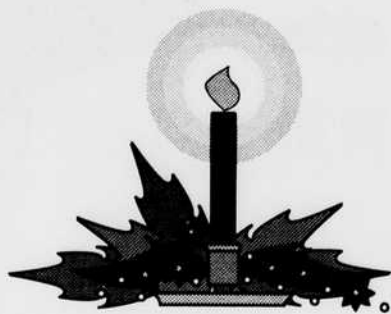


Happy Holidays

from the
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Keep an eye out for toy warnings

A national report warns parents of the hazards of some playthings

By Peter Breaden
Oregon Daily Emerald

The greatest gift is often safety. Parents need to look for warnings on toys that may be dangerous for children younger than 3, according to "Trouble in Toyland" the 13th annual report of dangerous toys, which was conducted by United States Public Interest Research Group.

"It's always important for parents to keep on the lookout for toys that are a problem," said Ilysia Shattuck, who organized the campaign. "If a toy has a potential hazard, parents have a choice to make."

It's difficult for parents to know which toys are dangerous for children younger than 3, according to the survey. Labels need to be more prominent, said Khela Singer-Adams, ASUO non-traditional student advocate and a student parent.

"My concern focuses on not

having full disclosure on toys," Singer-Adams said.

Smaller, more colorful toys are more likely to cause choking, Shattuck said.

Small toys for infants must measure a minimum of 1.75 inches in diameter. OSPIRG recommends that parents get a "no-choke testing tube" to check toy safety for themselves.

"The first step is being conscious of the toys. If it's bright-colored, round and small, it's more attractive to younger children," Shattuck said.

Nationwide toy-related deaths totaled 13 in 1997, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Of those deaths, 11 were related to choking.

The rate of toy-related deaths has been steadily dropping since 1993, when CPSC recorded 25. Since 1990, CPSC reports a total of 160 toy-related deaths, 100 of which involve choking. The survey also identifies toys that may have small parts, breakable parts

or toxins. Many of the dangerous toys were found in national chains including Target Stores, Toys R Us and Dollar Stores.

Local outlets for Target and Dollar Stores only take toys off the shelves after recall orders. The only time that the stores did pull a toy was when the community called for the recall of a soldier figurine following last year's Thurston shooting, said assistant manager Kristina VanHook at the Target Store in Springfield.

Luke Williams, an undergraduate who works at Elephant's Trunk Toy Company, said some parents are too lenient.

"There are some who let their kids go crazy and don't pay any attention," Williams said. "For them, warnings won't do much good."

Parents should be careful even if toy-related deaths are uncommon, pediatrician Jimmy Unger said.

"If it's your child that chokes and has a fatality, then it's one too many," Unger said.

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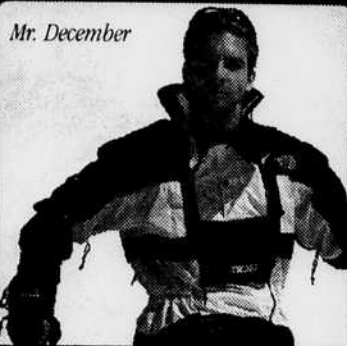
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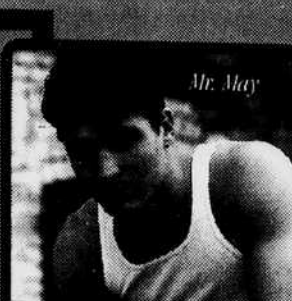
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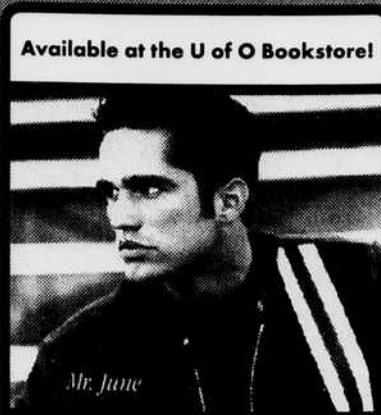
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