



Visitors enter mind-teasing maze at new Children's Museum exhibit

By REBECCA BIBBS
The Indianapolis News

Mental stimulation is the name of the game for a puzzling new exhibit opening at the Children's Museum, 3000 N. Meridian St.

"Puzzles Old and New" opens Friday and runs through April 1 at the museum's Spurlock Gallery on the third level.

"Some people may think it's jigsaw puzzles and that's all . . . but the focus is on mechanical puzzles," said Mike Hyer, media relations coordinator for the museum.

The exhibit, however, is not intended to be all fun and games.

"We're hoping that there's a little history involved, too, because what their parents and grandparents did as children will be represented here," Hyer said.

Teamwork also is essential.

"The other thing we're trying to encourage is to have families come through here and solve the puzzles together," Hyer said.

Curators compiled about 750 mind and body teasers in 10 categories from both the personal collection of California businessman Jerry Slocum and the museum's collection

for the exhibit. Each category will contain samples of puzzles at three levels of difficulty.

"We introduce them to the whole concept of problem-solving," Hyer said.

Visitors will need to muster all their skill in order to wind their way through a maze as they view the 10 areas.

And for those who are unable to unravel the secrets of some puzzles, hints are provided.

The Minds On Gym, which will include an ever-changing maze, provides visitors ages 10-18 with a mental workout. The exhibit is a preview component of the Center for Exploration, scheduled to open in May.

Teams of young mental heavyweights must match wits against The Puzzler, who will create obstacles in the maze.

"The exhibit is intended to emphasize real-life daily puzzles or problem-solving that we all do, such as figuring out how to fold a map," Hyer said.

The exhibit will help young people understand problems for what they really are — puzzles with one or more solutions.

"The thing is, a lot of these are tricks like magicians' tricks, which are really puzzles," Hyer said.

One of the most difficult puzzles for museum workers was that some of the items are mounted permanently in such a way that they are not easily seen or used by young people. "One of the problems with the traveling exhibit is it wasn't really made

to be handled by a lot of children," Hyer said.

"Puzzles Old and New" also will include workshops on puzzle

design and construction, problem-solving activities and a puzzle store featuring some of the mind-benders found in the exhibit.

The exhibit is free with museum admission and will be open during regular museum hours. For more information on this and other Children's Museum programs, call 924-5431.

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WEEKEND'S PICKS

Music, museum, or movie



M-m-m good: Celtic music, a plethora of puzzles and a 1988 award-winning Russian movie.

■ The music of Ireland deserves a listen before *that day* in March. The 1990 Celtic Con-

cert Series comes to The Warren Performing Arts Center at 8 p.m. Saturday.

■ More than 750 mechanical brain-teasers await visitors to *Puzzles Old and New* at The Children's Museum Saturday through April 1. This mysterious maze of mind-benders includes the collection of California puzzle expert Jerry Slocum.

■ *Little Vera*, the Venice Film Festival's Critic's Choice winner, is also the pick of the Indiana Film Society's 1990 Winter Film Series, for its opener at 8 p.m. Saturday and 6 p.m. Sunday in the University Place Conference Center at IUPUI.