

FILE NAME: Painters and Allied Trades (PAINT)

DATE: 1990 Jan

DOC#: PAINT083

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Article from Painters and Allied Trades
Journal

HD
6350
P26
P14
NON CIRC

JOURNAL

PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES

JANUARY 1990

20TH

GENERAL CONVENTION



DECEMBER 11-15, 1989 LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

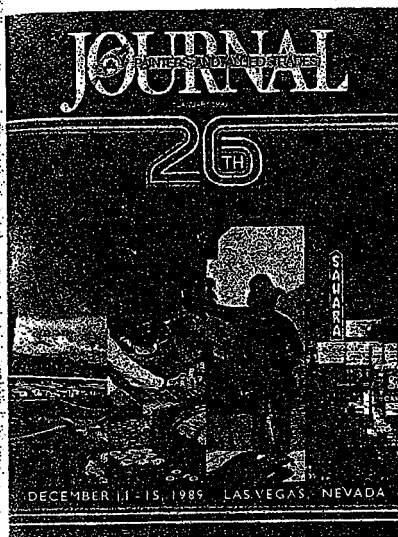
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January
1990

JOURNAL

PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES

Volume 104
Number 1



On the Cover: The General Officers' Report to the 26th General Convention of the International Brotherhood of Painters & Allied Trades. Scenes are of Las Vegas, NV, site of the Convention, December 11 through 15, 1989.

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JOURNAL

The official journal of the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades, organized March 15, 1887, and the only publication issued under its auspices.

THE JOURNAL (ISSN 0030-9532) is published monthly for members of the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades by IBPT at 1750 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES JOURNAL, 1750 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

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Printed on Union-made Paper
Printed with Union-made Ink

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Health and Safety

Since our beginning in 1887, health and safety issues have remained a major concern of our Brotherhood. Faulty scaffolding, improper ventilation, poor respirators (or none at all), lead poisoning, and silicosis from sandblasting, asbestosis from taping compounds and today, complex solvents and other toxic materials that are associated with neurological diseases and even cancer, are problems we continuously address.

As in the past, we have always been in the forefront of response to safety and health problems. The Occupational Safety and Health Act became a Federal law in 1970 with our lobbying. In 1974, we embarked on a famous study with Dr. Irving Selikoff, "The Health Hazards in the Painting Trades." In the 1980's, our cooperation with the manufacturers of the National Paint and Coating Association and the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America has been designed to increase our joint awareness of the problems and respond in the best interests of our members.

Our most effective response was the development of health and safety training programs for rank-and-file workers. In fact our programs were recognized by the Department of Labor and the National Institute of Cancer from whom we received most of the money to produce our training materials and video tape modules that are now part of our Apprenticeship Training programs.

Prior to the formal incorporation of the health and safety program into the National Painting, Decorating and Drywall Apprenticeship and Manpower Training Fund program, we produced 48 videotapes and a 272 page training book. Every new apprentice will have the benefit of these materials, as did some 25,000 members in the past five years.

The problems we face in the future are many, but a number of priorities we will continue to focus on are:

1. Neurotoxic effects among painters. Neurotoxic effects are the first sign of overexposure. Control-

ling them reduces other chemical exposures that can cause other illnesses and diseases.

2. Better Federal and state laws covering labeling and high risk application certification programs is a priority. We have applicator certification programs in Massachusetts and Alaska. The most comprehensive is the Alaska program, which we are using as a proto-type for other state laws to certify that painters who apply toxic substances are aware of the health hazards to themselves and those who work around them.

3. For members who become ill as a result of their work, extended compensation or disability benefits and a legal assistance fund to help with claims are indispensable.

We are involved with the Occupational Workers Legal Rights Foundation and Workers Institute of Safety and Health, two AFL-CIO support groups, to explore solutions to the ever increasing workplace exposures of our members.

Financing IBPAT's future safety and health activities will not be easy. Federal funds will not always be available and they are already drying up. We will try to meet all the needs. Since health and safety programs benefit the entire industry, the entire industry should share the costs.

In an effort to bring together all aspects of our industries to protect our members, we have reinstituted our Joint Health and Safety program with the National Paint and Coatings Association and the Painting and Dec-



orating Contractors of America. Currently, we are devising appropriate responses on a report that the International Agency for Research on Cancer has issued advising that the occupation of "painter" is carcinogenic. This Agency, part of the World Health Organization, has identified only two other occupations in the world as carcinogenic, rubber industry workers, wood dust workers—and now, painters.

The past has taught us the value of providing quality safety and health programs. Not only are our members better protected, but the training and health hazards identification program returns dividends to union contractors and the painting and allied trades.

