

## Nominating Committee

PHOEBE DENT WEIL has been elected to serve as chairman by the other members of the 1978-79 Committee, DONALD SEBERA and TERRY WEISSER. The Committee met in November and will meet again in December.

## FOREIGN MEMBERS

With the escalating postage rates it has become necessary to add a \$5.00 per year postage charge to all foreign members. This will become effective when the next dues notices are sent out. Dues remain the same. When ordering from the National Office, foreign members are requested to send funds in American currency. When foreign funds are sent, A.I.C. must pay up to \$5.00 for conversion. Since there have been many problems with the surface mail during the past year, foreign members are asked to check the list of recent mailings and notify the National Office of any missed mailings. These mailings will be sent immediately.

Our problems with the good old U.S. Postal Service continue, get worse, become impossible. (The 15 cent postage seems to be broken down into a 5 cent handling fee and a 10 cent storage fee!) Are you receiving your mail from us? Recent mailings include: Volume 17/ 1 and 17/2 of the Journal, May, August and now November Newsletter, the Directory, NCAC mailing, Call for papers, Minutes of Fort Worth Meeting. Are you missing anything? If you are a recent, new member, did you receive a "new Member packet"? When you ordered something, did it arrive within a reasonable time, in good condition? We have stopped using the mail for the delivery of orders and are now using the United Parcel Service. They are dependable, deliver within a few days and don't mangle things. If you have any complaints or suggestions, do write to the office.

The slides described in Bettina Jessell's article in volume 17, #1 of the Journal are now available from the National Office. A check for \$9.00 should be made out to A.I.C. Do not order from the University of Delaware address listed in the article.

All back issues of the Bulletin/Journal are in print and available from the National Office. Write for a publications list. Members orders are sent with invoice, non-members are asked for prepayment. The Directory has been reprinted, additional copies are available to members for \$4.00 (Those missing pages 53-4 are available from the office too!)

The hours for the National Office are daily, 8-2. The office will be closed on holidays and occasionally on a Friday. Frequently, the office is open later than 2 p.m., but it is best to conduct business between 8-2.

The next deadline for items to be submitted to the Newsletter is January 15, 1979, but send any news, any time. We need reporters in the field!

All members are encouraged to stop in at the National Office when visiting in Washington. With some advance notice, tours can be arranged in local museums, and arrangements can be made to meet with other Conservators.

## TELEVISION INTERVIEW

ELEANOR McMILLAN will tape two interviews on public access cable television for showing in November, December and January. ELEANOR will discuss the conservation of historic and artistic works. Watch for it in your area.

## NEWS IN GENERAL

### INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

MARY PAT WYATT of ALASKA STATE MUSEUM reports that The Conservation Services Project at the ALASKA STATE MUSEUM is in its third year serving Alaska Museums, and is funded by the National Museum Act and the National Endowment for the Arts. An Ethnographic Conservator has been funded, and four Ethnographic Conservators, ALICE HOVEMAN, Susan Paterson, Melba Meyers, and Thruid Clark worked in teams in four museums across Alaska this summer.

THE NEWARK MUSEUM exhibit "Murals Without Walls" will open this month and remain open through March 1979. The mural paintings by Arshile Gorky, painted for the Newark Airport in 1936-7 had been presumed lost for more than 30 years. Art historian RUTH BOWMAN initiated the search and a Port Authority of New York and New Jersey search team located the murals, hidden under 14 layers of wall paint in the Newark Airport Administration Building. The murals were removed from the walls of the terminal and restored through a preservation grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, matched by the Port Authority. As guest curator for the exhibition, RUTH BOWMAN has selected paintings, studies and drawings by Gorky, many of which have never been shown, as well as documentary photographs that will explain the historical background of the murals. She is also writing and editing a major catalogue that will put the murals into historical context.

Museum Support Center, Senate Bill No. 1029 was passed during the last session of Congress. The Bill is subject to final review by the Committee on Public Works which will review the architectural plans. The Smithsonian Institution hopes to move into the new quarters in 1982.

HEARINGS ON THE USE OF POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS in the museum laboratory were conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency on September 1, 1978, as part of a general investigation of the use of PCB's. The purpose of the hearings was to establish limited exceptions to a ban on the use and sale of PCB, for activities which will not present an unreasonable risk to health or environment.

The position of the A.I.C. is:

1. The use of PCB's in refractive index liquids and immersion oils for microscopy should not be continued since adequate substitutes are commercially available.
2. The use of the PCB's Aroclor 1260 and Aroclor 5442 should be continued because:
  - a) For microscopy, Aroclor is uniquely useful to our field because of its high refractive index, which eases both the identification of organic binders and other low refractive index material as well as mixtures of compounds with middle and high refractive indices (pigments plus calcite and silica extenders/contaminants).
  - b) The archival quality of Aroclor is excellent for permanent microscope slides.
  - c) Aroclor is reversible; the sample can be retrieved and analyzed by other methods. Thus, sampling works of art can be held to a minimum.
  - d) No equivalent substitute for making permanent microscope slides is available.
  - e) The tiny quantities used by art conservators (approximately 0.01 ml/slide) do not constitute a significant hazard to the microscopist or the environment.

3. Further sale of Aroclor to conservators should be permitted. The material could be packaged in small containers (5 ml), adequately labeled.
4. We strongly support the establishment of a search group to be engaged in finding a substitute mounting medium which is less hazardous.

LYNDA A. ZYCHERMAN, of the Freer Technical Laboratory, represented the A.I.C. by presenting written and oral testimony. WALTER C. McCRONE (McCrone Associates, Inc.), MARTHA GOODWAY (Smithsonian Institution) and MICHAEL McCANN (Center for Occupational Hazards, Inc.) also testified.

Copies of the relevant documents are available from E.P.A., TS794, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460. The A.I.C. Office has one set.

The STONE CHEMISTRY TASK FORCE - International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has prepared a preliminary outline of tests for assessing the composition and condition of stone in monuments, buildings and sculpture. The flowsheet has been designed to characterize sound material, decay products, and any replacements, impregnants, adhesives or coatings. The goal of the Task Force is the development of a body of standard methods for analysis that will provide reliable, objective data about historic stone. The next phase of the work will be the modification and amplification of the outline and its illustration with specific case studies. If a sufficient preliminary corpus of standard methods can be achieved by March, a conference will be convened in Rome in the summer of 1979, at which it is hoped that certain methods will be deemed sufficiently detailed, reproducible, and well-understood to be designated as "Standard." The tentative "Flowsheet for Analysis of Historic Stone" is available from Professor S. Z. Lewin, New York University, 4 Washington Place, Room 514, New York, New York 10003. Persons interested in contributing their time and experience (especially in the analysis of stone or the chemistry of exposed stone) to this project are encouraged to contact him.

A DANGEROUS PHENOMENON INVOLVING PLEXIGLAS is reported in the following letter from URSULA DREIBHOLZ, Paper Conservator at the Yale Center for British Art.

"A collector from Florida, passing through New Haven, showed me two ink drawings, 18th or 19th-century English, which he had framed under Plexiglas, with a sheet of Thymol-treated drawing paper at the back. For some reason he had them wrapped and stored away for two months, and after unwrapping he discovered that the Plexi had discolored to intense yellow, and the drawings and window-mats were sticking to it. He also told me about some blackish discoloration (?), which, at any rate, had disappeared when I saw the drawings. He left the drawings exposed to air for several weeks, but they are still sticking to the Plexi.

"He also contacted Rohm and Haas; they were rather unhelpful and seemed anxious he might sue them, but they admitted that the formula for the Plexi had been changed. They also pointed out that Plexi should not be used in connection with Thymol! In this context it might be interesting that this collector had a drawing treated exactly the same way some 12 years ago and nothing has happened until today.

"Since this is all second hand information and not my own experience, I would be grateful to hear if anyone else has had a similar experience or has heard about such a case. And I would invite comments from our scientist-colleagues."

ETHYLENE DICHLORIDE has produced malignant tumors in rats and mice in studies conducted by the National Cancer Institute. There is a possibility that people using this chemical run a cancer risk if the exposure is significant, although the level and duration of such exposure have not been determined. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has recommended that ethylene dichloride should be treated in the work place as though it were a human carcinogen.

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries  
Conservation Laboratory

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries Conservation Program, directed by its conservator JOHANNES HYLTOFT focuses its activities on the restoration of rare books and other library materials as well as preventative conservation measures for the library collections.

A conservation laboratory has been open and functional since November 1977, but additional equipment included in the conservator's plans for the facility is still in different stages of acquisition.

The laboratory is equipped to perform extensive conservation/restoration work, such as re-binding, lamination and reinforcing of fragile paper, non-aqueous deacidification, pH determination of books, documents and materials, leather binding preservation, production of acid free protective folders and specially designed flexible strip boxes, special pads for elephant folio size books and book dummies, photo documentation of the work performed, etc. Equipment for aqueous deacidification process and fumigation is being planned.

Some of the conservation program activities are:

- Inspection and assessment of the condition of the SIL collections.
- Examination and treatment of rare objects, books and papers.
- Collection of information and reports on the maintenance of the collections and on preventative conservation, including climatic and environmental control.
- Consultation on book and paper conservation problems in the Libraries.
- Advice to the Libraries' and Institutions staff on housing and displaying library materials.

In conservation situations, where specialized research is necessary, the conservator works in close cooperation with the Institution's Conservation Analytical Laboratory, as well as on occasion with the conservation staff of the Library of Congress.

The Smithsonian's Museum of History and Technology is in the process of organizing their conservation facilities and activities into one unit to be called the Division of Conservation. SCOTT ODELL has been appointed Acting Head Conservator. The Division of Conservation will consist of the staff and facilities of what was formerly known as the Technical Laboratory, the Model Shop and the Musical Instruments Laboratory. In addition, a Paper Conservation Laboratory is in the process of staffing and equipping. The facilities and staff of the separate labs will be available to all MHT divisions, and SCOTT ODELL will be responsible for coordinating the work of both labs and for assigning priorities for their services. He also will be responsible for coordinating and advising on all other activities of the Museum affecting the conservation and restoration of the collections.