where they serve preschoolers daily. Al- ... Mike Swearingen and Pearl Preston, air ... ready scraping ... and issuing plan for ... members. (Journal photo by Al Monner)

Dangerous Paint Found At Center

By WALLI SCHNEIDER
Journal Staff Writer

Dangerous old paint that medical experts have dubbed "children's poison" is being hastily scraped this week from the walls of a Portland building where 50 children stay and play daily.

The site is the Parent-Child Services center, housed in the old Albertina Kerr Homes, 424 NE 22nd Ave.

Gretchen Astorino, director of the center, said the "extreme hazard to our children — dangerously high lead level readings from the old layers of wall paint — was discovered by the Multnomah County Health Department's lead-paint inspection team.

The team was making a "routine check" of more than 40 day-care and nursery centers in the Portland area as part of a survey to determine the extent of the lead paint problem in this area.

IF INGESTED by children, the paint can cause illness, mental retardation and in extreme cases, death, health authorities pointed out when they began their study two months ago.

"And if we've saved the children in just this one place from harm, the study has been worth it," said Gary Dimbat, head of the mobile unit survey team.

Dimbat said "readings" from the interior walls of the 15 rooms in the children's center "averaged" 9 milligrams of lead per square centimeter of painted space.

A reading of 3 is considered dangerous, he said.

"YOU CAN see now why nobody's just sitting around talking," Dimbat emphasized. "This is an extremely serious situation."

The health worker noted that in two children's classrooms alone, he had found readings of 14.4 and 19.3.

While children played in obvious oblivion Tuesday morning, their parents met to set the wheels in motion for a massive "attack" on the walls of the old building.

ACCORDING TO Ms. Astorino, every wall and inch of woodwork in the building will be scraped down and repainted "to make this building safe."

Paint already has been donated by five local paint firms, she said, who are "equally concerned about the problem of old paint and responded immediately." (Newer paints are well within the accepted lead level limits.)

3rd Murder Victim May Be Found

Police investigation of the Forest Park "execution murders" could turn up a third victim, The Journal has learned.

The possibility that there is another victim is based on ... U.S. News World

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