing EPA's comments on the draft guide and that such a role could create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Other EPA sources, industry officials, and some academics, however, have praised the approach, saying additional analysis will bring more rigor to the process. "This could be good for risk assessment but bad for the environment," according to one academic.

But even EPA staff members who support uncertainty analysis and consideration of alternative models are concerned about how the provisions will be implemented. These sources say officials need to detail more precisely the bulletin's requirements, how risk assessors can determine whether they are complying, and what the budgetary implications are if they have to conduct additional analysis.

"If done right, uncertainty analysis could be good for the environment," says one EPA source. But the source cautions that many of Graham's other efforts to reform risk assessment practices led to weaker environmental standards.

Given the diversity of staff views on the provisions, sources say the SPC deliberations could be tense. "It's unclear whether he will listen to information about how these additional tasks may affect our workload and our ability to meet deadlines," according to one EPA staffer.

Meanwhile, several sources say staff should also consider the draft bulletin's call to detail the "adversity" of health effects associated with toxic exposures, an item that was not highlighted in the staff document.

The draft OMB bulletin says, "Where human health effects are a concern, determinations of which effects are adverse shall be specifically identified and justified based on the best available scientific information generally accepted in the relevant clinical and toxicological communities."

But some sources say this raises concerns that the bulletin could require agencies to set safety standards at levels only where diseases have taken hold rather than when preclinical signs are evident. "We need to make sure we don't inhibit discussion of key precursors of disease" in setting chemical safety limits, one observer says.

An EPA staffer says the adversity issue will be addressed and its exclusion from the document was an oversight.

In addition to agency comments, the draft OMB bulletin is also being peer-reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences, which expects to generate a report within eight months.

#### 25 Years of Society News

The Society for Risk Analysis *RISK newsletter* is 25 years old this spring! The first issue of the newsletter was printed 1 March 1981 and was four pages long, including news of the formation of the SRA, an announcement of the first SRA annual meeting and the start of *Risk Analysis*, many News Briefs, and a full-page application form for SRA membership.

To see the first *RISK newsletter* issue and all those following, visit the SRA Web site ([http://www.sra.org/membership\\_newsletter\\_archives.php](http://www.sra.org/membership_newsletter_archives.php)).



## What Do We Do?

— a quarterly look at the incredibly diverse field of risk analysis —

### Randy Ryti

#### What is your job title?

**Ryti:** My job title recently changed to president of Neptune and Company, Inc., which is a small environmental consulting company headquartered in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Prior to being president I was a senior scientist and one of the founding partners of Neptune and Company.

#### How is risk analysis a part of your job?

**Ryti:** I have been working in the field of applied environmental problem solving for more than 20 years. My work in the last five years has primarily involved consulting for large federal facilities in the western United States, including the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and the Hanford Site.

One focus of my work has been to develop and apply methods for assessing ecological risks in arid environments. The problems tend to be complex and involve working with a multidisciplinary team of scientists, representatives from the regulatory agencies, and the federal facility managers.

One recent project has involved assessing risks from radionuclides and other contaminants associated with Hanford reactors sited on the Columbia River in eastern Washington State. We developed the list of ecological entities (species and populations) potentially at risk from these contaminants and developed a battery of measures involving field, laboratory, and model data to assess the potential for ecological risks. Our approach emphasized the reuse of existing data sources and the testing of the conceptual model that was developed based on these data.

In another project, I worked with a team of scientists to develop a statistical and geomorphological approach to estimating the concentration of contaminants from historical discharges into canyons at LANL. The advantage of this method was that we used the conceptual model of sediment erosion and deposition in developing a representative sampling strategy, and this method is more efficient than a simple random sample of these sediments.

#### How did you decide to pursue this career?

**Ryti:** My interests have always been in quantitative biology, field ecology, and ecological modeling. My path to risk analysis and ecological risk assessment in particular was not direct. It was while I was a research scientist at Montana State University working in the environmental sampling field and the development of the Data Quality Objectives process that I became aware of the developing guidance for conducting ecological risk assessments.

Later, after we started Neptune and Company, I was able to review and offer comments on the ecological risk assessments proposed for LANL. Eventually, this led to me helping to write LANL's ecological risk assessment guidance.

#### What got you to where you are in the field of risk analysis today?

**Ryti:** I owe a lot to my mentors as a student and young scientist—Ted Case at the University of California, San Diego and Dan Goodman at Montana State University. In terms of giving me my initial start in the field of risk analysis, Elizabeth Kelly at LANL clearly deserves the most credit. Lastly, but not least, I have learned a great deal professionally and personally from Dean Neptune.



#### What is the most interesting/exciting part of your job?

**Ryti:** The most interesting part of my job is the varied group of people who I have as colleagues and reviewers. People are almost always engaged and engaging, which makes the work more interesting and important for me.

My job also allows me the flexibility to define new work areas so that I can continue to challenge myself personally and professionally.

#### What would you recommend to those entering the field of risk analysis interested in a job like yours?

**Ryti:** Educational experience only partially prepares one for a career in risk analysis. Because almost all projects are multidisciplinary you do not need to be an expert in all areas, but having good communication skills and being organized is essential.

I think that work experience in any of a number of related fields is a good way to start. There is really no substitute for “on the job” training in this field.

#### How has membership/involvement in the Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) helped you in your work?

**Ryti:** Membership in SRA has been a great asset for me in my work. The annual meetings are smaller than some other professional societies and encourage more interaction. Attending the meetings and getting involved with the Ecological Risk Assessment Specialty Group has also been helpful for networking opportunities. I am the past chair of the Ecological Risk Assessment Specialty Group and have truly enjoyed working with our members and the Program Committee to help develop the annual meeting program. I also find the annual meetings to be useful because I can attend sessions outside of my core work area and discover what is new in other disciplines. The annual meeting events are a good way to meet people doing risk analysis; SRA is truly an international organization and you can easily meet risk analysts from multiple continents at your lunch table.

#### Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Ryti:** I appreciate being asked for my input to the newsletter and I appreciate the work that goes into everything from the newsletter to the journal to the meetings.





## Specialty Groups

### Engineering and Infrastructure Specialty Group

*James Lambert, Chair*

Congratulations to longtime Engineering and Infrastructure Specialty Group (EISG) member Dr. Stanley Levinson of AREVA NP Inc. who received the Society's Distinguished Service Award at the annual meeting in Orlando in December 2005. Thanks, Stanley!

EISG members participated in or will participate in several NATO Advanced Research Workshops on the topic of infrastructure security in March 2006 in Venice, Italy, and in May 2006 in Primosten, Croatia. As presented on the Society Web page, the workshops are cosponsored by the Society and organized principally by the leadership of the Decision Analysis and Risk Specialty Group.

EISG members should give particular attention to the *Risk Analysis* journal's current Call for Papers on the topic of Risk and Extreme Events.

To help us more quickly identify the emerging engineering and infrastructure topics and members, please consider designating your submissions (papers, symposia, or half-day or full-day workshops) to the annual meeting as relevant to the engineering and infrastructure specialty.

The EISG welcomes a new member, Dr. Rehan Sadiq of the National Research Council Canada. Sadiq brings extensive scholarly and practical experience in environmental risk engineering, infrastructure deterioration and water quality modeling, risk-based decision making, reliability engineering and system safety, and environmental system modelling.

Send your communications regarding the EISG to Chair Professor James H. Lambert, Associate Director, Center for Risk Management of Engineering Systems, University of Virginia, 434-982-2072, [lambert@virginia.edu](mailto:lambert@virginia.edu).

### Dose Response Specialty Group

<http://www.sra.org/drsg/>

*Justin Teeguarden, Chair*

The Dose Response Specialty Group (DRSG) will continue its tradition of topical teleseminars on Tuesday, 6 June, at 12:00-1:00 p.m. Eastern Time with a discussion of nanotechnology risks. The presenters will be Jo Anne Shatkin of the Cadmus Group and Bill Mercer of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The interchange between Dr. Shatkin's exposure/risk assessment perspective and Dr. Mercer's experimental orientation should make for a multifaceted exploration of this emerging field. To participate, dial 513-569-7897 and enter the code number 2790 plus the # sign.

In March, the group had a lively discussion on "Mode of Action in Assessing the Human Relevance of Animal Tumors: An EPA Perspective" by Vicki Delarco and Anna Lowit of the US Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs. To get on the list to receive future announcements of teleseminars, send an email to Paul Schlosser, [Schlosser.Paul@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:Schlosser.Paul@epamail.epa.gov).

The DRSG is pleased to once again offer a merit award to a student conducting graduate research in dose-response assessment. The research may be on any topic broadly related to dose-response assessment, including but not limited to labora-

tory investigation, methods development, comparative analyses, novel applications, studies on strengthening the role of dose-response assessment in risk assessment, uncertainty analysis, harmonization, dosimetry, genetics, and molecular biology. In addition to the peer recognition of the student's scientific accomplishment, the award includes a registration fee waiver to the SRA annual meeting, an engraved plaque, and a \$500 honorarium. The DRSG award winner will present his/her results and receive his/her award at the annual meeting. All abstracts must be submitted for presentation at the 2006 SRA Annual Meeting 3-6 December 2006 at the Renaissance Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, following normal SRA guidelines for abstract submission (see [www.sra.org](http://www.sra.org) for meeting dates, guidelines, and deadlines). To submit, students must complete the following by 1 June 2006: (1) submit their abstracts using the individual abstract form on the SRA annual meeting Web site, (2) designate the Dose Response Specialty Group on their form, (3) complete the SRA student travel and/or merit award request form, and (4) in addition to the individual abstract, submit an extended abstract as specified on the award request form (between 900 and 1,000 words in length) that provides more detail about the work the students propose to present. Note that all applicants for the DRSG merit award may simultaneously apply for the SRA student travel award using the student travel and/or merit award request form. Questions concerning the DRSG award procedures should be addressed to Paul I. Feder, Vice Chair, DRSG, phone: 614-424-4525, email: [feder@battelle.org](mailto:feder@battelle.org).

### Risk Communication Specialty Group

<http://www.sra.org/rcsg>

*Felicia Wu, Chair*

Thanks to everyone who attended the Risk Communication Specialty Group (RCSG) mixer and business meeting at the 2005 SRA Annual Meeting, and also to those who contributed risk communication-related presentations to the conference. The group welcomed incoming Chair Felicia Wu (University of Pittsburgh) and bid farewell to outgoing Chair Cliff Scherer (Cornell University). Also elected were Lori Severtson (University of Wisconsin) as chair-elect, Jamie Wardman (King's College London) as secretary/treasurer, Chris Clarke (Cornell University) as student representative, and Victoria Friedensen (NASA), Theresa Garvin (University of Alberta), and Brooke Rogers (King's College London) as board members. Thanks to Chris Clarke and Henry Willis (outgoing secretary/treasurer) for their help in these notes.

We would appreciate your help in getting the word out to risk communication students in your institutions to contribute a paper to our RCSG Student Paper Award competition, as last year the decision was made not to make an award due to low turnout. Also, the Communications Committee of SRA is looking for volunteers. Among other items discussed at the meeting: Ragnar Löfstedt (King's College London) announced a "Future of Risk Communication" conference to be held at his institute on 31 August 2006. We discussed whether the RCSG should provide student travel grants.

Finally, thanks to Chris Clarke, our Web site has been revamped. Please visit it at [www.sra.org/rcsg](http://www.sra.org/rcsg).





## SRA-Japan

<http://dss.sys.eng.shizuoka.ac.jp/srajapan/english/index.html>

*Jun Sekizawa, President*

### General Assembly, SRA-Japan Councilors Meeting, and Annual Spring Symposium

SRA-Japan is planning to have its regular Councilors Meeting, General Assembly, and Annual Spring Symposium on 16 June 2006 in an assembly hall at the University of Tokyo. The subject of the symposium will be "Recent Advances in the Study of Health Risks from Exposure to Endocrine Disruptors."

### Academic Congress

SRA-Japan is preparing the 19<sup>th</sup> Academic Congress for 11-12 November 2006 in Tsukuba. This year's organizing committee is chaired by Dr. Tokai in the Research Center for Chemical Risk Management of the National Institute of Advanced Science and Technology in Tsukuba.

### Accrediting the Environmental Risk Manager Training Program

At its ad hoc Councilors Meeting on 14 March 2006, SRA-Japan accredited the Environmental Risk Manager Training Program which Dr. Morioka's group started last year in the Graduate School of Engineering Sciences at Osaka University with support from the Japan Science and Technology Agency for five years. The program is now training several scores of trainees, including both graduate students and applicants from outside the university. SRA-Japan will support this program by holding seminars and offering opportunities for discussion for trainees. SRA-Japan and the program are planning to extend this program by collaborating with other closely related ventures of training programs to establish solid recognition of the environmental risk managers in the Society.

### Revision of the Bylaws of SRA-Japan

This proposal was approved at our Councilors Meeting last November and will be presented to the General Assembly in June this year. The revision to the bylaws was made because we must strengthen our organizational structure and also academic activities as follows. Our bylaws were originally developed when SRA-Japan was established in 1988 by fewer than 100 members and have not been changed much. However, SRA-Japan now has a membership of more than 600 and is planning to increase membership to over 1,000 in the near future. We must respond to the needs of our Society and people facing various risks, both new and old, surrounding us in 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan, by solving problems or showing the direction. We need to establish risk literacy in Japan by working together with related academic and nonacademic societies domestically and also by closely collaborating internationally with SRA, SRA-Europe, and other related academic societies, especially in the Eastern Asian countries with whom we have been holding joint academic meetings every three years since 1998. Part of the change in our bylaws is in the description of our relationship with SRA, which is now described as a sort of parent-and-child relationship. This does not reflect the real situation in that SRA-Japan has been operating independently, not only organizationally (membership and office, etc.) or financially, but also in publishing its own journal in Japanese and others. President Dr. Jun Sekizawa explained this movement at the last SRA Council meeting in December and also in the recent unofficial teleconference with SRA Councilor Dr. Greg Paoli recently.

### Concise Dictionary on Risk Terms

SRA-Japan is planning to publish a concise dictionary of risk terms from Maruzen Co. Ltd. this year. The Editorial Committee, chaired by Dr. Kai of Oita University of Nursing and Health Sciences, is hoping to cover more than 1,000 risk-related terms.



## SRA-Europe

<http://www.sraeurope.org/>

*Olivier Salvi, President*

### SRA-Europe Annual Meeting in Ljubljana 11-13 September 2006

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual conference of SRA-Europe (SRA-E) aims at giving continuation in creating opportunities of meeting and promoting international knowledge sharing in risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication in Europe. An additional and specific aim is to create a forum on most actual and common risk topics among industry and authorities. This will be done in the form of a roundtable discussion and will help representatives of both to exchange understandings on specific needs and obstacles on their endeavours to achieve safe industrial operation.

**The new deadline for abstract submission is 30 April 2006.**

- Abstracts are welcome on the following topics:
- Social contexts and responses to risk
  - Challenges associated with risks in public health

- Creating a risk-reducing culture
- Natural hazards and associated risks
- Industrial hazards and associated risks
- Risk communication and perception: building trust among scientists, governments, and the public

#### Special topic—Industrial risks and safety\*

- Interrelations between risks and safety
- Demonstration of safety: methods, tools, indicators
- Uncertainty and trust, proofs
- Economic and financial aspects of SMS (Safety Management Systems)
- Spatial planning and land-use of practical aspects of ALARP (as low as reasonably practicable)

\*Roundtable discussion—participants are welcome to provide their views or questions in advance to the conference secretariat (check <http://sra-e-2006.ijs.si>).

## Activities of the Working Groups of SRA-Europe

During the last SRA-E annual meetings in Paris and Como, several working groups were formed on the following topics:

- Use of multicriteria analysis and decision-making tools in risk management (Chair M. Merad).
- Land-use planning around hazardous plants and infrastructures (Chair G. Walker).
- Integration of risk management health, safety, and environmental protection (Chair O. Salvi).
- Governance in a risk-informed society and risk communication (Chair A. Alemanno).
- Civil defense and civil protection: Challenges for European institutions after September 11 and Madrid, March 2004 (Chair G. Romano).
- Education and training: Challenges and emerging demands (Chair R. Reiss/J.P. Lacoursière).

To prepare future activities of these groups, a consultation process will be organised to collect ideas for projects that could be proposed for the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework programme of the European Commission starting in 2007 or to link activities funded at national level. More information will be put on the Web site soon ([www.sraeurope.org](http://www.sraeurope.org)).

## SRA-Europe Took Part in NATO Advanced Research Workshop

SRA-E was associated with the NATO Advanced Research Workshop that took place 16-19 March 2006 in Venice, Italy: Risk Management Tools for Port Security, Critical Infrastructure, and Sustainability. Scira Menoni (SRA-E past president) and Olivier Salvi (SRA-E president) participated in this event and had the opportunity to welcome the 45 participants.

This workshop focused on risk management tools, methods, and approaches specific for ports and harbours. It was pointed out that multicriteria decision analysis and decision support tools should be more widely used in this kind of situation.

## A Strategic Research Agenda on Industrial Safety for Europe

On 7 February 2006 the European Technology Platform on Industrial Safety (ETPIS) presented its strategic research agenda for the next 20 years. This initiative is based on an integrated approach of a strategy to eliminate industrial accidents as well as eradicating their negative effects on environment and industrial installations. The initiative fully supports safe technological innovations.

Authors of this medium- and long-term research agenda constitute a large forum of all industry sectors, skilled research organisations, trade unions, insurance companies, health and safety regulatory bodies, standardisation committees, and NGOs. It involves about 120 organisations from 17 member states of the European Union, in association with Romania, Canada, and Australia.

Main research domains are:

- Methodologies for risk assessment and risk management.
- Advanced technologies for reducing risks at work, to the environment, and of major accidents.
- Structural safety.
- Human and organisational factors.
- Emerging risks.
- Innovation for education and training.
- Nanosafety (nano-materials and nano-particles).

More information can be found at [www.industrialsafety-tp.org](http://www.industrialsafety-tp.org).



## Advertisements

### Scientist Position

ChemRisk is a consulting firm providing state-of-the-art toxicology, industrial hygiene, epidemiology, and risk assessment services to organizations that confront public health, occupational health, and environmental challenges. ChemRisk is seeking applicants with training in toxicology, pharmacology, the environmental sciences, risk assessment, biomedical engineering, industrial hygiene, medicine, or health physics.

This position requires a bachelor's degree in environmental or toxicological sciences. Candidates with a PhD or master's degree are preferred. Candidates with a background in consulting are especially desired. Positions are available in the offices in San Francisco, California; Boulder, Colorado; Houston, Texas; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Please send résumés to ChemRisk, 25 Jessie Street, Suite 1800, San Francisco, CA 94105, or email: [hr@chemrisk.com](mailto:hr@chemrisk.com), phone: 415-896-2400, fax: 415-896-2444, [www.chemrisk.com](http://www.chemrisk.com).

### RISK newsletter and SRA Web Site Advertising Policy

Books, software, courses, and events may be advertised in the Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) RISK newsletter or on the SRA Web site at a cost of \$250 for up to 150 words. There is a charge of \$100 for each additional 50 words.

Ads may be placed both in the RISK newsletter and on the Web site for \$375 for 150 words and \$100 for each additional 50 words.

Employment opportunity ads (up to 200 words) are placed free of charge in the RISK newsletter and on the SRA Web site.

Members of SRA may place, at no charge, an advertisement seeking employment for themselves as a benefit of SRA membership.

Camera-ready ads (greyscale) for the RISK newsletter are accepted at a cost of \$250 for a 3.25-inch-wide by 3-inch-high box. The height of a camera-ready ad may be increased beyond 3 inches at a cost of \$100 per inch.

The RISK newsletter is published four times a year. Submit advertisements to the Managing Editor, with billing instructions, by 30 December for the First Quarter issue (published early February), 30 March for the Second Quarter issue (early May), 30 June for the Third Quarter issue (early August), and 30 September for the Fourth Quarter issue (early November). Send to Mary Walchuk, Managing Editor, RISK newsletter, 115 Westwood Dr., Mankato, MN 56001; phone: 507-625-6142; fax: 507-625-1792; email: [mwalchuk@hickorytech.net](mailto:mwalchuk@hickorytech.net).



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### Deadline for RISK *newsletter* Submissions

Information to be included in the **Third Quarter 2006** SRA RISK *newsletter*, to be mailed early August, should be sent to Mary Walchuk, RISK *newsletter* Managing Editor (115 Westwood Dr., Mankato, MN 56001; phone: 507-625-6142; fax: 507-625-1792; email: mwalchuk@hickorytech.net) no later than **10 June 2006**.



The Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) is an interdisciplinary professional society devoted to risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication.

SRA was founded in 1981 by a group of individuals representing many different disciplines who recognized the need for an interdisciplinary society, with international scope, to address emerging issues in risk analysis, management, and policy. Through its meetings and publications, it fosters a dialogue on health, ecological, and engineering risks and natural hazards, and their socioeconomic dimensions. SRA is committed to research and education in risk-related fields and to the recruitment of students into those fields. It is governed by bylaws and is directed by a 15-member elected Council.

The Society has helped develop the field of risk analysis and has improved its credibility and viability as well.

Members of SRA include professionals from a wide range of institutions, including federal, state, and local governments, small and large industries, private and public academic institutions, not-for-profit organizations, law firms, and consulting groups. Those professionals include statisticians, engineers, safety officers, policy analysts, economists, lawyers, environmental and occupational health scientists, natural and physical scientists, environmental scientists, public administrators, and social, behavioral, and decision scientists.

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