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NOVEMBER 1, 1982



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PLAY METER

Twice a Month Publication for the Coin Operated Entertainment Industry

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EXPORTING? . . . Tokens Are The Answer.



365



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470



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836



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Phone or write for catalog & samples

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PLAY METER, November 1, 1982.
 Volume 8, No. 21. Copyright 1982 by
 Skybird Publishing Company. **Play
 Meter** (ISSN 0162-1343) is published
 twice monthly on the 1st and 15th of
 the month. Publishing offices: 508 Live
 Oak St., Metairie, La. 70005; **Mailing
 address:** P.O. Box 24170, New Orleans
 70184, U.S.A.; phone: 504/838-8025.
 For subscriptions: 504/837-7987.
 Subscription rates: U.S. and Canada—
 \$50; foreign: \$150, **air mail only.**
 Advertising rates are available on
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 manuscripts, cartoons, and art work.
 Second-class postage paid at Metairie,
 La. 70002 and additional mailing
 offices. **Postmaster:** Send Form 3579 to
 PLAY METER, P.O. Box 24170, New
 Orleans, La. 70184.

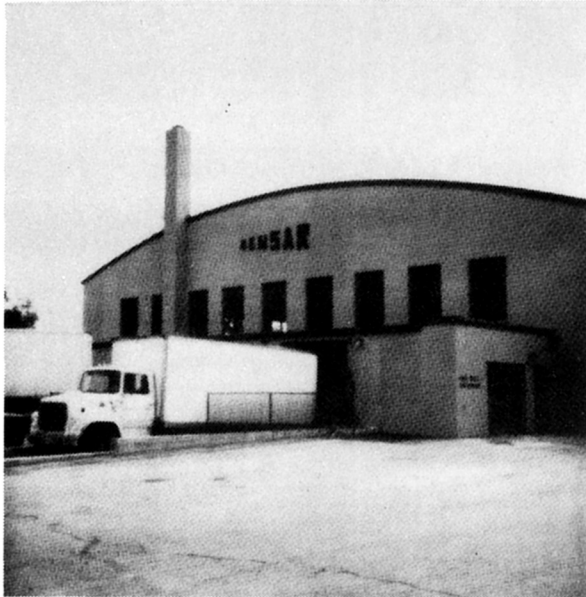
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UP FRONT

Back during the beginning of the year, the *Play Meter* office was literally being inundated by reports nationwide concerning the attempts by numerous local authorities to ban or limit the operation of coin-operated video games.

Overly concerned parents and misinformed public officials were up in arms against video games. It got to a point where video games were being billed in the national media as the new corrupter of our nation's youth. As time went on, the public outcry against video games had nearly reached epidemic proportions. It was indeed a very bleak time for this industry as the anti-video game movement proved the biggest single threat to its future.

I must admit that I was worried. I was worried as to how the industry would weather the storm this time around. Would we run and hide, or would we stand up and fight?

Today, I am pleased to say that we as an industry have engaged the "enemy" gallantly and honorably and are in the process of winning the war. It is far from being over, and the end is nowhere in sight. But from the reports we have been getting, we're starting to score some significant victories nationwide.

The credit doesn't go to any one person or organization but to the industry as a whole. And it just goes to show what this industry can accomplish when we all work together. This major industry problem was taken on by the joint cooperation of our three national associations, a host of state associations, local groups of operators, and individual operators too numerous to mention.

This was a problem that concerned everyone, and everyone who was concerned got involved. The results so far have been extremely encouraging. The outlook for the future is a lot brighter, but as I mentioned earlier, the war is far from over.

There was a time when you could go it alone in this business. That's hardly true today. The need for more state and local associations is greater than it has ever been. If there ever was a time to tighten our ranks, the time is now.

If you are not a member of the AMOA, I urge you to join. If you are fortunate enough to be in a state that has a state association, you should be a member. Contact all the other operators in your area and form your own local organization. The whole idea is to get involved with others just like yourself who are faced with the very same problems you are faced with.

And if there is strength in numbers, the more of you that get together and get involved, the more successful you are going to be in achieving your goals. The key word here is involvement. Don't just join, get involved.



Ralph C. Lally II
Editor and Publisher

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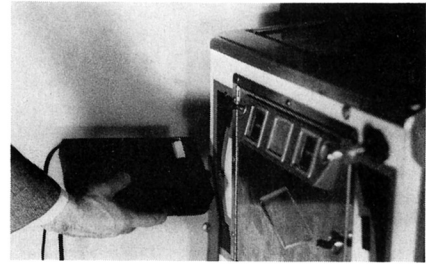
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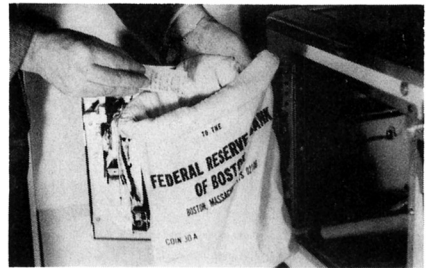
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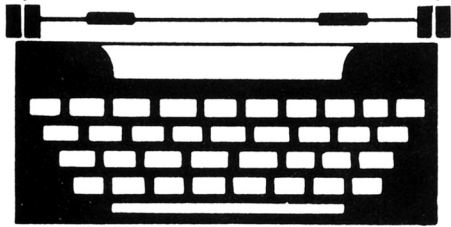
250-500 machines

under 250 machines

500-1,000 machines

over 1,000 machines

Letters to the editor . . .



Remembering industry leaders

Reading Millie McCarthy's letter (*Play Meter*, Aug. 1, pg. 7) regarding ASCAP and "Who do you know in Congress?" reminds me of another industry veteran whose great contributions have not been sufficiently documented.

We should not forget J. Cameron (Jack) Gordon who, when president of the Seeburg Corp., formed COPPS, the Coin Operators Phonograph Performance Society.

Utilizing music copyrights under his control, he told operators that if ASCAP cut off phonograph records for use on their coin phonographs, Seeburg would make its music available on records to keep the operator in business with new records.

Matter of fact, the many copyrights under Seeburg control and the actual phonograph records that the firm did issue undoubtedly caused the performing rights societies from pursuing their original course to extract license fees from the operators and delayed their activities for an extended period.

Like her and Jack, the industry needs, always, those who are willing to take positive action personally for the benefit of all.

Frank Luppino Jr.
Director, Corporate
Special Projects,
Beverage World Magazine
Glenview, Ill.

Hors d'oeuvres, entrées

I cannot agree with Mr. Jack Guarnieri of Brooklyn, N.Y. that home games will hurt the commercial

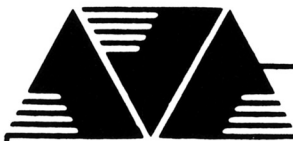
model games in locations and arcades (See *Play Meter*, Aug. 1, p. 7).

First, the home games are a thin, weak substitute for the variety and appeal of the games in an arcade or game room. Frankly, I believe that home games whet the appetite and initiate new players into the great appeal of coin-op video games. We might say that home games are the hors d'oeuvres, the entrée of a great feast being the brand new coin-op video games just installed on location.

Many years ago the shortsighted movie picture studios said that television would kill the movies, and they

would not permit their movies to be shown on television. So, we were treated to a diet of Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, and Gene Autry.

Finally the studios found out they could make millions by selling their old film libraries to the television networks. So now we have a loving marriage of television and movies helping each other, and better yet, movie theaters have discovered that video games and flippers have far more revenue to their theaters than popcorn and candy. Some movie theater managers have told us that many of their patrons come to their



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theaters because they have the latest and best games.

So Jack, if I were you, I wouldn't worry too much about home games. They are here to stay, but we will beat them at their own game.

Louis Boasberg
New Orleans Novelty Co.
New Orleans, La.

Logical observation

"Pawns and Pac-Man" by David Pierson, July 1, 1982 (p. 98), is such a

logical, effective observation, I would like to see it printed in the local media. Could you or the author grant permission?

Also, would you tell me a little about the author?

Daniel D. Holcomb
Owner
Odyssey Family
Amusement Center
Fort Collins, Colo.

[Permission is granted. We ask only that you give attribution to author and magazine when making such reprints. David Pierson is editorial director

and advertising manager for Play Meter. He's worked at the magazine since 1977.]

Compliments from Canada

I'd like to compliment Midway on their unbiased attitude on handling service calls from Canada.

Since there is no 800 number, they accept my collect phone calls or phone me back immediately without any problems or excuses.

I fail to see why these other multi-million dollar organizations do not provide an 800 number for operators in Canada the same way they do for Americans.

Since prejudice is being practiced by many major companies to Canadian operators, I suggest to these Canadian operators to boycott those companies that discriminate against us in service.

J.T.
Toronto, Ontario

Safe reader

I can't help it—first letter ever in my life!

Whoever wields a sledge hammer into a TV tube is definitely a dummy. (*!?!*&&c%*!) (See *Play Meter*, Aug. 1, p. 16.)

Remember: safety first.

James R. Patton
Lake Jackson, Tx.



Something on your mind you want to vent? Got a gripe? Full of praise? Have a question? If you have comments on the coin operated entertainment industry, write to Play Meter. Our "Letters to the Editor" columns are dedicated to you, the operator/reader.

All letters must be signed; if requested, only initials will be used or the name withheld from print. Please include return address (although, for the sake of your privacy, addresses will not be printed.) All letters subject to standard editing. Be concise.

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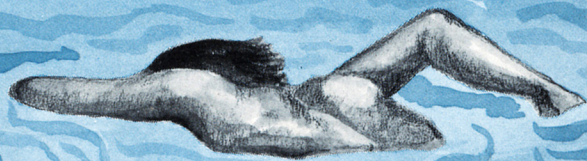


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Equipment Poll

The following are rankings of the top videos and top pinballs making above average weekly gross collections nationwide. The dollar amounts appearing are the average weekly grosses as reported to Play Meter magazine through its regular national operator survey. These averages are for games that are currently being marketed in the U.S. (no older than six months). Games with less than adequate responses (less than fifty percent) but with above average collections are so noted. Games not appearing on the poll either (1) did not generate over a ten percent response rate to provide an adequate representative sampling or (2) did not register weekly gross collections above the national average. We encourage operators to join our ever-growing number of readers participating in the survey.

TOP VIDEOS

Arcade Locations

Fourteen of 28 videos (50%) with a response rate over ten percent have above average earnings.

	Nov. 1	Oct. 15
National video average	\$191	\$188
★ 1. <i>Donkey Kong Jr./Nintendo</i>	\$291	\$256
2. <i>Jungle King/Taito</i>	\$276	\$228
3. <i>Tron/Midway</i>	\$245	\$249
4. <i>Ms. Pac-Man/Midway</i>	\$233	\$230
★ 5. <i>Tutankham/Stern</i>	\$229	\$257
6. <i>Turbo/Gremlin</i>	\$208	\$207
7. <i>Pac-Man/Midway</i>	\$202	\$191
8. <i>Donkey Kong/Nintendo</i>	\$199	\$193
9. <i>Zaxxon/Gremlin</i>	\$198	\$207
10. <i>Kangaroo/Atari</i>	\$194	\$193
11. <i>Galaga/Midway</i>	\$193	\$198

★ Conditionally Rated— Weekly average based on less than 50% response rate

TOP VIDEOS

Street Locations

Fourteen of 27 videos (52%) with a response rate over ten percent have above average earnings.

	Nov. 1	Oct. 15
National video average	\$183	\$169
1. <i>Tron/Midway</i>	\$230	\$212
2. <i>Ms. Pac-Man/Midway</i>	\$220	\$204
3. <i>Galaga/Midway</i>	\$217	\$191
4. <i>Robotron/Williams</i>	\$198	\$183
5. <i>Donkey Kong/Nintendo</i>	\$194	\$173
★ 6. <i>Turbo/Gremlin</i>	\$188	\$173
7. <i>Zaxxon/Gremlin</i>	\$184	\$180

TOP PINBALLS

Arcade & Street Locations

	Nov. 15	Oct. 15
National pinball average	\$108	\$109
1. <i>Speak Easy/Bally</i>	\$168	\$141
2. <i>Caveman/Gottlieb</i>	\$147	\$140
3. <i>Rocky/Gottlieb</i>	\$143	\$138
4. <i>Orbitor I/Stern</i>	\$116	—
5. <i>Mr. & Mrs. Pac-Man/Bally</i>	\$114	\$125

Provisionally Rated Videos

(Above average earning games, with a response rate between 10—25%)

Arcade Locations

Provisional Ratings	Nov. 1	Oct. 15
<i>Slither/GDI</i>	\$227	\$290
<i>Gravitar/Atari</i>	\$212	—
<i>Moon Patrol/Williams</i>	\$196	—

Street Locations

Provisional Ratings	Nov. 1	Oct. 15
<i>Donkey Kong Jr./Nintendo</i>	\$270	\$250
<i>Jungle King/Taito</i>	\$258	—
<i>Slither/GDI</i>	\$225	\$280
<i>Tutankham/Stern</i>	\$219	\$250
<i>Naughty Boy/Cinematronics</i>	\$194	\$208
<i>Wild Western/Taito</i>	\$190	—
<i>Moon Patrol/Williams</i>	\$183	—

Operator/readers who would like to join the ever-growing numbers of readers participating currently in the survey, write: Play Meter, Equipment Poll, P.O. Box 24170, New Orleans 70184.

SNAPPER



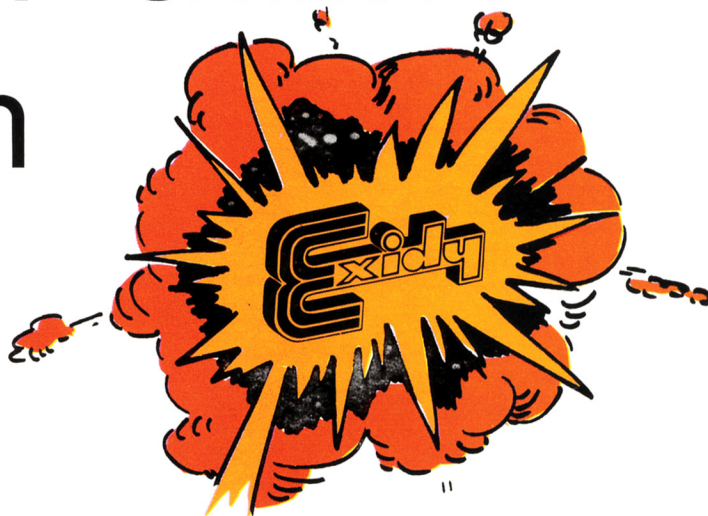
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WHIRLY BUCKET



2 New Games From

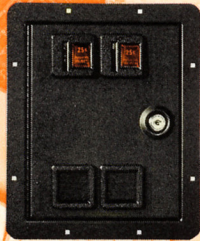


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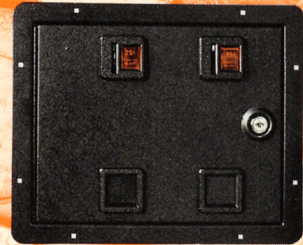
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NEWS

BY
Mike
Shaw

COUNTY BATTLES GRAY AREAS • BANNING IN BOSTON • LOTTERIES MIGHT USE "GRAY" GAMES • BALTIMORE OPS GET BETTER DEAL • MORGAN'S AT IT AGAIN • ATARI CUTS WORKWEEK • AMOA OFFICER DIES • PENN COURTS DIFFER • ASSOCIATIONS PUT HEADS TOGETHER • LOUISIANA OPERATORS FORM ASSOCIATION • BELAM CELEBRATES ATARI APPOINTMENT

COUNTY BATTLES GRAY AREAS

A television station's First Amendment rights are being fought over a politician moonlighting as a distributor of gray area games, and operators are suing the county for the return of those games. And all of this is happening in the same battle over the legality of video card games in St. Louis County.

Sixty gray area games were recently seized by St. Louis County police, most of them August 5. At least some of those games were identified as placed in taverns by Missouri Rep. Francis Markwell, a resident of St. Louis County.

To determine the extent of Markwell's involvement in the distribution of illegal gambling devices, St. Louis County prosecuting attorneys have asked for the outtakes of an interview of Markwell by KMOX-TV reporter Matt Meagher. During that interview, Meagher, posing as a tavern owner interested in obtaining video poker machines from Markwell, determined that Markwell was operating the video poker machines.

The county wants the full interview to prepare its case against Markwell and other video card game operators for the grand jury.

Because Meagher posed as a tavern owner rather than admitting to being a reporter, the prosecutors said he forfeited his "journalistic immunity" and his First Amendment rights to protect the tapes of his conversations from the county's review.

Additionally, the county prosecutor's office said its position was that "all the materials are necessary evidence...We believe the jurors are

entitled to hear everything."

On the contrary, KMOX-TV said the reports had "required confidential sources whose identities had to be protected.

Meanwhile a circuit court ordered the tapes turned over to the county, but KMOX-TV has won a stay of that order from the state Court of Appeals while it considers the lower court ruling.

St. Louis County prosecuting attorney Craig Ellis said that if the appellate court rules against the county, it will "take the case as far as it can," even to the U.S. Supreme Court. He also said that KMOX-TV, and its parent CBS, are expected to do the same if the court rules in favor of the county.

Meanwhile the county is embroiled in an effort to establish that the video card games it seized are gambling devices.

The machines carry "for amusement only" signs, but police said bartenders have been making payoffs to customers who beat the games.

"These are not amusement, but illegal gambling devices," Ellis said.

He said most of the games seized were Omega's *Double Up* machines, but that video card games manufactured by ElectroSport and Tuni Electro were seized.

To substantiate its case, the county has called on arcade operators who have confirmed, said Ellis, that the card games are not amusement pieces.

"These arcades don't have the games because they know people will not play the games for amusement," he said. "The use of the machines is for gambling."

However, at least three of the companies operating or keeping the games on location have contested the county's position and have filed suits against the county for the return of their games.

"Two bars have even put the games

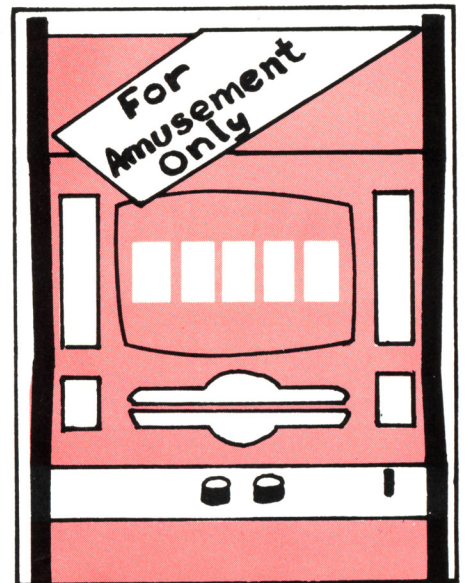
back on location," Ellis said.

One of the operators supplying the video card games to locations in St. Louis County is Lloyd Grice, a member of the Amusement and Music Operators Association. He said the video card games represent only 2 or 3 percent of his operation.

Four of the games seized in St. Louis County belong to Grice. He said the games were put on location because location owners requested them.

"People demand the games," Grice said, "and you have to get what they want to retain the location."

Grice said the games he operates are meant for amusement only and affirmed that a short playing time for each game is not a good argument against the game's entertainment value.



"You can get up to 25 free plays," he said, implying that playing time for one quarter could be quite extensive.

Grice said he is not suing the county for the return of his games because if others win their suits against the

NEWS

county, his games will also be returned.

"The crucial issue here is whether or not we will have to determine if each game is being used as a gambling device before we can seize it," Ellis mused. "If we lose, police will have to make individual cases against each machine before we can pick it up."

That situation, he confided, would make it virtually impossible to stop the influx of video card games into St. Louis County.

BANNING IN BOSTON

Although video games are not banned in Boston, the sentiment against them is so strong they might soon join the long list of American entities banished from that city.

Bowling & Ice Cream Designs



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It is almost impossible to get an approval to place even one video game in a street location, and if the city government has its way, Boston will be void of most of the games by the new year.

Barry Rosenthal, attorney for the Coin Machine Industry Association of New England (CMIA), calls the city's drive to dump the videos the "Boston Tea Party," referring to the city's avowed effort to get rid of 2,300 of 4,000 registered videos when licenses come up for renewal January 1.

"They are trying to clear the one and two-game operations off the streets," he told *Play Meter*.

In battling the city, Rosenthal and his Boston law firm of Lappin, Rosen, etc. have been successful in pushing two cases to the state's highest court, the Supreme Judicial Court. Both cases are scheduled to be heard September 13, but Rosenthal expects the eight judges to release opinions on the cases sometime after January 1.

The cases challenge the constitutionality of state licensing laws and will also try to establish First Amendment

NEWS

rights for video games.

"If we have First Amendment rights, the standards for prohibiting the games must be much broader than they are now," Rosenthal said.

The games are dismissed on the basis they are contrary to the "good and welfare of the community," a standard far too vague for Rosenthal and his clients.

The central issue for game operators in Boston stems from the city's decision to classify businesses with even one game as an arcade. Any business that includes a video game must be located in a zone that has been appropriated for arcades, and the building must be approved for legal use as an arcade. Those conditions must be met even before a business can obtain a public hearing on its license application.

Rosenthal recited the procedure anyone must go through to place a game in his establishment in Boston.

First, he must file an application with the city licensing board for a public hearing. Filing charges are \$100, plus \$25 so the city can advertise the public hearing.

After filing his licensing application, the applicant is sent to the zoning department where it is determined whether his business is in a zone that has been allocated for video games—those are, primarily, high traffic business districts or industrial districts.

If the applicant's possible site is fortunate enough to be located in an appropriate zone, he must then file an application to get his building reclassified for legal use as an arcade. The applicant must obtain the signatures of the building's owners on two copies of the application, and pay a filing fee of \$50, plus \$2 for typing the application.

If these procedures are completed properly, and more significantly, accepted by the governmental agencies involved, then the applicant has won the right to a public hearing. Prior to that hearing, the city advertises the hearing and makes an effort to notify every citizen's group that has listed itself as being against video games—the "vocal minority" Rosenthal calls them.

At the hearing, the applicant can expect to be bombarded with a public outcry against the games because they steal children's lunch money and are generally contrary to the good and welfare of the community, Rosenthal satirized.

But just getting to the right licensing board can be a big problem in Boston.

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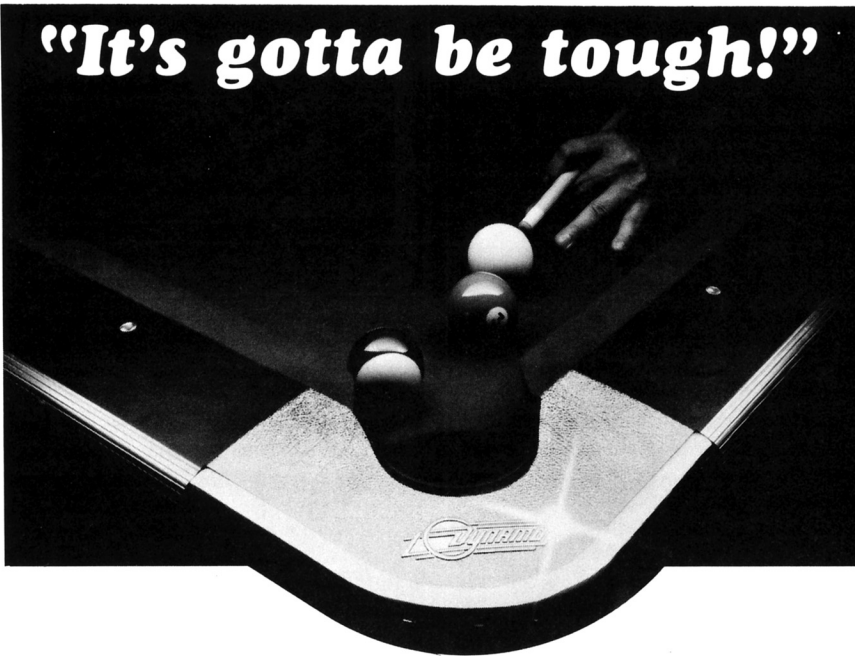
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Two licensing boards—one appointed by the mayor, another by the governor—are fighting over which one has the right to license video games.

"Both right now are, basically, denying everybody," Rosenthal summarized.

But even if the applicant is successful, he incurs further charges of \$240 per machine to operate the games throughout the week.

"Plus it's going to cost you about \$5,000 for an attorney to get you through everything," Rosenthal said.

LOTTERIES MIGHT USE "GRAY" GAMES

New Jersey Assistant Attorney General Theodore Winard has issued an opinion that favors gray area games in the state's lottery.

The games could, he opined, be placed in bars and liquor stores although they are legally considered slot machines in New Jersey.

Prior to the statement from Winard, the New Jersey Lottery Commission had already approved a pilot program wherein 100 machines will be put on location in early 1983.

The move is being questioned and opposed by New Jersey State Senator Richard Cody who stated that "using video games as lottery devices smacks of slot machines in every neighborhood candy store and can't possibly be legal."

Cody is seeking legislative action to prevent the video card games from being used in the lottery.

Atlantic City Action, a newsletter for gaming concerns in New Jersey's gambling center, said that New Jersey and other states and countries with lotteries would "no doubt...recognize the huge profits that will be generated by the inclusion of video gaming into their existing lottery systems, and some may find them more financially profitable and more morally acceptable than casino gaming."

The publication estimated that "millions of dollars of money now is being siphoned off by these illegal games without any benefit to the state or citizens of New Jersey."

New Jersey lottery director Hazel Gluck said the videos, which she concedes are "very much like slot machines," would be activated by

inserting coins for bets of 50 cents and possibly \$1. She said if the player is a winner, sirens and bells will go off, and the machine will issue a ticket for the prize that can be claimed where the machine is located.

As the *Atlantic City Action* newsletter suggests, New Jersey is not the only state looking at gray area games for lottery use. Vermont is also known to be considering them for its lottery system. ●

BALTIMORE OPS GET BETTER DEAL

Well! That is our show for tonight. On your way out, please pay your amusement tax.



Operators conferred with City Council members in Baltimore and achieved a compromise tax of \$300 per machine annually.

The figure was agreed upon as an alternative to a \$150 annual charge plus a 10 percent gross receipts tax.

"The state of Maryland has a provision on its books that authorizes municipalities to charge us up to 10 percent of our gross receipts as an amusement tax," Banner Specialty's Ed Kucharski told *Play Meter*. "This is a good compromise for the operator. We are glad to get out from under the threat of the gross receipts tax."

Kucharski said the city's operators met to attack the city's original plan and formulated several effective arguments against the tax. Operators argued that collecting the tax would be expensive for the city that would have to hire additional tax collectors and auditors.

"Also," Kucharski said, "the city was impressed with the fact that, with the flat fee, it would be getting its money up front."

The tax is an increase from the current \$150 per machine plus 1½ percent of the gross receipts and will go into effect January 1, 1983.

"What this means for the operator," Kucharski continued, "is that he cannot operate four or five games in a location where he only needs two or three."

The operators' informal organization resulted in the establishment of the new Maryland Amusement Operators Association. The Association recently elected its first president, Tom Foley. It was chartered by the state in May and has 38 members. Kucharski anticipates affiliation with the national association, the Amusement and Music Operators Association. ●

MORGAN'S AT IT AGAIN

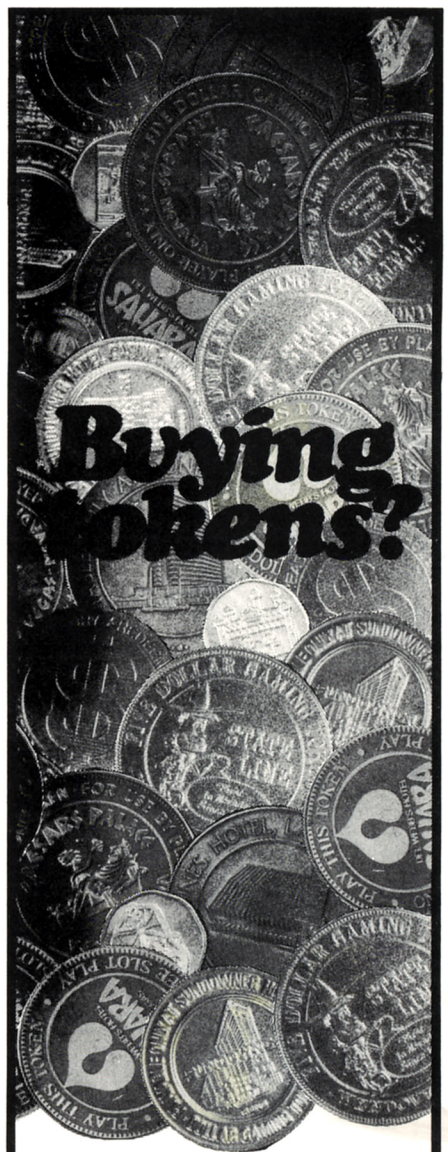
Morgan's Restaurants, the firm that said it had reached an agreement to buy the Southwest Vending distributorship early in 1982 and then didn't have a deal at all, is at it again.

The firm recently told *Barron's*, a national business tabloid, that it didn't expect to have much trouble picking up a couple of game distributorships west of the Mississippi with about \$20 million each in annual revenue.

The firm, which according to *Barron's* has been in the food business for more than half a century and boasts of being one of the first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchisers, has become so enthralled with its new division that it has changed its name to Mortronics.

Reportedly, Nate Dolin, firm chairman, said the company recently sold 1.5 million shares of common stock and will use the money to acquire additional distributorships.

The publication called the Morgan (now Mortronics) stock "a fantastic



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winner over the past year or two," and said "the electronic connection no question has already provided a spark to operating results."

Mortronics most recent fiscal year, ending in February 1982, shows \$20 million in volume, \$7.7 million of which came from its video game operation. More impressively, the video game distributorship accounted for 73.3 percent of the company's total operating profits. Further, Dolin told *Barron's* his sales would hit \$100 million for the fiscal year ending February 1983.

The publication said that Mortronics paid \$1.2 million for its video distributorship (Continental Divide Distributors of Colorado) and that the business is being capitalized by the market at "comfortably over \$40 million." •

ATARI CUTS WORKWEEK

In response to the summer slowdown and the resultant slackening in demand for its coin-op products, Atari has lessened the workweek for 10 percent of its 1,400 coin-op division employees.

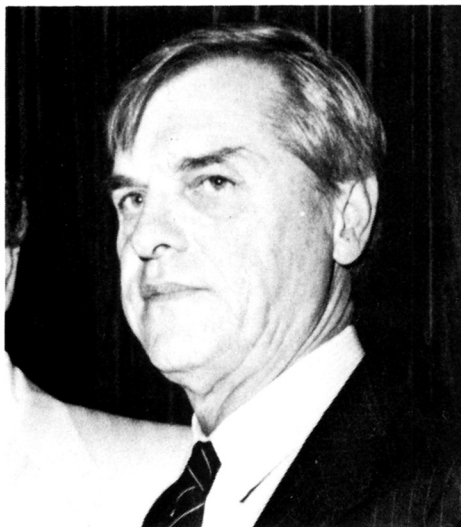
An Atari spokeswoman, Helen Gray, told *The Wall Street Journal* that affected workers wouldn't lose pay if they attended educational seminars about how the company operates.

Margaret Lasecke, another Atari media specialist, told *Play Meter* the 140 employees switched to a four-day workweek were all employed in the woodwork department in Milpitas, where cabinets for Atari coin-op games are built.

Lasecke affirmed there were "no layoffs" and that the Atari international work force, now estimated at 10,000, would show 10 percent growth for 1982. •

AMOA OFFICER DIES

Clayton Norberg, first vice president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association, died August 15 of a heart attack.



Clayton Norberg

Norberg was scheduled to be the next president of the national association.

In addition to his work with AMOA, he was instrumental in organizing the Music Operators of Minnesota and served as that group's first president. Norberg was introduced to the coin-op business by his father who established C&N Sales in Mankato, Minnesota. He most recently operated L&N Enterprises of Onamia with his son-in-law.

Services were held August 19 at Grace Luthern Church in Mankato.

Norberg is survived by his wife, Sally, three daughters, and one son. ●

PENN COURTS DIFFER

While Pennsylvania's Superior Court has found that a player exerts skill in operating an electronic video card game and has ruled the games legal (See *Play Meter*, August 1, p. 15.), an equal appellate court, the Commonwealth Court, decided the games are illegal gambling devices.

Despite the difference in the view of the two courts, the state Supreme Court won't settle the issue. The reasons the high court won't rule, said Paul Maryniak in an article for the *Pittsburg Press*, "are buried in a memo that is circulated only among the seven Supreme Court justices themselves."

"Although some knowledge of the

odds of obtaining various combinations of cards would enable a player to maximize his or her potential for winning," noted the Commonwealth Court, "the outcome of the game is dependent entirely upon the electronic fall of the cards."

"Likening the electronic poker machines to a deck of playing cards," wrote Maryniak, "Superior Court found that a player exerts skill by deciding which cards on the screen he

wants to keep and which ones he wants replaced by new cards."

Pennsylvania law does not define gambling, Maryniak noted, but does employ a test to determine whether a device is designed for gambling. That test incorporates three elements that are common to most states' statutes defining gambling devices: whether money must be paid to play the game, whether an award is given to the winner of a game, and whether the

The Token Zoo



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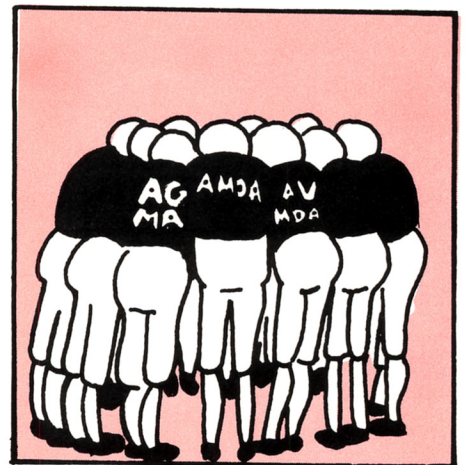
results of the game are solely dependent on chance.

ASSOCIATIONS PUT HEADS TOGETHER

Associations representing the industry's operators, distributors, and manufacturers met in Chicago September 3 to discuss a joint effort against anti-game legislation on federal to local levels.

The meeting produced a consensus that the three organizations need to make a more coordinated effort to better the stance of the industry in legislative arenas.

As a result, the three executive directors—Leo Droste of the Amusement and Music Operators Association, Ed Doris of the Amusement and Vending Machine Distributors Association, and Glen Braswell of the Amusement Games Manufacturers Association—have been organized into a committee to devise plans for monitoring and handling legislation.



AGMA Executive Director Glen Braswell said the meeting was "a good meeting" and signaled a new era of cooperation among the three associations. Braswell, a career association director who preceded his job with AGMA as director of the brewers' association, characterized the industry's associations on a par with those in other industries as far as being productive and helpful bodies.

"They are having to go through a psychological adjustment to the fact they are now big business," said Braswell pointing to the surge in popularity of industry products.

PLAY METER, November 1, 1982



A songwriter can only cringe when he hears a singer do a horrible adaptation of his song. But manufacturers can seize games with operator modifications. Operators sing the blues when it comes to the copyright issue. See Last Word, page 94.

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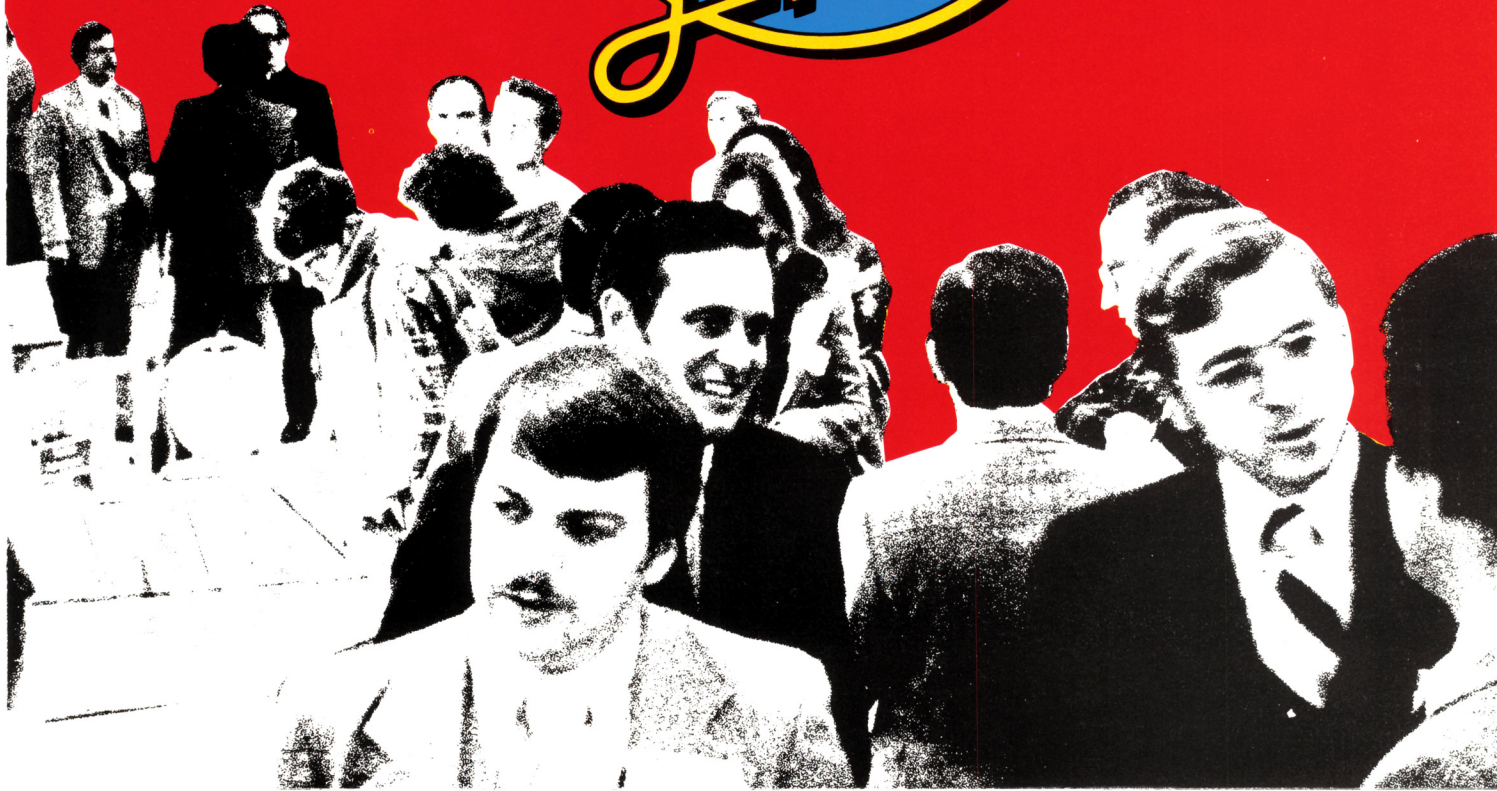
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LOUISIANA OPERATORS FORM ASSOCIATION



Newly elected president of LAMOA, Bob Waller, addresses the gathering of 43 operators.

Louisiana operators have finally joined together to form the Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association (LAMOA), a state association organized to represent the interests of operators before public and governmental bodies in the state.

For several years Louisiana operators have tried albeit, unsuccessfully, to form a state association. Well over a decade ago, operators in the state were organized under a common banner, but that organization eventually disbanded because no one could handle the day-to-day operations of the association.

The recent unsuccessful efforts to start the association again failed for much the same reason. But at an organizational charter meeting August 25 at the Hilton Hotel in Baton Rouge, operators from all over the state met to agree on articles of incorporation and the election of officers.

Spearheaded by the efforts of Bob Nims of Lucky Coin in New Orleans and Bill Atkins of Atkins Novelty in Jonesville, the organizational committee hired association executive Ed Campanella. Campanella, who has 16 years experience as an association

executive director for other industries, was at the meeting.

"The growing need for a state association became obvious some time ago," Nims told the jam-packed audience. "This is why we have tried repeatedly to form a state association and why so many people are here to get it off the ground."

There were 43 operators at the organizational meeting, a figure that surprised even the organizers who had planned on a somewhat smaller turnout. "This is the first time we've ever had more people come to a meeting like this than were actually invited," Nims said.

Such a high degree of interest on the part of operators across the state was especially good, in light of the fact that the industry in Louisiana is not presently confronted with any adverse legislation. It has become something of a cardinal belief in most industry quarters that operators will not join together unless there is a threat of adverse legislation. But such was not the case in Louisiana, and still the attendance was so great that many operators had to sit on a raised balcony to take part in the proceedings.

At the special organizational lun-

cheon, the Atari community awareness videotape, courtesy of Bob Boasberg of New Orleans Novelty, was shown as an example of the type of message the association wants to get out to the general public.

One of the last orders of business was the election of officers.

Bob Waller of Waller Enterprises in Greenwell Springs was elected president; David Goudeau of Gerald's Amusement Machines in Lafayette was named vice president. Other officers include Barney Atkins of Atkins Novelty in Jonesville as secretary/treasurer; and George Mouton of Dixie Phonograph in Lafayette to fill the voting post of immediate past president.

Three directors were also elected to the voting board. They were Mike Cannon of Lakeside Electronic and Amusement in Madisonville; Nick Putch of Southern Music in Shreveport; and Rick Ross of Ross Investment in Leesville.

Charter memberships are open through the end of the year. Those interested in joining should contact one of the officers or write the Membership Committee, LAMOA, P.O. Box 80764, Baton Rouge, LA 70898. ●



The organizational meeting drew more operators than even organizers expected. The result there wasn't enough room at the business table, and many operators had to take seats in a sort of balcony to take part in the proceedings.



LAMOA officers seated from left: Ed Campanella, Bob Waller, George Mouton, and Barney Atkins. Standing from left: Rick Ross, Nick Putch, Mike Cannon, and David Goudeau.



Bob Haim (l), Mark Haim (c), and Bob Harvey (r) survey the Belam facilities with Atari's Gravitar behind them.



A promotional videotape on Atari's Gravitar was set up for operators to view.

BELAM CELEBRATES ATARI APPOINTMENT

About 400 operators in the Long Island, New York, area packed into the showroom of R.H. Belam Co. Inc. August 27 for a special showing of Atari's newest video game, *Gravitar*, the first game Belam was selling as a factory-direct distributor for Atari.

The showroom featured Atari product only to commemorate Belam's appointment as a direct distributor for the Sunnyvale, California, manufacturer.

In addition to a wall lined with *Gravitar*s, Atari was well-represented by its recent product offerings, including *Dig Dug*, *Centipede*, *Fast Freddie*, (distributed by Universe Affiliated International Inc.), and *Space Duel*.

According to a Belam spokesman, the distributorship fetes operators every Friday with a luncheon buffet, but the sumptuous August 27 luncheon was billed as a very special event with Atari marketing representative Bob

Harvey on hand for Belam's appointment. And operators turned out in force for the occasion.

"We were thrilled to pick up the Atari line," said Bob Haim at the festivity. "Since this was a special appointment for us, we wanted to do something special."

Atari now joins Belam's other factory direct lines which include Gremlin, Nintendo, Lowen-America, Ardac, Lutton Microwave, and Animated Electronics.

Belam's chief executive officer, Vic Haim, announced that his son, Mark Haim, is taking over the reins as president of the company. It was also revealed that Bob Haim will become Belam's executive vice president.

Other officers for the company include Richard Bartlett, Jerry Rubin, and Ron McGill, all to positions of vice president. Sam Mudaro is the company's controller.

Vic Haim said he would remain with the company as chairman.

The Long Island distributor moved to Lake Success in October 1980. "At the time," Mark Haim told *Play Meter*, "operators in this area were literally starved for a distributor of games in their area. We think we've filled that void."

In addition to the 25,000-square foot facility, the company also has a warehouse with another 5,000 square-feet about three or four miles away, said Bob Haim, and another larger office for exporting. Belam also has two offices in Florida, in Miami and Orlando.

Bob Haim said the company employs about 65 workers at its Lake Success address alone.

Business was reported to be brisk, and a second showroom was set up just behind the main showroom to feature product from other factories at the special Atari showing. ●



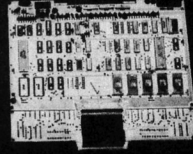
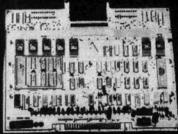
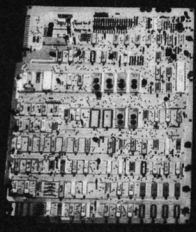
A wall of *Gravitar*s received much attention from visiting operators.



Business was very brisk even at the parts window.

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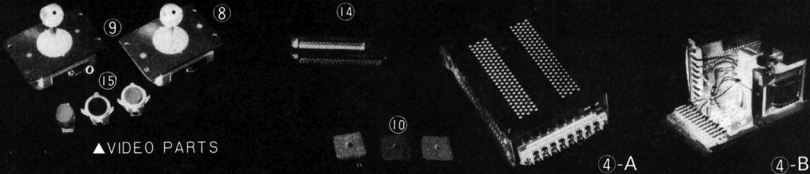
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Short Subjects

In one of the largest piracy lawsuits ever filed by a video game manufacturer, **Nintendo of America Inc.** obtained preliminary injunctions from the Federal District Court of New Jersey against 100 defendants. On July 27-29, federal marshals throughout New Jersey seized video games allegedly infringing upon Nintendo's *Donkey Kong*, most bearing the names *Crazy Kong* or *Congorilla*.

Seattle's community centers are not exactly stepping over each other to get in line for available video games. Two-thirds of the centers have rejected an invitation to join a pilot project sponsored by the Seattle Parks Department.

Only seven of the city's 24 centers said they want videos installed. Advisory boards at all the other centers have turned the games down, mainly because they feel they don't have enough staff to monitor the games.

The video contract for the seven centers that want the games will be put out to bid, said Parks Department recreation director Virginia Swanson. The games could be in place by November.

The pilot program is planned to continue through July or August.

Atari Inc. has agreed to give sole distribution rights for a new video, *Fast Freddie*, to **Universe Affiliated International**, an Atari distributor/exporter based in Roselle, New Jersey.

Fast Freddie is a video voyage simulating the adventure and skills of hang gliding, and per agreement, will be available only through UAI.

Dayton's **Video City** split a week's take with the Montgomery County Mental Health Association during its recent Video Olympics. Tammy Noble and her arcade raised more than \$5,000 for mental health and created some great public relations for video games in that city.

Leonard Mitchell, last year's top draft choice of the Philadelphia Eagles, is not too familiar with the geography around his new home in Pennsylvania, but he can tell you where every *Defender* game is, all the way to Delaware.

Mitchell, in whatever spare time he has during the football season, is a *Defender* devotee. He stated he likes the game because it is particularly challenging, saying that mentally, the game is a great deal like football.

"You've got to think quick, and it's fun to watch yourself get better," he said.

According to various estimates, Mitchell shares his video game interests with more than half the Eagles team. Coach Dick Vermeil has even been known to order the games unplugged during a team meeting so he can get everyone's undivided attention.

As the industry's show season rolls around, organizers for the **39th Amusement Trades Exhibition** announced their 1983 show will return to London and the National Hall, Olympia. The show, open to trade members only, will run for four consecutive days, January 10-13.

The show will feature amusement and gaming machines on display with related equipment spread over nearly 10,000 square meters of floor space.

Anyone planning to attend the English show should contact The Organisers; Amusement Trades Exhibitions, Ltd.; 122 Clapham Common North Side; London; SW4 9SP; England.

"Video games—which are present nearly everywhere these days—are the most blatant testimony we have to American waste and disregard for resources," said David Hartman, a minister of the Antioch Christian

Church in Lexington, Kentucky.

"Take technological warfare," he continued. "Remember the old Civil War movies where the young private wept over having killed his first human being, and the grizzled old sergeant assured him that it would be easier the next time?"

"In those days, death in warfare was cruel, but it wasn't sterile. The enemy had 10 fingers and toes, two eyes, and a nose—and probably a family waiting anxiously at home.

"Today, missiles wipe out entire cities without leaving anything to show on the six o'clock news.

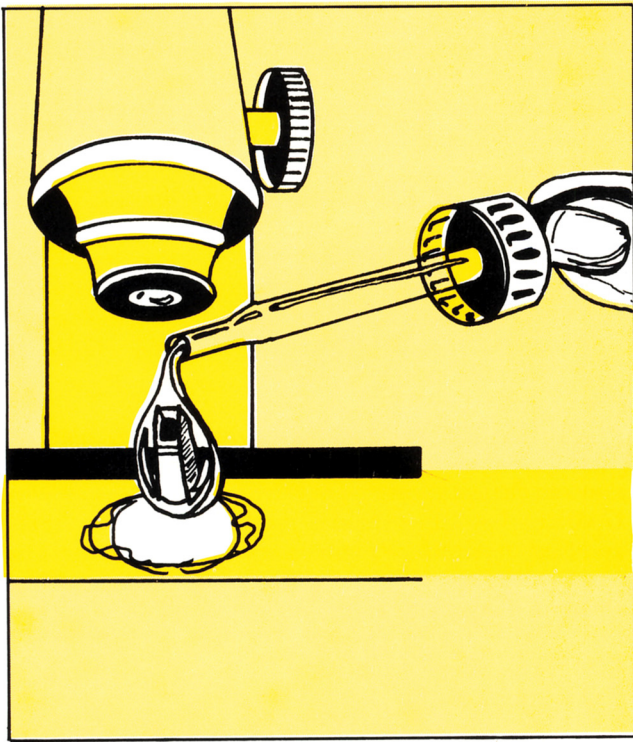
"A Navy recruiter I talked to recently told me how the 'new' Navy is excited about its technologically sophisticated recruits because—with the right amount of training, it can turn their video expertise at shooting down alien warships into the more practical applications of computerized warfare.

"Heaven help us if future generations associate the bliss they find in an arcade with the reality of warfare!

"Video games, without malice aforethought, are capable of inducing a subconscious sense that devastation is without consequence. That the only thing needed to set all things right is the insertion of another quarter."

Re: "Short Subject" of September 15 regarding **Atari** and **Malibu Grand Prix**. Though both firms are parented by Warner Communications, Atari takes no part in operating—as it was incorrectly stated—the Malibu Grand Prix game rooms. It follows, then, that Ed Watson is not an Atari employee but an employee of the Warner arcade division.

Taito America has added **London Distributing Company** of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to its network of distributors. London will distribute all the Taito America products to the Milwaukee area and upper Michigan.



Studies In Video:

**Parents, youths
react to videos**

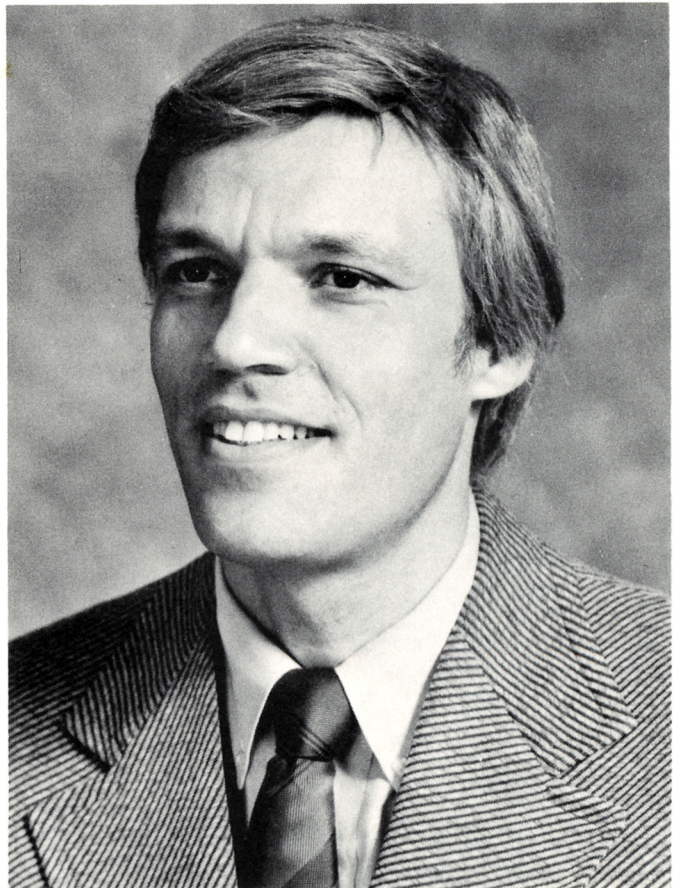
Editor's Note:

[This is the second article in a series of stories dealing with *Studies In Video*.]

Dr. Robert Gable, an associate professor of psychology at Claremont College near Los Angeles, is a self-described "social gadgeteer," who has a few of his own patents.

He has a doctorate in education at Harvard, a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Brandeis, and he also managed to pick up a law degree along the way. Gable has studied with psychologist/behaviorist B. F. Skinner and was a teaching assistant for Abraham Maslow. But, Gable says, he really enjoys studying technology and its social impact.

In this Play Meter interview with correspondent Mary Claire Blakeman, Gable discusses his studies on parents' reactions to video games, and he offers some ideas about where arcades might be headed in the future.



Dr. Robert Gable

PLAY METER: How did you get interested in work with computer and video games? How did you get started in this kind of research?

GABLE: When I was a graduate student, I worked with juvenile delinquents and did behavior therapy with juvenile delinquents. Part of our recruitment procedure was to go out on street corners, recruit the kids, and do tape interviews, etc.

Based on the work with the juvenile delinquents, and because we did natural setting recruiting, I found myself occasionally hanging out in pool halls and so-called entertainment centers. It seemed like a terrible waste of time, so one of the things I invented was a programmed pinball machine which was only a partial success.

But it consisted of a program—a series of slides and some logic boards; a slide projector underneath the pinball machine; and a counter printer and a card that would come out for elementary or introductory high school level mathematics, English, or some other type of subject.

The kids would then play the game. They'd put in the money and then a score would come out on these little IBM cards, which would give the date, time, and the kid's I.D. number, and of course, it would document how far they'd gotten with the program.

So, that was just a part of my long-standing interest in

the technology involved in games.

PLAY METER: *Where did you do this work?*

GABLE: I started the work with juvenile delinquents in the natural setting, behavior therapy kind of thing in Cambridge. And the programmed pinball machine was something I did in Claremont.

PLAY METER: *Have you done other studies like this?*

GABLE: Yes, we also did other things such as putting telemetry devices—with the kids' full cooperation, we paid them for it—we put telemetry devices so we could monitor where the kids were and how much time they spent doing what. Some of the natural setting studies that I'm now doing on time utilization are based on earlier work which we did.

PLAY METER: *Are the studies you are doing now on computer or video games?*

GABLE: The only thing I'm doing now is limited to the coin-op games and the arcades.

PLAY METER: *When did you start this research?*

GABLE: About 9 months ago.

PLAY METER: *How did you set up the study?*

GABLE: We did a parent survey, and we did a couple of time diaries with kids recording what they did every hour. They carried diaries around with coded information so we could try to see how they spent their time.

PLAY METER: *How many people were involved in the study?*

GABLE: With the kids, we've only had two or three kids do the time diaries, and we've probably had a survey of 60 parents in the Claremont area. Unfortunately it's all in the Claremont area; it's not as good a geographic distribution as you would get in a bigger survey.

PLAY METER: *You haven't had that many kids keeping the time diaries?*

GABLE: No, it's difficult to do. We have them keep the diary for a couple of weeks. We try to pick kids who are not doing well in school and some who are doing well in school. They tend to be junior high school students—13, 14, or 15 year old males.

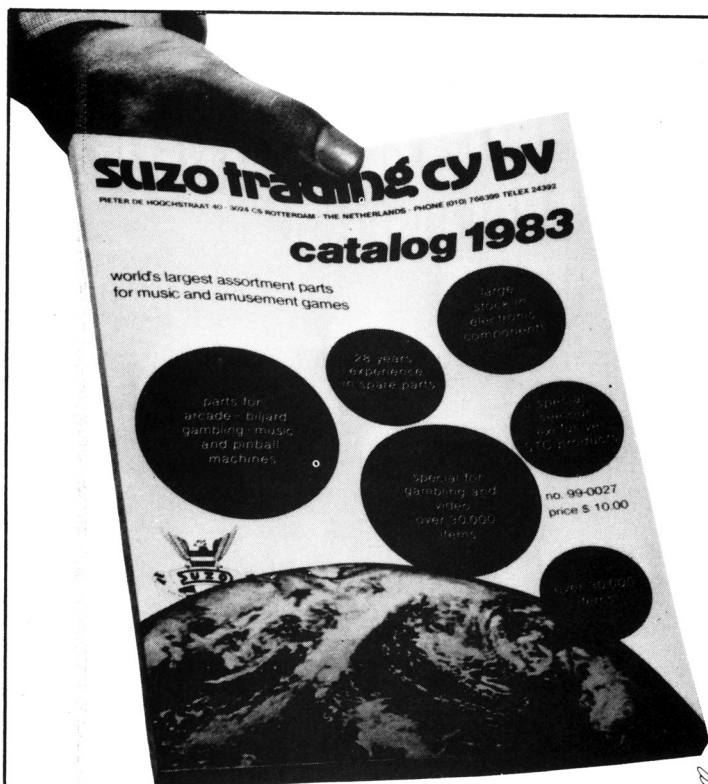
PLAY METER: *But what have you found out about how kids spend their time? Are they playing 10 hours a day? Do you see any patterns?*

GABLE: I would say, in a most general sense, that the arcades, or electronic entertainment centers, are mostly places to hang out that have replaced the soda fountain which no longer exists, or hanging out on the corner, or in the parking lot of shopping centers. Things have not changed so much from what I can see in terms of time distribution.

Kids who conscientiously study do their homework. Kids who aren't conscientious don't do their work anyway.

PLAY METER: *Could you give me a ballpark figure on how many minutes or how many hours youths are spending in the arcades?*

GABLE: I can give you a rough calculation here: about 18 percent of the total time in the day (or during the whole week) was spent in playing games. That was in a 17-day



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sample—it came to 4.32 hours per day with this youngster. Yes, he hung out, per day, 4 hours. He was picked out of the sample because he is—not an addict—but he spends a lot of time there and he had poor grades.

He's also a "loadie." That means he gets loaded and he just hangs out. In fact, he doesn't care if the machines are there or not. He "strings" a lot: he puts the string through the machine instead of quarters. So that's one extreme.

The other kind of more conscientious student, whom we have seen and prepared interviews with, looks like it's 3.6 hours per week.

The kids we got who were members of an arcade—they signed up, paid a couple of dollars, and they were on a mailing list—we tried to survey those who were members

There are a few parents we have found who have money, and give the kids money and the arcade acts as sort of a babysitter.

PLAY METER: It may be hard to tell because the range is so broad, but is the time spent straight through or is it broken up—maybe a few games after school or later at night? Do youths tend to play solid blocks of time?

GABLE: No, it looks like it's more broken up. You had a pretty good idea there about the time being broken up. For instance, that kid, the one who spent a lot of time at the arcade, also worked at a fast-food place. So he would go there before he went to work and then again after work. It's all pretty casual. It's just like (they say), "Well, what are we

...about 18 percent of the total time in a day (or during the whole week) was spent in playing games.

of this arcade, and they turned out to have 3.6 hours per week in playing time. So the gamut is really anywhere from 4 hours a week to 4 hours a day.

PLAY METER: Was there anybody working with him to get his grades up, or do you think it was the result of a lot of other things? Were his parents concerned?

GABLE: Well, he doesn't have a father; his mother has boyfriends in and out. She's very bright, high intelligence, and he has an older sister. I would think it's just kind of difficult—a broken home situation. Kids at these ages are going to be oppositional to their parents anyway.

So the question is, what kind of environment would the kids have for role models or peer groups? Where are they going to go when they leave the family? So there's no real interesting alternative.

So he tended to drift into a small group of rather benign loadies. And he doesn't do well in school. He's rather bored. In his time diary, it says he gets bored reading

going to do? We don't have anything to do, we're bored, so let's go up to the arcade."

PLAY METER: You have a bigger survey sample with the parents—what sort of things did you look at with them?

GABLE: We tried to look at whether parents thought the effects of the game were a benefit, had no effect, or were harmful, and all sorts of things such as social life, effect on grades...to how much money the kids spent, etc.

About 69 percent of the parents thought that the games were mind-expanding or developing, compared to 32 percent who didn't. (These percentages are rounded off.)

Another thing we asked was, "Do you favor laws restricting the availability of video games?" We got the same kind of percentage, 69 percent said no and 31 percent said yes. Most of the parents, a large percentage, felt that

About 69 percent of the parents thought that the games were mind-expanding or developing, compared to 32 percent who didn't.

the paper.

PLAY METER: What about youths on the other end? Do you have comments from the other kids about why they play the games? Apparently this guy is going to arcades because he's bored.

GABLE: He would go there even if the games weren't there.

As for the other kids, it varies a lot. For some, they want to get the high scores, to enhance their social prestige—that's just a small percentage of them, not very many, maybe 5 percent. The others just consider it a place to go. They're very casual about it—sometimes they go when there's nothing better to do. It's a way to get out of the house.

the games, in general, helped with their kids' interest in electronics and computers.

Here's a breakdown on the question about "Are video games (a) better than, (b) worse, or (c) the same as..." and then we just had a whole range of things like bowling, miniature golf, dancing, watching TV, etc. There was not much there except that most of the parents, 62 percent, thought that the video games were better than hanging out with friends in the parks and stores. About 31 percent said it was the same as hanging out, and around 7 percent said it was worse.

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and 6 percent felt they were a benefit.

In regard to the benefits, by the way, the kids don't agree with this, but the parents do. Just from casual observation, what I see happening is that the kids have less expendable income. That is, they will spend the money impulsively; the kids who are the most bored are most involved with the games and the most impulsive.

Because of the impulsive nature of these kids, they are dropping quarters into the games, and that leaves them less money to buy rock concert tickets or dope. So some parents felt that this was good that the video games were taking away from these other, questionable activities.

PLAY METER: *Were there any parents who felt their children had learned to be more responsible with money because of the games? Some kids have learned to discipline themselves around the games. Did you find anything like that?*

GABLE: Only to the extent that if they want to spend a lot of time on the games, they try to specialize in one particular game because then they will get good at it and not have to spend so much money.

PLAY METER: *Can you describe the group of parents? Was it middle and upper middle class?*

GABLE: Generally so. In this arcade, there is a mixture. There are some middle-class blacks, but our geographic area includes mostly the middle class. There are some blacks and minorities, but it's basically a white, upper middle class suburb.

PLAY METER: *Did any of the families have the home computer games?*

GABLE: Yes, about 35 percent had video games at home. Again, we had about 69 percent who felt their home video games were neither beneficial nor harmful, just sort of neutral. They were somewhat beneficial to about 19 percent on home video games.

There was some feeling and there was a higher percentage, about 75 percent, who felt the kids were learning more in terms of electronics than they were with the home games.

PLAY METER: *Parents are also concerned about violence or supposed violence in video games. In a description of your work, I read that you said, "Video games were less likely to bring out violent responses than television." Is that accurate?*

GABLE: I don't have any hard data on this so, given the speculation, I suspect that there's not many people who do have hard data. The reason for my suspicion is that the violence that's shown on the video game is a lot less realistic than the violence that's shown on television shows.

Therefore, it doesn't have the impact—it doesn't transfer to real-life situations nearly as easily.

PLAY METER: *Why is that? Are the video games not as violent?*

GABLE: Well, they may be violent to the extent that there's all that shooting that might transfer to some military application where you are shooting things on the screen. But in terms of violence where you are encountering another person, you would probably get more realistically involved with a TV because of the real human figures. There's a kind of desensitization process because of the violence. Generally, the more realistic a situation is, the

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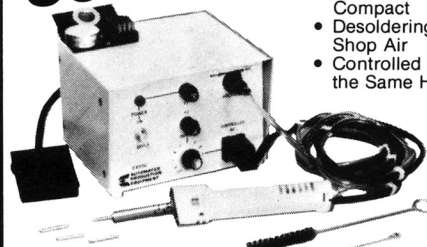
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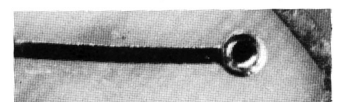


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PLAY METER: *There was also a study put out recently about how the sales of toy guns are up and the sales for all sorts of violent toys are up.*

GABLE: So is the military budget.

PLAY METER: *But how does that fit in with the criticisms of video games?*

GABLE: Just to put that whole thing together—we are getting more violent. But *Pac-Man* is not, essentially, a very violent game. Maybe *Asteroids* or *Donkey Kong* are violent. But the violence is probably not essential in the video games. It is simple; it is clear. You know what to do. You don't have to get instructions. That is, violence and self-defense is a very reflexive involvement. You don't have to tell me to get out of the way of the barrel being thrown down. The violence is not essential to the core of these games, as illustrated by *Pac-Man*.

PLAY METER: *Do you think there could actually be a healthy benefit to video games? Some of the kids I've interviewed said they feel like they get their aggressions out when they play the games.*

GABLE: My immediate reaction is that I do not go for this analogy of getting aggression out. That is, there is not aggression in you—that's a kind of very popular Freudian concept. We don't have a certain amount of love, aggression, friendliness with the old, mechanical idea of "get aggression out."

What appears to happen is that we have role models about how to deal with conflict, and there are many ways to deal with conflict. Sometimes we get upset, sometimes

we go to sleep, sometimes we cave in, sometimes we run away, compromise, bargain—there are many ways of dealing with conflict situations. Violence is one of them. Physical violence is one, verbal violence is another, hostile jokes—there's a whole range of them.

Then, depending on whether the world rewards us or punishes us then we sort of obey that. The classic study has shown that you can take little school kids and get a Bozo doll, a big, inflatable plastic doll that looks like a clown, and you can take video tapes of those kids when an adult comes in. You have the adult come in and hit the thing. It goes down and sort of pops back up. Then the teacher will say something like, "Ah, coming back for more, are you?" then hit it again and go away.

If you watch the kids after that, sure enough, word for word, they'll do exactly the same thing. They'll follow the parent, the teacher, or the role model very closely in a new situation—as will we all. Adults do the same thing in a new situation. In a new fancy restaurant, we'll watch and try to imitate others.

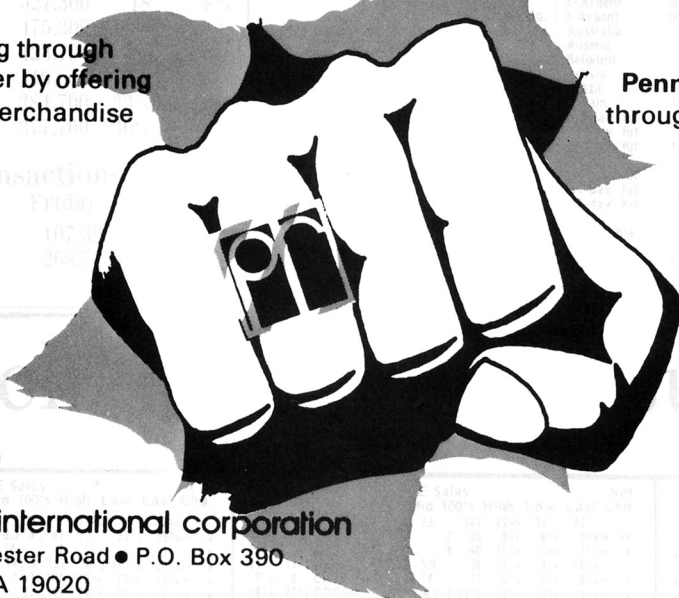
So it depends upon the degree of reality to the role model. That's what makes television more real than the video games—the models are more easily transferred; they're more realistic. Then, once we try those behaviors—let's say we see something in a movie and we try it out, then we see how our peers react to that and then we act accordingly. So it's not like a hostility toward something. It's very much an external kind of conditioning, a social learning process.

If I may go on a bit more broadly, that is what's important about the media. That is, in video games, movies, TV, and song lyrics, etc., there's an accepted model, an expectation level about what people think relationships

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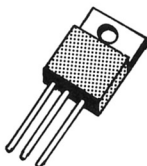
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ought to be, about what the world is like, whether the world is a jungle or essentially benign, or if people are inherently good or evil.

Those kinds of operational philosophies are implicit in the media and the technology in the culture. And I think we are now in a phase of some violence in which we look upon people as more evil, foreigners are more threatening, the “commies” are back again, and the world’s a more hostile place to live.

PLAY METER: Using that analysis then, how do you see the games fitting in? What kind of role model do they provide to young people?

GABLE: Well, I think they’re not giving much of any kind of role model. I think it’s just a little bit of fun stuff. The more visual, colorful, grabby, fast, noisy the thing is—it’s not very realistic. I don’t think the games have much transfer, violent or non-violent in any way. I’m more interested in the future of the games and the arcades, the entertainment centers.

PLAY METER: What about the future? How do you see things developing or how would you like to see things develop?

GABLE: Generally I would like to see, and I hope the owners would want to see, if it is possible to try to promote a cross-generational recreation center that is going to be better. The older people could provide some surrogate parenting, which some of the owners are doing now. It may provide an opportunity for people in our culture to meet “wayward youth,” particularly with the dispersal of the nuclear family in urban areas.

You could have legitimate contact with kids who

otherwise are trying to get out of their families, their homes. So, to the extent that that’s possible, I’d like to see the age range expanded, and this might be done, in part, by just having the arcades with certain sections for the “older folks”—the 20 and 30-year-olds.

By having traffic patterns, such as dining areas where you can have a dispersal of the people, it would be more attractive. Some of the arcades now are so noisy and such hangouts. Older people won’t go in because there isn’t a quiet place in them. So, when we are initially looking at these centers, we should do it in terms of behavioral architecture.

For example you could have a common eating area. That’s a very good activity to have where you’re going to have interaction between strangers because it reduces anxiety.

PLAY METER: There are some centers, like Chuck E. Cheese or Pizza Time Theatre, where the game area is separate from the eating area. Is that what you mean?

GABLE: Yes, it is separate. But I’ve seen none which had several separate areas. You might have games, and not just video games, you might have other types of more sit-down games for older people in a different area than you had the kids hanging out, then have sound barriers built for these eating areas. So it’s a matter of looking at traffic flow and then escape hatches for the various groups.

PLAY METER: When you’re talking about the older group, you mean 20 and 30-year-olds. What about the elderly?

GABLE: I don’t think we’re ready yet for the 40, 50, or 60-year-old group. It’s unfortunate.

WHOLESALE GAMES FROM COAST TO COAST



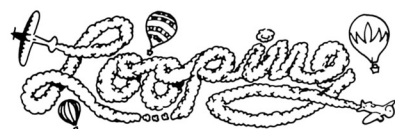
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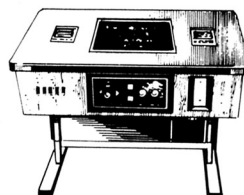
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PLAY METER: What other kinds of changes would you like to see in the concept of arcades?

GABLE: I'd like to see the development of an information exchange center in which there would be displays, interactive displays by various interest groups in the community, on the order of some of those zappy museums like the Exploratorium (in San Francisco).

You could have various displays that people could go around and play with and hang out with that could be by the local orchid society, the local motorcycle crowd, the chess champion, a health group—just think of all the groups and activities available.

You could have these displays, and not just the old ones where you might just have brochures about the group, but something more interactive that people could go around. Then you could get the older age group perhaps. You have to just watch the noise level and insure safety.

PLAY METER: At the Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, in the health library, there is a jukebox, and instead of records, you can punch up various health questions and then pick up a phone attached to the jukebox to hear the answer to the question. Is that the sort of thing you envision?

GABLE: Yes, you could have interactive displays where you pick up the phone or something. But this could also be for games like "Test Your IQ." For motorcycles, you could have something like "Sit down in this and ride the artificial motorcycle" as they have in some arcades. Arcades are going to have to grow and change and evolve.

PLAY METER: What about your work in the future? Are you going to continue the surveys and time studies?

GABLE: I'm less interested in what has happened than in what is going to happen. Therefore, I will continue to do these studies only on a minimal basis, realizing that it takes a great deal of money and effort to do an honest survey. My efforts will be largely in the designing of arcades and thinking about the future.

PLAY METER: Is there anything else you'd like to mention?

GABLE: Yes, you can't stop technology by throwing a hammer at it. So if you don't like video games or what's happening, it's like trying to stop a train. You don't stop in the middle of the track and stick out your hand—or pass an ordinance. You find a better alternative so you can throw a switch and the train can go in another direction. And that's what I think ought to be said to those people who are concerned about any aspect of this entertainment technology. They should ask, "How can we improve it?"

Long ago, the New Jersey Legislature wanted to pass an ordinance banning X-ray machines in movie theaters because they thought unscrupulous men would use them to look through women's dresses—not realizing that they'd just see a bunch of bones anyway.

But there is a rush to legislate out of existence things we don't like. We should put our creative efforts, particularly parents' and law enforcement officials' to different use. We could be saying, "Gosh, here we've got kids, they're bored, they're putting in a considerable amount of money, they're high-energy, and they have lots of time. What can you do with money, kids, and time?" Can't we drop something into that explosive mixture that will be educationally and socially valid? That's the challenge. ●

Studies in Video will continue in the Dec. 1 issue.

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Mommy, please?

Kiddie ride sales increase

By Laura Braddock



The carousel is still one of the most popular rides.



Hydraulic rides seem to appeal to children now.

Robert Versman and Thomas Leon aren't kidding around—neither are Warren G. Rosendahl Jr. and N. Earl Veatch Jr.

They are leaders of the U.S. kiddie ride industry, and they don't kid around when it comes to discussing increasing kiddie ride sales and an industry growing in recognition.

Mel LaForce, Kiddie Rides USA marketing director, calls the increase in his business "substantial." "The industry has exploded. Just like the entire industry has exploded, so has the kiddie ride industry exploded," President Robert Versman said. He said his sales have more than doubled since last year.

North American Amusement's sales increase about 15 percent each month, said President Thomas Leon. President Warren Rosendahl Jr. puts Utec's increase at about 30 percent over last year's sales. These three men said the buying trend began increasing between a year and two years ago.

"Our sales have increased every year since we have been in business since 1971," N. Earl Veatch, president of Carousel, said.

The reasons for the kiddie ride boom vary like the types of kiddie rides. Versman believes family oriented restaurants offer the kiddie ride market a feast of sales. Leon said the restaurants have not necessarily increased the market—they are the first businesses that recognized the potential of the rides.

Realized a market

"The people that have recognized the market are the family restaurants

like Show Biz and Pizza Time. There are about 14 major chains that have gotten involved. There are only a handful of really sharp arcade operators that are getting on the bandwagon—the regular street operators haven't figured it out yet, and most of the arcade guys haven't figured it out yet either," Leon said.

The men are quick to point out some of these advantages to operating kiddie rides. And their first reason is the most important to anyone considering the rides. Their promoters claim they can make a great deal of money. In fact, Leon said some kiddie rides outperform video games. "A hydraulic helicopter outproduces *Pac-Man* in a Show Biz or Pizza Time," he said.

How much can a kiddie ride make? Figures given show that a lot of kids don't let mom forget about the rides on the way out of the discount store.

Rosendahl points to a 1979 market study by an independent research group to back his figures: "We came up with a figure then that between \$250 to \$300 a month was the national average paid on our rides. We know for a fact that the *Nighthawk* and *Thunderbird* (motorcycle rides) in locations have brought in excess of \$450 a month."

Veatch estimated that some rides make more than \$100 a week. "Many of them make less and still support themselves," he said. "What has happened in the past was for years people that have been buying kiddie rides couldn't make any money with them, so obviously they weren't buying them," Leon explains. "Now

there are kiddie rides that are making a great deal of money."

Leon gave statistics for a hydraulic helicopter in an arcade: "I have never heard of less than \$200 a week, and I have never heard of more than \$600 a week."

Most operators have looked at kiddie rides as loss leaders—machines that historically don't make money in themselves but attract the whole family into an arcade. Whether the rides are making what their promoters claim depends on the location, of course.

However, there apparently is an industry trend toward buying coin-op equipment like kiddie rides which have a longer shelf life than the high-earning thoroughbred video games that are here today and gone tomorrow.

Operators, afraid of the fast depreciation of nearly all coin-op equipment today, are beginning to see staples such as kiddie rides as the "bricks" upon which they can build their business.

In years past, the jukebox was considered the backbone of the industry. With its decline and the emergence of videos, the industry has become spineless or invertebrate. We may see kiddie rides, and this type of equipment, establishing a backbone for the industry.

Long life cycle

The men also point out that kiddie rides generally have a long life span compared to other coin-operated games. They said seven to 12 years is an average life span. "It's a long-term

Only Utec sells through distributors

Of the four industry leaders interviewed, only Utec sells its rides through a distributing network. (See *Play Meter*, Aug. 15, p. 36)

"Our long-range growth plans make it imperative to develop an effective distributor network, completely supported by the manufacturer to provide mutual benefits to both the manufacturer and distributor," President Warren Rosendahl Jr. said.

Rosendahl, with a MBA in marketing, said he did a lot of research before starting the distributor network. "I frankly believe that the kiddie ride industry has suffered in not growing like it should because of the

poor philosophy of manufacturers. There has not been an allegiance established between manufacturer and the field," he said.

Utec made some distributor assignments. Caribe Amusements of Miami serves operators in South Florida. Automated Consultants Systems distributes in Kentucky, and Westroe Distributors works with operators in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean Islands.

But North American Amusement, Kiddie Rides USA, and Carousel sell their rides direct.

"We have not aggressively chased after the distributors, and the distributors have

not actively chased us. We are doing so much business direct, that at this stage, it seems to be working for us. But it should be somewhere down the line a distributors' item," said Thomas Leon with North American Amusement.

Robert Versman, of Kiddie Rides USA, said his company works a little differently. It imports rides and is more or less the distributor for the manufacturers.

"We distribute ourselves," said N. Earl Veatch Jr. of Carousel. Carousel sells directly to operators and sends sales people to trade shows. Veatch takes the approach that if you want to do something right, you have to do it yourself. •

investment that he (operator) can derive his tax benefits from and his depreciation," Versman explained. "It's not a six-month deal where he has to dispose of the ride and get another ride."

"The beauty is that kiddie rides will last for years and years, and they don't have to constantly buy new ones all the time," Leon said.

Veatch compares the rides to jukeboxes. Kiddie rides are to the amusement business the same way jukeboxes "used to be." Both products have longevity.

LaForce sees a depressed economy helping the industry. "A lot of people aren't traveling as much and because of this reason, people are staying close to home, and they don't want to deprive their kids of entertainment."

And a troubled economy can mean that parents are looking for inexpensive entertainment the entire family can enjoy. "The idea of family is more important today than it has ever been," Leon said. "You used to be able to put a sign in front of an arcade and call it family—that doesn't cut anymore. If you have kiddie rides, you are a legitimate family place."

Pleasing to play

Once the children are in the arcade, the rides have to look inviting to them to make money. Hydraulic rides seem to appeal to kids right now, and three of the men said hydraulic rides are their most popular items. Jack Eckart, director of sales for Carousel, said the carousel is the company's best-selling item, but he said the trend is toward hydraulic rides.

"It's due to the fact that the rides that were manufactured in European countries have been so much more sophisticated than the American-made rides," Versman pointed out. "They introduced hydraulic rides which are the number one rides in the industry. They have also introduced the flashing lights and the sound. I think this has helped to activate the interest from the little children in the rides."

In the last couple of years, kiddie rides have not only gotten the interest of children, but they have also garnered attention from theme-oriented restaurants and large arcade operators.

How long will this trend last? Versman said it will eventually level off. "But right now it's hot. We are having difficulty, just as the manufacturers in the video game industry are having problems, making deliveries."

Who said kiddie rides are child's play? ●

Operators speak out:

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His horse begins to slow down during the chase. The horse stops.

The people walking by the boy are shoppers at the local discount store, the sound that startled the horse into a gallop was a coin rolling through the slot, and his brown horse is actually a red and green kiddie ride horse.

A red and green horse?

"The ride must be appealing and eye-catching to the child," explained Tom Dudley, owner of Kiddie Amusements, a company dealing exclusively with kiddie rides. "We think of horses being brown or black. But kids think more in colors. We work in good color coordinating combinations that are bright to kids but not an eyesore to the stores."

Color-coordinating rides

Dudley operates 750 kiddie rides in 450 locations in 11 states. He claims Kiddie Amusements is "the largest southern-based kiddie ride operation." His red and green combination is a result of the color scheme of one of Dudley's accounts—Howard Brothers discount stores.

"I painted horses red with a green base to match their color codes. We discovered a kid likes a red horse," he said.

The operator said he does a lot of experimenting with his kiddie rides to see how he can get maximum use out of them. Although kiddie rides generally have a long life span, they are still an investment.

Dudley estimates that a new multi-ride costs from \$2,000 to \$3,000, while a single ride—"the cheapest good ride today"—runs from \$1,400 to \$2,000. Mel Pearlman, vice president in charge of amusements for Electronic Theater Restaurants, said a kiddie ride costs him from \$1,000 to \$4,000.

The Pizza Time Theatre locations in Pearlman's firm are in Ohio, Houston, and Atlanta. Each of the 12 locations has 10 to 14 kiddie rides.

Pearlman and Dudley offer some sug-



Dudley rebuilds and paints equipment on a 30 to 36 month basis.

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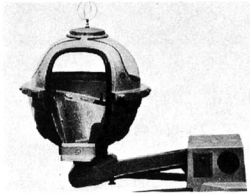
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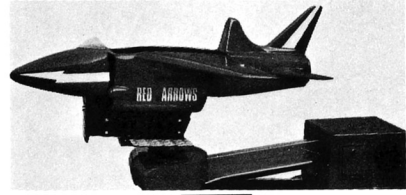
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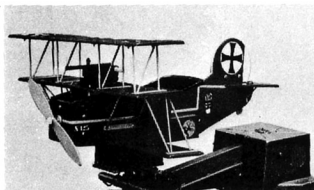
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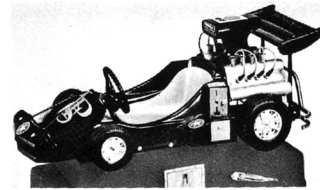


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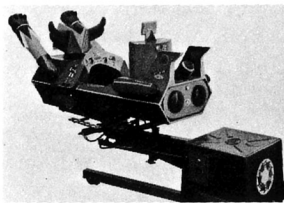
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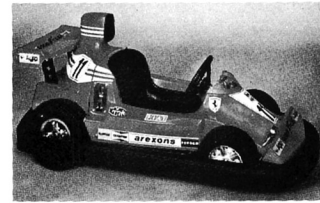


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Kiddie rides are placed on the mall side in The Fun Factory, Grod said.

gestions to operators considering kiddie rides.

In addition to red and green horses, Dudley also paints some of these animals yellow and zebra-striped. These are his major colors right now.

What goes where

How do you decide what type of ride should go in a location? Dudley said he considers what the child's parents do or what the area offers in entertainment. Children reared around horses may prefer riding a horse. And when children see mom or dad driving a boat around the lake, they want to drive a boat at the local discount store.

Where you place your equipment is another consideration. Pearlman said the 12 Chuck E. Cheese locations have a specific kiddie ride area.

Bruce Grod, district manager for The Fun Factory, with locations in Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah,

places his kiddie rides by the mall entrance so parents know The Fun Factory is a family entertainment center before they walk in the door. "I really feel that The Fun Factory itself is a family entertainment center. We're shooting at the family. We should give everyone something to do," he said.

The Fun Factory also features some kiddie rides on lighted platforms with bright lipstick red carpet.

"Many times an operator will try to place the ride on the right hand side of the exit door (in high traffic locations such as discount stores) because the majority of people are right-handed, and when they leave the store, they have change. They will reward the child for being good in the store by letting him ride," said Warren G. Rosendahl Jr., president of Utec.

Safety first

The National Kiddie Ride Association



In Pearlman's 12 locations, kiddie rides are grouped in a specific area.

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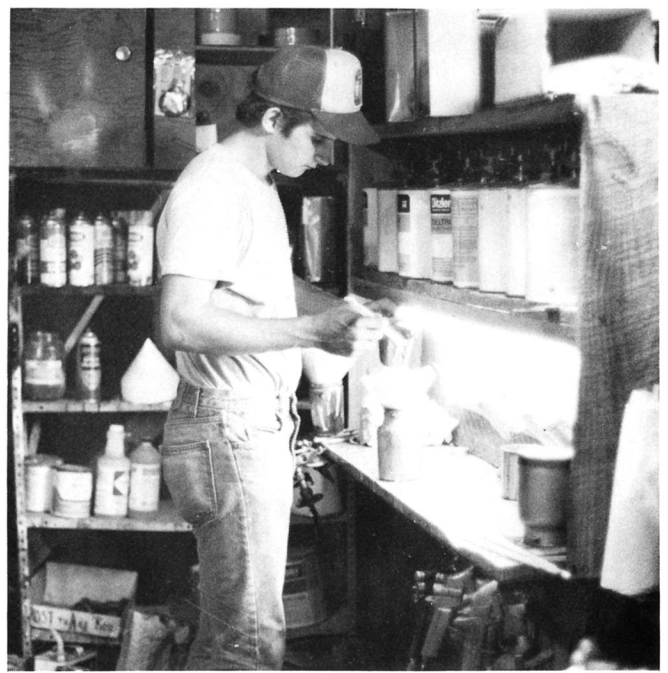
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The equipment can have a long life if it is properly maintained.



Experimenting with different colors of paint is one way to attract attention to the rides.

also cautions operators about ride placement. Rides shouldn't be put too close to plate-glass windows and/or doors and don't stretch electrical cords across aisles or in areas where people must walk.

After an operator has situated his kiddie rides, his next step is maintaining them. Pearlman said there is a technician in each of the businesses. They are not only there to fix broken machines but to maintain them as well. "They oil and clean the equipment. They check for things that are getting loose," Pearlman said.

Dudley brings his equipment in to rebuild it or paint it on a 30 to 36-month basis. He said he used to rotate his rides

every three to four months, but gas prices have kept him from rotating them as much as he likes.

He also said that inside sales are better than outside sales, but many of his locations prefer the equipment placed outside. Outside locations can mean problems for operators.

"The vandalism is terrible," Dudley said. "Vandalism is our biggest problem." The operator cited two recent cases of vandalism with his equipment. In one incident, someone copied a master key and began stealing collections. Another incident involved people using electric saws to cut the posts off the rides.

Finding parts

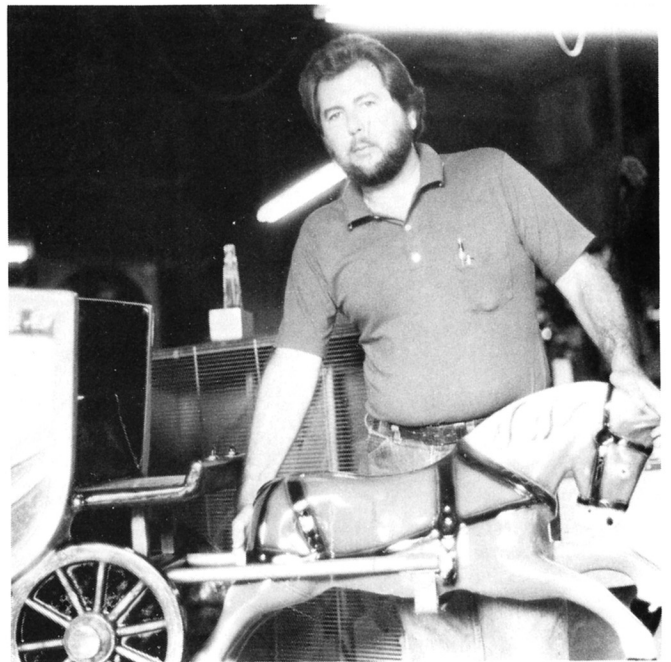
At Pizza Time Theatres, the rides are inside the business. Pearlman said his only problem with the equipment is getting parts for foreign pieces. "We anticipate and have in stock some of the parts," he explained.

But the young cowboy doesn't care about parts or vandalism. The horse, whether it be yellow, red, green, or purple is real to him because the operator has done his job through the ride's appearance and his servicing.

The horse begins moving, slowly at first but picking up speed. The young cowboy hands on for dear life...



Some kiddie ride operators employ technicians to get the equipment out of the shop and onto the locations as soon as possible.



Dudley estimates that a good single ride costs from \$1,400 to \$2,000.



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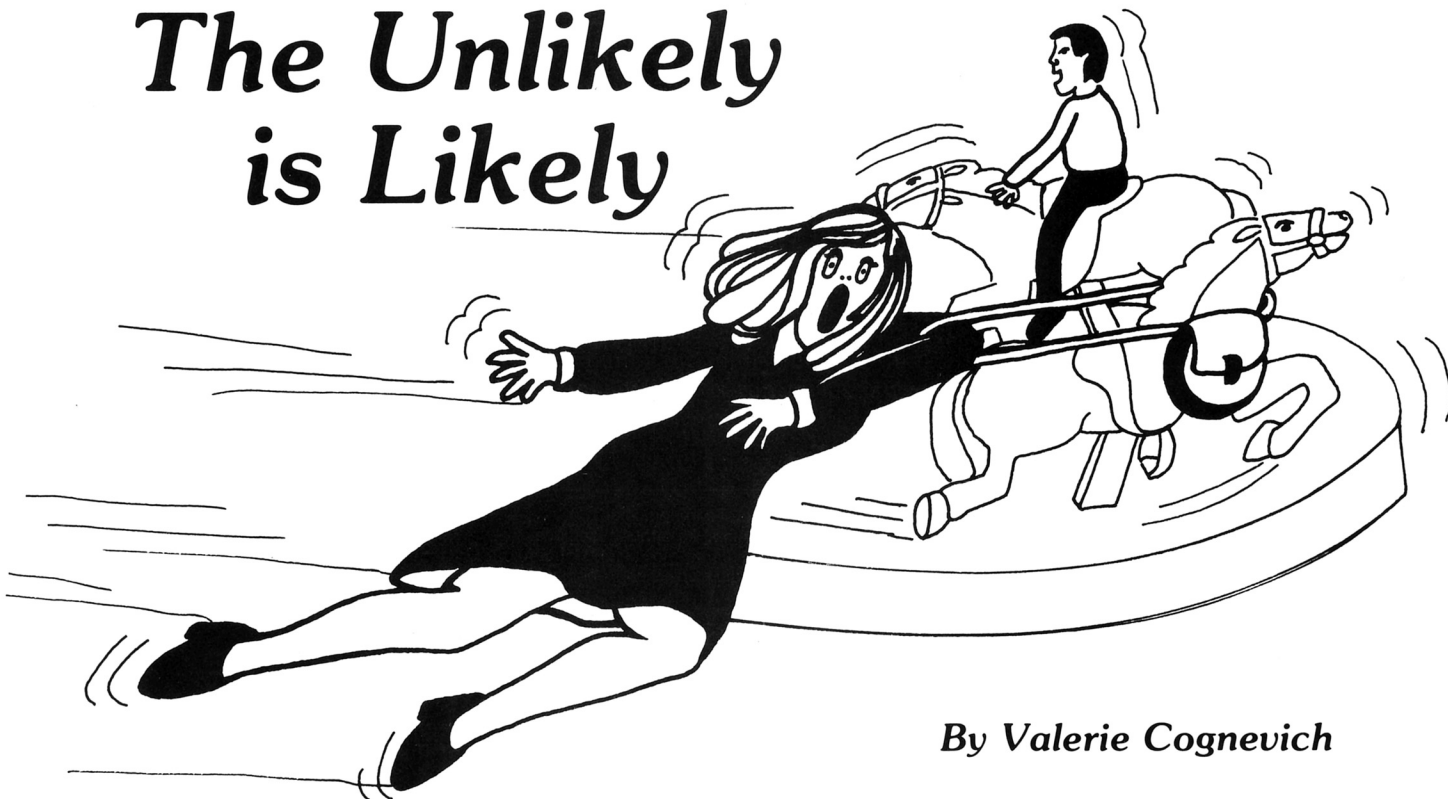
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The Unlikely is Likely



By Valerie Cognevich

Who doesn't have fond memories of riding the coin-operated horse in front of the local discount store as a child? Or who hasn't indulged his children in a few moments of excitement on a similar kiddie ride?

The horse is still a very popular kiddie ride although now there are spaceships, helicopters, and many more creative kiddie rides enticing children into pleading with mom and dad for a ride.

Maybe kiddie rides have more or less been taken for granted, but with the onset of places such as ShowBiz Pizza and Pizza Time Theatre, kiddie rides are being re-introduced as a viable part of the coin-op amusement machine industry.

However, anyone debating about whether or not to incorporate the operation of kiddie rides into his business should consider his added insurance needs.

Operating kiddie rides is a whole new ball game when it comes to your liability. Just the fact that the rides have motion is enough to cause them to be excluded in many cases from your general liability that you carry on your business.

Although the kiddie rides are cute, small, and not very intimidating, here are a few examples of freak accidents.

Consider the unusual

Bobby Boasberg of New Orleans Novelty Co. cites two incidents

involving kiddie rides. He emphasizes that there was very little injury, but at the same time, the incidents show what you as an operator should be aware of.

"An elderly lady was putting her grandson on one of the carousel rides, and as it started revolving, her purse got caught on the ride and she was dragged down," Boasberg recalls.

"In another instance," Boasberg continues, "another older person was just sitting on the ride and someone inserted a coin, and she was thrown off the ride."

This is not very likely, of course, but it just makes you realize that the most unlikely things do happen.

Jack Eckart, of Carousel International, a large operator of kiddie rides, reassures operators that, "The kids probably do more damage to the rides than the rides do to the children!" He also points out that "kids will be kids. Most accidents only amount to horseplay."

But whether an injury or accident is horseplay or not, there is still the possibility that the operator is going to be sued. With everyone today sue-crazy, the operator has to be prepared for even the most unlikely occurrence.

The more, the better

"In this day and age, you have to be insured, and the more you can afford the better. It seems to be that no matter how minor the injury the first thing a person will do is run to his lawyer," Eckart elaborates.

Eddie Ducasse, who works with an insurance agency that has insured kiddie rides, states that he does not recall any claims against operators of the kiddie rides. But he points out that the reason insurance companies don't like to insure kiddie rides is because of the *potential for loss*.

Just the fact that they move makes them a hazard. A person could trip on a ride, or a child could fall off and hit someone. This may be farfetched, but insurance companies are sometimes over-cautious.

So the rates for insurance on kiddie rides will be higher because of the loss potential.

Purchasing insurance

If you are thinking about operating kiddie rides (They can be very profitable.), check with your insurance agent handling the liability on your business. Some coverage specifically excludes kiddie rides, and a separate endorsement is included in the policy spelling this out.

Especially read the fine print! If your policy does exclude kiddie rides (or specifies anything with motion), inquire about adding a separate policy covering kiddie rides.

If the company that insures your business does not want to cover the kiddie rides, your agent can go through a surplus lines company that can write the coverage on them.

According to Ducasse, if you plan to operate kiddie rides in some type of

mall location, the lease you sign with the mall may have a minimum requirement for liability coverage. Malls, Ducasse points out, generally require high liability limits.

Another alternative for securing coverage on kiddie rides is through the National Kiddie Ride Association located in Woodland Hills, Calif. This association handles coverage on a large volume, so the price of the coverage may be lower than you could secure from another company.

Ducasse also mentions an "umbrella policy" that picks up where your underlying policy leaves off. He gives an example of how this works. "If you have an underlying policy with a \$300,000 limit, and you are sued and have a \$500,000 judgment against you, your underlying coverage would pay the \$300,000 which is its limit," he continues. "Your umbrella policy would then pick up there, and pay the additional \$200,000."

Responsible for losses

When operators place kiddie rides in locations, they should be aware that in almost all cases the operator is 100 percent responsible for any accidents.

The manufacturer of the rides carries insurance to cover any losses that may occur because of defects in the product itself. So if something happens as a result of the construction of the ride, the manufacturer would then assume the responsibility.

If an operator is placing rides in fairly large locations, he may be required to sign a "Hold Harmless" clause that would leave the location completely free from any and all blame should an accident occur. This exposure is picked up under the operator's policy.

The ironic thing about this, according to Ducasse, is "Even if an employee of the location accidentally does something to that ride to make it dangerous (such as plugging it into the wrong current, etc.) the operator can still be held liable for the loss." But, Ducasse says, "It's just part of the risk an operator takes."

Determining the premium

"Most companies quote a premium for kiddie rides insurance according to the gross receipts the rides take in. Most companies are getting away from a flat fee," Ducasse states. This makes it more fair to each individual especially if one has a \$50,000 gross per year on kiddie rides and another only has \$10,000 gross per year.

An audit at the end of the year can determine the additions or deletions of kiddie rides, and adjust the premium to the new gross receipts for that policy term.

Know your manufacturer

Boasberg of New Orleans Novelty Company gives several tips when considering where to buy your kiddie rides.

Make sure you are dealing with a reputable manufacturer. Know who his distributors are and what kind of reputation that distributor has, he says.

Ask for references and maybe even talk to several satisfied (or dissatisfied) customers to find out if that is the type of distributor you want to deal with.

The kiddie rides you operate should be kept in tip-top shape at all times to lessen the risk of accidents, he continues. So the equipment you start off with should be as reliable as possible.

Kiddie rides offer an alternative source of income for the coin-op amusement industry and may well be worth the extra insurance you must secure.

Cars - Trains - Boats - Planes



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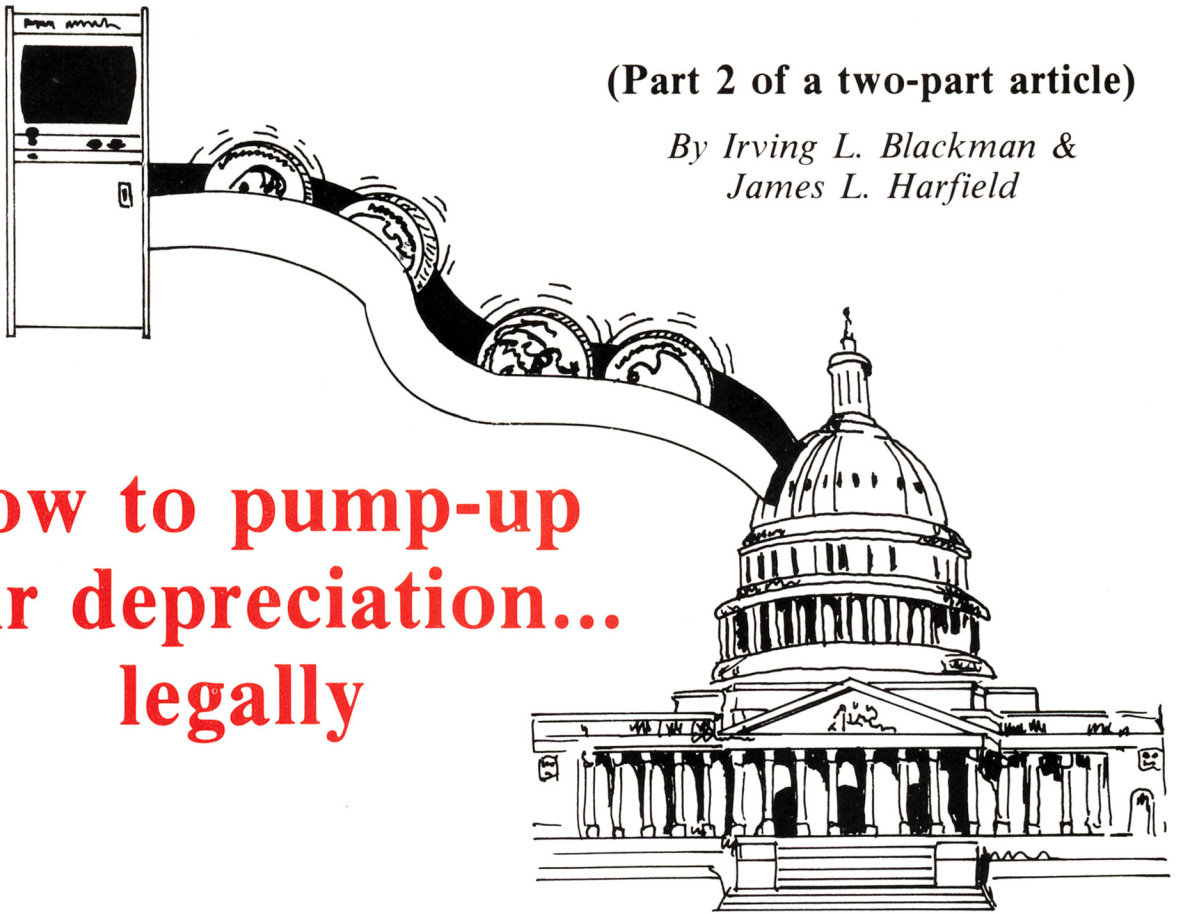
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(Part 2 of a two-part article)

By Irving L. Blackman &
James L. Harfield

How to pump-up your depreciation... legally



Cash Flow is the name of the game for the operator. From an operational standpoint, any good operator can produce a long list of "must-do's" and "must-not-do's" to be successful. But from a tax standpoint, cash flow is spelled D-E-P-R-E-C-I-A-T-I-O-N.

When President Reagan signed the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA), new depreciation rules were created. For the coin-op amusement industry, the new depreciation rules come off as a good news, bad news joke. First, the good news—the real estate depreciation rules are great. Now, the bad news—you may have to sell the real estate to comply with the "game" depreciation rules.

This article will analyze a portion of the new law.

The new law in a nutshell

Under ERTA, depreciation has a new look and a new name—Accelerated Cost Recovery System (ACRS). The system is substantially simpler and scraps the old Asset Depreciation Range and facts and circumstances system. Gone is the concept of useful life.

Technically, under ACRS you don't depreciate property; you recover capital costs over "statutory recovery

periods." The recovery period depends on the "class of property." There are four classes of recovery property: three-year, five-year, 10-year, or 15-year.

The prime examples of three-year property are automobiles and light

For the coin-op amusement industry, the new depreciation rules come off as a good news, bad news joke.

trucks. Real estate, whether residential or commercial, is 15-year property. Few readers, if any, would ever own 10-year property which includes such property as railroad cars and public utility property.

Video games, pinball machines, and similar games are five-year property.

Classes of recovery property

The class of recovery property determines the period of time over which it may be recovered. The central language of the old law, "a reasonable allowance for the exhaustion, wear, and tear," is strikingly absent from the new law. Instead, ACRS property must be written-off over one of four recovery periods.

A few new ground rules aid in the simplification of ACRS. The same recovery period is used for old and new property. More good news. Salvage value is not required. The entire cost of the property is depreciable over the class life of the asset. This is true for real estate as well as personal property.

Methods of depreciation

Basically, under the new law there are only two methods of cost recovery—the statutory percentage or a straight-line election. The statutory percentage automatically gives you the benefits of accelerated depreciation via a series of official IRS tables. There are actually three tables for each class of property depending on the year the property is placed in service: (a) 1981 through 1984; (b) 1985; and (c) after 1985.

The straight-line method can be elected as an alternative to the statu-

tory method. In addition, you may elect to exclude property from the ACRS rules and depreciate it under the unit-of-production method or any method of depreciation not expressed in a term of years.

Real estate—a delayed time bomb

ERTA dictates that real estate be depreciated over 15 years. That's good. You have a choice of two methods of cost recovery: the accelerated method, which yields larger cost recovery deductions in the early years; or the straight-line method, which gives you the same deduction—but smaller than the accelerated deduction in the early years. But careful, there is a potential tax trap.

Here is a simple—but practical—example that will make you stop and think before electing the accelerated method for commercial real estate. Sam Smart, who is in a solid 50 percent tax bracket, pays \$400,000 for a new game room building—\$100,000 is allocated to the land, \$300,000 to the building. Sam elects the accelerated method.

After 15 years, Sam sells the building for \$500,000. (Remember, after 15 years, all of the building's cost has been recovered via deductions.) The building's tax basis is zero; the land's tax basis is still \$100,000. Therefore, Sam's profit is \$400,000 (\$500,000 sale less \$100,000 tax basis). The tax bill on this profit is \$200,000 (\$400,000 x Sam's 50 percent tax bracket). Because Sam used the accelerated method, ERTA "recaptures" all of the cost recovery deducted. The recaptured amount is taxed as ordinary income. Ouch! That is the trap. Maybe this is Congress' way of punishing those that take a current tax break.

Suppose, instead, that Sam had elected the straight-line method. Then, the \$400,000 profit would be taxed as a capital gain. The top capital gains rate of 20 percent would result in only an \$80,000 (\$400,000 x 20 percent) tax bill—compared to \$200,000 in the first example. •

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Pizza Gameroom Tokens



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Find out what operators nationwide say about the coin-op industry in the Nov. 15 issue of Play Meter.

Playing the market:

Take stock of the current trend, still profit



Who wouldn't want a Pac-Man for Christmas?

If you managed to keep your head during the summer when business wasn't the best, you have to recognize that the assault has lessened somewhat in terms of new releases. In many ways, a saturation *plateau* has been reached, which is the way I think it should be described, since the inference isn't to suggest that the downward slope will continue.

In analyzing the situation, it becomes clear that the market can only handle so much of the same type of equipment. The shake-out (as many will call it) is due really not to the fact that all locations have been tapped to their limits, but rather that the multiple purchase philosophy has run its course with the current caliber of machines.

The reason is that the sudden entry of companies trying to capitalize on the video phenomenon has only glutted the market with copies and similar renditions of what have been the classic games of the last two years. Add different names, graphics, sound effects, and what-have-you and you're still stuck within the same generation of design that hasn't advanced as rapidly as it could.

If you don't catch the line of reasoning, just look at the number of maze, or even maze derivative games, that have burst on the scene. The same can be said for other motifs as well, reducing the player's selection of viably different challenges. Or, put another way, the video game manufacturers have taken what pinball manufacturers used to do (and had the luxury to afford because of popularity) by just rearranging the 'features' without rocking the boat.

essarily. However, the video player is different than the old-line pinball player, so the old-line rules and philosophy really don't endure as they used to. The proof of this is in the sharp drop-off of seasonal business. Although a given within the industry on an annual basis and always the case to some extent, seasonal business has never suffered to this degree—even with economic recession at hand.

If nothing else, the adjustment has been a healthy realization that the well can indeed run dry if it's not filled with new sources of nourishment. And so operators, as well as distributors, have become far more selective in their purchases, and the wealth of filler games has suffered because there is no void to service. In fact, at this stage, the industry finds itself product rich in terms of quantity and demand poor in terms of just what needs must be filled no matter what the location or the finicky nature of its players.

On the other side of this is the very real issue of replacement equipment. What will the trend be when the overflow becomes a very real consideration for making space available to fit in a stand-out machine? Or what will be the bottom line for trade-ins of recent vintage? Already the battle lines have seemingly been drawn, and things are tight to say the least.

In many ways this situation parallels the '30s when the games, primarily pins, dominated the business, and models were churned out with increasing frequency. Stories abound of good condition games priced originally at about \$20 to \$40, suddenly worth on resale or trade-in only \$10.

Apply to today

Although the span in value may not seem indicative of today's advanced state of the art, just try to envision a similar circumstance with appropriate

By Roger C. Sharpe

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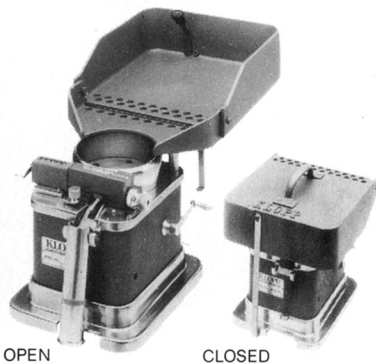


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dollar amounts substituted. You get a very real idea of what is about to come.

It's not all doom and gloom, however, nor do I want to sound an alarm that is without hope. There will, after all, be positive results from all this—not the least of which will be a temporary sensitivity to new games and whether they have the strength and staying power to make it over the long haul. The games will become better to serve the operator who has been burned once too often.

Also, those locations that have been large enough to sustain the flood of equipment, but now find space at a premium and vintage games no longer pulling their weight, will suddenly find some games' usefulness questioned. What's the games' incremental value to the total take vs. the space they occupy? After all, how many *Space Invaders* or even deluxe models are still pulling their weight in proportion to the other games in the lineup?

Are six of one game really an unnecessary and counterproductive luxury at this late date? Or would a location best be served by having only one or two? And if you consider the other, less notable, models that have done the job, it is easy to imagine that the re-evaluation or just the need for more cost-effective space will squeeze them out of the picture.

Remember the story about the '30s and the prices at the time? The punchline was that many distributors with nowhere else to turn in an attempt to salvage any real value, just buried the pins in a back room or, in some cases, literally buried them in the ground rather than submit to the monies they would have brought in return.

Last hope

It may not become that extreme, but I'd lay odds that when the time comes, an avenue not really open 50 years ago will become the prime source for this modern age as the last hope and road of least resistance.

What you'll find will be the renewed growth of the home market, the likes of which will surpass the wildest dreams of those golden days in the mid- to late '70s when pinball ruled the roost and almost anyone with space in a den, rec room, or even living room were paying to bring a bit of the arcade home.

And although you might well say that the home computer/video game center has cornered that market—which I admit has been substantially dented—what real game player or

status seeker residing in the suburbs wouldn't want to own the real McCoy in addition to its cartridge counterpart? And if the prices aren't totally beyond reason, don't think that this won't be attempted or that it won't succeed.

If all things remain equal and the video game explosion endures, which it shows no sign of doing otherwise, the Christmas season is going to be highlighted by not just the toy and computer manufacturers selling their knock-offs of the real thing. The season will feature the real-life inspirations standing alongside their far less substantial cousins, competing for that holiday gift dollar in distributor showrooms, locations, and even the envisioned rebirth of that cottage industry—the retailer/refurbisher of coin-op equipment selling not only games but also follow-up service.

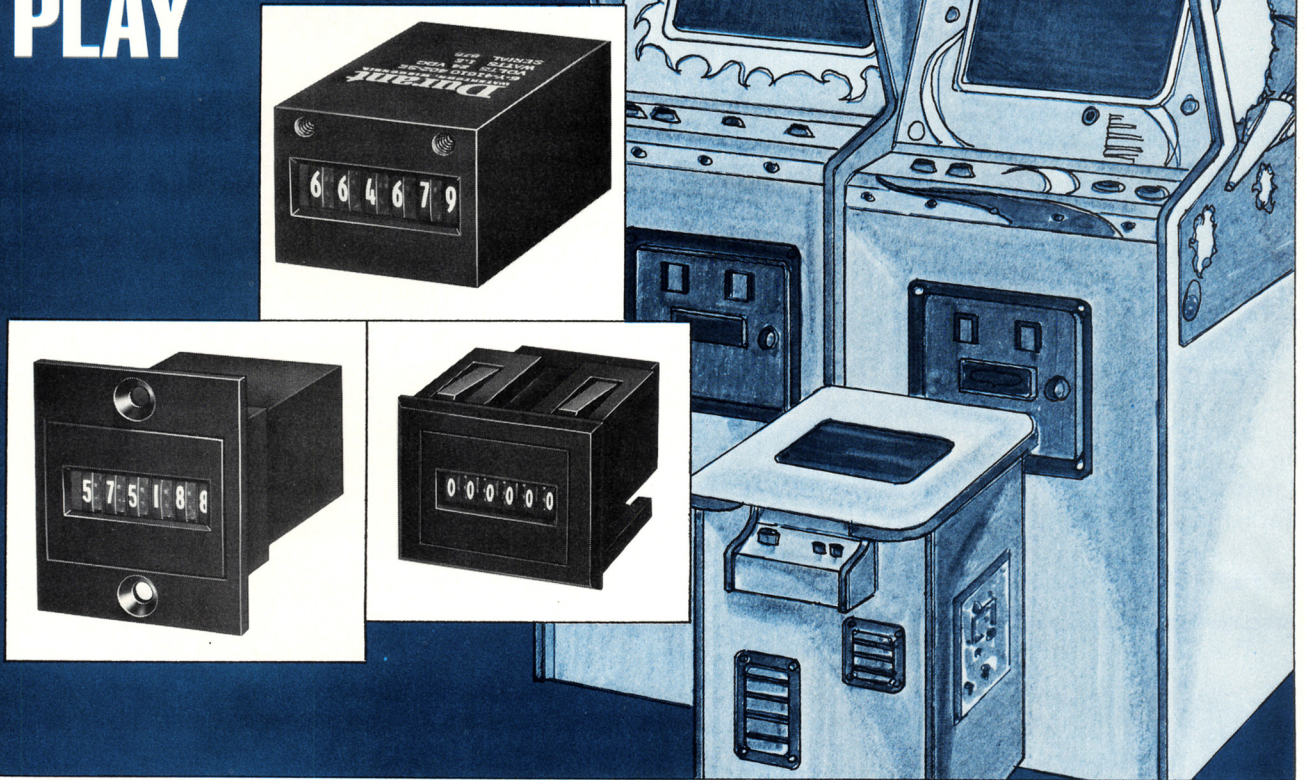
The scenario isn't that difficult to imagine, and if you do believe that the forecast can become fact, go to many game rooms and arcades today and you'll see small signs offering the sale of equipment. Isn't the time right to rethink what you might have been previously considering? Especially if you're in the position to take advantage of the situation, doesn't it pay to take a closer look at the option, and see how you might come out ahead on it and stir up some excitement?

Donate games

Another very real option open, one with immense tax consequences that has only been touched on in a limited way, is to donate those vintage survivors or even relatively new models that have overstayed the usefulness to local charity organizations, hospitals, youth centers, and the like so that the games can still fill a very valuable need. Not only is the suggestion here one of built-in promotional value and a philanthropic sense of giving something back to the community, but given the numbers thrown around in the media as to the worth—in earning power—of all video games (sometimes in excess of \$500 per week), you'll also find that your tax accountant may make the pot that much sweeter and irresistible when it comes to doing your books.

It's at least an option worth considering, with consequences far beyond that of normal day-to-day business. But no one is to say that whatever you ultimately do, you haven't kept up on the comings and goings of the market.

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TAX TIPS

By
Irving L.
Blackman

Watch out! The IRS' computer may get you

Many taxpayers resent the IRS' "Big brother is watching you" approach. But like it or not, the IRS has the job of making sure taxpayers comply with the law. On balance, the IRS does a fine job.

If you don't report income, the IRS would like to know. The "information return matching program" is a key toward helping accomplish this objective. The commissioner of Internal Revenue revealed some interesting numbers in his 1981 annual report. Would you believe that 645 million information documents were received?

About 840 out of every 1,000 of these were matched to verify that correct amounts were reported on taxpayers' returns.

More than 1.2 million taxpayers were notified in 1981 of potential discrepancies between income reported on their tax returns and income shown on the information returns. The information returns were also used as the basis for notifying 1.6 million taxpayers of apparent failure to file tax returns.

You might as well know it, the IRS seems to have found a good friend in

the computer. There is little likelihood that the information return program will do anything but grow.

Honesty is still the best policy. •

Irving L. Blackman is an attorney and the senior tax partner of Blackman, Kallick & Company, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants. Offices in Chicago (180 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601), Miami, and Houston. Irv's firm has established a HOTLINE to answer the tax and accounting questions of Play Meter readers. Call Irv or Jim Harfield at 312/782-3424.

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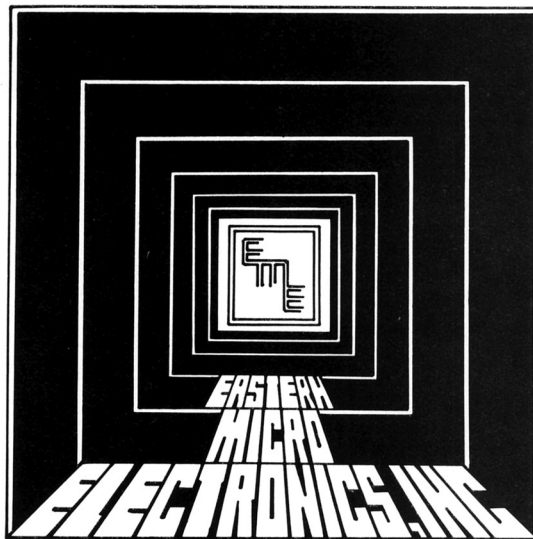
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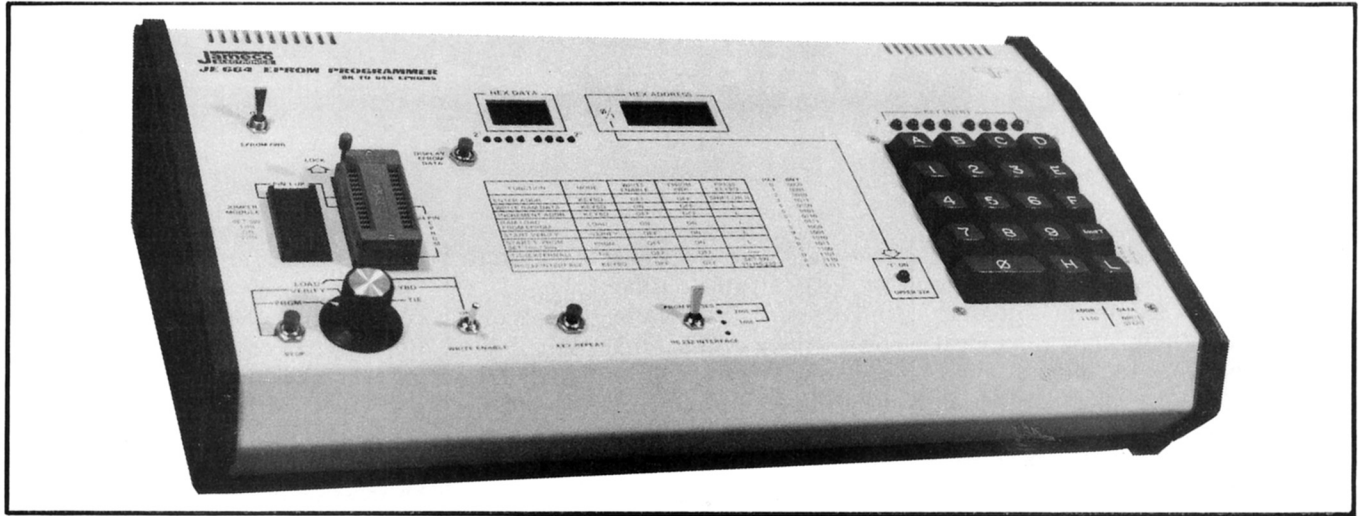
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PR PROBLEMS/ PR SOLUTIONS

What to say when...

The TV Talk Show

Because of its feature or soft-ware approach, a TV talk show is an ideal medium for you to discuss video games. But, if you have never been invited to appear on a show, how do you go about getting on?

The best approach is to write the producer of the program. Call the station to get his or her name, then write what is known as a "pitch" letter.

In the letter, suggest a story idea, such as "Are video games educational for youth?"—then briefly outline your opinion on the topic, and suggest yourself as an expert available to discuss it on the show. Include two items with the letter: (1) a one-page biographical sketch, and (2) a fact sheet on your business and its contributions to the community.

Once you're invited to appear on the show, take the time to prepare yourself for the interview and get your facts ready.

Your preparation also should include boning up on the program and its host. Here are a few questions you should ask when you're invited to appear:

- Will there be other guests? Who?
- How long is the interview to be?
- Who is the interviewer?
- What general areas will be covered?
- What time should you arrive at the station?
- Will it be taped or live? When will it air?
- Do they want visuals, such as a slide of a video game? When should you get that to the station?

- Can you challenge the host to play a game on the air?

Do your homework on the program by watching it. What time of the day is it shown? Who will be watching—mothers, children, or the whole family? What's the interviewer's approach? Is he friendly or relaxed? Or does she take an investigative approach?

Nervousness before a TV appearance is normal...just before going on the set, take a half-dozen breaths.

The TV News Interview

Unlike the soft approach of a TV talk show host, a news reporter will ask the tough questions. That doesn't mean you should avoid him or be any more nervous about the interview.

The key point to remember with a news interview is that you will have less time to answer the questions. If you try to give lengthy, roundabout answers, they will be edited and your most important point may be lost.

For this reason, strive for short, snappy answers in a 30-second "nugget." Turn a reporter's question to your advantage.

For instance, to get across the idea that video games are enjoyable and harmless entertainment, you might answer a reporter's question on

whether games are gambling this way: "No, the games are not like gambling because they don't pay off the player. But they are enjoyable entertainment for everyone, and people may want to play them often to improve their skills."

Here are some common mistakes business people make in interviews:

- Assuming the reporter is "out to get me." You shouldn't think because a reporter asks a certain question, he supports that position. Thinking so may make you unnecessarily defensive.
- Assuming everything you say is going to be aired. Strive for short "nuggets."
- Assuming you have no control over the interview but are simply at the mercy of the reporter. You're entitled to be treated with dignity. Media professionals make their share of mistakes. Don't feel shy about asking them to repeat a question or correcting them. You know your business better than they do.

If you have a chance, get acquainted with a reporter during the setup period. You can find out how much he knows about your business and let him know where you stand.

Appearance

Although you will want to appear natural, there are some generally accepted rules about what to wear on television. Avoid high-contrast or flashy clothes. Plaids and pinstripes, unless they are subtle, will vibrate on the screen. These will detract from what you have to say. A medium gray

suit, blue shirt, and plain tie are the most effective.

If you're balding, you may need a light dusting of powder, which the station will have on hand. If you're nervous and perspire a lot, use an astringent lotion.

Body language

Nervousness before a TV appearance is normal. To relax yourself just before going on the set, take a half-dozen deep breaths. This will increase your oxygen supply, slow your heart rate, and make you feel more relaxed.

Don't smoke on the set. It detracts from what you're trying to say.

Let your enthusiasm show; sit up; lean forward; smile. But restrict your gestures. TV is an intimate medium and often all that shows is your head and shoulders. If you make a broad gesture, not only will it be lost, but also the camera may lose your head while you're making it. That doesn't mean you should forget about the rest of your body. Once in awhile the camera will do a long shot.

If you have a prop—such as a game—let the producer know ahead of time so he can prepare for a close-up.

In general, talk to the interviewer and ignore the camera. Listen attentively. Many times the director will be taking reaction shots of you as the interviewer speaks—so you're always "on."

Microphones are highly sensitive. Let the station personnel attach it to you and take it off, and don't touch it during the interview.

Radio Interviews

Radio news operates on even tighter schedules than television news. The average radio interview lasts just a few minutes, and of that, less than a minute will probably be used on any one newscast. Thus, your responses should be especially short and to the point—no more than 30 seconds or about 120 words.

Editing is the rule, so isolate your main point at the beginning of your answer. Expect everything to hit the cutting room floor unless it is especially exciting or entertaining.

Most radio interviews are taped over the phone. For engineering reasons, the interviewer sometimes has to

tuck the telephone mouthpiece under the chin, so his or her voice may sound somewhat remote. Resist your natural impulse to speak in a half-shout as you would over a genuinely bad connection.

Be especially careful not to overlap the interviewer's question. Start your answer only when you're sure the interviewer is finished. This allows the editor to cut the telephone interviewer out and to insert another reporter's

voice. To do otherwise is unnecessarily frustrating and makes your interview harder to get on the air as you meant it.

This information was reprinted from "A Community Relations Manual for the Coin-operated Amusement Games Industry" by the Amusement and Music Operators Association, Amusement Games Manufacturers Association, and Amusement and Vending Machine Distributors Association.

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CRITIC'S CORNER

By
Roger C.
Sharpe

A seasonal catch: the new machines fall into place

The rumors continue to fly about regarding who's doing what, and it's interesting that the shakeout with equipment has happened so rapidly. Just because it might be a video game doesn't mean that it will be an instant winner, which many are beginning to find out the hard way. The glut is veritably choking some operators, and to say that business is tight as a drum, would be an understatement as manufacturers scurry about looking for some solutions to stem the tide.

But then, even the most naive or wishful thinking individuals had to believe that reality would strike at some time. After all, not every machine has the potential to be a winner, nor can the surrounding economic environment not be a factor for earnings on location. These things alone have brought levels back down to earth, although there will always be room for the big effort that stands apart from the crowd.

The major curiosity for this writer is just what all that means for the coin-op business. The pre-AMOA push has already begun in some quarters, and the announcements of the likes of Atari with "E.T." and the Lucas (of "Star Wars" fame) group, among others, brings the anticipation to a greater level. In addition, Sega's *Subroc 3D* is eagerly awaited to see if this could prove to be the next plateau in creative design and development.

But that's not all there is to the story of what's happening. I'm troubled by the lack of more variety in products. Oh, sure, there are the stories of pinball still bringing to life the genuine three-dimensional play and even some

attempts at repackaging the format into video cabinets and what-have-you. But there's a need for more which ideally the gun games could have provided if they had been more warmly received.

It's not going to be enough to rehash old ideas and dress them up.

Diversity is needed

The point is that no matter how successful video can prove ultimately to be, the industry needs more diversity in its offerings if it is to ever leap beyond its own viability for the future. What this means is that there's more to leisure time coin-operated entertainment than what we have now, and it's not being tapped to its fullest. Even if a new art form were to be created from the existing video game format, it would be a tremendous boom to the industry and the players. However, there at least needs to be the effort—even if it falls short of the mark.

I look at the micropin of recent vintage as a possible point of departure or even the resurrection of those mini-vids which came and went. If

nothing else, these and other renditions that always seemed to surface at the big Chicago convention showed that somewhere the search for novelty wasn't dead. Maybe this year we will once again have the opportunity to sit in judgment of somebody's crude effort to get a machine format off the ground—who knows.

Anyway you look at it, change is going to have to come if the business is going to grow. It's not going to be enough to rehash old ideas and dress them up. With pinball this was possible for many years but hardly was the audience as sophisticated or knowledgeable as it is now.

Besides, if nothing else, there's less play with a video screen in terms of shifting things around. At least with pinball you had the chance to alter a board's layout. Pinball suffered for the practice and so too will video if new avenues aren't explored to keep up with the times.

As mentioned last time around, because of the proliferation of games coming out, in an attempt to stay on top of the action and give you more timely reviews, this issue's C's C will include some miniviews of games, as well as the longer write-ups you've become familiar with over the years. See what you think...

Gottlieb's Spirit

It's difficult to believe that pinball can't still be a viable addition to many locations when you see a fully packed effort such as this one, which has more nooks, crannies, and subtle touches to involve players than many of the other middle-of-the-road games.

Plainly, Gottlieb keeps on pushing

and one has to wonder if the commitment won't pay off over the long haul, especially if it keeps trying new approaches to stretch the limits of just what can be done with a flipper machine.

PLAYFIELD: Here's a design that maximizes existing space and brings into play a number of strategies and options. The ball enters and wraps around to the left side of the board, where there's an upper kick-out hole and three lower lanes that control bonus multiplier up to 6X.

Move over toward the center of the board, and there's a little roundabout that can also activate a stargate when lit, and it features a standing target just below for lighting B-A. Just to the right of this is a three-bank of drop targets that tie in with spelling out S-P-I-R-I-T.

Back at the left is a lone thumper bumper below the lanes and a single small flipper placed more in the center of the field. Just below this is another kick-out hole, as well as a lone target (1) just to the right. Continuing to move over to the right is a deep set center ramp up to a top level of the

game, which is also a stargate (introduced on *Mars*) that can be up allowing the ball to roll around to a top hole for instant multiball play.

Returning to the center, just to the right are two targets (2 and 3) that side a shorter ramp for access to the top field and fronts a roll around behind the ramp for potential bonus multiplier when lit. And over to the far right is another kick-out hole and a last target (4). The top field, which is to the right, offers a lone flipper and set of three drop targets, as well as an upper right target for lighting L-L.

As for the bottom, there's been a twist from convention that brings together some long kicking rubbers with interior lanes down to the flippers and out lanes which offer smaller flippers at the base for possibly saving the ball and hitting a recessed target for activating the stargate when lit.

ANALYSIS: On the surface, *Spirit* is an intimidating game because the board is so full that it's difficult to make rhyme or reason on what the purpose is. But after a few games, the nuances show through, and all that's left is feeling comfortable with the full

array of shots and features.

The three kick-out holes alternate being lit for locking up a ball, and when all have been filled, it's time for automatic multiball play. Another option is to fill one or more, but not all of the holes, or not get any locked, land in the top center stargate hole, and also trigger multiball play. But that's only part of the game with the various targets around the board also increasing values and the spelling out of the game's name for a potential special.

All in all, there's plenty to go for with some nice, long shots up the ramps and also around the horseshoe, as well as to that top left kick-out hole. And an extra touch is the addition of those out-lane flippers, which bring into play an extra set of flipper buttons on the side of the cabinet, as well as some quick reflexes to keep the action going.

Taken in segments, there's some good balance top to bottom and accessibility to the majority of primary targets from the lower flippers with that upper center surprisingly alive due to the closeness of the target bank

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and the power of the small flipper.

In fact, with all the movement around the board, it's easy to forget that there's only one thumper bumper included, since during play it seems like there is a lot more help in many of the key areas.

GRAPHICS: Movement in the backglass, a la *Black Hole*, returns with a ghostly vision of floating forms in a sea of blue. The effect is eye-catching, and the sound supports the total package that is far different than some of the company's recent pinball games. All in

all, it's on the mark with the motif carried through on the field in both tonal quality and theme.

PLAY: The scoring on *Spirit*, probably more than any of the other seven-digit games from Gottlieb, takes full advantage of the point displays and provides, as a result, a wide range of options when it comes to setting limits. In those areas where add-a-ball play is warranted (or at least extra ball, since Gottlieb doesn't retain multiple extra balls accrued on a single turn), you should be all right with a 600,000

point first limit followed by about 1,800,000 points.

Meanwhile for free play you might want to increase these levels by about 200,000 to 400,000 points each depending once again on your percentage and caliber of players.

PROS & CONS: Despite the obvious glut of features on the board and probably because of this, there are some restrictions from the flippers as to what can be gotten and how. For example, that stargate ramp at the top middle of the field is blocked for the lower right flipper but not the small flipper or lower left flipper. And that right-side kick-out hole and (4) target are primarily left-side flipper shots, while that long run to the top left is from the bottom right flipper, although a quick shot from the smaller flipper can lift the ball into and through this area.

However, these are small points in regard to the total reach of play inherent in the action and are compensated by ample scoring opportunities almost everywhere. It just takes getting used to the effect of the playfield placements and a determination by the player as to what has more value during the course of a game. More importantly, the game doesn't suffer for this and remains a challenging piece that should satisfy players of all skill levels.

RATING: *Spirit* might be looked at as trying to do too much, but in these times for pinball this should be seen as an advantage and should prove its worth over time as a strong ### game that has more than enough to offer.

Destron/GDI's *Slither*

Throughout the history of the industry, there have been companies who have fulfilled the role of rounding out the variety of product offered at any given time—sometimes with great success and more often than not, surviving on sheer good fortune alone.

This manufacturer has basically walked the line between these two extremes with some respectable renditions of themes and play action that tend to parody recognizable strategies. This isn't a value judgment one way or the other, but rather an acceptance of the role these companies play in providing options to the operators.

PLAY: Resurrecting the name of a highly forgettable movie which came and went a few years ago, *Slither*

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brings a track ball and dual fire button into play for battle in a world of snakes, mutant gorillas, pterodactyls, and vegetation over a landscape that changes color the farther along a player can go.

Borrowing heavily on the appeal and popularity of *Centipede*, this effort offers firing capabilities that can go up and/or down and movement via the track ball that keeps the action non-stop and a measure of pinpoint accuracy to make every shot count. There's a fairly full screen of obstacles and targets to maneuver around and increasing levels of difficulty.

ANALYSIS: Similar to *Centipede*, GDI's *Slither* is a game where there can be very defined strategies for players and an opportunity for spill over if the Atari effort is taken, which is undoubtedly the rationale behind the existence of the machine. Its strength may well lie, however, in the fact that the screen seems much more wide open and available for a greater range of creativity in how players try to maximize their shots. This familiarity should, if nothing else, help to position the game on location.

GRAPHICS: Using bright colors for the cabinet helps to make the game a bit more of a standout, while the tones on screen only aid this overall effect that's bright and pleasing. The forms on screen have a dimension and what can only be described as an intangible quality that's refreshing and anything but impersonal. So for this alone, *Slither* scores high in its basic presentation and packaging.

PROS & CONS: Track ball games tend to have their own formula for action that tends to appeal to a wider range of players than was originally envisioned if one thinks back to its introduction on sports' video games. This was probably helped by *Missile Command* and the highly popular *Centipede* and should prove to be a factor here in terms of drawing power.

As for the action and the level of inherent challenge, this control once again plays an important role because of its inherent tenuousness for players to master since the sensitive touch is what becomes vital along with the necessity for more interaction by the player that buttons or even joysticks tend to approximate but not duplicate. As for the nature of the action, it more than sustains the level of participation needed to get into the game.

RATING: Admittedly not a breakthrough in design or concept, *Slither* still affords some respectable action and diversity from the norm of what's available and should find a strong niche among many players. There's really nothing that overwhelms here, but then that probably wasn't the idea behind its creation and should, with the gaining of a well earned ###, help to solidify Destron/GDI's place in the market as something more than filler equipment which deserves, in truth, something more than just passing

attention.

Centuri's Tunnel Hunt

With much anticipation, we get a licensed effort from Atari by way of Hialeah, Fla., and the reaction of trying to get a grip on a machine that is decidedly different yet reminiscent of some videos from the past, dressed up for a new day and age.

PLAY: The controls are a basic joystick with fire button at the top, as well as a shield button on the front panel for taking flight in a world of tonal

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shades that offer the effect of movement down never-ending corridors, where the enemy lies in wait for a battle of timing and accuracy that is a rapid transit journey.

In reality, *Tunnel Hunt* is a very simplistic game that builds upon the theme and its own graphic presentation rather than emphasizing a more sophisticated line of activity that, in its present form, detracts and only muddles what was the ultimate aim.

ANALYSIS: By its design, *Tunnel Hunt* draws players into its action on screen as it propels the movement forever within its walls. Think of an accordion and being inside or the scene in the movie "Tron," when there's a chase down passages that seem to be constantly whirling by, and you get an idea of the effect.

There's an on-screen cross-hair for lining targets, but the real challenge is in navigating the course and not getting carried away by the surrounding activity that is a true test of sense and control. However, even this can be self-limiting for players who might be more used to a different vision of video and reluctant to take on this deviation from the norm.

GRAPHICS: The cabinet configuration is difficult to ignore with sides that tend to envelope players with its greater width that tries to take advantage of the total effect. It's an attractive alternative and probably points the way to a further development of encasing players within their own fantasy world.

As for the graphics on screen, there's the attempt to make something more by using shades of color and a feeling of movement that gives depth to the field, which overshadows the basic play of *Tunnel Hunt* and makes it something more than what it might appear to be on the surface.

PROS & CONS: There is a nagging suspicion that Atari might not have felt that *Tunnel Hunt* was that great of a game since it decided to farm it out to someone else. But this shouldn't take away from the presentation of what's featured and how it's packaged. A certain repetitiveness is involved with the theme and how it comes across, but measured against the field, this might be a positive feature that will aid the staying power of the game.

However, the nature of the action is going to segment the market and the potential appeal to a select audience

that is going to be better in some locations and not present in others. So operators are going to have to be sensitive judges when it comes to deciding whether the game is a viable addition to the line-up.

RATING: There's a mixed reaction to *Tunnel Hunt* for a variety of reasons too complex to delineate here, but suffice it to say that it's either going to find a place or fade quickly from view on the strength of its visual effects. The feeling here is that the marketplace might not come to it easily or on a repeated basis because it is so different than what has been hitting the streets of late. For this reason alone, let's go with a ##, and see what the draw will be.

Miniviews

Other games to be on the lookout for include Sega's *Zektor* which takes this company away from the graphic realism of its last two machines. Instead it brings a story within a story along with some respectable speech and play action that, for this reviewer, tends to bridge the gap between *Eliminator* and *Space Duel*. Other nuances are thrown in that bear closer scrutiny and attention. In all, it looks like good standard fare that holds out the hope for something more which might just trigger player reaction.

Also in the news is Taito's *Space Dungeon* with a dual joystick control, a world of treasures to be found, enemies to be eliminated, and a layout, visually, that tends to heighten the sensation of being a bit more than *Amidar* with the closing up of boxes, or even *Qix*.

And the list goes on with the recent; as of this writing, appearance of the follow-up to *Donkey Kong* that looks to be just as strong and attractive if not more so compared to its inspiration. Atari's newest effort combines brilliant colors and a rehash of some basic action already defined by past efforts such as *Lunar Lander*. Plus more creation called *Jungle King* comes from Taito, and there's the traveling obstacle course of Williams' *Moon Patrol* and much, much more.

The months ahead should prove to be interesting as the activity and competition heat up for what is hoped to be a strong finish to the year. However, stay with me, and I'll try to keep you current as best I can. Until next time then, as always, be well and prosper. •

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OUR 'CADES

By Bill Kurtz

What is an arcade?

When is an arcade not an arcade?

When it's a street location.

Every operator knows arcades and street locations are two different operations. But to many of the legislators passing ordinances against video games, if a business operates even one game, it's automatically branded an arcade.

Things would be easy if there were an industrywide standard saying "More than x number of games is an arcade." But there isn't.

The *Play Meter* Equipment Poll, for instance, differentiates between game earnings in arcades and street locations, with 10 or more games qualifying a location as an arcade.

One of the few definitions of an arcade is in the Ohio Music and Amusement Association's model ordinance. While some parts of the definition are vague, it still provides many helpful guidelines for separating arcades from street locations.

The ordinance defines an arcade as "Any establishment, room, or place where more than two coin-operated amusement devices are available to the public and which derives more than 50 percent of its gross revenues in the city from coin-operated amusement devices."

This revenue requirement alone should clear up a lot of confusion about what's an arcade and what's a street location. Joe's Pizza may have 12 video games, but it probably makes much more than half its money from pizza sales. Thus, Joe's Pizza is *not* an arcade.

The same rule applies to record shops, convenience food stores, T-shirt shops, and anyplace else that has games as a sideline.

The ordinance also defines an arcade as "Anyplace where more than four coin-operated amusement devices

are available to the public."

I'd go even further and raise the minimum number of games to seven or eight, so the location is assured of looking like a coin-op business instead of just a place where the owner stores a few unneeded games for a fast buck.

Under the OMAA definition, though, you could rent a 10 foot by 10 foot room, drop in four machines, and call it an arcade. Not a big arcade, but still an arcade.

Probably the most important part of the definition is that an arcade never serves liquor. "Arcade" does not mean any establishment that has been issued a liquor permit by the state of Ohio."

Unfortunately, the ordinance would allow beer, wine, and malt liquors for carryout to be sold, which is treading on thin ice for such an image-conscious industry.

I personally think any definition of an arcade should also require the location to be supervised by a uniformed attendant.

While most arcades already conform to this requirement, game rooms in hotels and bowling alleys, for instance, seldom have full-time attendants watching the games, and a supervision regulation would further clarify the difference between an arcade and a street location.

The point is that size alone doesn't determine an arcade. A location with eight games can be just as much an arcade as a location with 80 games.

Factors such as liquor sales, the games' income compared with location revenue, and supervision are all part of the determination.

Until we have an industrywide standard for defining arcades or more guidelines like the OMAA's, operators should be careful not to think of every place with numerous games as an arcade or only one or two machines as a street location.

PUZZLES

By David Pierson

$$4 \times 5 = \cancel{20} \quad 10??$$

Henry W. Smith always believed a little ingenuity and imagination could go a long way—especially in the arcade business.

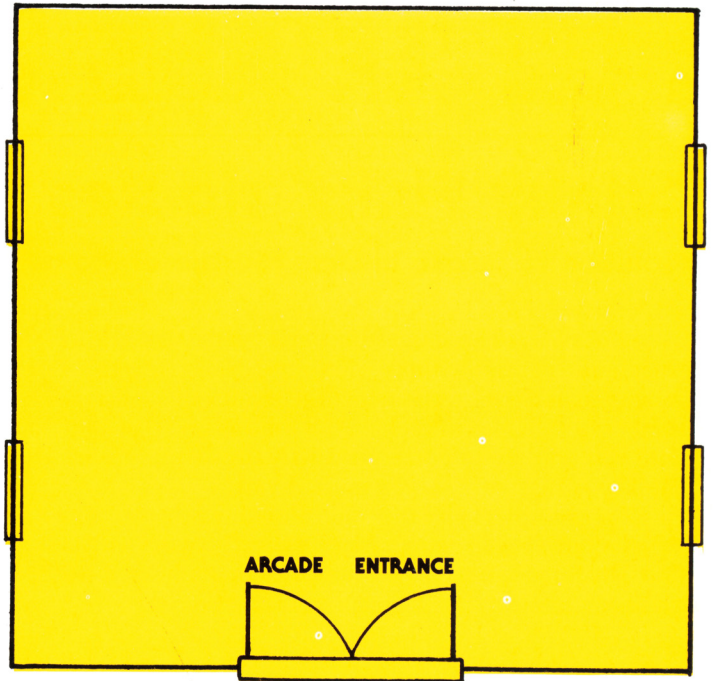
Against the advice of his friends, he opened an amusement center in River City but with only enough capital to buy 10 games. Yet ingenuity was the key, he figured. So he arranged the 10 games in a novel configuration to make it appear to his customers he had more games in his arcade than were actually there.

How did he do it?

With mirrors, you say?

Nope.

Henry was hardly an illusionist. He arranged his 10 measly games in five rows of four games each. That way, no matter which row a patron went down, he always had a row of four different games asking for his quarters.



It must've worked because his amusement center was quickly filled with playing customers who always insisted there were more than 10 games in the place.

Can you duplicate Henry's feat? Remember, it takes ingenuity...

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

By Bill Brohaugh

'Stinky Pinky' riddles

(Solution to puzzle in Oct. 15 issue of *Play Meter*, page 18)

I once played an interesting parlor game. Despite its ridiculous name—"Stinky Pinky"—the game is a fascinating mental exercise. I will give you a clue, plus the number of syllables in each half of the answer. Using the clue, you will try to come up with a two-word answer. The key is that both words must rhyme.

For example, I give the clue: "Popping post (2)." The "2" means that each word in the answer has two syllables. Two rhyming words that describe a popping post are "thumper bumper," and that is your answer.

Clues:

1. Complaints from *Play Meter's* pinball critic. (1)

2. The face-lift that *Star Wars* forced on coin-op games. (2)

3. Bally's movable control device. (2)

4. "Death row," where you often lose the ball. (1)

5. Trick question: The strength of the creator of *Space Invaders*. (2)

6. Flaw in a coin-op phonograph. (1)

7. Person addicted to this Williams' video. (3)

8. If you consider putting "The Greatest" on a pin a mistake. (2)

9. Taverns that feature this Gottlieb pin (also, candy). (1)

10. Tallying the bonus on a pin. (1)

11. Noise from a pinball machine. (1)

12. The backglasses of *Cleopatra* and *Pharoah* (3)

13. This clue has four answers: Video games whose names are "stinky pinkies"—that is, they rhyme.

14. This clue has four answers: Pinballs whose names are "stinky pinkies."

15. Editor that demands that this quiz comes to an end.

ANSWERS

1. Sharpe's carps.
2. Spacial facial.
3. Zipper flipper.
4. Drain lane.
5. Might o' Taito (I said it was a trick question.)
6. Juke fluke.
7. *Defender* dependar.
8. *Ali* folly.
9. *Mars* bars.
10. More score.
11. Pin din.
12. Egyptian depiction (Yeah, I know I'm stretching it, but what the hell.)
13. New York! New York!
Warp Warp
Gee Bee
Tora Tora
14. Joker Poker
Black Jack
Evel Knievel
Hokus Pokus
15. Puzzle muzzle.

FRANK'S CRANKS

By Frank Seninsky

Tired of change?

Convert to token mechs

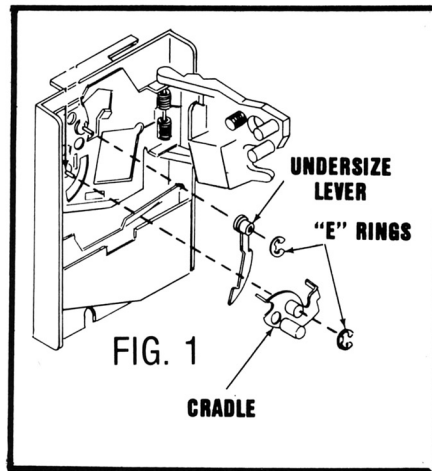
With crime on the rise, it's only a matter of time before many operators of coin-operated games convert to tokens. Aside from the promotional advantages, the security of using tokens is reason enough.

In locations where my games were constantly broken into, this problem has simply vanished since I converted to tokens. There have been no break-ins, and I feel comfortable knowing that the bill changers aren't a prime target now that they are filled with tokens and usually very few bills.

Conversion methods

I've received numerous calls about the cost and methods of converting to tokens. The following is a summary of the various alternatives:

1. Plastic token mechanisms can be purchased from Coin Acceptors Co. As far as I know, Coin Acceptors is the only manufacturer that is making a plastic token acceptor mechanism. It



sells these mechs to the various token manufacturers and distributors, so they are easily obtained. Each mech costs approximately \$8, and they are naturally cheaper when purchased in large quantities (about \$7.50 each). These plastic mechs have three adjustments: (a) gap—limits the thickness of the token, (b) kicker, and

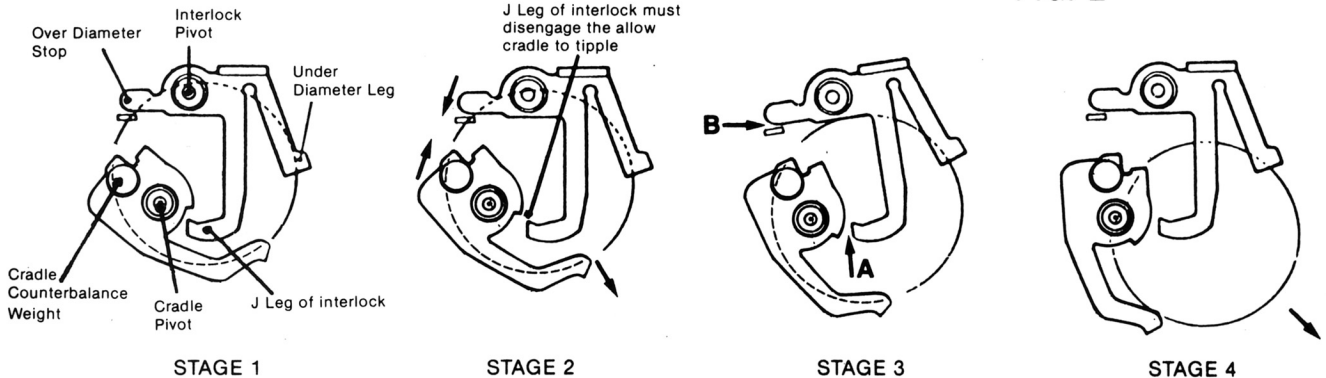
(c) separator. The kicker and separator are located on the back of the mech and are adjustable for fine acceptance or rejection. These plastic mechs are excellent, and once adjusted, will work as well as any mech. The only disadvantage is the cost.

2. If an \$8/mech seems a little steep, it's good to know that most of the metal mechs can easily be modified to take a token for a much less price.

The cheapest method that gives some security against acceptance of other sized coins involves bending the cradle and removing the undersize lever, if necessary. (See Figure 1.) Choose a token size that is just smaller than a quarter—.900 inches diameter is a common choice. Bend the ends of the cradle in (making it hold the token) until it fits as shown in Figure 2, stage 1. This is easier done on Coin Mech and Coin Co. acceptors than on Coin Control acceptors. If each cradle is done perfectly, the mech will be fairly reliable.

Fig. 2 The adjustment of the cradle and interlock.

FIG. 2

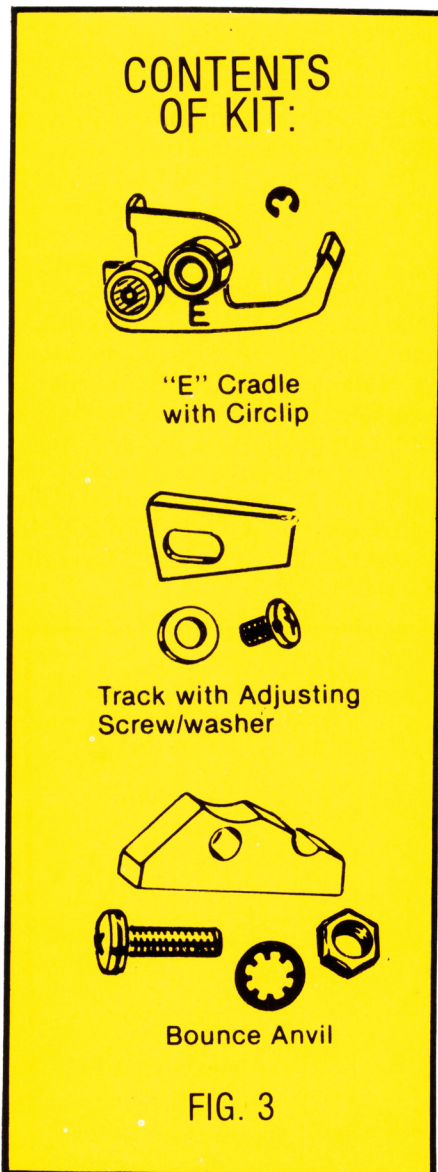


For finer setting when required, minimize gap A & B in 3 by bending over diameter stop and under diameter leg. Check with new and well worn coins.

This method only works for tokens approximately the size of a quarter. I don't recommend this method because the adjustments are too critical, and there can be problems with larger or smaller coins jamming up the mech. If you choose this method, don't forget to adjust the gap, kicker, and separator for a few different tokens. Remember, the cheapest is not necessarily the best.

3. A cheap but more precise method is to buy just the cradle that is the size of your token, and replace the cradles on the existing 25 cent mechs. Each cradle may cost about \$1.30. After the cradle is replaced, adjust the gap, kicker, and separator. This method works fine on Coin Mech and Coin Co. acceptors, and I recommend it after the plastic mech as far as reliability is concerned.

4. Coin Controls Inc. now makes a



universal token conversion kit. I've seen kit #4080 that can be used to modify the Coin Controls series 10 acceptor mechanism. This kit is inexpensive and gives the operator the option for very fine selection settings. The contents of the kit includes a cradle, metal track, and a bounce anvil. (See Figure 3.) To do the conversion, perform the following steps: (See Figure 4.)

Step 1. Remove the body of the mechanism from the game.

Step 2. Install the bounce anvil with the screw, washer, and nut provided in the lower of the two holes in the mech.

Step 3. Remove the separator from the rear of the mech. It won't be required. Save it in case you ever wish to convert back to quarter size.

Step 4. Remove the small track, and install the larger track supplied with the kit. Position the track with the screw in the center of the slot, for now.

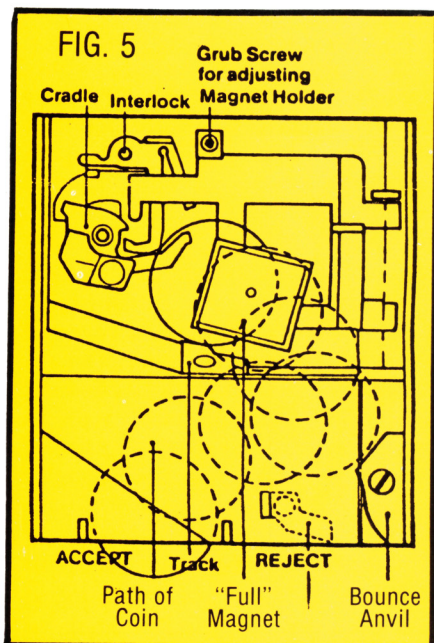
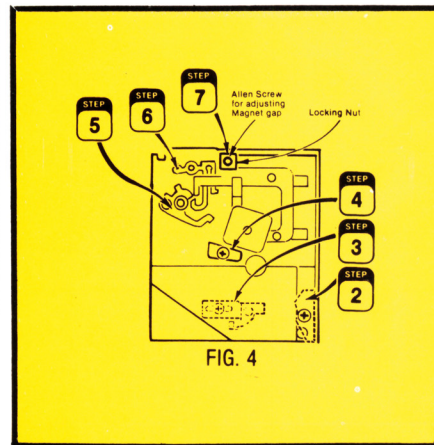
Step 5. For tokens smaller than a quarter, install the replacement cradle (labeled E). Make sure the circlip (E Ring) is fully locked in place, and the cradle pivots easily. For finer settings, the interlock must be bent very carefully to minimize the over diameter stop (gap B in Figure 2, stage 3) and minimize gap A, also shown. If your token is smaller than .900, the j-leg of the interlock can be removed. This will lighten the interlock and make it possible for the smaller, lighter token to pivot through the interlock and cradle section.

Step 6. Figure 4 shows the interlock.

Step 7. The magnet gap should next be adjusted by loosening the square lock nut and adjusting the Allen screw. All magnet gaps are adjusted by first closing the gap so that the coin won't fit through and then slowly increasing the gap until the coin first drops through. Then you can increase the gap slightly by turning clockwise another quarter of a turn. The last figure (Figure 5) shows the path that the tokens will take when all the adjustments are made correctly.

Simple method

Lastly, there is a simple way to convert the style mechs that are used for example on *Donkey Kong* and *Moon Crestor*. With the mech still in the game, loosen the two screws that hold the top guide rail in place. These screws should be easy to locate because they are the only adjustments



on the mech (unless your particular mech has a gap adjustment screw).

Place the token in the track, and lower the top rail until it is just above the token top. The adjustment between "accept" and "not accept" can be as small as 1/64 inch, so take your time and get it perfect. The top rail will always remain parallel to the bottom rail.

The first mech I did of this type took me 20 minutes, but the rest were easy once I realized how precise the adjustments must be. Once you have it set so that it works for a handful of tokens, tighten the set screws and you're done.

I want to thank Aaron Steelmon, sales representative for Coin Controls Inc. in Elk Grove, Ill., for sending me a sample of its Universal Token Conversion Kit. If you have questions about the conversions, the people at Coin Acceptors Co. will also be able to help you.

Reply to a letter

I've been asked to reply to a letter sent to *Play Meter* regarding its Aug. 1 interview with me.

The letter was sent by Stephen Clifford of Clifford Amusements in Benzonia, Mich., and reads: "One statement in the Aug. 1 interview with Frank Seninsky bothers me. He said that "All the money that they (operators) make in the first year, they can apply, if they're lucky, 20 percent of that to the purchase price of the game."

I agree with me, Mr. Clifford. The wording isn't clear, some words were left out, and the 20 percent figure is definitely wrong. The topic being discussed is how long does it take for an operator to pay for a game? This time period depends on the game, the location, and the operator's overhead.

An operator doesn't put all his revenues from a game toward the purchase price of the game. Yet many will say they paid for the game in 12 months, 10 months, or three months. If a game cost \$2,600 and grosses \$100 per week for one year, the operator might think that the game is paid for at the end of the first year—he received 50 percent of \$5,200 which equals \$2,600.

Add overhead costs

This is not realistic because the operator has overhead expenses (rent, insurance, electricity, licenses, phone, salary, gas, vehicles, parts, and interest).

A few years ago, a \$50/week (operator's end) take was acceptable. Overhead was less, and the game prices were less. Today, because of increased overhead and the reality that the games lose their value by the end of the first year, you simply can't make a profit if you buy and place new games that only gross \$100 per week.

I try to use \$75/week (operator's end) as an average guideline figure for new equipment. I might add that this seems to be a high figure to hope for.

In general, the average operator spends anywhere between 40-50 percent of his gross income on game purchases. To spend anymore would make it almost impossible to make any profit unless, of course, overhead can be cut down drastically.

I hope this clears up the question for most of us as to how much to buy and how much a game should gross. •



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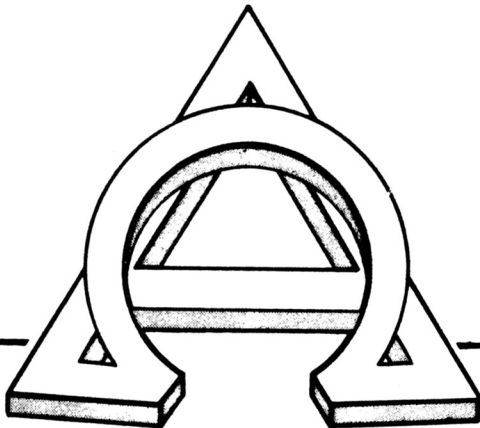
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"A durable soccer machine which stands on the operator's route with minute maintenance is now available," said McCloud. "Survivor truly stands on its own merit."

Frank says, "This is the best made foosball table; I wouldn't recommend it otherwise."

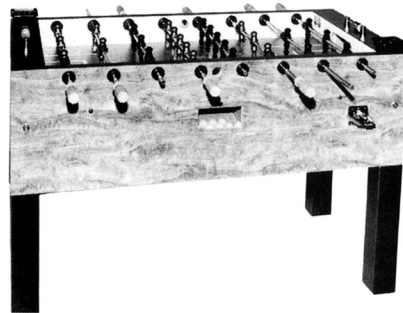
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POWER SUPPLY DESIGN COURSE PDS-1

Lesson Three: Half-Wave (HW) Rectifier Design

Editor's Note: The material below is a serialization of the Kurz Kasch correspondence course for electronics, designed specifically for the coin-operated amusement industry. This course is copyrighted and owned by Kurz Kasch of Dayton, Ohio, and its reprinting is being sponsored jointly by Kurz Kasch and Play Meter magazine. This material is authorized for publication exclusively in Play Meter magazine.

Lesson Three – Half-Wave (HW) Rectifier Design: This third lesson teaches the student to design a half-wave rectifier. It is important that the student fully understands this and the following two lessons, for the principles learned will be important towards the understanding of later lessons.

THE HALF-WAVE RECTIFIER :

The half-wave (HW) rectifier circuit is shown in fig. 3-1 along with its current and voltage waveforms. Notice that the DC output voltage, V_O , is not a pure DC but a **pulsating DC** (PDC). Secondly, the output waveforms show the diode conducting during only one alternation of the input waveform. Also notice that the current waveform, I , is identical to the voltage waveform. The amplitude of the current waveform is determined by the Ohms Law value of V_O and R_L .

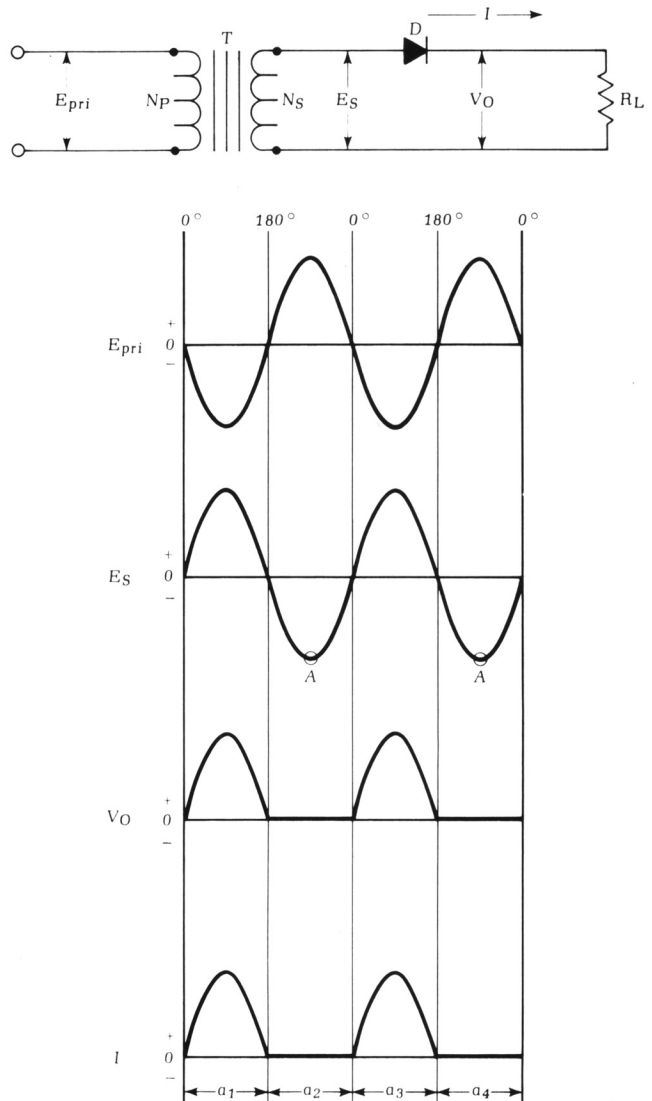


Fig. 3—1: A half-wave rectifier circuit and waveform associated with it. The transformer secondary voltage, E_s , is inverted 180° from the primary voltage, E_p . V_o is termed a pulsating DC. The output current, I , flows only during alternations a_1 and a_3 .

E_s , the transformer secondary voltage, can be found by use of the formula :

$$E_S = \frac{N_s}{N_p} \times E_{pri} \quad (4)$$

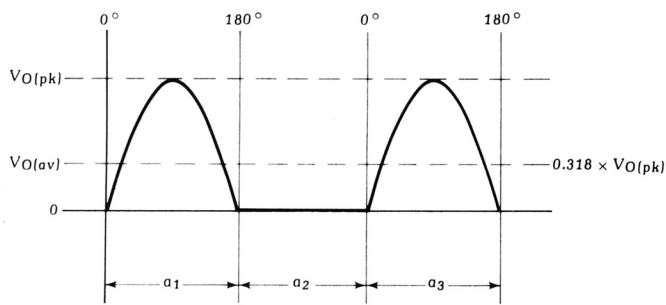


Fig. 3-2: The output voltage waveform from a half-wave rectifier. The equivalent DC voltage is 0.318 of the peak value.

Where: N_s is the number of turns in the transformer secondary winding.

N_p is the number of turns in the transformer primary winding.

E_{pri} is the primary line voltage, which, in this course, will be 115VAC (rms).

The **average DC** output voltage, $V_{O(av)}$, being defined as that value of voltage read by a DC voltmeter connected across the output terminals, would be one-half of $E_{S(av)}$. This point is illustrated in fig. 3-2. Since the average voltage is a function of the sum of the instantaneous voltages over a period of time, it can be seen that for the alternation $\theta = 0^\circ$ to 180° the average is 0.636 of the peak value. For the alternation $\theta = 180^\circ$ to 360° the average value is zero. Thus, the average value for $\theta = 0^\circ$ to 360° will be one-half $E_{S(av)}$.

Stated mathematically:

$$V_{O(av)} = 0.318 \times V_{O(pk)} \quad (5)$$

The waveforms as represented in fig. 3-2 and formula 5 consider the diode as ideal, where $V_F = 0V$, and is useful when $V_{O(pk)}$ is much greater than V_F . However, for low voltage supplies V_F can have an appreciable effect and must then be considered. Adapting formula 5 for V_F , it becomes:

$$V_{O(av)} = 0.318 \times (E_{S(pk)} - V_F) \quad (6)$$

DESIGN PROCEDURE:

The typical power supply design problem begins with the required voltage across the load and either the load resistance or current. From these given specifications the designer must work back towards the input.

STEP 1: Find $V_{O(pk)}$.

$$V_{O(pk)} = \frac{V_{O(av)}}{0.318}$$

The above is formula 5 solved for $V_{O(pk)}$. $V_{O(av)}$ is the voltage across the load, or the given specification.

STEP 2: Find $E_{S(pk)}$.

$$E_{S(pk)} = V_{O(pk)} + V_F$$

The above is established from the discussion of $V_{O(pk)}$, $E_{S(pk)}$ and V_F .

STEP 3: Find $E_{S(rms)}$.

$$E_{S(rms)} = 0.707 \times E_{S(pk)}$$

It is necessary to convert to the effective value of the peak secondary voltage because transformer specifications are generally given in this form.

STEP 4: Establish the turns ratio, N , of the transformer, or choose a commercial unit.

for $E_S < E_{pri}$

$$N = \frac{E_{pri(rms)}}{E_{S(rms)}}$$

for $E_S > E_{pri}$

$$N = \frac{E_{S(rms)}}{E_{pri(rms)}}$$

The above formulae are adapted from formula 4. It is more convenient to express the turns-ratio as a number > 1 . For the condition $E_S < E_{pri}$ the transformer would be described as a N to one step-down. And, for $E_S > E_{pri}$ it would be described as a N to one, step-up.

Regarding the choice of a commercial unit, the designer is simply purchasing a voltage and current rating of the secondary winding and, therefore, is not concerned with the internal aspects of the transformer. For example, in this program, the transformer has a 12.6V CT, 2A secondary. This is basically the only specification of consequence.

STEP 5: Determine the parameters for choosing the diode.

Finding the maximum current through the diode.

$$I_{(pk)} = \frac{I_{(av)}}{0.318}$$

Since V_O is sinusoidal the maximum current through the diode will occur at $V_{O(pk)}$.

Finding the maximum reverse voltage across the diode, $V_{R(pk)}$:

$$V_{R(pk)} = 1.414 \times E_{S(rms)}$$

The above is adapted from formula 2. The peak reverse voltage will occur when the diode is reverse biased and E_S is at a peak value. This operating condition is illustrated as point A in fig. 3-1.

DESIGN EXAMPLE:

Design a HW rectifier which will develop an average

voltage of 2.5V across a 25Ω load.

STEP 1: Find $V_{O(pk)}$.

$$V_{O(pk)} = \frac{V_{O(av)}}{0.318}$$

$$= \frac{2.5V}{0.318} = 7.86V$$

STEP 2: Find $E_S(pk)$.

$$E_S(pk) = V_{O(pk)} + V_F$$

$$= 7.86V + 0.8V$$

$$= 8.66V$$

The value of 0.8V for V_F is a good general rule to use for silicon diodes. This rule is reasonably accurate for diodes which operate with forward currents up to 3A. The designer should refer to the data sheets for diodes operating above 3A.

STEP 3: Find $E_S(rms)$.

$$E_S(rms) = 0.707 \times E_S(pk)$$

$$= 0.707 \times 8.66V$$

$$= 6.12V$$

STEP 4: Establish N for the transformer or choose a commercial unit.

Since $E_S < E_{pri}$

$$N = \frac{E_{pri(rms)}}{E_S(rms)}$$

$$\frac{115V}{6.15V}$$

$$18.7$$

The required transformer is an 18.7 to 1, step-down. The nearest commercial unit is an 18.25 to 1, step-down, or a 6.3V(rms) secondary voltage.

A 6.3V(rms) E_S will yield a $V_{O(av)}$ of 2.58V. If the designer can tolerate this small error in his circuit, the choice of a commercial unit is a better one.

STEP 5: Determine the parameters necessary for choosing the diode.

Finding $I_{(pk)}$

$$I_{(pk)} = \frac{I_{(av)}}{0.318}$$

$$= \frac{0.1A}{0.318} = 0.314A$$

Finding $V_R(pk)$

$$V_R(pk) = 1.414 \times E_S(rms)$$

$$= 1.414 \times 6.3V$$

$$= 8.9V$$

The value of $I_{(av)}$ was determined by use of $V_{O(av)}$, R_L and Ohms Law. The choice is to find a diode with the following characteristics.

$$I_F > 0.314A$$

$$V_R > 8.9V$$

The 1N4001 was chosen for the HW used in the program.

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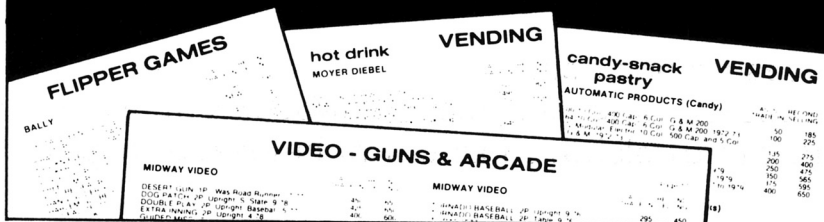
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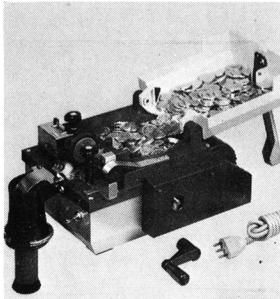
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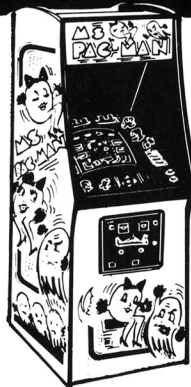
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First In 3-D effects

Subroc-3D, a new video game from Sega, brings authentic 3-dimensional video and stereo sound effects to the amusement game industry for the first time, Sega officials said.

The new game also features a "two-scenes-in-one" playfield in which the player can maneuver his flying *Subroc* craft to skim the ocean and battle sea-ships, or to soar the stratosphere for high-flying excitement against enemy spaceships and flying saucers.

The game's objective is to score points by defeating a barrage of enemy warships on the sea and in the air...and to destroy the elusive, barrier-protected Command Ship at the end of each round.

Subroc-3D's dimensional effects are produced with new hardware and software systems. The playfield is viewed through Sega's unique 3-D viewing system that allows the player to view a true 3-dimensional image without 3-D eyeglasses. Special shutters operating at 30 images per second alternately display the video images on the monitor in rapid synchronization. By looking at dual images with the right and left eye separately, a 3-dimensional picture is formed.

During game play, the player can freely choose between air and sea battle as part of the special player-control features built into the game.

At sea level, the player faces various seacraft enemies that fire torpedoes and space charges. Ominous battleships head directly toward *Subroc*. Other warships, called destroyers, move horizontally across the screen at varying distances from *Subroc*, their point values changing in proportion to their distance.

From the air, *Subroc* is attacked by Flying Saucers and gargantuan Airships firing lethal rockets. All the air and seacraft, their rockets and torpedoes, are targets for *Subroc*, and when hit, they score valuable points for the player.

The game is over when all player craft are destroyed. *Subroc-3D* is a one-player game and is operator adjustable from three to five player ships and various skill levels. Sega's one-of-a-kind *Subroc-3D* game is available in upright or sit-down cockpit models.



Steal of the show

The Wright Group Inc. has introduced its new children's prize vendor, *Clown-A-Round*.

The unit is constructed of durable, heavy-gauge steel with a baked enamel finish. It combines cosmetic appeal with mechanical reliability, including a photo-electric cell in place of conventional micro-switches.

Clown-A-Round comes in a super-size 76-inch unit. Standard size is 58 inches and the mini is 48 inches. Both feature a synthesized sound program, as well as a rotating clown.

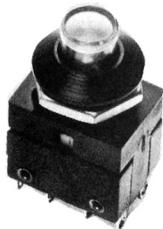
Aids to the Trade

Making a switch

Chicago Switch, a subsidiary of Illinois Tool Works Inc., introduces a new push-button switch designed to function in the rugged environment of a busy arcade.

The *Game Switch* features an umbrella shield that protects the contacts from spills and debris. The switch can be rinsed out with water without affecting its operation. The *Game Switch* is interchangeable with switches used by the electronic game industry.

Chicago Switch's new switch is designed to withstand the pounding given high traffic arcade games. It has been rated to 2,500,000 cycles. It's installed with single-nut mounting and quick-connect terminals and available in standard and custom colors. The *Game Switch* offers a choice of gold or silver crosspoint contacts.



For complete information on the new *Game Switch* or other switch requirements, contact Chicago Switch, a subsidiary of Illinois Tool Works Inc., 1714 N. Damen Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60647. Phone: 312/489-5500.

Video T-shirts

The Athletic Supporter Ltd. and Sega Enterprises Inc. have announced a licensing agreement for the production

of *Turbo* and *Zaxxon* video game T-shirts.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Athletic Supporter will have exclusive rights to manufacture and distribute preprinted silkscreened designs on both T-shirts and jerseys throughout the United States and Canada.

The Athletic Supporter Ltd., a screenprinting and marketing firm located in suburban Detroit, will be adding these video designs to its established selection of more than 100 copyrighted shirts which includes the entire line of M*A*S*H T-shirts and jerseys.

In addition, the Athletic Supporter has also secured a license to print and distribute *Frogger* video T-shirts and jerseys.

All of these new designs will be printed on first quality T-shirts and jerseys. The designs will be available in both youth and adult sizes.

More information can be obtained by calling the Athletic Supporter Ltd. at 800/521-6500.

ZZZip it up!

Platt luggage introduces a new concept in tool cases—ZZZippers.

Crafted from DuPont's new fabric, Cordura, the cases are light, tough, and easy on the pocketbook, Platt claims.

The zipper tool cases feature a heavy-duty zipper, pockets, and pouches for tools and accessories, with a metal pocket on the outside.

ZZZippers come in three sizes.

Model 670-ZT has 27 molded pockets made of Texin, an exceptionally tough urethane elastomer material that's practically indestructible. The pockets are molded without any seams, stitches, or rivets, forming a solid one-piece unit. You don't have to worry about tearing, ripping, cutting, or puncturing as you work. The case also has a pocket for paper and order books, and a magnet board for holding

small parts while working on equipment. There's a Cordura nylon pouch for extra parts and equipment. The case measures 18 by 13 by 2½.

Model 665-ZT has 27 molded pockets made of the same material as model 670-ZT. There are two vinyl pouches for extra parts and equipment. The case measures 14 by 13 by 2½.

Model 660-ZT has 29 stitched and riveted tool pockets made of special Neoluxe vinyl. These pockets are designed to fit tools snugly and retain their shape. There is also one vinyl pouch for extra parts and equipment. The case measures 13 by 10 by 2½.



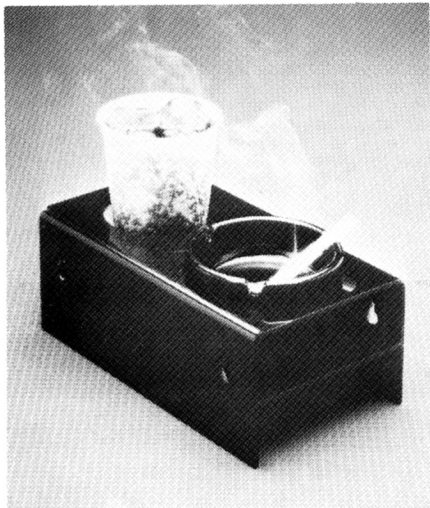
For complete information write Platt Luggage Inc., 2301 S. Prairie Ave., Chicago, IL 60616. Phone: 312/225-6670. Contact Michael Platt.

Clean up your business

Clean up your act—whatever it is, by using the *Ash 'n Can Caddy* from Spectrum Innovations Inc.

Specially designed to eliminate spills and cigarette burns, *Ash 'n Can Caddies* are sturdy units developed to reduce your maintenance time and improve your image. They attach easily to most any surface, the company said.

Ash 'n Can Caddies can be used for



arcade games, cocktail tables, cafeterias, amusement parks, factories, fast-food chains, fairs, nightclubs, boats, restaurants, offices, carnivals, trade shows, game rooms, trailers, rest rooms, amusement trailers, ticket box offices, waiting rooms, laundermats, hotels, motels, concert halls, convention centers, malls, stadiums, amusement rides, vending machines, drawing tables, poolside, airports, pool tables, counter games, midway group games, coffee shops, and almost anything else you can think of.

For additional information write Spectrum Innovations Inc., 453 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06906. Phone orders: 212/391-8455.

Remote counter

K-Tron Arizona Inc. introduces the *Remote K-Coin Coin/Currency Counter & Weighing Scale* for applications including amusements and games. This remote version is specially designed for permanent counting facilities.

The scale features speed of counting, and therefore, increased security. The scale can be run from a wall outlet full time or on a charged battery. The standard capacity is 66 pounds, but other capacities (6, 13, and 33 pound) are available on special order.

The *K-Coin* is a rugged solid-state design and has no moving parts within the scale mechanism. The weighing platform measures 12¾ inches long by

9 inches wide by 5 inches high, and the remote readout display measures 7½ inches high by 9½ inches wide by 5¼ inches deep. A 10-foot cable connects the platform and remote readout.

The scale features single coin, multiple coin counting, and dollar bill verification. The *C-Counting* version provides programmable slots for tokens if the multiple coin feature is not wanted. The scale features a coin accumulator memory and accuracy of ± 4 coins in 2,000.

A self-contained portable version is designed specifically for route operators who require counting at other than central locations. In addition, a heavy-duty plastic scoop is available as an option.



For more information contact K-Tron Arizona Inc., 7955 E. Redfield Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85260. Phone 602/991-0990.

Bag a prize item

Special bags for tokens are available from Business Builders. These bags can be used for special promotions, prizes, or just as a way to package tokens in \$5 and \$10 quantities.

"Many game center operators requested some type of container for

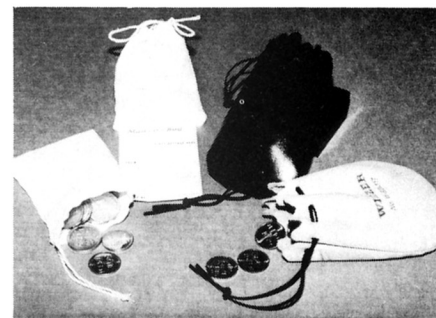
tokens to be sold or given out," explained Carol Kantor, president of Business Builders. "I've researched many different types of bags and containers that are available ranging from 15 cents to \$3 in price. There are a large variety to choose from, but I have selected just a few that are better for this application to include in the Business Builders line of promotion products."

The *economy bag* and a *premium leather bag* are offered.

The *economy bag* is 3 inches by 4 inches unbleached cotton fabric with a drawstring and easily holds up to 50 tokens. Its price starts at 15 cents each for a minimum quantity of 1,000.

A custom imprint of the location name, token design, or other special design like "Bag of Fun" or a logo can be added to this bag. They are also available with a mailing tag sewn in for other promotions, such as, mailing wooden nickels in a bag to potential customers to be redeemed for tokens or other promotion items.

The *premium all-leather bag* is a little larger in size, 3½ inches by 5 inches, and is made of a soft glove tan leather in black, brown, or a natural color. The *leather bag* can hold 100 tokens and can be a gift or prize item. The leather bags can be printed in 24 KT hot stamp or blind embossed. They may be especially good for the coming Christmas season.



(l to r) *Special Bags for tokens: Economy bag, Economy bag with mailing tag, Leather bags in black and natural color.*

For further information on these or other token containers, contact Carol Kantor, Business Builders, 10381 S. DeAnza Blvd. #209, Cupertino, Calif. 95014. Phone: 408/446-4400.

Read the industry survey in the Nov. 15 Play Meter.

The song doesn't remain the same

So why should the game?

By David Pierson

In a recent issue of *Play Meter* (July 15, page 80), an operator in Wichita, Kan., Ronnie Cazal, brought up an interesting point which should be seriously considered when talking about speed-up kits and their alleged infringement of video game copyrights.

Cazal said: "It's hard to mention copyright to an operator because he really doesn't understand (it). He understands it on music, that he can't change (it). But it also seems that with music a guy doesn't always play it the same way as it was originally written."

Mr. Cazal is right. For instance, the song "This Guy's in Love With You" changes to "This Girl's in Love With You" when a woman sings the song. And that isn't a copyright offense. That doesn't compromise the songwriter's creation. And her changing the lyrics—even to the point of changing the title itself—is not construed as violating the sanctity of the songwriter's creation.

Why? Because the copyright owner is being compensated for his creation. The main purpose of copyrights is to allow "the progress of science and useful arts," and that's done "by securing for limited times to authors and inventors exclusive rights to their respective writings and discoveries."

Now the copyright owner's "exclusive rights" do not mean he can dictate who can perform his songs or how they must be performed. Thus, a songwriter can cringe when he hears a terrible singer do a perfectly horrible adaptation of one of his songs. But all he can do is cringe. Legally, he cannot stop the damn singer from singing the song.

By the same token, it can be argued that an operator who buys a legitimate game can make whatever adaptations (i.e. modifications) he deems necessary to promote "the progress" of that creation in the marketplace. But at least one major video games manufacturer has been reportedly going around the country seizing original licensed games from operators whose only "sin" was that they modified the games with speed-up kits so that the games would remain commercially viable.

Now, considering the ground swell of operator sentiment in favor of speed-up kits, it's nonsensical that a major video game manufacturer who depends largely upon the continued goodwill of its customers would pursue such a nebulous cause. But, if the reports are true, one manufacturer in particular is doing exactly that with considerable success and apparently minimal backlash.

Why? Those who have been hit by these speed-up kit raids claim the video games giant is taking advantage of woefully disorganized operators. They say operators should be well-organized, especially since many of these operators have always made it a practice to buy only legal copyrighted games. But they point out no single operator has the financial wherewithal to stand toe-to-toe with the manufacturing giant on this issue.

Now, since a fair determination of the speed-up kit issue is in the best interests of the industry, and since a fair disposition of the issue can hardly be determined if only one side has the resources and the initiative to pursue the cause, what is the single operator to do? It is a dilemma. And one doesn't like to think a manufacturer within the industry would try to squeeze his operators/buyers dry. But what's to stop a manufacturer who starts looking upon his operators/buyers as so many sheep that are waiting to be fleeced?

Sadly, there's no national operators' association representing the interests of amusement game operators; for, if there were, that association would surely take up such a battle.

So the potential for operator fleecing is possible because of the disorganization of operators nationwide.

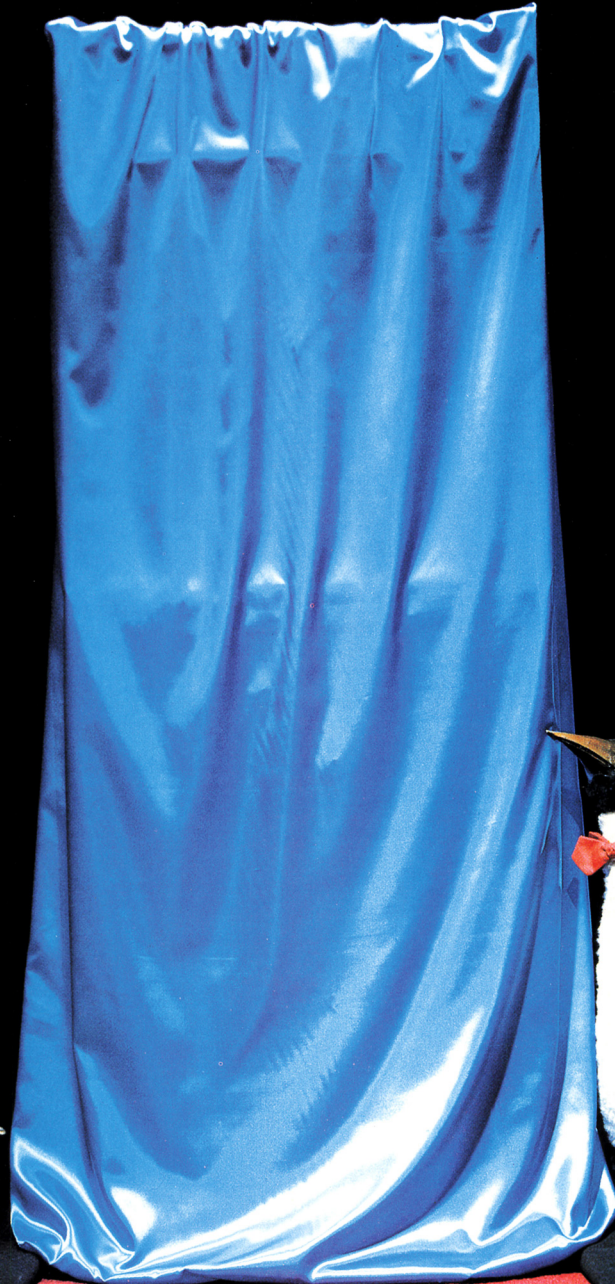
It is noteworthy that most video game manufacturers, with the possible exception of the aforementioned copyright extremist, have taken the position of looking the other way when it comes to speed-up kits and how they might infringe on their video game copyrights. The reluctance of other manufacturers to take part in such a squeeze play can be construed as those manufacturers' belief that the well-being of operators is essential to the continued prosperity of manufacturers.

It was probably stated best by a distributor, Bally Advance of South San Francisco, which, in a recent advertisement to the trade, stated: "To be successful, we must make our customers successful." Those are good words that, if the reports of the speed-up kit seizures are true, the avenging copyright extremist should take to heart.

Now, the position of a manufacturer who would try to squeeze every last advantage out of his buyers by pressing the issue on a very dubious interpretation of the copyright law, is no different from that of the performing rights societies—ASCAP, SESAC, and BMI—which adopted an operator-bet damned attitude when it came to their copyrights. The performing rights societies could get away with their hard-line stance because they really didn't depend on the jukebox operators for their continued well-being. But can a video game manufacturer, no matter how big, adopt such an attitude about his customer base? Hardly. Unless such a manufacturer has intentions of dominating the retail (i.e. operating) business as well and seeks to create his monopoly by bankrupting all his potential competition.

So, Mr. Cazal, you're right. Operators do not understand copyrights. But unless they are represented by leaders who understand their needs and those of the whole coin-op amusement industry, the copyright law could well be defined by the appeals of well-financed monopolists to federal judges who haven't the slightest understanding (or interest) in the coin operated amusement industry.

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