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VOLUME 17. No. 6 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY MAY 1991

PLAY METER magazine

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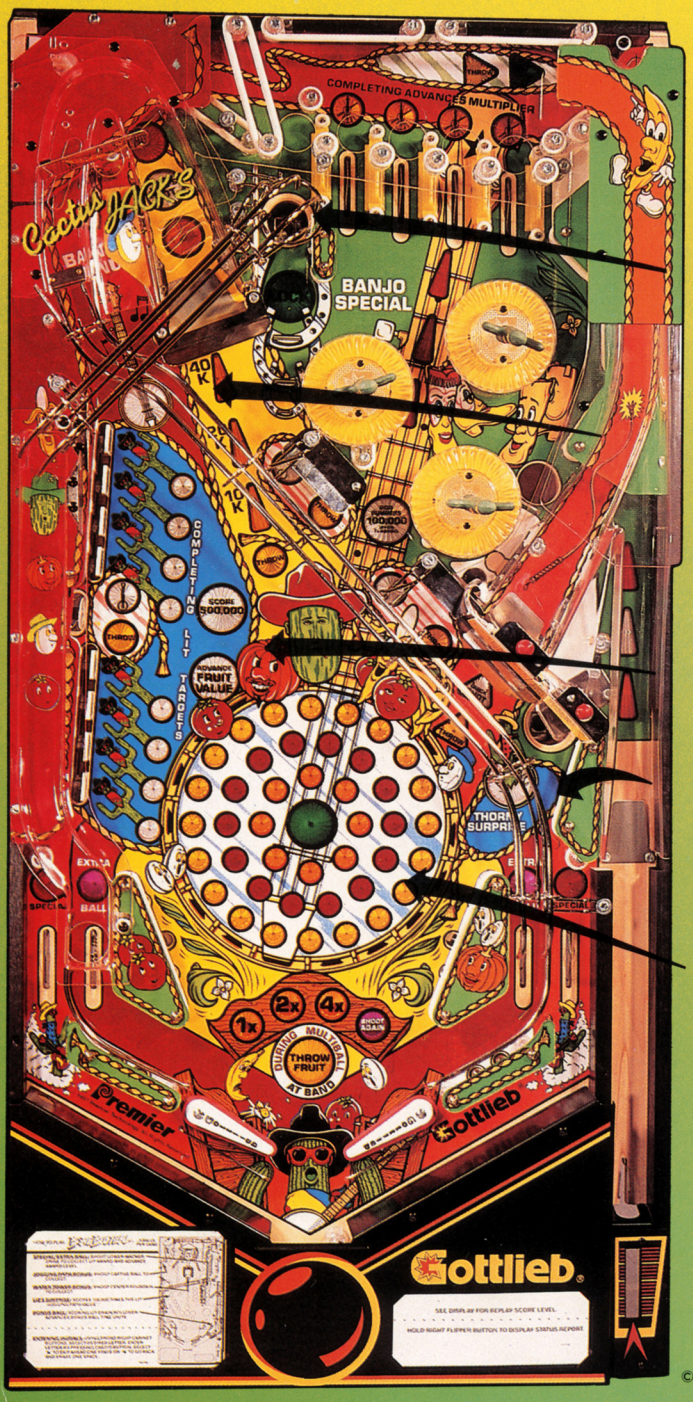

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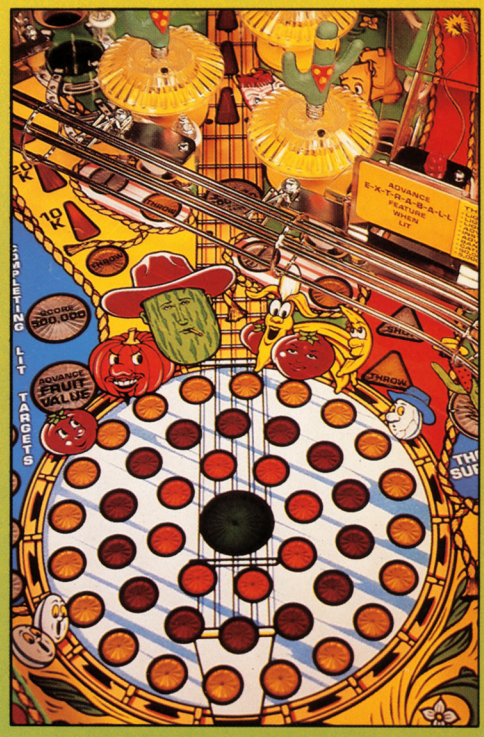

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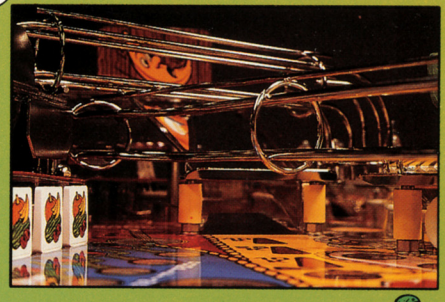

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NEWS BULLETIN

► **PREMIER BUYS SMS ASSETS...** Premier Technology has reached an agreement in principle to acquire the video gaming product assets of SMS Manufacturing Corp., with closing to follow shortly.

"We at Premier are extremely excited about the opportunity that this acquisition provides," said Premier president Gil Pollock. "In addition to SMS having the best product in the video lottery field, the addition of Sal Mirando and his excellent staff will strengthen our entire organization. This acquisition fits into our long-term growth plans to diversify Premier from a one-product (pinball) company."

Said Mirando, "I am pleased with this opportunity, since it will afford us increased manufacturing capacity that the video lottery field will need to satisfy the future demand."

Premier will now be structured to have the Gottlieb pinball division and the SMS division. Mirando will continue to head the sales, marketing, and engineering functions of SMS, which will still be located in New Jersey. All of the manufacturing will be moved to Premier's facilities in Bensenville, Ill.

► **MOVING PRODUCT IN POLAND...** Robert Herman of Ace Amusement in Brooklyn, N.J., fresh from attending the first-ever coin-op expo in Warsaw on April 3-6, reports that the show was good for game manufacturers and even better for parts suppliers.

"My initial impression is that the parts people did very well, which is somewhat surprising," he said. "That must mean there are a lot of machines underground in Poland, because I didn't see one video game anywhere in Warsaw. The only jukebox I saw was a used one."

Most of the exhibiting distributors and manufacturers were European, though American firms did have a presence there. European slot machine manufacturers, eager to have their product approved in Poland, were everywhere, Herman says. Many exhibitors have already signed up for next year's expo.

"My cousin George (Herman, the show chairman) is very excited about the turnout for this year's show," he said. "Poland looks like it's going to be a great market for the coin-op industry." Look for photos of the show in our June issue.

► **SEEKING VIDEO LOTTERY UNITY...** A group of video lottery machine manufacturers—including SMS, Merit, Grayhound, PARS Electronics, Kramer, and IGT—met with AMOA representatives in Chicago on March 18 to ponder this question: would it be possible to pool their energies to assist in the passage of video lottery legislation?

Former AMOA president Wally Bohrer, who represented the association along with current president Jim Trucano, said, "The first meeting was successful to the point that we're going to attempt to put together an affiliation of manufacturers, operators, and state associations. The object is to work together toward achieving positive legislation. There are many disjointed efforts currently being undertaken. We want to be a catalyst for future action that will benefit the coin machine industry."

Added Trucano, "The meeting went extremely well. There seems to be a lot of interest on the manufacturers' part to form a coalition. We (AMOA) would like to work with them to present a better image of video lottery nationally." The group held its second meeting on April 17 in Chicago.

► **N.C. ASSOCIATION CHANGES NAME...** The North Carolina Coin Operators Association has changed its name to the North Carolina Amusement Machine Association. The association felt a change in name should coincide with its recent incorporated status, indicating that it's undergoing a fresh start.

NCAMA's 1991 convention is slated for Oct. 24-27 at the Omni Hotel in Durham. For more information, contact Bobby or Cindy Earp at (919) 584-4833.

► **KANEKO ADDS KRAMER...** Kaneko USA Ltd. has appointed Tom Kramer to the position of national sales manager. He worked most recently for the Sanyo Fisher USA Corp. "Tom brings to us over eight years of electronics experience and will be a valuable asset to our marketing team," said Kaneko USA president Marty Glazman.

► **KANSAS LOOKS AT VIDEO GAMING...** Kansas is the latest state to express interest in legalized video gaming to ease its economic woes without raising taxes. Forty-five-year coin-op veteran Stan Chilton, president and owner of Chilton Vending Co. in Wichita, recently spearheaded an effort to have the state lottery commission add regulated, payout video poker machines to its existing products (scratch tickets, pull-tabs, and Lotto America).

State amusement operators joined with members of the Kansas Automatic Merchandisers Association to push for operator involvement in such a program, but it did not pass in the legislative session that ended in mid-April. This and related issues like sales taxes are of vital importance to both the vending and amusement operators of Kansas. They plan to continue fighting for legalized video gaming.

Kansas legislators also saw a high level of interest in riverboat gambling this session, due to its recent inception in neighboring Iowa (Illinois' riverboat gambling will begin soon). Another factor in the Kansas equation is the admitted existence of gray area games. According to the *Kansas City Star*, "There are already 7,000 video poker machines in taverns across the state. But the people who play them cannot legally win money." Video gaming and riverboat gambling could generate substantial revenue for the state, which also has greyhound and horse racing operations.

► **OPEN HOUSE AT MONDIAL...** Mondial International will stage an open house for its branch in the Pittsburgh area on Saturday, May 4. It will take place at Conley's Motor Inn in Monroeville, Pa. For more information, contact new branch sales manager Doug Wilson at (412) 733-1220. He was most recently with Hilltop Distributors in West Virginia, a company he started in 1988.

"Doug's years of experience (since 1969) in the coin-op industry, especially in West Virginia, will be an asset and will help us enhance our coverage and service in the greater Pittsburgh area," said Mondial executive vice president Tony Yula Jr.

► **EDISON BROTHERS NAMES MCAULIFFE...** Edison Brothers Mall Entertainment, a division of Edison Brothers Stores, has appointed George McAuliffe to the position of vice president/general sales manager.

He began his career in 1979 as a store manager for one of the Time-Out family amusement centers. From there McAuliffe advanced through several management positions, ultimately becoming divisional general manager. When Edison Brothers acquired the Time-Out chain last year, he was named director of anchor entertainment centers.

► **COMIC STRIP DEBUTS...** This month marks the inaugural edition of "Coin Quips," a comic strip that takes a tongue-in-cheek look at the coin-op industry. The first one appears on page 150. The strip will focus on a timely subject each month; comments are welcome.

► **IT'S A BOY!...** Congratulations to Jean-Marc Laniel of Laniel Canada and his wife Marie-Josee, who gave birth to son Francois on March 7. He weighed in at 6 pounds, 13 ounces. Francois is the fifth grandchild for Laniel Canada's Gaetan Laniel (the other four are all girls).

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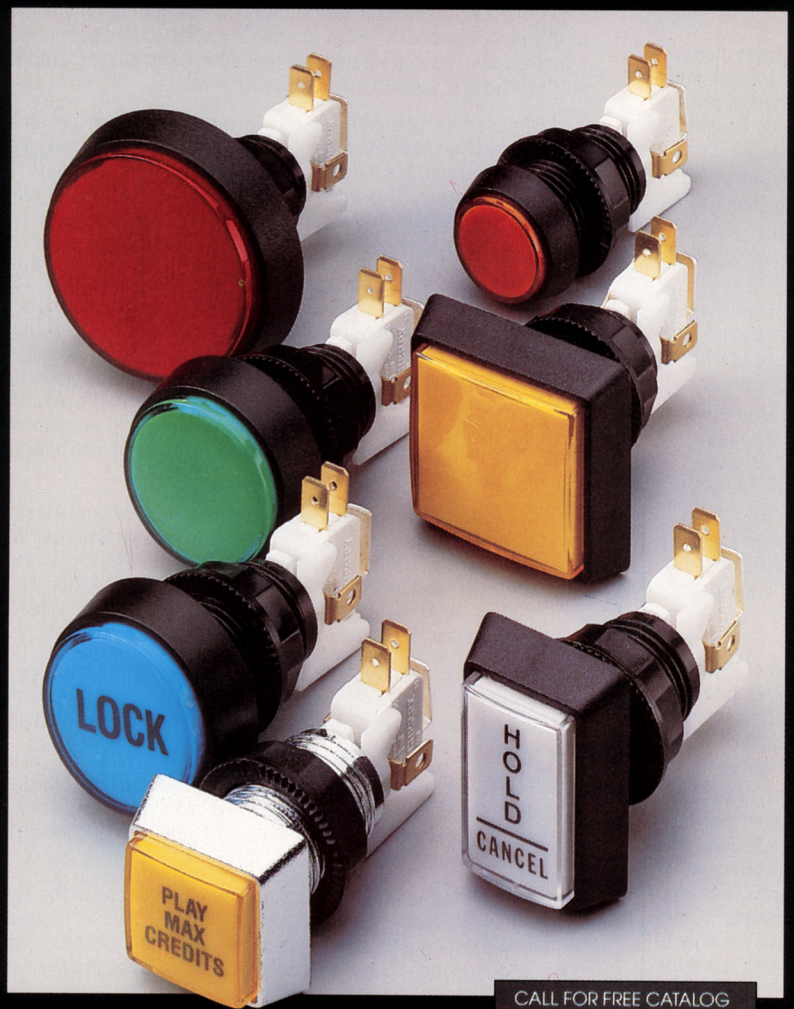

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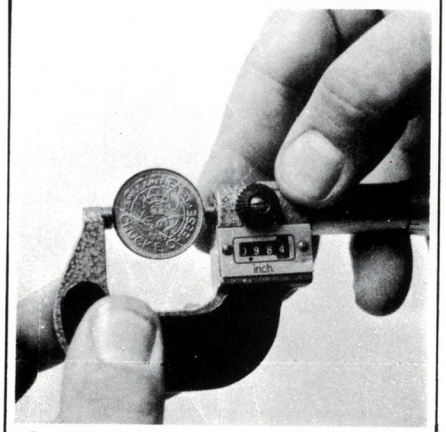

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Special Section: ACME '91 53
Positive comments outweighed the negative at this annual spring event, chronicled in our comprehensive coverage. Included are 24 pages of color photos, equipment reviews, detailed seminar reporting, "new games at a glance" listings, plus social events and awards.

Riverboat Gambling 136
This month's "Video Gaming Outlook" takes a voyage up the Mississippi River to the newest home of riverboat gambling: Iowa. Low-stakes gambling on three majestic vessels commenced on April 1. Illinois will be next, followed by Mississippi. Can Louisiana be far behind?

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COVER

The advent of the CD changed the face of music forever and just about put the 45 out to pasture. NSM, a multi-faceted company, looks to the future with a lineup of pleasing Space Age music machines.

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EQUIPMENT POLL

Buying the right game can be a "make-or-break" proposition for the operator. This chart is based on operator evaluations and is designed to provide information needed to make prudent game purchases. The longevity points indicate a game's staying power.

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	MONTHS ON CHART	MONTHS IN TOP 10
1. Race Drivin'	(*Atari*)	8.66	7	7
2. Fun House	(*Williams*)	8.55	4	4
3. Hard Drivin'	(*Atari*)	8.32	25	25
4. High Impact Football	(*Williams*)	8.29	4	4
5. Pit-Fighter	(*Atari*)	8.03	7	7
6. Street Fighter II	(*Capcom*)	8.00	2	2
7. Simpsons	(*Data East*)	7.94	6	6
8. F-15 Strike Eagle	(*MicroProse*)	7.87	2	1
9. Final Fight	(*Capcom*)	7.79	15	15
10. Elvira	(*Bally/Midway*)	7.78	18	18
11. Final Lap	(*Atari*)	7.74	24	23
12. Final Lap 2	(*Namco*)	7.69	3	3
13. TMNT	(*Konami*)	7.67	17	17
14. Whirlwind	(*Williams*)	7.43	15	15
15. Rai Den	(*Fabtek*)	7.41	9	7
16. Turbo Out Run	(*Sega*)	7.38	24	23
17. Four Trax	(*Atari*)	7.38	13	12
18. Super Off Road	(*Leland*)	7.36	25	23
19. Diner	(*Williams*)	7.36	5	4
20. Dr. Dude	(*Bally/Midway*)	7.34	6	6
21. Earthshaker	(*Williams*)	7.31	25	25
22. G-Loc	(*Sega*)	7.30	10	9
23. Space Guns	(*Taito*)	7.15	5	2
24. Cyclone	(*Williams*)	7.12	25	25
25. WWF Super Stars	(*American Technos*)	7.06	22	21

REDEMPTION

ALLEY BOWLERS

	POINT VALUE
1. Skee-Ball (*Skee-Ball*)	8.48
2. Smartball (*Smart*)	6.40
3. Croaker (*Exidy*)	5.00
4. F.A.B. Target Ball (*FAB*)	4.80
5. Twister (*Exidy*)	4.40

SPORTS GAMES

	POINT VALUE
1. Shoot To Win (*Smart*)	6.62
2. Quik Shot (*Design Plus*)	6.25
3. Pro Pitch (*Doyle*)	6.13
4. Pop-A-Shot (*Pop-A-Shot*)	5.92
5. Championship Basketball (*Grayhound*)	5.71
6. Batter Up! (*Doyle*)	5.57
7. QB Challenge (*Natl. Sports*)	5.20
8. Putting Challenge (*ICE*)	5.09
9. Hot Shots (*Vari-Tech*)	4.38
10. Superstar Basketball (*Kramer*)	4.14

JR. BASKETBALL

	POINT VALUE
1. Bozo Basketball (*Design Plus*)	7.27
2. Dribbles (*Betson*)	6.88
3. Jr. All American (*CCI*)	6.78
4. Shoot To Win Jr. (*Smart*)	5.50

ROLL DOWNS

	POINT VALUE
1. Roll Down (*Bay-Tek*)	6.44
2. Poker Roll (*SMS/Coastal*)	5.63
3. Dino-Roll (*Seidel*)	5.20
4. Fielder's Choice (*Bay Tek*)	5.20
5. Clown Roll Down (*Bay Tek*)	5.00
6. Quackers (*Seidel*)	4.67

SINGLE COIN PUSHERS

	POINT VALUE
1. Klondike (*Betson*)	7.08
2. Rock N' Roll (*Betson*)	7.00
3. Wedges/Ledges (*Betson*)	6.60
4. Starburst (*CCI*)	5.00
5. The 2001 (*GaMCO*)	3.60

SINGLE CRANES

	POINT VALUE
1. Big Choice (*Betson*)	7.11
2. Big Choice Ltd. Edition (*Betson*)	6.89
3. Top Choice (*Betson*)	6.38
4. Hollywood (*Hollywood*)	6.33
5. Clean Sweep (*Smart*)	6.14
6. Clean Sweep Jumbo (*Smart*)	6.09
7. Tiger Paw (*Drews*)	6.00
8. Skill Crane (*SMS*)	5.90

SINGLE CRANES (cont.)

	POINT VALUE
9. Skill Crane (*Grayhound*)	5.80
10. Action Claw (*Betson*)	5.67

NOVELTY

	POINT VALUE
1. Wacky Gator (*Data East*)	8.13
2. Pop-A-Ball (*SMS/Coastal*)	7.93
3. Rock-N-Bowl (*Bromley*)	7.50
4. Cosmo Gang (*Data East*)	7.43
5. Bowlingo (*Capcom*)	7.29
6. Whac-A-Mole (*Bob's Space*))	7.23
7. Knock Down (*Meltec*)	7.07
8. Big Mouth (*Meltec*)	7.06
9. Shoot Out (*Meltec*)	6.80
10. Can Alley (*Bob's Space*)	6.71
11. Skee Toss B.C. (*Betson/Skee-Ball*)	6.63
12. Boom Ball (*Meltec*)	5.75
13. Reel Poker (*Betson*)	5.50
14. Bozo Prize Game (*Yankee*)	5.42
15. Bozo Blast-Off (*Design Plus*)	5.40
16. Mr. Six Gun (*Vari-Tech*)	5.29
17. Rebound (*CCI*)	5.25
18. Toss Em (*CCI*)	5.00
19. Sidewinder (*Bob's Space*)	5.00
20. Roosta Shoota (*Coastal*)	4.89

EQUIPMENT POLL

VIDEO KITS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS		GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	High Impact Football (*Williams*)	8.29	189	19.	All American Football (*Leland*)	6.00	338
2.	Pit-Fighter (*Atari*)	8.03	316	20.	Bowl-O-Rama (*Leprechaun*)	6.00	*
3.	Street Fighter II (*Capcom*)	8.00	85	21.	Arch Rivals (*Bally/Midway*)	5.88	442
4.	Final Fight (*Capcom*)	7.79	705	22.	Championship Sprint (*Atari*)	5.79	93
5.	Rai Den (*Fabtek*)	7.41	289	23.	Rollergames (*Konami*)	5.73	185
6.	Turbo Out Run (*Sega*)	7.38	821	24.	Capcom Bowling (*Capcom*)	5.57	172
7.	WWF Super Stars (*Am. Technos*)	7.06	804	25.	Tri-Sports (*Bally/Midway*)	5.50	*
8.	Magic Sword (*Capcom*)	6.96	207	26.	Growl (*Taito*)	5.50	*
9.	Track-Pak (*Leland*)	6.69	310	27.	Thunder Fox (*Taito*)	5.46	*
10.	Super Spy (*SNK*)	6.64	33	28.	Baseball Stars (*SNK*)	5.44	*
11.	Carrier Airwing (*Capcom*)	6.57	21	29.	Combatribes (*Am. Technos*)	5.40	120
12.	Cyberball 2072 (*Atari*)	6.43	484	30.	U.N. Squadron (*Capcom*)	5.39	*
13.	Golden Axe (*Sega*)	6.39	598	31.	Hydra (*Atari*)	5.35	73
14.	Smash TV (*Williams*)	6.37	302	32.	Double Dragon 3 (*Am. Technos*)	5.35	*
15.	Blood Bros. (*Fabtek*)	6.37	23	33.	Crime City (*Taito*)	5.11	*
16.	Tetris (*Atari*)	6.35	321	34.	Golden Tee Golf (*Strata*)	5.10	*
17.	RoadBlasters (*Atari*)	6.22	252	35.	Top Landing (*Taito*)	5.09	*
18.	Hit The Ice (*Williams*)	6.10	106				

VIDEO DEDICATED

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS		GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Race Drivin' (*Atari*)	8.66	345	9.	G-Loc (*Sega*)	7.30	354
2.	Hard Drivin' (*Atari*)	8.32	1202	10.	Space Guns (*Taito*)	7.15	119
3.	F-15 Strike Eagle (*MicroProse*)	7.87	45	11.	Rampart (*Atari*)	7.06	52
4.	Final Lap (*Atari*)	7.74	930	12.	Galaxy Force (*Sega*)	7.05	174
5.	Final Lap 2 (*Namco*)	7.69	126	13.	Mad Dog McCree (*Betson*)	7.00	23
6.	TMNT (*Konami*)	7.67	789	14.	Out Run (*Sega*)	6.88	719
7.	Four Trax (*Atari*)	7.38	484	15.	G.P. Rider	6.85	118
8.	Super Off Road (*Leland*)	7.36	966				

PINBALLS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS		GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Fun House (*Williams*)	8.58	195	9.	Checkpoint (*Data East*)	6.85	19
2.	The Simpsons (*Data East*)	7.94	281	10.	Riverboat Gambler (*Williams*)	6.79	144
3.	Elvira (*Bally/Midway*)	7.78	734	11.	Rollergames (*Williams*)	6.68	201
4.	Whirlwind (*Williams*)	7.43	626	12.	Police Force (*Williams*)	6.57	575
5.	Diner (*Williams*)	7.36	143	13.	Taxi (*Williams*)	6.54	567
6.	Dr. Dude (*Bally/Midway*)	7.34	222	14.	Back to the Future (*Data East*)	6.31	85
7.	Earthshaker (*Williams*)	7.31	1025	15.	Jokerz! (*Williams*)	6.28	480
8.	Cyclone (*Williams*)	7.12	859				

* New or reappearing games.

FROM THE EDITOR

Have we made a difference

Abraham Lincoln said in his speech at Gettysburg, "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here." Could I safely say that he was greatly mistaken? In fact, the world has long remembered what Lincoln said. His words live in school classrooms across the country as students utter "fourscore and seven years ago..." for the first time.

Newspaper reporters at that time were puzzled about why *the president* had the audacity to give such a speech—such a *short* speech. It lasted only several minutes, compared to the other guy (I'm afraid I little noted nor long remembered his name) who talked for nearly two hours. Reporters whispered among themselves that Lincoln had really goofed this time. They didn't appreciate what they had been a witness to.

Can you imagine being in the audience on a cold November day in 1863, listening to a two-hour speech? Far from concentrating on the words, no matter how eloquent, you would probably have been shuffling from one foot to the other to stave off the frostbite setting in, hoping it would end soon.

Then up steps Lincoln. Were spectators groaning about listening to another lengthy speech? Perhaps the significance of his words were overshadowed by the relief that it didn't take long! Maybe it was appreciated, even if it was for all the wrong reasons.

However, 128 years later we look back and are awestruck by the beautiful sentiments of what he said. We encourage our kids to memorize the whole speech because it has such special meaning. We remember the devastation of the Civil War and can't help but feel for those that lived then. We are overwhelmed by what was accomplished.

The coin-op industry is the accumulation of what happened in the past. Would things have been different if bingo machines had been welcomed with open arms? What would have happened if manufacturers hadn't been forced to offer operators something to take the place of the outlawed machines?

We are standing in a time warp, struggling to exist in an ever-changing world, trying to hold on to the familiar but making decisions for the future. We will never be able to stay where we are or go back. We are here because of those who stood in our place years ago, wondering what lay ahead. We are their future. Their decisions and actions brought the industry to where it is today. What would they have done differently had they known what we know now?

Right now we are in a transition as we go from 45s to CDs and from gray area games to legalized video pokers. What we do now will have a profound effect on those coming after us. Will they wonder why we did some of the things we did? Of course they will. How could they not question certain things? They are the future we are molding now.

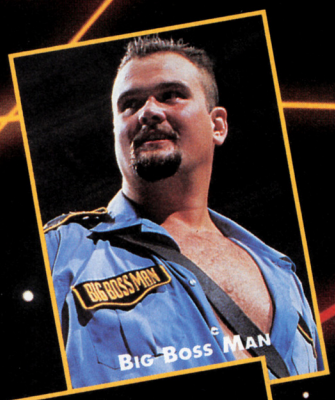
This industry is not existing simply for today; it is surviving to nurture the industry that will be. It doesn't seem so long ago that 1984 was the very, *very* distant future. When I was in high school, even a wild imagination could not conjure up some of the technology available today. I don't know if those who had a say in how the industry progressed thought about the future. But whether they did or not, we will long remember what they did. Let's make the right decisions and look ahead so that one day the newcomers will look back and say to us, "Thank you for making our industry a little better." □

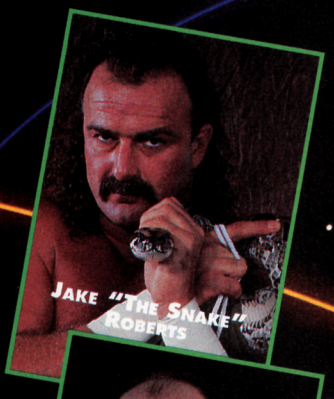
Valerie Cognevich

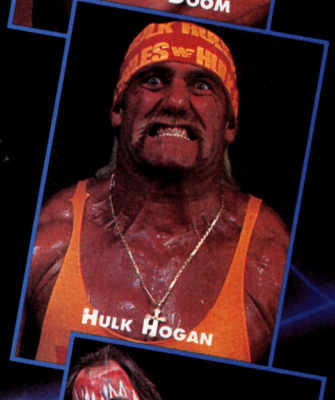
Valerie Cognevich
Editor

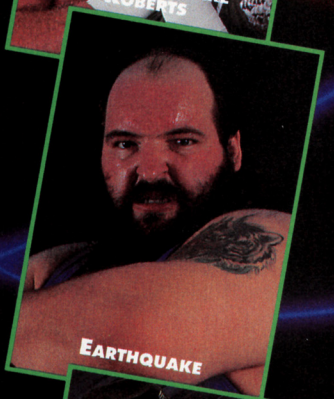
PUT A HEADLOCK ON PROFITS.

WWF WRESTLEFEST









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AAMA, AMOA ready for Washington Conferences in May

Both industry trade associations—AAMA and AMOA—will have the ear of congressmen and senators at their respective Washington Conferences in May.

AAMA's 1991 Legislative Conference/Annual Meeting takes place May 5-9 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. AAMA members will be briefed on House and Senate bills that may impact the industry by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Rep. Jim Hayes (D-La.), Rep. Michael Oxley (R-Ohio), and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

Also, U.S. trade representatives will discuss business opportunities for AAMA members in Eastern Europe and South America, as well as the free trade agreement between the United States and Mexico. Commerce Department representatives will focus on possibilities in South America.

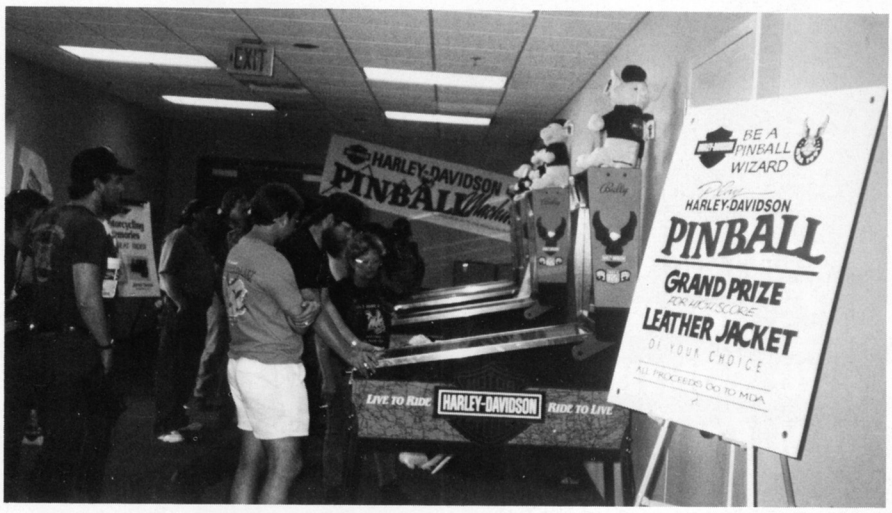
Other activities include appointments with congressmen and senators; the Congressional Reception, which will feature an autograph session by Washington Redskins players Mark Rypien and Jeff Bostic and appearances by Nintendo's Mario and Michaelangelo the Ninja Turtle; a trip to the FBI training facility; and a tour of the White House.

AMOA's 1991 Government Affairs Conference, to be held May 19-21 at the Hyatt on Capitol Hill, offers operators a rare opportunity to meet with their congressmen and receive updates on the industry's most pressing issues: dollar coin legislation, video gaming, cigarette vending, jukebox licensing, tax developments, and more.

In addition to congressional visits and the political workshop/issues briefing, the popular pinball, coin-op basketball, and electronic dart tournament for congressmen and their families and staff takes place on May 21. The event, held in conjunction with the Congressional Reception, drew over 900 participants last year.

The top winners will have prize money donated to their favorite charities on behalf of AMOA. Each participant will also receive a piece of plush from crane games on display. The tournament site is the Longworth House Office Building.

For information on registration, congressional appointments, housing, and airline travel (discounted by AMOA through ATI Travel Management), contact ATI direct at (800) 477-4561 or (312) 644-6642 in Illinois.



These Harley-Davidson enthusiasts, who traveled to Daytona, Fla., in March for an exposition on the famous motorcycle, took time out to enjoy Bally/Midway's latest pin—named, of course, *Harley-Davidson*.

Bring the arcade to the player

Playtime Arcade, based in Millbury, Mass., has developed a mobile arcade to deliver games to previously inaccessible areas.

All control panels, coin door assemblies, power supplies, and monitors are interchangeable for easy troubleshooting. The monitors can be changed from horizontal to vertical with little effort.

The mobile arcade's features include:

- A choice of over 100 arcade games from which to select.
- A set-up time—for only one person—of five minutes.
- A heavy-duty tandem trailer with removable hitch and four permanently mounted fold-up jack stands for leveling.
- Plywood construction laminated with white fiberglass.
- Side doors that swing up to provide shade from the sun; when closed, they provide a double security lock and weather protection.
- Two ground fault circuit breakers—one for each side—that are secured in a locking door at the trailer's rear.
- Six individual game stations.
- Options: dollar bill acceptor (with stacker if desired) and ticket dispenser; they can be installed on one or all six game stations.

The prices start as low as $14,000—excluding the six game boards. For more information on the mobile arcade, contact Jack Tesell at (508) 764-2301.

Operator Jim Stansfield Jr. of Jim Stansfield Vending in LaCrosse, Wis., received the Ralph C. Lally II "Operator of the Year" award at ACME '91, given in honor of Play Meter's late founder and publisher. Pictured here with Stansfield are publisher Carol Lally and her daughters Leslie (l) and Carol Ann.

Siemieniec joins Namco-America

Tom Siemieniec has left Seeburg to become a regional sales manager for Namco-America. His territory encompasses the Midwest and East Coast.

Siemieniec's office, which was established upon his joining Namco-America, is located in Plainfield, Ill. He can be reached at (815) 439-2140.

Donnaloia, Kalhar join Leprechaun

Veteran manufacturer representatives Aldo Donnaloia and Glen Kalhar have been added to the sales staff of Leprechaun Inc., the new company headed by Bill Cravens. Most recently employed by American Technos, they will be based in Oregon and cover the western United States and much of the South, Cravens said.

"I'm lucky to have gotten Aldo and Glen," Cravens said. "They're good people who bring talent and many years of industry experience to Leprechaun."

Cravens reports having a successful ACME '91. The response to Exit Entertainment's *Bowl-A-Rama*—an update kit for *Capcom Bowling*—continues to be favorable (Leprechaun is the marketing arm for Exit), and the redemption piece *Pot 'O Gold* is headed for test sites.

"It'll be out in about four weeks if the tests go well," Cravens said. "I hope it's as good as everyone at ACME said it was. We received a lot of great comments."

Williams/Bally-Midway unveils technology

A new pinball technology known as WPC (Williams Pinball Controller), which made its debut on Williams' *FunHouse*, "gets us much closer to everyone's ideal: totally service-free pinball," said marketing director Roger Sharpe.

The system was designed by Chuck Bleich (hardware) and Larry DeMar (software). The breakthrough is a godsend for operators and their technicians alike, Bleich and DeMar say.

"With WPC, the games have fewer PC boards and less interwiring, which results in higher reliability and greater serviceability," DeMar said. "It will now be much easier for the technician to pinpoint the problem." Added Bleich, "WPC's 'open architecture' allows the system to be easily expanded. Features can be added as game designers think them up."

FunHouse, The Machine, and *Harley-Davidson* utilize WPC, as will all future Williams and Bally pins. Without WPC, *FunHouse* couldn't have made use of Rudy the Dummy, and the new baseball-themed *Slugfest* wouldn't have included its highly praised dot-matrix scoreboard.

While technicians smile over the simplified troubleshooting, operators will delight in the detailed information provided by WPC. For instance, operators will now be able to determine a machine's period of peak play and corresponding slack time. They can then incorporate promotions or other methods to increase game play during lulls.

"An operator may know that a game earned $400, but *when* it earned that $400 is information he never had before," Sharpe said. "WPC will allow him to bring in $500 or $600 instead of $400.

"I equate this technology with *High Speed*'s automatic percentaging, which brought pinball out of the Dark Ages. WPC presents a comparable advance in pinball technology."

WPC has been in the works for about three years. The following is only a partial list of its improvements to former Williams/Bally pinball games:

- Fewer PC boards.
- Less connections and cables.
- The elimination of AC relays and PIA chips.
- Industry standard audits.
- Boards can be keyhole mounted for easy removal and installation.
- Unique connector and fuse designators to avoid confusion in identification.
- Connections to the playfield, cabinet, and backbox/insert are done directly from the controlling circuit.
- More ribbon cables to reduce the bulk of individual wire bundles.
- All coils operate on the same voltage (increased to 50 volts).
- New expansion and display port.
- A faster, more powerful microprocessor allows the software to do more.
- The use of a custom chip eliminates the majority of smaller integrated circuits.
- Increased ROM and RAM.
- The switch matrix circuits have been redesigned to accommodate a larger noise immunity.

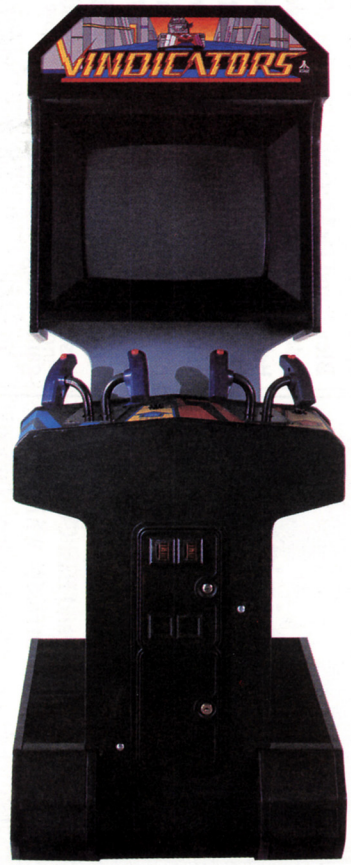
All of these improvements are only a sampling of WPC's many attributes. For more detailed information, contact Williams at (312) 267-2240.

Supporting the Desert Storm troops

Robert Parrow of Just Games in Chicopee, Mass., has informed us of a way to show support for the troops returning home from Operation Desert Storm. Their first stop on American soil has been at Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee, where they've been greeted around the clock with beer, hot dogs, music, and other bits of Americana.

The USO has been funding this homecoming, but in order to keep it going until the last troop touches down at Westover, more money is required. You can send donations to USO Patriot Homecoming, Westover AFB, Chicopee, MA 01020. For more information, call the USO at (413) 557-HOME.

From Rags To Riches.



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Namco names Belam Latin distributor

New York-based R.H. Belam and Namco America have entered into an exclusive sales/marketing agreement for the Latin American market, commencing with Namco's latest driving game, *Final Lap II*.

Belam, a leading exporter of amusement machines to Latin America, will assume full distribution responsibilities for that region (excluding Mexico) and the Caribbean.

"Our relationship with Namco really began with *Winning Run*," said R.H. Belam president Marc Haim. "Mr. Suzuki of Namco Japan allowed us to carry that fantastic product in 1989, and we have been running with Namco ever since."

Added Belam vice president Simon Deith, "Namco is a quality company producing top-quality products. We appreciate the relationship we enjoy with (Namco's) Kevin Hayes and look forward to many years of cooperation."

Alex Perner, R.H. Belam's salesman for the Latin American market, will make six trips there in the next six months "to support our momentum."

Data East gets game rights

Data East USA has obtained the exclusive North and South American rights to the redemption piece *Cosmo Gang* from Namco America. The game, introduced at AMOA '90, has proven to be a favorite among operators since it began appearing in arcades in mid-January.

"We are very excited to add *Cosmo Gang* to our family of coin-op games," said Data East USA president Joe Keenan. "Since Namco first introduced *Pac-Man* to the world 10 years ago, it has been one of the most respected names in the arcade industry."

The circuit boards for *Cosmo Gang* will be forwarded from Japan, with final assembly taking place at Data East USA's headquarters in San Jose, Calif. "Initial earnings for *Cosmo Gang* have exceeded expectations and should continue to be strong for some time to come," Keenan said.

AMOA board approves officer slate

At its recent meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz., the AMOA board of directors nominated and approved the association's officers for the 1991-92 term. They will take office at Expo '91, which takes place in Las Vegas on Sept. 12-14.

The officers are Gene Urso of Madison Coin Machine, president; Craig Johnson of Tataka, first vice president; R.A. Green III of Rosemary Coin Machines, treasurer; and Tami Norberg-Paulsen of C&N Sales Co., secretary.

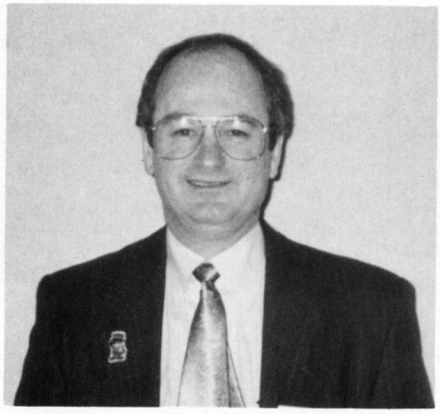
Three new vice presidents were also approved to serve three-year terms: David Goudeau of Gerald's Amusement Machines, Russell Love of Royal Vending Services, and Garland Garrett Jr. of Cape Fear Music Co.

Flipping out in Arizona

The Second Annual Pinball Show, the largest pinball-only gathering in the West, will take place June 14-15 at the Safari Resort Hotel in Scottsdale, Ariz. Pinball games from the '50s to the '90s will be stretched out over 10,000 square feet of space.

Distributors Mountain Coin and Betson Pacific will display the newest machines, while organizers are encouraging those attending the show to bring their favorite old games with them (those who do get free admission). Besides viewing and playing the games, attendees will also be treated to a pinball tournament, a banquet dinner with speaker, and a host of raffles and prizes.

For more information on the show and hotel accommodations, call (800) 824-4356.



Lamar Forque

Forque darts over to Merit

Merit Industries has appointed Lamar Forque to the position of regional sales manager for the West Coast. A 20-year veteran of the industry, Forque covered a vast area—including Hawaii and Alaska—for the Music-Vend distributorship.

"Lamar is eager to hit the road with Merit's extensive line of products, with which he is familiar from the distributor side," said sales director David Rubinstein. "He'll be offering his customers top-notch sales coverage, customer service, and up-to-date information on Merit's latest product developments."

Said company president Peter Feuer, "While making new and impressive strides in our markets, we continue to be one of the leaders in our great industry. We feel even stronger toward our people, who make it happen. I'm thrilled to have Lamar as a part of the Merit sales team."

New president at American Sammy

Mike Yamamoto has resigned as president of American Sammy Corp., citing personal reasons and pursuit of other interests for his departure. Former vice president Ko Adachi has been elevated to fill the position.

"The company appreciates Mike's many contributions and wishes him well in whatever endeavors he decides to pursue," said director of marketing Norman Evangelista.

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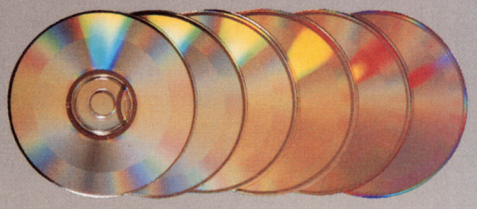

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Doug Wilson
Hilltop Distribution
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New standards proposed

The AMOA Standardization Committee has proposed five new standards for coin-op games. They must still receive final committee approval and a vote by the AMOA board of directors.

The following standards have been suggested:

- Standard voltages for coin door lamps and meters.
- Trackball standards for plugs.
- Trackball mounting standards.
- Standard sizes for kit marquees and console overlays.
- A standard for three- and four-player hook-up to the PC board.

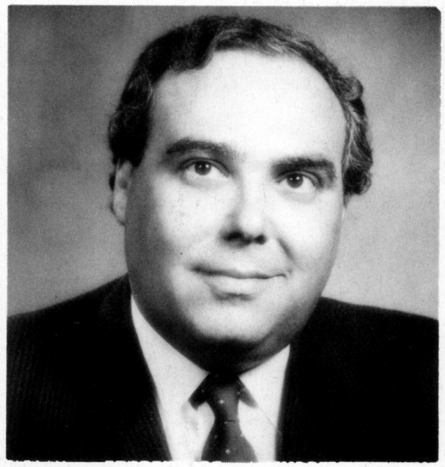
Committee chairman David Goudeau asks operators with standardization problems—and proposed solutions—to forward them to him. His address is Southland Distributors, 223 Luke St., Lafayette, LA 70506.

SCM hires Doyle

Standard Change-Makers Inc., manufacturers of automatic bill changers and token and ticket vendors, has appointed John Doyle to the post of regional sales manager for the central United States.

Doyle, who has extensive experience in the amusement and vending industries, will work with Standard distributors in 13 Midwestern states. He will be headquartered out of the company's main office in Indianapolis.

A record 40 AMOA board members and spouses took part in the 13th Annual Bob Nims Golf Classic, held in Scottsdale, Ariz., during AMOA's recent mid-year board meeting. The event was a scramble, with 10 four-member teams competing. Pictured here is the second place team, (l-r): Russell and Aida Love of Royal Vending Services and Phil and Debbie Elum of Elum Music.



Larry Kesselman

Kesselman remembered

Over 500 people attended the March 17 funeral of industry veteran Larry Kesselman, who died of a heart attack at age 44 while on business in Taiwan. He was president of L.H. Kesselman and Associates and formerly employed by Williams/Bally and Wico.

Anyone in the industry who wishes to remember Kesselman can make a contribution on his behalf to the AAMA Charitable Foundation, 12731 Directors Loop, Woodbridge, VA 22192.

Ryan featured on new AAMA poster

The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA) has released the fourth in a series of public awareness posters produced by AAMA. Featuring pitching legend Nolan Ryan and the message "Let's Strike Out Child Abuse," the poster is currently being distributed nationwide by both associations.

These posters are designed to raise public awareness and promote positive relationships between parents and their children. Previous ones featured John Madden, Don Mattingly, and Fred Savage.

"Both (wife) Ruth and I are delighted to participate in this worthwhile effort," Ryan said. "Everyone has a role to play in preventing child abuse, and the sooner we pitch it, the better."

Said AAMA president Gil Pollock, "Children are our business. In this industry, there is no better use of our energy than to help America's kids. Our purpose in supporting this project is to help NCPCA reach its goal: to effectively prevent and reduce the incidence of child abuse."

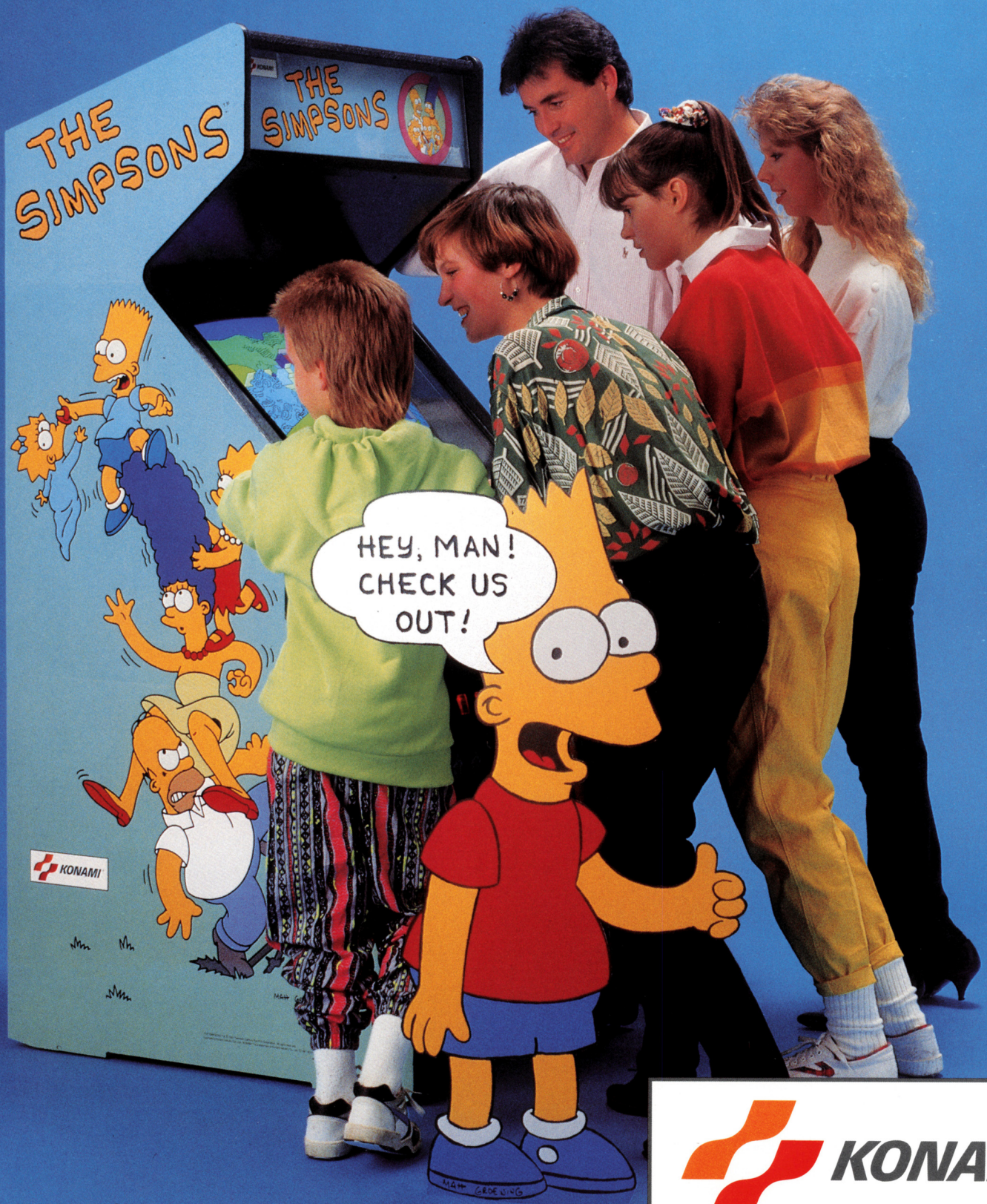
For a free copy of the poster, contact your local NCPCA chapter or write NCPCA, Box 2866M, Chicago, IL 60690.

New address for American Technos

American Technos has relocated its office personnel and functions from Beaverton, Ore., to Cupertino, Calif. The new office address is 19200 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 120, Cupertino, CA 95014. The telephone and FAX numbers are (408) 996-1877 and (408) 996-8736, respectively.

We apologize to American Technos for any confusion caused by a news item in March, the headline of which may have given the impression that the company had ceased U.S. operations. Obviously, that is not the case.

THE SIMPSONS™



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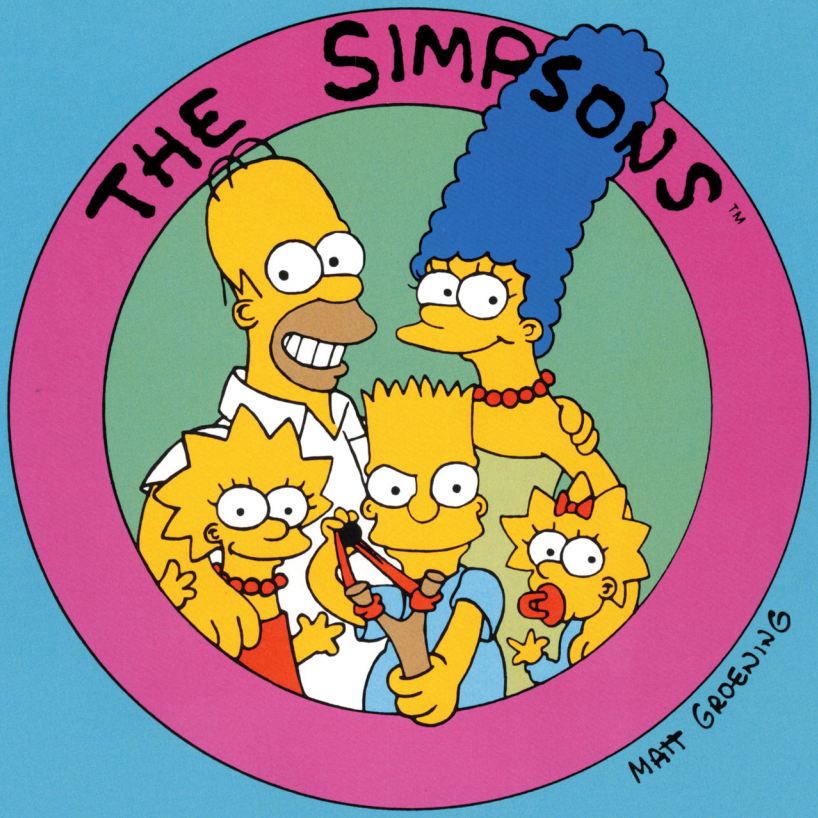

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- **4-Player Interactive**
- **Buy-In & Continuation Features**
- **Horizontal Monitor**

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  1. **8-way Joystick**
  2. **Buttons:**
     Attack
     Jump

Aye Carumba! Clear a space in your location 'cause **The Simpsons** are moving in. America's favorite animated family is now a favorite arcade game!

While innocently wandering through beautiful downtown Springfield, the Simpsons encounter a robbery in progress. As Homer bumps into the thieves, a large diamond pops out of their hands and into Maggie's mouth. Unwilling to part with the treasure, the thieves take Maggie with them. Now Homer, Marge, Lisa, and the infamous Bart join together in a mission to rescue Maggie.

Each family member has his own special attack technique. Bart uses his trusty skateboard, Lisa whips the enemies with her jumprope, Marge cleans up the hooligans with her vacuum, and Homer's arms & legs are his lethal weapons. Also, two family members can join together for a team attack. All through the game, the Simpsons fearlessly battle the evil hoods. Many of the enemies are in disguise, so expect the unexpected!

The fun never stops in **The Simpsons.** The game takes the family through different areas of their home town, including Downtown Springfield, Krustyland, the ghoulish Springfield Discount Cemetary, Moe's Tavern, scenic Springfield Butte, Dreamland, Channel 6, and Homer's place of employment, the Nuclear Power Plant.

The Simpsons packs all the action and humor of the T.V. show into a game that is sure to be a hit with players of all ages. Can our heroes rescue Maggie and reunite the family? Stay tuned to **The Simpsons!**

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ATEI unveils new '92 plans

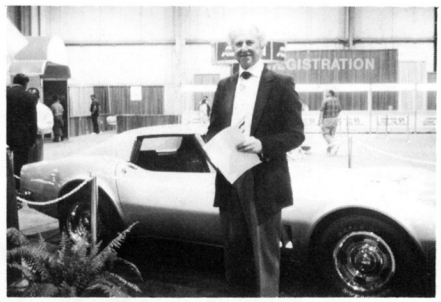
Long-time attendees of England's ATEI show may wonder if they're in the right place when the 1992 event rolls around. Their confusion would be understandable, as the next show will take place at a new venue with different floor plans. The traditional date, too, has been changed.

Organizers are excited about moving from London's Olympia to the new, ultra-modern Earls Court 2. The new floor plans, which take full advantage of the site's increased floor space, have recently been released to regular ATEI exhibitors (who are given priority booking status). These floor plans allow greater flexibility, which is welcome news to those who craved more space—an impossibility at the smaller Olympia.

The show dates will be a month later than usual: Feb. 4-6. This is in response to complaints that past ATEI shows followed too closely on the heels of Christmas and New Year's.

"We have talked to many of last year's exhibitors, visitors, and industry pundits," said new exhibitions manager Peter Rusbridge. "It's hard to build on an equivocal success, but we are going to try."

For more information on ATEI '92, contact Margaret Turner at 071 839 1461.



Marty Bromley was the lucky raffle winner at ACME '91, taking home this beautiful Corvette. However, not *everyone* who entered the raffle was prepared to give up the Corvette so easily. That's Sal Mirando making Bromley an offer of $10,000 for the car. We're not sure if Sal's efforts proved successful.

Trade conference set for Amsterdam

Because there is "no actual forum for the industry's decision-makers to meet centrally," a trade conference will take place in Amsterdam on June 4-5 to "fill the vacuum," say show organizers.

The conference will consider desirable legislation for the operation of coin-op games of chance in a Europe that's moving to a single trading entity in January 1993. By using state-of-the-art debating and voting equipment, delegates will be able to enter into a dialogue with speakers. The goal is to produce a "blueprint" for model European legislation.

There will be simultaneous translation from English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish at each session. A full set of tapes in the preferred language is included in the registration fee. (They won't be offered for sale after the conference.) Over 20 industry experts will lead the discussion.

Only 150 delegates will be allowed at the conference to ensure a manageable debate. To get more information, contact Michael Shefras, (0) 3727 43 200; the FAX is (0) 3727 40 925.

Ohio video lottery panel confirmed

A highlight of the Ohio Coin Machine Association's (OCMA) upcoming Exposition of Music and Games will surely be a seminar devoted to the industry's hottest topic: legalized video lottery.

The expo runs from May 31 to June 1, with the video lottery seminar taking place on the first day. The panelists confirmed for the seminar are from states actively pursuing video lottery legislation. They are: Hy Sandler (Minnesota), John Milliron (Pennsylvania), Adonna Jerman (Illinois), Candace Super (Michigan), and Leoma Ballard (West Virginia). OCMA executive vice president Paul Corey will serve as moderator.

The panelists will update Midwestern operators on what steps have been taken in their respective states toward legalizing video lottery, the problems and pitfalls to avoid, the costs associated with passing legislation, etc.

For more information on the seminar, and the expo in general, contact OCMA executive director Judith Martin at (614) 486-8677.

New Star*Tech seminar dates

The following are the latest dates and sites for Star*Tech Journal's regional seminars, which are designed for the advancing game technician (note that some of the seminars will not take place at a coin-op distributorship):

- April 27-28: Orlando
- May 11-12: Eastern Distributors in Philadelphia
- May 18-19: San Diego
- June 8-9: H.A. Franz & Co. in Houston
- June 22-23: St. Louis
- July 13-14: Music-Vend in Seattle
- July 27-28: Virginia Beach
- Aug. 17-18: Mountain Coin in Las Vegas

For information on sites, times, etc., contact Star*Tech at (609) 662-1080.

Deltronic moves

Deltronic Labs' new mailing and shipping address is 120 Liberty Lane, Chalfont, PA 18914. The new telephone and FAX numbers are (215) 997-8616 and (215) 997-9506, respectively. □

Team USA selected for World Cup event

The world's premier event of electronic darts, the Valley World Cup, takes place in May in Klagenfurt, Austria. Competition leading up to the selection of the American team (Team USA) culminated in Las Vegas on March 23 at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino.

Over 100 serious dart players from around the country converged in Las Vegas for this event, following 32 qualifying tournaments. Emerging winners were Tammy Tjapkes of Ft. Collins, Colo.; Cathy Perot of Carlock, Ill.; John Grey of Glendale, Ariz.; and Joe Beecraft of Algonquin, Ill.

Team USA will fly to Austria on May 7 and return on May 15. They will compete against teams from Germany, Austria, Spain, Holland, Luxemburg, Belgium, France, Sweden, and Italy.

Although Germany held the World Cup in 1989, the event has been won three times by Team USA. Hope runs high for another Team USA victory.

The World Cup committee anticipates an Eastern European country joining the competition next year, either Yugoslavia or Hungary. There are already signs that the 1992 event will feature at least four more countries.

During the Team USA stay in Austria, players will participate in three days of competition. In addition, visits are planned to Vienna and Carinthia, plus tours of the Alps.

Congratulations to the winners and all the participants. Best of luck in bringing the World Cup back to the United States. □

Bill Nemgar (r), Valley league consultant, and Gaylen Dick of Spirit Lake, Iowa, member of the C&N Sales Sioux City, Iowa team.

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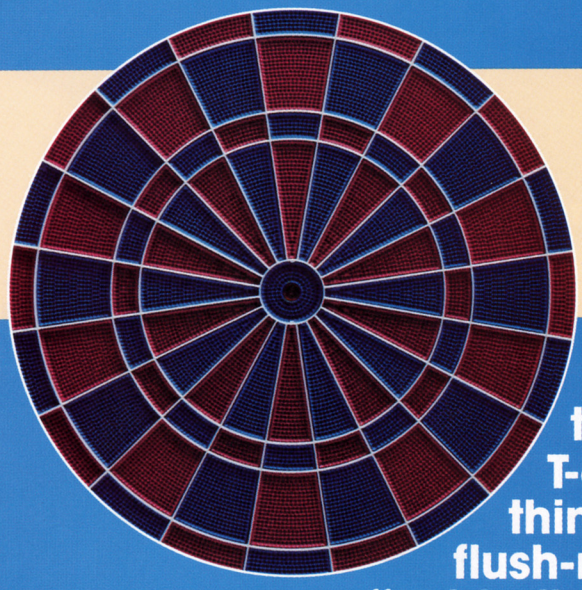

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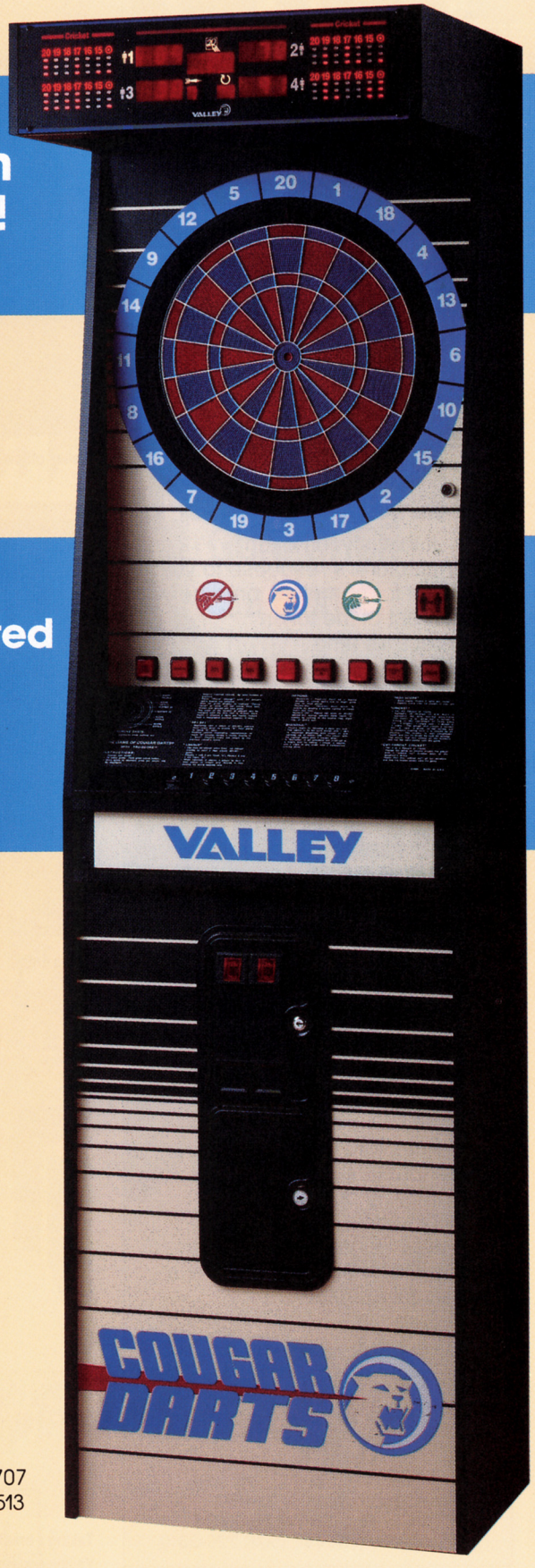

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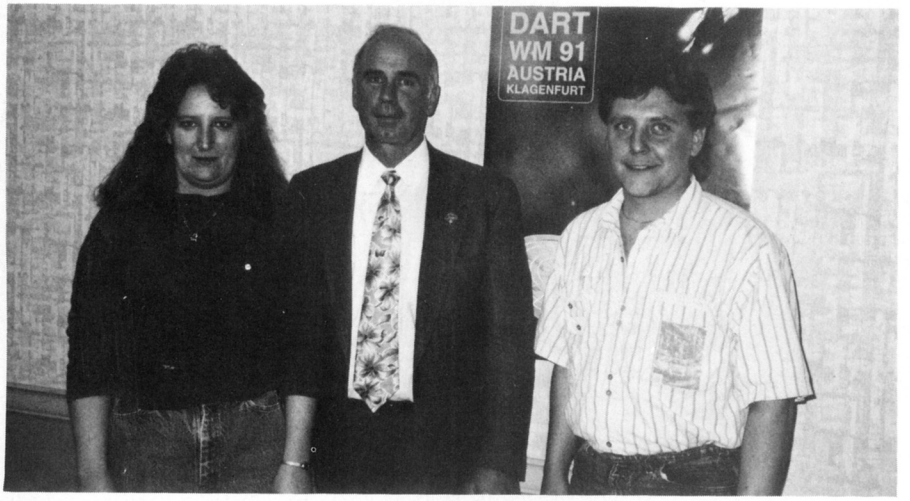
Valley officials join Team USA at the awards presentation.



Clyde Knupp of Amuse-O-Matic in Fort Dodge, Iowa, with team members Laurie Florea and Clint Hartzler.

Taking a break from competition, (l-r): Tim Benning, C&N Sales, Mankato, Minn; James Griffiths and Dave Kristal of Valley; and Bruce Hoechst, C&N Sales.

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UP FRONT

Callers haven't foggiest notion about coin-op

The telephone conversation was a playback of many similar ones in the past. The caller, a research analyst, was gathering data on the coin-op amusement industry for possible investors. He asked, quite innocently, "How is the amusement industry structured?"

There is no way to neatly explain this industry to an outsider in 25 words or less. I wanted to say, "How many days can you devote to hearing the answer?" Hours aren't adequate, much less a brief phone conversation. Instead, I started from the ground up, explaining the three tiers of manufacturer, distributor, and operator. I could tell I was losing him the longer I spoke.

Next question: "How do you determine the best manufacturers right now?" Answer: "By their last game." Lots of laughter on the other end, although I was dead serious.

Another question: "What's hot right now?" Answer: "Jukeboxes, redemption games, and the fight for legal video poker are high on the list of priorities these days." A lengthy explanation of music equipment, ticket-dispensing games, and video lottery terminals followed.

This call is typical. And they always come at deadline time. These folks want answers right away. They think the answers to their questions are simple because they don't *live* in the coin-op world. We want to oblige and reinforce the positive image of the industry as one populated by professionals who provide family entertainment.

We are also besieged by calls from newspaper reporters with preconceived notions about the negative impact of war-themed games on kids, especially now. Such persons want us to tell them something to support their ideas, even if they are unfounded.

We often find ourselves either on the defensive about the industry, or lost in a quagmire of explanations that can't be comprehended on the other end.

So what's the point of all this? The industry as a whole needs to think about self-promotion. In these tough economic times, promotions on a local level can be a lifesaver for operators. The name of the game is getting the players into your locations.

On a national level, we are severely lacking in self-promotion. The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) does work to promote the industry at trade shows around the country. AAMA has also engaged in a radio promotion program involving local distributors.

We need a lot more. We need an image builder. Considering the fragmented nature of the industry, this may not be possible. Games come and go quickly. By the time a national commercial could be produced, an ad tied to a specific game would soon be outdated. Home games are well-promoted on national TV. Shouldn't the coin-op side make a stab at some kind of generic ad promoting game rooms as family fun centers?

In the meantime, we'll continue to answer calls like the ones above and do our best to give a proper view of the industry to the novice. We'll also fend off suggestions of moral decay being directly related to video games that involve violence.

Did anyone ever call John Wayne and ask why he appeared in so many war movies? Did the TV Westerns of the '50s and early '60s result in all of us wearing six-shooters? Has round-the-clock TV coverage of the first two days of Operation Desert Storm taught us how to plan and execute a war? The answer to the last question may be "yes," because the war is real and its coverage in minute detail is nothing less than chilling. The answer to the first two is "no," because John Wayne movies and TV Westerns were make believe.

At a 1990 dinner honoring his many years in film making, famed director David Lean said, "This business lives on creative pathfinders." He could have been talking about the coin-op industry. From game design to promotion, this business needs a better public perception. Creative pathfinders are welcome to come forward at any time. □

Bonnie Theard

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

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Yet, ultra fast as our changer is, it never so much as touches your expensive CD's. Just the trays they're cradled in. So there's never any CD damage. Not even any wear.

Next, take a look at our new CD jacket title display mechanism. But you better look quick.

Because it's ultra fast too. In fact, if you continually depress the Picture Display button, titles will appear and disappear as fast as your eye can absorb them. Most importantly, they're positioned and presented so patrons can really see them well.

Bet you didn't even notice something was missing... until you looked inside.

All NSM jukeboxes look – and act – as if they're filled with CD's, even though they may be loaded with as few as 4. That's because you can "lock-out" empty CD trays and title strip holders...and no one can tell from the outside. But you always have the capacity of a full 100-CD machine.

Now look – really look – at the little things.

Things like the computerized transport mechanism on the changer. The "port" on the electronic board that lets you plug in a hand-held printer to retrieve diagnostic and collection information. The automatic-read feature so the machine can instantly identify and play 5" CD albums, 3" Singles or the new "Maxi-Singles"...or any combination.

Look at something so simple as the loomed & fitted wiring harnesses. Or the size and number of speakers. Little things, perhaps. Unimportant things, no. These are, in fact, just a few of the technological and quality

features built into every NSM HyperBeam™ jukebox...so that they will not only last for decades, but be technologically equiped to handle whatever comes along in the meantime. They're also the reason why NSM was overwhelmingly voted the machine of choice by operators at the international trade show in England last year.

Now, you really want "pretty"? Watch this.

Open the cabinet lid of any other jukebox manufacturer on the market...and compare what you see to NSM. You won't really know what "pretty" is until you do. Because no competitor even comes close to our features, our quality, or our level of technology. You don't have to buy an NSM for a side-by-side comparison, either. We'll send you an informative, illustrated booklet, "NSM Presents", to compare with. Just call, write or FAX us for a free copy. Or stop by your local NSM Distributor.

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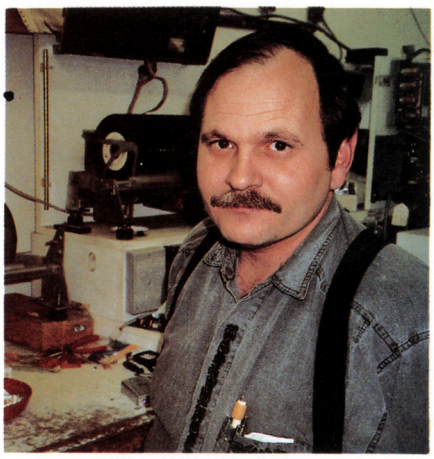
NSM opens the doors on

Rus and Carol Strahan

George Haydocy



Keith White, national training manager

When NSM threw open its doors, what we saw wasn't just interesting, it was downright surprising.

Most companies don't want everyone to know what's going on behind their top secret research doors. But then again, NSM is not *most* companies.

First, let's get the players straight: NSM-America (until recently known as Loewen-America) is located in Chicago and headed by Rus Strahan. It is the United States distribution arm for the German-headquartered parent company, NSM.

Although the NSM name is familiar in jukebox circles throughout the world, few know that the parent company is a huge, high-tech electronics company manufacturing not only jukeboxes, but also "intelligent" slot machines and a line of changers called *The Cashier*." Not only does *The Cashier* give change for a half-dozen different bills, it also will give out bills when change is inserted.

According to Strahan, the "smart" jukebox of the future will report how well it's doing and how well you are doing. It would automatically feed the operator cash collection reports, music popularity, diagnostics, and other information directly into his computer.

For now, all new NSM jukeboxes have the information-feed port built-in, preparing for the future. NSM already offers an accessory "DataPrint 2000" that plugs into the port, then dumps the information into the operator's computer back at the shop. The DataPrint can also print out the information on site.

One of the most time-consuming tasks is loading the CDs and then, after reading the popularity on site, updating music to maximize income.

But in the future NSM sees a system of automated information collection and analysis. Imagine one person sitting in front of a personal computer that has received information from all of the jukeboxes on your route. A few keys on the keyboard are pressed and out comes a profit report by jukebox and for your total route. A few more keys are pressed and out comes a music updating list by jukebox, all organized by how you travel your route. You know exactly which jukeboxes to update with what CDs and, very specifically, which changer slots they're in!

The "music manager" then assembles the necessary CDs in the computer-

"Changes will occur in CD technology that will be every bit as dramatic as the difference between 45s and CD. So operators should be cautious about what CD equipment they buy now."

The Cashier is only one example of the high-tech wizardry coming from NSM. The German headquarters is high technology itself—a 50,000-square-foot building mounted on huge shock absorbers to accommodate certain types of vibration-sensitive research. NSM also has co-ventures with the highest of high-tech companies in the world.

Since NSM means jukeboxes to most of us, let's take a peek inside those doors and find out what NSM has in mind for the future of music.

its "top secret" research

prescribed order and hands them to the routemen with a computer-generated instruction list.

And how about title listings? Far from the typed (or totally unacceptable handwritten) title strips, future listings would be on a video screen. Although it has been attempted by one manufacturer in England, Strahan feels "we're not quite there yet, but it will happen." Once the public is more comfortable with video screen-generated information and more research is done, it will be ready.

about what CD equipment they buy now. Buy now while planning for the future."

But Rus is quick to point out that operators should not abandon their current music routes and should take a good, common sense look at the situation. "45s are going the way of 8-track tapes, that's true. But there is no reason to rush into CD jukeboxes. Approached properly, it represents the opportunity of the decade. Approached improperly, operators can lose their shirts."

He suggests that while formulating a plan to make the switch from 45s to CDs, operators should keep their 45s working well. "Well-kept equipment and music have always been important, but it's now more important than ever with 45s. That might sound odd, but I think it is the best groundwork operators can lay in preparing for a transition to CD. The premise is ultimately to convert to CD if we want to stay in the music business. But you can't let things slide on the 45 front now," said Strahan.

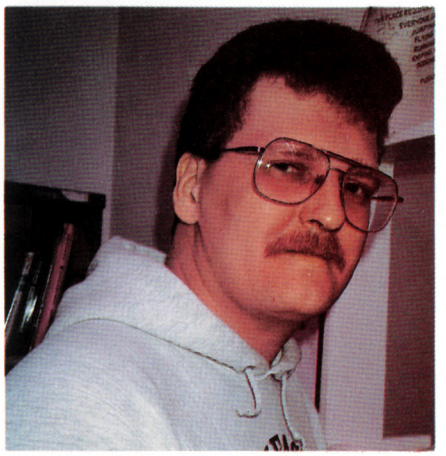
Jukeboxes that talk to each other, automatically swap music, change their own music, and notify you when they need to be collected may sound a bit Orwellian now. But remember that the year 2000—often cited by futurists when they referred to sometime "way off in the future"—is now less than 10 years away. □

"You will see CD technology being used in more and more industries for more and more things. NSM is already providing its changer to the broadcast industry, the information-storage industry, and some others."

In the future CDs may contain coded title information enabling operators to simply load a CD in a jukebox; the title code would automatically be shown on the screen. Again, the current equipment would be able to accommodate this feature.

And what about the future of CDs? "It will expand—explode is probably more accurate," said Strahan. "It's happening now and you will see CD technology being used in more and more industries for more and more things. NSM is already providing its changer to the broadcast industry, the information-storage industry, and some others."

Although confident that CD technology is the future, he notes, "Changes will occur in CD technology that will be every bit as dramatic as the difference between 45s and CD. So operators should be cautious

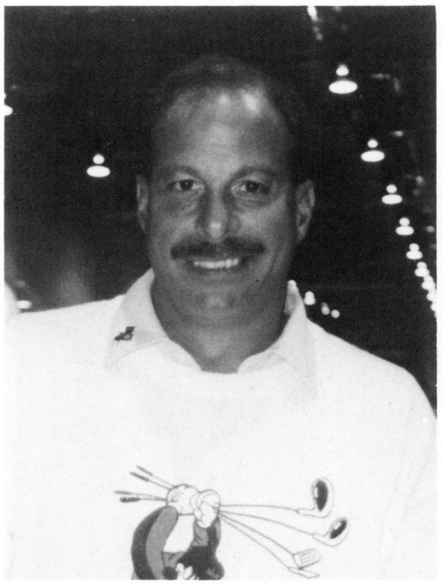


Mike Jablonski, service department manager

From left, Jorge Irizarry and Orlando Marrero

Jenna MacInnes

Valerie Cognevich



Tony Parina

Tony Parina of Parina Enterprises in Stockton, Calif., is a second generation coin machine operator. His father, Richard Parina, started the company 60 years ago with the purchase of seven cigarette machines in the San Francisco area. The company evolved into an impressive operation, encompassing music, games, cigarette machines, and full-line vending.

Richard's four children—two boys and two girls—all worked at the company during weekends, summers, and holidays. But only Tony seemed to have that dedication and devotion needed to make the industry your life's work. He became full time after leaving the Navy in 1971.

Tony says that he knew someone would one day have to take over for his dad, but figured it would be older brother Rick, who worked full time at the company for a brief period. When Rick decided that coin-op was not his thing, Tony gladly took the job when his dad died in October 1985. Tony recalls his father working up until the end. "He was a man of few words, but he would accomplish a lot," Tony said. "He came into the office every day from 8:30 to 11:30. He always loved this industry."

We asked Tony if he thought he would ever retire. In true "it's-in-my-blood" fashion, he admitted that he enjoyed the business so much that he couldn't imagine retiring.

I know you do quite a bit of traveling for AMOA and other areas of your work. How important is it for operators to get involved with AMOA and their state associations?

I think it is very important for operators to get involved. There's a cliche I've heard for years about trade shows: "You share ideas." It's really true. You may have to sift through what others say, but chances are you will learn something. You can get a good idea about what equipment is doing well in certain areas, which monitors are being used, which conversion kits work well, why leagues are so predominant in Minnesota and Wisconsin and not in other areas, and more.

By talking to other operators, distributors, and manufacturers, you can get a feel for how things are and hear different ideas. About two years ago Dick Hawkins of D&R Star talked about how he had started putting dollar bill acceptors on flipper machines. It was and still is a heck of a move.

Data East is now putting dollar bill acceptors on its flipper games, while keeping the two coin slots. I talked to Mr. (Gary) Stern and realized what a smart decision he made. When the dollar coin becomes available, you will have one coin entry already available, plus one for quarters.

Do you have a strong state association in your state?

I think we do. The California Coin Machine Association (CCMA) is for games and music; the California Automatic Vending Council (CAVC) is an arm of NAMA.

CCMA has a group of hardcore vendors that give credence to the saying, "Twenty percent do 80 percent of the work." There is a problem in California right now. In spite of a law that says cities can't go huckly-buckly down the road passing laws unless they are in agreement with state law, we have cigarette banning going on like crazy. Our association is trying to do something. We have plans to sue one city,

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but it is costing up to $75,000 in legal fees.

Operators are coming out of the woodwork for this. You wonder where they are the rest of the time. Of course, we greatly appreciate the money they are putting out for a special cause like this one.

Do you operate a lot of cigarette vending machines?

Yes, and I think banning cigarette machines is taking away the livelihood of an individual. Therefore, it must be against the law. On the other hand, cigarette vendors have the moral responsibility to be certain that cigarettes are available only to adults. I don't want to sell to minors.

One argument has been that teenagers buy cigarettes from vending machines. Studies have shown that it's not true. They will go to a convenience store or ask an adult hanging around one to buy a pack.

In California we have talked about initiating our own legislation that, in effect, says, "We've been bad boys and haven't monitored ourselves. We don't need you to monitor us, but this will get you off our backs." The legislation would dictate where the machines could be placed and how they would be operated.

Do you think there has been a problem about where the machines have been placed?

I don't think so, but anti-smoking groups will not be appeased unless steps are taken to ensure that minors are not exposed to temptation through cigarette vending machines.

"You have to do something; don't sit there and cry. Kimberly-Clark, which makes Kleenex, isn't going to come to your rescue."

It's a case of the best defense being a good offense. Putting out a brush fire now is better than being completely outlawed out of business. Instead of being ostriches, we are willing to do something.

Have you found that your business is down simply because there are fewer smokers?

Very much so. It's always been said that how California goes, so goes the rest of the country. Smoking is way down here. Californians are intelligent; they are aware of the dangers of smoking and have decided that they don't need the expense. Many have gone from Camels to Camel Filters, followed by Camel Lights and Nicorettes until they're off cigarettes completely. I did the same thing with the Marlboro family.

It's interesting that you mentioned that what happens in California mir-

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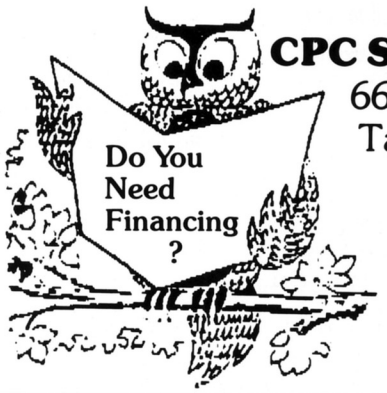

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rors the rest of the country. Does that apply to coin-op?

Very much so. Many of the manufacturers test their games here year 'round because of the weather. I think one reason the rest of the country follows California's lead is because the population is so diverse. If there is a big effort made in California to do anything—like ban cigarettes—then you will see efforts made elsewhere.

Have you diversified into redemption?

I'm sorry to say that I've procrastinated. I feel it's very demographic. If it hits with California operators, I'll look into it more seriously. Competition hasn't forced me to do it yet. An operator running music, games, cigarettes, and full-line vending already has a lot to handle. If you add something else, you are going to overtax your employees.

Do you feel that you will have to hire another person before getting into redemption?

Yes, exactly. In today's market and lean times you have to ask yourself if you can afford to have the excess weight in salaries while developing something new. You only have so many reinvestment dollars.

What percentage of your locations are street locations?

In music and games, about 85 percent are street locations.

Do you find that your street locations have changed in the last few years?

Yes. The corner bar—a long bar, a few tables, a jukebox, a pool table, and a cigarette machine—are going by the wayside due to rent increases, proprietors passing away, etc. If you're not licensing as many phonographs, that's where you are losing them.

Do you think operators can make a difference in keeping this type of location alive?

Not anymore. They once could have made a difference, because where customers went and what kind of music they had was very competitive in price and vending services. That's where the operator came in. He had to keep up with the latest and the best, especially in music.

Tony (r) was part of a panel discussion at a recent American Coin Machine Exposition.

You had to change records weekly. When operators decided that records weren't coming out that fast and decided to wait two weeks, it saved on service and record costs. I'm afraid, though, that no matter what operators do now, the neighborhood bars and taverns are a dying breed.

Do you find it kind of sad to see the neighborhood bars going by the wayside?

With fewer of these locations, it's having an effect on the way operators work their routes. I remember when one man could do most of his route in downtown San Francisco by parking his vehicle and walking to each location. That has changed. Look at the French Quarter in New Orleans, for example. It's a nice, compact area. Someone has to service the vending and probably walks from location to location. But there are not as many locations as there once were. They have been replaced by tourist shops that don't have the vending. And I never saw a jukebox on one of those hot dog carts!

Has the clientele changed?

I don't think so. As the corner bars close, the customers simply find other places. The customers basically remain the same; it's the locations that change.

Can you see a trend of more larger operators and fewer small ones?

There's no doubt about it. I see it happening in California. I acquired seven companies in one year and I'm not alone; others are absorbing competition, too. Operating companies sell out or go out of business for various reasons. The owner may retire and the family doesn't want to continue. Or an operator may bleed himself out; he takes the income and doesn't put anything back to keep it sellable. The bottom line is that they will bleed it, they'll die, and the equipment will go into liquidation. I've seen games stay in a location until they are finally thrown away.

Do you really believe someone would do that intentionally?

When a man has worked 30 years on his route, he figures the business is worth a lot more money than someone is willing to give him. So he will simply hang on to it without keeping it up. The industry passes him by. He hasn't stayed on top of new equipment or how to operate and keep prices up. He sort of goes gingerly down the street, not really caring. It's impossible to play catch-up.

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Are you saying that an operator must reinvest to stay alive?

Exactly! You have to reinvest; it's a constant renewing. I'm not saying that it has to be what it was years ago. I have normally reinvested 70 percent back into the business; it's probably down to 30 percent now. There isn't that much money out there to support new equipment.

I'd like to point out that even though I may be investing less, I have done some other things to keep the route fresh. I rotate, rotate, and rotate the equipment. You may laugh, but I can go back into a location with a *Missile Command* or a *Centipede* and have a new generation that has never played them.

You have to merchandise your equipment. It's no different from merchandising a candy bar in a machine; G-1 is *not* always plain M&Ms. You have to move it around so people will have to look at it. It's the same thing with locations. There has to be something different for people to look at.

You also have to keep your games clean, which is why I don't like changing drawers and having a generic cabinet. Unless someone walks in front of it and looks at the header—if you even have a personal header—they will never know that it's a different game.

"In my opinion, banning cigarette machines is taking away the livelihood of an individual."

Are you saying that when you dropped to reinvesting 30 percent, you made adjustments?

Most definitely. It's not like I decided to invest less, then made no changes in how I operate. I figured that I could hire someone, buy him a truck, and send him out only to rotate and clean equipment and recoup my investment. He leaves in the morning, does rotations, and comes back at night to log the information into the computer. He will pay for himself hundreds of times over doing rotations, making sure the games work, and seeing that they are clean.

Did you do that much rotation in the past?

No. We bought games, put them in locations, and then sold them. It was a whole different ball game. Distributors were order-takers—but we were equipment-placers! When the $80 minimum ran out, we got a new game and made the minimum $85. We were making money. You didn't even have to be an operator!

Now you have to know what you are doing and find different ways to be profitable. An example of merchandising a game could be placing a new—or old—game in a new cabinet, adding an oversiz-

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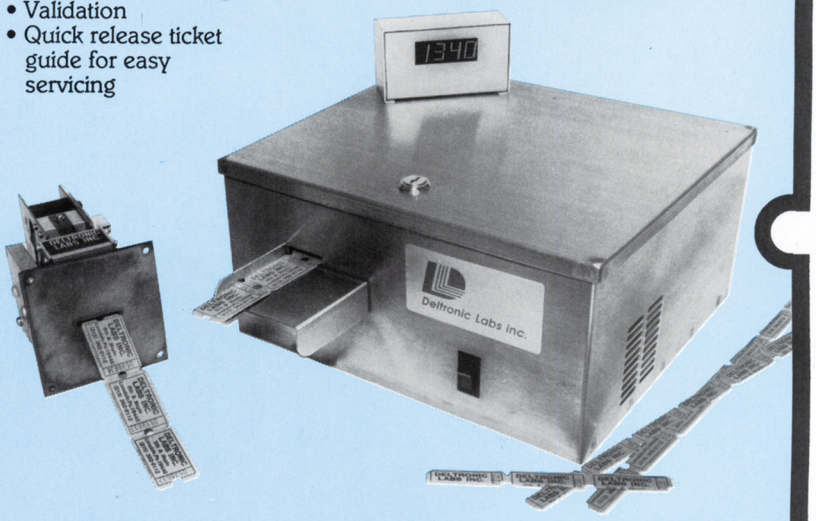

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ed monitor, and putting it out on 50-cent play. You will make nothing but money. I'm doing that here and it's proving out. Operators have to be creative.

It sounds like you have to have a plan.

You have to be doing something; don't sit there and cry. Kimberly-Clark, which makes Kleenex, isn't going to come to your rescue. I'm not trying to be funny. You have to do something. If you have a flat tire and don't change it, that car is never going to move. Even then, you have options: you can get that can of air out of the trunk—which is probably out of stuff anyway—or you can get a new tire. One option is preparing for the future; the other is simply getting by.

Another example is finding other ways to diversify. I am going in and out of bars, restaurants, pizza parlors, etc., bringing them games, music, pool sticks, and things like that. But there is another guy who sells them lemons, limes, and Bloody Mary mix. I decided to buy a bar supply company, so that now I bring my locations bar supplies along with music and games. If you don't do something you will get left at the starting gate.

I haven't diversified out of my field. Instead of putting chips in a vending machine, I take chips from the full-line operation, filter them through the bar supply division, and sell them to the bar. If they outlaw cigarette machines, I'm all set to sell my locations cigarettes. I'm not getting out of the cigarette business; they can put them behind the bar with a pack rack.

What is your plan with music?

A year ago I made plans to be 100 percent CD on the route in five years. But I am running ahead of that. I'm replacing the vinyl boxes with CDs. I'm either selling the 45 jukeboxes or giving them to charity.

Can you see where 45 records will be difficult to get?

I've already run into problems with that. Many records are not being released on 45s. In California there are many counties with a large Spanish-speaking population, being so close to Mexico. They stopped making 45s of Mexican music almost a year ago.

If you had to offer some advice concerning jukeboxes, what would it be?

Don't buy another vinyl phonograph. Go one step at a time, one location at a time, replacing vinyl boxes with CDs—depending on what the cash flow will allow. Most of the jukebox manufacturers are ceasing their production of vinyl boxes. If you only have six jukeboxes on your route, begin changing them—one this quarter, one next quarter, or as fast as you can. You can finance more on a CD unit than a vinyl one because it will have a longer value.

The phonographs today are such that you can get a better split with your locations, too. They have proven to have a better income. You don't have to fill it 100 percent with CDs at first. You can start off low and build into it by adding a few more each week, so that you don't have the high initial investment in a location.

"I have never seen the government run a business properly. Most cities even have trouble running a bus system."

Another thing that I feel is vital is changing the speakers. If you go in with a new CD phonograph and hook it up to the speakers that have been in there for 10 years, you're going to get junk music. You are looking at about $6,000 to place a new CD box, including the equipment, the labor to install it, the CDs, and the speakers. Any new speaker will be better than what is there.

While operators are making the transition, they must maintain their present business because they won't be changing overnight. Collectors and owners have gotten lazy. They've stopped wiping the machines down, changing lights, and making sure the title strips are typed and not written. Nothing looks worse than having a handwritten title strip; it drives me crazy.

A good example is that I'm still in the cigarette business even though my machines are probably down 20 percent. I still have to operate those I have professionally, have them cleaned, and stock them with fresh product. It's no different with music. While you are in the changeover, you have to give the service you started two years ago or two months ago.

Has California made steps to have video pokers legalized?

I've talked with Dennis Loper, our state association director and lobbyist. We told the Lottery Commission that we would like to work with them, not try to circumvent them. Just like other states with a lottery, California must come up with new and ingenious games and merchandise it just like any other business.

If we work with the Lottery Commission and get their blessing, they will know that operators are legitimate business people in the community. There was an article recently stating that the deficit in California was underestimated by one billion dollars. Legalizing video gaming could be a way to get an issuance of funds, so I think it should be looked at.

Would operating video pokers fit in with your business plan?

Yes, it would fit into my plan. I would work with the state association, and if they came up with a plan to help get these machines legalized, I would help them. You have to understand that it takes a quarter of a million dollars to have something like this passed. Then you have the investment of equipment and phone lines. If you are going to do it, you must do it properly, which means you must be well-funded. The state has to license operators; you can't have fly-by-nighters or out-of-towners come in. In South Dakota, one of the requirements was that the business had to have been established in the state for a certain number of years before it could apply for a license.

In certain provinces in Canada, the operators have been cut out of the plan. How do you feel about that?

I have never seen the government run a business properly. That's all I can say.

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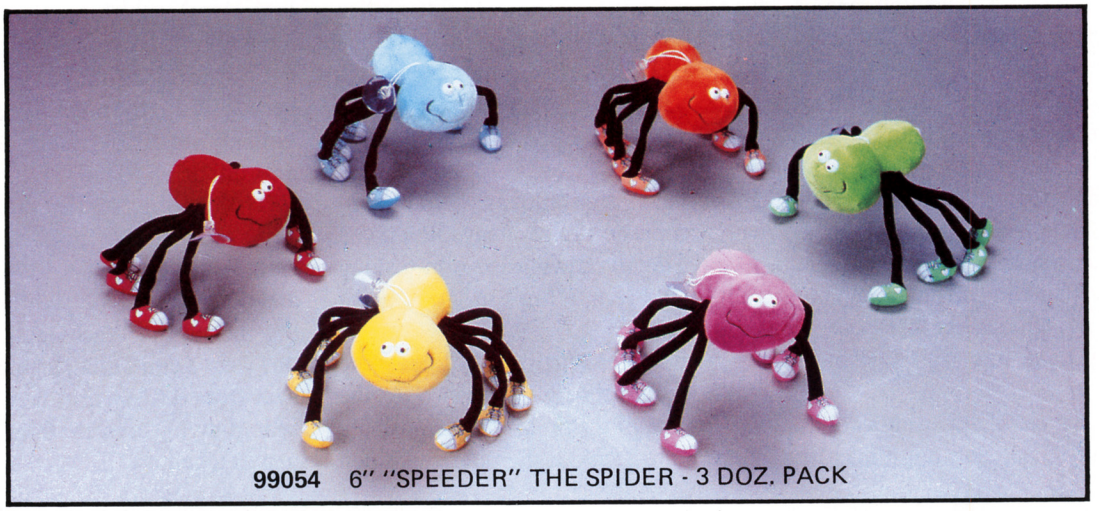

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Most cities even have trouble running a bus system. Billions of dollars depend on doing it effectively. It's crazy not to let the people who know how to operate be involved. The government has the controls, they know where the money is—it's all built in. To try and place machines also is absolutely stupid.

How do you feel about the possibility of having a dollar coin?

It is very important. The Veterans of Foreign Wars have joined others in endorsing a dollar coin. I'm not sure why they are doing it, but numbers count and they are a large contingent coming into our square.

One reason I go to the Washington Conference every year is to talk it up. We have to do it. I'm lucky to have great people surrounding me that can run the company when I'm away at things like this. A company of my size has to contribute something.

I think the chances of us getting a dollar coin are about 70 percent, but it may be three years before it becomes a reality. We all need to continue our efforts.

You can't tell legislators that they screwed up the introduction and merchandising of the Susan B. Anthony so badly that it is making it even harder to convince people a dollar coin really will work. They didn't educate people, which is a necessity today. They said, "Here are these coins. Use them as your dollar bill." But then they left the comfortable dollar bill in circulation. It must be phased out for the dollar coin to work. But our legislators don't want to take a chance because of the way past legislative bodies introduced that same item.

Just like in my company or your company, people don't like change. But if you get them involved in the decision-making and help them along, it goes a lot smoother.

No one likes surprises, either. The public could prepare in advance for the phasing out of the dollar bill and using a dollar coin. Look at the publicity when stamps went up from 25 cents to 29 cents. It was talked about everywhere. You could run the same articles on the dollar coin. The media could explain to the public what is going to happen.

That's a very good point. Everyone wants to know how something will affect them. It goes along with educating the public.

Right. Then they could see that it is logical and in the long run will save them money. It's nonsense to say that the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin didn't work because it was too much like a quarter. It's virtually impossible to tell a $100 bill from a $1 bill or a $10 bill.

It's a long battle that will take perseverance. We must show a united front. I'm sorry that AAMA and AMOA are not going to be fighting this battle together at the Washington Conference this year. I don't think legislators want to hear from AAMA and then 10 days later hear us saying the same thing. We all need to pull together. □

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Question:

What do you think is the most pressing issue to today's coin-op industry, and why?

A **Robert Herman**
Ace Amusement Inc.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

I think the most pressing issue is government regulation. That could be taxes, restrictions on our equipment, or bans on cigarette machines. Some of the issues that people speak about, as far as how a better game can be made, are really moot. The real issue is whether or not we can stay in business, or more specifically, will the government *allow* us to stay in business?

The threats are very real and still loom over our heads. It wasn't too many years ago that people were worried about video games being damaging to children. Though our image has changed to a degree, many still consider us bad people. We still face being wiped out with the stroke of a pen.

The taxes that are being proposed for video games, cigarette machines, pool tables, and jukeboxes are predicated on the misconception that ours is an extremely lucrative business. They only see the cash coming in, not realizing what the expenses are on the other side. We have to educate governmental bodies on all levels: city, state, and federal.

A **Charles Rowland**
Games People Play
Richmond, Va.

There are many pressing issues. First, I have a problem with new pinball machines, in terms of their cost versus the income they generate. We need to get pinballs that have a continuation feature like video games, so players will want to put the second coin in and keeping playing from where they left off.

I have a *High Impact* kit that does two-and-a-half times what a *Simpsons* pinball does—and it cost me half as much. The pinball is like a one-player video; only one person can play at a time, and when he's done, it's over with. There really isn't any continuation appeal.

Also, we're in the same kind of rut as we were in the mid-1980s, as far as sameness of game themes. At that point, *Kung Fu Master* and *Double Dragon* came on the scene, starting the "kick 'em/punch 'em" genre of games. I'm not sure what the next genre is going to be, but we need something else.

Finally, a lot of the high-dollar simulator games earn well when new but drop off as the months go by. You have to ask yourself whether you'd be better off with one $8,000 *Race Drivin'* in a single cabinet or, for about the same money, three *Final Fight*s. I guess what I'm saying is the economy itself has to be addressed. You can't sell $7,000 games in a $2,000 market. At least multi-player games, with everyone playing simultaneously, allow you to potentially quadruple your income on a single cabinet.

A **Stephen Genco**
Genco's Amusement Co.
Bogalusa, La.

Today's players are more educated and more demanding than ever before. They are very interested in games that involve a lot of skill. The manufacturers have got to produce quality product that's reasonably priced if they want operators to buy it. The video game heyday is over; it's time to buckle down and work hard in order to be successful. But we can't be without good equipment.

I don't think the home market is hurting us as badly as it did four or five years ago. What coin-op has to do is get away from the karate-type games. Atari has to be commended for doing that with *Rampart*. It's an excellent piece that's doing very well for us. I also liked Leland's *Ataxx*. But a lot of manufacturers still think they can give us these kits where everyone gets beaten up. You'd be surprised by the number of locations that request some different themes.

You see everywhere that pinball is supposed to be back. That may be so in other parts of the country, but we haven't found it to be true, although we have been buying more pinball machines. The manufacturers I've talked to say the South in general is an extremely soft market right now.

A **Jim Stansfield**
Jim Stansfield Vending Inc.
LaCrosse, Wis.

Every operator, along with AMOA and AAMA, has a common denominator of interest: the dollar coin. Passing the dollar coin in Congress is the most pressing issue in coin-op right now. It will give us the opportunity to make all kinds of unique price adjustments. I'm optimistic; I think we have a chance to pass the dollar coin bill this year.

We don't have this pricing problem in full-line vending. We can increase our prices in five- or 10-cent increments. But it isn't easy to do in the music and games business. We've been stuck on a quarter for ages, and I think operators are often their own worst enemies when it comes to price increases. Dollar bill acceptors, though, have made inroads. People are putting currency in jukeboxes and other types of amusement equipment, as well as vending machines. □

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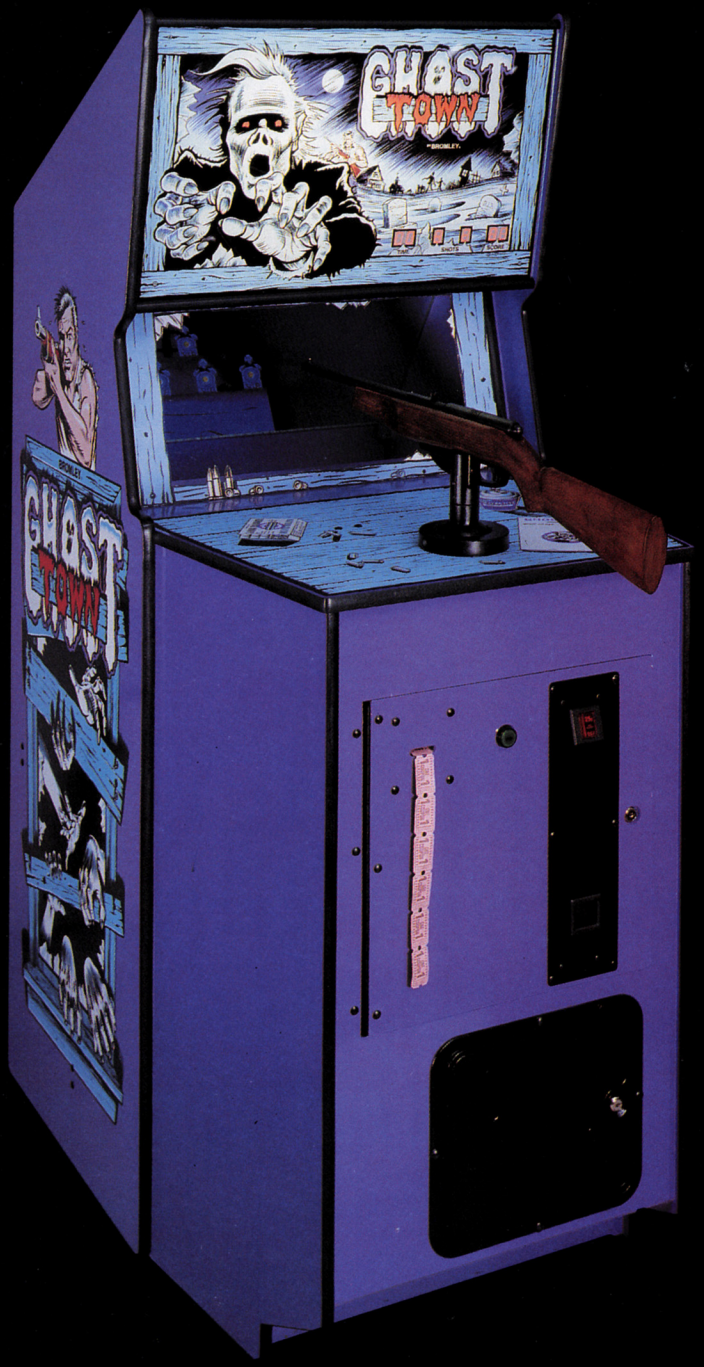

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Having a Grand time with Bromley and Prism

From left: Lauran Bromley, George Taylor, Minerva Santiago, George Taylor Sr., Frank Bundra, and Stan Jarocki.

Lauran with Grand's John Jaron, who helped Lauran on *Ghost Town*.

We often hear that it may take more than one, perhaps two, and quite possibly even a third game to prove a manufacturing company successful.

Lauran Bromley, who is now on her third game—her third *hit* game—somehow has shattered that theory. Her games, *Little Pro*, *Rock N' Bowl*, and the most recent, *Ghost Town*, have all been tremendous hits. In fact, Lauran told us that she has started up the fourth production run of *Rock N' Bowl*.

Lauran can only be described as a fireball of positive energy. She not only reaps the benefits of a successful game, she is right there doing her own quality control to ensure operators that they are getting what they pay for.

She is no stranger to the coin-op business. Representing a third generation in the industry, Lauran has grown up in the industry. She loves talking of earlier days when her grandfather, Irving "Bromberg," was an operator in New York or how her dad, Marty Bromley, made his distinct mark on the industry.

When Lauran's parents divorced when she was only two, her mom Allyn took her and older sister Bryann to Europe to live. When Lauran was seven, Allyn took the girls to Hawaii on vacation and decided to stay. Allyn lives there still, teaching art at the University of Hawaii.

After receiving degrees in business and cinema at the University of Southern California, Lauran took a job at Stern Electronics—her dad owned half of the business. She recalls that Gary Stern put her through an intensive training program,

similar to what his dad, the legendary Sam Stern, had put him through. "I worked in the stock room, quality control, purchasing, some extra-boring management position, and any other department there was," she remembered.

She was eventually promoted to director of advertising and promotion. She stayed at Stern four years after her father sold his interest in the business.

Stern Electronics folded but Lauran's love for the industry had only just begun. Although in real estate for a while, she was always on the lookout for an opportunity to get back into coin-op.

She thought she had found that chance when old friend Gary Stern was starting Data East Pinball. While management wasn't ready to hire additional employees, she was undaunted. As she explains, "I became the 'volunteer squad.' The offices were only two miles from my house, so I was there nearly every day. When they moved out to Melrose Park, I couldn't get there as often. I guess they missed me, because soon after I was officially added to the staff."

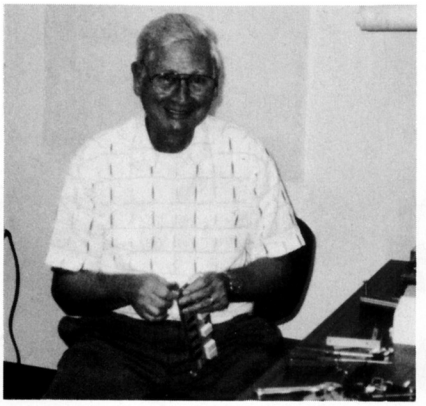
In 1988, Lauran decided it was time to be out on her own. "My dad knew I was looking to offer operators good games that would make them money. He thought golf would be a good theme and promptly picked up an old Harry Williams piece called *Little Pro*, built in 1937, and I loved it. It became my first game," she explained.

Bringing a popular game back from the past proved to be a wise move. The second Bromley game, *Rock N' Bowl,* was revived from a game called *Bolerin.* In the '60s, there were over 100,000 *Bolerin* games built in Spain for that market. "Can you imagine those numbers in one country alone?" Lauran asks.

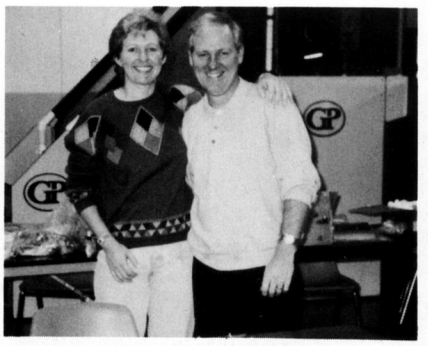
Marty Bromley came through again with a game that gave birth to *Ghost Town.* Simplicity mixed with enough action to keep players interested and coming back for more is its attraction.

Grand Products

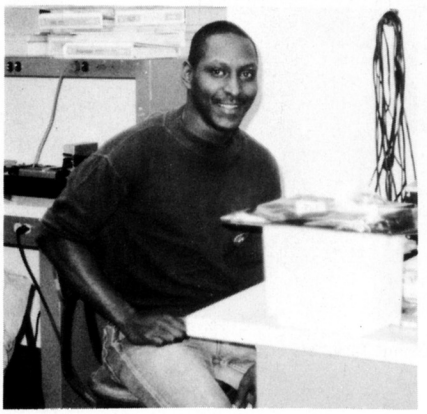
As part of a well-thought-out business plan to keep overhead down, Lauran does not have her own factory facilities. She has hitched up with four patriarchs of the industry at Grand Products—Hank Ross, Dave Marofske, Terry Sullivan, and Stan Jarocki.



Hank Siska, Bromley's mechanical engineer.



Lauran with Grand's Dave Marofske.



Tom Lawrence, a Grand Products technician.

Lauran gives the games an extra look to make sure they are right.

Hank Ross has been in the coin-op business over half a century. He and Iggy Wolverton, who were design engineers at United Manufacturing, started their own company, Midway Manufacturing, in the 1940s.

Stan Jarocki started his industry career 41 years ago at Seeburg, which he describes as one of the great steppingstones for many that have done well in the industry. After a short stint at Electro Games in the mid-70s, Stan joined Midway, where he had eight successful years.

Dave Marofske and Terry Sullivan both worked at Western Electric before joining Midway in the '70s.

"She is right there doing her own quality control to ensure operators that they are getting what they pay for."

Stan, Dave, and Hank started Grand Products shortly after leaving Bally/Midway; Terry joined them two years later. Grand Products specializes in contract design and manufacturing, having done work for Bromley, Jaleco, Sega, Konami, Taito, Data East, U.S. Games, and Strata.

In addition, the company has produced its own games—*Up Scope, Slick Shot,* and *Dyno-Bop*—and sells a line of universal cabinets, often doing kit installations for distributors.

Stan says that Grand can take on just about any project that comes its way. "We have two production lines, enabling us to satisfy our own needs as well as that of a client. Or we can go into production for two clients at the same time. Our cable department—set up by Dave and Terry—is so well-organized that we can do cable work on up to five projects."

Grand Products has an impressive lineup of talented people: Dick Kanopa is the supervisor of the cable department, George Gomez is a mechanical design engineer, John Jaron is the chief electronic design engineer, and Brian Osowski runs

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the parts department. Said Stan, "All of these men came from Bally and represent some of the finest talent around. If any one of them left, we would have to replace him with two people!"

Prism Products

Frank and Joe Bundra and their company, Prism Products, are also an important part of Lauran's business plan. Although technically they are manufacturer representatives for Lauran, the relationship goes much deeper. They are also an integral part of the game design and production meetings.

Frank got into the coin-op business in 1981 as a salesman at Interlogic. He advanced to national sales manager and then vice president. Interlogic was heavily involved with licensing deals with Konami. The relationship strengthened to the point where Konami purchased Interlogic, closed its own California office, and moved into the original Interlogic offices. Frank stayed on as vice president.

Joe joined Interlogic in 1982, working in the warehouse while attending college. After becoming full-time in 1983 he took on the purchasing responsibilities and was eventually promoted to operations manager.

Lauran does her own quality control. Here she is with the game's extra-reinforced cashbox holder.

The brothers left Konami two years ago and started Prism Products, a manufacturers' rep firm, with the goal of representing a few select lines. Their first clients were Bromley and Ameri Corp., where they sold *Ameri Darts*, a game Frank designed.

Currently they represent Bromley and their own Bundra Games, which they started last year to develop good, clean fun for the market. Bundra Games unveiled its new products—*Crusher* and *Ski Mania*—at ACME.

Frank said, "We are very proud to represent Bromley, not only because the product is exceptional, but also because of the attitude of the owner. She believes in quality, money-making product, and stands behind her games." □

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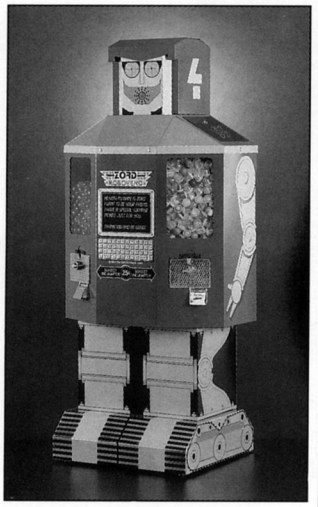

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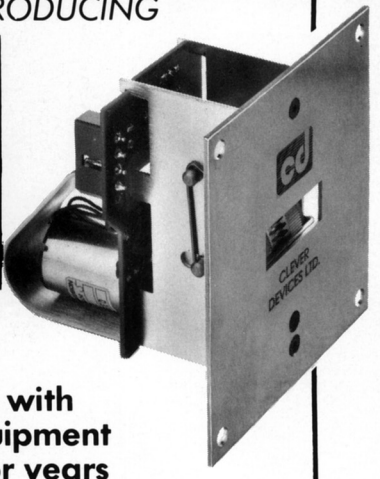

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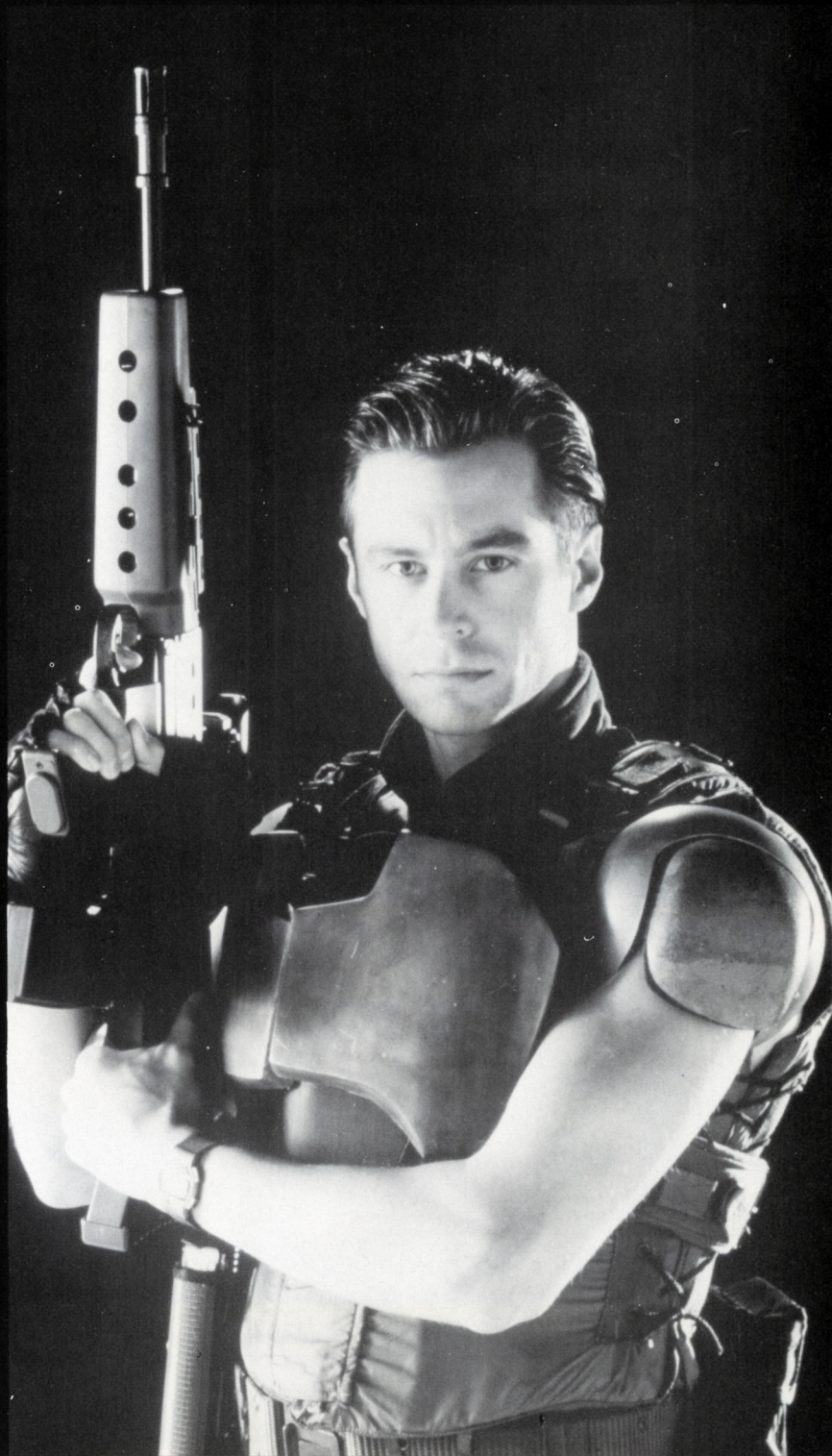

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ACME 91

At the Kramer booth, (l-r): Phil Cornick, Ed Kaba, James Boyd, John Newberry, and Mort Ansky by the new *Video Lottery*.

Anna and Katie Bush (Bush Enterprises) of San Diego.

From left: Ron O'Gorman of A & A Music, Lester Lambert and Stephen Holniker of Advent Technology, and Keith O'Gorman with the *Montana Poker*.

Mike Smith (l) of SMS shows Joseph Farley of Pachinko Palace the new *Robo-Bop*.

Bill and Tina Goldberg of Goldberg Enterprises with daughter Korena and The Simpsons.

Al Mosiello (r) of Selectra welcomes Dale Oprandy of Bryce Charity Vending.

ACME 91

All fired up and lots to buy

There was an excitement at the American Coin Machine Expo (ACME) that hasn't been felt for many shows. Held in Las Vegas on March 22-24 at the new Sands Expo Center, attendance was up about 800 over last year and it was much harder to find anyone complaining. In fact, one exhibitor had this to say, "Even the negged-out guys were not complaining. Those deadpan operators who never have a positive thing to say are the real barometer. This is the first show that they were excited!"

There were some comments indicating that attendance had dropped, but 100 extra booths, 62 new exhibitors, and more square feet in the expo center made it seem that way. However, numbers don't lie and the numbers were there.

"We're staying in upright poker games, which will be 90 percent of the market for the next 10 years."

Optimism reigned at ACME '91. The industry has been in intensive care, hooked up to a heart monitor. While the line on the machine has been looking a little flat, the show brought out the first signs of a few upward blips. It's not to say that the industry is ready to hop up and enter a marathon, but it's certainly a good sign that its health is returning.

Operators were talking about what they were going to *buy*. "There's more good stuff here than I've seen in a long time," was heard by more than one operator. "It's about time," echoed another. "If I walk around this floor and don't see anything I want to buy, I better wonder what I'm even doing in this business!" exclaimed still another.

Operators who were there had a few comments for their fellow operators who didn't show up. "For those who said they couldn't afford to come to any more shows, I'd like to say that there will be someone ready to take over your route shortly." Another said, "They're sitting at home complaining that their business is bad. Don't they realize they are doing a lot of it to themselves?"

But there is no magic formula for bringing an industry back from the brink of death. While many operators were discussing the video lottery situation (there was not even any standing room at the seminar), others are taking it in stride. They're keeping track of the progress and will accept it if it comes to their state. But they are not allowing it to interfere with their current business. "No one can run their businesses based on what might or might not happen. If I let my route go and don't update my equipment, what will I do if video poker does not come to my state. It will be awfully hard to play catch up at that point," stated one operator.

But there is no doubt that operators are studying video pokers; and many of the major players were there to answer questions and talk with operators. Similarly, operators are looking seriously into redemption and had an array of redemption equipment to consider.

Operators were also abuzz with comments about the home video market reaching a decline. "I never was positive that the home video market was hurting us as bad as others made it sound. However, it's ironic that since I've been hearing that the home market is down, our industry looks up." Another operator observed that there are so many home games to choose from that he would be crazy to invest in coin-op video games.

Although all of us are excited to see the industry's burst of positive energy, it's hard not to let past experiences—coupled with the recession—put a damper on the mood. There was a feeling that even though there is something to be excited about for a change, we'd better be cautiously optimistic.

Even with the caution, and those few who are never satisfied, all indications at ACME '91 point to this year as one that could be the start of a wonderful relationship.

Video Poker

The mood is optimistic, yet guarded, as operators cross their fingers hoping for positive legislative action with respect to legal video poker (translation: video lottery). Fifteen companies exhibited video pokers, with 8-liner reel games running a popular second place.

When asked if operators were shying

ACME 91

away from the gray area games in hopes of obtaining legalized gaming in their areas, most manufacturers said "no." Ventured one, "Even if a state has a video lottery bill pending, or an effort underway, as long as the 'amusement only' games are permitted, operators will buy them. If operators can gain one more day of revenue beyond their initial investment, they'll still go for gray area games."

Another manufacturer offered this forecast: "We're staying in upright poker games, which will be 90 percent of the market for the next 10 years. It will be a very slow process before states really jump on video lottery. The only state where we've experienced operator hesitation to buy gray area games is Illinois."

Despite this confidence, most gray area game manufacturers are planning to introduce games designed to follow the general requirements of a video lottery program. Since it is unclear if and when any of the 15 states pushing for video lottery will meet with success, manufacturers don't want to be caught without a product to meet the demand.

"Gambling is one of those emotional issues that elicits public outcries and legislative backlash," said another. "I don't know if we really know what we're letting ourselves in for."

The truth remains that the climate is ripe for a relaxation of opposition to legal gaming activities, due in part to states being strapped for funds (just like the average citizen). A total of 34 states have lottery programs. It would not be out of the realm of possibility for any of them to decide to add video lottery to their product offerings, and not take a moment to include coin machine operators in the bargain.

According to International Gaming & Wagering Business magazine (Feb. 15-March 14, 1991), "The rate of growth for U.S. lotteries slowed considerably in 1990 from the double-digit gains reported in 1989 and 1988.

"The product success story of 1990 was South Dakota's video lottery, which fueled the fivefold boost in total sales from 1989's level, accounting for 86 percent of the $102.7 million in sales. Last year, video lottery terminals (VLTs) contributed $88.1 million in net income, the amount of money remaining after the payment of prizes.

"VLTs also helped the bottom line in West Virginia, where the lottery tested the devices at race track installations. VLTs contributed $4 million in sales. Lottery officials are optimistic about their chances to expand the devices to other locations, such as bars and taverns."

The most recent word on West Virginia is that a program is planned *with* operator participation. The lottery commissions in other states, all of whom are are looking at their bottom line, may not be as accepting of operator involvement.

On the other side of the coin, lottery commissions may be cautious about adding more lottery-related products to the market and decreasing play in the already established scratch-off tickets.

The popularity of video poker games cannot be denied. Whether gray area or legalized and regulated, players flock to video pokers. The cash box tells us so.

It's not only in the United States where interest runs high for video lottery. The Maritime provinces in Canada, on the Eastern seaboard, are presently in the midst of video lottery programs, some with operators and some without.

There is hardly a Canadian province not considering video lottery. Operators had better prepare themselves well and present a professional presence to government if they hope to be included in future programs. Ditto for the United States.

Besides the negative image conjured up by the word "gambling," operators have to fight misconceptions about the coin machine business. Being well-prepared with facts and figures supporting the benefits of a video lottery program, especially the economic impact, is crucial.

In addition, advancement of the cause can be assisted by the ability to answer all questions and refute common myths about gaming activities and the coin-op business in general. It helps for operators to have their businesses on a solid footing. Remember, the industry provides entertainment, and video lottery is adult entertainment.

All areas considering video lottery programs have built-in a requirement that gray area games be eliminated by the start-up date for installation of the approved games. It becomes a criminal offense to have the machines after that time.

Just as a dollar coin cannot be successful if competing with the paper $1 bill, a video lottery program with full accountability to all participating par-

"If operators can gain one more day of revenue beyond their initial investment, they'll still go for gray area games."

"Our video lottery machine will be ready this summer," commented one such company. "We want to be approved for that market, but not say that it's the only market."

If there's one thing that has been learned thusfar in jurisdictions with video lottery programs, it's the importance of having approved product available in quantity in the early stages.

Operator comments vary. One Iowa operator said, "In our state, the dog tracks and horse tracks are not doing that well. And now we have low-stakes riverboat gambling. Can we support more gaming?"

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ACME 91

ties is based on those units being the only poker games in town.

Operators have no problem with this aspect of video lottery. Said one, "All our gray area machines will have to go whenever video lottery passes in the state. We'll have to invest in all new equipment but it will be worth it. In the meantime, as long as my gray area games are not considered illegal (no payouts allowed), then I'll continue to purchase them."

And what of the 8-liner games with their many different configurations? These are available with numbers, bells, watermelons, lemons, cherries, and even fast food items on the reels. Eight-liners have become popular kits to update aging video pokers. They give a location something different to offer patrons.

Not everyone approves of 8-liners because of the resemblance to slot machines. That waves the red flag even though the game says "for amusement only."

Manufacturers explain that the games are quick-stop, skill games that offer bonuses and keep the players interested. And they're easy to understand—a "no brainer" if you will. One operator observed, "Pokers will always be there but 8-liners are really hot right now. Just look at the variety."

Other gaming-type videos were exhibited, including keno, horse racing, and even a video roulette game.

Touch-screen technology was evident at several booths showing Montana- and South Dakota-approved video poker and keno. This next generation of poker games provides choices for the operator who knows his locations best. In some areas, older patrons may prefer button control machines instead of the newfangled hi-tech equipment. Games approved for these jurisdictions feature casino-style steel cabinets.

Multiple game choices were offered on most of the video pokers, such as Joker Poker, Draw Poker, Raise Poker, and Jacks or Better. Dollar bill validators were on all this equipment. In some cases, operators can even request the type of bill validator and whether to have an upstacker, downstacker, or even no stacker—just let the bills accumulate in a container inside the cabinet.

Whatever the outcome of video lottery efforts, it's a safe bet that video poker will continue to represent a major portion of the amusement game market in one form or another.

Fears of other equipment being abandoned in favor of putting all the eggs in the video lottery basket haven't come true as yet. One operator sees a positive side effect for himself even if he doesn't have locations where video lottery equipment can be placed. "When those other guys start neglecting their routes to focus on video pokers in bars, I'll be there to scoop up the business they leave behind. I'll do just fine."

Bonnie Theard

"Our video lottery machine will be ready this summer. We want to be approved for that market, but not say that it's the only market."

Redemption

If one were to ask Noah Webster or a member of the clergy about the meaning of redemption, the answer would likely involve "freedom from the wages of sin and damnation" or "spiritual salvation." With increasing frequency, operators are turning to redemption of the coin-op variety to attain "freedom from the sins of diminished game earnings" and "company salvation."

The prospect of operating redemption games, though, has some otherwise confident operators a bit nervous. Many got out of bed for an 8 a.m. redemption seminar to soak up information on how to commence their new redemption operations.

"My partner and I are buying almost no new video games shown at ACME," said one operator. "It's the same old stuff with another name—and a higher price tag. We're getting into redemption, though I'll admit we're not too comfortable with it. But we've got to do it to stay competitive.

"I'm scared. Two of our four stores are losing money; we've got to turn that around. The danger I see in redemption is that you give away about 25 percent (the common percentage of payout) from the outset. So even if the take is bigger when compared to video, it may end up evening-out in the long run."

He added that he and his partner don't plan to hire two or three extra people to man the stores' redemption centers. The regular game attendant will probably do it because "hiring more people just for redemption is simply an added expense we can't afford right now."

The equipment the duo will buy to inaugurate redemption includes standbys *Skee-Ball* and *Pop-A-Ball*, Smart's new *Super Pro Quarterback* football-passing game, and Bromley's *Rock 'N Bowl* and the ACME-premiered shooting game *Ghost Town*. The latter, along with Williams' *Slugfest*, was cited as the show's top new redemption piece in an informal polling of operators.

Another operator was brimming with excitement over the quality of product shown at ACME, saying he can "feel the ice covering the industry beginning to thaw." He thought there was a good mix of redemption games, picking out as his favorites Data East's *Cosmo Gang*, Doyle's new midway-style toss game *Dump the Ump*, Alter Enterprises' target-shooting *Fireball*,

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MicroProse Games' Gerry Blair (l) and "Wild Bill" Stealey in front of *F-15 Strike Eagle*.

Miss Lori and Mad Dog McCree himself flank Betson's follow-up to *Mad Dog McCree*. Titled *Who Shot Johnny Rock?*, the game is scheduled for a summer release.

Bruce Bauldridge (l) of Aspen Amusement Service and Greg Rice of American Technos with the company's *WWF Wrestlefest*. It's due to be released this summer.

Design Plus Industries' Mike and Diane Seibert, along with Leo Finn of American Vending Sales, beside *Roll-R-Ball*.

By Midway Manufacturing's new-and-improved *Trog*, (l-r): John Nicastro, David Wardak of Wardak Amusements, and Joe Dillon.

Sam Zammuto (r) of Arachnid with Gary Benson of High Country Games (Colorado) and *Galaxy Darts*.

ACME 91

In front of the Coin Controls booth: Jeff Beaumont (l) (James Industries) and Neal Zook (SNK).

Skeet Livingston (Nevis Co.) has a look at the Perfect 360 joystick with Curt Jones and Randy Mitchell.

Kimberly Guerlain and Bill Owen of National Ticket Co.

Jeff Parsetich (l) and Jack Kelly of Acme Premium Supply Co. surround James and Debra Kennedy (Canyon Enterprises).

Clever Device's Bill Long and Michael Conway flank Pat Talmadage (Alter Enterprises).

(L-r): Leisure Entertainment's Moishe Yeshaya, Sandy Markowitz (Garden State Games Sales), David and Jed Forman (Leisure), and Lenny Basile (Garden State).

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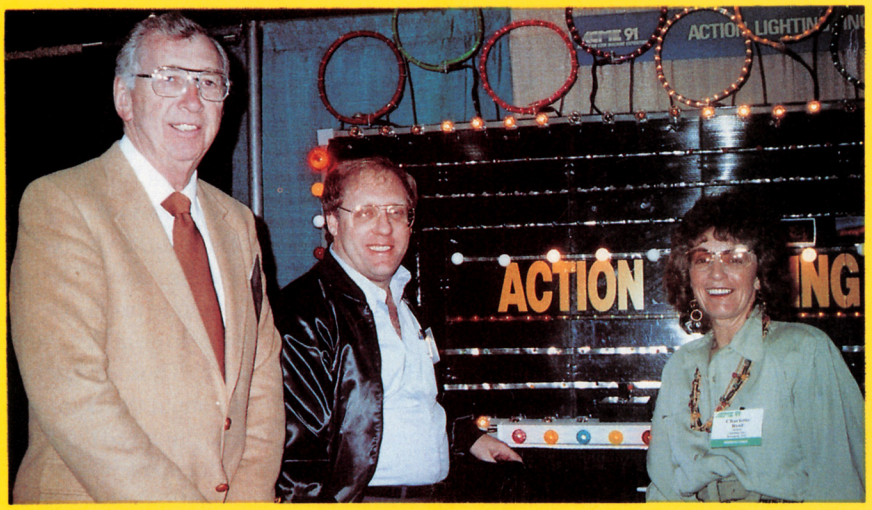

Hugh and Charlotte Reid of Action Lighting with Lars Iverson (c) of Larzland Family Amusements.

Jerry Reda (l) of Just Kiddies Rides with Eric Torres and Roger Prat of Kiddie's Manufacturing.

Michael Saadeg (l) and Raymond Lonsway of J.E.R.M. Enterprises with the Step-N-Roll Dolly.

Tom Brown (l) and James Nesmith (r) of Hamilton Scales.

The Vari-Tech team beside *Beeware* and *Space Shapes*, (l-r): Anne Coleman, Tom Kane, Reggie Moultrie, and Larry Thatcher.

Jennifer Fedesna (Ken's daughter) on R.H. Belam's carousel horse ride.

ACME 91

and Strata Group's *Peggle*.

Peggle is a cutesy video game that has an optionable redemption setting. On the plus side, the operator said, *Peggle* appeals to a female audience, giving it a niche in a video marketplace that caters almost exclusively to males. His criticism was that *Peggle*'s lack of clear game instructions might cause players to give up after one attempt. Points are earned by hitting pegs that revolve in a concentric circle. This operator says he talked to people who couldn't figure out how to *avoid* the pegs. To those who *do* know how to play, though, the game is a joy.

An operator well-versed in redemption said he thinks operators have never had a better choice of redemption product—at prices all across the spectrum. His choices, however, don't include Taito's offering of redemption games. The video game heavyweight's foray into the redemption arena didn't draw much praise from this or other operators polled.

Despite the negative comments, he says he's confident that future Taito redemption pieces will be better, adding, "It's good to see another established company involved with redemption. We can be assured of getting parts and service. I'm glad there aren't a lot of fly-by-night companies into redemption—yet."

One operator was quoted as saying, "When we run out of new ideas, we go to the past for inspiration." Whether that was meant in a negative fashion or not, the previously mentioned *Ghost Town* and *Slugfest* proved that borrowing from the past can pay off in spades.

Operators praised Bromley's *Ghost Town*, an update of an old-fashioned rifle game, for its simplicity; one need not be an MIT graduate or expert marksman to shoot down the 20 targets. "Why can't more manufacturers give us games like this?" asked one operator. Another appreciated the fact that *Ghost Town* would be appropriate in an arcade with other redemption

"We're not too comfortable getting into redemption, but we feel we have to do it to stay competitive."

Rock 'N Mole and *UFO Mogura* were similar to *Whac-A-Mole*, while the combination video/punching game *Sonic Blast Man*, because of its physical nature, had operators concerned about the need for extra insurance. Why? By this operator's count, three people who donned the boxing gloves and pulverized the punching pad encountered no resistance—and mighty sore hands and shoulders. The ball-shooting *Dino Blast*, though, drew a kinder response from him.

(All of these games, by the way, are made in Japan. A Taito America representative said their availability in the United States will depend on the response they receive from ACME attendees.)

pieces as well as street and tavern locations.

Williams has taken an old-fashioned baseball game (the one even *I* remember playing as a kid in old seafood houses—and I wasn't a kid that long ago!), applied some splashy technology, and produced ACME's other redemption king-of-the-hill—*Slugfest*.

Different operators had different features as their most favorite. One liked the dot matrix scoreboard. Another was tickled by the ability to pinch hit and steal bases. Still another was partial to the variety of pitches: fastball, curveball, screwball, and change-up. However, the majority of *Slugfest* lovers cited the baseball card-dispensing feature as the game's best. That's right: genuine Topps baseball cards. One operator looked at Williams' Roger Sharpe and summed it up this way: "Leave it to Williams to come up with a feature like that."

A female operator said she was "very pleased with the show. There was a lot of good, unique product exhibited. I wasn't going to go at first, but now I'm glad I did." Those in attendance are "serious about the coin-op business. We're not convinced that the industry is down for the count just yet."

In terms of redemption, she found nothing new that was "earthshattering." Dynamo's laser-shooting game, *Dinamic Shot*, was her favorite new redemption piece, and Data East's popular *Cosmo Gang* "is still a really cute game that I like very much." Between 35 and 40 percent of her game revenues have been coming from redemption games. "But," she said, "I'm not sure if it's because video games are down so badly, or because redemption is inherently that strong."

Another operator liked the concept of Exidy's new *4x4* truck-racing game. The player drops ping-pong balls into various holes to advance the objects on the playfield—four trucks in this case. There are also holes that, when found, *back up* the opposing truck(s).

However, this operator said *4x4* and future redemption games—by all manufacturers—should have their own ticket boxes to make ticket-loading easy. "No matter how good the piece is, if an attendant has to open the top of it to load tickets, he's likely to move a wire," remarked the operator. "That might cause problems that will unfairly be blamed on the game itself, when in reality there's nothing wrong other than a loose wire."

An operator who's been into redemption for about a year says he didn't get into it because of a video game panic. Rather, it was to "stay on the cutting edge to put me one step ahead of other small operators."

A lot of the new redemption pieces,

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especially those by manufacturers just entering the marketplace, are charging too much money for the games, this operator believes. Because of that, he's sticking with the "tried-and-true" games, citing *Skee-Ball, Whac-A-Mole, Roll-A-Ball*, and *Rebound*, along with Doyle's basketball game.

"They're charging what they'd *like* you to pay, but it's not a realistic market price," he said. "On the other hand, it's akin to trying to sell the $25,000 apple. You only need to make that one sale. Another thing I don't like is companies trying to rush out games when they're not ready, and even then they're usually rip-offs of old ideas."

tin says, to give it a well-rounded mix of sports games (Zamperla also manufactures a smaller basketball game, *Kiddie Hoop*, and the *Competition Air Hockey* table).

Before leaving redemption, it should be mentioned that Coin Controls International debuted the "CC2000 Ticket Dispenser" at ACME. This ticket dispenser is unique in that it can operate as a one-pulse-per-ticket unit *or* as a continuous-payout unit—all within the same model. Other features include automatic ticket embossing, an automatic ticket-feeder button, and a ticket-stop adjustment.

Christopher Caire

"No matter how good a redemption piece is, if an attendant has to open the top of it to load tickets, he's likely to move a wire by mistake."

Also mentioned by more than one operator as a nice new redemption piece was Vari-Tech's *B.C. Bash*, a prehistoric-themed piece that involves pounding characters that bop up and down with caveman-like clubs.

As for basketball games, one manufacturer said his company is backing off them because the market is too saturated. "Everyone jumped on the bandwagon, which has diluted the market for the manufacturers who got in on basketball early," he said. I think basketball's popularity has definitely waned, though it should still earn consistently for operators who bought quality games."

Two manufacturers, though, think the market can withstand another basketball game. Acces Entertainment debuted *Hoop*, which has as its key selling point the ability to set up in less than nine minutes (the company's Eric Brashear says he's done it in three!).

Zamperla introduced *Shot Clock Basketball*, the company's David Mar-

Music

It's been an established fact that the battle of 45s versus CDs is in full swing. The winner is already certain but the challenger is not going down without a final gasp.

The major players have left the gate and the race is on. Rowe, NSM, Pioneer, Rock-Ola, Wurlitzer, and Seeburg are all putting their reputations on the line, introducing their best of the best product and preparing for the change.

Sadly, Seeburg, who was far ahead of the pack when the race started, has been plagued by setbacks. The company had a booth at the show with two of its *Laser Music* CD boxes, but many of the conversations centered on whether it can survive its problems. Negotiations have been under way with several companies to purchase the company, but so far none have come to fruition.

But the company is confident that its reputation will enable it to make a full comeback; operators are not as sure. Many who went with Seeburg's *Laser Music* CD box spent time at ACME making their rounds of the other companies, seeking out other alternatives. "It's hard to believe that a company like Seeburg has left us in the lurch. I can't get parts and can't wait around. It's time to make a switch to a more reliable company. The sad thing is that I feel that Seeburg has the best CD; that's why I went with it in the first place," explained an operator.

NSM, once known as Loewen-America, has officially changed its name to NSM-America. Along with the new name are other new changes. NSM is seeking a stronger place in the market with aggressive marketing and revitalized new product. The company plans to manufacture its product here in the United States, perhaps within the next year.

Another change announced by president Rus Strahan, who has never been known to skirt an issue, is better-looking product. Strahan admits that NSM music systems (he prefers it to the word "jukebox," so we will honor his wishes) have been pretty ugly—too "European" was another explanation. But that's changing, as evidenced by stunning new looks on the drawing board.

Two examples of far-from-ugly units are the *Fire Country* and *Fire Bird* wallboxes. They are beautiful examples of the new styling we soon will come to expect from NSM. Showcased in an attractive new booth, constructed to exemplify the new NSM, these wallboxes can only be described as gorgeous. The *Fire Bird*, with its neon light show, and the *Fire Country*, with a more conservative wooden frame, have opened up locations too pressed for space for a regular sized music system.

NSM also showed *Silver City* and *Silver Sky*, its two full-size CD music systems. Both feature wireless remote, Dataprint 2000, field service kit,

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Checking out *Toss Em*, (l-r): Carl Devenio and Gary Warner (Coin Concepts), Steve Thomas (Show Biz Pizza Time), Art Warner (Coin Concepts), and Alison Rubin (Jaleco).

Joining Roger Sharpe by Bally's new *Harley-Davidson* pin are games co-designer and artist Mark Sprenger (c) and Harley-Davidson's Tom Parsons.

Lanny Jaco (U.S. Amusements) checks the artwork with Advanced Graphic Designs' Linda Shields.

Dynamo introduced the novelty shooting game, *Dinamic Shot*.

Smart Industries' Jeff (l) and Gordon Smart with the new *Super Pro Quarterback* football-tossing game.

A happy Nintendo group, and friends, on their way to a Mexican dinner.

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remote wall boxes, bill acceptors, microphone kit, and quality speakers.

All of NSM's music systems are equipped with the exclusive "Quick Change Artist" CD changer, which can take as little as 1.5 seconds to change songs. NSM puts it like this, "Studies show that NSM CD music systems play an average of over seven more selections per day. That adds up to extra revenue for operators."

Another prominent feature of the "Quick Change Artist" is its gentleness on the CD. "It babies your CDs because the changer mechanism never touches them—just the trays they're cradled in," boasts the sales brochure.

The NSM changer is also housed in Carson City's *Songbird*, *Country Classic*, and other specialty machines. However, they weren't shown at ACME because of a backlog of orders.

to begin phasing out their 45 jukeboxes, there are always those who insist they want to buy them. As long as there is a need, we will continue to build them," noted Rowe's Joel Friedman.

We'd like to congratulate Rowe for winning Play Meter's Award of Excellence for its *LaserStar* CD jukebox. The award is voted on by operators during Play Meter's annual State of the Industry report.

Rowe does not believe in resting on its laurels, however. "We must keep on our toes to be able to offer the industry the best there is for their needs," added Friedman.

Rowe showed its *LaserStar Gold*, an elegant black box with twinkling lights and regal gold trim. It features three brightly lit CDs rotating in a multi-reflective enclosure atop the machine.

Rowe bills the *LaserStar CD-51* by saying "good things come in small

"I think we'd better lay a wreath on the tomb of the unknown 45 that says, 'Rest in peace.'"

NSM has prepared for the future with its "NSM Music Management System," which allows operators to extract information from jukeboxes into a hand-held computer/mini-printer. "It isn't like we think everyone will start using the system tomorrow morning, but it may not be long before all operators will have to have this kind of ability to operate efficiently. All NSM music systems are equipped with information ports now," said Strahan.

Rowe has been far ahead of its competitors since introducing the combo unit, when CDs were just arriving on the horizon. Designed for operators to test the CD waters, the unit is equipped to handle both CDs and 45s. Although the company admits trying to discourage operators from buying 45 units, they still account for about two percent of Rowe's sales. "No matter how hard we try to encourage operators

packages" reflecting its smaller size. With all the advantages of the larger box, the *CD-51* is designed for locations with less space to devote to a jukebox. It also has the famous Rowe rotating CDs at the top.

Both the *CD-51* and the *LaserStar Gold* can be connected to the eye-catching *WallStar*, also complete with the rotating CDs atop the machine. The *WallStar* can be used in conjunction with the hideaway unit, which uses Rowe's record-changing mechanism to handle up to 100 CDs.

In addition to the audio units, Rowe also featured its *CD/Video Jukebox*, which looks as good as it sounds and *The Bubbler*, an exciting phonograph that brings back the early days of jukebox classics.

Rowe is looking to the future with its "Management System." Complete with a printer interface kit, the system

allows operators to extract hard copy of information stored in the machines. It can furnish cash reports as well as track the top 50 songs by the most popular to the least popular up to 100 songs. The system is adaptable to all *LaserStar* jukeboxes and is available now. "Operators will be able to get so many different reports from this system that they are too numerous to mention," added Friedman.

A wireless remote is another feature being promoted by Rowe. "It's true that you can sell the CD jukebox on collections, but the wireless remote gives operators another sales tool," said Friedman. The wireless remote, besides the obvious volume control, can make selections, offer "red" money programmed in, and prioritize songs. An example is interrupting a song in progress to play "Happy Birthday" as a cake is brought in to a customer. After "Happy Birthday" ends, the regularly scheduled song will resume.

Pioneer's name has long been famous in the consumer market. It is becoming as famous in the jukebox market for reliability and experience with its *Laser Juke* and the sing-along *Laser Karaoke* system. Pioneer has also initiated several operator programs.

It is offering an operator service kit for only $299. Said Paul Scribner, "This is a big advantage for operators who are used to paying much more for less complete kits. This one includes all the boards, parts, full service manual, and schematics at a great price."

In addition, Pioneer is offering a coupon for each jukebox purchased. These can be redeemed at any time during the year for a wide variety of Pioneer product, including home and auto stereo systems, Karaoke speakers, or a service kit.

Beginning in May, Pioneer will begin its third operator promotion. For each jukebox purchased, operators will receive a full magazine of Pioneer current hits, a full magazine of Pioneer

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Capcom's *Bowlingo* drew great interest.

Mary Fujihara and Shane Breaks of Atari explain the game play of *Batman* to young Luis Carona.

At the Valley booth, (l-r): Alan Schafer, Mike Riquier, Melody Sutkowi, and Dan Riquier by the *Cougar Darts*.

At the *Galaxy Darts* introduction, (l-r): Steve Ellis of Mountain Coin (Des Moines), Bill Ward and Gene Harlan of Arachnid.

By the Pub Time Premier Edition, (l-r): Jack Houriet of Merit, Timothy Jones of Midwest Electronics, and Peter Feuer of Merit.

Nancy and David Paddon of Fast Eddy's Arcade, about to play Leland's *Indy Heat*.

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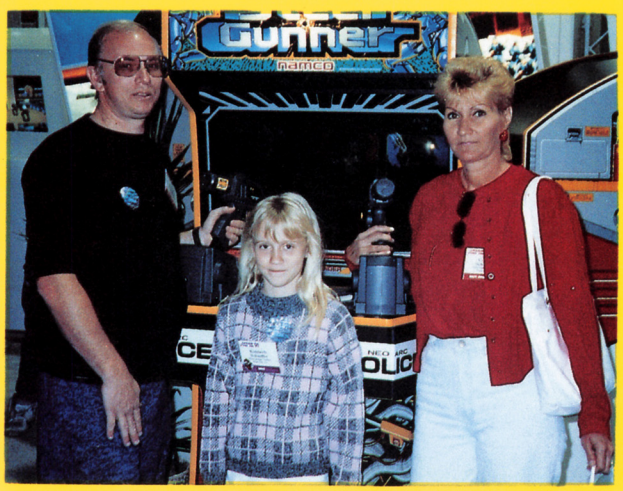
Greg Malavazos (r) of Quicksilver, about to demonstrate *Hi-Tension* to Jerry Hiltebrand of Hollie's '50s and '60s Club.

Showing the new *Maverick* poker, (l-r): Dick Miller and Teresa Raish of Bally Gaming and Mel Drews of Haron, Ltd.

By the *Jukebox Barrel*, (l-r): Guenette Alain of Alouette Amusement, Richard Suhy and Tim Sharp of the CD Jukebox Kit Co.

Bob Harzer (l) and Sal Mirando (r) of SMS with Frank Gumma Jr. of American Vending Sales by the *Player's Touch*.

Dilma Da Cunha and Antonio Rodriguez of Venezuela by the Micro Mfg. *Skill Chance*.



The Schaeffer family of Palm Springs Vending sample Namco's *Steel Gunner*. From left: George, Kimberly, and Connie.

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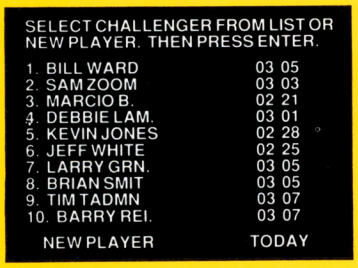
Isn't it about time you got a break, worked less on record keeping and more on developing new accounts, while increasing your league play and profits?



Top Gun Challenge Screen

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compilation hits, and a full magazine of the music genre of their choice—country, rock n' roll, R&B, or Spanish. Pioneer is promoting this as "buy today, earn today" because the discs are loaded into the jukebox so the operator can buy it and place it the same day.

Pioneer is also continuing its software subscription program—members receive current hit compilation discs each month. Those signing up will receive nine of Pioneer's past oldies and one hit compilation disc as an added bonus.

Rock-Ola showed its CD phonograph, *The Mirage*. It features 280 watts of power, automatic mapping to make it easy to add new selections, background music system, remote control, bill acceptor, and 3-D lighting.

convert their older 45s into new-technology CDs. There was some skepticism about making these conversions. "I've always heard that static can be a problem with CDs and I don't know that putting a CD changer in a regular jukebox shell would be reliable," offered one operator, weighing his options.

Another added that the cost of the kit was not cheap. He would feel better about the whole thing just buying a dedicated box to begin with. "I don't think a kit is the way to go. CD technology is more than just sticking a changer into a cabinet. You'd have to change everything and that would add up your cost. I'd rather do it right and buy one from a well-known manufacturer," said the operator.

anywhere else. RSI has negotiated deals with record companies to press 45s if there are enough members to make it worthwhile.

Some say that two years is all they'll give 45s; others feel that 45s will still be around as long as they are needed. As it is now, the majority of the Top 40 tunes shown in record magazines are available as 45s, but that number decreases monthly. Virtually all of the manufacturers and the one-stops are urging operators to plan ahead. "Operators can't stick their heads in the sand like nothing is changing," warned one manufacturer. "If they do, by the time they decide to react, it will be too late."

It's time for operators to start planning for what lies ahead. It's time to study the manufacturers and decide who has the best options for now and the future. No matter how much we may wish it wouldn't happen because we love the familiar, I think we'd better lay a wreath on the tomb of the unknown 45 that says, "Rest in peace."

Valerie Cognevich

"A transition period is vital for operators to make the change from 45s to CDs."

The Wurlitzer name has long been synonymous with music. Its *1015* has to be one of the most recognizable jukeboxes with its pulsating, rotating light drums. Wurlitzer has brought the flavor of the old days back again with its *One More Time*, available in both 45 and CD.

Wurlitzer also exhibited its *New York, New York* and *New Orleans* CD jukeboxes and the *Make My Music* 45 jukebox. *New York, New York* is a beautifully designed phonograph featuring delightful graphics and 100 CD capacity. It's black-backed mirror front is etched with a skylight of the city and an outline of gently rising bubbles.

The *New Orleans* features 50 CDs with eye-catching 3-D graphics on the front. Both the *New Orleans* and *New York, New York* come with an infrared remote and a connection for a printer.

But buying a dedicated CD jukebox was not the only choice at ACME. Two companies were previewing their CD kits, which will enable operators to

But whether or not conversion kits are viable or just a band-aid for the time being, CD Jukebox Kit Co. of Dresden, Tenn., is offering to "recycle your old jukeboxes." The CD jukebox conversion kit comes complete with the CD player, CPU board, selection buttons, LED readouts, control panel, wiring harness, decals, and instructions.

Digital Disc Automation of America in Jefferson City, Mo., is the exclusive United States distributor for a company in England. The CD changer, claim company representatives, is the fastest, most reliable changer in the market today.

While the music industry looks to the consumer industry to see its future, a transition period is vital for operators to make the change from 45s to CDs. Companies like Record Source International are helping to take the bite out of the transition with a 45 subscription service. Members receive 45s each month that would not be available

Darts

Dart game innovations are the order of the day. The list starts with Arachnid's new English Mark Darts game, *Galaxy*, which offers a host of operator-pleasing features.

First is the game's memory card system. Each team captain in a league gets a Team Card that can be inserted into the game for the input of team name, players' names, player order, and game played. Operators can transfer all this data to an Operator Card. The statistics can be used with Arachnid's Dartman II League Master software.

Arachnid also offers the Top Gun Challenge, a competitive dart ladder that displays the best 10 players. This feature encourages new player development and increases play on the games when leagues are not in pro-

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The National Sports Games' crew by *UB QB Football Challenge*, (l-r): Kim Cook, Steve Rice, and Greg Sullivan.

Flanking Coin Concepts' new *Cat 'N Mouse* are the company's Joe Tunney and June Burgess of Quicksilver Development Co.

Richard Suhy of C.D. Jukebox Kit takes a seing at Taito's *Sonic Blast Man*.

By Acces Entertainment's *Hoop*, (l-r): Eric Brashear, Jane Marques, and Jeff Beisler.

Monica (l) and Jeannie Wingert of J.J.'s Amusement enjoy Data East's *Cosmo Gang*.

Brian (l) and Keith Saunders of Vendtech Amusements compete on Lazer-Tron's *Shuttle Launch*.

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gress. It can be used for tournaments; the data is not mixed in with any league numbers.

If players don't play for two weeks, they are removed from the ladder. That way, players don't stay on the list indefinitely.

Galaxy comes with these games: 301 Open In/Open Out, 301 Double In/Double Out, Count Up, Tic Tac Darts, 501 Team Doubles, 701 Open In/Double Out, and the three variations of Cricket (Standard, Cut-Throat, and Team Cricket).

Coming this summer—statistical data collected via modem kit and an IBM AT compatible computer in the operator's office.

The newest innovation at Merit Industries is the Scorpion Target, which features flush segments and almost shadowless, non-protruding spider ribs. Because ribs are reinforced, there are no gaps causing jammed tips; hence, service calls are kept to a minimum. Various color choices are available, including a new, four-color international standard. The target is retrofitable for all Merit dart games. A one-year factory warranty is included.

The *Scorpion Wall Mount* unit offers a game menu with 301, 501, and all options; High Score; Shanghai; Cricket; and Cut-Throat Cricket. The game has a side-mounted coin entry or optional electronic multi-mech and internally locked cash box. The new Piezo missed dart detector is standard.

There's also the Solo Challenger feature (available on all games) that affords player vs. machine competition and selectable skill levels from novice to super-pro. The company's full-size unit, the *Pub Time II Plus 2*, features the Scorpion Target and the Solo Challenger.

Valley's new Cougar logo draws attention to *Cougar Darts*, a game with a long list of features.

Included are overhead scoring with four-player Cricket standard, new graphics, league software with Feats readout, flush mounting for shadow-free play, a spider closest to the bristle board to attract steel-tip players, and Valley's selectable, patented double bull's eye.

The company offers an exclusive, four-player version of Cricket as an option for the original models of *Cougar Darts* and *Royal Darts*. Valley also has the T-60/30 Target, a thin-ribbed spider target that goes with all their games as a retrofit kit.

Die-hard steel-tip dart players can now be accommodated by the Wellow *Electronic Dartboard System* (EDS), shown in the T.O.P. Distributing suite.

The game, a product of Great Britain built to accommodate players in the wealth of English country pubs, makes electronic steel-tip darts possible. Features include fully automated scoring, coin or free play option, game selection (301, 501, 701, and Cricket), nine skill levels, and satellite link-up to allow competition with other teams in the next town, state, or country.

Bonnie Theard

"Premier's Cactus Jack's looks like no Premier game you've seen before."

Table games

Table games have become such an integral part of most routes that they are sometimes overlooked in the search for the latest technology or that something-really-different.

This time there was something right up your alley as far as really different in table games. Cofusa Enterprises of Chula Vista, Calif., showed *Kron Duel*, which featured dueling robots on a pool table-sized cabinet. Each player controlled a robot on his side of the table, shooting laser beams at the opponent opposite. This one was touted as "not easily adapted to home play;" no argument there. Players of all ages were mesmerized.

Both Dynamo and Valley introduced new pool tables. Dynamo's *Excalibur* was featured on Play Meter's April cover. The design is stunning with oak rails and legs, leather pockets, and a look for "upscale" markets. It is billed as "Dynamo reliability with fine furniture styling."

Valley's *Cougar ZD-5* is an update of the *Cougar ZD-4* with a brilliant new wood grain finish, sable maple, and a different logo styling.

Table soccer is gaining momentum and R.H. Belam, Tornado, and Imperial had new tables to appeal to the growing audience. Imperial's *Premier Championship* soccer table features a burn-resistant laminate, long rubber handles, and brushed aluminum corners to eliminate breakage.

Belam's *Belita World Sport* foosball table features a tempered glass top that allows for "quiet play." It has a tamper proof ball return and aluminum construction.

Tornado's *Tornado 2000* is an improved version of its former table. It has a more durable construction and parts.

Another outstanding new table game could be found at the Design Plus booth. The *Roll-R-Ball* mini shuffle table is a natural for smaller locations that want shuffle action. It is complete with micro-processor for digital scoring, timed play, and a locking mechanism to secure rollers when not in play. Options include a bill acceptor and bar stools.

Video Games

There was so much from which to choose that even veteran show-goers felt swamped. It had been quite a few shows since they felt this way.

There was so much on display, and

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Thomas Leon of Amusement Equipment Exchange.

Victoria and Gene Sieben of M.H. Associates with children Leah, Michael, and Ariel.

Roger Wilson (l) and Ken Schaeffe of Carousel International.

In the Taito booth, (l-r): Jim Miskel, David Kuhrt, and Emilio Cabrera.

At the Fabtek booth, (l-r): Todd Erickson with Jeanne and Frank Ballouz.

(L-r) Imperial's Mike DiMotta and Paul Cardea with East Coast Design's Gary DuBoff.

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the show was so well-attended, that it was impossible to spend time with every game and every exhibitor. In some cases, all I could manage was a brief glance and perhaps a one-page glossy. Unless I was able to get my hands on a game for a fair amount of time, I won't offer an opinion.

Many booths were drawing crowds with games that have been around for months. I'm merely commenting on what I saw, without regard for whether the game was introduced at the show or had already been seen before. I offer my apologies to any vendor whose product I missed in this summary.

Biff, pow, bam!

Operators have been complaining about the lack of imagination in video games. Viewed from a distance, ACME might have looked like a room full of the same old stuff. But up close, you could see interesting twists to some tired themes. And there were even a handful of completely new ideas.

"Whatever you decide, you should be glad that there are so many good pins and videos from which to choose."

I'll direct my attention first to what I call the "punch-out" game. You know the one: the player is pitted against a number of opponents, which he or she must defeat by punching, kicking, slashing, throwing things at, or otherwise doing bodily harm to. The violence in these games generally makes the bloodiest boxing match look like a walk in the park.

The leader among the punching games is a surprise: Konami's *The Simpsons*. When I learned that Konami had licensed the characters, I envisioned a sort of adventure game; a fighting game never entered my mind. But the game seems to mesh well with Matt Groening's twisted sense of humor.

This is a four-player piece with each player given the chance to choose his character before starting. Homer, Bart, Lisa, and Marge are all represented here, which offers the possibility that this game might have some female appeal.

I played through a few lives as Homer and found the game to be a delight. The character moves in three dimensions and deals with obstacles well (he doesn't walk through walls). The programmers built in some details that add to the game's warped realism. In one scene, for example, the player is shown the "break points" of a piano and a table.

Sure enough, some well-placed Homer chops on those objects brought them crashing down. In other scenes, the character can kick away trash cans, scatter boxes—you name it. Weapons appear periodically that can be picked up and used (usually, the character just throws them at oncoming assailants).

In general, *The Simpsons* video is well thought out, highly-detailed, and a lot of fun. If you thought you had seen enough of the punch/kick/slash genre, suspend your bias long enough to pick one of these up. I give it my Best of the Show in this category.

Data East showed *Caveman Ninja*. Just the name should give you a hint that this game doesn't take itself too seriously. This is a two-player game in which the play is really quite amusing. The lead character is a squat caveman who defeats his adversaries with hand-to-hand combat and a variety of prehistoric weapons. The graphics are very good, and the sounds help the game's comic feel. But while the game is fun to play, I'd hardly call it absorbing. There were other more notable entries in this category.

One is Atari's *Batman* license. This is less detailed than *The Simpsons*, with the character moving in two dimensions instead of three, but it is a worthwhile piece just the same. This game delivers suspenseful action, even though the character movement is not that realistic. It's not a straightahead, "clear the decks" type of game. There are maze-like paths that Batman must follow to locate and defeat his chosen enemy.

At one point, the game becomes very difficult to play because there is apparently a specific path Batman must follow. This path is not clear, and even playing for free, it took me several tries to find that path. Some might argue that this draws additional plays, but I'm afraid *Batman*'s difficulty might frustrate those players who have lives outside of playing video games.

The graphics are good, but not great, and there are plenty of digitized voices from the film. Any Batman fan will gleefully pile quarters into this game.

One clear continuation of the classic punch/kick/slash tradition is Capcom's *Street Fighter II*. This is a traditional stationary-background fighting game, with a bewildering array of controls: eight labeled joystick actions and six buttons. Fighting for real could never be this complex, but *Street Fighter II* rewards the player's patience in learning the controls with realistic, fun, and exciting game play.

As usual, the player gets to choose both characters in the fight, and each character is endowed with particular traits and skills. The quality of the graphics and character motion make this game. I expect it will quickly take the lead among the realistic fighting games. For locations with teenage male-dominated crowds, *Street Fighter II* is a must.

My only misgiving about the game is that it pits a male fighter against a woman. Sure, she can handle herself well enough and even cackles an emasculating "I am the strongest woman in the world" upon defeating her male opponent. Perhaps I'm too

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old-fashioned, but I have trouble with any game that depicts violence against women. I don't expect that will hurt its income-generating potential, but if there is a *Street Fighter III*, I hope Capcom leaves the female opponent out of it (unless a player chooses to fight as a female).

I also had a bit of a moral problem with the characters in *The Ninja Kids*, an otherwise "cute" fighting game from Taito. I call it cute because the characters are, as the name suggests, caricaturish children. This, plus other elements in the game's plot and artwork, suggests that Taito is aiming this game at the younger set. This troubles me for two reasons: first, the game is *extremely* violent, with victims' hacked-off limbs flying everywhere. Second, some of the attackers are obviously black and are drawn and behave in grotesquely unflattering ways.

In general, *The Ninja Kids* gets my vote for Most Tasteless Game. If Taito hadn't worked so hard to target the game at the pre-teen set, I might let if off easier. Violence and racial slurs aside, the game is only mildly enjoyable. Set up near *The Simpsons* or *Street Fighter II*, it wouldn't stand a chance. Of course, the public is full of surprises, and there is certainly a market for a questionable game like this among those with a penchant for the bizarre.

There were other games in this category that looked promising, including SNK's *Burning Fight*, Taito's *Growl*, Leland's *Brute Force*, and American Technos' *WWF WrestleFest*.

Incoming!

Combat-style games were everywhere, perhaps thanks in part to Operation Desert Storm. Thankfully, the war ended too soon to allow anyone to release a game with this most recent war's romanticized name as a title.

A new standard in realism and thrilling game play was set by Namco's *Steel Gunner*, my own pick for Best Video of the Show. This two-player combat game puts the players behind kicking submachine guns with pulsing barrels. The sounds in this piece are startlingly real, and vehicles explode in a very satisfying array of fireballs.

I prefer combat games that take the soldier's point of view. Yes, it's very violent, but this is no kiddie ride. Teenagers and grown-ups will delight in taking out their frustrations by mowing down some fast-moving bad guys. *Steel Gunner* builds a plot so compelling that players will put themselves in hock to keep shooting. Operators should put themselves in hock to buy as many as they can. It's really that good.

"Homer, Bart, Lisa, and Marge are all represented here, which offers the possibility of some female appeal."

Second prize in this category goes to Sega's *Laser Ghost*. This three-player game (two sit down, one stands) is clearly a *Ghostbusters* knock-off, and again, I get to keep my gun controls and fighter's perspective. This is more a shooting gallery than a combat game, though. *Laser Ghost* tosses an absurd number of artfully frightening enemies at the player and is loaded with surprises. One innocent-looking billboard turns into a nasty monster.

The graphics are tremendous, aided by large square sights atop the guns in which a "laser" firing path flashes to show the direction of each shot. This is lined up well, and it's amazing how much those simple flashing lights add to the game. Thumbs up here, too. If I had to pick a pair, it would be *Steel Gunner* and *Laser Ghost*, but Irem's *Gunforce* should certainly do well.

Gunforce is a two-player game which loses the gun and trades the fighter's viewpoint for a third-person approach, but in other ways this game is a real winner. Movement is two-dimensional—but first-rate. The player can hop into jeeps and helicopters and blast away at inanimate objects to pick up new weapons. He climbs terrain with realistic motion and can shoot at angles (even straight up). I have no trouble recommending *Gunforce*.

A novelty candidate in this category is Fabtek's *Blood Brothers*. The graphics and sound are low-tech by comparison, but its tongue-in-cheek approach will draw chuckles from players. It's an easier game to play than the others (up to a point), and the cowboys-and-Indians motif will make this a good young player's game. The violence in this game is much more cartoonish than realistic. It might be good to give junior something to play while dad or big brother is knocking off bad guys on some harder, more violent games.

American Sammy's *Spinal Breaker* is challenging and the graphics are good enough (though they don't hold a candle to the other three), but the drawback is its half-baked control scheme. Instead of pointing your gun, you move a cursor around the screen. Your shots hit whatever the brackets surround. This is about as non-intuitive as you can get. It managed to take most of the enjoyment out of the game for me. Trying to track that silly cursor while making sure your body (which moves, too, but in ways that don't always make sense!) avoids getting hit makes this a frustrating game.

The game I didn't get to play in this category was *Desert Assault* by Data East. Wonder where they got the idea for a desert combat game? Hmmm...

And he takes the checkered flag!

Car-racing games were everywhere, spurred on by advances in technology that allow more realistic graphics to zip by at higher speeds than was possible before.

ACME 91

Flanking Bromley's latest redemption piece, *Ghost Town*, are, (l-r): Lauran Bromley, Michael Green, David Coren, and Marty Bromley.

Ric Stephan with his new California auctioneer, Lanny Jaco.

Sega's Tom Petit show off *Time Traveler* to a group of interested distributors.

Nancy Duncan of Just Vibrations with Steve Shoemaker of Redondo Fun Factory.

In front of Doyle & Associates' new *Dump the Ump*, (l-r): Doyle's Chris Williams, David Capilouto of Greater Southern, and Sondra Doyle.

Jeff Gress (l) of Tekbilt with John Caulfield of CAS Distributing Ltd.

ACME 91

(L-r): Don Shimel of J-S Sales, Jay Roffeld of Jay's Vending, and John Nusser of J-S Sales.

George Yurkovich and Gail Prorok of Patt Corporation.

Flanking Leprechaun's *Pot-O-Gold*, (l-r): Pete Entringer of AVA Sales, Bill Cravens, Todd Cravens, and Aldo Donnaloia.

In front of *Slug Fest*, Williams' new baseball-themed redemption game, are Rick Jasper of Goldberg Enterprises and Bill Pfutzenreuter of Williams.

Isaac Glazer (l) and Isaac Ben-Yehuda of Mayoni with the company's new *Sergeant Major* and *roll-R-Ball*.

Alter Enterprises' Earl Heller (l) and Pat Talmadge with its new redemption game, *Fireball*.

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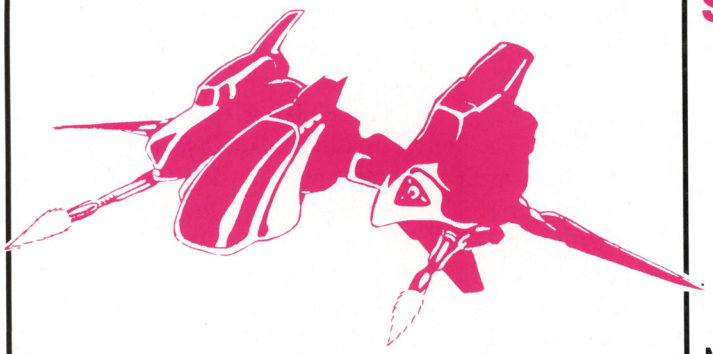

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AMOE 91

Sega's much-anticipated *Rad Mobile* appeared in a number of cabinets, including stand-up, sit-down, and moving-seat. The moving-seat model was a disappointment; it only moves from side to side. Otherwise, the graphics are good. The game sports buttons for lights and wipers, and the representations of night and wet-weather driving are pretty impressive.

There are little touches, too, like the rear view mirror and the doo-dad swinging from the windshield (where a mirror should be, but the mirror is shown in the upper left). I liked *Rad Mobile*. I expect it will do very well.

judged it about average, but the cop-car theme gives *Cisco Heat* extra earning power.

The cabinet is very attractive, with hot graphics and police lights. The game is pretty challenging; there are plenty of obstacles and twists and turns. I wouldn't expect *Cisco Heat* to outearn some of the more popular driving games, but it will hold its own.

Bringing up the rear in this group is Leland's *Indy Heat*. This takes a bird's-eye view of the track and plays like the drivers of old. Sometimes nostalgia is a good thing, but *Indy Heat* will likely bore adults.

graphics in this game are so good that everything else looks like it's in black and white.

Game play is challenging, but not impossible (like *Defender*). I won't bother going into detail on game play; just think of it as *Defender* for the '90s. This is a must-buy (one-player JAMMA kit).

Another horizontal flying game is Jaleco's *Earth Defense Force (EDF)*. I'm glad this style of game is making a comeback, and I hope *EDF* will be typical of the kind of dazzling graphics and exciting play that future flying games will bring.

This one- or two-player JAMMA kit is loaded with action and challenges. Some of the graphics are there just to entertain (one scene transition is a fly-by of a nicely detailed spaceship). Recommended.

Tecmo displayed its *Strato Fighter*, a horizontal space shooting game. Again, the graphics here are far better than those available to home systems, and the game play is engaging and challenging.

Strato Fighter's detriment is that there are too many different weapons that can be picked up during game play. Each one has different characteristics, and it's hard to tell from the shape what each weapon does. Even after several plays, I still couldn't keep the weapons straight. I rate *Strato Fighter* just a little below *EDF*, but I think it's still a pretty safe buy.

American Sammy's two-player *Paladin*, another horizontal fly-and-shoot, also showed good graphics but weaker game play. It might have done well if there weren't so many other good contenders in this group, but I don't think it quite measures up.

Moving to the vertical flyers, Fabtek's *Rai Den* (two-player) looked great. The graphics are intricately detailed, and the game play is engaging enough to keep drawing coins from dedicated galaxy-savers. I think this was the best of the vertical class. Highly recommended.

"Table games have become such an integral part of most routes that they are overlooked in the search for the latest technology."

Atari showed its *Hard Drivin' Panorama*, a driving game with a three-screen wrap-around. The feel seemed exactly like the familiar *Hard Drivin'* game, but the two extra screens provided a view much more like looking through a windshield. Like other sit-down drivers, this one needs a high-traffic, high-income location to pay its way.

A glimpse at the future of driving games came courtesy of Namco's *Driver's Eyes*. This incredible game also put up wrap-around graphics, but these were clearly 3-D. The animation was much smoother than in *Hard Drivin'*, and I thought the sounds and music were both superior.

When this game appears, I don't expect it to be cheap. If your locations have a history of doing well with driving games, however, keep your eyes peeled for the availability of *Driver's Eyes*.

In *Cisco Heat*, Jaleco showed a game that puts the driver in the seat of a police car. The game comes in a variety of cabinets, including stand-up, sit-down, and moving-seat. As a driving game, I

What this game *does* have going for it is kid appeal. You can't crash the car in this game; it just bounces off obstacles. To drive, you have to keep spinning the wheel around—the action has no relation to real driving. Still, this game is just what the doctor ordered for young players who can't quite handle the more demanding driving games.

Whoosh!

The floor was also filled with flying games of all kinds. It was here that I got the strongest feeling that arcade videos are finally using technology to get ahead of home video games. The graphics, sounds, and cabinet art in the best of these games can't be had in the home at *any* price.

It's a close race, but the leader of the pack is clearly Midway's *Strike Force*. This game harkens back to the much-loved *Defender*, but *Strike Force* sports much better graphics and simpler (more sensible) controls.

Midway seems to have discovered a new way of shading the objects in its games to give them a 3-D appearance. The difference is stunning, and *Strike Force* is simply a beautiful game. The

AMOE 91

Darlene Kindler with handsome gentlemen Henry Fong (l) of Mexico and Irem's Minoru Sasatani.

(L-r): Bob Jones, Dale Rodesch, and Joe Vanek.

Showing a new CD jukebox kit at the Digital Disc Automation booth, (l-r): David Loethen, Talik Ozturk, Bob Brandt, and Rich Grant.

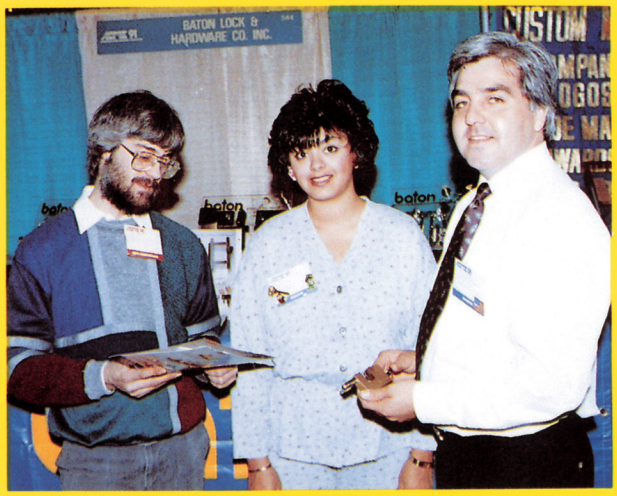
Pioneer's Paul Scribner (c) and Tony Maniscalco (l) with some good distributors, (l-r): Mitch Kaufman, Bob Donnelly, Rick Kirby, and Harold Kaufman.

With Premier's *Cactus Jack* are Gil Pollock (l) and Ron Zahler.

Tecmo's Mike Robinson (l) welcomes C.A. Robinson's Sandy and Adrea Bettelman, their two boys, and Ira Bettelman.

ACME 91

At Space Age Electronics', (l-r): Carl Fleischman, Mikiko Fleischman, Y. Park, and Connie Stowell.



Dave McEwen (Ben Tech Amusements) looks over some information from Baton Lock Co.'s Irene Chavez and Ray Chavez.

J. Pollitt of Wells-Gardner with Bob Smith of James Industries.

The Kiddie Rides U.S.A. team, (l-r): Stuart Heller, Dora Campos, and Joe De Marsico.

Roland Smith of Syracuse Coin (r) takes a look at Grayhound Electronics' new hockey game with Grayhound's Peter Coulas (l) and Dan Dinnebiel.

P.M.I. Toys & Novelties' Mark Gawlik (l) and Ray Rodriguez flank Pilo Avita and Robert Weerafekera.

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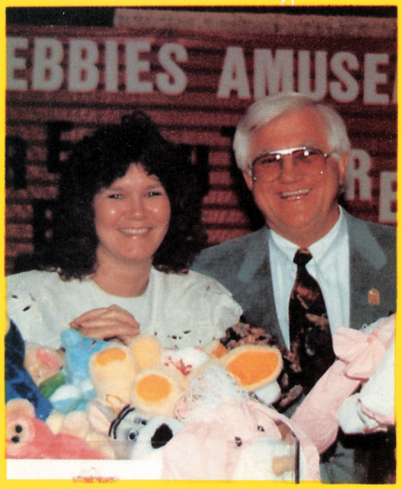


Debbie Jelonek shows R.A. Green the latest in South Carolina plush.

A hot redemption line, (l-r): James Davis (Beachside Entertainment), David Cantoni (Monticello Dist.), Steve Schulman (HMS Monaco), Brenda Sanderson (AA Amusements), Ira Erstling (HMS), Mona Sanderson (AA Amusements), and Bruce Haber (HMS).

Meltec's John McEwan (l) and Roy Nishi with Jane Marques of Acces Entertainment.

(L-r): Mel Erstling (Star Track), Rod Spencer (Darts-N-Things), Danny Wilkenson (Star Track) and Marie Beach (Darts-N-Things).

Mike Pacak (Fun 'N Games) and Shelia Dellacona of Roger Williams Mint.

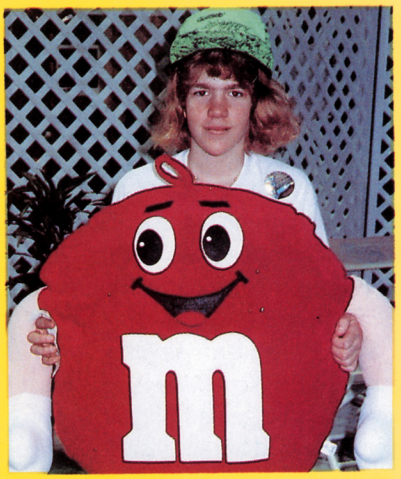
(L-r): Bonita Marie's George Ritacco and Margret Mitchell, Mary Tere Teel and Alex Teel (Fiesta Carousel-Mexico), David Katz, Rhonda Fletcher and Mike Maresca of Bonita Marie.

ACME 91

Nolan Kriegel (l) of Ram Star shows *Jokers Wild* to James Lacaria of Coal State Vending.

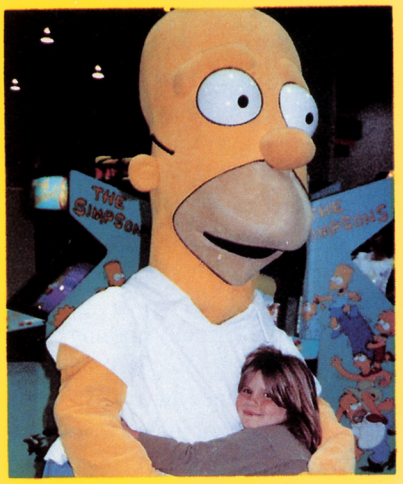
Joe Columbo of Amusement Plus enjoys Tecmo's *Strato Fighter*.

Crowded around the *Superstar 2000*, (l-r): Bob Hodges and Lamar Forque of Merit, Flynn Case of Cajin Amusements, Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales, and Dave Rubenstein and Tom Nicolas of Merit.



Stephanie Typaldos (El Dorado Games) won a giant friend at the Mars Electronics booth.

At the Nintendo booth, (l-r): Jerry Monday, Chuck Arnold, Mike Minor, Al Stone, Art Gallagher, and Todd Erickson.



Misty Graves (daughter of WICO's Bob Graves) hugs Homer Simpson.

ACME 91

Second to *Rai Den* was Namco's *Dragon Saber*. It sparks the imagination to be at the helm of a dragon instead of a ship or plane. The graphics are a little less impressive than the others in this group, and the game is a serious challenge. Still, I found it compelling. I think your players will feel the same.

Not to be left out, Tecmo also showed its two-player *Strike Gunner*. This is a much weaker game than even Tecmo's own *Strato Fighter*, but it does have one unique feature. In a two-player game, either player can press a "combine" button to link their ships together.

Batter up!

There were plenty of sports games at ACME '91. Williams' *High Impact Football* still looks like the one to beat, but there were a few notable contenders.

Video System showed off its impressive *Power Spikes* volleyball game. I wouldn't have expected a volleyball game to come closest to *High Impact*'s, well, high impact, but the graphics and game play in *Power Spikes* are *very* realistic.

This is a two-player game, and the strength of the game's simulation of real volleyball brings out the competitor. My only concern is that volleyball might not be a compelling enough subject to draw that all-important first play from some. The game's attract-mode graphics, combined with a carefully chosen location, should do the trick. I recommend *Power Spikes* (marketed by McO'River).

There were also some thrills to be had in Taito's *Football Champ* (that's soccer to us Yanks!). Again, game play is realistic, but sometimes the "camera" takes a view too far away from the field. The game is loaded with gratuitous effects and transitional graphics. (I don't mind a few seconds of free entertainment with each play.) It's fun, and soccer (er, football) has broad enough appeal to bring this game a thumbs-up. It should earn its keep.

With football, volleyball, and soccer covered, Strata seemed determined to work the remaining sports. *Golden Tee Golf* (a four-player kit), *Strata Bowling* (a four-player kit), *Arlington Horse Racing* (a one-player kit), and *Hot Shots Tennis* (a two-player kit) all share good-quality graphics and interesting game play. All of these games are available in countertop kits in addition to more traditional forms. I think they'd do very well sitting right on the bar in tavern locations.

Horse Racing can be a redemption piece, giving out tickets or retaining credits to be wagered on the next race. It works just like the real thing, complete with an announcer's voice that tracks the action.

Complicated bets can be laid down under complete player control. *Hot Shots Tennis* can handle two simultaneous players on a split screen. In all, the Strata games seem like a good lot to scatter throughout any sports-oriented location. *Horse Racing* is a good alternative to other redemption games, and since each coin increases the bet (and potential winnings), the right location could turn a tidy profit on that one.

Other videos

There were some video games that refused to be placed into a category, so I'll collect them under "other." The most surprising one of the group is an odd, fascinating game from Atari called *Rampart*. This looks like a military strategy game at first—I thought it would be something like *Risk*—but it's really a thinking person's mix of shoot 'em up and *Tetris*.

You select a castle, place some cannons within it, and fire those cannons at oncoming ships. The ships knock holes in your castle walls, which you must repair in a *Tetris*-like fashion (randomly shaped pieces that you can turn to fit) before a timer expires. As long as you rebuild your walls in time, you can keep playing. If you're really good, you'll build walls around the other castles, too. You get points for defending yourself and conquering new territory.

You can't just blunder your way through *Rampart*. That's why I'm so impressed with it. It's the first video game I've seen in ages for which thinking on your feet is a basic requirement. I loved *Rampart* and of all the "other" video at ACME, *Rampart* gets my

***"A new standard in realism and thrilling game play was set by Namco's* Steel Gunner."**

The backgrounds and game play are less interesting, and the other good candidates in this group lead me to not recommend it.

SNK showed its *Alpha Mission II* game for the *Neo-Geo* system. What I saw of it (the game I played had problems) seemed fun and visually intriguing. It reminded me of Atari's *Xevious*.

Neo-Geo needed a strong game in this class. It's a great system to begin with, and *Alpha Mission II* makes it stronger.

In a class by itself was MicroProse's *F-15 Strike Eagle*. This is less a game than a flight simulator. It's about as close as any player will get to being in the cockpit of a jet fighter. I was disappointed that there were no moving-seat versions of this game (the company showed sit-down and stand-up cabinets).

Still, there's virtually nothing not to like about this game. It's realistic enough to be damned hard to maneuver sometimes, but that makes this a profitable game. Though it takes time to learn, it's worth it. Highly recommended.

ACME 91

At the Sunmark booth, (l-r): Evan Brown with Jill and Mark DiLuciano.

At Happ Controls, (l-r): Heribeto Espejel Sandoval, John Stergides (Electo Coin-England), Ken Muszynski, Jim Happ, Peter Muszynski, Tom Happ, Frank Happ, and Sue Happ.

Putting Challenge designer Sam Kim (l) looks on as Gary Sobba shows his skill.

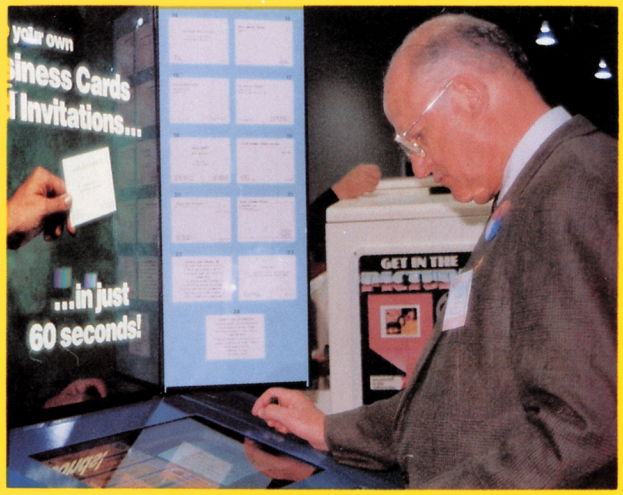
(L-r): Paul Levchuk (Jilly's Arcade), Deltronic Labs' Steve Horniak, Dave Carouso and Steven Horniak.

(L-r): Stephan Renaud and Luc Marcoux of Canada's Electro Games with Canadian Coin Box's Pete Wilkinson and Pierre Leger of Electo Games.

(L-r): Paul LaVictor (Allied Vending), Henry Parks Jr. (S&H and Assoc.), Issac Ben-Yehuda and Oscar Robins (Mayoni), and James LaVictoier (Health Info Vending).

AMOE 91

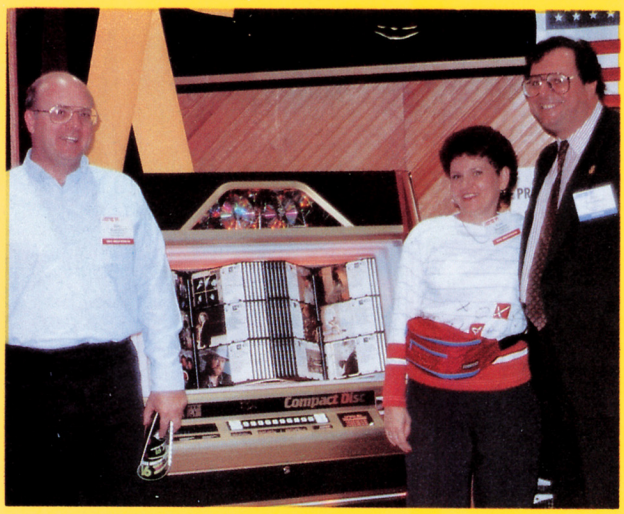
In front of Kaneko USA's *The Berlin Wall*, (l-r): Marty Glazman (Kaneko), Yogi Taylor (Ultimate Amusements), and Tom Kramer (Kaneko).



Al Toranto of Birmingham Vending using Auto Photo's business card making machine.

Adam Patterson (l) and Paul Lee (c) of Planet Earth with Steve Devlin of LA East.

(L-r): John Newberry, Blair Norris, and James Boyd.



Operators Ron and Rose Rudnick with Rowe's Joel Friedman.

By Wurlitzer's stunning new CD, (l-r): Jerry Reeves, Bobby Sanders, and Bob Myers.

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ACME 91

highest rating. Hats off to Atari for taking a chance on this one; you should, too.

If you're looking for non-violent fun, Video System offers an arcade version of *Welltris*, a sort of 3-D *Tetris* sequel. This is another game of "stack the blocks." It's interesting enough, but there are so many home versions of this game that I wonder how well an arcade version will fare. Still, Video System took the concept about as far as they could, complete with little Russians standing by to react to winning or losing. *Welltris* can be had in one- or two-player dedicated forms. It's marketed by McO'River.

Leprechaun/Exit Entertainment showed an upgrade to the venerable *Capcom Bowling*, endowing it with enhanced graphics, sounds, and a trio of bowling games: traditional, flash bowling, and 21. I didn't think much of this piece when I first saw it, but once I started playing, I found myself unexpectedly absorbed. It's just plain fun.

Brief animated sequences mark events like gutterballs and turkeys (three strikes in a row). There are no digitized voices or dazzling graphics here, just a solid, fun, entertaining game. I look forward to the company's plans to offer a dedicated version of this game. Let them know you want it. Meanwhile, I can't see any reason to leave any *Capcom Bowlings* you've got kicking around unmodified by this kit.

Midway showed a piece that's been seen before—*Trog*—but I'd like to take some time to comment on it. This is the kind of unique effort that comes so infrequently these days that it deserves to be applauded. *Trog* uses shading techniques similar to *Strike Force* to give the characters a realistic 3-D appearance (actually, they look like claymation figures). *Trog* is both fun and funny, but because it's such a unique game, it's hard for me to be certain that it will make money. My hunch is that it will because, again, *Trog* offers players something they can't get at home. I have to recommend it because it's so imaginative and amusing, but consider your crowd before investing in *Trog*.

"The pinnacle of non-violence is Strata's Peggle, a redemption video with a cute little character."

Another unusual game is Betson's *Mad Dog McCree*. The game has surprised many with its success, but there's certainly no lack of imagination here, either. *Mad Dog* is relatively old news, but Betson was showing a video preview of a coming game, *Who Shot Johnny Rock?*, that I expect will have equal potential.

"If you paid attention, there were very few times when every pinball machine in the place wasn't occupied."

This looked to be a '40s-style gangster/private eye script, with lots of breaking glass and a cooing blonde narrator. They weren't showing the game itself; I hope the real game trades the six-shooter for a heater more befitting a crime boss or crime fighter, depending on how the player is cast. Watch for it.

The pinnacle of non-violence is Strata's *Peggle*. This is primarily a redemption video in which a cute little character (really a ball with hands and feet) bounces around a bunch of pegs rotated by the player. Pegs eventually pop if hit hard or often enough. The control on this game feels good, and the character bounces realistically when hitting the pegs.

Actually, I have no idea what a ball with feet would look like when it hit a peg, but whatever it is, *Peggle* comes close. It's a timed game and a fine choice for youngsters. If you set it up to dispense tickets, even the littlest ones will get rewarded for inept use of the control—every play pops at least a couple of pegs. I recommend *Peggle* for those locations that cater to the younger set.

Sega brought its latest high-tech game, *Time Traveler* (two-player dedicated). The claim to fame here is what Sega calls a "hologram," but it's not that (at least not in the traditional sense). A laser disk image is projected onto a surface that appears to "float" in a dark space in the cabinet.

It's not a traditional hologram because you can't see all sides of a person or object. In any case, *Time Traveler*'s laser disk video seemed lavish with plenty of special effects. Unfortunately, the fancy floating playback setup leaves you with a huge cabinet and a tiny image. The floating video business wears thin quickly.

I will give a limited recommendation to an unusual (to say the least) game from Kaneko called *Gals Panic*. The name sheds no light on the game's purpose, which can be summed up in two words: Strip Qix. If you recall, *Qix* was a game in which players drew boxes on the screen. If an enemy came in contact with your line before you closed the box, the line was destroyed and you lost a life. Filling a percentage of the screen with completed boxes moved the player to the next level.

ACME 91

John Ivan Rovis of the Rocal Co. (c) with J.R. "Bob" Minick and Rich Polling of J.R. Minick & Associates.

At the Asahi Seiko USA booth, (l-r): Pamela Schaeffer, Buzz Bruner (Tekbilt), and Rick Mines.

At the Dart World booth, (l-r): Don Amirault, Kathleen Poirer and Mark Amirault.

Standard Change Maker's Barry O'Brien with David Schick (Newport Diversified).

Laramie Interests' Larry and Tami Morris show Alpha-Omega's Frank Seninsky their plush frog, with John Sullivan on the right.

Rosette's Hal and Phil Steinberg flank Robert Parrow of Amusement Consultants.

ACME 91

At the Prizes! booth—with a cute cuddly in the center—are Joseph Fiandaca and Kirk Kirdendall.

Colorado Game Exchange's Bev Babich with her sons Chi and J.J.

By Betson's *Rock 'n Roll* coin pusher, (l-r): Bill Treger, Neal Rosenberg, and John Margold.

Claudia Broyles with Muncie's new ticket shredding robot.

Bill Franch of Las Vegas TV station KTNV plays Data East's new pin, *Checkpoint*, as the company's Joe Kaminkow looks on.

Exidy's Virginia Kauffman shows the company's new truck-racing game, *4X4*, to Michael (c) and Dan Riquier of T&M Distributors.

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ACME 91

Gals Panic takes this concept and adds a titillating twist. Each completed box, instead of filling with some random color, reveals a portion of a drawing of a scantily-clad Asian woman. Each round shows her wearing less and less, until completion of the final screen for each "gal" shows a digitized photograph of her in the nude. There are several women; the player chooses at the start of the game and at the start of each new round.

Sexist? Without a doubt. Tasteless? Not really—even the nude pictures are pretty demure. But whatever your views on morality, you can't turn away from the opportunity to take quarters by the roll away from randy men in bars. *Gals Panic* is hard to play and it uses the gimmick to its fullest advantage. It gives out a taste of what lies ahead, then turns up the difficulty. The poor player will have no choice but to dump quarter after quarter when the "continue" prompt comes up. In the right location, on the right night, *Gals Panic* could be the best-earning game on your route.

"A glimpse at the future of driving games came courtesy of Namco's Driver's Eyes."

I'll wrap up the "other" portion with a list of games for Nintendo's *Play Choice* system. There are locations that are right for Nintendo and operators who have already invested in the *Play Choice* cabinets. The games marked "new" in Nintendo's booth included: *Rad Racer*, a race-driving game; *Solar Jetman*, navigating a spaceship through obstacles with an *Asteroids*-like ship control; *Super Mario 3* (need I explain?); *Yo! Noid*, a Mario-type game with Domino's Noid instead; and *Mega Man 3*, a Mario-type game with a little robot instead.

Pinball frenzy

Now we're in my home territory. If you paid any attention to crowd patterns at ACME you noticed that there were very few times when every pinball machine in the place wasn't occupied. For all the talk about the poor performance of pinball, there was certainly no lack of interest on the exhibit floor. Perhaps it's because, for the first time in a while, there are so many good choices.

I'll start alphabetically with Bally, which exhibited *Harley-Davidson*. The strong shaker motor and the perfectly sampled motorcycle growl make the game fun to play the first time or two. The problems are the lackluster, single-level playfield and weak set of rules.

Premier's *Cactus Jacks* looks like no Premier game you've seen before. It has two multiple-entry ramps (a mix of plastic and wire), a short tunnel under the playfield, three animated cactus puppets (not to mention little cactus stick-ons atop the pop bumpers), a vertical kicker, a complex set of rules, and best of all—a good sense of humor.

"Trog represents the kind of unique effort that comes so infrequently that it deserves to be applauded."

I don't have room to do the review of this game that it deserves—too bad. I couldn't get my hands on it before the show but I'll put it plainly: *Cactus Jacks* blows away everything Premier has done in the past. Placed next to pins from other manufacturers, I can honestly say that I expect *Cactus Jacks* will make money.

Perhaps more interesting is the fact that this game, for the duration of the current lineup at least, places Premier ahead of Bally for game quality, imaginative design, and enjoyability of play. Earning power follows naturally when those factors are covered, but only if operators buy the game. If you don't normally invest in Premier, I urge you to take a *Cactus Jacks* and put it out on test. It will surprise you. My hat's off to Premier for having the guts to take this chance.

Runner-up for best pin in my lineup is Williams' *The Machine: Bride of Pinbot*. As Williams sometimes does, nearly the entire device budget in this game was blown on a single gimmick. It's a hot gimmick, I'll give it that: a rotating cube with four faces on it. The idea is to complete each face by sending balls up the ramp. *The Machine* has taken flack for being a one-shot game. That's mostly true, but there are other things to shoot for that can net big points.

Unfortunately, while these other targets score well, they're not very interesting to shoot. Again, limited space prevents me from launching into my preferred level of detail, but *The Machine* is certainly a safe buy. The best thing about the game is its gorgeous artwork. The cabinet, playfield, and backglass are all decked out in some of the best art Williams has done in ages. That alone is more than enough to draw the first token from any gawker. Of course, the sounds, music, and voices are all first-rate. But is it *Fun House*? Not on your life. Is it *Checkpoint*?

Checkpoint by Data East Pinball is the game that took ACME by storm. *Everyone* was talking about it. I was pleased to hear that my excitement about the game, reflected in my April game review, was shared by so many.

AMOE 91

With the electronic-scoring, steel-tip dart game are Tom Tarantelli, Jeff Tarantelli, Andy Vining (designer), Dave Harmer, Matt Tarantelli, and Joe Gilbert.

Mobile Record's Ted Howell (r) with John Eyler of Eyler's Vending.

At Romstar's booth, (l-r): Rene Lopez, Helen Ota, Don Waters, Tim Jackson, and Art Greiner.

Showing an exciting route management system, (l-r): Carol Bardena and Mireille Chevalier.

At the Capcom booth, (l-r): Jeff Walker, Todd Erickson, and Jolly Backer.

Eugene Jarvis loves his game, *High Impact*.

ACME 91

I wasn't pleased to hear so many distributors and operators bemoaning the fact that Data East didn't seem to want to sell any games at the show.

It appears that someone at Data East lacked my faith in the game's potential and ordered the run to be cut short to make room for the company's next licensed pinball theme. This short run resulted in a short supply, which Data East reportedly sold out rapidly. I stand by my original review that predicted great things for *Checkpoint*. It would be tragic if this business decision resulted in operators and locations being deprived of a classic game. Whatever the outcome, this game is certain to sell short. Buy what you can and place them in your prime locations.

such) with a boatload of high-test twists. *Slugfest* has great music, sound effects, and digitized voices, but you expect all that from Williams.

What I didn't expect was the appearance of Williams' first dot-matrix display. As well as Data East did with the display on *Checkpoint*, Williams did them one better. At one point in the game, a center ramp rises from the playfield and an animated heckler appears on the display (shooting the ramp puts the ball in the balcony, quieting the heckler in a rather disquieting way). The detail is excellent.

Other actions, such as stealing bases, are animated convincingly with human figures and adds a lot to the game. Even without the display, though, I'd shout

A last side note in this category. Kudos to Williams, who is getting an early start on its 50th anniversary celebration with the release of a delightful game: *Slugfest*. This is old-style baseball (you know, the "pitch" and "bat" buttons, aiming the ball at flaps lit for singles, doubles, outs and

over *Slugfest*. This unique game will introduce a new generation to the fun and frustration of the silver-ball stadium.

Williams is celebrating, but the players of *Slugfest* will get to have all the fun. Incidentally, *Slugfest* can be fitted with a baseball card dispenser, in addition to the usual dollar bill acceptor and ticket dispenser. A great change of pace, and the kind of game that will find its way into operators' basements when its earning days are done.

Jolly good show!

In all, apart from being absolutely exhausted from the sheer volume of games at the show, I left feeling much better about the future of pins and video. I saw advances in video game technology that leave home games in the dust, and give operators plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the earning potential of video.

Choices should be made carefully, though. Gone are the days when any cabinet with a video display was a guaranteed money-maker. Spend your machine budget wisely and you can start digging out of the video doldrums. I've offered plenty of choices I feel very good about, but make your own judgments based on what you know about your audience. Remember, too, that I write these articles before solid earnings data are available for most of the games I review. By the time you get this magazine, you should be able to get earnings reports.

Of course, my favorite cure for the video blahs is pinball. I tend to be a cheerleader for that side of the business to some extent, but I truly believe that there has rarely been a stronger set of offerings than the current crop from Data East, Williams, and Premier. Those companies' current games would make a killer combination in any multi-pin location. If you've been waiting for the right moment to take a chance on pinball, that moment is here.

Whatever you decide, you should be glad that there are so many good pins and videos from which to choose. If the trends toward improving quality and innovation continue, the coming months and years could bring even more surprises. But for now, if you choose wisely, the second half of 1991 could prove very profitable. □

Tom Yager

ACME 91

Showing this interested player the finer points of Coastal's *Sheriff Shoota* are Robert Keelyn (l) and Bob Harzer.

Zamperla's Allen (l) and David Martin by the company's new basketball game, *Shot Clock Basketball*.

Ted Furkin (c) with Greg Wakeman of Smart Stop (l) and Paul So Relle of LPS Partnership.

Roann Adams with the *Thumb-B-Ball* game by Nevis.

Frank Minella (l) of Lock America with Rich Brabeck of Illinois Lock.

(L-r): Eygo's Chris DeBrecht, Albert Chien, and William Rivero.

AMOA 91

New games at a glance

Video Games

American Sammy

- ***Spinal Breakers***
  One- or two-player nuclear war-themed horizontal conversion kit with three dramatic endings.
- ***Bio Ship Paladin***
  One- or two-player space fly-n'-shoot-themed conversion kit.

American Technos

- ***WWF WrestleFest***
  Sequel to the hit WWF Superstars

Atari Games

- ***Batman***
  Batman must follow maze-like paths to defeat the enemy.
- ***Hard Drivin' Panorama***
  A driving theme with a 3-D three-screen wrap-around.
- ***Rampart***
  A thinking man's strategy game with a shoot-'em-up/Tetris theme.

Betson

- ***Mad Dog McCree***
  A dedicated, Western-themed shooting game; player shoots at the characters on the screen.
- ***Who Shot Johnny Rock?***
  A gangster version update for Mad Dog McCree; coming soon.

Capcom

- ***Street Fighter II***
  Dedicated or horizontal kit; fighting theme with new characters and new moves; two-player interactive.

Data East

- ***Caveman Ninja***
  Caveman using prehistoric weapons defeats enemies; two-player interactive.

Exit *(See Leprechaun)*

- ***Capcom Bowling* update**
  A trio of bowling games: traditional, flash bowling, and 21.

Fabtek

- ***Rai-Den***
  Shown previously; two-player vertical conversion kit engaging enough to keep the quarters coming from dedicated galaxy-savers.
- ***Blood Brothers***
  Shown previously; tongue-in-cheek cowboys and Indians game.

Irem

- ***Gun Force***
  Two-player fighting and shooting from a third party's point of view.

Jaleco

- ***Cisco Heat***
  Driving theme through the streets of San Francisco; upright or sit-down.
- ***Earth Defense Force***
  One- or two-player flying theme with dazzling graphics and exciting play.

Kaneko U.S.A.

- ***Gals Panic***
  Shown previously; adult theme; player completes picture of scantily clad—or nude—woman.
- ***Berlin Wall***
  Puzzle game with an obvious theme.

Konami

- ***The Simpsons***
  Four-player adventure with the popular unorthodox family on a rescue mission; find baby Maggie.

Leland

- ***Brute Force***
  Designed for three-player action.
- ***Indy Heat***
  A driving theme with a birds-eye view of the track; just what the doctor ordered for younger players.

Leprechaun

- ***Bowl-O-Rama***
  Kit to update Capcom Bowling games.

MicroProse

- ***F-15 Strike Eagle***
  Shown previously; as close as you can come to being in the cockpit of a jet fighter.
- **Update kit (coming soon)**
  Update kit for F-15 Strike Eagle with different action screens.

Midway

- ***Strike Force***
  Horizontal kit featuring a race of giant lizard men taking over the colonies, capturing humans as slaves; an updated Defender.
- ***Trog***
  Shown previously dedicated, now available as a kit; a light-hearted look at survival in the Stone Age with the one-eyed caveman, Trog.

Namco-America

- ***Driver's Eye***
  A driving/training simulator that duplicates the Formula I race car experience on a 25-inch screen.
- ***Final Lap II***
  Shown previously; deluxe driver challenges players to compete against the clock or other players in a choice of race courses around the world.
- ***Steel Gunner***
  Shown previously; dedicated shooting game with realistic machine guns in combat-themed action for two players.

ACME 91

Ace Novelty's Berta Herrera and Kim Garland show off Kim's fiance, Mike Kessler of Grupo O.N.E.S.A.-Mexico.

Plush-4-Play's happy crew, (l-r): Juan Garcia, Valerie Braban, Kathy Askew, and Joe Bates. Karl Heller of Atlas-Chicago is on the right.

Pearson Plush's Jonathan Pearson and Lisa Reid flank John Beers (U-Share Vending).

Michael Hoffman shows Miki Watkins (Prime Time Amusements) the latest in tokens.

The Dan Brechner crew, (l-r): Werner Heymann, Clifford Brechner, and Steve Suraci.

(L-r): American Vending Sales' Ron Bolger, IGT's Jerry Young and Linda Dunaway, and Frank Gumma Jr. of AVS.

ACME 91

- *Dragon Saber*
  Shown previously; sequel to Dragon's Spirit

Nintendo

- *PlayChoice System* **(with new software)**
  Sword Master, Nintendo Golf, Rad Racer II, Mega Man 3, Yo! Noid, Nintendo World Cup, Solar Jet Man, and TMNT II.

Romstar

- *NEO-GEO*
  The one-slot version of the popular SNK system.

SNK

- *NEO-GEO* **(with the following new games)**
  Ghost Pilots, Sengoku, Alpha Mission II, Burning Fight, and King of the Monsters.

Sega

- *Rad Mobile*
  Driving simulator with 32-bit hardware system; race through 20 cities.
- *Time Traveler*
  Hologram technology with projected laser disc images.
- *GP Rider*
  Shown previously; dedicated motorcycle simulator takes players on racing circuit adventure; ride-on model or upright.
- *Laser Ghost*
  Three-player; shooting gallery-type game with exciting play.

Strata

- *Peggle*
  A novelty video game adaptable to redemption; a playful character bounces on pegs and lands on a moving train below.
- *Arlington Horse Race*
  Shown previously; one-player kit can be adapted to redemption. Available in countertop.
- *Golden Tee Golf*
  Shown previously; exciting golf play.
- *Hot Shots Tennis*
  Shown previously; two-player simultaneous on split screen. Available in countertop.
- *Strata Bowling*
  Shown previously; four-player kit. Available in countertop.

Taito

- *Growl*
  Two-player horizontal kit; player must fight off animal poachers in the jungle through seven rounds of play.
- *The Ninja Kids*
  Violent ninja action for two players (or four with two units); puppet character heroes fight off enemy hoards using special weapons and ninja powers.
- *Football Champ*
  Soccer-themed conversion kit for one to four players; 3-D-like zoom up feature.

Tecmo

- *Strato Fighter*
  Shown previously; horizontal space shooting conversion kit.
- *Strike Gunner*
  Two-player interactive vertical conversion kit; players can link ships together with the push of a button.

Video System

- *Power Spikes*
  Two-player, volleyball-theme with realistic graphics.
- *Welltris*
  A one- or two-player kit or a four-player dedicated; 3-D Tetris sequel with a stack-the-blocks theme.

Williams

- *High Impact Football*
  Shown previously; available as a conversion kit.

Pinballs

Bally

- *Harley-Davidson*
  Motorcycle race theme with special jackpot bonus, mystery award, and realistic sounds and movement.

Data East

- *Checkpoint*
  Speed driving theme with unique key starter; players choose their own music and visit the pit stop for big awards.

Premier

- *Cactus Jacks*
  Features include two multiple entry ramps, animated cactus puppets, vertical kicker, complex set of rules, and humor.

Williams

- *The Machine—Bride of Pinbot*
  Clever, imaginative, playful, really put together—a real woman of the '90s. Ramp shots, multi-ball play, and a billion point shot as Pinbot's bride comes to life.

Redemption and Novelty

Acces Entertainment

- *Hoop*
  This new fold-up basketball game can be set up in a mere nine minutes.

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Adastra Inc.

- ***Hoops***
  The original game with fold-up capability.
- ***Showdown***
  Simulates a gunfight from the Old West.

Alter Enterprises

- ***Fireball***
  A one- or two-player game; players fire two-inch, hollow balls at changing targets.

Bay-Tek

- ***Roll Down, Fielder's Choice, Clown Rolldown***
  All three have been shown before; the second game has a baseball theme, the third one a carnival atmosphere.

Betson Enterprises

- ***Rock 'N Roll***
  A coin-pusher allows players to move the coin entry chute; the cabinet is solidly designed.

Bob's Space Racers

- ***Sidewinder***
  This ball-balancing game has been exhibited before; among the other old favorites seen were Can Alley and Whac-A-Mole.

Bromley Inc.

- ***Ghost Town***
  This new rifle-shooting game challenges players to fire 20 shots at 20 targets within a pre-set time limit.

Bundra Games

- ***Crusher***
  The object of this strength tester is to squeeze a beer can to measure your strength; six crushed ones brings a bonus.
- ***Ski School***
  The object is to pull a knob down a winding ski slope to the finish line without letting the controller hit the sides.

Capcom

- ***Bowlingo***
  A coin-operated, fully automatic, 10-pin installation that brings bowling to the arcade.

Coastal Amusement Dist.

- ***Sheriff Shoota***
  A new game option for those who already have Roosta Shoota; the graphics and theme take on an Old West appearance.

Coin Concepts

- ***Cat 'N Mouse***
  The object of this new game, which is designed for children, is to catch the mouse.
- ***Prize Bingo***
  Another new piece; 11 different win combinations are offered; three game options: one skill, two governed.
- ***Luigi's Corner***
  Shown in prototype form; will probably be ready at the end of May.
- ***Old McDonald's***
  This redemption game has been offered before; mentioned because CCI is now the sole U.S distributor for it.

Data East USA

- ***Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe***
  Players pop balls and hope for a good landing; once the balls have landed, skill is used to decide which to keep and which to re-pop.
- ***Video Foto***
  Unlike regular photo booths, this unit lets you see yourself posing live on a 14-inch TV monitor; pose for four pictures, then select your favorite from four printout styles.

Doyle & Assoc.

- ***Dump the Ump***
  This new midway-style, ball toss game is available in two sizes.

Dynamo

- ***Dinamic Shot***
  This new laser-shooting game is brightly colored; suitable for all ages; overhead monitor and unique speaker system.

Exidy

- ***4x4***
  The company's follow-up to Camptown Races utilizes a truck-racing theme; they advance by placing ping-pong balls in holes.

Grayhound

- ***Wrist Shot Hockey***
  Players shoot at five holes; if you hit the one flashing, the score is doubled; three difficulty levels; ready in May.

ICE

- ***Putting Challenge***
  Shown before; three game modes offered: total strokes, hole-in-one, or "pick-a-putt" practice green.

Lazer-Tron Corp.

- ***Shuttle Launch***
  Players race space shuttles up a track in this previously shown lazer midway game; the original Lazer-Tron shown too.

ACME 91

At American Sammy's booth, (l-r): Richard Bell, Kelly Pelissier, Peter Thomson, and Ko Adachi.

Shiny shoes were in abundance. Here Betson's John Margold gets a shine.

Jaleco's Larry Berke (l) and Howie Rubin (c) welcome Moises Soffer of Mexico.

(L-r): Lou Larson, Jim Wittler, Matt Tarantelli, Tom Tarantelli, Chris Brady, Joe Gilbert, and Jeff Tarantelli.

Williams' Tom Cahill (l) proves you're never too old for being silly! With him are Rebecca Gapp, Greg McKay, and Jim Patla.

Mike Betti (l) and Frank Arstone (c) (VGR Systems), with Steven Rossetti (Vendo-matic) viewing Machine-O-Matic Ltd.'s booth.

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Leprechaun

- ***Pot-O-Gold***
  The object is to roll a ball across a clear tube without it falling through any of the holes; the further you go, the more tickets you get; three balls per game.

Mayoni

- ***Sergeant Major***
  This new dual bulk vender with a toy soldier motif has a 1,000-unit-per-side capacity; vends small capsules, rubber balls, or gumballs.
- ***Zord Robovend***
  Another new dual bulk vender; 2,000-unit capacity in each side; vends either small capsules or rubber balls; battery-operated voice and LED-lit eyes optional.

Meltec

- ***Shoot Out***
  This air compressor gun game has been exhibited before; also shown were company favorites Big Mouth and Knock Down.

National Sports Games

- ***UB QB Football Challenge***
  A new one- or two-player football game; players throw footballs 6-1/2'' inches in diameter through the ''short pass'' and ''long pass'' holes.
- ***Buckets***
  The prototype of this domed basketball game was shown; it should be ready by early summer.

Nevis Inc.

- ***Thumb-B-Ball***
  Billed as a ''portable miniature basketball game''; the ball is held between the thumb and forefinger and shot like a dart; two- and three-point scoring; crowd cheers with score.

Quick Silver Development Co.

- ***Awesome***
  A new solid-state mechanical game; uses a 3/4'' stainless-steel ball that moves on an elevated, rotating playfield; a joystick tilts the playfield and keeps ball in play.
- ***Hi-Tension***
  A maze game with the same concept as Awesome; both have formica over solid-wood cabinet and tempered glass; either can be purchased as a kit to change out the other.

SMS Mfg.

- ***Robo Bop***
  A new striker game housed in a robot-style cabinet; features include a talking robot along with flashing lights and beacon.

Seidel

- ***Quackers***
  A '90s version of the ''over/under'' midway game of the '40s; features include ticket and coin meters, rotating beacon and bell; programmable scoring, pricing, credits, and tickets.

Skee-Ball

- ***Skee Toss B.C.***
  This previously released alley bowler is smaller than the conventional Skee-Ball game; designed for kids; has a prehistoric theme.

Smart Industries

- ***Super Pro Quarterback***
  This new football game offers three levels of play; the higher the level of play, the harder it is to land in the moving holes (one for six points, the other for three).
- ***Block-A-Shot***
  This is a new novelty piece with a basketball theme; the object is to flip a miniature basketball into the goal without having the shot blocked.

Strata Group

- ***Peggle***
  This new video game has a redemption setting; the object is for Peggle to hit as many pegs as possible while heading for a train car filled with good—and bad—compartments.

Taito

- ***Rock 'N Mole, UFO Mogura***
  Each new game involves characters that bob up and down out of five holes; bash them over the head to score points; the difference in the two is the theme and artwork.
- ***Sonic Blast Man***
  The player wears boxing gloves and hits a punch pad; three punches per game; player chooses from five available rounds.
- ***Dino Blast***
  This is a ball-shooting piece with a prehistoric theme; unique gun fires 150 rounds per minute, with the feel of a 100-caliber machine gun.

Vari-Tech

- ***B.C. Bash***
  Players, wielding caveman-like clubs, bash the characters that rise up and down from 14 holes; a prehistoric theme.
- ***Beeware, Space Shapes, Treasure Hunt***
  All of these new games are ticket-dispensing and designed for children.

Williams

- ***Slugfest***
  An old-fashioned baseball game is updated with '90s technology; one- or two-player game; dispenses Topps baseball cards or tickets.

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Zamperla

- ***Shot Clock Basketball***
  New basketball game with a special shot clock that allows up to 25 seconds of extra play; available in smaller version.
- ***Competition Air Hockey***
  Special U-shaped body for easy player access; sound system applauds every goal; adjustable timer; overhead scoring optional.
- ***Neptune, the Horoscope Machine***
  This large novelty piece, manufactured by an Italian firm, gives players their horoscope for the day.

Video Poker, 8-Liners

Advent Technology

- ***Montana Poker***
  Button-controlled video poker with 13'' monitor, housed in all-black, upright cabinet.
- ***Draw Poker***
  New features, menu can be customized, cash area separate from electronics, self-test function, can be retrofit kit.

Aeries

- ***Series 3200 Poker***
  Removable player panels for conversion, built-in security devices, three cabinet styles available.

Bally Gaming

- ***Maverick Joker Poker***
  Single-board technology, audio, built-in diagnostics and game security, personalized attract mode.
- ***Keno***
  Menu-controlled set-up, easily convertible, built-in bill acceptor, high-resolution graphics. Also shown: Magic Symbols.

Game Sales Mfg.

- ***Super Poker***
  Turbo fast play features, electronic bookkeeping and self-test. Also shown: Keno, U-Pick-Em, Super Cherry Bonus.

Grayhound

- ***El Dorado***
  From Dyna, a new quick, skill-stop reel game with normal odds, special odds, and a host of bonus opportunities.

IGT

- ***Deuces Wild Poker***
  Poker game housed in metal casino-style cabinet. Also shown: skill-stop reel game.

Kramer Mfg.

- ***Video Lottery***
  New unit with multiple games: Draw Poker, Black Jack, Keno. Also shown: Riverboat Poker, Cherry Bonus, Super 8 Lines.

Leisure Entertainment

- ***Lucky Numbers***
  A one-piece unit that accepts bills in any direction, 13'' color monitor, bright red cabinet.
- ***Lucky Roulette***
  Video Roulette with realistic sound effects. Also shown: Super 8 Lines, Fantasy Eight, and Jumbo Eight.
- ***Daily Races***
  Prototype of new laser disc game with actual races on the screen. Available dedicated with 13'' or 19'' monitor.

Merit Industries

- ***Superstar 2000***
  Touch-screen technology added to the company's Superstar line-up of video lottery terminals in casino-style cabinet.

Micro Mfg.

- ***Lucky Star***
  Simple reel game from Wing with bonus and fever spins. Also shown: Turbo Joker Poker.
- ***Cherry Bonus III***
  New from Dyna.
- ***Raise Poker***
  New from Wing with automatic hold, can go into double-up game. All three new units fit in upright or countertop.

Quantum

- ***Casino Strip***
  A laser disc video with adjustable settings and strip, amusement poker program available. Also shown: Bet or Fold.

Ram Star

- ***Sit-Down Console***
  Stylish new cabinet, stainless steel on top, Mars or CBV bill acceptor. Games shown: Wild Double-Up, Joker's Wild.

SMS Mfg.

- ***Player's Touch***
  Casino-style video lottery terminal with touch-screen technology, library of games, bill acceptor with 1,000 bill stacker.

Tekbilt

- ***Zanadew***
  Six-column ticket dispenser (capacity 3,000), completely automatic. Also shown: Lucky 8-Lines and TV remote poker.

Universal

- ***Video Lottery Console***
  Features multiple poker games, IBM TX-based, Mitsubishi high-resolution 19'' monitor. Also shown: Stars & Stripes. □

ACME 91

Don Carpenter (l) of Diamond Pacific and Cary Smith of Peninsula Vending.

Rock-Ola's Frank Schultz (c) with James Boyd (l) and John Newberry.

Bob Breither mans the Seeburg booth.

At Irem's booth, (l-r): Frank Gumma of American Vending Sales, Drew Maniscalco, Steve Blattspieler, Darlene Kindler, and Ron Bolger of AVS.

Record Source International's Sam Atchley and Betty Ringo.

At the NSM booth, (l-r): Rus Strahan, George Haydocy, Roy Evans, and Mike Jablonski.

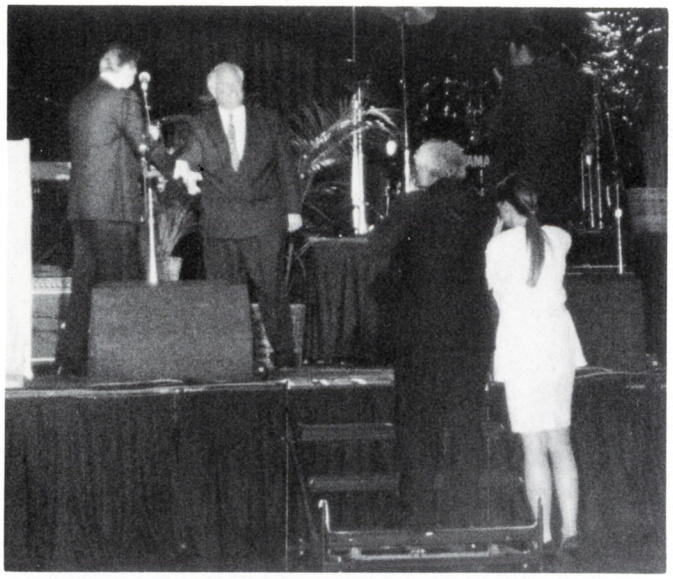
AMOE 91

Awards

The industry honors its distinguished members

NSM's Rus Strahan (r) and Armin Frank (l) presented "Rising Star" awards for sales excellence to, (l-r): Michael Riquier of T&M, Tony Yula of Mondial, Dave Patterson of SunBelt, and Ron Gold of Cleveland Coin.

Mark Struhs of Dynamo congratulates Andrea Schatz and Bernd Donalies of Stella Electronic Spielgerate GmbH on joining the "Million Dollar Club." Brady Distributing and Betson Distributing were also honored in this category.



Shane Breaks of Atari accepts the "Manufacturer of the Year" award from AAMA president Gil Pollock. The AAMY award is to recognize the outstanding manufacturer of the year, voted on by AAMA members.

The "Ralph C. Lally II" award for Operator of the Year went to Jim Stansfield of Jim Stansfield Vending in LaCrosse, Wis. The award is named after Play Meter's founder and each year presented to an operator who exemplifies the dedication and involvement in the industry needed to make it strong. Congratulations, Jim. With Jim, (l-r): Play Meter's Valerie Cognevich, Bonnie Theard, and Carol Lally.

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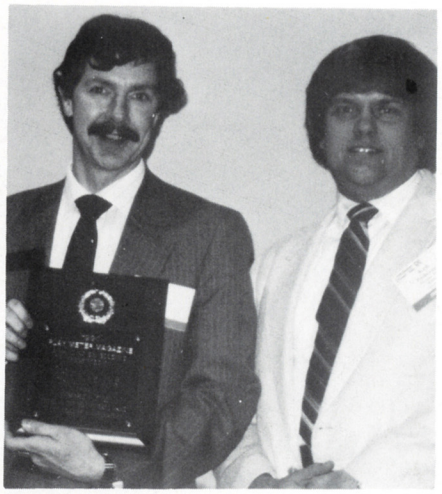
Dynamo "Distributor of the Year" awards were presented to Mountain Coin, Monroe Distributing, C.A. Robinson, Starburst Video Games, Colorado Game Exchange, Operators Distributors, and American Vending Sales. Representatives from each company accept the awards.

Jeff Walker accepts Play Meter Award for *Final Fight*.

Play Meter Magazine presented its awards—voted on by operators—to, (l-r): Dynamo for "Best Other Game" for its air hockey game (accepted by Mark Struhs); Konami for "Best Dedicated Game" for *TMNT* (accepted by Mike Kubin and Frank Pellegrini); Capcom for "Best Kit" for *Final Fight* (accepted by Jeff Walker); Rowe for "Best Jukebox" for *LaserStar* (accepted by Joel Friedman); SMS/Coastal for "Best Redemption Game" for *Pop-A-Ball* (accepted by Sal Mirando); and Williams for "Best Pinball" for *Whirlwind* (accepted by Pat Lawlor and Ken Fedesna.)



Williams' Pat Lawlor and Ken Fedesna accept Play Meter Award for *Whirlwind*.

AAMA presented its sales achievement awards to Capcom for *Final Fight*, *Magic Sword*, and *Mercs*; Konami for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Aliens*; Valley for its *Cougar ZD-4* pool table and *Valley Darts*; Atari for *Pit Fighter*; SNK for its *Neo Geo* system; Arachnid for *English Mark Darts 6300; Data East for Back to the Future*; and Sega for *G-Loc* and *Moonwalker*.

AAMA's "Distributor of the Year" award went to C.A. Robinson for the second year in a row. The AAMY, established in 1989 by AAMA to recognize the outstanding distributor in the coin-op industry, is accepted by the Bettelman family—Ira, Adrea, Leah, and Sandy. The AAMY awards are voted on by AAMA members.

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Charitable banquet honors Dunis and Galante

It was described as "bittersweet" by an ad in the program booklet prepared for the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation's banquet, which this year honored Ray Galante and the late Lou Dunis. Bittersweet because Dunis passed away two months before the event. He was looking forward to greeting old friends, but failing health claimed his life before he could realize that dream.

Lou's four children—Stuart, Nancy, Paula, and Elaine—along with his two grandchildren—Wendy and Jenny—were there representing him. Tears flowed and smiles emerged as fond remembrances of Lou were told. Nancy Dunis spoke for the family when she said how proud they were to be there accepting the honor for their dad.

A round of applause erupted when Nancy said, "I'm standing up here with a Kleenex; my dad would have had a salami and a tuna!" Lou's friends often told tales of his love for food and his penchant for sending salmon, tuna, and fruit to them.

Ray's wife Jeannette, four children—Averill, Valerie, Marv, and Charlie—and Valerie's husband Stanley Piha stood by as he spoke of his fondness for Lou, his partner of many years, and said that he would miss him terribly. A long-time friend of both, Steve Lieberman, described the special chemistry that existed between Ray and Lou.

Each year the foundation raises money for charitable causes, chosen by the honoree. Ray and Lou veered from the norm, but perhaps have set a precedent; they will start the Galante/Dunis Northwest Children's Endowment Fund. The annual income stream from the corpus will be distributed to various children's charities throughout the Pacific Northwest. □

Stuart Dunis (r) with nieces Jenny and Wendy and family friend Gary Chek.

ACME 91

Nancy Dunis taking a time-out from the dance floor.

Gene Lipkin shares a story with Nancy Dunis.

Lou Dunis's daughters, (l-r): Nancy, Paula Kelley, and Elaine Salberg with her husband Geoff.

Good friend Steve Lieberman presents the award to honoree Ray Galante.

Rowe's Joel Friedman and AAMA's Joyce Weller tore up the dance floor.

Ray and Jeannette Galante dancing to the beat of the Endless Summer Band.

ACME 91

Seminars

Video lottery remains industry's "hot potato"

From left: Scott Henneman of the South Dakota Lottery; Bill Burger of AMD in Scarborough, Ontario; and Angela and Larry Zigras of Astro Coin Vending in Markham, Ontario.

Bob Latz (c) talks with Michael Gaudet (l) of Imperial Amusement in Prince Edward Island and Joe Ferris of Ferris Music Service in Maine.

A particularly knowledgeable panel faced a standing-room-only crowd thirsty for more information on one of the industry's hottest topics: "Video Lottery and Gaming Outlook for the '90s."

A combination of factors, including the recession that has spread across North America, has created an atmosphere more tolerant of legalized gaming activities. Operators hope to capitalize on this mood to secure adult-oriented games, such as draw poker, for their tavern locations.

There's been quite a dry spell since the successes in Montana and South Dakota, with the latter becoming a "model" program. Near-misses in several states last year have caused some anxiety about the future.

Sal Mirando of SMS Mfg. served as moderator. Panel members were: Steve Lieberman of Lieberman Music in Minneapolis; Dean Schroeder of Musivend Inc. in Sioux Falls, S.D.; James Maida of Gaming Laboratories International; Scott Henneman of the South Dakota Lottery Commission; Bob Latz, attorney and lobbyist for the Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements; and Bill Rickett of Dynamo Corp.

Lieberman: Video lottery is something special—it's regulated and it's different. It's not the general pattern of this business because of its special nature.

It's a rare opportunity to say you are a partner with the state in a venture such as this. Considering the financial implications of video lottery, if the potential is there in your state, start discussing it with your accountant and banker.

There's a coin slot on the equipment and it goes into locations where operators have traditionally supplied amusement equipment. It's another income leg for the operating business.

The greatest needs are for financial planning, timely equipment testing and game availability, and ongoing service support.

Schroeder: The South Dakota system is one-of-a-kind. There's an atmosphere of cooperation between our lottery commission and operators that's existed from the early stages.

The general public and state legislators know little about our industry; it's our job to be educators. We must convince legislators we are the best service organization for this type of equipment. The operators are the risk-takers in this venture. If the system is not put together correctly, it can be a dismal failure.

If we all work for the betterment of the system, our businesses will prosper as well. Video lottery leads to employment opportunities. In South Dakota it's created at least 800 new jobs and I think that's a conservative figure.

Maida: Thorough testing insures the complete integrity of the games. When you lose that integrity, you lose everything.

Our job is to get the equipment approved and to market. We make sure the machine computers perform correctly and are interfaced properly. We test every possible function and scenario. Manufacturers should test and retest before they send games to us. We must cut down on the number of "enhancements" (corrections after game release).

The testing laboratory works for the good of the lottery commissions, manufacturers, distributors, and operators. Our lab tests gaming equipment for 15 jurisdictions and 25 manufacturers. We also advise, help draft legislation, and testify in states considering video lottery programs.

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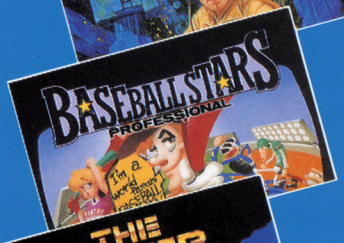

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Operators and distributors have to agree with the states more if they wish to be successful.

Henneman: The mission of the lottery commission is to maximize revenues for the state. On one hand we're promoters; on the other we're regulators. We must be sure all is squeaky-clean.

In South Dakota we have a system in which we've all come together to provide the type of trust that makes the program work. We have to be the friend of the operator, but also turn off machines if necessary. We can be flexible and admit when we're wrong. Our dial-up system gives us full accountability of every transaction on every terminal.

Operators are vital to the program. South Dakota operators have invested $25-$30 million in equipment, and they have a built-in technical staff. These factors make it implausible for the state to provide the same service. And, operators know how to deal with bar owners (a rumble of laughter from the audience).

As of March 16, in South Dakota there were 5,157 video lottery terminals earning an average weekly net income per machine of $450. There are 11 licensed manufacturers, eight licensed distributors, and 1,297 establishments with terminals.

In the first 12 months of operation, the video lottery accounted for $206 million. Of this amount, $132 million was paid back to the players and $74 million was divided among the state (22.5 percent), the operators and locations (a 50/50 split of the remaining 77.5 percent). As of Jan. 1, 1991, the state's portion of video lottery proceeds is 25 percent after patron payouts.

Latz: If video lottery is authorized in a state, it's best to include operators who know the locations best. A word of caution: there are companies waiting in the wings to offer direct sales to locations, or offer a sole source contract to provide all the games for a state. Except for service, such plans would exclude operators.

Lottery laws may be broad enough in some states to allow passage of new regulations without going through the legislative process of votes in both the House and Senate. Remember, there are three legs in the process; don't rule out the impact of the governor, who can veto any measure.

My advice: build a coalition of manufacturers, distributors, and operators to present a unified force to the legislature. It's expensive and it's not a short-term proposition. Start with a grass roots program. Have one leader at the top to spearhead the effort. Enlist the assistance of resorts, hotels, bowling centers, and other locations with liquor licenses. If we all work together we can influence legislators.

Know your opposition, such as horse and dog race tracks, charitable bingo, and Indian gaming. Any adverse publicity on gaming activities *anywhere* can have an effect on your efforts and make legislators skeptical.

When structuring a proposal, include a provision to get rid of gray area machines. The issues of security and accountability are critical. Video lottery is a tremendous opportunity for the states, the public, and the coin machine industry.

Rickett: The healthy operator can better afford to buy other new equipment, in addition to video lottery machines. We need more money in the cash box.

Initially, there will be demands for video lottery equipment that mean a decrease in other amusement machines. My personal point of view is that when lottery machines are installed, locations will want pool tables, music, and other games.

As a manufacturer, we're happy to see anything happen in this industry that puts money in the pockets of operators.

In the question and answer portion of the seminar, it was mentioned that state lotteries will find a decrease in the already established scratch-off ticket sales when video lottery terminals come into the picture. However, a change in the percentage of payback for the tickets will help the situation. The net income on video lottery machines remains high and will far outweigh the dip in scratch-off ticket sales.

Other comments:

Mirando: "This equipment is an alternate form of entertainment in a social atmosphere. We're talking about adult entertainment."

Henneman: "This is a win-win situation."

Latz: "In a sensitive area such as gambling, location contracts are needed."

Lieberman: "Players should have interesting changes. It's better for the player's entertainment value and results in greater revenue for all involved." □

Seminars

In search of redemption trends

A bleary-eyed crowd of about 90 braved the early starting time for "Redemption: Trends in the '90s," hoping that the sleep they missed would be worth the sacrifice. Panelists John Margold (Betson Enterprises), Rhonda Fletcher (Bonita Marie), and John Minkove (Ace Novelty) made sure it was.

The audience was equally divided between operators eager to get started in redemption and those with experience who wanted more advanced tutelage. Each camp was given the information it sought.

Margold began the seminar by pointing out that the most important ingredient for making redemption successful is choosing good prizes, not the equipment itself. On that note, merchandise supplier Minkove took the floor.

The redemption center, Minkove says, should be in a highly visible part of the ar-

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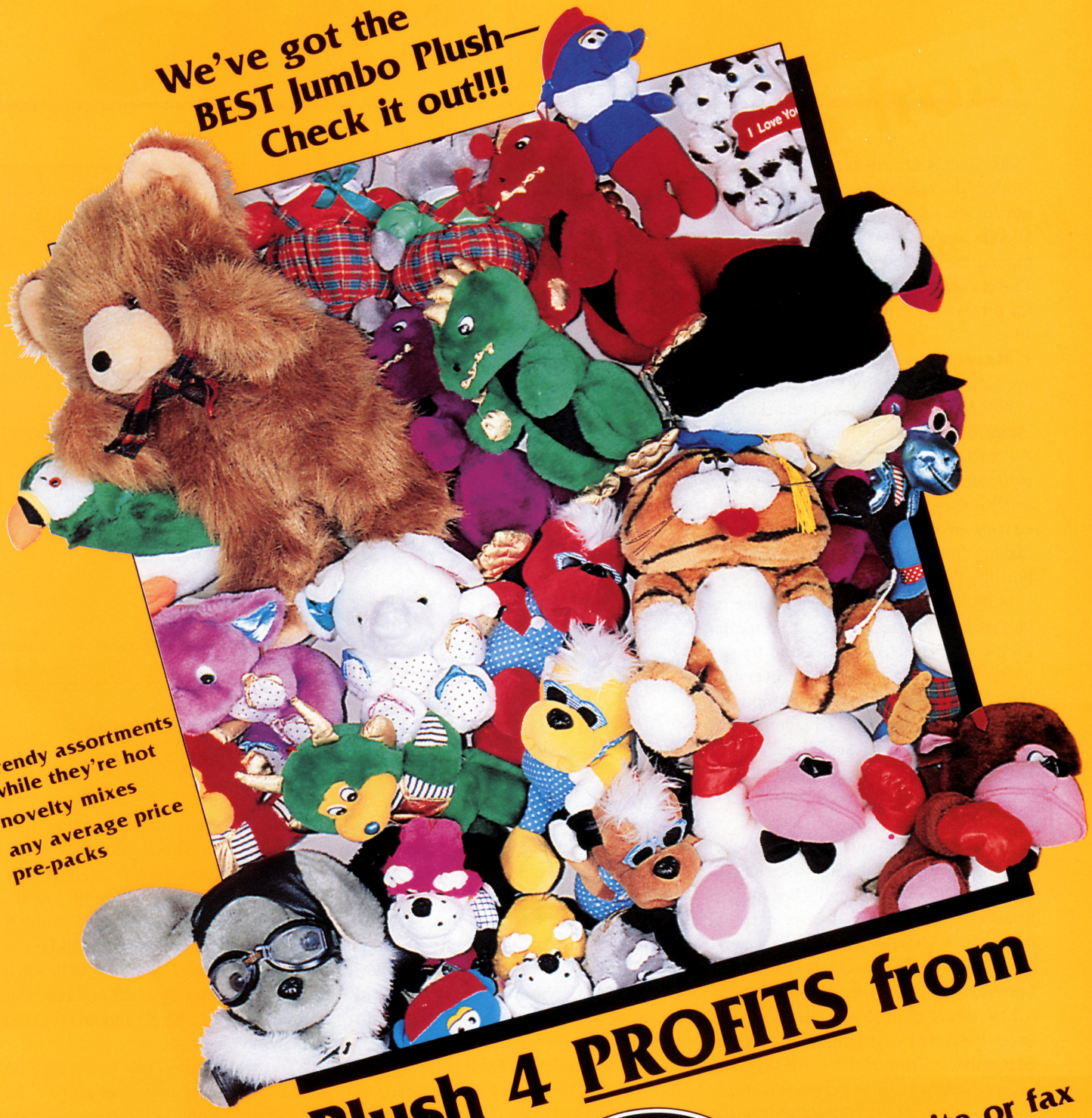

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cade. Since it's the display that attracts attention, the redemption center should incorporate such things as glass, neon shelves, and various forms of lighting to extend the appeal of the merchandise. Players should also be able to clearly see the prizes they're plunking down quarters for.

Minkove suggests looking for items that are easily recognizable to and desired by children—Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Super Mario Brothers, the Simpsons, etc. As for the percentage of payout on the equipment, he recommends between 25 and 35 percent. What needs to be weighed is the profitability of the operation vs. making things too easy—and therefore too boring—for the player.

Margold added that if you want to keep players coming back, make sure you offer high-end prizes like VCRs and toaster ovens. They will return over and over until they attain the necessary number of coupons. And when that player finally wins a VCR, happily turn it over to him. Don't think, "I just lost a good VCR." The player *made* you money in his quest for the prize.

Fletcher says those just getting their feet wet in redemption should first select a theme for the arcade. Among her suggestions were a Western theme, carnival theme, New Orleans theme, and a general party atmosphere. Once the theme has been chosen, stick with it; don't blend.

Machines should be purchased in enough quantity so that they can be banked together in a row or circle, she says, and plenty of signage helps get players there. The games should also be isolated from the videos and pins to avoid alienating players. Grandma, for example, might tire of playing *Skee-Ball* if it's next to a loud pinball like *Checkpoint*.

Fletcher stressed using every square inch of available space to place merchandise. Don't be afraid to stack prizes on top of videos, pins, and cranes. Also necessary is a good balance of low-end or "slum" merchandise and middle-end items (picture frames, travel alarm clocks, etc.) to go along with the high-end goods. (She suggests heaping the slum merchandise in bins.) Merchandise should be organized thematically if possible (electronics on one counter, Christmas items on another, etc.).

Seminar attendee Gary Eisner of Enchanted Castle in Lombard, Ill., joined the panel on stage to explain what makes his redemption operation so successful.

"Nobody is going to spend much money on a game if they have to stand up for very long."

How important is customer service? "Providing stools for customers can increase game revenues 100 percent," Fletcher said. "Nobody is going to spend much money on a game if they have to stand up for very long." Other customer service suggestions include offering coffee and soft drinks and hiring a person to walk around and make change. Providing rolls of coins in $5 and $10 denominations encourages customers to spend big dollars on six-player coin pushers, for example.

Margold's comments focused on the redemption equipment itself. If maintained well, redemption pieces won't lose their appeal with the passage of time. Unlike video games, they don't suffer from the "is it hot?" syndrome. All that's needed, Margold says, is attention to maintenance and a good supply of fresh prizes.

Make sure, though, that the equipment you choose is of good quality and well-constructed. The company you buy from had better be reputable to ensure availability of parts and service, he added.

When figuring percentage of payout, what you're asking is for every dollar a machine takes in, how much should come back out in prizes? Margold believes a good figure to go by is 25 percent. For every $10 put in, $2.50 should be given back in merchandise.

"You want the *arcade* to average 25 percent, not each individual piece," he said. "For example, 17 percent is a good payout for *Skee-Balls*, but *Pop-A-Ball* may be better at 33 percent or so."

The game's "hit frequency" is important as well. Margold says if a redemption piece goes too long without feeding the customer at least one ticket, he won't play it. "Give players a chance to win!" he said. "If slot machines here in Las Vegas went 20 minutes without paying out, no one would ever play them."

Concerning security, Margold says theft doesn't always come from outside the arcade. Watch your employees, because

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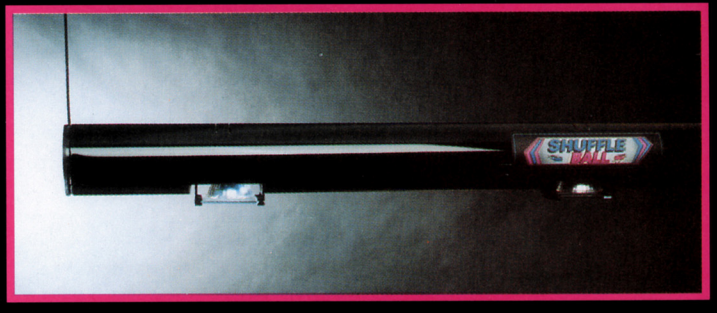

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they may be giving tickets to Sony Walkman-craving friends. What's needed is a system for destroying tickets after they've been cashed in. Margold suggested using a ticket shredder or spraying blue dye on them so they can't be turned in again. "If the tickets get re-used, you're killing yourself," he said.

Margold and Fletcher disagreed on the use of receipts. Fletcher believes its smart customer service to give, for example, a receipt good for 900 tickets instead of making players carry around or keep track of them all. Margold, on the other hand, says players would probably lose about 15 percent of them before their next trip to the arcade, forcing them to pump more money into the games to recover the lost tickets.

"The customers who make you money are the ones who save up their tickets for a high-end prize," Margold told the crowd.

All three panelists, however, agreed that redemption is worth pursuing. "It takes a lot of work and commitment, but redemption will pay off if done properly." □

Seminars

Bushnell peers into his coin-op crystal ball

What does the 21st century have in store for those who make their living in the coin-op industry? No one knows for sure, but over 250 people thought Nolan Bushnell did, packing the room for a breakfast address on the last morning of the show.

The "father of video," never shy about making predictions, started by offering this one: game rooms and amusement centers will continue to grow larger, thus squeezing out the little guy. This will happen, Bushnell believes, because coin-op will build upon what it does best: providing physical simulation. The amusement center of the future will have to expand to accommodate larger, more interactive equipment.

Bushnell also foresees more multiplayer games to allow players to compete. "People are interested in social interaction, not just game play," he said. "I think there's going to be more networking in the future. Coin-op is doing a poor job of providing that now."

Another criticism Bushnell has for coin-op concerns arcades and their lack of game diversity. Too many have nothing but "shoot 'em up/kick 'em" games—which he deplores.

"I've been in arcades and not been able to find any games I wanted to play—not one," he said. "I like more cerebral games, such as *Tetris*. Coin-op arcades have definitely lost the women and white collar workers. Who do you think made *Pac-Man* a success? Women! If you can bring women into the game center, the men will follow. I don't know why that is."

An animated Nolan Bushnell predicts a bevy of changes for the coin-op industry.

A fledgling technology known as VR (virtual reality), Bushnell believes, will be part of coin-op's future—but it does present drawbacks. In VR, the player has a pair of goggles placed over his head. He looks through two built-in screens and, depending on which direction his head moves, that's what is shown on the screen (up, down, right, left). VR, therefore, allows the player to be in the middle of the action.

The problems, though, are two-fold. First, VR requires massive computers, and second, general sanitation is troublesome. As Bushnell put it, "I wouldn't want to be the 148th player of the day to put those things around my face." He thinks it will take three to five years for this technology to trickle down to coin-op.

Redemption is here to stay and will only get bigger, Bushnell says. What makes redemption so appealing is the "psychic reward" involved with winning. "Psychic rewards are ego-boosters," he said. "What better way is there to boost somebody's ego than by letting him win?"

Another Bushnell prediction is that there will be no paper currency worldwide in 20 years. This is because advances in copier technology are beginning to and will further duplicate paper currency too closely, forcing governments to abandon it. The resultant $1 and $5 coins, coupled with a high-tech "hologram" card, will allow fabulous new games at a much higher price per play, Bushnell theorizes.

Amusement gaming will increase, he believes, as moral opposition continues to erode. Slot machines will turn up in more street and tavern locations and gain greater prominence in coin-op revenues generated. But expect heavy taxation to follow, Bushnell added—as much as five percent of the coin drop.

The creator of *Pong* summed up his thoughts this way: "The future looks bright for those willing to change—and change we must. Those who keep abreast of the changes will prosper. Those who don't are doomed to failure." □

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Seminars

Small crowd touches nerves at Firing Line

In direct contrast to other seminars that boasted better attendance figures, a small operator contingent faced manufacturer representatives at the "Firing Line."

This turnout may suggest that operators are either 1) apathetic (apparently), 2) have no complaints (hardly), or 3) feel they will not get straightforward answers to their queries (possibly). In any case, hats off to those who made it their business to be there and raise important topics.

The small crowd did prove one thing for sure: even a handful of operators can quickly zero in on the major issues facing the coin-op industry today.

Members were quite vocal in expressing a desire for a larger panel of manufacturer representatives. One attendee even suggested publishing a list of companies that refused to participate in the seminar.

Questions were fielded by the usual panel members: Frank Ballouz of Fabtek, Bill Cravens of Leprechaun, Bill Rickett of Dynamo, Gil Pollock of Premier, Rus Strahan of NSM, Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales, and Ken Anderson of Leland.

Operators were not always completely satisfied with the answers offered. To their credit, panelists responded to every question and weren't afraid to say, "I don't know." Manufacturers missing in action passed on an opportunity to get the real story on industry conditions from the same people they expect to keep getting business from down the road.

"We always learn something at this seminar," said Bill Cravens, explaining that he valued the experience. Chief among the issues covered was operator dissatisfaction with distributors, a subject that surfaced near the end of the seminar and caused it to run overtime.

Operators clearly consider distributors who also operate as competitors, reinforcing the nagging feeling that such companies have first dibs on new product before the rest of the area marketplace.

At the "Firing Line," (l-r): Dale and Mineko Moore of L.A. Games, Diane and Bob Taggart of B & D Video.

Panelists quickly said that if a distributor/operator proves to be unfair, "don't buy from him anymore." Attendees explained that their "hands were tied" in many instances where the distributorship did not provide good service, but was the only source for certain manufacturer's games. While it is "frowned upon" to buy out of territory, operators say they often have no choice.

Steve Koenigsberg, who is a distributor only, noted that some operators became distributors because there were no good distributors in their area. Some of these long-standing companies with good reputations cannot be expected to abandon their operating business. Considering wholesale margins and the cost of operating games, distributor/operators are not necessarily in a better financial position, except for the advantage of selling used equipment. If distributor/operators cannot "move" product, they often have to "eat" it on their own routes.

Other subjects tackled included electronic mechs vs. mechanical coin slots, debit cards used to raise the cost per play, game security, quality cabinets, pinball settings, CD jukeboxes, dedicated videos coming out later as kits, high-priced video kits, and the push for a dollar coin.

Said Frank Ballouz, "As an industry we need the dollar coin. Video came out in '72 and we're still using the quarter." He urged all operators to send their congressmen and senators a letter endorsing a dollar coin and eliminating the paper dollar, adding, "If you're the squeaking wheel, we'll get it through."

Canadian operators in the audience affirmed the increased pricing with their dollar coin, the "loonie." One even quoted 85 percent of the coins in his cash boxes as dollars. There was a lament that the United States "has the lowest coinage in the free world."

The issue of debit cards, although possible at some later time, was considered impractical at present since people are used to putting coins into coin-op equipment. A re-education of the playing public would be necessary for such a system to meet with success. It was said that "different kinds of game rooms, those with larger equipment, will serve as a catalyst for a debit card system in the future."

Some general comments from the audience:

"The best idea to increase price per play is to provide us with better product."

"Plywood cabinets are lighter and wear better; freight on the games is cheaper too."

"Between the game slump and the war, we're looking for a lift."

"We can always lower the price, but we can't go up once a price is set."

"We'll need better game security, especially if the price per play goes up."

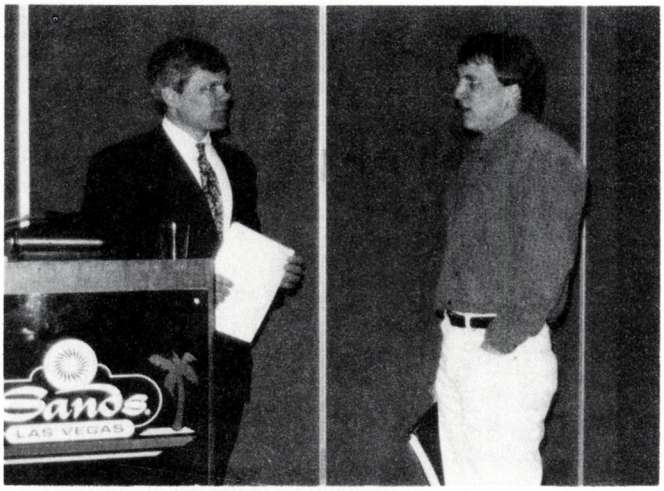
"Go with quality cabinets and parts (all of them) and have every game wired for bill acceptors."

"There's an advantage to having a coin slot and bill acceptor together; if one fails, the other is usable."

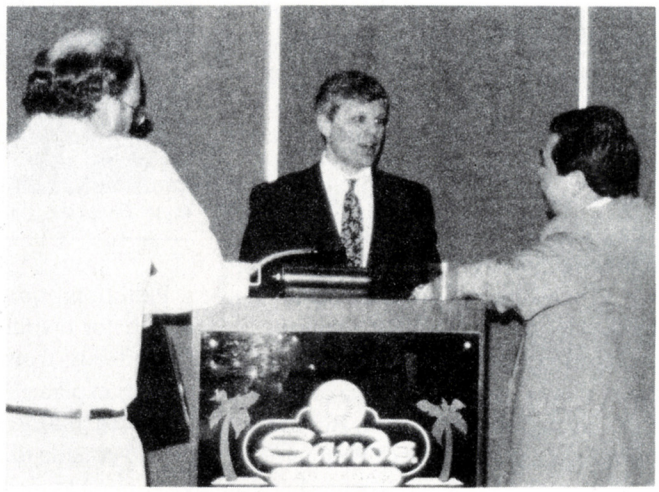
Regarding the low attendance figure, Frank Ballouz attributed part of it to the lack of any central, controversial issue at present. He wholeheartedly endorsed a larger manufacturer representation in the future. □

Seminars

Location agreements protect your business



David Hagen talks with Sean Richards of Hughes Music.



David Hagen talks to two operators after his seminar.

David Hagen, an attorney in California, guided a group of about 30 operators through some of the finer points of location contracts. A contract, he said, is defined as "an agreement to do or not to do a certain thing." He added that a location contract does not have to be written in "a different language—legalese." In other words, if you can't read it yourself, chances are the location owner won't understand it either. He told operators to question the attorney who draws it up if there are any unclear points.

Hagen covered reasons why you should have a contract in the first place: it defines your rights and assures business continuity, recovery of attorney fees, and business financing. There are three types of contracts: implied, oral, and written. Hagen focused on the written one.

An operator should look for several things in a well-written contract, including an adequate description of the parties—an individual (can be a dba), a partnership, corporation, or unincorporated association—and a clear description of the terms—length, price, and conditions—arbitration clause, attorney's fee clause, and restrictions.

In addition, operators should be aware of exclusive grant of rights, automatic renewal, reasonable access to games, payment of maintenance and repairs, payment for damage to machines, binding on successors, rotation and number of machines, and required reporting of machine malfunction. All of these things will be important in a contract with a location.

Of course, operators want to know how effective a contract can be if the location tells an operator to remove his games. By doing so, a location is breaching the contract, thus giving the operator the right to sue. The operator will be called upon to prove damages caused by the breach of contract. He will have to show what he would have earned if the contract had not been breached. He can usually do this by showing the court what he earned prior to the breach.

With video gaming looming on the horizon for some states, operators are wondering whether or not their current contracts will protect them against outsiders replacing their games with the video lottery games. Hagen addressed the concern by telling operators that they should consult with their attorneys. □

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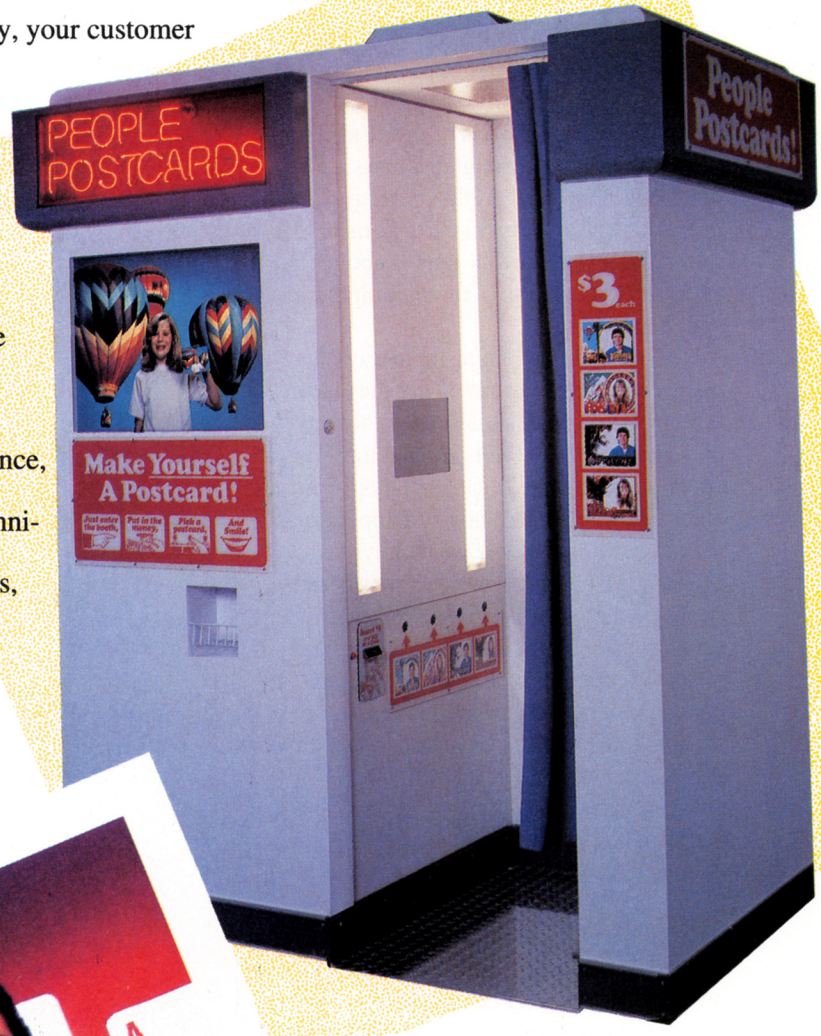

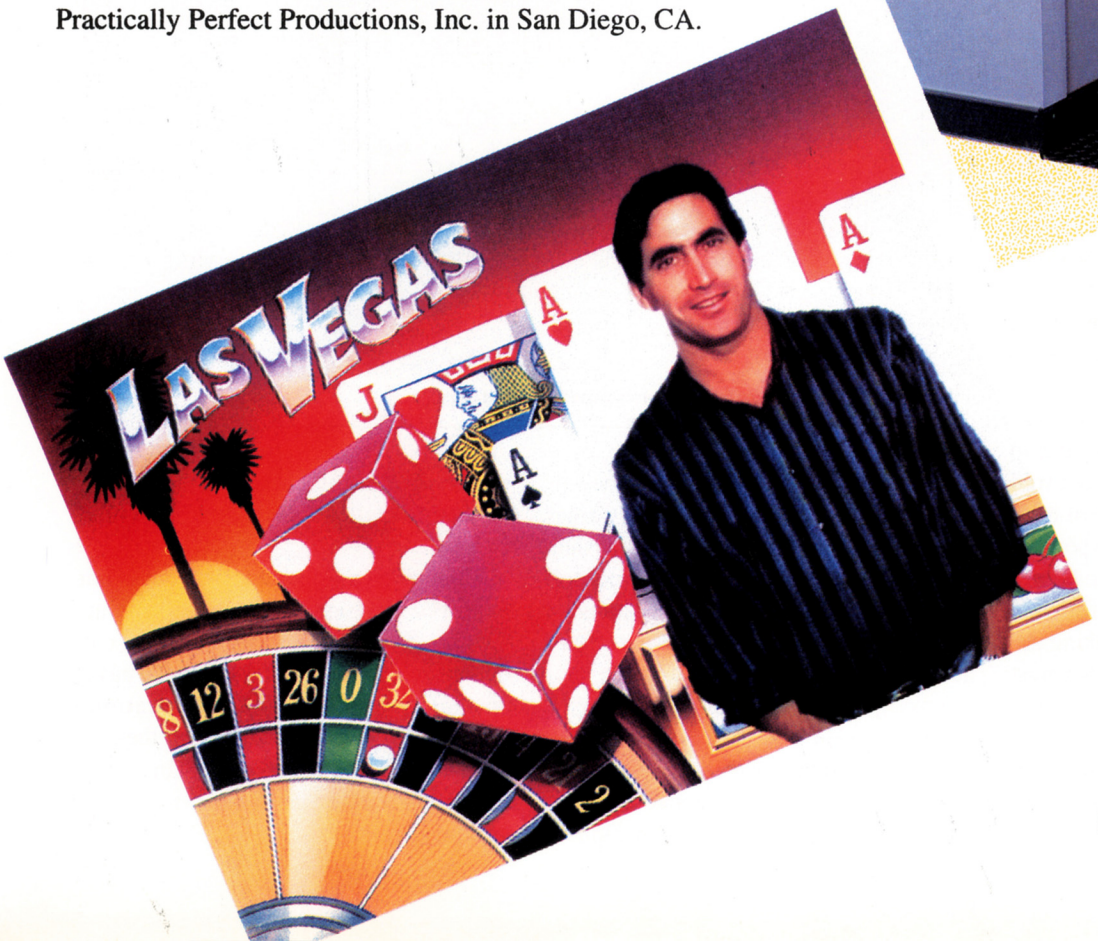

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Seminars

Equipment budgeting is more than buying games

Charles Ross, who has been a leader in guiding operators through business planning since the first AOE show, is still drawing crowds to his no-nonsense seminars. He spoke this year to about 60 operators on planning their equipment budgets.

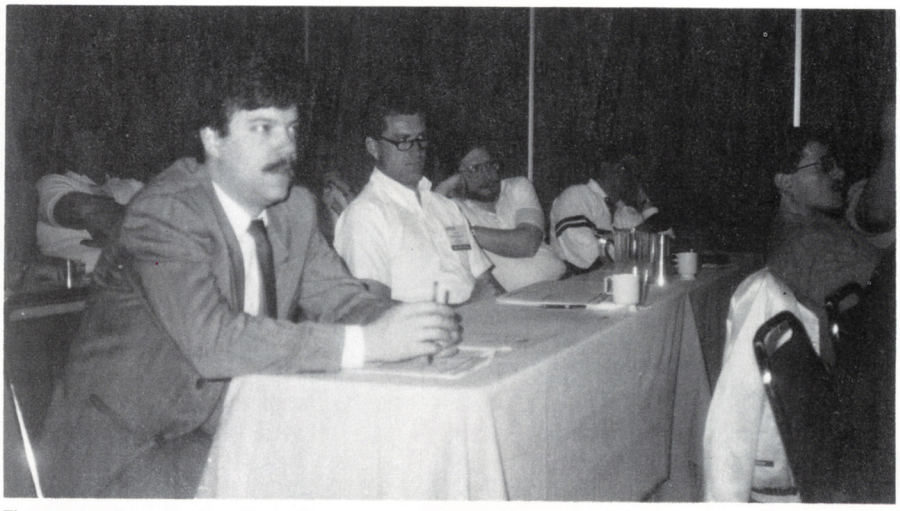
He started out explaining three ways that many operators buy equipment: they look at their checkbook balance and either buy or wait; a location calls demanding the latest game, so the operator buys it; or when attending trade shows, an operator sees something he likes, so he buys it.

Ross said that if operators use any of the above methods for buying equipment, his seminar on equipment budgeting was the place they needed to be, because all three methods are far from what should be done.

Ross told operators that planning an equipment budget maximizes profits. Too many operators simply look at the cash outlay of buying equipment, not taking into consideration how it fits into the total business plan. It's not the revenue the game brings in that should be the sole consideration, but the revenue minus the cost of operation. If a piece costs a bundle, even if it makes more than other games, it may not fatten your bottom line. On the other hand, a game may cost more than what you want to spend, but in the long run will look good on the bottom line. The only way to know is to have a plan.

Ross encouraged operators to analyze their current equipment's earning value to determine replacement needs. He told operators that they must be aware of what games are costing in terms of expenses, overhead, etc., and not keep them longer than their value. It may be more profitable to sell a game even if it is still making decent revenues, but again, an operator must know his own business to determine that. Unfortunately, he noted, games sometimes get placed in a location, left until the earnings are nil, and then put in a warehouse where they have no value. It would be better to sell an older game—or donate it to a charity—than store it. Games never have a value in the warehouse when planning your budget. When you sell them, you can take into consideration the sale value, which reduces the final cost of new equipment.

Charles Ross emphasizing profits and the importance of budgeting.



The attendees listen closely as Charles Ross explains his method of budgeting.

Ross is adamant about buying new equipment. He told operators that they can't run old equipment and expect to increase profits. He did not encourage arbitrary buying, but stressed a plan to reinvest on a regular basis. Kits are a good way to revitalize locations at minimum expense.

The budget an operator lays out is not engraved in stone, he reminded the attendees. There will always be unusual circumstances, where you will have to buy a special game for your best location. However, if you are not flying by the seat of your pants and have a good plan, it will be much easier to adapt to those circumstances. □

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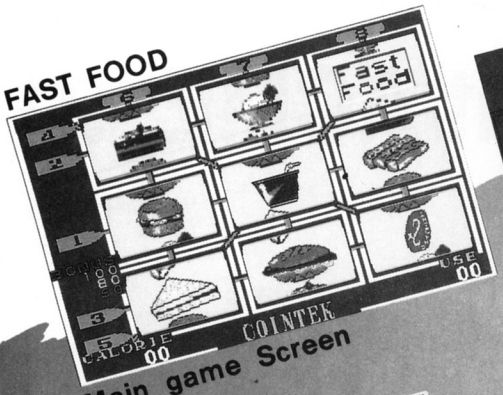
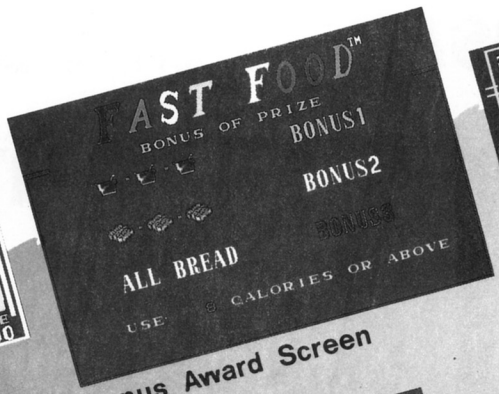
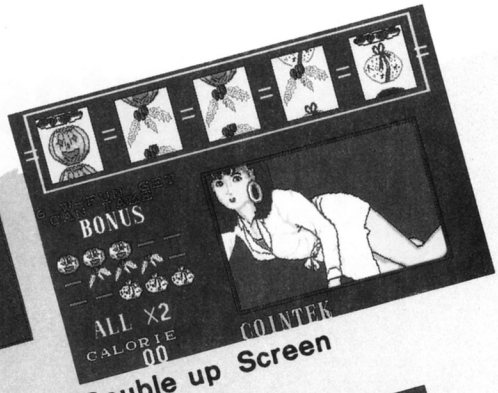


Main game Screen

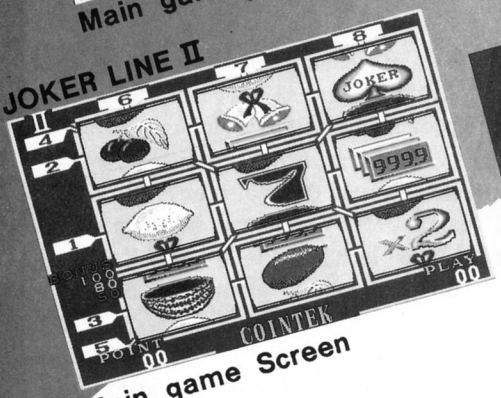


Bonus Award Screen



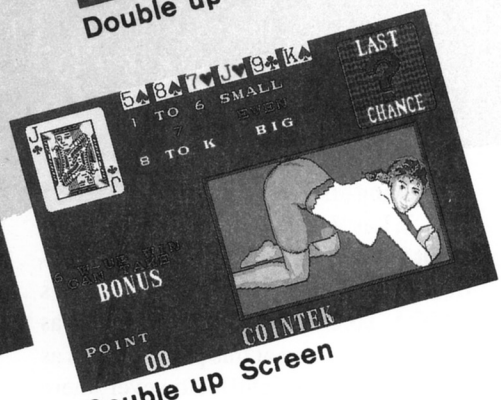
Double up Screen

JOKER LINE II



Main game Screen

Special Award Screen



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John Margold

Slugfest and *Ghost Town* redemption winners at ACME '91

Having just returned from ACME '91 in Las Vegas, I am faced with the difficult job of trying to predict the redemption "hits of the show". At last fall's AMOA, I thought the best new game was *Cosmo Gang* (and at this point it looks as though I guessed right!). However, there was a lot more equipment at ACME, which gives me a greater opportunity to be wrong!

Please keep in mind that my "hits" of the show are just one man's opinion. Unlike Play Meter's regular staff, I don't have to be objective. Having stated my disclaimer, here are my choices:

Williams' *Slugfest*

Thirty years ago when I was just nine, I played Williams and Chicago Coin baseball games more than I played pinball. *Slugfest* brings back the flavor of those great old games, plus adds two dimensions. Williams has used today's electronics to emphasize the game (I particularly like the "pinch hitter" feature) and has added a redemption feature.

Slugfest was shown at ACME with a card dispenser (baseball cards will be available from your Williams distributor's parts department). If you'd prefer, a standard ticket dispenser may be substituted for the baseball card dispenser. I suggest that you start with the card dispenser, and then after baseball season is over, switch to a standard ticket dispenser in the fall.

Bromley's *Ghost Town*

Again, this is an old idea that has been updated with redemption. *Ghost Town* is a standard arcade-style shooting game without a lot of complicated bells and whistles. However, in my experience, basic arcade rifles earn money week after week, year after year.

"Slugfest *brings back the flavor of those great old games, plus adds two dimensions.*"

Bromley has added pleasing graphics and appealing sounds to a solid idea. The combination is right for the game to become a staple. I wouldn't be surprised if every redemption arcade ends up with a *Ghost Town*. Even if it's not the top-earning game on location during any given week, it should be a steady, long-term earner. *Ghost Town* looks like the type of game that will still be collecting well five years (or longer) from now. And isn't that what you are looking for in redemption equipment?

My other picks

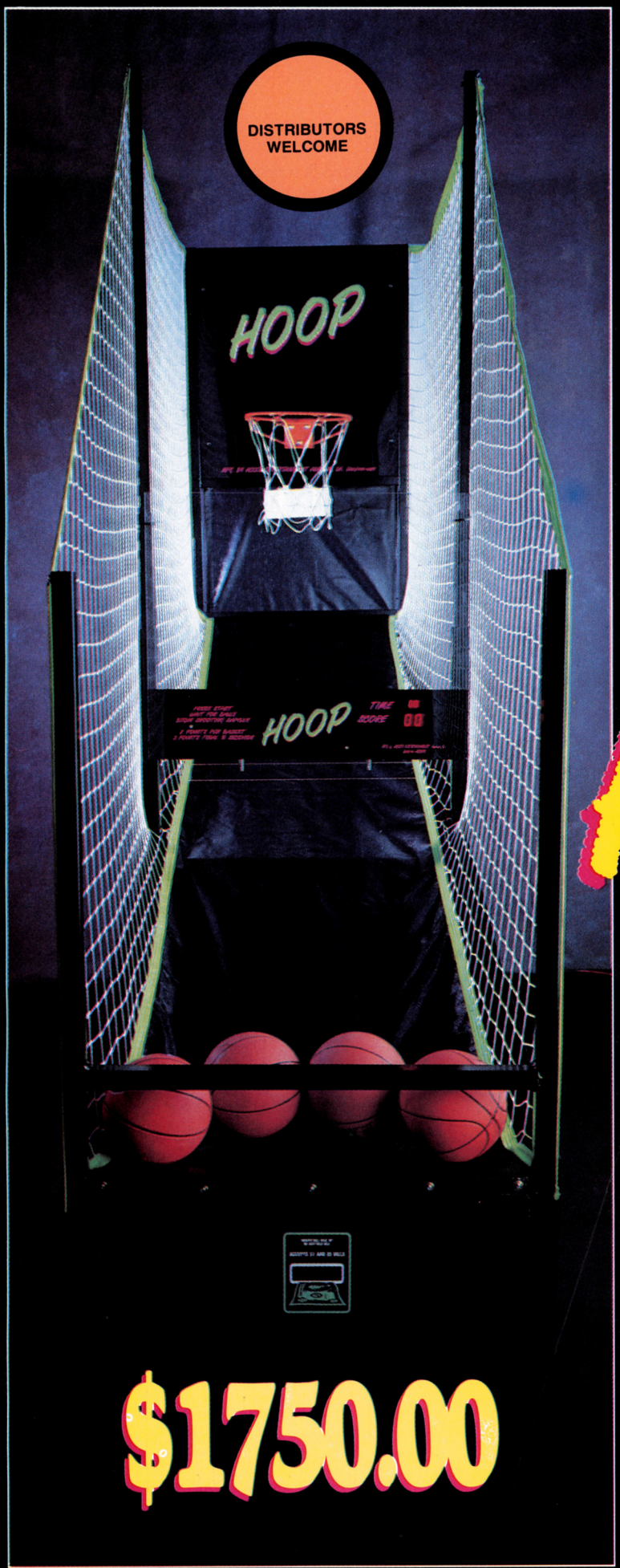
There were many other good games, any one of which may turn out to be the best new redemption game from ACME. I'll try to briefly review some of those potential winners.

Leprechaun's *Pot O' Gold* needs to be jazzed up a bit. Also, the program needs to provide the operator with more flexibility. Leprechaun will probably "tweak" this game in the near future; if they do it right, *Pot O' Gold* may be a winner.

Vari-tech had three "kiddie" redemption pieces in its booth—*Treasure Hunt*, *Space Shapes*, and *Beeware*—to challenge the younger players. If you have plans to section off a "kiddie area" in your fun center, one of those Vari-Tech games may be right for you.

Both Taito and Alter Enterprises had rapid-fire, ball-shooting games. The Taito piece—*Dino Blast*—had a prehistoric theme. The Alter game—*Fireball*—had the ability to play as a one- or two-player machine.

The Quick Silver Development Company introduced a mechanical, skill action game called *Hi Tension*. The player must move a ball around a maze as quickly as possible without losing the ball. *Hi Tension* may be converted to *Awesome* for only $395 (plus about an hour-and-a-half of labor).



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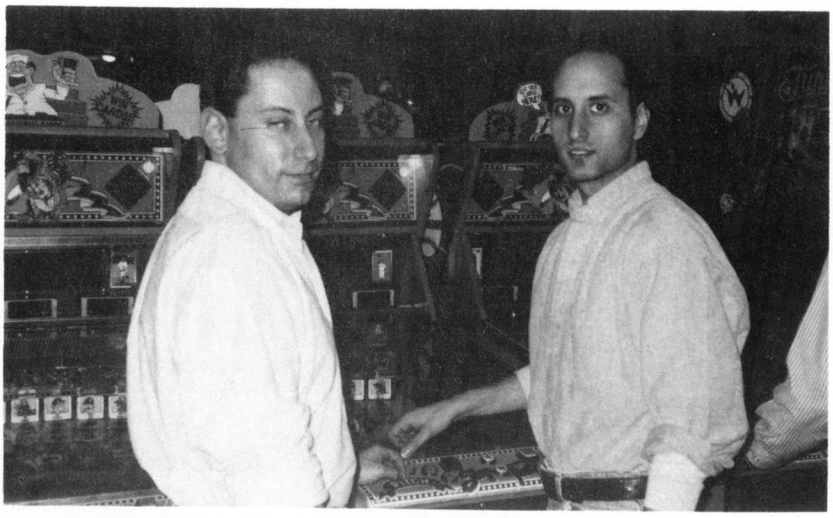

Evan Cooper (l) and Gary Gumowitz of Total Control Inc. enjoy the game play of *Slugfest.*

Bromley's *Ghost Town.*

There was one other new redemption game that drew its fair share of attention in the Taito booth. *Sonic Blast Manis* is a combination of the old punching bag teamed up with modern video technology. The game drew crowds throughout the show's three days. Several operators mentioned the possibility of additional insurance requirements because of the physical nature of the game. You'll need to make up your own mind on this one.

One other good idea for redemption that was displayed at ACME was the computer system from Bonita Marie through it's computer division, A.R.M.S. It's designed to keep track of inventory, build a customer mailing list for special promotions, figure your percentaging, and many other valuable functions.

The A.R.M.S. software may be helpful to both the new redemption operator and the experienced operator. Bonita Marie also had a handy scale for ticket or token weighing on display. At last year's AMOA, I liked the new "Ticket Eater" shown by Deltronic Labs. It counts and destroys tickets in one step and seemed like the ideal tool for redemption locations. However, in busy locations (especially on weekends), 13 tickets per second is not fast enough for ticket counting. A scale is a good alternative, and the scale available through Bonita Marie is priced right.

It won't be for several months before we'll see whether or not my predictions for ACME '91 hits will come true. Please keep in mind that there were a great number of new redemption games and ideas on display at ACME, and that my choices are just that—my choices.

As much as I hate to admit it, I have been known to make a mistake or two (on rare occasions!). Why not write down your two favorite new redemption games right here:

_____

_____

In six months, check back on this page to remind yourself of your choices. After all, I am willing to put my picks in writing. Next fall at the AMOA we can compare choices. By then we should know how right we really were. □

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Frank Seninsky

What I'm buying after ACME

This year's ACME show completely wore me out. I walked the floor for four solid days, checking every new game and speaking with hundreds of manufacturers, distributors, and fellow operators.

This show gave me one final opportunity to see all the new products before buying more than a hundred new games to set up our summer arcade locations. There were more games than usual to choose from, and making the correct buying decisions is always difficult. Picking only those games that will stay at the top of the charts and hold their value often makes the difference between profit and loss in this business. Here are the games that I feel will give me the best return on investment for my market:

***Pinbot* lovers flocked to *The Machine: Bride of Pinbot*.**

Video games

In my last article I wrote about *Neo-Geo* and *Street Fighter II* (kit). My opinion hasn't changed: I still feel that Capcom's *Street Fighter II* was the best video shown and *Neo-Geo* will likely turn out to have the best ROI two years down the road.

SNK's new *Neo-Geo* software, *King of the Monsters*, is another reason why this system rates so high with me. Some other operators may say that Konami's *Simpsons* was the hit of the show, but I was disappointed. I'm going to buy some *Simpsons*, but don't expect this game to have the legs that *Turtles* did.

I also liked Midway's *Strike Force* kit, which is a good remaking of the old award-winning *Defender*.

We all love our driving games. The best one shown was *Rad Mobile* by Sega. Some

Data East's driving-themed pinball, *Checkpoint*, drew crowds.

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others that may go the distance included *Indy Heat* and *Cisco Heat*. On a personal note, I ordered 25 *Rad Mobile*s and one *Indy Heat*.

The majority of my equipment budget is going toward sit-down videos this year. With great ones like *Rad Mobile*, *F-15 Strike Eagle*, *Final Lap II*, *Cisco Heat* (2-player), *Cisco Heat* (simulator), *Race Drivin'*, and *GP Rider*, it's my bet that these games will carry my game rooms for the next year, at least.

Last month I wrote that I have been very pleased with my 10 *Mad Dog McCree*s. In each location they are placed, they have increased the gross by what they've earned, *plus* 10 to 20 percent. By this I mean that if I put *Mad Dog* in a location that was doing $1,400 a week, the location gross jumped to $2,200 a week; $700 was due to the *Mad Dog*. These high numbers are starting to slip, so I'm anxiously awaiting the new software, *Who Shot Johnny Rock?* due to be released in June. I'm also going to order a couple more *Mad Dog*s.

"There were more games than usual to choose from, and making the correct buying decisions is always difficult."

Pinballs

Before ACME, I felt that *FunHouse* was the best overall pin, with *Simpsons* close behind. Now there are two other great pins to compete with them: Data East's *Checkpoint* and Williams' *The Machine—Bride of Pinbot*. Both are winners. However, if I had to choose right now, I would still go with *FunHouse* because I don't have quite enough data to make any other choice right now (maybe next month). Pinball should strengthen its market share of revenues with these four in action.

Redemption

Skee-Ball and *Pop-A-Ball* are still my favorites when setting up a redemption arcade. New products that I'm buying are Doyle's *Dump the Ump* (both adult and mini sizes) and Williams' *Slugfest* (which can dispense tickets or baseball cards). This all-around redemption game can now go into almost any type of location. Hey, there may even be a way to have *Slugfest* dispense both tickets and baseball cards.

Good luck, fellow operators, with the games you buy. I'm looking forward to having a great summer and fall season and finishing out 1991 in good shape. As always...keep cranking! □

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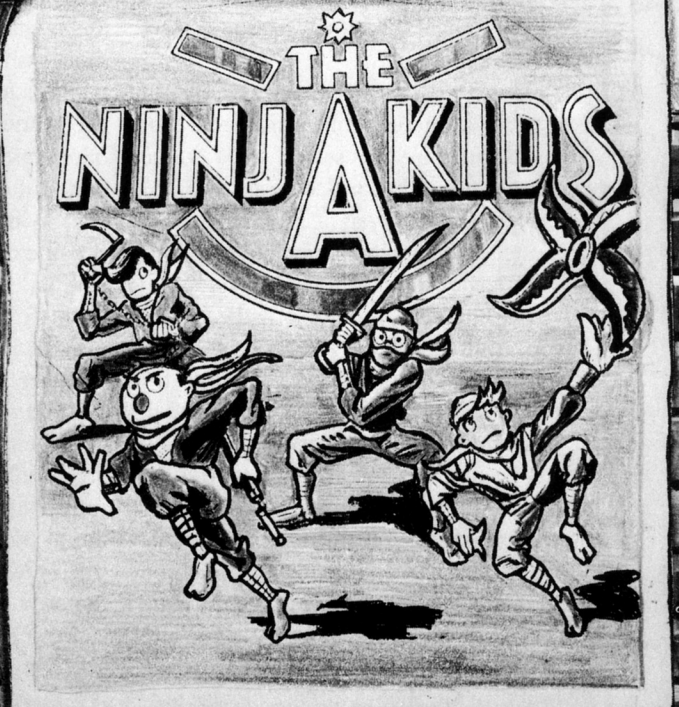

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TEN YEARS AGO

Looking toward a world of computers

When educators 10 years ago predicted that Americans would find themselves branded as "functionally illiterate" sometime in the near future if they could not operate a computer, I don't know how many of us took it *that* seriously! The article added that in 1990 the nation would need 40 million persons able to use computers. Look at us here in 1991. I think we'd agree that some knew what they were talking about.

As was the case 10 years ago, nearly every issue carried some article concerning the jukebox license fee. In May, we reported the jukebox location list battle was lost. The Copyright Tribunal had requested operators to send them copies of their location lists. AMOA had fought that it was unconstitutional, but the courts stood by the CRT. It was a devastating ruling, even though it was eventually reversed.

In industry news, Jeanne Angelo (who later became Mrs. Frank Ballouz) was appointed the sales administrator for the Atari marketing department; Rock-Ola was successful in obtaining an injunction against an alleged copy of it's *Star Castle* video game; Pacific Novelty went into production with its first video game, *Shark Attack*; at Gottlieb, Gil Pollock was promoted to vice president of product design and Marshall Caras became vice president of marketing, a position he had held several years before; Taito had just recently signed a licensing agreement with Nichibutsu for *Crazy Climber*; in a poll of operators, Play Meter found that 57 percent wanted the AMOA show in Las Vegas, but most manufacturers were totally against the idea, stating that they feared an inevitable link drawn between amusement games and the gaming sector in the public's mind and in mass media coverage; a Louisiana congressman told a group of operators, irate over the turn of events concerning the licensing fee, that the reason he voted the way he did was because their leaders were not doing their job; and Williams announced plans for cocktail table models of its popular video, *Defender*.

Roger Sharpe's "Critic's Corner" rated *Pink Panther*, the follow-up to Gottlieb's first multiball pinball, and gave it a two-and-a-half out of five. Stern's *Free Fall*, a follow-up to *Nine Ball*, was given a four out of five.

Play Meter's "New Products" section featured *Jungle Lord* by Williams, *Crazy Climber* by Taito, *Space Bugger* by Game-A-Tron, and *Shark Attack* by Pacific Novelty. □

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Carrier Air Wing	Jun. 30, 1992	$400

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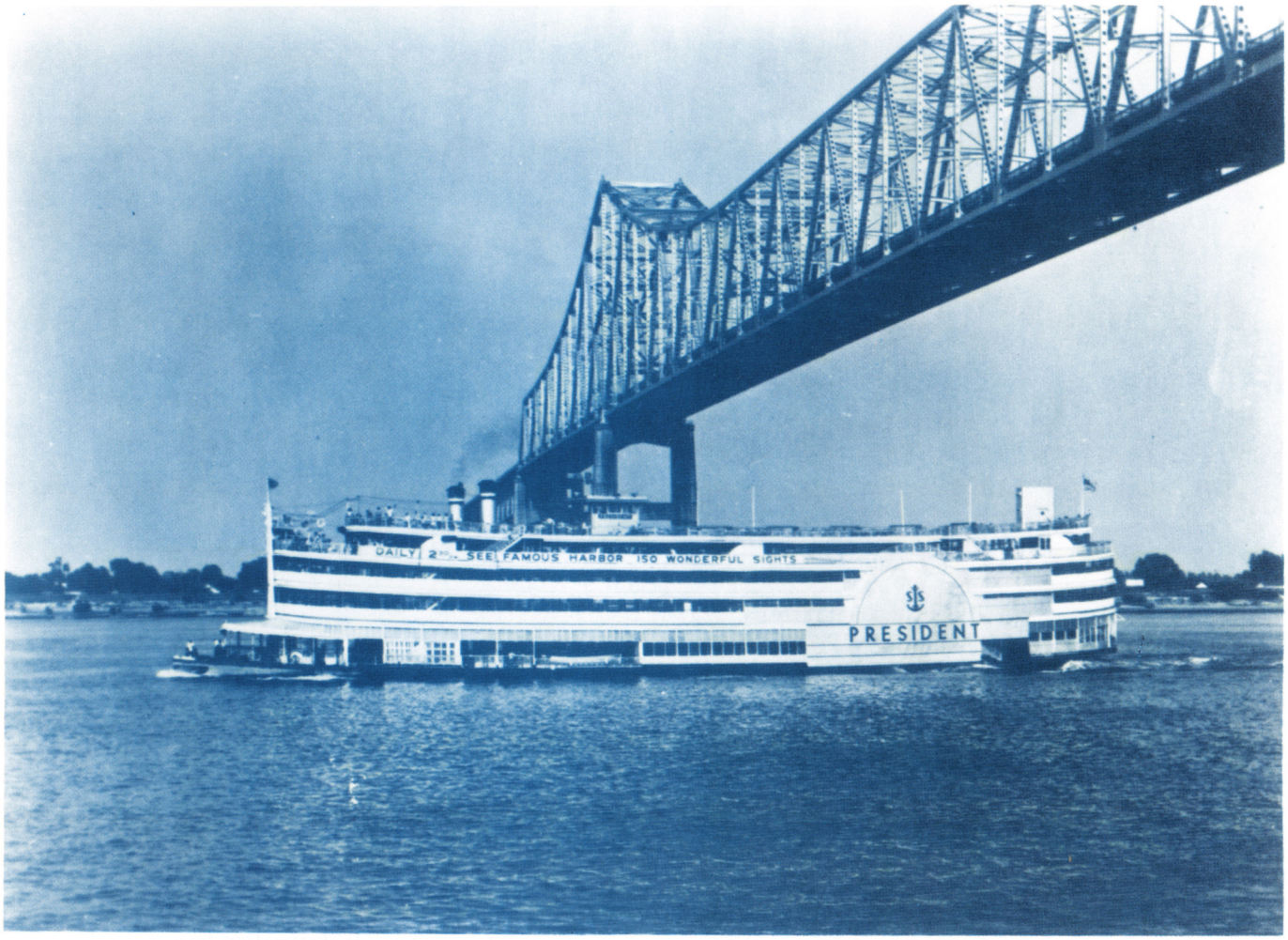
Riverboat gambling takes maiden voyage



The President as she appeared in the '60s. Recent renovations have turned her into an opulent gambling facility.

The riverboat President sailed away from New Orleans' Thalia Street Wharf the week of Feb. 25. Destination: Davenport, Iowa. Purpose: to serve as one of three ships operating under Iowa's legal, low-stakes riverboat gambling, which commenced April 1.

Nearly $10 million went into the renovation of this venerable vessel, converting the 297-foot ship into an opulent floating casino. As it departed and sailed upriver, New Orleanians relived many fond memories associated with her.

It was common for eighth grade graduating classes to spend a day on the

President—considered quite an occasion. Many high school dances were held "afloat," the sounds of live bands drifting off into the darkness of the river as couples pressed closer together than nuns ever allowed in the school gymnasium. Street peddlers sold gardenias to young men for their sweethearts to wear as they boarded the ship.

Now, the President has departed for a new career. Poker and blackjack tables, slot machines, craps tables, and roulette wheels appear where The Contours played in the early '60s. Happily for our industry, video poker games are also in the product mix. One regret: Louisiana could not hold onto the President and outfit her for riverboat gambling where she sailed for 46 years.

The President was built 67 years ago as a sidewheel paddleboat bound for duty on the Ohio River. From 1942 until 1988 she was based in New Orleans and traveled the Mississippi River, mainly as a sightseeing vessel but also available for charter cruises and dinner dances.

What developments led to this new career for the President? The story begins in Iowa.

"It accomplishes two goals: encouraging private enterprise and allowing communities to put money where they need it most."

Iowa

After riverboat gambling was approved in Iowa's 1989-90 legislative session, 10 interested counties held referendums to determine the outcome for themselves. Only two voted against the effort.

The first counties to endorse such a program saw their plans materialize in grand style recently in the cities of Davenport (Scott County), Bettendorf (Scott County), and Dubuque (Dubuque County). Davenport has the President, Bettendorf the Diamond Lady, and Dubuque the Dubuque Casino Belle.

While the President is an original paddleboat, the other two ships are new construction that duplicates the charm and allure of riverboats in days gone by. All three ships will operate along the Mississippi River.

Chuck Patton, director of riverboat gambling, a bureau of the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, explained that "the thought behind the bill was to spur tourism, particularly along the Mississippi River, a natural draw for visitors."

The Iowa law is unique. Licenses to operate riverboat gambling are granted jointly to a non-profit organization and a

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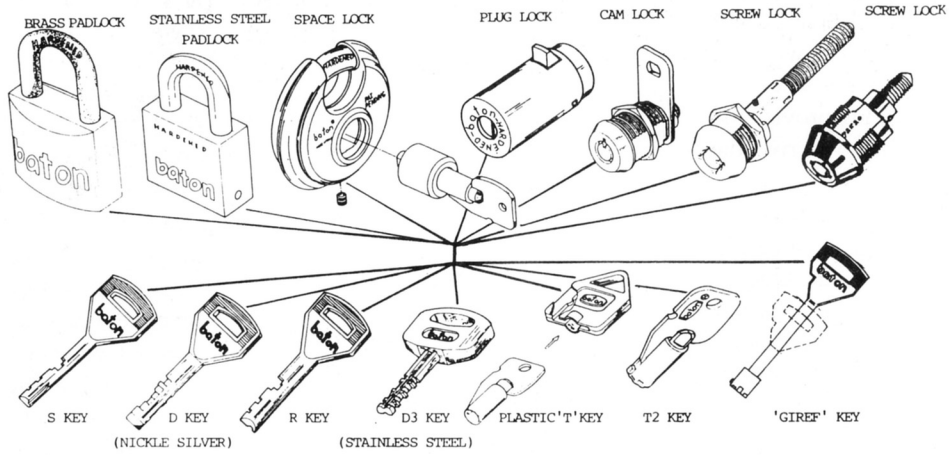

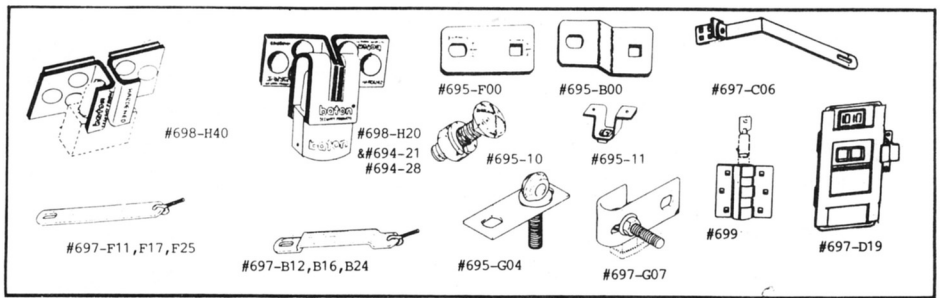

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private company. Thusfar, the commission has approved six licenses for seven riverboats.

"In this manner," said Patton, "the community is assured of sharing in the profits and the associated development that goes along with it. It accomplishes two goals: encouraging private enterprise and allowing communities to put the money where they need it most."

The state benefits in the collection of taxes, structured this way: tax is based on a sliding scale of five percent on the first $1 million won per vessel, 10 percent on the next $2 million, then 20 percent on everything over $3 million.

Of this tax money, one-half of one percent of the gaming win goes to the city; one-half of one percent goes to the county; and three percent goes to the state gambler's assistance fund, which sponsors programs to help compulsive gamblers. The remaining funds go to the state general fund.

Under Iowa law, the game mix offered on the ships must include one table game for every 20 slot machines or electronic games. Upon entering, patrons can buy only $200 of house (play) money for use at the tables and machines. The maximum wager is $5; there is no limit on winnings. Ships operate seven days a week year 'round with winter docking provisions if the ship is unable to navigate the river during the coldest months.

Other gaming activities in the state include horse racing, dog racing, a state lottery, and participation in Lotto America.

Iowa is not alone in realizing the benefits of riverboat gambling. It's sister state, Illinois, will be next to implement a program.

Illinois

Illinois passed a riverboat gambling bill in January 1990, authorizing issuance of a maximum of 10 licenses for operating vessels in Illinois waters. The first four licenses were awarded in November 1990. The earliest indication of a start-up date is between July 1 and Aug. 1.

Stated Joe McQuaid, deputy administrator of the Illinois Gaming Board, "The purpose of this legislation was to increase tourism and increase the economic growth in certain communities."

The four communities looking forward to riverboat gambling include three on the Mississippi River (Alton, Rock Island, and Joe Davies County) and one on the Illinois River (Peoria).

Under the Illinois system, private companies apply to the Illinois Gaming Board for a license to operate a vessel, with two ships allowed per licensee. Suppliers of all games and gaming-associated equipment apply to the board for a license as well.

In each case, applicants must meet state requirements before licenses are granted. There is no limit to the number of companies that may seek a license. Companies that operate the vessels must purchase their gaming equipment from licensed suppliers.

A combination of retrofitted older ships and newly constructed vessels will be used in Illinois. There are no dictated ratios of live games versus electronic gaming devices, as long as the equipment is approved by the board. All the normal casino "table" games and electronic games (such as video poker) will be in the game mix.

Once the program begins, patrons will have no limitation on the amount they may wager while on board. The ships will operate on a "cashless" system, in that the machines will not accept U.S. currency. Tokens will be used while wagering; players turn them in for cash later.

According to McQuaid, after winnings have been paid out to customers (referred to as the adjusted gross receipts), the remaining amount is taxed at 20 percent to the state. This money goes to the gaming board to cover administrative and enforcement costs, with remaining funds directed to a special education fund.

At present, Illinois has a state lottery, charitable games, parimutuel and off-track betting, bingo, and pull tabs.

Further south, riverboat gambling is on the horizon.

Mississippi

While Louisiana has not been successful in obtaining riverboat gambling yet, neighboring Mississippi approved such activity in May 1990, subject to referendums in each of the state's seven counties. Only the counties of Hancock (along the Gulf Coast) and Adams (the Natchez area) voted for it. Gaming activity can take place while ships travel to and from international waters, but not dockside.

Two ships, the Southern Elegance and the LA Cruise, currently operate on the Gulf Coast under a former law. Shipboard games include all the normal casino games plus video poker games. These vessels were "grandfathered" into the new law.

Any further development of riverboat gambling is at a standstill at present, because funding and rules and regulations have not yet been established for the new gaming commission. The Mississippi Tax Commission currently has jurisdiction. Lester Herrington, deputy commissioner of revenue, is also serving as interim executive director of the gaming division.

"We want to be sure that proper regulatory personnel are aboard."

According to Herrington, "We're now in the process of revamping the rules and regulations that apply to riverboat gambling. We've developed rules pertaining to vessel requirements and taxation. We're almost complete in regulations for all the other aspects of riverboat gambling. We have contracted with the Nevada firm of Gordon and Silver to assist in preparing proper regulations to cover this activity."

He explained that the tax rate on game revenues is a graduating one that starts at four percent and goes to eight percent on a state level. A similar rate could apply if local government decides to levy a local tax, which can be equal to 10 percent of the state tax. The Southern Elegance and LA Cruise now pay only a boarding fee, which will be replaced by the graduating tax rate when the new code is put into effect.

Before the expansion of any riverboat gambling activity, Herrington wants to "be sure that proper regulatory personnel are aboard." The state has three times before sought to obtain legalization of video poker games and failed. In 1990, such a bill passed the House but died in the Senate. □

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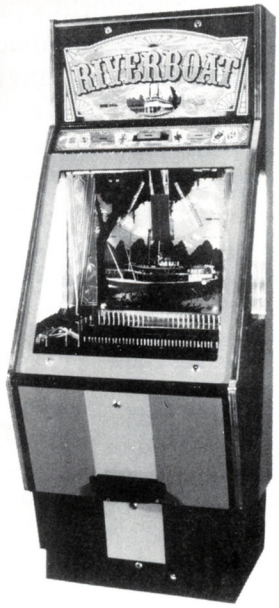

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Cruise gently into gambling

A number of people have suggested that one large, well-regulated casino, catering to tourists, might bring a Super Bowl-type crowd to New Orleans many times during the year.

Our food, culture, history, charm, jazz, architecture, and Southern hospitality are what we have to offer. These ingredients, plus a casino, would be a wonderful addition to the social and economic life of New Orleans.

If we can't have a casino, the next best thing would be riverboat or cruise boat gaming. This is a form of legalized gambling that would be *highly controlled* and be an acceptable means of raising revenue and attracting tourists every day of the year. A casino would be part of the equipment on excursion boats or cruise ships traveling the Mississippi River day or night.

Riverboat or cruise ship gambling would naturally blend with the allure of New Orleans, from both an historic and romantic viewpoint. The thrill and excitement of traveling along the Mississippi, and even out into the open Gulf of Mexico, is fun indeed. The added excitement of risking a few dollars on the turn of the wheel, the toss of a pair of dice, or the pull of a slot machine handle is something all visitors to the Crescent City would welcome, enjoy, and discuss with friends.

A study of New Orleans history reveals that all types of gambling are part of the city's heritage. And riverboat gambling has historically been as much a part of the river's history as the paddlewheel vessels themselves.

Everyone is familiar with Edna Ferber's great novel "Showboat," which became a musical on Broadway and elsewhere for many years. This great story also made its way to the silver screen. It depicted life on the Mississippi, on a ship that offered its passengers transportation as well as entertainment, good food, and the chance to indulge in a little gambling if one were so inclined.

"Riverboat gaming is a form of legalized gambling that could be highly controlled and be an acceptable means of raising revenue."

There is hardly an ocean liner or a cruise ship sailing the seas today that does not feature an elaborate, luxurious casino. Nearby Gulfport, Miss., offers gambling cruises day and night. The same is true of Galveston and other Texas ports. Vicksburg, Miss., and Davenport, Iowa, also have floating casinos.

There is no reason in the world why historic old New Orleans should be denied a tourist attraction and a reliable source of revenue when it would mean so much to the city at the present time. □

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HOT SINGLES

TITLE Label & Number/Distributing Label	ARTIST
1. One More Try Quality 15114	Timmy T.*
2. Someday Columbia 38-73561	Mariah Carey*
3. Coming Out Of The Dark Epic 34-73666	Gloria Estefan*
4. This House Capitol 44652	Tracie Spencer
5. Get Here Fontana 878 476-4/Mercury	Oleta Adams*
6. Hold You Tight Giant 4-19458	Tara Kemp*
7. You're In Love SBK 07343	Wilson Phillips
8. I've Been Thinking About You Radioactive 54005/MCA	Londonbeat
9. Rescue Me Sire 4-19490/Warner Bros.	Madonna*
10. Sadness Part 1 Charisma 4-98864	Enigma*
11. Signs Geffen 4-19653	Tesla
12. Show Me The Way A&M 1536	Styx
13. Iesha Motown 2070	Another Bad Creation
14. All This Time A&M 1541	Sting*
15. I'll Be By Your Side LMR 2758/RCA	Stevie B*
16. All The Man That I Need Arista 2156	Whitney Houston*
17. Rico Suave Interscope 4-98871/East West	Gerardo
18. Round And Round Paisley Park 4-19748/Warner Bros.	Tevin Campbell*
19. Where Does My Heart Beat Now? Epic 34-73536	Celine Dion
20. I'll Do 4 U Uptown 53914/MCA	Father M.C.

* available on vinyl

COMPACT DISCS

TITLE Label & Number/Distributing Label	ARTIST
1. Mariah Carey Columbia 45202	Mariah Carey
2. The Soul Cages A&M 6405	Sting
3. Wilson Phillips SBK 93745	Wilson Phillips
4. To The Extreme SBK 95325	Vanilla Ice
5. Gonna Make You Sweat Columbia 47093	C&C Music Factory
6. Shake Your Money Maker Def American 24278	The Black Crowes
7. I'm Your Baby Tonight Arista 8616	Whitney Houston
8. Into The Light Epic 46988	Gloria Estefan
9. Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em Capitol C2-92857	M.C. Hammer
10. Some People's Lives Atlantic 82129	Bette Midler
11. Heart Shaped World Reprise 25837	Chris Isaak
12. The Immaculate Collection Sire 26440/Warner Bros.	Madonna
13. Five Man Acoustical Jam Geffen 24311	Tesla
14. Empire EMI 92806	Queensryche
15. The Simpsons Sing The Blues Geffen 24308	The Simpsons
16. The Razor's Edge ATCO 91413	AC/DC
17. MCMXC A.D. Charisma 91642	Enigma
18. Hooked Capitol 95330	Great White
19. X Atlantic 82140	INXS
20. The Future Uptown 10115/MCA	Guy

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Air hockey shines in Chicago and Houston

Championship air hockey was on display during the National Hockey League (NHL) All-Star Weekend in Chicago on Jan. 19. An All-Star game and president's party at the 1800 Clybourn Complex were part of the festivities.

Current national champion Tim Weissman of Houston and two-time champ Mark Robbins of Boulder, Colo., played to a crowd that included present and former NHL stars, league executives, corporate sponsors, and media representatives. Two professional air hockey tables were provided for the occasion, courtesy of Dynamo Corporation and American Vending Sales.

In addition to Chicagoland getting a close-up of air hockey action, Texans gathered in Houston for matches at the 1990 Texas State Air Hockey Championships held Dec. 29-30 at Jungle Jim's Playland.

Tim Weissman won his second consecutive Texas victory. Other winners were: Albert Ortiz, second; William Upchurch, third; Paul Marshall, fourth; Vince Schappell, fifth; Mark Robbins, sixth; Robert Hernandez, seventh; T.C. Cabot, eighth; Max Silverstein, ninth; and Rolf Moore, tenth.

Tuna Gill won the Pro B division and Nathan Tucker won the amateur title.

For more information on air hockey tournaments and promotions, contact Mark Robbins at Dynamo, (800) 527-6054.

Tim Weissman (l) and Mark Robbins at the NHL All-Star Weekend.

Happy Texas winners, (l-r): William Upchurch, Paul Marshall, Vince Schappell, Tim Weissman, and Albert Ortiz.

Merit tour rolls into Ohio, Michigan

Merit's World Series of Darts tour made two stops in February. The first, the $5,000 Ohio Open, took place in Tiffin, Ohio, on Feb. 8-10. It was sponsored by C & J Games and Music, with Shaffer Distributing providing 30 *Pub Time Darts* dart machines.

The tournament kicked off with the traditional Blind Draw Doubles event, which was won by Bub Honeycutt and Vince Laureano. Here are some of the other tournament winners:

Open Singles: 1st place: Gary Mawson; 2nd place: Avtar Gill; 3rd place: Bub Honeycutt.

Women's Singles: 1st place: Rani Gill; 2nd place: Liz Matthews; 3rd place: Anne Fisher.

Four-Person Team: 1st place: Bub Honeycutt, Tom Ross, Tracy Sheppard, and "Freightrain"; 2nd place: Gary Mawson, Anne Fisher, Rani Gill, and Avtar Gill; 3rd place: Jim Hepperly, Mitch Tyraa, Morty Falk, and Bill Hill.

Mixed Triples: 1st place: Gary Mawson, Anne Fisher, and Avtar Gill; 2nd place: Bub Honeycutt, Tracy Sheppard, and Trish Portman.

Draw Doubles: 1st place: Bub Honeycutt and Vince Laureano; 2nd place: Tracy Sheppard and Mark Tusing; 3rd place: Mike Hensley and Ken Danek.

Women's Doubles: 1st place: Anne Fisher and Rani Gill; 2nd place: Trish Portman and Janet Mote; 3rd place: Gwynn Flechtner and Marty Hartsel.

C & J Games and Music, based in Tiffin, Ohio, has been running dart leagues in northwest Ohio for the past two years. Their player base now exceeds 500 players, and last year they paid out over $30,000 in prize money. Also, the company recently joined the AMOA-National Dart Association and adopted the SPRE system.

Merit's second February stop was for the 4th Annual Great Lakes Open, held in Southgate, Mich., on Feb. 22-24. Over 345 entrants from six Midwestern states and Canada competed for $4,000 in prizes and trophies. Michigan Nickel assisted Merit in putting on the tournament.

Opening night featured the Draw Doubles event. Mick Sweeney and Jim Hepperly of Findlay, Ohio, came from the loser's bracket to capture first place. Among the other tournament winners were:

Men's Singles: 1st place: Bill Gay; 2nd place: Mike Sweeney; 3rd place: Chris Stratton.

Women's Singles: 1st place: Mary Donaker; 2nd place: Rani Gill; 3rd place: Rose Latinski.

Men's Doubles: 1st place: Bill Gay and Ray Bachmeier; 2nd place: Chris Stratton and Karl Callender; 3rd place: Bob Andrews and Dick Ernsberger.

Women's Doubles: 1st place: Rani Gill and Rose Latinski; 2nd place: LuAnn Osbourne and Lexie Paro; 3rd place: Earleen and Linda Abraham.

Four-Person Team: 1st place: Chris Stratton, Jerry LaPalm, Gary Watkins, and John Picard; 2nd place: Dave McCloud, Glenn Sweet, Dirk Bartlay, and Karl Callender; 3rd place: Bob Andrews, Dick Ernsberger, Don Osbourne, and Dave Paro.

Mixed Triples: 1st place: LuAnn and Don Osbourne, Dave Paro; 2nd place: Doug and Janice Hunt, Ray Bachmeier; 3rd place: Twan Calhoun, Julie Auvenshire, and Dave Course. □

Mixed Triples Winners, third place, (l-r): Twan Calhoun, Julie Auvenshire, Dane Course, and Mike Benson of Michigan Nickel.

Arachnid tour visits the Northwest

Sam Zammuto, Arachnid's vice president of marketing, with Women's Singles winner Kay Davidson.

Pro Singles champ Larry Prewitt with Arachnid's Carol Payne.

Arachnid, with the help of Seattle co-sponsors General Coin and Music-Vend Distributing, staged a regional dart tournament on Feb. 22-24 as part of its BullShooter VI dart tour. Players competed for $5,000 in prize money on Arachnid's *English Mark Darts* machines.

Larry Prewitt of Tacoma, Wash., defeated Jim Gennai to win the Pro Singles event. First place in Open Singles went to Tim Kinnison of Kennewick, Wash., with Seattle's Rick Frias taking second and Mark Bauch of Maple Valley, Wash., placing third.

Kay Davidson of Spanaway, Wash., came from the loser's bracket to win the Women's Singles event. Betty Wagner, the runner-up in Women's Singles, bounced back by taking first place in Women's Doubles with partner Kathy Tarver of Olympia, Wash.

Gene Kuhn of Corvallis, Ore., finished first in Cricket Singles, while Keith Brown of Seattle and Teresa Wasnock of Portland, Ore., paired to win Mixed Cricket.

Those finishing first to third in each event qualified for the BullShooter VI Finals in Chicago, which takes place over Memorial Day weekend. □

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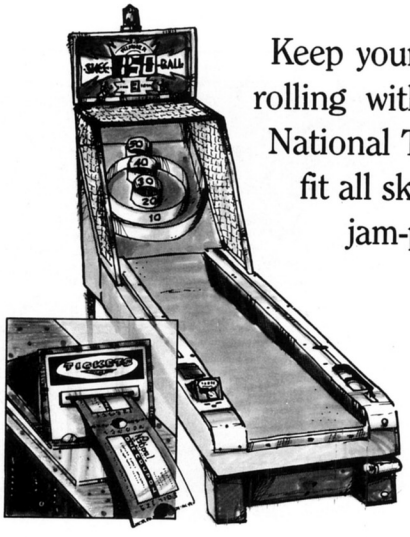

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Arachnid tour visits Los Angeles

Arachnid, along with co-sponsoring distributorship C.A. Robinson, played host to a dart tournament in Los Angeles on Feb. 15-17. The event was part of Arachnid's English Mark Darts BullShooter VI tour.

World champion Craig Belardes of Capistrano Beach, Calif., was defeated in the Pro Singles finals by Mike Coots of LaVern, Calif. However, Belardes did finish first in Open Doubles with partner Fred Aguero. He also captured third in both Cricket Singles and Mixed Doubles with partner Linda Endo of Manhattan Beach, Calif.

John Gray of Glendale, Ariz., had a good tournament as well. He took first prize in Cricket Singles, first in Mixed Cricket with partner Ellen Rice, third in Pro Singles, and sixth in Open Doubles with Phoenix's Brad Halley.

During the weekend's matches, those involved with the tournament never lost sight of the situation in the Persian Gulf. An "Operation Desert Storm USO Fund" was set up by C.A. Robinson, with contributions to the fund coming from a game of "Count-Up." At the end of eight rounds, if a man scored 900 or more points or a woman 700 or more, C.A. Robinson donated $25 in the player's name. When it was over, $1,000 had been raised for the USO Fund.

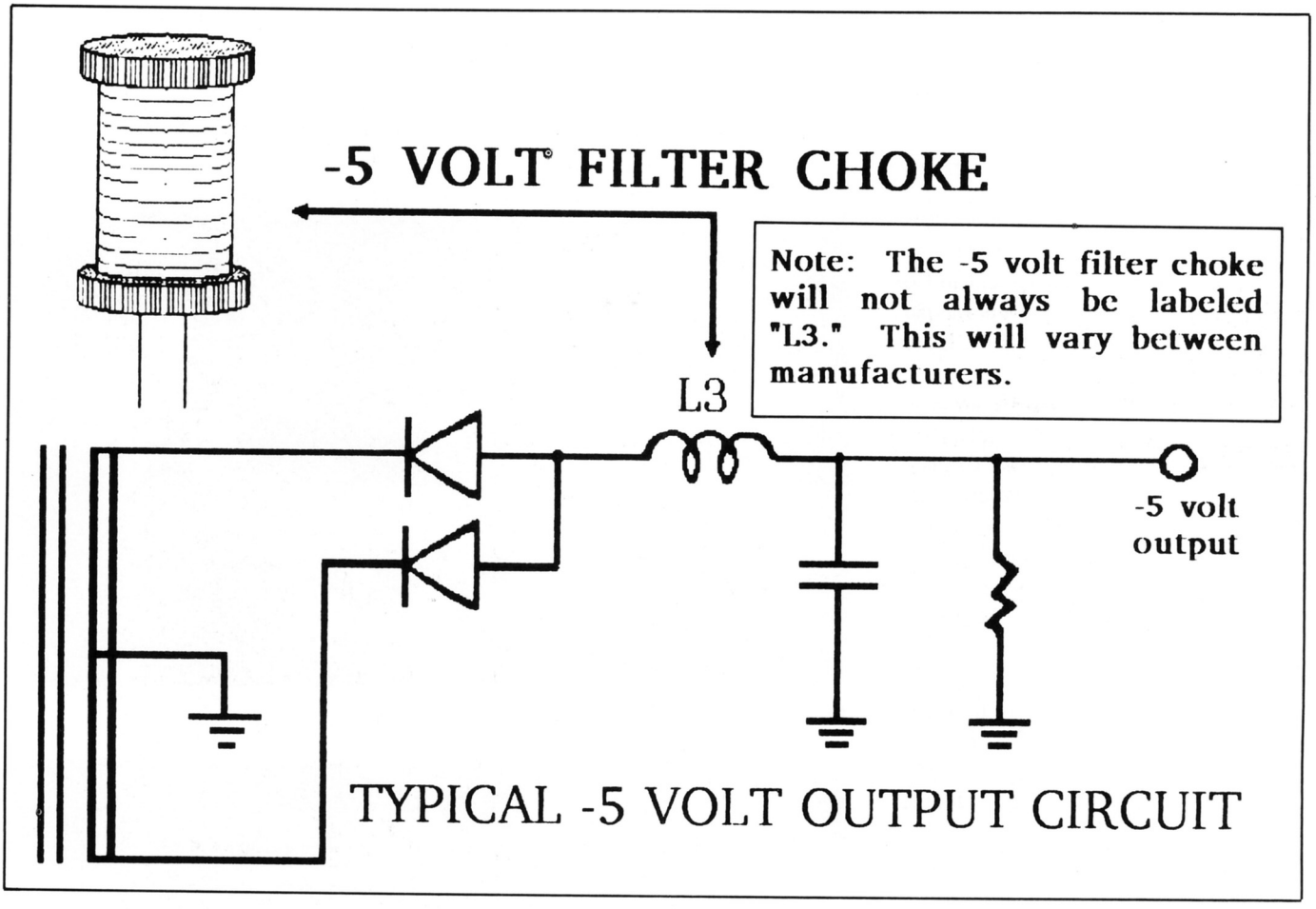
Arachnid's BullShooter VI Finals will be held over Memorial Day weekend in Chicago. □

Craig Belardes (l) and Linda Endo with Arachnid's J.L. Woodard.

C.A. Robinson's Dean Gamburd (l) presents USO executive director Bob Bernier with a $1,000 check for USO Fund Operation Fund Desert Storm.

Randy Fromm

Switching regulator power supplies "Peter Chou"-style



Most switching regulator power supplies have three DC outputs: the main +5 volt DC output that powers the computer system and the +12 and -5 volt outputs. These DC outputs are often used to power the sound-generating system and the audio amplifier itself. When you're testing a power supply, it's important to check all three of the outputs. This is especially true when you have a game that basically works OK but has distorted or missing audio.

When a switching regulator power supply fails, all three outputs will usually drop to zero volts (see Play Meter, June 1989, page 107). Sometimes, however, the output voltage may rise. If you find that the +5 VDC and +12 VDC outputs are normal, but the -5 VDC output is too high (more than -6 VDC), try replacing the -5 output filter choke.

It's easy to locate the -5 volt filter choke, even without a schematic diagram. Just follow the trace on the printed circuit board back from the -5 VDC output of the power supply. You will eventually come to a component that may look something

like a capacitor but will be clearly labeled "L" on the board. It will generally be accompanied by the schematic symbol for a coil as well.

The coil is wound on a ferrite core and is covered with a plastic sleeve that has been heat-shrinked over it. Examine the coil. If the heat-shrinked cover has been melted or is missing entirely, the coil may be bad.

You cannot boogie down to Radio Shack to replace this component. There are a couple of options for obtaining a replacement coil. The preferred method is to take the coil off a junk power supply. Alternately, you can pull the burned wire off the ferrite core and rewind the choke yourself using the appropriate gauge wire. There aren't so many turns of wire on it that you can't rewind a new coil in five minutes.

"When you're testing a power supply, it's important to check all three of the outputs."

Output capacitor replacements

I have received a number of calls and letters from operators and technicians who are having trouble obtaining replacement capacitors for switching regulator power supplies. I recommend using Nichicon brand capacitors. I have been using them for almost two years, and to date I have not seen a repeat capacitor failure.

Nichicon brand capacitors can be obtained from a company called TTI. They have a score of offices across the United States, all of which can be reached by calling (800) CALL TTI. I recommend that you order just two different capacitors for use as replacements for the output filter capacitors in the "Peter Chou"-style power supply. It helps a great deal when you have the part numbers. For the +5 VDC output, use 3300 microfarad, 16 VDC capacitors. The Nichicon part number is UVX1C332M. Each power supply requires two of these.

To make ordering and stocking easier, I use the same capacitor for both the +12 VDC and the -5 VDC outputs. It's a 1000

microfarad, 25 volt capacitor. The Nichicon part number is UVX1E102M. Although some power supplies use a 2200 microfarad capacitor for the +12 VDC output, I have found the 1000 microfarad to be perfectly satisfactory. Most power supplies use one capacitor each for the +12 VDC and -5 VDC outputs, so order the same number of 1000 microfarad capacitors as you do the 3300 microfarad capacitors. When you replace the output filter capacitors, it's a good idea to change them all at once.

Output diode replacements

Output diodes are a common failure item in the switching regulator power supply. I would say that around 25 to 30 percent of them have bad output diodes.

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

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

Substitute diodes: The + 12 volt output diodes will usually carry an original part number like PXPR302 or FR302. These are 3 amp diodes. I am using a commonly available 1N5404 as a substitute. This is a 3 amp, 400 volt diode. I have no doubt that the 50 volt version of this diode (1N5400) or the 100 volt version (1N5401) would also work. I use the 1N5404 simply because that's the only type of 3 amp diode that I keep on hand as a replacement.

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

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

Oiled crane string prevents breakage

Pretty self-explanatory, huh? This tip comes from David Pieme (pronounced P.M.) at Namco's Orlando, Fla., operation. According to David, using a light oil like 3-in-1 will virtually eliminate breakage. Just soak the string in oil prior to loading it on the take-up spool. □

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READER'S RESPONSE

OPERATORS: This column is devoted to you. It is your chance to have your voice heard on the state of the industry. We welcome all complaints, compliments, and comments. We will print your letters as received, when possible. We would appreciate it if you would refrain from sending a scathing letter about a specific manufacturer. Instead, we would like your general observations on the industry. Your name will not be used if you prefer. Take a few moments to share your thoughts with the rest of the coin-operated entertainment industry. There is a self-addressed sheet waiting for you to fill out and return to us.

Don't offend us

We spent years making a family-oriented fun center. Of course, we are always aware of games we buy. We would never intentionally buy games that would be offensive to our customers.

We recently bought a video game that we thought would fit nicely into our family atmosphere. My first reaction was: "This game can't really be saying *those* words. Surely, a leading industry manufacturer wouldn't do this."

A service technician at the company admitted there might be *questionable language*. He added that the software had been revised in later models with dip switch settings for family locations.

It is sad to think that this industry has to stoop to this kind of "Hollywood" and "sleaze TV" attitude to sell games.

I am one customer who thinks a good game doesn't need vulgar language or graphics. I hope other manufacturers don't follow this lead.

Mobile, AL

The writer sent the name of the company and game he was so outraged about. We deleted it because it is a powerful statement for all manufacturers. There are many operators who rely on wholesome entertainment for their customers and are offended at unnecessary obscenities.

Don't neglect them

I'm not a big operator by most standards, but I make a decent living on my route. I have been studying up on the switch from 45s to CDs. Replacing my jukeboxes could be a huge financial hardship if I had to do it all at one time.

I have made a decision to buy only CD when I have to buy a new jukebox. I believe, like I'm sure most other operators do, that 45s are going to get plenty scarce as time goes by. But one thing that I've noticed is that many operators—my competitors come to mind—seem to have given up on their 45 jukeboxes. I think some of the locations ask for a new CD box just because they think that it's the only way to get good music.

I'm perhaps an operator of different thinking. Instead of placing less importance on cleanliness and programming on my older boxes, I am doing just the opposite. I'm keeping them very clean, programming them properly and often, and generally making sure the location is happy. Do you know that most of the requests for records have nothing to do with the top 10 or even the top 40? Most are oldies, and those are plentiful right now in 45s.

If operators take care of their 45 jukeboxes, they will have time to make a workable plan for replacing them with CDs.

Chicago, IL

It's coincidental that we got this letter soon after our April issue went to press. Rus Strahan of NSM made the same observation. He urged operators to take care of their 45s while making a workable plan to make the switch to CDs. It is a point worth noting. Good luck, operators. Make the most of what you have to work with!

AND NOW . . .
A WORD FROM OUR READERS!!!

An operator challenged us to provide space and invite everyone in the coin machine business to write about what is right, wrong, or can be corrected within the industry. OK, here's the space. Now it's up to all of you to fill it with comments on the industry. We will not print your name if you so request, but we will print your comments just as you have them. The operator suggested running the page for three issues, but we will leave it indefinitely if you continue to send your opinions.

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Irving Blackman

New tax law can reduce life insurance coverage

Changing the rules in the middle of the game isn't allowed — right? Of course, but not when it comes to Congress and the tax laws.

Let's set the stage for this tax travesty. Millions of life insurance policies were sold to corporations, which were the policies' owners and beneficiaries. Most of the policies were sold as keyman insurance (usually insuring the owner/founder of the corporation) or to fund a buy/sell agreement.

The insurance consultant assured the policy purchaser that the proceeds, when received, would be tax-free. He was right: neither he, nor anyone else, ever expected the alternative minimum tax (AMT) imposed on life insurance by the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

In general, this AMT was 10 percent of the amount of life insurance proceeds collected. But starting in 1990, the rate was boosted to 15 percent. Let's understand just how hard this tax law change hits. The premiums your corporation pays on life insurance policies where it is the beneficiary are not deductible, but the proceeds are subject to the AMT.

Even worse, once the corporation has the after-tax AMT proceeds in hand, your heirs can't get the money out of the corporation unless they pay a second tax on the dividend. It's a lousy deal all the way around.

No, you can't beat death, but in this case—by knowing what to do—you can beat taxes. Here's how: switch to S corporation status. An S corporation is not subject to the AMT when it is the beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

"Life insurance and how it is taxed is a very complicated area because of the new rules and the many new insurance products that have become available in recent years."

If you cannot elect to be an S corporation for some reason, then each stockholder of the corporation should buy the policies on his life from the corporation for its cash surrender value. Such a purchase will eliminate all income taxes on death. An additional transfer to an irrevocable life insurance trust could even eliminate all estate taxes on the proceeds.

Life insurance and how it is taxed is a very complicated area because of the new rules and the many new insurance products that have become available in recent years. It is imperative that all business owners have their insurance portfolios reviewed. It is not the amount of insurance on your life that counts; rather, it is the after-tax dollars your family winds up with.

IRS ups retirement plan limits

Qualified retirement plans are still one of the few shining stars in a dismal tax galaxy. Such plans are so good, in fact, that the IRS has set strict limits to prevent you from ballooning the amounts you can contribute and deduct.

The tax law permits various dollar caps to be boosted each year to keep pace with increases in the cost of living. Here are the new limits just announced for 1991 by the IRS:

* Pension plans can be funded to give you an annual benefit of up to $108,963 (increased from $102,582 in 1990). The maximum annual contribution to a profit sharing plan remains at $30,000.

* You can make a $8,475 contribution to a Section 401(k) plan (up from $7,979).

* In calculating benefits, you can take into account up to $222,220 of compensation this year (increased from $209,200 in 1990). For example, if your profit-sharing plan provides for contributions equal to 10 percent of compensation, the maximum

1991 contribution allowed for your benefit is $22,222 (versus $20,920 in 1990), no matter how much you earn.

Out of the frying pan and into the fire

Prior to 1987, recapitalizations (recaps) were the direct route to the promised land for freezing the value of your family business. Everybody did it, and the IRS got fed up. When Congress obliged by passing the dreaded Section 2036(c), recaps were dead and buried.

Small businesses, trade associations, and tax practitioners all complained. This time Congress pretended to oblige by killing Section 2036(c) with a new law in late 1990. Hurrah, the wicked witch is dead! But wait. The law created something entirely new in the Internal Revenue Code: it's Chapter 14—"Special Valuation Rules."

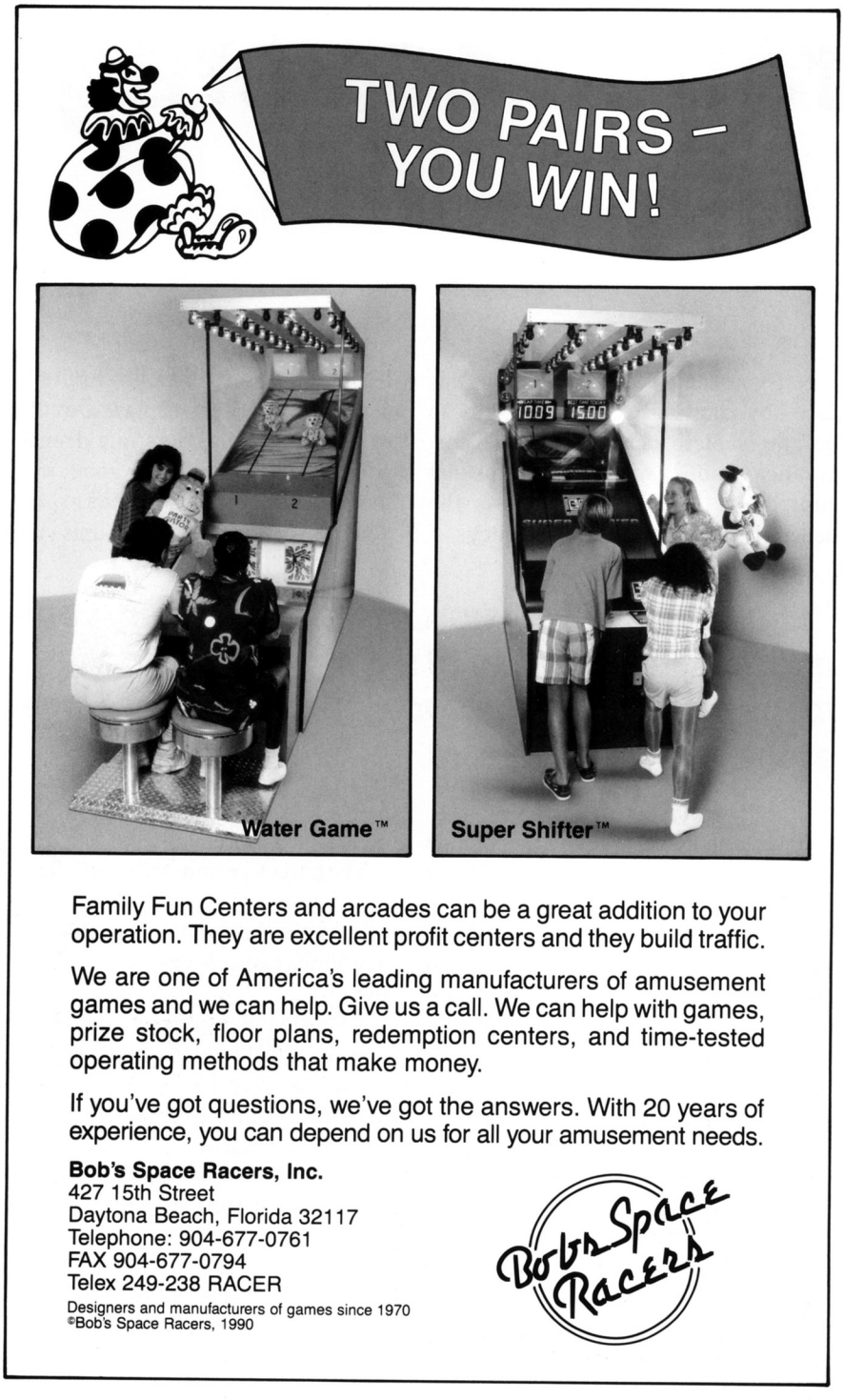
This law is designed to hurt you. How? In a nutshell, to make a recap work (freeze the value of your preferred stock for estate tax purposes), you must follow a host of new recap rules. For example, you must have your total corporation valued, as well as the new preferred stock. The value of the preferred stock is subtracted from the value of the total corporation; the difference is considered the value of the common stock. If the preferred stock is flawed (noncumulative, for example), its value is *zero*.

"The excise tax on defined benefit pension plan reversions has increased from 15 to 50 percent. That's outrageous!"

Let's explore the world of recaps under Chapter 14. Suppose Joe owns 100 percent of the common stock in ABC Co. In April 1991, he exchanges it for 100 percent of all the company's new common stock and new preferred stock. Joe then has the company appraised.

The appraiser values ABC Co. at $1 million—the preferred stock at $900,000 and the common stock at $100,000. That exchange of the old common for the new common and preferred stock is called a "recapitalization." Joe keeps the preferred stock, while his two sons—who are active in the business—receive the common stock from Joe as a gift.

First, suppose the preferred stock is cumulative and pays a 10 percent dividend. ABC Co. pays the 10 percent dividend of $90,000 ($900,000 times 10 percent) to Joe every year, until Joe dies in the year 2015 (25 years after the recap). ABC Co. is worth $10.9 million on the day Joe dies. What is the value of the preferred stock in his estate? A measly $900,000. Good move, Joe.



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Next, suppose everything is the same as above, except the preferred stock is non-cumulative. The IRS will ignore the attempted recap. Sorry, but this time the entire $10.9 million will be taxable in Joe's estate. Ouch!

The many technical tax reasons as to why Joe succeeded in the first case, and failed in the second, are a complex maze of legal gobbledegook. Make sure you talk to an expert as to why or why not a recap is in your family's best interest.

Successful? Meet your new partner—the IRS

The following saying supposedly dates back to colonial times: "Don't tax me, don't tax thee, tax the man behind the tree." Well, if you savor the good life, drink, smoke, or travel, you are in fact the man behind the tree in 1991.

My clients and readers of this column often ask two questions: what is covered by the new excise tax laws, and how much? Here's the list; read it and weep.

A 10 percent luxury tax applies to the purchase of:

* Automobiles exceeding $30,000
* Boats and yachts exceeding $100,000
* Aircraft exceeding $250,000
* Furs and jewelry exceeding $10,000

The tax applies to the purchase price before considering any trade-in.

"In a nutshell, to make a recap work, you must follow a host of new rules."

The "gas guzzler" tax on automobiles has doubled. It ranges from $1,000 if less than 22.5 miles per gallon to $7,000 if less than 12.5 miles per gallon. The gasoline excise tax has rocketed to about 14 cents, an increase of 5.1 cents.

The sin taxes are indeed devilish. The tax on a six-pack of beer has doubled, up to 32 cents. Tax on a bottle of wine is up to 21 cents—a seven-fold increase. The hard stuff has had a tax increase of about 20 percent (you get stiffed trying to get stiff). And if you smoke, watch your money go up in smoke: a four-cent increase per cigarette pack in 1991, increasing another four cents in 1993.

Airline ticket taxes are up, up and away—a 25 percent increase, from eight percent to 10 percent of the ticket cost.

And finally, the biggest tax ripoff in the new law: the excise tax on defined benefit pension plan reversions increases more than three times—from 15 to 50 percent. That's outrageous! □

Irving Blackman is a partner in Blackman Kallick Bartelstein, a CPA firm specializing in closely held businesses. If you have questions about the subject matter in this or other Blackman columns, call him at (312) 207-1040.

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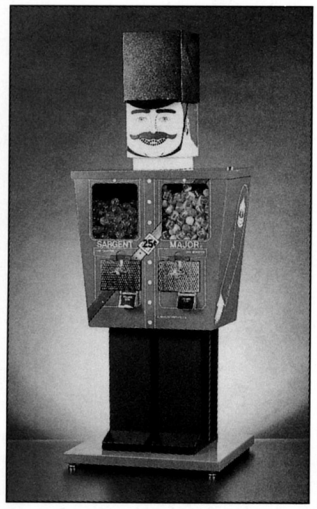

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Game machine firm wins case on information returns

Manchester Music Co. Inc. owns coin-operated amusement machines, including video games, pinball machines, and jukeboxes. It splits all revenues with the businesses that house them.

It had agreements with various retail establishments stipulating that after all the overhead was deducted from the monies collected by the machines—reimbursement for lost quarters and an equal split of license and permit fees and related taxes—the remaining monies were to be equally divided between Manchester and the shops. Manchester's collectors made these payments during regular visits.

After an audit, the IRS agent told Manchester that it should have filed information returns for the amounts paid to store proprietors. Under Section 6041(a) of the Tax Code, payments of more than $600 a year made in the course of business must be reported to the IRS on Form 1099, along with the name and address of the recipient.

The company said it wasn't paying the business for services but was dividing income from a joint enterprise, as stipulated in its agreements with the businesses.

When the IRS stood firm, Manchester's accountants asked for a technical advice ruling from the IRS national office. But the audit agent's supervisor refused to send the request to Washington. Giving up, Manchester filed the 1099s. Then it was notified by the IRS of penalties for intentional disregard of Section 6041(a), totaling $230,797 for 1982 and 1983.

Manchester paid $796 in penalties for four machine locations—under protest—and filed for a refund with the IRS, which was denied. Then it sued for the refund.

Chief U.S. District Judge Juan M. Perez-Gimenez observed that "only if both halves of the proceeds from the machines were to be considered money earned solely by the plaintiff (Manchester) could it then be seriously argued that the 'transfer' of one-half of the money from the plaintiff's hands to the proprietors' pockets constitute a 'payment'..."

He found the arrangements to be essentially "independent joint ventures in which the parties shared the profit and expense." Manchester had a right to only half the income, so the other half could not be a payment for purposes of Section 6041(a).

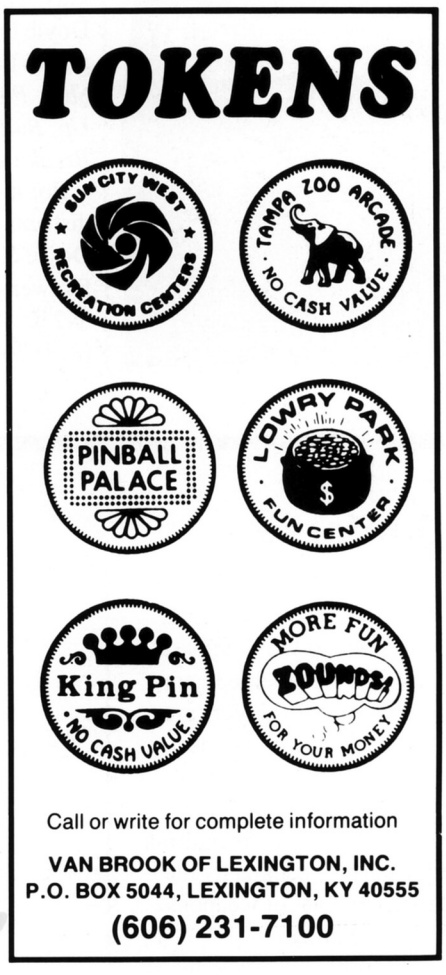
The judge said Manchester had the keys to the machines but the proprietors the keys to the establishments. Neither could get at the money without the other's consent. Manchester never controlled the funds until they were divided. Since control wasn't transferred from Manchester to the proprietors, no payment was made.

The IRS said its own revenue rulings found that such machines were leased and that monies paid to proprietors were, in effect, rent for the space. But this ruling "is not only unreasonable but fatally flawed," the judge said.

He pointed out that the entire argument in the revenue ruling could be reversed so the store proprietors would be the parties doing the paying and, thus, have to file the disputed information forms.

He ordered that Manchester get its penalty payments back with interest (U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire, Civil No. 88-257-D). □

This article was submitted to us by Karen and Marc Whitelaw of Action Video and Vending in Buffalo, NY. It was reprinted with permission from "Tax Update for Business Owners." The judge's ruling notwithstanding, operators should not suddenly discontinue filing 1099s. This ruling is contrary to specific language in the Tax Code, which sets forth the conditions for filing 1099s. Talk to a competent tax professional before abandoning your 1099s.



WHAT'S NEW

Dump the Ump

Who hasn't wished the umpire a little bit of bad luck after a questionable call? Now players have the chance to do something about it in Doyle's latest redemption game with a sports theme, *Dump the Ump*.

Players use baseballs to knock over umpire figures that appear in three rows on the back of the game. Tickets are dispensed depending upon the targets dropped. Dimensions are eight feet eight inches high, 41 inches wide, and 10 feet deep.

A mini version of *Dump the Ump* is available just for kids. These units join the Doyle line-up of popular games that include *Li'l Hoop Shot, Panda Pitch, Batter Up, Bullpen, Pro Pitch, Fast Break,* and *Hoop Shot.*

For more information, or distributor referral, write Doyle & Associates, P.O. Drawer 49467; Sarasota, FL 34230; (813) 366-3735; FAX (813) 366-5197.

New York, New York

Wurlitzer combines modern audio technology with design features of the Golden Age to produce *New York, New York*, a CD jukebox that holds 100 CDs and over 1,500 possible selections.

New York, New York has been named to honor the city's prominence as an entertainment center and features a unique Y-shaped bubble tube front with the city's familiar skyline on mirrored panels. The back of the unit is curved, a reminder of the graceful Wurlitzer jukeboxes of the '40s and '50s.

There are six loudspeakers for optimal sound and 200 watts of music output. All functions and displays are controlled electronically; an automatic "top tunes" display simplifies music selection.

Other features include a popularity counter and interface connections for printer, microphone, added amplifiers, and external loudspeakers.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Wurlitzer-Nelson International Vending and Music Inc., 30-35 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, NY 11102; (718) 721-4000.

Gunforce

Two-player simultaneous action is featured in Irem's newest video kit, *Gunforce*, a futuristic war-themed game.

In *Gunforce*, players are enlisted to defend themselves against continued alien attacks on planet Earth. The result is the ultimate multinational army, backed by the largest arsenal of weapons ever assembled.

The game is marked by explosive screen graphics and special effects. Advanced tactical weapons are featured as players travel a six-stage battle plan that takes them into the heart of enemy operations.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Irem America Corp., 8335 154th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 882-1093.

WHAT'S NEW

Sheriff Shoota

Coastal Amusement adds another novelty/redemption game to its line-up with *Sheriff Shoota*, a target shooting game that rewards high scores with tickets.

Sheriff Shoota is a 100 percent skill shooter similar to the company's successful *Roosta Shoota*. This model asks players to shoot lightweight balls into targets below figures of Old West sheriffs.

Features include an illuminated rotating timer, realistic sound effects, and ticket dispenser. Dimensions are 30-1/2 inches wide, 42-1/2 inches deep, and 72 inches high. The game is a Harry Levy design.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Coastal Amusement Distributors, 601 Prospect St., Lakewood, NJ 08701; (908) 905-6662; FAX (908) 363-6329.

Galaxy Darts

Arachnid has eliminated the time-consuming process of collecting and recording league statistics with the new English Mark Darts version, *Galaxy*.

The games accomplishes this goal by use of a memory card the size of a credit card. Here's how it works: Every team captain in the league is issued a Team Card, which is inserted into the game to input the team name, player's names, player order, and game played. Data is stored in the game until the operator transfers all the statistics to his Operator Card.

Collected statistics can be used in conjunction with Arachnid's Dartman II League Master software, which automatically calculates statistics and determines league standings, team wins/losses, and individual statistics.

Soon, collecting of statistics via telephone will be possible with a modem kit and an IBM AT compatible computer in the operator's office. It will automatically call all league machines during the off hours of the night to collect and process the data. Only one kit is needed on one *Galaxy* game per location.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Arachnid Inc., 6421 Material Ave., Rockford, IL 61132; (800) 435-8319 or (815) 654-0212; FAX (815) 654-0447.

Harley Davidson

Midway Mfg. honors a classic American dream machine with the new Bally pinball, *Harley Davidson*.

Players find themselves in a coast-to-coast, 10-city race that starts in Los Angeles and continues to Laconia, N.H., offering the chance to earn a multi-million point progressive jackpot value.

In addition, by spelling H-A-R-L-E-Y D-A-V-I-D-S-O-N, players increase a separate Harley bonus that can advance to 500,000 points or a special operator-adjustable timed speed bonus with five million point scoring.

Other features include two-ball multiball or three-ball multiball, and unlimited million point loop shots through the spinner lanes. There's also a multiple speed value Speed Trap kick-out hole that can award bonus multipliers, increased scoring, or a Speeding Ticket. Special effects, a shaker motor, and heart-thumping music complete the pinball package.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Midway Mfg. Co., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

Sergeant Major

Mayoni introduces a dual vending machine, *Sergeant Major*, that uses the toy soldier concept with bold primary colors and graphics.

Features include a 1,000 unit per side toy capacity. Operators have a choice of vending gumballs, small capsules, or rubber balls. An all-mechanical operation means the *Sergeant Major* is trouble-free. No electricity is needed, although owners may choose to add the optional battery-powered voice and LED eyes option.

Dimensions: 54'' high, 18'' deep, 20-1/2'' wide; weight, 70 lbs.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Mayoni Enterprises, 10340 Glenoaks Blvd., Pacoima, CA 91331; (800) 345-1183 or (818) 899-2488; FAX (818) 899-0152.

Clutch Hitter

Sega debuts a one- or two-player baseball video, *Clutch Hitter*, just in time for the baseball season.

Licensed from the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA), the game puts the player into the shoes of all the pros in the 26 major league teams: Nolan Ryan, Will Clark, Ryne Sandberg, Jose Canseco, Don Mattingly, Darryl Strawberry, Eric Davis, Dave Stewart, Ricky Henderson, and Ken Griffey Jr.

Players can use all the successful baseball moves, from turning the inning-ending double play to executing a squeeze bunt for the winning run. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your team is the key to victory.

Players choose from regular season play, All-Star game play, and tournament play. Game continuation is an important feature in this conversion kit.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Sega Enterprises Inc. USA, 2148 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95161; (408) 435-0201; FAX (408) 435-0294.

Pro Block-A-Shot, Super Pro

Smart Industries has designed and developed two new sports-themed redemption games in *Pro Block-A-Shot Basketball* and *Super Pro Quarterback*.

Pro Block-A-Shot Basketball is a one-on-one action game where two players interact to block, shoot, and score against the timer and each other. Players manually control basketball players through sturdy, movable parts.

Features include an adjustable game timer, LED readout, dual coin mechs, adjustable high score, and digital readout scoring system. Options include a ticket dispenser and $1/$5 bill acceptor with stacker. Dimensions: 28'' wide, 21'' deep, 69'' high.

Super Pro Quarterback is a football passing game with a moving target. It challenges players to choose from going for a field goal or attempting a touchdown pass. One or two players can compete; there are three skill game options for pro, college, and high school level that controls the speed of the moving target.

Features include adjustable timer, photoeye sensor, adjustable high score, steel frame, and top net. Dimensions: 33'' wide, 98'' deep, 117'' high (with net); Options: $1/$5 bill acceptor with stacker and bubble winner light.

Both games are enhanced by a voice audio sound system.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Smart Industries Corp., Mfg., 1626 Delaware Ave., Des Moines, IA 50317; (800) 553-2442 or (515) 265-9900; FAX (515) 265-3148.

Audio speakers

Gemini Sound Products introduces a line of speakers known as the "Rhino Series." Designed for both mobile and permanent applications, these speakers combine cutting-edge driver, crossover, and cabinet technology into a single synergetic product.

Because the Rhino Series incorporates virtually every type of driver configuration, Gemini decided to use its own proprietary driver and horn designs, with the exception of Motorola's piezo super tweeters. All cabinets are carpeted and made with heavy-duty fittings, and most models feature carrying handles and wheels for maximum mobility.

The Rhino Series includes everything from two-way units with 15" woofers and a 15" x 7" high-dispersion, super horn to a seven-way system with two 15" woofers, four piezo tweeters, and a 4" x 10" high-frequency horn.

For more information, contact Gemini Sound Products, 1221 38th St., Brooklyn, NY 11218; (718) 851-6000; FAX (718) 972-8178.

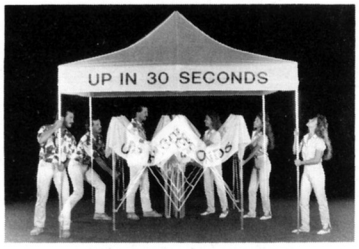
Portable canopy

KD Kanopy Inc. unveils its latest portable canopy product, the "KD Majestic." It embodies the latest innovations in fabrics, space-age materials, design, and engineering. The result: a lightweight, 48-pound canopy that fits into a carrying case similar to a golf bag. The canopy is one piece and 10 feet x 10 feet.

The KD Majestic tops are made of waterproof polyester cloth and a fire-retardant urethane coating that resists solar rays. They come in an array of colors and can be customized with any type of lettering and graphics.

The company's canopies are popular among trade show exhibitors and firms that put on promotions and special events.

For more information, contact KD Kanopy Inc., 5758 Lamar, Arvada, CO 80002; (303) 431-6508.



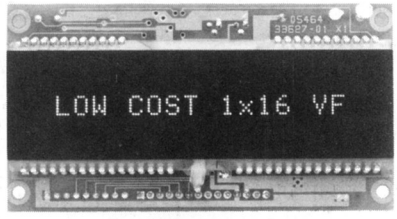
Bill changer

Drew's Industries introduces a bill changer that boasts heavy-duty construction: it has a 14-gauge steel cabinet and mounting bracket.

Other features include a Mars high-security bill acceptor with 400-bill stacker; a universal hopper with coin reserve and 1,600-coin capacity; an "out of service/out of coins" light that disables the bill acceptor; a Motorola microprocessor-controlled CPU with battery backup; a coin-counting ability with accessory bracket for easy removal; and an adjustable coin/token purchase price (it accepts 900 tokens).

The dimensions are 21" wide x 20" tall x 7" deep; the weight is 60 pounds. The bill changer is available in blue, brown, or black and costs $995 retail.

For more information, contact Drew's Industries, P.O. Box 632, Fairforest, S.C. 29336; (803) 574-0162; FAX (803) 574-7680.



Display module

The Industrial Products Division of IEE has added a new display to its "Nineties Series" line of FLIP vacuum fluorescent display modules. A microprocessor controller provides all scan, refresh, and data input/output operations.

The unit, designated Model 3601-98-016, displays one line of 16 characters in a 5 x 7 dot matrix. The characters are less than one-inch deep—.20 inches high. The bright, soft blue-green display is filterable to a variety of colors, which are comfortable for both short- and long-term viewing.

Interfacing with the host system is accomplished via an eight-bit, parallel TTL data bus. Both power and data connections use a common connector (which also provides for hardware "reset" and "busy" signals).

The unit is priced at $70 each (at 100 pieces). Availability is four to six weeks ARO.

For additional information, contact IEE, Industrial Products Division Sales Office, 7740 Lemona Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91409-9234; (818) 787-0311, ext. 418; FAX (818) 901-9046. □

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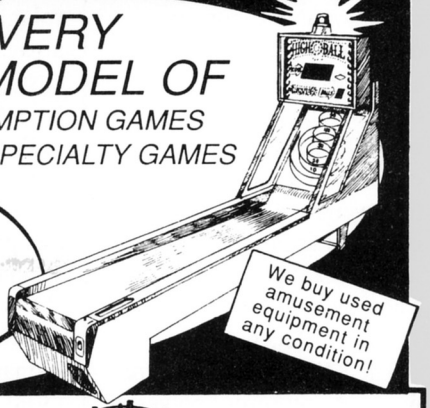

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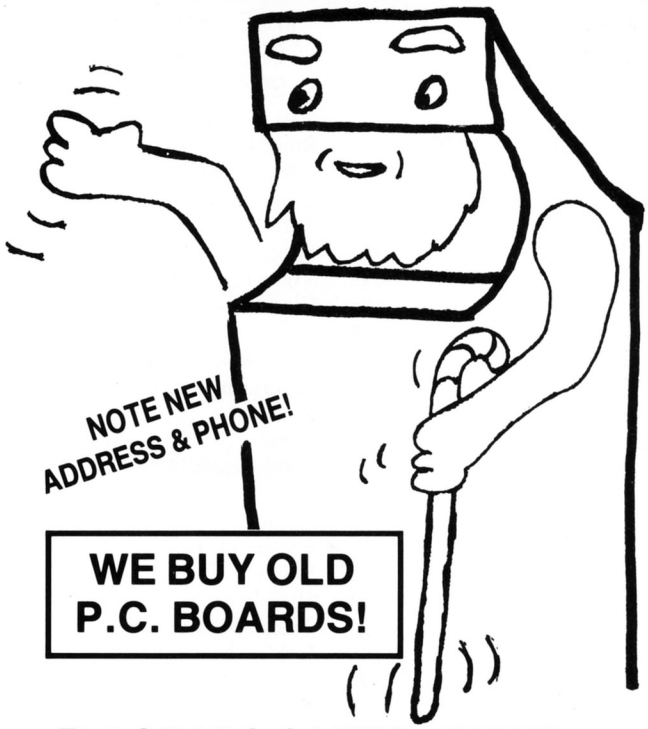

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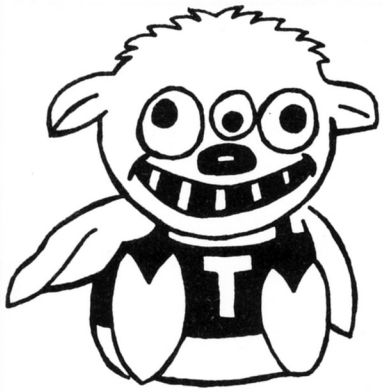

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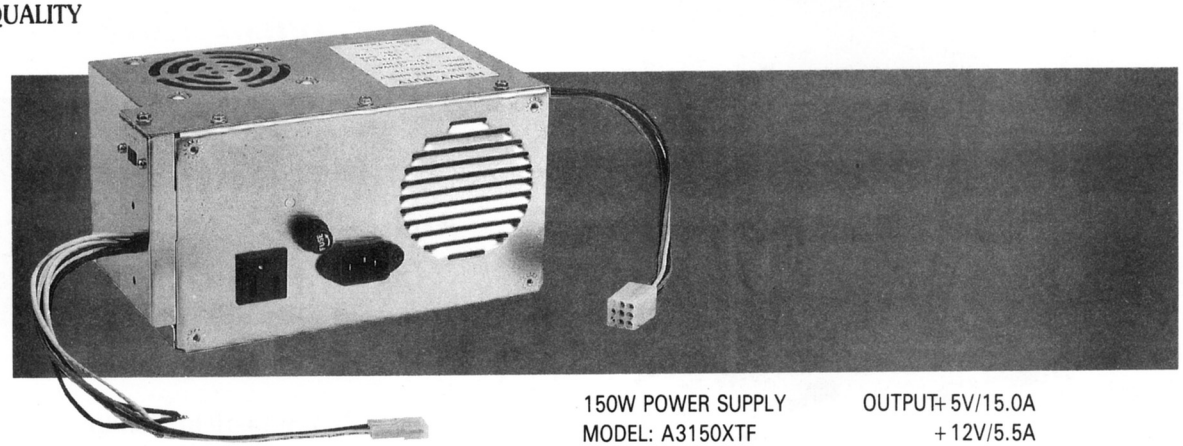

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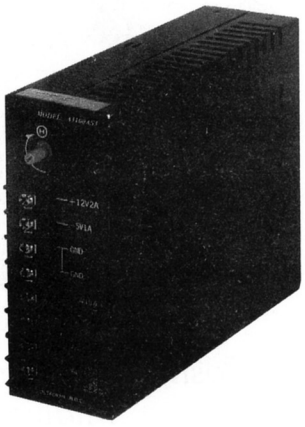

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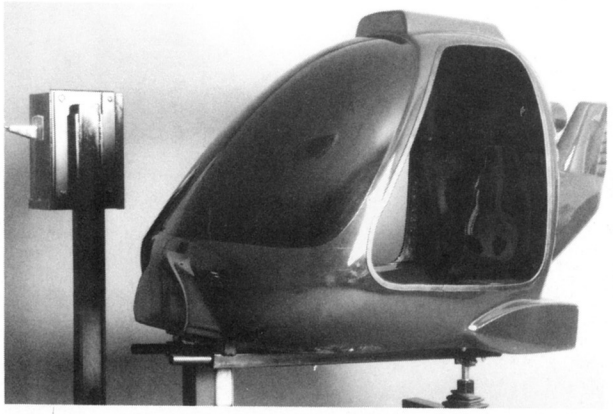

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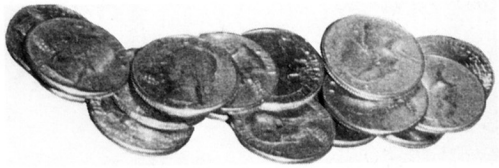

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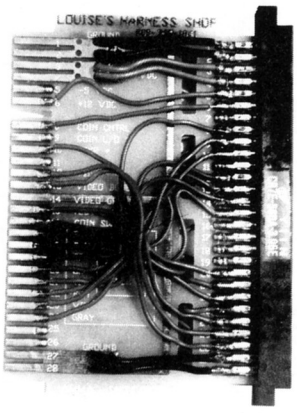

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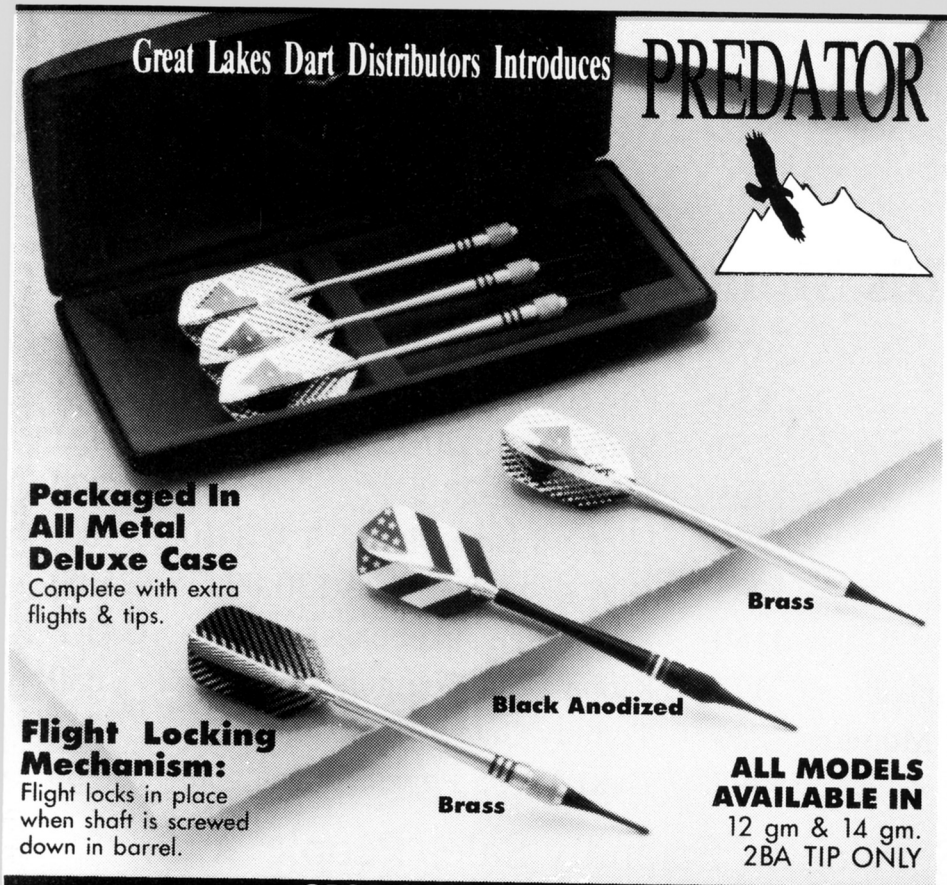

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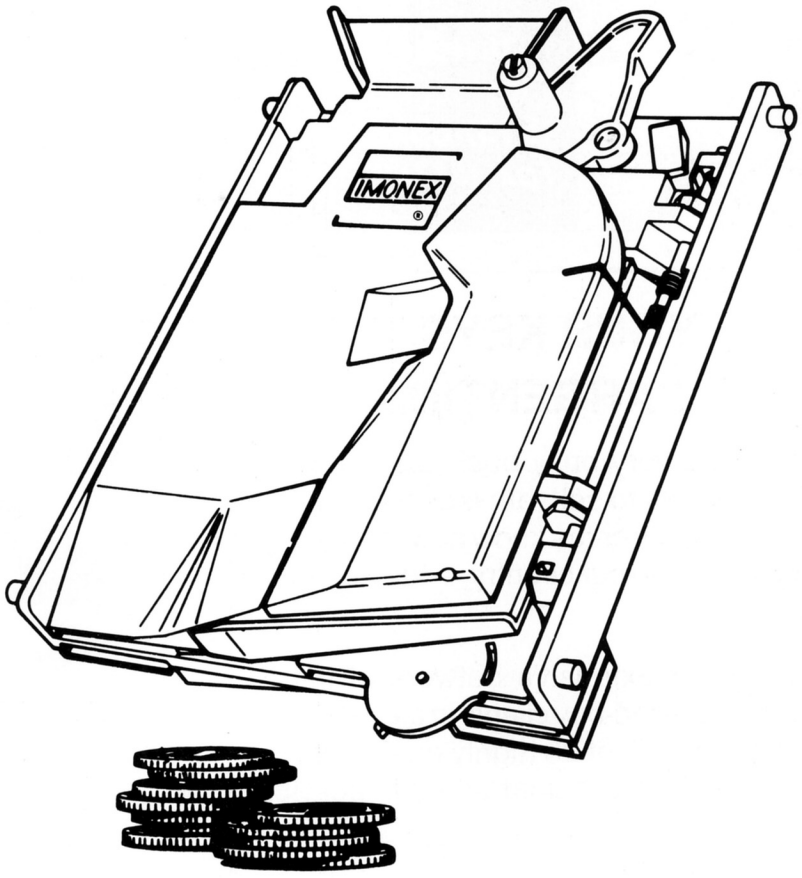

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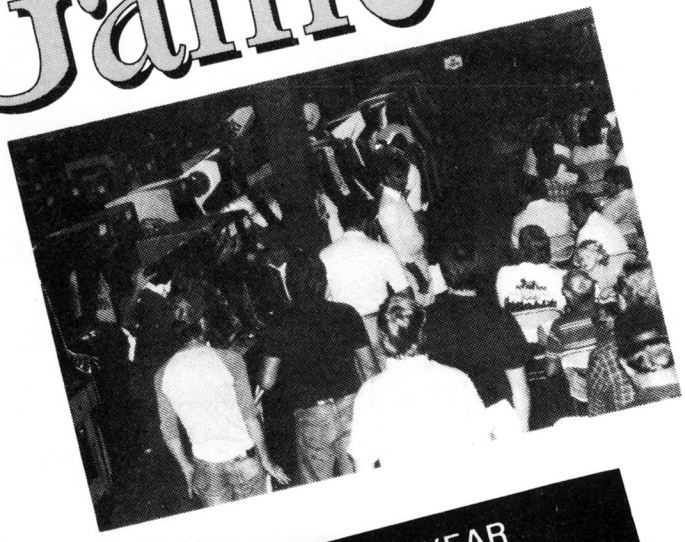

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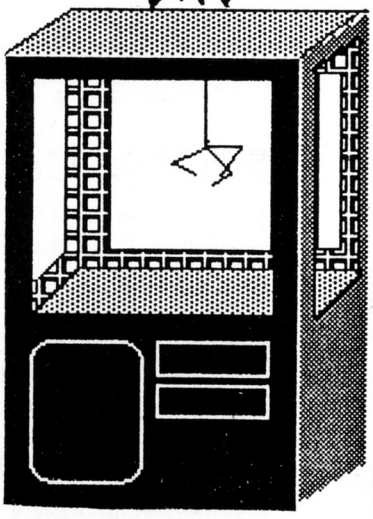

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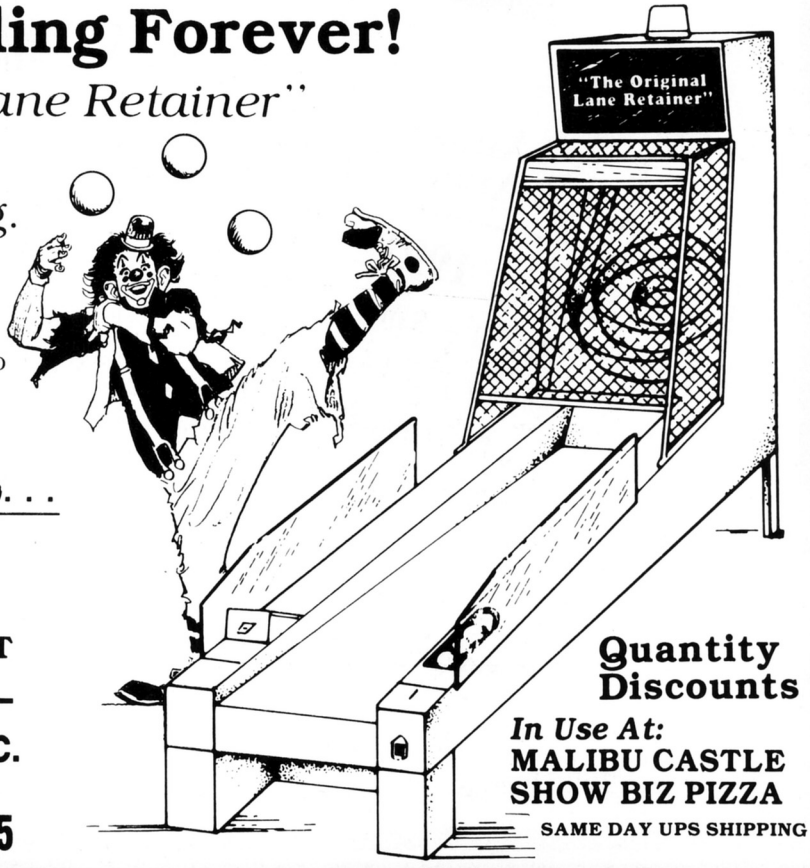

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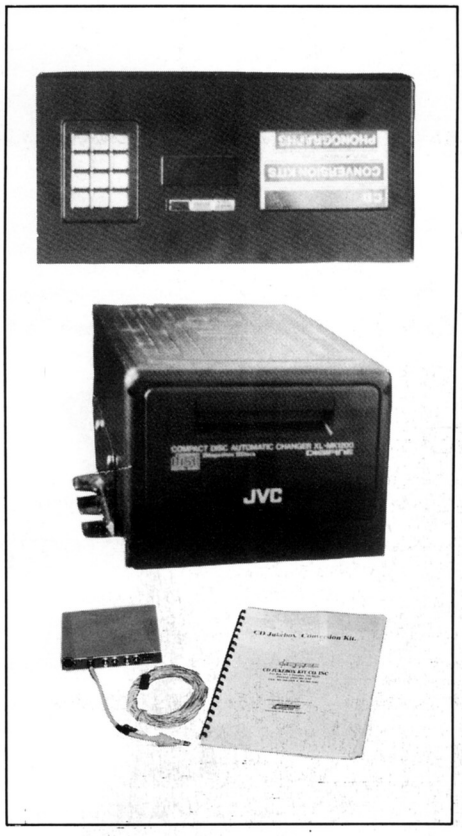

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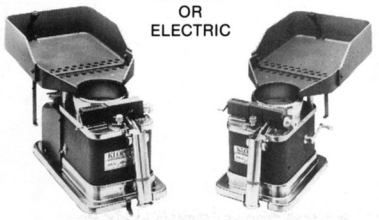

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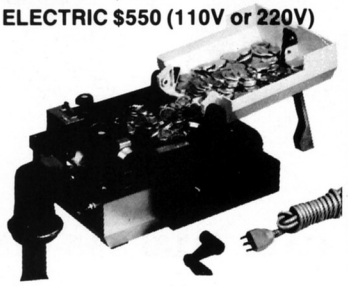

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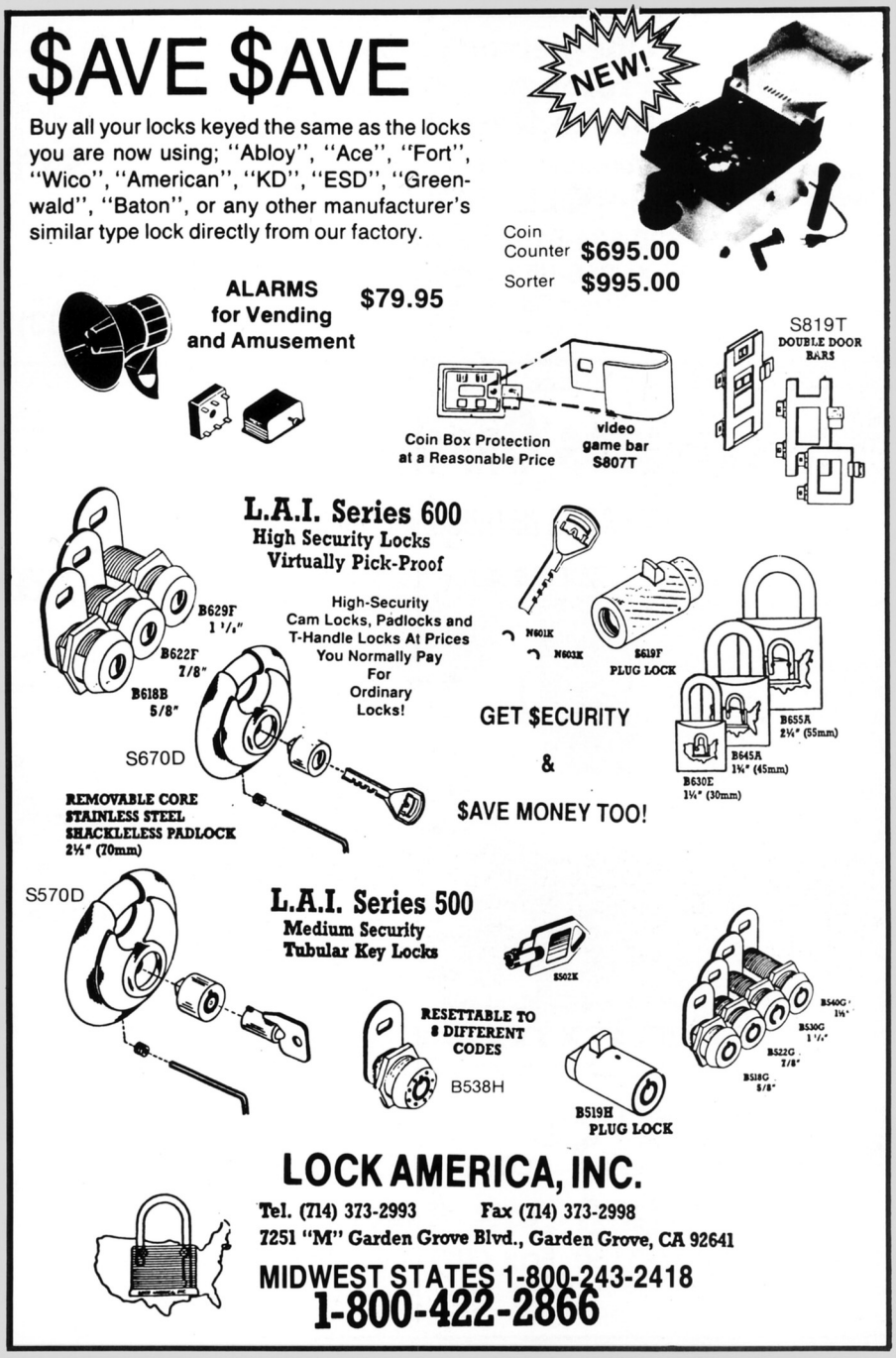

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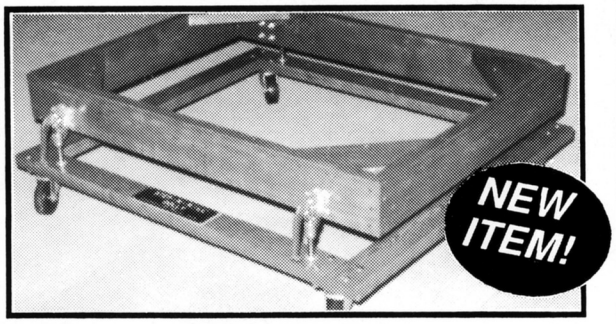

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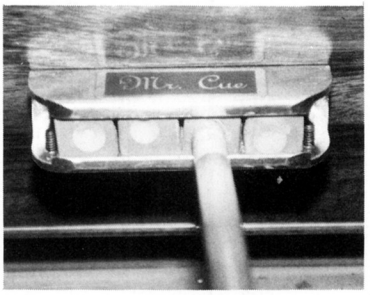

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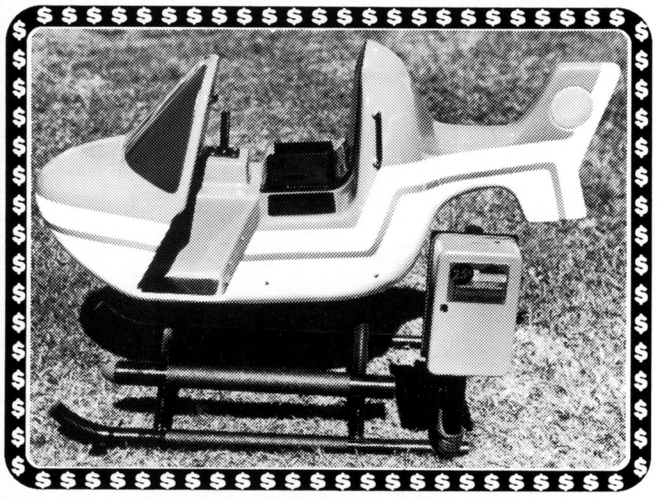

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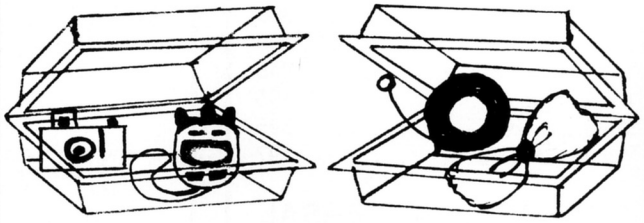

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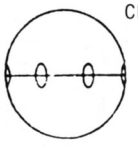

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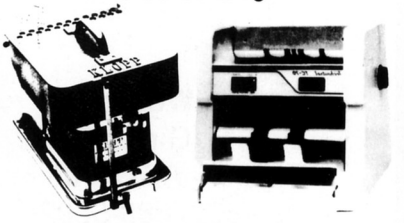

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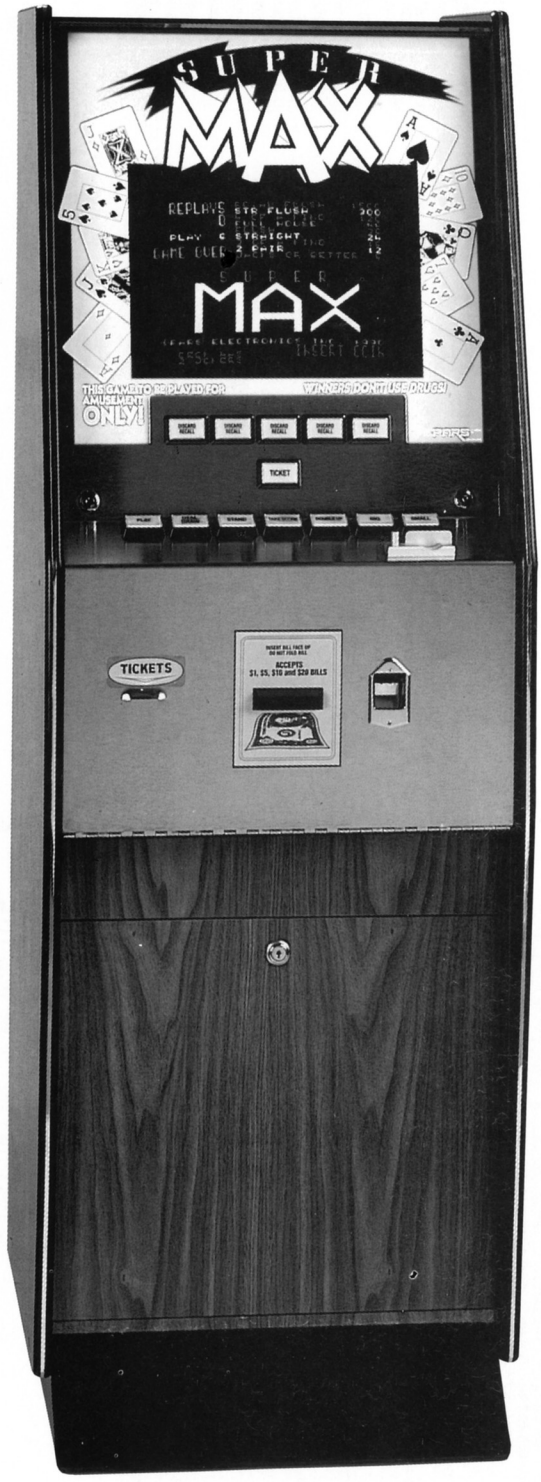

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CALENDAR

April 30-May 4
Amusement and Music Operators Association-National Dart Association (AMOA-NDA) Team Dart VI International Team Championship, Sahara Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas. Contact Joe Conway (414) 263-2444.

May 3-5
Northeast Regional Trade Show, cosponsored by AMOA-NY, NYSCMA, and AMOA-NJ, Atlantic City. Contact Sue Matterson (518) 439-0981.

May 5-9
American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) 1991 Legislative Conference, Hyatt on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Contact AAMA (703) 494-2758; FAX (703) 494-0616.

May 16-18
Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Country Inn Resort, Pewaukee, Wis. (near Milwaukee). Contact WAMO (414) 529-4704.

May 19-21
Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Government Affairs Conference, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Contact AMOA (312) 644-6610 or (312) 565-4602.

May 25-June 1
11th Annual Valley National 8-Ball League Association (VNEA) International Singles and Team Championship, Riviera Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas. Contact Gregg Elliott (517) 893-1800.

May 28-June 1
INTER-GAM '91, first annual consortium of conferences and exhibits related to gaming, Atlantic City, the tri-hotel complex of Taj Mahal, Resorts International, and Showboat. Contact the Public Gaming Research Institute (301) 330-7600; FAX (301) 330-7608.

May 31-June 1
Ohio Coin Machine Association (OCMA) Annual Trade Show and Convention, Radisson Airport Hotel and Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio. Contact OCMA (614) 486-8677.

June 20-23
California Coin Machine Association (CCMA) Annual Convention, Hyatt Lake Tahoe, Incline Village, Nev. Contact Cindy Urcan or Kathy Waldie (916) 441-5451.

July 11-13
8th Annual Billiard Congress of America International Trade Expo, Downtown Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Frank Zdy, Continental Productions (619) 278-3877; FAX (619) 268-9372.

July 19-20
Pennsylvania Amusement and Music Machine Association (PAMMA) Annual Trade Show and Convention, Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion, Pa., Contact PAMMA (800) 521-7778 or (717) 232-5322.

July 24-25
Latin American Amusement Music & Games Expo, Sheraton Maria Isabel, Mexico City, Mexico. Contact AAMA (703) 494-2758.

September 12-14
Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Expo, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Contact AMOA (312) 644-6610 or (312) 565-4602.

October 3-6
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) National Convention and Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill. Contact NAMA headquarters (312) 346-0370; FAX (312) 704-4140.

October 24-26
Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association (MCCOA) Annual Convention and Exhibit, Radisson Resort, Ypsilanti, Mich. Contact MCCOA (517) 372-2323; FAX (517) 372-4404.

October 24-26
Fun Expo, First International Family Fun Center and Miniature Golf Show, Market Center, Atlanta. Contact Bailey Beeken, show manager, Bellwether Expositions Co., (914) 923-0129; FAX (914) 762-8751.

November 13-16
International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) 73rd Annual Convention and Trade Show, Orange County Convention/Civic Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact Chuck Simanek or Ernestine Phillips, IAAPA show management, (703) 671-5800.

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This may sound like the Twilight Zone, but it could happen if AT&T and its "baby Bell" operating companies score victories in an appeals court and the halls of Congress.

It should be noted, however, that the preceding scenario is of the worst-case variety. More on that later; let me give you some background first.

Congress is interested in re-regulating the cable television industry. Senators such as Tennessee's Albert Gore believe that cable TV operators are taking advantage of their status as a monopoly, but how can they be reigned in? AT&T says it knows how. Forget holding the FCC hammer over their heads. Give them some old-fashioned competition: us.

As it stands now, AT&T's operating companies are not allowed involvement as a "content controller," i.e., they cannot provide information services. AT&T wants Congress to change this. But how, you ask, can the telephone behemoth compete with cable TV in terms of offering different programming? The answer: through fiber-optic technology, a budding form of communication that allows transmission of digital images through telephone lines. *Video* images.

According to Bob Wilbur, AMOA's government relations liaison, an appeals court has ordered the judge who broke up AT&T to reconsider part of his decision—the part concerning transmission of information services. Wilbur says there's speculation that the judge may allow the baby Bells to enter the programming arena on a limited basis.

On the congressional front, Wilbur expects cable regulation and telephone cable transmission bills to be introduced this session. The former died in Congress last year, while the latter was never formally introduced.

AMOA president Jim Trucano says there's been no indication that AT&T is interested in anything but the cable TV angle. And even if a victorious AT&T cast its gaze toward the amusement industry, who's to say it would want to leave operators trampled under foot? The increased installation of fiber-optic cables across the country could open huge new markets for operators in the 21st century, should AT&T look to them as partners in this space-aged venture.

Tennessee operator Bill Stone is a bit more leery of AT&T's intentions. He says at last year's AMOA Washington Conference, his congressman told him in no uncertain terms that AT&T wanted to get into the amusement business. Once given clearance to be a seller of video programming, AT&T could transmit music videos over telephone lines, giving locations a low cost alternative to jukeboxes. Competition for video games would be a natural progression, Stone fears.

He's encouraging operators to buy one share of telephone company stock, which would enable them to read the information sent to stockholders and get a gauge on AT&T's intentions regarding content controller legislation.

This column isn't meant to scare the pants off of operators. As was mentioned earlier, 1) AT&T still has to win in court and in Congress, 2) assuming AT&T prevails, it isn't clear that the coin-op industry would be a target for competition, and 3) even if AT&T wanted to enter our industry, it could be that it would welcome a partnership with AMOA to take advantage of operators' expertise.

As Trucano said, the last thing AMOA wants right now is a lot of angry operators making themselves visible to AT&T and the baby Bells. Coin-op could very well be a market that hasn't occurred to them yet. Don't sound off any alarms; just monitor the events as they unfold. □

Christopher Caire

Christopher Caire
News Editor

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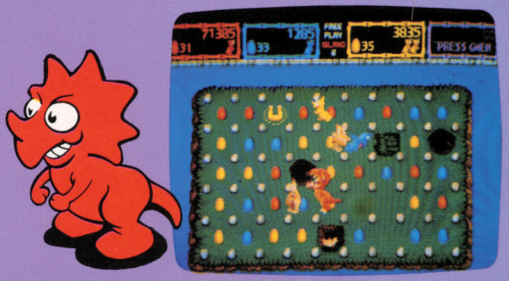

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