ensures that this support is timely and effective. For example, it distributed to other Task Force members, key state officials, and FEMA staff information on the Rapid Building and Site Condition Assessment Form developed by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

Over 1,000 copies of a special edition of the *Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel* were distributed without charge, and *Before and After Disasters: Federal Funding for Cultural Institutions,* a new publication on federal programs for preparedness and recovery, was widely disseminated on-line.

Heritage Preservation provided information to the public about how to salvage family treasures through the media and FEMA Joint Field Offices.

Heritage Preservation's Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) program prepared lists of outdoor sculpture in affected areas and gave the lists, with a special assessment form, to key local officials and cultural organizations. Staff will follow up to ensure that damage to the region's outdoor sculpture is documented.

Worth Noting

Grant Will Enhance Virtual Medieval Manuscript Collection

A pioneering effort to digitize versions of one of the most popular romances of the Middle Ages—*Roman de la Rose*—and to share digitized copies with students and scholars around the world, has won a $717,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to enhance and expand the project.

Begun in 1998 as a close collaboration between the Johns Hopkins University's Sheridan Libraries' Digital Knowledge Center and the Department of Romance Languages, the *Roman de la Rose* project enables new approaches to medieval studies through the creation of digital surrogates, transcriptions, and text and image searching. Rather than travel thousands of miles to compare these texts, scholars can easily compare and study them online. To date, *Rose* manuscripts from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University have been digitized, providing scholars an online environment for comparative analysis of works produced centuries apart, ranging in quality from commonplace to sumptuous presentation manuscripts.

The Mellon Foundation funding will help create a board of advisors, underwrite a technical conference, and support digitization of more versions of *Roman de la Rose*. Grants from the Samuel H. Kress and Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundations and the Getty Trust funded the earlier phase of Project Rose development. To visit the Rose site, go to http://rose.mse.jhu.edu/.

A New Focus at SCMRE

Last year Dr. Robert J. Koestler was appointed the new director of the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education (SCMRE). When asked recently about where SCMRE is headed, Bob replied that "SCMRE is refocusing its research on technical studies and conservation of the Smithsonian's 146 million objects currently located in 18 separate institutions. We hope to be offering a position for a conservation scientist to lead our technical studies effort. We also have a number of projects on-going or in development that will provide unique opportunities for graduate, post-graduate, and post-doctoral research." Individuals interested in research opportunities may contact Carol Grissom ([redacted]) for more information.

Health and Safety

Contact Lenses and Chemical Use: Updated NIOSH Recommendations

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recently reviewed the restrictions and guidelines set in 1978 on the use of contact lenses while in a chemical environment. Past recommendations restricted workers from wearing contact lenses while working with chemicals that can cause eye irritation or injury (1978 Standards Completion Program). Current NIOSH recommendations permit workers to wear contact lenses when handling hazardous chemicals provided that certain safety guidelines are followed and that contact lenses are not banned by regulation or contraindicated by medical or industrial recommendations.

The new guidelines result from a NIOSH review of relaxed restrictions put forth by some (but not all) of the chemical manufacturing firms; sparse injury data indicating restricted use of contact lenses while working with hazardous chemicals; and a few experimental studies that focused on the ability of contact lenses to absorb and adsorb acids, bases, and other solvents. The studies examined the resistance of contact lenses to chemical exposure and not actual chemical exposures in workers, with or without appropriate eye protection equipment. The results suggested that chemical exposure of contact lenses and subsequent transfer to eye tissue was not likely to be a significant issue. One study did indicate, however, that isopropyl and ethyl alcohol may pose risks to workers wearing contact lenses. According to NIOSH, the actual risk of injury to contact wearers versus non-wearers working with chemicals is unknown (NIOSH 2004). OSHA still maintains restrictions for use of contact lenses with exposure to acrylonitrile, methylene chloride, 1,2 dibromo-3-chloropropane, ethylene oxide, and methylene dianiline.

The recommendation says that the use of contact lenses in a chemical environment allows for greater choice of eye and face protection and for better visual acuity in certain circumstances, eliminating the need for prescription inserts in goggles or full face respirators. However, it must be understood that contact lenses are not eye protective devices. Along with following work-place regulations, caution and good judgment must be exercised by workers wearing contact lenses.

Contact lenses are not eye protective devices. Eye and face protection equipment are still required when working with hazardous chemicals.

For more detailed information about the new recommendations and accompanying guidelines, the basis for change, and links for choosing protective eyewear, go to

http://www.cdc.gov/ niosh/docs/ 2005-139/ for NIOSH publication No. 2005-139, *Current Intelligence Bulletin 59, Current Lens Use in a Chemical Environment;* and http://www.labsafety.com/refinfo/ezfacts/ ezf251.htm for Lab Safety EZ Facts, Document No. 251, ANSI Z87.1 *Eye and Face Protection Standard Changes.*

—Cheryl Podsiki, Objects Conservator
The Field Museum, Chicago

Safety Alert: Nederman® Local Exhaust Hoods

Two recent fire incidents within a conservation lab that involved Nederman® brand local exhaust capture "snorkel trunks" were reported several months ago. One incident narrowly averted personnel injury and resulted in melted plastic components falling onto a collection object being conserved. In each incident it seemed that inappropriately rated replacement bulbs had been installed within the integrated light unit of the extractor arms. The use of higher wattage bulbs resulted in overheating and melting of the plastic light assembly insert in the Nederman® hood.

The light package for the extractor arms uses either a 12- or 24-volt halogen bulb rated for up to 20 watts. No light bulb rated greater than 20 watts should be used with these systems. Additionally, when replacing the bulbs it is imperative that the clip holding the bulb in place be secured properly, to ensure the bulb does not slide out.

Non-Nederman®-brand capture hoods may be susceptible to the same problem if improper bulbs are installed. The proper bulb type and rating should be verified with the respective manufacturer for any capture hood, prior to change out.

The light source interferes slightly with exhaust flow. Conservators should be aware that the light assembly is an optional item and if the capture hood in their lab has one, but the light source isn't needed, then a qualified electrician should remove it.

Nederman® has responded to news of these incidents. The company has begun to place warning labels (example below) on all extractor arm hoods that can accommodate a light package.

Nederman® places tremendous value on its reputation in the conservation community and appreciates the opportunity to provide equipment to the community to improve the health and safety of conservation workers.

To find a Nederman representative, please go to: http://www.nedermanusa.com/html/contact.html

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