

Hand-Held Electronic Games Play Ball With Whole Family

Until a couple of years ago, if dad wanted to play with a toy he waited for his child to leave the room. But since 1977, he's been playing with toys out in the open, and often competing with mom and the whole family.

They're playing with hand-held electronic games, the toy sensation of the Eighties. More than 15

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million were sold in 1979, and they'll be a conspicuous bulge in Santa's sack this Christmas.

Hand-held electronics combine the playability - action, complexity and sound - of TV video games with the grains and portability of pocket calculators.

Making it all possible is the microprocessor - a tiny sliver of silicon that can receive, store and retrieve information for later use.

It can pack thousands of circuits into a chip smaller than a dime. Among their functions they control a game's numbers and "blips," LED (light-emitting diode) displays like those of a pocket calculator.

In 1977 toymakers offered less than a dozen hand-held electronic games. This Christmas there'll be more than 400.

One of them, Sears Team Play

Football, has controls for two players. The offense is shown as a blip of light that runs, passes, kicks or goes for a field goal. The defense can intercept, blitz the quarterback, score safeties and tackle. Or a single player can compete against the built-in computer. There are sound effects, too; referee whistles and a cheer after a score.

For summer-sports fans there's

Sears low-cost (about \$11) Hip-Pocket Baseball with electronic sounds and flashing lights. The pitcher throws a LED "ball"; the batter pushes a button to "swing." Lights also mimic the hit ball and players rounding the bases.

With this much electronic action under the Christmas tree, don't be surprised to find Santa still there on Christmas morning, pushing buttons to throw the "bomb."

Hollywood Christmas

Parade

Gene Autry, celebrating his 50th anniversary in entertainment this year, has been named Grand Marshal of the 49th annual Hollywood Christmas Parade airing as a two-hour holiday special Wednesday, December 3 at 10 a.m. on WBTV, Channel 3.

Bob Eubanks and Lee Meriwether co-host the glittering holiday parade, featuring more than 100 motion picture television and recording stars in Hollywood's biggest annual yuletide salute.

Among the stars set to participate are: Cindy Williams, "Laverne & Shirley"; Cathy Lee Crosby, "That's Incredible"; John Schneider, "Dukes of Hazzard"; Charlene Tilton, "Dallas"; Susan Richardson and Adam Rich, "Eight Is Enough"; Danny Thomas, "I'm A Big Girl Now"; Buddy Ebsen, "Barnaby Jones"; Rhonda Fleming, Lawrence Welk, Ed McMahon, Carmen Zapata, Kellee Patterson, Melissa Gilbert and Michael Young.

In addition, nearly two-dozen floats, many of them representing motion picture companies, will take part in the festivities. Some 22 marching bands and 15 equestrian units will also travel the parade route, winding through famed Sunset and Hollywood Blvds.

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