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PLAY METER Magazine

VOLUME 20, No. 8 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY JULY 1994

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LOUISIANA MAY RAISE ANTE, TIGHTEN POKER RULES

Fear of video poker game proliferation in pseudo-truck stops and other locations, combined with a desire for funds to finance the governor's proposed crime package, has led the Louisiana Legislature to consider numerous bills designed to redefine video poker locations and deliver more funds to the state coffers. The proven state money-maker cannot be repealed as some legislators proposed, but higher franchise fees and tighter rules for truck stops in particular could be the outcome if House Bill 419 is adopted.

Rep. Raymond Lalonde (D) sponsored the bill, which would limit truck stops to 50 machines. Such a limit was in place via the video poker rules and regulations formulated by the regulating body, the Louisiana State Police. Challenges to the rules earlier this year resulted in the courts' determining that the State Police did not have the authority to formulate the rules. (See the June issue of Play Meter.) Since the video poker law of 1991 was ambiguous, the rules became unenforceable. Additional legislation is needed to put the bite back into the rules and regulations. Under the proposed bill, truck stops seeking a new license or renewal would have to meet strict requirements, including being in business for at least two years and selling a minimum of 100,000 gallons of fuel a month (45 percent of it diesel).

On a more far-reaching note, the "franchise fee" of 22.5 percent to the state could be raised to 26 percent for small operators with one to three machines and 27.5 percent for operators with over three devices. According to Charles Pasqua, executive director of the Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association, "If the Legislature increases the franchise fee to a figure in excess of 25 percent, it would be outrageous. They're being greedy. Such a fee doesn't give our members enough time to pay their debt service." It is questionable whether taxes will need to be raised since none of the costly crime bills were passing in the June special session, still underway at press time.

MIDWAY ADOPTS REVOLUTIONARY PROMOTION

When it comes to selling the video game *Revolution X*, music isn't the only weapon in Midway Mfg.'s arsenal. The cornerstone of the firm's all-out assault strategy is a unique promotional package featuring the game's legendary rock superstars, Aerosmith. To accompany the impending Aerosmith domestic concert tour that kicks off Aug. 1, Midway is collaborating with distributors, operators, and location owners to offer hundreds of Aerosmith concert tickets, backstage passes, T-shirts, caps, posters, and CDs to be given away at the location level. These items are available from Midway distributors.

This revolutionary media blitz is designed to foster game play and create game awareness. Adding fuel to the flame of interest will be MTV's national coverage, combined with the local media and feature footage of *Revolution X* on wide screens during Aerosmith concerts. Aerosmith recently completed its European tour.

KIDDIE RIDES USA GAINS UL APPROVAL

Kiddie Rides USA has gained Underwriter's Laboratories' approval for its rides manufactured at the new Denver plant. In addition, the company says it is the only ride company to feature seat belts as standard equipment for the past several years. Stuart Heller, president of Kiddie Rides USA, notes that UL approval is "another step forward in achieving a top quality line that is manufactured in the United States. Customers can be assured that our rides will be approved by all municipalities throughout the nation."

ROWE DEBUTS NEW DIAMOND

Rowe distributors were elated when the company introduced its latest "jewel" during its annual distributor meeting in Orlando, Fla., in early June. While Marilyn Monroe look-alikes belted out renditions of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," Joel Friedman and Jerry Gordon donned sequined gowns and flowing wigs to drive home the point that diamonds may indeed be a girl's best friend, but Rowe's new *LaserStar Diamante* (also called the Diamond) is an operator's best friend.

Friedman began the introduction by telling distributors about the four Cs that jewelers use to describe a diamond: cut, clarity, color, carat. He then asked the audience if they could name the four Cs Rowe uses to describe its new Diamond. The response: cashbox, cashbox, cashbox, cashbox.

The new CD jukebox, which Rowe describes as its "crown jewel," is spectacular, said distributors seeing it for the first time. "We led our distributors through a simulated diamond mine; when they emerged they saw the new *LaserStar Diamante*. I can say I've never seen such an enthusiastic response. They loved it!" said Friedman. We'll have some photos and more details next month. By the way, Rowe will grace our August cover and we're fully expecting to see Joel and Jerry "dress" for the occasion.

Gordon has been selected "Man of the Year" by the Amusement and Music Operators Association of New York. He will be honored at the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, N.J., in early August.

SNOOK TO PUBLISH INTERGAME

After 26 years with The World's Fair Ltd., publishers of *EuroSlot, Coin Slot,* and *Park World,* editorial director David Snook has resigned. Trade magazine cohorts Christine Butterworth and Neal Barrington quickly followed suit. The team plans to introduce the first issue of its new international coin-op amusement magazine, InterGame, in September.

LAZER-TRON RECLAIMS RIGHTS TO SUPER BANK-IT

Lazer-Tron, the Pleasanton, Calif.-based redemption and novelty game designer and manufacturer, has reclaimed the rights from Capcom of its popular game, *Super Bank-It.* The company will release a new version, *Super Bank-It II,* in mid-July. The new title has several unique features and play characteristics, including the opportunity for players to win a large jackpot on a single game. *Super Bank-It II* can also be linked to the company's patented Progressive Jackpot system. A conversion kit for those wishing to update their *Super Bank-It* games will be available soon.

In other company news, Lazer-Tron Corp. announced the sale of 1,035,000 shares of its common stock and 65,000 shares of common stock by certain selling shareholders pursuant to an underwritten public offering. The price of the common stock was $8 per share, sold by Van Kasper & Co. as the lead underwriter. A copy of the prospectus for the offering can be obtained from Van Kasper & Co., 50 California St., Suite 2400, San Francisco, CA 94111, (415) 391-5600; or 11661 San Vincente Blvd., Suite 709, Los Angeles, CA 90049, (310) 820-2970.

IFECA STAGES AUCTION AT FUN EXPO

In an effort to prepare first-class market research and educational programs, the International Family Entertainment Center Association will hold a silent auction at the upcoming Fun Expo in Las Vegas, Nev., in October. Items already donated range from a weekend travel package to Las Vegas to a basketball signed by b-ball superstar Charles Barkley. Anyone interested in assisting in this effort can contact auction chairman Gary Warner of Coin Concepts Inc. (908) 390-9009.

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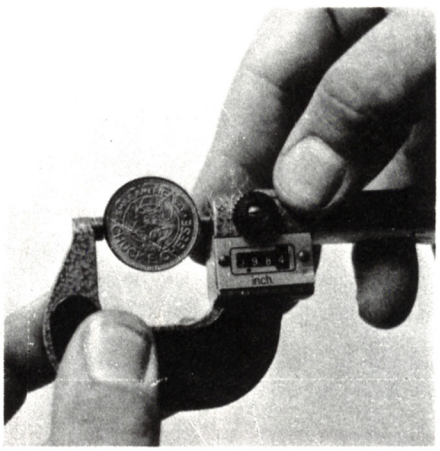

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PLAY METER magazine

Founder	Ralph C. Lally II
Publisher	Carol P. Lally
President	Carol Ann Lally Durand

Editor	Valerie Cognevich
Managing Editor	Bonnie Theard
Associate Editor	Al Rogers
Art Director	Jane Z. Nisbet
Production Assistant	Mary Henderson
Contributing Writers	Irving Blackman, Randy Chilton Shantelle Gaynor, Greg Reeves, Sue Monday, Frank Seninsky, Dave Stubblefield, Rich Holley Paul Virgadamo
Technical Writers	Vic Fortenbach, Randy Fromm
Director of Advertising	Ron Kogos
Advertising Representative	Sumio Oka Tokyo, Japan 3502-0656
Classified Advertising	Carol Lea LeBell
Circulation/Office Manager	Renée C. Pierson

Editorial Offices	P.O. Box 24970 New Orleans, LA 70184
Telephone	(504) 488-7003
FAX	(504) 488-7083

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FEATURES

Family Focus 56

Four articles cover different aspects of family entertainment centers: "Distributors speak out on FECs," "Successful FECs reveal winning formulas," "Risky business: insurance for FECs," and "What puts the 'fun' in family fun centers?" Additional information is supplied by Sue Monday, Paul Virgadamo, and Frank Seninsky, all knowledgeable industry members who share their expertise on the subject.

NANI ready to take off in Ohio 96

The National Amusement Network Inc. and the topic of video gaming dominated the agenda of the recent Ohio Coin Machine Association's annual convention and trade show. OCMA members learned more about the "information superhighway" and the 90-day test planned for the state. Also emphasized: the necessity of building coalitions for future success in the gaming arena.

Technical Topics 120

Troubleshooter extraordinaire is an apt description of Randy Fromm, our resident technical expert. This month he delves into troubleshooting horizontal deflection circuits. Since approximately 80 percent of the power consumed by a video game monitor is controlled by the horizontal output transistor, every technician will value Fromm's advice.

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COVER

The team at Coin Concepts gets into the spirit of the baseball season and its hit game *Home Run Hitter*. At left, top to bottom: Dan Zych, John Kara, Lonny Warner, and Art Warner. At right, top to bottom: Bob Schneider, Jeff Lankiewicz, Stacey Martin, Gary Warner, and little Jessica Warner. Kudos to John Parsekian for the cover photo.

LETTERS

Century Club plans

After five years of intense effort to promote the Half Century Club International, we still find our attendance is dormant. It is apparent that a new approach must be made for the survival of this organization.

At our last gathering during the ACME show in Rosemont, Ill., the regular attendees present decided that a more intense effort should be made to attract the younger element of the coin machine industry.

Since the name Half Century Club seemed to imply that you had to be in the industry 50 years to belong, it was suggested and passed unanimously that we rename our club the Century Club.

This name would be a credit to the coin machine industry for its more than 100 years of spectacular achievements and honoring those who made it possible. By the passage of this resolution, the Century Club is now open to all members who have been active in the coin machine industry at least 25 years.

The next gathering will take place during AMOA in San Antonio on Friday, Sept. 23, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Since the accommodations and refreshments will be provided by Dynamo, it is imperative that we know how many will be there.

Current members and all new interested members, please let us know if you'll be there. Contact me at Williams-Bally/Midway, (312) 961-1000 or FAX (312) 961-1010 or Jim McNeely at Southgate Amusements, (210) 824-9223 or FAX (210) 228-0423.

Steven Kordek
Williams-Bally/Midway
Chicago, IL

A matter of honor

I'm writing in regard to your comment ("From the Editor," Feb. '94, page 10): "Is Clinton any less capable because of the possibility of past infidelities?"

Doesn't honesty and being faithful to your wife show the character of the man? If a man lies and cheats on his wife, why would he be any different with the people and his country?

I am embarrassed with all the lies he has told to the American people. I am embarrassed that he is our president.

Louis C. Peppo
Sterling Services
Livonia, MI

Great issue

Bravo, Play Meter. You covered all the important issues of redemption in your May '94 issue. The reporting was straightforward and informative.

It is important for coin operators to have a complete book of information. It was an honest assessment on all fronts!

Virginia Kauffman
Exidy
Redwood City, CA

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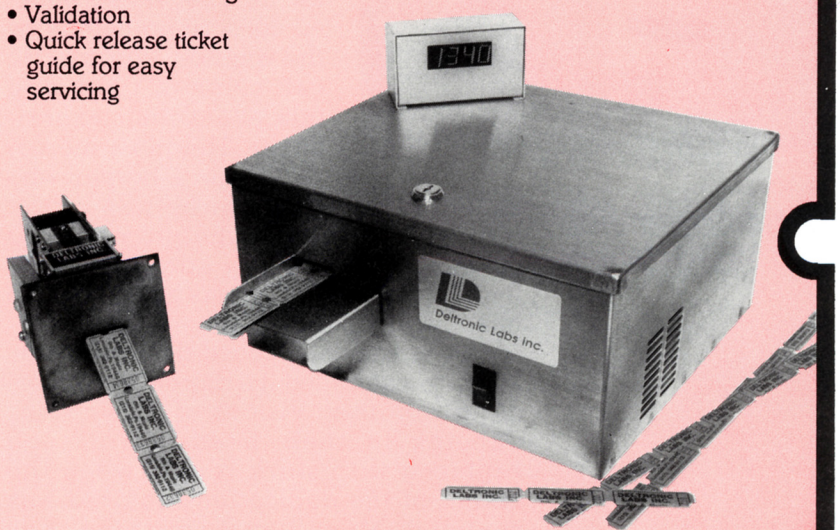

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FROM THE EDITOR

It's not your dad's Oldsmobile

People who have been in the coin machine business at least 10 or 15 years often compare the growing FEC phenomenon to the video boom of the early '80s.

There are some striking similarities: interest from people outside of the industry and an explosion of locations opening up. In the early '80s, coinciding with the proliferation of video games, arcades began to pop up everywhere. Video games blanketed cities; hardly a donut shop or gas station was immune. Professional operators bypassed many of these locations, knowing that there would not be a fair return on investment. Newcomers were so anxious to sit back and rake in the bucks that they didn't bother with unnecessary details like return on investment.

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

I vividly recall a conversation I had with a disillusioned newcomer. When the video boom reached its peak, our subscription list bulged with new subscribers. As the bust began, we noticed subscribers falling by the wayside. I decided to call some of them and talk about their experiences. The most memorable was a lawyer who candidly admitted that he had gotten into the business for the promised big money. However, he added that he hadn't had any idea it was going to be so much work!

This gentleman echoed the sentiments of many who called it a day on their operating ventures. Visions of dollar signs dancing in their heads were soon replaced with stark reality when the extent of the dedication required was realized. Many lost everything they owned. It was a rude awakening.

It's 10 years later and we're seeing another influx of new blood into the coin-op entertainment business. As one of our distributors noted in his comments in this issue, each generation seems to crave more physical stimulation and depends less on mental stimulation. Counting the minutes until "The Shadow" started on the radio and then gripping the edge of your seat in anticipation of what would happen seems awfully tame compared to what we expect from our entertainment today.

We don't depend on our imaginations. Perhaps that's why FECs are so compelling to families; we aren't entertaining ourselves, we're being entertained. The physical stimulation is becoming so sophisticated that we don't need to imagine we're traveling into outer space; there's a head gear and visual images to imagine it for us.

FECs are popular because families are in a crisis. As children are shuffled between their divorced mothers and fathers, it's important to have memorable times together. Parents have more money to spend but less time to do it. It's been said before, but to plan a three- or four-hour trip to Disneyland or Astro World is out of the question. But three or four hours in a well-run, well-organized FEC can be a rewarding experience.

The key here are the words *well run*. It's easy to open a fresh new place and watch customers flock there. What's hard is keeping it fresh. I was always impressed with the Show Biz restaurants and could easily understand their success when others tried and failed. They didn't ever stop improving. From the salad bar and pizza to the games and decor, it was always fresh. In comparison, I recall an imitator who didn't last long. The place was great—at first. But then the lettuce wasn't quite so crisp, the pizza toppings were skimpy, and games sported out-of-order signs more than they worked.

Opening an FEC is not a one-time expense, especially with games. There must be funds budgeted for updating. This is an area that can be best served by using a reputable operator.

FECs are a tremendous investment and it will be sad to see many of them fall by the wayside, but it's inevitable. Competition will be fierce and plentiful. Only those who are willing to do the work will survive. □

SPEED

HIGH BANK THRILLS

BEAT OUT

LET'S GO RACING 41

DRAFTING

What's it like powering a 750HP NASCAR stocker around Daytona's high–bank turns? Or drafting inches off the car ahead of you at 200 MPH? Daytona USA™, Sega's newest Virtua Reality action game provides all the adrenaline pumping thrills of world class stock car racing. With its industry leading 32-bit three-dimensional polygon graphics and some nifty audio / mechanical systems, Daytona USA™ supplies everything but the smell of the pits.

Available in either a deluxe model with life size 50" projection screen or a twin cabinet with 26" high resolution monitors, Daytona USA™ has lots of ways to keep players coming back. They can select a high speed oval course for a warm up before moving to an advanced Grand Canyon run or an all-out madcap seaside course. For real time head-to-head competition up to eight "twins" can be linked. A "time trial" option allows racing against the clock on any of the three courses. Daytona USA™, fast, fun, and a definite checker flag winner in the earnings race. Call your Sega distributor for a personal preview.

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EQUIPMENT POLL

REDEMPTION

	GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
	ALLEY BOWLERS		
1.	Skee-Ball	*(Skee-Ball)*	7.97
2.	Smartball	*(Smart)*	7.09
	SPORTS GAMES		
1.	Sonic Blast Man	*(Taito)*	8.40
2.	Razzle Dazzle	*(Doyle)*	8.00
3.	Arm Champs	*(Jaleco)*	7.80
4.	Full Court Frenzy	*(I.C.E.)*	7.00
5.	Hoop Shot!	*(Doyle)*	6.91
6.	Slugfest	*(Williams)*	6.58
7.	Shoot to Win!	*(Smart)*	6.53
8.	Championship Basketball	*(Grayhound)*	6.25
9.	UB-QB Football	*(National Sports)*	5.90
10.	Pop-A-Shot	*(Pop-A-Shot)*	5.13
	SINGLE COIN PUSHERS		
1.	Rock N' Roll	*(Betson)*	8.11
2.	Klondike	*(Betson)*	7.75
	SINGLE CRANES		
1.	Watch Crane	*(CCI)*	9.67
2.	Classic Watch Crane	*(Smart)*	9.33
3.	Candy Crane	*(Smart)*	8.07
4.	Candy Shop	*(Grayhound)*	7.50
5.	Clean Sweep	*(Smart)*	7.28
6.	Skill Crane	*(Grayhound)*	6.80
7.	Big Choice	*(Betson)*	6.55
8.	Action Claw	*(Betson)*	6.43
9.	Jumbo Crane	*(Grayhound)*	6.00
10.	Hollywood Crane	*(Maxwell)*	5.50
	CHILD-SIZE GAMES		
1.	1/2 Pint Frenzy	*(I.C.E.)*	9.60
2.	Smart Toss Em	*(Smart)*	9.50
3.	Shoot To Win! Jr.	*(Smart)*	7.67
4.	Li'L Dump the Ump	*(Doyle)*	7.60
5.	Li'L Hoop Shot	*(Doyle)*	7.30
6.	Toss Em	*(CCI/UETD)*	7.29
7.	Super Mario Mushroom	*(Premier)*	7.00
8.	Froggy Jr.	*(CCI)*	7.00
9.	Bozo Basketball	*(Design Plus)*	6.38
10.	Jr. All American	*(CCI/UETD)*	6.33
11.	Skee-Toss B.C.	*(Skee Ball/ Betson)*	6.08
	ROLL DOWNS		
1.	Tic-Tac-Toe	*(Skee-Ball)*	8.67
2.	Junglerama	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.60
3.	Spin-To-Win	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.58
4.	Pizza Roll	*(Bay Tek)*	7.25
5.	Clown Rolldown	*(Bay Tek)*	7.14
6.	Rock n Roll 4`	*(Bay Tek)*	6.67
7.	Fielder's Choice	*(Bay Tek)*	6.00
8.	Roll Down	*(Bay Tek)*	5.67
	NOVELTY		
1.	Ribbit Racin	*(Lazer-Tron)*	10.00
2.	Dinoscore	*(Planet Earth)*	9.63
3.	Flip-N-Win	*(Planet Earth)*	9.25
4.	Home Run Hitter	*(CCI)*	9.25
5.	Killer T-Rex	*(Smart)*	9.00
6.	Aftershock	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.58
7.	Wheel 'm In	*(Bromley)*	8.30
8.	Simple Simon	*(Am-Sammy)*	8.25
9.	Can Alley	*(Bob's Space)*	8.25
10.	Feed Big Bertha	*(Smart)*	8.06

REDEMPTION

	GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
	NOVELTY (Cont.)		
11.	Buddy Bear	*(Smart)*	8.00
12.	Bouncing Bandit	*(Amutronics)*	7.67
13.	Circus Hi-Rise	*(Skee-Ball)*	7.67
14.	Robo-Bop	*(Coastal)*	7.60
15.	Super Bank It	*(Capcom)*	7.57
16.	Double Cheese	*(Midway)*	7.50
17.	Rock-N-Bowl	*(Bromley)*	7.42
18.	Wacky Gator	*(Data East)*	7.40
19.	Hot Shot Basketball	*(Williams)*	7.33
20.	Whac-A-Mole	*(Bob's Space)*	7.29
21.	Neck-N-Neck	*(Bundra)*	7.25
22.	Pop-A-Tac-Toe	*(Coastal)*	7.25
23.	Dump the Ump	*(Doyle)*	7.25
24.	Knock Down	*(Meltec)*	7.00
25.	Super Wheel 'em In	*(Bromley)*	7.00
26.	Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe	*(Data East)*	6.76
27.	Cracky Crab	*(Namco)*	6.67
28.	Big Mouth	*(Meltec)*	6.64
29.	Pop-A-Ball	*(Coastal)*	6.58
30.	Addams Family Values	*(Williams)*	6.57
31.	Paint 'n Puzzle	*(Century)*	6.00
32.	Hungry Hungry Hippos	*(I.C.E.)*	5.57
33.	Bank It	*(Capcom)*	5.36
34.	Kick-N-Catch	*(Fun Industries)*	5.25
35.	Cosmo Gang	*(Data East)*	5.14

VIDEO KITS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	D & D Tower of Doom *(Capcom)*	8.67	102
2.	NBA JAM Tournament *(Midway)*	8.51	109
3.	Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	8.33	51
4.	Raiden II *(Fabtek)*	7.95	317
5.	BloodStorm *(Strata)*	7.80	44
6.	Windjammers *(Data East)*	7.71	42
7.	Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	7.28	1082
8.	World Heroes Jet *(SNK)*	7.18	33
9.	Mortal Kombat *(Midway)*	7.17	1238
10.	Super Street Fighter II Turbo *(Capcom)*	6.92	30
11.	Drug Wars *(Am. Laser)*	6.88	206
12.	Samurai Shodown *(SNK)*	6.60	468
13.	World Rally *(Atari)*	6.11	374
14.	Gal's Panic II *(Kaneko)*	6.00	161
15.	Super Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	5.87	241
16.	Fatal Fury Special *(SNK)*	5.81	32
17.	Art of Fighting 2 *(SNK)*	5.73	55
18.	Spinmaster *(Data East)*	5.63	11
19.	Street Fighter Champ *(Capcom)*	5.51	1262
20.	Golden Axe-Revenge *(Sega)*	5.50	366
21.	NFL Hard Yardage *(Strata)*	5.50	92
22.	Fatal Fury 2 *(SNK)*	5.37	304
23.	World Heroes 2 *(SNK)*	5.32	296
24.	Varth: Operation Thunderstorm *(Romstar)*	5.14	16
25.	Aero Fighters *(Mc O'River)*	4.94	393

EQUIPMENT POLL

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

	GAME	MO. ON CHART	MO. IN TOP 10
1.	Mortal Kombat II *(Midway)*	8	8
2.	Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	3	3
3.	Star Trek: Next Generation *(Williams)*	6	5
4.	Rescue 911 *(Premier)*	2	2
5.	Ridge Racer *(Namco)*	5	5
6.	D & D Tower of Doom *(Capcom)*	2	2
7.	Virtua Fighter *(Sega)*	4	4
8.	NBA JAM Tournament *(Midway)*	2	2
9.	Out Runners *(Sega)*	10	10
10.	Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	1	1
11.	Virtua Racing *(Sega)*	20	20
12.	Suzuka 8 Hours *(Namco)*	21	17
13.	Royal Rumble *(Data East)*	1	1
14.	Demolition Man *(Williams)*	2	2
15.	Lethal Enforcers II *(Konami)*	2	2
16.	Raiden II *(Fabtek)*	7	7
17.	BloodStorm *(Strata)*	1	1
18.	The Addams Family *(Bally)*	28	28
19.	Windjammers *(Data East)*	1	1
20.	Run and Gun *(Konami)*	7	7
21.	The Who's Tommy *(Data East)*	3	3
22.	NBA JAM *(Midway)*	16	16
23.	Cybersled *(Namco)*	7	5
24.	Air Combat *(Namco)*	5	2
25.	Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	21	21
26.	Indiana Jones *(Williams)*	9	9
27.	Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	15	15
28.	World Heroes Jet *(SNK)*	1	1
29.	Mortal Kombat *(Midway)*	22	22
30.	Jurassic Park *(Data East)*	13	13
31.	Super Street Fighter II Turbo *(Capcom)*	1	1
32.	Drug Wars *(Am. Laser)*	5	4
33.	Title Fight *(Sega)*	10	2
34.	Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	11	2
35.	Last Action Hero *(Data East)*	9	5
36.	White Water *(Williams)*	17	12
37.	Samurai Shodown *(SNK)*	10	9
38.	Star Wars *(Data East)*	21	10
39.	Creature from the Black Lagoon *(Bally)*	17	14
40.	Tales from the Crypt *(Data East)*	7	5
41.	Crime Patrol *(Am. Laser)*	10	5
42.	Wipe Out *(Premier)*	7	0
43.	Dracula *(Williams)*	15	7
44.	Fish Tales *(Williams)*	22	16
45.	Final Lap 3 *(Namco)*	15	1
46.	Cue Ball Wizard *(Premier)*	20	2
47.	Judge Dredd *(Bally)*	8	3
48.	Rocky & Bullwinkle *(Data East)*	16	6
49.	World Rally *(Atari)*	11	9
50.	Gal's Panic II *(Kaneko)*	6	5
51.	Shootout at Old Tucson *(Am. Laser)*	1	0
52.	The Getaway *(Williams)*	27	13
53.	Super Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	7	6
54.	Fatal Fury Special *(SNK)*	3	0

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED (Cont.)

	GAME	MO. ON CHART	MO. IN TOP 10
55.	Moto Frenzy *(Atari)*	19	1
56.	Tee'd Off *(Premier)*	12	1
57.	X-Men *(Konami)*	28	12
58.	Art of Fighting 2 *(SNK)*	3	2
59.	Popeye *(Bally)*	2	0
60.	Punisher *(Capcom)*	12	2

VIDEO DEDICATED

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Mortal Kombat II *(Midway)*	9.20	479
2.	Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	9.09	163
3.	Ridge Racer *(Namco)*	8.69	264
4.	Virtua Fighter *(Sega)*	8.62	226
5.	Out Runners *(Sega)*	8.50	522
6.	Virtua Racing *(Sega)*	8.32	1087
7.	Suzuka 8 Hours *(Namco)*	8.29	957
8.	Lethal Enforcers II *(Konami)*	8.00	98
9.	Run and Gun *(Konami)*	7.67	343
10.	NBA JAM *(Midway)*	7.64	901
11.	Cybersled *(Namco)*	7.60	261
12.	Air Combat *(Namco)*	7.50	179
13.	Title Fight *(Sega)*	6.86	253
14.	Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	6.85	313
15.	Crime Patrol *(Am. Laser)*	6.36	314

PINBALLS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Star Trek: Next Generation *(Williams)*	8.95	321
2.	Rescue 911 *(Premier)*	8.80	108
3.	Royal Rumble *(Data East)*	8.14	48
4.	Demolition Man *(Williams)*	8.06	95
5.	The Addams Family *(Bally)*	7.77	1632
6.	The Who's Tommy Pinball Wizard *(Data East)*	7.67	123
7.	Indiana Jones *(Williams)*	7.25	440
8.	Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	7.20	741
9.	Jurassic Park *(Data East)*	7.03	607
10.	Last Action Hero *(Data East)*	6.80	326
11.	White Water *(Williams)*	6.64	624
12.	Star Wars *(Data East)*	6.58	668
13.	Creature from the Black Lagoon *(Bally)*	6.39	650
14.	Tales from the Crypt *(Data East)*	6.37	266
15.	Wipe Out *(Premier)*	6.36	151

Results are based on monthly Equipment Poll ballot returns. Point Value: average of ballot ratings on a scale of 1-10. Longevity Points: determined by standings in Video & Pinball combined column (#1 game receives 60 points, #2 game receives 59 points, etc.) **Indicates new or reappearing games.*

Family harmony often needs a helping hand

Stressed out? Suffering from conflict overload at the workplace and on the homefront? Two choices are open: sign up for yoga sessions or visit your nearest family entertainment center. Both are guaranteed to calm *you* down. But only one calms down the *entire family*, plus friends and relatives who may tag along for the afternoon.

With the strain of the school year and other sundry problems bombarding us, it's nice to know there is a place where we can escape. A place where doddering parents, out of step with the teen perspective, can still beat the pants off said teenager at air hockey. A place where both teens and pre-teens can get behind the wheel and sample the fun of go-karts, often with their parents. Talk about bonding! A place where the dash and splash of bumper boats encourages a good-natured smack into fellow boaters. Ditto for bumper cars—a perfect way to relieve your frustrations with no harmful effects.

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

A place where little leaguers of today and yesterday can step up to the plate at the batting cages—a more demanding sport than it appears at first glance. A place where outdoor iron rides may accommodate adults and/or the younger set.

You don't have to leave the premises for a snack because most FECs have a goodly supply of pizza, nachos, popcorn, soft drinks, and other foods that appeal to kids. Adults can move over to the salad bar for a light lunch. Seating is usually available indoors and outdoors.

Don't forget miniature golf, a major element at FECs. When was the last time you enjoyed one of the new-age courses? The ones with waterfalls, trees, fountains, and park benches scattered about. Way back in the '60s miniature golf was a cheap date. Teens with shallow pockets could enjoy a round of miniature golf with a girlfriend or a bunch of the guys and still have some change. The same is true in the '90s. Even the youngest member of the family can get into the act because miniature golf is not a game of power, but one requiring a light stroke and a good aim.

The game room in an FEC is filled with redemption equipment, usually about half of the machines fall into that category. The tickets they spew forth bring smiles to the faces of both young and old. The subsequent trip to a well-stocked redemption counter is another cause for wide-eyed amazement. Present desires can be satisfied on-the-spot, while the more patient customer surveys the offerings and makes a mental note about larger items achievable at a future date.

The Theard clan enjoyed such an outing last weekend; it did wonders for the family dynamics. We were away from business deadlines, monthly bills, the last report card, and the phone (which never rings for us anymore but rings constantly). An entire afternoon in an atmosphere where we were surrounded by families in a festive mood, either celebrating birthdays or enjoying fun activities alongside of us. We could choose one, two, or three attractions, depending on our time frame because each was priced separately.

Lastly, the cost. About the same as you would spend for five people to go to a movie and buy sodas and candy bars for everyone. Less expensive than five tickets to a major sporting event or a concert. We left saying that we need to do this more often. The nearest amusement park of any size is in Houston, so there is no way to manage a visit in one day. Leisure activities close to home, that's the niche.

This month we zeroed in on family entertainment, expanding our "Family Focus" column to touch on all aspects of FECs. We also visited outstanding centers in print and photos.

FECs are a trend and a new avenue for the coin-op world to continue supplying fun for the masses. From recent personal experience, a few hours of rides, games, and miniature golf helped us enjoy each other as well as the attractions. □

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Namco to merge arcade operations

Namco has merged its two arcade operating subsidiaries, Aladdin's Castle Inc. and Namco Operations Inc. The merger became effective in June. The new entity is called Namco Cybertainment Inc.

Aladdin's Castle Inc., based in Bensenville, Ill., now operates 270 arcades in 45 states. It was acquired by Namco in January 1993. The company is undergoing a major investment program in new games, new locations, and an extensive remodeling of its existing locations.

Namco Operations Inc., based in San Jose, Calif., is a descendant of the old Barrel of Fun and Atari Expo arcade chains. It now operates 70 arcades in 18 states and has been growing since it was acquired by Namco from Atari Games (now Time Warner Interactive) in 1990.

Kevin Hayes is president/chief executive officer of Namco America Inc., the coin-op sales company. The other officers of the new company are Bill Pelafas, senior vice president/chief financial officer; Dick Adams, vice president special projects; Bob Fliday, executive vice president; and David Bishop, senior vice president, operations.

Namco Cybertainment Inc. will be located at 877 Supreme Dr., Bensenville, Ill. 60106; phone (708) 238-2200, FAX (708) 238-0560. Namco America Inc., the coin-op sales company, will remain in San Jose, Calif.

Pinball collectors gather for Pinathon and Pinfest

More than 300 pinball players and collectors converged on the 7th Annual Pinathon held May 14 in Sacramento, Calif., for a day-long pinball tournament and swap meet.

Participants in the show came from across California and the Western U.S., and as far as British Columbia.

Classic pinball games from the 1930s through the 1980s were on display, as well as other games, books, and parts.

Two tournaments were held. Tyre Polk of Richmond, Calif., won in the electromechanical division while Marc Conant of Redwood City took the solid-state competition.

Awards also were given to Paul Takakjian of Los Angeles and Mike Scott of Martinez, Calif., for the best games exhibited.

Tentative dates for Pinathon '95 have been set for May 20-21. For more information, contact Walt Schlenker at (918)-783-2727.

In other pinball news, Rick Stetta of Sunnyvale, Calif., and Timothy J. McMurray, of San Jose, Calif., took top honors in pinball competition at the first annual Wild West Pinfest held in April at the Safari Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz.

In separate play, Stetta was declared the Flip-O-Rama Tournament winner, while McMurray was named "1994 Pinball Rodeo Champion."

Author Bill Kurtz spoke on the growth and future of the hobby of pinball collecting. More than $800 was raised in a raffle which will go to benefit the Valley Big Brothers and Sisters. Next year's show will be held May 28-30.

Kiddie Rides USA opens manufacturing branch

The new Denver manufacturing facility for Kiddie Rides USA.

Kiddie Rides USA has more than doubled in size with the addition of a new 30,000-square-foot facility in Denver, Colo. The manufacturing branch is an addition to Kiddie Rides' 25,000-square-foot Davenport, Iowa, plant.

With more than 1,400 rides in stock, Kiddie Rides USA is one of the world's largest distributors of kiddie rides.

Kiddie Rides USA's offices are located at 3801 East 50th Ave.; Denver Colo. 80216; (303)-399-07191.

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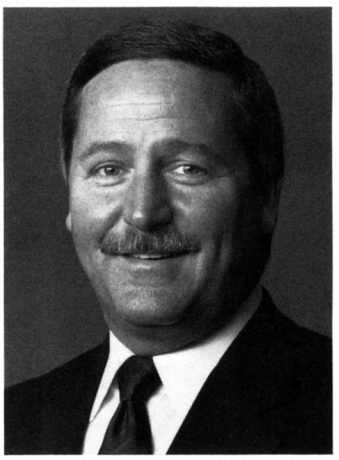
Stone named president at Sega USA

Alan Stone has been named president of the Amusement Sales Division for Sega Enterprises USA. He replaces former president Tom Petit, who has assumed a position with the New York-based Acclaim Entertainment.

Stone, who joined Sega in 1993, has an extensive domestic and international background in the arcade and amusement industry. He is currently the executive vice president of amusement operations and will continue in that capacity with his new position.

In 1980 Stone was a cofounder of Nintendo of America and president and owner of Far East Video Inc., an importer and distributor of video games for major Japanese manufacturers.



Al Stone

Sega of America's cochairman, David Rosen, said, "Al, who has been working closely with Ned DeWitt, president and COO of Sega USA, has a strong vision for the future of the amusement business and a sterling reputation as a businessperson. We look for continued growth from this division of our highly successful U.S. operations."

Four Taiwanese sentenced in PCB counterfeiting

Four Taiwanese have been found guilty of manufacturing counterfeit PC boards and were sentenced on April 23 to nine months in jail. Charges were filed by the Osaka-based Capcom Co.

According to Capcom, Liu Chien Liang, president of Soon Hwa; Yuan Fong Chang, president of Fun Tech; Tony Liu, president of Max Focus; and Chang of Lun Lai were accused of making counterfeit PC boards of *Street Fighter II* and *Knights of the Round.*

Taiwan is well-known as a production base for counterfeit PC boards of coin-op video games, according to the Japanese *Game Machine Magazine.*

The charges stemmed from a string of raids of companies by Taiwan authorities in 1992. Some 1,500 counterfeit PC boards were seized in the raids from four of the companies.

The four defendants were found guilty of violating the Public Trade Law. According to the court, even though companies from non-recognized countries, such as Capcom, cannot sue for copyright infringement directly, that does not mean that Taiwan companies are free to copy their products.

Brandt sold to internal group

The Bensalem, Pa.-based Brandt Inc. was purchased in May for an undisclosed amount by a group of some 40 members of the company's management, independent district managers, and suppliers.

The sellers were Nelson Peltz and Peter W. May, who have had direct or indirect ownership of Brandt since January 1984. The company posted sales of $62 million in 1983.

Brandt emerged last October from a 10-month Chapter 11 proceeding brought about by a patent infringement suit lost to a competitor.

Brandt, now in its 104th year of continuous operation, is an industry leader in design, manufacturer, and support of coin and currency handling equipment and cash processing systems for gaming and other industries.

Brandt has a manufacturing facility in Watertown, Wis., and an international sales office near London.

Maine Legislature considers gaming issues

Gaming issues kept law makers in Maine occupied for much of 1993 and 1994.

During that time, the Maine Legislature considered proposals to authorize an Indian casino for the Passamaquoddy tribe in Calais. Also an attempt was made by the Department of Public Safety to take away from private, nonprofit clubs and organizations, like the Eagles and VFW, the right to have licensed electronic video machines.

Also considered was legislation authorizing liquor establishments to operate up to three video lottery terminals, connected to a central computer and licensed by the state, with a payout of up to $1,000 on a $2 wager.

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Lazer-Tron names regional sales manager

Bob Berke has been named regional sales manager of the Pleasanton, Calif.-based Lazer-Tron. Berke came to Lazer-Tron after spending four years with Blockbuster Corporation. His father, Larry Berke, who is now with Smart Industries, has been in the coin-op business for many years.

Bob Berke

Bob recalls fond memories of growing up in the industry.

"I would go along with my dad on his collection and service calls. We would travel all day long going from location to location collecting and counting money," Berke said. "I was able to count and wrap coins before I could ride a bicycle."

Berke added: "I never had a pacifier when I was young, they just game me a coin mechanism as a teething ring instead."

"We are extremely pleased to welcome Bob to our company," Lazer-Tron's Ron Carrarra said. "I've known and respected his father for years."

Sandler Vending service school

John Buras gets to the heart of Premier's Rescue 911.

The Minneapolis, Minn.-based Sandler Vending Co. hosted a recent Premier equipment service school. John Buras, Sandler's director of engineering and electronics, guided area operators through the *Rescue 911* pinball machine.

"Our Premier sales are building with each new release, especially on the 911," Buras said. "This school will spur even greater growth of Premier products in the future."

Petit to head Acclaim division

Thomas Petit, a former president of Sega's North American coin-op company, has been chosen to head Acclaim Entertainment Inc.'s newly formed Coin-Operated Amusements Division. As president, Petit will spearhead the company's 1995 coin-op market entry.

In his new position, Petit will report directly to Robert Holmes, president of the parent company, Acclaim.

"Tom brings to Acclaim a wealth of experience in the coin-op area as well as an outstanding reputation among industry leaders," said Holmes. "We are pleased to have someone of Tom's caliber lead our entry into what we anticipate will be an exciting and profitable area for Acclaim in the future."

Betson Pittsburgh appoints Tanchuk

Tammy L. Tanchuk has been named inside sales/customer service representative for Betson Pittsburgh Distributing of Pittsburgh, Pa.

She will be responsible for contracting customers in parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland, about equipment sales, parts, and service.

Tammy Tanchuk

Kenny Rogers to headline AMOA

Kenny Rogers, a dominant force in American music for more than 25 years, will headline entertainment at the AMOA Expo '94 Awards Show & Banquet Sept. 22-24 in San Antonio, Texas.

Also, former Chicago Bears linebacker Mike Singletary is set to address AMOA's annual business meeting. After a 12-year career with with the Bears, Singletary is now in high demand as a motivational speaker who addresses such topics as teamwork, discipline, and leadership.

Oops!

In a story last month on Mardon Laser Disc Renewal, a company that is restoring scratched compact and laser discs, the business' address was inadvertently omitted. For more information about this revolutionary process that removes surface abrasions and scarred edges from discs, contact Mardon Laser Disc Renewal, 13 South Carroll St., Frederick, MD 21701; (301)-663-3478 or (800)-770-DISC.

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Chicago Lock Co. appoints Swenson

Chicago Lock Company has appointed Ron Swenson as regional sales engineer for the Northeast territory.

Swenson's territory includes New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Canada. In addition, he will service selected accounts in Ohio, Connecticut, and North Carolina.

Ron Swenson

Success Plush names sales executive

The Houston, Tex.-based Success Plush Inc. has appointed Teresa King as a sales executive. King, who was formerly with Laramie Interest, brings eight years of crane plush experience to Success Plush Inc.

TOP sold to Mondial Distributing

About 150 operators, distributors, and guests gathered for a recent open house at TOP's facility in Rochester, New York.

The Rochester, New York-based TOP Parts & Service has been sold to Mondial Distributing Inc. The sale of the amusement and vending parts company became effective in early May.

The New York office will be headed up by Matt Tarantelli and parts manager Mike Senn.

"Mondial will not only bring to you the same products, service, and all considerations, but will expand to provide better pricing and total availability of all parts for our amusement and vending industry," Tarantelli said.

Mondial Distributing has offices in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.

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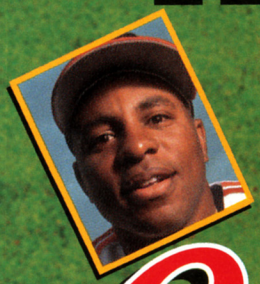

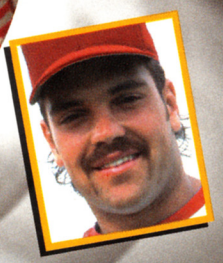

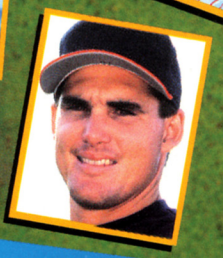

Zoom feature shows cut-aways of those real close calls

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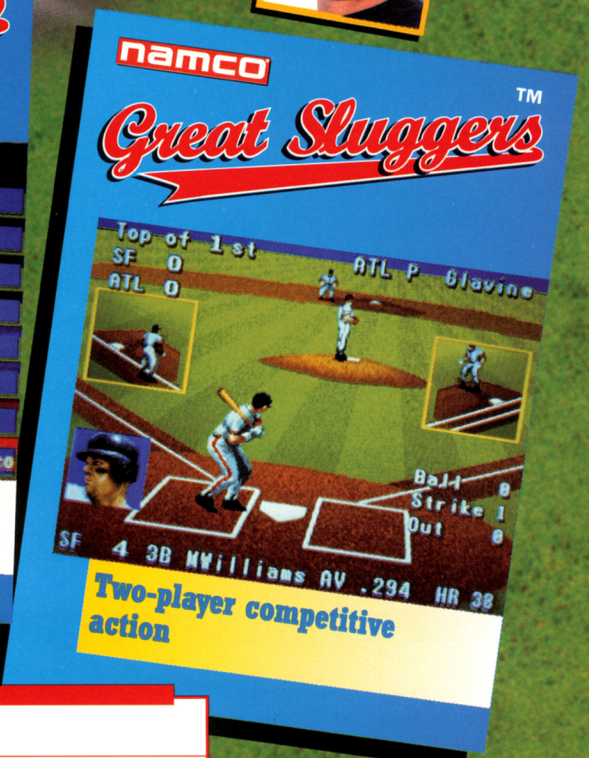

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NIGA supports Monteau to chair NIGC

The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) is applauding President Clinton's nomination of Harold Monteau to chair the National Indian Gaming Commission. The NIGC oversees the Indian gaming industry.

Monteau's nomination is awaiting Senate confirmation.

Monteau is a partner in a Montana law firm and specializes in federal laws affecting Indian tribes. He served for the past three years on a special task force on Indian affairs headed up by the Secretary of the Interior.

"This is a victory for all of Indian country," said NIGA chairman Rick Hill. "The president's choice shows respect for Indian people and our knowledge and professionalism in managing the Indian gaming industry."

The president also appointed Lacy Thornburg, a former North Carolina attorney general, to serve as an associate member on the commission. Thornburg served for five years in the North Carolina House of Representatives and was a state superior court judge for 16 years.

"The experience these two individuals bring will be invaluable as attempts to amend the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act come to a head," Hill said.

The NIGC helps monitor and regulate the tribal gaming industry. It was established by Congress in the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. The NIGA, established in 1985, is a non-profit organization of more than 90 tribes engaged in tribal gaming enterprises.

Washington tribe to open casino despite governor's threat

Despite threats by Washington Governor Mike Lowry to ask federal authorities to intervene, officials with the Colville Confederated Tribes said they are moving ahead with plans to open a casino in Manson, Washington.

Governor Lowry has said if the Colville open their casino without a compact, it will violate federal law and he'll ask the U.S. Attorney to take action to close it down.

"Gaming is providing Indian people with their first real chance at self-sufficiency," said Colville chairman Eddie Palmanteer. "The governor of this state is not interested in helping Indian people, he's only concerned about protecting the state's gaming interests."

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) requires states that offer gaming, such as Washington, to negotiate compacts with tribes to operate similar games on tribal-owned land. At issue is a 1993 Eastern District court ruling that says the entire compact process must be severed from the IGRA in order for tribes to have recourse from uncooperative states. Colville officials maintain that the ruling clears the way for the opening of the casino without a compact.

The casino will offer table games which are already legal in the state, such as blackjack, roulette, poker, craps, and pull-tabs. The Colville casino will not have slot machines, which are not yet legal in the state.

"We're opening regardless of what Governor Lowry threatens to do," said Palmanteer. "We've talked to the U.S. Attorney and he said as long as we don't offer slots there shouldn't be a problem."

The Colville Confederated Tribes represent approximately 8,800 members. The reservation is located on 1.4 million acres of land in North Central Washington.

Si Redd acquires gaming company VGT

The Las Vegas-based International Technical Systems Inc., which recently acquired Video Gaming Technologies of Antioch, Tenn., is the latest gaming endeavor of industry giant Si Redd.

ITS has opened an engineering and development office in Tennessee.

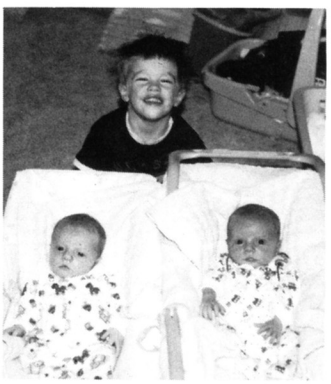
ITS has been appointed as the North American distributor for the Nevada-based Computer Gaming Corporation and Computa Game International in Australia. In an agreement between the two companies, Computa Game will distribute ITS video gaming machines in Australia.

In addition, ITS has been granted the exclusive North American rights to market Casino Keno from AWA Gaming Systems Pty. Ltd. of New South Wales, Australia.

"This is an exciting development for us, since the Australian form of Keno currently dominates the market in New South Wales and elsewhere overseas," Redd said.

Redd, 82, touts a long list of success stories including Bally Distributing and International Game Technology (IGT).

Welcome boys!



Pictured are Steve and Carla Abel's new twin sons, Zachary (l) and Spencer, while big brother Stephen, 3, poses for the camera. The Ables own R.M.V. Sales in Imperial, Pa.

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A Smart toast

Distributors gather around new products from Smart Industries.

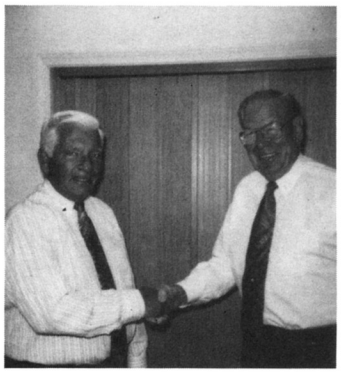
Smart Industries of Des Moines, Iowa, hosted a champagne toast at the ACME '94 Convention in March to honor their distributors and to showcase their newest game releases.

"Our booth was filled to capacity," said Jeff Smart, vice president of Smart Industries. "We wanted to toast the members of our distributor network and discuss our new products."

New releases include the *Smart Redemption Center*, the *Smart Toss Em*, and the *Smartball Super Jackpot*.

Arjay welcomes new partner

Robert Jones, president of Arjay Export Co. Inc., announces the addition of long-time friend and associate Robert LeBlanc as an equal partner of the Massachusetts-based company.



New partner Robert LeBlanc (l) is welcomed to Arjay Export by company president Robert Jones.

Their association dates back to 1960 at REDD Distributing in Boston and later at Robert Jones International. Jones subsequently formed Arjay while LeBlanc went on to manage Rowe International's Boston office. LeBlanc remained in distributing after Rowe closed its eastern U.S. offices, working with Central Distributors, Peach State, and R.H. Belam.

Said Jones: "Bob brings to Arjay many years of experience in amusement games, which will permit Arjay to offer its customers more flexibility and variety in this area, as well as in the export and gaming markets. I am extremely pleased and excited to renew our business association and look forward to a productive and successful partnership."

AP sponsors workshops

Peter Whitney, AP assistant service manager, gives distributors a better understanding of AP machines.

The St. Paul, Minn.-based Automatic Products International offers its distributors a workshop on AP machines every six months in St. Paul.

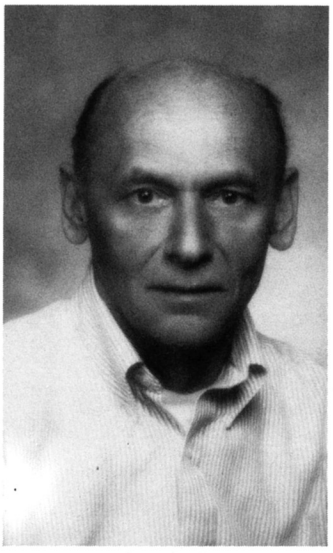
The program is designed to train key personnel from each distributor, enabling them to educate their own associates. Topics include trouble-shooting and servicing the machines, as well as increasing overall awareness of the full capabilities of each machine.

For more information about workshops, contact AP at (612)-929-1370; FAX (612)-929-5417.

World Wide promotes Ney

World Wide Distributors Inc. of Chicago has promoted Gerry Ney from service manager to operations general manager. Ney has been with World Wide Distributors for 21 years.

Ney will oversee parts, game repairs, and the game, music, vending, and shipping departments. He will work also with sales executives, factory programs, and will be responsible for other duties including plant operation.



Gerry Ney

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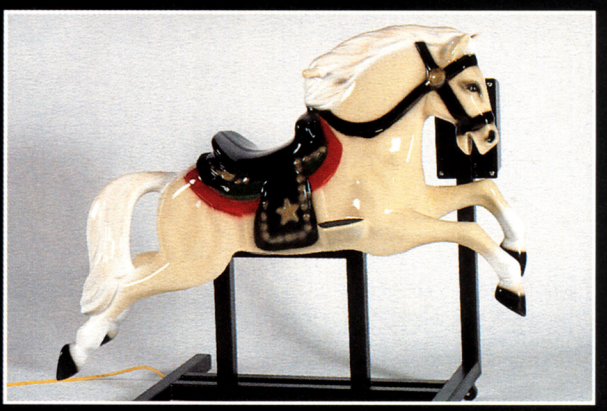

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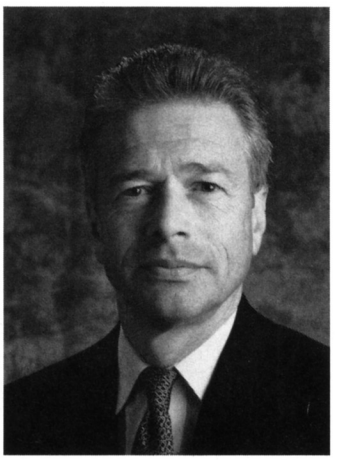
Changes at IGT

During a recent move towards corporate restructuring, International Game Technology of Reno Nevada has been split into three separate, individually-functioning entities: IGT-Corporate, IGT-North America, and IGT-International.

IGT-Corporate includes the executive officers in the president's office, as well as the office of research and development. IGT-North America will oversee operations in the United States and Canada. IGT-International will be responsible for all other gaming jurisdictions throughout the world.

In a related move, James Krejci has been named president of IGT-International. All operations of IGT-International will be conducted from the new IGT-International headquarters in Reno with the exception of sales, which will remain based out of the Las Vegas sales offices.

IGT-International was formed in 1993 to manage business in countries outside the U.S. and Canada and to better serve IGT's international customers.



James Krejci

In other IGT—International moves, Paulus Karskens has been appointed managing director; Rick Shaff was named vice president of operations; Mary Hays has assumed the position of director of sales; Don Johnson has joined as director of strategic planning and business development; Ken Moberly was appointed new director of customer marketing; and Kevin Ong was named controller.

International Laser is "Telly Award" finalist

International Laser Productions Inc. has been named a finalist in the animation category of the 1994 annual Telly Awards.

The *Kid's Adventure Dome* video game from ILP features three animated adventures in outer space, in a haunted canyon, and in dinosaur land.

The Telly Awards were founded in 1980 to showcase and recognize outstanding non-network and cable TV commercials. The competition was expanded several years ago to include film and video productions as well as non-network TV programming.

Bally Mfg. changes name

Bally Mfg. Corporation, which left the manufacturing business in 1990, will change its name to Bally Entertainment Corporation.

Bally's board of directors authorized management to begin taking steps to separate the company's two interests, casinos and fitness centers. The Bally parent will remain a pure casino company.

Arthur Goldberg, Bally chairman and CEO, said the name change was necessary after stock shares devalued "as a result of confusion in the marketplace regarding our health and tennis division."

In other news, Bally received licensing approval for its Bell of Orleans riverboat in New Orleans. The transaction follows the opening of the company's first water-based casino, Bally's Gambling Hall & Saloon in Tunica, Miss. last year.

AMOA Expo '94 update

Nearly 800 exhibit booths have been sold for Expo '94, the Amusement & Music Operators Association's international exhibition and educational seminar for the coin-operated amusement, music, and vending industry.

Expo '94 will be September 22-24 at the San Antonio Convention Center, in San Antonio, Texas. An estimated 8,000 owners/operators, distributors and manufacturers of coin-operated amusement, music, and vending equipment are expected to attend AMOA Expo '94.

About 185 companies and organizations have purchased 792 booths for the show—nearly 80 percent of the available space. AMOA officials say they expect the more than 1,000 booths at the convention center to be sold by early July.

Companies wanting exhibit space, or to be put on a waiting list in the event of sold-out show cancellations, must have their exhibit application and deposit on file at AMOA headquarters.

Registration, housing, and program information for Expo '94 was mailed out in late June to thousands around the world.

The Expo '94 exhibition will feature the latest in pinball games, video games, CD jukeboxes, electronic darts, pool tables, cranes, redemption equipment, monitors/electronics, cigarette vending, and other coin-operated equipment/computer technologies from the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers.

In addition to the exhibits and educational seminars, a variety of management, marketing, personnel, and business trends will be discussed at Expo '94.

Exhibit and other inquiries can be obtained by contacting the Amusement & Music Operators Association at 401 N. Michigan Ave.; Chicago, Ill. 60611; (312)-245-1021; FAX (312)-245-1085.

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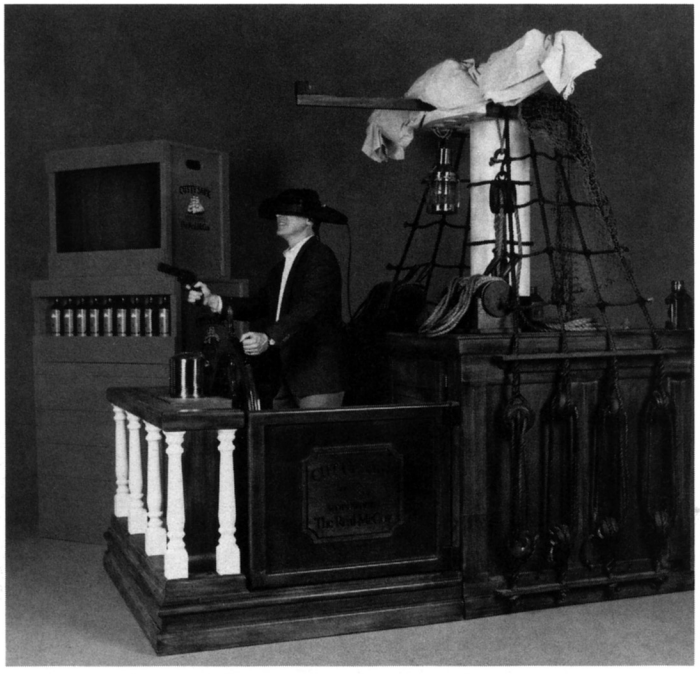
The Real McCoy Virtual Voyage tour



A player steps back in time to the days of pirates and galleons in Horizon's newest virtual reality entry, now on tour.

Horizon Entertainment has created two fully customized, high-performance virtual reality entertainment systems for an 18-month promotional tour by the Hiram Walker Corp.

The Cutty Sark Scots Whiskey Virtual Voyage tour was launched in May at the National Rifle Association trade show in Chicago. It is expected to make stops at every major market in the country during the next 18 months at boat shows, sports bars, nightclubs, festivals, and other events.

Horizon Entertainment created the world's first VR tour with the Virtuality National College Tour in 1992.

Strapping on the virtual reality helmet and taking controls in hand, the player sets out on a three-minute adventure through the golden age of sail. The field of vision is a 360-degree computer created landscape, complete with the midnight seas of the North Atlantic. Casting off from port in calm seas, a raging storm soon tosses the clipper off course. The Voyager regains control of the vessel in choppy seas and fends off attacks from plunderers and stowaways before finally reaching a safe cove.

Video Lottery Technologies names new president/CEO

J. Stephen Vanderwoude has been named president and chief executive officer of the Bozeman, Mont.-based Video Lottery Technologies Inc. Vanderwoude also joins VLT's board of directors.

Vanderwoude served as president of Centel Corporation from 1989 to 1993, and in a number of other executive positions with Centel since 1971. Upon the acquisition of Centel by Sprint in 1993, Venderwoude became president and chief operations officer of Sprint's local telecommunications division. He left Sprint in September 1993 to become a consultant and private investor.

James Davey, who was VLT's president and chief executive officer, will continue with the company as vice chairman, focusing on VLT's international operations.

Video Lottery Technologies operates systems in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe.

Time to celebrate

American Sammy and Grand Products recently celebrated the completion of the 1,000th redemption game under the American Sammy name. Officials of American Sammy served up two cakes to mark the occasion and extended special thanks to Grand Products for its support and cooperation in the development, design, and production of their games. Rick Rochetti (l) and Dave Marofske Sr. share the honor and the cake.

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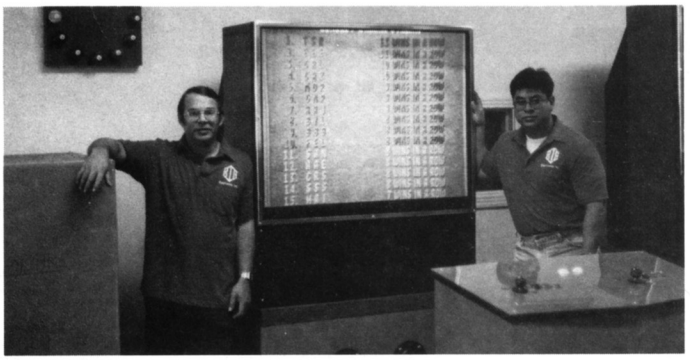
BIG Electronic unveils 50-inch screen video game cabinet



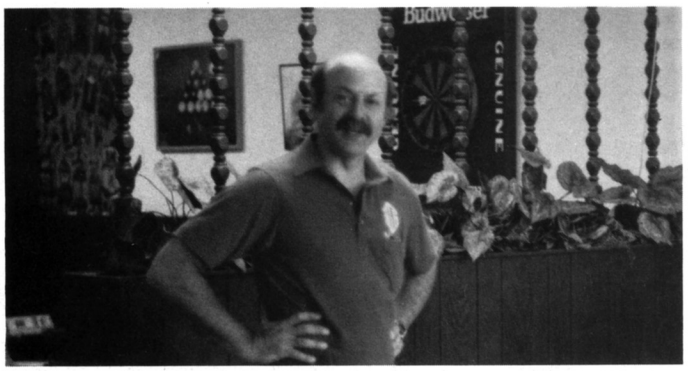
Bill Barnes (l) and Russell Galindo stand by the BIG cabinets.

Operators from all over the southwest converged on O'Conner Distributing recently as the Austin, Texas-based Big Electronics unveiled its first two production models. The 50-inch screen video game cabinet was the main attraction.

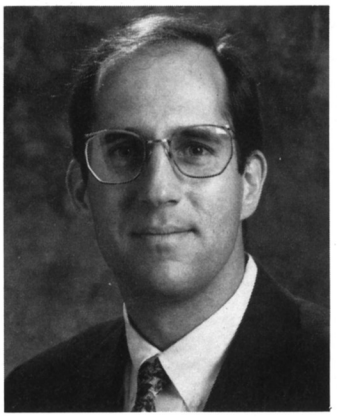
On hand was Bill Barnes, president of BIG Electronics, and Bob Sokol of Two Bit Score Amusements. Sokol showed new software and demonstrated the RGB to NTSC converter board, which is used in BIG Electronics' cabinets.

Many who attended got a chance to play *Mortal Kombat*, with life-size characters on the 50-inch screen video game cabinet. Russell Galindo, head technician of Two Bit Score, demonstrated how he could quickly open up the hinged control panel on the cabinet and change out the game board. The cabinet comes with a complete JAMMA harness, so many different games can be played.

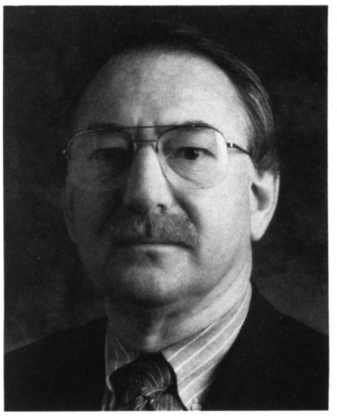
Barnes showed pictures of a prototype sit-down cabinet BIG Electronics is in the process of completing. Designed around the same 50-inch Hitachi monitor used in the upright cabinet, Barnes said the sit-down version will be a natural for driving games. The first sit-down cabinets will be ready to ship in about 30 days.



Bob Sokol of Two Bit Score Amusements.



Don Miller Jr.



Max Myers

IGT-North America promotions

The Reno, Nevada-based gaming machine manufacturer IGT—North America, has made several new appointments. Among those are Don Miller Jr., who was named vice president of sales.

Miller will be responsible for all sales, service and customer support functions for IGT—North America. He will oversee some 350 employees, comprising a sales division and a field support function.

In other news at IGT—North America, Ronda Kerr was promoted to director of project management, while Julie Olesinski has been named director of project assurance. Both positions are new departments within the company's sales organization.

Kerr will be responsible for managing a team of project managers and will be directing all administrative resources that support the project management process. Olesinski will oversee several project assurance teams responsible for all technical aspects of fulfilling IGT sales orders.

In other IGT news, Ali Saffari has been promoted to director of firmware engineering.

Saffari's responsibilities include developing new games, designing new products, customizing games for potential gaming markets, and providing low-level programming for the company.

Saffari joined IGT in 1986 as a firmware engineer, and was later promoted to manager of the firmware engineering department. His staff of 40-50 employees service IGT—North America's traditional gaming markets and video gaming jurisdictions.

Also, Max Meyers has been named director of IGT Networks.

Myers will oversee the installation of a company-wide electronic mailing system, in addition to local and wide area networks.

Prior to joining IGT, Myers spent five years as a communications networking consultant for Accelerations Systems Designs in Saratoga, California. He also worked at Epson, Intersil Systems, Lockheed, and General Electric.

He will be based out of IGT's corporate headquarters in Nevada.

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"Galactic Marauders" and "Get out of the norm, Get into the STORM!" are trademarks of Space Sport, Inc.

LAMOA gets new executive director

The Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association (LAMOA) has appointed Charles Pasqua as its new executive director. Pasqua, a Baton Rouge consultant and lobbyist, replaces Sarah Whalen, who stepped down in May.

"The (LAMOA) board of directors felt they needed someone who could give more time to the association," Whalen said in a recent letter to LAMOA members. "They asked if I would give up my clients that I have had for 13 years and I could not do that."

Pasqua is recently retired from the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA) where he was employed for more than 20 years.

SNK Corp. sets up European subsidiary

SNK Corp., of Osaka, Japan, has established its first European subsidiary, SNK Europe Ltd., in London. Kazuhiro Takeshita, a manager in SNK's overseas department, has been named president of the new subsidiary.

The new subsidiary was established in response to the expansion of SNK *NEO-GEO* systems, and aims to strengthen the cooperative relations with its distributors in Europe, according to the Japanese *Game Machine Magazine*.

Kauffman joins Alternate Worlds Technology

Mel Kauffman, a 40-year veteran in the coin-op industry, has joined the team of Alternate Worlds Technology (AWT) as the company's vice president of sales.

Kauffman has formerly been with Betson Enterprises, U.S. Billiards, and Imagination Leisure.

AWT, based in Louisville, Ky., has an in-house research and development team with extensive computer background.

IAAPA creates committee

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has created a committee to advise the association's board of directors on a broad range of trade show and convention issues.

The new committee, chaired by Bill Alter of Alter Enterprises, met for the first time in June at IAAPA headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia.

Other IAAPA members include: Stephen Lipkin, Nancy Sales Co.; Jack Mendes, Bob's Space Racers; Len Soled, Zamperla; George Wade, Iwerks Entertainment; and John Wood, Sally Corp.

The IAAPA is the largest international trade association for the world's permanently located amusements parks and attractions. It represents more than 4,000 members in 61 countries.

In other news

• AMOA's Washington, D.C. office has moved. The new address is 1200 19th St., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20036-2401. The phone (202) 857-1100 and FAX numbers (202) 223-4579 will remain the same.

• Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. has promoted Daniel Harnett to manager of public relations. Harnett will be in charge of product publicity activities for interactive entertainment software, corporate, and internal communications.

• Tadashi Manabe, 62, vice-chairman of Namco Ltd., Tokyo, died of colon cancer on April 30. Funeral services were held in Fuchu, Tokyo, on June 3.

Manabe, who came to Namco in 1964, became president of the company in 1990. He served as executive director in 1981 and later managing director in 1986. From 1992 he served as vice chairman. He also served as vice president of AOU and director of JAMMA.

• All Bay Tek Inc.'s roll down games have been tested and have been found to meet all Underwriters Laboratories (UL) requirements. These requirements are based on UL's published standards for safety. UL will conduct factory follow-up checks. □

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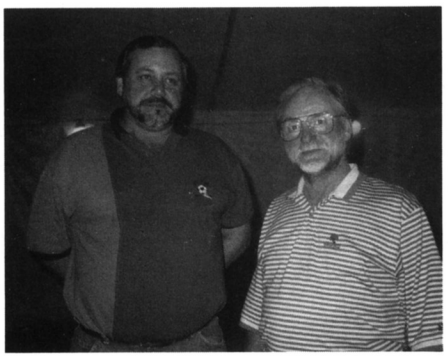
BOARD MEETING

AAMA holds annual board meeting in Illinois

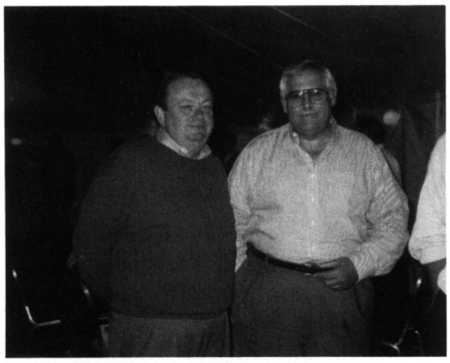
Rich Babich (second from right) was famous after his photo appeared in **USA Today** being manhandled by Utah Jazz owner Larry Miller. Now everyone wants to play Miller's part. This time, (l-r): Jolly Backer (Jaleco), Steve Koenigsberg (State Sales), and John Margold (NSM).

Mark Struhs (l) and Bob Fay (r) welcome Herb Cochran of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, who gave a speech on opening markets in Asia.

NSM's John and Julie Margold (l) with Valley's Chuck and Florence Milhem and Dick Shelton.



"The upcoming Tornado tournament is going to be fantastic," said Ed McCloud (r) and Dave Courington.



Williams-Bally/Midway's Joe Dillon (l) with Century Vending's Jerry Monday.

Sega Chairman Joe Robbins (r) with Konami's Mike Rudowicz.

The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) held its annual board meeting on May 21 in Lincolnshire, Ill. During the event, the association elected officers and board members, handed out awards, scheduled a myriad of meetings, and discussed many pressing issues within the industry.

Steve Koenigsberg, president of AAMA, presented plaques to five outgoing board members whose terms had expired: Rich Babich (Colorado Game Exchange), Frank Gumma Jr. (American Vending), Jerry Gordon (Rowe), Dave Patterson (SunBelt), and Tom Petit (formerly with Sega).

Some outgoing board members were unanimously re-elected. The new board members included Gumma, Gordon, Patterson, and new member Joe Dillon of Williams-Bally/Midway.

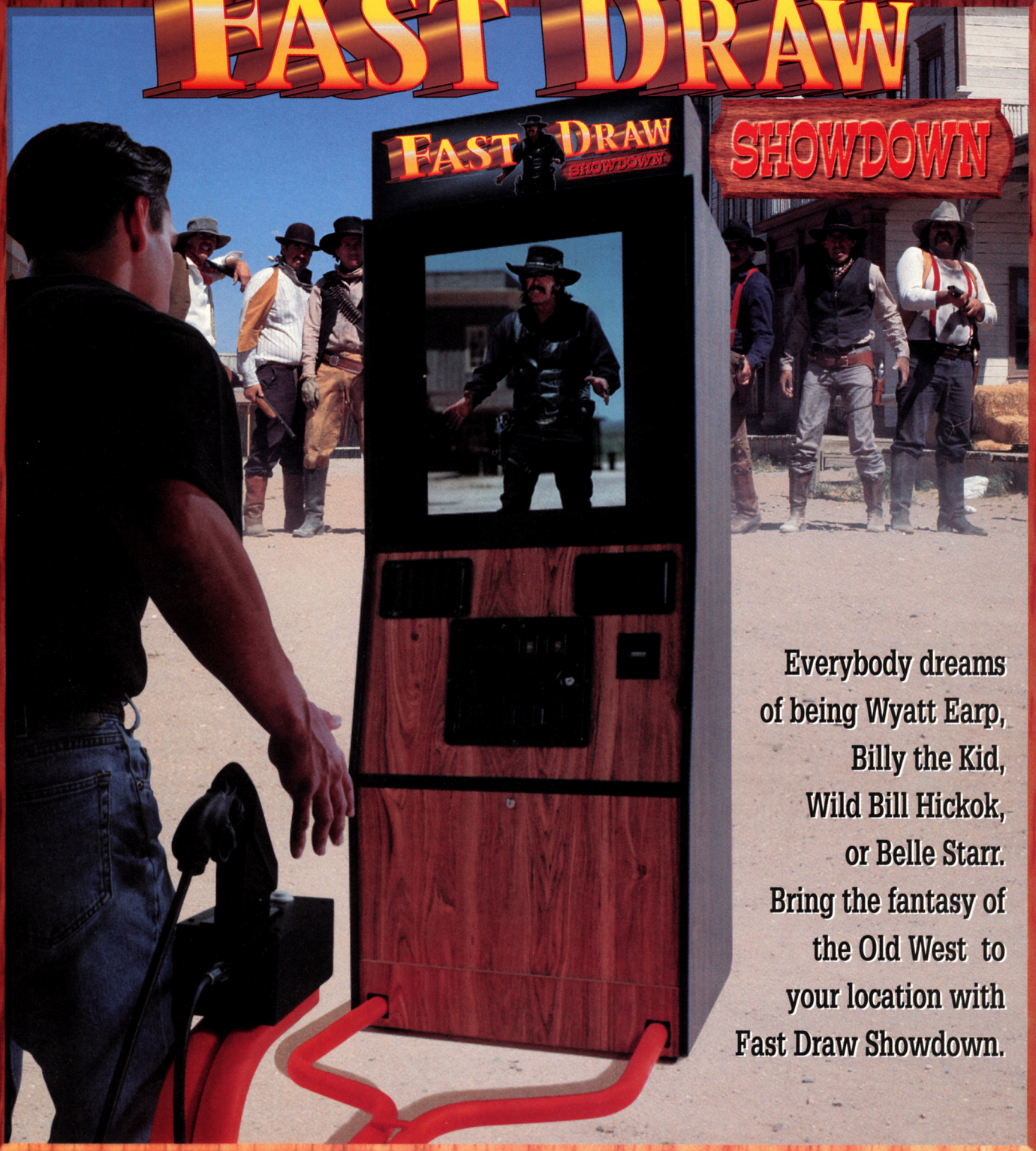
The slate of officers remained unchanged: president, Koenigsberg; vice president, Bill Cravens; treasurer, Patterson; secretary, Gumma; assistant treasurer, Rick Kirby; and assistant secretary, Marty Glazman.

AAMA also selected its officers for the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF). Ray Galante (Music-Vend/Dunis), Steve Lieberman (Lieberman Music), Frank Ballouz (Capcom), and Joe Robbins (Sega) will return from last year. Joining them are Frank Cosentino (Namco), Dick Shelton (Valley), and Joe Sladek (Skee-Ball).

Dave Patterson was named the recipient of the 1993 "Joe Robbins Award," named in honor of Joe Robbins, chairman of Sega Enterprises. It is presented for outstanding participation, contributions, and service to the coin-op industry. "Dave was a natural

FAST DRAW

SHOWDOWN



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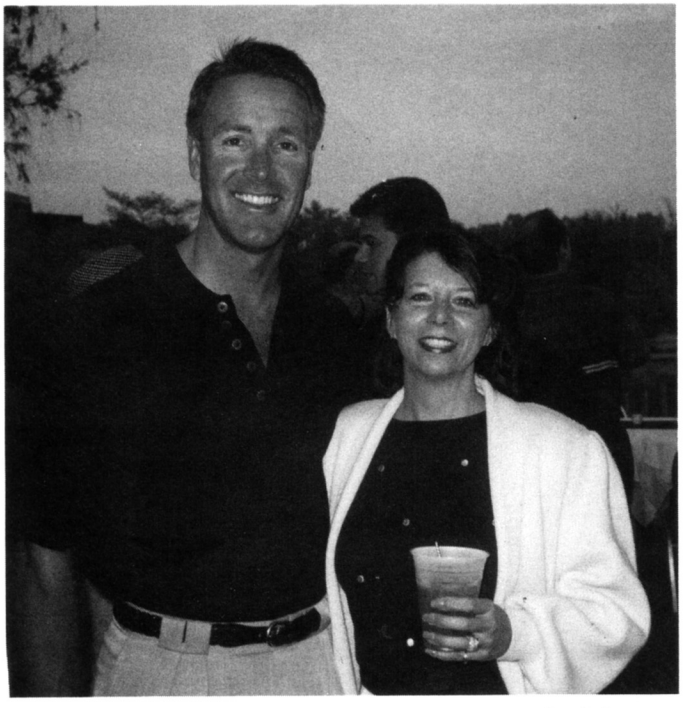
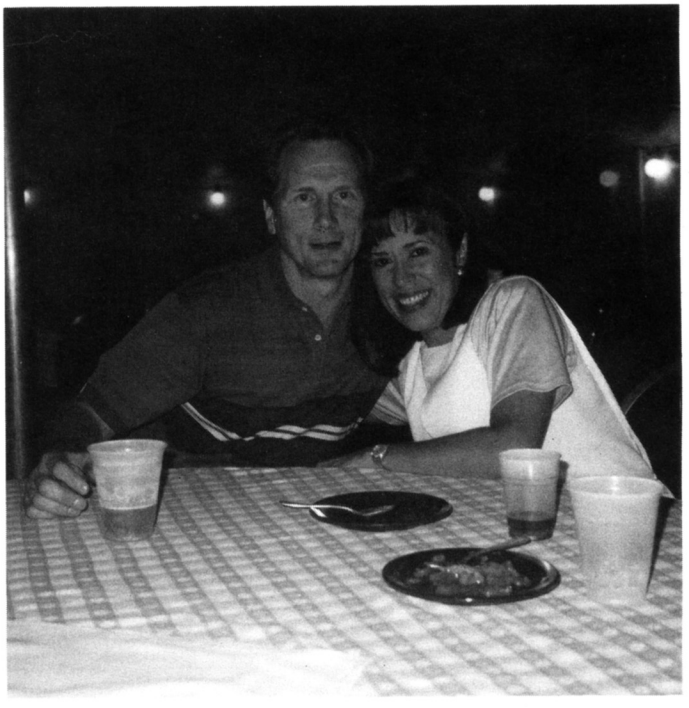


Tom Petit announced his resignation from Sega just days after the meeting. Here he is with Century Vending's Sue Monday.

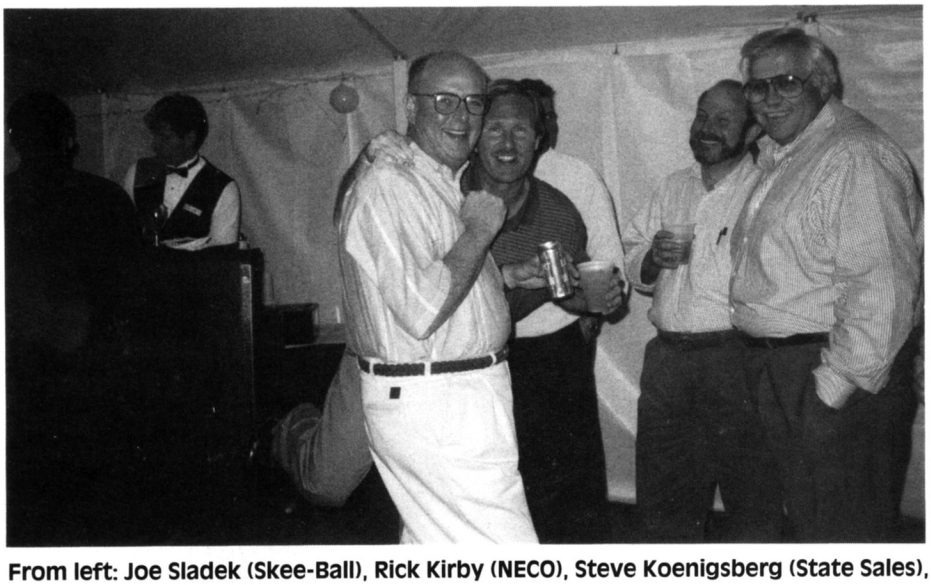


SNK's Tom Keil snuggles up to Carol Carrara, wife of Lazer-Tron's Ron Carrara. Ron snapped this photo!

choice for this award," said Koenigsberg. "As treasurer of AAMA for the past year, Dave had made a number of significant improvements to the financial structure of AAMA. He is dedicated to both the association and the industry."

Rich Babich was given the AAMA "President's Award" for outstanding participation, contributions, and service to both AAMA and the industry. Rich has chaired the association's industry promotion committee and has overseen such projects as the player market survey and the AAMA/NCPCA poster project.

There were several announcements made during the meeting. Executive director Bob Fay was appointed to continue to serve as a member of the Industry Sector Advisory Committee on Consumer Goods for Trade Policy Matters. Fay, who has served in this position since 1992, will continue to work with other industries' representatives to advise the Commerce Department and the U.S. Trade Representatives Office on a number of tariff and trade matters. All members of this committee must have top security clearance.



From left: Joe Sladek (Skee-Ball), Rick Kirby (NECO), Steve Koenigsberg (State Sales), and Jerry Monday (Century Vending).

Additionally, Fay has been re-elected to the board of the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition. Having served for six years, Fay has become very familiar with the role of the coalition, which is to focus on international copyright and trademark infringement matters.

With the recent departure of Elaine Kite, AAMA has hired Corrie Moore as administrative assistant; Michele Piazza has been promoted to the position of executive assistant to Fay. □

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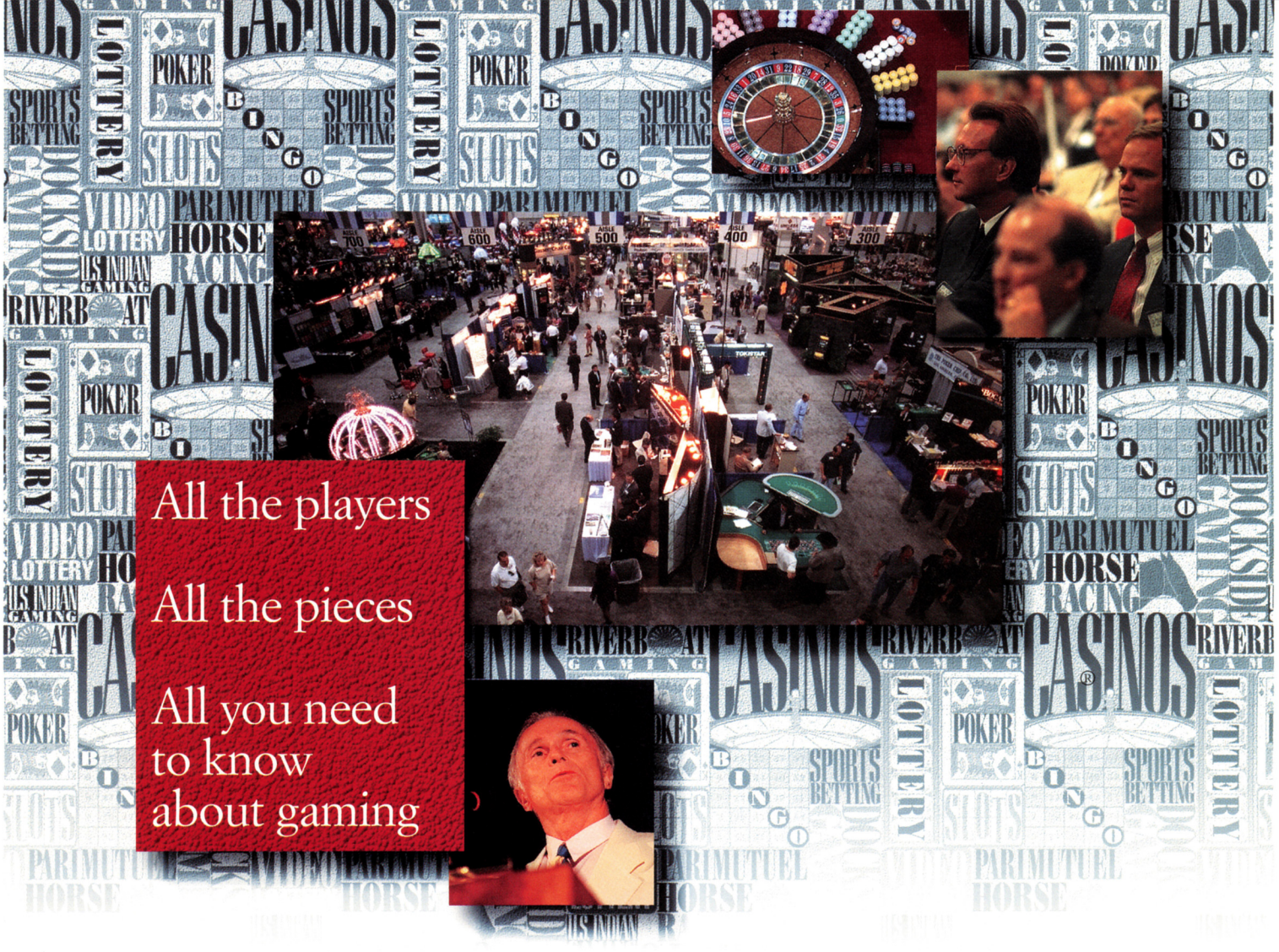

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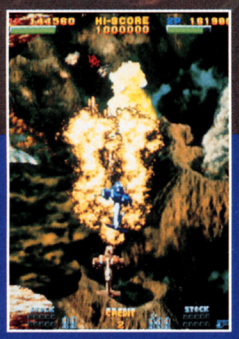
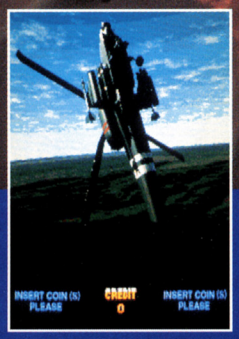


Awesome trick shots with command codes.



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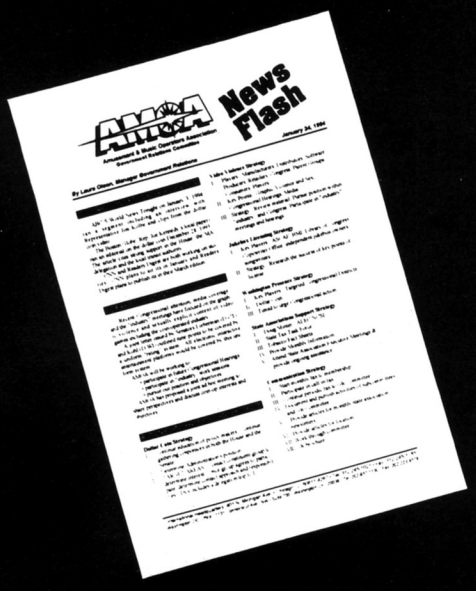

Each month — generally the last week — AMOA members receive either by FAX or mail a report on issues impacting the coin-op industry. The report , called AMOA "News Flash," is compiled jointly by AMOA's Washington office and AMOA's Government Relations Committee.

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COVER STORY

You can't beat experience and teamwork

Art Warner, president and founder of Coin Concepts, began his industry career in 1967 working for a New Jersey distributor selling amusement games, jukeboxes, and vending machines.

Five years later he started making rounds on the Jersey Shore calling on operators who were traditionally being serviced by Pennsylvania distributors. Art quickly dubbed the area "the birthplace of redemption" and started developing some strong relationships.

At a planning meeting, (l-r): Dan Zych (parts manager), Jeff Lankiewicz (vice president of operations), Art Warner (president), Gary Warner (vice president), Bob Schneider (service manager), and John Kara (production manager).

Looking back to those early years of his redemption education, Art says contacts he made on the Jersey Shore taught him the basics that would play a major role in his future. He learned things like game placement, win frequency, hit frequency, percentaging, ticket values, token values, etc. In 1972, when video games were beginning their advance into the amusement business, learning all there was to know about redemption wasn't a priority to many.

But Art was fascinated. He was astounded at the psychology and the philosophy of redemption. For example, the games were being played by toddlers, parents, teenagers, even grandparents. All he learned about this obscure part of coin-op would be filed away for future reference.

In 1981, when the video game market began to fade, he gave his first seminar on the operation of cranes. How receptive were operators? "Let's just say that at the first seminar there were nine operators," said Art. "The following year at the seminar it was standing room only."

Of course, redemption in the early '80s consisted mainly of mechanical cranes, rotaries, and roll downs. While Art dusted off his knowledge of redemption and related it to operators, many still thought of it as a fad and were reluctant to commit. "The market has certainly changed," Art observed.

In 1988, Art took a chance that many would like to take but few do; he started his own company, Coin Concepts. He saw a tremendous market niche with very little competition. Again, the philosophy he learned on the boardwalk came into play with the company's first game, *Rebound*. Art explained: "I know there is a little bit of gambling blood in all of us. *Rebound* was a game built on that probability. The player inserted a coin on the top of the game and it traveled down onto a horizontal playfield filled with different targets and values. Players loved it and we sold it for over three years."

Encouraged by the tremendous success of *Rebound*, Coin Concepts found success in the kiddie market with *Froggy Jr. and* Ol' McDonald. The company is also proud of other successes like *Dealer, Dreamboat, Flamingo,* and *Gold Rush.*

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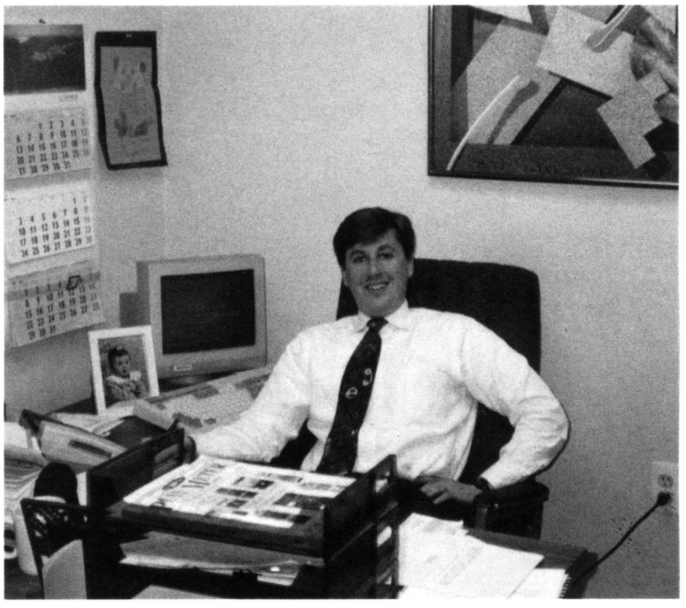
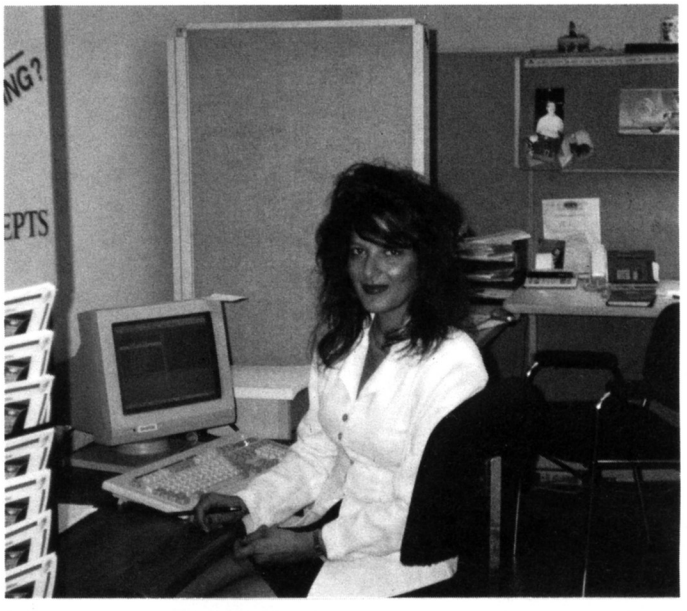
President and founder, Art Warner.



Gary Warner, vice president of sales and marketing.

The office staff, (l-r): Joan Roland (controller), Diane Sheridan (assistant bookkeeper), and Jo'Ann Reccoppa (receptionist).



Sales associate Stacey Martin.

Art has another philosophy he uses to explain the popularity of redemption: "It's basic human nature for people to want to feel good about themselves and feel like winners. When players walk away with a handful of tickets, they feel like winners. It's that psychology that we build into our games."

The psychology is seen in Coin Concepts' latest game, *Home Run Hitter*. It is a universally appealing game that makes players of all ages feel good because everyone likes sports, tickets, and a challenge. And, yes, people feel good about playing the game, too. "Those from my generation," began Art, "can remember the old baseball games where players ran around the bases when they got a hit. So *Home Run Hitter* takes us back to our youth. At the same time, the game is something novel for kids—many play little league so they can relate to it. It's a great game for parents and kids to play together. Another thing: girls love it! There hasn't been a game like *Home Run Hitter* for 20 years."

Art's son Gary joined Coin Concepts three years ago and shares his father's enthusiasm and insight into what makes the industry tick. "Some companies today are slapping ticket dispensers on just any game and

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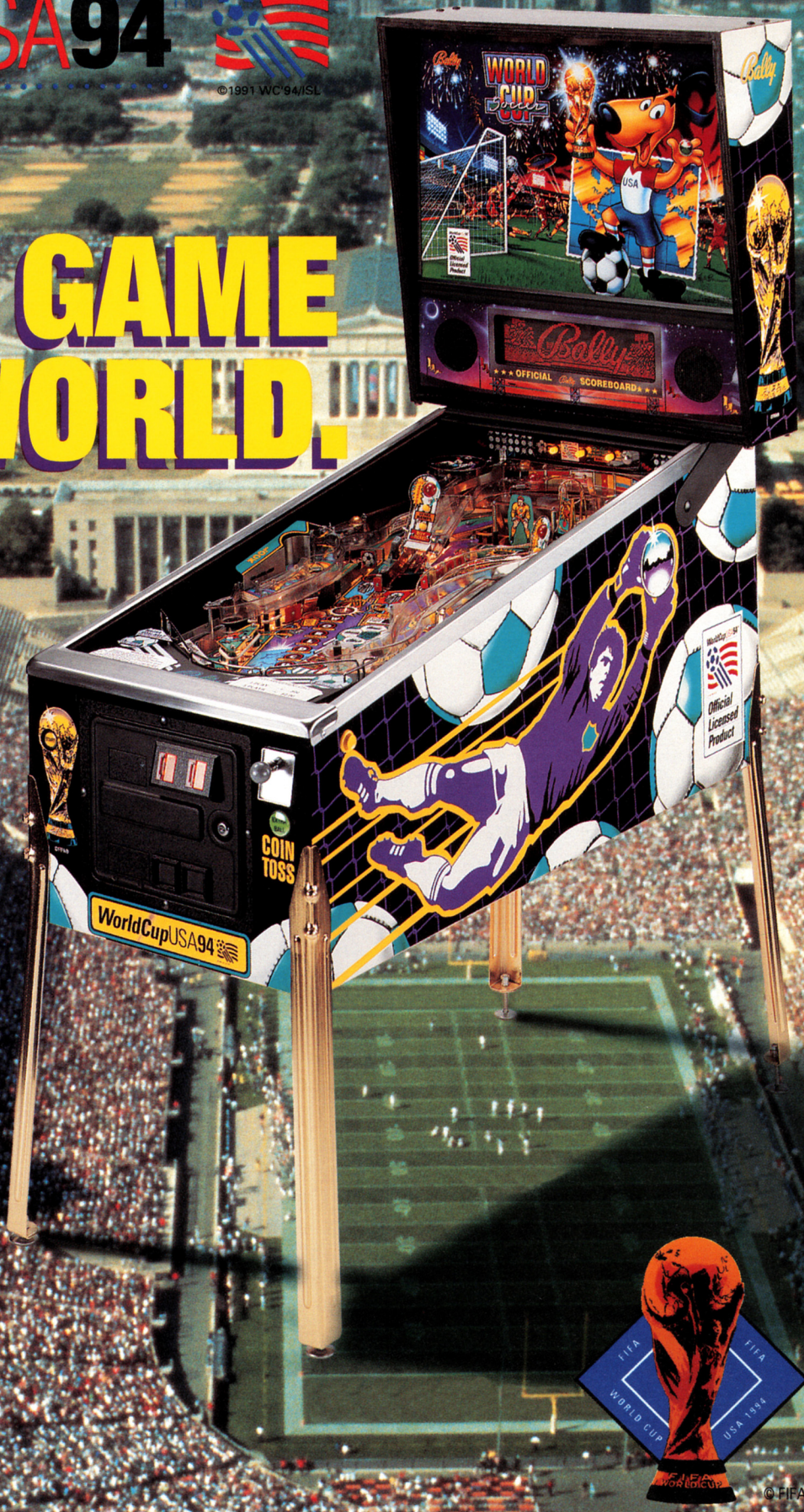

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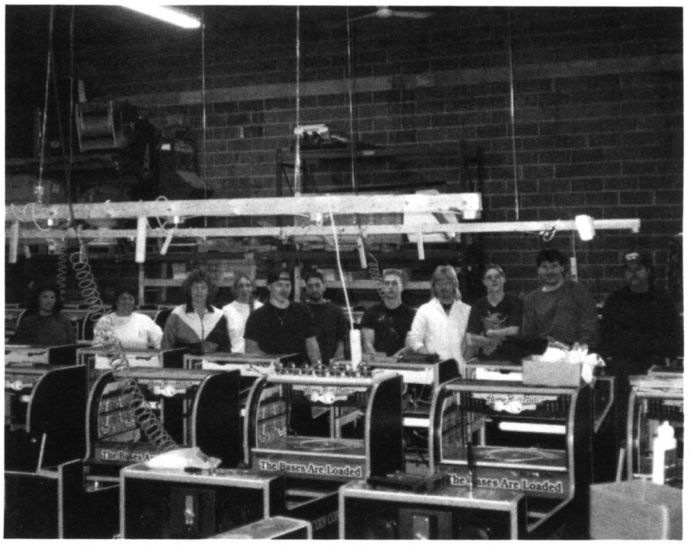

A group shot of the production department.

calling it redemption. It's similar to when video games were popular; companies figured that as long as a game had a video screen it would sell. We saw that theory go up in smoke," noted Gary.

Both Art and Gary admit that the redemption market is growing. One reason, they say, is the explosion of family entertainment centers mushrooming all over the country. Art said of this emerging market: "The arcades of the '80s were focused on young people who hung out and played the latest video games. The family entertainment centers of the '90s are focusing on families. There are many more youngsters today and families are seeking activities to share. Parents and grandparents want to make their little ones happy and family entertainment centers are a place they can take them for maximum fun and enjoyment. Making kids happy makes very happy parents."

Will the family entertainment center phenomenon continue? Art answered, "There has been tremendous growth in the past year. It hasn't peaked yet. It should continue to expand well into next year. However, things eventually will begin to change."

Art sees a future in redemption for street operators, too. He explained, "While arcade operators may be able to add redemption much easier, street operators don't have to be left out if they are willing to do it properly. A common misconception is that you can't operate redemption if you don't have younger customers. I counter with a suggestion to add the games and then they'll get the younger customers. A common mistake is not knowing the customer base *and* potential customer base."

Gary concedes that any company is only as good as its next game. While the company is ecstatic about *Home Run Hitter*, the next game is already in the works, scheduled for a fall release. No amount of coercing would force a clue from Gary's lips, but he did say it's going to be a must-have game. He did, however, take the opportunity to talk about the teamwork Coin Concepts depends on for its success. "Everything we do is through teamwork," he offered. "We have brainstorming sessions, where every department's input is valued and incorporated into the finished product. When we put a game out on test, we listen very carefully to any suggestions. Operators submitted some great ideas that we incorporated into *Home Run Hitter*."

Key employees at Coin Concepts include Jeff Lankiewicz, vice president of operations, who has been with the company five years; Bob Schneider, service manager, who has also been with them five years; Stacey Martin, a valued sales representative, who has been with the company three years; Dan Zych, the parts and shipping manager, with CCI for five years; and John Kara, production supervisor, with five years at the company.

Art summed up by saying: "No matter where we travel, we take the time to visit arcades and talk to operators to find out what they want. As long as we continue to stay in touch, we'll continue to make exceptional games. We value our distributor network and know they play a vital role in the industry and our company. Our philosophy will continue to be: the customer, the customer, the customer. Always do right by them and they'll ensure your own success." □

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COMPANY PROFILE

ICE: a product of vision and dreams

Like many great ideas get started, the Buffalo, N.Y.-based Innovative Concepts in Entertainment Inc. (ICE) came into existence in 1981 on a vision and a whim.

With absolutely no experience in the coin-op industry, Ralph Coppola and Jack Willert dreamed of designing and building a game fashioned after tabletop hockey games that were popular in the 1960s and 1970s.

So with the help of designer John Callahan, the three saw their vision evolve into a reality they called *Chexx*. It proved to be the first in a long line of successful games developed, manufactured, and marketed by ICE. After 13 years of production, more than 15,000 *Chexx* and *Super Chexx* games have been sold in 25 countries around the world.

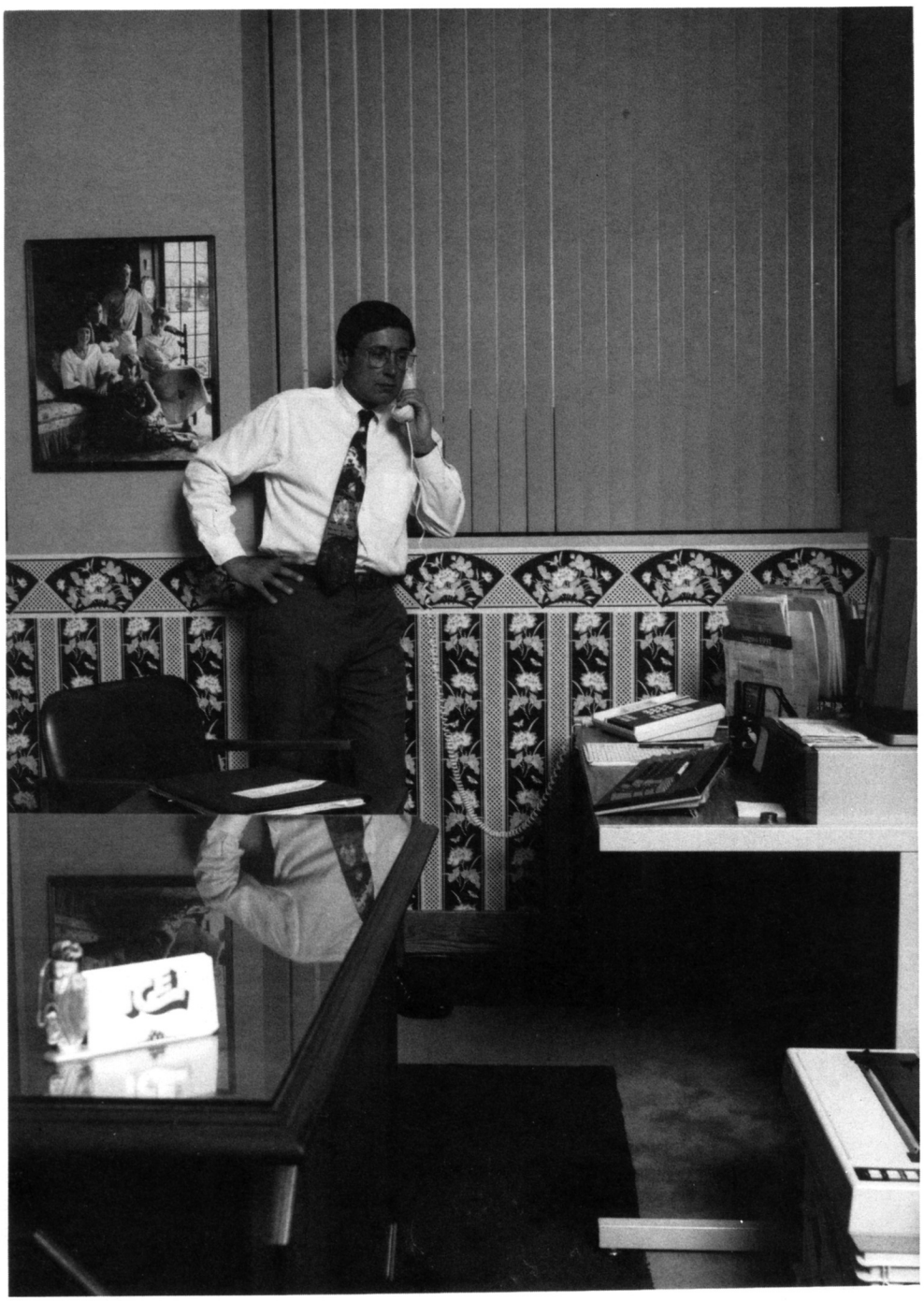
"It was a dream." said Coppola, who is president of ICE. "But perhaps a whim better describes it. I think our naivete prevailed over reason."

In the video dominated coin-op market of the early 1980s, *Chexx*'s electromechanical design took many in the business by surprise. Before a large group of skeptical manufacturers, distributors, and operators, *Chexx* was unveiled at AMOA '82 in Chicago. But *Chexx*'s popularity soon turned the skeptics into believers; in 1983 *Chexx* was awarded "Novelty Game of the Year."

"*Chexx* was revolutionary," Coppola said. "People forget it now, but in 1982 there was nothing but video. We were going to what were considered video game shows with this crazy looking game with a dome on it that operated primarily mechanically."

Since that time *Super Chexx* has developed a cult-like follow-

Ralph Coppola, president



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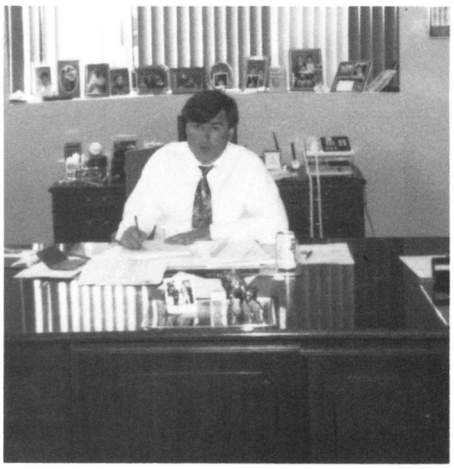
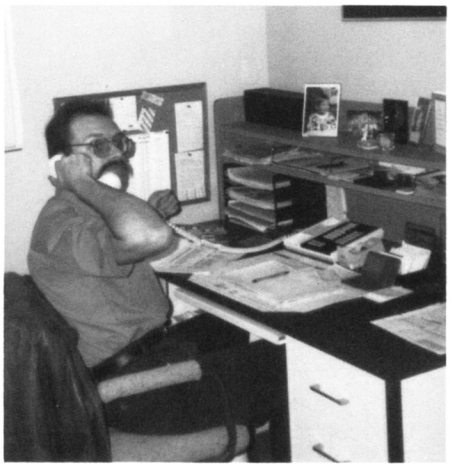
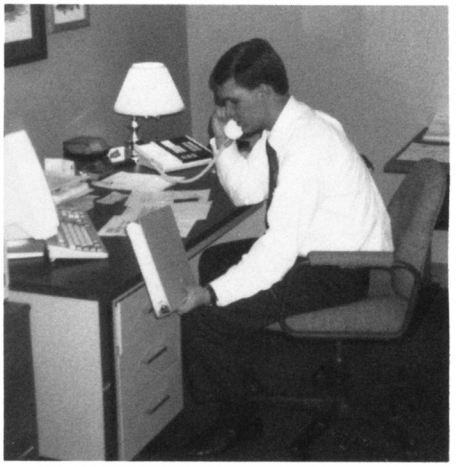


Jack Willert, executive vice president.



Gene Brogowski, sales and service.



Greg Kania, sales representative.

ing in many circles around the world. Its designers say the game has established itself as a "sport," much like air hockey or pool. Another success for ICE has been *Super Kixx*, an arcade style soccer game. It is affectionately called the "soccer-version" of *Super Chexx*.

As popular as *Chexx* and *Super Chexx* have been, Coppola claims that *Full Court Frenzy* and now *Full Court Frenzy II* could very well be ICE's highest-earning game. The game offers players a choice of three games and 10 different shot locations from all over the court. The rotating basket adds even more of a challenge to the playing experience.

The updated version, *Full Court II*, offers the same play value as the original but is easier to assemble, requires less space and height, has a metal mesh cage, and is about 20 percent lower in cost.

"This game has outearned any we've ever made," Coppola said. "Some locations have reported up to $1,000 a week in earnings."

Full Court Frenzy, Coppola said, breathed new life into the basketball game business. Before the production of *Full Court Frenzy*, Coppola said he was told that the basketball game business was dead.

However, more than 2,200 *Full Court Frenzy* games were sold in just an 18-month period. "This was done in a so-called saturated market," Coppola exclaimed. "It's outsold other basketball games anywhere from 10 to one and up."

"If we have a fault, it's that we insist on more play value than others. Our games have had more moving parts and a lot more bang for the customer's buck."

Not to leave out smaller basketball fans, ICE introduced *Half-Pint Frenzy*. In addition to the appealing features like the moving hoop found on the grown-up versions, *Half-Pint Frenzy* has unique sound and scoring systems designed to appeal to youngsters.

Another success story for ICE has been *Putting Challenge*, an innovative golf game that challenges players with a moving surface. It has been described as a putting simulator designed for competitive play. In 1991 *Putting Challenge* was named "Sports Novelty Game of the Year."

"*Putting Challenge* has been a tremendous earner," Coppola noted. "We've sold over 3,200 pieces. For a game that retails for around $4,000 and is 11' X 5' those are pretty big numbers."

Although ICE has been known for its sports games, it is fast becoming known for its redemption as well. *Hungry Hungry Hippos*, for example, was introduced in 1991. Licensed from the Milton Bradley Co., which sold more than 15 million of the games at the retail level, ICE turned the arcade version into a full-fledged must-have entertainment center game.

"This was the number one kid's interactive toy over the last 15 years," Coppola explained. "Most kids in the three to 10-year-old age group recognize the game."

A new product now in the works is a game being licensed

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from Hanna Barbera Productions. Testing is set to begin in a few weeks. Although Coppola would not divulge too many details, it's obvious he is excited about the project. How excited? "From the quality to what it has to offer players, it will be our best game ever," he projected. ICE is planning to release the game this summer.

Coppola is happy with ICE's success with sports games. He explained that they are attractive from a manufacturing viewpoint because they seem to be able to bridge the gap between the arcade business and the street business. Still, ICE does not want to limit itself to only one type of game.

"On the contrary, for example, we knew we weren't going to hit any street locations with a game like *Hungry Hungry Hippos*. It's strictly an entertainment center game," Coppola said.

But street locations are important and ICE strives to hit "the street" with at least every other game. Coppola said a successful street game has to be good, reliable, and long lasting.

"A good theme or cosmetic appeal may get limited mileage in an arcade, but it gets you nowhere fast on the street," he noted. "*Super Chexx* and *Full Court Frenzy* are two of the best street games in production."

Ask Coppola what sets ICE apart from the rest of the competition and he'll say its the more than 13 years of experience in electromechanical design. This, he said, translates into more play value for the customer.

"Chexx was revolutionary. People forget it now but in 1982 there was nothing but video."

"If we have a fault," he added, "it's that we insist on much more play value than others. Our games have had more moving parts and a lot more bang for the customer's buck."

Coppola said he used to have to explain what he meant by electromechanical games. "Now everyone wants to make them," he laughed.

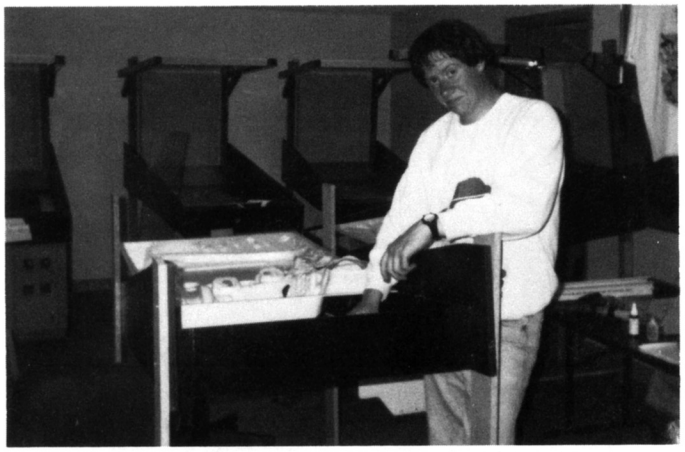
As president of ICE, Coppola is responsible for the overall administration of the company. He also is responsible for the contact with the outside world, such as distributors, overseas agents, coin-op contacts, and licensors.

Willert, the executive vice president, oversees everything inside the building. His responsibilities include development, manufacturing, purchasing, and shipping.

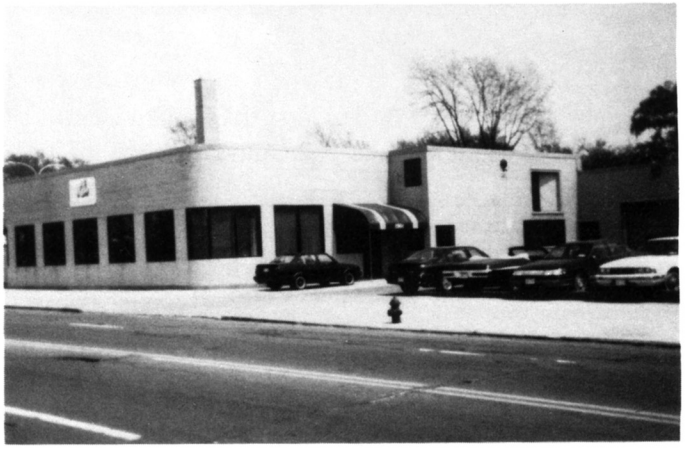
Callahan is in charge of the research and development effort at ICE. Coppola said he is one of the best in the business at electromechanical design.

"Our service manager Gene Brogowski married into coin-op two years ago (meaning we hired him)," Coppola said. "Then he fell in love with it. It's a great situation when your service people care about the customer as much as the principals in the company.

"We are also fortunate to have Greg Kania in sales, servicing the needs of all our domestic distributors and dealing with everything from orders to shipping arrangements to marrying customers to distributors," Coppola said. "In two-and-a-half years Greg has learned a great deal about not only what it takes to make our customer happy, but also what it takes to make them happier." □



John Callahan, head of research and development.



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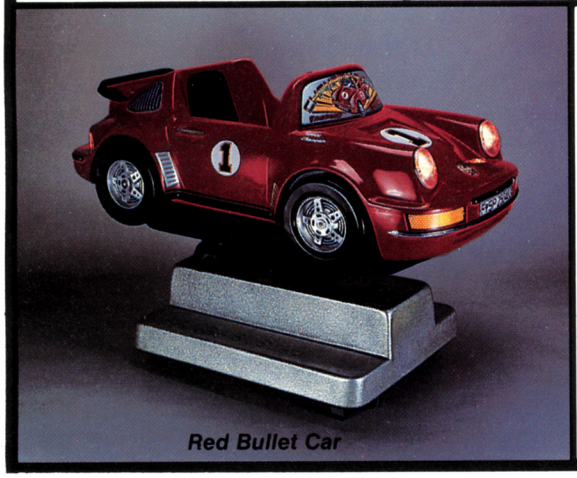

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FAMILY FOCUS

Distributors speak out on family entertainment centers

Family entertainment centers are popping up all over. And everywhere they show up, there's a distributor giving advice and encouraging them to succeed. We asked a number of distributors to give us their candid comments on this growing phenomenon. The first two told us that they would be much more candid if we agreed not to use their names. OK with us, because they had some interesting insights.

Anonymous

About 90 percent of the people opening family entertainment centers and buying redemption equipment have not been in the amusement business before. Invariably, it's a group or a limited partnership, who pool money to come up with this giant project. The FECs I see opening include miniature golf, the obligatory party room, and any number of other attractions—bumper boats, racing cars, soft play, batting cages, etc.

"The ultimate for the industry is that the players start young and remain players as they mature."

It scares me but I understand why they are becoming so popular: the average family can't afford to go to Disneyland every week. Families are looking for entertainment that is less costly than going to Disneyland but more thrilling than going to a bowling center. But I'm concerned about proliferation. When you talk about a place that takes up six acres of land and there's four of them in the same area, they all can't make it.

Why are FECs popping up now? Let's not go back just five years but 40 years when people were easily entertained by reading a book. Family entertainment centered around the excitement of listening to the radio. It had no color or pictures, but it was the most exciting hang-on-to-your-seat activity families could do together.

A few years later, we watched TV; then we needed color TV. Who was content to listen to the radio when there was TV with visual stimulation? Then somehow the thrill of TV wasn't enough. With each generation the imagination means less and the physical experience is more attractive.

There's a unique trait in people who open FECs. Because they are not familiar with our industry, they come with different business perspectives. Because there are multiple partners, they seem to present their package in financial terms—necessary when putting together a prospectus for raising money.

Let's assume that you and I were trying to put together a package to open a park. We decide on an antique carousel, expensive but it will scream excitement. Write down $800,000. Next we'll need about 25 go-karts at $2,000 each, so write $50,000. We have to lay asphalt and hire a mechanic—add another $50,000.

The batting cages, including cement, bats, nets, balls, and an attendant will add about $100,000 to our list. Soft play will cost about $200,000. Now we get to the game room. That would be about 100 games at an average of $3,000 apiece, including some used pieces plus a technician.

The costs are approved and we're ready to open. Two months later the man who sold us the carousel stops by and we tell him everything's great. The batting

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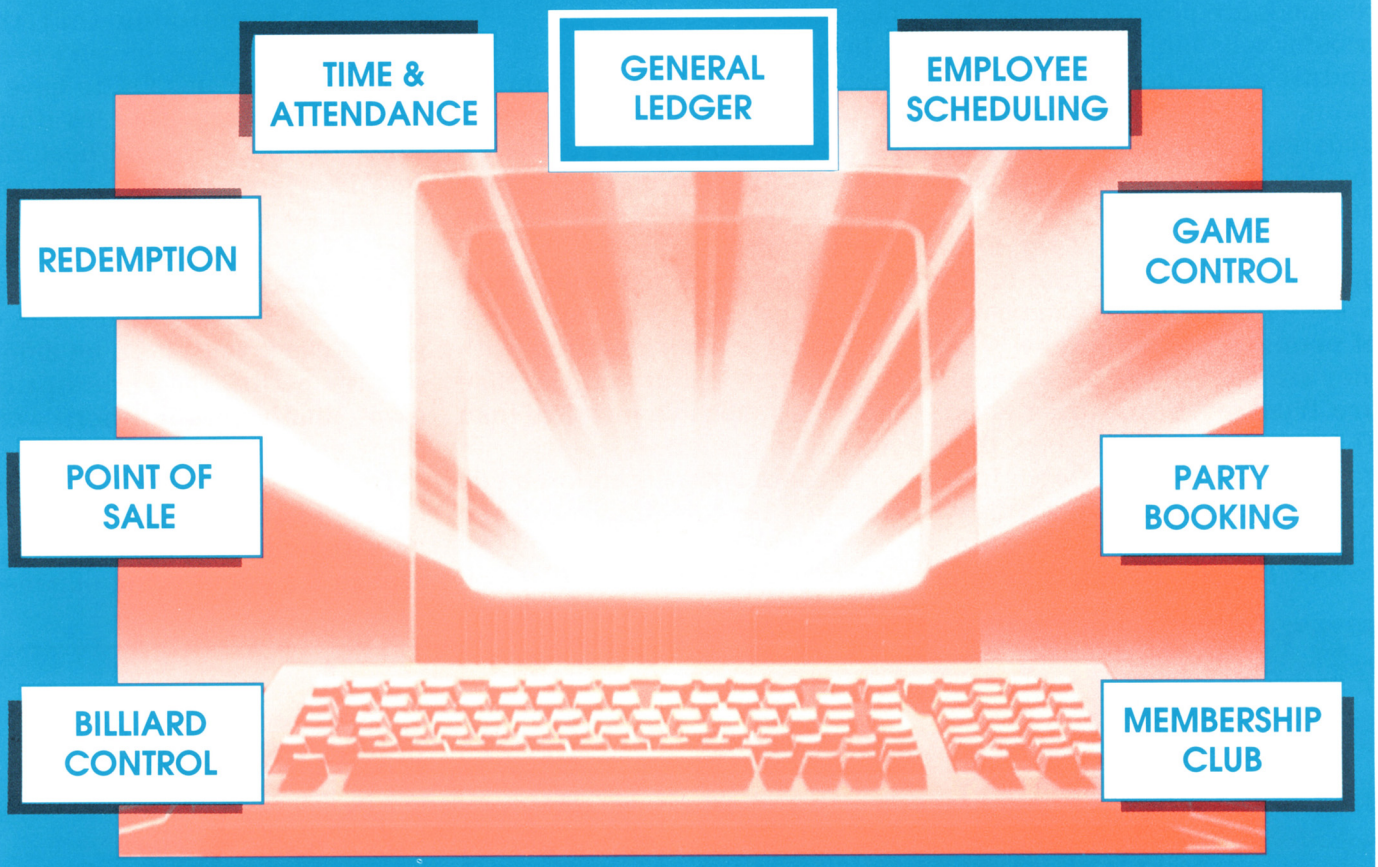

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cage salesman is told that things couldn't be better. Same with the soft play and go-karts. Now here comes the distributor to inquire about the game room. The owner says he's not too happy because revenues are down. When the distributor tells him that it's time to update equipment the owner panics. He hasn't budgeted for updating equipment. He explains that he can't go back to the partners for more money.

This is why many of the FECs opening now have some of the worst game rooms. It's indicative of people who don't know what they are doing. Now these people are frustrated and disgusted. They can't understand how their game rooms can be obsolete. "What do you mean the guy down the street has a better game room?" he asks. He starts looking for a solution since the game room is bringing in 20 percent of the park's revenue. He is trying to find a way to avoid competing with the guy down the street, who is a professional in the arcade business.

In effect, he wants to neglect the game room but he doesn't want anyone to know he's neglecting it. How do you fool a 12-year-old kid who knows that the arcade down the street has the latest games?

The location owner finds a way with redemption. You can hide a multitude of shortcomings with redemption, just as you can hide more mistakes in a meatloaf than you can in a souffle.

It's the answer to his problem. He won't be competing with the guy down the street and he doesn't have to spend more money.

However, the philosophy of operating redemption will soon be antiquated. That same 12-year-old snot nose kid who knew the video games were obsolete will soon start realizing that the redemption games haven't been updated either. It's OK to have a *Wheel 'Em In* if players don't know there's a *Super Wheel 'Em In*. Already we're seeing players asking for the new redemption pieces.

There are probably 25 redemption manufacturers. That's a lot of games every year. It's a lot different from the five redemption game manufacturers there were a few short years ago.

The bottom line is that some of the poorest arcades are in family amusement centers. They don't realize it's an on-going expense.

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The only answer is to work with an operator. Many places are contracting with a professional for the food service. They are smart enough to know that they don't know food. If they'd figure it out, they don't know anything about games either.

They may not know the industry now but they will after their location has been open for 30 days.

Anonymous

Family entertainment centers are here and they're here to stay. Wherever you look there's an FEC being built. It reminds me of the early '80s, when everyone had to have an arcade. And like the mid-'80s when a great number of these arcades went out of business, I believe the late '90s will see many FEC casualties.

Those that survive will be around for a long time, but the price will be costly for those that exit from the business. The cost of a typical FEC greatly exceeds the cost of an '80s arcade; some in excess of $2 million. To get a decent return on investment the FEC must be well organized, efficiently run, and be in the right location.

Where are the problems? There are simply too many being built. The professionals (Nickels & Dimes, Edison Brothers, Namco, etc.) are building them and will be the most likely survivors. They know how to locate them, set them up, and stock them. Their weakness is in the food area, but they have taken steps to get over that hump. The Chuck E. Cheeses and Celebration Stations have been around long enough and have been successful enough in their operations to be among the winners in the FEC war.

The independents currently in the FEC arena will continue to be successful, but they'll find it more difficult to expand because of the dollars needed for expansion. Consequently, many of these independents will sell out to larger chains and no longer exist as individually run operations. It's unfortunate because they are the ones who use the most imagination.

We're seeing a number of well-financed corporations entering the scene. Though well financed, I don't believe they have the expertise to compete with the aforementioned groups. If they succeed, I predict that it will be costly to them and they will end up closing many of their locations along the way. I don't believe they will achieve the return on investment that they expect.

The last group entering the business are underfinanced businesses and investor groups, who are convinced that the FEC is the road to making millions. They are not doing their planning properly. Most end up short of funds, underestimate expenses, have the marginal locations, are poor selectors of games, and are generally operating poorly-run and unorganized locations. Once again, the amateur will lose out and this time he can't blame the blue suede shoes salesmen. They can only blame themselves for being greedy.

I've been addressing the larger FECs. What about the smaller 8,000-square-foot FEC (Discovery Zone, Leaps & Bounds, etc.)? Great idea. They'll be around for a long time, but with the same problems. Too many are being built, not only by the chains but also by their imitators. To further complicate their problems, because of the smaller size, they're all beginning to look the same.

With too many being so similar, the kids will grow tired of them and will become bored. As a result, the smaller FECs will level off at a much lower number than those being built; the failures will be high.

As a distributor, it is disturbing to see the newcomers to this field bypassing us and going direct to the manufacturer for their purchases. These people have no expertise in selecting equipment and are purchasing a large number of the wrong products, using price as their main guideline. As for service, these newcomers have no experience and are failing badly at providing service to their centers. What they do provide is extremely expensive and wasteful.

Some manufacturers are turning them away and directing them to distribution for the above reasons. Some manufacturers are too greedy to see beyond today and are adding to the problems of the FECs. On the bright side, look at all of the cheap, used equipment we can pick up for the next summer season! It's too bad that these newcomers can't take a trip back to the early '80s to see the mess we had then.

Steve McCaul
Director of Sales and Special Projects
Mondial Distributing
Springfield, NJ

Mondial welcomes the new business of the FECs; we do not see it as a fad. We look at this as a steady growth and encourage the more aggressive operators and entrepreneurs who get involved in the FEC business. FECs can be very profitable and a great addition to your existing facility, but anyone considering getting into this business must do all of their research and planning well in advance of jumping in.

Some of the things that we suggest before considering opening an FEC:

- Decide what market you're going after (i.e. families, teens, sports bar crowds, etc.) It's unusual to be able to satisfy all these groups in one spot.

• Study the population of that market; make sure there is a strong group to pull from in that targeted market. This is why a demographic study is so important.

• Again, understand the market you're targeting and select the redemption games accordingly. It's obvious that you don't want lots of games geared toward youngsters if you're expecting adults.

• Ticket payout is a very important aspect of a successful redemption/FEC. Pay close attention to the number of tickets you're giving away. You don't want to be greedy, but you don't want to give them away either. This is an important consideration; don't overlook it.

• Your merchandise counter (prize selection) is a major factor. You must have a variety of small to large items. Have things your customers will want to win, even returning to collect more tickets.

Depending on the market you're going after, especially families, I'd like to share a few observations:

Because mom and dad are both working, the family unit has very little time during the week to go out and enjoy themselves. We have found in our business that we are taking in 70-80 percent of our revenue Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Therefore, if you are dealing with families, make sure your FEC is able to accommodate a large number of people.

For example, birthday parties have become big business. You must be prepared to seat a capacity crowd (up to 400). Parents will go to great lengths to please their children and only have the weekend to do so. Along with a large seating capacity, it's essential to have a good selection of coin-operated redemption games to entertain both the children and their parents.

Another observation I'd like to share is the placement of bill changers, which are a major function of your FEC, especially if you operate with tokens. You need one changer for every 20-25 games. You have a short window of time to accept your customers' money so *be ready* when the crowds hit on weekends. Make sure your changer accepts $10s and $20s (a Standard changer does this well).

Mondial has done its homework and will continue to do so. Anyone contemplating opening an FEC should do his homework

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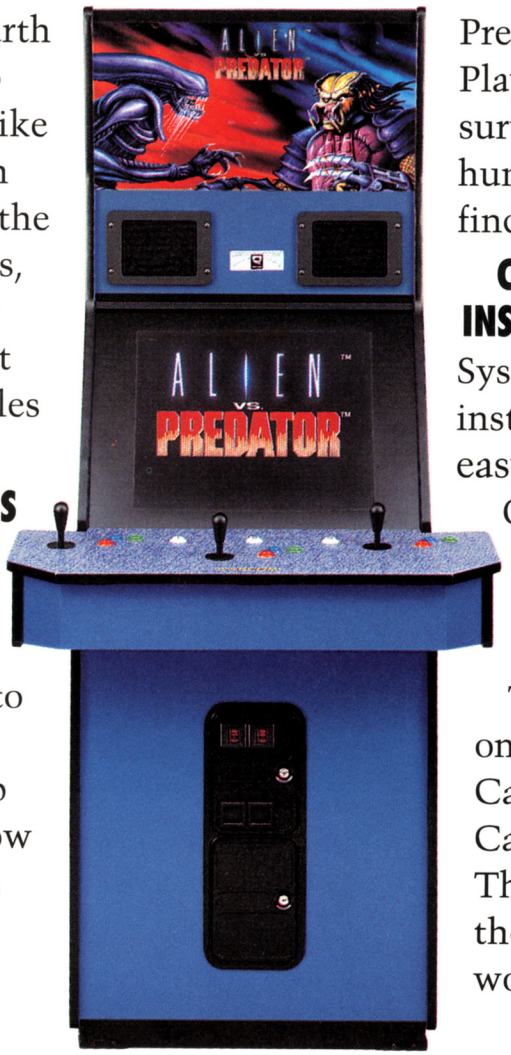

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and continue to educate himself on this industry. It's a learning process that never ends. Good luck!

Jerry Johnston
Sales Manager
H.A. Franz & Co.
Houston, TX

FECs are multi-faceted facilities designed to attract the whole family. When you can draw the family, the bottom line income is going to increase.

Redemption equipment brings families into a location; women like the simpler games. What our customers need to do is to get dad there; he's the one with the money! Over the years, we've found that men are attracted to go-kart tracks where father and son can drive together. What's needed is a well-rounded situation that keeps the family there longer.

Redemption has been very good to many of my customers. It took a long time to convince them. Many were apprehensive initially, but once you convey the numbers generated, operators feel more at ease. Always remember that daily maintenance is required to keep redemption games functioning.

If the demographics in your area are conducive to introducing a family entertainment center, explore it. We've found that such a center can be a good income producing warehouse for an operating route.

Harold Lieberman
Lieberman Music Co.
Minneapolis, MN

I believe FECs will grow considerably over the next few years. With Blockbuster (Discovery Zone) and McDonald's (Leaps & Bounds) backing unique concepts, the immediate future seems bright for the consumer.

The problem is that there are already established concepts in our marketplace. Circus Pizza, Kidsquest, Sportspree, and the new entrants will have to fight to maintain their market share. Competition for the family dollar will be fierce in the upcoming years.

For distributors, the arrival of new FEC concepts will lead to additional opportunities for game and redemption business. Hopefully, the manufacturer will develop innovative video games, pinball, and redemption to take advantage of this exploding niche market.

"Competition for the family dollar will be fierce in the upcoming years."

Robert Donnelly
Sales Manager
New England Coin-Op
Norwood, MA

We have been concentrating on selling redemption equipment for some time now. With the help of some excellent teachers (Skip Doyle and Joe Sladek) we began selling redemption equipment to FECs over seven years ago.

By being involved in redemption for this long as a distributor, we have learned not only the impact of the equipment earnings, but have also realized the *new* markets that this equipment has found.

With the most recent "baby-boom" entering game player age, we have been able to successfully aid in the opening of FECs. This has transpired in the long run into four game player categories:

Category 1: 2-10 years old—"young" redemption with familiar cartoon characters, voice association (i.e. *Wacky Gator*). This type of location is complemented with soft play.

Category 2: 8-17 years old—"skill" redemption games like *Skee-Ball*, roll downs, etc. This type of location is usually complemented with indoor amusement rides.

Category 3: 16-21 years old—"sports" redemption like basketball games, etc. This type of location is usually complemented with a strong video and pinball line-up. A typical mall arcade with redemption.

Category 4: 21-up—"adult" style redemption like *Pop-A-Ball*, coin pushers, etc. This location is complemented with a sports bar, pool tables, and food.

We believe that these categories are good barometers for grooming players as they become older and more skilled. The ultimate for the industry is that the players start young and remain players as they mature—with the emphasis being on fun and entertainment for the player on all levels.

As a distributor, we have to know our position in the marketplace and educate our customers so that they too can define their respective market segment. The key word here is education. Redemption is here to stay for all age groups.

We can never say it often enough—it takes a lot of work to make these places successful: finding the proper location, setting the location, picking the appropriate mix of equipment, knowing how to percentage the equipment to pay back fairly, purchasing the right prizes at the right price, knowing what your ticket value is, knowing what your tokens are worth, where and when to advertise, and above all providing a comfortable location that provides fun and repeat business.

We have been very busy and successful in the redemption

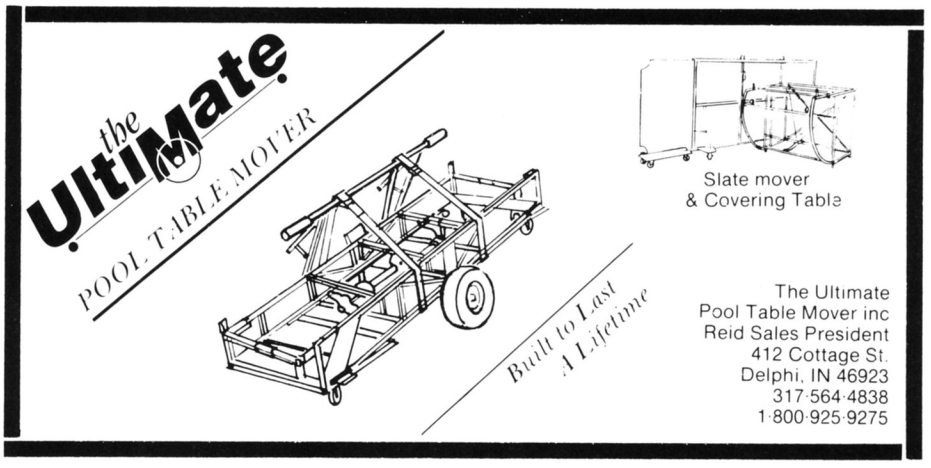
business for the last seven-plus years. We will always be in this market, but we do see a saturation point. It's similar to a recent situation here in New England: there were lots of pool halls built and then there was a thinning out period—a survival of the fittest. We see the same in the FEC market, with about two more years of constant growth before this saturation occurs. At that point, there will be hot new products sold into the "categorized" locations as they become available.

Gary Gouse
General Manager
Birmingham Vending co.
Birmingham, AL

We find the FECs to be a new and challenging area of business. However, many people planning to open a FEC have little or no experience in this field. They depend more on distribution for equipment selection and service than your typical arcade or street operator.

Proper direction is vital for these new customers. Without proper guidance, it would be tough for a new FEC to be successful. If they do their homework and get proper guidance, they have a better chance for success; their success opens the door for future businesses. We think FECs are here to stay, even though they will be constantly changing.

FECs have definitely expanded our customer base. Some people compare what's happening with FEC's with what happened with arcades in the early '80s. While there may be some similarities, part of the problem with arcades of the '80s was that they often were not run in a professional manner. Street operators, as well as individuals from outside the industry, were looking for an easy business to open and were seeking a quick return. This is not the case with the new FECs. The investment is simply too great. □



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FAMILY FOCUS

Successful FECs reveal their winning formulas

A bumper boat pool is part of the miniature golf course at Aventure Island. Batting cages are under construction in the background.

Adventure Island's redemption counter with built-in showcase and mirrored wall.

There is no magic key that unlocks the door to success for family entertainment centers. Once the research has been completed, the business decision made, and financing secured, construction begins and the center is well on its way.

If the owners and their advisors are correct and the attraction mix is on-target, it will fulfill its purpose of providing safe, enjoyable activities for all family members.

Play Meter surveyed six centers from California to New Hampshire and found out more about their individual winning formulas.

Adventure Island Henderson, N.C.

"We went way out on a limb but we have confidence that the market will support our center," remarked David Abbott in a recent conversation about his two-and-a-half-acre family entertainment center. Abbott has been "really pleased" since the center opened a mere three months ago.

The theme of adventure permeates the facility, which offers visitors a miniature golf course with waterfalls and rock formations, a bumper boat pool that is actually part of the golf course, an indoor soft play area for kids, birthday party rooms, and batting cages.

In addition, there's a 2,500-square-foot game room with 75 percent redemption equipment and a first-class redemption counter featuring a built-in showcase and mirrored wall.

Attractions are priced separately so patrons can pick and choose their favorites.

Abbott and his brother Anthony were coin machine operators first before embarking on the FEC concept. They started Triple A Amusements in 1982, operating a route and later expanding to amusement centers in several shopping malls.

Opening an FEC was a leap of faith. "We began work on this project about a year ago," said Abbott. The initial construction phase took 10 months; the batting cages were completed after the grand opening.

What's the magnitude of their investment? According to Abbott, "With land cost, the building, and our attractions, we'll be in the $850,000 to $1 million range."

To maintain the family atmosphere, the Abbotts require that children under the age of 12 be accompanied by an adult. "It

The game room entrance at Adventure Island.

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An overall view of the variety of activities offered at GAMES Family Fun Center.

The well-stocked redemption counter at GAMES Family Fun Center keeps the kids coming back.

encourages the entire family to come out together," he noted. "It's made a difference in the type of clientele. People are more well-behaved here than in a free-standing game room."

Abbott explained that Triple A gradually started making the break to redemption games in 1989. "A lot of operators are taking the step to redemption," said Abbott, "because the family market is an untapped market. The redemption games set the mood at Adventure Island. Adults don't realize how much fun the games are. It doesn't take long for them to start exclaiming to their children: 'Let me win you some tickets!'"

Adventure Island is located in a rural area, about 40 miles north of Durham and 45 miles north of Raleigh. It's right on I-85 and less than half a mile from the strongest retail area in town.

An afternoon of fun is reasonably priced: $4 for a round of golf (discounts for groups), $2 for unlimited time in the soft play area, $2.50 for bumper boats and $1.50 for a child passenger. A snack bar features hot dogs, nachos, popcorn, ice cream by the scoop, and Hawaiian shaved ice. Picnic tables are available.

"There's not a nicer center like it anywhere," said Abbott. Additional property behind the FEC serves as a distribution center for the arcade and route business of Triple A Amusements.

game room with half videos and pins/half redemption, a snack bar, party rooms, an outdoor pavilion, and an ice skating rink under construction.

"By the end of the year we'll have even more redemption equipment," assured Snyder. "I feel the games bring in the families. Everyone enjoys playing them because they can get something in return."

"A lot of operators are taking the step to redemption because the family market is an untapped market."

Sports Park
Sandy, Utah

Sports Park general manager Karen Snyder feels that FECs are great for today's families that are "so busy they have only a couple of hours for leisure activities. At large amusement parks it's difficult to see all the attractions in one day, but at an FEC you can do everything in three hours and go home knowing you had a good time together."

Sports Park features five go-kart tracks (three junior tracks and two for ages 10 to adult), seven batting cages, two 18-hole miniature golf courses, a large

Bumper boats may be the next attraction at this three-year-old facility that's a one-of-a-kind in the Salt Lake Valley. It stretches across eight acres, with most of the attractions outdoors.

This is the first time that Sports Park will operate all year long. The go-kart tracks opened in March, due to good weather, and are scheduled to run through October. The ice rink adds a new dimension for the fall and winter.

The well-stocked game room at Dinosaur-Us.

Parents and children alike enjoy the redemption games at Dinosaur-Us.

"If it's a beautiful day in the winter we'll open the tracks as well," said Snyder.

The Sports Park snack bar offers hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, chicken, french fries, nachos, pretzels, breadsticks, and a sweet delicacy—churros (soft dough that's quick-fried and dusted in cinnamon and sugar, yum!).

Snyder takes it as a compliment that parents feel comfortable leaving their children at Sports Park for a few hours. "We offer a safe, clean atmosphere," she adds. "We promote the family fun center concept. This is definitely a trend."

GAMES Family Fun Center Mukilteo, Wash.

Mike and Beth Kerwin dreamed of opening a recreational facility built around the concept of fun activities for the whole family. They just dreamed it before the notion became popular.

The couple, who have degrees in recreation, met while working at the Sudden Valley Recreation Center near Bellingham in the early '70s. As Kerwin puts it, "Three children and two economic downturns later we finally got our chance."

That "chance" required two years of preparation before the opening day in September 1991. Coincidentally, the state of Washington had approved the operation of redemption games one month earlier and GAMES became one of the first locations to provide the equipment.

Kerwin is a big supporter of redemption: "The popularity of redemption is so strong that its growth supports its expansion."

"FECs foster a bond between family members they take from our environment and bring back to their homes."

GAMES offers 20,000 square feet of fun in a remodeled warehouse not far from Puget Sound. The four large warehouse doors are open during the summer, creating cross-ventilation that establishes a pleasant temperature.

All the activities are indoors. Said Kerwin, "Nowadays with the concern over too much solar exposure, people don't mind being indoors as much." Washington state's penchant for rain makes an indoor location preferable.

The Kerwins have included two batting cages offering two speeds of fast-pitch baseball and slow-pitch softball, a 10' x 20' soft play area, a 130-unit game room that's half redemption/half video, seven pool tables, table tennis, and 18 holes of miniature golf (built by the Kerwins).

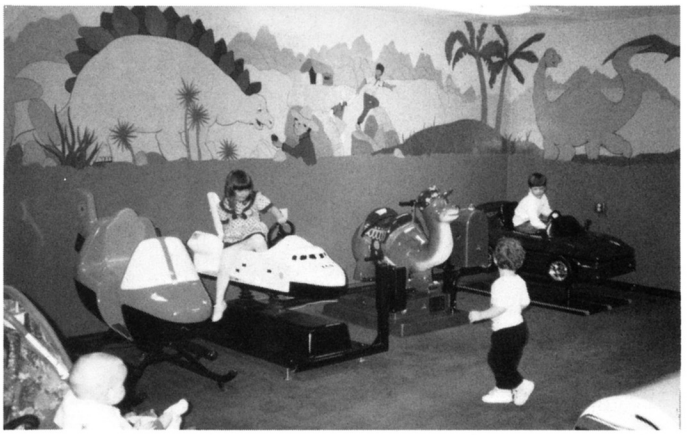
"Our big deal is birthday parties and group parties," explained Kerwin. "We have banquet facilities that handle up to 250 people. A large private area on our upper level is perfect for large groups and allows us to maintain our lower level for the public."

Pizza is the home-grown variety, made in the center. Kerwin believes in "quality and consistency. If people have a good food experience they will come back again."

A sense of community is important to the Kerwins, who have opened their center for worthy fund-raisers, from the United Way and MADD to Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other organizations.

The term "family" is not only a word to the Kerwin clan; it's a

The entrance to Dinosaur-Us in Glendora, Calif.



Murals of prehistoric creatures adorn the walls in Dinosaur-Us.

philosophy. The Kerwin children, two boys and a girl, work alongside their parents and have a positive influence on the business.

"Family is the purpose of our business," affirms Kerwin, who generously shares his experiences. "We worked to gain the skills to get the project together. It's our responsibility and our privilege to give back to the industry. What makes the industry strong is the caliber of the people in it. We have to be able to share information."

Kerwin admits to "a lifelong obsession to be in the field of entertainment." He is happiest when he sees parents and children doing things together, explaining, "There's a bond they take from our environment and bring back to their homes."

Joker's Portsmouth, N.H.

Bill Latvis and James Grattello undertook nine months of research before deciding to enter the FEC business. Today they are poised to open a 27,000-square-foot facility with a full kitchen, mini-go-karts, train ride, ferris wheel, soft play area (1,800 square feet), and game room with 150 games (65 percent redemption).

Latvis expects to throw a lot of birthday parties and will provide a package that includes the cake, soda, and food items from the ample kitchen. The regular menu will include hamburgers, pizza, appetizers, sandwiches, and salads. The seating capacity is 300-400 people.

All the activities are indoors, since as Latvis said, "In New Hampshire our summer season is the Fourth of July. The rest of the year can be very cold."

Latvis and his partner conducted their own feasibility studies. "A lot of people can hire outside consultants but we felt we had to do our own research," he explained.

Dinosaur-Us Glendora, Calif.

Can dinosaurs get a new lease on life at the family entertainment center level? Al Hassen Sr. and his son, Al Jr., have revived the once extinct creatures and built an entire FEC around them.

Wedged in-between the popular big-screen movie "Jurassic Park" and the recently premiered "Flintstones," Dinosaur-Us in Glendora, Calif., suits both the time traveler and the parents of the '90s.

The Hassens missed no opportunity to capitalize on the prehistoric theme. For starters, the walls of the center are generously covered with dinosaur murals; the building is surrounded by pine trees.

Included in the 17,000-square-foot center are the Hungry-Saurus, a food area with dinosaur-shaped pizza, fries, and chicken nuggets; the Disco-Saurus, a dance spot with a real disc jockey, helicopter lights, a fog machine, and schedules for pre-teens and teens; and the Gift-Saurus, where dinosaur T-shirts, caps, and trading cards can be found. Even the rest rooms bear the names He-Saurus and She-Saurus.

In addition, there are over 100 arcade and skill games divided by age level and type of game, Flintstone kiddie rides, party rooms, and a gourmet dessert and coffee bar with frozen yogurt and espresso on the menu.

According to Hassen Sr., Dinosaur-Us is "the largest family entertainment center in the San Gabriel Valley. We are geared to all ages. Grandpas can come here and have as much fun as the little ones." The center, which opened in April, is located 10 miles east of Pasadena.

Birthday party celebrations and group parties are big at the facility, where children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. No alcohol or smoking is allowed on the premises.

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Since arcades can sometimes be noisy, Dinosaur-Us has a special quiet section set aside for parents. They can escape to the patio and dine on specilaity pizzas and gourmet salad while the kids are busy playing games. When it comes to food, Hassen emphasizes the word *gourmet.*

He believes in community service, which explains why the center was the host for a "Meet Commander Crime Stopper" day in mid-May. Crime Stoppers is a local good citizen awareness program. Sports celebrities have also appeared at the center, to the delight of children and their parents.

A clear sign of success: after the first two weeks of operation, Hassen had to order another pizza oven. Dinosaur-Us issued over 300,000 redemption game tickets in two-and-a-half week's time.

More outlets of Dinosaur-Us could be on the horizon. Said Hassen: "We want to expand our existing facility and open new ones with more emphasis on outdoor and indoor rides. We're testing our system and looking at new ideas."

Supertrack
Houston, Texas

While it is smaller than most locations that fit into the FEC mold, Supertrack's 9,000-square-foot facility still offers several entertainment choices. Steve and Philip Vincent own the center and strive for universal appeal.

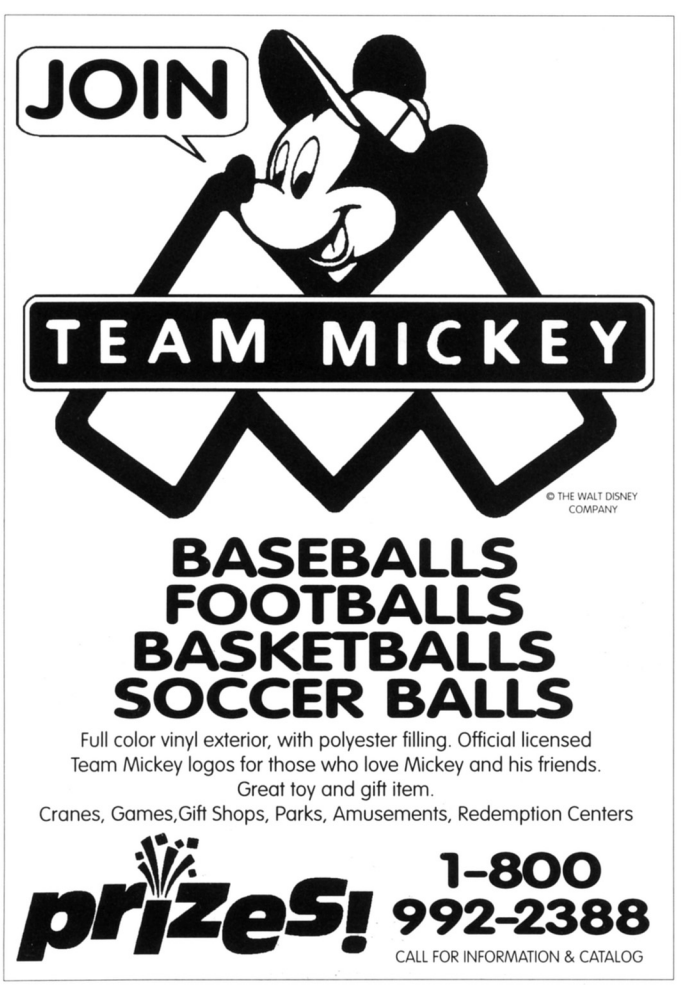
A pizza party room is connected to the main game room; it handles 10-15 parties a day. As Steve Vincent puts it, "The party package includes rides, game tokens, balloons, the whole bit."

Fifteen years ago the Vincents opened with go-karts and a small game room, later expanding the game area and adding both bumper cars and bumper boats. Vincent explained that 30 to 40 percent of the machines are redemption games that account for half of the game room revenue.

Supertrck is a popular spot for group parties, such as local

baseball teams and soccer teams. It is located on the Gulf Freeway leading to Galveston. ❑

Readers who operate FECs or plan to open one in the near future are invited to send in photos and brief descriptions of their centers for inclusion in future "Family Focus" columns.



FAMILY FOCUS

What puts the "fun" in family fun centers?

While there is no formal definition of the term "family entertainment center," a facility with multiple attractions has a good chance of making the grade in terms of appeal.

Among the elements that draw interest are go-karts, bumper boats, bumper cars, batting cages, soft modular play systems, game rooms with plenty of redemption equipment, party rooms, good food, and miniature golf courses.

Rock formations and waterfalls like this one at Adventure Island in Henderson, N.C., highlight the new-age miniature golf courses.

Bonnie Theard

Miniature golf has enjoyed a resurgence in the last few years and it's no surprise. Three companies that design such attractions tell us why.

Putt-Putt Golf & Games
Fayetteville, N.C.

Joe Aboid, director of home office of Putt-Putt Golf & Games, cites several reasons why miniature golf is so popular: it's participatory, competitive, non-intimidating, and fun you can afford.

He explained, "There are peaks and valleys in the number of inquiries about miniature golf. When there's a need for localized recreation and people stay close to home, they like to play miniature golf. It can be played by people of all ages without regard to age, strength, or gender."

One of Aboid's greatest thrills is to see grandparents and grandchildren playing the game, in effect "bridging the generation gap."

But all is not rosy in the miniature golf game. He counseled, "The fact is that more miniature golf courses will close in 1994 than open. This is not a get-rich-quick game. It's played on the weekend."

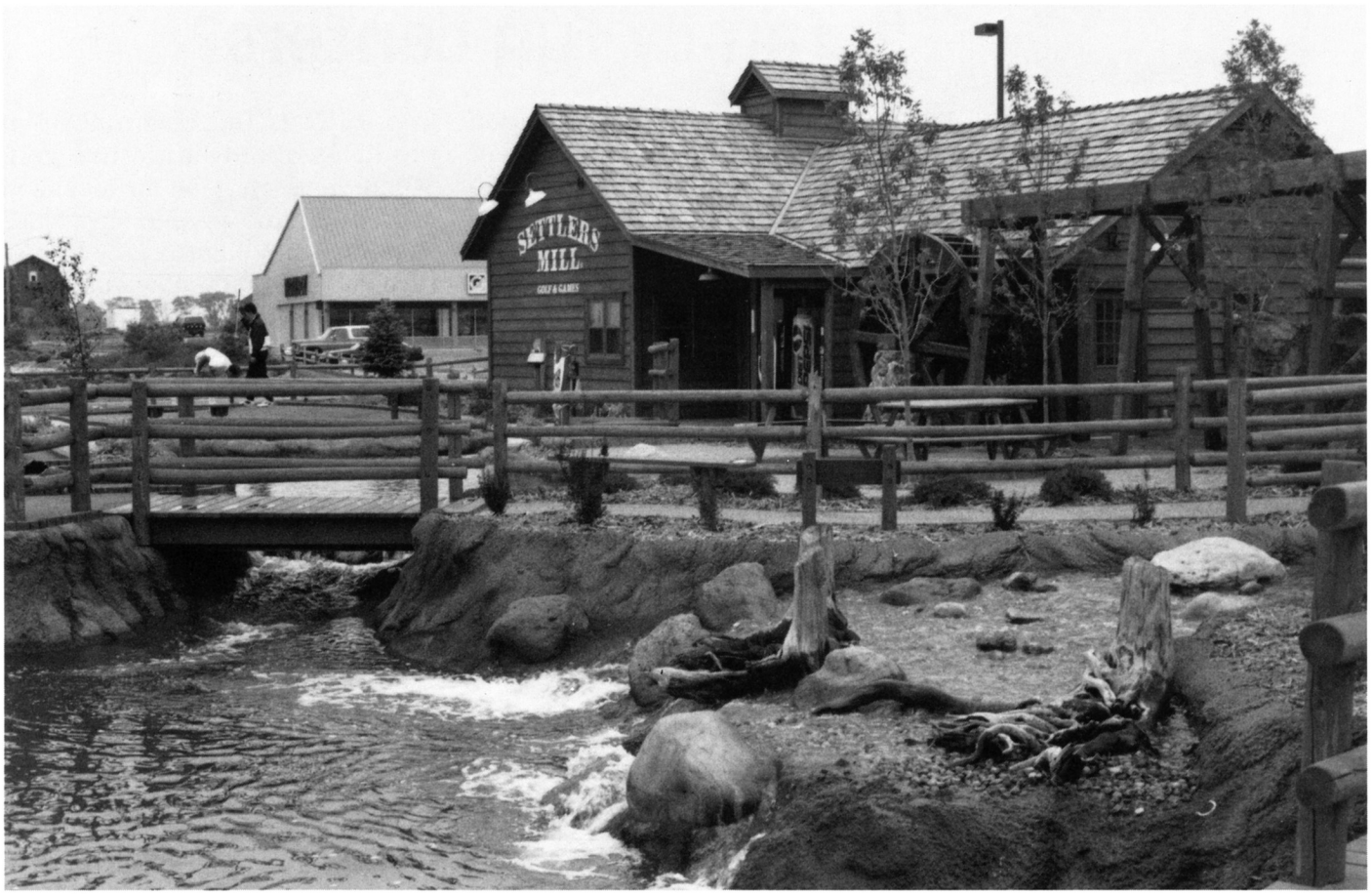
According to Aboid, the average person plays miniature golf one-and-a-half times a year. In a city with a population of 100,000 citizens, one good quality course can expect 40,000 rounds of play per year. A second location won't double the number of plays. In the end the better units will last."

Another word of caution: someone who looks at a facility and thinks it would be nice to have one must remember they are not inexpensive to build or operate.

Putt-Putt was established in 1954 with the primary focus being miniature golf. Game rooms were added on a full-time basis in 1977. These days, a redemption area is highly recommended. Putt-Putt boasts 167 mostly franchise locations in the United States, Japan, Australia, and Canada.

A tournament system fostered by the company has resulted in over $7 million in prize money being awarded since 1959. A TV series that began in 1960 has also increased awareness of Putt-Putt and all of miniature golf.

Aboid sees a "potential for growth" and expects miniature



Miniature golf with the look of the '90s from Cost of Wisconsin.

golf to be "a part of the landscaping of this world."

Adventure Golf Services
Traverse City, Mich.

Arne Lundmark, chairman of Adventure Golf Services, has been in the miniature golf business since 1975, both as an operator and designer/builder. He identified the early '80s as the turning point in miniature golf. That's when when the newer-style courses with mountains and waterfalls first came into being. "It was a signal for a lot of developers who got into the business; it quickened the pace of developments," he said.

Adventure Golf Services can juggle 15 different projects in progress at a time, from indoor and outdoor applications to portable units and deluxe courses. The company has designed and built courses all over the United States, Canada, Mexico, England, and France. It also manufacturers portable courses. The primary emphasis is on prefabrication including theme elements.

"Miniature golf is participatory, competitive, non-intimidating, and fun you can afford."

Lundmark explained that in Europe miniature golf is serious business: "It's a sport over there, while we think of it as a game. Each European player carries a bag of balls with different bounce characteristics. Not only is the game different, but there are international competitions."

What does he see for the future at home? "I think the future is tied in with family entertainment centers," he remarked. "The free-standing golf course is still popular but many are being incorporated into FECs. As the competition from multiple activity centers increases, free-standing facilities will have to decide how to keep pace with the competition."

Lundmark sees "a lot of interest and activity that won't stop for a while." He predicted more interaction and new ideas, such as "redemption golf," a concept the company initiated at two indoor facilities in Virginia. Certain holes on the course award tickets. It works this way: balls travel through themed objects on certain holes. Sensors identify the good shot, sound effects are emitted, and tickets are awarded.

"The concept of FECs builds family togetherness, encourages

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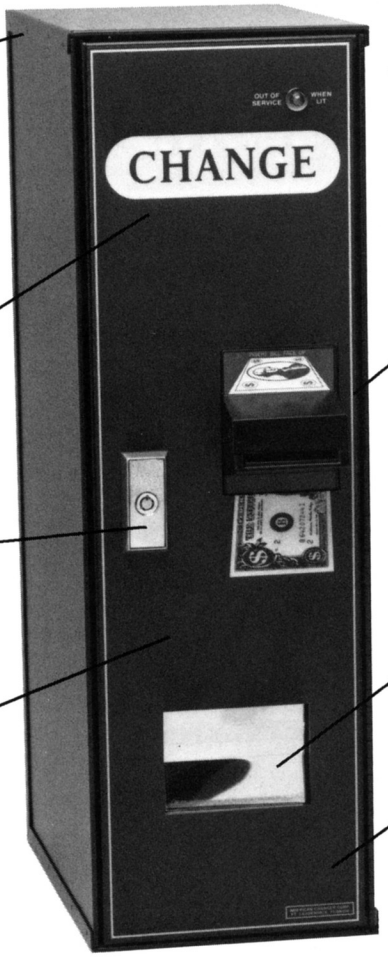

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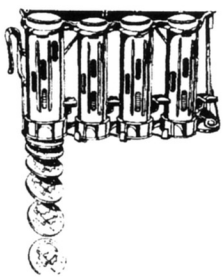

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them to play together, and helps extend the time spent in the facility," Lundmark noted. Miniature golf, which fits well into that picture, is often an FEC anchor attraction.

What's the tab for a typical course? "Anywhere from $125,000 to $250,000 for a nice 18-hole course that has some theming and waterfalls. You can spend as much as you want on lighting and landscaping."

What else does Lundmark see? "More and more people coming into the field. Sometimes they have not stood behind their product. We're seeing not only fallout but a new string of people coming into the industry. They feel if they have one course they are experts. That's not the way it works."

Lundmark mentioned the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which has affected the design of miniature golf courses. "The miniature golf industry feels that by providing a reasonable number of golf holes that are ADA-accessible we're doing our job," he said. "Forcing 100 percent accessibility is a hardship on the owner and it changes the nature of the game."

A portable miniature golf unit from Adventure Golf Services.

"The concept of FECs builds family togetherness, encourages them to play together, and helps extend the time spent in the facility."

Cost of Wisconsin
Germantown, Wis.

"We create simulated natural environments," explained Chris Foster, assistant director of sales and marketing for Cost of Wisconsin. The company designs and constructs miniature golf courses and offers assistance in the areas of operations, feasibility studies, and consulting for a turnkey operation.

Cost of Wisconsin started manufacturing rock works and water features for zoological environments, later branching out to the amusement industry in the form of water parks and family entertainment centers.

Said Foster: "FECs have basically been around just the last few years. We've been building adventure golf courses, bumper boat pools and water park attractions for 15-20 years. FECs are a relatively new concept and definitely the wave of the future. There will be fewer and fewer stand-alone facilities with one attraction. More elements are being added to ensure there's something for the entire family."

According to Foster, 50 percent of the company's business involves miniature golf courses, FECs, and pre-fabricated Micro Golf systems.

Cost of Wisconsin custom designs courses, incorporating features that are suited to location's topography. Courses can range from $150,000 to well over $1 million.

Foster points out that the company is not only a designer and builder of courses but operates and owns two Settler's Mill themed courses in Oshkosh and Minocqua, Wis., which are highlighted by wooden water wheels, rock formations, water features, and lush landscaping. □

FAMILY FOCUS

Risky business: insurance for FECs

Through the eyes of people in the insurance industry, the world is often seen as a jungle, full of endless risk, personal injury, and the constant possibility of lawsuits.

Anyone who owns or operates a family entertainment center in the United States is aware of the potential hazards and the escalating costs of protecting their investment. While liability insurance is not cheap, it's an expense few operators can afford to be without.

"In this litigious society, every damn lawyer in the country is out there trying to sue someone," said Bob Rippey, who owns Jungle Rapids family entertainment center in Wilmington, N.C. "Some kid stumps his toe and you'll hear from his attorneys."

Go-karts and similar attractions where patrons have control are seen as more dangerous by insurance companies.

Al Rogers

Jungle Rapids opened as a water park in 1976. At that time Rippey's liability insurance coverage cost between $1,000 and $2,000 annually. Since then Jungle Rapids has added four water slide flumes, a go-kart track, bumper boats, jungle golf, and an arcade to the 10-acre facility. Those expansions were met with the expected hikes in liability insurance premiums.

This year Rippey expects to shell out between $20,000 and $30,000 on his liability policy alone.

"We've had a few calls from lawyers," Rippey said. "But so far we haven't had to pay any claims."

Agents and underwriters in the insurance business see a glaring potential for risks and claims in the amusement industry. And with the growing popularity of family entertainment centers and the increased sophistication of rides, insurance has become a big headache for many operators.

"Anything you do, there's going to be some sort of risk involved," said Kim Krueger, customer service representative with the Beckman Insurance Agency. "There is nothing that is going to be totally accident-free and claim-free."

While still a relatively new trend in the amusement industry, the business of family entertainment centers is growing by leaps and bounds. The Beckman Insurance Agency, based in Wisconsin, now provides liability insurance for nearly 500 family fun centers across the country.

"It's all a concern. Anything anybody does is a risk," Krueger said. "As long as somebody has business, there is a potential for a claim."

A typical family fun center is a large facility that provides entertainment for the whole family. It usually has several of the following: miniature golf, bumper cars, bumper boats, a game room, bat-

ting cages, go-karts, possibly a mini-roller coaster, and a soft play area for the younger kids.

But the insurance community typically doesn't see the centers from a fun and games point of view.

Dean Smith, vice president of Allied Specialty Insurance Inc., said "incidents" and subsequent lawsuits are not seen as a possibility, but as a reality of the industry.

"There are incidents that occur that are common nature to this type of business," Smith said. "And they're quite frequent if you handle any volume of people." Smith said, however, that these types of "unavoidable" accidents were usually not serious.

Smith said lawsuits have been an obvious by-product of family entertainment centers as the facilities continue to increase in popularity.

"I would say that within this industry there are literally thousands of lawsuits," Smith said. "Thousands upon thousands every month. I mean, how many family entertainment centers are there in the country now? And that's growing weekly by big numbers."

Smith estimates that his company insures about 200 family entertainment centers in the United States. "We get about 15 calls a week. Three or four of the calls are actual facilities ready to open up."

Peggy Stewart, a representative with the Chicago-based Rockwood Group, said her company insures only two family fun centers.

"It's not a major part of our business, but it is a growing industry," Stewart said. "Particularly in our area."

Haas & Wilkerson Inc., an insurance company headquartered in a suburb of Kansas City, Mo., with offices in St. Petersburg, Fla., and St. Louis, Mo., insures over 100 family entertainment centers.

"We have been in the business for 50 years," noted Philip Coulson, company president. "We understand the risks. Our company is instituting a new program to provide fast turnaround time and comprehensive coverage through A-rated companies. Our goal is to devèlop a permanent, long-term insurance facility for this class of business."

Some states require a minimum amount of insurance family fun centers must carry. Many

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states require operators to carry a minimum liability policy if they own a go-kart facility. Operators generally request a certain level of liability insurance, usually based on the total of their investments and assets. Insurance underwriters usually inspect the centers and assign amounts based on the risks they feel are involved.

"The amount of liability insurance should be at least enough to cover the operator's investment."

"All of the insurance companies work differently," Smith said. His company looks at three things: 1) the type of devices or rides; 2) the past history of the establishment or the operator; and 3) the location.

Funland in west Chicago is one of the two family fun centers insured by the Rockwood Group. Its owner, Lauran Bromley, said the amount of liability insurance should be at least enough to cover the operator's investment.

"Today everyone is so sue happy," Bromley said. She advises other operators to purchase at least $500,000 worth of liability insurance to protect a $100,000 investment.

The owners of Chicago's Brick Yard Mall, where Funland is located, advised Bromley to get $5 million in liability coverage. "Had (their recommendation) only been $1 million," Bromley said, "I would have gotten more."

Like other operators, Bromley has seen her insurance costs rise dramatically with the expansion of her center. After the addition of a $100,000 bumper car attraction, Bromley's policy went from $8,000 to $16,000 a year.

The soft play areas in family fun centers, which attract very young children, are one of the biggest concerns of the insurance companies. This area might include a sea of balls, mazes, rope bridges, poles, and slides.

"That is a major concern," Krueger said. "You get little kids running around with little or no parental supervision. I would think that would be a concern of the underwriters."

However, Bill Latvis of the soon-to-open Joker's family entertainment center in Portsmouth, N.H., said his facility will have from one to four attendants assigned to the 1,800-square-foot soft play area. He said children usually pay more attention to attendants than their parents. In his case attendants will be trained to watch for overcrowding.

"Anything you do, there's going to be some sort of risk involved. There is nothing that is going to be totally accident-free and claim-free."

"The area will be fenced off and ticketed separately so you don't have just anyone running through it," Latvis added.

Smith said attractions that are seen by the insurance companies as more dangerous than others are "typically activities where the patron has control (i.e. go-karts, bumper cars, or moon-walk type devices)."

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"Anytime the public has control over the operation of the device, they're more hazardous," he said.

Coulson pointed to the impact of safety standards in the go-kart industry: "Safety procedures and guidelines are being developed, including requirements for seat belts, helmets, guard rails, proper wheels, and signage that weren't there in the past. Plus, at a family entertainment center go-karts are not the driving force but are present with other attractions. As a result, people don't tend to get as out of control as in a stand-alone go-kart track."

Some states, such as North Carolina, require operators to keep a minimum of a $300,000 policy.

Rippey said he is not sure how big of a policy he will take out on Jungle Rapids this year. "The best thing to do is to try and cover yourself," he said. "But the more insurance you have the more a lawyer is going to try and get. So you're damned if you do and damned if you don't."

Protecting one's investment is likely the most important thing an operator can do. Last December, a Chicago operator said a teenager was shot by a rival gang member in a vacant fun center there. Two months later, the operator was named in a lawsuit that alleged "lack of supervision" in the incident.

For some owners of the smaller, family-owned facilities, insurance rates have become an unaffordable luxury.

"There's no way I can afford it. It would put me out of business," said one owner of a go-kart track in Houston. "I've been in this business for 15 years and I've never seen it like this."

When shopping for insurance policies two years ago he was given one quote of $10,000 per go-kart, per year. The track owner said that was the last day he shopped for liability insurance coverage. "I've got 16 (go-karts)," he said. "How am I going to afford a policy like that?"

Mike Kerwin of GAMES Family Fun Center in Mukilteo, Wash., views the insurance picture this way: "The fear of the unknown causes liability insurance to be astronomical. Once insurance companies become comfortable with the whole family entertainment center concept, the premiums will adjust accordingly." □

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REDEMPTION REPORT

How do you know where to be?

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary to pick one's location, we have the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of property. Not all locations are created equal, however. Some locations are too small, too dark, or just plain dead. So what do you need to know to know where to be?

The first thing you need to do is get a demographic study done of your prospective area. This demographic study will tell you if there is a large population of children in the area, if the area can support a family entertainment center, and if there is a maximum security prison just down the road!

Make sure you are in a high-traffic, high-visibility area with lots of parking available. If your location caters to children, make sure you have controlled entrances and exits so your bald, bouncing babies don't leave with the wrong peppy parents. Keep in mind your build-out costs when looking for a location. Security is just the tip of the iceberg. You

"This demographic study will tell you if there is a maximum security prison just down the road!"

Once you have decided on your perfect location, you should not plan a family amusement center less than 2,500 square feet. Any less and you'll feel cramped; it's so difficult to play a game when you are standing on some poor child. If you are building a play park, you'll need a minimum of 2,000 square feet.

The types of locations that are most appealing to families with small children are airy, spacious places with lots of windows to keep your game room bright and happy. Happy, peppy people play a plethora of games. Corner spots or locations with windows at both ends provide a place for people to play in the sunshine and not fear a potential drug deal going down in the back room.

need to build a redemption counter, office space, technician space, and storage. It can cost you between $15-$150 a square foot, depending on how much you put into themeing your palace for peppy players.

Since we're on a money-spending roll, let's talk about rent: $13-$15 a square foot is about average. Depending on your projected gross revenue, you may be able to spend a tad more. Some locations in high tourist areas spend up to $1 million a month just to provide a place for tickled tourists to play. It is not recommended that you start that high! Look for something that will be about 15 to 20 percent of your annual gross revenue. While you may not be able to spend a million dollars a month, don't fall for cheap rent traps. Dirt cheap rent is usually too good to be true. Dead malls sporting such "deals" suffer from the worst cancer known to operators—no customers. The disease is fatal.

Family entertainment centers cannot cure the disease; don't be another victim. When renting, get a lease for at least seven years, with an automatic renewal clause so that if you want to sell your place the new owners don't have to move to a new location.

There's more money to be spent; you need to buy games! It costs approximately $4,000 per play station and each game needs about 40 square feet. About 75 percent of your total location should be redemption games. Contact a local operator or distributor to get professional advice about what game mix is appropriate for your location.

Since the location is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your family entertainment center, remember the words of every successful business owner: "Location, location, location!" □

What to expect from a demographic study

Although you need to plan ahead before opening your family entertainment center, the good news is that you can hire companies that know how to help you plan.

They do demographic studies to determine if your location is a good choice. Just because you saw hundreds of kids walking down the street, it doesn't mean that this is a regular path for them. They could have been on a field trip visiting "the place where children have never visited before!"

If you build your entertainment center at that location you could name it "that place where children never come again." It's obvious that you need a demographic study, but you may be asking, what exactly is it?

A demographic study—also called a feasibility study—is a survey of the area to determine if your location is a wise move or not. A demographic study is based on a 20-mile radius and looks for factors such as schools, population of families, average income, and what the competition in the area is like. If the market is saturated, your store is dead in the water.

The study also will look to see if your location has easy access from major roads, if it's highly visible, if there is ample parking, what the neighboring businesses are, how your market relates to your product, if the location is the right size, and whether there are any comparable attractions in the area.

Examples of comparable attractions could include bowling centers, ice skating rinks, roller skating rinks, or other similar places that would draw people into the area. They will see your store and possibly visit it in the future.

A feasibility study takes care of the details. Depending on how much help you want, companies that conduct such studies can find a location, help you with your game mix, and point you in the direction of a designer.

A good study will provide a solid, reliable estimate on the dollar return per square foot that you can expect from your investment. This is valuable information—the bible for the rest of your planning.

The figures should be broken down for each type of entertainment. For example, the study may say your video section will most likely earn $125 per square foot, redemption $110, play park $80, up to $250 for the food and party room, and $75 for miniature golf. You can use these estimates to judge how much space you will allot to each type of entertainment in your center.

Based on these projected earnings, the study will recommend a construction budget. These studies are good to show bankers and financial backers. The studies let others know how you want to invest their money. They give you peace of mind and give them an economic plan.

To paraphrase a study: Company X identified three types of customers that will frequent ABC, an 18,000-square-foot location in a mall next to the food court. The first group is teens, aged 12-20. This group will have the highest attendance rate because they have the most free time and can provide their own transportation.

The second group is aged 7-11; their attendance is based on their parents' availability because they need parental supervision and cannot provide their own transportation.

The third group, aged 25-45, generally can attend only during lunch hours and after work. The study suggests that while the teenage market may account for as much as 25 percent of attendance, with the proposed game mix, a clean and orderly operation, and a quality design, the majority of support will come from the family portion of the market.

Company X suggests that most of the customers will be from middle and upper-middle class households that live within five to 10 miles of the entertainment facility. Results of customer surveys conducted by the mall agree with this study—this is just a small sampling. Remember, economic consultants are your friends.

The question now, of course, is how do you find the right company? Your local distributor may be able to point you in the right direction. Trade associations are another source. The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has a listing of companies that may help. You can reach them at (703) 836-4800. Also contact the International Family Entertainment Center Association (IFECA) at (205) 520-5358.

Don't let anyone talk you out of a feasibility study, not even you pocketbook. Save yourself a lot of heartaches by planning ahead.

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DOLLARS & SENSE

Redemption: getting started

Paul Virgadamo

In this month's column we will discuss some alternatives in incorporating redemption into a street location. The three programs we will highlight all have their own specific advantages and disadvantages.

1. Location-owned and operated: While this alternative may *seem* more profitable to the location's management, it probably isn't. Setting up and operating a successful redemption center is not for the light-hearted; it requires more time and effort than it might appear.

"Setting up and operating a successful redemption center is not for the light-hearted."

A well-run redemption operation is the equivalent of being in both the game and retail businesses simultaneously. It requires the expertise, experience, and management skills associated with both. The location owner who decides to own and operate his own game room must realize that he is now in another business.

The list of areas that a location owner must be involved with is lengthy. They include equipment selection, purchasing, maintenance, payout, rotation, disposition, security, earnings, legality, merchandise selection, display, inventory, ticket value, assignment, promotions (birthday parties, special events, token use, voucher systems, VIP clubs, data base mailing lists, etc.), revenue/expense projections, and facility design and appearance. If a location owner is not willing to commit to all of these areas, he'd do better to look into option number two.

2. Joint venture: After careful analysis, most location owners will find it to their advantage to work with a professional amusement vending company. For this type of arrangement to work, it is vital for it to be a win-win situation for both.

In a joint venture arrangement, responsibilities generally fall into three categories: location's, vendor's, and shared. Here's a look at the three divisions of responsibility:

a) *Location*—Since redemption is primarily a retail business, the arcade facility must reflect an atmosphere which will attract customers and promote repeat visits. In most cases, the facility must be modified to accomplish this. The expense for these changes is the responsibility of the location owner. Renovations can range from minor to major and often include structural, decorative, and lighting changes at least. Neon is popular because of the "flash" it provides. Input from the operator "partner" should be expected during the planning of the project as to equipment selection, placement, and special needs. Some location owners consult an architectural or design firm as well.

b) *Operator*—He is responsible for the selection, purchase, placement, and routine ongoing maintenance of all equipment. He will be expected to have equipment in top working order.

c) *Shared*—These responsibilities include several start-up and ongoing costs such as display showcases, merchandise, tickets, tokens, signs, inventory control devices, printing, and employee salaries. Employees are trained by the operator and supervised by the location.

In a joint venture, everything is operated and managed by the operator, leaving the location owner to manage his own business. The lion's share of both the risk and the expense rests with the operator and should be considered when negotiating the revenue sharing arrangement.

3. Leasing space: Leasing space in a street location is not a new idea. Many locations, bowling centers in particular, routinely have leased pro shop, snack bar, and lounge space as a guaranteed source of revenue. Although leasing space is not a typical arrangement for amusement games, the redemption concept is by no means traditional and should be considered on its own merits. This might be considered in lower traffic volume locations where, under normal circumstances, a costly redemption operation might not be attempted by either the location or the operator.

Under this type of arrangement, the location would exclusively lease a portion of its facility to an operator, who would be responsible for all of the costs that would normally be shared under a joint venture. The advantage to the operator would be keeping 100 percent of the revenue. This incentive could entice him to place more costly and elaborate equipment. The advantage for the location is guaranteed cash flow. A well-run game room also will provide new sources of revenue, since the location will be able to aggressively market its primary business to increased traffic flow.

The end result of any of these scenarios is a win-win situation for all concerned when done properly. □

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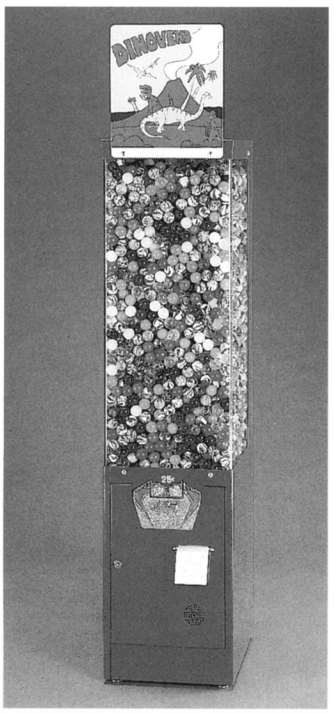

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FRANK'S CRANKS

Frank Seninsky

FECs: what are they really about?

Almost half of my company's business now comes from family entertainment centers. At Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales we operate redemption, video, pinball, and novelty games plus kiddie rides in 23 family entertainment centers. We have sold, leased, and set-up redemption and other types of coin-op games in many more FECs. In addition, I have consulted for perhaps another 20 FEC owners, all during this past year. You would have to agree that "business is booming" and FECs are where it's happening.

Why then are many coin machine operators not getting involved in FECs? The answers are simple: 1) you need to understand redemption machines—which ones are good investments, how to set the correct ticket payout percentages, etc.; 2) redemption equipment is expensive—$4,300 per player station on average; 3) repairing redemption games takes a much greater effort—frequent service, more attention to details; and 4) most operators have become *lazy*.

These are the reasons why some operators are getting all the FEC business and will continue to do so, while the majority of operators simply sit on the sidelines.

Perhaps if more operators understood what FECs are and what it takes for one to be successful, they would include FECs in their location mix. So let's get educated.

Defining FECs

What is an FEC? My definition is a facility with more than one attraction, where groups of people (usually family members) go to spend some time (usually two to two-and-a-half hours) on a *repeat basis*.

I may not have covered all the bases here but I don't consider an amusement park, an arcade, a movie theater, a bowling center, or even a large arcade with rides in a tourist area (boardwalk) to be an FEC. A real FEC needs to have enough attractions to fulfill a two-hour leisure experience for family members. And it must be clean and well managed.

What do I consider to be attractions? Food and party rooms also count as an attraction. Carnival rides, soft play areas, lazer tag, batting cages, miniature golf, bowling, bumper cars/boats, and roller skating are all considered attractions.

I do not consider coin-op games to be a real attraction, even though they must be advertised as an attraction. I never count on a family deciding to go to an FEC just because they all want to play the games. They go to an FEC for the other attractions and play the games *because they are there* (impulse).

Now don't get the idea that I'm saying the games are not important to an FEC. They are very important and earn between 30-40 percent of the total FEC income. My most profitable FECs generate one-third of their money from the games (which they split with my company) and work hard to make sure that the other two-thirds come from their other attractions.

Signs of trouble

A sure sign that an FEC is

heading into financial trouble is when the games start to make a higher percentage of the total revenue, sometimes more than 50 percent of the total business. This happens when the customers tire of the other attractions in the facility and the owners do not change or update the attractions on a regular basis.

Although my company's games continue to gross good numbers for a short time longer, from experience I know it will not continue long term since the FEC will not survive. When this happens and the cheap owner screams that he wants more of the latest and newest games, my response is: "I seem to be doing too good of a job with the games. What are you doing to hold up your end of the deal? Isn't it about time you bring in some different attractions and invest in some new equipment?"

A real FEC needs to have enough attractions to fulfill a two-hour leisure experience for family members. And it must be clean and well managed.

Some heed the warning while others blame their shortcomings on the games, which they expect will be the backbone of their business. Too bad, another FEC goes down the tubes.

One important thing to remember about FECs and the family leisure experience: each section of the country has a built-in spending per capita that people are used to spending for a two-hour leisure experience. I compared the cost of going to a movie, bowling, and attending an FEC and came up with an average.

Let's use $9 per capita. This means that each person (on average) who goes to an FEC, spends

50 Ways to Lose Your Guests

A guaranteed checklist of how to lose your shirt in the FEC industry.

1. Undercapitalize—fail to budget for start-up costs
2. Unrealistic rent
3. Think you will be the only game in town
4. Skip a feasibility study
5. Have more than one operating partner
6. Inefficient layout and space planning
7. Don't have enough attractions to draw repeat guests
8. Treat your FEC as a regional draw
9. Don't keep your FEC spotless/immaculate
10. Try to be all things to all people
11. Depend too much on coin-op games
12. Static attractions
13. Hire mostly part-time teenage help
14. Don't read trade magazines
15. Pick an inexpensive grade C location
16. Ignore parties and group bookings
17. Don't offer high perceived value
18. Ignore acoustics
19. Inadequate parking
20. Poor redemption prize selection and display
21. Copy the chains
22. Low redemption payout and ticket pricing
23. Don't rotate coin-op games
24. Poor atmosphere, keep your FEC dark
25. Ignore parents' needs
26. Not enough token machines/bill changers
27. Build cheap
28. Don't join trade organizations or attend their conventions
29. Inadequate security
30. Don't treat your tokens and tickets as cash
31. Understaff
32. Accept $20 bills in your token machines
33. Hiring anyone who does not have an outgoing personality, loves children, and likes working weekends and holidays
34. Treat your attendees as customers, not guests
35. Own your own games
36. Chose the location with the cheapest rent
37. Measure everything except what is important
38. Take your guests for granted
39. Think the first six months of business will continue forever
40. Not surveying your guests on a regular basis
41. Don't build a guest-focused culture
42. Argue with your guests
43. Don't continually monitor your competition
44. Ignore growing your weekday business
45. A mix that does not create a length of stay
46. Don't share information with your employees
47. Design the FEC yourself
48. Have too many games
49 Don't maintain and utilize a good customer database system
50. Don't treat your employees as you want them to treat your guests

Prepared by Frank Seninsky of Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales and Randy White of White Hutchinson Entertainment Group

only $9, and has a good time in that two-hour period, has a 95 percent chance of coming back again.

Perceived value

That is what FECs are all about—VALUE. It's up to the owner (and game operator) to make sure that the customer perceives a great value. This is where discount packages for parties, groups, and even value packages come into play. This is why operating the games and attractions on tokens is a MUST.

How does an FEC get a customer to perceive value? Everyone wants a good deal. With all the competition for the leisure dollar, an FEC with multiple attractions can give its customers a great value that others, such as Discovery Zone and Leaps and Bounds, can't compete with. Even if your FEC caters to children aged two to 12, you can package rides, games, and other attractions that give the customer 50 to 100 percent more for their money.

For example, in a smaller FEC with two rides, games, and soft play, make a package for $5.95 that includes: soft play (value $4), three ride tokens (value $3), 10 game tokens (value $2.50), and cup of soda (value $1). Total value: $10.50.

Remember when I stated that the games in an FEC should do one-third of the revenue? This means that one-third of the $9 per capita spending should go into the games, or $3 per person. This is what I look for in each FEC I set up. It also means that $6 will be spent on the other attractions (including food). Of course, your FEC may be in a section where per capita spending is more or less than $9.

Check the competition

Another factor to take into consideration is competing leisure time alternatives. In a small town where there isn't any competition, it is possible to have an FEC with few attractions and still many people hang out there for two or more hours.

On the other hand, if there are many close by attraction alternatives, your FEC may not have enough to hold customers for the full two to two-and-a-half hours. They may take their per capita money and spend some of it elsewhere and your games will not get the $3 per capita that you expected.

How many games does an FEC need? I try to estimate what the

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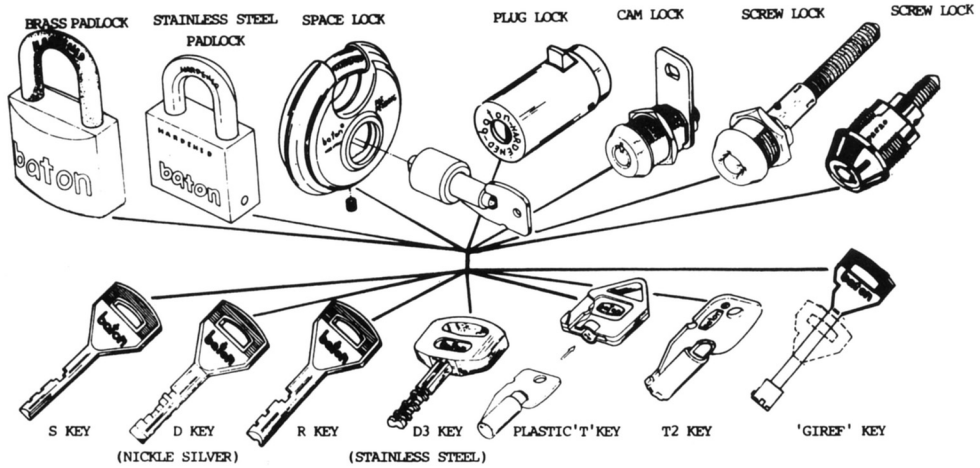

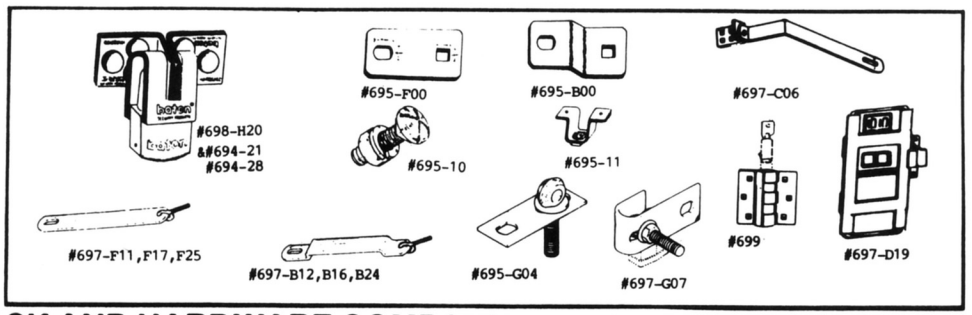

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total revenue of an FEC will be per week and figure that my games will generate one-third. I take this figure and use an average of $200/week per game to determine the number of games needed.

Of course, you also need to use a figure of $4,300 per game to see how much money you will be spending on games for this FEC. Use a figure of 50 square feet per game (if half the games are redemption). Make sure that there are enough attractions in the FEC for customers to use one to one-and-a-half hours of their time for those attractions and have at least one-half hour or more remaining in which to spend $3 on your games.

Debunking a myth

Redemption manufacturers say that their games never need to be rotated; just keep changing the merchandise. This is a myth that has been spewed forth about redemption for so long that even today most operators believe it is true.

Just take a look at all the great new redemption games that have been manufactured in the last two years and you must realize that these new redemption games are *killing* the older models. Only *Skee-Ball* remains on location and continues earning its keep.

Redemption games need to be rotated, but at a slower rate than videos. I try to change one or two redemption games in each location with 12 or more on average every month (not counting *Skee-Ball*. And that means spending money to keep making money.

Party on

What about parties and groups? How important are they? Parties and groups are very important to an FEC and often generate up to 40 percent of the revenue (with discounted game tokens included). I would not consider putting my games into an FEC that does not make a huge commitment to doing birthday party and group events.

The real purpose of parties is to give a large group of kids a taste of what your FEC has to offer so they will come back on their own, or have their own parties there and bring in other kids to get a taste.

"If you stick to sound business practices and keep the words change, value, and customer service in mind every minute of every day, your FEC can be very successful."

There is not much bottom line profit on parties, but it is the concept of getting a repeat customer that will spend the per capita each time they visit. Groups help bring in business during the week as do parties. Deep discounting is usually a means of getting weekday business.

An average FEC should be able to do 100 parties per week with a least 10 kids per party. That's 1,000 kids spending $8 to $10 each. Let's hope that the games get one-third of that money plus some additional revenue from the parents who brought the kids to the party (example: fathers hanging around playing basketball or pinball). The balance of the weekly gross of the FEC must come from walk-in traffic.

Take a look at the accompanying chart: "50 Ways to Lose Your Guests." It was put together for a seminar I presented at Leisure Expo '94 with Randy White of White Hutchinson Entertainment Group. We came up with 160 ways initially, so you can see it is much easier *not* to have a long lasting FEC than it is to have a successful one.

Let me say that if you stick to sound business practices and keep the words **change, value**, and **customer service** in mind every minute of every day, your FEC can be very successful. As always...keep cranking! □

For more information on FECs, contact Frank at Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, (908) 287-4990; FAX (908) 287-3079; or Randy White at White Hutchinson Group (816) 931-1040; FAX (916) 756-3933.

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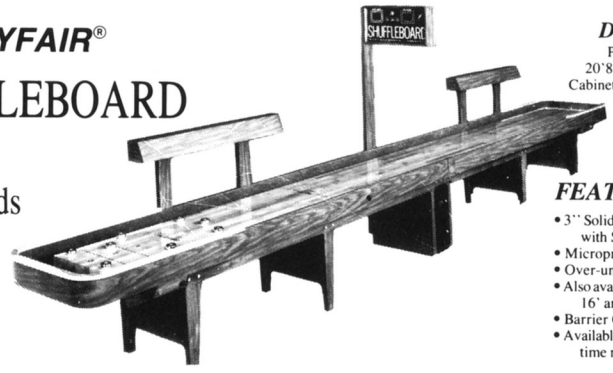

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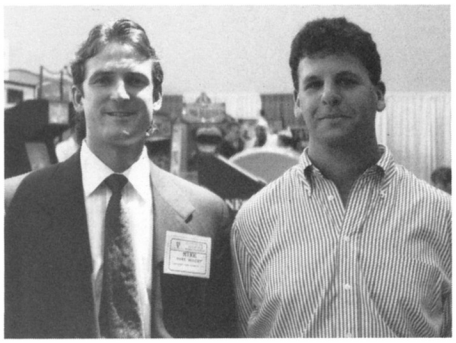
STATE SHOW

FAVA gets new name, officers

AMOA president R.A. Green III congratulates newly-elected FAMA president Richard Holley.



Mike Holley of Southeast Game Brokers and Steven Toranto (r) of Birmingham Vending Co.

The Florida Amusement and Vending Association (FAVA) was renamed Florida Amusement Machine Association (FAMA) at this year's convention in Orlando April 14-16.

New FAMA officers for 1994-95 are: president Rich Holley, Southeast Game Brokers, Tampa, Fla.; 1st vice president Dale Williams, Williams Amusement, Kissimmee, Fla.; 2nd vice president Jerry Brewer, Gulf Coast Music, Clearwater, Fla.; and secretary-treasurer Larry Sinclair, Southern Music, Orlando, Fla.

To reflect some of the changes now riveting the Florida gaming industry, the theme of this year's trade show was "Flight to the New World."

"At that meeting we made a lot of changes," Holley said. The name change was to reflect some of the trends FAMA members are now seeing, he said. "We haven't had vending in our group for some time now."

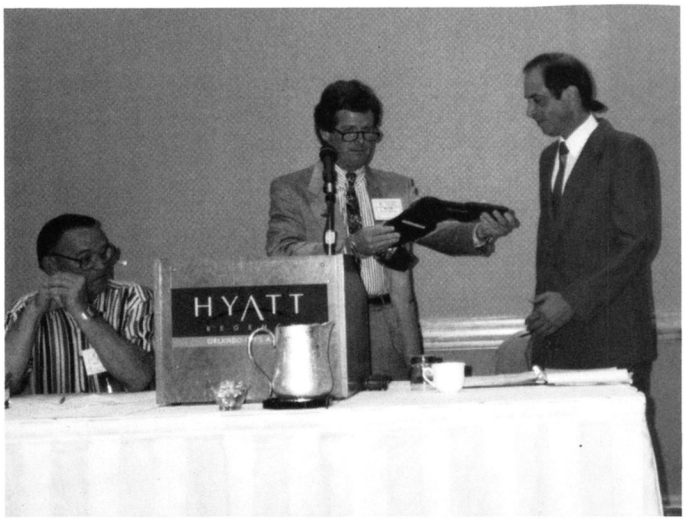
The guest speaker was AMOA president R.A. Green III, who surprised FAMA members with plans for the National Amusement Network Inc. (NANI) and how the new technology will impact the industry. Green outlined plans for NANI before the Ohio Coin Operators Association in Columbus in May.

NANI, often referred to as an information superhighway, is a project that will soon link the country's coin-op games via a computerized network. NANI is set to get started in 90-day test markets in Ohio and Kansas.

The convention included a golf tournament, management and technical seminars, and the trade show. FAMA officials said attendance this year was significantly higher that it has been in recent years.

"That's because this year we let each exhibitor mail out free entrance passes," Holley said. "It worked out well." □

FAMA president Rich Holley, Southeast Game Brokers; R.A. Green III, AMOA president; Manley Lawson, Lawson Music Co.; and Mike Holley, Southeast Game Brokers.



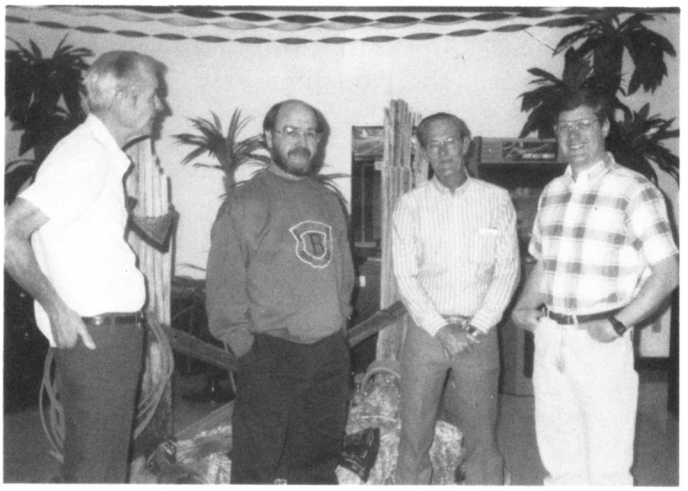
Jerry Brewer, second vice president, looks on as FAMA president Rich Holley presents a plaque to outgoing president Dick Tolpin.

OPEN HOUSE

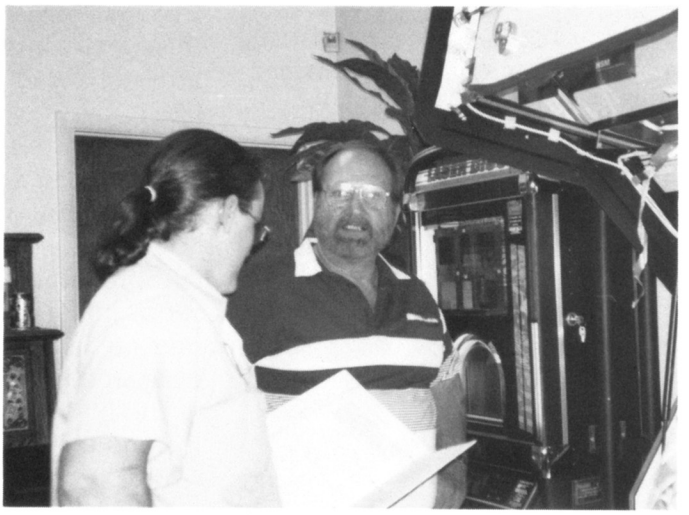
Mountain Coin Machine holds open house

Dominic Barbera, Capital Amusement tries his luck on Sega's new hit **Daytona U.S.A.**

Tracy Tate and Mark Chan showed up to show off SNK's new software.



From left: Bill Buzbee of Fun City, Jerry Stansbury of Funtasia, Phil Vaught of Mountain Coin, and Hollies Yates of Fun City discuss new games.



Robert Ferrari, Mountain Coin's service manager, goes over NSM's CD jukebox with Bill Wright of Gray Vending.

More than 200 operators, factory representatives, and guests attended Mountain Coin Machine Distributor's open house in Phoenix, Ariz., on April 13.

Operators from as far away as Mexico, California, Colorado, and New Mexico were represented, said Don Waters, Mountain Coin Machine's southwest regional manager.

"I couldn't believe the response we got," Waters said. "It was great to see the operators out looking and buying." □

Gunfighter Wesley Flowers with Nick Griggs, sales rep, by American Laser's new game **Bounty Hunter**.

STATE SHOW

NANI ready to take off in Ohio

Preliminary plans for the National Amusement Network Inc. (NANI), which could soon revolutionize the nation's coin-op industry, were outlined at the Ohio Coin Machine Association's 20th Anniversary Exposition in Columbus May 20-21.

From left: Bill Cassey, Jim Fernella, and Frank Giamo of WICO Distributing.

Jim Hittman (l) and Eugene Schmidt of English Connection.

Steve Dzanko (l) and Jay Bender of Cleveland Coin Machine.

More than 300 operators, manufacturers, exhibitors, speakers and guests attended this year's expo and trade show. Fifty-one operating companies, 69 exibitors, and 17 manufacturing companies were represented.

"It was a resounding success," said Paul Corey, OCMA executive vice president. "Because of the special interest that the operators showed in the new ideas, like NANI."

NANI, often referred to as an information superhighway, is a project that will soon link the country's coin-op games via a computerized network. NANI is set to get started in a 90-day test market in Ohio, followed shortly by a similar test in Kansas.

The first game set to go on line in January will be 50 units of *NBA JAM Tournament Edition*.

"The test market is going to run for 90 days during which time we will gather information on our successes and our failures," AMOA President R.A. Green III said. The 90-day time period, he said, will give operators a chance to fine tune the program.

To simplify what many see as a complicated matter, Green compared NANI to an ATM machine at a bank. "The only thing you people are looking at today is credit card technology applied to a video game," Green said.

NANI, owned by AMOA and the Canadian-based TVphone Inc., was established to manage the interactive network's business activities. TVphone owns patents and other intellectual property, including the specifications for electronic games of skill.

NANI and Electronic Data Systems (EDS) Corp., of Dallas, have entered into a 10-year agreement that creates a strategic relationship designed to accelerate and expand the development and implementation of a nationwide interactive, digital multimedia network.

The network will link more than 100,000 game terminals throughout the U.S. and, later, Canada and Mexico—within three to five years. It will give operators the ability to expand their businesses to include networked games for local, state, regional, and national tournaments. Although the project starts with video games, NANI envisions the inclusion of pinball, darts, and pool tables down the road.

EDS, a subsidiary of General Motors, employs more than 70,000 in 30 countries. The largest private digital network, it posted revenues in 1993 of $8.6 billion.

Proponents of NANI say the program is vital if the coin-op industry is to survive in a world of new competing formats and new deliveries of entertainment through sattelites, cable, and telephone lines.

"This program places our industry on an equal footing with our competition," Green said. "We believe the AMOA has a responsibility to assure that its members are allowed to play an influential part in the new commercial amusement and entertainment arena."

During a program on NANI at the OMCA show one speaker read a quote from a recent *Wall*

Street Journal describing NANI: "A reality rather than a vague abstraction on the information superhighway, this first-of-a-kind network will apply today's and tomorrow's technology to the amusement industry."

Many believe that the best part of NANI is its potential to generate more money from corporations which will "buy time" on game screens for advertising and couponing strategies. For instance: say Nike wants to target market a particular type of tennis shoe for 10 to 15-year-old boys. The machine will have the ability to decide whether or not it will show the player an advertisement and/or issue the player a coupon for the tennis shoes.

"It was a resounding success because of the special interest that the operators showed in the new ideas, like NANI."

When the player walks up to a game he can do as he always does: put in 50 cents and play against the game. But he can forgo the "casual" mode and choose from the network menu. If it's his first time he will select "registration" and join the network. He will give his name, address, age, equipment preferences, and other demographical data and receive a temporary ID card to begin network play (a permanent ID card will be mailed to him).

"One of the key design factors that was hammered home to us by all the operators was to not change the way the player interacts with the machine today," an EDS spokesman said. "That would defeat our purpose."

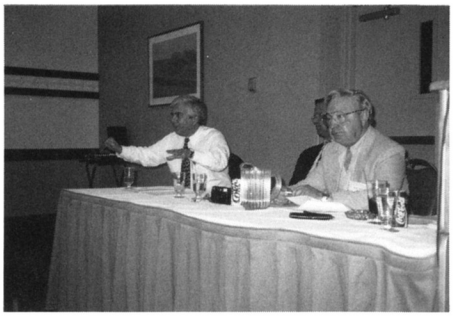
A player with a permanent ID card will swipe his card through the machine and select either "instant win" or "redemption" mode. This means he will play against the game and, depending on his score, receive the accompanying prize.

In addition to the tournament play potential, many attending the show believe the best part of NANI is the network's ability to show commercials and issue coupons.

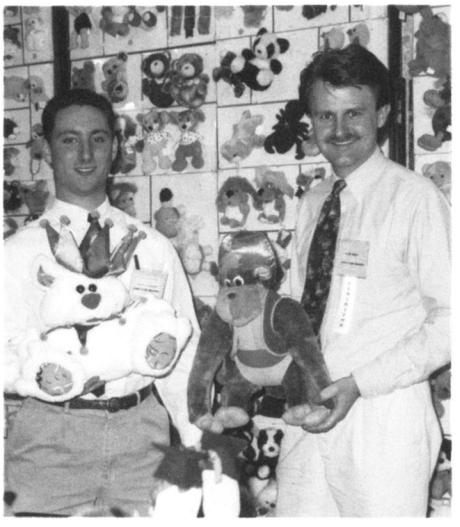
"For the first time, monies will be generated besides what the player puts in the coin slot," Green said. "Someone swipes their card through, we know where they live, their age, etc."

Mark Iorfida of Atlas Distributing by Data East's Royal Rumble and Premier's Rescue 911.

Charlie Kanziolka of EDS.



John Nicastro Sr. of WMS Gaming; John Glaser of IGT; Bob Rondeau, retired from Bally Mfg.

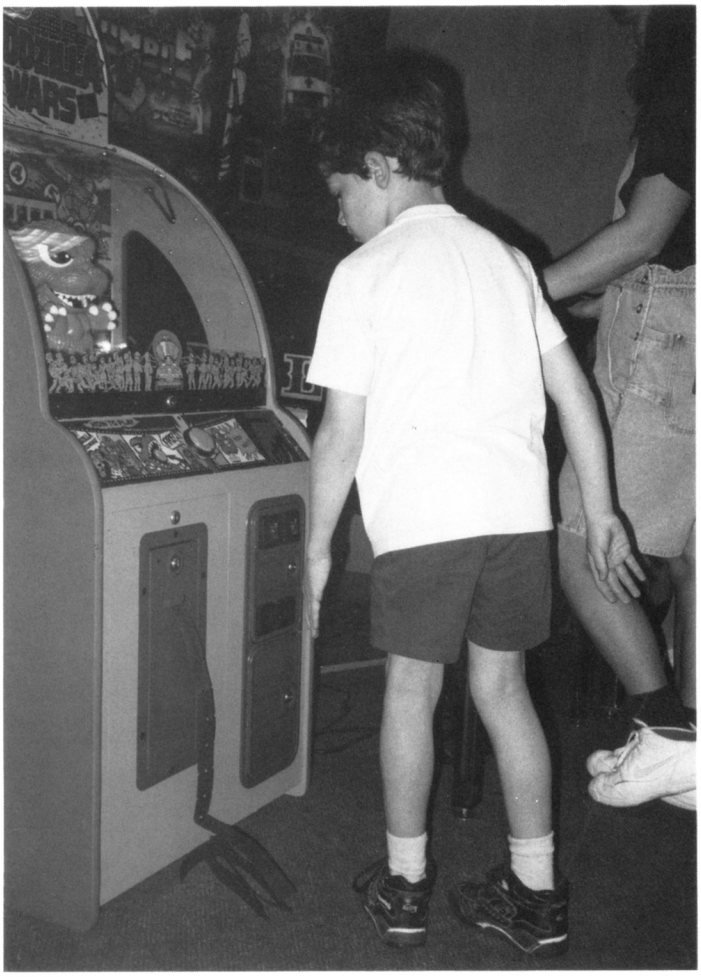


Dan Silberman (l) and Allen Ramey of Cloud 9 Toys Inc with an assortment of new prizes.

"We believe the direction that the AMOA members are setting will clearly ensure their dominant role in the evolving entertainment industry."

"NANI is not going to be manufacturing games and we will not be buying and selling games," Green said. "AMOA through NANI is doing nothing more than forming the network that will allow us as an industry to better market our products to the consumer. So that we can maintain and increase our markets.

"There is no doubt that there will be an electronic superhighway and it is clear entertainment will be a leading and dominant lane on that highway," said Charlie Kandziolka, EDS account executive for NANI. "The AMOA



Grant Clark plays **Godzilla Wars Jr.** by Namco-America

Paul Corey, executive vice president of OCMA.

members are about to open their own ramp to that lane."

At least one operator at the show expressed concern over the additional costs of making the games network-aware and of computer training.

"We believe the direction that the AMOA members are setting will clearly ensure their dominant role in the evolving entertainment industry," Kandziolka said "We are truly excited about the role they have asked us to play."

In other activities at the OCMA show, a panel including John Nicastro Sr., WMS Gaming; John Glaser, IGT; and Bob Rondeau, Bally (retired), discussed gaming issues in Ohio and around the country. The OCMA has been exploring the possibilities of getting video lottery in the state.

The panel urged OCMA members to build coalitions with other groups—other gaming entities, such as race tracks—in order to build political power and pass gaming legislation.

"The only thing you people are looking at today is credit card technology applied to a video game."

"Cooperate with groups that are trying to get anything passed," Glaser said. "It's very important for you to maintain that political pressure." He told the group that race tracks are the first stepping stone for statewide expansion of gaming.

"They've got to do it together and realize they're asking to be granted a privilege," Nicastro said. "It's not an entitlement." He said it was important to keep the political sensitivities in the forefront of your thinking.

"I don't think they really understand what they're asking the politicians to grant them," he said. "The political implications of what they want are a hell of a lot more complex and sensitive than they think."

Nicastro suggested approaching the issue from the points that are attractive to politicians, such as revenue enhancement, jobs, and economic expansion. □

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PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Videos and pinball offer four times the adventure

Greg Reeves

Whether racing, role playing, fighting, or tracking down criminals is your specialty, the four games featured this month are bound to satisfy. Each offers a vastly different kind of adventure.

Ridge Racer

Theme: The race for the best virtual reality-type game is still on. Namco is pulling ahead with a racing simulator so real that actually driving a car is less realistic.

The competition takes place on a highway that loops through a large city and out to the coast. Twelve cars are involved, including the player's own Rave War vehicle. Depending on the difficulty level chosen, a certain number of laps must be completed in the allotted time to progress on to the next round.

All races take place on the same track, only the speed of the player's car and the number of laps change from level to level. The object is simple: beat the competitors and finish the track before time is up.

Graphics: I can only describe the techniques used to create the graphics; to truly understand and appreciate the visuals one must see the game. The most detailed polygon forms ever seen in a coin-op video game are right here. Namco's own *Starblade* was impressive, but *Ridge Racer* surpasses it.

Ridge Racer by Namco-America.

By a process called "texture mapping" game creators are able to detail the roads, mountains, clouds, and buildings with amazing accuracy; the forms actually seem to have texture. The course winds through the city, passing rocky cliffs and an airport where planes are lifting off. There are two tunnels along the track that are illuminated from within, perfectly mimicking the eerie glow of the fluorescent lights.

Players drive past a beach with palm trees, sailboats, and a lighthouse. The view is in first-person perspective, as if sitting in the vehicle looking out. A distance progression map, as well as a timer, are located in the upper left hand corner of the screen; the speedometer is in the bottom right corner. Racing-themed games have been done in the past with bit, laser-disc, and polygon graphics, but none have achieved the capability displayed here.

Controls: The large one-player simulator has an adjustable seat, two speakers flanking the monitor, a six-speed shifter, a rubber-grip steering wheel, an accelerator, brake, and clutch pedals.

Game Play: Once coins are inserted and the seat is adjusted, the player can select a skill level of novice, intermediate, advanced, or time trials. Each succeeding level increases the top speed allowed and the number of laps to complete in the time frame.

The music-select mode is next, with six available songs to choose from (via the shifter). Finally, automatic or manual transmission can be chosen to determine the car's acceleration. The player starts the race in last place and must catch up and pass the other eleven cars to achieve first place.

Impact with road boundaries or other cars cause the player to temporarily lose control. Recovery is quick and the game is not delayed unnecessarily. A helicopter follows the progress of the race and can be seen occasionally from the road. If the player completes the track in time, a replay is shown from the helicopter's viewpoint.

Overall, the reactions of the car to curves are realistic, requiring some countersteering to pull out of a spin. For Namco to release this game right after *Suzuka 8 Hours* shows that the unexpected can happen.

Dungeons & Dragons Tower of Doom

Theme: The fantasy role-playing game from TSR has finally been done justice on the video screen in Capcom's latest System II kit. Most people are familiar with Dungeons & Dragons, especially video game players, because the two forms of playing are quite similar.

What sets role playing apart from simple board games is that the player *is* the character and is led through an adventure by someone else controlling events. It is up to the player to make decisions on certain courses of action to take during the game.

Dungeons and Dragons Tower of Doom by Capcom.

In *D & D Tower of Doom* a player can choose from a strong and stout dwarf, a charismatic fighter, a spell-casting cleric, and a female elf warrior. Their task is to liberate the normally peaceful Republic of Darokin from an assortment of creatures taken right out of TSR's game.

Corwyn Linton, a member of the inner council of Darokin, suspects there is more to the occupation of the republic than meets the eye. The Tower of Doom, located in the distance, seems to be the point of origin for the evil that has overtaken the republic. This theme is common for D & D players but unusual for video game players.

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Graphics: Capcom's standard bit graphics style is unmistakable, though not taken for granted. There is just a hint of a Japanimation look to the characters; otherwise all the details are loyal to the game theme.

The action takes place in a right to left scrolling manner, just like Capcom's *Knights of the Round* or *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*. Scenery detail is much like the earlier *Quiz and Dragons*. Backgrounds range from villages to dark forests and aboard ships to inside mountainous caverns.

Creatures encountered are detailed, just as they are in TSR's Monster Manual, complete with weapons, fangs, claws, and other offensive body parts characteristic of the enemies. In general, graphics are pleasing if not much different from past Capcom games. On the other hand, it is the perfect format for a game of this sort because digitization or polygon forms would not be able to capture the painted look of the fantasy theme.

"The most detailed polygon forms ever seen in a coin-op video game are right here."

Controls: The two-player cabinet makes use of a joystick and four buttons per character. The joystick allows the warrior to crouch, retreat, dash forward, and defend when the proper direction is used. The red button causes an attack with the weapon held by the character; the blue button makes the warrior jump; and a combination of the two causes a new attack.

Collected weapons or spells may be chosen with the yellow button. Items displayed at the bottom of the screen can be accessed with the green button. The cabinet features a large marquee and two speakers that face the player.

Game Play: This aspect of the game wins the prize for best effort because the role-playing characteristics are most evident here. Once credits are given and a character is chosen, the computer allows the player to enter a name for his warrior, up to about ten letters.

Each character starts out with a certain number of hit points and a particular experience level. The amount of hit points determines the length of the life meter at the bottom of the screen. The more hit points collected, the more life possible on the meter. Also, the player can use certain items as weapons, such as burning oil flasks, bows and arrows, or a hammer.

Proper button manipulation is needed to access these weapons, as well as a good aim. Silver and gold pieces can be collected along the way to buy supplies at the random shops visited during the adventure.

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There are hidden rooms to be found and traps to be avoided, treasures to unlock and magic scrolls to collect. Creatures match the role-playing game and include trolls, gnomes, ghouls, skeletons, and displacer beasts. Spells are also familiar: hold a person, continual light, magic missiles, and cloud kill. The best feature is the ability to choose a path to take when certain non-player characters offer new information.

This game license opens the door for future themes and serves to re-introduce the idea of role playing to people who haven't tried it in a while.

World Heroes 2 Jet

Theme: A couple of months back, while reviewing another SNK title, I wished for a *World Heroes 3*. I got the next best thing with this enhanced sequel. The original *World Heroes* allowed the player to choose one of eight characters and traverse the globe, battling other warriors in their native countries until facing the body-morphing boss in the final round.

The sequel, *World Heroes 2*, added six new characters, among them a pirate, an African mud-man, and a super-powered football player. The regular progression matches could be chosen or a new "death match" in a ring surrounded by fire walls or electric fences. Now in this latest outing, another two characters have been added with a change in game play. Once again, the theme is simply to win two of three matches per fight to progress to the next competition.

Graphics: The style used in the first two games has been preserved here, as well as the character costumes and background scenery. Except for the two new entries, the only things that change are the attract mode sequences and the beginning of each match right after the fighters are chosen.

This gives the game a little more story instead of simply throwing two competitors into the ring. Since this game is not actually another sequel, the small changes are all that's needed to attract interest.

Controls: A joystick and three of the four buttons on the Neo-Geo cabinet are used to control the fighters. As usual, the joystick allows forward movement, retreat or guard, and jump or crouch.

Demolition Man by Williams.

Button A is a punch or weapon strike button; button B performs a kick. The length of time the button is pressed determines the strength of the blow. Button C is a new function—the play dead ploy—which allows the player to fool the opponent into attacking. When the opponent is close enough, the player can use a special attack. This game is the king of energy attack moves and special techniques; the player should experiment with different control manipulations.

Game Play: The player has a choice of tournament play in various locales with three different competitors per three matches, or direct challenges with all the opponents around the world. Secondly, the player can choose which opponent he will fight in the direct challenge mode, even more than once if desired.

From then on, the game play mimics the standard fighting game aspects. This series is perhaps the closest to the original *Street Fighter II* from Capcom but the characters make the game stand on its own. If fighting games are to be made, then sequels to established games is a logical way to go.

Demolition Man

Theme: The popular trend of movie licenses translating to pinball games continues with Williams' *Demolition Man*. Like the movie, pinball action takes place in the mid-21st century when the nation has found peace and friendship and the idea of murder has been forgotten.

John Spartan, a member of the Los Angeles police department nicknamed Demolition Man because of his explosive rescues and arrests, is wrongly accused of causing the deaths of innocent people. His punishment: cryogenic freezing in the late 20th century. Spartan's arch-enemy Simon is actually responsible for the crimes and is frozen later for other reasons.

Simon is awakened by the leader of the peaceful, now combined San Angeles Police Department to kill underground homeless terrorists who threaten the tranquil community. The loving society turns out to be a fraud because the underground citizens are being starved and ignored. Simon the murderer is commissioned to kill them.

Once plenty of damage has been done in the peaceful community, Spartan is awakened by the SAPD to stop Simon and expose the leader for his true self. The pinball takes the player through different rounds to cryo-freeze prisoners, apprehend Simon, and destroy the unstable new society.

Features: The playfield resembles Williams' earlier pinball, *Terminator 2*. The most noticeable feature is the two trigger handles raised above the glass, which substitute for flipper buttons while enhancing the gunfiring aspect. These are more responsive than the flipper buttons themselves.

The launch plunger is also a button used along with the triggers to operate an on-field claw. The cryo-freeze chamber from the movie makes the transition to pinball with the transport claw. It is located in the upper left corner of the field and rotates right or left with the respective triggers, releasing balls into chosen targets by hitting the plunger button.

"The fantasy role-playing game from TSR has finally been done justice on the video screen."

Three ramps and one loop also occupy the upper portion of the field. There is a retina scan target with a ball painted like an eye and a car chase and crash alley target consisting of two hot wheels-like toy vehicles. The ball hits the first car, which hits an SAPD car, and the result is a crash bonus.

Game Play: The lack of popularity for the movie holds back the pinball's interest a bit but the play and mechanical devices function well. Four versions of multiball can be played, each with different jackpot values.

Balls are locked by freezing them in the chamber, then released by scoring the left loop. The right ramp leads the ball to an upper level with a ball diverter gate. If the gate is open, the ball enters the claw chamber and is immediately picked up. The player can drop the ball into one of five targets to start a new round.

The DCS sound system's quality is evident in the movie soundtrack and voice digitization. The now standard dot-matrix display features scenes from the movie, which also appear in the video mode.

Considering the theme, the pinball might not see the success it deserves. The movie dealt more with people fighting than with vehicles or machines, which are much easier to duplicate. As a playing experience, however, it's a worthy game. □

TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

Medalist Leagues World Championships

Nearly $250,000 in cash and prizes was paid out as dart players from across the country came to Reno, Nev., for one the largest tournaments in the history of the game, the 1994 Medalist Leagues World Championships Tournament.

More than 300 dart boards were set up in the 45,000-square-foot tournament room of the Reno Hilton for the event

Winners in the major categories were:

'01 Doubles AA Flight: 1st—Dave & Judy's 3Inabed, Edmond, Okla., Ed Geist, Chad Sylvan; 2nd—Sharkie's Fins, Salem, Ore., Gary Lasky, Ron Powers; 3rd—Mardi Gras Raiders, Sacramento, Calif., Steve Bean, Mark Frayser.

'01 Doubles A Flight: 1st—End Zone Nitemare, Kent, Wash., Jeff Fields, Barbara Jackson; 2nd—Poppycock's Best Bet, Tacoma, Wash., Jim Nelson Jr., Tim Dotson; 3rd—Poppycock's Wishnwel, Tacoma, Wash., Nick Logan, Doug Hoover.

'01 Doubles BB Flight: 1st—Players Easy Too, Bakersfield, Calif., Mike Del Rio, Dave Kyle; 2nd—Pack Saddle Lonewolf, Glendale, Ariz., Doug Malde, Jon Humphreys; 3rd—Capt. Cooks Hamrtime, Seattle, Wash., Todd Williams, Frank Crnich.

'01 Doubles B Flight: 1st—Lucky 7 2 Is Enuf, Kirkland, Wash., Rob Galert, Cynthia Cameron; 2nd—Bobby Lee's A Team, Burlington, Wash., Troy Adams, Tim W. Adams; 3rd—Dugdales Synergy, Sacramento, Calif., Laura Chase, Dan Domiano.

'01 Doubles Women's Flight 1st—One Bridge Fullobull, Spokane, Wash., Shelley Winters, Norma Wyant; 2nd—Dragon Palace No Bye, Vancouver, Wash., Keri Olive, Tammie Cambell; 3rd—Rusty Porthole Islgirls, Bethel Island, Calif., Gay Salazar, Dee Uhl. □

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TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

European Bullshooter II

European BullShooter II, which was held in Linz, Austria April 8-10, was televised in 27 countries reaching 250 million European households.

The 13-event European darts championship, which drew more than 1,700 entries, was aired in two separate one-hour programs. Some of those countries included the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Left: The Spanish team, winnner of the international team match with Bill Ward, of Arachnid.

Right: The tournament room and crowd.

Rockford, Illinois' electronic dart and video lottery manufacturer, Arachnid, Inc., sponsored the European Championship.

European BullShooter II was twice as large as the first championship which was held in Playa de Aro, Gerona, Spain.

Winners in the major categories were:

Men's 501 Singles: 1st—Alain Cherpion, Belgium; 2nd—Maurice Despontin, Belgium; 3rd—Rainer Laudenback, Holland.

Women's 301 Singles: 1st—Annete Spreitzer, Austria; 2nd—Anna Pujol, Spain; 3rd—Lucia Catinello, Belgium.

Low Ball Cricket: 1st—Thierry Wolfs, Belgium; 2nd—Thomas Forst, Austria; 3rd—Pedro Sanchez, Spain.

Mixed Doubles 501: 1st—Annette Spreitzer & Andreas Harrer, Austria; 2nd—Maria Geier & Emil Pylipyw, Austria; 3rd—Andrea Simen & Oliver Klein, Holland.

Men's Cricket Singles: 1st—Andreas Bentele, Holland; 2nd—Tony Martin Sr., Spain; 3rd—Tony Martin Jr., Spain.

Men's Doubles: 1st—Pettarini Sergio & Lineham Edward, Italy; 2nd—Niedermeier Dieter & Laudenbach Rainer, Holland; 3rd—Carlos Pages & Toni Martin, Spain.

Women's Doubles: 1st—Huylebroeck Myriame & Catinello Lucia, Belgium; 2nd—Diana Mourad & Pujol Anna, Spain; 3rd—Cruz Ramal Olmedo & Mary Alarcon Ua, Spain.

Tic Tac Mixed Doubles: 1st—Anna Pujol & Chris Greenhalgh, Spain; 2nd—Hartmann Francis & Catinello Lucia, Belgium; 3rd—Thienpont Roger & Legasse Christe, Belgium.

Team Cricket: 1st—Andreas Kratt & Leonardo Montalbano, Holland; 2nd—Tni Martin & Carolos Pages, Spain; 3rd—Markus Erdmann & Arthur Maisner, Holland. □

TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

BullShooter regionals hosted in three states

Arachnid's BullShooter Tour gathered momentum this spring as darters around the country participated in regional competitions. The goal: gaining a berth at the BullShooter World Challenge of Champions on Memorial Day weekend.

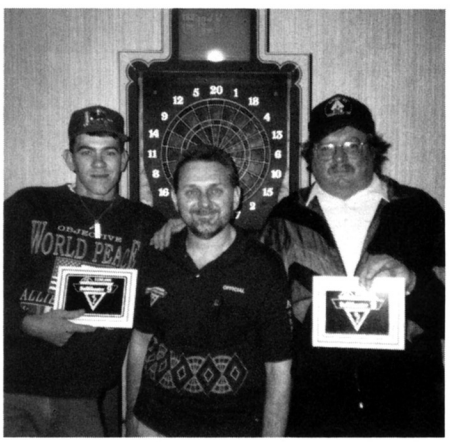
Three of the best-attended regionals occurred in Wisconsin, New York, and Tennessee.

Open Doubles Cricket: 1st—Tory Gould and Scott Kirchner, Janesville, Wis.; 2nd—Bruce Holmes, Oshkosh, Wis., and Rick Wnuk, Milwaukee, Wis.; 3rd—Todd Kurtz, Watertown, Wis., and Larry Clark, Shawano, Wis.

301 Pro Singles DI/DO: 1st—Jimmy Damore, Crystal Lake, Ill.; 2nd—Gary Wanta, West Allis, Wis.; 3rd—Scott Kirchner.

In Wisconsin, (l-r): Scott Kirchner, Pam Dischler, A-Team official Kathy Harris, and Tory Gould.

In New York, Bob Mills of Arachnid congratulates Lynn Masters and Liz Davis.



In Tennessee, A-Team official Bob Lenz (c) with big winners Dan Pace (l) and Tom Pace.

Wisconsin

Top players from Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa turned out for this regional event. Winners in the major categories were:

301 Men's Doubles: 1st—Brian Massey, Great Lakes, Ill., and Ryan Coskey, Lake Villa, Ill.; 2nd—Bill Bogard, Burlington, Wis., and Ray Bennett, Waukesha, Wis.

301 Women's Doubles: Barb Kirchner, Janesville, Wis., and Pam Dischler, Baraboo, Wis.; 2nd—Meredith Denny, Milwaukee, Wis., and Carolyn Nessmann, Appleton, Wis.; 3rd—Norma Johnson and Julie Stellpflug, Waukesha, Wis.

501 Men's Open Singles: 1st—Bill Abraham, Janesville, Wis.; 2nd—Dan McArthur, S. Elgin, Ill., 3rd—Mark Green, North Fond Du Lac, Wis.

301 Women's Singles: 1st—Kathy Hinerichsen, Clinton, Iowa; 2nd—Sharon Sonntag, Milwaukee, Wis.; 3rd—Meredith Denny, Milwaukee, Wis.

New York

East Syracuse, New York, was the scene of a state qualifier cosponsored by Betson Advance. Certificates were given to first, second, and third place winners. Victorious in the major categories were:

Men's Open Singles: 1st—James Lawlor, Watertown, N.Y.; 2nd—Nelson Collins, Indianapolis, Ind.; 3rd—Charlie Breisch, Pottsville, Pa.

Women's Singles: 1st—Rosie Richard, Raymond, N.H.; 2nd—Liz Davis, Newport, N.Y.; 3rd—Lynn Masters, Auburn, N.Y.

Open Doubles Cricket: 1st—Greg Jones, Whitehorse, Pa., and Jona Salata, McAdoo, Pa.; 2nd—Mark Potter, Buffalo, N.Y., and Dave Brock, Tonawanda, N.Y.; 3rd—Ed Dormer, Mt. Carmel, Pa., and Larry Scott, Pittston, Pa.

Men's Doubles: 1st—Jona Salata and Greg Jones; 2nd—Wayne Spratley, Newark, N.Y., and Walter Pankow, Lackawanna, N.Y.; 3rd—Don Clark, Newfield, N.Y., and Ed Haskins, Ithaca, N.Y.

Women's Doubles: 1st—Linda Spratley, Newark, N.Y., and Rosie Richard; 2nd—Lynn Masters and Liz Davis; 3rd—Maria Fricker, Ottsville, Pa., and Fran Ginder, Lansdale, Pa.

Pro Singles DI/DO: 1st—Walter Pankow; 2nd—Greg Jones; 3rd—Sonny Hubbard, Auburn, N.Y.

Tennessee

Sammons-Pennington Co. in Nashville co-sponsored this eight-event competition that drew players from Alabama, Illinois, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Winners in the major categories were:

Pro Singles DI/DO: 1st—Ricky Bramer, Southhaven, Miss.; 2nd—Darrell Harp, Bowling Green, Ky.; 3rd—Tony Chapman, Paducah, Ky.

Men's Open Singles: Dusty Snipes, Moody, Ala.; 2nd—Don Duncan, Phoenix City, Ala.; 3rd—Jeremy Shown, Harrison, Tenn.

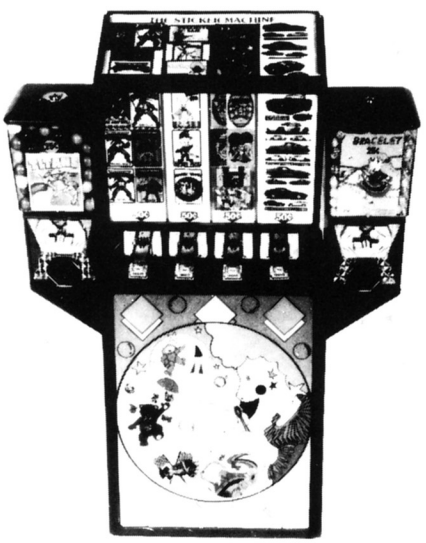
Women's Singles: 1st—Vicky Richard, New Salisbury, Ind.; 2nd—Becky Southern, Knoxville, Tenn.; 3rd—Jackie Ogletree, Jonesboro, Ga.

Men's Doubles: 1st—Tom Pace, Nashville, Tenn., and Dan Pace, Hollywood, Fla.; 2nd—Rusty Goff, Louisville, Ky., and Courtenay Casteel, Louisville, Ky.; 3rd—J.R. Shumake and Donald Gann, Nashville, Tenn.

Women's Doubles: 1st-Renae Plehn, Waukesha, Wis., and Laura Wyatt, Huntsville, Ala.; 2nd—Patricia Reed and Becky Southern, Knoxville, Ky.; 3rd—Mischelle Naylor and Angie Thurman, Memphis, Tenn.

Open Doubles Cricket: 1st—Tom Pace and Dan Pace; 2nd—Carl Parsley, Hixson, Tenn., and Jeremy Shown; 3rd—Derrick West, Madison, Tenn., and Darrell Harp, Bowling Green, Ky. □

The kids stop here.



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TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

Valley Gold darters keep on qualifying

Getting crazy at Spartan Darts' Valley Gold qualifier in Jacksonville, Fla.

Mary Margaret and Scott Odle put their money where their mouths are.

Dart competition continues to heat up as players from across the country keep qualifying for the Valley Gold Cup Championship, to be held July 14-16 in Las Vegas.

The Valley Gold Cup Championship will determine the four members of Team USA, who will travel to Europe this fall for international competition.

More than 100 operators in 14 states have been holding local qualifying events this year.

Among the latest qualifiers who will advance to the Valley Gold Cup Championship in Las Vegas are:

Jacksonville, Fla.: (April 23-24) Games of cricket, 301 double in/double out, and high score kept 60 double elimination players busy in a two-day qualifying event, sponsored by Spartan Darts and the V.F.W. Post 7909. Each player competed against 11 others, playing 33 games in their division.

Winners in the men's division were Tim Salz and Rich Lanham. Sandi Bringle and Debbie Hartford took the women's division.

Bakersfield, Calif.: (April 22-24) Lloyd Roe and Lyndy Rose, of Bakersfield won top honors in their divisions. The event, sponsored by Kyle's Amusements, was held at The Trap.

In 501 and cricket in two singles events, one double elimination, and one round robin, nine women and 28 men competed for a $185 cash pot and door prizes.

Johnston, Iowa: (April 23) Two Des Moines men and two Clive women are going to Las Vegas after winning the Valley Cup

Ladies finalists in Albany, Georgia: Debbie Barlow, Bambi Curles, Tyanna Seaton, Melani McCooley, and Regina Houston.

Men's finalists (from left, front row): Bobby Watkins, Steve Vinavong, Ronald Bell; (back row): Andy Oglesby, Dave Mullins, Tony Downs, Mike McGuire, and Ronnie Bowden.

Qualifier held here at Mr. R's Lounge.

Scott Bowles and Jerry Warden of Des Moines, and Lisa Wiese and Nancy Hilderbrand of Clive, won the event, which was sponsored by Great American Fun Factory. Shooters in the finals played 501 and cricket same score, best of three, and double elimination in 10 events. Nearly $900 in prize money and Las Vegas trips were at stake.

Wisconsin Rapids, Wisc.: (April 16) Gale Lynn Spice of Nekoosa and Rick Rosplock of Vesper, won the Valley Cup Qualifier held at David Harld's. The competition, which drew 74 darters, was sponsored by Herman's Distributing & Vending Co.

In a best of three 701, darters shot for Las Vegas trips, $160 in cash prizes, and a Valley goods giveaway.

Springfield, Ill.: (April 16) Dan Ehlers of Bloomington, Rick Hesse of Springfield, Cathy Perot of Eureka, and Emily Poulliard of Springfield, took top spots in the Valley Gold Qualifier held at Mowies Cue.

It was 301 double in/double out, cricket, and 501 in the men's and women's singles events. In all, 32 men and 16 women vied for a $600 cash pot, jackets, shirts, mugs, hats, darts and dart boards.

Albany, Georgia.: (April 9) Sixty-six darters came to the Heritage House Banquet room for the first annual Valley Gold Cup Qualifier, sponsored by Barlow Amusement & Music Co.

Melani McCooley of Albany and Dave Mullins of Leesburg won top spots and trips to Las Vegas.

Cricket and 301 were played in the men's and women's singles events. Darters were given four chances to place and a $100 first place guarantee.

Norco, Calif.: (April 8-10) Nearly 150 darters packed the Moose Lodge for the Valley Gold qualifying event, sponsored by Claymar Darts and Ye Olde Dart Shoppe.

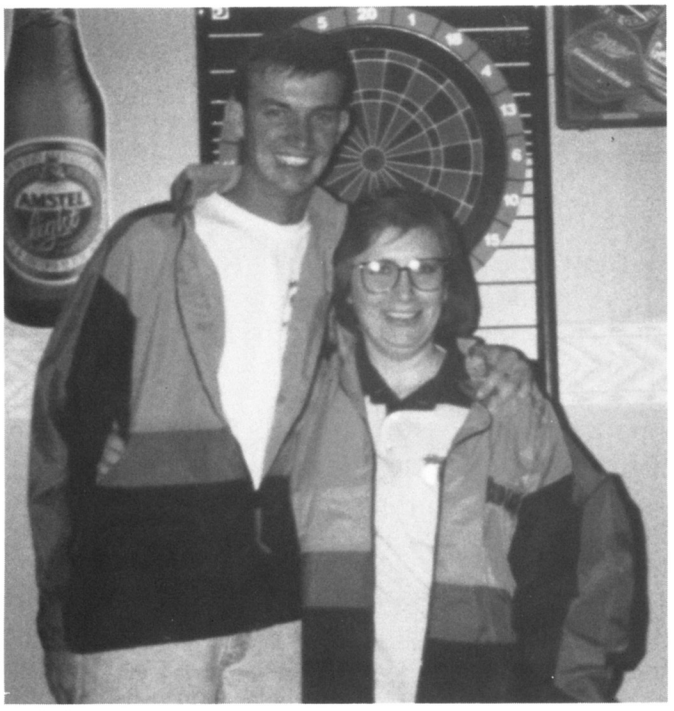
Marie Lovett of Corona, Anthony Gregory of Buena Park, Sue Hayward of Norco, Ryan Dinga of Riverside, Janet Evans of Norco, and Alice Goodman of La Habra, won the qualifying event and a chance to advance to the Valley Cup Finals.

Darters played luck of the draw and blind draw cricket as well as men's and women's divisionalized 301 and 501 doubles, triples, and medleys. Directors used a point system to award the Vegas trip and more than $1,700 in prize money. Two grand prize Sahara Hotel accommodation packages were also awarded to the NDA's two Team Dart IX winners.

Cheyenne, Wyom.: (April 8-10) Melissa Luttral and Jim Irwin won the Cheyenne Valley Dart League's Valley Gold Dart Tournament, held at the Mayflower Lounge.

The tournament was hosted by the Cheyenne Vending and Amusement Inc. It included an ice breaker party, primary competitive events, and a charity shoot off.

Temperance, Mich.: (March 26-



Dan Ehlers of Bloomington and Cathy Perot of Eureka advance to Las Vegas after winning local qualifying events.

Six-week-old Hunter, son of Melanie McCooley, who won the Valley Gold Cup ladies' division.

26) Bremer Vending of Toledo and the Michigan Tavern hosted 56 Rocket League players for Valley Gold qualifying event.

Thirty-two men and 24 women competed in 301, 501, cricket and 301 double in/double out, in five women's and five men's events for a shot at the Vegas trip and a piece of the $1,000 cash pot.

Toledo's Tracie Griener and Denny Summers won the competition.

Sacramento, Calif.: (March 26-27/April 24) Forty-four players competed in the Valley Gold Tournament series here for $610 cash and four Vegas trips.

Ellen Cole and Jerry Kohl of Sacramento, Rick Davis of Roseville and Valarie Patterson of Rocklin qualified to advance to Las Vegas.

St. Cloud, Minn.: (March 25-27) Cristy Paulsen of Albertville and Tom Berg of Sauk Rapids nabbed top honors at the Valley Gold Cup Qualifier at the St. Cloud Holiday Inn.

The tournament was hosted by the Bros Amusement & Games.

Combination 301, 501, and cricket were played in singles, doubles, and team events. More than 400 players vied for $5,000 and the Las Vegas trip.

Big Bend, Wisc.: More than 40 dart players competed in the Valley Cup qualifying event held at Lucy and Ethel's Sports Bar. The tournament was sponsored by American Entertainment Inc.

Lloyd Roe of Bakersfield Calif., winner of the men's Valley Gold qualifier.

Leanne Schaumberg and P.J. Essig of Muskego, and Mike Hardy and Randy Plautz of Waukesha, are making plans for Las Vegas after winning top honors.

Polson, Mont.: (March 12) Twenty-two darters played 301, 501, and cricket at the Polson V.F.W. in a qualifying event sponsored by Big Sky Amusements.

Walt Swanson and Teresa Farrington of Thompson Falls won the trips to Las Vegas and a shot at making the national team.

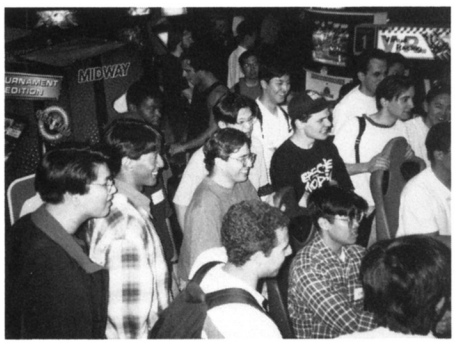
Lorain, Ohio: Nearly 180 darters packed the Eagles Nest for Ohio Vending Machine Inc.'s inaugural Northern Shoot-out and Valley Cup Qualifier.

Dave Turrill and Alicia Twining of Elyria, and Darryl Lubinski and Debbie Bilyj of North Ridgeville, won the event and trips to Las Vegas.

Cricket, 301, and 501 were played in men's, women's, doubles, team, and blind draw divisions. □

TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

Namco continues Cybersled competition



Talk about a crowd! Students gather 'round for the Cybersled tournament.

Twenty-four of the top *Cybersled* players in the Los Angeles area competed in a tournament held at the ASUCLA game room on April 14.

Namco-America's popular driver is one of the top-earning games at ASUCLA, according to tournament officials. Players were randomly assigned to three division brackets and competed in a double elimination tournament. Finalists then competed to determine standings.

Finalists received an AM/FM stereo sports headphone, an AM/FM sports cassette deck, and the grand prize of a JVC portable CD player. Players also entered into a drawing for other prizes, including gift certificates, free credit coupons, and *Ridge Racer* T-shirts.

Namco-America provided tournament kits and the T-shirts; UCLA provided prizes for winners in first, second, and third place. ASUCLA's Israel Mora and Stephen Chen coordinated the event; Henderson Hsieh won the tournament.

For information on how to organize a similar *Cybersled* event, contact Namco-America customer service for a free tournament kit, (408) 383-3900. □

From left: Gary Rashed, second place; Henderson Hsieh, first place; and Sam Bartels, third place.

NEWS FEATURE

AMOA-NDA stages Team Dart Nine

Mixed Couples team members with their plaques and trophy.

The German team makes a grand entrance during the opening ceremonies.

Five days of grueling competition to determine the "best of the best" in the world of team soft-tip darting took place at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev., April 26-30.

The event, Team Dart Nine, was a resounding success for the AMOA-National Dart Association. Spectators, international guests, and league representatives joined with the 3,800 players to make it a true record-breaking occasion. Six hundred of the players were from foreign countries. Prize money exceeded $131,000, up more than $20,000 from the previous year.

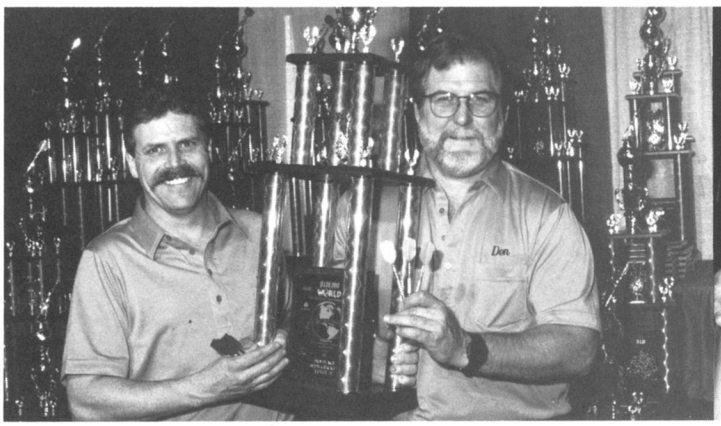
A highlight of Team Dart Nine was the first All Star Invitational, won by the United States team: Bernie Roney, David Golden, Chuck Johnson, Ken Fitzgerald, and Dave Turrill.

Outgoing AMOA-NDA president Mike Smythe of Indy Amusements in Indianapolis, Ind., turned over his duties to Jerry Borth of Brothers Music in St. Cloud, Minn. The final gathering was the sold-out awards banquet; the Blues Brother's Revue provided the evening's entertainment.

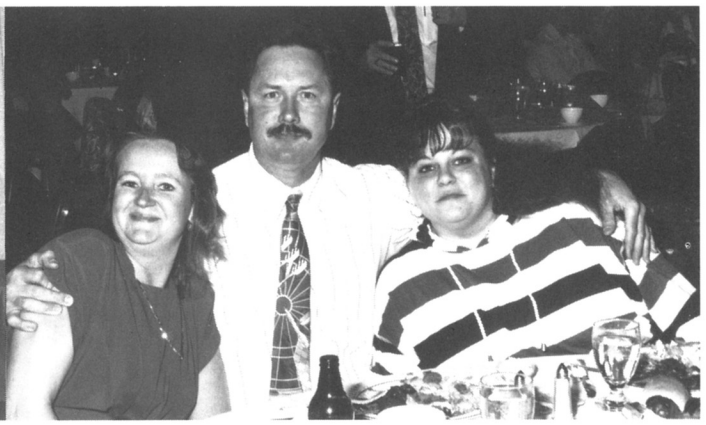
Players were generous with donations to the AMOA-NDA national charity, Give Kids the World, and raised $7,000 for the worthy cause.

Special thanks are extended to Joe Conway and his staff at the AMOA-NDA, charter members, sanctioned players, location sponsors, and manufacturer sponsors (Arachnid, Merit, and Valley) who provided games for the competition.

The next event in the AMOA-NDA program is the First Annual Soft-Tip Dart Singles & Doubles International Championships, scheduled for Oct. 20-22 at the



Proud winners show off their trophy.



New '94-'95 AMOA-NDA president Jerry Borth of Brothers Music with classification specialist Judith Mehle (r) and shift leader Dawn Orloff.

Radisson Twin Towers Hotel in Orlando, Fla. For more information, contact Joe Conway, (414) 476-4665 or (800) 808-9884; FAX (414) 476-7454.

Winners and their sponsors in the major categories of Team Dart Nine were:

Open Level 1: 1st—Duffy Lunatic Fringe, Ponderosa Amusement, Colorado; 2nd—Club House, AVS Amusements, Illinois; 3rd—EDC Bullbusters, NSM, Germany.

Open Level 2: 1st—Salsburger, Vorderegger, Austria; 2nd—Our Place, Allstar Music, Illinois; 3rd—Riley's Bar, Capital Music, Montana.

Open Level 3: 1st—Rocky Mountain 4, Darts of Colorado, Colorado; 2nd—TD Knights, C & N Sales, Minnesota; 3rd—It'll Do Lounge, American Music, Montana.

Open Level 4: 1st—Bleachers, Neon Amusement, Kansas; 2nd—Score Boards, Neon Amusement, Kansas; 3rd—Widow Makers, Inter-City Leisure, Canada.

Open Level 5: 1st—Minsky's, Neon Amusement, Kansas; 2nd—B & B Tau, Star Service, California; 3rd—Pointe East, Top Flite, California.

Masters: 1st—DSAB II, NSM, Germany; 2nd—Evil Roy Slades, K & D Enterprises, Wisconsin; 3rd—Lancers, Gem Music & Vending, Ohio.

Masters Cricket: 1st—Dufferin, Midwest Dart, Canada; 2nd—Buckley Four Man, Gem Music, Ohio; 3rd—Sports Page Gold, Star Service, California.

Open Cricket Level 1: 1st—Juice, Star Darts, Indiana; 2nd—OVI 1, Ohio Vending Machine, Ohio; 3rd—Rauch-Bochner, NSM, Germany.

Open Cricket Level 2: 1st—Crusin', Black Hills Novelty, South Dakota, 2nd—Gung Ho, Wandarts, California; 3rd—Jochem & Holtz, NSM, Germany.

Open Cricket Level 3: 1st—Minsky's A, Neon Amusement, Kansas; 2nd—East Side Boys, Soaring Darts, Colorado; 3rd—Bleachers A, Neon Amusement, Kansas.

Women's Cricket Level 1: 1st—Sports Page Elite, Star Service, California; 2nd—Breakers Roses, SoCal Darts, California; 3rd—Rivers Edge, K & D Enterprises, Wisconsin.

Women's Cricket Level 2: 1st—Rockford Stars, Rockford Star, Illinois; 2nd—Class Act, Darts Etc. Amusements, California; 3rd—Bumps & Humps, Claymar Darts, California.

Mixed Couples Level 1: 1st—Marroni's, Marroni Inc., Indiana; 2nd—Dead Heads, Theisen Vending, Minnesota; 3rd—Triple Nickel Pokin' Fun, Quality Amusements, Oregon.

Mixed Couples Level 2: 1st—Hardt-Murr, Marroni Inc., Indiana; 2nd—Dream Team, B & D Darts, California; 3rd—Triple Nickel Suds Suckers, Oregon.

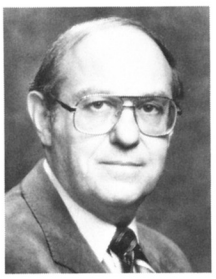
Mixed Couples Level 3: 1st—Hayloft Lounge, Amuse-O-Matic, Iowa; 2nd—Point East, Top Flite Darts, California; 3rd—VIP Hellraisers, Just-In-Darts, Florida.

Mixed Couples Masters: 1st—Sports Page, Star Service, California; 2nd—Straight Shots, K & D Enterprises, Wisconsin; 3rd—Trade Winds Wnuk, Hastings Distributing, Wisconsin.

Women's Level 1: 1st—Terry's Bar, K & D Enterprises, Wisconsin; 2nd—Sports Page Babes, Star Service, California; 3rd—Triple Nickel Teasers, Quality Amusement, Oregon.

Women's Level 2: 1st—Flyers, Arctic Music & Vending, Alaska; 2nd—Jacks I, Cole Amusement, Arizona; 3rd—Sports Page Dolls, Star Service, California.

Women's Level 3: 1st—Silver City Casino, American Music, Montana; 2nd—Huggables, B & D Darts, California; 3rd—Longbranch II, C & N Sales, Minnesota. □



TAX TIPS

Investing for income, growth, or security

Irving Blackman

This is a tax column. As a result, when readers call me to consult, taxes—usually centering around transfer/succession/estate planning—are at the center of the stage. Almost all of the callers are business owners. Sure they want to save taxes, but they continually bombard me with questions about cost cutting, revenue enhancement, and compensating key people. You name it. Sometimes I can help, but usually I must refer the caller to a specialist.

Can you guess what the runaway request for non-tax help has been through the years and still is today? Hands down, it is, "Irv, how do I invest my ...?" Listen up! Here's the order in which most business owners fill in that all-important blank: (1) pension plan, profit-sharing plan, 401(k) or IRA; (2) surplus corporate funds; and (3) personal investment funds. Often the funds belong to mom or dad, the kids, a trust, or an estate.

Until recently, I, like many of the readers and callers, did not know where to turn. But while attending an investment seminar in October 1993 I met one of the speakers, a man named Adrian Day. Of course, I had known of his reputation and had read his newsletter for a number of years. After a three-hour meeting (we had dinner together) following the seminar and studying his material and track record, I made the best investment of my life: On Nov. 17, 1993, my entire investment portfolio was transferred to Adrian, giving him the sole authority to trade my account.

Adrian manages five types of accounts, including Conservative Global, Aggressive Global and gold resources, up 53 percent, 64 percent, and 123 percent, respectively, in 1993. The other two accounts went up 57 percent and 62 percent.

But caution: past performance is never an assurance of future performance.

How did my accounts do? Well, from Nov. 17, 1993 to Jan. 31, 1994, the value of my accounts went up an astounding 17.14 percent. This article was written on Feb. 13, 1994. 'Nuff said.

Taking your spouse to the next convention?

Most trade associations design their annual conventions to be a combination of business and pleasure, with spouses accompanying the business member of the family. Well, the new tax law—starting in 1994—changes the deduction rules of the game.

Here's the story. Under the old law, you could write off the costs of bringing your spouse (or any other family member) on a trip if this was a bona fide business purpose for your spouse's presence. For example, when the president of Walt Disney Productions took his wife with him on a three-month business trip around the world, her travel expenses were allowed as a business expense. Why? Because his wife's presence at film showings, social gatherings, and meetings with the press and the public enhanced the company's family image.

Well, here are the unwelcome new rules. No deduction is allowed for your spouse's travel expenses unless (1) there is a bona fide business purpose for

your spouse's presence (same as the old rule); and (2) your spouse is also an employee of your business. The same rules apply to your dependents or any other person accompanying you on a business trip.

The Disney example would flunk under the new law, unless the president's wife worked for the company. So here's the tax-saving move to remember: put your spouse on the payroll and pay a salary appropriate (what you would pay a stranger) for services actually rendered. Your spouse must be a bona fide employee but is not required to be a full-time employee.

Next, let's explore a different, but very practical, fact pattern—you travel for valid business reasons and your better half just travels along. What are the tax rules?

Sorry, you can't deduct your spouse's travel expenses. But you'll like this basic rule: you can deduct the same amount it would have cost you, just as if you had traveled alone. You are not limited to one-half of the total expenses.

For example, the airlines often have a special deal if you travel with your spouse. You get a deduction equal to the fare for a single traveler. Or suppose you drive to a business convention. The entire transportation cost is deductible because the cost is the same whether you drive alone or not.

Lodging expenses give you another tax break. You can deduct the costs of a single room. For example, if the charge for a single room is $100, and a double room costs $120, your deduction is a full $100.

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Winning the tax transfer game

We all wear many hats. This article is aimed at you if you wear two or more hats. At a minimum—to play this hat game—you must own all or part of a family business and be a father (or mother). Chances are you also are a wife (or husband) and a boss (to your kids in the business). And of course, like it or not, you wear a hat as a taxpayer.

If you are typical, your most valuable hat and asset is your business. It represents pure wealth (in current dollar value) and produces a stream of income to support you (and probably other members of your family). But a portion of this pure wealth (which usually grows a bit in value each year) must someday go to the IRS (you know, that tax hat).

Well, the rest of this article tells you about a wonderful tax case (TCM 1989-231, Docket No. 28151-85) and how we use it in our office to make business owners "happy hatters."

Here's the story: Clara Winkler died, leaving stock in a closely held business to her children. Some of the stock was voting, some non-voting. The estate valued all the shares at $20 per share. The IRS pushed for a $46 value for the voting stock and $42 for the non-voting stock.

The Tax Court compromised in a very interesting way, valuing the voting stock at $38 per share (closer to the IRS's figure) and the non-voting stock at $25 per share

(very close to the estate's figure). Now, make sure you keep your eye on the ball—both the IRS and the court agreed on one thing: the non-voting stock had a lower value than their voting stock.

Now here's how we have been using the Winkler case to keep you wearing the hats you want and shrink the cost of the tax hat (or sometimes even be able to toss it away—legally). Step 1: Recapitalize your corporation by turning in all of your voting common stock and exchanging it for new voting common stock (say 1,000 shares) and new non-voting common stock (say 99,000 shares). This transaction is tax free and works for S corporations, as well as taxpaying corporations. Step 2: Give the non-voting stock to your children. Since it's worth less than the voting stock, you can give more shares without owing any gift tax.

Let's look at how this strategy can accomplish many family-business goals. Dad can stay in control of the business (owning only voting stock). The kids (whether in the business or not) can own own the non-voting stock (we use a buy-sell agreement to get all the stock into the hands of the business kids after dad and mom have passed on). The flexibility and possibilities are endless. Everyone—except the IRS—becomes a happy hatter.

You may send for these special reports: "Transfer Your Corporation to the Next Generation—Tax Free;" "Transferring Your Business When You Have Two Or More Children;" or "How You Can Beat The Estate Tax—Legally."

More about meals and entertainment

Every taxpayer loves to deduct meals and entertainment expenses. But some recent tax law changes are still causing a great deal of confusion. Picking up the tab for a meal or entertainment activity for a legitimate business associate—customer, prospect, supplier, etc.—does not automatically entitle you to a deduction.

Document the information needed to support the deduction as soon as possible.

Under the old law, 100 percent of a "quiet business meal" with a business associate could be deducted even though no business was discussed. According to the new rules, only 50 percent of a business meal—quiet or otherwise—is deductible only if business is discussed before, after, or during the meal. It is essential that you document the nature of the business discussion.

Here's another rule that causes problems: entertainment—a ball game, a play, fishing day, or similar activities—done for only a pure business motive is never deductible as a stand-alone activity. To make it deductible (50 percent of the expense), the activity must be preceded or followed by a bona fide business discussion.

Let's put the two rules together and get two deductions for one meal. For example, Sam Seller takes Ben Buyer, a potential customer, to dinner. They talk business. Then they go to a hockey game. The business dinner did double duty. First, the meal is deductible (50 percent); there was a bona fide business discussion. Second, the cost of the game is deductible (50 percent); it was preceded by a business discussion.

Make sure you and everyone in your company who engages in entertainment activities follow these rules to the letter. Get receipts and bills. Document the information needed to support the deduction as soon as possible.

(You may send for these special reports: "The Complete Guide to Building Your Automobile Deductions"; The Complete Guide to Building Your Entertainment Deductions"; and "The Complete Guide to Building Your Travel Deductions.") □

Irving Blackman is a senior tax partner in Blackman Kallick Bartelstein, a CPA firm specializing in closely held businesses. He has agreed to consult with readers of this column. His tax hotline number is (312) 207-1040. The address to send for the special reports (at a nominal cost) is Book Division, 300 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, Ill. 60606.

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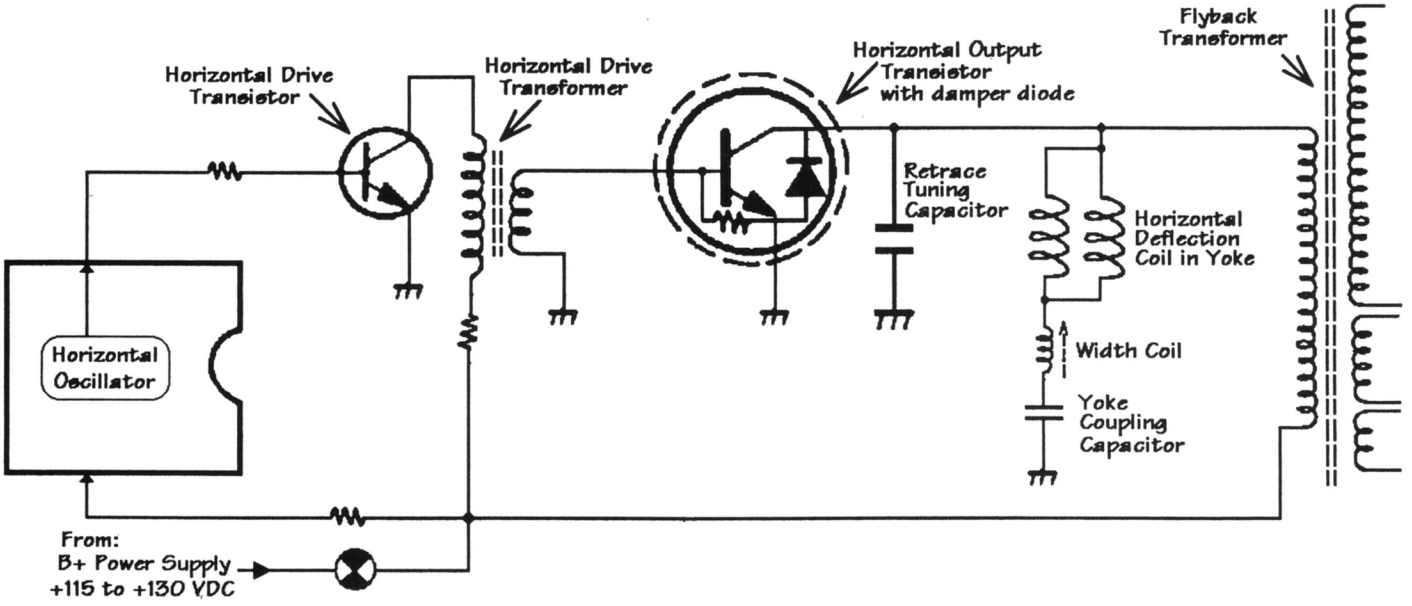
TECHNICAL TOPICS

Troubleshooting flowchart redux

Randy Fromm

This flowchart has been published previously in Play Meter. Since that time, a few additional common failures have been showing up in the field. Changes have been made in the flowchart that will lead you to these new failures. Specifically, there are a couple of components in the horizontal deflection section that short-circuit and blow the fuse in the monitor.



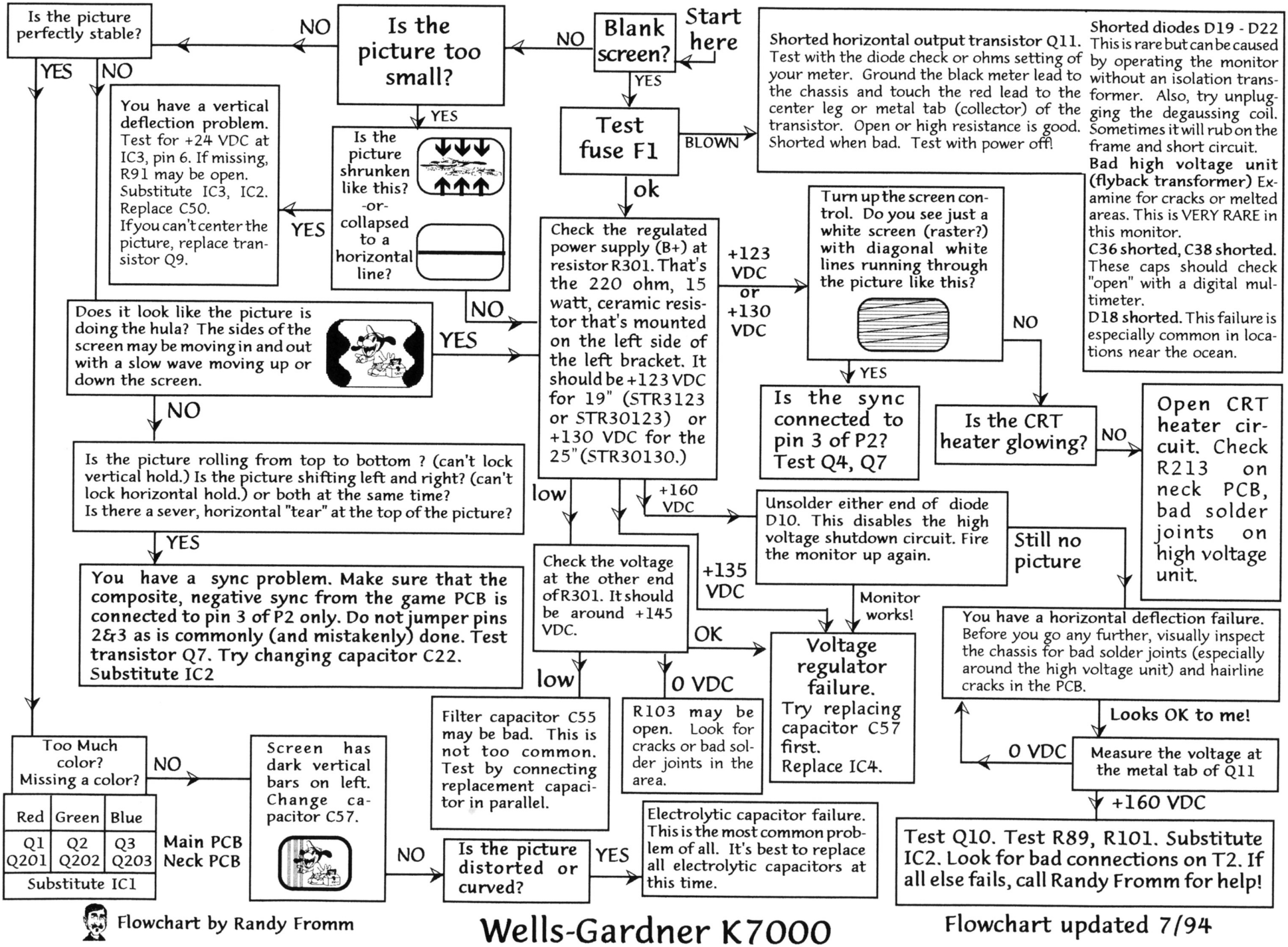
We'll get to those failures in a moment but before we do, let's take a brief look at the horizontal deflection circuit and how it operates. Perhaps even more important, we'll look at how to troubleshoot this circuit when it fails.

A failure in the horizontal deflection circuit can be difficult to figure out because the monitor will probably appear to be completely dead. The characteristic high pitched squeal of a functioning monitor will be missing and there will be no picture or brightness of any kind on the screen. That's because the horizontal deflection circuit is used to drive the high voltage unit. Without high voltage, there is no picture at all. Also, since the CRT heaters are powered by a winding on the flyback transformer in the high voltage unit, there is no orange glow in the neck of the picture tube.

Then again, most horizontal deflection failures will blow the fuse and shorted components are usually pretty easy to find. Read on, warrior.

The horizontal deflection circuit

The horizontal deflection circuit is similar in most monitors; in fact, it is almost identical in just about every video game monitor in use today. Inside an IC on the monitor's printed circuit board, a circuit known as the "horizontal oscillator" is used to generate an alternating current signal of approximately 15,750 Hertz. Although this signal will eventually be used to power the horizontal deflection coil in the yoke (as


Start here
Blank screen?
NO
YES
Test fuse F1
BLOWN
ok
Shorted horizontal output transistor Q11. Test with the diode check or ohms setting of your meter. Ground the black meter lead to the chassis and touch the red lead to the center leg or metal tab (collector) of the transistor. Open or high resistance is good. Shorted when bad. Test with power off!
Shorted diodes D19 - D22 This is rare but can be caused by operating the monitor without an isolation transformer. Also, try unplugging the degaussing coil. Sometimes it will rub on the frame and short circuit.
Bad high voltage unit (flyback transformer) Examine for cracks or melted areas. This is VERY RARE in this monitor.
C36 shorted, C38 shorted. These caps should check "open" with a digital multimeter.
D18 shorted. This failure is especially common in locations near the ocean.
Check the regulated power supply (B+) at resistor R301. That's the 220 ohm, 15 watt, ceramic resistor that's mounted on the left side of the left bracket. It should be +123 VDC for 19" (STR3123 or STR30123) or +130 VDC for the 25"(STR30130.)
+123 VDC or +130 VDC
Turn up the screen control. Do you see just a white screen (raster?) with diagonal white lines running through the picture like this?
NO
YES
Is the sync connected to pin 3 of P2? Test Q4, Q7
Is the CRT heater glowing?
NO
Open CRT heater circuit. Check R213 on neck PCB, bad solder joints on high voltage unit.
+160 VDC
Unsolder either end of diode D10. This disables the high voltage shutdown circuit. Fire the monitor up again.
Still no picture
Monitor works!
low
Check the voltage at the other end of R301. It should be around +145 VDC.
+135 VDC
OK
low
0 VDC
Filter capacitor C55 may be bad. This is not too common. Test by connecting replacement capacitor in parallel.
R103 may be open. Look for cracks or bad solder joints in the area.
Voltage regulator failure. Try replacing capacitor C57 first. Replace IC4.
You have a horizontal deflection failure. Before you go any further, visually inspect the chassis for bad solder joints (especially around the high voltage unit) and hairline cracks in the PCB.
Looks OK to me!
0 VDC
Measure the voltage at the metal tab of Q11
+160 VDC
Test Q10. Test R89, R101. Substitute IC2. Look for bad connections on T2. If all else fails, call Randy Fromm for help!
Is the picture perfectly stable?
NO
YES
NO
Is the picture too small?
YES
You have a vertical deflection problem. Test for +24 VDC at IC3, pin 6. If missing, R91 may be open. Substitute IC3, IC2. Replace C50. If you can't center the picture, replace transistor Q9.
YES
Is the picture shrunken like this?
-or-
collapsed to a horizontal line?
NO
Does it look like the picture is doing the hula? The sides of the screen may be moving in and out with a slow wave moving up or down the screen.
YES
NO
Is the picture rolling from top to bottom ? (can't lock vertical hold.) Is the picture shifting left and right? (can't lock horizontal hold.) or both at the same time?
Is there a sever, horizontal "tear" at the top of the picture?
YES
You have a sync problem. Make sure that the composite, negative sync from the game PCB is connected to pin 3 of P2 only. Do not jumper pins 2&3 as is commonly (and mistakenly) done. Test transistor Q7. Try changing capacitor C22. Substitute IC2
Too Much color? Missing a color?
NO
Red Green Blue
Q1 Q2 Q3
Q201 Q202 Q203
Main PCB
Neck PCB
Substitute IC1
Screen has dark vertical bars on left. Change capacitor C57.
NO
Is the picture distorted or curved?
YES
Electrolytic capacitor failure. This is the most common problem of all. It's best to replace all electrolytic capacitors at this time.
Flowchart by Randy Fromm
Wells-Gardner K7000
Flowchart updated 7/94

well as the high voltage unit) it is still very weak at this point (only about 1.5 VAC); it has to be amplified.

The output of the horizontal oscillator is connected to the input of the horizontal drive transistor where it is amplified to obtain an output of around 100 VAC. A small transformer (appropriately called the horizontal drive transformer) is used to change this output into a high current AC signal that drives the horizontal output transistor.

The horizontal output transistor is the hardest working transistor in the monitor. All the current for the horizontal deflection coil in the yoke and the flyback transformer in the high voltage unit passes through the horizontal output transistor. In fact, approximately 80% of the power consumed by a video game monitor is controlled by the horizontal output transistor.

Troubleshooting horizontal failures

If the monitor has a blown fuse, chances are excellent that the horizontal output transistor has shorted. You can check it with your digital multimeter. Set the meter to the diode test setting. If your meter does not have a diode test, use a low resistance scale. Remove the power to the monitor. Ground the black meter lead to the chassis and touch the red meter lead to the collector of the horizontal output transistor. If the meter displays a low resistance or short circuit, you've found the culprit. A bad high voltage unit also may cause the fuse to blow. In fact, the horizontal output transistor and high voltage unit will often fail together (the bad high voltage unit having caused the transistor to fail).

The latest failures to show up in Wells-Gardner's K7000 series are two capacitors in the output stage of the horizontal deflection circuit. They are C36 (the retrace tuning capacitor) and C38 (the yoke coupling capacitor).

I've had a couple of people refer to C36 as a "safety capacitor." That is not the correct term for this component. It's actually called the "retrace tuning capacitor." I'm certain the reason for this misnomer is that Wells-Gardner notes this component on the schematic diagram as a "safety critical component" by marking it with an exclamation point within a triangle. Someone said they read the term somewhere. I assure you that there is no such thing as a "safety capacitor" (at least, not in a monitor, anyway).

Retrace tuning is what this capacitor does. When the beam is at the right edge of the CRT, the horizontal output transistor is turned off. This cuts off the current flow into the horizontal deflection coil of the yoke. Left on it's own with a fully energized magnetic field, the yoke coil's magnetic field quickly collapses. This collapsing magnetic field turns the coil into a generator; a generator that creates a high voltage spike (as high as 600-900 volts). This charge is dumped into C36, quickly bringing the horizontal sweep back to the left edge of the picture. This is called the "horizontal retrace." When the horizontal output transistor is turned back on, yoke coupling capacitor C38 dumps its charge through the yoke, moving the beams from left to right.

That's the way it's supposed to work, anyway. Unfortunately, C36 and C38 have been failing lately. When they fail, they short circuit. You can check these caps for short circuits with your digital multimeter. On any resistance scale, the capacitors should both read "open." You'll have to pull them out of circuit to be sure. The value of C36 is 6100 picofarads, 1500 volts. This value may be a bit different in your monitor due to changes in circuit design to accommodate different CRTs and horizontal scan rates. Also, some monitors use a capacitor with four legs instead of the normally found pair of component leads. If you are using a two legged replacement component, you'll need to add a couple of small jumper wires. The value of C38 is .39 microfarads, 200 volts.

Fuse not blown

Horizontal deflection problems that do not blow the fuse are somewhat more difficult to troubleshoot. There are a few things that can cause the horizontal deflection to become inoperative. One may have nothing to do with a horizontal failure at all!

Most monitors include a circuit known as an "X-ray protector" or "high voltage shut-down." The purpose of this circuit is to shut down the high voltage if it becomes excessively high in voltage. It does this by killing the horizontal oscillator circuit. This prevents the monitor from emitting excessive X-rays.

To figure out if the horizontal deflection circuit is really defective or if it has been shut down by the X-ray protector, you should start your troubleshooting by disabling the shut-down circuit. This will be different in each type of monitor, so here are some commonly used video game monitors and the method of disabling the X-ray protector:

Electrohome—remove transistor X701.

Hantarex MTC 900—unsolder and lift one end of resistor R152.

Hantarex MTC 9000—unsolder and lift one end of diode D10.

Orion—unsolder and lift one end of diode D401.

Sharp Image—unsolder and lift one end of diode D410.

Wells-Gardner K4600 series—remove transistor TR353.

Wells-Gardner K7000 series—

unsolder and lift one end of diode D12.

Note: Quite a few of the monitors use an HA-11235 integrated circuit for the horizontal oscillator. Pin 9 of this IC is used for the shut-down input. If you see a zener diode connected to this pin, lifting either end of the diode off the board will disable the shut-down circuit.

With the shut-down circuit disabled, apply power to the monitor. If the monitor now gives you a picture, the horizontal circuit is working. Your problem lies elsewhere (probably in the voltage regulator circuit).

If the monitor is still dead, you need to make a few more tests. Measure the voltage at the collector of the horizontal output transistor. It should be around +110 to +130 VDC.

WARNING: NEVER TEST THE VOLTAGE AT THE COLLECTOR OF THE HORIZONTAL OUTPUT TRANSISTOR IF THE HORIZONTAL DEFLECTION CIRCUIT IS WORKING PROPERLY!

This test should only be performed if the monitor is dead. If you hear the high pitched squeal, or if a neon lamp glows when held near the flyback transformer, measuring the collector voltage can damage your meter.

If the collector voltage is missing, there are only a few things that can be wrong. The most likely is a crack in the printed circuit board. Also, examine the solder joints around the high voltage unit. You may find some cracks or fractured solder joints. There is a highly remote possibility that the high voltage unit may be bad.

The Wells-Gardner K4900 series has a common problem with the jumpers that carry the +130 VDC power supply around the perimeter of the board. One of the jumpers is located in the position on the board that is subjected to stress from the plastic clip that holds the board in place on the chassis. Removal and replacement of the board can cause this jumper to break, cutting off the voltage to the horizontal output circuit.

If the collector voltage of the horizontal output transistor is good, test the voltage at the collector of the horizontal drive transistor. If this voltage is missing, the primary winding of the horizontal drive transformer or the resistor that is in series with it may be open. The resistor will generally be 5 watts at 2.2K to 3.8K ohms. Check these with the

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power turned off. Naturally, you want to check for bad solder joints here as well.

If the collector voltage measures at around 50 VDC, switch your meter to read AC volts and measure it again. If you read approximately 50 VAC, the horizontal drive circuit is probably working properly. Your problem is most likely an open secondary winding in the horizontal drive transformer or broken traces and/or bad solder joints between the output of the horizontal drive transformer and the base of the horizontal output transistor. There is a remote possibility that the horizontal output transistor is bad but this is highly unlikely. As the horizontal output transistor is often a specialized one (with an internal resistor and diode) the best test here is substitution with a known good component.

If the collector voltage of the horizontal drive transistor measures at +110 to +130 VDC, turn off the monitor and test the horizontal drive transistor. You must unsolder and remove the transistor from the printed circuit board to test it properly. Horizontal drive transistor failure is not too common, so don't be too hopeful.

If the drive transistor tests good, re-install it, apply power to the monitor and measure the voltage at the base of the horizontal drive transistor. It should measure at around .4 VDC and 1 VAC. If you have performed all the previous tests and still haven't found the problem, it probably won't. You probably will measure 0 VAC. This means that you do not have an output from the horizontal oscillator in the integrated circuit. Before you declare the IC to be defective, you should test to make sure that the IC has power (Vcc) to it. Most of the time this will be around 12 VDC. As before, this connection will vary from monitor to monitor. Here are some common monitors and the Vcc connection for each:

Electrohome: IC501 Pin 6.
Hantarex MTC 900: IC2 Pin 2.
Hantarex MTC 9000: IC2 Pin 15.
Orion: IC401 Pin 11.
Sharp Image: IC401 Pin 11.
Wells-Gardner K7000 series: IC2 Pin 16.

Of course, any monitor that uses the same IC as those listed above, will use the same pin number for the Vcc input.

If the input voltage to the integrated circuit is okay, the IC itself may be defective. This is not a very common problem but at this point the IC should be replaced as you have all but eliminated everything else. If the Vcc power input to the integrated circuit is missing, trace the circuit back to see where it comes from. In general, the Vcc power for the IC comes from a 6.8K to 7.5K, 3-watt resistor that is connected to the +110 to +130 VDC power supply. If this resistor opens, it will cut off the power to the IC.

Author's note: following these procedures should help you locate most horizontal deflection failures. As always, if you need any assistance, feel free to give me a call at (619) 593-6131 or FAX (619) 593-6132. My Internet address is randyfromm@delphi.com.

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"Ticket Vic" Fortenbach

TICKET TECH

If the arrow points up, which way is up?

It amazes me how many techs—or so called techs—lack the one thing that is essential in troubleshooting any game: common sense.

Let me give an example that took place in a 10,000-square-foot game center with over 125 of the newest games. I'm the tech and it's a big job keeping all of the games operating properly.

I could use some assistance. Enter the future game tech. Before I get into what happened, let me tell you a little bit about this future tech. He is in his middle 30s, he's been in the Navy two years specializing in electronics, and he's taken electronics at a correspondence school. Now he's ready to open his own business of repairing computers.

Back to what happened: we approach a down redemption game. It has nine tri-color LED target displays for targets hit and a coin display. The game speaks with a squeaky voice that makes it one of the hotter pieces in the game center, so I'm anxious to find the problem.

I notice that the displays have a lit frame of white lights around them that operate off of an 18-volt power supply; only three of the nine frames of lights are lit. The coin lights operate off of the +5 volts. The game appears dead except for the marquee light—no speech and no attract lighting.

I point out that it looks like a 5-volt power supply problem, since there aren't any flashing lights or LED displays lit and no coin lights. We open the back of the game and see that the red LED on the switching power supply is *not* lit. I ask future tech to check the power supply to make sure. When I return about 30 minutes later, he is removing the push-on terminals from the on/off switch!

"I'll admit that good help is hard to find, but it's not impossible."

This switch is a double-pole, double-throw switch that disconnects both sides (black wire and white wire) from the game and the wall power. After I assure him that I don't think that's it, he attempts to reconnect the four wires back onto the switch. I notice that he connects the wires wrong: black wire to white wire on both sets of terminals. I give him another opportunity to save face and admit his mistake by asking him if he's *sure* it's really right. He says he's sure it's right. Although I know that the black wire goes with the other black wire and the two white ones should be connected, I let him go ahead and plug the game into the wall. Of course, I shielded my face.

The next instant I hear moans and groans from six people whose games have been "turned off" because of the wiring error. We correct the wiring error and I reset the breaker in the back room. We check the 5-volt power supply and determine that the switching power is bad. After showing him how to change seven wires on a power supply, I return 20 minutes later and he has it *wrong*. I have to show him what he did wrong and have him correct it. After three hours of fiddling with tech incompetence, the game is fixed—finally.

Does it have to be this way? I'll admit that good help is hard to find, but it's not impossible. My advice to anyone searching for help in a game room setting is to get a youngster just out of high school with *common sense* who is eager to learn about electronics. It may take a little while of holding his hand, but he'll learn your way. Often, if you get a seasoned game tech with 100 years of experience, you'll find he has his own way of fixing the problem (hint: it's not the right way).

Training someone to do things right the first time will make you much happier with your technician. He'll know how to fix problems your way—the right way. Another tip: don't get some hotshot person with a two-page resume. Trust me, either way you will be doing a lot of hand-holding. You might as well do it with someone who is willing to take your advice and learn. □

CD Jukebox

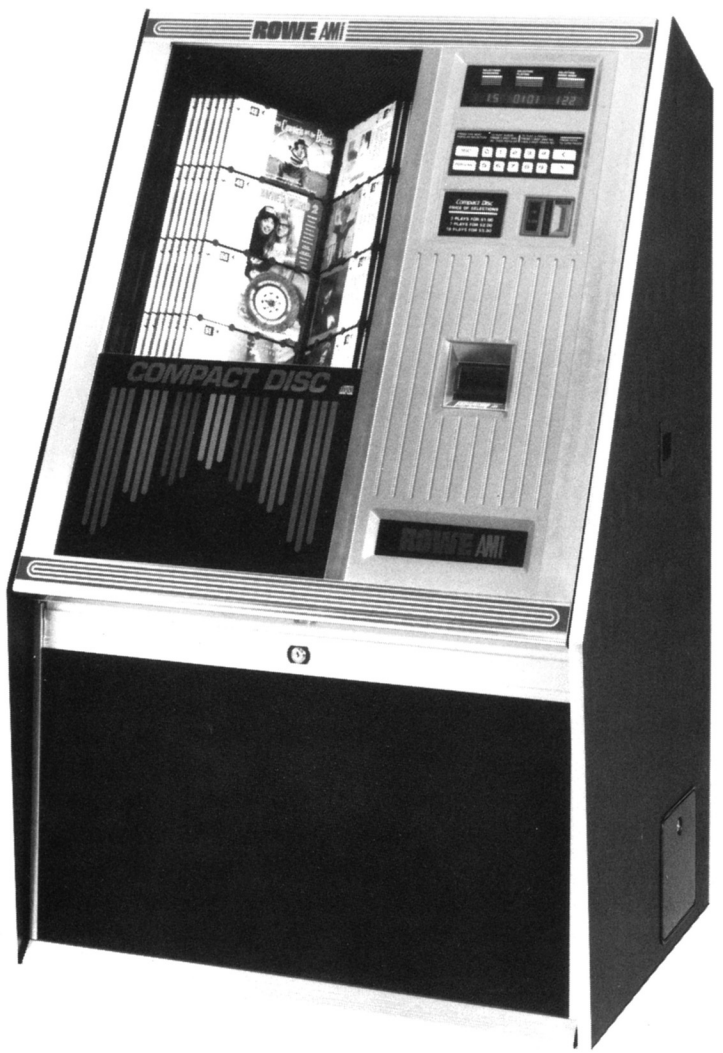
Rowe International introduces its new mid-size *MM1* CD jukebox, a unit set to display 64 compact discs but easily expanded to hold up to 100. It is the direct result of operator requests.

The CD capacity of the jukebox can be expanded by removing a blocker kit. Many of the components of the *MM1* are interchangeable with the company's flagship model, the *LaserStar*.

The *MM1* displays eight album covers at a time. Dimensions are 57" high x 33" wide x 26-1/2" deep.

The Rowe family of jukeboxes now includes *LaserStar CD100, MM1 CD, CD51, CD Nostalgia, CD Wallbox, Hideaway* and the *Booth Box*. By the end of 1994 Rowe/AMi will expand again.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Rowe International Inc., 75 Troy Hills Road, Whippany, NJ 07981; (201) 887-0400; FAX (201) 887-2399.



WWF Royal Rumble

Data East USA leaps into a ring of wrestling pinball mania with the release of *WWF Royal Rumble*.

The game features many of the superstars of wrestling, including Hulk Hogan, the Undertaker, Hitman Bret Hart, Yokozuna, Macho Man Randy Savage, and Lex Luger. The game incorporates four flippers, three and four drop-target banks, and rumbling shaker motors.

Players can clinch the WWF intercontinental, tag team, and heavyweight belts by entering the top playfield and knocking the drop targets out of the ring. In the no-hold brawl video mode, players pit their skills against some of the world's best wrestlers.

In *WWF Royal Rumble* players complete all nine grid features and shoot the capture holes to begin a rumble. Players shoot the ramps from there to get ready for the six-ball rumble.

For more information or distributor referral, write Data East USA Inc., 1990 Janice Ave., Melrose Park, IL 60160; (708) 345-7700; FAX (708) 345-7718.

Casino

The Wurlitzer Jukebox Co. unveils its the *Casino* CD jukebox, which has the capacity to hold more than 1,500 songs from its 100-CD library.

Advanced laser CD tracking and noise/vibration reduction ensures a powerful, crisp CD sound. Individual tracks can be selected from the electronic, quick-flip menu at the touch of a button. Eight CD albums are always displayed for viewing.

Although the *Casino* comes with a 200-watt amplifier and six internal speakers, it offers an option to upgrade the amplifier to 500 watts.

The *Casino* system also comes with an electronic popularity counter and a programmable play stimulator, which can be activated on intervals between five and 60 minutes. In addition, it has an optional remote control unit that adjusts volume and reject tracks.

A printer port provides a print feature of all pertinent accounting data. Vertical disc storage and edge-grip retrieval eliminates surface scratches to the CDs.

Dimensions are 39" wide x 27-1/4"deep x 57-3/4" high.

For more information, or distributor referral, write the Wurlitzer Jukebox Co., 235 Moonachie Road, Moonachie, NJ 07074; (201) 807-2616; FAX (201) 807-9543.

Cougar ZD-6

Valley Recreation Products debuts the *Cougar ZD-6* pool table, with a change in design from the company's flagship model.

A large part of the new look is that the typical dark-colored laminates and fluted side corners were changed to a light "Summit Ash" laminate and a new side corner with a dimensional Cougar medallion. Those changes, coupled with a redesigned bright aluminum trim, gives the *Cougar ZD-6* a different look.

Additional chalk-drop holes have been added to the ball return chute, with more die-stamped in the chute that can be cut out by operators, if desired. The ball trap has also been reinforced with additional metal braces and spot welds.

Most of the table's major components can be changed from model to model, year to year.

Other standard features include a one-piece polyethylene ball collector chute, a replaceable coin chute housing that's designed to break away from vandals, double reinforced structural fiberglass legs, and the triple-plated die-cast metal corners.

The *Cougar ZD-6* is available in lengths of 85", 88", 93", and 101".

For more information, or distributor referral, write Valley Recreation Products Inc., 333 Morton St., P.O. Box 656, Bay City, MI 48707; (517) 892-4536; FAX (517) 892-6513.

Apple-Jack

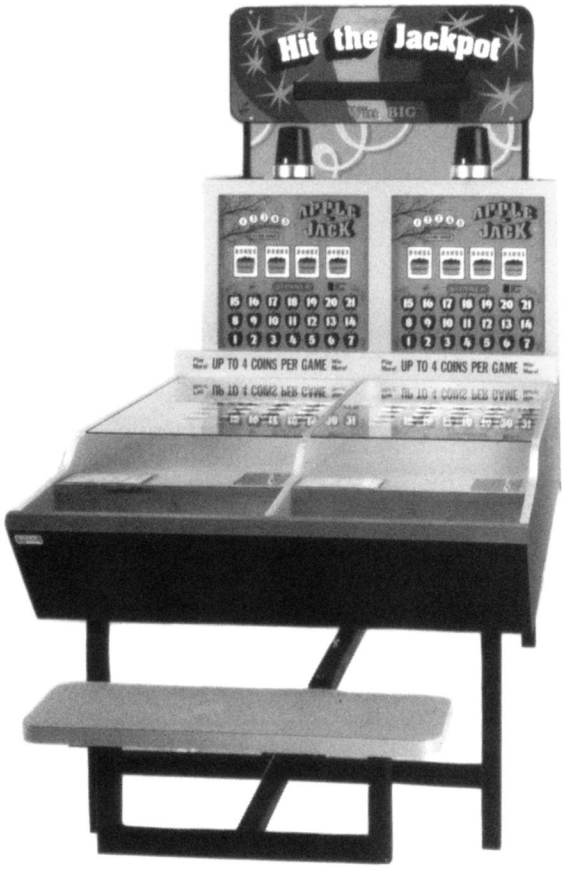
Seidel Amusement Machine Co. introduces *Apple-Jack*, a new generation roll down game of 21. Count the apples and watch the tickets stack up!

The redemption unit features multiple coin and ticket play, bonus hole ticket awards, a ticket-every-time scoring option, ticket dispensers with low-ticket lights, ticket and coin meters, rotating beacons, individual score tables, tempered glass enclosures, and a modular steel game stand with matching bench seat.

In addition, look for operator-programmable scoring, tickets, pricing, game features and bonuses. *Apple-Jack* is built of plywood, stainless steel, and aluminum. With the stand it measures 102" long x 48 3/4" wide x 75 1/5" high. The game only is 86" long x 48 3/4" wide x 52 1/2" high.

Also optional is the Hit the Jackpot display that offers customers increased excitement with the challenge of winning mega-tickets.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Seidel Amusement Machine Co. Inc., 8436 Washington Place, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87113; (505) 821-6878; FAX (505) 821-6876.



Ball Washer, Swisher

LAD Enterprises introduces *The Boss*, an ultrasonic ball washer, and *The Swisher*, an automatic ball-feeding system for the washer.

This state-of-the-art machine cleans the balls by exposing them to high-frequency acoustics, which dislodge any surface debris from the balls. The balls are then sanitized and lightly waxed before being sent to a drying area. Here, the machine uses high-speed air to dry the balls before clean ones are sent back to the ball pool or to a storage area for later use.

The process is visible because machine's body is constructed of clear acrylic plastic. The ultrasonic ball washer uses 20,000 cycles per second of sound to clean balls. The unit has a fully fused electrical system incorporating its own 20-amp breaker.

The Swisher is the automatic feeder unit that facilitates moving balls to the washer. It uses high-speed air to move the balls vertically more than 15 feet. By automating the extraction process, it can free up a location's employees for more important tasks.

The Swisher uses a three-hp 210-volt motor to move 300 balls per minute. It has an airflow of 6,500 cubic feet per minute.

For more information, or distributor referral, write LAD Enterprises, 255 Manor Drive, Merritt Island, FL. 32952; (407) 454-9082.

Astroid Ultimate

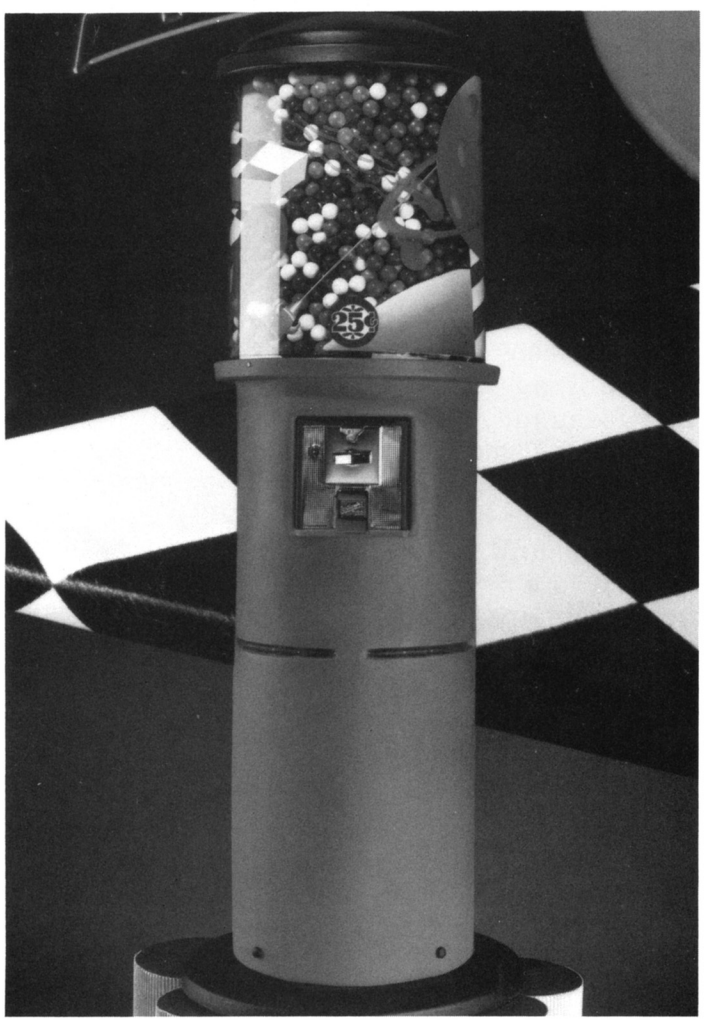
Galaxy Inc., a pioneer in the mini-giant gumball machine vending business, introduces its new *Astroid Ultimate* series.

Similar to its predecessor, the *Astroid Classic* series, the new series features the latest in manufacturing techniques and integrated hardware components.

The *Ultimate* series stands 5' tall x 21" in diameter and weighs only 55 lbs. It can hold up to 4,500 jumbo gumballs and is available in seven colors.

An exclusive lock-out mechanism keeps the coin assembly and cash box separate. This feature offers owners safe and secure maintenance, even from second and third parties. Weight adjustments are made easy because of the versatile base design. Chaser lights andvoice boxes are optional.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Galaxy Inc., 809 N. First St., Plymouth, IN 46563; (800) 237-0261; FAX (219) 935-5002.



Showtime

Showtime, from Coastal Amusements, offers sing-a-long fun with life-size puppets. Children can choose from two different characters and accompany their puppet friend in singing one of 12 popular children's songs.

The microphone is easily accessible, located on the side of the unit; a ticket dispenser is optional. Dimensions are 27" wide X 27" deep X 76" high.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Coastal Amusements Inc., 601 Prospect St., Lakewood, NJ 08701; (908) 905-6815.

Popcorn Wagon

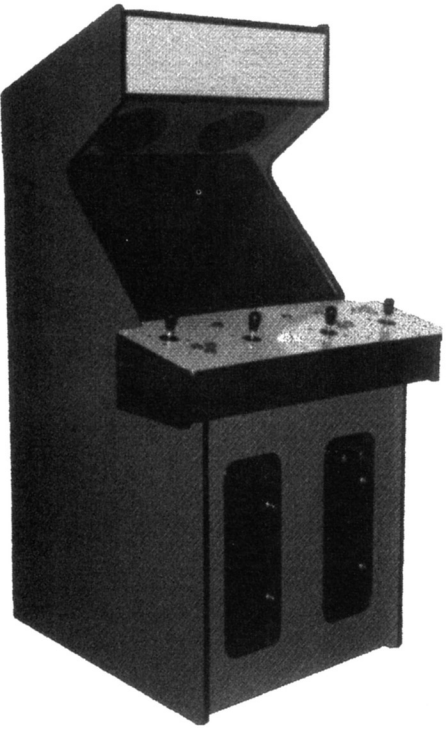
The new Model 2936 steerable *Popcorn Wagon* from Gold Medal Products has a 36" long wagon body with a full 36" long counter, plus an optional 11" counter extender. The unit is engineered to accept either a 20" X 28" or a 20" X 20" "drop-in" popper with a partial stainless-steel counter. A full countertop cart is also available.

The unit can be ordered in red or white powder-coat construction or a stainless-steel version.

For more information, contact Gold Medal Products Co., 2001 Dalton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45214; (800) 543-0862.

Universal cabinet

Prism Products debuts the *Action 33* universal cabinet that accommodates a 33" horizontal monitor, a four-player control panel, drawer system, plywood back and bottom, and steel reinforced base.



With its laminate covered sides and front the cabinet is scratch resistant. It has optional coin door configurations and is available in many colors. The cabinet is wired for stereo sound and has two eight-inch speakers.

Action 33 cabinets are 71" high X 41" deep X 30-3/8" wide. The 31" depth allows the cabinet to fit through most doors.

For more information, contact Prism Products, 1081 Country Club Rd., Plaza Level, Lake Zurich, Ill. 60047; (708) 540-6400; FAX (708) 540-6404.

Cush-N-Cubes.
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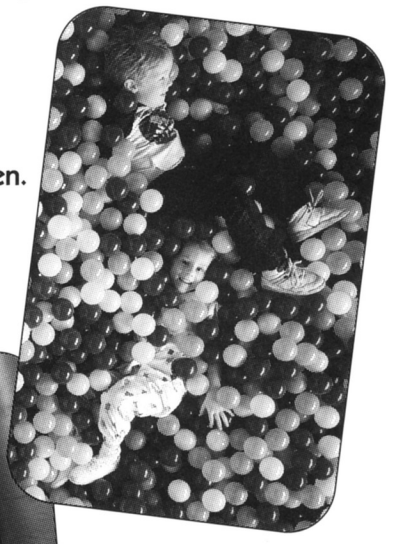

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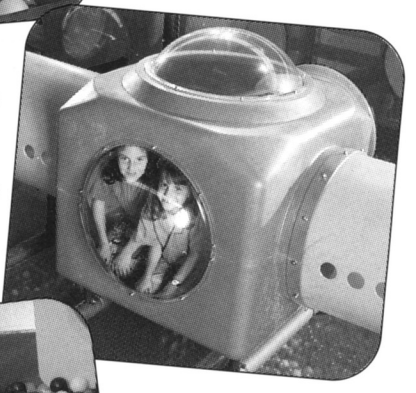
Cush-N-Bags provide a great opportunity for children to develop their muscle tone, motor skills and coordination.

You can choose from a wide variety of play activities when designing your Cush-N-Cubes playsystem. The Junction Cube is pictured here.



Let your imagination soar on the exciting Mountain Climb. It's a single play activity that creates multiple good times for children.

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Children will enjoy hours of indoor fun on a Cush-N-Cubes playsystem. And, you'll enjoy the added benefit of a profitable investment. Cush-N-Cubes offers a broad array of color combinations and unit configurations to enhance its safe, secure and healthy play environment. Call **1-800-523-4202 or 417-235-6917** for more information on customizing a Cush-N-Cubes playsystem for your operation.

Money management system

DataEye Inc. introduces its remote acquisition system, described by the company as the most reliable, cost-efficient solution to money management.

The system includes total remote accounting for all coin-operated machines, complete computerized access via phone lines, no external modem, a printer port, security for machine and access to computer, 40-machine input, easy hook-up, and simple operation.

The unit requires 110-120 VAC for power, a dedicated telephone line, and an IBM-compatible computer with at least one meg of memory.

For more information, contact DataEye Inc., 2751 Highway 17 S., Suite A, Garden City, SC 29598; (800) 395-6912.

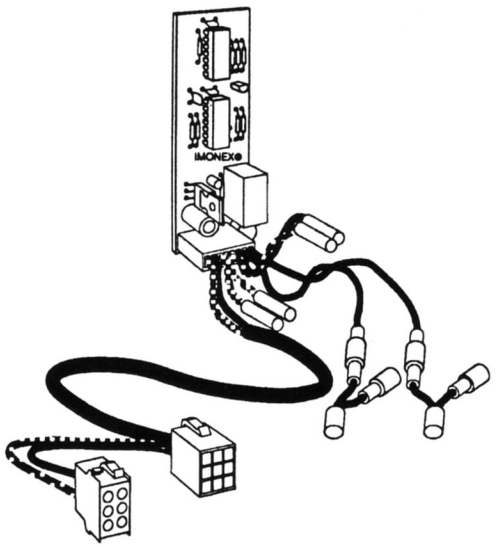
Line of signs

Sunnywell Display System Inc. is offering a complete line of easy-to-program LED signs. The signs are available in three options:

- The four-inch red LED moving message sign has large characters for longer viewing distance.
- The two-inch color LED moving message sign is designed to attract attention.
- The LED moving message sign with text, graphics, and animation is available in red or tricolor.

All signs are easy to program with wired or wireless keypad or personal computer. They feature preprogrammed and user-programmable graphics; both English and European language capability; clock and timer scheduled display; large memory capacity; and 90-day battery backup.

For more information, contact Sunnywell Display System Inc., 661 Brea Canyon Road, Suite 6, Walnut, CA 91789; (909) 598-8578 or (800) 322-0938 or FAX (909) 598-9972.



Changer upgrade

Imonex Services Inc. introduces a changer update. It allows you to upgrade your Coinco mechanical changer to communicate with a number of validators, including Coinco's CBA-2 and BA, Maka, Mars VGM1 and VGM3, and USA Dixie Narco (requires a jumper harness).

The upgrade kit is perfect for use in high-vend price accounts, lower-volume accounts where a bill validator is needed, in new accounts with unknown vend volume, or as a spare changer in repair truck.

For more information, contact Imonex Services Inc., P.O. Box 519, Katy, TX 77494; (713) 391-4704 or (800) 446-2719 or FAX (713) 391-4239.

Total management system

Dynamic Technologies introduces the Total Amusement Management System, developed to give family amusement center operators maximum control. This system fully integrates all phases of operations and data collection.

With a fully integrated system, there is no need to re-enter information into the computer. For example, all financial information is directly downloaded to the general ledger and it can link your token machines to do the same. In addition to sales, inventory is updated on a real-time basis.

All information is stored and easily accessed by a variety of standard reports. The system keeps your accounting accurate and organized. Not only can you log in via remote computer, such as a laptop, but you can actually monitor individual terminals by bringing them up on your screen from anywhere in the world.

For more information, contact Dynamic Technologies, P.O. Box 7289, Newburgh, NY 12550; (914) 566-4077 or (800) 837-3844 or FAX (914) 566-7652.

Laser tag system

Space Sport Inc. has designed the *Laser Storm* laser tag system for all ages. The company claims it is the only laser tag system developed to comfortably fit a small child as well as an adult.

There are no bulky vests, no heavy battery packs, and no helmets. All that is worn is a lightweight velcro belt that weighs under two pounds, a telephone-style headset, and a small handheld "laser."

The simulated laser unit easily fits children's hands as easily as adults' hands, and the unique thumb trigger accommodates any hand size. Scoring options include team and individual computer scoring.

For more information, contact Space Port Inc., 7700 Cherry Creek South Drive, Denver, CO 80231; (303) 751-8545 or (800) Y-A-PHASER.

Customized color CRTs

Pentranic Inc. is offering its Series 1000 and Series 2000 line of customized color CRTs to meet the challenge of the newer games. Both models feature deflection yokes that are adjusted electronically to harmonize with the regional magnetic field to obtain purity and convergence. Features include a one-year limited warranty, a pincushion control circuit, and protection against CRT arcing.

The Series 1000 is called the Econoline, while the Series 2000 has all of the same features plus more. For example, in addition to standard features, it comes with a remote control board with six functions, automatic color balance, automatic brightness control, and a switching mode power supply. No isolation transformer is required.

For more information, contact Pentranic Inc. at (317) 322-2345 or FAX (317) 322-2347.

High-security lock

One of the first products from the new strategic alliance between Chicago Lock Co. and CamLock Systems Inc. is a new lock designed to provide increased security for bulk vendors.

This new lock offers many theft-resistant features, including a unique key way and a sequence of six tumblers. Restricted key numbers are available, as are thousands of key combinations. The lock is double-pinned for smoother operation and added strength.

In addition, Chicago Lock has a new catalog, developed specifically for the vending industry. It features the latest security products. The 12-page catalog is the direct result of the alliance formed by Chicago Lock and CamLock Systems. The company also plans to issue a new high-security catalog soon.

For more information, contact Chicago Lock at (312) 282-7177 or FAX (312) 282-8199.

Cash safe

Perma-Vault introduces its patented Model PRO-1200-M Twice-As-Safe cash protection system. It consists of one PRO-1201 M outer unit (6" x 12" x 11-1/2") and one PRO-1202-M inner unit (5" x 11" x 11"). The inner unit can be exchanged for convenient transfer to a counting room or to a cash pick-up service.

Perma-Vault's restricted key way protects against unauthorized key duplication. The safe is virtually pickproof, keys are removable only in the locked position, and custom key control systems can be designed to your specifications: master keyed, keyed alike, or keyed differently.

For more information, contact Perma-Vault Safe Corp., P.O. Box 473, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006; (215) 364-0330 or FAX (215) 364-8306.

Prepaid debit card system

XCP releases its new prepaid debit card vending control system. The *VendaCard Reader*-writer accounts for both debit vending value and winning redemption points. As a card is inserted into the reader, the number of credits is read and one credit debited.

For each vend, the card is marked with a punch hole. A major patent-pending new concept is the Meter Card. Meter Cards are inserted in the game readers to write the machine number, total plays and redemption winning totals to the magnetic stripe of the card.

In the operator's office, the cards are inserted into a transaction terminal that totals and prints out consolidated reports and totals. The system operates without wires or special computers.

For more information, contact XCP Inc., 40 Elm St. Dryden, NY 13053-9624; (607) 844-9143; FAX (607) 844-8031.

Pro DJ CD player

Pioneer releases its *CDJ-500*, the first CD player that allows DJ's to jog, sample, and manipulate digital quality sound with the hands-on feel of a traditional turntable.

Among the new control features are a palm-sized jog shuttle, oversized displays, different cue options, and a seamless loop.

The *CDJ-500* player also has a built-in decoder that allows it to play Pioneer's new line of karaoke software.

The two most noticeable features of the *CDJ-500* are the oversized jog dial and the large, easy-to-read display, which includes a bar graph that displays the song's elapsed playing time and remaining time.

The seamless loop allows pros to sample a musical phrase off a disc and repeat it as many times as desired. Since the player memorizes the starting point, the DJ can return to the original cue with no "dead air" whenever the loop is released.

Other advanced features include a quick start to eliminate lag time between the push of the play button and the actual music; an auto cue and a manual cue that precisely locate a song's beginning and can identify any pre-determined cue respectively; and a cue point sampler that can sample up to a full second of sound and repeat it continuously with the push of a button.

When two *CDJ-500*s are used in tandem, one unit is set on standby while the other plays. Once the cut ends on the first unit, a relay play feature automatically cues the second CD for non-stop play.

For more information, contact Pioneer New Media Technologies Inc.; 2265 E. 220th St.; Long Beach, Calif. 90810; (310) 952-2111; FAX (310) 952-2990. □

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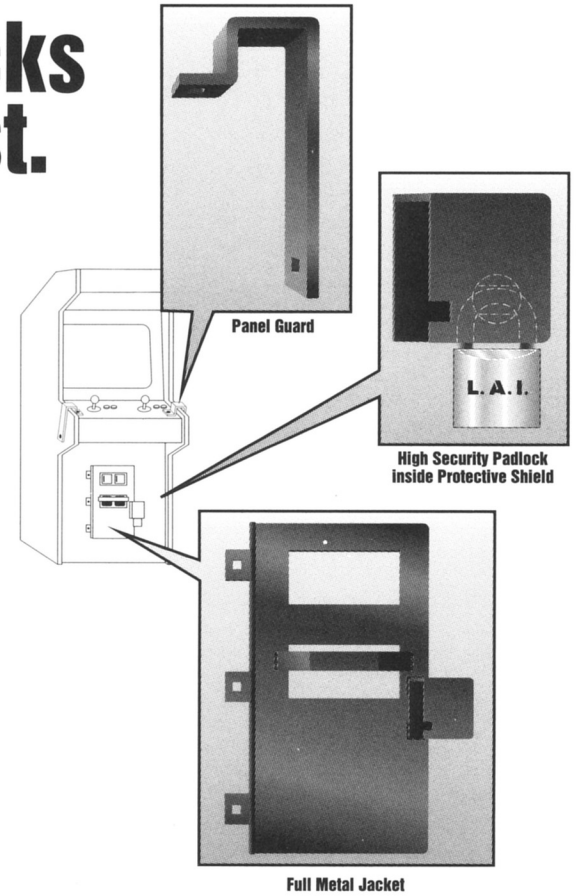

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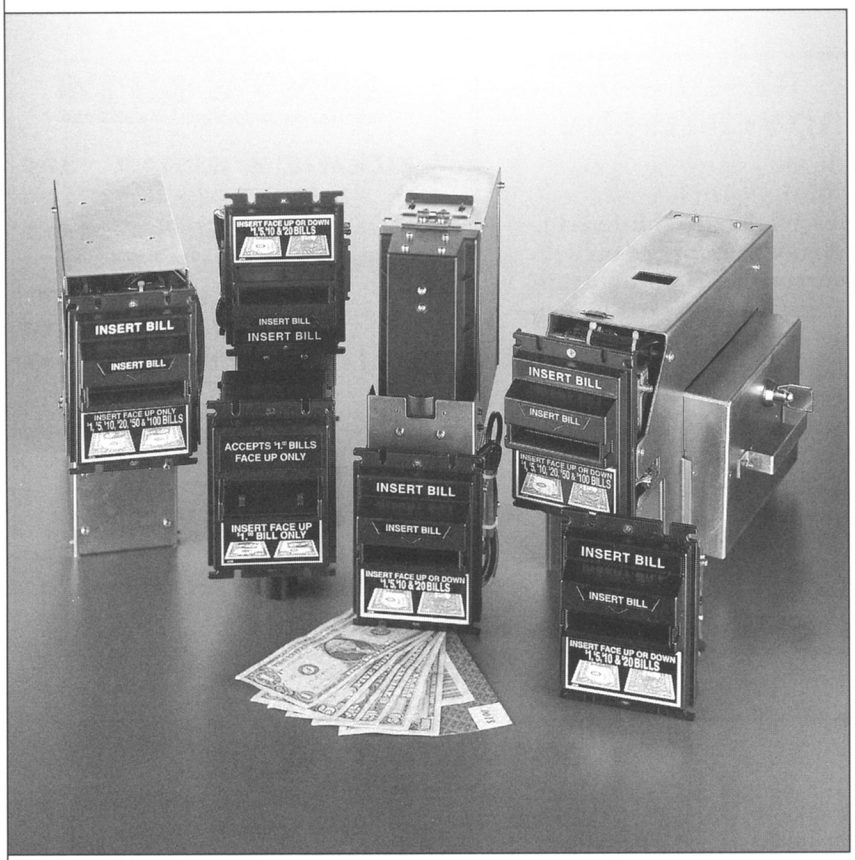

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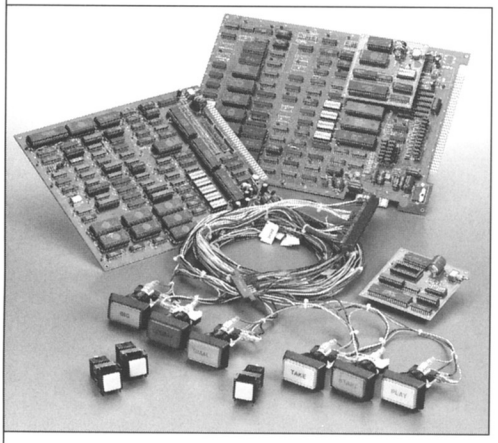

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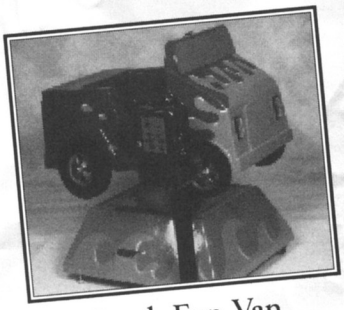
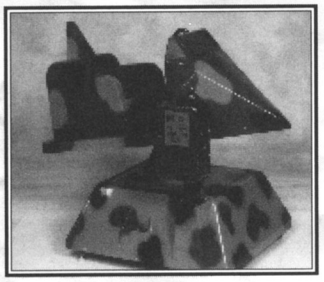
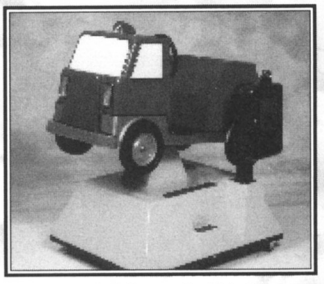

Beach Fun Van


Army Shuttle


Old Red #1

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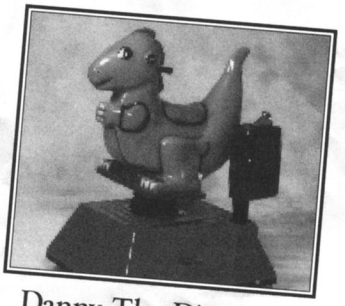
Danny The Dinosaur

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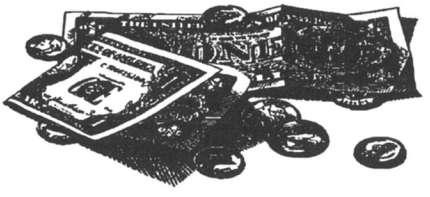
$  $

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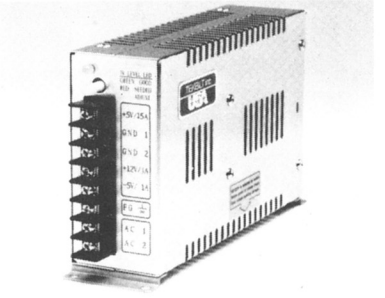

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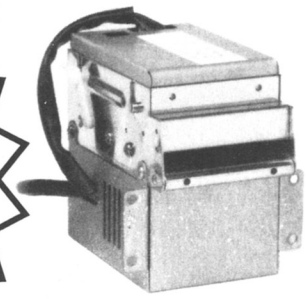

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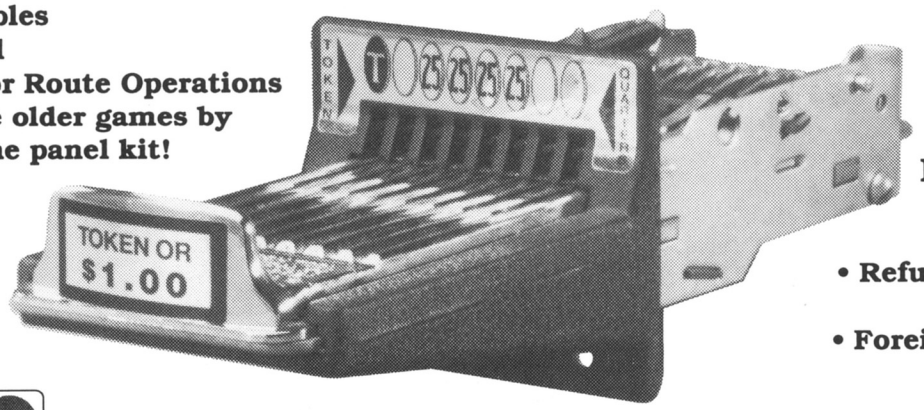

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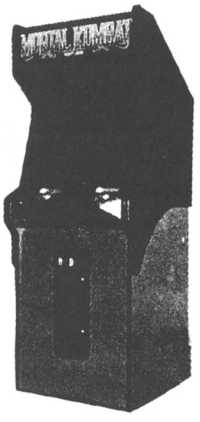

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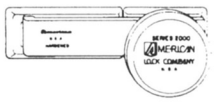

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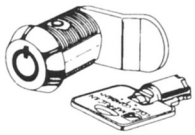

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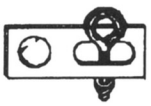

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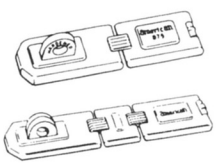

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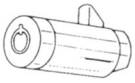

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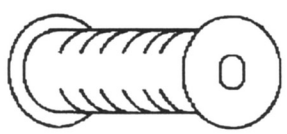

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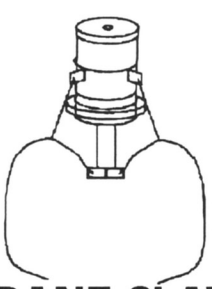

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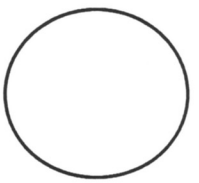

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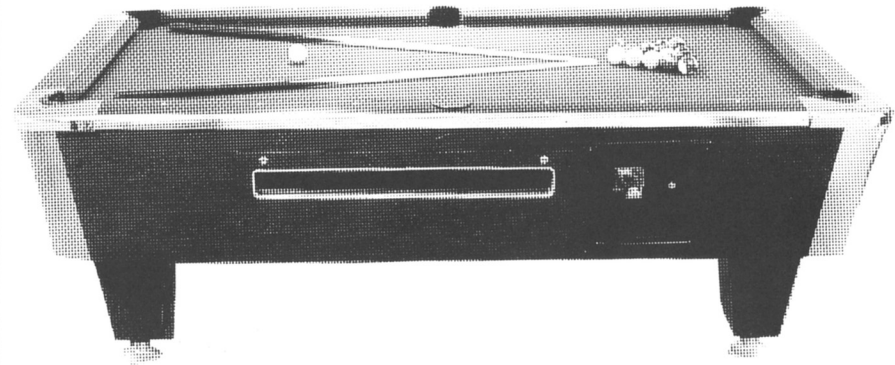

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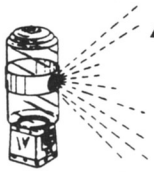

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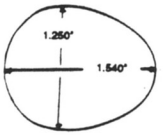

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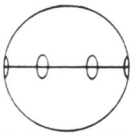

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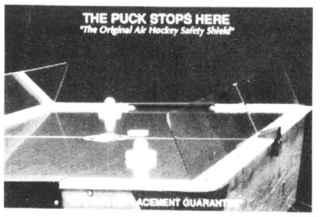

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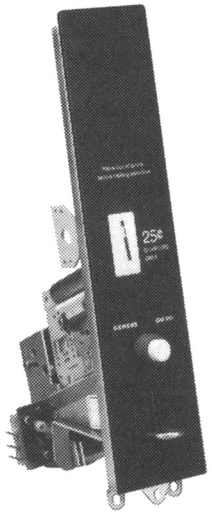

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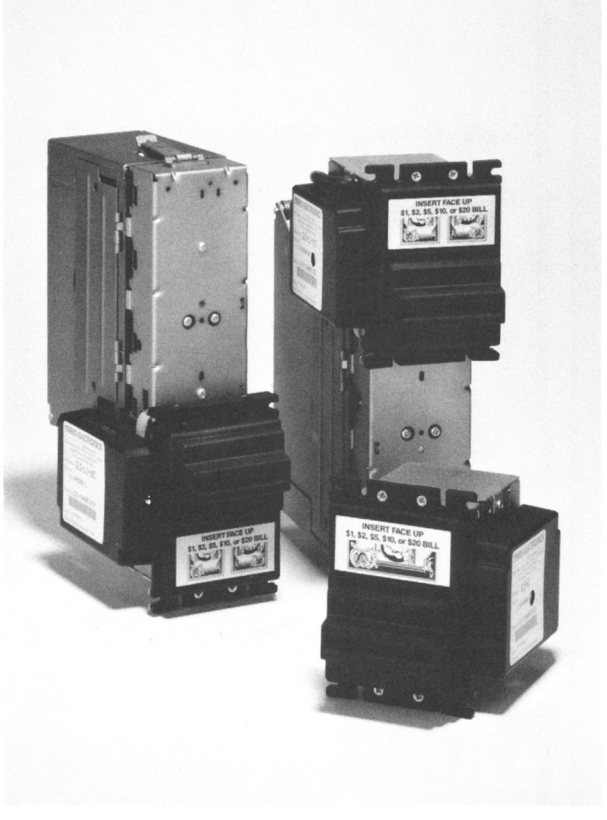

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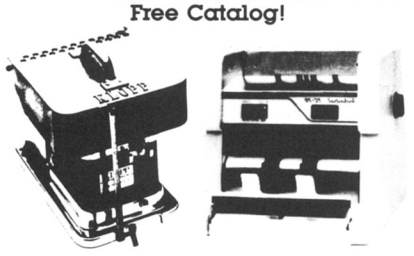

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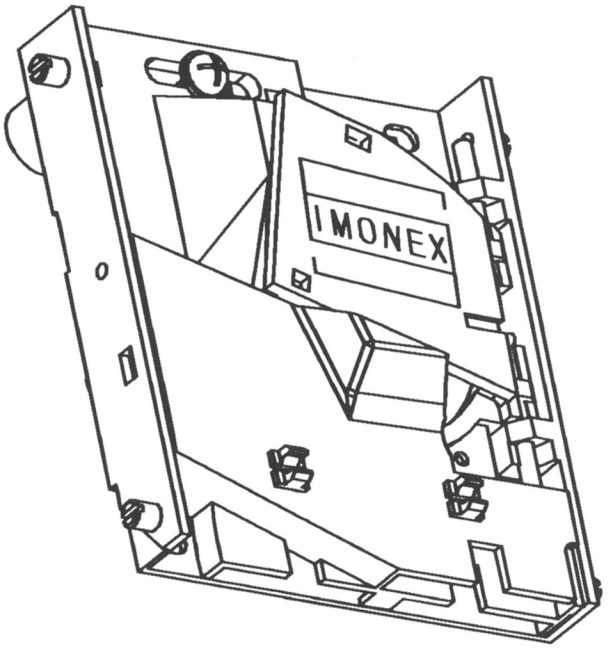

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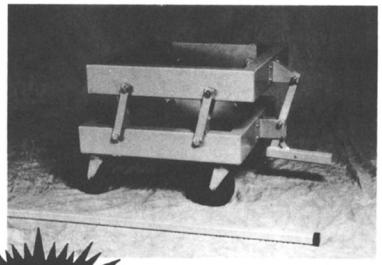

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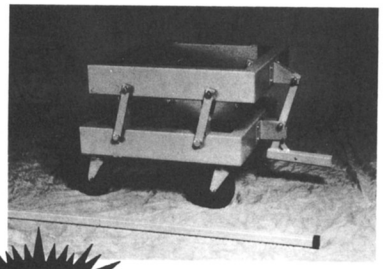

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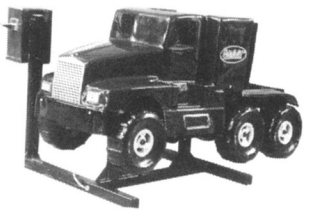

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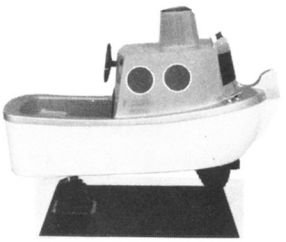

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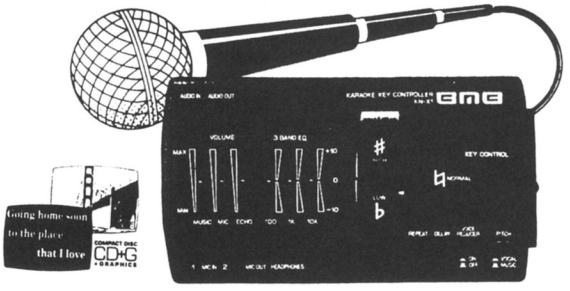

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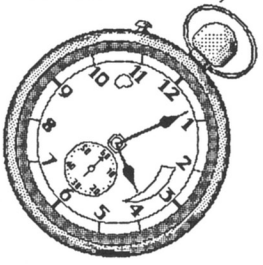

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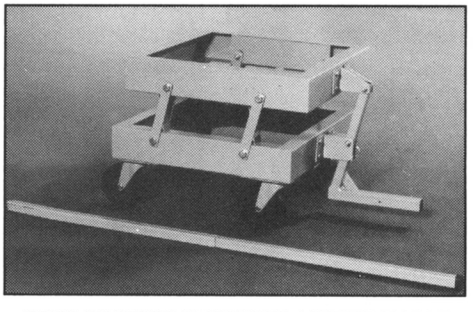

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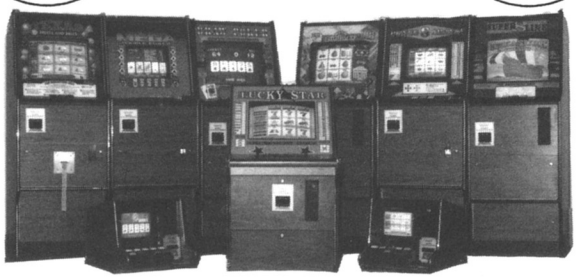

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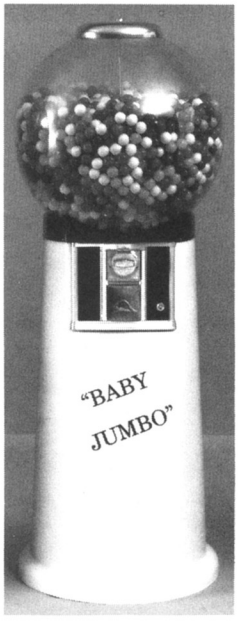

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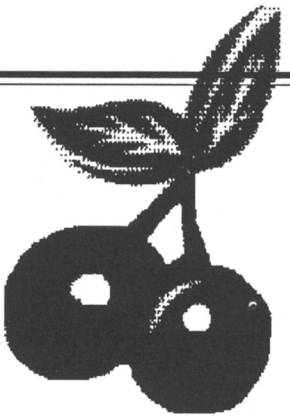

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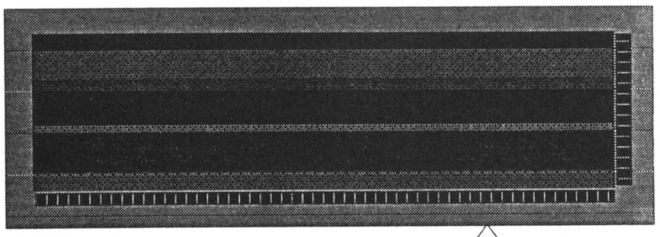

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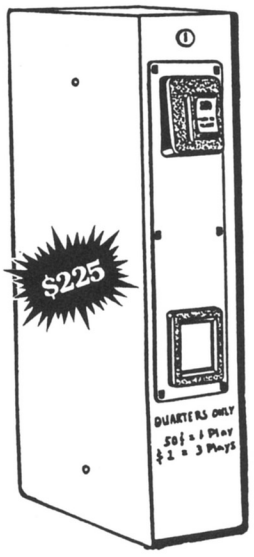

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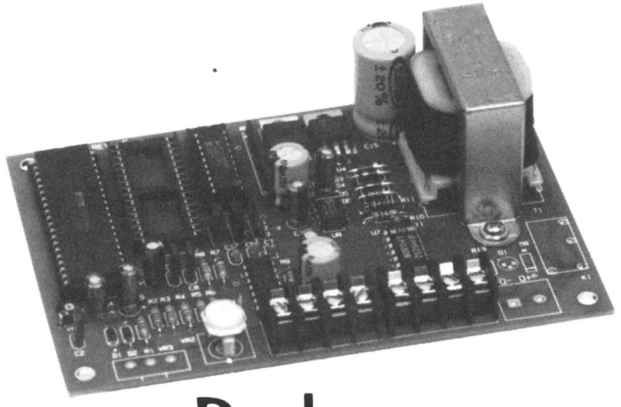

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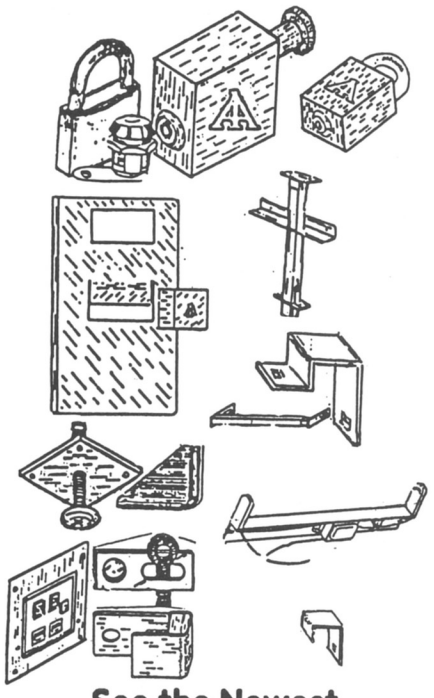

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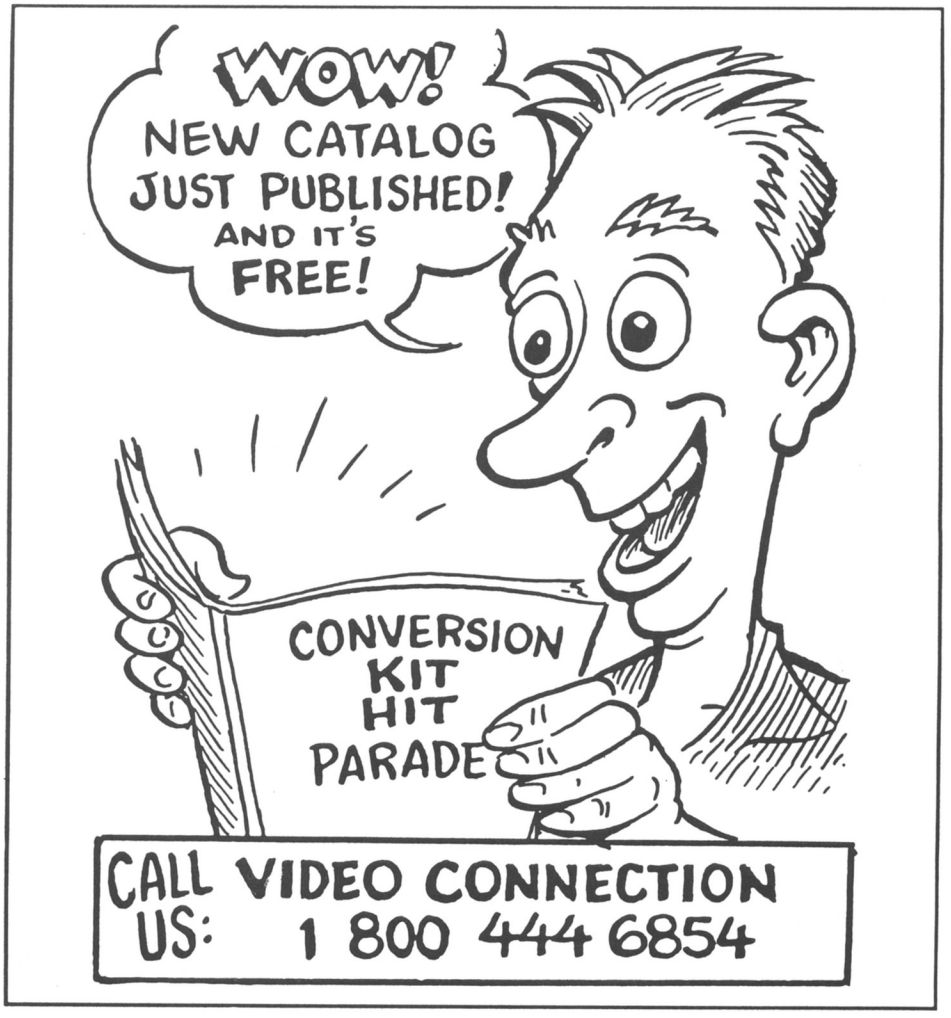

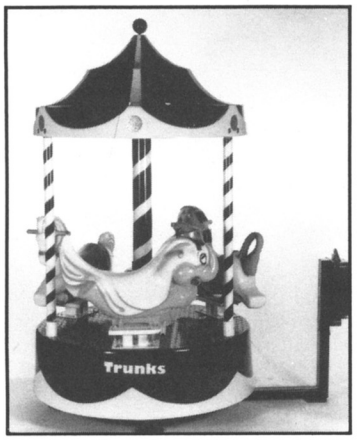

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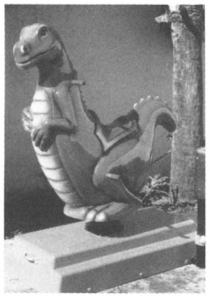

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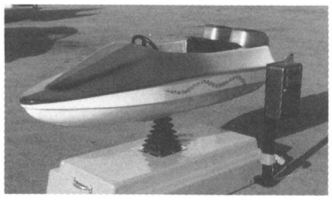

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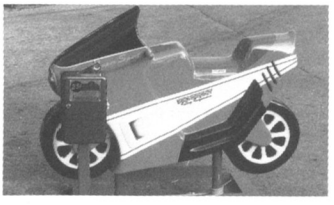

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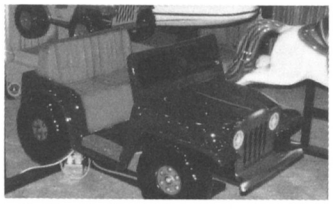

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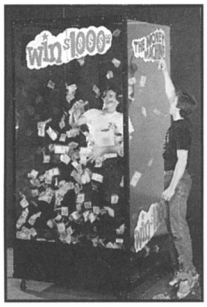

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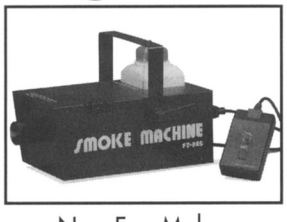

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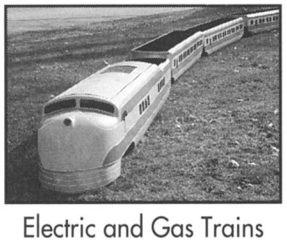

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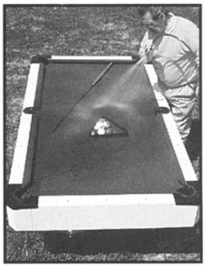

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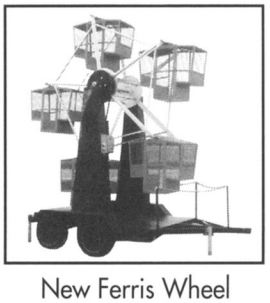

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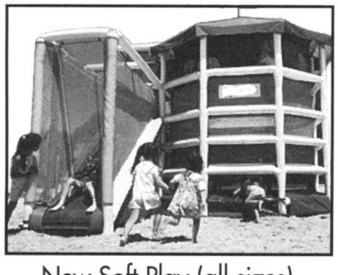

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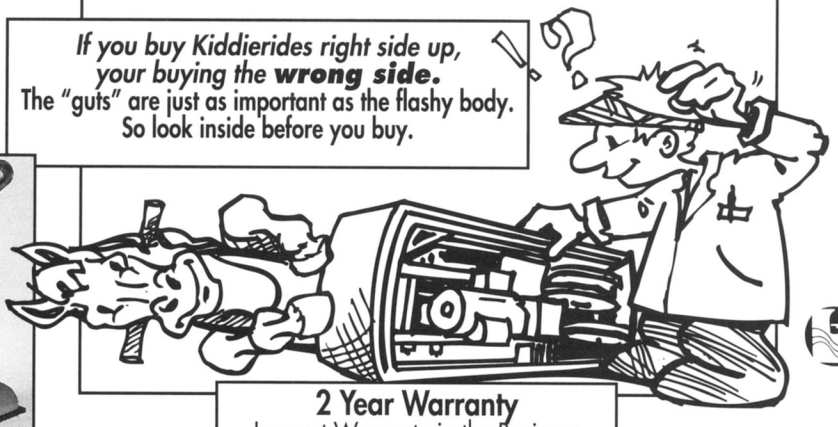

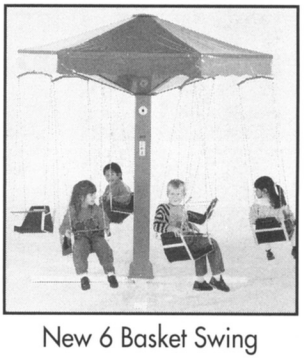

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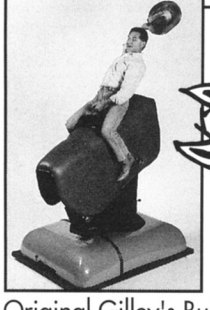

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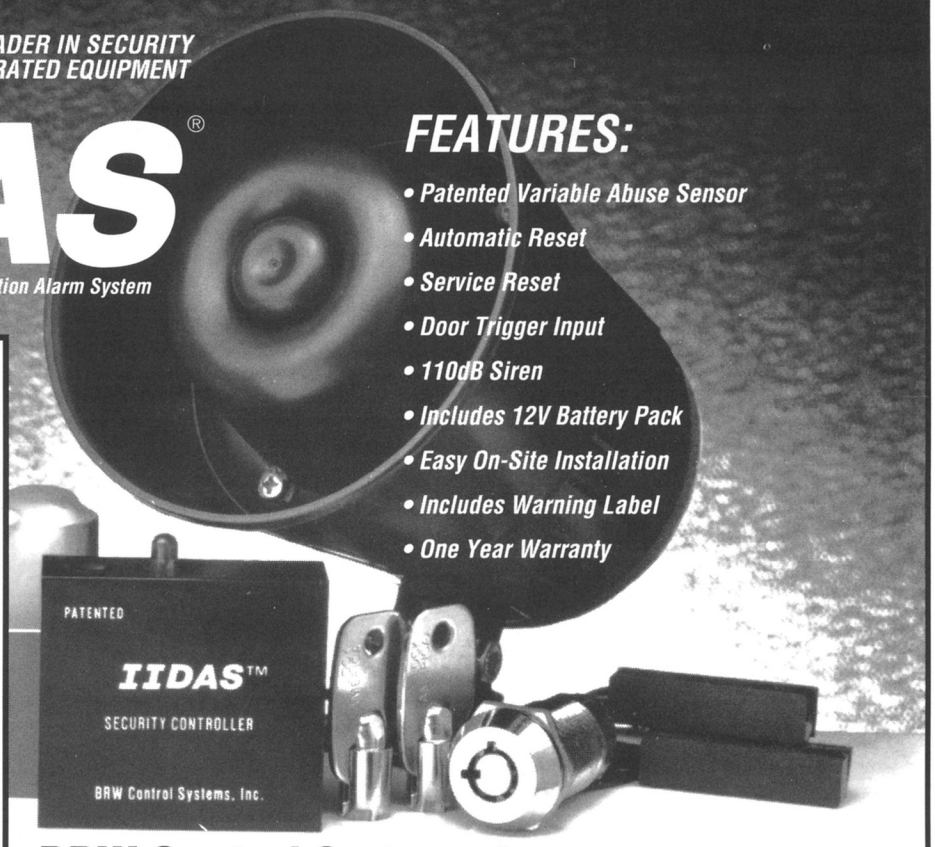

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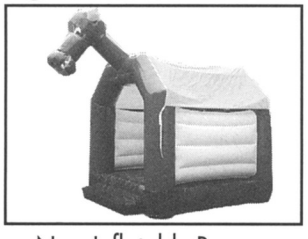

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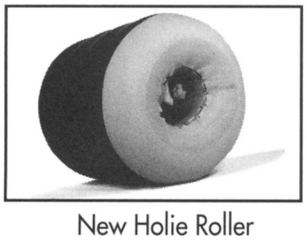

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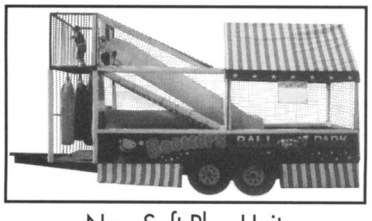

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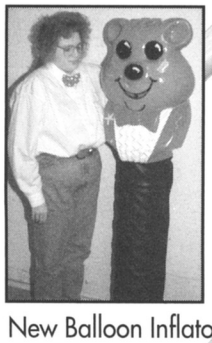

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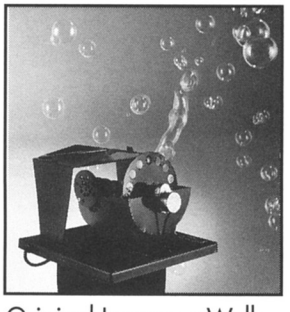

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July 22-23
Pennsylvania Amusement and Music Machine Association Annual Convention and Trade Show, Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion, Pa. Contact PAMMA, (717) 232-5322; FAX (717) 232-1544.

July 29-30
Amusement and Music Operators of Texas Annual Convention and Trade Show, Doubletree Hotel, Austin, Texas. Contact AMOT, (817) 325-1005; FAX (817) 325-6431.

August 3-7
CES South America, the Consumer Electronics Show, Parque Anhembi Exhibition Hall, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Contact Margaret Cassilly, (202) 457-8778; FAX (202) 457-4901.

August 4-6
Salex '94, South America's coin machine and casino exhibition, The Mart Center, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Contact Joe McManus, 44-61-624-3687.

September 21-23
Japan Amusement Machine Manufacturers Association Annual Trade Show. Contact JAMMA, Tel. 81-3593-2563; FAX 81-3581-3656.

September 22-24
Amusement and Music Operators Association Expo '94, San Antonio, Texas. Contact AMOA, (312) 245-1021; FAX (312) 321-6869.

September 26-28
World Gaming Congress & Expo, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Alan Liebensohn, Gaming & Wagering Business, (212) 594-4120; FAX (212) 223-9688.

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October 5-7
World Waterpark Symposium & Trade Show, MGM Grand, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Patty Miller, (913) 599-0300; FAX (913) 599-0520.

October 13-16
ENADA, Italian coin machine expo, Rome Fair. Contact SAPAR-AGIS, Tel. (06) 4402718; FAX (06) 4403686.

October 20-22
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November 2-5
International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions 76th Convention and Trade Show, Miami Beach, Fla. Contact IAAPA, (703) 836-4800; FAX (703) 836-4801.

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AMOAQ International Convention '94, Australia, Royal Pines Resort on Queensland's Gold Coast. Tel. 61-7-841-1021; FAX 61-7-841-1332.

November 3-5
National Automatic Merchandising Association National Convention and Trade Show, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Contact NAMA Convention Dept., (312) 346-0370.

November 10-13
Pinball Expo, Ramada Hotel/O'Hare, Chicago, Ill. For show information, contact Robert Berk, (800) 323-3547; for exhibit information, contact Mike Pacak, (800) 321-2722. □

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