

Asbestos continues to sicken, kill U.S. workers

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As a career interior decorator, Marilyn Stratton of Beaverton, Oregon, was used to carrying heavy samples of rugs, tiles, wallpaper, carpets, and catalogs that showcased the tools of her trade.

Her skills as a decorator have been showcased in three "Street of Dreams" homes and a number of "Showplace Homes" in the Portland area during her lengthy career.

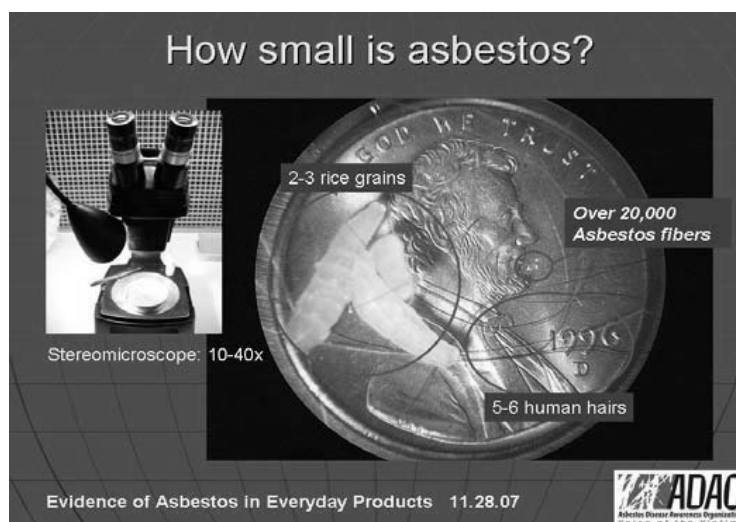
A workaholic, even at age 73, Stratton seemingly was always on the go. Until the onset of summer 2006, when she began experiencing pain in her chest.

Concerned that someone as fit and active as she would be suffering from chest pains, her husband, retired arbitrator Dick Stratton, insisted on a visit to the doctor. X-rays taken in early June

revealed a build-up of fluid around her lung. More tests were taken and the diagnosis was horrific: malignant pleural mesothelioma. "Meso" is an aggressive cancer that attacks the lining of the lungs. The only known cause of this fatal disease is asbestos.

Asbestos is a mineral found in nature. Its fibers are long, thin, flexible, strong — and resistant to heat, fire, rot, mildew, water damage and electrical and chemical damage. Prior to 1975, the so-called "miracle fiber" was used heavily in Navy ships and shipyards; in office, school and home construction building materials such as drywall, flooring and roofing; in automotive products like brake pads; and in consumer products like hair dryers.

Asbestos fibers are invisible and cannot be smelled or tasted. But when



This slide shows the nearly invisible asbestos fibers as compared to grains of rice and human hair. On the penny, just under President Lincoln's nose, are more than 20,000 asbestos fibers. Virtually indestructible, these fibers can remain suspended in air for days.

- Studies have shown that asbestos exposure is responsible for 1 in every 125 deaths of men over the age of 50.

- Asbestos is the largest single cause of occupational cancer.

- 30 percent of all victims of asbestos-related diseases were exposed to asbestos on naval ships and in shipyards.

- In 2005, world production of asbestos was 2.4 million metric tons, an increase from 2.36 million metric tons in 2004. Russia led the world in asbestos production, followed by China, Kazakhstan, Canada, Brazil, and Zimbabwe.

- Asbestos has not been mined in the United States since 2002, and imports, mostly from Canada (88 percent), satisfy domestic manufacturing needs.

- Asbestos has been banned in 40 countries. The United States isn't one of them.

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► *Mesothelioma typically develops 20 to 60 years after the first asbestos exposure. Each year about 3,000 new cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed in the U.S.*



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Roger G. Worthington, P.C. has donated more than \$2.5 Million to medical research working on a cure for mesothelioma — more than all the asbestos companies combined.

inhaled or swallowed, the fibers have been found to be lethal. The fibers can lodge in the lungs and other soft tissues, resulting in changes to the cells that may eventually result in meso, asbestosis and other types of cancers — some of which have latency periods of more than 40 years.

In the U.S., statistics show 4,000 people are diagnosed with malignant pleural mesothelioma each year, and 10,000 Americans or more die each year from all asbestos-related disease.

According to the RAND Institute for Civil Justice, an estimated 27 million people may have been exposed to

Asbestos found in household products, toys

The Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO) has released a study showing asbestos is in common toys and household products. Products such as Scotch High Performance Duct Tape, DAP "33" window glazing, DAP "Crack Shot" spackling paste, Planet Toys "CSI Fingerprint Examination Kit," and Gardner Leak Stopper roof patch are on the list.

Over 250 suspected products currently sold in national retail stores within the last 18 months were tested by the Scientific Analytical Institute, Inc. The products included children's toys, hardware, cleaning products, and cosmetics. The testing process followed procedures outlined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Testing also found asbestos in other products such as toy play clay from China and Thailand, pre-packaged potting soil from the U.S., hair rollers from China, cosmetics from France, baking flour, powdered household cleaners and kitchen appliances from China.

ADAO was founded in 2004 by asbestos victims and their families to raise awareness about the dangers of asbestos and to push for more and improved product testing.

asbestos during the period of 1940 to 1979. Tillinghast-Towers Perrin, an actuarial consulting firm, estimates that more than 100 million Americans may have been exposed through products containing asbestos and asbestos used in buildings.

Portland is considered a "meso" hotspot because of its history of shipbuilding, paper and pulp mills, aluminum plants, and construction.

Despite these warnings — and the staggering health consequences — the United States continues to import over \$100 million worth of asbestos products each year. Asbestos still can be found in about 3,000 different products, ranging from cement panels, sheets, and tiles; fabric, including yarn, thread, cord, and string; gaskets, packing material; aircraft parts and more.

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington) has been trying for six years to pass a bill banning asbestos in the United States. Last October, advocacy groups thought they had a breakthrough when Murray's Ban Asbestos in America Act passed in the Senate. SB 742, they said, would finally ban asbestos while investing millions of dollars to develop effective treatment for asbestos-related diseases, and in a public education campaign.

However, according to Roger Worthington, an attorney who specializes in asbestos victim lawsuits, after all parties had agreed on the bill's language, asbestos industry representatives were able to insert a last-minute change — altering the word "products" to "materials" — before sending the bill to the floor for a vote.

"Asbestos-containing materials," according to Worthington, "are statutorily defined as anything with more than 1

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