

## **U.S. FORUM CONNECTION #147, MARCH 2016**

This publication is intended for your information about issues important to education, women and children. How you choose to use the information included here is up to you.

This free newsletter is sponsored by the United States Forum of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is an organization of leading women educators with over 80,000 members. Delta Kappa Gamma members wishing to subscribe to this FREE newsletter should send a request to the editor Angela O. Bedenbaugh at [Bedenbaugh.Angela@gmail.com](mailto:Bedenbaugh.Angela@gmail.com). We urge you to share this newsletter with other interested individuals who are not members of Delta Kappa Gamma or members who do not subscribe to this publication.

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### **NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

In 1987 Congress proclaimed March as National Women's History Month. It is a time to celebrate the achievements of women about many of whom we are ignorant. For some interesting information about women of many races in many fields of endeavor visit the current exhibit of National Museum of Women's History at <https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/> Through the museum we have learned about women as spies, women who dressed as men and fought in wars and women who have achieved distinction in many, diverse fields of endeavor. I particularly liked the story of 17-year-old Jackie Mitchell, the second woman to play in the major leagues, who struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig in an exhibition game in 1931, but her contract was voided the next day because the baseball commissioner deemed the sport "too strenuous for women."

### **LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

The current children's health crisis in Flint, Michigan due to high levels of lead in the drinking water has been reported recently. Before the advent of plastic piping in the 1930s, water pipes were either made of lead, iron, copper, or wood. Even when materials other than lead were used, lead could be found in drinking water coming through the pipe. In Jackson, MS, for example, although all the water pipes were not made of lead, they were joined together with a lead compound some of which leached into the water. [Science teachers take note: the word plumbing comes from plumbum the Latin word for lead.]

It is impossible to know how widespread the problem is because the federal government requires only about 10 percent of the nation's schools and a tiny fraction of day care centers — the 8,225 facilities that run their own water systems — to test for lead at

all. The EPA estimates about 90,000 public schools and 500,000 child care facilities are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act because they depend on water sources such as municipal utilities that are expected to test their own water. That means parents have no assurance that lead isn't seeping into their children's water from a school building's pipes, solder or fixtures. In fact, many schools that have tested for lead voluntarily were found to have lead in their water indicating that this is a common occurrence. Given the dangers, the EPA recommends that schools and day care centers test for lead, even if they're not required to do so and to work to reduce the amount of lead in their water.

But even among schools and day care centers required to test for lead, the USA Today Network analysis found lead levels which caused concern in 42 states. Water providers didn't always conduct the required follow-up tests or notify customers when tests indicated high levels of lead. For example, in the Ithaca City School District parents weren't told about problems until four months after test results were known. Four water samples from two district schools which were required to test for lead tested above the EPA action level in August. When the district tested the water again, it found numerous levels greater than 100 ppb (50 ppb is the recommended maximum), according to results it released. Officials turned off drinking water sources at the two schools and made bottled water available throughout the district. EPA officials say they encourage voluntary testing in schools and day care facilities and provide help to those that want to test for lead while also helping those which are required to test in order to stay in compliance.

Blood testing for lead poisoning is typically done in babies, not school-age children. Symptoms usually don't arise until dangerous levels have accumulated and can be vague, so they are often missed until the damage — such as lowered IQ, behavior problems and developmental delays — has been done.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT LEAD IN WATER**

According to the EPA's 1991 Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) public water systems are required to identify lead service lines.

1. Ask your local utility/water provider if you have a lead service line. Do not take a yes or no answer, get proof. Often these providers do not have records. This was true in Jackson, MS where the officials responsible for keeping records had not done so.
2. Ask your local utility/water provider when water lines were installed, what they were made of, and what types of connections of water pipes were used. (Remember that not all lines were installed at the same time. You may want to contact the office of the water provider to learn what information they have about composition of water lines, how pipes were connected and any recent tests for lead in the water.)
3. Ascertain when your dwelling was constructed. (If it was built in the last 50-60 years there is probably no lead in the system.)
4. Ask if your local schools have had tests for lead in their water. It is not only the drinking water which may contain lead but also the water used in food preparation.
5. Consider buying a filter for water in your home capable of removing lead from tap water.

### **REVIVING SOLAR CALCULATORS**

If you have a solar calculator or other solar powered device which has ceased to function, try placing it open in a window which gets a lot of sunlight. Leave it there for a

several days. This will often cause the device to function again. A solar calculator is often kept closed, so that it gets very little light of any kind. This prolonged exposure to light may recharge the solar cell.

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**FORUM FACEBOOK PAGE LINK**

For those of you desiring discussion of legislative topics there is a U.S. Forum Facebook page online at <http://www.facebook.com/DKG.US.Forum>

**FORUM WEB SITE:** <http://www.usforumdkg.org/>

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**CONTACT ADDRESSES FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION**

**U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION** can be obtained through Congressional Switchboard [1-866-327-8670](tel:1-866-327-8670) [this is a toll free number]. You can contact your Congressman and Senator through this number without paying long distance charges.

Email access and addresses

<http://www.house.gov/> for members of the House of Representatives <http://www.senate.gov/> for members of the U.S. Senate  
White House [1-202-456-1111](tel:1-202-456-1111)

**FIVE CONSTITUENT CONTACTS WILL CAUSE A LEGISLATOR TO PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO A GIVEN ISSUE.**

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