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A BUMPER YEAR FOR NEW TOY LAUNCHES AT THE 2003 CANADIAN TOY ASSOCIATION (CTA) CANADIAN TOY AND HOBBY FAIR

JANUARY 25 TO 27, 2003 METRO TORONTO CONVENTION CENTRE

Toronto, January 13, 2003... Imagine telepathic games, wacky magic characters that dance in your hand, bricks that let kids build their own houses, and jigsaw puzzles that make images move. The toy industry has broken new barriers to turn the impossible into child's play. Come see for yourself at the biggest Canadian Toy Association (CTA) Canadian Toy & Hobby Fair in years.

This year, the Media Sneak Preview is held Saturday, January 25, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the Toronto Metro Convention Centre, 255 Front Street West. Media are invited to bring their children. This industry trade fair is closed to the public.

Here is where inventors, toy manufacturers, distributors and importers gather to showcase what they hope will be the hottest toys, crafts, games and hobbies of 2003-04. The annual CTA Toy and Hobby Fair is the largest in Canada and attracts buyers from chains and specialty stores from across the country and the world.

With more exhibitors than in the previous years, there are a lot more new toy launches and more contenders for hot toy of the year. There are also more photo opportunities, anniversaries, mascots, and surprises. Here is just a small sample of some of the things you'll see.

Jumping collectibles: The craze to play it, trade it, and collect it keeps on growing. There are lots of new collectibles poised to get in on the action, including Mighty Beanz, little wacky characters that magically hop and dance in your hand.

If you build it, it will come alive: The sky is the limit with this generation of building toys that knows no boundaries. Among the innovations ready to land on store shelves in 2003 are Lego sets that you bring to life, an ultra-strong magnetic building set called SuperMag, and Nak-Nak, an unusual new stacking challenge.

Property taxes to be determined: The to-be-unveiled breakthrough Cool Blocks are strong interlocking soft bricks that lets kids construct and play in their own house.

Where were you when the Berlin Wall came down?: Twenty years later, the questions have changed, but the demand for trivia games remains as strong as ever. Preview the 20th Anniversary Trivial Pursuit Edition and time-travel back over the past two decades. And while in the time warp, check out new retro trivia and card games, like those based on the Andy Griffith Show, the Three Stooges, and I Love Lucy.

Speaking of anniversaries: Other birthdays of note at the Fair include Crayola's celebration of its 100.th And Air Hogs marks 100 years of powered flight.

A Canadian ritual thrives: Playing board games is a favorite past-time in Canada. Look for a large new crop of inventive games to fuel the tradition, like the all-Canadian Dare-to-Dream, made for the 21st century. Player will flex their skills with new mind-benders like Telepaths where you need to think the same to win the game, and Simalarius in which you draw it like you saw it.

Today's kids are Generation S for Smart: See how toy makers have raised the bar as a result. I.e., Gobblet puts real strategy into tic-tac-toe. Take 4 is a crossword puzzle-like game that demands quick thinking. Junior Enigmages has players thinking visually. And be warned: Advanced new learning toys, like Junior Explorer Globe and Pharaoh-theme wooden train sets, are preparing preschoolers to take over the world.

Doll-ightful: New stunning Canadian "Little Ladies" Paper Dolls, MapleLea Dolls representing every part of Canada, and ultra-realistic baby dolls are just a few of the new contenders ready to steal a girl's heart.

Some beautiful friendships: Primemotion marries jigsaws with action for the first hockey puzzles in which images change to create action sequences. Fashion and toys meet to create Funky Flashers that can be worn on

everything from sweaters to ears thanks to their rare earth magnets. Babar's kingdom of Celesteville meets Canada. Spinning tops merge with high-tech advances and more...

Founded in 1932, the CTA is Canada's national association serving the interests of more than 120 toy, game, hobby and seasonal product companies. The 2003 Canadian Toy and Hobby Fair runs from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. January 25; from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. January 26 and from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on January 27.