PLAY METER Magazine

VOLUME 21, No. 1 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY JANUARY 1995

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NEWS BULLETIN

VLTS BACK ON IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Call it Round One: Video lottery terminals were reinstated on Nov. 22, 1994 after voters changed the Constitution to include the games under the description of a lottery. Game play was reportedly back to 80-85 percent of what it was before the machines were turned off on Aug. 12 following a Supreme Court ruling that declared them unconstitutional. This is not the final word on video lottery in the state.

Prepare for Round Two: In a Dec. 7 address to the Legislature (which reconvenes this month), outgoing Gov. Miller recommended raising the video lottery tax from the present 37 percent up to 42 percent. Incoming Gov. Bill Janklow has said publicly that 42 percent is inadequate; he would prefer 50 percent! Cited as the purpose for the increase: personal property tax relief.

A local operator commented, "We've weathered the storm but our biggest problem now is dealing with government. Will it leave us in a position to be a strong industry or a weak industry? A 50 percent tax will start a very significant erosion of the industry in South Dakota."

WASHINGTON APPROVES SUPER ROCK 'N BOWL

Bromley Inc., the Illinois-based manufacturer of novelty and redemption games, is happy to advise that its *Super Rock-N-Bowl* has been approved under Washington state's stringent redemption game guidelines (100 percent skill). *Super Rock-N-Bowl*'s double targets and intermittent lights added to the skill factor and put it over the top as far as Washington is concerned.

CONGRATULATIONS IN ORDER

Bob Snyder of Bob Snyder & Associates, the Walnut, Calif., consulting firm that specializes in regulatory issues, gaming, licensing, and product evaluation, has been awarded status as a Diplomate: Board Certified Forensic Examiner of the American Board of Forensic Examiners. The ABFE recognizes experienced individuals who have achieved proficiency in a variety of fields. Information from such skilled experts is often used in court testimony, with implications of local and national significance. Snyder is frequently called upon to participate in coin machine industry educational sessions.

MERIT KICKS OFF SERIES

Merit Industries of Bensalem, Pa., commences its 8th Annual World Series of Darts schedule this month, traveling to Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 20-22, and Indianapolis, Ind., Jan. 27-29 for regional events. The Series schedule also includes stops in Ham Lake, Minn., Mar. 17-19; Port St. Lucie, Fla., April 7-9; and Honolulu, Hawaii, April 21-23.

The average guaranteed payout this year will be over $9,000, plus trophies, medallions, and MVP jackets. Merit will continue to use the Tournament King software program that has streamlined tournaments by running multiple events simultaneously. Dart Mart Inc. will co-sponsor the Series. For more information contact Bob Wiles or Kim Morgan, (215) 629-4700.

DATA EAST SHIPS LOCKED N' LOADED

Look for the new Data East two-player video gun game, *Locked N'Loaded*, at your local distributor. Starting in late December, the game became available as a dedicated upright and in two different kit formats: Basic Kit with PCB, conversion adaptors, game graphics, and manual for existing gun game cabinets; and Gun Kit with all the same items as the basic plus two guns, holsters, and cables to convert a generic cabinet.

STATE GATHERING NEXT MONTH

Now is the time to contact your state association to express your views on important issues in your area. State association executive directors and other officers will be gathering in Orlando. Fla., Feb. 2-4, for the winter meeting of AMOA's Council of Affiliated States. Slated for discussion are topics near and dear to our hearts, such as taxes and regulatory issues. Bill Treger of Betson Enterprises, chairman of AMOA's state association committee, directs this year's program.

SYMPATHY TO KOENIGSBERG FAMILY

We extend our sincere sympathy to the family of AAMA president Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales and Service Corp. in Baltimore, Md., on the death of his mother. Anita Koenigsberg passed away recently following a lengthy illness.

STEVE KAUFMAN JOINS PREMIER

Steve Kaufman recently left Electronic Arts where he was the general manager of the coin-op division. He will be joining Premier, where he spent a brief time in the company's gaming division several years ago. He can be reached at Premier after the first of the year. ▲

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Did your mother ever buy you clothes that you could grow into?

She had foresight. And probably a limited budget.

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Our jukebox technology concept is about the same. Except we eliminated the having to grow into it part. Our 100-CD HyperBeam™ sound system gives you most every income-enhancing feature you could possibly use today — no compromises — yet all but infinite flexibility so it can likely adapt to new digital technology as it comes.

Here's how we <u>didn't</u> do it.

We didn't just adapt our old 45RPM system to handle CD's. They're entirely different sound reproduction technologies. And we couldn't hope to be flexible by just modifying our old system.

Here's how we <u>did</u> do it.

With components ... compact, high-efficiency components that simply plug in. For example, our HyperBeam's high-speed CD changer is a simple 8″ x 18″ component that can be removed and re-installed in minutes.

Then we made components within the components. Our CD changer component has two 50-CD magazine "components" that simply snap in & out. And within the magazine component, we made individual tray "components" that are just as easy to take in and out.

All said, when something changes in technology, something can likely be changed in our HyperBeam system ... ***and just some thing.***

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CORRECTION

An apology to Nate Feinstein

Jerry Marcus of Atlas Dist. in Chicago called with some good news and bad news. The good news first: Nate Feinstein, formerly of World Wide and Atlas, is alive and well, still having lunch with old friends.

The bad news: we had a photo of him in our 20th anniversary issue, in a section dedicated to industry friends who have passed away.

Jerry immediately called Nate to make sure all was well and then explained what had happened. It's possible that Nate suddenly recalled a quote by one of our most famous writers, Mark Twain, who said: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

Jerry, who met Nate back in 1961, calls him a genius. "He is a brilliant man who has always been successful. And you know that picture you ran in the magazine? Well, although that photo is quite a few years old, Nate looks exactly the same. He hasn't aged a bit."

Needless to say, we feel awful about the error and offer our sincerest apologies to Nate. Editor Valerie Cognevich said, "We always regret making a mistake in our magazine, but listing someone as deceased who is not is just terrible. I am truly sorry and wish Nate the best for many years to come." ▲

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Music to our ears and a boost to the bottom line 48

While some equipment may be down, music is decidedly up. CD jukeboxes are now commonplace, not the exception for only the best locations. What lies ahead in this significant segment of the coin-op industry? Five manufacturers offer their insight, followed by three operator interviews, and a jukebox guide of currently available models.

IAAPA: something for everyone 72

From the highly technical to the downright old-fashioned, the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions' 76th convention filled the need. A growing number of traditional coin-op companies now reserve space at this global event, which caters to diverse markets. And it's no surprise that more operators are among the attendees.

NAMA looks at the future in vending 89

Vending goes beyond standard snack machines, as a walk through the National Automatic Merchandising Association trade show revealed. Taking a bow were a wide array of products to liven up vending routes: jazzy new cold drink machines, ice cream vending units, new-age gumball machines, and advanced bill changers among them.

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COVER

X-Men, Children of the Atom is the next action-packed video from Capcom, the company that left an indelible imprint on the fighting theme genre. Capcom staff, top row, (l-r): Kerann Christopherson, Dennis Sable, Brian Duke, Ron Malinowski, and Theresa Rivas; second row, (l-r): Steve Hanawa, Ryuichi Hirata, Frank Ballouz, Kazushi Hirao, and Richard Moore; third row, (l-r): Satinder Bhutani, Dennis Agpaoa, Mark Trotter, Alex Jimenez, and Kelley McDonald.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Are we really in deep doo-doo?

We are not in a recession, we're in a full fledged depression, an operator told me over the phone the other day. Equipment costs too much, there's not anything new and innovative, the players have moved on to other activities, price per play is still 25 cents, and the manufacturers are trying to run the little guys out of business.

These were just a few comments this operator had to say. It's obvious he's frustrated about the industry he's called his own for two decades. He's aggressive, a go-getter as he describes himself, and can't figure out what is going on in the industry. In fact, when I asked him what he thought was right around the corner, his straightforward answer was, "I have given up trying to figure out what's going to happen. There are too many factors influencing our futures and not much we really can do about any of them."

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

While he was quick to point out that he wasn't speaking for operators all over the country, in his area things were just plain horrible. "You magazine people will say something like 'the market is sluggish.' Sluggish? No, it's much more than that. We must use much stronger words to describe the business."

We know that the industry has its ups and downs. However this operator describes a situation where the down is much lower and the up is even more elusive. "I've never seen expressions on distributors faces like I saw at AMOA," he exclaimed. "They were positively ashen! They are as shocked as the operators are about prices and lack of choice."

These are some strong, heartfelt words spoken by someone who has been in the coin machine business 20 years. It's a little scary because this operator is part of the foundation on which a successful industry has been built. Even more frightening words came from an outsider, who has done some management articles for us: "After studying some information I've accumulated on the coin-op industry, I'd say you were in deep doo-doo!"

Can things really be that bad? Or put another way, can they really be good considering the market? What's happening right now reminds me of the title of a movie "Something's Got to Give." I didn't see the movie, but it's the title that is so intriguing. It describes what we've been saying about the industry.

Two shows at the end of 1994 shocked us into reality. The 50-year-old AMOA, the industry show for many years, was dismal. Street operators were out in the cold as far as equipment, while manufacturers proudly showed their mega-priced video games designed without street operators in mind. Then a week later Fun Expo exceeded even cautious expectations. Crowds of attendees filled the aisles, and they were smiling. Even video game manufacturers were pleased, as one explained: "For those spending big bucks opening a family entertainment center, the price of our games is not out of range."

But comparing these two shows is perhaps comparing apples to oranges. Sure there's crossover; you see familiar faces at Fun Expo but in reality it's two different audiences. But it's sobering to see so many newcomers willing to spend the mega bucks it takes to open a family entertainment center. Sure the industry has seen newcomers before, but it was in smaller quantities and certainly they weren't investing what's required now. During the early '80s you could officially become an operator with the purchase of one game and a few feet of space to place it!

Well, something's got to give. There's lots of turmoil within the industry right now. High-tech, information superhighway, FECs, and a few other buzz words are replacing some more familiar ones, and we'd all better know what is out there.

We are in the process of tabulating our State of the Industry results we've received from our loyal readers. Stay tuned in mid-January when the inevitable comparisons to previous years will come to your door. Pay special attention to the comments at the end from the operators who participated. It's always an eye-opening experience. ▲

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RAREWARE

EQUIPMENT POLL

REDEMPTION

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
ALLEY BOWLERS		
1. Skee-Ball	*(Skee-Ball)*	7.75
2. Smartball	*(Smart)*	7.22
SPORTS GAMES		
1. Sonic Blast Man	*(Taito)*	8.80
2. Strike Zone	*(Purple Star)*	7.80
3. Shoot to Win!	*(Smart)*	7.21
4. Champ. Basketball	*(Grayhound)*	7.00
5. Full Court Frenzy	*(I.C.E.)*	6.84
6. Arm Champs	*(Jaleco)*	6.78
7. Two Minute Drill	*(Taito)*	6.60
8. Slugfest	*(Williams)*	6.44
9. UB-QB Football	*(National Sports)*	6.00
10. Hoop Shot	*(Doyle)*	5.33
SINGLE COIN PUSHERS		
1. Jungle Jive	*(Coastal)*	8.67
2. Klondike	*(Fun Merchants)*	8.50
3. Star Burst	*(CCI)*	7.50
4. Rock N' Roll	*(Fun Merchants)*	7.20
SINGLE CRANES		
1. Snack Attacker	*(A.G.E.)*	8.50
2. Clean Sweep	*(Smart)*	8.37
3. Rainbow Crane	*(Rainbow)*	8.20
4. Big Choice	*(Fun Merchants)*	7.82
5. Candy Crane	*(Smart)*	7.18
6. Action Claw	*(Fun Merchants)*	7.11
7. Jumbo Crane	*(Grayhound)*	6.75
8. Skill Crane	*(Grayhound)*	6.29
9. Candy Shop	*(Grayhound)*	6.00
10. Hollywood Crane	*(Maxwell)*	5.85
CHILD-SIZE GAMES		
1. Shoot to Win! Jr.	*(Smart)*	9.17
2. Smart Toss 'Em	*(Smart)*	8.29
3. Half Pint Frenzy	*(ICE)*	7.17
4. Jr. All-American	*(CCI/UETD)*	6.75
5. Bozo Basketball	*(Design Plus)*	6.50
6. Kiddie Whac-A-Mole	*(Bob's Space)*	6.50
7. Toss 'Em	*(CCI/UETD)*	6.50
8. Awesome Toss 'Em	*(Lazer-Tron)*	6.40
9. Skee-Toss B.C.	*(Skee-Ball/ Fun Merchants)*	6.07
10. Super Mario Mushroom	*(Premier)*	5.40
BALL ROLL DOWNS		
1. Spin-to-Win	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.43
2. Jungle Rama	*(Lazer-Tron)*	7.75
3. Clown Rolldown	*(Bay Tek)*	6.55
4. Rock N' Roll 4	*(Bay Tek)*	6.25
5. Tic-Tac-Toe	*(Skee-Ball)*	5.75
6. Fielder's Choice	*(Bay Tek)*	5.25
NOVELTY		
1. Dinoscore	*(Planet Earth)*	8.93
2. Robo-Bop	*(Coastal)*	8.80
3. Ribbit Racin	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.27
4. Flingshot	*(Planet Earth)*	8.00
5. Whac-A-Mole	*(Bob's Space)*	7.29

REDEMPTION

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
6. Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe	*(Data East)*	7.23
7. Wacky Gator	*(Data East)*	7.20
8. Feed Big Bertha	*(Smart)*	7.06
9. Pop-A-Ball	*(Coastal)*	7.00
10. Flip N' Win	*(Planet Earth)*	7.00
11. Coin Circus	*(Am. Sammy)*	7.00
12. Dump the Ump	*(Doyle)*	7.00
13. Simple Simon	*(Am. Sammy)*	6.25
14. Neck-N-Neck	*(Bundra)*	6.20
15. Knock Down	*(Meltec)*	6.14
16. Big Mouth	*(Meltec)*	6.09
17. Godzilla Wars Jr.	*(Namco)*	6.00
18. Cracky Crab	*(Namco)*	5.88
19. Circus Hi-Rise	*(Skee-Ball)*	5.80
20. Hot Shot Basketball	*(Williams)*	5.75
21. Boom Ball	*(Meltec)*	5.50
22. Sidewinder	*(Bob's Space)*	5.00
COIN DROP GAMES		
1. Super Rock-N-Bowl	*(Bromley)*	8.83
2. Home Run Hitter	*(CCI)*	8.75
3. Aftershock	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.06
4. Sonic the Hedgehog	*(Sega)*	8.00
5. Wheel 'M In	*(Bromley)*	7.81
6. Super Bank It	*(Lazer-Tron)*	7.75
7. Rock-N-Bowl	*(Bromley)*	7.30
8. Bank It	*(Lazer-Tron)*	5.73
9. Addams Family Values	*(Midway)*	5.00

PINBALLS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. Red and Ted's Road Show *(Williams)*	8.55	57
2. Maverick the Movie *(Sega)*	8.25	55
3. Star Trek: Next Generation *(Williams)*	8.22	654
4. The Addams Family *(Bally)*	8.00	1937
5. World Cup Soccer *(Bally)*	7.71	291
6. Creature from the Black Lagoon *(Bally)*	7.67	752
7. Freddy, A Nightmare on Elm Street *(Premier)*	7.60	73
8. Corvette *(Bally)*	7.33	66
9. Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	7.08	929
10. Fish Tales *(Williams)*	7.03	962
11. Guns N' Roses *(Data East)*	6.90	168
12. Demolition Man *(Williams)*	6.83	294
13. The Flintstones *(Williams)*	6.83	120
14. Rescue 911 *(Premier)*	6.74	333
15. Indiana Jones *(Williams)*	6.71	639

Results are based on monthly Equipment Poll ballot returns. Point Value: average of ballot ratings on a scale of 1-10. Longevity Points: determined by standings in Video & Pinball combined column (#1 game receives 60 points, #2 game receives 59 points, etc.) **Indicates new or reappearing games.*

EQUIPMENT POLL

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

	GAME	MO. ON CHART	MO. IN TOP 10
1.	Daytona USA *(Sega)*	4	4
2.	Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	8	8
3.	Cruisin USA *(Midway)*	2	2
4.	Red & Ted's Road Show *(Williams)*	1	1
5.	Out Runners *(Sega)*	16	16
6.	Maverick *(Sega)*	1	1
7.	Star Trek: Next Generation *(Williams)*	12	11
8.	The Addams Family *(Bally)*	34	34
9.	Primal Rage *(TWI)*	4	4
10.	Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	7	4
11.	Mortal Kombat II *(Midway)*	14	14
12.	Suzuka 8 Hours *(Namco)*	8	8
13.	Virtua Racing *(Sega)*	26	25
14.	Virtua Fighter *(Sega)*	10	10
15.	Revolution-X *(Midway)*	6	4
16.	World Cup Soccer *(Bally)*	6	6
17.	Creature from the Black Lagoon *(Bally)*	23	15
18.	Samurai Shodown II *(SNK)*	2	1
19.	Freddy *(Premier)*	2	2
20.	Great 1,000 Mile Rally *(Kaneko)*	1	1
21.	Lethal Enforcers II *(Konami)*	8	4
22.	T-MEK *(TWI)*	4	2
23.	Corvette *(Bally)*	2	2
24.	Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	17	3
25.	Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	21	20
26.	Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	27	27
27.	Fish Tales *(Williams)*	28	18
28.	Racin' Force *(Konami)*	5	3
29.	Raiden II *(Fabtek)*	13	13
30.	SSF II Turbo *(Capcom)*	7	5
31.	Guns N' Roses *(Data East)*	4	3
32.	NBA JAM Tournament *(Midway)*	8	8
33.	DarkStalkers *(Capcom)*	4	4
34.	Demolition Man *(Williams)*	8	7
35.	The Flintstones *(Williams)*	4	2
36.	Aero Fighters 2 *(SNK)*	4	3
37.	Street Slam *(Data East)*	1	1
38.	Rescue 911 *(Premier)*	8	6
39.	Indiana Jones *(Williams)*	15	14
40.	Run and Gun *(Konami)*	13	7
41.	Jurassic Park *(Sega)*	19	14
42.	D & D Tower of Doom *(Capcom)*	8	7
43.	NBA JAM *(Midway)*	9	4
44.	King of Fighters *(SNK)*	3	1
45.	Alien vs. Predator *(Capcom)*	6	5
46.	Cybersled *(Namco)*	13	5
47.	Crime Patrol *(Am. Laser)*	15	5
48.	Gals Panic II *(Kaneko)*	8	5
49.	Jurassic Park *(Data East)*	19	14
50.	Raiden DX *(Fabtek)*	1	0
51.	Super Sidekicks 2 *(SNK)*	2	0
52.	White Water *(Williams)*	23	14
53.	Samurai Shodown *(SNK)*	15	11
54.	Ridge Racer *(Namco)*	11	8
55.	Under Fire *(Taito)*	6	1
56.	The Who's Tommy *(Data East)*	9	4
57.	Last Action Hero *(Data East)*	14	5
58.	Dracula *(Williams)*	18	7
59.	Tales from the Crypt *(Data East)*	13	6
60.	Fast Draw *(Am. Laser)*	4	1

VIDEO DEDICATED

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Daytona USA *(Sega)*	9.52	240
2.	Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	9.22	439
3.	Cruisin' USA *(Midway)*	9.11	117
4.	Out Runners *(Sega)*	8.31	842
5.	Primal Rage *(TWI)*	7.95	221
6.	Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	7.92	290
7.	Suzuka 8 Hours *(Namco)*	7.80	435
8.	Virtua Racing *(Sega)*	7.79	1379
9.	Virtua Fighter *(Sega)*	7.76	523
10.	Revolution-X *(Midway)*	7.73	298
11.	Lethal Enforcers II *(Konami)*	7.42	346
12.	T-MEK *(TWI)*	7.38	185
13.	Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	7.27	541
14.	Racin' Force *(Konami)*	7.00	216
15.	Run and Gun *(Konami)*	6.62	503

VIDEO KITS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Mortal Kombat II *(Midway)*	7.89	820
2.	Samurai Shodown II *(SNK)*	7.64	44
3.	Great 1,000 Mile Rally *(Kaneko)*	7.50	41
4.	Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	7.05	1288
5.	Raiden II *(Fabtek)*	6.95	529
6.	SSF II Turbo *(Capcom)*	6.92	158
7.	NBA JAM Tournament *(Midway)*	6.87	354
8.	DarkStalkers *(Capcom)*	6.85	182
9.	Aero Fighters 2 *(SNK)*	6.80	67
10.	Street Slam *(Data East)*	6.75	24
11.	D & D Tower of Doom *(Capcom)*	6.54	316
12.	King of Fighters *(SNK)*	6.50	61
13.	Alien vs. Predator *(Capcom)*	6.45	216
14.	Gals Panic II *(Kaneko)*	6.43	182
15.	Raiden DX *(Fabtek)*	6.36	11
16.	Super Sidekicks 2 *(SNK)*	6.36	21
17.	Samurai Shodown *(SNK)*	6.25	532
18.	Super Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	5.98	107
19.	Twin Eagle II *(Seta)*	5.92	*
20.	World Rally *(TWI)*	5.89	403
21.	Mortal Kombat *(Midway)*	5.60	1325
22.	Drug Wars *(Am. Laser)*	5.50	985
23.	Fatal Fury 2 *(SNK)*	5.47	304
24.	Windjammers *(Data East)*	5.36	83
25.	Art of Fighting 2 *(SNK)*	5.33	55
26.	Aero Fighters *(Mc O'River)*	5.32	393
27.	Fighter's History Dynamite *(Data East)*	5.30	9
28.	Warriors of Fate *(Capcom)*	5.29	52
29.	Street Fighter Champ *(Capcom)*	5.12	1262
30.	World Heroes 2 *(SNK)*	5.04	296

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UP FRONT
Looking at both sides of the coin

A southern operator recently remarked that business was terrible. So bad, in fact, that he had not purchased a new game since *Mortal Kombat II*. Nor had he attended any recent trade shows. As good as that game might be, it is difficult to imagine that he could not rustle up enough funds to add a few games of more recent vintage. Another choice: jump into a new area, such as redemption.

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

As long as his customers continue to see the same games, their image of his establishment will change over time. Revenue will never improve if there are no new titles to entice game play. While holding down expenses, he has also withheld life support from the ailing patient.

A few days later a midwestern operator admitted that indeed video revenue was down, but she was enlarging an already well-established dart and pool league system by adding foosball to the mix. Here's an operator who decided to do something about declining revenue. Instead of being reactive she chose to be proactive and initiate change. Her business was very good since she was making the best of other types of equipment while one segment was down.

Similar stories are retold every day. The names change but the situation remains the same: what to do in the face of declining revenue? Both sides are understandable. Playing it safe may be preferable to sticking your neck out. Don't take chances and you won't be disappointed. Wait for the next big guaranteed winner.

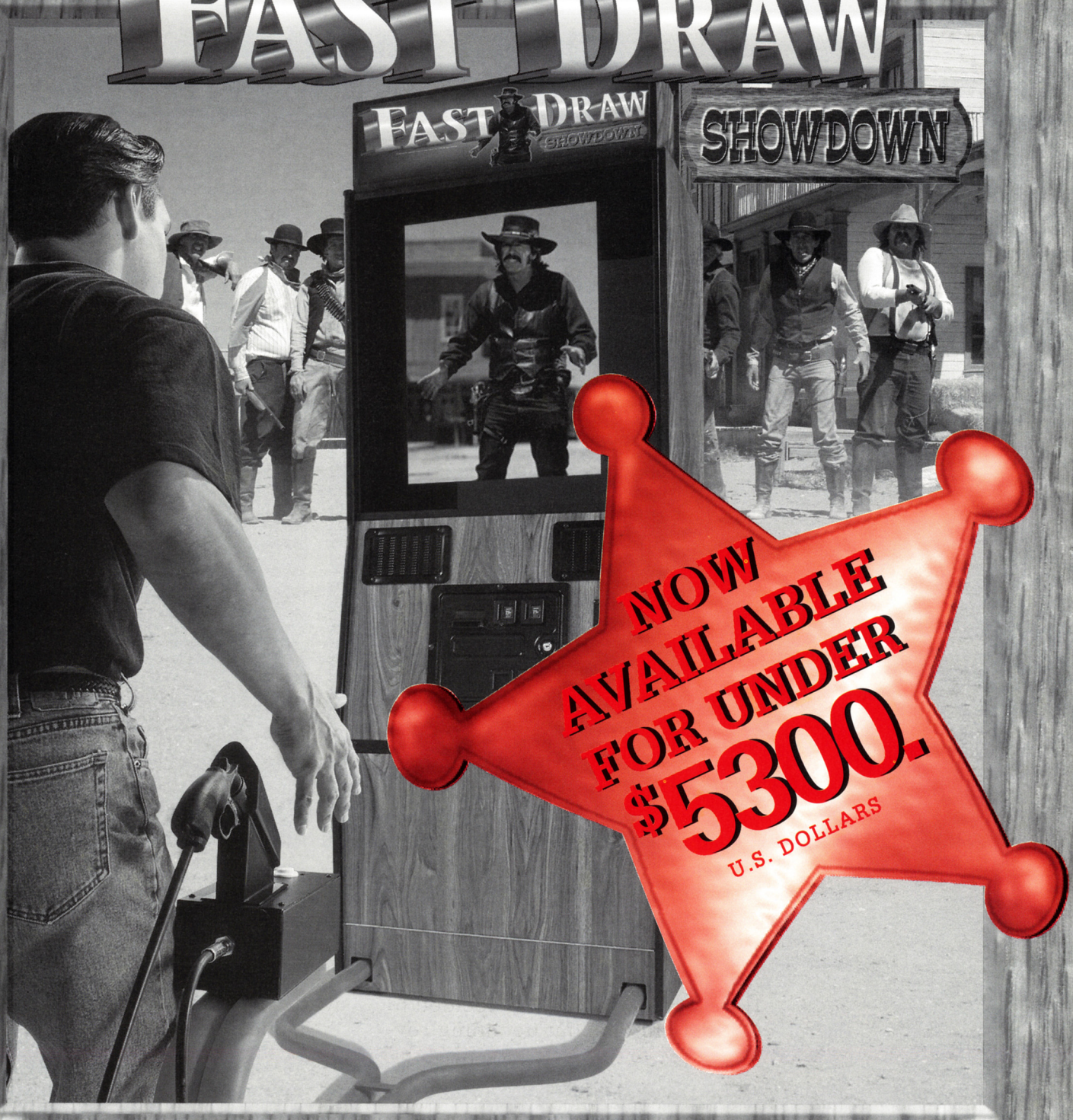
Or, reassess your locations. Spend some time talking to the players. For a short-term boost in game room settings, host a tournament or sponsor a special promotion to draw players in with discount coupons (two-for-one-token day perhaps). Advertise these specials in your city newspaper, high school or college newspaper, or on radio stations that your core clientele favor. Ask any teenagers and they will tell you their favorite spots on the radio dial.

Tournaments are not limited to pool, darts, air hockey, and foosball. Try a father/son pinball tournament (this is where dad may outshine his offspring) or basketball tournament- Don't rule out video game tournaments. Invest in some cassette tapes or CDs of hot rock groups and give them as prizes for the top scores in a three-hour period on either old or new videos. For the father/son event try sporting goods as prizes. Just use your imagination.

The object of the game is to get warm bodies into your locations and remind them that you are there. Give them a reason to come in now and later. Look for alternative ways to achieve this goal. Extricate yourself from the quicksand of dismay over a low cash pan.

No one is saying that such a move is easy. The status quo is a comfortable place, even if you are not totally happy there. It represents the known versus the unknown of untested waters. Yet it is clear that standing still will not improve the situation. Change is inevitable. Change is a part of life. Change is necessary. Take no action and change will occur around you, perhaps to the detriment of your business. Take control and chart a new path. As playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote: "Hell is to drift; heaven is to steer." ▲

FAST DRAW



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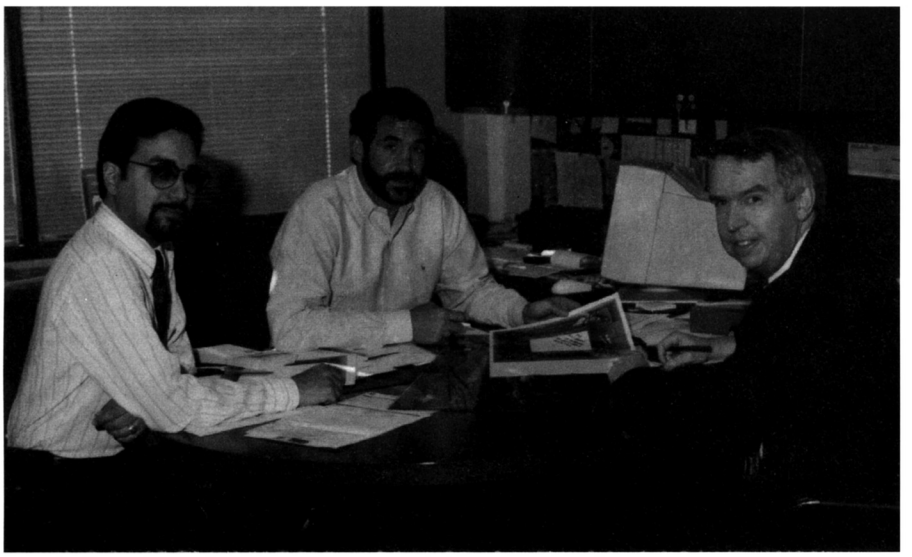
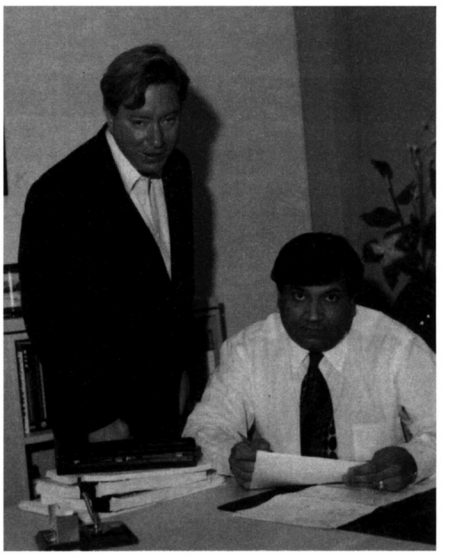
COVER STORY

Capcom's winning combination for success

Although Capcom Ltd. was founded by Kenzo Tsujimoto only 15 years ago, and the U.S. office is just 10 years old, its tremendous impact on the coin-op industry is apparent. At a time when operators were desperate for games that would allow them a fair return on their investment, Capcom obliged by giving them *Street Fighter*.





Left:
Frank Ballouz (c) with Alex Jimenez (l) and Tom Harlan of the advertising firm, Beeline Group.

Mark Trotter (l) with Satinder Bhutani.

To appease operator demand for more great games, Capcom gave them *Street Fighter II, Street Fighter II: Champion Edition, Street Fighter II Turbo, Super Street Fighter II,* and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*. To those who said enough is enough, Capcom answered that as soon as players had enough the run would be finished.

But players didn't seem to get enough. As is par for the course in our industry, fighting games became the most popular theme with every company. Every fighting concept and character were thrust upon the market.

Surprisingly, although Capcom is most famous for its *Street Fighter* series, the company has not rested on its success. Capcom's run of exceptional games including *Alien vs. Predator, Dungeons & Dragons Tower of Doom,* and *DarkStalkers* have allowed the company to sell in excess of 25,000 games per year.

But there were some potholes along the way. When Capcom was selling *Street Fighter*, the most popular game since *Pac-Man*, management challenges created some serious problems within the company. "How can a company have the hottest game in town and yet collect enemies like flies?" asked a perplexed industry.

Now it's out with the old and in with the new. Dismay has been replaced with respect since the addition of the most respected man in the industry, Frank Ballouz. He'd be the first to argue that there are other people who have earned more respect within the industry, but those who have dealt with Frank agree he's at the top of the list.

Frank is optimistic and enthusiastic about the challenge ahead. He's made it quite clear that his greatest assets in the

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industry are his reputation and integrity, and he will not compromise either one. "When I give someone my word, I stand behind it. Mr. Tsujimoto has shown his commitment to us by supporting my decisions and accepting my ideas as Mr. Hirata, Mr. Hirao, and I lead Capcom U.S.A. forward," he explained.

Frank was referring to Mr. Hirata, who is the new president of Capcom U.S.A., and Mr. Hirao the vice president of corporate planning.

Mr. Hirata has been with Capcom Ltd. for close to 10 years and is looking forward to working at Capcom U.S.A. He said, "I am anxious to bring my experience and knowledge of Capcom to the United States. I've known Frank since I was at Sega many years ago and am looking forward to working with him. I've enjoyed our first six months and know we have have made some postive accomplishments toward our goals here at Capcom."

"Mr. Hirata is a great man who is a joy to work with. He will be vital in the decision-making process," said Frank.

Frank's industry career began at Atari during the infancy stage of video games. He sold games like Asteroids and was a vital part of the industry as it evolved. He was working for Nintendo when the company offered a sluggish industry the VS. system that reportedly saved many operators from bankruptcy. Frank left Nintendo in 1988 and formed Fabtek, which is still a viable coin-op company. Remember Cabal, Raiden, Raiden II, etc.?

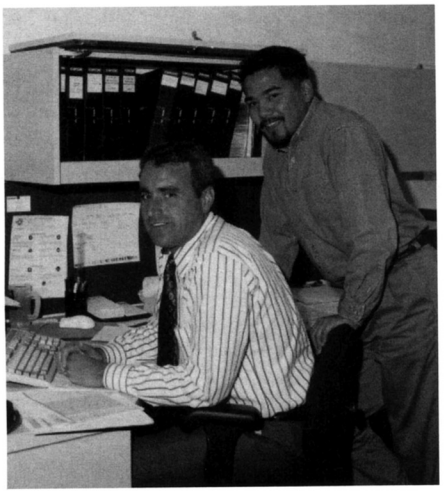
We talked with Frank about Capcom's future, his views of where the industry is headed, and why he is willing to put his head on the chopping block. Frank is aware of Capcom's position in the industry; he's sensitive about previous company decisions, and he's eager to talk about both.

Frank knows he has a tough road to navigate, but once you hear how he intends to travel the course, you'll instantly agree that Capcom is on the road to an extraordinary future, and you'll want to go along.

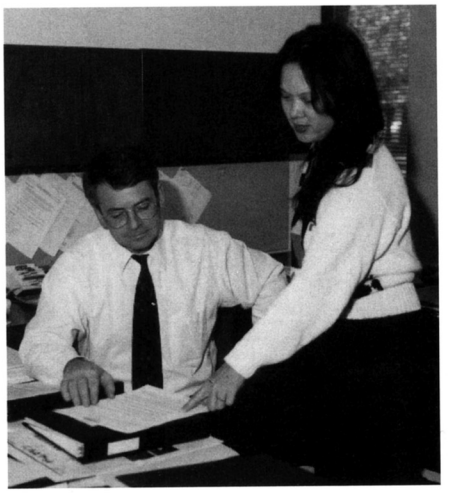
Frank spoke candidly about Capcom's revenue-sharing program, an ill-fated program that caused quite a stir within the industry. "It has been a point of contention within the industry," Frank began. "We now recognize that it's not the manufacturer's place to be involved in street routes. Our intentions were good. We thought we had found a way to help share the financial burden operators face when buying new equipment. However, we are willing to admit that it was a program that simply did not work out. We're taking steps to wind it down."

Capcom also is taking dramatic steps destined to make the company even stronger. For example, Capcom is assembling an in-house R&D staff in the United States that eventually will include 65 people. The director of this department is Rich Moore, who worked with Frank at Atari. Steve Hanawa, formerly of Sega, has been named vice president of R&D. The team will include newcomers with fresh ideas, experienced people who have worked on game design in the past, and some R&D staff members from Japan.

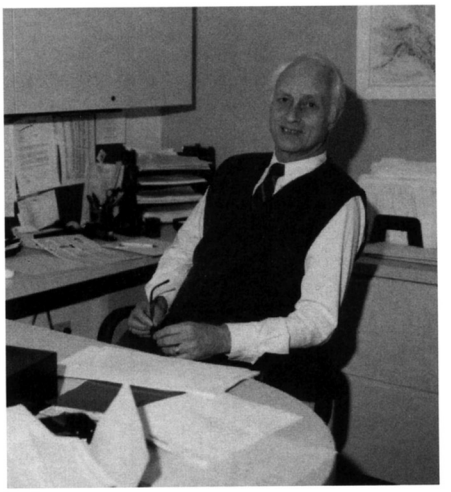
Ask Rich about new technology and Capcom's future and be prepared to listen awhile.



Nick Laherran (l) and Joel Pamid.



Legal counsel Ian Rose and Stephanie Chan.



Derek Bunning, director of credit.

He's so passionate about Capcom's goals and plans that it's contagious. While some of the technical talk goes over our heads, it's clear that Capcom is setting some stiff goals, and there's no doubt in Rich's mind that those goals are well within reach. We boiled down his comments into a few paragraphs and tried to translate it for the non-technical among us.

Rich believes that Capcom has led the pack in graphics and fighting-themed games. But he admits that the industry does not live by graphics and fighting games alone.

He explained, "One thing that brought me to Capcom was the well thought out game designs and how spectacularly they were presented to the player. Capcom has some of the highest standards in quality, production value, and animated realism. We want to accentuate these qualities on a higher level of technology. Going to 3-D allows the graphic presentation to be more alive and richer, with more vivid colors. It is visually stunning when presented to the player."

Rich added, "Our mission is to build on our strengths while branching out into different themes like sports, driving, and flight simulators, and still other areas of role-playing games."

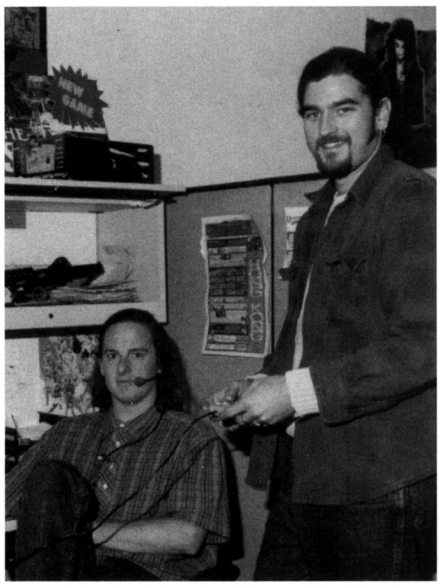
We asked Rich about the necessity of an R&D staff here in the United States. He explained, "As the animation gets more realistic, it is more critical than ever to have the nuances that make the United States so unique portrayed as accurately as possible. To capture that realism and then totally immerse the player into the game's action, everything about the game must have more reality. The only way to ensure that realism is to have design teams that live and breathe everyday experiences right here in the United States. They will enhance the development of realistic games."

Frank added, "The R&D team in Japan is fantastic. Having a team here in the United States will be a great supplement to their already established reputation."

But all this high-tech talk should not deceive you into believing that Capcom is abandoning the street operator. On the contrary, Capcom sets a high priority on street operators and their needs.

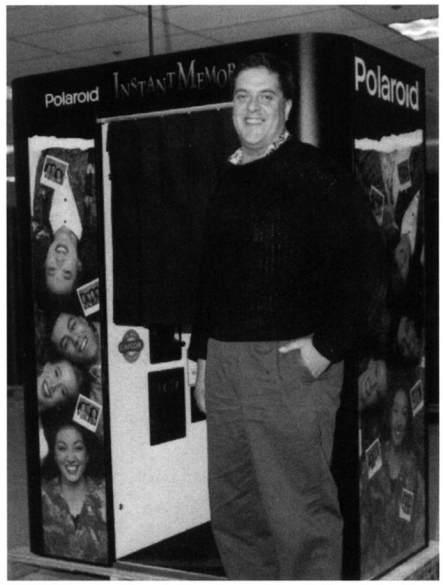
"Some manufacturers are driven by their interests in amusement parks and motion simulation platforms," Frank voiced. "These companies can spend all the R&D dollars they want, knowing they'll capture it back from their operations. However, while that may sound positive, it can also prove negative in designing games. What one company needs for its own operations may not be what the industry as a whole demands."

"Capcom is taking a different approach," Frank said. "We continually look for ways to drive the cost of games down, not up. Capcom has enjoyed an enviable place in the market because we are aware of what operators need. We've had an impressive list of games at reasonable prices. Our ultimate goal is to continue to bring out games with the look and feel



Game counselors Chris Kramer (l) and John Hargrove.

Erin Shiba (l) and Laurie Thornton in public relations.



Sal Jurado in front of the Polaroid Instant Memories photo booth.

that has made us successful, and to sell those games at very attractive prices."

Capcom is striving to introduce games that will earn operators a fair return on investment for years to come. While the game plan involves a system, Frank hates using the word. "No matter how much a factory supports a system, when it finally upgrades that system, operators go crazy," he said. "Remember the VS. system from Nintendo? It was a lifesaver for many operators. I'd challenge any operator to show me that he lost money on the VS. system. Yet, after years of support with outstanding games, when Nintendo replaced the VS. system with Play-Choice, operators accused Nintendo of abandoning them."

He continued, "Capcom will be offering the CPS II system to operators, but we'll emphasize that each game will stand on its own merits. Who wouldn't buy a *DarkStalkers*? Yet, once you have it, you'll be able to convert it with an equally good game somewhere down the line. I can assure you that Capcom will not be introducing games for the system that won't stand on their own.

"We recently opted to turn down some games from Japan because they weren't up to what U.S. operators expect and demand. I think it's important to note that Japan is not forcing us to take any game we do not feel is up to the expectations of Capcom U.S.A. or U.S. operators."

In addition to the CPS II system, Capcom is selling its *Polaroid Instant Memories* photo booth, which is a partnership with Polaroid. Said sales manager Mark Trotter: "We've lowered the cost of the photo booth considerably and are selling them strictly through distributors. We thought we could sell them direct to operators but learned that distributors offer the best support mechanism."

He added, "We find that the photo booth registers consistent earnings in a variety of locations—shopping malls, multiplex theaters, FECs, amusement parks, and nightclubs. This is a steady, long-term earner for operators."

We asked Mark his opinion on Capcom's direction. "I've been here two years and I've never been more optimistic. Frank has taken a strong leadership position with a long-term strategic plan that will benefit Capcom and the industry."

National sales manager Brian Duke, who has been with Capcom since 1987, is also optimistic about Capcom's future. He offered these comments: "It is so easy to say good things about Frank. He adds credibility and is positioning us where we need to be. He knows what needs to be done, and we're all on the same page. We've overcome some obstacles, and I like where we are now. We have great product. Our testing, which was in shambles, is now accurate. We can confidently show our customers how a game has done in any type of location. Each game just gets stronger. Our next game, *X-Men Children of the Atom*, is just unbelievable."

A strong, motivated R&D staff; top-quality, high-tech games; reasonable prices; a staff that is working as a team; and Frank Ballouz lending his experience, knowledge of the industry, and reputation to the mix. It is truly a winning combination. ▲

X-Men Children of the Atom

Hot news: Marvel's famous X-Men have teamed up with Capcom on a collaborative project to bring their adventures to life on the video screen.

The vehicle for the popular heroic figures: *X-Men Children of the Atom*, a head-to-head fighting title that follows Capcom's tradition of excellent games in the combat genre. Six of the most famous X-Men characters and four of their arch foes come to life, fleshed out by the same team that created the legendary Street Fighter series. Fans can find Wolverine, Cyclops, Psylocke, and other favorites sporting special moves.

Game highlights: X-Men remains faithful to both the comic book series and the animated TV program. This video version of X-Men is unlike any other Marvel license. Capcom's game marks the first time the X-Men are featured in a combat-style game where they battle against one another in fierce competition. Players can also select the X-Men's foes, including Omega Red, Spiral, and the rest of the bad guys.

Other special features include an auto blocking option that allows novice players to challenge pros. In addition, players can achieve three different levels of special X-power to help build strength and the ability to execute even more incredible moves against opponents.

Availability: January
Format: Upright, kit, and B-kit formats
Expectations: High

Users' Reports

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"We were using a system which had the "illusion of control" . . . The first shift manager counted all our Tokens. The third shift manager emptied all the cashboxes, and did a day-end count."

"The Token Tech has simplified our whole operation, and we know exactly where we stand every hour."

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Australian 20¢	5,000	Chile 1 Peso	4,500
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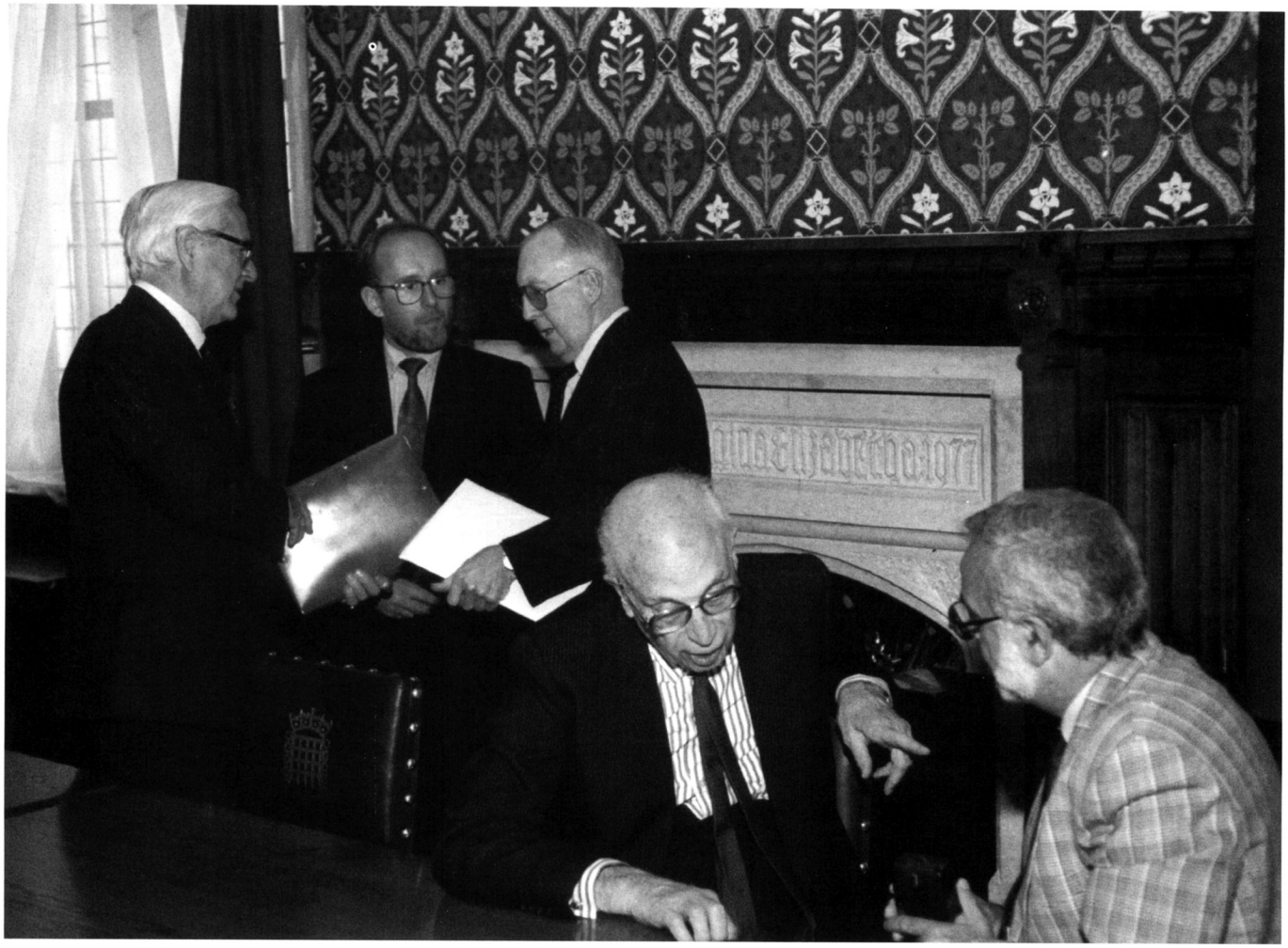
NEWS FEATURE

ATEI show brings together international contingent



ATEI exhibition manager Peter Rusbridge (c) is shown here at a recent pre-ATEI event. He is talking to Sir John Gorst MP (l), and BACTA General Secretary Allan Willis OBE. Seated are Lord Allen of Abbeydale and Antonio Ingles from Temas Recreativos.

ATEI, the London based amusement machine exhibition, has always been part of the UK industry. But with a constantly growing international audience—83 nations were represented at the 1994 exhibition—how strong are ATEI's claims to be regarded as The Show? Exhibition manager Peter Rusbridge provides an insight to the development and marketing of ATEI, which celebrates its 51st birthday in January.

For our readers who may not have visited ATEI, can you give an overview of the exhibition?

One of the most striking features of ATEI, certainly over the last three years, is the tremendous mixture of languages that you hear. We had visitors from 83 different countries at the 1994 exhibition, and it really makes you realize the importance of international trade, particularly within the amusement industry.

With the increase of cross-border trade and the development of new markets, it is ATEI's task to provide a forum which will help buyers monitor the new products which are being produced to suit the cultural and legal requirements of each country. There are still some people who believe that

ATEI is mainly about slot machines. Although they continue to play an important role in the exhibition, there is, in fact, a tremendous breadth of product on show including the very latest in video, redemption, virtual reality, pinball, pool, simulators, kiddie rides, novelty, and many more sectors.

Why do you think ATEI attracts so many international visitors?

I've worked as an exhibition manager in a large number of different industries, and it's true that ATEI's international profile is unusually high. In real terms, approximately 25 percent of our visitors are from outside the UK.

There are a number of reasons to explain it. Amusement industry buyers do travel all around the world. Also, amusement and leisure are universal. But perhaps most importantly, visitors are prepared to make the journey to London because they know they will see things which are new and which will give their businesses a commercial advantage. While ATEI is a social event, it is first and foremost about business. We aim to provide a sympathetic and professional environment in which that business can take place.

What measures have you taken to increase the international profile?

Our first task is to ensure that our international guests, and that is what they are—guests, receive the best possible service an exhibition can provide. This means that we help with travel arrangements to the UK, provide a chauffeur service from London Heathrow and London Gatwick airports, and a list of recommended central hotels where we have negotiated discounts of up to 50 percent. Once they are at the exhibition, there is a business class lounge exclusively for international guest and, of course, a team of interpreters.

Service remains at the top of our list of priorities, the philosophy being that if you give people the attention they deserve and that provided the product is right, they will return the next year, hopefully with their colleagues. In addition to concentrating on our current customers, we have an active marketing campaign to keep ATEI in front of our audiences in amusement journals throughout the world.

Can you explain the relationship between ATEI and BACTA, the British Trade Association?

The link with BACTA has existed throughout the history of the exhibition and allows us to provide an exhibition which is tailored to meet the demands of the industry. ATEI is truly organized by the amusement industry for the amusement industry.

How many staff work on the exhibition?

The board of directors, led by ATF chairman Charles Henry, contribute massive amounts of time to ensure the long-term strategic development of the show. However, in terms of day-to-day running of the show, there is myself, my assistant Samantha Byrne, and sales manager Dawn Millroy. We also use external consultants for design and marketing work.

Unlike other companies who might be involved in a number of exhibitions, we concentrate exclusively on ATEI. The advantages are that as a small team we are focused on one event and one event only. It means we are in a better position to develop a detailed knowledge of the market and satisfy the demands of our customers. When you are a small team, customers—whether they be visitors or exhibitors—value speaking to and dealing with the same people, which is a very positive thing in all areas of business.

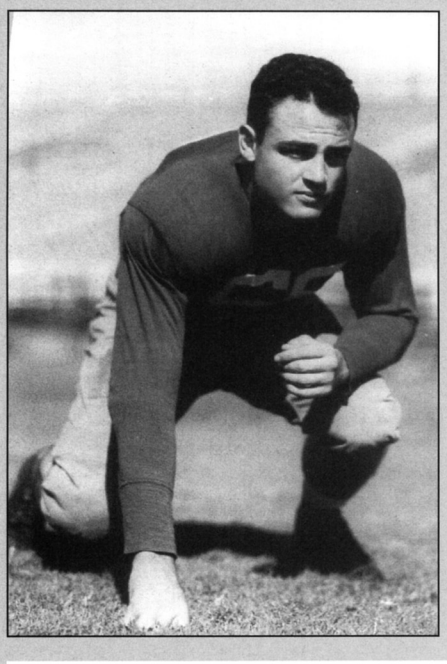
What do you think will be new at the 1995 ATEI?`

Although it's impossible to be specific about new products because exhibitors keep a close guard on what they will be showing, we do know that many companies delay product launches specifically for ATEI. Research we undertook in the lead up to the 1994 exhibition showed that, on average, each exhibitor launched eight new products. With over 200 exhibitors, that's an awful lof of new products in one exhibition.

Finally, what would you say to readers who may be undecided about making their first visit to ATEI?

I would encourage them to attend for two reasons: first, the quality of exhibitors means they will see all of the world's leading manufacturers with the leading products in one event; and second, on the basis that we have taken every possible measure to make their journey to London as trouble-free as possible and that once they arrive they will be treated as our valued guests. The only thing we can't guarantee is the weather, so bring an umbrella.

The show takes place on Jan. 24-26, at the Earls Court 1 Exhibition Hall in London. Entry badges, which will be free to international visitors, can be obtained by faxing details to ATE Limited at +44 71 713 0446. ▲



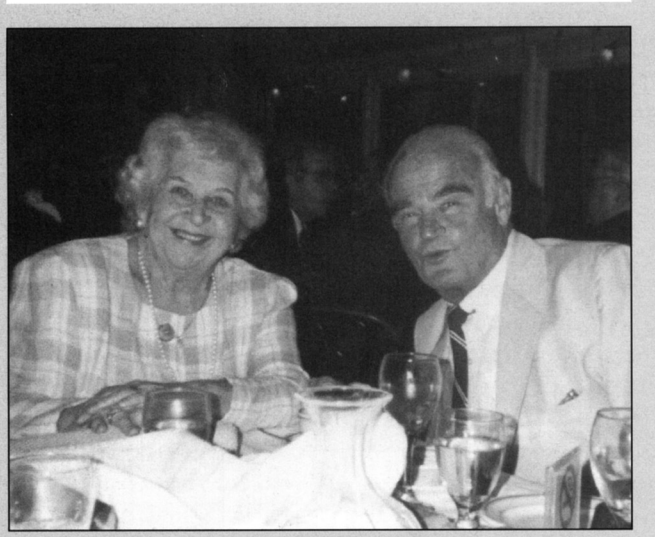
IN MEMORY
Louis Boasberg

Louis Boasberg liked to quote Shakespeare. In fact, he used quotes from the playwright in several of the articles he penned for Play Meter over the years. We don't know exactly which quote he would have chosen to use on this page, but since Louis was a true gentleman, the one above seems appropriate.

Louis passed away on Nov. 8, a shock to many of his friends. It was a shock because he was always so vibrant, outspoken, and healthy! He didn't eat lunch and his belief was that you could never get enough walking. However, toward the end he was unable to do much of it; he was simply too weak.

"A proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man."

Shakespeare in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"



Louis and his beloved Babsy.

Louis Mark Boasberg was born in Memphis 84 years ago and was an only child. While still a youngster, his parents moved the family to Canada where his father owned a race track. I'm not sure if he learned to walk first or figure handicaps, but he took a great liking to betting on the horses.

He was becoming a young man when his family moved to New Orleans, where his father built a lavish casino that attracted performers like Louis Armstrong. Perhaps his parents thought he enjoyed the gambling atmosphere a little too much, because it wasn't long before Louis was enrolled in a boarding school on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. After graduating from high school, Louis attended Tulane University in New Orleans where his love of sports and the coin-op industry would intertwine.

To make extra money while in school, he operated a few one-ball pinballs in locations on and near the campus. As a football player (he played in the 1931 Rose Bowl game) he built a reputation and a following. That recognition was soon helping him secure even more locations. He began to add different types of equipment to his growing route. He didn't know it then, but six decades later, he'd still be in the coin-op industry, loving every minute of what he did.

And he did love it. He had an opinion on everything from pinballs and videos to video poker and gambling. He enjoyed sharing his views with his lengthy list of industry friends. Those friends unanimously agree that they will sorely miss the letters he sent out on a regular basis.

Three of Louis' dearest friends visited him soon before he died: Si Redd, Paul Calamari, and Bill O'Donnell, who brought his son Bill Jr. With these words, Si recalls how generous Louis was: "We'd be driving and he'd stop the car, get out, and talk to some poor boys who were playing baseball, football, or other sport in a vacant lot. He'd talk awhile, then come back to the car and give them brand new mitts, baseballs, basketballs, etc. The back end of his car was always full of sports equipment."

Si credits Louis with his success. He explained: "The most financially rewarding thing that ever happened to me was moving to Nevada. Louis recommended to Bill O'Donnell that

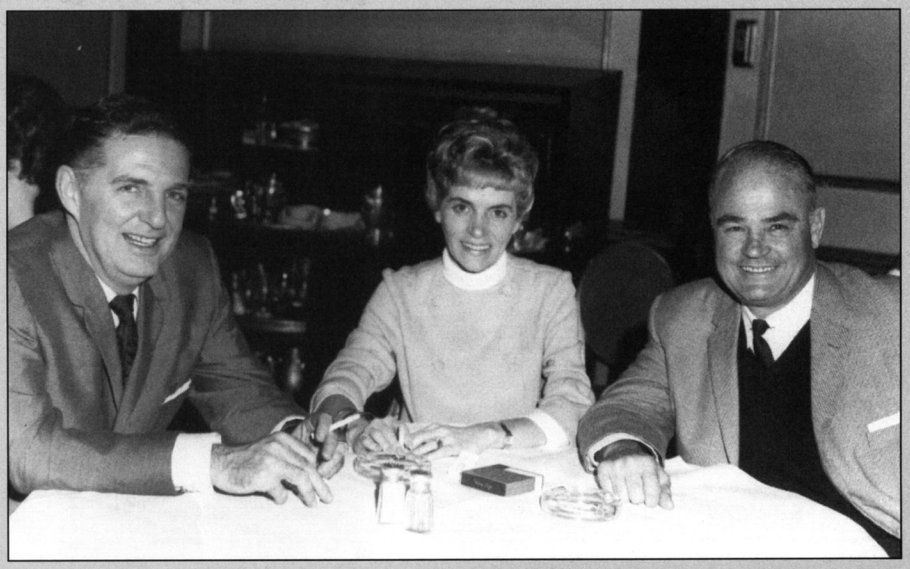
Bally give Si Redd the job, saying it was not the thing to do but the ONLY thing to do. Believe it or not, even though Louis did not operate gaming equipment and was never associated with slot machines, he gave me ideas for new machines."

Ironically, the last article Louis penned for Play Meter was a tribute to Paul's wife Edna, who passed away in September. Paul and Louis had been friends for decades, often enjoying some fight-to-the-finish discussions. Paul and Edna frenquently came to New Orleans during Mardi Gras. Louis often talked about the good times they had.

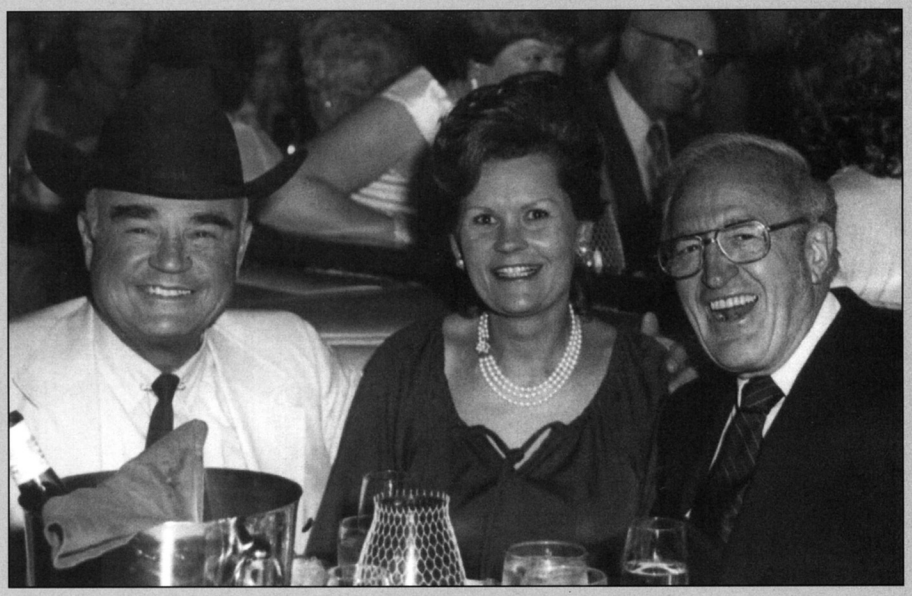
During the war, Louis was on the aircraft carrier, Intrepid, which was hit several times by kamikazi attacks. Memories of that time in his life resurfaced last February when Play Meter's cover featured a photo of Marty Bromley and his baby daughter, Lauran. Louis wrote: "No doubt the photo was taken in Honolulu, as shown by the copy of the *Star Bulletin* on the table in back of Marty's chair. This was the first newspaper that we read after being introduced back to civilization when our aircraft carrier, Intrepid, stopped off in Honolulu for repairs after being a victim of several kamikazes."

Louis met the love of his life, wife Barbara, while taking the train to New York. Barbara, who was from Seattle, was on an around-the-country adventure. Louis called the day he met "Babsy" the happiest day of his life. Louis and Barbara raised four sons, Bobby, Jack, Eddie, and Barry, and one daughter, Jane. All four sons are in the coin machine business.

"Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good night till it be morrow." We'll miss you Louis; rest in peace. ▲



Bill O'Donnell, here with his late wife Nikki and Louis, visited shortly before Louis passed away.



Louis (l) with dear friends Si and Marilyn Redd. When Marilyn heard Louis was gone, she said, "The store is closed."

Louis (c) served on the aircraft carrier, Intrepid, during the war. Here he is with some buddies.

PINBALL EXPO '94
Pinball Expo: the best yet

The press release for Pinball Expo '94 was correct. Folks who were at Chicagoland's Ramada O'Hare from November 10-13 for the event were treated to the best edition of Expo yet. There were more games, more people, more displays, more seminars—everything. The food at the banquet was even good!

The weekend began with busloads of attendees getting a first glimpse of Donal Murphy's Electrical Windings, Inc. plant. Murphy's 50,000-square-foot facility has produced coils and transformers for the pinball industry since the early 1940s. The plant is also home to Murphy's electromechanical pinball collection. Among the 82 restored playable games on display, are classics from Genco, D. Gottlieb & Co., Williams, and Bally.

Left:
Michael Gottlieb was crowned "Grand Wizard" after his victory in the tournament.

Right:
From left: Williams' Steve Kordek, Expo's Mike Pacak, industry legend Wayne Neyens, and Expo chairman Rob Berk.

After a stop for lunch, the caravan wound its way cross town to the home of Sega Pinball. Traditionally one pinball company is given the spotlight on a rotating basis for each Expo. This year, the choice of Data East was made before Sega's purchase of the 10-year old company. But that made the visit even more interesting. Tour members viewed Sega's Melrose Park production facility, including the main production line, as *Maverick* pinballs were completed. A second building, used for support services like cable assembly, also is home for Sega Pinball's executive offices.

Excitement mounted that evening as the exhibit hall opening time approached. At the magic hour the hall was instantly packed as attendees were treated to everything pinball. There were hundreds of vintage games for sale and on display. The walls of two exhibit halls were lined with vendors offering every imaginable pinball part, backglass, playfield, promotional flyer, score card and playfield plastic. As the featured company, Sega supplied 20 new *Maverick* games for the Flip Out '94, the four-day tournament at Expo. At the end of the event, the "A" Division winner, Jason Werdrick, narrowly lost the final match to Manufacturer's Division champ Michael Gottlieb. Mike won the trophy, title, and crown of Grand Wizard 1994.

Sega also sent some of its past hits including custom built games like *Michael Jordan* and *Ritchie Rich*. *Ritchie Rich*, although built to be a prop in the soon to be released movie of the same name, was programmed and set on free play. The standard pricing for this game is one play for $1 million dollars.

The pinGame journal booth was a popular place for both hobbyists and industry types with the appearance of a playable, pre-production "whitewood" of Sega's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. This marks the first time Expo or possibly any location has had a game at this stage of development available to the public. The booth included artwork and design drawings provided by artist Paul Faris and designer John Borg. This was a unique opportunity; Gary Stern and Joe Kaminkow of Sega Pinball should be commended for their indulgence and generosity.

Premier Technology provided a number of games for play including *Rescue 911* and *Freddy: A Nightmare On Elm Street*. Designers Jon Norris and Bill Parker were around to answer questions

Jim Schelberg & Tim Ferrante

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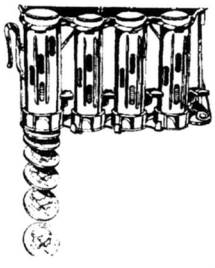

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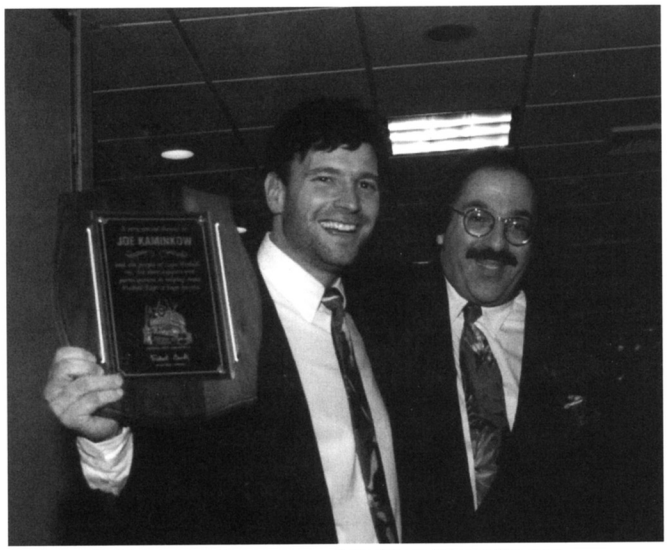
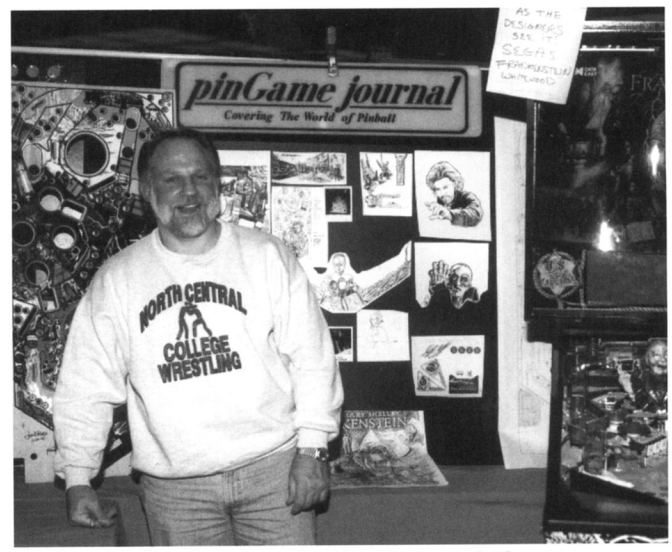
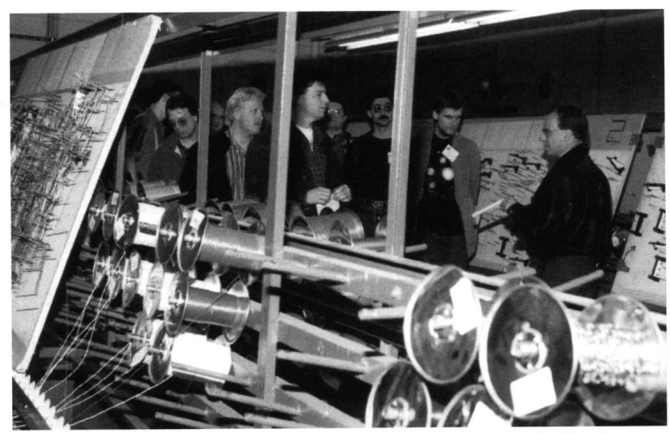


Rob Berk (r) presents an award to Sega Pinball's Joe Kaminkow during the banquet.



Paul Faris with his artwork and whitewood of **Frankenstein**.

Designer Pat Lawlor answers questions as the rest of the panel looks on.



Sega's Pete Gustafson (r) conducts a tour through the factory.

and explain game rules. The folks from Williams Bally/Midway set up *Red & Ted's Roadshow*, *Corvette*, and *World Cup Soccer*. A *World Cup Soccer* was the top prize in the raffle at the Saturday night banquet.

Next door to the exhibit hall a seemingly endless stream of seminars and Q&A sessions took place with names like "Game Design From A to Z," featuring Williams designer Pat Lawlor and most of the *Roadshow* design team and "How Many Did They Build" by hobby mavens Tim Arnold and Sam Harvey. Another first for Expo were the Fireside Chats, open to the public, in Expo chairman Rob Berk's hotel suite. Each session was attended by about 30 people. One featured current pinball artists and another was a more-than-two-hour affair with industry veterans Steve Kordek and Wayne Neyens. With the exhibit hall open around the clock from Friday at 5:30 p.m. to Sunday 4:00 p.m. there was never a lack of things to do.

The Saturday night banquet featured a charity auction with donations from manufacturers and collectors alike. Sega donated a new *Tales From The Crypt* pinball signed by the entire design team and a personalized *Laser Wars* jacket with patches depicting most of Data East's past games. The auction was followed by featured speaker, Joe Kaminkow, who presented the assemblage with a lighthearted look at Data East and those involved in its success.

As things wrapped up on late Sunday afternoon, there was a good feeling apparent among the "regulars." All of this "good" is the result of much hard work by many people, but most of the credit goes to Berk and exhibits chairman Mike Pacak. They are already wondering how they are going to top this success as Pinball Expo enters its second decade when Expo '95 rolls around on October 26-29, 1995. If this is the reality of Expo '94, one wonders how exaggerated the press release will be for next year's event. Maybe things have become so good they only need reality. For information contact (800) 323-FLIP. ▲

Dynamo receives top exporting award

Congressman Joe Barton (c) presents Dynamo founder Bill Rickett with the nation's top exporting award, held by Vavie Sellschopp of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Dynamo Ltd. has been awarded the President's "E" Award for Excellence in Exporting, an honor that recognizes firms and organizations for their competitive achievements in world markets and their contribution to the U.S. economy.

The award announcement was made by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, and U.S. Congressman Joe Barton made the presentation.

"Dynamo Ltd.'s record of increasing exports is tremendous," Barton said. "The company is one American firm that is leading the way toward U.S. prosperity and a prime example that America will flourish in world competition."

Dynamo is one of a select group of U.S. companies to receive the award created in 1961 by President Kennedy to recognize American exporters.

Pool, air hockey, and soccer tables are the company's mainstay products. Dynamo also manufactures video hardware systems, video games, and video lottery terminals.

"This is a fantastic tribute to all of us at Dynamo," said Bill Rickett, company founder. "Our employees take great pride in their work. To be honored by the president and recognized as one of the nation's most dynamic companies heightens the enthusiasm in all of us."

Founded in 1973, Dynamo is a privately-held company with annual sales in excess of $30 million. Since 1991, Dynamo has experienced double-digit increases each year in both domestic and foreign sales. The company now exports its products to 35 countries worldwide.

Look out for PAPA 5: Judgment Day!

Flippermasters from 11 European and Pacific Rim countries will challenge reigning pinball champ Bowen Kerins at the 5th Annual Professional and Amateur Pinball Association World Pinball Championships, set for Feb. 3-5 at the Park Central Hotel in New York City.

According to PAPA president Steve Epstein of The Broadway Arcade, the challenge is to "break the mold and outdo what we did at PAPA 4." Last year the tournament brought together over 800 competitors from 25 states and five countries and drew worldwide media attention. For the first time, top American players got a serious swipe at the international competition.

Says Epstein, "Since then all I've heard is 'invite the rest of the world; bring on Germany, give me Japan.' Well, here it is. I've extended invitations to 18 countries and expect teams from England, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Australia, Japan, and more. With that much foreign talent in the field, and the strongest American slate ever assembled, PAPA 5 will be a war. I have no idea who will be left standing. It will be judgment day."

Competitive divisions at PAPA 5 include three levels of singles, doubles, juniors, and the rapidly growing women's division. Although secrecy surrounds the choice of games, it's a safe bet that recent hits will be present.

Today's pinball is made of an array of chip-driven, multitiered, eight-balls-at-a-time, video mode, and digitized audio features so advanced that, as Epstein says, "It's totally '90s. This ain't the game your daddy played down at the diner."

For those longing for the good old days, PAPA will introduce a competitive bank of games from the '60s and '70s. Also new this year: PAPA's longtime sponsor Amtex Software will conduct Cyber Clash, a tournament on its award-winning computer pinball games.

PAPA 5

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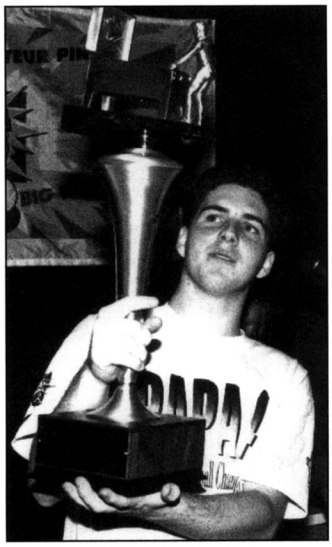
PAPA 5

Continued from pg. 29



Bowen Kerins shut out the competition at PAPA 4. Can he do it again?

Amtex has produced a series of challenging, fast-paced games utilizing art and play features of classic pinball games. Cyber Clash will feature the world premiere of Amtex's version of the 1957 masterpiece, *Royal Flush*, and will carry a purse of $7,500 in cash and prizes.

Last year's event saw two virtual unknowns capture the title in the singles and women's divisions. Leading the pack in A level singles is current champ Kerins, who faces competition this time around from Jason Wendrick, Hal Erickson, Bill Kurtz, and Dominic Nardini. Other players hoping for the crown are David Hegge, Fred Richardson, and Dave Stewart.

Ellen Frankel eradicated her more experienced competition in '94 to win the women's title. Again she faces Joannie Perry and a host of other women contestants. Richie Truxillo, 13, returns to defend his Juniors title against Josh and Zack Sharpe.

There will also be a benefit party for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, which brings theater and sports celebrities to the event. In the past Brooke Shields, Lou Reed, Penn Jillette, and Elle MacPherson have been among the stars to appear.

Epstein concluded, "We're very excited about working with Broadway Cares again. Last year's turnout was spectacular, and show people sure play a mean pinball." Over $15,000 was raised in '94. For more information on PAPA 5, contact Sharon Kahn or Susan Jacobs, (212) 647-1850.

Keeping up with home games

Nintendo of America has an exclusive contract with Dallas-based Paradigm Simulation to create a 3-D game using Paradigm's real-time software technology for Nintendo Ultra 64, the 64-bit home video game system being developed in conjunction with Silicon Graphics.

Under the agreement, Paradigm will work with the creative team headed by Shigeru Miyamoto, who created Nintendo hits *Donkey Kong* and *Super Mario Bros.* A new game will debut this year.

Acclaim Entertainment has developed a new memory chip that replaces higher priced conventional ROM cartridge battery back-up systems. It will be incorporated in the *NFL Quarterback Club* video game for the Sega Genesis system.

Truck stop owners band together over video poker

Truck stop owners in Louisiana who operate video poker machines have formed their own association in hopes of offsetting negative press reports and lobbying for favorable legislation.

"Certainly our aim is not to circumvent any laws or rules but to try to see that we don't have a black eye in the media," explained Sal Diesi, president of the newly formed Louisiana Travel Centers Association. "We have common goals and common problems in our business as well as dealing with government."

The organization will help provide a unified front in talking to state police regulators, preparing an impact study, meeting with legislators, and promoting the business.

Paid membership currently totals about 25, according to Diesi, who hopes to recruit additional membership from more than 100 truck stops operating video poker machines in the state.

Under Louisiana law, truck stops can have up to 50 video poker machines, while restaurants and bars are limited to three. Truck stops are taxed at a higher level than the street locations.

But with elections coming up this fall in Louisiana some candidates are already promising that they will take video poker machines out of the state's truck stops if elected.

Those promises also come in the midst of controversy over the status of riverboat gaming, which has gotten off to a shaky start in the bayou state, and a nascent project to develop the world's largest land-based casino in New Orleans that has been held up by regulators for several years.

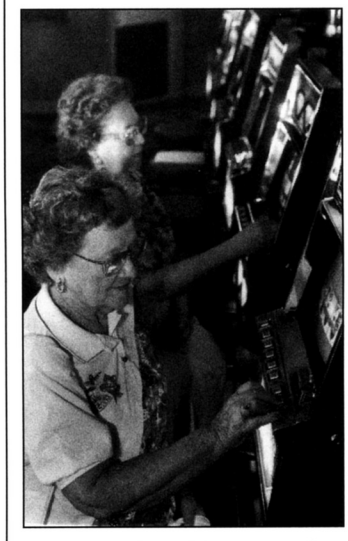
Diesi, owner of Diesi's Little Capitol Exxon in Breaux Bridge, La., says that while other forms of gaming may be bankrolled by out-of-state corporations, truck stops are local businesses.

"Our money stays here," he said. "Just about everything I earn is spent in the three- or four- parish area. We're not the barons some people portray us."

Diesi, himself a former legislator, said that any significant changes in the law this year are unlikely with statewide elections looming in the fall.

However, members of the association are interested in addressing in the years to come the issue of parity as it involves taxation, Diesi said.

"Most of us started out at the three machine level," he said. "We have the same machines and the same kind of business. We do feel like the stepchildren of the industry. We realize it's a new industry and we think things will settle down. We just hope things will settle down soon."



Players enjoy video poker in the O'Aces game room at the Union 76 Auto Truck Plaza in Slidell, La. (Photo courtesy of Mari Darr, Slidell Sentry News.)

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H. Betti forms Fun Merchants

H. Betti Industries Inc. has announced its newly formed division, Fun Merchants. The division will operate independently from the other HBI divisions.

Fun Merchants, headed by vice president Jeff Walker and national sales manager Chuck Morton, will market and sell the company's own in-house products, as well as Crompton coin pushers, IGS video products, and other amusement products.

Fun Merchants has contracted with Moloney Mfg. for production of *Rage 'N The Cage* and future in-house games. The company's next release is scheduled to be previewed this month.

Kaiser to debut Virtual Odyssey

Kaiser Electro-Optics (KEO) of Carlsbad, Calif., has selected Division Ltd.'s VPX image-generation technology for use in its new virtual reality entertainment system.

The new system will be called Virtual Odyssey and will bring the latest in head-mounted displays and immersive computer graphics to the video entertainment market.

KEO specializes in advanced optical systems and has supplied visualization technology to the military for many years. The company has been working for the past year on the Virtual Odyssey system, which incorporates KEO's latest head-mounted display, the VIM 1000 personal viewer, and Division's VPX graphics system.

Virtual Odyssey has been developed to offer immersive entertainment for family entertainment centers, as well as clubs and bars. The machine was launched with *Cue View*, KEO's first VR game, at IAAPA '94.

The game is a VR pool game, allowing the player to experience the action from the perspective of the cue ball. It can be operated both as a single-player system, and in a network allowing two players to compete in the same virtual environment.

Irata joins with General Growth

Irata Inc. and General Growth Management Inc. have announced the formalization of an expanded relationship between the two companies.

The agreement was announced jointly by Robert Searles, president and CEO of Irata, and Mark Klockner, vice president of General Growth.

General Growth, based in Minneapolis, Minn., is the country's largest third party shopping mall management firm, operating 78 malls in 29 states. Irata operates over 500 *Video Photo* booths, which produce computerized versions of the traditional self-service photo.

Irata, which operates nationwide, currently has five *Video Photo* booths in malls managed by General Growth. Both companies expressed satisfaction with the results to date, and believe that the expanded relationship will benefit both companies.

Coin games shine at bowling show

Paul Virgadamo (l) and Jodi Powell of Southeast Amusement & Vending with Kevin Krauss of Strike and Spare Fun Centers.

From left: Rich Holley and Mike Holley of Southeast Game Brokers and Chris Langlo of Lane-Glo Bowling Centers.

The Southeastern Regional Bowling Proprietor's Convention & Trade Show was recently held at the Belleview Mido Hotel in Clearwater, Fla., and representatives of the coin-op world put in an appearance.

Attended by southeast bowling center proprietors and employees, suppliers to the industry, and special guests, the trade show focused on the theme "Building Bowling."

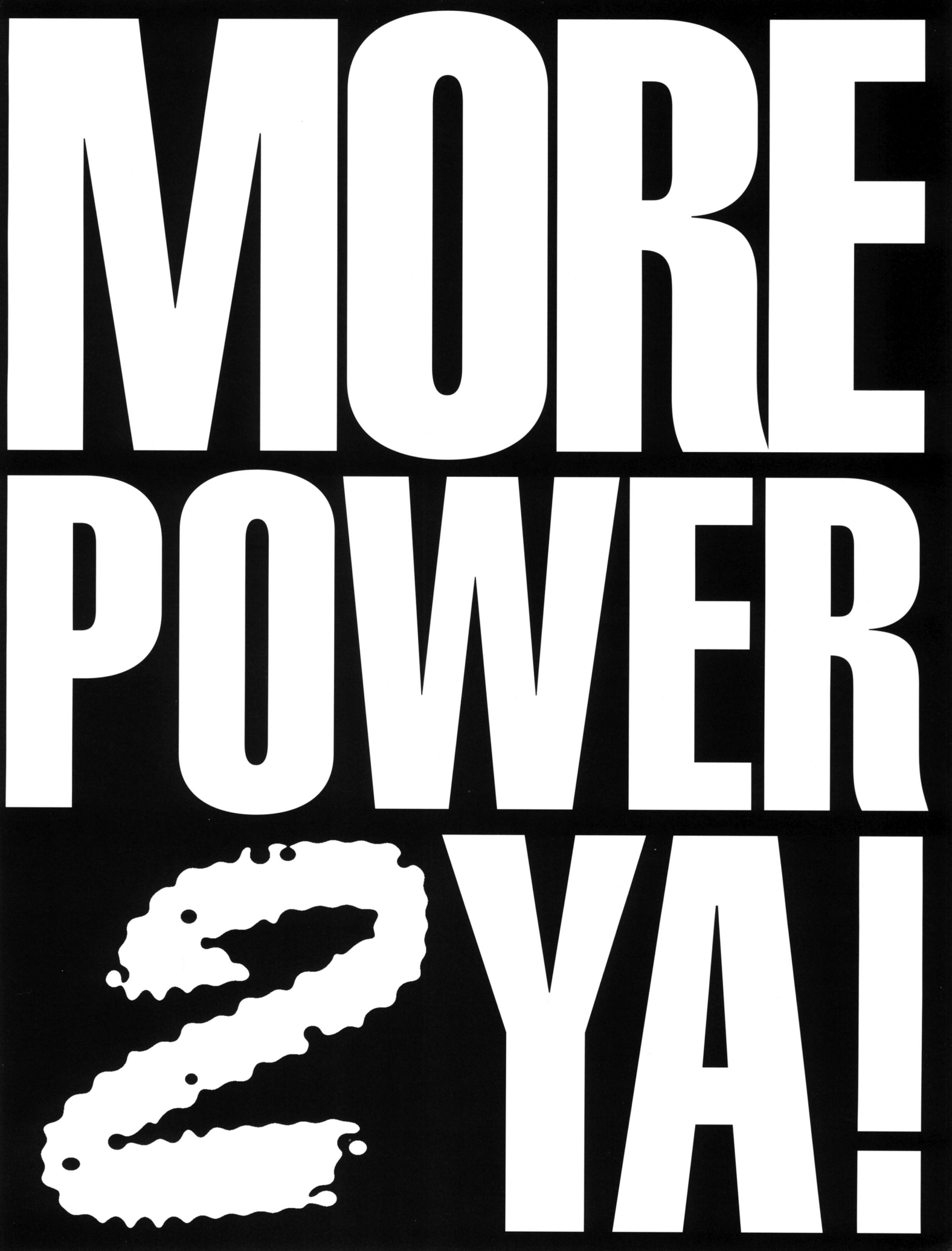
Getting into the act with a large display of amusement equipment at the show were Southeast Amusement & Vending Corp. and Southeast Game Brokers.

"In today's depressed economic climate, it has become very important for proprietors to maximize revenue from every square foot of their facilities, as they can no longer depend on bowling revenue alone to survive," said SAVC president and CEO Paul Virgadamo. "Amusement vending revenue is more than ever an integral part of every proprietor's bottom line.

"As a result of these increased economic needs, bowling center owners showed a greater interest in our programs, which have produced substantial revenue increases in all bowling centers where they have been implemented. This was our most successful bowling show to date."

Said Rich Holley, president of SGB, "This show is always a lot of fun and does produce results. Our participation every year is just a small way to show our appreciation to this industry that has done so much for us in our continued growth and success."

Tampa-based SGB had something different in its booth this year to capture the attention of attendees: Mr. Bentley, vice president of new accounts. Mr. Bentley is actually a remote-controlled robot who talked with potential customers and left them with a smile on their faces.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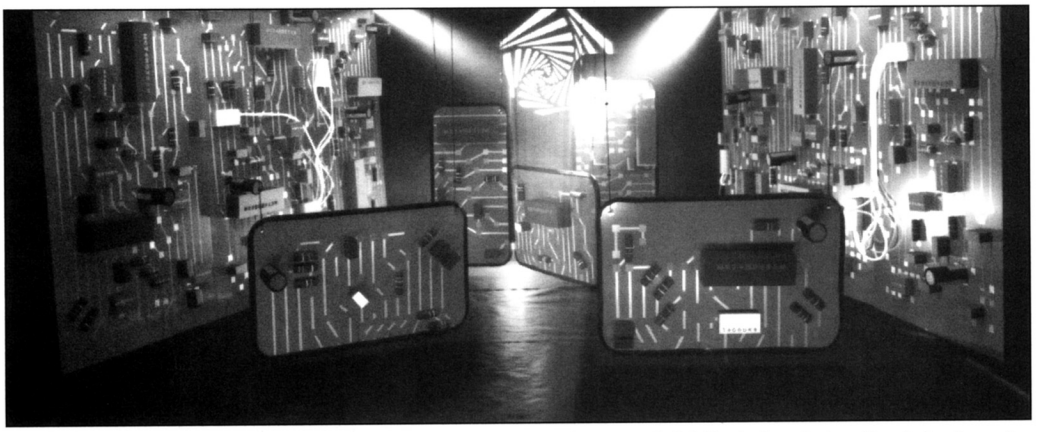
Laser Storm plays the name game with its game name



This Laser Storm arena, Circuit Commandos, features a playfield that simulates the interior of a computer.

Recognition of their increasingly popular laser tag game, *Laser Storm*, has prompted Space Sport Ltd. to change it's name. The company will now be known as Laser Storm Inc.

Space Sport was formed five years ago with the objective of developing a revolutionary interactive laser game. By combining exclusive high-tech equipment with unique and imaginative game concepts, *Laser Storm* was developed. Since that time, many operators have opened successful *Laser Storm* arenas throughout the world.

"The company is growing faster than our expectations, and with that growth has come tremendous recognition of the name," said company CEO Bob Cooney. "It is simply logical for us to change our corporate name to avoid confusion and to accentuate our commitment to *Laser Storm* and our operators."

Brady Distributing reaches golden year

Festivities are being formulated to officially mark the golden anniversary of Brady Distributing Co. on April 7-8.

President and CEO Jon Brady remarked that it all started when his dad, the late C.B. Brady, was appointed as a Wurlitzer distributor on Dec. 7, 1944, a memorable date in world history as well.

The senior Brady had been an operator in Durham, N.C., for nearly 15 years prior to the appointment. Brady Distributing continued to add more lines and grow to its present day operation of four offices: Charlotte, N.C.; Memphis, Tenn.; Miami, Fla.; and Orlando, Fla.

An expansion is underway at the Charlotte home office on Yorkmont Road, the company's headquarters for the past 12 years. According to Brady, 36,000 square feet are being added to the warehouse and 4,000 square feet each to the showroom and administrative offices. Total square footage leaps from 40,000 to 84,000 square feet.

Congratulations to Brady and his staff. Look for more about the company's history and celebration this spring.

In other Brady news, the company is the first U.S. distributor to carry the BWB Newark Ltd. line of equipment from the United Kingdom. The first available BWB machine is *Sunset Skill Stop*, a ticket or token payout game designed for the U.S. redemption market.

BWB's USA sales manager Don Tunstall explained that the game has tested well in many Florida family entertainment centers, game rooms, and arcades.

Electronic Entertainment Expo set for May

Infotainment World and Knowledge Industry Publications are jointly producing the first E3 Electronic Entertainment Expo, set for May 11-13 in Los Angeles.

The event has been endorsed as the interactive entertainment industry's official trade show by the Interactive Digital Software Association, which includes such companies as Acclaim, Capcom, Crystal Dynamics, Electronic Arts, Konami, Nintendo, Philips, Sega, Sony, TWI, and Viacom.

E3 expects over 300 exhibitors to present products at this electronic shopping extravaganza. Developers, publishers, producers, manufacturers, and distributors are expected to participate. All entertainment platforms will be represented, including cartridge, CD-ROM, CD-i, 3D0, personal computer software products, and interactive TV and cable.

Said Patrick Ferrell, president of Infotainment World, "With more than 10,000 game and 'edutainment' titles now on the market, and over 150,000 retail outlets selling electronic entertainment software across more than 10 major distribution channels in the United States, the interactive electronic entertainment market now required a dedicated trade event that reflects the needs of both buyers and vendors."

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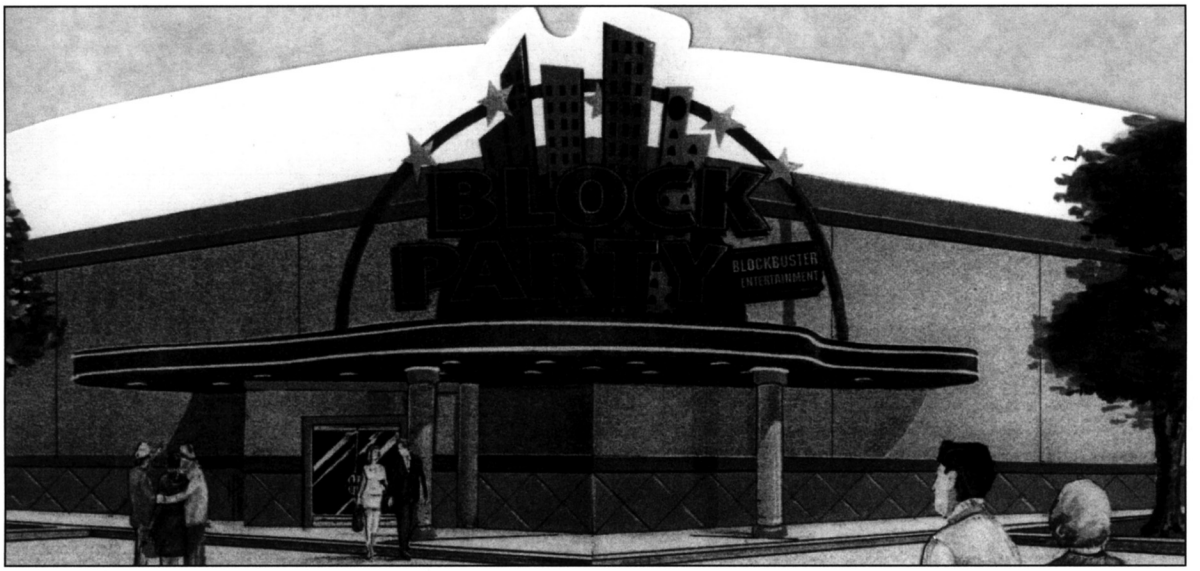
Blockbuster throws first party in Albuquerque



Blockbuster Entertainment has opened Block Party, the first in a series of state-of-the-art indoor entertainment complexes geared toward adults, in Albuquerque, N.M.

The facility is designed to fill the need among adults 18-45 for accessible interactive entertainment. "We designed Block Party to be a city within a city," said Bill Burns, president of Blockbuster's entertainment division. "Guests can't help but get absorbed into the engaging animation, thematics, and special effects that are the essence of the Block Party design."

Block Party provides visitors with many entertainment options, ranging from an adult-oriented, high-tech playground and motion-based simulator experience to spontaneous giveaways and a relaxed party atmosphere.

All Block Party attractions and electronic games are accessed with a Fun Card, or electronic debit card which can be purchased in any denomination and recharged. Package deals are also available.

The location-based entertainment venue's atmosphere is carefully orchestrated through the use of thematics, animation, and special effects, all of which are brought to life by the eight unique areas and attractions.

These attractions include: *Infomania*, a street-side newsstand to gather vital information and purchase Fun Cards; *Power Grid*, the hub of excitement demanding physical savvy in a multi-level maze of shifting landscapes; *Soup'er Bloopers*, a quirky parody of a sports cafe with unique foodstuffs; *Go Motion Pictures*, a motion-based simulator; *Virtua Alley*, offering a virtual reality adventure beyond the senses; *The Tube*, an offbeat oasis where guests can break away and regenerate their energy with musical entertainment; *Flippers*, for the ultimate in high-tech game experience; and *Alarm 'N Stuff*, the place to find the hottest bargains on the Block.

A second Block Party is scheduled to open in Indianapolis, Ind., this month, with others to follow throughout the year.

Companies providing feature attractions include ITEC Productions, Soft Play Inc., Iwerks Entertainment, and Virtuality Entertainment Inc. Also featuring games at Block Party are Sega, Williams, Namco, and Konami.

CMIA meeting

Frank Seninsky of Alpha-Omega Sales was the keynote speaker at a meeting of the Coin Machine Industries Association of Massachusetts. His presentation covered redemption, the NANI project, and the video violence rating system. From left: Melo-Tone Vending's Jack Kerner, CMIA president Mark Levine, Brad Ogren, Christian Kerner, and Seninsky.

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In other news

• A new simulator attraction by Dream Quest Images opened in the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn., in December. Titled "The Legend River," it follows a boy and two faithful friends on a four-and-a-half minute river journey on a raft. All the special effects are based on musical notes.

• Mondial Distributing and the Fresh Air Popcorn Co. have reached a tentative agreement for Mondial to exclusively distribute Fresh Air's new coin-op popcorn machine in the United States.

The unit comes with both a coin acceptor and bill validator and dispenses 46 ounces of hot-air popped popcorn in under two minutes. Mondial executive vice president Tony Yula Jr. said, "The industry is looking for something new right now and this is something that both traditional vending operators and game operators alike can make money with."

• The Drew's Eagle *Dream Jack* six-player blackjack game has been approved by Gaming Labs International for the Minnesota Indian gaming market. The game uses four decks of cards and is available in five-bet or 20-bet versions. The player stations can be linked together for an internal progressive jackpot or attached to an external progressive system.

• Winners Entertainment reports that revenues are up after the first full month of operating 400 new video lottery machines at the Mountaineer Race Track & Resort in Chester, W.Va. The company expects even better results after implementing a comprehensive marketing and busing program under development.

• Automated Wagering International, a subsidiary of Video Lottery Technologies, has been awarded a five-year contract to operate the New Jersey on-line lottery system. ▲

New arrival

Sega Pinball game designer Tim Seckel and his wife Kelly are the proud parents of a baby girl, Madison Paige, born a few months ago weighing 5 lbs. 11 oz. Congratulations, and welcome to a future coin-op game player.

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Redemption Machine

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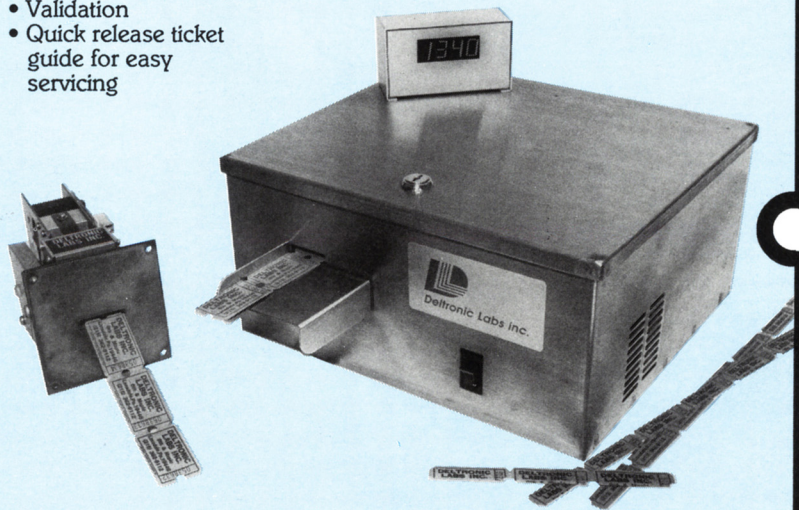

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The "Cougar IQ" will be the next upgrade example.
At the '94 AMOA Show, we pre-announced a new "smart" dart machine with a color monitor, a new overhead display, a card reader, and on site & remote communication abilities ... among other things. This "Cougar IQ" model won't be in production until around mid-'95, but we want Valley operators to know what's coming so they can plan. Just as important, we want operators to know that an update kit will be available to "smarten' up" all current and past folding models we've made in the last 3 years.

What we're really saying is that — when you select a dart machine — you're really selecting the company behind it.
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Breakaway trade group formed in UK

Licensed operators in the UK who hope to affect changes in the country's gaming laws have split from the mainstream trade association BACTA and formed their own organization, Coin Slot International reported.

Two of the main players in the formation of the Licensed Gaming and Entertainment Industry Association (LGEIA), Norman Leftly and Mike McFadden, say that BACTA does not represent the interests of licensed suppliers.

One of the major issues which LGEIA hopes to address is a provision in the UK's 1968 Gaming Act which requires that operators receive a static rental fee from gaming devices such as AWPs (amusement with prize machines) and even pinball games.

Most AWPs are located in pubs controlled by the UK's major breweries, for all practical purposes leaving operators at the mercy of the brewer's monopoly to determine their rental fees.

"We will begin by lobbying for revisions to the act to enable suppliers to obtain an income from machines proportionate to their use, which should apply to slot machines, pinball, and other forms of entertainment by gaming," said Leftly, formerly of Jaleco.

"With the cost of equipment it is simply not feasible to be faced with a static rent," said McFadden of VPA. "All we're talking about is basic economic facts of life. The old scam implicating profit sharing with the criminal element was a lie."

The group also intends to push for legislation banning machines that can potentially be used for illegal gambling.

BACTA officials, who have been striving to maintain unity within the organization, expressed disappointment at operators' perception that their interests had not or would not be represented.

While both organizations desire some of the same revisions in the gaming law, revenue sharing is not an item on BACTA's agenda, according to Coin Slot.

Rowe/AMi visits with Puerto Rican distributors

Rowe's Joel Friedman joined Carlos Rivera of Funny & Fun at the grand opening of the Puerto Rican company's distribution center.

Joel Friedman, executive vice president of Rowe International, along with Rowe's Phil Cole spent several days during the fall visiting with the company's distributors and music vendors in Puerto Rico.

Open houses and training sessions were held at Funny & Fun, James Industries, and Mondial International. Operator attendance was very heavy at all three functions, and Cole's educational seminars drew well over 100 operators from every region in Puerto Rico.

Friedman joined Carlos Rivera of Funny & Fun in cutting the ribbon at the grand opening of that company's distribution operation. He also attended the grand opening of Mondial's new facility.

After visiting a number of locations, Friedman said that Puerto Rican operators "have warmly embraced the Rowe/AMi jukebox line. Our jukeboxes are all over the island in every type of location, and operators are delighted with the cash box results."

Skee-Ball to supply games to Port Aventura

Skee-Ball Inc. has been contracted to supply a full-scale American-style midway game program to Port Aventura, a major theme park under construction in Salou, Spain. The park is scheduled to open this Spring.

Jeff Hudson, Skee-Ball's European operations manager, worked with park officials in designing the games area and selecting the type of games to be featured.

Games at the park will include: Basketball, Milk Can, Cat Rack, Frog Bog, Water Race, and the new *Skee-Ball Lightning*. Additionally, Skee-Ball will provide a cash control and management system and installation services.

Skee-Ball was selected to supply the games because of its manufacturing expertise and extensive experience in introducing American-style midway games to Europe. The company has successfully completed midway projects for the UK's Thorpe Park, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Chessington World of Adventures, and Germany's Holiday Park.

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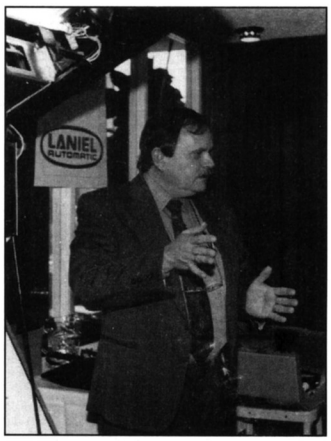
NSM reaches new heights

A United Way fund-raiser in Toronto achieved a new high recently when two fitness enthusiasts hauled a 282-pound NSM jukebox up the steps of the world's largest free-standing structure.

Ray Dilling and Jim Dean took less than three hours to get the jukebox up the 1,760 steps of the CN Tower as a preamble to the charity's two-day 16th annual stair climb.



NSM America's field service trainer Keith White was recently in Montreal to conduct a school for the company's distributor, Laniel Automatic.

Thousands of climbers, unburdened by jukeboxes, participate in the event, which has raised more than $1 million since its inception.

The jukebox was donated to the United Way by Gilchrist Vending in Toronto, and provided high-quality audio entertainment for the party that followed the charity event.

NSM also recently put in an appearance in Montreal when Keith White, NSM America's field service trainer, ran a school for the company's Montreal distributor, Laniel Automatic.

The school was a big success, and White praised Laniel's hospitality.

Acclaim Japan appoints Koshikawa general manager

Kiyo Koshikawa has been appointed general manager of Acclaim Japan Ltd., a subsidiary of Acclaim Entertainment Inc. In his new role, Koshikawa will be responsible for overseeing operations, including marketing, sales, and distribution.

Koshikawa will report directly to Robert Holmes, president of Acclaim Entertainment.

"Kiyo brings vital merchandising, operational, and management expertise to this important new position," Holmes said. "We're confident his extensive, high-caliber experience will enhance Acclaim's overall performance in Japan."

Acclaim Entertainment is a worldwide entertainment publisher of software and peripherals for Nintendo and Sega hardware systems, personal computer and CC-ROM software, coin-operated arcade games, proprietary motion capture systems and comic books under the Valiant imprint.

The company also operates ADI, a global sales and distribution company for products from a variety of entertainment publishers.

Mondial appoints Arte Son exclusive Gottlieb rep

Premier/Gottlieb's L.J. Greene tries her hand at one of the pinball machines at Mondial's grand opening while Taito's Carlos LaGuardia looks on.

Mondial International Corp. announced that it has granted exclusive distribution rights for Brazil to the Sao Paolo-based firm Art Son Ltda.

The decision was announced after several weeks of negotiation that followed the SALEX show in Sao Paolo. Over the past several years, Gottlieb has been re-establishing its reputation for high-quality and high-earning pinballs all over the South American continent.

With the introduction of *Freddy: A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Mondial's export manager Fernando Galeb said he felt that the Brazilian market would be best served by Arte Son, which has a strong parts and service department and the financial resources to become an exclusive distributor.

"We have seen a big increase in demand from Brazil, especially from the fun center and arcade market, which has been expanding recently," Galeb said. "The market has now matured to a point that it will be best served by an exclusive distributor who can stock parts and give good service to support games."

In other Mondial news, the company's new branch office in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, was the host site of one of the island's biggest parties.

Over 150 local operators attended the party to christen the new office, and they enjoyed a lavish buffet and open bar while discussing the latest in coin-op equipment with Galeb and branch manager Ivonne Rivera. The party lasted until well past midnight!

"The Puerto Rican market has always been good for us, which is why we decided to open an office here to support our customers even more," said Mondial executive vice president Richard Sarkisian, who flew in to cut the ribbon. "I expected a great turnout, but this crowd is bigger than we hoped." ▲

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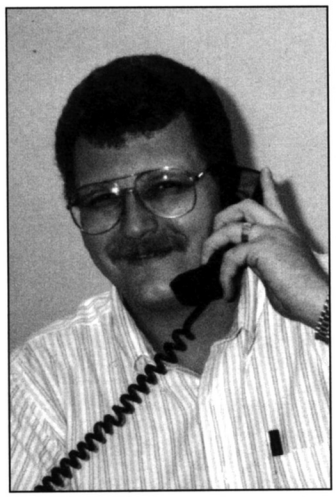
Jablonski to AA/Rock-Ola



Mike Jablonski

Antique Apparatus/Rock-Ola president Glenn Streeter announces the addition of Mike Jablonski to the post of director of technical services at the company's new 10,000-square-foot Rosemont, Ill., facility.

Jablonski's responsibilities will include technical support, training schools, and engineering support. He was a longtime technical staff member at NSM-America, but departed last September to work with his brother in the Chicago area.

Said Streeter, "I knew Mike was too young to retire from this industry. He will be training in Rosemont and Torrance (California) to get familiar with our product lines and how they function."

Added Jablonski, "Rock-Ola has an exciting future with its American-made jukeboxes with the features that jukebox operators demand. I'm looking forward to being on the team and helping Rock-Ola return to prominence in the industry." Jablonski can be reached at (708) 928-2121; FAX (201) 928-2128.

Skee-Ball promotes Moultrie to new post

Skee-Ball Inc. recognizes the significant contribution of sales manager Reggie Moultrie and has promoted him to the position of vice president of sales.

Moultrie has been with the company for two years. He previously headed the sales team at Vari-Tech International from 1989 to 1992, when Skee-Ball purchased the company.

Before his tenure at Vari-Tech, Moultrie was a 13-year member of the Six Flags organization, where he functioned in key management posts in the games and attractions department of Six Flags Great Adventure.

His new duties will include overseeing sales operations for both the Chalfont, Pa., Skee-Ball office and the National Sports Games division office in Phoenix, Ariz., for domestic distribution and national accounts, plus international accounts in Mexico, Canada, South America, and the Middle East.

Moultrie's experience and talents will continue to play a key role in the company's future expansion.

Valley appoints Allen

Valley Recreation Products president Dick Shelton announces the appointment of Bruce Allen as the vice president of manufacturing and engineering at the company's Bay City, Mich., headquarters.

Allen assumes total responsibility for the manufacturing and engineering operations at all three Valley facilities, including the electronic products division in Sycamore, Ill., the specialty wood products division at Shakopee, Minn., as well as the Bay City operation.

Allen joined Valley in 1981 in the engineering and model shop. He later became director of engineering in 1984, then manager of manufacturing operations in 1989, and plant manager in 1992.

"Valley's reputation for consistent quality and reliability is a direct result of the dedication of our people," said Shelton. "And nobody exemplifies this more than Bruce. For almost 15 years he has been a vital part of our growth and success, repeatedly demonstrating the vision and leadership so necessary in building and maintaining our high product image."

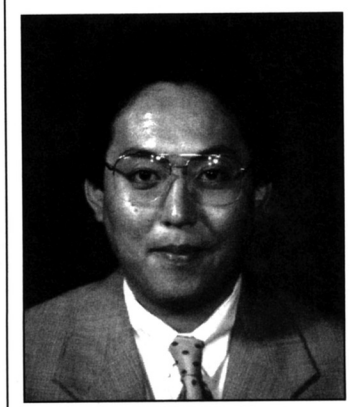
Ohata joins TWI

Time Warner Interactive, formerly Atari Games Corp., has a new director of international business, Tokyo native Masao Ohata.

Ohata will oversee the sales, marketing, and localization of Timer Warner Interactive products in the Far East and South America. In addition, he is responsible for the development of new business and partnerships in those regions, and for bringing new international business opportunities to TWI in the United States.

According to Bob Sheffield, vice president of new business development for TWI, "We are very excited to have Masao on board. His expertise in both the arcade and consumer game industries, and his knowledge of Japanese language and business, will allow us to aggressively expand our business in new international arenas, particularly in Japan and the Far East where we want to reestablish TWI as a world leader in video game entertainment."

Ohata was most recently vice president of Jaleco USA Inc., where he managed the company's consumer and international sales divisions, the coin-op video game manufacturing division, research and development, licensing, and operations.



Masao Ohata

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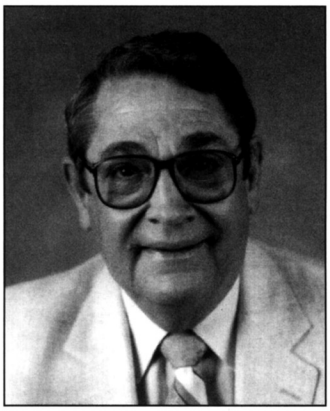
Blankenbeckler plans new company



Ed Blankenbeckler

Forty-five-year industry veteran Ed Blankenbeckler has departed Seeburg International Inc., where he was vice president of marketing and sales and spent most of his coin-op career.

We caught up with Ed at his home near San Antonio, Texas, and found out he was not considering well-deserved retirement. Instead he will start a new jukebox company. Blankenbeckler was busily compiling industry statistics that will be important for his new project. He quipped, "You could say I was vaccinated by the stylus that generates this music industry."

Industry associates can reach him at (210) 620-1617; FAX (210) 608-1418.

VLT names three

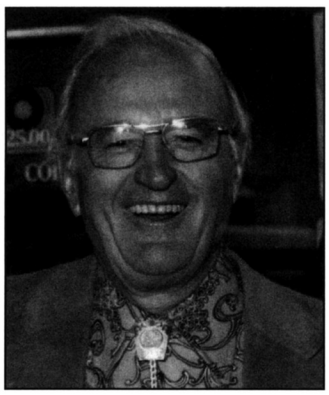
Video Lottery Technologies announces three senior management appointments:

Mark Cushing has been named president of Automated Wagering International Inc., the company's lottery division. Cushing moves up from the post of senior vice president; he joined the staff in 1989.

Michael Eide takes on the position of president of Video Lottery Consultants Inc., the company's gaming machine and systems division. Eide, who has been a part of VLT and its predecessor company since 1989, was formerly senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Richard Haddrill will replace Eide, assuming the post of executive vice president of operations and chief financial officer. Haddrill previously held an executive post with a provider of application development software and services.

Si Redd honored



Gaming icon Si Redd was recently named "Civic Leader of the Year" by the National Kidney Foundation of Nevada. Redd was honored at the Foundation's Annual Masked Ball and Dinner at the Stardust Hotel and Casino.

Dinnebeil moves to Classic

Dan Dinnebeil has joined Classic Inc. as president of sales. Dinnebeil spent the last 10 years with Grayhound Electronics, where his sales skills were applied to the marketing of cranes, video card games, countertops, basketball games, debit card dispensers, and other products.

This experience will stand him in good stead at Classic, which manufacturers redemption and sports equipment, as well as an extensive line of prize merchandise.

APA titleholder

Ron Park of Charlotte, N.C., captured the title of U.S. amateur champion at the American Poolplayers Association annual championship, held in Cleveland, Ohio. Joseph Rossman of Ladson, S.C., was the runner-up.

Condolences

We offer our heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of several industry members who have lost loved ones over the last few months.

NEW YORK: Tommy Greco of Greco Bros. Amusement Co. in Glasco, N.Y., will be sadly missed. He was instrumental in the start-up of the New York State Coin Machine Association and served as its first president in 1958.

Millie McCarthy of Catskill Amusements in Hurleyville characterized Greco as "a stalwart defender of the industry who helped lay the groundwork for today's operators." McCarthy and Greco belonged to the New York State Operators Guild, which became the NYSCMA.

Greco died on Nov. 3. His brothers Frank, Joe, and Jack, and nephew Tom continue in the business, both the operating company in Glasco and the distributing company in Albany.

CALIFORNIA: Dan Cravens, brother of Bulldog Amusements' Bill Cravens, died of a heart attack on Nov. 22. He was the parts manager for Century Vending in Gardena, Calif. He is survived by five sons.

LOUISIANA: Lois Cheramie, wife of New Orleans area operator Norris Cheramie, recently passed away. Mr. and Mrs. Cheramie had been married for 38 years. Norris, of Rand/Collins Amusements, entered the coin machine business when he purchased Collins Amusements in 1980. The couple have four children: Teddy, Becky, Tracy, and Tommy, and seven grandchildren.

OHIO: Bill Abbott, former employee of ABC Music & Games in Dayton, Ohio, and a member of the Ohio Coin Machine Association, died on Nov. 16.

Debbie Grotjan, daughter-in-law of Jerry Grotjan of Atlas Distributing in Cincinnati, Ohio, died unexpectedly on Oct. 21. She is survived by her husband Jeffrey, daughter Alison, and son Scott. ▲

NEW FROM JALECO

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The state of the music industry

When CD jukeboxes were introduced to the market, they were not accepted readily by everyone. Many experts predicted that it would take at least five years for the transition to be complete. It's been eight years since the first CD jukebox was introduced, yet there are still some clinging to their 45 jukeboxes. However, even those holding out are realizing the inevitability of making the change. But what's on the horizon? More changes in the music industry? No one can be sure, but we asked the major manufacturers their educated opinions on where they see the jukebox industry today and in the future.

"First of all, the transition from 45s to CDs is not over; every day more locations convert."

John Margold

NSM

First of all, the transition from 45s to CDs is not over; every day more locations convert. Yes, the "feeding frenzy" has passed because the obvious and easy conversions were made early in the CD years.

However, it is proven time and time again that a mediocre 45 location can be a decent earning CD location. The greater selection of music and the higher quality sound can turn a $40 per week location into a $120 per week one.

The top music locations have had CDs for at least three years, many much longer. Therefore, as these locations get new equipment, good used CD jukeboxes can be moved down to the locations that still have 45 boxes. In this way, one new purchase can please two locations.

Another reason why I believe that CD jukebox sales haven't yet been completed is the NSM wall jukebox. This is a unique product that allows operators to find new sources of revenue because it is perfect for locations that previously were thought to be too small or too crowded for a jukebox. NSM's compact changer enabled us to design a jukebox that can fit on a wall with no need of a hideaway. *Firebird, Performer Wall,* and our other wall models are examples of the capable engineering that has come from NSM. More examples will follow soon.

Last year was especially difficult for street operators. The video game business has been unexciting with little offered for street operators and pinball has been spotty. Although jukeboxes may not be a total salvation, without question, the operator with a healthy route of music and pool will have a much better chance of weathering the storm. As a matter of fact, right now is the best time for a smart operator to emphasize these street location basics.

Significant changes in the jukebox business are coming soon. The jukebox as we know it will change, but the concept of play-for-pay musical entertainment will continue. The operators with the best routes will win in the long run. By best

We'd like to say that our Solid Gold™ heralds an entirely new era in coin-op music.

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The Solid Gold was designed with everything an operator needs in a jukebox. Every income-enhancing feature possible. Almost infallible reliability. And an unprecedented life expectancy.

That was the easy part ... designing a jukebox that has what operators need.

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Meet the 100-CD jukebox that's ready for the new era: Solid Gold. It's fitted with the most advanced, amazingly efficient digital sound reproduction system there is ... a system so perfected, so capable that it's magazine-cover news in scores of major industries from broadcasting to computer science.

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The Solid Gold. Not a new era in coin-op music. But ready for it.

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routes, I mean two things: obviously top earning locations come to mind first. But just as important is the relationships built between operator and location owner. Some stiff competition may be just down the road, and the operator with strong relationships with their locations will understand why these ties are so important.

Technology systems, like that being established by NANI, may allow companies not currently in the coin-op world to become the operator's new competitors. Good customer relationships and well written contracts will be vital in helping existing operators keep their locations.

Now that music can be stored optically and magnetically, it has become part of the information superhighway. These storage systems break the information down into a series of zeros and ones (111001000100110, etc.). In the future, these zeros and ones may be transmitted in any number of ways. Operators may end up setting up mini radio stations to handle their music locations. Or perhaps it will be data transmission over fiber optics.

The engineers at NSM in Germany are working on the development of the most efficient systems and procedures. When the next wave of technology gets to the coin machine industry it will be in the jukebox operators best interest to have a solid music route. The basic cost to set up a digital system will be the same (or at least close to the same) whether you have six, 60, or 600 locations.

At first blush you may reason that with radical technology changes coming, it is best to stop purchasing current technology CD jukeboxes. On the contrary! Get your route up-to-date quickly. The operator with the most good locations will be in the best position to take advantage of any situation that comes along.

The type of jukebox you buy is important. With changes coming, you want (actually you need) flexibility. Years ago the home stereo business was primarily large wooden consoles. Today everything is modular. This allows the audiophile flexibility. He can can upgrade his tape player, add a tuner, etc. NSM's jukeboxes are designed in a similar fashion as a series of components. Since we built our jukebox to be a part of the digital age (rather than upgrading our 45 rpm technology), everything is modular and independent. An operator will have an easier time upgrading his NSM jukebox when the future technology demands it.

On a similar note, an astute operator should look very closely at the company behind his jukebox. Unlike a video game that has a short life, a jukebox should continue to earn for many years. An operator will want to ally himself with a financially sound company, one with the resources and strengths to invest in the R&D needed to cope with the technology of the future.

Joel Friedman

Rowe

The CD jukebox continues to experience strong worldwide growth. I believe that presently in the United States the CD jukebox comprises 30 percent of the marketplace and is growing. The percentage worldwide is somewhat less, but recently we have been seeing new markets switching to CDs as international operators recognize the profits to be made.

In England where CD jukeboxes were accepted earlier, 50 percent of the market is now CD and the numbers are climbing. On an overall worldwide basis, CD jukebox sales will continue to grow rapidly as CDs become more popular. The recording industry is enjoying a worldwide upsurge in the sale of CDs which creates location demand for the quality sound that emanates from a CD jukebox.

We have had many discussions with recording industry experts concerning the future of CDs. We were told that record companies foresee many years of booming CD sales. While the 45 vinyl record is being phased out, CD support gets stronger. Both record companies and consumer hardware manufacturers continue to predict growing sales for many years to come.

Operators are beginning to move older CD jukeboxes into type B and C locations. The CD jukebox continues to prove itself to be a steady and reliable money earner. Operators universally agree that CD jukeboxes earn far more than the old vinyl jukeboxes. They concur that CDs are one of the best investments they can make for several reasons: they've been able to increase their price per play, obtain better financial arrangements, and increase their return on investment overall. We are beginning to see two plays for $1, which we believe will be the next operator innovation.

In today's expensive environment of doing business, operators must carefully monitor their return on investment and be compensated for their hard work, the services they provide, and the equipment they supply. Operators are recognizing that they supply intrinsic value to their locations and are more

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During my extensive travels, I've had operators express to me how important jukebox revenue is to their overall business and that they will continue to upgrade their routes to CD. Operators all over are finding new opportunities and new locations because the CD jukebox is a sound system, an entertainment center par excellence. Locations are proud to have this "upgrade" in their establishments. CD jukeboxes are exciting entertainment devices in traditional locations as well as in new upscale restaurants, hotels, and lounges.

In 1994, Rowe/AMi celebrated its 85th anniversary in the music business. In 1909, the Automatic Musical Instrument Company of Grand Rapids, Mich., was founded to manufacture automatic electric pianos equipped with a selector device that invited patrons to choose their favorite tunes. This innovation met with instant public acceptance and typifies the imagination and forward-thinking that has characterized Rowe/AMi over the years.

Since 1927 AMi has been continually manufacturing jukeboxes in its Grand Rapids factory. Many operators around the world consider the Rowe/AMi jukebox the standard of the industry. With 85 years of experience, we continue to be youthful in our thinking and progressive in our management style with careful and aggressive future planning.

The future belongs to those who have a deep understanding of the past and are smart and strategic in present and future visions of the industry. Manufacturers, distributors, and operators must maximize the present and seek new opportunities for the future to be successful.

"Considering that the CD introduction to our trade was in 1986, the percentage of CD to 45 units really should be higher."

When Rowe/AMi introduced its first *LaserStar* CD100 in 1988, we were careful in our planning as we continue to be. Our R&D group designed an entertainment system with the cashbox in mind for today and tomorrow.

Our worldwide team of distributors and factory support personnel listen to operators' requests because there is no better way to serve operators than to interact with them in their marketplace. Together we understand that what is planned today may have a profound effect on tomorrow.

Rowe/AMi's extensive engineering, manufacturing, and technical staffs have proven their willingness to look beyond today. We have used the most powerful and innovative designs and technology available. Operators need reliable player-friendly designs to maximize the cashbox and their long-range financial stability. Operators know they can depend on Rowe/AMi. Thank you. We are proud of the nine awards given to us by American jukebox operators for the "Most played" and "The Best" jukebox. We will continue working very hard to earn operators' trust and confidence.

At the upcoming ACME show in Reno in March, we will be introducing our new wall mounted jukebox, the *LaserStar Eagle*. We have spent two years designing this jukebox, carefully listening to operators' requests. This is truly a wall hung jukebox designed by operators. We believe it will open up many new opportunities for operators.

Rowe/AMi is totally committed to the future of the jukebox business. Constantly looking toward the future, our engineering staff recently released an add-on Karaoke kit which is an application of CDG for use on most of the past models of the Rowe *LaserStar* jukeboxes. We are constantly monitoring developments and opportunities within the music industry as we recognize our responsibility to the music operator's future.

Ongoing success for the jukebox industry means more than selling products and services. In a competitive world, the perceived differences between products and services often can relate to the values and impressions invoked by a company's name and reputation. Operators understand that they must give their locations the best equipment and service to maintain strong cashboxes.

Rowe/AMi, its worldwide distributor team, and its operators are inseparable. Together we will continue to find opportunities that others may not see. We'll see that the jukebox industry remains strong and profitable, and we'll face a changing world with exciting new opportunities.

David Loethen

Digital Disc America

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the early '70s, I have experienced three major changes: from electromechanical games to solid-state in the '70s; from video games to redemption games in the '80s; and from vinyl record jukeboxes to CD jukeboxes in the '90s.

With the change from electromechanical to solid state and when redemption games began to upstage video games, I sympathized with the operators. They were forced to dramatically modify their routine ways of doing business with coin-operated equipment, while at the same time keeping their locations happy. However, for the most part through those changes the basics, including jukeboxes, remained relatively stable.

Then in the early '90s came major surgery on the jukebox, the backbone of their business. We at Digital Disc saw many doubts in operators' minds. Many were unwilling to accept as fact that the vinyl jukebox would be phased out. We gave these hesitant operators a way to get their feet wet by introducing our proven quality 100 CDs jukebox mechanism as an affordable conversion kit for vinyl jukeboxes.

This helped operators financially, while allowing them to gradually merge into the CD world. However, no matter which vinyl jukebox is converted, there are limits on the number of CDs that can be displayed. Although our conversion kits were a major breakthrough for many operators, we wanted to offer something for those locations that still demand a new cabinet that displays all 100 CDs.

For those demanding locations, we are making two styles of jukeboxes, the *Panther* and the *1812*. Both are equipped with the same Digital Disc CD mechanism offered in our conversion kits, 100 selection flipping title pager, coin acceptor, and a 200-watt amplifier. They are capable of linking up to three additional amps bringing up to 800 watts of power.

"The recording industry is enjoying a worldwide upsurge in the sale of CDs which creates location demand."

Digital Disc is constantly surveying today's jukebox locations. In visiting locations we have asked ourselves this question: How is an operator going to get a fair return on their investment when a CD jukebox is not being played or is turned all the way down?

We've seen a location's employees and customers listening and watching soap operas on TV, playing music cable or satellite systems, or leasing a Karaoke system on a regular basis.

If the location wants a Karaoke, we'll give it to them. Digital Disc has brought a new concept to the operators: Karaoke plus personalized advertising. Not only will the operator increase their jukebox revenue, but most important, they'll have a little control of that location's television set. Yes, we do offer a portable monitor stand on wheels with holders for two microphones and a drink holder, but we encourage operators to also hook up the locations' TV as well.

Studies have shown that Karaoke bars do bring in new patrons and create a warmer atmosphere. We have made our own studies and found that locations have been keeping their TVs hooked up to the jukebox at all times, especially now that they are receiving additional revenues from non-audio advertising companies.

There are so many surprises in the music industry that it is difficult to predict what will happen next. For example, I heard on the news today that they are going to start promoting 45 records again! So what's coming up next from Digital Disc? See us at this year's ACME show in Reno!

Joe Pankus

Wurlitzer

We wonder if someone somewhere is quietly turning, bending, revising, and refining a certain technology or innovation that will affect our business. Who is going to next challenge the status quo of the music and jukebox industry? Trivia experts often remind us that the most significant advances in a certain industry are often created by people or firms in other industries. In simple terms, we are influenced by another industry's innovations and pressures. We react to new technology and reconfigure it for our own needs. Consider the following end-user scenario as an example of what technology, in a refined manner, can accomplish:

Brian rolls out of bed on beautiful, sunny Saturday morning. The temperature is in the low 80s and there's a slight breeze. "Think I'll play golf," he mutters over coffee and a bagel. He phones Clyde and makes a golf date.

"How about we play a round at Pebble Beach," Brian en-

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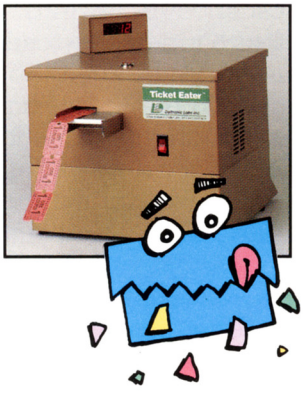

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courages Clyde.

"When I play you I want it windy and I want two strokes each side," Clyde replies.

"Agreed," says Brian.

Then each goes to his own computer, boots it up, and competitively tees off. Brian lives in Florida; Clyde in Iowa. And, it's mid-December.

While our two golf fanatics master the greens at Pebble Beach, Clyde's wife uses another computer to order groceries to be delivered for a party that night. She would have driven to the market, but there is just too much snow. Meanwhile, back in Florida, Brian's wife also prepares a list, but it's not a grocery list. It's a list of video games she is going to buy and give as Christmas presents.

She pops into the local video store, pulls out her list, and hands it to the retail clerk. He types in the names of the games and a few feet away a machine makes and dispenses the game cartridges. And it all happens in seconds. Interestingly, the new owners of the video games will be able to interactively compete against each other, just like Brian and Clyde.

The most recent and dramatic music change was the introduction of CD sound in the early '80s by Philips and Sony. However, may I remind you that many in our industry resisted CDs for several years. But change will sometimes happen very quickly. Remember how big the cigarette business was 10 or 15 years ago? Today only National makes a cigarette machine; no more than 500 will be sold this year. Remember headlines on trade articles in the late '80s proclaiming "45 vinyl records and jukeboxes will always be available to the operator." Only Wurlitzer today still manufactures a 45 jukebox, but not a lot of them. And, finding current hits on 45s is increasingly difficult.

Regardless of the resistance and wait-and-see attitude, the cashbox revenues for the first five years were outstanding for those aggressive and well-heeled operators who bought and set CD product. They demanded and received $50, $75, even $100 up front each week; the return on investment averaged about 12 months; and the location was happy to sign on the dotted line to get that great CD sound. Operators had the leverage to ask for and obtain long-term contracts. A location that did $50 per week with a vinyl box suddenly did $200 with a new CD system. Industry production of 10,000 to 12,000 jukeboxes a year increased to over 20,000 in just a few years.

"If your competition wants to go to the poor house, let him. You don't have to follow."

Statistically, about 30 percent of the jukeboxes in street locations are totally CD systems. Based on what industry expert you talk to, another 200,000 locations are still spinning 45s. Considering that the CD introduction to our trade was in 1986, the percentage of CD to 45 units really should be higher. The transition seems to have leveled off according to objective industry tradesters.

The total number of coin machine operators is getting smaller for a variety of reasons. I hear too many sad stories about the little, local operator taking it on the chin. Says he can't compete! Speculation is that many operators just don't seem to have the ammunition to compete with the likes of live entertainment, DJs, big screen TV, and Monday (and Thursday) night football. When the video game money dried up, the incentive for the operator to open more or new music locations lessened. These big video game losses often canceled thoughts of reinvesting in any new equipment.

I have preached the importance of marketing and promotion for about 10 years now. I firmly still believe that this thought process and approach helps the operator overcome certain activity that occurs in a location that is counterproductive. There will always be the isolated operator who constantly shoots himself in the foot by either giving away too much split or making poor business decisions. Unfortunately, this operator can play havoc and create problems for all the other operators in a marketing area.

How do we sum up the state of the jukebox industry? For someone to say here is where we were and here is where we'll be in the next few years is making a pure guess. I'm sure that you will hear a few industry experts tell you that all you need is the right product for the right customer and you'll be fine. These are the statements of those who focus solely on product. Others might lead us into buying certain products that have a high degree of obsolescence built into them, selling us bandaids instead of solutions. We've all seen those examples, both in music and games. Whether we need new technology or a new way of doing business to give our industry a kick start into a new era, I can't be sure.

However, what we will see in music within the next few years will likely be different from what we've been used to seeing—or

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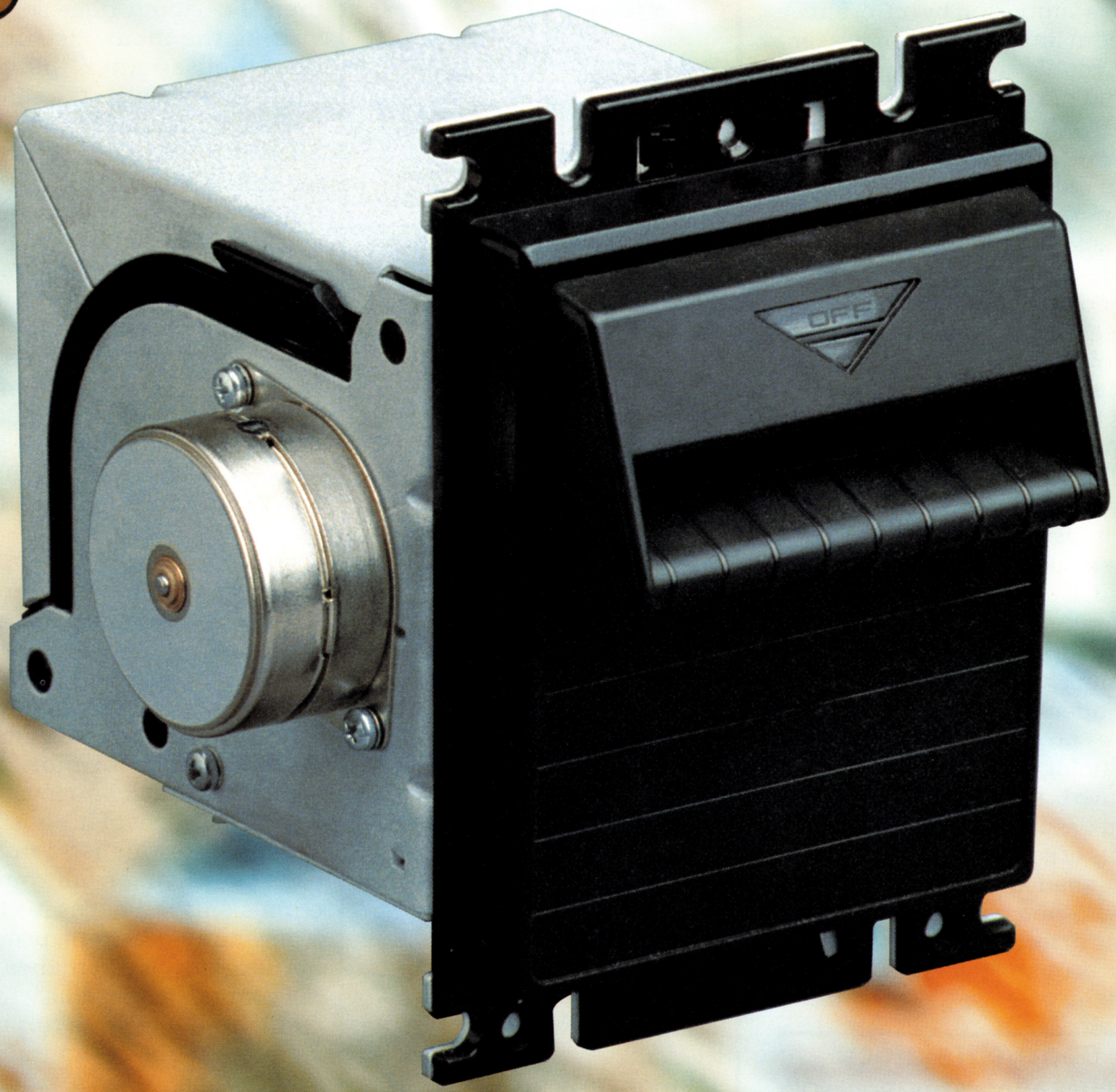

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hearing. Digital has become so technically compressible, it could change the industry. Think of it as an enormous amount of X's and O's fitting into a small thimble, then exploding to fill up a large bucket with no compromise in quality.

Imagine a single CD holding 140 song tracks. Removable computer hard drives, assisted by smaller drives to accommodate a quick update or revision, are here both in hardware and software forms. Combination hard drives supported by off-premise modem links have been present for a couple of years now. The potential of read, write, and erase CD-ROMs is still a bit hazy to many of us, but their ability to store mega tons of video, audio, and pure raw data is well defined and acknowledged.

Superhighway information technology is equally impressive. Those firms in the data and digital transmission business are finding and refining ways for all of us to use their highways, either on a one-way basis or interactively. The technology shared between our golfers, Brian and Clyde, is here. Maybe it is not here in its final form, but rest assured, it's here and its presentation is forthcoming.

At Wurlitzer, we are always examining various ways to make the operator's job easier and more profitable. Some of the technology we have evaluated, touched, and listened to is indeed impressive. Certain elements of it will handsomely apply and enhance what we offer today, while other unique innovations are so different and exciting, that they require a total change of thinking.

George Haydocy
Antique Apparatus/Rock-Ola

I believe that the jukebox is the strongest and most stable part of the coin-op business. Long term, the jukebox has always earned income and kept its value in the marketplace.

The one and only concern I have is where commissions and pricing are heading. My dad, who was an operator in Cleveland for many years, once told me, and I quote: "I cannot make money with a 50/50 split and when I have to give it out, I will get out of the business."

We sold our route in 1968. Have we progressed since then? I certainly hope so! While visiting the many distributors' open houses after the major trade shows, I hear the same remark over and over again from operators: "My competition is making me do it. I can't get better commission or pricing because of him!"

Operators may believe with all their hearts that it's true, but they simply can't give up trying. If your competition wants to go to the poor house, let him. You don't have to follow. Instead after he goes out of business, you can service the locations the right way and ask for what you deserve.

Sometimes you have to walk away from a location when they refuse to negotiate with you fairly. But be certain that sometime in the future that location will be back one way or another. When your location demands more, ask him for more. If he wants 50/50, ask him if you can have 50 percent of his business.

I may be idealistic but you earn your living from your machines only; he earns his living from many different products in his location. I am always on my soapbox about this wherever I go. I'll continue to preach as long as I'm in the industry. The return on investment is very important. ▲

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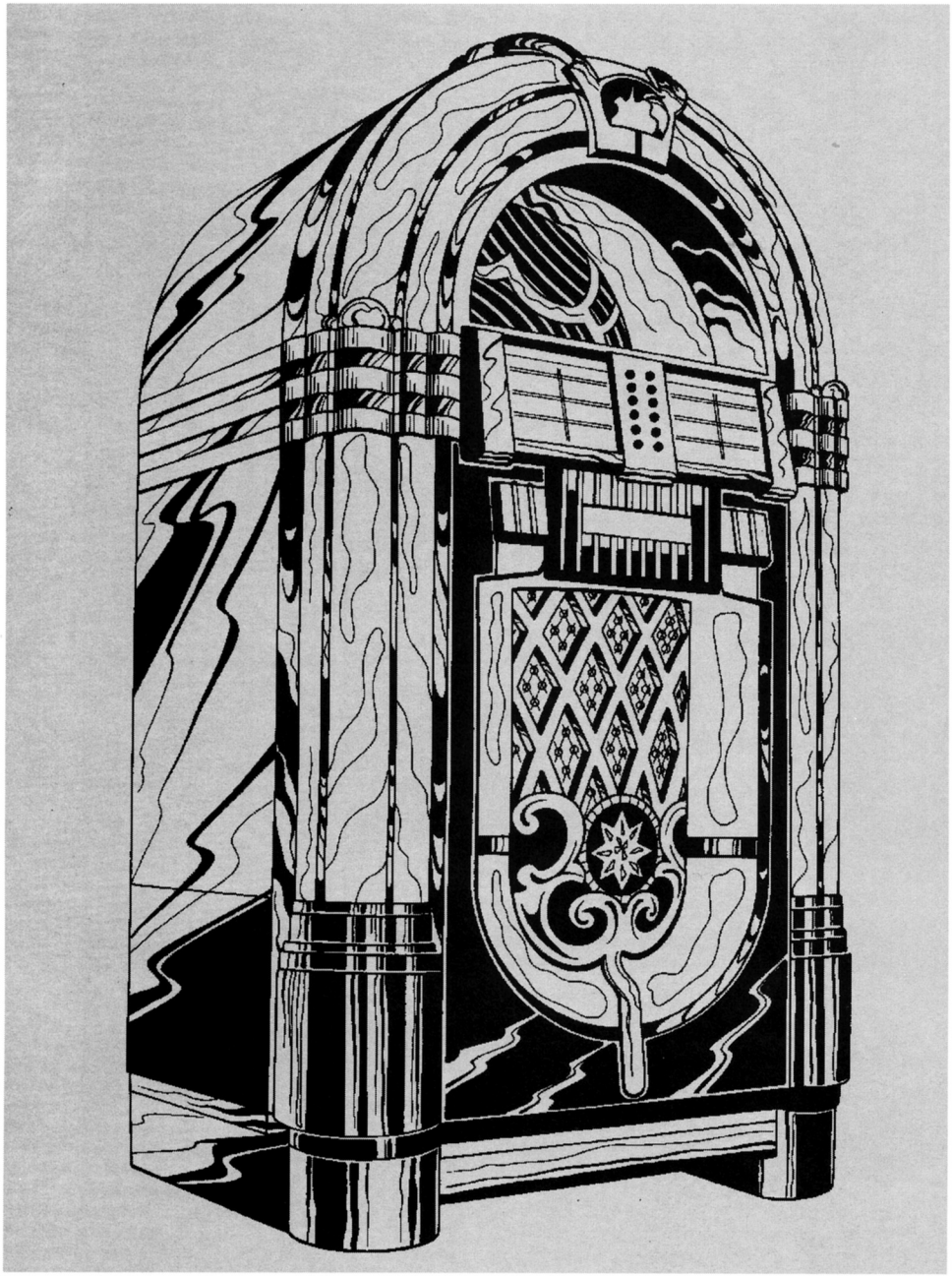
OPERATOR INTERVIEWS

Dan Marchetti
Rendezvous Music and Vending
Eureka, Calif.

Rendezvous Music and Vending was started by Carl Marchetti in 1949. His son Dan joined him 20 years ago. Dan describes the company as much bigger than a small route with lots of jukeboxes. In addition, the company specializes in full-line vending, pool tables, pinball, and video. Here's what Dan had to say about the music segment of the business.

"I still like 45 jukeboxes but you can't buy the 45s."



We have been upgrading our jukeboxes from 45s to CDs on a regular basis. When CDs were introduced I knew that eventually they would be all over. However, we're in a rural area and it would have been impossible to change all of our jukeboxes over to CD at one time. I'm not sure our percentage of CDs to 45s, but I'd estimate it's a little less than 50 percent right now. But as I said, we're converting all the time.

Although we are converting over to CDs on a regular basis, we don't really have a system for doing so. But it's working out well. Usually what we do is when we get a new location, or when one of our current locations is ready to upgrade to a new jukebox, we'll convince them to go with a CD box.

But there are some places that simply don't and probably will never make enough money to justify placing a new CD box there. However, what we've been able to do with some of our locations is rotate an older CD jukebox down. When an exceptionally good location is ready to upgrade, we'll take the older CD unit and filter it down. This is the way we'll eventually have our route converted.

CD jukeboxes have allowed us to renegotiate our commission with our locations. When we decide a location needs a CD jukebox, we'll discuss the arrangement. They balk at first, but when they see what kind of

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*** 3 TYPES OF DOUBLE UP GAMES TO CHOOSE FROM, OPERATOR ADJUSTABLE.**

NOTE ; There is a possibility to have some changes made in actual production without notice.

NEW VIDEO GAME.

Manufacturer EAGLE CO.,LTD

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Development WING CO. LTD.

TOKYO, JAPAN

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money they're making, they are happily surprised. I don't make them any guarantees that they'll make X-amount of money, but I go right up to that point without saying they'll make more. But I'd like to stress that they always make more!

We go by requests to stock the jukebox with CDs. When the jukebox is first installed, we ask the location to make us a list of the music they'd like. They'll usually come up with about 50 titles and then we can determine the rest by their selections, depending on the type of music. Also, we are very impressed with the Hot Hits selections. The company puts out a disc that has a selection of the top hits in several categories.

Although CDs cost more than a 45 record, with 45s you were constantly taking risks. You'd try to buy a song in the top 40, hoping that by the time you got it it would be in the top 10. You were trying to keep up with individual songs on a weekly basis. It was a gamble.

Today, I don't think even 50 percent of the songs in the top 10 are on 45s. And I'm sure that figure will be dropping. The Hot Hits is a good CD because it's all top songs. We also buy a lot of the greatest hits by popular groups. You just can't go wrong; it's all good songs.

We don't have much of a problem with locations playing the TV or other types of music. If I see they are doing that, I'll strongly discourage them, reminding them how much they are making from their jukebox. When MTV came out I thought it would really hurt our jukebox business, but it didn't. When people want to hear a song, they go right to the jukebox.

We completely redo speaker systems when we add a CD jukebox. I can't believe there are operators out there who don't do that. The sound quality is so much better. What's the point of even having a CD jukebox if you aren't going to change the speakers? It's a big investment, but worth it.

"They might come out with an EPROM that will give you 100,000 selections!"

I'm impressed with CDs. I think it's the only way to go until they change to another format. When they do, we'll be off and running again. But CD is here to stay awhile. Although we've seen change before like 78s to 45s, the rate technology is moving now is scary. They might come out with an EPROM that will give you 100,000 selections! As long as people want to listen to music the jukebox will always be viable.

"I don't think there are any operators not running CD jukeboxes today. They were forced into it. The ones that didn't change cannot afford to change now."

Tom Riquier
T & M Distributors Inc.
Willimantic, Conn.

Tom Riquier is in a unique position to discuss the music end of the business. The family-owned company, headed by Riquier brothers Tom, Dan, and Mike, has operated jukeboxes since 1944. Today's route includes 120 jukeboxes, along with video games, pinballs, pool tables, and cranes. T & M also distributes jukeboxes and a wide range of amusement equipment, and manufactures cabinets for video games and coin boxes for jukeboxes. A thriving retail business has prompted T & M to enlarge its office space to accommodate this market.

The demand for jukeboxes is still strong, but it has slowed down. CD jukeboxes are finding their way into secondary locations, such as private clubs and social clubs. We had supplied 45 rpm jukeboxes for these locations until a few months ago; now they are asking for more CD units. As long as you change the CDs, the income is still very good.

We track every CD on every jukebox. That's the whole key: have a good library, know where your CDs are, and take out one that isn't making any money and put it in another location that's requesting it.

We're starting to see a demand from the home market. We opened a retail store seven or eight years ago, selling pool tables, jukeboxes, and pinballs. We have 25 new and used pool tables on display. The home market likes wall units and

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WALL HANGING TYPE
8 LINE, 9REEL SLOT

DREAM 97
8 LINE, 9REEL SLOT

BAR TOP
8LINE, 9REEL SLOT

DIMENSIONS

DREAM 97 8LINE, 9REEL SLOT
(H) 1140 mm (W) 500 mm (D) 660 mm

WALL HANGING TYPE 8 LINE, 9REEL SLOT
(H) 770 mm (W) 540 mm (D) 350 mm

BAR TOP 8LINE, 9REEL SLOT
(H) 350 mm (W) 415 mm (D) 450 mm

NOTE : There is a possibility to have some changes made in actual production without notice.

Manufacturer EAGLE COMPANY, LIMITED
Telephon : 81-3-3331-7611 Facsimile : 81-3-3331-7600

Development WING WING CO.,LTD.
Telephon : 81-3-3331-7311 Facsimile : 81-3-3331-7800

nostalgia jukeboxes, if they can afford them. The end of the year is exceptionally busy for us due to the interest from home buyers. If we could only figure out what to do with the video games!

What we're doing now is expanding into a 120,000-square-foot building to improve our retail outlet and have more space for the rest of our business—distributing, operating, and manufacturing. We're bringing our Danielson, Conn., sales office together with our Willimantic headquarters. We also maintain a sales office in Syracuse, N.Y.

I don't think there are any operators not running CD jukeboxes today. They were forced into it. The ones that didn't change cannot afford to change now.

Special splits are starting to go by the wayside, little by little. A lot of our competition gives a 50/50 split on CD jukeboxes. There are actually four or five splits being used today: 1) Guaranteed $50 per week, then 50/50; 2) Guaranteed $25 per week, then 50/50; 3) Guaranteed $50 per week, then 60/40; 4) No guarantee, 50/50; 5) No guarantee, 60/40.

No matter what the split, the normal charge to the customer in our area is three plays for $1.

Wall units are not only popular with home buyers, they are very popular in taverns. They love them. You explain the advantages and disadvantages of different models (floor space, cleaning underneath, etc.) and show pictures of the products. If you give locations a choice they want the wall box most of the time.

We've done something to save on down time in the case of a bill acceptor difficulty. We manufacture a coin unit that we add on jukeboxes that don't take coins. Then no matter what the situation, the jukebox can remain in play.

"Everybody wants CD, but they can't tell the difference. After the first riff of a song they're talking."

James Orr
Empire Games
Dallas, Texas

James Murphy Orr, owner of Empire Games in Dallas, Texas, has been a video game aficionado since he was 15. But the former professional photographer turned operator says he has recently renounced video and redemption games for pool tables and jukeboxes exclusively. In response to a recent Play Meter Equipment Poll, he told us he was "happier with that decision everyday." Along with his route operation and vending business, Orr also owns one bar and part ownership in another in the Dallas area.

"As long as people want to listen to music the jukebox will always be viable."

On April 1, 1982, I opened an amusement arcade in Dallas. I was a player, and the owners of the place where I played wanted to open up a store and they wanted me to run it. But when I found a location they changed their minds and didn't want to give me a finder's fee. Six months later I bought them out, and I continued to get bigger.

I started vending within a couple of months. I had to have an outlet to move out the games that were becoming old. I also did a couple of other video arcades as a vendor.

The arcade, like most of them, closed. I'm a bar owner now. I own one outright, and I've invested in two others. We're scouting another location right now.

Four or five years ago I contended there was nobody making money on video games. The cost, the inferior parts they use, the repairs, and the number one reason, Nintendo. The street location game has to bring in $8,000 to pay for itself. Start looking on the routes and tell me how many games have 32,000 plays on them.

I've always operated pool tables and foosball games. I went completely with them three years ago, when I stopped buying video games. When I get calls about video games, I have a couple of people who I will send in their direction. Honestly, the number one call we get is, "Do you have Sega Genesis?" We tell them we do the kind you put quarters in, and they don't know what we're talking about.

I've increased my pool tables and jukeboxes. To each individual location, I've added pool tables. I've only got one location that has three jukeboxes.

I have about 10 or 12 stops. I think I have three or four that are leftover, still just straight video. It's hard to get good loca-

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Play Meter equipment poll (May '94)

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- Fantastic Realistic Dinosaur Sounds
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- 110 or 220 Volt
- Fast Ticket Pay Out
- Very Low Maintenance
- Easy to Change Target Settings
- Aim at One of the Many Life Like Dinosaurs or Shoot into the Active Red Hot Erupting Volcano

OPTIONS

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- Neon Cabinet Lights
- Large Prize Redemption Unit
- Bulk Prize Redemption Unit
- Combination Ticket / Token Dispenser

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tions for pool tables. I turn down a lot of stops which I probably shouldn't. But I can't tell you the difference between now and when I thought I was doing good in the video business. I don't have as many stops, but I don't work as hard. The video business is a nightmare.

Quite honestly, I don't like the pricing of jukeboxes either. It is a pretty tough piece to buy. You've really got to turn some numbers. I still like 45 jukeboxes, but you can't buy the 45s. We used to buy them out of England, but that didn't work out with the down time. A record can be gone in two weeks.

Everybody wants CD, but they can't tell the difference. After the first riff of a song they're talking. The quality is better, but so what. You're in this for profit. You can still make a profit with CD, but it takes longer.

I probably buy five CDs a month for each jukebox. If there's nothing released, you can't buy anything. You bought more 45s because they didn't have as long of a shelf life. With 45s there were new singles every day. We probably bought 20, 30, 45 a month. That was still $80. On CD you try to stay off the one-hit album and go with the super groups.

I track the music by the in-system computer by location, and I find out what that location goes for. I track the CD collection myself. I've never had an employee that didn't steal from me. I can write pretty much anything I would need for tracking on Lotus. Jukebox collections don't fluctuate more than $10 a week, and I'm not big enough so I don't have to be that fancy.

Only one or two locations require speaker systems that are pretty elaborate. Most of the stops are 1,000- to 1,500-square-foot stops. I'm a small vendor. I'm 80 percent of the industry.

Anyone who listens will usually agree with me. I've never seen people in a business work so hard to make a living as those in the video game business. With jukeboxes and pool tables, there are not as many coin mechs and input devices. Jukeboxes are built pretty soundly. They don't have joysticks you've got to replace in two weeks. You don't move the machine.

"The quality of CD is better, but so what. You're in this for profit. You can still make a profit with CD, but it takes longer."

"CD jukeboxes are finding their way into secondary locations."

When I put a pool table down I expect the floor to fall in before I move it. It's a heck of a lot more stable. In 13 years, I had two video games stolen and 30 games locked out that I couldn't get to for several weeks. And I've even had games disappear for two years, and I find them in another convenience store. I bitch about this business, but it's gotten me where I am today.

In most locations, the pool tables pay for everything. What has changed is how I loan money and the kind of collateral I like to put on it. It gives me leverage. I can bring in countertops and take 100 percent as my interest.

I'd just as soon be in a location for 20 years and make a little less every year than be in there for two or three years and have the owner call me one day and say "Hey, operator number two's games are coming in and you need to be out of here today." Some people will sell their mother to put a game in your location. You'd be moving games around every two months. With expenses, you were working for free.

State law doesn't allow us to earn less than 50 percent. That's normally what I give up, 50 percent. We don't run this like a corporate meeting. It's one guy to another. I'm a small vendor, just like 80 percent of the vendors. These guys on my route are my friends. We help each other get concert tickets.

I didn't build a better mousetrap. I followed other people in. I'm beyond elation. I can't think of anything better. It's nice to make your money and keep it, instead of giving it to Sega. It's just unbelievably easy. I don't see how the big video operators are making it.

In summary, I'm gone from the video game business, and there are probably some who are happy about that. But to paraphrase an old song, people around me are toiling and digging, and I just watch them go by sitting on my bag of money. ▲

JUKEBOX GUIDE '95

ANTIQUE APPARATUS/ROCK-OLA

•**The Bubbler:** Eight tubes of bubbles bring a kaleidoscope of colors to life in this CD jukebox with 280-watt amplifier and six-speaker, three-way sound system. The unit, crafted from fine hardwoods and triple-plated metals, has push-buttons and a motorized page flipper.

•**The Legend:** Features include display of 16 full-size CD jackets and title cards at once, while the functional design allows for full viewing of the 100-CD mechanism. A six-speaker, three-way sound system is powered by a 280-watt amplifier

•**The Rocket:** Maximum performance in a minimum of space. This model features eight full-size CD jackets and title cards, 100-CD capacity, 280 watts of power, dual equalizers, and a five-speaker three-way system for live performance reproduction sound.

DIGITAL DISC AMERICA

•**1812 Deluxe:** A slim jukebox in a cherry wood finish with chrome-plated grills and molding. Standard features: 100-selection title pager, coin and bill acceptors, disc management, and 200 watts of power. Capable of karaoke and personalized advertising.

•**Panther:** Blinking lights and an easy-access front door highlight this modern jukebox with disc management, self diagnostics, P.A. capabilities, background music, 200-watt amplifier, and 100-CD selection pager. Options: karaoke and personalized advertising.

NSM-AMERICA

•**Firebird II:** Colorful and stylish wall-mount jukebox, just right for most locations. Features include 100-CD "quick change artist" high-speed Hyperbeam changer, sculpted peacock art, mirrored glass, color-burst pilasters, and chrome adornments.

•**Old Fashion Wizard:** For those seeking an alternative style wall-mount unit, this model features lighted woodgrain pilasters, silk-screened front glass, the 100-CD "quick change artist" high-speed Hyperbeam changer, and picture title display.

•**Performer Wall:** The same wallbox technology in a modern package with a high-tech, art deco look; silk-screened front glass, glistening chrome and pulsating laser chase lights, Hyperbeam laser disc sound system, and 100-CD "quick change artist" changer.

•**Solid Gold:** A floor model that incorporates the same Hyperbeam system as NSM's wall jukeboxes, plus a more powerful sound system—a 250-watt power plant and dual tri-speaker system. Also available: a wall-mount "slave" unit, LaserStorm, and Hideaway jukebox.

ROWE/AMi

•**LaserStar Diamante CD-100 E:** Hallmarks include gold and silver molding and running lights in a diamond shape. Among the features are 12 full-size CD jackets, easy-to-read title strips, 100-CD album capacity, and autoplay at random or pre-selected track at specific time intervals.

•**MM1-CD:** The title display is designed to merchandise music and stimulate maximum customer play. Eight full-size CD jackets are displayed. It features motor-driven push-button controls and accommodates up to 100 CD albums.

•**CD 51-A:** A compact, cost-effective jukebox that stocks up to 51 CD albums. It offers a changeable front panel to hold custom advertising or promotion signs. The bill acceptor handles $1-$5 with a 500-bill stacker.

•**CD WallStar:** A CD wallbox that has a choice of either 50 CD album covers/title strips and up to 96 title strips (100-CD display). It can interface with the CD Hideaway or LaserStar jukeboxes. A CBA-II bill acceptor has a capacity for 500 $1-$5 bills.

•**CD Wallette:** An attractively-styled gray and black wall unit that can be programmed to match the Rowe parent phonograph. Features include LED readout for selections made, in play, and remaining; most popular selection button; and mechanical coin acceptor.

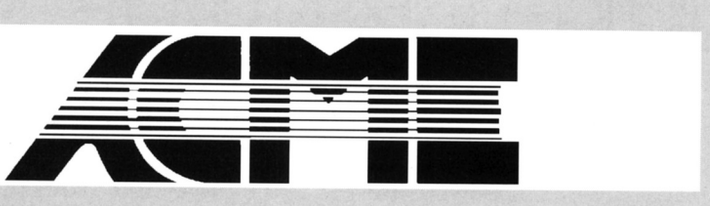
•**CD Hideaway:** A remote hideaway unit that holds up to 100 CDs. It features a 250-watt amp and seven-band graphic equalizer. Dimensions are 21" deep x 27.8" wide x 23-1/2" high.

•**CD Nostalgia:** The look of the past in front with state-of-the-art components inside. It's equipped with a CD-100C mechanism. The CD version holds up to 50 CDs. Accessories include a CD LaserStar wireless remote and printer interface kit.

•**LaserStar Eagle:** Coming in April, the wall-hung jukebox with a dramatic new look and operator-inspired features.

SEEBURG

•**Classic:** Features include an easy-to-use modular mechanism that holds up to 102 CDs, CDM-4 Philips disc reader, top hits selection button, enhanced audit memory, 1,000 bill stacker, and 240 watts of



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power. Optional: printer for full data retrieval.

•**WMJ-1:** A low-cost, wall-mounted jukebox with a 240-watt amplifier; visible mechanism; a host of programmable features; and enhanced audit memory logic for disc popularity, cash transaction records, and overplay analysis.

•**The Neon:** Features include an easy-to-read automated title display, 102-CD capacity, CDM-4 Philips disc reader, top hits selection button, 240 watts of power, and system software to lock out faulty disc tracks and retain data for service analysis.

WURLITZER

•**Casino:** Hand-crafted cabinetry are featured in this jukebox with 200 watts of power, a quick-flip menu, and programmable play stimulator. It holds 100 CDs, has advanced laser CD tracking, and noise/vibration reduction.

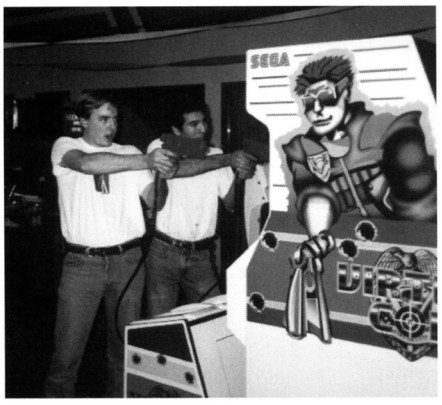
•**New York, New York:** Named in honor of the famous city, it holds 100 CDs and features a unique Y-shaped, bubble tube front, and New York City skyline on mirrored panels. The back of the unit is curved, reminiscent of Wurlitzer jukeboxes of decades past.

•**New Orleans:** Features include 3-D graphics, 50-CD capacity, four-digit LED display and track number for each disc, and play stimulator. Discs are stored vertically; all 50 titles are in view.

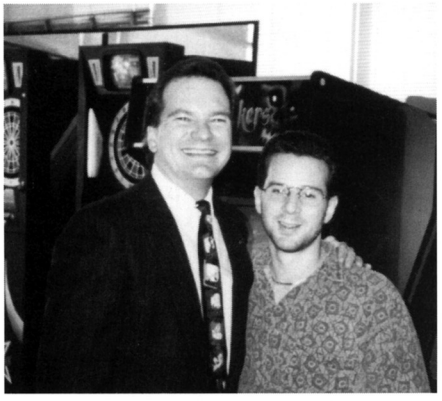
•**One More Time:** A design that recalls the Golden Age of jukeboxes, recreating the Model 1015 with back-illuminated, rotating color drums and pulsating bubble tubes. Available in vinyl and CD versions with six speakers and three-way stereo system. ▲

OPEN HOUSE

A taste of San Antonio comes to Seattle



Daryl Burke and Pete Moralez of Advanced Amusement playing Sega's Virtua Cop.



Capcom's Brian Duke (l) with Vance West of Amusement Enterprises.

Music-Vend's Ray Galante (r) welcomes Sega's Al Stone.

From left: Music-Vend's Charlie Galante with Jeanne Ballouz, Mary Wilkins, and Tiffany Hadley of Fabtek.

Ely and Jackie Briones (r) of Express Vending watch their daughter play Lazer-Tron's The Flintstones as Susan Jessee looks on.

Todd Brown of Metro Entertainment takes a shot on Sega's Virtua Cop.

The Music-Vend staff enjoyed visiting San Antonio for the AMOA so much that they decided to treat their customers to a little taste of the city. On October 12, customers joined a fiesta atmosphere of Mexican food, while viewing all the new equipment.

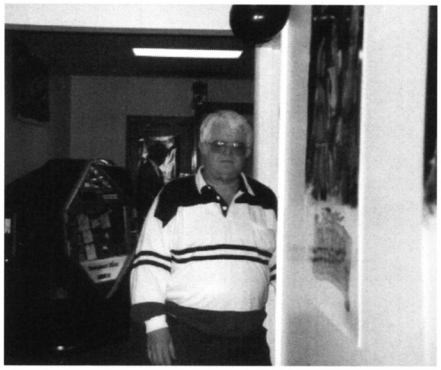
"Our menu was Mexican to coincide with the theme of the San Antonio show," noted Music-Vend's Steven Levy.

In addition to gastric delights and a near overload of new games, there were great door prizes with very happy winners. "Everyone had a great time and were very enthusiastic about the new releases by the manufacturers," Levy added. ▲

OPEN HOUSE

Great day at Greater America

Premier's Paul Weideraenders (l) with Kelly Goins of Kelly Coin.



Don Rank of Rank Vending takes a good look at the latest equipment.

Greater America's Jim Hedblom (l) with Dave Hall of Rowe by Rowe's Diamante.

From left: Howard Smoyer (New Image Technology), Dale Knupp (Amuse-O-Matic), Nancy Hardt (Purple Star), and Steve Wolf (Greater America).

The Greater America staff, (l-r): Dick Kincaid, Don Thompson, Steve Wolf, Nancy Wolf, Jerry Waldeck, Cindy Hedblom, Jim Hedblom, Cass Nemmers, Joe Peterson, and Ted Neis.

It was a beautiful fall day for Greater America Distributing's open house in Des Moines on Oct. 28. "What a difference a year makes," explained Greater America's Steve Wolf to a group of operators touring the recently rebuilt facility.

Just a little over a year ago a five-foot river of water tried to destroy the office. But after extensive remodeling the business is still there and stronger than ever.

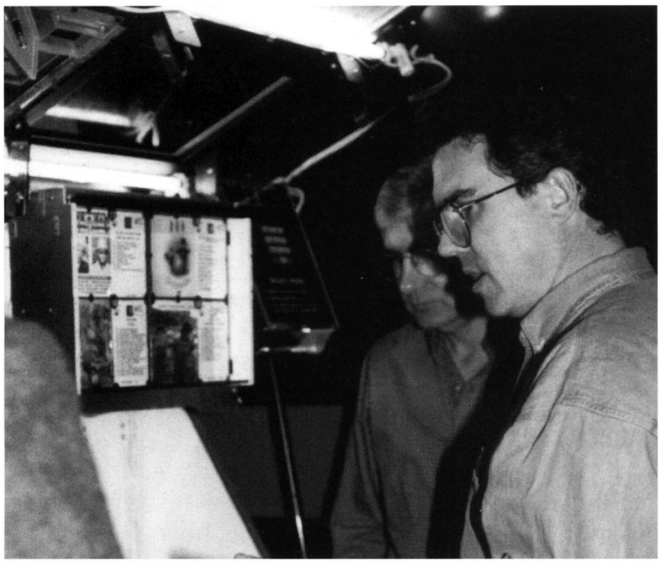
Greater America's Omaha employees joined the festivities in Des Moines as they welcomed over 90 music, game, and vending customers. Many manufacturer representatives were on hand to answer questions and show off their newest products.

To show its appreciation to its valued customers, Greater America provided plenty of food, drink, and door prizes. "Sales were strong, but the real order of day," emphasized Wolf, "was fun and a big thanks to our customers for contributing to Greater America's success." ▲

OPEN HOUSE
Mondial hosts family event

Jazbo the clown entertains a group of children.

Mondial's Matt Tarantelli draws names for an array of fabulous door prizes.



The NSM CD jukebox generated an enormous share of attention.

Matt Tarantelli (c) welcomes customers to Mondial's open house.

Mondial Distributing in Rochester, N.Y., hosted a post-AMOA open house that included something for everyone. While parents were treated to the latest equipment and chatted with manufacturer representatives, children laughed with Jazbo the clown, watched fascinating magic tricks, and had their faces cleverly painted by an expert.

"There were over 175 people in attendance, representing about 100 vendors. Everyone seems to be going back to the basics. The Merit *Mega Touch* has been a big seller for us and our customers are promoting the heck out of their dart business," noted Mondial's Matt Tarantelli.

He added, "You hear about how bad things are in the industry, but operators have to make their businesses work. They can't sit back hoping things will get better; they have to make them better. And that is possible with the right equipment." ▲

IAAPA '94

Showcasing the conventional wisdom of the future

ICE's Ralph Coppola (l) and Greg Kania by their new **Mini Dunxx.**

Showing off their equipment, (l-r): Data East's Kristen Montgomery with **Carousel** and Sega Pinball's Shelly Sax and Pete Gustafson with **Maverick.**

At the Smart Industries booth, (l-r): Gordon Smart, Brian Chilton and Maynard Ostrow of Circus Circus, and Jeff Smart in front of the popular **Smart Redemption Center.**

Pentes Design's Jason Hamrick taking an infrequent breather at the company's colorful booth.

Yehuda Lior of LTC Israel (l) checks out Grayhound Electronic's **Penalty Kick** with Grayhound's Peter Coulas (c) and Jim Gesser.

The Fun-'N-Motion guys have a friendly chat with the Oriental Trading sales team.

The English poet William Blake once wrote that the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

If that be the case, then those who attended the 76th annual International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions convention in Miami Beach, Fla., should have returned home bearing gold, frankincense, and myrrh—or maybe the modern equivalent thereof.

But then IAAPA is the show that seemingly has everything for everybody.

The convention and trade show was held on November 1-5, and saw just over 20,300 registered attendees, according to post-show calculations.

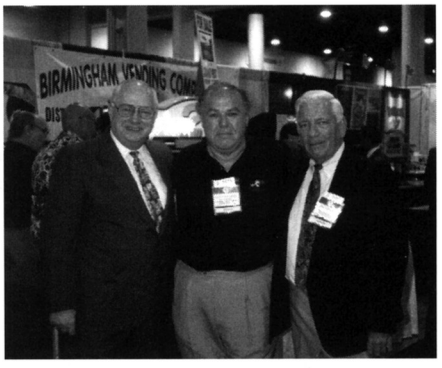
> **"You can see every aspect of the industry at this show. It's got everything."**

To a newcomer the experience is awe inspiring, both in size (it's huge) and content. And while this year some veteran IAAPA goers said the show is gradually shrinking, there appeared to be plenty enough at the Miami Beach Convention Center to keep everyone satisfied.

Just casually glancing around the show floor, one might see a guitar-strumming Tennessee black bear, or an articulate mechanical Samurai warrior talking about "compliant animation," or maybe even a four-legged hydraulic monster that simulates the experience of a roller coaster ride on an abandoned planet for the unsuspecting victims locked inside.

Quick Silver's Greg Malavazos (l) and Paul Scribner, proud of the company's new **Fiddle Stix.**

From left: Parkilandia of Spain's Luis Cepedano, Nancy Calderon of Machine-O-Matic, Javier Madrid of Parklandia and Malcolm Knight and Bernie Schwarzli of Machine-O-Matic.



Birmingham Vending's Chuck Arnold (l) talks with old friends Al Kress (c) of Eenchmark Entertainment and Bob Leblanc Arjay Exports.

EMT Kiddie Ride's Alicia Sadoff is sandwiched like a hamburger (ride) between Cleveland Coin's Bob Munaik and Jim Misuraca (r). NSM/EMT's John Margold is at left.

Software-At-Work's Jerry Foote, a long-time Play Meter fan, talks FEC computer managment with The Track's Chuck Steeg.

The Lazer-Tron team (l-r): Jim Boehner, Bob Berke, Susan Jessee, and Norm Petermeier.

And sandwiched in between such high profile exhibits are token producers, mask makers, fog machines, amusement software companies, architectural firms, mechanical chairs dancing in sync, pizza stands, sugar doughnut suppliers, the "ice cream of the future," and even a booth promoting the great state of Texas.

The variety of product, from the highly technical to the old-fashioned fun of county fairs, is endless. Whatever your wildest fantasy (within limits), it could likely be found somewhere on the show floor.

And that doesn't even address the ever-increasing contingent of coin-op industry representatives at the show.

"You can see every aspect of the industry at this show," said Charlie Caplan with Birmingham Vending. "It's got everything!"

That everything, including large rides and games, simulators, miniature golf courses, etc., is what the coin-op industry will have to embrace as complementary attractions in the future, many show attendees were saying.

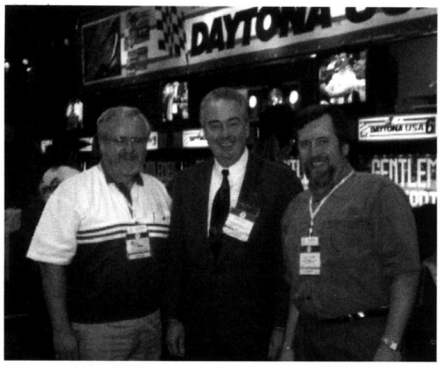
This attitude was reflected in products on the show floor, including multiplayer coin-op products as well as the larger game attractions more suited to the FEC or park facility.

Said one exhibitor of his product: "People who own a whole entertainment complex might say this would fit right in. Street operators would just say this is cute."

Several major video game manufacturers, including Time Warner Interactive/Atari and Williams Bally/Midway, also had their own exhibits at the show for the first time. "We're just trying to get our name out there," explained Elaine Shirley, Time Warner Interactive/Atari sales manager.

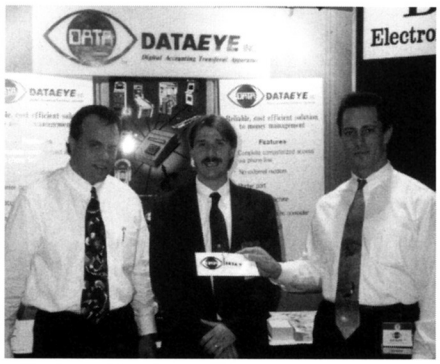
However, companies that produce redemption games, kiddie rides, and related amusement products said they have long known the benefit of the IAAPA show.

"This is always our biggest



Canadian distributors Jerry Janda (l) and Paul Janda (r) with Sega's John Hill by **Daytona USA.**

By the Polaroid **Instant Memories** photo booth, (l-r): Polaroid's John Callahy, Don Mauchan, and John Sasso, and Capcom's Brian Duke.



The Data Eye team, (l-r): Matt Elliman, Steve Brittner, and Steve Killen.

Castle-'n-Coaster's Jeff Brooks (r) is welcomed by Planet Earth Entertainment's Debbie Gonzales and Lou Velasco as they check out **Dinoworld.**

The American Sammy team, (l-r): Mr. Kiyo Nichimura, David Cane, Natalie Kulig, Rick Rochetti, Emilio Cabrera, and Mr. Gen Ozeki.

Proudly presenting Coastal's new **Fred Flintstone's Memory Match** were Lenny Dean (l) and Sal Mirando.

show because we can show redemption, park models, and trailers," said Ted Sloan, sales manager for Bob's Space Racers. "We feel this is the biggest show in the country as far as buying."

Alec Sprouse, Skee-Ball production manager, agreed: "It's always been a good show for us. A lot of the managers and technicians come to the show and they make a lot of the decisions."

Apparently the decision being made by many was to buy, particularly on the opening Wednesday. A number of manufacturers were raving by day's end and looking toward three more profit-filled days.

"We've already exceeded our expectations," said Namco's Lucinda Bender.

"We sold more on the first day than we ever have," said Brian Carasik with Kiddie Rides USA.

"We feel this is the biggest show in the country as far as buying."

"We're selling the hell out of our equipment," a third manufacturer's representative added. "It's pretty amazing."

The activity, which faded on the second day but rallied by Friday afternoon, led some to question the continued importance of traditional coin-op shows such as the AMOA. The diverse market represented at IAAPA is where the action can be found, they reasoned.

"AMOA's got some real competition," one exhibitor said.

Another suggested that his company would not likely return to AMOA next year. "There are only so many shows you can go to," he said. "You've got to cost-justify this."

Dire predictions, or just idle talk? That remains to be seen.

At the AAMA booth, (l-r): Mary Hermanson of Jaleco, David Cane of American Sammy, Mick White of Tornado, Angela Orlando of AAMA, Philip Cole of Rowe, and Bob Fay of AAMA.

From left: Alex Sparks, Richard Crompton, Mel and Susie LaForce of Fun Industries, and John Crompton.

Play Meter's Steve White (l) talks Treasure Chest cranes with, (l-r): Classic's Brian Petaccio, Dan Dinnebeil, and Bill Lumi.

From left: Taito's Anita Platacis, John Pipp, and Shugi Takahashi show off new software for SNK's Neo-Geo system.

From left; Advanced Games and Engineering's David Hodge and J.R. Fishman show the **Snack Attacker** crane to Fun Club's Paula Whitman and Candy Concept's Brian Riggies.

At the Happ Controls booth, (l-r): Sue Happ, Elias Paniagua, and Mark Savoia.

An enthusiastic international contingent, exhibitors said, was another reason to praise the show.

One British manufacturer said that he comes to the IAAPA show every year specifically to connect with international buyers. "It's the best international show," he said, echoing what appeared to be a consensus.

The only real complaints concerned slow traffic on Thursday, and to some extent Saturday, and the placement of a handful of exhibits in rooms adjacent to the main show floor away from the center of activity. "We're going to study the map a little closer next year," said one disgruntled exhibitor.

However, when the final buzzer rang, overall response was positive.

"It's getting to the end of the year and people are starting to decide what they are going to buy," said Brad Danielson, sales manager for Meltec. "It's all coming to a head."

And if the all the activity on

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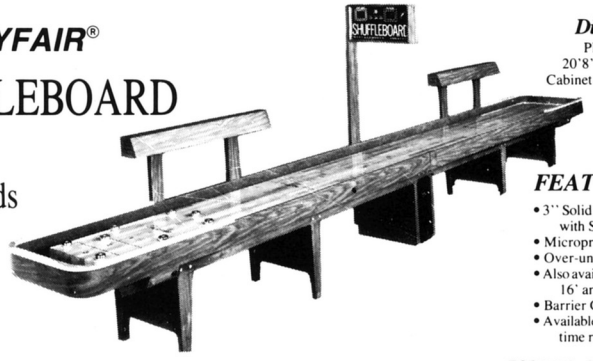

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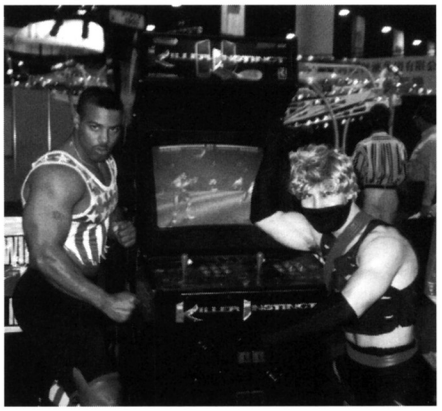
Bob's Space Racers' Bob Cassata and his daughter, Glenda Cook, in front of their trailer model games.

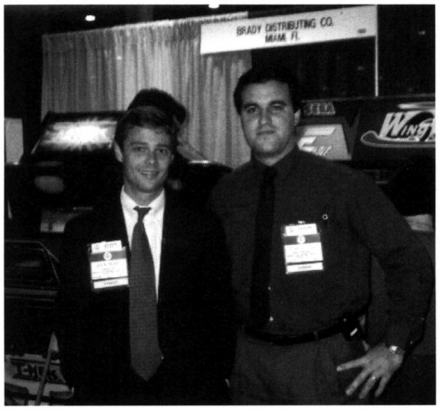
"Sorry, too tall!", says Tenderfun's **Sammy Snake**, the height indicator. From left: Tenderfun's Jeff Kalan, Charlotte Rogers, and Donna Roane.

Time Warner Interactive/Atari exhibited at IAAPA for the first time. Pictured, (l-r): Elaine Shirley, David Macias, Mike Taylor, Dennis Wood, and Tom Keil.

Kiddie Rides USA's Brian Carasik amid a display of new Bozo-themed kiddie rides.



These guys were "dressed to kill" at Williams' first ever IAAPA exhibit.



Brady Distributing's Jon Brady (l) gets some local help from Enzo Celani, assistant manager of Brady's Miami office.

the show floor wasn't enough to keep attendees busy, a full slate of seminars was also offered. A number of them dealt with the continuing complexity of legal issues that surround running an entertainment business.

That trend prompted the formation of the International Amusement and Leisure Defense Association (IALDA), which met for the first time at the show.

Amusement park and family entertainment center owners face more and more uncertainty when it comes to the question of liability, according to IALDA board members. That requires the unified front which the organization can provide, they added.

"We really want to become a part of the fabric of the leisure and amusement industry," said IALDA president Lary Zucker at their formal commencement breakfast.

"If you stop by our booth, you'll see more lawyers than on the O.J. defense team," he added jokingly.

"We sold more on the first day than we ever have."

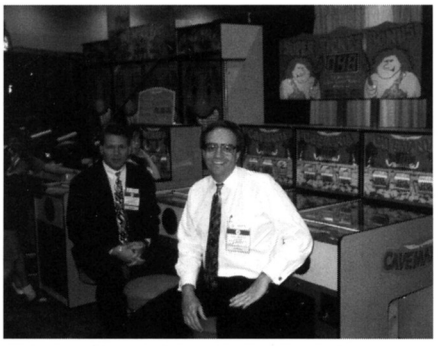
Manufacturers of coin-op and related products also picked up a few of the many awards that were given out at the show. Among the winners were Bob's Space Racers for the best game exhibit, best display and set, and the best game, *Monkey Drop*. In the kiddie ride exhibit category first place went to Zamperla Inc. The company also took second place for *Crazy Submarine* in the corresponding product category.

Play by Play Toys and Novelties won first place in the gifts

From left: Williams' Tom Cahill, Ken Williams, and Jim Patla are joined by Miss Cruis'n USA in front of the company's popular driving game.

Damon Paramore (l) and Lou Rudolph with Dynamo discuss the nuances of their foosball table.

Namco's Frank Cosentino and Lucinda Bender display the company's first place award for **Ace Driver.**



Taking a break from all the action are Meltec's Brad Danielson (l) and John McEwan.

The group at GaMCO were proud to show off their popular game, **Tiddly Dinks.** From left: George Liller, Pat Liller, Ron Yaffe, Emily Yaffe, and Sam Everts.

and novelties exhibit category, as well as first in the product category for Coca Cola Bears. Dan Brechner & Co. took second in the product category for Snakes.

ARMS International picked up second place in the revenue and admission control exhibit category. Smart Industries garnered first place in the same product category, as well as second in equipment and supplies.

Skee-Ball took second place for the best game with *Operation Vortex*. Winners in the exhibit category of arcade and coin-op equipment were Coastal Amusements, which placed first, and Machine-O-Matic, garnering second.

Namco-America won first prize for best coin-op game with *Ace Driver*. Amutec Kiddie Rides took second for *Photo Ride*.

IAAPA, which represents over 4,000 member organizations in 61 countries, will host next year's show at the Ernest Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, La., on Nov. 14-18. ▲

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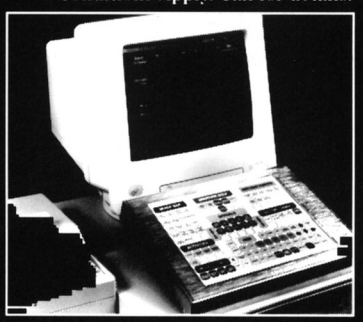
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FAMILY FOCUS

Memphis has reason to be X-SITE-ed

"We felt if we offered attractions for the whole family, siblings and parents would also have something to do."

There is nothing like it for miles around. The 36,000- square-foot family entertainment center on American Way in Memphis, Tenn., has brought a new brand of excitement to the city.

The facility, aptly named X-SITE, evolved over a 27-month period before it took shape in a former Children's Palace toy store close to a million-plus square-foot shopping mall, 300-room hotel, and office buildings on the southeastern side of town.

Operating partners John Winchester and Steve Guinn have assembled an all-indoor FEC designed to satisfy the amusement desires of any age group. Included are Power Alley video batting cages; Bowlingo lanes; 55 redemption games; 10 bumper cars by Design International and Soli; 75 video and pinball games; a 4,000-square-foot custom laser tag arena with a LaserTron Game System; a Mini Himalaya ride by Designs International; and a 3,500-square-foot three-level soft play structure by Omni, which takes advantage of the 18' 8" ceiling.

If that weren't enough, throw in Zamperla's Red Baron airplane ride and Rio Grande train ride, Creative Engineering's Rockafire Explosion animated character show, and a McDonald's that serves up its famous hamburger menu and pizza to boot. A 13-stool '50s-themed soda fountain satisfies patrons with a sweet tooth that leans toward handmade shakes and sundaes. The McDonald's seats 96; the adjacent X-TRAV-A-GANZA Party Room handles up to 112.

Launching an FEC of this size is no small undertaking. What was the inspiration, and how did the project come together? Winchester was in Cincinnati with Allright Parking Corp. in 1992 when he visited a Discovery Zone and became interested in a franchise for his home town of Memphis. "I liked the concept and began looking at

Left: The Rio Grande train travels under a three-tiered soft play area named X-PLORE-LAND.

Right: The view from the Mini Himalaya ride.

Bonnie Theard

John Winchester (l) and Steve Guinn sample the Music Atrium from Cool Stuff for Kids at Fun Expo '94.

Rockafire Explosion, the three-character karaoke system, was first seen at X-SITE.

children's entertainment centers," he said. "At the time, Memphis didn't have anything like it."

There was a hold on new Discovery Zone franchises then, but Winchester was undaunted. He returned to Memphis and began formulating a business plan for his own center. Winchester connected with Progressive Capital Investment Corp., an investment banking firm that specializes in private investment transactions for small businesses, and met Guinn, PCI's chief financial officer.

"He came to us in May 1993 with his idea," explained Guinn. Next came a crash course in FECs. Winchester literally loaded the family in the car and started driving around the country visiting locations. Along the way he heard about the Fun Expo and IAAPA trade shows. He attended both and found them helpful and instrumental in putting together the information necessary to get started. Soon he and Guinn were partners.

Instead of concentrating on smaller children as core clientele, X-SITE expanded to a full-fledged family entertainment center. Winchester comments, "I was impressed with the larger indoor centers and decided to focus not only on customers seeking activities for young children, but those who wanted more.

"With a small child-only center it becomes a contest between the parent and the child to see how long the parents can last. We felt if we offered attractions for the whole family, older siblings and parents would also have something to do."

"With a small child-only center it becomes a contest between the parent and the child to see how long the parents can last."

An integral part of X-SITE is the 2,500-square-foot McDonald's. Says Guinn, "We knew we had to have food and knew we would have our hands full in the entertainment department. We felt the American public would relate to a proven food vendor." The duo chose McDonald's as "the best food value for the money."

While researching laser tag systems, Winchester and Guinn traveled to Milford, Conn., to see the Milford Amusement Center and met the dynamic Michael Getlan of Amusement Consultants.

Winchester and Guinn agree, "As we got further down the road, one of the things we wanted to be sure about was the layout of our facility. We enlisted Michael and Melvin Getlan's help."

They decided to purchase redemption games but enter into an operator/location relationship

Teens and parents enjoy the latest video games.

The entrance to the X-TRAV-A-GANZA party room and McDonald's restaurant.

with Amusement Consultants on the video and pinball games.

Promotion played a major role in developing community awareness of X-SITE. When the June 26, 1994 grand opening date approached, newspaper ads and TV spots announced the center's attractions. By late fall radio promotions and pizza boxtop coupons continued to remind the public of X-SITE.

Favorable comments and the success of X-SITE have encouraged Winchester and Guinn to consider another southern location, in Little Rock, Ark. Negotiations were underway at press time, but general plans for the next X-SITE include a similar attraction mix, with the addition of a new De-

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signs International airplane ride, *Thunder Air*.

Also under consideration, a Music Atrium or other educational and entertaining attraction for children, and a McDonald's that offers a drive-thru window.

Winchester and Guinn realize that it is important to "keep attractions hot and fresh." With expansion comes the opportunity to rotate attractions and achieve that goal.

Opening the first X-SITE has been a learning experience. What would they do differently?

Winchester: "I would open up several months sooner in order to market and promote the center before the summertime rush is upon us. We opened in the heart of the season, which was stressful. We would like a March opening at the next location."

Guinn: "We have a really good layout, it's functional and works well. We're going to pay more attention to the acoustic side of things next time."

Is franchising out of the realm of possibility? According to Guinn, "There may be alternative ways to expand and accomplish the same thing without technically franchising. What we really want to do is get three or four company-owned stores up and running successfully before we get too far ahead of ourselves." After Little Rock may come Nashville.

Here are some vital statistics on X-SITE's operation:

Hours—10 a.m. until 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 10 a.m. until midnight Friday and Saturday; Parking capacity—325 vehicles; Pricing—by individual attraction and package with a wristband; Employee uniforms—black slacks and white shirt with a colorful X-SITE vest. A full-time staff of 25-30, plus part-time employees, keep the place humming.

To ensure that customers know they are appreciated, the center offers an X-SITE membership that includes a monthly newsletter, merchandise discounts, and special coupons.

The giant U-shaped redemption counter offers 300 feet of shelf space for prize display. Many items carry the X-SITE logo; customers may purchase X-SITE-emblazoned merchandise separately if they wish.

When it comes to promotion, Winchester and Guinn believe in trying "a little bit of everything." So far, their business decisions and operations approach have proven correct. ▲

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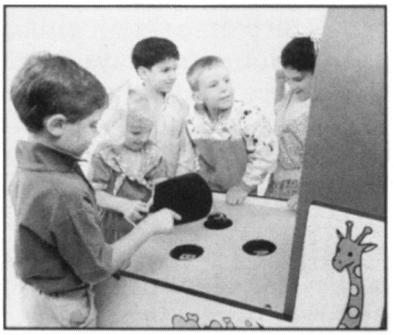
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REDEMPTION REPORT

State of the art in FECS; making redemption more profitable

On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate your redemption operation? In the past eight years I have seen everything from a zero through a 10. As a consultant I am often asked: "What can I do to improve my redemption center?" The question is best answered by breaking an operation down into several parts which are: the redemption center (display cases, location, size), merchandising and display (organization and visual appeal), merchandise (variety of price), and store staff. In order to make your operation a 10 consider the following:

"Merchandise is the lifeblood of a redemption operation."

Visibility

A redemption center should be visible from all parts of your store and should be placed near the center of the redemption games. Remember, this is the place customers will come for assistance, therefore, it should be monitored at all times. In order to be effective, a redemption center must be able to display merchandise clearly and effeciently. Glass display cases (usually between four and six feet long) that can be viewed from the front and the top can be placed in such a manner as to encircle the backdrop on which plush merchandise and larger items can be displayed.

For a medium sized operation a general rule of thumb is to have one display case devoted primarily to boys, one to girls, and one for more adult-oriented merchandise as well as electronics and higher priced merchandise. Additional cases can include novelties, seasonal, and even collectible merchandise. The most effective cases can be locked and include small storage areas for back-up stock so that displays do not have to be disturbed on a continuing basis.

Eye appeal

Make sure that displays are visually appealing! I have seen more than one display case containing cardboard or plastic boxes lined up, with no redeeming aesthetic appearance, which have had merchandise literally dumped into them. As an alternative, try placing the items in a case without a box by stacking or organizing them in an interesting manner. Put small items such as penny candy, super balls, and the like into clear hexagonal jars with lids and place the jars on top of the display cases. Hard-to-sell merchandise can represent a challenge to sell, but if used as an active part of a display, even the most difficult oddity can be sold (although recently I was perplexed as to why one of my clients offered Ricola cough drops as a prize). All displays must be kept full of merchandise since the displays give customers the feeling that thought and care was taken in organiz-

Francine Burrier

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ing them, and also give the illusion that there is really more merchandise in the display than is actually there.

Arrangement

Arrange merchandise by category in ascending order by ticket value in a neat and orderly fashion to avoid customer confusion. This also makes it easy for odd amounts of tickets to be spent.

Merchandise displays, however, should not be limited to the redemption center since merchandise can be displayed throughout the entire amusement center. I often place merchandise including large stuffed animals on top of games and even hang prizes like plush, bicycles, and seasonal merchandise from the ceiling.

Merchandise is the lifeblood of a redemption operation. Without appealing merchandise there is little incentive for a customer to play. The most important key to a successful redemption operation is the variety and the quality of merchandise. A wide selection of merchandise will draw a wider range of customers. High quality merchandise will be more reliable and keep customers feeling as if they won something worthwhile.

Merchandise should not only target children, but the entire family. Mom, dad, and grandparents should be addressed! I have found that many times a customer may be accompanied by a girlfriend, mother, father, grandparent, sister, or brother who may not be inclined to play any games. However, if there is a piece of merchandise that he or she finds interesting there will be an incentive to win it.

For example, if a teenage boy comes into the store to play the newest video game and brings a date along, she will probably become bored and urge him to leave. But if she can find a game that is intriguing or a prize that is appealing, she will likely play a game, spend money, and leave her companion to play his game for a longer period of time.

Stocking

Although merchandise can be trendy, some merchandise is always popular. When stocking a new redemption center, or even overhauling an existing operation, I order a variety of merchandise in several categories. For girls I order stationery (pencils, pens, memo pads, pencil sharpeners, and erasers), paint sets, balls and jacks, rings, ink stamp pads, stick-on gemstones, and friendship rings/bracelets. For boys I order toy cars and airplanes, squirt toys, magic putty, keychains (especially rabbits foot keychains), hackeysack balls, handblaster balls, marble sets, mini playing cards, and spark guns which are always a good bet.

"The glue holding a successful redemption operation together is a courteous and friendly staff."

I also order miscellaneous merchandise for both boys and girls, including Chinese yo-yo's, sponge guns, pacifier items, bubble toys, babble bars, handcuffs, pencil helicopters, super balls, glassware (ceramics and logo glasses), squeeze cups and bottles, cheap 35mm cameras, and teddy bears (and other plush). Currently some of the hottest merchandise includes sparkle spinners, magic springs (plastic slinky), whoopee cushions, light-up toys, removable tattoos, and dice erasers.

Try not to get into a rut by buying inexpensive, cheaply manufactured merchandise. This can be a grave mistake! Customers need to feel as if they have made a quality purchase, even if the price is inexpensive. Large chain operators often skimp on merchandise, believing that the lowest price is the only determining factor in its purchase. We are all in business to make money, but cheap merchandise reflects poorly on the overall image of the store. I recently visited a location which had almost $500,000 in state-of-the-art equipment, but had some of the poorest and cheapest redemption merchandise on the market. Remember that merchandise goes hand in hand with redemption games; without one the other is useless.

Finally, the glue holding a successful redemption operation together is a courteous and friendly staff. Patience is of the essence since a five-year-old can often take a considerable amount of time to make a decision. When making anonymous visits to my clients' establishments I have encountered employees using profanity and who have treated me as a bother when I was trying to redeem tickets or make change. Once I was told I didn't know how to play a game properly. Imagine that! ▲

ACME95

Coupon book offers valuable savings at ACME

We talked with Bill Cravens, ACME show committee chairman, about an exciting new program. Operators can save big bucks by being in Reno March 23-25, 1995. Here's the scoop:

Many were disappointed in AMOA's operator attendance. Why will operators want to go to ACME?

For the first time, we will offer a coupon book that will make it possible for operators to go to the show for virtually nothing! In fact, if they are big buyers they may even make money! These coupons will save operators thousands of dollars, but they will have to be there to take advantage of the savings because the coupons will be distributed only at the show. It's a way for the exhibitors to say to operators, "We want you to come to the show." And what better way to say that than to offer valuable savings on equipment?

Are operators really going to use all the coupons?

They certainly should. If they can save $100 on each piece of equipment they buy, whether it's a video or pinball, it is certainly worth a trip to Reno. We've offered the opportunity to all exhibitors and will likely have in excess of $1,000 in coupons.

Is this just a gimmick?

Let's just say that these coupons are like real money, controlled like real money, and have serial numbers. Offering operators money is not a gimmick.

How easy will they be to redeem?

As simple as giving them to distributors who handle the product direct. They will treat it like cash. There will be a time limit, set by the manufacturer and noted on the coupon.

This sounds almost too good to be true?

It is good and it is true. It's a way to encourage operators to see new product, have it explained, be shown new innovations, and save money. It's not just the big booths that make the show, it's lots of support and supply companies. Operators—real operators—that come to a show always find a little something that makes their routes better. It could be software, locks, or something we don't even know about. I haven't heard anyone saying they didn't learn anything. The exhibitors want operators there and are willing to pay for their participation. With this coupon book, everyone knows they'll leave Reno a winner!

P.S. Make your reservations to Reno early! Stay tuned to the ACME ACTION page in future issues for updates on other exciting programs you won't want to miss! ▲

VENDING TRADE SHOW

NAMA show focuses on the future of vending

Automatic Products sports a new booth.

Sonny Sheehan (l) watches as Ultra Lift's George Dabb dances on the table top.

Pictured at the Glasco booth, (l-r): Joseph Loparco of Automatic Choice, Fred Smith of Mondial Dist., and Joe Gilbert, Bob Bell, and Pete Kallash of Glasco.

Eric Lecompte of Polyvend checks out the race car in the Kellogg booth as driver Flink Brown watches closely.

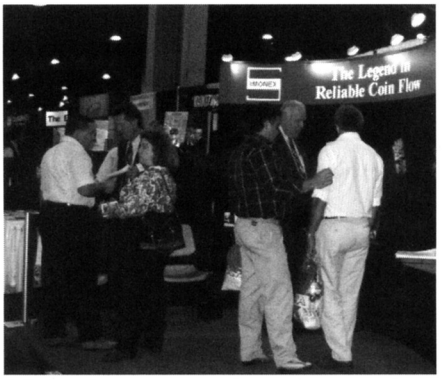
While the vending industry has seen its centennial come and go already, with the first Egyptian vessel used to dispense holy water introduced in 215 B.C., the shifting sands of modern commerce and technology have left open the question of what the next 100 years will bring.

That uncertain future was undoubtedly on the minds of approximately 8,000 attendees who showed up at the fall NAMA (National Automatic Merchandising Association) Convention and Trade Show held in Atlanta on Nov. 3-5.

Addressing the issue for those at the show was a slide presentation entitled "What Your Customers Think About Vending" put on by Technomics Inc. of Chicago.

VENDING TRADE SHOW

Libby Palmer accompanied her parents to the show and enjoyed the Capcom Instant Memories photo booth.

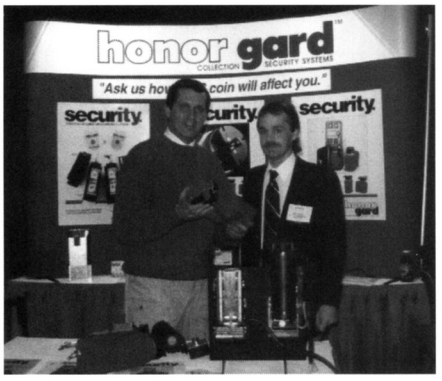


The two men in suits, Butch Bruner (l) and Tom Heyn did their best to explain all they could about Imonex.

The KIC Products staff, (l-r): Craig Barry, Pamela Beason, and Richard Rzasa.

Marcel Lasover of Worldwide Security Devices helped Peggy Wilczynski of Skis at the Baton Lock booth.

Ore-Ida's manager for vended products, Karl Roberts welcomes "The Pres," a Bill Clinton look-a-like.



John Ongena (l) of Honor Gard shows his security bag to Chris Raddatz.

Bill Willis (r) of BRW explains it all to a group from Canteen Services.

From left: Bobby Goodwin, Tom Taylor, and John Taylor of Convenient Vending Service with Tom Kozlik, VP Project Manager of Rowe International.

Here are just a few of the things revealed by the firm's recent survey:

•Use of vending machines is down. Of those surveyed, only 38 percent were recent users of vending machines, compared with 44 percent in 1981.

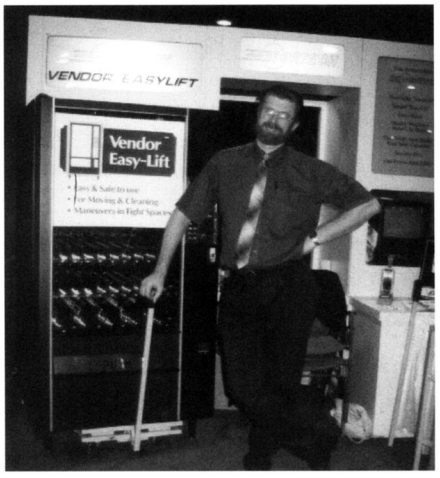
•Of the recent users, the rationale put forward by 55 percent was that nothing else was available.

•The vast majority of purchases were soft drinks with candy and salty snacks coming in second and third respectively.

•As might be expected, cigarette vending is significantly lower; only six percent of users purchased cigarettes from a vending machine. In 1981 that figure was 27 percent.

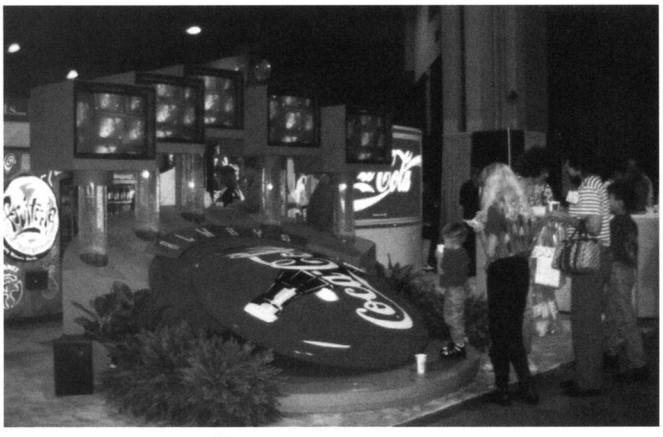
•While public perception of vending machines in terms of

Per Lundin of Scan Coin was proud to show his new coin counting unit.



Bob Sundstrom demonstrates how easy the Nortech Easylift works.

Bob Dickerson (r) of M & M/Mars with Aaron Schwah (c) and Craig Schwah.



Coca-Cola draws attention with its new look.

NAMA's show floor gets bigger and bigger each year.

convenience and reliability has improved, the perceived difficulty of getting a refund remains a problem.

•Vending faces increased pressures as a result of employee cutbacks in offices, a more dispersed workforce, and more fast-food convenience-type outlets.

•Customers would increase the amount they spend on vending if there was a wider variety of offerings, better value, more convenient locations, improved quality and freshness, and brand name products available.

However, in spite of some gloomy findings by Technomics there was plenty of business being done—and plenty of fun being had—on the 80,000-square-foot show floor that featured 281 exhibitors including 61 newcomers to NAMA.

Show attendees saw a plethora of new and innovative products and got a taste of some novel promotional techniques as well.

Kellogg for example recruited NASCAR race driver Flink Brown, and his car, to help market its products, while visitors at the Frito Lay booth got a chance to play a *UB-QB* football toss game for NFL team jackets as prizes. But the crew at Ore-Ida took top honors for promotion with the commander-in-chief himself (or the next best thing in the form of a Bill Clinton look-a-like) there to promote its product.

On the technical front, software systems for monitoring and managing vending businesses are becoming increasingly popular just as they are in other business sectors. That was dramatically demonstrated by the presence of more than 10 firms exhibiting related products, everything from windows for vending to wireless remote monitoring.

Another widely seen trend, diet consciousness, has taken the vending industry by hold as well. Food and drink vend items at the show tended to the healthy side with a wide range of low-fat and no-fat snack items and fruit juices on display.

Here's an abbreviated look at some of the new products that were on display at the show:

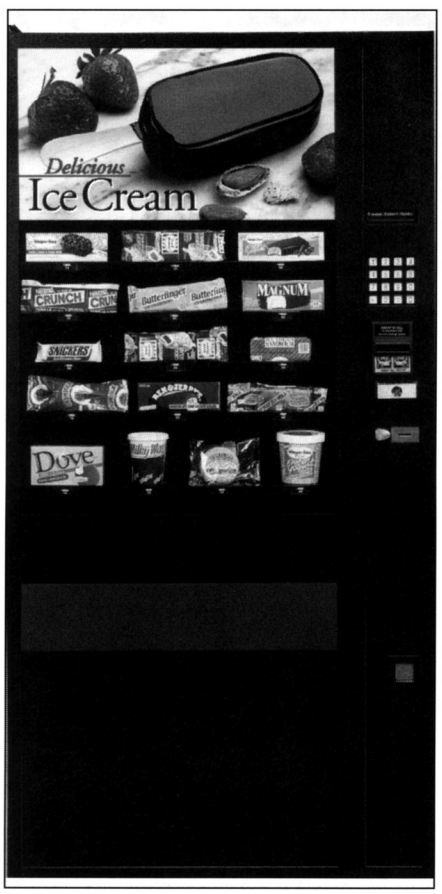
Vending machines

Automatic Products:

The newest addition to its product line is the *LCM4 Glass-front Merchandiser* with three snack/candy shelves and 10 cold can drink selections. The top three shelves can accommodate five snack selections or 10 candy selections each.

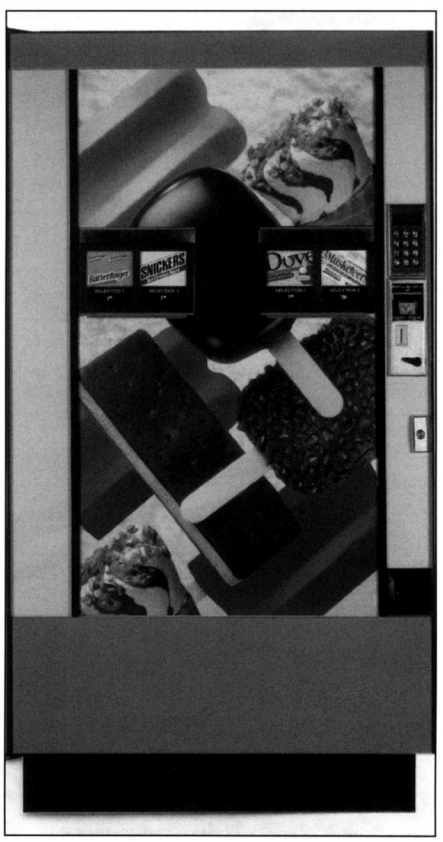
Fastcorp:

Six years of research and development went into Fastcorp's *F631 Frozen Merchandiser*, a robot-controlled vending machine with no spirals, conveyors, motors, or other dispensing mechanisms in the freezer. The robot's motors, sensors, and switches float above the freezer in room temperature air.



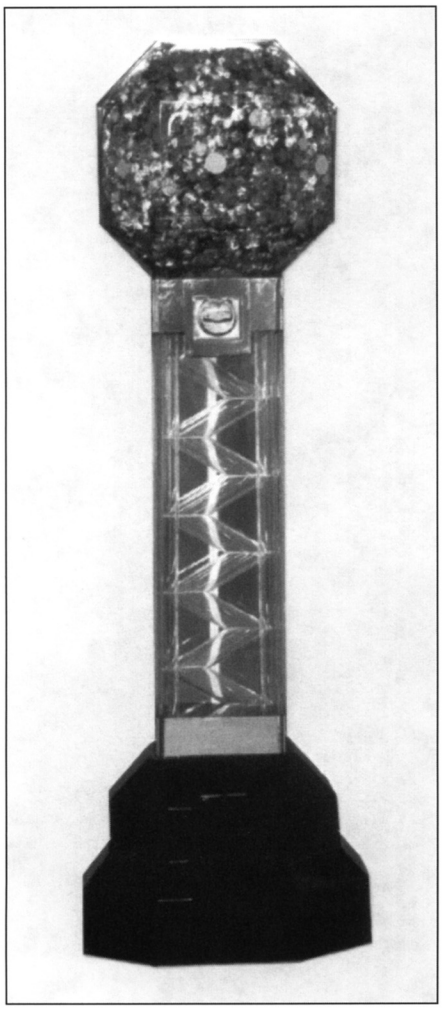
Glasco:

Complementing its line of snack and drink dispensers is the *GIC-4 Ice Cream Merchandiser* that features four selections. The dispenser accommodates standard ice cream bars as well as larger gourmet items.



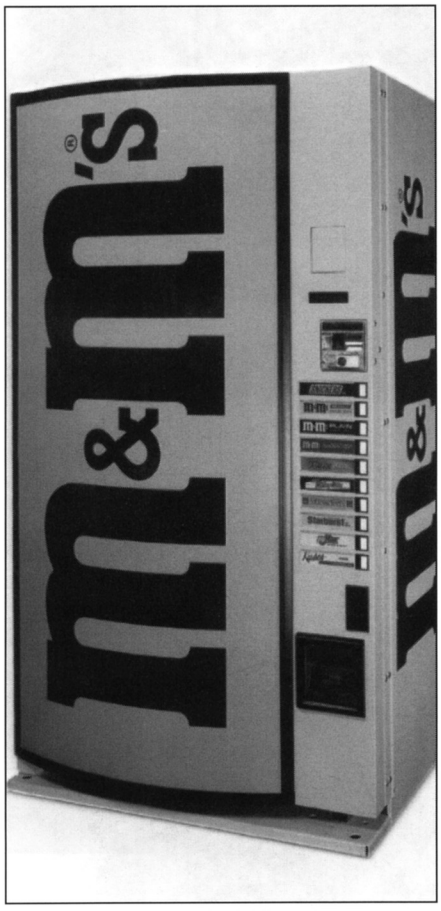
LA Vending:

Featuring three tops and two different bases available in three colors, LA Vending's new *Elegance* spiral gumball machines featured at NAMA comes with a one-year warranty and a five-year mechanism warranty.



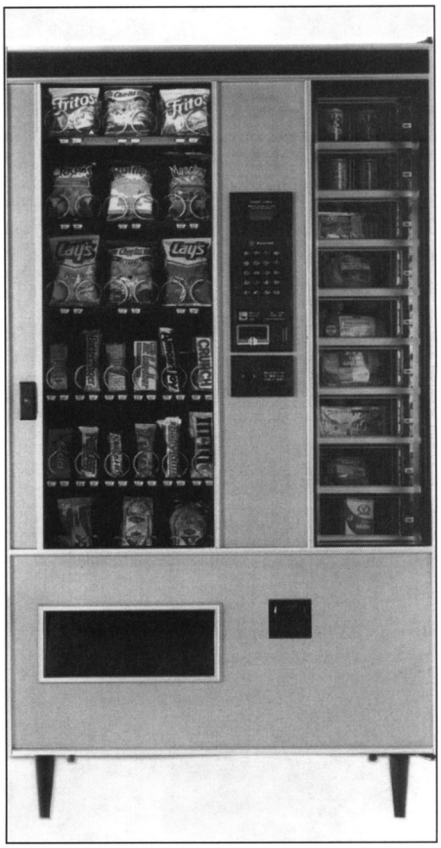
M&M Mars:

Two new branded vending machines made for the company were presented. They were the refrigerated *MVC600* confectionary, which keeps up to 650 products at 61 degrees, and the *MFF 400* ice cream vender, which can offer up to 10 selections and can hold up to 296 products. Both machines are fully outdoor siteable.



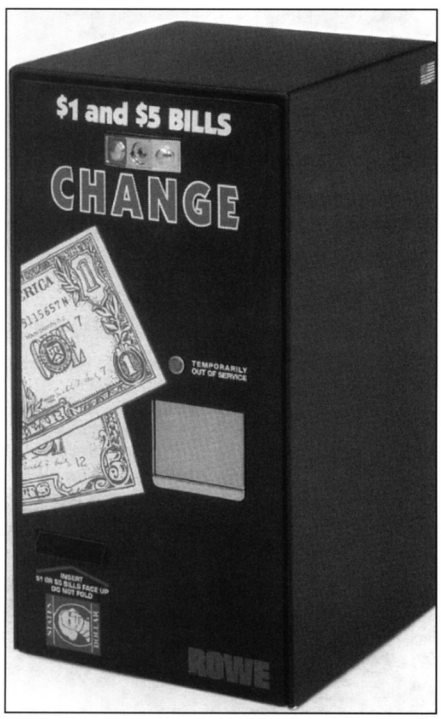
Polyvend:

On display were the new *Food King 900*, a carousel food dispenser, and the *Snack-Food Combo*, which combines both product lines in one compact machine.



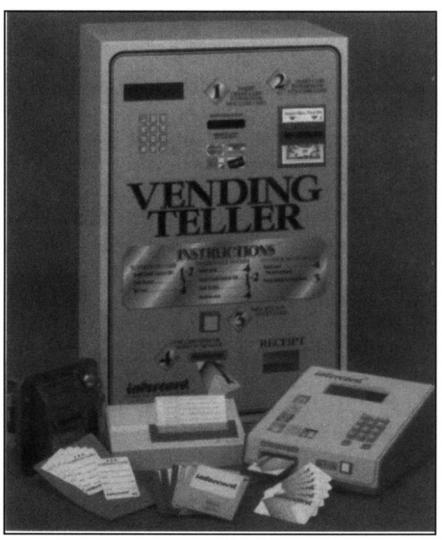
Rowe:

Along with its *550* unit, Rowe was showing its new *551 Sundry Vending* machine. The sundry product options range from pantyhose and sunscreen to tennis and golf balls and even CDs. Rowe also presented the *SBC-2* bill changer designed for smaller locations.



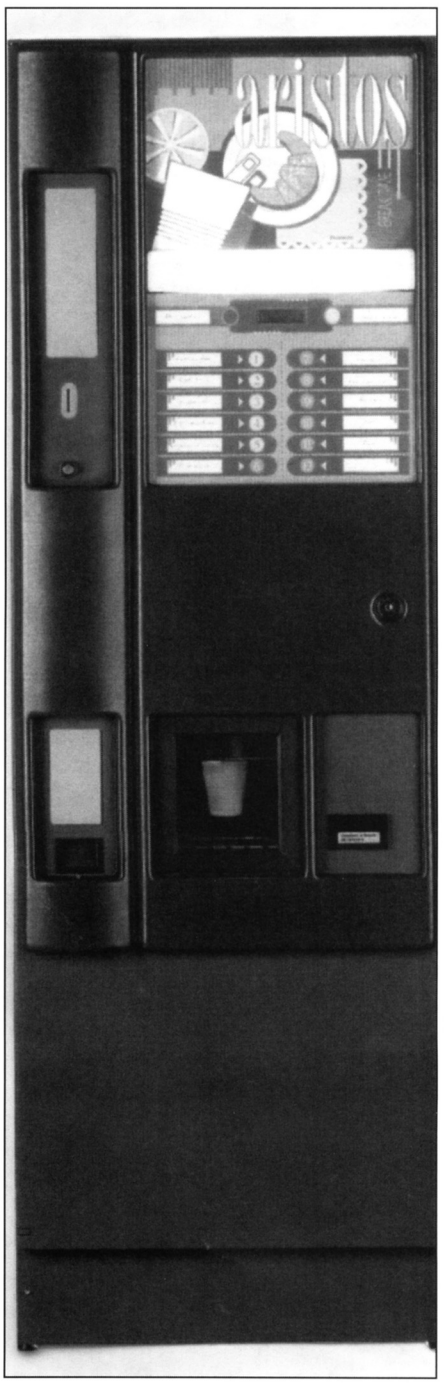
Intercard:

The new Intercard teller both dispenses and adds value to the card, which can be used for a wide range of vending opportunities. The system will lower operational costs and cut down on the problems associated with cash and coin exchanges.



Vendors Exchange:

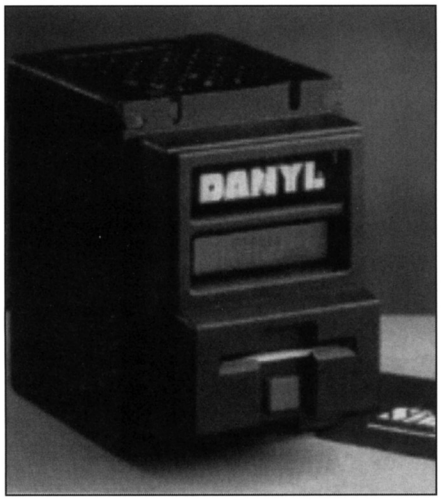
The company is now the exclusive distributor for *Aristos Beverage Dispenser* and *Avant Garde Ice Cream Vending* machine, which were displayed.



Vending accessories

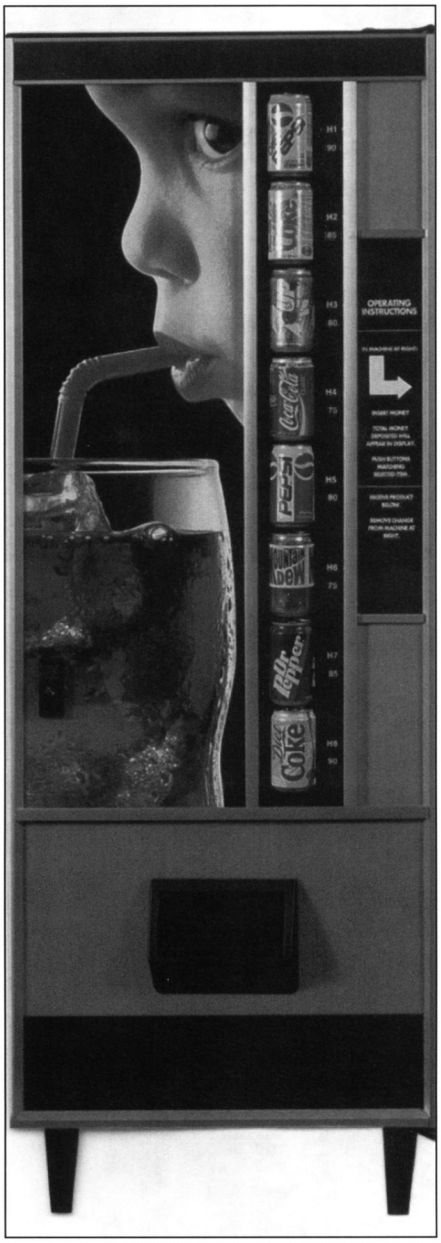
Danyl Vending Systems:

In trying to capture the market on low-value cash vends, Danyl introduced its new smart card controllers for snack and beverage venders. The stored-value debit card system is compatible with most single- and multi-priced venders.



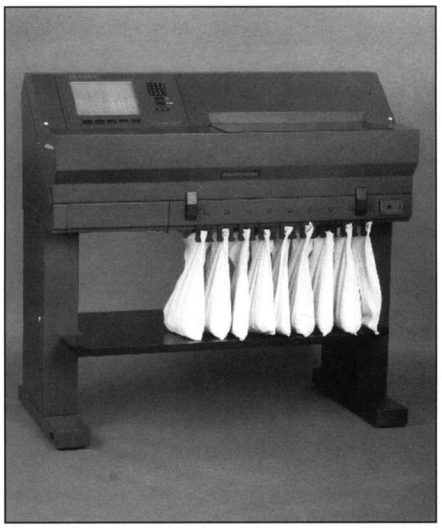
U-Select-It:

For those areas where space is limited, the company has introduced its slim unit, *Can Mart II*. With six selections, the game measures 72" high x 26-5/8" wide x 31-1/4" deep.



Scan Coin:

The *Scan Coin 4000*, a new generation of coin sorting and processing, displays an animated representation of the level of coins being processed into the eight bagging stations. With a wide range of options, the newly displayed processor can sort up to 4,000 coins per minute. ▲

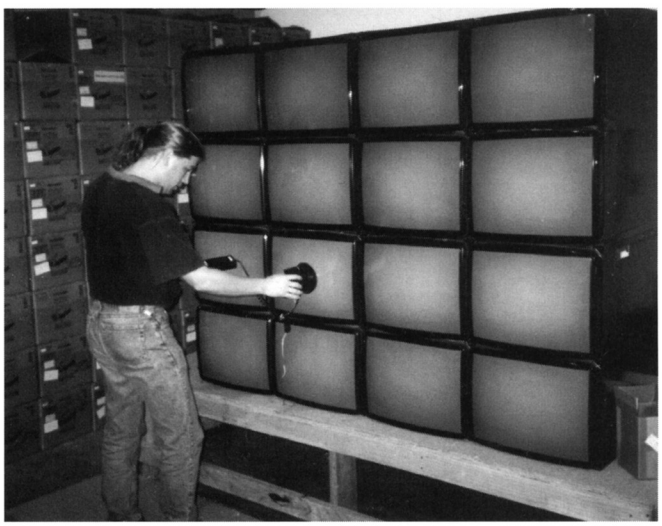


COMPANY PROFILE

LA East brings harmony to electronic systems

Great chefs bring their experience, knowledge, and imagination to the process of creating dishes that in the end are far greater than the sum of their ingredient parts.

In fashioning integrated audio/visual systems that go far beyond simply hanging jukebox speakers or video screens, the Hatfield, Pa., firm LA East, Entertainment Advanced Service Technologies Inc. does much the same.



Left:
LA East's president Eileen Schembri and vice president of sales Steve Devlin are the driving forces behind the company, which was formed in the late 1980s to meet a growing need in the electronics field.

Right:
Service technician and installer Dominic Cubranich works on a wall of video screens. LA East has recently provided its services in developing such video walls for a national shoe store chain.

The company staff members draw on their own expert knowledge and experience in the growing field of integrated systems to bring the appropriate components together so they work in literal harmony.

"Ideally what you'd like, especially in the commercial end, is to make the system as automatic as possible, in essence making it hands free," explains vice president of sales Steve Devlin. "We do a lot of commercial installations. This could encompass anything from hospitals to commercial entities such as supermarkets."

Over the past year the company has been working on video walls for Foot Locker shoe stores in a number of the nation's major metropolitan areas.

While LA East, with a small staff of six, installs the systems and provides technical assistance, the company utilizes a national service organization to handle follow-up, on-site work in all but the nearest states.

LA East also does design work, primarily for audio systems, working with the technical staff of family fun centers or theme parks. In looking at a facility's needs, they will design a system "down to the wiring diagrams," Devlin said, and do everything short of actually installing the system.

Such designs allow for zoned control of sound and the ability to page and broadcast periodic voice announcements in facilities as small as two rooms and as large as an outdoor theme park. "There may be a jukebox involved but it's only one component," says Devlin.

Even when dealing with a jukebox sound system many factors must be taken into consideration including the location's square footage, existing

Providing key in-house support is controller Melissa Kelly.

Secretary Sherry Rizzo is a crucial member of the LA East team, handling the company's day-to-day business.

equipment, and clientele, according to Devlin. "Pizza Hut is going to have different needs than a college bar."

The rise of the CD jukebox

LA East is a subsidiary of Landsdale, a music and games operation formed in 1957 by Sam Schembri in Hatfield. LA East is owned by Schembri's daughter, Eileen Schembri.

The company was formed in 1988, shortly after the introduction of the CD jukebox, to fill a growing market, which included the need to integrate CD jukeboxes with in-house location sound systems.

"I started with Landsdale in 1984 and after a few years with the company we started seeing these different needs," Devlin recalled. "That got us started, getting into basic AV installs for Landsdale's coin-op clients. It was a nice marriage. One hand helped the other. Say if Joe's Corner Bar wanted to put up a couple of TVs, we could do that too.

"Once you got into CD, the signal quality was so good, there was more of a need to make the jukebox part of the in-house system. That was the incentive for us to do our catalog."

LA East's catalog is a listing of quality medium range price components, which the company will distribute and integrate into a custom system for its clients. Developing a jukebox system, for example, can range from installing new relays to designing a sophisticated, multiple-input system.

> **"Ideally what you'd like, especially in the commercial end, is to make the system as automatic as possible, in essence making it hands free."**

But that investment can bring the operator and the location owner together in a more valuable partnership, providing additional incentive to showcase the jukebox. That in turn equates to more playtime and added revenue.

"The bottom line to making money on a jukebox is records," says Devlin. "The second thing is great sound."

Promoting quality and avoiding alienation

The kind of integrated jukebox system which LA East can provide will pay additional dividends from a standpoint of quality, according to Devlin.

In the past, there was less reason to look at this factor because 45s did not have the same top-notch signal quality, and what was there wore out over time. So in many cases little attention was given to the system as a whole.

One of the main changes in recent years is the sophistication of listeners, who have experienced CD sound in their own homes. "They have a certain expectation of how a jukebox is going to sound," said Devlin. "If it doesn't sound good, they are going to be turned off."

CD jukeboxes have opened the doors to other venues as well, and that has brought about the need for more sophisticated controls. Ironically, the strength of the jukebox may also be its main weakness—

whoever pays the dollar gets to choose the songs.

"It opened up the doors to take jukeboxes places where they hadn't been, maybe a place that already had a good sound system, like a nice restaurant," Devlin said. "But there's always that possibility of someone walking up and playing a Van Halen tune right behind Frank Sinatra."

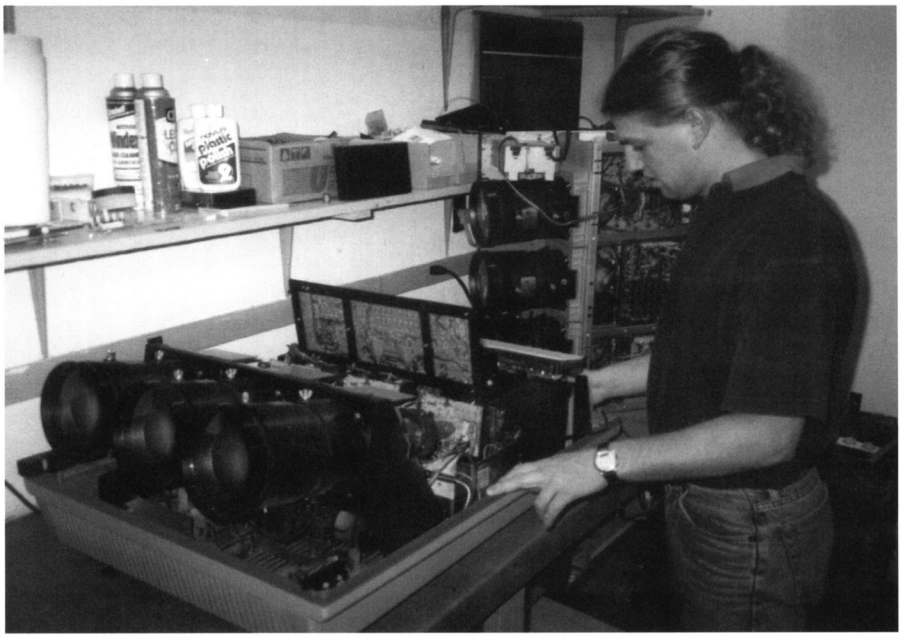
With the right system design, and a commitment to implement that system, such situations can be controlled without employees having to rush back and forth to the volume adjuster. The noise level can be modulated or even zoned from restaurant to lounge.

On the other end of the spectrum, a well integrated speaker system can make it possible for a jukebox to overcome the din of crowded bar through proper sound distribution without overpowering the listeners. "If it's really laid out well, it's not going to be ear splitting to compensate for the additional noise," Devlin explained.

Finally, a good system can help overcome the inertia of hesitancy from customers when the jukebox is not being played. In those instances TVs and radios are often in use to supplant dead air in bars and restaurants.

"A lot of people are intimidated to walk up to the box...but you want the jukebox to take priority," Devlin said. "On a simple level, there's a little relay you can use that will cut off another source when the jukebox is played and turn it back on when play is completed."

These kind of features can go a long way toward avoiding any alienation which might be caused by the jukebox for either the customer or the location owner. The last thing a jukebox should prompt, according to Devlin, is a "turn-that-thing-off" response.



While the service and installation work of technician Dominic Cubranich may be done behind the scenes, LA East's clients and their customers reap the benefits by way of excellent audio and video entertainment.

However, attacking such problems takes the kind of careful planning and expert knowledge that the staff at LA East, which includes several former service technicians, have to offer. It also takes forethought on the part of developers looking to include entertainment outlets in their facilities.

"We respond to the same problems that the coin-op guys do," Devlin noted. "AV is rarely a priority for a new business. A lot of times we're called in near the end of the job. They want a four-course meal for the price of a cheeseburger. But you have to put in a good skeleton. You can always flesh it out later. The important thing is to first design in the necessary infrastructure. It doesn't cost that much to add a few components later. We do that a lot."

So what does the future hold, particularly in the field of jukeboxes?

"The combination of audio and video is already out," Devlin responded. "The trick will be to combine them in a jukebox form. I don't know where it's headed. There's a lot of new technology out there."

"The bottom line to making money on a jukebox is records. The second thing is great sound."

While the future may be uncertain, LA East, with it feet firmly planted in both of these technological arenas, is sure to be there when it does happen, ready to meet the challenge those developments will bring in the way of making them part of a coherent whole. ▲

TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

Louisiana stages state foosball championship

For three days foosball excitement permeated Kenny's Key West in Metairie, La., as over 300 players gathered for the 4th Annual Louisiana State Foosball Tournament Oct. 7-9.

John Zoller and Darby Russo organized, officiated, and competed in the event, which featured 10 standard categories and two specialty categories of competition.

Top-ranking players from around the country traveled to the Bayou State for the occasion. Winners in the major categories were:

Open Doubles: 1st—Todd Loffredo and Terry Moore, 2nd—Russ King and Bobby Diaz, 3rd—Shane Coffee and Greg Perrie.

Open Singles: 1st—Greg Perrie, 2nd—Todd Loffredo, 3rd—Tommy Adkisson.

Expert Doubles: 1st—Jack Simpson and Corey Clement, 2nd—Chris Still and Darby Russo, 3rd—Gerry Herring and Andy Shirley.

Expert Singles: 1st—Sammy Dill, 2nd—Terry Rue, 3rd—Mark Duhe.

Women's Doubles: 1st—Cammy Carter and Cindy Stuart, 2nd—Stephanie Dean and Lizz Hill, 3rd—Liz Trotter and Patricia Morales.

Open Mixed Doubles: 1st—Todd Loffredo and Cammy Carter; 2nd—Tommy Adkisson and Lizz Hill, 3rd—Beth Myer and Greg Perrie.

Rookie Singles: 1st—Safi Shiber, 2nd—Bryan Chauvin, 3rd—Hung Nguyen.

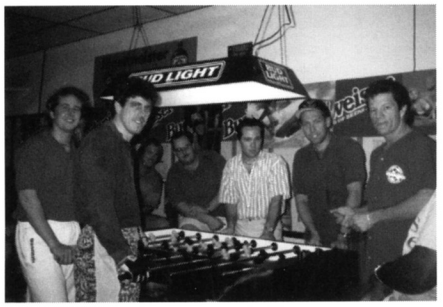
Rookie Doubles: 1st—Safi Shiber and David Thille, 2nd—Tracy Howard and Gary Howard, 3rd—John Crawford and Mike Burkell.

Amateur Doubles: 1st—Micah Odle and Mike Burkell; 2nd—Laurie White and Donnie White, 3rd—James Mcafee and Ron Harden.

Amateur Singles: 1st—Chris Whittaker, 2nd—Mark Matarese, 3rd—Jack Simpson.

Bill Partridge and Liz Trotter won the $1,000 Draw Partner event; Dan Corcoran and Tommy Adkisson won the Second Chance Draw. ▲

John Zoller and Darby Russo say it takes a large staff to produce a state tournament. Here's living proof.

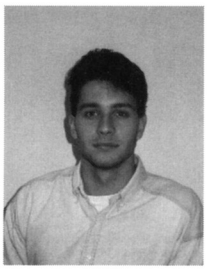


John Zoller (r) officiates for, (l-r): Greg Perrie, Shane Coffee, Bill Partridge, and Evan Stachelek. Champion Terry Moore is in the background.

Competition in Expert Doubles draws a crowd for Dominic Musso and Chris Still of Baton Rouge and Terry Rue and Terry Scott of Lafayette.

Husband and wife team Randy and Angie Bentley of Orange, Texas, set up for doubles competition.

Competing in Mixed Doubles, (l-r): Ron Hardin and James Mcafee and John Melton and Janine Guercia.



PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Masterful moves key to new game success

One thing that never ceases to amaze me is the speed at which some players master a game. Any fighting game worth mentioning from the last few years contains at least two or three special or combination moves per character, with the most recent entries sporting up to 10 or more!

Granted, joystick/button combinations are similar in different games, but how some players avoid confusing these moves is beyond me. The first game featured this month contains plenty of hidden features. It would require weeks of play for me to learn and distinguish some of the combos. However, it was mastered and turned over three times by a certain player before he gave the game over to me because he was tired. And it had only been on location for two days!

A sample of the fighting action in Killer Instinct by Midway.

Greg Reeves

There have always been high score masters, but it seems to me that they get better as quickly as the games become more difficult.

Killer Instinct

Theme: Nintendo has returned. After pulling out of the arcade game market in favor of home systems, Nintendo is back in partnership with Rareware and Midway to release the most visually stunning standard fighting game to date.

For starters, the graphics capture the imagination. One or two players can choose from 10 characters, including a werewolf, ninja, cyborg, Indian, and lava man, among others. There is very little story, but none is needed since one look at the game reveals its true purpose.

Battles take place atop buildings in futuristic cities or wastelands, in alleys, and on bridges. Victory over all nine opponents and a duplicate of one's own character, as well as discovery of the highest number of combo moves possible, are the player's goals.

Graphics: This is another hard-to-describe-with-words game. Nintendo's Ultra 64 system features all computer-generated graphics that make perfect 3-D realism possible in characters and backgrounds. What takes this game beyond something like Sega's *Virtua Fighter* is its color and texture, in addition to polygons that achieve a plastic and glowing look to everything on the

screen. In fact, the high-resolution graphics make the screen appear to be a window with the scenery beyond it.

The camera automatically zooms out as fighters move away from each other, revealing the depth of the battle area. Character movement flows smoothly, giving the appearance of weight when jumping.

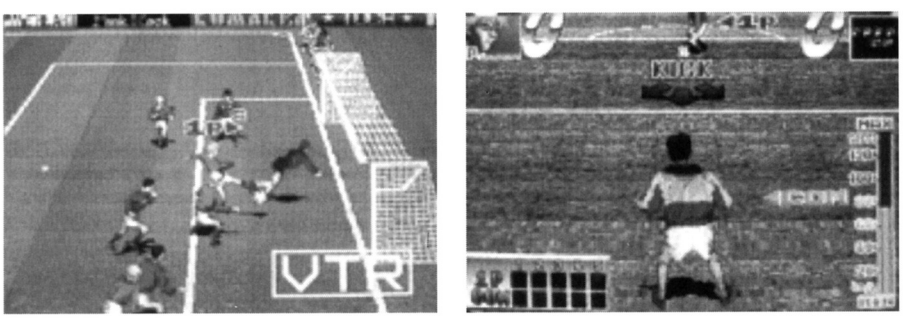
Everything on the screen has a tangible look, as if it could be touched. Perhaps the best artwork is in the title sequence and attract mode. With cinema-like brilliance, the game logo appears on the screen, followed by all 10 characters displaying their fighting abilities and stances, courtesy of computer animation.

Controls: The common six buttons are preserved here, though in the format of quick, medium, and fierce for either high or low attacks. The type of attack varies among kicks, punches, weapon strikes, or bites, depending on which fighter is chosen. The multiple combo moves or special distance attacks are accessed by a combination of these buttons and the joystick. The dedicated cabinet is as attractive as the game itself and houses the patented DCS sound system.

Game Play: No fancy stories or explanations are given once the credits are displayed. Combat begins right after character selection. The action is real-time, meaning that movements appear slower as the camera zooms out, and there are no dramatic slow-motion finishes as in real life.

Points are scored for the highest number of combos, starting at three hits all the way up to those in the 20s. There are no rounds; game play continues until one character loses all life twice. A learned finishing move may then be executed.

Summary: Despite attempts to reduce game violence lately, *Killer Instinct* is the definitive fighting experience. Cool characters, lots of blood, and destructive finishing moves are proven to be what players want. This game has all three in abundance and already draws a crowd.



Taito's Hattrick Hero '94 features varying soccer field textures.

Hattrick Hero '94

Theme: The first entry in Taito's new interchangeable software unit, the Cybercore System, is an update of an older game based on international soccer competition. Thirty countries are represented, each with uniformed team players boasting unique characteristics.

Three-minute games are played, with the winner progressing to the next match. The kit is full of details, including different coaches per team, rough play penalties, instant replays, and varying soccer field textures.

Graphics: The screen camera shows the field from the sidelines and above the ground. This way the scrolling is right and left and the screen portion of the field is fully visible from front to back. The long end of it would be about four screens wide, so constant movement is important to score in the short time frame. Teams are distinguished by clothing, skin, and hair color, but all have exaggerated features typical of the Japanese animation style.

Controls: Like many sports-themed games, *Hattrick Hero's* buttons have a dual function, depending on offense or defense. When in possession of the ball, button A allows a kick, button B performs a pass to another team member, and button C activates a special move chosen earlier in the game.

Defensively, button A lets the player slide to steal the ball, and buttons B and C enable rough play against an opponent. The joystick controls the team member being used and the direction of the ball across the field.

Game Play: The best aspect of the game is here. Character control is easy—an icon and arrow constantly remind the player which character he is using and what direction he is running. The goalie is controlled by the computer and there are always teammates nearby for a quick ball pass.

The three minutes allotted will continue unless the ball is kicked out of the field or into the goal, where a throw-in or kickoff, respectively, then occurs. Rough play is interesting because an obvious knock down stops the game and a yellow or red card penalty is given to allow the opposing team a free kick.

At the beginning of each match the player can choose

one special move to use during the game when pressing button C. Among the 10 or so special moves are Super Dash and Super Shoot to score an easier win, or Super Guard to increase protection of the player's goal. After a point is scored, the computer replays it in slow motion without the crowd noise.

Summary: There were four or more soccer-themed games at AMOA Expo '94. It is unfortunate that collections and player interest are not as great as the games themselves.

Red & Ted's Road Show

Theme: In the tradition of lighter-themed pinball games from Williams, *Red & Ted's Road Show* is based on a pair of construction workers who operate a runaway bulldozer. Red (voiced by country singer Carlene Carter) and her co-worker Ted are the two stars of Williams' patented PinMation concept, and serve as the player's guide to destroying roads and cars countrywide.

Jason Lapene gets a kick out of Red & Ted's Road Show by Williams.

On the way to the West Coast, the player can go through the days of the week to get his paycheck, explode dynamite in the blast zone, cause vehicles to jump the "bridge out" ramps, and smash taxicabs in traffic.

Features: The most noticeable features on the playfield are the two animated heads of Red and Ted, hardhats and hair included, which serve to guide and inform the player during the game. Just as in Williams' Fun House, the ball can hit the faces and heads of the characters, as well as go into their mouths, causing gagging sounds.

There is a bulldozer shovel target in front of Ted's face that progresses the weekday when hit, but lifts up to expose his mouth when multiball commences. Two "bridge out" ramps are on the left and right sides of the field, and an extra plunger fires the ball onto Ted's head for a skill shot award. Lighted diagrams on the floor of the playfield display the day of the week, the city scheduled for wreckage, and the current play mode.

Summary: The ramps and target scores pale in comparison to the PinMation feature. In fact, Pinteractive would have been a more appropriate word since the actions of the characters reflect the status of the game and the whereabouts of the ball.

Along with the DCS sound system that plays songs that Red sings and the dot-matrix display, the player is easily able to keep up with the game changes. Williams has a solid reputation as a pinball manufacturer; this is one of its best games. ▲

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FRANK'S CRANKS

What have we learned? Where are we heading?

In three days, Alpha-Omega Amusements will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. Being an operator surely isn't the easiest way to make a living, but for me it is the most enjoyable. I look forward to getting up early every day and going to the office or visiting a location to solve problems and think of new ways to improve this business.

If you love what you do, you already have 50 percent of what you need to be successful. Service is what coin-op has always been all about. There are very few industries that can boast about their fine reputation for customer service. Most operators provide 24-hour service. We work long hours at very low rates, especially when compared to, say a washer/dryer service call that starts at $50 just to "take a look."

"When I look back over the past 25 years, the products that we made money operating were just about everything but video games."

Most of us try to make our locations happy even if it means losing money on that account. There is something special about being an operator. It's a combination of hard work, paying bills, (sometimes) making money, and charity every day all rolled into one.

Now that we feel good about ourselves, what is our future going to be like? What kind of equipment will we be able to operate? Many operators have gotten used to operating upright video games and have learned to use conversion kits to extend the life of their equipment. I feel that this era is going to come to an end very soon.

There are several reasons why: presently very little R&D money is going into coin-op. This has been the case for the past few years as fighting game after fighting game has been released to the market. Video game revenues have been decreasing and will continue to decrease as more and more quality game are available to the homes.

Gambling in the United States is increasing, and I see the day when there are casinos in every regional market and video lottery terminals in almost every state.

It will take years for the public to realize that gambling was not the answer for government to raise money and start to take drastic action to decrease the proliferation of gambling. Operators can't wait that long. We must go after new markets with new opportunities now!

Every so often great games like *Daytona, Mortal Kombat II,* and *Virtua Fighter* are introduced, and our remaining players put their money into these games. On some games, like *Daytona*, players spend even more so our location gross reflects an increase for a while. But these players won't go back to play the other games. We will lose these loyal players unless we have new exciting games to keep their interest and keep them playing. Do I need to tell you that we are losing players?

In my last column, I discussed how redemption games are earning good numbers for operators who have learned

Frank Seninsky

how to operate them correctly. I see that many of the field video game techs (not the bench techs) refuse to acquire the new skills needed to repair redemption games. They have learned how to replace buttons, joysticks, power supplies, and tighten down control panels. But keeping redemption games in top operating condition requires a lot of patience and attention to detail.

Redemption games must be kept clean, and all moving parts must be checked often. Many times it takes four hours to recondition a redemption game. Operating redemption games is very labor intensive. Not all operators are comfortable making a transition to redemption.

There are very few video game manufacturers left. The Japanese will decrease their manufacturing presence in the U.S. market as our market is becoming very difficult for them to dominate. Don't think that Japanese manufacturers won't try to dominate the U.S. operating market, as they have already begun that quest.

This opens doors for new small manufacturers to fill this void. The majority of these new companies will make products for us other than upright video games. Operators will be able to operate different types of games and will probably be better off.

When I look back over the past 25 years, the products that we made money operating were just about everything but video games. With all the revenues we took in from video games, we spent that and more to purchase additional video games. So, I for one, won't feel too bad if the upright video market dries up or there are just a few new models put out each year that the players desire.

But we still want to know where are we headed. A new breed of operator is in the making. This operator will have a technical background and be well versed in computers, banking/finance, accounting, law, marketing, promotions, and most important, getting along with people. Working directly with the location will always be important and this should never be forgotten.

"The new breed of operator will be able to assess a new market and create partnerships and joint ventures with other companies enabling him to become a player in new markets."

The new breed of operator will be able to assess a new market and create partnerships and joint ventures with other companies enabling him to become a player in new markets. This operator must know what is going on in coin-op around the world, for the operating market has become global.

Finding secondary markets for used equipment will become a much bigger part of the job. In fact, it will be critical because only top level equipment will make money.

This new operator will be heavily involved in national and international associations and speak multiple languages. He'll have to possess a thirst for knowledge. This operator is the role model of who we all need to strive to become.

I have just outlined someone who is unrealistic. But my point is that operators of the future will need to excel in far more areas of business than we do now. Perhaps it will take two or three operating partners to be able to cover all these areas of expertise.

All of the top glitz locations will be operated by the type of operator outlined above. The smaller street locations always will be best operated by the small operator. But even these smaller operators will have to know about computers to download games, about banking and accounting to get the required capital, about law to keep his locations from jumping ship, and about marketing and promotions to get his fair share of the leisure entertainment dollar.

If you think you are working long hours now, you will be working even harder to make these necessary changes before you lose your business. Many of you will rise to the challenge. Some of you won't because you feel (rightfully so) that there are other things you could do that won't take as much effort. Whatever your decision is, I know one thing for certain: I am going to do my best to become one of the new breed of coin machine operators. I hope to see many of you along the way.

The past 25 years have gone by quickly. I hope that the next 25 take a little longer! As always...keep cranking. ▲

TECHNICAL TOPICS

As others see us

Randy Fromm

This article takes a look at the coin-op industry as seen by players—and fans! I have included comments from Steve Ofoz via internet.

Much of this article contains text quoted directly from publicly available files; files that can be found on the internet. If you read this column regularly, you may have noticed that in addition to my telephone and FAX numbers, I now include my internet address at the end. That's right! I have a brand new, shiny internet address, and I've found some very interesting things along the I-Way. Some surprising things, too!

For example, There is a "usenet" newsgroup called "rec.games.video.arcade." A newsgroup is where you can find information (or contribute information) of interest on a specific subject or topic. It was here that I discovered one of the most interesting things of all: copies of the monitor troubleshooting flowcharts that were published previously in Play Meter. I wonder how they got there. If the person who uploaded it to the net reads this, could you e-mail me or give me a call?

There is a great deal of interesting information about the coin-op amusement business. Here's a list of some of what's available. By the way, you'll see the term "FAQ" used quite often. FAQ stands for "frequently asked questions." As the name implies, the FAQ is a list of frequently asked questions and the answers to them. FAQs are dynamic, ever-expanding lists that are generally maintained by one person or a small cadre of dedicated volunteers. Contributions, however, can come from dozens or hundreds of different individuals. For that reason, you will often see small parts of an FAQ credited to a contributor such as :

JoeBlow@delphi.com

or:

snake@mit.edu:

or something like that.

Here are some examples:

auction: Steve Ofoz's "Buying from an Auction" faq

cheats: The latest copy of the Definitive Arcade Games cheat sheet

help: The RGVA Mailserver and FTP guide (from the FAQ)

klov: The latest copy of the Killer List of Video Games

mk: The Mortal Kombat moves sheet

mk2: The Mortal Kombat II moves sheet

nba: The NBA JAMS moves/secrets sheet

operator: Steve Ofoz's "Buying from an operator" faq

primal: The Primal Rage FAQ

rampart: The Rampart help sheet

faq: The rec.games.video.arcade Frequently Asked Questions list

samurai: The Samurai Showdown moves/hints sheet

sf2 faq: The Street Fighter II FAQ sheet

sf2 ken: The Street Fighter II Ken FAQ

sf2 moves: The Street Fighter II Moves sheet

ssf2: The Super Street Fighter II FAQ and moves sheet

tssf2: The Turbo Super Street Fighter II FAQ (how long can this go on?)

t2: The Terminator 2 help sheet

virtua: The Virtua Fighters

help sheet

I think the "Buying from an operator FAQ" is especially interesting because it shows an outsider's perception of the industry. Here is an excerpt:

FAQ: BUYING FROM AN OPERATOR

This FAQ is divided into six sections:

SECTION ONE: Where did all the games go?

SECTION TWO: Who's who?

SECTION THREE: Know your operator

SECTION FOUR: Strategies for dealing with operators

SECTION FIVE: Wheeling and Dealing

SECTION SIX: Miscellaneous questions

SECTION ONE: Where did all the games go?

Q: Why can't I find my favorite game anymore?

A: Simple. Your favorite video game doesn't make the operator enough money to justify the floor space it takes up. Perhaps you should have put more quarters in it when you had the chance.

Sometimes games are retired due to high repair and maintenance costs regardless of their popularity. For example, *Missile Command*'s large trackball was known to have problems with pins wearing down, and the HV flyback transformer in Tempest's color vector monitor was notorious for its high failure rate.

Regardless of the reason for its retirement, if you want to play, it'll be up to you to find your game and buy it. Making this process simpler and easier for you was why we wrote this FAQ.

Q: So why couldn't I buy it when it was in the arcade?

A: If you're playing a game on the street, the game is still making money for the operator. We'll get into how much money in the next question, but keep in mind that unless you offer the operator at least three times the game's monthly earnings, he won't even consider selling it to you.

Q: What happened to my favorite game while it was at the arcade, and where did it go when it left?

A: Here's a rough sketch, based on the author's experiences, of what the first few years of a game's life is like:

An operator makes money by buying video games for $2,500 to $3,000 and running them for several months. Note that there are exceptions: Hard Drivin' machines, for instance, can cost upwards of $10,000 and will be run for years.

After the first week of operation, the operator will probably have $200-$400 inside. If a game costs $3,200 and the operator gets $200 per week, it takes the operator 16 weeks to make back his original investment. Anything that comes in after that is pure profit. Unless you can offer the operator more than he will make from a machine over the next three months or so, you can forget it.

This is why you never hear of anybody buying new machines from an operator. After the operator has been running the game for about 18 months or so, the game becomes old. It doesn't earn much, perhaps only $20-$50 per week or so. Since the operator has limited space in the arcade, the game will be replaced with a new game when an opportunity arises. The new game takes up no more space than the old one, but it earns more MONEY.

Since the operator doesn't know what to do with the old game, it usually gets dragged downstairs or thrown into a warehouse, where it sits unused for several years, waiting to be sold, converted, parted out, or even taken off to the dump!

Conversion is the process of turning one game into another. Ever wonder why you keep seeing the cabinets for some of your old favorites with the "wrong game" inside 'em? Conversions are the reason. The more specialized the parts for a game are, the less likely they are to be converted.

At the other end of the scale are JAMMA-based games, in which only the game logic needs to be changed; the controls and other hardware are completely interchangeable. These games are almost always converted quickly and reintroduced to circulation. The longer a game sits in a warehouse, the more likely it is that parts of it will disappear, either for use in repairs (parting out) or for use in other conversions. As the game's earning potential approaches zero, or as a lot of its parts disappear, it'll eventually wind up in the dumpster.

Not all of this news is bad news, though. When a game gets converted its boards are often left over. This is why warehouses can be a good source for boards as well as complete games. We'll get into the risks and rewards of buying boards later on in the FAQ. For now, let's stick to the sale of complete games.

The sale of a game can take two forms: taken to auctions and sold to the general public. The general public includes other operators (who might have fewer games in their arcades and still want the game), or collectors (who often attend

auctions and buy games there). See the Auctions FAQ for details. The games can also be sold to collectors who manage to get into the warehouse. Getting you into that warehouse, and informing you on what to do when you get there, is the goal of this FAQ: How to Buy from an Operator.

If the game is not sold and the warehouse is full, the operator will, without hesitation, throw the old game into the dumpster in order to make room for newer retirees. Again, the MONEY principle is at work. Newer retirees are more likely to command a higher price (more MONEY) when sold, and the operator doesn't want to spend MONEY on buying more warehouse space. You will hear more about the MONEY principle later.

SECTION TWO: Who's who?

Q: Who are distributors? What do they do?

A: Distributors sell new (occasionally used) games from manufacturers to operators. Some distributors also perform repair, reconditioning, and conversion work for operators.

Q: Who are operators? What do they do?

A: Anyone who owns a video game and makes money off it is an operator. The guy who runs your local arcade is an operator. The owner of the company which puts games in locations like your corner store is also an operator. Even the people who run Starcade at Disneyland are operators. Operators operate their games at locations to make MONEY.

Q: Now that I know the difference between operators and distributors, where should I go to buy my games?

A: Keep in mind that operators consider collectors as small potatoes. They consequently dislike dealing with collectors and avoid it wherever possible. If an operator is unwilling to deal with you because he considers you to be small potatoes, the distributor (who often considers some operators to be small potatoes) is going to be even less amenable to dealing. It is possible to deal with a distributor, but it's rare, and since the techniques used for dealing with operators and distributors are roughly the same, the remainder of this FAQ will concern itself with dealing with operators.

"The MONEY principle is simple: OPERATORS LOVE MONEY. It's a simple rule, but its importance cannot be overstated."

Q: Who are the collectors? (Okay, we are. So what do we do?)

A: What we do should be obvious: we collect video games. Different collectors tend to have different objectives. There are three general classes of collectors out there:

- Beginning collectors who own one or two games and are looking to expand. This category also includes the people who have yet to start their collections. Although we discuss auctions in a separate FAQ, we highly recommend them as a way to get started in the hobby. Even if you don't buy anything at an auction, you'll at least get a feel for the state of the market in your area. And they can be great places to meet fellow collectors.
- Intermediate collectors who own between three to six machines and probably have converted at least one cabinet to play more than one game. Auctions and get-togethers for bulk buys are common ways of getting games at this stage.
- Serious collectors who own more than six machines and have converted several cabinets. Serious collectors are often starting small inventories of parts, and they probably sell at least some of the games they fix. Most serious collectors acquire their wares through bulk buys with operators. Remember that these are only generalizations. In your travels, you will likely encounter people who fit into more than one of these categories. You may also encounter people who fit into none of these categories. This hobby is about video games, but it is not a video game. It doesn't matter what level you're working at as long as you're enjoying yourself.

SECTION THREE: Know your operator

Q: What makes operators tick?

A: Very simply. In fact, one word will suffice—MONEY.

Q: So this is the MONEY principle, right?

A: Right. The MONEY principle is simple: OPERATORS LOVE MONEY. It's a simple rule, but its importance cannot be overstated. MONEY gets you in the door, MONEY talks to the operator, MONEY pays your way when you're inside, and MONEY can even help you get your favorite game away from the operator at the lowest price possible. The strategy section of this FAQ will describe all of this (and more) in detail.

Operators own games to make MONEY. If operators were allowed to run porno shows on their games in order to collect quarters, they'd do it. Operators are not interested in the art of game design or the impact these games have on society. And they are certainly not interested in packaging up the boards for your favorite game and sending it halfway across the country for you or anyone else. Not when he can make several times as much money letting players pump quarters into his games.

AGAIN, ONLY ONE THING MATTERS TO OPERATORS GETTING THE MOST MONEY OUT OF THE GAMES THEY OWN.

Read that sentence again. You and I, however, only want to wrestle our favorite games away from these operators. So how do we do it? Suffice it to say that whatever the answer is, it lies in MONEY. This should be kept in mind as you read the remainder of this FAQ, and should be foremost in your mind whenever you deal with an operator.

Q: How do I contact an operator?

A: If you wish to use the phone, you can get phone numbers from the following places:

- The "Amusement Devices" and "Vending Machines" sections of your Yellow Pages directory is the best place to start.
- Stickers on games which read something like "For service, call 555-5555." Call one of these numbers and see who answers.
- The sides of trucks seen at auctions sometimes have phone numbers and company logos written on them.
- Go to an auction and put up a posting saying "MONEY FOR JUNK" with your phone number on it. It can sometimes work wonders. If you're physically present at the arcade, start working your way up through the ranks. Start with the person behind the coin counter or a technician. These front-line people can give you information on what's in the basement, and may be able to set you up with the arcade manager. Often a combined approach (visit an arcade, ask a few questions, get a phone number, go home and call the next day) is the most effective.

"After the first week of operation, the operator will probably have $200-$400 inside. If a game costs $3,200 and the operator gets $200 per week, it takes the operator 16 weeks to make back his original investment."

Q: Okay, I've got the phone number, but I still don't seem to be getting anywhere. What's going on, and how can I do better?

A: Getting the phone number is only half the battle. The whole organization of receptionists, technicians, and arcade managers is set up to prevent people from talking to the operator. The reason for this is that anything the operator could be doing would earn him more money than dealing with a collector, who is only likely to spend $100-200. For example, the average operator can take in just as much money in a single day by leaving his phone off the hook and letting people pump quarters into a row of Mortal Kombat machines.

If you are in an arcade, keep in mind that (in most cases) only the operator has the authority to sell you a video game. The arcade managers and technicians generally do not. Although these people are often valuable sources of information, you'll usually have to keep working at it until you reach the man at the top.

One last note. OPERATORS NEVER RETURN PHONE CALLS. (Well, maybe not never, but trust us, it's rare.) So if you manage to talk to one and want to continue dealing, you have to take the initiative. Some operators have also become jaded through deals with beginning collectors that never spent much money, expected perfectly-working games, and always wanted warranties. If this is the case for your operator, expect considerable difficulty in overcoming his prejudices if you wish to deal effectively. Sometimes there's just no winning, and you're best off trying your luck elsewhere.

SECTION FOUR: Strategies for dealing with operators

Q: I've made contact! What do I say I'm looking for?

A: Don't be overly specific. Telling an operator that you are looking for Battlezone simply tells the operator that he can ask any price he wants for it. This is a case of the MONEY principle working against you. On the other hand, if the operator has no interest in the collec-

tor's desired item, the collector can often buy it for next to nothing.

The key is NOT TO BRING ATTENTION TO THE DESIRED ITEM. An excellent way of doing this is by including desirable items in bulk buys. Indicate interest in "oh, some old Atari boards," then buy a pile of them, even if half of them are for games you don't really want. The Battlezone board will be much cheaper as a result, and you can use the rest of the boards for parts.

The MONEY principle can also be used to your advantage. If you casually mention that you're willing to "clear out some space" for him by "taking some old games off his hands," you can improve your chances. After all, the operator is only going to be throwing the junk away in a couple of years. If he sees that he can save on storage or disposal costs by selling you something, you're in business.

The higher the potential for making MONEY, the more eager he will be to deal with you. Bulk buys (where you state that you're willing to buy three or more games, for instance), are especially attractive. Making purchases with cash sweetens the deal still further. He can see the MONEY right in front of his face, and he'll want to get his hands on it.

The key is to convince the operator that he wants to sell you the goods. Ask him how much it costs to rent/heat the warehouse. Does he have space problems? Wouldn't it be nice if a dozen machines which he'll never operate again disappeared and several hundred dollars CASH appeared in their place? (A hint: emphasize the word CASH.)

Ask him why he still has those ancient vector monitors around. Ask him if he even has any machines out that could use the parts sitting in the pile in the corner. Why pay to keep a batch of Defender boards when all your Defender cabinets have been converted to other games or scrapped? (A hint: make sure he tells you what is useful before you start rummaging through boards, otherwise his list of useful boards may grow during your conversation.)

The whole idea behind this line of questioning is "Mr. Operator, let me take these parts/machines that will not make you any MONEY (and will never be used to repair anything that makes MONEY), and which cost MONEY to store or dispose of off your hands. I'm even willing to PAY YOU MONEY for the privilege of doing you this favor!" Once you explain things that way (and especially if you suggest a bulk buy), you should end up getting a great price. Generally, about 50 to 75 percent of the stuff you take will be useful or valuable to you. The rest of it will probably be useful or valuable to the other serious collectors on the net, so you can actually make some money yourself!

The only problem you will encounter is that you have a limited time to select all the stuff you will haul off; this is discussed in another question.

Q: I'm in the warehouse. What now?

A: Remember those old contests where the prize is a one minute shopping spree? That's what you do. You hurry. Time is MONEY in the video game business, and you should know by now what MONEY means to an operator. Since collectors rarely have much MONEY and are often shunned by operators, if you've managed to get this far, you probably won't get a second chance.

For instance, if you go to an operator and spend an hour and a half rummaging through old boards and play-testing half of the machines in the warehouse, take down some prices and then leave, the operator will probably feel that he didn't get enough MONEY for the time he lost in dealing with you. You probably will not be welcomed back, even if you intend to buy this time. (The only times we've heard of collectors being invited back for a second visit is when they purchased over $1,500 worth of goods.)

SECTION FIVE: Wheeling and Dealing

Q: Which games are most worth buying?

A: This is a tough question. The economics of supply and demand determine what is worth buying and how much it should cost. Both change often, but a good guide to what was in demand recently is the VAPS membership list. If it's popular with VAPS members, odds are it'll be popular among other collectors too. Ranges of sample prices have also been sprinkled throughout the text of this FAQ and can be used as guides to help you in your dealings. (Keep in mind these prices will eventually go out of date as the FAQ gets older.)

Q: What parts will be the most useful if I don't have much money or space?

A: Cabinets are large, heavy, and difficult to keep around. They're also hard to sell to other people. Go for monitors, boards, and control panels. Here's why:

• If you trade equipment with other collectors, you get the first pick from the bulk deal and can keep the best stuff for

yourself.

• It's much easier to throw in a new board set and control panel on a game than it is to rewire a whole cabinet. See the Conversion FAQ for more details.

• Boards, being worthless to most operators, tend to be cheap.

• You can sell most, if not all of your goods, on the net at a later date. This helps your hobby pay for itself and also helps others (who may not have the time nor the inclination to do a bulk buy) to get the parts for the games they want.

• You can use extra goodies as a source of spare parts for your games. Control panels are especially useful in this regard.

• If you're dealing in non-working equipment, remember the adage about spare parts

• The more, the merrier. Even if you like to program with a soldering iron, you'll want spare parts to swap in and out during the repair process.

• A control panel and related boards occupy much less space than a complete cabinet.

• If you're buying JAMMA-compatible hardware, you don't need anything more than the board, since one-cabinet-fits-all. See the question on building your own cabinet for more information.

• If you're buying for friends, or are far away from home, you cut down drastically on shipping costs. See the section on shipping costs for details. Compare the volume and mass of a control panel and boards with its cabinet. Which would you rather carry for 500 miles?

• You avoid the horrible situation of the operator/distributor throwing the boards away when you aren't there. The next collector arrives and hears "oh, sorry, we threw a whole bunch of those out last month." (If collectors got paid a quarter for every time they heard this line, they'd have more money than the operators.)

Q: What risks are there associated with dealing in spare parts? What should I know about buying or selling boards?

A: When buying from an operator, try to resist the temptation to test the goods. If a board set is gathering dust in a corner, both you and the operator can safely assume it isn't working. On the other hand, if you power up a board set and it

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does work, you've just told the operator that the board set is worth something.

Once you've gotten your parts home, test them out. If they don't work, don't worry. If you have some knowledge of electronics, you may be able to fix them. Even if you can't, broken boards can be sold on the net. There are people out there who can fix them.

If you're really worried about the condition of the boards and are willing to pay extra for working boards, you can still ask for testing. But keep in mind that if you're dealing in large quantities of boards, even the friendliest operator will not have time to test them all. Therefore, you'll still be buying boards of unknown condition. They may not work even if the operator says they will. Moreover, you are buying "as is."

If you intend to sell extra boards on the net, we recommend that you start small in order to get a taste of all the hassles associated with just breaking even. For instance, everyone will want advice on how to hook up the game, and nobody will want to pay for shipping or handling. You may also have to deal with bounced checks and/or C.O.D. shipment hassles.

This isn't a money-making business. If you could make a killing in the used boards market, we wouldn't need this FAQ. The operators would be selling used boards by the dozen right in the arcades. On the other hand, don't let this scare you. The authors of this FAQ, who have done board deals in the past, have always found some use for most of the goodies they've picked up. Keep your wits about you, use common sense, and you probably won't go wrong.

Q: I want to deal in whole games. What is a reasonable price for a game and/or its components?

A: Everything depends on where you live, but here is a general guide:

• Once a game stops earning enough money to justify its floor space, its boards are generally worthless to an operator. These games have no real value except in terms of what they can be converted into. Consequently boards that are more than three years old should go for $10-20 apiece if you buy them in bulk.

"If you casually mention that you're willing to "clear out some space" for him by "taking some old games off his hands," you can improve your chances."

• Raster monitors go for $50-100 because operators can reuse them in other games. Although the required horizontal sync frequency can differ from manufacturer to manufacturer, the required changes to the monitor's circuitry are minor. Operators' technicians can perform these changes and thereby reuse the monitor.

• Vector monitors, on the other hand, are practically worthless. Very few operators these days feel they can make money from these old vector games. Furthermore, since vector monitors operate on different principles than raster monitors, nothing on such a monitor is reusable. The only value a vector monitor has is its rarity operators know that collectors want these monitors, and consequently they tend to go for $25-50 apiece in bulk deals.

•Older games (those over five years old) go for $150 to $300.

• Newer games (between one and five years old) are worth up to $1,500.

• Brand new games can cost up to $3,000. Note that rare games are an exception. Operators know which games are rare and which games are popular. Unless you are making a very large bulk buy (20 games or more), the operator will demand more for these games.

Q: So now that you've said all that, what should I buy? Tell me quickly, because I'm in the warehouse now and only have about 15 minutes or so to make up my mind!

A: The moral of the story is:

• Scarf any old boards you can find.

• Scarf any vector monitors you can find, especially if you are interested in this type of game and are willing to buy or store spare parts. These parts are becoming rarer by the day!

• Scarf any control panels of games you'd like to have, even if the board sets aren't there. This is particularly important in the case of rare or classic games. If you intend to become a serious collector, scarfing control panels of games is a must!

• Be wary of buying raster monitors, especially if the monitors are new. Ask yourself why the operator is willing to give you a perfectly good monitor if he can put it into his next conversion, thereby saving himself $50-100?

Q: How much does it cost to ship a video game?

A: Shipping a game costs $150 as a minimum, and up-

wards of $300 if you want a reputable company to do it. When people find out that their $200 game is going to cost $300 to ship, they buy locally. Up to 90 percent of all games traded on the net are bought and sold within a two-hour drive of the location of the game. If you're buying for a friend, make sure they're willing to pay these costs. Otherwise you'll wind up with what they didn't want to pay to ship and what you probably didn't want in the first place.

If you want to ship the game yourself, the best method is to use a trailer. Trailers cost about $20 to rent, plus the cost of your gas, and unless you own a pickup truck, they are by far the cheapest way to move a video game. A used trailer will cost about $300 and will probably be the most useful item in a serious collector's inventory. (The second most useful item, by the way, is an appliance-moving dolly or refrigerator dolly.) Always keep in mind that boards, monitors, and control panels can be carried in the back seat of your car, so shipping costs are equal to the cost of gas and a few hours of your time. Also, keep in mind that shipping can be rough on old games. Expect to perform some minor repair work if your game has to be carried over long distances.

SECTION SIX: Miscellaneous questions

Q: Why hasn't anybody started a locator service on the net? Why won't people buy games on my behalf?

A: Consider the following sequence of steps, all of which would be required were such a service to be set up.

1) Find an operator who's willing to deal.

2) Get a price on a video game from the operator.

3) Advertise on the net through the locator service.

4) Get a reply via e-mail.

5) Buy the game from the operator.

6) Work out shipping and handling through the net.

7) Ship.

From the middleman's perspective: Notice that two visits to the operator are required. If operators tend to avoid collectors (because there isn't enough MONEY to make it worth their while), what are the chances that our prospective middleman is going to get a second visit with the operator? If a dozen other people on the net manage to find the game at the same time, what are the chances that you (the person making the buy) will be the one lucky enough to make the sale? Not very good. You will either have wasted the operator's time (because you didn't buy the game) and you can forget about dealing with that operator again, or you will be the proud owner of a game which you didn't want in the first place.

From the end buyer's perspective: Wait, I've got 10 people who want to sell me the same game and I can only buy one. That means nine people who won't be eager to deal with me through the net again because I just cost them their contact with their local operator. And I've also got to pay shipping and handling (upwards of $150-200) for a game of unknown quality ON TOP OF THE PURCHASE PRICE.

I suppose I could have asked the sellers to send me a picture of the game through the (snail) mail first. But that would have cost more money, taken more time, and annoyed more operators. Again, more people unlikely to deal with me (to say nothing of the fact that most of the pictures were taken in dark warehouses and I couldn't even see the game).

From the net's perspective: The problem with locator lists is that not all copies of the list can be updated simultaneously. The end buyer may forget to take the game off the list. Then someone else on the list finds the game and gets stuck with it. Often, the end buyer will forget to include the cost of shipping into their calculations and back out of a deal upon discovering that the cost of shipping exceeds the cost of the game itself.

Q: If bigger is better, why doesn't the net organize group trips to warehouses?

A: Group trips are good ideas in theory, but in practice they turn out to be very complicated. If you've ever organized a social gathering of net acquaintances (even if only from your local area), you already know what we mean. Now imagine how hard it is to get six different people to show up from halfway across the country at a predetermined spot—on time—in order to go to the one and only meeting with the operator.

Even if everybody makes it there on time, if all six people try striking separate deals with the operator, they'll wind up taking too much of his time and the deals will fall through. If you do manage to organize a group visit, it's a very good idea to make up a joint grocery list beforehand. Everyone involved must be prepared to contribute a certain amount of money for a given game. Once this is decided upon, you can all visit the warehouse and offer one price for the entire list.

Haggling over individual

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games during a bulk buy is a very poor way to conduct business. The one-price-takes-all strategy will save the operator time, thereby increasing the chances that you'll be allowed back at some future date.

Q: Can I build my own cabinet?

A: Yes, but don't expect to save money by doing so. It's somewhat cheaper than shipping a cabinet, but it's very time-consuming and the results depend entirely on your carpentry skills. One of the authors has tried it at a cost of about $125, and it took about three weeks. None of the authors have heard about anyone else attempting this feat. There may be an advantage to building your own cabinet if you have an interest in JAMMA-based games. For JAMMA aficionados, a huge cabinet capable of holding 10-20 boards would be of considerable value.

Q: Anything else I should know?

A: Connections and reputations are the key to this hobby. For example, if you develop a reputation for being cheap (by buying only things you really need and when the pieces are in good condition), you won't be invited to go on all the bulk buys. On the other hand, you'll always be invited to go on the really high-quality buys, because the other collectors will know you're likely to buy a lot.

Keep in mind that you can develop both your reputation and contacts any way you like. The collecting community is not an old-boys network. If you develop a lot of contacts, you'll have a reputation that'll get you more connections.

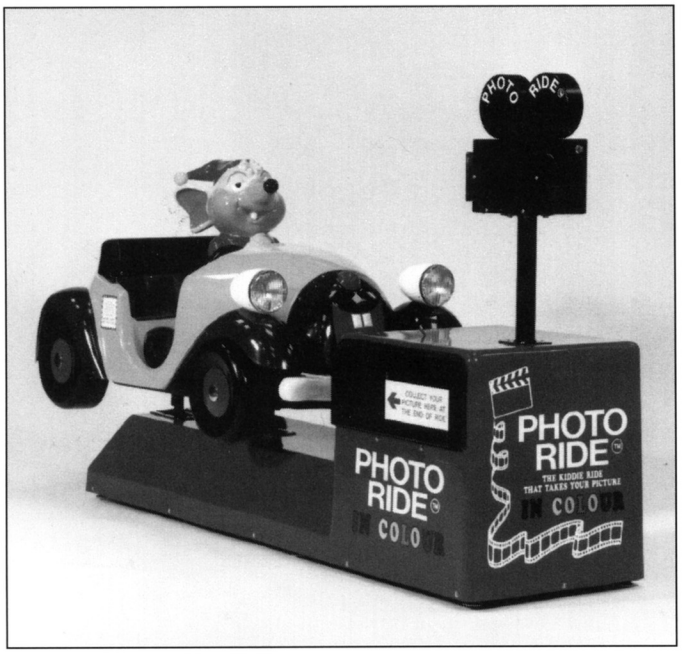
The end of FAQ

Well, there's lots more where that came from. There's a great deal written about pinball as well. Did you know that there are secret flipper combinations on pinball machines? Have you seen the cows? Check out the game archive by using ftp to wiretap.spies.com. I'm also starting to get a few technical questions on the net now. If you're "on-line" feel free to e-mail me:

randyfromm@delphi.com.

For more traditional communication, call me at (619)593-6131 or FAX (619)593-6132. By the way, for readers in Europe, my videotape training programs are now available in PAL format. See you at the Arcade School! ▲

Photo Ride



Amutec Kiddie Rides announces the release of its new product, *Photo Ride*, which is the world's first fully automated ride that photographs a child during the ride and produces a fully-developed picture at the conclusion.

This allows the price per play to be set higher than almost any other kiddie ride. Nevertheless, *Photo Ride*, according to the manufacturer, will likely outearn the number of rides on other conventional kiddie rides even at a higher price.

Ride features include self-colored fiberglass, a high-security door, steel fabricated chassis, all bearing movement, and a full one-year warranty.

Photo printing comes in black-and-white or color.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Amutec Kiddie Rides, Unit 4 Enterprise Road, Golf Road Industrial Estate, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire, LN 12 1NB, England; (0507) 472765; FAX (0507) 473876.

Corvette, Red and Ted's Roadshow

Midway introduces its new *Corvette* pinball machine, cutting-edge entertainment that inspires greatness by capturing the spirit of a true American original.

The company is also presenting another new PinMation pinball game, *Red and Ted's Roadshow*, featuring country-and-western star Carlene Carter as the voice of Red.

Corvette features an authentic molded LT-5 engine on the main playfield, and players can control idling and revving. The goal of the game is to collect some of the most memorable models, including the 1953 Blues Flame six.

A chance at Endurance Multiball, with three balls on the playfield at once, head-to-head racing, and special scoring modes, is also offered to *Corvette* enthusiasts.

Game design allows for multitiered objectives against a bevy of high-speed drivers. A right-side ramp activates a series of challenges for high scoring action. Additionally, there's a drag race between moving minicars on a separate, elevated straightaway.

The game is equipped with a DCS Sound System music track, a complete range of dot-matrix animation, and full choreography.

Coming from a different perspective, *Roadshow* features a running commentary between two PinMation characters. Red is a brassy country girl, and Ted is her two-steppin' partner with a bad roadside manner.

During the game the two travel to 18 different cities in their runaway bulldozer, crushing a few cabs in New York and partying at Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

This latest SuperPin features four flippers, two plungers, plenty of multiball excitement, Williams DCS sound system with Carter's hit "Every Little Thing" on the soundtrack, rainstorm and explosion effects that shake the game and rattle players, and an added buy-in feature to keep the players coming back.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Midway Manufacturing Co., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

Killer Instinct, Cruis'n USA

Midway announces two new games, *Killer Instinct* and *Cruis'n USA*. The latter is available in sit-down, stand-up, and full-motion simulator models.

With high-resolution, real-time fighting video, *Killer Instinct* showcases a new dimension in fighting game technology.

The game features 10 warriors built from scratch, each with a secret means of destruction. Using an arsenal of multiple-hit combos, players fight for the glory in 3-D settings loaded with detail and hidden danger.

Razor-sharp graphics and computer animation are powered by 64-bit technology, and music, dialogue, and sound effects are delivered by the game's DCS Sound System.

Game dimensions are 73" high x 28" wide x 40" deep.

The *Cruis'n USA* full-motion simulator integrates virtual experience technology into a full-motion driving game. The fully interactive three-dimensional UltraGraf X video system delivers high-resolution detail and 360 degree immersion which duplicates every curve, crest, and crash. All driving footage is scanned and recreated from videotape shot on-location throughout the United States.

A pressure pad barrier is also included, ensuring bystander protection by halting motion if the safe-distance perimeter is breached. Game dimensions are 108" long x 46" wide.

Both the Deluxe and Twin-Deluxe sit-down models contain all the same features except the three-axis motion mechanism. They measure 80" high x 30" wide x 60" deep and 80" high x 60" wide x 60" deep, respectively. The twin sit-down model also features linked playing.

The stand-up version contains all the same features of the two sit-down models presented in a space-saving upright design, and is linkable with other machines for head-to-head competition.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Midway Manufacturing Co., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 961-1000; (FAX) 961-1060.

Car Toon Racin'

Skee-Ball unveils *Car Toon Racin'*, a one- or two-player redemption race game in which players pit their pinball skills against another player.

Players race their hot rod cars down an illuminated roadway to the finish line in the competition. The game has two exciting pinball playfields that contain a variety of stationary targets, jet bumpers, and a loop ramp.

When successfully triggered, these features cause the player's car to move forward at different speeds. Each ramp shot lights a letter in the word "Turbo" to give the player an extra boost of power.

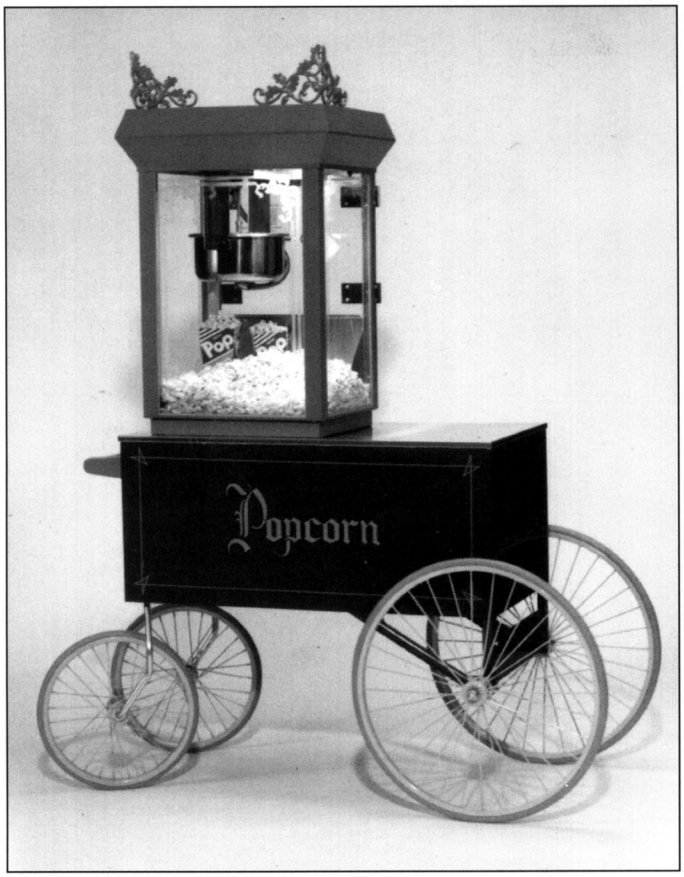
The game features colorful graphics and a sound package including surfing style music, drag racing sound effects, and voice prompts from the race announcer. Three dimensional molded cars and lighted flipper buttons have also been incorporated.

The illuminated roadway with running lights which cycle upward give competing players the feel that the cars are moving at high speeds. Single players compete against a microprocessor-controlled opponent.

Ticket payouts and play times are adjustable. *Car Toon Racin'* was developed for Skee-Ball by Pearl Development Corp.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Skee-Ball Inc., 121 Liberty Lane, Chalfont, PA 18914; (215) 997-8900; FAX (215) 997-8982.

Antique Deluxe 60



Gold Medal Products announces its newest popcorn and cart combination, the *Antique Deluxe 60 Special* on a 36-inch steering cart.

The six-ounce antique-style popper is equipped with a Love My Popper kettle, making it safe and easy to operate and clean. The kettle will pop 120 quarts of popcorn per hour, and the stainless-steel kettle will keep the finish looking great.

Another advantage when placing the popper on top of the cart: it can be plugged in anywhere. And the unit's specially designed wheels allow for difficult maneuvering.

The longer cart also provides plenty of working storage and serving space and functions as a self-merchandiser with old-fashioned popcorn lettering.

The cart can be ordered in red or white, and comes with a six-, eight-, or 12-ounce popper.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Gold Medal Products Co., 2001 Dalton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 35214; (513) 381-1313 or (800) 543-0862; FAX (513) 381-1571 or (800) 542-1496.

The Wave

Lazer-Tron presents *The Wave*, a baseball-themed game in which players try to guide their coins down a vibrating field into the target holes in order to score base hits.

Players hitting a single, double, triple, and home run in that order will be rewarded with huge bonuses.

The game is fully operator adjustable. Doubles are worth two times the base level. Triples are worth three times that, and home runs take the jackpot.

Other features include real major league baseball sounds, progressive jackpots, adjustable skill level, and UL listing. Game dimensions are 26" wide x 60" long x 96" high.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Lazer-Tron, 4430 Willow Road, Pleasanton, CA 94588; (510) 460-0873; FAX (510) 460-0365.

Megatouch II

Merit Industries presents its *Megatouch II* program in their signature touchscreen countertop and upright product line.

Megatouch II features new games, set-up options, and promotional tools that are exclusive to the program. New games included are Royal Flash and Trivia Twister.

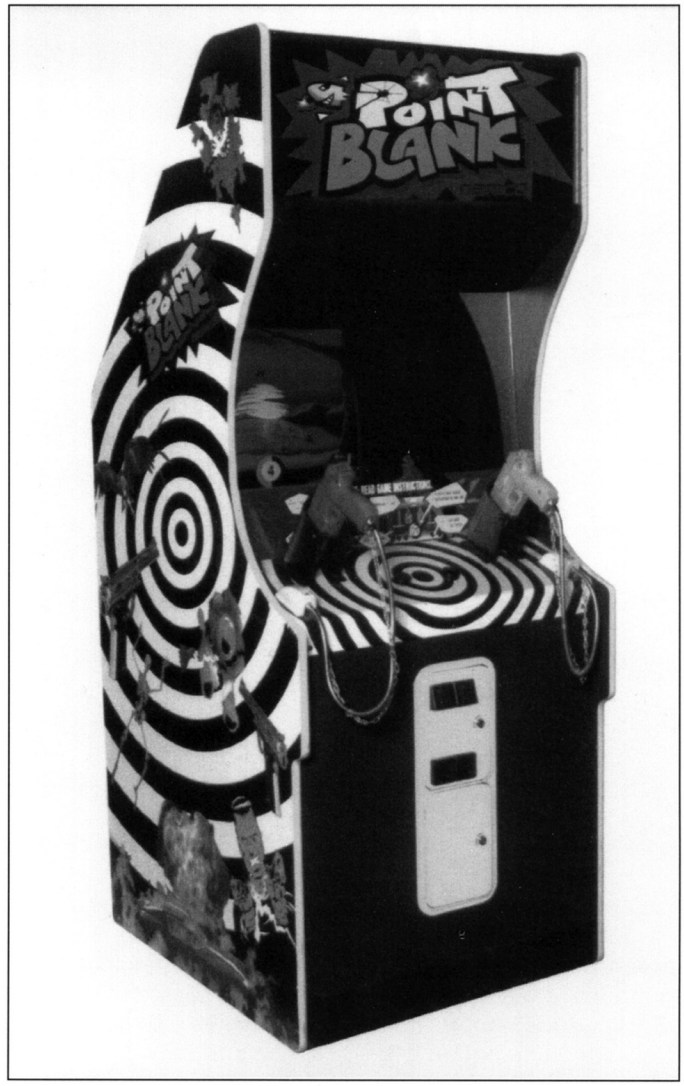
Royal Flash combines the best of Run 21 and Poker. The player places cards on a five-by-five grid, one at a time to form winning poker hands both horizontally and vertically. Players catch on quickly to the strategy of going for flushes in one direction and pairs or full houses in the other.

Trivia Twister cleverly hides the answer to trivia questions in a maze of letters. Not only do you have to know the answer, but you must find it as well. Both of these new games have demonstrated the universal appeal necessary to add increased earnings to the cashbox.

Megatouch II also enables operators running high score contests to clear the high scores without opening the game, thus expanding promotional opportunities.

For more information contact Merit Industries Inc., 2525 State Road, P.O. Box 5004, Bensalem, PA 19020-8529; (215) 639-4700; FAX (215) 639-5346,

Point Blank



Namco presents *Point Blank*, a high-action, non-violent gun game that uses an advanced Algorithm Sensing PCB.

The system enhances the precision of each shot fired, making it one of the most accurate gun games in the business. The new .45 caliber-type gun with recoil action also provides players with tactile feedback.

With brightly colored weapons and a black-and-white target design on the cabinet, the game grabs the attention of potential players.

Players can choose from 50 different competitive, non-violent events, offering fun and excitement that will hold their interest for long periods of time. The game accommodates either one or two players.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Namco-America, 877 Supreme Drive, Bensenville, IL 60106; (708) 238-2248; FAX (708)238-9333. ▲

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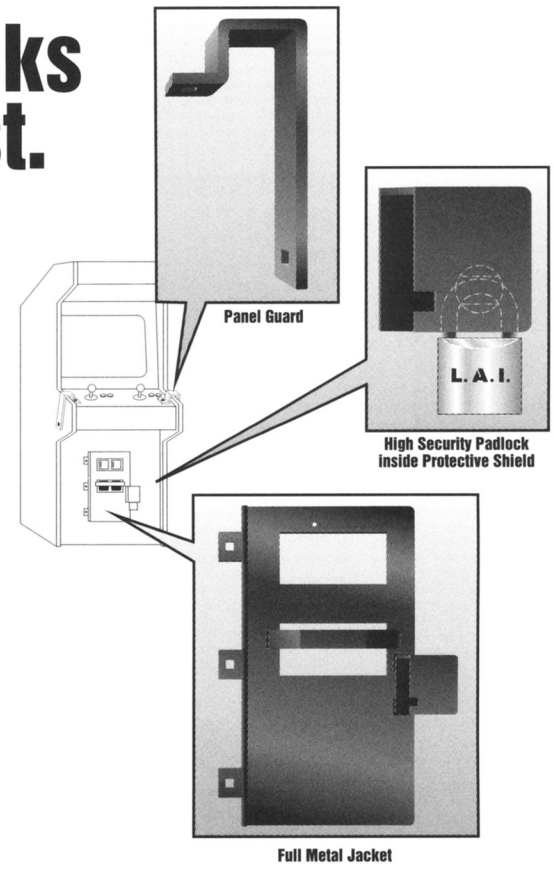

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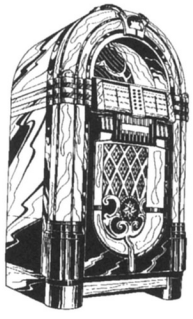

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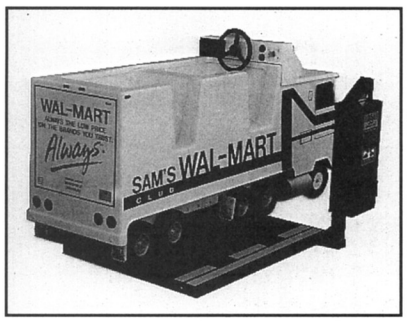

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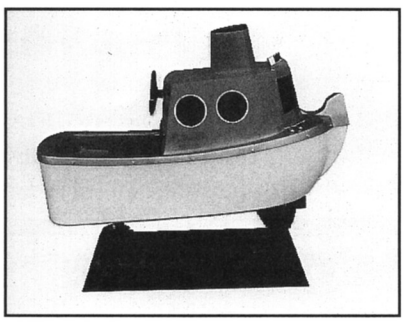

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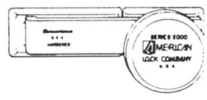

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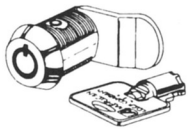

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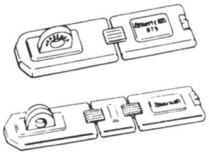

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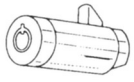

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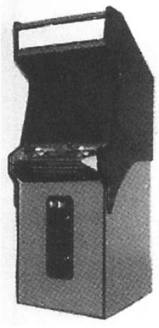

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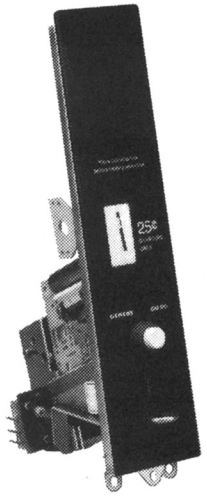

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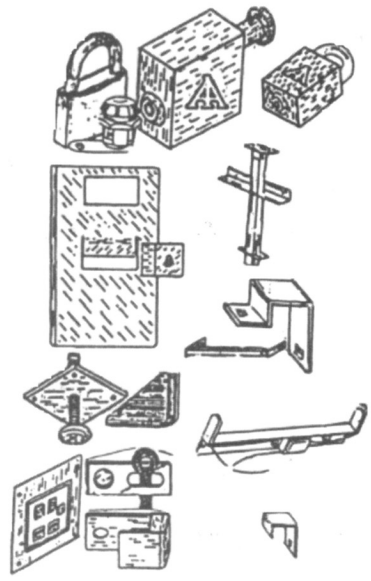

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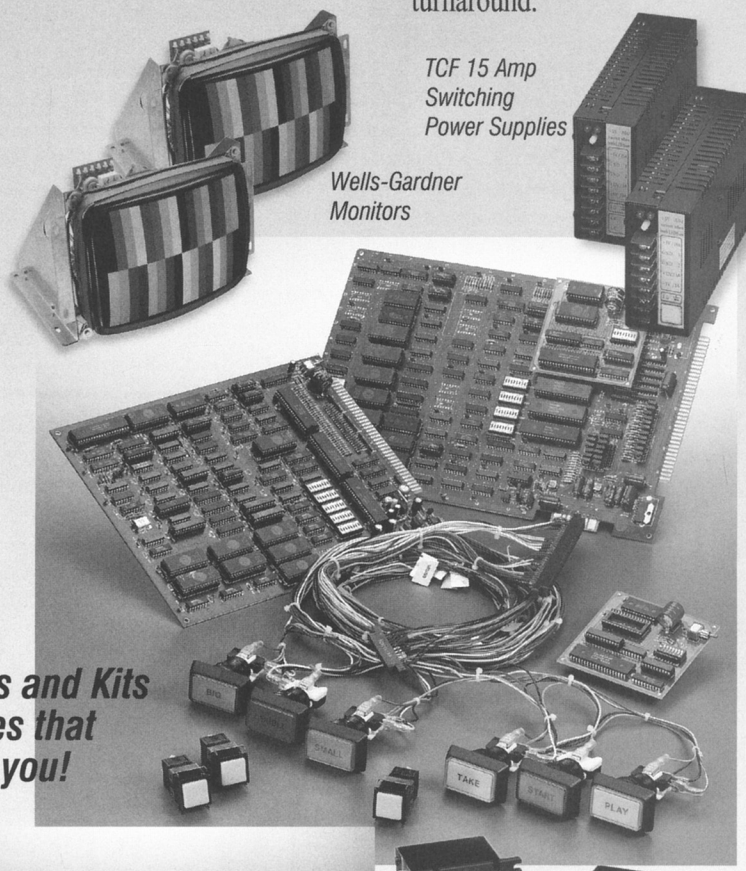

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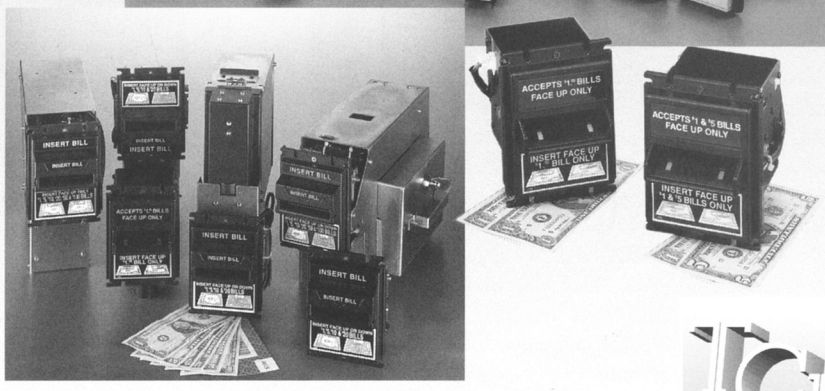

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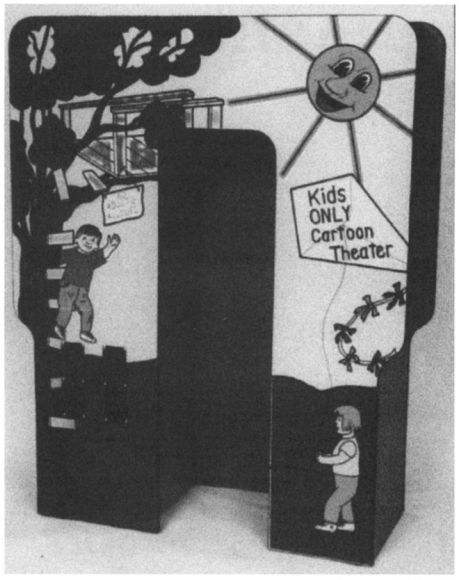

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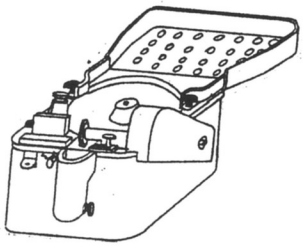

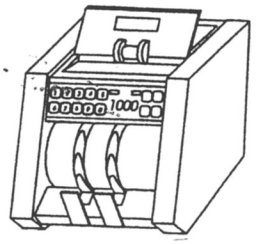

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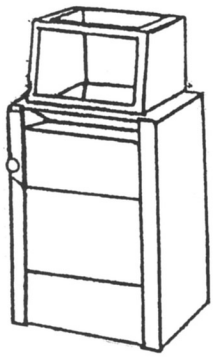

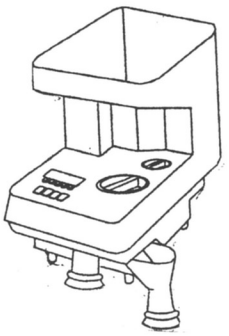

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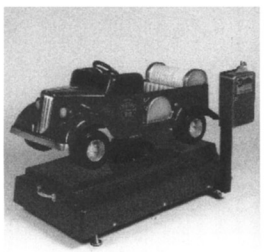

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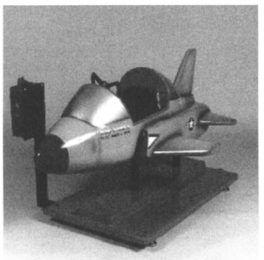

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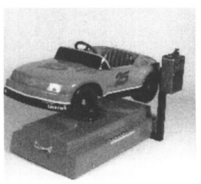

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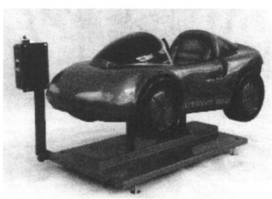

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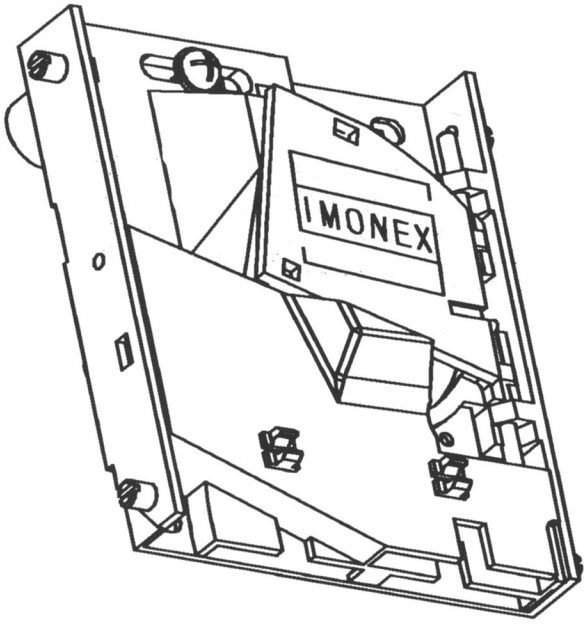

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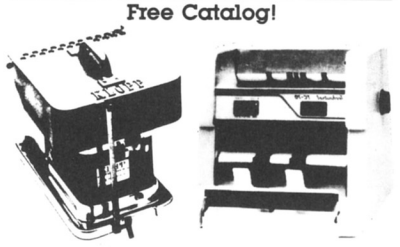

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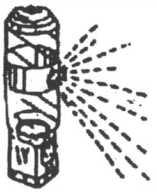

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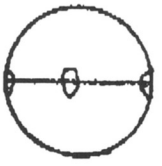

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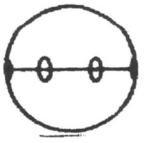

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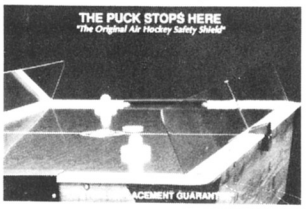

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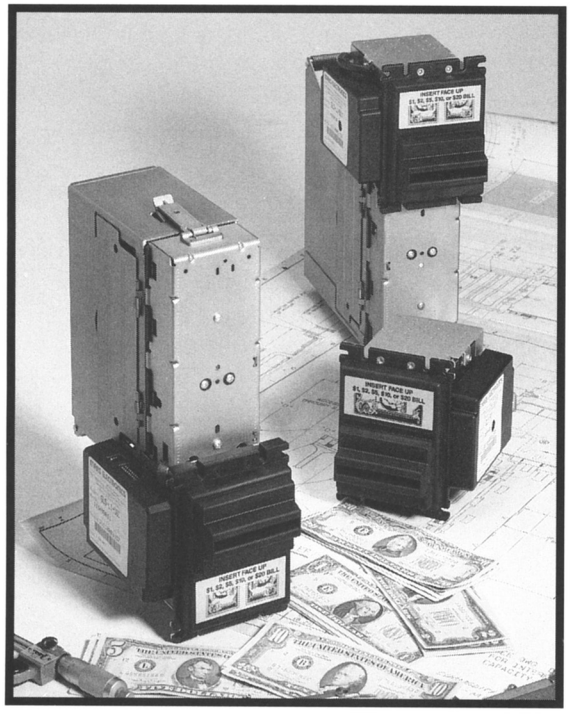

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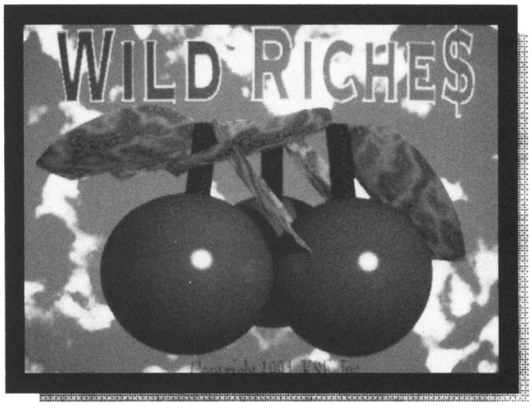

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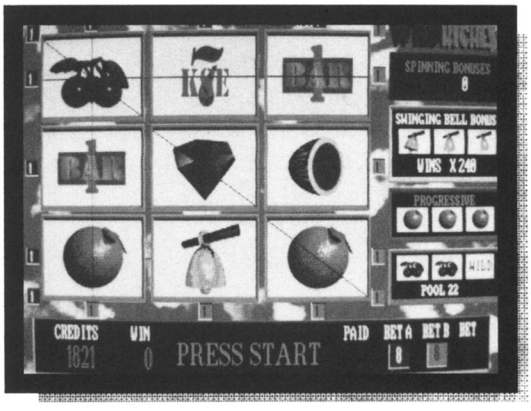

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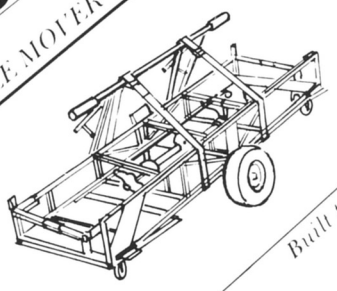

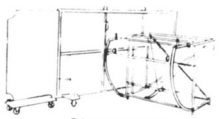

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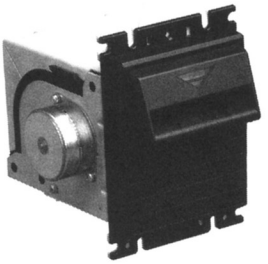

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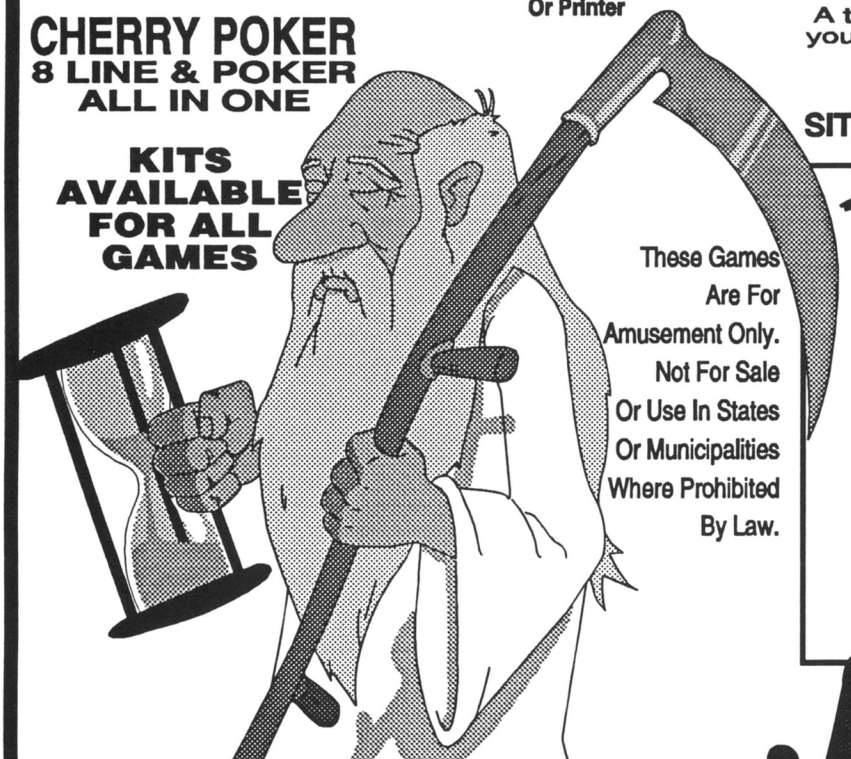

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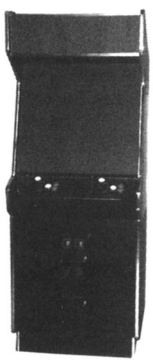

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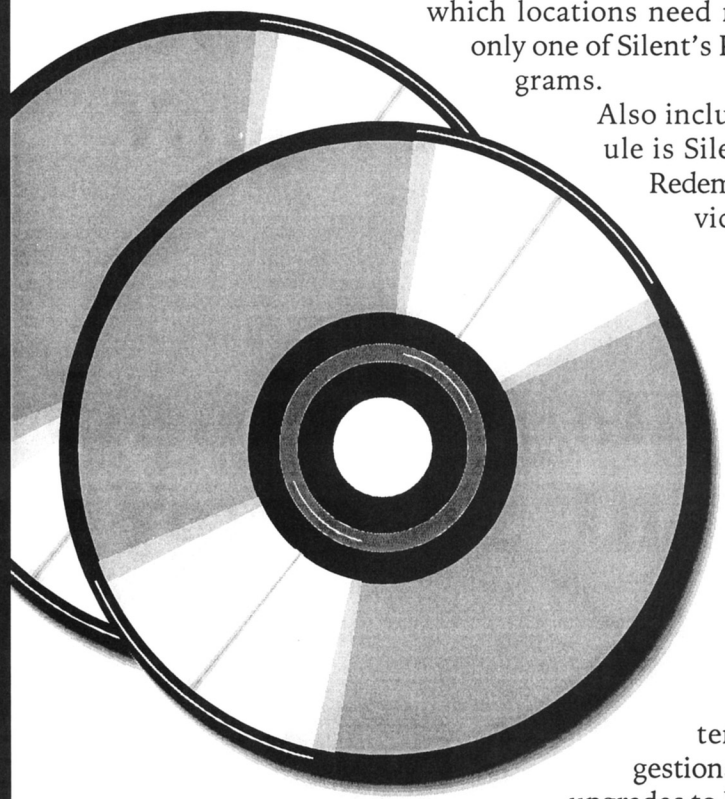

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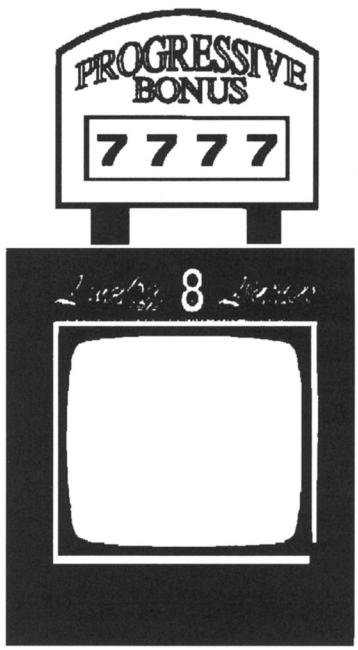

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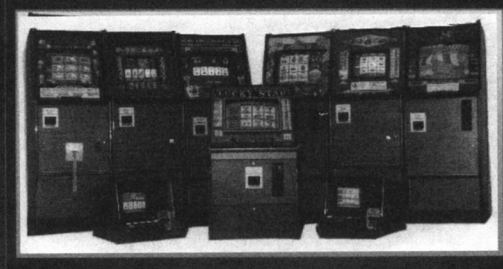

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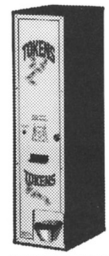

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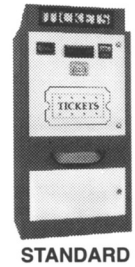

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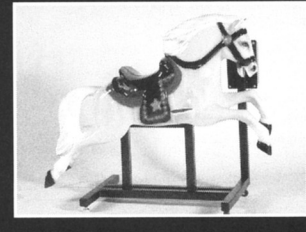

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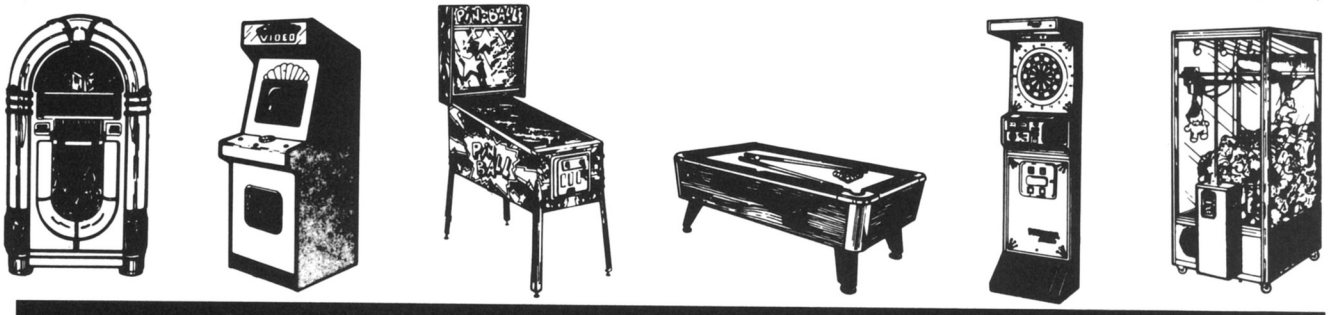

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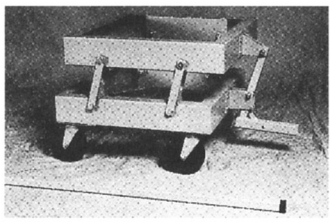

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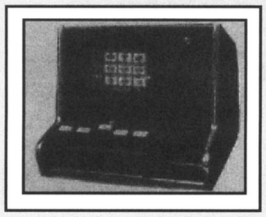

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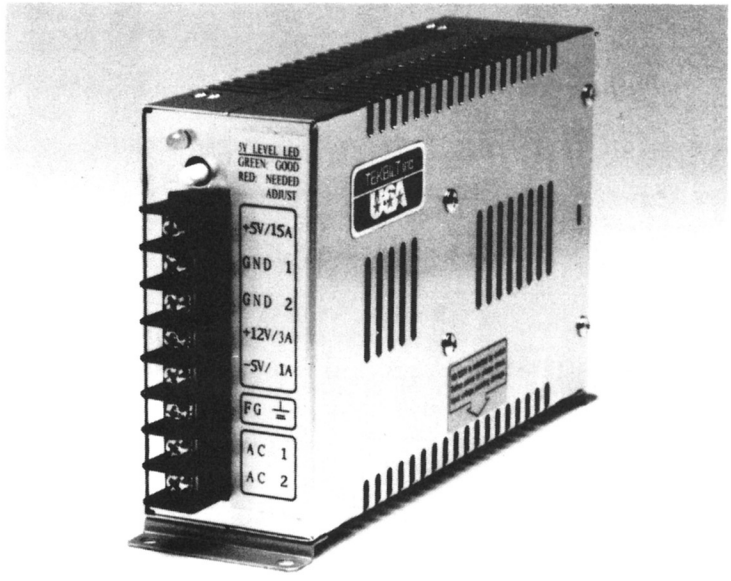

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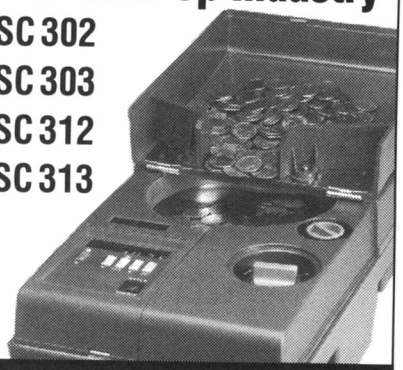

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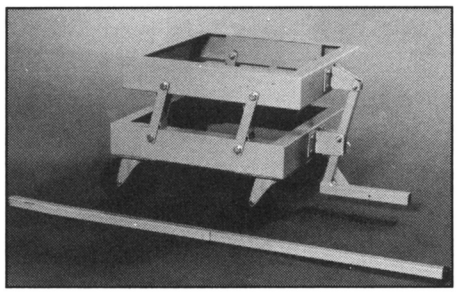

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January 24-26
ATE International, British Leisure Trade Show, Earls Court 1, London, England. Contact ATE Ltd., 40 Moor St., Coventry, UK, CV5 6EQ; FAX +44-71-713-0446.

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IMA '95, German Amusement and Vending Exhibit, Frankfurt Trade Fair Centre, Frankfurt, Germany. Contact Blenheim Heckmann GmbH, 49-211-901-9134.

February 8-12
TAE '95, Taiwan Amusement Exhibition, China External Trade Development Center, Taipei, Taiwan. Contact Creative International Public Relations, 02-746-6860; FAX 02-746-6875.

February 24-26
South Carolina Coin Operators Association Annual Meeting, Sheraton Convention Center, Columbia, S.C. Contact Helen Sikes, (803) 345-2038.

March 7-8
AmEx '95, 16th Irish Amusement Trade Exhibition, Green Isle Hotel, Naas Road, Clondalkin, Dublin, Ireland. Contact Susan Feery, 045-21190 or +353-45-21190; FAX 045-21438 or 353-45-21438.

March 23-25
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April 20-22
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May 11-13
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May 20-23
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May 26-June 3
15th Valley National Eight-Ball League Association International Championships, Riviera Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Gregg Elliott, (800) 544-1346.

June 6-11
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July 27-29
12th Annual Billiard Congress of America International Trade Expo, The Sands Expo and Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Frank Zdy, (619) 278-3877; FAX (619) 268-9372.

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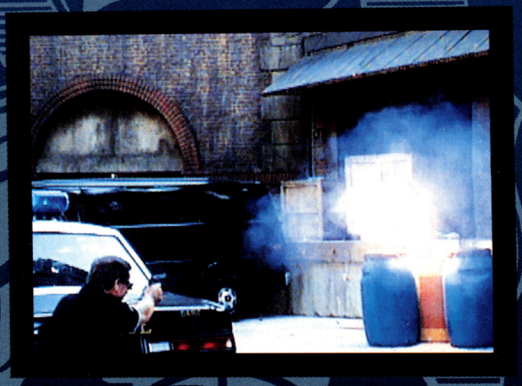

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