

Fun on the Road

by Molly Hover, for The Bulletin Special Projects
photos by Kevin Prieto and Kari Mauser

Digital distractions have come a long way from handheld Nintendo Game Boys beeping in kids' hands in the backseat of the car. Nowadays, it is all too easy for parents to give their child an iPad or portable DVD player for long road trips — especially during the holidays.

But what happened to the types of distractions that didn't require batteries to operate? In the digital age, it can be refreshing to give kids games and toys that allow them to be the power source. I took my belief in non-digital games as well as my nostalgia for these toys with me when I visited three local toy stores — Leapin' Lizards, Wonderland Toy Shoppe and Tumbleweed Toys.

The Stores

Ages 2-4

Leapin' Lizards

My journey started with a classic for those who grew up in Bend: Leapin' Lizards, nestled in the heart of downtown. Molly Hungerford, a shop employee, showed me around the shop to her recommendations. We managed to pick three that fit our age categories from the array of toys they have in stock.

www.leapinlizardstoys.com

Wonderland Toy Shoppe

Next on my list was Wonderland Toy Shoppe in the Old Mill District. A myriad of colorful toys and educational games caught my eye as Mandi Mahoney, a Wonderland employee, greeted me. After showing me more than a dozen of the staff's favorite options, we narrowed it down to three.

www.wonderlandtoyshoppe.com

Tumbleweed Toys

South of Bend in the Village at Sunriver, Tumbleweed Toys draws people of all ages through its doors to peruse the endless variety of classic toys and games. Many of the choices promise to be a great fit for just about any kid, including the picks by owner Natalia Bokish.

www.villageatsunriver.com/shopping/directory/items/view/tumbleweed-toys

WATER WOW!

Melissa & Doug | \$9.99

Uses water to draw and practice letters in a non-messy way. Single player.

"One of our most popular travel items."



LOTTO GAME: ANIMALS

The Purple Cow | \$13

Bingo-style lottery game for 2-4 players that uses magnetic animals instead of numbers.

"Perfect all-in-one game."



SUPERPEGS MINI

Miniland | \$24

Place super-sized pegs into the grid to match the included picture cards, or create other imaginative designs.

"This is great for travel — it's not only entertaining, but also helps with motor skills, shapes and colors."



Keeping children entertained (without going digital) during holiday travel.

Ages 5-8

FLIP TO WIN WOODEN GAMES: HANGMAN

Melissa & Doug | \$14.99

Classic hangman game (for two or more players) that uses a wooden board and dry-erase marker.

"Something great parents can do with their kid while still focusing on driving."



MAGNETIC MOSAICS JUNIOR

The Orb Factory | \$9.99

Uses foam squares to create original or templated mosaic by number designs that are reusable.

"Learning and craft travel game. Helping them learn colors and numbers."



MAGFORMERS

Magformers LLC | \$26

Durable plastic-covered multi-shaped magnets that can be manipulated into all sorts of structures and designs.

"Get the creativity flowing in a magnetic way that the whole family will enjoy."



Ages 9+

RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC JAM LOGIC GAME

ThinkFun | \$19.99

Like the Rush Hour app, this game uses a scenario on a card that challenges the player to get the red car through the exit without removing the other vehicles on the board.

"All the rage right now. Multiple award winner and brain building maze challenge."



TWIZMO! WORDS

Twizmo! | \$14.99

Three-dimensional word-finding game in easy-to-pack cubes. Two player.

"Word twist on a Rubik's cube."



HANYAMA CAST PUZZLES

Bepuzzled | \$14

Challenging cast metal brainteaser puzzles. Take the pieces apart, if you can, and then try to put them back together.

"Determination will be tested in the quest to get these travel-sized puzzles solved. Everyone will want a chance at it."

