

# NOW dubs some toys sexist

By SHERRY KAHAN

Christine Novak is a member of the National Organization for women who feels pretty strongly that some toys on the market need a "sexist" tag hung on them as well as a price tag.

These include things like doctor and nurse kits, fashion dolls, especially the new one that grows breasts, action toys that stress the male role and some career games.

Mrs. Novak, who recently participated in an hour of picking an area Kmart to help her NOW group make its point, explained her feelings by telling a brief story.

"I once watched a girl playing with her nurse kit and asked her if she was the doctor."

The child responded, "No. I can't be a doctor. I'm a girl."

Mrs. Novak noted that the girl, "had never seen or heard of a woman doctor."

She added, "A picture of a girl is on the nurse kit and a picture of a boy is on the doctor kit. The doctor kit has the real equipment like the stethoscope. These toys are programming girls into thinking they can only become nurses, and boys into thinking they can only become doctors."

ANOTHER GIFT that is an anathema to NOW is Growing Up Skipper. It is not her arms, legs or curly locks which exhibit growth, but her breasts.

"You turn her arm and she grows breasts," explained Mrs. Novak. "I've read that little girls have wrenched their arms trying to imitate this doll. Little boys are playing with them as though it were some kind of a dirty thing. NOW thinks the development of a girl's mind should receive as much attention as her bosom."

"If they brought out a boy doll with a leg you twist to simulate growth during puberty, men would have a fit."

The board of directors of these companies are usually men, and they try to figure out what women will buy. We have to let them know when we don't like their products."

MRS. NOVAK also questioned different marketing for the same toy. In one case the toy is packaged as vacuum cleaner with the advice "play vacuum like mommy."

"The same toy is also brought out for boys telling them to play lawnmower like daddy," reported Mrs. Novak. "This is stereotyping and not giving the child a choice. A study done by Yale University indicated that if a boy's picture is on the box, it will be bought for a boy, and for a girl if a girl's picture is there."

## Diabetes classes set

A winter series of diabetes classes offered by the Oakland County health department will begin on Jan. 19 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The free classes, held weekly for five weeks, will be offered at the South Oakland Health Center, 2775 Greenfield, Southfield. Register by calling the health department education office.

The classes are taught by public health nurses and a nutritionist. Topics include the nature of the disease, dietary management and medications and suggestions for coping with everyday problems.

Each person attending must present a physician's written statement that he or a member of his family has diabetes. Classes will be limited to 20 persons.

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Mrs. Novak also zeroed in on action toys, complaining that pool games and hockey games for children bear the picture of males only.

A sign carried by one of the youngsters during the picketing reminded the public that "A girl can pitch too."

Toys with these pictures "show a girl she should not be interested in action," claimed Mrs. Novak.

Pictures of girls always adorn doll feeding equipment, mop sets and other happy household equipment, she said. "It puts across the idea that girls have to iron and clean while boys can go play hockey."

BARBIE DOLLS and their vast needs for clothing and equipment also give NOW members considerable distress.

"We are concerned with the way they push expensive fashions and make-up with these dolls," said Mrs. Novak. "It pushes girls into thinking that in order to be feminine they must wear high heels and make-up."

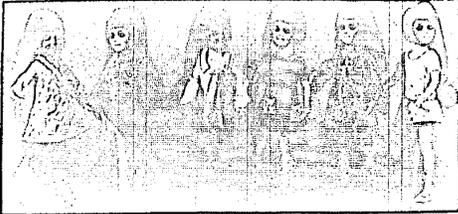
"People spend a fortune keeping up with Barbie and her boots, townhouse and camper. These dolls are too materialistic. We don't want girls to grow up and think of themselves as

Barbie dolls. They seem so empty-headed."

Books currently reflect non-sexist attitudes, according to Mrs. Novak. "I'm happy to see this."

But then again, some of the career games on the market offer girls the choice of being only a ballerina, a nurse or a stewardess.

"In the Your America quiz game covering 200 years of American history, there are only five females included," said Mrs. Novak. "One of them is Lyndon Johnson's dog, Her."



Fashion dolls are considered sexist by some liberated mothers.



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