

PLAY METER

JANUARY 15, 1984



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AMOA WRAP-UP PART 2

M.A.C.H. 3

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PLAY METER

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Cover Credit: Animated characters are one way operators can draw new customers into their businesses. Also operators who can't depend on games alone are considering adding these characters (such as the one on the cover by Sally Animation) or multi-stage shows. See page 36 for more information.

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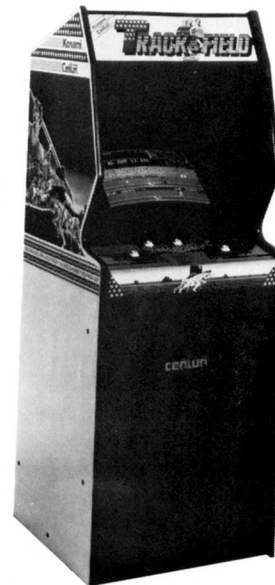
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The Stoning of the American Media



It has been hard to stomach the stoning of the American media. Once afforded favorite freedom status, the right to observe and report on momentous human events, to keep the truth of them in plain and public view, is being roundly assailed. Americans have answered polls, called radio talk shows, and railed to each other in overwhelming agreement: President Reagan's decision to disallow the American media to report on the American military incursion into Grenada was an honorable and glorious deed.

Do we Americans believe the president's excuse that the Grenada exercise was too dangerous for the press to accompany the troops? No. Do we sincerely believe American government officials should be able to do whatever they desire without it being revealed to the American public? Not really.

What many Americans do believe, and they have eloquently voiced it since the battle blackout, is that the American press is not as truth seeking as the writers of the First Amendment supposed it always would be. They believe the morals of the media have decayed and grown biased. They feel its interpretations of events are dictated by the prejudices of network management, that it carves out news stories to fit predisposed personal convictions, and, in general, that the media approaches its holy task under a variety of unholy influences.

In a convincing editorial of their own, Americans have taken the Reagan imposed information boycott as an occasion to lambast the media with derogatory and accusatory epithets. It is reminiscent of the disgust shown for politicians following the Nixon administration scandals. It reveals a widespread loss of confidence in a profession that penetrates everyone's life, every day.

I remain convinced that most newspaper and magazine reporters, electronic journalists, even network executives, are people of honor. I contend most media people aspire to find the truth in a situation so they can lay it bare for their readers or listeners.

I suspect what Americans really don't like is bad news. They are tired of unhappy findings and unconscionable events.

But, it is the media's job to point to the digressions from what is right, to highlight the abnormalities, and to alert the public to the abused and put the abused on display in the hope that the abusers don't go unchecked. It is the duty of the journalist to question the pronouncements of the powerful, to offer a balance to the company line, so that no one can twist society to serve his intentions.

That duty was not born at Watergate. It has been the charge of the nation's press even before Joseph Pulitzer put it into words. The media, the father of modern journalism said, is "an institution that should always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption. . .always fight demagogues of all parties. . .always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, always remain devoted to the public welfare, always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong."

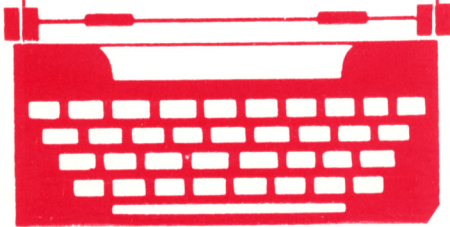
In our own coin-op microcosm, there are people who don't like bad news, mainly because they see much of it as an attack on their livelihoods. The manufacturers who have oversaturated our marketplace with dull product, the makers and operators of subterfuge gambling devices or "gray area" games, those who profit from games that infringe legitimate copyrights—they don't relish having their indiscretions hammered away at in full view of their own industry members.

It is *Play Meter's* intention to defend our industry and to serve it. Often that requires exposing the abuses within it. We hope that in doing so we are contributing to keeping the industry moving in a creditable, worthy direction.

Whether America remains free from tyranny and Americans retain personal freedom is due to a great extent on whether the people can depend on an uninterrupted flow of firsthand reporting. Comparatively, if our industry is to remain an arena for honest competition, publications like *Play Meter* will have to continue to take industry institutions to task, to review all situations honestly and objectively. It is discomfiting some of the time, but it is crucially important all of the time.

Mike Shaw
Associate Editor

Letters to the editor . . .



Pessimist or optimist?

Editor's note: This letter was sent to Florida operators from Belam Florida.

Our industry is being divided along a very recognizable line. Those on one side will certainly be winners and many of those on the other will not. You can choose either side.

One side contains the people who believe our industry is collapsing, dying all around us. They are the prophets of doom, the gloom casters, the pessimists. They go around telling the banks and the finance companies, the newspapers, the TV reporters, friends, neighbors, and anyone else who will listen about how they are suffering in this industry. They let their equipment get stale because they don't believe in the industry anymore.

I believe those people are partially right. If they continue to forecast doom and don't keep their equipment fresh, I believe they will be out of business.

The second side contains those people who have made a commitment in attitude to win in this industry. They believe this industry, although not as bountiful as in recent years, is still a very good industry. This side believes the best is yet to come.

I have noticed that the second side says its business is off an average of about 15 - 25 percent. Some have seen an increase in their business. The other side says its business is

off 50 percent.

In a disturbing article in the *Miami Herald* Sunday, October 23, 1983, many people in our industry were interviewed. From that article it would appear most of us have given up, rolled over, and died. It was upsetting to see our own industry people contribute to their condemnation by feeding the fires of doom.

All of us here at Belam have not rolled over and died. We still think this is a fun and exciting industry

and one in which we choose to be in.

To quote Hank Heiser of Bally Midwest, Livonia, Michigan, "Now is the time to make up your mind to be a winner. . . Notice I did not say survive, the word is. . . WIN."

I urge each and every member of this industry to speak positively about this industry.

Be a winner. We are in a great industry. The best is yet to come.

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NEWS

BY
Mike
Shaw

THE MARSHFIELD BAN STANDS • AOE-ASI CEASE LEGAL FIRE IN HOPE OF A TRUCE • TOWN CONFUSED ON VIDEO RIGHTS • AGMA PROPOSALS 'UNREALISTIC,' SAYS U.S. CUSTOMS • SMUGGLED VIDEOS HEAD TO MIDWEST • ROWE TO BUY PHILLIP MOSS • O'DONNELL LEAVES BALLY • BID FOR DOLLAR COIN DIFFICULT AMOA SCRUTINIZES CIGARETTE VENDING • COIN-OP IMPORTS, EXPORTS DOWN

THE MARSHFIELD BAN STANDS

The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected an industry request to review a Marshfield, Massachusetts, law that bans coin-operated video games.

The decision to bypass the case came November 28, and the next day Marshfield police informed merchants they had three days to remove the town's 60 to 70 games.

The decision ends the battle between industry lawyers and the town of Marshfield that has raged since the ban on "all electronic amusement devices" was voted into effect at a June 1982 town meeting. At each of the previous court challenges, the ban was upheld. But each time lawyers for the Marshfield locations who brought the suit were able to keep the games in operation while they pursued a new hearing at a higher court.

"This ends the litigation on the matter, but we are considering a legislative effort to reverse the law," offered a dejected Ira Zaleznik, the attorney who presented the merchants' case. He said there was little chance of a successful legislative effort.

There was an industrywide effort to have Marshfield's General By-Law No. 48 declared unconstitutional. Zaleznik's firm, Lewin & Rosenthal, was joined by attorneys for the Amusement and Music Operators Association (Jenner & Block) and the National Coin Machine Institute.

For the Supreme Court to hear the case, at least four of the nine justices had to agree the case posed issues which could substantially alter or add to the interpretation of the federal

principles involved, which, in this case, were the First and 14th Amendments to the Constitution. Only Justices William Brennan and Byron White agreed the industry's petition contained sufficient grounds for the Supreme Court's review.

In the standing decision on the case, that of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, the ruling judge referred to video games as nothing more than advanced pinball machines. However, he did note that in the future games might contain "sufficient

communicative and expressive elements" to earn such protection.

Zaleznik gleans hope from that passage and from a new case in which a U.S. District Court has restrained the Massachusetts city of Fall River from refusing to renew an arcade license.

"We believe that with laser disc, video game technology has advanced enough to be awarded First Amendment protection," Zaleznik said.

Ban supporters look at the decision

AOE-ASI CEASE LEGAL FIRE IN HOPE OF A TRUCE

On the eve of the scheduled showdown between industry trade shows, Amusement Operators Expo and Amusement Showcase International, AOE sponsors have arranged a cease-fire.

On November 17, AOE co-sponsors *Play Meter* and Conference Management Corporation voluntarily withdrew their suit against the Amusement Game Manufacturers Association and the Amusement and Vending Machine Distributors Association. The suit was withdrawn "without prejudice," meaning AOE sponsors can later reinstate it should such action become necessary.

On November 18, AOE sponsors were to begin arguments in the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Virginia, that manufacturers organized under the AGMA umbrella were unfairly competing with AOE '84 by staging their own show "deliberately close to

the previously scheduled time and announced location" of AOE '84 and by having "its members refuse to attend or support" the AOE. (*Play Meter*, December 1, 1983, p. 19)

According to *Play Meter* Publisher Ralph C. Lally II, the suit was voluntarily withdrawn after both sides indicated the conflict could be settled amicably.

"There has never been any question that we will defend operator-oriented AOE '84 as staunchly as is necessary," Lally said. "Nor is there any question that AOE '84 is going to be a success worthy of the four shows we have put on for the industry in the past, no matter how it is attacked.

"But we will walk the last mile, and more, to avoid a fight that can only end up hurting everyone," Lally continued. "We all hope that the parties are now moving toward a fair solution."



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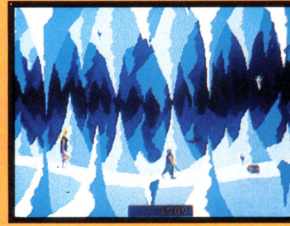
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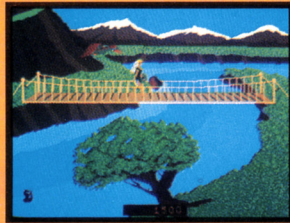
(3) CAVE (BATS, FALLING ICICLES, ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN)



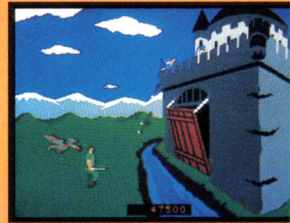
(4) JUNGLE (MAN-EATING PLANTS, GORILLAS, COCONUTS, TOUCANS, ETC.)



(5) VOLCANO (SPEWN ROCKS, MOLTEN LAVA, ETC.)



(6) BRIDGE (ROLLING ROCKS, PTERODACTYL, FISH, FROGS, OWLS)



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Surviving certain very difficult levels also awards the player with bonus members, increasing the size of his party.

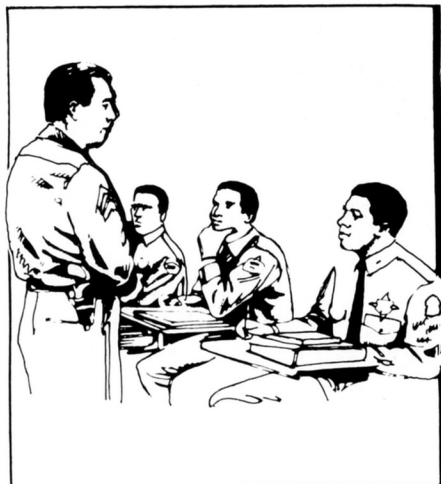
Valuable treasures can be found in some scenes.

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AGMA PROPOSALS 'UNREALISTIC,' SAYS U.S. CUSTOMS



Proposals from the Amusement Game Manufacturers Association on ways to increase its attacks on international video piracy are being ridiculed. But a suggestion that manufacturers pursue criminal rather than civil sanctions against copiers is being hailed as an important policy shift.

In a closed door meeting in New Orleans prior to the AMOA Show, AGMA offered anti-piracy recommendations which included setting up an AGMA trading company to review foreign made video game printed circuit boards and parts to determine if they infringe the copyrights of American manufacturers. The association also said it would encourage U.S. Customs to increase its budget for copyright enforcement.

Jerome Hollander, a U.S. Customs officer and spokesman for West Coast Customs operations, said neither of the AGMA proposals are realistic. "The logistics of setting up such an organization is comparable to them setting up their own Customs department—not to mention the legal problems they would confront. It sounds dangerously like restraint of trade."

AGMA's Glenn Braswell said he is aware of the legal difficulties involved

in forming a trading company and that AGMA would have to avoid antitrust activities. He proposed, however, that recently enacted international trading laws allow for a trading company, provided it avoids antitrust activities. There are industries which conduct such companies, he said.

"What other industries are doing is setting up coalitions against piracy," Hollander said. "They publicize the problem so that the public is aware of it and can avoid the pirated products,

and they push cases toward the courts."

Manufacturers who are not AGMA members indicated they would not favor the formation of a trading company. They admit concern that foreign-made parts headed toward their American facilities might be hindered.

"I don't think it is a practical solution," one non-AGMA manufacturer who wished not to be named said. "If I thought they would do it, I'd

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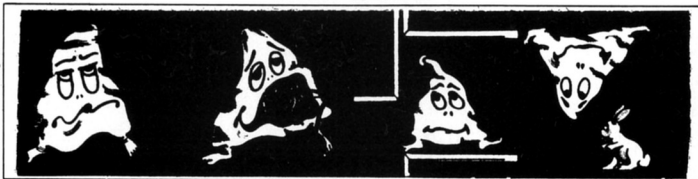
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NEWS

be nervous."

"I am considering buying a game from a Japanese manufacturer for our Moppet line," explained Pat Reed, president of Enter-Tech. "It would make me uncomfortable to think that someone from another manufacturer was holding up my boards to look at them before they got to me."

The idea was also criticized by Richard Stern, former head of the U.S. Department of Justice's Intellectual Property Division who has acted as defense attorney for several small American game assemblers charged with piracy. "It could be exclusionary," Stern said. "If you don't belong to the club (AGMA), you could be out in the cold. I don't think you can set up a vigilante committee to enforce the law."

Hollander also put aside the AGMA suggestion the U.S. Customs budget be increased. "I have just come out of a meeting about fiscal restraints," he said. "We're talking about getting the job done on a smaller budget."

And Hollander contends the Customs effort is effective. "We're making a lot of seizures now and developing some very innovative ideas."

AGMA also announced manufacturers would be "re-directing their efforts away from private civil action, which have not been very effective," toward criminal prosecution, which could result in jail terms for convicted infringers.

Sidney Katz, a Bally/Midway attorney who has been the leading industry attorney in filing civil cases against infringers, agreed in part with the AGMA assessment.

"Civil suits have not been very effective in stopping small assemblers," he said. "It is costly to sue, sometimes costly even to find the 'garage' manufacturers who can pack up their things and move on so easily. Even if we catch them, judgments net almost nothing."

These small, "hard core" infringers account for most of the copy games in the United States, Katz said. To stop them, criminal sanctions would be more effective.

"Civil remedies have been very effective in gaining recognition of the propriety of these copyrights," he said. "We have established video game copyrights can be protected. Some of

THE CALENDAR

January 19-21

IMA 84 International Amusement and Vending Trade Fair, Hall 1, Frankfurt exhibition grounds, Germany

February 3-5

Music Operators of Minnesota State Team 8-Ball Tournament, Mankato, MN

February 10-12

South Carolina Coin Operators Association annual convention and trade show. Carolina Inn, 937 Assembly St., Columbia, SC. Telephone: 803/738-0652

February 17-19

Amusement Showcase International, trade show and conference sponsored by the AGMA, Chicago's Expo Center.

February 24-26

Music Operators of Minnesota Annual State Convention, L'Hotel Sofitel, Minneapolis, MN

February 28 - March 2

Amusement Trades Exhibition International (ATE) 40th Show. Grand Hall, Olympia, London. Telephone: 01/228-4107.

March 9-11

Fifth Annual Amusement Operators Expo, O'Hare Expo Center, Chicago. Industry trade show and seminars sponsored by Play Meter magazine and Conference Management.

March 29-31, April 1

SADA '84, Palacio de Congresos de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. Contact: Interalia, S.A., Diagonal, 474, Barcelona - 6. Telephone (93) 218-58-50.

March 29-April 1

1984 FAVA Trade Show, Hyatt Regency Orlando, Grand Cypress Resort, Florida. (904) 878-3134.

April 6-8

Pacific Amusement Operators Show, Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, Calif. For information contact: Terry Cunningham, (415) 325-6691.

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NEWS

the legitimate Japanese firms have changed a lot in the last three or four years, coming to respect these rights."

At the meeting AGMA also chided the trade press for not "giving copyright infringement actions front-page treatment in order to assist the industry in getting the message to the copiers that 'the net is closing in.'" The trade press was not invited to the AGMA meeting.

SMUGGLED VIDEOS HEAD TO MIDWEST

U.S. Customs agents said they have identified several Midwestern buyers of pirated video game printed circuit boards smuggled from Japan.

The names of individuals and companies identified as receiving the smuggled boards are being withheld, agents said, pending completion of the investigation.

"The investigation is continuing," U.S. Customs agent Brian Rockon told *Play Meter*. "We have identified some buyers but are still gathering sufficient evidence to file charges against others."

The discoveries came as Customs agents continue an investigation of video piracy that has already led to the arrest and conviction of three Japanese nationals.

The nationals confessed to smuggling printed circuit boards across the Canadian border en route to the Midwest destinations. Asafumi Kayoda, 24, Hirofumi Kinoshita, 26, and Hiroyuki Hiraiwa, 32, all employees of NASA Trading Company of Tokyo, were nabbed bringing 134 printed circuit boards across the border at Blaine, Washington, July 7 (*Play Meter*, October 15, p. 15).

All three pled guilty to criminal smuggling charges in October, and in November began serving prison terms. Kayoda was fined \$5,000 and is serving a 4-month term; Kinoshita, \$5,000 and 2 months; Hiraiwa, who was listed as president of NASA, \$5,000 and 6 months.

According to Rockon, the boards

were infringements of copyrights held by American manufacturers of *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Galaga* (Bally/Midway), *Gyruss* (Centuri), and others. He said the boards were smuggled into Canada first, then to the United States—a common route for pirated materials.

ROWE TO BUY PHILLIP MOSS

Rowe International will add to its distribution network with the purchase of Phillip Moss & Company.

The Whippany, New Jersey based distributor has signed a letter of intent to purchase the entire Phillip Moss assets in accordance with an agreement it has reached with Phillip Moss Chairwoman of the Board Bernice Moss. The transaction is scheduled for completion January 31.

Terms of the sale were not disclosed and Rowe officials declined comment pending completion of the deal, but a Phillip Moss official said Rowe has indicated it will make no substantive changes in the management or operation of the business.

Phillip Moss is headquartered in Des Moines and maintains branches in Omaha and Kansas City. All branches are full service distributorships and sell all major coin game lines as well as music and vending equipment.

Late this summer, Rowe's distributing Vice President Jerry Gordon indicated Rowe was "looking to expand if opportunities present themselves." (*Play Meter*, September 1, p. 55) With the acquisition, Rowe outlets will number 20, the most of any distributing chain in the United States.

O'DONNELL LEAVES BALLY

William T. O'Donnell has left his position as president of Bally's Aladdin's Castle division, marking the end

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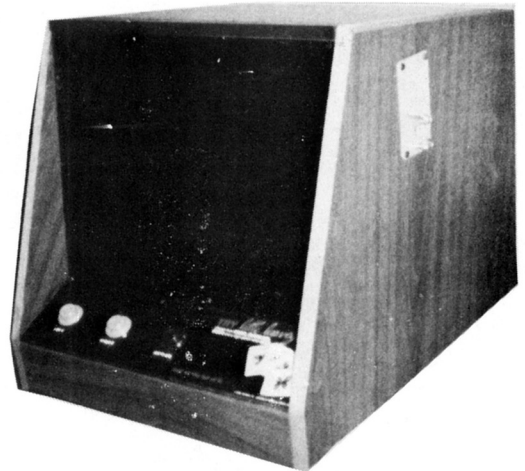


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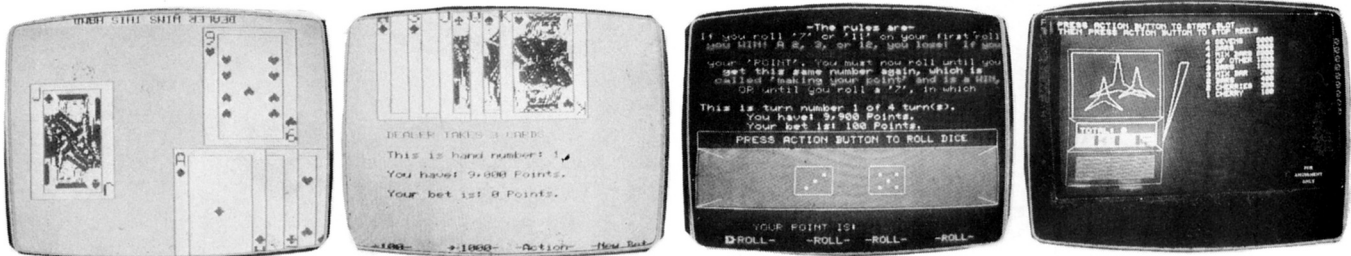
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Bill O'Donnell



Maurice Ferchen

of a long-standing association of the O'Donnell name with the Chicago coin game manufacturer.

According to a company spokesman, O'Donnell left to "pursue his own interests."

O'Donnell was with Bally since 1971, having served as the director of its European marketing effort and then president of the pinball division before his appointment to lead Aladdin's Castle arcades in 1981.

The O'Donnell name has been part of Bally since Bill O'Donnell Sr. began

work there in 1945 as a purchasing agent. He retired as president of the company in December 1979.

O'Donnell is replaced by Maurice Ferchen who moves to Bally from Montgomery Ward where he held a variety of senior management positions. Most recently, Ferchen was a district manager for Ward's Midwestern outlets.

Ferchen inherits a network of 450 Bally family amusement centers, including Aladdin's Castle locations, Le Mans Family Fun Centers, Pin Pan Alley, Pac-Man Palace, and Bally's Great Escape. •

BID FOR DOLLAR COIN DIFFICULT

In a letter to the Bureau of the Mint, the National Coin Machine Institute has requested a meeting of the "proper authorities" in hopes it can convince the federal government to revitalize its program of minting and distributing the dollar coin.

But according to U.S. Congressman Andy Ireland (D-Fla.), who addressed operators at the AMOA Exposition in New Orleans October 29 (see Seminar Section, p. 53), getting the government to reconsider the dollar coin will be a "very difficult marketing job."

While NCMI hopes it can use industry clout to get the government to reconsider the Susan B. Anthony dollar, Rep. Ireland called the demise of the piece a "laughing matter." It will take the Congress a long time to think seriously about something they consider such a "joke," he warned.

"Wide use of the \$1 coin is vital to the future of our industry," the NCMI communique reads. Many operating companies invested very substantial sums in coin acceptor equipment for use with the \$1 coin when it was first minted and distributed. The sudden halt in minting and distribution of these coins has imposed severe penalties on our industry."

The letter notes that coin-operated equipment accounted for more than \$20 billion in retail sales and services

in 1982, and that the entire vending industry employs "hundreds of thousands of Americans."

Copies of the NCMI letter were also sent to President Reagan and Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan. •

AMOA SCRUTINIZES CIGARETTE VENDING

Despite several objections and a significant number of no votes, the Amusement and Music Operators Association passed a resolution October 28 to include cigarette vending machines as one of its concerns and activities. The vote came during the annual AMOA membership meeting, prior to the opening of the 1983 AMOA International Exposition in New Orleans.

According to AMOA Executive Director Leo Droste, a committee of AMOA board members will meet to define the cigarette issues the AMOA will scrutinize. Droste added AMOA was in the process of gathering information from its members.

While AMOA's depth of concern over cigarette issues is undetermined, it is obvious AMOA will limit its involvement in the complex and deep rooted problems of the cigarette industry. "We will limit ourselves to giving attention to the problems of cigarette vending," Droste offered as clarification. "It only represents a small change in our objectives."

One AMOA member took the meeting floor to object to the inclusion of cigarette vending concerns, contending "it is not wise to mix our industry, which concerns itself mainly with entertaining children, with the image and problems presented by cigarettes."

"I don't know much about it," outgoing AMOA President Wesley Lawson answered. "I only know that the proposal was considered by the board of directors, and they suggested we adopt it."

Droste told *Play Meter* the initial

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proposal to include cigarette vending in AMOA came from the National Coin Machine Institute. NCMI, an association composed primarily of the nation's large amusement and cigarette operating firms, was formed in 1983 with the intention of being a subgroup within AMOA. The group organized as a separate entity instead, after disagreements with AMOA over several issues, including the NCMI decision to represent cigarette vending. •

COIN-OP IMPORTS, EXPORTS DOWN

Imports and exports of coin-operated games fell sharply in the second quarter of 1983, according to a report from the U.S. International Trade Commission.

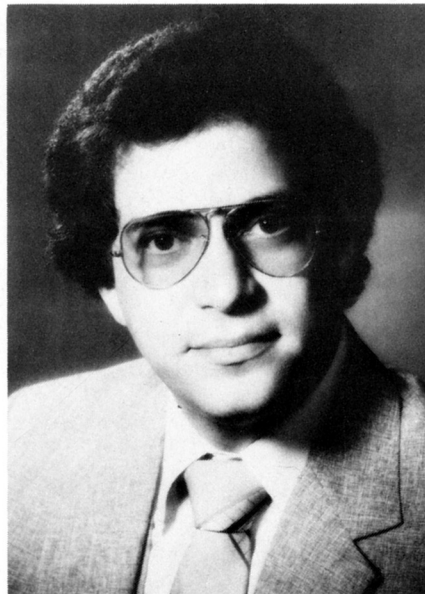
In a study released in late October, the ITC showed imports of coin-op games were down 63 percent (from \$45 million to \$17 million) from the second quarter of 1982, while exports declined by 46 percent (from \$34 million to \$19 million).

The most dramatic declines were seen in the importation of games from Japan. U.S. companies bought 73 percent less Japanese coin-op product in the second quarter of 1983 than they did during the same period in 1982. According to the ITC report, the declines reflected the "diminished popularity of *Donkey Kong*," the 1982 Nintendo hit. •

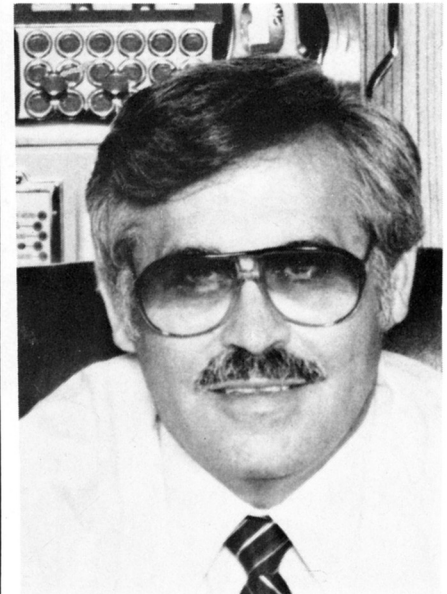
Coin game exports were more than offset by a 108 percent rise in exports of home video games (from \$18 million to \$37 million) for the second quarter. The Canadian market—which cut its coin-op game buys from U.S. manufacturers more dramatically than any other country (from \$10 million to \$4 million)—was responsible for the steepest rise in purchases of U.S. made home game machines and software (from \$2 million to \$10 million). •



After two years as sales manager for Interlogic Inc., Frank Bundra has been promoted to vice president of the Rosemont, Illinois, producer and marketer of the Roc 'n Rope conversion kit. Among his new responsibilities will be promotion of the company's newest conversion, Mega Zone, a Konami/Interlogic cooperative effort.



Marty Glazman has become vice president of marketing and sales for Sente Technologies. Glazman, formerly sales manager for Williams Electronics, was a victim of the white-collar cutbacks Williams made in November.



Jerry Monday has been named vice president of Betson Pacific Distributing. Monday has been with Betson since 1977 and has managed its San Francisco office since 1978. In his new position, Monday will participate in corporate decisions while maintaining his role in the San Francisco branch office.

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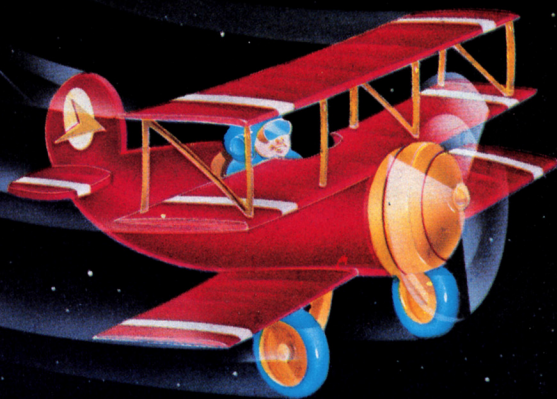
The FAX trivia game, licensed from Exidy, Inc., is generating hundreds of dollars a week in test locations. With 3,700 questions, four categories, and three skill levels, the FAX Game Brains provides a never-ending challenge for players. As Exidy releases new sets of questions for FAX, Digital Controls will make them available for COUNTERCADE.

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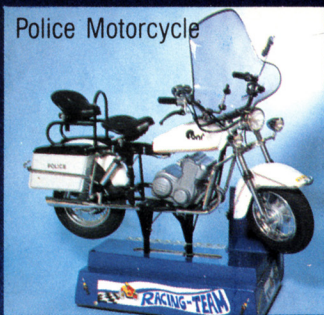
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Meet Me in St. Louie

By Mike Shaw

Audio Visual Amusements President Peter Entringer hosts distributor showings twice a year, following the major coin-op trade shows, the AMOA International Exposition in the fall and the AOE in the spring, to give his 100-plus operator customers a firsthand look at the industry's new equipment.

The AVA show provides a comfortable and entertaining way for St. Louis operators to review and buy some of the new pieces. It has also become a valuable evaluation tool for the manufacturers Entringer represents, a barometer of operator response to their latest equipment. Consequently, "meet me in St. Louie" has become a popular theme for the top marketing brass of the industry.

The operators who came to the November 19 AVA show were described by Entringer as "eager and optimistic," anxious to participate in the "boom of the next 18 months" he predicted will occur. "With fewer manufacturers, fewer distributors, and fewer operators, that will mean a boom for those of us who remain in business," he said.

But many of the operators attending AVA's fall showing displayed more confusion than confidence about their futures. Their confusion has been prominent since the decline in player interest in their video games, but it has grown lately because, as many perceive it, every manufacturer seems to have a different solution for the industry's financial dilemma.

"Much of this equipment has 'back to basics' written all over it," one operator told *Play Meter*. "But a lot of people are saying the recovery will be based on new technology—laser or whatever—not going back to what *used* to work."

"Laser has been called our saviour by a lot of people, including manufacturers who want us to buy their



AVA President Peter Entringer welcomes visitors to his 1983 fall distributor showing.



Entringer and Satish Bhutani pose in front of Zaccaria's newest pinball releases, Time Machine and Farfalla.



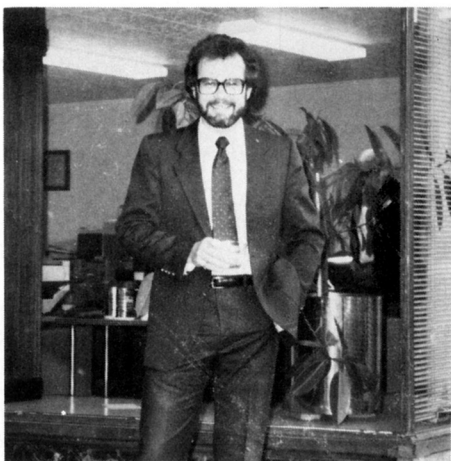
Centuri's Ivan Rothstein attended the show to introduce AVA's customers to the hit of the 1983 AMOA show, Track & Field.

new, very expensive laser disc games," another added. "But I don't think that just because a game has a laser disc player in it means it's going to make a lot of money. And with the kind of investment you have to make to buy one, you better be damn sure it's going to make a lot of money before you do buy it."

Equipment range

The fall's new equipment releases cover a vast range of types, from laser disc videos to pool tables. Bhuzac's Satish Bhutani was high on what he described as a re-emerging interest in pinballs, led, of course, by his Zaccaria games. So great is the interest, he said, he could not promise November orders of *Time Machine* would be filled until February. All the *Time Machines* Zaccaria could produce until then are already sold, he said.

Making the biggest wave of all the new equipment was Konami/Centuri's *Track & Field*. Marketed as interest in the 1984 Olympics increases, more is expected of *Track & Field* than any other game to come out of AMOA '83. According to Centuri



Dynamo's President Bill Rickett stands at the entrance of the AVA building that still displays the insignia of the Wurlitzer company. Rickett said Dynamo's pool table and foosball sales were triple what they were during the fall of 1982.

marketing executive Ivan Rothstein, the game has produced brilliantly throughout extensive testing conducted since June. *Track & Field* is a "street piece, so successful because it is highly competitive," Rothstein said at the AVA show. "Since it can be played by four players, the game can earn a dollar per play." they can clear the confusion if they

consider each game individually, regardless of type. To exemplify, he pointed to Taito's *Ice Cold Beer*, a mechanical game defying categorization. "That will be one of the best pieces of the fall," Entringer predicted.

This year more manufacturing personnel and more equipment than ever before greeted the AVA customers that appeared at the downtown St. Louis showroom. Entringer added the Mylstar and Taito lines in 1983, completing his acquisition of crosstown rival Morris Novelty. AVA, once known as Brandt Distributing, formerly represented only Wurlitzer jukeboxes. Now, AVA handles a majority of the most prominent amusements—with the notable exception of the games of the "big three"—Bally, Atari, and Williams.

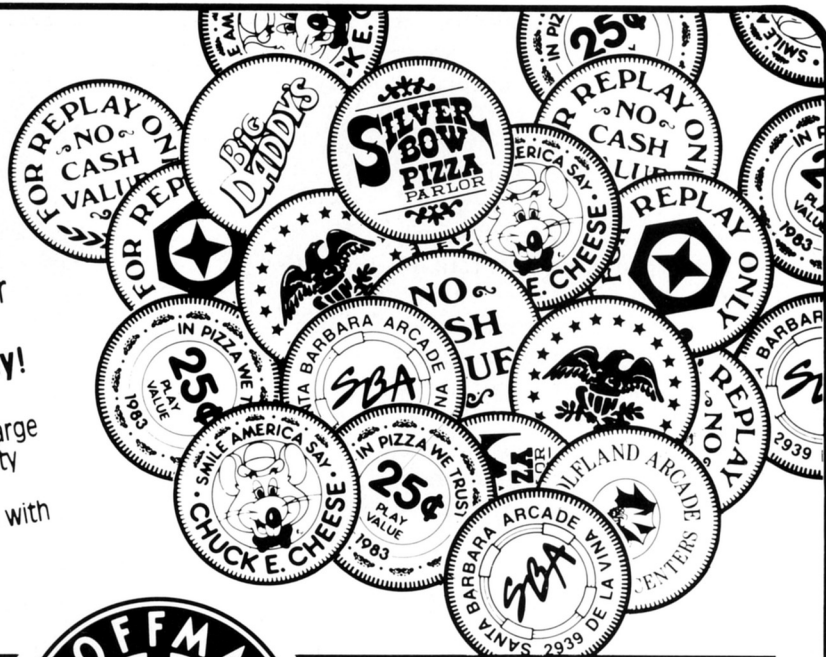
According to Entringer, AVA's growth has been, paradoxically, the result of the industry's demise. According to the operators and manufacturing reps he does business with, his aggressive attitude has enabled him to prosper when other St. Louis distributorships

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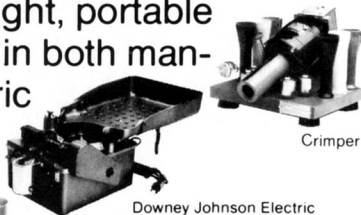
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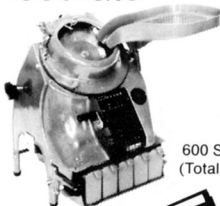
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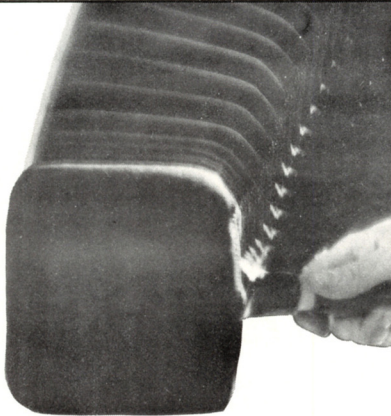
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struggled or failed. "Once there were 10 viable distributorships in St. Louis," Entringer recalled. "Now there are two."

Certainly there are more distributors than AVA and Bally Midwest doing business in St. Louis, a city which continues to foster an excellent coin-op business climate. But much of the other distributors' business involves non-amusement vending equipment.

Large market share

At any rate, there is no question that Entringer has garnered a large share of the St. Louis market. Not only has he added Morris customers—Morris President Marion Mitchell stayed on as AVA vice president—but he has snared much of the St. Louis business of Central Distributing. Once located just five blocks from Entringer, Central has moved across the Mississippi River into Illinois to concentrate on its "east side" clientele.

Also, equipment jobbers who rooted in St. Louis during the heat of the videomania of a couple of years ago have discovered the quick money they wanted would never materialize, Entringer pronounced.

"The thinning out that is going on now in the industry is very good for those who remain," Entringer said, characterizing his business as very good. "The carnage is healthy, at all levels."

That includes manufacturers, Entringer noted, struggling through their worst of times. "There will be a shift in power among manufacturers," he began. "Any manufacturer who makes a viable product can be in business today. Operators haven't quit buying equipment, they have quit buying *all* equipment. The problem is the big manufacturers have been building equipment for arcades, ignoring the fact that street operators are still the vast majority of their business."

It must be noted that Entringer's remarks are made in deference to the manufacturers he represents and are critical of those he doesn't, but those remarks still hold credibility in light of his success. Even in difficult times, AVA has prospered.

"We have had our best summer ever," Entringer boasted, giving credit to the equipment of manu-

facturers like Nintendo—(Entringer predicts Nintendo will emerge soon as the industry's leading manufacturer.)—and Cinematronics, which has produced not only the first laser disc coin-op game in *Dragon's Lair* but the laser game that continues to top earnings charts.

Entringer also extends credit for keeping his business good to Centuri and Universal. They have provided equipment designed for today's street operator, Entringer pointed out.

Conversions

This equipment includes conversion kits, an equipment type that was soundly dismissed by Entringer as "unprofitable to sell" the last time *Play Meter* visited an AVA showing after AOE '83.

"I've changed my attitude because the kits have changed," Entringer said, holding his ground. "The type of kits now being produced are top games. The development of better kits has been pioneered by Nintendo; now Taito, Universal, and others are putting viable games into kit form. I now believe that the bulk of our business in the foreseeable future will be kits."

The manufacturers who do business with Entringer and the operators who are his most faithful customers, praise his aggressive, involved attitude. "He sells a lot of our games," Universal's Bill Cravens simply said.

Apparently, Entringer does much more. During recent difficult times, he worked vigorously to keep several of his operators in business. Entringer said the past two years have made him more cautious, careful to determine if the operators he will deal with are financially sound.

The operators he maintains are not "price buyers," he said. They stick with Entringer because they know he is in their corner.

"I have their support because they know I will not compete with them," Entringer said, acknowledging he operates no routes. "A good, responsible distributor cannot be an operator because when the good games come in, he gets them first and at a better price. I promised my operators that if they stayed with me, I wouldn't compete with them." ●



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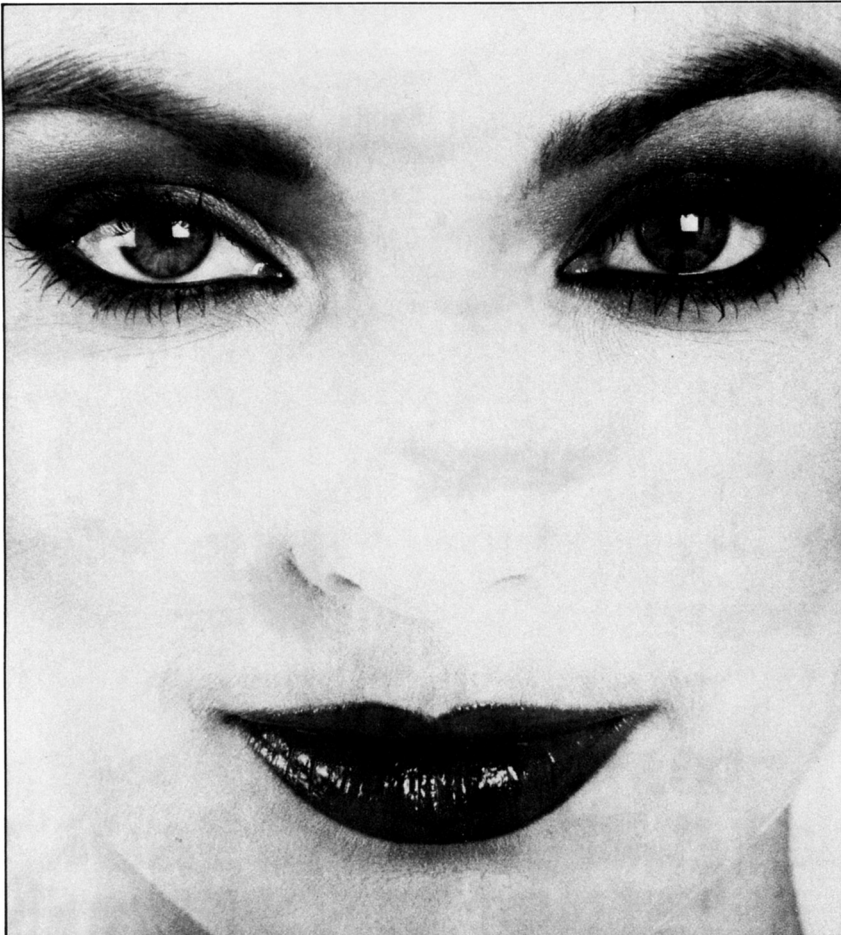
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Desirée does more than just talk. She makes money. Customers' desire to hear what she'll say next encourages them to keep playing. The voice of Desirée is recorded on ROM voice memory for life-like reproduction. Seventy-five different phrases heighten player interest throughout the games.

Standard equipment on new Little Casino II, Desirée is offered as retro-fit enhancement for Little Casinos already in the field. The voice option shows Digital Controls' commitment to extend the earning capacity of its games.



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Virginia Operators Celebrate Their Silver Jubilee

By Valerie Cognevich

Virginia operators gathered in Richmond for the 25th annual state association convention, October 7-8, to discuss legislative problems, "gray area" equipment, and to recognize association members.

Ed Shell, president of the Amusement and Music Operators of Virginia (AMOV), explained the legislative problems Virginia has faced. "In the last year, Virginia has been besieged by five different bills that would have taken the ceiling off the amounts a city and county could charge for license and gross receipts

taxes."

Virginia now has no state tax. Cities and counties are allowed to charge up to \$200 for an operator's license (regardless of the number of games) and up to 36 cents per \$100 on gross receipts. However, very few cities or counties charge the maximum allowed.

To defeat these detrimental bills, AMOV hired a lobbyist who worked in the vending business and is familiar with the industry. All five bills were defeated.

"Gray area" games were discussed at a general membership meeting.

In Virginia, gambling is illegal, but gray area games are apparently legal if there are no payouts. In addressing the gray area problem, Herb Beitel, president of the National Coin Machine Institute, told AMOV members that NCMI is working on a set of guidelines on the gray area issue.

"Someone needs to do it," Schell said. "I just hope they can successfully come up with something that will be a standard for operators."

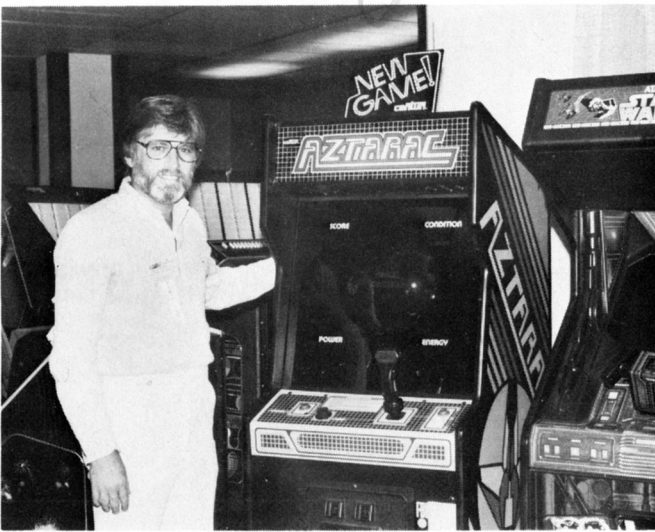
Association members found time to recognize each other. The Silver Jubilee Celebration was highlighted



Attendees focused attention on laser games. Here, an operator plays Bega's Battle by Data East.



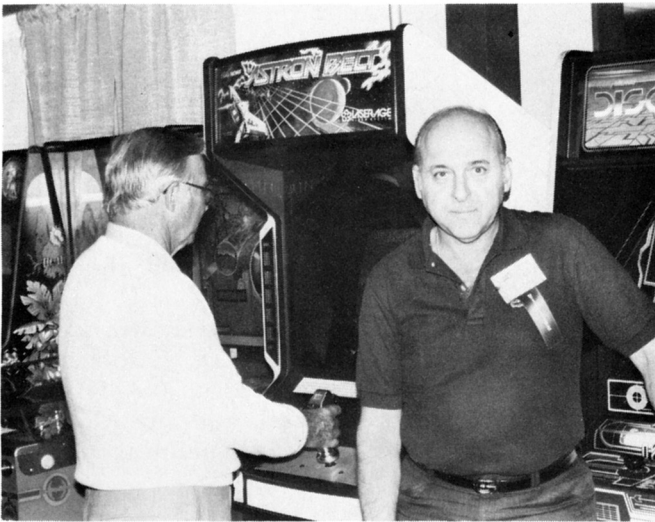
M.A.C.H. 3, Mylstar's new laser game, was played by about everyone at the show.



Dick McCannell of Eastern Distributors takes a break by Centuri's Aztarac.



Cliff Hanger, one of Stern's laser games, drew crowds who had some good comments on the game.



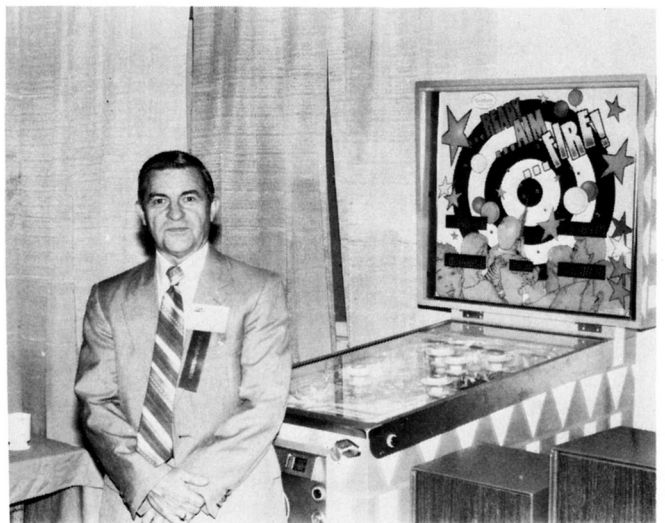
Larry Berke, of Bally, stops briefly to have his photo taken by Bally's Astron Belt. Jim Reaves is absorbed in playing the game.



A banquet was held celebrating Virginia's 25 years as a successful state association.



Jim Frye (left) of Brady Distributing and Larry Simmons of Digital Controls share a few highlights of the show.



Ed Shell of Wometco and president of the AMOV surveys the show by Gottlieb's Ready - Aim - Fire. Shell reported attendance at 362 for the Silver Anniversary event.



Ray Hild, (from left) Doug Schudel, Bruce Hoffman, and Alex Goldstein pose by Bowl from G Manufacturing.



Brian Duke (left) of Universal demonstrates Mr. Do's Castle to Nick Corsaro. The conversion has signs of being almost as successful as Mr. Do's.

by numerous prizes, wrapped in silver anniversary paper, given out at the banquet. Prizes included TV sets, conversion kits, games, and other items.

The Virginia show, scheduled only weeks before the AMOA Show which was held in New Orleans, gave manufacturers one last opportunity to get feedback from opera-

tors on their latest equipment. Mylstar had *M.A.C.H. 3*. It was pleased with attendees' comments and said it would be one of the better lasers at AMOA. It seems Mylstar was correct in that assumption as operators at AMOA agreed that *M.A.C.H. 3* was one of the better lasers.

Centuri showed *Azterac*, and after

consulting test results and listening to operators' comments, decided not to exhibit *Azterac* at the AMOA Show.

Taito, having shown *Ice Cold Beer* at the North Carolina show, again exhibited it at AMOV. And once again, and at AMOA, it received overwhelming response from operators. ●



This show was Bob Lenz's (right) final appearance as a representative of Stern. He joined NSM and represented NSM at the AMOA. Bob Breither (left), formerly a consultant at Stern, was made sales director before the AMOA.



Morty Hyatt and Joel Smeyne of General Vending with U.S. Billiards' Video Sound.



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Konami/Centuri Track & Field is a color raster scan game that features six popular events: 100-Meter Dash, Long Jump, Javelin, 110-Meter Hurdles, Hammer Throw and High Jump.

In each event, the player **must** qualify against a pre-determined time or distance in order to proceed to the next event. If not, the competition is over.

1, 2, 3 or 4 Players

Konami/Centuri Track & Field can be played individually or simultaneously by up to four people. Play will continue, however, even if a contestant has been eliminated.

The control panel features run and jump buttons. The game is personalized by the entry of each player's name at the beginning of the contest.

THE EVENTS



The 100-Meter Dash

The classic track and field event. A contest of raw speed. The player uses only the run control during this event, but must be careful not to jump the gun. Three flying starts lead to disqualification.



The Long Jump

The combination of speed and power. By building speed with the run button, the player must time his takeoff precisely. You get three attempts to qualify, fouls count as a turn.



Javelin Throw

Once again, the player must build sufficient speed with the run button and release the javelin at the proper angle in order to qualify.



110-Meter Hurdles

Speed + Timing + Agility. Each missed hurdle seriously affects your overall performance.



Hammer Throw

The muscle event. A touch of the run button begins the power building centrifugal motion. The release of the hammer must be exact.



High Jump

The event that separates the men from the boys. The angle of your jump is critical. It can, however, be changed several times in mid-air.

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- Voice synthesis announces starts, fouls and qualifying times.
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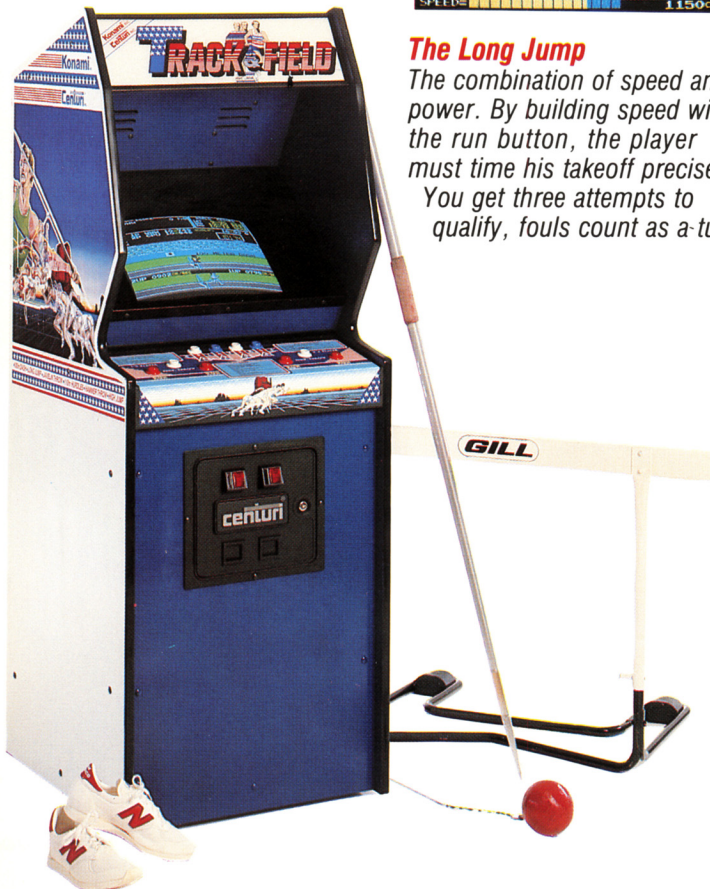
Dimensions

Upright

Height	73"	185.4 cm.
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Length	32"	81.3 cm.
Weight	330 lbs.	149.7 kg.

Cocktail Table

Height	39½"	100. cm.
or	30"	76. cm.
Width	25¾"	65.4 cm.
Length	40"	101.6 cm.
Weight	250 lbs.	111.5 kg.



Konami/Centuri

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STATE UPDATE

BY VALERIE COGNEVICH

NCMI: The National Coin Machine Institute has established an emergency hotline to provide assistance to operators in legislative and public relations activities. The toll-free number is 1-800-327-7724. In Florida, Alaska, and Hawaii, the number is 305/561-0886.

"Emergency calls will be handled by the appropriate staff person to provide prompt counsel and assistance. We will call on our experts and sources within the industry to respond with counsel and suggestions for action," said Herb Beitel, NCMI managing director.

In other association news, in a letter to Donna Pope, director Bureau of the Mint, NCMI pointed out the need for the availability and usage of the \$1 coin and the critical need for an effective dollar coin program by the government.

"The sudden collapse of the dollar coin program was a severe blow to the vending industry and others," Beitel said. "It is our hope that an early meeting with the Treasury can develop an effective program to bring the dollar coin back to life."

FLORIDA: The Florida Amusement/Vending Association (FAVA) has made an official stand and statement on "gray area" games for the first time.

The statement follows:
"It is the consensus of the Florida Amusement/Vending Association, Inc., a corporation for non-profit chartered in the state of Florida, that we as an association oppose games of chance that offer rewards for anything other than skill."

For several months FAVA has researched information and has been on the verge of making a public stand on the subject. Members of the executive committee of FAVA met with Howard M. Rasmussen, director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, to discuss

this area of the music and games industry. Rasmussen stated that he would stand by Florida statutes and do whatever it takes to eliminate illegal games from the state.

The September 15, 1983, *Play Meter* issue on gray area games was used to help familiarize the executive committee and the board of directors with nationwide happenings on gray area games.

ILLINOIS: Alex McConnell, president of the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association, recently announced the employment of professional management to handle day-to-day staff services for the association.

Arthur W. Seeds was named executive vice president and will provide management leadership for ICMOA to implement constructive and financially valuable programs for members.

MICHIGAN: A bill to legalize slot machines remains stalled in the House State Affairs Committee. Because of opposition by State Affairs Committee Chairman Joe Young Jr., Representative Tom Scott has also introduced a resolution asking for a special legislative study committee to look at the possibility of legalization of slot machines.

Another issue brewing in Michigan is the gray area games situation, and the problem has not been resolved. The Liquor Control Commission's appeal of an earlier decision has not been heard. The commission plans legislation to specifically ban the machines from licensed locations should the appeal be lost.

Another bill, which also legalizes gray area games, is scheduled for passage by the Senate. If it is sent to the House, it likely will be sent to

the same committee holding the slot machine bill.

NEW JERSEY: The Cedar Grove City Council approved a measure to hire a professional planner, as part of Township attorney Stuart R. Koenig's preparation of an ordinance to deal comprehensively with video arcades. Koenig told the governing body that recent court decisions have established video arcades as legitimate businesses. He envisions an ordinance that would restrict video arcades so that they would not be offensive to the public.

OHIO: This year state Representative Edward J. Orlett, persuaded by Gerald Austin and Paul Tipps (lobbyists in Ohio), sponsored a bill to legalize video lottery machines in Ohio. Austin's client was IGT, a manufacturer of video games. Apparently IGT wanted to build a factory in Ohio but could not legally make the machines in the state.

The bill failed when the Ohio Music and Amusement Association and Director Paul Corey lobbied that IGT's games would financially hurt association members. Corey's major argument was that the bill might legalize slot machines. Ohio has long been publicly against gambling including gray area games.

PENNSYLVANIA: Owners and operators of video poker machines at legitimate Crawford County businesses had to bring those machines into compliance with a Supreme Court ruling by November 11 or risk criminal gambling charges and forfeiture of the games. This ruling said that the games, simulating elements of five-card poker, were automatically gambling devices *per se* if they contain a knock-off switch or if any payoff is made. ●

Bringing Fantasy to Life

By Valerie Cognevich

Fantasy...Imagination...Offering customers something extra special is what animated characters are all about.

ShowBiz and Pizza Time Theatre were the first companies offering a combination of computer characters, food, and games, and they are extremely successful businesses.

However, that successful combination is possible and within the reach of smaller arcades or arcade/restaurant locations. Drawing people into a location is an operator's top priority. Who could resist the beckoning of the lifelike and life-size animated figures of Mark Twain or Ruacdac, an extra-

terrestrial character who looks like he just stepped out of a video game?

Arcades that once flourished on video games alone have been severely hurt, and operators striving to survive are looking for alternatives besides just displaying games. Offering food is one alternative. Animation is another. And combining all three, food, games, and animated characters, is one way operators can revitalize their business.

"Animation is within reach for those who truly want something unique," said Ray Phillips of Crystal Palace in Clearfield, Utah. "I am mystified that some game rooms haven't seen a new game recently. I can't understand the complacency—people are not willing to put money back into the business."

Sally Animation is probably one of the better known animation companies. Specializing in individual animated character packages and multi-character, multi-stage shows, Sally Animation offers a variety of themes, ranging from country-western to Dixieland jazz, tailored to fit the needs of any size or type of arcade.

Animation possibilities

For smaller locations, Sally's line of individual reprogrammable characters act as traffic builders, attention getters, and promoters. Ruacdac is an example of one of the individual characters. Costumed in metallic black and gold, Ruacdac "thinks" and "speaks" with the aid of hundreds of blinking red and green LED lights. His "space accented" voice can greet customers via a pre-recorded cassette or "live" by a hidden microphoned with synchronized mouth movements.



Daniel and the Dixie Diggers play Dixieland jazz in larger locations.

At only 65 pounds, Ruacdac is portable for exhibitions or radio/TV promotions and is operational by plugging him into any electrical outlet.

Designed specifically for small to medium locations, The Entertainers are Sally's line of computer-operated single character packages. They sing, play an instrument and tell jokes, and have expanded movements. Many have probably become familiar with Colonel Beaufort T. Beauregard III, usually doing his act at many of the trade and state association shows. Dressed in a Confederate uniform, Colonel Beaufort plays the banjo and sings old favorites such as "Camp-town Races" and "Sweet Georgia Brown."

And for the larger locations, Sally's multi-character, multi-stage show packages can build a world of fantasy animation. Showboat, Sally's three-stage show (or available in one and two stages), features Dixieland jazz by Daniel and the Dixie Diggers, a five-member hound dog band on center stage. On an adjoining stage, Mark Twain is the showboat host and storyteller. Twain spins tall tales of life on the mighty Mississippi. Betty B. Birthday and Wally Wish celebrate birthdays in the magical birthday kitchen. Both the host and birthday character stages rotate to provide stage space for special holiday guests.

"We felt there was a need to provide entertainment that adults could appreciate and enjoy as well as children," noted John Wood, vice president of Sally Animation. "Everyone is fascinated by the animated characters, especially the band members and Mark Twain, who has the ability to stand and sit."



Colonel Beaufort T. Beauregard III plays the banjo and sings.



An animated character can draw people into locations and give them new life.

If an operator is looking to franchise, Sally has produced animated character shows for many of the rapidly expanding franchise entertainment, video/food locations.

Two such shows are The Enchanted Castle and John Phillip Tuba's Ice Cream in the Park.

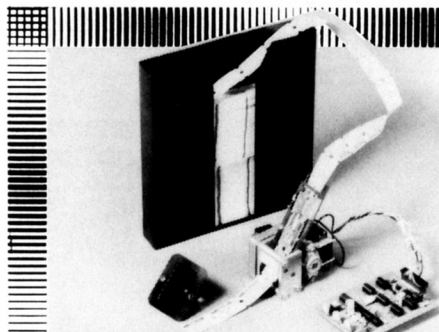
Safari Sam

Neil Voss is an operator who opened an arcade several years ago that was successful in the video boom years. In the past year, like many operators, he faced the decision of "where to go from here." He said he had several choices including closing, selling the business as it was, or diversifying it. "We did great back in the boom years but had drifted into the throws of mediocrity here last year," Voss said. "I decided that I liked the business, wanted to stay in it, but realized that my arcade needed some revitalizing. You can't just attract people with video games anymore."

Inspired by Colonel Beaufort at the Florida State Association Show, Voss found an answer. "I went basically with the Colonel Beaufort character but had it custom modified for the theme of the arcade called Safari Sam's Game Preserve. I called my character Safari Sam. I know that if I would not have made the changes, which also included adding food, I would not be here today. This came out much better than I even dreamed about and I'm the type that likes to do things right and have no regrets down the road."

Voss also recommended combining food with the animation. "It would make a little more sense to go with food without animation than it would to go with animation and no food."

(Ed. Note: Neil Voss, of Safari Sam's Game Preserve in Largo, Florida, said he will relate his experience with Safari Sam with anyone contemplating animation. Call him at (813) 581-7652.)



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Hanson Distributing Helps Operators Slay Laser Apprehensions

Nearly 100 operators and technicians from six states attended a laser disc service seminar given by Hanson Distributing of Bloomington, Minnesota, and Cinematronics.

Rusty Gieske, head technician and laser specialist for Hanson, conducted the seminar assisted by John McNeil, supervisor of technical support for Cinematronics. Gieske attended the Cinematronics laser disc service seminar this summer.

The first half of Hanson's two-part seminar covered basics on location maintenance and troubleshooting of *Dragon's Lair* and the Pioneer laser disc players used in them. Gieske and McNeil discussed the do's and don'ts of the games and players, emphasizing the don'ts. Cleaning, accessing boards and fuses, and diagnosing simple problems were a few of the things covered in this section.

The second half was aimed primarily at the technicians in the group. Gieske and McNeil concentrated on the mechanics and electronics of the laser disc player in detail. Although this half demonstrated the complexity of the disc players, operators learned something useful about the lasers.

"The seminar gave me the necessary information to handle the small problems confidently, but it also gave me a lot of respect for the complexity of the machines so that I realize my limitations in servicing them," stated Dale Lund, serviceman for Theisen Vending, a Minneapolis company.

Gieske and McNeil did not encourage the operators or their service people to attempt to work on the players themselves, but rather hoped the seminar would enable them to handle the minor problems themselves and to give good,

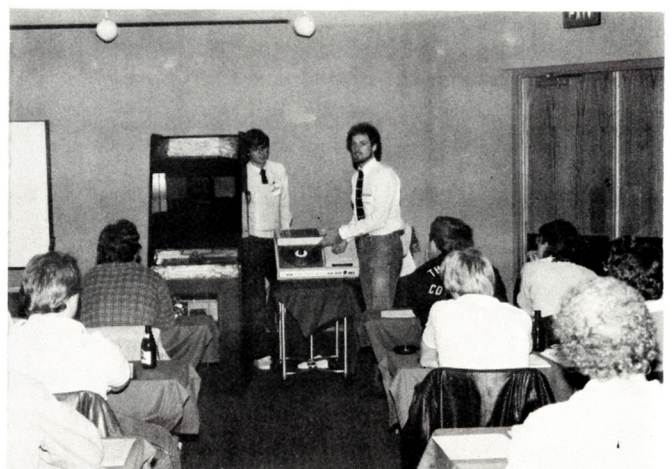
accurate symptoms when calling for service assistance.

Successful turnout

"We were very pleased with the turnout," said Kirk McKennon, vice president of Hanson Distributing. "We were very eager to dispel the rumors floating around concerning service problems on the *Dragon's Lair* machines. We've sold quite a few of these games now, and we've found that service problems are *not* an inherent problem in the game, but more often a result of mishandling by the operator. Before a laser game leaves our warehouse, we check each one and make sure the operator understands the importance of locking down the disc player and taking the necessary precautions *whenever* the game is moved. The operator is learning that these games cannot be treated like a regular video game."



Rusty Gieske talks to the nearly 100 operators who attended the seminar.



John McNeil (left) of Cinematronics and Rusty Gieske of Hanson point out features on the laser player.



AMOA WRAP-UP PART 2

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Pinball Merchandising

MAXIMIZE PROFIT POTENTIAL FOR AN INDUSTRY STAPLE

By Dawn Adorno

The industry is going back to basics, and there's nothing more basic than pinball," Tom Nieman of Bally Manufacturing said, addressing an overcrowded roomful of operators at an AMOA pinball merchandising seminar.

"The fact that this many people (more than 90) came to a seminar on pins shows that they are looking for something after videos," Nieman suggested.

Nieman moderated a four-member panel which included Sharon Harris of Stan Harris and Co. in Philadelphia, Williams marketing representative, Joe Kaminkow, Jack Hubka, Mylstar marketing manager, and Bernie Powers, vice president of operations at Aladdin's Castle.

In his introduction, Nieman indicated that "the time is right for a resurgence of pinball," quoting passages from *Play Meter* which contend that young players may constitute a new pinball market.

"Pinball has survived for 50 years and has consistently responded to the marketplace by changing its face," Nieman noted. Pinball, he added, is one of the products always regarded as an industry staple. "Will technology leapfrog pinball, or can technology be maximized for pinball?" he asked.

"We are in a fashion industry, and must provide players with popular product. We've just come through the video game cycle which brought other product lines almost to a standstill, but there are rumors of a

resurgence of pinball," he said.

Legislative problems

Sharon Harris, the second speaker, outlined the history of pinball legislation and discussed current operator efforts to minimize pin regulations.

"We are right in the middle of financial and ethical quicksand," Harris explained, giving recent examples of proposed adverse legislation, specifically in Pennsylvania. "We must analyze our past successes and failures so that we don't make the same mistakes."

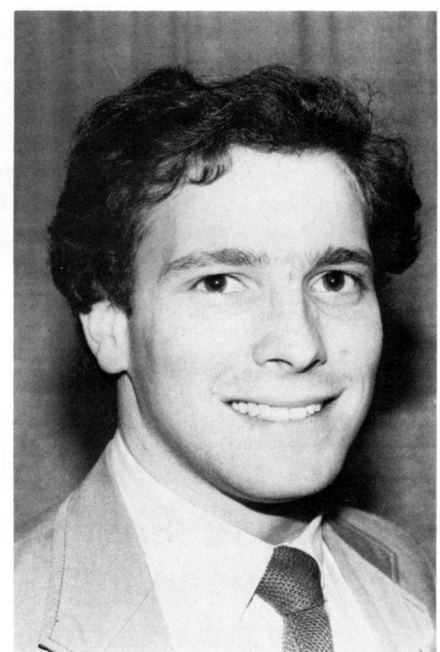
A crackdown on games in the 1930s, Harris noted, led to pinball taxation. The '40s saw the issues of free games and knock-off switches addressed in court cases. And in the



Tom Nieman



Jack Hubka



Joe Kaminkow

'50s, she added, "Bally became embroiled in a court case with bingo-type games." Philadelphia, she noted, was one of the few major cities where pins were legal. Finally by the 1970s, pinball bans were lifted.

"We have numerous problems confronting us," Harris said. Operators in Pennsylvania, she explained, are staging a massive community program to contact representatives and senators to sponsor a bill. "We must work *with* the law and use it," Harris emphasized, "rather than attempt to dodge it."

"We have an industry that we can be very proud of which offers a lot of alternatives for fun," she said. "But we also have some negative publicity from the past to overcome."

Pins reflect society

"We must reaffirm our commitment to pinball," Joe Kaminkow stressed. Exceptional pins, he said, can provide a good return on investment. A good pinball, he noted, which averages between \$150 and \$200 weekly, will pay for itself in six months. "A pinball can have a peak life of two years and then there is a home market to sell it to," he stated.

Kaminkow noted that pinball has always mirrored what has been popular or topical in society. "In 1932," he explained, "pins began to grow in popularity and took topical names like *World's Fair* and *World's Series*. The backglasses show how prevalent pins are in our society. 1977-1979 were good years for games, and videos were mirrored in *Space Invaders*, *Joust*, and *Defender* pinballs.

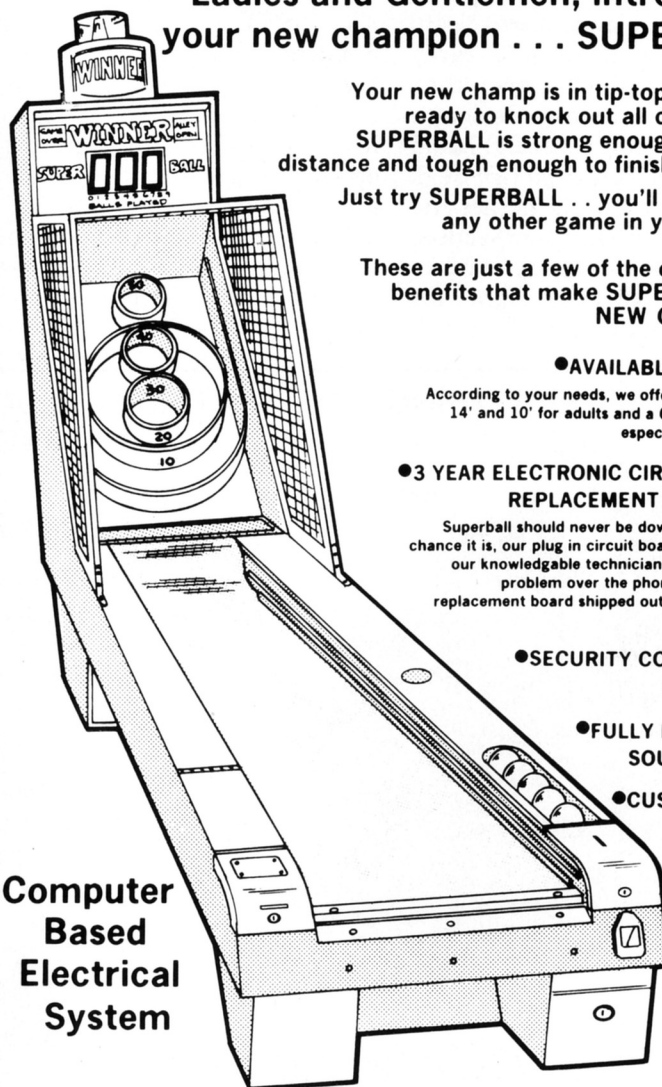
"Today pinball is really back," Kaminkow asserted. "Not in the numbers it was three years ago," he continued, "but the home pin market is strong, and people are turning back to pins in street locations because they are bored with videos."

Pinball maintenance

"If performed on a regular basis, maintenance will ensure long location life for pins," Jack Hubka explained. Hubka emphasized that maintenance begins with the pinball being set up on location. Adjustments of the cabinet and playfield

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assembly are important, he maintained, because "the angle of the playfield is most important in determining how well the game plays."

In making decisions about the difficulty levels of the games, Hubka suggested that operators go with the factory settings because they are in a conservative mode. "This ensures higher earnings and shorter play time," he stated. "We also recommend that you go with the factory settings on replay levels as well. Start out with three balls for a quarter unless the competition in the area determines otherwise."

Regular maintenance, Hubka said, should include keeping the outside cabinet and backglass free of cigarette burns and spilled drinks and keeping the playfield area clean. "Nobody wants to play a filthy machine," he reminded operators. "Any cleaner on the market does a good job. Use a soft cloth and liquid wax once a month for the playfield. Clean all channels in the games and don't forget the ball roll-up section.

"The self-test program," Hubka indicated, "will check all lights for you. Replace anything that's burned

out, and fix anything that's not working properly. Also run the self-test on coils to ensure they are working correctly."

*Pinballs traditionally
have a longer
life cycle than
video games.*

Merchandising pins

According to Bernie Powers of Aladdin's Castle, one of the most important things a street operator has to do is make his product visible to his clientele. "Make the product inviting so they will want to come up to it and spend their money on it," he suggested.

Trying to get the best position for the pieces on location is important in marketing pinballs, he said. "You have to look at our industry as a

whole. Within each location, you're in a macro-marketplace. When you see a downturn in revenue because clientele has become bored with the product, rotate your equipment.

"If I notice that machines at the far end of a location are earning a large sum of money, that tells me I need more of a certain type of equipment. It also tells me which machines are no longer earning money and that I have to put something else in their place."

Powers also revealed that his studies over the past year show that the video game life cycle is just over 12 months. On the other hand, he said, pins traditionally have a little longer life cycle than video games. "Today, because of some good quality pins produced in the last few years, we calculate the useful life of pins to be 24 months. Operators have a much longer period of time to recoup their investments on pins," he explained.

"Pinball won't outearn the new laser disc games," Powers admitted, "but a year from now, a pin will still be on location whereas the laser will have ended its life cycle." ●

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Public Relations Workshop

MANUFACTURERS, OPERATORS MUST BEGIN SOLVING INDUSTRY PROBLEMS

By Laura Braddock

Manufacturers and politically astute operators should lead efforts to solve the coin-op industry's internal and external image problems, said Sandra Pesmen, an AMOA seminar speaker and features editor of *Crain's Chicago Business*.

Pesmen presented a seminar titled "Public Relations/Seminar Workshop," but *Play Meter* contacted Pesmen after the show to discuss her seminar and industry issues. The seminar was attended by only approximately 20 people, but there was much audience participation in the way of questions and anecdotes.

One operator at the seminar said he has attended many workshops over the years, but this was the first time a speaker had motivated him to act, to take more responsibility in promoting and protecting his industry.

Before analyzing the industry's image problems, Pesmen defined public relations for the attendees: "Every person, place, or thing has an image, a way in which it is perceived by the public. Every person, place, or thing has an image of the way that it would like to be perceived by the public. The purpose of public relations is to make those two images one and the same."

Pesmen terms the image prob-



Sandra Pesmen

lems as "severe." The external image problem pits the industry against the public. Pesmen likened this dilemma to "Music Man's" Professor Hill saying there's trouble in River City and waving a wand without producing any facts. "I have an arsenal of (newspaper) clippings which show the public thinks that there are still tremendous profits to be made in this business. Legislators from the top down are wielding impossible taxes on small operators

who are going belly up because they can't even meet their rental and purchase costs," she explained.

The public also believes that coin-op games turn youths into gangsters or delinquents, Pesmen added.

The second image dilemma is within the industry. There is a distorted image between operators and their suppliers, or distributors and manufacturers, Pesmen said.

She backs up her analysis of the industry's internal problem with research from business publications from the past two years. She said articles indicate the manufacturers broke industry rules. "The manufacturers have broken the gentlemen's rules that this industry's played by for 40 years." Pesmen believes some of the errors the manufacturers made include their buying arcades, competing with operators, and raising prices "until most of them (operators) were choked out of business."

Can there be a solution to these hard feelings that have developed over the past years? Can manufacturers, distributors, and operators communicate? "We're friendly now with China because Russia is looming. We got friendly with Russia when Germany was after us," Pesmen responded. "Now, when we're in deep and serious trouble in the industry, is the time of emer-

Since the industry is in serious trouble, manufacturers, distributors, and operators can sit down, make peace, and work together.

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gency when they certainly can sit down and make peace and work together."

Meet for solutions

Pesmen proposes meetings as the first solution to the industry's communication problem and its image problem with the public.

She proposes that the manufacturers and their equipment development personnel and independent distributors meet with operators ("someone who is out in the trenches and knows what's going on") to discuss game development and pricing. "They have to want to listen to each other," she said. "Let the operators in the streets and in the trenches give them input as to what is needed by way of new games."

Pesmen pointed to laser disc games as one example of bad communication. She said that many operators she knows (Her husband has been an operator for 13 years.) believed lasers weren't going to benefit the industry because they are too expensive and need to be set at 50-cent play.

"They couldn't afford to buy them, they couldn't afford to put them in, and the kids couldn't afford to play them," she explained.

And while they are at the bargaining table, industry personnel should discuss "realistic" prices. Major U.S. companies have learned that volume selling can offset lower product prices, she added.

Who should arrange this meeting to thrash out internal problems in the industry? Pesmen feels the responsibility belongs to the large manufacturers because they're the only industry members who can afford to take on the project. "Either they (manufacturers) are going to take over the entire industry and the operators are just going to quit, or an industry can be saved on three levels. But the guys on the top have to help the guys on the bottom."

Apologies are a start

Pesmen said that Atari and Bally's recent apologies for producing low-earning games are a start to solving internal problems, but she warns that the apologies are only a little water on a very big fire. "They need to put their money where their

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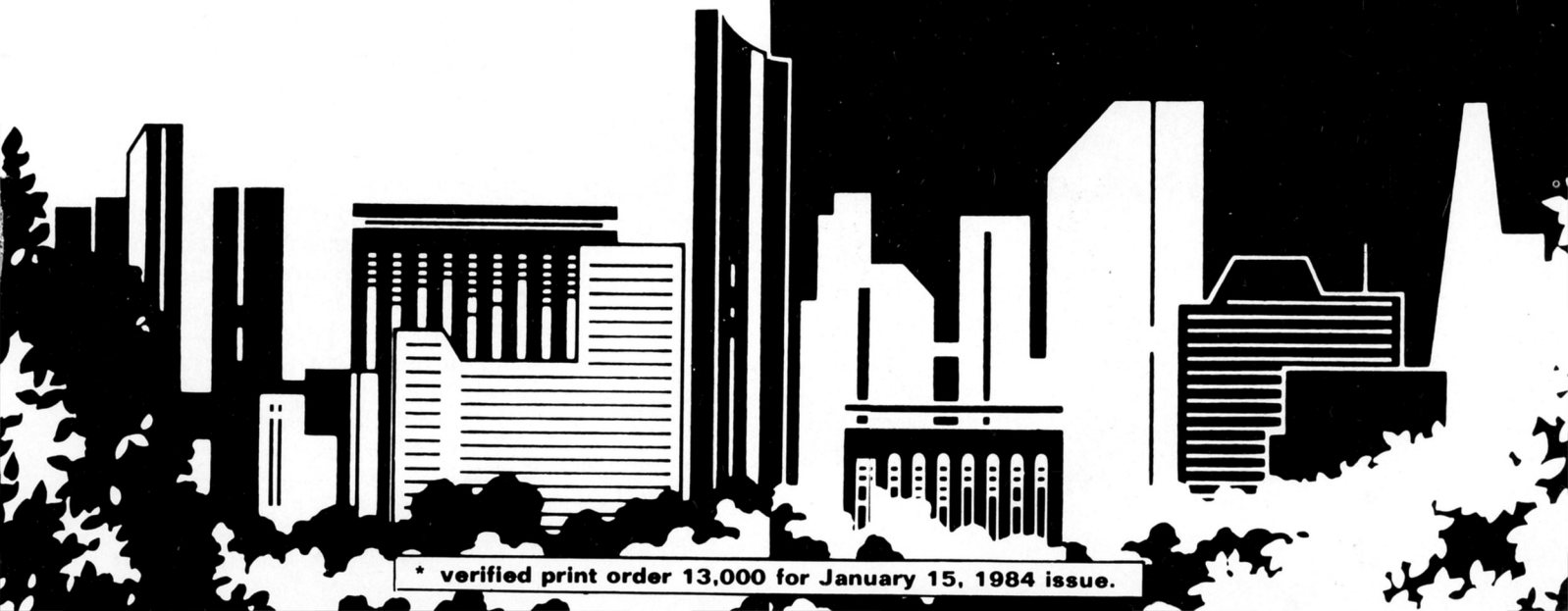
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mouth is," she said. "What good does an apology do to a guy who just went bankrupt or can't pay his bills?"

Manufacturers must activate change, she stressed. "You can't ask these guys going out of business to take charge of such a movement—nobody will listen to them. If the guys without power and money call a meeting, they are still at square one afterward."

A meeting is also part of the solution for the industry vs. the public situation and the all-too-common legislative problems. Pesmen suggests the meeting be set at an industrywide event, such as a trade show, and be attended by people who have successfully fought legislative problems. "We sit down with them and we ask them how they did it. They give us their game plan. We are then able to write it down, and distribute that to top people in every city," Pesmen said.

A major dilemma coin-op industry members and state associations confront is that they spend much time putting out brushfires instead of preventing the fire, she explained. Pesmen advocates that a committee direct efforts to stem legislation throughout the year instead of the night before an anti-industry bill is up for vote. She believes state association funds need to be channeled into advertising, public relations, and marketing programs—"to make peace where there is no war."

Solve the problems

In summary, Pesmen said the industry must first solve its external image problem so people will play the equipment; second, solve the "false-money" problems so legislators won't tax industry members out of business, and third, solve the communication problem between operators and suppliers. "You can't write releases to get people to come to your place until all these other things are taken care of," she said.

"There's no industry without problems. I see people turn industries around with professional, excellent marketing programs. It's not an impossible dream. But it has to start with the people who are in a position to do something about it."



State Association Meeting

ASSOCIATION EDUCATION PROGRAM... CONVENTIONS... FUNDING

By Valerie Cognevich

More than 100 people attended this year's state association meeting. As at previous meetings, it was moderated by Russell Mawdsley of Russell-Hall, who is also the president of the Coin Machine Operators of New England and past president of the AMOA. Three major topics were discussed: an apprenticeship education program, planning a convention, and funding an association.

Before the general membership meeting, Leo Droste, executive director of AMOA, met with directors of various associations to discuss how the AMOA can help state associations. Droste noted that there are still a number of unorganized areas and proposed that AMOA would work on a manual on "How To Organize an Association" and requested state associations to participate in the project.

Apprenticeship program

Joe Phillips, president of the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators association, talked about an apprenticeship program that has been successful in Wisconsin.

Phillips pointed out that Wisconsin has been the only state so far to certify coin machine repair people. The apprenticeship program has been in effect in the state for several years. The state pays for the instruction, which is a big benefit to the program. There has been support from Bally Midwest in donations of equipment and representatives from the various manufacturers have volunteered help.

Those who want to enter the business are required to complete a three-year program of 6,000 hours.

Phillips said that the coin-op



Russell Mawdsley

industry has to get more professional and this program helps get well-trained people into the areas they are needed.

Phillips outlined how to get involved in the apprenticeship program:

- 1 Survey your membership for a need and an interest in such a program.
- 2 Contact your state agency (In Wisconsin it is the Division of Apprenticeship.) to decide the feasibility of this program.
- 3 Form a committee to set guidelines and requirements.
- 4 Inquire if the state will provide facilities and/or teachers.

Your convention

Bob Rhinehart, executive director for the Florida Amusement Vending Association since 1968, presented guidelines for getting the maximum out of a state convention.

A convention assembles people for a common purpose, he said. Therefore, before planning a convention, find out what its purpose is, ensure that purpose is outlined in the bylaws, and then plan the convention according to the bylaws.

An association's bylaws should cover the election of officers, a finance report, signing contracts, etc. So the convention should include all of these events. You cannot think of a convention as just a party, Rhinehart said. The bylaws should be spelled out with the objectives and goals, but they do not need to be complicated. After an association has determined its purpose, then the following should be considered:

- 1 Site selection—the site must serve the convention's purpose and association's needs. Figure out what people want (golf?). It can be held in the same city year after year, but people can get bored so it may be better to rotate the show.
- 2 Be aware of the cost to the individual—you have to serve everyone so you should remember that everyone can't afford an expensive hotel. Check for room rates, food costs, and travel accessibility.
- 3 Be a convention of no surprises! Make it as easy as possible. Confusion at registration causes negative feelings. Check out the hotel before the convention.
- 4 Have a theme—it makes it easier to choose entertainment, food, etc. A theme makes members believe that the show is special and they feel comradeship. Talk to the chef about

preparing special dishes. You may be surprised at how willing he will be to display some culinary creativity—it sure beats roast beef and potatoes.

- 5 Work force—have members of the association promote membership, collect tickets, and greet people. Designate special badges or ribbons to denote workers' positions and show leadership. Most members will be willing to help.
- 6 Get to business—fulfill the by-laws. Be professional. Have materials ready for elections. The financial report is not secret but open to all members. Schedule a time for business when the majority of members can participate. The best members are the best informed.
- 7 Have something for everyone—have something members can benefit from. This includes seminars, exhibits, and technical instruction. These are ways of getting people to the convention.
- 8 Tie in allied activities—if something special is happen-

ing in the city of the show, try to plan the show at the same time. Again, this promotes good attendance.

- 9 If your state faces a crisis (legislation), then advertise it. Advertise who will be at the show to address the crisis such as a state representative. You can get press coverage if you have a legislator or authority.

Funding beyond dues

Jack Herner of Mello-Tone, a director of AMOA and president of the Coin Machine Industries of New England, spoke to the group on funding a state association beyond its dues.

In Marshfield, Massachusetts, costs have been enormous due to the age-ban lawsuit so the association has been inventive in acquiring funds. Here are some fund raising programs that were successful for the association that may help other groups:

- 1 Decal program. It is mandatory for members of the state association to pay \$10 extra for a decal when purchasing a new

game. If a member buys a used game, the decal costs \$5. Distributors collect this fee and forward it to the association. Some operators pass the cost on to the location. This provides a continuous cash flow for the association. The cost is not prohibitive to operators, and the program has greatly helped the association.

- 2 Dinner dance. The association sponsors a dinner dance charging each person \$100. The dance is very elaborate and features a seven course meal and a great band. The association made a worthwhile profit on this.
- 3 Auctions. The association is just starting this project. In this auction the association takes the first \$50, and the equipment owner gets the rest of the money. If not sold, some of the equipment will be donated to boys' clubs or other worthy charities which will also create goodwill. Three hundred pieces of equipment is planned for the first auction.

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Risk Taking and Entrepreneurship

SMALL BUSINESS DOES MORE, GETS LESS

By Mike Shaw

A MOA Exposition attendees found several opportunities to gauge U.S. congressmen's perceptions of the coin-op industry. One of those opportunities came in a Saturday, October 29 seminar titled "Risk Taking and Entrepreneurship," a look at coin game operators as small businessmen, presented by U.S. Representative Andy Ireland, a Florida Democrat.

Ireland, a self-professed fiscal conservative, told the seminar audience that the "economic condition of America is currently sound," and should stay that way, barring military or political tumult, a weakening of the United States' present strong fiscal policy, or increased foreign competition.

"Historically, small businessmen have built the Western world," Ireland, a former banker who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Small Business Problems, told operators. "They are the risk takers."

Because small businesses provide half of all American jobs, generate six times more new job opportunities than big businesses, and create more than 60 percent of all technological innovation, Ireland proposed, "this country needs a

sustaining national policy to support or unshackle small business."

That policy, he suggested, should center around reforming tax laws which make small businessmen carry an unproportionate amount of the nation's tax burden while many large companies pay little or no taxes.

ACRS

When a seminar attendee characterized recent changes to tax laws on equipment depreciation (Operators calculate taxes under the Accelerated Cost Recovery System.) as detrimental to coin operators, Ireland called it "a severe and classic problem."

There were several other inquiries from the audience, including one from an operator who worked on developing his own video game as early as 1965.

"The government made a significant investment in research and development between 1957 and 1967," said Tom Bollman of Pride Enterprises of Huntsville, Alabama. "But it has abandoned those of us who are making an effort to advance technology. Everyone wonders how the Japanese can be so technolog-

ically successful. Well, the Japanese government is putting up five times the money America is to support research and development."

Ireland did not point to any active congressional efforts to answer any of the several industry dilemmas posed by operators during the session. He could only suggest that operators and their customers make their wants and needs known to federal officials.

"People more than money" influence congressional decisions, he suggested. "You should use the unique set up of location-oriented (businesses) to get all those people to move on some topics."

Contact representatives

When an issue of concern to the industry arises, Ireland suggested operators should "spend a little time with each location to get each to contact his (congressional) representatives."

Ireland said much of the legislation favorable to big businessmen and unfavorable to small businessmen has been passed because "small business doesn't have the pull of big business, big labor, big government." ●

A national policy should center around reforming tax laws which make small businessmen carry an unproportionate amount of the nation's tax burden while many large companies pay little or no taxes.



Computerizing

CUSTOMIZE YOUR COMPUTER TO YOUR BUSINESS

By Dawn Adorno

If you have more than 100 machines and are not counting your money, you really need a computer," Ted Furkin of Allstar Music in Springfield, Illinois, explained to attendees at an AMOA seminar titled "Are You Computerizing for the Right Reasons?"

Furkin, Manley Lawson of Lawson Music Co. Inc., in Winter Haven, Florida, and Paul Borchardt of Borchardt's Coin Machines Inc. in Amarillo, Texas, comprised the panel that addressed more than 60 attendees. The speakers expressed surprise at the large early Sunday morning turnout, one that seems to indicate that more operators are considering the use of computers in their businesses.

Lawson opened the session by citing an AMOA survey revealing that 94 percent of all operators who are AMOA members have fewer than 500 machines. "This discussion is directed toward them and not the large operators and distributors because the decision making process is different for them," Lawson said.

"If you have more than 250 machines," he continued, "it is necessary, almost mandatory, that you look at a computer."

Set a goal

Whether you are considering a computer to monitor cash control, to achieve maximum return on investment on your machines, or to run your business more efficiently, the panel emphasized that operators should set a goal before making an initial purchase.

"We went to a computer because we wanted cash/revenue control," Borchardt explained. "We pur-



Manley Lawson

chased software programs to handle payroll, depreciation, accounting, etc. Our business had grown so much that my wife and I couldn't handle it ourselves," he added.

Additionally, Borchardt's computer enabled him to keep financial records and to give his servicemen specific routes. The computer aided him in accounting for his technicians' stops and in recording the amount of time the serviceman spent on each call. "We also needed a record on each piece of equipment for our own analysis," Borchardt said.

Manley Lawson invested in a computer for similar reasons. "When I took over the management of the company, I wasn't too familiar with the day-to-day operation," he noted. "Decisions are made every day on rotating equipment. It was difficult for me to look at collection tickets and decide if a location was a good or bad one. I couldn't remem-

ber every machine, and I needed a standardized way to measure each location."

Lawson, interested in the control that a computer offers, used his computer to set up a memory to tell him where each machine is and to measure each location's earnings.

"I no longer had to base decisions on how I felt that morning or by looking at the collection tickets. We use the computer readings to make those judgments," he said. "In the first year we had the computer, our profits increased fivefold."

"The computer tells us exactly what amount should be there in the coin box," Furkin asserted. "We use it to give a list of every game, its year-to-date earnings, return on investment, etc."

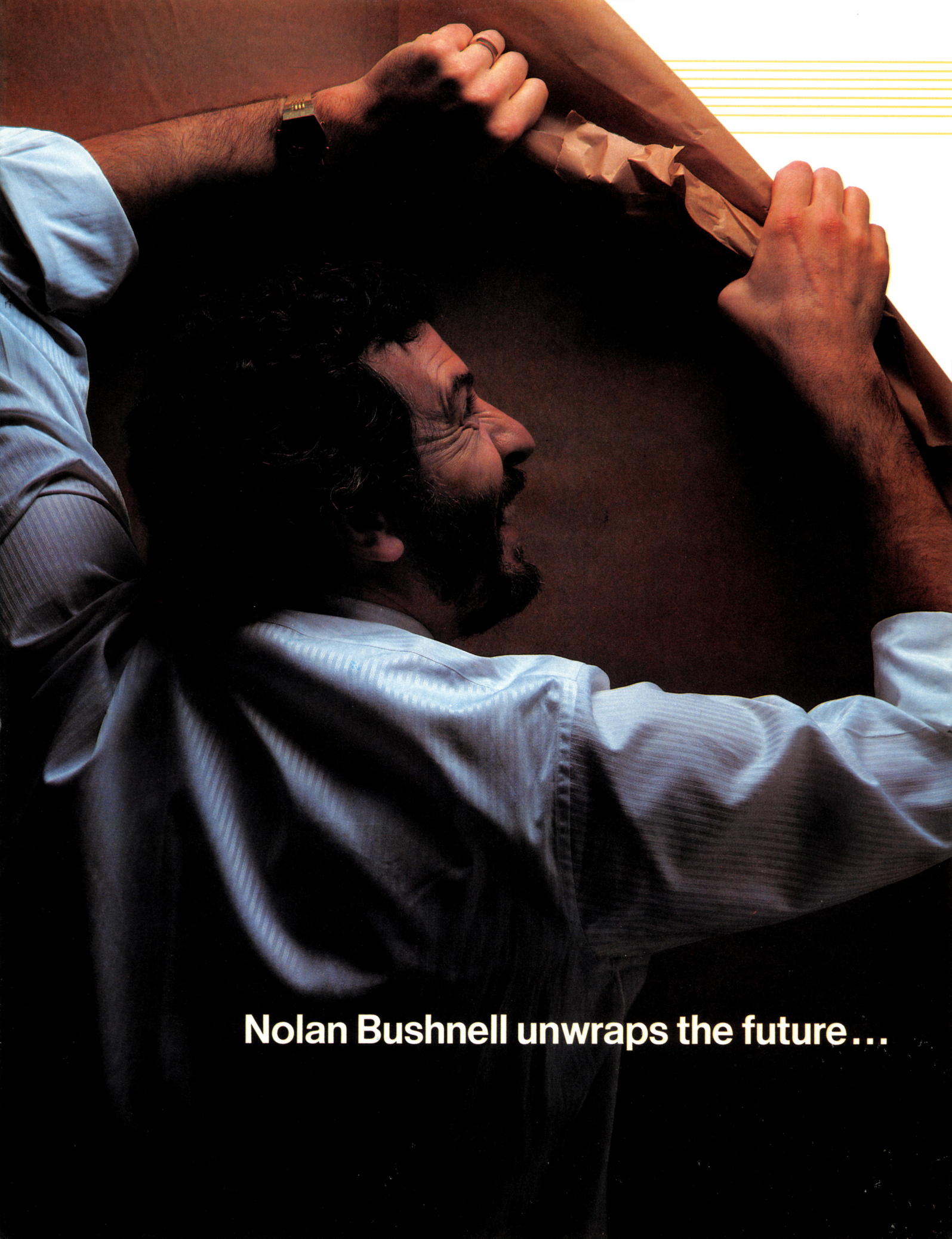
Buying software

Figuring out what aspect of your business will benefit from the use of a computer is essential in determining what kinds of software to buy. And software, the panel agreed, is the most important element to consider.

"Don't tailor your business to the computer; tailor your computer to your business," panel members stressed. Because each operator manages his business differently, he should consider his specific needs before purchasing computer software.

"I'd like to dispel the idea that it is possible to go to a computer store, pick out a computer you like, take it home, plug it in, and start to work," Lawson said. "It doesn't work that way."

Operators need to write down everything they want their com-



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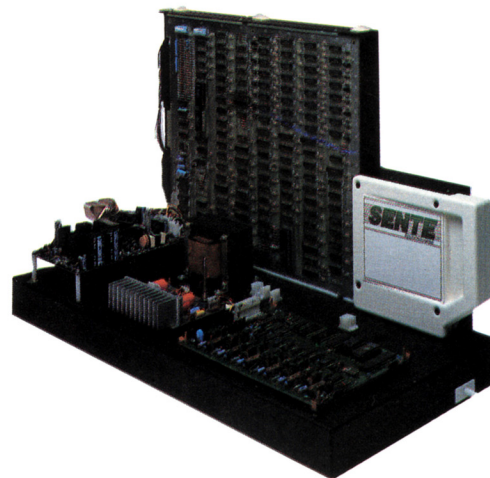
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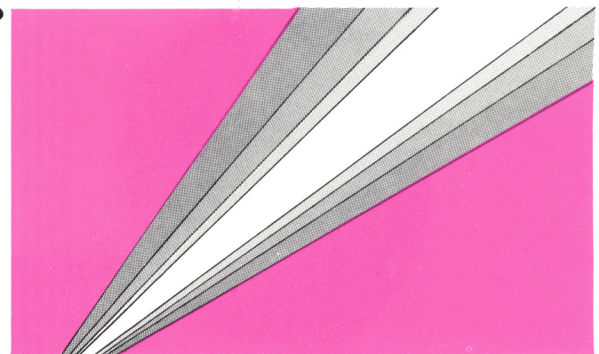
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puter to do and then take this list when shopping for a computer, Borchardt added. "The system will expand as the company grows. We looked at some custom programs at the trade shows, but we couldn't find exactly what we wanted. We had to make changes to custom fit our business," he explained.

An operator attending the seminar suggested purchasing the software before the hardware. Panel members cautioned that although some programs are more easily transferred, most programs are not adaptable to all computers. "The more efficient the program is," Borchardt noted, "the more likely it needs a particular type of hardware."

"Look at what other operators are doing," Lawson recommended. "The AMOA office maintains a file of surveys of people who have had computers installed. Many of these people are happy to explain to you what they're doing."

As your business changes, your computer needs change as well, the panel stated. Although many packages are available, the panel advised operators to ask computer salesmen before making a package purchase how easy it is to make changes, how to get someone to make changes, and how much they will cost. "Hardware salesmen try to convince you that a package will do anything you want now and in the future, but that's not true," Lawson maintained.

"What's expensive is the software," Borchardt emphasized. "Make sure what you buy is what you want."

Service and supplies

"Another important thing to look at is service," Furkin said. "Make sure that the company you buy your computer from has service backup."

"You need support for your system," Borchardt agreed. "Whether it's an in-house supplier or somebody you hire under contract, you'll need someone who can fix the computer after you have it installed."

"Also be sure that you can locally obtain supplies—like single and multiform paper and ink tapes," Borchardt suggested. "And of course, remember to keep yourself and any of your staff who will be operating the computer informed." •



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GENE'S GUDGEMENTS

By
Gene
Lewin

Critiquing AMOA Show Conversions, Dedicated Games

In this article, I will briefly review the games at the AMOA Show that are not laser based. I will use my new Return On Investment Rating Scale, which first appeared in the December 31, 1983, issue of *Play Meter* (p. 78), in all future articles. These ratings for the short reviews are based on my initial reaction. At the time of this writing, these games were not yet available. When the games come out, I will more carefully analyze them and give a full review.

The Return On Investment (ROI) Rating Scale:

- 10 A fantastic investment. Move over *Pac-Man*.
- 9 Great investment. Should earn well and hold its value.
- 8 A good bet. Should pay off for you.
- 7 Not bad. Are you willing to take a chance?
- 6 Slightly above average. Only a good investment in a high volume location.
- 5 Just average. Better be ready to rotate quickly.
- 4 Below average. Closeout around the corner.
- 3 Pretty bad. I'm not buying any.
- 2 Don't waste your money. Move over *Gravitar*.
- 1 Terrible. Not even worth playing.
- 0 They've got to be kidding. Buy pesos instead.

Conversions

Pole Position 2 - Atari

The enhancement kit adds three

new tracks to the original game. Each of the new tracks adds new twists and turns along with different scenery in the background. The crash scene is greatly improved—instead of a car burning up, the car actually blows up into pieces which fly across the screen. I'm glad Atari had the sense to release it as a kit instead of a new dedicated game. The kit is high-priced, but it looks like it will increase earnings considerably.

Rating: 9

Donkey Kong 3 - Nintendo

It seems Nintendo is offering another professional looking conversion for *Donkey Kong*. When converted, *Donkey Kong 3* looks just like a brand new game. So much for the idea that conversions mean inferior games. *Donkey Kong 3* introduces a new character named Stanley, and he tries to spray Donkey Kong up the vine. It has three scenes, but they are not as different from each other as they were in the two earlier *Donkey Kong* games. If it's reasonably priced like *Mario Bros.*, it will be a good investment.

Rating: 8

Junior Pac-Man - Bally

Another *Pac-Man* game? Yes, but it's certainly more of a change than *Pac-Man Plus*. It has seven different mazes with horizontal scrolling, making the playfield twice as big as in the earlier *Pac-Man* games. More energizer dots are available for eating, and the floating rack indicators are there as in *Ms. Pac-Man*.

The kit includes a logic board, marquee, monitor overlay glass, control panel overlay, and front cabinet overlay. The theme of *Pac-Man* is pretty well worn out so unless the kit is reasonably priced it will not be worth it. It will definitely help *Pac-Man* a lot more than *Pac-Man Plus* did.

Rating: Depends on the price.

Dinosaurs - Eastern Micro Electronics

The player is represented as a man uncovering dinosaur skeletons. The game is entertaining to play and cute. While it is not going to be a top game, it can be a good rotation piece.

Rating: 6

Popper

(Kevin McIntyre at Magic Conversion has information on *Popper*.)

The basic game play is similar to *Q*bert* in that the player jumps from pentagon to pentagon to change the color. There are some different features to make it somewhat changed. The sound effects are not as good as *Q*bert's*.

Rating: 5

Dacholer - Nichibutsu

This is a very cute game with good background music. The game wasn't finished at the time of the show, but it looks like it has some promise.

Skelagon - Nichibutsu

This game seems to be similar to *Defender* in basic game play. The *Defender* theme is completely worn out now, and this game does not stand a chance.

Rating: 1

Mega Zone - Konami

With several differences, the game play is somewhat similar to *Xevious*. It seems like another shoot-'em-up game, but I did not have enough time to really get into it to see if there is something different to it. My rating could be changed when I have more time to analyze the game.

Rating: 5

Marvin's Maze - SNK Corporation

The game play is somewhat similar to Atari's *Crystal Castles*. The graphics aren't as good nor are the sound effects, but it is a conversion, not a dedicated game. This game was not completed at the time of the show.

Rating: 6

Eggs - Universal

The play is cute, but it's slow-paced. It obviously isn't as good as *Mr. Do!'s Castle* and should have a much lower price. It probably won't make money for long, so it will be necessary to rotate it a lot.

Rating: 4

Hoccer - Eastern Micro

The player is a hockey player and the object is to run the enemies into the wall to destroy them. It almost looks like the player is killing off the opponents in a hockey game. There are other features to the game to make it interesting. One feature lets the player choose one of three difficulty levels when starting the game.

Rating: 6

Mr. Do!'s Castle - Universal

The game play, for the most part, is different from *Mr. Do!*. The Mr. Do! character is still there as well as the extra feature, but in a different way. The graphics and sound effects are good. It looks like another winner from Universal.

Rating: 9

Stinger - Venture Line

With some variations, the game play is on the *Xevious* theme. One change is that the game moves from left to right instead of up and down.

Rating: 4

Ambush - Venture Line

The game starts off with a plane taking off from a runway. It is difficult to master, but then the play turns into another space shoot-'em-

up game.

Rating: 3

Dedicated Games

Blaster - Williams

This is basically a space shoot-'em-up with good graphics and sound effects. Williams is really missing the boat with this game. It refuses to release it as a conversion, yet it will never sell very many *Blasters* as dedicated games. If Williams only offered it as a conversion for *Defender*, it would sell a lot of kits. I guess Atari will beat Williams out on a conversion for *Defender*. The game may be good, but not good enough to buy for more than \$2,000. Look for this game as a closeout.

Rating: as a complete game 3. If Williams wises up and offers it as a conversion, make that ROI rating an 8.

Phozon - Namco

(It is not licensed yet.)

The game play is based on chemistry and matching the shape in the middle of the screen with the player's molecules. It is a very colorful and challenging game with a different twist. I hope someone offers it as a conversion because, as a complete game, it won't make it in today's market.

Rating: I cannot rate it until I know if a conversion will be available.

Major Havoc - Atari

The game has several phases of play. One part is shoot-'em-up and the other part involves a maze. As a dedicated game, it has no chance and expect it as a closeout. If Atari were smart, it would have designed it so that it could be offered as a conversion for *Tempest*, since it uses an XY monitor. Since this game uses a higher resolution monitor than *Tempest* did, I think it's too late to do it now.

Rating: 2

Great Guns - Stern

The graphics are excellent with nine different scenes. The game ends when all the bullets are used. Extra bullets can be earned by skillful shooting. I wonder if a gun game will make money anymore. I don't know the cost of the game so I cannot give it an ROI rating.



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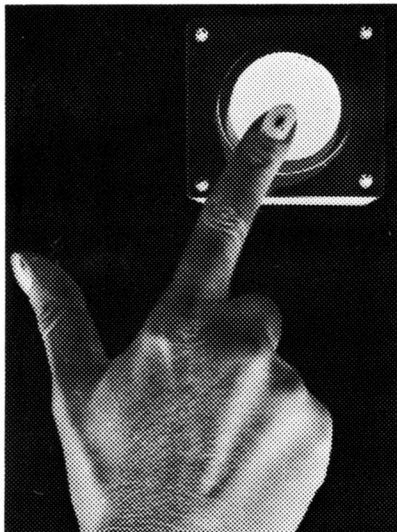


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TX-1 - Atari

It looks like an elaborate *Pole Position*. TX-1 uses three monitors to give the effect of passing objects, and it has tunnels and other obstacles. The sound comes from behind and in front of the player to give a realistic passing effect.

Rating: It depends on the price.

Bouncer - Entertainment Sciences

The graphics are excellent. It is almost comparable with a laser disc game. Entertainment Sciences uses a high-resolution monitor and a very powerful computer with more memory than any other game. It also has full speech capability. The game play is somewhat repetitious, as the player is a bouncer in a bar and has to kick out the bad people so they do not disturb the regular customers.

The bad thing is that the game is going to cost around \$4,000. As a dedicated game, it would not be worth it but Entertainment Sciences says it is going to offer two conversions a year for the cabinet. Being a new company, it is difficult to say if it will follow through with plans or even stay in business. I do think the game is overpriced and wish it were lower because the concept of a powerful computer and new programs every 6 months is a good one.

Rating: 7

Crossbow - Exidy

Game play is centered around a crossbow gun, and the play continues as long as you keep the enemies from killing off your friends. The graphics are excellent and very colorful. It would be a good game at a regular price, but Exidy wants to charge at least \$1,000 more than the standard price. The manufacturers have to realize that the operators will not make any profit if the good games are so high priced. Why should we buy them if there is no money in it for us?

Rating: 4. It is a good game but overpriced, making the ROI look below average.

Complete Review

Track & Field - Konami/Centuri

Play: The player or players, there can be up to four, compete against either each other or the computer in six different Olympic-type events. There is a minimum achievement in each event to qualify for the next event.

Controls: There is a set of buttons for two players to run and jump at the same time. In the running event, the faster the two buttons are hit the faster the man runs. This makes it necessary to pound on the buttons to make your man run fast. This will mean problems with the wires breaking and switches wearing out. It would help to use flexible wire made for vibration on these switches to help reduce the service problems.

Graphics: The graphics are excellent. The picture is very detailed and the images are sharp and clear. Konami did a nice job with this game.

Sound: Fantastic. The sound effects greatly enhance the game, along with easy-to-understand female and male voices telling the score.

Originality: Having different track and field events is an original idea. It is certainly different than the other sports games based on baseball, football, or basketball.

Opinion: The timing for this game is right, especially for operators in the Los Angeles area since the Olympics will be there this year. Everything on the game, from the graphics to the sound effects, is very well done. Without question, this was the best standard priced dedicated game at the show. It's also the only one in its class worth considering. Too bad Centuri didn't offer it as a conversion. If it did, it would blow away all the other conversions. I wonder how many dedicated games will sell in this soft market.

Rating: 8. If Konami/Centuri ever releases it as a conversion, it will be a definite 10.

The manufacturers have to realize that the operators will not make any profit if the good games are so high priced.



THE MOST EXCITING VIDEO... PINBALL'S RETURN... VIDEO JUKEBOX'S APPEAL

By Roger C. Sharpe

I attended my first MOA in 1975. There was a sense of wonder and awe at seeing one machine after another waiting to be played. Mirco exhibited a solid-state pin called *Spirit of '76*, and Allied Leisure showed off its hybrid *Dyn 'O Mite*. Together, these two models were examples of what lurked around the corner.

Video games attempted to make a mini-comeback, and highlights included a wealth of racing/driving games, as well as gun and sports themes, while arcade attractions continued to borrow on old concepts and play action.

The atmosphere was rather low-keyed and almost friendly on the floor as visitors passed from one booth to the next. The industry hadn't experienced widespread public attention yet, and it was, more or less, business as usual—similar to what had transpired for decades. No one on that floor could have dreamed what would follow and how different the industry would become due to new technologies and big business getting involved.

Today the results are apparent. The coin-op industry has become big business with major corporations involved as holding companies for so many of the manufacturers. Gone are the days of good-natured competition where everybody seemed to share so much in common with the fellow next door. In fact, the general mood was almost like that of a country club where each member paid dues and then became

a part of the activities.

Industry changes

In 1983 all that has changed. The neighbor-like feelings have been replaced by cautious business practices and an unwritten credo that everyone looks out for himself. The slump caused much of this, but so too has the appearance of licensing agreements and further media exposure. Suddenly, any game has the potential for bringing in big bucks if it can sustain some popularity and catches the eye of a home game/software company.

There's even the possibility of other adaptations such as toys, apparel, knickknacks, or a Saturday morning cartoon show. These circumstances contributed much to the conditions at the 35th annual AMOA convention held at the end of October in New Orleans.

For me, at least, it was strange to be down south in warm weather attending this event, rather than making my way through Outer Drive traffic in windy Chicago. Initially, the show seemed to be less frantic and crowded compared to the Second City affairs.

Added to this was a noticeable lack of excitement on the show floor. It was as if everyone were more somber and low-keyed this time around. Only on the last day of the show, when I ran into Eddie Boasberg at the Atari booth, did I find someone who said the convention had been "exciting, with so much interesting equipment on display."

But this seemed to be a minority opinion. Many others either walked with boycott signs or talked about an ominous lawsuit threatening to split apart the industry.

Diverse product

Putting everything in perspective, what struck me the most, overall, was the diversity of product on display. For far too long the only game in town seemed to be video, video, and more video. This single-minded assault wouldn't have been so bad, even for a pinball fan like myself, if the models introduced only had shown variations in game play and design.

But this year there was a variety of product, possibly due to the few companies willing to deviate from the norm and gain some success in the process—Stern with *Mazer Blazer*, ICE's *Chexx*, Zaccaria's return to these shores with a couple of loaded pinball machines, and others. The trend seemed to encourage more imaginative models, and the AMOA had a fair share on display.

In fact, one of my personal highlights was in looking at how broad the category of coin-operated amusements has become. All the kiddie rides aside, which seem to be growing in number and design, a wealth of machines were available that probably wouldn't have been attempted just a year or two ago.

Up there near the top of the list has to be Taito's *Ice Cold Beer*. Here is a throwback to the mechanical

novelties of the '20s and '30s, amply updated with digital displays and musical accompaniment as players try to guide little ball bearings into specific holes that dot the upright board.



Zeke's Peak is the arcade version of Taito's Ice Cold Beer.

It's pure, no-frills entertainment that should find a good audience as a bar piece and on college campuses. The uniqueness of this creation and its appeal are a credit to Taito and the company's willingness to break away from tradition.

Attention also must be paid to Williams and its innovative *Rat Race*, which takes the concept of the old labyrinths and incorporates challenges on a single joystick-controlled machine that's ripe for one-player action, but will make it or break it as a head-to-head piece.

Following on the strength of *Chexx*, there were a number of imitations and variations, while ICE brought us a little head-to-head boxing machine called *Smaxx*. You then had to only walk around the convention to see a selection of Skee-balls.

But the former arcade attraction which showed surprising resurgence was the gun games. From *Ninja Gun* to Stern's *Great Guns*, this type of machine appears to be enjoying a rebirth in interest of sorts. However, the fact that so many gun games were in attendance should offer a clue that there might be a ready, willing, and able market waiting to be tapped.

Pinball's return

As for that other long time coin-op staple—pinball—the testament to its return could be found, most impressively, at the Zaccaria corner where *Farfalla* and *Time Machine* brought new meaning to what a fully loaded design can be. Brightly colored with a host of cosmetic effects, one could only marvel at the double-level playfield design and the rising or sinking playfield that were anything but austere.

This company has to have some impact in the United States for pinball-starved players and those just now trying flipper machines.

Williams showed off the extremely appealing *Firepower II* with all its fine touches and fast-paced action. It vastly improves upon the original in terms of layout and play. Over at Gottlieb (aka Mylstar), *Ready - Aim - Fire!* was displayed, but it falls short of the mark and left me asking why *Rack 'em Up*, an infinitely better game, wasn't on the floor.

Bally rounded out the flipper game options with a follow-up to *Baby Pac-Man* called *Granny and the Gators*. This pin/vid definitely emphasizes the video portion of play far more than *Baby Pac-Man* and might not balance everything off as well as it could. However, X's & O's did bring back a basic pinball theme from the old days with a fairly straightforward layout that shouldn't be too intimidating for the novice player.

One exhibit I can't pass up, because there was some personal satisfaction in seeing it, was Game Plan's booth. There was *Sharpshooter II* with some new artwork and sound effects, but the same basic, solid action I'll always remember. It looks to be a potentially strong performer for today's players.

Anyway you look at it, pinball seems to have turned the corner as a viable piece that can earn its share of the market for those looking for more physical interactive coin-op entertainment.

Laser review

Speaking of interactivity, laser games were in attendance as many

companies attempted to further the notion that this format, indeed, offers a vast amount of potential. The problem in viewing this category as the messiah and panacea



Stern's Cliff Hanger incorporates animation and looked to be a novel effort.

that will lead the industry out of its woes, is that the application of the technology is still in its infancy. This was apparent from the games that didn't make it to the show floor, including Atari's *Firefox* and Laser Disc Computer System's *Pitchman*, but also in the other games that were displayed.

Cinematronics continues to ride on the success of *Dragon's Lair* although there were rumblings of the next game, *Space Ace*, as well as a possible follow-up sequel to *Dragon's Lair* which will feature Dirk the Daring in a different storyline. Animation was also the direction taken by Stern's *Cliff Hanger* which looked to be a novel effort, complete with operator-adjustable screen displays that tell players what they should have done in order to not lose a life. Another addition to this genre was the surprise showing of Centuri's (through Konami) *Badlands* which was a response and timing game complete with an Old West scenario.

Over at Data East, *Bega's Battle* showed off the combination of background animation along with PC images on screen for an interest-

ing twist that offers some potential. And then there were the other lasers such as Bally's *Astron Belt* which looked to have undergone substantial changes since last year. Meanwhile, Mylstar couldn't help but be pleased by the response and initial reports of *M.A.C.H. 3* with its live-action footage and video image marriage.

Funai was off in the back, but those who passed had to be impressed by its *Interstellar Laser Fantasy* being projected on a big-screen television. A relative newcomer to the scene was Simutrek with an imaginative cabinet design and screen displays for *Cube Quest* that brought to life some eye-catching visuals.

Taito, meanwhile, got on track with its *Laser Grand Prix* racing game. It adds a new dimension to the Fuji Speedway which must be becoming one of the more recognizable and famous tracks around.

Williams should have a winner with *Star Rider*. Although this machine was far from complete, the package and impressiveness of the graphics can't be ignored for what they represent as a breakthrough in the use of technology.

Finally there was Stern again with a second effort called *Goal to Go* that brings live action football to coin-op.

Videos

Rounding off the major attractions on the show floor were a host of conversion kits to update old videos. An array of manufacturers offered a range of options and selections that either borrowed on old themes or introduced some nuances that might be worthwhile for today's troubled operator.

In terms of more conventional videos, the most exciting introduction had to be Centuri/Konami's *Track & Field*. These two companies have had great success, and they may have teamed up for their most promising effort to date. With a booth that featured a one-track mind of *Track & Fields* in a variety of cabinet styles, the one constant was the play action. The game features six Olympic events and head-to-head competition that will give players a taste of more physical video action.

Not since Atari's trak-ball sensa-



Astron Belt (above) featured several changes since last year. Many were impressed with Funai's Interstellar.



The Fuji Speedway is highlighted in Laser Grand Prix.

tion *Football*, have I seen a game that demands such involvement by the player. It's a test of stamina, timing, and good coordination. The graphics and sound effects are excellent, and the promotional package Centuri has put together, complete with trophies, is something which should be commended for its eye to detail.

Elsewhere on the show floor, the sensitivity to improved graphics was probably best exemplified by the 3-D cartoon animation of *Bouncer* from Entertainment Sciences and Exidy's *Crossbow*. Developed by a new company, *Bouncer's* visuals were due to state-of-the-art technological applications and new system hardware that produced more than 500 images on screen.

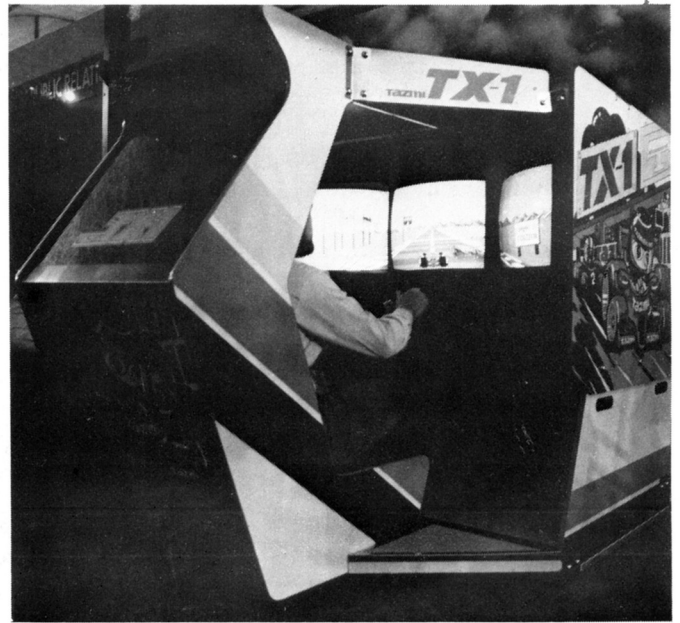
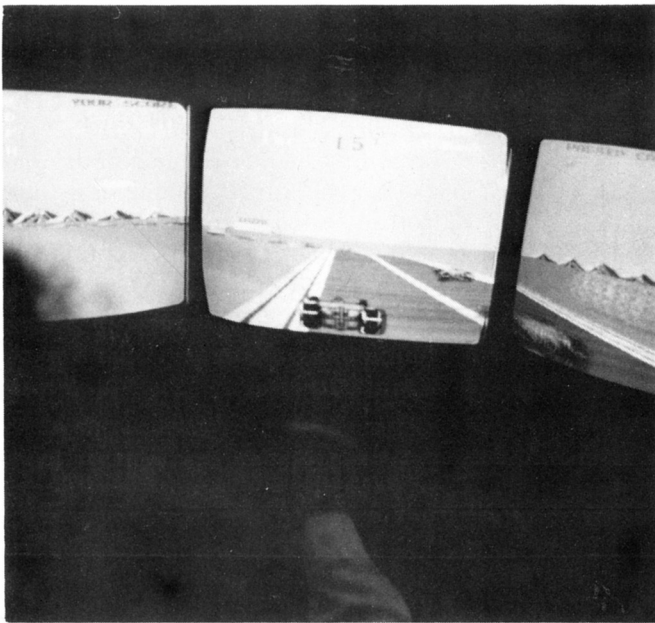
As for Exidy, which is enjoying its 10th anniversary in this crazy business, *Crossbow* was a far cry from *Death Race*. Eight screens are filled with a variety of colors and extremely realistically rendered settings that should mark this shooting game as a notable deviation from the ordinary.

Other visually special models included *TX-1* from Atari via Namco. This *triple* monitor racing game was a sight to behold, and it will be interesting to see the response to the surprisingly good enhancements found on *Pole Position 2*. Bally's *Discs of Tron*, although no longer a newcomer, is still an arrestingly appealing machine with its distinctive cabinet environment and strong, dimensionalized graphics.

In addition, Williams showed off *Blaster* in a few different cabinet designs. This is a fast-paced shooting and flying game that boasts very colorful graphic images on screen and an almost limitless storyline that promises a real treat something like wave 8,000. (Seriously, it's only wave 30.) Even a kit like *Marvin's Maze* from SNK Electronics wasn't too bad visually, although it did combine themes from a couple of games of more recent vintage.

Something for everyone

With this edition of the AMOA, it truthfully could be said that there was something for almost everyone and every taste. The array of kiddie rides



TX-1's triple monitor aroused interest. TX-1 is from Atari via Namco.

continues to be more imaginative each succeeding year as does the diversity in novelty equipment, with everything from the most modern bowling machines to shooting galleries and attractions such as *Mr. Muscle* and *Mr. Jolt*.

If jukebox manufacturers have searched for a broader audience during the past few years, the inclusion of sights, as well as sounds, have probably helped this coin-op staple turn a corner in its growth. The result is a greater proliferation

of models which incorporate some video entertainment, on the order of MTV. And, in terms of innovatively styled cabinets, it was almost impossible to ignore the white countenance of the model from Laser Disc Computer Systems.

Finally, adding fuel to the fire that coin-op is a multifaceted industry, was the appearance of High-Tech Entertainment's booth. This Muncie, Indiana-based company displayed its Micro Coin coin-operated computers, which could eventually

become an extremely important component part of future design development. The possibilities with this type of concept are limitless as society becomes more computer-oriented.

All signs point to a much improved 1984 as the industry seems ready to venture into new areas and upgrade basic equipment and formats for an audience waiting to be enticed and allured back with inventive creations that span all areas of design. ●



SNK's Marvin's Maze combines themes from recent games.



Super-Bowl from U.S. Billiards proves there is diversity in novelty equipment.

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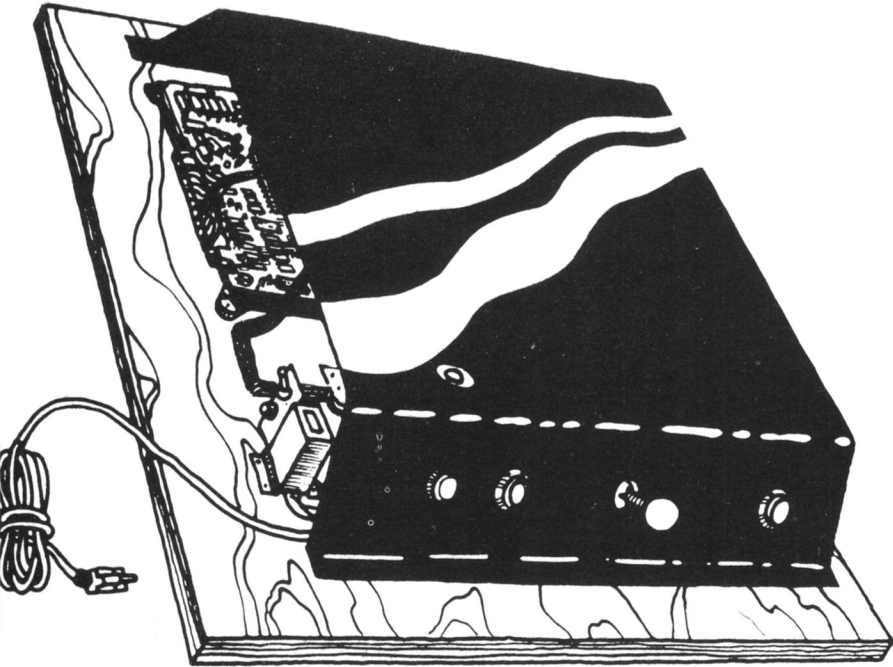
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A TECHNICAL LOOK AT AMOA 1983

By Randy Fromm



DIP SWITCH ADJUSTMENT
REMOVES HANGING SCENE

If you looked carefully enough, the 1983 AMOA Show held some interesting surprises. There was, of course, an abundance of laser disc games. One was highly sophisticated, one was incredibly silly, and the others ran the gamut between the two.

Also on display at the exhibition were high-resolution graphics, kiddie computers, and various types of test equipment.

The Laser Discs

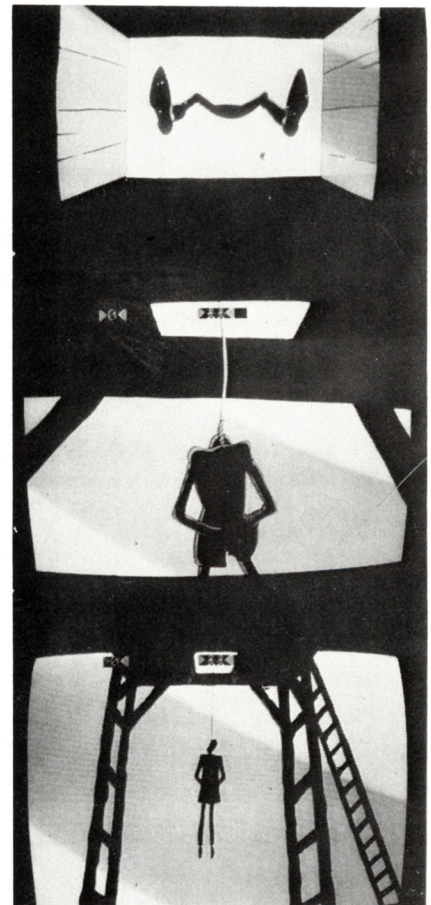
The laser disc video games have evolved into three subspecies. The cartoon game asks the player to make a series of decisions via joy-

stick and button to enable a cartoon hero to survive a seemingly never ending onslaught of threatened mayhem. In Cinematronics' *Dragon's Lair*, the hero fights his way to save a princess from the clutches of a dragon. Konami's *Badlands* pits a wild west hero (the player) against snakes and gunslingers.

Cliff Hanger from Stern is just like the Japanese cartoons that kids watch on Saturday morning—you never quite know what the heck is going on! Like the others, *Cliff Hanger* requires that the player move the joystick or depress an action button to correspond with the activities on the screen. Unlike the others, however, *Cliff Hanger* responds to a missed or incorrect move with a message on the screen indicating "You should have moved left!", "You should have moved down!", or a similar message to indicate to the player what the correct move should have been.

Also unlike the others, *Cliff Hanger* sports the most gruesome, repulsive, and unnerving "death sequence" to date: a spectre of a body as it drops from a gallows above pulling back to reveal the ghastly apparition of the lifeless corpse as it swings gently at the end of the hangman's noose. Operators with routes on this side of Transylvania will be pleased to know that the hanging sequence can be eliminated with an option switch on the control board.

A second type of laser disc game is an interactive system that uses computer generated graphics (at least one of which is controlled by the player) that interact with the background scene generated by the



This particularly gruesome death scene in Stern's *Cliff Hanger* can be eliminated with an option switch on the control board.



Jim Sneed of Kurz-Kasch demonstrates the use of signature analysis for troubleshooting logic boards.



Taito's Laser Grand Prix puts computer generated cars on a laser disc video track.



Bega's Battle is an example of a background generator type of laser.

laser disc. The first such game was Sega's *Astron Belt* which debuted at an earlier show and has now been released for production by Bally. In *Astron Belt*, the player pilots a computer generated spacecraft through a dogfight with enemy craft and between the walls of a steep canyon. (The canyon illusion was created by using a blowtorch to cut a trench in a large, rotating disc made of Styrofoam. The camera was then lowered into the trench as the disc revolved around it.)

Mylstar's *M.A.C.H. 3* and Taito's *Laser Grand Prix* are similar systems with different themes. In the interactive system, the computer keeps track of the laser disc display by means of digital information that is encoded in one of the two soundtracks on the disc. As the video information on the disc is displayed, the information on the audio track is fed into the game's computer so it can determine hits and misses.

The undisputed champion of the interactive video disc system is Williams Electronics' *Star Rider*. The Williams' system uses two microprocessors to control the laser disc player and to generate additional screen graphics. The system also uses a technique known as "scrolling" to allow changes in the perspective of the roadway in response to steering. Unlike the other games (stuck with unalterable images contained on the disc), the hardware system in *Star Rider* manipulates the images to enhance the illusion of realism. I'll give you more on this system as information becomes available.

Finally, there is the laughable "background video" laser disc game. In this type of system, the images displayed by the video disc player have absolutely nothing to do with the actual play of the game itself. The sole purpose of the laser disc is to provide a high resolution background for the computer generated graphics that are actually the game itself.

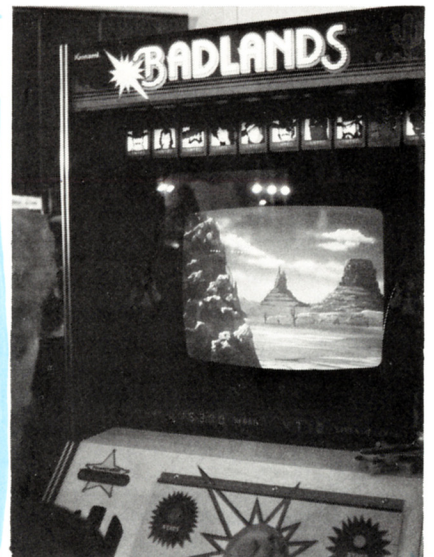
In their haste to jump into the laser disc arena, the manufacturers have forgotten that, above all, the game has to be good in order for the operators to make a return on their investment. A silly game is no less ridiculous with the addition of a laser disc background generator. In fact, Simutrek's *Cube Quest* is touted



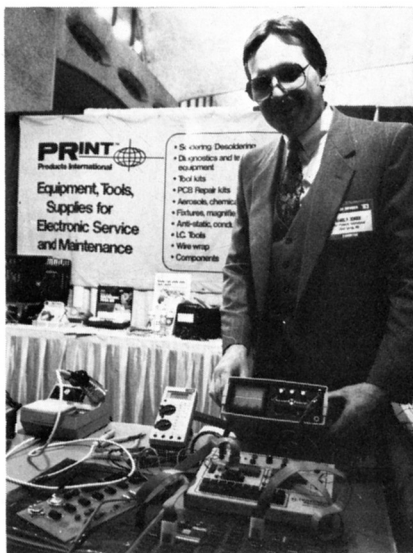
High-resolution graphics are featured in Exidy's Crossbow.



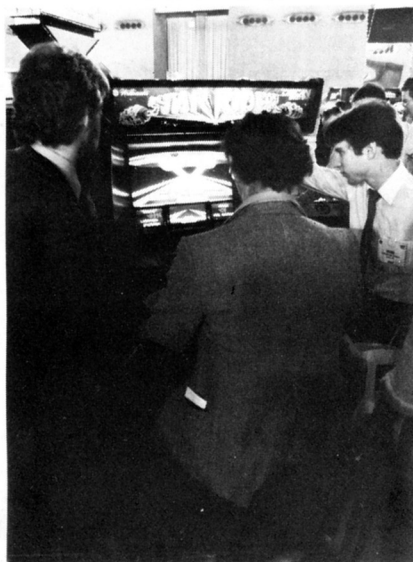
Data East's "visible video game" shows the simplicity of its convertible system.



Konami's Badlands is a cartoon western drama with snakes and bad guys.



Daniel Schoen of Products International presented the "Huntron Tracker" unit.



The undisputed champion of the interactive video disc system is Star Rider.



Just what the industry needs—a cheap, fun, and mechanical game. (Hooray for Taito!)

for its ability to function as a viable, money-making entity even when the laser disc player has failed! If it's that good, why use a video disc system at all? *Bega's Battle* from Data East is another example of the background generator type of laser disc video game.

High-Resolution Graphics

Another outstanding development may have gone unnoticed by many who attended the show. *Bouncer* from Entertainment Sciences features the highest resolution graphics found to date in a commercial video game. Using a full megabyte (one million bytes) of memory, four microprocessors, and a new, high-resolution monitor from Electrohome, *Bouncer* sports a resolution of 512×384 . That gives the programmers more than 196,000 individual picture elements (pixels) that can be separately illuminated to create the images of the game. The high-resolution monitor has a bandwidth of 25 megahertz!

Along the same lines, Exidy has released a high-resolution graphics video called *Crossbow*, which is promoted as a "mass memory" game. However, all current raster scan videos are technically mass-memory, and *Crossbow* uses a conventional medium-resolution monitor to display the images of the game. The images are extraordi-

narily good in *Crossbow*, and the industry does need a viable "rifle" game. *Crossbow* fills the bill nicely.

Technical Support

Technicians looking for easier and faster ways to repair logic boards found some support at Kurz-Kasch. The Dayton, Ohio, manufacturer displayed a wide variety of test equipment including logic probes, power supplies, PROM duplicators, and its signature analysis system. Of special note are two new "firmware accessories" that are used in conjunction with the signature analysis system. The NOP and intelligent NOP accessories are plugged in place of the microprocessor and are used to exorcise all of the peripheral devices of the system for testing with the analyzer. This creates a standard set of signatures for all systems, regardless of what the actual game might be!

To make things even easier, Jim Sneed Jr. of Kurz-Kasch prepared a manual that lists all of the standard signatures so that the technician need only compare the listed signatures to those obtained from the unit under test. If a device's input signatures check out good but the output signatures are different from those listed, then the device is probably bad. Of course a loaded output will also show as defective so



Data East displayed its current stable of interchangeable games.

outputs must be isolated to verify a bad device. This is true of all troubleshooting techniques.

On display at Products International was a wide variety of tools and test equipment for board repair including the Huntron Tracker. The Tracker looks like a small oscilloscope and is used to test all types of electronic components. The Tracker has a couple of advantages over other types of test equipment in that all testing is performed with the power to the board turned off and components can be tested individually for quality without the neces-

sity of having a schematic for the unit under test. Look for a more detailed review of this unit at a later date.

Automated Production Equipment Corp. showed its range of repair aids including the model PRS-475. This unit does everything necessary for repairing printed circuit boards including soldering, desoldering, and thermal wirestripping. It also includes a precision, rotary tool for grinding, cutting, and deburring printed circuit boards. This is quite useful when a section of the board becomes

damaged or burned.

Additional features include reflow soldering that heats component leads by passing current through them (4 volts at up to 8 amps) and a supply of heated, pressurized air that is useful for blowing solder from holes and shrinking "heat shrinkable" tubing. The heated air supply is also ideal for isolating component failures that are thermally intermittent. When a marginal component is blasted with the 1000° stream of air from the unit, thermal problems show up quickly!

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FRANK'S CRANKS

By
Frank "The Crank"
Seninsky

'Mega Zone': A Conversion Worth Considering

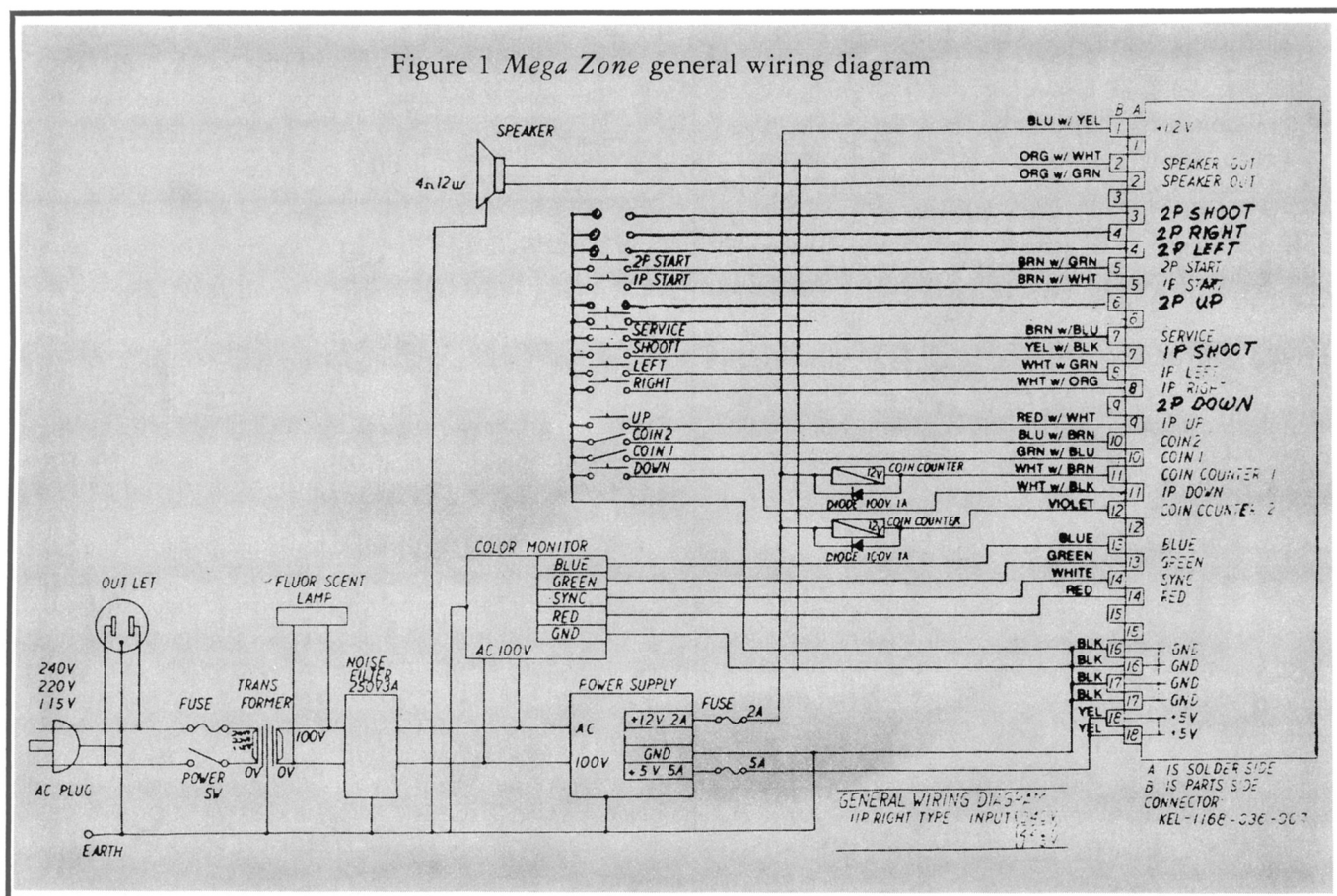
It's now four weeks since the AMOA Show, and I can not offer you any revised opinions on what the hot games are. With these additional weeks of nationwide test reports, I still stick with my original picks.

The best dedicated video game is still *Track & Field* by Konami/Centuri; the top conversion kits I've been working with are *Elevator Action* by Taito, *Mr. Do!'s Castle* by Universal, and a "sleeper" by Interlogic called *Mega Zone*. (I'm also getting *Time Pilot*, *Pole Position 2*, *Junior Pac-Man*, and *Donkey Kong 3*.)

Mega Zone was created by Konami Industries of Japan, the originator of some pretty good games: *Time Pilot*, *Gyruss*, *Super Cobra*, *Roc 'n Rope*, and *Track & Field*.

I've received six different test reports (independent of Interlogic), and *Mega Zone* is right up there, just below the decent laser games, *Star Wars*, *Pole Position*, and *Elevator Action*. If you're like me, you don't put much credence in test reports because the circumstances can sometimes be very misleading. I'm more interested in which games will fit into my route,

Figure 1 *Mega Zone* general wiring diagram



game plan, and budget. Extremely good test reports on a game initially get my attention to take a serious look at a game.

Mega Zone is a fast-paced, challenging game that can be likened to Atari's *Xevious* in some respects. There is much more scrolling up the screen in *Mega Zone* than in *Xevious*; as players must overcome enemies and barricades as they advance to destroy the Command Tower.

The kit comes with the PC board and RF cage (FCC required), wiring harnesses, marquee overlay, left and right cabinet side graphics, a 10 millimeter thick suede lexan control panel overlay (like those on Williams' games), two sets of control button decals, an instruction decal, an eight-way Wico joystick, and manuals with schematics. Any vertically mounted raster scan monitor game can be used for the conversion.

A special hard vinyl destructible acrylic material is now being used for the marquee and panel decals. Once these decals are bonded on (They take 48 hours to completely bond.), they cannot be peeled off. Players or passersby can chip away at the edges of the decals and take small pieces off at a time but will soon be discouraged from continuing. If you should need an extra button decal or are doing a cocktail conversion, also note there are two sets of button decals.

Figure 1 shows the edge connector and general wiring diagram. This wiring is almost exactly the same as that on *Roc 'n Rope* except that it's even simpler. *Mega Zone* does not require a -5 volts as does *Roc 'n Rope*. Pins B3 and A6 are not used on *Mega Zone*. These were the "Flash" buttons on *Roc 'n Rope*.

I noted that the RF cage is secured by two screws making it quite easy to get to the board for service. I've seen cages that are held on by too many screws, making it time consuming to repair the game. The kit comes in a full-sized box, big enough so that the decals and lexan overlay are packaged in a flat position. These decal materials have a memory and if rolled or folded will not go back to their original form without showing a crease or bend.

Figure 2 shows the bonus, difficulty level, and number of players' settings on *Mega Zone*. The board comes set at normal difficulty levels but should be adjusted according to what type of players you have. There are 48 possible combinations of settings.

Hints on *Mega Zone* Conversions

Choose a power supply that is rated for around 5.0 amps at +5 volts and between 1 to 2 amps at the +12 volt section. When setting the +5 volts, measure this voltage at the PC board because you will probably have a slight drop from the power supply to the board due to wire resistance and the resistance of your connections.

Remember, the appearance of the cabinet is always a factor in what a game earns. Of course a bad game in a good cabinet will still not earn, but a good game in an

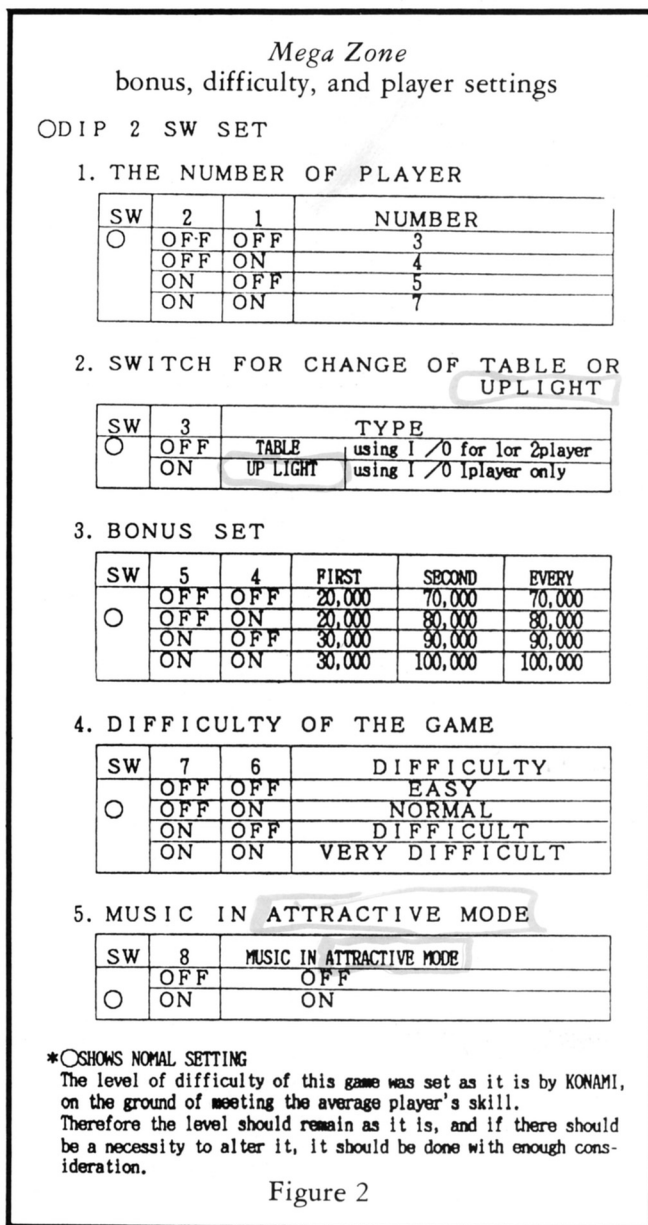


Figure 2

attractive cabinet will earn more than that same good game in a shabby cabinet.

To save time, a hair dryer can aid in removing old stick-on graphics from a panel or cabinet. The heat from the dryer will "rubberize" the adhesive so most of the material will peel off. Soaking the remaining gummy adhesive with acetone and rubbing with a towel or cloth will give you a clean surface to work with. (Don't use acetone on surfaces with flat paint as it may remove some of the paint).

Stick-on decals will bond to your surface if you take the following steps: spray the already cleaned area where the decal is to be applied with Windex. Remove the decal backing and place the decal over the bubbled area. Using a soft, dampened sponge, begin in the center and slowly push to the outside areas. Press out the excess foam until the entire decal looks smooth. Let the decal sit for about 24 hours. Your decals will stay on longer than if you had just pressed them on without the Windex.

By the time you read this article, I will have my own

test reports on *Mega Zone*, as well as a few others. I like the professional manner in which Interlogic puts together its kits. *Mega Zone* looks like it will be around a while so there's little chance that purchasing one could be a bad investment. I think *Mega Zone* is one of the best conversion kits presently around.

Service Tips

1. Bill Sebourne of Santa Cruz Sea Side Co. tells of a common problem that he had with his *Dragon's Lair*. The game will have distorted video or no video at all, a loud hum, and/or no game play (lockup). After much searching, Sebourne found a short in one of his coin door lamp socket terminals.

This is a very common problem on many video games. Often coin door wires (from lamps, slam switches, or just from the wiring harnesses) will become shorted to ground because they become pinched at one of the coin door edges. Whenever you see "garbage" on the screen, check these wires. It's also a good idea to go over all the coin door wires every time you do a collection. It only takes a few seconds and may save you a serious service call.

2. *Mr. Do's Castle*—You need a coin meter! I forgot to mention in my previous review that the coin switch circuit needs a coin meter or it will not time correctly. The coin meter is not shown on the schematic, but you must wire one into the coin switch circuit. I've gotten more than a dozen calls this week regarding this problem. Most of you were lucky in that you either chose a game that already has a coin meter or just put one into the circuit out of habit.

3. One of the most practical tips was phoned in to me by Larry Ginsburg of Gem Vending, Straten Island, New York. Ginsburg knew he would catch my attention with a way to stop a plastic attraction panel (marquee) from breaking when punched by a frustrated player.

Ginsburg suggests putting Scotch nylon-reinforced packing tape, in a single layer, tightly across the back of all plastic (or safety glass) marquees. The 6-inch width tape is the best. The tape is transparent so the attraction light will shine through, and no one will be able to see the tape. After applying the tape, punch the marquee. It really makes it rigid. Ginsburg claims that since he's done this, he hasn't found a broken marquee. That's not to say that marquees cannot be stolen but, at any rate, the tip is appreciated. It's inexpensive and, if it saves you a few bucks on new marquees, all the better.

Don't be ashamed of any tips you have. The readers find them useful.

You can reach me at Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, 3 Coral St., Edison, NJ 08837, (201) 738-1800. Call or write if you need any more information or just want to chat. Who knows, maybe I'll even save you some time or money.

As always...keep cranking. ●

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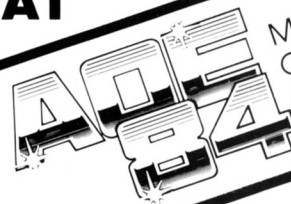
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An Operator's Viewpoint

WHEN LESS IS MORE . . . REFLECTIONS ON AMOA '83

By Steve Hochman

Editor's Note: Play Meter has featured AMOA Show reviews from technicians and game critics. Here is an operator's opinion to round out our show coverage. Look for a players' review of the AMOA in a future issue.

Toward the end of this annual AMOA Show, for the first time held in beautiful and warm New Orleans, I was asked by this trade publication to submit my list of the top 10 machines. My initial reaction was that I would have a difficult time deciding on more than five favorites that I feel will become the hits of '84.

During the flight back to the Big Apple, most of the conversation among the many operators and distributors aboard centered on the following points: (not necessarily in the correct order of importance) "Why does the AMOA have to be in Chicago? It's always cold and windy in Chicago at this time of the year. Let's come back to New Orleans." "I must have gained 5 pounds." "Did you try breakfast at Brennan's?" "It must be amateur night for flight attendants (Eastern Airlines)." "Seems like attendance was off, or maybe everyone went sightseeing." "Looked like a Gambling and Arcade show."

Back home in New York with Willie Tari, my partner, we reviewed the show. The manufacturers' sales brochures were given a careful examination. We both agreed that any list on the top 10 machines would include a lot of "cross pollination." After all, most of the equipment was for either arcade, tavern, or street (non-tavern?) locations. Since 98 percent

of our locations are street locations, we attempted the top 10 from our point of view. We soon realized that there simply was no way this list could honestly be constructed. Possibly naming the top 5 twice would produce a top 10 list.

Needless to say, the two top games were 1. "Large Empty Box" by Sente and 2. "Disappearing Act" by Nolan Bushnell. I can hardly wait until December 9. Of course *Firefox* by Atari could have been a big hit—if it only worked. Maybe the factory

*The only laser
game having a
socially redeeming
value, or any value,
is M.A.C.H. 3
by Mylstar.*

now knows what it feels like to place a game on location and find out it doesn't work.

Equipment rating

All kidding aside, the most important piece of equipment was *Junior Pac-Man* by Bally/Midway. This conversion will breathe new life into our *Pac-Man* and *Ms. Pac-Man* games. With more than 50 percent of our route invested in the former and latter, the cash boxes will overflow once again. My per-

sonal thanks to Bally/Midway for this excellent conversion.

Number 2 on our list would have to be *Pole Position 2*, either as a dedicated game or as a conversion. Our own games have become just a little tired. This four-track conversion is just what the doctor ordered. We hope the price of the conversion will be reasonable.

Number 3 could be *Crossbow* by Exidy. We haven't seen a good rifle game in many moons. This one should earn for a long time. While not a true street piece, our route will easily absorb a few. I doubt if most of our customers will ever see it. There seems to be a little problem in keeping the crossbow on the game. A new type of casting is in the works and should solve this problem. This excellent rifle is a little overpriced.

Number 4, but in the same category, is *Great Guns* by Stern—also an excellent rifle game. The problem for the street operator is the size—it's a twin rifle. By the way, it will fit through all doorways as the width is just 30 inches. I understand recoil effect is being added to the rifles before shipment begins. Should be super-great in arcades.

Number 5 and the only laser game having socially redeeming value, or any value, is *M.A.C.H. 3* by Mylstar (Gottlieb). A few uprights on our route will go a long way. (By the way, our standard commission for laser games is as follows: First \$300 per week to operator, second \$300 per week to location, then 50/50. Mr. Location Owner, if you don't like it, call someone else. I have to make a profit, and profit is not a four-letter word.) As with all lasers, this one has its problems. I'll hold

back our order for a few more weeks, and hopefully the bugs will be ironed out. The cockpit model and arcades were made for each other.

Number 6, *Ice Cold Beer, a/k/a Zeke's Peak* by Taito, could be the surprise of the show. A return to older electromechanical concepts was evident throughout the show. It seems the factories are looking to some of the old penny arcade games. While primarily a tavern game, it should do well in all types of locations. Taito is back-ordered so be patient; it's worth the wait.

Number 7, *Track & Field* by Konami/Centuri. While I initially didn't understand the game, it could be a big hit. Here again, it seems that the factory is back-ordered. I'll try a few in my better locations and document their acceptability based upon the cash box. It is our policy to let the cash box talk. Our opinions are almost meaningless. If we don't listen to the cash box, what should we listen to?

Numbers 8, 9, and 10. Sorry, but that's the end of my buying list. There was one other device that did hold my attention for a long period of time—a laser disc video poker (countertop) product of Digital Controls, which primarily manufactures countertop games. This excellent display, featuring Mike Macke (president of Digital Controls) and the band of cutthroats in the Red Eye Saloon, is truly the best concept ever shown using a laser disc. While we are totally in opposition to "gray area games," this device is acceptable. It can not be converted to credits, a knock-off button, or any other type of gambling payback. It is a pure amusement game, and it is very amusing.

'Gray area' games

While I have your undivided attention, let me say a few things about "gray area" games. This has been one of the low points in the history of the AMOA. The officers and directors are misguided. This pure gambling activity should not be allowed to be displayed in this trade show. Hold a gambling equipment show in Las Vegas or Atlantic City. When the investigations start, you will cause the coin-op amusement industry to be painted with the same black brush as yourself. The public

reception of our industry has been improving for several years. You will, and have, set it back to the picture of the '30s. All of your good work is going down the drain. Is this what I pay dues for?

The net result of this show was to give us the feeling of a highly profitable 1984. If you ask me for the theme of the show, in 10 words or less, it would have to be "Less is More." Yes, we will purchase less. Less models, less quantity, and less price (in some cases). We should be earning more profit. These new

games should have more longevity. More good conversions were shown than ever before. More profit will be earned from less investment. It certainly demonstrated that there will be less buying pressure this coming year. And of course, there seemed to be fewer operators, which can only mean more market share for those remaining.

(Your comments are welcome. Mail them to Steve Hochman, president, Crown Vending Corporation, 111-59 44th Ave., P.O. Box 19, Corona, New York 11368.)

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Keep Confrontation Within Industry

By Roger C. Sharpe

It's Friday evening, October 28th. The first day of the 35th annual AMOA convention is history and, instead of going to the Williams' suite or the Bally/Midway festivities or gathering with friends, I am in my hotel room writing this piece because the very existence of the coin-op industry, as we know it, is in jeopardy.

I have often been outspoken regarding issues which I saw as being dangerous to the well-being of the coin-op industry. Realizing that mere words usually mean a lack of impact in this business, since everything seems to be so cash and direct-action based, I don't want to be thought of as one who always cries *wolf* at the slightest sign of trouble. I'm not an alarmist, but I do react when events happen before my eyes.

I inject this preamble because so many may have forgotten, or not been around, when I put myself on the firing line to support the industry through uncertain times. I did this without any personal gain or ambition to capitalize on this role. I testified in the New York City case in 1976 to legalize the operation of pinball machines after their more than three-decade absence. I traveled to Columbus, Ohio, as an outside industry expert witness on behalf of local operators, distributors, and manufacturers when the games were once again called in question. I also testified in a New Jersey case and became involved with other cases nationwide.

I was willing to lend my acquired expertise and knowledge because I understood what hardships the coin-

op business had to endure to survive. It was unfair, and as a fan of the products, I couldn't allow myself to fade into the woodwork and disappear. I knew there was some role I could play and I did so willingly and was grateful for the chance.

Industry faces problem

Now I need to speak out again, this time on the AOE and the AGMA-sponsored ASI and confrontations between industry members. There was tension on the show floor as some seemed to be bracing for the upcoming battle.

Before I go any further, it's important to put matters in a proper perspective from what I have witnessed over the years. In the old days, business had always been cut and dry. This isn't to suggest that competition wasn't as fierce, but comradery existed between the principal members of the industry. Most businessmen had begun in the industry at the same time, nurtured the business, and had mutual admiration for each other.

But payout games dramatically changed things and relationships. Some fervently believed in the need for this type of machine, while others had reservations about their place in the coin-op community. Public sentiment quickly turned against these creations as well as the people responsible for their existence.

The result was an issue of guilt-by-association for an entire industry along with the albatross of a less than pristine image which has never been eliminated. This is true

although the industry today has very little similarity compared to what it once was, especially in light of how far the business has come from those crude beginnings given new technologies and more new people in the industry.

In looking back, the Korpan case might well be considered a turning point in 1956. The Korpan case went before the Supreme Court for a decision regarding the differentiation between novelty pin games and bingo machines.

The reason for the action was the imposition of a tax on gaming equipment and conventional pin games. To keep pinball's classification separate from bingo machines, there was a split in the industry with manufacturers and other members of the coin-op world taking sides. And although more than 25 years have passed, along with many of the individuals who were then active, the bad blood has never disappeared.

Industry press

When it came to the industry press, the same type of "choosing sides" has always existed, although I could never (and still don't) understand why. When I first became involved in this business as an impartial, outside observer, I was writing, simultaneously, for all three major publications.

This across-the-board contribution continued until I began reviewing and rating games for *Play Meter*. Suddenly the prevailing attitude seemed to be that I was more closely

associated with *Play Meter* and that some choices had to be made if I wanted to continue to have a voice in the press.

For a variety of reasons, and one in particular, I remained with *Play Meter* as an independent, long-distance correspondent. And when Ralph Lally received incredible pressure against my "Critic's Corner" column, he remained steadfast in his belief of its value. Never before had the industry had a reviewer who might say something less than positive about a new model.

For some reason, the majority of people who manufacture or sell coin-op machines have never accepted and have always scorned those who might be less than enthusiastic or supportive of each new product or endeavor. There still remains today an aversion to anyone who rocks the boat by giving objective, personal commentary that strays from what some individuals want and expect to hear.

But it was this event which, maybe, best describes what I can see as a very personalized approach to editorial subject matter by a magazine's publisher. Not that this involvement is so remarkably different from many other publications in different fields. Hugh Hefner defined, refined, and molded *Playboy* into what he wanted and what it has become today. Malcolm Forbes and his views, as well as his singular approach to life and business, can be seen regularly on the pages of his magazine, *Forbes*. And the list goes on.

Magazine's policy

You have to accept the fact that every industry publication (or consumer one for that matter) is shaped and influenced by its publisher. You may not always agree with what any publication has to say, but the decision is ultimately up to those who call the shots. It's no different for the manufacturers, distributors, jobbers, reps, operators, and even players. Everyone has his personal or corporate style, and each person who runs a business has only himself to answer to when push comes to shove.

The same thing holds true for Ralph Lally and his magazine *Play*

Meter. Obviously not everyone has always agreed with the way Lally has directed editorial content or some of the policies of his publication. However, it is, after all, his business and his decision if there is something he believes in and wants to air on these pages. There are no value judgments here as to whether he's right or wrong in what he does, only the recognition and awareness that it's his choice.

When Lally and *Play Meter* took a stand against what was commonly known as "gray area" games, it was his right to do so. Many viewed this action as some type of flagrant discrimination and censorship. But I remember when a company displayed a pinball machine which featured a series of graphically explicit nude shots automatically appearing in the middle of the playfield. The reaction at the time was immediate with the game suddenly having a piece of cardboard placed over the female spread shots. The company faded from view.

Distressing situation

But here we come to an issue that threatens to rip apart this industry. And since I am not directly or indirectly involved with the whys and wherefores, let alone the proceedings leading up to this point, there's no denying how distressed I am by its potential and implications. This issue could continue unhindered without every industry member getting involved and having a say in what will determine the future fate of coin-op as well as how, and if, it is to conduct its business.

In four years the AOE has gained considerable stature as a viable and even needed springtime trade show. It allows manufacturers to display follow-up, as well as modified equipment, from the AMOA and tends to establish a design direction for the following months. In addition, the AOE has solidified the value of seminars and conferences to the degree that similar activities are now a staple part of the fall AMOA extravaganza.

On the surface it would appear that the industry has grown large enough so that these two events can coexist. In fact, not only has this become the case, but both trade shows balance each other so that

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there is a bit more stability to product releases and a keener sense of seasonal trends in the industry. So, amply supported and complemented by state conventions held during the year, the coin-op industry was blessed with two established, major domestic trade shows, not to mention shows in Europe or the Orient.

If anything, a summertime exposition might be considered as lacking. This period of the year is notorious for being a transitional stage and could be immeasurably aided by some event which showcased available equipment as well as early fall models. However, this has not happened, leaving an appreciable void.

AGMA's development

Instead, the AGMA was developed. It was created to gather major manufacturers in a united front to set industry policies, standards, and procedures for dealing with the outside world's intangibles. The AGMA was formed to be a single, forceful voice representing the best interests of the industry.

And, it should be added, much goodwill has already been done by the AGMA since its inception—not the least of which has been the ability to bring major manufacturers together for a common good.

But something must have happened along the way, the motivations and rationale behind which I am still uncertain about, that questions the integrity of the AGMA and whether it does have the industry's best interests at heart.

When I first heard that the AGMA was planning to stage its own trade show, my immediate reaction was that here was an organization that felt the way I did and was sensitive to the cyclical nature of the industry and that it was going to fill that mid-year gap with an event. There would be three major trade shows evenly spaced throughout the year and all would benefit as a result.

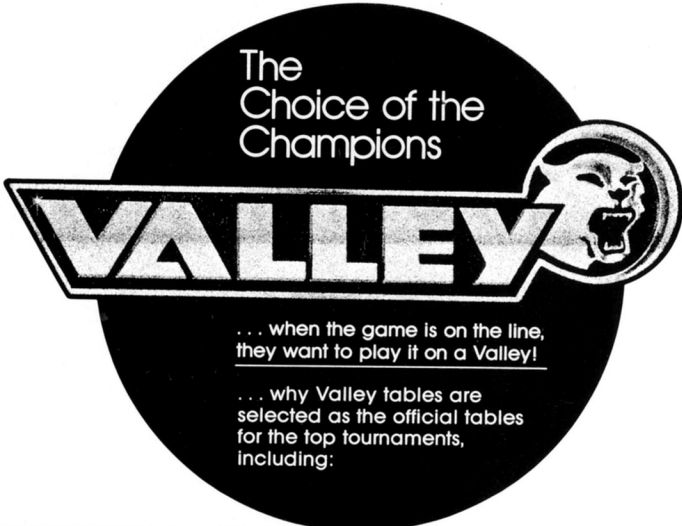
Then I discovered that, no, the AGMA was going to run a convention in February, only a few short months after AMOA, barely a month after ATE, and a matter of weeks before the AOE. I was

amazed, couldn't understand why this situation would, or could, have developed, and still marvel at the blatancy of the announcement and plans.

I became aware of a series of meetings and offers by the AGMA to buy the AOE. Whatever the terms were is not my concern nor even the issue. The AOE had endured, changed, and earned its right to survive. Apparently *Play Meter* is thrust into the middle with the potential loss of advertising revenues being a wedge to possibly influence any decisions or agreements.

Potential danger

And so we have reached the point of lawsuits and countersuits with only the principals aware of all the charges and countercharges. It's not my intent to pass judgment for either side, but rather to raise questions and concern that this issue threatens to become an all too enticing weapon for some overly ambitious politician looking for a situation that offers considerable media interest.



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By the same token, municipalities and areas where coin-op's existence and operation is tenuous, at best, could be the first to feel the effects of protracted litigation that might well turn ugly due to personal passions running high.

If this weren't enough, add to the potential dangers the fact that there are intrepid reporters who are looking for that next, great expose'. With coin-op coverage having already been done to death, a legal battle could be just the ammunition for a new angle of media attention that we all know the industry doesn't need.

The biggest problem with all this is the fact that any confrontations between industry members had previously been contained within this private world. There was always the good sense to work it out in the quiet of a back room, rather than parading any dirty linen to the outside world. In all honesty, it's no one else's business. But suddenly we have a situation where, from what I was told at the AMOA, the outside world has already been given some advance word about what is taking place.

This is an unbelievably short-sighted and potentially fatal mistake which must be halted before it does any more damage. Whatever the outcome or nature of the battle ahead, there still needs to be restraint and common sense as to what the ramifications might be if the public were to get a story and then distort it. All the parties involved must be forced to abide by a general news media blackout until the issues are solved. There's no other alternative, and it scares me to think what might occur if any of us lose sight of the less-than-stable existence of coin-op in the country today. Not everyone has been won over; some still wait for the chance to attack and bring an end to the business.

It would be tragic, after having endured so much and coming so far, if an internal struggle were to be the basis for the outside world to make all the decisions or compromises only a forgone conclusion. Let's not forget that the survival of the industry is the most important thing. Without it, nothing else really matters.

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Let the games begin

Konami/Centuri's *Track & Field* is a color raster scan game that features six events including the 100-meter dash, long jump, javelin, 110-meter hurdles, hammer throw, and high jump.

In each event the player must qualify against a predetermined time or distance to proceed to the next event. If he does not qualify, the competition ends.

The player uses only the run control during the 100-meter dash event, but must be careful not to jump the gun. Three flying starts lead to disqualification. The long jump is a combination of speed and power. By building speed with the run button, the player must time his takeoff precisely.

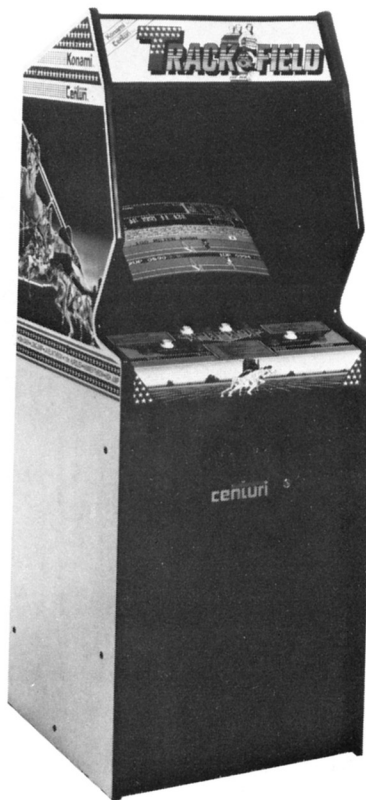
For the javelin throw, the player must once again build sufficient speed with the run button and release the javelin at the proper angle in order to qualify. Speed, timing, and agility are important in the 110-meter hurdles. Each missed hurdle seriously affects the player's overall performance.

A touch of the run button begins the power building centrifugal motion for the hammer throw. The release of the hammer must be exact. Finally, the high jump is the event in which the angle of the jump is critical.

Track & Field can be played individually or simultaneously by up to four players.

The control panel features run and jump buttons, and voice synthesis announces starts, fouls, and qualifying times.

Track & Field is available in upright and cocktail table models.



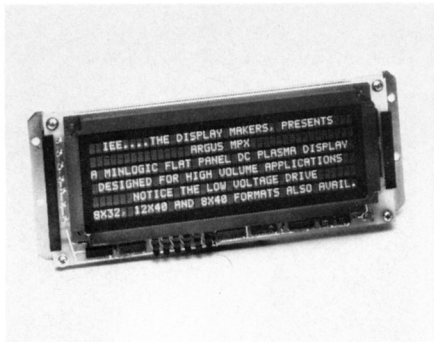
Monitor your health

Tech Vend Marketing of Norcross, Georgia, manufacturer of the *Pulse Meter I* heart rate monitor vending machine, introduces the *Mini-Clinic*, a computerized blood pressure and heart rate monitor.

Designed as a compact free-play or vending unit, *Mini-Clinic* takes up little space and generates a high profit return per square foot, company officials claim.

Mini-Clinic takes blood pressure and pulse rate readings from the consumer's wrist. The computerized voice welcomes customers and tells them their blood pressure and heart rate.

Aids to the Trade



Plasma display

The Industrial Products Division of Industrial Electronic Engineers Inc. (IEE) has available a 6-line x 40-character alphanumeric DC plasma display module.

This display uses a 200-column scan, which provides a better duty cycle than the previous 280-column design. Like its predecessor, this new ARGUS MPX, Model 2-03-240N, requires +5VDC for logic, and unregulated +11 to 20VDC for its internal display power supply. No external high voltage supply need be provided by the system designer.

ARGUS MPX is a family of minimum-logic alphanumeric displays, employing DC plasma flat panel technology to conserve space. The 0.21" (5.3mm) high, neon-orange characters are formed using a 5 x 7 dot matrix for legibility. These modules require serial dot refresh data from the host system, but full-logic ARGUS AIM Modules (with an integral microprocessor-based controller) which accept parallel ASCII data are also available.

Panel dimensions are 11.0" (279.4mm) W x 4.3" (109.2mm) H x 1.7" (43.2mm) maximum thickness. Total power required is typically 22 W.

For additional information, contact John Sutton, product marketing specialist, Industrial Products Division, IEE, 7740 Lemona Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91405. Telephone: 213/787-0311, ext. 233.

Co-molded housing

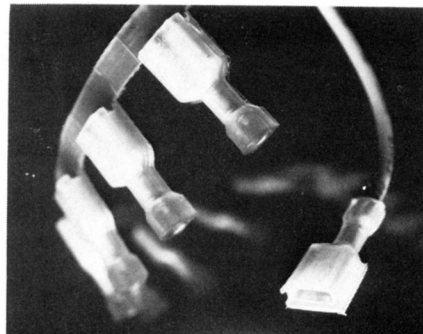
Co-molding the insulating housing from two different nylon materials gives Ultra-Fast Plus fully insulated Faston receptacles from AMP Inc. the added feature of wire support.

Company officials claim the rear portion of the pre-insulated assembly is a premium grade nylon which has minimal spring-back after it is crimped to conform to the insulated wire.

The main portion of the terminal's insulation shell is molded 6/6 nylon to withstand the high pressures of wire crimping. No knit line exists between the two materials. The result is a fully insulated receptacle with increased wire protection—especially valuable in environments where vibration is a concern.

Electromechanical performance is equal to similar uninsulated Faston terminals and allows dense contact populations even in 600 volt applications.

These .187" and .250" tin-plated copper alloy receptacles mate with a variety of tabs including those with shoulders. Solid and stranded wire, 22-14 AWG, are terminated through a system of guided funnel entry and wire stop. The color coded translucent housings allow a visual inspection of the wire crimp. Strip mounted assemblies are compatible with hand, semi-automatic, and fully automatic lead making equipment.



For further information, contact AMP Incorporated, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Telephone: 717/564-0100.



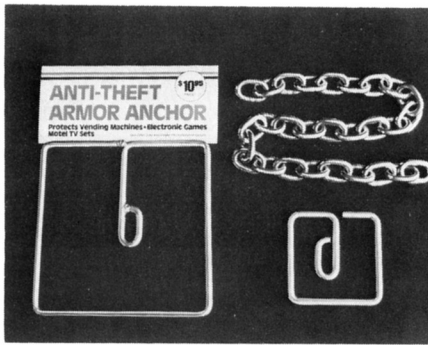
Message display

The Scan-O-Matic electronic message display, from Turn-O-Matic, is an indoor electronic message display. Scan-O-Matic can be used to announce specials, new items, and events.

The new Scan-O-Matic features two size displays—33" and 66" long, a larger 2,500 character memory, more dramatic display modes, and a message library. Up to 30 different messages, canned graphics, automatic centering, and full editing capabilities are also available.

Scan-O-Matic I is 33" long, has 2" high characters, and an oak case. Including all new features and a keyboard, Scan-O-Matic I costs \$1,796 complete. Scan-O-Matic II is 66" long, has 4½" high characters, and an oak case. Including most features and a keyboard, Scan-O-Matic II costs \$3,180.

For more information, contact Turn-O-Matic Inc., 2470 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Telephone: 415/858-2860.



Anti-theft anchor

Armor Chain Company has developed an anti-theft security system built for vending machines and electronic games.

This new (patent pending) anti-theft Armor Anchor (7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ") is made of carburized steel, with a zinc blue chromate finish.

It is installed by drilling a hole in the side or bottom of the machine and attaching a chain and lock. Machines can be connected to each other to stop theft.

The anti-theft Armor Anchor retails for \$10.95. The 30" carburized chain with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 1" links retails for \$10.95. Other sizes are available on request. Distributorships are available.

For more information, contact Armor Chain Company, 3240 West 117th St., Cleveland, OH 44111. Telephone: 216/252-8126.

Promotional characters

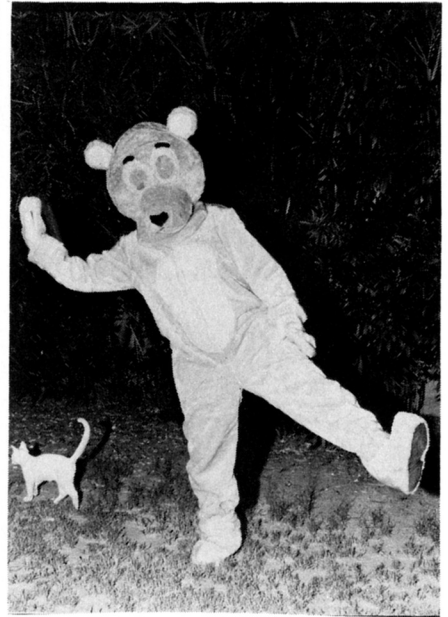
Business Builders can create a character for your promotions. A professional cartoonist designs a character based on your answers to a brief questionnaire about the type of character you want. A costume designer creates a full-sized replica of your character that can be worn by employees so your character can make appearances in your location, at special events, or anywhere.

As a special introductory offer, Business Builders will design a character, provide one adult-sized costume, one print ad design, and three dozen T-shirts printed with your character in one color for \$1,500. Character design, costumes, ads, T-shirts, and many other themed items can also be purchased separately.

Among the notable characters that have been used in promotions are Pac-Man, Charlie the Tuna, Tony the Tiger,

Theodore H, and Mickey Mouse. All of these characters reflect the image of the companies and products they represent. The new service that Business Builders offers provides a potential notable character to represent your business.

To receive a copy of the Character Questionnaire and more information, contact Carol Kantor, Business Builders, 10381 So. DeAnza Blvd., Suite 209, Cupertino, CA 95014. Telephone: 408/446-4400.



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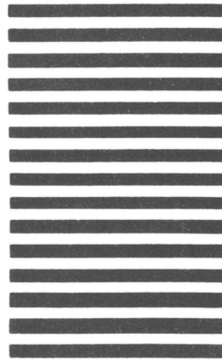
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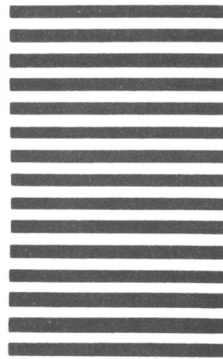
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FOR PROMOTION

By Carol Kantor

A group of operators can sponsor a promotion

Can 10 different game locations (including both arcade and street locations) in a 10-mile radius run a successful promotion *together* to benefit all of them?

Yes.

A community newspaper in one major city is planning to help sponsor a promotion where a group of different game locations will all participate in a single promotion. The newspaper recently contacted Business Builders for some ideas on this concept. When first presented, it seemed impossible to get a group of operators to agree to participate in something that may help a competitor.

But this could be an opportunity to show the new player attracted by the promotion why he should come again to a particular location. After all, once the player gets into a location, the location should sell itself with up-to-date games and a good environment. It is more important to get the players in than to worry about their going to the competitor's location.

Here's the way the promotion works: The newspaper prints a map-contest board in its publication each day/week of the promotion. The map indicates 10 (or more) different game locations and lists two games in each with a space to insert game scores. The map also includes space around the edges for advertisements and coupons from both the game locations and other local businesses.

The participant must go to each location on the map, play the games listed, and record his scores on each

game. Each participating location gets a special stamp that is imprinted on the player's map to validate the scores.

Everyone who completes this game playing adventure in all the locations can win a prize when the contest map is turned in. The winning scores are not necessarily the highest scores, so everyone has a chance to be a big winner. Top prizes are awarded for various categories and are based on the combination of scores. It can be a fun contest for the community and can bring lots of new customers to all the locations that participate.

Prizes are donated by the various participating locations and sponsors. There are many good choices for prizes that have wide appeal and will be an incentive for participation. Tickets to popular events or concerts, T-shirts, hats, records, stereos, and dinners, trips, or nights out with local celebrities are all good alternatives.

Contact the local newspaper to see if it would be interested in co-sponsoring the event. The newspaper could use it as a way to get advertising from other businesses that sell to the young adult market like record or jeans stores. A radio station could also be brought in as a co-sponsor of the promotion.

In theory, this promotion works great. I hope that the city newspaper that inquired about this program will proceed and will get the cooperation of all the operators in the area. This is a concept that can be initiated by you, the operator. •

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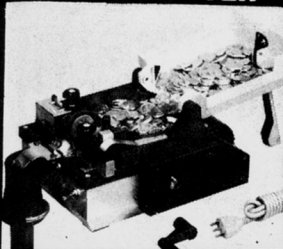
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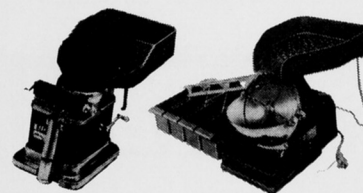
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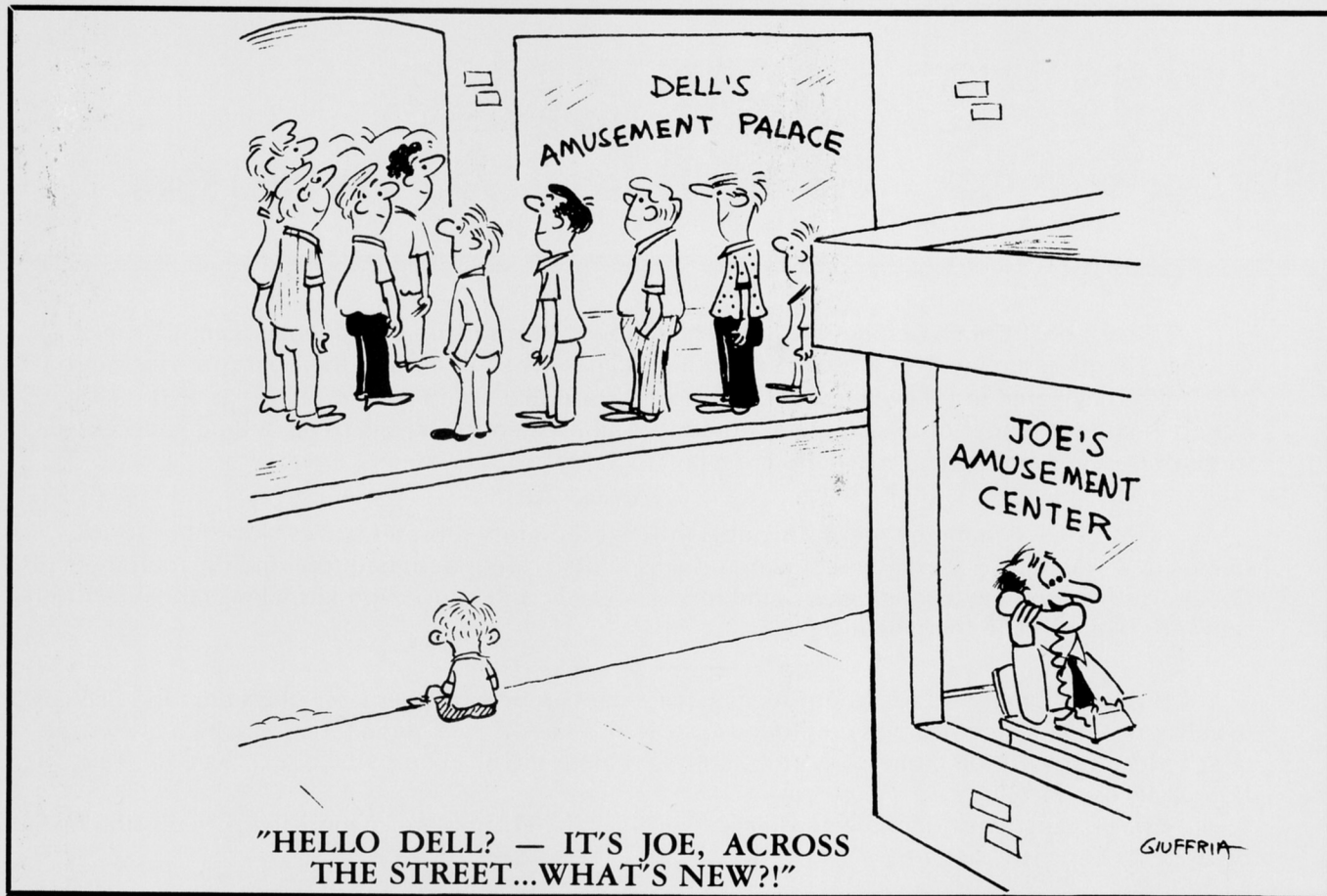
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NEWS BRIEFS

By Mike Shaw

The National Coin Machine Institute has approved sponsorship of Students Against Drunk Driving. The program involves a "contract for life" signed by students and their parents which outlines rules they agree to follow when they face a situation that could lead to driving after drinking. Robert Anastas, founder of the program, noted that amusement operators have "a unique access to students because amusement machines are a favorite attraction for them."

AGMA's UL committee met with Underwriters Laboratory representatives November 15 to discuss new standards for amusement games. Old standards were designed for vending equipment and not appropriate to new technologies found in video games and conversion kits. Eleven manufacturers sent representatives to the meeting.

The latest *Dragon's Lair* from Cinematronics contain new Pioneer laser disc units. The LDV 1000 is built to handle a video game's continuous use. It also has a "track jump" feature which allows the laser to leap forward 100 frames almost instantly, avoiding the blackouts which mar *Dragon's Lair*. The LDV 1000 costs \$1,200.

Pioneer said demand for the new player "is very high right now, much more than can possibly be met by us or by any manufacturer."

Exidy has licensed *Fax* for the home computer market. The game will be available in the "Learning Fun" series of games marketed by California software producer Epyx. The company produces learning and action games, including a cartridge titled *Silicon Warriors* in which the House of Apple, the House of Adam, the House of Peanut, and the House of Pong battle in the Silicon Valley for a completed computer program enabling the winner to dominate the universe.

Atari revenues continue to plummet. Third quarter 1983 revenues show a 64 percent drop from last year's figures, from \$528.9 million to \$187.8 million. The figures resulted in a \$180.3 million third quarter operating loss, extending the 9 month loss to \$536.3 million.

The company estimated a move to make home games that run on competitors' machines would account for 10 to 15 percent of estimated 1984 sales of \$1.4 billion. It marks the first time Atari has operated as a third party software producer.

To bring his employees closer together, Atari President James Morgan will build new headquarters in San Jose at a cost of about \$60 million.

Bally announced 38 cents per share earnings for the quarter ending September 30, 1983. The same quarter in 1982 produced per share earnings of \$1.02. Company President Robert Mullane attributed the earnings slump to "slack demand" for traditional video games. He noted he expected the company's fortunes to rebound with the production of *Astron Belt*, and as soon as laser disc player manufacturers can supply the industry with large quantities of the imaging systems. Mullane said he expected laser manufacturers to meet industry demand by the end of the first quarter of 1984.

Coin Controls of Elk Grove, Illinois, and Coin Acceptors of St. Louis have reached an agreement whereby Coin Acceptors will pay Coin Controls an undisclosed sum to manufacture its Entry/Reject Button into Coin Acceptor products.

Coin Mechanisms Inc. of Elmhurst, Illinois, has arranged a distribution agreement with Vendall Machines Ltd. of Ottawa, Canada. Vendall will hold exclusive distributing rights in the Canadian market for Coin Mech's *Coin Comparitor*, an electronic coin mechanism. Vendall said it became impressed with the mechanism after using it in some of its vending equipment.

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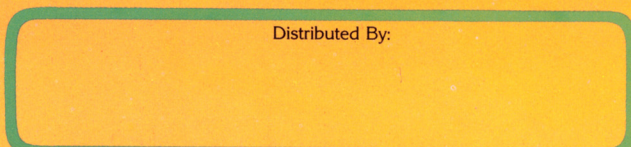
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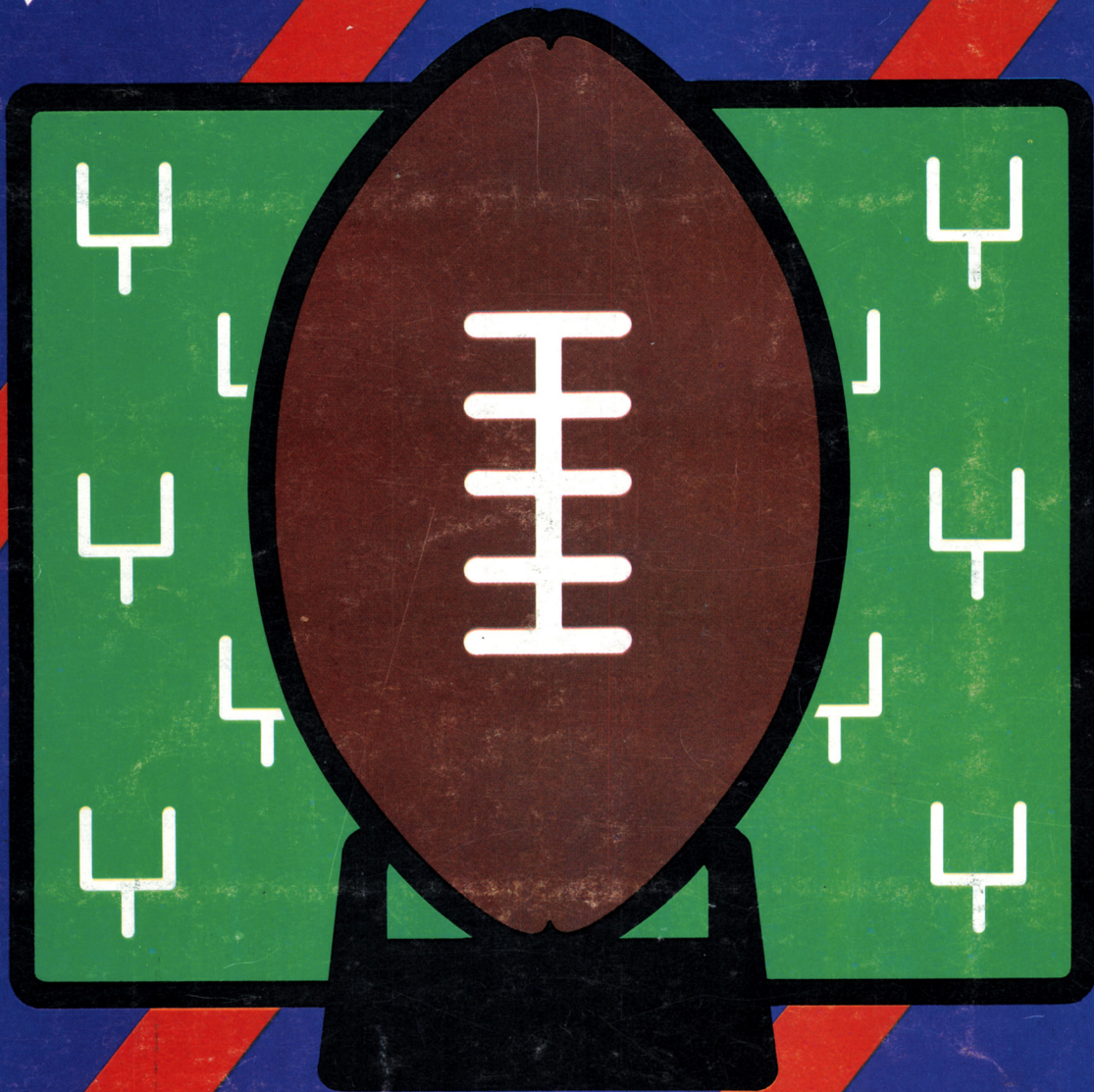
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