"...for Franklin fanciers"

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Lead Poison
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at a hospital for a week for poisoning
that caused their urinary excretion of
lead to soar up to 80 times the normal
rate. The source of the lead was paint
which became loosened from a set of
cocktail glasses after several trips
through the heat and detergent of the
family dishwasher. They were lucky to
escape unharmed. Not so lucky was a
woman who was particularly fond of
cooking hearty dishes in an earth-
enware casserole from Mexico. When
improperly fired, the lead-based glaze
of such pottery can leach out upon con-
tact with acidic foods. By chance, the
woman’s husband brought home an
FDA warning sheet about such pot-
ttery. She recognized her recent symp-
toms of headache and fatigue and took
the casserole to be tested. Lead con-
centrations in the casserole were
extremely high. Unfortunately, the
woman was pregnant at the time, and
since her blood lead levels were so high,
It was decided the fetus had already
been permanently damaged and that
she should have an abortion.

In another case, an actress came
down with strange symptoms. She be-
gan losing her acting ability. Her hair
fell out and she ended up in a
wheelchair. Seeking a cause for her al-
ments, she became suspicious of some
bone meal from a health food store she
had been consuming daily to increase
her calcium intake. Her diagnosis was
right. The analysis showed the bone
meal contained a high level of lead. It
had come from old horses who had
been exposed to lead all their lives.

Benjamin Franklin would not be sur-
prised that even at this late date lead
still claims unwary victims. In 1786 he
noted that the “mischievous effect
from lead” had been known to scien-
tists for at least 60 years. “You will ob-
serve,” he wrote with irony, “how long
a useful truth may be known to exist,
before it is generally received and prac-
tised on.”

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