

Satellites and Sidearms Top Toy Outlook for 1958

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NEW YORK — (NEA) — Space will be the big thing under 1958's Christmas trees. But in winning a child's fancy and wooing a parent's purchase, it's a toss-up between outer space and the old-fashioned western variety.

That's how the nation's toy buyers, who anticipate no recession in their industry, see the Yuletide picture nine months in advance. They base their forecast on the 10-day American Toy Fair in New York, where a highly flushed young visitor neatly covered both sides of the prediction.

Confronted with the vast crop of new toys, this lad glued an eye to a \$14.95 educational telescope for a quick peek at the canals

on the moon. And while he looked, he kept one hand clasped on his trusty six-shooter.

It's simply that toys reflect current events, toy-maker Al Gilbert Jr. says in explaining the birth of new gadgets.

"When a new weapon is announced, it almost immediately becomes a toy. Children were pored with space helmets before half their parents even found out what they were," he says.

"When Sputnik went up, space stations, flying saucers, satellites and rockets immediately began to orbit on the toy horizon."

Young Galileos will welcome a planetarium, charts telling them of the stars and games that reveal worlds on other planets. Spinning satellites, mobile rocket launchers and other missiles continue the trend in scientific toys.

But little girls who would rather spin a curl for dolly than a Sputnik aren't overlooked. They can set up a beauty parlor with a new set that includes a running water tap and a hair dryer that works.

Topping the wee lady's coiffure will be millinery that the little girls make from a kit. And if there is a tear in the doll's latest high fashion chemise, Little Mother can sew it with a portable sewing machine.

Dolls themselves are growing up, averaging about eight inches, and one firm has joined hands with a pattern company so the dolls' dresses are twins of their mistresses.

The world in miniature even has a new home—a \$10.95 frame affair that goes together 12 different ways to make such things as a zoo, corral, radar tower or tent.

Miniature juke boxes that light up, pegboard play tiles, building sets, a shooting gallery equipped with cork bullets, robot hands and an electric shaver for boys



EYES ON THE MOON: Two youngsters at the American Toy Fair in New York line up a junior-size telescope for a look at outer space. The 40-power scope can track satellites.

will keep the kids happy—for a while anyway.

For little girls who have everything an East Coast firm has wrapped a doll carriage in mink for a \$3,000 surprise.

And if that doesn't keep them happy, there is a dynamiting set that "blows up everything harmlessly."

But behind the sparkle in a child's eye at getting a new toy is the serious world of manufacturing.

Highly competitive, the men and women in the toy world feel secure in the thought that "children always want toys to play with."

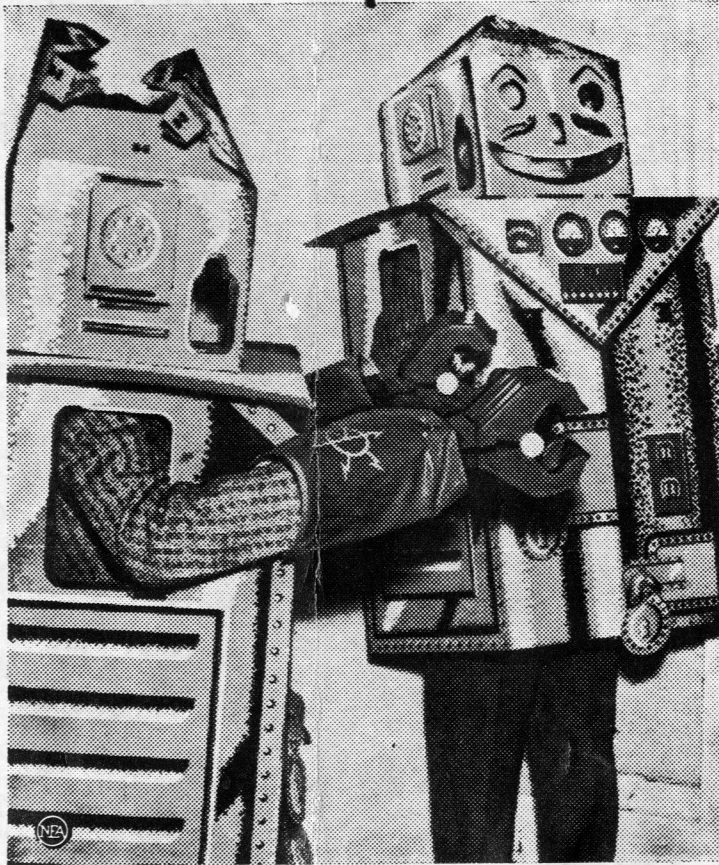
Even TV viewing can't cut into playtime, according to the president of the Toy Manufacturers Association. TV shows have created a demand for new toys, in fact.

The toy manufacturers are enthusiastic about 1958 sales, lanky Robert Muessel says. As association president he keeps a finger on the pulse of the one and a half billion dollar industry that employs 70,000 persons.

"We are stepping up production in our South Bend plant," Muessel said indicating the industry's reaction to the current recession.

"I am sure other toy manufacturers are, too."

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EYES ON THE EARTH: Junior can dress up like a mechanical man and pretend he's just arrived from another planet in these "men of steel" outfits previewed at the toy fair.

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