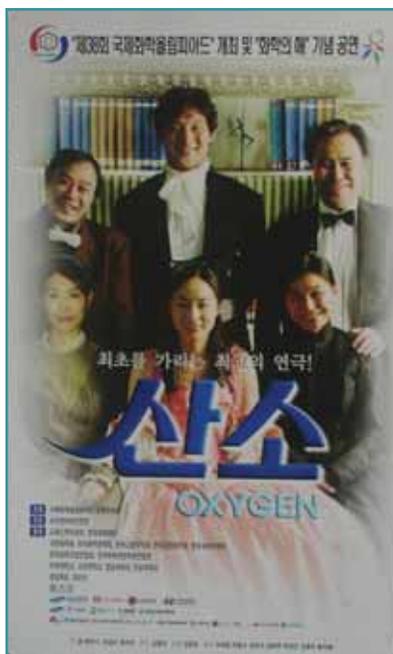


The 2006 Year of Chemistry in Korea

Education (Jan-Feb 2007 *CI*, p. 32), 38th International Chemistry Olympiad (Nov-Dec 2006 *CI*, p. 22), and the 18th International Symposium on Chirality. A number of chemistry-related organizations also participated in the activities of the Year of Chemistry, including the Korean Union of Chemical Science and Technology Societies, the Korean Institute of Chemical Engineers, the Polymer Society of Korea, the Korean Society of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry, and the Korean Ceramic Society.

South Korea's experience with the 2006 Year of Chemistry demonstrated that students of all ages, the public, administrators, and legislators will support the chemical



sciences if they are exposed to chemical facts and activities and educated about the benefits of chemistry. However, it is necessary to maintain the momentum and energy behind this effort to continuously enhance the chemical sciences. 🌐

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Poster for the play Oxygen, which was seen by more than 14 000 people during its 19 showings in six cities.

See also www.iupac.org/publications/ci/indexes/stamps.html

Stamps International

Petrochemicals Galore

Countries sometimes use postage stamps to highlight their economic growth and promote their industrial prowess or development plans. Such is the case with South Korea, which issued a set of eight stamps on 15 March 2006 to recognize its key export industries, including automobiles, semiconductors, electronics, textiles, steel, machinery, ships, and petrochemicals. Accounting for nearly three quarters of the country's total exports (worth some \$360 billion in 2007), these industries have made South Korea one of the world's leading industrialized and most technologically advanced nations.

The stamp illustrated in this note draws attention to the petrochemical industry in South Korea and displays the structural formulas of benzene, ethylene, propyl-



ene, and butadiene. In particular, ethylene is the most important petrochemical feedstock in the world in terms of both production volume (about 120 million metric tons) and number of derivatives. About half of the world's output of ethylene is converted to polyethylene (that's a lot of plastic bags!) and in the manufacture of ethylene dichloride, vinyl chloride, ethylene oxide, styrene, vinyl acetate, ethanol, acetaldehyde, and other organic compounds, with applications ranging from solvents and detergents to chemical fibers and adhesives. Interestingly, ethylene is also an important plant hormone and is extensively used as a ripening agent for fruits and vegetables.

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