

Top toys of 2013 chosen, some sarcasm required

**By Timothy Linscott**

*Managing Editor*

'Good Housekeeping' puts out an annual list of the 'Best Toys' and this year there are many fine items for children and parents to cherish.

This annual list gets a bit of a personal touch with some editorializing.

I have fond memories of helping my father choose toys for the upcoming year at the store he managed when I was a boy and have never lost my love and observation of toys.

The list for 2013:

- Disney Planes Pilot Pals remote plane: This toy uses remote control devices that fit on your child's hand and they move about, the plane mimics the movement.

Looks fun but I can see kids getting bored after about an hour. A plain old airplane toy will probably challenge kids more, but it depends on the child.

- V-Tech 2-in-1 Shop and Cook playset: A shopping cart turns into a kitchen for kids to buy, then cook their play food. Transformers for young Foodies.

- Play-Doh Perfect Twist ice cream machine: New compound molding allows children to make swirling ice cream sundaes with sprinkles and other fun items. DO NOT EAT PLAY-DOH. It can make you sick and does not taste anything like the creations on the box. Trust me, I know.

- Tomy Chuggington StackTrack Rescue at Rocky Ridge Action Playset: An easily assembled track allows children to build a 'hill' 20 inches tall. Comes with two trains.

Trains and tracks, pretty simple and I can foresee a decent amount of play time for children.

- Little Kids Fubbles No-Spill Bubble Guitar: A plastic guitar with different buttons that make various 'rock star' sounds turns into a bubble maker. Lawrence Welk meets Slash.

- Hape Master Workbench: Comes with 35 pieces (a vice, screws and gears) with a workbench area to create different items. List price is \$120, so Dad may have to sell some of his actual tools for this one.

- Laser Pegs White Line: Legos with lights. These clear plastic building block pieces have colored lights that bring out the cool factor. Parents can now look forward to stepping on these brightly colored blocks in the early morning instead of the single colored Legos.

- Spin Master Zoomer: A remote control dog. The concept has been around before and there have been many different 'robotic' animals, miniature people and some say elected officials. The more children play with Zoomer the more tricks he can learn. Similar to Furby, the more interaction, the more the AI (Artificial Intelligence) kicks in for Zoomer.

I am not real big on these types of toys. My daughters received a Furby as a gift a few years ago. After about two days, Furby took a nap in a box in the basement, where it sits today.

- Playmobil Spy Command Vehicle: Playmobil figures have been around a very long time and have been a staple for many children. This set includes a mini-jet, what appears to be missiles and all kinds of gadgets.

Children can just let their imagination go nutty with this set as there is really not a lot of bells and whistles to it. This would be something I would want today if I were a child, a lot of imaginative play options.

- Uncle Milton Iron Man Repulsor Ray tech lab: The teaser for the toy says: “Hone coordination by moving a ball through obstacles.” It combines science, puzzles and comic book characters into one toy. All things considered ‘nerdy’ at one time is now considered ‘cool.’

Can we nerds, geeks and dweebs have nothing to ourselves?

- Hot Wheels Car Maker Kit: Make your own Hot Wheels cars and trucks. Enough said. Not sure who squealed in excitement more when the commercial came out: eight-year-old boys or their fathers. I, personally, went hoarse from squealing.

- Alex Duct Tape Party: You get 12 rolls of colorful duct tape to decorate accessories like bracelets.

Can handymen have nothing to themselves?

It proves the adage of many men I know: Duct tape can do anything, which includes entertaining girls ages seven and up.

- EZ DJ Pro (by Jakks Pacific): You can add effects and drum loops to existing music using a smart device. Technology is moving at warp speed and this is for ages 8-11, but I can see adults using this as a fun rainy day activity.

- Crayola Marker Maker: Kids can mix ink and create up to 16 custom markers. Re-usable, children can create all kinds of color combinations and go through virtually hundreds of pieces of paper in a single sitting.

- Think Fun Laser Maze: A game that kids bend a beam to hit a target with mirrors, splitters, and a blocker. Includes different levels from easy to expert.

More along the science and logic route, this will test young, and even mature, minds.

Although, personally, I can’t help but think of the 80s movie ‘Real Genius’ where lasers and mirrors were used to shoot a beam through...well, a town. Still looks like a fun game.

- Sifteo Cubes: Cubes interact with each other for on-screen play. Various games pre-loaded. Like a new version of ‘Simon,’ if anyone remembers that game, only with multiple options.

- Necomimi by NeuroSky: Kids wear a headset that have animal ears on them. The brain waves of the kid makes the ears move.

The review notes: “Kids loved controlling it and found it irresistibly adorable.” I find it a waste of \$70 and irresistibly creepy. Brain waves move ears...fun for kids of all ages for literally 12 minutes.

- Lego Creator Family House: Children can build several styles of homes, a factory or more with one kit. Add-ons include working lights, a car and a grill.

Why can’t modern homes be built the same way with the same add-ons?

Lego has been on the top toy list for decades for its ability to let kids create.

Parents, enjoy finding at least three blocks after the kids have picked them up and put them away.

I hope everyone has a safe and joyous holiday season!