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## 1970s toys get new life in OHA toy exhibit

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Hart Seely / The Post-Standard



David Lassman/The Post-Standard

TOM HUNTER stands near a G.I. Joe display from a previous toy exhibit at the Onondaga Historical Association.

Following up on past exhibits -- the "Nifty Fifties" and "Psychedelic Sixties" -- the downtown Onondaga Historical Association Museum is showcasing "Toys From Your Childhood: The Sensational Seventies" through March 27. Exhibit curator Tom Hunter spoke with Hart Seely:

What's the star of this show?

Probably the "Star Wars" action figures. "Star Wars" came out in 1977.

We're talking Darth Vader, right?

Yes. In fact, we have a really cool, mini-figure setup collection. It's inside a black plastic Darth Vader-head carrying case. It's open, so you can see inside the Darth Vader head, which has all these little figures.

Wow. Where did you find that?

Most everything we've borrowed from members of the community. We put out a call. ... Along with the carrying case, we have Luke Skywalker and Han Solo action figures -- at least, I think it's Han Solo -- in their flying machines, plus the two robots.

Did you ever have "Star Wars" toys like that?

No. When they came out, I was graduating from high school. My action figures were mostly '60s and '70s -- I had G.I. Joes. I had Johnny West. I had Chief Cherokee. Those were my favorites. I had a lot of G.I. Joes.

"Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots?" Got 'em?

### The details

**What:** "Toys From Your Childhood: The Sensational Seventies" exhibit.

**Where:** Onondaga Historical Association Museum, 321 Montgomery St., Syracuse.

**When:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; now through March 27.

**Admission:** Free.

**Information:** [www.cnyhistory.org](http://www.cnyhistory.org) or call 428-1864.

Yes. We do.

Do they still work, or did one get knocked out?

They still work. Some folks who lent the toys are collectors, and they've collected items from their childhood.

So you can't fight them, because they're collectors items.

Right.

What other big sellers?

Out of the top 10 toys of the '70s, we have "Uno," "Simon" and "Hungry Hungry Hippos."

I don't remember "Hungry Hungry Hippos."

It's a game with marbles. You must put a hippo into the center. They have big mouths, and you try to capture as many marbles as you can. Up to four players. We also have G.I. Joe -- with the fuzzy head. In the '70s version, he has a full beard.

G.I. Joe grew a beard?

Yes, and a fuzzy head. We also have TV show figures from "Happy Days," "The Waltons," "The Six Million Dollar Man" and "The Bionic Woman."

Who from "Happy Days?" The Fonz?

Yeah. I think he's the only one they did.

Why would they even bother with the others? Who would want Richie Cunningham?

Yeah. The Fonz was the coolest... We also have a Kiss Lunch Box Transistor Radio.

Wow. You must keep it under lock and key.

And we have the Beatles' "Let it Be" album.

Wait a minute -- that's no toy.

Well, we kind of bent the rules on some things. We consider them to be '70s pop culture items. We have some disco record albums and some Bee Gees 45s. They go with that record player you would have gotten for Christmas.

Any "Brady Bunch?"

No "Brady Bunch." But we do have both Sonny and Cher.

You've got action figures of Sonny and Cher?

Yeah.

What's Cher's hair color?

Dark. And Sonny has the mustache.

Is he half her size?

No. They're pretty close in size.

That's not to scale.

Yeah. ... We have Chrissy and Velvet dolls and a Dawn doll. And we have a couple Evel Knievels -- an action figure and a stunt cycle... It's inside the box... We have some games: Aggravation and Rack-O.

What kind of reactions do you get from people?

Very nostalgic. People come in and point. "I had that!" "I remember that!" They're very nostalgic. That's why we continue to do this. People come in to remember what they had when they were kids.

But you're still waiting on a Nerf Ball?

If someone has one, they haven't come forward yet.

Wait -- how about Malibu Barbie?

Well, no, we have one of her friends. Barbie showed up in the "Nifty Fifties." She came out in 1959, and she showed up again with us in the '60s. I figured we didn't want to keep bringing out Barbie -- even though there was Malibu Barbie. But, well, we don't have the Malibu Barbie in this exhibit.

Any complaints because of that?

Not yet. You know, we probably have 100 toys and games. We went with Chrissy and Velvet because we didn't want to go with Barbie too many times.

You didn't want to go to the Barbie well once too often?

That's exactly right.

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