

nothing like a doll

Toys from the Humane Society of the United States come with a message this holiday season. The animal protection organization provides a booklet with the stuffed dogs and cats, explaining proper care for real pets.

Many pets are given up by owners who can't or won't take care of them, says John A. Hoyt, president of the Humane Society. "Often," he says, "the reasons stem from lack of education about a pet's needs and an owner's responsibilities."

The booklet that accompanies the toy animals, which are manufactured by Determined Productions of San Francisco, introduces children to the ideas of care and kindness and reminds adults about the importance of taking responsibility for pets, he says.

A portion of the purchase price for the toys goes to the Humane Society.

ACTION FIGURES called Super-Naturals feature holography, a process that makes three-dimensional appear to change images, from Tonka. Its LionHeart, for example, can be either a fierce-looking lion or a noble king.

Holograms are also featured in Hasbro's line of eight Visionaries action figures.

A plush 9-inch doll called Bah Koo comes in a package with a 32-page hardcover book that tells its story. The 18th-century Oriental legend gives Bah Koo the magical power to devour nightmares, literally, say the publishers, St. Martin's Press.

And, of course, soon after any or all of these dolls are unwrapped and hugged, they may need help. Enter the Witty Bitty Cast Kit, with a roll of cotton padding, a roll of plaster bandage and "X-ray film."

Associated Press

How candy cane custom originated

Researchers give credit for the shape of candy canes — what would a Christmas tree be without some? — to the choirmaster of the cathedral in Cologne, Germany, who, in 1670, start-

ed handing out white canes to children who attended service.

The stripes on the canes came much later, about the turn of this century.

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