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IAAPA
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Focus on:
Sweepstakes
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 and Boxxi 2

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BONNIE THEARD
Editor

We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see.
E-mail:
(editorial@playmeter.net)

Have you ever opened a fortune cookie and there was no fortune inside? That happened to me the other day during lunch at a little restaurant near the office. I felt rejected. How could there not be a fortune for me? Then my husband gave me his fortune cookie, which did have a fortune inside and more than made up for the missing one. It said: "Act as if it were impossible to fail."

I don't know about your reaction, but I felt emboldened to make the best of the rest of the day. I felt like I had to adopt a more positive attitude because I could not disregard that little piece of fortune cookie wisdom.

I save fortunes from those crispy little folded cookies because they offer inspiration. For example: "A goal is a dream with a deadline," "We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone," "Doing little things well is a step towards doing big things better," and "A day without smiling is a day wasted."

As we slog along in our everyday routines, we need an infusion of inspiration. Some of the following fortune cookie sayings read like they were meant for our industry:

"Take advantage of an upcoming opportunity." Industry events are right around the corner, from local distributor open houses or spotlight shows to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo 2012 in November and the Amusement Expo 2013 next March.

"Listen these next few days to your friends to get answers you seek." Networking at industry events is a great place to discuss common concerns and gain insight into how your peers are addressing the same issues. Attending educational seminars is a must to stay on top of your game.

"An investment in yourself will pay dividends for the rest of your life." The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Notre Dame Management Program offers continuing business education that operators have praised for decades. The program is designed to enhance the personal and professional growth of coin machine operators and managers. A new schedule makes it even more convenient to attend. If you've always wanted to do it, there's no time like the present to make the commitment.

"Nothing in the world is accomplished without passion." Nowhere will you find more passion than in your state and national associations that exist to help their members. They are constantly working to provide member benefits. State associations need your support and participation to represent the industry's best interests to state and municipal officials who have the power to raise taxes and pass regulations that affect small businesses.

"Your mind is filled with new ideas; explore them." Take all that you have learned, evaluate it, put the best ideas into practice, and perhaps expand your operation into new profitable areas.

I'll close with some wisdom unrelated to fortune cookies but valuable just the same. It's from the late humorist Andy Rooney, who said, "I've learned that opportunities are never lost; someone else will take the ones you miss." ▲

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Why Attend the AMOA Notre Dame Management Program?

We Asked Some Alumni and Here's What They Told Us:

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...To help make me a better operator." Larry Elbert, Cedar Rapids, IA

...To tell my friends I attended school at Notre Dame!" Sal Cifala, Newton, MA

...Because I believe it's important to invest in continuing education." Dale Lazar, Pittsburgh, PA

...For the personal and professional friendships that last a lifetime." Marion Paul, Gatlinburg, TN

...With my spouse to share in all the program has to offer." Donna and Gary Brewer, McMinnville, TN

...To network with people who face the same challenges I do every day." Mary Lavine, Madison, WI

...Because there is simply no other program like it in our industry." Vince Gumma, Elk Grove Village, IL

...Because I believe in challenging myself to get outside of my comfort zone." Phil Juckem, Tampa, FL

...Because I saw how many successful operators had gone through the program." Brenda Daniel, Tampa, FL

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Kevin and Anne Hayes of Atari's factory in Ireland.



The gang's all here, (l-r): Jean and Jim Newlander, Jerry and Denise Marcus, Tom Keil, Jackie Sherman, Mary Fujihara, Elaine Shirley, Mike Taylor, Mark Sherman, and Richard Adam and Linda Benzler Adam.



Elaine Shirley and Dan Van Elderen.



From left: Adrea and Sandy Bettelman, Elaine Shirley, and Ira Bettelman.



Elaine Shirley and Eugene Jarvis of Raw Thrills (also a former Atari employee.)



The Atari sales team, (l-r): Jim Newlander, Elaine Shirley, Mike Taylor, and Tom Keil.

Atarians gather for reunion

Alumni of Atari (1972-1996), one of the foremost companies in video game history, gathered recently for a reunion party on the 40th anniversary of the company's founding. A brunch for the sales and marketing team was hosted on the following day.

Among the attendees were former Atari executives including Nolan Bushnell, Joe Keenan, and Dan Van Elderen; coin-op employees; and distribution representatives such as Jerry Marcus of Atlas Distributing, the Bettelman family of C.A. Robinson, and Bob Boals of Betson Enterprises.

Alumni Elaine Shirley, now Vice President of U.S. Sales for Global VR, said, "The party was a blast. About 350 people attended. It was still going on into the early hours of the morning. It was the best reunion party ever."

Alumni Tom Keil, now Regional Sales Manager for Sega Amusements, said,



"The reunion committee was able to get over 350 ex-Atarians to attend the reunion. That was amazing. All the people we worked with were there; it was unbelievable. I was blown away that so many people came."

Alumni Mary Fujihara of the Atari Marketing Department said, "It was such a pleasure to see everyone; it was very heartwarming. A lot of the original employees, veteran staff members from the '70s, came, people who had worked at Atari for 20 years or more."

Fujihara added, "There were generations of employees from every sector of the company: finance, engineering, operations, marketing, programming, industrial design, graphic design, animation, and human resources. It was a good blend of original Atarians to the very last Atarians."

In conclusion, Fujihara said, "What made Atari special was that it was an actual design and manufacturing company. With so much production now taking place offshore, we appreciate that we got to work with all the different groups to produce a game from start to finish. It was a rare opportunity." ▲



Operator attendees enjoy the Welcome Reception.



Operators listen at the "Increasing Consumer Engagement to Maximize Value" seminar.



Matthew Cobb (l) and Brandon Cobb (r) of Acme Music & Vending Co. enjoy the lunch break.



Chris Desarro of Clearly the Best Inc. (l) has a one on one Compass demonstration with Kathy Hickey of TouchTunes.



Michael Tooker, Senior Vice President of Technology and Operations, assures attendees of TouchTunes' commitment to future innovative products.



From left: Sal Cifala of Firestone Financial, Jim Hines of TouchTunes, David Cohen of Firestone Financial, Nikki Hendricks of TouchTunes, and Spencer Norton of Firestone Financial.

TouchTunes 3rd Annual Partners Meeting

Most people visit Arizona to soak up the sun and enjoy the beauty of the Sonoran Desert but operators attending the 3rd Annual TouchTunes Partners Meeting had something else in mind. They came to soak up as much knowledge as they could to help them increase their jukebox revenue by attending the Third Annual TouchTunes Partners Meeting.

The meeting took place at the JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. The focus of this year's meeting was to educate operators on TouchTunes' Virtuo jukebox features and innovations that can help generate more revenue for their routes.

Networking with other operators

and hearing new ideas is an added value of the program. Steve Brecher, TouchTunes' Chief Operating Officer, told attendees, "This meeting celebrates where we have come from and where we want to go together."

Verizon and Firestone Financial were sponsors of the event. Firestone Financial staff members were present to provide equipment financing and answer questions.

Since its first product launch 14 years ago, TouchTunes has been making digital jukeboxes and has become the largest interactive entertainment network in the coin-op industry. By the end of this year the TouchTunes Network plans to reach approximately

60,000 installed jukeboxes in bars, restaurants, and retail locations.

This is an uptick from 44,000 installed jukeboxes from a year ago. With the introduction of the Virtuo SmartJuke in April 2011, the company has delivered tremendous excitement and has sold over 5,000 units. The addition of the PhotoBooth and Karaoke services to its Virtuo jukebox last year has brought the entertainment experience to a whole new level.

Chief Executive Officer Charles Goldstuck was unable to attend this year's meeting due to family illness but nevertheless addressed attendees via live streaming from Cape Town, South Africa.



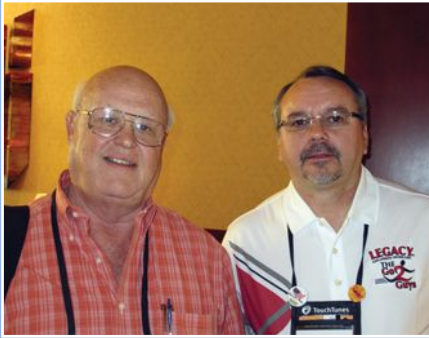
Michael Martinez (l) of N2 Entertainment and Kelly Dittmer, TouchTunes.



Hal Williamson of Gardner's Up North (l) and Phil Juckem of All Brands Vending enjoy a break between seminars.



John Gatens of H.A. Franz & Co. (l) and Emily Dunn of Tom's Amusement Co.



Manley Lawson (l) of LMC Enterprises and Ed Chermak of Legacy Coin-Operated Distributors chat in between seminars.



First time attendees Chad Cook (l) and Bob Fox of Freedom Station enjoyed the seminars.



Jonathan Peyravay of Peyday Enterprises (c) won the Las Vegas trip for two to see The Beatles LOVE show at the Mirage.

“It has been a busy but gratifying year. We have experienced overwhelming enthusiasm for our products and services, and are witnessing exciting growth. We have learned important lessons and honed our processes and we’ve continued to improve and develop our products.”

Goldstuck continued, “It has been an incredible year since our meeting last September. I want to share my passion for TouchTunes and how we are continuing to transform our in-venue entertainment.”

One issue that has recently impacted TouchTunes is the lack of product availability that occurred after the Amusement Expo.

Goldstuck said, “The bottom line is we completely underestimated the demand and we were caught off guard by the huge enthusiasm and the fast adoption of our products and we experienced delivery delays.”

He continued, “We need to do a better job forecasting demand, particu-

larly with the floor stand, a product which you have been asking for. However, I am pleased to say we have caught up with orders across our product lines, our supply chain has been reviewed and improved, and our future product venues will ensure the ability to fill the market from the moment our product is officially announced. In response to this demand TouchTunes has added more support staff to their tech line to ensure all times are kept as



The JW Marriott Camelback Inn hosted the TouchTunes Partners Meeting.

low as possible.”

TouchTunes’ PhotoBooth product has been so successful that 80 percent of Virtuo jukeboxes are now enabled with this popular service and 60 percent of the total photos taken on the units have been uploaded to Facebook.

Since the launch of Karaoke, the music catalog has grown to over 17,000 fully licensed tracks in more than 50 genres. This includes popular requested artists such as Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, and The Beatles, whose music was added to the network this past April. In fact, the popularity of The Beatles has resulted in over 2.1 million plays.

The highly popular TouchTunes mobile app has been downloaded 850,000 times since its release. New updates will be available over the next four months. These updates will make the app easier and more engaging to use. The Gen3 software is an important part of the TouchTunes operators’ route and the company is continuing to



Phil Cohn, Senior Vice President of Sales, speaks prior to the Keynote Address.



Steve Brecher, TouchTunes Chief Operating Officer, addresses the dinner guests at the Awards Dinner.



Michelle Santangelo, TouchTunes Marketing Manager, is presented with flowers after many years of dedication and service.



The President's Outstanding Partner Award was presented to Metro Distributors Inc.



The Distributor of the Year Award was presented to Legacy Coin-Operated Distributors.



The Rising Star Award was presented to Trajo Amusements.

make it even better. A new design for the Gen3 is currently being tested and will be released this January.

TouchTunes' Senior Vice President of Technology and Operations, Michael Tooker, delivered his thoughts about the innovative products and services TouchTunes is capable of.

Tooker said, "The expanse of what goes into making the framework is far beyond the physical aspect of what can be seen, which is just the tip of the iceberg. With the implementation of Virtu, mobile, PhotoBooth, Printer, and Karoke, the bar has been transformed. These elements can create new capabilities in-venue, which can be leveraged in the future with new products and services."

Dale Lazar of H. Lazar & Son complimented his speech, "When Michael Tooker spoke I was blown away by the depth and extensive activity that goes on behind the scenes. He is not just an engineer. He has a personal sense of passion and commitment to the Touch-

Tunes products and services."

Educational Breakout sessions gave operators a wealth of knowledge about Karaoke, PhotoBooth, mobile, social, acoustics, and route management. These sessions were presented to inform operators on how to increase their revenue and at the same time add value to their locations and their business.

Kathy Hickey, TouchTunes Sales Development Manager, educated seminar attendees on the importance of using Compass. She commented, "Compass was created so that each operator can dig into their routes and see information that they can use to their advantage. Compass is a free tool to help you make more money."

Operators were encouraged to bring their personal laptops or iPads to the seminar. They were able to follow her live demonstration to view the performance of their personal route information.

Operators who attended the "Making Karaoke a Star Performer" seminar were able to learn how to maximize the

potential of the Karaoke experience. By discussing different strategies, operators were shown how to increase this revenue stream and make it a success.

Other breakout sessions taught the importance of making sure that your business and locations have a social media presence, and the basics of in-venue sound configurations. A newcomer to the Partners Meeting, Jerry Vento of Vision Amusements, came to learn more about Virtu. He said, "It is an excellent sales tool for us to use to get into locations."

This year TouchTunes brought a unique touch of the Las Vegas Strip to the Partners Meeting by providing entertainment with a Beatles tribute band at the Awards Dinner.

Gaines Butler of Metro Distributors Inc. was this year's recipient of the President's Outstanding Partner Award for his commitment to the TouchTunes vision and the industry overall.

Ed Chermak of Legacy Coin-Operated Distributors accepted the Distributor



The Silver Loyalty Award was presented to Newport Diversified and Peyday Enterprises LLC.



The Gold Loyalty Award was presented to Metro Distributors Inc. and Southern Amusement Corp.



The Platinum Loyalty Award was presented to Sunstar Vending, the New Vemco Music Co., and East Coast Vending.



The Gold Virtuo Vanguard Award was presented to Superior Amusements.



The Platinum Virtuo Vanguard Award was presented to Coin Op Solutions LLC and L&M Music Co. Inc.



The Trailblazer Award was presented to Midwest Coin Concepts.

of the Year Award for outstanding jukebox sale growth, training initiative, marketing activity, and customer support.

Several other awards were presented to operator attendees. The Silver Loyalty Award, given to a company with 50-99 active TouchTunes jukeboxes, was presented to Newport Diversified of Irvine, Calif., and Peyday Enterprises LLC of Broken Arrow, Okla.

The Gold Loyalty Award, given to a company with 100-229 active TouchTunes jukeboxes, was presented to Metro Distributors Inc. of Norcross, Ga., and Southern Amusement Corp. of Norfolk, Va.

The Platinum Loyalty Award, given to a company with 300 plus active TouchTunes jukeboxes, was presented to Sunstar Vending of Brooklyn, N.Y., the New Vemco Music Co. of Fayetteville, N.C., and East Coast Vending of Morton, Pa.

The Gold Virtuo Vanguard Award, given to a company with a route consisting of 50 to 74 percent Virtuo juke-

boxes with 10 or more Virtuos, was presented to Superior Amusements of Ontario, Canada.

The Platinum Virtuo Vanguard Award, given to a company with a route consisting of 75 to 100 percent Virtuo Jukeboxes with 10 or more Virtuos, was presented to Coin Op Solutions LLC of Marietta, Ga., and L&M Music Co. Inc. of Williamsport, Pa.

The Trailblazer Award, presented to a company demonstrating outstanding commitment to TouchTunes innovation (this year focusing on the mobile app),



The Beatles Tribute Band was the entertainment at the Awards Dinner.

was given to Midwest Coin Concepts of Waite Park, Minn.

The Rising Star Award, presented to a new operator to TouchTunes who has shown outstanding commitment to TouchTunes products and services, was presented to Trajo Amusements of Brooklyn, N.Y.

New to this year's Partners Meeting was a chance to win The Beatles LOVE flyaway raffle. Each operator attending the meeting was automatically entered for a chance to win a trip for two to Las Vegas including air fare, hotel accommodations, and tickets to see The Beatles LOVE by Cirque du Soleil at The Mirage.

Operators collected multiple entry tokens from the TouchTunes staff during the breakout sessions. The more LOVE tokens you collected the greater the chances were of winning. The lucky winner was Jonathan Peyravy of Peyday Enterprises.

For more information, call (888) 338-5838; Web (www.touchtunes.com). ▲

Sweepstakes and promotional games

Blue Water Games
Blue Water Gaming
Technologies



Sweepstakes and promotional game firms were well represented at the Amusement Expo 2012 in March.

The companies offer a clear definition of sweepstakes and promotional equipment. For example, sweepstakes is defined at The Donate Zone Web site as: “A marketing promotion designed to generate enthusiasm in the consumer and give the consumer a greater incentive to buy a retail good or service or assist in fundraising for a charity or charities.”

Integrated Sweepstakes Solutions (ISS) defines sweepstakes as: “An advertising or promotional tactic through which incentive or prizes are given in order to participate in an event by lucky draw. Just by playing you are entered to win.”

Play Meter checked with companies that provide these products to obtain more details and the latest on their product lines. Following is information on 10 companies:

Blue Water Gaming Technologies is a privately owned company located

in Florida and known for its state of the art graphics and innovative game designs. Many of its sweepstakes games are found in bars and convenience stores from the East Coast to the West Coast.

The newest game launched by Blue Water is the Aqua Spin, a 25-line game with animation and colorful graphics. It also has a crumble effect, which means that if players have a winning line, then it crumbles and another falls in its place without costing the player any extra. There is a sunken treasure bonus along with free spins in the game. For more information, call (352)356-3255; Web (www.bluewatergamingtech.com)

Integrated Sweepstakes Solutions (ISS) is a national sweepstakes company supplying charitable sweepstakes for the charitable market. The company is headquartered in Ft. Worth, Texas. Its game developers have more than 20 years of experience in the sweepstakes marketplace.

The goal of ISS is for bars, convenience stores, fraternal organizations, or

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stand-alone locations to generate income that exceeds expectations while giving back to a good cause.

Standard terminals feature privacy sides, cup holders, and a slide tray. High back terminals feature a larger advertising space and come in three or four module set-ups. A large selection of games is available to entertain players, such as Arctic Alley and Reels & Deals. For more information, call (866)947-8010; Web (www.integratedsolutions.com). See the ISS ad in this issue on page 43.

New Cherry Master LLC offers a modular system that can adapt to each location's needs. Features include a centralized printer system, remote credit transfer system, phone time sweepstakes, linked free play bonus system, and operator/location/sales tax

split accounting. It is compatible with any coin-op equipment using Pulse Protocol.

Coming soon are a high security RFID card reader system, online real-time monitoring, and national/regional/operator linked free play bonus. For more information, call (262)255 0600; Web (www.NewCherryMaster.com).

Pace-O-Matic Inc. is headquartered in Norcross, Ga., and has a long history of developing innovative and exciting games for the coin-op industry. The company's mission statement is based upon a solid foundation of integrity for the markets it serves.

When the fledgling e-commerce company Products Direct came to Michael Pace to develop a way to drive traffic to its Web site, Pace knew how it

could be done: Give the patron an entertaining and potentially rewarding experience while providing the needed discount coupon that gives the Products Direct customer up to 30 percent off the retail prices on the Web store. This was a true blending of marketing practices.

Pace-O-Matic offers three different sweepstakes software systems: Platinum Plus, Cutting EDGE, and Onyx. The sweepstakes software is operated in stand-alone equipment for convenience stores, bars, and fraternal, or in game rooms utilizing a point-of-sale system. Pace-O-Matic currently operates Products Direct sweepstakes software in several states.

Company officials said, "Our competitive edge is based upon the emphasis of providing the best entertainment

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PC based software available in Sweeps and Skill (featuring our NEW Icy Hot Keno)



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Available in Sweeps
and Skill



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Skill Games
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SweepsCoach System
SweepsCoach

for our operators and players with a strong emphasis on state-of-the-art technology." For more information, call (887) HIT-GAME or (770) 441-9500; Web (www.paceomatic.com). See the *Pace-O-Matic* ad in this issue on page 45.

Primero Games LLC is located in Suwanee, Ga. The product line includes nudge games, skill games, complete and board-ready cabinets, sweepstakes kiosks, and Internet sweepstakes.

One of the products shown at the Amusement Expo 2012 was Dream. Players purchase entries that allow them to go to a field of five games (Deuces 2 Wild, Lucky Dream Poker, Magic Rabbit, Sevens & Eagle, and Super Dream Keno). Points earned in the games allow the players to buy discounted merchandise at a prize Web

site. For more information, call (770)614-2624; Web (www.primero.com).

Skillmate Games is located in Sterling Heights, Mich. The Skillmate System rewards players' high game scores with an opportunity to select prizes. Players collect points on a card and exchange them for prizes.

Points won playing one of 29 games available for the company's kiosk can be converted into extra time to play a game or, via an online store, can be used to select one of many prizes. Points won in the game are automatically converted to use in the online store. The rewards system does not allow players to win cash prizes. Shipping costs may be covered by additional points.

Among the games are Magic Fruits,

Hot Party, Turbo Play, Magic of the Rings, and more. For more information, call (586)808-5503; Web (www.skillmategames.com).

SweepsCoach, located in El Dorado Hills, Calif., makes it easy and affordable to start, maintain, and operate an Internet-based business with sweepstakes promotions.

SweepsCoach systems have fewer technical difficulties (no on-site server/network to deal with); have the ability to monitor business performance from any device with Internet access (real-time performance data in the cloud); and customers can play the games from their home.

SweepsCoach has been successful for over 12 years. The company offers sweepstakes solutions for Internet cafes and stand-alone Internet kiosks (Totems) that can be placed in bars, convenience stores, or other businesses.

The company helps its customers build their dream of financial independence, achieved through its step-by-

Are you ready to take your business to the next level?



ISS is a national sweepstakes company supplying charitable sweepstakes for the "Charitable" market. Our game developers and designers have over 20+ years experience in the sweepstakes marketplace. The goal of ISS is for your c-store, bar, fraternal organization, or standalone location to generate income that far exceeds expectations, while giving back to a good cause. Whether you choose to do a revenue share or an outright purchase, we have a plan that works for you. We have sweepstakes terminal packages that start as low as \$595.00. So don't delay... Call today.



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Integrated Sweepstakes Solutions, Inc.



The Donate Zone
The Donate Zone

Diamond Seven
Ultra Group



Spin of Fortune
Ultra Group

step processes and through continued customer support. SweepsCoach has more than 50,000 locations around the world and has a strong presence in the U.S. market.

Company officials say that what separates SweepsCoach from other companies is the way it does business and its technologically advanced Web-based platform with nearly 50 games. For more information, call (800)980-0858; Web (www.sweepscoach.com). See the *SweepsCoach* ad in this issue on page 39.

The Donate Zone, a Hest Technologies company, is located in Haltom City, Texas. The Donate Zone vends sweepstakes marketing software and hardware direct to convenience stores or through a distributor. The company markets products or charity fundraising.

The Donate Zone works with its customers to teach them how to introduce the sweepstakes software and advertising so they can promote their business, improve their sales, and strengthen customer loyalty.

Customer service is a top priority; the company has team members available to coordinate installations, train, troubleshoot technical issues, and more. The Donate Zone installs the sweepstakes system and will train the customer's staff via the Internet.

The Donate Zone also provides all the necessary hardware and software so that customers do not have to invest significant funds in computer hardware. For more information, call (877)654-9606; Web (www.hesttech.com). See *The Donate Zone* ad in this issue on page 41.

Ultra Group of Companies has been in business since 1991 and is located in Norcross, Ga. According to the company, it was the largest telecommunication provider in Georgia when it began its pay phone business in 1991.

In 1996 the company began its amusement gaming business and now manages thousands of locations. In 2010, during the growth period of phone time sweepstakes in North Carolina, its Titan Touch Point-of-Sale System debuted.

Company officials said, "This product was exclusively designed for the sweepstakes, redemption, and amusement machine business sector to abide by state law of not allowing bill acceptors in game machines. In mid-2011, iBOSS USA was launched to satisfy our customers looking for an alternate sweepstakes software solution."

iBOSS, the Internet Back-Office Sweepstakes System, is an entertaining way to promote the sale of products with an Internet cafe or storefront environment. iBOSS provides each store

Attention POT O' GOLD Owners



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Distributors Wanted!

owner with a popular consumer product to sell to customers: Internet time.

iBOSS will manage the entire customer transaction from the minute the consumer walks into a cafe until the end of their play time. iBOSS offers sweepstakes entries in a "Finite Pay-Table Pool of Entries" format that automatically replenishes when it reaches an empty threshold.

iBOSS delivers the highest quality game designs, 16 total, that will continue to bring customers back to purchase more Internet time to reveal pre-determined sweepstakes entries. For more information, call (770)449-0400; Web (www.ultragroupinc.com). See the *Ultra Group ad in this issue on page 47.*

Worlds of Games LLC is headquartered in Shelbyville, Tenn., and has



**Phone US
Worlds of Games**

been in business since 1997 when it was incorporated by Dwayne Keith Heflin. Heflin pioneered the original collector card/phone card dispensing system with a promotional game platform. His designs and developments earned him three U.S. Patents pertaining to those inventions (#6,213,874; #6,722,977; and #7,236,943). Worlds of Games LLC has successfully defended those patents and will continue to do so.

Worlds of Games LLC manufactures its products under trademarked names such as FREESPIN®, PhoneUS®, FREETAB®, and FREECHOICE® and sells them through a network of licensed distributors. Each licensed distributor is given the exclusive rights to operate within a defined area.

The company continues to refine its current products while developing new systems to meet the ever changing marketplace. For more information on the products or on becoming a licensed distributor, call (800)762-0015; Web (www.worldsofgamesllc.com). See the *Worlds of Games ad in this issue on page 46.* ▲

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 OF CUSTOMERS
 OF CUSTOMERS

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US PATENT #6,213,874 FOR DISTRIBUTORSHIP INFO. CALL 1-800-762-0015



EASITRAX® Advance 5000™ telemeter

MEI has released its latest cashless solution for full-line operators, the EASITRAX® Advance 5000™ telemeter. Previewed at the National Automatic Merchandisers Association (NAMA) OneShow in April, the telemeter is positioned to energize machine profitability, beginning with an expanded cashless functionality.

Replacing the MEI EASITRAX RDP telemeter, the Advance 5000 telemeter's cashless features provide operator benefits in the vital areas of connectivity choice, security certification, back-end flexibility, a scalable, modular solution, and technical and installation support.

Connectivity choice remains a top operator concern. The Advance 5000 includes new capabilities to talk over Verizon's CDMA network and AT&T's 2G and 3G networks. Operators will have the option to communicate in WAN, LAN, or wired Ethernet configurations. These connectivity choices provide the flexibility to seek the best data rates and coverage solutions for locations where signals are poor or not accessible.

Secure, compliant cashless solutions are another critical area of need for operators. The Advance 5000 is PCI-certified, providing the highest level of security for cashless transactions. This certification ensures consumers and business owners that consumer credit card information will be transmitted securely.

In the upcoming months, MEI will provide the option for the Advance 5000 to become the control center for full-line machine telemetry. Dual IP and APN (access point network) capabilities allow both cashless and telemetry communications to be directed independently from the Advance 5000, providing an additional layer of data security.

MEI works with Apriva® and other gateways to give operators the choice to select a back-end provider that meets their card processing and reporting criteria. This is often an area of choice operators overlook to find flexibility with other industry cashless solutions. The Advance 5000 has been designed to support two-tier pricing, which helps mitigate rising transaction fees.

Like other MEI payment systems, the Advance 5000 is a modular, scalable solution, which future-proofs the oper-

ator investment. Operators can plug and play from the base unit, adding and removing the communication modules required to connect, configure, and bring their cashless solution online. As the Advance 5000's telemetry solution is added to the MEI portfolio, its capabilities to "Give Your Machines a Voice" will expand even more.

For more information, call (800)345-8215; Web (www.meigroup.com). ▲





Top:
Sacoa principals, (l-r): Pol, Jorge, and Sebastian Mochkovsky at a trade show.

Inset:
The Color-Shot HD DR450

Sacoa PlayCard celebrates 20 years



As sophisticated wireless debit card system designed to manage every activity in an entertainment center was not commonplace 20 years ago. Enter Sacoa, a game changer.

The company has roots in the entertainment field that go back 55 years, with the PlayCard System in operation for 20 years.

Company principals are Jorge, Sebastian, and Pol Mochkovsky. Sebastian provided background and history on the development of the Sacoa PlayCard System, which is currently installed in over 800 locations in more than 50 countries.

What led to the development of the PlayCard System?

My grandfather, Mauricio Mochkovsky, and my father, Jorge, started the entertainment business operating jukeboxes and Bally bingos in bars and sports clubs in Argentina.

In the late '80s, Jorge realized the need of a much better way to control the business, keep track of the revenue, rotate games wisely, modify prices to compensate for inflation, and avoid theft.

So Sacoa PlayCard was developed in-house in the early '90s to optimize our own operation of arcades, family entertainment centers (FECs), and amusement parks.

An almost immediate 30 percent revenue rise was derived from the sys-

tem being installed at all the centers around the country in less than a year.

The Sacoa System is THE solution to optimize the entire operation using a rechargeable magnetic debit card with centralized management from a remote corporate office.

As operators you could see what was needed at the location level. What were the capabilities of your first system?

The first version of the PlayCard system allowed basic features such as individual game control price, automated digital revenues reports, and cashiers sales control, which was our goal.

Suddenly, we realized the power of the “marketing system” and we added new features like VIP status, automated price tables, instant lottery on POS (point of sale) recharges, time cards, and more. Today most of these features are standard in the card system industry.

One feature we created in 1994 and did not find successful until a few years ago was the implementation of the “electronic” ticket for redemption games. The market was not ready for such advanced development.

How has the PlayCard System evolved? How has the market changed?

From the beginning, the system was developed to manage the basics in a location. By that time, the market had a powerful coin/token mindset. The U.S. market was the hardest one because of the legendary quarter and operators did not have an open mind

ready for the future. The rest of the world appeared to be more prepared for such a huge change.

Today, the system allows operators to manage all aspects of their business, such as redemption, food and beverage inventories, party bookings, membership, loyalty programs, online sales, and more options.

As the market became more and more demanding, and new requirements surfaced from operators all over the world, the company strived to lead the vanguard by developing and introducing new features every year, taking the PlayCard system to new levels of performance, usefulness, and sophistication.

For example, the implementation of a wireless game network eliminated the hassle of running wires to or from the games, allowing new site layouts as easily as moving furniture around.

The development of multi-function

self-service kiosks allowed customers to purchase, recharge, and analyze PlayCards on their own. Our Multi-Session redemption counter software used through barcode scanners provides speedy customer service.

The current acceptance of e-tickets eliminates jams and down time at the games, reducing counting time at the redemption center as well as personnel needed. The introduction of several colorful card readers opened a range of options for customers with different budgets.

Today, many food and beverage and bowling operators are looking for integrated third party system solutions. We found this to be very convenient and the feature has been offered since we made one of our first installations in the U.S. market back in the mid-'90s.

The Internet and smart phones have had a great impact on the market with direct payment solutions, growing





Top:
Game rooms run efficiently using a wireless Sacoa PlayCard System.

Inset:
Sacoa kiosks at the front entrance to Castles-n-Coasters in Phoenix, Ariz.



also food and beverages, retail merchandise, attraction and ride passports, schedule laser tag sessions, link their cards to a frequent bowling account, post their transaction to a hotel room, and more.

- Tools to implement marketing strategies, ensure customer satisfaction, and enhance customer loyalty.
- Pricing strategies to increase revenues, a feature impossible to achieve with coin/token operation.

- Elimination of the financial cost of float and hidden operational costs.

- Put a stop to petty theft or fraud. The system prevents cashiers from cheating the operator or the customers.

- Computerized management, monitoring, and control for operations of any size.

- More time to cater to customer needs, motivate personnel, and achieve general operation oversight.

- Reporting and auditing features that enable better decision making based on hard facts information.

- The possibility of switching to e-ticket operation provides for maintenance savings by reducing coin and ticket jams, thereby reducing labor costs.

- More efficient redemption inventory control.

All these translate into a more profitable operation. When you think about the reasons why an operator would choose the Sacoa PlayCard System, you cannot avoid mentioning some key factors such as:

- We operate more than 30 FECs and amusement parks in Argentina and Ecuador, thus our products are developed in-house with a true inside knowledge of the operator's business and marketing needs.

- Our company is known for its outstanding performance and reliability as well as for its post-sale service and flexibility for product customization, which accounts for the constant evolution and improvement of features.

world. Coming up is the European Amusement Show (EAS) in Berlin this month and the IAAPA Expo in Orlando in November.

One constant first impression from the attendees is when they look at the amazing world map where we show the locations Sacoa has installed all around the world, currently over 800 locations in more than 50 countries.

Despite the economy, new entertainment centers are being built and existing facilities are remodeling to stay competitive. Are you seeing more facilities deciding to go to a card system?

Absolutely! The trend is to go towards the card system because it allows for increased sales, better control, reduced costs, marketing strategies, etc.

What advice do you give to a facility that is still undecided about going to a card system? What are the biggest advantages of your card system?

The biggest advantages are that it increases sales and allows the operator to have more control. Operators of all sizes cannot afford NOT to have a card system.

When you think about the reasons why an operator would want to implement a debit card system, you have to mention the following:

- The possibility of having an integrated POS according to the type of operation where customers may purchase not only cards and credits but

demand for online sales, online booking solutions, and customer relationship management (CRM) applications.

Sacoa's product line of card readers consists of the Classic DR200, Color-Shot DR-400, Color-Shot HD DR450, and the Touch N' Play DR500. What is your most popular model? Which features are most in-demand?

Our most popular card reader model is definitely the Color-Shot that allows for countless effects such as static hues, marquee-like animations, fade in, fade out, and crawling rainbow effects.

The Color-Shot 3.5-inch HD screen is the newest product, and as such it has been growing exponentially. It supports multiple images and multi-lingual messages in any alphabet. We also offer motorized turnstiles and manual access control for rides.

What are the best locations for each model of card reader?

For indoor FECs, any of the Color-Shot models is recommended, while for outdoor parks we suggest the Classic model since it is waterproof.

You exhibited at the Amusement Expo in March. What are trade show attendees impressed with when they come by your booth?

Sacoa exhibits at all major trade events in the U.S. and around the

Top:

A Sacoa kiosk is in the center of the game room at Uptown Alley in Surprise, Ariz.

Inset:

Sacoa also offers motorized turnstiles.



• The PlayCard System has been in use since 1992 and is the most widely used system in the world.

• We offer unparalleled support, a 24/7 help desk at no extra cost, and free software upgrades.

Tell us about your other products: the Redemption Counter Program, the Inventory Control System, the Online Party & Event Booking Module, and the Online Sales Module.

The *Redemption Multi-Session Program* allows up to eight attendants, equipped with wireless barcode scanners, to work at the same time on one single computer, servicing up to 64 persons simultaneously. This allows for high-speed performance of all redemption operations, which translates into speedy customer service.

The *Redemption Counter System* controls e-ticket counting and paper ticket counting since it is capable of interfacing directly with “behind the counter” ticket eaters and scales and also “reads” ticket amounts from pre-counted vouchers from stand-alone ticket eaters.

The system allows for full audit and accounting through specific and customized reports. Labeling capability, DPL direct input from all major redemption suppliers, and automated minimum/maximum settings for DPO are standard.

The *Online Party Booking Module* is a highly customizable platform where customers can adapt their whole system to their business needs. It features multiple store selection, availability, party packages, food and gifts, on-line payment, and everything needed to manage party reservations.

With the *Online Sales Module* operators can start offering instant credit recharges to their customers right from their Web site. It allows for easily

adapting the look and feel to suit the company’s image, customizing credit offers, and getting online reports with an easy to use interface.

What are some of your most recent installations?

In the last few months we have installed the Sacoa PlayCard system in more than 30 locations. In the U.S.: The All Star in Riverhead, N.Y.; Lucky’s Complex in Daytona Beach, Fla.; The Epicenter Family Entertainment Complex in Klamath Falls, Ore.; Restaurant 180 in Dallas, Texas; Laser Legend in San Antonio, Texas; and more.

Worldwide we have recent installations in Australia, Brazil, Colombia,

Georgia, India, Kuwait, Oman, Mexico, Morocco, Paraguay, and South Africa. More are coming during Christmas.

Is there a minimum size facility or minimum number of games and attractions that work well with a card system?

Although technically there is no minimum, the minimum we recommend for the investment to be reasonable is 14 games.

Even with cultural differences, there is universal appeal in family entertainment. Is there a common goal or mission at all the facilities that utilize Sacoa products in their entertainment venues?

Absolutely yes! To make more money and to have more control over the operation.

Sacoa is a family business. Is it easier or more difficult for family members to work together? Is a new generation coming along to continue the Sacoa name and tradition of excellence?

Sacoa Entertainment was born in 1957 as a family business and has kept the same format since then. The PlayCard division is also a family business from Jorge’s side.

It is nice to work together; when there are several ideas for the same matter, looking for the best solution without jeopardizing the family side of it.

We have opened offices around the world to provide better service. They are in Brazil, France, India, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Mexico, Taiwan, Turkey, Russia, and the U.S. Our main office is in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The new generation joins us at several trade shows, playing games and collecting souvenirs, which is exactly what Pol and I did when we were kids. We can’t wait to see what happens 15 years from now.

For more information on Sacoa, call (214)256-3965; e-mail (playcard@sacoa.com); Web (www.playcard.com.ar). ▲





Mission accomplished

One of the goals of American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) Chairman John Margold at the start of his two-year tenure in 2011 was to bring in new talent and fresh ideas.

That mission was accomplished with the announcement of two new members of the AAMA Board of Directors made at the AAMA Annual Meeting and Distributor Gala held Aug. 6-10 at the Wyndham Hotel in Lisle, Ill.

Eugene Jarvis, President of Raw Thrills Inc. in Skokie, Ill., and Bill Kraft, President of Shaffer Distributing Co. in Columbus, Ohio, are the newest additions to the board.

Margold said, "New ideas are always a good thing. It's great to see industry professionals such as Eugene and Bill come on the board. Both are successful in their own areas and represent different aspects of the industry. Eugene is a riveted individual from the manufacturing side and Bill has done a tremendous job at the distributor level. I'm very pleased that they are both able to put in the time to work on the board."

By all accounts the meetings, first-time manufacturer presentations, and the gala were a resounding success. Margold was quick to credit AAMA President John Schultz and his staff, Tina Schwartz and Jennifer Anker, for organizing the event.

"I can't give them enough praise," he said. "They chose the right venue for what was needed. We specifically did not select a resort location with amenities like a golf course, but rather kept a business focus to address important topics to help the industry grow in this challenging economy."

He continued, "While there are some bright spots, there are fewer tavern locations today than a few years ago. Add to that the effect of smoking bans and it's harder for those in our industry to make a living.

"We wanted to focus on how to grow this business and make it healthier. This was the right type of meeting to host for the industry in 2012. Everyone enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new people and conducting serious work."

Bill Glasgow Sr., President and Founder of long-time show management firm W.T. Glasgow Inc., was honored for the more than 20 years he has worked with the industry planning trade events. Margold said, "Bill was more than a

management firm we hired. He became a mentor and a friend and helped grow our show and our association. It was great to see him get the recognition he justly deserves."

Margold added, "Bill not only worked on our shows, he did a great deal to promote the coin machine industry. There are a lot of competent people who are good at what they do. And some people are friendly and make you feel comfortable. In Bill we have someone who embodies both of those qualities, and that's what makes him special."

Margold was happy to see representatives from the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) at the gala: Andy Shaffer, President; John Pascaretti, First Vice President; and Jack Kelleher, Executive Vice President.

"It's a show of solidarity," he said, "We're all in this together. Years ago I heard the expression 'we all eat out of the same cash can.' It's never been more true. The directors of the two associations work well together and create an atmosphere of cooperation, which is a very good thing for our industry."

Margold spoke of other positive happenings, like the co-location of the Amusement Expo in the spring with the National Bulk Vendors Association (NBVA) Expo, which will continue in 2013 and 2014.

"This addition shows traditional coin machine operators that there might be other products they could incorporate into their routes using the trucks and manpower they already have," he said. "Bulk vendors can see the same thing and expand the products they operate. It's called efficiency, and learning from each other about different aspects of the business."

He added, "If you find out from other people what's worked for them, choose carefully, and use good ideas to expand your base, you will be more successful than those who keep blinders on and keep doing things the way they have always been done."

When asked about promoting the industry, Margold said, "It's difficult to promote an industry with so many facets. I think it's important to promote the industry TO the industry and make sure everyone attends the Amusement Expo. This is our industry and we need to take control of it, participate, and grow the industry." ▲



John Margold
AAMA
Chairman

"This is our industry and we need to take control of it, participate, and grow the industry."

Mid-term activities

It's been seven months since Andy Shaffer was elected to the top post of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA). He has been crisscrossing the country since then representing AMOA at numerous industry events.

Shaffer said, "I love it; I embrace it. My theory is that I was lucky enough to have been voted in along the way and fortunate to be elected President. When you sign up as a director of AMOA you promise to give it everything you've got. In March I promised to give AMOA all my passion and energy."

He continued, "When you have less than 12 months to implement your ideas you have to have a great team around you. And I have that with Jack Kelleher and his staff. You also have to convince the other directors to jump on the same surfboard. It's been a good wave to ride. I've met phenomenal people in many states. They have been generous and friendly. I'm grateful for the opportunity."

Play Meter caught up with Shaffer fresh from attending the Missouri Amusement and Music Operators Association (MO-AMOA) Annual Meeting and Trade Show and the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) Distributor Gala.

He had just concluded a full day of conferences calls to discuss upcoming plans and events for the association and the industry.

Next on Shaffer's travel agenda: the West Virginia Amusement and Limited Video Lottery Association (WVALVLA) Meeting Oct. 24-25 in Charleston, W.Va., and two days later, addressing Class XV of the AMOA Notre Dame Management Program.

Missouri: At the MO-AMOA event Shaffer promoted the Amusement Expo 2013 (March 20-22 in Las Vegas) and encouraged Missouri operators to apply for the Wayne Hesch Scholarship. Several attendees had family members who obtained scholarships in the past but Missouri did not send any applications for this year.

When asked about the major concerns voiced by Missouri operators, Shaffer said that sweepstakes games and term limits topped the list.

Sweepstakes cafes are proliferating in the state. A large turnover in the legislature is expected, along with the election of a new governor.

MO-AMOA raised over \$14,000 from its auction, which featured donations from manufacturers. "Ron Kinney and Tom Cobb were really happy to have raised this amount,"

said Shaffer. "This is the only show in the entire circuit I have attended in back to back years."

AAMA Distributor Gala in Chicago: "AAMA hosted a very nice event. This was the first time I attended the gala. I was very happy that the feeling in the industry was relatively optimistic in Chicago."

IAAPA 2012: Meetings for AMOA and AAMA are scheduled during the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo 2012 in Orlando, Nov. 12-16.

"The main goal for AMOA is to go over budget items for 2013 and beyond. It's extremely productive for the Amusement Expo show committee (composed of AMOA and AAMA representatives) to meet at the same time as IAAPA since many manufacturers who exhibit at IAAPA also exhibit at the Amusement Expo. It's in everyone's best interest."

Shaffer said he has attended the IAAPA Expo for the last five or six years: "It is very worthwhile for me personally to attend this expo. My business had changed; some of my best customers are family entertainment centers (FECs). At the IAAPA Expo I continue to see fresh and new equipment for the FECs we serve. In addition, I can meet with AMOA members and AAMA members at the same time."

Amusement Expo 2013: "There are some ongoing positive discussions about changing the format of the expo, possibly expanding the first day to a full day of seminars and then having two full show days 9 a.m.-6 p.m. to maximize everyone's time."

When asked about the possibility of the Amusement Expo being held in a venue other than Las Vegas, Shaffer said that while a contract has not been signed for the show in Las Vegas in 2014, all indications are that the show will be there.

He added, "We are researching other cities and we will look at the financial viability of moving the show to another city." The criteria: if the new venue would boost attendance and booth reservations.

The first item on the agenda was to resign W.T. Glasgow Inc. as the show management firm before moving forward with any plans. Shaffer said, "Brian Glasgow and his dad, Bill, have been such an integral part of our show and our industry for as long as I've been involved in it." ▲



Andy Shaffer
AMOA
President

"I've met phenomenal people in many states. They have been generous and friendly. I'm grateful for the opportunity."

SAY WHAT?



10

second
interview
with...

Zach Sharpe is a contributing writer for *Play Meter*, Vice President of the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA), and works as an Account Manager for a global marketing/advertising agency.

My first job was:

at Sports Authority.

My favorite type of music is:

anything but country...although I have to admit liking some country songs.

I wish I had the nerve to:

tell a previous employer (not Play Meter!) that I called in "sick" to go and compete in a pinball tournament.

One thing I can't live without is:

food.

The last book I read was:

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows."

One word that describes my personality is:

entertaining.

The best advice I ever got was:

to not rush college graduation and study abroad.

My favorite TV show is:

"Breaking Bad" and for reality TV, "Big Brother."

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

Roger Sharpe.

My most cherished inanimate possession is:

are my contact lenses because without them, I'd be blind.



Josh Sharpe is a contributing writer for *Play Meter*, President of the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA), and the Controller for Raw Thrills Inc. He is also a new father to son Colin Sharpe.

My first job was:

at Max Dragonz Comics behind the counter.

My favorite type of music is:

DJ Zachsky's energy mixes.

I wish I had the nerve to:

tell my friends that I didn't go to Daytona Beach for Spring Break with them so I could meet with Gary Stern to talk about a pinball design I had drawn up.

One thing I can't live without is:

my son Colin.

The last book I read was:

"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire."

One word that describes my personality is:

sarcastic.

The best advice I ever got was:

to not worry about things you can't control.

My favorite TV show is:

"Modern Family," unless it's the summer, then "Big Brother."

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

Eugene Jarvis.

My most cherished inanimate possession is:

my Cyclopes pinball machine.



X-Men Pinball is “Marvel”-ous



Josh and Zach Sharpe

The two cornered critics discuss Stern's latest addition to its growing number of “the ball is wild” pinball games.

There's definitely plenty to be excited about on the pinball front this month. To celebrate the launch of its latest pinball machine, X-Men, Stern Pinball and the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) teamed up to host 11 simultaneous launch parties all across the U.S. and Canada.

Host cities included Chicago, Portland, Cleveland, Seattle, Denver, Birmingham, Toronto, Minneapolis, Boston, Houston, and Detroit. If you're an operator or collector reading our column and would be interested in hosting a future launch party at a new location, don't hesitate to contact the IFPA directly at (ifpabinball@gmail.com).

Last but not least, before we dive into our in-depth review of Stern's latest machine, X-Men, a little shameless self promotion from the Critic's Corner Too staff. We're not talking about Beast from X-Men just yet, but Zach just successfully completed his first (and most likely last) triathlon competition! Now, on to the review.

Pros: The first things that jump out in the X-Men game are the Wolverine and Magneto toys. They are both lacking in the subtlety department, which is especially great for novice players. If nothing else, shooting Wolverine and Magneto is a no brainer when stepping up to the game.

Good things will happen.

In addition to being a huge toy, front and center, the rules really help

the Wolverine area come to life. While the magnet serves as a great randomizer, the rules of hitting Wolverine “X” number of times to obtain the Weapon-X multiball serves as terrific upfront entertainment for casual players that will simply bash on Wolverine over and over again.

Another area of the game that we think was done well was the risk/reward balance of the main feature of the game, Magneto multiball.

With the jackpot value based on how many X-Men character modes you've played and/or finished, the player is in complete control of trying to start a less valuable multiball quickly. The player can also try to build the jackpot values up and start the multiball later, while risking the possibility of not starting it at all.

Without a doubt, one of the best decisions we feel Stern made with this X-Men theme/license was obtaining the rights to the comic book universe versus the movie franchise. With the original movie franchise well past its prime and the next wave of movies (First Class) having a retro/prequel angle, we feel it would have instantly dated this universe if people saw Hugh Jackman or James McAvoy on the artwork. The comic book world helps make the theme more timeless.

Another area of the game that we think is great are the animations of the DMD during game play. With so many X-Men and Villain modes, the DMD effects help give personality to all of those different areas of the game. Simulating the battles against your various enemies is taken to a whole new level with the integration of the display during game play.

One of the more refreshing and unique items with X-Men fell within its rules. Stern gave free reign to Waison Cheng to do lead programming on his first game and it really shows.

The rules are very fresh in terms of entertainment value and are tied in uniquely with the dots. In addition, the depth of the rules and the character/storyline layout





suggest that the designers are very familiar with this comic book universe.

As we've been putting more time on the machine, looking for ways to exploit some easy scoring strategies, we've been pleased to not really find any huge imbalances in the various features. There is a very fair balance of risk and reward within the rules that makes the game great for tournament play.

Being a part of the comic book universe versus the movie franchise also allows X-Men to have its own unique sounds. Using Iron Man, Spider-Man, and Batman as examples, most of the sounds (and dots) are leveraged off of those respective films.

With this game being in its own distinctive universe, there is a clean slate to come up with very creative and refreshing sound effects to complement the action and animations as opposed to recycling from a movie.

As part of Stern's new philosophy of trying to keep the ball wild, we're pleased to see the two magnets, along with the spinning disc on the LE serve their purpose of making the game a little uncontrollable for players. This especially goes for Wolverine, as he's such an integral part of game play. It's tough to try and avoid the magnet in front of him knowing that you really need to shoot him if you want higher scores.

Cons: While we love the Wolverine figure front and center, and what it accomplishes from a rules perspective, physically speaking there are some noticeable ball hang-ups under his arm. These balls get stuck under his arm more often than you would expect and can unintentionally lead to drains because it's almost directly above the center of the playfield (leading to balls draining straight down the middle).

Another issue we've seen consistently is multiple balls coming out of Magneto whenever the game is trying to only release one. This can eventually lead to a situation where a player could lose one of the balls just as they re-lock the other ball that spit out. This would end that player's turn. Hopefully this timing on the Magneto lock mechanism can be addressed in software down the road.

In addition, on the LE edition, we've seen and heard many issues regarding the Ice-Man ramp interfering with the Wolverine figure as well as not delivering the ball where it's intended while moving back and forth. These unfortunate blemishes can leave a sour taste in a player's mouth when their ball drains due to a design feature that is not acting properly.

For us, the integration of Nightcrawler within game play is underwhelming. While having him pop up within certain modes when the character is being held by a villain makes sense, it doesn't allow him to be utilized enough (especially on the LE where he is a physical target to hit).

To compensate for this, Nightcrawler is started randomly through the Blackbird award, which doesn't really give a good reason as to why he's activated. Most of the other features within the game are woven into the storyline. With Nightcrawler, it just seems a little lost among the rules.

With the Wolverine figure being so big and prominent, it does lead to a little awkwardness with the upper right flipper shots. While it's not impossible to hit the Storm side ramp or Rogue inner loop shot successfully, they are a bit more "blind" to shoot for.

As opposed to other games where you can see the ball being hit by the upper flipper and flow through to the shot, with X-Men there's that brief moment after you shoot where you lose track of the ball behind Wolverine.

On the software side, with the inability to really stack modes, it's possible to get into situations where only one shot is lit on the playfield, with all other shots not really doing anything.

If one of those shots is a difficult one, especially one of the shots with the upper flipper, players can become frustrated by not getting any sort of reward, score, or entertainment value for the shots they are making across the playfield.

While some of the voicework was very entertaining, we found the biggest focal points of the game (Magneto and Wolverine) to be a little lackluster. Magneto could have been far more menacing, while Wolverine could have been much grittier.

One of the unique features in the LE version is the spinning disc that is located in the middle of the playfield directly below Magneto.

However, the only time this feature is activated is at the very start of a

Magneto multiball. It just feels like a waste of a toy/feature that could have been utilized much more throughout game play. As it stands, most players will only see it spin once (maybe twice) during the course of regular play. And that's only during the opening sequence of the multiball. Perhaps if it were to continuously spin whenever a lock was lit (i.e. Whirlwind), or spin throughout the entire multiball sequence, it could add some nice action to that area of the playfield.

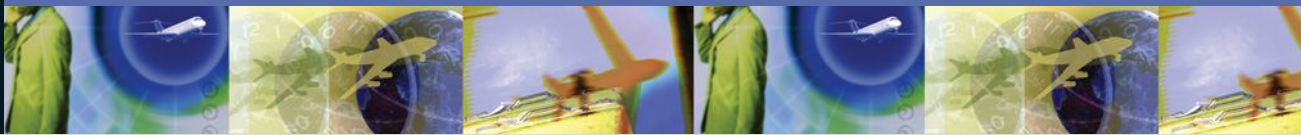
Overall: The best thing we can say about the game was that it felt new. The shots around the playfield were very unique, and having a new programmer at the controls brought a fresh perspective to pinball rules that we haven't seen before.

Players can play the game to maximize their score, for X-Men modes or for Villain modes, and have a fun time playing it each of those different ways. While there seems to be some physical issues around the playfield, and some rules that make the game sort of "dead" in certain situations, the game is packed with so much content that we feel it should have some great legs on location. ▲

OVERALL RATING: ★★ ★ 1/2



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



October 1-4

G2E

Las Vegas, Nev.
Sands Expo and Convention Center
tel: (703)840-5662
e-mail: inquiry@reedexpo.com
web: www.globalgamingexpo.com

October 2-3

DNA U.S. Conference

Los Angeles, Calif.
University of South California Davidson Conference Center
e-mail: MMMascioni@aol.com
web: www.dnaconference.org

October 3-4

World Waterpark Symposium and Trade Show

Las Vegas, Nev.
Paris Hotel
tel: (913)381-6734
e-mail: patty@waterparks.org
web: www.waterparks.org

October 4-6

Atlantic Coast Expo

Myrtle Beach, S.C.
Embassy Suites Kingston Plantation
fax: (919)249-1394
e-mail: info@atlanticcoastexpo.com
web: www.atlanticcoastexpo.com

October 7-10

National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) Show

Las Vegas, Nev.
Las Vegas Convention Center
tel: (877)684-3600
e-mail: show@nacsonline.com
web: www.nacsonline.com

October 9-11

Euro Attractions Show

Berlin, Germany
Messe Berlin
tel: (703)836-4800
e-mail: europe@iaapa.org
web: www.iaapa.org/eas

October 17-19

ENADA Rome

Rome, Italy
Roma Expo Center
tel: 00390-5417-44250
e-mail: s.bodellini@riminifiera.it
web: www.enada.it

October 17-21

Pinball Expo

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

October 18-20

Surexpo

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

October 24-26

RAAPA Autumn Expo

Moscow, Russia
VVC, Pavilion 55
tel/fax: +7(495)234-52-42
e-mail: raapa@raapa.ru
web: www.raapa.ru

November 1-3

China Zhongshan International Games & Amusement Fair

Zhongshan, China
Zhongshan Expo Center
tel: +86-20-2831-4758
e-mail: marketing1@grandeurhk.com
web: www.zsgaf.com

November 12-16 PM

IAAPA Attractions Expo

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

November 13-15

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Hyatt Regency Hotel
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Excel Center
tel: +44(0)1582-767-254
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web: www.eagexpo.com

February 9-11, 2013

AMOA Council of Affiliated States Meeting

San Antonio, Texas
San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk
tel: (847)428-7699
e-mail: llschneider@prodigy.net
web: www.amoa.com

March 20-22, 2013 PM

Amusement Expo

Las Vegas, Nev.
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tel: (708)226-1300
e-mail: info@amusementexpo.org
web: www.amusementexpo.org

PM denotes *Play Meter* as an exhibitor.

Checking in with the NBVA



Steve
Schechner,
NBVA President

Play Meter spoke with Steve Schechner, National Bulk Vendors Association (NBVA) President, about current happenings in the association, the 2013 Amusement Expo, and membership presence at the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo.

Does the NBVA plan to have seminars at the Amusement Expo in 2013? If so, what topics do you predict will be covered?

We will have our seminars. Topics are in discussion, but nothing has been locked in yet. I believe you could expect something on networking, locating, merchandising, and building a more efficient bulk vending business.

We are open to any topics the membership feels is important and will

include this information in our next newsletter. We really want to give the membership something of value they can use to grow their business.

Did you receive any positive comments after last year's show about the benefits of being co-located with the coin-op show?

The 2013 show will be the third year of the co-located show. It's a great idea, and has become more successful

over the years. The comments were overwhelmingly positive.

The other industry groups were very happy to share the space and meet new and future customers, and the members of our organizations were excited to learn about other possibilities for their businesses. By having a wider variety of products available at the show, many bulk vendors are able to diversify their business.

Do many NBVA members exhibit at the IAAPA Expo? Will they exhibit again? What is the importance of the IAAPA Expo to member companies?

Some do. I can't speak for them on the importance of the IAAPA Expo or whether or not they'll be exhibiting again.

Have you noticed a trend of bulk vending operators expanding by introducing cranes or any other equipment?

We've been discussing this trend for years.

Are there any significant changes members are making because of the tough economy?

Many members are diversifying their equipment mix.

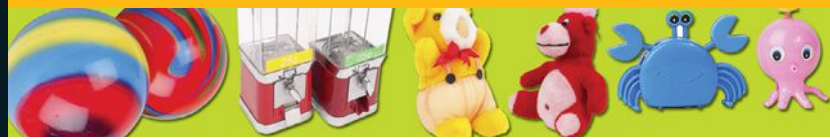
Any other trends in bulk vending?

It's difficult to identify specific trends, since each operator's business is different, and very specific to a location.

What are a few issues the association feels are important to members right now?

Truth, transparency, and fairness.

For more information on the NBVA, call (888)628-2872; e-mail (info@nbva.org); Web (www.nbva.org). ▲



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Stock items are packed 24 pieces per case, at \$5.75 per piece; 144 pieces are \$5.50 per piece. This item is included in the HMS Monaco Free Freight program.

Also new are 2012 licensed/generic NFL crane kits. The Regular Claw Kit is 2/3 licensed and 1/3 generic plush, average \$2.10 per piece, \$302.40 per kit of 133 pieces. The Jumbo Claw Kit is 2/3 licensed and 1/3 generic plush, average \$3.50 per piece, \$252 per kit of 72 pieces.

For more information, call (800)777-0901; Web (www.hmsmonaco.com).



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As players move across the luxury-themed game board, they have the opportunity to upgrade their salary and move up. Players may start off with a paper airplane, but they'll be flying high in a private jet by the end of the game. All-new lifestyle and fortune cards keep the game moving as money shifts hands and players compete to collect properties and become the first millionaire!

Monopoly Millionaire is available now at mass merchandise retailers nation-wide for the approximate retail price of \$19.99. The game is recommended for two to four players, ages eight and up.

For more information, visit (www.hasbro.com/monopoly/en_us).



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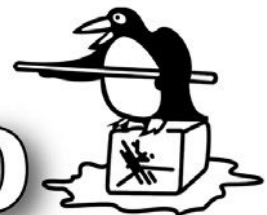
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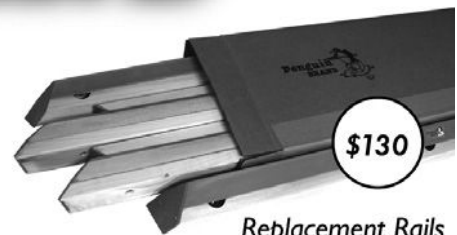
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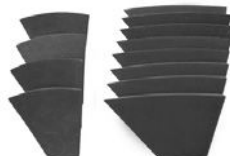
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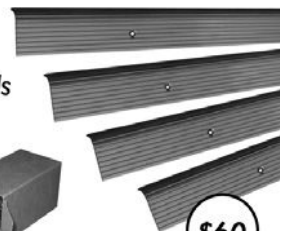
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


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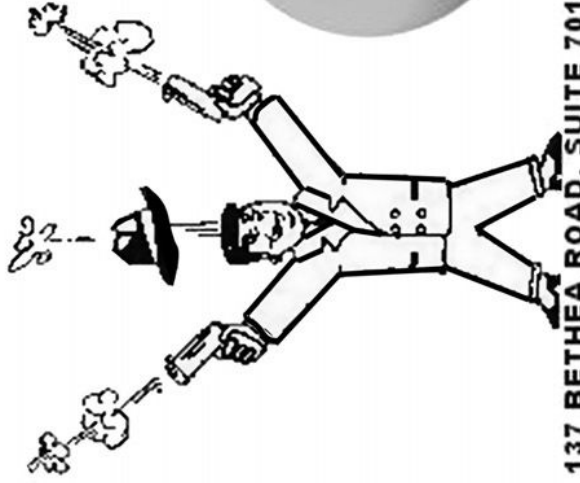
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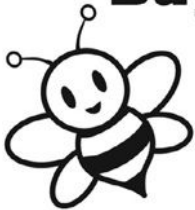
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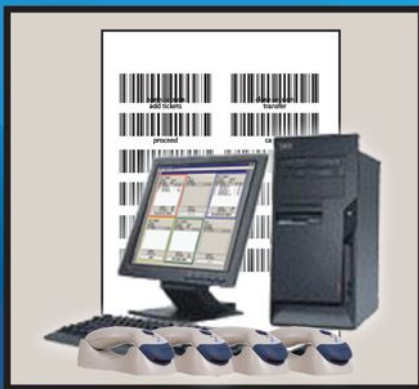
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