was obtained from the many sponsors as indicated in the individual abstracts. This issue is the result of an invitation to participants to submit for publication articles based on their presentations. It reflects well the panorama of subjects covered in the symposium with respect to both fundamental aspects and the importance of current and new research on the development of sweeteners. The topics covered vary from receptor studies to natural sweeteners to design and synthesis of sweeteners to industrial applications.

This issue was coordinated by professor J. Bull, IUPAC special topics editor and professor Mugio Nishizawa, conference editor. Preface by Kazuo Yamasaki, Symposium chairman, and Osamu Tanaka, Planning Committee chairman.

www.iupac.org/publications/pac/2002/7407

Ionic Poylmerization

Nikos Hadjichristidis and Hermis Iatrou (symposium editors)
Macromolecular Symposium, Vol. 183.
Wiley-VCH, 2002, pp. 1-210.
(ISBN 3-527-30473-8)

The IUPAC International Symposium on Ionic Polymerization (IP'01)—the fourth in the series after Istanbul (1995), Paris (1997), and Kyoto (1999)—was held in Crete, Greece, in October 2001. The major topics of the symposium included anionic and cationic polymerization, both vinyl and ring opening, as well as living radical, metathesis, metal-coordination, template and enzymatic polymerization. One day of the symposium was devoted to polymer physical chemistry and physics. Most of the invited lectures and selected papers are compiled in this issue of *Macromolecular Symposia*, which provides an excellent overview of current research in this area.

The Crete Symposium was the first to incorporate lectures on polymer physical chemistry and physics. There were altogether over 240 active participants from about 30 countries. In total, 66 invited lectures, 29 oral lectures, and 91 posters were presented.

www.iupac.org/publications/macro/2002/183_preface.html

Green Chemistry in Africa

P. Tundo and L. Mammino (editors)
INCA, 2002.
(ISBN 88-88214-07-0)

IUPAC has always been keen on promoting the advancement of science in developing countries. A recent contribution in this regard is *Green Chemistry in Africa*, the fifth volume in the green chemistry series. As the book points out, Africa's vast abundance of natural resources offers valuable opportunities for African countries to pursue novel routes to sustainable processes. Focusing on the search for such routes as alternatives to Western methodologies—and expanding their benefits—is an exacting and exciting challenge that can render African countries extremely competitive at the international level.

The book grew out of the work of IUPAC's Interdivisional Subcommittee on Green Chemistry, which organized the "Workshop on Green Chemistry Education," held in September 2001 in Venice in collaboration with INCA (Italian acronym for the Interuniversity Consortium "Chemistry for the Environment"). The proceedings of this conference—published as the third volume of the green chemistry series—represented the "state of the art" on green chemistry education. It included a number of recommendations for strengthening the diffusion of the chemical sciences into society through cleaner technologies. One of the most pressing recommendations was the following:

> *"To disseminate Green Chemistry educational materials and techniques to both developed and developing nations."*

Accordingly, the subcommittee proposed the preparation of a collaborative volume on green chemistry in Africa, with the specific aim of offering university lecturers a useful tool for their teaching activities. The proposal was accepted by IUPAC and the book was pub-

Some of the book's authors convening in Pretoria, South Africa (25-28 May 2002) for the first editing. From left: Liliana Mammio, Pietro Tundo, Egid Mubofu, Joseph Gaie, and Salie Lwenje.

lished in collaboration with INCA—a nonprofit organization that encourages the diffusion of knowledge,with particular emphasis on the importance of the chemical sciences to protecting the environment. In order to pursue its mission, INCA is involved in a wide range of activities that span from research to publishing.

Green Chemistry in Africa originates from the passionate work of academicians based in African institutions and it aims at familiarizing African students with the principles of clean and sustainable chemistry. The book is meant as an introduction to the challenges of green chemistry. Its primary objective is to highlight the major roles of chemistry in the study of the problems that were discussed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (held 26 August to 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa) and in the design of valuable solutions for those same problems. The Subcommittee on Green Chemistry hopes that this book will attract researchers' and students' attention to the importance of chemistry to sustainable development.

www.iupac.org/publications/books/author/tundo.html

Vermeer's Camera: Uncovering the Truth Behind the Masterpieces

Philip Steadman
Oxford University Press, 2002 (ISBN 0-19-280302-6)

Reviewed by Hans Bouma

Do you like detective stories? No, not the ones in which the blood flows in liters but the real ones, in which the detective, after finding a nail clipping and a postage stamp of 39 eurocents is able to infer that the suspect's alibi is faulty. Or are doctoral dissertations more in your line? Are you interested in art? And you are involved in education in one of the sciences?

Well, then you must not go past this book. It explains, step by step, with compelling logic, that Vermeer used a camera obscura for his paintings, in which room this happened, and which dimensions lens the camera had, how the painter employed them, and how in that way the paintings were produced. From the two dimensions of the paintings, Steadman is able to derive the three dimensions of Vermeer's world.

In nine chapters the logic line is drawn: first the camera obscura, then Vermeer with testimonies that he worked with a camera obscura, an idea of the room-studio and of the way the objects (their dimensions verified and compared with reality) are grouped in this room, the reconstruction, and the new evidence then forthcoming. To make sure, the author also deals with the arguments which are contrary to the idea of the camera with Vermeer, and he outlines the influence of it on his style of painting.

Now here you can see how fertile the application of science to objects of art is, this time not in connection with restorative activities, but to penetrate more deeply into the work. Not all questions can be solved, as Steadman honestly admits. But he also shows which tricks in perspective are applied by the painter, and, in the last chapter, he succeeds in penetrating into the artist's soul.

There is an elaborate account in notes and an impressive list of references. The author, too, gives the impression that he is well versed in 17th century Delft and in Holland in general, and that renders the book even more readable. He even is able to report that the bricks used in the houses around the Delft market had, in those times, a length of 16 centimeters.

You can sense that I am terribly enthusiastic. My only refutation that I deemed a length of 1.80 metres for a seventeenth century Dutchman quite sturdy is disproved by clear evidence in the book.

A book about paintings by a great researcher of a great painter. Cordially recommended!

Hans Bouma is an IUPAC Fellow and former member of the Committee on Teaching of Chemistry.

www.oup-usa.org/isbn/0192803026.html

Reports from Conferences

Bioinformatics 2002: North-South Networking

by Prasit Palittapongarnpim

Bioinformatics is rapidly emerging as a new branch of science. It is widely believed that scientists in developing countries will be able to significantly contribute to the progress of this field since the capital investment needed for bioinformatics research may be much smaller than for experimental biological sciences. However, the advancement of bioinformatics science in developing countries requires not only competent human resources, but also good ideas and problems. Without good communication with state-of-the-art experimental laboratories, there is a clear danger that small bioinformatics teams in developing countries may try to address irrelevant questions. Without good communication with state-of-the-art bioinformatics laboratories, there is a danger of using suboptimal technology to address the problems. To avoid these dangers, there must be forums