

Tickle Me Elmo in high demand, but shoppers not laughing

NEW YORK (AP) — Surprised by soaring demand, the maker of Tickle Me Elmo is flying the dolls instead of waiting for a slow boat from China. You'll be hard-pressed to find the latest Nintendo, too. Barbie on CD-ROM is one as well.

Barely one week into the holiday shopping season, the blood pressure is rising among moms and dads competing for the hottest Christmas toys.

"Parents are breaking down doors for some of these toys," said Frank Reysen, editor of *Parents* magazine. "There's not just one hit this year, but a couple that everyone wants."

As in the Cabbage Patch Kids craze of 1983 and the frenzy over Holiday Barbie last year, the parents are using guerrilla-shopper tactics. Lines are lining up by the hundreds before stores rumored to have the toys. In a phenomenon satirized in the new Arnold Schwarzenegger movie "Jingle All the Way," they're tugging and brawling to get a toy after the doors open.

At a Target store in Davenport, Iowa, a clerk handing an Elmo doll to a customer saw it intercepted by another customer.

"Grown people are willing to go pretty far for one of these dolls," said Jen Smith, a mother who couldn't find an Elmo at New York's FAO Schwarz store. "It's pretty crazy."

Stores can't keep Tickle Me Elmo in stock. It's a plush doll based on the Sesame Street character that giggles when you press its tum-butt. It sells for under \$30.

Tyco Toys Inc. is flying the dolls from factories in China to the United States to get them here faster. The company will have shipped 1 million dolls between its July debut and Christmas and still doesn't expect to meet demand.

"You can never plan a phenomenon," said Neil Friedman, who heads Tyco's Preschool division.

Also scarce is Nintendo 64, the new video game system that exploits advances in computer chip and software design to create 3-D play. The system costs about \$200, and each of its eight games costs about \$70. Many of the 1.2 million machines the company allotted for Christmas in this country have already been sold.

"It's too bad, because my boys are going to be disappointed if I can't find it anywhere else," said James Lynch of Nashua, N.H., a dad



AP/Tonia Cowan

who has been searching for a Nintendo since the weekend.

Even parents who succeed aren't necessarily gloating.

dauer said.

Barry's main focus for the spring will be teamwork.

"I want everyone to feel the love that I feel for The Battalion and that what they're doing matters," she said. "I want to create a group of hard-working and dedicated people who feel a strong sense of pride for the paper."

Bob Wegener, general manager of Student Publications and a journalism instructor, has worked with and taught Barry.

"She's got a real sharp mind for journalism," Wegener said. "And she's a great leader and teacher."

Barry is known for being enthusiastic and approachable.

Dr. Randy Sumpter, an assistant journal-

ism professor, is currently teaching Barry in an editing class.

"She has a very high energy level," Sumpter said. "She's the sort of person that would gladly teach as well as learn."

Most of the desk editors have been selected for the spring and are anticipating a productive semester with Barry.

Kristina Buffin, next semester's sports editor and a senior journalism major, said Barry has many good ideas.

"She'll do a good job and keep the legacy of editor going strong," Buffin said.

Barry said she will be busy but is looking forward to next semester.

"I just hope I'm able to give back to the paper what it's given me," Barry said.

BARRY

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"She has a true passion for The Battalion and genuinely cares about making the paper better," Collier said. "She's really people-oriented and wants to create a more unified staff. She's always so willing to learn anything 2-0 when and help out."

Michael Landauer, current editor in chief and a senior journalism major, is a close friend of Barry, with whom he shares ideas and knowledge.

"I think she's going to continue the improvements we've seen and bring it down to a personal level for each staffer," Lan-

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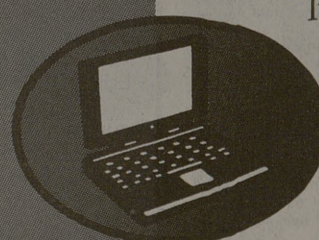
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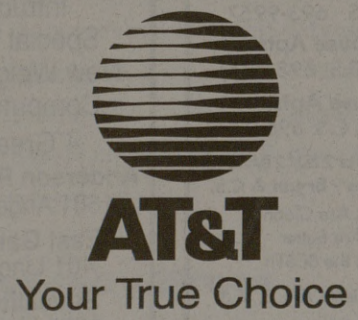
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