

Annual Toy Report can help frazzled Christmas shoppers

by MICHELE GOUETT
With the holiday season just around the corner, many of Santa's helpers are busy filling their youngsters Christmas lists.

Well, once again the Canadian Toy Testing Council (CTTC) has come to the rescue of those people who are having trouble picking out that extra special gift, that will not only be fun for the children on their list, but also a good value for the dollars spent.

Every year, just before Christmas, the CTTC release their annual Toy Report on toys currently on the market, rating them for durability, design, function, packaging, and most importantly, their play value to the child.

Since 1952 a group of concerned parents and consumers in the Nation's Capital have met regularly to comply the report which can be bought in most major bookstores across the country.

This year's addition of the 1986 Toy Report, released in Ottawa last month, examines over 1,400 toys from the most expensive to the most inexpensive stocking

stuffers. The data for the report comes from the toy users themselves, the children. Over the year more than 200 families are involved in the council's testing. It's a family affair, with moms and dads getting involved with the tots at play time and seeing how good or bad certain toys are.

With the reactions of the children and the comments by the parents the 30 member CTTC sat down and compiled the results in their annual report.

The report is very easy to use and all the toys are indexed for quick reference.

Each of the toy rating includes the price range, the suitable age range, a description of the toy, any major flaws or attributes, the name of the manufacturer, along with the rating.

The rating system is very simple to follow. A three star rating is for the best toys meeting all the criteria set out by the council. A two star rated toy may be of good play value but have problems with design, function, or durability. A one star rating suggests that a toy needs some major improvements in the

durability, design, and function as well. If there are no stars given, the council does not recommend the toy at all. Such a rating indicates the toy has displayed major deficiencies in function, play value and durability.

Although not all consumers take advantage of the Toy Report, one group of people that do, are the toy retailers. According to Gordon Cooke, owner of Bag-A-Toy in the Huronia Mall, the only problem with the report is that it comes out too late for the retailers to take advantage immediately.

"Ninety per cent of our buying for the toy season is done nine months in advance," says Cooke. "When the report comes out late in the fall, it is too late to go out and buy a certain toy for the Christmas rush."

Although Cooke may not use the report now, when the buyer for Bag-A-Toy is ordering in January of next year, you can be sure that right beside him will be a copy of the toy council's report.

Despite what most people think buying toys for a large store is lots

of fun, it's actually very time consuming and difficult.

Cooke says he doesn't sit in a room full of toys and decide to stock the shelves with something that catches his attention, it's all a matter of advertising.

"If you know the manufacturer is exceeding a million dollars on advertising for a certain item, you definitely want that item in your store," says Cooke. "People tend to buy for Christmas what their kids want, and what the kids want is what they see on television that is heavily promoted."

Cooke, who also owns Bag-A-Toy stores in Barrie and Orillia, says the unfortunate thing is that parents have very little choice when it comes to Christmas shopping, more often than not parents have to buy what the kids want and it might not always be the best value for their money.

In the past three years, in the toy business, Cooke says he has had very little response from people about the CTTC annual report. It is more likely that someone will come in and say I have to have this or that because their child wants it, not, I want this because the toy council recommends it, according to Cooke.

The price of the report is only \$6.95, and can be picked up at all the bookstores in the area.

If you haven't picked up a copy and you won't be before all the Christmas shopping is finished here is what the Toy Testing Council has to say about a number of the hottest items on the market for this year.

These adorable Cabbage Patch Kids that have been around for the last two years are still one of the most

popular items again this year. The Toy Report gives Coleco's dolls a three star rating saying they are amazingly popular and lovable, cuddly male and female dolls for boys or girls. Their well-designed bodies and outfits along with the easy washability and great play value make them one of the top toys of the council.

Although the council recommends the Master of the Universe figures, they are one of the most popular items for the young boys on the list, they do note some problems with the Webstor, Kobra Khan, and Orko figures. The council noted that some of the functions of these figures may break or stop working, but the figures themselves retain good play value.

Another hot item on Christmas lists this year, is GoBot Transformers. Although they are popular the council has found some problems with the pocket-size robots, of die-cast metal and plastic, in reversing back and forth of the toy from a robot to a car.

If the little one in your family wants one of those lovable Care Bears, the council gives it a three star rating. The council likes its easy washability and the imaginative play that can result from such a gift.

This year the CTTC has chosen, for the first time ever, a toy of the year. The group's choice was Wrinkles the Puppet by Ganz, because it represents a return-to the traditional value of toys. Although the price may be a little high, the council recommends it on its durability, while also having all the best features of a stuffed toy, as well as a puppet.

Although the 1986 Toy Report comes out just before Christmas, it is not intended solely for that use.

If you want to know

what your child is playing with and how others recommended them, pick up the Report at any time of the year.

Thanks to our carriers

During the months of October and November, the Citizen, held a Circulation drive. The young men and women who deliver the newspapers went out and found new subscribers for their respective routes.

Their efforts were rewarded, as the carriers received prizes and certificates at a party thrown in their honour.

The Citizen would like to thank the Bike Shop, Ken Gauthier Sports, R & R Sports, Penatang Bottling, Dock Lunch and McDonald's Restaurant for supporting our newspaper carriers. From all of us, we thank you.

It's the law

With the winter weather upon us, Penatangishene Town Police are reminding motor vehicle owners that it is contravening a town by-law to park vehicles on any street within the municipality between the hours of 1 a.m. and 7 a.m.

According to Penatang Police Chief Robert Cummings, any vehicle left on the street overnight will be tagged and the owner will be subject to a \$10 fine.

Although the fine is only \$10, vehicle owners could pay up to \$40 to retrieve a vehicle left on the streets, if the police have it towed away.

According to Cummings, the town uses Dusomes Garage to impound vehicles which charges \$30 for the

service.

Cummings says the by-law was put in place to help with the snow removal on the roads during the winter months. Although it may help with the cleaning of the streets, according to Cummings, keeping vehicles off the streets can also prevent accidents between the snowplows and parked vehicles.

Another by-law within the town that officers are busy enforcing these snowy days is that it is an offence for any person to place snow on any sidewalk or street so as to obstruct traffic of the view of traffic.

The Chief added that the fine for a first offense is no more than \$50, but any subsequent offense is worth \$100.

Girl Guides' draw results

The Awenda District Girl Guides are pleased to announce the winners of their annual Christmas draw.

From the large ticket draws, L. Latanville, S. Player, and A. Thompson took home the Christmas money tree, a grocery hamper, and a Christmas floral arrangement, respectively.

In the quarter draw, S. Zoscke won the

Christmas wreath. The lucky ticket holder for the ceramic doll was J. Summers.

The winners of the Rangers' Penny Arcade were S. Bellehumeur (pointsetta), J. Richardson (ceramic bell and dove), and M. Archer (doll). The fruit basket was won by T. Hower, while J. Robilliard was the lucky winner of the candy cane.

Crackdown getting THE results: chief

by MICHELE GOUETT

Penatangishene Police Chief Robert Cummings is pleased with the results of the number of liquor related offenses laid so far this holiday season as a result of the new liquor laws within the province.

"People seem to be abiding by the new laws and we've had a good showing in that regards so far this year," says the Chief.

Since the town force implemented their spot check program on Dec. 6,

only two vehicle operators have been charged with impaired driving.

According to Cummings, police have issued only four 12-hour driving suspension and nine highway traffic offenses fines during the numerous spot checks around the town.

Cummings adds this is a very good number considering the number of vehicles that have been stopped in the checks already this Christmas season.

"The new laws seem to be working this year," says Cummings, "the numbers speak for themselves."

Shoppers Mart

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THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH INVITES TENDERS FOR A ONE YEAR RENTAL AGREEMENT FOR THE OPERATION OF THE CANTEEN AT THE WASAGA STARS ARENA

Tenders, in sealed envelopes provided, will be received at the office of the clerk, Town of Wasaga Beach, 30 Lewis Street, Wasaga Beach, Ontario (P.O. Box 110) L0L 2P0, for the operation of the Wasaga Stars Arena canteen for one year January 10, 1986 to January 9, 1987.

Deadline for the tenders will be 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 19, 1985

Tender forms, terms of lease agreement and schedule of yearly activities to bidders may be obtained from the Parks and Recreation Office, upstairs in the Wasaga Stars Arena on Highway 92 (River Road West) Wasaga Beach, Ontario L0L 2P0 (P.O. Box 110). Information available week days 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. A cheque in the amount of \$50.00, made payable to the Town of Wasaga Beach, must accompany tender.

Alan Miller Recreation Director E99, 101

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EW 85 TF

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3 bedroom cottage, winterized on 45th St. and Stayner Town Line. \$400.00/mth. and utilities. Call 429-3669 or 429-4475. E97 WTFN

FOR RENT For rent - 2 bedroom bungalow on Hwy. 92 near Wasaga Beach. \$325 per month plus utilities. Call 322-2494. E 93 TFN

One bedroom apartment, reliable adults only. \$300 a month, first and last. Deposit on hydro and damages. Port McNicoll. 534-4195 or 526-7240. 100.101

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Tay Township 526-2992
Tiny Township 526-7133
Coldwater 686-7777
Penatangishene 549-7425
Port McNicoll 526-3300
Victoria Harbour 526-3333
Elmvale-Flos 322-1313
Honey Harbour 756-2101
Wasaga Beach 429-2544

POLICE

Town of Midland 526-2201
Town of Penatangishene 549-2456
Midland OPP 526-3761
Elmvale OPP 322-2424

AMBULANCE

Huronia Area (Midland) 526-5466
Wasaga Beach 429-4101

HOSPITALS

Huronia District Hospital (Midland) 526-3751
Mental Health Centre (Penatangishene) 549-3181
Penatangishene General Hospital (Penatangishene) 549-7442 549-7431

DISTRESS CENTRE

MIDLAND & AREA 526-7836
Barrie & Area 726-7922

FAMILY PHYSICIAN

POISON CONTROL CENTRE

Royal Victoria Hospital (Barrie & Area) 728-9802