

# The ALPHA Files

## VICTORY in Rhode Island

The State of Rhode Island filed a lawsuit against four lead paint manufacturers for creating a public nuisance. On February 22, 2006, the jury found three of the four manufacturers, "liable for creating a public nuisance by making lead-based paints that have poisoned thousands of children"—NL Industries, Sherwin Williams Co., and Millenium Holdings. RI is

the smallest state, yet the first one to take legal action against major corporations.

NL Industries, formerly National Lead Company, marketed Dutch Boy Paints from 1906 through 1980. Sherwin Williams sold lead paints, and purchased the Dutch Boy Painter in 1980; Millenium/Glidden Paints was also at fault; Atlantic Richfield was not found liable.

The verdict is historic in that this is the first loss by paint companies, who are facing several lawsuits across the country. Many other states are watching this trial. The cost for the three companies to abate the estimated 240,000 homes with lead is between \$2 and 4 billion.

*From Leadnet—Peter Lord  
www.projo.com*

*Related story, page 5*

Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Recent Lead Recalls 3-23-06:

**\*\*NEW\*\* Reebok Charm Bracelet**

**\*\*NEW\*\* Oriental Trading Beaded Photo Charm Bracelet**

**\*\*NEW\*\* Dollar Tree Mood Rings & Necklaces**

See page 3 for other recent recalls.

## Pencils, Paint and Pica (Oh My!)

For many people, the image of lead poisoned children is of kids who eat paint chips. "Not me or my kids," says the woman chewing her nails, and fiddling with a pencil with teeth marks in it, "why would children want to eat paint chips anyway?"

Pica, derived from the Latin word for magpie, a bird that eats anything and everything, is a term used to describe when children eat non-food items. Materials consumed by patients with pica include dirt, ice, clay, glue, sand, chalk, beeswax, chewing gum, laundry starch, and hair.

Chewing or eating non-food substances is something that parents and teachers witness daily. Look at your children's pencils, or yours. No one chews on the "lead" part of a pencil, but the teeth marks are all over the painted surface, or eraser and metal band that holds the eraser.

Is that pencil made in another country? Most are. What color is the pencil? Usually yellow at the dollar stores.

Here's the problem: pencils made overseas may and probably do contain lead in the paint; yellow and red contain the highest lead pigments. Erasers are created through vulcanized rubber, which contains lead.

The part of the pencil that we associate with #2 lead for standardized tests has been graphite throughout our lifetime. "Graphite came into widespread use following the discovery of a large graphite deposit in Borrowdale, England in 1564. Graphite left a darker mark than lead, but was so soft and brittle that it required a holder. At first, sticks of graphite were wrapped in string. Later, the graphite was inserted into wooden sticks that had been hollowed-out by hand! The wood-

cased pencil was born."

As children, we've chewed on wax candy bottles or finger nails, noshed on Kindergarten paste or snow at some point in our lives. Why is it such a stretch of our imaginations to understand why children would be drawn to **PAINT!** That's just wrong, right?

Lead is sweet to taste, and the ancient Romans recognized this quality—they used it as a sweetener in wines and foods. Combine that with the fact that the aqueducts were made of lead, and the upper-class drew the first water of the day, which was most contaminated with overnight leaching of lead into the water. Plates, cooking and drinking containers, such as pots and goblets, were made of lead.

Now, remember the history of the Roman emperors who went *plumb loco*? *Plumb* is

*Continued on page 5*

### Inside this issue:

Understanding Lead Levels 2

Wipe Out Lead NJ Dust Kits 2

Lead Housing Control Assistance—NJ 2

Lead Recalls 3

Cleaning Lead Dust 3

Famous Individuals with Lead 3

A Parent's Thoughts on Lead: Srey Pen 4

Kristin Joyner: lifetime achievement 4

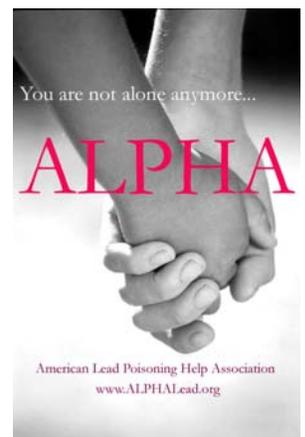
Thank you Rhode Island! 5

Lead Saliva Testing 5

Checklist for parents 6



Do you know what part of the pencil is the most dangerous?



## The ALPHA Files

### Understanding Lead Screen Levels



Remember to have your child tested for lead.

Getting your child tested for lead is the first step—what do the numbers mean? If blood lead levels are:

**0-9 mcg/dl**—Your child's blood level is in the low risk range. Routine lead screening tests should be done again in 6-12 months depending upon your child's age and risk of lead exposure.

**10-14 mcg/dl**—Your child has some exposure to lead and will need to be re-tested.

**15-19 mcg/dl**—Your child has some exposure to lead and

needs regular follow-up at least every 3 months.

*Note to OH residents*—beginning at this level, the state will do an inspection of your property.

**20-44 mcg/dl**—Your child's lead level is **HIGH** and will need close medical follow-up at least **EVERY MONTH**. If the first test was done by finger stick, your child needs a venous blood test as soon as possible.

*Note to NJ & ME residents*—beginning at this level, the state will inspect your property

**45-69 mcg/dl**—Your child's lead level is **VERY HIGH** and **NEEDS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**. If the first test was done by finger stick, your child needs a venous blood test right away.

**70 mcg/dl or more**—Your child's lead level is **DANGEROUSLY HIGH** and needs attention within 24 HOURS!

*Adapted From What Every South Jersey Family Should Know About Lead Poisoning—May 2000*

Lead Housing Control Assistance (LHCA) Funds provides low interest deferred payment repayable loans directly to homeowners and property owners for reducing lead-based paint hazards.

### New Jersey's Lead Housing Control Assistance Fund

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs is now taking applications to award loans to property owners to remediate and remove lead-based paint hazards for residences. Over \$7 million is available for lead hazard control work for Fiscal Year 2006.

The Lead Housing Control Assistance (LHCA) Funds provides low interest deferred payment repayable loans directly to homeowners and property owners for reducing lead-based paint hazards in housing units.

Owner-occupants of 1-4 family dwellings may qualify for deferred payment loans with provisions for forgiveness, if their total household income does not exceed 50% of the median income for the area.

The Lead Hazard Control Assistance Act, sponsored by Senator Ronald Rice of the 28<sup>th</sup> District, was signed by the Governor on January 20, 2004. Other parts of the bill include the Lead-Safe Housing Registry, and the Emergency Relocation Assistance Fund, which

provides financial assistance to relocate a child and his or her family when that child has tested positive for lead poisoning, and that child is removed from his or her dwelling in connection with an order to abate a lead-based paint hazard.

Grant applications are available on-line at:

[www.state.nj.us/dca/dcr/lhca/lhca14app.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/dcr/lhca/lhca14app.pdf)

[www.leadsafenj.org](http://www.leadsafenj.org)



This dust kit will indicate if there is a lead hazard present in your home, before your child is born.

### Wipe Out Lead NJ Dust Kits

Beginning in 2005, the state of New Jersey implemented a free lead dust wipe test kit for expectant mothers to be distributed through their OB/GYN or clinics in 18 target cities: Bridgeton, Millville, Vineland, E Orange, Irvington, Newark, Trenton, Orange, Patterson, Plainfield, New Brunswick, Montclair, Camden, Atlantic City, Passaic City, Elizabeth, Jersey City and Perth Amboy.

According to the American Civil

Liberties Union report on NJ, only 5,000 of the 44,000 kits have been distributed through September 2005.

Dust kits include 2 testing wipes, 2 pairs of gloves, 2 test tubes, 2 templates, instructions in English & Spanish, and a postage-paid envelop to mail to the lab. The dust kits will indicate if there is a lead hazard present in your home, before your child is born.

If you live in New Jersey, are the parent of a child under the age of 3, or are pregnant, and you live in a house or apartment that was built before 1978, you qualify for a free lead dust kit. Contact 1-888-722-2903 for more information.

Participants who return dust kits to the labs in the postage-paid envelop qualify for a \$5 gift card from Shop Rite or Pathmark.

## Volume 2, Issue 1

### Special Cleaning Steps for Lead Dust

Careful cleaning of areas that contain lead is very important to prevent lead poisoning in children. Lead dust collects on window sills, floors, walls, toys, food, hands or even the fur of dogs and cats. From there, lead dust can easily find its way into a child's mouth through a child's normal hand-to-mouth activity.

Lead dust levels can be lowered by wet cleaning with an all-purpose cleaning solution. Change the wash and rinse water frequently (at least once per room) and use a clean rag with each new solution to avoid recontaminating areas. Be sure to wear old washable clothing and avoid smoking or eating while cleaning.

☞ Use a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) vac-

uum to dry surfaces, such as: woodwork, windows (wells, sills, frames) doors, stairs, banisters and floors. Start up high and work down, cleaning the floors last.

☞ Use two buckets, one for wash water and one for rinse water. Wash surfaces with the cleaning solution. Start up high and work down to the floors. Follow the wash procedure with a clear water rinse. Change the wash and rinse water frequently and use a clean rag with each new solution.

☞ After the cleaned surfaces have completely dried, HEPA vacuum all surfaces again. If using a wet-dry shop vacuum, be sure to

vacuum the surface while they are still wet.

☞ Put all cleaning items (gloves, rags, mop heads, plastic sheets) in a plastic bag. Tie the bag closed and throw away in garbage.

☞ Wash hands and change clothes. Be sure to wash the clothes worn during cleaning separately from all other washable items.

☞ To be sure that lead dust levels remain low, these surfaces should be cleaned with the cleaning solution at least once a month. *Adapted from Ohio Dept of Health form*



*Use a HEPA vacuum, cleaning solution and plenty of clean water to clean up lead dust.*

## Recent Lead Recalls

Although the most common way for children to get lead poisoned is through old paint, MANY other products contain lead; many are made overseas. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced the following items contain dangerous amounts of lead:

**Little Tikes Co. Recalls Animal-Shaped Flashlights Sold at Target**—The light green paint on the dinosaur-shaped flashlight and the brown paint on the dog-shaped flashlight could contain excess lev-

els of lead. <http://tinyurl.com/r7uk4>

**Stravina Operating Co. Recalls Children's Metal Necklaces and Zipper Pulls**— The recalled metal jewelry contains high levels of accessible lead in the metal and/or the paint. The recalled metal necklaces and zipper pulls were sold at discount, toy, party, grocery and drug stores from March 2002 through September 2005 for between \$2 and \$4. All of the jewelry was manufactured in China. <http://tinyurl.com/rkmsn>

**Art Accentz™ Changiz™ Metal Charms**—The recalled charms contain high levels of lead. The charms are small silver-colored metal shapes that include flowers, bugs, pumpkins, and picture frames. Sold through small craft and scrapbook retailers outlets from April 2004 through July 2005, and at Pamida Stores from January 2005 through April 2005, for about \$3. <http://tinyurl.com/ntxu6>

For more information:  
[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) CPSC Recall Hotline:  
(800) 638-2772



*Stravina necklaces recalled for high lead content.*

## Historical Figures with Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is falsely believed by many to affect only inner-city children eating paint chips. History tells us otherwise...

**Ludwig Van Beethoven**—lead may have caused Beethoven's decades of poor health, which culminated in a long and painful death in 1827 at age 56. Recent studies on his skull and hair indicate high levels of lead. Among the possibilities are his liberal indulgence in wine consumed from lead cups or perhaps a lifetime of medical treatments, which in the 19th century

were often laced with heavy metals. <http://tinyurl.com/l23zc>

**Andrew Jackson**—the 7th President of US experienced both lead and mercury poisoning. Recent testing indicates that Jackson had significant lead levels in samples from 1815 and 1839. Sugar of lead was used as a therapeutic during that time! His death was probably not from heavy metal poisoning. [JAMA.2000 Jan 12; 283\(2\):200-1](http://www.jama.2000)

**Francisco Goya**— A portrait and pastoral painter for most of his life, he was considered skilled but unre-

markable until he contracted lead poisoning in his late forties and painted a series of disturbing paintings called "the Caprices." These paintings led to an investigation by the Church and charges of heresy, from which he was saved by his patron Charles IV. Goya was a Spanish painter of unforgettable images of execution, dismemberment, torture, and cannibalism and the "Disasters of War" series. [www.azsba.org/leadepiarts.htm](http://www.azsba.org/leadepiarts.htm)

**Millie** (President George H.W. Bush's dog) - during White House renovations in 1990, the spaniel developed lead poisoning from the flaking paint through licking her paws. -LH  
<http://tinyurl.com/jea85>



*Beethoven*

*The famous composer had high levels of lead.*

## The ALPHA Files

### Do You Understand the Effects of Lead on Children?



Srey with Christian.

*If you think that [lead] only lowers a few IQ points...think again.*

As I sit here and think about lead and how it has negatively impacted the lives of so many young children and their families, I wonder about the priorities of our society. The problem is – most Americans feel that it's not their problem because it didn't have a direct impact on them or they never had any personal affiliations with anyone that has experienced it and so it's not their problem. My question is...whose problem is it?

Many people in this society are too wound up with their own problems that they reject the harsh realities that humanity, as a whole, faces. It is our duty, as adults, to do what we can to protect the children.

These faceless children who are poisoned every year, are growing in numbers, and are obviously ignored. They weren't given, through unfortunate circumstances, what is their right to grow up healthy like other more fortunate children who were not exposed. It only takes a few micrograms of lead dust, the tip of one finger nail, to poison a small child.

The effects of lead are permanent. It causes all sorts of neurological damage. If you think that it only lowers a few IQ points...think again. It impacts their ability to perform basic motor functions – something that we do easily, without effort. It causes behavior issues, attention problems, affects short-term/long-term recall, and so much more and it is fatal with extreme exposure.

So if the problem is so severe and grave – why are most Americans ignoring it? Yes, it's a costly problem, yes it requires a lot of thought, work and effort, and yes, it's overwhelming, but it is a serious problem and we need to do something about it. I'm not talking about short-term solutions, I'm talking about creating a long-term solution to combat this problem altogether and not in just one geographical area, but tackling this on a national level. What is the biggest obstacle? *Affordable housing*. There is a shortage of affordable housing nationwide and we need to come up with a solution for families dealing with this problem and provide an affordable way to get them out of these harmful environments. We need national partnerships between housing developers, city/state/government and national agencies to sign on to a plan that will create these long-term solutions and actually implement them. We also need to get these folks in the entertainment industry, which generally have a pretty hefty cash flow to jump on board.

Most importantly, we have to come up with a plan and we need the right partners to do it effectively. Before we will ever get anywhere, we have to be willing to work on it. For the sake of the children, this is a worthy enough cause. We owe it to them. With that said, please do your part in this effort. Remember, every effort, even if it's small, makes a difference.

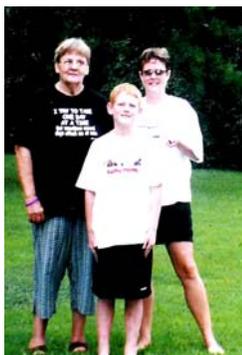
Written by [Srey Pen](#), Rhode Island parent

#### Lifetime Achievement Award: Kristin Joyner

On March 31, 2006, veteran childhood lead poisoning advocate Kristin Joyner will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions in the field of lead at the Indoor Environmental Health & Technologies Conference in Charleston SC.

Kristin first learned about lead through her youngest child, Mikey, who had elevated lead levels in 1991, and she has been active in lead ever since. She started working locally in NC with Beverly Baldinger, developing a Train-the-Trainer workshop for special education teachers, attorneys, or anyone who worked with lead poisoned children. She volunteered with Barbara Miller in Kellogg, Idaho, working with the state senators and EPA on addressing lead in that state.

When Kristin returned back to NC, she championed for education reaching landlords, health professionals and educators, and founded an independent branch of United Parents Against Lead (UPAL of NC). Many people across the country may have met Kristin during her work with Steve Weil, booking presenters and exhibitors for national conferences. She was also one of the founding members of VOCAL – Voices Of Children Affected by Lead, the national parent network, providing a mentoring hand with the newer parents. From all of us—congratulations Kristin!



Kristin , Julian & Leann 8/05 NC

#### The ALPHA Files Newsletter

Editor: Leann Howell

Contributing: Liz Colón RI  
Gene Elwell NJ  
Kristin Joyner NC  
Srey Pen RI  
Sandra Roseberry ME  
Deadline for submissions: June 23, 2006  
Let us know how we're doing:  
[info@alphalead.org](mailto:info@alphalead.org)

Parents interested in joining the on-line ALPHA group—request an invite at <http://tinyurl/qcx6s>

Please feel free to make copies of [ALPHA Files](#) to distribute in your communities.

## Volume 2, Issue 1

### “Thank you” from Rhode Island Childhood Lead Action Project

This is a thrilling victory! Sometimes in this not so friendly world, the Goliaths are defeated and justice triumphs. This precedent setting decision against the lead pigment Industry feels like a home run for the families devastated by lead poisoning and for a community that has borne the cost of this industry-made public health disaster. The Childhood Lead Action Project applauds the tremendous work of Attorney General Lynch and his colleagues for their pioneering efforts in pursuing this cutting edge suit against the Industry.

The lead industry knowingly poisoned America's children - particularly poor and minority children. It was pure greed and a cal-

lous disregard for the well-being of children that the industry continued to use lead pigment in paint. While the industry marketed lead-free paint to the European community and protected farm animals from the dangers of lead, children in the United States continued to be exposed to lead-based paint - in their cribs, their toys and in their homes.

It is only right to hold the lead industry accountable for its actions. The public has heavily subsidized the enormous costs involved in getting the lead out - medical treatment for poisoned children, special education costs, lead abatement and the tragic loss of human potential. It's long overdue that the industry compensate our community for

this tremendous injustice.

Lets roll up our sleeves and lock up the toxic once and for all! A huge THANK YOU goes out to all of you who have supported us over the years. Today sitting in the courtroom watching this was an amazing experience.... Again, ,thanks for the continued support! [Liz Colón](#), Director of Training and Outreach / R I Parent Childhood Lead Action Project - from Leadnet 2/22/06

#### Free EPA Materials

Do you need to order EPA lead materials? Go to [www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nlic.htm](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nlic.htm) for on-line ordering, or contact the National Lead Information Center at 1(800) 424-LEAD [5323].



Justice prevailed in the Rhode Island lawsuit, 2006.

### No More Tears: Testing for Lead *WITHOUT* Blood?

Every parent has the same story—one of the worst parts of lead prevention in children is getting them blood tested. Holding a screaming infant, toddler, or preschooler while the phlebotomist draws blood - we've all said it—"there HAS to be a better way to test children for lead!" Now there is a way!

American Medical Saliva Testing is entering into discussions with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on saliva lead screening for children. Similar

to DNA testing, a swab goes under the child's tongue for 30-45 seconds, and mailed to the lab. Results in 7-10 days.

Initial testing of the saliva tests occurred in Guilford County, NC in the fall of 2005. Results indicate that the saliva test is "consistent with established blood lead measurements," according to the Senior Environmental Health Specialist. Saliva test results were within 1/1000 of the blood test. More accurate without blood!

Saliva test kits are \$59.95 each, plus \$6 shipping & handling. Save 10% by typing ALPHA as the discount code. This is **NEW** technology, and hopefully will be covered by insurance soon! -LH

#### Pencils, Paint & Pica

*continued from page 1*

derived of the Latin *plumbum* meaning lead, *loco* is Spanish for crazy. Literally, lead-crazy, Caligula, Nero, and Commodus suffered mental incompetence during their reigns. Lead poisoning was a disease of the upper-class in Rome. During the late Middle Ages, aging wine in lead containers created either a toxic wine or an excellent paint.

So, if you hear of children attracted to lead paint—they are following in the pattern of ancient Roman emperors. It's an unfair stereotype of children - some crave the sweet taste. It's also a way of alienating parents from understanding the dangers of lead paint and children. Learn the facts about lead before it's too late.—LH  
[www.epa.gov/history/topics/perspect/lead.htm](http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/perspect/lead.htm)  
[www.pencils.com/history.html](http://www.pencils.com/history.html)

“...there HAS to be a better way to test children for lead!”



Romans recognized lead as a sweetener in wine & cooking.

**10% OFF**

**Saliva Lead Screens**

**American Medical Saliva Testing**

**Order kits on-line and get 10% off. Type in “ALPHA” for Discount certificate at**

[www.amsalivatesting.com](http://www.amsalivatesting.com)

**“Testing with Dignity”**

**856-642-0220**





## American Lead Poisoning Help Association

ALPHA is an emerging group seeking to unite parents of lead poisoned children together, to network ideas, and to promote lead education and prevention strategies on a national level. Since November 2005, over 95 parents and interested individuals from 19 states have indicated an interested in learning more about preventing childhood lead poisoning.

Parents should not have to face lead in their children alone anymore. ALPHA is here to provide assistance. Addressing lead issues is a lifelong quest for some parents, as there are other hurdles these children will face as they grow up and become adults.

With the goal of 2010 to eradicate childhood lead poisoning looming, it is imperative to reach as many parents as possible. Our children will not be forgotten. ALPHA is for the parents, by the parents & professionals who want to make a difference.

[www.ALPHALead.org](http://www.ALPHALead.org)

Request an invitation to join ALPHALead group site: <http://tinyurl.com/qcx6s>

Questions? [Info@ALPHALead.org](mailto:Info@ALPHALead.org)

### Lead Poisoning Prevention Checklist for Parents



*Take a checklist to your child's next doctor's appointment—ask questions!*

#### **Doctor's Visit:**

- My child has been tested for lead poisoning
- I have seen the results
- I know my child's lead level
- I have been educated on lead poisoning
- I know my child's next doctor's appointment or follow-up visit
- I know how old my house is
- I always inform the landlord in writing of any peeling paint
- I am aware of the dangers of lead poisoning
- I know the different sources of lead
- I always try to mop and wet wipe surfaces once a week
- I wash down the windowsills once a week
- I only use cold water to cook and I let the first draw run for 30 seconds or more
- I am aware of the nutritious foods my child should eat
- I always wash my child's hands before eating
- I wash my child's toys, pacifiers, and favorite objects frequently

#### **Around the House:**

- I know my child's lead level