

Family Sociologist Offers Toy Buying Advice

BY BARBARA MILLER
Lycoming Co. Correspondent
WILLIAMSPORT — "Stick your finger in the doll's eye," advised Dr. James Van Horn, a family sociologist from Penn State University.

Van Horn, responsible for an Associated Press column that reaches 2½ million people, advised approximately 60 women on toy selection at Fall Homemakers Day on Oct. 29 at the Genetti Lycoming Hotel in Williamsport.

Van Horn, father of five children, maintained he wasn't being sadistic when he issued the above advice, but was imitating what a small child would do with a doll. If an eyelid falls off, or one eye remains closed forever, he said, then it is not a doll you want to buy. He advocated moving the

arms and legs to see if they remained attached.

"Try to put on the eyes of a child when you buy a toy," Van Horn suggested.

With 150,000 different kinds of toys on the market today and with an additional 3,000 to 4,000 being introduced each year, choosing toys is no longer a simple matter, Van Horn observed. He added that toys are big business. According to Van Horn, combined sales at the retail level is \$12 billion yearly with most of the money spent from September to Christmas.

Van Horn stressed the importance of play and the necessity of buying well chosen toys. He said play is a distraction for most adults, but for a child, it is serious business.

"Toys are the tools of a child's

business . . . You wouldn't send a neurosurgeon off to the discount store to look for the cheapest tools," he observed.

When buying toys, you need to consider the kind of toy, the child's age, ability, and what the toy means to a child, Van Horn said. Shoppers should also keep in mind whether the toy is safe, whether it will teach the child new skills, and the appearance of the toy.

Toys today are far safer than 15 years ago, Van Horn said, and added that name brand toys are usually safer because they have been subjected to numerous tests. For children under three he advised making sure there were no small parts that come off and checking for sharp edges. Many imported metal toys are not safe, he said. Reading the instructions on the box often helps to determine if a toy is safe.

Van Horn said he "wasn't into" educational toys since he believed children learn from any toy, but recommended the housewares department of a store for sturdy, low-cost toys. A good quality wooden spoon, a pie pan (if you can stand it, he said), and a rubber spatula for children who are teething, are excellent toys for children.

Opening the box the toy comes in and checking the toy in the store before you buy it is an acceptable

practice, but Van Horn suggested asking permission from a sales person first. If permission is denied, he advised trying another store.

"If you're going to spend \$20 for a toy, you have a right to inspect it," he maintained.

When selecting board games, "stick to names you recognize," Van Horn stressed. Board games based on a current TV series often don't hold children's attention, he added.

Get input from parents when buying a toy, Van Horn urged, noting that parents know the child's capabilities and needs better than anyone else. He advocated sticking to brand names for toys that would last and steering away from battery operated toys. He especially favored child powered toys for the younger children because they encourage use of imagination and

because when batteries go dead a child can get frustrated. He told listeners to imagine how they'd feel if their car battery went dead and through no fault of their own wasn't replaced for a period of days or weeks.

Van Horn concluded with a slide presentation of toys currently on the market. Toys to hug are big this year, he said, attributing the trend in part to more mothers working outside the home.

Eleanor Yarrison, Lycoming County Extension home economist, demonstrated how to make a colorful fabric Christmas tree without sewing. The afternoon session featured a slide presentation entitled "Around the World" by Anna Mae Lehr, retired extension home economist from Columbia County.

The Fall Homemakers Day was sponsored by the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service.



Dr. James Van Horn, a family sociologist from Penn State, advises parents on toy selection for Christmas.

Lancaster 4-H Exchange Club

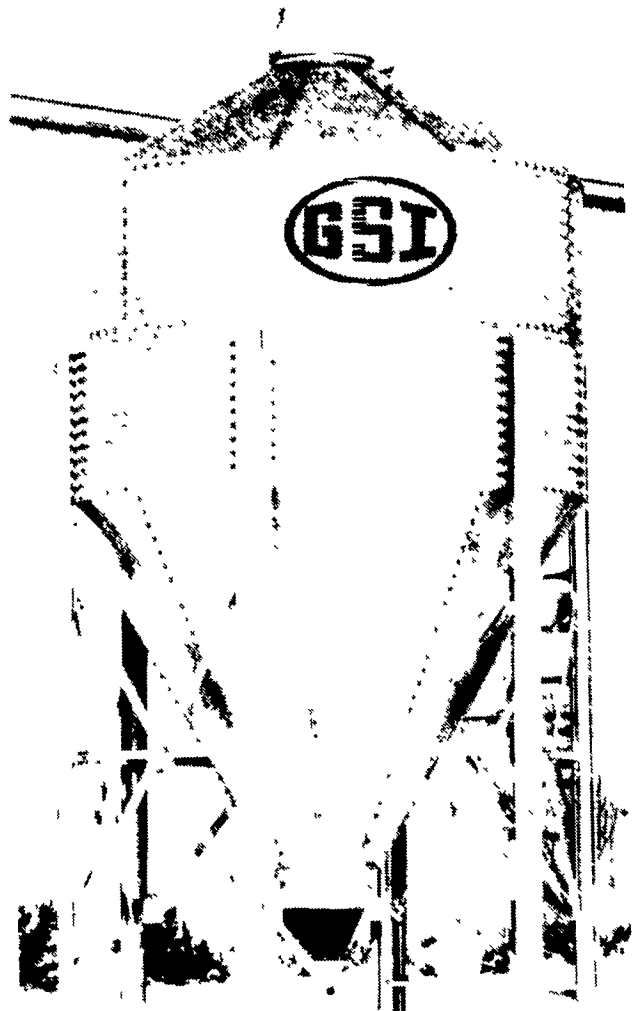
The Lancaster County 4-H Exchange Club is hosting a family movie night on Saturday, Nov. 15 beginning at 7:30 p.m. The featured movie is "Smith Family Robinson." A \$1.50 donation is

requested.

It is being held in the Farm and Home Center, Arcadia Road, Lancaster. This event is open to the public.

TRUCKLOAD SALE

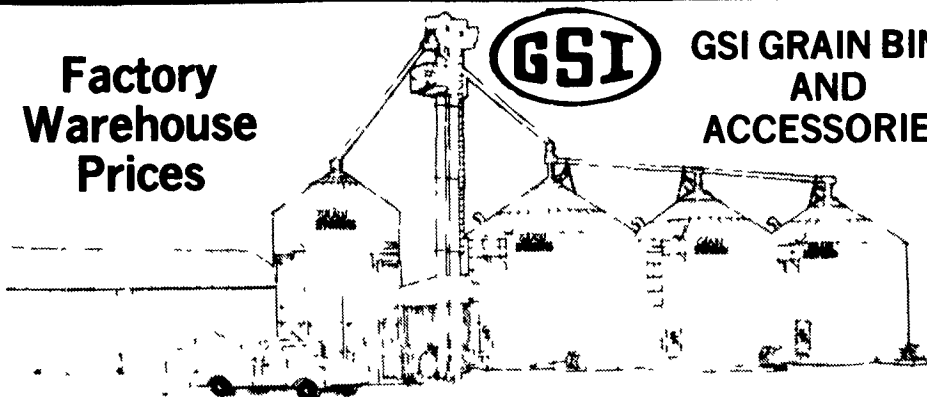
FLEX BOOT **LADDERS**
AGITATORS **GSI** **AUGERS**
PNEUMATIC **SLIDE**
FILL KITS **VALVES**
FEED BINS



IT PAYS TO BUY FROM A FULL LINE GRAIN EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTOR

Factory Warehouse Prices

GSI **GSI GRAIN BINS AND ACCESSORIES**



HAVE A BREAKDOWN? NEED GRAIN EQUIPMENT PARTS?

Call Us For:

- Bearings
- Auger Flighting
- Auger Tubing
- Power Units
- Sprockets
- Roller Chain
- Drive Shafts
- Electrical Parts For Dryers
- Moisture Tester
- Flang Rings
- Flang Clamps
- Adjustable Elbows
- Bracket Elevator Accessories
- Aeration Fan Units
- Metal & Plastic Flexible Down Spouts

We Ship UPS Same Day

★ FULL LINE PARTS DEPARTMENT

★ WE SELL, SERVICE & INSTALL

EMHERR EQUIPMENT, INC.

RD 1, Rt. 272 S., Herrville Rd., Willow Street, PA 17584

Phone 717-464-3321 or Toll Free: 800-732-0053 Serving the Industry For Over 25 Yrs.



automatic farm systems

608 Evergreen Rd., Lebanon, PA 17042

(717) 274-5333

Check Our Low Prices Before You Buy