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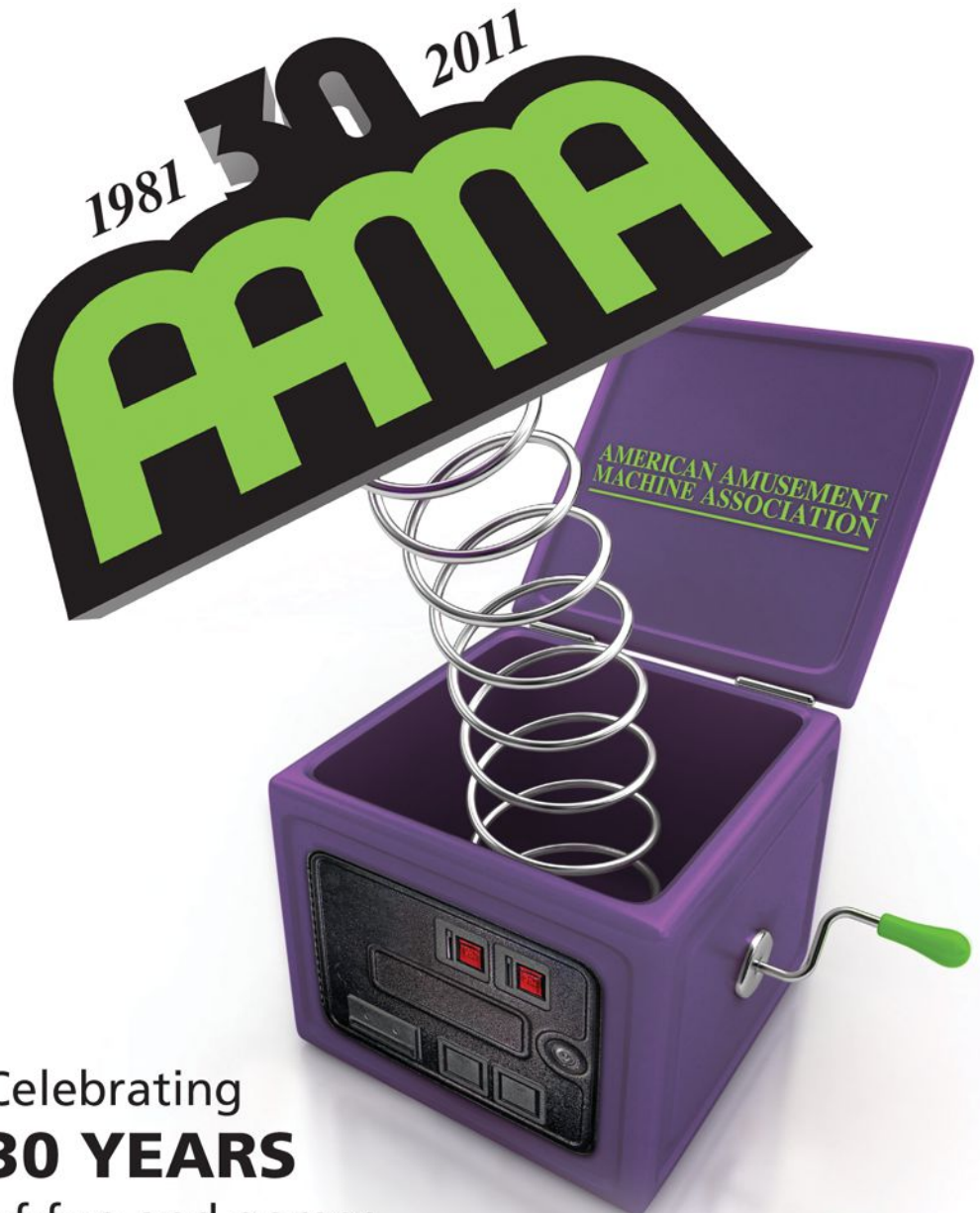
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# play <sup>"The Operators' Choice"</sup> METER

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AAMA is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. *Play Meter* caught up with past Presidents to discuss highlights from their term and the importance of the association. *Cover design by Don Marshall of Marshall Productions.*

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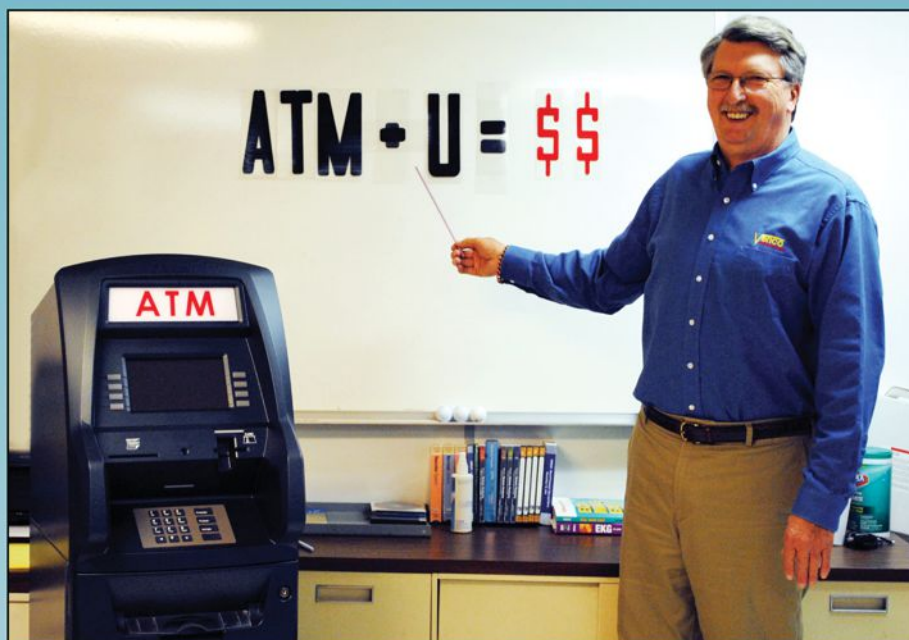
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# In Memory

## Alan Ramsay

Alan Ramsay, President of CLM Entertainment in Providence, R.I., Secretary/Treasurer of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA), and columnist for *Play Meter*, died suddenly on June 12; he was 41.

Ramsay was a longtime member of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) and NEAAPA. He also served in a leadership position with the International Association for the Leisure and Entertainment Industry (IALEI).

His career began in 1986 at Rocky Point Park in Warwick, R.I.; he later became a manager at Roger Williams Park, and also worked for Ripley's during his career.

Ramsay was a dedicated IAAPA volunteer and served on many committees. He was a well-known speaker who gave presentations at domestic trade shows as well as IAAPA institutes and expos around the world. He also developed training manuals for amusement rides and provided safety inspections at the IAAPA Expo and the Asia Amusement Expo (AAE). Ramsay was the lead trainer and Certified Risk Evaluator for CLM.

He believed in giving back to his community and was a proud volunteer fireman for the Cumberland Hill Fire Department for many years.

Chip Cleary, President and CEO of IAAPA, said, "Alan supported IAAPA and the worldwide attractions industry in many ways over the past 25 years. He worked tirelessly to train, educate, and inspire attractions operators around the globe on the key tenants of operations, safety, and guest service. His passion for excellence and his posi-

tive and enthusiastic demeanor will be greatly missed."

Close friend Dorothy Lewis of Maxx Fun LLC said, "I have been blessed with the gift of having Alan as my dear friend and colleague. When it came to business he was the epitome of professionalism and wisdom. Alan gave selfless hours volunteering his time and giving back to the industry that he so loved. It never mattered where in the world he was at the time, he made sure that when you needed him he was there, whether it was to answer a question, offer advice, or just to lend a sympathetic ear. He had his unique style of delivery and humor that will remain with me forever."

Greg Chiecko, President of NEAAPA said, "Alan had a passion for NEAAPA and the entire amusement industry. He will be sadly missed by many."

Bonnie Theard, Editor of *Play Meter*, said, "The amusement world has lost a dedicated supporter who was always ready to share his experiences and expertise with others for the betterment of the industry. We will forever be grateful that he graced the pages of *Play Meter*, and we will miss his

valuable contribution."

Ramsay is survived by his father, Burton E. Ramsay; mother, Judith Y. Culgin; stepfather, Robert Culgin; sister Kimberly Ann Picard; and niece Ashley E. Picard, all of Ormond Beach, Fla.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the Alzheimer's Association of Rhode Island, 245 Waterman St., Suite 306, Providence, RI 02906. Guestbook at ([juddyfuneral.com](http://juddyfuneral.com)).



At a fall 2010 meeting in New Orleans on the proposed merger of IALEI and IAAPA, (l-r): Pat Rothwell of Laser Mania, Rich Sanfilippo of Sam's Fun City, Suzanne Provenzano of Adventure Quest, Dorothy Lewis of Maxx Fun LLC, and Alan Ramsay.



Alan Ramsay (r) received the 2008 Ed Wood Award for the Most Outstanding Contribution to Amusement Ride Inspection and Midway Safety.

# In Memory

## DAVE TUCKER

Game designer Dave Tucker of Phoenix, Ariz., lost a battle with cancer on May 23; he was 62.

Dave began his coin-op career with Atari at its New Jersey offices. He moved to Boston to work for Rowe International, and then Bally Northeast to head the technical department. Dave helped establish New England Coin, and later worked with Betstar and then the gaming machine manufacturer Atronic before forming his own game design company, Games 4 You, which was acquired by Bally. Dave remained with Bally as Director of Software Development in the Arizona Game Development Department.

Close friend Rick Kirby of Betson Enterprises, said, "I've lost a friend; he was a wonderful guy. Dave was one of the top technicians in the country. He was a jack-of-all-trades and a master of all. There was never anything Dave couldn't do or wouldn't do for anyone. This is a great loss to not only his family but also to the industry."

Joe Ferris of Ferris Music, a long-time friend of 35 years, said, "Dave was in touch with everyone; he had an open line of communication with people in the industry. He treated everyone with respect and oftentimes put himself out trying to help someone else, whether on a weekday or a weekend. He took everything to heart. Dave's talent was phenomenal; he could take anything apart and figure out how to put it back together."

Ferris added, "We were very close. We traveled together, spent holidays together, and raised our children together. He was a remarkable friend."

Bill Treger of Gaming Labs International (GLI) worked with Dave at Betstar and Atronic. Treger said, "Dave was an extremely hard worker. He would work 24 hours a day to get a

job done if that's what it took. He had a tremendous knowledge of the amusement industry and brought it over to the gaming industry. Dave said that amusement technicians were a natural to enter the gaming industry because they could easily adapt to the platforms."

Treger added, "Dave and I traveled all over the country and Europe together for Atronic. His insight led to Atronic being the successful company it became. Dave and Jason Stage started Games 4 You. Bally will miss his creative efforts."

Dave is survived by his wife, Linda; daughter, Ericka; son, Ryan; and brothers, Alan (of Tricorp Amusements) and Richard.

Dick Donlan of East Coast Amusements said, "Dave's passing hit me hard. Dave was the first person I worked for when I got into the industry in 1975 at Rowe International. He taught me the fundamentals. He was one of the smartest guys in the industry. We worked together at Rowe International and at Bally Northeast. Then Dave, Rick Kirby, Bob Donnelly, and I formed New England Coin in 1986.

"Dave was an incredibly hard worker. He never stopped. He would be the first one in and the last one to leave every day. It was impossible to keep up with him. Dave was super-talented in many ways: he built a house and race car. He was a natural engineer; he designed all the electronics for the last generation of the Big Choice cranes. I have so much respect for what he did and what he knew. I owe a lot of where I am today to Dave."



Dave Tucker



George Karas

## GEORGE KARAS

George Karas, Regional Manager of the Great West for The Pelican Group, passed away May 29 in Denver, Colo., sur-

rounded by his family; he was 73.

Richard Scherer, President of The Pelican Group, said, "George had been a cancer survivor twice and then this time it got the best of a very well-liked man, one who will be missed as both a friend and employee of The Pelican Group."

In his capacity at Pelican, George worked with operators and clients in five states. He made many friends within the amusement and vending industries. Prior to his employment with Pelican, George managed an amusement route, Coin Amusement, in Santa Rosa, Calif., for the late Larry Martini.

In the 1980s, George served as President of the California Coin Machine Association (CCMA) at a time when legislation threatened to tax the video game industry at the state level as well as almost every municipality in California. He was known throughout the industry as a man with a big heart and incredible integrity, a man who truly cared about others.

George is survived by his daughter, Stacy; sons, Jeff and Mark; daughters-in-law, Heather and Gwen; and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lorrie. ▲

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By Bonnie Theard

# memorable years of AAMA



Who's Who in coin-op at The Big Bar during ASI 2007 in Las Vegas.

In 1981, a group of dedicated amusement industry members formed the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) at a time when the coin-machine industry was enjoying what would later be called the Golden Age of Video Games.

Outstanding games of the year were Donkey Kong, Frogger, Galaga, Ms. Pac-Man, New Rally-X, and Stargate.

What else was happening in the world in 1981? IBM introduced the first personal computer running the Microsoft Disk Operating System (MS-DOS), the term "Internet" was first mentioned, and the space shuttle Columbia made its maiden flight.

The world was a dangerous place: Egyptian President Anwar el Sadat was assassinated in Cairo and attempts were made on the lives of President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II. Scientists identified the AIDS virus. Fifty-two U.S. hostages held since 1979 were released from Iran.

The average cost of a new house was \$78,200, but the Federal Reserve year-end interest rate was 15.75 percent. A gallon of gas cost \$1.25, but the average income per year was \$21,050. The cost of a first-class postage stamp rose twice, from 15 cents to 18 cents and then to 20 cents.

It was also the year that Post-It notes were launched, MTV debuted, the first frequent flyer miles program was introduced, researchers found the wreck of the Titanic in the North Atlantic, the hot movie was "Raiders of the Lost Ark," and the top-rated TV show was "Hill Street Blues."

The first President of AAMA was the late Joe Robbins, followed by Bob Lloyd, President of Data East USA. The association directors, known as Executive Vice Presidents and later as President, were the late Glenn Braswell, David Weaver, Bob Fay, Mike Rudowicz, and currently John Schultz.

Attempting to reach every past Executive Director/President and Chairman of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) for its 30-year history proved to be a daunting task. But that's not surprising, considering that this group of industry leaders has agendas filled with projects and business ventures.

For example, Frank Ballouz was on his way to Moscow, Bob Fay was headed to New York on legal matters, Al Kress was about to embark on an international trip, Rick Kirby was deep in day-to-day operations, Gil Pollock was directing the efforts of his new company, and Dave Courington was at the





With the President's E Award, seated, (l-r): Bob Fay, Rick Kirby, and Joe Robbins; standing, (l-r): Ron Carrara, Frank Gumma Jr., Mike Rudowicz, and Mark Struhs.



At the 1996 Man of the Year dinner honoring Jon P. Brady, (l-r): Frank Gumma Jr., Jon P. Brady, Gwen Brady, Chris Brady, Anna Neale Samworth, Terri Houck, Charles Houck, and Jon W. Brady.

Valley National Eight Ball Association (VNEA) Championships.

To a man, each former President and Chairman exhibited the same drive and passion for their work as they had when they helped guide the association through decades of change in the coin-op industry.

Following are highlights and remembrances from past AAMA leaders who reflected on the issues during their terms, the general business climate at the time, and the association's progress through the years.

### **FRANK BALLOUZ** **President (1987-1989)**

Frank Ballouz, currently Director of International Business Development for Global VR, was the first AAMA President to be re-elected. Prior to his term (except for Joe Robbins), the office of President was for one year. He was with Nintendo of America during his first term; the second year he had started his own company, Fabtek.

Frank recalled, "I was re-elected because we were involved in a lawsuit regarding parallel imports. We also had a major problem with copied games."

David Weaver was Executive Director of AAMA at the time. Bob Fay, who was brought in on a consulting basis by former AAMA President Bob Lloyd, was convinced to retire from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) early to come on board as Director of the Law Enforcement Department.

Ballouz promoted Fay to the post of

Executive Vice President of AAMA. He said, "It was one of the best decisions I ever made for the association. Bob is the only man I know who can juggle 20 things and be productive in all 20. He was an outstanding association director; he supported us and the industry."

Frank mentioned additional highlights: "We started the trade show calendar where we communicated with Japan and other countries to schedule no conflicting trade shows and no shows over religious holidays. We also started the international forum where we spoke about common issues that crossed everyone's borders."

Also during Ballouz's term: "Distributors started to form their own association and we brought them into the fold."

He added, "In the beginning, everyone thought it was just a manufacturer's club. The association started to shine when Bob became involved. Basically, we were cops trying to plan a trade show. Bob brought a different perspective. He started our relationship with Washington, D.C., and became involved in issues such as the dollar coin and taxes."

### **BOB FAY** **Executive Vice President** **then President (1986-2000)**

Bob Fay, Government Relations Director for AMI Entertainment Network, has probably traveled to 70 countries on behalf of the industry. He was hired from the FBI to set up an anti-piracy program, and his position

expanded in the association.

Fay said, "In 1989 the U.S. Department of Commerce contacted me about participating in a trade show in Mexico. When we saw the response by attendees, I told association President Gil Pollock we should think about doing our own show in Mexico, which we started in 1990."

Even though counterfeiting had stopped in the U.S. and Canada, it was appearing in other parts of the world. Fay said, "We set up an anti-counterfeiting coalition in 1991 in conjunction with video game manufacturers in Japan and worked with former federal agents to pursue counterfeits in eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Spain, and Taiwan. At that time, software piracy was done in Italy and Spain and put onto printed circuit boards in Taiwan. We were successful from 1991 to 1996 and basically cleared up the counterfeiting problem."

Fay's name will forever be associated with trade missions that provided more exposure for manufacturers of coin-op products. Trade missions covered South America (1991), Southeast Asia (1995, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand), India (1996), Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia. Fay traveled internationally with association presidents to the far corners of the globe, for example, Beijing, China, in 1993 and Shanghai.

"If we had good success with a trade mission, we would consider a trade show," said Fay. "We were ahead of our time. We started the Asian Amuse-



Tina Schwartz (l), Mike Rudowicz, and Vanessa Cabrera with Darth Vader and Storm Troopers.



At the 2003 Annual Meeting wrap-up dinner, (l-r): Ed Urich, Don Hesch, John Schultz, Elliott Portnoy, and Frank Cosentino.

ment Expo (AAE) in 1994, and partnered with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) in 1995. Here was little AAMA and IAAPA was the big gorilla.” The show was later sold to IAAPA.

Fay said, “Ron Carrara and I worked closely with the organizers of the first DEAL Show in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and helped them launch the show in 1997. We did not have a big staff, so the association depended on the Board of Directors to become involved. Show management W.T. Glasgow Inc. deserves a lot of credit for handling the logistics of foreign trade shows.

“The association would not have grown without Glasgow and attorneys Don Barnes and Elliott Portnoy coming on board on the legal side.” Portnoy, now of SNR Denton, handled government relations for both AAMA and AMOA.

“In 1996 we started thinking about the possibility of having one trade show in the U.S.,” said Fay, “but we never could put it together.”

During Fay’s tenure, the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) honored outstanding industry members, among them Bill O’Donnell, David Rosen, Bert Betti, Leah Bettelman, Joe Robbins, Steve Lieberman, Jon P. Brady, Ray Galante, and Chuck Milhem.

In conclusion, Fay said, “I enjoyed my 14 years at the association. I worked with a great group of men. There were so many who gave of their

time. I’m proud that we started foreign business development—including the location trade show program—a unique benefit for members, and helped worthwhile charities. In a word: being proactive.”

### **GIL POLLOCK President (1989-1991)**

One of the highlights of Gil Pollock’s term was a meeting with then-First Lady Barbara Bush at a White House reception. He presented her with one of the 1991 Child Abuse Prevention posters produced by AAMA.

Pollock, then President of Premier Technology, is currently President of Advanced Media Network LLC, a full service digital out-of-home communication solution for corporate communications and retail in-facility marketing, branding, advertising, and promotions.

He commented, “The entire experience in heading the association was about the people involved, a really small group compared to many industries. Activities then included lobbying for the industry on Capitol Hill and meeting with congressmen and senators. Mexico was opening as a territory and AAMA worked with operators in Mexico to help establish the industry there. I felt honored to represent AAMA around the globe for an industry that provided a livelihood for a lot of people.”

“The staff of AAMA at that time, headed by Bob Fay, was heavily involved in combating counterfeiting problems that existed,” said Pollock.

“Bob traveled all over the world in this effort. Video game manufacturing was booming in new markets in Asia and outside of Japan. A lot of copied games were coming from Asia, South America, and Mexico. There were efforts to legitimize the industry in those markets. There was even a licensed manufacturer for pinball in Morocco covering the North African market.”

Pollock added, “The industry structure that had been set well before AAMA existed gave us the foundation to expand and strengthen coin-op overall, not only for traditional products but also to expand into the video market that had been growing in leaps and bounds.

“Eastern Europe was opening and new distributors were established in Hungary, Russia, and Slavic areas that had previously been unavailable to us. A lot of that was due to political and economic situations in Eastern Block countries at that time.”

In conclusion, he said, “Those were some of the best years, both professional and business wise in the industry. I have fond memories and always will. It boils down to the people, some great individuals. It was a lot of work, but it was also a lot of good times.”

### **BILL RICKETT President (1991-1993)**

Bill Rickett, retired from Valley-Dynamo, said, “I’m most proud that under my watch AAMA worked to mend the relationship between AAMA and AMOA and move the focus from





Front row, (l-r): Bill Cravens, Tina Schwartz, Emilio Cabrera, Jim Chapman, Dale Padjen, and Gary Balaban; back row, (l-r): Wei Hsu, Tom Keil, Wayne Snihur, George Limonez, Steve Farley, and Tim Padjen.



From left: Bob Fay and Angela Orlando of AAMA with Frank Thomas of the Chicago White Sox by Premier's Gottlieb pinball Big Hurt. AAMA produced a series of posters on the prevention of child abuse.

copyright enforcement more toward mutual industry support and making the industry better for everyone. We also made the association dues more affordable and brought in more members.”

“In addition,” said Rickett, “I felt we needed more exposure in South America and Mexico, which led to a trade mission in South America and the establishment of our trade show in Mexico.”

Regarding the association in general, Rickett said, “The association is an important forum for expression. It gives all the manufacturers an opportunity to come together and talk about industry problems and possible solutions.”

### **RICK KIRBY President (1995-1997)**

Rick Kirby, Executive Vice President of Game Sales for Betson New England, said of his term: “From a business point of view, times were good, companies were doing well, and there was a lot of growth. Legislatively, we were fighting the video violence issue.

“AAMA is going to start traveling to Capitol Hill again because of issues being confronted by the business world, especially small businesses. We want to do what we can to help our members.”

Kirby added, “One of my wishes was the one show concept. During my term the relationship between AAMA

and the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) grew closer and a good relationship developed with Randy Chilton and Tami Norberg-Paulsen during their terms as President of AMOA.”

Kirby spoke about the two-year commitment as president and two more years as past president: “Two years is a lot of time to take away from your business—a financial and time obligation. The association has been blessed with the commitment of so many good people.”

Kirby added, “I am thrilled that the manufacturers and distributors of AAMA allowed me to be president for two years. We all have the highlights of our business careers, and when your peers vote you into that position it’s a true honor.

“In that position I gained an insight into the men who had served before me, what they accomplished, and how the industry evolved. It also helped me to become a well recognized figure in the industry.”

Regarding accomplishments during his term, Kirby said, “It was important that the association paved new ground in foreign business development. I am truly honored to be a part of the AAMA legacy.”

When asked about the challenges faced by the industry today, Kirby said, “today’s challenge is the shrinking business. I see consolidation upon consolidation. Lack of game development concerns me. We are in a period of

great redemption equipment. We are fortunate to have new companies put their stamp on that equipment, but we need more development of product that captures the imagination and gets people out of their houses and into the bars and family entertainment centers (FECs). We need more bar equipment.”

### **MIKE RUDOWICZ Board President (1997-1999) Staff President (2000-2009)**

Mike Rudowicz has the distinction of serving as President for two years and then taking on the reins of association director, which had been changed from Executive Vice President to President.

Rudowicz, now Executive Vice President of the Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Division of American Gaming & Electronics (AG&E), became a member of the AAMA Board of Directors in the mid-1980s. His involvement with the association spans 24 years.

He spoke about those early years: “The video game business started to really boom in 1980 and 1981 and distributors were concerned about warranties and repairs. Joe Robbins wanted to form an association to develop a uniform warranty program to help distributors.”

He continued, “Manufacturers and distributors dominated the association at first, then suppliers became dominant and more suppliers came on the



From left: Tony Shamma, Cortney Black-Kinzler, Marty Man Smith, and Holly Meidl; in front, Vanessa Cabrera.



From left: Brian Glasgow, Mike Rudowicz, Vanessa Cabrera, and Richard Ditton.

Board of Directors. We needed their input because they came to represent a larger percentage of our membership, and their concerns were equally important.”

Rudowicz said during his term as President it was “an exciting time” at the association, and “we opened up other markets for our members around the world. Those efforts started with Bob Fay and the trade missions he established through the Department of Commerce and U.S. embassies.

“The market was expanding and instead of trade missions to find business partners, we began trade shows, such as the one in Mexico: EXIME. Our members exhibited at those trade shows and built relationships. We brought several association members to China, the Czech Republic, Russia, and other countries.”

Rudowicz said, “One of the nicest things I was able to accomplish was to help smaller firms get established in foreign markets and expand their business internationally. We added new members, expanded our base, and expanded the business ventures of our members, which was really great. I saw how hard it was for smaller companies to get into international markets. If it was a good feeling to see them grow in the industry.”

He added, “We also helped establish other associations, such as the Taiwan Amusement Association and the China Amusement Association. And

we helped Fun Expo grow in a joint venture with AMOA and IAELI.”

Rudowicz also focused on the activities of the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF). “We actually contributed to 114 charities, representing several hundred thousands of dollars, mostly to children’s charities, which was wonderful. We looked at all kinds of avenues to raise money for charity: golf outings, the Christmas wreath program, Texas Hold ‘Em tournament at an ASI in Chicago, raffles, and silent auctions.”

“The associations are of vital importance for all industries,” noted Rudowicz. “They are the voice of the business. When people need help, they have to have somewhere to turn, and it helps if there is an association. Associations are a wealth of information, and more people should realize their value.”

Lastly, he said, “Today, if you find a job that you really love, it becomes a labor of love and not a job. That’s what it was for me being part of AAMA. The fact that I was able to be there and do what I did made all the difference. I enjoy helping people, and at AAMA I was able to do that.”

**RON CARRARA**  
**President (1999-2000)**  
**Chairman (2000-2001)**

Because of a title change during his tenure, Ron Carrara is the only industry member to serve both as President and Chairman. His leadership came at

a time of international trade missions and trade shows.

Carrara recalled, “I headed up three trade missions, to India, Southeast Asia (including Vietnam), and Eastern Europe/Scandinavia (including Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden). The late Joe Dillon wanted us to do the Estonia, Latvia, Sweden mission but passed away before the mission.”

“Bob Fay started the trade missions before my term; he had been to South America and Mexico,” said Carrara. “When I came on board we talked at length about expanding foreign trade shows and establishing relationships on more trade missions. We met with ambassadors and leaders in those countries.”

Carrara, along with Bob Fay and Frank Ballouz, co-founded the Asian Amusement Expo (AAE) in Hong Kong, which was later sold to IAAPA.

Carrara explained, “The purpose of the missions was to expand the U.S. coin-op industry and introduce our companies and services around the world. That first trade mission to India led to us establishing the first trade show in Mumbai, India, in 1999, which was held for three years before being sold to *InterGame*. Bill Glasgow Jr. of W.T. Glasgow Inc. handled that show.”

“One of the things that Bob Fay and I were working on that did not materialize at the time was the merger of the two (U.S.) shows,” said Carrara. “It was a top priority. Al Kress and Frank Cosentino continued in that effort.”



In 2003 Mike Rudowicz (l) and Frank Cosentino (r) present the Joe Robbins Award to Al Kress.



From left: Frank Cosentino, Emilio Cabrera, Vanessa Cabrera, John Schultz, and Jon W. Brady.

Carrara was full of interesting stories about the trade missions and foreign travel, from a visit to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam to an amusement park in India. He said, "I am very proud of our trade missions and the trade shows we founded."

"Joe Robbins and Bob Lloyd did a wonderful thing by creating the association," noted Carrara. "There have been many fine presidents and chairman since then that followed the goals set forth. I am very proud of the association and the hard work of the officers and board of directors. They've done a fabulous job of merging the spring and fall shows—a great achievement."

He added, "For the sake of the industry, at some point the two associations (AAMA and AMOA) have to come together. If you look at the economics, we all eat out of the same cash box. Our industry has dwindled. To make it strong again, one of the first steps would be to merge the two associations."

**AL KRESS  
Chairman (2001-2003)**

Al Kress, Owner and CEO of Benchmark Games, has served on the Board of Directors of AAMA for 12 years. He replaced the late Joe Dillon in 1998.

Kress spoke about his term: "One of my accomplishments was raising membership." He also made every effort to

move the spring Amusement Showcase International (ASI) back to Chicago, which happened for two years (2005 and 2006).

On the value of the association, Kress commented, "Whenever there have been problems, the association has been there to help our members. Before me we were able to get the Indianapolis ruling.

*Note:* The game industry prevailed in the case of the Indianapolis Ordinance that restricted game access by minors based on game content. The ordinance was determined to be unconstitutional and set a legal precedent. The controversy over objectionable video game content dates back to the 1990s and continues.

"Being President of AAMA is a very fulfilling position," said Kress. "It's nice to know you are doing something for the betterment of the amusement machine industry. AAMA has created more awareness of the industry and added more professionalism."

**FRANK COSENTINO  
Chairman (2003-2005)**

Frank Cosentino, Senior Vice President of Product Strategy at Namco America, spoke about some of the highlights of his term: "Changing the format and timing of our annual meeting to include a Distributor Gala where members could preview their fall lineups to distribution was definitely a highlight.

"This party increased the numbers of our distributor membership. It also increased all member participation in the annual meeting greatly. Prior to this point, the annual meeting was basically just attended by the board of directors. I feel this additional attendance has had a great impact on the number of industry people that are now involved in the association."

Cosentino spoke about the value of networking: "The two trade shows in Chicago had some positive effects even though the shows were lower in attendance than we would have hoped. It showed us just how important the networking aspect of a trade show is to all attendees.

"The Big Bar at the Hyatt provided us with a place to talk about the show as a group with all sectors of the industry. Future shows have all included events where we try to keep the group together immediately after show hours to accomplish this goal."

He added, "The Chicago shows also saw the return to the show of a great number of Midwesterners who had been missing for a number of years. When the show moved back to Las Vegas, many of these attendees traveled to Vegas to attend."

**JON W. BRADY  
Chairman (2005-2007)**

Jon W. Brady, Vice President of Brady Distributing Co., said, "As Chairman I really enjoyed the two years I





At the AAMA Annual Meeting 2009: David Cohen (l) presents a plaque to Dave Courington for his term as Chairman.



Rick Kirby (r) presents an AAMA Sales Achievement Award to Namco, (l-r): David Swafford, Frank Cosentino, and Tom Semieniec.

was on board at the helm. I was very involved in helping bring the first Distributor Gala into being in 2004. We were so pleased with the outcome that we decided to make it an annual event.

“We also hosted the second Amusement Showcase International (ASI) in downtown Chicago in 2006, after a successful event in 2005. We also worked very hard on a unique operator promotion at the show. We held the first ever Free Arcade Promotion Giveaway, in which many AAMA manufacturer members contributed their newest products to a raffle for all attending operators. This promotion increased operator attendance at the ASI by 20 percent.”

ASI 2006 was the first spring show after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region in August 2005.

Brady said, “The major disaster in New Orleans was on everyone’s mind at that time and we were just figuring out the true reality and magnitude of the event by late in 2005.”

Brady added, “The American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) contributed \$25,000 to hurricane relief efforts in the Gulf region through the Salvation Army and American Red Cross. Following the disaster, the AAMA Board of Directors established the Coin-Op Rehabilitation Fund, which gave direct monetary relief to those in the coin-op community to help rebuild their businesses.”

He continued, “For ASI 2007, which was held in Las Vegas, we really wanted to shake up the social event and make it a draw for all the attending operators and buyer members. This was one of the most commented about items of the show, as all the exhibitors and buyers loved this social event.”

That social event was The Big Bar and featured a giant photo of past AAMA leaders and trade press sitting at a bar, and other industry notables in uniforms working around the bar. The tagline was, “If you are in coin-op, you are at The Big Bar.”

### DAVE COURINGTON Chairman (2007-2009)

“The highlight for me was the opportunity to serve the industry that has served me for so long,” said Dave Courington of Domestic Coin-Op Products for Valley-Dynamo.

“I enjoyed working with different segments of the industry. The camaraderie of everyone, their willingness to work together, and working with our counterparts in the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) was very gratifying.”

“The one show concept came to fruition under my watch, although the industry had been working toward this for some time. It’s the best thing for our industry.”

Courington said that association presidents have a tough job because of the ever-changing business landscape, new board members coming in, and the fact that the association intertwines

with so many other associations.

He spoke about the demands of being chairman: “Two years is a long time, but it takes that time. The first few months you learn the inner workings of the office and get a feel for the ebb and flow. Then you see if there are any fires to put out and also do fire prevention. Then there is a period of moving forward. The last six to eight months you want to be sure that you leave the association in as good a shape or better shape than it was when you came on board.”

Courington reflected on the past and present: “Years ago the industry roadmap was more clearly defined. There were three roads to drive on: manufacturer, distributor, and operator. The roads (and roles) of each industry segment are starting to blend together. Now we all travel the same highways.”

“I had a wonderful group around me, and the board gave me good direction,” he said. “I always tried to be open and let everyone know what was taking place. At the end of the day the board I worked with was very productive.”

Courington believes that everyone in the industry should be involved in our associations. He said, “If you care enough to take home a paycheck from the industry you should care enough to put back a little bit. I applaud those who step up to serve.” ▲



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By Bonnie Theard

# Current AAMA leadership

# 30 YEARS



In 2009 after the announcement of the one big spring show, (l-r): David Cohen of AAMA and Gary Brewer of AMOA; standing, (l-r): Russ Medley of AMOA, Dave Courington of AAMA, and Lloyd Williamson of AMOA.

For the past two years, David Cohen of Firestone Financial Corp. has served as Chairman of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and John Schultz has served as association President. On the eve of the AAMA Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala at the Marriott Lincolnshire in Lincolnshire, Ill., next month, *Play Meter* caught up with Cohen and Schultz to discuss the association's history and future.

It's been an eventful two years, marked by the negotiations that led to combining the AAMA Amusement Showcase International (ASI) in the spring with the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) International Expo in the fall to create one big spring show in 2010. The result: the Amusement Expo, which enjoyed increased attendance and acceptance this March.

Schultz commented, "The biggest thing we have accomplished in the last three years is putting together the Amusement Expo. We feel positive about the show; it's a shining star. AAMA and AMOA did the right thing for the industry. I believe the industry as a whole is happy with the outcome."

Cohen said, "In business you need to listen to your customers and provide

for them. For years we heard from exhibitors and attendees that we needed to combine shows, and while it took a lot of time and effort, it's something we are extremely proud of. It has been well received. It was evident at the press conference at the end of the Amusement Expo this year that we're headed in the right direction."

He added, "In addition to the show we are proud that we have a much stronger working relationship with the AMOA leadership and staff. In both the short term and the long term that bodes well, and I suspect if we continue to reach our strategic goals, you will see us working together more in the future."

Schultz said, "Internally, the staff is working with the Executive Committee to streamline the association's management, financing, and communications. We are working better with our members and the AMOA. We've upgraded equipment and changed some outside services to make us function more effectively."

AAMA is also proud of its American Amusement Machine Association Charitable Fund (AAMCF), which consists of four endowment funds. Schultz said, "Over the last 10 years we have donated to children's charities in excess of \$500,000."



At the AMOA Mid-Year Board Meeting 2010, (l-r): David Cohen of AAMA, Andy Shaffer of AMOA, John Schultz of AAMA, and Donovan Fremin of AMOA.



David Cohen (l) of AAMA, Vince Gumma Jr. of AVS, and John Schultz of AAMA in Nashville, 2010.



Gathering around a 30th anniversary cake at the Amusement Expo 2011, (l-r): David Cohen, Sal Cifala of Firestone Financial, John Schultz, Jennifer Anker, and Tina Schwartz.



At the Amusement Expo 2011: David Cohen (l) and John Schultz (r) present AAMA's Lifetime Achievement Award to Frank Gumma Sr. of AVS.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership is a crucial area for every association. Cohen said, "What's interesting is that our membership is up as a result of the work that we are doing and because of the show. For us to be able to attract more members because of what we do shows that the proof is in the proverbial pudding. Members see the value, and that's a strong indicator that the association is doing the right thing."

Along with increased membership comes fresh ideas and new perspectives. Schultz said, "We've been fortunate to get new blood in the association. We're proud of the young people who have joined our association and worked on our committees. Young, talented people in the industry are giving of their time, which is positive and keeps our association moving forward."

## RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are also vital in the amusement business. Schultz said, "The relationships we have today with fellow associations (AMOA; the National Bulk Vendors Association, NBVA; the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, IAAPA; and the National Automatic Merchandising Association, NAMA) are as strong or stronger than they have ever been. We are pleased that the NBVA Pavilion will be back at the Amusement Expo 2012. There are many other associations we are reaching out to so we can work together to better our industry."

Cohen said, "We continue to partner or work with other associated aspects of our industry, such as bulk vending. The NBVA pavilion at the Amusement Expo this year gave NBVA members access and exposure

to other parts of our business. We have a good relationship with IAAPA and the family entertainment center (FEC) community through our previous association with Fun Expo."

He continued, "For us to be successful, it's important to connect with other businesses that seek to have coin-op equipment and services to help increase the value of their businesses."

Schultz mentioned the added benefits for attendees at the Amusement Expo 2012, which is set for March 14-16 in Las Vegas. The show will again include the NBVA Pavilion and overlap with the International Pizza Expo and the ASD Variety Merchandise Show.

## ANNUAL MEETING, GALA

AAMA has been hosting its annual Distributor Gala for seven years, which has grown considerably. Cohen commented, "Last year was one of the



Neal Rosenberg (l) joins John Schultz and Tina Schwartz in presenting the Joe Robbins Award to David Cohen in 2010.



After a seminar at the AAMA Annual Meeting 2010, (l-r): John Schultz, Mike Zolandz of SNR Denton, and David Cohen.

best years. We had more participation, more attendance, and more manufacturers showing product for our distributors. It's turned into a great event for our industry."

He continued, "At our Annual Meeting we have an opportunity to step back and look at the industry and where we are going."

Schultz said, "More people want to get involved in the association and are ready to step forward at the Annual Meeting. They are working hard to improve the industry. We thank all our members and volunteers for their commitment."

### DEMANDING ROLES

Soon, Cohen will step down as Chairman but he will continue to serve in the capacity of Past President for two years. Cohen said, "I think it's good for industry leaders and leaders within their companies to think about actively participating in trade associations."

"I would encourage other senior members of management teams to become actively involved. The more we tap into those resources of intelligence, brainpower, and creativity, the better the trade associations will be."

The post of Chairman requires a considerable commitment of time and effort. Before his election to that post, he had served on numerous committees. Will Cohen miss anything when his tenure comes to a close?

Cohen said, "As Chairman I feel engaged and part of something. I will miss being part of the strategic planning and interacting with the rest of the Executive Steering Committee, but I will stay involved in the association.

One thing I will look to continue is being on the trade show board for another year. I will also spend more time on government relations."

He added, "We've been working on how we can become more effective in our government relations and member benefits. We want to stay in touch with what's happening in government pertaining to our industry. It's early to talk about specifics, but by the time of the Annual Meeting we will introduce a program we think will bring more benefits and access to information for our members."

The job of Chairman is a demanding one. Cohen is quick to credit others for their support: "I have a great team at Firestone Financial that is very skilled at their jobs and that gave me the ability to do this. Seriously, I am very lucky I have them."

As President, Schultz is a constant at the AAMA headquarters, assisted by Tina Schwartz and Jennifer Anker. Schultz adjusts to the personal style of each incoming Chairman and they become a close team. Schultz was a member volunteer for 12 years, long before taking on the role of President. His coin-op career includes 20 years in distribution and 10 years in manufacturing.

Schultz said, "One of the things David and I have tried to do is allow the association to be more inclusive and transparent. We're also more proactive, which is preferable to a passive role."

Cohen commented, "John has made great strides in improving and streamlining what we do. As a volunteer it's easy for me to hop in and out, but the day to day running of the association

falls on the shoulders of John, Tina, and Jennifer. I think you are only as good as the people you have working for you. We are here today based on the efforts of many people."

Schultz keeps the lines of communication open with the board including a monthly letter. He said, "It's amazing how many things happen in a month. My title is President but my real title is facilitator. My job is to take the direction from the board and make it happen."

### TODAY'S CHALLENGES

The industry is constantly changing, presenting new challenges, and requiring adjustments in business plans.

When asked about the major challenges faced by the industry today, Cohen said, "One of the biggest challenges is that all of our end-user customers who buy our equipment, services, and parts generate all their revenue from discretionary consumer spending. There has been a slow change in consumer confidence, which has leveled off or turned a little upward. This industry clearly depends on the economy and the ability of consumers to have discretionary spending dollars."

He added, "On a global basis, we need to find the mechanism to improve the economy so consumers have that discretionary income to provide revenue to our industry. We need more jobs. We have to encourage businesses to hire more people and expand their businesses."

With the group effort of its leaders and members, AAMA will continue to do everything in its power to work toward the betterment of the industry. ▲

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I remember visiting my father,  
Joe Robbins, as he embarked on the  
quest to create an association of  
coin-op manufacturers - an unlikely  
and unheard-of idea at the time.  
It was like herding kittens - I recall  
him cajoling, pleading, and  
haranguing the various manufacturers  
in numerous phone calls.

Fortunately, his endeavor succeeded,  
and the AAMA legacy has been  
continued over the years by the many  
hard-working individuals whose  
efforts we all appreciate.

Mark Robbins  
Owner, Shelti

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## I applaud those who step up to serve our industry.



Dave Courington  
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Blackbeard's was built in 1978 in stages. When current Owner Greg Florer acquired it in 1984 he continued to finish the park, and added racecars and bumper boats. He decided to keep the name Blackbeard's because the 15-acre park had a good reputation and it made sense.

Attractions include bumper boats, racecars with two different tracks, laser tag, Ride Land, a small roller coaster, a pirate ship, bank shot basketball, water slides, a batting range, mini golf, paintball, a cyber coaster, two large arcades, and a rope course which was installed last year.

Of the coin-op arcade games, Florer said the top earner is Big Bass Wheel. He explained, "It's just totally amazing. I can't believe the money it's making. We operate two freestanding nickel arcades outside of the park and bought bass wheels for those businesses as well."

The FEC's two snack bars and summertime ICEE® cart offer favorites like pizza, nachos and cheese, Frito boats, popcorn, cotton candy, and more.

The business hosts numerous birthday parties and company picnics.

Florer said, "We have three group sales people in the summer and they're constantly busy. We book probably 20 or 25 parties most Saturdays and almost that on Sunday. We offer parties

where guests can bring their own stuff and we reserve a spot for them and we have packages where we do everything for them. We provide cake and pizza or hotdogs. When parents book a 'Deluxe Captains' party, they can purchase additional two or four hour wristbands for unlimited use of several attractions."

Another large part of the business is group sales with schools. Florer said, "There are about three weeks towards the end of the school year where we

months. The waterfalls are all looking better than usual. Years like this are when brochure pictures are taken. I hope that may draw some people into Fresno."

## OH WOW! NICKEL ARCADE

Florer also operates several nickel arcades in the state of California. Florer said, "The idea came about back when the arcade games were a lot stronger than they are now, the nickel arcade was a place we could take older games that were still in working condition and make room for newer games in the FEC."

The concept worked in San Diego and Florer and his associates thought they'd try it. The current admission is \$1.95 and all games are on nickels. There are also 12 to 15 games on free play.

Florer said, "We opened one 12 miles from us in Fresno and it didn't seem to affect Blackbeard's business so we put one about 50 miles south of us. Then we opened another one 50 miles north of us. All three are doing well."

In the arcade, around 60 percent of the games are redemption.

Florer said, "Most of the games in the arcades are older redemption. They all have Skee Ball. They all have a couple of newer redemption games like Winners Cube, Big Bass Wheel, and Haunted House. It's a good variety of redemption, older video games, and pinball machines."

For more information on Blackbeard's, call (559)292-9000; Web ([www.blackbeardsfresno.com](http://www.blackbeardsfresno.com)). For more information on Oh Wow! Arcade, call (559)432-0123; Web ([www.ohwow-arcade.com](http://www.ohwow-arcade.com)). ▲

## vital statistics



### Facility:

Blackbeard's Family Entertainment Center

### Location:

Fresno, Calif.

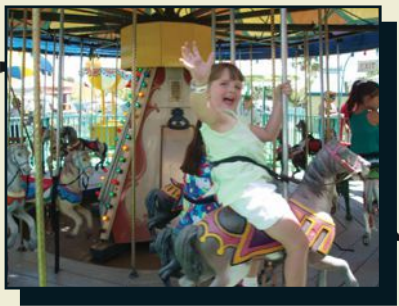
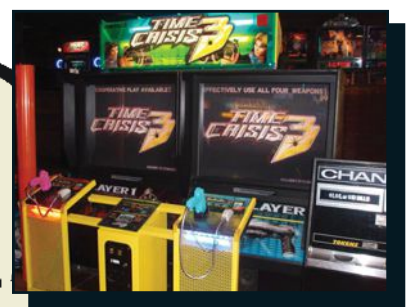
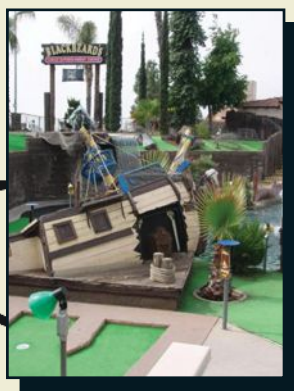
### Attractions:

Bumper boats, racecars with two different tracks, laser tag, Ride Land, a small roller coaster, a pirate ship, bank shot basketball, water slides, a batting range, mini golf, paintball, a cyber coaster, two large arcades, and a rope course.

have 1,000 kids a day in here. We also host several all night graduation parties."

The FEC is located close to one of the main entrances to Yosemite National Park. Florer hopes this summer's unusual rain patterns may have a positive effect on business.

He explained, "Because Yosemite has had twice the rainfall this year than it normally has, a national news item said Yosemite is one of the nicest places in the U.S. to visit for next two





## Odd Art and Martial Arts



Josh and Zach Sharpe

*The Sharpe brothers critique two more games from this year's Amusement Expo.*

Last month we helped to run, competed in, and promote the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) World Pinball Championship that was held this year in Sweden.

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank *Play Meter* magazine, as well as Stern Pinball, Planetary Pinball Supply, the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), the Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA), Betson, GameWorks, Raw Thrills, and Prilosec OTC for their support and sponsorship of this international event.

For a complete review of IFPA8, see separate article in this issue. Back to the task at hand before our trip across the pond. This month we will take a look at Adrenaline Amusements' Fruit Ninja FX and Odd Art Fabrications' Score Lock.

### FRUIT NINJA FX/ ADRENALINE AMUSEMENTS

Adrenaline Amusements definitely delivered one of the more unique gaming experiences at this year's Amusement Expo with its TouchFX system featuring its first game, Fruit Ninja FX.

**Analysis:** Using its gaming platform, Adrenaline Amusements was able to convert the popular iPhone app game Fruit Ninja FX from a 3.5-inch screen onto a giant 46-inch monitor. The objective of the game is pretty straightforward. Using a finger on the giant touch screen, players must cut up as many flying pieces of fruit in the allotted time. However, this time players have the added incentive of winning tickets.

**Pros:** Adrenaline Amusements has done a fantastic job with its gaming platform. To amplify an already suc-

cessful game onto an enormous touch screen monitor with the added bonus of being supported by redemption is a brilliant idea. TouchFX can work wonderfully at smaller locations that can't afford to house multiple titles on their floors. To have multiple games at your fingertips, pun intended, while encompassing the area of only one machine can be very efficient for operators.

That being said, playing Fruit Ninja FX on a giant 46-inch monitor was an absolute blast. The addition/option of winning tickets by using our amazing culinary skills made the experience that much more fun.

**Cons:** The biggest concern we have over Fruit Ninja FX or any future Adrenaline Amusements converted game is the cabinet design. One aspect of Fruit Ninja FX that really stuck out was its lack of personality or signage.

*“Sometimes you don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to a game idea.”*





From a direct competitor comparison, ICE did a fantastic job with its touch screen game, Buster Bubble. The cabinet was in the shape of the main character and it resonated with its game play, providing players with the complete package. It'd be nice if Fruit Ninja FX had a little more character and pizzazz outside of the game play alone.

**Overall:** Adrenaline Amusements has done a great job of converting a handheld game into a full arcade experience. Sometimes you don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to a game idea.

Adrenaline proved this with an already established game that now has the additional bonus of redemption.

As we mentioned in our cons section, one big concern of ours moving forward with Adrenaline Amusements is its physical footprint. One of the downsides of having kit-conversion style games is the lack of personality outside of game play. Considering how hard it already is to stand out in any location, it'll be interesting to see, and our apologies on yet another pun, if Fruit Ninja FX can cut through the clutter.

**Overall rating:** ★★★ 1/2

## SCORE LOCK/ ODD ART FABRICATIONS

We always love seeing new companies come out to the trade shows and galas, especially those that venture into this crazy world of coin-op and redemption games. Odd Art Fabrications fit that bill at this year's Amusement Expo with its newest creation, Score Lock.

**Analysis:** Score Lock's premise is quite simple. Standing seven feet tall is a gigantic wizard holding a huge chest. On this chest are multiple LED buttons which must be pushed in a lighted sequence that will complete shapes, earn points, and ultimately win players many tickets. For analogy purposes, it feels like playing Namco's Flaming Finger transported into the



***“We will definitely be curious to see what comes next with OAF's future in this industry.”***

world of Harry Potter via the use of push buttons.

**Pros:** First and foremost, Odd Art Fabrications easily created one of the most beautiful cabinet designs we have ever seen in its giant wizard. Besides standing out with its height, the level of detail is truly remarkable.

This wizard literally looks like something straight out of the Wizarding World of Harry Potter theme park. Those who visited this park during the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo last year can attest that this is very high praise. Besides look-

ing brilliant, the game play itself is very fun and addicting. The sequence of the light movement is never the same from game to game so it will definitely keep players on their toes.

**Cons:** While we were fans of the cabinet design and game play, a huge concern of ours pertains to its lighting or lack thereof. Besides the buttons that light up and the score displays, there's no ambient lighting to make this game stand out.

We were fortunate enough to see this game on a trade show floor where there's plenty of lighting to make Score Lock really pop. However, if this is placed in a darker lit arcade setting a la GameWorks or Dave & Buster's, we could easily see this game being lost in the shuffle, which would be a shame.

**Overall:** We were very impressed with Odd Art Fabrications' first foray into the coin-op industry. Score Lock looks phenomenal and with its simple premise and addictive game play, it shouldn't have any issues attracting a wide audience if they can see it! We will definitely be curious to see what comes next with OAF's future in this industry. Just by looking at the company's Web site, anyone can see how successful it is in creating sculptures, miniatures, and props for a wide range of industries. Let's just hope this success can transfer over to the arcade scene and infuse some fresh new energy into the mix.

**Overall rating:** ★★★ 1/2

With a father like Roger Sharpe, the original “Cornered Critic,” it is probably no surprise that sons Josh and Zach share a true passion for the coin-op industry. Former pinball champions, both are recognized as being two of the finest players in the world. But their interest and skills have grown far beyond the silver ball to embrace video games and attractions of all types.



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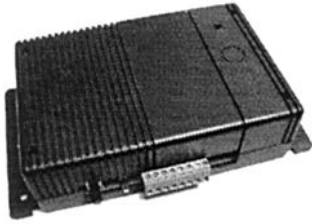
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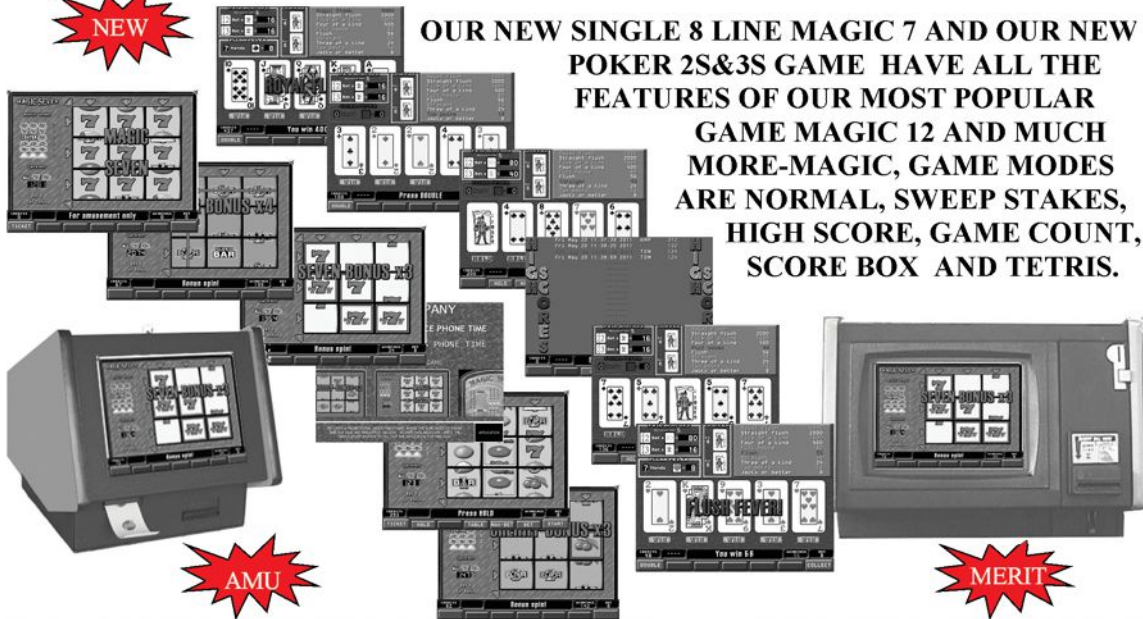
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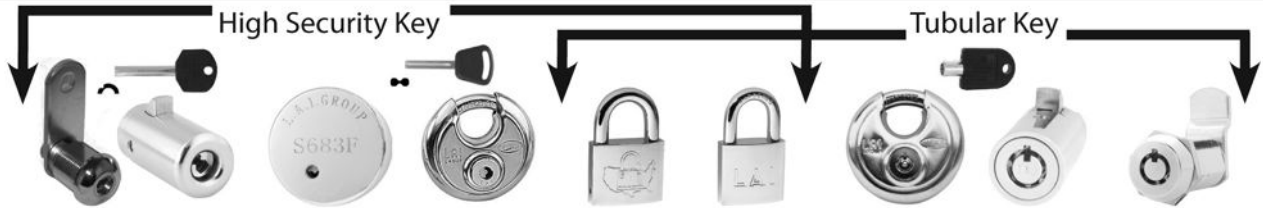


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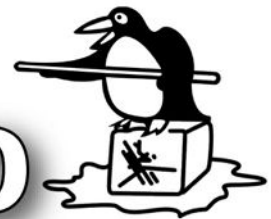
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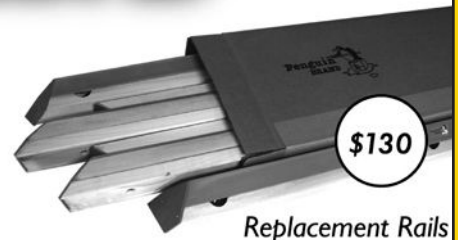
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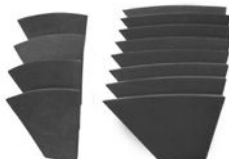
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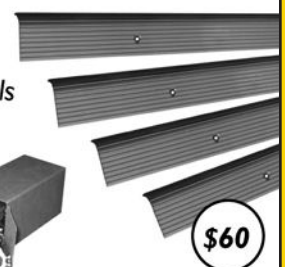
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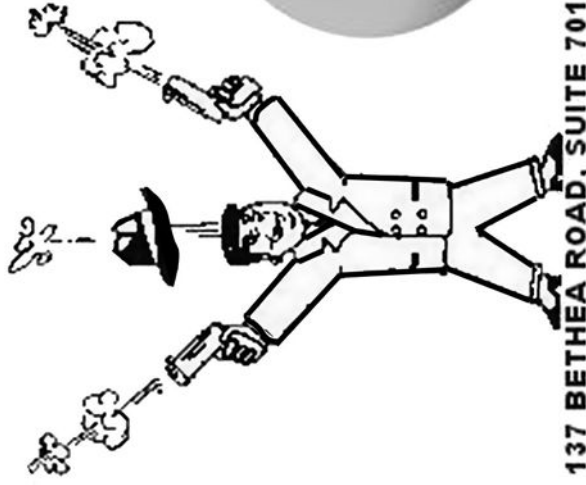
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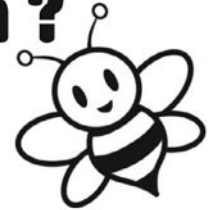
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