# CHEN3600 – Computer-Aided Chemical Engineering Spring 2012

# Chemical Engineering Department Bonus Opportunity 2

**T.D. Placek Auburn University**

**Bonus 2 – Optional Writing Opportunity**

### Problem Statement

In this optional assignment, you will be writing a report based on your perception of what the world will be like in 20 years, or stated in the obverse, what will be different in 20 years.

This is NOT an assignment where you research the topic and then writing a report. This report is to be written entirely from your personal knowledge of both current events and passed events.

“If we have learned one thing from the history of invention and discovery, it is that, in the long run - and often in the short one - the most daring prophecies seem laughably conservative.”

- Arthur C. Clarke

When I think back 20 years, I had been at Auburn University for 14 years and 20 more years in the past was approximately when I was an undergraduate in college. There were no computers, no VCR’s, no cell phones but plenty of pay phones. Phones were black and modern phones were plastic and not Bakelite. The “princess phone” was just coming out. There was no such term as “landline”. There were no satellites in the skies. Most purchases were made with cash and sometimes a check, gasoline was 28 cents a gallon as were a pack of cigarettes. The only “credit cards” were store charge cards. In 1969 when I was a junior in college, I bought a brand new Ford Maverick for $1995.00. Truly I could not have anticipated how different the world would be, but the skills I acquired in college are still the same skills needed by students today. There was no MATLAB… there were no personal computers… there were no hand calculators… but I did know how to use a slide rule and got correct answers. There were three channels to watch on TV (ABC, NBC, CBS) even in a major metropolitan area. When one watched the news, there was for the most part an accurate portrayal of events reported by people who understood the issues. There was no such concept as being “politically correct”. I watched very little TV while in college… mainly limited to watching first runs of StarTrek on Sunday evenings when I returned to the dorm.

A Head’s Up…

**Big Changes**

There will be several big changes in the world in the next 20 years at the rate that is right now. The biggest change will be in computers where instead of a computer being considered old in 6 months after it comes out, it will old in 2 hours or so. Life will be quite fast paced.

**20 Years From Now… What Will Be Different?**

In 20 years, inflation will have probably gone up by a large amount. In 20 years, you will need a college degree just to get a job at McDonalds. In 20 years, the Middle East will still be at war. Technology will begin to overcome the human though process. There will be a great improvement in medical technology, especially transplant technology. There will also be great improvement in the efficiency of alternate sources of fuel. Electronics will be so small you can hardly use them. They might even be implanted inside of you so there are no external electronics like cell phones or iPods. Tons of things will be different in 20 years!!!