

For Immediate Release

## **CARU PROVIDES NEW GUIDANCE TO TOY INDUSTRY ON ADVERTISING OF STATIONARY TOYS**

*New York, NY – Nov. 17, 2008*– The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has released new guidance to the toy industry, aimed at assuring that the advertising of stationary toys, directed to children under 12, is not misleading.

CARU, the children’s advertising industry’s self-regulatory forum, issued the Guidance to assist toy manufacturers and marketers in developing advertising that does not leave children with the impression that stationary toys move on their own.

“CARU’s core mission is to assure that advertising directed to children under the age of 12 is truthful, fair and appropriate,” said CARU Director Wayne J. Keeley. “We want provide the children’s advertising industry with the necessary tools to accomplish that end.”

CARU monitors advertising directed to children under 12 in all media, conducts inquiries and issues case decisions.

Traditional playthings represent a significant market segment, Keeley noted. A recent report on toy spending notes that sales of toys to children under 12 comprised nearly \$17.3 billion of the \$22.3 billion toy market in 2007.

The new Toy Guidance explains that CARU examines advertising to determine the overall take-away message the advertising conveys to a child.

The Toy Guidance notes that some advertising techniques may contribute to a misleading impression about a toy’s abilities, including the use of stop-action, quick cuts interspersed with animation and disguised or inconspicuous hand manipulation.

Specifically, the Toy Guidance states, “[w]hen a doll or toy that cannot move on its own is depicted as moving, there should be a clear and conspicuous appearance of a hand(s) (or a person) manipulating the doll or toy ... .”

To illustrate the application of these principles, the Toy Guidance provides advertisers with examples of commercials and advertising techniques that would or would not comply with the guidelines outlined in CARU’s *“Self-Regulatory Program for Children’s Advertising.”*

For example, a commercial for dolls might depict the dolls holding objects in their hands, an effect accomplished by using concealed rubber bands to keep the objects in place. Such a commercial would violate CARU’s guidelines.

A commercial for toy dogs might depict the dogs racing or doing tricks, an effect accomplished by hand manipulation that is clearly visible in every scene. Such a commercial would comply with CARU’s guidelines.

The complete text of the Toy Guidance document, as well as the text of CARU’s *“Self-Regulatory Program for Children’s Advertising,”* is available at [www.CARU.org](http://www.CARU.org).

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*CARU's inquiry was conducted under NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU's decision, and the advertiser's response will be included in the next NAD/CARU Case Report.*

**About Advertising Industry Self-Regulation:** The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB's National Advertising Division (NAD) and Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children's advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB's sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. Funding for ERSP is derived from membership fees paid to the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit [www.narcpartners.org](http://www.narcpartners.org).