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October 13, 1954

TO MEMBERS OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS:

Association's Health-Education Program

An important challenge to our industry today is adverse publicity on alleged paint poisoning of children. This situation has been brought forcibly to our attention during our work with the New York City and Chicago Boards of Health.

In our conferences with the New York City and Chicago health authorities, we have received splendid cooperation and several important concessions relating to their proposed laws covering the labeling of our products. Our success was due in a great measure to the Association's proposed Health-Education Program. We are in agreement that a nation-wide Health-Education Program will accomplish more than any stringent labeling law or restrictions of the use of paint raw materials.

As part of this Health-Education Program, we will issue releases to the press, radio and television directed to educate parents in the importance of watching what young children put in their mouths, chew and eat. Also, we will emphasize to local medical authorities the need of care in diagnosing these cases.

Attached is a copy of a proposed release intended for nationwide coverage.

Your comments and suggestions will be appreciated.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

Joseph F. Battle
President

JFE:me
enclosure

A SPECIAL FEATURE SERVICE

for

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Up-to-the-minute stories on color, decoration . . . surface protection. They're technically correct and show how to use the industry's products to get the best results. These weekly stories, you'll note, never mention a specific brand or manufacturer. They're yours to use in your publication and are, of course, gratis.

from the NATIONAL PAINT, VARNISH AND LACQUER ASSOCIATION, INC
1500 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE, N. W., WASHINGTON 5, D. C.

#FS-

WATCH YOUR CHILD'S EATING HABITS

Washington, D. C. — "The conviction that 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty' is just as American as apple pie. If all parents were equally certain that eternal vigilance is also a vital necessity where their children are concerned, there would be fewer accidents and unnecessary illnesses in the junior ranks." General Joseph F. Battley, President of the National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association, stresses this point as he calls attention especially to the importance of watching what young children put into their mouths, chew and swallow. Sometimes young children suffer from a pica, he points out.

Most people think of the word "pica" as referring to the measuring mark on a printer's ruler — or as a size of typewriter type. But "pica" has another meaning, too — one that's unpleasant. According to General Battley, the word also refers to the family of birds to which the magpie belongs. "That indiscriminating bird," explains the general, "will pick up almost anything and eat it. There are human beings like that, too," he states. "They are said to be suffering from a pica. You could say these people had 'magpie disease.' However, the situation is anything but amusing. Unnatural appetites may even result in tragedy. The pica addict may develop a craving for many inedible items — dirt, for example — or coal, plaster, wood or fibre. If the inedible object is coated with paint, the person may chew and swallow the whole mass. Such abnormal cravings may persist even when the normal appetite is satisfied with good, wholesome food.

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The General calls attention to the fact that you seldom hear or read of the pica addict after he has reached maturity. "The ones we read about and must watch carefully," he says, "are children who may chew and swallow foreign objects that may prove harmful.

"When a young child is teething," says General Battley, "his gums become inflamed and swollen, due to the pressure of incoming teeth. In order to ease the irritation, the child is likely to bite on any convenient article. That article may be the rail of his crib or a favorite toy. If he is the first-born of the family, the crib and the toy have probably been newly purchased at the store. This means that they are wearing only the special finish applied in the factory. Such paint, varnish or lacquer will not be harmful. The paint industry has always been exceedingly alert to the problems involved. In consequence, paint makers supply only finishes that are unquestionably safe to the manufacturers of children's toys and furniture. As a matter of fact, I know of no recorded cases where new factory-finished nursery furniture and new American factory-finished children's toys have poisoned a child.

"The danger lies in second-hand or used nursery furnishings and toys that are repainted locally for a second or third time with left-over house paints," General Battley states. He believes that, in the interest of economy, some parents will use such left-over paint without first checking with their paint dealer to make sure it is of the proper type for the purpose. As an illustration, he emphasizes that paints intended for outside use should be applied to outdoor surfaces, while those formulated for interior surfaces should be used only indoors. For children's furniture and toys, only those finishes recommended by the dealer for the purpose should be utilized.

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While the process of teething presents an understandable reason for a young child's desire to chew on any article or surface, either painted or unpainted, General Battley indicates that there are other reasons which cause such a craving. Some of these may be the result of a dietary deficiency. Others may be psychological. A well-fed child, for instance, may still be emotionally hungry because he does not receive as much loving attention as he needs. Another may suffer from a sense of insecurity. To gain the comfort and reassurance they crave, they often place inedible objects in their mouths. This can become a bad habit that's as hard to break as thumbsucking unless the basic cause is discovered by a doctor and corrected.

Old type paint that is peeling on outside surfaces may also be a source of possible trouble, General Battley points out. These old weather-beaten areas which have been given too many layers of paint when the modern self-cleaning types of paint were not known can prove a temptation to unwatched children with abnormal eating habits. If the surface is within reach, small fingers will pick off — or pick up — loose flakes and carry them mouthward.

"The best way to safeguard young children against danger of any sort is to watch them constantly and carefully at all times," the General emphasizes. "In addition," he says, "parents should make sure that nothing harmful is around for the child to chew or put in his mouth. If your child shows any tendency toward chewing or putting foreign objects in his mouth, then consult your doctor at once.

"Paint is formulated to protect your home and your possessions and to make them beautiful. It is not made to be eaten," stresses General Battley, "and it certainly isn't intended to be any part of a young child's diet."

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from the **NATIONAL PAINT, VARNISH AND LACQUER ASSOCIATION, INC.**
1300 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE, N. W., WASHINGTON 5, D. C., MOBART 2-6272
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HELP SANTA REPAINT TOYS
AND CHILDREN'S FURNITURE
-- BUT USE PROPER COATINGS

By Charles Irwin

Washington, D. C. -- At Christmas time toys take on so great an importance it's unthinkable that any child should be without them on Christmas Day. To make sure that less fortunate children are not forgotten, charitable organizations with the help of volunteers are now busily at work repainting and repairing toys and toy furniture that have been discarded or outgrown by others.

Ten to one your own household has toys lying around or stored away -- forgotten since the family has grown up or no longer of interest to your own children. A guaranteed way of getting yourself into the true Christmas spirit is to gather up these discards, paint them, and otherwise put them in good-as-new condition and pass them on to Santa Claus to deliver where new ones can't be left.

Actually, you'll find this a lot of fun. A few minor repairs may be necessary, but usually it's just a matter of a new coat of enamel to bring back the original look. Be sure, of course, that the surfaces to be painted are clean, smooth and free of rust. A little sanding will remove corrosion and rough spots. It will also lessen any too-high gloss that may, in some instances, interfere with the adhesion of the new coating. Once the surface is prepared, you are ready to apply a gleaming new coat of color.

For toys and children's furniture, it's advisable to use a lead-free, interior gloss enamel. Where bare metal calls for a primer, use iron oxide or the zinc-dust type.

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for

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Young children who are teething are likely to chew on anything they can get into their mouths, so be sure to use a type of coating for their toys and furniture that is non-injurious — even if eaten. Nearly all coatings intended for indoor use are harmless, even if swallowed in small quantities. So are the coatings applied by manufacturers to children's toys and furniture.

The same is not true of exterior coatings which are formulated to withstand the driving force of severe weather. Outdoor paints usually contain ingredients that definitely are not made to be eaten. For this reason, it's of the utmost importance that you avoid using exterior coatings on anything to be placed near teething children. If you are at all in doubt about the type of paint to use, ask your paint dealer for advice.

Every year at this time the National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association, 1500 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C., publishes a free booklet called "Painting Toys and Children's Furniture". Whether you're planning to paint toys and furniture for your own small fry or — out of the goodness of your heart — you're doing it for others, you need the information this booklet gives you. Write for it now. That will be your first step towards bringing happiness to the children who will benefit by your handiwork.

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