

In Toys: The Girls Like The Boys'

By **JULIE CANDLER**
Staff Writer

Pretend that you're a fly on the wall in the toy department of a big store at Christmastime. That's what this reporter did recently. Haven't had as much fun since the night my husband forgot to put the soda in the Christmas punchbowl!

My toy department visit was a scientific research project, to see what toys little girls and little boys headed for when they arrived in the big wonderland of young Yuletide joys.

I WATCHED MANY a little girl head straight for the electronic fighter jet or the power play electric hockey game. Only a few tiny ones hugged and kissed the big life-sized dolls.

My conclusion: most of today's girls are space-minded, cowboy-happy, sports-mad, and doll-rejecting.

Must be the influence of TV's Bat Masters, football casts and Disneyland trips out of this world.

And who ever saw a kid's television heroine who would inspire a little girl to play with dolls? Is Annie Oakley a mother? Did anybody ever see Lois Lane fondling a baby? Or Lorelei Kilbourne?

EVEN MRS. MARGE Carver, clerk at one of Birmingham's large toy departments, has noticed a trend. She claims little girls still like dolls.

"But," she says, "there are a lot of little girls who like to play things like cowboy right along with it."

Most girls enjoy games like mechanical football and basketball, Mrs. Carver observes. They like pinball machines. And a lot of games that are supposedly for boys only.

SOME MOTHERS aren't too

happy about the trend. Like the mother who saw her six-year-old daughter flashing lights and firing off machine guns and pushing gears at the electronic fighter jet controls. "Linda!" shouted the mother. Little Linda ejected herself from

the cockpit. She fairly shot over to the doll section where her mother was shopping.

MOTHERS DON'T like it when the trend works in reverse, either. A little two-year-old boy was proudly pushing a doll buggy around the floor. Until his mother spied him.

"Oh, you're a darling boy!" said mother, in a tone carrying all the sincerity of Frankenstein.

Junior was snatched away from the buggy and diverted toward the electric trains.

One mother stood in the midst of the boy toys where her daughter was pushing, touching and manipulating everything she saw.

WHEN A CLERK asked if she could help, the mother brushed the whole thing off by saying coyly, "We're just getting ideas."

As daughter named the boyish things she wanted for Christmas, mother tried to discourage her.

"My!" she exclaimed, "You have such expensive tastes!"

It might have been the five-year-old brother's influence that fascinated a somewhat smaller sister with masculine playthings.

SHE AND HER brother scurried first to a big hockey game. Then Sis browsed off to stare at the electric trains. Until she was drawn by the cowboy hats.

Then there was the puzzlement of the seven-year-old child who

came in, followed closely by mother and a younger sister.

Despite the long pants and the cowboy boots, I gathered from the longish wisps of hair escaping from knitted headpiece that the seven-year-old was a she.

SHE, TOO, went for the electronic fighter jet.

Her mother held up a musical toy and asked, "How would you like this, Howie?"

I decided Howie must have needed a haircut.

Later, after Howie had looked over the burp guns, cowboy hats, and covered wagons, his mother called to little sister and Howie.

"Come on, girls," she said as she walked away.

I'm STILL wondering.



ECCENTRIC PHOTO

Newest in Models

Models of all sorts have always been popular gifts for the youngsters and George McGlennen brought some of the latest models for Santa's inspection. McGlennen, of Princeton Prep shop, 237 Pierce, Birmingham, showed the new plastic model airplane and a scale model of the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga.

Lounging Robe Tops as a Gift

What would Christmas be without a gift of a new lounging robe for dad? Chances are, with his old one frayed and worn from long and happy use, he's surely counting on someone giving him a new robe this year.

Smartly styled new Chesterfield models are being shown in wool for this Christmas, some in hound-tooth checks with half collar of velvet, which is in harmony with new men's wear styling. Others are in solid colors with contrasting welting.

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