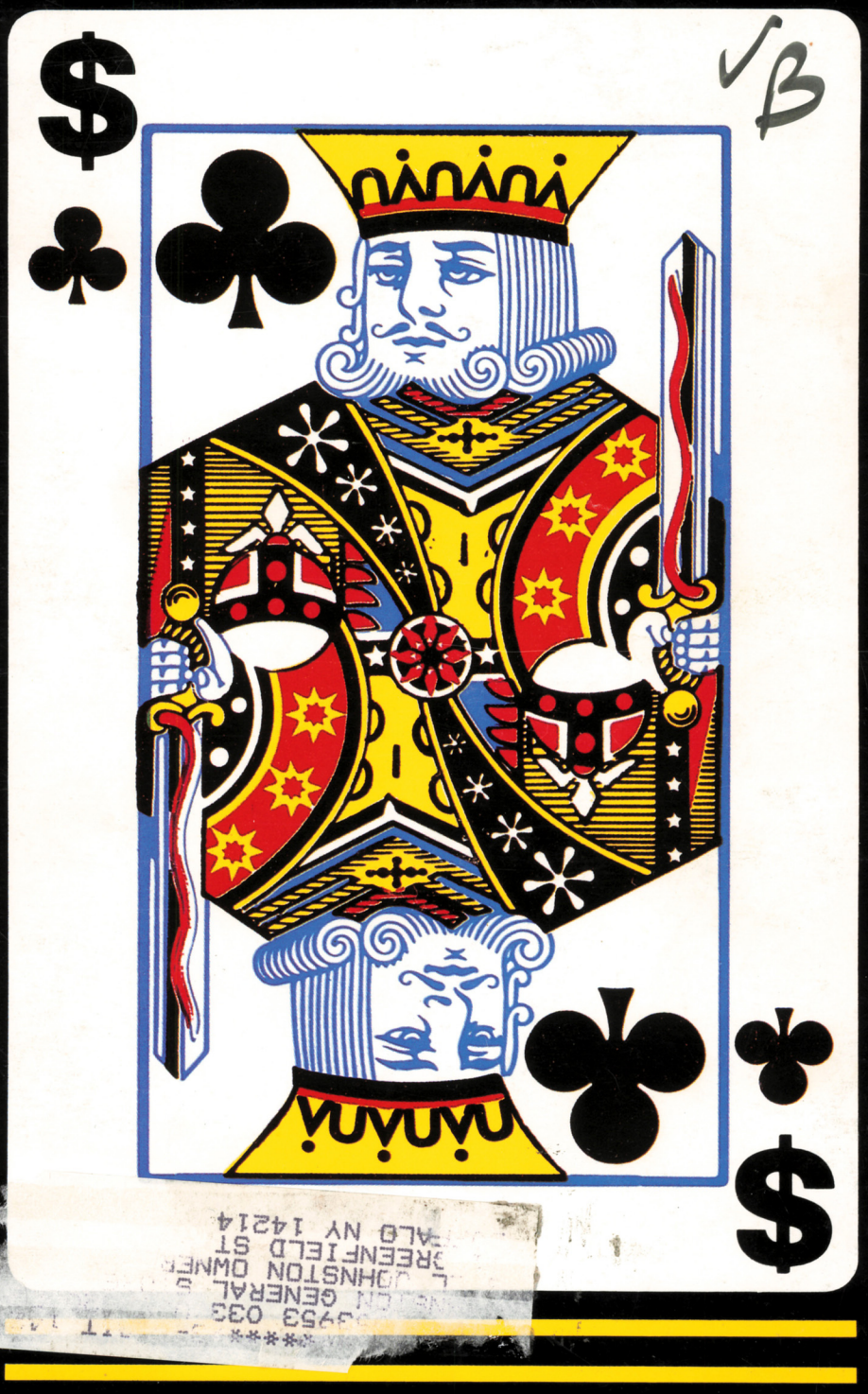
PLAY METER magazine



Video gaming shuffle:

Proposed political action

Manufacturer assessment

Distributor evaluation

Regulator viewpoint

Informative industry interviews:

Jim Trucano

Roger Westmont

Emile "Peppi" Bruneau, Jr.

James Maida

VOLUME 17, No. 3 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY February 1991

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NEWS BULLETIN

► **DUNIS DIES...** Lou Dunis, president and founder of Dunis Distributing, died Jan. 21 after a lengthy illness. Dunis is one of the honorees at the upcoming American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation Dinner, held in conjunction with ACME '91. He is survived by three daughters, one son, and two granddaughters.

Sharing the honors at the dinner will be Dunis' partner Ray Galante, who said, "Lou has been a good friend and partner for many years. I will miss him as will his many friends in the industry."

Play Meter's Valerie Cognevich, who is writing stories on both Galante and Dunis for the Charitable Foundation program booklet, visited with Dunis in Portland, Ore., on Jan. 16. According to Cognevich, "Although he was in the hospital and obviously very ill, he smiled often as he recalled his early days in the industry. He spoke fondly of men such as Bob Breither and Paul Calamari and was looking forward to the dinner. So many of his friends will be sad that he did not live to enjoy it."

► **CRAVENS LEAVES CAPCOM, FORMS OWN COMPANY...** Bill Cravens has left his position as vice president of sales and marketing at Capcom USA to start his own company, Leprechaun Inc. Based in Bellevue, Wash., Leprechaun Inc. will focus on video game kits and some redemption pieces.

The company will show *Bowl-O-Rama* at ACME. It's an enhancement kit for *Capcom Bowling*, changing the long-time favorite into three different bowling games. "The game has a '50s theme with '50s music," Cravens said. "It breathes fresh new life into *Capcom Bowling*. Locations are reporting twice the income they used to bring in on *Capcom Bowling*."

Cravens' oldest son Todd is working part time with his dad at Leprechaun Inc. Atlas Distributing's Ed Pellegrini worked closely with Cravens on *Bowl-O-Rama* and plans to help with future projects, Cravens said.

► **DEAL BETWEEN IGT, VLC OFF...** International Game Technology has discontinued discussions regarding its proposed acquisition of Video Lottery Consultants. It isn't certain whether talks will be resurrected in the future.

A previously announced letter of intent had been signed by the parties in mid-December. "It became evident that a definitive agreement could not be reached," said Raymond Pike, senior vice president of IGT.

► **GILBERT RETURNS TO INDUSTRY...** Joe Gilbert, who's been away from the coin-op industry for awhile, has returned as executive vice president of T.O.P. Distributing in Rochester, N.Y. He's previously worked for Atlantic/N.Y., National Vendors, Rowe, Belam, Nintendo, and Williams.

T.O.P. is expanding its scope, with the parts department taking on added emphasis. Besides the day-to-day operations, Gilbert will be responsible for developing the parts department, with the goal of elevating it to a national scale.

T.O.P.'s supplemental winter catalog is now available. For a copy, call (800) 222-8671 or (800) 872-5656; the FAX is (716) 248-8777.

► **BROWN PASSES AWAY...** Paul Brown, who founded Western Automatic Music (Chicago) in 1937, passed away Jan. 3 at age 77. His son-in-law, Kem Thom, heads the company and has been active in local and national association work, as was his father-in-law. Brown was a member of the AMOA board during the '60s and served his state association well. He retired in 1979 but continued to keep tabs on industry happenings. We offer our condolences to Brown's entire family.

► **BAN ON CIGARETTE VENDING...** In mid-January, the Chicago City Council voted to ban cigarette vending machines from all public places except taverns. Violators could face penalties up to $1,000 and/or loss of licenses. A move to raise the legal smoking age to 19 was not passed.

► **DATA EAST WORKING ON NEW TECHNOLOGY...** Data East USA is developing video games that produce graphics with imagery approaching film quality, according to the company. The games will be based on Intel's digital video interactive (DVI) technology (using Data East's own proprietary hardware and software).

The first game using this new technology will be *Thunderstorm*, a helicopter action game shown in prototype form in Japan last October. It will be exhibited at ACME next month.

"Over the past few years, arcade video games have lost some of their technological edge over home entertainment systems," Keenan said. "DVI technology returns that advantage. It makes immediately available a highly advanced, multi-media computer technology that will be found in arcade systems long before entry into the home marketplace."

► **SMS GAME APPROVED...** SMS Manufacturing Corp. has secured approval to operate its *Player's Touch* multiple game video lottery system in New Brunswick, Canada. Approval came from the Atlantic Lottery Corp., the administrative body entrusted with overseeing video lottery in New Brunswick.

Player's Touch, housed in an all-steel, casino-style cabinet, utilizes advanced touch-screen technology to facilitate interaction between player and machine. It will come configured with three variations of Draw Poker games and one Keno game. Other games are currently being developed for the system. *Player's Touch* is being distributed by Montreal's Laniel Automatic Machine.

► **SEGA/NAMCO BUY DEITH LEISURE...** According to British trade publication *Coin Slot*, Sega Enterprises Ltd. and Namco Ltd. have jointly acquired London-based distribution company Deith Leisure PLC.

A written statement said the following: "Sega Enterprises Ltd., jointly with Namco Ltd., entered into a contract to acquire Deith Leisure PLC on Dec. 20, 1990. (The two companies) will now provide all necessary support and assistance to maintain and expand Deith Leisure PLC's business.

"In addition, we take this opportunity to confirm that our good relationship with other manufacturers and distributors will not be affected by this acquisition."

► **USAA ADDS AUCTIONS...** United States Amusement Auction Co., which has been auctioning games and jukeboxes since 1983, will add more sites this spring. Among them are Anaheim, Calif., on Feb. 23; Tampa in March; Dallas and New Jersey (city still undecided) in April; and Indianapolis and Columbus, Ohio, later in the spring. For more information, contact Ric Stephan at (812) 333-9939.

► **R & M EXPANDS...** R & M Distributing Corp. has added Louie Gutierz-Rummenigge and Roberto Hernandez to its Export Sales Division. Rummenigge will be traveling periodically to Europe, Asia, and parts of Latin America, while Hernandez will cover South America and the Caribbean. Both will be based in the company's West Hempstead, N.Y., office. Call (800) 229-4FUN for more information.

► **SUPER BOWL ARCADE SET UP...** Southeast Game Brokers of Tampa, Fla., one of the largest operating companies on the west coast of Florida, provided an arcade with all football-oriented video and pinball games as part of the Super Bowl's 25th anniversary.

The arcade was located in the 250,000-square-foot Town Square, part of the Super Bowl Village produced by the NFL. Special tokens were minted by Roger Williams Mint for those visiting the arcade between Jan. 24-27. Midway-style games were provided by local charities.

► **BUSHNELL TO APPEAR AT ACME...** Nolan Bushnell, who is often called "The Father of Video," will deliver a speech on "The Future of Coin-Op" during ACME '91 at the Sands Expo & Convention Center in Las Vegas, which takes place March 22-24. This session is free to all registered attendees.

In addition to Bushnell's speech, there will be an impressive list of seminars, including "Video Lottery and Gaming Outlook for '91," "Redemption Trends in the '90s," "Bowling Centers and Other Gold Mines," "Arcade Security," and the much anticipated "Manufacturer Firing Line." Business management and technical seminars are also on the agenda.

As we went to press, there were 612 booths sold for the show, with more to be added later (592 booths were sold last year). Some 153 companies plan to exhibit, and that figure is expected to grow. For more information, contact W.T. Glasgow Inc. (708) 333-9292.

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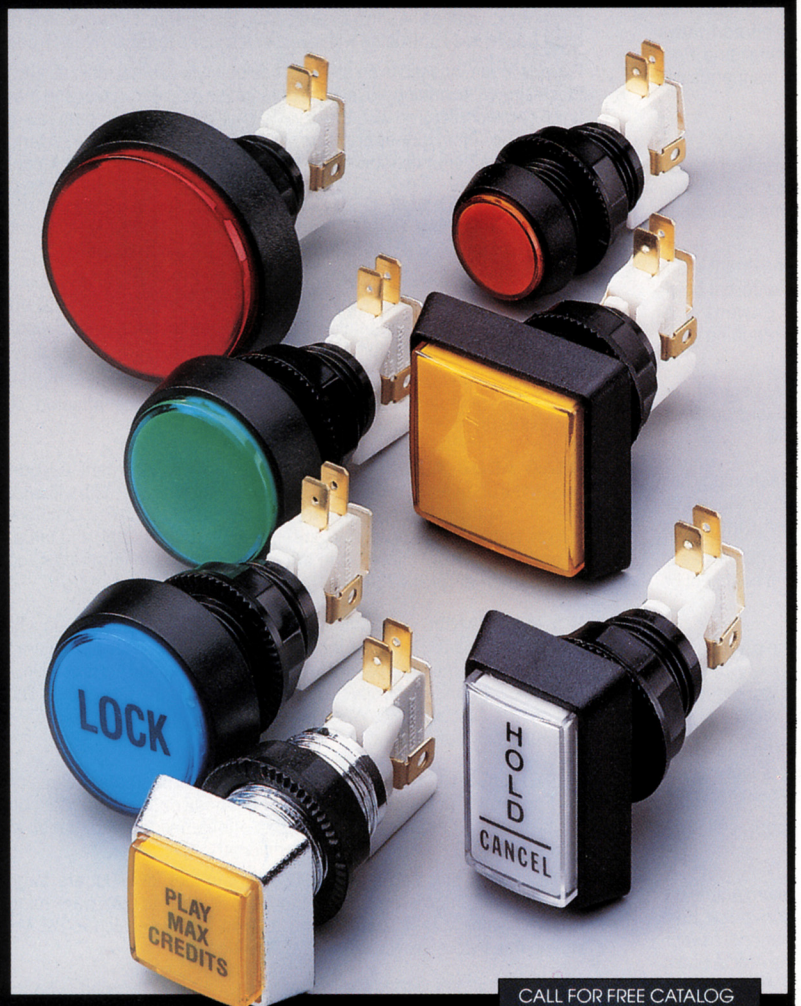

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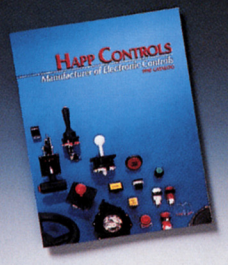

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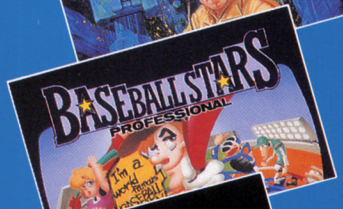

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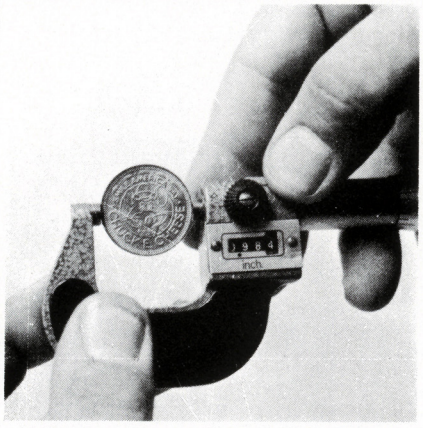

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAY METER magazine

Volume 17, No. 3 February 1991

FEATURES

Special Video Gaming Section 25
An expanded "Video Gaming Outlook" travels political paths in 10 states, followed by interviews with Jim Trucano (AMOA President) and James Maida (International Gaming Laboratories). Manufacturers, distributors, a regulator, and an operator all have their say.

Coinman: Roger Westmont 46
As President of the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO), Westmont is involved in the push for legal video poker. An earnest promoter of operator participation in such activity, he sees it as reflective of changes occurring in the industry.

Interview: Emile "Peppi" Bruneau, Jr. 58
Rep. Bruneau chronicles the story of Louisiana's 1990 proposed video gaming bill, which traveled smoothly through both the House and Senate committees before coming to an abrupt halt. Plans for the future are discussed, as well as "gray area" games.

DEPARTMENTS

News Bulletin	3	Prime Time Player	90
Equipment Poll	8	Tournaments & Leagues-1	94
From the Editor	10	Tournaments & Leagues-2	95
Letters	12	Tax Tips-1	96
News	14	Tax Tips-2	98
Up Front	20	Tax Tips-3	100
International News	22	Frank's Cranks	102
Open House-Belam	76	Top Twenty	103
Open House-Rowe/Dedham	78	Technical Topics	104
Open House-Eastern	80	What's New	106
Redemption Report	82	Classified	113
Reader's Response	86	Calendar/Ad Index	143
Ten Years Ago	89	The Last Word	144

COVER

Political activism is a game of true skill. Those experienced and devoted to the activity may hold the winning card when state legislatures vote on legal video gaming this year. (All playing cards are courtesy of Merit Industries and Liberty Inc.)

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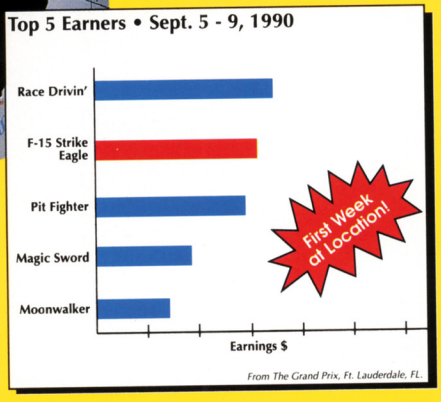

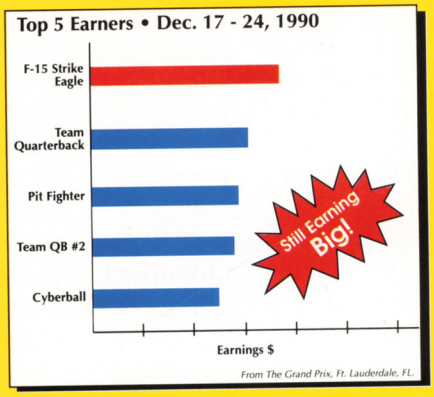

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EQUIPMENT POLL

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

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	MONTHS ON CHART	MONTHS IN TOP 10
1. Race Drivin'	(*Atari*)	9.33	4	4
2. Hard Drivin'	(*Atari*)	9.08	22	22
3. Simpsons	(*Data East*)	8.83	3	3
4. Fun House	(*Williams*)	8.73	1	1
5. High Impact Football	(*Williams*)	8.70	1	1
6. Final Lap	(*Atari*)	8.29	21	20
7. Final Fight	(*Capcom*)	8.19	12	12
8. Elvira	(*Bally/Midway*)	8.16	15	15
9. Pit Fighter	(*Atari*)	8.11	4	4
10. TMNT	(*Konami*)	8.08	14	14
11. Whirlwind	(*Williams*)	8.06	12	12
12. Dr. Dude	(*Bally/Midway*)	7.92	3	3
13. G-Loc	(*Sega*)	7.63	7	6
14. Space Gun	(*Taito*)	7.60	2	1
15. Track-Pak	(*Leland*)	7.58	9	8
16. Super Off Road	(*Leland*)	7.57	22	20
17. Magic Sword	(*Capcom*)	7.54	4	4
18. Earthshaker	(*Williams*)	7.53	22	22
19. Cyberball 2072	(*Atari*)	7.50	15	12
20. Oper. Thunderbolt	(*Taito*)	7.36	21	16
21. Turbo Out Run	(*Sega*)	7.36	21	20
22. Chase H.Q.	(*Taito*)	7.31	20	10
23. WWF Super Stars	(*American Technos*)	7.27	19	18
24. Smash TV	(*Williams*)	7.17	9	6
25. Galaxy Force	(*Sega*)	7.17	4	3

REDEMPTION

	POINT VALUE
ALLEY BOWLERS	
1. Skee-Ball (*Skee Ball*)	8.14
BASKETBALL	
1. Shoot To Win (*Smart*)	7.20

	POINT VALUE
NOVELTY REDEMPTION	
1. Pop-A-Ball (*SMS/Coastal*)	9.14
2. Rock-N-Bowl (*Bromley*)	8.20
3. TMNT Pizza Drop (*Capcom*)	7.80

VIDEO KITS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	High Impact Football (*Williams*)	8.70	46
2.	Final Flight (*Capcom*)	8.19	573
3.	Track-Pak (*Leland*)	7.58	258
4.	Magic Sword (*Capcom*)	7.54	133
5.	Cyberball 2072 (*Atari*)	7.50	437
6.	Turbo Out Run (*Sega*)	7.36	723
7.	WWF Super Stars (*American Technos*)	7.27	719
8.	Smash TV (*Williams*)	7.17	255
9.	Arch Rivals (*Bally/Midway*)	7.10	431
10.	Hit The Ice (*Williams*)	7.00	77
11.	Rai Den (*Fabtek*)	6.86	177
12.	Golden Axe (*Sega*)	6.83	592
13.	Tetris (*Atari*)	6.83	279
14.	Aliens (*Konami*)	6.64	170
15.	Roadblasters (*Atari*)	6.61	223
16.	Championship Sprint (*Atari*)	6.55	79
17.	Champion Wrestler (*Taito*)	6.50	39
18.	Blood Bros. (*Fabtek*)	6.33	4
19.	Combatribes (*American Technos*)	6.20	118
20.	D J Boy (*American Sammy*)	6.00	*
21.	Ataxx (*Leland*)	5.93	78
22.	Hammerin' Harry (*Fabtek*)	5.83	*
23.	Hydra (*Atari*)	5.80	73
24.	All American Football (*Leland*)	5.80	335
25.	Gate of Doom (*Data East*)	5.71	*
26.	Buster Bros. (*Capcom*)	5.70	*
27.	Capcom Bowling (*Capcom*)	5.60	150
28.	U.S. Classic (*Taito*)	5.60	*
29.	M.V.P. (*Sega*)	5.57	163
30.	Cadash (*Taito*)	5.57	80
31.	Moonwalker (*Sega*)	5.33	*
32.	Crime City (*Taito*)	5.09	*
33.	Thunder Fox (*Taito*)	5.00	*
34.	U.N. Squadron (*Capcom*)	4.80	94
35.	Snow Bros. (*Romstar*)	4.40	3

VIDEO DEDICATED

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Race Drivin' (*Atari*)	9.33	196
2.	Hard Drivin' (*Atari*)	9.08	1060
3.	Final Lap (*Atari*)	8.29	805
4.	Pit Fighter (*Atari*)	8.11	185
5.	TMNT (*Konami*)	8.08	666
6.	G-Loc (*Sega*)	7.63	265
7.	Space Gun (*Taito*)	7.60	58
8.	Super Off Road (*Leland*)	7.57	879
9.	Oper. Thunderbolt (*Taito*)	7.36	648
10.	Chase H.Q. (*Taito*)	7.31	481
11.	Galaxy Force (*Sega*)	7.17	150
12.	Beast Busters (*SNK*)	7.00	244
13.	Mechanized Attack (*SNK*)	6.75	264
14.	Out Run (*Sega*)	6.63	641
15.	Pigskin 621 A.D. (*Bally/Midway*)	6.63	20

PINBALLS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	The Simpsons (*Data East*)	8.83	147
2.	Fun House (*Williams*)	8.73	47
3.	Elvira (*Bally/Midway*)	8.16	620
4.	Whirlwind (*Williams*)	8.06	510
5.	Dr. Dude (*Bally/Midway*)	7.92	125
6.	Earthshaker (*Williams*)	7.53	927
7.	Cyclone (*Williams*)	7.11	780
8.	Phantom of the Opera (*Data East*)	7.09	314
9.	Back to the Future (*Data East*)	7.00	68
10.	Rollergames (*Williams*)	6.67	184
11.	Radical (*Bally/Midway*)	6.50	30
12.	Mousin' Around (*Bally/Midway*)	6.14	320
13.	Taxi (*Williams*)	6.13	512
14.	Jokerz! (*Williams*)	5.79	462
15.	Pinbot (*Williams*)	5.76	300

* New or reappearing games; look for longevity points next month.

FROM THE EDITOR

A rose by any other name

We have boldly stated in several recent articles that video poker will be playing a bigger part in the coin-op industry in the future. We have also said that we can't predict whether that is good or not so good. It doesn't matter what we think will happen. What does matter is that we are prepared for it when it happens, if it does. All we can do is inform the industry as to what the developments are along the way. We are all learning right now and are thirsty for all of the information we can get from all corners.

This issue is devoted to several aspects of the video poker industry. One thing that has been said is that there is a problem in some areas with the term video "pokers" or video "gaming." The industry is learning that perception is important—perception from governmental bodies and from the public in general. So other terms are coming into being. One such term—the one most prevalent in South Dakota—is video "lottery."

What you call it may seem like the least of our worries. Wrong. Look at what the movie industry has done with the familiar "X" rating: they have changed it. Now even though it is the very same thing and the movies with the different rating are just as raunchy as those with the old "X" term, it seems that even newspapers can deal with advertising them now.

Regulator John Willems sums up that no matter what you call it, "it is still a form of gambling. No name will change the fact that we are talking about slot machines." With many states accepting a lottery, it seems that *video lottery* is a term that is familiar and not quite as unpalatable to the public as gambling.

We talked to several game manufacturers about their view of the future of video lottery. It was extremely interesting. These guys have spent many hours traveling and researching the potential of video lottery. One common thread running through these opinions is their plea to operators to pull together if they hope to be a part of the video lottery industry, should legislation pass in their states. There is always the possibility that outside entrepreneurs could wrangle their way into the positions that operators should dominate.

Another vital point is for operators to be aware of opposing groups that have a vested interest in seeing video lottery shot down. Whenever something this significant is being considered, there are those that see it as negative to their interests, whatever they may be. Knowledgeable and informed operators, through their state associations, can do wonders in pointing out the advantages of their side.

Even distributors are concerned about the effects of legalized video gaming on their businesses. As one pointed out, this is not the amusement industry. Distributors could be out of business if they are not careful and discerning about the issue.

I would like to invite our readers to call us with any questions that may be unanswered. We will do our very best to address them as soon as possible. Don't sit back thinking that your opinion does not count—it does. Operators, you need each other, probably now more than ever. Join your association. If you don't, someone else will be glad to take over what should have been yours.

Valerie Cognevich

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

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LETTERS

Loves blackberries and coin-op

I just read Valerie's January editorial ["Down on the vine"]. As a lover of blackberry jam and blackberry cobbler, let me say, "great job!" Her words were both eloquent and true.

When the industry is experiencing a downturn, as we have been lately, it is especially true. If we don't support our industry and re-invest in it, we won't have an industry. And I am much too young and too poor to consider retirement!

Talk to operators who have invested in CD jukeboxes and they will tell you that the lounge patrons will put a dollar into a jukebox. Operators who have invested in the top end simulators — Atari's *Race Drivin'* or *Four Trax,* Microprose's *F-15 Eagle,* Sega's *GP Rider* or Betson's *Mad Dog McCree* — have discovered that it is possible to go beyond 25 cents per play. However, we can reap only what we sow.

Our industry can survive the slow times. As an industry, we may even grow during times of economic strife. When the economy is poor, families may put off the vacation to Barbados or the purchase of a new car. But a trip to the local Dairy Queen (with a stop at the arcade on the way home) or an evening at the miniature golf course (with a visit to the attached redemption center) is an affordable diversion. We will survive these tough times if we work together. And, above all, *don't panic!*

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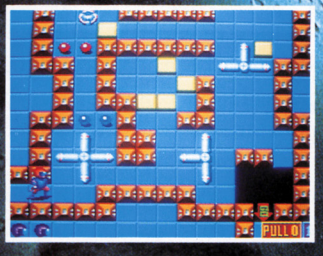

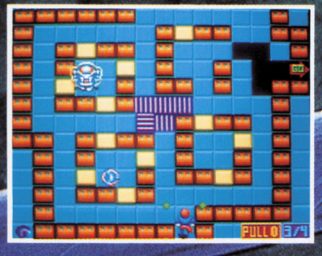

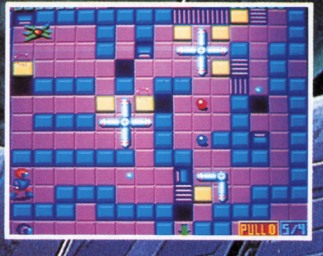

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Jukebox licensing deadline nears

March 15 is the deadline for the Jukebox Licensing Office to receive completed jukebox licensing applications for 1991. After this date, operators won't be able to get licenses for 1991 *and* 1992, according to AMOA president Jim Trucano. They will have to wait until 1993 to apply again.

In a joint statement, the three U.S. performing rights societies—ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC—said: "The jukebox license agreement issued by the Jukebox License Office permits the lawful performance of virtually all the copyrighted music in the world, including the copyrighted music in the vast repertories of ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC and over 40 affiliated societies.

"The Jukebox License Office agreement is the most convenient and economical way to license jukeboxes. After March 15, 1991, the Jukebox License Office will no longer accept applications from jukebox operators to license any jukeboxes which have been on location. Following the deadline, ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC will each begin licensing the establishments where the unlicensed jukeboxes are located."

Said John Schumacher, AMOA executive vice president, "AMOA continues to strongly encourage all jukeboxes owners and operators to license their jukeboxes. They can't afford not to be licensed."

Strong operator compliance in 1990 led to a $3 reduction in fees per jukebox for 1991. Increased compliance will bring further reductions in the future.

Operators wishing to report unlicensed jukeboxes, or requiring jukebox license application materials, should contact the JLO, P.O. Box 5458, New York, NY 10185-0044; (800) 955-5853.

Tapping an untapped market in Poland

Imagine if a large oil company had knowledge of land with massive oil reserves, ready to be tapped, yet opted to stand aside while a competitor reaped the rewards. It's analogous to the staggering business opportunities now available in Poland that are being ignored, for the most part, by Americans in the vending, music, and games industry.

That's the opinion held by George Herman of ABP, based in Calabasas, Calif. He's show chairman of the first-ever coin-op expo to be held in Poland, set to take place in Warsaw on April 3-6. The site for this gathering of vending machines, coin-op amusement games, jukeboxes, and outdoor amusement rides is the Palace of Culture and Science, the largest building in Warsaw. It's a 35-story building erected on orders from Josef Stalin.

"The reaction to this show has been tremendous in Japan, Britain, Germany, France, and other European countries," Herman said. "Companies there have rushed to take the 125 maximum exhibit spaces. Only about 15 or 20 percent of the booth space has been taken by Americans. That's shocking to me.

"There are thousands of new businesses opening every month in Poland. The average age of the population is 28 years old, and they're very well-educated. But the people have been deprived of goods for so many years. For example, everybody in Poland smokes, but there isn't one cigarette vending machine! This is going to change in the next year or two, because exhibitions of all kind are going to provide the source of supply that's been missing all these years.

"American companies are blowing a golden opportunity. I've heard distributors gripe about not being able to sell used equipment. This show is the answer! Poland is the place to unload used equipment. It's like a giant flea market."

Herman says the show will be attended by people from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other Eastern European countries. Show exhibitors will have access to meeting and conference rooms, and interpreters will be provided for language translation. Hotels are within walking distance; meals are dirt cheap. Herman, a native New Yorker, says the climate is similar to New York City.

Again, booth space is at a premium. Those interested in exhibiting or just going to observe should contact Herman immediately at (800) 735-4APB.

Fletcher joins Bonita Marie

Rhonda Fletcher has joined the staff of Bonita Marie International, a merchandise supplier based in Toms River, N.J. She worked most recently as a sales representative for Coin Concepts, a redemption game manufacturer and distributor in East Brunswick, N.J.

At Bonita Marie, Fletcher will devote her attention to the computer division, where the company has developed an amusement redemption management system called ARMS. Designed for arcade redemption centers, ARMS covers the full spectrum of management, from printing receipts to keeping track of outstanding points. It also handles inventory control and employee management.

"The biggest benefit to this system is that it lets you issue VIP cards for preferred customers," she said. "Points for the companies are stored in the computer, and it then runs on a credit/debit system."

In addition to ARMS, Bonita Marie supplies jewelry, plush, electronic items, prize capsules, and other merchandise suitable for cranes and redemption centers. Fletcher can be reached at (201) 349-1994 or (800) 272-6375.

Show cancelled

The premiere National Amusement and Vending Expo, scheduled for April 12-14 in Louisville, Ky., has been cancelled. Show organizers say they're unsure whether it will be rescheduled at a later date.

New Brunswick's video lottery off and running

The continued uncertainty regarding "gray area" games in New Brunswick, Canada, was the apparent springboard for the provincial government's implementation of video lottery in December 1990. We thought now would be a good time to review how video lottery is set up there and update its early progress.

The private sector owns and services the video lottery terminals. The Atlantic Lottery Corp. owns and operates the central computer system, as well as approves which video lottery terminals will be made available. The expected revenue to be generated—$20 million for the year—is to be used to create an environmental trust fund.

Also, owners of these regulated machines are expected to assist in the eradication of "gray area" machines.

The regulations for video lottery in New Brunswick include:

* The maximum payout is $500.

* The maximum bet at any one time cannot exceed $2.50.

* The payout must range between 80 and 90 percent.

* No more than five terminals are allowed in establishments with liquor licenses.

* No more than two terminals are allowed in establishments without age control.

* No owner can possess more than five percent of the province's terminals.

* No owner can be a siteholder.

* Players must be 19 years old (Canada's legal drinking age) or older.

The terminals accept either dollar coins or quarters, and credits can be valued at five, 10, or 25 cents (the latter being the majority). Games currently available include poker, blackjack, keno, bingo, line games, and others.

At the end of any game, the player can decide to cash his remaining credits. When the refund button is pushed, the terminal totals the cash value of the remaining credits and issues a receipt. The player then takes the receipt to the attendant for payment.

The money left in the terminals after prize payout is distributed as follows: 35 percent to the siteholder, 35 percent to the owner of the terminals (members of the Coin Machine Operators Association of New Brunswick own them), and 30 percent to the government of New Brunswick.

The Atlantic Lottery Corp.'s main responsibilities in the video lottery program include approval of the manufacturer and terminal type; terminal acceptance; enrollment (making sure the terminals are properly linked to the central computer via telephone lines); and polling (keeping an accurate record of each machine's transactions).

The first video lottery terminal was installed on Dec. 1, 1990. As of Jan. 11, 1991, 1,114 terminals have been installed in 644 locations. The gross sales figure (cash into the terminals) totalled slightly over $3 million; over $1.3 million was paid in winnings. Installations are being conducted at the rate of about 30 a day.

Sixty-five operators have been approved by both the CMOANB and the Atlantic Lottery Corp. The latter has also approved five manufacturers of video lottery terminals: Bally Gaming Inc., International Game Technology, Merit Industries, SMS Manufacturing, and Video Lottery Consultants Inc. Approved distributors include Hi Tech Games, Laniel Automatique, and Winning Combinations Inc.

In late November 1990, the Newfoundland and Labrador government announced plans to regulate a video lottery in that province—with one major difference from New Brunswick: the private sector (operators) isn't involved. Location owners receive 35 percent of the net revenue.

The first video lottery terminal was installed in St. John's, Newfoundland, on Dec. 27, 1990. To date, 93 have been installed in 26 locations. The gross sales figure is $48,330, with players' winnings totalling $23,000.

Pursuing the silver ball in New York

The Professional and Amateur Pinball Association (PAPA) will conduct a regional championship in New York City on Feb. 2, the first in a series to take place nationally. PAPA was founded almost a decade ago by Steve Epstein of the Broadway Arcade, who still serves as association president.

Sanctioned PAPA players from New York and New Jersey will face off in preliminary qualifying competition at the Broadway Arcade. The finalists will then relocate around the corner to the Lone Star Roadhouse, dubbed "The Official Texas Embassy to New York City."

In addition to the pinball action, the World Famous Blue Jays band will perform, and contestants will savor some of the city's best Tex-Mex cuisine, courtesy of PAPA.

"Players will be challenged by the hottest machines from the industry's four leading companies: Williams, Bally/Midway, Premier Technology, and Data East," Epstein said. "We look forward to the best pinball wizards on the East Coast squaring off in this regional championship.

"This major event is the first step leading to the crowing of a national champion at PAPA's 1st Annual National Pinball Championship, planned for the spring of 1992. Championships are strong visual evidence of the renaissance in pinball interest."

Said Frank "The Crank" Seninsky, East Coast promotion coordinator for PAPA, "We expect to quickly create a base of some 2,000 to 3,000 loyal players, coming from all age and income brackets. The possibilities are explosive."

For more information, contact PAPA at (908) 754-0934, or the Broadway Arcade at (212) 247-3725.

AAMA names Powell

Liz Powell has been appointed to the position of AAMA programs coordinator, according to executive vice president Bob Fay. She comes to AAMA from the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association in Alexandria, Va.

Powell's duties will include coordinating the Location Trade Show Program, editing the "CoinGram" and "Loose Change" publications, and handling a variety of association public relations programs.

"Liz was exactly who we were looking for to fill this position," Fay said. "She has all the necessary qualifications, as well as a personality that will mesh well with the staff and membership. We are very lucky to have found her."

Liz Powell

Colorado cities get gaming

Gaming via slot machines, blackjack, and poker will be legal for operation on Oct. 1 in the Colorado cities of Cripple Creek, Blackhawk, and Central City—a development that's sprung the state association into action.

At the Rocky Mountain Amusement and Music Operators Association's (RMAMOA) most recent board meeting, its lobbyist, Betsy Clark, suggested that a committee be formed to meet with members of the Gaming Commission. The commission will regulate gaming in these cities and possibly all of Colorado, should a gaming measure be placed on the ballot for state referendum.

Chosen for the committee were Tom Wyscaver, Gary Benson, Gus Pantelopoulos, Rich Babich, and Gus Hartgrove. They recently met with Roger Morris of the Department of Revenue, Liquor Enforcement Division, who expressed a desire to meet with distributors and operators for educational purposes.

Morris is in the process of gathering information for the Gaming Commission, which will be used to formulate rules and regulations for the licensing of this limited gaming.

Star*Tech adds dates

Star*Tech Journal has announced the first series of dates for its 1991 seminars, designed for the advancing game technician. Each seminar consists of two full days of inside repair tips and hands-on labs. Advance registration is $250, with a 10 percent discount for multiple registrations from the same company. Late registration (less than seven days before the seminar) is $275.

Here are the dates and sites: Feb. 9-10 at American Vending Sales in Elk Grove Village, Ill. (suburb of Chicago); Feb. 23-24 at Shaffer Distributing in Columbus, Ohio; March 9-10 at Rowe International in Dedham, Mass. (suburb of Boston); May 11-12 at Eastern Distributors in Philadelphia; and June 8-9 at H.A. Franz & Co. in Houston.

For more information, contact James Calore at StarTech Journal, (609) 662-1080; FAX (609) 662-0537.

Dilks joins 1002 Distributing; school planned

Phil Dilks has joined Wisconsin-based 1002 Distributing, with his responsibilities to include all customer service areas relating to parts, service, and delivery.

"We began our search for a top-notch, experienced technical person in late October and were pleased to attract a person of Phil's experience and organizational abilities," said Jim Buckner of 1002.

Dilks' industry experience spans a period of over 10 years. He has, in the past, managed a tech lab, supervised a customer service hot-line, and acted as service manager of an operation with over 18,000 games.

In other news concerning 1002 Distributing, it will play host to a Gottlieb/Premier service school on Feb. 7. There will be two sessions. The first will take place between 10 a.m. and noon and cover basic familiarity with Gottlieb/Premier products, systems, and mechanical playfield adjustments.

The second session begins at 1 p.m., following a buffet lunch. It will be dedicated to the electronic packages that power the Gottlieb/Premier game systems, troubleshooting, and technical assistance on the games. Premier's Bob Wilson will conduct the school.

There will be a voluntary contribution box for attendees to donate $1 each, with the proceeds going to support Wisconsin's state association, WAMO. 1002 Distributing is planning another service school for March.

For more information, contact 1002 Distributing Inc., 1421 Racine St., Delavan, WI 53115; (414) 728-1477; FAX (414) 728-1205.

Eldorado moves

Eldorado Games Ltd. has relocated; the new address is 3385 E. Artesia Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90805. The telephone and FAX numbers are (213) 630-3300 and (213) 630-1566, respectively.

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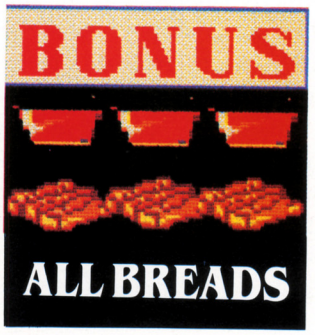

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Illinois lobbyist gets top post

Kirk W. Dillard, a Republican lobbyist formerly employed by the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA), has been named Chief of Staff by Gov.-elect Jim Edgar.

Although Dillard will no longer be involved with ICMOA activities—including the association's endeavor to gain legalized video gaming—he does understand the issues, background, and benefits of such legislation for Illinois.

ICMOA will be seeking another Republican lobbyist to work with lobbyist John O'Connell (a Democrat) on association programs. O'Connell is preparing a video gaming bill for introduction in the current legislative session, which began in mid-January.

AMOA-NY elects new officers

Robert Herman of Ace Amusements has been re-elected president of AMOA-NY, a move that took place at the association's annual meeting on Nov. 27. Other officers elected were Ralph Ceraldi of C&C Vending, vice president; Frank Calland of E&S Music Corp., treasurer; Scott Tartaglia of Shamrock Vending, secretary; and Al Mizrahi of Scientific Entertainment, sergeant-at-arms.

Elected to three-year terms on the board of directors were Joe Bossolina Jr. of McGee Amusements and Richard Hohman of Royal Leisure Inc.

Robert Herman (l) and Ralph Ceraldi at AMOA-NY's annual meeting.

CMIA president Rick Kirby with his wife Daryl.

From left: Nintendo's Chuck Arnold, his wife Millie, Linda Publicover, and Mike Publicover of Rowe International.

CMIA raises over $10,000

A Nov.30 auction at Joe Tecce's Restaurant in Boston netted in excess of $10,000 for the Coin Machine Industries Association of New England, according to association president Rick Kirby. New video kits, pinballs, golf clubs, and other valuable goods were auctioned.

The night's festivities also included a play, "Impeach the Governor," that featured a popular Boston radio personality. "It was a fun, successful night enjoyed by all in attendance," Kirby said.

Representing Manchester Music, (l-r): Bo and Linda Harris, Jane and Elliott Sirkin.

From Dream Machine Arcades: Geri and John Maus (standing), Jackie and George Smith.

Atlantic City readies for INTER-GAM '91

The Public Gaming Research Institute of New Jersey has announced plans for INTER-GAM '91, a consortium of conferences and exhibits related to the gaming field. Atlantic City is the host city for the event, which takes place May 28-June 1.

Host facilities include the Taj Mahal, Showboat, and Resorts International. All three hotels are connected and make up one of the largest casino complexes in the world.

Upscale resorts and manufacturers of gaming equipment will be among the exhibitors. The seminar topics include proper marketing strategies and gaming investments in such diverse markets as Eastern Europe and Latin America.

For more information on exhibiting or attending, contact the Institute at (301) 330-7600; FAX (301) 330-7608. □

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The long and winding road to legalization

Perhaps Charles Kuralt put it best in his newest book, "A Life on the Road," when he said: "If the traveler expects the highway to be safe and well graded, he might as well stay home."

That's clearly the sentiment of those who have undertaken the journey along the road to legalized video gaming. The process requires many years (up to five is not uncommon), much patience, and mega-bucks to sustain the momentum and carry the torch.

The year 1990 was supposed to be a banner one for these games, but it has not come to pass. Although the general population has embraced lotteries with enthusiasm, video poker games have not enjoyed the same acceptance.

Listed among the gambling diversions considered "harmless" are office football pools, horse and dog track betting (on and off the premises), and friendly games of cards among friends. The latter is fine as long as there is no "house" getting a cut. In these economic times, if video poker games become legal, it's not a "house" that would get a cut, but the state and local businesses that would be the prime beneficiaries of video gaming revenues.

Vocal opposition is not always supported by actual follow-through. That was discovered in Louisiana, where verbal outcries against a lottery in some districts were in sharp contrast to the voting tallies when all was said and done.

It reminds me of an incident many years ago, when my father was in the motel business. A large group of relatives booked several rooms when they came to town for a wedding. It just happened that these folks were members of a religion that professed abstinence from drinking alcoholic beverages. At the wedding itself only punch was served as liquid refreshment. You can image what type of beverage containers were later found in the rooms of the wedding party. For all the outward expressions, inwardly there must have been conflicts.

Clearly, what we espouse in public does not necessarily reflect our true feelings on a subject. How anyone could advocate *some* regulated gambling activities but not *all* regulated gambling activities is beyond me. Why would video poker games be more corrupt than placing bets on a horse race? Paychecks can be spent on a basket full of lottery tickets just as quickly as on a video poker game, if an individual were so inclined.

A particularly funny segment of TV's "Designing Women" centered around purchasing lottery tickets out of state. Dixie Carter's character refrained from participating, righteously saying: "People who would start foaming at the mouth at the mere mention of a tax will crawl buck-naked through a minefield for a chance to spend their money on lottery tickets." In the end, she put up $20 in the hopes of winning the jackpot.

Much of the past month has been spent exploring the present standing of legalized video poker in this country. AMOA, state associations, lobbyists, distributors, manufacturers, a Louisiana legislator, a gaming regulator, and operators who preferred to remain anonymous all contributed to this issue's update on the matter.

After the last phone call in search of more data to add to the growing file on legal video gaming, I am left with a few outstanding thoughts: 1) the economic climate is ripe for legalized video gaming, 2) opposition will come out of the woodwork once your objectives are outlined, 3) earnest efforts will have no effect if you don't have the right people pressing the issue in your behalf, 4) even after a bill passes both the House and Senate committees you are not home free, and 5) education is our best ally in this struggle.

Many states have lined up for the '91 legal video gaming race. Now that legislative sessions have convened, it will not be long before we see who crosses the finish line, if any. It is my sincere hope, for the health of the industry as a whole, that several states see the light of economic reason and pass favorable legislation. □

Bonnie Theard

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

Easter '91

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Report defends British coin-op industry

Another key battle has been won in the war against misinformation in the games business. For the second time in a year, the British industry has come out smelling like a rose when faced with independent research into whether playing coin-op games is harmful for adults and juveniles.

This time it was research compiled by the Centre for Leisure Research, taken from thousands of interviews with machine players. The information was recorded in two major cities and two major seaside resorts.

The CLR report comes less than a year after the publication of major research by the government's own research unit. It was set up in response to a gathering storm of opposition from anti-arcade groups, which had become stronger in Parliament and the press. That report not only gave the coin machine industry a clean bill of health, but it also suggested that arcades were positively therapeutic for teenagers.

A similar message has come across in the CLR report, published last September after two years of work. It was commissioned by the British Amusement Catering Trades Association, the United Kingdom's version of AMOA.

Part of the commission was that CLR would not take on the research unless it was given a completely free hand by BACTA, and that BACTA would permit the CLR to publish its report in total—irrespective of the conclusions in that report. BACTA could have effectively been paying for its own destruction, but it was sufficiently convinced that the outcome would disprove many of the half-baked theories about coin machines.

"For those trapped in between child-like and adult forms of leisure, the arcades were important social venues."

The 200-page report has been titled "Playing the Machines—A Study in Human Behavior." It is available from the Centre for Leisure Research, Moray House College of Education, Cramond Road North, Edinburgh EH4 6JD, United Kingdom. The cost is $50, plus postage.

The results

In an effort to cover the widest spectrum of machine playing (gambling and non-gambling), as well as all age groups, social classes, and environments, the researchers utilized two major cities and nearby seaside resorts that served them.

They chose Newcastle upon Tyne, in the north of England, and the seaside resort of Whitley. The findings were cross-referenced by conducting similar research in another northern city, Sheffield, and the resort of Bridlington. Thousands of people were interviewed: players, their families, local politicians, the police, social workers, teachers, and a myriad of other interested parties. The results were fascinating.

Looking at the motivations for playing machines, the report concludes: "Although playing the machines is the primary entertainment provided in amusement arcades and centers, it was not always the main reason why people visited these venues. The in-depth interviews with a small sample of regular players highlighted the importance of amusement arcades as social venues, both for young teenage males and older women.

"Young males viewed school and family-centered activities as increasingly unattractive, but they were not yet able to use pubs and clubs. Therefore, they regarded amusement arcades as one of the few available relevant leisure venues. For those 'trapped in between' child-like and adult forms of leisure, the arcades were important social venues.

"For both groups of players, companionship was an important aspect of their regular use of arcades. Both groups claimed to exercise restraint on the sums of money they committed to playing the machines, often regarding the money they lost on the machines as an acceptable price

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One to four players can enjoy exciting individual or team competition. Players use a trackball to control the arc and distance of their toss. Amusing graphics and a regulation horseshoe pit keep Shuuz entertaining and competitive.

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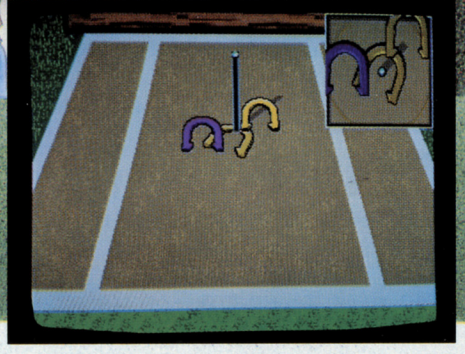
Available as a universal kit. Includes PCB, trackball and buttons, JAMMA harness and artwork for header, control panel, bezel and side decals.

Up to 4 players can enjoy individual or team play.

A close-up view displays the winning Shuuz!



Optional "Beer Round" for bar and tavern locations.

to be paid for fun or entertainment.''

The report noted that there were marked differences between the two groups in the meanings which they attributed to playing machines. For the young male players, the subjective elements of control and self-testing were important, which helped to explain the centrality of rational calculation in their playing.

For the older women, fun and sociability were more important motivations than control. Indeed, they emphasized the limitations of their skills—compared with younger male players—and preferred the older, more familiar, and less complex slot machines. Said the report, ''What the data does emphasize is that for the two groups studied, amusement arcades were valued social venues. Playing the machines was a source of sociability, fun, and excitement.''

Views on gambling

Some curious public attitudes were observed, leading to the illustration of a complex relationship between attitudes toward gambling and gambling behavior. A household interview survey found that negative attitudes to gambling are widespread, irrespective of whether or not the individuals themselves gambled. In other words, as in other areas of social behavior, such as smoking and drinking, negative attitudes to gambling do not necessarily prevent participation.

For example, though 87 percent of those sampled agreed that ''gambling is addictive and leads to theft and crime,'' 54 percent had played slot machines at some time in their lives. Further, 79 percent had participated in a raffle or lottery in the previous 12 months, 39 percent had completed football pools, and 34 percent had played slot machines. Over 25 percent had either placed a bet on a horse race or played bingo.

Despite relatively widespread participation in a variety of gambling forms, there nevertheless remains a popular belief in its potentially harmful effects. Such beliefs inevitably lead to a negative evaluation of the consequences of playing gambling machines. Eighty-four percent regarded slot machines as ''a waste of time and money.''

Even playing video games, which wasn't viewed as gambling, was believed to be ''addictive.'' Half of the respondents expressed the belief that video games were harmful because people get hooked on them. In particular, young people are believed to be especially vulnerable to such perceived dangers.

The study revealed that the police did not regard arcades and machine-playing as constituting a special policing problem, relative to the problems posed by youth and alcohol abuse. Those from the education service were generally agreed that though amusement arcades may provide an accessible ''hide-out'' for truants, they were not a direct cause of truancy.

Probation officers and youth workers did, however, entertain an unproven belief in some relationship between playing machines and criminality. According to the report, ''This was based on an assertion that relevant prosecutions were only the tip of the iceberg. More generally, they opposed the use of arcades and machine-playing as an unproductive use of leisure time.''

Conclusion

''An important contribution of this research has been made to highlight the positive aspects of playing machines from the player's point of view,'' the report states. ''Amusement arcades and centers provide relevant leisure opportunities for certain groups of young people and older women, for whom few other relevant recreational opportunities are accessible.

''In such circumstances, punitive measures which restrict young people's access to this form of leisure provision may deprive them of a valued leisure resource. Any future reviews of current legislation and controls on amusement machines or arcades must take into account the leisure needs and relevant alternatives accessible to young people and older women.'' □

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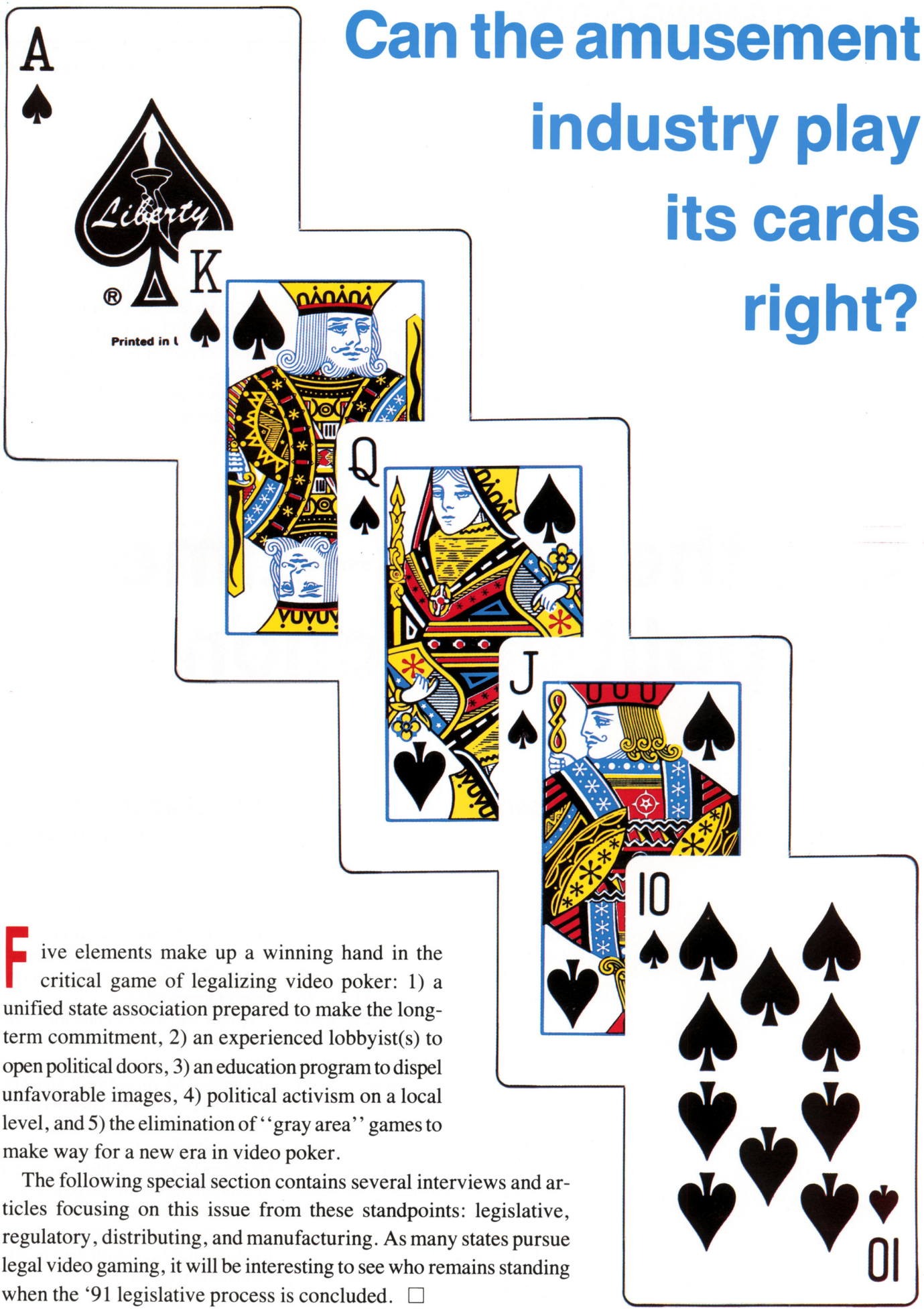

Five elements make up a winning hand in the critical game of legalizing video poker: 1) a unified state association prepared to make the long-term commitment, 2) an experienced lobbyist(s) to open political doors, 3) an education program to dispel unfavorable images, 4) political activism on a local level, and 5) the elimination of ''gray area'' games to make way for a new era in video poker.

The following special section contains several interviews and articles focusing on this issue from these standpoints: legislative, regulatory, distributing, and manufacturing. As many states pursue legal video gaming, it will be interesting to see who remains standing when the '91 legislative process is concluded. □

Bonnie Theard

Cut the cards—time for political action

Few operators are in a position to stand by and watch the blossoming of a market without wanting to participate. Such is the case with video gaming, a success story in Montana and South Dakota, and a close call in several other states.

Following the passage of the South Dakota Video Lottery in October 1989, industry predictions ran high that 1990 would be the year of acceptance for video gaming. The start of a new decade came and went, yet only defeats were listed in the debits column of video gaming in the United States. Canada took a step forward with a video lottery in New Brunswick, effective Dec. 1, 1990.

It's anyone's guess which state(s) will be the next to legalize video poker machines. No less than 18 are pursuing the issue; many are in the very early stages. All those unsuccessful last year are regrouping and making a renewed effort.

Roger Franke, president of the North Atlantic Gaming Regulators Association (NAGRA), sees the video gaming industry as an "exploding market." Lottery-related organizations, such as Lotto America, consider video poker an option for future expansion of lottery products. Mature lottery markets continue to seek ways to entice more play from citizens. States with dwindling financial resources are more likely to opt for video gaming instead of increased taxes.

"Operators consider this issue integral to the continued growth and health of the industry."

What's the bottom line? More states continue to contact the South Dakota Lottery Commission for information on their program. The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) supplies operators with a video tape and a copy of its "Standards on Coin-Operated Video Gambling Devices," which was prepared in conjunction with NAGRA. State associations seek full membership from area operators to help sustain the push for legalization. The ranks of the "hopeful" continue to rise, not fall.

WISCONSIN

Of all the states that have been working to legalize video gaming, Wisconsin is one of the best organized and may be poised on the brink of success.

According to Tom Coenen, lobbyist for the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO), as of Dec. 31, 1990, the state's bill was undergoing a second redraft for technical details. The substance of the bill the association formulated in 1990 is unchanged. WAMO plans to approach the legislature during the first floor period, or budget session, that runs from the third week of January through June 30.

Said Coenen: "We expect to make progress during the budget period. Although budgets are the primary concern, members do act on other legislation."

Briefly, here are the major points of the Wisconsin bill:

1. Only the game of video draw poker to be approved.
2. Maximum bet, $2.
3. Maximum payout, $1,000.
4. Video poker machines only in Class B locations with liquor licenses (the legal drinking age is 21). There are an estimated 12,000-14,000 Class B locations in Wisconsin.
5. Number of machines dependent upon location occupancy (set by fire regulations), from 1-3 units for the first 18 months and 2-6 units thereafter.
6. Statute enforcement by the Lottery Board.
7. Dial-up system in which all games are tied into a central computer system via modems (the same method used for the Mega Bucks Lottery).

Said Coenen, "By legalizing the game of draw poker, we are still looking to create another exception to our state gambling statutes. For Wisconsin, this is the best avenue to pursue. Our gambling statutes allow for exceptions, provided that skill can be proven. That element of skill does apply to the game of draw poker."

Wisconsin's bill does not refer to the games as "video lottery machines," since the definition of the term "lottery" is a controversial one at present. This situation could change at a later date.

Wisconsin has enjoyed a state lottery for several years. When the lottery passed, pari-mutuel betting also passed. Subsequently, four dog tracks opened—the state's first major venture into gaming activities. A fifth track is due to open this year. Coenen commented, "It's obvious that the public perceives this as a way to spend some of their entertainment dollars."

He also noted that negotiations are ongoing with the Indian compacts in the state. WAMO hopes that a positive resolution there would be helpful to efforts for legalized video poker.

"We've been told by several legislators that one of our biggest problems is education about the coin-op amusement industry."

What can Coenen suggest to other states involved in similar efforts? "One of the things we're doing from the lobbying standpoint is asking WAMO members to invite legislators into their places of business. This shows the legislators they are legitimate businessmen with a substantial investment in equipment and employees with technical backgrounds. It's been very helpful. We've been told by several legislators that one of our biggest problems is education about the coin-op amusement industry."

In terms of cost, he explained that in Wisconsin's political climate, the effort has involved the salary of a qualified lobbyist and a grass roots program from the operator standpoint. This includes participating in local fund-raisers and supporting legislators—getting to know them. In some other states, it may take a great deal more to get the attention of the legislators.

ILLINOIS

Illinois is a state that embarked on a concentrated education effort last November. It involved machine demonstrations and explanations of the positive aspects of legalized video gaming during a veto session of legislators.

It was hoped that a bill could have been included in another one being redrafted for a second chance, but it didn't happen.

The Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA) plans to continue its campaign for legalized video gaming this legislative session. Said Adonna Jerman, executive director of ICMOA, "All the comments we received from legislators indicated interest. It is perceived as a good 'money stream' from the legislators' viewpoint."

Jerman emphasized the importance of hiring an experienced lobbyist to assist in a state association's efforts. "You can be well-organized, know what you are doing and what you are saying, but if you can't talk to the right people you can't advance your cause. Our lobbyists (one Republican, one Democrat) have opened many doors for us."

NEBRASKA

Although Nebraska was not able to succeed in obtaining legalized video gaming through a constitutional amendment last November, the Nebraska Operators Association (NOA) is redrafting its original proposal and continuing to press for passage of such a bill. The association recently hired a lobbyist.

The amendment attempt did sway some of the senators to change their minds about the issue. Mardy McCullough, executive director of NOA, explained that Nebraska has a unicameral system with only 49 senators, which makes each one's vote extremely critical to the success or failure of any legislation. "To add Senators Jacklyn Smith and David Landis (both committee chairmen) to our side is a real boost for video lottery," said McCullough.

Also in the credits column for Nebraska is Gov.-elect Ben Nelson, whose campaign slogan was, "Isn't it time Nebraska had a governor who can deliver?" One of the items Nelson plans to deliver is a state lottery.

It is believed that he will advocate an

Iowa-type lottery and earmark proceeds for education. He predicts up to $30 million a year raised for schools. During his campaign, Nelson blasted incumbent Gov. Kay Orr for breaking her promise to not raise taxes.

If a state wants to refrain from imposing taxes, it becomes clear that new areas of revenue enhancement will definitely be considered. Legal video gaming fits perfectly into the picture and should be easier to obtain when a state lottery already exists.

OREGON

Economic pressures are being felt in the Northwest, especially Oregon, where a ballot measure passed in November 1990 has mandated a reduction in property taxes. The state now must consider measures to make up the estimated $680 million that will be lost for the years '91 and '92. The state operates on a two-year (biannium) system.

Gary Williams, contract officer for the Oregon State Lottery, said, "The driving force right now is how to deal with the Ballot #5 issue. I can certainly see that this would increase interest in video lottery."

The state currently has the only legal sports betting game in the country on a lottery basis. A video lottery could offer the state some financial help, although not the total $680 million figure.

In the last legislative session a law passed that allowed video lottery, but it was very open-ended and did not ban "gray area" games. The attorney general made it known that he would not accept it. New governor Barbara Roberts does not appear to have leanings one way or the other on this particular issue.

Several lobbyists have contacted the State Lottery on behalf of the amusement industry. The legislative session convened Jan. 14 and will certainly make this revenue shortfall a top priority.

WYOMING

"Operators in Wyoming have worked five long years toward the goal of passing a video poker bill," said Jim Mason of High Country Games, president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association of Wyoming.

While there has not been much press about their efforts, association members have been working hard. Said Mason, "Last year during the budget session we were within three votes of a two-thirds vote coming out of committee. We are continuing to pursue passage of our bill. We're better off than we've ever been."

Supporters of the association's bill include taverns and the liquor associations. The operator's association recently obtained the services of respected lobbyist Dick Skinner (Republican), to ensure that state legislators are fully and correctly informed about the positive aspects of video poker.

Wyoming's population is 469,557 (1980 Census) and land area is 96,988 square miles. Its close proximity to Montana and South Dakota may be in its favor. Midwestern states with large land masses and smaller populations have been more successful than other states launching similar efforts.

"You can be well-organized, know what you are doing and what you are saying, but if you can't talk to the right people you can't advance your cause."

VERMONT

Vermont is among those states making a bid for passage of a video lottery bill. Said Anthony Otis, attorney and lobbyist for the Vermont Vending Amusement and Music Operators Association (VVAMOA), "We think the political climate is very good. The Northeast is in a severe economic recession, especially Vermont. We're faced with revenue shortfalls, which means program cuts and tax increases.

"We have obtained sponsors to introduce our video lottery bill again this legislative session, which began Jan. 9. Our operators are working well together and working hard. We're going to do our best to push it through this year."

The association has brought in several South Dakota-approved machines for demonstration purposes. The most recent demonstration was held on Legislative Day, Jan. 24.

Vermont's video lottery bill for '91 is essentially the same as the one introduced in '90, with a few different elements. Basically, the provisions are:

1. Video lottery to fall under the jurisdiction of the State Lottery Commission.
2. No vertical integration (manufacturers could not distribute games, distributors could not operate, etc.—each level would be separate).
3. Maximum wager, $2.
4. Maximum payout, $800.
5. Payback value range, 80-92 percent.
6. All licensing and application fees go to the State Lottery Commission for administrative purposes.
7. The net machine income (or net governmental share) to be divided this way: 22.5 percent to the municipality, 46.5 percent to the coin machine operator, and 31 percent to the location.
8. Machines to be placed only in first and third class licensed liquor establishments (those licensed to sell beer, wine, liquor, and food). The legal drinking age recently changed from 18 to 21 years of age.
9. The maximum number of machines per location, 4.

Vermont's present governor is one who was not in favor of the state lottery in the past. It is hoped that the economic situation may influence his acceptance of video lottery.

The VVAMOA is a relatively new association, formed in September 1989. Members have quickly learned the correct approach in the preparation and presentation of a bill.

"Now everyone knows who we are and what we do," said Otis. "We think the time is right this legislative session. In the

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House we have support from the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Both are strong supporters of the bill."

INDIANA

The Indiana Amusement Operators Association (IAOA) recently decided to commit the time, money, and effort needed to campaign for passage of a video lottery bill. In just three short months the association has conducted numerous meetings, obtained legal counsel, and hired a lobbyist to help propel the effort forward.

According to Dave Sheehan, president of the association, "We will not have anything prepared for the upcoming legislative session. We're getting everything in line to present in 1992." He recognizes that time and patience are required.

"Our biggest effort so far has been to recruit more operators to join the association," said Sheehan. "This presents a commanding force. Next, we want to engage in initial dialogue with the State Lottery Commission and get their views on the issue."

One of the biggest hurdles facing the association may be the governor, who is not in favor of any type of gambling. However, he abstained from commenting on the lottery, which passed just over one year ago and has proven to be very successful. The governor also does not want to raise taxes, a tough stand in today's economic doldrums.

MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA) have been working on a video lottery bill for introduction in the '91 legislative session. It is modeled after the South Dakota law, and provides for a dial-up system of terminals connected to a central computer system.

Provisions include machine placement only in locations with "on-sale" liquor licenses; the legal drinking age is 21. The State Lottery Commission would have jurisdiction.

According to Robert Latz, attorney and lobbyist for MOMA, "We are making a major move. We have beefed-up the lobbying team and are working in concert with the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association to get the bill passed.

"One of the major groups opposing our bill are the Indian gaming interests. Minnesota has more Indian compacts and full-blown casinos than any other state in the nation. This means more organized Indian gambling than anywhere else in the country. Gaming activities occur on the reservations and areas designated as 'Indian land.'

"With the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and the governor of the state, Indians can go off the reservation and designate a location as 'Indian land.' This has occurred in Duluth, where an Indian casino is now situated in a former retail store outlet."

Other gaming activities in the state include a state lottery, just one year old, that offers scratch tickets and membership in Lotto America.

"If a state wants to refrain from imposing taxes, it becomes clear that new areas of revenue enhancement must be considered."

MICHIGAN

Operators in Michigan feel the video gaming issue is a critical one. According to Candace Super, executive director and lobbyist for the Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association (MCMOA), "Association members are looking at this as part of their salvation. It's viewed as integral to the continued growth and health of the industry."

The association has been studying the issue for several years and assessing the legislative status. Now, with Gov.-elect John Engler, MCMOA is hoping he and his staff will look favorably on a video lottery as a possible option in raising additional revenues for the state. Like many other areas, Michigan is in serious financial straits.

Said Super, "We've contacted our Bureau of State Lottery, the governing body that would oversee a video lottery program. We consider the change in administration as positive, because the past administration didn't give us much hope.

"We're optimistic but cautious. The association board considers video lottery an extremely important issue on our agenda, especially this year."

TEXAS

Another new governor, Ann Richards of Texas, is bound to have an affect on the future of legalized video gaming there. She has said she would make a lottery a priority measure during her administration.

The Amusement and Music Operators of Texas (AMOTX) have twice before proposed a bill for legal gaming.

The legislative session for 1991 started on Jan. 8; the governor was sworn-in on Jan. 15. A lottery bill in generic form has been introduced and could encompass an instant video lottery.

Bob Hughes, attorney and lobbyist for AMOTX, explained, "The way we have designed the bill, it would include instant video lottery, scratch-off tickets, and other lottery products. The bill is pre-filed; we're working on legislation we hope to pass.

"We have an excellent state organization, one of the largest active organizations of coin machine operators in the country. The operators understand what this could mean to them. It would keep money in Texas and keep the local citizens involved. It would be beneficial to the state, the local economy, and our industry in general." □

This column will continue to explore the efforts to legalize video gaming. Any operators, state associations, distributors, or manufacturers who have information that would be helpful may call (504) 488-7003 or send a FAX to (504) 488-7083.

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"Window of opportunity" won't last forever

James Trucano, president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA), is an experienced operator with Collins Music Co. in North Charleston, S.C., and an able spokesman for the association and the industry as a whole. We sought out his views on the currently hot issue of legalized video gaming and were rewarded with concise and detailed information that all our readers will appreciate.

Said Trucano: "I personally think that we currently have a window of opportunity for legalized video gaming in the United States that won't last forever."

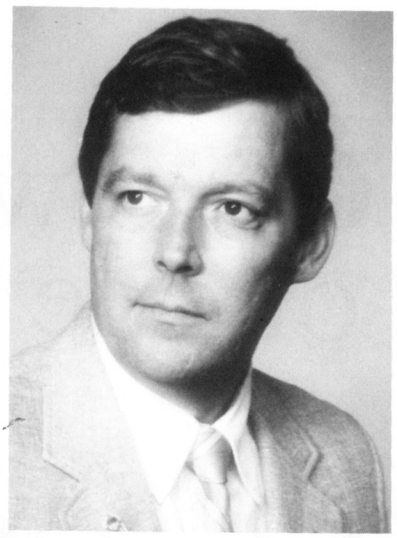
What are the first steps operators should take in the effort to work toward legalized video gaming in their state?

There are really two things that should be done simultaneously before anything else. First, get organized with a key group of operators and business leaders in the state to openly discuss the pros and cons of what is to be proposed and to analyze the best avenue through which to submit legislation.

The state association should look within its ranks to those who have shown interest in working with state legislators and have taken the time to work with the legislative process.

Know who the "movers and shakers" are in the general business community and contact them to help in the legislative effort, because legalized video gaming positively affects all segments of the economy.

Ideally, this group should total no more than six or eight people and should objectively determine which legislative avenue should be pursued. It may be that tailgating the state lottery will be the avenue, or it may be that a free-standing bill will have the best chance for success. South Dakota took the former route, Montana the latter.



James Trucano

"The passage of Video Lottery legislation will forever change the way people in our industry conduct business."

Secondly, the operator has to go out and secure his existing locations with contracts. From the standpoint of long term benefit to the individual operator as a business person, this is probably even more important.

The operator needs to contact his attorney and have a contract drawn up between him and his location owners for exclusive rights to operate coin-operated equipment *of all kinds* in the location. In the final analysis this is the ONLY security the operator has. Even if the video gaming initiative fails, it's still smart business. Do get contracts signed commensurate with the legislative push; it certainly won't get any easier after word hits the newspaper that the business community will be trying to implement legal video gaming.

There is a story in South Dakota about the longtime operator who always did business with a handshake. He was a fairly large operator in many locations. Right now he's not nearly as large and will never again do business without a contract. Even his brother-in-law, who owned a tavern, went out and cut a better deal. Sad, but true. And no matter how many times those of us who have seen it happen tell the tale, there will still be some otherwise street smart operator who will believe it "can't happen to me!"

Expectations will be high but patience is required. How much time could it take?

The South Dakota Video Lottery took, from the start of discussions to the placement of machines on the street, a total of five years. It can be frustrating because the process can take a long, long time. I can offer this advice to all who are trying to get

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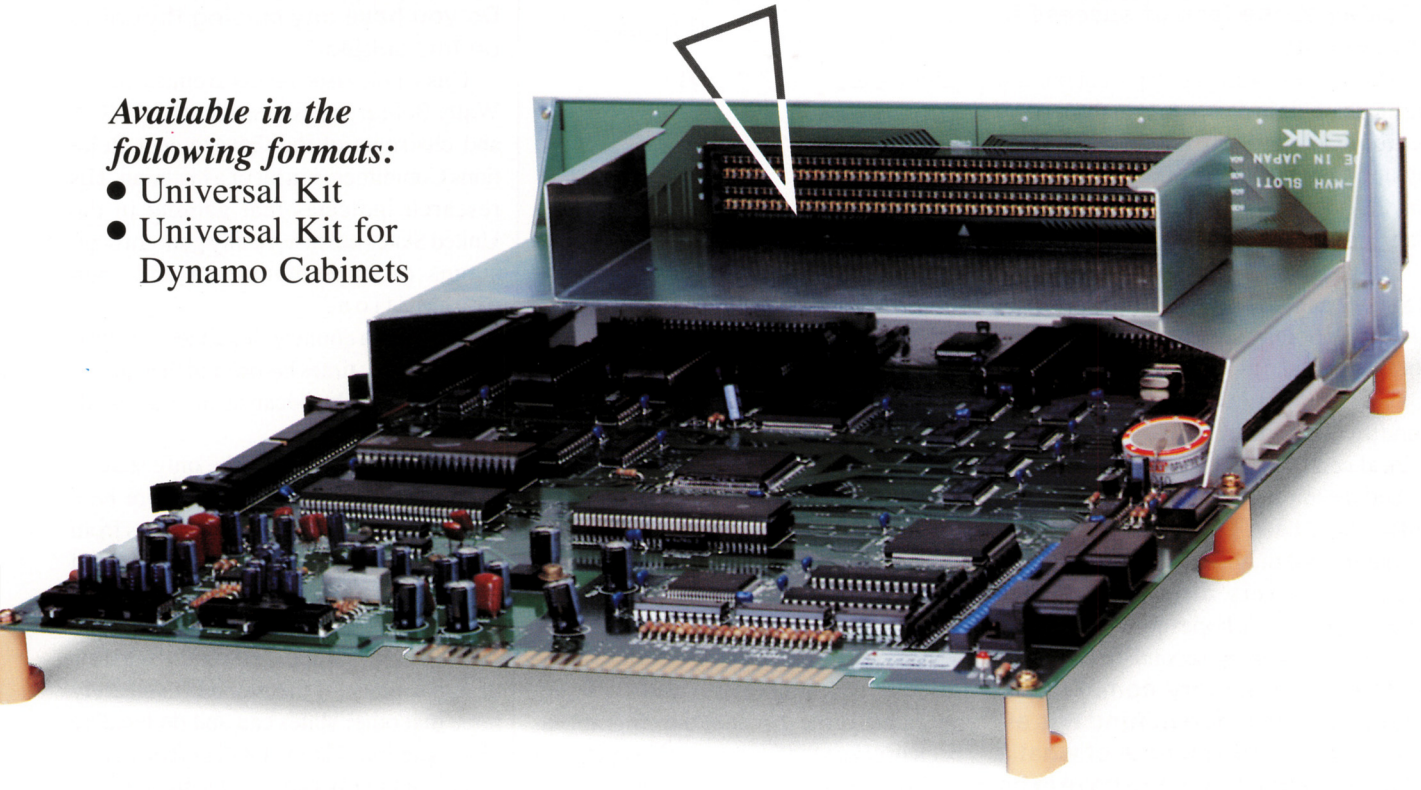

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bills passed: When the state starts arguing about the money, you are almost there!

Is there a common thread in Montana and South Dakota that has contributed to the success in those states?

There are many differences in the system currently used by Montana and South Dakota. If I had to choose one common element it would be the relatively rural demographics of the two states, and the importance of the coin-operated Video Lottery dollars to the state's financial health.

The money returned to the state of South Dakota from the Video Lottery is very important. That same dollar amount to a more populated state could be viewed as less significant.

Is there an equally common thread in North Dakota, Nebraska, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania that contributed to the lack of success in those areas?

There were some concerns about the particular bills in those states and how they were different from the South Dakota system. Whether ultimately that had anything to do with the lack of success, one can only guess.

I have spoken to operators from perhaps 15 states about the Video Lottery and the success in South Dakota. In every instance the operator had an exact copy of the South Dakota bill for reference, yet in each case modifications were made to allow for "local conditions."

Did these variances make a substantial difference? I don't know. What I can say is that the bill that finally passed in South Dakota was very different from the original bill. Let's hope those other states will be successful the second time around.

There is a monetary commitment that has to be made to fund this effort. Is there an estimate of what a state association should have in its coffers before starting? What about enlisting the expertise of a lobbyist?

In South Dakota the financial resources were attained by an assessment of each operator who felt strongly that the Video Lottery system would be in the best interests of both the state and the private sector. This assessment process was repeated many times over the life of the effort.

I think each state will be different in the total resources needed. Pennsylvania, should it try again, will require more dollars than Wyoming would need. How many? It's impossible to say exactly.

As regards a lobbyist, I certainly would retain one, but only for access to the system that would be denied a regular constituent. When the ball really gets rolling, no one will push for the bill more than those most affected. I think it's a mistake to hire several lobbyists and then go back home and wait for the bill to pass.

There will be many who disagree with me, but this is my recommendation. Retain the state association lobbyist and, in addition, the services of an outside person well acquainted with our industry who will derive no direct gain from the outcome.

"A three-way guideline: be up front and honest, be ready to compromise, and be professional."

There is a great fear that other amusement equipment will take a back seat to legal video pokers. While understandable at first, when operators are meeting demand, the program should make operators more healthy and therefore better able to invest in other new equipment. As an operator, do you agree or disagree?

The passage of Video Lottery legislation will forever change the way people in our industry conduct business. True, Video Lottery will make operators healthier financially. But it's not necessarily true that once the program has been in effect for some time that operators will have much more investment capital for other types of coin-operated equipment.

Look at it this way: If you have the choice of placing a new CD jukebox with an ROI of five percent, or another Video Lottery terminal with an ROI of 75 percent, which are you going to choose?

Sure, there will be instances where certain locations will demand new auxiliary coin-op equipment to augment the equipment mix, and the operator will buy it. But a concerted investment in other types of equipment? Hardly. (I can hear the gnashing of teeth right now!)

To see it firsthand, go to Montana, where video gaming has been in operation for five years. Or go to South Dakota, where they are working on the second year. There has *not been a major investment in other kinds of coin-op equipment as yet.*

South Carolina is unique in its video poker operation. Could you explain it briefly?

A video poker game in South Carolina is no different than any other amusement video game. We are unusual in that they are heavily taxed (along with everything else). Down here they are in the product mix offered to locations right along with jukeboxes, pins, and pool tables.

Do you have any closing thoughts on this subject?

This whole issue pivots around timing. Wally Bohrer, a past president of AMOA and chairman of the Government Relations Committee, is a bit of a historian. His research indicates that gaming in the United States has historically gone through stages of implementation and then prohibition.

We have, as a country, legalized this type of thing many times before and then just as quickly (usually because of a scandal) eradicated it.

Will South Dakota be the only state to legalize Video Lottery? Will there be a scandal that will preclude other states from implementing this type of coin-operated game? I don't think anyone knows for sure.

We need to capitalize on that "window of opportunity" I mentioned. I sincerely hope that other states can and do legalize video gaming. I know I will personally do what I can in my capacity as president of AMOA to help.

There are three bits of wisdom I can offer in conclusion. If one state embraces these three tenets religiously throughout its endeavor, it will be successful.

1. Be up front and honest about your intentions from the outset.
2. Be ready to compromise.
3. Be professional. □

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Video gaming—how does the deck stack today?

After all the discussion about how to effectively pass laws legalizing video gaming, thoughts naturally turn to product. Who are the major suppliers of these sophisticated games? How do they feel about this segment of the coin-op industry? Their future may be riding on this progressively developing arm of the amusement business, along with the future of many operators.

The list of states eager for government approved video gaming has grown significantly since last year. If success smiles on several at one time, manufacturers will be facing an enviable, yet trying, period of meeting increased demand.

Multiple factors have contributed to the interest in video gaming, an interest that has not abated in the face of recent defeats in such disparate sections of the country as the Midwest, Deep South, and East Coast. Operators and their state associations appear undaunted and are ready to approach their lawmakers again. The manufacturers endorse these attempts. Here are their comments:

Dave Rubenstein
Director of Sales
Merit Industries

At Merit Industries we have a very optimistic outlook for video lottery equipment in the United States because of what's been happening around the country. A number of states are actively working to pass favorable legislation in this area.

One of the first things that has to happen is for the operators to join their state associations, and for those associations to become solid, cohesive units. Decisions have to be made on how to move forward. Operators have to participate through financial support and hard work.

Lobbyists are central to the effort since they serve as liaison between the coin operators' associations and the legislative bodies in their particular states. Lobbyists are helpful in guiding the operators, working with various state officials, assisting in writing the bills, and coordinating the entire effort.

"Lobbyists are central to the effort since they serve as liaison between the coin operator's associations and the legislative bodies."

There's no set timetable for success. It completely depends on the political climate in each state. Keep in mind that South Dakota's program spanned four years from initial idea to conclusion.

A note of caution: operators must remember that there are certain entities that may directly approach their state government with an offer to operate a video lottery program without any participation from the coin-op sector. If operators don't come together to accomplish this goal on their own, it won't happen for them. But the state could proceed alone.

Merit supports the normal chain of sequence in our industry—the three levels of manufacturer, distributor, and operator—and continues to advance technology for the development of improved video lottery products.

Phil Cornick
Executive Vice President
Kramer Manufacturing

In a period of relative inactivity, the video lottery issue has certainly brought some excitement to an otherwise lethargic, if not stagnant, industry.

During times of economic decline, such as that which currently exists in our country, it's understandable that there would be less of a tendency to take risks financially. Subsequently, fewer manufacturers are going out on the proverbial limb to develop new concepts because fewer distributors are willing and able to buy volume, due to the fact that operators are purchasing fewer new units for their routes.

The video lottery, on the other hand, offers a rather unique situation. I think of it as the "No Lose Scenario." The manufac-

turers are willing to expend the developmental costs because they'll have a product that they can sell—at a price that actually makes it worthwhile to be in business.

The distributors will buy as many units as they can get their hands on, since the operators will buy them up as quickly as they come in. All this is true because the players will play these games like no other in the history of this industry, as evidenced by the collections in South Dakota and Montana.

Not only do all sectors of our industry benefit, but so too does the general population benefit from revenues gained and paid to the state. The result may ultimately be tax decreases, or at the minimum, a halt to the necessity of tax hikes. Finally, the number of new jobs created by this new potential is a benefit not to be overlooked.

We should all applaud the efforts of those who stride toward this goal. Those who truly care about the future of this industry will join in those efforts.

Jim Pietrangelo
Vice President of Sales
SMS Manufacturing

The future of video lottery is bright. I am thoroughly convinced of that. Too many public misconceptions about the legalization of this form of gambling have been shattered by the success of video lottery in South Dakota. Having spent all of last week traveling around that state, I am once again renewed in my convictions regarding the absolute "rightness" of the coin machine operator's role in video lottery.

My fear, however, is that there are those in public office, law enforcement, and even private industry who feel that video lottery would be better run by eliminating the partnership between the coin-op industry and the public sector. These people view our industry with disdain; they tend to frown upon the thought of considering the coin machine operator as their "partner." They think that operating a piece of equipment is as simple as throwing it up against the wall, plugging it in, and coming back once a week (day?) to haul out the cash. Sure it is!

What the public does not realize is that operating is an art. Yes, it's a respectable business, a very good business at that. But the truly successful operator will admit that there is that little "something" that whispers to him when deciding where to place the equipment, how to flash it, how to "negotiate" with the location owner, how to appease the customers, etc. These things can't be learned from a book. They must be learned from "doing," and coin machine operators have been doing for years.

Let's not forget one of the *major* functions of the coin machine operator: S-E-R-V-I-C-E. It's not uncommon for an operator to be in a location at midnight, fixing a game or retrieving a customer's "lost" dollar bill. In addition, with regard to video lottery terminals, it should be noted that these are very sophisticated pieces of computer equipment.

The coin machine operator already has personnel in place who, thanks to the complexity of today's amusement games, are familiar with computer equipment. Given the additional training which we provide with respect to video lottery terminals, this army of service agents is already in place and capable of caring for this equipment.

My one suggestion to our industry is to band together. The legalization and coin-op's eventual participation in video lottery hinges on the old adage, "United we stand, divided we fall."

Rick Barber
President
Video Lottery Consultants

Operators of video lottery terminals in South Dakota and New Brunswick are on the leading edge of a trend in video. The trend calls for government to take control of popular but illegal "gray area" video gaming within their jurisdictions.

By coupling legal operation of video games to strict qualifications, design, and reporting standards, government and operators have found a way to successfully work together in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Experience in South Dakota has shown high public acceptance of video lottery and complete confidence in the central computer system's ability to assure control. The operators and retailers have been rewarded for their willingness to convert to the new program by volumes of play they never imagined possible. They are using the new-found profits to improve their operations and have created hundreds of new jobs to handle the increased business.

"There are those in public office, law enforcement, and even private industry who feel that video lottery would be better run by eliminating the partnership between the coin-op industry and the public sector."

We feel this approach will serve as a model for many similar programs in the future. It answers governmental problems of public protection, inadequate law enforcement, and the ever-present need for additional tax revenues without doing economic harm to the thousands of small businesses that are reliant on video for their economic viability.

Central computer control will assure secure and economical control of new video lotteries without expensive regulatory and bookkeeping burdens on equipment operators.

Gregg Kalifut
Vice President of Sales
Advent Technology

As a manufacturer of video lottery games, we have done a massive job of researching the subject. We need to know the past, present, and even be able to predict what is likely to happen in the future. Our business depends on us knowing what is going on and staying on top of the latest developments.

It's not so different at the operator level. We've heard it said for years and it might

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sound like a familiar cliche, but operators have to be involved. They must keep on top of what is going on. It has never been more true than it is right now.

There is more to gain with video lotteries coming of age. But there is also more to lose. Even when amusement video games were tremendously successful, there wasn't as much to gain or lose for operators.

The involvement I'm talking about is with state associations and the national association. Involvement on the operator level is crucial because it builds a base of informed supporters. There will always be strong—perhaps well-meaning—groups representing other interests.

Well-meaning or not, there will be groups campaigning to stop the legalization of video poker machines just as hard as we are campaigning for them. Their reasons for opposing it may vary—lack of knowledge or simply a resistance to change. That's why operator involvement is so important.

Operators that are informed and involved with their associations are going to be the disseminators of the proper information. They are the ones that are going to make the doubters into believers.

You have to be clear about one thing: the video lottery has a lot to offer in a very positive way for budget crunched state governments. But it's only operators with the proper information who show a strong front to the opposing groups that will have a positive impact on making things happen.

If operators sit back and allow others to do it, then these other interests—either within a state or even interests outside of states where a video lottery would not be in their best interest—will prevail.

John Hafazi
President
PARS Electronics

I believe that video lottery is definitely one of the sure ways of salvaging the soft video market and keeping operators from losing their businesses. By that I mean more purchasing power for the operators so they can invest in other areas of coin-op—video games, pinballs, pool tables, dart machines, etc.

We have lost a good part of our business to foreign enterprises. Most video game manufacturers are Japanese. We need to keep this one to ourselves. The way it looks, already some outside manufacturers are trying to get to this healthy market. Once the others smell the money they are going to gang up on it. Believe me, if that happens insiders will quickly be pushed out. We have all seen that the video game industry has moved to the Far East.

Manufacturers must make a profit in order to support the industry that it's serving. If the inside manufacturers can't maintain a fair level of profit, they can't provide the proper service the industry requires.

No matter how much we want this form of entertainment or how profitable it is for operators, there will always be a certain percentage of the general public that just doesn't or never will approve of it. It must be restrictive enough that the public will accept it.

Another thing I think is important for operators right now is getting involved and active in their state associations to force the policies and rules. I don't think it would be unreasonable to require operators to be members of the association to be able to operate the games. Once investors and other outsiders see the potential, they will all run toward it. By having a strong association, the industry could monitor who is operating the games.

As a manufacturer, I think the states are tying our hands too much. We should be able to be more creative in programming to allow small manufacturers, like me, to compete with the larger ones. By offering something a little different, I could sell our games to the players, and they would be able to choose. If not, we'll all have the same games in different shells.

We can't lose sight of the entertainment aspect of the games. There are two different types of players—those that play for amusement and entertainment and those that are compulsive gamblers. We are not worried about the compulsive gamblers. The games should provide entertainment to the player who wants to spend a few dollars while having a few drinks. I think that players should benefit from the entertainment aspect.

Mike Pace
President
U.S. Games Inc.

In talking strictly about state-run video lotteries, there are a multitude of concepts and guidelines that must be understood before an operator can even begin to make decisions on whether to join the many voices (getting louder every day) in support of legalized video gaming.

Looking at the many options that a state has in setting up a video lottery can be confusing, and only when one knows all the ins and outs can a meaningful direction be taken.

One thing is sure, though. With the advent of home video games, our market has narrowed. It must focus on the features of coin-op that cannot be duplicated at home; it's the only way our industry can survive and grow.

Concepts like redemption and gaming are ways we can tap into the dollars being funneled into other industries by a more mature clientele. The growth of the gray market is a testament to the fact that video gaming is a profitable venture. But without any type of regulation, the machines that are operated don't necessarily show the industry in a good light. Also important is the fact that only a small percentage of the available market is reached.

With the implementation of a well thought out, operator-operated video lottery, both the operator and the state come out ahead—financially and public image-wise. The methods and procedures necessary to achieve this are different in every state, but the most sensible thing to do in any case is contact your state association.

If you haven't already, help to form a lobbying task force. This type of organized group will always be your best bet in dealing with the state. Supporting (by belonging to) your state operators' association is the best way to insure your interests, as its members are always the most informed and influential. □

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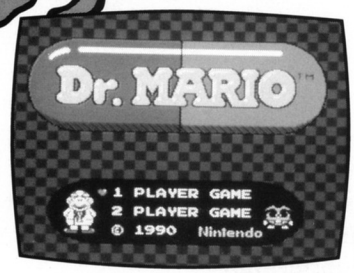

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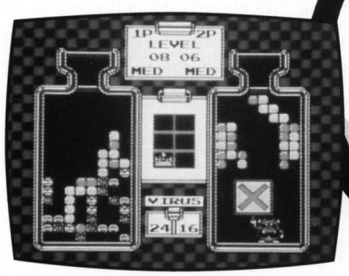

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Cement good relationships with your banker and distributor

If, or should I say when, video poker legislation passes in any given state, it's fairly clear what the position of the manufacturer and operator will be. What perhaps is not quite as clear is where the distributor will stand. While it could be that distribution is side-stepped with video lotteries, most believe that they will have a useful—in fact, very necessary—part to play.

We talked with several distributors to find out what they are doing to prepare for the eventuality of video lottery legalization. Their views give us some insight into what distributors are doing to not only prepare themselves but their customers as well.

Bill Treger
Betson Enterprises
Moonachie, NJ

Some distributors are all for it, while some are against it. When legislation first passes, it will have a negative impact on sales of other types of equipment. All of the money will be spent on buying video lottery terminals.

Betson is preparing by telling operators that distributors will not be able to handle all of the financing on the equipment operators will need to buy. We are impressing upon them the need to establish solid relationships with their banks as this gets closer to passing.

We've also seen the importance in keeping on top of what's happening. I am working on various committees in New Jersey and New York concerning video lotteries. Rick Kirby from the NECO office in Massachusetts is at many meetings in that state. We are becoming a sounding board for operators who have never been involved in political activities before.

Sooner or later it is going to happen. We don't want to be left at the starting gate. It will impact the rest of our business, so we must be prepared. It isn't the amusement industry; it's a licensed, regulated industry. Not everyone will have the wherewithal to get into it, and not everyone will be allowed to get into it.

Every state's legislation is different. Most of the bills pending require distribution. It would behoove all distributors to see that distribution is called for in their state bills. That is what we are doing. If it's not mentioned, then a distributor in that state would almost be out of business. Why? Because all of the money will be going toward buying legal video lottery terminals.

"Legal pokers are an opportunity for operators. If ever there was a chance to change the mind-set of 50/50 commission splits, this is the time."

We must also be acutely aware of opposition. There is no doubt that once the bill in introduced in New Jersey soon, we will have opposition. Although we don't know where that opposition will come from, I'm sure that some of it will be from the casinos in Atlantic City.

We are already addressing the likely opposition from compulsive gambling groups. My recommendation is to work it into the bill, giving them a percentage of the income. We have to recognize that it is a sickness that exists and we are better off addressing it up front.

Steve Lieberman
Lieberman Music Co.
Minneapolis, MN

The issue of legalized video gaming will be in the legislatures of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa soon. We're certainly going to be actively involved in the political process. We're guardedly optimistic.

If we could make one strong recommendation it would be that operators cement good relationships with their local distributors and their bankers, to ensure product availability and a solid line of credit. When video gaming is legalized in a state, operators will need to purchase a large amount of equipment in a short period of time. Communicate with your distributor—it's essential.

The current economic situation is the biggest factor influencing this issue. States need revenue without raising taxes. If operators approach their legislature at the correct time, they may be successful.

Jim Wittler
Lou Larson
Atlas Distributors
Pittsburgh, PA

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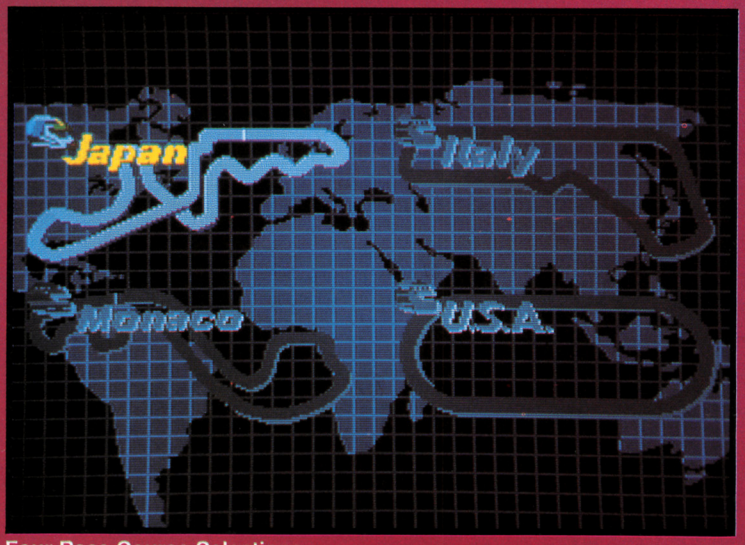

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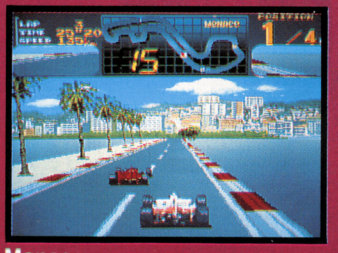
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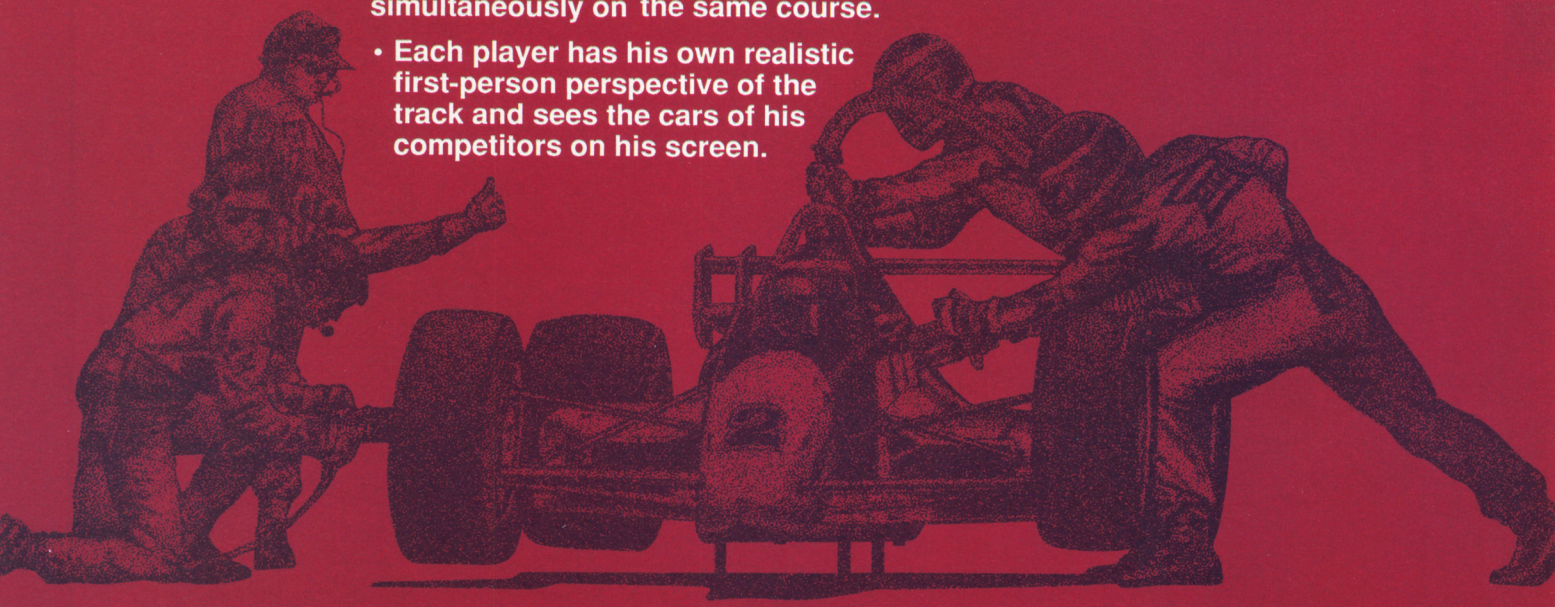

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a great opportunity to make some much-needed changes. The general perception is that when legislation does happen, it will hurt the sales of other equipment. But it should settle down, and once operators have established their video poker routes, they will have the money to buy other types of machines.

The wording in the Pennsylvania bill calls for manufacturers to sell to licensed distributors who will sell to licensed operators. Both will pay a fee to the state, which will fund the Video Lottery Commission. As a distributor, we feel that we will be an important part of the video poker industry. We pride ourselves in getting involved with our state organization (PAMMA).

We believe that operators will need to have a good relationship with a distributor. They may need assistance securing financing, installation help, and follow-up service. As a distributor, we have already planned service schools for these intricate machines. We are going to be the experts. Some operators may be able to handle it themselves, but that will be a small percentage.

I really think that if this business is ever going to change it will have to be with the commission splits. If ever there was an opportunity to change the mind-set off of 50/50 commission splits, this is the time.

We have related the video poker issue to phonographs: when 78s were replaced with 45s, operators were more inventive with pricing. The same thing is happening now that 45s are being replaced with CDs. This year we are pushing 2/$1 on CD.

Now we are talking about video pokers and how we can use this change to our benefit. We constantly hound the operators to do everything they can with pricing. Factories push 50-cent pinball and pool table manufacturers are shipping games with 75-cent and dollar chutes. It filters down to us. We feel it is part of our job to help operators find ways to be more profitable. It is also in our best interest.

Our thinking is that pokers are an opportunity for operators. In Pennsylvania the legislation calls for a two-year contract with the location. Also it's divided up so that the state gets 30 percent, the operator gets 35 percent, and the location gets 35 percent. We're thinking that operators should use this as an opportunity to have all of the machines the same as the pokers, that is, giving the location 35 percent. This would be a marked improvement over 50/50.

Operators will be going into debt about $300,000 just to get the video pokers they'll need. Most will need financing. I remember reading about the banking industry in Montana, which said that they would have been pushing for that legislation if they would have known how much it was going to benefit them. □

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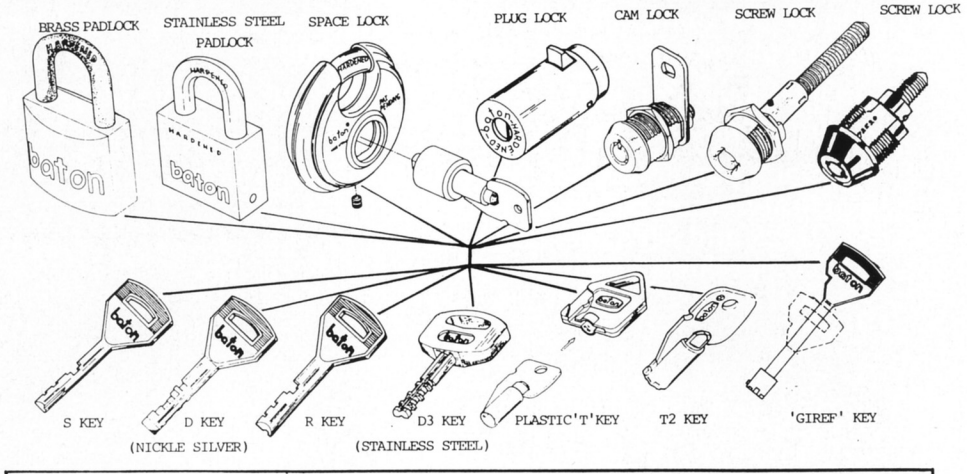

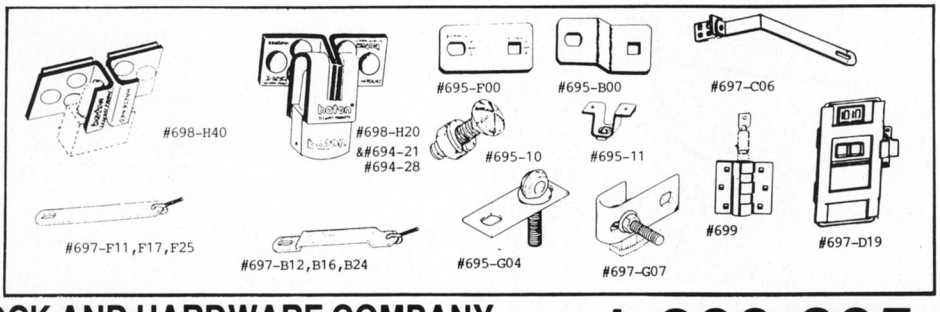

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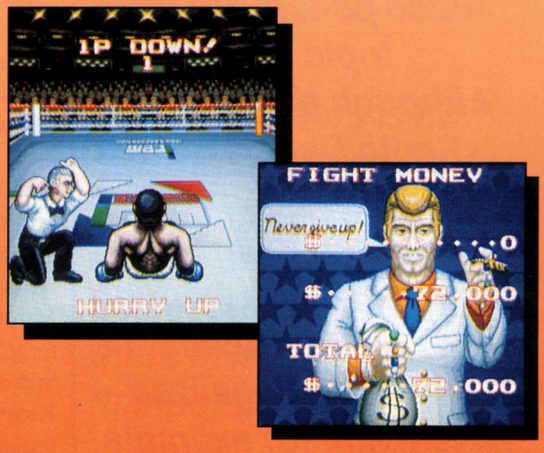

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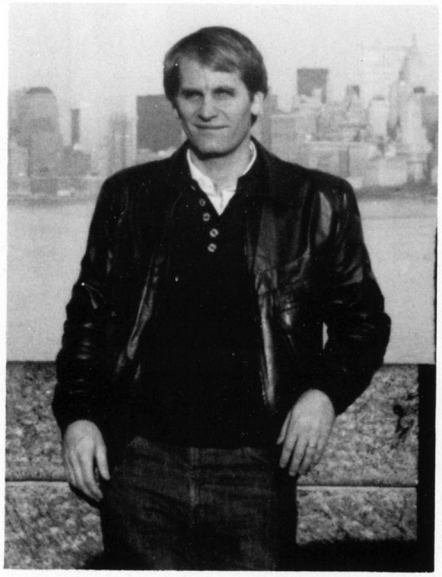


Roger Westmont

Video pokers are a hot topic these days. Although Montana and South Dakota are the only states that have legalized them so far, more states are working toward having the games legalized—Wisconsin, for example. Since video poker (or "lottery" as many prefer) is the theme of this issue, we thought it would be interesting to see how Wisconsin is progressing and what they have learned.

Roger Westmont of Modern Specialty in Madison is the president of the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators Association (WAMO). As president, he is heavily involved in the push to have video pokers legalized in his state. He graciously answered our questions about taking on such a mammoth project.

Roger was not born into the industry. In fact, making coin-op a career did not enter into his mind when he began working part time at Modern Specialty while attending the University of Wisconsin in the late '60s.

After graduating with a degree in economics, the threat of being drafted was still a possibility. Roger knew he would have to do something. He stayed at Modern for another year while contemplating his "real" future, doing odd jobs—everything but work as a technician. Roger didn't know it then, but his roots in the industry were being planted.

Again, he left Modern, this time to attend law school in Kansas. But for various reasons law school didn't work out, so he went back to Madison with plans to teach school. While waiting to be certified, he once again found himself at Modern. Roger did his intern teaching and everything went fine, except that his supervising teacher suggested that he would have better opportunities elsewhere. When Modern heard about this they offered Roger a full-time job. Unbeknownst to Roger, the old owners were selling out and had advised the new owners that they should try to keep Roger on board.

So nearly 10 years and several college degrees later, Roger knew that he would never again be looking for another career. "I am a firm believer that you either like this business or you don't," he said. "And if you like it, you can hardly ever leave it. It gets in your blood."

What size company is Modern Specialty?

We have 25 people on the payroll and a fleet of 12 vehicles. Our route area runs about 50 miles north and 60 miles south.

What are the operators like in your area?

The competition is very fierce. There is no letting up or slacking off. Although we respect each other, every account is fair game. If you are not taking care of your customers or are not up on the changes, someone will take over your locations. The competitive pressures do a lot to keep us on our toes.

WAMO must take quite a bit of time away from the company. How has that worked out?

The board of directors of WAMO had originally asked Robert Berman, the majority owner of the company, to serve on the board of directors. It didn't take him long to offer that idea to me! Through a series of coincidental happenings, I was moved up quickly from the board of directors into the officer position.

And yes, it does take quite a bit of time. For example, I write a column, "The President's Message," for our newsletter. The last one I wrote was a synopsis of one week's time out of my schedule for WAMO.

I wouldn't be able to devote the time if

they weren't so supportive here. Bob believes that WAMO is important to the future of our company and our business, especially with the issues we are facing now—video poker legislation and restrictions on cigarette vending.

How did your state get started in trying to legalize video poker machines?

(Operator) Jim Stansfield believed we had to get on top of this issue. Otherwise, he could see others carrying the ball, leaving a big doubt about whether the game operator would be involved at all. Now a lot of other operators are thinking that. But Jim was saying that to me three years ago. I first visited Montana two years ago; WAMO has been working on it at least two-and-a-half years.

What was the first step?

We started having discussions in the summer of 1988 to decide how to pursue this issue. We had recently been successful in having cranes declared legal. We saw how well that worked out and decided to draw on that experience. Jim visited Montana with the AMOA's Truth in Amusement Committee in September 1988. On his return he suggested that he and I, along with (lobbyist) Tom Coenen and (operator) Ralph Fleege, go up to Montana for further research. We saw for ourselves how well the poker games were doing. We had a long discussion with people from VLC (Video Lottery Consultants), who really got us aligned in terms of how we wanted to approach this. Then it was a matter of determining our strategy.

We decided to go with a bill that focused on draw poker, hoping we could get an exception to the state's gambling laws, as we did with our cranes. In that case, since players don't win a toy every time, cranes were viewed under Wisconsin statutes as gambling devices. We convinced the state legislature that there was some element of skill involved. They agreed and passed the crane bill almost unanimously.

Were other operators in Wisconsin as enthusiastic?

One of our concerns was that we would not have a unified membership. While we have heard comments and criticisms about things we've done, for the most part they believe we are working as hard as we can to put together the best, most logical bill we can. We have not had very much dissension.

The most dissension has come from those who feel that in state associations, the big operators who do all the work are the ones who will gain from it. All I can say is that to a certain extent the big operators *are* going to do the work because, as you pointed out earlier, it takes time away from your business. A small operator could jeopardize his business if he was in my position and didn't have people to come in and take up the slack. We have people who can fill in for me.

If this video poker legislation does pass, will it benefit small operators?

I had a discussion with an operator in New Brunswick, Canada, who was instrumental in getting their bill passed. He is a very small operator with less than 100 machines on his route. He is tickled pink with the law being passed.

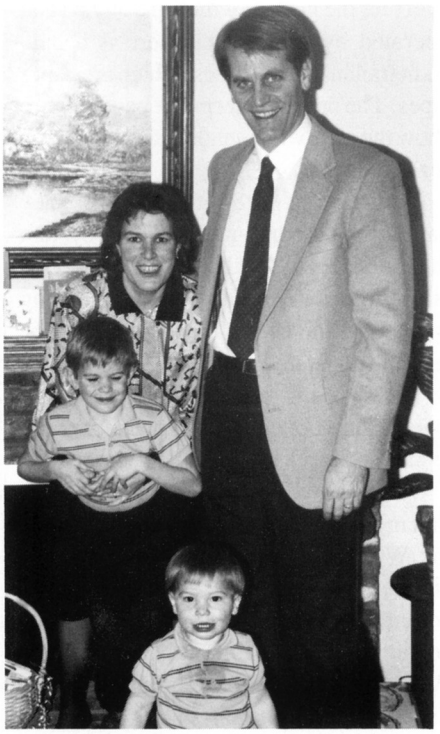
He is looking forward to video pokers as much as companies 10 times his size. I tell that to operators here. The small operator is going to feel the same effects as big operators, because everything is relative. They employ fewer employees and have fewer machines on their routes. On the other hand, their expenses are a lot lower. If they are running their businesses right, they should be making just as much money for themselves and the route as the larger operators.

Basically, then, most operators are in favor of this legislation. Are there any who are actively campaigning against it?

No. I think everybody sees the change going on in our industry—at the player level and in tavern locations. We don't see video games being played that much anymore. What we do see is are a lot of darts, jukeboxes, pinballs, and pool, with just sporadic video play. It used to be much different. As we see these changes we realize that we must change, too.

Do you have a lot of bar locations?

Yes, we do. We've tried to buy video games for them, but there aren't many to choose from. We've bought *Capcom Bowling, Tetris*, and *Klaxx*, which we thought would be a follow-up to *Tetris*. I can't name any other video games that have been successful in bars. *Tetris* was pretty good for us, but one game is not enough.



Roger with his wife Ruth and sons Gabriel and Gordon.

"Because there is no real threat of penalty for operating and making money on gray area games, they are out there in large numbers."

Looking at this sad state of equipment, video pokers would only be suited to bar locations. Our bill has been structured so that the pokers would go in Class B, combination liquor-licensed locations—bars. It wouldn't include liquor stores—they're Class A—or places like convenience stores.

Since Wisconsin has a much bigger population base than Montana or South Dakota, do you think it will have different concerns or problems to contend with?

In Montana, the Gaming Commission oversees the games, which are owned and operated by operators. There is a dual audit trail in the machines, which are paper tapes. The operator keeps the paper tape to show the state when sending the tax money for each game.

It's different in South Dakota. They have a central computer, a dial-up system that connects all of the games to it. This allows the state to know in the morning what all of the games did yesterday—the revenue generated and what the tax dollars to the state will be. They electronically sweep the account of a game company every two weeks.

Our idea in Wisconsin is very similar to that in South Dakota. We propose to have the Wisconsin Lottery Board supervise and regulate the games. There would be a central computer with a dial-up system connecting the games throughout the state. We want the traditional alignment in our business to stay—manufacturer, distributor, operator, and location. It would all be under the umbrella of the Lottery Board's regulations. They would authorize which manufacturers could sell in the state.

So you don't see any particular problems because of a different population?

I don't think so. Our anticipation is fewer games than are allowed in South Dakota. There are about 12,500 liquor-licensed locations in Wisconsin, which has a population of 4.9 million people. That is quite a bit larger than Montana or South Dakota—both are under a million. Because of this, we think there should be a cap of six machines to a location. The present bill limits the number according to the occupancy rating of the location. Although it's in our bill now, we realize that we may have to compromise.

Some compromising will be between us and the legislature, while some will be between us and the Lottery Board. The Lottery Board has certain ideas on the games because they have talked to Susan Walker and others in South Dakota.

Where does your bill stand now?

We are up to a second draft of the bill we had in the summer. We are constantly looking at it with our lobbyists. There is ongoing negotiation and compromise in terms of what they would like to see in the bill and what we think is practical. We look to our lobbyists, who look to our bill sponsor, assemblyman Rick Grobschmidt.

The bill was introduced last year and did quite well before a committee. However, we got bogged down with our past attorney general, who was supposed to be issuing an opinion on the legality of the games. Then that got bogged down with the Indian gaming compacts.

The state has a mandate by a federal judge to negotiate Indian gaming compacts with the several tribes in Wisconsin. It hasn't happened yet. In some ways our future is tied in with the Indian gaming issues. We feel that the state would be more likely to allow video gaming to non-Indians if the Indians get it.

The Indian reservations are some story.

It's unbelievable. They got their first video lottery law in South Dakota. Just recently at least one tribe signed an Indian gaming compact. That tribe has a small casino.

An Indian gaming compact is an agreement between an Indian tribe and a state for Class III gaming activities, such as casinos. This covers the types of games to be operated and the regulations that will apply. Indian tribes do not need permission from the state to operate things like bingo games.

I think the biggest problem with the Indian situation is that many times the state isn't quite sure where it stands. Indian tribes are actually "nations." The whole thing becomes very confusing as to who has what jurisdiction. We certainly see that now in Wisconsin. One month the video poker games were removed from a reservation and the casino was shut down. Another month it was opened up. There doesn't seem to be any logic as to what is going on.

Unfortunately, although it is confusing, much of what we are hoping to accomplish with our bill is riding on what eventually happens with the reservations. I'm kind of curious about places like New York, which has had a lot in the news about the Mohawk reservations.

How is your local economy? Do you think it will influence what happens with the bill?

We have thought all along that the revenue impact of our bill would have substantial influence on legislators. Our economy is pretty good. Although we read about recession in the newspaper, we haven't seen it yet. We have not seen a slow-down in our business, and I don't hear our customers complaining. The state just announced that there will be something like an $800 million deficit. That sort of thing can help our bill because we are going to have a positive revenue impact on the state.

Are gray area games a problem in Wisconsin?

They are out there! It's a very sensitive topic. I have discussed it with legislators and tried to explain why something has to be done with video poker in general. My comment to legislators has been this: either strengthen law enforcement and have these games picked up, staying con-

At a recent legislative session, (l-r): Tom Coenen, Roger, Janet Swanby, Gov. Tommy Thompson, and Jim Stansfield.

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sistently on top of it, or look at the games as what they are—a source of entertainment for a lot of players. Then legalize and regulate them under close restrictions.

What kind of enforcement is there now concerning gray area games?

It's random enforcement. It's almost as if the sheriff and district attorney get a call about the games and say, "Today we'll go pick them up or take a look." But they may not feel the same way the next day. In one area where we operate, gray area games are prevalent. One month there will be no problem for the locations that have them. Then a couple of months later they are warned that the games will be picked up on Friday. So the games move in and out. It's almost as if they come out of a warehouse for a while. Then there will a threat that they'll be picked up, so they go back into the warehouse.

It's a game. I asked a tavern owner who had two gray area games if if it ever bothered her that the games were illegal. She told me, "No, what are they going to do to me if they find them here?" I told her that they would confiscate them. To this she replied, "I don't care."

What is the penalty for getting caught with the machines?

That is the bottom line. Because there is no real threat of penalty for operating and making money on them, gray area games are out there in large numbers. People just don't feel any repercussions.

Do you know of cases where someone got in trouble for having gray area games?

It has happened in very few cases. Games have been picked up and people have been fined. I'd say in general the games are picked up, but I don't hear of anyone being fined. So the punishment is simply losing the games, which doesn't happen very often.

A sheriff told me that in order to pick up the games, he has to have positive proof that the bar was paying off for the credits won. That involves sending a deputy sheriff into a bar, having him play a game, and getting paid off. He admitted that he just doesn't have the time.

Once a law is passed legalizing video pokers, will there still be gray area games?

No. Our plan is to follow South Dakota's lead on that. What they did was adopt strict penalties for operating gray area games or games other than those authorized by the state. It would be a felony charge. Since the legalized video pokers have been so successful in South Dakota, there isn't any need or desire for operators to shoot themselves in the foot by operating gray area games.

Have you thought about how legalized video pokers would affect other types of equipment?

We are tying to analyze all aspects of legalizing these games, and how it will affect other equipment is one aspect we have looked into. What they have told us in South Dakota is that their pool, darts, and jukeboxes went down a little at first, but now the equipment has tended to stay pretty much at the same level as before video lottery. You don't see too many video games and pinballs in bars, but then again, many operators in Wisconsin say that many of those games are standing idle in taverns anyway.

Even initiating a project to legalize video pokers must be expensive. How did WAMO fund it?

It's expensive in terms of time and money. We're paying two lobbyists to work on the bill. There are about eight of us on WAMO's Legislative Committee. That means meetings to attend and time trying to get different operators to meet our legislators.

"We had to increase our association dues by almost 25 percent in order to finance this lobbying effort."

One thing we are working on very hard is getting the legislators and operators in direct contact with each other. We need to educate the legislators, not only on our business, but on the reasons behind this proposed video poker bill. Most people don't have any idea about our business. They don't know what goes on, how we work to earn a living, or who benefits from it. It's amazing.

Have you ever run into image problems?

It was suggested that we may run into that particular problem. All I can say is that the business certainly had a different image 25 years ago, or even more recently. We work hard to present ourselves as hard-working business people that have a lot of risks. We are trying to earn a profit and be responsible business people.

No one is directly challenging us about our image. We present our case in a professional manner. These legislators don't give you much time. If you don't come prepared and present your case in a logical, professional way, you won't get their attention. Before meeting with a legislator, we go over exactly what we would like to accomplish with our lobbyist, along with potential questions. We then prepare answers to these possible questions.

We have also met with a number of people from state agencies, such as the Department of Revenue, the Criminal Justice Office, and the Lottery Board. When you meet with these people, you do yourself a great disservice if you don't go in with your notebook pretty much memorized.

There's another thing that I've noticed. I am fairly well-educated, with two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree in business. It has been a tremendous advantage, because these legislators expect you to analyze the issue before talking to them. These people are very well-educated and will not be swayed on an emotional level about what this is going to do for Wisconsin. We go in with our statement, and then I expect a lot of questions. My position would be weakened if I was not able to handle their questions. We must be able to explain to them in an educated way.

What suggestions would you give to other state associations who are interested in initiating efforts to get video pokers legalized?

As far as a 10-step plan, I guarantee you we don't have that. I think the first thing is to sit down with the people who want to be involved. You must have people who are willing to commit themselves. If you are going to try to legalize video poker games,

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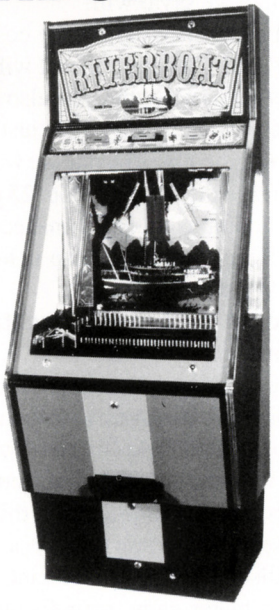

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it has to be a mission. This can't be the sort of thing where you would like to have it passed without a concentrated effort to get it done. It won't happen by itself.

It will happen if the organization decides that it would like to introduce a bill and have good lobbyists who pay attention to the bill, work hard for you, and commit themselves to you. Our lobbyists are very much at our disposal. When we want to talk we have no problems getting in touch, and we have no problems arranging meetings with legislators. You need that vital core of people.

You also must do your homework. Our association spent the money to send people to Montana to see what was going on. We have a firm background on the situation there. We also have a firm understanding of what is going on in South Dakota. When legislators ask us questions about the games, we are prepared. For instance, one legislator asked me what would happen if the central computer system went down. Since I had studied South Dakota, I could answer him. They are impressed when you have that kind of information.

You are not proposing something that you don't have a thorough understanding of. They sit there with questions, not so much from a critical nature, but from an educational nature. They want to know how this will work and whether or not it will work like we say it will.

You had mentioned earlier the cost of doing this. And I'll repeat that it will be costly in terms of time, but you also will have to spend some money. We just announced to our membership that we would have to increase the dues by about 25 percent for the additional funds to finance this lobbying effort. Our game plan is long-term; we have set our course.

Are there some other important considerations?

There are a lot of pitfalls as you try to introduce this kind of legislation because, there are so many interests that have to be taken care of. For instance, the Lottery Board is concerned about how things would be set up. There has to be a fair amount of discussion and understanding.

The video poker game manufacturers had some input because they would like to see the bill structured so that the games they are currently making will fit into the whole bill easily.

Have you had any input from the video game manufacturers?

We haven't heard a single word from them or their association. But this legislation does not happen quickly. Two years ago in Montana they told us, "We know you are enthusiastic now that you have seen the games, but remember that it is quite a way down the road." Here it is two years later and they were right.

What do you see for the future of the coin-op industry in general?

Video lottery machines will be a big part of the future. It's what players in taverns want. They do what they could do on the machines in other ways. They're in football pools, do pull-tabs, or play gray area games to get that source of entertainment.

We certainly think that CD jukeboxes are a big part of the future. We believed that from day one. We started out buying Seeburg and now have all of the manufacturers represented.

Are you phasing out your 45 rpm jukeboxes?

I guess you could say we are phasing the 45s out. It's hard to say for sure when you're in the middle of things and don't have a plan on paper, but I suppose that's our plan. We still have quite a few vinyl boxes on our route. I'd say our route is about 40 percent CD now. We are not buying any new vinyl boxes and haven't bought one since Seeburg brought out the first CD. When we buy new jukeboxes, they are CDs.

A big part of the future has to be analyzing things from a different perspective. We like the new pinball machines, for instance, but we realize that based on the revenue we've seen in the past, we can't put them out on the same commission as before.

We are trying to set up commissions with customers. They can be happy with new equipment, and we can be happy with making a profit. We haven't stopped buying equipment, but we are making changes in our commission structure. It's to everybody's benefit: the players want the new games, the customers want those players in their taverns and want to have some commission on the machines, and we have to be able to make a profit. I can't tell you how many discussions I've had with people on this subject. We feel it is the thing to do, and most of our customers agree.

If anything good has come from the down-turn of video games, it's been that most of our customers now believe that this is a risky business. They understand that we can longer spend $2,500 on a video game and hope it makes a lot of money. Our customers are willing to listen to different arrangements on different machines. They don't see the money flowing like it did eight or nine years ago.

Have you talked to any of your locations about their feelings toward video gaming?

Actually, they have been talking to *us* about the games. A lot of tavern owners have gray area games or know of other tavern owners who have them. I don't foresee running into any problems in the locations with video pokers; they are anxious. If the games are legalized, the biggest problem will be taking care of all your customers! That's been one concern of the smaller operators.

What is their concern?

Some smaller operators feel that if the bill is passed, they would be at a big disadvantage because the big companies would flood all the locations with games. But the fact of the matter is that bigger operators have a tremendous number of machines to buy. When you look at the cost of a machine—around $5,000—the financing is going to be very tough.

The operators in South Dakota would tell you that they should have done better in getting their financial houses in order. The smaller operators have to get their finances in order. If they don't have a relationship with a banker, now is the time to establish one. They should explain that legalized video poker games are a real possibility and discuss their potential needs.

The association should make sure that operators up and down the scale are getting enough information about the future. For instance, if a lot of smaller operators don't participate in the association but are members, they should be getting information about meetings or seminars. It's important. □

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John Willems, Chairman
Standards on Coin-Operated Video Gambling Devices
North American Gaming Regulators Association

Video gambling machines: the foundation

During the past 15 years, this country has seen a proliferation of what are being called video gambling or video lottery machines. These devices are one and the same.

Few may remember the failure of the Nebraska video lottery experiment in the early '80s when video lottery terminals were legalized on a local option basis. The enabling legislation was sunsetted (meaning there was a termination point set at the start).

The result, after two years of operation, was a variety of allegations of public corruption and scandal. Because the legislation was sunsetted, the law expired and the operation of these devices ceased.

Years after that, the jurisdictions of Montana ('85) and South Dakota ('89) legalized the use of these machines in two different forms. Montana differed from Nebraska in that it was state controlled and did not offer local option. It further created stringent machine requirements before operations began.

South Dakota differed from Montana in that it placed the operation of the machines under the state lottery and incorporated the use of a central computer system to monitor the machines. Montana utlizes, to this point in time, a stand alone machine system with quarterly tax reporting and payment to the state. Both Montana and South Dakota use machines that are essentially the same and both employ a state level of control.

John Willems

The impact of the legalization of these machines by these states has been significant and goes far beyond this country. Interest in this form of gambling has been nothing less than staggering. Interest has led to an enormous number of inquires from other states and countries, including Canada, Australia, Austria, and other European nations.

In Canada, the Atlantic Lottery Corporation became, as of Dec. 1, 1990, the first Canadian entity to offer this form of gambling to the public.

In addition to state organizations, tavern owners and trade organizations such as the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) has inquired about the operation of these machines.

All of the interest has been generated by the rapid growth of the machine industry in these market areas and the revenues generated by this form of gambling. Montana and South Dakota will collect tax revenues this year of about $20 million each. This number is important when you realize that the population base of each of these states is less than 800,000 people. There are more people in the seven county metropolitan areas of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn., than in Montana and South Dakota combined.

To give a further example of the growth factor, look at Montana. In the first year of operation the estimated total value of coins taken in by the machines was about $40 million. By the end of fiscal year 1990 that estimate had risen to $235 million annually.

Directly related to that revenue is the almost exponential growth of the industry surrounding the machines. This includes machine sales, number of machines on routes, number of workers employed

directly or indirectly because of the machines' legitimate presence, manufacturing of the devices, etc. Remember that regardless of the name these truly are slot machines.

In almost every jurisdiction, the machines meet the technical definition of a slot machine. I'll use Montana law as an example. Section 23-5-112 of the Montana Codes Annotated offers the following definition:

...(29) ''Slot machine'' means a mechanical, electrical, electronic, or other gambling device, contrivance, or machine that upon insertion of a coin, currency, token, credit card, or similar object, or upon payment of any valuable consideration is available to play or operate, the play or operation of which whether by reason of skill of the operator or application of the element of chance or both, may deliver or entitle the person playing or operating the gambling device to receive cash, premiums, merchandise, tokens, or anything of value, whether the payoff is made automatically from the machine or in any other manner...

Other terms, such as ''video lottery terminal,'' ''video gambling machine,'' or ''video game of chance'' are names created to disguise the fact that these are slot machines. Some of this is done, I believe, to protect agencies such as state lotteries or policy makers such as state legislators from the image problem associated with the operation of slot machines. The result is a more socially acceptable term, the ''video lottery terminal.''

It is a simple matter to check the validity of my position. All you have to do is obtain a copy of your state's definition of a slot machine, then compare the definition to the operation of one of these devices. My intent is not to offend, but to ensure that everyone clearly understands what these devices represent. Obviously, if these are truly slot machines, then any operation of them is gambling.

As a regulator I can tell you that if gambling is legalized and expected to survive, it must be effectively regulated. That means a variety of things, not the least of which is protecting the legal gambling operation from illegal gambling operations.

History shows that where gambling is offered to the public in an unregulated manner, the door is open to scandal, corruption, and organized crime. When this occurs, the public and political pressure explodes to prohibit all gambling.

I appreciate that no one truly likes to have their business regulated. However, gambling is one industry that can ill afford not to be regulated. Gambling can be likened to a house of cards; regulation is the glue that keeps it from falling apart.

Participants should understand that in the final analysis it comes down to a matter of understanding and choices. For many jurisdictions this represents a new venture. For many coin operators this is an activity in which they have no experience. It's in everyone's best interest to fully understand what they are considering to be a part of, and how they will work within this activity.

"Gambling can be likened to a house of cards; regulation is the glue that keeps it from falling apart."

They face the choice of operating in a state of confrontation with the regulator, or in a state of coexistence with the regulator. I have seen the results of adversarial relationships between regulators and the industry.

In the early days of the Montana program that kind of relationship existed. There was a real difference of opinion between the state and the industry over what constituted an illegal machine and what machines met the statutory guidelines for the grandfathering provisions. The difference finally came to a point where machines were seized and lawsuits were filed—all culminating in a case that went to the state Supreme Court. It resulted in a bitter relationship between regulators and the industry.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing and perhaps there was a better way to resolve the controversy, but the parties involved had ceased to communicate. It took many months of effort on both sides to repair the damage done during the first few bitter months of start-up.

During those months, there was little or no communication between the parties. A tremendous atmosphere of distrust existed. The result was almost a standstill of progress while court cases and political agendas were played out.

I cannot, as a regulator of gambling activity, ever condone the idea of being a partner with the industry. The fact is there are certain relationships that need to be built from the outset, not the least of which is the commitment to what can best be described as good faith dealings by both sides. There will always be the diversity of concerns, but a common ground can be found in the integrity of the games.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out the need for regulators to work from this position of coexistence. It's as important for them as for the coin-op industry. Without integrity there can be no player confidence; without that confidence the ultimate result is failure.

The bottom line to my message is that the most basic building block is the relationship between regulator and businessman. To ensure the success of this relationship there needs to be a common understanding of what we are dealing with in terms of the proposed gambling activity.

In a real sense everyone needs to be working from that common script. The script states that we are talking about a form of slot machine gambling made available to the general public. The relationship sets the tone for how this gambling activity is presented to the public. It's imperative that to achieve this end the coin-op amusement industry must work with regulators to ensure the integrity of the system being created. Anything less is self-destructive and therefore not acceptable. □

John Willems is currently with the State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Gambling Enforcement Division. He was formerly Bureau Chief of the Video Gaming Control Bureau and Bureau Chief of the License and Tax Bureau of the Montana Department of Justice.

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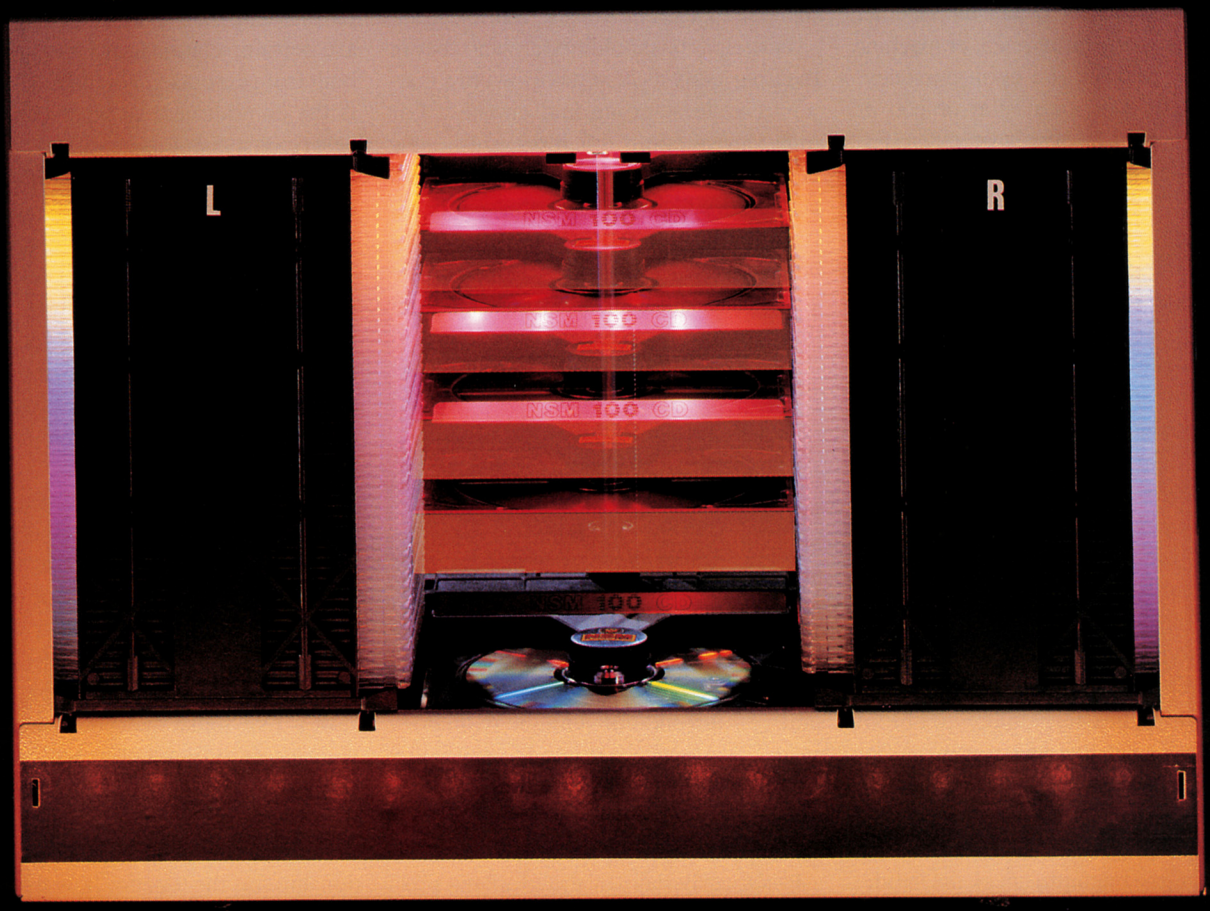

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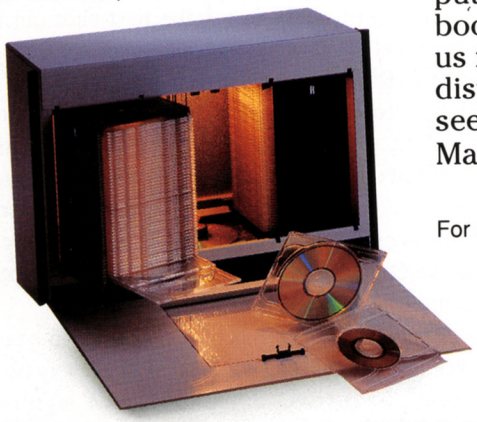

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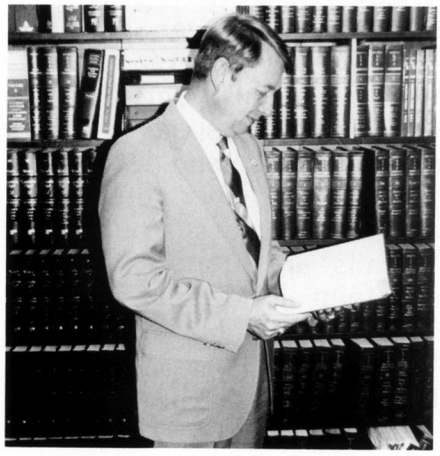
Rep. Emile "Peppi" Bruneau, Jr.

(R-New Orleans)



Four-term Louisiana Representative Bruneau is the author of HB1509, the 1990 video poker bill that would have authorized and licensed certain video draw poker games for use throughout the state. All systems were "go" until the 11th hour when the bill died before coming to fruition. Bruneau and Louisiana coin-operators who championed the bill are continuing to pursue the issue with new fervor and some modifications to the original proposal.

Louisiana is a state with an estimated 10,000 unregulated "gray area" poker games. It is also a state with highly developed and long-standing charitable gaming organizations, multiple horse race tracks, and off-track betting. These realities, combined with a recent voter-approved state lottery, may pose problems for a new bill. Somehow, video gaming is not perceived on the same level as other sanctioned gaming activities. Bruneau and his supporters would like to change that perception and regulate video gaming activities for the benefit of the state and its citizens.

Bruneau has served as chairman of the Republican Legislative Delegation since 1984 and chaired numerous House committees in his 16-year tenure. He has received several prestigious awards, including Legislator of the Year ('78, '80, '81, '86) from the Alliance for Good Government and National Legislator of the Year ('86) from the National Republican Legislators Association.

Why is it difficult to convince legislators that video gaming is popular entertainment that can be controlled?

I'm not convinced that it is difficult. This bill got 68 votes in the House. It came out of the House Criminal Justice Committee, the first real bill regulating gaming to come from that committee aside from the lottery. Remember, neither the cruise ship proposal nor the casino proposal ever gained more than 50-51 votes. It passed the House floor with a minimal amount of debate, maybe 15 minutes. There was no major opposition.

For a gaming bill to pass the House on the first shot out is an accomplishment. This is a lot different than your normal gaming bill. It's a regulatory bill to cover something out there right now; it's not legalizing something new. It makes sure the public is treated fairly and provides reasonable restrictions so no one can have undue advantage taken of them.

What kind of opposition did HB1509 encounter?

The bill came out of the Senate committee without any problem. Yes, we did run into some significant problems on the

Senate floor at the very end of the process. Perhaps that had to do with the fact that 1) the lottery had just passed, 2) it was the end of the session, and 3) it was a House bill with no senator "beating the drums" for it. And by that time an "unholy trinity" of opposition had formed.

That trinity included "gray area" operators, some of the so-called "charitable interests," and those opposed on moral grounds. The first two groups were coming from a pecuniary standpoint; the third group was not. The racing industry had some questions about the bill but we resolved those.

Any type of controversial issue always has two sides. I can certainly appreciate and tolerate the point of view of those folks who think that we should not pass the legislation either for economic or moral reasons.

But when the opposition comes from people who are operating the games illegally and those who want to maintain a monopoly on operating real slot machines in this state, then those two groups have no sanctity clothed in their opposition.

Legalized video gaming is a new concept since there are only two states regulating it at present, but the regulations have proven workable. From talking to people in other states, I know that an effort is going to be made to regulate these machines where they are prevalent.

How does the governor feel about the issue? A great deal of blame was laid at his doorstep when the bill did not pass.

The bill went through the House and Senate committees so easily that we did not anticipate how the opposition coalesced in the end. That very fragile bridge of negotiation fell apart at the last moment. I don't attribute any bad motives to the governor. He did run on an anti-gambling platform; the lottery passed over his opposition.

The governor and I have had an ongoing dialogue about this. The lines of communication are not sealed, even though that's the opinion of some people who perhaps reacted emotionally to what was his apparent non-support at the end of the process. Our lines of communication are open and I think that we can go back with a better bill.

What's the outlook for '91?

The Louisiana Constitution says that a tax cannot be levied at a regular session of the legislature in an odd-numbered year. At the regular session this year no taxes can be levied, but you can levy a tax at a special session.

The governor has indicated that he will call a special session on revenue-raising measures. A tax could be considered at that time if the legislation was subsequently to pass in the regular session.

"The bill went through the House and Senate committees so easily that we did not anticipate how the opposition coalesced in the end."

Did HB1509 include a tax?

The bill as I introduced it did not include a tax. It provided for a fee of $1,000 per machine to be utilized to defray the cost of regulation. You can enact a fee at a regular session in an odd-numbered year.

Last year, discussions centered around the bill that I had passing, plus another bill levying a tax in addition to the fee. All those things could have happened. But since the lottery passed at that time and a lot of people were skittish about the public's reaction, it gave them the opportunity to pound on people in the Senate who were ambivalent about this bill.

This year is an election year in Louisiana. Will that have any affect on a new video gaming bill?

It is the nature of most representative bodies to not deal with controversial legislation immediately preceding a change in lawmakers.

That is not necessarily a bad philosophy, because if you do expect a new set of lawmakers and you're making laws for the future, maybe the people most recently elected ought to make the laws. The downside is that you do nothing when you should be doing something.

If this were not an election year, I think the chances of passage of the bill would be excellent. Since it is an election year, it may be more difficult to pass. But I'm certainly going to introduce a bill.

How long could the process take? When did you get involved?

Whenever you take on a new issue you have to look at it as an educational process that's going to take time. It's very seldom that you can do that in a one-year time frame.

I became interested in this issue five years ago. When "gray area" games started to proliferate I tried to prohibit them because I saw what type of effect they were having. They should be illegal, or legal and regulated. It should be either a swan or a goose and not a "swoose."

How do you feel about the multitude of "gray area" games in Louisiana?

My motive comes from the regulatory aspect because I see what has happened with "gray area" games. Why do we refer to them by this term? Because the machines can go from a gambling mode to a non-gambling mode and back by punching in a code or flipping a switch.

That means the machines are not "per se" gambling devices. In order to make a case to seize a machine you have to actually witness gambling taking place. In most states gambling is a misdemeanor or a relative felony at best. In Louisiana it's a misdemeanor.

With a crime wave sweeping the country, it becomes exceedingly difficult to justify the mass amount of law enforcement needed to track these games, then tell someone they have committed a crime on the machines when you have a willing buyer and a willing seller. It's a question of priorities.

The fact is that legitimate coin machine operating businesses know that gambling is a crime and they are not going to be involved in this day and time, regardless of the economic fruits. And yet the machines surface.

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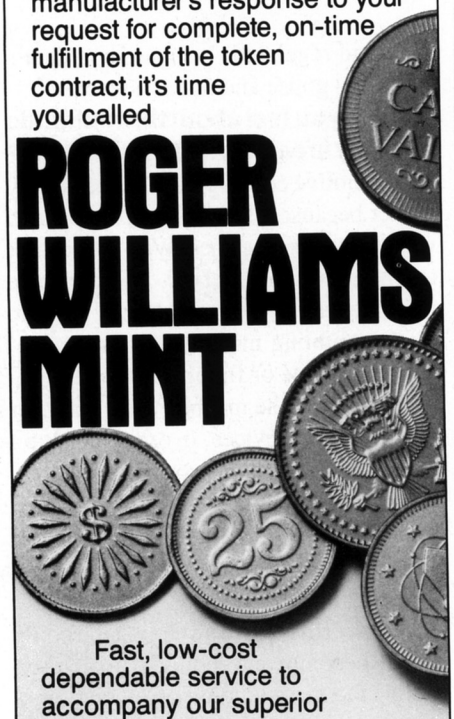

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ask if they handle that type of machine and they will say, "No, we don't, because those machines are used for gambling purposes."

That means illegitimate business people are involved. They are probably not paying sales taxes on the purchase of the machines. For sure, they aren't paying income taxes, unemployment taxes, or Social Security taxes, because it is bound to be done on a totally cash basis.

There is a demand for the machines, which means the location owner in essence becomes a criminal because his patrons want them.

I tried to make "gray area" games illegal and the bill did not pass. It passed the House, but died in the Senate—the same place where the regulatory bill died. To me, you either regulate them or prohibit them. If not, you have wide-open, unregulated gaming. That's what we have in this state now. The poor patron doesn't have any guarantee that the machines will be programmed to legitimately play a game of cards. The programming capacity is there for an unscrupulous person.

When you create an atmosphere that legitimate people will not be involved in, and you have someone who is willing to take the risk of bringing in the machines to operate illegally, then it's a very easy step for that person to do what old-time slot machine operators did: put a percentage clip on them so they'd never hit the jackpot.

Are other legislators unable or unwilling to recognize the problems associated with "gray area" games?

We can't have a Pollyanna attitude: close your eyes and something doesn't exist.

Since there is no regulation at present, "gray area" games can be anywhere, perhaps locations where children could play them. That's why my bill limited machine placement to outlets with a license to sell beverages of high and low alcohol content on the premises.

If someone in the Senate looks at this problem in depth— realizing the detrimental economic effect on legitimate businesses (amusement companies, cocktail lounges) and the general public—perhaps they will decide to either declare "gray area" machines gambling devices "per se" and pick them all up, or regulate them.

My bill makes it a felony to operate "gray area" machines. That's what it will take to outlaw them: five years in jail or a $10,000 fine.

I hope the process in 1990 brought the problem to the attention of some folks in the Senate who are willing to really look at the issue. When you handle a piece of legislation like this you have to know it forward and backward, arguments for it and against it. You have to be prepared to think on your feet in a debate. I am hopeful that we can find someone who has that interest.

How will the '91 bill differ from the one presented last year?

In retrospect there are certain things we can do to lessen the legitimate opposition. Nothing will ever solve the problem of the "gray area" games and people who want a gambling monopoly.

HB1509 allowed a maximum of five machines per location. That will be changed to three. I don't want any place to become a gambling casino. These games are just another form of adult entertainment.

The maximum wager amount will be changed from $5 to $2. The dollar payout was perhaps considered too high and will be changed from $1,000 to $250. I came to this figure after addressing a meeting at the North American Gaming Regulators Association (NAGRA) Conference in New Orleans last October. My legislation is far milder than NAGRA's model legislation. Going to the NAGRA conference was very instructive for me. There's not a thought the human mind devises that cannot be improved upon.

Two other major changes will be made. In HB1509 the $1,000 per machine license fee would have gone to the state general fund. Now, the fee will be split on a 75/25 basis between the state regulators, who have the bulk of the licensing and regulatory duties, and local police authorities in the jurisdictions where the machines are placed.

For example, in Orleans Parish, the $1,000 fee would be divided this way: $750 to the La. State Police Division of

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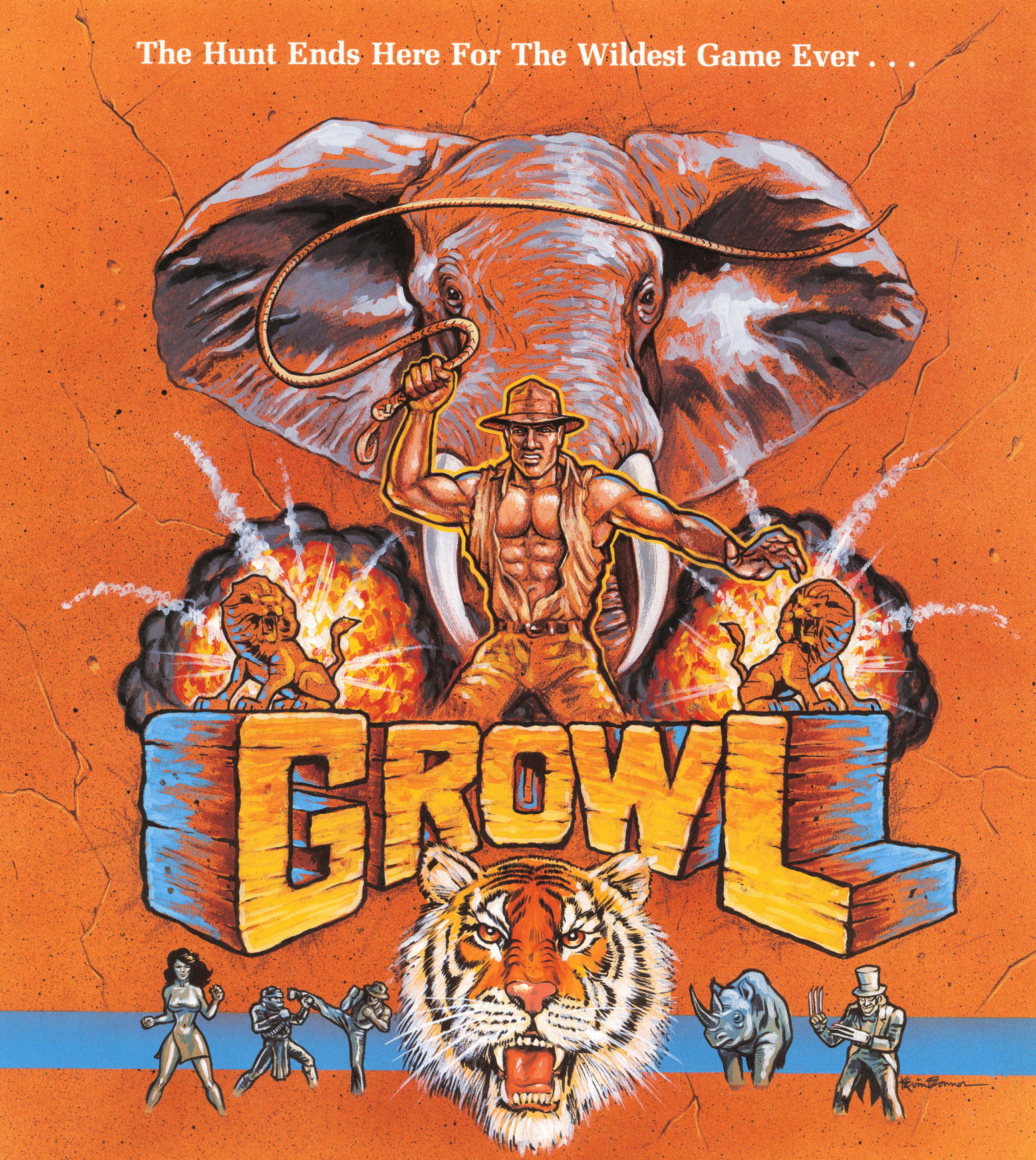

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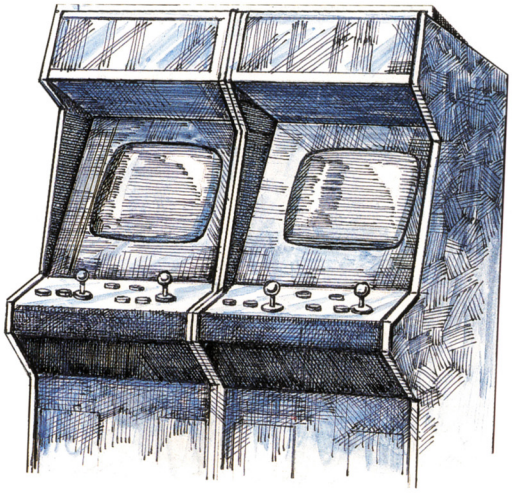

The 8-way joystick and 2 action buttons arm you with 8 deadly options, which include deadly kicks and punches, ability to throw crates and barrels, and firepower with your assault rocket. The attack and jump buttons used together, give the player the ultimate advantage. Change weapons by using the joystick in the down position. Victory or defeat depend on the speed and variety of your assaults.

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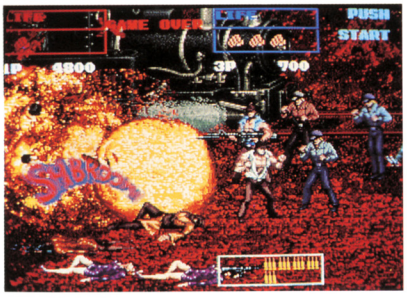

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Regulatory Gaming and $250 to the New Orleans Police Department.

The first bill anticipated that the fee would in turn go to the State Police, but the new bill will specify this point. The other change is a local option provision that will allow any parish governing authority to "opt out" by a local vote of that governing body. They could not have "gray area" games either.

Several points remain the same: 1) manufacturers and distributors each pay a $5,000 license fee, 2) no vertical integration (manufacturers cannot distribute, distributors cannot operate, etc., to assure no monopoly), and 3) locations have the right to purchase their own machines. Probably only 10-20 percent of locations would be interested because of changing technology, sophistication required for repairs, and financing the machines.

Specifications for the machines will require that they have the capability to key into a computer hook-up. Instead of specifying this in the legislation, I'll leave that decision to the regulating authority and let it rule.

If you have a permit fee per machine, then you don't really need a computer hook-up. If you ultimately levy a tax, then the South Dakota method of a central computer system is the proper method. If a tax is involved, it is far easier to collect that tax by monitoring the machines by computer.

If you use that method, you should prohibit any operator, distributor, or manufacturer from directly or indirectly having any interest in the operation of the computer used by the regulatory body. That would give one manufacturer a very unfair advantage over another. There are enough computer vendors around, and in-house computer technology, that you don't need to go to one of the manufacturers to bid on who will set up the system. I want to keep everything generic.

Do you feel a tax could be added to any passing legislation?

I anticipate that if my legislation passes, a tax will not be far behind. It it were to pass this year, the tax would happen in a special session. If it passes in an even-numbered year I would expect a tax bill introduced concurrently. I don't think that it would be unfair.

Will this bill be considered a video lottery bill?

In South Dakota, the Lottery Commission regulates the games, and that's probably why its called video lottery. Their lottery statutes authorize the commission to operate this type of game. Our statute doesn't do that.

"Whenever you take on a new issue you have to look at it as an educational process that's going to take time. It's very seldom that you can do that in a one-year time frame."

This is not a lottery and it should not be confused with a lottery. I think it should be handled in a candid fashion. I don't think you should try to fool the legislators or the general public. I don't intend to do that.

Here, the lottery has a specific connotation. I'm sure that you've heard the argument: Now that we've passed a lottery you can say this (video gaming) is a lottery. It's not a lottery when it's not a pure element of chance; that's not the case with these games. I don't think our Lottery Commission will embark on all these new games.

What regulating body will oversee implementation of this program?

In Louisiana, legal video gaming would come under the jurisdiction of the La. State Police Division of Regulatory Gaming. That body regulates bingo halls at present.

We all know that the bingo machine and the video poker machine fit inside the same type of cabinet. The only difference is that one plays a game of cards with player interaction, and the other involves dropping in your money and watching the lights come up on the screen.

Will the newly passed lottery impact on other gaming legislation?

I think we have a lot of people who will play the lottery who don't normally frequent cocktail lounges. The lottery cuts across a greater swath of society than video poker machines, bingo halls, or race tracks.

A number of legislators from areas most analysts considered anti-gaming were very surprised by the large percentage of votes the lottery received in their districts. I think there's a subliminal message—a difference from the vocal opposition. The attitudes of some legislators may "mellow" and the opposition may be "muted" to a degree.

What about that formidable opposition, bingo halls?

Bingo has always been a traditional charity-type fund- raiser. We've had legalized church bingo in Louisiana for over 20 years.

There's a big difference between the churches and the so-called "charitable bingo halls." Although a portion of those monies go to charity, those places are really being operated as businesses, and I think we all know that. I find it unusual that there's a cry about the regulation of video poker games that comes basically from people in that particular business.

To a large degree the bingo halls appeal to a segment of the economy that does not have a lot of leisure dollars. These halls are different from a church bingo or school fair bingo.

I don't view gambling as "per se" evil. I view it as evil when it is unregulated and people are making money from gambling as a business and not reporting that income. I have always felt it should be regulated.

If video gaming were to be legalized here, tavern locations might find patrons consuming less alcohol because of time expended playing the games. Would legislators consider this a positive point?

That may be a large selling point in other states but not necessarily a significant one here. I don't think it will make a difference, because you find that those who have a strong moral objection to legal

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gaming have that same objection to the use of alcohol.

In this state there is far more of a tolerance and a realization that taverns, rather than being illicit or bad places, are locations of adult entertainment. If treated properly they can provide enjoyment without detriment.

What do you consider the major benefits of legalized video gaming for Louisiana?

Legal video gaming will provide revenue to both the state and the localities. The real plus is economic. After the licenses fees, benefits come in the form of state income taxes paid on profits generated by the games. There will also be jobs saved and jobs created. It will help the small businessman as well.

Additional economic impact will include the hiring of more employees with technical backgrounds. Trade will be stimulated in the establishments. Look at the Montana experience, where it has encouraged customers who also play the jukeboxes, darts, and other equipment.

I view it as taking money out of the illegal gaming market and putting it into the hands of legitimate business people. That money will turn over in the economy and not be washed through a surreptitious process as it is now from "gray area" games.

What other regulated gaming activities do you consider economically beneficial to the state?

Although we're discussing the regulation of video poker machines, from an economic standpoint, a free-standing casino and/or cruise ship gaming would be economically beneficial because that brings in tourists. Tourism is one of the foundations of our economy in Louisiana.

New Orleans is an adult tourist city. We have Mardi Gras, the Aquarium of the Americas, and the Audubon Zoo as family activities. But we're also a convention town and normally draw more adults.

Our pari-mutuel betting has proven to be a great economic plus in this state. Regulated gaming can have a positive impact. □

"When the opposition comes from people who are operating the games illegally and those who want to maintain a monopoly on operating real slot machines in this state, then those two groups have no sanctity clothed in their opposition."

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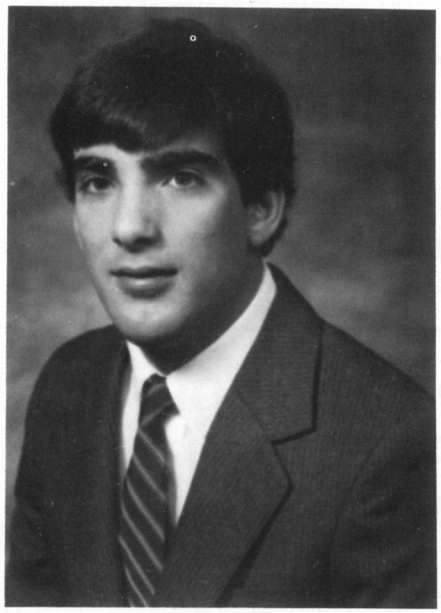
Christopher Caire



James Maida

In this interview, Maida, a computer engineer and attorney, discusses the process of approving machines and other topics related to the growing video gaming industry.

Before a video gaming machine manufacturer can begin reaping the fruits of legalized gaming in a particular state, it must first clear the hurdle of having the game approved for operation. With increasing frequency, that role is being filled by Gaming Laboratories International Inc., a New Jersey-based firm headed by president/founder James Maida.

Let's start with some background on you and your company.

Well, I worked at the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement from July 1985 to September 1987, at which time I left to enter law school. When I arrived at New Jersey Gaming Enforcement in 1985, there were already two individuals working in the lab.

They had just started purchasing emulator equipment and high-tech computer equipment, because some attempted cheating—tampering with machines—had infiltrated the Atlantic City market. The New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement decided it was time for the gaming people in New Jersey to begin checking the machines and programs very closely.

New Jersey was the first to set up a high-tech electronic laboratory. We used computer equipment to analyze the hardware and software that run all the machines. We also got into randomness testing, where we were able to develop software to play devices several hundred thousand times. The data showed that many devices had events which weren't random; the odds for coming up with four-of-a-kind were better than some other things, for example.

When I left in 1987, there were only two legalized gaming jurisdictions: Nevada and New Jersey. Montana had just started, and its gaming laboratory called to see if I could help set things up. I spent about a week out there.

In early '89, the South Dakota Lottery Commission was setting up its operation. The entire state needed testing for its machines, so I was asked to produce an identical New Jersey Gaming Enforcement lab, with all of the same hardware, tests, criteria, etc. In the fall of 1989, I was hired by the South Dakota Gaming Commission. From there, the Minnesota Indian tribes heard about my services and asked me to help draft and negotiate their compact.

Is that, then, when you got the idea to start your own company?

Yes. State-run laboratories, as a general rule, are funded by state tax dollars. They are not allowed to accept work from other states. We saw that there was a need for the states getting legalized gambling to test their machines. To set up a $500,000 testing laboratory in each state seemed to be redundant. We recognized the need for an independent laboratory to sit as a "clearing house," if you will. All of the machines are sent here, and we certify them for whichever state you want them certified for.

Is your company expanding?

Yes. We are in the process of hiring one

ARE YOU GETTING ALL THE GAME TITLES YOU'RE ENTITLED TO?

or two engineers per contract, or per state. Iowa riverboat gaming will be done by these people, Illinois riverboat gaming will be done by these people, and so forth. The other structural thing we're looking at is assigning two engineers only to IGT, two to VLC, two to Bally, etc. All of the machine requests will be handled by experts, who will be familiar with a particular manufacturer's entire product line. We feel this is better than making everybody in each state section have to know everything about every machine.

Right now, we're actively testing for six states: the Minnesota Indian tribes, the South Dakota Gaming Commission, the South Dakota Lottery, the West Virginia Video Lottery, the Atlantic Lottery Corp. (which oversees gaming in Canada), the Iowa Riverboat Gaming Commission, and the Illinois Riverboat Gaming Commission. Illinois, though, is still quite a few months away from starting up. Our consulting there is limited at this point.

Every state that's enacted gaming since South Dakota has chosen our company for machine testing. They can now go to one central location—us. The manufacturers are our biggest fans. Once major companies like Bally and IGT have a program chip that we've approved, they can merely call and request that the chip be transferred to any other state that we do business for. It doesn't cost them anything to have it re-tested.

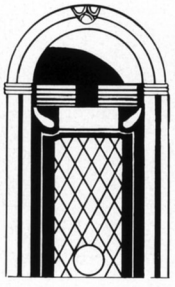
So the boards for every machine don't have to be individually tested?

No. One for each type of machine model has to be sent to me. We test the Eproms, which are the chips that hold the program. They're stuck in on sockets on the board. We use a device by KOBETRON Inc. that can analyze EPROMs and tell us if one in a far-away location is the same one that we have here as our master. Once we approve a chip, we send a certain-digit code to the state requesting it. That state matches their chips with our code to more or less prove that the machine they have is exactly the same as the machine I tested here. It's 99.98 percent effective.

Let me give you an example. Today a machine was shipped in for the Atlantic Lottery Corp. We're working on it this morning; the results should be out by mid-afternoon. When we finish, the chips are taken out and placed in KOBETRON's device. From there we get signatures, or numerical codes, which will be sent by FAX to an inspector for the Atlantic Lottery Corp. He will take those codes and match them against the EPROMs that are in his games up there. If the codes match, then they know that what they have in their game is exactly what I have in my game here. That game and every one like it will be certified.

We test and approve basically all of the electronics involved with gaming opera-

It's time to



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tions. It's more than just the testing of chips.

What percentage of machines fail?

We fail about 40 percent of all machines that come into our laboratory. Most problems are minor, but many are major: the pay-out is incorrect, the meter readings aren't being credited properly, the bill acceptor or coin acceptor isn't working correctly, the hopper isn't counting out the coins correctly, and so on.

To get your game out into the field in places like South Dakota and West Virginia, you must submit a model to Gaming Laboratories International. The manufacturer sends me the game board, manuals, schematics, wiring diagrams, EPROMs—an exact replica of the game. The normal time frame for approval is 20 to 30 days after submission. Emergencies are handled in one day; they're given top priority. Once the game is approved, we write the manufacturer and the state client to tell them so.

Being an attorney, I try to help with some of the gaming issues. I try to keep machine specifications the same from state to state. I believe manufacturers should only have to make one specification game. If it's a ticket-printer, it should have one set of specifications. If it's a hopper, it should have another set. I believe that a machine approved for use in Iowa should also be able to be used in South Dakota, New Jersey, Illinois, Nevada, or anywhere else where hopper games are allowed, if that's the type of game we're dealing with.

Has it gotten to that point yet?

We're working on it. All of my clients use one of two specifications: one for ticket games—lottery-type products—or one for stand-alone hopper types. The specifications are kept very close together, so that if you have a machine approved for use in South Dakota, it's probably going to be approved in a state where the regulations are the same.

About 50 percent of our work is what we call "transfer approvals." In other words, we've already done the work before; it's on our data bank. We're simply moving the chip from one state to another state. We only see about 500 or 600 new programs a year. Between 1,500 and 2,000 programs are transferred yearly.

Are there a lot more manufacturers getting into this now?

Yes. I'll give you a concrete example. In Atlantic City, there are five manufacturers that can do business. There are a couple of dozen manufacturers in Nevada, but most are smaller. We're seeing new people call up every day for the South Dakota Video Lottery.

My company deals with 20 or 25 manufacturers, and within each there are numerous different games. We're going to have to approve about 350 programs for Iowa alone by March 1.

Does a manufacturer have to re-approve its games after a certain period?

No. Once a program is approved, we use the KOBETRON device and certify it. But we always reserve the right to go back and check. States allow us to revoke our approval.

Let's say we find something wrong with a chip after it's been approved. It hasn't happened yet, but it will happen one day; no one is 100 percent fool-proof. Should a problem arise, we keep one set of every program chip that comes in here. We have a filing area that's lined with each manufacturer's EPROMs. If someone calls and says, "IGT chip XYZ is having a problem," we can pull it right off the shelf, put it in a game, find out the symptoms, and test it right away while they wait.

Do you and your employees do much field work?

Yes, we do travel and make inspections. One thing I should make clear is that this company is bigger than just a testing laboratory. I work through Maida and Eler, a law firm in Trenton. That's where we handle all of our regulation-drafting. We have several attorneys and a support staff to help out.

Attached to the Maida and Eler firm is an in-house CPA firm, which deals with audits, financial flow of money, accounting procedures, and things of that nature. So when you talk about Gaming Laboratories International, you're talking about a conglomerate that encompasses engineering, law, and accounting.

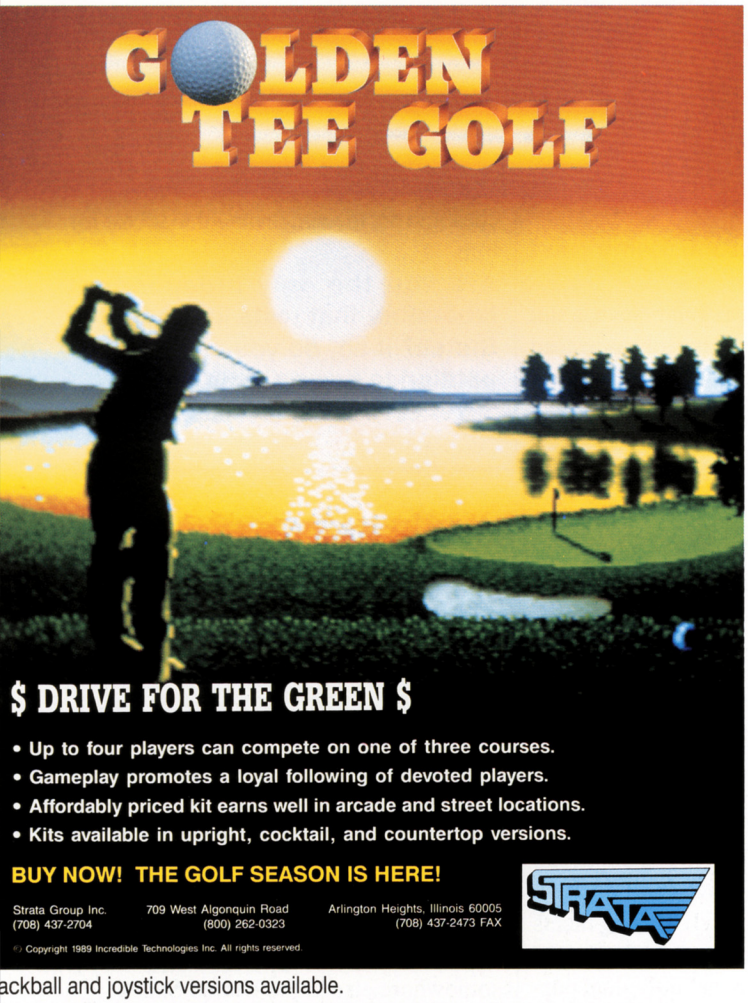
"Once major companies like Bally and IGT have a program chip that we've approved, they can merely call and request that the chip be transferred to any other state that we do business for."

My philosophy is that you just don't go out, get a laboratory, and start testing. That's not what states should do. They should come to us and say, "We need help with regulations. What should we be looking for in slot machine regulations?" That's handled in one area. Then once we get a specification, I take off my legal hat and put on my engineering hat. When that aspect is finished, it goes over to the accounting side. I'm president of the engineering one-third of the corporation, not the legal or accounting areas.

Do you meet with state legislators to come up with gaming regulations, or do you go through state administrative agencies?

Legislation in this area is generally worded, "We're going to have a video lottery. Here are some of the basic things we'll need to have." But as far as machine specifications go, no legislature should specify in their statute what a machine should look like. Engineering and law changes so rapidly. To write something in a statute, and then not be able to change it because you don't have enough votes, is extremely dangerous.

A lot of this should be handled through administrative rules and regulations. The legislature should deal with the basic things, but as far as how the machines have to be assembled, that should be left to administrative rule. I write a lot of the



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machine regulations for administrative law bodies.

Part of my job also is not to represent the view of the industry, but to be able to listen to what the industry says. When the industry sees something that it thinks is unfair, I try to convey those feelings to the state.

Let's talk about some of the new technology being introduced to the industry, such as touch-screens and multi-games.

With touch-screen, by placing your finger on top of certain characters on the screen, the game will go on as if you've actually hit a button. For example, it'll say, "Press here to increment your bet," and you follow along. I've heard it's popular in some states but not others.

Multi-games, or three-in-one games, have a different number of game keys on the machine. You can, from the central system, configure different types of games on the terminals. Multi-game terminals seem to be the preferred way to go during the last six months.

How is Iowa's riverboat gaming set up?

The boats will have regular Nevada slot machines, but they will take tokens instead of money. There's a $200 loss limit per player, per excursion.

Are you the only independent laboratory that tests in the United States? If so, do you expect competition to begin sprouting up?

Yes, we're the only ones. As far as competition, I don't know what to expect. We're a clearing house for all states. I believe states that sign on with us will get the benefit of all the chips that we've approved during the past two years. I don't see why a state would want to set up its own laboratory, or pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for 2,500 programs that have already been approved somewhere else in the United States. □

"Multi-game terminals seem to be the preferred way to go during the last six months."

Do you have any recommendations for what to look for in equipment? What machine features have proven most reliable?

I can't comment on that. It would require me to tell you which machines are better or worse, which we can't do as an independent laboratory. If a game meets the specifications, that means its decent and reliable. It's up to the individual purchaser to decide which machine is best for him.

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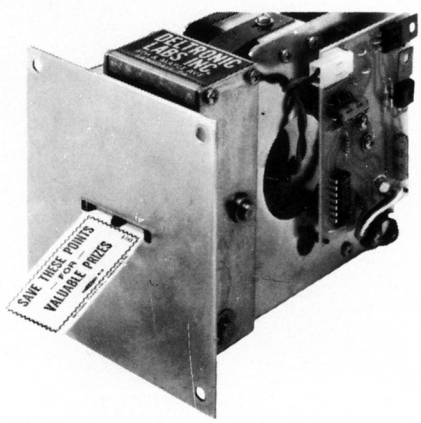

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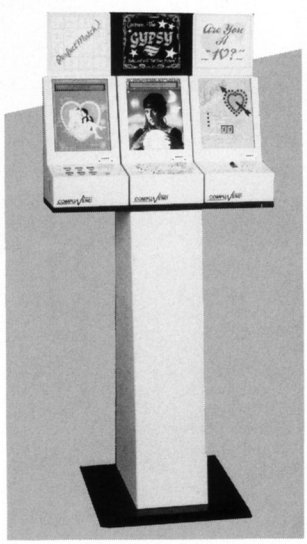

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Bonnie Theard

The other side of the poker hand

There's a joker in every deck of cards, a useful one depending upon the game you play. In the economically charged game of legalizing video poker, the joker may be those "gray area" games already in place. Not everyone sings a happy song when it comes to regulated video gaming.

One Midwestern operator candidly explained the "gray" game demand. "Locations aren't closet cases," he said. "They travel around and see other taverns with video poker games and note how much the players enjoy them. Bars are tired of those kiddie videos. We're an older society and want to play games that have some real risk and excitement, not fictional ones. The big kids like the real stuff."

What happens when an operator doesn't supply the games his locations demand? The response: "If you want to hang on to an account, you put them in. If you don't, sure enough, the location will go elsewhere.

"If you took a survey of all the locations with coin-op equipment, you would probably find that 95-plus percent are in favor of some type of adult entertainment."

What's the economic situation? "Here in the Midwest you have a lot of minimum wage labor and a farm-based economy. The weekly gross income numbers I see in your 'State of the Industry Report' are our monthly numbers. There are a lot of operators in the Midwest who have left the business, or are in deep financial trouble."

"Operators don't have the luxury of waiting out legal video poker."

It becomes clear that "gray area" games spell survival for many. Operators in states pushing for legalized video gaming may feel they do not have the luxury of waiting it out, possibly losing locations in the process.

Despite the downturn in the economy, this particular operator says his state has horse and dog tracks, Indian gambling halls, and church bingo games and pull tabs (most of the pull tab machines are owned by the churches). He asks: "How can state government award the gambling privilege to some groups and not others?"

He advocates keeping the money at home, saying, "Consider the big dollars that people have to take to Atlantic City or Las Vegas. That money is no longer in the state where the citizens live and work—it's gone elsewhere. States have to help their own economy."

Would he consider disposing of his "gray area" games in favor of legalized video poker? "I'd be all for it as long as I had a fair chance to obtain that equipment and compete on an even footing with other operators, whether they be state association members or non-members. An open market is all I desire."

He explained that there is one hitch: the state association. He describes it as "a clique with an unwritten code of conduct that excludes many operators from its ranks," a closed society of sorts, that could stand in the way of non-member operators enjoying the benefits of legal gaming activities.

Each operator must assess his own circumstances. More dialogue and openness are needed on every level if the benefits of legalized video gaming are to become a reality. For this operator's sake and the entire industry, that time cannot come soon enough. □

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Blowout at Belam

Belam general manager Howie Goldman and parts manager Henry Coletti were very pleased with turnout.

Belam's Simon Deith (c) calls out winning numbers for door prizes.

Data East's Steve Walton (r) enjoys watching an operator play *The Simpsons*.

Tommy George and Barry Snow of D&S Vending enjoyed playing the latest games.

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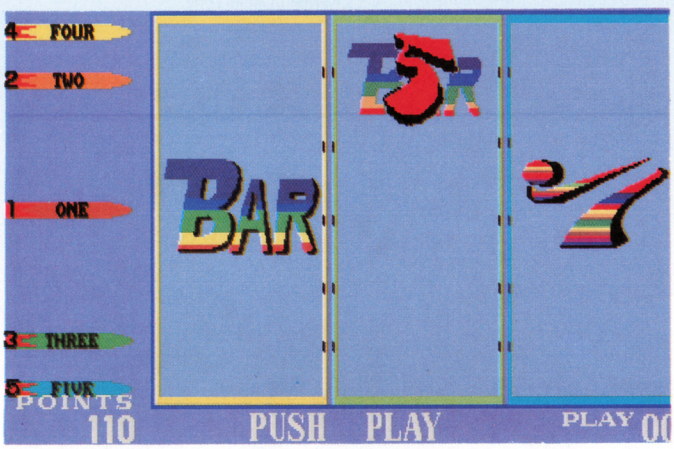

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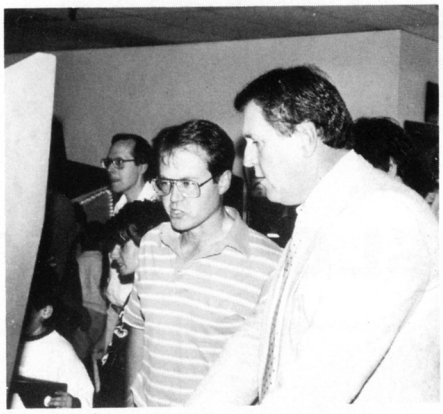
Rowe-Dedham draws crowd

Rowe-Dedham had a lot to celebrate when it invited its customers and manufacturer's representatives to its facilities for an open house in November: a successful year and hope for an even more successful 1991.

Operators mingled with other operators and the representatives from Rowe Manufacturing, who beamed at the acceptance of its new line of phonographs. □

From left: Rowe's Joel Friedman, Bob LeBlanc of Rowe-Dedham, and Jack Kerner of Melo-Tone.



Rowe salesman Mike Publicover shows Charlie Kellenberger of LaVerdiere's Arcades the new *Shuuz* game.

Operator Marsha Seavey of Northeast Video Vision is teaching her first grandchild the industry early!

From left: Mr. and Mrs. Russ Mawdsley of Russell-Hall with a happy Joel Friedman of Rowe.

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Eastern extends a welcome

Eastern Distributors of Philadelphia held an open house prior to the holidays, where it introduced Williams' *FunHouse*.

Close to 50 operating companies attended the event and saw Merit's latest video poker machine, to be introduced when (if?) video gaming is legalized in Pennsylvania. □

SNK's Rachel Davies talks to an operator about the *NEO-GEO* system.

Mary Hermanson of Konami watches an operator enjoy a game of *Over Drive*.

Merit's Bob Whitehead talks with an operator.

From left: Rhonda Fletcher (Bonita Marie), operators Herbert Zayon and Allen Britton, and Phil Steinberg (Eastern.)

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John Margold

How to determine the proper percentaging

As the trend toward redemption continues to grow, I get more and more calls that ask me to elaborate on the subject of percentaging. Giving the player back a percentage of money spent in an amusement center is what separates a redemption center from a standard arcade.

Because of this, the amount of value returned to the player is extremely important. If you don't give the player enough, your location may be perceived as a rip-off. But if you give the player back too much, you can't make a profit.

Some successful redemption operators return as much as 35 percent to the players. Others claim that 20 percent is sufficient. Obviously, all locations are not alike. If you are in a transient, vacation-land type of location, 20 percent may be correct. However, if your business must rely on repeat customers, a figure of 25 to 30 percent is probably more in line.

"Giving the player back a percentage of money spent in an amusement center is what separates a redemption center from a standard arcade."

Ticket-hungry players enjoy redemption games that provide a tangible return in addition to the entertainment value.

In order to illustrate, let's use 25 percent as the figure for our hypothetical amusement center. Assume we have all of our games set to accept tokens. The bill acceptor gives four tokens for $1, 24 for $5, and 50 for $10. In our amusement center, the average cost of a token is 22 cents. In order to pay back 25 percent to the customer, each token played must average five-and-a-half cents back in winnings.

In our hypothetical amusement center, each redemption game has a ticket dispenser. To keep things simple, we will use tickets with only one value; all tickets will be imprinted "John's Fun Center/One Point." To continue in the interest of simplicity, each point will equate to one cent. Therefore, if we wish to average five-and-a-half cents back on each token played, we also want to average five-and-a-half tickets back per play.

Some games will pay out less than five-and-a-half tickets per play (*Skee-Ball* may average only four), but others may average more than five-and-a-half. *Reel Poker*, for example, may average seven tickets. Our goal is not to have each machine award 25 percent, but to have the entire redemption center average 25 percent in pay-back to the player.

Since one point equals one cent of value in our amusement center, it will be easy to price the merchandise. If one of our items is a Kodak disposable 35mm camera, let's

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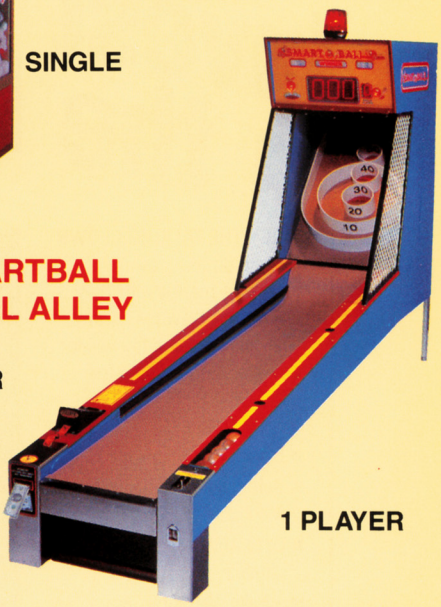
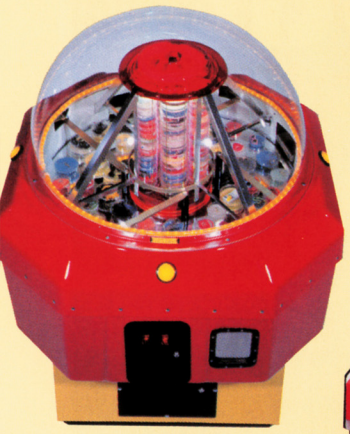


1 PLAYER



4 PLAYER

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figure out our true cost.

Assume that we paid $138 for a dozen. The UPS charge to have the box of 12 cameras delivered was $5.64, giving us a total cost of $143.64. Each camera cost us $11.97 ($143.64 divided by 12). With a "one point=once cent" formula, we would "sell" the camera for 1,197 points (we may round it off to 1,200 points to keep it neat). A second example might be a Sony AM/FM Walkman radio that costs us $23, including shipping. We would put a sign on the radio marked "2,300 points."

If we have adjusted our game correctly, a customer spending $10 in our amusement center should win $2.50 worth of tickets (250 of them). If that player wants the Kodak camera, he or she will save those tickets. Since tickets marked "John's Fun Center" have value only in our location, we are assured of a return visit (or several) by the player.

By the time the player has won 1,200 tickets and redeemed them for the camera, he will have spent $48 on the redemption games. You will keep $36, or 75 percent of $48.

Without redemption, we would have kept the entire $48. But would that player have returned to our location and spent that much money in our amusement center? By giving a fair percentage of the player's money back, via redemption merchandise, we will reinforce the customer's desire to play our games again and again.

Amusement games take the player's quarter and give him a few moments of fun. Redemption games, on the other hand, take the player's quarter, give him a few moments of fun, *plus* a nickel's worth of merchandise back. By giving a nickel back, you are apt to get many more quarters from that happy player.

If you're getting involved with redemption, but the numbers used in our hypothetical arcade do not coincide with yours, you may still use our 25 percent formula—with some adjustments. For example, if your location uses quarters instead of tokens (but you still use a one-cent ticket), your redemption games will need to be set a lot more generously in their payout. You must average six-and-a-quarter tickets back instead of our five-and-a-half.

However, if you use a two-cent value for your tickets with a 25-cent play price, you'll want to award an average of just over three tickets per game. The choice is yours. Some people like to keep a low ticket value and award lots of tickets. Other successful redemption arcade owners use a higher ticket value with a lower ticket "price" on the merchandise. Either system can work for you, as long as you give the player a fair return for his money.

At first, percentaging may seem confusing, but if you take a few months to study these numbers it may become clear. If you have any questions about redemption percentaging, give me a call; I'd be happy to discuss it with you. I can be reached at (201) 440-2200. □

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READER'S RESPONSE

OPERATORS: This column is devoted to you. It is your chance to have your voice heard on the state of the industry. We welcome all complaints, compliments, and comments. We will print your letters as received, when possible. We would appreciate it if you would refrain from sending a scathing letter about a specific manufacturer. Instead, we would like your general observations on the industry. Your name will not be used if you prefer. Take a few moments to share your thoughts with the rest of the coin-operated entertainment industry. There is a self-addressed sheet waiting for you to fill out and return to us.

Welcome reception

I was personally very disappointed in the trade show in New Orleans (AMOA Expo '90). I am a "foreign" operator and felt that I was treated exactly as such, not as a potential customer.

At the IAAPA show we, as foreign operators, were treated with great dignity. Special arrangements were made for us when we felt that we needed them.

For the most part I felt that the representatives on the floor for many companies were ignorant on the subject of their product and definitely not interested in foreign business.

There were three exceptions to this: the folks at Play Meter, The Amusement Equipment Exchange, and Marcio Bonilla of Arachnid. These people really made us feel welcome.

David R. Smith
Honduras, C.A.

David, thank you for your kind comments. What about it, AMOA, are there special arrangements that can be made for foreign visitors to the show? They are important and should be treated with respect.

Don't give up

I'm a small operator and I haven't been one to write down how I really feel about things. However, I am getting tired of hearing too much negative about the industry. I got into this business about 10 years ago when things were looking very good—video games were just getting popular. I was as shocked as everyone else when the bubble began to burst, but I didn't give up. No one promised me a rose garden, but I was determined to make a go of it.

I believe operators in general believe that they will make it no matter what. Our business has had subtle changes, but basically it remains the same. We put games into places and pray that people will play them. What has changed drastically is those games that we have to put in. Manufacturers have got to be nuts if they think we can continue to buy crap games. Do they really care? Where is their pride? I know that manufacturers cannot expect a hit every single time, but I expect them to at least try. It doesn't seem like they are even trying.

This business is changing because those that have it in their power to help the operator are not living up to their potential.

New York

AND NOW . . .
A WORD FROM OUR READERS!!!

An operator challenged us to provide space and invite everyone in the coin machine business to write about what is right, wrong, or can be corrected within the industry. OK, here's the space. Now it's up to all of you to fill it with comments on the industry. We will not print your name if you so request, but we will print your comments just as you have them. The operator suggested running the page for three issues, but we will leave it indefinitely if you continue to send your opinions.

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Welcome to Frank "The Crank"

The February 1981 issue was Play Meter's "Directory" issue, featuring listings of all manufacturers, distributors, and support/supply companies in the coin-op industry. It's interesting to glance through the listings back then and compare them to today's list of companies. A few names remained constant over the years, but far more fell by the wayside. You don't realize how many until you compare old listings.

One company that was just getting its start in the United States was Nintendo of America. Ron Judy and Al Stone had been appointed as marketing managers for its newly established U.S. headquarters in New York. Al and Ron had previously been handling Nintendo products through Far East Video.

It hadn't been very long since operators were forced to pay an $8 per year, per jukebox licensing fee. However, it was apparent in 1981 that $8 was going to look good compared to what the fee would soon be—$25 in 1982 and $50 the following year. ASCAP's general counsel, commenting on BMI's reluctance to stand with ASCAP and SESAC for a $70 fee, noted that if they had joined the other two "the fee might well have started earlier." He added that he felt the jukebox operators "fared very well. Their attorney got a very good result with a very weak case."

The February 1981 issue featured a new column by Frank Seninsky. He stated his goal for his column, "Frank's Cranks": "It is my intention to ask questions, disassemble, and reassemble games on location to make comments in praise of manufacturers for their improvements, implant new ideas and suggest future improvements." As you know, Frank has been a regular contributor to Play Meter since his debut 10 years ago. By the way, his first game reviews were on *Spectar* by Exidy, *Battlezone* by Atari, *Flight 2000* by Stern, and *Xenon* by Bally.

Pat Matthews, Play Meter's music programming columnist, eulogized John Lennon, who had been shot down the previous December. He said, "The shots rang out and almost simultaneously caused a 'ringing' in the ears of millions. We've all lost a best friend. John Lennon's music will live for more than a lifetime."

Ralph Lally, in his editorial, pointed out some positive and negative things happening in the industry. On the negative side: 1. AMOA suffering a setback on the copyright issue; 2. the problem of "gray area" games affecting the industry; and 3. ultra-high interest rates and runaway inflation putting a pinch on everyone's finances.

On the positive side: 1. operator profits and revenues up because of better equipment; 2. pinball making a comeback and 50-cent play a possible reality by 1981 (oh well, he couldn't be right about everything!); 3. very strong video with good American-made games; 4.) more and more people playing amusement games; and 5.) AOE becoming a reality with hard hitting seminars.

Products featured in our "New Products" section included *Force II*, a multiball pinball by Gottlieb; *Radar Scope*, the first product marketed in the United States and Canada by Nintendo of America; *Pac-Man*, Midway's one- or two-player cocktail version; *Black Knight*, Williams' first multi-level, multi-ball pinball game; *No Man's Land*, a combat video game by Gottlieb; and *Spectar*, an Exidy video game. □

Tom Yager

What's up, doc? Bugs Bunny and High Impact

Some videos are made to bring out the rowdy in everybody. Williams' *High Impact Football* has more adult male appeal than most videos I've seen recently, and the rest of the game stacks up equally well.

The first thing that struck me about the game is the sensible design of its cabinet. *High Impact* is a four-player game, with a large color CRT tilted for easy up-close viewing. The controls are mounted on a ledge, spread to give adult players plenty of room. The controls for players one and four are more on the sides than the front of the game, but the screen is still easily viewed by all.

The game supports a variety of play arrangements. Two players can either play against each other, or on the same team playing against the machine. Four players team up, two and two, against each other. The controls are simple: one joystick and one button for each player. The buttons are labeled "action," appropriate since pressing it does something different depending on whether you're running or passing, or playing offense or defense.

High Impact runs on a timer (don't you love that!); each credit buys a slice of time. All of the credits purchased *must* be used at once, and players can "buy in" on a game in progress. A separate timer is maintained for each player, which can be increased at any time by inserting coins and pressing "start."

"Some videos are made to bring out the rowdy in everybody."

This game sports gorgeous graphics. The players are well-formed and move pretty realistically, if a bit jerky. The game clock is presented in an inset frame ("just like on TV"), and other insets appear with referee, coach, and color commentator's reactions to the game (not to mention an occasional cheerleader).

Most of the game is done in ordinary pixel graphics, but the people (even, it seems, some of the crowd) are digitized: an electronic picture was taken of them and stored in the game's memory. There is limited animation of the digitized graphics, too, as the game plays back three or four frames of events like jumping cheerleaders and coaches celebrating touchdowns. The game's graphics reward players lavishly for success, but also chide them for failure in a tongue-in-cheek way. Really bad plays are met with insets of coaches holding their noses, or putting bags over their heads.

The game couldn't have done better at giving each player a chance to win. Every play opens with a menu of offensive or defensive play diagrams. The player holding the quarterback's controls (this is fixed according to which control is chosen) selects a play from this menu. When the play starts, the game controls your other players for you, while you maneuver yourself (with the joystick) and use the action button to throw, block a punt, spin out of a tackle or some other action appropriate to the play.

A flag with your player number on it floats over your player's head, or points in your player's direction if he's off the screen to one side. That's one of my few gripes with this game. There is only one camera angle, which always stays fixed on the ball. During a kickoff, for example, the ball is with the kicking team, and the receiving player is "blind" (off the edge of the screen) until just before the ball

lands. They should have found a better way to handle this, and the game would have been made more interesting with even one additional angle.

Aside from that, *High Impact* is a great game. Just about anything's possible, and the game-controlled players seem to (more or less) faithfully execute the selected plays. There is a healthy sense of humor throughout: the coaches' reactions, the shirtless fan with "We're #1" painted in red on his chest, and the halftime show with dancing cheerleaders.

From an operator's point of view, this is a terrific street location game. No sports bar should suffer football season without one of these (Williams' release seemed a bit late for that, but there's always next year), and it might give football junkies a needed fix in the off-season. The control the players have over the game, and the game's responsiveness to good and bad play, make it likely that players, once started, will be hooked. Each player must pay his own way and keep paying it as long as he wishes to play. The game's competitive nature encourages continued spending.

The 1990 football season is already over, and I'm not sure how well this game will do off-season. I'm also not sure of its success in arcades and locations where players aren't as likely to show up in groups. The game is enjoyable as a single-player piece, but its strength (and best profits) comes from having all the controls occupied.

I *am* sure that Williams did a bang-up job of simulating the feel and action of real football. The graphics are far beyond that capable of cheesy home video games, and the sound is stirring and realistic. I took an immediate liking to this piece, and I highly recommend it, with one caveat: remember the audience (adult males, mostly), place it carefully, and monitor your take. If you have multiple locations, you may need to move *High Impact* once or twice before it starts attracting the crowds and profits it deserves.

Bugs Bunny's Birthday Ball

It's hard to find someone who *isn't* a fan of the Looney Tunes characters. Bugs Bunny and his cohorts are universally recognized as the ruling party in the realm of cartoons, so no one can fault Bally's business sense for licensing these Warner Brothers characters for use in the latest Bally pinball, *Bugs Bunny's Birthday Ball*.

In designing *Bugs Bunny*, Bally (sorry, I can't help but alliterate) hoped for a game that was playable by all age groups, regardless of expertise. What actually came out was a game tilted decidedly toward the inexperienced player. Make no mistake about it: *Bugs Bunny* is an easy game. So much so that it reminds me more of some recent Premier efforts than of a typical Bally showing.

Several factors contribute to the game's ease of play. First, it is a single-ball game. This might seem limiting, but I think doing away with multi-ball allowed the designers *more* leeway. Instead of having fewer things to shoot for, eliminating multi-ball should have paved the way for more interesting objectives. Unfortunately, Bally went gadget-happy instead, using up a lot of the game's device budget and playfield space on a gimmick that doesn't add much to the game.

The gimmick in *Bugs Bunny* is its "inverted sunken playfield," a separate abbreviated playfield ramped down toward the back of the game. A single flipper lies at the bottom, with a handful of contact targets, a captive ball (the "big score"), and an escape ramp ("tweety's slide") within shooting distance. The ball falls into a kicker hole when the flipper can't keep it in play. I was not impressed with the sunken playfield. I stand roughly six feet tall, and I wasn't tall enough to see three of the contact targets (and their corresponding lights), which are the main objectives for that playfield. Activity on the sunken playfield is limited mostly to flailing, a style of play which frustrates good and bad players about equally.

The sunken playfield was also the cause of the game's two most obvious design flaws. The entrance to the kicker hole has a lip which causes a slow-moving ball to get stuck there. The end of the escape ramp has a "V" cut into it which also serves to grab the ball. Both cases required serious jolts to get the ball back in play. These may be problems specific to test units, but if not, expect complaints from players about stuck balls and forced tilts.

The central skill shot is just that: central. Its placement makes it easy pickings. A shot up the rear-center ramp sends the ball through a short plastic gutter and into what looks like a small version of the *Diner* cup. The ramp's award is chosen at random and ranges from 10 points to 500K points, or

lights an Extra Ball target.

While the audit system reports the payout of these awards, the percentage, at least according to the manual, is *not* adjustable. Every game should have one easy skill shot; it helps attract new players. But the lack of adjustment for this ramp's payout makes it tough to keep the game from giving away too many replays/extra balls to better players.

The rest of the main playfield is slow and not very productive. The common objectives are contact targets for the letters in "Looney Tunes," a trio of drop targets, and a kicker hole. There are some not-so-easy shots as well: two contact targets (which are worth 1 million points after completing "Looney Tunes"), and a captive ball. The captive ball rolls between being accessible from the main and sunken playfields.

Successful flailing on the sunken playfield lights a "Big Score" on the captive ball, but it always activates the left outlane kicker when hit. There is also an eject hole which, if hit often enough, can be worth 50 million points during a timed period in the third ball. Does any game really need a single target worth 50 million? Granted, it's hard to light, but even 5 million would have made this target worthwhile and kept the game's scores realistic.

There are some things this game does right. When you shoot the center ramp, the ball drops into the middle of a trio of bumpers. Each contact adds to the bonus. As the ball leaves this walled-in area, it can be kicked back toward the bumpers by an upper slingshot. That's a nice touch, and it makes carefully applied nudges a good ally. The bonus multiplier is managed by a set of three rollovers which sit on a ledge above the sunken playfield. The launch can place the ball either here, amidst the bumpers (which don't advance the bonus except following a ramp shot), or down a gutter to the sunken playfield.

To add to this, there is a timed launch skill shot which awards from 10K to 100K points, or 500K plus bonus multiplier. I admire games which make more of a challenge of the launch by giving the ball several places to land. An alley which sends the ball along roughly the same path as the launch can, when lit, also give out these awards.

Just to be different, I suppose, the game has no right outlane. Instead, there are *three* left lanes: one return, one outlane, and one outlane with a kicker. With the game tuned to anything below "medium," the kicker is lit at the start of every ball, leaving only one true outlane. The kicker is shut down after one kick and can only be re-lit by the fairly difficult captive ball shot. The lack of a center bounce target (like a bank of drop targets) and the game's overall sluggishness make a center drain a rarity.

There is one other gimmick: the surprise package. At the end of each player's game, he or she is given the option of keeping or passing on a surprise. The surprise is a random (but, thankfully, tunable) award which covers an incredible range. The possibilities are not all listed in the manual, but I encountered a few interesting ones: give 1 million points to the next player, swap scores, deduct points from score, and, of course, replay. This is a great deal more interesting than a typical match feature (which can be activated instead of the surprise). I'm not sure how crazy I am about any feature which randomly penalizes players, however. Player reaction to the surprise package bears watching.

Before I played my first game, I expected to be bowled over with the music and voices of the familiar cartoons. The "opening number," the tune played before the first ball is launched, is marvelous, as is the tune which ends the game. They're both reproduced faithfully from the Warner Brothers' opening and closing music and done about as well as the synthesized voices can manage. The background music and sound effects are passable, but they're not Bally's best. The voices, an area where a cartoon-based game could really make a name for itself, are realistic but, again, too few. The game's title character speaks only once (in my tests), and the lack of variety of voices in normal play makes things a little monotonous.

But will it make money?

Even though the *Bugs Bunny* characters have an ageless appeal, the game's birthday party motif and brightly colored artwork make it a better kids' game. Its tendency toward long plays (set to "easy," the game's average is over three minutes in a location that draws mixed players) makes careful tuning a must.

An initial replay value of six million points or more is advisable, and I can't recommend putting the game out set to anything easier than "medium." At "easy," a better-than-average player can nail a 6 million point replay about half the time. I don't see this as a good multi-player game, either, since so much of the scoring is not tied to skill. And, breaking your back only to have the "surprise package" swap your score with another player is cute, but frustrating.

Bugs Bunny's Birthday Ball is, to me, a study in missed opportunities. With the cast of everyone's favorite cartoons at their disposal, Bally designers could have spun out a game with a delightful plot, backed by music and voices matched to what is happening in the game. Instead, it seems contrived. Bally should have given this game the wild treatment it gave *Dr. Dude* and *Elvira*; those machines were cartoonish in their own way. Change for its own sake is sometimes a good thing, but in this case, Bally's retreat toward conservatism and understatement backfired.

This game has very high one-time appeal; its artwork makes it almost irresistible to play once, or a few times. But its appeal fades quickly, and I found myself completely losing interest after a dozen plays or so. Does that mean I don't recommend it? Not exactly, but I think only a few locations are likely to find it profitable. Mall arcades, amusement parks and other locations which have high traffic and a steady flow of new customers should make good homes for this piece.

If you don't run locations which match these criteria, or if you have a limited pinball budget, I can't recommend *Bugs Bunny*. Knowing some of the new pins that will roll out at ACME in March also leaves me feeling that those who buy only a few games a year should pass this one up. □

Bill,

I need to know ...

1. Should I rotate the Double Dragon at Quick Mart?
2. Did you want to put another machine into Zak's Pizza?
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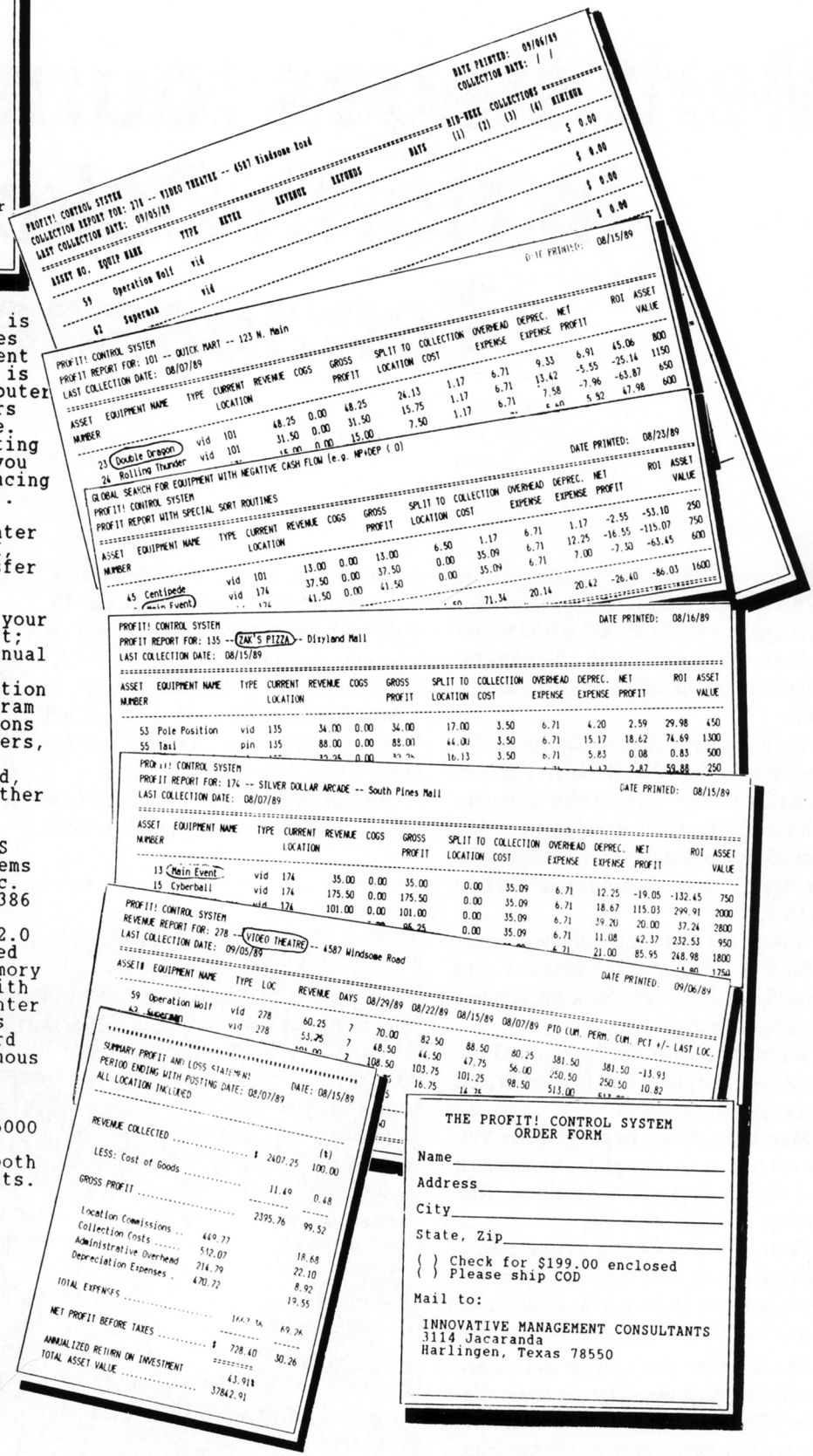
Charles



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Merit stages tournaments in North Dakota, Tennessee

Merit Industries recently sponsored the 1st Border Classic in Devils Lake, N.D., part of the $125,000 World Series of Darts tournament series. The $5,000 event was co-sponsored by LaFleur & Sons.

The highlight of the tournament was an appearance by Virgil Hill, a silver medalist boxer in the 1988 Olympic Games. The middleweight, now a highly ranked professional, signed autographs for the players and even took time to throw a few darts.

Among the tournament winners were:

Men's Singles: 1st place: Craig Engelhard; 2nd place: Rick Bachmeier; 3rd place: Duane Logie.

Women's Singles: 1st place: Diane Anderson; 2nd place: Lisa Bachmeier; 3rd place: Diane Fossen.

Men's Doubles: 1st place: Waun Vetter and Barry Cox; 2nd place: Roger Glick and Kevin Metcalf; 3rd place: Ray Lesarge and Bob Westman.

Women's Doubles: 1st place: Sherry Omdahl and Jackie Pastorek; 2nd place: Marlene Krokum and Ida Mae Miller; 3rd place: Jane Lommen and Debbie Glick.

Shortly after this tournament, Merit held the 3rd Volunteer Open in Knoxville, Tenn. The event, worth over $7,500 in prizes and trophies, drew over 800 entries. Precision Darts served as co-sponsor.

The charity event raised $2,800 for the Epilepsy Foundation. Precision's Denny Havner organized 21 celebrity teams, composed of individuals from local TV and radio stations, newspapers, and city/county government.

Here are some of the final results:

Men's Singles: 1st place: Carl Kreuzer; 2nd place: Bub Honeycutt; 3rd place: Terry Brown.

Women's Singles: 1st place: Lisa Quick; 2nd place: Patty Ray; 3rd place: Ann Fisher.

Draw Doubles: 1st place: Steve Troutt and Ray Hope; 2nd place: Ralph Monger and Mick Hedges; 3rd place: Thom Johnson and Chad Pratt.

Women's Doubles: 1st place: Lisa Hancock and Pat Reed; 2nd place: Lisa Quick and Angie Harper; 3rd place: Terry Reddy and Trish Portman. □

Steve Troutt (l) and Ray Hope, winners of the Tennessee Draw Doubles event.

Arachnid pays visit to Pittsburgh

Jerry Umberger, known throughout the world for his prowess as a steel-tip dart player, made a successful conversion to soft-tips at Arachnid's BullShooter Regional in Pittsburgh on Nov. 16-18. It was co-sponsored by Pittsburgh's Atlas Distributors.

Umberger has been a five-time member of America's World Cup Team. His travels with the team have taken him to Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, England, and Scotland. For the Pittsburgh event, he joined soft-tip players from Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, New York, and Ohio. They competed on Arachnid *English Mark Darts* machines.

Umberger, representing Dart World Inc., showed he is equally adept at soft-tip darts. He captured the Pro Championship category, first place in Open Doubles with partner Mike Orav, first place in Mixed Cricket with wife Gloria, second place in Mixed Doubles with Gloria, and second place in Cricket Singles.

"I have watched the electronic game grow and decided to get involved in it," Umberger said. "I plan to place some boards around my area and try to get people interested in the game. I think I can get electronics going in my area, and Arachnid has offered to help in any way it can." □

Ohio welcomes Arachnid's BullShooter tour

Arachnid's BullShooter VI dart tour made a stop in Columbus, Ohio, on Nov. 30-Dec.2 for a regional tournament, co-sponsored by Cleveland Coin and Shaffer Distributing. Over 600 players from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and New York competed for $5,000 in prize money.

Terry Brown, a well-known player from Greenwood, Ind., captured the Pro Singles title. He also won the Mixed Doubles event with partner Pam Schilling, fourth place in Cricket Singles, and first place in the warm-up competition. Mary Donaker of Grand Rapids, Mich., won the Women's Singles event and teamed with Chris Stratton to take first place in Mixed Cricket.

As with other BullShooter regionals, the first, second, and third place winners in each of the eight main events qualified for the BullShooter VI World Challenge of Champions. It will take place over Memorial Day weekend at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago. □

Mary Donaker with Arachnid A-Team member Herb Healey.

Jeff Rosenthal

What to expect in the year ahead

Simply put, 1991 does not look good from a tax point of view. As the economy slows we see big companies in deep financial trouble.

With industries like banks, stock brokers, airlines, hotels, retailers, auto manufacturers, and state and local governments layoffs and/or furloughs are the order of the day. Added to this complicated mess are the complex issues in the Middle East.

The depth of recession has net yet been reached. So far it appears to be as deep as the recession in 1981-1982. Economists are telling us an upturn in the economy should be felt by mid-year. I believe that they are too optimistic. The effects of a slowing economy and cost of the military build-up will clearly stifle any signs of improvement in the economy until January 1992 at the earliest.

What should you expect?

Inflation and unemployment should rise. So, too, should the cost of living, especially energy costs. Prudent investors should be able to find some real bargains.

On the tax front, government at all levels will find declining revenue and increased costs a big challenge. The tried and true answer is tax increases, revenue enhancements, or user fees. Call them what you like, but it amounts to a tax hike.

Tax changes for 1990

Many of these items are the result of the passing of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. Adjustments are due to indexing (adjustments for inflation):

1. **Dependency exemption allowances:** Exemption allowances for you, your spouse, and each dependent is now $2,050. This is an increase of $50 from last year. The amount allowable by your state of residence varies from state to state.

2. **Standard deduction allowance:** If you are married and filing jointly the deduction is now $5,450, compared to the previous amount of $5,200; if you are single the deduction is now $3,250, compared to $3,100; if you are the head of the household with a dependent child your deduction is now $4,750, compared to $4,550; and if you are married but filing separately (the worst status) your deduction is now $2,725, compared to $2,600.

Who must file?

The following is a list of those that are required to file an income tax return: *(See Figure 1)*

Earned income credit

If your earned income and your adjusted gross income are both less than $20,264 and you have a child who lived with you for more than half the year, you may be entitled to a refundable credit of up to $953. You can get this refund even if you are not otherwise required to file a tax return.

Tax rates

The three standard tax brackets remain at 15, 28, and 33 percent. The income levels for each have changed for the 1990 tax returns. Here are the new levels: *(See Figure 2)*

Social Security rates rise

Most taxpayers will end up paying a higher Social Security (F.I.C.A.) than a Federal Income Tax for the first time this year. The new rates of 7.65 percent were deducted by employers from your paychecks on wages up to $51,300. The old rate was 7.51 percent on wages up to $48,000.

Since employers pay an equal amount, the total amount credited to your Social Security account will be 15.3 percent or a maximum of $7,849. Self-employed individuals pay on net profit up to $51,300 at the rate of 15.3 percent. However, this year for the first time, half of the self-employment tax can be used to reduce net earnings.

Missing numbers could cost

Social Security numbers are required for all dependents over the age of two. The IRS informs us that they intend to check to see if anyone else is claiming the same child. To apply for a Social Security number for a dependent contract the Social Security office near you.

Also, if you intend to claim credit for child care, make sure that you have the Social Security number and address of the person providing the care. No number—no deduction.

Also required is the Social Security number of any person to whom you pay alimony (if you intend to take a deduction for this amount). As an aside, if you receive alimony, it is taxable. Receipt of child support is not taxable.

Failure to list the required numbers can result in a loss of a deduction and a fine of $50 for each missing number.

Status	Gross income
Single (under 65)	$ 5,300
(65 or older)	6,100
Married filing jointly	
(both under 65)	9,550
(one 65 or older)	10,200
(both 65 or older)	10,850
Married filing separately	
(all cases)	2,050
Head of household	
(with dependents)	
Under 65	6,800
65 or older	7,600
Qualifying Widow(er)	
(with dependant child)	
Under 65	7,500
65 or older	8,150

Figure 1

"Simply put, 1991 does not look good from a tax point of view. Inflation and unemployment should rise."

15 percent bracket	
Married (jointly)	$0 — 32,450
Single	0 — 19,450
Head of household	0 — 26,050
Married (separately)	0 — 16,255
28 percent bracket	
Married (jointly)	$32,450 — 78,400
Single	19,450 — 47,050
Head of household	26,050 — 67,200
Married (separately)	16,255 — 39,200
33 percent bracket	
Married (jointly)	$78,400 — 162,770
Single	47,050 — 97,620
Head of household	67,200 — 134,930
Married (separately)	39,200 — 123,570

Note: Higher calculations apply if over maximum at 33 percent.

Figure 2

Deductible business miles

The new mileage rate for 1990 is 26 cents per mile. The rate for 1989 was 25-1/2 cents per mile. And now, the 26 cents per mile rate applies to all business mileage, not just the first 15,000 miles as in prior years.

Extensions expiring

The following items, scheduled to expire at the end of 1989 or earlier, were extended through Sept. 30, 1990:

1. Exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance.
2. Exclusion for employer-provided group legal services.
3. Deduction for 25 percent of the health insurance costs of self-employed individuals.

Change of address

If you have changed your address since the last tax return was filed, you should notify the IRS. You can do this by completing Form #8822.

Those in Iraq or Kuwait

The IRS will suspend tax examination and collection actions for U.S. citizens detained in Iraq and Kuwait. These people will receive this administrative relief under the IRS policy for taxpayers in hostage situations. To take advantage of this policy, a special toll-free phone number, 1-800-829-4351, has been set up by the IRS. And yes, a family member may call on behalf of the taxpayer in the Middle East.

Early IRA withdrawals

Many people take IRA withdrawals prior to the proper age of 59-1/2. If you do so you are subject to a 10 percent penalty by the IRS, plus the income tax and any penalty the financial institution may have.

If a notice arrives

One of the more frightening experiences in life is receiving an envelope from the IRS. For most, the mere sight of an unexpected envelope from the government can cause heart palpitations.

In truth, many of these notices are not correct. Don't panic! Simply forward a copy of the notice to your tax professional. These notices are very cryptic and without seeing it, it's next to impossible for him analyze. Do not ignore these notices. Let me assure you that they will not go away on their own. □

Irving Blackman

Employee plans: the best bang for your tax buck

Owning your own business forces you to think of and for yourself—and how to get the most out of every dollar spent. You must also think of your employees and how to get the best return on money spent for their benefit.

A qualified retirement plan (pension or profit-sharing) can help you accomplish both of these goals. It offers super results for you, your top people, and your rank-and-file employees.

Just what is a qualified retirement plan? Technically, it's called a "qualified plan of deferred compensation." Let's take one word at a time.

Retirement plans that are "qualified" simply mean that the plan meets all of a long list of specific rules set forth in the Internal Revenue Code, thus qualifying it for favorable tax treatment. The "plan" is a written document that spells out how your own animal is going to work.

OK so far? Good. Now let's take two words at once. "Deferred compensation" means wages or other salary that is set aside (i.e., "defer"-taking) until a future year. But with the added kickers that a "qualified plan" allows, you can:

* Take a tax deduction *now* for the amount contributed to the plan.

* Accumulate investment earnings on the funds in the plan *tax-free*.

* Get additional tax breaks when those funds are eventually distributed to you or any other employee/participant.

Who can have a plan? The answer is almost any business or professional. Here's the long and short of it: if you have any earnings from self-employment or are the owner of a closely held corporation, a "qualified" retirement "plan" may be the best tax mousetrap to capture money for your future.

But wait a minute. Are qualified plans best for every business? No. Sometimes a non-qualified plan standing alone is your best bet. Often a non-qualified plan, in tandem with a qualified plan, can save a bundle of taxes. The big advantage of a non-qualified plan is that you can give benefits to only one selected executive (or more if you like). Moreover, there are no limits to how much you can sock away for your selected executive(s).

The tax advantage/disadvantage is a perfect match—the executive doesn't pay any tax until he receives the benefit in cash, while the employer gets a matching deduction at the same time.

Business owners who want to save every possible tax buck, while finding a way to reward employees, should learn the ins and outs of both qualified and non-qualified deferred compensation plans.

"A qualified retirement plan offers super results for you, your top people, and your rank-and-file employees."

Planning for both life and death

Sometimes truth *is* stranger than fiction. This is hardly an old cliche; many of you will say "That's me!" after reading this item.

This is a true, bittersweet story of a real business owner (let's call him Joe). His business (Success Co.) is the realization of a life-long dream. It started small, struggled, grew, and began making money. Now, after 20-plus years, Success Co. is profitable and growing. The future looks bright.

But here's the story that unfolded during an all-day tax-planning consultation. About 75 percent of Joe's wealth is locked up in Success Co., a tax-paying C corporation. He is 66 years old and married to Susan. They have two sons: one who lives in a distant state (he won't ever be a part of the business) and one who does minor tasks for Success Co. The latter son has neither the skills nor the desire to take over the company.

Joe's goals are divided into time frames: during his life and after his death. His lifetime goals are to keep working until the day he dies, but slow down; keep the business growing; build his management team; minimize income taxes; and not sell the business.

Joe's after-life goals are also simple: never sell the business (the boys would own it 50-50 after Susan dies) and minimize estate taxes. Though Joe loves his family and has a great relationship with his boys, it is clear that his real passion is the business.

It became apparent that Joe's present tax plan was beating him up income tax-wise. Also, upon his death, Success Co. would probably be sold to pay taxes and avoid putting the bulk of his wealth at economic risk. (Remember, Success Co. is now about 75 percent of his wealth and growing in value every year.)

pairs of shoes that fit you just right—one for lifetime planning and a second pair for death planning.

A way to beat the tax collector

Sooner or later, we all go to that big business in the sky (or that other place). You know how the old saying goes: "You can't beat death or taxes." But there *is* a way to eliminate a big chunk of death taxes.

"The premium cost of a second-to-die life insurance policy is substantially less than a traditional single-life policy."

Here's a list of some of the more important suggestions given to Joe for accomplishing his objectives. You should have no trouble matching the suggestions with Joe's goals. Some hints are given parenthetically, but most of the suggestions are designed to increase Joe's personal wealth and reduce the value of Success Co. for estate tax purposes.

1. Success Co. will elect S corporation status.
2. All major equipment will be purchased by Joe, who will then lease it to Success Co.
3. All insurance policies on Joe's life that are owned by Success Co. will be purchased by Joe.
4. Joe and Susan will buy in excess of $1 million of last-to-die life insurance, utilizing an irrevocable life insurance trust. (This will transfer much of the estate tax liability to the insurance carrier.)
5. Joe and Susan will make a gift of about $1 million worth of non-voting Success Co. stock to the boys. (This will get most of the value of Success Co. out of Joe's estate.)
6. Joe will control Success Co. for as long as he lives by keeping the voting stock.
7. Success Co. will be professionally appraised to make sure the IRS cannot prevail if it chooses to attack the stock gift to the boys.

The above does not attempt to cover every aspect of Joe's problems, the alternatives considered, or the possible tax traps. If Joe's shoes fit you, get professional advice so you have two separate

First, let's look at a few basics. The top estate tax bracket is 55 percent. A common way to pay estate taxes is to buy life insurance equal to the estimated amount of the estate tax liability. It's a good idea, but then again, life insurance is included in your estate.

Next, let's examine a common, real-life situation. Sam computes that his estate will be short $1 million to pay his estate tax liability. He cleverly buys $1 million worth of life insurance to pay the tax.

Was that smart? The $1 million in life insurance will produce another $550,000 in estate tax liability. Should he buy another $550,000 in life insurance? That game can only enrich your happy insurance agent and the IRS. You can defer the tax on your estate by leaving it to your wife, but the IRS will get its pound of flesh when she follows you to heaven.

Here's a method we recommend to our clients to win the insurance/estate tax game. It's a two-step process. First, Sam should buy a million-dollar, second-to-die life insurance policy. It has several names but is always easy to recognize: one policy insures two lives (in this case, Sam and his wife), and the $1 million is paid only after the second death.

That's the way it should be in Sam's case, because that is when the estate tax is due. This type of policy has one terrific advantage: the premium cost is substantially less than the cost of a traditional single-life policy. Check it out.

Step two is tax heaven. Sam creates an irrevocable life insurance trust. The trustee buys the million-dollar, second-to-die policy. If properly done, the IRS will not get one cent of that $1 million in insurance proceeds—not when Sam dies, not when his wife dies.

If you have any potential estate tax liability of any significance, call a competent professional adviser. Don't wait; time raises the insurance premium cost and favors the IRS. □

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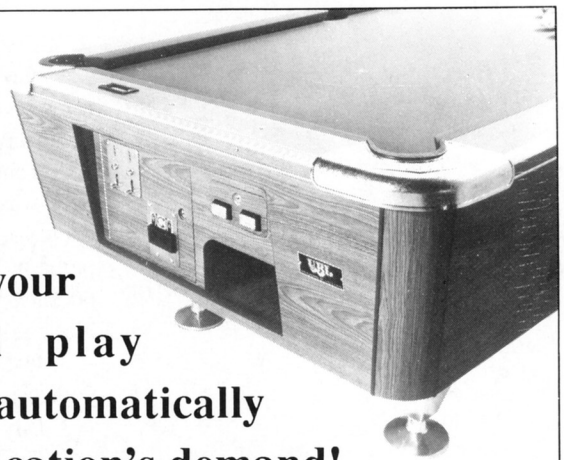
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Irving Blackman

Recession vs. boom

This is being written a few days before the November 1990 elections. I'm tired of two negatives—the negative campaigning and the negative predictions about the economy. There has been a storm of articles on what your business should do to prepare for the coming recession. If you're smart, down-turn plans should always be part of your overall business strategy.

But listen up. My money is on a boom—a super boom with inflation being a main feature, which means higher interest rates. My bet is that anything which looks like a recession won't happen or, if it does, it won't last long.

If you knew an inflationary boom was coming, what should you do tax-wise? Here are a few points to consider:

1. Go LIFO. This inventory method removes inflation from your ending inventory. Say your inventory is $300,000 at year's end and that the inflation rate for the year was 10 percent. You could legally drop your inventory about $30,000 (10 percent times $300,000). At a 30 percent tax rate, you would save $9,000 in taxes. Not bad!

2. Order needed equipment to lock-in your price.

3. Buy real estate instead of renting.

4. Try to arrange financing at a fixed rate.

(Note: All of the above strategies are designed to use inflation as a friend rather than a foe.)

5. Consider S corporation status once again. Higher profits usually make an S election the best choice. Pencil out the tax cost at various levels of income.

6. Explore different ways of dividing your increased income with your low-bracket family members. Think in terms of owning fixed assets in a family partnership that leases the assets to your corporation; give S corporation stock to low-bracket family members; create new corporations to be owned by adult children when new business opportunities come along; and take a look at how trusts might serve your family tax picture.

I know, my neck is sticking out. I'll tell you what: cut out this article and put it in a file for six or nine months. Then send it to me with your "it did boom" or "it didn't boom" comments. You're invited to thank me or chop my head off.

Break for auto expenses

It's not often that I ask my readers to do this, but let's hear it—three cheers for the IRS! Rarely, very rarely, does the IRS give us taxpayers a break without a lot of shouting and complaining on our part. But in Revenue Ruling 90-23, it did just that for those who drive a car for business purposes.

The ruling centers on the deductibility of **daily transportation expenses** in going to a **temporary** job site. Let's start out at your house. You leave, get into the car, and drive to your regular place of business—your office, plant, store, etc. Sorry, this ruling doesn't help you. The cost of the trip is not deductible.

Now let's see what the word "temporary" means. This time, on the way to

your regular place of business, you stop to see a client, customer, or supplier. You do your business and then go to your regular office. That temporary stop makes the entire trip deductible.

Here's another common variation. You go from your home to a customer or client, work the entire day at that "temporary" location, and return home at the end of the day. Again, it's entirely deductible.

Two situations remain fully deductible and are not affected by the ruling. Transportation costs between any two business locations (if you have two regular offices, plants, etc.) remain deductible. Also, out-of-town trips to a temporary job site (you return home the same day) or to an overnight out-of-town trip to a regular place of business (you have offices in more than one city) are still 100 percent deductible.

"A new IRS ruling centers on the deductibility of daily transportation expenses in going to a temporary job site."

How to avoid a tax audit

Every year, without fail, tax return time comes. Sometimes the tax man comes, in the form of an audit. And worst of all, often he finds you owe more taxes. The following is a primer to help you avoid this situation.

1. Don't make mistakes. Recalculate every figure on your tax return; math errors draw attention. Trace every schedule total and compare it to the figure used. Reread the description on every line; putting the right figures on the wrong line is a no-no.

2. Follow instructions to the letter and answer all of the questions asked on the return. Attach all schedules requested. Sign and date the return.

3. Explain unusual items; this is a must. Once your return is pulled by an IRS computer, an IRS employee will look it over. A schedule, with appropriate explanations, will usually avoid an audit. For example, explain the differences reported on 1099s and W-2s, a large deduction (like a casualty loss), or a substantial charitable contribution (attach your full appraisal report). When in doubt, over-inform.

4. File on time (an extension is OK). Either file the return on time or get a timely extension. Also, file the extended return when due, even if you don't owe any additional tax. Pay the tax due; if you're short, it's better to borrow and pay the tax than owe the IRS.

If you're nervous, register your return at the post office, return receipt requested. You must prove the return was filed on time if timeliness becomes an issue. Your best bet, if you have the time, is to file your return at a local IRS office. Have your copy date stamped by the clerk.

5. Elect S corporation status. A business that reports on Schedule C of Form 1040 is more likely to get audited than the same business reporting as a corporation. Yet an S corporation usually reports the same income or loss as on Schedule C.

Avoiding disaster on business transfers

This is a sad, but true, story. I had just finished giving a half-day seminar on "New Strategies for Transferring Your Family Business." The audience was made up of closely held business owners and spouses; they were attending a national trade association meeting in Seattle. A personal consultation with one of the members (let's call him Joe) after the seminar uncovered this tax horror story.

Joe is 66 years old; his wife Nancy is 59. Joe has four basic objectives:

1. To transfer the business, Little Co., to his son John, who has run it for many years.

2. To treat the other two non-business children fairly.

3. To provide for Nancy if he dies first.

4. To pay as little tax as possible.

Here is Joe's asset-fact pattern in a nutshell. He's worth about $600,000 alive—$350,000 is the approximate value of Little Co., with the rest in other assets. All are owned jointly with Nancy. Now watch this: Joe is worth $1.1 million dead. Little Co., a tax-paying corporation, owns and is the beneficiary of a $500,000 insurance policy on Joe's life.

Stop! Don't read any further for a few minutes. Jot down your own objectives and asset-fact pattern; chances are you and Joe have many common threads. Now continue reading about Joe.

He showed up at the consultation with a stack of documents worthy of a $10 million estate: two wills (one for him and one for Nancy), two living trusts, and a buy-sell agreement so the corporation could buy the stock from Nancy with the insurance proceeds when Joe died. All of these boiler-plate documents can be described in one word—worthless.

The wills were useless because of the joint tenancy. If Nancy died first, the two non-business kids shared $250,000, while John got the rest of the estate—not "fair," as Joe desired. Yes, John would own the business, but at a great tax cost. Little Co. would get socked with an alternate minimum tax of about $25,000.

And what about the estate tax? If Joe dies first, Nancy's estate could get hit with about a $60,000 liability. But if Nancy dies first, the estate tax liability for Joe could skyrocket to about $200,000. The reasons for this tax mess are complex. But suffice it to say that, if done right, it's easy to avoid paying one cent of alternative minimum tax or estate. That's right, zero!

What should Joe do? Basically, he must get the insurance out of the corporation and move half of the joint property into his name and half into Nancy's name.

What was Joe's mistake? He took some advice from his accountant, some from his lawyer, and some from his insurance man. No one person coordinated the entire plan. The result: a potential tax and family disaster. Joe's situation was easy to fix; we worked out the necessary changes.

The point I'm making is this: if you don't have a transfer plan, get one in place—now! If you already have one in place, get **one** competent professional to review all the pieces to make sure they fit. The tax savings is usually between 10 and 50 percent of your estate. □

Frank Seninsky

Bozo Basketball is for real

"Simply the best" is the way Diane and Mike Seibert, Design Plus Industries' dynamic sales duo, described their new *Bozo Basketball* to me at the Northeastern Regional Trade Show in May 1990.

Their presentation of the game was great, but I became skeptical when I heard that the cost would be a couple of hundred dollars more because of the "Bozo the Clown" license. Initially, I wondered how a picture of a clown could help a game earn more money.

There are several basketball models on the market, but somehow I had missed *Bozo*. I thought it would be interesting to get the mini-basketball manufacturers together and conduct a side-by-side test of all the different units in one arcade.

The first one to agree was Design Plus. They were willing to take their chances against the competition and have the results published. Two other manufacturers declined, with one saying that a side-by-side test wouldn't be valid. So there was no test—at least by me.

A single-player *Bozo* arrived at our arcade a week later. I instructed our arcade manager to set up the game and note any difficulties. I called him back a few hours later and was told there were absolutely no problems with the assembly (he had never put a basketball game together before). "It's collecting quarters right now, and the players really like it," he said.

Players' comments and revenue earnings were collected for the next few weeks. *Bozo* earned right up there with *Skee-Ball* and most of the other redemption and video games. It was set on 50-cent play, with a minimum of one ticket and a maximum of six. Each ticket was worth three points (a point is worth about a penny). We encouraged the teens and adults to play, even though most could earn the six-ticket maximum, which equates to a pay-out of 36 percent. Our average pay-out is about 17 percent.

I called around to see how other operators were doing with their mini-basketballs. Aladdin's Ron Malinowski is very happy with the *Bozo* earnings and has had no operational problems. Another large mall arcade operator told me that his *Bozo*s are doing over $400 a week. The second-best mini-basketball ranges between $250 and $275.

What accounts for the game's success? First off, let me say that I wasn't aware that the "Bozo the Clown" show is such a well-known TV program worldwide. I remember watching it as a child but didn't think my kids even knew who he was. It's a tremendous advantage to have an attraction that the kids, parents, and grandparents all relate to. The clown, circus music, flashing lights, and circus colors add an extra dimension that translates into extra game play.

Also, the game has positive design features. *Bozo* was designed specifically for children; it's not simply a scaled-down adult basketball version. The fact that older children and even adults play is just an added plus. The padded front across the all-steel construction keeps the players playing longer and spending more money.

The kids lean as far forward as they can, a fact taken into account by the game's designers. The two adjustable front bars allow players to easily see the basket, making *Bozo* less intimidating to smaller children. The game's 90-inch length adds a bit more skill for the older kids, which leads to repeat play. Even with the clown, this game does not look like a little children's toy.

I haven't had a chance to work with the double-hoop version yet, but all my reports show this game to be twice as good as a single-hoop model. The double is only 13 inches wider than the single, and it adds the direct competition factor. Naturally, the double can also be played as a single.

Operators are often wary of licensed products, since history shows that the game is what sells itself. But as I've explained, *Bozo* is different. The clown's universal appeal is a bonus that won't fade. The small additional licensing cost is well worth it.

Hats off to the Seiberts for having the imagination and persistence to obtain the licensing, build a quality product, and successfully market their game to a hard-to-penetrate distributor network. We will be looking for more licensed redemption games from Design Plus (such as *Bozo Blastoff*), which has perhaps opened the door to a new coin-op marketing approach for others.

As always...keep cranking! □

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HOT SINGLES

TITLE Label & Number/Distributing Label	ARTIST
1. Justify My Love Sire 4-19485/Warner Bros.	Madonna*
2. Because I Love You LMR 2724/RCA	Stevie B*
3. From A Distance Atlantic 4-87820	Bette Midler*
4. High Enough Warner Bros. 4-19595	Damn Yankees*
5. Tom's Diner A&M 1529	DNA/Suzanne Vega
6. Impulsive SBK 07337	Wilson Phillips
7. Love Will Never Do Without You A&M 1538	Janet Jackson*
8. Sensitivity MCA 53932	Ralph Tresvant*
9. The First Time Columbia 38-73502	Surface*
10. I'm Your Baby Tonight Arista 2108	Whitney Houston*
11. Gonna Make You Sweat Columbia 38-73604	C&C Music Factory
12. Freedom Columbia 38-73559	George Michael*
13. Miles Away Atlantic 4-87824	Winger
14. Play That Funky Music SBK 07339	Vanilla Ice
15. The Way You Do The Things You Do Virgin 4-98978	UB40
16. After The Rain DGC 4-19667	Nelson*
17. Something To Believe In Enigma 44617/Capitol	Poison
18. Miracle Mercury 878 392-4	Jon Bon Jovi*
19. Love Takes Time Columbia 38-73455	Mariah Carey*
20. I'm Not In Love Epic 34-73636	Will To Power*

* available on vinyl

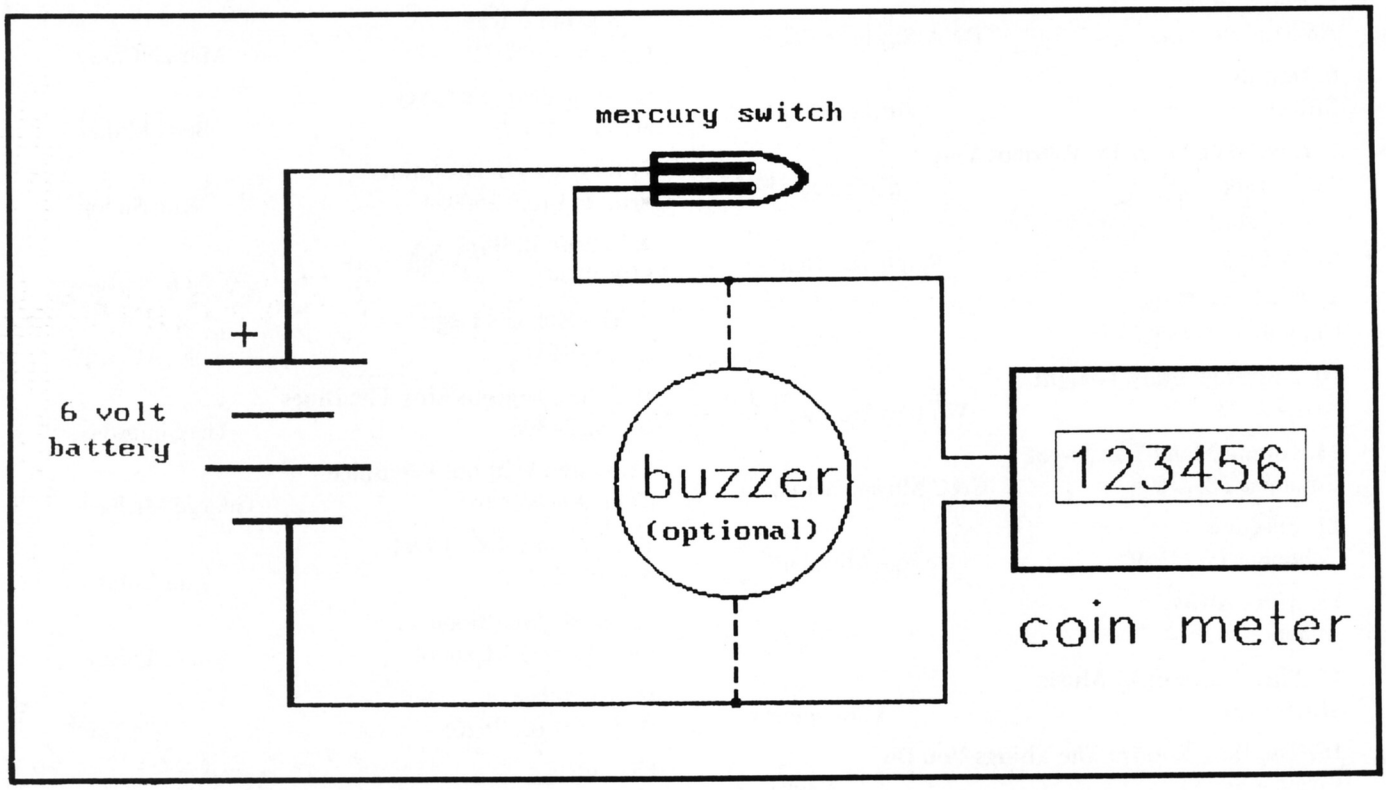
COMPACT DISCS

TITLE Label & Number/Distributing Label	ARTIST
1. To The Extreme SBK 95325	Vanilla Ice
2. Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em Capitol C2-92857	M.C. Hammer
3. The Immaculate Collection Sire 26440/Warner Bros.	Madonna
4. I'm Your Baby Tonight Arista 8616	Whitney Houston
5. Mariah Carey Columbia 45202	Mariah Carey
6. Some People's Lives Atlantic 82129	Bette Midler
7. Rhythm Of The Saints Warner Bros. 26098	Paul Simon
8. Wilson Phillips SBK 93745	Wilson Phillips
9. The Razor's Edge ATCO 91413	AC/DC
10. The Simpsons Sing The Blues Geffen 24308	The Simpsons
11. Listen Without Prejudice Columbia 46896	George Michael
12. Serious Hits...Live! Atlantic 82157	Phil Collins
13. Flesh And Blood Enigma 91813/Capitol	Poison
14. Recycler Warner Bros. 26265	ZZ Top
15. Vol. 3 Wilbury 26324/Warner Bros.	Traveling Wilburys
16. Rhythm Nation 1814 A&M 3920	Janet Jackson
17. No Fences Capitol 93866	Garth Brooks
18. Put Yourself In My Shoes RCA 2372	Clint Black
19. No More Games Columbia 46959	New Kids On The Block
20. Poison MCA 6387	Bell Biv Devoe

Randy Fromm

Building the Squealer

Circuit alerts you to tampering



One of the most common methods of cheating a crane out of its merchandise is by "crane-tipping." It is often possible to lean the machine on its side, causing an avalanche of plush.

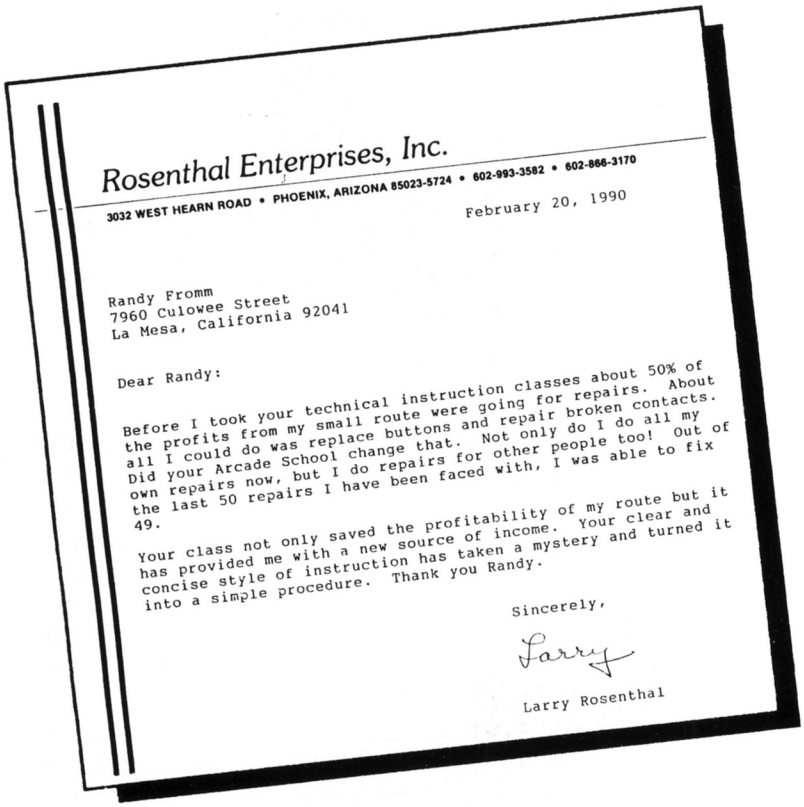
It is sometimes difficult to tell if the crane has been tipped; the only evidence may be an unusually high percentage of payouts. If the crane is being tipped and you do not know about it, it may cause you to try and "tighten-up" your crane in order to bring down the percentage. This will really discourage your players, who will now find it very difficult to win anything at all!

The Squealer

The "Squealer" circuit will let you know if the crane has been tipped. There is also an optional alarm that will sound when tampering occurs. With only three or four components, the Squealer is simple to build.

The six volt battery is connected in series with a coin counter and mercury switch. Be sure to mount the mercury switch so that it will close when the crane is tipped forward. When the crane is tipped, the mercury switch closes. This completes the circuit to the coin meter, which then increments. By keeping track of the meter reading, you will be able to tell if the crane has been tipped. □

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES?



Rosenthal Enterprises, Inc.

3032 WEST HEARN ROAD • PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85023-5724 • 602-993-3582 • 602-866-3170

February 20, 1990

Randy Fromm
7960 Culowee Street
La Mesa, California 92041

Dear Randy:

Before I took your technical instruction classes about 50% of the profits from my small route were going for repairs. About all I could do was replace buttons and repair broken contacts. Did your Arcade School change that. Not only do I do all my own repairs now, but I do repairs for other people too! Out of the last 50 repairs I have been faced with, I was able to fix 49.

Your class not only saved the profitability of my route but it has provided me with a new source of income. Your clear and concise style of instruction has taken a mystery and turned it into a simple procedure. Thank you Randy.

Sincerely,

Larry

Larry Rosenthal

TAKE A LOOK AT WHO'S USED RANDY FROMM'S ARCADE SCHOOL TRAINING, AND WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

- ATARI OPERATIONS
- CHUCK E. CHEESE/ SHOWBIZ PIZZA
- KNOTT'S BERRY FARM
- TIME-OUT FAMILY FUN CENTERS
- DAVE & BUSTER'S
- PUTT-PUTT GOLF & GAMES
- SCANDIA MINIATURE GOLF
- MICROWORLDS

SURE IT'S TECHNICAL . . . BUT IT'S NOT DIFFICULT!

1991 CLASS SCHEDULE

FOR YOUR **FREE** INFORMATION PACKAGE,CALL:

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Seaside Heights, NJ	April 22 - 27
Charleston, SC	June 24 - 29
Columbus, OH	August 12 - 17
Las Vegas, NV	Sept 16 - 21
Chicago, IL	Oct. 14 - 19

RANDY FROMM'S ARCADE SCHOOLS

Randy Fromm's Arcade Schools 7960 Culowee St. La Mesa, CA 92041

Laser Ghost

In *Laser Ghost*, a new three-player gun game from Sega, players must destroy an alien form that has invaded the city and rescue a kidnapped young girl. Current assault weapons have no effect on the creature, which wreaks havoc among the citizenry while assuming ghost-like forms. The only salvation is a three-man team known as "Laser Ghost."

Players battle the alien while at the controls of a devastating "laser" gun. While peering through gun sites, each player can view and control a laser beam that is so powerful it destroys everything in its path. This is the only known weapon that can stop the attacks of this demented creature.

The many stages of *Laser Ghost* take players through haunted houses, cemeteries, sewer systems, and cargo docks. Besides the alien ghosts, players must destroy objects such as knives, suitcases, food, plates, and shoes. Buy-in and continuation features extend the game's quick pace.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Sega Enterprises Inc. (USA), 2149 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95161-0550; (408) 435-0201; FAX (408) 435-0294.

Bozo Blast-Off

Design Plus Industries has added a new piece to its line of "Bozo the Clown"-themed games: *Bozo Blast-Off* ball toss. It's simple to play: hit the blinking lights to score points and win tickets.

The game features a four-color, silkscreened backboard with Bozo "blasting off" into space aboard a rocketship; bright blue laminate ramps and coin box; a red fabric netting that encloses both sides of the game; crown-top netting; red flashing lights on the backboard; bright orange "bounce resistant" balls; and catchy circus music.

Bozo's voice is activated at the beginning and end of play and each time scoring buttons are hit. There's a "winner-every-time" feature and easy settings for coins, game time, and tickets. The dimensions are 32 inches wide, 72 inches long, and 80 inches high.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Design Plus Industries, 737 E. Marietta Ave., Peoria Heights, IL 61614; (800) 541-1288; FAX (309) 682-9394.

Shuuz

Atari Games brings horseshoes to the world of video with *Shuuz*, an easy-to-play game that's available as a JAMMA-compatible kit. It's designed for the street operator.

In this one- to four-player game, players use a track ball to control the arc and distance of their toss. It can be played five ways: one player vs. the computer; high-score challenge; two players head-to-head, three players head-to-head, or two two-player teams head-to-head.

Ideal for street locations, *Shuuz* features a competitive "Beer Round" for adult establishments. It can also be disabled for younger, non-drinking locations.

The game is available as a universal kit, complete with JAMMA harness, PCB, track ball, buttons, Atari's statistics package, and the appropriate artwork and side decals. Play times are adjustable by changing the number of rounds per credit.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Atari Games Corp., 675 Sycamore Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035; (408) 434-3799; FAX (408) 434-3776.

Lotto Picks

GaMCO International has a new game for those with a case of lottery fever. It's called *Lotto Picks*, a small, inexpensive lotto pick machine.

Different models are available for every state with a lottery: Pick 3, 4, 5, or 6. Upon insertion of a quarter, three chambers bounce the lottery balls around, simulating state lottery machines. The side pockets house lottery slips, allowing locations to make money in an area that they used to only house tickets.

Route operators can use *Lotto Picks* to create their own lotteries, or use it in promotions. For example, daily Pick 3 numbers can be put on a blackboard, with customers trying to match the numbers for prizes. For promotions, operators can offer a free beer or video rental if certain numbers come up. Another idea is to place a red ball in the Pick 6 chamber; if it lands in the display area, the customer receives a prize.

Lotto Picks is 16 inches wide, 14 inches deep, and 48 inches high. It is virtually maintenance-free.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact GaMCO International Inc., 2153 10th St., Sarasota, FL 34237; (800) 642-7263 or (813) 366-1133; FAX (813) 366-1134.

FunHouse

Williams introduces new technology and a talkative dummy named Rudy to the world of pinball with *FunHouse*.

Rudy, the central attraction on the playfield, reacts to each player's shots. He talks, taunts, heckles, and keeps a constant watch on the action, following the movement of the ball with his eyes. With Rudy, it's non-stop commentary.

The "FunHouse" is an amusement park filled with a host of attractions: Mystery Mirrors, Wind Tunnels, Crazy Steps, Super Dogs, Trap Doors, Gangways, Hidden Hallways, FunHouse Frenzy, Super Frenzy, and Rudy's Hideout.

FunHouse also features an industry first: a right-side plunger skill shot for increased scoring via Rudy's Hideout, and a left-side plunger that shoots the ball onto the Crazy Steps for a possible extra ball, 500,000 points, or Frenzied scoring opportunities.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Williams Electronics Games Inc., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

Pig Racing

Coin Concepts' latest entry in the redemption game market is *Pig Racing*, a one- to four-player piece from England. A single player can compete against the game pig, while multiple players can race both the pig and each other.

Each player advances his or her humorous-looking pig by using a pinball plunger to release a ball into lanes, which are located on the colorful playfield. How successful the player is at putting the balls into the lanes determines how fast his or her pig advances. The first-place finisher wins a ticket.

Pig Racing is fully metered and comes with a display showcase and complete sound package. In addition, the game has adjustable race speeds and ticket awards, along with an optional bench seat.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Coin Concepts Inc., 16 Edgeboro Road, Unit 5, East Brunswick, NJ 08816; (908) 390-9009 or (800) 462-COIN; FAX (908) 390-3373.

Mirage

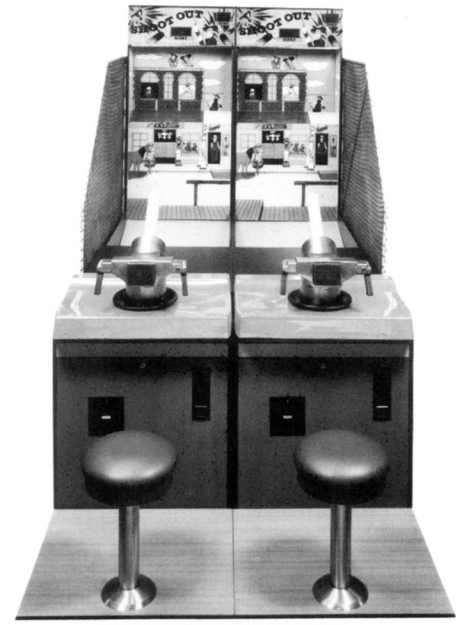
Rock-Ola has unveiled its latest all-CD jukebox, the *Mirage*, a unit that holds up to 100 discs. It has a black, leather-grained vinyl cabinet with platinum-look trim, 3-D animated lighting, and futuristic graphics.

The jukebox is capable of pumping out 280 watts of power. Full jacket covers and selections for 12 CDs are prominently displayed at any given time. An LED display identifies selections provided for the "top hits" option, as well as the selection in play.

An external and internal background music control system is built-in, with a volume control separate from regular play. Unused CD pages provide advertising space for special events or promotions. When the machine is not in use, an automatic recall displays the page. And an automatic mapping feature makes it easy to add new CDs. With the flip of a switch, the unit calculates and programs the number of selections for each new CD.

Options include a microphone paging kit, a speaker kit, and wireless remote control.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corp., 313 S. Rohlwing Road (Hwy. 53), Addison, IL 60101; (708) 629-9200 or (800) 621-4618; FAX (708) 628-0019.



Shoot Out

Shoot Out is Meltec's latest midway-style redemption gun game, featuring a rapid-fire gun mechanism and non-stop pop-up targets.

The player races against the clock to gun down as many Western outlaws as he can. Bad guys appear on rooftops, windows, and saloon doorways in the backboard art. The score is displayed on big LED readouts, and tickets are dispensed according to the score. The daily high score is also shown.

Operators can adjust the time of play, coinage, ticket award levels, and bad guy action patterns (continuous or random appearances). The dimensions are 12 feet long, 2.5 feet high, and 7.5 feet high.

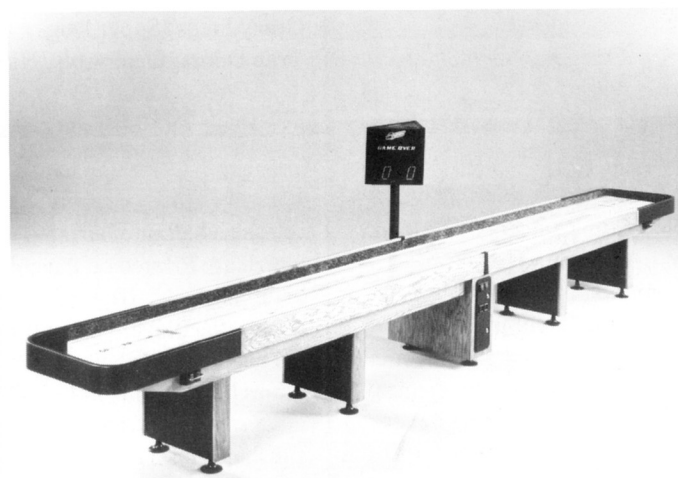
For more information, or distributor referral, contact Meltec Inc., 1550 B Las Plumas Ave., San Jose, CA 95133; (800) 356-4777 or (408) 923-1302; FAX (408) 923-0835.

Shuffleboard table

Dynamo has added a new shuffleboard to its product line of coin-op table games, a model that boasts a unique scoreboard design.

Spectators can see the game's score from any angle in the location. The scoreboard has programmed pause and audible feedback on each score. Scoring is programmable for 15, 21, or 51 points.

Totally electronic operation eliminates the need for mechanical parts, reducing down-time. Automatic shut-off allows players to purchase additional time for finishing the game, and a special metal detecting feature prevents free play.



Other features include a 3/16" poured, resin finish that's applied to the 4/4 maple playing surface; a rich cabinet made of the finest oak; heavy-duty leg levelers; and climatic adjusters. Light kits and a dollar bill acceptor or coin mechanism are optional.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Dynamo Corp., 2525 Handley-Ederville Road, Richland Hills, TX 76118-7910.

High Impact Football

The gridiron makes its way to the video screen with Williams' *High Impact Football*, a game featuring the company's exclusive digitized graphics technology (termed ''Live Action'' football).

High Impact Football, a one- to four-player piece, gives players 15 teams and 40 plays to choose from. Using a ''move'' joystick and an ''action'' button, they can pull out all the stops: bombs, double reverses, half-back options, nickel defenses, zone coverages, stunts, red-dog blitzes, and more. A continuous buy-in feature is included.

In addition to the players on the field, the game features cheerleaders, coaches, a deranged play-by-play commentator—Manic Max—and fans such as Joe Six-Pack.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Williams Electronics Games, 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

Race Drivin'

Atari Games' has released a smaller version of its successful driving simulation game, *Race Drivin'*. It's now available in a compact upright configuration; the game was originally released as a deluxe sitdown model.

The force in the steering assembly is provided by a motor driven by the game software. The wheel reacts with the real-time video display simulation of road conditions and the player's response to the video and mechanical feedback. A faster microprocessor and more efficient software code provides an imperceptible lag-time between control input and screen graphic response.

Race Drivin' features two new tracks to thrill players, bringing the total to four. New tests of skill include a corkscrew loop, a jump loop, and a section of dangerous winding mountain road. Players can select from four different sports cars to suit the race track chosen.

Also new is the ''Buddy Race,'' a two-player sequential contest. The computer records the performance of Player One, and Player Two races head-to-head against the first player, a drone car, and the clock. This two-player sequential racing competition is an industry first.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Atari Games Corp., 675 Sycamore Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035; (408) 434-3750; FAX (408) 434-3776.

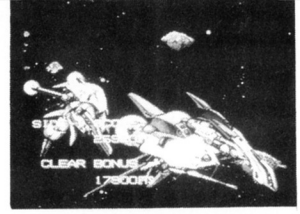
Pirate's Cavern Mini Golf

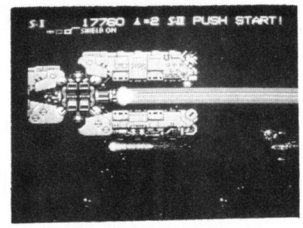
Leisuretime Consultants offers *Pirate's Cavern Mini Golf*, a skillful mini golf course for operators interested in this entertainment outlet.

The six major elevated holes—Castle, Fort, Pirate Ship, Lighthouse, Cannon, and Skull—challenges the player by offering one of three areas to hit the ball. If the player hits into the middle chamber, he is rewarded with a hole-in-one or a lie close to the hole. But if he hits the ball into the left or right chamber, it drops onto the left or right side of the green—behind an obstacle.

The playing holes are geometrically computer-designed to ensure realistic playing conditions and to allow the ball to roll where it is aimed. The company developed its own concrete block, which is used as ball-retainer walls. It features a smooth finish on the inside surface and a textured finish on the top and outside edges.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Leisuretime Consultants Inc., P.O. Box 17085, Plantation, FL 33318; (305) 973-9342; FAX (305) 752-1576.





Thumb-B-Ball

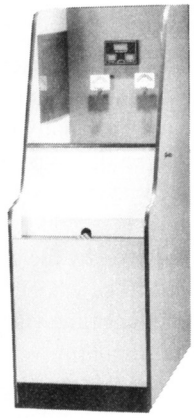
What do you get when you combine basketball with elements from darts? The answer is *Thumb-B-Ball*, a new product from Nevis Inc.

Twelve mini-basketballs come with this one- or two-player game. The player holds a ball between his thumb and forefinger and shoots it like a dart. A sensor registers two points for each basket made as the crowd cheers its support.

The point status goes to three points during the last 15 seconds of play. With each successful basket the "fans in the stands" on the side panels flash and camera lights come on. The crowd also counts down the final five seconds of play, just like in a real basketball game.

The game's dimensions are 24 inches wide, 48 inches long, and 70 inches high. There's a red trim, a blue floor, and a white base.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Nevis Inc., 1130 E. Sleepy Hollow, Suite A, Olathe, KS 66062-2228; (913) 764-5554; FAX (913) 764-0540.



Strato Fighter

Tecmo takes players on a soaring flight with *Strato Fighter*, a new one- or two-player, horizontal kit. This interactive game is JAMMA-compatible.

Strato Fighter is set in the year 2135, a time when the planet has come under siege from a devious, powerful enemy. The player has a difficult mission to complete: he must maneuver his high-tech "Aero Tactic Fighter" across the galaxy and into the heart of enemy territory, where the foe waits, poised for battle.

The action includes vertical shooting, homing missiles, guard weapons, and tight, instant turns. There are six standard and six pro levels of play, along with continuation and speed-up features.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Tecmo Inc., Victoria Business Park, 18005 S. Adria Maru Lane, Carson, CA 90746; (213) 329-5880 or (800) 338-0336; FAX (213) 329-6134.

R360

Sega brings together the challenge of a video game and the thrill of an amusement park ride with *R360*, the company's latest simulator piece.

Those who enter this unit experience the same sensations as being inside the cockpit of a jet fighter: the force of a take-off; the feeling of a sharply banked turn; the view of Earth while upside down; and the exhilaration of air combat. *R360* duplicates all aerial movements by revolving 360 degrees in any direction.

In developing the game, Sega instituted numerous safety features, including a fully controllable attendant station; a four-point safety harness designed to adjust to a variety of player sizes; inside and outside "emergency stop" buttons; doorway sensors; a perimeter safety mat; and a surrounding plexiglass fence that's three-feet high.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Sega Enterprises Inc. (USA), 2149 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95161; (408) 435-0201; FAX (408) 435-0294.

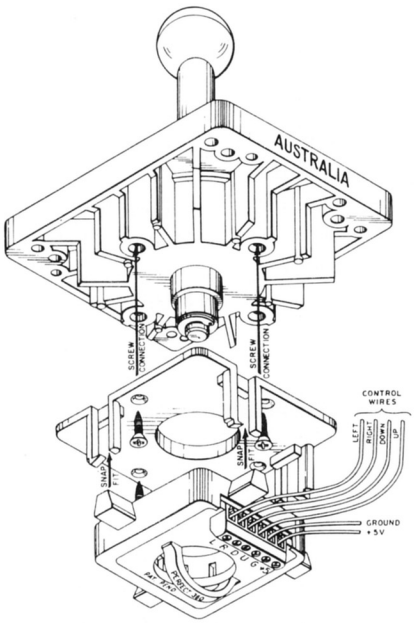
For more information, or distributor referral, contact Leisuretime Consultants Inc. P.O. Box 17085, Plantation, FL 33318; (305) 973-9342; FAX (305) 752-1576.

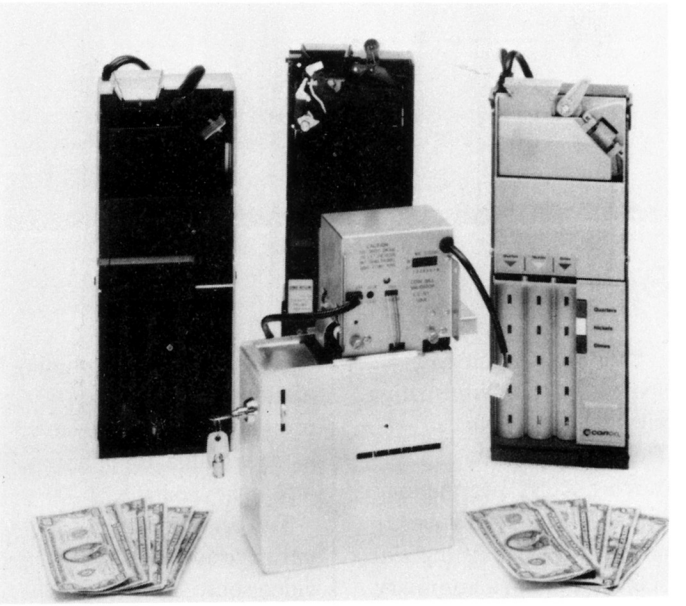
Adapter platform

Perfect 360 has released a new product, the Australian Perfect 360 adapter platform. Operators can easily retrofit the Perfect 360 switching module to the Australian joystick, as well as Wico's heavy-duty joystick and Happ Control's Super Joystick.

The solid-state switching module eliminates outdated mechanical switching on joysticks. Designed to operate without fail for 10 years, it's priced under $20.

For more information, contact Perfect 360, 3840 Hillside Lane, Salt Lake City, UT 84109; (801) 534-8950; FAX (801) 487-7784; or contact Amusement Emporium Inc., (800) 525-7059.





Validator, stacker

Coin Bill Validator Inc. has two new products on the market: a versatile currency validator/acceptor and a lockable, 500-bill stacker that detaches.

The compact, self-contained validator, known as Model 100, has a $4,096 credit register and can be set to accept $1, $2, $5, $10, $20, $50, and $100 bills—in any combination. The unconditionally guaranteed machine also offers tighter security, since the electronics are all on top and out of the reach of sprayed fluid or dampness. In addition, Model 100 won't give credit if a bill is inserted and then pulled out, and it will not accept counterfeits.

The validator's companion-model stacker offers a unique advantage. Available as an option, the unit can be attached in more than one position, which allows it to accommodate space limitations.

For more information, contact Coin Bill Validator Inc., 30 Di Tomas Court, Copiague, NY 11726; (516) 842-3810.

Bill acceptor

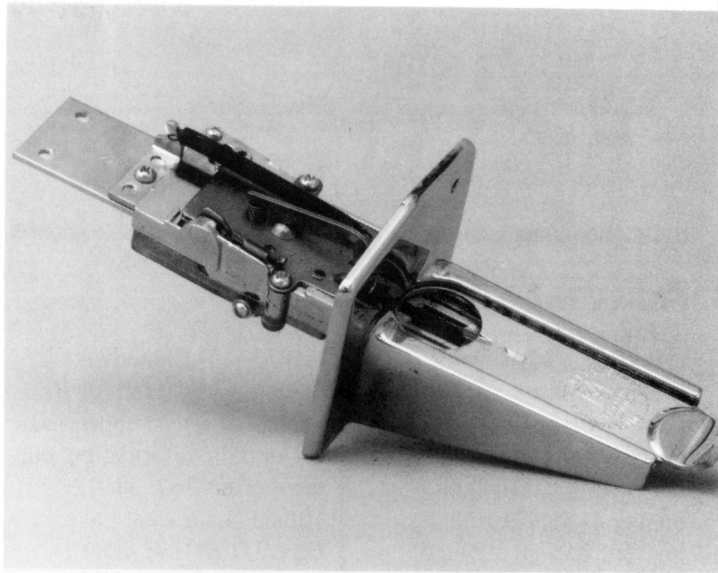
Mars Electronics International has introduced an electronic bill acceptor that's made specifically for the coin-op amusement market. The VFM2 Amusement bill acceptor gives operators a host of features within one unit.

It can be set to accept $1 bills or both $1 and $5 bills, providing payment flexibility and maximum revenue. The bill acceptor contains a pulse interface and a serial interface for compatibility with both existing and new amusement machines.

The pulse interface is an industry standard used in a wide range of machines, while the serial interface is being used in some new applications. In addition, the VFM2 can be programmed to provide one, two, three, four, five, eight, 10, or 20 pulses per dollar, with credit-pulse accumulation capability.

The unit's compact size means it can be easily installed in a variety of games and amusement machines. Simple installation procedures make it easy to move the bill acceptor from one machine to another.

For more information, contact Mars Electronics, 1301 Wilson Drive, West Chester, PA 19380; (215) 430-2500; FAX (215) 430-2694.



Sports news

SportsTicker, an instant sports news and information service, has introduced Tickervision, a constantly moving sports information "crawl" line. It's superimposed over any existing video at the bottom of an ordinary TV set or monitor.

Designed for the hospitality, retail, and sports facility markets, Tickervision delivers SportsTicker's up-to-the-minute scores, breaking sports news, daily schedules and game previews, standings, statistics, and trivia quizzes. In addition to its 24-hour information "crawl," Tickervision permits programming of in-house messages, promotions, and local advertising with the use of an on-site keyboard.

Tickervision is non-intrusive and will overlay any video source, allowing viewers to watch TV programs originating from off-air, cable, satellite, or VCR. The unit can be installed in minutes.

For more information, contact SportsTicker, Harborside Financial Center, 600 Plaza Two, Jersey City, NJ 07311; (201) 309-1200; FAX (201) 860-9742.

Coin chute

Monarch Tool & Manufacturing Co. has introduced its Model 444 single, flat coin chute to the Canadian market, redesigning it to accept the Canadian Loon coin. This is the same chute that has been produced for the American nickel, dime, and quarter since 1935.

The Canadian Loon chute incorporates the same high-quality die cast, stamped steel parts, and craftsmanship that has long characterized Monarch products.

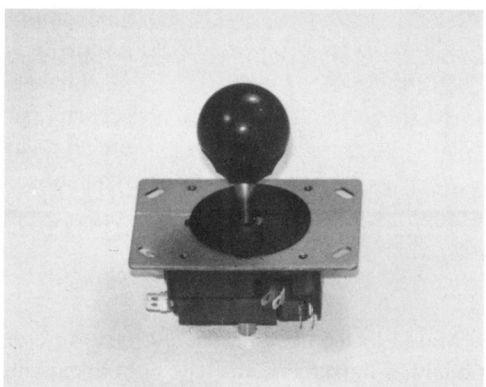
For more information, contact Monarch Tool & Manufacturing Co., P.O. Box 427, Covington, KY 41012; (800) 464-9460 or (800) 258-9417 in Canada.

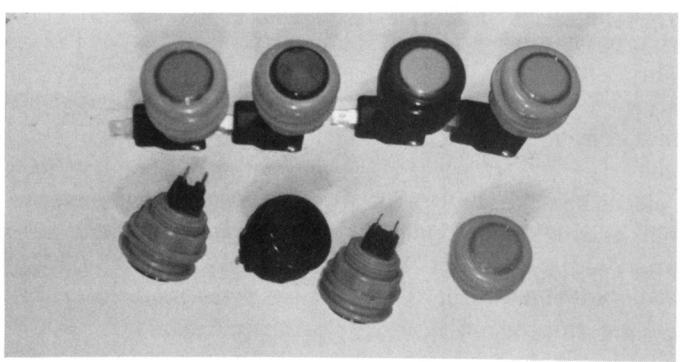
Joysticks, pushbutton

Two new joystick models and a versatile new pushbutton are now available from the JAMP Corporation of Torrance, Calif.

Model JLW-UM-1 is a two-, four-, or eight-way joystick with interchangeable switching (from micro to leaf). The unique design lets operators make changes without having to take out a heavy control panel. All that's required is the loosening of four joystick screws.

JAMP's Turbo 360 (Model JL-1) joystick offers all of the above—and more. A microswitch allows for 360-degree movement of the joystick, giving the user a greater feeling of control.





In addition to the joysticks, the company has a new pushbutton, Model OBSL-28. It has interchangeable switching (from micro to key) and a small screw diameter (24 to 30 mm), allowing it to fit just about any kind of hole on the control panel. The pushbutton's soft touch and fast reaction lets players play longer without finger fatigue.

The pushbutton comes in an array of colors, including eye-catching neon.

For more information, contact JAMP Corp., 3101 Plaza del Amo, Unit 47, Torrance, CA 90503; (213) 787-0140; (213) 787-0144.

CLASSIFIED

PLAY METER'S classified ads are sold by the column inch ($30 per column inch with a 1 inch minimum). Prepayment must accompany ad. You may pay by check, money order, Visa or Master Card. The deadline is one month before you want the ad to appear (example: August ad must be in by July 1). Send ad orders and payment to: PLAY METER Magazine, P.O. Box 24970, New Orleans, LA 70184; FAX 504-488-7083. For more information, contact Carol Lea LeBell (504) 488-7003.

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(not the usual 15th)
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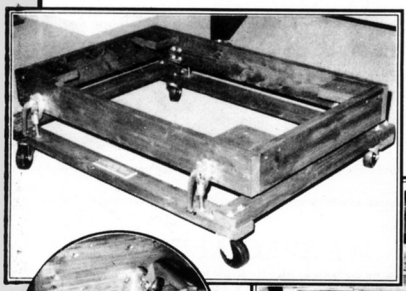

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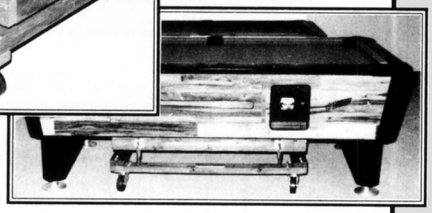

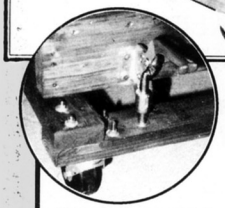

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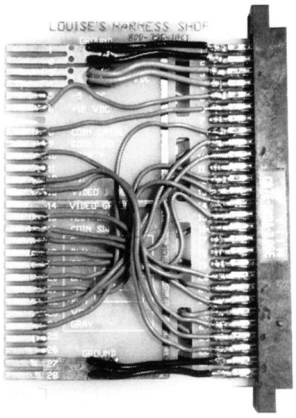

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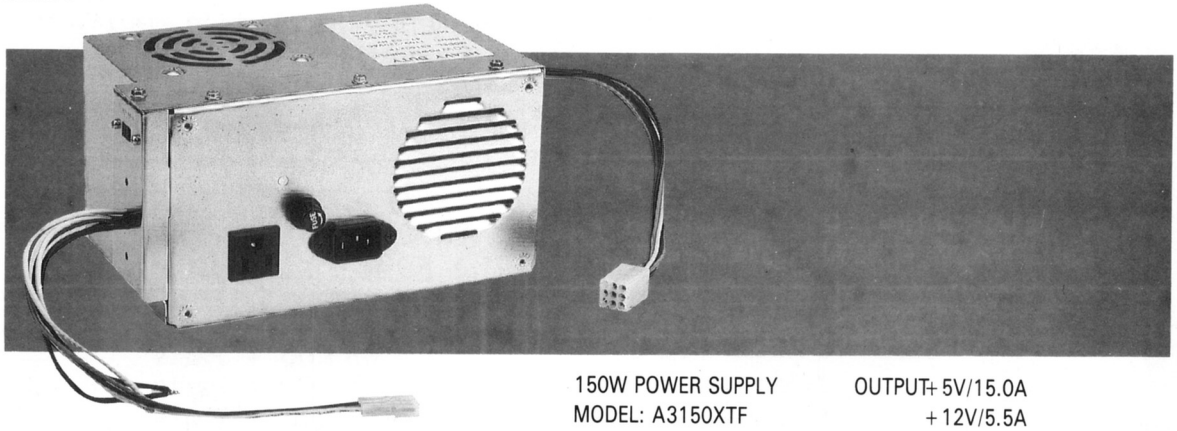

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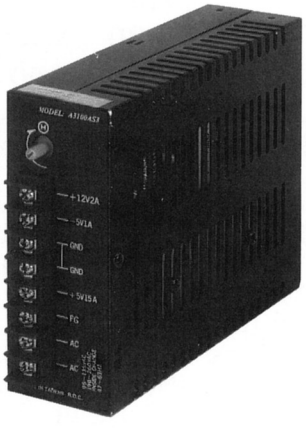

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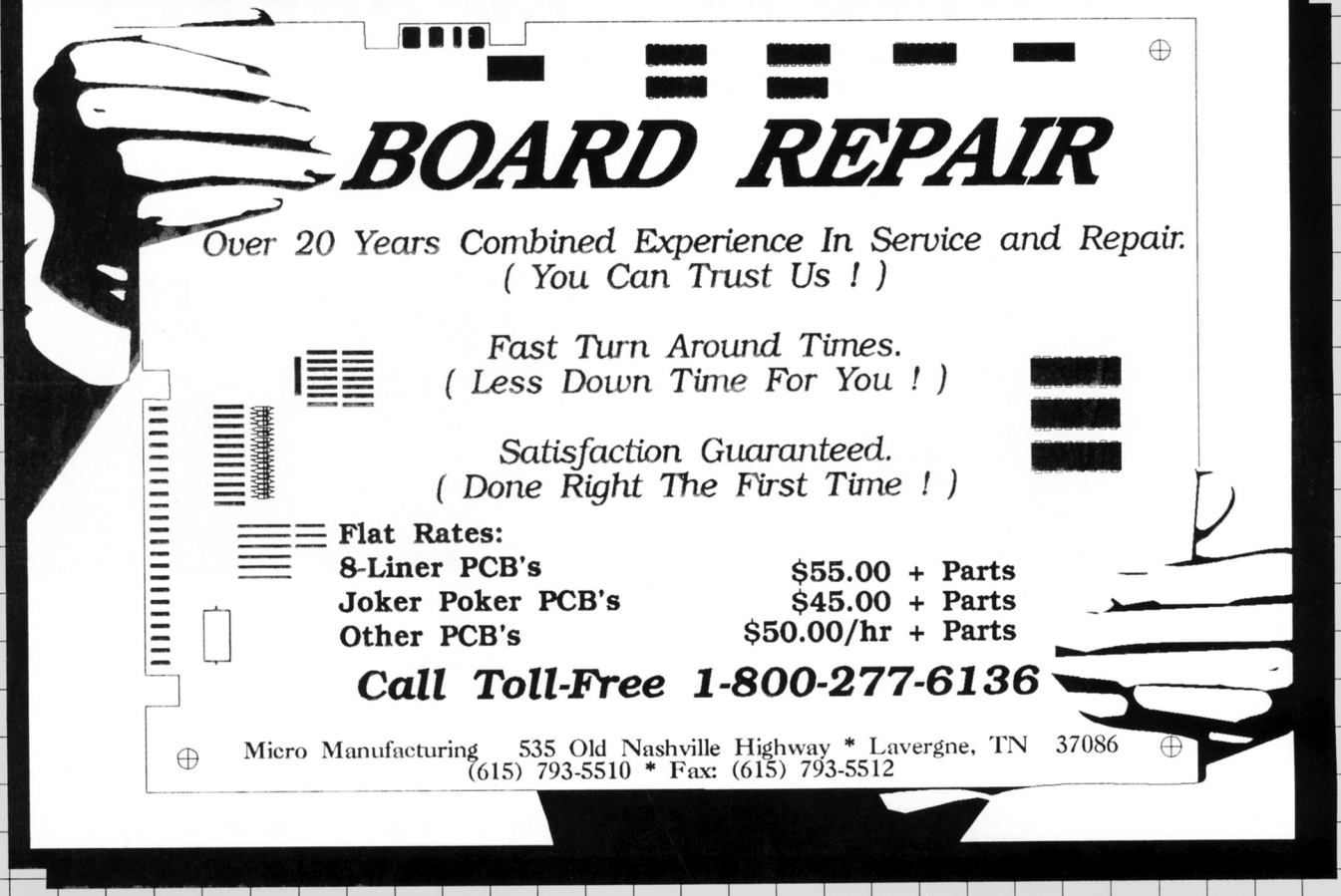

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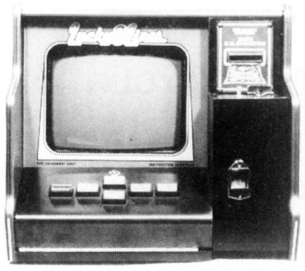

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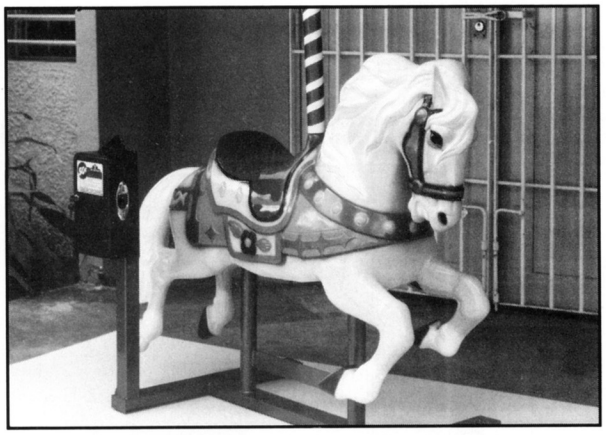

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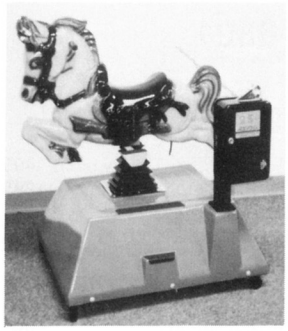

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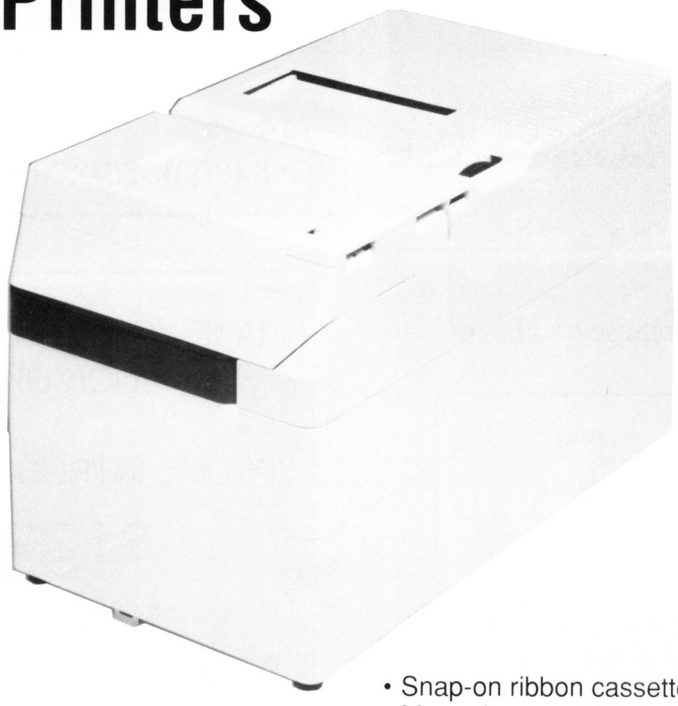

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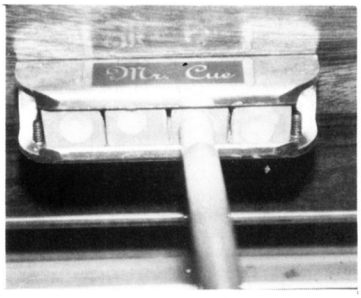

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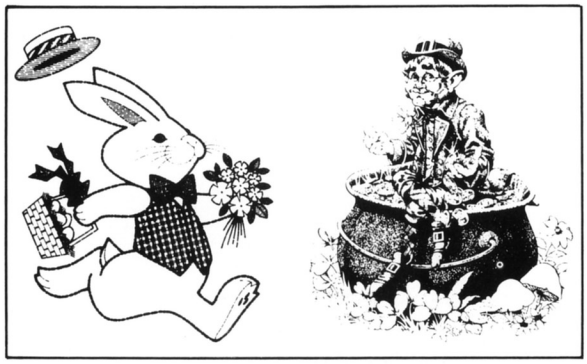

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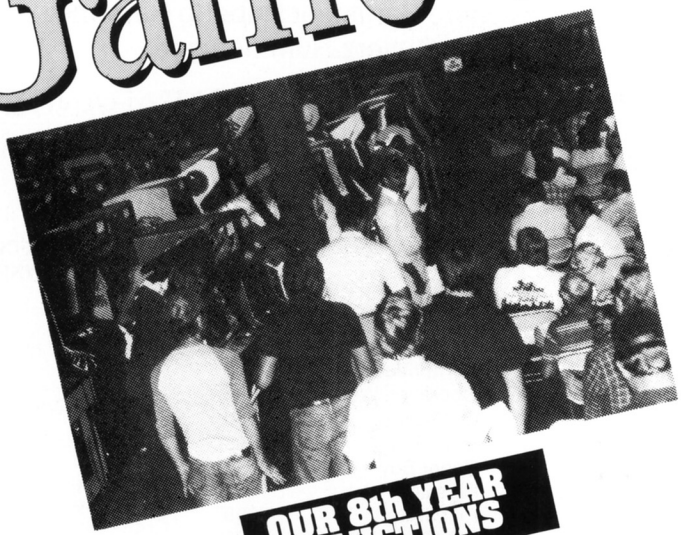

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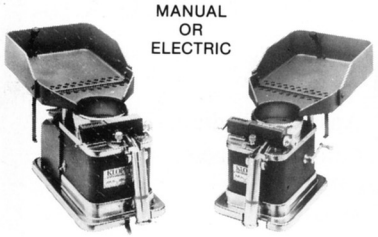

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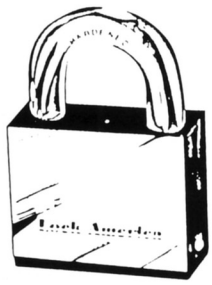

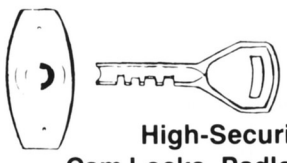

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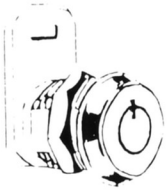

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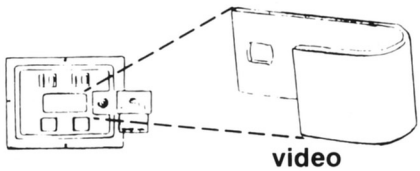

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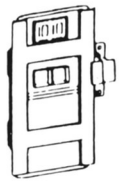

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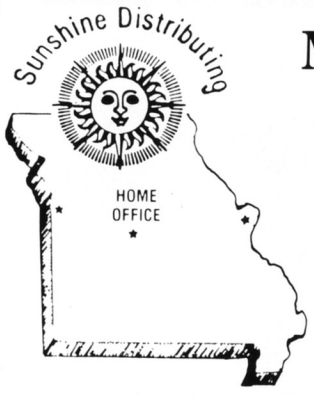

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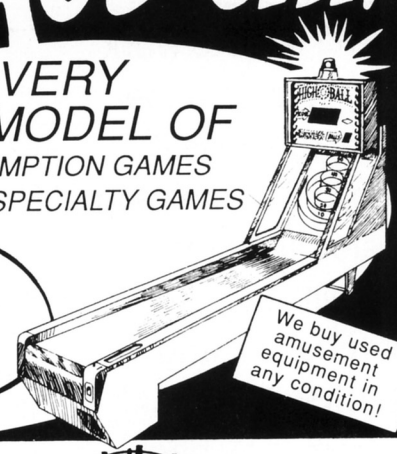

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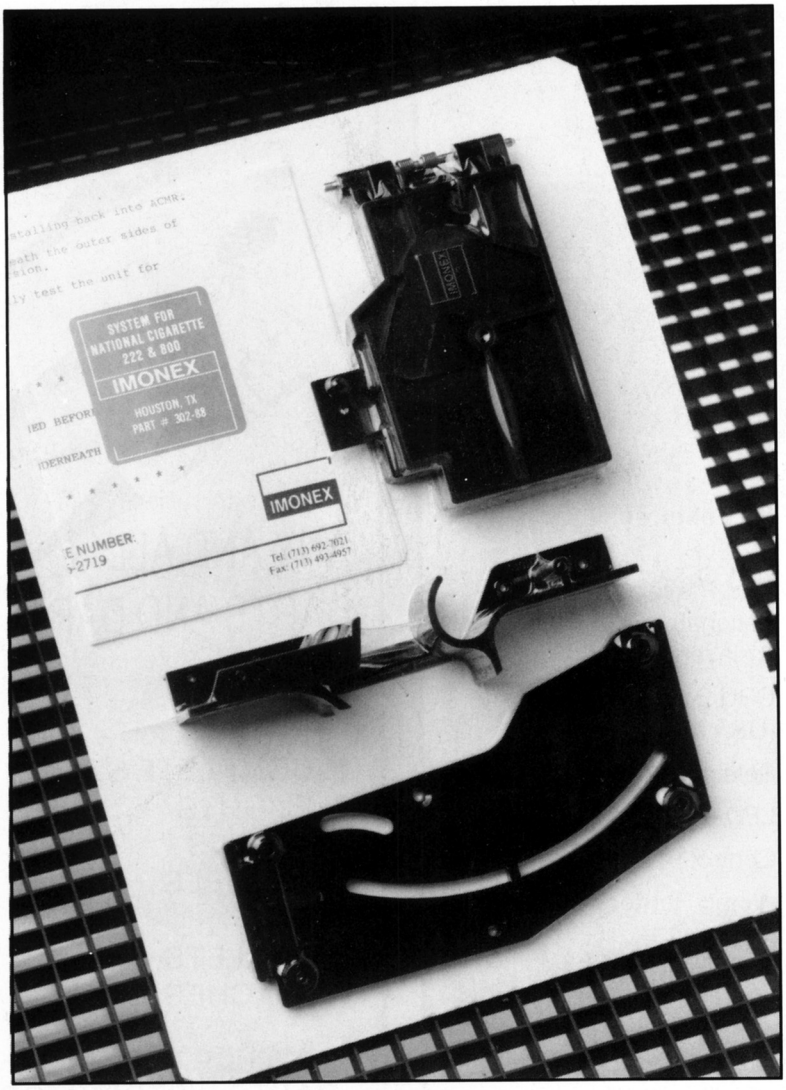

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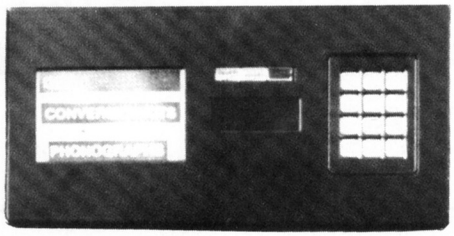

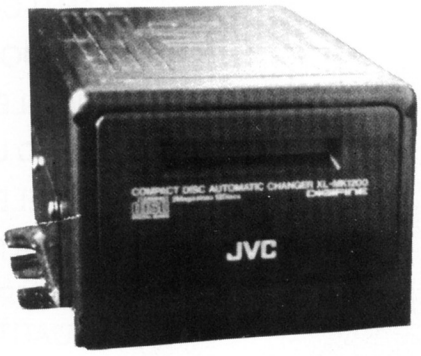

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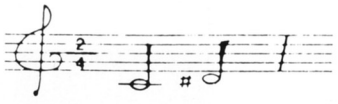
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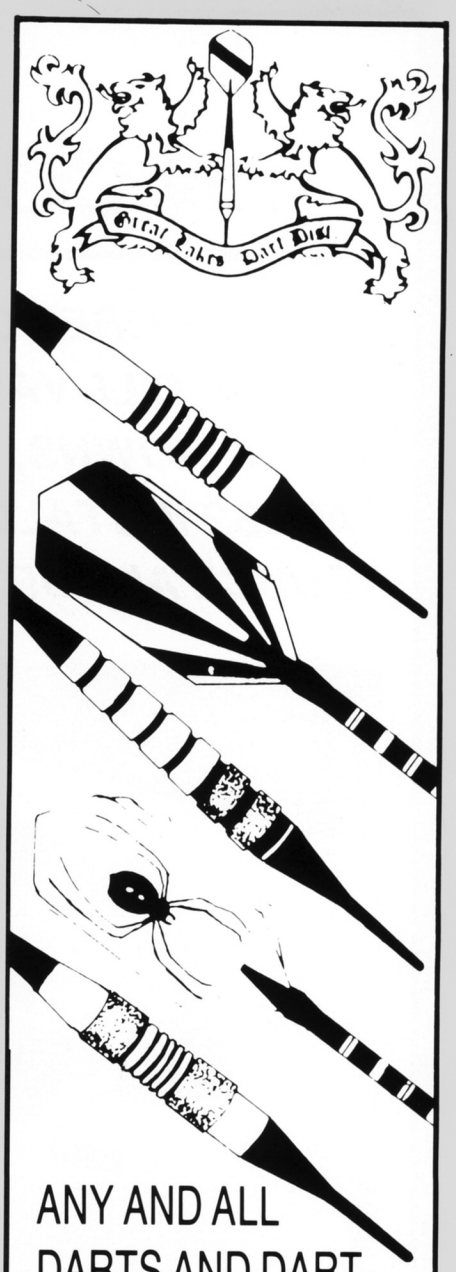

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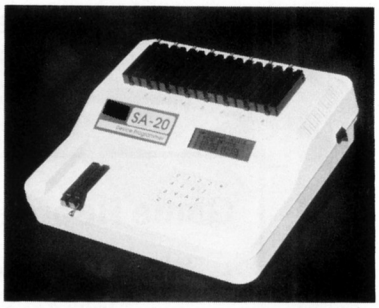

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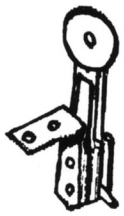

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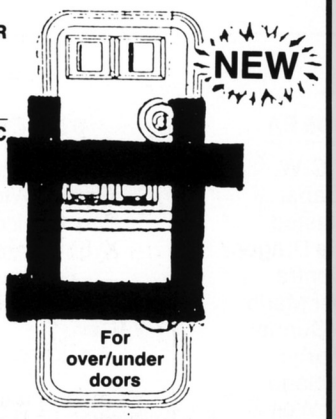
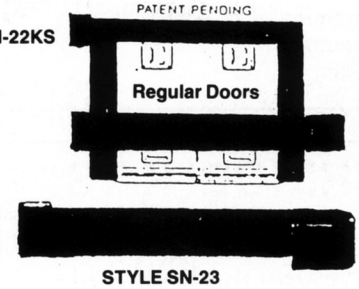
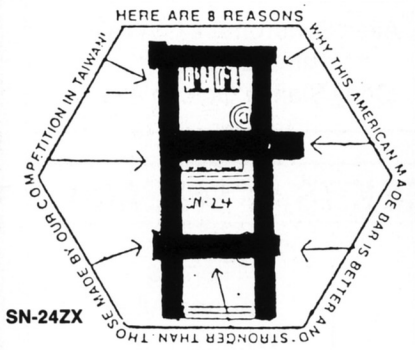


SN-22KS



STYLE SN-23



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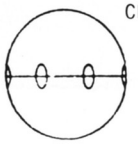

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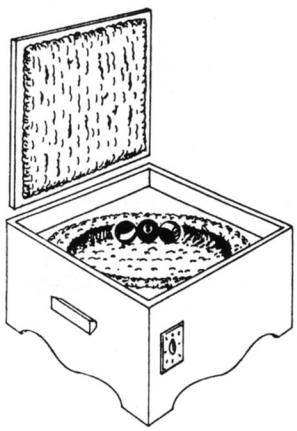

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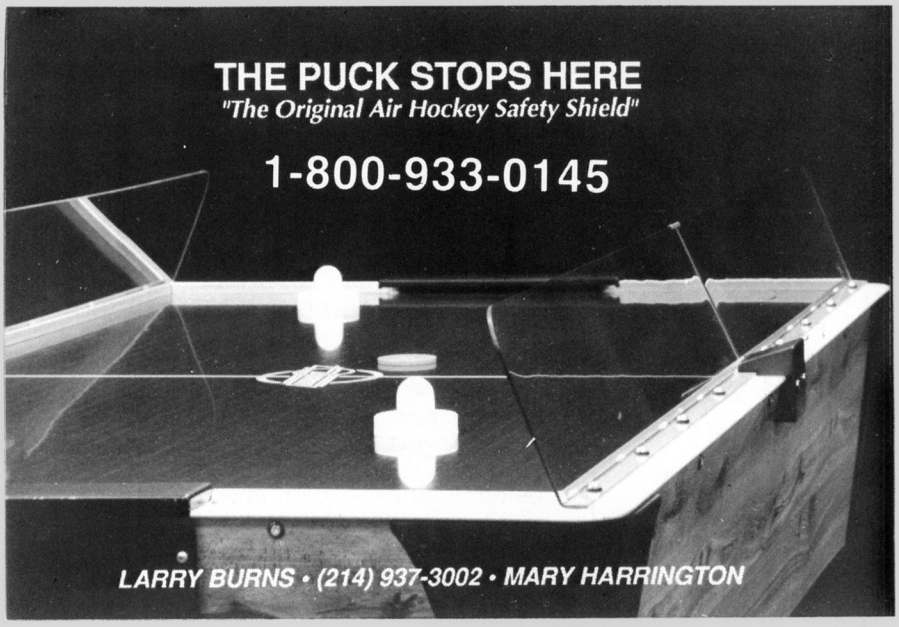

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February 22-24
South Carolina Coin Operators Association (SCCOA) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Columbia, S.C., Sheraton Hotel at I-20 and Bush River Road. Contact Helen Sikes (803) 345-2048 or (803) 779-2498.

March 1-3
World Championships of Flipper/Pinball, sponsored by the AMOA/International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA), Chicago O'Hare Hilton. Contact Joe Conway (414) 263-0233.

March 22-24
American Coin Machine Expo (ACME), Sands Expo and Convention Center, Las Vegas. Contact Bill Glasgow Inc. (708) 333-9292.

April 12-13
Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA) Annual Convention and Trade Show, St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul, Minn. Contact Hy Sandler (612) 927-6662.

April 12-14
National Amusement and Vending Expo, Louisville, Ky. Contact Andry Montgomery and Associates Inc., (502) 473-1992; FAX (502) 473-1999.

CANCELLED

April 19-21
Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Evergreen Conference Center in Stone Mountain Park, Atlanta. Contact GAMOA (404) 972-7445.

April 19-21
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) Western Convention and Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. Contact NAMA headquarters (312) 346-0370; FAX (312) 704-4140.

April 25-28
Mid-South Regional Amusement and Music Operators Convention and Trade Show, Omni Memphis Hotel, Memphis, Tenn. Contact LaVerle Franzen or Jan Green (901) 353-1000; FAX (901) 353-1155.

April 30-May 3
Amusement and Music Operators Association-National Dart Association (AMOA-NDA) Team Dart VI International Team Championship, Sahara Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas. Contact Joe Conway (414) 263-2444.

May 16-18
Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Country Inn Resort, Pewaukee, Wis. (near Milwaukee). Contact WAMO (414) 529-4704.

May 18-22
Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Government Affairs Conference, Hyatt Regency, Washington, D.C. Contact AMOA (312) 644-6610 or (312) 565-4602.

May 25-June 1
11th Annual Valley National 8-Ball League Association (VNEA) International Singles and Team Championship, Riviera Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas. Contact Gregg Elliott (517) 893-1800.

May 28-June 1
INTER-GAM '91, first annual consortium of conferences and exhibits related to gaming, Atlantic City, the tri-hotel complex of Taj Mahal, Resorts International, and Showboat. Contact the Public Gaming Research Institute (301) 330-7600; FAX (301) 330-7608.

May 31-June 1
Ohio Coin Machine Association (OCMA) Annual Trade Show and Convention, Radisson Airport Hotel and Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio. Contact OCMA (614) 486-8677.

July 11-13
8th Annual Billiard Congress of America International Trade Expo, Downtown Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Frank Zdy, Continental Productions (619) 278-3877; FAX (619) 268-9372.

September 12-14
Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Expo, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Contact AMOA (312) 644-6610 or (312) 565-4602.

International

April 3-6
International Vending, Music, and Games Show, Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw, Poland. Contact George Herman, ABP of Calabasas, Calif., (800) 735-4ABP or (818) 713-0166; FAX (818) 713-0518.

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

ACME 85
Alter Enterprises 89
American Sammy 13
AMOA 64
Arachnid 49
ASCAP 35-36
Atari Games ..... Cover 4, 23
Bally/Midway 69
Baton Lock 44
Betson Enterprises 68
Capcom ..... Cover 2
Coastal Amusements 51
Coin Concepts 12
Coin Tek 17, 77
Deltronic Labs 72
Fabtek 75
Happ Controls 4
Hoffman & Hoffman 6
Innovative Management 93
Irem 45
Jukes, Pins and Amusements 24
Kaneko USA 19
Konami 64
Laramie Interests 21
Leisure Entertainment 73
Mali & Co. 84
Mayoni Enterprises 72, 84
Merit Industries 92
Micro Prose Games 7
NAMCO 43, 65
New Orleans Novelty 86
Nintendo 41, 67
N.S.M./Lowen-America 56-57
PARS Electronics 39
Philip Morris USA 79
PMI Toys & Novelty 53
Prizes! 11
Randy Fromm's Arcade School 105
Roger Williams Mint 60
Romstar 33
Rowe International 31
Smart Industries 83
SMS ..... Cover 3
SNK 5
Strata Games 71
Taito 61-62
U.B.I. 99
Van Brook of Lexington 86
Vari-Tech International 12

Goodrich doesn't have a blimp

It's the day after New Year's as I write this. I dread the torture that must now be inflicted upon my body to make my face once again look like the photo in the upper left-hand corner. Non-stop food and wine during the holidays, I've found, will make your face nice and round.

Anyway, extra weight aside, the holidays are a good time to catch up with old friends and relatives, people you never see during the rest of the year. The conversations quickly turn into gossiping sessions.

"Hi, Aunt Louise, how've you been?"

"Fine, Chris. Say, what's this I hear about your brother and a 43-year-old hooker from Honduras?"

"Well, boys will be boys. This carrot and beet casserole is delicious ...."

Friends you haven't seen in years keep you on guard as well.

"How many years has it been, Chris?"

"Oh, I guess about six or seven. You're looking good."

"So are you, except for that extra chin you're developing. Been hittin' the Fritos and onion dip pretty heavy, I see. Tell me, do you ever run into Paula Thibodeaux any more? I hear she *really* turned into a porker. Or how about Jimmy Freidrichs. I hear he...."

Inevitably, that tired subject we all dread takes center stage: What Are You Doing With Yourself These Days?

Relative #1: "Still in school, Chris?"

"No. I've been out since '84."

Old Friend #1: "I hear you're working for a newspaper in Cajun country."

"No. I left that job two-and-a-half years ago."

Relative #2: "Where have you guys been? Chris has been working for a video game magazine. You know those Nintendo games that your kids beg for every Christmas? That's what he writes about."

"Well, not exactly," I explain. "There *are* magazines for the home market, but ours is for the coin-operated amusement industry. We're a trade publication for the video games you see in arcades, along with pinball machines, redemption equipment, jukeboxes, pool tables, electronic darts, and, more recently, legalized video poker machines."

Old Friend #2: "Oh. So do you think you could get me some game cartridges for my son? He already has the Nintendo *NES*, but lately he's been asking for Sega's *Genesis*. Which one's better, Chris?"

"I wouldn't be a good judge. Like I said, my magazine covers—"

"Old Friend #3: "Oh, I know all about those home systems. Now if I were a kid, I'd prefer...."

Knuckleheads. Nobody in the general public, it seems, wants to hear about the coin-op industry. Even people I see on a regular basis don't act particularly interested in the latest games on the market. Do I ever get asked, "Chris, what's the best new pinball at the arcade on Veterans Highway?" No. Or maybe, "How does *Race Drivin'* compare to *Hard Drivin'*?" Never.

But let me talk to a seven- or eight-year-old who thinks he knows what I do for a living. "Do you know where I can find *The Wrath of Black Manta* for my home system?"

The point I'm making is that our industry is finishing second in a two-horse race with the home market. The product available for the home is fresh in the public's mind; ads for the games are all over the airwaves and in periodicals. It is my opinion that the coin-op industry, in its current state, is yesterday's news.

Players aren't doing as much playing, operators aren't buying as many new games, and manufacturers appear to have hit creative bottom. Exceptions, of course, do exist. Operators of redemption equipment and CD jukeboxes, according to our "State of the Industry" survey, have met with success. Pool and darts still earn steadily. But the comments we've heard, in sum, amount to a cry for help, help to combat the home market.

I need to get away and think about this some more. Maybe I can hitch a ride aboard the Goodrich blimp. □

Christopher Caire

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News Editor

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Then, *it's on with the battle*, as each side hurls its projectiles to destroy enemy walls. Once the onslaught ends, the players must quickly rebuild and extend their walls before the next battle. The action is lightning fast. The strategy is exhilarating.

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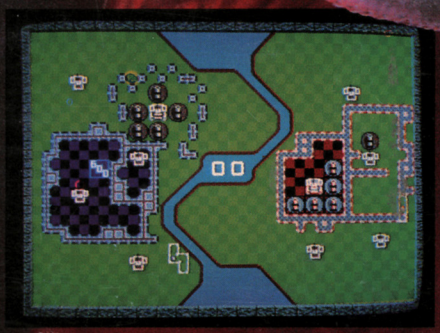

Castle construction phase of a two-player game.

Three players can battle it out to see who becomes the medieval overlord.

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