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# Development Of Our People



*by Desmond Benjamin*

By the time most of you would have read this article at least one very significant event would have transpired in the life of PLNL. That is, for the first time in the history of the organization we would have simultaneously filled not one, not two but three managerial vacancies by promotion from within the organization.

What is so significant about this you may ask? After all, promotions happen virtually every year since the inception of the organization. That right there is the crux of the matter. Many of you, especially the older heads could recall the promotion of Ian Walcott from Principal Engineer to technical manager and Sheldon Jadoonanan from engineer to his current position as Maintenance manager. Notably however in each of those instances the two persons were selected for promotion based no doubt on their hard work, dedication and application to the job.

The difference now is not only that we had evidence of dedication, hard work and application from the individuals promoted but the fact that we had evidence of that from a large field of in-house applications for all the managerial positions advertised. Each of the persons promoted won their promotion from a strong, competitive field of applicants. Not a single one of these promotions was a “shoo-in.”

Now think about the larger picture. How many organizations do you know that are operating at the level of technical and managerial complexity required to operate a world-class ammonia plant such as ours, can fill three senior technical managerial positions from within the organization, especially from a population base of eighty-six (86) persons?. I think you would be challenged to name ten—worldwide.

Congratulations to you, the employees at PLNL who have prepared and accepted all the challenges that would have conditioned you to be in this fortunate position. Some would point to some element of luck and circumstance but as most successful people would tell you—luck is a combination of preparation and opportunity.

To focus too strongly on this achievement however, even against the backdrop of its singular significance, would be to miss the forest from the trees. Over the past four years PLNL has been embarking on a programme of realizing its strategic objectives and none more so than the Development of our People.

What do we mean by Development of our People? First off, development is not to be confused with training. They are separate, somewhat interrelated but distinct concepts. Training is about being more effective about what one is doing. Often it is about reinforcing existing pathways of knowledge and skills that a person possesses. This is not to say that it can't lead to development but it is more often than not about being more effective.

Development on the other hand is about change and evolution not only impacting you but also the people around you. Thus, not only are your work solutions and processes challenged but your leadership skills and behavior patterns no longer reflect what they used to be. And how have we gone about this at PLNL that would allow us to realize the strategy of promoting most of our people from within? Easy, think “People First.”

Sure, the programme may not have been without its demerits much as you would expect from any programme aimed at developmental and behavioral change in a large organization. ‘One size does not fit all’ but the grounding it provided was the foundation that allowed us to be in this fortunate position of having a wide pool of suitable qualified and ready pool of individuals capable of leading this company. This certainly constitutes a singular

testimony to the merits of the programme.

It is unfortunate that we were unable to fill the “service positions” vacancies from within our fold as with the plant areas but it just reflects the fact that there is more to be done, that there is opportunity. The New Year will not be without its challenges but when and if they do arise it should not deter us from the task at hand—the continued Development of our People.

One of the first steps in this process is to treat the Performance Appraisal assessment system with the importance that it deserves. Consider that you are crafting a developmental and performance plan for each individual that you appraise. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us in the organization to ensure that no one is left behind in this process. The Human Resources Department will soon have systems, personnel and other resources capable of realizing the potential of the plans that we pass on to them. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

Lastly, we must expose our people to new experiences, work groups and processes. Trust and believe in what they can achieve. Just as we were able to prepare the fertile ground that allowed for the promotion to three (3) managerial positions from within our departments, do believe that the next person could be you.





*by Ann Marie Ramsundar-Radhay*

Another year has come and gone, and with it another Christmas season filled with joy, merriment and feasting. We have put on a few pounds and now, with the Carnival season fast approaching and with our resolution to lose weight still intact, we are looking for the fastest way to shed those unwanted few. Beware the crash/fad diet!

We are bombarded with images of the super sleek and their endorsement of crash/fad diets and the promise that these do work, but remember that these are paid endorsements intended to lure you into trying a product which may not necessarily be safe or in the best interest of your health.

Prolonged or repeated crash diets may harm your heart, and diet pills can do likewise. These may be prescribed by a doctor in extreme circumstances, but usage should be carefully monitored. All liquid diets can cause protein-calorie malnutrition to the heart, and can produce arrhythmias or atrophy of the heart muscle. Extremely low calorie diets may result in the body not obtaining vital vitamins and minerals and can cause decreases in blood pressure and sodium depletion.

Some gurus also advocate cleansing systems, on the misguided concept that the body needs help in eliminating

waste. Even a 'natural' cleanse consisting of nothing but a mixture of lemon juice, maple syrup, cayenne pepper and water over a prolonged time can be dangerous, as the body does not get all it requires from these few ingredients.

So, if you have put on a few, and need to lose them, the best way is the healthy way: eat sensibly and exercise. The key to successful weight loss is to burn more calories than you consume. So, cut back on those large portions of carbs, and substitute with vegetables. Eat lean meats and fish in smaller portions. Have water instead of carbonated beverages and juices and keep lots of carrot sticks, celery sticks and apple slices handy for those snack attacks.

Walk more often and try going to a gym where you can get good exercise advice from certified trainers. Take up yoga or callisthenics, but do get more active. There is no magic way to lose those extra pounds safely; and consider this : they were not gained overnight, but over a period of time so common sense should dictate that they would be lost over time as well.

Above all, if you do have health complications such as diabetes or hypertension, please consult with your doctor first before embarking on any major weight loss plan.

# Christmas Party







## Up Close and Personal



Sharik Khan (SK)



Denise Gooden (DG)

### What was your happiest moment?

**SK:** The birth of my son was my happiest moment. Spending time with him and watching him grow are the best moments.

**DG:** When I got my BSc degree, but am happiest just observing nature and watching the birds pecking at the fruits on the trees.

### What is your secret fear?

**SK:** That one day I may develop Alzheimer's disease and forget the people and things I love. Forget my happy moments!

**DG:** It's a secret?

### Which living person do you admire the most and why?

**SK:** My Dad! He may not be the most perfect person, but what he did for my brothers and I growing up, and still do, I admire and respect him for that. Always there to provide advice, listen to us, encourage us, (discipline us). People always tend to respect him after he has a conversation with them. He is articulate in his own way.

**DG:** No single person, but I admire my 3 children who turned out to be such beautiful, balanced people in the face of much adversity.

### What is your greatest extravagance?

**SK:** Food and Travel. I love to taste the different flavours life has to offer. Love to visit different countries whenever I get the opportunity.

**DG:** Traveling to see all those places I studied in geography class and to experience the various cultures. (don't get enough vacation though).

### What is your pet peeve?

**SK:** Dumb drivers who swerve in and out of traffic and ride close to your car. If they come close to my bumper I tip the brakes so the lights come on whilst mashing the gas! Love to see it when they panic!

**DG:** People who just won't let go of the ills of the past, accept what life dealt them, and move forward.

### What do you get most complimented about?

**SK:** My patience. People say I have a lot of patience. I don't think so. I'm just tolerant of the imperfections of others! Apart from that, the ladies say I have a nice smile. And for some reason they like my name!

**DG:** Being organized, but don't judge by how my office looks!

### What quality do you like most in women/men?

**SK:** I don't think that I will be allowed to put that in this magazine ! But, I like a woman who is intelligent, strong willed, spontaneous and a bit unpredictable.

**DG:** The man who puts his woman's needs before his.

### What was your most embarrassing moment?

**SK:** In 2007, I was in Puerto Rico at a Group Finance and Compliance Dept. meeting. I just started with the company one week prior and I didn't know any Spanish. My "friends" from Mexico taught me a few words the day before—gave me the "Mexican" meaning—which supposedly meant "don't bother" in English. At the meeting, the President and the COO of the Company asked me what Spanish I learnt so far—I told them "No Mames" Lessons Learnt: Always know what you are saying



before you say it! And, Never trust a Mexican!

**DG:** I can't exactly remember but I know I wished the floor could have opened up and swallowed me.

**What was the first thing you did this morning?**

**SK:** Kiss my son and thank God for letting me wake to live to see today.

**DG:** Turned off the alarm and lay quietly thinking of all sorts of things.

**What are your hobbies?**

**SK:** Hiking, cooking unique dishes, spending time with my friends and family, and just doing whatever we feel like at that moment.

**DG:** Travelling and going to the movies. (Lynette can testify to the latter).

**What is your favourite food?**

**SK:** Lasagna! Best invention ever!

**DG:** Stewed red peas with pigtail on a bed of hot white rice.

**What do you consider your most cherished virtue?**

**SK:** Patience, loyalty and my helpful nature. This is also my biggest drawback.

**DG:** Not giving up. Even though sometimes I say I just can't bother, people around me know it's just words.

**What trait do you deplore in others?**

**SK:** People who feel that the world around them owes them something. People who complain all the time yet do nothing to make the situation better either for themselves or for those around them.

**DG:** Negativity, and saying they just can't do any better. They must be open to just receiving.

**When was the last time you cried?**

**SK:** Upon the death of my brother last year. That experience taught me that we are in this world for a short time. We do not know when our time will come. So make the most of what you have in this very moment.

**DG:** A few months ago when a close girlfriend passed away. I cried buckets: the tears spilled out of my eyes onto

my clothes.

**How do you deal with stress?**

**SK:** Scream! Let it all out when driving alone in my car. Then have a relaxing dinner in a restaurant or go to the beach.

**DG:** Spring-cleaning at home: throwing out stuff (even clothes) or giving away something.

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

**SK:** A few more kids. MBA complete. And grasp at the opportunities life and PLNL throws at me!

**DG:** Real tired.

**What is the most important lesson life has taught you?**

**SK:** Be careful whose advice you take, but be patient with those from whom you receive it. Life is unexpected, make the most of the time you have with what you have. **DG:** To make the most of the now and the people who are important to me.

**What is your current state of mind?**

**SK:** Acceptance, Calm, Hakuna Matata!

**DG:** As normal as can be.

**If you had one wish which you alone can benefit from, what would it be?**

**SK:** Travel back in time and stop the death of my brother. Find the problem before it happened.

**DG:** To hold discussions with my (late) father who I most times wanted to be far away from (he was too strict), but whose wisdom I never recognized and tapped.

**What place would you like to visit before you die?**

**SK:** I *will* visit Egypt before I die. The history of the world began there.

**DG:** New Zealand to experience the lives of the Maoris.

# Alternate Party









**Darryl Roberts**—ten years service with the Company





L-R Aaron Mungal, Terron Moore and Shivan Mahabir celebrate five years with the Company



**Rupash Ramlal**—celebrating 5 years



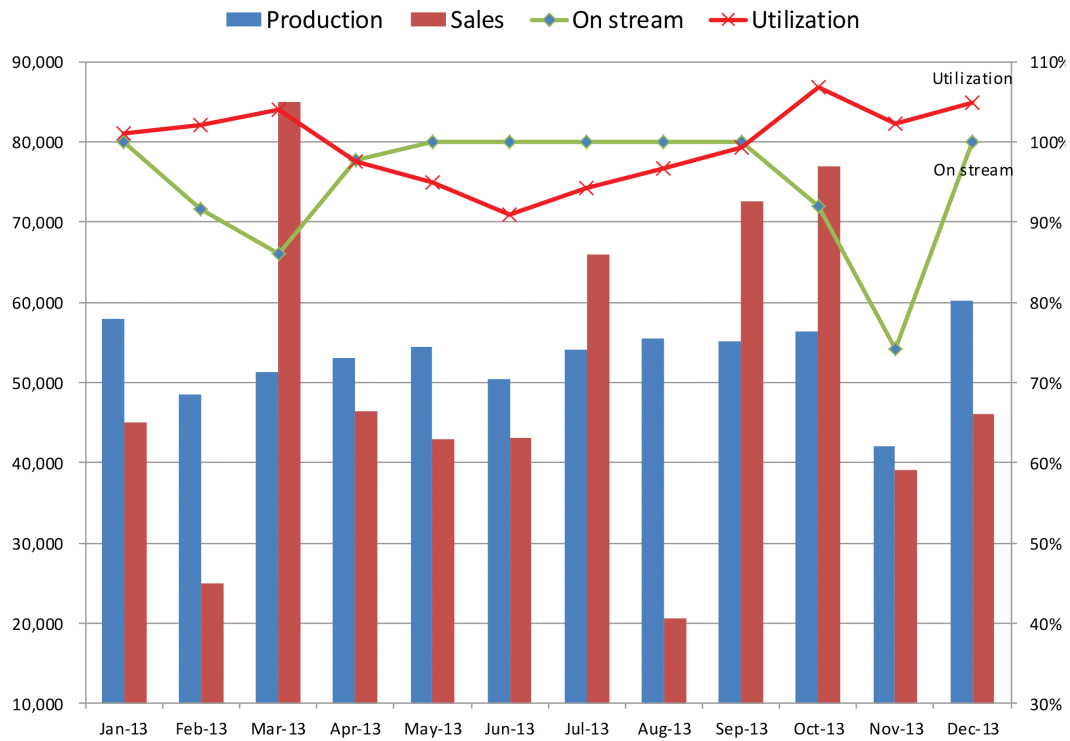
Terron Moore receiving his five-year token

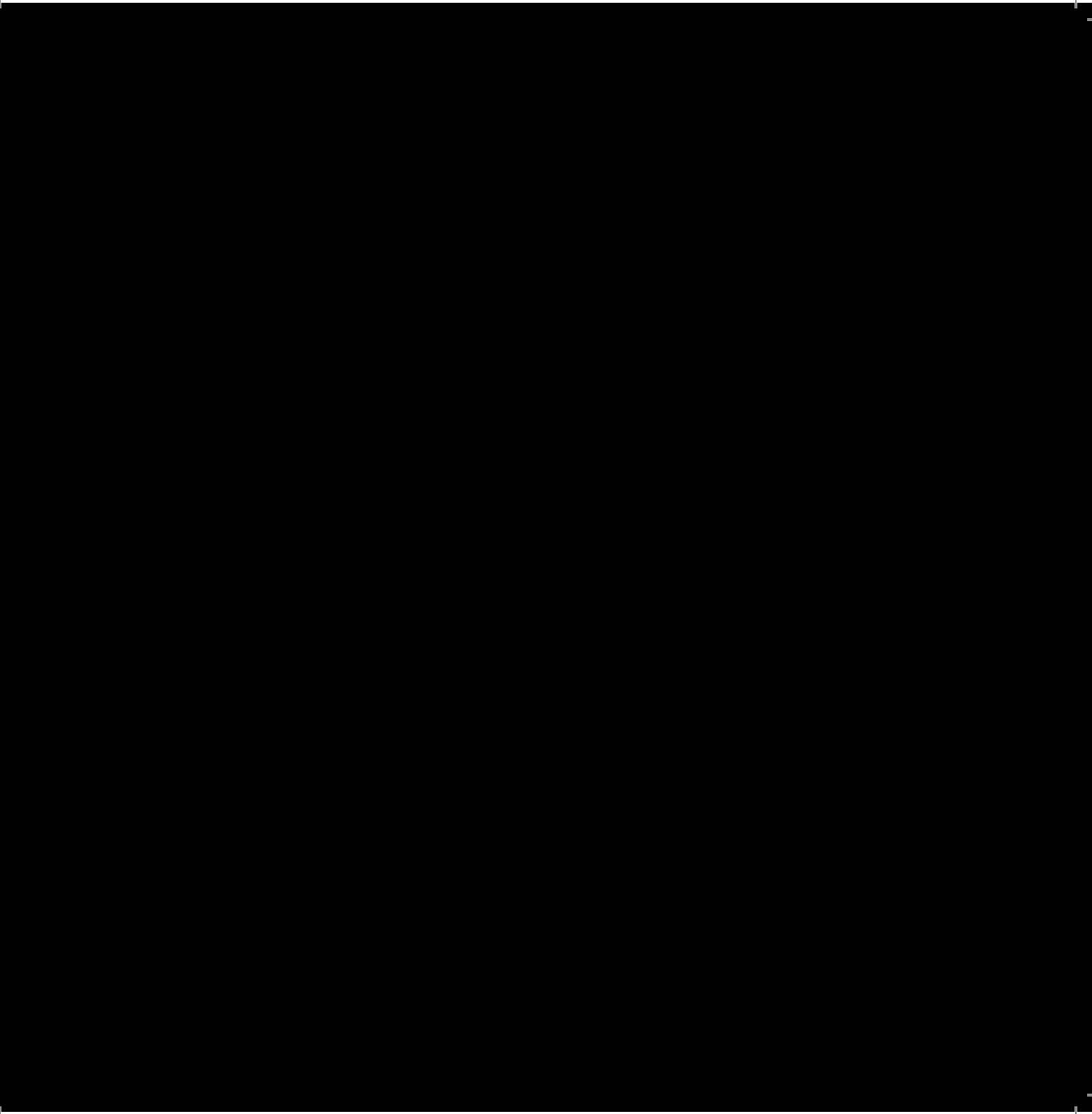
# PLNL Milestones

On November 25, 2013 at 6.00am the new ammonia converter commissioned in 2012 exceeded 2,000 metric tonnes (2003.084MT/day).

Congratulations are in order to all PLNL personnel for this milestone achievement!

Point Lisas Nitrogen Limited  
Production and Sales 2013





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