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go smart  
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**Equipment:**  
Fall  
Product  
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**AAMA:**  
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## 32 AAMA Gala and Fall Product Lineup

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## 62 Anniversary: Shaffer Services

Shaffer Services was founded in 1988 as the operator division within Shaffer Distributing, a fourth generation, family-owned entertainment distributorship headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. The company is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

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**R**edemption in all its forms, from cranes to prize merchandisers, and the attempts to restrict the operation of these games and limit the prizes, is the main topic on everyone's mind today. At state association meetings this summer industry members acknowledged the threat from proposed legislation related to these games and the concern that what happens in one state could spill over into neighboring states.

In *Play Meter's* "On the Road" interview with Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) President John Pascaretti in July, he said, "That category of equipment is producing revenue for operators. To lose that would be detrimental to everyone's bottom line." He compared it to smoking bans that slowly swept across the nation.

In *Play Meter's* "Coinman Interview" in March with outgoing AMOA President Andy Shaffer, he said, "The major challenges are legislation on all levels of government, smart phones, and Pandora background music, among others."

Efforts are under way to do something about proposed legislation that would prove detrimental to redemption equipment and to our industry. At the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala in August, which is covered extensively in this issue, AAMA announced the formation of a defense fund to fight such legislation.

At AAMA's Government Relations Luncheon, new AAMA President Pete Gustafson stressed the importance of separating the industry from Internet cafes and/or sweepstakes parlors, and the terminology that connects the two (using the word arcade, as in adult arcade).

In California, the Amusement Game Defense Trust was established early in the summer to help combat adverse legislation.

A special News Feature this month pertaining to this issue comes courtesy of Bob Snyder of Bob Snyder & Associates Inc./National Games Laboratory, who provides advice for operating merchandisers and how to avoid waving red flags of costly risk. Snyder said, "The ripple effect of foolish operation can impact the industry as a whole."

Also in this issue is our Fall Equipment Lineup with current and soon-to-be available games in all categories. Keep this list of products with descriptions and photos handy for reference as we move into the fourth quarter.

Significant anniversaries are highlighted this month as well: the 25th Anniversary of Shaffer Services, which is taking a bold step to present commemorative plaques to its customers to thank them for their support over the years.

There is more than one anniversary to celebrate at Valley-Dynamo, where Champion Shuffleboard, Dynamo, Tornado, and Valley product lines are all marking significant years of providing quality table games to the industry.

Nostalgia buffs, and anyone who remembers the thrill of a kiddie ride, or watching their child or grandchild on a kiddie ride, will enjoy the feature this month ("Remember When") on a new book on kiddie ride manufacturer Carousel International penned by Steven E. Veatch of the company's founding family. The book details the history and closure of a company that provided smiles for children for nearly 40 years. ▲



**BONNIE THEARD**  
Editor

**We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see.**

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## Valley

In response to operator demand, Valley's new Top Cat table is shipping with the standard Valley Panther/Cougar leg design. This change will allow for operators to stock a single leg for any service needs that may arise. Top Cat also has a new grooved "Dado Joint" for the most solid connection ever between rail and apron, delivering exceptional deflection on every cushion.

Other service friendly features include replaceable top laminates with silkscreened and clear coated markers, easy-access cushion rail bolts, the simple magnetic separator with no moving parts, Panther-proven electronics with a reliable MEI bill acceptor, Championship Worsted Invitational cloth with Teflon for stain resistance, and numerous service access points. ([www.valley-dynamo.com](http://www.valley-dynamo.com))



## Universal Space

Momentum is already building for the latest game from Universal Space (UNIS), Funfair Bash. The first machine to be launched in the new Carnival series is already showing great test results. Kashif Ahmad, General Manager at Playdium Mississauga and Playscape Markham, is very pleased with Funfair Bash.

He said, "UNIS has produced a carnival-themed game for all ages. With an attractive cabinet, manageable footprint, and exciting game play, this game is sure to entertain all your customers. It requires skill and encourages repeat play. Funfair Bash creates a lasting experience for the consumer. In our facility of close to 100 redemption games, its earnings are continuing to improve each week. Consistently among the top 50 games, this game is working its way into the top 25." ([www.universal-space.com](http://www.universal-space.com))



## Rowe

Rowe recently announced the release of Model 500-3, the newest addition to its reliable bill changer product line. This model features a revolutionary \$5 bill recycling option that improves customer service and cash flow for carwashes and laundromats. This model comes with front and rear load options and is the same size as the popular BC1400/1200 models. The changer also has three high-capacity cassettes for outgoing bills and an MEI bill recycler that accepts \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 incoming bills.

This model can dispense three different denominations or use the three high-capacity cassettes to increase currency capacity up to 1,600 outgoing bills. The units also feature an electronic user feedback display allowing patrons to see what bill denomination is accepted by the machine and the correct change amount being dispensed.

The Model 500 offers location owners the capacity to improve cash flow by recycling bills to other patrons. The machine can receive a \$5 bill from a patron and return five \$1 bills. The machine can also recycle that same \$5 bill to another patron as change for a \$20 bill, providing the perfect solution for replacing heavy, bulky coins with bills. Using the bill recycler in this way means storeowners do not need to reload \$5 bills, saving time and money. Rowe also offers models that accept \$50 and \$100 bills, keeping large bills securely locked up. Other models can break large bills into smaller bills and coins. ([www.roweinternational.com](http://www.roweinternational.com))







## Sega

Double Spin is the latest addition to Sega Amusements' ever-growing family of ticket redemption games. Double Spin is a mechanical wheel-action game that incorporates two wheels. One wheel shows the ticket value while the other shows the multiplier value.

Each wheel is controlled by its own oversized lever. Pulling back and releasing the left lever starts the ticket value wheel spinning. Pulling back and releasing the right lever starts the multiplier wheel spinning. Get "super" on the ticket wheel to line up with "bonus" on the multiplier wheel and you win the super ticket bonus. (www.segaarcade.com)

## Zytronic

Zytronic recently launched its Zero Bezel range of touch tables and wall-mounted displays. The product is being targeted at showrooms, boardrooms, banks, and other business, retail, and leisure environments.

One of its key features is an attractive, smooth, all glass fronted design, free of unsightly bezel structures or frames around the perimeter of the display. Supporting Windows 8 operation, it is based on NEC's super-slim MultiSync X462S LED display. The tables and wall-mounted displays have the capability to detect more than 10 touch points at once. This allows multiple users to simultaneously activate the surface using swipes, drag/drops, page flicks, pinch zooms, and a variety of other defined gestures. (www.zytronic.co.uk)



## Incredible Technologies

Incredible Technologies has now given PowerPutt LIVE 2013 operators the ability to send their own customized messages to their PowerPutt LIVE simulated dot-matrix marquee right from their computer.

The scrolling sign can be seen from across the room as it displays high scores, game features, and daily prizes to potential players. It is ideal for announcing contests or setting up leagues.

Operators simply log in to their ITNet Operator account at itsgames.com and click on the "Manage PowerPutt Messages" link. Messages can be created and saved in a message library, and can be downloaded to any or all of their PowerPutt LIVE games. Up to three different messages can be displayed on a machine at one time.

PowerPutt LIVE 2013 is fully compatible with FACTS and AdWiz online software, which help create easy-to-run contests and promotions. (www.itsgames.com) ▲







Pete Gustafson (l), President of AAMA, presents a plaque to John Margold, Immediate Past President of AAMA, for his service.



The 2013 Joe Robbins Award was given to Holly Meidl of Bay Tek Games, (l-r): Tina Schwartz, Jennifer Anker, and John Schultz of AAMA, Meidl, Pete Gustafson, and John Margold.



At the Government Relations Luncheon, (l-r): David Cohen of Firestone Financial, John Schultz of AAMA, John Russell of Dentons, and Rick Kirby of Betson New England.

# Positive AAMA Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala

The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala, held Aug. 6-9, in Lisle, Ill., was a positive experience all around. New products, new leadership, and good attitudes were rampant.

The event agenda included committee meetings, a welcome dinner, elections, the gala, a bowling tournament, and manufacturer presentations from Dave Courington of Valley-Dynamo, Dave Shwartz of Bonita Marie International, Satinder Bhutani of Andamiro, Al Kress and Tony Maniscalco of Benchmark Games, Holly Meidl of Bay Tek Games, Mark Robbins of Gold

Standard Games/Shelti, Greg and Anna Bacorn of Barron Games, and Pete Gustafson of Sega.

The manufacturer presentations were a perk for Gala exhibitors and gave distributors a chance to experience a more thorough explanation of products being shown at the gala. Barron Games announced that it is now offering Injoy Motion products in the U.S. The company will service and stock parts at its warehouse in Buffalo, N.Y.

Special guests at the welcome dinner, sponsored by TouchTunes Interactive Networks, included John Russell of Dentons, AAMA Government Rela-

tions Lobbyist; Brian Glasgow of W.T. Glasgow, the firm that manages the Amusement Expo; Jack Kelleher of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA); John Pascaretti, AMOA President; and John and Linda Schultz of AAMA.

## LEADERSHIP

Pete Gustafson of Sega Amusements has been elected the new President of AAMA. Following tradition, Gustafson will serve a two-year term; he succeeds John Margold of AMI Entertainment Network. In addition to Gustafson as President, Chris Felix of M.E.I. was named Vice





Seated, (l-r): Pete Gustafson of Sega, John Margold of AMI, and John Pascaretti of AMOA; standing, (l-r): John Russell of Dentons, Jack Kelleher of AMOA, and Linda and John Schultz of AAMA.



Seated, (l-r): Josh Pick of Namco, Juan Fernandez of Betson, Randy Cesco of Venco, Mike McWilliams of Specialty Coin, Debbie Gonzalez of UNIS, Greg and Anna Bacorn of Barron Games, and Chris Felix of MEI.



Jim Dupree (l) of Smart Industries and George Smith of Family Entertainment Group.



A large crowd turned out for the welcome dinner.



The AAMCF raised \$5,000 for KEEN and Children's Miracle Network this year.



Kern (l) and Justin Jennison of Jennison Entertainment Technologies by Snow Down.

President. Rich Babich of Game Exchange of Colorado will remain as Treasurer, David Cohen of Firestone Financial will be Assistant Treasurer, Frank Cosentino of Namco America will be Secretary, and Holly Meidl of Bay Tek Games will be Assistant Secretary.

Other board members include John Margold of AMI Entertainment, (Past President), Jim Belt of Stern Pinball, Jon W. Brady of Brady Distributing Co., Jim Chapman of Coast to Coast Entertainment, Eugene Jarvis of Raw Thrills, Rick Kirby of Betson, Bill Kraft of Shaffer Distributing, Don Marshall of Marshall Productions, Neal Rosenberg of Elaut USA, Tony Shamma of American Vending Sales, and



Jeanne Ives (R-Wheaton), Illinois state representative, addresses the crowd at the Government Relations Luncheon.

Allen Weisberg of Apple Industries.

## AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Distributor Gala was also the

occasion to present two awards: The Joe Robbins Award was presented to Holly Meidl of Bay Tek Games; The Shining Star Award (formerly the President's Award) was given to Sondra Doyle.

Holly was praised for her commitment to the industry. Schultz said, "Holly has been very involved with the charity, supportive of functions, co-chair of the Industry Promotion Committee, and well versed in all functions of the association."

Gustafson said, "We knew we got it right when we decided to give Holly the Joe Robbins Award. It was a unanimous vote."

At the gala, John Schultz, Executive Vice President of AAMA, announced that association charitable funds would





From left: Len Keywood of Cineplex Starburst; John Buscaglia, Jim Belt, and Gary Stern of Stern Pinball; and Nick Jordan of Nickels and Dimes.



Mike Tobin with Monopoly from ICE. Play Mechanix and Raw Thrills will produce the new game.



Eugene Jarvis (l) of Raw Thrills and Scott Pikulski of Betson Enterprises.



From left: Steve Ignarski, Tim Marlega, Jim Wulfers, Sam Ven, Erik Gilly, Frank Cosentino, Tom Siemieniec, and Josh Pick of Namco America.



From left: AMOA President John Pascaretti, Jack Kelleher of AMOA, Jeff Hudson of Skee-Ball, Vince Gumma of American Vending Sales, and Brian Glasgow of W.T. Glasgow.

be donated to Kids Enjoy Exercise Now (KEEN) and the Children's Miracle Network, each received donations of \$5,000 each.

A 60/40 raffle was held at the gala where 60 percent of the money raised went to charity and 40 percent was won by Mike McWilliams of Specialty Coin.

### COMMENTS

Lisa Chapman of Family Fun Companies said, "This is a great show. We've had a good response so far."

Roger Rosebush of Gold Standard Games, said, "This is a fun industry. The buzz is very interesting. Everyone seems to have an authentic love for the industry. I think Pete has a challenge on his hands but he has a great attitude about it and fresh ideas."

Greg Bacorn of Barron Games attended and exhibited at the show for the first time this year. His wife and Vice President of Barron Games, Anna Bacorn, has been several times before. He said, "I should've come to this show five years ago. I learned a lot here."

Anna said, "It's been a productive meeting. I picked up a lot of different views on what's going on."

Gaetan Philippon of Bay Tek Games said, "Everything has been really well received. We're looking forward to finishing the year strong."

### GOVERNMENT RELATIONS LUNCHEON

The AAMA held a Government Relations Luncheon Aug. 8, sponsored by Apple Industries, to discuss political matters. A hot topic issue was the recent merchandiser controversies in California, Arizona, Florida, and Ohio.

Rick Kirby, Co-Chair of the Government Relations Committee moderated the event. AAMA retains a Washington firm, Dentons, to monitor legislative activity and lobby against adverse legislation that could affect the coin-op industry.

Jeanne Ives, Illinois State Representative (R-42), gave an update on leg-



**“We want to include everybody in the industry and create a space full of opportunity.”**

islative activity that could affect small businesses in Illinois.

John Russell, AAMA Government Relations Lobbyist and Senior Managing Director of Dentons, spoke about current industry problems and steps the firm and industry members were taking to combat them.

He explained, “It used to be a one-shot deal where one day a year we’d flood the hill and bring in a bunch of people. Now we try to do eight to 12 meetings per year and target congress people and staff. One advantage we have is that all Capitol Hill office members have an experience with our industry, and they’re mostly positive, but they haven’t necessarily thought of who’s behind it.”

He went on, “The big issues right now are tax reform, the steel coin, the dollar coin, and violence in video games. We’re working hard to make sure they understand we’re typically family-owned small businesses. We pay taxes and we’re not looking for a hand-out. We’re just looking to continue business and want some consistency. We want to be considered a resource not just on games but on all issues. It’s important for us to play both sides of the coin, the district component and the D.C. component. The heavy lifting is done at the district level.”

Rick Kirby gave his opinion on the matter as well, saying, “Everyone has their own opinion on what the problem is. In my opinion, as long as Internet cafes are around, we’re in trouble. We’re in an era where we need to be self-regulated. Maybe we should take the \$500+ prizes off the shelf for now. I’m concerned. I don’t know what’s going to happen in family entertainment centers (FECs).”



**Lisa Chapman and Alex Mazon of Family Fun Companies by Freethrow.**



**From left: Dave Courington of Valley-Dynamo, Ed Pellegrini of Team Play, and Don Marshall of Marshall Productions.**



**Allen Weisberg (l) of Apple Industries, Neil Miller (c) of AVS, and Eugene Jarvis of Raw Thrills.**



**The Bay Tek team, (l-r): Rick Rochetti, Jeremy Day, Gaetan Philippon and Tom Diedrich.**



**John Margold (l) of AML and Bill Hampton of Megatouch.**





From left: John Schultz and Tina Schwartz of AAMA, Barbara Peltz of *Bowling Center Management*, and Linda Schultz.

George Smith of Family Entertainment Group also shared his thoughts. He said, “I would rather have a defensible business that’s going to survive. I think we need a predominance of skill games. There are no gray area games; only black and white. I’d like manufacturers, distributors, and sales people to come together and be able to say we have legal and defensible product. Will some machines earn less? Probably. But I’d rather have less than nothing.”

### GOALS AND THE FUTURE

At a special press meeting, John Schultz and Pete Gustafson shared their thoughts on recent AAMA happenings and the future of the association. Both considered the meeting and gala to be very positive.

They also gave some insight into committee meetings. Steering Committee members discussed the direction of the association. This meeting sets the agenda for the year. A representative from Charles Schwab addressed the committee and gave an update on policy and finances.

Schultz said, “We’re very happy with where we stand. The association is in better financial shape than it’s been in years.”

In the Membership Committee meeting, the committee discussed reaching out to other segments of the industry and bringing in regional operators. The association has 129 members, up 35 percent over four years ago.

Some bylaws were rewritten. The International Manufacturers and Manufacturer categories are now one category. There is now an avenue for large FEC members. They can now become members of the board. Any operator or location owner can now join.

Gustafson spoke of the recent FEC Phoenix conference. He said, “The FEC people are very passionate. Many of our members produce equipment specifically for the FEC market. We need to support them.”



Courtney McDuff of *Play Meter* plays Pac-Man Ticket Mania.



Al Kress (l) and Tony Maniscalco of *Benchmark Games*.



Dave Schwartz of *Bonita Marie International*.



The Shining Star Award was presented to Sondra Doyle of *Sureshot Redemption*, (l-r): Jennifer Anker of AAMA, Doyle, and Tina Schwartz and John Schultz of AAMA.



Peter Stolarczyk of *Kalkomat/IGPM* demonstrates Speedball for Cortney Kinzler and Tony Shamma of *AVS*.



Schultz mentioned the association's charitable activities. AAMA has given away more than \$1 million total, and this year over \$35,000 to children's charities."

Marketing efforts for the association were mentioned. Gustafson spoke of the desire to come up with a clear and consistent mission statement. "We want to include everybody in the industry and create a space full of opportunity. We're creating relevance for a wider audience. It's why we've updated our bylaws. We've got great relationships with AMOA, NAMA, IAAPA, and CAPA. We want to form strong bonds with other associations."

The Government Relations Committee meeting was attended by 100 percent of the committee and had 20 people in the audience. There was a lot of conversation.

Gustafson said, "The most important thing we can do is protect our industry. We're really working on getting people involved locally."

Schultz said, "The quarter is still a top piece. The continued circulation of pennies, nickels, and dimes doesn't really affect us, but doing away with the quarter would."

The association made the decision to set up a defense fund to help protect states from negative legislation. Association members will have a voice on where it goes.

Gustafson stressed the importance of segregating the industry from Internet cafes and the terminology that connects the two. He mentioned reaching out to Native American gaming lobbyists who feel threatened by sweepstakes parlors and remind them that we are collateral damage in legislation aimed at these businesses.

The association is discussing language that defines what constitutes "redemption."

The Government Relations Luncheon was a success. Schultz said, "We wanted to bring everyone together. We thought John Russell speaking to people and meeting them in person was important."

Everyone on the charitable board was re-elected. The association raised the fixed number of charitable board members from seven to 10.

Note: Some of the products on display were prototypes and covered a wide range of equipment categories. For photos and descriptions of products at the show as well as new products for fall, turn to the "Fall Product Line up" in this issue. For more information on the AAMA Meeting and Distributor Gala, visit ([www.coin-op.org](http://www.coin-op.org)). ▲



From left: Hiram Gonzalez of Play It Amusements, Vince Moreno of Sega, Paul Williams of Sega, and Mark Sprenger of Sting International.



Anna and Greg Bacorn of Barron Games.



Satinder Bhutani of Andamiro demonstrates Lobster Robot.



Mark Robbins (l) and Mick White of Gold Standard Games/Shelti by the Gold Flare hockey table.



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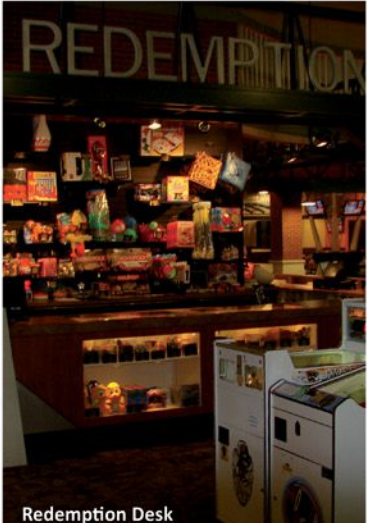
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Robert Snyder



## *A coin-op attorney gives advice for operating profitable merchandisers and how to avoid waving flags of costly risk.*

Whether they're called prize vendor games or "merchandisers" this genre of coin/currency-operated machines are successful pieces of equipment for industry operators. This success is, in part, through the display of hard goods that are seemingly only inches away from the physical grasp of the would-be game player who might become the item's quick new owner. Further, the prize items include those of recognized known market value.

In addition to profits and your ROI, there are legal risks to operating merchandisers. However, there are practices that can lower the legal risks and they are the focus of this article.

My experience includes 40 years encompassing the regulatory and legal areas of commercial live gaming and game machines for prizes. My experience includes roles as a governmental expert in amusement and gambling games, founder and director of a private consulting and forensic laboratory exclusive to coin-op, and a court room expert in 130 plus cases on game machines and equipment components as related to the legal issues of the cases. Those court appearances occurred throughout most of the U.S. and into Canada.

I serve as a coin-op amusement game industry consultant, and a currently active licensed California attorney. My field experience includes providing on-site services at virtually every type of venue including, but not limited to, casinos, major amusement parks, state and county fairs, family entertainment centers (FECs), and retail centers where amusement games and game machines are operated. My law practice is exclusive to national game and gambling research and related legal services.

For the discussion to follow, I have provided the definition for a few common terms.

**"Coin-operated"** includes machines wherein the public pays for the play or use of the machine by any method including currency, coin, debit card, or designated payment swipe-card.

**"Merchandise game"** means a payment required machine designed for amusement wherein for successful completion of the game's play task goal, within the time allotted and rules of play, the machine will directly dispense to the successful player a displayed item of merchandise, novelty, or toy with a value corresponding to the task completed and rules pertaining to the machine's offering.

I will share some general points as a foundation before getting into the subject of merchandisers.

Reason for play:

### **1. Perceived or known values of prizes**

There are two concepts in market game prizes; the first is a perceived value of a prize to the player, which can be far from the operator's careful buying cost. The second is merchandisers using brand name items offered to a consumer who likely knows the dollar value of the brand name items. Yet, the value versus the low cost to play one attempt makes the cost to the player appear worth the attempt.

### **2. The trophy of a win**

What I have witnessed over the years in game play is the behavioral actions stemming from the human ego, and this appeared more prevalent to me with males. Outward statements of "I am going to play until I beat this thing," "I can get it this time," and similar outward verbalized expressions followed by repeated play indicated to

# Waving red flags



me that sometimes the prize itself becomes a secondary goal and it is more about “winning.”

I call this the trophy effect. The prize is often the symbolic physical evidence of conquering the challenge as proof of “I did it.” This becomes clear if you spend time around midways and in fun centers where the prize or mounds of tickets are paraded through the public areas as if the holder is grasping a trophy. A large visible trophy better fulfills the recognition of a “winner.”

### 3. “That thing is rigged”

There are times when the prize is not won, no matter the effort, and the human reaction is to then save face and offer some justification for the failed play. This is where you overhear statements by players of “the gun sights were off,” “the machine didn’t react to my move quickly enough,” “that thing is defective,” “it’s programmed to lose,” or “the game is rigged so you can’t win.” In essence,

## **“The ripple effect of foolish operation can impact the industry as a whole.”**

the player’s justification of the failed attempts and reason for the loss were not the player’s fault.

The down side to such negative expressions is the sense of being cheated and it’s to the detriment of the game’s name and the business where it is located. The result is a loss of game play revenue and it brings the increased possibility of a complaint to law enforcement.

A visit to game review Web sites including YouTube makes the point that it is the machine that is the reason for not winning. During the writing of this article an Internet YouTube entry of rigged arcade games brought up numerous clips, many using slow mode digital video to expose light chasing and stopping games. Popular brand merchandisers and cranes were included.

Video segments taken inside arcades revealed a view of inside a

crane and its potentiometers, and an expose of an operator’s game manual setting forth the programming options to preset frequency or percentage of wins. The same instructions that serve as an informative guide to operators now serve as proof of rigging and warning to the viewers.

The site reveals an ABC TV news segment explaining that cranes are rigged. One discussion was on how to win on a controlled crane game. The strategy was for a would-be player to covertly watch and count until 10 players lost in succession, then move in to play. This was based upon the idea that the game is preset to only permit a win after 10 losing plays.

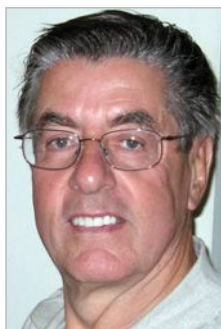
Governmental agencies might be slow to react partly because of higher priorities, and even a lack of technical knowledge of merchandisers; yet, when the reaction does occur it can also be by new legislation toward laws that

impact the industry as a whole. It should be of little surprise when the action does occur.

### 4. What is in a name?

Depending on the specific game industry, terms of “rigging” vary in the method to covertly control the play outcome. In coin-operated machines the method is termed “auto-percentaging,” self-adjusting,” “prize control,” “retention adjustment,” “prize management,” or crafted in print as “difficulty setting.”

Of course there are industry arguments as to how else can the machine offer real value merchandise and still be profitable. Yet, to the consumer it is simply “rigged.” Before a judge or jury the method to percentage wins would be argued by a prosecutor or plaintiff as cheating consumers out of their money so that perhaps one lucky player thousands of plays later might win.



Bob Snyder

### Varying flags draw attention to your merchandiser:

All merchandiser games have visual stimuli to draw attention. Let’s call the attention getters “flags.”

As an operator you select or control your own flags.

Some flags are “red flags” that signal “pick me, pick me!” and can be a call for attention by government and law enforcement entities that the game machine is worthy of closer scrutiny, an investigation, and even a game seizure.

### 5. “What’s the worst that can happen?”

I have heard more than one operator comment: “What’s the worst that can happen? So the police seize the machine; by the time that happens the game has paid for itself several times.”

I can understand the financial position of that reasoning, but a game loss is not the worst that can happen. Search warrants may be executed, resulting in your office files, computers, and trucks seized and perhaps if you work out of your home, and if specified in the warrant, to search that area too.

Perhaps then even your spouse might have had enough and seek a divorce. Add to this the possibility that you as the operator and staff could be arrested, handcuffed, jailed, and on top of everything else you and your staff charged with operating a commercial gambling enterprise.

To defend yourself would necessitate incurring costs for a criminal attorney, independent testing and experts for trials, loss of business, potential jail time if convicted, and a civil lawsuit against you. So it is your flag to wave.

Relatively in California and elsewhere, money prizes on the playfield and cash tied to toys in crane machines have resulted in police actions. The cash money was the “red flag” taunting law enforcement. One result was that a crane was seized as a game of chance and therefore a slot machine, although a cash prize was not specifically pro-



# “Do’s” and “Don’ts” for operating

■ First, consider that posted notices and rules of play on many amusement games are inadequate. It is a good practice and worthwhile investment to have your attorney draft language to alert would be players that: “You will not win every time.”

Some prizes are more difficult to obtain; several plays might be required; and, consider the value of the prize as to potential difficulty. Similar language unique to your machine and business can also be used.

■ Tips on how to play should also be posted and a timer displayed.

■ You should be aware that the manufactures operator manuals with the programming instructions and any method of controlling the prize frequency or percentage have been repeatedly used as prosecution

exhibits. Therefore there are really no secrets. The real workings of machines have been revealed by former employees, and competing operators, and by other means of obtaining information. Perhaps your product has a modified version of software more appropriate for the specific state in which you operate.

■ Do not state the game is a “game of skill” when in fact it is self-adjusting. Unless you have some certification holding that the game is one of skill, it is better to not make the self-serving statement.

On this point, most players do not actually read all signs and notices. Rather, they play intuitively or perhaps only read enough to start play. However, entities looking for “red flags” will read your notices. Be accurate, truthful, and use proper wordage. The notice will take away some

hibited in the California statutes.

The investigation, seizure, and subsequent police testing revealed that after literally thousands of recorded plays using police civilian employees, many toys from the crane’s playfield were retrieved but not one “money toy” was actually lifted and retrieved by the claw.

A closer look revealed that the toys with currency attached were all made of a unique long slender design that had been weighted on one end with internal buckshot making them so off balance and heavy that they would be extremely improbable to win.

Coin pushers have been generally overlooked until currency wrapped weighted objects and \$50 bill wrapped rolls of coins screamed to potential players and the police “pick me, pick me!” so the police did; and after a full week jury trial the operator was convicted.

As a result of similar findings of “red flag” operators, the penalties in California for slot machine possession were increased for a second and third conviction to \$10,000 and \$25,000 respectively.

As a direct result of a few operators flaunting cash prizes in California, in November 2010, the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued an advisory that coin-operated amusement games, even if skill predominate, cannot offer tangible prizes; only free games are allowed.

In May of this year the DOJ issued notices to one or more retail chains of their advisory. Immediately some large chain stores reportedly had several

dozen cranes removed from their stores.

From this, one or more private attorneys filed civil law suits against large operators and retail chain stores for consumer protection violations based on the DOJ advisory that crane games and other machines are illegal “gambling games.”

Earlier I mentioned the mindset of “what’s the worst that can happen?” Well, a greedy few operators flaunting cash brought about this ongoing chain reaction, harming many. This year California introduced a bill to prohibit offering cash in amusement games, and the DOJ is seeking to prohibit prizes or possibly only those with a very low prize value exception. This bill is still in flux and being opposed by the industry at a costly price.

Very recently in Arizona, a state authority seized from one or more public malls many merchandiser games, cash, and reportedly even the operator’s service truck, and more.

The “red flag” was high-end merchandise and iPads, in a state that has a prize limit of \$4 for a single play, and an aggregate wholesale value of not greater than \$35. From this, the investigation turned to the machine’s programming, serving to educate investigators for future investigations.

Do you think a bundle of \$100 bills, or keys to a motorcycle or other vehicle would fit in the machine and not be a red flag? The flag type and size is yours to plant and wave. Some merchandisers’ designs can now physically handle even larger prize dimen-

sions. The ripple effect of foolish operation can impact the industry as a whole.

## Potential “deep pocket” flags, as viewed by the plaintiff attorney:

What flag is the civil attorney who seeks potential defendants for alleged violations of a state’s consumer protection laws seeking, perhaps for a relatively quick settlement?

In the trade publications of past and more recently are news alerts of law suits filed against restaurant chains for allegedly operating illegal gambling machines, in that the machines are not skill based amusement games as marketed.

Let’s consider the purpose of consumer protection laws and the reason such laws have been enacted by individual states. In essence, consumer protection laws safeguard the consumer, in part, by attempting to create a level field in the marketplace and enhance fair competition. An unfair, unlawful, or fraudulent business practice as a course of business gives the violator an unfair advantage for business over those complying with the laws.

Uniquely in this field of law, a prosecutor or a private attorney can seek relief in court to halt the unlawful or fraudulent business practice (such as offering the play of gambling machines to the public).

Further, to seek disgorge (take away) from the wrong doer of any profits gained, and other remedies as a court finds appropriate including paying for attorney fees.



# profitable merchandisers

of the arguments that the public was uninformed when spending the money.

- Notices must be readily readable in their placement, contrast, and font size. Small print behind a prize or located two-feet above the floor will do little to rebut allegations of the unwary public and actually can be argued that you are attempting to hide information.

- "This is a game of skill" can be and has been a red flag to government. It is not dissimilar to the sign of "no gambling" found on the back-room wall where the poker games occur. "This is a skill game" notice is found on some eight liners and spinning reels that are not predominately skillful, but is not found on child friendly coin-op games.

As a general concept it is perhaps a better choice that may remove a

red flag to state, when accurate, "practiced players tend to win more prizes," or "you can improve with practice and by watching others." Here both notices infer skill yet without the need to state it. The statements must, however, be true and accurate.

- Do not post notices or phony price tags on prizes that are not true or are misleading.

- Operate within your state's value limitations and type of prize permitted. It is illegal not to. Need help in getting a copy of your state's current law? Check with your state association or attorney.

- Consider an independent review by a knowledgeable entity, perhaps your own attorney, who is well versed in your business and your practices and game machines as you operate them.

In several amusement game cases relating to unfair business practices I've been involved with, settlements were reached between the parties. The parties included the retail chains, game operators, manufacturers, and the plaintiff attorney. In each case the settlements were a low six figure amount plus costs in the thousands of dollars.

Practically, the games remained in play after the settlement, with perhaps additional notices to the public as to the difficulty to win, and that a player will not win every time.

Why settle you wonder? One main reason for a settlement is to stop the ongoing cost of litigation. In a sense the settlement is cheaper than prolonging the litigation. Secondly, the defendant's desire to move on and focus on business, thus protecting the company's name and image without the negativity and stress of the litigation.

What flags a plaintiff attorney might look for are, first, the flag of an unlawful game product; allegedly a gambling or fraudulent game is promoted as one of skill when it is really controlled by internal adjustments and factors unknown by the unwary public.

Second is the consideration of who has the deeper pockets. A national chain with a reputation at stake is a more profitable target than a mom and pop store just staying afloat.

A merchandiser that obviously exceeds prize limits of the state makes an easier illegal target flag. The bigger the discrepancy between the value of what the game machine advertises as a

prize and the state's statutory limit, the bigger the flag of "target me and pick me."

The trophy flag: consumer impression of "I can get it for a buck" flags.

Here, the attractiveness and seeming value of a desirable prize is a play flag to the consumer, your target audience. Interesting is that the "flag" that draws a player to play might also be the flag that brings about scrutiny by the government and the civil plaintiff attorney. It is a matter of degree or flag size.

## Law is comprised of:

Both federal and state constitutions

It is your state constitution that might prohibit lotteries with an exception of those that are state authorized and operated. (Also: criminal codes).

## Statutes

These are the many written prohibitions and mandates found in each states' codes. For game machines, the criminal code, also known as "penal code" most commonly addresses gambling, winning by cheating, obtaining money by fraud, what is termed a "slot machine" and gambling devices, and set forth exceptions for amusement games that might include prize limits such as no cash prizes or value limits.

Some states regulate prize game machines in their administrative codes, or taxation codes with licensing and "annual fee required" stickers. When game machines are on the premises of an alcoholic beverage retailer then that state's liquor code or Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) statutes are relevant as controlling of all activities on an alco-

holic beverage licensed premises. Here the location's license is at potential risk for gambling violations.

## Case law (decisional law)

Case law pertains to how courts have interpreted the legal issues and statutes in previous cases on similar issues. The higher the level of authority of a court, the more significant and binding the previous decisions apply to the other courts of the same state.

Courts follow precedent, that is the ruling previously decided. The highest court in all states but New York is the Supreme Court. New York named its high court the Court of Appeals. A local trial court ruling is not binding statewide but a Supreme Court decision would be.

## Local municipalities' codes and ordinances

Typically, local licensing matters and fees are required. What is not law and can be legally challenged are governmental agency and attorney legal opinions, even state attorney opinions are not binding law.

The latter, however, are highly respected and carry a high level of influence. Challenges will be financially costly. Therefore the better choice is to avoid the necessity to do so.

The effort is a prudent approach to removing or lowering your "red flags." If a law enforcement decision is to seize a game machine for a court case or a plaintiff attorney looking for a target, avoid making yours the machine selected based on red flags. ▲



# Route collections go smart

Clockwise from top left:

**Dan Miser, Partner**

**David Crawford, Partner**

**Lou Miele, Partner**

**Jen Marchese, Technical Support/Trainer**

The jump from player to route operator to route management software design firm evolved over time for David Crawford and Dan Miser, followed by a partnership with industry veteran Lou Miele of Miele Amuse-

ments, which resulted in the formation of MCM Elements.

MCM Elements is quickly making a name for itself with such products as Route Boost, Golden Tee League Manager, and Cash Keeper. All three are designed to improve route functionality, accuracy, and efficiency.

Route Boost, the flagship product, is a route management software application for smart phones that saves time at locations and automates collections. It has been updated to allow route operators to utilize data to maximize machine return on investment (ROI) and help with purchasing decisions.

Sample reports include gross net revenue reports, profitability and machine ROI reports, sales tax reports, and more. With a smart phone or tablet, operators can provide the most accurate service possible.

Golden Tee League Manager helps run organized leagues to create location loyalty and retain customers. It works on smart phones, desktops, and laptops. In addition, it generates schedules, calculates wins/losses/handicaps, updates standings, tracks lifetime player standings, and has flexible parameters for each league.

Cash Keeper organizes ATM routes to maximize potential and reduce loss. It is currently beta testing and will be available soon.

## HOW IT STARTED

Crawford and Miser were dedicated Golden Tee Golf players. Crawford picks up the story of how they met in 2000: "We both walked into a location in Milwaukee one day and were putting money into a Golden Tee game at the same time. We played often and became really good friends.

"We became operators because the equipment in that location was not well







maintained and we thought we could do it better. I had a friend who opened a sports bar and we put in 10 games. We operated the route, Live Technologies, for seven years with a total of 35 games in taverns and restaurants around Milwaukee.”

Before this foray into coin-op, Crawford and Miser had different professions. Crawford owned Crawford Evaluation Group, a medical evaluation resource; Miser was a computer programmer.

“We had a lot of fun with the route and we were successful,” said Crawford. “We were doing everything manually with calculators and wanted a tool to make route management more efficient. But the only tools that existed were expensive up front and did not make sense for our small route. That’s when we decided to design our own route management software.”

Their vision was to have a system that would work on smart devices. Miser started working on the programming in 2008. It took a few years to perfect a good working model.

“It was a real advantage as we grew our route,” said Crawford. “Other operators became interested in our software. Eventually, we decided to move into the software business full time. We saw a real void in the software market for a system with reasonable hardware and software costs.”

Crawford said, “We saw it as an opportunity to offer something different: a subscription-based system (based on machine count) with no up front costs. Large operators can afford more than we could. Our system appeals to the large operators and the small operators. It seemed that our target market would be technologically-driven operators who use smart phones.”

They formed a new company, RoutExcel, and introduced Route Boost at the Amusement Expo 2011. An operator in North Carolina was RoutExcel’s first customer; Miele was the second customer.

**ENTER MCM**

Crawford said, “Our relationship blossomed because it was not only Lou, but also his whole team that was devoted to the software. Their input was integral to the further development of Route Boost.”

In the meantime, Miele was thinking about another product, Cash Keeper, but needed someone like Miser to do

the programming. Cash Keeper was a natural fit.

RoutExcel took on a new name and a new partner in Miele, whose family has been in the coin-op business in Pennsylvania for 78 years. That new identity is MCM Elements.

“Lou’s experience and history in coin-op brought a new perspective to the company,” said Crawford.

## ROUTEBOOST






ROUTEBOOST WILL PUT THE POWER OF YOUR ROUTE IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND




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### CASH KEEPER

CASH KEEPER WILL MAXIMIZE YOUR ATM CASH ASSETS AND PROTECT THEM FROM EMPLOYEE THEFT.






### GOLDEN TEE LEAGUE MANAGER

WILL ALLOW YOU TO RUN WELL ORGANIZED LEAGUES CREATING LOCATION LOYALTY AND CUSTOMER RETENTION



Route Boost, Golden Tee Manager, and Cash Keeper





**ROUTE BOOST**

Features for Route Boost are growing. “When you buy Route Boost it does not get stale,” said Miele. “We push out one to two updates per week. I send an e-mail to all my customers as each update comes out and I call them. Installation is front-end loaded and the time depends on the complexity of the route.”

He explained, “The program is not all done with smart phones. It is desktop based; set-up is done in the office where you access the server over the Internet. When customers log into their account they are logging into our server that we provide so they can access their data.”

The smart phone comes into play when the collector is out in the field; the phone accesses the server.”

Crawford added, “The data entry is tedious work. Once all the back office information is loaded on the desktop

or laptop, collectors can go into the field with a smart phone or tablet and don’t need to take cumbersome equipment.”

Miser developed an import program that takes export files and location information and moves it over to cut through re-entering data already on file. Even when it’s another system, he can access the data and move it over.

**GOLDEN TEE LEAGUE MANAGER**

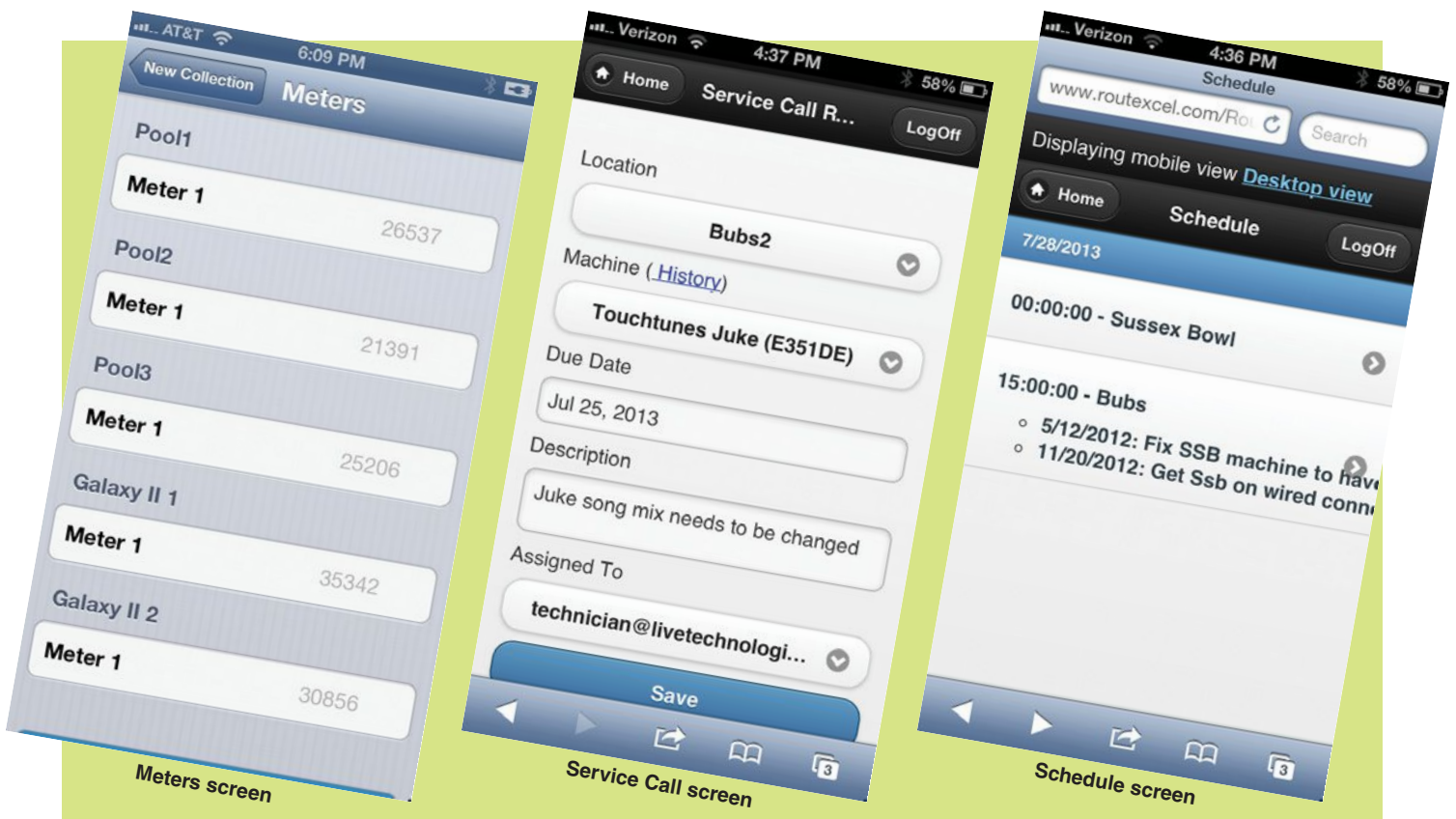
What was the idea behind Golden Tee League Manager? Crawford said, “We understand Golden Tee from both the player’s side and the operator’s side. One third of the games we operated were Golden Tee. We had a small route with good revenue because we really promoted leagues on Golden Tee. Creating leagues is one way operators can keep the customer base more active, competitive, and growing.”

**CASH KEEPER**

Cash Keeper provides 360-degree tracking of the flow of cash in and out of ATMs. That’s important to a company like Miele Amusements that operates 100 ATMs.

With Cash Keeper, money to fill an ATM is assigned to a location and a collector. The collector takes the bag and signs for it. Then he puts the money into the ATM, takes the money out of the other machines and puts it in a different bag, and runs reports on the machines. Receipts are put into the bag and it is returned to the office and logged into Cash Keeper, which will show how much money the machine needs on a daily basis.

Miele commented, “Cash Keeper will tell you what your fill amount should be based on historical data. It protects the operator’s cash inventory and helps the operator service those accounts accurately.”







David Crawford and Dan Miser at the WAMO Conference in June.



*“Cash Keeper protects the operator’s cash inventory and helps the operator service those accounts accurately.”*

Miele said he has heard horror stories about theft and developed this system to give operators more control. Cash Keeper can be used on a desktop and smart phone.

**BENEFITS**

There are other benefits to MCM products. “We do not charge for service,” said Miele. “If an operator needs to call us about a problem, it’s free, and they talk to us.”

In addition, the products are easy to use and iOS and Android compatible. Updates are automatic so there is no need to buy a new program. There are no hardware costs. The subscription level is based on the number of machines and works out to pennies per machine (anywhere from eight cents to 30 cents). MCM Elements also offers a 30-day, risk-free trial of its products.

Crawford said, “Because it’s cloud-based, the back office is now completely in tune with the route on a real time basis. As someone is collecting and hits

‘submit,’ the office can look at the report immediately. The operator receives an e-mail. Locations have the ability to check on their half of the collections.”

“Our system is live technology,” said Miele. “One customer even sent the reports to his accountant.”

What are Crawford, Miser, and Miele hearing from operators using their software? Miele said operators are saying the data is really relevant: the ROI reports, tax reports, and choices of reports. Customized reports can be requested.

Crawford said one recurring comment heard from operators is that they can tell these are products made by operators. “Previous systems did not have the perspective of operators in mind,” said Crawford. “When you are using our products you can tell you are looking at it through the eyes of the operator. We make it that way.”

For more information, visit [www.mcmelements.com](http://www.mcmelements.com). ▲

**HOFFMAN MINT**

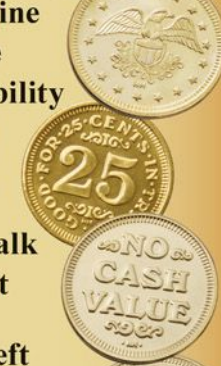


*We manufacture Tokens in the U.S.A. for the Vending and Amusement Industries!*

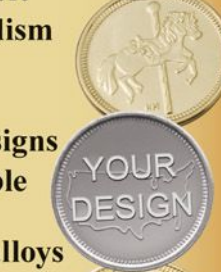
- Accept tokens in your machine to promote price flexibility and brand awareness



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- Reduces theft and vandalism



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- Different alloys to choose from



- Sizes range from .800” to 1.125”



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# Fall Product Lineup



**Barron Games International**  
(716)866-0054; [www.barrongames.com](http://www.barrongames.com)

### Champion Racing Car

Barron's newest kiddie ride, Champion Racing Car is ideal for any FEC location, appealing to both boys and girls. It features flashing attraction lights and pushbutton sound effects. This kiddie ride can hold up to two children at a time and moves from side to side.



**Barron Games International**  
(716)866-0054; [www.barrongames.com](http://www.barrongames.com)

### Galaxy Collision

Experience a Galactic Adventure in this multi-player air hockey game played with two, three, or four people and up to three pucks at a time. Its patented design features goal gates that drop down when each side is credited. The game is upgraded with the latest technology: timer/scoring on the playfield; coin comparator on each side; DBA-ready/card swipe compatible; USB port for custom music; 20 Barron Games pucks, eight rubber gripped mallets, and spray polish.



**Bay Tek Games**  
(920)822-3951; [www.baytekgames.com](http://www.baytekgames.com)

### Connect 4 (Standard)

Look for the same great game play as the Deluxe version but in a smaller cabinet. Using the arrow buttons, players take turns dropping the checkers into the grid to try to connect four-in-a-row, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally to win and enter the bonus round. Connect 4 Standard fits through any standard doorway.



**Bay Tek Games**  
(920)822-3951; [www.baytekgames.com](http://www.baytekgames.com)

### Ticket Monster

Big Bass Wheel has been a proven success for many years. Bay Tek has now given it a new look: a bright blue, green, and pink monster. Colors are bright and different and Bay Tek has added a progressive. Players step up to the game, pull on the big handle, and wait in anticipation for the wheel to stop and land on a ticket amount.



**Benchmark Games**  
(561)588-5200; [www.benchmarkgames.com](http://www.benchmarkgames.com)

### Explosive

This two-player "carnival-like" balloon game challenges players to inflate the 16-inch balloon towards a rotating buzz saw to pop the balloon and win the jackpot! Players are captivated by the anticipation of the balloon bursting and being rewarded the jackpot prize.



**Benchmark Games**  
(561)588-5200; [www.benchmarkgames.com](http://www.benchmarkgames.com)

### Next Generation Tickets to Prizes

The next generation in unattended ticket redemption is here in two versions: Single-Tree Tickets to Prizes and Two-Tree Tickets to Prizes. The Single-Tree has five featured prizes and 840 small to medium prizes. As the location traffic grows, another tree can be added to increase the prize capacity to that of the Two-Tree unit, which has seven featured prizes and 1,400 small/medium/large prizes. Both come with a two-sided ticket station adjunct.



# Quality comes first at Valley-Dynamo LP

This is a year of notable anniversaries for Kelye Stites, President and CEO of Valley-Dynamo LP. The company portfolio includes an extensive line of table game products from Champion Shuffleboard, Dynamo, Tornado, and Valley.

Champion Shuffleboard is celebrating 25 years; Dynamo, 40 years; Tornado, 43 years; and Valley, 66 years. Not many companies can say the combined experience of its divisions comes to 174 years serving the coin-op industry.

What accounts for such longevity? Stites said, "Delivering products that will make money, that create fun experiences, and that engage new players and fans is what defines our success. I

Valley-Dynamo from Brunswick, which had acquired Valley-Dynamo in 2003 and moved operations from Texas to Mexico.

Stites moved the company back to its Texas roots where Dynamo had originated in 1973, Champion (formerly Gametime) began in 1988, and Tornado started in 1973. Valley Co. began in Michigan in 1947, then became Valley Recreation, and merged with Tornado Table Sports and Dynamo Ltd. in 1999.

Now all four brands are headquartered in Richland Hills, Texas. The Champion, Dynamo, Tornado, and Valley names are known for quality and support after the sale.

*Play Meter* caught up with Stites for more corporate history and a current update on the products.

Dynamo started building foosball tables, then branched out into pool tables and air hockey under the leadership of entrepreneur Bill Rickett. Dynamo also served as a contract manufacturer and continues to do custom manufacturing. In 1995 the company won the President's E Award for export excellence. Dynamo products are now sold in 40 countries and its international presence continues to grow.

Valley is known not only for its line of pool tables and introducing the Magnetic Cue Ball separator, but also for forming the Valley National Eight-Ball Association (VNEA) in 1979 to help promote the game of pool, drive revenue, and offer competitive events for players.

Valley's Chuck Milhem, Emil Marcet, and others wanted to provide more for operators and the sport of



Kelye Stites



Kelye Stites (c) of Valley-Dynamo with European Shuffleboard's Geir Oterhals, Jarle Jensen, Peter Eikeland, and Anders Hovden.

personally believe in a small business approach: remain focused on quality products and building strong, lasting relationships."

Stites took a giant leap of faith in 2009 when he purchased the assets of

By Bonnie Theard



pool. The VNEA offers programs for leagues as well as state, regional, and provincial tournaments.

### BACK HOME

Stites spoke about moving the company back to Texas: “When Brunswick moved the company to Mexico it did not know how much skill went into building those tables. The young workforce had no experience. Small changes that were made had unintended consequences and caused problems.

“When we moved the company back to Texas in August 2009 we went back to building tables the old way and got the standards back up to an acceptable quality level within 90 days by hiring most of the former Dynamo employees. Our workers are highly skilled and work fast.”

Valley-Dynamo occupied three separate buildings in Richland Hills until 2012 when Stites purchased one 170,000-square-foot building and moved all four brands under one roof.

Stites said there were some growing pains moving into a new building but

it’s good to have everyone together. It’s also better for shipping product from one facility. There are 94 employees.

The new building also includes 3,000 square feet for research and development. New products are on the drawing board and will be coming to completion towards the fourth quarter of the year.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

When asked what’s been the biggest accomplishment in the last four years, Stites said, “I feel very comfortable that our product is being manufactured correctly and with quality. It’s a tribute to our skilled workforce. The average tenure of employees is close to 20 years. On the pool, foosball, and air hockey lines, the average worker has been with us 10 years. You cannot underestimate what skilled labor can do.”

The newest Valley-Dynamo product is the Top Cat pool table that features stained hardwood, a tapered leg design, flexible pricing options, MEI bill acceptor standard, and worsted billiard cloth with Teflon.

“Feedback has been excellent,” said Stites. “We have high hopes for that table. We made all the corner pockets and pocket liners flush mount. It is the most dynamic change in the last 30 years. Players have wanted these features for a long time.”

What are operators looking for today? Stites said, “Operators rely on us. They want to buy new units that will make them more money. That’s the type of products we will be bringing out in the fourth quarter.”

He added, “Operators who are in business today are really good operators who run their businesses efficiently. It’s not like the old days; it’s tougher now. They have to be prudent with their decisions and we realize that.”

### TABLE GAME APPEAL

While some types of games ebb and flow in popularity, table games retain their appeal. Stites shed light on that appeal: “Table games provide interaction with other people. That will never go away. Socializing is what people like to do. That’s why leagues are still pop-



Valley  
Top Cat



ular. It's an opportunity to hang out with your friends. I still play in a shuffleboard league today and some of our employees also participate in leagues."

Table games do face challenges in today's market. Stites said, "We're competing against the gaming industry and other entertainment options. Strict DUI laws and smoking bans also have an impact."

## ECONOMY

The state of the economy has also been felt across the board in coin-op. Stites commented, "We felt the effects of the economy starting in 2007. We hit rock bottom in 2009 and 2010 but we are now seeing an uptick. We have popular brand name products and we are on pace for double digit growth this year. It is the best it has been since 2006. I hope others are experiencing it as well."

He attributes the rebound to the slightly better economy: "As the housing market goes up, it helps all of us."

## SHUFFLEBOARD AND FOOSBALL

Changes in the Champion Shuffleboard playfield five years ago made it an easy two-man job to set up. The playfield is now in two sections. Scoring has also been changed from the longer 1-2-3 game to a 2-3-4-5 game that has speeded up play, which is what operators wanted.

Stites said the change has helped shuffleboard grow, with most of the increase from non-coin units. The company makes several furniture grade models.

Foosball tables for the home side also include furniture grade models. Tornado's coin-op model has been the industry standard for 30 years. Stites

said, "Tornado foosball tables are well received and we have not had any requests to make changes."

## THE FUTURE

Stites said, "We will continue to acquire other businesses that make sense if they mix well with our product lines. We will always introduce new tables."

Plans call for a new Dynamo air hockey table next year. Stites joked, "Internally we call it the George Jetson table because it has a totally new look. It's going to be different. That's our next major project."

He added, "We have a positive outlook for the future. If we take that outlook and add new products for 2014, we will be in good shape and firmly on our growth path again." For more information, visit ([www.valley-dynamo.com](http://www.valley-dynamo.com)). ▲



Champion  
Madison



Tornado  
T3000





Josh and Zach Sharpe

*The two cornered critics take a closer look at the new Metallica pinball.*

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.

## Stern's latest rocks the world of pinball

This month, we take a look at and have a listen to Stern Pinball's latest music themed pinball machine on the market based on the highly successful band, Metallica.

Continuing their business model of offering collectors and operators a wide range of products, Metallica is currently available in a Pro model as well as a limited edition Master of Puppets model and due to overwhelming feedback in relation to the artwork, there are actually two choices of the premium model (one with Dirty Donny artwork versus a live shot of the band).

We'll try to keep the Metallica puns to a minimum so with that being said, please read with one eye open, gripping your Play Meter tight.

### METALLICA/STERN PINBALL

**Pros:** Before even glancing down at the playfield, one of the most unique aspects and drawing power of Metallica definitely lies within the original artwork on display. "Dirty" Donny Gillies has done an amazing job steering away from more of the typical clip/Photo-shop artwork and created what is truly a work of art. In fact, the feedback was so positive and enthusiastic that Stern created a new Premium version of the game in order to feed the demand. We can't remember artwork creating such a stir on a game really, ever.

Similar to AC/DC, the music lends itself very well to pinball, with plenty of fast paced tunes to get your blood flowing. While many of the songs are featured during the various modes of the game, for example Master of Puppets for Gravemaker Multiball, players initially have the chance to choose their song of choice as the main background music for their game.

Another aspect we thought was executed near flawlessly with Metallica is

its use of lighting. The lighting is simply phenomenal and orchestrates with game play features and modes perfectly. The grave marker lights are great in drawing attention of players to the set of in-line drop targets, but the real star of this show is with the Sparky light show before that respective multiball.

Not only are the lights super bright and popping all over the place with sounds to boot, they also create a nice spotlight effect that makes Sparky THE toy, something that players and spectators can't possibly miss and unfortunately something that was lacking in Avengers with their Hulk figure.

In general, Metallica does a great job of having players interact with its toys. While a lot of games have toys that are there more for visual purposes, these various toys are implemented much better with a steel ball being flung their respective ways.

Sparky up top gets repeatedly assaulted and with the bobble head aspect up top, really creates the illusion you're hitting him with a lot of force. Besides the inline drop targets being really cool to hit, the very back "grave marker" toy is a great end destination to hit before starting that respective multiball.

While players get to wail on the captive ball a bunch for great action, this is accompanied by a giant hammer that slams the ball down into a coffin to lock it. Directly to the right is the Snake toy which has a mouth that opens and closes. All of these toys serve their purpose very well and each feel totally unique in action, which is very refreshing.

Another plus, especially for operators with a large casual player base is that the basic fundamental rules are extremely easy to understand. The design team did an excellent job of



using the inserts on the playfield to communicate the main tasks of the games as easily as possible to the player.

The four main inserts represent the four main multiball modes. Pound on Sparky enough, reach Electric Chair Multiball. Pound on the inline drop targets enough, reach Grave-maker Multiball. While there are layers of complexity to rules deeper in the game, it's a huge plus to have this accessibility of features to even the most casual player.

While there is no doubt that the Limited Edition and Premium versions of Metallica are packed to the gills with nice additives, operators and collectors alike can feel extremely confident that this is easily the best pro version that Stern has put out in quality, bar none. Comparing this to the other recent music themed pinball machine AC/DC, the Pro and Premium versions were vastly different in terms of features not showing up in the Pro (swinging bell, sub mini-playfield) that drastically alter game play.

**Cons:** While we really enjoyed the sounds and effects within game play, we were less enthusiastic on the voiceovers from the band members (the Sparky fake sound was fantastic though).

As fans of pinball, we always enjoy and appreciate when actors/musicians add custom speech to games; it definitely gives a unique and special quality. So yes, we definitely appreciate the enthusiasm of the band members adding their speech into the game; however, they may want to leave their talents to creating music since it definitely gives the game a little bit of a lackluster feel on certain call-outs.

From a design perspective, one frustrating element is with the up-post that is stationed behind Sparky. While the post is supposed to stop balls and feed it into the jets, consistently it is rejected and simply comes back down around the side. Not only can it be frustrating to players, it also creates

dead lag-time where there's not really any action going on and then it unenthusiastically rolls back down the side. It just doesn't feel right.

In addition, there have been various issues with the other toys on the playfield. While playing we've found the inline drop target bank to not properly fall down when hit, the hammer toy often misses knocking the ball into the under playfield coffin, and the snake hole often rejects balls that should be "made" shots. As the main attractions of entertainment for Metallica, these devices not working properly can be extremely frustrating for both advanced players and first time players.

At this point we've grown to accept that incomplete software is now part of the fabric of pinball production. That doesn't mean we won't continue to point it out as a negative feature of the game play experience. No matter how easy it is to update game code, the trend for games on location continue to be like the Ronco Food Dehydrator . . . "Set it and forget it!" Leave too many feature out of the initial release and there is a risk that players won't get the chance to actually play the machine as it was intended.

While the upfront and basic rules are very easy to understand, we definitely have had a tough time grasping more of the complex "player" rules. This can definitely be tied into code not shipping complete and things changing, but, there are elements that



are simply not explained even via the DMD display very well (i.e. how to start Seek and Destroy).

**Overall:** There's no doubt Stern is continuing the trend of picking solid licenses for pinball. The release of Metallica Limited Edition was like the release for Metallica concert tickets . . . a complete sellout nearly immediately after the announcement.

The Sparky toy alone gives the game a ton of wow factor for operators to get excited about. The other toys also provide great direct physical interaction that we don't often get to see in pinball. With the backdrop of all this action set to the Metallica tune of a player's choosing, the game shouldn't have a hard time pulling in dollars on location. ▲

**Overall Rating:** ★★★ 1/2



# Summer and fall activities for AMOA

July was a relatively quiet month for Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) President John Pascaretti, who attended four state association events in the month of June.

John and his wife Shirley traveled to the Montana Coin Machine Operators Association (MCMOA) Annual Meeting in July. They were welcomed by Tim and Natalie Carson of Amusement Services LLC and Grand Vision Gaming, who gave them a tour of the area and the operating side and manufacturing side of their business.

## MONTANA

"Montana has a strong state association," said Pascaretti. "It was an eye-opening visit to see how they operate video gaming equipment."

The meeting included members of the MCMOA, the Montana Tavern Owners Association, and the Gaming Industry Association (GIA). "The groups have set aside their differences and work together to benefit everyone," said Pascaretti, "They are well organized."

The state smoking ban had a devastating effect on video gaming revenue. Pascaretti said, "Now that operators have been able to add line games, they are starting to see a bounce back in revenue, a renaissance. They had to work to get that accomplished. The state did not come to them and say, 'Hey, why don't you add line games?'"

Pascaretti added, "Montana is not all about gaming. Operators are making a renewed effort to organize more pool and dart leagues more efficiently. Jukeboxes are also a major entertainment component for Montana operators."

The MCMOA event also included a business meeting, golf outing, dinner, and a pub crawl where everyone could socialize.

## MORE TRAVELS

The next state association meetings on his agenda were the Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association (MCMOA) Annual Meeting Aug. 26 at the Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center in Plymouth, Mich. (his home state), and

the Missouri-AMOA Annual Meeting Aug. 23-24 in Columbia, Mo.

In early August, Pascaretti traveled to Lisle, Ill., for the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala along with Jack Kelleher, Executive Vice President of AMOA.

While in the Chicago area, Pascaretti, Kelleher, and Lori Schneider, Deputy Director of AMOA, were able to put the final touches on plans for the AMOA Mid-Year Meeting set for Sept. 6-9 at the Hyatt Regency Jersey City on the Hudson in Jersey City, N.J. Pascaretti said, "We will be reaching out to coin machine operators from the East Coast."

Also invited are the new President of AAMA, Pete Gustafson of Sega Amusements, and the Immediate Past President of AAMA, John Margold of AMI Entertainment.

## AMUSEMENT EXPO

Regarding some of the plans for the Amusement Expo 2014 in March in Las Vegas, Pascaretti said, "If history is any predictor, we expect to have another successful Wayne E. Hesch Memorial Scholarship Raffle, this year featuring a Chevrolet Camaro as the Grand Prize."

In recent years AMOA has featured a number of cars as the top prize: a Dodge Challenger, a Ford Mustang, and a Chevrolet Malibu. Many more prizes are included in the raffle, everything from plush toy mixes to gift certificates to entire games. Funds derived from the raffle provide college scholarships to deserving students. AMOA has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships since 1984.

Pascaretti added that everyone is excited about the new format for the Amusement Expo (one full day of seminars followed by two full days of exhibits). "The support we are receiving for this change has been tremendous," he said.

The Amusement Expo is co-sponsored by AAMA and AMOA and co-located with the National Bulk Vendors Association (NBVA) Expo. For more information on the Amusement Expo, visit ([www.amusementexpo.org](http://www.amusementexpo.org)). ▲



John  
Pascaretti  
AMOA  
President

*"(Montana) operators are making a renewed effort to organize more pool and dart leagues more efficiently."*





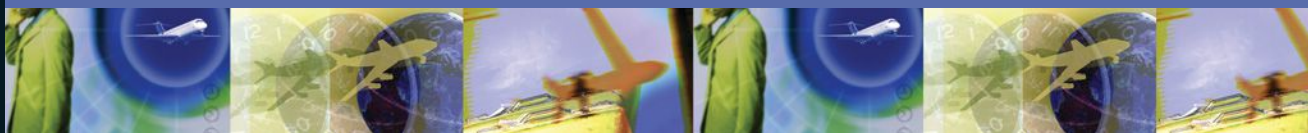
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**September 6-9**

**AMOA Mid-Year Meeting**

Jersey City, N.J.  
Hyatt Regency Jersey City on the Hudson  
tel: (800)937-2662  
e-mail: amoa@amoa.com  
web www.amoa.com

**September 17-20**

**Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show**

Las Vegas, Nev.  
Las Vegas Convention Center  
tel: (678)285-3976  
e-mail: lglosson@urban-expo.com  
web: www.urbaon-expo.com

**September 18-20**

**Euro Attractions Expo**

Paris, France  
Porte de Versailles  
tel: (703)836-4800  
e-mail: iaapa@iaapa.org  
web: www.iaapa.org/eas

**September 23-26**

**G2E**

Las Vegas, Nev.  
Sands Expo and Convention Center  
tel: (888)314-1378  
e-mail: inquiry@globalgamingexpo.com  
web: www.globalgamingexpo.com

**September 24-26**

**GTI Asia China Expo**

Guangzhou, China  
China Import and Export Fair Pazhou Complex  
tel: 886-2-2760-7407, ext. 207  
e-mail: gametime@taiwanslot.com.tw  
web: www.gtiexpo.com

**September 30-October 3**

**WWA Sumposium & Trade Show**

West Palm Beach, Fla.  
Marriott Palm Beach County Convention Center  
tel: (913)599-0300  
e-mail: patty@waterparks.org  
web: www.waterparks.org

**October 12-14**

**ENADA Rome**

Rome, Italy  
New Rome Trade Fair  
tel: 39(0)541-744214  
e-mail: s.bodellini@riminifiera.it  
web: www.fierarimini.it

**October 12-15**

**National Association of Convenience Stores Expo**

Atlanta, Ga.  
Georgia World Congress Convention Center  
tel: (877)684-3600  
e-mail: show@nacsonline.com  
web: www.nacsonline.com

**October 16-20**

**Pinball Expo**

Wheeling, Ill.  
Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel  
tel:(800)323-3547  
e-mail: brkpinball@hotmail.com  
web: www.pinballexpo.net

**October 17-18**

**Surexpo**

Warsaw, Poland  
Centrum Expo  
tel: 48-71-359-6271  
e-mail: office@wigor.wroc.pl  
web: www.wigor-targi.com

**November 12-14**

**NAMA CoffeeTea&Water**

Nashville, Tenn.  
Opryland Hotel  
tel: (312)346-0370  
fax: (312)704-4140  
web: www.vending.org

**November 18-22 PM**

**IAAPA Attractions Expo**

Orlando, Fla.  
Orange County Convention Center  
tel: (703)836-4800  
e-mail: iaapa@iaapa.org  
web: www.iaapa.org

**January 21-23, 2014**

**EAG International**

London, England  
ExCel London  
tel: +44(0)1582-767254  
e-mail: karencooke@eagexpo.com  
web: www.eagexpo.com

**February 6-8, 2014**

**AMOA Council of States Meeting**

Tampa, Fla.  
Renaissance Tampa International Plaza Hotel  
tel: (800)937-2662  
e-mail: amoa@amoa.com  
web: www.amoa.com

**March 25-27, 2014 PM**

**Amusement Expo**

Las Vegas, Nev.  
Las Vegas Convention Center  
tel: (708)226-1300  
fax: info@amusementexpo.org  
web: www.amusementexpo.org

**March 25-27, 2014**

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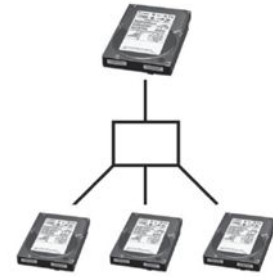


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10 am

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**September 28th, 2013**  
10 am

Load In: Sept. 27th, 10am-9pm • Auction Preview: Sept. 28th, 8am-10am

### Sellers - Terms and Conditions

If you would like to bring equipment to the auction, drop off times are as follows:  
10am-9pm the day prior to the auction and  
8am-9:45am the day of the auction.  
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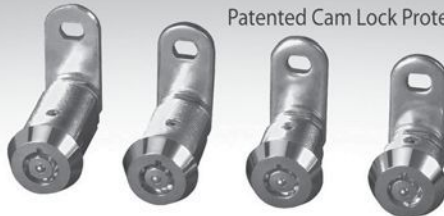
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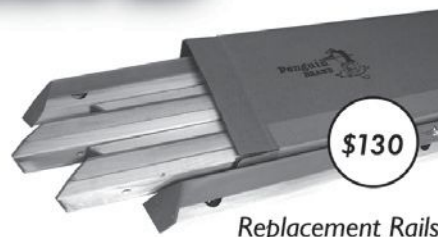
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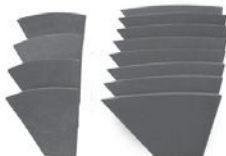


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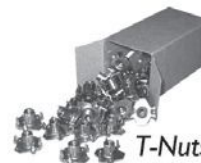
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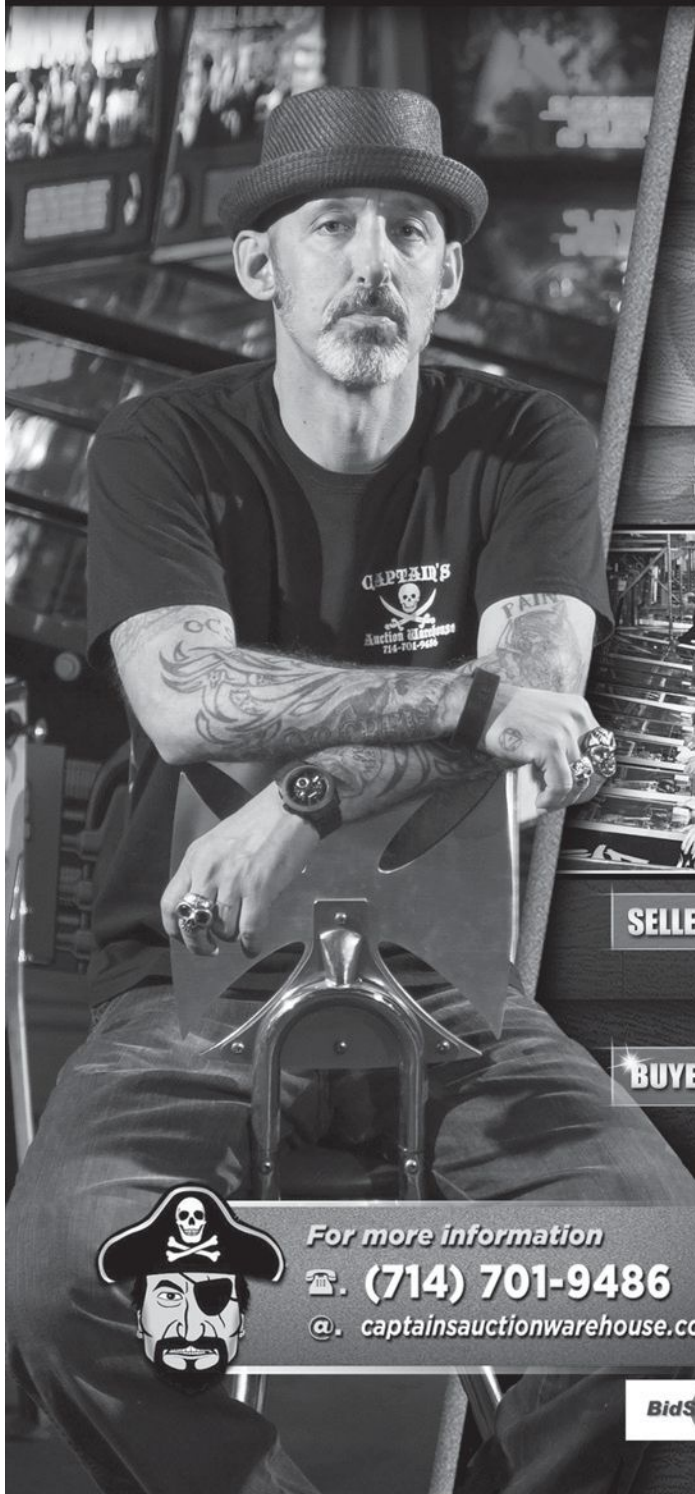
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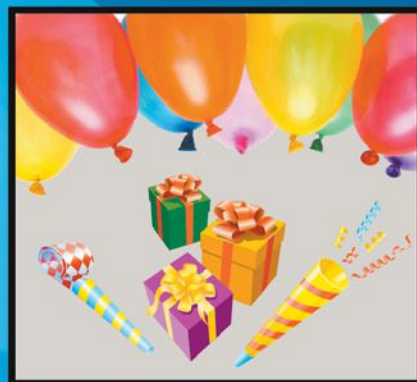
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