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Cover Story:  
Stern Pinball  
elevates  
the art of  
pinball

IAAPA Expo:  
Always  
Awesome

Year in  
Review:  
Highlights  
of 2011



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# play *"The Operators' Choice"* METER

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## 39 Year in Review

2011 was a year filled with new products, successful trade shows, and major court decisions. Take a look at the highlights of each month in our Year in Review.

## 54 Coinman: Frank Gumma Sr.

Frank Gumma Sr. is an entrepreneur and family man. He built his company, American Vending Sales, from a one-man operation to the thriving amusement business it is today.

## 69 What's Hot, What's Not

Feeling out of the loop? We've compiled a list of what's hot and what's not in the industry, the world, and the ever-expanding technological frontier.

## On the Cover

Stern Pinball continues a tradition of innovation, fun, and successful pinball games. *Play Meter* spoke with Gary Stern, President and CEO, about the company's history and latest developments.

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**P**reparing the Year in Review section in this issue (starting on page 39) allowed me to revisit the highlights of 2011, by all accounts a busy and memorable year.

The first quarter included the European Amusement and Gaming Expo (EAG) in London; *Play Meter's* State of the Industry Survey; the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Council of Affiliated States Meeting; the second successful Amusement Expo; the International Pizza Expo, the Nightclub & Bar Expo; *Play Meter's* Operator of the Year Award presented this time to Rick LaFleur of I.F. LaFleur & Son; the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Frank Gumma Sr. of American Vending Sales (AVS); and AMOA's Innovator Awards presented to Apple Industries, Coast to Coast Entertainment, and TouchTunes Interactive Networks.

The second quarter saw the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) OneShow; the National Dart Association Team Dart; Arachnid's BullShooter Finals, the Valley National Eight-Ball Association International Pool Championships and Junior Championships; and *Play Meter's* 18th Family Fun Edition.

The third quarter included the 30th Anniversary of AAMA, *Play Meter's* Video Gaming Update; the Billiard Congress of America (BCA) Expo; the International Bowl Expo; the AAMA Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala; the 10th anniversary of Raw Thrills; AMI Entertainment Network reinventing Meagtouch; the AMOA Mid-Year Board Meeting; and the TouchTunes Partners Meeting.

The fourth quarter closed out with the Global Gaming Expo (G2E); the World Waterpark Association (WWA) Expo; the 25th anniversary of Stern Pinball; the Pinball Expo; and the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo.

Also notable: historic rulings from 1) the U.S. Supreme Court in the California video game ban case, and 2) from the Supreme Court of Illinois, which upheld the Capital Improvement Plan of 2009 that included the Video Gaming Act and allowed progress to go forward in the video gaming program with operator involvement.

Along the way state associations across the country hosted annual meetings and conferences that were ideal for networking and learning from each other.

There was sadness as well as the industry lost many of its senior statesmen and other members, among them: Bert Betti Jr. of Betson Enterprises; Gordon Smart of Smart Industries; Joel Kleiman of Pioneer Sales & Service; Jon Buerkett of Melody Amusement, his wife Dana and daughter Morgan; Dr. Anita De Souza-Zimmerman (AMOA Notre Dame Program presenter); Michael Riquier of T&M Distributors; Roy Yanase of Play Mechanix; Jim Frye of Brady Distributing; Ed Yaffe of Firestone Financial Corp.; Bill Merrick of QubicaAMF; Alan Ramsay of CLM Entertainment (*Play Meter* columnist); Dave Tucker (game designer); George Karas of The Pelican Group; Frank Guerrini of Frank Guerrini Vending Machines; Robert Henderson of Namco Cyberainment; Donald Bowersox of Michigan State University (MSU), who worked with NAMA; Vince Leavey of Western Automatic Amusements; and Inez Patterson of Cool Crest Family Fun Center.

These dedicated people have left a legacy of affection and passion for the industry and they will be truly missed.

A new year awaits; let's make the most of its opportunities, work to overcome its challenges, and appreciate the bonds of friendship that are a hallmark of our industry. ▲



**BONNIE THEARD**  
Editor

**We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see.**  
**E-mail:**  
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***Drive Me Home!***

*Daily drawings for a variety of prizes will be conducted March 14-16, 2012 at the AAMA/AMOA Amusement Expo in Las Vegas. Winner need not be present!*

***Raffle Tickets are \$25 each or 5 for \$100***

For over 25 years, the Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA) has been conducting a raffle at the industry's annual trade show to support our Wayne E. Hesch Memorial Scholarship Program, which provides college students with funding to further their academic pursuits. To receive a copy of an application, contact the AMOA office.



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**S** EM 2012 is organized by People's Government of Panyu District, it is believed that SEM 2012 is destined to succeed in Gathering a long list of exhibitors and providing the most advanced and complete array of e-game related product offerings.

With leading R&D capabilities and organized machine supplying chains, the development of the e-game industry in Guangzhou is much more mature than other cities in China. Located in Guangzhou, Panyu has developed as a well-known manufacturing powerhouse of the Chinese e-game machines and related products and services; therefore, professional buyers are able to make a one-stop purchase at this district and it has become a new destination for both local and foreign professionals to buy amusement equipment. Facing the future, on the basis of its celebrated manufacturing power and continuous support from the Chinese government, Panyu is transforming itself actively and heading on the road of becoming a nationwide R&D headquarters of the e-game industry of China.

## China: Global Economic Focus Full of Business Opportunities in 2012

Chinese electronic-game industry has drawn a large amount of international professionals' attention. It is believed that SEM 2012 will be the most professional and commercially effective show among the e-game related exhibitions next spring in China.

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### Targeted Exhibitors

The exhibition is a grand assembly for all types of Chinese companies related to the e-game industry involved in such activities as manufacturing, distribution, trade, supply, retail and amusement venue operation.



### What Will You See?

In this exhibition, you will see various types of China-manufactured innovations and products including amusement machines, amusement games, theme park facilities, and fitness equipment. Do not miss this chance to make purchases.



### How to Reach Us?

Please feel free to contact us for inquiring about booth rental issues or admission tickets, your participation will definitely enrich the exhibition. For further information about the show, Please contact **Peter Lee** / +86-20-2287-1721 (Rep.)  
E-mail: [peterlee86@163.com](mailto:peterlee86@163.com)



# Always awesome IAAPA

At the Benchmark booth.



# T

he International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo is more than theme park rides, concessions, and midway-style games. The show has evolved into a major showcase of coin-op equipment and occupies a large portion of an exhibit floor that boasts 60 aisles of displays.

Industry veteran Frank Seninsky of Alpha-Omega and Amusement Equipment Management (AEM) said, "The IAAPA Expo is the most awesome industry show that's ever been created."

Following are descriptions of coin-op offerings found at this mega event.

**Adrenaline Amusements** introduced Flight Control FX and Infinity Blade FX for its TouchFX interactive multi-touch system with durable 46-inch screen. Flight Control invites players to become air traffic controllers; Infinity Blade is a sword-fighting game powered by Epic's Unreal Engine 3 technology.

**AMI Entertainment Network** showcased its reinvented Megatouch, the ML-1 next-generation multi-touch gaming system loaded with new features such as Megatouch Live (seen for the first time at any trade show); also new Ion software for 2012 (11 games); and a wide array of skins for its NGX digital jukebox.

**Andamiro USA Corp.** debuted Birthday Party, a coin drop game with a



At the Adrenaline Amusements booth.



At the Apple Industries booth.



At the Barron Games International booth.



At the Raw Thrills and Betson booth.



At the AAMA booth.

revolving playfield (reach the silver or gold stages to earn more tickets); Love Star Slim photo booth; Over the Top arm wrestling game; and Tower of Hanoi, an instant prize redemption game that features rings and a swinging arm that makes the game challenging.

**Apple Industries Inc.** introduced the Face Place Wedding Booth in a white and silver cabinet. Ideal for event planners and rentals, it can produce a wedding mosaic using the bride and groom's photo overlapped with mini photos of all who helped them celebrate. Apple also showed new Smile 2.0 software for the Sapphire that can post to Facebook and Twitter, produce a video recording, and allow the purchase of additional prints.

**Arachnid Inc.** debuted the Spinner,

a spinning dart head designed for operators. It can be set up for redemption or as a promotional item for end-of-year league banquets or as a rental unit. Also shown: new games for the Super Shuffle.

**Barron Games International** displayed its line of table games including the four-player Quad Air hockey table with LED scoring and timer on the playfield, aluminum body, and polycarbonate scratch-free playfield. For children: Happy Birds Carousel and Jungle Hoki Baby table game.

**Bay Tek Games** brought several new titles: Big Bass Wheel & Pro Jackpot with large bonus ticket payout; Chameleon Paradise single player children's redemption game; Connect 4, a big footprint game based on the family

board game; Crank It! Revolution, a two-player game with a spinning drum; and Goal Rush, an alley bowler.

**Benchmark Games** debuted Super Hoops Basketball, which features a moving rim and LED lighting that allows for three, four, and 10-point values; and Monster Drop X-treme. Also new: Roll for Gold 2, the reinvention of a classic, and the Stop It merchandiser for street locations that allows players to pass winning small prizes and continue playing for higher ticket items.

**Betson Enterprises/Raw Thrills** showcased Raw Thrills games Dirty Drivin' with 10 wild races on 14 tracks; Fast and Furious Super Cars 2 with 10 new exciting vehicles; and Super Bikes 2 with a redesigned compact cabinet. Also shown; the World Tour Tickets redemption game from Chicago Gaming; and Power Truck and Storm Racer, two racing simulators with 42-inch screens from Wahlar.



At the Brady Distributing booth.



At the CLM Entertainment booth.



At the Coast to Coast Entertainment booth.



At the Coastal Amusements booth.



At the Champion/Valley-Dynamo booth.

**Bob's Space Racers** introduced Bazooka Blast with a futuristic air gun that fires a lightweight object at stacked targets; Balloon Bust, a pop-the-balloon game that features bean bags instead of darts; Speed Bag, a new boxing game available in three heights; the Stinky Feet water game available with Mr. Duck; and Striker, which features lighted targets (similar to Strike Zone).

**Brady Distributing Co.** featured the Magica automatic self-serve ice cream/gelato machine from Carpigiani, which was shown for the first time in the U.S. The machine has been successful in Europe for several years. It's simple to operate, clean, and move due to the compact cabinet on wheels.

**Bromley Inc.** brought its Water Fallz coin drop game with adjustable bonus and coin-tray tip control, and front playfield and ticket tray access; and Racer 1 kiddie rides from LoLo Inc. available in two sizes.

**Brunswick Bowling & Billiards** featured its 16-foot Gunnison shuffleboard with optional scoring and lights, and a custom laminate overlay for traditional lanes of bowling (recently installed at

Bass Pro Shops with bowling).

**Carolina ATM Services** displayed several ATM models: Gen Mega 2500, Gen Mega GT 3000 through-the-wall unit, the Nautilus Hyosung 1800, and Hantle 4000T. The company specializes in full turnkey ATM placement.

**Champion Shuffleboard/Valley Dynamo** showcased Champion's 16-foot shuffleboard with split playfield feature along with its full line of U.S.-built table games including the Dynamo Sedona DBA pool table. Also shown: the new Short Shot child-size air hockey table with inlaid lighting, onboard sound, and ticket dispensers.

**Coast to Coast Entertainment** brought five new titles: Jackpot Extreme, a ticket redemption game with adjustable bonus and trackball in

a light-up cabinet; Prize Explosion Crane (a dedicated Stage 1 AutoClaw function crane) with rounded top header, lighting package, and back toy drop for loading; ReRave Arcade with touch screen and online connectivity for an interactive ranking network; Rock-n-Roll crane in blue or black with magnetic claw and rotating play area; and Showdown, a skill shooting game with moving targets.

**Coastal Amusements Inc.** introduced Casino Lights, a new six-player coin pusher from Harry Levy Amusement; Monkey Mania, a two-player jungle themed water race with video graphics; Spin Out, an auto racing themed redemption centerpiece that stands nearly 10 feet tall; Toy Soldier 40-inch skill crane; and Tutti Frutti



At the Creative Works booth.



At the Digital Centre booth.



At the EMBED booth.



At the Family Fun Companies booth.



At the Firestone Financial booth.



At the Green Coin Machine booth.



At the Geo Productions Corp. booth.

touch screen skill slot-themed game with fast action.

**Creative Works Inc.** brought The Game Patrol, literally a portable family entertainment center (FEC) on a trailer, available in 26-foot or 30-foot models. The interior is like a limo or party bus with air and heat that can be operated

all year long offering 47-inch screens, Xbox games, Blu-ray, and AppleTV. You can play games, watch movies, make presentations for corporate events, and even set up laser tag.

**Digital Centre America** displayed a full line of photo booths, including the Fold 'N' Go portable photo booth

that is easy to set up; The Strip Wall, a new concept that displays 12 screens of photos that can be wedding theme related; The Strip smaller version with four screens; The Mega Strip with a vertical 22-inch touch screen, two printers, caster wheels, and retractable feature for transport.

**Elaut USA Inc.** displayed its The Wizard of Oz six-player centerpiece coin pusher with attractive graphics and 10 collectable character cards to encourage repeat play. Also shown: the E-Claw crane in a variety of sizes and colors, the Carre crane, and the Knock It Off rotary.

**Falgas Industries** introduced two kiddie rides: 4x4 Safari Car, a two-seat ride with interactive game play and optional ticket redemption; and Daniel's Racing Car, a ride inspired by classic rally teams and featuring brightly colored artwork, LED lights, and realistic racing sounds.

**Family Fun Companies** highlighted



At the Injoy Motion booth.



At the ICE booth.



At the IGMP/Kalkomat booth.



At the Ideal Amusements booth.



At the InterCard booth.



At the International Currency Technologies booth.

the new Crystal Ball redemption game where players set the ball in motion with a unique handle; and Reactor, which invites players to “bounce” their coins through openings of the spinning center column to win tickets.

**Fun Industries** featured custom fun merchandisers for fundraising to bring more promotional products to the market, bring more people in the door, and make them smile. Also shown: the Extreme Cha-Ching! pachinko machine and Loop-T-Loop children’s vending game.

**GEO Production Corp.** unveiled several new titles: Rolling Balls table game, Happy Elephants Carousel, Texas Train ride, and The Hammer strength-testing game with striking graphics.

**Global VR** introduced its 50-inch-screen Frightfearland video; Blazing Angels (squadrons of WWII) upright; Loyalty Kiosk from Streak Technology



At the LAI Games booth.

that is customizable and comes with a printer or can dispense tickets. Also shown: the Marksman prize merchandiser and King of the Bill Wheel redemption game from Nickels and Dimes.

**Green Coin Machine** displayed the Virtuo digital jukebox with intelligent

search engine and Bose base box from TouchTunes Interactive Networks.

**Hurricane Simulators** brought its Hurricane-themed unit that allows users to experience the 78-mile-per-hour winds found in category one storms. From one to six people can enter at a time.



At the Laser Star Amusements booth.



At the Payment Alliance booth.



At the Shelti booth.



At the Jennison Technologies booth.



At the MEI booth.



At The Michael Angelo Auction Co. booth.

**Incredible Technologies** brought the new PowerPutt LIVE, which has six unique courses, a new daily online tournament, and is FACTS and ADWIZ LIVE compatible. The game also has stats tracking, character customization, and more. Also shown: Golden Tee LIVE 2012 with five new courses.

**Injoy Motion Corp.** featured the Dido Kart 2, a racing simulator with animal characters, HD graphics, and card system; and Project X-Pher video in which humans fight to take back earth from aliens. Also shown: Power Boat racing simulator with turbo boosts.

**Innovative Concepts in Entertainment (ICE)** introduced the Deal or No Deal Mega kit; Ice Age Icebreaker two-player bopping game in time for the new Ice Age big screen movie in 2012; Lift Mania merchandiser; Emporium crane with remote programming unit;

and Winner Every Time crane with an updated graphics package.

**Innovative FOTO** launched its LumaMagic™ technology that enables high-quality layered photo effects in an unmanned environment, as well as the Internet-enabled Triple Strip photo booth with yellow exterior (customizable) and choice of color, black and white, or sepia tone photos on three strips to tear and share.

**Interactive Games Marketing & Promotions (IGMP)/Kalkomat** promoted boxing game tournaments and the bonus prize idea in the Boxer Fire with thermal printer, ticket and capsule dispenser, Internet modem, and second bill or coin acceptor; Boxer Sexer with ticket dispenser, Internet modem, and second bill or coin acceptor; and the Spider Boxer for small locations. Other models can be upgraded to prize capsules.

**Intermatic Mfg.** displayed its Cotton Candy Vending machine that pro-

duces non-sticky cotton candy in a range of colors and flavors. The machine is also represented by Sega.

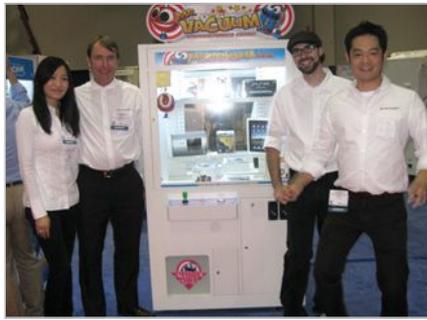
**International Currency Technologies** showed a prototype of the BCA1000 currency acceptor, which takes both bills and coins.

**Jennison Entertainment Technologies** brought its Space Ballz drop-the-ball game with enhanced software package; a new base for its Intermission game that allows for comfortable seating; and the two-player (prototype) Panda Pyromania panda/fireworks-themed coin pusher with bonus feature.

**Jolly Roger Ltd./Photo Me International** had several new products: Eco-Freddie, a recycling truck kiddie ride that fits three children and helps teach hand-eye coordination; Voyager and Simulator X small simulators that can feature customized programs; and the Air, Land, and Sea Carousel. The Photo-Me Vintage photo booth is sim-



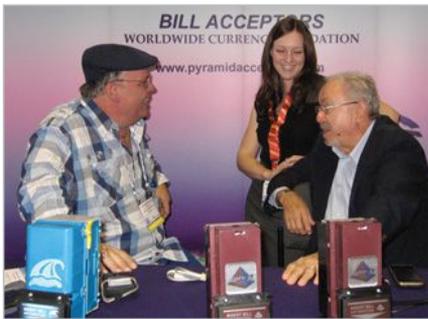
At the Namco booth.



At the Pentavision Global Inc. booth.



At the Punch Line Games booth.



At the Pyramid Technologies booth.



At the Sega booth.



At the Sacoa Playcard System booth.

ple to use and ideal for nightclub and bar locations.

**JVL Corp.** displayed the Echo touch screen entertainment system, a countertop with an HD monitor and 3D graphics processor; and the Boom Media Stream that connects to the Echo and streams on-demand music in real time. The Echo is available with a front pad or without; up to five Booms and five games can go on one Media Stream box.

**Kingdom Photo Booth** featured the Photo Prints photo booth that comes in two sections and can be transported in a car. It has a touch screen and Facebook, e-mail, and video capabilities. A new wing expansion that fits all Kingdom booths allows six people in a booth at one time.

**LAI Games** featured six new products: Speed of Light, a redemption game where players are challenged to press lit buttons to earn points; Pirate Battle, a ball-toss redemption game with a pirate theme; Rainy Days, a ticket redemption water game that challenges players to catch raindrops; Balloon Buster, a carnival-themed prize merchandiser where prizes are sus-



At the Smart Industries booth.

ended by balloons that players must pop; Stacker Wall Street, a wall-mounted Stacker game featuring four secure prize compartments with auto-locking doors; and Drop Zone, a prize merchandiser with progressive game play for players to win minor or major prizes, a "winner-every-time" option is also available. Also shown: SnapShot Photo Booth and Willie Wheels.

**Larson International Inc.** featured its Flying Rides, which come in several

themes including Jumping Jumbos, Bumble Bee Bop, and Star Command. The rides are available in both park and portable models.

**Laser Star Amusements Inc.** showed Tasty Tubes, a granulated candy-art maker. Also shown was The Prize Shoot Out, a shooting game where players compete and the winner gets a big-ticket prize. The screen displays instructions for easy game play. Pirate Shootout is a coin-op, redemption shooting gallery where the targets fire back at players with water. No attendant is required. Also shown: The Haunted Saloon.

**Moneytree ATM** showed its new countertop ATM that is shiny, black, and easy to use. The Mesquite model was also shown.

**Namco America Inc.** introduced Funky Gaters, a bopping-style kids game with a colorful cabinet and fun sound effects. Players whack alligators with a mallet when they emerge onto the playfield. A 3D theater-style version of Deadstorm Pirates was shown. Players sit in motion seats and interact with the game by shooting the screen. Also shown: PAC-MAN's Arcade Party,



At the Silent Partner LLC booth.



At the Stern Pinball booth.



At the Suzo-Happ booth.



At the Team Play Inc. booth.

Dunk Tank Prize, Barber Cut Lite, and PAC-MAN Battle Royale.

**Pan Amusements** introduced its Clownin' Around two-player water game with adjustable time and ticket payout, and the Professor Coggins shooting gallery with four guns and 14 interactive targets.

**Pentavision Global Inc.** featured several new games including DJ Max Technika 3, the latest update for the DJMAX series. The new title features over 160 songs and new "crew challenge" mode. The game relies on a network connection. Mr. Vacuum DX was created to house larger prizes and electronics. Mini Album is an updated, deluxe edition of Photo Maker. The photo machine features a 22-inch LCD

touch screen, LED lighting, and a colorful cabinet. Each session includes two mini photo albums and two sets of 14 handpicked images. There is also the option to connect to Facebook.

**PrimeTime Amusements** displayed its Harley-Davidson statue and Shark Air Hockey, a light-up air hockey table that is 100 percent waterproof. The table also features a 32-point programmable menu, state-of-the-art playing surface, electronic or mechanical coin selector, credit and score info display, and is easy to clean, transport, and assemble.

**Punch Line Games** featured Asteroid Defense, a classic air gun ticket redemption game where players shoot alien graphics. The game is family-

friendly and features no gory scenes. Flippin' Eggs is a spin-the-wheel ticket redemption game. The company's Boxer 2012 has been updated with a door in the front and more lighting effects. Also shown: Power Strike, Bulldozer kiddie ride, and the Glam-up coin-op hair straightener.

**Pyramid Technologies** brought its Apex 7000 Series bill acceptor with automatic self-calibration, dual-stage optical anti-stringing, pushbutton/LED on-board diagnostics, numerous interfaces, and optional 500-bill locking cashbox.

**QubicaAMF** had its Highway 66 mini-bowling lanes that feature a variety of games, on-lane advertising, glow in the dark lanes, multiple payment



At the Toccata Gaming booth.



At the Tokens Direct booth.



At the Trainertainment LLC booth.



At the Universal Space booth.

options, a redemption option, and other extras.

**S&B Candy and Toy Co.** showed its Smarties Crane that houses jumbo Smarties candy. The product has a Web site tied to it ([www.smartiesland.com](http://www.smartiesland.com)) where kids can compete to win a \$25,000 scholarship.

**Sega** featured Let's Go Island 3D, a 3D version of the popular ticket-redemption game; Operation: GHOST, a shooting game available in 42-inch and 55-inch models; Virtua Tennis 4, a tennis game featuring an all-star lineup of 19 players; GRID, a driving game featuring championship mode and three tiers of challenging races; Cows Might Fly, a ticket redemption game with a "seesaw controller" where

players launch a cow into space, aiming to hit as many UFO's as possible; Bejeweled, a ticket redemption game where players swap adjacent gems with one another to create lines of three of the same kind; and Candy Floss, a cotton candy machine.

**Shelti** showed its Radikal Darts system, an online electronic dartboard that has cameras, a laser beam, and sensors that allow remote monitoring and recording of the game as well as the players. The game also features a player card reader, solid, break-proof and user friendly keypad, software for leagues, and a panoramic 19-inch TFT monitor.

**Skee Ball Inc.** featured Bat Attack, a bopping-style redemption game

where players hit bats on a haunted house-themed cabinet. The more bats are hit, the more tickets the player wins. Harlem Globetrotter's Video Basketball is a kiddie basketball game with real Globetrotters. Players are challenged to shoot as many hoops as possible before the buzzer sounds.

**Smart Industries Corp.** had several new games. Push-n-Win is a new merchandiser that can fit through a standard door. The game has four merchandise coils with different values. Operators can place multiple prizes on each coil. Happy Sailor ticket redemption game has players move a cup back and fourth under three faucets that turn off and on at random, the object of the game is to fill the cup to



At the Venco Business Solutions booth.



Angry Birds were everywhere.

progress to the next level. The progressively harder game features a self-recycling water reservoir. Hollywood Photo Booth has a steel upright cabinet, is all touch-screen, and features a new printer and sparkle graphics. Also shown: Pirate's Chest, Hot Diamond, Forbidden Treasures, Candy Crane House, and Ultimate Big Punch Deluxe.

**Stern Pinball Inc.** showcased its Tron: Legacy and its Transformers pinball machines. Transformers features rapid-fire multiball with "cyber" ball lock and illuminated eyes, Optimus Prime target, and Decepticon laser-cut steel ramp. Tron: Legacy features a 3D backglass, exciting sound bites, and music from the film's original score.

**Team Play Inc.** featured several versions of the game Pirate's Booty which has game play similar to Chutes and Ladders. Players stop the light on blue arrows to progress up the path. The game comes in a ticket redemption version, a kiddie ticket-redemption version with easier game play, and a merchandiser version. The Fun Stop photo booth snaps photos of passers-by to pull them in. The booth has dual printers, all LED lighting, and a steel frame cabinet.

**Toccata Gaming International** showcased its new Progressive System with card-dispensing units and sweepstakes systems. New Derby Dollars is a

25-line penny amusement game. Also shown: Spooky Too and Down Under Dollars.

**Triotech Amusement** introduced four new films for its Typhoon library: Rat's Race, Snow Ride, Speedcoaster, and Super Jets, bringing the total to 10 films. The XD Dark Ride that debuted last year is now ready for installation beginning in 2012.

**U.S. Bowling Corp.** showed its Mini Bowling System which features automatic bumpers, the newest safety feature designed to protect small children who veer too close to the lanes.

**Universal Space** showed a variety of games including Ducky Splash, a two-player water shooting, ticket redemption game; Convoy Spinning, where players spin a steering wheel and then press a button to stop the on-screen arrow from spinning (wherever it lands determines the number of tickets they will win); and the Crystal Ball prototype, which has players pull a lever to spin a crystal ball that lands on the number of tickets they will win.

**Venco Business Solutions** showed its Nautilus Hyosung 1800 SE. The unit has upgraded features, such as a faster processor to improve transaction speeds, added security with a more robust locking mechanism, and a cash dispensing unit that provides a variety

of cash-dispensing configurations with a capacity of up to 4,000 notes. It supports three languages: English, French, and Spanish.

**VendEver LLC** featured its Cotton Candy Factory machine with stainless steel interior, LED lighting, and patented self-cleaning system. Also shown: the Evolution Ice 4 Scream! ice cream vending machine from Fastcorp LLC with internal chest freezer design, self-diagnostic features, simple programming, and vacuum robot.

**Zamperla Inc.** had an interactive car ride that players can steer. It runs along a track and is redirected if steering is off. Players also can control the speed, to an extent, with the speed pedal. The car also has shock absorbers and sensors in front. The company also showed its rollercoaster vehicle which is available in different themes.

**Zhongshan Golden Dragon Amusement** had Combat Trigun, a two-player target shooting game. Super Speed RS, a driving game; Top Speed City 3D, which features an immersive 3D screen and attractive light effects; Shopping Baby, a touch-screen, ticket redemption kiddie game, which tests players memory by showing them several items and then having them pick those same items off of grocery shelves and place them in a basket. ▲

## SAY WHAT?



# 10

second  
*interview*  
with...

**Donovan Fremin** of Delta Music in Louisiana is the current President of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA). He and his wife Amanda are in the process of renovating a Victorian era house in their hometown of Thibodeaux, La.

My first job was:

being a busboy at a restaurant.

My favorite type of music is:

rock/alternative rock.

I wish I had the nerve to:

run for public office.

One thing I can't live without is:

my family.

My favorite cocktail is:

orange vodka and ginger ale.

One word that describes my personality is:

outgoing.

The best advice I ever got was:

never ask someone to do something you're not willing to do yourself.

My favorite TV show is:

Iron Chef.

If I could have dinner with a famous person that person would be:

Prince William and Kate Middleton.

My most cherished inanimate possession is:

my golf clubs.



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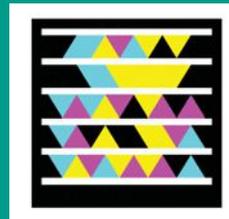
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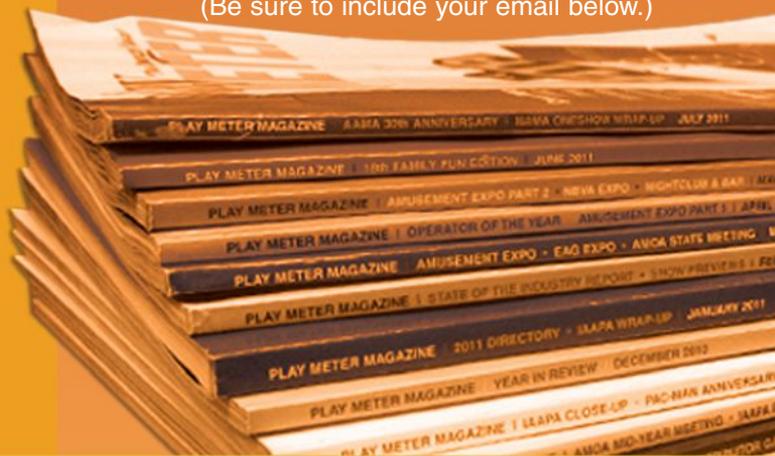


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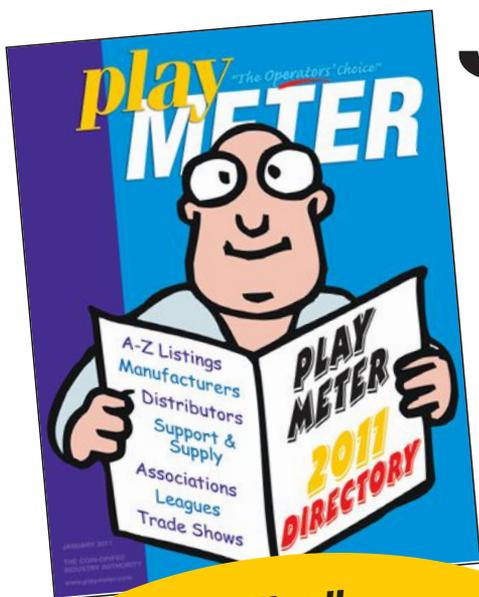
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# Year in Review

# January 2011



**COVER: DIRECTORY:** Convenient A to Z listings make it easy to find every manufacturer, distributor, support and supply company, and association in the industry.

**IAAPA EXPO 2010:** This entertainment playground, often referred to as “an idea show,” featured an extensive education program, special events, and the biggest coin-op presence to date that included the Coin-Op Pavilion sponsored by the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA).

**G2E 2010:** The Global Gaming Expo welcomed gaming industry professionals looking for the latest innovations and trends to enhance their revenue streams. A contingent of Illinois operators came to check out products in anticipation of the state’s Video Gaming Act being implemented.

**“You are exposed to so much at the IAAPA Expo. Having the coin-op games condensed in the large pavilion makes it a nice mini amusement show.”**

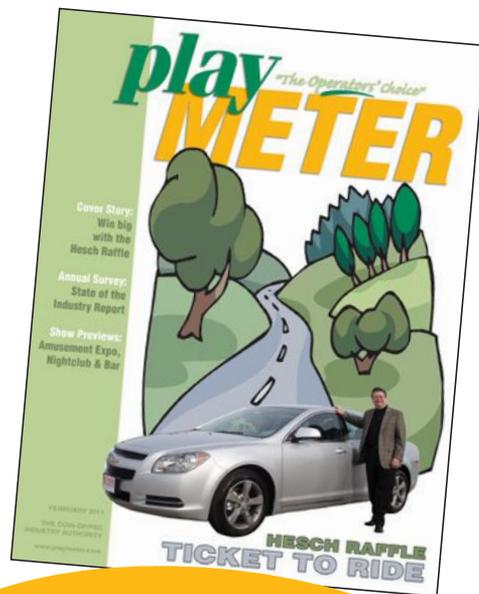
*Phil McBride, T&G Music*

**“We all have the same games and tools and we should find new ways to differentiate our company’s operations from others.”**

*Kama Reed, B.J. Novelty*

# February 2011

**COVER: HESCH RAFFLE TICKET TO RIDE:** The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) made headlines with a 2011 Chevy Malibu as the Grand Prize in its annual Hesch Scholarship Program Raffle named for the late Wayne Hesch of A.H. Entertainers, a past AMOA President who placed a high value on education. Hesch Promotion Committee Chairman Hal Williamson of Gardner’s Up North said, “It’s gratifying to see so many young people receive scholarships; the students are very appreciative.”



**“I plan to add more prize machines, video kits, better quality major prizes, and install bigger LCD screens on some games.”**

*Operator comment on survey*

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT:

Statistics on the coin machine industry are hard to come by, which is why *Play Meter’s* annual operator survey is so important. *Play Meter* has been compiling this comprehensive report since 1976, complete with candid remarks and observations.

## AMUSEMENT EXPO PREVIEW:

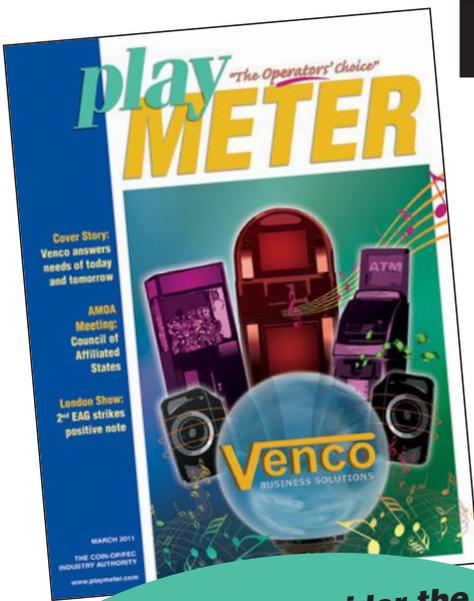
The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and AMOA

combined their resources to jointly sponsor the 2nd Amusement Expo, to be co-located for the first time with the National Bulk Vendors Association (NBVA). The goal of the expo: to be a unifying event that brings all segments of the industry together under one roof to share information and see the latest games, services, and technologies.

**“Our main competitor is Steve Jobs. The iPhone and iPad offer a lot of competition to amusements.”**

*Operator comment on survey*

# March 2011



**"We must consider the challenges that we each face and understand how we can ensure the future of our industry if we are willing to do the work."**

*Rick LaFleur, I.F. LaFleur & Son*

**COVER: VENCO BUSINESS SOLUTIONS:** John Newberry built Venco from a small route operation into a multifaceted company that has branched out into ATMs and sound contracting while expanding the amusement route. Newberry is a firm believer in the security and growth potential that comes with diversification.

**AMOA COUNCIL OF AFFILIATED STATES MEETING:**

An "education powerhouse" is the best way to describe this annual event, which drew representatives from 24 states. They came to exchange ideas, discuss common issues, and gain a perspective on happenings around the country that impact the coin machine industry.

**EAG IN LONDON**

**STRIKES POSITIVE NOTE:** The 2nd European Amusement and Gaming Expo came into its own in January in London. Companies that want to do business in the international marketplace consider the show a "must attend" "high energy" event that kicks off the trade show calendar.

**WHAT'S NEW**

**Coast to Coast Entertainment:**  
*Friction and Lucky Zone*

**Family Fun Companies:**  
*Half Court Hoops*

**ICE:**  
*Frogger*

**Namco America:**  
*PAC-Man Battle Royale*

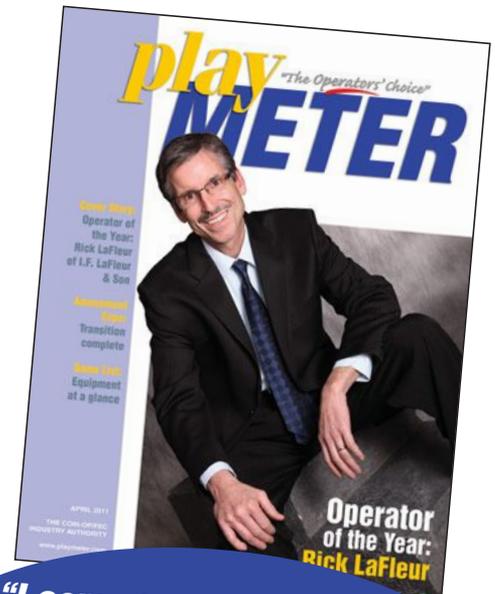
# April 2011

**COVER: PLAY METER OPERATOR OF THE YEAR:** Rick LaFleur of I.F. LaFleur & Son in Devil's Lake, N.D., is a third-generation operator with a 37-year industry career. LaFleur is a Vice President of the AMOA, active in two North Dakota associations, and has been recognized for contributions in his community. His motto: "Love one, friends to many, good will to all."

**"If I come away from the show with one or two new things that I can apply to the business, I'm doing great. The days of just rolling in the games are gone. The industry has to move forward with the newest technologies."**

*Angel Portugues III,  
All Brands Vending*

**AMUSEMENT EXPO:** The consolidation of the fall and spring industry shows into one big spring event was a resounding success, drawing 34 more exhibitors than in 2010. Education opportunities were plentiful and well attended. As an added bonus, attendees could take advantage of a one-day crossover reciprocal admission to the International Pizza Expo. Sam Zamuto of Arachnid Inc. said, "I give this show a score of nine on a scale of one to 10. It seems like there is a change in attitude. Operators are saying, 'I have to have some new equipment.'"

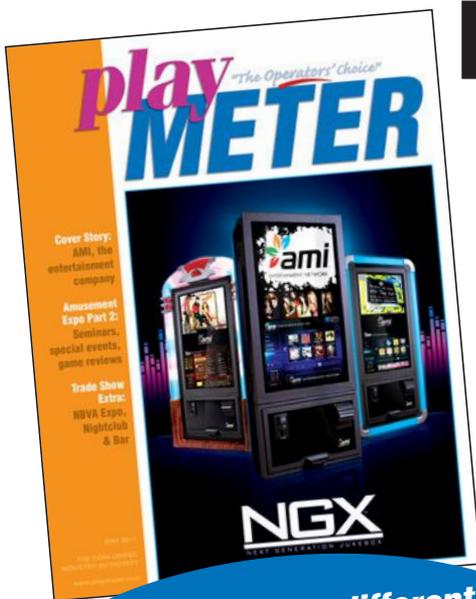


**"I come to the show to get ideas and to meet with other members of the industry. It's that exchange with other people that matters most to me."**

*Norm Farber, BFC Enterprises*

**SPRING AWARDS:** AAMA presented its Lifetime Achievement Award to Frank Gumma Sr. of American Vending Sales. AMOA presented Innovator Awards to Apple Industries for the Pix Place Photo Kiosk, Coast to Coast Entertainment for the Stage 1 Crane Controller, and TouchTunes Interactive Networks for the Virtuo Digital Jukebox.

# May 2011



**COVER: AMI ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK:** AMI Entertainment Network highlighted the new NGX next generation jukebox, which offers a host of new features and can be customized with optional skins. Mike Maas, President and CEO, said, "At AMI we are focusing on our customers. We are dedicated to building products that will help them make money. We are growing and succeeding despite the economy."

### STATE ASSOCIATIONS:

**Louisiana:** The Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association hosted a conference to update members on issues related to the state's video poker program that partners coin machine operators with the state.

**New York:** The Amusement and Music Operators Association of New York held its annual gala and fundraiser dinner to honor its Man of the Year, Charles Peitz, Founder and President of TriCorp Amusements in Somerset, N.J.

**TRADE SHOW RECAP:** More coverage was available for the Amusement Expo, NBVA Pavilion, International Pizza Expo, and Nightclub & Bar.

### WHAT'S NEW

**Adrenaline Amusements: TouchFX**

**Bio Dad & Sons: Boozelator 3001**

**Global VR: Welcome to Frightfearland**

**Smart Industries: Hot Tickets**

**Stern Pinball: The Rolling Stones**

**Team Play: Fun Stop Photos and Pirate's Booty**

**"We all have a different style in how we do business, but if we can come to the table and agree, we can get more done in the best interest of the industry."**

*Donovan Fremin, AMOA President*

# June 2011

**COVER: BARRON GAMES INTERNATIONAL:** Originality and reliability are hallmarks of this on-the-rise company that specializes in table games that are out of the ordinary. The company built its reputation on a product portfolio headlined by a series of air hockey games with a twist: redemption capability. The newest model is the QuadAir multi-player.

**"Smart phones, iPads, and other new technologies are a source of inspiration for how we adapt to the ever-changing marketplace. Years ago our fingers did the walking; now our fingers are doing the talking."**

*Dorothy Lewis, Play Meter columnist*

### 18TH FAMILY FUN EDITION:

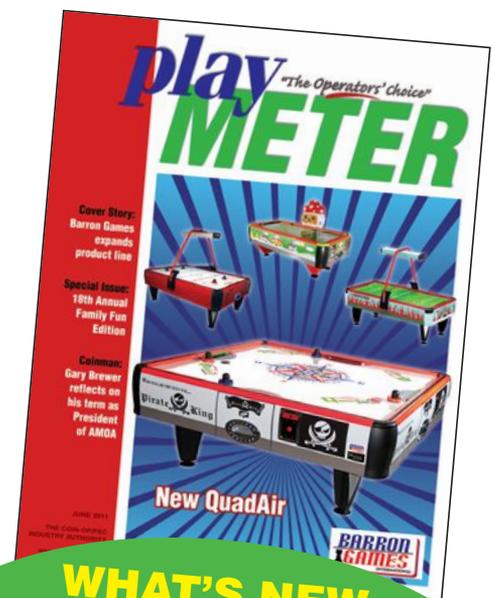
This special issue focused on one of the most popular elements of family entertainment centers (FECs): laser tag, its history, current trends, and facilities with outstanding examples of laser tag experiences.

### COINMAN INTERVIEW:

Outgoing AMOA President Gary Brewer of Brewer Amusement Co. concluded an 18-month term. During his tenure AMOA and the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA)

reached an agreement to combine each association's trade shows into one big spring event.

Brewer said, "Virtually everything we do as operators is promoting our businesses. To me, that's where state and national industry associations are vitally important."



### WHAT'S NEW

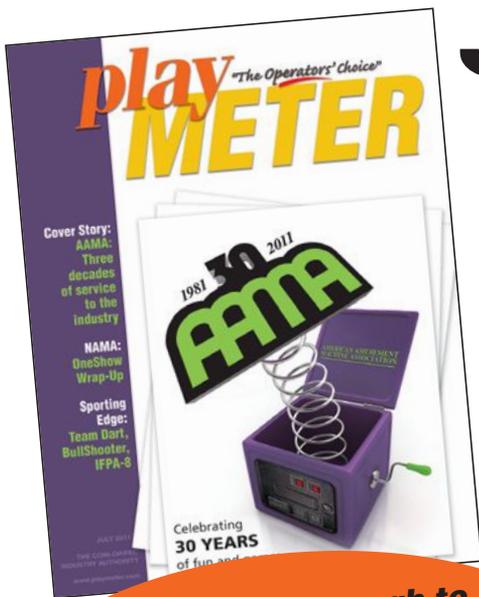
**Bay Tek Games: Boink!**

**Global VR: Marksman**

**ICE: Knock Out Punch, Hoop Troup, and Treasure Quest**

**Valley-Dynamo: Dynamo Sedona DBA**

# July 2011



**"If you care enough to take home a paycheck from the industry, you should care enough to put back a little bit. I applaud those who step up to serve."**

*Dave Courington, Valley-Dynamo*

**COVER: AAMA TURNS 30:** The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) celebrated its 30th anniversary. *Play Meter* spoke with former leaders of the association who shared remembrances from the past and reflected on the issues during their terms and the association's progress through the years.

## STATE ASSOCIATIONS:

**Maryland:** The Maryland Amusement & Music Operators Association (MAMOA) held its annual spring fundraiser in Baltimore, Md. The association's lobbyist, Kevin O'Keefe, was honored as MAMOA's Man of the Year.

**Oregon:** The Oregon Amusement & Music Operators Association (OAMOA), a 42-year-old organization, held its Annual Meeting in Portland, Ore., and drew operators from across the Pacific Northwest.

**NAMA ONE SHOW:** The national Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) held its OneShow at McCormick Place North in Chicago and showcased everything new in the vending, coffee service, and foodservice management industry and broke attendance records in the process.

## WHAT'S NEW

**Betson:** **Dance Dance Revolution X2 and World Tour Tickets**

**ICE:** **The Price is Right Shell Game**

**Incredible Technologies:** **PowerPutt LIVE (coming spring 2012)**

**Sega Amusements USA:** **Sonic and Sega All-Stars Racing Arcade**

**Stern Pinball:** **TRON: Legacy**  
**Valley-Dynamo:** **Short Shot**

# August 2011

**COVER: ECAST INC.:** Since being honored with an AMOA Innovator Award in 2008 for the EQ digital jukebox, the company has improved, refined, and enlarged the capacities of the EQ, culminating in the Juke 4 software and a Social Media Bundle with benefits for operators and locations.

**COINMAN:** Marshall Kohtz, League Coordinator for Valley Vending Service (VVS) of Cozad, Neb., began his coin-op career in 1976 running qualifier pool and foosball tournaments. Kohtz spoke about the effects of the economy on leagues and shared his Top Ten tips for tavern league coordinators.

## HISTORIC RULINGS:

■ The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that California could not ban the sale or rental of violent video games to anyone under 18. The majority opinion stated, in part: "California's effort to regulate violent video games is the latest episode in a long series of failed attempts to censor violent entertainment for minors."

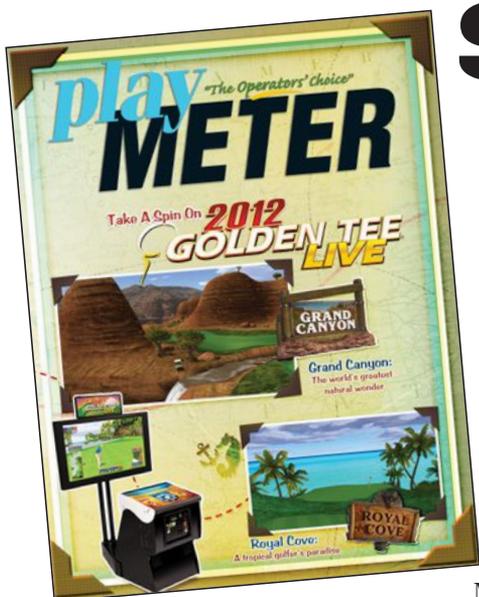
■ The Supreme Court of Illinois upheld the Capital Improvement Plan of 2009, which included the Video Gaming Act authorizing a legalized video gaming program that partnered the state with coin machine operators. Progress on the video gaming program had been in limbo pending this decision.

**STATE ASSOCIATIONS:** Operators gathered for annual meetings held by the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA), the Minnesota Operators of Music & Amusements (MOMA), and the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO).



**WHAT'S NEW**  
**Andamiro:** **Winners' Cube Deluxe**  
**Elaut:** **The Wizard of Oz**  
**LAI Games:** **Snapshot Photo Booth with Social Media**

# September 2011



**COVER: INCREDIBLE TECHNOLOGIES:** The classic game of Golden Tee received its new courses update for Golden Tee LIVE 2012. As a bonus, all 35 courses in the game's history are now available for play. Incredible Technologies also released its "Best Practices" guide for contests, promotions, and leagues.

**VIDEO GAMING UPDATE:** *Play Meter* looked at the progress in Illinois and provided an update on mature programs in Louisiana, Montana, South Dakota, and West Virginia. The Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) began issuing licenses to manufacturers and distributors.

**STATE ASSOCIATIONS:** The Michigan Coin Machine Operators

Association (MCMOA) held its Annual Meeting and Golf Outing in Bath, Mich. The Amusement and Music Operators of Texas (AMOT) offered a full agenda to attendees at its Annual Convention in San Antonio, Tex., which included exhibits and a legislative session.

**BCA EXPO:** The Billiard Congress of America (BCA) hosted its International Billiard and Home Recreation Expo in Las Vegas with products and services from 100 exhibiting companies.

**BOWL EXPO:** The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) hosted a Coin-Op Pavilion at the International Bowl Expo in Grapevine, Texas, and added a Distributor Sales and Information Table to help educate and assist attendees.

## WHAT'S NEW

**Andamiro: Dolphin Show**  
**Incredible Technologies: Golden Tee LIVE 2012**  
**Injoy Motion: Dido Kart 2 and Project X-Pher**  
**Smart Industries: Hi-Ti Printer for Hollywood Photo Booth**

# October 2011

**COVER: INJOY MOTION CORP.:** Injoy Motion makes it possible for players to race powerboats, fly spaceships, maneuver World War II tanks, and drive designer cars—all activities that are immersive, interactive, and definitely not something that can be duplicated at home.

## WHAT'S NEW

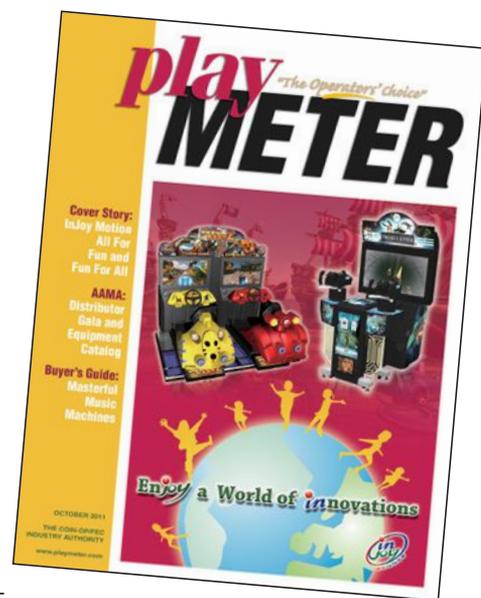
**AMI: Megatouch 2012 Ion Domestic Software and NGX Smart Skins**  
**Barron Games: QuadAir**  
**Digital Centre: Party'N'Go**

**COINMAN:** Mary Lavine of Bullseye Inc. in Madison, Wis., is a progressive operator with a portfolio of equipment and services for pool, darts, foosball, jukeboxes, sports video games, and more. She believes in promoting equipment, educating bar owners, using social media, and spicing up league programs to add excitement.

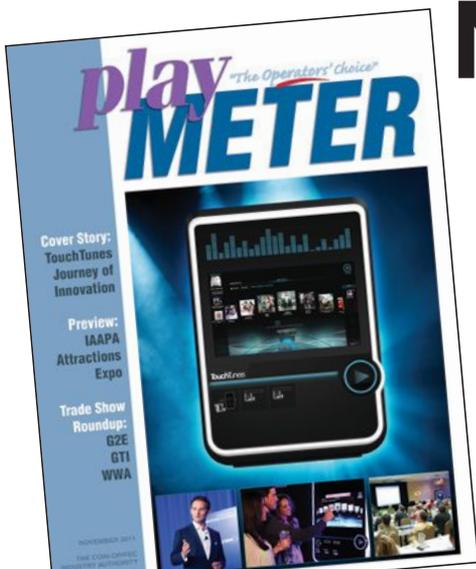
**AAMA ANNUAL MEETING AND DISTRIBUTOR GALA:** The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) held its Annual Meeting in Lincolnshire, Ill., and concluded with its Distributor Gala where new products were shown for the first time. John Margold of AMI was elected to a two-year term as Chairman of AAMA; he also received the Joe Robbins Award. The President's Award was presented to Rich Babich of Game Exchange of Colorado.

**RAW THRILLS:** Raw Thrills celebrated its 10th anniversary with a night on Chicago's Leading Lady cruise boat. CEO Eugene Jarvis said, "We're putting our blood, sweat, and tears into trying to make better and more reliable games with more player appeal."

**STATE ASSOCIATIONS:** The Missouri Amusement and Music Operators Association (MO-AMOA) held its Annual Meeting in Osage Beach, Mo., which focused on issues such as video gaming and smoking bans.



# November 2011



**COVER: TOUCHTUNES INTERACTIVE NETWORKS:** TouchTunes, the company that changed the jukebox genre with the first digital downloading jukebox 14 years ago, continues to innovate the music experience in our social/mobile world with products such as the Virtuo Smart Juke.

**AMOA MID-YEAR BOARD MEETING:** The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) held its Mid-Year Board Meeting in Savannah, Ga., which included committee meetings, social events, and the naming of principal officers and new class of vice presidents to take office in March 2012 during the Amusement Expo.

**IAAPA PREVIEW:** Fresh ideas and new equipment are hallmarks of this mega event, which also features an extensive education program with tracks for specific areas of interest, such as family entertainment centers (FECs).

**AMI REINVENTS MEGATOUCH:** AMI Entertainment Network launched its ML-1 and Megatouch Live with a simulcast presentation, "Live with AMI, a Virtual Trade Show," which was streamed to distributor offices across the country.

**GLOBAL GAMING EXPO:** The Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas welcomed an estimated 26,000 attendees who came to see the latest products and services for the gaming world.

**TOUCHTUNES PARTNERS MEETING:** TouchTunes Interactive Networks held its 2nd Partners Meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. The meeting focused on new opportunities for revenue growth: the Virtuo karaoke and Virtuo photo booth applications.

## WHAT'S NEW

**AMI: ML-1 and Megatouch Live**  
**Coast to Coast Entertainment: ReRave Arcade**  
**Laser Star Amusements: Tasty Tubes Factory**  
**Mega Mania Diversions: Snap-Back Shuffleboard**  
**Stern Pinball: Transformers**

# December 2011

**COVER: STERN PINBALL:** Stern Pinball celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. Gary Stern, President and CEO, reflects on company history, current successes, design philosophy, game appeal, and the Pinball Expo. The list of pinball titles from Stern could fill a museum.

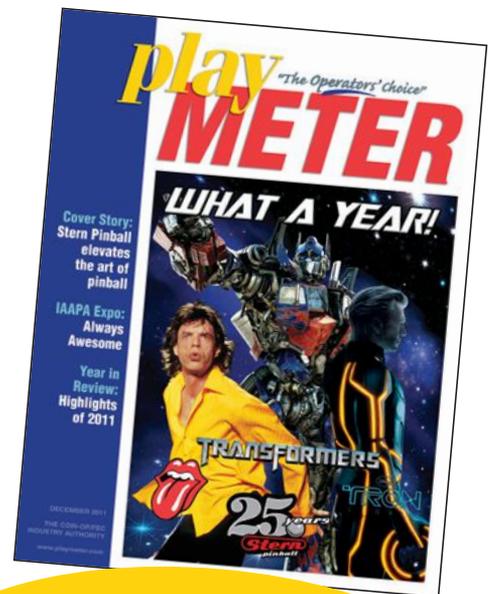
## WHAT'S NEW

**Andamiro: Tower of Hanoi, Over the Top**  
**Coast to Coast: Jackpot Extreme, Prize Explosion Crane, ReRave Arcade, Rock-n-Roll Crane, Showdown**  
**Falgas: Daniel's Racing Car, 4x4 Safari Car**  
**Incredible Technologies: Power Putt LIVE 2012**  
**LAI Games: Balloon Buster, Drop Zone, Prize Battle, Rainy Days, Speed of Light, Stacker Wall Street**  
**OK Mfg.: Captain Claw, Gumball Falls**  
**Pentavision: DJMAX Technika 3, Mini Album, Mr. Vacuum DX**  
**Sega: Let's Go Island 3D**  
**Skee-Ball: Bat Attack, Harlem Globetrotters Video Basketball**

**COINMAN:** Frank Gumma Sr. of American Vending Sales (AVS) has devoted 55 years to the coin machine industry, starting with a small storefront in Chicago and building the company into one of the most respected distributors in the Midwest.

### ALWAYS AWESOME IAAPA:

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo in Orlando was the mega event of the year, with an ever-increasing coin-op presence in the Coin-Op Pavilion sponsored by the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and elsewhere on the exhibit floor. ▲



*"I firmly believe that we should always take care of the mother ship. Gaming will be a nice surge in business, but our main amusement business will continue."*

*Frank Gumma Sr.*

## Creative Works installations

Invasion Laser Tag in San Marcos, Calif., recently opened its doors to the public. This is the only laser tag location in North San Diego County and while boasting a 5,000-square-foot arena, the facility can accommodate groups of almost any size.

The arena was designed and installed by Creative Works Theme Factory. Creative Works coordinated the laser tag project and worked closely with the laser tag equipment vendor Laserforce to ensure the system and the battle-themed arena performed cohesively.

To help achieve this, giant 14-foot battle droids were placed at either end of the arena, housing the electronics for the laser tag bases. Crumbling walls create a labyrinth through the space station, while airborne droids fly overhead, surveying the landscape.

The most prominent 3D prop is the Energy Pulse Generator. This 16-foot glowing tower sits at the middle of the arena and acts as a landmark for players to navigate during the game. The pulsating lights inside the prop change colors during the game, creating a great visual effect in the arena.

The theme even spills into the lobby as Kevin Caster, Owner, had the Creative Works artists paint murals representing the interior of a space station. This all-encompassing theme work immerses guests into another world, allowing the imagination to run wild.

On the other side of the country, Creative Works recently



helped in developing a unique Lazer Frenzy attraction. Lazer Blaze has been an icon in the Louisville, Ky., area since it opened over a decade ago. Over 100,000 guests have been to the facility over the years.

During the past five years, Owner Jack Turner has contracted the company to install a Cosmic Golf course and provide theme work for his

lobby, party rooms, and laser tag arena.

In order to keep Lazer Blaze ahead of the competition, he wanted to bring the successful Lazer Frenzy attraction to his site, but he wanted a different twist that no other location has seen. The team went back to the drawing board and designed a custom Lazer Frenzy laser maze attraction they dubbed "The Qube."

This unique footprint is about 256 square feet, larger than most mazes, and has a unique pulsating laser tower in the center.

Rather than the back and forth action of the standard Lazer Frenzy attraction, this new design requires players to move around the tower in a circular fashion while avoiding the lasers that fan out in every direction.

For more information about Invasion Laser Tag, call (760)571-9191; Web ([www.invasionlasertag.com](http://www.invasionlasertag.com)). For more information about Lazer Blaze, call (502)895-3462; Web ([www.lazerblaze.com](http://www.lazerblaze.com)).

## FEC comes to Surprise, Ariz.

Surprise, Ariz., is getting its first bowling and family entertainment center (FEC) next spring. According to the *Tuscon Citizen*, Uptown Alley, a Virginia company, plans on opening a 60,000-square-foot facility that will include bowling lanes, a climbing wall, laser tag, arcade, and restaurant.

Surprise Community and Economic Development Director Jeff Mihelich told City Council members, "The concept they have is more than just bowling. They want to make something for all ages with a particular emphasis on teens."

The idea of opening an FEC has been a popular one in Surprise for quite some time. A survey completed this summer found that a bowling center was the second-most requested type of business in Surprise.

Steve Uphoff, the developer behind the project, said that Uptown Alley would create a destination center and "Disney experience" for all demographics. The business is expected to generate 75 full and part-time jobs.

For more information, call (623)222-1422; Web ([www.surpriseaz.gov](http://www.surpriseaz.gov)).

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George Smith, President of Family Entertainment Group LLC, USA.

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## Resort to add indoor FEC in the Smokies

Following a spring and summer tourism season that resulted in record-breaking attendance numbers at Wilderness at the Smokies resort, the Southeast's largest indoor and outdoor waterpark announced that it is about to get bigger. Considerably bigger.

Wilderness at the Smokies resort recently began construction of its new "Adventure Forest" indoor park, literally doubling the amount of indoor space the resort provides for its guests. Currently, the Wild WaterDome indoor waterpark provides seven acres of indoor water attractions for visitors, and the addition of the new Adventure Forest family entertainment center (FEC) will bring the total amount of indoor, year-round fun at Wilderness at the Smokies to 14 acres.

"Unlike our other attractions at Wilderness at the Smokies, the new Adventure Forest will be a 'dry' park," said Steve Cruz, General Manager. "It will feature a three-story ropes course, a multi-level enclosed laser tag arena, bowling, black-light mini-golf, a 7,000-square-foot arcade, a 'Laser Maze,' a 25-foot spring ride, special birthday party rooms, another



restaurant and lounge, plus other attractions and activities that do not involve water. All of it is indoors and open year-round."

Unlike the other attractions at Wilderness at the Smokies, Cruz said the new Adventure Forest would be open to the general public periodically for special events. Currently, all of the amenities at Wilderness at the Smokies are only open to resort guests.

In 2009, the resort opened its second multi-million dollar outdoor waterpark, Lake Wilderness, featuring the Cataloochee Creek Adventure River, the Wilderness Rapids Wave Pool, an 18-hole miniature golf course, a poolside restaurant, and plush cabanas. In June 2011, Southern Living listed Wilderness at number two on its list of the nation's "Ten Best Pools" and just two months later, Wilderness at the Smokies resort was named one of the "Top Three Waterparks" in the nation by Aquatics International.

For more information, call (877)325-9453; Web ([www.WildernessAtTheSmokies.com](http://www.WildernessAtTheSmokies.com)).

## Timezone store opens in Victoria

Timezone Australia has officially launched its flagship store at Northlands shopping centre in Victoria, Australia.

The response from visitors was one of excitement and enthusiasm. Many parents visited Timezone in their youth and were happy to be able to bring their kids in for a fun experience.

Over 200 competitors registered to play Hot Shot Shoot Out basketball and Sega Classic Racing, while hundreds more received free cotton candy and double dollars on Powercard loads when visiting the store during the Grand Opening weekend.

Prizes included a Hot Lap for the winner of Sega Classic Racing and four tickets to a Melbourne Tigers Basketball game for the winner of the Hot Shot Shoot Out basketball comp.

Teams of roaming promotional staff dressed in flashing laser tag gear attracted a lot of attention to the new TZLAZER laser tag arena.

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



## Landmark installs Embed technology



**Embed**, a provider of debit card and point of sale systems for the amusement

and family entertainment industry, has completed the successful rollout of its systems throughout the **Landmark Group's Fun City Operations** in the Middle East region.

Following a competitive supplier evaluation process and successful trial of Embed Systems in two initial Fun City sites in late 2010, the Landmark Group has now rolled out Embed Systems into 12 Fun City sites throughout the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

The rollout of systems has been carried out at a frantic pace with seven of the sites converted over to Embed in August alone. All system installations were carried out with a minimum of fuss and resulted in no disruption to normal store trading.

A total of almost 2,000 Embed HD Color-Glo swipe readers using Embed's wireless-at-the-game technology have been installed throughout Landmark's operations. All stores in the United Arab Emirates are connected together through a centralized management service which provides a capability for globalized control of games, prize merchandise, and the roaming of customer cards across the store network.

Head of Landmark Leisure, Silvio Liedtke commented, "We chose Embed because of the superior depth of features in its product and for the high level of service they can provide us via their Dubai-based office and support team. We have some big development plans for Fun City and we needed a technology partner that would be there to support our growth plans going forward."

For more information, call +44-7906 506969; Web ([www.embed.com.au](http://www.embed.com.au)).

## iPlay America Grand Opening

**iPlay America** and **Encore Event Center**, a one-of-a-kind, indoor theme park, entertainment venue, and event center in Freehold, N.J., officially opened its doors to the public on Nov. 11.

iPlay America and Encore Event Center featured free fun and activities for guests of all ages including a balloon artist, an airbrush tattoo artist, a NASCAR racing simulator, a Monmouth Country fire truck, Danny iPlay's custom Hummer, and a number of fun giveaways and treats from Centra State Fitness Center, iPlay America, and Encore Event Center.

Inside the 115,000-square-foot theme park the public experienced an exciting variety of games, rides, and attractions, including indoor go-karts on the banked "iPA Speedway," a multi-sensory 4D movie-motion theater, Cosmic Battle two-level laser tag, Spin Zone bumper cars, boardwalk-style rides, a variety of midway games, and mini bowling lanes, along with more than 200 modern and classic video games in a massive, state-of-the-art arcade located in the heart of iPlay America.

Guests enjoyed a selection of traditional boardwalk rides suitable for all ages. Younger children enjoyed "Just iKidz," a modular play area. The redemption counter was stocked with prizes for all ages, like name-brand electronics, gaming consoles, and high-end sporting goods.

iPlay America has a variety of dining options, no matter what you are craving. Guests can enjoy a gourmet pizza fresh from the oven at City Square Grill.

For a quick bite, head over to CSG Express, pick up a sandwich or salad, and get right back into the fun of iPlay. Guests can enjoy a hotdog, funnel cake, or fried Oreos at Sonny's. Mixx has soft-serve frozen yogurt and Broadway Sweets has an unbelievable variety of candy.

For more information, call 732-577-8200; Web ([www.iplayamerica.com](http://www.iplayamerica.com)).

## Red Zone Laser Tag and Games commissions Creative Works

**Creative Works** recently traveled to Columbus, Ind., to do a paintwork project for **The Red Zone Laser Tag and Games**. This entertainment facility had its grand opening in October.

By the time the Battle-themed paint project was finished, Terri Nowling, Owner, was pleased with the final product. "The Creative Works staff did a great job on-site," she said. "We couldn't be happier with the results."

The feeling was mutual with Creative Works, and they were pleased to help create the first laser tag center in Columbus. "Terri had a clear vision to provide a quality laser tag experience for her community," said Kimberly Schilling of Creative Works. "She and her family put a lot of time and effort into creating a fun and inviting center for families in the Columbus area."

For more information, call (317)834-4770; Web ([www.thewoweffect.com](http://www.thewoweffect.com)). ▲



# Parties, pizza, points, and more!



Jim Chapman



Richard Oltman

*Think outside of the box to attract new customers and keep your regulars satisfied.*

→ **Tip one:** We are having great success with using M&M licensed products in both our showcases and on our redemption wall. The great thing about this item is that both the kids and their parents play for it. It also helps to teach kids how to save for a great prize. We hope that each time they use it they will think of where they won it.

→ **Tip two:** This is an oldie but goodie: Guess how many points are in the container?

You can use points, jelly beans, buttons, small 27mm super balls, or even a wheel barrel full of tickets! Use your imagination to build a fun filled contest.

This promotion could be used to capture more e-mails and Facebook friends, tickets (have them guess for 100 tickets), or you could even use this

At one local school here, a teacher spends a lunch period with them once or twice a month to get them to feel better about themselves and let them know they are loved. You could donate a slice or two of pizza to each child for the lunch with their teacher.

That way you can make a difference in a child's life, show your location in a good light, and you will feel great knowing you brought a smile to a child's face. We have had great success with this small act of kindness. More kids and teachers learned about our locations, which brought us more customers.

If pizza is not your strong suit then go to Subway and bring in a healthy sandwich. The key here is to do something a bit different and make an impact.

→ **Tip four:** Want to increase your birthday party business? Make sure your host/hostess hands out your birthday party brochure to every parent that comes in for a birthday party.

I noticed recently that our host/hostess are on target with our "bounce-backs" for every child at the party but they were not handing out party brochures to the parents. This is a great opportunity to reach out to all those parents whose kids had a blast at your party. You may even want to offer a small discount if they book their party that day!

I hope these tips help you. Feel free to adjust these ideas to work best for you and your location. ▲



Guess how many points.



M&M display

as a way to have your customers donate tickets for prizes like iPads for their schools. This is a great way for the parents to help their schools earn tickets to buy supplies for their classrooms.

→ **Tip three:** Having trouble getting into the good graces of local schools? You could try a different approach.

At most schools they have kids that are termed "at risk." These are the kids that may come from a troubled home or have some type of problem outside of a learning disability that tends to hold them back.

Jim Chapman is the Director of Sales and Marketing for Family Fun Companies; Richard Oltmann is the Chairman of Family Fun Companies and Trails Entertainment Centers, which include four fun parks in Illinois. Jim and Richard--both of whom have extensive backgrounds in entertainment center operations and game design--frequently conduct redemption seminars at major trade shows and distributorships across the U.S. Jim has been in the industry for 21 years; Richard for 48 years.

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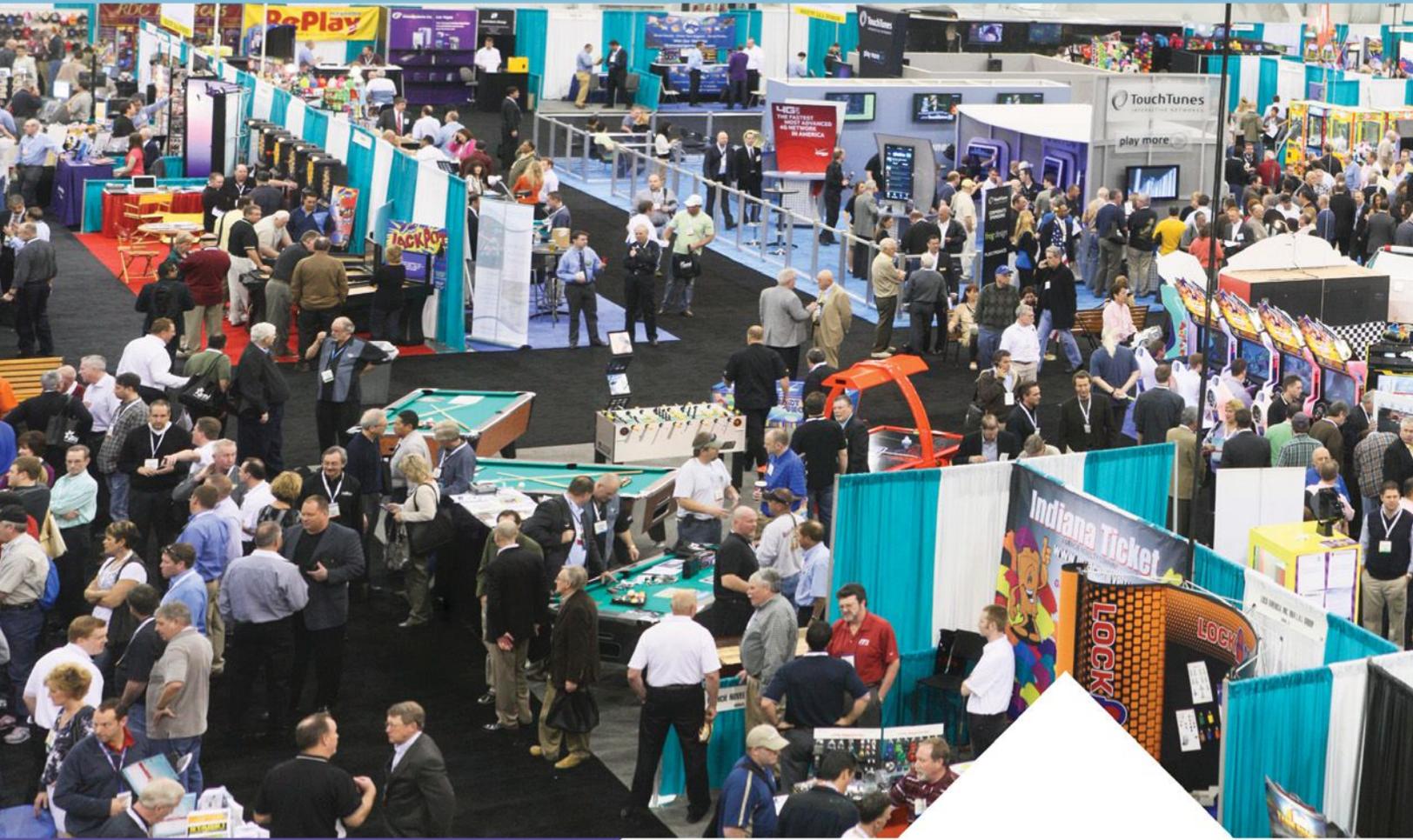
  
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# Stern Pinball exists for love of the game



Gary Stern

*The keeper of the silver ball flame plays on with one successful title after another.*

**Y**ou would be hard pressed to find anyone on the manufacturing side of the industry more dedicated to his product than Gary Stern, President and CEO of Stern Pinball Inc. Pinball has been Stern's whole life; it's an obsession that has resulted in memorable games and preserved the art of pinball.

The list of pinball titles from the company could fill a museum: Avatar, Back to the Future, Batman, Pirates of the Caribbean, Elvis, Family Guy, Guns

and Roses, High Roller Casino, Indiana Jones, Monopoly, NASCAR, Shrek, Spider-Man, The Lord of the Rings, The Rolling Stones, The Simpsons Pinball Party, TRON: Legacy, the new Transformers, and Wheel of Fortune. And that's just a short list.

The company continually succeeds in obtaining sought-after licenses that bring popular big-screen movies, television series, sports, and other themes to the pinball playfield and backglass with

custom speech, sound, and characters from the original works.

*Play Meter* managed to reach the eternally busy Stern after the ENADA Rome trade show in Italy and the Pinball Expo in Wheeling, Ill., to ask about company history and the latest developments at Stern Pinball.

**Stern Pinball celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. As you look ahead to the next year, what stands out in your mind as memorable in**

**those 25 years, either games or other developments that affected pinball?**

At 66 years old, I have been in the pinball manufacturing business for 64 years. When I was two years old, my father Sam Stern, who was originally a Philadelphia coin machine operator and a distributor, became an owner of Williams and we moved to Chicago. He passed away before this company was started 25 years ago, but I know he would be proud of what my co-workers have accomplished.

In those 25 years, we have seen a lot of ups and downs in the coin-op game business, in general and in pinball. We have seen a lot of trends in coin-op change, and we have seen a lot of trends in other entertainment come and go.

Most memorable in these 25 years are my great co-workers, past and present, who have weathered the ups and downs to help us remain the only manufacturer of commercial pinball machines today. We all want to make a living, and pinball is our vocation. But it's also our avocation. We all love pinball. The world would exist without pinball, but a little of the fabric of life would be lost without pinball.

**Every year during the Pinball Expo you kindly open your doors and conduct a factory tour to an appreciative crowd, and participate in other ways. How important is your involvement in the Pinball Expo? Does that event keep you and your staff energized to continue providing pinball games to the market?**

We sell through our dealers to three different types of customers. First of all, and worldwide, a majority of our games are sold to coin machine operators. Second, there are lots of customers who think pinball is cool and want a game in their home. Our third market group is the category of home sales: pinball enthusiasts and



**The Rolling Stones**



**TRON: Legacy**

collectors. Pinball Expo is one show this “enthusiast” market group attends.

We love having the enthusiasts come by. We are very proud of our factory, where real manufacturing is taking place in the United States of America. We appreciate their interest. Being located in the Chicagoland area, the Pinball Expo is a show many of my co-workers can attend. We all get to talk to this segment of the market, learning together. It is an opportunity for the pinball design and manufacturing community, past and present, to meet and renew old friendships.

**Is Stern still offering tours at other times, and do you still have a gift shop and displays of pinball history?**

We love to show people our factory. We will do tours at the drop of a hat. We especially appreciate operators who stop by. Many operators have a special respect for pinball, regardless of how many they operate. This customer segment may well appreciate the most what goes into a pinball.

Usually we have a stock of our SWAG: shirts, hats, hoodies, etc. These can also be purchased online at ([www.sternpinball.com](http://www.sternpinball.com)).

**You attended the ENADA Rome show the week before the Pinball Expo, and Stern collaborated with the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) for a Rome Tournament. How strong is the market for pinball in Europe?**

The European market is very good. We export over half of our games, and most go to Western Europe. France and Italy are both eight to 10 percent of our pinball market.

Tecnoplay and its Mauro Zacarria, our exclusive importer for Italy, have been very supportive of competitive pinball and its tournaments. The IFPA ranks 10,000 players worldwide. At our trade shows in Italy, Tecnoplay has sponsored IFPA-sanctioned competitions.

This year there were players from many countries. Tecnoplay also has sponsored teams for the tournament at the expo and the European championship in France. Operators who support tournaments in their locations will see earnings increases, and their location owners will see increases in their sales products.

Many readers will recognize the Zacarria name. The family made pinball machines in Italy many years ago. Marino and Natalie Zacarria are both very active in Tecnoplay.

**In an interview last fall, we spoke about the new design philosophy at Stern. At the time you said, “We saw that we needed to make the games more fun to play for everyone. The result is greater game appeal and increased earnings on location.” Has this design approach been successful?**

Absolutely. Operators I have spoken to have seen increased results

with our newer games. These games play shorter and have more randomness. As Harry Williams said, “The ball is wild.” We have simpler designs that the casual player can fathom, bouncer rubbers, some magnets, and the like.

We are selling FUN, and we are selling TIME. The games of the past became too long-playing, plus too skillful to be fun for the casual player. Nonetheless we have plenty in the game for the core, great player. We just don’t want him to play too long.

**Product launch parties were new in 2010. How has the reception been to those parties since then? Do you get valuable feedback?**

The reception to the launch parties has been great. There has been such interest that we have increased from one launch party for a game to a few dozen.

Locations love having more customers and new customers spending money. Operators get great coin collections. Sellers appreciate the

sales event. And yes, we get good feedback. *Note:* Operators interested in launch parties should contact Jody Dankberg, Director of Marketing, at (jody.dankberg@sternpinball.com).

**Stern’s two most recent games are Transformers 3 and TRON: Legacy. What are the successful main ingredients in each of these games-what makes them enjoyable to play?**

In a word: FUN. These games are fun. Again, we are playing a little shorter game with more randomness. These games have great toys for the ball to interact with, great ball action, great sound and art, and great titles.

**Are you going to do any production runs of past hit games or special edition limited runs such as Spider-Man Black?**

We are making more Avatar, TRON, The Rolling Stones, Big Buck

Hunter, and of course Transformers. We make smaller runs of most games over a few-year-period. Spider-Man Black was a limited edition, capped at 500 games, all built and sold. There will never be a 501. We honor our commitment.

**A segment of the “Made in America” TV series several years back visited the Stern factory. You were asked to name your favorite pinball game. At the time Elvis was the newest title and you said the current game was your favorite. We won’t ask if you have a favorite pinball game, but do you have any pinball games at home?**

I have a factory full of games, with a half-dozen different games in our showroom. I have had games at home, but currently I live in a downtown Chicago apartment, which is small compared to my suburban house where I had a number

of pinball machines over the years.

Now that my children are grown and not coming back home to live, I can move a game into my second bedroom, which now has a nine-foot opening in the wall to the living room. By the time readers see this, I will have a Transformers in that room.

My daughter Erin has my Batman Black Knight pinball in her house in Los Angeles. My other daughter Lindsey had it for a while, but when she moved into a smaller place Erin asked for it. After a small squabble about losing her game, Lindsey let Erin have the Batman. Erin has pinball parties with her friends and she works hard to regain high score on the machine when someone else betters her.

**Stern Pinball employees must keep their pinball skills sharp and play the games at the factory. This**



Transformers

**is an educational experience, a personal investment in the products, and a stress reliever. Were there certain goals in this policy?**

During part of the design cycle for a new pinball, all overhead employees must play 15 minutes a day. We want to see if features are functional. The computer in the game keeps track of game time, free plays, how much everything in the game is made, and any problems.

There is always a sheet for comments next to the game. If someone does not want to play pinball, he or she should not work at a pinball company. I am 66, a little older and slower, so when I play I represent the guy who has been in the bar a little too long.

**A visit to the Web site includes “Where to Play,” “Service & Support,” and a “Community” section to keep players up to date on championships, expos, and other events. Are there plans to add anything new to the Web site?**

Lots. We find all the social media tools very important. We have made big changes in our Web site, and we will constantly be changing and improving it. Readers are invited to check us out periodically.

**Are you using social media to promote pinball? I see on Dank’s blog on the Web site that someone posted: “Try the new pinball map app with the region set to Chicago. It’s cool and very helpful to see**

**“My dad would be proud of what my co-workers have accomplished.”**

where all the locations and titles are located.”

We are, and we will a lot more. Like our Web site, we have lots of things planned. Our Facebook page was started by my daughter Lindsey so her friends could vote on titles we might want to license for our games. Actually Lindsey wanted to lobby for the titles she liked.

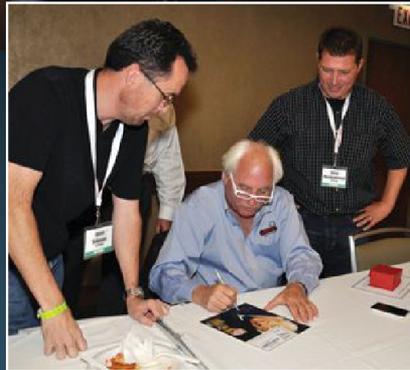
Jody has taken over Facebook and done a great job communicating with the pinball community. It has grown to have 4,500 Facebook friends.

We added to our Web site a game locator some time ago. We are improving it all the time. We ask both players and operators to list games. For operators, it can mean earnings increases, as enthusiast pinball players will seek out games at locations to play. That also translates into more sales for locations.

**Can you give us a hint on your next game title, which is usually introduced in January?**

No hints about what's next. We have a good catalog of games currently with Transformers, TRON, Avatar, The Rolling Stones, and Big Buck Hunter pinball.

For more information on Stern Pinball, call (800)542-5377; (708)345-7700; Web ([www.sternpinball.com](http://www.sternpinball.com)). ▲



At a private dinner, Gary Stern autographs a photo for Dane Johnson (I) and Greg Mockenhaupt of Nebraska.



Gary Stern (I) and George Gomez address attendees.

## Stern Pinball at the Pinball Expo

Stern Pinball was a major participant in the 27th Annual Pinball Expo held Oct. 19-23 at the Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel in Wheeling, Ill.

In keeping with tradition, the company hosted a factory tour of its facility in Melrose Park, Ill., on Oct. 20. More than 200 expo attendees came to show their support and see their favorite games being built.

Later in the day, Stern's CEO, Gary Stern, and Vice President of Game Design, George Gomez, spoke to a group of enthusiasts at the expo. Gary and George informed the crowd about innovations coming soon to Stern games and Gomez's newest design, Transformers pinball.

A special event with Gary kicked off the events on Oct. 21 when a small group of Stern Pinball fans joined Gary for a private dinner and roundtable discussion.

Also that evening, legendary designer Steve Ritchie held a fireside chat during which fans could ask questions about his career, his accomplishments, and his future games.

The fireside chat was followed by a Transformers Launch Party attended by a packed house of pinball fans who were able to meet the design team behind the game and participate in a tournament conducted by Josh and Zach Sharpe of the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA). Josh and Zach pen "Critic's Corner Tool" for *Play Meter*.

For more information on the Pinball Expo, visit ([www.pinballexpo.com](http://www.pinballexpo.com)); for more about pinball tournaments, visit ([www.ifpa.com](http://www.ifpa.com)); and for more about Stern Pinball, visit ([www.sternpinball.com](http://www.sternpinball.com)). ▲



Gary Stern conducts a factory tour.



The company's headquarters in South Florida.



Above top: Outside of Johnny Rocket's Game Room in Sunrise, Fla.

Above: David Goldfarb with Ron Mogerman, majority partner in Johnny Rockets Fun & Games.

Inset: David Goldfarb, President of PrimeTime Amusements.

# PrimeTime Amusements not surviving, but **thriving**

**D**avid Goldfarb, President of Prime-time Amusements, knows that in this economy, it takes more than hard work or luck to make it in the amusement industry. The key is diversity and offering your customers a wide range of services to help them get the most bang for their buck. The company is prepared, ready, and willing to provide just about anything a family entertainment center (FEC) owner may need to get started.



PrimeTime Amusements is a global operator, seller, and event renter of video arcade machines and simulators. The company is divided into four segments, each offering a unique service to FEC operators. PrimeTime offers entrepreneurs and FEC operators turnkey arcade consulting, planning, installation, and operations solutions. The

company can literally put people in the arcade business, which has few fixed costs, almost no variable costs, and generates constant cash flow when the right games are in place.

The company's headquarters are in South Florida where PrimeTime has a 20,000-square foot warehouse in which it refurbishes equipment. Attached to the headquarters is a 900,000-square-foot indoor go-kart track called X-treme Indoor Karting. The location features 100 interactive arcade games, one of the world's fastest go-kart tracks, a full sports bar, indoor mini gold, mini bowling lanes, a kid's arcade, concessions, a team building center, three conference rooms, and more.

PrimeTime specializes in new and refurbished high-end equipment as well as classic games. The company is divid-

ed into four key areas of business: operations, rentals, sales, and consulting.

The operations aspect includes running arcade businesses in special locations like McDonalds, GameWorks, Muvico, NASCAR Sports Grille, Universal Orlando Resorts, Xtreme Indoor Karting, and various bowling centers.

The company rents out arcade games for private events like Bar Mitzvahs, birthday parties, and trade shows. It sells arcade games and sets up game rooms of all sizes including home game rooms.

The consulting division includes everything the owner/operator needs to get started. The company employs in-house architects, engineers, designers, etc., to turn a game room concept into a reality.



The company has come a long way from the three pool tables, jukebox, and few games Goldfarb began with in 1992.

Goldfarb said, "I started when I was 19 at the University of Central Florida. I had an athletic scholarship in college and wanted to move into an apartment but couldn't afford it. I bought three pool tables, a jukebox, and couple of video games. When I moved to South Florida we expanded into sales rentals and consulting and today we do all four divisions of the business. At this point I feel if you're not doing at least two ends of the business, you're not surviving."

He explained, "The most difficult part of this business is people don't have an outlet to move older equipment. We've found an outlet because of the fact that we have a home office in Miami, Fla., a major international hub. We refurbish a lot of this equipment and move it to South America to where it's not second hand."

With so many untapped markets internationally, Goldfarb spends much of his time traveling to meet with new FEC owners and potential clients.

He said, "Basically there are a lot of untapped markets right now. I travel constantly and we are always looking to see who's trying to open up an FEC business. There are markets such as the entire continent of Africa and countries like Indonesia and India that are emerging. Many are now building shopping centers and therefore want to build FECs."



PrimeTime recently celebrated the grand opening of its 20,000-square-foot joint venture with national restaurant chain Johnny Rockets, Johnny Rockets Fun & Games. The site of the first-of-its-kind restaurant/arcade housed a former GameWorks and is located inside Saw Grass Mills Mall in Sunrise, Fla.

Goldfarb said, "It's the largest Johnny Rockets in existence and the only one with an FEC. The facility has full liquor service, party rooms, pizza, and 30 flat screen televisions. This is a prototype of sorts and Johnny Rockets is interested in possibly doing more of these types of centers. We just opened the doors two weeks ago and it seems to be very successful."

He added, "We have approximately 180 machines there. We pretty much have every single game in the industry in this location. Since we're collecting

**Photos from top:**  
PrimeTime Amusements supplied equipment for the game room at the world's largest McDonald's in Orlando, Fla.

**Inside the game room at the world's largest McDonald's.**

100 percent of the revenue we've got some non-traditional equipment. We have various simulators and a lot of deluxe model equipment there. We also have duplicate equipment. For example, we have four Terminator 2 Salvation games."

With a history of expansion and a solid business model, PrimeTime continues to be a leader in the amusement industry.

For more information, call (800) 550-0090; Web ([www.primetimeamusements.com](http://www.primetimeamusements.com)). ▲



## Pinball “transformed” by Stern



Josh and Zach Sharpe

*New Transformers  
Pinball attracts fans,  
casual pinball players,  
and serious  
competitors alike.*

After a decent absence from its origins as a toy line, comic book series and TV show Transformers rapidly launched itself back into public consciousness with the worldwide success of the recent film franchise. In the war between Decepticons and Autobots, it's the humans playing Stern's latest that will win this battle.

To help promote and celebrate its latest release, Stern once again teamed up with the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) to host Transformer launch parties all across North America. Locations included Chicago, Seattle, Colorado, Connecticut, Oregon, Texas, Ohio, and even in Canada.

In total, over 1,000 pinball fans attended these launch parties that offered players the chance to test the newest game as well as compete in tournaments with a chance to win cash, prizes, and World Pinball Player Ranking points to increase their worldwide ranking.

Just when you thought these launch parties couldn't get any bigger, Stern

really went above and beyond. For Chicago's launch, held at the Chicago Pinball Expo, Stern streamed live footage of the party in addition to a sweet setup by Marco Specialties that included cameras, monitors, and an incredible light show to enhance the overall spectacle of the event.

With that being said, it's time to see if there's truly more than meets the eye with Stern's latest.

### TRANSFORMERS PINBALL/ STERN PINBALL

**Pros:** Instinctively, we have to put theme at the top of the pros list. Not only is Transformers a big hit with the older generation through old comics, cartoons and toys, more recently it has become a global phenomenon through the live-action movies.

This is easily on par with Lord of the Rings in terms of Stern's strongest licenses to date. Regardless of lack of new movies coming out of the franchise, the theme itself is timeless with a rabid fan base.

Additionally, the sounds of the game fit the theme perfectly. Similar to TRON: Legacy, Stern makes great use of the robot/electronic sounds and speech that add to the entertainment package.

This is especially true during the multiball modes where the sounds really help to build the drama during battles with Megatron and Optimus Prime.

New to Transformers is the way Stern constructed their ramps for production. Constructing them out of the printed plastic sheet allowed Stern to really give personality to the ramps, making them feel like an organic extension of the playfield.

This will also help in the service area, as a cracked piece of the ramp won't require an entire replacement, but a simple replacement of the



Transformer launch party



piece that is broken.

While not everyone welcomes new technologies with open arms, Stern is definitely entering uncharted territory for our industry via the use of QR codes, which we think this is absolutely brilliant.

If you want to engage a wider audience, you need to speak with them across as many channels as possible. Since this is the first time Stern's employing this technology, it'll be interesting to see how much action/interest they receive. Regardless, we feel it's a great way to get additional entertainment to the player and to have a more collaborative experience.

From a gameplay perspective, we loved the creative take on splitting the personality of the game right down the middle. The left side being the Decepticons, and the right side being the Autobots. The additional option of having players pick the side they want to play as is also a very nice touch.

**Cons:** Before even plunging the first ball, our first impressions of the playfield artwork, along with the insert layout, made the game feel very generic to us.

Each shot has the same set of inserts, so it really hinders the ability for those shots to have any personality within game play. This also makes it extremely difficult to know how far players are progressing throughout the story of the game without looking at the DMD display for help.

As we have seen time and time again, most players don't even look up while they are playing anyway, so the playfield is supposed to be their guide during their journey.

Making anything dependant on looking on the DMD for information is a huge disadvantage for the casual player. How do you start a mode? Where do you lock balls? What does that Bumblebee Car do? None of these can be answered without the aid of the display. This makes the game way too confusing for a majority of the player base, including people that know pinball.

Furthermore, we also felt from a software perspective that the current game

***“There’s no doubt the theme will get those first quarters from anyone that walks by the game, which is half the battle.”***

modes also feel generic.

We can't help but think of modes like War of the Ents on Lord of the Rings, Bonesaw on Spider-Man, Ipecac Contest on Family Guy, or the Bonus Games on Big Buck Hunter, which are filled with personality making them extremely memorable.

Unfortunately none of the Transformers modes stood out from the batch. If there were a way to inject the personalities of the Autobots and Decepticons within their various modes, it would go a long way towards adding entertainment to the player.

Lastly, and probably the most disappointing of our cons, is the problems we've encountered on many different Transformer machines. Right off the bat, we've noticed many issues with the ball not making it around to the pop bumpers from the plunger lane. It ends up clunking/hitting stuff along the way, which we don't think was part of the original design. In addition, we've witnessed and experienced many different shots within the game causing problems. The All Spark hole and Megatron scoop hole can repeatedly have issues rejecting the ball. And from the main "toy" perspective, Optimus Prime does not register many of its hits, which can leave players extremely frustrated.

**Overall:** We couldn't help but feel a bit frustrated with the final product, especially having the potential to really hit a home run with the theme.

We talk all the time about the need to give players a "wow" moment within 30-60 seconds of game play, and unfortunately there was nothing that



made us jump out of our seats while playing the game.

With that said, we are aware of the Limited Edition models that seem to have some potential "wow" elements waiting for players to enjoy. The real question is whether too much of the potential "cool stuff" was pulled out for the Pro model, the one that casual players will be enjoying on location.

If Stern still truly believes in coin-op, and trying to introduce fresh faces to the game of pinball, they need to make sure there's enough there to keep the quarters dropping. To end on a positive note, there's no doubt the theme will get those first quarters from anyone that walks by the game, which is half the battle.

**Overall rating: ★★ 1/4**

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

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**January 24-26****ICE Totally Gaming**

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**February 9-11****AMOA Council of Affiliated States Meeting**

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**March 1-3****IAAPI Trade Show**

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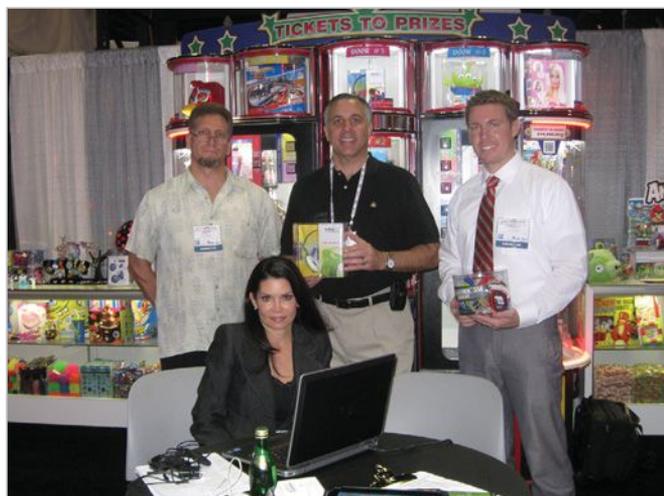


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Myrna Dorfman and Rasha El Bakly of Allstar with Augmented Reality Dinosaur Stickers, Angry Birds Tattoos, and WWF stickers.



Mike Maresca, Shelley Katz, David Katz, and Josh Yenchick of BMI International hold Parachute Cord Bracelets and iPod Headsets.

# Bulk at IAAPA



Steven Schulman of HMS Monaco with Webkinz plush.



Joe Rinaldi and Pat Hoye of Manley Toy Direct LLC with Sprinkles cupcake plush.



From left: Dori Maxwell, Cristopher Millar, Adela Cervantes, Andrew Vetock, and Lae Phonphakdy of Fun Express display Minnie Mouse, Pokemon, and Angry Birds plush.



From left: Matt Czugala, Ann Krull, Jason Patterson, Courtney German, Justin Michaels, Rachelle Granger, and Doug Stokes of Redemption Plus with Show Your Digits watches.



Matt Lemoine, Sean Morrone, Alaina Bart, Joel Gonzalez, Dan Highcove, Neil Sormanti, Peter Quinn, and Dave Bejbl of Rhode Island Novelty with Team Colors Line Balls.



Front: Rorie Keller of Sureshot Redemption and Gregg Borman of Palace Entertainment; back: Dennis Foland and Bryan Netz of Sureshot, Laurie Ross and Marion Paul of Fannie Farkle's, Casey Lee of Boondocks Fun Center, and Aaron Graves of Sureshot with licensed Monopoly games and T-shirts.



Gerry Clothier and Brian Ross of A&A Global stand with a series of capsuled toys.



Paul Rosenbaum and Aaron Pelto of Eyeprize Technology with the Eyeprize.



Marty Luepker of S&B Candy and Toy Co. showcases the Smarties crane.



Charles Caplan and Georgia Meyers of Play Time Toys with Mickey and Minnie Mouse jumbo plush.



Rick Tran of Redemtronic holds the RC Car Capsule, which houses a mini remote control vehicle. ▲

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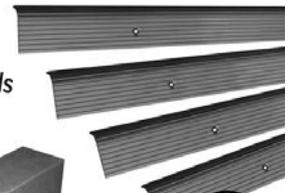
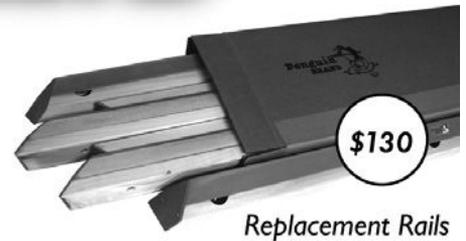
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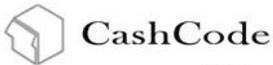
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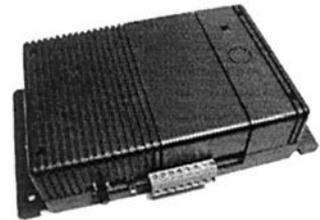
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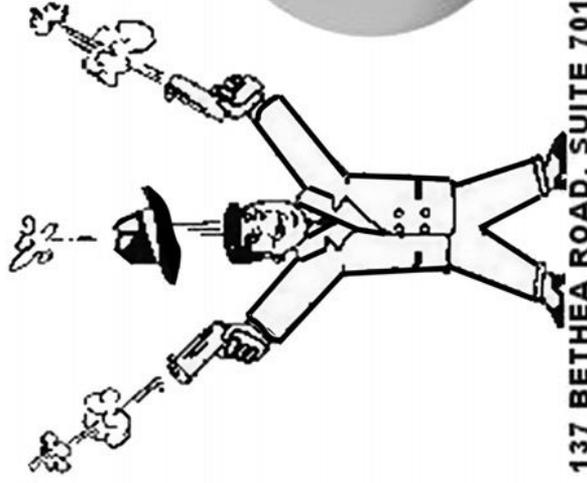
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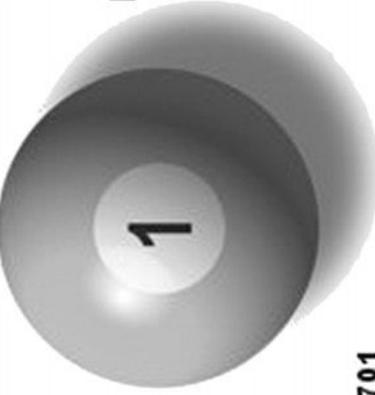
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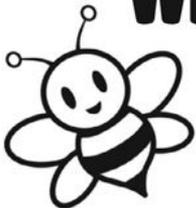
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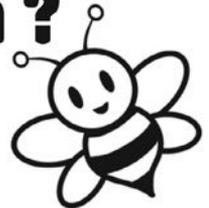
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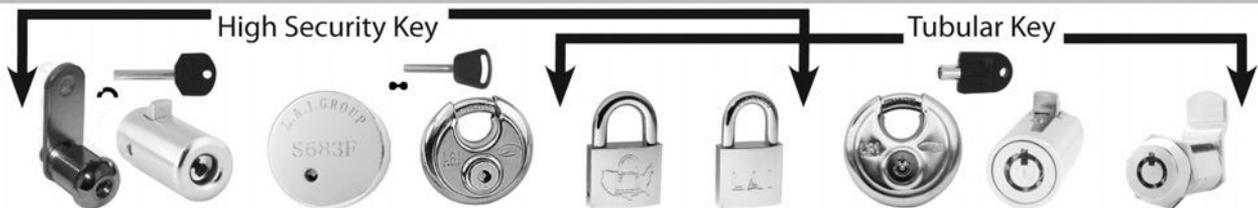
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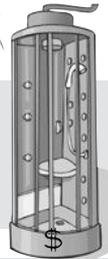
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| CoinOp Warehouse . . . . .                    | 101             |
| Donate Zone/HestTechnology . . . . .          | 99              |
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| Lock America (LAI) . . . . .                  | 102             |
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| Penguin Amusement . . . . .                   | 90              |
| Phoenix Marineri LP . . . . .                 | 94, 96          |
| PNL Inc. . . . .                              | 101             |
| Quality Vend . . . . .                        | 99              |
| Quartermtime Amusements . . . . .             | 96, 98          |
| R.K.S. Inc. . . . .                           | 95              |
| Reel Spin . . . . .                           | 98              |
| SeaSide Gaming . . . . .                      | 100             |
| Seegurg Digital . . . . .                     | 102             |
| Zanen Elect. . . . .                          | 96              |

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