



Kimberly, 6, left and Melodie, 8, below right get a bit of help from their parents, Peter and Susan in pinning up a poster banning war toys from their home. — Sjoerd Witteveen

No war toys for this Markham home

By Peggy Wheeler

Rev. Peter Twaddle, his wife Susan and their children have declared their home a war-toy free zone. They've created a poster to that effect for the front door of their Sherwood Forest Dr. home.

Rev. Twaddle feels that individual citizens can do much to correct the trend to violence which he finds in his work. (He's pastor of Brown's Corner United Church and believes violence is spreading in family life and disrupting it.)

He said there is a "commercialism of violence which is profiteering on the basis of the unrealistic fears our children are being brainwashed into". His message is simply that there are alternatives to war toys — cooperative board games, cuddly toys, (for both boys and girls) skill games, crafts and hobbies, many of which involve the whole family and bring them closer together.

Rev. Twaddle is not a peace group member, nor has he ever been in a public protest, although he said he was tempted this fall to take a sign and picket the toy stores. On investigation he found that the stores all stock many non-violent toys and it is really television commercials that push war toys.

The family all co-operated in making their poster, which in itself was an enjoyable activity.

Protesting the sale of war toys was not his own idea. It originated with a United Church of Canada bulletin on the Victoria Peace Project in Fenelon Falls.

It referred to a campaign to have parents write to toy manufacturers to protest the war toys being merchandised.

Jim Deacove of Perth also reacted to the bulletin in a practical way. In 1972 he began manufacturing non-violent, non-competitive toys for his own children and now has a full-fledged business supplying stores in Canada and the United States.

Mr. Deacove carries the family idea to the extent that if dad or grandad is handy with tools, he'll supply them with plans for the board games.

The Canadian Toy Testing Council has come up with a list of top toys which excludes war toys, even though they were among the toys tested.

Its method of testing is to let groups of children play with the toys of their choice from a market sampling. It lists the favourites:

The all-out top winner this year was a teddy bear with a beating heart, and if you cuddle him close you can feel his heart beat.

Runners-up were a wiggle-worm, a color co-ordinated piano, plush toys, cars, a kite set, shaving set for boys, play cosmetic sets for girls. War toys didn't place.

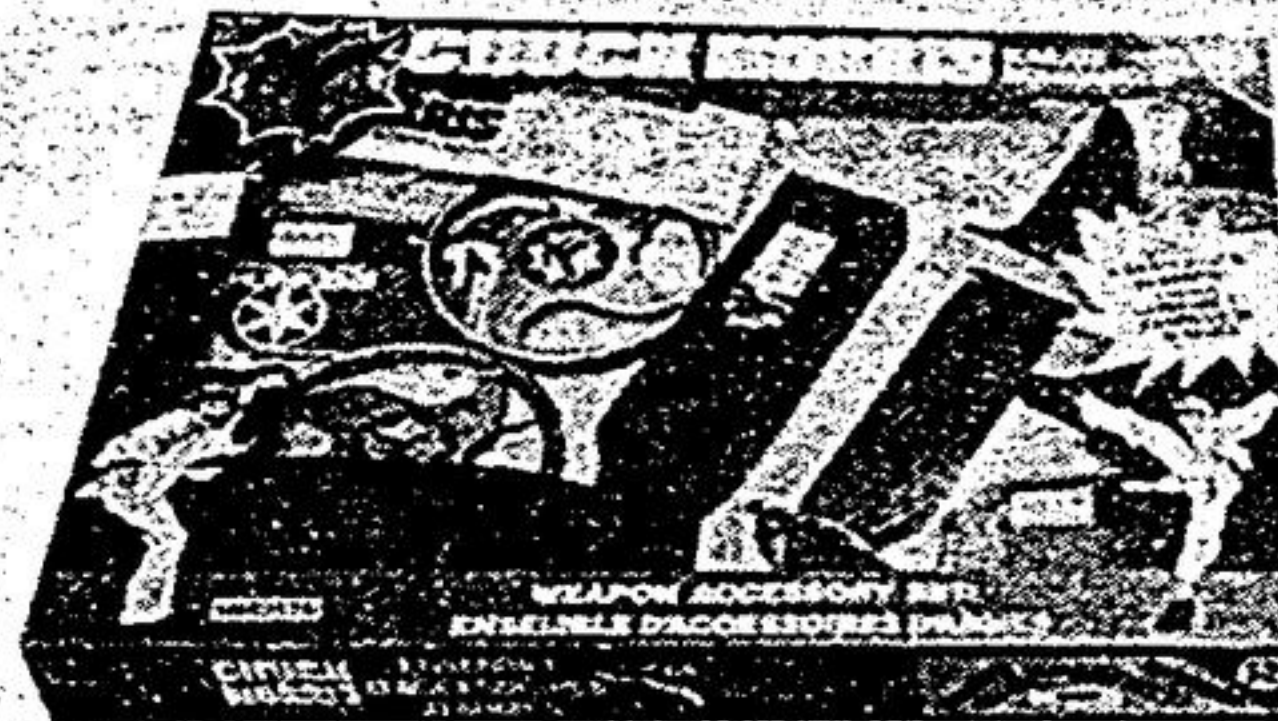
Brian Gaucher, Woolco Markville manager said GI Joe is hold-

ing its place as most popular boy's toy in his store and Wrinkles is first overall.

A toy department employee at Eatons in Markville concurred about GI Joe, adding that masters of the Universe is also a top seller, as are animated and talking toys.

Other toy store owners and managers queried about how sales were divided among violent and non-violent toys hesitated to commit themselves, saying mainly that year-end inventory will tell the story.

Some suggested that parents try to put a little surprise back into Christmas and buy something they think is suitable for a child, and not necessarily what the T.V. commercials tout as the best.



Parents have both war toys and non-violent toys to choose from this Christmas. Below is the Heart to Heart teddy which placed top on Canada Toy Testing Council's list.

—Sjoerd Witteveen



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