



# fun!

By Laura Wahler

## THE STRONG

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PLAY

ROCHESTER

Recognized as the No. 1 family museum in the country by readers of Family Fun magazine, the Strong is a staple for family fun in our region. Unlike many museums where visitors can “look but don’t touch,” kids at the Strong are encouraged not only to touch, but to create, imagine, discover and play with the exhibits.

On the main level, the Wegmans Super Kids Market is one of the more popular permanent exhibits. Kids get to push their own cart, make all the grocery-buying decisions, and scan their own items at checkout. It’s all in good fun: Store shelves are stocked with toy food items specially designed for small hands and an eternal shelf life. And really, who doesn’t enjoy watching their kids load up their cart with 5 gallons of chocolate milk, while other people’s children quietly select a healthy mix of fruits, vegetables and lean proteins?

Upstairs, the iconic toys of the National Toy Hall of Fame are on display in an open, interactive gallery. Continue on through the double doors to see items from the world’s most comprehensive collection of toys, dolls, and video games – a fun opportunity to show your kids the difference between their childhood toys and your own.

### »» WHAT’S NEW:

Back by popular demand, the LEGO Castle Adventure exhibit is open now through Feb. 1.

### »» AAA DISCOUNT:

Show your membership card to save \$1 on admission for each person in your party.

## SCIENCENTER

A HANDS-ON SCIENCE MUSEUM

ITHACA

An absolute must-do for families in the Finger Lakes, the Sciencenter is a delightful way to entertain the little ones on a cold winter day. Kids love its 250+ exhibits and colorful, hands-on activities. Adults love the musical staircase designed like a ginormous piano keyboard.

You’ll all have fun together exploring scientific principles like astronomy, health and wellness and sustainability, presented in simple concepts for easy comprehension. The



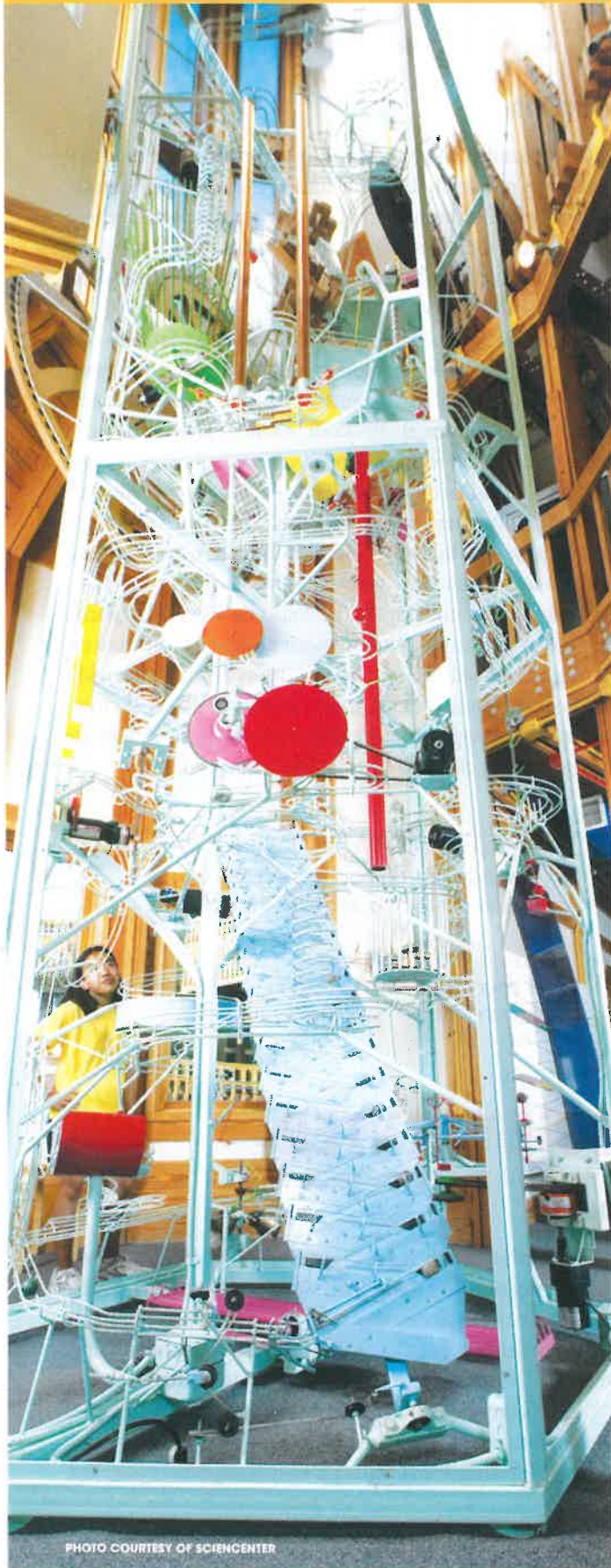


PHOTO COURTESY OF SCIENCENTER

tide pool touch tank is a particular favorite among Sciencenter regulars – just be sure to check its hours before you go.

If the opportunity presents itself, take advantage of a crisp and clear early winter day to explore the Sagan Planet Walk, a scale model of the solar system that extends three-quarters of a mile from the Commons in downtown Ithaca to the Sciencenter.

### » IF YOU GO:

The Sciencenter is closed most Mondays.

### » AAA DISCOUNT:

Save \$1 on admission when you show your AAA card.

## SIX FLAGS

### GREAT ESCAPE LODGE & INDOOR WATER PARK QUEENSBURY

When the weather outside is frightful, this 200-room family suite lodge near Lake George features a 38,000-square-foot indoor water park guaranteed to make you forget the frosty forecast. It's always 80 degrees inside this water park, and I predict thrills for all ages with a 100 percent chance of fun.

Want to start off easy? Or, shall I say, "eesi?" Grab a tube and float down the Tak-it-Eesi Creek before you test your balance on the Boogie Bear Surf. Get your thrills on the Avalanche family raft ride, a 382-foot tube that simulates a white-water rafting experience, complete with a 41-foot drop.

On the milder side, kids love blasting each other with the water rifles and the arch jets at the Tall Timbers Treehouse. But listen closely: If dripping wet hair will destroy your 'do, do not – I repeat – do not listen when your kids sweetly ask you to stand still underneath the gigantic water bucket. (Truth be told, that's generally good advice to follow no matter where you go.)

Once the kids have had their fill of the water (and their fingers are wrinkled) join forces with the Guardians and battle the fumbling foes of fun, the Humdrums, in the all-new Adventure Trek: Quest of the Guardians interactive gaming challenge.

### » THIS WINTER:

Look for special events like Holiday in the Lodge now through Dec. 28, and the popular New Year's Extravaganza on Dec. 30-31.

### » AAA DISCOUNT:

AAA members, save \$10 off your stay at the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge.