

crucial that you let us know about interesting projects you are working on. Contact: Pamela Hatchfield, Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115; (617) 267-9300.

Health & Safety News

Interested AIC members are needed to join the Health and Safety Committee. Involvement can range from reading assigned periodicals to overseeing complete projects. Health and safety experience is not required. New ideas are welcome. Contact the committee chair, Sandra Blackard, [redacted] days or evenings.

In the News

LEAD ROOFS: Lead roofing materials are regaining popularity for new construction and for replacing lead gutters, flashing, and roofing at some historic sites. Artificial patinas can be applied to help stabilize lead surfaces, but can they really be trusted to prevent lead runoff, especially in the face of today's acid rain? The literature for one artificial patina describes the product as "insoluble and strongly adhering," but the material is basically a synthetic resin. According to ACTS, "since the problem of lead corrosion is so well known, parties specifying lead for roofs may be liable for damage from lead patina runoff in soil or water." Conservators faced with reroofing decisions should consider recommending other materials when possible. For more information, contact Arts, Crafts, and Theater Safety (ACTS), (212) 777-0062. "Alert: Lead Roofs," *ACTS Facts* 7, no. 2 (February 1993). Monona Rossol, editor, [redacted] New York, NY 10012.

TOXIC WASTE FROM ALLOYS: The Environmental Protection Agency is denying petitions from cutlery, fastener, and ironwork companies to delete chromium, nickel, and copper from reporting under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act "on the grounds that certain forms of the alloys (e.g., dusts, grind-

ings, and shavings) can be reasonably anticipated to corrode to soluble forms of the metals." EPA also says that nickel, its compounds, and an oxidation product of chromium are known carcinogens and that "copper is very toxic to aquatic life and causes some adverse human health effects." Artists or conservators using metals are reminded that grinding and shaving dusts from alloys containing these or other toxic metals must be disposed of as toxic waste or recycled. Pigments containing these metals carry the same disposal restrictions. "Waste from Alloys of Chromium, Nickel, Copper Are Toxic," *ACTS Facts* 7, no. 8 (August 1993). Monona Rossol, editor, [redacted] New York, NY 10012.

DANGERS OF PREPOLYMERIZED ISOCYANATES: Artists and museum workers using any two-component urethane foam or resin product should use local exhaust ventilation or air-supplied respirators even if the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) does not indicate it is hazardous. MSDSs on some urethanes warn of serious hazards because they contain toluene diisocyanate (TDI) or methylene bi phenyl isocyanate (MDI), which are known to be dangerous and have exceedingly low TLVs (0.005 ppm). However, MSDSs may not warn users about products containing isocyanates that have been chemically altered in any way, including prepolymerizing (adding urethane units). This process turns them into technically new and untested chemicals. These new chemicals may be described on MSDSs as chemicals for which there are no TLVs or other applicable OSHA regulations. People often assume that this means they are safe. While some of these new chemicals are slightly safer because they are not as volatile as MDI and TDI, they still must contain a reactive isocyanate group in order to function. Isocyanates are potent irritants and sensitizers in extremely small amounts. They also may be carcinogenic, since TDI and a related chemical are considered carcinogens by NIOSH and the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC). *ACTS Facts* 7, no. 7 (July 1993). Monona Rossol, editor, [redacted] New York, NY 10012.

Publications

WAX: A four-page article, "All About Wax," is available from ACTS at no charge. The article has direct application for conservators using heated wax products of any kind. Hazards, air quality standards, and protective working methods are described. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a request for the article published in *ACTS Facts* 7 no. 10 (October 1993). Monona Rossol, editor, [redacted] New York, NY 10012.

INHALED MINERALS: A 19-page article, "Biological Effects of Inhaled Minerals," by George D. Guthrie, Jr., Los Alamos National Laboratory geologist, is available from ACTS for copying costs of \$4. It "compiles available data on the biological effects of many non-asbestos clays, zeolites, and other minerals." ACTS notes that the author wrongly concludes that talc is not fibrogenic or carcinogenic but recommends the article to ceramicists, sculptors, conservators, jewelers, and other mineral-using artists. "Non-Asbestos Minerals Also May Affect Health," *ACTS Facts* 7, no. 5 (May 1993). Monona Rossol, editor, [redacted] New York, NY 10012.

Computer User's Update

Conservation Information for Museum Collection Databases, the session cosponsored by AIC and the Museum Computer Network (MCN), enjoyed great success at the MCN meeting November 3-6, in Seattle. Nearly 300 attended the conference held as mutual outreach by the two organizations. Lisa Mibach focused on integrating conservation information into museum collection databases. Henry Lie spoke of commercial imaging software. Bob Futernick introduced his scanning system, an innovative approach to surveys and tracking. Using bar code labels on object folders, housings, and shelves, he tracks locations from storage to the copy stand. Katharine Untch detailed the technical