january 1991

RePlay

window on the world of coin-op entertainment

The Dynamic Dynamo Team and Their New Shuffleboard

YEAR IN REVIEW / FORECAST 1991 ISSUE

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HOT OFF THE PRESS!

VIDGAME STATS — In the wake of AMOA's success in legalizing parallels (starting Dec. 1, 1991), video factories are keenly aware of operators' strong preference for kits over dedicated games. AAMA has released a **new study** intended to show that the U.S. market is, by and large, responsive to operators' wishes. AAMA's conclusions: 1. approximately 75% of product introduced since January of 1988 was made available in kit form; 2. the number of two-player dedicated games dropped sharply from 13 titles in 1988 to three or four per year in 1989 and 1990; 3. well over half of all "dedicated only" videos in 1989 and 1990 had guns, steering wheels, unique controls or more than two player stations; 4. for Jan.-Oct. 1990, U.S. (not Japanese) firms produced three of the five dedicated one- or two-player videos. Study was based on raw data provided by *RePlay* about major video titles, not including pokers, trivias, countertops, etc.; all conclusions are AAMA's own.

THE DEBATE — Citing the above figures, AAMA denied the claim that Japanese firms and their U.S. subsidiaries "force American operators to pay higher costs than their counterparts in other areas of the world." No comment from AMOA was available at presstime, but AMOA officials have earlier pointed out that while many games are released as kits, many of the "absolute top" videos tend to come dedicated-only. *RePlay's* comment: since so few games are released dedicated-only anyway, why can't we all agree to stop fighting about parallels?

'MAD DOG' SHIPS — One of the hottest games shown at the New Orleans expo, *Mad Dog McCree,* began shipping to Betson-appointed distributors just before the holidays from the Dynamo contract manufacturing plant in Dallas. First units were the smaller "upright" version of this laserdisc cowboy shooting adventure, with 27" monitors, to be followed by the same machine with 33" tubes. The larger "console" version with 50" rear-projection screen starts shipping this month. Exec VP **Joe Cirillo** said they have orders for product well into March based on the trade's reaction to the game, and certainly to test collections which have topped $200 a day in cases. "The best part about *Mad Dog,*" said Cirillo, "is that it brings additional income into the location rather than draining money from other games. For example, there's a place out here in the East that averages between $4,500 and $4,700 a week. *Mad Dog's* brought that up to $5,500, so you see what I mean." We do.

SECRET'S OUT — Williams has been testing a new football video on a Q.T. basis for about two months. Shipping now, it's called ***High Impact*** and judging by some test reports it may also have a high impact on the national collection box. (**Roger Sharpe** told us one place booked over $1,000 in one week and that a Florida test arcade did $831 in its *seventh* week there!) A game with such shoulders could have been dedicated . . . but, recognizing prevailing market conditions, Williams has decided to market it as a kit with two- or four-player option.

LIVE ACTION — *High Impact* employs Williams' exclusive digitized screen graphics, so the football action and characters onscreen are quite realistic. (This technique starts with live movie footage, which is then fed into a computer that turns it into video graphics.) Gameplay combines bone-crunching sounds as well as the deranged play-by-play speech of announcer Manic Max, plus 40 authentic offensive and defensive formations. Players can throw the bomb, run double reverses, halfback options, red-dog blitzes, etc. It also has extra goodies like cheerleaders, plus the jeers of fans led by "Joe Sixpack." Williams, their dealers and operators may have caught the banzai wave here. And we're not only talking arcade; we're talking street! Joining the ***Funhouse*** flipper, Williams has a tasty plate of games right now.

BRAVERY — San Diego operator **Joel Weinberg** (Coin-Tech) has always been one for the gutsiest tradesters around, so it must have been that attitude that saw him through some harrowing physical difficulties these last two months. First off, he underwent a seven-part heart bypass operation around AMOA showtime. Some weeks later, he returned to the operating table for a carotid artery procedure. He's at home recuperating now, full of ginger as always, and talking more about the biz than his health. "You do what you gotta do, did you hear me!" said the lion of San Diego.

RePlay

the Players' Choice

JANUARY 1991

TOP GAMES NOW IN OPERATION, BASED ON EARNINGS-OPINION POLL OF OPERATORS

upright videos

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
➡	1	**RACE DRIVIN' (Atari) (3)**	**9.50**	**32%**
➡	2	PIT-FIGHTER (Atari) (4)	9.18	74%
	3	HARD DRIVIN' (Atari) (22)	8.78	54%
➡	4	SPACE GUN (Taito) (1)	8.70	17%
	5	TMNT (TURTLES) (Konami) (13)	8.34	98%
	6	GALAXY FORCE (Sega) (8)	8.29	18%
	7	G-LOC (Sega) (7)	8.20	35%
	8	FOUR TRAX (Atari) (3)	7.79	12%
	9	FINAL LAP (Atari) (26)	7.64	28%
	10	TEAM QUARTERBACK (Leland) (20)	7.61	47%
	11	OFF ROAD (Leland) (22)	7.57	74%
	12	2-DUDE OFF ROAD (Leland) (8)	7.48	19%
	13	S.C.I. (Taito) (12)	7.40	34%
	14	SMASH TV (Williams) (7)	7.39	64%
	15	CYBERBALL 2072+ (Atari) (11)	7.33	46%
	16	BEAST BUSTERS (SNK) (12)	7.23	22%
➡	17	HIT THE ICE (Williams) (1)	7.20	13%
	18	TURBO OUT RUN+ (Sega) (18)	7.18	47%
	19	CHASE H.Q. (Taito) (25)	7.14	54%
	20	S.T.U.N. RUNNER (Atari) (14)	7.08	34%

+ indicates game was produced in both dedicated & software forms

flippers

➡	1	**FUNHOUSE (Williams) (1)**	**9.44**	**23%**
➡	2	THE SIMPSONS (Data East) (2)	8.87	48%
➡	3	DR. DUDE (Midway) (3)	8.49	44%
	4	DINER (Williams) (5)	8.23	53%
➡	5	RIVERBOAT GAMBLER (Williams) (2)	8.11	26%
	6	WHIRLWIND (Williams) (11)	8.07	69%
	7	ELVIRA (Midway) (15)	7.91	53%
	8	EARTHSHAKER (Williams) (21)	7.79	54%
	9	ROLLER GAMES (Williams) (7)	7.58	44%
	10	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (D.E.) (10)	7.50	37%

best software

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
➡	1	**NINJA COMBAT [S] (SNK) (3)**	**8.46**	**30%**
➡	2	FINAL FIGHT [H] (Capcom) (11)	8.40	82%
	3	RAIDEN [V] (Fabtek) (5)	8.09	28%
➡	4	MAGIC SWORD [H] (Capcom) (4)	8.08	67%
➡	5	STRATA BOWLING [V] (Strata) (3)	8.00	11%
➡	6	CYBERLIP [S] (SNK) (1)	7.75	14%
➡	7	SUPER SPY [S] (SNK) (1)	7.67	16%
	8	OFF ROAD TRAK PAK [R] (Leland) (8)	7.61	38%
➡	9	CARRIER AIR WING [H] (Capcom) (1)	7.40	9%
➡	10	BLOOD BROS. [H] (Fabtek) (1)	7.33	5%
	11	WWF SUPERSTARS [H] (Technos) (18)	7.26	83%
➡	12	ATAXX [H] (Leland) (2)	7.18	35%
➡	13	BASEBALL STARS [S] (SNK) (3)	7.10	35%
	14	VIOLENCE FIGHT [H] (Taito) (10)	7.09	20%
➡	15	RIDING HERO [S] (SNK) (1)	7.00	10%
	16	HYDRA [H] (Atari) (5)	6.95	32%
➡	17	DOUBLE DRAGON 3 [H] (Technos) (1)	6.95	18%
	18	PIGSKIN [H] (Midway) (5)	6.90	25%
	19	TETRIS [H] (Atari) (17)	6.83	68%
➡	20	VS. CYBERBALL [S] (Atari) (1)	6.83	16%
	21	ROADBLASTERS [S] (Atari) (37)	6.62	60%
	22	GATE OF DOOM [H] (Data East) (4)	6.55	19%
➡	23	SNOW BROS. [H] (Romstar) (4)	6.54	21%
	24	ARCH RIVALS [H] (Midway) (15)	6.53	75%
	25	GOLDEN AXE [H] (Sega) (19)	6.53	72%

[H] horizontal [V] vertical [S] system [R] retrofit

best new videos

➡	1	CISCO HEAT [u/r+s/d] (Jaleco)
➡	2	GP RIDER [u/r+s/d] (Sega)

➡ *available brand new at certain distributors; number following brand shows months on chart including this one.*

RATING: *Operators were mailed "ballot sheets" listing games in active operation in U.S. locations and game centers and asked to "rate" the earning performance of each on the "1 to 10" measure: 10 for "power-house earnings," 9 for "excellent," 8 for "very good game," 7 for "good game," 6 for "decent game," 5 for "just average," 4 for "below average," etc. The written votes were tallied up and divided by the actual number of times the specific game was rated. Hence, the decimal points.*

DIST.: *The percentage of the surveyed arcade and street location operators who have the item on location. No upright videos rated by less than 10% of these operators appear on the Upright Videos chart, but promising new items appear under Best New Videos.*

The MVS-2 Performs Well Under The Following Conditions

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RePlay magazine

P.O. Box 2550 22157 Clarendon St.
Woodland Hills, CA 91365
818/347-3820
For subscription information, ask for Carol Casuga.
Fax: 818-347-2112

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ED ADLUM
Publisher

TIPPY ADLUM
VP & General Manager

KEY SNODGRESS
VP, Director of Operations

MARCUS WEBB
Editor

BARRY ZWEBEN
Advertising Director

CAROLYN LOKKEN
Advertising/Production Assistant

COVER

Our cover features Dynamo, Inc. with their newest table game, a handsome shuffleboard which can go into any location including fern bars and upscale places (just look at that oak finish). The piece is a natural addition to Dynamo's line of classic, long-earning table games. Dynamo started nearly 20 years ago with soccer tables; today pool is their bread and butter, with air hockey coming up fast. Dynamo also builds universal cabinets for video games, and they've announced plans to enter the "video lottery terminal" market. Seen in the cover photo, from left, are President Bill Rickett, marketing and sales folks Brenda Selvey and Chris Brady, VP Mark Struhs and sales rep Damon Paramore.

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EDITORIAL

The video game has been tarred as the prime cause of the industry's current "ills." Now, it's high time to get some facts out about this class of machine which has made operators oodles of money in its 18-year roller coaster history. Collection averages cited in trade magazine surveys are helpful, so long as people understand that not every single dedicated game (3 months of age or younger) does $115.50 a week and then drops to $50.00 a week afterward. New kits averaging $92.00, and older ones earning $39.75 (as stated in RePlay's November street survey) are the same thing: an average, lumping all the "pigs," the so-so pieces and the hits in the same tub.

But if you only calculated the collections from the hits, the numbers skyrocket and this is where operators should be looking. We're going to break an internal rule now and talk about some numbers. These are weekly arcade grosses (gained from two rooms in the midwest). Even though they're not street locations, these grosses are germane. One arcade's collection period ended Dec. 7, the other Nov. 30. Since neither gets any political advantage by fudging its numbers, you can "take these to the bank."

The F-15 Strike Eagle *did $364.75,* Space Gun *averaged $247.00,* Hit the Ice *made $192.25 and* Double Dragon 3 *(a kit) nailed $188.25. Okay, those are brand new. Check these older game figures out then:* Pit Fighter *averaged $413.75,* All American Football *$250.75,* Cyberball 2072 *did $270.75,* Magic Sword *(a kit as well as dedicated like* Cyberball*) made $263.75. The* Raiden *kit collected $194.25, the* Mercs *upright $193.25,* Final Fight *(a kit) $183.50,* Punk Shot *(another kit) did $180.00 and* Turtles *(over a year old!) averaged $163.00 among the three of them on locations there.*

Point made? Several, we think, like dignifying the "hit syndrome." We don't know how many (if any) of these were on half buck play. But if some were, there's another point made to the street. By the way, we did not discuss any of the bigger arcadey games that often do super numbers like Hard Drivin' *and* G-LOC*, equipment not really geared for the street except where the operator is "creative."*

Many think video's embrace of the home market is coming home to roost. We'd prefer to look at what's in this for us and forget about all that. Coin-op video clearly can be a profit center if operators purchase wisely. But when some pass on Turtles *(as has happend), how do ya figure? New tech's coming. Meantime, good stuff's on the present market. Don't even think of writing off this class of machine. She's only begun to fight.*

THANK YOU OPERATORS!

... for being in our corner on quality!

You've said it again! Quality Counts! You did it by choosing our COUGAR ZD-4 as the "Most Played Pool Table" at the 1990 AMOA Show – *for the 9th straight year!* Once again, you have rewarded Valley in the most satisfying way.

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- Our table says "Quality".
- We say "Thank you"...again!

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INSIDE

JANUARY 1991

SPECIAL ARTICLES

LOOKING BACK . . . & AHEAD

1990 was a tough year for many tradesters, chiefly because "King Video" wore a tarnished crown. We review what happened and we also hazard some predictions about what 1991 has in store . . . . . pg. 39

THE INDUSTRY SPEAKS

This month we turn our pages over to more than 30 leading manufacturers, distributors and operators. They speak their minds on the questions, "Where are we now?" and "Where are we headed?" Get great insight on today's downturn, plus prescriptions for a better tomorrow for all in coinland . . . . . pg. 67

OPEN HOUSE: THE SEQUEL

Blizzards moved across much of the country in late November and early December, but the snow didn't stop a "blizzard of open houses" in dealerships from East to West. We covered many of these in our last issue and now bring you quite a few more. Photo features begin . . . . . pg. 108

SNAZZY AT SEGA

Check out the special effects on Sega's new three-player dedicated upright gun game, *Laser Ghost.* And while you're at it, go head-to-head against a second player in their motorcycle simulator *GP Rider.* Try 'em both . . . . . pg. 102

KIDDIE RIDES GROWING

There are more kids 4-12 these days. They have more money to spend (and parents who spend more on them). So it should come as no surprise that there are also more and better kiddie rides, plus a one-year-young association dedicated to this niche . . . . . pg. 97

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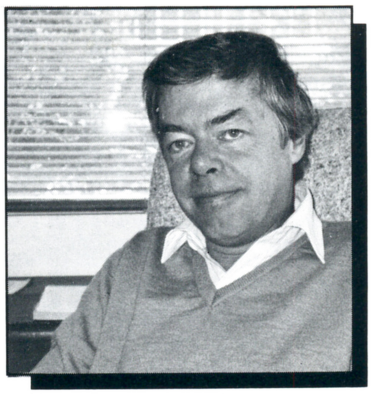

Here's my New Year's message in a nutshell: "Let's lighten up." We've all given this busines an "agonizing reappraisal" (there's certainly plenty of that in the issue you're about to read). It's a natural way to close out a year, but I also think it's time to smell a few roses for a change instead of fingering the thorns. What roses? Oh, like owning your own business, making your own hours, having something to pass onto the next generation that you made with your own hands which they can improve upon with theirs. Roses like that.

The classic New Year wish is for happiness and prosperity. Don't forget you can have one without the other (there are a lot of miserable millionaires riding first class in the same plane with happy postal clerks in coach). One of the sharpest fellas in this business is a guy named Dave Jackson from out my way, who preaches the gospel of a "balanced life" — work, fun, time with the family and time to meditate on the whole package known as "living." Wise, no?

Things have been difficult for me lately. Many of you know I have an honest streak a mile wide. Try to apply that to my job of reporting on a politically fractured industry and you can get thorns (like a screaming call from an East Coast distributor because I used the dreaded word "recession" last month, or a lost ad because I ran the "dreaded" Larry Salganek letter). I have to call conditions as they are and although I disagree with the tone of Larry's message, I think the readers are all big boys who know how to separate emotion from reality.

And please don't call me to complain as I now pass along the words of a Canadian distributor, who told me legitimate videos up his way actually sold ***more*** *when they were also selling counterfeits and parallels, and that he actually thinks U.S. video "manufacturers" may do better when parallels become legal a year from now due to improved operator cash flow. Personally, I don't know if he's right or wrong. But I do know his words have a right to be printed. I also remind all that using copies is a federal crime!*

I wish you all a happy and prosperous 1991. If prosperity is essential to your happiness, you know you can find it in the amusement business. We won't be here forever, but "it" will. So while we're its custodians, let's give it our honest best and for God's sake, appreciate all the roses it's grown for you and yours.

If you're a ghost, it might be wise to begin looking for some new haunting grounds. LASER GHOST™, Sega's ultimate ghost eliminator has arrived. With its extraordinarily realistic crimson red laser beam, LASER GHOST can zap, fry, and annihilate all ghost and ghost-like creatures instantly.

LASER GHOST is going to be equally effective in heating up player enthusiasm. Its high-action story line sends players against invading legions of ghastly ghosts. The game offers continuous play through multiple stages and equips players with a combination of powerful laser beams and high explosive missiles! New players can join the action at any point.

The LASER GHOST cabinet is as innovative as the game itself. It features sit-down laser gun stations for two players, and a standing station for a third. From a player's vantage, the laser gun's line of fire appears to be dozens of feet in depth, but in reality the cabinet, including seats is less than 63 inches deep.

For more information about LASER GHOST, contact your Sega Distributor.

Sega Enterprises, Inc., 2149 Paragon Drive,
P.O. Box 610550.
San Jose, CA 95161–0550
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SEGA

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LASER GHOST™

Installation Dimensions: 72.0"(H), 57.2" (W), 62.2" (D)

VIEWPOINTS

BOTTOM LINE ON COLLECTIONS

Dear RePlay:

I read with interest the street operator survey you ran in your November issue. While there was much in it to digest and reflect upon, a few things really caught my attention enough to comment upon.

The collection chart showing dedicated videos (3 months of age or younger) averaging $115.50 gross a week and kits doing $92.00 gross over their own first three months unfortunately feel about right. So do the numbers on older dedicateds and kits.

I wonder if the operators who also reported that their businesses were doing "the same" or "better" than the previous year (66%) and who *also* were the sources for this collection chart data have really looked at those figures. Now bear with me on this:

Assuming a 50/50 split, with $115.50 (on new dedicated), that comes to $57.75 per week. This times three months equals $693.00 to the operator. If the average cost for a new non-closeout dedicated game runs $2,950.00 including tax & shipping, it would take 90 *more* weeks to pay this game off by my calculations of your new & older game figures . . . 102 weeks in all.

Kits are not much better. Without going through the whole math, taking your kit figures (new and older games) and calculating the price of the software, shipping, tax and conversion labor, the final payoff would take 89 weeks. I know of no operator who could sustain this indefinitely. These figures speak volumes about what our customers think of the quality of games coming from our manufacuters.

I don't hear much talk about going to 50¢ play anymore as it seems our customers (the players) always vote with their quarters. So it seems the products currently being offered (with a couple of exceptions) for the street video portion of this industry are "losing the election".

What will turn this around? Solely and only one thing: a steady supply of good quality games which have been researched, developed and marketed for our street customers. I hope it's not too late.

Respectfully,
Dale Moore
L.A. Games
Torrance, California

[Dale: you have gone right to the jugular vein with your letter and I will respond with the same candor you used. I did this survey personally and am pleased to say the operator sampling was a good one (although the word "pleased" might look peculiar here). The methodology of the survey was sound and the responses quite reflective of what's going on from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the mom-pop operations to the bigger "suit & tie" companies. Since I don't "fool" with the numbers on these surveys (nor on the Players' Choice *chart), the accuracy of the surveys depends upon the accuracy of the figures mailed in by the operators on their questionnaries. The only way these surveys can fall short is if operators lowball their collection averages from fear of the tax man reading the trade journal.*

This we have little control over, other than by asserting our constant plea for accuracy. Therefore, the $115 and $92 reported in that latest survey is based squarely on the data supplied by operators. But even if one or more lowballed us, your message is still eye-opening. One thing I didn't print in that survey was that the 1989 gross averages for new dedicateds and kits were $140 and $95 respectively, higher in both categories. Now you'll appreciate this: if we also asked the operator for their weekly grosses on Turtles, Final Fight *and* Pit Figher *(just those alone), and if the operators were honest, I think the averages would have been quite different. Ergo, the high syndrome. P.S. I didn't check your math on my calculator. "Hope" you're right. Ed]*

A LETTER TO LARRY

Dear Larry Salganek:

After reading your letter to the editor in *RePlay's* December 1990 issue, I concluded that any response would be unacceptable at best, but to ignore it would be worse and totally out of character for me and my company. Let's give it a try.

First of all, I'm truly sorry that you decided not to attend this year's AMOA Expo in New Orleans. In view of the personal financial investment you have already made to the coin machine industry, I would think that you would want to see what equipment and services are available even if you have decided not to buy anything at any price.

Although it might sound self-serving, we look forward to interacting with operators such as you at these shows for valuable input in improving our products. As many of our operator friends will attest, we have listened to their suggestions.

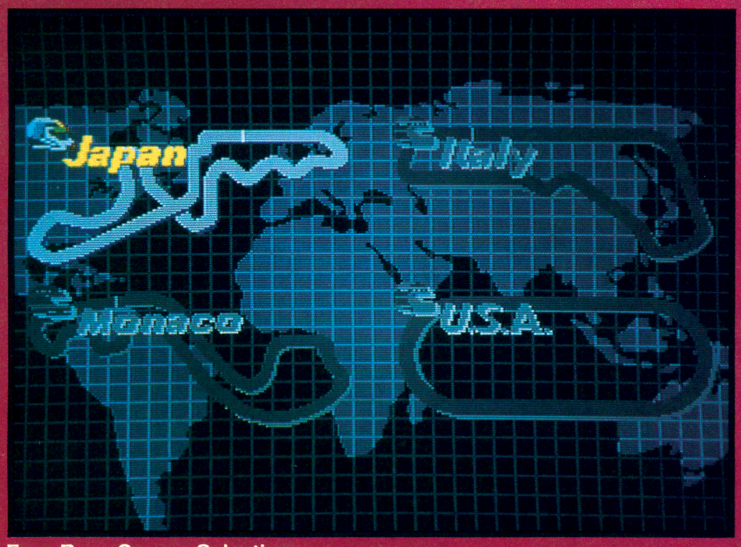
Secondly, one could debate the pros and cons of advertising in one publication or another. However, if the only criteria was to restrict advertising to those magazines, newspapers, etc. . . . that do not, at one time, irritate or offend an individual or group of readers, none that I know of would still exist — including *RePlay,* as my good friend Eddie Adlum will acknowledge.

As for *Tavern Sports International,* we support this magazine as its primary focus is on the men and women that spend their recreational dollars in their local tavern. By helping us promote leagues and tournaments, this media exposure at the "grass roots" level has increased the amount of play and revenue for the operator and his locations. I'm not convinced that the article on the AMOA Expo '90 encouraged any significant number of location owners to attend the expo that have somehow not

FINAL LAP™ 2

Four Different Courses to Select

Newly designed race courses include MONACO, ITALY, USA, and the exciting SUZUKA CIRCUIT.

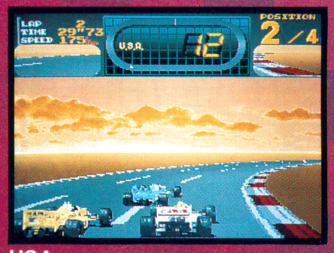


Four Race Course Selections

Japan

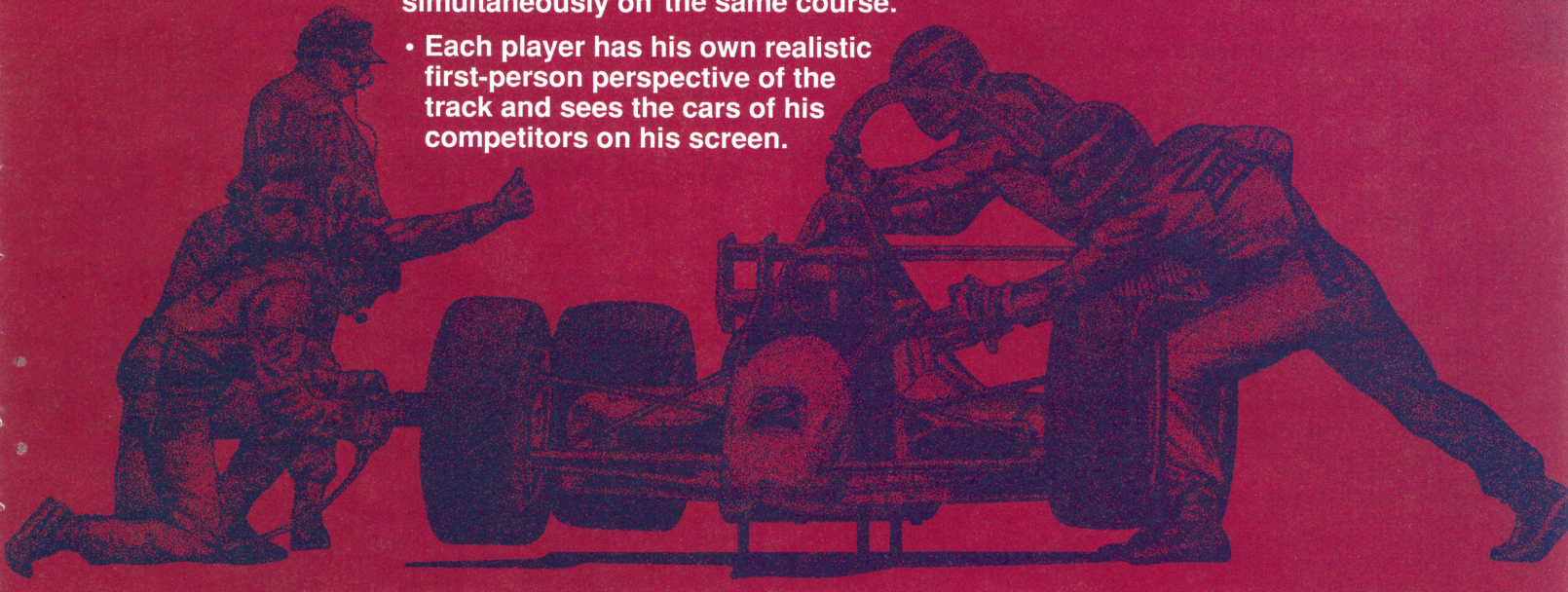
Italy

Monaco



USA

- Up to four units can be linked for unprecedented competition. Eight players can compete head-to-head!
- One player competes against the clock or multiple players race simultaneously on the same course.
- Each player has his own realistic first-person perspective of the track and sees the cars of his competitors on his screen.



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done so in the past. It certainly didn't result in increasing the number of direct telephone inquiries we normally receive that, I should mention, are referred back to their local coin operator. As evidenced by our involvement in the V.N.E.A., AMOA, NDA and other industry activities, Valley's interests have and will continue to be toward helping, not hindering, the operator.

Finally, in view of all the challenges facing our industry in the coming year, I strongly urge you to reconsider your decision to withdraw your membership from AMOA. Now is the time to close ranks behind the single most important organization to all the elements within our industry. If you feel AMOA should make changes to improve its mission and purpose, you owe it to your fellow operators to be heard.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy birthday and extend an invitation for lunch — hopefully at the AMOA Expo '91 in Las Vegas.

Best Wishes,
Charles P. Milhem
President
Valley Recreation Products

LOVE THOSE PINBALLS

Dear Ed:

It has recently come to may attention that you spoke at the Pinball Expo, delaring that you had a "lack of romantic feeling" for the pinball in comparison to the jukebox.

Here are some facts that you may have overlooked. First, in the 1930s and '40s, when operators were barely earning $3 per week from their jukeboxes, pinball was definitely keeping them and the industry alive. Then the video game (ugh!) came into being, as did other diversions. But, the pinball has survived all this, and will continue to survive.

So, when we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the pinball machine in 15 years, and you see that pinball will go on indefintely, I will make you a promise. If I am still around (Sharon has demanded that I'd better be), I will personally buy you the six-pack of your choice, raise a glass with you and toast "l'chaim" to our beloved industry.

Regards and happy holidays to everyone.
Stan Harris
Stan Harris & Company
Philedelphia, Penn.

[Stan: I know I can talk rather loudly at times, but I didn't know you could hear me from Chicago all the way to Philly. To be truthful, I sort of knew what I said would come back to bite me. It was at a seminar during that Pinball Expo thing and somebody (if I recall correctly) wanted to know if I'd write up the history of the pinball business since it's celebrating its 60th year. I told the audience that I (in concert with Marcus Webb here) spent countless hours researching and writing up the 100th year of the jukebox, that there really wasn't any "money" in it for me apart from the normal magazine buck, and that I did it for my readers but really because I do have a romantic attachment to the jukebox. I also have deep feelings for the pingame (had one in my house before I ever got a phonograph). But. . . I'm still exhausted from dealing with jukebox history. Okay, I'm not a Roger Sharpe who goes to bed with pinballs under his pillow, granted. However, if the ginger comes up, I'll think about a pinball saga. Believe me, patriarch, that ain't easy if you want to do it right. Eddie]

EVEN MORE ON DISTRIBS

Dear Ed:

In reply to Ed Blankenbeckler's letter in the December issue, which answered my own letter in the previous issue, Ed needs to talk to some of the distributors I deal with. Only one deals with a bank for financing. The rest quoted me 17% to 18% interest from a financial lender in Massachusetts.

I recently went to a Dallas distributor and he gave me 15 minutes of his "busy schedule." I really want some new games and spoke to him about my location where I wanted to put them. He didn't offer any good suggestions!!!

Only one of five have let me know about any specials or new products. The one is willing to work with me. The others act like I'm too small to matter. Ed should read the December Viewpoint letter from Mr. Salganek of New Mexico Vending. It seems the operators have their eyes open. Open yours, Mr. Blankenbeckler and help us with action, not noble words. And by the way, I am in a buying attitude and, yes, my company's name is unique.

David "the Prospector" Snider
Prospector Salvage & Video
Mineral Wells, Texas

[Okay, guys, this is beginning to become a soap opera. Let's call a halt to this and simply ask one of you to call the other and I'll bet a friendship can be made. You both live in Texas, right? But, distributors should know that Dave makes a telling point. This is not the first time I've heard about a "new" operator getting short attention from a distributor. I personally remember when I started RePlay *back in August of 1975 when I walked into a typesetting house and the guy said, "What can I do for you?" I asked him how much he'd charge me to set the type, threw a $500 check on the table to get started and his eyes opened. Now every vendor that supplies printing, paper or anything else (even the Post Office) says "Hi Eddie boy, how's it going!" You never know when a new face turns into a big puss. So, dealers should treat every fellow who walks in the door like he's the next Aladdin's Castle (well, sort of). Ed]*

PAY-OFF MACHINES

Dear RePlay;

Fifty to 70% of our local operators are having to run some kind of payoff machines to keep the locations. This is a single piece of equipment doing three to four times what two pool tables, a jukebox, two countertops and a whole mess of darts do. Figure it out. Less than a $3,000 investment for one machine equals $20,000 for the others.

Your friend from Texas

Note: we received an October letter from someone calling himself Irving Schwartz (no company or address). The letter criticized WMS's new distribution policy. But unless letters also carry company name and address, we cannot run them. Years ago, we got a letter criticizing a game developed by Nolan Bushnell. The letter was signed "Kosher Games" and quite obviously came from a Bushnell competitor. We didn't run that one either. We welcome all letters, provided they're signed and carry the company name and address at the end. ed.]

2 OR 3 PLAYER CONVERSION KIT

BILLY & JIMMY ARE BACK

THEY'RE BACK WITH MORE DOUBLE DRAGON MAGIC!

Get the game that kids have been waiting for. It's the newest adventure in non-stop action as *Billy, Jimmy* and now *Sonny* travel to distant lands packed with excitement. There's more tricks, surprises, and action than ever before.

WE'RE BACK WITH MORE PLAYERS.

Technos built Double Dragon 3 with operators in mind. It's operator-selectable as either a 2-player or a 3-player game. The choice is yours. A flip of the dipswitch is all it takes.

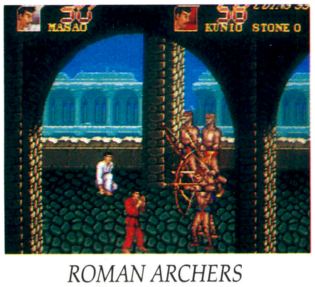
YOU'LL BE BACK TO THE BANK WITH MORE QUARTERS IN YOUR CASHBOX.

Billy and Jimmy are proven winners and Double Dragon 3 is going to be bigger than ever. This is your chance to cash in on the hottest duo ever to hit the arcade screen.

GAME FEATURES:

- Three Heros: Jimmy, Billy and now Sonny
- 2 or 3 Player Selectable Modes
- Special weapon stores
- Buy-in and continuation feature
- JAMMA Adaptable universal conversion kit
- Horizontal monitor

EGYPTIAN MUMMIES



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DOUBLE

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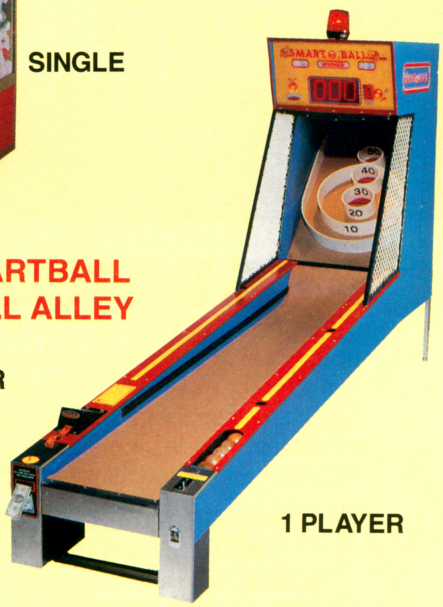
1 HOOP 2 HOOP

SHOOT TO WIN BASKETBALL

STW JR.
(CHUCKLES THE CLOWN)

SMARTBALL SKILL ALLEY

4 PLAYER



1 PLAYER

SMARTBALL SKILL ALLEY IS AVAILABLE IN 1 AND 4 PLAYER MODELS IN 10 OR 13 FOOT LENGTHS

4 PLAYER

1 PLAYER

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NEWS DIGEST

PENN. GOVERNOR VETOES VID LOTTERY, BUT NEW TEXAS GOV. BACKS IT STRONGLY

Pennsylvania Governor **Robert Casey** on Nov. 30 vetoed a bill which would permit operator-run, payoff **video lottery** in localities which approved it. The state legislature had finally passed the pro-video poker bill ten days earlier, after years of lobbying by Pennsylvania operators. **Janet Polly** at PAMMA, the state operator association, said: "Of course we'll try again next year. I don't know if any change of wording in the bill (to make it more acceptable to the governor) is planned or not."

When **Ann Richards** takes office as Governor of Texas this month, one of her top priorities will be passing a state lottery . . . including a South Dakota-style **video lottery** run by coin machine operators. AMOT, the state operator association, thinks 80% of the public also backs the idea and they hope to jump all the needed legal hurdles this year and get the system up and running this year or next. But they need help: not enough of the state's 1,600 licensed operators are AMOT members. Ann Richards favors lottery, by the way, because state treasury is running dry and the new governor hates taxes (so do most Texans; they don't even have an income tax). Get the whole story on **page 30.**

TOBACCO LOBBY: STATES SHOULD REQUIRE CIG VENDING "SUPERVISION"

A tough new **anti-smoking campaign** aimed at minors was launched last month . . . by, of all people, the tobacco growers. On Dec. 12, the **Tobacco Institute,** together with its constituent members like **Brown & Williamson Tobacco** and **RJR Tobacco,** announced they would support legislation in every state **"requiring supervision"** of cigarette vending machines in locations accessible by youth. (TI estimates that kids under 21 have access to only 20% of existing cigarette locations.) The tobacco industry will also support or initiate several other measures and industry actions to make 18 the minimum smoking age.

Some tradesters wondered how many locations would simply eject cigarette machines rather than comply with any new supervision requirements, but **AMOA** and **NAMA** publicly backed the spirit of the Tobacco Institute's campaign.

"The release by the Tobacco Institute of guidelines designed to keep minors away from Tobacco products is welcomed by AMOA," said the association. "We applaud the program as a valuable first step towards the education of our youth to the issues involved in tobacco use." AMOA said it, like the Tobacco Institute, will provide "no sales to minors" signage to its members (over half of AMOA members do some cigarette vending). Finally, "AMOA is also encouraging all its members to move cigarette vending machines out of unsupervised locations to where access to cigarettes is under the sight and control of people of legal age." Said AMOA prexy **Jim Trucano:** "AMOA will continue toprovide whatever assistance is needed to insure the responsible use of tobacco among adults." More of this on **page 27.**

JUKEBOX 1991 LICENSES WILL BE LOWER

Parties to the new Voluntary Jukebox Licensing Agreement said last year that if the Jukebox Licensing Office (JLO) collected a "benchmark" amount of copyright fees from jukebox operators, then 1991 licenses would cost less. Well, 1990 compliance levels sent us over the top and in late November, AMOA, ASCAP, SESAC and BMI announced the happy result: a $3 per box rate cut for '91. The license for your first jukebox will cost $272; the second through the tenth box may be licensed for $52 each; and jukebox number eleven through infinity may be licensed for $45 each. The JLO will mail detail info this month about the new rates to everybody who licensed a box last year. By the way, last issue we said the original plans were for the performing rights societies to issue a "rebate" if operators met the benchmark. That was not correct. The rate reduction was the plan all along, so everything is proceeding according to Hoyle . . . and everybody involved deserves congratulations for a job well done. For more information, or to obtain registration forms and info, contact the JLO at P.O. Box 5458, New York, NY 10185-0044; 800/955-0044.

PARALLELS SIMMER AS AMOA, AAMA SEPARATE D.C. VISITS

AMOA and AAMA will travel to **Washington, D.C.,** two weeks apart from each other, to lobby Congress separately for industry legislation. (See "Datebook" for exact details.) Why schedule separate trips? In part because both associations remain unwilling to agree that **parallel imports** should be "off the agenda" (although some other issues, such as "who's in charge of the schedule?" may also have been a factor). Meantime, the two associations and operator **Bill Beckham** are still pondering the significance of parallels, which will become legal to operate on Dec. 1, 1991. **(President Bush** signed the legislation containing AMOA's pro-parallel amendment last month.) Another leadership meeting of over a dozen toppers from both associations will take place Jan. 31 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. See our update on **page 36** for latest parallel developments.

OPS CAN NOW SUBSCRIBE FOR MONTHLY PIONEER HIT COMPS

Beginning Jan. 1, jukebox operators will be able to subscribe to receive monthly CD hit disc compilations directly from **Pioneer** for use on Pioneer phonographs. The subscriptions, piloted by their software czarina **Mary Carloss,** will also include two periodic country hit comps and two oldie comps as well (16 discs in all). They only have limited royalty rights to these current tunes, so discs are to be destroyed by the operator after six months (except for oldies which run a full year). Post cards, signed by the operator attesting to their destruction, must be mailed in. For full particulars, call 213/PIONEER.

Mary Carloss joins their new eastern regional rep and **Tony Maniscalco** midwestern topper **Dave Drouillard** during a Dec. 6 holiday evening cruise around L.A.'s Marina Del Rey aboard the **Dandeana.** Yes, Tony's the brother of Fabtek/Irem sales rep **Drew Maniscalco** Dave Drouillard and wife Laura, by the way, became proud parents of their first youngster, baby girl Kaitlyn, born in Lansing, Ill. on Nov. 27.

POLISH COIN-OP SHOW TAKES PLACE APRIL 3-6 IN WARSAW

It was bound to happen sooner or later: an amusement, jukebox & vending expo in Eastern Europe. Beginnning April 3, 1990 and running until the 5th, the International Vending Machine, Music and Games Exhibition will take place at Warsaw, Poland's classic Palace of Culture. Sponsored by ABP of Calabasas, Calif. (which produced a telecommunications show at the same venue last Sept.), the event will exhibit new and used equipment but moreso, open commercial channels for such equipment to entrepreneurs in the Republic of Poland as well as other Eastern nations.

Show chairman **George Herman** advised that over 3,200 attended his telecommunications expo, including government and industry people from Poland as well as from six other Eastern European countries. He is currently completing his coin show exhibitor list on a first-come, first-served basis. He fully expects a sellout of space as the total number of exhibitors probably won't exceed fifty firms.

Herman, who hails from the famous New York City operating family said: "I toured the AMOA expo and spoke with prospective exhibitors. I explained a number of things to them, like the fact that Poland is an

excellent spot to move used equipment into. There are virtually no vending machines there, you know. While many distributors have recently been dumping old video games into the country, vending is nonexistent. I mean, there are no cigarette machines, yet almost everyone in Poland smokes. There are no candy, soda, coffee, jukeboxes, kiddie rides or gum venders, either."

Says Herman: "The people of Poland are aggressively seeking business opportunities and guidance, making it one of the world's most investment-conscious and lucrative markets for the vending, music and games industries." Interested parties should contact him by phoning 818/713-0166 of faxing APB at 818/713-0518. Exhibit prices and floor plans will be sent, provided exhibit space is still available. Some may simply wish to visit the show as observers.

ACME MOVES TO SANDS CONVENTION CENTER

ACME '91 has been moved to the new **Sands Convention & Expo Center** in Las Vegas, but show dates remain as originally scheduled **(Friday-Sunday, March 22-24).** As reasons for the move, show sponsors cited "early demands for exhibit space" and "growth in the number of new exhibitors and space requirements of established exhibitors." ACME has grown 10 to 20% a year over the past two years, and many new firms started asking for space even before exhibit info was mailed out, said AAMA Exec VP **Bob Fay.** Also, many "established" exhibitors just want more space. Rather than set up a temporary structure in the back of Bally's Hotel, show sponsors elected to move to a bigger site. The new Sands opened just last November and offers a huge, one-hall exhibit space with a 32' ceiling and virtually no floor columns. There's also plenty of room for seminars, said Show Chairman **Bill Cravens.** Important note: although the welcoming party, all exhibits and seminars are set for the Sands, ACME will keep its block of more than 1,800 rooms at Bally's. Free shuttle buses will run between Bally's and the Sands (it's a six-minute ride). For more information, contact ACME '91 Show Management, William T. Glasgow, Inc. at 708/333-9292.

When Push Comes To Shove ... Call

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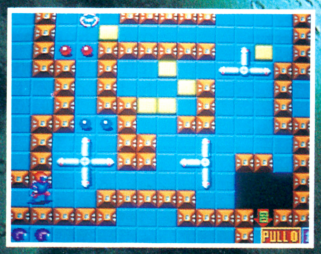
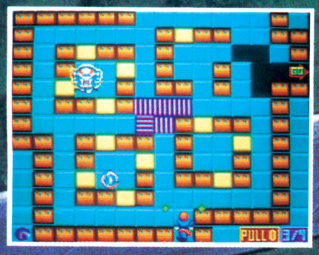
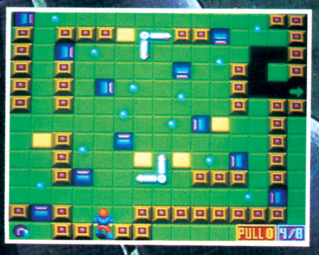
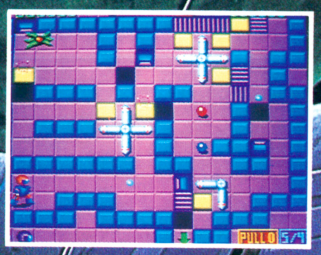
JUST PUSH IT!









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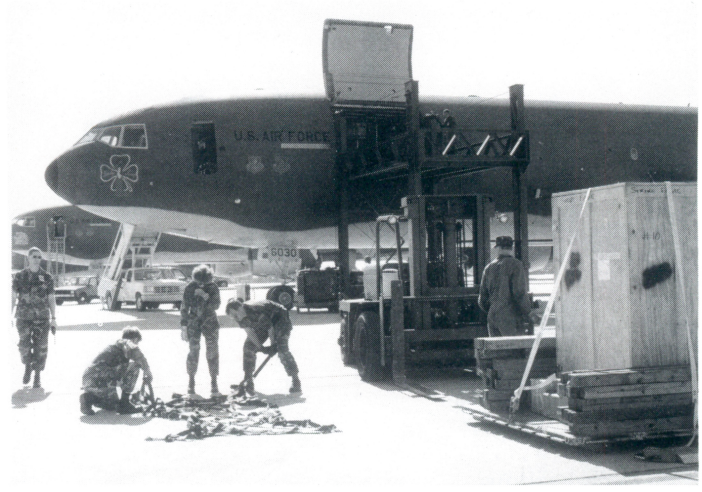
TRADE SUPPORTS TROOPS WITH GIFTS OF MUSIC & AMUSEMENT

The coin machine industry did its bit to make Christmas (and the rest of the year) happier for American troops stationed in the Middle East for Operation Desert Shield. Nelson International's Wurlitzer Division donated a **Wurlitzer** *Make My Music* contemporary-styled jukebox (software supplied by Musicland's Sam Goody stores). The phonograph will be rotated among 15 American armed services base camps in Saudi Arabia. Wurlitzer got the idea for the gift after hearing and reading some "mail call"-type programs and features in the news media; recently returned U.S. military folks said a Wurlitzer could help provide a taste of home. And, seen in the photo are some of the good folks at **Merit,** who sent cases of *Pub Time Darts* home boards to U.S. troops. The firm said they hoped darts would help provide some much-needed entertainment. Finally, operator **Gail Sherman** of General Amusement Corp. mailed off a handsome shipment of items collected for the troops, ranging from books to cookies. Well done, all!



MicroProse Games recently shipped an ***F-15 Strike Eagle*** video game from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (N.C.) on a cargo plane bound for the Gulf (see photo). The flight simulator, which actually contains a scenario about a Gulf raid, will be set up in one of the more permanent military establishments over there since electricity isn't that readily available in the desert. Company chief **Bill Stealey** (a Lt. Colonel in the Air Force Reserve, by the way) said, "Many military personel have been long-time MicroProse computer game players because of the real-life decision making all our games bring to the screen. We hope this is as close to real action as they get." The high tech game is also being shipped to selected U.S. coin machine dealers, don't 'cha know.

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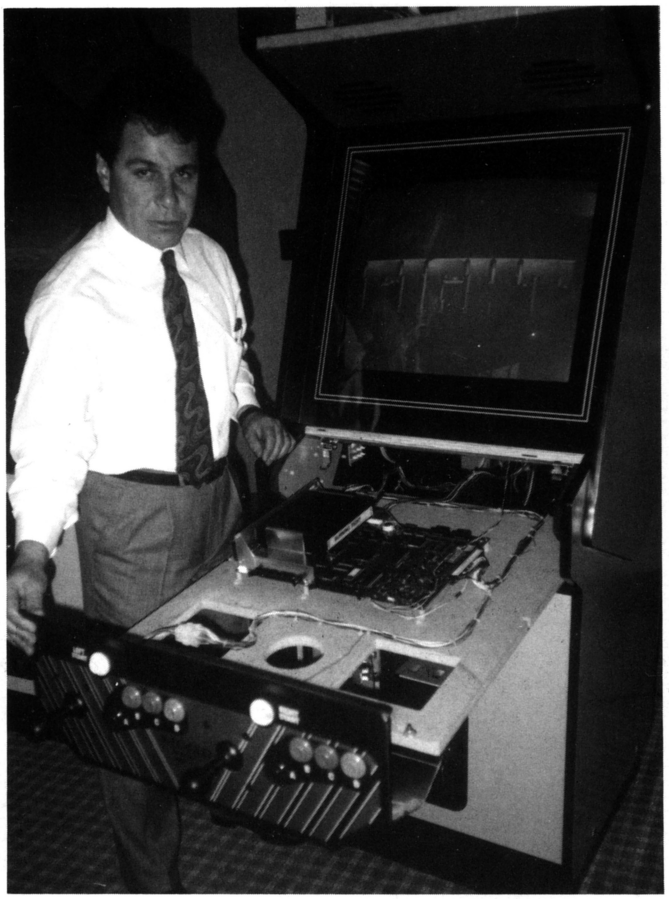
ROMSTAR SET TO SHIP ONE-SLOT *NEO•GEO* HARDWARE KITS

As stated in last month's edition, **SNK** has selected **Romstar** to market single-cartridge conversion hardware for their ever-growing *Neo•Geo* video system. That is, you can buy a kit from Romstar that converts other video cabinets to the *Neo•Geo* system. (SNK continues to market multi-cartridge dedicated cabinets in six-, four- and two-slot versions themselves). Romstar's **Rene Lopez** and staff showed the goods to regional distributors at mid-December meetings held at airport hotels in Newark, Chicago and L.A. They start shipping mid-January.

Three types of one-slot "kits" will be available: 1. a complete package with hardware, control panel, JAMMA harness, digital score readouts, speaker marquee and decal artwork, etc., plus one game cartridge; 2. the same package for Dynamo universal cabinets, also with a game of the operator's choice; and 3. the hardware alone without a game. Prices vary accordingly. The colors on the control panel, headers, etc. are the familiar *Neo•Geo* red and white.

Apart from the one game cartridge that's included in the first two kit choices, all subsequent *Neo•Geo* software will be purchased



exclusively through SNK distributors. However, both dealer networks are almost identical so there's little logistical problem in buying conversion hardware (Romstar) and games (SNK) from the same stores.

Lopez said older video games can be converted into one-slot *Neo•Geos* in one hour (wires have butt connectors, so there's no soldering required). "Based on the success of SNK's system and the vast amount of old video game cabinets sitting in operator shops or languishing out on the street, I think we have a home run here," Lopez told dealers at the L.A. meeting. "The software, of course, is the key and nobody doubts SNK's cartridges have been quite good and in some cases excellent."

Between SNK's own games and the ones to be converted via Romstar's one-slot materials, Lopez predicts the number of *Neo•Geo* units in the field could top 100,000 downstream. An SNK consumer division is marketing a home version of the system in the States now, offering many of the same titles used by operators. Lopez advised, however, that home software cartridges cannot be used on coin-op hardware (the former run on time play, the latter on men or lives). He also advised that SNK will retard release of new games to the home market to give operators the "money window" in front.

Some trade people have heard that some *Neo•Geo* home systems have been jerry-rigged to run on coin-op. SNK's **Paul Jacobs** says that's happened in Taiwan but has yet to find one in the States. If he does, he says "SNK will take whatever steps are necessary to protect our rights; the home system is not intended to be used in the commercial coin-op fashion."

FACTORY NOTES:

Spot-checking news on the amusement factory scene, we note the following developments. **Tom Kalinske** is the new CEO for the umbrella Sega USA group that covers their coin-op and home game divisions. His previous posts include presidencies at Matchbox and Mattel. . . **Nintendo** has set up a free hotline for technical help. It's 800/628-4126. Make a note of it, because when you see the nifty coin-op product coming later this year from Nintendo, you'll want to do business with them. . . **Data East USA** has promoted **Pete Gustafson** from field service chief to midwestern regional sales manager, where he'll work with U.S. and Central Canadian operators and distribs out of the firm's pinball plant in Melrose Park, Illinois. . . As expected, **Capcom Japan** went public with a stock offering on the Tokyo Stock Exchange last October. According to Japan's *Game Machine* magazine, Capcom raised $36 million which execs said would fuel new R&D.

NOTE TO JUKE PROGRAMMERS: NEW "VITAL TITLES" DEBUTS

Replacing the "Hot Hits" music feature in *RePlay* from this month forward will be new **"Vital Titles."** Appearing on **page 135** in this issue, the new music report compiles the top-selling 45s and compact discs at key one-stops across the country. The bottom line: buy these if you buy no others! We hope this new approach helps you see what hits are available on vinyl, helps you decide what 45s & CDs to buy and gives you a way to double-check your recent purchases for any fireballs you might have missed. We'd like to thank our helpful jukebox programmers who helped us with the "Hot Hits" section, and welcome our new one-stop contributors. We all hope this information makes your jobs at least a little easier and, as always, we welcome your feedback.

IF YOUR VS. SYSTEMS ARE ACTING SLUGGISH, CALL IN A SPECIALIST!

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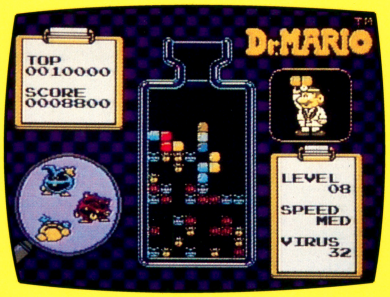
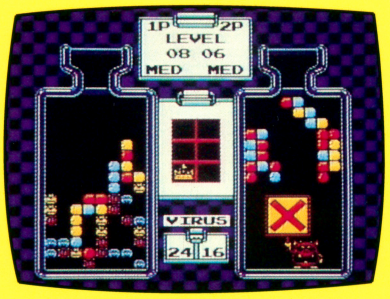
He's got the remedy for your VS. System.

Dr. Mario—with germs that are fun to catch.



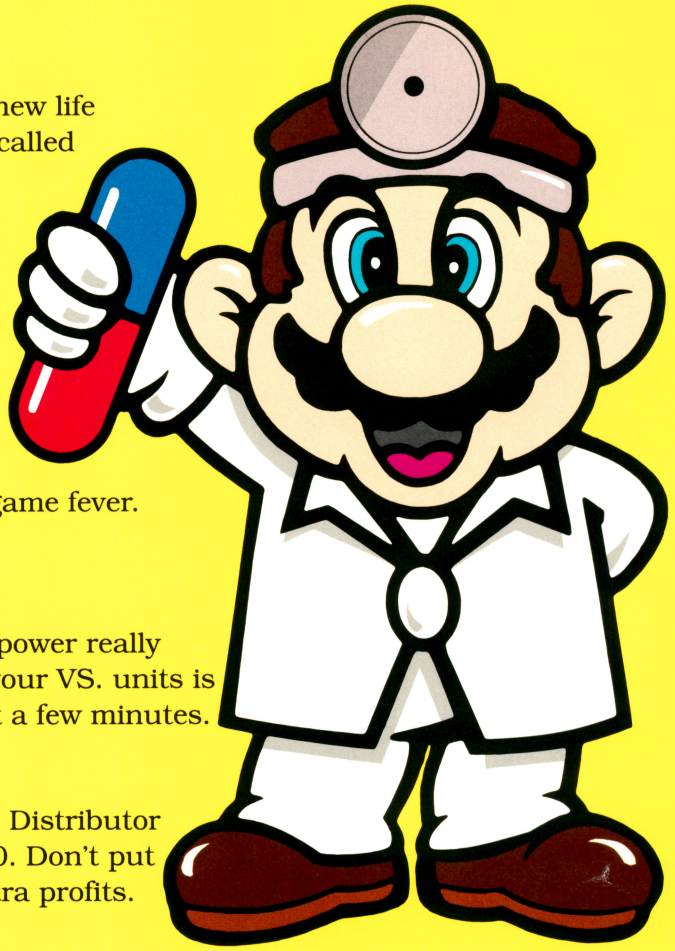
When all the viruses are destroyed, Dr. Mario advances to a more challenging round.



Players compete to match colors on the vitamin capsules as they fall.

Nintendo has just the prescription to pump new life into your VS. systems—a brand new release called Dr. Mario.™

The object is to help Dr. Mario destroy a nasty bunch of viruses by lining up appropriate combinations of vitamins. It's great fun for both one or two players. The action is intense as opponents choose their own level of skill. And you can be sure that players all over the country will be lining up to give it a try. So you'll be riding high on the first surge of game fever.



Rarely does a low-powered game provide such high-powered excitement.

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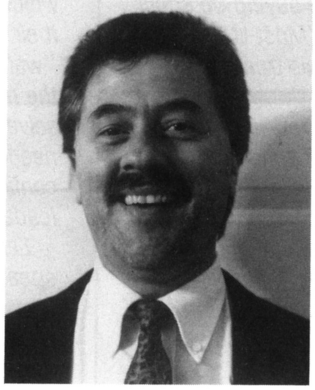
JUKEBOX CONVERSION KIT CAN BRING CD SOUND TO SMALLER LOCATIONS

Back in the days when the music industry converted over from 78s to 45s, there were plenty of jukebox conversion kits around to help ease the transition in smaller, lesser-earning locations. Maybe you've been wondering why no such kit is available to take your smaller accounts from 45s to CDs? Well, stop wondering. A CD conversion kit hit the market Nov. 1, from a firm called CD Jukebox Kit Co., Inc. which is the brainchild of 25-year industry vet **Tim Sharp.** The kit includes a CD player mechanism made by JVC (holds 12 discs; JVC will honor the 12-month warranty on this component). It also includes a CPU board, selection buttons, LED readouts, control panel and wiring harness, all designed by and built by Aeries International of Las Vegas (who also gives a 12-month warranty on their end). Decals and instructions complete the package. You can convert it faster an easier than a video kit, say operators who've done so. Truth is, you don't even need a 45 box to convert; you could conceivably install the kit in a cracker barrel or any other item themed to the location . . . or even install the kit right into a wall! Just add an amp, lights and coin mech, and you're in business.

Idea here is **not** to compete with dedicated CD jukes; that's a whole different market. For example, you "could" add more CD player mechs to this kit, but it doesn't pay to go over three mechs because at that point you're near the cost of a full-grown box. Instead, this kit opens up smaller, marginal locations to CD . . . small-potatoes locations the operator might otherwise lose when the owner says, "Get me a CD box or get out." To learn the name of the kit representative in your region, contact Tim Sharp at CD Jukebox Kit, P.O. Box 747, Dresden,TN 38225; 901/364-5140 or 364-5645. That's Tim, center, with Southwest regional reps **Dave & Rich Shuhy** in the photo.

DOUG YOUNG NAMED EXEC DIRECTOR OF IFPA

AMOA has announced that **Doug Young** will be the permanent Executive Director of its International Flipper Pinball Assn. (IFPA). Doug has a successful track record in promotion, sales, club management and organization leadership . . . most recently as director of RSI, the operator-run record supply service. Doug says he is "devoted to being a positive influence on the growth of amusement flipper pinball league play," both in the U.S. and overseas. He also pledges to promote pinball as "wholesome family recreation that's fun for all ages."



In announcing Doug's appointment, the IFPA board of directors also thanked acting director **Joe Conway,** who did a fine job piloting IFPA through its infancy. (Now Joe can go back to darts full-time as exec director of the AMOA-NDA.) To learn more about the new flipper association, contact Doug Young, AMOA-IFPA, 141 W. Vine St., Milwaukee, WI 53212; 414/263-0233.

SAN ANTONIO FRANZ BRANCH

The facility is not completely finished, but **H.A. Franz & Company's** new branch office in San Antonio is open for business. **Floyd Taylor** is their manager and he offers the whole shot: machines, parts & service in jukes, games and vending. ***Joe Franz*** tells us there's still work going on to bring the place to completion, but invites Texas ops to come on down. "We're in business!" he states.

AMOA NEW ADDRESS: STILL IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO

Yes, the national operator association has finally made its long-anticipated move to the building across the street from their old digs on Wacker Drive. You can reach them at AMOA, 401 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Phone is 312/245-1021.

IMPROVEMENT IN GAME SALES NOTED ON WMS FISCAL REPORT

While total results of operations for **WMS Industries'** fiscal quarter (ended Sept. 30, 1990) showed a net loss of $3 million, amusement game sales improved measured against the previous year's quarter. This resulted from higher pinball unit sales, including the sale of finished good inventory models carried over from the previous fiscal year's production. However, this division did post a modest decrease due to lower than normal profit margins charged on the sale of prior year machinery.

WMS total scope includes their hotel and casino businesses in Puerto Rico, and seasonal room rate and occupancy reductions there usually hurt the corporation's overall earnings in its first quarter. WMS owns both the Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino and the El San Juan Hotel & Casino. On the game scene, they presently have two impressive machines with the Williams ***Fun House*** and their Bally brand ***Bugs Bunny*** (both flipper games).

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"Quality is our family tradition"

On Your Mark...

by Marcus Webb

"Our industry is undergoing a dramatic transition. Markets are changing fast. So are operators. Product is slowly catching up."

So said this column in April 1990. Today, the direction of coin-op's transition is somewhat clearer than it was last spring. Video product is changing faster with a marked manufacturing trend toward hi-tech, big-ticket items. Another video trend is toward strong systems with good software support. Look for both of these trends to increase in 1991.

Markets show a clear shift toward the prize-seeking adult player, via redemption, video pokers, and 8-liners. Operators are by no means alone in this. "We intend to change our business tactics to adapt to a changing market," one small Eastern distributor said recently. More factories are dabbling with redemption, and also closely watching the video lottery campaign. If any large states legalize poker, expect some amusement video people to add VLTs to their product line.

Operators are changing, too. According to AMOA's Notre Dame professor Jerry Sequin, large professional operators are buying up small mom & pop firms. (Most U.S. industries evidence this trend, AMOA correctly notes.)

All of these changes are speeding up. Is this cause for optimism, or pessimism? "Too many folks in all segments of the industry are pushing an unjustified doom and gloom attitude," complain a few leading tradesters. "Our major problem is too much negative talk," they say. Who's right?

Well, as we said in April, the downside of any transition is easy to see. It takes real vision to peer into an unknown future, correctly predict the upside, and help make positive developments happen. RePlay *spent 1990 optimistically predicting that hi-tech video items would arrive. They have. We optimistically predicted a few "today tech" winners would arrive. They did. We predict more of both for 1991.*

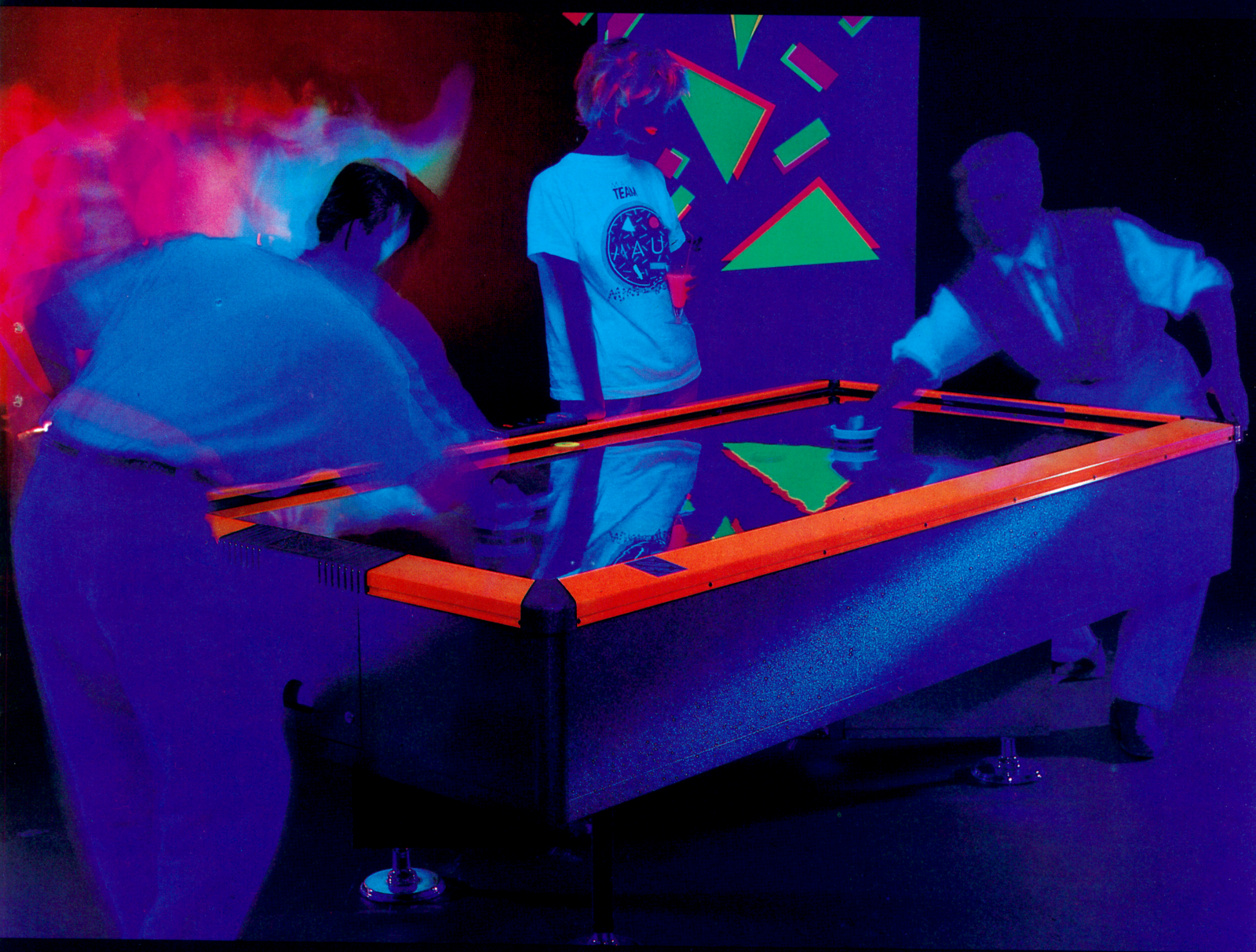
We also predicted in 1990 that more states would legalize video poker. None did. Five pro-poker campaigns failed last year. However, four of them failed in small states with small or new operator associations. Now the big state associations will try — strongly backed by AMOA, vidpoker makers and at least two governors. We stand by our our prediction!

As for whether industry pessimism is justified, let's put it this way: Any transition period is full of uncertainty, which prompts people to hold onto their money, buy less, and take a "wait and see" stance. As some in the manufacturing sector have themselves suggested, the main thing needed for a recovery of operator confidence is some plain, old-fashioned leadership . . . from manufacturing.

Let's hear manufacturer voices speaking out on where our industry's transition is going. Let's see more new product that's really new (and affordable) to back up those voices. We've had some of these things, and three cheers to the leaders who provided them. But we need more.

Tired of the "wait and see" syndrome? When more operators can stop "waiting" and start "seeing," they'll stop saving and start buying.

DISCO TAIFUN — ACTION AND FUN



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Weight: approximately 260 kgs

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All around profile strip prevents the puck from jumping out.
Rails: special rails fluorescent shining under black light
Fan: radial compressor with 420 m^3/h air transport quantity
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easily exchangeable
noise level: 61 decibel
Display: indicating the game credit, the time left and the goals made
Electrics: mounted on service slide easily accessible behind the door of the coin rejector,
fully extractable
Cash box and coin mechanism: large format cash box
coin mechanism: electronical or mechanical
variable credit allowance
Installation of the table: simple installation by simply screwing on the feet
adjustment possibility: 20 mm provided by adjustable feet
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Tobacco Turnaround

for the first time, tobacco industry supports "supervised machines"; coin-op fears some locations may simply decide to remove cig venders

Don't look now, but did cigarette vending machine operators just lose one of their most powerful allies? Some operators thought so, at first . . . but there may be "less than meets the eye" to a new tobacco industry campaign to prevent kids from smoking. At least, coin-op tradesters are sure hoping damage will be minimal.

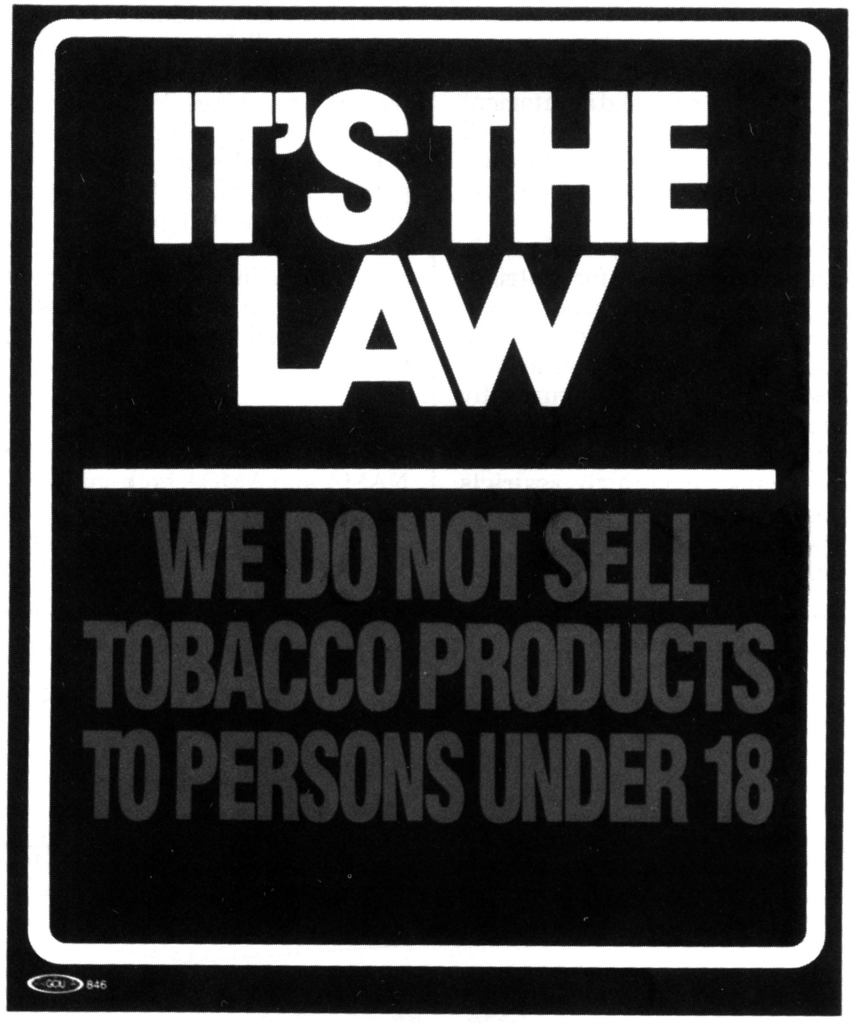
On Dec. 12, the Tobacco Institute announced a comprehensive program to keep cigarettes away from minors. Several tradesters across the U.S. caught some startling reports about this on TV and radio. The news stories **seemed** to say the Tobacco Institute was supporting a nationwide ban on cigarette vending machines in youth-accessible locations. Some operators feared they had just been made the "sacrificial lamb," tossed overboard by the tobacco industry to appease powerful anti-smoking forces.

MACHINE SUPERVISION

Not so, insisted spokesmen for tobacco firms . . . although the kind of legislation the tobacco industry does favor, may nevertheless cost cigarette vending operators quite a few locations. What the Tobacco Industry (and its constituent members like Brown & Williamson, RJR Tobacco, etc.) now support is state legislation requiring that "machines in youth-accessible locations must be supervised."

Now, that stance is not necessarily so dangerous to the industry as an outright ban. After all, NAMA (National Automatic Merchandising Assn.) has for years supported a voluntary policy of machine supervision in youth-accessible locations. And, at least two state operator associations are currently calling for laws that would require exactly the same thing.

But some important questions remain unanswered. How many states will actually pass such laws? Exactly how will each state define a "supervised" machine? Will installing a lock-out device do the trick? Will kids under 18 who work behind counters be permitted as "supervisors"?



The Tobacco Institute provides these signs to locations to help show that they observe state laws prohibiting tobacco sales to minors. These are available by contacting the organization.

THE BIG QUESTION

Most importantly — how many location owners will decide that supervision (of whatever kind) is too costly, or too much of a headache? How many locations will simply decide to remove cigarette vending machines as a result?

Vending machines account for only 5% of all U.S. cigarette sales to smokers of all ages, according to industry figures. Similar statistics hold true for cigarettes purchased by minors: only a small percentage comes from machines. And, according to the Tobacco Institute, only about 20% of cigarette vending machines are located in places where kids under 18 would go. Most cigarette venders — as many as 80% — are in offices, factories, nightclubs, taverns or liquor-licensed places

where kids are prohibited (and some of these are already "supervised" in some sense). The Tobacco Institute believes very few current locations will be at risk from their proposed legislation.

But coin machine operators have become quite sensitive, of late, to the possibility of being abandoned by allies in political fights. That's why many tradesters became nervous or upset at first, when the Tobacco Institute released a statement saying "the [tobacco] industry will support legislation prohibiting unsupervised machines in places frequented by minors."

The key word in that sentence is "unsupervised." As for outright bans on all cigarette vending machines in youth-accessible sites, RJR Tobacco's Maura Payne told *RePlay*: "Most of the legislation currently being considered by state governments calls for bans. We oppose that because it unfairly restricts access by vending machine's main users, who are adults." Brown & Williamson's Patrick Stone agreed: "Obviously, discouraging of any vending machine bans is the reason for requesting supervision. Basically, there's no need for a ban. The situation [of kids buying from machines] can be addressed differently by having supervision."

Payne added: "The youth program was not intended to move away from the vending industry in any way at all. It is simply intended to find ways of keeping youth away from the machines." The Tobacco Institute, Brown & Williamson, and RJR Tobacco all stated that the new policy will not affect the promotional allowances that cigarette vendors may receive from manufacturers. Also, political and other partnerships with NAMA and AMOA are expected to remain firmly in place.

NAMA'S RESPONSE

Reached for comment, leaders of NAMA and AMOA both said: "We aren't interested in breaking the law or selling cigarettes to minors." In addition, NAMA said "The Tobacco Institute's initiative to support legislation requiring supervision of cigarette vending machines located in places frequented by minors is consistent with the position NAMA has taken through 'Operation Alert.' A voluntary self-regulation program, Operation Alert was first issued in 1962. It has been updated periodically over the years, and is still in effect."

The Tobacco Institute's call for supervision of youth-accessible cigarette vending machines was just one part of a new, comprehensive "don't let minors smoke" campaign announced by the industry. The rest of the campaign includes multi-million dollar education programs aimed at parents, location signage, other proposed laws fixing the legal smoking age at 18, etc. Only time will tell whether the Tobacco Institute's new policy is a bold stroke that helps stave off the anti-smoking people...or a concession which encourages anti-tobacco forces to go even farther than they already have.

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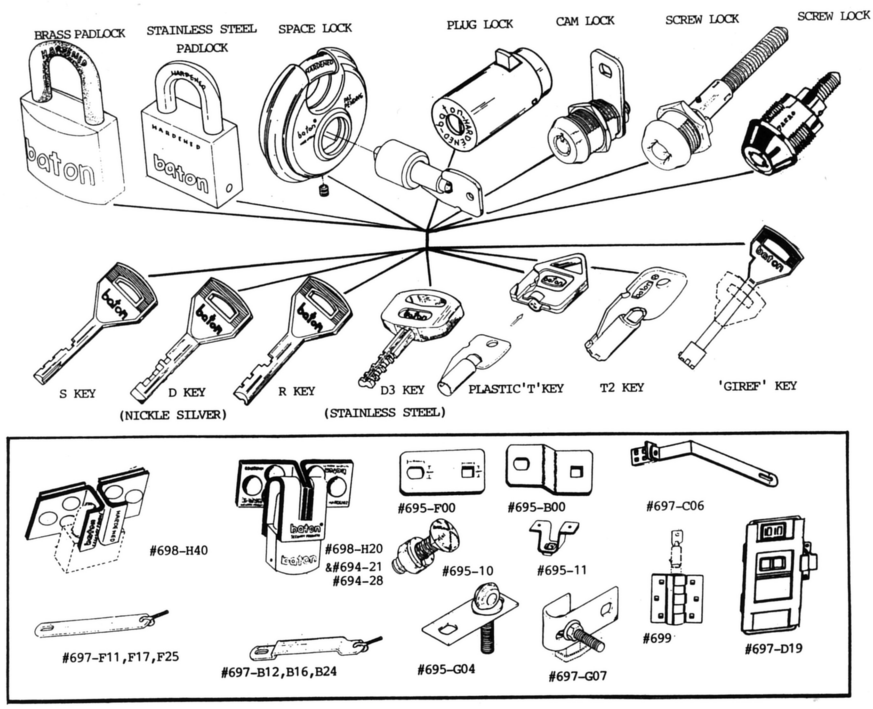

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South American Tribesmen Worship A Video Game

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Texas Jackpot

Gov.-elect Ann Richards makes lottery a top priority; package will include South Dakota-style video gaming

Operator-run video lottery may become a reality in Texas this year. Operators seeking to legalize pay-off video games of chance have two powerful new allies: Governor-elect Ann Richards, and 80% of Texas voters.

In her first big speech since winning the election Nov. 6, Ann Richards publicly announced on Dec. 1 that creating a Texas lottery will be one of her top priorities, as soon as she takes office this Jan. 15. Richards hopes a statewide voter referendum on lottery can be held as early as April.

"I'm going to be coming very early with a lottery," Richards was quoted as saying in the *Dallas Morning News*. "It is going to bring in revenue and I believe we can pass it...It's something the people of Texas so overwhelmingly support and want, that we ought to be listening to them."

Privately, staffers for the governor-elect have told the state operator association (AMOT) that Richards supports the inclusion of operators in her proposed Texas lottery. In addition to other forms of gaming, the lottery law would probably also provide for South Dakota-style, operator-run, pay-off video games of chance. AMOT has polling data showing that 80% of the Texas public says they would vote for video lottery, and 90% believe a referendum should take place.

OPERATOR SUPPORT NEEDED

With the new governor and the public strongly behind it, passing video lottery may seem like a sure thing at first. But "it won't be a cakewalk," warned Texas tradesters. Earlier lottery bills failed in recent sessions of the state legislature, partly because Texas is "the buckle of the Bible Belt." Strong opposition can be expected from the powerful Southern Baptist Convention. This group is headquartered in the Lone Star State and commands a respectable number of votes in the statehouse.

Texas Governor-elect Ann Richards

AMOT is now urging all of the state's 1,600 licensed operators to join the association, come to meetings, work with legislators and contribute financially to legalization efforts. (Phone numbers of AMOT leaders are given at the end of this story). AMOT already enjoys very strong relationships with state regulators and has excellent contacts with the incoming Richards administration. AMOT also enjoys the services of top lobbyist Bob Hughes.

However, the group needs more grass roots strength to lobby the Texas legislature and the general public. "Music and game operators need to get behind their association and support this effort," said association VP Verl Burnaugh. So far, AMOT says it has received no support from AMOA or from VLT (video lottery terminal) manufacturers, but it intends to seek help from these groups. AMOA recently increased its video lottery lobbying budget by a very substantial amount. Also, Texas-based Dynamo Corp. has announced plans to start building VLTs.

READ HER LIPS: NO NEW TAXES!

Why does Governor-elect Richards favor the lottery? Texas is facing a $3.8 billion deficit for the next two-year budget. Top legislators said recently that a first-ever state income tax might be necessary to raise the money. But Ann Richards ran for governor on a no-tax platform, and she's totally opposed to more taxes. Her proposed state lottery is expected to be a comprehensive system, including "lotto" (pick winning numbers to win multi-million dollar jackpots), "scratchers" (buy scratch-off tickets to win small cash prizes), and "instant lottery" (AMOT's name for pay-off video games of chance).

Within a week after taking office, Richards is expected to send the Texas legislature an "emergency message" requesting that lottery legalization be made a priority bill for soonest-possible action. A state constitutional amendment is needed to allow a lottery in Texas; the legislature would have to agree to put the proposed amendment before the public. Enabling legislation to set up the lottery itself would also have to pass the legislature.

AMOT has not publicly disclosed whether the governor will seek the constitutional amendment or the enabling legislation separately or together, or which one might come first. But AMOT lobbyist Bob Hughes did say he believes the earliest possible vote on any constitutional amendment would come in July. If the expected "emergency message" request doesn't work, standard legislative procedures would likely delay lottery enactment by nearly a year, Hughes added.

Texas operators or others wishing to support the AMOT lottery campaign are asked to contact any of the following AMOT leaders. President Jim Gildart (Allcoin Equipment Co., San Antonio, 800/880-8363). VP Verl Burnaugh (Commercial Music Co., Dallas, 800/442-7281). Past president Paul Borchardt (Borchardt's Coin Machines, Amarillo, 806/383-0832). Board members Hoddy or Jimmy Franz (H.A. Franz & Co., Houston, 713/523-7366).

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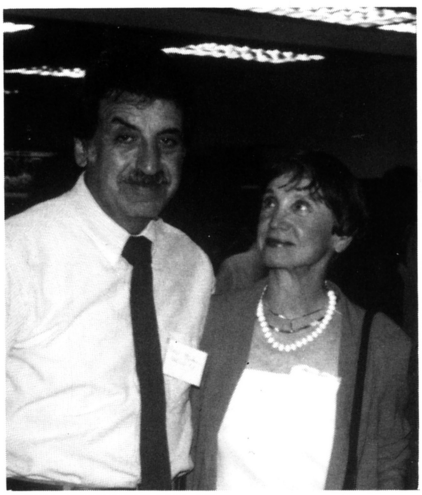
BBIA to Honor Valley Chief Chuck Milhem

As his charming wife Florence knows, Valley Recreation Products' President Chuck Milhem has a lot of industry awards on his "busy wall of respect." Now she's making room for another, the prestigious 1991 Industry Service Award from the BBIA (Billiard & Bowling Institute of America).

The Midland, Mich. resident will receive the plaque at the BBIA's convention banquet in St. Louis on April 24 and be enshrined in their National Bowling Hall of Fame & Museum (not Chuck himself, 'cause we still need him).

This award is presented annually to a prominent person for his or her contribution to the promotion of the sports of bowling or billiards, both of which have been stimulated by Chuck's efforts all these years.

Chuck Milhem served for 18 years with Brunswick where he rose to VP of their bowling division with responsibility for merchandising and distribution. He joined Valley in 1979 and began a 10-year term on the BCA board of directors where he spearheaded creation of their trade show, their All-American Team tournament, a PR drive and the involvement of the Italian slate producers in the BCA (Billiard Congress of America).



Chuck Milhem (he doesn't wear the mustache anymore) and his wife Florence at just one of the many industry open houses he attends.

His contributions to the BBIA include a key leadership role in allocating The Super Show funds to the BCA for programs like their 'How to Play Pool Right' booklet, billiard dealer workshop manual and BBIA Billiard Participation Study. During his own term on the BBIA board of directors (1984-1990) and his presidency (1988-1989), the association's membership and financial strength grew and its annual convention prospered.

At Valley, he founded the Valley National 8-Ball Assn. which has grown to 40,000 player members. His success in expanding Valley's international business culminated in the presentation of the Commerce Dept.'s prestigious President's "E" award for export excellence in 1990. Only 30 U.S. companies received this honor in 1990.

"This latest honor is truly deserved," said BBIA President Martin Bloom (of the Bloom Company). "Chuck is a man that contributed richly to both the billiard and bowling industries for so many years." Don't we know it!

Chuck Milhem genuinely enjoys helping promote the sports his company makes products for. Here he is pictured (at left) at the most recent VNEA finals with Mrs. Mazzone of the L.E.A.N.I. slate company, VNEA prexy president Roger Rasmussen, Florence Milhem and Lorenzo Mazzone.

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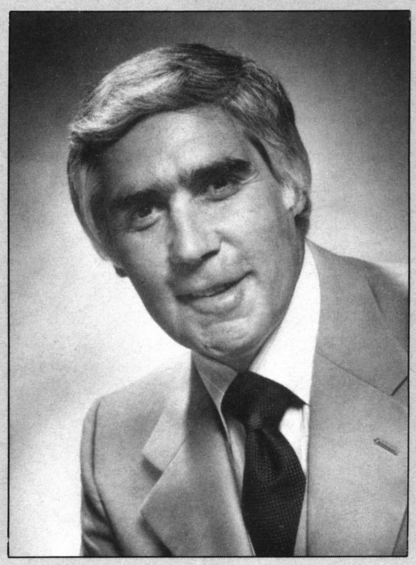
Goodbye, Ben

One night during the New Orleans AMOA show, factory/distributing veteran Ben Rochetti felt faint and went back to his hotel room to rest. After returning home to Westchester Ill., he went to the doctor for some tests and got a clean bill of health (although more test were scheduled for afterward). He never took them, because on thanksgiving Day, he sufferd a massive heart attack. Despite the efforts of the alerted paramedics, he was gone.

The death of any husband, father and grandfather is always tragic for the survivors. But the circumstances here were even more poignant. Practically the entire family was gathered at the Rochetti home where wife Doris (a gourmet cook) served up her usually spectacular Thanksgiving meal. Afterward, Ben sat with the grandkids, watching football on TV and making paper planes for the youngsters. Suddenly, he complained of pain, went upstairs to take a break, and the "event" happened.

The paramedics took him to Loyola Hospital where he was pronounced dead at the age of 57. The shock to the family was understandable; the shock to his many industry friends was as accute, witnessed by the enormous outpouring of sympathy (and people) at the Hursen Funeral Home where the chapel was jammed with flowers.

Services were conducted the following Tuesday at Divine Infant Church and burial followed at Queen of Heaven in Hillside, Ill. Counting in the flowers, the cards, the calls, the personal visits by friends and business people, it was a fitting testimony to a family man who at the same time was a well-



known figure in the coin machine industry after spending over 20 years working either in manufacturing or distributing.

Ben Rochetti came into this business in the late '60s as an NSM jukebox distributor sales rep during the time Henry Leyser had the American agency. Before very long, he joined the Empire Distributing staff out of Chicago, working for Gil Kitt, Joe Robbins and Jack Burns. During his ten-year tenure with that prominent dealership, he rose to the position of sales manager. Among his "special projects" was marketing one of the earliest soccer tables the *Garlando*, which he imported from Italy.

After Empire, he hired on at Stern Electronics (which made videos, pins and for a brief time, Seeburg jukeboxes). Then it was on to Wico, the national parts house, during their brief flirtation with game manufacturing (Wico built a couple of pins but sold around 5,000 Sega *Baseball* video kits as well).

After two years there, he joined up with Don DeVale at the I.D.E.A. dart company and then did regional sales for Cinematronics before coming aboard the Taito America ship as a consultant to then-president Paul Moriarity in 1986. He spent around four years at Taito, most notably as their VP of production, piloting the manufacture of such videos as *Kick & Run, Darius, Operation Wolf, Chase HQ* and the mega-hit *Double Dragon.*

Ben left Taito this past January. He also left them something, or rather someone, quite important to that factory — his son Rick, their well-known Sales VP who has made his own impressive contribution to the business and now carries the family name on in the industry.

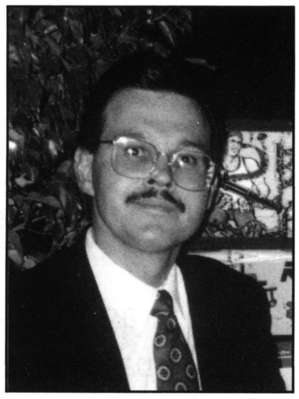
When he died, Ben Rochetti was working on some redemption pieces at his new Double Play company (one of which, son Rick said, was looking very promising.) Rick, apparently, will attend to summing up these affairs for his mother.

While a lot of industry people were outright shocked that Ben died so suddenly and more especially at such an early age, few took it as hard as Rick. "He wasn't only my dad, we worked together at Taito for a bunch of years," he said. "It's still very hard to talk about it. It's been very tough on my mom too. They had a good marriage for 37 years and they did a lot things together," he added.

Besides Doris and Rick, Ben Rochetti is survived by his other son Jeff, daughters Dorann and Pat, their spouses and eight grandchildren. Clearly, Ben made his mark in life, both in family and in business. We would like to add our wishes, along with so many, that Ben lives in God's peace.

''Rock 'N Bowl week in and week out is at the top of the list in earnings. I highly recommend it to anyone seriously looking at redemption or enhancing their current mix. Seeing is believing... we're operating over 50 units now!''

—Ronald Malinowski
Vice President Equipment Services
Aladdin's Castle



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Parallel Update

associations still wary of each other as Bush signs new law; parallel boards will become legal to operate on Dec. 1, 1991

After the U.S. Congress legalized operator use of parallel video games for 1992-95, AMOA and AAMA "agreed to disagree" on the issue. Well, President Bush put his signature on the pro-parallel law Dec. 1, and as planned, the two major U.S. coin-op associations are disagreeing about it.

AAMA'S Don Barnes Interprets New Parallel Law

RePlay has obtained a copy of an internal memo by AAMA attorney Don Barnes, assessing the meaning of the new pro-parallel law. The full text of the memo is as follows:

"New Gray Market Legislation: On Saturday evening, Oct. 27, 1990, Congress passed an amendment to HR. 5316 which will legalize the public performance of gray market video arcade games. The bill ***does not*** legalize counterfeits and does not become effective until one year after it is signed into law by the President.

"Section 803 of HR. 5316 states: *Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 106 (4) and 106 (5), in the case of an electronic audiovisual game intended for use in coin-operated equipment, the owner of a particular copy of such a game, lawfully made under this title, is entitled, without the authority of the copyright owner of the game, to publicly perform or display that game in coin-operated equipment,* ***except that this subsection shall not apply to any work of authorship embodied in the audiovisual game if the copyright owner of the electronic audiovisual game is not also the copyright owner of the work of authorship.***

Don Barnes goes on to comment: "The exception (highlighted in bold type) was included to protect the recording and motion picture industries. As the House Report states: 'The [public performance] exception does not apply, however, in cases

AAMA attorney Don Barnes

where the electronic audiovisual game also contains other works of authorship, such as a musical composition or a motion picture, unless the copyright owner of the electronic audiovisual game is also the copyright owner of these works as well.' H. Rep. 101-735 at 16.

"Simply stated," Barnes concluded, "if a gray market game contains music or pictures owned (copyrighted) by a **third party** (not the owner of the copyright in the game itself), the new law does not apply. The music or pictures cannot be publicly performed without the permission of the third-party copyright owner."

AMOA and AAMA can't even agree about how strong or active their disagreement over parallels is! According to AAMA leaders, the association intends to take a neutral "operator education and communication" role for now, and to stay away from confrontation and anti-parallel activism. For its part, AMOA seems extremely wary of any sign that AAMA may "want to fight the parallel war all over again."

The two associations have announced separate lobbying trips to Washington, D.C. this spring. AAMA will visit the nation's capital from May 5-9, while AMOA's D.C. conference takes place May 19-21. This suggests of course that AMOA and AAMA "could" argue opposite sides of the parallel issue. AAMA has not formally announced plans to lobby against the new law, though; it now says its board is "reviewing the options" and will decide what formal stance to take on parallels later this year.

Meantime, operator Bill Beckham (who raised the parallel issue to the level of an operator crusade in the first place) has publicly absolved Japanese manufacturers of any role or blame in the parallel controversy. Beckham has stated he now believes the zeal to stop parallels lies solely with U.S. subsidiaries of Japanese firms.

Unintended support for this view might have arrived from an unlikely source: Japanese manufacturers. Their manufacturer association, JAMMA, has not formally commented on the latest parallel developments, but one unnamed Japanese manufacturer was quoted in the Japanese trade press as saying his company didn't really care one way

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or the other about parallel legality, dismissing it as a domestic U.S. concern.

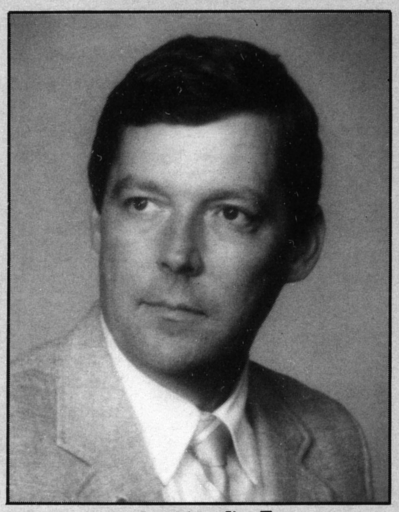
Wrote Mr. Akagi, publisher of Japan's *Game Machine* magazine: "Most major Japanese manufacturers feel they will not be affected [by parallels] at all, as long as their video games make a hit."

AMOA President Jim Trucano Issues Reply Statement

The Don Barnes memo was made available to AMOA, as was a letter from AAMA Exec Bob Fay. The letter explained that AAMA planned to "meet with FCC officials on Dec. 10 to obtain their detailed requirements and laws that could impact on operators prior to their investment in parallels."

AMOA President Trucano released the following statement in reply.

"AMOA is disappointed that AAMA continues to want to fight the parallel imports war all over again, especially after the Congress overturned the Red Baron decision. It may be that in certain rare instances, there will be some games that might use a work of authorship (music and/or characters), the copyright in which is owned by an entity different from the owner of the copyright of the game, but it remains to be seen whether the owners of the copyrights in works other than the game will go to the trouble of trying to prevent owners of legitimate parallel games from using them for public performance.



AMOA President Jim Trucano

"We are also disappointed that AAMA apparently feels it necessary to go to the FCC to try to find a basis under FCC regulations to interfere with operators' use of parallel games. After the Congress made clear that it disagreed with the Court's decision in Red Baron, we in AMOA hoped that no more resources of the operators or equipment manufacturers would have to be used on the parallel boards issue. It appears that the game manufacturers have not given up on their intent to discriminate in price against American game operators by resisting the operators' use of parallel boards. AMOA will therefore continue to do everything necessary to protect the interests of its members in being able to purchase legitimate — not counterfeit — parallel boards and take advantage of the substantially lower prices of these boards. This is particularly important in the current difficult economic conditions."

A MESSAGE TO OPERATORS OF ATARI FINAL LAP VIDEO GAMES FROM NAMCO AND ATARI

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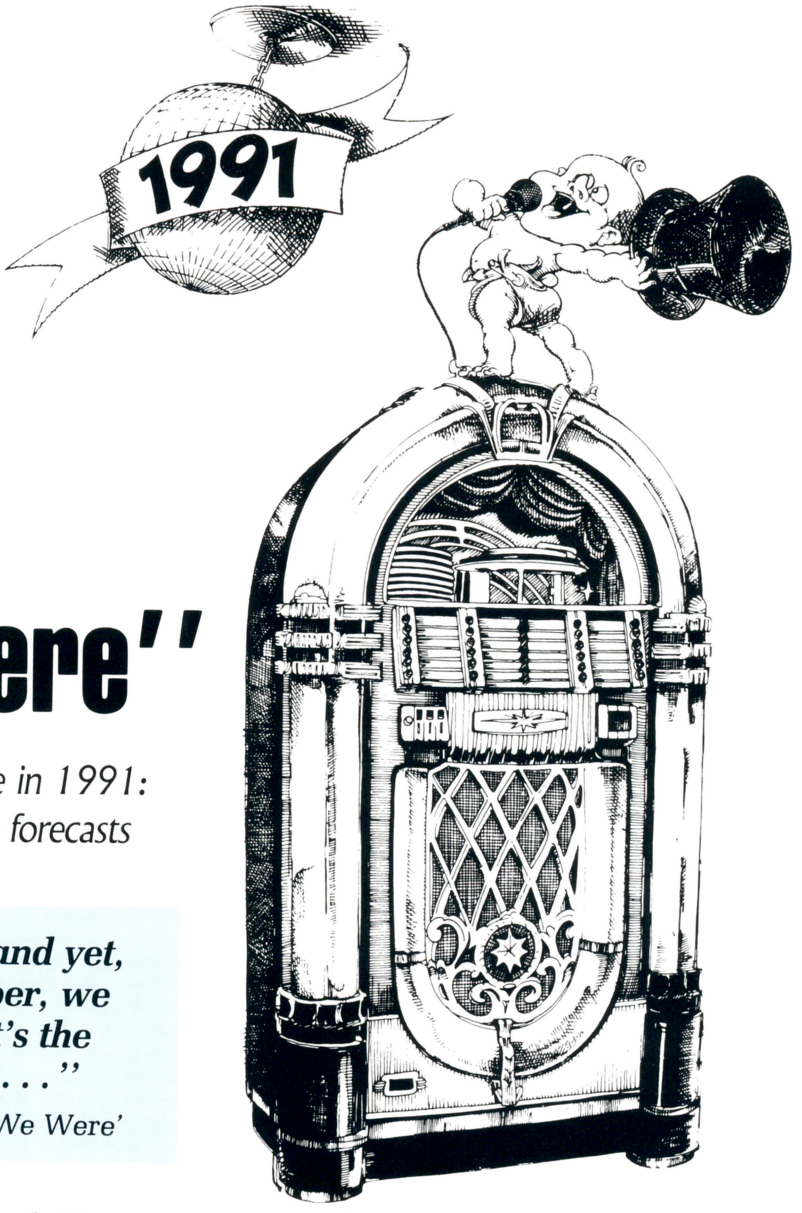
The Atari Final Lap Video Game includes trademarks belonging to Philip Morris Incorporated. Upon learning of our use of their trademarks, Philip Morris raised objections. They do not want children to smoke. They have stated it is against their policy for any of their cigarette trademarks to be used on or in connection with children's games or other items intended for children.

Although our use of the trademarks was inadvertent, Namco Limited, as creator and manufacturer, Namco-America Inc., and Atari Games Corporation, as manufacturer and distributor of the game, take responsibility for such use. Accordingly, we have made up conversion kits consisting of 10 Eproms with instructions for you to convert existing games into non-infringing games. The kits are free and will be shipped to you pre-paid.

Please contact your distributor to receive a conversion kit for each Atari Final Lap game that you own or operate. You will receive a $100 credit from Namco-America Inc. through your distributor for each game you convert, upon Namco-America's receipt of the original chip sets. Up to five $100 credits can be added together and applied to the purchase of each new Namco Final Lap 2 dedicated game, which is scheduled for introduction February, 1991.

Namco, Namco-America and Atari join Philip Morris in urging you to cooperate with us in making the conversions. This will guarantee your ability to continue using the Atari Final Lap video game and the $100 credits will enable you to obtain new Namco Final Lap 2 dedicated video games at substantial savings.



"The Way We Were"

. . . in 1990, and the way we will be in 1991: RePlay's year-end review and future forecasts

"Memories can be beautiful, and yet, what's too painful to remember, we simply choose to forget; so it's the laughter we will remember. . . "

— lyrics from the title song, 'The Way We Were'

Taking a cue from the famous Barbra Streisand ballad 'The Way We Were,' someday the coin-op trade may look back on 1990 and say, "Ah, those were the good old days." Asked to defend that statement, the trade can say: "After all, 1990 was the year of Konami's smash video *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. 1990 was 'the year of the pinball.' It was also the year we finally got a break on music copyright royalties (as long as we operated over 20 jukeboxes). And it was the year that 'family amusement centers' became more important profit centers. Finally, 1990 was the year we all worked like dogs, and — for the most part — scrabbled up a decent dollar. Not such a bad year, 1990."

From the perspective of January 1991, however, it's a little too early to bathe last year in the golden glow of selective nostalgia. While it's true we had some bright spots, some hits, and some success stories, another part of the picture is more painful: 1990 was a tough, troubling year for many in the coin-operated amusements industry. . . and the chief reason was that "King Video's" crown became tarnished again.

VIDEO STREET BLUES

With a respectful nod of the head to the many operators (including game center people) who did suffer a fall in the general coin drop in 1990, the aggregate picture wasn't nearly as bleak as many liked to believe. This industry produces as many doom-sayers as Iowa grows corn stalks. So while a big sport for many at the arcade may have been playing *Turtles*, the big sport for many at trade gatherings was to chatter about the sky falling down.

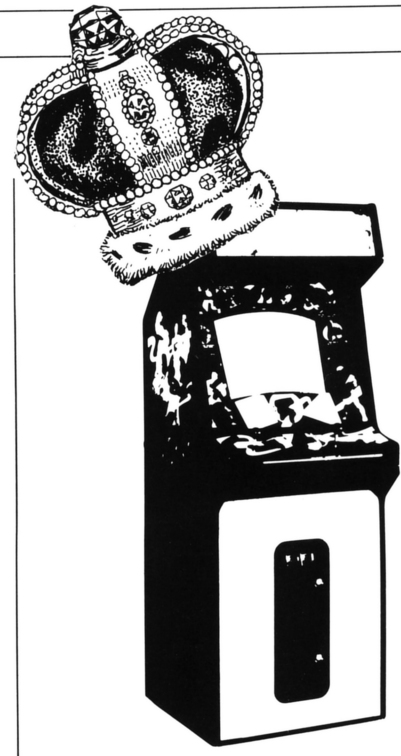
In truth, things weren't really rotten for operators who had well-balanced routes. But, many of the video-oriented companies — in the words of one distributor — "took it on the chin." Jukeboxes, pins, darts, pool, redemption and just about anything that didn't sport a video monitor, fared decent to good, and often great. Still, since Nolan Bushnell's brainchild began to dominate the route and arcade picture over 10 years ago, many have measured the overall health of the trade by that single yardstick: video collections. What happened?

Let's look at *Turtles* itself as a yardstick. Measured against the greatest video of all time, *Ms. Pac-Man*, total sales of Konami's megahit came to less than 20% of what the Midway machine did. Granted, *Turtles* is kid-oriented while *Ms. Pac-Man* was "everybody's best gal" and cooked up a storm in the bar as well as the game room. The fact remains that every manufac-

turer, distributor and operator remembers the "glory days" and, perhaps unrealistically, wants them back.

Some think there's a recession going on within the industry as it certainly seems to be for the country at large (the U.S. Federal Reserve recently reported that regional economic slumps are now pushing from coast to coast). A few trade people even think the video slide could be the worst since the great bust of the early 1980s. While that's arguable, the decline does have some unsettling signs that sound oh, so familiar — e.g., some distributors are looking at some troubling receivables on the books and bloated inventories in the warehouse.

Vending machine sales for some dealers may have been off their color, but any way you measure the pulse of 1990, it invariably comes back to that video artery, and its heartbeat pumped slower. Tradesters indicated all sorts of reasons—from thematic sameness, to home video; from an expected down-cycle (due to fickle player habits), to competition from recorded movies and music. Street operators quite correctly add in the most pregnant element: whether the video designers try or not, they seem to have a devil of a time producing a game that catches the fancy of the tavern-goer.



1990 was a troubling year for many in coinbiz and the chief reason was that "King Video's" crown became tarnished again.

Tetris, followed by the new *Ataxx* (as well as such evergreens as *Pit Boss)* have partially filled this gaping hole. In general, though, an "adult video" (non-poker, of course) is the most elusive product around. If professionals from outside the industry really knew this, they'd find it utterly fascinating.

The most complex problems often come down to the simplest solutions. In the case of video, and it's been proven historically, all the business needs to kick back up is another butt-kicker itself. We know that *Gauntlet* revived video after the early slide. We know that *Double Dragon* did the same thing a couple of years later. We know that *Turtles,* while not a cross-the-board location piece, picked things up as well. And we know it can and will

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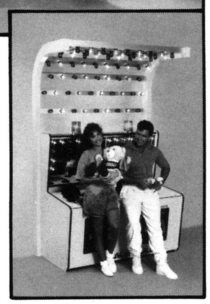

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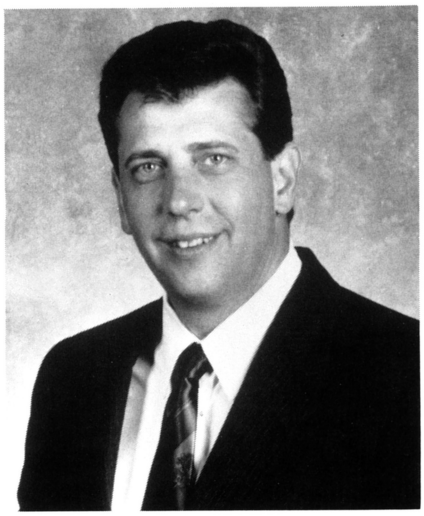

AAMA prexy Gil Pollock

happen again. Konami itself is readying *Turtles II* for the summer, but (get ready) will bring *The Simpsons* video out for spring. And who knows what the Japanese, for one, will do with 32-bit memory?

POLLOCK'S PREDICTION

Everybody expected "the big nine-oh" to be a tough year. In late 1989, AAMA President Gil Pollock bluntly assessed the industry's 1990 prospects at an association board meeting. Candidly admitting game makers were putting out too many titles, too fast, Pollock predicted a serious market correction could lie in store for 1990. "I'm afraid we may have to go through the same type of shake-out we had in 1982," he said, "although I hope without the same intensity."

Well, 1990 hasn't been quite as bad as all that. In the 12 months since Pollock's prediction, only one manufacturer (Gamemasters in Atlanta) and one front-line distributor (Banner in Pittsburgh) shut their doors. (Both of those were "special situations.") But sliding earnings, slower sales, shrinking profits, and negative attitudes from all levels of the trade marked 1990 as a definite come-down from the more robust markets of 1987 to mid-1989.

If coin-op's 1990 market was soft, the political arena wasn't much happier. The industry's political unity in Washington D.C. was shredded by angry arguments over parallel imports of PCB boards. Ultimately Congress made it the "law of the land" that parallels would be legal to operate from December 1991 to October of 1995. But at this writing, even an Act of Congress hasn't enabled the industry to unite and put the parallel issue behind it.

On the state level, the political atmosphere was gentler, but the concrete results were largely disappointing. The hoped-for "saviour" of many operators—legalized video poker — went down to at least five straight defeats (in Vermont, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Pennsylvania . . . and arguably one more state we won't name).

PLAYING IT SAFE

Operators responded to this slowed-down, emotionally-heated market with an ultra-conservative "back to basics" movement. CD jukeboxes and pool tables stood tallest of all. Hi-tech versions of 1920s classics like redemption and darts continued to prosper and grow. Electric-powered pinball, celebrating a 60-year anniversary, ran into a "hit syndrome" but also produced some truly great hits like Williams' *Whirlwind.*

Another old-time "basic" that flourished in a "hi-tech incarnation" during 1990 was gambling. AMOA made legalization of video poker one of its top priorities, while at least 18 state operator associations decided to pursue eventual poker legalization in their own states. And, despite police crackdowns from California to New Jersey, video slot machines (the infamous "8-liners") were seen as a "good bet" by many, many operators. Others saw the proliferation of this type of equipment as a sell-out to the industry's "dark side."

From music to gambling . . . from staying with staples, to "only buying number one hits" . . . from cutting down on overhead, to stepping up the rotation cycle . . . many U.S. operators spent 1990 playing it super-safe, watching their budgets, husbanding their profits, and "waiting to see what happens next."

Our review of 1990 (and our forecast for 1991) focuses on two broad areas: first, machines and markets. Second, politics and people. It was a busy, almost frantic, year that continually stepped up the action and the pace . . . so here we go!

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The year is 2039 A.D. When a distant colonized space station experiences strange and unexplained occurrences, the Federation of Earth launches a special off-world unit of commandos to investigate. En route, a distress signal from an Earth-bound cargo ship is intercepted. The crew has been taken hostage by hostile alien life-forms. Tension builds as the commandos search through the ship for survivors, while fending off the brutal, inhuman attackers. It's a fight to the death when the aliens' true course of cold-blooded destruction is discovered . . . Destination: Earth!

How To Play

- This high-powered shooting game is in the first person perspective and can be played by one or two players simultaneously. A second player can join the game at any time.
- The hostages must be rescued while annihilating the alien monsters in seven shocking and horrifying rounds.
- The game is over when the player's LIFE ENERGY has expired, when no hostages have been rescued, or when the seven rounds have been completed. And with Taito's buy-in feature, the player can continue the action!
- A LIFE ENERGY capsule appears periodically to restore life to the player. In addition to the endless supply of bullets, the player can collect special weapons including Freeze, Blade, Fire and Explosive Bombs.

Operation

- The controls include a high-powered, pump-action, fully automatic machine gun and a foot pedal to assist the player in maneuvering through the alien-infested ship.
- The pump-action allows the player to select the special weapon of choice. The player then simply pulls the trigger to unleash total destruction.
- The foot pedal allows the player to reverse his direction of travel. This gives the player additional maneuverability to explore each corridor of the large ship.

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Machines & Markets

video produced a few strong hits while many titles struggled; music, pins & redemption enjoyed a strong year while poker faltered

VIDEO SEE-SAW

As mentioned, the see-saw on which everything seemed to pivot in 1990 was the amusement video game. We all learned (again) that video is a hit-driven business. Did we have hits? Yes, indeed! We had arcade-y hi-tech wonders from the likes of Sega *(G-Loc, Galaxy Force)* and Atari *(S.T.U.N. Runner, Hard Drivin' & Race Drivin').* We had dedicated blockbusters like Konami's *Turtles* and Atari's *Pit Fighter.* We had great kits or system games like Capcom's *Final Fight* and *Magic Sword* and SNK's *Ninja Combat* (their *Neo•Geo* system was a genuine 1990 success story). We had solid earners like Fabtek's *Raiden* and several others.

But as operators and distributors moaned all year, there just weren't *enough* hit videos to fuel the entire industry on a continuing upward curve. A handful of smash hits sold (and earned) handsomely; much else dribbled off to the side. And, it must be said, there were more than a couple of titles (including some from top factories) that bowed with much fanfare, then quickly headed into the "close-out" column.

ALPHABET SOUP: NES, ROI & FCC

If Gil Pollock's prediction of a painful shake-out failed to materialize in 1990, it may be because many companies' home video divisions kept their coin-op offices afloat. As for coin-op, the comment made in an earlier year by Capcom's Bill Cravens continued to apply: "You can't take three billion dollars out of an industry and not expect to feel it."

Cravens, as visible politically as he was as a sales manager, qualified that statement, saying: "If it weren't for the income from home video cartridge sales, I wonder how many video manufacturers would still be around." When the *RePlay* reporter asked him whether he thought coin-op wouldn't be healthier if home video never existed, Cravens replied: "I know what you mean, but I still think home video's been positive for the overall concept."

Konami's hit Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Without question, however, the majority of coin operators believe home video has exacted a price from their businesses. They liked seeing certain of the home product ads on TV (not all) and hoped some of the increased public awareness would spill over into their cash pans. But many still wondered where the video manufacturers' first allegiance sat, and whether or not their designers targeted home or coin-op first when they sat at their tables and monitors.

Indeed, a somber realism about home games settled over coin-op in 1990 as the trade saw the vast majority of technical innovations and titles (and manufacturer profits) going to (or coming from) the home front. Some tradesters kept predicting that home games would eventually slow down . . . and that coin-op would rebound as a result. Although growing numbers of individual home video titles were "non-hits" in 1990, the overall home market continued strong for a third straight year . . . and coin-op continued to "feel it."

As 1990 ended, a handful of coin-op manufacturers stepped up to the plate with some super-spectacular hi-tech videos (such as MicroProse's *F-15 Strike Eagle,* Betson's *Mad Dog McCree* and gyroscopic simulators from Taito and Sega). These could not possibly be duplicated in the home, everyone agreed. The response: some sales of the more reasonably priced items, but many operators blinked at high price tags on others. Even with "standard" video, the price-vs.-ROI debate was alive and healthy throughout 1990, and shows no signs of going away in 1991.

RePlay's 1990 year-end survey of operators showed that video now accounts for just 35% of the national cash box take. That's down from 65% two years ago. Video remains the bulwark, the top-earner, in a diverse industry "pie," but the numbers speak for themselves: video's relative health isn't what it used to be. Video is far from "dead" (as some operators claimed all year), but it has proven to be mortal, with some titles dispatched by ailing C-store locations and others wounded by continuing competition from home games.

Federal and local safety regulations proved to be another potential thorn in video's side during 1990. Much of the trade had ignored the problem for years, but suddenly the FCC and localities such as the City of Chicago demanded better compliance with their own and Underwriters Lab's standards. AAMA struggled to come to grips with the problem all year, working with tradesters and officials alike to get everyone squared away. Some initial progress was made, but we've got a ways to go and safety compliance remains a possible land mine buried out there for 1991.

VIDEO '91 OUTLOOK

The larger questions for video

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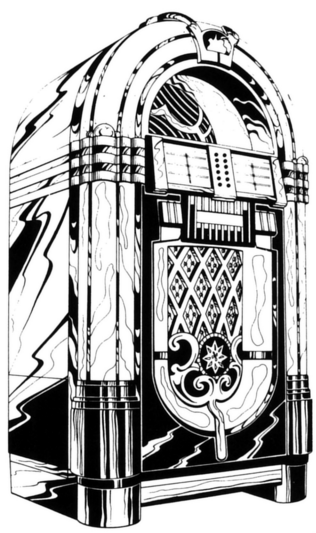
AMOA President Jim Trucano, outgoing prexy Jack Kerner and their respective wives, Beth and Shirley, cut the ribbon opening the association's 1990 Expo in New Orleans.

games in 1991 are as simple as they are stark. Where is the next generation of hit videos coming from? Will video makers be able to supply ever-more-dramatic (yet affordable) innovations in technology and themes? If not, will some players . . . and operators . . . walk away from the video category, looking back over their shoulders only when a rare super-hit comes along? How will the future legalization of parallels affect videos? Can Gil Pollock's fear of a possible 1982-type shakeout still come true?

RePlay's answers come from reading the tea leaves at the "Parks" show and at the JAMMA expo in Tokyo. Leading manufacturers in both Japan and the U.S. are moving into high-end, big-ticket items . . . products that can't be duplicated in the home. But they didn't show much of this equipment at the AMOA show. Apparently these factories believe arcades and the "bigger and bolder" operators will constitute their chief market for high-end items.

Meanwhile, back on the street, coin-op video seems likely to become more "hit-driven" than ever in 1991. The winners are likely to be outstanding kits, a handful of competitively-priced and high-earning dedicated units, and strong systems like SNK's *Neo • Geo*. One or two new examples of affordable hi-tech may also appear for street games in '91 (from some surprising sources) . . . but the "average" 1991 video game won't look much different from its 1990 predecessor. Most likely, its cash box take will look about the same, too. We sincerely hope we're wrong about this, and very well could be if another *Gauntlet* comes along like the last time to pull video back onto its feet.



MUSIC: UPBEAT & SMILING

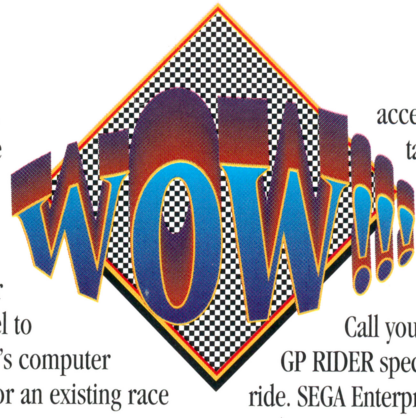
In 1990, jukeboxes continued for the second year in a row to be coin-op's shining category. Sales of CD jukeboxes were strong and steady, unstoppable as a steamroller. The industry slowly but firmly continued to follow the consumer market in making the expensive change-over from vinyl 45s to compact discs.

Software supply was the jukebox market's most controversial issue in 1990, but in the end this problem turned into one of the year's happiest success stories. The controversy centered on this question: was vinyl "in its death throes," as *Billboard* magazine reported in February? All year long, operators found 45s of hit songs harder to come by. Most of the record labels went to one-way sales (no returns of unsold records), which also put a squeeze on vinyl supplies. Several smaller one-stops simply quit servicing operators. Often, only half of the *Billboard* top 100 singles were pressed on vinyl, and by year's end the top music trade journal had stopped factoring jukebox sales into their hit charts.

But by year's end, 45s had made a near-miraculous recovery. Manufacturers or their licensees were pressing more of them, and had stopped talking about discontinuing the format — at least near-term. Operators were more confident of a steady vinyl supply. Nimble one-stops could still service their jukebox operators with confidence and thoroughness. What made the difference?

Several things. One was that a group of AMOA past presidents (headed up by Dock Ringo and Wally Bohrer) and others privately purchased RSI (Record Service International) from Billboard, Inc. What was once a vehicle to sell record subscriptions to radio stations, now offered that same service to jukebox operators, world-wide. More important, from the labels' point of view, RSI placed guaranteed orders for at least 10,000 copies per title in 45 format — enough to make it worthwhile for labels to commit to pressing vinyl.

RSI was just one factor in the 45's mini-revival, however. AMOA and jukebox manufacturers like Rowe lobbied hard for continuation of the vinyl format. Major one-stops (such as Mobile Records) also placed their own large orders for 45s. Add it all together and suddenly, the 45 had a new lease on life. All of this overlapped with official AMOA Jukebox Promotion Committee efforts (including major promotions of new music and oldies in February and November), resulting in closer co-



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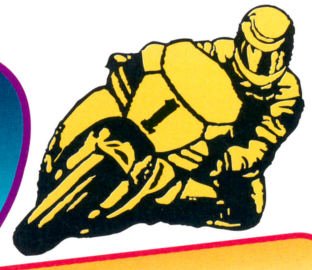

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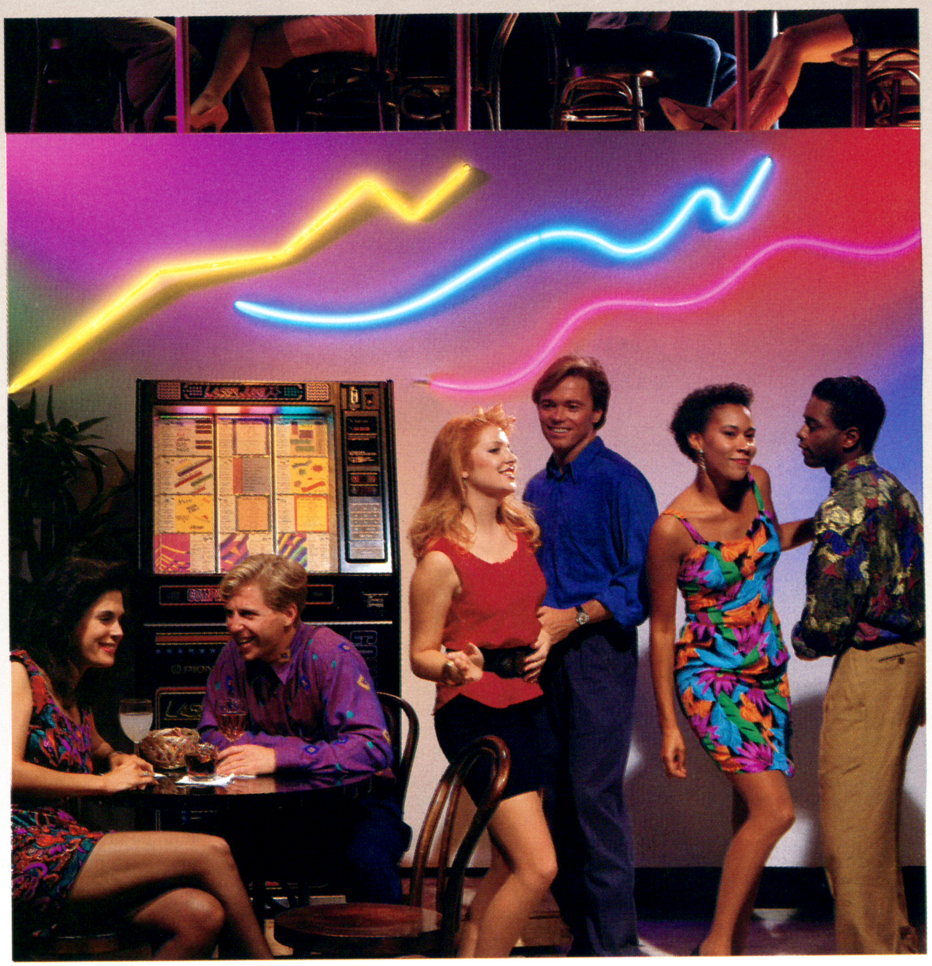

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Pioneer brought many distributors on-line in '90. Pictured during the ACME show are Roth Novelty's Howard Lucas & Phil Roth (pictured behind Pioneer prexy Ted Karasawa shaking hands with World Wide's Fred Skor), Pioneer's Paul Scribner, Laniel Canada's Mr. Laniel & Jean-Guy Laramee. Lots more have come aboard to rep the firm's compact disc and video jukeboxes.

operation between operators and the music industry than anybody had seen in years.

AMOA COPYRIGHT VICTORY

The industry began 1990 with no formal mechanism in place for operators to pay their copyright obligations for music on the jukebox. The old Jukebox Compulsory License system, with its triangle of operators, copyright societies and Uncle Sam, had expired in '89 but no replacement was in sight.

So, everybody waited . . . and waited . . . while a five-man AMOA team conducted some very tough closed-door negotiations with representatives from copyright groups (ASCAP, BMI and SESAC). The doors opened in late March with both sides smiling at a sliding-scale arrangement that resulted in lower fees for operators with 21 or more jukeboxes. The first box cost $275, but the next nine were $55 each and the next lot were $48 each. The agreement also provided promotional money for the jukebox (courtesy of the societies). Finally, the agreement stated that if compliance increased, next year's prices would go down a bit . . . and so they will (see separate story in this issue).

Smaller operators weren't necessarily thrilled with the new arrangement, but those few who complained were free to "go bare" (and risk serious penalties), or to cut their own deal with the copyright societies (a risky proposition at best). Overall, the new deal was a great success for AMOA: it strengthened the group's political clout in Washington and validated the reason the operator association was formed in the first place. The organization had much to be proud of.

JUKEBOX MANUFACTURERS

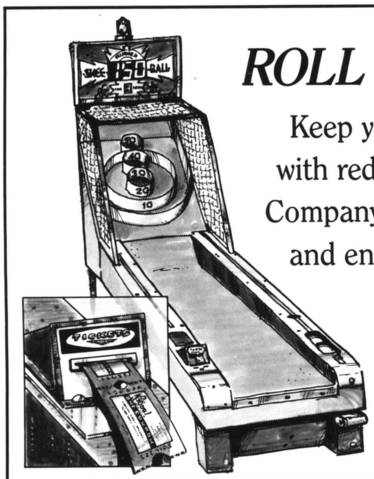
On the manufacturing level, 1990 was the first year that "everybody" had one or more CD boxes on the market. Rowe remained the market leader, expanding their appeal (and potential locations) with a popular 51 disc CD. NSM won much applause and some fine sales with their handsome line of quick-change CD boxes. Wurlitzer beefed up its U.S. sales effort with new offices in New York and a new U.S. president.

Competition on the manufacturing level was powerfully quickened by the entry of a huge new factory: the Japanese electronics giant Pioneer entered the jukebox market in a big way with their *CD Laserjuke*, plus a followup laserdisc video jukebox and impressive marketing and software-getting capability, all headquartered out of a U.S. subsidiary with plant and offices in Southern California. Another new entry was Micro Manufacturing, selling an imported British CD box.

For a while, the CD jukebox market looked so inviting that rumors of even more new manufacturers were flying. But Leland and Dynamo apparently decided not to take on the established makers, and a well-connected Chicago tradester with CD ambitions said "not quite yet."

"Trouble in jukebox city" was mainly confined to Seeburg, which deserves great credit for bringing the coin-op industry to CD in the first place. They spent 1990 denying rumors that they were going out of business (and searching for financial backers who could make those denials true). By fall, Seeburg execs said they'd acquired "bridge financing" to make new sales and to supply some overdue back orders. Meanwhile, they continued to seek longer-term financial support which (they hoped) could put them solidly in the black again.

As for Rock-Ola, through its long history, this famous firm has traditionally been a reliable quality supplier, if not a leading innovator. In early 1990, the venerable company



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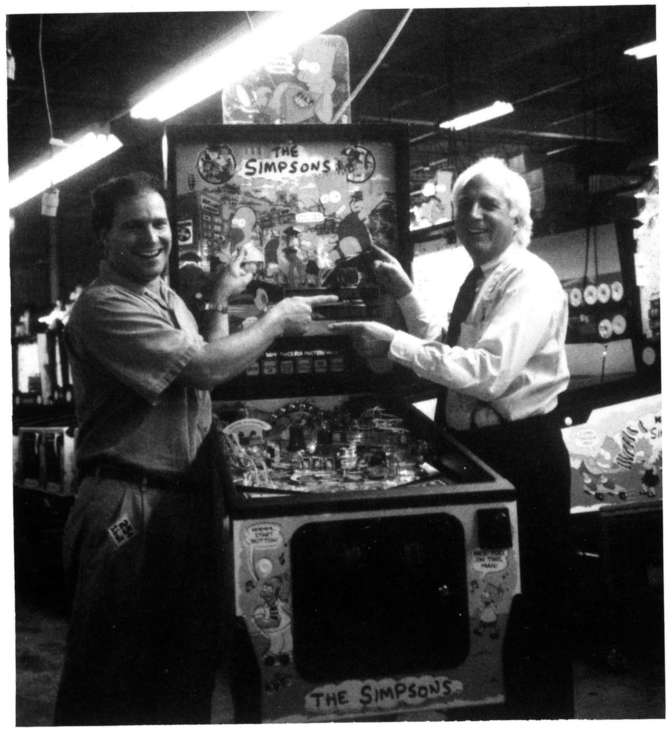

Data East Pinball finally got their long-awaited recognition in 1990 with their The Simpsons *pinball which debuted at the AMOA Expo. It got best of show honors there, plus topped the RePlay pinball chart in December. Pictured on the production line with the game are Joe "Bart" Kaminkow and Gary "Homer" Stern.*

finally had a handsome CD jukebox, too . . . but many of its distributors took on the newer Pioneer line. However, with satisfactory market reception of their new *Mirage* phonograph, the firm had the means of regaining market share.

The steady movement into CDs seems certain to continue into 1991, with 45s remaining "reasonably" available. How long will 45s last? Nobody has the answer to that. But it now seems highly likely that "if" any major labels decide to discontinue the format, independent pressers will take up the slack (such as RSI has already started doing). The prognosis here is for that "orderly transition" we've all been praying for.

1990: YEAR OF THE PINBALL

Flippers! Bumpers! The seductive slide of the silver ball! AMOA announced a "year of the pinball" theme in late 1989, vowing to duplicate their successful jukebox promotion in a new arena. Did they succeed?

Yes and no. As with the jukebox campaign, the first year was largely spent on fundraising, organizing and planning. Any PR/promotion effort like this takes a while to get off the ground. So, while no outward results were seen in 1990 (except for all that incredible publicity garnered for Williams by Roger Sharpe), there's now a well-funded new animal in the industry zoo called the "International Flipper Pinball Assn." IFPA's first big pinball tournament takes place this March. Look for 1991 to bear the fruits of 1990's heavy labors.

As for the workaday world of flipper buying/selling or pinball playing/earning, the year once again belonged to Williams while the "Whiz Kids on the Block" award went to Data East Pinball. Here's a story of "requited" love and poetic justice. It's a story of how a hardworking team of guys and gals (who truly adore the game) came from behind with a series of games that boasted technical innovation (topped by their solid state flipper) and a unique design identity (all those popular and licensed themes, from *Phantom of the Opera* to *Back to the Future*). The fitting climax to this happy tale: operators voted Data East's *The Simpsons* as the "best new game of the show" at AMOA's fall 1990 expo. (Our readers also gave the game a stellar 9.57 chart rating, which is as close to perfect as you can humanly get.) DE's Gary Stern and Joe Kaminkow were genuinely choked up about their long-delayed recognition, and we're happy for them.

In raw sales, the leader remained Williams/Bally-Midway. They shook up their sales force and trimmed down their dealer network (more on these developments below). Some operators — even the factory's loyal fans — complained that "too many pinballs" were on the market, but somehow the Chicago factory kept churning out winners: *Whirlwind, Diner, Dr. Dude,* and *Fun House.* Experience counts!

Premier remained competitive and even exerted notable leadership by creating a bold new line of pins for the street, stressing simplified playfields (and lower prices). Titles such as *Silver Slugger* and *Vegas* did fine in tavern locations and in arcades as well, pleasing older players and newcomers. In addition, this strategy seemingly prompted the "other" Chicago flipper factory to offer some simpler-playing, tavern-oriented pieces of its own. While the jury is still out on Premier's "redemption" pins (which vend tickets), those small-fry games look good and the firm closed 1990 with an attractive new flipper *Title Fight.* The legendary Alvin Gottlieb's return to the "Premier team" bodes more good things ahead in 1991.

Overall, the future of pinball looks serene, with all levels of the industry working ever more closely together (even players and collectors are getting into the act with their annual Pinball Expo). Given the continued technical innovation and creative freshness that all three manufacturers exhibited in 1990, plus the unique "can't play it at home" appeal of flippers, pinball deserves a strong, stable future in '91.

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Family entertainment centers grew in a major way in 1990 and should be expected to remain a major force in the coming year. (They offer games, kiddie rides, redemption, carousels, food, etc.)

There is a very strong reason behind that last statement. Thanks to the pinball factories, new units have been shipped by the factories set to vend games at 50¢ for one play, 75¢ for two and $1 (four quarters) for three. We have no true idea how many local operators reset the pricing back to a quarter (some certainly did), but many obviously passed the higher vend onto their players and one-upped video in that regard. So, who's to say exactly which class of game is really the "leader," and who's to say whether or not video people will play catch-up on this unique pinball street pricing in 1991? (We do like the video "buy in," however.)

REDEMPTION & ARCADES

Redemption found its "place in the sun" during 1990 — namely, as the glamor and growth category for the glitzy national arcade chains. Large, medium and even small arcades who pursued this category found that ticket-vending redemption games boosted their family appeal, bringing in repeat business.

Although yesteryear's top redemption pieces (basketball and cranes) were much less in evidence at trade shows, a wild and wonderful variety of animal-whackers, midway-style pieces, race games, shooting games, golf games, skill games, and kiddie-themed games proliferated. Pieces like Betson's *Magic Circle,* Coin Concepts' *Fire Fighter,* Doyle's *Dribbler,* ICE's *Putting Challenge,* Data East's *Cosmo Gangs,* Coastal Amusement's *Pop-A-Ball* and Exidy's *Camptown* all showed that the only true limit on redemption games is imagination.

Indeed, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then redemption got lots of "compliments" from mainline video and pinball makers who tried to cash in on the redemption trend by putting out ticket-vending games. Some did okay; others showed a lack of understanding of what redemption is all about. Said one redemption manufacturer: "These big companies could hurt the redemption market by putting out mediocre product. The trouble is, they've got enough clout to force distributors to stock their games on the showroom floor instead of ours. We don't like it and it's no service to operators, either."

On the bright side, nobody is saying any more that redemption is a fad. Today, it's a fact of life. Redemption has won an important place for itself in the industry mix . . . and that place seems likely to grow in the 1990s. "The better distributors are beginning to get aboard and get educated," smiled redemption manufacturers. "We think our success so far is just the beginning. Redemption will remain a growth market through the decade."

Another, perhaps related, growth market in 1990 was the large, indoor family amusement center. These places offer everything from kiddie rides to carousels, with food, redemption and videos and pins into the bargain. Result: big bucks from the family trade. (For example, using the family amusement center formula, one Midwestern site under 10,000 sq. ft. confidently predicted a 1990 gross of over $1 million.) Earnings like these set off a multi-million dollar scramble for desirable new locations. All the major arcade chains seemed to have expansion plans (some important ones also changed ownership; see below).

A related trend was the reported explosion of outdoor "pocket parks" — places featuring miniature golf courses, or go-cart tracks, or pitching and batting cage centers, but which also offered food and traditional arcade games. "The better arcade operators are all rushing to build this kind of place," said one game maker who serves this market. "Even non-industry people are cashing in on the trend." Perhaps that's why two new expos (NAVE and Fun Expo) are aimed at this in-between market (bigger than an indoor arcade, smaller than a full-blown amusement park). Keep your eye on pocket parks to be a "trend" in hot new locations for 1991.

LEAGUE GAMES & TAVERNS

The oldest and most traditional coin-op location is the tavern (remember, the very first jukebox went into a San Francisco saloon). Tavern stops contended with increasing anti-smoking laws and higher tobacco taxes (see below), plus the continuing tough public attitude against drunk driving. Many customers stayed away from taverns, period. Urban renewal continued to knock them down for shopping malls, condos and parking lots, while some other beer bars simply closed up due to lack of customers.

The result is that many taverns had either a great or rocky year, often depending on the individual operator. Those who ran dart and pool leagues said they did better

than ever with these professional promotions. (And some hope to repeat that success with pinball leagues in 1991, believe it or not.) Sales of dart games kept going nicely from Arachnid, Valley and Merit (so did some of the endless Arachnid patent suits). Operators kissed their Valley and Dynamo pool tables with renewed ardor. Dynamo hockey enjoyed spurts of solid popularity in those locations where operators and players had a meeting of the minds. Tournament play for all types of games at local, state and national levels set new records.

Short of these staples, however, no "wonder game" appeared in 1990 that turned losing tavern locations into winners. Still, some promising videos for tavern stops did appear in 1990, proving that manufacturers did hear — and heed — the cries of operators for exactly that type of game. Beyond the evergreens (such as countertop video systems by such as Merit and U.S. Games), taverns could choose from new items like Taito's *American Horseshoes*, Atari's *Shuuz*, Strata's *Strata Bowling* and video horse race game, and a whole raft of sports- or puzzle-themed games from Atari, Fabtek, Sega, Chevalier, GameTek, I-Vics, Midway, and others. Grand Products' novelty pool-themed *Slick Shot* intrigued many, but fell short (the company went back to the drawing board for its improved *Dyno Bop*). Beyond video, taverns also had Premier's "street line" of pins, new or updated shuffle alleys from Williams and others, and even selected redemption pieces to choose from.

You can't say manufacturers ignored the tavern in 1990. But a growing number of operators seemed to look to video poker and/or video slots as the "miracle machine" that would make taverns profitable again . . . hence, the legalization campaign (more on this below) and the continuing gray market activity.

A fall 1990 survey by this journal suggested that up to 85% of polled operators were "running gray." Said one operator: "For some years now, it's seemed like there were two tiers of American operators — those who ran pokers, and those who didn't. The poker operators are doing fine. The rest of us are barely making it." That picture didn't change in 1990 and seems likely to remain true (at least in the eyes of many operators) in '91.

Valley was the recipient of the President's "E" Award for outstanding achievement in export expansion in 1990. At the ceremony are Valley's VP for International Operations Jim Griffiths, Michigan Congressman Bob Traxler, Valley prexy Chuck Milhem and Assistant Secretary of Commerce Susan Schwab. Not only was 1990 a big year for Valley's export, it was also a big one for those operators involved in leagues and other tournament-type promotions, helping offset an otherwise rocky year for the tavern stops (drunk driving laws, taxes, etc. continued to take their toll).

Beyond the tavern, the other classic street stops also faced a somewhat rocky 1990. Convenience stores suffered a downturn with or without coin-op (with such as Arco putting in mini-marts at every gas station, competition was up; 7-Eleven went into Japanese hands and Circle K went into Chapter 11). Many operators reported video earnings in C-stores dropped by 50% last year. A few C-store operators who bought wisely, advertised hits and rotated cleverly, held their own. Restaurants, bowling centers and other street stops were a similar mixed bag.

FOREIGN MARKETS

While American arcades generally grew and prospered, and American street stops generally struggled and sputtered, new foreign markets began to open in 1990 that made U.S. manufacturers and others smile broadly. Disappearing trade barriers in Mexico prompted not one but two coin-op expos ("one for counterfeits and one for legitimate products," joked one U.S. tradester) and spurred good sales to a growing middle class community of new Mexican businessmen. (Some U.S. factories are thinking of building more products South of the Border, too, taking advantage of cheap labor.) Overall, the U.S. trade's venture into Mexico was so promising that AAMA did it again in Chile, putting a coin-op display into a huge November trade fair down there. Manufacturers returned from that venue with high hopes and new contacts, though some said Chileans would need education and training before solid sales and service could begin.

Eastern Europe beckoned in 1990 even though getting enough hard currency for food and heat, let alone amusements, was clearly going to be a major problem for some former East Bloc nations. But the Iron Curtain had fallen in late 1989 and the echoes of that collapse rapidly faded away in the vision of open borders, market economies, a united Germany, and — as 1990 came to a close — the very real prospect of a common European currency and a single, central European bank. By mid-1990, Western European manufacturers, distributors and operators were already scrambling for a piece of these new markets. And Moscow even decided to allow Western-style casinos!

Was all of this hustle and bustle premature? In East Europe, it very likely was. But like the song says, "If you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?"

People & Politics

bitter divison on parallels drowns dollar coin "unity issue";
both national associations become super-active on many fronts

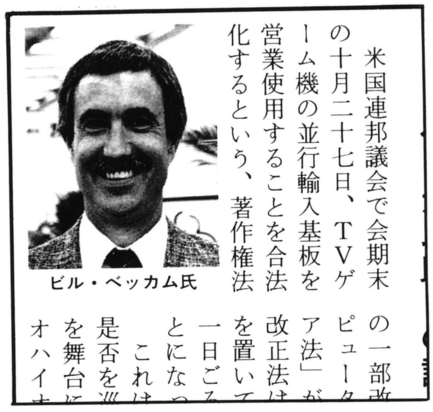
PARALLELS WON'T GO AWAY

Legalization of parallel imports was a dream for some, a nightmare for others, but either way it came true in the closing months of 1990. Congress voted on Oct. 27 to amend the U.S. Copyright Law so that "public performance" considerations would no longer block U.S. operators from running parallels on their routes. In effect, Congress reversed the federal court decision in 1989's *Red Baron vs. Taito America.* President George Bush signed the bill into law on Saturday, Dec. 1.

The year began with Bill Beckham (plaintiff in the original suit) appealing Taito's victorious decision to the Supreme Court. . . which quickly turned him down. Nothing much was heard about parallels until May, when AAMA couldn't resist lobbying on the issue during their joint Washington, D.C. lobbying trip with AMOA. The operator association, now over the jukebox copyright hurdle, was finally free to take up the challenge. AMOA called in its "friendship credit cards" with powerful congressmen like Rep. Bob Kastenmeier, did some fancy political footwork and whisked their pro-parallel bill through Congress without full hearings or public debate on the issue. AAMA, predictably, was boiling mad.

Both associations made conciliatory noises about "putting this issue behind us and working together for the good of the industry," but both may find themselves fighting for (or against) parallels once again on Capitol Hill in 1991. Said more than one top AAMA member: "We told AMOA if they didn't like the law, they had the right to lobby to change it. Well, now we don't like it and we have the right to lobby to change it back."

Both sides have some ugly things up their sleeves to threaten the other with. If more congressional hearings on parallels are held, the industry as a whole could easily get a black eye, no matter who "wins." Result: everybody could lose. Rep. Kastenmeier and Senator Boschwitz (who carried AAMA's water during the October fight) have both lost already. . . in the November elections. It would be nice if the associations could take a cue from this omen and hang up their guns, but it seems unlikely to happen. Another joint Washington conference, with parallels "off the agenda" and the industry's common interests at heart, isn't in the cards.



Operator Bill Beckham on the front cover of Japan's Game Machine *magazine.*

"Why is my association doing this when our greater good probably lies elsewhere?" one dedicated AMOA board member asked during the midst of the parallel fight last October. "Why is my association working so hard to offend my customers?" several AAMA members asked around the same time. No unselfish answers have yet been heard to these questions. Much as many tradesters would like it to, the parallel issue may not go away in 1991. Indeed, the new parallel battleground (just what we need) may open, depending on the answer to this question: will mainline distributors start selling parallels next December?

DOLLAR COINS STRUGGLING

Dollar coins were the "unity" issue for AMOA and AAMA in Washington during 1989, but appeals to this cause grew somewhat thin as 1990 progressed and it became clear just how tough the battle really was. The number of Congressional supporters kept growing nicely, but the Coin Coalition also ran into the cold, hard fact that vigorous support from the Bush Administration would be needed to make the dollar coin a reality.

That support didn't materialize, at least not in 1990. Strong testimony *against* dollar coins was what Congress heard from U.S. Mint Director Donna Pope. Careful neutrality was what Congress heard from the Government Accounting Office. Even some of the coin's key supporters (such as sponsor Senator Alan Dixon) refused to go along with killing dollar bills, which — all agree — is crucial to the success of any new dollar coin. (Another key sponsor, Senator DeConcini, got splattered with mud from the "Keating Five" S&L scandal.)

In favor of the coin are the tireless lobbying of AAMA Exec Director Bob Fay (and all those AAMA people he keeps sweet-talking into coming to Washington). Good press from major newspapers and influential political periodicals is also helping. But the burden remains on coin supporters to recruit a "champion" in the White House. As we've said all along, it's a long-haul effort and coin supporters really have their work cut out for them. At least 1991 isn't an election year!

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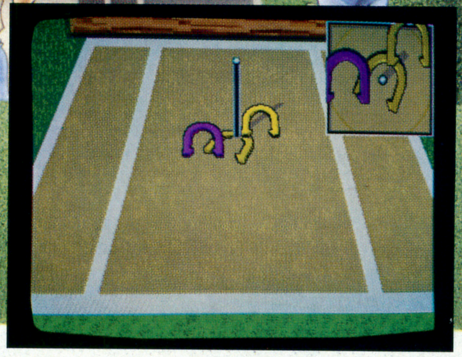


Optional "Beer Round" for bar and tavern locations.

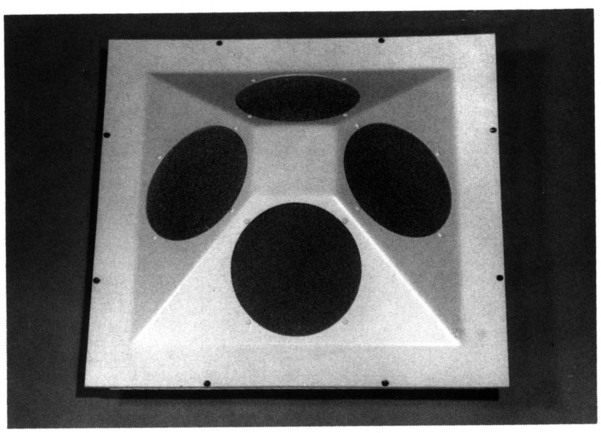
COUNTERFEITING SEEMED TO INCREASE

Another legal issue that rankled in 1990 was an apparent increase in counterfeiting activity. We can't get an official comment on this from any of our usual sources, but we confidently deduce counterfeiting was on the rise, judging from noticeably increased enforcement activity by U.S. Customs, the Canadian Mounties and even law enforcement in Tokyo and Seoul.

A sample: one alleged counterfeiter was arrested in March just off the show floor at ACME in Chicago. Another was lured to Louisiana by a sting operation. Guilty pleas came in another case in Canada, guilty verdicts arrived in a long-fought Nintendo action in Tokyo, and a steady stream of seizures of suspect boards occurred in ports of entry and various transfer centers all over North America. All of this testified to a growing traffick in phony video game copies.

On the plus side, AAMA's "protect sticker" program continued to work well; cooperation between U.S. and foreign enforcement agencies went smoothly; and the quiet handling of most anti-counterfeit actions all contributed to the strong impression that, if the crime is on the increase, so is the crime-busting.

IT'S OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT?



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CIGARETTE SETBACKS

Yet another series of legal setbacks hit the industry as city, county and state governments (most notably in Minnesota and New York) adopted tough anti-smoking measures aimed squarely at cigarette vending. Operators fought back, sometimes with testimony and other times with "lock-out" devices. Still, the anti-tobacco crusade rolled remorselessly on, with new warnings coming out of the Surgeon General's office (even your dog can get lung cancer if you smoke) and new propaganda coming from all sides (California aired a hard-hitting series of anti-smoking TV commercials). One Maryland town even banned cigarette vending, despite the fact that only three cigarette vending machines existed in city limits (and one was in City Hall). Grandstanding won votes for politicians, but cost money to operators.

An interesting sidebar to the cigarette battles are that some leading coin-op people seem to be drawing away from the tobacco industry, deciding to shy away from the issue altogether. Even if tobacco is not a

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"guaranteed loser," some tradesters think the winning strategy is to portray vending machines as "inventory control" devices which do a better job than C-stores, etc., of keeping cigarettes away from minors.

Some tradesters have also questioned whether elements in the tobacco industry are "returning the favor," sacrificing their vending operator allies in hopes of appeasing the anti-smoking lobby. Either way, the distress signals are mounting and the writing is on the wall. The "Smokeless 2000" campaign won't win total victory by the decade's end, but with the pro-smoking coalition getting smaller and more fractured, the outlook for cigarette vendors is to keep fighting a rear-guard (and often a disappointing) battle.

TAXES & VIDEO POKER

States needed more money in 1990. Some of them got it from operators (Oregon, for example, doubled per-game fees.) In an odd way, the need for more state revenues proved to be a double-edged sword for operators. Paying more tax and license fees is, of course, a negative. But if the state is screaming for more money, and you can convince them that video poker is a great way to raise it, then that's a big plus for your state association members.

That logic apparently convinced one newly-elected governor of a major state. Shortly after the November elections, staffers for the governor contacted the state operator association to signal strong support for an operator-run "video lottery." At least one smaller state with a tight operator association is reportedly ready to pass video poker legislation this spring, too.

The strong hope of success in various states in 1991 must be weighed against defeats of pro-poker campaigns in at least five states (Vermont, Louisiana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Pennsylvania). But the balance tilts in favor of operator optimism, if only because the dream of legalizing video poker is prompting many operators to become far more professional in their state lobbying and government relations efforts. Even if they don't pass pro-poker

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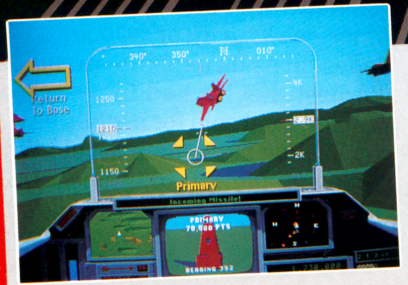
— Jim Spinello
President
The Entertainment Industry of America



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laws, they make friends and raise their political stature. Poker prospects may have been the driving force in getting Alaska operators to even form a state association (though cranes were the chief motivation for the new, Los Angeles-based Amusement Assn. of California).

Certainly AMOA enjoys growing political clout, with a successful lobbying event in Nashville during August (operators sang the praises of pokers to a national convention of state lawmakers). AMOA also has shown it can work closely — and successfully — with state gambling and lottery regulators (NAGRA, the North American Gaming Regulators Assn.) which can only benefit the industry. For 1990, AMOA has tripled its poker lobbying budget and plans to hire lobbyists especially to work on this issue in the two or three "most promising" states.

So 1990 looks to be an even stronger year for video poker lobbying (although no one can guarantee the results). Besides more AMOA muscle in the project, carefully-laid plans of action in well-organized, well-connected and well-financed states like Wisconsin and Texas are about to go into action. Poker manufacturers say these and other states' efforts have a much better chance of success than the losing campaigns of 1990. Besides, the five states who lost their bids in 1990 all say they'll try again. We shall see!

There's an anomaly in the poker situation which we'll mention briefly. The AAMA manufacturer/distributor association stands ready to support poker legalization efforts (if asked by AMOA). But many AAMA members worry that legalization could spell a pall in the sales of pure amusements in those locales. Some AMOA members report that in Montana and South Dakota, where video lottery is legal, operators do reinvest poker profits in bar games like jukeboxes, pool, darts, etc. Non-bar pieces (like amusement video) may not share in the wealth, some fear.

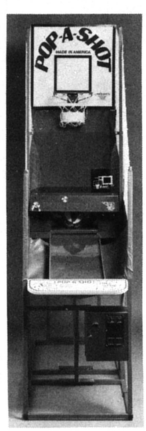
So why are pinball and video factories supporting efforts to establish something that may undercut their own business? Could the same people be working toward making their own video lottery product? Is this a self-contraction, a hidden agenda, or a sleeping dog that might start barking? These fascinating questions may be answered in 1991.

NEW FACES, NEW PLACES

While operators closely watched the unfolding poker drama, manufacturers played their favorite game: high speed musical chairs. In the corporate coin-op world, faces disappear from one venue and pop up again in another, only to go through the same roundelay very soon again. Companies are bought, sold, merged, revamped, re-purchased, resold . . . and 1990 was no exception.

On the corporate buy-sell level, a big mall retail outfit called Edison Brothers became on overnight arcade chain powerhouse with the purchase of Adventure Properties Ltd. (48 arcades) and much larger Time-Out chain (formerly owned by Sega). Time-Warner bought a bigger interest in Atari Games from Namco Japan, but Namco bought out control of Atari's national arcade chains, and activated its own Namco America sales office. A "white knight" who manufactures machinery for another industry bought Kramer and injected new life into it; the old Status Games came back as Quantum Industries. Atlas and Cleveland Coin opened new branches in Indiana. Mondial bought Active Distributing; Banner closed its doors in Pittsburgh; Bernie Powers started up in Wisconsin; Sweet Distributing closed in Minnesota; Rollie Beach moved to Montana and Belam's officers bought their firm back from British conglomerate Corton Beach, which went into receivership. Large-scale trends were hard to spot in all this criss-crossing, trans-oceanic activity, except for "business as usual." (One tradester commented: "Sega has bought and re-sold those arcades so many times they ought to build a revolving door for the stock.")

On the personnel level, Bob Lentz and Mort Ansky departed from Merit to work at Midway and Kramer, respectively. Steve Blattspieler left Midway for Irem America; Marty Glazman left Williams to open a U.S. branch of the Japanese game maker Kaneko. Pioneer hired Paul Scribner to head up U.S. sales and distributor relations; Bill LaHart toiled there briefly as a sales rep. Rowe got a new chief named Arnold Greenhut from Merrill Lynch. Mike Macke shuttered Gamemasters to tend to his health; Joe Dillon left Taito America's presidency and popped up as national sales chief for Williams/Bally-Midway. Taito America's new president is Minoru Suzuki. Joe Keenan succeeded Bob Lloyd, who resigned as president of Data East. Shortly after, Gene Lipkin departed MicroProse for his old stomping grounds on the West Coast as VP at Data East. Ray Musci left Data East and became "the man" at Ocean of America. Wurlitzer appointed Joe Tedeschi as its new U.S. president, the first they've had in years. Jeff Walker went solo for a while as U.S. rep for *Bowlingo*, then brought that game and himself to Capcom USA.



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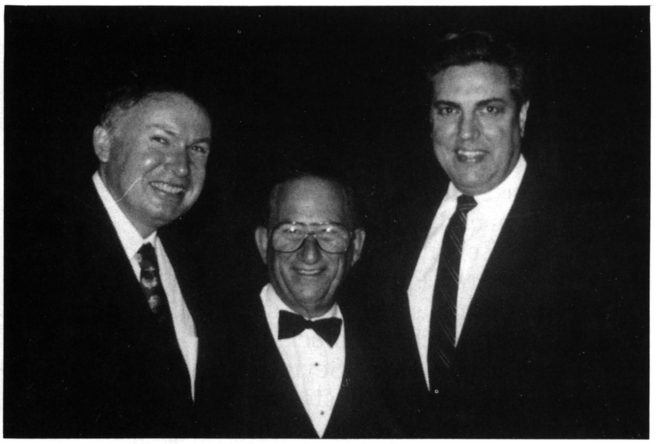
AMOA continued to go full-steam-ahead in 1990 under the direction of Exec VP John Schumacher, his staff and prexy Jack Kerner and the association's other officers. Kerner even visited Japan's AOU show. Above, he greets JAMMA/Namco Chairman Masaya Nakamura who came to the AMOA.

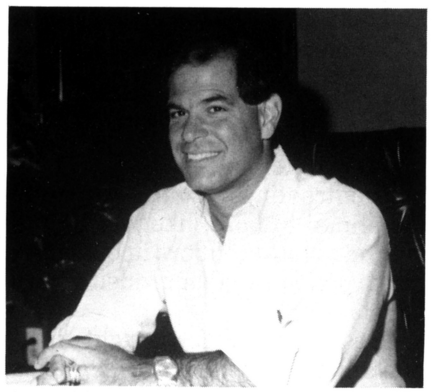


Joe Robbins was honored by the AAMA's Charitable Foundation at their annual dinner (he's flanked with the association's Exec VP Bob Fay and former director Glenn Braswell at the charity fundraiser). The association continues to be involved in many industry image-building activities.

Doyle & Associates found a new VP in Bill Condon. Bill Treger stopped being a New Jersey gaming regulator to be a Betson redemption sales rep. Service chief Darl Davidson left Sega to perform that same task at Data East. Sega's sales team gained Jim Chapman (formerly with Taito). The Brothers Bundra exited Ameri Corp. to pursue their own goals while also repping Bromley, Inc. Last but far from least, our own "Aunt Mary" Openshaw retired after many years as European Correspondent for this and other coin-op trade journals around the globe.

ASSOCIATIONS IN ACTION

The amusement industry's two major associations kept up a level of activity that reflected the trade's go-go pace. AMOA's Exec VP John Schumacher (hired in '89) hit his full stride with a beautifully-organized New Orleans expo which broke all earlier records for exhibit space.



SMS prexy Sal Mirando will spearhead the AAMA's more open attitude toward gambling equipment and the firms that make them.

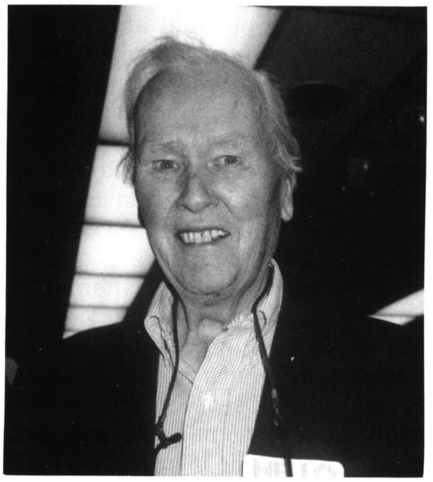
"Gentleman Jim" Trucano succeeded Smilin' Jack Kerner as AMOA prexy, overseeing with Treasurer Craig Johnson an annual budget that topped $2 million. The association racked up its second and third big win in Washington, D.C. with the jukebox agreement and legalization of parallels (they first pulled a legislative rabbit out of the hat by getting Congress to declare November "national jukebox month" some time back; that feat was obviously just a warm-up). AMOA extended its reach overseas by sending Jack Kerner to Japan's AOU (operator) expo; he returned the favor by hosting JAMMA leaders to the AMOA show. Programs in standardization, education and other operator services continued on track.

AAMA, the manufacturer-distributor organization, was no slouch either. The above-mentioned Mexican Expo was probably their biggest accomplishment, but shows in Chile and various U.S. locations' trade conventions also came off well. AAMA hired congressional staffer Lauren Olsen as a full-time staffer to help with all that dollar coin lobbying (even Bob Fay can't be everywhere) and the group also played watchdog on FCC and UL regulatory issues. AAMA raised a hefty chunk of change for charity with their annual dinner (this time Joe Robbins was the man of honor) and burnished the coin-op image with free-play arcades at the Olympic Festival and Goodwill Games, plus a continuing series of anti-child abuse posters featuring stars of the sports and entertainment worlds. AAMA broadened its base with an ever-growing list of new members, and looked toward broadening the industry with a more open posture on gambling equipment and firms (with SMS topper Sal Mirando spearheading that charge).

AND LEST WE FORGET . . .

We lost some good folks in 1990. Jukebox pioneer Jack Gordon, who at the "old" Seeburg virtually single-handedly forced consumer and trade markets to leave the 78 and adopt the 45, passed on but was fondly remembered with a posthumous AMOA Merit Award for "fundamental contributions" to the industry. Nobody ever deserved it more.

From the manufacturing sphere,



The industry lost many of its greats and faves in 1990. Among them was jukebox pioneer Jack Gordon. He and they will be sorely missed.

1990 called the roll for former Betson man Irv Kempner, Arachnid international sales rep Rokuro Tanaka, and Ben Rochetti (of Taito and Double Play). Distributors lost Roth Novelty's Marvin Roth, Struve's "Cousin Ferd" Tuttle, Commercial Music's Raymond Williams, Lieberman's John Zeglin and Bally and Pioneer sales rep Pat Netterville.

Others who left us included Augie Van Brackel, Fletcher Blalock, Jim Hill, Ernie Doub, Hoke Seymour, Howard Sittinger, Joe Westerhaus Sr., Joe Siwak and Bob Meyer. All of them made their mark on the industry, and on the hearts of those who knew them.

THE OUTLOOK FOR '91

So where do we go from here? Into an uncertain market at best, and possibly into a genuine national recession according to most economists. That old saying "tough times don't last, but tough people do" sure applies in this case, because coin-op prides itself on weathering recessions with ease . . . even sometimes prospering in them. That pride will put to the test in 1991.

As seen above, '91 will probably hold "much more of the same" in many categories. More hit-driven video (and weak sales for "ungreat" games), more parallel arguments, more video lottery lobbying, more CD growth, more music success, a higher profile for pinball, more steady earnings from staples like darts and pool, more firmly established redemption games, more challenges for taverns and cigarette vending, more growth in arcade chains and "pocket parks" . . . but then, you knew all that.

If it sounds anything like hard times from where you sit, please remember that several "up trends" are in place for some major improvements in 1991. We'll go out on a limb and predict three big, happy surprises: first, at least one major state will approve video lottery. Two, operators will finally get the "dream opportunity" to put games into a famous-name fast food chain (but only games made by a certain company . . .). Three, the year's hit video with sales of 100,000 units will be a joint Sega-Atari-Leland-Williams-SNK-Nintendo project, and will be a tank simulator titled *So Long, Sadaam.* (We can dream, too).

New AMOA President Jim Trucano

NEEDED: THE "CRUSADER" ATTITUDE

The sky is not falling on this industry. If you look at it carefully, it's actually brightening. Music, pinball, league games and other types of product are actually doing better right now than they were a year ago for some, if not many, operators. Those with the "crusader" attitude will not only kick up more business, but just might take advantage of the doom-sayers who've let their attraction levels drop.

Some guys like it on the edge . . . like buying stocks when the market is soft, like banging for new stops when others are crying in their beer. There are simply too many people, too many distributors, too many manufacturers riding on the same "industrial boat" for it to ever sink (although it can sure list at times). Investment in product vs. return on investment is the obvious tactic. But . . . this is "entertainment," right? It's not a machine shop making nuts and bolts for somebody else's invention.

Coin-op is "knee jerk city," a world of entrepreneurs who dream and scheme, fight with bar owners and C-store managers, to put a piece of "wonder" before the citizen . . . admittedly, to scoop up some of that citizen's disposable income and (hopefully) to put part of it back into new product to keep the cycle going. This business isn't on its back; it's just got a cold!

For our concluding thoughts let's turn to AMOA's new chief, Jim Trucano. Without doubt, he will be one of the industry's brightest political lights in 1991. Representing the operators, he sits in the first seat. He advocates the operator agenda, but as a former distributor (in South Dakota, of all places) he also knows the agenda of the dealer and factory all too well. Can an AMOA topper have better credentials?

WORDS FROM PRESIDENT JIM

Says President Trucano: "AAMA should remind its members that without the operator, they will not have a coin-op market. AMOA members need to realize that without new games to place on location, the already-dismal video revenues will slide even further. Operators also need to remember that this legislative action (on parallel PCBs) does nothing to change the illegality of counterfeits. Counterfeits have been, and always will be, illegal. What the industry has to have, in my opinion, is a combined effort to strategically plan for a future that will enable each segment of our industry to prosper. We cannot do this before we put the 'parallel' issue behind us and think again as a single industry.

"There are many issues confronting the industry," Trucano continued. "I advocate taking the same level of energy we expended fighting each other on the parallel issue, and redirecting it towards an issue beneficial to both, like working to keep cigarette vendors in business, or advocating enabling video lottery legislation."

President Trucano is right about one thing: a bright future awaits us all, if we have the courage and good sense to reach out and grab it. Good luck to **all** for the new year!

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Where Are We Now? Where Are We Headed?

The amusement machine industry has entered a new year on its march with the rest of the industrial world into a new millenium, the 21st century. While the year which just ended was healthy for some, it was disappointing for others. Many in the industry remain bullish about the new one now enfolding, although some other jawlines are grimly set because 1990 was definitely not a happy one for them to write home about.

The cash box speaks loudest in this trade, and the 1990 coin chute had a frog in its throat. The principle cause of the malaise was the industry's principle machine, the video game, which caught a lot of operators in the R.O.I. shorts. Even though hot numbers like *Turtles, Pit Fighter* and *Final Fight* spawned big collections, the year ended with a generally negative attitude toward this class of game. Even AMOA's President Jim Trucano admitted that operators "would rather eat barbed wire than buy video."

The pluses and minuses of "video 1990" have been analyzed to death, but that's very good in its way because somehow and someway, someone "in charge" will listen, react and rejuvenate the sport. Some believe home video competition was the chief culprit that kept player hands away from the sticks and buttons while others believe just as firmly that the sport as it presently exists has simply bored the player to tears with repetitive themes.

Some other industry analysts actually think that video collections come in cyclical fashion, on a peak and valley economic curve (or, more aptly, a "roller coaster") that exerts its influence up and down every couple of years. Operators out in the street and in the game rooms usually don't sport diplomas from the Harvard Business School, so they want good new ideas (especially for the adult player) and new technology. And as always, they want it all at a price.

The operator's "ideal" is a video kit costing around $400 that makes "Turtles money" and lasts for a couple of years. Sounds great, but it doesn't work that way in the real world. But what is the real world? And, is the present situation only affected by video or do other classes of machines (not to mention politics) play their parts in the yin and yang of the American amusement and jukebox business?

And how about the national economy itself? Like it or not, we are in a recession. Some old-timers remember when the business prospered during the Great Depression, but others approach their craft in a more parochial way, seeing people in their towns out of work and don't wonder why their cash boxes are thinner.

RePlay, like most news magazines, gets its facts from trade people on all levels of the industry it serves, and its own opinions are based on those facts. This month, for our *Forecast 1991* issue, we decided to do something different and print thoughts directly as received from many of the people we hold in high esteem. Their sober appraisals on where we are and where we're headed will give direction to some readers, solace to some others and perhaps even provoke a bit of hostility with a handful more.

The majority of the opinions expressed on the pages to follow are fully worth reading, as you will see. Some remarks are actually inspired. But, it's the general honesty of these statements we appreciate most. We begin with AMOA's President Jim Trucano and AAMA's President Gil Pollock and then, in no "political" order, checkerboard those from other operators, distributors and manufacturers . . . your brothers, one and all, in this trade we call the amusement machine industry.

JIM TRUCANO
Collins Music Co.
North Charleston, S.C.

It used to be the nuts and bolts of coin-op was fixin' the machines late at night and placin' em during the day. Ten years ago when people asked me what I liked most about being an operator, I'd say taking the service call on the jukebox at 11 PM, getting it fixed, saving the barkeep's crowd and leaving a hero. There wasn't too much more to it than that, either. If you took the calls, if you set more locations than you lost to your competitor, then everything else pretty much worked out.

It isn't that simple anymore. Economies are interdependent, certainly more so now than when we started in the business. What happens to the price of oil directly impacts our weekly collections.

Probably the biggest difference now is that product lifecycles are so much shorter. Twenty years ago, you could buy a juke, a pin, or even a shuffle and be relatively sure of some residual value in the equipment after a year or so. Now, when you buy a video you cannot be certain of anything other than having to buy more if it is any good at all.

"Where are we now?" Operators have always had to take risks in this business, but the risks today are larger than they were twenty years ago. A major product we offer has an extremely short life, plus economic swings are greater today than in the past.

"Where are we now?" Our competition has changed. Used to be an operator's major competitor was the coin-op fellow down the street. Today the competition is movie theatres, video rental stores, amusement parks and home video games. Let's face it, consumers would rather watch 'Robo Cop' on a VCR than go to the local 7-Eleven and play our coin-op game.

"Where are we now?" Honestly, most operators would rather eat barbed wire than buy new video. The 'perception' is that no matter how good the piece is out of the box, it will end up with a negative ROI. How do we change this perception?

The enthusiasm isn't quite there to the extent it was last year, or the year before. Or so it seems anyway. You at *RePlay* are optimistic about the future, and so am I. Maybe we need to spend more time convincing others that this is still a great business. It still can be "amusing" to the people in it.

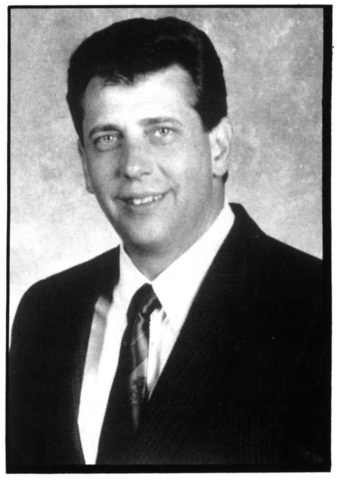
There's a new arcade down the street. All brand new equipment and doin' jam up. Packed all the time. The owner is brand new in the business, bought all his own equipment. Why? Because none of the established operators would buy him what he wanted.

He has 35% merchandise equipment, 35% kiddie rides, 15% pinball and four (4) video games. **Four.** My kids positively love it. They would rather go to this arcade and play for tickets than go to the shop and play a regular dedicated video for nothing. As a parent it is fun to see them "amused." As a member of the traditional coin-op industry, it is **not funny!**

"Where are we headed?" Somewhere out there is a person or company working on a revolutionary new coin-op product. This new product will be so radically different from anything we've seen, most traditional operators will sit on the sidelines and let others try it first. Remember the furor that went through the industry when the first solid state pinball hit the market? The old-timers said no one would play the new pins . . . and the *RePlay* said "climb aboard gents . . . this is the future." (In retrospect, what made the difference is the feature termed 'memory and recall' . . . the ability to remember the features from ball to ball and player to player. The pinball player loved it.)

"Where are we headed?" Going along with the above, I think in five years, the makeup of the industry will be entirely different. Video games as we know them now may become a distant memory. The new technology will have proven itself to all the naysayers and the operating community will be more profitable than ever.

The verve will be back . . . and so it goes . . .



GIL POLLOCK
Premier Technology
Bensenville, Illinois

It is no surprise to anyone that we are in one of the industry's down cycles. However, the old adage applies: "there is nothing wrong with the business that a good game won't cure."

I think we'll see improvement in product from all manufacturers which will once again bring us out of the down cycle. We've all experienced down cycles and upswings before. So, it's important for all of us to position our businesses to take advantage of the forthcoming upswing.

This upswing will be a direct result of the closer bonding between all three segments of the industry — manufacturers, distributors and operators. The strength in communications between the three will lead

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It's important that all of us realize we must "work" our businesses more so than at any other time in the industry's history. We must learn to look at things from a different perspective and implement success stories from other industries, primarily promotions and merchandising.

We have a great industry which has demonstrated come-back ability for many decades. But that only occurs with the proper attitude and hard work. I think the quality of individuals within this industry will once again demonstrate, as it has in the past, that we can grow our businesses to a new high.

IRA BETTELMAN
C.A. Robinson & Co.
Los Angeles, Calif.

Manufacturers, distributors and operators can always agree on one thing at least. Depending on which one is speaking, you can be sure he believes the other two have no idea what he does for a living. Or to put it another way, each thinks the other two have IQs less than their chronological age.

As a distributor "in the middle," there are certain advantages. For one, I have met some people with IQs less than their ages. But more importantly, there have been many enlightening exceptions. I recently had the opportunity to discuss the state of the industry with an operator who shared some insights worth repeating, and I want to share this with you now.

The discussion centered around the changes he was implementing in his business while the industry is in one of its proverbial "valleys" in the cycle. His thoughts added up to a kind of "do's and don't's" he shifts into when it seems the light at the end of the tunnel is just a reflection of the light at the beginning of that tunnel.

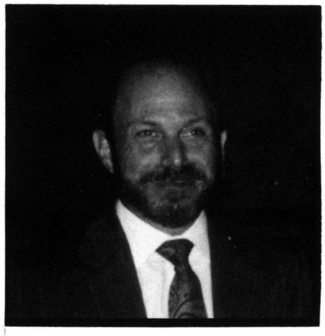
His thoughts on commissions: The "valleys" (lower collections) present the best time to renegotiate minimums, guarantees, contracts and splits. "When better to get a team effort going between operator and location to increase the price per play," he asks.

On blockbuster vs. specialty equipment: When new games like *TMNT* that rotate successfully throughout the entire route aren't available, there are new specialty games . . . those only good for your one college location, your one truck stop or your one beer bar, but could never go into the 7-Eleven store. These can't be ignored. They must be closely evaluated. "A winning run can be preceded by three singles." I like that analogy.

It **is** the cash box that counts: At the most economically-critical time, this axiom is usually abandoned. Operators magically acquire the ability to evaluate and predict player tastes. There is no testing, sampling or experimentation. It is usually replaced with tunnel vision. More than ever, the old standby positions must be re-thought like "hockey and soccer games are never any good," or "sports games out of season can't make it" and "I don't want another kick & punch game." What about the cash box?

I've personally learned a lot from my conversation with this gentleman. Just as when winter approaches you prepare your vehicles (anti-freeze and snow tires) or remove games at the end of the summer boardwalk season, so you must adopt a posture when business takes a negative turn. Sitting back, neglecting accounts and waiting for the next hit will not translate into successful longevity.

Innovation, flexibility and taking advantage of the situation is what has sustained this industry on all levels. The easiest way to pass a competitor is not when everyone else is speeding along when things are going great, but when the other guy slows down because he sees a cloud in the sky.



STEVE KOENIGSBERG
State Sales & Service
Baltimore, Maryland

We are currently on the "tail" of an entertainment cycle where one of our mainstay products, video, has lost some of its oomph. Why? One reason is because a number of factories have geared R&D to video products that conform to consumer platforms (home video) rather than offer unique coin-op entertainment. That's where the money was, so who can blame them?

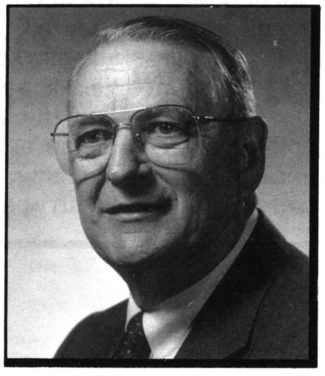
Now, that market has turned its own cycle and I believe many of these same factories will redirect their efforts to coin-op. That means a whole new generation of video products and themes and with it, a new growth cycle for the operator.

From the operator side, I believe that video lottery efforts have taken the dream and initiative away from building amusement routes. That too will go its course. However, there is a viable amusement business out there and new "players" will take over where existing companies are not aggressive because of video lottery expectations.

Music hasn't been as good as this for decades. Pool table mania throughout the country has given a shot to coin-op locations. Pinball, especially with the new vend price, has become much more profitable. League play on shuffles and darts is like having an annuity. And for the creative soul, street redemption offers the earnings potential that we saw in the growth period of cranes.

Except for certain areas that are military-depen-

dent, things aren't too shabby for the amusement operator who has a well-balanced route. For the video-dependent operators who have taken it on the chin, take heart. Things will get better starting this spring.



RUSS MAWDSLEY
Russell-Hall, Inc.
Holyoke, Mass.

As an operator, I've attended a lot of operator business meetings and heard all the current complaints. But it's nothing new, nothing I haven't heard before. It all so often comes down to "there's no new *Pac-Man.*" Anyone who's been in the business for a while knows it cycles up and cycles down every couple of years.

That said, I'd like to remind the trade that wise operators will be prudent, because we have a bit of a way to go before this business comes back to robust health. Check the economic barometers and see if people are being put back to work. Be careful about location loans because a bunch of these accounts just may not make it through.

Remember, if we get any lower, there's no way to go but back up. I'm not complaining too loudly and I personally think the economy will swing in a year or so. But I want to see the prime go down and home building, etc. go back up. Keep plugging, keep your eye on the economy and remember this industry is here to stay.

GARY GOUSE
Birmingham Vending
Birmingham, Alabama

Fortunately, the product base of our (distributing) company is diversified. If we were only marketing video games, the outlook for the immediate future would not be overly optimistic.

Our experience over the years has proven again and again that the amusement business is product-driven. Even during periods of sluggish sales, we've found that a really innovative new product will literally fly out of our doors. So, it's our firm belief that the release of several "hot" games, back-to-back, would go a long way toward moving the amusement business out of its current doldrums.

When times are tough in the amusement business, it's all too easy to place the blame on those tired old excuses like poker machines, state lotteries, sagging consumer confidence, copy boards, etc. We must avoid that type of thinking and concentrate on finding new markets that will attract different types of people to play the games.

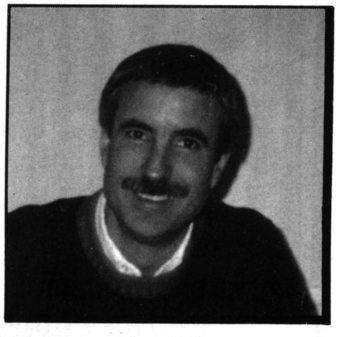
We still believe that 1991 can be a good year for the amusement industry. With the new products soon to hit the market, many new doors should be opened.

JOE DILLON
Williams Electronics
Midway Mfg.
Chicago, Illinois

We are presently at an "intermission." The first half of the "play" is over. We have witnessed a great show: 1. a video boom, bust and rebirth; 2. associations flexing egos; 3. a fantastic new generation of jukeboxes; 4. dart leagues that work; and 5. pinballs that collect 50¢.

Now for the second half of the "play." Will gaming take firm hold? Will redemption win? Will parallels ever make money?

We get the luxury of writing the second half. The show will be good. The games will improve. Collections will go up. How do I know? In the final analysis, we as a group have carved an industry that produces trade shows, buys cars, houses, tuition and vacations. We all dream the same dream — good games — good prices — good locations — good earnings. We are coinmen! When we work as coinmen the play has a happy ending.



BILL BECKHAM
Red Baron Amuse.
Toledo, Ohio

I believe that most operators realize that in today's coin-op market, diversification is now a necessity for continued survival. Whether it be in terms of redemption and merchandising in the game rooms, or tournaments and leagues on the street, the days of primarily just rotating the latest video games into your location are over, at least for the short term. But since I follow

the video market closer than other market segments, I'll concentrate my remarks in that area.

I believe the operation of video games is going to change drastically in the United States in the next few years. This is due not only to the recent copyright legislation that was passed but also because of the current status of the video game market. To market games in the traditional manner that has been done the last ten years is as out-of-date with the realities of the marketplace as would be trying to market horses & buggies.

To be able to compete (given the current lower level of earning power of today's games), the operator has to be able to buy **more** games in order to rotate more frequently and be able to do so at a lower price. The purchase of a greater number of games to put into the marketplace at a lower price will not only increase sales for the manufacturers but will also enable the operator to place more good games on the street and thereby increase his profit in order to invest in additional games.

In order for this snowball effect to get started, manufacturers have to adjust their marketing and pricing policies and I believe they are currently looking at this. They must look at ideas such as the role of distributors in the video game market (e.g. National Distributors), the possibility of offering chip changes (e.g. *E-Swat Jr., Arch Rivals & Pigskin),* rebate programs (e.g. Capcom's), systems (e.g. SNK's *Neo•Geo),* the feasibility of offering just the circuit board instead of the full kit (with the unnecessary joysticks, buttons, harnesses, etc.) and many other marketing possibilities.

In addition, the used board market in America will flourish as it is more properly used to facilitate a large variety of games to operators at an economical price. Not only do I believe that the days of normal games being offered in dedicated format are over, I think the days of successfully marketing your average game as a $1,500 kit are limited as well.

The changing of the video game segment of the coin-op market in the next couple of years will be exciting and challenging, and I believe it will be rewarding for the industry people who will change with it.

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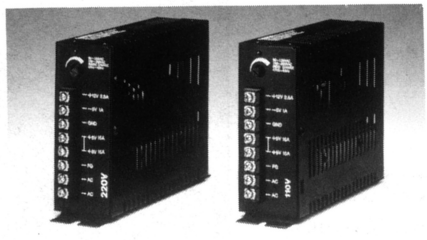

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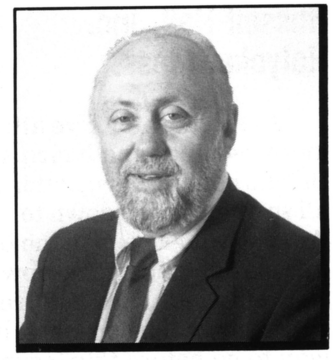

KEN ANDERSON
The Leland Corp.
El Cajon, Calif.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is not doomsday. Times are not as hard as many are making them. The coin machine industry is a product-driven industry. That means good product earns and sells. There is very good product on the market and it is the responsibility of everyone in the business to see that this good product gets in front of the player.

From what I have heard from so many in recent months, "it's over.....nothing is earning or selling and the operators won't buy." I say **nonsense.** The operator will buy if his distributor sells him. You want to know what's over? The days of taking orders. Distributors have to be salesmen, backing up product information with enthusiasm for that product.

Operators can't replace 1990's lost income without buying and putting new goods out and moving existing equipment from one location to another. In addition, they have to reevaluate their routes, make some good, sometimes tough decisions. Hey, many of them have seen these times before and I guess one day we'll see them again.

I'd like to suggest that every distributor takes the energy now being used to breed doom and gloom and promote sales. There are many things they can do, but the number one ingredient is to display a positive mental attitude. If they are as negative to their customers as some appear to be, I'll guarantee you that nothing will change.

Industry representatives on all levels need to spread good news, not doom and gloom. There **is** good product available and can be income-producing if approached with a positive attitude. Let's pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and start all over again! I can assure you that it will work.

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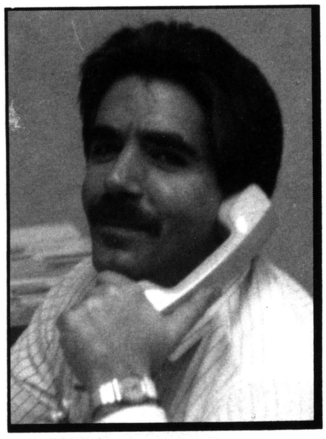

ANTHONY J. YULA
Mondial Distributing
Springfield, N.J.

One of the things we cannot do is go into a shell and close our eyes to new product. We are in the entertainment business and if we lose sight of that fact, we are all in a load of trouble.

We as an industry have built up a player base over the last five years, since the great fallout, and it would be a shame to lose that base. Technology is the key. Products like Atari's *Hard/Race Drivin'*, MicroProse's *F-15* and (as rumor has it) all those 32-bit games coming down the pipeline should keep our player base strong and even add to it substantially.

That is great news for the arcade/bowling center operator. But what about the street operator? Well, I feel there should be more emphasis put on products that are going to earn for years to come. Products like pinballs, jukeboxes, air hockeys, shuffle alleys, pool tables, etc. Also, operators must budget themselves accordingly on videos.

They should buy the right product, not necessarily a kit just because it's cheaper, and stick to a budget amount each month. I am extremely optimistic about 1991 and the future.

BILL WARD
Arachnid, Inc.
Rock Island, Illinois

Where are we now? There is much gloom heard about the state of the industry on all levels. Operators are complaining, distributors claim they're not making money and manufacturers are going through cutbacks.

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saying "darts is more work, but there's money to be made!" We're selling more dart machines because the better, tougher operators are getting into darts. They've made the decision to invest for the future.

That's where we at least are headed. . . to the future. Adversity builds character, the weak will drop out and we'll have a stronger industry when it's over. The 50¢ dart game is coming and so is video gaming.

Darts and video gaming will be very complementary, as darts will draw the people to the locations and while they're there, they'll try their luck at a poker game! Prosperity will be there for those who tough it out! Profitability is the key to economic growth, and we see growth ahead.

MARC HAIM
R.H. Belam Company
Hempstead, New York

The amusement machine industry is presently at a crossroads. It's no longer a new or young industry but not yet a mature and staid one either. Our game room operators are healthy and growing, and they have enjoyed some prosperity from the redemption products that are now popular.

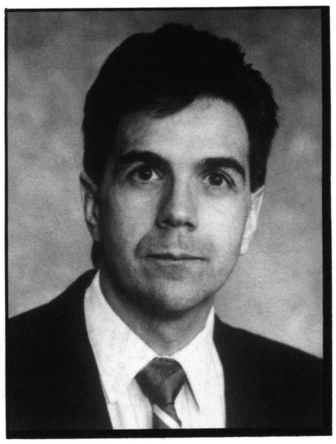
But our street operators are languishing, always struggling to make a living and to pay their bills. Their workable locations are being reduced in number as there are even fewer bars and their revenues are stagnant. The C-stores and candy stores generate even less money.

Now, just where are we going? Our industry is fundamentally strong, but as always, we must focus on satisfying the player, on giving good entertainment value, in order to stay healthy and prosperous. What must we do? In my opinion, the most essential factor in producing growing revenues is **increasing the price of play!** Only by charging a realistic price for our product can we support profitable operators who pay their bills to successful distributors who buy the machines from creative manufacturers!

As long as the American operator earns only quarters from his plays, and gives half of that away to the location, the revenue stream cannot be sufficient to allow manufacturers to develop better quality and more entertaining machines.

Twenty years ago, movies cost $10 million to make and $2 to see. Today, they cost $50 to make and $7 to see. The people pay the $7 in record numbers because the movies are good, and they perceive good entertainment value for that money. Why are arcades successful? Same reason. They can afford to buy the $5,000 to $20,000 machines that give good entertainment, and they charge 50¢ to $1.00 to play.

What do all operators need to do? In the short term, they must charge 50¢ per play. And longer term, we need a $1 coin and the elimination of the dollar bills.



MICHAEL LEONARD
Coin-Op Specialists
Adrian, Michigan

Where are we now? Back to the basics. Jukeboxes are up, but very costly, and pool tables are up slightly. As you ride the cycles of the video, pinball, even dart business, the roller coaster is headed down. What a feeling!

Suggest reading 'Mega Trend 2000.' Look at new types of bars and restaurants. Look at legislative trends, i.e. cigarette regulations and video poker legislation. We're headed where the consumer demands and the law allows. We find the want and fill the niche.

As a constituent expressed: "I feel like I'm driving in the fog." Take for example the Northwest Airlines pilot who drove around in the fog at Detroit Metro Airport. He crashed into another plane. . . on the ground! One small deviation can be disastrous, so it is with business.

SKIP DOYLE
Doyle & Associates
Sarasota, Florida

Industry veterans realize we are into another downswing, which began in August and will end when consumer confidence improves. In the meantime, leisure spending will continue, and only those forward-thinking and imaginative operators will prosper.

Creativity is games selection, redemption and merchandising, and promotions are keys to survival in this economy. Instead of thinking "what is wrong?", concentrate on "what am I doing right?" Accentuate the positive; enthusiasm is a contagious disease. . . catch it!

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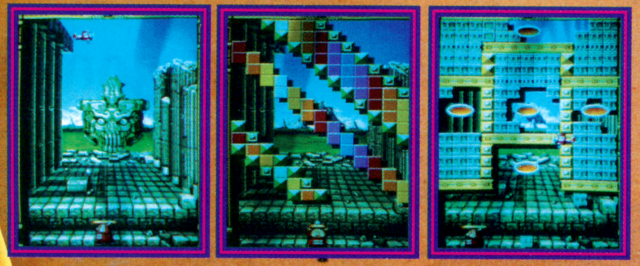

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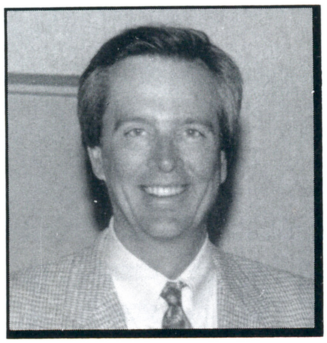

MARK STRUHS
Dynamo Corporation
Richland Hills, Texas

Our company's business this year has been very good for pool tables, air hockey tables, soccers and our new shuffleboards. Each of these products is a basic, long-term money maker for the operator. Unfortunately, the video side of our business has not fared as well over the past several months, and we do not look for the situation to improve much in the near future.

We attribute much of the downturn in the video business to several factors including a general fear about the state of the U.S. economy, the lack of great earning games available to the market and the fact that most street operators cannot afford to invest in great new video games, even if they were available.

Where are we headed? We've positioned ourselves to survive in the future by making a solid mix of products with long-term potential. Unlike the video game market, these products offer steady growth and good return on investment.

Understand that the video market will survive and Dynamo will play an important role in this part of the business, both with system cabinets and contract manufacturing. But we will most definitely not sit around and wait for this to happen.

Instead, we will move aggressively into new markets such as Europe and will develop whole new product categories such as instant lottery. That is our future and we are very excited about it.

FRANK GUMMA SR.
American Vending
Elk Grove Village, Ill.

The industry is now at a low point, partially due to all the media hype (be it real or not) regarding recession and most certainly due to the Middle East crisis. It appears everyone has taken a "wait and see" attitude.

The basics — jukeboxes, pool tables, darts and pinballs — are all strong today. The void appears to be

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in the area of the video market. We hear from our customers that the better video games are geared for arcade locations, not for street stops.

I feel it is now the time for manufacturers, operators and distributors to get aggressive via promotions and creative financing. On the positive side, we are anticipating some great new video products for this coming year.

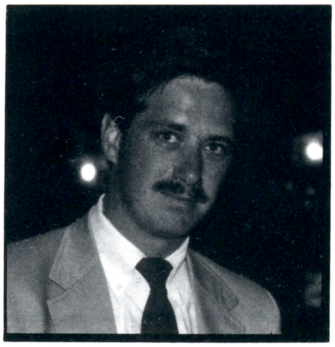
STEVE KAUFMAN
Konami, Inc.
Buffalo Grove, Ill.

We have entered a very critical period of adjustment. Now is the time to smooth out all relationships in our industry. In many ways, this is a very simple business if we all do what we're supposed to.

So, let's forget for the moment where we've been and look to the future. At this time, I can only reflect on the video game segment and pass along my thoughts.

Manufacturers must only produce first class games if they are to make a significant impact on the industry. The distributors must provide the vital link between manufacturer and operator. Operators must realize the value of the new product introduced to maintain the stability of their routes.

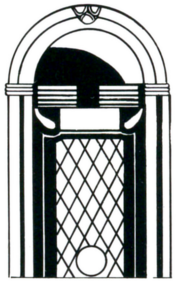
We all possess the ability to do what's written above. Now is the time to do it.



CRAIG N. JOHNSON
TATAKA
Salt Lake City, Utah

There is no question that the business is tightening up. This, however, does not mean business is bad. The majority of operators I have spoken with have said that in all areas except for their video, business is up. So I think that we need to understand that there is still a lot of money in the cash boxes and a lot of locations that

It's time to



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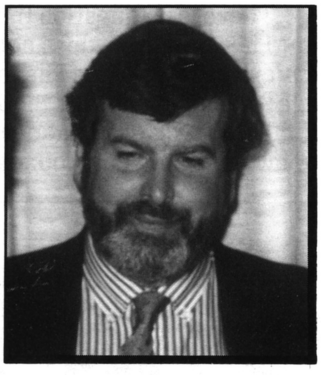
are doing well when run properly.

If we can keep our efforts on building the business and on making fair and reasonable deals for all of us (the operator and the location), we can do well in the '90s. The operators of this country have an enormous investment in equipment on the streets and can make a fair return on that investment if they buy right, operate the equipment properly and make fair deals with locations.

The roller coaster we're on has been here before and it will be here again one day. The operators that are bemoaning the state of the industry need to look at history and realize that each time business gets tough we have an opportunity to improve our own operations.

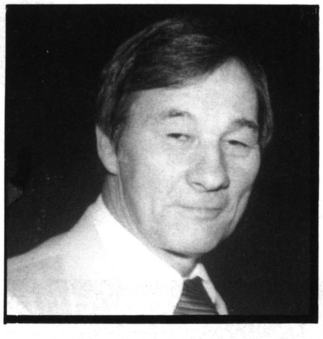
Yes, it's time to look within to see where we can improve and yes, it's time to look at the "deals" that we have made with our locations. No, it is not time to back away from the opportunities that are coming along every day. For our operation, we see the '90s as the best years we have seen yet. And we intend to take advantage of the opportunities.



MARK BLUM JR.
United Distributors
Wichita, Kansas

Over the last two years, our company has suffered an average of a 40% percent decrease in collections. This past year, we have been forced to cut expenses in many areas.

1991 could be a good year for the amusement machine operators, but that will heavily depend on the manufacturers' abilities to create some fantastic products to turn this recession around.

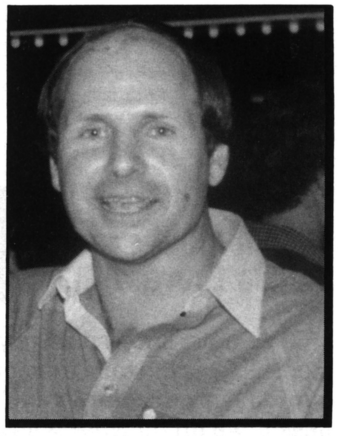


MEL SONIER
Eastern Distributors
Philadelphia, Penn.

Our industry is suffering one of its worst downturns in recent years. Games are suffering the most, while music is doing well with the dedicated CD phonographs leading the way and collections holding. Why is this happening to video, for example?

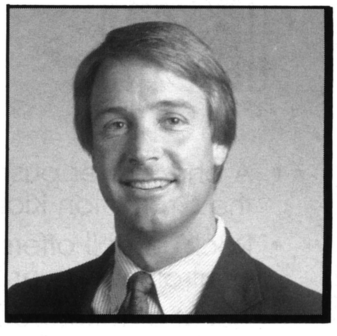
Is it due to the economy, lack of innovative product, home video games? Take your pick. The results are lower cash box collections. But whatever the cause, we've all experienced it before, and as in the past, I have every confidence we will look back at this time as another piece of our "history."

After all, we are in an industry populated by very creative people providing entertainment at a very low cost to the public.



MARK MADURA
Yellow Brick Road
San Diego, Calif.

Business in my arcades has been off about 10% across the board, **but** 10% of my clientele has been pulled overseas by Operation Desert Shield. So, apart from that, we're doing fine. Look, I've heard some complaining from some others and I can only echo what many of them want: something technologically new and great that can't go into the home video market right off the bat. And, I'll tell you this much: I personally **know** that such a product is coming . . . something that can put us back into the leadership role we once enjoyed in the entertainment industry.



TOM PETIT
Sega Enterprises
San Jose, Calif.

The current down trend is a historical cycle that occurs on the video side of the industry, as I will illustrate. Just after the very inception of the video game business in the early '70s, we entered a similar period of stagnation, running from 1975 to 1977, which was the "post paddle game era."

After this came five years of overwhelming growth during the years 1977 to 1982 with such super titles as *Space Invaders, Asteroids, Pac-Man, Defender,* etc. Then in 1983, once again we entered into a period of

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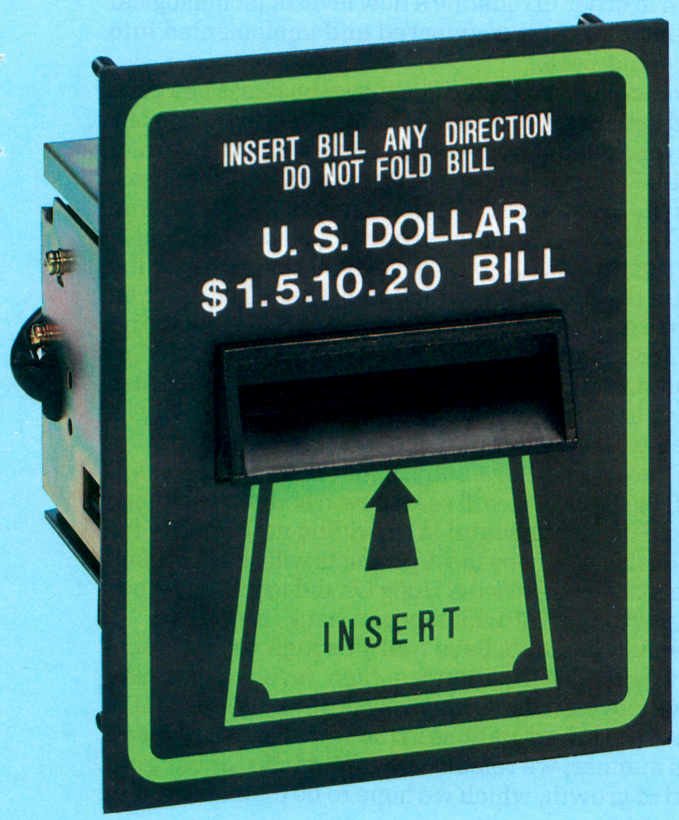

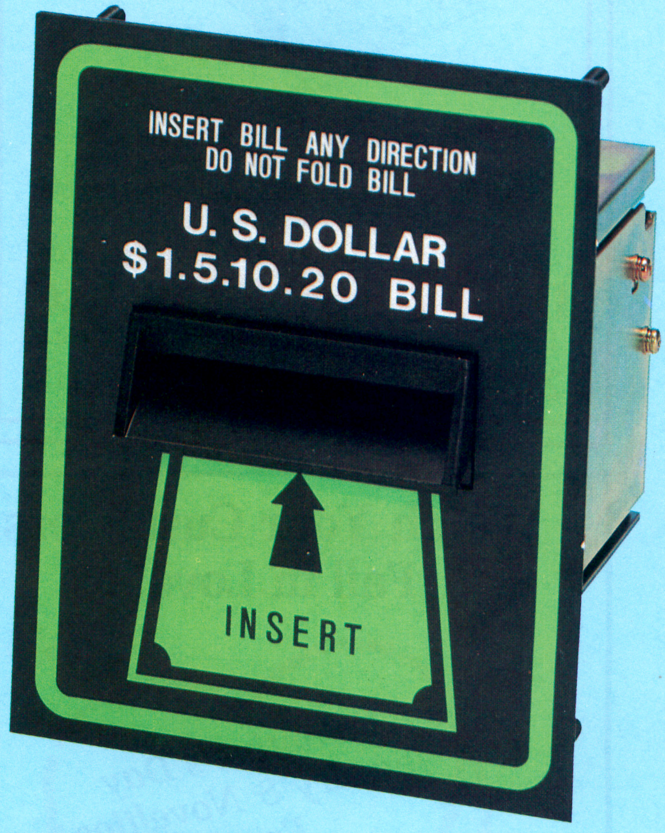

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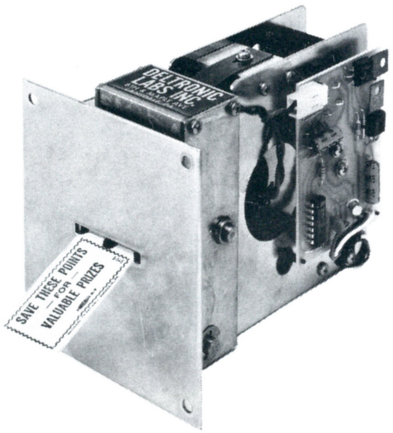

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stagnation.

In June of 1985, with the introduction of *Hang On*, our industry began to enjoy five more years of active sales, utilizing a high level simulation technology with greater capability.

With this historical perspective in mind, I think that the coin-op video business tends to run in four- to five-year growth cycles followed by two-year recess periods. I think this is valid, because during the periods of growth, it typically takes about five years to fully exploit and exhaust the level of technology and associated creativity of that generation. This then is followed by two years of slowness, which I believe is critical in order to redefine a new level of technological direction and get it engineered and implemented into the product cycle.

Ironically enough, the consumer business has gone up and down as well in an interesting correlation to our own cycles. In our post paddle game stagnation era of 1975-1977, there was a small home video business, primarily lap top paddle tennis games that came and went. Then when we entered our second period of video down turn in 1983 in coin-op, we oddly enough saw the crash of the Atari 2600 which was a business that had grown to a sales level in excess of 20 million units. And right now, in conjunction with our current period of slowness, we see a consumer industry that is also starting to see a recession in their business activity as they enter a downward trend of sales volume.

Where do we go? I believe that next year, specifically from Sega, you will see a new trend of technology that will be instrumental in providing new vitality for our industry. We hope these products will have as much impact on the business as *Hang On* did to influence our last growth market which began back in 1985.

I would like to believe that this high level of technology will also facilitate a high level of per-play income, moving more exclusively to 50¢ play, as the U.S. is one of the lowest nations in the world in this respect. In this manner, we remain very optimistic for our next period of growth, which we hope to be instrumental in creating.

RON MALINOWSKI
Aladdin's Castle
Franklin Park, Ill.

Kudos to Konami. If not for the arrival of *Turtles*, who knows how the industry would have stayed above water in 1990. Since mid-July, collections have been very soft. Contributing factors, no doubt, relate to the alarming lack of innovative video product, to consumer

video and to the general softening of our national economy. My advice for 1991 would be:

1. Practice sound and cautious buying habits and focus in on games that are different.

2. Test extensively when possible. Also, sharing of the test results would be beneficial to all sectors — manufacturers, distributors and operators alike.

3. With a prevailing void in video, other product lines should merit a look-see (e.g. pinball, air hockey and an old staple *Skee-Ball).*

Pay close attention to game appearance and maintenance. Nothing is more frustrating to a would-be customer than to walk up to a tattered, or worse, down game.

We anticipate the early part of 1991 to be just about status quo, with many more repetitive games being introduced. We do, however, feel a strong late spring and summer looming. Beyond this, we all know our business and its cyclical nature. We at Aladdin's are what Wall Streeters would describe as "bullish" on our industry's future.

BOB JONES
Arjay Export Co.
Hyannis, Mass.

The export side of amusement machine sales is very strong for good, fairly recent equipment. But, foreign buyers are not interested in taking old, worn out machinery. They need decent equipment and will pay decent prices for it. Operators tend to wring the last penny from any given piece of equipment until nobody else wants it. It is actually in the operator's best interest to dispose of equipment while it's still saleable and replace that equipment with new higher income-producing games.

CHUCK MILHEM
Valley Recreation
Bay City, Michigan

If you had any doubt that the U.S. is in a recession, just pick up your local newspaper or watch the television newscasts and learn from the experts how bad things are. Unless our friends in Washington take steps to stimulate the economy pretty soon, our coun-

try, as well as the rest of the world, will plunge into a depression.

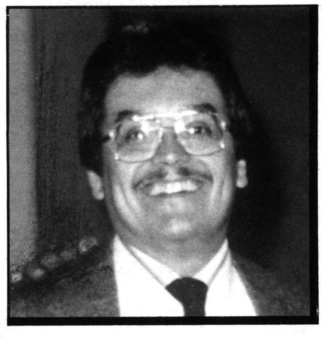
You can bet the farm that they won't let that happen. However, if they don't ease up on credit and the money supply, you might as well bet that farm for with a depression, all of us will lose our farms.

As businessmen, it is already too late to plan for a recession, but not too early to plan for a recovery. If the past is any indication of what occurs in a recovery, we can expect prices and wages to increase in tandem with revenues. Instead of talking about recession, the topic on the nightly news will be the dreaded "I" word — Inflation.

If you agree there's a good chance we'll be dealing with inflation in the months ahead, you can be certain that prices for most goods and services will be increasing and you should plan accordingly.

Two major concerns we all share in running a business in an inflationary environment is controlling expenses and maximizing the return we get on our investments. Operators who've participated in leagues, tournaments and other industry promotions have been rewarded for their efforts with sizeable increases in income. For those that haven't, there is no better time than now to get involved in these revenue-generating activities.

Any dark thoughts? Sure, the poker games in these parts have screwed up the industry pretty badly. Some poker operators have gotten into bad habits like giving money away to the locations and neglecting their other types of machines. If there's any respectable future to this machine it should be in tandem with the state in proper fashion.



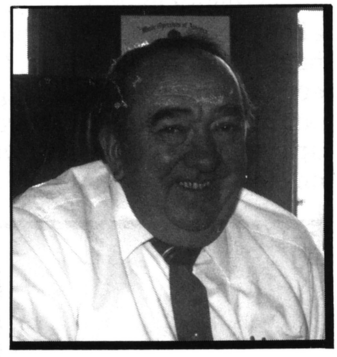
ED VELASQUEZ
Velasquez Music Co.
Chicago, Illinois

If there's anything good that can be said for the present state of the industry it's this: it forces the operators, myself included, to look where they're placing the equipment and at what terms. Equipment prices have to be factored into the location arrangement. We all have to take a hard look at the 50/50 split and do creative things with minimums, etc.

The 75¢ pool pricing should be all over the place, but that's up to local operators to put across. CD music boxes should be set at three plays for a buck. But, if a location is resistant to that, consider putting the machine in on a 60-40 split and then offering four tunes for that buck. This can work. It did for me, although our norm is three for a buck.

As I see it, the future of video will gravitate into the *Neo•Geo*-type of flexible system where the operator can program the machine with, for example, a baseball game during baseball season, put kid games in and adult games as well and do it with the same ease he programs a jukebox. I really think a lot of video manufacturers will be headed that way.

Pinballs are looking good. AMOA's committee is creating public awareness, or maybe "re-awareness" of the game. This will get the operator more aware of his pins and get him to percentage them better and be more serious about them overall.



JACK HACKETT
Apollo-Stereo Music
Denver, Colorado

Quite a few years back, we had a very close-knit industry. We had disagreements, but we still did what was best for the business. The manufacturers and distributors were an asset to the operators. We still have some that are trying to help the operators, but their profit margins are so small, they are unable to do very much.

The first thing the operators should do is get a fair price per play. Most of us have failed to keep up with the cost of equipment and the cost of doing business. In my opinion, pinballs (for example) should be slowed down. Charge 50¢ or a buck a game but give the player some entertainment with longer play time and a challenge.

As far as videos go, they should be made simpler and play slower so that more can be charged. This way they'd keep players playing. On pool, we have recently begun to change our tables to 75¢ games. As we all know, the cost of recovering pool tables has steadily gone up. However, by recovering more often, you can increase your income.

Shuffleboards have always been a comparatively low money earner due to the cost of resurfacing and supplies. The cost per play should be increased. After all, the playing time is considerably longer than on other games. And since we've begun to convert over to CD jukeboxes at three plays for a buck, we've found that a formerly lousy jukebox location is now a money maker.

We're in the entertainment business. With the new drunk driving laws, we have to promote shuffleboard, pool and dart leagues. People want to go to bars, but need something else to do there besides drink. This also keeps players in the bars longer, therefore keeping our locations in business.

It is my belief that the factories produce too much for the arcades instead of for the street locations. Give

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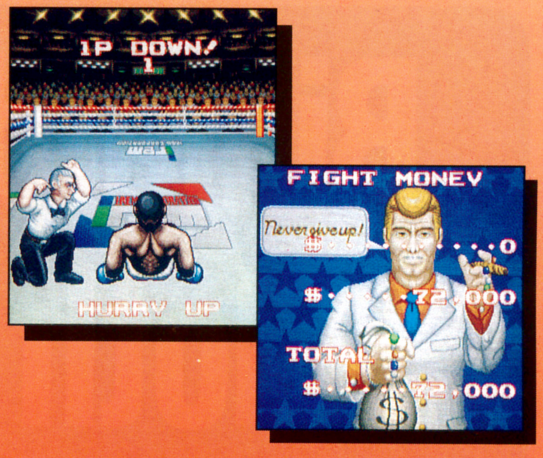

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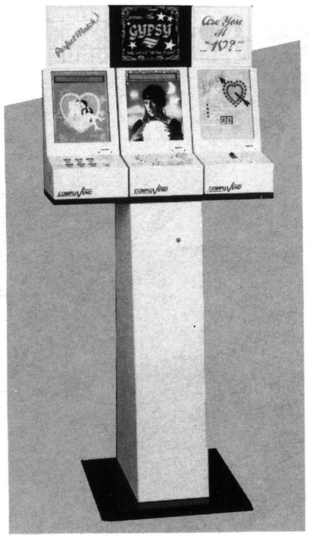

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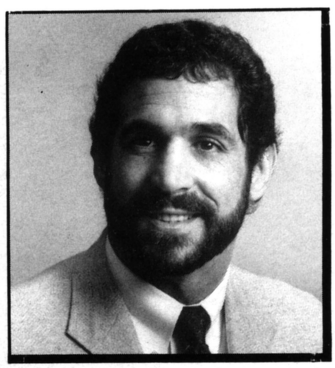
a jukebox operator a bar piece that will make money and they will buy them all day. If the operator makes a decent profit, he can afford to buy more **new** equipment and will make more money.

I think that our business can be put back on the right track and make the operator, distributor and the factories profitable again. The factories and distributors should always remember the operator controls the cash box, and gets first count, and that it all comes from there.



FRANK BALLOUZ
Fabtek and Irem
Redmond, Wash.

As an industry, we are currently experiencing a recession. I believe the biggest cause is the lack of design creativity, and the lack of research & development on new technology too.

When over 30% of U.S. households now own their own video game (Nintendo, Sega, Atari and NEC), it is our responsibility to offer them a coin-op experience that cannot be duplicated in the home. Today, Sega and NEC offer graphics and game play very similar to that of coin-op. In the very near future, Nintendo will offer their new 16-bit system which will have better graphics and more game play capability than the majority of the current coin-op products offered on the market today.

In order to compete with these consumer systems, we need to invest millions of dollars in R&D. Who knows what this investment will bring: more digitalized graphics, a resurgence of laser discs, CD ROM (already in the home via NEC), a little closer to virtual reality games? Who knows what the future will bring until we spend the time and dollars to explore the worlds of the unknown.

To make it possible for the factories to invest the needed millions of dollars, they must sell equipment today. For whatever the reason, very few operators are maintaining their routes with new equipment purchases. Are the reasons "due to lack of creativity, why should I buy?" or is it "I'll wait for parallels"? One is surely more justified than the other.

The parallel issue has divided our industry for some time now, depriving it of the much needed unity to move forward. It has cost us in dollars and in time, hundreds of thousands of dollars. The real cost won't be known for several years. I feel sorry for the operator who purchases a counterfeit disguised as a parallel who could lose everything for the savings of a few hundred dollars. Again I warn, buyer beware!

While the factories hopefully invest money in R&D to

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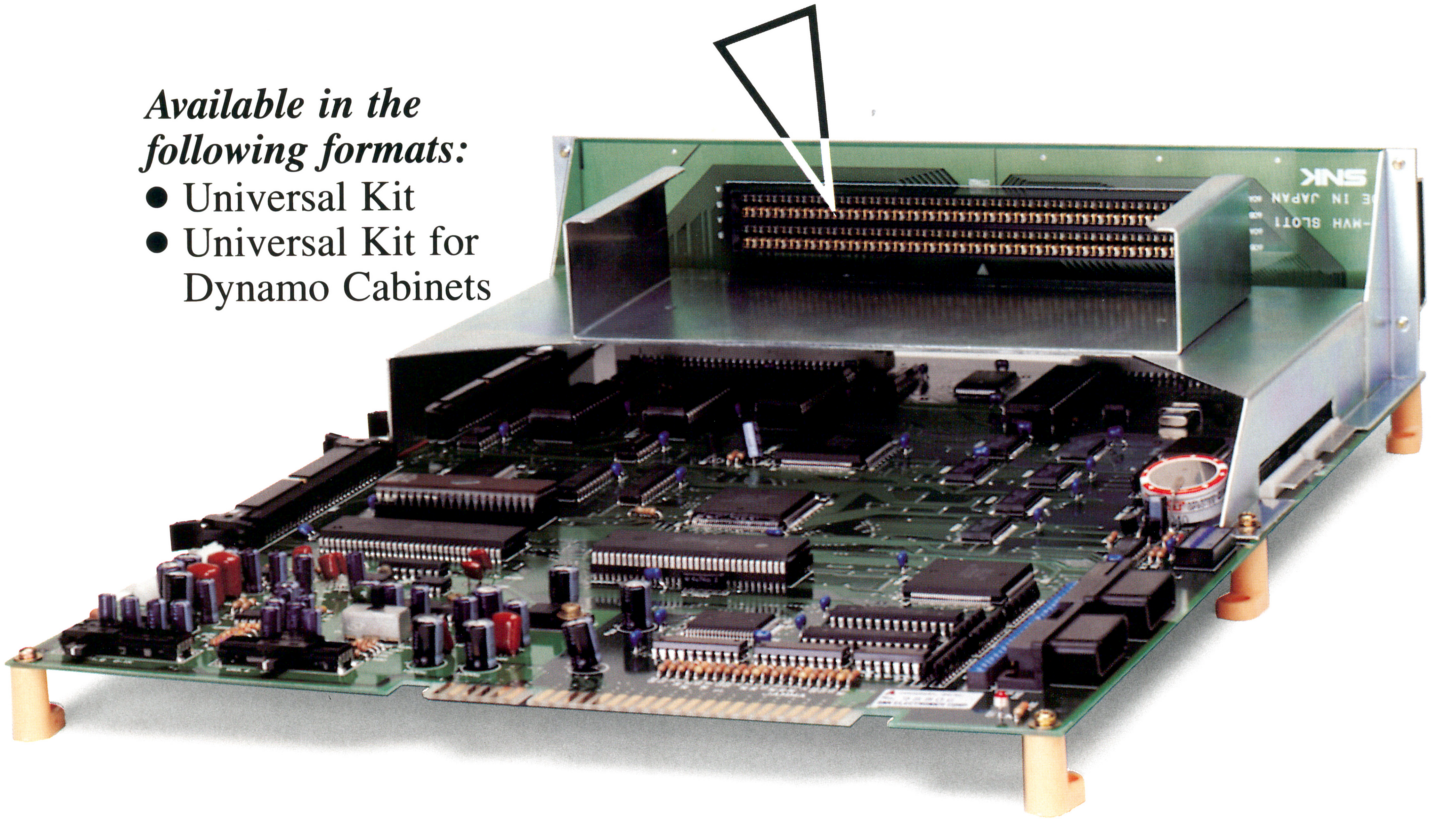

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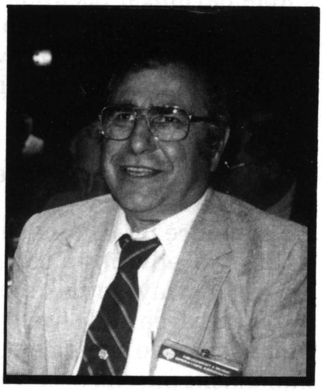
stimulate the creativity of their engineers and the operators continue to support their distributors (hopefully with the purchases of new equipment), let's also work together for the betterment of our industry in our towns, our cities, our states and importantly, in our nation's capital. Let's work together . . . together . . . **together!**



ROSS TODARO
TAV'S, INC.
Bryan, Texas

The operator must run the location rather than the location running the operator. I feel this can be accomplished by "educating" the location in terms of making gradual increases in prices on games in conjunction with changing the commission structures.

Overhead costs such as gasoline prices have affected the frequency and way we run our routes. I feel it is important to be very conscientious of where our route people are located as calls are received and routes are planned. We can no longer afford the luxury of randomly making route calls due to the cost of such calls.

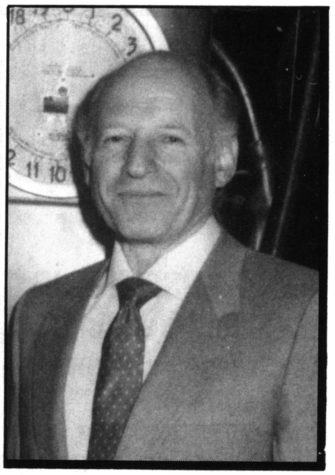
We feel it's important to be more price-conscious in terms of purchasing parts and selecting equipment. "Shopping"the market for competitive prices has proven profitable. I also feel that along these same lines, it's important to recognize these operational costs in terms of the line of equipment being marketed. Example: due to increasing costs for parts and equipment, our pool (play) prices need to be increased accordingly.

We feel it's very important to provide replacements for non-productive, obsolete equipment. While the initial investment is costly, ultimately the replacement should prove profitable.

In summation, we are cautious but optimistic. We are targeting smaller locations rather than arcades. We feel the larger operators will ultimately replace smaller operators due to increases in operational costs, including taxes and licensing. The current trends seem to be toward pinballs, quality video and CD jukeboxes. However, I would note that 45s are still strong.

Overall, I feel the industry must diversify its operations in order to survive. This can be accomplished by encompassing vending and improving the quality of the products being offered. As has been proven, "trendy" games like *Ninja Turtles* and *Simpsons*, which were introduced through the mass media and then brought into the amusement industry, are quite successful.

Recognizing "trends" such as these has added a new dimension to the amusement business. Their "overnight" success has proven to each of us that this idea needs to be expanded and new successors discovered. I'd also like to note that the driving games are still very popular and I feel that this is an area for expansion. In addition, we feel there's a need for games which are competitive and action-packed with player participation.



JERRY GORDON
Rowe International
Whippany, N.J.

Despite the economic climate that exists today, we're still in a very good business, although there must be a shift in the operator's buying habits. His resources should be put to either long-term revenue-producing equipment or into equipment that will maximize income over a short time frame. There are no other choices.

At the present time, video collections are somewhat depressed. But this situation will not last forever. There are too many good video game manufacturers still in business and they will not let that portion of our industry dwindle.

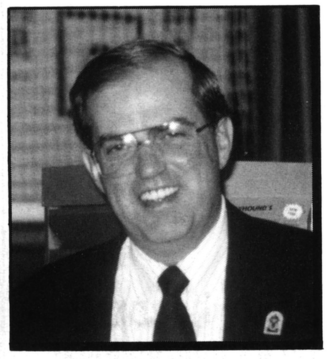
As a distributor, I must be responsible to our operator customers to make sure the equipment they need to buy will produce necessary income. The good distributor knows as much as possible about the operator's route (i.e. what percent is pool, music, pins, redemption, video, etc.). And the distributor should always remind the operator of all the good business practices that will keep him viable and make him able to get through these questionable times. Anyone who experienced the downturn of the industry in 1982 hardly needs to be reminded.

As a manufacturer, our company must produce equipment that is reliable, will generate income and be delivered at a reasonable price in a responsible time frame. Fortunately, our manufactured products have long-term capabilities and are not tied to the hit syndrome of the game business. We also, however, need to keep up with new technologies and maintain our R&D to insure the future.

Today's operator must be smarter to survive. His hard work alone will not make it in the current environment. Creativity is also a necessity. With the possible demise of some cigarette locations, operators need to create new locations to replace lost income. Obviously, this is easier said than done. So, talk to your dis-

tributor about new ideas, since he gets a cross section of all new thinking.

Distributors want to sell equipment to operators while recognizing that operators need the ability to pay their bills in a reasonable amount of time. Last comment: stay positive and you'll survive. Negativism spreads too quickly and becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.



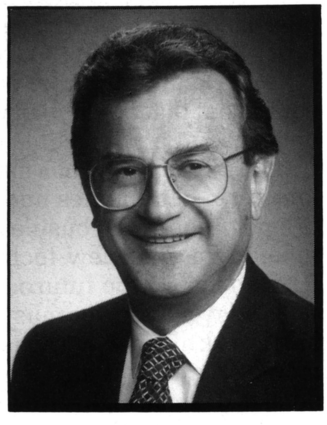
JIM STANSFIELD JR.
Stansfield Vending
La Crosse, Wisconsin

I don't think the "bad times" have reached the midwest yet as things here are not as bad as what I hear around the country. We are holding our own and enjoying a slight increase in gross sales without any major acquisitions of routes or companies.

The problems trickle down to the net...many things are going up in price and we are not able to capture those increases by continuing to sell our product or rather our "entertainment" at the same (old) price.

If the cost of doing business must go up, as the manufacturers tell us the cost of the equipment must go up, then, unless our gross sales go up, we cannot afford to buy and pay for new equipment.

I can't really give any great "insight" into the future...just ask the brothers to hang in. There is no quick fix...no easy answer...we are going through some down times around the country and we must just learn to go through this period of history in the coin machine industry.



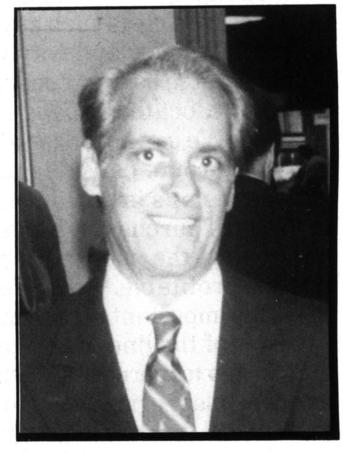
RAYMOND GALANTE
Music-Vend Dist.
Seattle, Wash.

We are experiencing slow growth in the video game business in anticipation of getting additional better-earning games. But, there has been a general uptick in music, pinball, darts, redemption and other types of coin-op equipment, all necessary to maintain a fully-facilitated distributorship.

In my opinion, we are heading for more sophisticated, more expensive, overall more appealing games. "Destination" game locations should have more than stable earnings. Locations must be worked where a potential exists for revenue from different types of equipment. The industry will be much more personalized than in the past with regard to contacts between operators and distributors and between operators and locations.

Excluding convenience stores, coin-op revenue is very necessary for retail outlets accustomed to that revenue stream. The machine distributor's obligations extend to advising customers and helping them in necessary ways to make sure they are more profitable.

If research and development doesn't produce revolutionary video equipment, we have to address present equipment purchases strictly on realistic earnings to better gauge buying by distributors and in turn by operators. If the recession is already here, we all have to be stronger managers.



PETE ENTRINGER
Audio Visual Amuse.
St. Louis, Missouri

First off, I feel that our industry has split into two different and distinct businesses...one being for amusements, the other for gambling. The operators who are running both gambling and amusement machines have lost interest in the latter because of the relatively small return on their investment.

1990 had a great game with *TMNT*, but I have operators (or at least they call themselves "operators") who passed the game completely by, saying that their convenience stores and other locations don't make enough money to warrant the purchase. What is "enough money"?

The true amusement operators were saved and had a pretty good year with the likes of *TMNT, Pit Fighter, Final Fight, Hard Drivin'* and *Neo•Geo,* to name but a few.

I think the time has come to separate the two types of operators. How, I don't know, but I'm sure readers can pick up on this and give their pro's and con's. The

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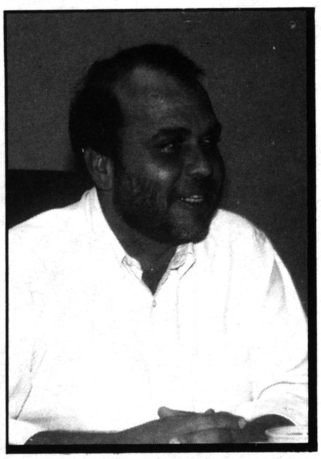
locations controlled by the "gambling operator" that only have amusement games are getting short changed by not getting the good amusement pieces that are available.



GENE LIPKIN
Data East USA
San Jose, Calif.

Coin-op has undergone a quiet revolution in recent years as it struggles to compete with a crowded entertainment market, increased equipment costs and only modest growth rates. The only course to continued market vitality will be charted by industry leaders willing to work in a spirit of partnership with their vendors and customers. Data East has taken on just this strategy.

Since its huge growth in the '70s and early '80s, followed by the subsequent crash, the market has stabilized, but we face a very different industry environment. What was once a mom and pop business has evolved into a multi-million dollar industry.

However, the number of locations is shrinking, although arcades are growing in number. The cyclical popularity of games, which coincides with the continual recycling of the population, is currently on a downcurve. And bar business has been stagnant due to the drinking and driving concerns of the nation.

Many outside factors now influence the state of coin-op as well. The Japanese took a big position in the market in 1982-83. Flush from a win in their own market, they had the advantage over their U.S. counterparts. While Americans had no money to invest, the Japanese were more than willing to invest in new ideas.

I'm often asked if I feel that Japan controls the current market. My answer is 'no.' Do they have a greater capital base? Unquestionably, 'yes.' No one controls the coin-op market because it is product-driven. Even a Japanese parent company gets no market advantage unless it is producing great games. Coin-op is clearly a hit-driven market, with no set recipe for success, and an open door for anyone who markets great product.

The ultimate judge of great product is the marketplace. What we must all realize is that our target market has changed substantially. Kids have far more money to spend and clearly defined likes and dislikes. With the wealth of entertainment options available to them today, it's easy to understand why these young consumers are extremely savvy about getting the best entertainment value for their dollar.

Consumer expectations have risen in direct proportion to their exposure to sophisticated forms of entertainment like the better movies and MTV.

For somewhere around 20 years now, most games still only require a quarter to play. This has handicapped the industry insofar as how much a particular machine can collect in one week. This in turn affects operator overhead as machines become more sophisticated and cost much more per unit. Although the industry is moving towards a 50¢ vend price, operators are still reluctant as players remain extremely price-sensitive.

In other countries, the cost per game is much higher to play, so operators have the disposable income necessary to purchase more sophisticated equipment. There's also less risk associated with their purchases because they're able to make a return on their initial investment more quickly.

Another issue facing the industry is the split, which could quite realistically never be resolved. Even though the street operator is forced to invest significantly more of his capital in equipment costs, and faces decreasing residual values of the pieces he currently owns, he must still split revenues 50/50 with the location. This eventually affects all in the industry who cannot be paid if the equipment can't liquidate.

Primary among the obstacles we all face is the concern over the amount of product on the market. While there is arguably a large amount of such product available, I feel a bigger issue is the amount of *bad* product on the market. It hurts us all.

Facing continual pressure to satisfy the market's craving for "hits"— including an insatiable hunger for bigger and better special effects and sound — it's no wonder we all feel a little pinch. Operators have been especially hard hit, particularly in relationship to video purchases which don't liquidate and have little or no residual value. Thus, buying a video has become a real investment decision for an operator — one that he makes extremely carefully.

To ease the burden, developers must continue their research and development efforts to support the market's appetite for hits. Distributors and operators must support these advances in technology that enable us to keep pace with consumer demand. And perhaps most importantly, we must recognize our inter-dependence. We must open channels of communications that allow us to examine the issues facing our industry and devise creative, long-term strategies to address these concerns for the benefit and survival of our industry.

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Bernie Powers Starts Dealership; New Wisconsin Outlet's in Delavan

A brand new distribution point called 1002 Distributing Co., Inc. has been opened by trade vet Bernie Powers and his partner Jim Buckner at 1421 Racine St. in Delavan, Wisc. Located in a business park, the new dealership sits close by the intersection of Hwy. 43 and U.S. 50 and (according to Powers), is roughly a 45-minute drive between Milwaukee and Madison (right near the Geneva Lakes dog track).

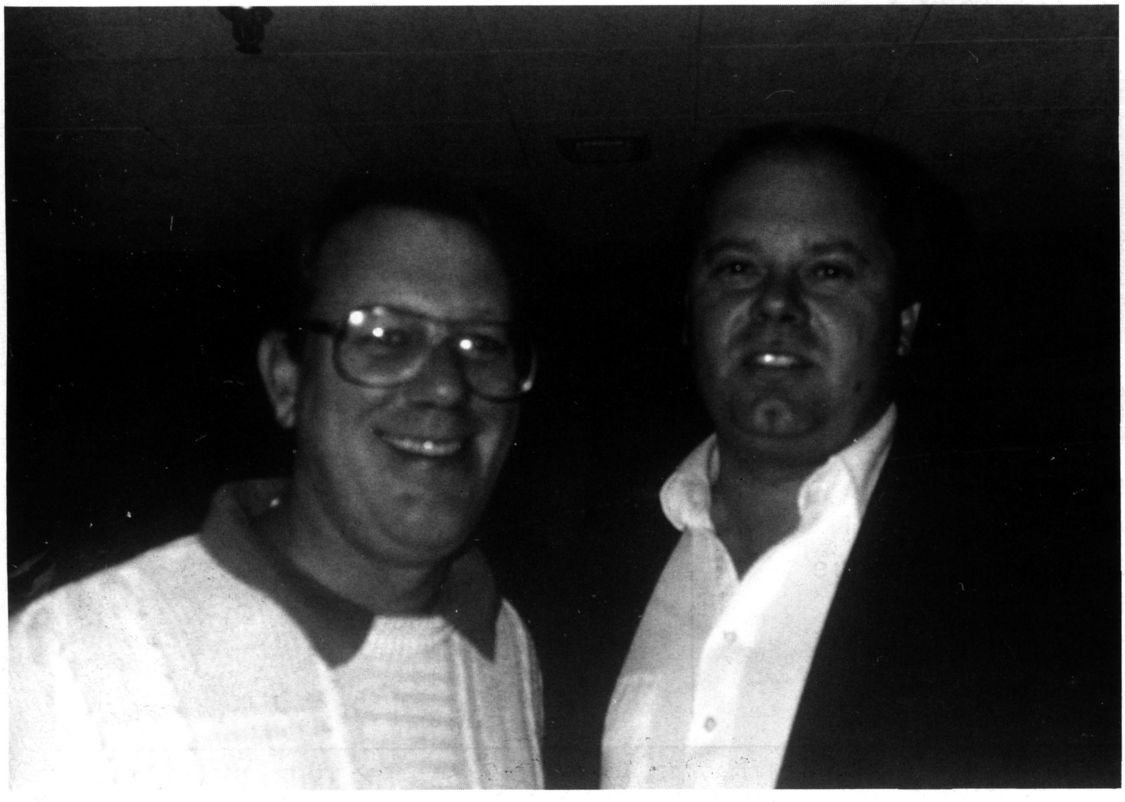
Presently at work generating direct equipment lines to represent (Powers says they already have Premier pins and Wurlitzer phonographs), the firm will also job products for operators. Goods are already on their showroom floor. The facility offers around 5,000 sq. ft. (with an additional 2,000 joining up end of January) for the showroom, shop, parts department and offices. "The whole shot," says Powers, describing his music and games emporium.

Personnel already hired on include Controller John Adams (formerly a VP with First Midwest Bank), Gal Friday Norma Hicks (who has a background in accounting) and Phil Dilks (their service manager, an 11-year veteran of Aladdin's Castle, who's in position to perform video conversions).

Powers spent the bulk of his 20-year industry career with Bally corporate where he was best known as the field man who helped operators understand solid state flipper game technology (and fix same) during numerous sessions at distributorships. Most recently, he'd occupied executive positions at Arachnid and then at Merit Industries.

His partner Jim Buckner is one of his closest and oldest friends (they served as best men at their respective weddings). Their friendship extends back to their college days at Northern Illinois University where they had an apartment at 1002 State Street in DeKalb, hence the name of their new distributing company "1002." Buckner himself spent some time working for Arachnid's consumer product division and has been to many AMOA shows.

So, we add the town of Delavan to Menomonee Falls, Waupaca and Green Bay on the Wisconsin distribution map and wish Bernie and Jim all good luck in their new venture. Interested parties can phone them at 414/728-1477.



Bernie Powers (left) and partner Jim Buckner have opened 1002 Distributing in Delavan, Wisc. Longtime friends, Powers and Buckner currently have secured the Premier and Wurlitzer lines and will also job other equipment for their customers.

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A Farewell Address

On Nov. 30, 1990, 32-year industry veteran Mac Hasvold sold his Sioux Falls, SD based Hasvold Vending Company to Robert Correa. This music, games and vending route is an industry fixture in that part of the world, as was its retiring owner.

On the very next day after the sale closed, Hasvold sat down and wrote a letter to his friend and fellow South Dakotan Jim Trucano (who is also this year's AMOA president) which serves not only as a "farewell address" of sorts, but as a message to operators everywhere from a man who can speak his mind now that he doesn't have to fight the good fight any longer.

Hasvold's letter was sent to *RePlay* by Trucano and we in turn called Mac to gain his permission to reprint it. During our call, we learned he'd gotten bored with retirement "after the first couple of hours," understandable since the route business was both his livelihood *and* his hobby. It's entirely possible he may offer consultancy services to parties interested in the "operator's viewpoint" on video lottery, since Mac was involved in South Dakota's program. Anyone wishing to contact him should call Hasvold Vending at 605/336-8301 and they will get the messages through to the former owner.

Mac's "farewell address" is quite candid, as you'll see. For example, he was pleased that South Dakota legalized video lottery, said the revenues helped his other arms of the coin business but warned operators in other states never to neglect their non-gaming equipment should the day ever come when video lottery is legalized in their areas. Here's the letter:

"Dear Jim;

"I would like to share some thoughts with you as I sit here in my rocking chair. These are the facts of life as I see them:

"1. Locations expect, and probably deserve, a 50/50 split. There are exceptions, but for the most part, this is true.

"2. Operator costs are going to continue to go up. Yes, we can get more efficient, but the good operators are there now or have been there for a long time.

"3. The amusement industry does not generate enough income on the retail level to sustain a strong industry from concept, design, manufacture, distribution, operator and on the street with the locations and players.

"4. Video is dead under the present system of dedicated, kit and parallel. The Nintendo home system has killed the street market. We need 50 cents and we can only get 25 cents for about ten weeks' time.

"I do not see any 'miracle video concept' game coming along to save us all. The home market is too strongly entrenched. Whatever is developed will be put directly into the home market either as soon as the coin-ops prove it or even as we place it. We cannot compete within a ten-week window.

"The only market the video game can work for us is in the ten week window at 25 cent play, so we must have the right to buy the home kit at the same price as the home market does (around $35.00), buy 30 to 40 of them and saturate the street market and then repeat that process in ten weeks. This would introduce new games to the home market and also save our tails.

"I can get the $35 overhead and profit back in that time window at 25¢ play. I'm not in love with 25¢ play, but that is all the market will bear when a person can rent the same kit for $1.00 for two days and two nights in our market.

"What I'm recommending is that Nintendo produce hardware to enable the operator to run the exact same home cartridges sold at retail stores in a coin-op format. Their present *PlayChoice* system is limited in terms of available game software compared to the many more on sale in the stores. And the price is higher per-cartridge. In addition, I would like Nintendo to give operators a week or two headstart on new titles before they're released to the retailer in the way radio gets the new songs before music stores get the goods.

"On an entirely different matter, though it's hardly that different, we need to get to 50¢ play on the games that cannot be put into the home market. The major player in this field is the pinball. . . the game that no operator likes to run because they require more work. To get up to 50¢ play, we must have a coin chute that takes multiple coins. I'm talking about a chute that accepts nickels, dimes and quarters so we can nickel and dime the vend up at our will.

"This multiple coin chute *can* be done. It *must* be done. And it must be done on all new machines now and forever. Inflation will not stop; the Federal Government is dedicated to it.

"Jim, you may already have a theme for your presidency and if you have, I would like to see you make this a part of it. If you haven't set your theme yet, I would like you to consider this one. It won't do me any good as I sold Nov. 30, but I strongly believe that this is the only way the industry can go and I also believe that it must do it *now*.

"Operators cannot rely on 'video lottery' as evidenced by the failure of passage in North Dakota and Nebraska. And even if the day comes when more states besides South Dakota legalize it, their non-gambling activities should never be neglected."

Sincerely,
Mac Hasvold

Kiddie Ride Renaissance

growing market strength of long-overlooked category prompts operators to form successful new association

Kiddie rides are coming out of the shadow and into the bright sunlight," says Tom Theisen (pronounced "Tyson"), president of a one-year-young organization called the American Kiddie Ride Assn. (headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn.).

A number of factors have converged to make kiddie rides a growth industry for the '90s: more kids, better games, and a much more receptive attitude from locations. "All of the sudden we find the reception for kiddie rides in the marketplace is very great," Theisen said. "As a result manufacturers are becoming more creative with new types of rides; distributors are becoming more aggressive; and operators are more successful in placing the games. The American Kiddie Ride Assn. was formed so that kiddie ride operators could band together to pursue their unique interests."

AKRA was formed in March of 1990, to help these tradesters find their own identity, gather basic facts about their own industry, monitor relevant developments, communicate to the industry and work together on common concerns. The group held its first two meetings in conjunction with the ACME and AMOA shows.

AKRA boasted 87 members at presstime; most are operators ("we were very happy to say that we got most of the major U.S. kiddie ride operators to join," Theisen notes). Kiddie ride manufacturers and distributors also belong. Dues are a flat $50 per year; a newsletter is issued to all members four or five times per year. A board of directors meeting and membership meeting takes place annually (the next one will be held in conjunction with the AMOA show).

THE MARKET

Worldwide, AKRA estimates that there are at least 15 kiddie ride manufacturers ranging from major factories to "guys who build machines in their garages." The factories are "better and more creative than ever"...not just a rocking horse as in the old days, but helicopters, jets, space ships, Army jeeps, speedboats, dragons, you name it. And they're beautiful! Glossy, high-quality finish, flashing lights, hydraulic motion and other features are also becoming more common.

"You can find every theme and every price," Theisen said. "The selection is there and so is the quality. They're built lower to the ground than they used to which provides easy access, comfort and safety."

AKRA believes there are about 75,000 kiddie rides on location in the U.S., earning around $150 mil-

At the American Kiddie Rides Assn. meeting held Oct. 27 in New Orleans (from left): President Tom Theisen (at podium), Secretary Steve Banks, VP Steve Caplan, Kiddies Manufacturing's Eric Torres, R.J. & Associates' Dick Salisbury, and Executive Director Anita Bennett.

lion yearly (based on an average estimated income of $2,000 annually). The kiddie market (4- to 12-year olds) is on a growth curve as the post World War II "Baby Boomers" are creating their own families. "We went through a lull in the 1970s when schools were closing. Now there are more children again and schools are being built. Finding locations for kiddie rides is much easier now than 10 years ago, too . . . partly because competing types of amusements have softer earnings."

Outside marketing factors are also helping boost kiddie rides these days. "Retailers and shopping centers are looking for more ways to be competitive, and they're very receptive to putting in a kiosk in the center of the center which houses kiddie rides. It's not promoted to the retailers as a get-rich-quick scheme, but as an amenity which makes the center more attractive to families. If kids can be entertained, their parents will be more relaxed, stay longer and spend more."

Another market factor favoring kiddie rides is that today's parents are more willing to spend a quarter (which most of the rides are set on). And according to *Forbes Magazine*, the 4 to 12 set themselves now have $75 billion to spend each year.

More arcades & family centers are buying kiddie rides these days. For example, the huge national Aladdin's Castle chain is installing rides in its arcades now. Part of the reason for kiddie rides going into more arcades is that the redemption business is attracting more families, and as a result, games and rides are needed for kiddies as well. (Notice that redemption game makers are building kid-sized versions of basketball, roll-downs, etc.). Amusement distributors are becoming more aggressive about stocking kiddie rides in their showrooms, too, said Theisen. And more kiddie ride makers are displaying more of their wares at the AMOA and ACME shows.

AMERICAN KIDDIE RIDE ASSOCIATION

AKRA & INSURANCE

AKRA was formed as a response to this growing market. Instrumental in AKRA's formation were the tradesters who now serve as association officers: Theisen; VP Steve Caplan (Universal Vending, Portland, Ore.); Treasurer Steve Banks (B&J Vending, Toledo, Ohio); and Secretary Jerry Reda (Just Rides, Farmington, N.Y.). A key "spark plug" who helped conceive AKRA is board member Eric Torres (Kiddies, Inc., Puerto Rico).

AKRA's main accomplishment to date is obtaining group insurance at competitive rates from a reputable, industry-experienced carrier. Today, AKRA members enjoy $1 million of liability insurance coverage at a rate of about $30 per ride annually.

"One concern that kiddie ride operators have traditionally had," said Theisen, "has been insurance. It hasn't been a problem, so much as it's been an unknown. Even with the lack of hard statistics on the subject, insurance carriers were concerned about putting kids in moving vehicles off the ground. So one of AKRA's goals was to pool our buying power and cut a competitive deal with a good insurance firm . . . and that's what we've done with R.J. Salisbury of Salt Lake City, Utah. They've been servicing the amusement ride and recreation industry for many years and we see them as a very good firm to work with. We are also going about the business of studying our own industry to see where our exposure is and how we can work with insurers and manufacturers to enhance industry safety."

Interested parties may contact the American Kiddie Ride Assn., care of Tom Theisen, Theisen Vending, 3800 Nicollet Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55409; 612/827-5588 or 800/633-3436 (out of state). Fax is 612/827-7543.

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Success in Santiago

AAMA members display coin-op goods at huge expo in Chile; solid response indicates promising South American market

Today Mexico and Central America; tomorrow Chile and South America! AAMA took the first big step toward opening the South American market to coin-op amusements in November. The U.S. manufacturer-distributor association successfully displayed music and games at a major international trade fair in Santiago, Chile from Oct. 31 to Nov. 11.

The venture to Chile represented AAMA's ambitious follow-up to a very successful Latin American Expo, held in Mexico City earlier in 1990. By all reports, response by showgoers in Chile was most enthusiastic; many U.S. tradesters reported making excellent contacts that will pave the way for future market development. "We created new business opportunities for our members in Mexico and now we are hoping to do the same in South America," said a smiling AAMA Exec VP Bob Fay at the show's conclusion.

AAMA Exec VP Bob Fay welcomes U.S. Ambassador Charles A. Gillespie Jr. to the AAMA booth at their Santiago product exhibition (that's Nintendo's Mike Minor & AAMA's Joyce Weller at right).

Joyce Weller, Bob Fay and Taito's Emilio Cabrera chat with U.S. Department of Commerce rep John Klingelhut and Paul Fischer at the ambassador's reception. Marcelo Herrera is also pictured.

Exhibiting (and/or manning the booth for a few days at a time) were reps from several AAMA member firms. They included Nintendo, Capcom, Atari, James Industries, Wells-Gardner, Wico, Coin Controls, Konami, Williams/Bally-Midway, Taito, Happ Controls, NSM and Dynamo. All were headquartered in the U.S. Pavilion of FISA '90, the largest annual trade show in all of South America. Over 34 nations displayed goods at FISA; the U.S. Pavilion alone contained wares from over 50 firms.

"Our mission in Chile," stated Bob Fay, "was to give exposure to the latest coin-op amusement equipment available in the U.S., and to find new distributors, operators and investors who are interested in importing new product. We feel we accomplished our goals."

All the equipment in the booth was sold to enthusiastic buyers, exhibitors reported. "We were ap-

proached by several individuals who wished to upgrade their routes with new equipment, as well as others who wanted to purchase equipment for their businesses, such as resorts and hotels," Fay said.

Indeed, some showgoers were almost "too" enthusiastic. "Many people offered to buy our equipment, but we made sure it went in-

AAMA

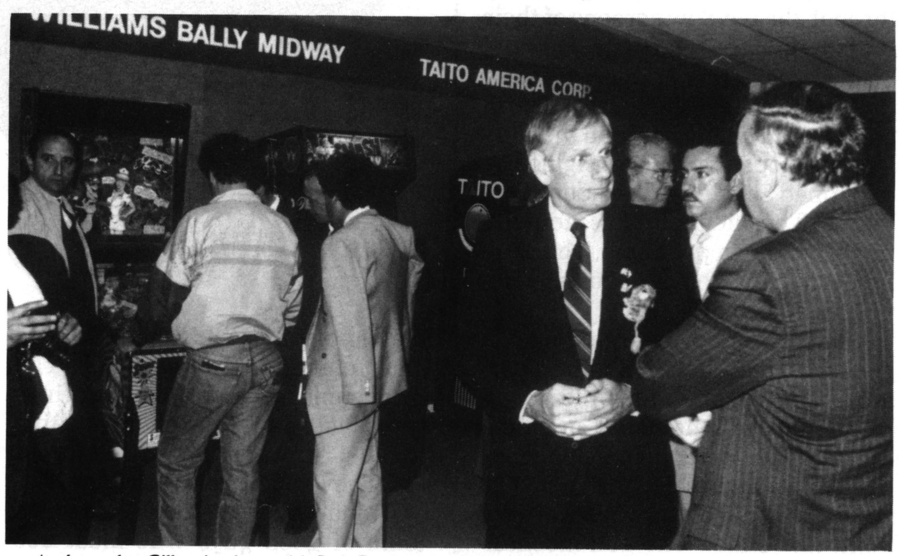
to the hands of qualified people with the proper expertise to keep the machines running," said one U.S. exhibitor. "Before we move too strongly into this market, we'll want to do extensive training and make sure good service and support will be available. Long-term growth demands this gradual, balanced approach."

AAMA's exhibit was the most popular in the U.S. Pavilion by some accounts, attracting many thousands of visitors. Show officials stated that over one million visitors total attended FISA '90 (sometimes it felt like the entire million were all in the coin-op booth at the same time, said AAMA execs). Showgoers came from Chile and many other South American countries; leads were developed in all these nations, AAMA reported. "These leads have been sent to all of our members," Fay explained. "Now it's up to individual companies to follow up by contacting interested individuals in South America."

AAMA will consider staging more exhibits in other South American countries downstream. Meantime, a follow-up to 1990's Latin American Expo is definitely on the agenda; it will take place at the Sheraton in Mexico City during the week of July 22 this year. Also, the association is sponsoring a series of technical seminars for Mexican tradesters this year (the first such seminar took place in fall of 1990 and drew over 200 operators). It all spells a sustained, steady program of stronger business ties between U.S. coin-op and our neighbors down south.

Marcel Gejman and Daniel Simonsohn of Delta Electronics (Chilean operating and distributing company) with Joyce Weller and Marcelo Herrera (AAMA's interpreter for FISA '90.)

Bob Fay, Miss FISA '90, James Industries' Carlos Colin and Julio Auad of Flipperlandia (Chilean operating/distributing company) discuss the show at the ambassador's reception held at the Polo Club.



Ambassador Gillespie chats with Bob Fay in the AAMA booth against a backdrop of other exhibits.

Snazzy at Sega

simple technology provides hi-tech effects in Laser Ghost;
GP Rider *offers built-in head to head player competition*

The quality people. The reliability people. The leadership people. Call 'em what you want, the guys and gals at Sega USA have done it again with two top dedicated video games which bear their distinctive trademark. Watch for both games to burn up the game charts in the months ahead. Operators who are looking for games which are exciting enough to justify higher play-prices, get over to your distributors now!

LASER GHOST

Laser Ghost is a three-player upright video gun game (with one sitdown player station included). Shipping Jan. 15, *Laser Ghost* offers what one discriminating operator called "the best special effect at the AMOA show" — namely, a through-the-lens optical illusion that the player is firing a pin-point laser ray at targets on the 26" video screen. Excitement!

Onlookers don't see the laser rays on the screen; players see them when they are looking directly through the window screens of their large, sci-fi laser gun units. How did Sega achieve this unique effect?

"A series of LEDs are seen in parallel through a unique viewing lens developed by a Sega engineer," explained Sega USA President Tom Petit. "The technology is actually fairly simple in principle," he grinned, "but the results are very impressive, as you'll see."

Guns on any video game raise concerns in the minds of many operators about reliability and alignment. "There's no recoil or pump action slide device to fatigue or break," Petit assured *RePlay*. "Essentially you look through the gun, point and shoot. The gun mechanisms do include simple vibration technology that we've used before and found highly reliable." The three guns are also anchored firmly in place; there's no chain or cable to twist or break. As Tom Petit put it: "They're not going anywhere!"

Gameplay casts the players as a team of good guys who must use laser weapons to destroy ghost-like aliens in a variety of settings: haunted houses, cemeteries, sewers, cargo docks, etc. The object of the game is to destroy the alien invaders and rescue a little lady they've kidnapped. Players may pick up extra "life" (playing time) by shooting at selected onscreen symbols. Players may buy into the game at any time;

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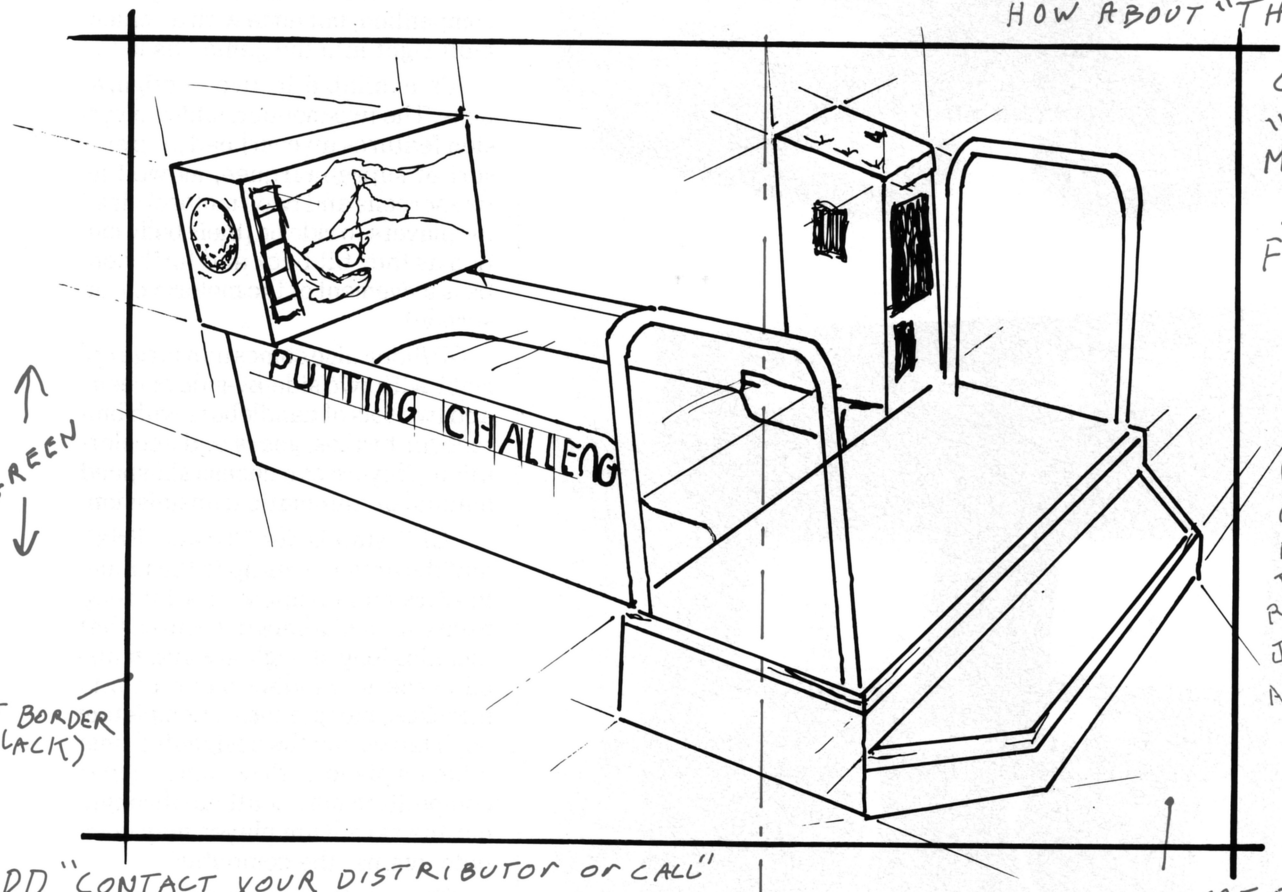

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continue-play options are also available.

Initial testing has been "outstanding" and initial orders were "phenomenal," Petit reported. "Distributors who saw the game at AMOA were eager to start on the product. I think we'll be selling it well into spring and summer." As stated, mid-January is the targeted production time for this game in Sega's facilities in U.S., Japan & Europe, where it will be manufactured separately for each of those markets.

GP RIDER

Already at distributors' showrooms is *GP Rider*, a one- or two-player motorcycle simulator that offers a first for Sega: built-in, head-to-head player competition. (Sega has earlier offered separate units which could be linked for player competition, but none with a contest built right into the game "as is.")

It's available in two configurations. The two-monitor, sitdown version features an overhead map as a sort of supra-marquee, as well as two screens and two "motorcycles" for players to ride on (their body motion as they tilt back and forth controls movement of the motorcycle on screen).

GP Rider also comes as a large upright with two side-by-side screens and two sets of handlebars with buttons for brakes, gears and acceleration. Players can choose six-speed manual or automatic transmission.

"GP" stands for "Grand Prix" and the action lives up to the name. Players can compete in a four-lap race over a challenging course that includes long straight-aways, banked corners, winding S-curves and merciless hairpin turns. Completing each lap within the designated time extends players' drive time so that competition may continue throughout the race. One player may compete against the computer.

"We're getting very good response to this one," Tom Petit told us. "I think *GP Rider* will prove to be one of the strongest games shown at AMOA. It features very strong competitive player appeal and all field reports (but one) have shown it the number one game in every location. And in that one, it was a darned close number two!"

The ride-on version of *GP Rider* began shipping in mid-November while the upright starts production this month. While you're visiting your dealer, ask him to show you Sega's newest conversion kit, *Aurail*.

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Camptown Races

Exidy's redemption winner is a real "thoroughbred"; unique four-player unit combines racing with pachinko

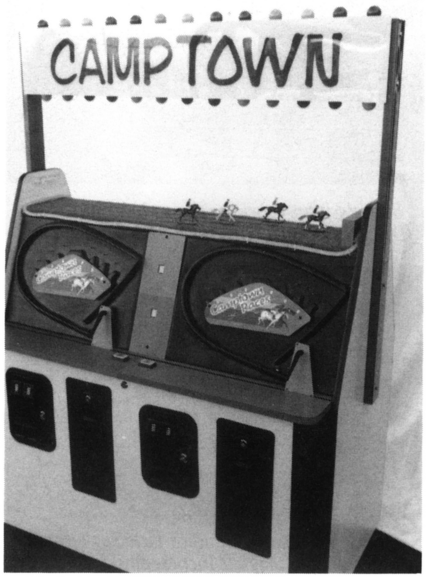
And they're off! An exciting new redemption game from Exidy is poised to sweep the arcade market: *Camptown Races*, a four-player horse race game (the marquee says simply "Camptown"). The game uses computer programming to translate pinball-style player skill at four player stations, into an electromechanical horse race on the top playfield.

"You've got to see this game!" a well-known arcade operator enthused to *RePlay* at a recent trade show. "It looks like a winner and I'm ordering several for my arcades. This is the kind of new idea the industry needs," the operator added. "Yes, the price is more than a bottom-of-the-barrel game, but you're getting four player stations, top components, attractive execution and a great theme. It ought to earn for years."

He's right. Exidy's Pete Kauffman has designed a machine whose play appeal is positively addictive. Each player has his own "pachinko"-type playfield (vertical pinball). The game rewards skillful shooting. Depending on which target hole you shoot the steel ball into, your horse (a small, realistic model on top of the game) advances one, two or three lengths down the track. An average game takes about 55 seconds. When one horse crosses the finish line, the machine explodes with bells ringing, lights flashing and music with the famous melody to "Camptown Races."

Four Deltronics ticket dispensers are included as standard (one per station), although the game is available without ticket dispensers if so desired. Operators may select the ticket vend, from one to 50 tickets rewarded (tickets may be awarded at different levels to winners all the way down to fourth place). Tickets may also be vended simply for playing. Each of the players has his own two-coin slot mechanism; all coins drop into a single secured cashbox. A bill validator connection is also included.

Exidy's Virginia & Pete Kauffman with their new redemption game, Camptown Races, *at the Parks show.*



Yellow, blue, purple and orange "chase lights" on the marquee may be set to scroll back and forth on the marquee, creating a carnival-like atmosphere. A clear plexi hood covers the horse models (the hood is three-piece for easy service). Sounds include a bell to start and stop the race, plus a horse whinny during the galloping.

The game is now in production from Exidy's Redwood City, Calif. plant, where the firm says reliability will be their number one priority. For more information, contact Marketing Director Virginia Kauffman at 415/364-5201.

Votes in, Mondial Open House Hits the Gong

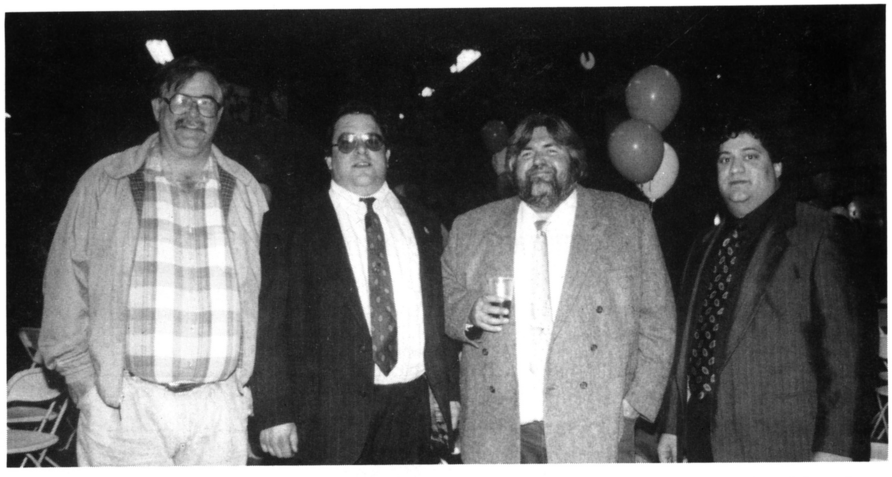
Nov. 6 was Election Day and an army of operators, their ralatives and employees, elected to go to Mondial Distributing in Springfield, N.J. where the "two Tonys" held open house to show off the new goods in the wake of the AMOA Expo in New Orleans.

"We had a tremendous turnout, one of the best of any East Coast open house," enthused Tony Yula Jr. "One reason for the crowd was Sal Mirando's excellent seminar on video poker prospects," he added (New Jersey is among the various states pushing for video lottery legalization).

The mood of the customers was "upbeat" and business was written that day (a ton of hot & cold buffet foods were also consumed). Actually, Yula said business has been good ever since: "We had an excellent November."

Door prizes like TV sets, CD home players and VCRs were given away and factory reps were on hand to demo their latest toys. All told, there was a lot of "spring" in the steps of many at the Mondial opener, and that (as you all know) is such welcome news.

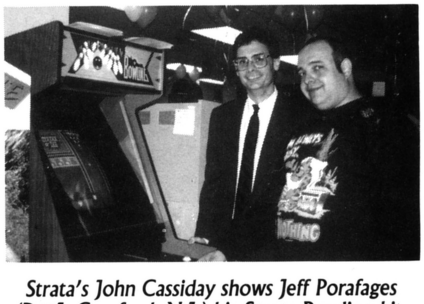
P.S. Mondial's purchase of Active was set to close on Dec. 17. Welcome aboard!



Harry Leonard (Comet), Barry Resnick (New England Pinball Services) Walter, and Mike Mascolo.

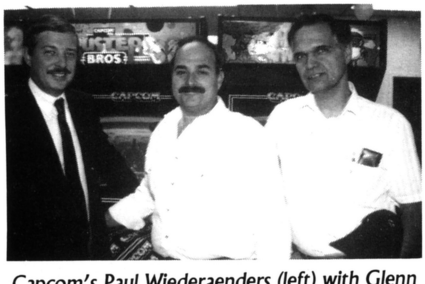
George Plas of Mondial's parent company Mondial International with Premier's Dan Clarton.

Popular John Hill (r) treats Carl & Faith Varriale (Montvale) to some Sega motorcycle simulation.

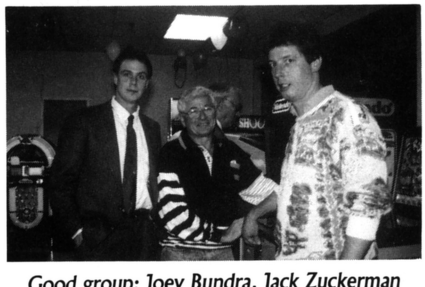


Strata's John Cassiday shows Jeff Porafages (D&J, Cranford, N.J.) his Strata Bowling *kit.*

Jim Newlander greets Tony Yula Sr. by Race Drivin' *and* Shuuz *horseshoe videos.*



Capcom's Paul Wiederaenders (left) with Glenn Giannini and Nick Anden of Century Amusements.



Good group: Joey Bundra, Jack Zuckerman (Games People Play) & Rich Seninsky (Wizards).

Konami's Mike Kubin (left) shows Over Drive *to Mike Mascolo, operator in Derby Connecticut.*

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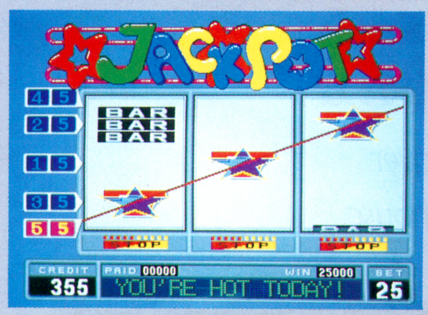

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Lucky 75

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Lucky 55

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Lucky 77

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Lucky 25 DUAL REELS

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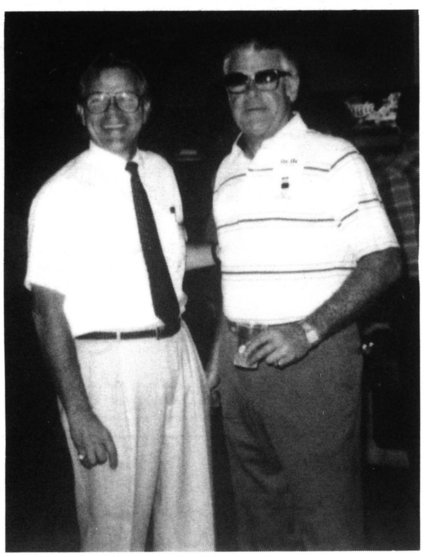
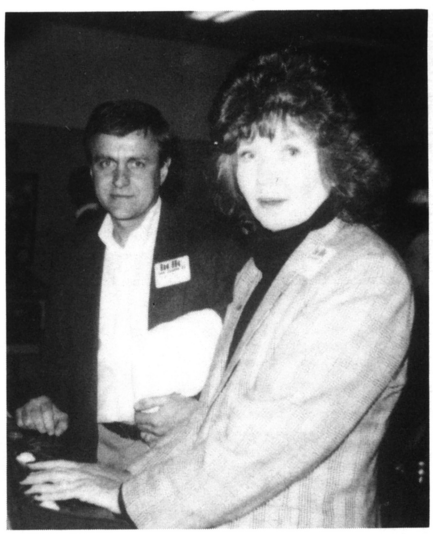
Struve: the Magnet

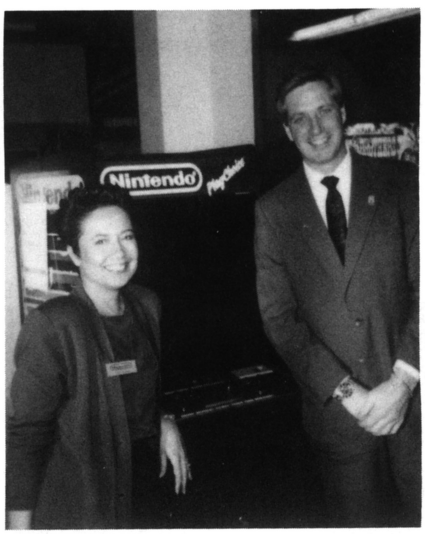
operators fly, drive & otherwise arrive from all over the Mountain West for dealer's post-AMOA open house

Some might refer to the Mountain States as the "empty quarter" of the United States . . . but there was nothing empty about Struve Distributing's open house on Friday, Nov. 9. The Salt Lake City dealership hosted over 100 customers and their support people to a product show and trade gathering. They came from Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and of course Utah. Guests were feted with a nice buffet and cocktails; several manufacturer reps demo'd the new games. "The same games that won good reports at AMOA were enthusiastically received by operators here," reported the distributor's Kent Larsen. "All in all, everyone had a good time!"

By the way, Struve also hosted a Rowe phonograph service school on Thursday, Nov. 9, drawing about 30 route technicians to the session conducted by Rowe's field man Jay Hum.





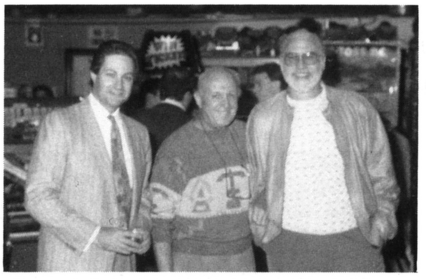


In the photos: Top left shows Tony & Sherri Vina of Vina Enterprises enjoying one of the new videos on display. Top right finds Nintendo's Linda Weber and Tataka's Craig Johnson chatting by PlayChoice. *Pictured at far left are Struve's friendly Kent & Stan Larsen. And at left, Data East Pinball's Kristen Avena with Jana Johnson and Marlene Bailey from Tataka.*

Betson Roadshow Brings Expo Product Home

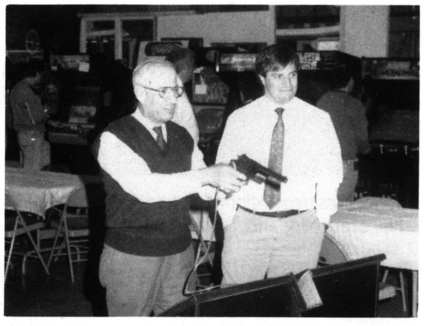
The powerful Betson Enterprises engine chugged across the Northeast after Expo, bringing new products (and operator open houses) to Norwood Nov. 4, Syracuse Nov. 7 and to high headquarters in Moonachie, N.J. Nov. 7. At Moonachie, business was written up as operators, often with family members, came by for the distributorship's traditional groaning board of food and open bar, and (for those who missed the Expo) an opportunity to inspect the new fall/winter game lineup.

Door prizes, including video kits, were passed out. Jim Toth of Associated Amusements (Metuchen, N.J.) took the top prize for a trip to Puerto Rico. Others went home with electronic goodies like CD players and color TV sets. Everyone had a ball and factory reps were there to keep spirits high.

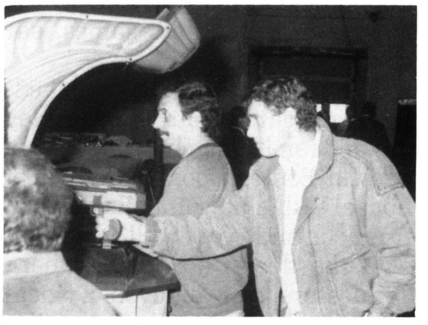


Betson's John Margold with Just Fun's Murray Panitz and Falcon Consultants Mel Getlan.

Betson's Tom Faranda and Atari's Jim Newlander listen closely to Games People Play's Jack Zuckerman at the open house.



Betson prexy Hugh Betti takes aim in a game of Mad Dog McCree *while Steven Betti looks on.*



Michael from Advanced Amusements and Roy from P&T Amusements play Taito's Space Gun.

New York operators Gene Howard and Larry Preschel (CMG) with Rowe's Joel Friedman (left) in front of the Rowe juke lineup.

Atari's Jim Newlander (who lives in Jersey) didn't have to hop on a plane to get to this party. He shows Rocco Fuataruolo Race Drivin'.

Good friends meet again by the Williams/Bally game lineup: Steve Blattspieler (now with Fabtek/Irem) and WMS' Leslie Ross.

New York City arcade operator Steve Epstein (left) gets snapped with Data East's Steve Walton at the Betson party in Moonachie.

Target: Eastern

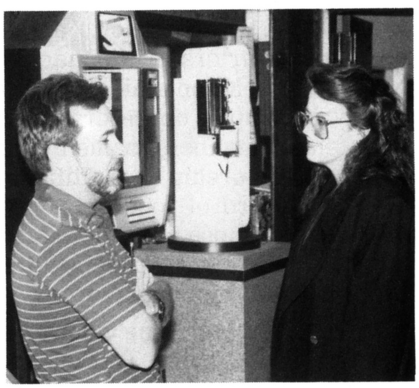
operators invade Eastern Distributors in Philadelphia; Williams' Funhouse gets good reception from happy crowd

"Okay, commandos, let's synchronize our watches and get ready to infiltrate the designated site. The date: Thursday, Nov. 6. The place: Eastern Distributors offices in Philadelphia. Mission objective: see new games, buy new games, eat, drink and be merry!"

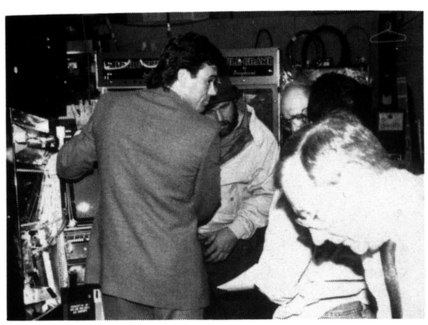
It was "mission accomplished" for 48 operators, plus their employees and family members, at the successful Eastern post-AMOA open house. Williams' Funhouse was introduced and "very well received," said the dealer's Phil Sternberg. Tradesters also enjoyed a sneak preview of the new video poker that Merit hopes to sell into a legal Pennsy poker market (PAMMA's going to try again in the new session, so keep your fingers crossed). Plenty of manufacturers' reps were on hand to show machines and exchange ideas. In all, another great Eastern party!

Here are some snapshots from the day.

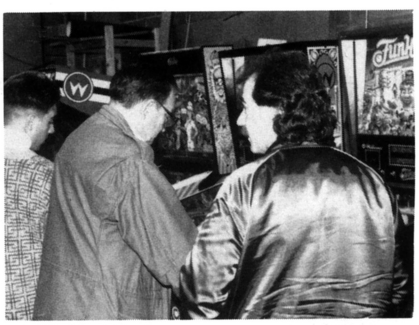
Taito President Minoru Suzuki with Eastern's Phil Sternberg and Taito's Space Gun *video.*



M&P's Paul Azaul (Philly) with SNK's Rachel Davies who was on hand to talk about Neo•Geo.

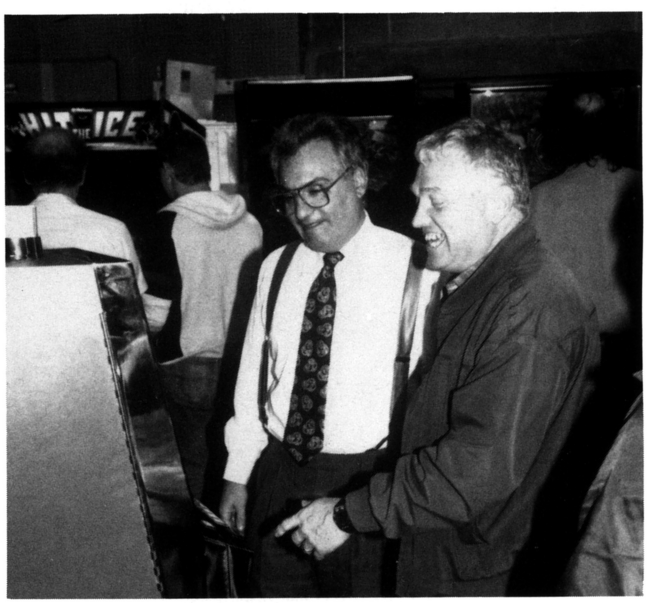


Merit's Bob Whitehead opens up a machine for interested tradesters. That's Mel Sonier at right.



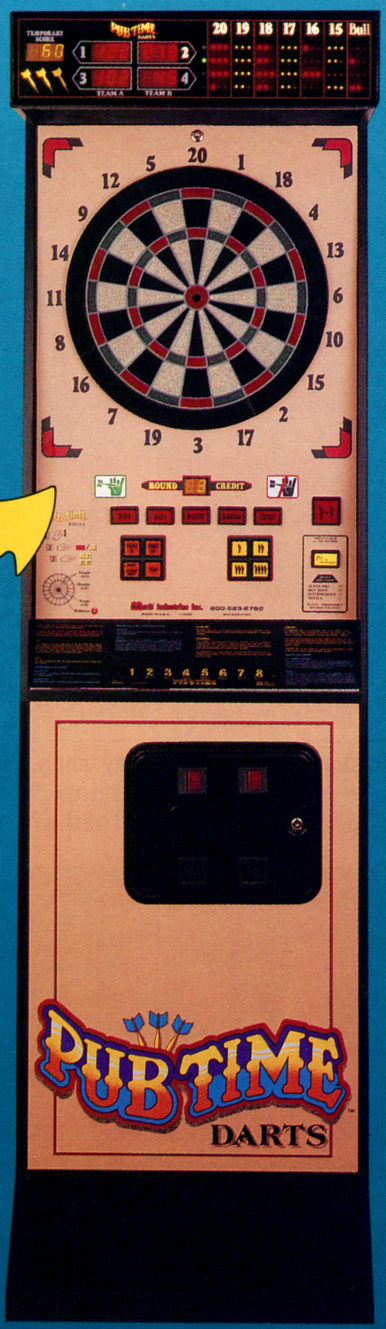
James Geronikos of AAA plays Williams' latest pinball, Funhouse *at the Eastern open house.*

Mary Hermanson of Konami chats with a customer about Over Drive.



Eastern VP Morrie Zacher with Allen Britton of Northwood Toy (Philly).

Pub Time II PLUS 2



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The General Wore a Stetson

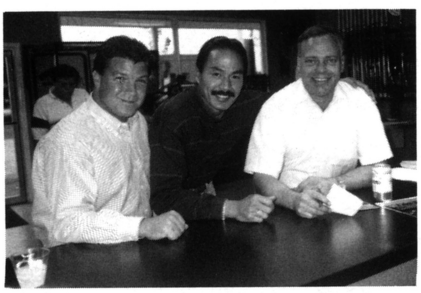
cowboy theme enlivens General Coin open house in Seattle; post-AMOA event includes lots of golf, gaming & hospitalilty

It was a fun-filled post AMOA show at General Coin Distributing (Portland, Ore.). Over 100 operators from all over the state, plus plenty of tradesters from neighboring Washington, poured in to participate in "Western Days," the distributor's fun cowboy-themed product show, party and celebration.

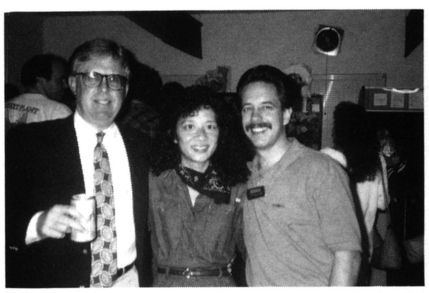
Fun teed off with the General's third annual golf tourney for operators, General's staff and manufacturer reps. That afternoon and well into the evening, operators tried all the new equipment, wagered their money on a full-scale casino of fun, and competed in a special *Showdown* (novelty game) fast draw tournament to see who was the "fastest gun in the building."

Once again, General's Faye and Mike McWilliams and their staff presented an event to remember. "We would like to extend a special thanks to all the factory reps for their participation, support and contributions," Faye said at the conclusion of the happy affair. "To our customers, we say thanks for another great year!"

Factory reps at the General Coin open. Back row: Taito's Rick Rochetti, Mark Chan, Data East's Jolly Backer, Mike McWilliams, Atari's Jerry Momoda, Sega's Jim Chapman, Faye McWilliams, Romstar's Tim Jackson and Pioneer's Jerry Sheaks & Tony Maniscalco. Front row: Arachnid's Bill Ward, Skill Games' Gregg Perrie, Very Fine's Larry King and Performance Brokers' Darus Pfiefer. Factory reps not pictured were Betson's Bill Treger, Taito's Yoshi Suzuki & American Technos' Aldo Donnaloia.

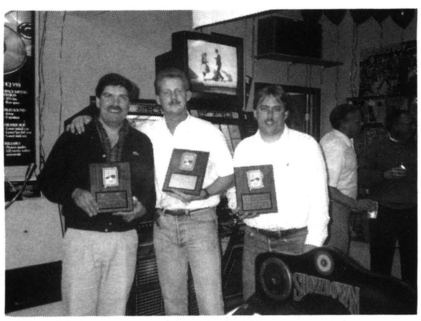


Data East's Jolly Backer, General's Mark Chan and Hit Parade's Kenn Hague chat at the open.



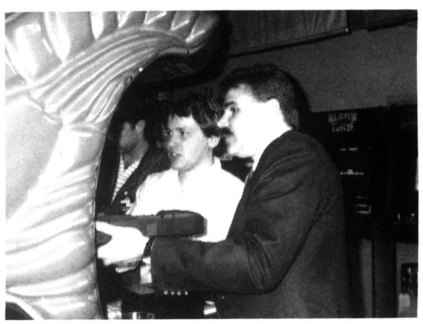
Diamond M's John Rourke & Sega's Jim Chapman flank General's great gal, Faye McWilliams.

Skill Games' Gregg Perrie and Automatic Cigarette Service's Rich Gill by Showdown.



Jim Anderson (Anderson's Vend.), Bob Woynowskie (Pacific Amuse.) and General's Gary Lewis.

Dosh Amusement's Doug Gemma, Metro Amusement's Kelly Thompson, Mark Chan and Courtesy Coin-Op's Richard Rowe at the open.



Rick Rochetti plays a game of Space Gun *with Tim Beckett of Great Western Games.*

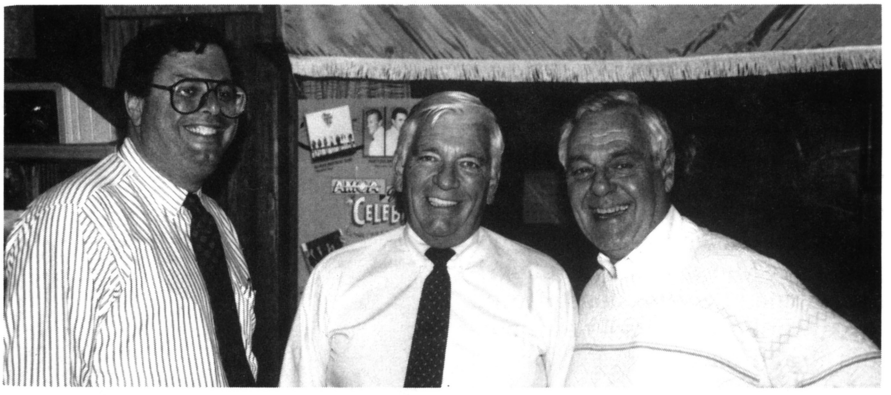
Rowe Dedham

they came, they saw, they partied at successful post-AMOA open house

Long lines to play *The Simpsons*, Data East's top-charting pinball highlighted the November 4 post-AMOA open house equipment showing hosted by Rowe Distributing (Dedham, Mass.). It was an unseasonably warm, almost summer-like day as dealer Bob LeBlanc welcomed 250 operators from all over New England to enjoy Rowe's hospitality and catch up on music and games.

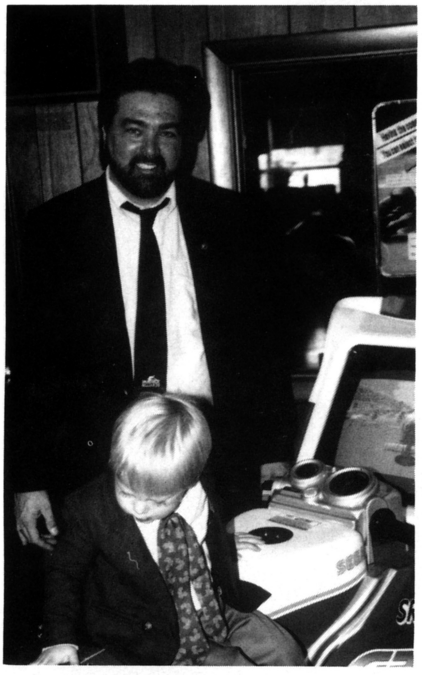
Many manufacturers' reps also came by to demonstrate the new equipment. In addition to the socializing, business chat, and equipment ordering, operators enjoyed cocktails and a buffet courtesy of Rowe. Lucky visitors won door prizes ranging from video kits (provided by manufacturers) to consumer electronics (provided by Rowe).

Here are some photos snapped at the event by "Mr. Reliable," Chuck Arnold of Nintendo. Thanks, Chuck!



Rowe Int'l.'s Joel Friedman, Rowe Dedham's Bob LeBlanc & op (and former AMOA prexy) Jack Kerner.

Dennis Taschereau (head technician at Rowe Dedham) with Kim Sona at the very busy product show.



Ross Furman of Skillful Vending (Portland, Maine) with his son Yates who is checking out Sega's new GP Rider motorcycle video.

Jack Kerner (Melo-Tone) shows his cute grandson how to play a game of pinball at the open house.

New Digs Make Fine Venue for Atlas Fete

Topping the trade's calendar of events for Friday, Nov. 16, was the post-AMOA open house held by Atlas Distributing, Inc. at their newish facilities on W. Dickens. We say "newish" because the new digs officially opened for business around Labor Day. However, company toppers Jerry Marcus and Ed Pellegrini combined the occasions offered by new fall product and new quarters to put on a big feed for the area's trade.

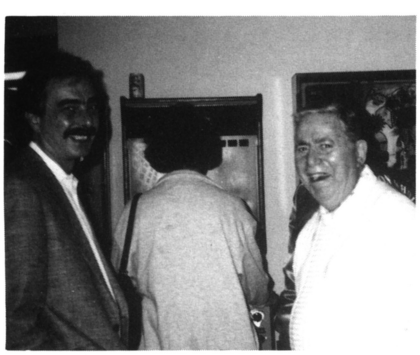
The place was sparkling and quite a leap forward from the old outlet at North Western Ave. that Jerry and Eddie bought years ago from Eddie Ginsberg. Operators found the new place modern and convenient. At the party, they also enjoyed meeting with factory reps who came in for the day, and inspecting the new goods for the fall/winter season. (Our thanks to Camille and Pam of *Cash Box* for the photos.)

Western Automatic's Jim & Kem Thom flank Atlas prexy Jerry Marcus by the Pit Fighter *video.*

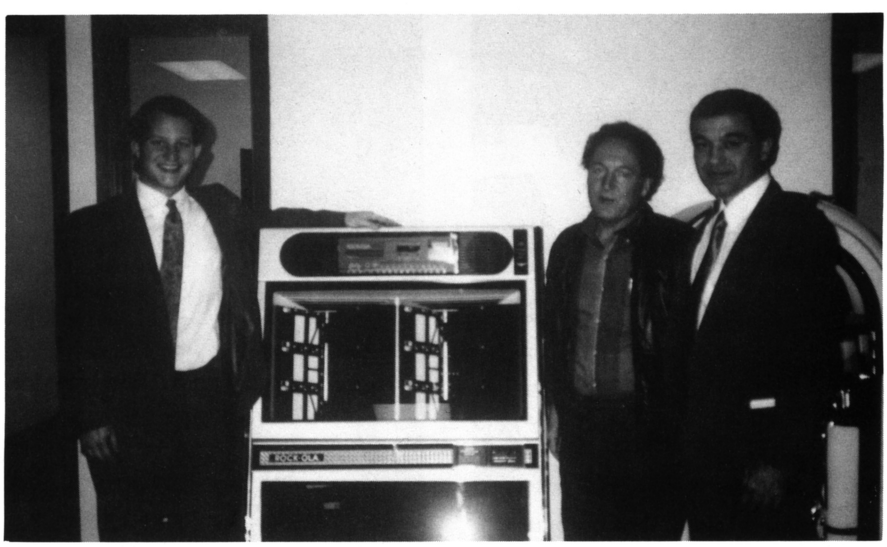
Jaleco's Larry Berke & Howie Rubin with their Cisco Heat *driver. A fine video presentation.*

At the Taito Space Gun: *Natalie Kulig & Julie Filips with Spot Amusements' Kevin and Frank Mundt.*

Coin Controls contingent, Jim Brendel, Art Melescio, Ellen Evans and Mike Keisinger.



Konami topper Steve Kaufman (left) with genial Len Zeidman. Len's retired but son Alan's at Atlas.



Rock-Ola's Ed Olson (left), Joe Riggio and Atlas's Ed Pellegrini with the new Mirage *CD phonograph.*

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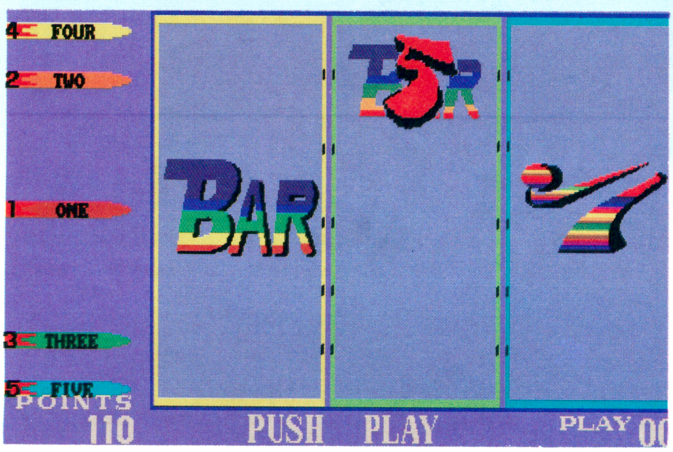

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Boffo at Belam Post-Expo Basheroo!

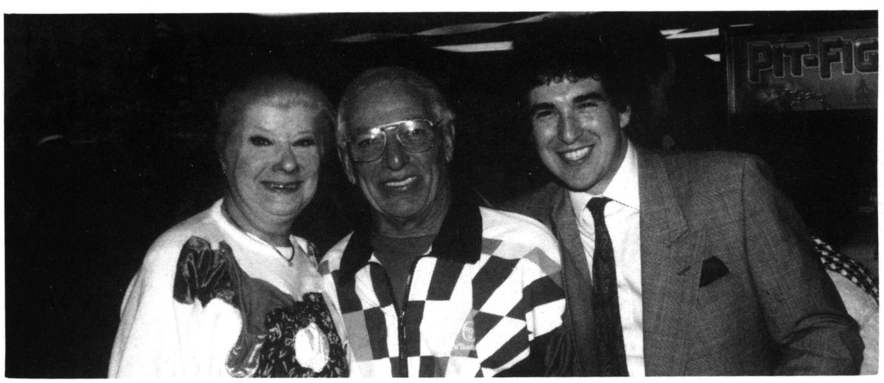
"It was a mob scene; we wrote more business than at any previous local show!" said (yelled?) R.H. Belam partner Simon Deith in that hoarse, cockney accent that charms both operators and their wives alike.

Long Island's favorite Brit was describing the packed house of tradesters that converged on their Hempstead showroom Nov. 8 for a post-Expo open house better described as Grand Central Station at rush hour. "We ran out of food the first two hours and kept ordering more through the day," said Simon. "There were so many people here, we actually had to talk with some guys about orders out in the parking lot."

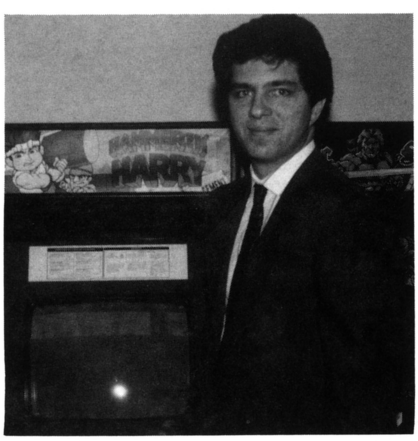
Besides the chow, the bar and the machines (manned by factory people), door prizes were awarded including video kits (rare for this open house season) and the grand prize of a trip for two down to Puerto Rico (won by P&T Amusements, Brooklyn).

Corporately, customers know that Belam execs Marc Haim and Simon are in negotiation to regain control of the company from the bankrupt parent Corton Beach. An agreement in principle has been reached and the lawyers are smoothing out the language of that document. "It should be closed by mid January," said Simon. "Meantime, Marc and I are running the show, being responsible for the bills, etc. The Suzo division has already been regained by the Suverein family and my father's (Bob Deith) division should also be closed by the time your magazine comes out," he advised. So, it's all good new for the house the Vic Haim built.

Simon Deith with Bob (Electro Service), Steve (D.E.) & George (Hamilton, of course, Terminal Vend.).



Lorry and Earl Basse (Triple E Vending) with Simon Deith. The Basses were among many at the event.



Irem/Fabtek's Drew Maniscalco shows off Hammerin' Harry *kit. Drew's also thumping* Blood Brothers *and* Pound for Pound.

Dave Goldstein of Replay Amusements with Simon and Rock-Ola's Bob Hesch chat at the Belam party.

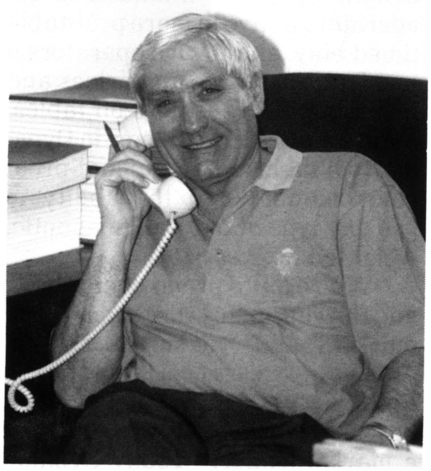
cover story

Dynamo Blazes Ahead

from selling pool into Europe, to taking on VLTs in the USA, this far-sighted Texas manufacturer forges new paths in coin-op

Great quality at reasonable prices. Long-lived products with great ROI. A wide variety of products with long-term earning potential for the operator. Products that are built with top quality control, and are based on a closely-reasoned analysis of market trends. A company that blazes new trails and revitalizes old ones. Active leadership in the U.S., European and Mexican markets.

Which coin-op company are we describing? It could only be Dynamo, the Richland Hills, Texas "everything factory" led by Bill Rickett and Mark Struhs. Now in its 17th year, the firm is enjoying a resurgence in their market niche: classic skill games that involve face-to-face interaction and competition. Coin-operated pool, table soccer, air hockey and now shuffleboard are the Dynamo staples; universal video cabinets and contract manufacturing of amusement videos have been another key profit center.



Dynamo's Executive Vice President H.L. Coats. He's been with the firm for 13 years now.

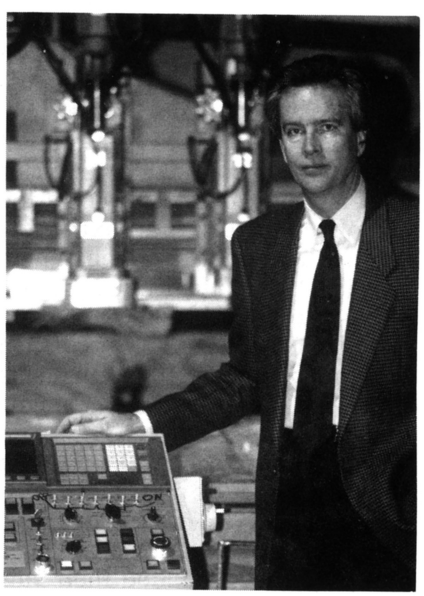
Dynamo President & founder Bill Rickett.

And, in a striking example of their consistent leadership, Dynamo is the first big amusement manufacturer to announce definite plans to enter the video poker market. "We are going to get into video lottery terminals for sale into legal states, whether our own state of Texas decides to approve their use or not," stated Dynamo President Bill Rickett. "Our plans are to be involved in the manufacturing side. We're doing the groundwork now and are trying to decide which software to use."

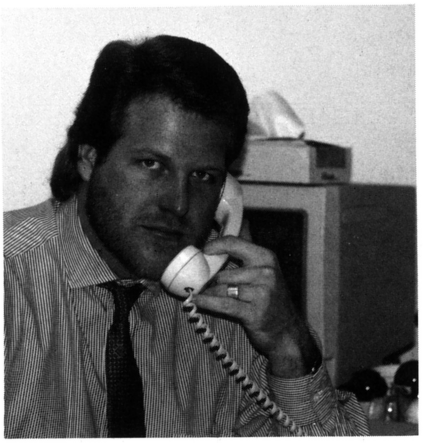
This is a company with a well thought-out (and very consistent) philosophy. "We know that putting the emphasis on long-term earning products is the best way for us to ensure our survival as a company," said VP Mark Struhs. "It's also the best way to position ourselves to take advantage of dynamic opportunities as they arise. So long-lived games like table games, plus video hardware system cabinets, are the backbone of our company."

This is also a company that studies market trends closely, and acts decisively and boldly on what they learn. Did the classic "shot and a beer bar" location suffer in the 1980s? For the 1990s, Dynamo sees a growth of white collar, better-educated players and the corresponding growth of upscale entertainment locations. And they're providing top-quality, "Cadillac" products with oak finish and super-careful craftsmanship to open doors for coin operators into these locations.

"In the past, these types of locations mainly haven't had much sports-oriented coin-operated equipment like pool, soccer and shuffleboard," Mark Struhs noted. "But now we're starting to see places such as the Baha Beach Club, Dave



Vice President of Sales & Marketing Mark Struhs, who's been with Dynamo for 10½ years.



Damon Paramore, Southern & Western Regional Sales Mgr. for Dynamo, talks to a customer.

& Busters, hotel chains and many upscale neighborhood bars that look favorably on this type of equipment, so long as the equipment offers a high-class, high-quality appeal. We're trying to provide that product...and we believe many operators should be investigating these new opportunities."

Here's a quick overview of Dynamo's current product line and market activity:

Shuffleboard: Dynamo officially launched their newest table game, *Dynamo Shuffleboard,* to the trade at the AMOA Expo. "Shuffleboard has a fairly broad, fairly well-organized player base out there already," said execs. "We plan to do what we can to promote that player base and build this business."

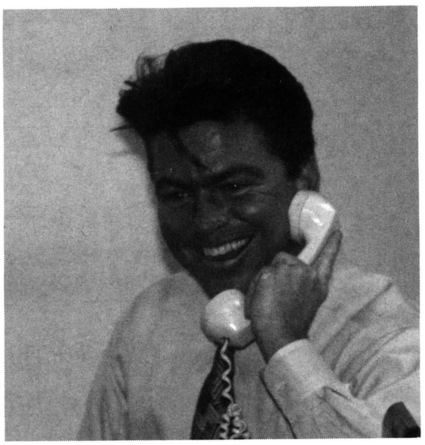
As a giant first step in that direction, Dynamo provided 14 tables to a national table soccer tournament in Las Vegas last fall. The move signalled Dynamo's deep confidence in the product, since the game hadn't been extensively field-tested prior to being played by America's top players. The result: an extremely positive reception from champion players. "We sailed through with flying colors," said execs. "Players absolutely loved it." This promotion will continue at future tournaments in 1991, and perhaps some league activity as well.

The game was developed with special attention to player input. Dynamo brought players into their factory as the game was being designed and perfected, solicited their suggestions, and incorporating them into the final product. Players tend to be the older, beer-drinking, tavern-visiting demographic group that also supports pool table, although upscale yuppie game centers like Dave & Busters are also succeeding with the product. "The potential of this game is universal and that's one thing we really like about it," said execs. "We think the upscale location is where some of this market's growth is going to come."

With operators in mind, Dynamo also found ways to turn shuffleboard from a "high-maintenance" game into a "low-maintenance" game. For example, the playing surface features a 3/16" layer (its exact material is a company trade secret) which "should last indefinitely" without refinishing, so long as it is not abused, said the firm.

Operators have rewarded all this work with a strong reception and good initial sales of *Dynamo Shuffleboard.* "It costs more than the competing product made by our competition," conceded President Bill Rickett, "but it's the Cadillac of the market with oak materials, overhead LED scoreboard and everything possible to market the table look first-rate and high-quality. All of this helps encourage players to customers more to play the game.

Sales Assistant Shelly Stilly (standing) with Blenda Selvey, Sales Service & Parts Mgr.



Chris Brady, also on the phone, is Northern and Central Regional Sales Manager.

All of this will help the operator nail down that location by offering the best possible, highest-earning game. We're very, very proud of it. Dynamo is coming up on 20 years in the industry," Rickett noted with a smile, "and we feel we're getting better every year. *Dynamo Shuffleboard* is the latest result of our continued striving for increasing excellence."

Pool: Dynamo says pool tables are "our bread and butter." They make five different sizes (including a nine foot version). Perhaps 20 different variations are available when you consider different sizes, finishes, electronic vs. mechanical features, etc. Looking toward developing that high-end, upscale market, Dynamo also offers an oak finished, "furniture-styled" pool table that looks sharp in the finest location.

The firm's time/rack play coin-op pool table, which bowed about 15 months ago, was intended to get operators active in more profitable timed play, and to give operators a justification for raising prices and installing bill acceptors on tables. Future innovations to come in Dynamo pool tables include cheat-proof coin counters and the ability to use any type of cue ball (magnetic, weighted or oversize).

"We're quite proud of surviving and thriving in this very competitive market," said Dynamo execs. "Many of yesteryear's pool table makers aren't around today, but we're still here and we've built ourselves into a market leader." Today Dynamo sees a "very strong" U.S. replacement market for pool tables, and

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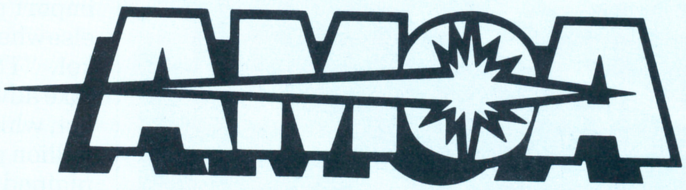

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(And don't forget AMOA's 1991 Government Affairs Conference, May 19-21 in Washington, D.C., and Expo '91, September 12-14 in Las Vegas!)

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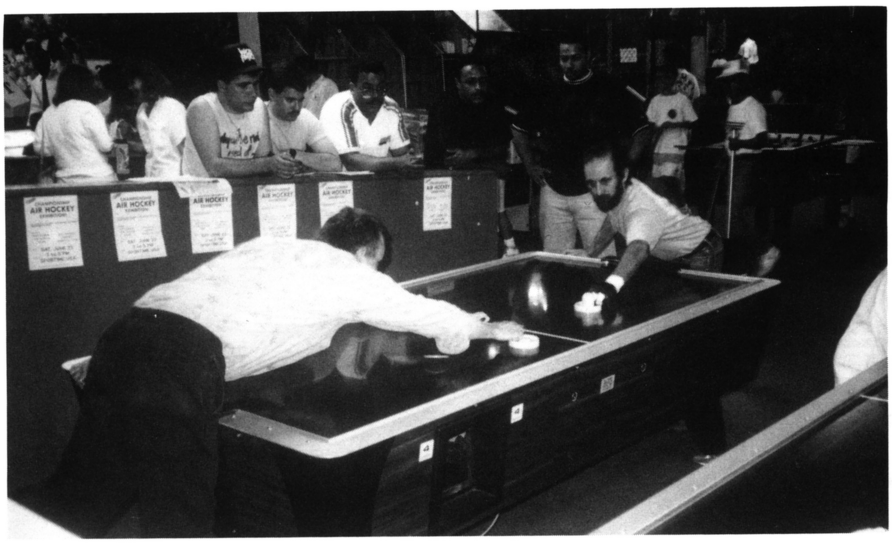


The ever-promoting, ever-traveling Mark Robbins (right) at an Air Hockey exhibition in the northeast.

they're also building new markets overseas.

Soccer: Dynamo will expand production and sales of its soccer tables (including their new "Texas Style" table with three-man goalie and wider goal area for faster play). "This product never went away," noted VP Mark Struhs. "It's a good, stable product in the industry. Everything's running in cycles and today we're seeing a small surge in the soccer table market. Soccer is a proven winner that continues to appeal to a new player base. For operators, it has a good longevity factor and is a great return on investment."

Air Hockey: here's proof that a true classic never dies. Some shortsighted tradesters gave up on air hockey some time back, but Dynamo recognized a timeless piece that would always have a market if designed and promoted properly.

"The wonderful thing about air hockey is that it's easy to play and even easier to maintain," explained Bill Rickett. "The operator can basically plug it in and walk away. Players have a fast learning curve, but they can enjoy a game that's different with every person you compete against.

"The key to this game for the operator," Rickett continued, "is that when players walk up to play it, it works. This can make the difference between success and failure. With many other types of games, the more people want to play them, the more down time you have. Air hockey doesn't cost the operator money in this way; it just makes him money."

Accordingly, Dynamo brought out a very fine product three years ago (their latest upgrade is a deluxe version with overhead LED computer scoring) and they backed it to the hilt. Dynamo's tireless tournament promoter Mark Robbins is a "true believer" in the sport; his dedicated, enthusiastic approach to the game has helped air hockey grow far beyond its hard-core supporters. Today, air hockey is attaining a "fad" level of interest in several sectors of the country, attracting casual, drop-in players right alongside the "regulars."

Said Mark Struhs: "Air hockey is in the top ten, and often in the top five, in many arcades where it's been tried. Best of all, it stays in the top five or ten while the other titles on that list change quickly. If there's a home run over the centerfield wall, air hockey is it."

Universal cabinets: Dynamo has been a leader in this market for years. Their latest series of HS video cabinets offer 33" Wells-Gardner monitors. Although Dynamo concedes to feeling the impact of the soft video market of the past 18 months, they've kept prices down and quality up so that operators can ensure the best possible presentation for their kits.

European marketing: Finding new markets to apply their coin-op game expertise was the motive behind Dynamo's forming a partnership with Stella, the marketing arm of the Gauselmann Group (a huge German manufacturer, distributor and operator). Their timing was perfect: a couple of years of groundwork led to formation in 1990 of Dynamo-Stella Spielgerate GmbH, a joint venture which is a separate company registered in Germany and owned jointly by Dynamo and Stella, International.

Dynamo-Stella's main goal is to import products from the U.S. and elsewhere into the European market. "The company is in place to take advantage to the Common Market, which will become a single 300 million person market in 1992," explained Bill Rickett. "Over the next decade, Western Europe will be the world's single largest market. The opening of the Eastern European market has been an unforseen benefit that has really been great for us. The world market is growing more active and the weak U.S. dollar has made American products more attractive to foreign buyers. All of these trends have made our export business explosive in the past couple of years. It's become a key part of our business."

Moving into Mexico: Dynamo's been doing business in Mexico for a year or so, and they're taking a careful, build-for-the-future approach to expanding this business. "The AAMA-sponsored trade show in Mexico City last year was a springboard for us," said execs. "We've developed some important contacts and relationships that will build for the long term. The Mexican market is maturing very quickly; it's not like going into Eastern Europe where players haven't seen anything for 40 years."

Going on line Jan. 1 is a video game assembly plant using Dynamo's equipment and expertise, but owned and run by Oscar Gutierrez's Video Games of Mexico. Components are manufactured in Texas, but final assembly is done in Mexico for a higher quality cabinet for use in the Mexican market, at lower freight cost. "This is our first step into Mexican manufacturing," explained Struhs. Added Bill Rickett: "We think it's going to be an exciting long-term relationship for us."

Look for Dynamo to remain a key industry player. . . for the long term!

Magic Circle

new redemption game from Betson features Cromptons quality; players shoot a coin to "cover the spot" & win, win, win!

"The next step beyond coin pushers" is a new redemption game called *Magic Circle,* according to the manufacturer (Crompton's of England) and the exclusive U.S. distributor (Betson Enterprises).

Paying back tickets or tokens, the game is built into the same 26" long x 31" deep x 63" high cabinet as Crompton's *Rock 'n' Roll* and *Klondike* (both also represented in the U.S. by Betson).

Magic Circle is a "cover the spot" redemption game with a difference: the player actually controls and aims where their coin goes, via adjusting the angle of the coin chute. Another unique feature: when the player inserts a coin, the operator can adjust the game to vend a ticket automatically to the customer, guaranteeing "win every time" appeal.

Finally, with a tremendous number of target "spots" on the playfield, players have many opportunities to win. "As we like to say," Betson redemption chief John Margold smiled, "winners make players. When you play *Magic Circle,* it's almost impossible to have a coin *not* land on a circle!"

Other features include operator-adjustable award percentaging, full tilt alarm and full metering. *Magic Circle* is available as one-player single unit. It also comes as the centerpiece of a three-player piece called *Variety* (the two outside bays on *Variety* are more like *Klondike,* a one-player pusher with bonus slide down the middle).

Betson Enterprises' redemption division specializes in ticket and token vending skill and fun games of all types, many exclusively imported from famous overseas makers such as Crompton's (whose games highlighted the Betson booth at the recent AMOA Expo). Betson's number is 800/524-2343.

Above is a closeup of the Magic Circle *playfield (it's made by Crompton in the U.K. and distributed in the U.S. exclusively by Betson). In the new redemption game, players take aim and try to get a coin to cover one of the many target "spots." It's available in a one-player unit or as the centerpiece of the three-player* Variety *machine pictured at right.*

Tournament Highlights

VALLEY GERMAN-AMERICAN DARTS — Valley Recreation Products scored another success last fall when last year's winning U.S. dart team enjoyed an all-expense paid trip to Bingen, Germany for a visit with Valley's dart distributor there (NSM) and some friendly socializing and competition with the top Valley darts German team, plus other local teams. Highlights of the trip included wine-tasting and a trip on the Rhine River, plus a train ride to Munich and a jam-packed tour of Southern Bavaria, where the U.S. team stirred up plenty of interest in the sport. The American team wrapped up their tour with a blowout Octoberfest in Fruedenberg, featuring thousands of people, fairground attractions, polka bands, and of course plenty of beer, singing, eating, drinking and dancing. (Photo shows the American team at the festival.) Valley said the entire event was a great electronic dart promotion,

VALLEY IN COLORADO — High Country Games (Fort Collins, Colo.) recently sponsored the first Valley regional dart tournament of the season. A whopping 44 teams showed up to shoot it out for rights to compete in the U.S. finals in March. Nice going, High Country!

VALLEY IN IOWA — The Last Chance Saloon in Fort Dodge hosted a 501 Valley darts qualifying tournament recently. Competition was close indeed, especially in the men's division where the outcome was in doubt until the final match. The top two players (one man, one woman) will go on to Valley's North American finals this March. Valley termed the Iowa event, sponsored by Clyde Knupp's Amuse-O-Matic operating firm, "a huge success."

VALLEY U.S. DART FINALS will begin March 22 at the Imperial Hotel in Las Vegas, the firm reports. Qualifying events were underway around the nation at presstime; the winning four-person team at the North American Tournament in March will go on to Australia in May, where they'll represent the USA in Valley's world finals against top-rated European teams.

VALLEY DARTS TO SAN DIEGO — Rick Lynch says his Lynch Distributing of San Diego will hold the "Soft Touch" dart tourney Jan. 19-20 to benefit a charity called Support Organization For Trisomy 18,13. (Trisomy 18,13 is a disorder of the chromosomes.) The tournament will take place at the VFW Post 2275, 136 No. Chambers, El Cajon. Top shooters will win an all-expense paid trip to the North American finals in Las Vegas in March. All dart shooters are welcome. Contact Candy Lynch at 619/273-1028.

VNEA POOL FINALS — The 11th Annual Valley National Eight-ball Assn. International Singles & Team Championships will take place May 25-June 1 at the Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nev. VNEA members only are allowed to send qualified players. For more information contact Gregg Elliott at 517/893-1800.

ARACHNID IN PENNSY — What happens when a top steel tip dart player decides to shoot soft-tip darts? If his name is Jerry Umberger, he wins the pro championship at an Arachnid "BullShooter" regional qualifying dart tournament. The event was held recently at the Days Inn (Butler, Pa.) and attended by players from Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, New York and Ohio. Co-sponsor with Arachnid was Atlas Music & Novelty (Pittsburgh). Top winners in eight main events at the tourney qualified to compete in Arachnid's BullShooter VI grand finals, set for Memorial Day weekend in Chicago. Seen here are (from left): Arachnid's Bob Mills, Jerry Umberger & PNL Vending's Lou Manolios.

ARACHNID TO NEW YORK — Niagra Falls saw its second annual $5,000 BullShooter darts tourney recently, with contests on the Arachnid game pulling in players from New York, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Canada. Seen here is (from left) Walter "Hots" Pankow, who won top place in two events and placed second in two more events; Arachnid's Tom Pace; and winning darter Sandy Sullivan.

ARACHNID TO OREGON — Players came from four nearby states to shoot darts in the third annual $5,000 Regional dart tourney, held in Portland to qualify players for Arachnid's upcoming $135,000 tour finals. Co-sponsoring was local distrib General Coin. Organizers noted that plenty of young, new players are coming to the sport as it continues to grow and prosper. Seen here are winning darter Kevin Luke (now that's a young player) with Arachnid's Steve Johnson.

AUDIO DARTS — The second national "audio darts" tournament (using Arachnid electronic dart games that "speak" results of each shot and match) will take place in Minneapolis, Minn. on April 5-6. Contact the Braille Sports Foundation for more info at 612/920-9363.

MERIT TO IOWA — Merit's fourth annual World Series of Darts opened Sept. 21-23 with the $5,000 Midwest Open, held in Des Moines and co-sponsored by the Iowa Electronic Darts Assn. All concerned were thrilled at the large turnout from over 10 states across the midwest. Players said they liked the new "Scorpion" four-color target with larger bullseye. A new charity event raised over $350 for the local Ronald McDonald House, which houses families of hospitalized children. Congrats to all!

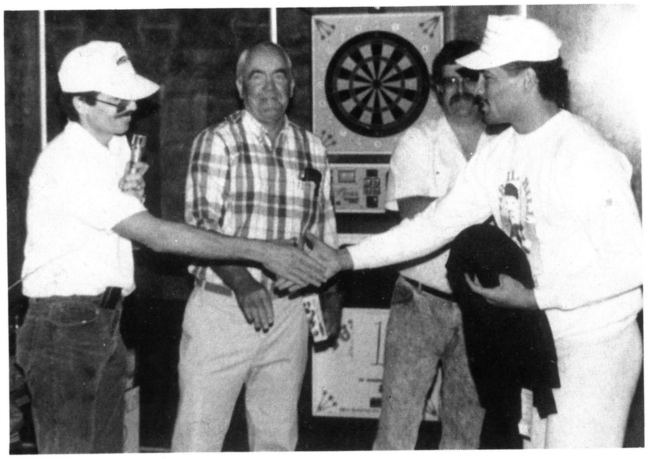
MERIT TO COLORADO — Over 300 entrants competed for $3,000 in prizes and trophies in the second annual "Colorado Classic" Merit darts regional tournament. The Sept. 28-30 event was co-sponsored by Soaring Darts (Jack & Sandy Moore, Pueblo, Colorado), who reported "mile-high" enthusiasm. Merit also tipped their hats to the Moores' hard work and positive attitude.

"Camp" Lane Helgeson with Seeben & Vifico owner and founder Victor Bosquin Sr., Merit's export lady Mireille Chevalier and Seeben's Michel Denis.

"The Challengers" with "The Champ" at the competition in Belgium.

MERIT TO SPAIN & BELGIUM — Merit took its electronic dart games and one of the world's best electronic dart shooters (Lane Helgeson) on a two-country, three-week, European tour last October to promote the sport. The results, said Merit's Howard Smoyer, were simply sensational: "Standing room only crowds of cheering and chanting spectators. Multitudes of excited and enthusiastic players. Bar owners and coin machine operators who could not believe their eyes (or their incomes). And one electrifying performance after another from Lane Helgeson!" Merit called this their "Beat the Champ" tour, since the champ took on all comers. The Pub Time Darts distributor for Spain, (Vifico, S.A., headed by Victor Bosquin) set up the events in six cities in Spain; the annual Spanish FER trade show in Barcelona was a climax of this segment of the tour. "Dart mania is sweeping Spain," Howard reported. "Locations stayed crowded till dawn with players lined up for their turn to play the champ, and onlookers shouting Ole, Ole!" Belgium's Seeben, S.A. (Mr. Denis and Mr. Roufflaer) coordinated the show in that country, where overwhelming response included all-day, eager practice sessions and late-night matches played to full houses over closed-circuit TV. Both of these European distribs will continue to promote darts and support European operators strongly, and will field teams to this year's AMOA-NDA finals event, Merit said.

MERIT HONORS HARRIS — Merit's "California Classic" $5,000 electronic darts tournament (San Diego, Calif., Oct. 5-7, 1990) was dedicated to the memory of John Harris, a friend and teammate of many area darters. John was killed earlier by a tragic motorcycle accident earlier in the year, but his memory lives on in a new trophy for Outstanding Sportsmanship which bears his name. B & D Darts (Al and Margie Rawlin) co-sponsored the event and decided upon the dedication.



MERIT TO NO. DAKOTA — They called it the first annual Border Lake Classic, a $5,000 Merit dart tournament held Oct. 12-14 at the Elk's Club in Devil's Lake, North Dakota. LaFleur & Sons co-sponsored the event; after three years of dart promos they say over 2,500 players support their local league. One highlight: hometown boxer Virgil "Quicksilver" Hill (1988 Olympics silver medalist, seen here at far left of photo) stopped by to throw a few darts and sign autographs. Another nice touch: the event raised over $400 for a camp that caters to sick kids. Operator Rick LaFleur (seen here at right) pronounced himself "very pleased" with Merit's strong backing and looked forward to growing darts action in coming months and years.

MERIT TO TENNESSEE — The Third Annual Volunteer Open electronic dart tourney took place Oct. 26-28. Over 800 entries (many from as far away as Indiana) competed for a $7,650 purse. Co-sponsored by Precision Darts, the Knoxville, Tenn. affair was rated a huge success thanks to hard work by operators Denny and Missy Havner, Jerry Havner and Jimmy Sharp. Merit called them "a cut above" and praised the event as the "best Volunteer Open ever." By the way, the tourney raised a whopping $2,800 for the local branch of the Epilepsy Foundation. Much of this was raised via tourney participation by local "celebrity teams" of radio, TV, and newspaper folks, plus city and county political figures. (Denny Havner worked hard to make all this happen.) Seen here is the winning women's draw doubles team with a tourney official.

MERIT TO CONNECTICUT — The second annual Colonial Classic offered a $4,000 purse as Merit's World Series of Darts arrived in Meriden, Conn. Nov. 16-18. Co-sponsors included Merit's Pub Time Darts, Days Inn, the Waterbury Operators Assn., Star Distributing (representing Miller Beer) and Betson Distributing. The event drew many steel tip darters to electronic darting for the first time; the universal reaction seemed to be "I love it! How soon is the next event?"

After just 18 months of running the Pub Time program, Merit and local operators have lots to boast about; they've recruited nearly 100 soft tip darting teams here in "steel dart country." By the way, the November tourney also raised over $600 for the Curtis Home, a local charity. Seen in the photo are, from left, Waterbury Amusements' Joe Naclerio with winning players Joe Futima and Chet Caron. Nice going, everybody!

PACIFIC COAST DARTS — Arachnid and C.A. Robinson & Co. hosted a $5,000 Pacific Coast Dart Championship competition back in August at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza hotel by Los Angeles International Aiport. Darters from as far east as Phoenix joined with Californians to compete in the event, which marked the first time a distributor has co-sponsored one of these events. C.A. brought in 56 boards for the over 300 entrants to throw on. Pictured above left is John Gray (winner of three of the events at the competition) and his friend Susie Bauer. At right, Arachnid's Bill Ward and Dave Schultz wave hi.

AMOA-NDA PLANS — The AMOA National Dart Assn. will hold its sixth annual Team Dart Championship at the Sahara Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada from Tuesday through Saturday, April 30 to May 4. Eligibility in the $50,000 finals is limited to NDA-sanctioned league players only; entries open Feb. 1 and close April 1, so get ready to qualify your players now. Events include Open Cricket Doubles, Ladies Cricket Doubles, Open 4-Player 301, Ladies 4-Player 301, Mixed Couples 4-Player 301, and Masters 4-Player 501. All league skill levels may compete. Teams are expected from the USA, Canada, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, France and Spain; entry fees per event range from $50 to $300 per team and 100% payback is guaranteed. Individual and team awards will be presented; a player reception and awards banquet will open and close the event. For $60 room reservations, call 800/634-6666. For more information, contact NDA Executive Director Joe Conway at 414/263-2444.

INDY DARTS CLASSIC — The fourth annual Indy Darts Classic will take place Jan. 25-27 at the Sheraton Northeast, 7701 E. 42nd, Indianapolis, Indiana. For more information, contact Mike Smythe care of Indy Amusements at 317/253-9388.

TECHNICAL TIPS

Substituting Output Diodes: One Way to Keep Power Supplies Going

by RANDY FROMM

More than ever before, it seems, operators are repairing their bad power supplies instead of tossing them in the trash. I can't really prove this, of course, but many of the telephone calls I receive are from operators and mechanics with questions about power supplies.

One question that pops up from time to time concerns the output diodes. These diodes are a common failure item in the switching regulator power supply. I get to see a lot of power supply repair and I would say that around thirty percent of them have bad output diodes.

HIGH-SPEED DIODES

There are three pairs of output diodes; one pair for each of the outputs: + 5 VDC, + 12 VDC, and -5 VDC. These are not ordinary diodes. They are special, high-speed, "fast-recovery" diodes. High speed diodes are made to handle the very fast switching action (around 40 thousand cycles per second) of the power supply.

I have never replaced the + 5 volt diode assembly in a switching regulator power supply. The + 12 and -5 volt output diodes are the most common failures. It is normal for these diodes to test bad when checking them "in-circuit." There is usually a low ohm resistor (normally around 100 ohms) across the output of the power supply that causes a very low reading when checking the + 12 or -5 volt output diodes. Most people unsolder and remove one end of each diode to test it but you can usually bypass this step. When these diodes fail they will generally short completely. Instead of reading around 100 ohms, you will get a reading of around zero ohms; a dead short!

SUBSTITUTE DIODES

The + 12 volt output diodes will usually carry an original part number like PXPR302 or FR302. These are 3 amp diodes. I am using a commonly available 1N5404 as a substitute. This is a 3 amp, 400 volt diode. I have no doubt that the 100 volt version of this diode (1N5401) or the 200 volt version (1N5402) would also work. I use the 1N5404 simply because that's the only type of 3 amp diode that I keep on hand as replacements.

POWER SUPPLY DIODE SUBSTITUTIONS
PXPR302 USE 1N5404 (+12V)
PXPR1502 USE 1N4004 (-5V)

UPCOMING CLASSES

Orlando, FL	Jan. 14-19
San Diego, CA	Feb. 4-9
Seaside Heights, NJ	April 22-27
Charleston, SC	June 24-29
Columbus, OH	Aug. 12-14
Las Vegas, NV	Sept. 16-21
Chicago, IL	Oct. 14-19

The -5 volt output diodes will often be type PXPR1502 or similar. I have been using 1N4004 as a substitute. This diode should be familiar to everyone as it is widely used in games of all types.

While I acknowledge that good engineering practice dictates that high speed, "fast-recovery" diodes be used in this circuit, I have found normal diodes to be perfectly acceptable as substitutions. I have been using them on the route for well over a year, with detailed tracking of each power supply's repair history. I have not had a repeat failure of a replaced diode or capacitor.

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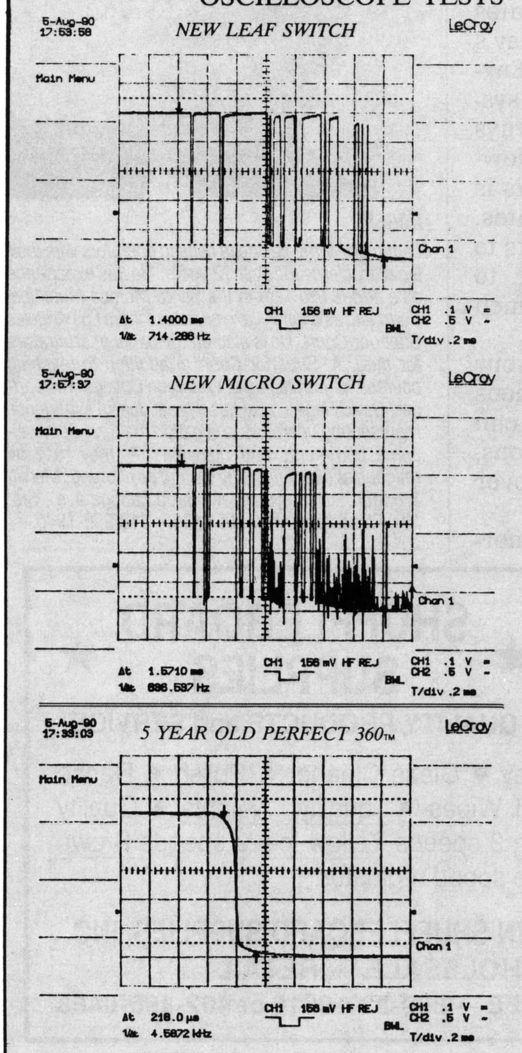
OSCILLOSCOPE TESTS



At left are a few oscilloscope tests that should have run with our feature story on the Perfect 360 *joystick in our November issue. The two test reports at top show the performance of switches used in this industry compared to that of a 5-year-old* Perfect 360 *which appears at bottom. As Randy Mitchell of the firm proudly notes, the* Perfect 360 *shows an "ultra fast" response and no switch bounce, plus contains no moving parts that otherwise would wear and degrade performance. For more info, see the article on page 227 in the November issue or call the firm at 801/534-8950.*

Those Legal Questions

by LAURENCE MERRITT
& DAVID HAGEN

Attorneys' Fees: When You Get Them, When You Don't

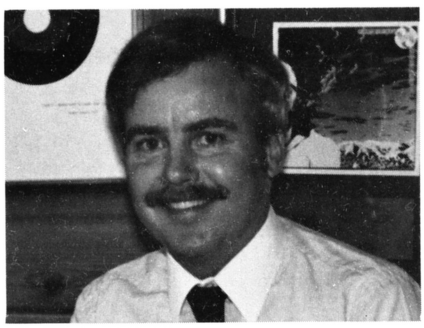
Most prevailing parties in a lawsuit just want to be made "whole." That is, they want to be in the same position financially that they were in before the lawsuit. To most clients, this means recovering damages, interest, and attorneys' fees.

Many times it is the attorney's unpleasant duty to inform clients that they will not be able to recover their attorneys' fees. Therefore, in an effort to prevent some attorney out there from having to explain this to their client, and in an effort to keep our readers better informed than the "average Joe," this column will discuss when you do, and when you don't, get attorneys' fees.

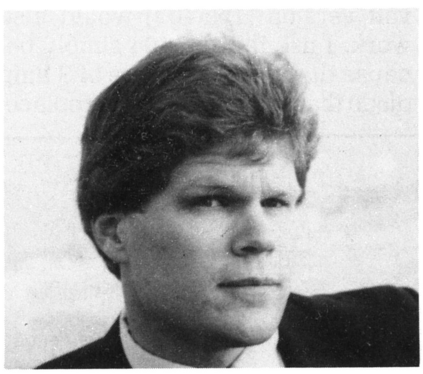
The basic rule in the United States is that you do not get your attorney's fees as a matter of course. In England, the source of our judicial system, the prevailing party always gets their fees reimbursed. However, for whatever reason, this is not the rule in the United Sates. There have been some attempts to change this general rule, but, to date, they have not gained much momentum.

As with most general rules in our legal system, there are exceptions to the general rule. If a party can fall into one of these exceptions, they will then be able to recover their fees.

The first exception to the general rule is where it has been altered by statute. Usually a federal or state law will provide for the recovery of fees in certain situations. For example, actions brought under many sections of the federal Civil Rights statutes will often be entitled to an award of attorneys' fees. While this is great for Civil Rights groups, it really doesn't do much for route operators.



MERRITT



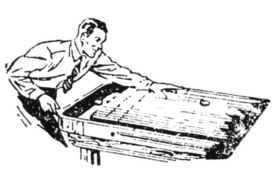
HAGEN

Laurence Merritt has been helping operators with their legal problems for over 12 years. He has experience as a Judge Pro Tem in the Santa Monica Municipal Court and as a family law mediator for the Los Angeles Superior Court. He is also on the panel of arbitrators for the L.A. Superior Court in addition to teaching courses for paralegals at Waterson College. His partner, David Hagen, also has a great deal of experience representing operators in litigation matters. Both welcome comments and questions — they may be reached at their offices by writing or phoning: Merritt & Hagen, Attorneys at Law, 6400 Canoga Ave., Ste. 311, Woodland Hills, CA 91367; 818/992-1940.

California has a unique provision in its law which provides that if it is necessary to sue to collect on an "open book account", the prevailing party can recover fees. An "open book account" is one where a supplier has supplied goods to a person over a period of time and sent him a bill on a monthly basis. Many states will probably follow suit, but this type of law is not in place yet in most states. Consult your local attorney.

The second exception to the general rule deals with lawsuits involving a breach of contract. The exception provides that the winner in any suit is entitled to fees if the contract between the parties so provides. Essentially, this is the attorneys' fee clause which we have discussed so many times in this column. Simply stated, this provision provides that in the event litigation is instituted, the prevailing party shall be entitled to their attorneys' fees. What if the contract is not in writing? Arguably, it could be proven at trial that one of the terms of the oral agreement was that attorneys' fees would be paid by the loser in any lawsuit. However, usually this is not discussed between the parties when they enter into a contract. Also, who in his right mind will admit that they agreed to pay attorneys' fees now that they are getting sued?

Keep these general principles in mind when thinking about recovering attorneys' fees in any lawsuit. Just as importantly, remember to include an attorneys' fee clause in any contract you sign!



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NEW PRODUCTS

MIRAGE 100-CD Box by Rock-Ola

Rock-Ola's brand new **Mirage** CD phonograph was officially launched at the AMOA Expo. In full production already, the phonograph boasts a sound system generating 280 watts of power, which the factory claims is the highest of any jukebox on the market.

Holding up to 100 discs, the machine's cabinet features black leather-grained vinyl with platinum trim and 3D animated lighting and graphics. CD jackets and title selections are displayed on two manually-operated page turners. An LED display identifies selections provided for the top hits option as well as the selection in play.

Backlighting of the keyboard, bill acceptor bezel and a lighted bill entry slot provide user convenience even in dark environments. The total package is aesthetically compelling and provides a visual asset to even the fancy location.

An external and internal background music control system is built in with a volume control separate from regular play. Unused CD pages can provide advertising space for special location events and promotions. When the jukebox is not in use, an automatic recall displays the page. An option switch can be set to play songs as selected or provide rapid-play (to play the nearest CD).

A wired remote control, standard on every machine, offers volume and song cancellation control. A microphone paging kit, speaker kit and a wireless remote control are available as options. The wireless remote is RF-based and provides on/off, volume and cancel play control from anywhere within a 1,000 yard radius.

An automatic mapping feature makes it simple to add new CDs. With the flip of a switch, the machine calculates and programs the number of selections for each new CD. There's no need to wait for the end of the mapping process. No revenue producing time is lost either because the mapping will cease.

The **Mirage** makes the replacement of CDs simple as well. An auto select button moves the least popular CD onto the player for removal. The replacement CD is placed on the player and the automatic mapping takes over. The unit includes a pass/fail diagnostic system with a visual display of access codes to provide simplicity for even the newest employee.

"Rock-Ola's long-standing philosophy to 'keep it simple' in order to ensure reliability is inherent in the design of the **Mirage,"** said Shuja Haque, Rock-Ola's Engineering VP. "The primary tool for keeping it simple is minimizing parts movement. Because popular CDs are frequently selected, each CD remains on the player after each play until the next selection is made. This minimizes the parts movement associated with repeated play," he added.

Each **Mirage** is shipped with background (external and internal) music control, a wired remote control and a $1- and $5-dollar bill acceptor. According to Exec. VP Art Kareff, "The **Mirage** offers extensive benefits for generating revenue and minimizing service costs as well as providing appeal to location owners and players. When you add to that the optional equipment that we provide as standard features, it's easy to see why this machine offers such tremendous value."

Williams' FUNHOUSE

Funhouse is the latest crowd-pleasing pinball from Williams, and is considered a sequel to their earlier carnival-style hits.

Theme: moving through the crazy rooms in a carnival funhouse and putting "Rudy" to sleep (he's the hypnotic but obnoxious barker who dominates the playfield).

Gameplay: Rudy is an animated, talking dummy whose head is the main feature on the playfield. Based on a real-life carnival barker from a famous Chicago site years ago, the character reacts to each player, laughing at blunders and offering a non-stop commentary on all the action. He talks, taunts, heckels and follows ball movement with his eyes.

Meantime, players shoot the ball at and through obstacles and targets such as the mystery mirrors, wind tunnels, crazy steps, trap door, etc. . . . and even Rudy's own hideout.

The game climaxes with a "witching hour": players advance the clock by hitting various playfield targets. At the stroke of midnight, Rudy closes his eyes and falls asleep . . . but his snoring, open mouth is the starting point for three-ball multiball play and potential million-plus scoring.

Features: Williams has really topped itself with incredible playfield features and sound effects on this one. There's also a right side plunger skill shot (an industry first), the usual boat-load of high scoring and extra ball features, self-diagnostics and top Williams workmanship.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Williams Electronic Games, 3401 N. Calif. Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; 312/267-2240.

New from Atari

Shuuz is Atari's latest video kit, themed around horseshoes. Simple fun and friendly competition makes it a "perfect pitch" for taverns, bars and other grown-up locations (it even has competitive "beer round," but this can be disabled for younger, non-drinking places).

Theme: recreation/sports game.

Gameplay: one to four players take turns using a track ball to control the arc and distance of their "toss." Just line the onscreen "player" up, roll the track ball back, then roll it forward. Five modes of gameplay include: one player vs. computer; high score challenge; two players head to head; three players head to head; four players (i.e., two teams of two players each).

Features: adjustable playtimes (operators can change number of rounds per credit); Atari statistics package; game comes complete

with JAMMA harness, PCB, track ball, buttons, and all needed artwork & decals (header, control panel, bezel, sides).

Also from Atari, **Race Drivin'** is now available in two models: the Deluxe Sitdown unit and the Compact Upright. All the features that made it the Number One dedicated game on our December chart are present in both models. . . including computer programming and real sports cars; super-sophisticated computer programming and real-time steering wheel feedback that simulates driving a real car with breath-taking accuracy; a super "stunt track" including corkscrew loop, jump loop and winding mountain passages; an "autocross" track with built-in pace car and lap timer (the vector-drawn pace car is actually a recorded view of the players' best previous lap); a competitive feature called "Buddy Race" for two players taking turns (second player competes vs. a recording of first player's car and just-finished performance); etc.

Compact upright includes attached seat; 25" monitor; four speed stick shift, steering, clutch, gas and brake pedals, ignition key start switch, etc. Compact upright is 79"Hx40"Dx 27"W. Shipping now, the compact version joins the deluxe sitdown model in current worldwide availability. Also coming: conversion kits to modify both the sitdown and upright 'Hard Drivin'' to their equivalent 'Race Drivin'' counterparts.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Atari Games Corp., P.O. Box 361110, Milpitas, CA 95035-1110; 408/434-3700.

Premier's TITLE FIGHT & PCB TESTER

Title Fight is the newest pinball in Premier's "SL" line of simple-playing pins designed especially for street locations. This exciting and creative addition to the line features animated boxers in the backglass who throw punches at each other.

Theme: battling it out for the heavyweight crown.

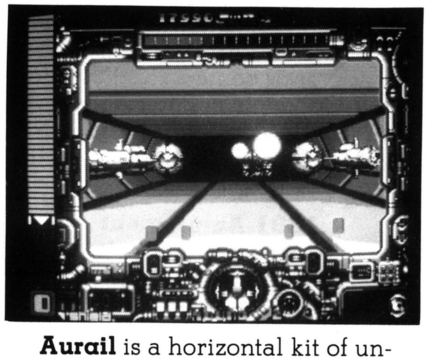
Gameplay: players start the round by pulling back the plunger (a bell sound effect is heard). Hit as many targets in the upper playfield as possible before the bell rings to signal the end of the round. Hitting certain targets or riding the loop causes "your" boxer in the backglass to land good punches on his computer-controlled opponent. Shoot

for the uppercut rollover, round house punch, etc. You continue to punch and go through various contenders, advancing toward the "title fight" round, where players must complete the target bank twice in the allotted time. . . or else they lose 10 punches and must start over. Two-ball multiball is possible; the game features mostly drop target shooting but several challenging long shots are designed into gameplay.

Also available from Premier is their new **Gottlieb System 3 P.C. Board Tester,** a test system which may be installed on any IBM compatible computer running DOS 2.1 or higher (also requires one full size expansion slot in the computer). Operators can test supported System 3 boards by attaching them to the test box via adapter cable. A floppy disk contains the test program; operators may set up static conditions on some boards to allow for easier troubleshooting, too.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Premier Technology, 759 Industry Dr., Bensenville, IL 60106; 708/350-0400 or 800/444-0761.

AURAIL from Sega



Aurail is a horizontal kit of unusual play action versatility. It's for one or two players taking turns and features a combination of top-down views and first-person perspectives, with rapid-fire action and characters who can turn 360 degrees. (This feature allows players to pass an enemy, then turn to shoot at the enemy's weak side).

Theme: sci-fi high-tech shooting game.

Gameplay: players progress through 16 stages, using a joystick and three buttons (each with very different functions) to battle an onslaught of robotic baddies. Players can also send out a robot kite to kill off airborne enemies.

Features: continue-play and buy-in features included.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Sega Enterprises, Inc. (USA), P.O. Box 610550, San Jose, CA 95161-0550; 408/435-0201.

Meltec's SHOOT OUT

Shoot Out is Meltec's latest midway-style redemption gun game, featuring a rapid-fire gun mechanism and non-stop pop-up targets. It's shipping now.

Theme: take on Western bad guys.

Gameplay: player races against the clock to gun down as many outlaws as he can; bad guys appear on rooftops, windows and doorways of the saloon in backboard art.

Features: Score is displayed on big LED readouts; tickets are dispensed according to score. Daily high score is also shown. Operators can adjust time of play; coinage; ticket award levels; and bad guy action patterns (continuous or random appearances). Dimensions are 12'Lx2.5'Wx7.5'H.

For more information, ask your distributor or Meltec, Inc., 1550 B Las Plumas Ave., San Jose, CA 95133; 800/356-4777 (out of state) or 408/923-1302 (in state).

BOZO BLAST-OFF BALL TOSS from Design Plus

Bozo Blast-Off Ball Toss is a simple ball-throwing game for all ages. Theme: circus music & character. Gameplay: hit the blinking lights, score points and win tickets.

That's it — the simplicity is deliberate and classic.

Features: four color silk-screened backboard; bright blue laminated ramps and coin box; red fabric netting (encloses both sides of game); crown top netting; red flashing backboard lights; bright orange "bounce resistant" balls; snappy circus music; synthesized Bozo voice. Easy setting for coins, time and tickets (optional "winner every time" ticket vend). Dimensions are 32"Wx 72"Lx80"H.

For more information, contact your distributor or Design Plus Industries, 737 E. Marietta Ave., Peoria Heights, IL 61614; 309/682-9359; 800/541-1288.

LOTTO PICKS from GaMCO

Lotto Picks is an inexpensive, small number-picking game which can be used in several ways. Players may use it to select numbers they'll bet on in their state lottery. Operators may use it as a "random action redemption game," where customers try to match posted numbers to win promotional prizes — anything from a free video rental to a beer in tavern locations. (Check with your local distributor for any legal impli-

cations of this type of use.)

Different models are available for every state with a lottery; players can "pick three" (or four, five or six) numbers. Steel cabinet dimensions are 16"W x 14"D x 48"H. Side pockets are provided for lottery slips.

For more information, ask your distributor or GaMCO International, Inc., 2153 — 10th St. Sarasota, FL 34237; 800/642-7263 or 813/366-1133.

PUTTING CHALLENGE from I.C.E.

Putting Challenge is an electromechanical mini-golf game for one to four players.

Theme: unique appeal from a putting green playfield which changes shape and contour, offering 18 different challenging greens.

Gameplay: players choose one of three modes (games). "Total strokes" is played or scored like mini-golf with a twist which helps speed play

and income by scoring one point for a hole in one, two for a miss which leaves the ball on the surface, and three points of a miss with the ball rolling off the surface. (A unique but simple sensing system causes the putts left on the surface to be removed by automatic tilting of the playfield.) "Hole in one" is played just like it sounds, while "pick a putt" allows one or more players to "practice" on any green(s) they choose.

Features: hi-tech, space-saving presentation; putter is cabled to railing to prevent theft. Player and hole are announced; sharp, crisp graphics also show hole number on the green flag; score is shown on flashing display. Clean white melamine cabinet features simple instructions mounted on console. Factory setting charges $1 for a "credit" (9 balls), but operators can adjust the cost of this "credit." One player on nine holes takes about three minutes, for earnings of $16 to $20 per hour when continually used.

For more information, ask your distributor or contact I.C.E. (Innovative Concepts in Entertainment), 1501 Kensington Ave., Buffalo, NY 14215; 417/833-0481 or 800/344-7467.

TOP HITS OF JAPAN

from Game Machine magazine, Dec. 15, 1990

TOP 25 VIDEO COCKTAIL

Model (manufacturer)

1 Puzzled (SNK)
2 Carrier Airwing (Capcom)
3 Raiden (Seibu)
4 Cyber-Lip (SNK)
5 Super Spy (SNK)
6 Columns (Sega)
7 Columns II (Sega)
8 Tetris (Sega)
9 M.V.P. (Sega)
10 World Stadium '90 (Namco)
11 Bio-Ship Paladin (UPL)
12 World Cup '90 (Tecmo)
13 Final Fight (Capcom)
14 Baseball Stars (SNK)
15 Super Masters (Sega)
16 Palamedes (Taito)
17 Capcom World (Capcom)
18 Ninja Combat (SNK)
19 Shanghai II (Sun Electronics)
20 Top Players Golf (SNK)
21 Quiz H.Q. (Taito)
22 Nam-1975 (SNK)
23 Adventure Quiz II (Capcom)
24 Super Formula (Video System)
25 Out Zone (Toaplan)

TOP 15 UPRIGHTS & COCKPITS

Model (manufacturer)

1 Final Lap 2 [del.] (Atari/Namco)
2 Space Gun (Taito)
3 Cisco Heat (Jaleco)
4 Final Lap 2 [standard] (Namco)
5 Hard Drivin' (Atari/Namco)
6 GP Rider [ride-on] (Sega)
7 Beast Busters (SNK)
8 Big Run (Jaleco)
9 Super Monaco GP [del.] (Sega)
10 G-LOC [deluxe] (Sega)
11 Winning Run (Namco)
12 Out Run [deluxe] (Sega)
13 S.C.I. (Taito)
14 Air Inferno [deluxe] (Taito)
15 Turbo Out Run (Sega)

TOP 5 FLIPPERS

Model (manufacturer)

1 Back to the Future (Data East)
2 Earthshaker (Williams)
3 Silver Slugger (Gottlieb/Premier)
4 Rollergames (Williams)
5 Whirlwind (Williams)

1991 Amusement Guide Sourcebook

Amusement Business (the Nashville, Tenn. journal for sports and mass entertainment) has published their 1991 **Audarena Stadium International Guide to Facilities, Supplies & Services.** The $65 publication (price includes first class postage and handling) lists over 6,500 mass entertainment facilities in the U.S. and abroad. Its supplies and services sections list companies that sell equipment, products and services (from promotions to sound & lighting, food & drink, management & consultants, you name it) used by a wide variety of entertainment venues.

For a copy, send prepaid orders to Amusement Business, Single Copy Dept., P.O. Box 24970; Nashville, TN 37202. Or call 615/321-4251 for more info.

the Big Ticket

Thematic Flair Draws More Players (& Dollars) to Amusement Centers

Editor's Note: our columnist on redemption is Art Warner, president of Coin Concepts, Inc. After many years in redemption, Art knows that successful redemption manufacturing demands much, much more than just putting a ticket vender on a game.

RePlay knows that successful redemption operating demands more than just putting one or two cranes or rolldown games into an arcade. Too many operators around the U.S. have heard about the hot redemption trend and tried a game or two in their amusement centers. Some of these operators were disappointed by the machines' earnings and removed them, saying: "Well, I guess redemption is not for me."

These operators never gave redemption a fighting chance to work! The most successful redemption operators make a real change in the location's atmosphere. They use a good portion of redemption games, not just one or two. They have prize counters with merchandise which is updated often. They promote themselves as family places. And, they give customers enough time — several months — to discover the change, and to bring more family members in.

Half-baked attempts to try redemption will, in many cases, only achieve half-baked results. That's why Art Warner's latest column is particularly timely. This month he discusses how to create a "winning atmosphere" for your arcade or amusement center.

— Marcus Webb

Creating an appealing atmosphere for your game room is a crucial requirement for operator profitability. If you think one game room is just about like any other . . . if you think all that's needed is to throw a few machines into the place . . . then I invite you to reconsider. Let's begin with a brief example, one that is quite common in real life.

Suppose two arcades on Main Street, USA, are less than 200 feet apart. Both fun centers have a good selection of video, pinball and redemption games. Both have a miniature golf course. Yet, if you visit the arcades, you notice one major difference between them. "Arcade A" has *half* the number of customers that "Arcade B" has.

What makes the difference between these two businesses?

Most often, the arcade that creates the better *atmosphere*, the one that creates a better feeling of family fun, comfort and entertainment, will attract more people. "Arcade B" created an atmosphere that attracted the whole family, not just the younger players. "Arcade A" appealed to younger players only . . . and so the families walked on by.

CHOOSING A THEME

Everyone has his or her own special preferences and tastes regarding decor. Whether it is the style of our homes, our cars, or the clothes we wear, each of us has a particular style. And it is the style of each owner/operator that will most likely dictate the atmosphere of the arcade.

The first step in establishing the right atmosphere is selecting a *theme*. Focusing on a theme gives a single, overall feeling to any arcade. Themes such as "Big Top Circus" or "The Midway" or "Party Time" can create a bright and festive mood with bright colors and good times. A theme such as "The Disco" would rely more on music and bright lights to get your customers to boogie to the nearest game.

You have to select a theme that will please yourself, as well as your customers. After all, you'll be spending days, weeks, months in the arcade. The theme should also appeal to a broad range of customers. For instance, the theme in our fictional "Arcade A" targets the younger player; in a different location, that might be the perfect theme. But "Arcade B" has recognized something about the local flavor, and has benefited by tailoring the theme of the arcade to the location.

No single theme is right for every location.

THREE STEPS TO EXECUTE THE THEME

Okay, now you have selected a theme which you and your customers will both like. How do you translate it into reality? The three factors to consider are 1. music and lighting; 2. comfort, and 3. design layout.

Music and its presentation will profoundly affect your arcade's mood. Play the music too loud, and you drive people out. Play it too soft and it may disappear behind the sound of the machines. Depending on the customer base you wish to attract, different kinds of music may be appropriate: rock, jazz, easy-listening or even the Big Band sound could provide a "hook" to catch — and keep — players.

Again, depending on the type of customer you're after, sporting events on the radio may be a good hook for you. One of the nicest features about installing a good sound system is that you can change the music to fit the customer base by season, or day by day.

Lighting can also be changed throughout the day or year to create different moods. Bright lights may welcome customers to shop around for the games or prizes which interest them. Many arcades turn down the lights late at night to emphasize a "late-night" mood and to make the lights of the machines more attractive.

Comfort is also an important factor in creating an appealing atmosphere. You need to make your customers feel at home, not awkward or out of place. The more comfortable they feel, the better the chances that they will stay and play. One of the more successful fun centers that I have visited places bar stools in front of each redemption game. At this location, many players were "planted" in front of their machine, quite content to go on playing. Such comfort — and the long-term play it encourages — translates into increased revenues.

[Editor's note: other obvious amenities that create player comfort include padded carpets, vending machines or other food and drink, clean bathrooms, a smoking policy, posted rules of behavior which are faithfully enforced by attendants, and places for customers to sit down when not playing.]

Designing a layout is the third step to create the right atmosphere. I emphasize the word "design," because a good layout does not "just happen." Too often, owners/operators line machines against the wall, or cram a new machine in front of the store just because it's new. Even the newest and best machine won't earn its full potential if players cannot get at it, or are uncomfortable playing it. Consider a traffic pattern for the arcade. Provide aisle space to accommodate that traffic.

Proper physical layout can greatly improve arcade revenue. Cramming three games into a space where only two games should be, may kill the earning potential of all three units. The lesson is that sometimes two can earn more than three! Place similar machines together: a row of pinball games or a bank of video poker machines may encourage competition. Adult games that require supervision should be grouped; and sports games that require physical movement should be placed so as to offer players lots of room.

As I've suggested so often in the past, look around at the bigger department stores for ideas on how to market your product and draw in the type of customer you desire. Remember, these stores arrange everything within their walls — lighting, music, comfort, layout — according to a conscious, deliberate design. It works; that's why they are so successful!

Learn the lesson that "Arcade B" has already learned: make your facility look and feel like fun for the whole family. With some good planning and design, people may feel the fun of your facility before they ever put a coin in the slot.

Next time, I'll talk about the size of your fun center. In the meantime, keep sending me your comments and questions here at Coin Concepts. And keep thinking "redemption"!

If you have questions or comments, you may contact Art Warner at Coin Concepts, 16 Edgeboro Rd., Unit 5, East Brunswick, NJ 08816; 903/390-9009 (N.J.) or 800/462-2646 (U.S.).

The BONDEAL CHART

top kits and dedicated videos at the Hong Kong Flashback Arcade for the week ending Dec. 15, 1990

TOP KITS	Dec. 15	Dec. 8	Dec. 1	Weeks on Location
Pit Fighter	1	2	1	9
Double Dragon 3	2	1	—	2
Gals Panic	3	3	2	7
Lightning Fighters	4	9	9	30
Gun Dealer	5	7	4	8
Columns	6	6	6	38
Hydra	7	5	5	8
Passing Shot	8	8	7	79
Smash TV	9	4	3	23
Carrier Air Wing	10	10	8	7
TOP DEDICATED GAMES				
Four Trax	1	1	—	2
Hard Drivin'	2	2	1	87
Big Run	3	3	2	46
Super Hang On	4	4	5	173
Super Off Road	5	5	3	89

Vital Titles

Top-selling 45s and CDs at key U.S. one-stops as of Dec. 18, 1990

★ = *significant crossover activity*

POP

★ **1. LOVE WILL NEVER DO,** *Janet Jackson, A&M 1538*
2. SO CLOSE, *Daryl Hall & John Oates, Arista 2085*
3. FROM A DISTANCE, *Bette Midler, Atlantic 87820*
4. HIGH ENOUGH, *Damn Yankees, Warner Bros. 19595*
★ **5. JUSTIFY MY LOVE,** *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 19485*
6. MIRACLE ("Young Guns II"), *Jon Bon Jovi, Mercury 878392*
7. BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, *Stevie B, RCA 2724*
★ **8. I'M YOUR BABY TONIGHT,** *Whitney Houston, Arista 2108*
9. ONE AND ONLY MAN, *Steve Winwood, Virgin 98892*
10. AFTER THE RAIN, *Nelson, DGC 19667*

POP PICK HITS

THE SHOOP SHOOP SONG
Cher - Geffen 19659

MONEYTALKS
AC/DC - Atco 98881

★ ***IT NEVER RAINS...***
Tony! Toni! Tone! - Wing/Polydor 879068

I SAW RED
Warrant - Columbia 73597

★ ***ALL THE MAN THAT I NEED***
Whitney Houston - Arista 2156

CW

1. COME NEXT MONDAY, *K.T. Oslin, RCA 2667*
2. I'VE COME TO EXPECT IT FROM YOU, *George Strait, MCA 53969*
3. PUT SOME DRIVE IN YOUR COUNTRY, *Travis Tritt, Warner 26094*
4. ROCK 'N' ROLL ANGEL, *The Kentucky Headhunters, Merc. 878214*
5. CRAZY IN LOVE, *Conway Twitty, MCA 79067*
6. GHOST IN THIS HOUSE, *Shenandoah, Columbia 73520*
7. PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES, *Clint Black, RCA 2678*
8. TURN IT ON..., *Dwight Yoakam, Warner Bros. 19543*
9. LOVE CAN BUILD A BRIDGE, *The Judds, Curb/RCA 2708*
10. CHASIN' THAT NEON RAINBOW, *Alan Jackson, Arista 2095*

COUNTRY PICK HITS

(YOU'RE MY) SOUL AND INSPIRATION
The Oak Ridge Boys - RCA 2665

A FEW GOOD THINGS REMAIN
Kathy Mattea - Mercury 878246

BROTHER JUKEBOX
Mark Chesnutt - MCA 53965

LONG LOST FRIEND
Restless Heart - RCA 2709

FOREVER'S AS FAR AS I'LL GO
Alabama - RCA 2706

R&B

★ **1. MISSUNDERSTANDING,** *Al B. Sure!, Warner Bros. 19590*
★ **2. LOVE TAKES TIME,** *Mariah Carey, Columbia 73455*
★ **3. PRAY,** *M.C. Hammer, Capitol 44609*
★ **4. I'M YOUR BABY TONIGHT,** *Whitney Houston, Arista 2108*
★ **5. B.B.D. (I THOUGHT IT WAS ME)?,** *Bell Biv Devoe, MCA 53897*
★ **6. IT NEVER RAINS,** *Tony! Toni! Tone!, Wing/Polydor 879068*
★ **7. MARY HAD A LITTLE BOY,** *Snap, Arista 2142*
★ **8. THE GHETTO,** *Too Short, Jive/RCA 1397*
★ **9. LOVE WILL NEVER DO,** *Janet Jackson, A&M 1538*
10. MY LAST CHANCE, *Marvin Gaye, Motown 2083*

R&B PICK HITS

ONLY HUMAN
Jeffrey Osborne - Arista 2127

ALL THE MAN THAT I NEED
Whitney Houston - Arista 2156

★ ***JUSTIFY MY LOVE***
Madonna - Sire/Warner Bros. 19485

★ ***NEW POWER GENERATION***
Prince - Paisley Park/Warner Bros. 19525

KEEP OUR LOVE ALIVE
Stevie Wonder - Motown 1990

CDs

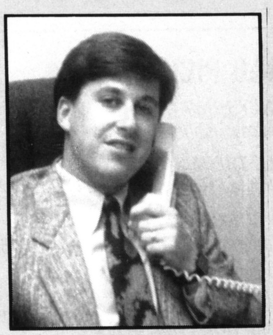
1. TO THE EXTREME, *Vanilla Ice, SBK 95325*
2. PLEASE HAMMER DON'T HURT 'EM, *M.C. Hammer, Capitol 92857*
3. SERIOUS HITS...LIVE!, *Phil Collins, Atlantic 82157*
4. CHERRY PIE, *Warrant, Columbia 45487*
5. NO FENCES, *Garth Brooks, Enigma/Capitol 91813*
6. PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES, *Clint Black, RCA 2372*
7. DAMN YANKEES, *Damn Yankees, Warner Bros. 26159*
8. WILSON PHILIPS, *Wilson Philips, SBK 93745*
9. MARIAH CAREY, *Mariah Carey, Columbia 45202*
10. IMMACULATE COLLECTION, *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 26440*

GRAPEVINE

northeast

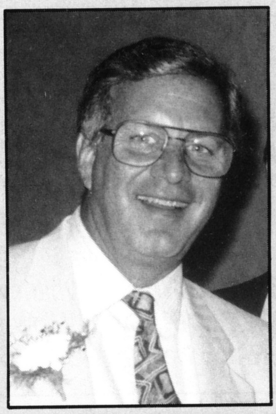
AMOA-NJ OFFICERS — *RePlay* columnist Frank Seninsky was elected to a second two-year term as president of AMOA of New Jersey, along with VP Joseph Corrao (Wayne Vending), VP Ed Silverstein (Cue Vending) and Sec./Treasurer Bill Englehard (Bill's Vending Service). Elected to the association's board of trustees were top local operators and distributors: James Feinberg, Irving Green, Frank Mandia Jr., Tony Storino, Bill Treger, John Fisher, Rich Goulazian, Irwin Spinak, Lou Perosi Jr. and George Hamilton Jr. AMOA-NJ has introduced their video lottery bill and continues with their suit against cigarette machine bans in East Brunswick, N.J.

CIG VICTORY — We received the following item from the New York based "Coin-A-Gram," published by the Music, Cigarette and Amusement Assn. It says: "Jim Faraldi led Suffolk County cigarette operators to an override victory on Nov. 13. This bill will allow cigarette vending in most all places. Congratulations to Frank Calland, Ralph Ceraldi, Ken Kohles, Jerry Rispoli, Dick Simon, Rich Hohman and the others who spent numerous hours lobbying to save their businesses."



GARY WARNER has been appointed as a sales rep at Coin Concepts, Inc., where he'll represent the redemption firm at trade shows and seek new markets for the product. His proud dad, Art Warner, is president and founder of the company. Said Art: "With the continued growth of our organization, it became imperative that we hire someone with not only an expertise in sales, but a commitment to service. I did not have to look far. My son Gary possesses the ideal mix of sales experience and follow-through that will enable us to better serve our clients." Gary was previously a senior account exec with Airborne Express. He holds a bachelor's in finance from George Washington University. Congratulations!

MONDIAL'S NEW MAN — Richard Sarkisian, Exec VP of Mondial International Corp., announced that world wide amusement machine exporter Mondial has hired industry vet Fernando Galeb as export sales manager. Galeb previously held that same post at R&M Distributing. He'll be headquartered at Mondial's executive offices in Pelham Manor, N.Y. and will travel extensively to South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

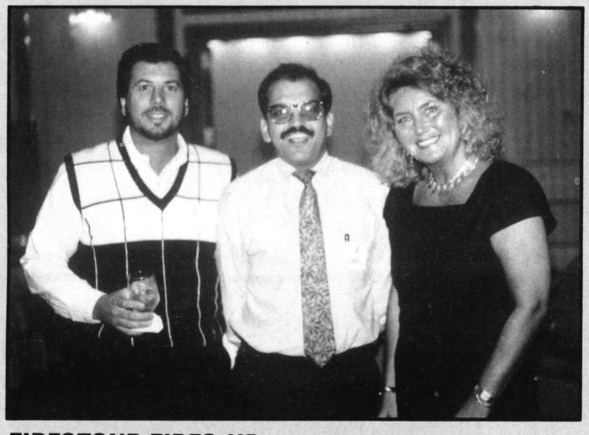


MORT ANSKY is the new VP of Sales & Marketing at Kramer Mfg., where he'll head up a new division devoted to video gaming and lottery products, plus a new line of consumer products for the home market. The 10-year industry vet was previously at Merit. Kramer now has a 180,000-sq.-ft. production plant which they're planning to put to work building product for the USA and world markets.

JUST MARRIED — Presenting Mr. & Mrs. Mike (M.D. Game Sales) Druss, who tied the knot recently. What a handsome couple! Best wishes to this Brooklyn, N.Y. tradester and his beautiful bride.

STAR*TECH SEMINARS — Here's an advance look at the 1991 schedule of technical seminars "for the advancing game tech" from the industry's one and only technical journal. Feb. 9-10: American Vending (Chicago). Feb. 23-24, Shaffer Distributing (Columbus). March 9-10, Rowe (Boston). May 11-12, Eastern Distributors (Philadelphia). June 8-9, H.A. Franz & Co. (Houston). As always the tuition costs $250 per person if you register more than seven days in advance; it's $275 thereafter. Also, you can get group discounts if there's more than one student from the same firm. Class hours are 9 to 5 Saturday; 8 to 3:30 Sunday. For more information, contact *Star*Tech Journal* at 609/662-1080.

AMOA-NY FUND RAISER — "Great food and fantastic entertainment" are promised to guests at the Feb. 9 AMOA-NY dinner-dance at Leonard's Great Neck, a catering hall in Great Neck, N.Y. The fun starts at 7:30PM. Tickets cost $100 per person; proceeds will be used to help defend cigarette vending and to pursue other lobbying efforts. For tickets, call Carolyn at 718/647-9853.



FIRESTONE FIRES UP — Distributors who meet assigned sales quotas for Firestone Financial Corp.'s "Fiesta Challenge" (ending Sept. 1) will be rewarded with an all-expense paid vacation in the famed scenic resort town of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Winners of the "Fiesta Challenge" will stay at the Krystal Vallart Hotel & Village, a 37-acre luxury resort on the bay. Firestone offers equipment financing and leasing services to qualified dealers in the coin-op industry, with end users (operators) getting conditional/installment sales contracts, plus equipment leases with option to buy. Interested distributors can call 800/851-1001 (U.S.) or 617/965-0366 (Mass.); ask for Ed Yaffe or Mike Guidi. By the way, seen here at Firestone's 25th anniversary Boston blowout last fall are, from left, Brady Dist.'s Bob Haim with Firestone's Mike Guidi and Helen Moody.

midwest

CHILTON VENDING received a smashing write-up in the Fall, 1990 edition of the "Ronald McDonald House Newsletter" of Wichita, Kansas. The firm, led by operators Stan and Randy Chilton, has been donating games to the charity, which provides lodging to parents whose kids are in nearby hospitals. And brother, do the families and staff love this entertainment! Chilton Vending also maintains the games. Jan Deering, exec director of Accent On Kids, said "There was a time when I thought video games were totally frivolous. But the more I watch the families here use them, the more I realize the games provide a way to find relief from the stress and frustration" of endless waiting while a child is hospitalized. The newsletter even told how one wheelchair-bound boy named Ryan (who was recovering from a coma) reached over and pushed a video game start button for his dad. "That was the first sign we'd had that Ryan was able to comprehend after coming out of a coma," his grateful father explained. Way to go, Chilton Vending!

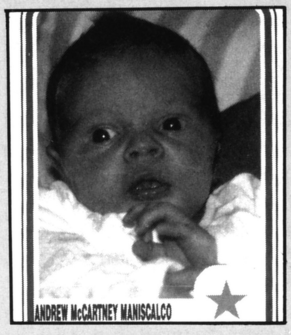
NAMA'S NEW CATALOG — The national vending association, NAMA, now offers a new pamphlet-style catalog that lists everything from profit-building tips to training videos for the vending industry. Also covered are things like sales literature you can customize for your company; amunition for fighting unfair taxes and licenses . . . legal advice on employee relations . . . you name it, everything from accounting to security and more. Many of the items listed are free; others sell at discounts to NAMA members. For a free copy, contact Gale Samuels, Communications Dept., NAMA, 20 No. Wacker Dr., Ste. 3500, Chicago IL; 60606-3102; 312/346-0370.

ID, PLEASE — When the *RePlay* guys & gals returned from the AMOA show, we were lucky to be able to identify ourselves much less all the folks in the photos we ran in the follow-up issue. Bruce Homier (Shaffer Dist.) was one of the victims. Captioned as "unidentified tradester" in the magazine, he will forthwith be known as I.T. ("it" for short). Bruce, second from right, is shown with two unidentified cute ladies and a guy with a lot of teeth at an AMOA bash. How's that for "meatball journalism"?

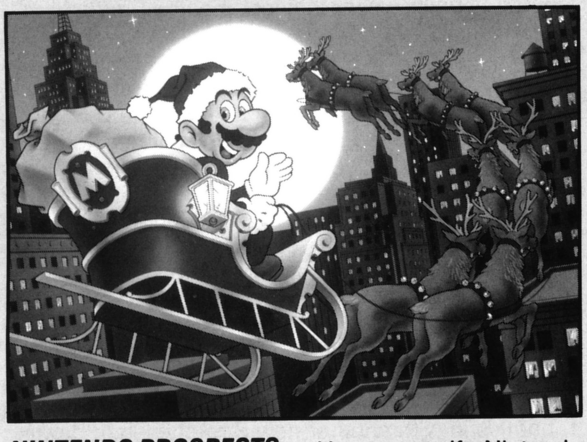
STRATA WINNERS — Twenty visitors to the AMOA Expo won prizes in a sports-oriented raffle at that show, sponsored by Strata, Inc. (sales arm of the U.S. video game firm Incredible Technologies). Minnesota Valley Vending & Amusement VP Kurk Johnson (yes, that's how it's spelled) won the grand prize, an official white satin touring jacket with the colorful Arlington Million logo hand-embroidered on the back. (Strata's new horse racing video game was developed with close cooperation from officials at Arlington International Racecourse.) Second prize winners were well-known Salt Lake City operator Tony Vina; Michigan operator Eric Bogedon; and Jay's Vending of Baltimore. Each won a ceramic "bowling ball" cookie jar, filled with gourmet goodies. (That ties in with another new Strata video, a bowling game that allows players to roll of a real cue-ball sized ball as the major game control.) Another 16 winners were awarded containers of tennis balls (you guessed it, Strata has a tennis video, too!). Congratulations to all!

45 RANCOR — Conventional wisdom says there are "enough" new tunes available on vinyl to keep operators content, but that doesn't help when you get specific requests for singles that only exist on cassette. Gem Music's Cathy Pitzer said she got location requests for MC Hammer's 'You Can't Touch This' "everyday," yet the song never came out on vinyl. However, Capital saw fit to intro his follow-up 'Pray' on vinyl, but that tune's been drifting off the *Billboard* charts by now. Complains Cathy: "Our customers don't understand why I can't get songs for them that are on the charts and being played a lot on the radio. It seems to be getting worse rather than better as new songs entering the *Billboard* charts are usually only on cassettes." We also notice that more songs become available on vinyl as they get to the upper reaches of *Billboard's* charts but further hear that the situation regarding vinyl pressing has bellied out; that it won't get any worse than it is now. Hope that's true . . . An anonymous chart reporter had this to say: "Customers are really upset and disgusted that they can't get their 45 requests. Is the almighty buck the only thing artists and labels think about? What about pleasing the customer so he'll come back for more?

southwest



BIG LEAGUE BABY — Drew Maniscalco keeps falling asleep while we interview him for this item. Well, that's okay. After all, he's only five months old. He was born Aug. 6 to Mr. and Mrs. Drew Maniscalco (of Fabtek fame). Somehow Drew (senior) got him on a baseball-type card which we've reproduced here. Congrats!



NINTENDO PROSPECTS — Have yourself a Nintendo little Christmas? Seems like every Christmas season produces a crop of news stories in the consumer and business press about Nintendo's home games. Half of them claim that "the video craze may have peaked . . . and none too soon for U.S. toymakers" (Business Week, Nov. 19). The other half claim that kids' wish lists are topped by three items: 1. Barbie dolls, 2. anything with the Simpsons on it, and 3. Nintendo. Business Week did say Nintendo expects sales of the basic NES hardware system to drop by 12% this year (to 8 million units) when all the figures are in. Software sales by Nintendo and its licensees are expected to keep going up by 15 or 20% for 1991, though. And there are hints that the 16-bit version of the NES, which is already out in Japan, may arrive in the USA in 1991. So don't cross the big boys of Redmond, Wash. off next year's Christmas card list.

northwest

GREAT NEWS — Patriarch Si Redd came through his brain tumor operation with flying colors and is probably back on the job at Reddco International (Las Vegas) by the time this issue hits. As many know, Si was operated on Nov. 16 at Moffit Hospital in San Francisco. Surgery went fine, the tumor was benign and he was out of the hospital in less than two weeks. The operation took place on this 79th birthday! Send him a fax at 702/736-9111.

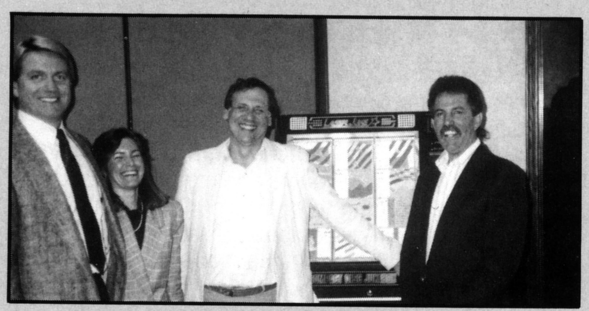
CELEBRATE! On Jan. 16, Hank Tronick will mark (as he quips) "the 20th anniversary of my 55th birthday." Correct. The veteran C.A. Robinson sales maven makes his diamond (75th) jubilee that day, but the best news of all is that his recent hip operation worked out beautifully. As many know, Hank had to have another implant to replace the old one that flared up. "Everything's looking good, I'm still at home on the crutches but the doctor says I'll be able to stand pretty soon," he advised. "I hope to have thrown those crutches away around the holidays, but who knows." He's still working at home on the phones and had no idea when he'd return to the Pico Blvd. office when we chatted. Let's just be thankful he's getting along so well. By the way, he welcomes calls, so give him a jingle at 818/788-3208.

PLANNING AHEAD — Atari Games has notified its distributors that their 1991 convention will take place April 20-23 at the Boca Raton Hotel (and Club Boca) in Florida. Atari held their 1989 dealer confab in Naples, Fla. and last year's on Maui. They sure know how to find the sun.

HERE AND THERE — Dave Morgan (Supercade) asks Konami to "Please give us a *Turtles* update kit for $600, $700 like Leland did for *Super Off-Road,"* We've passed the suggestion along here, but advise that *Turtles II* will be coming next summer and assume it'll be an upright . . . Old buddy Don Singer (with South Desert Vending) is a big fan of Premier flippers. And the reason is the cash box (Don cites good earnings on *Deadly Weapon, Silver Slugger* and *Vegas,* older pins booking coinage) . . . Kansas veteran Ron Cazel has a new company called The Answer. While its letterhead has the Game Operator's Corp. name at the bottom, The Answer's got its own Building at 1428 W. Harry in Wichita. The same letterhead describes the company's service as "One System . . . Every Video Game!" Wonder what that means.

NEW AT DYNAMO — Company VP Mark Struhs proudly announced that he and wife Jenny welcomed a new baby boy into the family Dec. 3rd. Christopher William Struhs weighed in at 7 lbs., 1.5 oz. and is doing fine.

JOLLY IS JOLLY — Born to Data East's Jolly Backer and his missus was on Sept. 24: a cute little tyke named Bradford Staunton Backer. He weighed in at 8 lbs., 8 oz. and our warmest congratulations go to the whole family.



RENO GAME SALES held an open house for operators at John Ascuaga's famed Nugget Hotel & Casino on Nov. 1. Taking the spotlight was RGS's newest line: Pioneer (both their audio CD jukebox and their videodisc vidjuke). About 30 customers attended. Seen here, from left: Pioneer's Jerry Sheaks, RGS toppers Cindy Bozman & Marty Shumsky, and Howard Morrison.

SPACE AGE FOR "LITTLE GUYS" — Space Age Electronics (the Southern California supplier of quality components) now has a retail division to cater to the small buyer. . . such as an operator who wants to buy anywhere from one to 24 monitors. Monitors are on sale at "very inexpensive" prices, says prexy Carl Fleischman, so call now at 800/822-0180.

BORROMEO'S BRIGHT IDEA — This lighting consulting firm says we can all do our bit to foil Saddam Hussein's nefarious plans by saving energy. How? Via their light sensor, which automatically turns off lights when nobody is in the room. Hey, it also saves money and helps protect the environment by requiring power companies to produce less. (Okay, they're reaching, but what the heck, you gotta give 'em credit for trying!) Your "guide to energy efficiency" may be had from the firm for a $5 check or money order to cover shipping and handling. Send it to: W.S. Borromeo, Lighting Consultants, 1619 W. Garvey Ave. No. #203, West Covina, CA 91789.

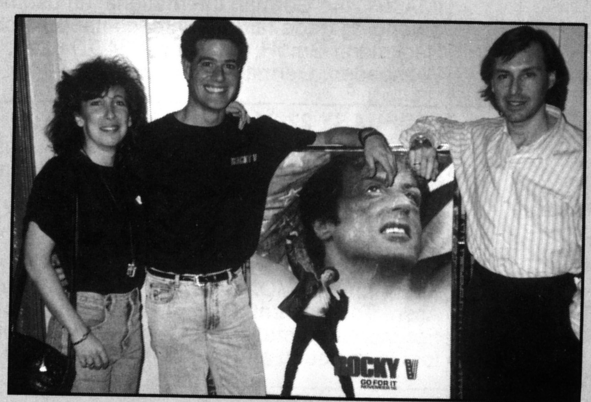
southeast

BILLIARD CONGRESS of America has its eighth annual international trade expo on July 11-13. Site is the downtown Nashville Convention Center in Tennessee; over 200 exhibitors from 22 nations around the world are expected to occupy some 600 booths with everything for pool (coin-op and home tables), plus related coin-op products. For more info, contact Continental Productions at 619/278-3877.

MIAMI VENDING ELECTRONICS — Seen here is the firm's Frank Dichazi (left) welcoming sales and service pro Randy Collins (right) to the team. The firm, located at 350 North Seaboard Rd., is a factory-authorized sales and service center for Mars Electronics. It previously covered the Florida and Caribbean markets. Now they'll expand their service area to Georgia and Alabama, too. The company offers free pickup for Mars coin changers and bill acceptors; technical assistance; operator training; and maintenance for Mars electronic products. For information, call 800/822-8327.

international

ATEI '92 — This year's edition of the famed "London show" takes place the first week of January at their traditional Olympia venue. But next year, ATEI will move to Earls Court 2. It's a huge, brand-new, and very modern expo center, located in the middle of London. The date will also be shifted — permanently — to the first week of February. Organizers say the new place offers more space, parking and convenience. . . and the new date gives tradesters more of a "breather" after Christmas.



YO, ROCKY! Canadian arcade operator Wayne Fromm's latest exciting movie/video game promotional tie-in was, as you might expect, a "heavyweight" success. Wayne's Video Invasion store worked with United Artists to distribute 100 free tickets to Sylvester Stallone's latest pugilistic melodrama, 'Rocky V.' The movie's logo was stamped randomly on 100 tickets, which were vended to players of the arcade's *Whac-A-Mole* game. Lucky customers redeemed the tickets

for free double passes to one of two advance screenings of the film (Nov. 12 or 14 in Toronto). Following the second screening, a celebration party at a big downtown nightclub included a "boxing ring" stage in which Video Invasion supplied Atari's *Pit Fighter* on free-play for 60-second bouts. Highest scoring contenders won a necklace with a silver boxing glove pendant. "Needless to say, Video Invasion customers enjoyed the excellent film and party that followed," smiled Wayne. "Things may be 'rocky' for some businesses, but for Video Invasion, 'Rocky' means opportunity!" Seen in the photo, from left: UA-Canada publicity directors Tami Weinberg and Jeff Reingold with Wayne Fromm.

MYRON & KIDDIE RIDES — U.S. trade vet Myron Sugerman is general manager of a new joint venture for kiddie rides. The venture combines the expertise of two Italian ride makers: Bella Italia Amusements, Ltd. and Cimosaka Elettronica. They'll market a complete line of ride-on units (duck, race car, etc.) totalling some 40 different models in all.

ITALY'S NEW ASSN. — It's called "Sindaut" and in English it (somehow) means the National Trade Union of Coin-Op Amusement Operators. The group was formed Nov. 24 in Florence to perform self-regulation by operators, polish the industry's image and achieve more favorable legislation. (They want to bring Italy's coin-op regulations more into line with laws in other Common Market countries.) Sindaut has already merged with CISL, an existing association which serves independent workers. President is Serafino Maurizi; top VP is Mario Negro. Bob Schermerhorn, known to some U.S. tradesters from his AMOA Expo visits, serves on the Executive Committee. The legal address is: Sindaut, Via Riscasoli 15, 50122 Firenze, Italy (phone is 055/284591). The commercial address and phone is: Via delle Acque 1, 02100 Riete, Italy (phone 0746/485732).

IRISH TRADE SHOW — It's called AmusExpo '91 and it takes place from noon to 7PM daily, Tuesday and Wednesday, March 5-6, in the Green Isle Hotel in Dublin. The show will be run in conjunction with LeisurExpo '91 so many new types of products and many new visitors are expected. According to organizer Martin Dempsey, a wide variety of coin-op equipment is also expected, as are plenty of coin-op visitors (attendance is up 50% since they moved the show to this hotel two years ago). For more info, call Mr. Dempsey or Susan Feery at 353/452-1190.

DATEBOOK

JANUARY 7-10
ATEI, Grand Hall, Olympia, London. For info, contact Exhibitions Administrator Dawn Milroy, ATEI, 122 Clapham Common Northside, London, SW4 9SP. Telephone is 071/228-4107.

JANUARY 22-23
AMOA second annual meeting of state association leaders, Embassy Suites Hotel, Schaumburg, Ill. For more information, contact Jim Stansfield at 608/782-7181.

JANUARY 23-26
IMA '91, the German international amusement & vending trade fair. For info, contact Blemheim Heckmann GmbH, Kapellenstr. 47-D-6200, Wiesbaden, Germany. Tel.: 06-212-5804-0.

FEBRUARY 22-24
South Carolina Coin Operators Assn. Annual Convention & Trade Show, Columbia. For more info, contact Helen Sikes at 803/779-2798.

MARCH 1-3
First Annual AMOA International Flipper Pinball Assn. Tournament, O'Hare Hilton, Chicago, Ill. For more information, contact IFPA exec director Doug Young at 414/263-0233.

MARCH 22-24
ACME '91, Sands Expo & Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. For more information, contact Glasgow & Associates at 708/333-9292.

APRIL 12-14
National Amusement & Vending Expo, Commonwealth Convention Center, Louisville, Kent. Contact show organizers Andry Montgomery & Assoc.: 502/473-1992; fax: 502/473-1999.

APRIL 25-28
Mid-South Regional Amusement & Music Operators Convention & Trade Show, Omni Memphis Hotel, Memphis. For info, contact LaVerle Franzen or Jan Green at 901/353-1000.

APRIL 30-MAY 4
AMOA National Dart Assn. Team Championship, Sahara Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. For room reservations, call 800/634-6666. For more info, contact Joe Conway at 414/263-2444.

MAY 3-5
Northeast Regional Trade Show (co-sponsored by AMOA-NY, NYSCMA & AMOA-NJ). Atlantic City, N.J. For more information, contact Sue Matterson at 518/439-0981.

MAY 5-9
AAMA Government Affairs Conference, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact AAMA at 703/494-2758.

MAY 16-18
WAMO Spring Convention, Country Inn, Pewaukee, Wisc. For more information, contact WAMO at 414/529-4704.

MAY 19-21
AMOA Government Affairs Conference, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact AMOA at 312/245-1021.

SEPTEMBER 12-14
AMOA Expo '91, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. For more information, contact AMOA at 312/245-1021.

THE BLUE PAGES

BUYERS' BULLETIN

A COMPENDIUM OF USED EQUIPMENT ADS & OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COIN INDUSTRY

A number of video game manufacturers have been successful in enforcing their copyrights and trademarks in the U.S. courts against those who supply or use unlawful copies. Readers are warned of the risks involved when copies of video games are purchased from sources other than the manufacturer or one of its authorized distributors. We can offer no assurance that a video game or printed circuit board set purchased from all the sources of such are legitimate. RePlay asks its readers to write us regarding any complaints about a product or service advertised in this magazine.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION

CLASS SCHEDULE

Orlando, FL — January 14 - 19
San Diego, CA — February 4 - 9
Seaside Heights, NJ — April 22 - 27
Charleston, SC — June 24 - 29
Columbus, OH — August 12 - 17
Las Vegas, NV — September 16 - 21
Chicago, IL — October 14 - 19

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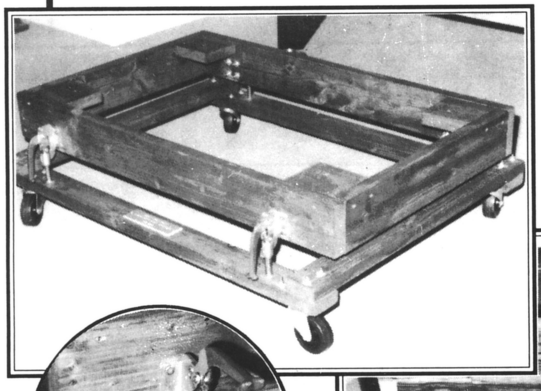

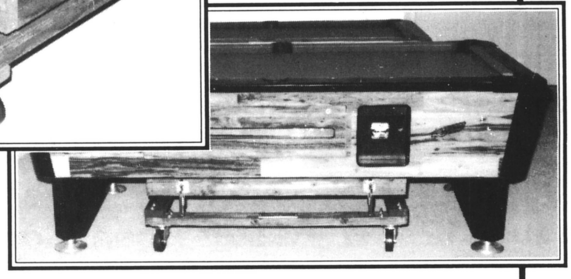

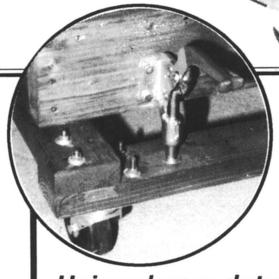

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Midnight Resistance (H)	595
Smash T.V. (H)	1095
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Task Force Harrier (V)	495
Two Crude (H)	695
U.N. Squadron (H)	695

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R-Type	595
Road Blasters	1295
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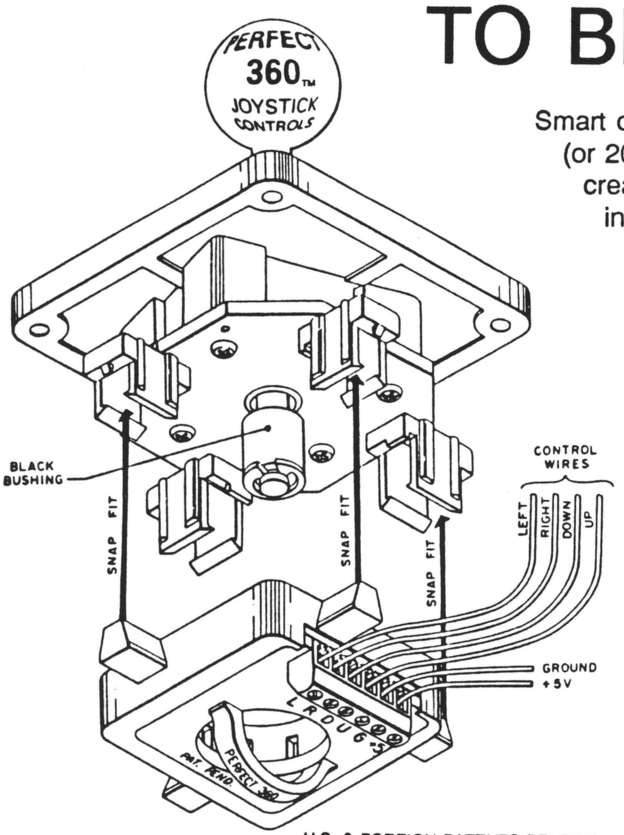

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'FRANK THE CRANK' July 1990 PLAYMETER pg 110, "I feel that if the sensor unit lasts a few years in perfect operating condition (which I believe it will), most operators would be very happy, myself included. I'm hoping that several game manufacturers will take a good look at this unit and consider using it on all their games and kits."

Featured article, Nov., 1990 REPLAY Magazine pg 227, " It isn't often that RePlay gets a press release about a new product so impressive we decide to make a feature story out of it. It's even more rare when that new product is a "mere" component. But there's nothing "mere" about a revolutionary new joystick called PERFECT 360. As players, respected operators and established distributors have testified, the industry's first solid-state joystick "performs exceptionally well" (significantly better than a conventional stick), yet costs less than a typical service call."

OPERATOR TESTIMONIALS: "The PERFECT 360 is overdue in the industry." "After playing games equipped with the PERFECT 360 joysticks, customers have requested that the same system be installed in their favorite games." "This is the type of thinking and engineering we need in this industry." "PERFECT 360 increased revenues in games by a minimum of 20%. I would buy and advise other operators to buy this control. We feel the PERFECT 360 could be the missing element in today's market in the goal of achieving player longevity." "It's about time the "user interface" came up to date with the rest of the industry." "Earnings which had dropped to about $175 a week had climbed to about $300 in just two weeks time! Eighteen months without a single second of down time! I have nothing but fantastic praises for this control." " Your joysticks make all the others obsolete."

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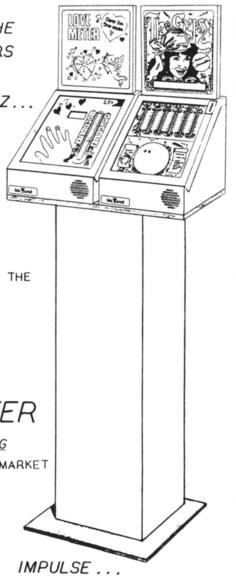

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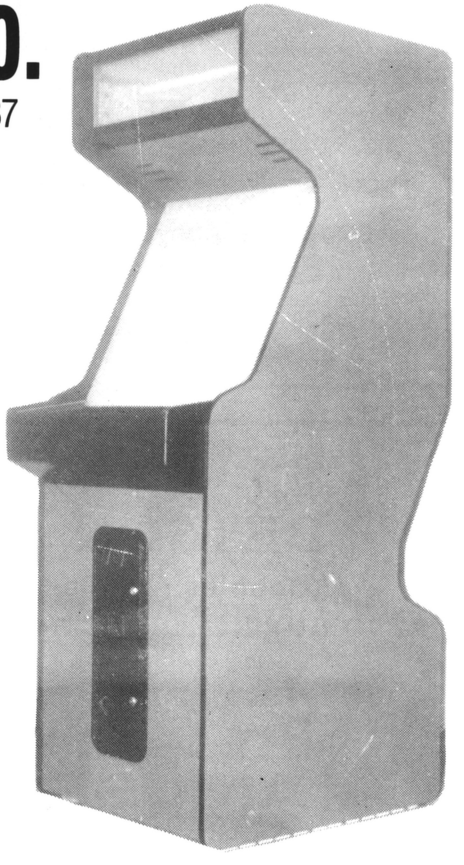

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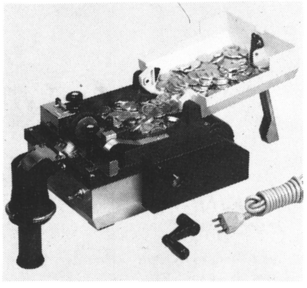

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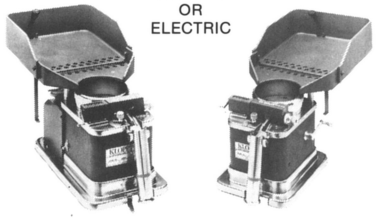

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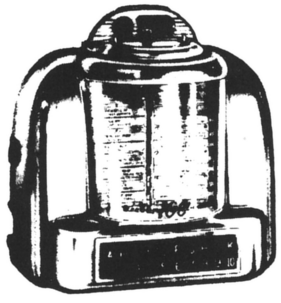

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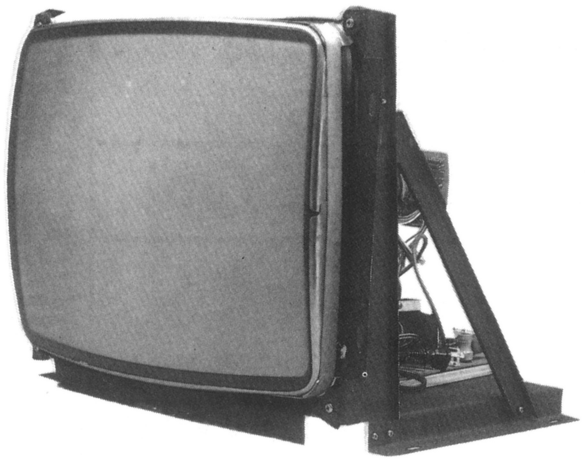

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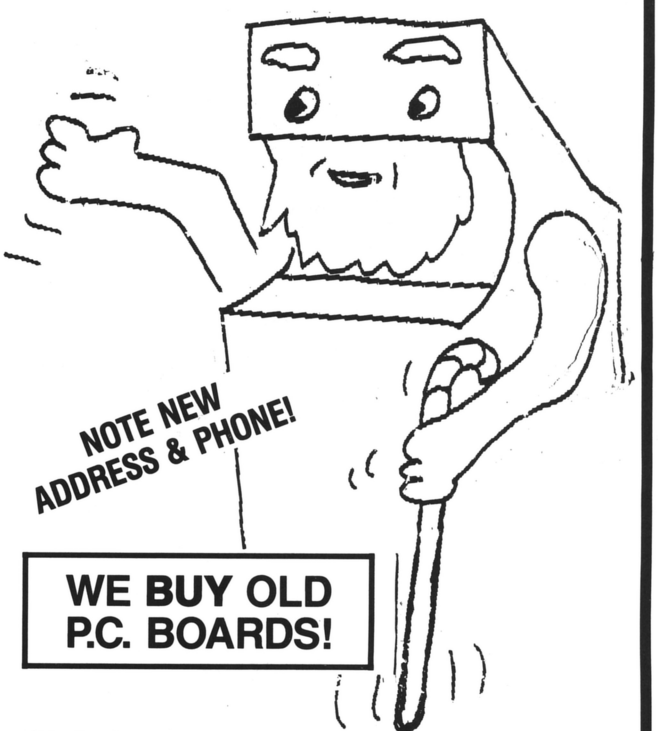

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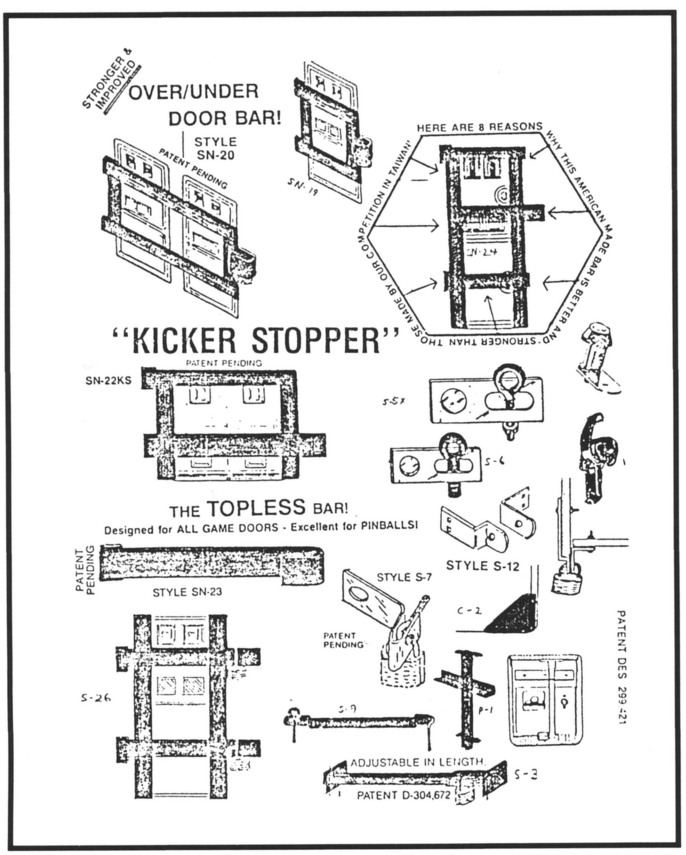

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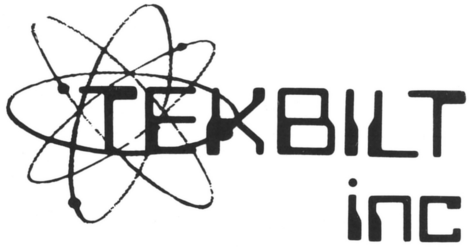

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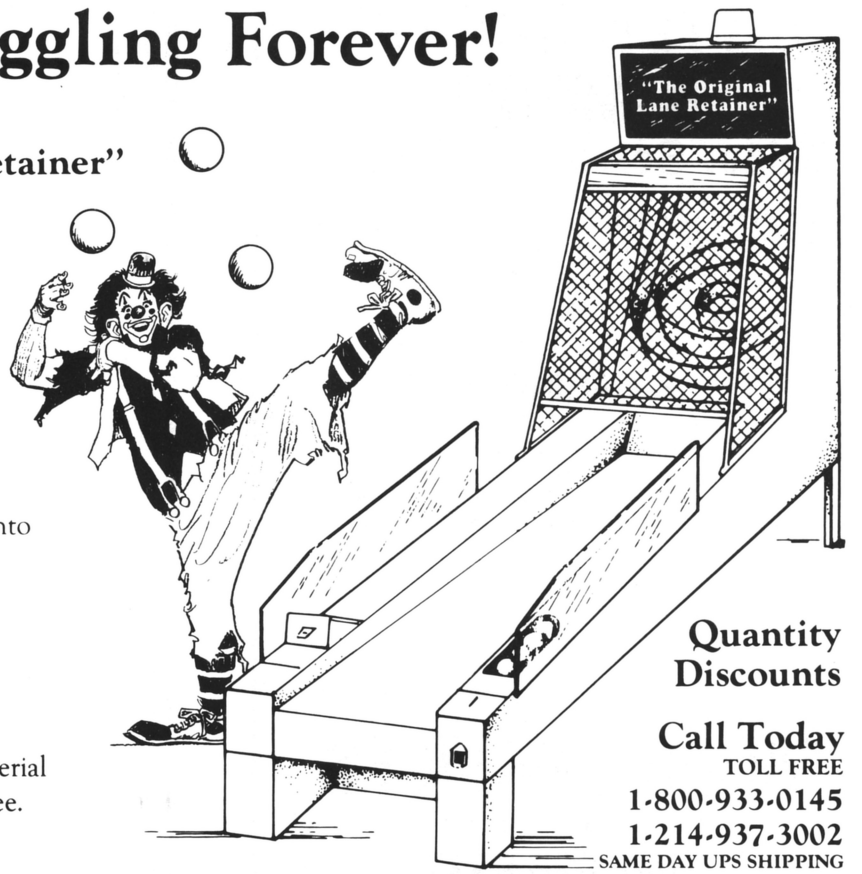

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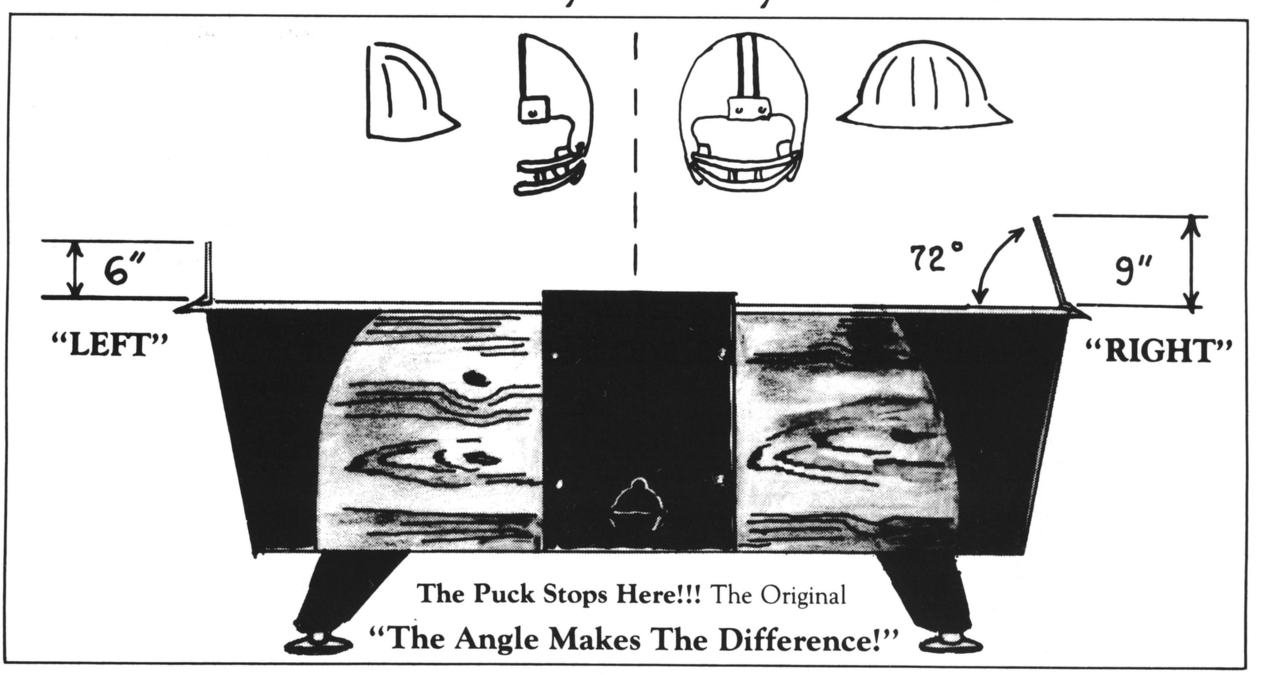

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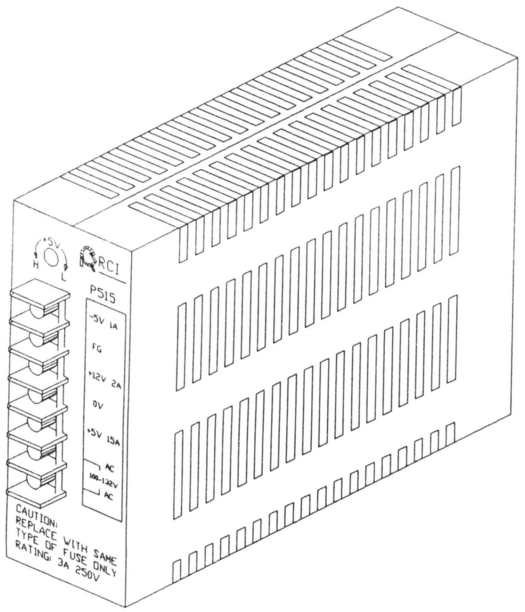

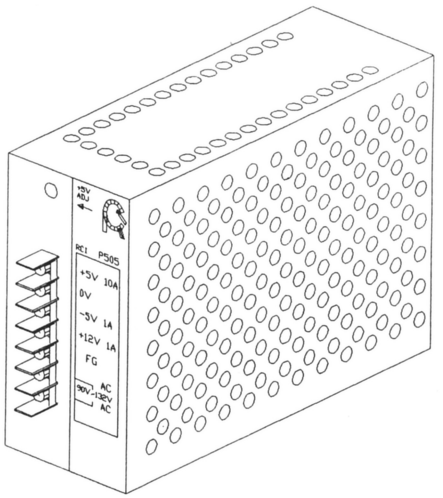

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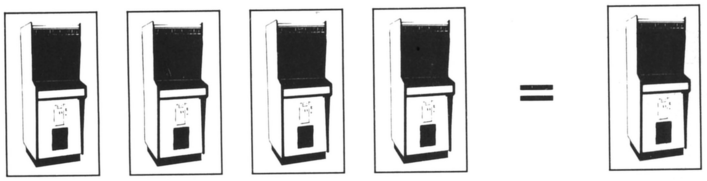

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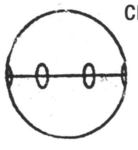

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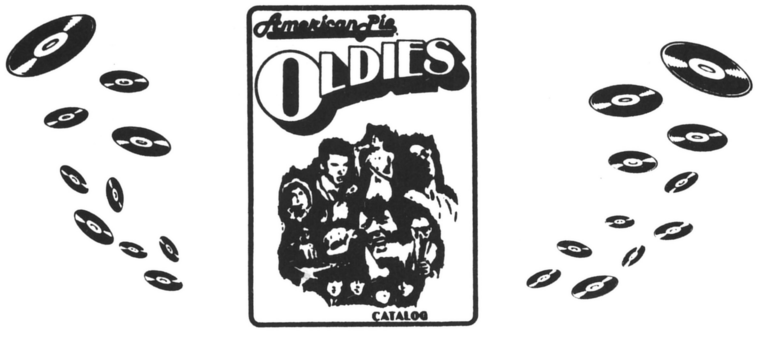

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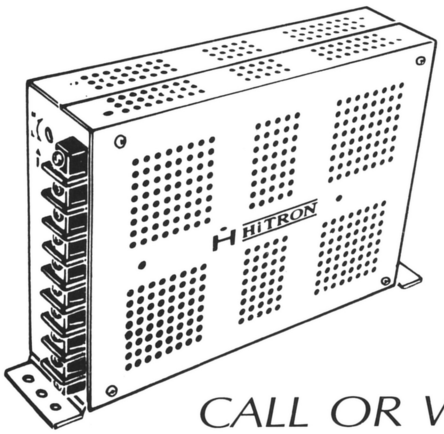

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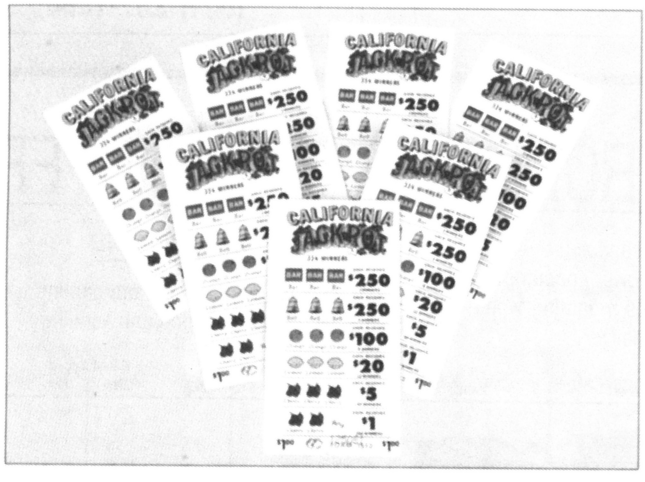

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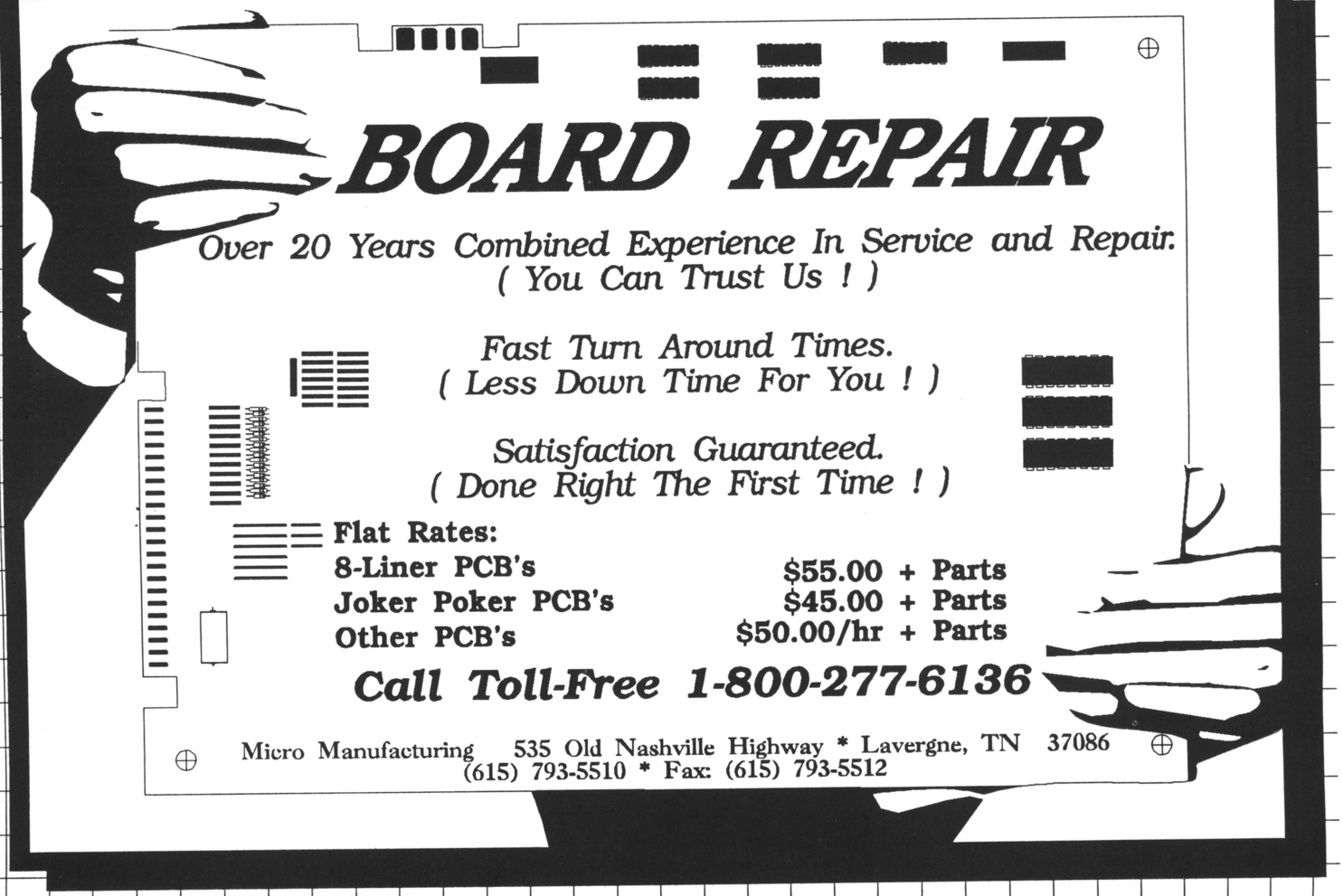

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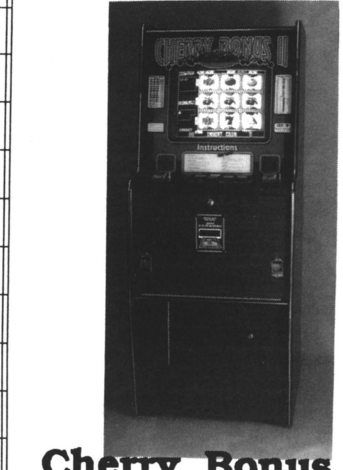

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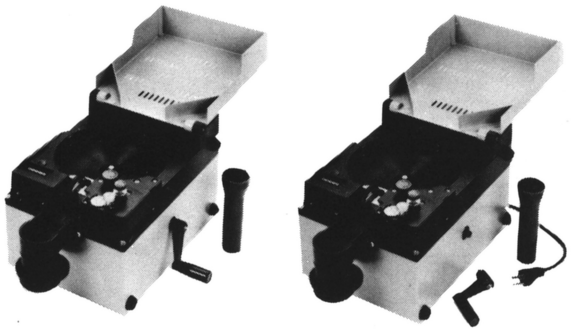

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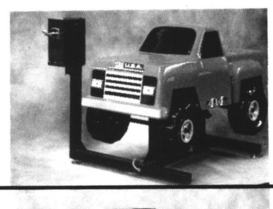

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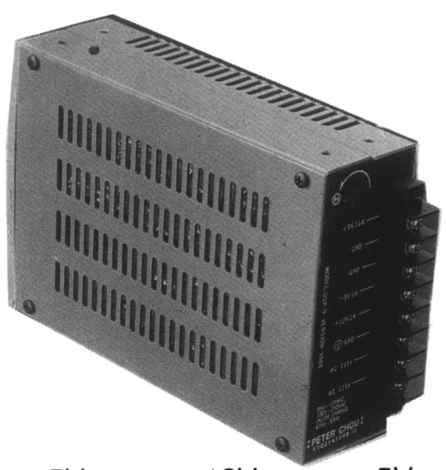

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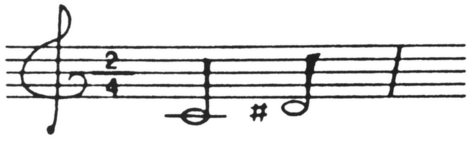

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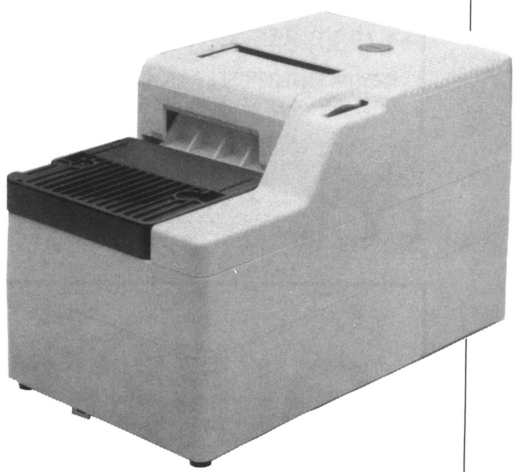
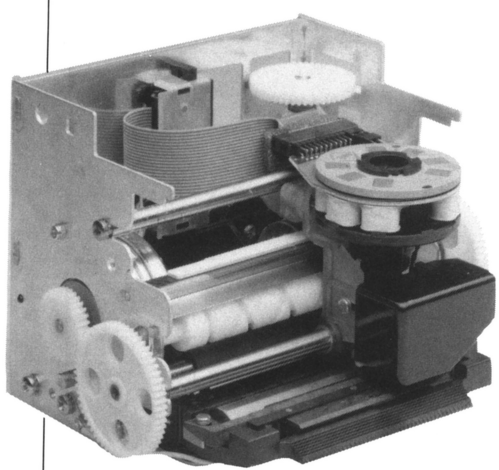


NCR 2285 Print Mechanism



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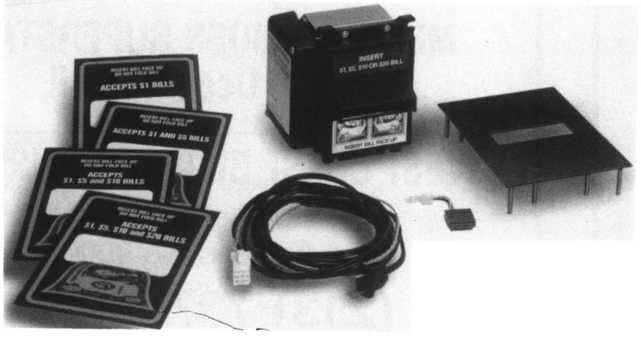

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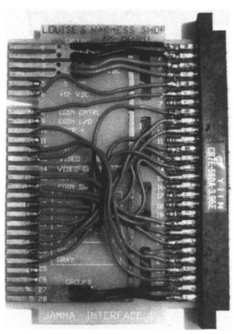

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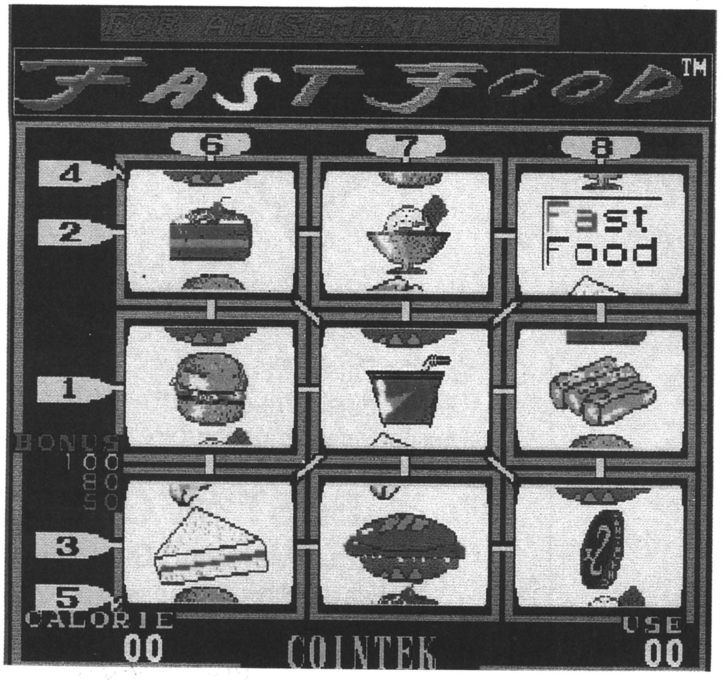

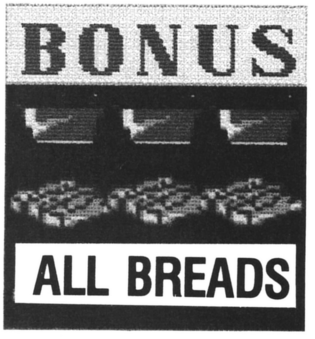

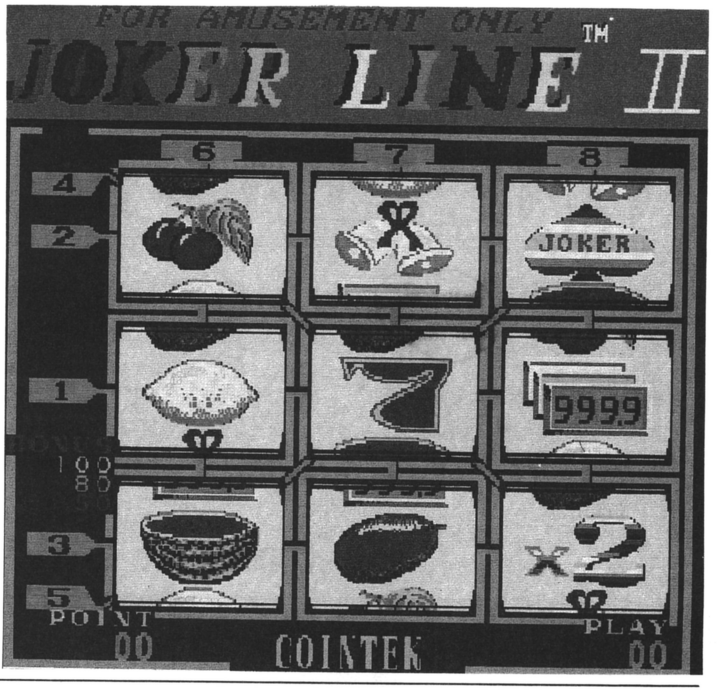

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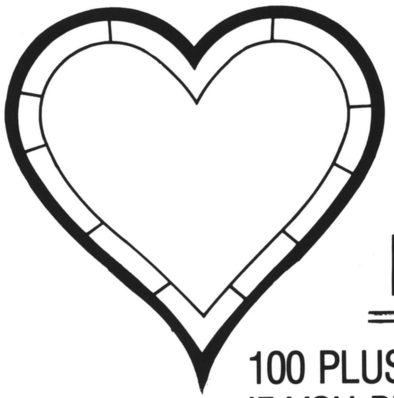

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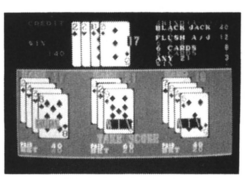

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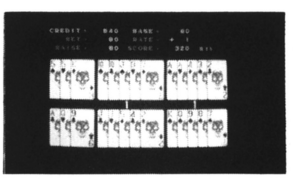

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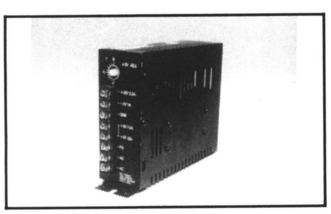

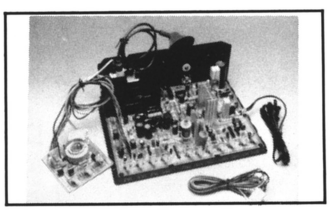

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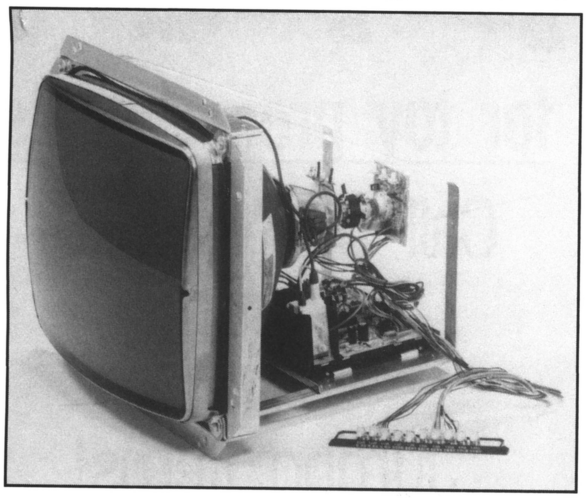

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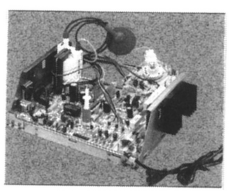

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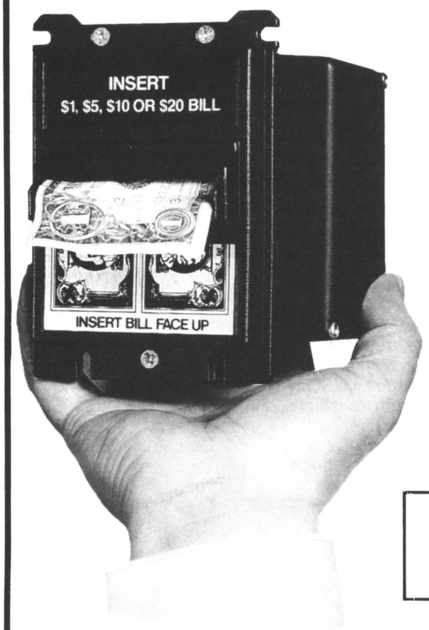

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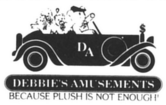

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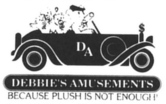

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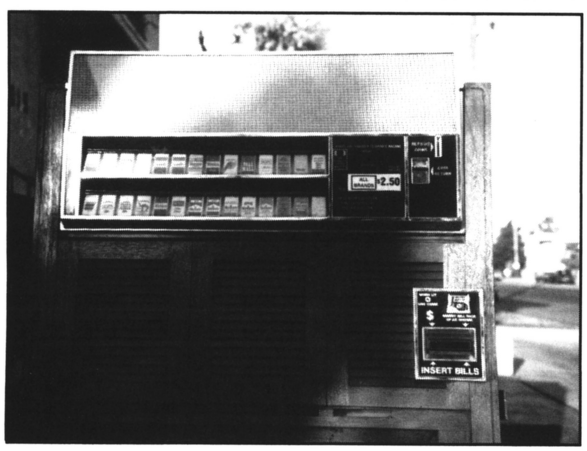

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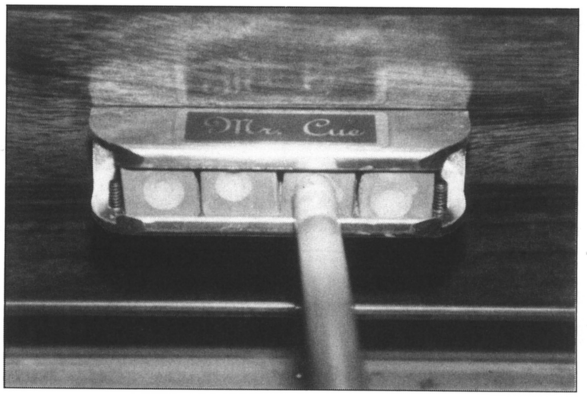

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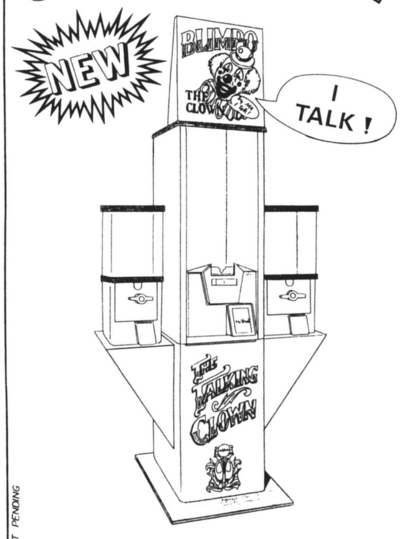

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