

# IMWSCC

## Intermountain West Society of Cosmetic Chemists

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## Reflections~ Message from the Chair Elect

We are at the close of a great 2009 year. We had great participation at our events and look forward to many more excellent events in 2010. Excluding the golf outing, we noticed that chapter member attendance has been slightly down from previous years. This is of concern to us, so we looked at all the factors that might have contributed to this. First, we looked at the economy. Things have been bleak and therefore, overall chapter membership is down. For those of us that were able to keep our memberships, we may be fighting for our jobs at our current positions since we feel very fortunate to be working in the midst of extremely high unemployment rates. Second, we looked at ourselves and the educational speakers we offered this year. We did note a trend this year that many of our presentations were less technical than what we may have had in years past. Our overall goal was to offer a good variety of speakers and in the end we have received mostly positive feedback that people were enjoying the meetings. We do understand that you can't please everyone, but we do desire to please the majority. We do need and want feedback from our meetings. You are always welcome to let any of the chapter leadership know what you thought of the meeting. Please be frank and do not worry about any of us taking offense, we want our meetings to be worth while! We will be posting a survey on our website, [www.imwsc.org](http://www.imwsc.org) to gather your thoughts about the 2009 year. Surveys will be anonymous, so you are able to keep your anonymity.

We are already planning out the 2010 calendar and have our Q1 and Q2 meetings

scheduled for the end of February and the end of May. We hope that you will make a diligent effort to attend as many of the meetings as you can since you never know what you might learn and how that may benefit you in your current position. One of the advantages of being members of the SCC is to be a part of a valuable network of colleagues and friends. Our chapter is still very young, but we are strong, and that is on account of our excellent membership.

In closing, I ask each of you to examine your personal commitment to the SCC. The society is a volunteer, non-profit organization, and as such relies heavily on people to make things happen. As your volunteer leadership, we ask you to consider how you can help out in small ways that will make a big difference for the chapter. Here are a few examples: Offer to write a technical article for one of the quarterly newsletters, help contract a speaker for one of our quarterly meetings (we always want to find unique, interesting, and relevant speakers), and help increase our chapter membership by getting others to come on board as an SCC member. Doing any one of these small things, besides attending our quarterly meetings will not only make our jobs easier, but will benefit the entire chapter.

I wish everyone a fabulous holiday season and look forward to an amazing 2010.

# Looking for a Few Good Chemicals

## Whose name is on the list?

In the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta "The Mikado" the Lord High Executioner has to find candidates for execution to preserve his job. He tells us how he does this in a little song which begins

"As someday it may happen that a victim must be found,

I've got a little list;

I've got a little list.

Of society offenders who might well be underground

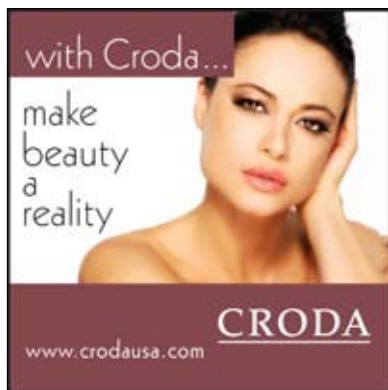
And who never would be missed;

Who never would be missed."

The Lord High Executioner may be dead and gone but his spirit lives on in the way some activists and a percentage of consumers view the cosmetic ingredient declarations on their skin care and hair care products. It seems that every week brings word of some new ingredient which has fallen into disfavor. Formulators, when doing nothing else, are kept very busy trying to replace the latest ingredient to receive unfavorable notice on the Internet, in popular magazines or on television talk shows.

Preservatives have long been a target of consumer suspicion. In some cases it may have been justified. It is hard to defend the cosmetic use of formaldehyde. DMDM hydantoin, quaternium 15, hydroxymethylglycinate and imidazolidinyl urea do not sound very nice either and in fact the entire class of "formaldehyde donors" has been placed on the public enemy list. Methylparaben and propylparaben are, of course, utterly innocuous preservatives but they are, nevertheless, on the list as well.

Dermatologists have their list of suspect cosmetic ingredients. Many



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preservatives are on this list along with fragrances generally and particular fragrance ingredients such as citral and hydroxycitronellol. Lanolin and its fractions and derivatives are considered to have allergenic potential. Even propylene glycol is viewed askance. A fairly long list of commonly used fragrance raw materials require separate labeling as potential

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**Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:**

allergens in EU markets. This includes such supposedly dangerous substances as benzyl alcohol, geraniol, limonene and linalool.

Numerous Category 1 UV absorbers have acquired an evil reputation for their effects on skin beginning with PABA esters and including salicylate and cinnamate esters and benzophenones.

Surfactants and emulsifiers have not escaped notice. Alkanolamides were formerly widely used in shampoos, shower gels and liquid soaps. Lauramide DEA and cocamide DEA have all but disappeared due to suspect carcinogenicity of potential impurities. It is a bold formulator who continues to use even MEAs.

Alkyl sulfates

and alkylether sulfates were formerly the backbone of most shampoos, shower gels and liquid soaps. The formulation of sulfate-free shampoos is now a



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### Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:

cottage industry and every surfactant vendor has one to recommend. One imagines that chemical-free shampoos will be next.

Any emulsifier, surfactant or cosmetic raw material whose INCI name includes “PEG”, “-eth”, or “polyoxyethylene” is a candidate for replacement.

Mineral oil is considered a detriment on a cosmetic ingredient statement. Petrolatum, one of the few cosmetic ingredients any dermatologist ever said anything good about, is now viewed with suspicion because it is sourced from the petroleum refining industry.

Over the last thirty years there have always been a few ingredients struggling with adverse safety reports. In the distant past these reports usually involved specific animal safety studies conducted for a particular reason by a reputable laboratory. However it seems that the pace of these developments has greatly increased. At the same time the amount and quality of adverse data needed to create a stampede has drastically diminished.

Of course no one expects the cosmetic industry to stand still. But it is fair to inquire whether we are advancing or retreating.

### Of Good Chemicals

According to legend the cynic Diogenes traveled the streets and marketplace of classical Athens with a lamp lit in broad daylight. When asked why a poor man would burn valuable lamp oil in daylight he replied, “I am looking for an honest man.” There is no report that he ever found one.

If Diogenes had difficulty finding an honest man in the Athenian marketplace, finding a good chemical in the modern cosmetic marketplace would be equally difficult. This is hard news for a chemist. Like it or not, as cosmetic chemists we

work in a branch of the chemical industry. To the government we may be just tax payers but to the world, and especially to the activists out there, we are chemists.

The last two issues have featured articles which dealt with silicones, a large and well-known class of cosmetic chemicals. Should we consider

**“If Diogenes had difficulty finding an honest man in the Athenian marketplace, finding a good chemical in the modern cosmetic marketplace would be equally difficult.”**



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Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:

silicones to be good chemicals? Silicones are featured on the ingredient declarations of many cosmetics, but I cannot recall a cosmetic product which publicized its use of silicones, or claimed that it had more silicones than competitive products, or that it was made entirely with silicones or “silicone-derived ingredients”, or was made with 20% post consumer recycled silicones. In fact that last claim sounds icky.

We know a few things about silicones. They are not biodegradable. They are not made from renewable resources. They have a carbon footprint which would make a Sasquatch envious. Many silicones are relatively expensive in comparison to other materials.

Why, one might ask, would savvy cosmetic chemists use expensive ingredients which are

neither derived from

renewable resources nor biodegradable?

As a practical problem solver a cosmetic chemist is interested in two questions:

What are the properties which I need in my formula?

What is the most practical way to obtain them?

The value of a chemical to a cosmetic chemist depends upon the properties it can lend to a formulation.

Silicones have unique properties. They are particularly effective as lubricants or slip agents. They spread very readily on a variety of surfaces. Not only do they possess these properties as pure substances but they lend these properties to formulations containing them, even when used in relatively modest, i.e. economical, amounts. Formulators know this. So silicones may not be good chemicals but they are undeniably valuable chemicals.

### The Value of a Chemical

“Value (n): the equivalent in goods, services or money for something exchanged.” Mirriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.

Silicones themselves have no value at the consumer level. Products which provide the properties of silicones in a convenient form of application have a very significant value in the consumer market. This is evident



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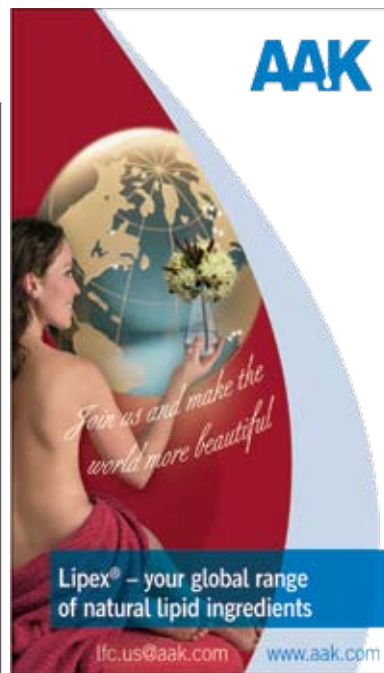
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**Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:**

from the money consumers willingly pay for 2-in-1 shampoos, detangling products, conditioners, anti-frizz products, creams and lotions which capitalize on the properties of silicones.

Once the formulator recognizes the properties which are required the question becomes how to obtain them. Often there will be a whole group of additives which exhibit similar properties when used within a particular formula. The base formula may consist of a small number of essential ingredients with clearly defined functions. Other ingredients which have similar chemical structures and/or physical characteristics may fulfill the same function to a greater or lesser degree. The base formulation classifies all those similar ingredients into a functional group.

For example a moisturizing lotion requires a complement of oil soluble/water insoluble

materials, a complement of emulsifiers and a complement of water soluble/oil insoluble materials. Petrolatum, cosmetic esters and mineral, botanical and vegetable oils classify into the first


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**Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:**

group. Nonionic surfactants, anionic surfactants and polymers with emulsion stabilizing properties would make up the most common emulsifiers.

Humectants, alpha hydroxy acids, proteins, peptides, amino acids and urea would classify into the third group.

When a large group of ingredients all provide similar properties in a formulation the formulator has great freedom to substitute. Adverse publicity regarding one or more of the members of a group of ingredients poses little problem for the formulator. If, for example, a cosmetic ester such as isopropyl myristate becomes tarred with comedogenicity the formulator has many open avenues for replacement of the offending material. It does not really matter if the adverse publicity is based on sound reasoning or superstition. Everyone simply switches.

**It is to the advantage of the formulator to continually update the list of potential alternates for important functional materials.**

It is to the advantage of the formulator to continually update the list of potential alternates for important functional materials. In some cases there may be a significant cost advantage to one of the alternates. In other cases the adverse publicity associated with one ingredient is not associated with an alternate.

**Example 1: Parabens**

Let's consider potential alternate materials in two specific examples.

What are the properties which cause parabens to be so widely used as cosmetic preservatives?

- i. Combinations of parabens are very effective preservatives even when used at low dosage. Efficacy at low dosage makes them both economical and highly compatible in purely aqueous compositions and in emulsions.
- ii. They have a long history of safe use,



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Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:


essentially no allergenic potential and are essentially non irritant at typical use levels. They are even on the list of substances generally recognized as safe (GRAS) 21 CFR 582.3490; 582.3670.

iii. They are chemically unreactive in the pH range between 4 and 10.

In short they are ideal preservatives. They have only two unfortunate properties: a chemical name


which must be included on the ingredient declaration and a chemical signature which permits them to be detected analytically at extremely low levels. These are the properties which have made them controversial. But what preservative can one find which does not share these two properties? There is not much chance of finding an alternate cosmetic preservative which can exceed, or even match, the properties of parabens.

**Example 2: Alkyl Sulfates and Alkyl Ether Sulfates**




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Alkyl sulfates and alkylether sulfates have cosmetic properties which have led to their dominant role in shampoo and body wash products.

i. They possess excellent wetting and detergency properties. Lauryl sulfates and laureth (1) sulfates are unexcelled for foaming.

ii. The cosmetic feel on skin and hair of lauryl sulfates and laureth (1) sulfates is very good, although they may lack detangling

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properties.

iii. Color and scent of the commercial raw materials are low and stable.

iv. They are very easily thickened to produce viscous, shear thinning lotion products.

v. Compatibility in aqueous compositions is very good between pH 4 and 10. In general they are not very compatible in emulsion and suspension products and they have some noteworthy incompatibilities with emulsified ingredients, with particulate suspensions and with cationic surfactants. These incompatibilities have led to some interesting intellectual property for major consumer packaged goods companies.

vi. Straight chain alkyl sulfates and alkyl ether sulfates are readily biodegradable.

vii. Alkyl sulfates have an excellent human safety profile. They have low acute toxicity when ingested, have no allergenic potential, and no carcinogenicity or mutagenicity. Aqueous solutions of alkyl sulfates have significant dermal and ocular irritancy as pure substances. Aqueous solutions of alkyl ether sulfates with low ethoxylate numbers also have significant dermal and ocular irritancy although irritancy is progressively diminished by ethoxylation of the hydrophobe.

viii. Like many other surfactants alkyl sulfates and ether sulfates are very responsive to the presence of other surfactants and of non-surface active additives in a formulation. They have been in wide commercial use for about six decades. Over this time numerous strategies have emerged for decreasing their dermal and ocular irritancy potential. Most notably alkyl ether sulfates are the anionic surfactants in the most popular baby shampoo formulations. In these formulations not only ocular irritancy, but eye sting is reduced essentially to zero. So it is entirely possible

to formulate a sulfate containing shampoo or body wash whose dermal and ocular irritancy is extinguished.

What is the chance of matching or exceeding the properties of alkyl sulfates and alkyl ether sulfates with a sulfate-free formulation? It appears that the major opportunity for superiority of a sulfate-free formulation is in reducing the dermal and ocular irritancy of the product. There is no lack of anionic surfactants which exhibit high foaming

and lower dermal irritancy than sodium lauryl sulfate. We might count sodium lauroyl sarcosinate, sodium lauroyl glutamate and sodium lauroyl lactylate among the mild, high-foaming carboxylate head group anionic surfactants. Sodium laurylsulfoacetate, sodium N-methyl cocoyl taurate and ammonium cocoyl isethionate are among the mild, high foaming sulfonates. However, using current production technologies each of these mild, high foaming surfactants is much more costly than is sodium lauryl sulfate or sodium laureth sulfate. A formulator seeking to match the properties of a sulfate-containing product using these alternates might face an interesting challenge; he or she would also face a significant economic disadvantage unless some manufacturer invents a process which matches the efficiency of current sulfation process

technology. If one were required to employ only water and the anionic surfactant, sodium lauryl sulfate would be at a serious disadvantage in providing a low irritancy product. The disadvantage melts away in the presence of current formulation technology.

When controversy surrounds a cosmetic raw material the cosmetic chemist should analyze the implications of the controversy. What properties are provided in my formulations by the controversial ingredient? What are the potential alternates? These questions provide a learning

**A formulator seeking to match the properties of a sulfate-containing product using these alternates might face an interesting challenge; he or she would also face a significant economic disadvantage unless some manufacturer invents a process which matches the efficiency of current sulfation process technology.**

### Looking for a Few Good Chemicals Continued:

opportunity. If the chemist does not have the answers initially, he or she has some work to do.

Once armed with the relevant facts one can approach the key question: Would it be to my company's advantage, all things considered, to make a switch?

### Looking Ahead

We cannot predict which cosmetic ingredients will be next to descend into controversy. However, given current trends there are a few things we can predict with confidence.

1. Almost any ingredient whose name appears on the ingredient declarations of enough cosmetic products is likely to be a target for publication of adverse information by some group of activists.
2. Word of adverse information will spread rapidly in popular publications and on the internet.
3. Consumers will be alarmed and confused.
4. Cosmetic chemists will need to quickly assess the impact on their formulations and make appropriate recommendations.
5. Companies may make the wrong decision, abandoning good ingredients hastily or clinging to ingredients which are fated to succumb to the adverse publicity.

Cosmetic chemists can prepare by clearly understanding the properties which each component contributes to a formulation and by evaluating potential alternate ingredients in advance of any adverse publicity.

Jim Kurtz

VP of Homecare Product Development

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Kurtz is a "grizzled veteran" of the consumer product industry. Beginning in 1978 in the Bar Soap and Household Cleaning Products Division of Procter and Gamble, he has occupied positions in product development at S. C. Johnson and Son and at DowBrands prior to joining Melaleuca where he serves as VP of Home Care Product Development. Jim is a physical chemist and kineticist but he really loves to discuss the science and technology of chemical formulations. We have given him that opportunity in the current issue.

**We cannot predict which cosmetic ingredients will be next to descend into controversy. However, given current trends there are a few things we can predict with confidence.**

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## Up Coming Events

- December 10th & 11th SCC Annual Scientific Meeting & Technology Showcase New York Hilton, NY
- February 25th Lunch Meeting (Location TBD)
- February 25th California Vendor Dinner Party (Location TBD)
- February 26th-28th California Vendors Ski/Snowboarding Event (Non-SCC sponsored)
- May All-Day Seminar- Sponsored by the National SCC (Meeting Date and Location TBD)



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# IMW SCC

## Chapter

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