Introduction

In 1977, ASTM sponsored its first symposium on chemical dispersants for oil spills. During that symposium, "Chemical Dispersants for the Control of Oil Spills," results from earlier studies were reported. They seemed to ask more questions than they provided reassuring answers. L. P. McCarthy, of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), stated in the introduction to the ASTM special technical publication (STP 659) resulting from that symposium, "What remains to be demonstrated domestically is that oil spills can be dispersed in an environmentally acceptable manner." The work necessary to answer his challenge was well underway at the time of his assessment. An extensive program had already been initiated by researchers to find the real answers, favorable or unfavorable. Since that time laboratory and field research efforts have generated a wealth of information on the whole spectrum of chemical dispersant usage—toxicity testing, effectiveness testing, fate and effects of oil and dispersed oil in the field, and efficient application methods. Much of this work was reported in the 1982 ASTM dispersant symposium entitled "Oil Spill Dispersants: Five Years of Research."

McCarthy and his colleagues recognized that ASTM offered the ideal forum from which constructive discussion between industry and government could take place. Since that first dispersant symposium, ASTM's special subcommittee, F20.13 on the Chemical Treatment of Oil Spills, has been very active. Many of the researchers working on developments in the field have joined in the subcommittee work. Together with regulatory interests and others, the subcommittee undertook the task of translating research data into standards for laboratory effectiveness and toxicity testing and guidelines for meaningful, responsible, decision-making strategies. The cooperation and effort developed within the subcommittee and the professional manner in which its business has been conducted has been exemplary.

The present status of dispersant usage is that of growing acceptance. The viability of dispersant as a means of control to minimize the overall environmental damage has been proven.

The most significant difference between the 1977 and 1982 dispersant symposia was the lack of controversy in the latter. There was an overall attitude of sharing the latest developments of research and field usage and discussing where to go from here. There were differences of opinion, but they were uttered with professional care. One attendee suggested that the sympo-

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sium was a little boring—without flair. In my view, that was a compliment. There is no room for the flare of uninformed rhetoric when the status of one of our most valuable natural resources is concerned. The spill control industry still has problems, both technical and regulatory in nature, but with the present cooperation between industry and government, I am confident that they can be solved.

The symposium was attended by people from 15 different countries and five continents. Papers were contributed by people from eight different countries; 50% of the papers were from outside the United States.

Recognition needs to be given to Stu Horn, past chairman of ASTM F-20; Bill Leek, chairman of the Oil Spill Division of F-20; Don Tobias, the past ASTM staff manager; and Earl Sullivan, now ASTM's director of standards production. These individuals were the key in the initial organization and planning of the symposium. Special thanks go to the Program Committee, many of whom also served as session chairmen for the symposium: Ted Erler, Kennedy Jenks Engineers; Byron Cashion, Exxon Research; June Lindstedt-Siva, Arco; Jack Anderson, Battelle Northwest Marine Research Laboratory; Leo McCarthy, USEPA; Tom Nanney, retired, American Petroleum Institute; Roger Rufe, US Coast Guard; Waynon Johnson, US Fish & Wildlife; and Gordon Lindblom, Exxon Chemical.

For doing an outstanding job with the summary panel discussion, congratulations go to moderator Tom Nanney and panelists Jack Anderson, Laboratory and Testing; Gordon Lindblom, Field Effectiveness; Ed Gilfillan, Fate and Effects; Cmdr. Roger Rufe, Contingency Planning; and Don MacKay, Laboratory and Effectiveness Testing. Obviously, the largest contribution to the symposium was made by the authors of the papers given there. Many thanks for the effort they put forth to submit the abstracts and go through the process of review and revisions for this publication.

And finally, thanks to the many people at ASTM, and particularly, Kathy Greene, Manager, Acquisitions and Review, and her staff who have provided expert guidance and coordination with all the details concerning this publication.

Tom E. Allen
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