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INSTRUCTIONS

- INSERT COIN.
- SELECT ONE OR TWO PLAYERS.
- CONTROL LEVER MOVES DEFENSE SHIP RIGHT OR LEFT.
- TO FIRE MISSILES, PRESSED BUTTON.
- ATTRACTING ALIEN SHIPS SCORING HIGHER THAN SHIPS IN CONVOY.

SCORING

CONVOY: 20	40	50	60	70
SHIPPING: 10	20	30	40	50

CONTROL

FIRE

**1
PLAYER**

START GAME

**PLAYER
2**

FLAGSHIP ATTACK: 150 pts.

WITH 1 ESCORT: 200 pts.

WITH 2 ESCORTS: 300 pts.

2 ESCORTS, FLAGSHIP LAST: 500 pts.



Specifications:
Height: 68½" (1740 mm)
Width: 25" (630 mm)
Depth: 31½" (800 mm)
Weight: 204 lbs. (92 Kg.)

PLAY METER

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August 15, 1980

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PLAY METER, August, 1980

PLAY METER

Wanted: Imagination 16

Pinballs are apparently suffering at the hands of the hot video games, or so everyone claims. But Editorial Director David Pierson thinks it's because pinball is lacking in new play features. Then he makes some novel suggestions.

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Pinball critic Roger C. Sharpe examines the question of whether fifty-cent pinball is the way to go. How does this compare with the costs for other forms of entertainment?

Making Your Machine Records Useful 44

Do you use a card system to keep track of your machines' earnings? If so, there's a good chance you're leaving out a vital statistic which should be included on that card.

Service Tracking Saves Money 45

Managing Editor Ray Tilley has some suggestions on how to make sure your machines are serviced right the first time. It all has to do with keeping proper records. . . and assigning your servicemen blocks of machines.

Bookkeeping Data 48

It's a two-player game for you and your accountant. If you want him to give you timely and useful information, you have to give him useful data to work with.

Equipment Budgeting 52

Do you have a capital budgeting plan, or do you just buy something of everything? Charles Ross has some suggestions about how you should gauge your buying habits.

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Hugh Armstrong III, a Blaine, Tennessee illustrator, created the cover design.

From the Editor

Fortunately, the coin-op amusement industry is somewhat immune to the nation's economic ills. There are many reasons for this, so many that it seems almost a cliché when you say the coin-op amusement industry is recession-proof.

Still, our industry is not completely isolated from what is happening to the rest of the country. For one thing, interest rates are still out of sight, obviously making financing a greater problem for this or any other industry. And, second, our industry is still dependent upon the outside world for its new materials. And costs for those goods have risen steadily. Manufacturers especially have felt this pinch and it's reflected in the ever-increasing costs of their new equipment. This rising cost spiral is somewhat above and beyond the control of any single industry, even an industry that is buffered, in most respects, from other economic influences.

Now, for the good news. While the rest of the nation is suffering from a sluggish economy, there's something which sets us apart and should keep our industry whirring along. Other industries are hampered by slow play; and that, of course, results in a slowdown in productivity. But for the coin-op industry, at the grassroots level, we don't have to worry about that kind of foot-dragging because the income is gotten in cash—up front. That's a big plus, an in-bred edge that the industry should use to its advantage, especially when other outside forces threaten to put a crimp in the industry. The fact that an operator gets paid in cash should be used to an advantage by the industry as a whole.

However, we really haven't been using that built-in edge to our advantage. Distributors and manufacturers have been too willing to allow easy credit to make a sale,

easy credit where it's not really necessary. If the ultimate buyer of the equipment was dependent upon the fickle pay schedules of his customers, there would be reason for the manufacturers and suppliers to extend easy credit terms to the buyers. But since this is not the case for our industry, such practices take away the industry advantage.

For their part, operators need to be more responsible and not as dependent on slow-pay terms. And manufacturers, for their end of the bargain, could probably combat the high cost of new games by making better games. For instance, instead of having ten production runs of 10,000 games each, manufacturers should put more ingenuity into the games they build and reduce the number of models. Why not have five runs of 20,000 games each? That would ease the demand on the operator so he wouldn't have to over-extend himself and buy every new game that comes out just to keep himself covered. And the games would have a higher resale value, thus helping the operator out of the pinch so he'll have the ready cash to buy the new equipment.

It's simply a case of one hand washing the other. And all it requires is a sense of cooperation from everyone in this industry.



Ralph C. Lally II
Editor and Publisher

Five years ago in Play Meter's pages...

Here's a look into the files of PLAY METER's past issues—some of the news and feature material from our pages, five years ago this month.

AUGUST, 1975

Coinman of the Month was Harry Williams, "the man who gave us TILT!" and who introduced electricity to the pinball machine in the 1940s, industry pioneer and still active in the business of amusement games.

Said Williams, "I can't see where pinball is a harmful device, not the way it's constructed today. For example, in Los Angeles, there were many licensed machines that were called games of skill. I told the judge that pinball games were more skillful than some of those licensed by the police. I showed him where the different chance features existed on those, too..."

And on TV, we reported in August, 1975, there was a current game featuring a giant pingame with a shot-put sized ball: "The Magnificent Marble Machine."

In the news pages: Hanson Distributing had held a grand open house for its new Bloomington, Minnesota headquarters....New York State operators were being

faced with legislative bills to restrict pingames. One would have empowered local zoning boards to prohibit coin-operated amusement machines within 2,640 feet of public schools....Wisconsin operators were planning an apprenticeship program in early 1976 to train persons interested in becoming coin machine repair technicians... Seeburg corporate officers announced that a \$5.25 million financing program had just been completed to provide capital for its Chicago jukebox and vending machine plant.

New products? These were bowed-in for August, 1975: Atari released a cocktail video game, *Goal/4* (soccer style, for one, two, or four players)....Mirco Games' *Slam* cocktail table was unveiled (combining features from volleyball and tennis)....Chicago Coin was shipping a new two-player console sit-down baseball game, *Big League*....The first release from Project Support Engineering of Sunnyvale was called *Scandia* (with interchangeable logic boards for operator control)... *Red Baron* flipper game from Chicago Coin was its latest pin (the game had a World War I air dogfight motif)....and Meadows Games had out a new aerial bombing video game, *Bomber*.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO JUKEBOX OPERATORS

Promote phonograph business

The present economic condition—called many things, but all indicating a downward trend—is actually providing a stimulus to the jukebox industry.

Many places (taverns or lounges, e.g.) have found that professional musicians or disc jockeys are proving to be too expensive, relative to the added income they produce at the door and at the bar. Yet these locations cater to a dancing clientele, and management must provide the desired type of music or lose their customers.

Not surprisingly, many locations are turning or returning to the jukebox to provide the needed music. This eliminates the entrance charge that only helped defray the cost of live entertainment or a disc jockey, but irritated customers. With a phonograph, the price per selection can be set to provide a profitable income, or it can be used as a promotional tool to draw a larger crowd—by free play, five-cent night, ten selections for a dollar, etc.

Aggressive, promotion-minded managers use the jukebox in many ways to stimulate their overall business. In addition to “free play nights” or “five cent nights,” they run special events such as Music from the 1930s and '40s, polka parties, Square Dance Night, Music by the Big Bands, Roaring Twenties, Venetian Nights, an Evening of Irish Music, and waltz parties.

Some locations have their phonographs programmed

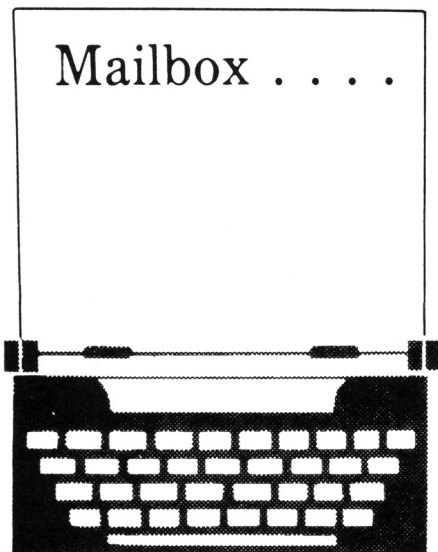
two ways: for “touch type” dancing until eleven o'clock and disco type dancing from eleven until closing.

There are some locations that use two phonographs located in separate rooms. Each phonograph is selectively programmed to please a certain type of audience.

Properly used, the phonograph is a very effective promotional tool that has a direct and measurable influence on profits. When you consider that a jukebox is provided to the location without any capital investment, is serviced, maintained, and in most cases, programmed without charge—and that the location owner shares in the machine's profits and that it stimulates his overall business—a phonograph turns out to be a most unique and profit-producing piece of equipment for the location owner.

For many operators, the jukebox has always been there—producing profits year-in, year-out. They take the phonograph for granted and tend to overlook its potential for increased profits. Added profit potential for the operator is also made possible by the new phonographs now available.

Joseph E. Senesac
Advertising and Sales Promotion Manager,
Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corporation



Seeburg had American Amusement and many other operators in a dilemma. A majority of our jukeboxes were manufactured by Seeburg. The unavailability of Seeburg parts had us believing that our Seeburg boxes were almost worthless and therefore would place a great number of operators in a financial crisis if these boxes had to be replaced.

Stern Electronics has always been a name one could trust in the coin-operated amusement business. I was very pleased that a company of Stern's stature has given new life to such an integral part of the music operators of America.

Wishing Stern Electronics well-deserved success in the Seeburg venture...

Gary W. Domino
American Amusement of
Morgan City, Inc.
Morgan City, Louisiana

Pleased with Stern

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly express my appreciation to Mr. Gary Stern and Stern Electronics, Inc. regarding the acquisition of Seeburg.

The declared bankruptcy of

'Red-tape waste'

First and foremost, why are operators forced to pay for “double dipping” practices?

Since jukebox operators are subjected to the same, why does a Copyright Fee Permit have to match a serial number, rather than a name and address of a located coin phonograph? If a jukebox operator must “change-out” a machine in a local bar at midnight so patrons can listen to “something” related to composers and publishers, he must have a fee on every unused phonograph in his shop, even though each of those units are used from (maybe) zero to 75 percent of earning capabilities.

Since the days of Copyright Fee Permits, a jukebox operator has to wait an extended length of time before he can legally put his hard-earned capital to work for him—new coin phonograph equipment—in terms of remodeling.

Since we operators are required to spend extra, unrecoverable, wasted hours for keeping our business in unnecessary legal formation, conforming to such crazy policies, we have lost the same valuable time that could have been utilized in analyzing and scrutinizing the potential value of thousands of annual new releases, to pick a winner in the record programming field.



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Sparky Electronics' *Asteroids* modification kit is what you need if players are keeping your game tied up for excessively long periods of time on just one quarter.

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Why has an office of our U.S. Government become a collection agency?

The paper work and restrictions involved in these matters must go.

Philip B. Rowan
D&R Amusement Company
Burlington, Iowa

AOE 'enlightening'

Our company, new and small in the amusement game industry, sent two representatives to the Amusement Operators Expo. We very much enjoyed the seminars and have corresponded with some of the panel members. The exhibitions were enlightening, and we are already in receipt of over 15 machines ordered directly from the show.

G. Alan Williams
Amusement Game Centers, Inc.
Houston, Texas

Ed. note—Trade people who need to make contact with any of the seminar members, exhibitors, or others who attended the first A. O. E., can write or call PLAY METER's editorial offices in New Orleans. Mark the dates of the second annual Expo: March 12—14 in New Orleans [Hyatt Regency].

Bypass not possible

Thank you for the mention in your May 15th issue....I would like to clear up one point brought forth in the article on page 53 entitled, "Getting the Edge on Mall Locations." The I.T.S.-1 Totalizer System I presented during the "Internal Cash Controls" seminar, Amusement Operators Expo, did in fact have a test vend switch which I pointed out at that time. The question that arose was: "Can the test vend switch be bypassed?" I answered categorically that it could not be bypassed! Therefore, no further investigation need be made as the test vend switch has been standard on our Music & Amusement Totalizers since late 1979.

It's a small point, but to leave it unanswered, some may think that we haven't tried to close the accountability loop completely, when in truth we have put it into practice long before it has occurred to others to question.

I hope this sets the record straight. Please keep up the great work with PLAY METER Magazine as your publication is an asset to our industry.

Edward Schroter
International Totalizing Systems
Newton, Massachusetts

IMPROVING THE IMPERFECT?

If we must, we must

Ever since we introduced our *Space Invaders* Modification Kit and followed that with our *Asteroids* Modification Kit, we at Sparky Electronics have been beset with operator inquires about a multitude of engineering headaches:

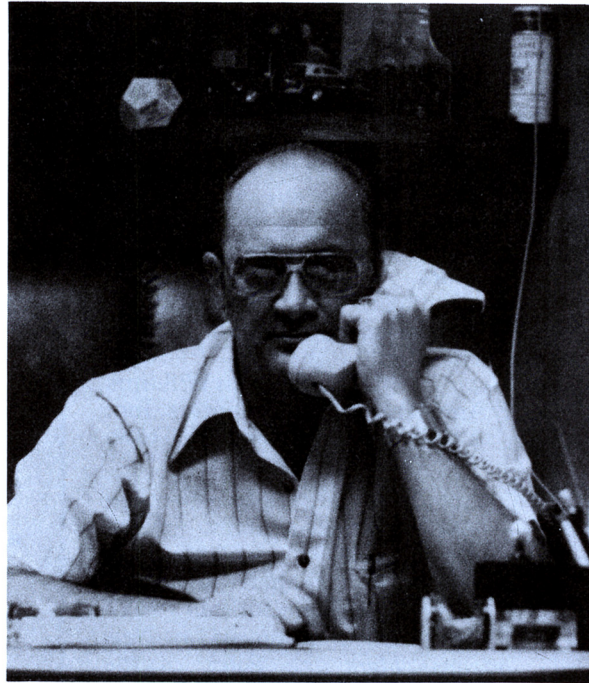
- "Why isn't more thought put into the manufacture of these games?"
- "How many modifications and repairs am I going to need before this game pays for itself?"
- "When I think that I spent over \$2,000 for a game a kid can master with fifty cents or, even worse, for nothing if he dangles quarters by a string, I get furious.
- "Where's my return on investment?"
- "I wish the engineers as some of these companies would wake up and see what's happening out here in the field."

From the beginning, our task here at Sparky Electronics has been to improve on perfection. That's been our challenge, and we feel our *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids* Modification Kits do just that. But these operator inquiries, which ask us to improve upon the imperfect, have created a dilemma for us here. So, for our part, we have resolved to attempt improvement also on the imperfect—but only where we feel it is better that we, and not the manufacturers, make those improvements. If it's something like a faulty coin mech or something that could be better handled at the manufacturing level, we intend to bring about those changes by personally bringing them to the attention of the appropriate parties.

For your part, if you have serious questions of a technical nature on any of your current games, feel free to write us and we'll do our best to remedy the problem ourselves—or see to it that the manufacturer does.

SPARKY ELECTRONICS
 95-26 42nd Avenue
 Elmhurst, New York 11373
 Telephone:
 (212) 429-7594, (212) 459-0950

Coinman of the Month



DONALD ANDERSON

Donald Anderson of A&A Amusement Company in Portland, Oregon, has been in the coin-operated amusement business about thirty years. And, during that time, he has built up his operation, watched it swell...and then diminish in size.

Now, a shrinking business usually suggests a failing business, but not in this case. What Anderson has been able to do is monitor the different parts of his route and examine what was making money for him and what was not. And then, having found this out, he had the courage to carry out his plan of action. The result has been an operation that is more efficient and profitable...and smaller.

It required delicate surgery on his part—raising the commission arrangements at his locations, going for service charges on top of that for those locations which were marginal, eliminating those locations that would never make the grade, dropping product lines that were not doing him any good, and so on.

Entire routes were lopped off, and the number of employees working for A&A diminished accordingly. At one time, Anderson reported, he had 49 employees. Now he has almost half that number. His operation includes 14 employees in the Portland office, three people at his Lincoln City branch office, and five others who work his two arcades.

Presently Don is serving his second term as a member on the AMOA board of directors. He's been a member of

that national association for about 15 years. In addition, he's one of the founders of the Oregon Amusement and Music Operators Association and, while still a member of that organization, he's a past president of the association.

He and his wife Jolene are native Oregonians who recently had some unexpected excitement when nearby Mount St. Helens erupted. Although he lives only about sixty miles or so from the volcano, fortunately for him, that eruption had no effect on him—the wind was blowing the other way, and the volcano dust was carried into the eastern Washington area. But the second time St. Helens blew, the fickle wind dumped layer after layer of volcanic ash in his backyard.

"I forgot to put my car inside," said Anderson, "and by the time I remembered, it was too late. The car is blue, but when I looked out, it had turned gray. The ash was so heavy in the air that by the time I had hosed the car off, it was covered again." Adding to that, Anderson said the cars that went through the streets kept swirling up the ash that was already on the ground.

Luckily, for Don, the volcano did not adversely affect his operation. In fact, he says it might even help. The tourist industry in the area expects the eruption will probably help business this year.

Maybe those tourists will feel like playing some of Anderson's pinballs while they're in the area to behold mighty St. Helens.

Pinball Earnings Anemia?



**Take a couple
of Williams.**



Williams[®] 
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PLAY METER: What information do you require and how do you use it to make your operation run efficiently?

ANDERSON: The information I'm looking for is on the collection tickets we get in daily. They are coded by location; so when they come in, I can go over them to keep on top of things. That's when I make my decisions as far as which machines have to be pulled out and where we need to add more machines. We do quite a lot of rotation, by the way, especially on our flipper games.

PLAY METER: So you're looking for the machines' earnings, but do you keep track of what each machine costs you?

ANDERSON: I've found that after all my years in the business, it's better if I go by some rules of thumb, instead. It's pretty hard to say a certain machine should do a certain amount of money. It might do that in one location, but at the next location maybe it just doesn't have the traffic to generate those dollars. So the rule of thumb I go by is if I don't get a minimum of \$25 per week per machine at my end, that machine isn't going to stay there, no matter what.

PLAY METER: Are there any other record keeping indicators you use to keep track of what is making you money and what is not?

ANDERSON: Well, with us, everything is on computer; so once a month I get a printout of what each of my locations is doing. At that time I can look over the printout and see what all my locations are doing. That's when I evaluate locations. When I see that a location has, say, three machines and is averaging only \$100 per month per machine, I'm afraid that guy is going to lose some of his machines, either that or else he's going to have to find somebody else to do business with.

PLAY METER: But do you really pull your machines out if the location owner balks?

ANDERSON: Yes, I do. A couple of years ago, after a Notre Dame Seminar in Chicago, I finally came to the realization that I couldn't afford to be a nice guy like any

longer. I made the move to sixty percent and even added on service charges. We now get an awful lot of service charges, varying from five to ten dollars per week, per location—before we start counting out for the location split. And it's worked for me. I just can't afford to be a nice guy today.

The example I like to use is of a place we'll call Joe's Bar. Everyone, it seems, has something like this. The business at Joe's Bar hasn't been what it should be ever since the plant next door folded up, but you like Joe so you don't have the heart to pull the machines out. Well, you can't let the fact that Joe's a nice guy interfere with a business decision. You should be able to go straight to Joe and say, "Look, we've been friends for a lot of years, but I just can't afford you anymore. Here's the phone book. There's a lot of competition that could probably do you a better job than I can because I just can't afford to put the stuff in here that you deserve. So, rather than put in some old stuff and make you mad, I'd rather you get someone else."

The reason is that if you put older stuff in there you'll have a tendency to say to yourself, "I've got three service calls to make today, and this one here from Joe. But we don't get that many plays over there anyway; so we take him last." And then maybe you don't get around to it at all. That's bad business. What happens when a real go-getter comes along and buys Joe's place and starts to work miracles with the place? He's going to see all the antiquated equipment you put in there, and he's going to think he doesn't want that operator in there. So you'll end up losing the location anyway. That's what happens when you continue to operate in a place even when you can't afford to—it reflects badly on your entire operation.

PLAY METER: When you stopped being a "nice guy" and started holding the line against locations, what effect did that have on your operation?

ANDERSON: I started to make some money. We used to operate way out in some little towns that were 40 or 50 miles away. And we'd have to send a servicemen down there and while he was there he'd go around to all the rest of the accounts in that area, just to make sure



Mount St. Helens: A neighbor too near to Anderson, in Portland

everything was working all right before he started back because it was such a long way. So I looked at that and saw where we were losing a serviceman for the entire day. And I started weighing that against the collection and saw where all I was doing was furnishing somebody with a job. I was buying a lot of gasoline and wearing out a lot of tires, and the location was making money, but I wasn't.

That's when I went back to those locations and told them I would just have to have more money or else I couldn't afford to do business with them. And I found out that even when I was making sixty percent with these locations, I still couldn't afford them. So I got in touch with another operator in the area, sold him my stuff down there, and got out of that region.

PLAY METER: From your answer, then, it appears you do look at more than just your collections. Isn't that right?

ANDERSON: That's right. I look at my overhead. Like that little route that was way out in the country, I got to looking at the whole thing and got to thinking that I had one man devoted to that route down there. And by the time I took, the cost of his vehicle, the cost of operating that vehicle, gas, tires, insurance, his payroll, and the other fringe benefits, I found out all I was doing was furnishing him with a job. So, by eliminating that route, I was able to eliminate a vehicle and a person, and I was able to free up some money to do more good for me elsewhere. It wasn't making a penny for me down there.

Lopping off unprofitable locations also had its effect on the size of my operation, too. At one time I had 49 employees, but now I'm down to 14 in this office; and that's counting the bookkeeping staff, receptionist, everybody. You wouldn't believe it, but my business is healthier because of it. The same thing happened for me with my music business, by the way.

PLAY METER: You found the music end to be unprofitable for you?

ANDERSON: Yes, out here the music business kind of got ruined by operators who went on a straight rental. For awhile they thought it was a pretty good idea because they went in and got so much a week, and that was it. But then the locations started to complain because they weren't making any money off the jukeboxes because their help was playing it for free. So, consequently, the rentals just kept getting lower and lower. In fact, there were some big companies going around offering ridiculously low rentals.

And the same thing was happening out here with pool tables. So I just scratched my head and figured here again I wasn't making any money on it; so I went to this big operator who was into music and pool but who was very little into the amusement field as far as videos and flippers, and I sold him all my music and vending and foosballs and pool. And, all of a sudden, when I phased that out, I started making some money. By the way, the other day I talked with the gentleman who I sold all that stuff to, and he told me things haven't gotten any better. It's still a struggle. So I think I make a wise decision.

At first, when I sold all that, I thought this would really dig into my cash flow, but then I saw where it was kind of a false deal anyway. It was a tremendous amount of cash coming in, but it was also a tremendous amount of cash going out, too. With my cigarette vending machines, for instance, after all the smoke had cleared, it seemed the only money I was making in vending was what I was making in royalty payments.

PLAY METER: Getting back to your music problems, you saw the rental as the beginning of the end for the profitable operation of jukeboxes in your area?

ANDERSON: Well, a lot of operators thought that was

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service backup.**

**But when your top
earning game is down,**



**you need
more than
a smile and a promise.**

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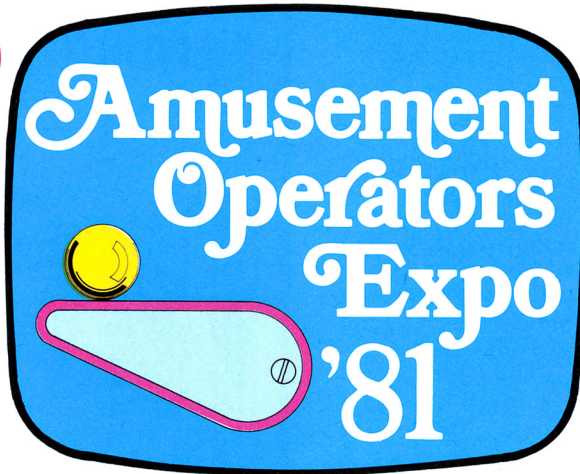
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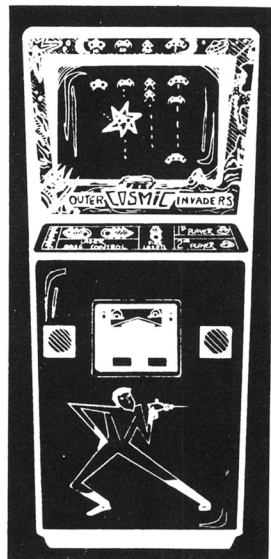
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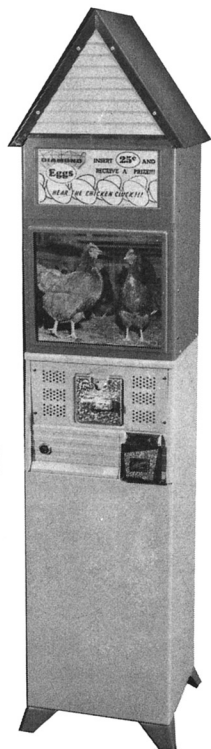
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the way to get around all their problems. They'd give the locations the keys and let them pay us \$25 a week and not worry about what they did. But this was wrong because the locations would play the phonographs longer, and so the machines got more wear and tear on them, and the operator, for his end, wasn't making any more money.

Now, what I can see, instead of a flat rental is a lease, but it should be like car rentals, where you're charged so much a day and so much a mile. It should be \$10 or \$12 a week for the use of the machine, plus a charge of, say, two or three cents per play. That would have been a more equitable way. If we would have done that, instead of going to the flat rental, we would have made more money, and music would have remained profitable. The locations would have had the keys, and we would have gone in only to read the play meter and multiply that times the formula to see what the location owed.

And there were also other problems which contributed to the problems with music. So many places were turning to tape decks and FM radio stations and were taking out their jukeboxes. So the number of music locations started to decline. All of this contributed to the decline of music in my area. As I said, we operate only seven jukeboxes now, but at one time we operated 240.

PLAY METER: Have you taken any measures to insure efficiency among your workers?

ANDERSON: Yes, I have. Some time back I took my total route in the Portland area and my two arcades and assigned each serviceman so many locations and so many machines, and this has helped our efficiency. The reason I did this was that I wanted to get away from the attitude among my people that although they know they should do something they won't do it because they're in a hurry or figure they'll just let George do it. As I said, I wanted to get away from that. I found that I was running too much into the same problem where a serviceman said he thought another serviceman was going to take care of some call, and so the repair was never made. My present setup, however, has eliminated that. Each servicemen has particular machines and locations that are his exclusive responsibility, and he knows he had better take care of them or else he'll hear from me about it.

PLAY METER: What was the servicemen's reaction to this change?

ANDERSON: They actually kind of liked it. They found out inside of a very short period of time that they were eliminating calls. Our call sheet went from one page a day to about one page to cover the entire week.

PLAY METER: How many calls do you have a day?

ANDERSON: We hardly have five calls a day now, and that's counting change calls, too. With this new system, I leave it up to the individual servicemen as to how much time he should spend on each machine. He has to fill in a report every day, and here in the office we break that down to see how many actual calls he's had. I want to know when he's been called back to a location more than once in a week so we can check and see if he's having repeat calls on a particular machine. If he is, it's his responsibility to get to me and tell me that machine has to come into the shop for repair.

I can also look at that report and check for driving time and see if he's been doubling back. There's a space for time unaccounted for. And there's a space for time spent on preventive maintenance. I'm very interested in that; if there isn't enough time spent on preventive maintenance I can expect to see his service calls start going up.

PLAY METER: So your servicemen are required to fill out some forms themselves?

ANDERSON: Yes, that's right. The forms include the calls they took that day, what was the matter with the machine, how much time they spent at a location, and how much time they spent driving. And each mechanic, as I said, has certain machines and locations that are assigned to him specifically. They don't do any collecting, although they will count change if the location needs it. But their time is to be spent servicing the machines on their route and performing whatever preventive maintenance is required to keep their machines operating. The reason for this is I do not want to go into one of my locations and see that the machines are dirty or that there are a lot of lights out, and if I do see that, then I know exactly who is responsible for it. My men are expected to keep their machines up. If they don't have any other calls, they are expected to do a certain amount of preventive maintenance.

Sometimes they'll gripe about the detail of filling in the forms, saying something like they forgot to look at their watches and so they forgot to put down the time. And I'll just tell them I'm not looking for them to carry a stop watch around with them. I just want approximates. "I'm paying you for forty hours," I'll tell them, "and I want to know what you're doing for forty hours."

PLAY METER: But by instituting this procedure, you haven't had any real serious problems with your people?

ANDERSON: No. Since we started the preventive maintenance program, we've been able to cut off our service at 7 o'clock at night. And on Sundays, we rotate emergency calls only. That way, if a bowling alley with 15 machines calls in that one of the machines is out of order, they can wait until Monday because what we would make to go out there and repair that one machine would cost more than what we would make between then and Monday.

PLAY METER: Is there anything else which has helped make your employees better workers?

ANDERSON: I let them know what I'm doing for them. Along with the employees' W-2 Form, I also give each man a company form that shows how much it cost the company to employ him. This is so the guy, when he looks at his W-2 Form, won't think he's got a cheap boss who could only afford to pay him \$18,000 last year. He'll see that company form which will also show that we furnished him with a uniform at so much cost, that we paid for his health and accident, his life insurance, his social security, accident and unemployment insurance, and so on. Then the guy looks down at that and sees that actually he makes \$24,000 last year. It's worked for us, and it helps to point this out to your workers.

PLAY METER: Have you noted a shift in your buying habits recently?

ANDERSON: I believe we have, and it's become even more so in the last couple of years. *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, *Galaxian*, *Tailgunner*—they've all been terrific pieces of equipment, and I've noticed a change from flippers to videos. There's been a big jump over, in fact, especially in the bars where the flipper games are really played. Now, all of a sudden, everybody wants an *Asteroids* or *Galaxian* or whatever.

And now I'm looking hard at the cocktail tables again. They have never been too heavy in this area, but I see where they are starting to make some inroads now. I kind of shied away from them for awhile because I got burnt so bad on the *Pong* stuff, but now I can see where things are leaning in that direction. I was in Hawaii recently and saw where a friend of mine has over 40 cocktail tables in his arcade. I have always been against sitdown cocktail games in arcades, with the exception of games like *Star Fire*. But I'm going to try again with these cocktail tables.

PLAY METER, August, 1980

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Wanted: Imagination

By David Pierson

Pinball needs some fresh approaches, and some bright ideas are around, just waiting to be used!

Let's look at the symptoms: widespread copying, a sameness in design and appearance and play appeal, a lack of any new play features, games with short shelf lives, and games with the same theme—and even like-sounding names! It all points to one conclusion, that the industry is suffering from a lack of imagination.

It could perhaps be put in nicer words, but to mince the words would mince the meaning as well.

Presently videos are riding the crest, apparently on the success of a single game, *Space Invaders*, which has been dissected by various manufacturers who, poring over every one of the game's ingredients, have looked for the secret of its success. And, depending upon the thoroughness of their analysis, they have turned up new games, using some or many of the ingredients in this archetype. *Asteroids*, *Galaxian*, and so on down a lengthy list—some remotely reminiscent of the original success and others almost carbon copies.

But even while videos are riding high on the sea of success, there is a growing suspicion among distributors, operators, and players as to what these companies will do for an encore. Can we expect more of *Space*-this or *Cosmic*-that? Are there no other game ideas in the world besides those that are elaborations or modifications of this outer-space theme?

And while the video market has burgeoned, it has apparently done so at the expense of the rest of the

industry. Most notably, pinball has been suffering at the hands of the video foe, or so everyone agrees.* But it isn't so much the challenge of videos but rather the stagnant pingame designs which have brought about a change in the balance. To paraphrase William Shakespeare, the fault lies not in the videos but in the pins themselves that they (the pins) are underlings.

And the reason is a lack of originality.

With the introduction of solid state a few years back, pinball seemed to have unlimited horizons. But, since that time, operators and players have been only mildly impressed with the new play features in the games.

True, the changes that have been made in pinball have been for the good. And it could certainly be argued that probably any pingame produced today would have been a top game last year. That's a healthy sign and shows that the game is evolving...upward. But it appears the game is not evolving fast enough. When a new pinball idea or play feature is designed, we find it re-packaged in game after game after game until it's stale and has lost all its appeal.

There have been hardly enough fresh ideas coming from pinball to keep players coming back, and therein lies the problem. Recycling the same ideas in game after game is not going to do it. So players and operators, remembering all the promise this new technology apparently held for pinball when Bally's *Eight Ball* appeared on the scene, are standing back and wondering now, "Is that all there is?"

Can manufacturers keep relying on scoring toward infinity? What will happen when we hit 35-digit scoring?

* Ed. Note: For a polling of distributors' views on the pin-versus-video point, see *Distributing*, this issue.

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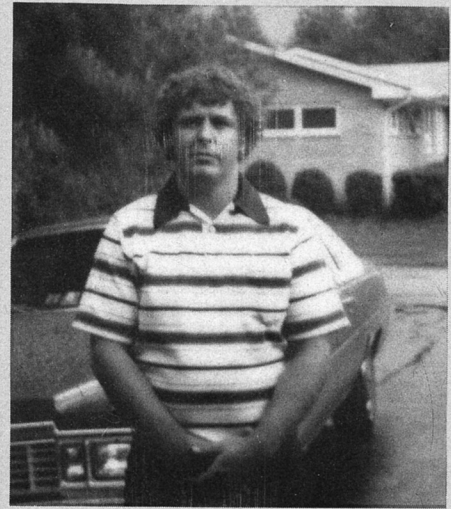


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Can we anticipate pinball machines with McDonald's-like signs proclaiming "Over 35 billion points scored!" Are the manufacturers going to be able to rely on personalities forever? Will a particular game go over big and possibly open a new market if we plaster Walter Cronkite's face on the backglass? Are these the only gimmicks left in pinball's bag of tricks?

What has apparently created the pinch for pinball is that game producers have lost sight of what will play and have opted instead for what will sell. That, plus a myopic view of what the other pinball manufacturers are doing, has conditioned them to think that their only competition is other pinball manufacturers. As a result, manufacturers—trying to firm up their pinball market shares—have for the most part played it safe and conservative. And they have created a glut of games that are too much alike and which have, consequently, little resale value, thus crimping the operator's pocket because he can't resell them back to upgrade his route.

Something more has to be done in playfield design than rearranging pop bumpers and drop targets if manufacturers want the games to keep the players' interest. But what? What ideas could be tried on the pinball playfield that are not being tried right now?

Pin play possibilities

Some of the seeds for that innovation lie in a current pingame, Williams' *Firepower*, which, by the way, is enjoying great commercial appeal in spite of the soft market for pinball at this time. Much of the attention toward that game is being focused on the Multi-Ball play feature which allows the player to play with three balls at the same time. It's an old forgotten play feature which has been resurrected and with great success. Bravo!

But the seeds for pinball innovation are elsewhere in this game. The right flipper button changes the lit lanes at the top of the playfield, in addition to activating the right flipper. The simple appearance of this feature suggests a multitude of play features which can spin off this one idea. At this point the idea is still primitive in its application (in fact, it's probably not even the major attraction on this game), but if this capability were to be expanded upon, pinball would have countless options open to it. Here are some:

1. While the ball is in play, the player could percentage his own shots by activating one or both of the flipper buttons. He could, for instance, increase the spinner value from 1X to 2X or 3X or 5X, and in

doing so, reduce his scoring values elsewhere on the playfield. So if he raised the spinner value to 5X, thinking he would be able to hit that target but missed and knocked down a drop target instead, he would score a lower value on the drop target than if he would have raised the value on the drop target and lowered the value of the spinner instead.

In this way, the skilled player, by the timely activation of his flipper buttons, could do more than just keep the ball in play and direct his shots. He could also increase his scoring potential by knowing when to percentage his shots.

2. Like Cinematronics' *Space Wars*, which was itself a giant video game hit, the player could decide, perhaps by the activation of flipper buttons before the first ball is shot, which game mode he wants to play—such as beginner, average, master.

This would allow the game to be designed to meet varying skill levels. The reason for it is that presently a pinball player can score high even if he doesn't know which targets will advance the value at other targets. Just by the mere chance of keeping the ball alive on the playfield so that it bangs around hitting something,

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scores points for the player.

But using increasingly more difficult modes, players can learn what is keyed into what because they won't score points randomly. For instance, if a target increases in value after the drop target bank is knocked down once, perhaps on a higher mode of play, the target might not score any points at all until the drop target bank is knocked down. This would obviously reduce scores, but that has not proved to be a hindrance for video games. *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, *Galaxian*, and so on do not rely on infinitude scoring—or even large increments.

And to encourage players to try to play the game at its highest mode, perhaps that should be the mode where free games, extended time, or high scores to date could be won or posted.

And, of course, there are other play possibilities which should be examined for pinball play.

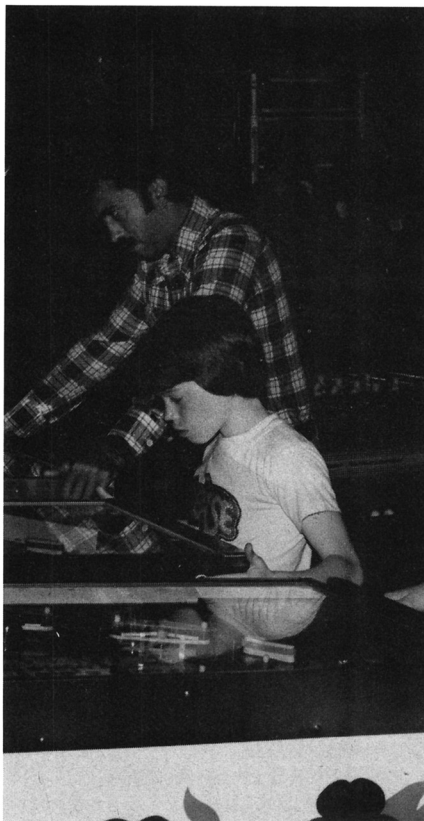
3. As for the matter of fifty-cent play, for instance, it would probably be easier to upgrade the per-game pricing structure if the game were structured so that it prohibited a direct comparison that discourages play. If three-ball play was once 25 cents but is not 50 cents, it's a turnoff to players. But where is it decreed that pinball has to be based on per-ball play?

Although videos have moved away somewhat from a time factor for the games, that method of measuring play time has been accepted by the playing public. That way, when a player buys time on a pinball game, he would buy, say, two minutes or perhaps even more. And if he drains his third ball before the allotted time, he would still get another ball, and another one, and another one, until his time is up. And when time runs out, one of two things could happen: the machine would deactivate and the ball drain, as it does when a player tilts; or the player's game would end when that ball finally drains. It seems this approach was tried once, in a game by Williams called *Travel Time*. Would a re-examination be worthwhile?

Play features could be added to help emphasize this new play style. For instance, if a player lights up all of four lanes at the top of the playfield, perhaps the target values would increase in value. So players would quickly drain three, four, five,

or six balls so that they can have more plunger shots to light the lanes at the top of the playfield.

The advantage to the operator if pinball were placed on a time basis rather than a per-ball basis is that it would stop a player from tying up a game between balls while he goes for another beer or whatever. The game puts the clock on him, and he has only so much time to play the game—just as he does now with a video game.



Budding pinball wizard: Giving him pin play on a time basis would not leave him discouraged at the game.

And, along these lines, operators could eliminate non-revenue producing free games, replacing that feature instead with extended play time, so that a player can try to achieve a high score in the allotted time.

Such a change would make increased pricing more palatable for the playing public because the game would have restructured its way of measuring playing time.

Such a change would also have the effect of encouraging parents to let their little children play pinball. As a parent, when I go to an arcade, for instance, I am reluctant to let my

four-year-old daughter play a pinball game because she'll drain three balls before the quarter hits the bottom of the cash box. Instead, she plays the videos because they allow her so much time to play, no matter what her playing ability. But if the pin-games were set on a time basis, rather than per-ball, parents would probably be more likely to let their children play the games, too. Think of it as training young people in how to play pinball.

4. And, of course, there are those long-awaited play features such as the multi-level playfield which operators have been anxious to see. The ideas are out there. It isn't that pinball is dead. It's just that designers have become conservative and unimaginative of late.

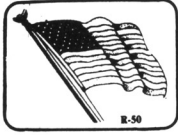
One final thought on this matter. If a pinball manufacturer turned out a giant hit which would have the commercial success of a video *Space Invaders* or *Asteroids*, how would that affect the manufacturer's own production? Well, Midway and Atari have apparently demonstrated that a major manufacturer does not have to turn out countless models a year in order to maintain its place. Rather, if it has a good piece, chances are that, like Atari, like Midway, that pinball manufacturer will probably be able to continue producing that game long after a normal production run. And thus, more time could be spent to turn out quality games, rather than mediocre games which have to be produced to keep the production line running.

Things are not as stagnated with either pinball or video as many industry people are being led to think nowadays. Rather, there will always be a market for a good game.

It's not necessary to "re-invent the wheel" every time out, but certainly, close scrutiny should be given to see if perhaps too many assumptions are being taken for granted (such as per-ball play being the only method of gauging pinball play). When Goodyear invented rubber, that wasn't the final statement on the wheel. Since then we've had rain tires, snow tires, 2-plys, 4-ply, radials, steel-belted, fiberglass, tubeless, and so on.

There is no doubt that pinball will survive. There never has been any question that it would. The question is if it will innovate fast enough or will it accept as its place a smaller share of the playing public's dollar.

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★ Star-Gazette



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Moose Lake, Minnesota 55767

Thursday, March 27, 1980

Two Sections

18 pages 20¢

Suit filed against Runnberg

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) announced this week that as part of its campaign against unlicensed jukebox operators, certain of its members have filed a lawsuit for copyright infringements against Gordy's Arrowhead Music, Inc. and Gordon Runnberg, a jukebox operator in Moose Lake.

Ordinarily, music users such as bars, restaurants and taverns where jukeboxes are located enter into voluntary agreements with ASCAP. The voluntary license system does not apply to jukebox performances because the jukebox industry persuaded Congress to grant a compulsory license in the new copyright

law, which became effective in 1978. Under the compulsory license system, a jukebox operator may obtain the right to perform all copyrighted music for an \$8 per year per jukebox by registering the jukebox with, and paying the fee to, the United States Copyright Office. The \$8 fee is subject to adjustment this year by a federal agency, the Copyright Royalty Tribunal.

In the complaint filed in Federal Court, the plaintiffs claim that a number of their copyrighted musical compositions were performed on a jukebox, without authorization, at the Municipal Liquor Store, Rush City, MN on December 5, 1979.

When asked of the law suit against him, Gordon Runnberg stated that he had not even been notified of the action against him.

Runnberg commented that he has



license sticker on the jukebox in Rush City might have occurred if the jukebox had been recently replaced with one from the shop that had not yet received a sticker.

Runnberg explained he hopes that ASCAP will come and look at his records, for he feels he is doing a much better job at complying to the copyright restrictions than many other operators.

Runnberg's operations cover an area ranging from Carlton to Rush City and From Cloquet to McGregor.

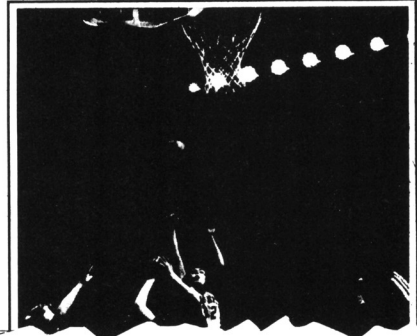
Runnberg commented, "It seems unfair," other operators can get away without licensing their jukeboxes, we are "doing better than others in trying to comply."

Robert Light, District Manager for ASCAP, answered back to Runnberg's unfair charges by stating, "There will be more." According to Light, a crackdown on offenders of the copyright law is proceeding.

Jones (a/k/a Mick Jones) and Lou Gramm. Under the federal copyright law, the Courts normally award injunctions against further infringing performances and costs, including attorney's fees and damages which range from a minimum of \$250 to a maximum of \$10,000 for each song infringing.

Chmielewski assures funding for schools

At the insistence of State Senator Florian Chmielewski, the Sen. Tax Committee



Recipe contest

ASCAP snafu shakes up operator

By RAY E. TILLEY

Gordon Runnberg, a jukebox operator in Moose Lake, Minnesota found himself steeped in "quite a bit of concern" when he was slapped with a lawsuit by ASCAP in March. "A federal marshall served papers on me and the whole ball of wax," Runnberg commented.

Sticky subject of all the flap? The lack of a copyright fee stamp on one of his approximately 150 phonographs in operation—all of the rest of which were currently fee-paid, he said when contacted by PLAY METER.

For the want of a stamp, \$250 to \$10,000 per each of four ASCAP-licensed songs on the jukebox could have been assessed against Runnberg, under the Copyright Law.

In their complaint against Runnberg filed in federal court, the ASCAP plaintiffs claimed that the four copyrighted musical compositions were performed on a jukebox without authorization at the Municipal Liquor Store, Rush City, Minnesota, on December 5, 1979.

When asked by the Moose Lake Star Gazette newspaper about the lawsuit against him, Runnberg stated that he had not even been notified of the legal action.

It ended as "a farce as far as they (ASCAP) were concerned," Runnberg told PLAY METER. He discovered in telephoning George Linear at the Copyright Office in Washington, D. C. that a mix-up had occurred. "My fees were pur-

chased under Gordon Runnberg, and we are incorporated under 'Gordy's Arrowhead Music, Inc.' So there is no record of fee payment under Gordy's Arrowhead Music, Inc."

He said he had at least 135 jukeboxes on location at the time cited in the ASCAP action. To the best of his knowledge, all were fee-paid, as confirmed by the Copyright Office, under the company name. The exceptions were machines which were being shopped. The absence of the license sticker on the jukebox in Rush City might have been due to that phonograph having been recently replaced for a machine which went into the shop, he stated.

He said he invited ASCAP to come and examine his books, because, as he put it, "we are doing better than others in trying to comply" with the 1978 Copyright Royalties Law.

In a letter dated May 21, 1980, Runnberg and his firm were notified by ASCAP that the suit brought against them for copyright infringements was dismissed.

He termed the original action "unfair" but said he would not seek any reciprocal action for "false suit." He stated, "It's just over and I will try to forget about it."

But Runnberg had been on the grill for more than two months, with the threat of a multi-thousand-dollar court judgement hanging fire. And among other embarrassments, the Moose Lake newspaper had carried

a banner headline, "Suit Filed Against Runnberg," with a story on the suit, on March 27. He told PLAY METER that the royalties matter produced local "good publicity in the end, but it started out bad."

The initial "bad press" left him "kind of shook up for awhile," he commented. With the dismissal of the suit, Runnberg said he had to take his case to the newspaper to get equal coverage of the suit against his operation being dropped.

Under the compulsory jukebox license system, a jukebox operator obtains the right to play all copyrighted music for an \$8 annual fee per jukebox by registering each machine and paying the fee to the U. S. Copyright Office. The \$8 fee is subject to adjustment this year by the Copyright Royalty Tribunal.

Under the federal copyright law, courts can ward injunctions against further infringing performances and award plaintiffs costs including attorneys' fees and damages from \$250 to \$10,000 for each song infringing.

ASCAP District Manager Robert Light answered Runnberg's charges of unfairness by saying of the suit: "There will be more." Light commented to the Star-Gazette of Moose Lake that a "crackdown on offenders of the copyright law" will be proceeding, and future lawsuits against other operators will follow.

Runnberg's operation covers a Minnesota area from Carlton to Rush City and from Cloquet to McGregor.

IAAPA plans lobbyist

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) plans sending a "representative" to Washington, D. C. by late August.

IAAPA may be getting a jump on the national elections in the fall by sending its own rep to the Capital. A spokesman for the association said, however, that the responsibilities to be given to the proposed office will depend on the person hired.

Applicants were being interviewed for the director of governmental rela-

tions post by the IAAPA, which is headquartered at 7222 West Cermak Road in North Riverside, Illinois. A selection of an officer and the Washington office should be set in 30 to 60 days, said IAAPA's Ray Sholander in mid-June.

A director is being sought "who is familiar with our problems in Washington, D. C.," said Sholander. Although he stopped short of defining the post as a lobbyist's, that apparently would be the role desired for the officer.

Game tax off the books

The July 1, 1980 expiration of federal gaming tax stamp requirements will open many amusement modes—including pinball tournaments—to legitimacy, as well as opening the door to local districts' definition of gaming devices.

The gaming machine tax has been a headache for amusement machine operators because, in addition to slot machines, many other types of coin-operated machines were included under the regulation, requiring a \$250 federal tax stamp for each machine. The IRS had ruled pinball machines to be gambling devices when they were used in a profit-making promotion. [PLAY METER, July, 1979.]

Expiration of the tax, under the Revenue Act of 1978, will leave definition of gaming devices to local jurisdictions. Some in the coin-op industry expect confusion to reign when the states' legislatures begin to split hairs between amusement

machines and gaming devices.

One chief suggestion to operators has been to watchdog new legislation which could rule games to be wagering tools (as discussed in an Amusement Operators Expo seminar; see Expo wrapup story, June 15, 1980 PLAY METER).

IRS had ruled, oddly, that pin-games when used in a pinball tournament were gambling devices—but were not when not used in such promotions. The problem this has presented operators was that if they undertook a profit-making promotion where they would award prizes, they would be forced to pay the \$250 per-machine tax—thereby making those pinball machines technically illegal to operate according to most local laws.

However, with the expiration of the tax stamp law, pinball tournaments—as well as video card games and slot machines—will no longer come under this special scrutiny by any federal agency.



Pinball tournaments were made easier to stage after June 30.

In Memoriam

MIKE ANDERSON, JR.

ERIE, Pennsylvania — Mike Anderson, Jr., president of Mickey Anderson, Inc. distributorship, died May 10 at the age of 41, being treated at a Ft. Lauderdale, Florida hospital for chronic heart illness. The funeral service was held May 14 in his home town of Erie.

Mr. Anderson spent his entire working life in the coin machine industry. His father Mickey Anderson founded the Erie distributorship some 40 years ago. Mike Anderson became president of the firm, of which his brother Richard is vice president, on the retirement of their father. A surviving son Mike also works in the family business.

CALENDAR

August 1, 2

Oregon Amusement and Music Operators Association summer meeting, Ashland Hills Inn, Ashland

September 19-21

North Carolina Coin Operators Association, annual convention, Radisson Hotel, Charlotte

September 23-25

Eurautomat, trade exhibition, Expo Rogier Center, Brussels, Belgium

September 26-28

West Virginia Music and Vending Association, convention, Ramada Inn, South Charleston

October 2-5

ENADA, Italian national amusement machines exhibition, Congress Building, EUR, Rome

October 8-10

Japan Amusement Trade Association, annual convention, Tokyo

October 10, 11

Amusement and Music Operators of Virginia annual convention, Howard Johnson's, Richmond

October 23-26

NAMA National Convention/Exhibition, Bartle Hall, Kansas City, Missouri

October 31, November 1, 2

1980 AMOA Exposition, Conrad Hilton, Chicago

Sega opens 'Pizzazz'

Sega Enterprises has designed "P.J. Pizzazz" to be a family entertainment complex unlike any other.

Located in the Eastland Shopping Center in West Covina, California, P. J. Pizzazz is a futuristic amusement center which features a full complement of advanced electronic games and introduces Sega's use of computer video animation. In the same atmosphere, there is a quality pizza restaurant featuring unusual and "unique" recipes.

Aiming at the whole family, the complex has a special area to meet the needs of each age group. In Pizzazz Place, teens who want to test their skills and expertise can challenge any of the Sega games. Young children who require active forms of amusement have a variety of kiddie rides to experience: they can romp in the Big Bouncer or play in the styrofoam-filled Space Crawl.

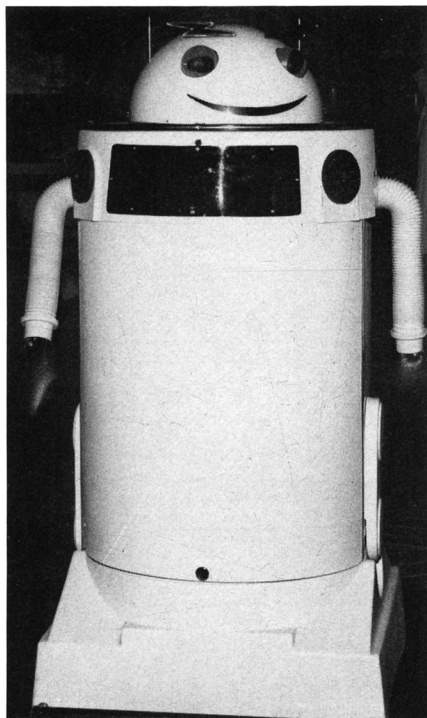
While younger people play, the parents can relax in P. J.'s Corner, an adult lounge, and play Sega cocktail table games. The demanding role of babysitter is eliminated here for parents—they can monitor their children's activity from the lounge via a large overhead screen. Two 12-foot video screens, in addition, present live coverage of sports

events, motion pictures, and listings of current announcements.

Guests upon entering the center are greeted by "P. J.," a friendly computerized robot. As mascot of the facility, P. J. mingles with customers, delivers personalized messages, and emcees birthday celebrations and other festivities.

Said Sega's chairman of the board, David Rosen, "Sega Enterprises has spent many years researching and developing this innovative concept in family entertainment. We feel that by presenting a variety of highly entertaining space age games which capture the imagination of youth and adults alike, coupled with Sega computer video animation and a high quality pizza restaurant, and environment has been created for people of all ages," said the chairman of Sega Enterprises.

The opening of P. J. Pizzazz in West Covina represents the first of a planned network of Sega regional entertainment centers. The West Covina center opened to the public June 16, with a grand opening June 20 and an earlier "VIP tour" for industry people, said Sega's Steve Isaacson, vice president and general manager.



"P. J." is a mechanical man, the mascot of the facility.



Tied in closely are kids' amusements, coin-op games, and food for family.

Betson hosts video school

Betson Enterprises sponsored an Atari Video School for its New Jersey Shore arcade operators on May 6 and 7 in Point Pleasant, N. J. Russ McDonald of Atari led the class in a step by step study of the basics of video.

The class was attended by both arcade owners and service technicians from Keansburg to Wildwood. Art Warner, assistant sales manager, and David Barkovitch, field service technician, both of Betson, assisted McDonald.

Warner said the class was very worthwhile in light of the recent increased interest in video game play. He told the class that Betson intended to continue sponsorship of such classes, to underscore its "commitment as a full-service distributorship."

Vending sales volume jumps

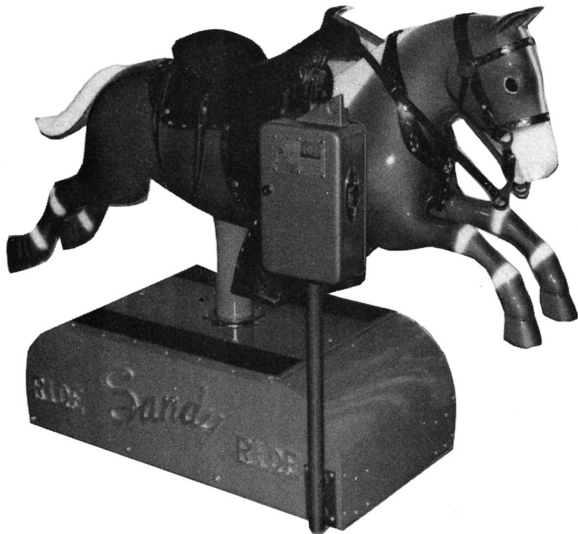
More than eight out of 10 vending service companies achieved sales volume increases for 1979 but only half of the companies reported new profit increases compared with 1978, according to a nationwide survey made by the National Automatic Merchandising Association.

Reports from 452 vending services companies in 38 states indicate that 85.4 percent of the companies had higher vended sales volume last year, 8 percent stayed even and 6.6 percent had lower sales compared with 1978, said G. Richard Schreiber, NAMA president.

Although 52.7 percent of the firms achieved higher net profits, 28.2 percent said profits were down and 19.1 percent said 1979 results were even with 1978. Schreiber said rising business expenses and inability to increase retail prices fast enough to match higher costs affected profit margins.

Higher vended sales volume was forecast for 1980 by 74.1 percent of the respondents to NAMA's survey—with companies in the West, Southwest, and New England appearing more optimistic than those in the Great Lakes region, Schreiber said.

New accounts were credited by 74.6 percent of the respondents for higher volume last year; 63.7 percent increased volume through higher retail pricing; and 53.9 percent reported higher sales volume from present accounts.



From horses to rockets:

Kiddie rides pick up the pace

While pinballs, videos, and jukeboxes have been swept along with the new solid state technology, kiddie rides have, to operators' minds, been left somewhere behind. The technological switchover for pins and videos, of course, has resulted in a corresponding increase in earnings. But kiddie rides, though also making the transition, seem almost to have been completely forgotten.

Apparently, though, that is changing.

Mark Waite, president of a kiddie ride manufacturing firm, Waite Manufacturing of Brush, Colorado, sees a change taking place among operators as far as their attitudes and perceptions of these rides.

"Kiddie coin-op rides had gone by the wayside," says Waite, "because for too long there wasn't any innovation. When you talked about kiddie rides, a mental image of a coin-operated horse flashed in everybody's mind. But that has really changed."

That change, he told *PLAY METER*, was brought about because of the new technology which allowed manufacturers to develop more sophisticated rides. "We can do more things now and do them better," says Waite. "As a result, we've enhanced the locations with classier rides. So now locations with more traffic are allowing room for the placement of these rides.

"Enclosed malls, for instance. They don't want horse rides. But with hydroplanes and race cars and laser ships, they're very receptive. We've been able to open up a lot of location possibilities for operators like entrance ways to chain stores and shopping malls and shopping centers and a lot of that has been made

possible with the introduction of solid state."

The thinking is that parents will always spring for money to let their children ride, and if the ride can be used as a baby-sitter while mom or dad is shopping, so much the better.

"The drawback we've found," said Waite, "has been, believe it or not, with the operator. Operators still think kiddie rides are nickel and dime rides. But they're not. It's nothing for a mother nowadays to spend 25 cents per ride to let her children ride a few times while she's in the store shopping."

The result is higher collections than operators sometimes expect, Waite insists.

Louis Boasberg of New Orleans Novelty agrees. The rides are not the loss leaders many operators think they are, he says, but rather are profitable in their own right.

"The kiddie rides today," says Boasberg, "are very appealing to children. They appeal to their eyes and ears and, most of all, to their imaginations. It's a much more pleasing and sensual experience for children than the horse used to be.

"And these rides will make around \$50 to \$100 a week. When you consider the longevity, that they'll stay out there earning longer than your other pieces, it's got to be a plus."

Waite said he deals direct with operators because distributors are more accustomed to working with pins, videos, jukeboxes, and so on; and, as a result, they just aren't interested. Hopefully, he says, in time more distributors will see promise in the rides and accept them as part of their product lines. To overcome the disadvantage of not having a dis-

tributor network, Waite has instituted an exchange program for board repair. But he claims the rides do not require the same high degree of maintenance as many of the other pieces of coin-operated equipment.

As Boasberg stressed, the longevity of the pieces is also to the operator's advantage.

"There's money to be made in kiddie rides," contends Waite, "if the operator is smart enough to investigate it."

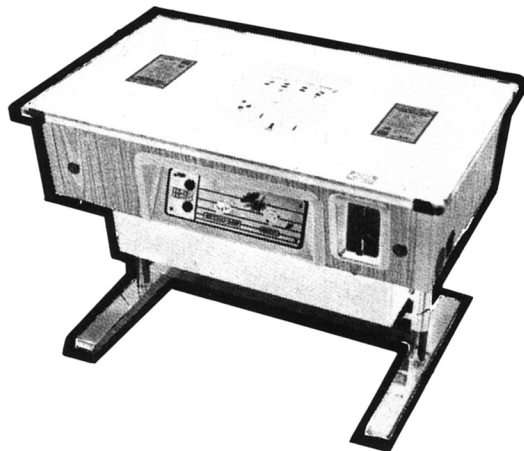


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Play Meter Equipment Poll

Here are the August results of PLAY METER's subscriber survey ranking pinball and video games. The standings are compared with games' results in the July poll.

Top Pins

AUGUST	JULY	AUGUST	JULY
1. SPACE INVADERS/Bally.....	5	11. KISS/Bally.....	12
2. FIREPOWER/Williams.....	3	12. STELLAR WARS/Williams.....	8
3. GORGAR/Williams.....	1	13. ALI/Stern.....	—
4. SILVERBALL MANIA/Bally.....	2	14. CHEETAH/Stern.....	—
5. LASER BALL/Williams.....	7	15. SEA WITCH/Stern.....	18
6. FLASH/Williams.....	4	16. BIG GAME/Stern.....	15
7. GALAXY/Stern.....	6	17. ROLLING STONES/Bally.....	—
8. SPIDER-MAN/Gottlieb.....	11	18. SHARPSHOOTER/Game Plan.....	17
9. PANTHERA/Gottlieb.....	—	19. FUTURE SPA/Bally.....	14
10. METEOR/Stern.....	9	20. TIME WARP/Williams.....	10

Top Videos

AUGUST	JULY	AUGUST	JULY
1. ASTEROIDS/Atari.....	1	6. MONACO GP/Gremlin.....	8
2. GALAXIAN/Midway.....	3	7. FOOTBALL/Atari.....	4
3. SPACE INVADERS/Midway.....	2	8. SPRINT II/Atari.....	5
4. ASTRO FIGHTER/Gremlin-Data East **.....	—	9. HEAD ON/Gremlin.....	9
5. RIP OFF/Cinematronics.....	—	10. TAILGUNNER/Cinematronics.....	6

** Note: Responses do not differentiate between the cocktail table (marketed by Data East) and the upright version (leased by Gremlin for marketing).

The PLAY METER subscriber survey of pinball and video games will be a regular feature in subsequent PLAY METER publications. If you would like to join readers currently participating in the survey, simply fill out the coupon below and return it to PLAY METER.

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Sliding Into the Saucer can be Rewarding 4 Ways

Each saucer entry scores 500 points. In addition, the saucer can be illuminated from the in-line drop targets for a special or from the bonus sequence completion for an extra ball or 25,000 points.

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The right kicker lane is illuminated when the ball goes thru the top playfield "K"; this activates the kicker to collect the bonus and thrusts the ball into play.

Ski the Top 5,000

Completing S-K-I on the top 3 lanes, lites the 5,000 light. These lanes also lite the thumper bumpers for 1,000 points and the center lane ups the right kicker to collect the bonus.



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Atari, Inc. lines up new management team

Placement of new Atari, Inc. leaders in three key management slots was confirmed by its Coin-Operated Games Division in June.

Joseph Robbins, most recently president of Empire Distributing Co., a division of Bally Manufacturing, was named co-president of the Atari coin-op division, said Eugene Lipkin, president.

Fred Gerson has been selected for the post of vice president/finance for the coin-op games wing of Atari, Inc. Prior to joining Atari, Gerson has worked for several years for Arthur Young and Company, both in New York and San Jose, where he served as an audit manager.

Shane Breaks was tapped for the newly created position of international marketing director for the Atari coin-op division. In his new

post, Breaks will be responsible for all overseas sales of Atari products, said Lipkin. Breaks will be headquartered in Tipperary, Ireland, and will also maintain a residence in Sunnyvale, California.

In making these announcements, Lipkin said, "I am particularly pleased that Joe has joined me to manage the expanding administrative and marketing plans for Atari's coin-op division. His assistance will enable Atari to keep up with the demands of the industry, and to devote the creative and business efforts needed to continue our leadership in the marketplace."

Robbins was educated at Yale University in the School of Engineering. After service in World War II, he began his career in the industry in 1946 with a Seeburg distributor and

with London Music Company in Wisconsin. In 1955, he joined Empire in Chicago, where he became a partner in 1962, later directing the sale of the distributor to Bally. He continued as chief executive officer at Empire and was elected to Bally's board of directors, serving as chairman of the Executive Committee. Robbins held these positions until he resigned in 1978.

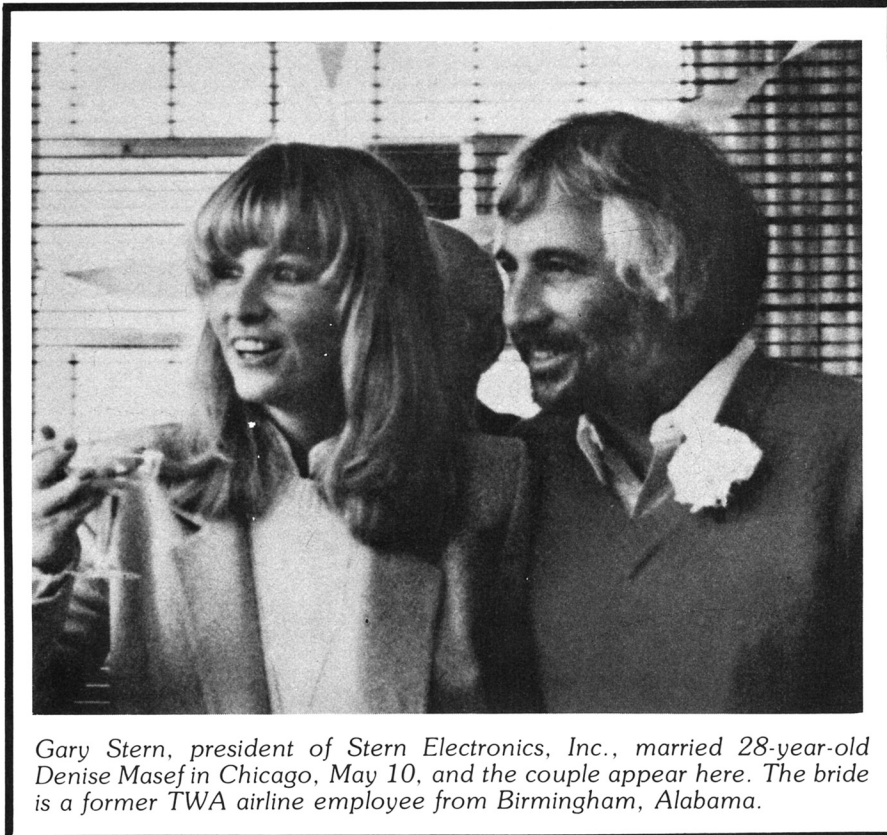
Lipkin, commenting further, said International Marketing Director Breaks "brings many years of successful international marketing and sales experience to the company. His familiarity with overseas markets, with Atari's products and customers, and his experience in all areas of the coin machine industry are extremely valuable assets. Living in Ireland will keep him in close touch with our major overseas buyers and with our factory in Tipperary."

Breaks has been involved in the industry since 1964. He served as vice president and general manager for Streets Automatic Machine Co., Ltd., London for many years. In 1975 he was brought to the United States to direct Rowe International's game purchasing function for domestic markets. Since 1977, he has worked for R.H. Belam Export, Inc., New York, recently having been promoted to a vice presidency in the firm.

Breaks told *PLAY METER*, "Of course, it's a very big situation for me. I'm very excited about it, more than any other job in the industry. At the same time, Belam has been very exciting to work for. There is sadness about leaving great people to work with." He would remain in the New York area during July in his Atari post, Breaks indicated.

Gerson holds a B. A. degree in economics from Brooklyn College and an MBA degree in accounting from New York University.

Atari, Inc. is a division of Warner Communications Inc.



Gary Stern, president of Stern Electronics, Inc., married 28-year-old Denise Masef in Chicago, May 10, and the couple appear here. The bride is a former TWA airline employee from Birmingham, Alabama.

More on licenses and taxes

In the closing minutes of the New York state legislative session for the spring, coin-machine operators fought off a proposed \$250 per-machine tax which many had felt to be inevitable.

Originally proposed to the legislature as a measure to aid New York City and only to tax within the city, the wording of the bill affected operators in the whole state, said State Coin Machine Association President Millie McCarthy. Local authority to tax machines would have shot up from a \$25 limit \$250 per machine.

Debate in the Assembly wavered pro and con over the measure. While it was voted down June 13 just before the legislators recessed, the measure is expected to come up in the fall in a new form. Mrs. McCarthy said, "I think it's going to make the city sit down with the operators and work something out," and no statewide measure is expected. However, were advised by their state association to keep in touch with legislators to plead their case.

CALIFORNIA

As in other jurisdictions, California has widely varying local license and tax requirements. Here is a breakdown of three cities' rules, under which one operator has to cope.

Lakewood, California: Each game requires a business license, obtained by paying a license fee to the city, the amount of which is determined by the coin drop on each game. Coin input of 10 cents or more requires \$36 fee per year per machine, and 50 cents per \$1000 gross is paid at the end of the year. The city prohibits payouts.

Whittier: A straight license fee is paid on all machines—vending, photo, jukebox, pingames, and videos—determined by the coin drop—

1-cent drop: \$2 per year;

5-cent drop: \$6 per year;

10 cents and up coin chute, \$12 per year.

Arcades as such are illegal in Whittier, but an existing business can have games, with a permit from the planning commission. No payouts or tournaments are allowed.

Long Beach: There is a straight business tax—\$90 for the first \$5,000 gross and \$2.50 for each additional \$1,000 gross. The number of pins, videos, and vending machines allowed at a business location depends upon the type of business license issued to that location.

READER'S INPUT

We will continue to run lists of license and tax regulations in local communities and states, as reported by our readers. Changes, in particular, should be reported. Let us know what the license or tax regulation is in your community and state and we, in turn, will communicate with the rest of the industry. The information that you supply may well help operators elsewhere head off problems.

Do you pay Sales Tax? YES NO If yes, indicate percent:

State _____% City _____% Other _____%

What other license or tax levies do you have to pay on the following:

Name of City	Pins	Phonos	Pool	Videos
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Additional comments: _____

Send to PLAY METER, P.O. Box 24170, New Orleans, LA 70124.

Distributing

Veteran distributors agree:

Video games are "softening" the market for other coin-operated amusement machines, in the consensus of opinions expressed by distributors contacted by PLAY METER.

East and west, the games with the cathode-ray tube are riding on a wave that shows no sign of breaking very soon, say the distributors.

Hy Sandler (of Sandler Vending/Minnesota): "Pingames now are a good product, but not capturing the imagination like the videos are."

With the attempted takeover from the TV monitor, pins, pool, and jukebox sales are all "soft," going into early summer, Sandler observed.

Ira Bettelman (of C. A. Robin-



Distributors wonder:
Are hot videos ...

Pins must meet video challenge

son/Los Angeles) said, "It's difficult to see the pinball problem without contrasting it to where the video is at." The TV game sales challenge from two points, in his view. One, "in the last nine months to 1½ years there have been truly significant, sophisticated changes in videos." The changes made in pinball games—whether speech, memory, or higher-digit scoring, etc.—are not of the same magnitude as the developments featured in the market-invading video games, Bettelman commented.

Secondly, the video game is currently expanding its market of locations. "If you sat down and asked where the games are placed, you find there has been a significant change in two years, of wider areas of placement," said Bettelman.

Those places are the supermarkets, the concourses of shopping centers, the theater lobbies, many places beyond the beaches and bars. And, although pingames are making their own incursion into new locations, local laws often restrict pinball sites specifically.

At best, the number of location types for expanding pinball has "stagnated," in Bettelman's estimate.

Louis Boasberg (of New Orleans Novelty/New Orleans) commented, however: "Flippers will never die in arcades." It is just that, in his view, "pinball manufacturers are bankrupt for ideas."

He added: "*Firepower*, *Space Invaders*, and perhaps, *Seawitch* are as good as flippers have ever been produced. But an older, more sophisticated group play pins." Boasberg sees an additional problem to the distributor: "The used game market is shot right now, because of over production of new games."

However, further hope was expressed against gloom and doom for steel balls games. Jerry Gordon (of Continental Divide/Denver) said: "I feel the operators' pins are almost all solid state now, and come September, operators will have to buy these new," to replace their early solid-

state pingames. There will then be an "evening-out" of the sales difference between videos and pingames, Gordon predicted, as operators update their routes with the new solid-state pins from the assembly lines and the "slowing down" of new games will be past.

The manufacturers have new pingames of the solid-state mode now in production plans mapped through the early fall.

The threat to pinball sales from the video makers, in the opinion of Boasberg, is a trend that "may inspire the pinball manufacturers to stop rearranging, and to have new gimmicks. There is no margin for error. Flipper manufacturers have got to make new games."

One manufacturer's representative sounded the depth of videos' challenge, saying that "the large amount of good videos are hurting pins" and that in the current economy, operators are "very choosy in what they buy—but the 'super' pins are faring well," said the manufacturing source.

Pinball will swing back upward on the wave, distributors maintained, according to the trend they receive. Any novelty business is "cyclical," said Hy Sandler, and no game has ever captured the market entirely. "We thought the electro-mechanical pinballs were the end-all... We'll see a lot more changes in games."

Pinball makers will have to introduce untried features, in Ira Bettelman's view, such as new cabinet configurations. "They can't afford to sit and wait and ride out the videos' success. A video trend is not a passing fad. It is attracting a whole new clientele," he said—in contrast to some others of the handlers.

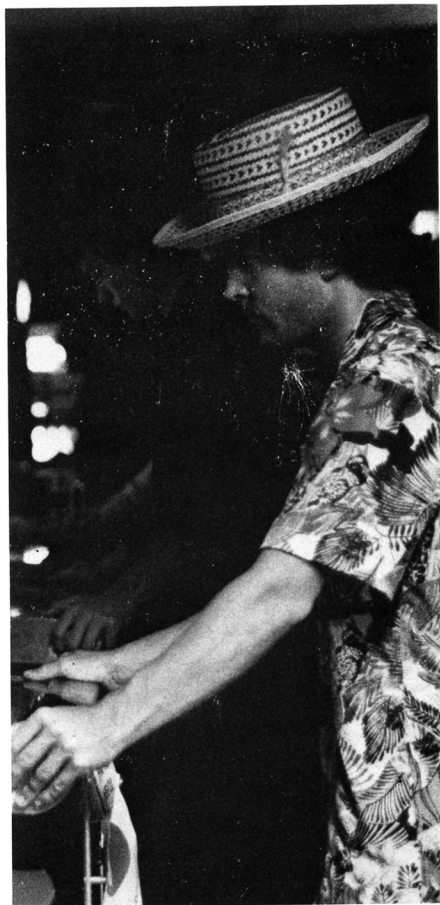
In Louis Boasberg's opinion, some of the "old ideas" used in pingames in years past can also be updated for success with the cashbox—the captive ball, for example. But one innovation alone (he mentioned the "talking pingame") is only "good for one game."

Said Boasberg: "The flipper will never die. It's very American.

Foreign manufacturers can't imitate it, they can't make it." Videos are simply easier to play, less complicated than pinball, he observed. Operators will naturally "lean toward the cashbox," buying the mode of game that is currently popular with players.

What can be done by the distributor in the push-and-pull period of two sharply competing types of games, said another handler, is to promote—to the operator, the location, and the player—the appeal of the games that are available.

In summary, the voice of the consensus called for "more imagination" across-the-board in the coin-op industry.



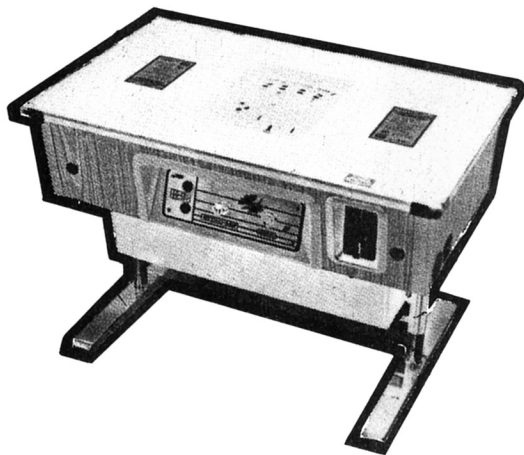
...softening pingames' sales?

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Chicago Hilton in planning stage, AMOA requests even larger exhibit space



This is a preliminary rendering of the new Chicago Hilton to be built on Wacker Drive near AMOA headquarters in Chicago: Site of future expos.

The AMOA has requested 25 percent more exhibition space in the new Chicago Hilton hotel, plans for the construction of which were furthered recently by an agreement between the hotel chain and the City of Chicago.

In a June 17 letter to the management of the Conrad Hilton, AMOA Executive Director Fred Granger recommended that the projected one-level exhibition hall be increased from 80,000 square feet to 100,000 feet in the new hotel—a full two-block complex—bounded by Wacker Drive and Lake, State and Clark streets.

Granger said the expanded hall “would satisfy the needs of more exhibiting organizations. Also, a sizeable registration area should also be a part of this complex. of course, I realize that space limitations may not permit an allocation of this size hall, but I think...the Hilton organization would agree to its desirability.”

Granger said that, as of mid-June, the 1980 Exposition at the Conrad Hilton “is all but sold out.”

The AMOA Board of Directors in their April meeting committed the

AMOA to holding exhibit and registration fees at the 1980 Show to the 1979 rates. [See PLAY METER for June: page 45.]

Here is a recap of AMOA Exposition plans through 1985:

- Conrad Hilton, Chicago, October 31—November 1, 2, 1980;
- Conrad Hilton, Chicago, October 29—31, 1981;
- Caesar’s Palace, Las Vegas, November 2—4, 1982;
- Rivergate, New Orleans, October 28—30, 1983;
- Chicago Hilton, October 26—28, 1984; Chicago Hilton, November 1—3, 1985.

AMOA is holding tentative dates at the new Chicago Hilton, forward through 1990.

Chicago Mayor Jane M. Byrne and Barron Hilton, chairman and president of Hilton Hotel Corporation, announced May 21 that an agreement had been signed for the acquisition and clearance of the site for the \$200 million Chicago Hilton.

The hotel site forms a major portion of the city’s North Loop Redevelopment Plan, one of the largest downtown renewal programs ever

undertaken by a major U. S. city, the announcement said.

When complete, the new Hilton will contain 2 million square feet, by present planning, with the public areas given to banquet, meeting and exhibit space comprising 200,000 square feet. Included in the public-space plans are a one-level exhibition hall of 80,000 square feet (to which Granger refers) and a grand ballroom of 32,000 square feet, which will have 3,200 seating capacity and be divisible into three separate ballrooms. Also included in the plans is another area, the “Chicago Ballroom,” capable of seating about 1,500 persons and designed in the traditional style and elegance of noted Chicago greatrooms, such as the existing Grand Ballroom at the Conrad Hilton, said the hotel chain’s announcement.

At the Chicago Hilton, all parking and loading areas will be located below grade, on Lower Wacker Drive, with direct access to Dearborn and Clark streets, the main north-south arteries into and out of the Loop’s financial and commercial centers.

The agreement signed with the city commits the city to expedite the purchase and clearance of the property for the hotel site over the following 18 months. During that period, the Hilton Corporation will proceed with completion of architectural and financing arrangements in preparation for the construction of the hotel. Barron Hilton noted that, in his corporation’s studies for the new hotel, provision is planned for 1,800 to 2,100 “guest room modules,” giving flexibility to operational efficiency and guest comfort.

The hotel tower will be located on Wacker. The ballrooms and exhibit halls will be located along the Lake Street side of the property, spanning Dearborn Street and continuing over to Clark Street.

Mr. Hilton said, “In the meantime, we plan to continue to operate the Conrad Hilton as a first-class convention facility consistent with Hilton’s standards of maintenance and operations.

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Allied Leisure becomes Centuri Inc.

Ed Miller, newly appointed president of Allied Leisure Industries, has announced the first in a series of major changes taking place in the structure and operation of the company—its new name, Centuri Inc.

Said Miller, "We are well aware of the problems Allied has suffered over the past several years. Major changes are needed to turn the company into the positive force it has always had the potential to be. Our new name, Centuri Inc., officially marks the beginning of the many positive changes we have planned.

"Centuri signifies the forward thrust of the company into the 21st century," he continued. The name was pending stockholder approval at a near date.



Miller

Military slots return after long absence

After eight years' absence, slot machines are set to return to U. S. Army and Air Force overseas service clubs, at least on a test basis.

When the slots were removed in 1972 after allegations of fraud (skimming of slot revenues), the machines were a principal source of revenue for the clubs.

Officials now cite a need, in tight-budget times, for more money to improve morale, recreation, and welfare programs for overseas personnel, the Associated Press reported. The official projection was of at least \$13 million a year in net income, to be used for other services.

The trial period for slot machines involves about 200 in selected clubs, according to *World Gaming Report* of Las Vegas.

Bhutani joins Data East's marketing effort

Satish Bhutani has joined Data East, Inc., a marketer of video games, as an executive vice president at the corporate level.

His responsibilities at Data East will include overseeing the overall operation of Data East, including the charting of Data East's marketing efforts.

The announcement of his ap-

pointment was made by Tetso Fukuda, chairman, and Keiichi Iwamoto, president of Deco, the parent company of Data East.

Bhutani, who once served as vice president of Project Support Engineering (P. S. E.), was most recently employed by Namco America where he was in charge of sales

and marketing.

Presently he is marketing Data East's popular *Astro Fighter* cocktail video game (the upright configuration was licensed to Gremlin), and is engaged in inviting marketing plans for Data East's second offering on America's shores, *Tomahawk*, another space video game.



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Midway suit claims infringement

Midway Manufacturing Co. of Franklin Park, Illinois, has filed a complaint in federal court against Universal Co., Ltd. and its subsidiary, Universal, USA, Inc., for alleged infringement of Midway's copyrights in audio-visual works and brochures relating to the *Galaxian* video game.

The action filed in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles June 5 charges Universal copied *Galaxian* audio-visual material and advertising material for use in or in conjunction with *Cosmic Alien*, which is marketed by Universal.

Paul Jacobs, executive vice president of Universal USA, issued a statement in response to the Midway charges, saying: "We have been advised by our attorneys that there is no merit in their suit and we are evaluating the filing of counter claims for affirmative relief."

Midway has stated that it intends to take "the legal action necessary" to protect its proprietary rights "against all copiers of the *Galaxian* video game and the sellers of such infringing games."

The Midway complaint in federal court contends that Universal is

infringing Midway's rights by creating, importing, and distributing an electronic video game known as *Cosmic Alien* which "contains audio-visual material that is copied largely from *Galaxian*" and that "numerous advertising brochures" distributed for *Cosmic Alien* "contain material that is copied largely from *Galaxian*."

The complaint also charges Universal with unfair competition under both federal and California laws, and seeks an injunction and recovery of damages, profits, costs, and attorney fees from Universal, plus punitive damages.

A court hearing date had not been set at play METER's presstime.

1979 U.S. vending exports hit all-time high for volume

Exports of merchandise vending machines from the United States set an all-time record in dollar volume in 1979, according to data released by the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA).

The value of 1979 exports totaled \$39,622,000 compared with \$27,084,981 in 1978, the previous high, said Joann Hames, NAMA assistant secretary-treasurer. The data was compiled from U. S. Department of Commerce figures and does not include coin-operated music and amusement machines.

Sales volume of exported vending

machine parts totaled an additional \$12,789,000 in 1979, Ms. James said. Bureau of the Census data showed 1979 vending machine imports to the United States totaling \$11,614,000.

Nearly one third of the vending machine exports went to Canada for a total of \$12,162,000, followed by Hong Kong (\$6,692,000), and Japan (\$4,893,000).

Vending machine exports have steadily climbed since 1974 when volume totaled \$15,512,795, Ms. James said.

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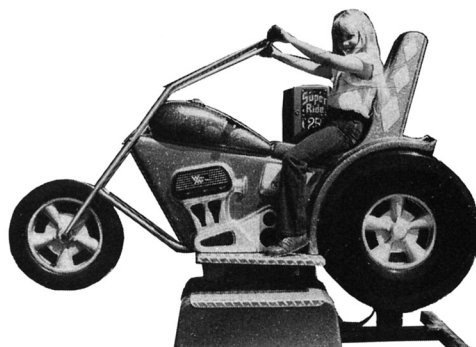
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Asteroids sets Atari record, closes in on *Invaders*

By RAY E. TILLEY

Asteroids, the upright video by Atari, Inc., has topped the production runs of any other game by the Sunnyvale, California manufacturer and bids fair to challenge *Space Invaders* for the top of the video sales curve, spokesmen for Atari say.

Asteroids has "by far surpassed any production of our games"—*Breakout* being the top mover heretofore—said Frank Ballouz, Atari director of marketing. Totals of factory production were not divulged, but Ballouz said, "We are approaching the numbers *Space Invaders* has reached in the States." He noted the various accounts of production figures for Midway's video, being 42,000 to 55,000 units.

Releases from additional production runs are promised, said Ballouz. "There's a continued strong demand for the piece," he said. The record-breaking mark of *Asteroids* included the "committed production" to date, in mid-June.

Ballouz commented to PLAY METER that the "earning curve" of *Asteroids* had climbed above *Space Invaders* videos since January, but that fewer *Asteroids* games had been on location during that period. With higher production totals, the Atari game was winning the race, he claimed.

Don Osborne, Atari national sales

manager, said: "It's our biggest hit yet, surpassing even some of our classic hits like *Tank*, *Breakout*, and *Atari Football*."

Asteroids is a space action game in which one or two players can try to destroy asteroids and enemy spacecraft on the video screen. Atari's QuadraScan video display system provides visual effects, "space age sound," and a new High Score Table.

[In PLAY METER's Equipment Survey of operators for July, *Asteroids* topped *Space Invaders* in the voting according to video game earnings for the first time in over a year, during which period *Space Invaders* had held the poll's top slot. For the August results, see the Equipment Poll, this issue.]

Raymond E. Kassir, chairman and chief executive officer of Atari, Inc., said recently: "The coin-op business is growing at a rapid rate. Our engineers have exciting new products in the pipeline and are already blueprinting games for 1982 and 1983."

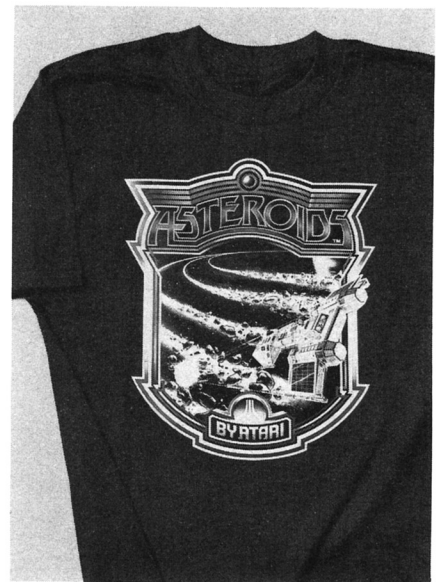
On the occasion of announcing the appointment effective July 1 of Joseph Robbins as new co-president of Atari, the firm's President Gene Lipkin said: "Atari's Coin-Op Division has experienced accelerated growth and expansion, both domestically and internationally during the past 18 months." Robbins would join

him in the management of "expanded administrative and marketing plans" for Atari coin-op games, said Lipkin. [See related story on new personnel at Atari.]

Kassar said the team of Lipkin and Robbins "provides us with outstanding management leadership in a highly competitive business."

Lipkin commented also: "The outstanding successes of such Atari games as *Asteroids*, *Sprint/2*, and *Breakout* have been instrumental in bringing Atari into the forefront of the coin-op industry worldwide."

‡ ‡ ‡



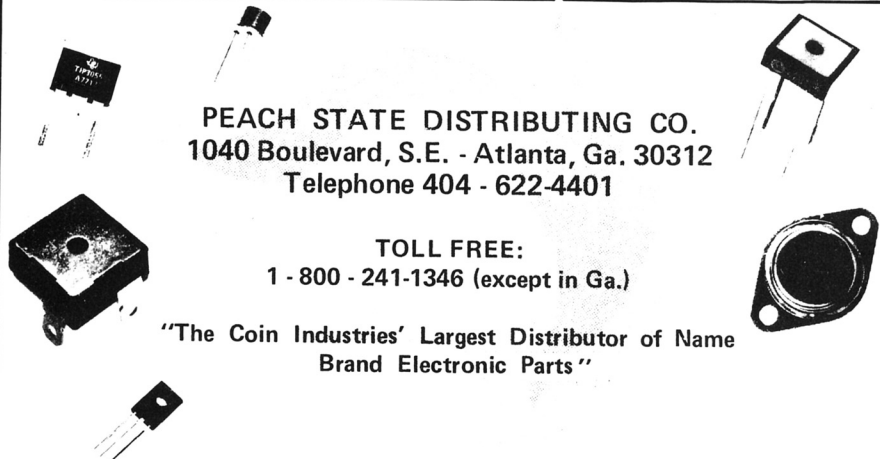
Atari *Asteroids* T-shirts are available for purchase from Atari distributors, according to the game manufacturer.

The bold graphic design is printed in full color and shows a spacecraft blasting through a rain of asteroids.

The shirts are a navy blue cotton/polyester blend. These wearables provide for location prizes, giveaways, and advertising premiums.

Asteroids T-shirts can be ordered in small, medium, large, and extra-large sizes. Because supplies are limited, according to the factory, operators are requested to place orders as soon as possible.

[Ed. note—*Asteroids* is available in a new cabinet configuration; see *New Products*, this issue.]



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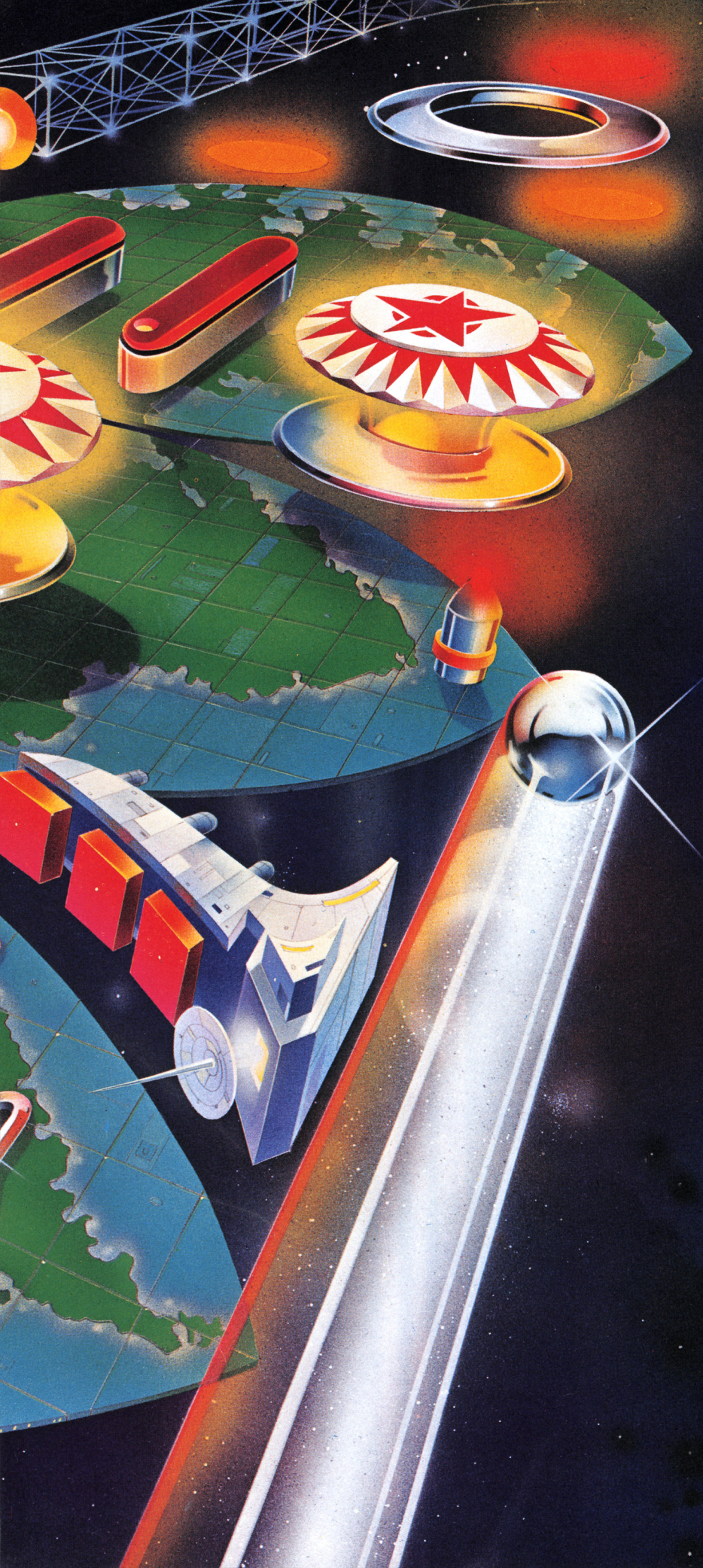
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Of time and the fifty-cent piece

By Roger C. Sharpe

The fabulous fifties... that's what a lot of people would have you believe, and I'm not talking about the decade, but rather the seemingly slow movement of increased pricing both to the operator and the player. Last month in "Critic's Corner" I made a slight mention of my feelings to the 50-cent play idea. But somehow, there's no hue and cry about it. Everyone seems to be going with the flow and not really questioning whether it should be done (the answer is yes), whether the time is right to do it (the answer is no for now) and whether the equipment itself has sufficiently changed to warrant the price rise to the player (the answer is yes and no, but primarily no).

Now, let me state at the outset that I am not immune or even insensitive to what is going on in the real world and the factors that are undoubtedly influencing the industry and the steps it is taking. I can even go along with the argument and fact that the value of a dollar has decreased to a ridiculously low level (living in New York City and paying the rent that I pay for the space that I have, I would have to be totally blind to not know that things aren't what they once were and that nickle candy bars just don't exist). What I do also know is that the standard of living and wages and discretionary income have not stayed on a par with the level of inflation. And let's face it, no matter how bad it is, it's still not Argentina—home of the highest rate of inflation in the world—although we may be getting close. So the essential question is, and remains, what about



The 25-cent pinball coin slot: Is it fading into the past?

the games?


It may be enlightening, before we look at the whole subject of 50-cent play, to briefly report some findings

of this writer on a recent trip to Florida. What has become almost an annual undertaking, a few days in the sunshine also provided some evenings for taking in the sights and specifically an opportunity to check out all the various arcades, fun centers, etc. This year was particularly surprising because of the closing down of a couple of spots that I had come to like and the shift in condition of a few others.

From North Hollywood over to Fort Lauderdale, the emphasis has changed considerably. The viable—and what appeared to be the most popular—places are no longer your basic arcade. Whether it's a water flume, formula car racing, restaurant, ice cream, or a movie theater nearby, the biggest draw are these extras and not the games themselves. And I'm not talking about only pinball machines, but also video games where everybody says the money is going—well, it's not. Admittedly, the number of pinball machines in most locations had diminished but so too had the video games and there just weren't that many people playing.

And, for the bottom line, the pricing of games (specifically pins) was a quarter a play and, of course, the few *Space Invaders* were on fifty cents as undoubtedly will be *Firepower* when they make it down there. But where everybody has preached hard and long about the price of games, taking for granted that everyone has already decided about three- versus five-ball, the overall impact on this part of Florida (and probably all too many places around the country) has been almost

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non-existent.

The best places, both in terms of business and even the condition of machines, as well as those having the newest games, were those that offered all games (50-cent "S.I." included) on five-ball.

Yes, folks. Forget fifty cents for a minute and realize that there are still a lot of places where three-ball has yet to be accepted. And although some manufacturers and distributors would like to think differently, maybe the industry from the standpoint of the operator and the player hasn't changed that much since the inception of solid-state. (But even this probably doesn't come as a surprise to anyone who has traveled around and talked to people and seen what's happening out there.)

More important, however, is that in many places all types of coin-operated machines are not going through the roof, but rather just going along as they always have. The exceptions to the rule remain as witnessed by many inner city locations, those places near high density areas of young students in high school and college and not too many other places. And for the distributor who mentioned to me that the day is in sight for a piece to bring in \$1,000 a week: that's all well and good, and maybe 50-cent play brings this dream closer to reality, but for the majority of places and even games with their appeal and playing power, the higher price is not going to supply that quantum leap ahead. Instead the price will keep the numbers at a fairly competitive level with the general flow of traffic to a location, or even tail off in the cashbox strictly on the basis of player resistance.

What we have is not the question of 50-cent play per se: it is a foregone conclusion that this is the price of the future. What does enter into play now, however, is whether the economy and the quality of the games are enough to sustain the changeover that doubles the price of a game, not even counting the three-ball versus five-ball situation.

There may be something more to consider as regards the pricing of what has always been called a recession-proof business. A short scenario may amplify the point I want to get across. Let's take a look at the divorced father who has his two children for the weekend and must decide once again what he's going to do to entertain them. Saturday is a day at the zoo, and when Sunday arrives he's faced with a few options. As some have liked to say, look at the price of seeing a movie these days, well, OK, let's say that the adult admission is \$4 for this father and his two children will get in at half

price or \$2 each. Now that's an investment of \$8 for two hours of entertainment, add in some soda and pop corn at another \$4 and you have a grand total of \$12 for two hours, or stated another way: \$6 per hour.

The price of the arcade for this same father and his two children at 50-cent play, three for a dollar coin would translate into something like this: Everyone in the business is quick to point out how the games are timed and how important it is not to have a machine play too long. After all, video only gives about a minute, minute and a half tops for 25 cents, so pinball changed to meet the competition on a time basis: hence three-ball, and now the price increase.

So, for our purposes here, let's accept that a three-ball game is going to last, and I'll be generous here, 2 1/2 minutes. For the father and his two children, we're talking about 7 1/2 minutes of pinball fun for each dollar, or \$2 for each fifteen minutes or only \$8 an hour.

Now, that's not too bad. You have the two hour movie and the pinball games and the difference is only \$2 an hour for all the fun of pinball and even the chance to win free games and bring down the price per hour. But let's also get real—games are not averaging out at 2 1/2 minutes and outside of the major urban areas, the price of movies is still around \$3 and not \$4. And with all of this, it just becomes a totally different ball game when pinball, or even video games, are forced to compete against other forms of leisure time entertainment for enjoyment and affordability, rather than just being a part of the whole alternative.

The games and the quality of the environment in which they're found are rich, unique, and very special—but in this day and age, a bargain can still mean something, and if someone were to ask whether you'd like to sell one Rolls Royce or twenty VWs, you'd probably pick the VWs because it's better business to deal with quantity and quick turnover in space, etc. The same is true with pinball (and video) but on a different level.

You don't mind, or at least shouldn't, the fact that a player may put a lot of time in on a game—it's some kid, he gets hot, pops a few games and there he is playing on that lonely quarter for what seems like a half hour. Too many people take that as negative rather than thinking that maybe, just maybe they're building up a following and that lucky kid may become a regular who will put more than enough money in the games to justify an occasional hot streak. Because just like gambling casinos, the house when it comes to coin-op

games, has the edge, the upper hand and the odds in its favor.

And if you operate fairly and keep the games clean and running smoothly, the payoff comes over the long haul and there's more than enough profit to go on.

Whether it's \$100 a week for fifty weeks or a try at doubling this, possibly by raising the price, will the return be twice as much for the same period of time—or half as long or less than that?

It is a question that everyone must answer for themselves and their own situation regardless of whether the games are in fact worth the increase—which they are not. There is not a single pinball machine out there right now that's worth the price of fifty cents per play over a sustained period of time. As a novelty maybe, such as Atari's *Hercules* and maybe a *Space Invaders* or *Firepower* for a few plays, but there ain't no way, no how that a regular to any location is going to stand up in front of a game for a sustained period with the rolls of money on the glass.

There's just not enough, graphically, sound effects-wise and in terms of playability of the games to draw that money... Sorry folks, but that's the way it is, pure and simple.

The pinball machines may be XXXXs or whatever designation one

wants to give to them; they may even take in hundreds of dollars a week over a period of two months or more, but not many have the staying power to keep up interest over the long haul, or to justify that extra quarter per play. Even for myself, looking at the frequency of play of particular games and talking to other regulars at the few arcades I visit on a daily basis, the consensus is that machines such as *Firepower* are really nice to play, but since the play is 50 cents, we just haven't played them that much. And the drop off is not equal or balanced by the extra money that is taken in when we do play.

Of course, there's always that sneaky way of starting on 50-cent and when the traffic lessens drop back down to a quarter, but that defeats the purpose—although in New York City, that's just what has happened at a few locations. And then there's the place where every new pin is being put on 50-cent play, such as *Dolly* (well worth the price) and a slew of games like *Roller Disco*, *Torch*, *Coney Island*, and others.

Makes you wonder doesn't it? But when you have a captive audience you can sometimes get it, as is the case at Adventurer's Inn just outside NYC and near Shea Stadium and La

Guardia airport, where almost everything with no discrimination is being set of 50-cent and the Brinks trucks come in a haul out the loot on a regular basis, hand over fist. They're rolling in dough and business hasn't been hurt at all—it's improved after the initial resistance. But could they have done more, opened more space for more equipment? How good is it really, and have they maximized their business if they still have hundreds and hundreds of feet just wasting away and not earning anything?

It's hard indeed to put in a clear-cut answer and solution to the problem of pricing, let alone the setting of the games for time limits and even three- or five-ball play.

And most assuredly this article has just been the first of many. What do you think about the whole thing? Where do you stand if you're an operator?

Why not write in and let us know what your feelings are about pricing and pinball and video and whatever else is on your mind? With pricing especially, it may be too late if you don't react fast enough. So write today to PLAY METER. Put your thoughts down and let us know.

And maybe next issue, this writer will take an even closer look at where all this is leading.

With a wholehearted "Thank You"

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Making your machine records useful

Are you getting everything you should be getting from your card system when it comes to keeping track of what your equipment is doing for you? It's a question many operators avoid asking themselves. They'll say they are, but still they feel that somehow they aren't getting the whole picture.

And it's not that they don't want the whole picture. In fact, some of them will keep tedious records of collections, cross-referencing that with their collections by locations, but still they suspect they're missing something.

And they are. They're missing something, a single entry that should be included on the card, one simple addition that would help put everything in perspective.

First, let's look at what's often included on a card system: (1) a description of the machine, including brand name, model name, serial number, operator number (if any), maybe even cash box key number; (2) where the machine was purchased; (3) how much the machine cost; (4) collection reports, including the date of each collection, what the machine grossed, what the location netted, what the operator netted; and (5) what location the machine is at, when the machine was placed at that location, what locations the

machine was placed at before this location, the dates of each of those placements, maybe even what the machine grossed at each of those locations. End of card data.

As you can see, it can get quite drawn-out and time-consuming. But the question you should be asking yourself is: Does this give you all the supportive data you need? Obviously, if you're relying on a card system, you want it to help you make sound executive decisions. But with the accumulation of all this data, have you really realized that potential?

Will that data be able to help you decide when equipment should be moved or sold? Only partly, because you're only seeing part of the picture.

What you're missing on that card is symptomatic of this industry, and it's caused by the high turnover of equipment and the immediacy of weekly cash collections. The regularity of collections entices the operator into looking at how much his machines are making for him. But what it doesn't show him is something that is a little less obvious, and that's how much it's costing him.

It's an often-heard remark by accountants that you cannot allow yourself to look just at what your machines are collecting. You also have to look at how much they are costing. And this is a special problem

with operators simply because of the regularity of the collections.

With that in mind, a simple addition to your present card system would probably suffice to make your recordkeeping system do what you originally planned for it to do for you.

You should include on the card a quota, a goal, a set figure in dollars and cents which that machine is expected to generate for you each collection period. And with this figure printed right there on the card, you'll be in a much better position to see if the machine is pulling its weight or if it should be pulled.

Perhaps when you institute such a program, you'll find that quite a number of your machines should be re-located. And maybe when you see that, your first reaction will be to chuck the whole system and forget about it. But don't give up — persevere. Set about your deliberate pace of fine-tuning your route so that your equipment meets its specific quota.

How do you determine what quota to assign to each machine? Once you start thinking about it, it'll probably become self-evident. What you have to do is determine what your total operating expense load is, and this includes not only the cost of operating that particular piece of equipment. This should include what you're paying in the way of salaries, interest, rent, vehicle costs—everything.

The reason is that you have to keep in mind that those machines out there have got to generate the revenue for you to pay all those bills. They're your only source of income. So after you've finally decided on your total operating expense load and plugged in your projected return on investment, you'll have a single figure which should then be divided by the total number of machines you have on location. This will provide you with a base number, to which you add on the card the depreciation of each particular machine so that you can see what that machine has to generate to pay for itself and carry your operation along, as well.

Now, this is a point where many

Continued on page 46

Distributor: XYX, Inc. Machine Cost: \$000.01

Date	Our Share	Merch. Share	Date	Our Share	Merch. Share	Date	Our Share	Merch. Share	DATA
2/15/77	50 ⁰⁰	50 ⁰⁰							Description <u>ROCKOLA 444</u>
									Serial No. <u>G336</u>
									Cash Box Key
									Wall Box Nos.
									Speakers
Date Placed	LOCATION	Date Removed	Total Collected Gross	Date Placed	LOCATION	Date Removed	Total Collected Gross		
11/1 70	LOCATION 10	4/11 73	1576 50						
5/30 73	LOCATION 25	5/27 76	2640 50						
7/8 76	LOCATION 3								

F-202

Everything you need to know about a piece of equipment is right here on this card. Right? Wrong!

Action Request *from*

TO _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

SUBJECT _____ NO: _____

COMPLETED ACTION			AUTHORITY
ASAP	DATE	AT YOUR DISCRETION	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Act on own; Report at Review 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Act, but advise immediately 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Advise before taking action

DESCRIPTION: _____

REVIEWS		
DATE	TIME	STATUS

Sample Form A

DAILY ACTIVITY REPORT DAR

SERVICE MAN _____ START TIME _____

DATE _____ VEHICLE NO. _____ START MILEAGE _____

PLANS FOR TODAY:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

CUSTOMER	ARRIVAL TIME	ARRIVAL MILEAGE	SERVICE NO.	TIME LEFT

EXPENSES _____ FINISH TIME _____

FINISH MILEAGE _____

Sample Form B

Service tracking saves money

Time is money. So we have heard, and we know this in a business based on equipment that, essentially, sells time on a game board. Time is measured in minutes in your equipment; it is gauged in micro-seconds on the solid state boards; it's hours on your service personnel's time card; and in its form, downtime, it spells the loss of revenue when a machine is out of function.

Many operators see the need—and adapt a system—for making best use of time by way of service records and a routine for best utilizing those skilled fellows who are on your timeclock.

Toward such method, this month's Coinman, Donald Anderson, suggests an operating method in his interview with PLAY METER.

Here is an outline of an adaptable method and the kinds of forms you may need to track service calls. Paperwork, often a nuisance, is perhaps most useful to your operation in this area. Model forms, some of which are commercially available, can be duplicated by a local printer. The sheets reproduced here can be modified to your specific requirements and then run off at a local printing shop.

The "action" form [Sample A] shows a call received: "To —Mac's Grill and Game Room," with date, time—and number of the sub-route.

Consider your total operation divided into your own device of

districting. With 400 games, 175 of which are located near the core of the city, you might have three servicemen, whose routes are assigned according to a share of games—and the driving distance to reach them. Remember, these are simply examples to illustrate a point. Up in Suburb City, it may take 30 minutes to drive from shop to location. That route may encompass 125 games. In the separately removed College Town, there are 100 of your games, variously located. Those three may be the divisions of your total route, considering drive time and concentration of games.

A call from College Town is logged on Serviceman A's route A. This information is taken down by operation personnel in the central office. Copy is kept, copy is given to Mr. A. It includes specifics as to "Description: " lights out, one flipper dead, monitor haywire, and so on.

On to Sample Form B. Our serviceman, Mr. A, on arriving at work has a number of action requests from locations on his route. He takes the call forms and prioritizes his work day, taking into consideration the more serious problems and travel time, so as not to get caught doubling back. He lists: 1, broken playfield glass, Fred's Bar and Grill; 2, coin jam at Sal's Diner; 3, flipper dead at Blitz's Bar. Now, it's a good idea to have only serviceman A to service the machines on Route A. It makes him accountable for certain equip-

ment. You'll find he'll do a better job and will be more likely to see if the other machines in the location are operating correctly or if they're ready to go down. And from the serviceman's point of view, he'll be more productive if he knows exactly what he's responsible for.

The Form Sample B shows what Serviceman A logs: Customer number, arrival time at the location, arrival mileage (an important item to insist on, it shows that young Mr. A was not driving to the disco across town), service call number from the action request, and the time he left the location, with any comments ("Plugged in the machine," "replaced glass," "need a part XYZ ordered")

His log for the day, the Daily Activity Report, shows date, his vehicle number, start time and mileage; also the expenses incurred (gasoline, extra screws, etc.); finish time, and finish mileage—both marked after the last service call.

The daily report, as used by a number of operations, is handy to be kept on file for servicemen A, B, and C. Each of the servicemen can return his action request slips to the office with the basic data on repair noted. The office has a record of the request call, action taken on it (duplicate of the action form), and the servicemen's logs of their daily runs. The daily logs are available to both the operator and the servicemen. Continued on page 47

Continued from page 44

operators who are, in all other respects, solid businessmen make a wrong decision. They do not expect some of their machines to meet this quota. Their thinking is that the *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, and *Firepowers* on their routes will pull the weight for a few other games as well. This is bad. In effect, what you are doing is handicapping yourself.

If the machine cannot pull its fair share of the weight, it should be moved to somewhere where it will, or else it should be pulled. That's what it's all about. You can't count on a hot 50 "designated hitters" out there among your 300 or so games and expect those hot 50 to carry the weight for the rest of your operation.

You cannot say that some games are not expected to pull their full share of operating expense load, because then what you're doing is misusing your own capital.

You may be making some locations happy by doing that, and you may be able to give some jobs to some people. But what you have to look at is, quite simply, whether your money is working for you or is it just being tied up while you give someone a job.

If it's not making you any money, you have to make a decision. Are you rich enough that you can

squander this money? Can you have X dollars tied up that are not making you anything in return? Or could that money be put to better use somewhere else? But don't think about that right now. Think about that the next time you're planning to go to the bank to borrow some money at today's "reasonable" interest rates.

Now, after you've determined what that machine's operating expense load is, print that on the card itself. That way every time when you see how much that machine generated for you in collections, you'll also see how much that machine was supposed to make for you. The total machine expense load should, of course, be divided by the frequency of your collections to allow a direct comparison. If you collect weekly, for instance, then divide the annual operating expense load for that machine by 52; if bi-weekly, divide by 26. And to further refine this method, for extrapolating repair costs, you could probably plug that figure directly to the machine's card, thus raising its quota.

Can this same principle apply to your card system by locations?

Yes, it can. Again take your total operating expense load, include in that your projected return on investment, and, after dividing by the number of machines you are operat-

ing, multiply by the number of machines at that particular location. Add on the individual depreciation figures for each of the machines at that location, and you'll have an accurate figure of what that location is expected to do for you, given the number of machines in that location, the age of those machines, etc.

It might be somewhat enlightening for you when you see that some locations you thought were really the hot spots for you aren't really that hot after all, and vice versa, some locations that you thought were not very good, turned out to be pretty good when you consider the depreciation of the games at those locations.

With information like this, plugged into your already existing card system, you'll be in a much better position to see if you have to go up to a 60/40 split, when you have to increase prices, and with this type of supportive data at your disposal, chances are you'll find it easier to sell the location on the idea because you'll have your facts straight.

If you thought a card system was important enough to institute one in the beginning, make sure it's giving you everything you need. Don't forget what those machines are costing you.

—by David Pierson

Why?

Why do you suppose more operators read Play Meter than any other industry-related trade publication?

We think it must have something to do with the fact that Play Meter is independently-owned and honest with its readers.

PLAY METER

What may seem like a lot of paperwork really is a small use of that precious commodity, time. Operators tell **PLAY METER** that the structure of a form or chart does discipline the personnel to think about the service job, while writing it down on the Daily Activity Report's plans portion; they do not launch blindly in without needed parts.

Tracking in this fashion also allows the most economical runs, not backtracking for miles at the expense of gasoline. And the division of servicemen's routes eliminates their passing each other on service calls—on the clock. And it helps as a motivational tool for each one. Serviceman A, for instance, sees the machines on Route A as "his" machines because he alone is responsible for their upkeep.

It also shows work done on specific machines, which may give real clues to their life expectancy or their worth.

It is the check on performance goals, an aim an operator would want to have for the 10-year veteran on his staff as well as the rookie. The operator can time service runs and determine whether a location in Wildcat Inn is really worth the time spent to repair abused machines.

At any rate, clocking of this type

shows the operator the time required for repair on the route. The serviceman will also clock time in the shop; preventive maintenance will take so much additional time—how much can be allotted if repair required 18 hours a week, for example? Do you need additional service personnel? If you grow in operating area and in geographical size of the route, how much will it cost you in expenses? Go over the activity reports for a number of weeks or months.

Collections and coin counting, pickup and delivery of machines, and service calls can all be similarly charted on forms that are easily filled in by your personnel and easily understood when it comes time for your review of the operation.

What all the tracking via forms adds up to is a smoother system for servicing the games on the route. The paperwork is both a check on the service personnel—and a proof they themselves have of performance. If Bob Doe had the lowest percentage of callbacks on his machinery, it will show on the forms. The operator may hold out a "reward" for that kind of performance: days off; a measurement of experience and competence that would be considered for a pay raise; more tangibles, such as an award for "serviceman of the year," a prize

worth having when the operation is large enough and the serviceman's competition is great enough.

For the operator's benefit, the service-call forms are a great aid. They show Location Alpha that work was performed on a machine on July 8th when the owner's son-in-law was running the place and avowed that no one came to work on the dysfunctioning *Baa Baa Bad Sheep*

The paper can be posted inside your operation's office as a kind of running score on performance by your personnel. And it is proof in hand that your employee is on the job, not in a tavern or at girlfriend LaVerne's place.

Service personnel worth any salt, of course, want to show that a technical job was done right and when required. They can show by the forms that they've done a day's work.

On the operator's side of the books, though, as our Coinman Anderson expressed it: "I'm paying you for forty hours a week, and I want to know what you're doing for forty hours."

Forms have gotten a bad rap. If overdone they become a hindrance to any operation. If used wisely, they can make your operation more efficient and profitable.

—by Ray E. Tilley

SUPER EARTH INVASION

This latest conversion from Competitive Video is aimed at greatly improving the on-site takings of most existing invader type games.

It is a simple plug-in kit, consisting of plug-in PROMs and a perspex screen.

It can be fitted on site in a matter of minutes— although some machines need a wire link to be soldered.

FEATURES INCLUDE

- ★ First wave of Invaders is virtually unchanged, but from second wave onwards, the Invaders missiles get faster, and at random, they split up and form one or even two new Martians when hit!
- ★ Space ship drops superfast missiles that pass through bases!
- ★ 20p per game facility ★ 50p facility
- ★ Completely new graphics and game over sequence
- ★ Small Invaders are harder to hit.
- ★ Score levels upgraded
- ★ Space ship no longer has a "score sequence"
- ★ Bonus lazer score increased.
- ★ Distracting messages on screen
- ★ Invaders no longer return to top line after multiple resets

Approximately
\$300
INCLUDING
NEW SCREEN

Agents Required

Through the use of sophisticated computer equipment, and our thorough knowledge of the amusement business, we have completely reprogrammed the 'Computer Programme' that runs these games, to add an impressive list of new features that stop long games and provide new interest.

We also supply a bright new front glass, where appropriate, to give the machines a new look.

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Telephone 01-949 3327

COMPETITIVE VIDEO—THE VIDEO GAME SPECIALISTS

SPACE INVADER IS A PRODUCT OF TAITO CORPORATION.

BOOKKEEPING DATA

It's a two-player game for you and your accountant —
you need the output, he needs the input!

By Charles C. Ross

If you are unhappy with your accountant, it may not be his fault. After all, you gave him the data and he is simply providing the information he thinks you need. Perhaps the fault is a double fault, part yours and part his. So before you fire your accountant—remember you wrote the information which he is to assemble.

Information you must provide your accountant

What is it that you would like to know about your business? That is the basic question which you must answer before you can even determine what information you need to give the accountant.

Profitability is an obvious answer everyone would like to know. If

profits are of interest to you, provide the accountant with the information he needs to show you the profits.

The profitability of a business is of course found on the income statement, sometimes referred to as the "P and L Statement." In its simplest form, the income statement is simply revenues for a given period or time less expenses for the same given period.

To give your accountant revenues for a given period, you must have a schedule for revenue collections which fit the time period. For example, if you desire monthly income statements you should collect revenues for the exact days in that particular month. If collecting revenues from all of your machines as of a particular date causes your organization problems, you can of course estimate what the revenues would be from some of your locations for those last few days of the month.

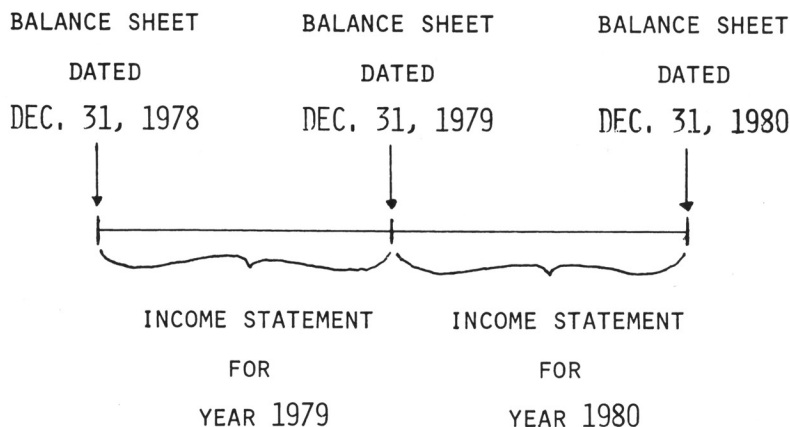
Just remember, the more estimates you make, the more incorrect your income statement is likely to be.

The expense section of the income statement can also cause some problems. Expenses can be handled by two methods, the accrual method or the cash method.

The accrual method of accounting for expenses means you will accrue expenses for a given period. In other words, when you pay for items, such as your state or city permits for the coming year, the cost of the permits will be distributed equally over each month in the coming year.

The cash method is where you recognize the cost, such as of the permits, as an expense in the month in which the cost of the permits was incurred. So, if you paid for the permits in January, you would recognize the entire cost of the permits as a cost in the month of January, as opposed to recognizing one-twelfth of the permits' cost as an

EXHIBIT



INCOME STATEMENT OR "P AND L"

SUMMARIZES THE REVENUES AND EXPENSES FOR A GIVEN PERIOD, I.E. A MONTH OR A YEAR.

BALANCE SHEET OR STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

SUMMARIZES THE ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND OWNERS EQUITY AS OF A GIVEN DATE, I.E. JUNE 30, 1930 OR DECEMBER 31, 1979.



A hole new video thrill!

Gremlin's new DIGGER is more than an exciting test of speed and manual skill.

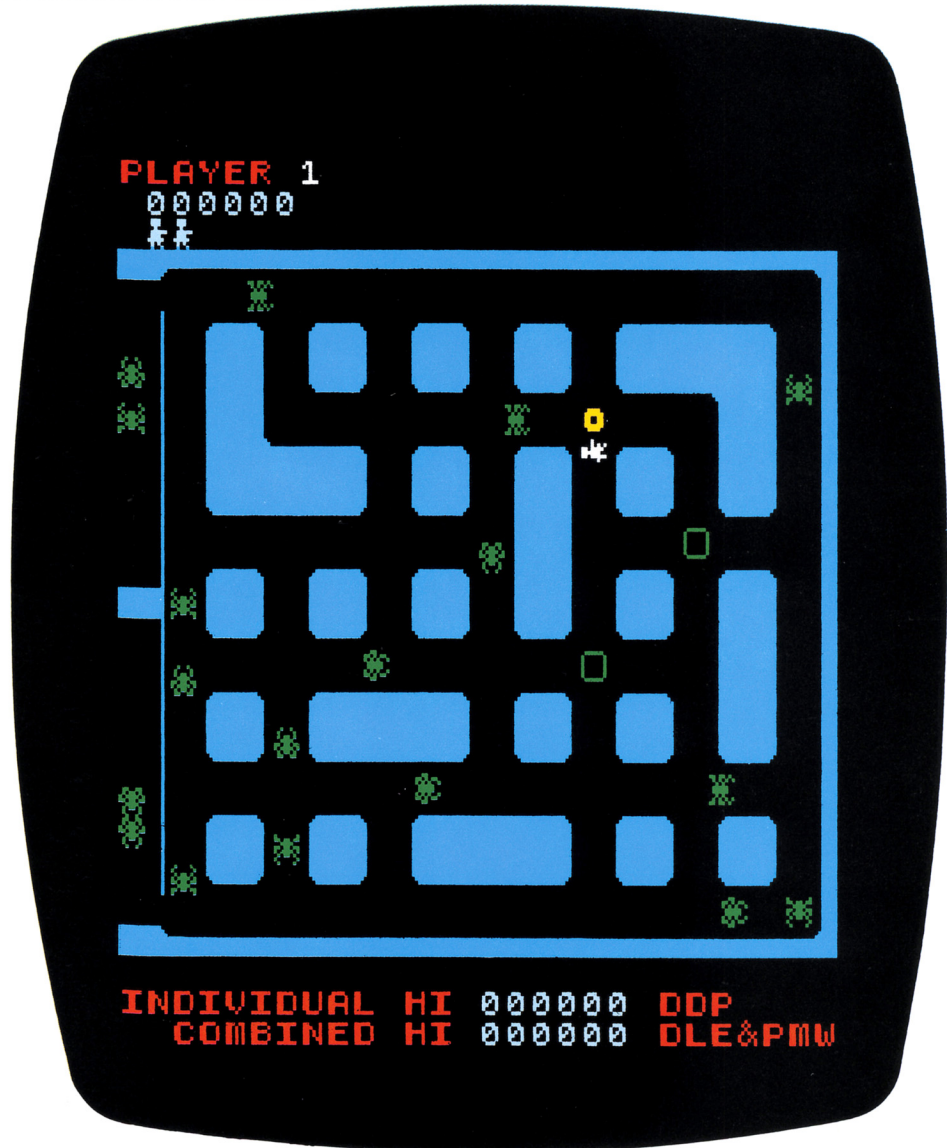
It's also a game of strategy that challenges your players' minds as much as their reflexes. And that challenge means more income for you.

All the action in DIGGER is in bright, eye-grabbing color. For added excitement there are ten different, authentic sound effects.

And Gremlin's exclusive MultiPhase® keeps player interest high by increasing the challenge as their skills improve. The playing field changes with each new game phase. And after every successful phase, the number of enemy creatures increases. Players may choose either individual or combined scoring for competitive or cooperative play.

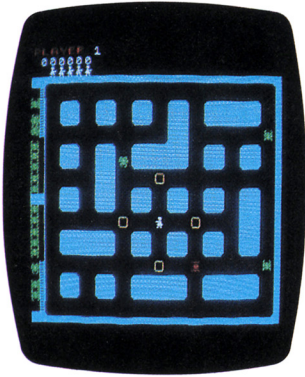
Your players will really dig the challenge and excitement of DIGGER.

And you'll dig its bigger replay profits!





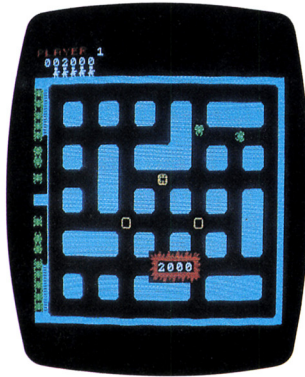
PLAY ACTION



As play begins, you're lost in a maze-like desert canyon.

Suddenly, four hungry creatures begin to stalk you!

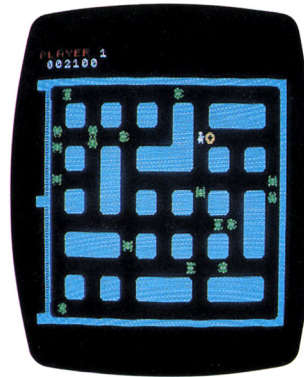
So you dig holes to trap them. As the creatures fall into your holes, you run to fill 'em



in-scoring points.

Trap the red creature and you score bonus points!

But look out—as play progresses, the army of creatures at the top of the screen start to eat their way through the protective barrier. So if



you don't trap all the creatures in the canyons—and fast—their army will escape and devour you!

Designed for one or two players, DIGGER is a constant challenge. The maze changes with each new play phase.



And the built-in ranking display keeps players eager for replays.

That's DIGGER, a hole new game of speed. Skill. Strategy.

And a whole new kind of money-maker for your locations.

CONTROLS



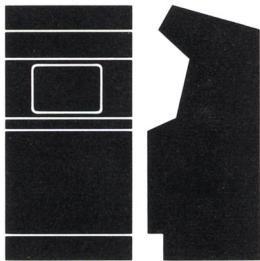
Player Controls include a directional Joy Stick and Dig and Fill Buttons. Plus one player or two player select buttons.

Operator Controls

feature Gremlin's exclusive E-Z Adjust™ volume controls for game sounds and sound-off during advertising plus a service switch for credit game play. Credit games do not increment

the coin counter. Adjust overall game speed with control on the CPU board. DIP switch also provides operator with game play options. Universal coinage selection with switches inside coin door.

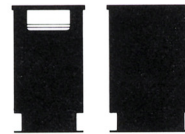
CABINET MODELS



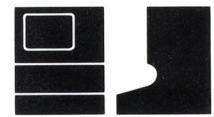
Upright
25½"W x 67"H x 28"D
64.77 cmW x 170.18cmH x 71.12cmD
290 lbs./132 kg.



Cocktail
22"W x 34"L x 24½"H
55.88cmW x 86.36cmL x 62.23cmH
80 lbs./36 kg.



Slimline
35"H x 19"W x 22½"D
89cmH x 48cmW x 57cmD
120 lbs./54 kg.



MiniVideo
22"H x 21"W x 20"D
55.88cmH x 53.34cmW x 50.8cmD
80 lbs./36 kg.



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The games people REALLY play.

expense in that month.

Whether you should be on the cash method or the accrual method depends on the accuracy you desire. You will find that the net income or profit of your company will fluctuate more if you use the cash method as opposed to the accrual method. The fluctuations will be caused mainly by the fluctuation of your expenses. You and your accountant need to decide which method is best for your operation.

One of the key elements of the income statement is, of course, depreciation expense. For your accountant to have an accurate depreciation expense on the statement, you must be sure to give him all the invoices for the new machinery you acquire throughout the year.

A machine begins depreciation the moment you drive away from the distributor. Since you are constantly buying new machines and trading-in the old, to get an accurate depreciation picture you must keep the accountant informed as to the changes which occurred since he prepared the last income statement.

You will also need to keep accurate records of all other expenses you incur in the process of running your business. Your check book is the best source document you have available for the compilation of your operating expenses. Don't forget your auto expenses which you may be incurring on a credit card. Ask your accountant how he is calculating your auto expenses. He may be using the standard mileage approach or the actual cost incurred. The method he is using will require you to collect different information.

You should also discuss with your accountant which method of ac-

counting for your auto and truck expenses will minimize your income taxes.

While the income statement is the most important of the financial statements, you may also desire for your accountant to prepare a balance sheet. A balance sheet or "statement of financial position" is often required with a loan application and should be reviewed at least two times each year.

The balance sheet as opposed to the income statement is set up as of a particular date, not for a given period of time. The balance sheet is a summary of all the assets, liabilities, and capital of the firm. Assets are things the company owns; liabilities are debts the company owes; and capital or net worth or stockholders equity represent the owner's investment in the firm. Of course, as the name implies, the balance sheet must balance. (See Exhibit.]

The equation for the balance sheet is:

Assets = Liabilities + Net Worth.
If the business owns an asset, someone has a claim to that asset. The creditors have a claim to the asset or the owners have a claim to the asset. There cannot be more or less in claims than there are assets.

If you do desire a balance sheet to be prepared by your accountant, you must give him accurate data needed to assemble the statement. He must have the amounts of every asset your company owns as of the date you wish the statement prepared. He will also need to know the amounts you owe to creditors as of the same date. Be sure to include in your assets those new pieces of equipment which you have purchased but which are not yet paid for. Also, don't forget to include the amount you still

owe on the new equipment in the liabilities. Let your accountant worry about the net worth section of the balance sheet.

Also remember to inform your accountant about the peculiarities of your business. For example, you have no inventories (if you are an amusement company only), and you have no accounts receivable.

Information your accountant must provide you

Now that you and your book-keeper have gathered all that data, what can you expect from the accountant? The answer should be no surprise. He should give you a monthly income statement and possibly a balance sheet twice a year—maybe more often, depending on your needs.

One requirement you must make of your accountant is that the information be timely. Your profits depend on your ability to run your business successfully. But if you do not know what your profits are, it is hard to decide on courses of action you will need to take in order to make profits increase.

If your accountant cannot provide timely information, find yourself another accountant. After all, he is your "employee," so expect the performance you would from any other employee.

Conclusion

Monthly income statements are extremely important in the running of your operation. Balance sheets provide useful information and can be helpful in getting a bank loan or distributor credit. But remember you and your accountant must work together, because accounting is a two-player game.

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Do you want to operate a Pinball Game on 34 Krupecs? 62 Cruzeros? 29 Francs? 4, 350 Lira? . . . Tokens are the answer. Coin Acceptors and Slide Chutes are easily adjusted for Token Operation. Bill Changers can be quickly modified for virtually any size Token, and the number of Tokens dispensed can be set for any quantity.

It is important to allow a margin of size difference from the coins in use in any country, to prevent slugging. Pro-

viding the proper Token is selected, Coin Mechs can be set to eliminate slugging completely.

If you are exporting new or used equipment, you owe it to yourself and to your customers to consider Tokens and all of the advantages they offer.

Catalogue and assorted samples are available on request. Phone (606) 255-5990, or write Van Brook of Lexington, Inc., P.O. Box 5044, Lexington, Ky. 40555.

Put your 'assumptions' into a target plan

Equipment budgeting

Equipment purchasing is fundamental to future revenues in the amusement business. It's a simple fact: any operator who gets into the business and thinks that equipment purchases are a waste of money is destined to follow in the footprints of the now-extinct dinosaurs.

It is a nice theory to think equipment purchases need not be made, but it is untrue. How many 8-year-old pinball machines still make good money?

While equipment buying is a very integral part of any amusement operator's business, I have found only one operator who actually plans his machine purchases. Could it be that the preparation of an equipment budget is really not needed after all? [See *Reasons for not preparing an equipment budget*, below.]

Assuming we agree an equipment budget is needed, let me clear up a point. I am not about to tell you which machines to buy or which machines will earn well. That is not the purpose of this article—and, besides, I left my crystal ball at home today. What I will try to do is to explain how you should set up and maintain an equipment budget to help maximize profits and cash flow.

Establishing Replacement Needs (The Long Way)

The old maxim, "everything has a price," is true for preparing a detailed list of equipment replacement needs. This method is best suited for an operator with 100 machines or less. It can be performed for any size operation, but the work load increases unless you employ the aid of a computer. (Larger operators may desire to use the short-cut approach [following]. But for those who desire accuracy, use the "long way.")

Take two sheets of paper and list all your pinball machines on one and all arcade games on the other. Then categorize the machines, as in Tables I and II, according to what you think are their remaining useful lives. In other words, how much longer do you plan to operate each piece? Just use your best guess based on what you know about the machine and its earning history to this point in time, your company policies regarding a

machine's normal life, and what new machines are coming out soon. If you have several of a particular machine and plan to operate them for different time periods, this causes no problems. For example, see the "Slime" pinball machines in Table I.

Once you have categorized them by remaining useful life, total the check marks in each column and you have a good estimate of the number of machines you need to replace in each of the coming three years. The most important column is, of course, the one for the coming year—since your estimate of a machine's useful life may change over time.

Establishing Replacement Needs (The Short-Cut Approach)

This is more of a "ball park" figure than the long approach. It is a good and valid approach assuming you put in good data.

The short-cut approach requires two calculations.

1. Pinball machines

$$\frac{\text{Total no. of pinball machines owned}}{\text{Useful life of a pinball machine}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Pinball machines} \\ = & \text{To be replaced} \\ & \text{Each year} \end{aligned}$$

2. Arcade machines

$$\frac{\text{Total no. of arcade machines owned}}{\text{Useful life of an arcade machine}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Arcade machines} \\ = & \text{To be purchased} \\ & \text{Each year} \end{aligned}$$

For example, the Magic Machine Amusement Center operates 18 pinball machines which are expected to have a 3-year-life.

$$\frac{18 \text{ pinballs owned}}{3\text{-year Life}}$$

$$= 6 \text{ Pinball machines to be Replaced each year.}$$

Magic Machines will need to buy 6 new machines each year and on the average, their pinball machines will

By Charles C. Ross

of Innovative Management Consultants,
San Marcos, Texas

be 1½ years old, assuming they had a 1½-year average to start with.

Establishing Expansion Plans

What are your expansion plans for the coming year? If you don't have any expansion plans, perhaps you should read "Establishing Company Goals and Maintaining Them, parts I and II, PLAY METER, April 15 and June 15, 1980.

Do you plan to expand the number of machines at any location? Do you plan to reduce the number of machines at any location? Do you plan to open a new arcade? Do you plan to capture any of your competition's locations? Are any new locations going to open which could use your services?

These are some of the fundamental questions an operator must ask when attempting to establish expansion plans. Remember, for your equipment budget you must think in terms of the number of machines needed for expansion. The dollar cost of the expansion will be handled later.

Establishing the Cost of a New Machine

You now have a good idea of your equipment needs in terms of how many new machines you will need to purchase, based on your replacement needs and your expansion plans. Next we need to determine how much those new machines are going to cost, in total and per machine. Table III is the worksheet to calculate the equipment cost needed for the preparation of the equipment budget. It recaps the number of needed machines and the machines to be purchased each month. The monthly purchase quantity of 2 in the example is only an average. In some months when several good machines are coming out, the company may want to buy more than two machines. Do not be alarmed if your average comes out so you are to purchase a fraction of a machines: such as 2.3; it is only an average.

The estimated cost of a new pinball machine and arcade pieces must be determined for each individual firm. Such factors as your relationship with your distributor and

Table I
Estimating Pinballs Remaining Life

MACHINE	WILL HAVE A LIFE OF			
	Less than 1 year	1 year but less than 2	2 years but less than 3	3 or more years
Beepo		✓		
Hey Man			✓	
Honker	✓			
Klunk		✓		
Slime #1	✓			
Slime #2		✓		
Sp1at				✓
TOTALS	7	8	4	2

Table II
Estimating Arcade Games' Remaining Life

MACHINE	WILL HAVE A LIFE OF			
	Less than 1 year	1 year but less than 2	2 years but less than 3	3 or more years
Blue Baron	✓			
Club-Out		✓		
Got-Ya	✓			
Hip Hugger		✓		
Missle Chaser				
OK Corral	✓			
Space Trash				✓
Super Shovel	✓		✓	
TOTALS	8	9	5	2

Table III Worksheet for the Equipment Budget

TOTAL PINBALLS NEEDED FOR REPLACEMENT THIS YEAR	7
TOTAL PINBALLS NEEDED FOR EXPANSION THIS YEAR	<u>3</u>
TOTAL NEW PINBALLS NEEDED	10
TOTAL ARCADE GAMES NEEDED FOR REPLACEMENT THIS YEAR	8
TOTAL ARCADE GAMES NEEDED FOR EXPANSION THIS YEAR	<u>6</u>
TOTAL NEW ARCADES GAMES NEEDED	<u>14</u>
TOTAL NEW GAMES NEEDED THIS YEAR	<u>24</u>
Average Machine Purchases to be Made Each Month (24 ÷ 2)	<u>2</u>
Estimated Cost of New Pinball Machines	<u>\$ 1,950</u>
Estimated Cost of New Arcade Machines	<u>\$ 2,400</u>
TOTAL PINBALL BUDGET	
\$1950 Estimated Pinball Cost x 10 Needed	\$19,500
Less Trade-in value of 7 replaced machines*	<u>- 3,500</u>
Total Equipment outlay for arcade machines	\$16,000
TOTAL ARCADE BUDGET	
\$2400 Estimated Arcade Cost x 14 Arcades Needed	\$33,600
Less Trade-in value of 8 arcades replaced*	<u>- 5,800</u>
Total Equipment outlay for arcade machines	<u>27,800</u>
TOTAL EQUIPMENT BUDGET FOR THE COMING YEAR	<u>\$43,800</u>
Equipment purchases to be made each month \$43,800 ÷ 12 mos. =	<u>\$ 3,650</u>

*A trade-in value of \$500 has been assumed for used pinball machines and \$725 for used arcade games. Each operator must determine his own trade-in value for each machine based on his experiences. Trade-in value must be included because it reduces the equipment expenditure which must be made.

Table IV EQUIPMENT BUDGET (SAMPLE)

	July	August	Sept.	October	November	December
Monthly Budgeted Expenditure	\$3,650	\$3,650	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,650
Cumulative Budget To Date	\$3,650	\$7,300	\$10,950	\$14,600	\$18,250	\$21,900
Expenditures Less Trade-in Value Machines Purchased #1	\$1,775	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$ 2,500	-	\$ 1,800
#2	2,500	-	1,400	1,850	-	1,870
#3	1,320	-	-	1,970	-	1,550
Actual Expenditure	\$5,595	\$1,600	\$3,400	\$ 6,320	-0-	\$ 5,220
Actual Expenditure to Date	\$5,595	\$7,195	\$10,595	\$16,915	\$16,915	\$22,135
Budgeted Expenditure to Date	3,650	7,300	10,950	14,600	18,250	21,900
Over Budget	\$1,945			\$ 2,315		\$ 235
Under Budget		\$ 105	\$ 355		\$ 1,335	

the number of machines you purchase at one time and for the year may have an impact on the price you pay. The price of machinery also seems to be continually rising—so you may want to make your estimate higher than you think adequate at present, to allow for price increases. The estimated cost of your new equipment must be based on your best judgement, and don't forget to include any freight and taxes you pay.

Total Pinball Budget. This budget for the coming year is simply the number of pinball machines to be purchased, times the estimated cost of a new pinball, less any trade-in value you receive on old machinery. Note that there are only 7 machines which are trade-in in the example. The three others, if you will recall from the top of Table III are for expansion purposes, hence there will be no trade-in.

Total Arcade Budget: The total arcade budget for the coming year is calculated the same way the pinball budget is calculated. The number of arcade machines to be purchases, multiplied times the estimated cost of a new arcade machine, less any trade-in value you receive on old machinery traded.

The Equipment Budget: Once you have completed the worksheet you are ready to prepare the equipment budget by month as in Table IV. The Monthly Budgeted Expenditure line is simply the total yearly expenditure divided by the 12 months, which gives \$3,650 in this example.

The Cumulative Budget to Date line is the monthly budgeted expenditure added across. For example, the cumulative budget to date for September is \$10,950—which is \$3,650 for July, August, and September (\$3,650 X 3 months = \$10,950).

Expenditures Less Trade-in is the actual cost of a new machine less any trade-in value added. The actual expenditure for each machine purchased will vary depending on the trade-in received and other factors such as the game's popularity and discounts you may receive.

As time passes, the equipment budget allows you to track your actual expenditures as compared with the budget expenditures. For example, in the month of October several new machines came out which this company felt were needed to buy. As a result, their purchases in that month made them go over their budget by \$2,315. They did however wind up at the end of the year only \$235 over budget because they purchased no new machines in November of 1980.

Handling Budget Variances

Wethern's Law states: "Assumption is the mother of all screw-ups," and we have made several assumptions in the preparation of an equipment budget. However, our assumptions do not destroy the validity of the equipment budget as a useful planning tool. As far as why your equipment budget will be wrong, there are several possibilities.

First, did you make good assumptions about the remaining useful life of your existing machinery? Did you do a reasonable job of protecting your expansion needs? Did you leave an inflation cushion in your estimated cost for new arcade games and pinball machines? Were your trade-in values accurate? And finally—did you attempt to stick to your plan? These are some of the reasons you may not be on target with your equipment budget.

So, what are the consequences of not staying on budget? That is a difficult question to answer. If you spent more than the budget called for, you may find that the money available to take home went down—

or on the other hand, you find you had more money to take home. Unfortunately, there is no standard answer as to the consequences of being off target.

Remember, it was your own input into the budgeting process that told you how much to buy, given your attitude toward your machinery's age. So, if you find you are consistently off the budget target, perhaps you should re-evaluate how you located the placement of the target in the first place.

If you are off budget because there has been an unusual number of good machines coming out and you have purchased heavily into the pieces, you have not necessarily blown your budget. In Table IV that situation is depicted in the month of October. Several new machines came out, all of which the company felt were worthwhile. As a result of the heavy purchasing in October, they ended the month \$2,315 over budget.

How do you get back on track? Simple. As with the company in the example, you slow down on your

acquisitions of new machines in future months. Note that their purchases were zero in November which put them under budget for the month, and more or less back on track.

Also remember that your equipment budget is not carved in marble. If you are off, perhaps it is the budget that is off and not your performance; so don't hesitate to re-evaluate how the budget was designed, and re-design it if necessary. Before you re-design, first try to determine why you are off budget.

Summary

Hopefully, by now you are convinced you need an equipment budget. If you need a little more persuasion, check last year's total expenditure for new equipment—and I will bet you find it to be one of the top three outlays of funds. Any outlay in the top three should not be left to chance, but should be planned. So grab a cup of coffee and sit down to set up an equipment budget. You may find it a rewarding experience.

'Arguments' against an annual plan

REASONS FOR NOT PREPARING AN EQUIPMENT BUDGET

1. *I buy only good proven pieces. If they come out, I buy. If they don't come out, I don't buy.*

You are avoiding the issue, which is not *what to buy* or even when to buy—but how to buy. I agree that buying proven pieces is a good strategy, but you still need a plan for your equipment purchases. An equipment budget is just such a plan; it does not say to buy poor earners or even buy good earning machines. What the equipment budget does is help you determine how much you should be buying once you have set some objectives for machinery age and your growth potential.

2. *I'm not large enough to plan my equipment purchases.*

Being a small operator is all the more reason you should plan and calculate how much money will be needed and available for equipment purchases. Being small, you need very exacting plans. A mistake at this stage of the game could cause you to lose the game. You may also find yourself getting a little hungry if you get "buy happy" and don't plan your purchases well.

3. *I know I must have new equip-*

ment, so why play with a budget?

Again the question here is how much equipment do you need. The budget does an excellent job of helping you establish the quantity of machinery to purchase, given your objectives for such things as expansion and average age of equipment.

4. *I'm so large I just buy two of every new machine anyway.*

My purpose is not to tell you what to buy but how much to buy. Purchasing two of each machine may be the correct amount for your company to purchase. But did you arrive at that amount by calculations or by "the seat of your pants?" You need support for that quantity of equipment purchases and the equipment budget will provide the information.

4. *My business is doing well, and I don't care if I make any more money or not.*

The question is not how well your business is doing, but how well can your business do? As far as you not desiring to make more money, I admire your stance. I would like to caution you against the hungry operators who will be after you if you get lazy. Do not become complacent or think you are invincible.

6. *Budgets are always wrong, so I never prepare them. I can be wrong without a budget.*

Budgets are a financial plan for the future, and anytime you try to

predict the future you have an extremely good chance of being wrong. But remember, everytime you buy a piece of equipment you must have predicted it to be a good piece or you would not have purchased it. As unfortunate as it is, a business' ability to survive and prosper hinges on its ability to predict the future. Many fortunes have been made by predicting the future correctly, and many fortunes have been lost by predicting incorrectly. While you may still be wrong when you use a budget, you should be less wrong than when you act without a budget.

7. *An equipment budget takes too much time to prepare.*

Wrong again, "coin-mech-mouth!" I am in full agreement with the rule: "Do no more paperwork than is absolutely necessary." But as far as an equipment budget is concerned, what are the benefits as opposed to the costs. To help you save time, included above is a short-cut approach to preparing an equipment budget. If you input good data, the short-cut approach to determining replacement needs for old equipment could save you several hours.

Even if an equipment budget took one entire day to prepare—I would be willing to bet it would save you more than that one day's wages.

music programming



By Pat Matthews

Program/Music Director WQVE New Orleans

New talents are rolling

Music is on a roll. What I mean is: new talent is being developed. And they're *hitting*, the first time out in most cases, and hitting it big! In the coming months we'll be seeing this (and hearing of them) more and more. It could be that the days of the so-called "one hit band" are forever gone. Musical talents today are too smart to allow their progress to stagnate. Besides, it's good work if you can get it, so why squander it away?

SAILING—Christopher Cross—Warner Brothers WBS 49507

Here's a perfect example of what we were talking about. Now, be honest, how many of you laughed when I reviewed his initial smash "Ride Like The Wind" some months back? I must admit, I kind of chuckled at a singer whose name is Chris Cross. But I gave it a very favorable review, if memory serves, and now I'm really going out on a limb by saying the second cut from the self-titled debut album will be even bigger. It's a beautiful summertime ballad that just flows ever so nicely. It's acoustic and somewhat jazzy in parts with nice keyboard work.

Headed for the big time...again! 10 out of 10, no problem.

BEYOND—Herb Alpert — A&M 2245-S

Mr. Alpert "rose" from the musical dead with last year's appropriately titled "Rise." This year he's back with a bouncier, more ambitious effort. Alpert has gone beyond anyone's expectations of a successful follow-up. This one has very little horn work and emphasizes the rhythm track of the song. He'll definitely score big on the jazz charts, and the timing could be right for another hit single. I still think it's danceable, despite what some people may think: 8 out of 10 or better. It just sounds like a hit.

ONE MORE TIME FOR LOVE—Billy Preston & Streeta —Tamla T-54312-F

This time Billy Preston reciprocates and sings on the lady's album. This cut, like "With You I'm Born Again," is a beautiful love ballad sung in separate verses and beautifully together. It features a nice acoustic guitar up front in the mix, with the string section playing more of a supporting role this time around. Unlike Johnny Mathis and Deniece Williams

this duo is believable and seems to be together on musical philosophy as well as *very* together in the vocal department. Excellent crossover record: 10 out of 10 in all applicable categories.

MAKE A LITTLE MAGIC—The Dirt Band —United Artists UAX1356-Y

Once again it's one of the last vestiges of American musical group unity. Following more or less hot on the heels of the very successful "An American Dream," it's a sort-of sound-alike song which should insure success since it is not an immediate follow-up and is from a brand-new lp. It's country rock at its best from one of the pioneer groups of the genre. Sounds a lot like a Ms. Ronstadt on the background vocals again. I give it 9 out of 10 or better.

JOJO—Boz Scaggs—Columbia 1-11281

"Breakdown Dead Ahead" was a comeback of sorts for the multi-talented Boz and was a "rocker" in every sense of the word. This time around we get a taste of the mellow and jazzy side of Boz Scaggs. And I must admit the taste is good. Utilizing the best studio musicians available, including former sidemen Toto, Boz

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has got it all together with the breezy mid-tempo R&B flavored sure-fire hit record. Total mass appeal this time out: I give it a conservative 9 out of 10.

TAKE A LITTLE RHYTHM—Ali Thomson—A&M 2243-S

Rumored to be some sort of kin to a member of Supertramp, here's the debut record from a newcomer whose influences obviously come from that family. The Supertramp sound is present throughout, although I could find no "thank you's" on the lp liner notes to indicate their physical presence. It's up-tempo acoustic and happy. Nice clarinet work highlights this very summery sound from a new star on the horizon. Could be A&M's big month to pull them from the no-hits doldrums. Give it 7 out of 10 on a hunch.

ALL OUT OF LOVE—AIR SUPPLY—Arista AS 0520

This Australian group took America by storm with "Lost In Love" and continues to blow me away with another beautiful ballad from their debut Arista lp. This one doesn't depend on the electronic sound as much as the initial hit did, but is beautifully acoustic and features strings for a nice touch. Lots of changes throughout the song make for interest. Unmistakable vocals I find very unusual for a group that has only been exposed to the States for a short time. Definite Top 10 material, therefore 10 out of 10.

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT—THE BROTHERS JOHNSON—A&M 2238-S

This is the title cut from the comeback album produced by Quincy Jones for the guitar-playing Brothers. It is co-written by Rod Temperton, of Heatwave fame and more recently the composer of a couple of Michael Jackson's Off The Wall successes. It's a funky, danceable tune and has the Brothers Johnson sound. May not cross over as "Stomp" did, but should be a huge R&B success: 10 out of 10.

HAVEN 'T I LOVED YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE—JOE STAMPLEY—Epic 9-50893

An obvious play on words, here's a country song in the true sense. It tells a great story of love lost and found again—complete with a "cow-boy chorus," strings, steel guitar, and ticklin' piano riffs. A great one to get close to the one you're dancin' or neverminding with: 10 out of 10 C&W

PLAY METER HOT STUFF

COMING UP—PAUL McCARTNEY—Columbia 1-11263 ***
LITTLE JEANNIE—ELTON JOHN—MCA 41236 ***
SHE'S OUT OF MY LIFE—MICHAEL JACKSON—Epic 9-50871 ***
STEAL AWAY—ROBBIE DUPREE—Elektra 46621 ***
LET ME LOVE YOU TONIGHT—PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE—Casablanca 2266 ***
IT'S STILL ROCK'N' ROLL TO ME—BILLY JOEL—Columbia 1-11276
CLONES (WE'RE ALL)—ALICE COOPER—Warner Brothers 49204
LET MY LOVE OPEN THE DOOR—PETE TOWNSHEND—Atco 7217
SHOULD'VE NEVER LET YOU GO—NEIL SEDAKA & DARA SEDAKA—Elektra 46615 ***
SHINING STAR—THE MANHATTANS—Columbia 1-11222
I'M ALIVE—ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA—MCA 41247 ***
MAGIC—OLIVIA NEWTON JOHN—MCA 31247 ***
TIRED OF TOEIN' THE LINE—ROCKY BURNETTE—EMI-America 8043 ***
GIMME SOME LOVIN'—THE BLUES BROTHERS—Atlantic 3666***
ALL NIGHT LONG—JOE WALSH—FullMoon/Asylum 46639 ***
LOVE THE WORLD AWAY—KENNY ROGERS—United Artists 1359
TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME—RAY PARKER JR. & RAYDIO—Arista ***
ONE FINE DAY—CAROLE KING—Capitol ***
ANSWERING MACHINE—RUPERT HOLMES—MCA 41235
MISUNDERSTANDING—GENESIS—Atlantic 3662
MORE LOVE—KIM CARNES—EMI-America 8045
STAND BY ME—MICKEY GILLEY—Full Moon/Asylum 46640
IN AMERICA—THE CHARLIE DANIELS BAND—Epic 9-50888 ***
ATOMIC—BLONDIE—Chrysalis 2410 ***

PLAY METER PICKIN' & GRINNIN'

HE STOPPED LOVING HER TODAY—GEORGE JONES—Epic 9-50867
TRYING TO LOVE TWO WOMEN—THE OAK RIDGE BOYS—MCA 41217
HE WAS THERE (WHEN I NEEDED YOU)—TAMMY WYNETTE—Epic 9-50868
MIDNIGHT RIDER—WILLIE NELSON—Columbia 1-11257
YOUR BODY IS AN OUTLAW—MEL TILLIS—Elektra 46628
BARROOM BUDDIES—MERLE HAGGARD & CLINT EASTWOOD—Elektra 46634 ***
TENNESSEE RIVER—ALABAMA—RCA 12018
THE BLUE SIDE—CRYSTAL GAYNE—Columbia 1-11270
IN AMERICA—THE CHARLIE DANIELS BAND—Epic 9-50888***
NAKED IN THE RAIN—LORETTA LYNN—MCA 41250
SAVE YOUR HEART FOR ME—JACKY WARD—Mercury 57022
STAND BY ME—MICKEY GILLEY—Full Moon/Asylum

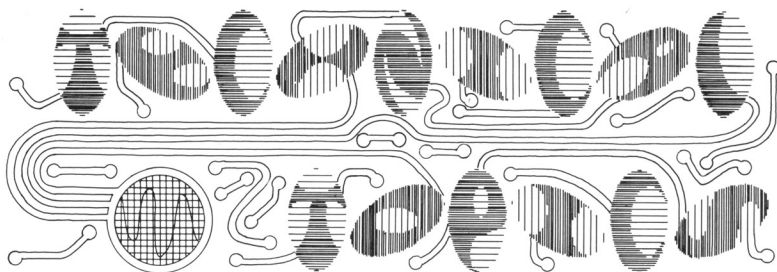
PLAY METER FUNKIFIED

SITTING IN THE PARK—GQ—Arista 0510
TAKE YOUR TIME (DO IT RIGHT)—THE S.O.S. BAND—Tabu 9-5522 ***
GOTTA GET MY HANDS ON SOME MONEY—THE FATBACK BAND—Spring 3008
POWER—THE TEMPTATIONS—Gordy 7183
LANDLORD—GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS—Columbia 1-11239
YOU AND ME—ROCKIE ROBBINS—A&M 2213
ONE IN A MILLION—LARRY GRAHAM—Warner Brothers 49221
DOES SHE HAVE A FRIEND—GENE CHANDLER—20th Century Fox 2451
CUPID/I'VE LOVED YOU FOR A LONG TIME—THE SPINNERS—Atlantic 3664 ***
WELCOME TO MY WORLD—DELEGATION—Mercury 76056
BEHIND THE GROOVE—TEENA MARIE—Gordy 7184
SOMEONE THAT I USED TO LOVE—NATALIE COLE—Capitol 4869

*** Denotes records previously reviewed by PLAY METER.

By Joe O'Hara

courtesy of
Star-Tech Journal
Merchantville, New Jersey



Bally/Stern games:

High voltage regulator

The circuit which regulates the +190 VDC for the display tubes in Bally/Stern games, fails in a manner which wipes out all traces of the event which caused the failure in the first place. How does this circuit work, and what can we do to prevent returns of this assembly after fixing it once?

Figure 1 here shows the circuit in question. We can divide the circuit into three main sections: input filter, consisting of C26 and the bleeder resistor R35; the series pass transistors Q21 and Q22; and the feedback network consisting of the voltage divider R54/RT1/R56, Zener VR1, and Q23.

The input filter simply evens out the half-sine-wave humps from the bridge. Q22 and Q21, in a Darlington arrangement, act as a variable

resistor to control the voltage seen at TP2.

At this point, you are probably saying, what is a Darlington, and how does it know how much to conduct? To answer the first question, a Darlington is the name for the connection made between Q22 and Q21. As you can see, all of Q22's current flows right into Q21's base, where it is multiplied by Q21's again. What you end up with is a circuit which acts like a single transistor with very high gain. This means that it can handle all the current in the load, but is still easy to control. As to how the control is handled, let us imagine what happens when power is first applied.

Initially, the output voltage is zero. As a result, no current is fed into Q23 through VR1 and the divider so Q23

is off. As the voltage rises at the input, some current flows into the Darlington through R51. The Darlington turns on. The voltage continues to rise until it reaches the point where R1 "breaks down" and feeds current into Q23.

Q23 conducts and begins draining the current from R51 which was feeding the Darlington. This tends to turn it off, which in turn inhibits any rise in voltage at the output. *Hey presto*, voltage regulation via negative feedback.

Perhaps we lost you at the Zener diode.... Briefly, a Zener is like an ordinary diode when forward-biased. However, this is no help to you, because they are never used that way. The good part is where they are back-biased. Again, same as a normal diode—up to a point. But as you increase the voltage across it past the "Zener point," it suddenly starts to conduct like anything—and, even as you pump more and more current through it, the voltage across it stays nearly the same. So a Zener can be used to detect when a voltage threshold has been exceeded. VR1 is a 140-volt diode; thus, its threshold occurs at the point where the wiper on RT1 sees about 140V.

All of this is very nice—but what about that smoking ruin on the bench? Why does it fail catastrophically? Well, first of all, we are talking about *big volts*. Once a transistor breaks down and looks like a short, lots of current flows, with predictable effects.

Consider what happens if Q23 shorts. R51 embarks on a brief but merry life as a space-heater, a 1/2 watt resistor dissipating over 2 watts!

This circuit does not incorporate current-limiting. If you accidentally short the output, it is a foot race to see whether the fuse or Q21 blows

Figure 1

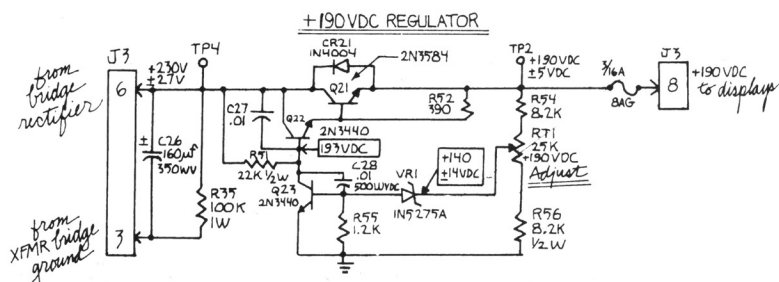
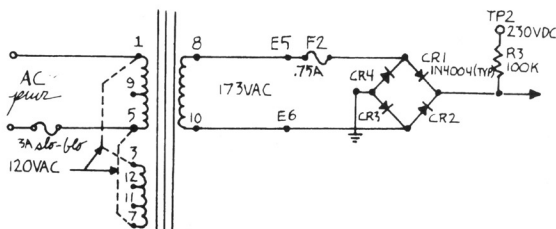


Figure 2





A

long, long time ago, there lived a small African tribe whose people possessed a strange, yet magnificent power. They could gaze upon a simple, earthen stone and turn it into a rare, sparkling gem.

Then, one day a tragedy struck. An earthquake. It shook and trembled their land for a fortnight. Until the ground opened up and swallowed them.

However, before they forever disappeared, they willed their majestic power to a baby cheetah that cowered nearby.

As the months passed, the cheetah grew large and strong enough to venture forth. And, even the tiniest pebble that crossed its path changed into a beautiful, shining stone.

Though many say the magical power of the cheetah was only legend, there can be no other explanation for all the diamonds in Africa.

Even more remarkable, the cheetah lives on. And, be not a doubter. For you are about to be rewarded by ...

(see other side)





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CHEETAH ^{by}



first. (Remember what Murphy said about that?) However, we can assume that this is not a major cause of failures because the tubes rarely fail shorted. My suspicions center on the other end of the circuit.

Imagine this game out in the field. There could be anything hooked into the AC like it is plugged into. Often, devices such as air conditioners, large motors, and so on, drop big voltage spikes onto the line when they are turned off. These spikes often exceed 600V. When you consider that the transformer steps up the line for this circuit, you can be in real trouble in a worst-case situation, because these are 350V transistors. Such a spike could, say, break down Q22's collector-base junction—leaving Q23 holding the bag.

Briefly, if you are getting repeated failures from one site on this circuit, you might try connecting one of the devices listed below, across the bridge CR1—CR4 (on the AC side—Figure 2). This will also protect the bridge.

First choice: Unitrode UDZ 5230—a 300V back-to-back Zener suppressor;

Or: International Rectifier Z10L271—a varistor-type suppressor.

Now, when you ship the board out, the odds are with you that line transients won't be able to knock the board out again. °

SERVICE BULLETIN: Asteroids Atari, Inc. has developed and offers a new modification kit designed to add more challenge to Asteroids and extra difficulty to the achievement of unusually high scores, according to Frank Ballouz, Atari's director of marketing.

The modification accomplishes the following:

The small flying saucer fires immediately in the direction of the player as soon as it enters the screen. The missiles also have a "wraparound" capability.

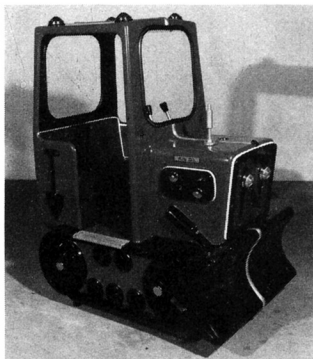
Originally, the program allowed the saucers to fly one-sixth of the way across the screen before firing. There was no wraparound capability.

Two revisions currently exist in the field. ROM Revision 02 has the flip-flop capability, ROM Revision 01 does not.

Kits are immediately available from distributors, said Ballouz. To determine which kit is required, check the ROMs on the Asteroids PCB. If ROM code is "-01", order kit No. 08-0303009; if ROM code is "-02", order kit No. 08-0303008, said the manufacturer.

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NEW YORK MIAMI BELGIUM CHILE

England views Yanks' pool wins

By David Snook

The gulf of difference between pool and the more traditional games of snooker and billiards was heavily underlined in England in May, when two top American pool players swept aside the challenge of a host of world champions in the old game.

The occasion was the Hemeling World Pool Masters Tournament, backed up by the Breaker Pool Challenge Tournament, part of a

four-day pool spectacular run by one of Britain's largest breweries, Bass Ltd., through its subsidiary, Bass Leisure Ltd.

It was also a major breakthrough for the game in Great Britain, with extended nationwide coverage of the Masters Final in BBC Television's Saturday afternoon "Grandstand" mass-audience sports program.

This was undoubtedly the high-

light of the event, and probably its main justification for the sponsors. Bass Leisure Managing Director Peter Sherlock commented: "Television coverage was what we really had in mind. Pool has been on TV before, but only on the BBC's second channel. This was the first time that the sport has received such in-depth coverage to such a mass of people. It has put the game into millions of homes and we hope that the sport generally will be much the better for it."

A great deal of Bass' time, money, and effort went into securing the television coverage, using the top names in world snooker and billiards, then riding in on the shirt-tales of the recent World Snooker Championships which received massive coverage on British TV.

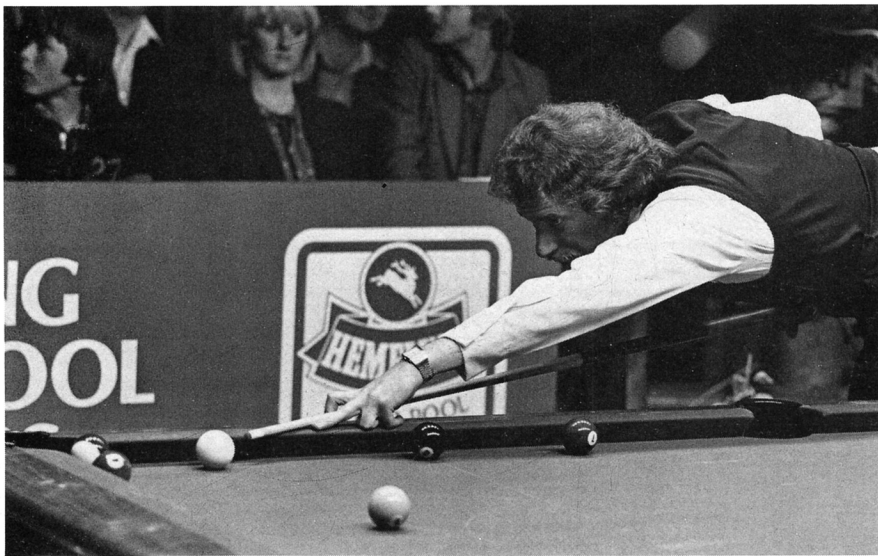
Among the players were John Spencer of England, Bill Werbeniuk of Canada, Terry Griffiths of Wales, Alex Higgins of Ireland, Dennis Taylor of Ireland, Willie Thorne of England, Rex Williams of England, Jack Rea of Ireland, Fred Davis of England, and Doug Mountjoy of Wales. Among them they hold a host of world titles in both snooker and billiards.

But they came up against two specially-imported top Americans—Jim Rempe, one of the greatest American pool players of all time with literally dozens of titles to his credit, and his great rival and friend Steve Mizerak, similarly a prolific winner of titles.

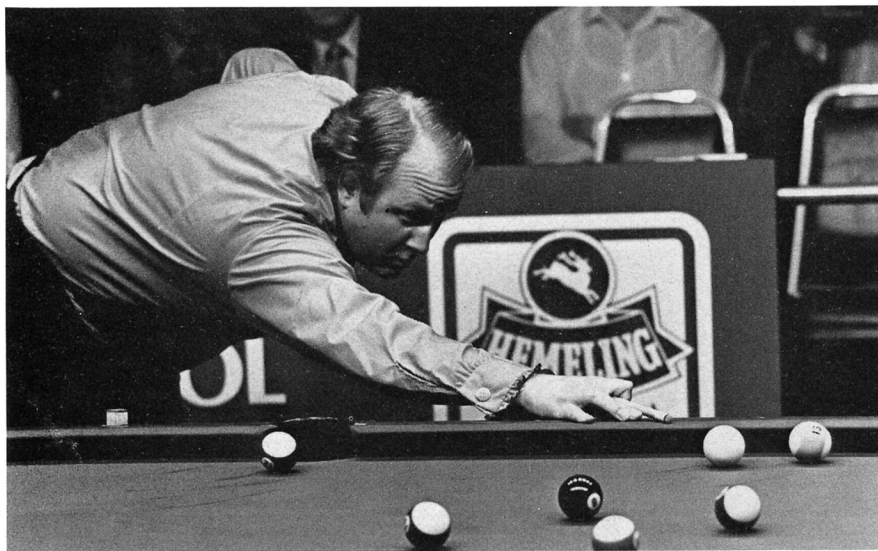
The two of them swept into the Final with little effort, and four individual sessions throughout the afternoon (covered by television) resulted in victory for Rempe in the best of 21 games.

The eight-ball match out of the way, the same players took part in the 14:1 Breaker Pool Challenge and again the two Americans won through to the Final—this time with Mizerak showing his superiority, winning 150-68.

Although there was 20,000 pounds prize money, Rempe picking up 5,000 for his Masters win and another 500 for becoming runner-up



Master shootist Jim Rempe lines up a shot in the Hemeling World Pool tourney, where he took away 5,000 pounds sterling as prize.



Steve Mizerak shows the championship form that brought more than a little respect for Americans' pool table abilities.

in the Challenge, and Mizerak winning 1,000 pounds for the Challenge title and 2,500 pounds for second place in the Masters.

The four-day spectacular was held at the Park Hall Leisure Centre, Charnock Richard, Lancashire, from May 28 to 31, during which time the Bass pub player finals were also held. This was an open competition for players in the brewery's thousands of pubs all over the United Kingdom, attracting 30,000 entries. Named the Hemeling Lite Solo Pool Championships, it was won by Robert Malone from the Crumpsall Hotel, Man-

chester, with a 500 pounds prize.

The only criticism that the many coin machine industry personalities who visited the event found with the organization, was that it used a nine-foot by four-feet-six Gandy table specially brought in from the U. S. for the occasion. Many people pointed out that if it was to demonstrate the game as played in Britain, then a British table—using smaller pockets and balls—should have been employed.

The sponsors pointed out, however, that it was necessary to play the traditional American game to

interest the television people. In future tournaments, presuming that television coverage is again to be courted, it would be possible to make that kind of change.

From that point of view, the decision to use American tables undoubtedly paid off, for the TV coverage must have helped the game become even more firmly entrenched in British pub life.

The event also showed, however, that British players, even world champion snooker and billiards players, are a long way behind the American professionals at pool.

Music Hire results rest on system

European sales of Rowe International products have leapt, thanks to the aggressive sales policy of the Music Hire Group, the British-based importers.

Through its recently-formed network of subsidiary companies, Amiro France, Amiro Automaten Switzerland, and Amiro Automaten West Germany, the group is radically altering the Rowe sales performances in Europe in a short space of time.

The French company held an Open Day on May 23 at its headquarters in Besancon, near the Swiss frontier, with 100 local operators as its guests. The company has only been in operation in France since the end of March, but under its energetic General Manager Andre Moulon, it has already overtaken the Rowe sales figures in France for the whole of last year.

A similar story comes from the West German company, where John Hunger, general manager, was half-way through a series of twenty separate presentations of the new Ri3 phonograph at locations all over the country. Sales in Germany have also leapt since Music Hire formed the subsidiary.

Music Hire Joint Managing Director John Farrand told *PLAY METER*: "So far the total involvement of the Amiro companies in Europe has more than doubled the sales of Rowe equipment in Europe."

The method by which Music Hire is achieving spectacular results rests simply on the British system of operating jukeboxes. A heavy concentration on disc purchasing and programming lies at the root of the system. Programming is carried out by central computer, assessing the results of meter readings from sites all over the United Kingdom.

"In France, for example," he said, "we have taken fifteen independent

operating companies and installed in total about 50 pieces of equipment for them. We have given them the cash box keys and left them to assess for themselves the results of our computer programming. In many cases those results have shown 100 percent take increase, which in turn obviously leads to more sales."

British operating techniques, he said, are far superior to anything anywhere else in the world. "This is not an idle boast," said Farrand, "but rather based on the different operating situations in the United Kingdom and other countries. In the U. K. the vast majority of pubs are owned by a small number of breweries. That

means that they control hundreds, or even thousands of sites, and that in turn means that they can compare results between operators. This leads to fierce competition, and competition leads to increasingly higher standards of expertise.

"The rest of the world has been left far behind because in the great many instances, the country has a vast number of individual site owners who cannot compare results so readily.

"But the exercise in Europe has shown what professional expertise can do for both the operator's profits and for the distributors' sales," according to Music Hire's Farrand.

—by David Snook



Coin Operated Amusements Ltd., Kildare, Ireland, recently became Irish and U. K. agents for Recel S/A Madrid pingames, bingos, and other coin-ops. Pictured here in a meeting of the games maker's and the distributor's representatives are: (left to right) Jose Luis Rojas, export sales manager, Recel; Donal Watters, technical manager, Coin Operated Amusements; Fernando Alvarez, Recel; and Brendan Swords, service manager of the Kildare firm—with the new bingo game from Recel.

Hawley acquires Cherry Leisure

LONDON—Hawley Leisure Limited has agreed to purchase certain assets of Cherry Leisure (UK) Limited, with agreement expected to be final July 1. The assets include about 1,800 amusement machines—1,400 on location and 400 new or used for sale—plus vehicles, plant, equipment, and 16 lease-held properties.

Stocktaking and evaluation June 30 was to be the basis for the sale. The July 1 transfer was contingent on investigation of Cherry's business, approval of Hawley's stockholders in a general meeting, and the grant of transfer to Hawley of the lease of Cherry's head office in Willesden.

The offer for the transfer was limited to 1.35 million pounds but

was not expected to exceed one million pounds, reported *Coin Slot* of London.

Hawley has agreed to employ about 90 persons currently employed by Cherry Leisure. Claus Arrhen and Kurt Oppenheim, Cherry managing director and operations manager, respectively, would remain as executives.

Bob Deith, Hawley Leisure director, was quoted in *Coin Slot*: "The purchase of Cherry Leisure, combined with Musomatics and the original Ruffler and Deith hiring company, amounts to a very significant operation."

Arrhen said, "I cannot stress

enough how pleased I am with the arrangement reached. The organization and staff will remain intact and the identity of Cherry and I hope that its goodwill, paired with the backing of a progressive U. K. public company, will further strengthen our position in the video market."

He said the "added benefits for an operating company to have a distribution company like Ruffler and Deith in the same group" is to broaden access to equipment which may benefit its customers.

The acquisition of Cherry Leisure would bring to five the number of companies in which Hawley has interest, in the coin machine field.

TAX CLINIC: The rules on 'Subchapter S'

By Comprehensive Accounting Corp. of Aurora, Illinois. Comprehensive provides a bookkeeping, accounting, and tax service to over 14,000 business clients each month through a nationwide network or more than 140 franchised offices.

QUESTION: What is a "Subchapter S" corporation?

ANSWER: A Subchapter S corporation is a domestic corporation that elects to be taxed under the Subchapter S provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

A corporation electing Subchapter S status is not subject to federal tax on its income. However, its income or losses are considered to be the income or losses of its shareholders in direct proportion to their percentage of ownership.

The income of the corporation, whether distributed or not, is included in the gross income of the shareholders during the taxable year in which the Subchapter S corporate year ends. Similar to a partnership, a Subchapter S corporation files an informative return each year with the Internal Revenue Service, but pays no federal income tax.

A corporation must elect to be a Subchapter S corporation by affirmatively filing with the Internal Revenue Service an election signed by the president of the corporation and all of its shareholders during the first 75 days of the corporation's taxable year, or at any time during the preceding taxable year.

Once making the election the corporation is bound for that calen-

der year unless the status is terminated involuntarily. However, the election can be terminated for subsequent years. In the event the election is terminated, the corporation is not eligible to elect Subchapter S status for a period of five years after termination.

To qualify for making the election to be taxed under the Subchapter S status, a corporation must meet certain requirements. The corporation must be a domestic corporation with only one class of stock and fifteen or fewer shareholders (stock owned by husband and wife, together or separately, is treated as stock owned by one person).

In addition, the corporation cannot be a member of an affiliated group of other corporations and all of its share holders must be either individuals, estates, grantor trusts, or voting trusts. Corporations or other types of trusts are not allowed as shareholders, and all shareholders must be residents or resident aliens of the United States.

In addition to the above, the corporation cannot derive more than 80 percent of its gross receipts from sources outside the United States in any taxable year, nor can the corporation derive more than 20 percent of its gross receipts from rents, dividends, interest, annuities,

royalties, sales or exchange of securities or any other form of *passive income*. The collection of rents from rental of real estate is considered as passive income. Accordingly, Subchapter S status cannot be elected for a corporation whose purpose is to own and lease real estate.

There are many significant advantages of electing to be taxed as a Subchapter S corporation. All of the commonly cited advantages of corporate form over other forms of business exist including the ability to provide fringe benefits to employees, such as medical reimbursement plans, group term life insurance, and qualified deferred compensation plans.

In addition, losses of the corporation pass through the shareholders to use as offsets against their other income. Further, the impact of double taxation is eliminated since dividend distributions to shareholders are taxed only once.

The advantage of the Subchapter S status merits careful consideration. Further, once having made the election, care must be taken to verify that the corporation has maintained its status as a Subchapter S corporation as the involuntary termination of the election will result in adverse tax consequences.

Critic's Corner



By Roger C. Sharpe

Dynamic damsel duo

The year is silently slipping away. Eight months into it, and all we hear is the same old song—increased pricing and the warfare between video and pinball. Somehow it all seems so crazy, only because both forms of entertainment are going to survive. There is a place for video and pinball, and when everyone begins to realize that the competition isn't between the two, everything is going to be a helluva lot better.

There are fans of pinball and fans of video, and then there are fans who play both regularly. The market will always be there, and share of earnings or how fast a game can pay back for itself becomes almost immaterial over the long haul, with business as a whole bubbling along at a very nice clip.

Meanwhile, although the focus may be away from the games themselves, there are some exciting things going on, particularly with pinball. This month we take a close look at Gottlieb's newest entry, which offers some full integration of memory and recall with their drop targets and some fairly fluid action as well as a different feeling graphically and in sonics. Another effort on view is Stern's newest which come at us with

seven-digit scoring in a conventional game, as well as some interesting memory utilization and fast-paced action on a little different kind of field design.

And, down the road, we can wait for the next Gottlieb pin, which is quite a machine, as well as Stern's next follow-up to *Big Game* in the big game size; Williams' next space venture following on the heels of *Firepower*; Bally's two games in the wings, one of which will be reviewed next month; and Game Plan's try at coming back with a totally different package in its fourth effort, on display before the summer's end.

All in all, there's more than enough happening in pinball and more than enough choices for operators to pick from in offering the best in steel ball entertainment. And with that in mind, let's look at two games that are sure to score points with pinball players everywhere.

Gottlieb's PANTHERA

Second in the line Star Series 80 is this oversize pin which has become the Gottlieb standard shape along with the "squat" body. And everything is new here on a pingame that

borrowes from the basics that have long been a staple of Gottlieb pinball machines.

PLAYFIELD: The action begins with four lanes at top (yellow, blue, white, and green) and leads down to two thumper bumpers which are slightly angled. At the right side of the bumpers is a short little set of three lanes (1-2-3) at the interior of a longer return lane back to the top. Back over at the left is the first drop target bank of four targets, color coordinated with the upper lanes. Move over to the right side and there's another bank of drop targets, while further over at the opening to the lane is a bulls-eye that lights for extra ball value. Back on the left there's a fairly straight up-and-down set of drop targets almost perpendicular to the flippers, that fronts a spinner for access back to the top and also fronts a side lane for getting the 2 when lit. Just below this is a kick-out hole for collecting bonus when lit or specials and the wide-spaced bottom is a standard wire form and flipper alignment although both the outlanes and interior lanes to the flippers control color values as well.

ANALYSIS: The color tie-in that

Roger's Ratings At-A-Glance

Gottlieb's PANTHERA ### Stern's SEAWITCH..... ###1/2

was so successful on *Cleopatra* and other earlier Gottlieb efforts, re-surfaces here on *Panthera* and succeeds only because of the use of memory and recall that allows the continuity of play once found on a single-player machine in a multi-player format. Bally has been successful with it on more than one occasion, and it's great to see it here. Basically the game is nothing more than getting out the lanes and colors and then hitting down drop targets to match up in order to gain bonus multiplier values that grow up to 5X. Finish the colors in the lanes, and the bottom side kick-out hole flashes for a special. By the same token, the numbered lanes (1-2-3) which can also be picked up by the spinner and that left side lane behind the lower targets, means an extra ball value on that right side bulls-eye.

It all ties in, with drop targets staying down or bouncing back up depending upon the colors that a player has out. And finish all the banks, and values on the drop targets increase from 500 points to 5,000 each.

There are some strong shots from both flippers, although that right side lane is a tight squeeze for even the skilled player. On the right side just below the bulls-eye, a sling shot kicker adds to extra oomph to the ball and helps lessen the problems of the elongated rubber leading to the flippers, which doesn't have the slap that it could. Even the spinner, not a Gottlieb forte, has been helped by an increased lit value of 10,000 points per spin, for some totals of around 40,000 to 50,000 points.

GRAPHICS: Forget all that Gottlieb has done before—this is really a departure which works and works well. The princess-goddess on *Panthera* is just this side of PG-rated and if you don't notice her on the backglass, you'll surely catch her on the playfield. Add some striking colors and the addition of some penetrating sound that seems to build the longer the ball is in play—and one can see that Gottlieb has gotten its corporate act together.

PLAY: The scoring is possible on *Panthera*, although, as most games that fully utilize memory, the build-up is an important aspect of the machine. So, although the point totals may not be there on the first ball, each succeeding ball should mean improved potentials to capitalize on what has already been accomplished. This point becomes more important when one is dealing with

extra ball areas and where to set the limits. On three-ball play you might want to try a 220,000 start and follow it with 450,000 and 700,000 points. For free play the game should be able to stand an increase of about 100,000 to 150,000 points to each level depending upon the caliber of the players at your location.

PROS & CONS: On the whole a fairly decent game, *Panthera* offers anything but a crowded playfield and does have some brutal roll-downs from the right side lane, the top yellow and blue lanes, and the spinner if the ball doesn't make it all the way to the top. Wide open, it's really a shooter's game, especially when only one or two targets remain to be hit and all you're hitting against is the rubber behind the targets. So everything is really in the hands of the flippers, although there are some rebounds from the thumpers and that sling shot kicker—but for the most part, this is a game that a player will have to play and not walk through, hoping that the game will compensate, because *Panthera* won't.

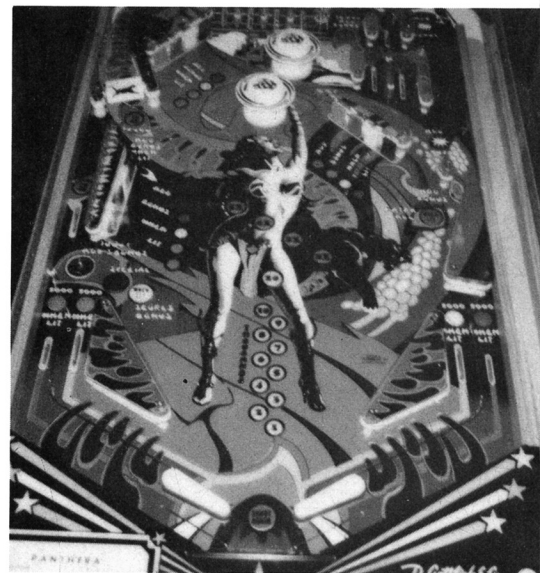
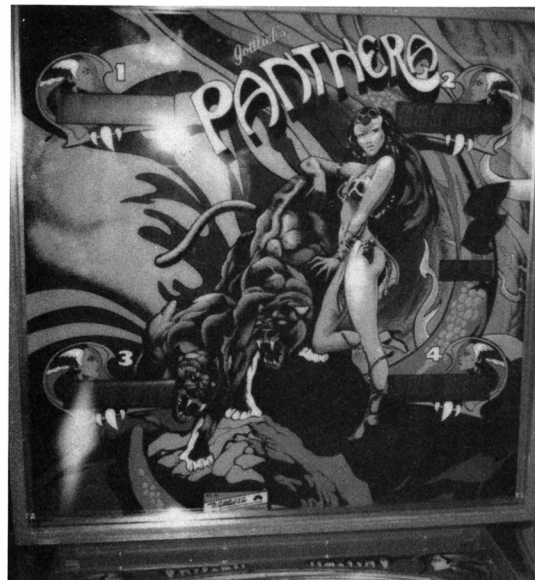
Sound and graphics as I've mentioned have come a long way, and in terms of sound, the volume level is such that the game shouldn't get drowned out in even the loudest location. All in all, it's a step in the right direction for Gottlieb and promises the hope of even greater things for the future.

RATING: ###

Stern's SEAWITCH

A departure from some of their recent games, this newest effort from the folks on Diversely is fast, exciting, and filled with sights and sounds that are more than enough of a draw, neatly complimented by the seventh digit scoring that is destined to mark the '80s.

PLAYFIELD: It's interesting that on *Seawitch* there really is no top per se, since the ball follows an arc that can get it all the way around to the left side under flipper, or only part way and a roll down to the upper right side flipper, or just in the middle to a roll-over button and an opening down to the playfield proper. Add in a top thumper bumper area of three bumpers that are sided by three targets on the left, another target on the right and a four-drop-target bank, also on the right. Move down and on the right side is a slight opening to an arcing lane that offers a spinner on this side as well as a flipper, while to



Gottlieb's PANTHERA

the under side of this flipper is yet another roll-over button and access back to the plunger. Over on the left side there's another top flipper that fronts access to the arcing lane, while there's another bank of four drop targets in the center of the field. Down a bit on the left and another set of drop targets, three this time, finishes off the major action on the field before one gets to the bottom flippers with the conventional Stern set of wire lanes topped by small rubber-ringed posts.

ANALYSIS: Although it can be do or die on the plunger, *Seawitch* is a very basic game that ties in all the components on the field. The three sets of drop targets control the bonus multiplier value, depending upon whether the X is lit in front of the bank. Get one bank complete when the light is on, and the bonus is increased and then moves to another set of targets before finishing and returning to the circuit all the way through to 7X value. Finish all the banks on one ball and extra ball values light on the bottom lanes leading to the flippers—and with the right combinations, specials will also light on the outlane as well as the short opening back to the plunger and under that top flipper.

And the scoring goes on with special lit values popping up for individual banks of targets depending upon the sequence of how things are hit, so that a finished bank means extra points that are tied into the out-hole bonus build-up. And on and on, with the top three targets on the left of the bumpers meaning bonus points and potential scoring of almost 280,000 points on the out-hole bonus alone.

It's easy to see why there's a seventh digit, although it hasn't been exploited to the point where values are needlessly increased by the addition of an extra zero. There are plenty of shot possibilities off all flippers, with reverses cut down a bit, but the proximity of the targets more than compensates for this loss, as well as the additional play of the top flippers for getting into the thumper bumper area and even around the arc, or in sweeping that center target bank.

GRAPHICS: The color blue predominates on *Seawitch*, but it's the use of flashing displays on the playfield, during play and at the end of a finished amount of bonus (or flashing the high score to date before the last ball) that all add to the total effect of a game that makes up for

artwork closely approximating the look and feeling of Stern's *Magic*. Add to this an interesting array of sounds, as well as a *wioosh* that happens every once in a while when the ball's around the arc area, and it all amounts to a very strong piece of equipment on all counts.

PLAY: Well, with the seventh digit, you can also now set limits for free plays or extra balls in the millions of points, but be guided by how the players are hitting the game and what scores are shaping up to be.

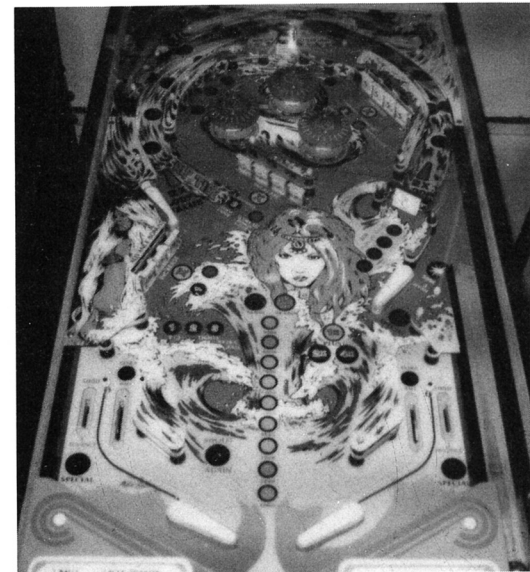
For free play you'll probably want to try a 600,000 point start and follow it with 1,100,000 and 2,000,000-point levels. On extra ball you might want to bring this way down to about 400,000 points to start and the next limits at 900,000 and 1,600,000 points. Once again, and with this game especially, be sure you're within reach of your average players so they're not put off when they see the limits. It's going to take some getting used to for them.

PROS & CONS: The opening off the plunger is both a positive and a negative for *Seawitch* since it makes that opening a skill move and also calls into play the idea of fast reflexes for when that ball shoots around. The problem is when the top left flipper is used and hits in the middle between the flippers. Players are going to have to stay on their toes with this one. The other main area of concern is the integration and full usage of the top arc and whether it's a worthwhile shot for players to make, not only in terms of points but also in positioning the ball for a sequence of shots.

But beyond these few points, the game works effectively and brings in the element of surprise as well as the excitement that is so much a part of what pinball is all about. Pure and simple, *Seawitch* is viable, although some of the shots angles and sets are reminiscent of previous Stern games such as *Nugent* and *Magic*.

RATING: ###1/2

And that's it for the Corner this time around. Next month, a close look at Stern's next big game as well as Bally's follow-up to *Superball Mania* and *Rolling Stones* and some comments on Game Plan's next, *Pinball Lizard*, and Williams' next, *Blackout*. So until we meet again on these pages, my best to one and all, hope the summer is all that you want it to be, and as always—be well and prosper.



Stern's SEAWITCH

Williams produces 'Omni'



Williams Electronics, Inc. has begun production on its newest solid state shuffle alley, *Omni*. Four favorite ways to play are featured on *Omni*: Regulation, 800, Strike 90, and Flash, and a new "test of skill"—Single Shot—is introduced.

The challenge of Single Shot is allowance of only one shot per frame—a miss means the player receives only the pin count. Scores for strikes range from 100 to 800, making every shot a new challenge.

Omni also introduces "a new universe of innovative futuristic sounds," to motivate players to greater competition and make for greater location earnings.

With *Omni's* new butcherblock design, Williams has created the shuffle alley playfield combining fast skimming action with the realism of the bowling alley.

Coin-operated massage table

Parlor Products, Inc. of Coffeyville, Kansas recently introduced its new automatic massage table, *Swedish*

Massage.

The table allows a back and shoulder massage via automatic rollers

that slowly turn beneath its padded mattress. The entire mattress moves slowly along the length of the table to provide massaging action from the lower back upward to the shoulders, and down the back again. The naugahyde-covered table can also be made to vibrate.

Dr. Terry Thompson, inventor and developer of the *Parlor Swedish Massage*, explained that the table is designed to reduce tension and stress. It is designed for use in private clubs and spas, offices and homes, as well as hotels/motels, salons, or any other lounge area.

The *Parlor Swedish Massage* is available in both coin-operated and non-coin-operated models. The unit is 25 inches high and 73 inches long, available in a variety of colors.

Parlor Products provides information on the table from: 2205 West 8th Street, Coffeyville, Kansas 67337.



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PROFITS APPEAR BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES!

Witness for yourself the incredible attraction power in Mystic's enchanting sounds and startling effects of the flashing Pyramid and Eye

1 TO 4 CAN PLAY

NO PLAYER CAN ESCAPE THE ASTOUNDING, ENTERTAINING STRENGTH OF THIS WONDEROUS FEAT OF DESIGN

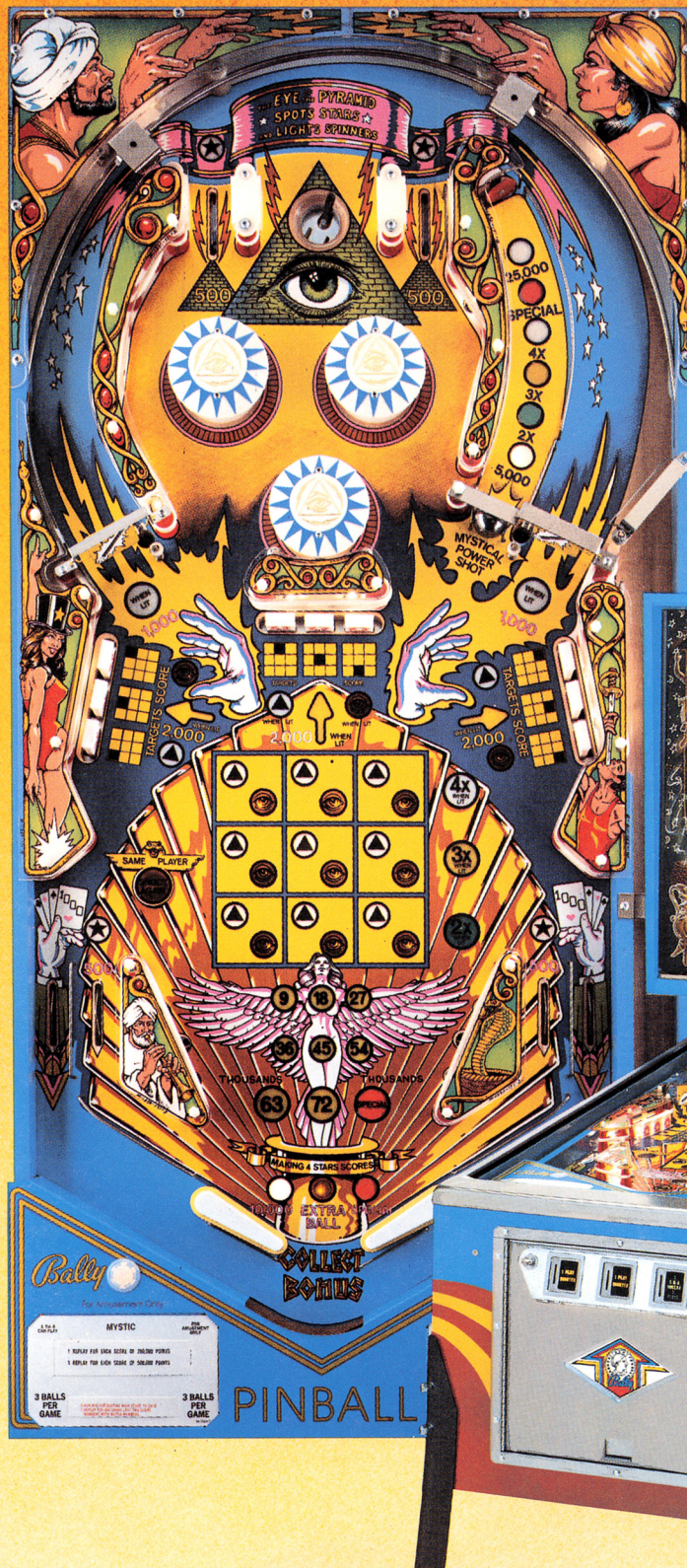
SEE the 3 banks of drop targets light the center playfield and backglass Eyes and Pyramids. Each lighting scores 3,000 bonus points plus an extra lit bonus.

SEE the lit cards offer astounding scoring options:
Each line of 3 Pyramids or Mystic Eyes, vertical, horizontal or diagonal advances extra bonus scores from 9,000 to 72,000.

A completed card with all Pyramids or Mystic Eyes is adjustable to score two or three replays, and also lights the special after collecting bonus score.

A completed card with a combination of Pyramids and Mystic Eyes scores one replay when special is lit.

WATCH players transform into wizards as they score 5,000 points and multiply bonus from 2x to 3x to 4x and special and then score 30,000 points with the mystical power shot!



AMAZING

Eye of the Pyramid Saucer spots lit star lanes, lites spinner and scores 500 points

Making all star lanes per ball in play is an accountable feat, as the 1st completion scores 10,000 points and lights extra ball, the 2nd scores 10,000 points and lights special and the 3rd and each additional time scores 10,000 points and special. The star lanes have optional recall.



Bally

PINBALL DIVISION

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The operation of these games and the features therein may be subject to various state and local laws or regulations. It is not intended herein to solicit the sale of such games in any jurisdiction wherein the same may not be lawfully sold or operated.

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Cabaret Asteroids

Atari has unveiled a new cabinet design concept named "The Cabaret." Atari's worldwide hit, *Asteroids*, is the first game to be offered in this new configuration.

Frank Ballouz, Atari's director of marketing, commented on the new design, saying: "The Cabaret packaging is a result of extensive market research, human factors engineering, and numerous requests from industry leaders throughout the world. It's specifically designed to help open new types of locations and expand profit potential for operators."

"We believe *Asteroids* Cabaret's contemporary styling and compact size is ideal for use in more sophisticated environments and especially in locations where space is very limited," he said.

"The Cabaret model along with our cocktail and upright versions makes it possible for operators to place *Asteroids* in any type of location," said Ballouz. "Operators now have a high-profit game in a cabinet that will go anywhere."



Personality tester

Zyrtronics of Miami, Florida, after several months of location testing, has begun shipping its new *Colorscope* personality tester.

To operate *Colorscope*, the customer approaches the brightly illuminated machine and inserts a quarter. Instructions tell the patron to press his favorite color first and the rest of the colors in the order he likes them. Five seconds after the colors are picked, a *Colorscope* computer card drops into the hopper.

The customer finds that his card reveals, in addition to personality traits—his lucky numbers, day, and month—as well as the horoscope sign of the person's ideal mate.

Gerald Zaichick, president of Zyrtronics, said, "*Colorscope* is our entry into the bulk vending area of shopping centers and similar locations." The machine is being accepted, he said, because of "its small size, attractive appearance, and low cost." Dimensions are: 17-inch width, 22-inch height, and 15-inch depth; an optional 30-inch pedestal is available.

"There is a universal human craving for personal attention. These machines help fulfill this need," said the Zyrtronics president.



Me Tarzan, you Cheetah

Stern Electronics has announced plans for international distribution of a new solid-state, four-player pinball game, *Cheetah*, released in mid June.

The *Cheetah* game provides a dramatic, colorful playfield and is Stern's second entry into the wide-body market, noted the Chicago manufacturer. Game features include:

- Four drop-target banks equaling 14 drop targets in all; options for both resettable drop targets and the remote spotting of drop targets; and three flippers, kickers, spinning targets, and bumpers.

Scoring features provide three ways to collect an extra ball and two ways to score the special play; and Stern's seven-digit display allows players to score in the millions.





NSM classic

Consul Classic ES 160 from NSM contains EA-ROM memory, the latest computer technology which retains programmed information even with power turned off: price and credit ranges, Total Cash, popularity of A & B side selections, Top 9 records of the location.

Price range is operator controlled, and the least and most played records are indicated on L.E.D. display. Records receiving the most play are advertised as the "Top 9" and indicated on L. E. D. display.

Consul's vertical record playing system has Shure magnetic cartridge and diamond stylus.

Symbols on the Selector assembly show the operating cycle the machine is in and illuminate: Insert coin, Credit, Playing a record, and Hit function. The Hit button may be used for fast selection of the more popular records.

Speakers are special three-way wide-frequency combinations (Type P303, P130, and type HM100). These units are installed in separate left and right sound chambers to enhance stereophonic reproduction.

Dimensions: height—77.5 centimeters; width—114 cm; depth—60 cm. The coin mech is a multiple-coin mechanism with infrared coin detectors. Optional extras are the NSM Consulette/Wallbox, microphone kit and loudspeaker output transformer.

Consul Classic ES 160 is available through Lowen-America distributors.



Ante up

Royal Flush by Elcon Industries is a one-player draw poker "credit only" type of amusement machine.

Its appealing cabinet has its mechanism "in a drawer" for easy accessibility.

Players play by "betting" one to 10 credits by pressing one button. Pressing another button "deals a hand" on the *Royal Flush* video screen. The player selects cards to keep by another touch, and he may cancel his choice via a cancel button.

The game machine provides color overlays for the video screen.

Elcon is located at 2715 Nakota, Royal Oak, Michigan 48073.



Making change

Standard Change-Makers, Inc., of Indianapolis has announced availability of a new bulk-loading \$5 bill changer (single hopper) with a capacity of 2,640 quarters—providing 132 vends of 20 quarters for each bill changed.

Standard's 6003/\$5 changer operates on the principle of gentle magnetic vibration. To fill, coins are simply poured directly from the bag into the hopper. They are then channeled down into the coin-dispensing mechanism by vibration, with no belts or motors. "This unique system eliminates jams and downtime caused by bent or mutilated coins or mechanical failures," according to product literature.

The hopper can be filled while still in the machine or may be totally removed. The 6003 is available in front- and rear-loading models.

The 6003/\$5 changer's cabinet is built of heavy gauge steel with two case-hardened UL-approved locks for maximum security. It mounts to wall, stand, or post.

An optional bill stacker is available to automatically face the bills as it stacks them. Optional insurance on both the changer and its money content is also available. For more information, call or write: Standard Change-Makers, Inc., 422 E. New York Street, Indianapolis 46202;

Bally premiers two new pins

Bally Pinball Division announced the release of *Mystic*, its latest conventional size pinball game.

And *Hot Doggin*, Bally's latest Supersize release, features a winter ski scene in a bright, colorful display of "a wonderland escape of fun," said Tom Nieman, vice president/marketing for Bally.

Hot Doggin's super-sized terrain offers a large bonus potential with a S-K-I, F-U-N, and H-O-T D-O-G-G-I-N adjustable bonus feature awarding points, extra ball, more points, and a special that can be counted two ways. The playfield also has a saucer that scores four different ways, plus three drop-target assemblies for skill shots. A disappearing kicker gives the player an additional playfield run, as well as collecting the bonus.

Hot Doggin was set for release through Bally distributors in July.

Mystic, meanwhile, is far from conventional in its play, noted Nieman. It has three banks of drop targets that light the playfield "Mystic Eyes" and Pyramid Card for up to 72,000 bonus points for each lit line of 3—vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. This card is also adjustable to score replays and lights the special after the bonus is collected.

A power shot on *Mystic* multiplies the bonus from 2X to 3X to 4X and special and then scores 30,000 points. In addition, *Mystic* has an "Eye of the Pyramid" saucer that spots the lit star lines and lights the spinner and scores 500 points. These star lanes have optional recall as well as scoring points, extra ball, and special for each sequence completion per ball in play.

Mystic attracts with its realistic backglass Eye and Pyramid that flashes among the bold, colorful graphics; "and its mystically enticing sound package is the perfect complement to the artwork of this truly astounding pinball," said Nieman.



Centuri 'Rip Off'



Centuri Inc. is now shipping samples of its first model, *Rip Off* cocktail table. Centuri Inc. is the new name for Allied Leisure. [See related story in Manufacturing, this issue.]

Centuri has licensed *Rip Off* from Cinematronics, Inc. to manufacture and market in the cocktail table style on an exclusive basis.

"The timing of this licensing arrangement is very beneficial to Centuri during the management changeover from Allied Leisure," said Edward Miller, president. "We needed a proven winner to release as our first product, and *Rip Off* certainly meets our requirements.

"We are very pleased with the styling of *Rip Off* as a cocktail table and are confident that our distributors will be well-satisfied with the unit from an operational viewpoint," states Miller.

"The *Rip Off* cocktail table is fully adjustable from a sitdown level to a bar height of 39 inches. The table has a wide-leg configuration, providing strong cabinet support. In addition, the table is 35½ inches by 26 inches, allowing for greater player comfort.

The *Rip Off* cocktail table's exclusive 19-inch monitor and new "surface graphics" surrounding the screen create a total visual environment, added a spokesman for the company.

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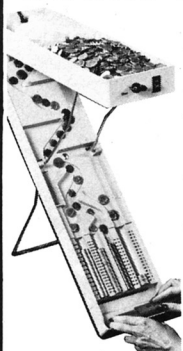
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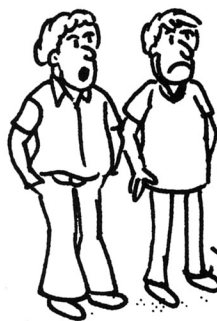
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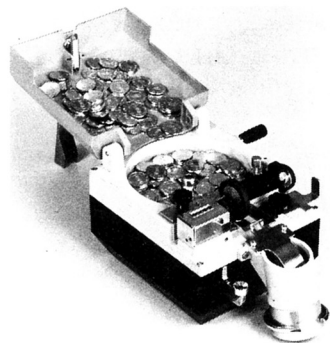
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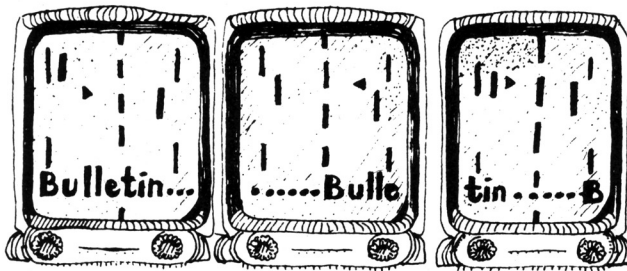
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NEWS BRIEFS

.....Universal USA is setting up a manufacturing facility in the San Francisco bay area. A work force will be staffed there. Presently, the company is marketing its fourth video game this year, the earlier offerings were Cosmic Guerilla, Galaxy Wars, and Cosmic Alien. This time out the game is called Cheeky Mouse.....

Wildcat Chemical Company of Fort Worth, Texas, is offering as the grand prize in its 10th anniversary contest a trip to Las Vegas, Nevada. The contest is underway now and will run through November 30, 1980. The parts manager who produces the largest percentage of increase in sales of Wildcat products during the five-month period will win the grand prize. Cash prizes of \$100 and \$50 for second and third place.....

.....Congress is still considering the Danielson Bill (H.R. 997) which would add \$1 to the present \$8 jukebox royalty fee for distribution to record companies and performing artists. The AMOA, of course, is opposing the bill, saying it would create a new performance allowance for record manufacturers and performers. AMOA cites Constitutional grounds for its opposition, and members are advised to write House of Representative members on the Judiciary Committee.....

.....Tournament Soccer's \$150,000 World Championships of foosball, staged in Chicago, drew international attention last month. The open doubles winners were Mike Bowers and Tim Burns. More details next month.....

.....A bill that would permit casino gambling was being introduced in the Ohio legislature in June. It reportedly was limiting casinos to cities of 250,000 population or more, with only one casino allowed in each city.....

.....The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) has filed a brief in federal court in Washington D.C., in support of a suit by the National Soft Drink Association in opposition to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's competitive foods regulation which went into effect July 1..

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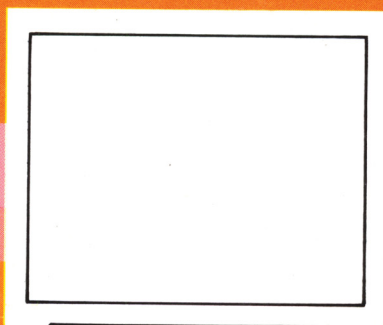
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