

From the Editor

Carol Christensen

Please note that beginning with this issue we are resuming the Health and Safety column. I would like to thank Sandra Blackard and her committee for their help in trying to present sometimes bewildering data in an intelligible format. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Marc Harnly for an outstanding report on the spring photographic conference in Cumbria, England (see Conference Report); Marc gave us the most information in the least amount of words and managed to write well too. The *AIC News* has decided not to report on the Institute of Paper Conservation spring Manchester conference, since a report in some detail has already appeared in a recent *Abbey Newsletter*.

In our next issue, the feature story will focus on recent advances in digital imaging techniques. Also, look for a review of the Madrid IIC conference.

JAIC News

I am pleased to report that Jean Portell has taken over as associate editor for book reviews. Jean is an independent objects conservator in Brooklyn, New York, with a specialty in ethnographic objects and sculpture. She and I welcome your suggestions of titles that might merit a book review in the journal. Review copies of books should be mailed to the AIC office. Contact Marcia Anderson or Heather Hagan there to find out if we have received a particular book.

The summer issue of the *JAIC* will reach you this month. As you know, the journal is now appearing three times yearly. The fall/winter issue will be the third in 1992. With the extra work load resulting from the changeover from two to three issues I am even more indebted to the associate editors, manuscript reviewers, and production editor for their professional assistance.—Elisabeth West FitzHugh, *JAIC* Editor.

Computer Users Update

CIMI: Computer Interchange of Museum Information

WHAT IS CIMI? CIMI is a committee of representatives from American museum associations—the American Association of Museums, the American Association for State and Local History, the Association of Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums, the Association of Systematic Collections, and the Museum Computer Network. This core committee works with professional associations, museum information networks, and special interest groups to create an information interchange format.

WHAT IS CIMI'S PURPOSE? CIMI's goal is to develop a technical framework for interchanging all types of museum information. The framework will allow museums to build common databases, exchange data, and move information from one internal system to another. These capabilities are essential to making cultural heritage information more widely available and to encouraging the exchange of information for scholarly and research purposes.

WHY ESTABLISH CIMI NOW? Museums are in the relatively early stages of automation, and interchange requirements can be anticipated before technically irreconcilable approaches are taken by both institutions and vendors.

HOW DOES CIMI WORK? The CIMI committee will meet twice a year through 1993. Between meetings, task groups of discipline specialists and technical experts will define the kinds of data and functional information to be exchanged and identify the technical problems to be solved. CIMI's job is not to control the content or purpose of the information exchange but to provide system-independent solutions to the problems of interchanging data. To do this, CIMI is in close contact with existing groups representing types of museums and areas of museum activity. CIMI is currently working with the Art Information Task Force (AITF) and AASLH/Common Agenda to define the information needed by art and cultural history museums respectively. CIMI

also collaborates with standards bodies such as the National Information Standards Organization (NISO), the Library of Congress MARC Standards Office, and the International Organization for Standards (ISO).

WHO SUPPORTS CIMI? CIMI has received statements of support from museum organizations around the world. The work of CIMI is supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Pew Charitable Trusts and by in-kind support from the Museum Computer Network and the participating organizations.

HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED IN CIMI? Participation in CIMI and its meetings is open to any museum association, regional group, or other interested party committed to the objective of information interchange. Occasional observers are also welcome at meetings. For information on how to participate or to receive updates on CIMI's activities, contact: John Perkins, CIMI Project Manager, 5659 Merkel St., Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 2J1 Canada; (902) 454-4077; fax: (902) 453-6153; Internet Email: perkins@dcdljh.das.net; TCN Email: TCN4200.

If you have information you would like to share in this column, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact: Katherine Untch, Conservation Department, Asian Art Museums, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118; (415) 668-8921; fax (415) 668-8928.

Health & Safety News

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sandra Blackard, the new chair of the Health and Safety Committee, has agreed to contribute a column to the *AIC News*, beginning with this issue. She will be consulting with industrial hygienist Monona Rossol of ACTS (Arts, Crafts, and Theater Safety) in gathering information for the column. Sandra welcomes questions and comments to help direct the focus of the committee. Contact: Sandra Blackard, Chair, Health and Safety Committee, 3216 Emerald St., Bedford, TX 76021; (817) 540-3574 or committee members: Sara McElroy; John Messenger; and Dan Riss.

MINERAL SPIRITS TOXICITY RATING INCREASED: In the February issue of *Studies in Conservation*, Andrew Thorn pointed out that in 1987 the toxicity rating for Cellosolv (2-ethoxyethanol) was dramatically lowered from 100 ppm to 10 ppm. In his article "Safer Solubility" (pp. 12-21), he also noted that the solvent variously known as Stoddards solvent, white spirit, and mineral turpentine has also been discovered to be more toxic than previously thought. Its Occupational Exposure Limit has been lowered from 500 ppm to 100 ppm, making it on a par with xylene and toluene. The author suggests that cyclohexane (toxicity 300 ppm) or octane (300 ppm) be substituted as nonpolar diluents. He also suggests dissolving Ketone resin N in a mixture of 85% octane and 15% propyl acetate (toxicity 215 ppm), which can adequately dissolve the resin and will not evaporate too quickly. This mixture has a toxicity rating of better than 200 ppm compared with white spirit, xylene, or toluene which all have a toxicity of 100 ppm.

The author could not find a suitable substitute for Cellosolv. In this issue of *AIC News*, the solvent propylene glycol monomethyl ether, known variously as methyl proxitol (in England), glycol ether PM, or Arcosolv PM (both in the United States) is suggested as a far less toxic substitute (toxicity 3000 ppm). See the *Materials* column (p. 24) for a more detailed description of propylene glycol monomethyl ether.

SOLVENT TOXICITY CHART AVAILABLE FROM AIC OFFICE: Solvents in Art Conservation Laboratories, published by the Center for Safety in the Arts (CSA) is an eight-page updated data sheet useful for reference and training. It arranges solvents in a chart by class and clearly lists toxicity ratings, organs affected, symptoms, and comments on comparative toxicities within classes. The CSA generously provided copies for distribution. The data sheet was included in the 1992 annual meeting registration packet. Send a self-addressed, stamped (29¢) legal-size envelope to the AIC office.

ART MATERIALS DATA SHEET AVAILABLE: "Art Painting and Drawing," by Angela Babin. Center for Safety in the Arts (CSA), 5 Beekman St., Ste. 1030, New York, NY 10038. This data sheet presents the hazards and

precautions of working with dry pigments, paints, pastels, inks, pencils, crayons, and other painting and drawing media. It is clear and thorough, making it useful for quick reference and training. With permission from CSA, it is also a good handout for artists.

Membership News

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce the following new Professional Associates:

*Konstanze Bachmann
Daphne S. Barbour
Harriet Beaubien
Gina Bianco
Laurie Booth
Irene Brücke
Kermit Cederholm
Robin Chamberlain
Kristin Cheronis
Carol Christensen
James Coddington
Elizabeth Estabrook
Peter Lawrence Fodera
Kathleen Garland
Margaret Geiss-Mooney
Laurie S. Germain
Linda W.F. Hee
Nancy Heller
Helen Ingalls
Caroline Kenyon
Mino Missaghi Larson
Julie Lauffenburger
William Lewin
Susan Lansing Maish
Marianne Russell Marti
Cecile Davis Mear
Stephen P. Mellor
Kenneth N. Needleman
Deborah Stephens Page
Lisabeth Pedersen
Roberta S. Pilette
Frances Prichett
Brian Ramer
Constance Stromberg
Rebecca Renner Tombs
Cara Varnell
Thomas Venturella
Helene Von Rosenstiel
Carol Weingarten
Susan Wilson
Marlene Worthach
Frank Zuccari*

FAIC NEWS

ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

As of July 31, the FAIC has raised \$8,196 in donations and from the 1992 Annual Giving Campaign. We are \$1,804 short of our \$10,000 goal. If you have not made your donation, please join in the effort to help us meet our goal.

The FAIC Board and staff thank the following contributors (whose donations were received since publication of the May *AIC News*) for their generous support of FAIC activities:

*John Swanner
Julia Claypool
Peter Yamin*

AWARDS

The Kress Foundation has awarded a grant to the FAIC toward the creation of a Conservation Publications Task Force. In awarding the grant the foundation noted that, "the systematic development of a core collection of writings on specific areas of conservation training is critical to the field and the AIC/FAIC project is an important initiative." Additional funds are being sought before beginning the project.

DID YOU KNOW?

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