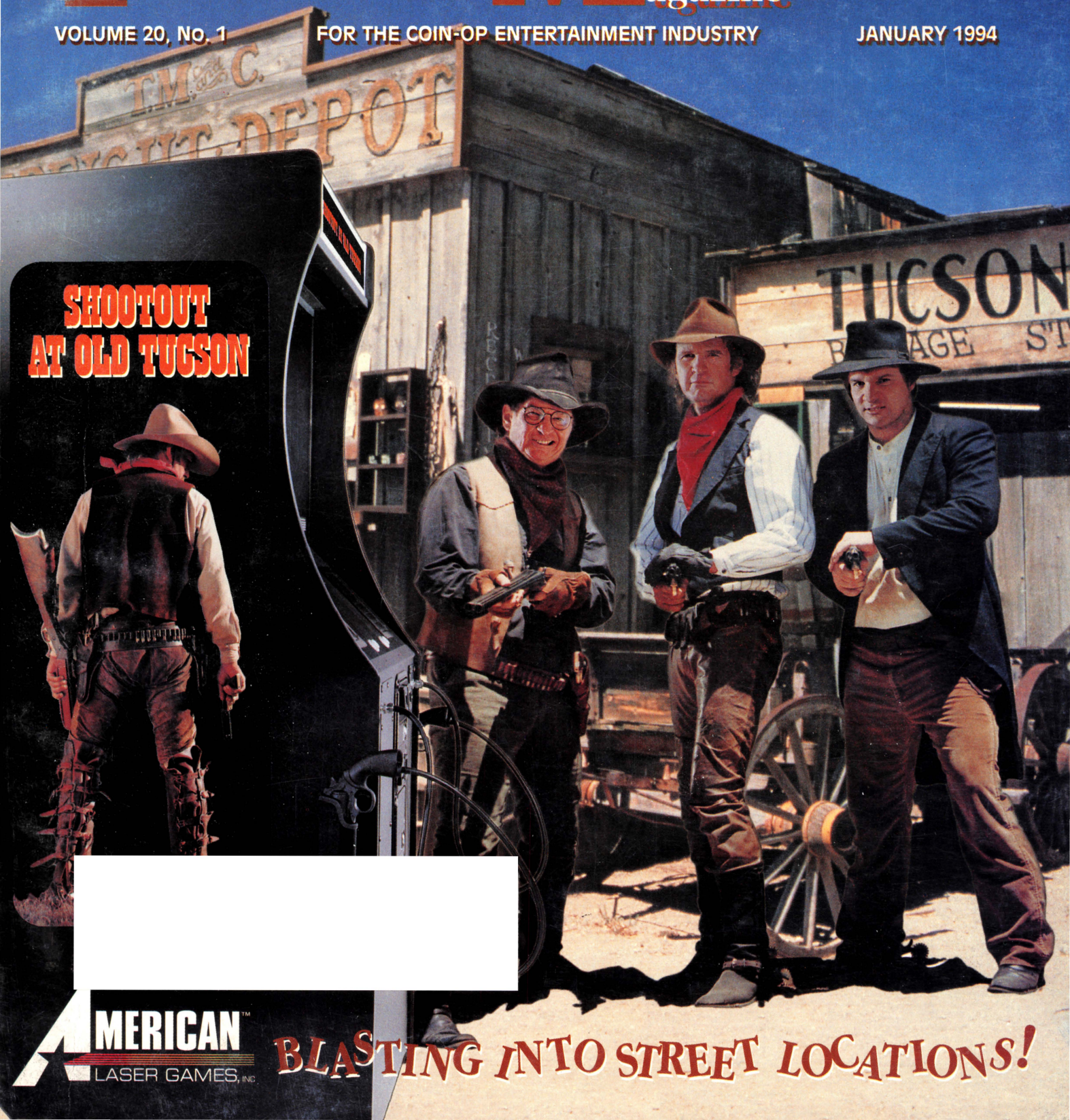
1974 Our 20th Year 1994

PLAY METER Magazine

VOLUME 20, No. 1 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY JANUARY 1994



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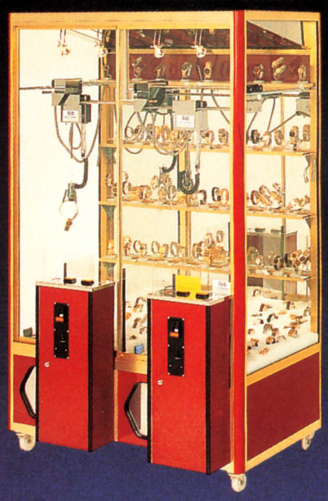

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NEWS BULLETIN

JOHNSON TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS

AMOA immediate past president Craig Johnson testified and fielded questions at a Dec. 9 Senate hearing on the issue of violence in video games. He represented the association before the Senate Government Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Regulation & Government Information, as well as the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice. Johnson's remarks were carried in full by C-SPAN and in brief by the NBC Nightly News.

Among the other witnesses were Howard Lincoln, senior vice president, Nintendo of America; Bill White, senior vice president, Sega of America; and representatives of the Software Publishers Association and the Video Software Dealers Association. Leading the hearing were Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Herbert Kohl (D-Wis.).

Johnson stated AMOA's position on violence in video games (printed in full in the December issue) and went on to add: "While AMOA does not manufacture video games and cannot control what the designers put into the games, we do believe that the violence in the games would best be controlled within the industry through self-policing policies. The issue is relatively new, and most games that are now on the streets have been under design for some time. In many cases the design of video games takes over one year to complete. We appreciate the attention Congress is giving this issue. Your interest will help our industry focus on the solution to this concern. I encourage you to allow the industry time to take care of its own problems and to limit and control the violence that is now in some video games."

Johnson also pointed out the differences between the coin-op and consumer game industry (violence in the latter having been the impetus for the hearings). For example, he made it clear that Sega's *Night Trap*, which caught a lot of the heat, is not a coin-op title. (Note: On Dec. 16, Toys 'R' Us announced that the game was being removed from its 581 stores.) When asked if the coin-op industry could adopt a ratings system for games, which is being proposed for the home market, Johnson frankly replied that monitoring such a system would be extremely difficult due to the operator/location set-up.

"Our industry needs to realize that Congress is very serious about this," Johnson told Play Meter. "It's interesting the number of people who have told me, 'This just concerns the consumer side of the business.' I told them that's flat untrue. Congress is going to implement programs designed for the home market, and if we're not careful we could get caught up in them. That would mean big trouble.

"Congress is in a difficult position with legislation because of the First Amendment. They know they can't say, 'You can't do this, you can't say that.' But the subtle hint was that life would be miserable for us if we don't clean up our own house. And I think we all have to agree that we're starting to cross the edge; we're going a little bit too far. Congress could cause such a stink that a great number of advocacy groups and parents would end up speaking out against us. That would hurt us in the cash box and hurt our location relationships. We as an industry need to stand up and take action so that we protect ourselves."

Meanwhile, AAMA did not have a representative testify before the subcommittee but instead submitted a statement, which read, in part: "AAMA does not represent the home segment of the video market; (we) represent the coin-operated market exclusively.

"AAMA appreciates the opportunity to inform members (of the subcommittees) that our industry is already working to take appropriate steps to protect the interests of children who might be exposed to graphic violence or sexually suggestive material in the products of AAMA members. Although we believe that children are able to differentiate between video games and real-life situations, a committee of our association was established earlier this year and has met to discuss various options for voluntary industry self-regulation. Several options have been discussed by this committee, including some of the suggestions made by Senator Lieberman.

"AAMA has reviewed the proposed National Independent Council for Entertainment in Video Devices Act of 1993, and commends Senators Kohl and Lieberman for their interest in video game violence. AAMA believes that the creation of an independent council, however, is unnecessary in light of the industry's ongoing efforts to address the issue of violence in video games. AAMA intends to continue to review this issue with our members, eliminating the need for such a council, which would operate at taxpayer expense.

"The coin-operated amusement machine industry recognizes and has acted in consideration of its responsibility to its customers: the children and parents of our nation. Congress, however, must grapple with the unfortunate reality that there are myriad causes of violence in our society. Limiting the exposure of children to violence is an important societal objective, and one which our industry takes seriously. Members of Congress may rest assured that the coin-operated amusement machine industry has and will continue to review this issue regarding the use of a limited number of video games which contain graphic violence."

Immediately after the hearing, AMOA's Government Relations Committee, chaired by Tami Norberg-Paulsen, appointed Randy Chilton and Frank Seninsky to serve as AMOA representatives on a soon-to-be-formed industry coalition that will monitor the issue. The coalition is expected to hold its first meeting during this month's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

MICHIGAN CONSIDERS VIOLENT VIDEO LAW

The furor over violent video games exists in state government, too. Michigan Rep. Alma Stallworth (D-Detroit) is drafting legislation that would limit children's access to violent video games and establish a ratings system for them. The bill objects to games that depict "graphic violence," i.e., bloodshed, dismemberment, or—get this—pain and suffering.

"I'm concerned that our industry is being asked to solve the ills of society, and violence in videos is nothing more than another symptom," said Candace Cummings-Super, executive director of the Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association. "How much encroachment can we expect from government before the people are no longer asked to think for themselves?"

SEGA NAMES DEWITT

Ned DeWitt has been appointed president and chief operating officer of Sega Enterprises Inc. (USA). He will report to Hayao Nakayama, president and CEO of Sega Enterprises Ltd., and be located in Redwood City, Calif.

DeWitt's prior experience includes nine years as president and CEO of Six Flags Inc.; president of the Entertainment Group of Madison Square Garden; and, most recently, co-owner of a consulting firm serving Major League Baseball and World Cup Soccer Inc., USA 1994.

Dave Rosen, co-chairman of Sega of America, said, "We are very pleased to have an individual with Mr. DeWitt's experience join our company. Tom Petit, president of the amusement sales division, and Alan Stone, executive vice president of the amusement operations division, will assume expanded responsibilities as Sega USA positions itself for dynamic growth in the future under Mr. DeWitt's direction."

Sega USA is a subsidiary of Sega of America, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sega Enterprises Ltd. in Tokyo.

AMOA INSTALLS CIGARETTE HOTLINE

AMOA has set up a cigarette vending hotline for those having problems in their localities. The tobacco companies and others concerned will then be contacted to lend whatever help they can. The toll-free number is (800) 274-4550.

NFL HARD YARDAGE RELEASED AS KIT

Shipping began Dec. 6 for two- or four-player kits of Strata's *NFL Hard Yardage*, an interactive football game based on NFL Films Inc. and NFL Properties Inc. licenses.

"In order to support market demand created by solid game earnings and our distribution network, we negotiated a kit release with the NFL," said Strata president Richard Ditton. "Our part suppliers and printers will be working around the clock to enable us to meet a strenuous kit production schedule."

NBA JAM SETS EARNINGS MARK

Despite only being on the market for 10 months, Midway Mfg.'s *NBA JAM* has become the highest-earning arcade game in the history of the industry, earning as much as $2,400 a week, according to company officials. This puts the game ahead of such '80s smashes as *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Mario Brothers*. In October *NBA JAM* received "Most Played Video Game for 1993" honors at the AMOA show.

"The game's highly advanced graphics, superior game play, and overall entertainment effects only enhance the experience of controlling the signature moves and skills of the NBA's greatest stars right at your fingertips," said director of marketing Roger Sharpe. "This is really responsible for making the game so popular to basketball and non-basketball fans alike."

Professional athletes have also become involved with the *NBA JAM* craze. Baseball All-Star Ken Griffey Jr. has six models at his home in Seattle, and NBA Hall of Famer Jerry West has one as well.

CAPCOM MOVES

Capcom USA has relocated to expanded facilities. The address is 475 Oakmead Pkwy., Sunnyvale, CA 94086. The phone and FAX numbers are (408) 774-0500 and (408) 774-3995 (sales and marketing FAX).

CORRECTION

Namco alerted us to a typographical error that recently appeared in our Equipment Poll, which identified its sit-down driver as *Suzuka 9 Hours*. The name is, of course, *Suzuka 8 Hours*. The company wanted to clear up any confusion the typo may have caused.

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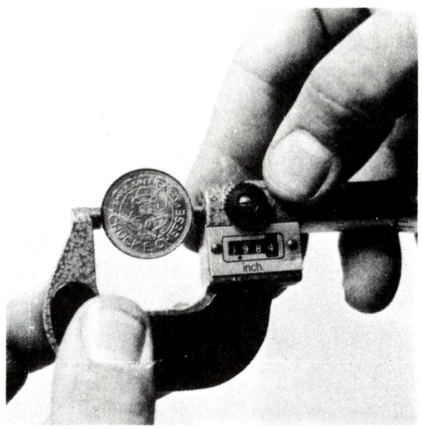

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What's all the fuss over family fun centers? 40

The term "family values" moved from joke status in 1992 to political correctness in 1993. At the same time, amusement complexes with entertainment choices for the whole family began to mushroom. It's a phenomenon that deserves closer scrutiny and a new column: "Family Focus."

IAAPA '93 46

The headline, "A universe of attractions under one roof," tells the story of the 75th anniversary mega-trade show hosted by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. Nine pages of photos, observations, and quotes from industry members bring the event to life.

Open Houses 68

A flood of post-AMOA open houses was the perfect avenue for spreading the good word about new coin-op products this winter. Featured are Pacific Vend/Canada, Lieberman Music, Betson/New Jersey, Betson/Pittsburgh, Greater Southern, Atlas/Chicago, Music-Vend/Seattle, and Music-Vend/Alaska.

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COVER

Strap on your six guns and travel to the Wild West via American Laser Games' latest live-action, interactive laser disc video, *Shootout at Old Tucson*. The gritty ALG cowpokes by the depot are, (l-r): Stan Jarocki, Robert Grebe, and Jim Jarocki.

FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

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1993

MOST PLAYED DART GAME

GALAXY

As determined by the vote of the AMOA Membership

AMOA
GAME AWARD
MOST PLAYED DART GAME
ENGLISH MARK DARTS
ARACHNID, INC.
As determined by the vote of the AMOA
1990
NEW ORLEANS, LA

AMOA
GAME AWARD
MOST PLAYED DART GAME
ARACHNID, INC.
As determined by the vote of the AMOA
1991
LAS VEGAS, NV

AMOA
GAME AWARD
MOST PLAYED DART GAME
SUPER 6 + 2
ARACHNID, INC.
As determined by the vote of the AMOA
1992
NASHVILLE, TN

AMOA
GAME AWARD
MOST PLAYED DART GAME
GALAXY
ARACHNID, INC.
As determined by the vote of the AMOA
1993
ANAHEIM, CA

EQUIPMENT POLL

REDEMPTION

	GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
	ALLEY BOWLERS		
1.	Skee-Ball	*(Skee-Ball)*	7.58
2.	Smartball	*(Smart)*	6.38
	SPORTS GAMES		
1.	Sonic Blast Man	*(Taito)*	8.56
2.	Full Court Frenzy	*(I.C.E.)*	7.47
3.	Shoot To Win!	*(Smart)*	7.29
4.	Hoop Shot	*(Doyle)*	7.00
5.	Putting Challenge	*(I.C.E.)*	6.27
6.	Slugfest	*(Williams)*	6.15
7.	UB-QB Football	*(National Sports)*	6.14
8.	Hot Shot Basketball	*(Williams)*	5.44
9.	Championship Basketball	*(Grayhound)*	5.43
10.	Arm Champs	*(Jaleco)*	5.00
	SINGLE COIN PUSHERS		
1.	Rock N' Roll	*(Betson)*	8.75
2.	Klondike	*(Betson)*	8.18
3.	Starburst	*(CCI)*	5.80
4.	Wedges/Ledges	*(Betson)*	5.00
	SINGLE CRANES		
1.	Candy Crane	*(Smart)*	8.29
2.	Clean Sweep	*(Smart)*	7.32
3.	Big Choice	*(Betson)*	6.73
4.	Skill Crane	*(Grayhound)*	6.42
5.	Action Claw	*(Betson)*	6.20
6.	Hollywood Crane	*(Maxwell)*	5.75
7.	Jumbo Crane	*(Grayhound)*	5.63
	CHILD-SIZE GAMES		
1.	Bozo Grand Prize	*(Exit)*	7.00
2.	Bozo Basketball	*(Design Plus)*	7.00
3.	Toss 'Em	*(CCI/UETD)*	7.00
4.	Shoot To Win! Jr.	*(Smart)*	6.85
5.	Skee-Toss B.C.	*(Skee-Ball/Betson)*	6.73
6.	Li'l Hoop Shot	*(Doyle)*	6.50
7.	Kiddie Whac-A-Mole	*(Bob's Space)*	6.17
8.	Jr. All American	*(CCI/UETD)*	6.17
9.	Super Mario Mushroom	*(Premier)*	6.00
10.	Li'l Dump The Ump	*(Doyle)*	5.86
	ROLL DOWNS		
1.	Clown Rolldown	*(BayTek)*	8.14
2.	Spin To Win	*(Lazer-Tron)*	7.00
3.	Roll Down	*(BayTek)*	5.50
	NOVELTY		
1.	Wheel'Em In	*(Bromley)*	8.94
2.	Whac-A-Mole	*(Bob's Space)*	8.71
3.	Rock-N-Bowl	*(Bromley)*	8.09
4.	Aftershock	*(Lazer-Tron)*	8.00
5.	Wacky Gator	*(Data East)*	7.50
6.	Pop-A-Ball	*(Coastal)*	7.27
7.	Feed Big Bertha	*(Smart)*	7.20
8.	Super Bank It	*(Capcom)*	7.17
9.	Can Alley	*(Bob's Space)*	7.00
10.	Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe	*(Data East)*	6.95
11.	Big Mouth	*(Meltec)*	6.44
12.	Dump The Ump	*(Doyle)*	6.43
13.	Pop-A-Tac-Toe	*(Coastal)*	6.20
14.	Lippy The Clown	*(Data East)*	6.00
15.	Cosmo Gang	*(Data East)*	5.79
16.	Hungry Hungry Hippos	*(I.C.E.)*	5.73
17.	Neck-N-Neck	*(Bundra)*	5.67
18.	Knock Down	*(Meltec)*	5.50
19.	Cracky Cram	*(Namco)*	5.45
20.	Bowler Roller	*(Bob's Space)*	5.33
21.	Bank It	*(Capcom)*	5.21
22.	Circus Hi-Rise	*(Skee-Ball)*	5.20

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

	GAME	MO. ON CHART	MO. IN TOP 10
1.	Mortal Kombat II *(Midway)*	2	2
2.	Mortal Kombat *(Midway)*	16	16
3.	Lethal Crash Race *(McO'River)*	1	1
4.	The Addams Family *(Bally)*	22	22
5.	NBA JAM *(Midway)*	10	10
6.	Virtua Racing *(Sega)*	14	14
7.	Samurai Shodown *(SNK)*	4	4
8.	Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	15	15
9.	Indiana Jones *(Williams)*	3	3
10.	Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	9	9
11.	Super Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	1	1
12.	Out Runners *(Sega)*	4	4
13.	Jurassic Park *(Data East)*	7	7
14.	Suzuka 8 Hours *(Namco)*	17	13
15.	Race Drivin' Panorama *(Atari)*	29	20
16.	Run And Gun *(Konami)*	1	1
17.	World Rally *(Atari)*	5	4
18.	Hard Drivin' *(Atari)*	57	49
19.	Rai Den *(Fabtek)*	38	18
20.	Last Action Hero *(Data East)*	3	3
21.	Street Fighter Champ *(Capcom)*	21	21
22.	Race Drivin' *(Atari)*	39	38
23.	Crime Patrol *(Am. Laser)*	5	3
24.	Mad Dog McCree 25" *(Am. Laser)*	15	2
25.	Terminator 2 *(Williams)*	30	30
26.	Terminator 2 *(Midway)*	27	22
27.	White Water *(Williams)*	11	8
28.	Fun House *(Williams)*	36	34
29.	Creature From Black Lagoon *(Bally)*	11	10
30.	Star Wars *(Data East)*	15	10
31.	X-Men *(Konami)*	22	12
32.	Wipe Out *(Premier)*	1	0
33.	Moto Frenzy *(Atari)*	13	0
34.	Punisher *(Capcom)*	7	2
35.	Tales From The Crypt *(Data East)*	1	0
36.	Rai Den II *(Fabtek)*	1	1
37.	Mad Dog II Lost Gold 33"/50" *(Am. Laser)*	11	7
38.	Air Combat *(Namco)*	2	0
39.	Rocky And Bullwinkle *(Data East)*	10	6
40.	Fish Tales *(Williams)*	16	13
41.	Cybersled *(Namco)*	2	1
42.	Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	5	1
43.	World Heroes 2 *(SNK)*	7	7
44.	Judge Dredd *(Bally)*	2	1
45.	Tee'd Off *(Premier)*	6	1
46.	Lethal Weapon 3 *(Data East)*	18	8
47.	Golden Axe-Revenge *(Sega)*	9	1
48.	The Getaway *(Williams)*	21	13
49.	Martial Champion *(Konami)*	7	0
50.	Super Chase *(Taito)*	9	4
51.	Mad Dog McCree 33"/50" *(Betson)*	11	6
52.	Lethal Weapon *(Ocean)*	5	4
53.	Time Killers *(Strata)*	12	10
54.	Metamorphic Force *(Konami)*	1	0
55.	Final Lap 3 *(Namco)*	10	0
56.	Aero Fighters *(McO'River)*	16	10
57.	Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	34	32
58.	Survival Arts *(Am. Sammy)*	1	0
59.	Cue Ball Wizard *(Premier)*	14	2
60.	Dracula *(Williams)*	9	6

EQUIPMENT POLL

VIDEO KITS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. Mortal Kombat *(Midway)*	8.72	946
2. Lethal Crash Race *(McO'River)*	8.67	58
3. Samurai Shodown *(SNK)*	8.02	224
4. Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	8.00	808
5. Super Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	7.78	50
6. World Rally *(Atari)*	7.43	181
7. Rai Den *(Fabtek)*	7.40	787
8. Street Fighter Champ *(Capcom)*	7.13	1,155
9. Rai Den II *(Fabtek)*	6.45	25
10. World Heroes 2 *(SNK)*	6.17	233
11. Golden Axe-Revenge *(Sega)*	6.12	103
12. Lethal Weapon *(Ocean)*	6.00	128
13. Time Killers *(Strata)*	5.90	490
14. Metamorphic Force *(Konami)*	5.90	7
15. Aero Fighters *(McO'River)*	5.89	352
16. Street Fighter II *(Capcom)*	5.87	1,700
17. Survival Arts *(Am. Sammy)*	5.83	3
18. Super High Impact *(Midway)*	5.69	737
19. Road Riot *(Atari)*	5.62	872
20. Fatal Fury 2 *(SNK)*	5.56	283
21. In The Hunt *(Irem)*	5.52	127
22. Fatal Fury *(SNK)*	5.48	324
23. Art Of Fighting *(SNK)*	5.41	291
24. Sunset Riders *(Konami)*	5.37	726
25. World Heroes *(SNK)*	5.26	382
26. WWF Wrestle Fest *(Am. Technos)*	5.24	857
27. Gal's Panic II *(Kaneko)*	5.20	66
28. Warriors Of Fate *(Capcom)*	5.18	23
29. High Impact Football *(Midway)*	5.06	595
30. Knights of The Round *(Capcom)*	5.00	164
31. Wild West C.O.W. Boys *(Konami)*	4.78	13
32. Final Fight *(Capcom)*	4.76	1,196
33. Three Count Bout *(SNK)*	4.75	70
34. Clutch Hitter *(Sega)*	4.69	479
35. King Of The Monsters 2 *(SNK)*	4.65	189

VIDEO DEDICATED

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. Mortal Kombat II *(Midway)*	9.64	119
2. NBA JAM *(Midway)*	8.55	589
3. Virtua Racing *(Sega)*	8.41	776
4. Out Runners *(Sega)*	7.71	201
5. Suzuka 8 Hours *(Namco)*	7.65	760
6. Race Drivin' Panorama *(Atari)*	7.57	1,187
7. Run And Gun *(Konami)*	7.50	45
8. Hard Drivin' *(Atari)*	7.40	2,613
9. Race Drivin' *(Atari)*	7.11	1,964
10. Crime Patrol *(Am. Laser)*	7.10	180
11. Mad Dog McCree 25'' *(Am. Laser)*	7.00	336
12. Terminator 2 *(Midway)*	6.83	1,338
13. X-Men *(Konami)*	6.67	919
14. Moto Frenzy *(Atari)*	6.56	329
15. Punisher *(Capcom)*	6.53	191

PINBALLS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. The Addams Family *(Bally)*	8.66	1,321
2. Indiana Jones *(Williams)*	7.97	165
3. Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	7.79	487
4. Jurassic Park *(Data East)*	7.67	380
5. Last Action Hero *(Data East)*	7.15	136
6. Terminator 2 *(Williams)*	6.89	1,553
7. White Water *(Williams)*	6.75	420
8. Fun House *(Williams)*	6.75	1,627
9. Creature From Black Lagoon *(Bally)*	6.72	446
10. Star Wars *(Data East)*	6.68	536
11. Wipe Out *(Premier)*	6.56	29
12. Tales From The Crypt *(Data East)*	6.50	26
13. Rocky And Bullwinkle *(Data East)*	6.36	355
14. Fish Tales *(Williams)*	6.35	642
15. Judge Dredd *(Bally)*	6.16	64

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

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FROM THE EDITOR

A very special year

This year is a very special one for all of us here at Play Meter. Although it's hard to believe, 1994 marks our 20th anniversary of serving the coin-op industry.

We love to brag about being the first trade magazine to keep coin machine operators up to date on what is happening all over the coin-op world. Founder Ralph Lally was like thousands of other operators back in 1974, who were curious about how operators in other states were handling their businesses and what issues they faced. He felt that there should be a way for operators to keep track of what was going on in other cities, states, and towns that affected the industry.

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

His curiosity about the industry compelled him to formulate a plan to start a magazine that would cover the entire industry. Realizing that it was an ambitious plan and not quite certain he could make a living at it, he kept his day job. At nights he worked on the new project.

Ralph was soon overwhelmed with the support he got from just about everyone he talked to. He was beginning to realize that there were a lot more like him who wanted industry information. Although the ads didn't start dropping from heaven, there were enough to make Ralph realize that a magazine for the coin-op industry was an idea whose time had come.

Play Meter was three years old when I came to work here. I remember thinking that there couldn't possibly be enough to write about *every* month on coin-operated games. At that time, of course, "games" usually referred to pinball; video games were a new breed and referred to as novelty or arcade games. I soon realized that not only was there enough to write about every month, there was enough for *twice* a month. It was during the video boom that Play Meter fired up the presses for 200-plus-page issues twice a month!

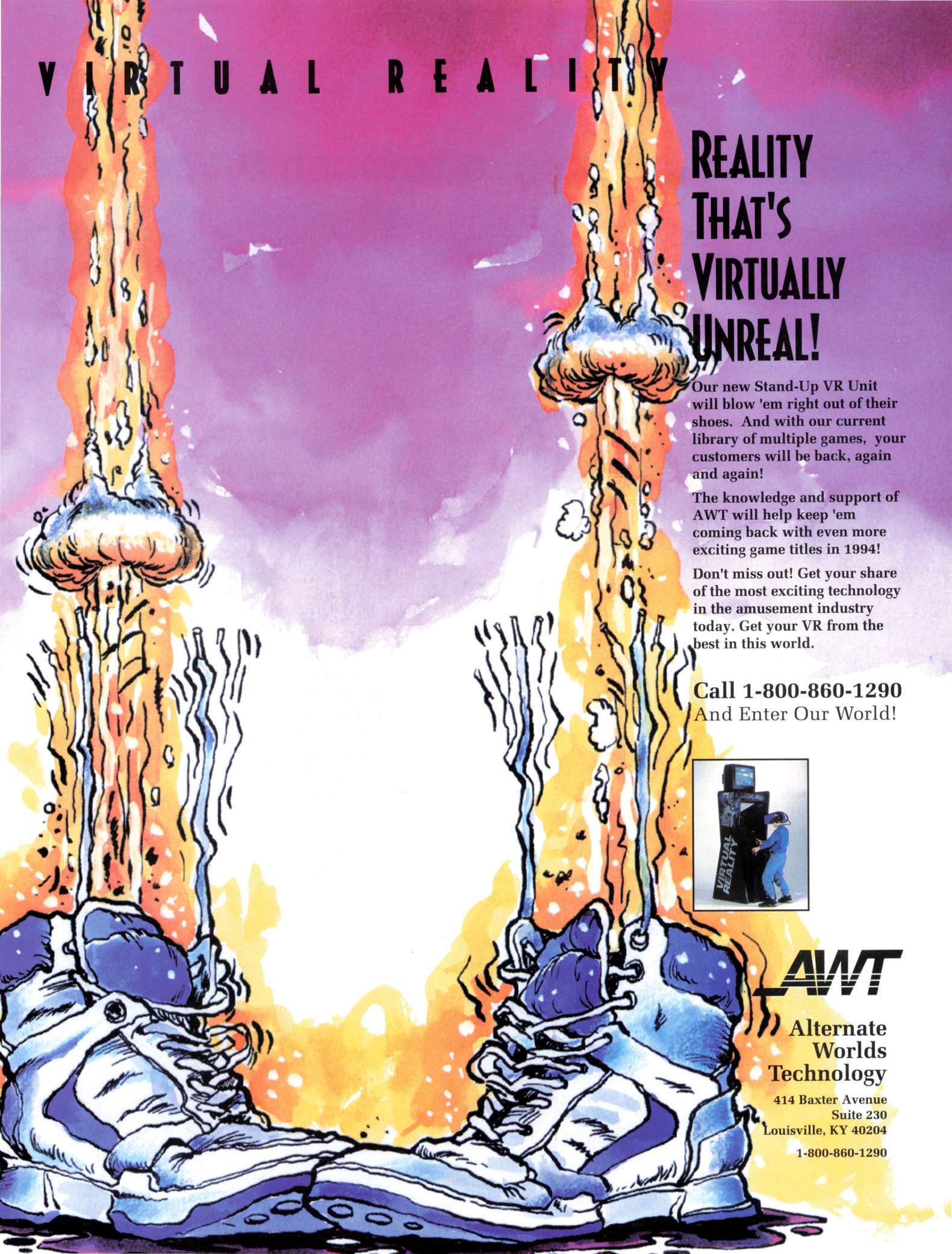
I have some fond memories of those early days, from donning an old pair of jeans to cut the grass in front of the building to taking my first cab ride at my first AMOA in Chicago! Was I ever really that young?

Many predicted that the magazine would fade into oblivion without Ralph's guidance, after he was killed in a car accident 10 years ago. However, they hadn't figured on the determination of his wife Carol, who had been by Ralph's side from the beginning. Being both mother and father to two young daughters made Carol's task seem insurmountable. But as she says, "This magazine was our dream. I was not about to let it fail. Ironically, while we all will be commemorating the magazine's 20th year of serving the industry, I will be celebrating my 10th year as publisher. I can honestly say that I can't wait to see what's ahead for the next 10 or 20 years. I do know, though, that Play Meter will be here to report it!"

All of us at Play Meter are excited about beginning our 20th year. Throughout the year, we will be taking a look back five, 10, and 20 years at how the industry has changed and maybe how it has stayed the same. We'll probably even dig through our archives for some snapshots of our industry friends from way back. Remember those checked pants and really long sideburns!

If you have a story you'd like to share about Play Meter's first years or a memory of Ralph, please give me a call so we can share it with our other readers. We'd love to hear from people like Gary Stern and Chuck Arnold, who were the first to commit to full page ads, and others who have a tale to tell.

Thanks to all of you, our loyal readers, who have been the real story behind our success. I'd like to propose a toast to all of you and to our next 20 years! □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Magic Edge, Namco to open VR center

From left: Namco Operations' David Bishop and Kevin Hayes; Magic Edge's Michael Chan and Donald Morris.

Magic Edge Inc. and Namco have announced plans to open a virtual reality entertainment center in Mt. View, Calif. The announcement follows the signing of a three-part joint venture agreement between the two companies.

The Magic Edge Entertainment Center is slated to open on Shoreline Boulevard during the second quarter of 1994. The conceptual and architectural design has been developed by Magic Edge, which will continue to manage the project through the construction and grand opening phases. Magic Edge will operate the center for two years, at which point Namco will own and operate it.

"We really want people to feel as if they have entered into a different world when they arrive at the Magic Edge Entertainment Center," said the company's Lei Tunnaye. "By combining a myriad of special effects with architectural and theming details, we have created a truly immersive and absorbing environment."

At the heart of the 12,000-square-foot, fully themed facility are 12 two-ton, interactive flight simulators developed by Magic Edge. The single-passenger simulators have all the trappings of an F/A-18 fighter plane and deliver a convincing aerial combat mission. Advanced technologies include high-resolution graphics, 3-D sound, and a patent-pending motion system. The units can be networked together so that players can dogfight with one another.

"The location-based entertainment market has been projected to be a multi-billion-dollar industry," said David Bishop, vice president of Namco Operations. "Namco and Magic Edge together have the technology and experience to set the standards in this emerging industry."

Breaking ground in Mt. View, Calif., are Lei Tunnaye of Magic Edge and David Bishop of Namco Operations.

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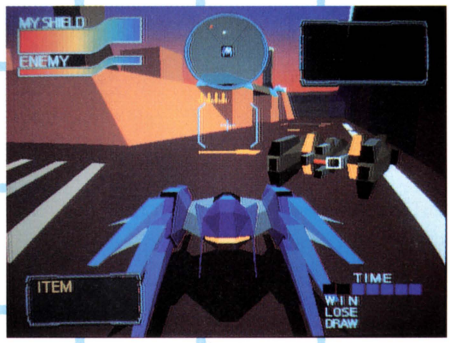
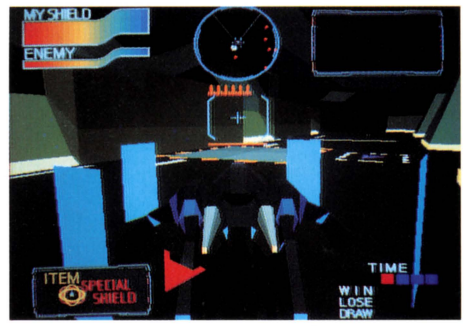


Use strength and skill to obliterate your opponent.



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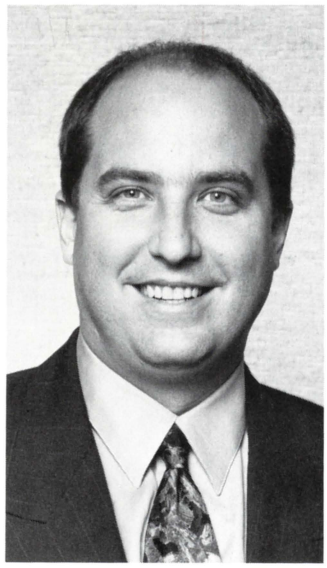
Changes made at Atari Games

Mark Pierce has been promoted to executive producer/vice president of engineering at Atari Games, one of several changes that have taken place recently at the company. He's been a team leader in Atari's engineering group for over eight years and has an extensive background in art, animation, and game design.

Shortly after Pierce's promotion, a restructuring in Atari's research and development groups took effect.

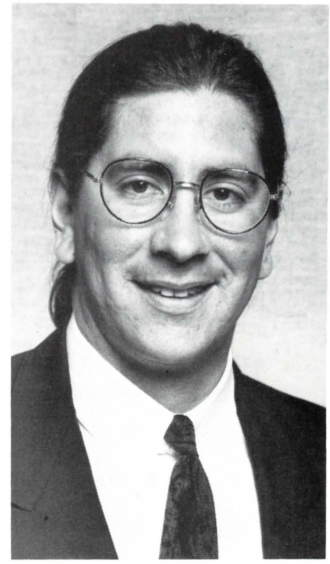
"Adding strength to our individual teams was a top priority for our company," he said. "With that, I have restructured our development groups so that they are now headed by a producer who directs all the talent on his team. We have hit products in development which will insure the industry that Atari has the creativity and quality that has made us so successful in the past."

Said Hide Nakajima, president of Atari Games, "We have made this change to give our design teams the full support they need to get innovative games into the market. We are fortunate to have someone of Mark's dedication and creativity in this position, and we are very confident that these recent changes will make a remarkable impact in 1994."



Mark Pierce

Derryl DePriest



David Macias

Atari has also added two people to its marketing department: Derryl DePriest, associate product manager; and David Macias, product manager. "Our growth in marketing allows us to be more involved with the product development process from start to finish, as the product managers will be interfacing with the producers and creative staff to help deliver what operators and players want from us," said marketing director Mary Fujihara.

Finally, Jackie Sherman has been promoted to marketing communications supervisor. She's been involved with all aspects of marketing and sales support in her 13 years with Atari. "In her new role, Jackie will be responsible for all field testing procedures and reporting, as well as her previous responsibilities in advertising and meeting/trade show planning," Fujihara said.

Meck elected '94 IAAPA president

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has elected Joe Meck president for 1994. He's vice president of entertainment and operations for Knott's Berry Farm.

Meck succeeds Roy Gillian of Wonderland Pier in Ocean City, N.J. "Becoming president is without a doubt the highlight of my career," he said. "It's an honor to be recognized by the people of the industry."

Gina Romano of Nellie Bly Park in New York was elected third vice president. The following were appointed to two-year terms on the board of directors:

Darrell Metzger, Ocean Park, Hong Kong; Kate Horner, Riverside Park, Massachusetts; Peter Herschend, Silver Dollar City, Missouri; Michael Demetrios, Marine World Africa, California; Steve Mast, Elitch Gardens, Colorado; and John Roberts, Busch Entertainment, Missouri.

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Capcom sues Data East over Street Fighter II

According to Japan's *Game Machine* magazine, Capcom Co. Ltd. (Osaka) has brought a civil lawsuit against Data East Corp. (Tokyo) for alleged copyright violation of *Street Fighter II*. The suit was filed in Japan and in the United States (Capcom USA vs. Data East USA).

Capcom claims that Data East's *Fighter's History* violates the copyright embodied in *Street Fighter II* and *SF II: Champion Edition*. Data East counters that it has violated neither audiovisual works nor computer software works that are protected by copyright law. Capcom seeks a prohibition order on the manufacture and distribution of *Fighter's History*, plus 623 million yen in damages.

According to Capcom, *Fighter's History* closely resembles *SF II* in basic story, characters and their motions, screen image composition, attack moves, etc., to the point where its copyright is being violated. Data East asserts that its game is in no way a copy of *SF II* and says that, as far as fighting games are concerned, its *Karate Champ* was the first in the genre.

"Ideas do not become an object of the copyright protection," said Data East in a statement. "All similarities asserted by Capcom are those which can be usually seen in other fighting games. Thus, Capcom's charges are excessive and represent a menace to the future of the video game industry."

Capcom president Kenzo Tsujimoto told *Game Machine*: "If a video game is the same as another in terms of game action and differs only in characters, background, colors, etc., and there is no prosecution, it will leave the door open for unauthorized copies.

"It is possible to technically analyze a video game through reverse engineering and make a video game which is essentially the same; it's only superficially different. Capcom intends to prove the processes whereby Data East came to make a counterfeit called *Fighter's History*."

In response, Data East president Tetsuo Fukuda said, "Since both companies have the same strong attitude toward copyright protection, there was certainly room to discuss the problem. However, Capcom has brought this suit, unilaterally casting Data East in the role of 'bad guy.' This must never be permitted. Capcom has brought the current charges simply in order to monopolize the market."

EMT Kiddie rides enter U.S market

Elektro Mobiltechnik (EMT) of Raubach, Germany, has been making top-quality kiddie rides for some 20 years, and now those rides are headed for the U.S. market.

NSM-America will handle distribution through its national network of NSM distributors. Operators can go to any of the approximate 40 participating NSM distributor offices for product, parts, and service. NSM-America vice president John Margold will head the new effort, in addition to his jukebox sales and marketing duties. Jim Chapman will serve as EMT sales manager.

NSM-America's Chicago headquarters also doubles as the EMT national service center. Ten thousand square feet of warehouse space has been devoted to EMT inventory. Coin-op service veteran Tony Lantz has been appointed EMT service manager.

In addition, EMT has named Miami-based FunTecnic Inc. to handle national accounts and to help develop sales into traditional operator routes. National accounts are typically high-volume, factory-direct buyers: store chains, arcades, family fun centers, amusement parks, and the like.

What makes EMT kiddie rides different from the others? EMT president Ulli Kunnecke says they're created based on principles known to appeal to children, then street tested before ever placed on the market. "We may design a dozen rides to end up with one that meets our earnings criteria," he said. "And then it must meet our reliability and durability criteria. Creating good kiddie rides is no easy task."

EMT kiddie rides are priced higher than ordinary rides, but Kunnecke stressed that the up-front purchase price is only one factor in determining what a ride really costs. "You have to compare service frequency, replacement frequency, versatility, and very importantly, ride appeal," he said. "In the end, kiddie ride operators will find EMT kiddie rides actually cost them far less—and earn them far more."

All EMT kiddie rides are indoor/outdoor certified. They're made with non-flammable, non-toxic, non-conductive fiberglass and have overload protectors, adjustable sound and ride-time controls, non-skid entrance mats, and other standard features. Also, the fiberglass shells (the part the kids ride in) are interchangeable within a model series. Operators can update their rides (switch the shells) without buying entirely new units.

"Kiddie ride operators have never seen quality like this," Margold said. "At first you'll think they're overbuilt, but after 10 years or so on the street you understand why they have to be built so well."

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Test shows new Valley dart package increases earnings

Valley Recreation Products has released the results of an independent earnings test commissioned to determine the effects of games recently added to all new *Cougar Dart* machines. The earnings test, conducted in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area by an independent testing facility, measured the effects of 701, 901, Mark 21 (a no-score type of Cricket game), and a play-the-computer feature called "Ernie."

Simultaneous with the introduction of machines with these new games in March 1993, Valley also gave away packets of in-bar promotional materials to call attention to the games. (Valley offers the new games in kit form for under $100 for most previous *Cougar Dart* machines.)

The test results showed that new *Cougar* machines with promotional materials posted to draw attention to the new games earned 20 percent more than the previous *Cougar* model. Installing the upgrade kit in older *Cougar* models and posting the same materials resulted in the same 20 percent average increase.

"The results were solid and confirmed by extending the test an additional four weeks," said Dick Shelton, Valley's senior vice president and general manager. The test employed some 17 machines over a 12-week period. He also stressed that the earnings increases "may well not be permanent."

"We picked up no diminution of the 20 percent increase during the 12-week test, but we would suspect that the earnings increase would gradually erode over a year's period of time or so," Shelton said. "But a 20 percent increase can add up to a lot of money, even in six month's time. We expect some portion of the increase will stick, if nothing else due to new players that we've inspired to try the game and then continue to play."

He concluded, "We want to make it clear that we are not encouraging operators to buy more new machines or update kits. We are, however, clearly recommending that Valley operators try to time their usual equipment purchasing to coincide with what we've proven is an earnings-increase method." He recommends that operators do their own earnings testing on their routes with several kit-upgraded machines before proceeding.

WMS Gaming hires director of operations

Elizabeth Chapa has been appointed director of operations for WMS Gaming Inc., the gaming products division of Williams. Two years ago the company entered the legalized video gaming business with a terminal designed specifically for the lottery industry.

"Elizabeth Chapa brings to Williams extensive knowledge and experience in manufacturing resource planning, an area of expertise that is vital to ensuring our long-term success in both the casino gaming and video lottery industries," said WMS Gaming president Richard Currie. "As we expand Williams' gaming product line and increase our market penetration, we need someone with her skills to ensure flexible, responsive fulfillment of customer demand and to help the gaming division achieve Class A manufacturing status."

As director of operations, Chapa will be responsible for managing the operational functions required to fulfill customers' demands for quality gaming products and service, Currie said.

In other news concerning WMS Gaming, it has been selected by the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority to provide 1,000 video lottery terminals to the Canadian province. "We are very pleased to have been chosen to supply VLTs to Saskatchewan," Currie commented. "Additionally, we are proud to have scored so highly on the technical evaluation. The Canadian marketplace has proven to be an exceptionally strong sales region for our VLTs."

IAAPA names award winners

At its 75th anniversary convention and trade show, the International Association of Amusement Parks (IAAPA) presented awards for originality and creativity in the display of product, as well as product innovation. Among the winners in the exhibits category were:

New Technology: Visions of Reality, first; Ride & Show Engineering, second.

Games: Skee-Ball Inc., first; Bob's Space Racers, second.

Merchandise: Liberty Toy, first; Dan Brechner, second.

Arcade and Coin-Op Equipment: Bob's Space Racers, first; Doyle International, second.

The product innovation recipients included the following:

Games: Lazer-Tron, *Awesome Toss 'Em*, first; Doyle International, *Hoop Shot Rally*, second.

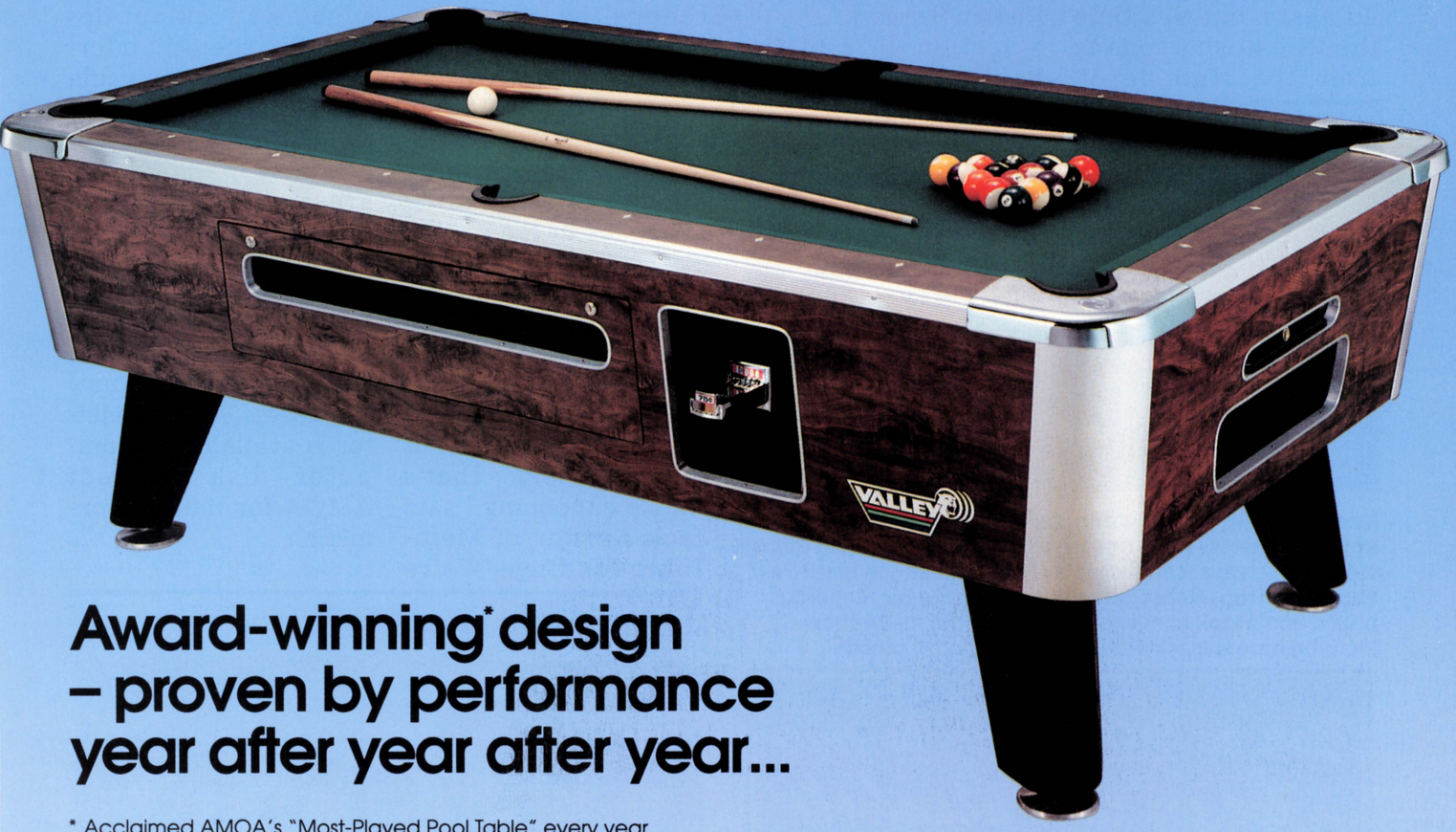
Arcade and Coin-Op Equipment: Lazer-Tron, first; Doyle International, second.

New Kiddie Ride: Designs International, first; Zamperla, second.

Congratulations to these manufacturers for being recognized by IAAPA.

COUGAR

ZDS



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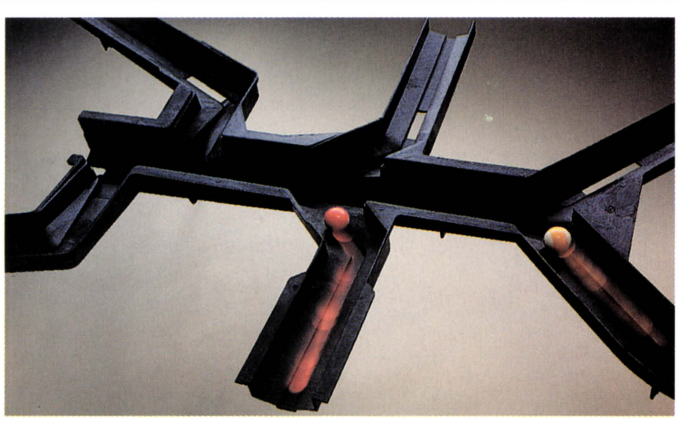

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AMOA tackles cigarette vending threat

Cigarette vending machines are being targeted again, but this time the threat isn't coming from the state level. Rather, it's the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

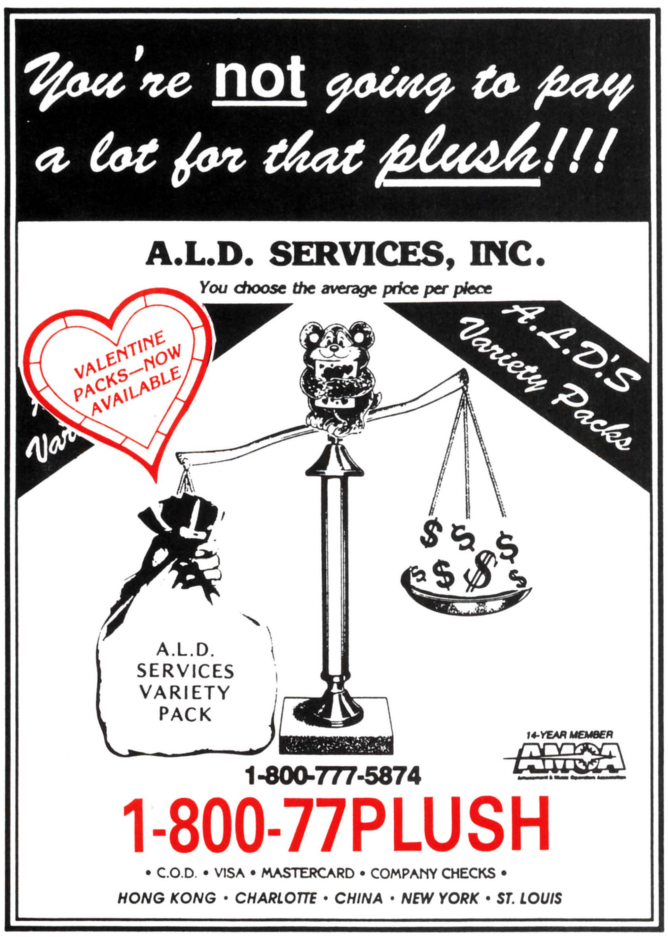
Section 1926 of the Public Health Service Act was added in 1992, and its intent was to reduce the number of underage smokers. But HHS took an extreme interpretation of this section and issued a ruling that would prohibit all cigarette vending machines in the United States. To make matters worse, HHS's Gale Herd refuses to meet with representatives of AMOA.

"The intent of this law was not to put an industry out of business, but unfortunately that's what's happening," said Jack Kerner of Melo-Tone Vending. "We're trying to show her that there are alternatives, such as a lock-out device. But she isn't interested in hearing our side of the story."

AMOA urges cigarette operators to ask for congressional assistance with HHS. Congressmen and senators should remind HHS of the legislative intent and the negative impact a ban would have on small businesses. A sample letter is available on computer disk; contact AMOA for more information.

Big day at New-Way

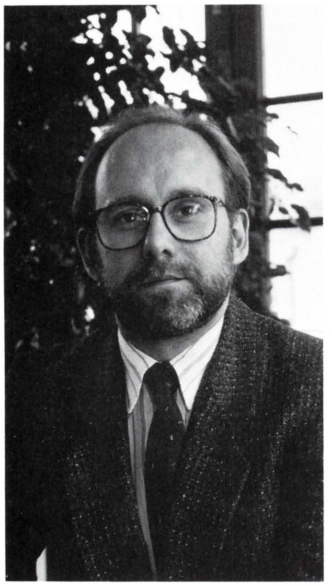
New-Way Sales Co. in Ontario, Canada, had a busy day on Nov. 4. Operators were treated to Rowe and Data East Pinball technical schools (conducted by Phil Cole and Joe Blackwell/ Pete Gustafson, respectively), lunch, a raffle for numerous prizes, and a look at new product from the AMOA show. Pictured here is Blackwell leading the pinball school.



Mondial open house

Our friend Chuck Arnold shot some photos for us at Mondial's post-AMOA open house in Norwood, Mass. Pictured at the top, (l-r): Carlos Lagaurdia and Mike Publicover of Mondial; Steve Walton of Premier; and John Hill of Sega. On the bottom, NSM-America's John Margold (r) talks about product with operator Rick Jones. Look for other open house reports elsewhere in this issue.

ATEI turns 50 in January



Peter Rusbridge

The Amusement Trades Exhibition International (ATEI) celebrates its 50th birthday on Jan. 25-27 at Earls Court 1 in London. As of Nov. 5, 198 exhibitors had booked space for the show, with representatives from 45 countries already confirmed (69 countries were represented last year).

"What we are witnessing is the concept of the global market in action," said exhibition manager Peter Rusbridge. "The 1993 ATEI set the tone, with overseas companies recognizing the importance of London as one of the world's major amusement industry exhibitions. Those who were unable to attend have seen what important business opportunities were missed and have come into the fold, so much so that in January we will have at least 17 first-time exhibitors."

Among the manufacturers who have confirmed their attendance at ATEI are Bally, Capcom, IGT, Jaleco, Merit, Namco, NSM, Sega, Taito, and Williams. The major British gaming machine manufacturers will also be there, including Ace Coin, Barcrest, Bell Fruit Mfg., JPM, Maygay, and Project Coin.

This year's move to Earls Court 1, London's premier exhibition hall, gives show-goers a more spacious venue than before. Visitors will benefit from wider aisles and a more efficient registration area.

A range of additional services are aimed at non-U.K. visitors. Atop the list is a new International Visitors Lounge exclusively for the use of overseas guests. Also, a team of bilingual interpreters will be available at no cost.

ATEI has negotiated up to 50 percent discounts at some of London's top hotels. A worldwide network of agents to assist with travel arrangements to London is also available from ATEI. For more information, FAX 44 71 713 0446.

Nickel play a hit in S.D.

U.S. Games' *Pot-O-Gold*, the first nickel-play game in the South Dakota video lottery market, is outearning the average video lottery game in the state by 28 percent—after only two months on location, according to the South Dakota Lottery.

In October the average "net revenue per game" for the 109 *Pot-O-Gold* games on location was $2,431; the overall game average was $1,900. The figure also represents an increase of about nine percent over the take per *Pot-O-Gold* game in September.

"Overall video lottery sales were up almost a million dollars in October over September," said Tom Klingel, chief operating officer for U.S. Games. "We believe that nickel play has attracted many new players to video lottery."

Said Bob Johnson of American Games, the Rapid City-based distributor of *Pot-O-Gold*, "It's a very attractive game that's fun for the players and extremely reliable to operate. There's no worry about downtime."

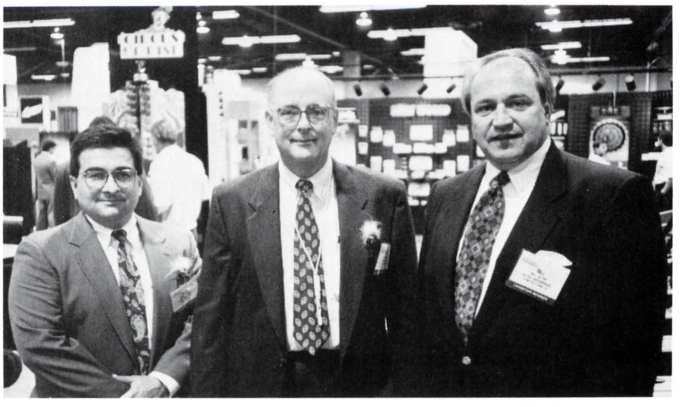
With *Pot-O-Gold*, players have a choice of five different games—Jacks or Better, Aces or Better, Joker Poker, Blackjack, or Keno—and, when set to allow it, nickel or quarter play.

Alter granted patent

Alter Enterprises has received patent protection for *Fireball* and the group game version of *Killer Beez*. The latter debuted at the 1992 IAAPA show, where it captured the award for best game.

Killer Beez was developed by Skee-Ball Inc. in conjunction with Alter Enterprises. It utilizes a rapid-fire ball-shooting mechanism developed by Alter. The patent, which centers primarily on the ball delivery and shooting mechanism, was developed over a period of nearly seven years at a cost of many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A new redemption version of *Killer Beez* is scheduled for release in the spring.



From left: Mark Kane and Joe Sladek of Skee-Ball Inc., Bill Alter of Alter Enterprises.

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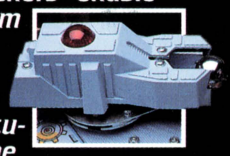
With STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION Williams takes a giant leap in pinball technology, excitement and profits.

Already a hit with millions of viewers, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION promises extra-ordinary player identification and appeal. Featuring custom speech by all eight cast members, the show's theme song and original music in brilliant DCS sound, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION is engineered to deliver out-of-this-galaxy pinball adventure.

Brand-new technical advances make STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION a galaxy class pinball. The "Light-Speed" ball launcher and "Below Decks" multi-ball delivery system increase playing speed. Left and right "Probe Launchers" enable players to aim balls at ramps and targets with powerful accu-racy. And the all-new Borg ship challenges players to a head-on pinball confrontation from the universe's most feared adversary.



STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION also offers players eight different U.S.S. Enterprise™ Missions, 2-; 3-; 4-; 5-; and 6-ball Multiball™ thrills; three Neutral Zone Encounters, Holodeck Video Modes, opportunities to Advance in Rank, Super Spinner, Warp 9.9 Mode, Secret Modes, Hurry Up bonus feature, bigger jackpots, more shots than ever, and unmatched excitement. You can search the galaxy and never find a better pinball investment.

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SPECIFICATIONS:

Height:.....85" (216cm)	Width: .....29" (73.5cm)
Height with backbox folded: .....56" (142cm)	Depth: .....55" (139.5cm)
	Weight:.....320 lbs. (144kg) crated
	300 lbs. (135kg) uncrated

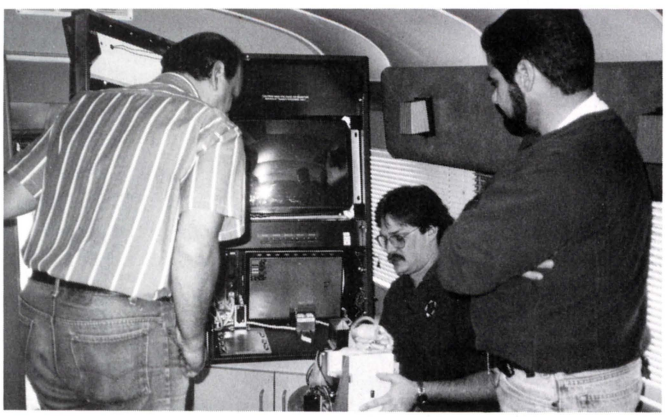
The bus stops here!

Arachnid gaming division staff members have been traveling the state of Louisiana in the company's BullShooter bus, certifying coin machine operators on the company's *Lucky Touch* video poker machine.

Louisiana's video poker rules and regulations require certification for each brand of machine used by a device owner. Louisiana operators can expect to see the bus frequently during 1994 as Arachnid continues its educational journey. One *Lucky Touch* game is on the bus; it is used for demonstration and certification purposes only.

According to Chris Kannelakis of C.K. Gaming, the distributor for Arachnid gaming equipment in Louisiana, "We're getting a good response to the machine after months of testing at two off-track betting parlours in the state. Arachnid and C.K. Gaming feel very satisfied with the revenue generated by the machine and the player appeal that's built in. We feel our machine has the 'legs' that will last."

From left: Vic Tusa and Larry Ward of the Bayou Casino in New Orleans, Elmer Schulz of Arachnid, Chris Kannelakis of C.K. Gaming, and Brad Bennehoff of Arachnid.



Gaming engineer Brad Bennehoff shows the ticket printer mechanism to Larry Ward (l) and Vic Tusa of Bayou Casino.

Parkway names Kucharski

Ed Kucharski

Parkway Machine Corp., a Maryland-based manufacturer and distributor of coin-op equipment and supplies, has appointed Ed Kucharski director of its full-line division. He has over 32 years of experience in full-line sales, principally in the mid-Atlantic region.

Parkway has just been appointed exclusive distributor of Glasco Products in the mid-Atlantic region. The company also distributes the Lektro-Vend, USI, Royal, Coinco, Mars, and Hamilton Mfg. lines. Kucharski will direct the sales and service of existing lines and consider the addition of others.

In other news

- Due to a need for increased production space, Grayhound Electronics has moved all of its operations to a 27,500-square-foot facility in the Lakewood Industrial Park. The address is 1915 Swathmore Ave., Lakewood, NJ 08701; the phone number is (800) 222-0491.
- Pioneer New Media Technologies has introduced the CLD-V121G, the only all-format karaoke system specifically designed for commercial establishments. The company will also introduce a new line of CD+G software, The Professional Series, which offers 18 songs per disc. Titles will include R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion" and The Beatles' "I Want To Hold Your Hand."
- According to AAMA, on Nov. 10 armed Mexican federal police and the Attorney General's office raided Electronic Nancy in Mexico City and seized 996 counterfeit games.
- Video Lottery Technologies has completed arrangements for Datacraft Ltd. of Victoria, Australia, to begin manufacturing VLT's multigame video lottery terminals for the Victoria market. Terms of the technology licensing agreement were not disclosed.
- Maryland's Court of Appeals recently overturned two ordinances that banned the sale of cigarettes in vending machines. The court said state government has exclusive control over the machines; local governments cannot restrict such sales.
- Shaffer Distributing Co. of Columbus, Ohio, has named Gary Marshall coordinator of its customer in-house service.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Compiled by the editors of EuroSlot

ITALY

Karaoke is booming in Italy, thanks to TV personality Fiorello. Something of a cult hero in Italy, Fiorello has a karaoke program that appears weekly on national television. The show travels to a different town each week, inviting members of the audience to get up and sing their favorite songs.

BELGIUM

Due to new regulations, the "telephone system" of playing games will come to an end. Previously, players could pay the bartender for games that were credited on the bingo tables. Now the games can be played only by coin entry.

After regulations were tightened, the operation of bingo tables dropped from around 20,000 to 12,000 over the past two years. On July 1, 1993, the Ministry of Finance introduced a new regulation, but a trade-inspired lobby to have it delayed (pending the industry's ability to convert equipment) was permitted.

Authorities are now clamping down, despite the industry's doubts that the regulations would be enforced. Some machines are reported to have been seized in Brussels. Delays in the application of the regulations in four areas of Walloonia have now expired and the entire country has to operate in the same way.

In related news, the application of VAT has been threatened for the first time on bingo games. A bill is currently in the Parliament, which will make the site-owner's share of the machine take subject to VAT at a rate of 19.5 percent. This will bring bingo tables into line with other coin machines.

GERMANY

Press reports indicate that Escor Deutschland Holdings AG of Coesfold, and Escor Deutschland GmbH of Hanover, have applied for bankruptcy. The group is one of the largest arcade owners in Europe. A liquidator, lawyer Reinhard Muhl, has been appointed to handle the proceedings.

The two companies own 500 amusement centers through subsidiary companies and 50 companies in Germany. The group has 1,000 employees; the most recent records show a turnover of DM 200 m. (U.S. $130 m.).

The structure of the group has been hazy for some time. Escor AG, the Swiss parent company in Dudingen, used its subsidiary company, United Leisure Holdings AG, to retain sole ownership of Deutsche Escor. But in 1992, Escort AG sold Escor Deutschland AG and Escor Deutschland GmbH to the manager of United Leisure, Udo Oberhoff.

According to Muhl, it is not yet clear whether this purchase actually took place, and there is some doubt who legally owns the two troubled companies.

For the moment, all the gaming centers are continuing to run under Muhl's control. He said that several outside parties had shown interest in the possibility of a takeover. Apparently, turnover of the companies is not showing expansion, although income is reasonable. The companies are unable to meet DM 400 m. (U.S. $225 m.) in liabilities.

The Swiss Escor company is reportedly still involved, either as a creditor or as a shareholder in the two companies, and is working hard to find solutions.

When the German companies were sold at the end of 1992, the price was negotiated in the form of a loan to be paid back over a period of time. A representative from Escor in Switzerland is on record in the German press, stating that halfway through 1993, around SF 170 m. (U.S. $110 m.) was outstanding, of which half is a loan amount and the remainder a share investment.

BRAZIL

Law 8672 has been published by the official journal of the Brazilian Government. It establishes general arrangements for sports and other leisure activities.

Article 57 of the law entitles activities to take place to raise funds for sports, including the playing of bingo. Licensing for bingo activities has been given to state and federal authorities.

AUSTRALIA

Organizers of the Queensland coin machine exhibition, the AMOAQ show, are rethinking the dates of their event. The show was originally scheduled to run about four weeks after JAMMA, to ensure that new products would be available.

JAMMA organizers decided to move their dates to late September, so the Australians are renegotiating their show dates. The problem is that JAMMA is now set to clash with America's AMOA show in San Antonio, Sept. 22-24. The Japanese are

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reinvestigating their plans.

HUNGARY

Playsafe Monitoring of the United Kingdom has gained a substantial slice of Hungary's market share as suppliers of the EDC black box, which is required by law to be fitted on all licensed AWP machines in Hungary.

The company has opened a new service and installation center in Budapest to meet the demands of this expanding customer base. A free machine management software package is offered by the company. It allows customers to use the data output from the black boxes to provide security information and a wide range of performance statistics and analyses to help run their operations in the most profitable manner.

The gaming machine business in Hungary is being transformed into a mature and properly regulated industry, and Playsafe management says it sees its trade with that country very much as a long-term commitment.

JAPAN

Run and Gun, Konami's new basketball game, has received advance orders in the amount of U.S. $1.5 m. Konami's Steve Bierrum told EuroSlot that most of the orders were from Spain and Italy, where basketball is strong.

The game is expected to be built in the United Kingdom for the European market. It is the first basketball game from Konami in some time. Past titles included *Super Basketball* and *Double Dribble*.

Meanwhile, *Violent Storm* and *Metamorphic Force* were still selling well. A new game, currently titled *Brain Busters*, is expected to be on the market in time for launch at the ATEI show.

CHINA

There has been a large-scale crackdown on gambling in Shenzhen. Police Chief Liang Dojun confirmed at a press conference that gambling has reached epidemic proportions in the Special Economic Zone, which was set up close to the Hong Kong border. Despite earlier police actions, the problem has not abated.

According to Chinese news agency reports, 61,960 people were investigated for gambling in the first eight months of 1993. There were only 7,848 prosecutions in 1992. Dojun was quoted as saying that Shenzhen had not only recorded a significant increase in gamblers, but that gambling has become more lucrative and high-tech. Many government officials were frequent customers of well-organized and well-protected underground casinos.

He said that gambling syndicates were in charge of 159 video game centers, as well as 54 makeshift casinos in the city. "Some of these syndicates escort their customers by limousine and hire special watchmen to look after their casinos. They are well-organized and some are loan sharks who blackmail their customers when they owe them money."

The China News Service said Shenzhen police recently closed the Dynasty Video Game Center at the New Dynasty Hotel. Approximately 130 gamblers were arrested and hundreds of thousands of dollars were found at the location. Dojun said the Shenzhen government would ban all video game centers used for gambling and that operators of underground casinos and horse racing bookmakers would be prosecuted.

However, according to a correspondent, there are doubts the police and government are really determined to carry out such a crackdown, especially as there are suggestions that many of the gambling businesses are run by the police themselves.

ISRAEL

Pini Spielman has opened his second arcade, this one in a shopping mall in Tel Aviv. The arcade includes over 70 games, half video and half redemption. The redemption equipment was purchased from Harry Levy of the United Kingdom. Among the machines are *Melody Mouse*, *RoboBop*, and *Big Bertha*.

Following the new Israeli/Palestinian peace agreement, Spielman is now hoping that the West Bank will open up to business again. Arcades in the area had closed down. □

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By Grayhound

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UP FRONT

No need to leave home

The American Express credit card commercials with the familiar line, "Don't leave home without it," have been parodied by everyone from Johnny Carson on the former "Tonight Show" to Big Bird on "Sesame Street" (credit card showing an adult hand and the slogan, "Don't cross the street without it"). It's no laughing matter that entertainment possibilities available today and in the near future will make it unnecessary to leave home for fun and games.

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

Dependable home TVs are the conduit through which new technology—multimedia interactive systems—enter the American household. As our technology guru Dave Stubblefield says, "This technology is very serious stuff; it shouldn't be underestimated."

Cable TV has caused a revolution in entertainment, bringing more double meanings, innuendo, and sex to the screen daily. The major networks are fighting back with controversial fare of their own, especially gritty crime dramas.

It seems that the more channels available, the less meat in terms of satisfying programs. There are channels for everything: shopping, sports, comedy, sci-fi, music, and soon, games. MTV removes the opportunity for the listener to interpret music for himself by placing images on the screen that often make no sense, such as a rock band member playing an electric guitar in the surf or in the snow. Let me use my own imagination when it comes to music; don't force-feed some director's idea upon me.

Parents continue to indulge their children with multiple, expensive home game systems that keep them indoors. Home movie rentals and pay-per-view make it so easy to become a passive couch potato.

What is the coin-op industry dangling before the players to get that adrenalin going? And which players are we talking about? If teens are to be the only audience, by all means stay with a mostly video game room. If a more diverse crowd is desired, then the crossover to family fun center status makes sense.

As one Fun Expo '93 attendee said: "Some people accuse redemption proponents of creating more work. That's not the case. Video games made us lazy. The rewards are there with redemption games, and they last a heck of a lot longer than videos. Redemption satisfies everyone's desire to win. Customers end up paying more for the prize, but they also had months of good clean fun and enjoyment."

Family fun centers provide an atmosphere that can't be duplicated at home. They give patrons something worth leaving home to experience: a total entertainment package of game diversity (heavy on the redemption side), miniature golf, amusement park-type rides, and food. No one has to leave the location to satisfy any other needs.

In the past, price could have been a consideration. Redemption games were a bit higher on the scale, promising longer life on location as the trade-off. That was then, this is now. Who would have thought that pinball games would cross the $3,000 barrier, or that video kits would top the $2,000 mark? Forget big footprint simulators at $10,000 and up. Redemption, which is a major component of family fun centers, looks better and better.

Can old dogs learn new tricks? How fast can you say, "A family fun center opened near me and devastated my business"?

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COVER STORY

American Laser Games: pioneers in interactive videos

In 1990 American Laser Games helped bring life back into a stagnant coin-op industry with *Mad Dog McCree*, the company's first live-action interactive game. ALG began as ICAT, producing a "live action" video system for police and military firearms training. Seeing the fun the students were having with the system, the idea for a movie-action interactive video game was born.

Jim and Stan (r) Jarocki

With innovative use of laser disc technology, filmed rather than computer-generated programming, large-screen projection television, and dollar bill acceptors, *Mad Dog McCree* quickly became a top-grossing favorite worldwide. After 30 months on the market, it's still on the charts. *Mad Dog McCree* made the player an extension of the game. That feature would follow through in subsequent games —*Who Shot Johnny Rock?*, *Space Pirates*, *Gallagher's Gallery*, *Mad Dog II: The Lost Gold*, *Crime Patrol*, *Drug Wars*, and *Shoot Out at Old Tucson*.

The company knows that the industry is changing, and it will change even faster in the next 12 to 18 months as home games give coin-op a run for its money. Innovative game technology will be a must for operators to attract new customers and bring back the old ones. American Laser Games recognizes this need and is bringing even more ingenious products to market at a cost that operators will be able to afford.

"We are continuing to develop games that have a motion picture element, but utilize increasingly better technology," explained president Robert Grebe. "We have plans to introduce games over the next two years in other segments of the market, like we are doing with *Shoot Out at Old Tucson*. And we're going to diversify into non-shooting types of games which will utilize high-end graphics and motion picture action."

Grebe continued, "We want to attract back those customers who have become bored with the games offered for the last several years. We want to give the operator the opportunity to have a family entertainment center that is going to draw consumers out of their homes to spend money on coin-op."

American Laser Games has kept its promises with its two latest games, previewed at the AMOA show in October. *Shoot Out at Old Tucson* combines the company's live action expertise

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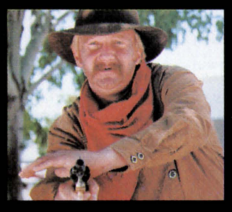

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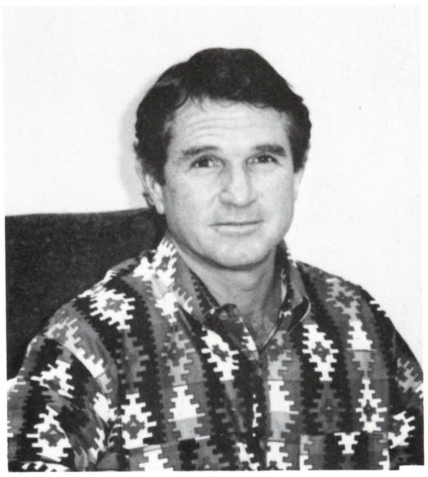
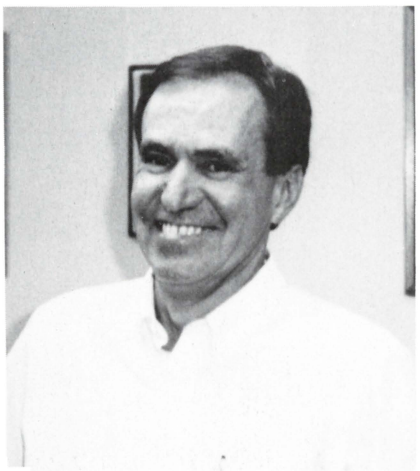
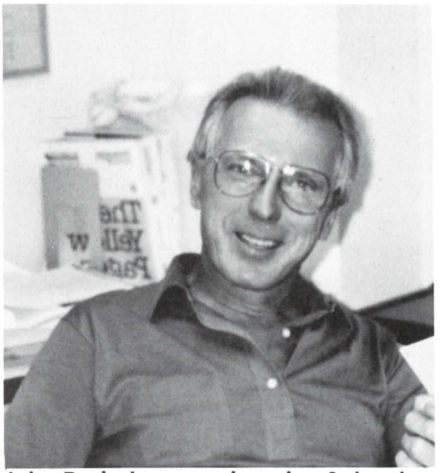


Bob Grebe, president

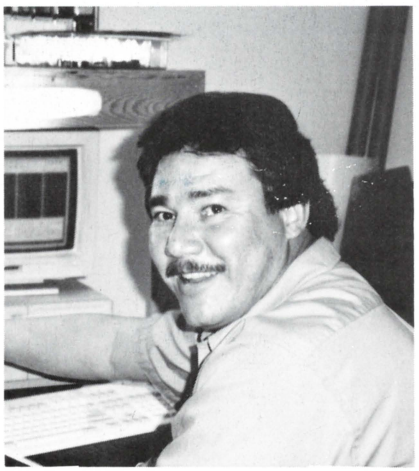


Doyle Burnett, chief operating officer

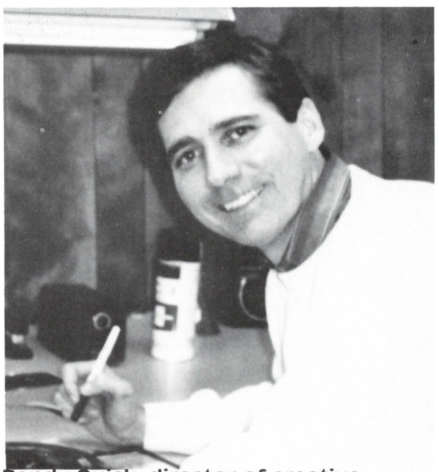


John Pasierb, vp engineering & development

Margo Guerra, sales administrator



Dan Montano, field service manager



Randy Quick, director of creative productions

with new technology from 3DO Co. The result is a game that provides the thrill of live action at a price comparable with traditional street video games.

Drug Wars, the seventh laser disc-based game, has superlative cinematography, special effects, and stunts that puts the "gee whiz!" on the screen to keep players glued to the action.

Industry changes

Stan Jarocki, whose coin-op career has spanned several decades with such companies as Bally/Midway and Seeburg, came out of retirement to join American Laser Games. Under his direction, the novice company was linked with Betson Enterprises, an established distributorship, to market American Laser Games products. Last year the two went their separate ways, and ALG is now working with its own impressive distributor network worldwide in addition to working in partnership with Namco and Atari for international distribution.

Jarocki sees a number of changes that will have an effect on operators remaining profitable. He explains, "Operators should be at a minimum of 50-cent play on everything, get up-front money, and be at a 60/40 commission with their locations. On our equipment, we suggest taking the first $100 off the top and then splitting the rest 60/40 because of the cost of the investment. Equipment costs aren't going down. They will continue to rise because of the continually rising costs of doing business. If the operator doesn't make changes, he won't be able to stay in business."

He continued, "Another concern is capital investment. Operators must look at how to make more money. Normally an operator cuts his purchasing budget, which is the worst thing he can do. We're in the entertainment business. Just like people don't want to see the same movie over and over again, they don't want to

From left: engineers Greg Morrison, Tommie Daniel, and Ken Egan

Tim Penner, quality assurance manager

Gary Essenpreis, production manager

play the same games. You have to continually refresh your locations with new equipment."

American Laser Games is an advocate of dollar-per-play; all equipment is shipped with the dollar bill acceptor standard. Jarocki is a avid supporter of the dollar coin and views it as a boon to the coin-op industry. "As the leading economy in the world, for the United States to have the quarter as its most prevalent coin is truly amazing. Germany, England, France, Japan, and Italy all have multiple coins that are valued in what would be our dollar. We're the *only* country in the world that keeps putzing around with paper. It doesn't make sense!" Jarocki exclaimed.

The future

American Laser Games, entering its fourth year in the industry, has made tremendous strides. In addition to its laser disc technology, and the CD-ROM system, the company plans to introduce a third game platform next year, which it claims will further revolutionize the industry.

John Pasierb, vice president of engineering and development, describes it like this: "It's a higher-end graphics platform geared for more finely resolved characters. The resolution will be as good or better than the laser disc system, but the live action images and other images are going to come from computer memory."

President Grebe added, "We envision a product line that provides the highest level of realistic entertainment just beneath virtual reality. It will provide a compelling entertainment experience, but without donning the goggles required for virtual reality."

The success enjoyed by American Laser Games is phenomenal. The privately held company went from sales of $1.5 million its first year to $16 million in 1993. The ICAT video training system division was sold in 1993 and the company changed its corporate name to American Laser Games.

American Laser Games made a promise in 1990 to introduce at least two live-action games per year, both in dedicated and kit form. The company will continue to do two games per year for the laser disc format, one in the spring and one in the fall.

Jarocki has expanded the marketing department with a host of capable talent. His son Jim, who was with Bally/Midway and Electra Games, is now American Laser Games' sales director. Margo Guerra is the sales administrator, Dan Montano is field service manager, and Dave Vickers provides operator assistance.

Grebe noted, "We have our work cut out for us, developing products that are going to satisfy the consumer. But American Laser Games is up for the challenge!" □

1974-1994
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PLAY METER

GUEST COMMENTARY

Overlooking everything good

The AMOA show held in Anaheim two months ago was the place to be. There was so much to see and seminars to experience. Many games—from redemption to video—were offered on display. Unfortunately, an article about the show ran in the *Washington Post* that overlooked every single good thing about the show and dwelled on an issue that has been covered to death in the media already—violence.

"As manufacturers, distributors, operators, parents, or concerned citizens, the responsibility of our children cannot be shirked."

Jessica Crosby, in her article titled "Video Game Violence: Pushing the Wrong Buttons," reported that the video game industry is failing to monitor the levels of violence in games. She quoted attorney general Dan Lungren, who said of video games at a gathering of police investigators, "The message is destroy your opponent. I would ask you if that is very different from some of the messages in gang culture."

Crosby also quoted a policeman, also at the gathering, who cited games as "equally guilty with rap music and television in contributing to a culture of violence among disenfranchised youth."

It's a sad commentary to note that Crosby claimed the whole AMOA show was nothing more than the industry being drawn into the media violence controversy. Crosby failed to mention that video games are created by our culture. Nor did she feel it important to note that many manufacturers design games, specifically non-violent ones, to be put in what she describes as the "dimly lit world of the mall arcades." What mall arcade has she been to lately? Of course, we know by her comments that she hasn't bothered to visit any.

The idea of destroying one's opponent is not foreign to our culture. Football, hockey, soccer, and card games (as well as other American pastimes like police actions and war) teach our children how to be violent, don't they? And don't cartoons, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes tell us to slay our foes to win the fair maiden or throw a piano on the bad guy to solve the case?

Video games are hardly the catalyst for this mentality, but merely a reflection of it. As with our culture, however, not all of it is violent. Since the first video games in the early '70s, there have been non-violent games like *Pong* by Atari, *Bubbles* by Williams, *Q*Bert* by Gottlieb, and the new *Ridge Racer* by Namco. Has anyone forgotten that the greatest video game of all time, *Pac-Man*, was about as non-violent as you can get?

Along with these games we have had *Street Fighter* by Capcom and *Mortal Kombat* by Williams. As violence is a part of

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our culture, it is a part of our entertainment.

The video game industry is especially sensitive to the issue of violence. Crosby failed to acknowledge that there are many games designed especially for small children that are not only fun and non-violent, but also sometimes educational. Many such games were featured at the AMOA show. Century Vending, for example, in conjunction with Rite Idea, released *Paint 'N Puzzle*, which challenges children to solve a jigsaw puzzle on the touch-sensitive screen. Lazer-Tron showed its new *Awesome Toss 'Em*, in which children win tickets for throwing colored balls into matching boxes.

Additionally, Data East featured *Flower Busters*, which gives kids a chance to shoot light at flowers to make them open, revealing the faces of the happy or tired flowers. Visions of Reality offered a virtual reality experience that is completely non-violent. In conjunction with the Naval Museum in Pensacola, Fla., VOR's centers will offer an educational experience. Children will be able to learn about flight and space travel. This is only a fraction of the games shown that were designed for those little "impressionable" children that Crosby so often referred to in her article.

Crosby says that regardless of the safeguards the industry takes—designing non-violent games or establishing a rating system to alert parents to a violent game—"there is the added risk of young children being exposed to such games by older siblings." This is a problem that parents need to address. Shooting off your nose to spite your face has never solved anything. The best safeguard against older siblings may be to lock them in a closet until the younger siblings turn 12 or so. Or how about something more realistic, like monitoring your children's activities as you once did with the older kids.

As manufacturers, distributors, operators, parents, or concerned citizens, the responsibility of our children cannot be shirked. Current games offer a wide variety of play experiences. Through this variety we attempt to appeal to everyone who plays video games. For Jessica Crosby, what could we offer? How about a wet mop chasing a wet noodle or one that earns points by discussing it all over tea. □

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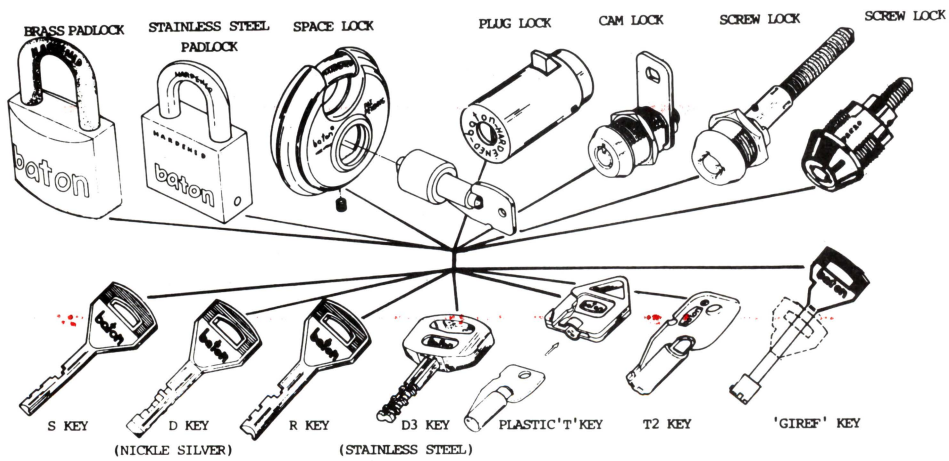

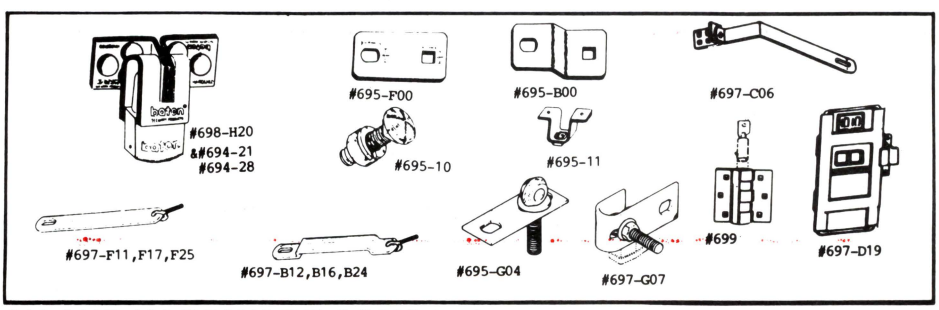

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FAMILY FOCUS

What's all the fuss over family fun centers?

Not long ago, when then-vice president Dan Quayle espoused returning to a firm set of "family values," there was a lot of scoffing at the term. Family values are no longer the butt of late-night talk show jokes. The foot-in-mouth-prone Quayle actually hit upon something significant.

A well-stocked redemption counter, such as this one at Funspot in Weirs Beach, N.H., offers a wide range of prizes.

Even the motion picture industry is sitting up and taking notice. Tom Sherak, executive vice president of 20th Century-Fox, said in the Nov. 29, 1993, edition of *Parade* magazine, "Family values are coming back into fashion in Hollywood. Nowadays, parents are more conscious of ratings and are looking for films that the whole family can go and see."

In a world where both mom and dad hold down full-time jobs in the traditional household, and single parents struggle to provide all the material and emotional needs of their children alone, leisure time spent as a family is precious.

Add to this situation a slumping economy that deters long-distance vacations, and it's easy to understand why families opt to stay close to home for entertainment. Theme parks, such as Knott's Berry Farm, Astroworld, and Six Flags Over Georgia, to name but a few, enjoy increased patronage every year.

In addition to the big parks, there is a need for local, medium-size facilities that offer smaller scale rides and amusements, but enough variety to keep kindergarteners, teens, parents, and grandparents interested.

Enter the family entertainment center, a relatively new niche in the amusement world. What are the basic components of a facility that targets the whole family? A miniature golf course, for starters, bumper cars/and or boats, a big game room with plenty redemption equipment and a first-class prize counter, batting cages, go-karts, a soft-play area for the youngest patrons, and possibly a mini-roller coaster-type ride or other large attraction.

Food is an important element since it keeps patrons on the premises. Pizza is the prevailing favorite food, but salad bars and fat-free offerings are also on the menus of the '90s. Provisions for birthday parties, which generate large groups of customers, result in good word-of-mouth advertising within the community and increased foot traffic.

There's so much to explore in this new market that a monthly column is needed to reach a full understanding of the family entertainment center phenomenon. Each month "Family Focus" will address a different aspect of family entertainment, including the opening of new centers

Bonnie Theard

around the country. It's bound to be an information-filled year as we all learn more about how the American family spends its leisure moments.

This month, we asked a diverse group of well-known industry figures for their thoughts on the growth of family entertainment centers.

Terry Weerts, executive vice president of Celebration Station (a division of Whiteco Industries Inc.) in Merrillville, Ind., identifies two influencing factors:

"There's no question that the increasing number of working mothers and the recent baby boom has helped spawn some of the growth of family entertainment centers. Things seem to be cyclical in nature and now there's an interest in family entertainment again."

Celebration Station will open its 15th outlet in July in Tampa, Fla. The full-spectrum facility will include mini-golf courses, go-kart tracks, batting cages, bumper boats, a kiddie playland, arcade games, and a party area with an animated band and a pizza restaurant. A 16th unit will open by the end of the year.

Adds Weerts, "We basically stick to what has worked for a long period of time. We do as good a job as we can of making our locations customer-friendly. Redemption has been a big part of what we do. In our mind it's family entertainment. Our concept is one of balance. We haven't reinvented the wheel.

"We are a combination indoor/outdoor entertainment center. We focus on the word 'family' and try to offer something for each and every age group within the family. Our commitment is trying to provide an environment where families can join in participative entertainment together and enjoy each other's company. What our customers like about us is that we're big enough to have something for everyone to do, but small enough that they can separate for small periods of time and keep track of each other."

Steve McCaul, director of sales and special projects for Mondial Distributing in Norwood, Mass., has studied population statistics and come to this conclusion: "Basically the boom of families and the decline in the number of teenagers has driven the move to family entertainment centers. It's a matter of population and the way the demographics fall out across the country."

Celebration Station's Metairie, La., location includes miniature golf, a common element in family entertainment centers.

Census Bureau reports indicated that 1993 would signal the lowest pool of male teens in the United States in 30 years, due to lower birth rates in the mid-'70s, often referred to as the "baby bust" or "birth dearth." In another couple of years we will have an amazing number of children under the age of 12 in this country, since births reached four million in 1991, matching the peak baby boom year of 1957.

Mondial recognizes the trend toward family entertainment centers. Bringing McCaul on-board is

a testimonial to the distributorship's forward thinking. McCaul has logged 23 years in the industry and been involved in the setup, layout, and operation of at least 20 amusement centers.

According to McCaul, "There's a big push to the 20,000-25,000-square-foot facility as the norm for family entertainment centers. It's going more to the mini-carnival atmosphere, with midway games and midway rides indoors (known as 'iron rides')."

Art Warner, president of Coin Concepts, an East Brunswick, N.J., manufacturer of redemption and novelty games, has another theory on the development of family entertainment centers: "Arcades were starting to have an image problem. By making a facility a family fun center, appealing to all ages, right away your arcade is a legitimate operation.

"It changes the entire way our industry is looked upon. Arcades used to be considered dark and dreary places. Family entertainment centers are light and bright."

Adds Warner, "The concept has caught on; good news travels fast in our industry. The phenomenon is not only a U.S. phenomenon; it's a worldwide phenomenon. Right now, because of redemption, U.S. manufacturers have taken a more prominent position in our industry and around the world. I hope it will last."

Steve Thomas, director of games and facility support for Blockbuster Corp. in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., looks at it this way: "When people talk about any entertainment complex today they speak in terms of family entertainment centers. The word 'arcade' has almost gone out of the entertainment language.

"All the violence in videos and the bad press that came out in the '80s has pushed families toward family entertainment centers. Families want to get back to interacting with their children. In family-oriented centers there's something for the whole family to do."

Thomas has 12 years of experience in family amusement center planning and operations. "Blockbuster is going to be in the family entertainment center industry starting in '94 and is presently putting together a management team," says Thomas. The company has over 3,500 video rental outlets in eight countries.

"We live in a different society today; parents have less time to spend with their children and want to spend more quality time as a family."

Joe Tunney, sales representative for Coastal Amusements, the Lakewood, N.J., redemption and novelty game manufacturer, was a long-time operator before entering the ranks of manufacturing. He points to sheer economics: "All the aspects mentioned already are bona fide reasons for the success of the family entertainment center concept. I also believe that the cost of traditional family entertainment has risen so high that it is no longer affordable to the 'microwave parent' (We want to have fun and have it now!).

"Look at the cost of the typical sporting event: $30 tickets, $4 hot dogs, and $4 beers can turn an outing into a $150 afternoon for a father and two children." Tunney believes that even with the larger facilities being built right now, "the smaller operator has a niche he can fill."

Bailey Beeken, show manager of the Fun Expo and president of Bellwether Expositions in White Plains, N.Y., attributes the growth of this phenomenon to a combination of factors. "The largest number of children born to baby boomers was just a year ago," says Beeken. "We're going to have an enormous amount of children looking for recreation in the future. We live in a different society today; parents have less time to spend with their children and want to spend more quality time as a family."

Beeken began researching family entertainment centers five years ago. An article in the *New York Times* about the resurgence of miniature golf was the catalyst. Says Beeken, "Even then you didn't hear the words 'family entertainment center' very much. You heard about the individual elements, such as bumper boats and go-karts."

According to Beeken, the recession has contributed to the growth of smaller centers in two ways. "First, parents who once leaned toward 'destination vacations' now look for the value-added concept: 'What can I do for a little bit that gives me a lot?'

"Second, land values dropped and large plots of real estate became more affordable. Businessmen and women in other industries took an interest in the concept and made a decision to enter this new arena. Perhaps they were in the restaurant business and decided to branch out. Attendees at Fun Expo come from all different kinds of business backgrounds. They are bringing fresh ideas to the amusement world."

There's no question that the once-fledgling Fun Expo has grown into a major trade show in three brief years. Attendance in

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'93 was 4,000; a larger number is expected for the Oct. 2-4 show this year in Las Vegas.

"Most of this business is not big chains," notes Beeken, "but mom-and-pop locations." She sees an opportunity for coin machine operators to form partnerships with family entertainment centers. "Each family entertainment center in each community is based on demographics. Who knows better than the local operator what works in his area? They have the competitive edge. Operators may think they will be dictated to, but I think they will be pleasantly surprised. It's a different relationship than what they have with a tavern or pizza parlor."

Beeken concludes, "Family entertainment centers range in size, shape, and scope. They must be equal to the demographics of the area. As the market becomes more competitive, it's vital that those in the industry acquaint themselves with all the educational materials available, from trade publications to seminars and trade shows. There's still a lot of opportunity for growth as long as it is done in a measured and well thought out way."

What does the future hold?

McCaul foresees growth in the family entertainment center area for about five more years. Says McCaul, "Then I can see new developments, such as virtual reality, if it hits big. I can see different virtual reality rooms to go along with what we have right now, sort of a virtual reality theater."

Beeken explains, "All communities cannot support mega-centers. What I see is a convergence of recreation facilities of all kinds becoming diversified family entertainment centers, or multi-amusement complexes.

"Pick up any trade journal, from bowling centers to skating rinks, and it's clear that instead of keeping to one specialty they are all diversifying. They know they must be competitive to stay in business."

Warner, whose decades in the amusement industry stand him in good stead, feels there will be a saturation of family entertainment centers in the 20,000- to 25,000-square-foot range. His perspective is based on history: "I compare the future to the days of *Pac-Man*. The prudent businessman who watches his business will survive. Those who think it's an easy dollar will not last." □

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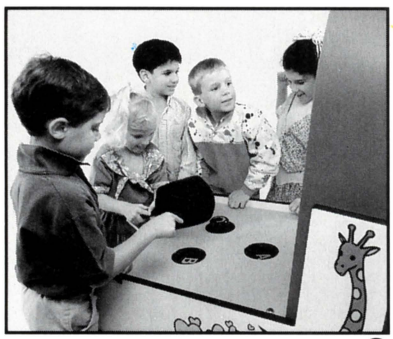
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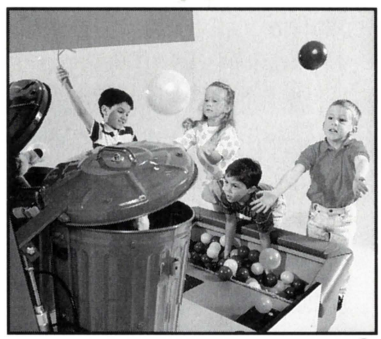
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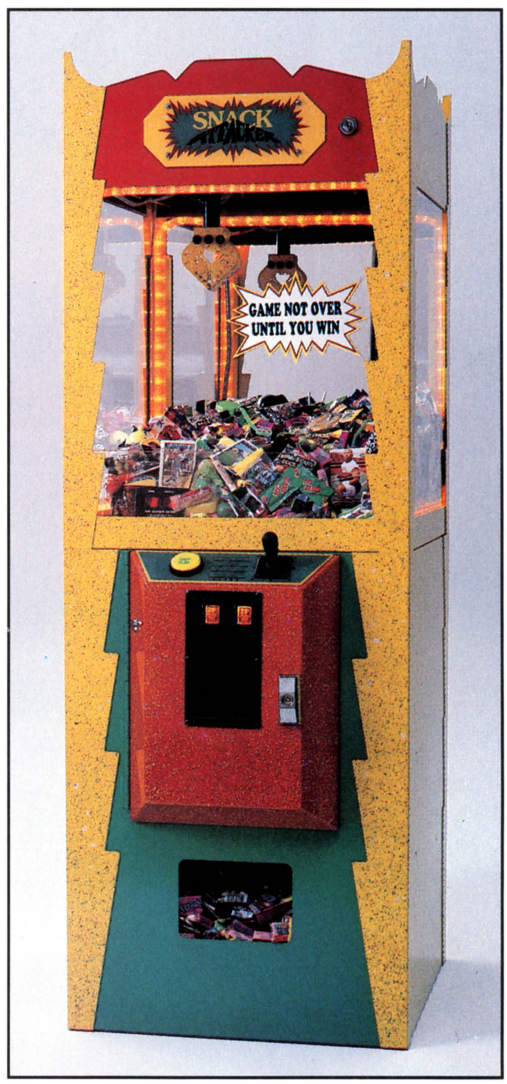

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The newly expanded Los Angeles Convention Center served as the backdrop for this and so much more at the 75th IAAPA (International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions) Convention and Trade Show, held Nov. 16-20. Every inch of the additional 335,000 square feet was utilized—and then some. Carousels, Ferris wheels, and a host of other attention-grabbers were set up outside.

Two words in the IAAPA acronym are right on target: "international" and "attractions." If one were to spin a globe and blindly stop it with the index finger, the odds are good that the country where it would come to rest had a representative at IAAPA '93. Spying the badges of exhibitors and attendees—there were over 24,500 of the latter, by far the largest turnout ever—made an observer wonder whether he was at a trade show or the United Nations. They came from Spain, England, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Australia, China, Japan, Taiwan, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Saudia Arabia. That's just for openers; the list could contain about 50 more countries.

And oh, was there an abundance of attractions, not just big-ticket pieces for the large amusement parks but also items for family entertainment centers and large arcades. The aisles were lined with major rides, kiddie rides, roller coasters, simulators, go-karts, bumper cars, and shows/productions that involved water, animals, stunts, theatre, and animation.

Take, for example, the aforementioned *Loch Ness Expedition*, the first in a series of *Virtual Adventures* from Iwerks Entertainment/Evans & Sutherland, the latter a defense contractor that's expanding into the enter-

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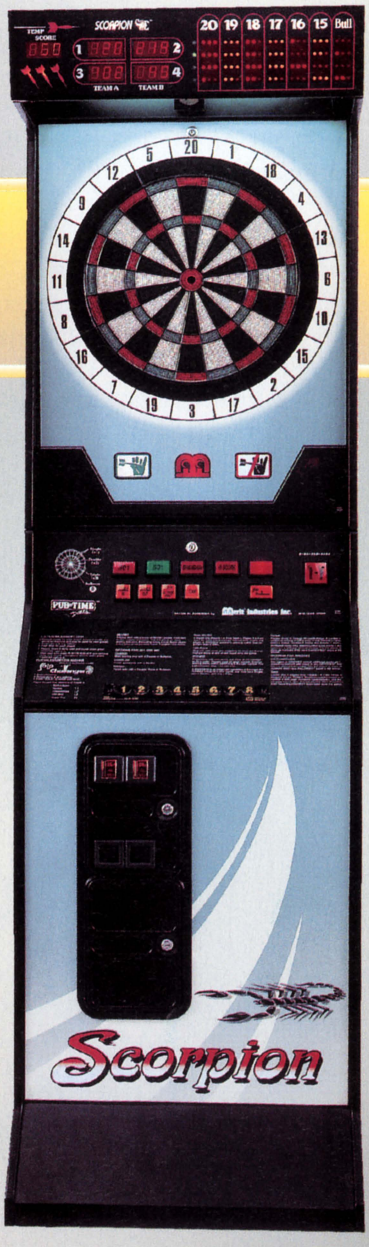

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Of course, not lost in the mix was the coin-op amusement industry, which continues to increase its presence at IAAPA shows. Those who are veteran exhibitors say it's a show they wouldn't dream of missing, while rookies vowed to take out booth space from this time forward. Here are some of their comments:

Joe Tunney, Coastal Amusement: "This is truly an international show—with attendees from places like Europe, Latin America, the Far East, and Australia—and it's becoming more and more so every year."

Ron Yaffe, GaMCO: "First of all, there are more potential customers at IAAPA—upwards of 20,000—so we write more business. And it's the most diverse clientele you'll ever find at an amusement show. Every amusement park in the world is represented here.

"These parks are beginning to realize how important it is to have redemption in their facilities. I find they're more aggressive and receptive to change. They're willing to try redemption, even if it's something unfamiliar to them. Of course, they have the luxuries of money and space that small amusement game operators might not have.

"Another thing about the foreign customers is that they often buy by the container, not a piece here and a piece there. These international sales have allowed many of us in amusement game manufacturing to stay in business. It would be very difficult to survive on domestic sales alone. IAAPA is just a great, great show for GaMCO."

Ted Sloan, Bob's Space Racers: "This is our big show, the one where we showcase all of our products to customers from all over the world. In fact, we bring 20 people to work the IAAPA show; that's how huge it is for us."

Matt Kelly, Lazer-Tron: "We've been coming to IAAPA since our inception.; it's the most important show for us. IAAPA has everything you need in one place, whether you're a large amusement park, an independent family entertainment center, or a large arcade operator. In fact, I've talked to some street operators here this year; that's not something you would've seen before."

Greg Sullivan, National Sports Games: "We started out small with one booth at IAAPA a few years ago. This year we had six—it's grown as the interest in our company has grown. Our basketball games, for example, are really becoming popular in the Far East. Exhibiting at IAAPA gives us contacts with international customers that we don't get at other trade shows."

Natalie Kulig, American Sammy: "IAAPA is a natural for our industry, because most of these theme parks have game rooms with coin-op equipment. This is the first IAAPA show for American Sammy, and we'll definitely

return. There's so much more international business than you'd normally see at AMOA, ACME, or the Fun Expo."

Jeff Smart, Smart Industries: "IAAPA is our biggest show. With AMOA and ACME, we do *great* domestic and *good* international business, whereas with IAAPA the situation is reversed. Having so many visitors from all over the world let's us get together with our overseas customers and make contacts with people who might not be familiar with Smart. Our products do especially well in the Pacific Rim."

Ralph Coppola, ICE: "This is my fourth year exhibiting at IAAPA, and it just gets better and better. We do so much foreign business at IAAPA that we'd be crazy to miss it. Those manufacturers in our industry who aren't here are really hurting themselves."

Ron Carrara, Lazer-Tron: "You're now seeing almost every major U.S. distributor at IAAPA, whereas in the past you'd only see one or two. I think manufacturers who don't exhibit at IAAPA are making a real mistake. I know some take the attitude, 'Well, I'm so and so. If I don't get prime, corner booth space, I'm not coming to IAAPA!' That's stupid. Some of the manufacturers here are so big they *dwarf* coin-op manufacturers.

"I can't overemphasize how important IAAPA is to our company in terms of selling our games to foreign markets. It's just the most vital trade show there is for Lazer-Tron."

David Capilouto of Greater Southern Distributing, after stepping out of the *Hornet-1* simulator from Magic Edge/Namco, summed up why the coin-op industry needs to be involved with IAAPA.

"This simulator is amazing; the technology just keeps getting better and better. The cost is easily into six figures, and though it's not something we'd handle, there are a lot of amusement parks who will buy it and do well with it.

"Why do I come to IAAPA shows? You have to be aware of what's out there; you can't have tunnel vision. Even if our customers can't use a simulator like this, we have to keep abreast of technological advancements in the amusement industry and how they will affect our operator customers. We're definitely going to be seeing more and more sophisticated attractions like this in the near future." □

ICE's Ralph Coppola (r) with Michael Damtew of Dunis Distributing.

By Coastal Amusements' **Arrow Alley**, (l-r): the company's Joe Tunney, Bob Keelyn, and Russell O'Rourke.

Kevin Flaherty of Moon Jump (l) looks over Willy the Whale with Carousel's Steven Veatch (c) and Tom Collins.

Lazer-Tron's Ron Carrara (r) with representatives from Pan Asia Amusement Co. Ltd. in Taipei, (l-r): Clark Liu, Samson C.M. Chu, Charles Chen, and Peter Yeh.

Part of the newly merged Ace Novelty/Acme sales team, (l-r): John Dyer, Rorie Keller, Jack Kelly, and Georgia Plantz.

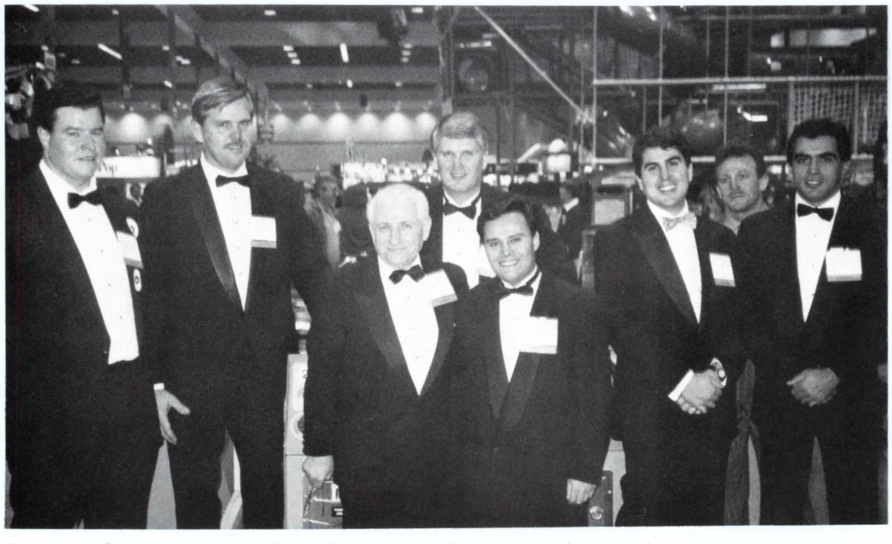
The Purple Star gang by **Winning Inning**, (l-r): Bill Quinn, Lou Erpelding, Nancy Smart Singh, Keith Ashbacher, Jim Thayer, and Tod Bertram.

Jaleco USA's Mary Hermanson between **Grand Prix Star II** and **Arm Champs II**.

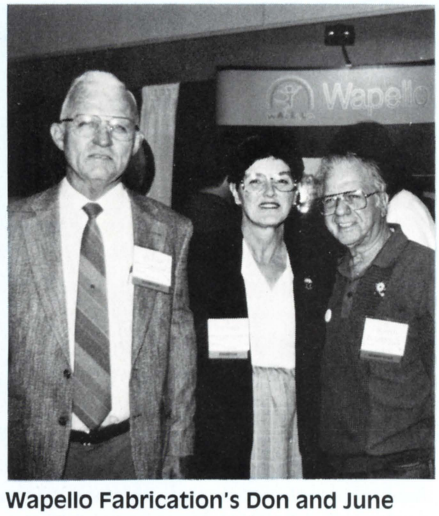
Hamilton Mfg.'s Gary Calhoun talks changers with Playtime Industries' Lyn Merrill.

By Bob's Space Racers' **Rising Waters**, (l-r): the company's Ted Sloan, Bob Cassata, and Jack Mendes.

Dan Brechner/Cloud 9's Sondra Doyle and Leonard Brechner.



The Mondial team shows that tuxedoes are appropriate attire for any occasion.

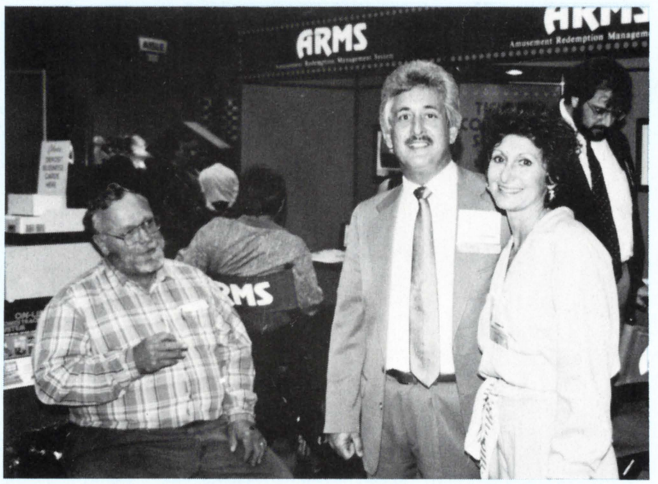


Wapello Fabrication's Don and June Hardin welcome old friend Sam Arrigo of Big A Amusements (l).

At the EMT/NSM kiddie ride booth, (l-r): Linley Hughes, Jutta Enders, Ulli Kunnecke, Courtney King, Tony Lantz (in the Dozer), John Margold, and Jim Chapman.

All smiles at the Rainbow Crane booth are, (l-r): J.P. O'Neil of Rainbow, Joy Rectenwald of Island Adventure Golf, Stan Smith of Rainbow, and Ross Rectenwald of IAG.

Thomas Reily of Reily's Fun Spot winds up to take a pitch as Sport-Tech's Dick Galloway (l), Bill Galloway (c), and Bob Porembski look on.



Dave Clark of TDR Enterprises tries out one of ARMS' new arcade stools while chatting with ARMS owners Lou and Bonnie Cappetta.

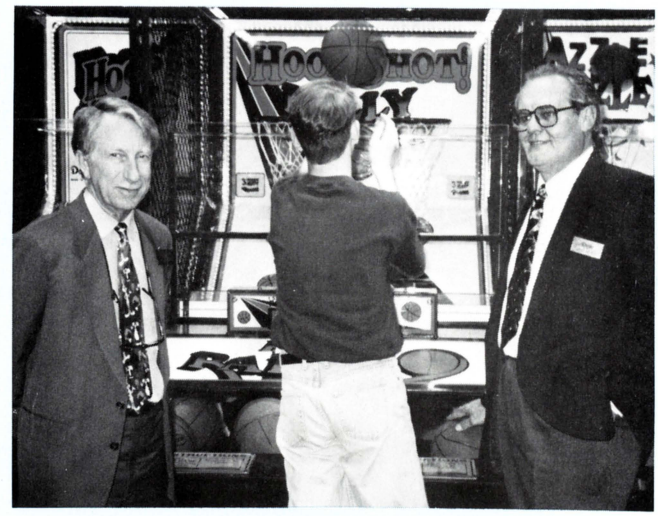
A family tries out Design Plus' new **Striker** as Design Plus owner Mike Seibert, daughter Laurie, and Exidy's Viginia Kauffman look on.

In front of Laramie Interests' plush are staff members Jackie Foster (l), Theresa King, and Stephen Chernin.

Betson's Neal Rosenberg by two new Crompton pieces, **London Bus** and **London Cab**.

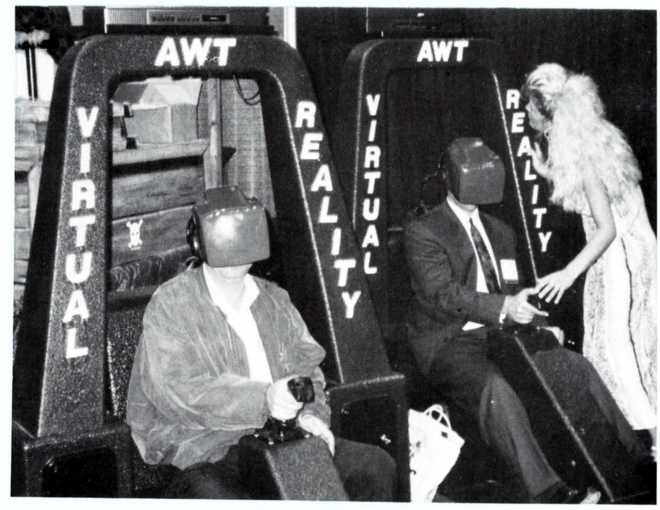
American Sammy's Natalie Kulig and David Cane by **Simple Simon**.

Quicksilver's Michael Ansell (l) and Greg Malavazos by the company's redemption and jukebox product.

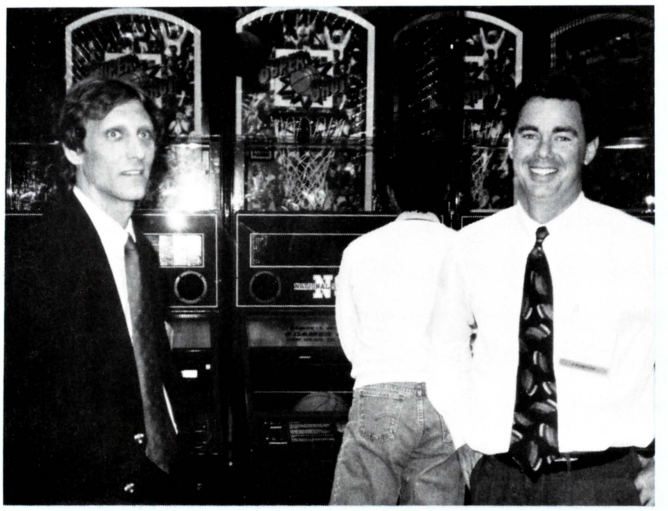


Doyle International's Skip Doyle (l) and Jerry Weiman flank the dual-rimmed **Hoop Shoot Rally**.

This attendee samples the virtual reality experience at the Visions of Reality booth.



Players take a virtual reality spin in Alternate Worlds Technology's **Reality Rocket**.



National Sports Games' Kim Cook (l) and Greg Sullivan by **Super Shot**.

Ron Yaffe (l) of GaMCO and Gary Johnson of Jump-It Sports by GaMCO's **Tiddly Dinks**.

Namco introduced a new redemption game, **Sunny Side Up**, at the show. This young lady proved quite adept at tossing the fried eggs!

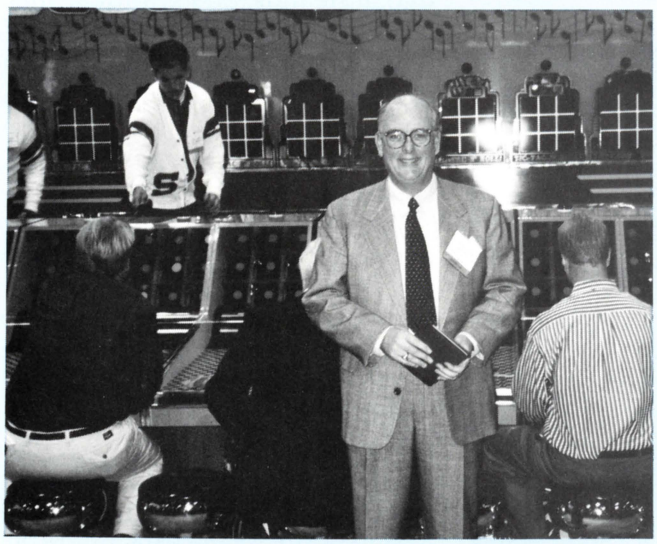
At the AAMA booth, (l-r): Elaine Krieger, AAMA; Mick White, Tornado Table Soccer; Holly LaMontagne, Atari; and Angela Orlando, AAMA.

Data East's Drew Maniscalco and Judy Burt by **Tales from the Crypt**.

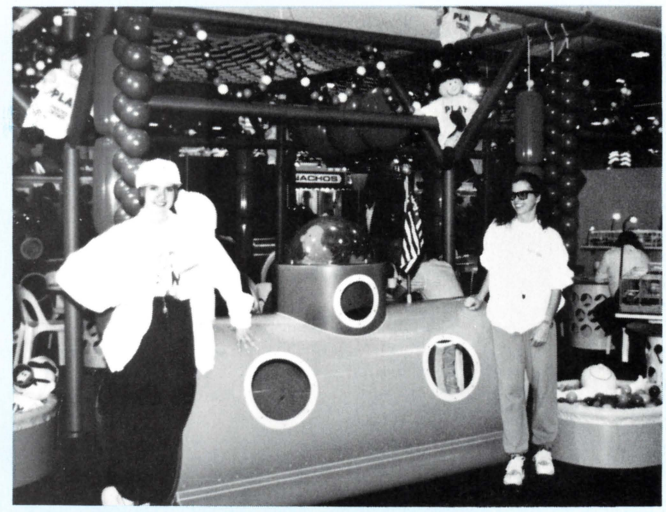
The Smart clan by the company's **Candy Cane**, (l-r): Gordon, Kellie, Jesica, and Jeff Smart.

Wylie Irwin of Side Show Pizza tries Coin Concepts' new **Laser Blazer** as the company's Art Warner looks on.

Oriental Trading Co.'s Steve Fortson (l) and Gary Lauber (c) with Danny Brown of Brown Concessions.



Skee-Ball president Joe Sladek in front of **Tic Tac N' Roll**.



Pentes Design's Val Spake (l) and Dana Pentes show what soft play is all about.

Canobie Lake Park's David Cook (c) dons HMS Monaco's new sports caps; he's pictured with HMS's Steve Shulman (l) and Ira Erstling.

Holding Dino, Fred and Coca-Cola Bear plush from Play-By-Play, (l-r): Fiesta Texas' Rick O'Leary and Scott Smith; Play-By-Play's Tony Lawlor and Mark Gawlik.

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COMPANY PROFILE

Meltec thrives on low-tech in high-tech coin-op world

The year is 1978. *Boom Ball*, an electromechanical redemption game, makes its debut. Old-timers and skeptics say, "Well, it's not pinball." In 1986, when *Knockdown* hit the market, the word was, "Well, it's not video."

Right on both counts. Redemption games such as these from Meltec don't fit into any category but their own. In a high-tech world, such low-tech games are doing quite well, thank you. Take a look around the next major trade show exhibit floor if there is any doubt.

John (l) and Mike McEwan at the company's IAAPA booth. An attendee plays the popular Big Mouth.

One of the survivors in the early redemption game manufacturer sweepstakes, Meltec is a family-owned business that specializes in redemption games for the whole family.

According to company president John McEwan, "This industry used to be pinball, video, and 'other.' Redemption is now a legitimate, valid category of machine."

Redemption equipment has dominated the amusement scene of late, and talk frequently turns to the topic of family entertainment centers, where redemption equipment occupies a major share of floor space.

McEwan is not surprised by the popularity of such centers. "A lot of the market segment has been ignored in the past. The majority of games are mostly male-oriented. Some videos are confusing to adults and little kids cannot even see the screen. So many people couldn't spend their quarters.

"There was no place for mom, dad, little kids, and grandparents. Redemption addresses this segment of the player population. In the early '80s redemption was a tough sell; it did not have a home in arcades around the country. Now that's changed."

Why is a family entertainment center different than an arcade? According to McEwan, "simply because there's something for everyone in the family. You can't say that about arcades in general. I don't think we as an industry were getting quarters from the entire family. Family entertainment centers came out of the amusement parks and facilities with batting cages and miniature golf. Those places always had our games."

McEwan feels that the move to redemption started with operators who had a ratio of "too many losers to winners" in video and wanted other equipment. Distributors, who did not handle redemption in the early '80s, are more in tune with the equipment today. Some even have seminars for their customers.

"Almost all of our sales are through distributors," adds McEwan. "People I used to sell to direct now buy my equipment through a distributor and that's fine with me."

All Of Meltec's Games Have One Thing In Common...

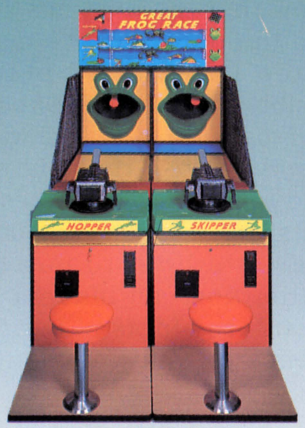
FUN!

AND THAT MEANS FUN FOR ALL AGES. AFTER ALL, WHAT GOOD IS A FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER IF YOU DON'T HAVE GAMES THAT ARE ENJOYED BY EVERYONE?

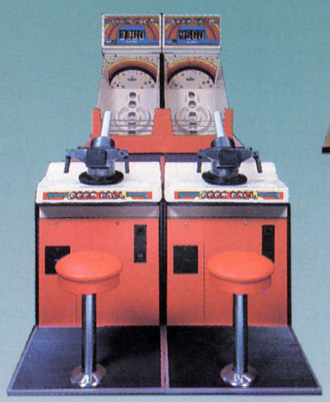
FAMILY FUN CENTERS AND TICKET REDEMPTION ARE TRULY THE DIRECTION FOR SUCCESS, AND MELTEC OFFERS YOU FUN IN A VARIETY OF PACKAGES.

KNOCKDOWN

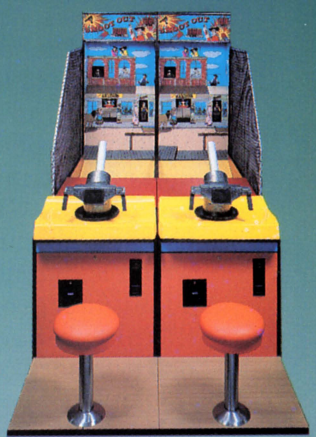
BIG MOUTH



GREAT FROG RACE



BOOMBALL



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Employees in front of the new office: John McEwan, Mike McEwan, Natalie McFall, Ken Barnett, David Hoffman, Jose Santiago, Amy McEwan, John McFall, Karl Jones, Aaron Worthen, Hugo Santigo, Tony Bondy, Wendy Blalock, Gus Martinez, Barry Loser, Ladd Klink, and Paul Hanson.

Inside the factory, an assembly line of **Big Mouth** games.

As with other redemption manufacturers, McEwan finds that the Far East market is a hotbed of activity, from Japan to mainland China. Europe is slow, due to the abundance of fruit (low-stakes gaming) machines. Adds McEwan, "The traveling carnival business is big in Europe. If you don't make trailers you don't do as well in that market."

He feels that the recent NAFTA trade agreement may be a shot in the arm for our industry. "Duties will be reduced substantially over time and that should open some markets in Mexico and Central and South America."

Big changes at the home office

Meltec recently moved its headquarters from a 15,000-square-foot location in San Jose, Calif., to a new 25,000-square-foot home in Beaverton, Ore., right outside of Portland. The 700-mile move was motivated by a desire for a less hectic lifestyle, good schools, clean air, and more open spaces.

Says McEwan: "There's a good labor force here and everyone has been friendly. I think it will be a better place to operate economically." Since 40 percent of Meltec's business is overseas, the close proximity of the port is important. Games headed for Canada go through Vancouver, which is due north. Both the personal and professional sides of life are in harmony in the new office/factory complex.

Meltec's game lineup includes *Boom Ball, Knock Down, Big Mouth, Shoot Out*, and *Pot-O-Gold* single-player games and the multi-player *Frog Race*. The number one seller is *Big Mouth*, the game that asks players to shoot out the teeth of a huge clown face. The company is known for its shooting games and has sometimes been typecast. *Pot-O-Gold*, Meltec's new ball-rolling game, has taken time to build an audience of its own.

Now that the dust has settled from the move, what's next for Meltec in terms of product? Possibly a revamp of *Shoot Out* and *Frog Race*, says McEwan. He acknowledges that there's a trend to scale down games since floor space is expensive, but adds, "There's a limit to how much smaller you can make a game and still retain its integrity, the essence of what makes it play well."

The scaled-down thinking won't result in child-size games from Meltec. Any youngster can play the company's games as originally designed. Notes McEwan, "Once a child pushes the button on *Knockdown*, the ball shoots just as far as when an older person pushes the button."

Good game elements never change

At Meltec, the playability and fun of the game are paramount. "If a game isn't fun it won't stick,"

advises McEwan. "If you're going to make games that go on for years you'd better be hitting all the markets." Fun and simple are his watchwords.

"I don't think kids care about how you make the game happen—the technology; if there's no game play it won't work for a long period of time. *Pac-Man* was a game that was fun for everybody; it was not gender-based."

That universal appeal of redemption games has brought a new wrinkle to this end of the business. Are there too many companies putting ticket dispensers on games and calling them redemption pieces?

"I always thought there was a limit to the games you could truly merchandise and add a ticket dispenser," comments McEwan. "How do you percentage games where players can score astronomically, as in videos and pins?

"Tickets don't work on just any machine. There's a thought out there: just spit out tickets. I've heard many manufacturers say, 'Forget about the game play, just kill them with tickets!' I don't subscribe to that line of thinking.

"When you manufacture redemption games it takes a certain kind of mindset. Some big factories design a game, crank up for a run, and then they're on to the next product. Some of the better redemption games, those that have stood the test of time, come from a different mindset. You're building something you'll build this year and the year after. The buyer has to have the same mindset. This piece is going to sit here and be steady, forever. I think the people making them and buying them must have this understanding." McEwan is of the opinion that the smaller factories are "a little more near and dear to the product."

More competition is another byproduct of the interest in redemption. "It cuts both ways," says McEwan. "Since everyone is making it, it says good things about redemption. If a location is adding redemption games, I think Meltec should be a part of it. Maybe in the old days I sold 10 games to a customer and now it's five. There's a bigger base today so that's alright. I'd like to have both but I understand."

With all this interest in redemption, why do some operators still resist? "Some are for good reasons," speculates McEwan. "Take a bar in Minnesota with a pool table and a dart machine. A guy drinking his beer there doesn't want redemption. These machines can't go everywhere. Some people are reluctant to change because change is difficult.

"In some regards it's a lot more work. It puts you into retailing a little bit. Trying to buy and sell video games when they're hot and getting rid of them when they're not, that's like being a stock broker. It's hard on that side as well. I think they're both difficult but there's a difference. Redemption initially takes a lot of homework. I contend that it's well worth it."

"When you manufacture redemption games it takes a certain kind of mindset. Smaller factories are a little more near and dear to the product."

What does McEwan have to say about those who claim progressive jackpots on redemption games teach children to gamble? "It smacks a little of gaming, without a doubt. But it also smacks of some clever merchandising. It's another incentive for the player. I've always wondered why a mini-golf location doesn't put a star on every 50th or 100th ticket in the game room that awards a free round of golf, to pull players in. It could be viewed as quasi-gaming, but it's good merchandising."

Meltec games are usually found in banks and lend themselves to a progressive jackpot. The company is working on one at the present time, to be used as an add-on device for *Big Mouth* and *Knock Down*. It offers an opportunity for veteran players to earn a higher reward for their skill.

Predictions are tricky, but McEwan graciously answered one posed by Play Meter: Will the entertainment centers of the year 2000 be vastly different from what we know today?

Cautiously stated: "I don't know if they will be huge mega-centers or not. Family entertainment centers are headed upward in terms of square footage. No one goes in today and builds a 1,500-square-foot-center. Locations are adding, not downsizing.

"Certainly I think there's some new technology that will be a part of the industry. Whether it will be virtual reality or not is unclear. In general, locations will offer hands-on activities you can't do at home."

For sure, Meltec and its close-knit staff will be making time-proven redemption games for the players of tomorrow. Assisting in that effort are Mike McEwan, vice president; Natalie McEwan McFall, administrative coordinator; Paul Hanson, field/technical service; Ron Bader, electrical engineering; Ray Nishi, mechanical/graphic design; Pat Adams, shipping and receiving; and Jose Santiago, production manager. □

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COINMAN INTERVIEW

Joey Herd

Despite the numerous positives offered by membership in the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), there are many operators of family amusement centers who've longed for an association that more closely addresses their specific needs. Well, they've got one now; it's called the International Family Entertainment Center Association.

It was founded in the fall of 1993 and is headquartered in Birmingham, Ala. The executive director is Joey Herd, general manager of that city's Riverchase Golf 'N Games, a family fun center featuring three themed miniature golf courses, a 50-piece arcade, and nine batting cages. Before joining Riverchase he worked for White Water and American Adventures, two Atlanta-based divisions of Silver Dollar City Corp.

I understand the IFECA is geared toward independent family entertainment centers and smaller chains like Celebration Station, not the giant theme parks commonly served by IAAPA.

Really, we're geared toward anybody in family entertainment. A lot of people assume that means the small guys, but it just boils down to this: we're not for the amusement parks. They're typically huge and located in tourist destinations, whereas family entertainment centers are usually local ventures that attract local visitors. I know of very few people throughout the world who drive any length of time to go to a family entertainment center. That's kind of how we define it: a unique facility that attracts local visitors and has a variety of recreational elements.

Christopher Caire

A typical family entertainment center has multiple activities, but each one is completely different. That's a little different than a typical amusement park, which has rides, shows, and food. Family entertainment centers have a wide variety of things: batting cages, miniature golf, Laser Tag, bumper boats, go-karts, virtual reality, arcade games, and so on. Recently soft play has accounted for a major portion of the industry, and family-style rides have started to make an influx. A major amusement park might have 100 rides and a $3 million roller coaster, while the average family entertainment center would have rides that cost between $100,000 and $150,000. I'm talking about carousels, Ferris wheels, scramblers, and small kiddie rides.

We hear references to "family entertainment centers," "family fun centers," "pocket parks," etc. Are they synonymous? If not, how would you define them?

Yes, they're pretty much synonymous: family entertainment centers, family fun centers, pocket parks, fun parks, kiddie parks, soft play parks, etc. They all refer to family entertainment at places smaller in size than an amusement park—but they're just as exciting and fun. The average facility is 10 acres and less, though there are a lot that are two acres and under. But I haven't seen many that are over 10 acres and still classify themselves as family entertainment centers.

So the common denominator is the size, not so much the attractions to be found there?

Yes, I think that's right.

Does your association have any specific criteria for membership?

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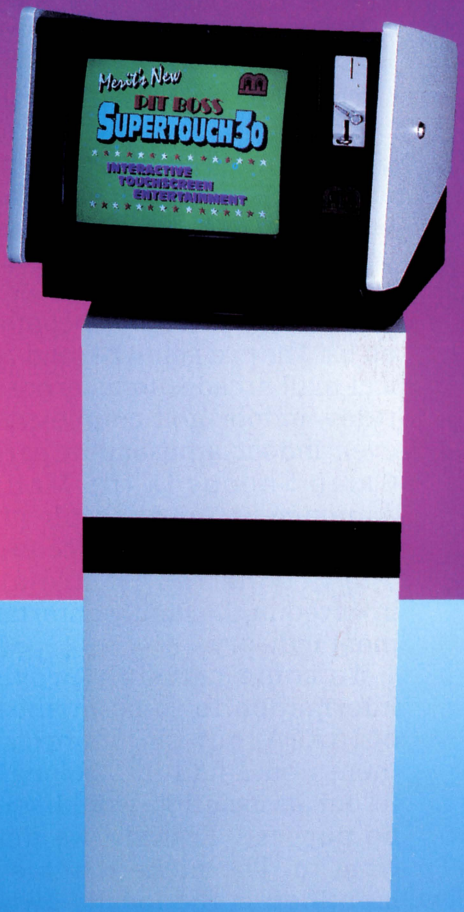

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Anyone who considers himself part of the family entertainment industry can join. Technically, I guess an amusement park could join the association, but there's nothing we can provide that IAAPA doesn't already. IAAPA does a tremendous job dealing with amusement parks; there's no way we could compete with them in terms of offering services to amusement parks.

We're geared toward folks who operate things like miniature golf, go-karts, batting cages, bumper boats, and soft play. Even the parks and recreation departments have contacted us, because they're getting into the family entertainment end of the business. A lot of shopping malls have contacted us. They're going beyond typical mall arcades to incorporate rides, indoor golf courses, and even indoor amusement parks; Camp Snoopy in the Mall of America is an example. Ice skating rinks, bowling centers, and driving ranges are also involved in the family entertainment industry.

We could certainly provide information to some members of IAAPA, but the majority of them would find that belonging to our association would serve no purpose. Frankly, we don't want to. The niche that we've identified is the locally owned and operated, or corporately owned and operated, family entertainment center. We did some surveys this past March, and what we found was that 70 to 80 percent of those who responded were locally owned and operated family entertainment centers; they were owned and operated either by a small group of investors or family members; the family entertainment center was their sole source of income; and they didn't belong to *any* association.

We're not trying to steal members from any association. There are simply a lot of people out there who don't belong to any organization, and we feel we can provide them an avenue for education, communication, networking—in other words, teaching them more about the industry they belong to.

"It's critical to understand that the IFECA is for suppliers as well as operators, though the association is certainly operator-driven."

How long had the association been in the planning stages before becoming a reality?

Planning started about three years ago, when I was still living in Atlanta. Fun Expo had their first trade show there, and after it was over (show director) Bailey Beeken called in several folks from the show to talk. From that discussion, we decided that the family entertainment center industry needed a voice.

Over the next 18 months, I took it upon myself to talk to a lot of people. I wanted to get their input on whether an association for family entertainment centers made sense, whether it would provide a service to people, not be self-serving. Then, at the 1992 Fun Expo in New Orleans, the talk became more serious. By the beginning of 1993, we said, "Let's do it."

It's critical to understand that the IFECA is for suppliers as well as operators. Even though it's been stated several times, and accurately, that we are an operator-driven association, the suppliers of the industry—ride manufacturers, game manufacturers, designers, prize companies, etc.—are critical to our success. Without their knowledge base, without their information, there's no way we could succeed. They get to see multiple facilities at any given time. They may sell a piece of equipment in New Jersey, one in California, one in Montana, and so on, while the typical operator only sees the facilities in his own geographic area. So the supplier is very important to us; we need to utilize their expertise.

What services will the association provide its members?

Unlike some of the other organizations out there, we're going to be more educationally oriented. We have nothing to do with running trade shows; that's not what we do. Fun Expo does that very well. We've entered into a partnership whereby they'll continue to run Fun Expo and we'll serve on their advisory board. Fun Expo is our official trade show and convention site each year. They've done a great job over the last three years of growing this industry and bringing people together. There were more than 4,000 attendees at this last show, which is tremendous for a three-year-old organization.

What we want to do as an association is continue to foster goodwill and, on a timely basis, get information out to people. I'm talking about educational ideas on their bottom lines, marketing, health and safety, insurance, and all the other issues that concern our businesses. This will be done

Users' Reports

"We really liked our first Token Tech, which is why we ordered our second. I'm calling now to order our third."

"The Token Tech eliminates the need to spend hours making up rolls of 20 and 40 Tokens. We are saving enough labor cost to more than pay for it in less than two months."

"The best investment since we bought our fax machine. I can't ever imagine doing business without either one."

"We have good employees . . . The Token Tech removes the temptation for them to become "silent partners" by skimming the till."

"It's great! You should have come out with it 10 years ago."

"After using our Token Tech for Quarters, we are switching over to Tokens. Thanks to the dispenser, we got acquainted with your Token Systems."

"The Token Tech eliminates long lines at our cashier's cage. Our customers like it, too!"

"Our Batting Cage Tokens are valued at $1 each. Anyone with a high-value Token should be using a Token Tech."

"We use a larger size Token for our Carwash. All Tokens are sold through the Token Tech. It's accurate, and much faster, and it keeps our people honest."

"The first two Token Techs are excellent. We are sending our purchase order for six additional units."

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through newsletters, publications, an on-line FAX service, and a referral hot-line. None of this costs extra; it all comes with being a member of the association.

Explain the four levels of membership: operator, corporate, supplier, and developer.

A developer member would be anybody who's thinking about getting into the industry but doesn't currently have a facility. He wants to learn as much as he can before actually joining the industry. It's also for true developers, people who are developing various projects. We get a lot of calls from those folks. There needed to be a special membership level, because they aren't suppliers and they aren't operators. It's a little more expensive—$275—but we felt like our operators should have the best price.

Individual operator membership is $199 a year. That's to send out the message that we're operator-driven. In other associations the operator pays the highest membership fees, but we went in the opposite direction. We're not trying to stiff other people; we set a base price and worked *down*, not up.

Corporate membership is $250, plus $100 for each additional facility. We basically did that for the corporations that have multiple facilities. Instead of having them pay $199 for every single one, they can simply pay $250 for the corporation and then $100 for some or all of the others. They can choose to be as involved or uninvolved as they like.

The supplier membership is $300. That's our base price; we weren't saying, "Suppliers, you have to pay more." What we said was, "This is our base price; why don't we discount the other folks." They're the people who are in the industry from a hands-on, operating standpoint, either actually or potentially. That's the reasoning for how we set up our dues structure—right, wrong, or indifferent. Based on the surveys, that's what people told us they wanted to see. It may change over time, but this is how it'll be initially.

The suppliers are very important to the family entertainment center industry. We're going to recognize them with an awards program at this year's Fun Expo in 1994. There will also be a suppliers-only program at the

show, though we haven't determined the format yet. It may be strictly social, or it may also incorporate educational elements. The suppliers are extremely knowledgeable and very hard-working people, and we want to recognize them and work closely with them.

Why do you think there's been such an explosion in this area of the amusement business?

I believe there are four or five main reasons. First, more than ever before, there are more families that have both parents working. Because of that, when the weekend rolls around or when the parents have available free time, they want to spend it with their children—and they want that time to be fun. That can't always mean taking a trip or even going to an amusement park. But what you *can* do on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis is pay a visit to your local family entertainment center for some good, clean fun. It doesn't require a big investment in planning, time spent, or money.

Second, and it sort of contradicts what I just said, there are more single-parent households than at any other time in our history. When fathers who don't have custody of their children do get to spend time with them, they want to do something that's memorable. And again, due to economics and/or time, maybe they can't do anything major. Family entertainment centers provide another avenue for those folks.

Another reason we're seeing more and more people is the fact that the baby-boomer era is coming of age. Many of that generation who were militant in the late '60s and early '70s realize, "Hey, by spending all that time being political and speaking my views, I may have missed part of those growing-up years. I don't want my kids to miss that. And you know what: playing with my kids is *fun*!" We see a lot of mothers and fathers coming in with their children, whereas before it was more common to see the parents dropping the kids off. They want to spend time with them and know what they're doing, so that they don't run with the wrong crowd. I know the term is used a lot, but I think family values are starting to come back.

"The major players in the industry will be the first ones to install virtual reality and do well with it. But right now most small operators can't afford it."

Also, with the economic situation we have now, a lot of middle managers are being laid off, fired, or forced to take an early retirement. When they leave these corporations to go into another business, many of them are looking for something fun; they don't want another boring job. Family fun centers are certainly a fun alternative, and they don't require tremendous capital investments. This is a business, but it's a *fun* business. On a daily basis, you're interacting with people whose primary objective is to come to you for a good time. You don't get that in most businesses.

Finally, most parents understand the components of a family entertainment center. At a lot of amusement parks, the technology has gotten so incredible that parents don't know what the heck is going on! Mothers, especially, like things they understand. They understand miniature golf, batting cages, bumper boats, and go-karts, even if they themselves don't play. On the flip side, not only does dad understand it, he has a blast doing it. It reminds him of his youth.

Are you seeing more virtual reality systems appearing in family entertainment centers?

First of all, the virtual reality games are a lot of fun to play. But the biggest concern for family entertainment center operators is the cost. The major players in the industry, those who have the resources and large numbers of people passing through the facility, will be the first ones to install virtual reality and do well with it. But until the price tag comes down or it becomes something you just have to have, regardless of the price, most small operators can't afford it. But I haven't talked to anyone who doesn't think it's a great concept.

The thing that's doing very well right now is Laser Tag. It could be the next boom in this industry, followed by virtual reality.

Where do video games fit in today's family entertainment centers?

They're very important. If you're going after a pre-teenage or teenage environment, you almost have to have video games because they're so profitable. At the same time, the biggest growth area in the industry seems to be families with children under 12 years old. That's why redemption has experienced a rebirth, besides the fact that the redemption manufacturers keep coming up with fresh new ideas and innovations.

But getting back to video games, it'll always be a vital part of the family entertainment center. The centers always attract teenagers and young adults, and that group loves video games. We've gotten some great games lately, such as *NBA JAM*, but I do believe the manufacturers have to guard against including too much violence. *NBA JAM* shows that you can make a successful game that isn't filled with violence.

What's your opinion of the redemption games on today's market?

Probably the one common denominator in all the new family entertainment centers is redemption games. They're becoming more and more important every year. In fact, there are centers being built now that don't even have video games or pinball machines; they're strictly redemption. The concept is strong enough that it can be successful on its own.

Redemption has become so important to the industry that the manufacturers are introducing more innovations, rather than just seeing the standard sports games. We're seeing more interaction, more graphics, more pizzazz. And adults love the games because they can figure the darn things out! They don't want to feel like idiots in front of their kids.

Redemption is merchandising. It isn't necessarily the game; it's playing to see how many tickets you can win and redeem for prizes. That's what drives the redemption business. You have to change your prizes and the way they're displayed. Obviously, too, you must continue to upgrade your games, but a lot of them are going to be around for a long, long time. Look at how long *Skee-Ball* has remained strong.

Will the association be hiring a full-time executive director?

At some point in time I'm sure we will. But right now, in our infancy, we don't want to spend any money other than what's needed to provide membership services. At whatever point the membership reaches a level where a full-time director is warranted, we'll look at it. Until then our officers serve on a volunteer basis out of my office here in Birmingham and Fun Expo's office in New York. The address is P.O. Box 361195, Birmingham, AL 35236. The

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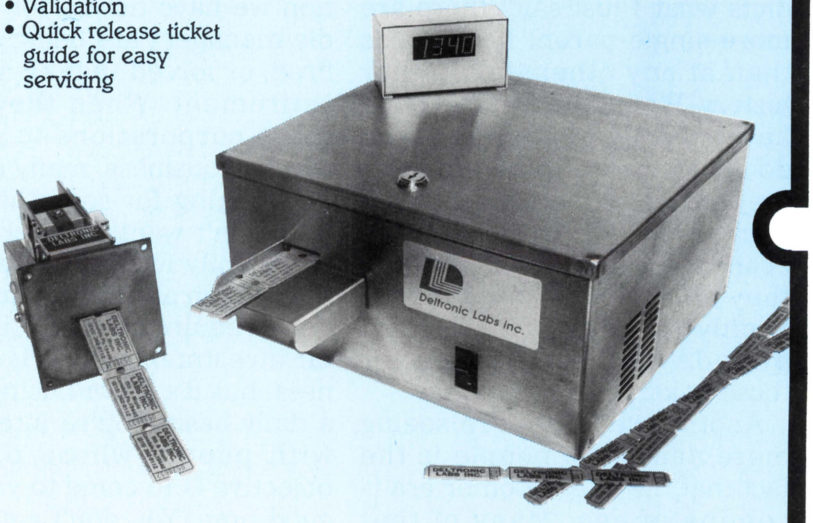

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What's your advice for those who are thinking of opening a family entertainment center?

I think the key thing is to do your homework. For example, find out how much competition there is in your particular area. There's no reason to open a center in a market that already has several facilities, unless it's a major metropolitan area. You don't want to be sharing dollars with the competition.

Learn as much as you can about the industry. Don't think you can just open the doors and have everything take care of itself. I would suggest reading as many different trade publications as possible, as well as the brochures from the equipment manufacturers. I would also get a qualified consultant or group to do a study of the market and its revenue potential. You can never have too much information.

Another suggestion is to visit as many facilities as you physically can. The more you go to the more you're going to see what you like and dislike, which will help you determine the type of business you want to run. And since you're going to be spending so much time and money on this business, make sure it's something you enjoy. People who don't like kids probably shouldn't be in the family entertainment center industry.

Finally, I would join some organization—preferably ours, though there are others out there. There are so many benefits to membership in a professional organization: information, ideas, networking, etc., especially when you consider the insignificant costs of joining.

Don't say, "I know of a place I can lease or buy. All I have to do is throw a bunch of equipment in there and collect the money." Those who do that have gone out of business fairly quickly, because they don't understand the ins and outs of the industry. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out what we do, but it does take time and effort to learn it well. □

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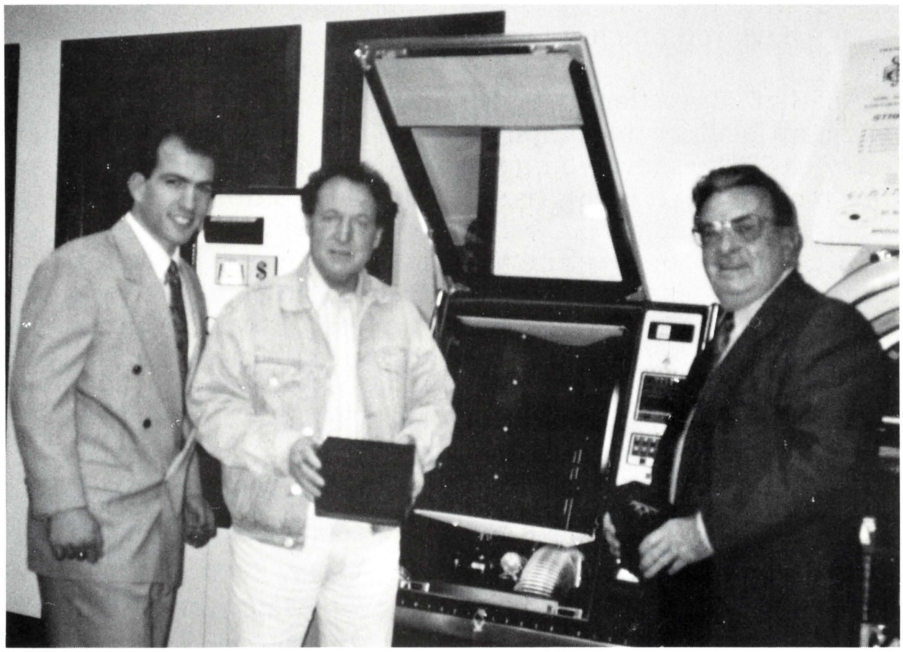
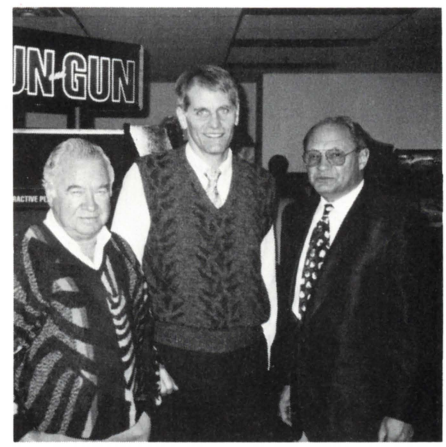
OPEN HOUSE

Sellout crowd at Atlas



Antique Apparatus/Rock-Ola's Frank Schultz (r) shows off the new slimline Rock-Ola **Rocket** to operators Geno Giuntoli of Atlas Sales and Joe Riggio (c) of Advance Amusement.

From left: Rich Reedy of Hidden Cove, Geno Giuntoli of Atlas Sales, and Andy Corbus of Hidden Cove.



Atlas' Jerry Marcus (r) welcomes Bob Berman (l) and Roger Westmont of Modern Specialty.

Atlas' Jerry Marcus is flanked by Chicago big-hitters, Kem Thom (l) of Western Automatic Music and Don Hesch of A.H. Entertainers.

From games and music to redemption and vending, Atlas had it all. Operators were invited to the Chicago office in November to view powerhouse kits for the street and arcade, striking big ticket videos, and a wealth of redemption games.

Occupying center stage was Atlas' new vending line—Glasco. According to Atlas' Jerry Marcus and Ed Pellegrini, Atlas is serious about vending.

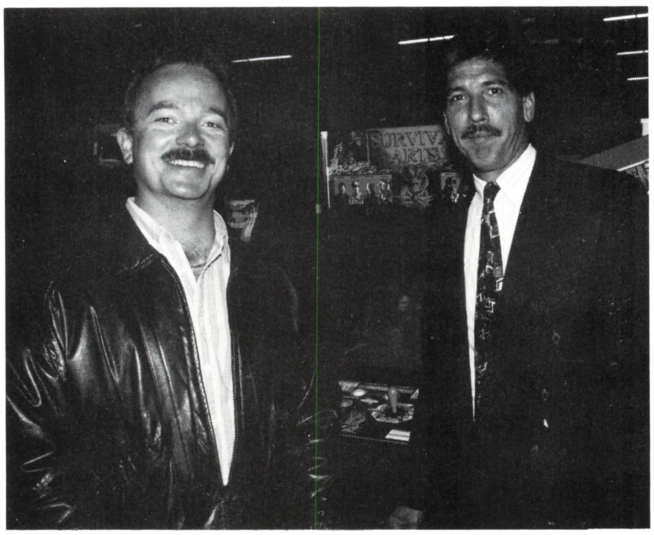
In addition to all of the new equipment, Atlas featured a flea market of older games, which drew rave reviews from bargain hunters.

Will it be a good year? "The mood of the operators was upbeat as confirmed by the number of orders we wrote," noted the company. "Atlas is off and running to the new year!" □

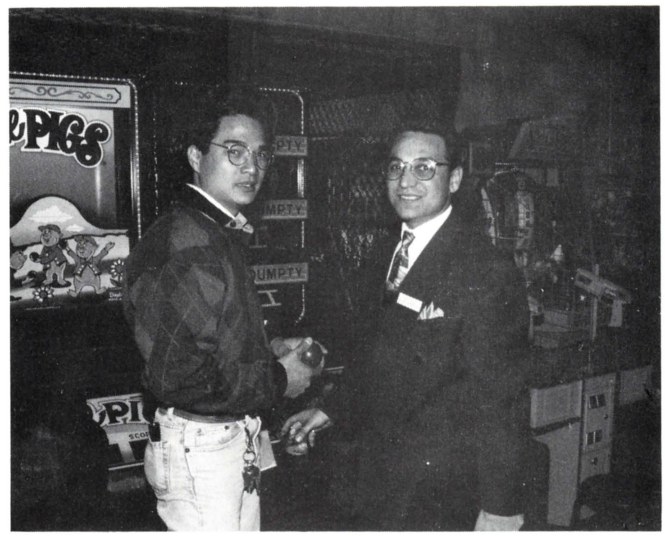
Bob Walston of A Plus Vending with Atlas' Bob Hansen.

OPEN HOUSE

Record crowd at Betson



Betson's Bob Boals (r) chats with Chuck Pietz of Tri Corp. Amusements.



Gordon Lee of Sunstar Vending (l) interrupts his game to chat with Betson's Joe Ingui.

Ben Toro of Betson (r) with Don Kramer of Family Gameland.

Nick Napolitano of NBR Vending (l) with Tom Faranda of Betson.

Betson Enterprises happily reported a record crowd for its post-AMOA open house held at its home office in Carlstadt, N.J. Over 250 operators from the New York and Connecticut areas visited the office for a look (or better look) at the new equipment shown at AMOA.

"This was one of the best turnouts Betson has ever listed at an after-show open house," noted company executives. □

Dennis Shifter of Kiddie Up Express (r) shares a story with Betson's Christopher Cirillo.

OPEN HOUSE

A pep rally at Betson Pittsburgh

Brittany Boehm (granddaughter of Dick Boehm of CRS Game Room) assists her "Uncle Jim" and "Uncle Lou" as they draw the winner of the trip to Puerto Rico.

Lauri Bicknell (c), representing the London office of Dobkin Brothers, and his interpreter (l) chat with Betson's Lou Larson.

Dave Kopack of Merit demonstrates his new countertop game, **Supertouch 30**, to John Rybka of Harrison Amusement and Jay Balson of Jay's Vending, while Betson's Clarence Smoyer (r) looks on.

Betson Pittsburgh's parts department during set-up time, (l-r): Tom Webber, Mary Jo Pospychala, Ken Bartok, and Wayne Jones (administrative manager).

Betson's Bob Busche chats with Jake Nikituk of Pro-Vending Co.

"Betson Pittsburgh's 22,000-square-foot facility was turned into one of the largest industry pep rallies ever experienced west of the Susquehanna," said general manager Jim Wittler of the post-AMOA open house held Oct. 30.

The all-pro Betson team of Lou Larson, Wittler, Bob Busche, and Lee Ivory, along with 17 manufacturer representatives displayed and demonstrated the new equipment.

Mortal Kombat II and *Judge Dredd* held the spotlight on the amusement side, while the new Rowe *Model 550* food vendor and SBC-2 compact bill changer were featured on the vending side.

Along with plenty to eat and drink, some great door prizes were donated by manufacturers, including a trip to Puerto Rico from Williams. □

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TOPIC: Price Per Play

1. Have you raised your price per play on videos and pinballs from a quarter?_____

2. Has competition stopped you from raising your price per play?__
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3. What other factors have influenced your decision to stay at quarter play?_____
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4. What will have to happen to cause an across-the-board raise in price per play on videos and pins?_____
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Continue on a separate page if needed.

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OPEN HOUSE

Music-Vend in Seattle

Sega's Brian Kopf (l) with Doug Shaver of Intercity Vending and Ray Horton of the Dallas Cowboys.

"Watch this, Dad," says Kristian Burke as dad Daryl of Advanced Amusements looks on.

Leif Leding of Turntable Music (r) tells Rowe's Dave Hall how much he likes the Rowe jukebox.

Music-Vend's Charlie Galante watches two customers play **Night Slashers**.

In Seattle it was great food, even more prizes, the latest equipment, and a visit by some local celebrities when Music-Vend invited its customers to a post-AMOA open house.

Ray Horton of the Dallas Cowboys and former University of Washington Huskies' player, and Shawn Kemp of the Seattle Super Sonics and NBA All Star/Dream Team II, dropped by to say hello, much to the delight of attendees. □

Williams' Lenore Sayers is obviously very happy about the popularity of **Mortal Kombat II**. Looks like Adam Barmeyer would agree as he takes a turn.

OPEN HOUSE

Music-Vend in Alaska

Rowe's Phil Cole (r) answers some questions from George Nazarre of Arctic Music.

Williams' Tom Cahill (l) with B.J. and Don Ridl of AAA Amusement.

Capcom's Dennis Sable gets some tips from two game experts.

Tom Salo (l) and Curt Zakrzewski of Service America flank Ron Quinn of Mars Electronics.

Prior to the AMOA show, Music-Vend hosted an open house in Alaska, which featured an array of service schools. The service schools were instructed by Ron Quinn of Mars, Tom Cahill of Williams, and Phil Cole of Rowe.

In addition, Matt Davison of Irem, Brian Kopf of Sega, Dennis Sable of Capcom, and Alan Dolgoff of Disc City were on hand to greet guests and show them some of the latest equipment. There were also a number of door prizes for lucky attendees. □

Matt Davison of Irem (r) with Gary Lester of Lester Brothers Amusements.

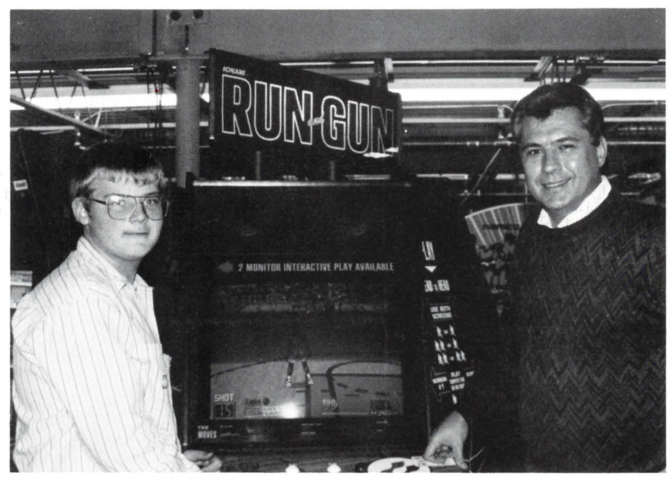
OPEN HOUSE

Great day at Greater Southern

Joe Capilouto of Franco Novelty (l) chats with Atari's Jim Newlander.

Three factory reps, (l-r): Pete Walton (PARS), Tom Siemieniec (Namco), and Jeff Yantz (Valley).

Arachnid's Tracy and Darren Decatoire with Alex Kadar (l) and Larry Simmons (r) of Amusement Entertainment.



Konami's Mike Kubin (r) with a **Run and Gun** fan, Gerald Veitch.

In keeping with its long-running tradition of successful post-AMOA open houses, Greater Southern treated its customers to a real "swine-dining" affair—a good old fashioned barbecue—in early November.

With all the food they could possibly eat and drink, fabulous door prizes, and the opportunity to speak with many factory representatives about the new equipment, everyone had a "rib-roaring" time. □

Greater Southern's Gray Stowers welcomes Carmen Ortiz Roura from Puerto Rico.

OPEN HOUSE

Customers made it happen

Capcom's Dennis Sable (l) with Dick Hawkins of D&R Star.

Enjoying the day are manufacturer representatives, operators, and Lieberman employees, (l-r): Dawn Tanda, Randy Fricke, Linda Winstead, Frank Cosentino, and Mr. Tachibana.

Marge and Jim Stansfield are flanked by Lieberman's Linda Winstead and Bundra Games' Jim Gall.

Strata's Alicia Sadoff shows operators Bill and Dave Lethert the company's new game **Hard Yardage**.

Lieberman Music Co. reported a great turnout at its post-AMOA show open house in early November. The show floor was busy throughout the day as customers viewed the new equipment and enjoyed talking with factory reps.

"Customers enjoyed themselves and we were busy writing quite a bit of business," said Lieberman's Glenn Charney. "Also, our employees worked hard making sure our customers had a worthwhile visit to our showroom." □

From left: Tamara Schroeder, Sandy Zeglin, and Joey Bundra.

OPEN HOUSE

Fromm class featured at Pacific Vend

Pacific Vend's Sam Fedder (r), Carl Fedder (l), and Alan Tam with Capcom's Dennis Sable (white shirt).

Matt Davison (l) and Max Fujimoto with Irem's **Ninja Bat Man Baseball**.

Randy Fromm played to a full house during his service school.

From left: SNK's Mark Chan, Darren and Jeff Schebek of Full Tilt, and Randy Fromm.

Canada's Pacific Vend had a bonus for its customers at the post-AMOA open house in November. The company hired Randy Fromm (Randy Fromm's Arcade School) to put on a one-day seminar free to all attendees.

Randy told us that he focused on video game troubleshooting in the morning and spent the afternoon on pinball repairs. "I was surprised at how many people attended. The operators loved it. I was told it was the most successful open house Pacific Vend ever had," reported Randy. □

Leprechaun's Leroy Hancuff chats with Atari's Elaine Shirley.

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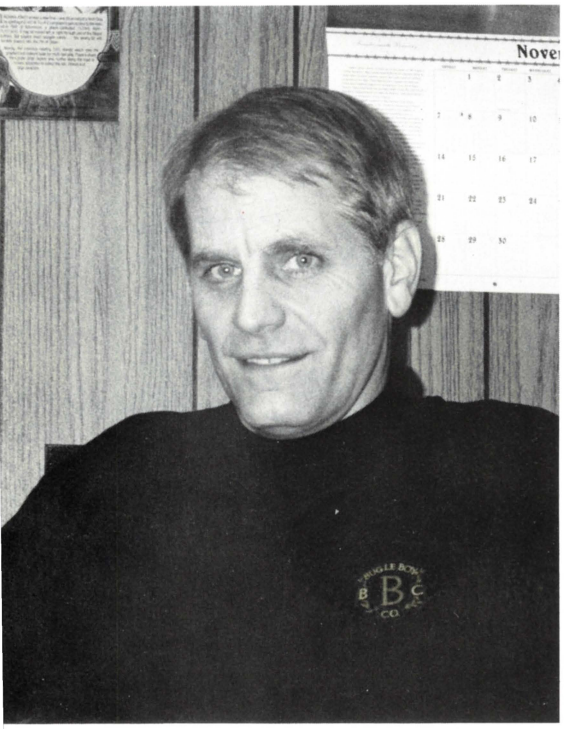
SCORING SUCCESS

IFPA: an operator's story

We've grown accustomed to dart and pool leagues. No doubt about it, they're great. We've even accepted air hockey, shuffleboard, and foosball tournaments. But pinball? Can pinball leagues and tournaments really work? The International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA) has been trying to convince a doubting industry that pinball is the perfect candidate for leagues.

But even the positive waves from IFPA officials hasn't been quite enough to convince some operators. Roger Westmont of Modern Specialty Co. in Madison, Wis., is an operator who gave pinball leagues very little thought. He didn't even bother going to the last two IFPA championships, even though both were held in his own state. Roger was also like many other operators, pondering alternatives to increase an ever-diminishing bottom line and dwindling player base.



Roger Westmont

Modern Specialty Co., in business for half a century, employs 27 people. Its route is made up of street locations—some large, some small. The company operates a wide array of games, from pool and darts to pinball and redemption. Pinball has always been an asset to the company.

Roger is realistic when he describes the pressure from pinball locations: "They either want a brand new machine or demand to keep the one already there. Either way, it isn't a good situation."

Modern began its successful pool league nearly 20 years ago. It's grown from a humble six teams to well over 60. Six years ago, Modern added dart leagues. That too has grown from five teams to over 60.

But even the success with pool and dart leagues didn't convince him to consider pinball leagues. He was aware of IFPA and recalls listening to what he calls "one of (director) Doug Young's 'Sermons on the Mount,'" but *still* staunchly resisted the idea.

We asked Roger why he was so hesitant. "I always felt that pinball was a solitary game and that the focus was on the game itself. I never considered it something that would lend itself to organized play like pool and darts, where two players traditionally play together. I certainly know now that I made an error in judgment thinking that pinball players would not be interested in competing," he said.

But Roger soon changed his mind. While at the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators (WAMO) convention, he sat in on a seminar given by Williams' Bob Lentz and Young. It clinched Roger's decision to join IFPA, as he explains: "This could very well be the best argument for attending state shows—you get great ideas. I had heard the pitch before, but suddenly it just clicked. After talking with Bob, Doug, and some IFPA members, I realized why I wanted to join. I had so much money tied up in pinballs that we couldn't afford *not* to promote them."

Roger's love of the game made him the perfect choice to make it work for Modern Specialty. He stresses to other operators that someone in the company must be committed enough to make it successful. Roger began by making a list of locations he felt would be receptive.

Roger explains what happened next: "I approached 15 locations and, believe it or not, every single one was receptive to the idea. As we followed through with additional meetings, I realized how excited they were. They were anxious to offer their pinball playing customers this opportunity."

Just how did Roger recruit players? From a fellow operator

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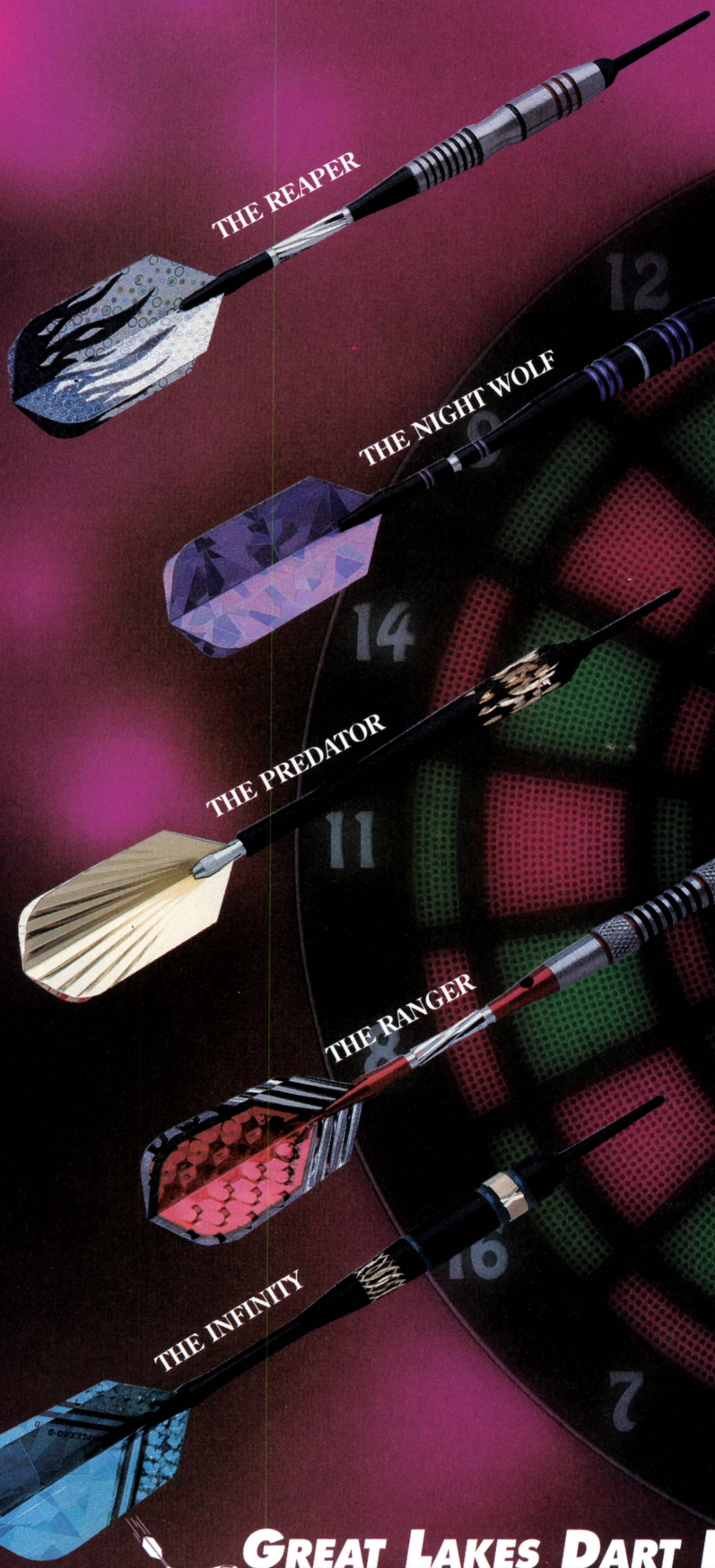

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he got the idea of running a tournament about three weeks prior to the date the league was set to begin. Many of those who played in the tournament joined the league.

Although not all of the locations stuck with the program, Roger says that's to be expected. "People have rosy ideas of what they will do but plans fall through. Don't be disappointed. Even with some dropping out, we got what we wanted—a nucleus of dedicated players and locations. In fact, two of the locations have been with us for a long time, but never got involved in any of our other promotions, not even dart or pool leagues," he said.

Roger says that with pinball leagues, he's added a new goodwill opportunity for locations. "Just as operators like to do something special for their accounts, the locations are thrilled to offer something special for good customers," he explained.

Although still fairly new, Roger pointed out some things he's learned:

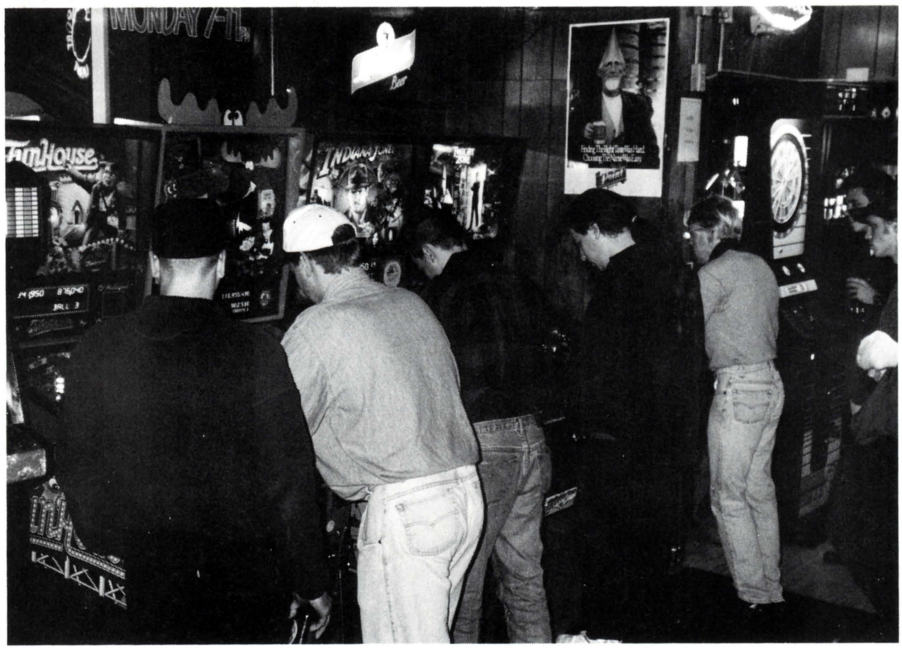
"We wanted to promote it as a league for anyone, not just the experts. However, I think we should have taken a little different direction and promoted it as a way for pinball players to show off their skills. I don't mean necessarily promoting it as a league for experts, but letting those serious players who know things about the machines that others don't that it's for them, too. There's an ego thing with any sport, and pinball is no different," Roger explained.

He continued, "The name of your league is important. We call ours the Pin Kings. A new woman in our office saw the name and remarked that it sounded so professional. We got something we didn't' even ask for when we named it.

"We decided to run our leagues for 14 weeks, so players aren't overwhelmed with commitment. I wouldn't change this. After the 14 weeks we hold a league party and at the same time run another tournament that anyone can enter. We not only entice new players, we also give our league players something to look forward to. We give out trophies and lots of prizes.

"One more important point," Roger said, "is to assure your locations that you are committed to the program. The locations don't want to have to explain to their customers why it fell through. I could also add here that joining IFPA takes a lot of pressure off the operator. For example, if someone complains about a rule, we just tell them to write IFPA. It also saves time because you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Everything's been done."

Since Roger is also active in dart and pool leagues, we asked him how the average pinball player differs from the others. We were a little surprised when Roger described a typical pinball player as being quieter and more even-tempered. "Pinball players



Pinball enthusiasts are eager to join the league.

Players take their pinball seriously.

get excited when they get high scores, but they don't whoop it up like some of the dart players, for example," Roger said. "They may do their fair share of drinking, but don't have the same level of carousing as dart players."

He estimates that players range in age from their early 20s to 40s and are people who have been waiting for this to happen. They love pinball and know how to play, but there was never an organized way to enjoy playing. Roger had this to add about pinball players: "The IFPA scoresheet may look imposing, but even though I've never had a real instruction session with players they seem to know what to do. There's a real difference between pool and dart players and pinball players when it comes to the paperwork. It's a pleasure to deal with the players. We initially thought they'd be nit-pickers; you know, complain about anything and everything. But they aren't like that. We picked up a rule from another operator which states that there has to be three things wrong with a machine to put it out of order; burnt out bulbs cannot be one. That little rule has gotten rid of at least 50 percent of the complaints. But remember that you have to be diligent about keeping your machines in top shape."

Has Roger been disappointed or surprised by anything so far?

"I can't think of any problems, but there have been some surprises. For one, it was a shock when locations actually thanked us for starting the league! That's unbelievable, since we don't often get thanked for something. Some positive things have happened because of the pinball leagues. For one, we have been raising our price per play on pinballs."

Roger continued, "We've added bill acceptors to our pinballs and have seen a definite increase in revenue. In addition, because of the league, locations feel more comfortable when we talk about changing our commission structure. They feel they are getting something in return for the increase. Surprisingly, though, it's not only our league locations. We explain to other locations that we are running a league and buying new machines. We'll offer it to them, but explain that we need 60 percent. They say OK."

How does Roger sum up the decision to join IFPA? "It's simple. If I had it to do all over again, I'd do it sooner!" □

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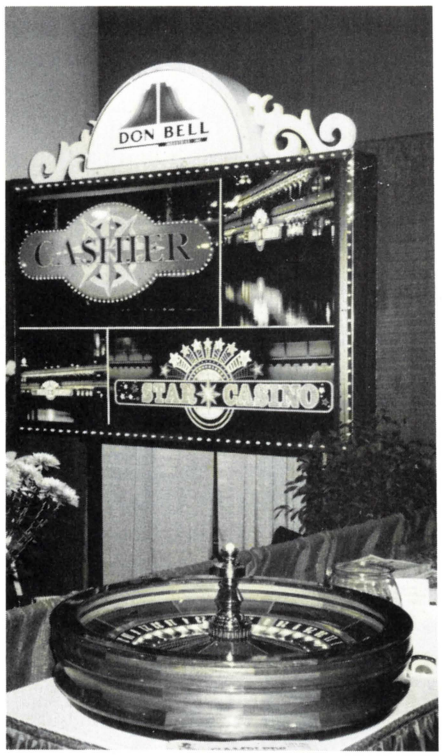
RIVERBOAT GAMING CONGRESS & EXPO

Support services grow with expanding industry

One pass around the exhibit floor of the Riverboat Gaming Congress & Expo in New Orleans on Nov. 9-11 made a fact abundantly clear: the expanding riverboat casino industry provides a nucleus around which support industries can grow and thrive. In one word: jobs.

Mark Zetzmann (l) of Delta Gaming and Mick Roemer of IGT and the Wild Cherry.



Electronic signs and message centers such as this one from Don Bell Industries were plentiful.

Companies that manufacture coin and currency-handling equipment, indoor and outdoor signs, locks and security devices, and accounting systems are in demand, thanks to this new market. Not to mention shipbuilders, designers, and outfitters. Of the over 100 exhibitors present, only eight companies were game manufacturers.

While the slots, roulette wheels, and video poker, keno, bingo, and blackjack games provided the sparkle, everyday products such as uniforms, furniture, cellular phones, playing cards, tokens, and cash advance services provided the necessary accessories.

Marketing and consulting firms are sprouting up to service the new industry, as well as interior decorating specialists. Insurance companies with maritime credentials and the Passenger Vessel Association are poised to render expertise.

Gaming & Wagering Business and Michael Jones and Co. cosponsored the event, which drew a crowd eager for more details on the operation of riverboat casinos. Coincidentally, on the eve of the event, Louisiana's first gaming riverboat, the Star Casino, extended its gangplank to patrons for the first time.

A full roster of seminars covered the following topics: the economic impact of riverboats, the politics of licensing, insurance and loss control, licensing reciprocity, targeting your player, legislative and legal issues, gaming floor design, site selection, going public, marketing case histories, gaming commissions, and working with maritime architects, designers, and shipyards.

Among the speakers were Joseph McQuaid, interim administrator of the Illinois Gaming Board; Kenneth Pickering, chairman of the Louisiana Riverboat Gaming Commission; Paul Dworin, publisher/editor of Gaming & Wagering Business; Chuck Patton, deputy director of the Mississippi Gaming Commission; and Jack Ketterer, administrator for the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission.

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From left: Val Haydel of Delta Gaming, Bob Nims of AMA Distributors, and Ronald Payne and Robert Theriot of Laser Amusements.

By the new WMS Gaming 19" **Slant Top Poker**, (l-r): John Nicastro II, Dana Waggener, John Nicastro, and Jim Jackson.

Daulat Sthanki (l) of Dollar Amusement learns more about tavern equipment from Tom Zaun of Easy Bar Liquor Systems.

Chris Kanellakis (l) of C.K. Gaming and Robert Huckabee of Southland Gaming join Saundra Gilbert at the Premier CashLink booth.

Bob Harzer (l) and Dave Tucker of Betstar by the **Big Choice**.

Paris Anderson (l) of Celebrity University and Mort Ansky of U.S. Games by the **Progressive Pot-O-Gold**.

Jimmy Wright (l) and Mark Munro of Cummins-Allison by the Model 5061 Jet Sort.

Pam Schaeffer and Richard Mines of Asahi Seiko man a booth filled with coin-handling equipment.

At the Bally Gaming booth, (l-r): Rus Strahan, Lorraine Wilson, and Dick Miller with **Jumpin Jokers**.

Other panelists included executives from riverboat casinos, marketing and management consultants, attorneys, and financial advisors. Opening and closing sessions centered on the explosive growth of the industry and the challenges of the future, respectively.

One of the immediate needs of the floating casinos is in coin and currency-handling. Says Mark Munro of Cummins-Allison: "This has been a real growth market for us over the last few years. We

think it's great for the local economy of cities along the Mississippi River. Casinos want high-speed sorters to assist change booth operations, currency scanners, and machines that wrap coins as they are counted. These coins are recirculated later within the casino."

Legal jurisdictions on the rise

This is the third expo tailored to floating casinos. Exhibitor and attendee rates jump each year. First, Iowa passed riverboat gaming legislation, then Illinois, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, and now Indiana, pending local referenda for implementation.

States bordering those with successful riverboat operations find increasing pressure to meet the competition and keep citizens from spending their money next door. There's also demand to increase the number of licenses. In Illinois the limit is 10, but talk of Chicago obtaining four vessels could mean more downstate.

In Louisiana (limit 15) the '93 Legislature considered upping that amount to 25 before the first one was operational. Dockside gaming flourishes in Mississippi, which has no limit to the number of licenses granted (12 facilities were up and running by the end of '93).

How long will riverboat casinos continue to be popular?

Rick Currie of WMS Gaming feels that, "the opportunity for riverboat expansion is exponential. I expect more legislatures to approve riverboat gaming, and in many cases that will be at the expense of video lottery. Riverboats are an easier legislative sell. That constituency has the political power to make it a reality."

His cohort John Nicastro is of a similar mind: "Riverboats are the new buzzword. Three years ago it was video lottery. Now it's riverboats and they can deliver. I don't think the expansion of riverboat gaming will affect big casinos—they're an event. Riverboats are an evening's entertainment."

According to Bob Harzer of Betstar, "Riverboats will probably replace the hope for video lottery in many states for two reasons: first, they will create new jobs, along with a large investment on the part of boat owners and operators, and second, they will have more far-reaching economic effects in the local communities.

"States are looking to gaming to generate revenue, but I don't think they want it to be a spur-of-the-moment convenience. Lottery-related games in general become an impulse sale; riverboats require a conscious decision to go out for an afternoon or evening. Riverboats offer gaming in a controlled environment."

Will this new industry reach a saturation point? Says Currie: "The issue will not be saturation; it will be too much 'in your face' gambling that could hurt expansion."

In the meantime, construction jobs related to this industry (vessels, hotels, restaurants) continue to climb, as do the number of support services. Look for this trade event to grow substantially.

Final figures for the 1993 Riverboat Gaming Congress & Expo: 1,700 attendees, 232 booths, and 160 exhibiting companies. The 1994 dates are Nov. 15-17 at the New Orleans Convention Center. □

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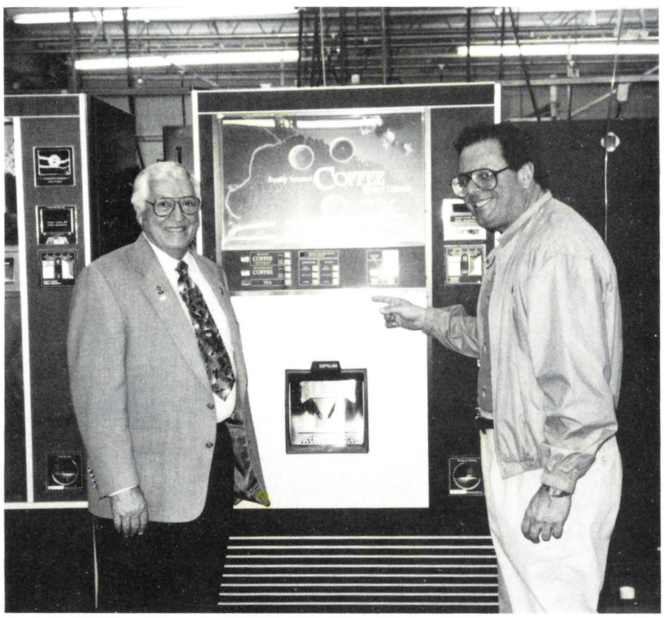
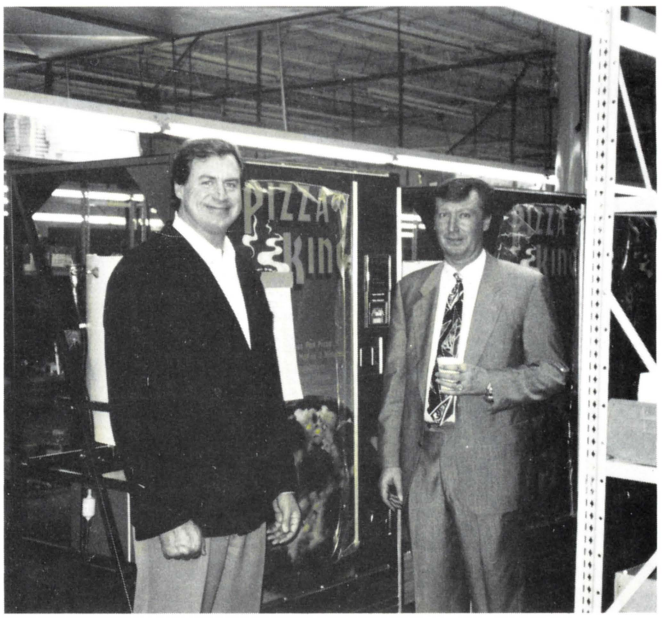
VENDING NEWS FEATURE

Distributors tour Rowe vending facilities in Texas

Since Rowe International had already gathered its principal distributors in Dallas for an early December meeting, the company figured it would be an opportune time to also conduct a tour of its vending plants in the nearby towns of Rockwall and Greenville.

Left: "Do you take cream in your coffee, Bob?" says Rowe senior vice president Joel Friedman (r) to Bob Nims of A.M.A. Distributors.





Right: At the Greenville facility, Bill Kraft of Shaffer Distributing (l) and Rowe president Jim Gang flank the Pizza King machine, which should be ready for distribution by the second quarter of 1994.

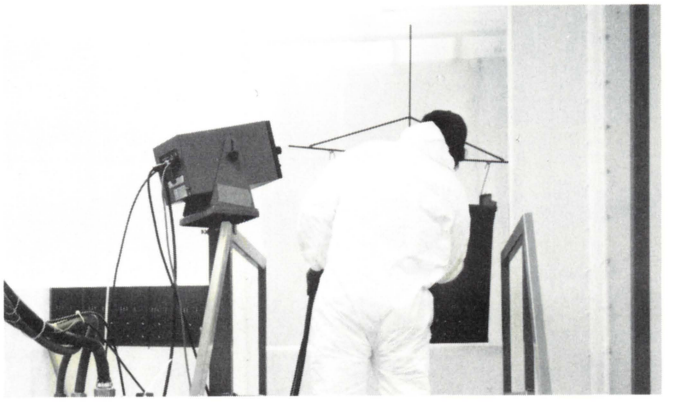
The first building in Rockwall is largely devoted to the manufacture of parts with progressive dies. The frame and door of the upcoming *Pizza King* machine, for example, are built here. The next building is the "board shop," or electronics area. Circuit boards are made here using the latest high-tech equipment. The boards are primarily for Rowe vending machines, though some end up in jukebox and currency product.

It's the new building in Rockwall, however, that has company officials beaming with pride. The 75,000-square-foot facility, which at the time of the tour was only being partially utilized, will primarily be used to manufacture cabinets, doors, shelves, etc, for vending machines, though senior vice president Joel Friedman says Rowe will actively seek contract work here, too. Though inventory was being conducted, the distributors were able to see snack shelves being powder-painted and dried on state-of-the-art machinery. A smaller powder-paint booth is used for the hand-painting of reduced runs.

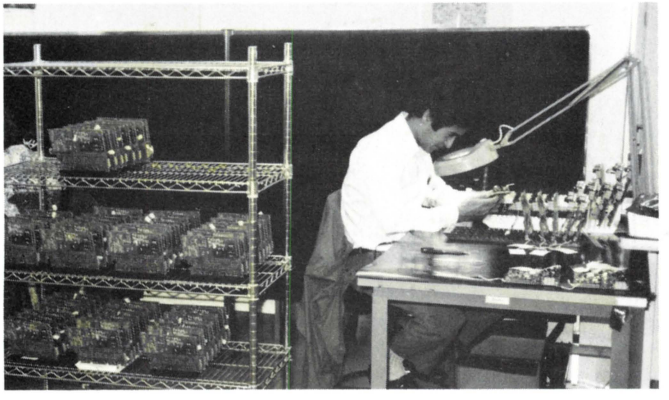
It has yet to be determined how much manufacturing will take place at the Whippany, N.J., plant once the new Rockwall building is more fully operational.

"When everything is up and running, we will be able to double our vending volume," said Rowe president Jim Gang. "We're doing all this because of the bright opportunities ahead in vending. In Japan there is one vending machine for every 23 people. That's not an anomaly; it's going

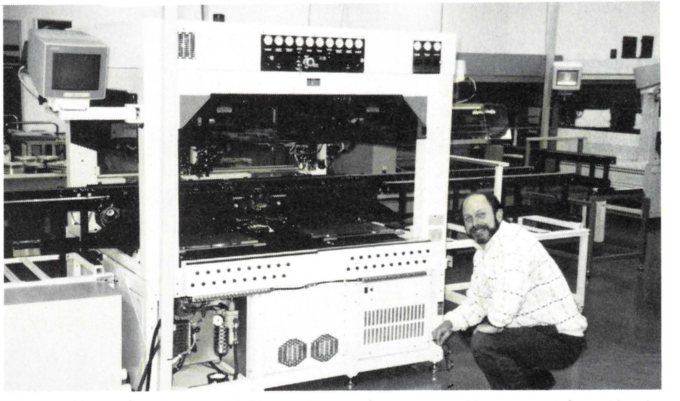
A group of distributors listen intently at the Rockwall building for parts-making.



This worker powder-paints snack machine shelves at the new Rockwall building.

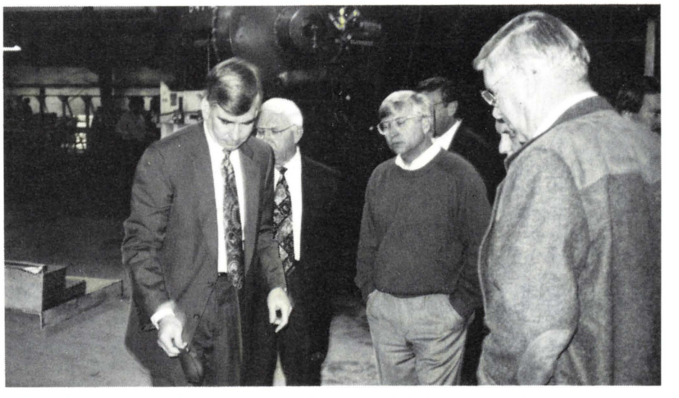


Working on circuit boards in the Rockwall "board shop."



Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales inspects the machine that picks up components and places them on circuit boards.

This coil goes through progressive dies to make various parts.



Mike Cheek, senior vice president of C-Power, gives a demonstration at the Rockwall facility.

to be a future trend. We're building for that future."

The tour concluded in Greenville, where refrigeration work and final machine assembly takes place. Friedman said Rowe will likely expand and/or renovate the Greenville plant so that it's devoted exclusively to final assembly of vending product.

"We're committed to having one of the most, if not *the* most, modern facilities for vending machine manufacturing," Friedman said. "That commitment is reflected in our new $7 million facility in Rockwall. Stage one of construction is well under way and should be done by the end of February, at the latest. Stage two should be completed in 18 to 24 months."

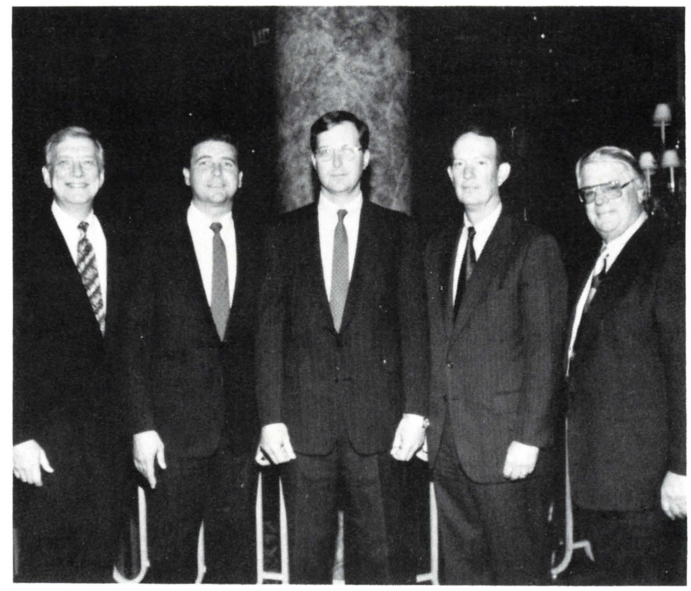
The principals-only distributor meeting also included a discussion of music; we'll have more in February. □

PEOPLE AND VENDING PRODUCTS

NAMA exhibitors donate food

Chicago's homeless people were provided with over 8,500 meals by companies who exhibited at the NAMA show. In conjunction with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, 11,000 pounds of food were donated from leftover food items at the convention, according to Stuart Aizenberg, NAMA's director of trade shows.

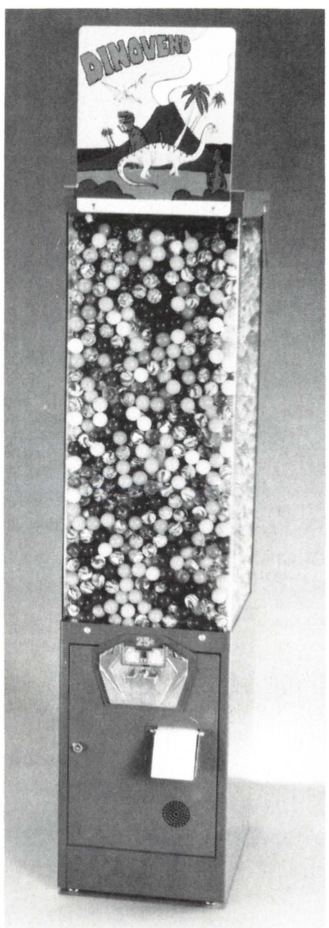
"We have done this for a number of years, after each of the two trade shows and conventions we have every year," Aizenberg said.



NAMA president James Rost (l) with the officers for 1994, (l-r): Craig Estey, chairman; Jack Thomas, senior vice chairman; Charles Bryden, vice chairman; and Don Hesch, secretary/treasurer.

New toy vendor from Mayoni

Mayoni Enterprises introduces a versatile toy vendor called the *Dinovend*. It features every design requirement needed by operators for today's competitive market.



The *Dinovend* adapts to any location because it vends any size eggs/capsules or gumballs. Restocking is minimized due to an extra-large capacity and one-step top loading. The stock itself can be seen in the three-sided, 1/4" plexiglass viewing area.

The unit is 50" tall, yet its footprint is only 12" x 15", allowing for placement in any location. The weight is 55 pounds. Other features include a modular design for mounting two or three units; a separate front door to access the coin box; attention-grabbing graphics; and optional custom signage.

For more information, contact Mayoni, 10340 Glenoaks Blvd., Pacoima, CA 91331; (800) 899-9099 or (818) 899-2488; FAX (818) 899-0152.

Estey elected NAMA chairman

Craig Estey, CEO of a group of family-owned vending and food service businesses in Portland, Ore., was elected chairman of the NAMA (National Automatic Merchandising Association) board of directors at the national convention in Chicago. His one-year term begins Jan. 1.

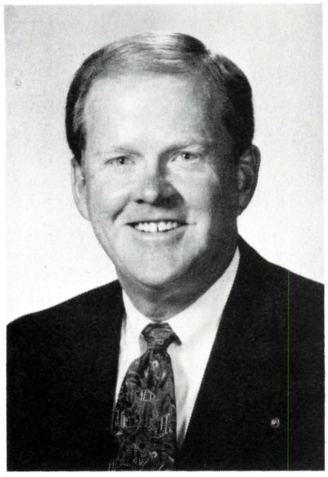
Estey succeeds Lawrence Levine, president of Woburn Vending Inc. in Woburn, Mass.

The other new NAMA officers for 1994 are: Jack Thomas Jr., Coin Acceptors Inc., senior vice chairman; Charles Bryden, Canteen Co., vice chairman; and Don Hesch, A.H. Vending and Food Services, secretary/treasurer.

The following were elected to the NAMA board of directors for three-year terms, beginning in 1994: Michael Cronk, ARA Services Inc.; John Dee, Service America Corp.; Robert Downing, Dixie-Narco; Richard Levin, Blue Ribbon Services; Robert Muller, Crane Corp.; and Arlo Richardson, Ideal Services Corp.

Michael Jalbert of Pepsi-Cola Co. was elected to a two-year term, chairman Estey to a one-year term. Both begin in 1994.

Russell receives Nolan Award



William Russell

William Russell, president of Canteen Service of Steel Valley Inc. in Youngstown, Ohio, was presented NAMA's Nolan Award at the national convention. It's named for the late Arthur Nolan of the Dixie Cup Co. to honor his contributions in the area of public health.

Russell was recognized for his work with the Ohio Food Service Health Advisory Board, where he represented the Ohio Automatic Merchandising Association. When the Ohio Legislature passed a state health law affecting vending, Russell worked with state health authorities to assure that amenable regulations were developed.

Gumball vending is really BIG

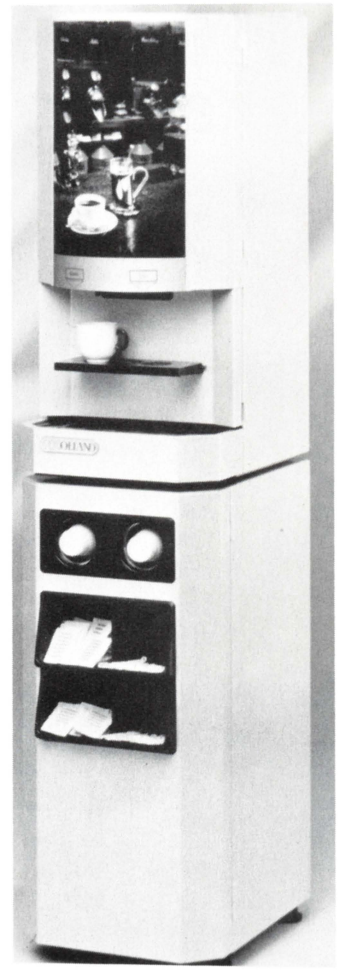
B & E Vending debuts two mega-gumball vending units, *Super Jumbo* and *Baby Jumbo*, with globes that fit through standard doorways.

Features include a secure locking steel bank door, easy front mech service, and options that run from a battery-operated intrusion alarm to flashing neon lights. In addition, at extra cost, the units can be adjusted to vend two different products or the same products with dual coin mechs.

The *Super Jumbo* stands 82" high with a 40" base and either a 28" or 36" globe. The *Baby Jumbo* stands 59" high with a 22" base and 22" globe. Both come with a red base, although custom colors are available.

For more information, contact B & E Vending Co. Inc., 3590 Oceanside Road, Oceanside, NY 11572; (800) 873-8998 or (516) 763-2559; FAX (516) 763-2566.

Countertop coffee from Coffee-Inn's



New from Coffee-Inn's and Olland Industries is a countertop, single-cup, fresh-brewed coffee machine that gives operators the ability to advertise on the front door. This is done by utilizing a back-lighted, translucent panel, which can be easily changed to suit virtually any location, from convenience stores to car dealerships.

Options include a unique "No Whipper" hot chocolate (or any powdered beverage) dispensing system and an all-metal, lockable matching stand. The unit, without the stand, measures 33" high x 21" deep x 15-1/2" wide.

For more information, contact Coffee-Inn's, 2362 W. Shangri-La Road, Bldg. 200, Phoenix, AZ 85029-4724; (800) 528-0552 or (602) 944-3396; FAX (602) 997-6203.

NAMA honors Funk

At the national convention, NAMA president James Rost (l) congratulates Richard Funk, NAMA's vice president and general counsel, for his 30 years of service to the association. The Chicago resident has been instrumental in the vending industry's efforts to get a dollar coin bill passed by Congress.

SCORING SUCCESS

Have a good time at the Pastime

Walk into the Pastime Arcade in Metairie, La., on any given day and you will find an eclectic mix of people enjoying a variety of games, from classics such as Chicago Coin's *Mini-Baseball* and Atari's *Millipede* to currently popular titles the likes of Midway's *Mortal Kombat* and Capcom's *Street Fighter II Champion Edition*.

The 2,000-square-foot game room is located in the Galleria complex that also houses eight cinemas, a health club, a small retail community, a food court, business offices, and a modeling agency, which sends applicants to the Pastime to get a current snapshot at the photo booth.

Who are Pastime's customers? Students, parents, grandparents, and business folk from the Galleria. A regular neighborhood crowd is on hand daily; the numbers swell on weekends when the cinemas enjoy increased patronage.

Joe Galiano, a 16-year veteran of the coin machine industry, manages the Pastime, assisted by his brother Nick (21 years of experience) and mother Sylvia. The Pastime is a family venture. Dad Nunzio enjoys a 40-year history in the amusement business and presently owns a tavern in downtown New Orleans.

New game purchases are a family decision. Says Joe, "We do a lot of research before purchasing a major piece of equipment." In addition to the Pastime, he has games in six convenience stores and cranes in a number of cocktail lounges.

Joe understands the plight of the small businessman. "It's hard to be buying and buying when you're a small operator," he explains. "I need to be able to count on revenue coming in for six months to a year. Sometimes you buy a piece of equipment and it's hot for a month and dead two months later."

Game prices are a sticky subject for Galiano. "High-priced kits are the wrong way to look out for the small operator," he comments." The space-conscious Galiano shies away from games with a big footprint.

Joe is a strong believer in raising the price per play. He puts all his new games on 50 cents to start, 25 cents to continue. "Parts go up, insurance goes up, every-

Left: The Galiano family, (l-r): Joe, niece Amanda Williams, nephew Mike Williams, and mom Sylvia by NBA JAM.

Right: Nick and Sylvia Galiano by Chicago Coin's Mini-Baseball wall game.

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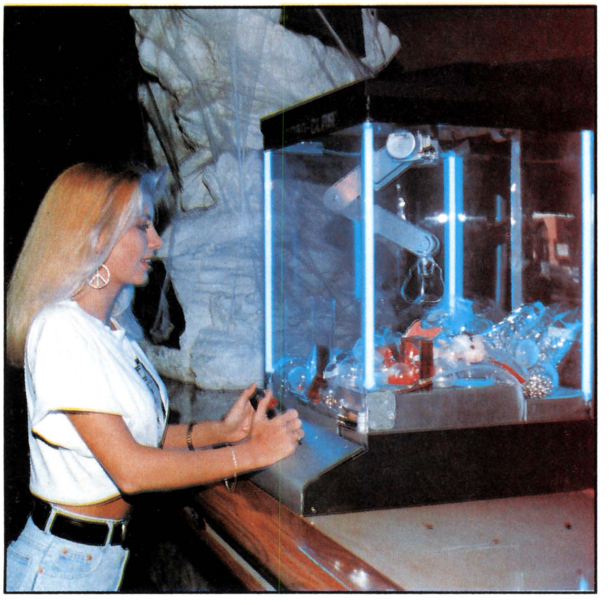

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If the player fails to do this in the allotted time, ROBO-CLAW™ then goes to a different position and releases any prize it may have grabbed.

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Regulars Jameel Saleem (l), Thou Keohavong (c), and David John love Midway's **Mortal Kombat**.

Warren Buonaguera plays Bally's **The Addams Family**.

A view from the mall: a mix of drivers, shoot-em-ups, and cranes.

Capcom's **Street Fighter II Champion Edition** keeps players intrigued.

thing goes up for an amusement operator, yet it's hard to get a higher price per play. When you're in the pizza business and the price of cheese goes up, you can raise the price of a slice of pizza. But if we raise the price on video games some customers have a fit."

His pricing philosophy applies to pinball games as well as video games. A pinball fan from way back, he says: "I don't think pinball will ever die. I wish the manufacturers would come out with more pins like *The Addams Family*—the best thing since *High Speed*."

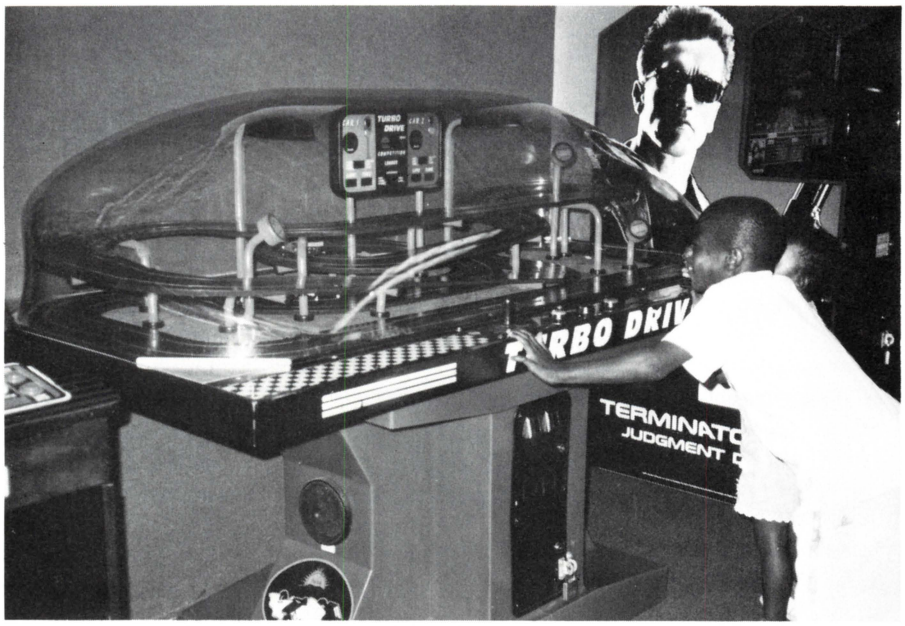
Joe is meticulous about maintaining his pinball games, frequently waxing the playfield, cleaning the rubber bumpers, and replacing them when needed.

"High-priced kits are the wrong way to look out for the small operator."

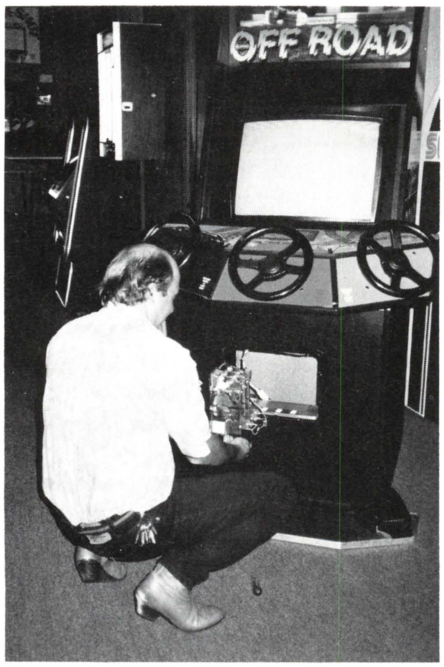
The Pastime doesn't stop at videos and pins. It includes a vintage *Champion Foosball* table, an air hockey game, two cranes, a photo booth, jukebox, *Turbo Drive* racer, and a basketball game. He intermingles "oldies but goodies" that some of his customers can't do without. Joe adds: "One businessman in the center says he'll stop coming by if I take out *Donkey Kong*. I like to have a variety of different games and not just all fighting videos."

Does Joe foresee adding redemption? "I don't think this location lends itself to redemption games. I was thinking about it at one time and polled my customers, but I have more dedicated video and pin players."

Parents feel comfortable leaving their children at the Pastime, which does not allow smoking, eating, or drinking in the game room. An attendant is on duty at



Young race car fans enjoy ICE's **Turbo Drive**.



Joe puts on his technician hat to make an adjustment on **Off Road**.

all times and doesn't tolerate obscene language or rough-housing. An attendant and two change machines make it easy for customers to get the quarters they need.

While some game rooms use tokens, Joe has no plans to take that route. He feels that customers may walk out with tokens they didn't spend, and they may feel a subtle pressure to stay around. Says Joe, "With quarters they are more free to spend as much as they wish per visit."

Young customers are important at the Pastime. The location participates in a local summer program called "Read for the Stars," which requires students to read 10 books. Students who certify this accomplishment can obtain free games.

In addition, the Pastime hosts birthday parties complete with a birthday banner, free games, and an item from one of the cranes for the birthday child. Separate arrangements are made for pizza from the nearby food court.

"Word-of-mouth, that's how you get business," says Sylvia, as she talks with a group of "regulars"—young players challenging each other on a favorite video. On Friday and Saturday evenings the Pastime is so packed you can't get on a machine. That word-of-mouth must be working for this location, which successfully blends old and new games for a winning combination. □

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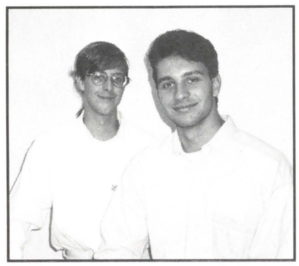

Greg Reeves
Ray Hepburn

PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Solid video and pin duos hit the arcades

The fall timing of the annual AMOA Expo is perfect because operators can release new equipment to the public by the beginning of the new year. A large group of video and pinball games have already made their appearance at local arcades; all are promising themes.

Drew and Daniel Fenwick concentrate on Irem's **Ninja Bat Man Baseball**.

Ninja Bat Man Baseball

The name and theme of Irem's latest kit is unique in that the characters are neither licensed nor copied from previous games. The format begins with four player controls, each consisting of a simple joystick and attack and jump buttons.

Players must choose one of the colorfully garbed, baseball bat-equipped, ninja-trained characters who have been hired to bring back stolen baseball memorabilia. Thieves have taken six objects and put each one in a major city in the United States.

Character choices are Captain Jose, Twinbats Ryno, Beanball Roger, and Stick Straw. Each has varying degrees of speed, swing, power, and reach. There are a few special attacks possible through proper manipulation of the controls, but each character has one super technique that can be achieved by pressing both buttons at the same time.

Enemies range from walking baseballs to large, leaping catcher's mitts to animated playing cards. Bosses at each level vary from a monster truck to a walking airplane to a huge creature made completely of baseballs.

The important aspect of the game is its appeal. We like the extremely colorful and simple, yet defined, graphics. This means there aren't a lot of different colors or details within each object, so that a clean cartoonish effect is achieved rather than a dirty or dull appearance. It also means that the graphics are oversized for definition, not small and cluttered.

A game with this kind of look generally seems less intimidating and easier to play because there isn't a heavy reliance on new technology or complex controls. The theme and characters are refreshingly original, resembling no previous ideas used in video games, except perhaps *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

This crazy mixture of unrelated things is a technique that has been abandoned for the last several years in video games. Such pairings gave us lasting characters like *Donkey Kong* and *Pac-Man*. We hope Irem will have a greater following after its excel-

Greg battles zombies and mutants in Data East's **Night Slashers**.

Comic book fan Greg enjoys Bally's **Judge Dredd**.

lent *In the Hunt* kit and this current game.

Night Slashers

It's always interesting to see what a veteran company such as Data East will release next in video, especially since the company also produces pinball games. Data East's latest video is a dark-themed, scrolling, fighting game that looks much like other recent games utilizing the same screen progression format (Capcom's *Punisher* and *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*).

Three characters can be chosen by the player, each controlled by a joystick and attack, jump, and special attack buttons: Jake, a robotic-armed hunter; Christopher, a European martial artist; and Hong Hua, an Oriental fighter.

These protagonists combat the hordes of zombies and mutants infesting the world.

As the attract mode describes, the Earth has been taken over by hideous creatures who hunt down the remaining humans. While survivors hide in military bases protected by soldiers, the players navigate their characters through different stages: fog-shrouded forests, zombie-filled hospitals, and haunted castles.

Players use different combinations of the attack and jump buttons to fight the zombies and mutants, or an energy-diminishing special attack that destroys all enemies on the screen. Two players can perform 10 different attacks at the same time on one foe.

The idea of protecting what few humans are left, rather than saving all of humanity, gives a different feel to the game. In effect, there is no hope, and the player must simply survive.

The exterior of the game is appealing in itself, with the dark blue and purple cabinet and the crescent moon on the marquee. The scenery adds a certain atmosphere to the game, with graffiti on buildings and the dirty, slimy, dark hallways the player often travels through.

The enemies are a bit graphic in appearance. For instance, most creatures in the game have their intestines and organs hanging out of their bodies. The more human characters usually carry surgical knives and axes and wear hockey masks.

Again, the limits of gore in video games is tested. Despite this, the game has a fantasy setting, which reduces the effect of violence and adds interest to the game.

Judge Dredd

Bally's latest pinball is a licensed British comic book theme of a lawman in Mega-City One who uses violent force to fight crime. This idea is transferred onto the playfield in the futuristic look of the pursuit ramps, which weave among buildings and nuclear reactors.

The most noticeable piece on the playfield is the rotating Deadworld, home of Dredd's arch enemies. There is a missile launcher in the lower left corner that saves the ball and propels it back onto the playfield. Players have four flippers at their disposal and a launch button instead of the traditional plunger.

An interesting feature has been added to allow the player a choice of a regulation game for one credit, or a supergame for two credits. In the supergame, higher jackpots are attainable, a greater number of balls are available in multi-ball, and special crime modes appear that are not possible in the regulation game.

Greg manipulates the two sets of flippers on Premier's **Gladiators**.

"The idea of protecting what few humans are left, rather than saving all of humanity, gives a different feel to the game."

The player can pursue fleeing criminals on the ramps when the red and blue lights flash, and they can make arrests in warning, misdemeanor, felony, and "Class X" felony modes.

The comic book from which the pinball was adapted is an excellent one, but it's not as well known as others. Proper placement may solve this situation. The backglass is a fine rendering of Dredd riding his Lawmaster, with the dark judges of Deadworld looking on.

The digital screen has improved and displays scenes of the futuristic Mega-City One or of criminal targets. We enjoyed playing the game because the "crime in the future" theme is an appealing one, and the playfield, though crowded, is arranged to work smoothly in multi-ball.

Gladiators

We enjoy Premier pinball games because of the wide variety of both licensed and original themes. The appealing *Super Mario Bros.*, the light-hearted *Tee'd Off*, and the current fantasy theme are good examples.

Gladiators returns to the simple plunger and two flipper buttons of standard pinball games, avoiding the complex ball launch controls or special feature buttons. The theme is reminiscent of the old Power Lords toys and comic books.

There are golden armored warriors, three-headed flying dragons, high-tech tanks, pyramids, and volcanoes. The playfield has a ramp on the left side that takes the ball around to a catapult controlled by the right flipper.

The player drops the ball either to upper field flippers or into a hole for maximum points. These flippers manipulate the ball in a separate portion of the playfield. The upper part also contains another ramp that ends by shooting the ball all the way to the bottom. There is an abyss hole behind one of the upper flippers that is hard to score, but increases in point value during a round.

Gladiators has a simplified playfield. The side chutes are wider for less chance of losing the ball. The dot-matrix display looks as good as polygon technology when the pyramids are shown. The soundtrack is deep and the characters interesting in a setting that combines future and medieval times. We hope the game gets the attention it deserves, without suffering from a lack of theme recognition. □

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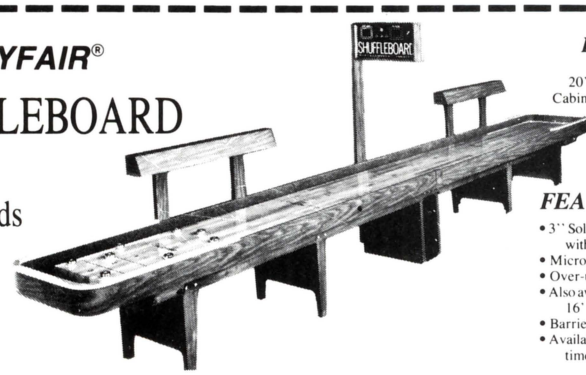

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Michigan's Cheryl Collins of the Gas Log Lounge team competes in the NASL Team Event.

Steve Perry of California, member of the Gas Log Lounge team, during the NASL Team Event.

Nebraska Cornhuskers, winners of the NASL Team Event. From left: Larry Morrow, Mike Roach, Joel Rahn, Gwynette Orsi, Maggie Worley, Bill Melton, and Junior Butler.

Phil Skover (l) of Oklahoma, who placed in A-B Draw Partners, and Darrol Nelson of Oregon, winner of Pro Singles.

TOURNAMENTS & LEAGUES

Reno hosts North American Shuffleboard Championship

Nearly 200 players gathered at the Sands Regency Hotel Casino in Reno, Nev., on Nov. 9-14 to compete for over $60,000 in prize money at the 1993 North American Shuffleboard Championships.

The tournament was sanctioned and promoted by The Shuffleboard Federation and marked the return of American International Shuffleboard to the tournament scene. The company supplied 16 new *Royal* shuffleboard tables for the 12 events.

One of the highlights of the week was the introduction of the federation's new game, Deuces Wild. The hotel added $2,000 to the pot for this event, which matched randomly selected four-person teams in a best three-out-of-five single elimination event.

Top players and novices attending their first big tournament all learned how to play the game at the same time. Deuces Wild is fast and easy to learn; it can be played in one-third the time of a standard game of shuffleboard.

Also noteworthy were the NASL Team Event, which included $5,000 in added money from the hotel, and the East-West Pro Team Challenge.

During the week's festivities, U.S. Open founder Don Valk was presented with the 1993 Sol Lipkin award, in recognition of his contributions to the sport of shuffleboard.

Winners in the major events were:

A-B Draw Partners: 1st place—Tammy Denson, Texas, and Bobby Voorhis, Indiana; 2nd—Rick Boyer, California, and Brenda Watts, Oklahoma; 3rd—Donny Cox, California, and Bob Jacobsen, Washington.

Division I Singles: 1st—Dan Mourgos, California; 2nd—Bjerne Sunde, Michigan; 3rd—Al Salazar, Arizona.

Ladies Singles: 1st—Rosa White, Oregon; 2nd—Sandy Swift, Oklahoma; 3rd—Cassie Kern, Michigan.

Pro Singles: 1st—Darrol Nelson, Oregon; 2nd—Bobby Voorhis; 3rd—Denny Busch, Nebraska.

Pro Doubles: 1st—Bill Melton, Oklahoma, and David Williams, Texas; 2nd—Denny Busch and Bob Shaw, Texas; 3rd—Jim Allis, Washington, and Bobby Voorhis.

Division I Doubles: 1st—Alan Primrose, Oklahoma, and Bobby Williams, Texas; 2nd—Nick Chaffin and Bob Hunt, California; 3rd—George Camara and Rick Thomas, California.

Deuces Wild: 1st—Al Salazar and Dale Williams, Texas, Rosa White and Bobby Voorhis; 2nd—Ron Buckley, Oregon, Bob Jacobsen, Sue Hubenthal, Washington, George Ostrum, Colorado; 3rd—John Fisher and George Main, California, Diana Hagen, Texas, Rich Warren, California.

NASL Team Event: 1st—Nebraska Cornhuskers (Junior Butler, Gwynette Orsi, Mike Roach, Larry Morrow, Joel Rahn, Maggie Worley); 2nd—Gas Log Lounge, Sacramento, Calif. (Mike Bruner, Lloyd Coffelt, Steve Perry, Charlie Busch, Cheryl Collins, Debbie Voorhis); 3rd—Balloon Inn, Arvada, Colo. (Dennis Bird, Ron Hurney, George Ostrum, Dave Cowan, Kathi Lloyd, Gwen Vogt). □

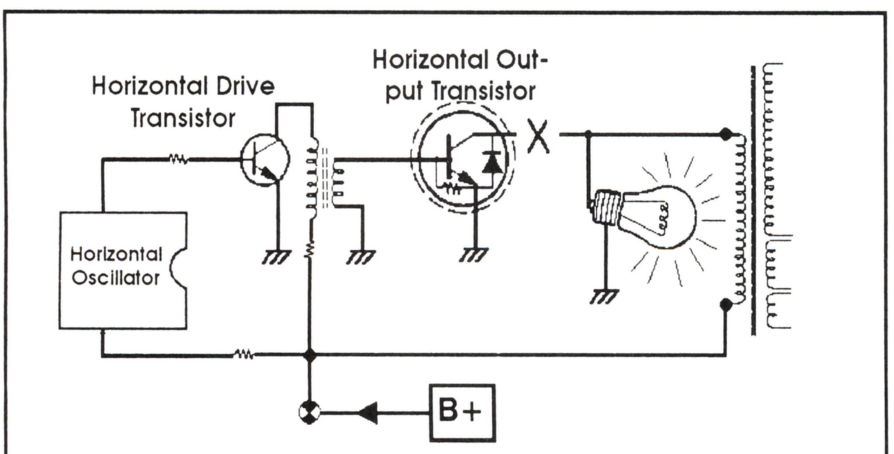
TECHNICAL TOPICS

Bright ideas for monitors: Using an ordinary light bulb

Randy Fromm

Short circuits blowing fuses can be a vexing problem. This is especially true on those rare occasions when the monitor seems to fire up but blows the fuse some seconds or even minutes after power is applied. By the time you get around to making some observations about what the monitor is doing, the fuse blows again. Replacing the fuse over and over again can get expensive, especially with slo-blo type fuses.

One way around this problem is to perform the "smoke test." You simply bypass the fuse with a clip lead or jumper wire, energize the monitor, and replace the parts that smoke. I don't recommend the smoke test, as it usually puts excessive strain on the voltage regulator and other components. This often results in even more damage than that of the original failure.



Use a 40 watt incandescent lamp as a power supply load. Disconnect the collector of the horizontal output transistor and connect the light bulb as shown.

Another troubleshooting technique is to use a circuit breaker in place of the fuse. Just use a pair of clip leads to connect the circuit breaker in place of the blown fuse. A 3 amp circuit breaker is available from Radio Shack that serves this purpose well. However, as with the smoke test, repeatedly energizing the monitor can cause further damage to other components in the monitor.

So how do you find the problem? In general, most short circuits that are severe enough to blow the fuse can easily be located with the power turned off and your digital multimeter set to measure resistance. But some monitor problems will only show up when the power is applied. Problems such as bad voltage regulation, off-frequency horizontal oscillators, or other tuned circuits cannot be located with static testing. Dynamic testing with the power applied may be the only way to go here.

How can you test the monitor without overloading the circuits? Try using an ordinary incandescent light bulb in place of the blown fuse. The light bulb limits the amount of current passing through the monitor. A 100 watt bulb works great. I just use my work light and a couple of clip leads, but you can get fancy and make a dedicated unit if you want.

When you connect the bulb in series with a perfectly good working monitor, you'll see that at first the lamp lights fairly brightly, then dims as the monitor begins to fire up. This is due to the automatic degaussing circuit in the monitor. Remember, the degaussing circuit operates for only a short time and only when the monitor is first powered up from a cold start. Subsequent cycling of

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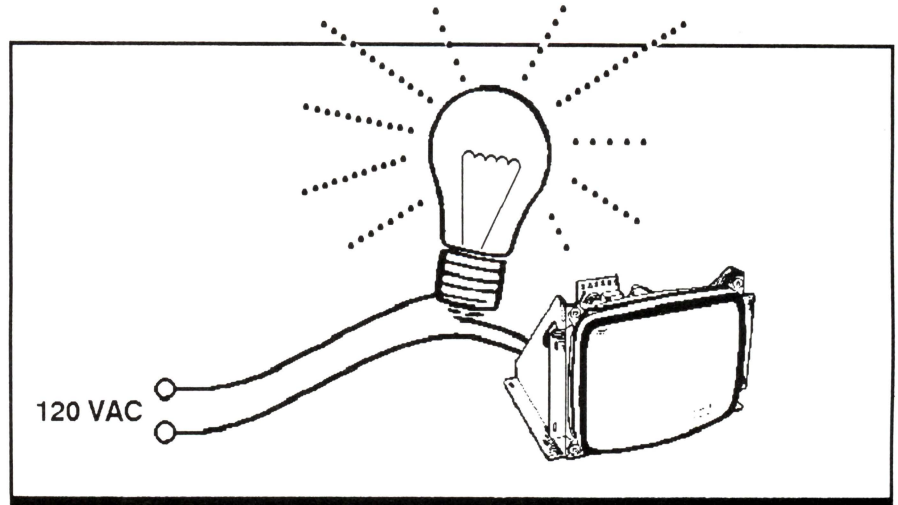

A 100 watt light bulb in series with the 120 volt AC power. If the monitor is shorted, the bulb will glow brightly instead of blowing the fuse.

the 120 volt AC power to the monitor will not energize the degaussing coil until the monitor (specifically, a component in series with the degaussing coil called a "Positive Temperature Coefficient Thermistor" or "Posistor," a component that increases in resistance when it gets warm) cools down. Once the degaussing circuit has shut itself down, the bulb will dim considerably and you'll hear the monitor's high voltage come up with its characteristic high-pitched squeal.

With the bulb in series, the monitor will take a bit longer to warm up. This is because the voltage drop across the bulb will cause a low B+ output from the monitor's power supply. Often the raster will exhibit a bit of "hula," as the input voltage to the regulator will be below the minimum required for proper voltage regulation. This allows the ripple that is normally present in the unregulated side of the power supply to be passed directly to the monitor circuits. This is normal.

If the bulb glows brightly, you have a problem. For the bulb to glow brightly, there must be something in the monitor that's drawing too much current. Usually, this can be traced to a shorted horizontal output transistor, a bad high-voltage unit (also known as a flyback transformer), or a degaussing coil that is shorted or has rubbed and shorted to the frame of the monitor.

Note: This troubleshooting technique will not be as valuable for troubleshooting the latest Hantarex brand "Polo" monitors or the Kortek "free voltage" monitors. These monitors use a switching power supply that automatically shuts down when the monitor experiences a current overload condition such as a shorted horizontal output transistor. In this case, only primary power supply problems or degaussing circuit failures will light the lamp.

There's another way to use the incandescent light bulb when troubleshooting monitors. Specifically, the bulb can be used to test the monitor's B+ power supply for proper operation. Some monitors use a power supply design that includes "Over-Current Protection" or OCP. In fact, all monitors that use a switching regulator power supply have an OCP circuit. The OCP circuit reduces the B+ power supply voltage (in many cases, cutting it off completely) when it detects a short on the B+ supply line.

A classic example of OCP in action is when some bad high-voltage units were installed in the early runs of Hantarex's popular MTC 9000 monitor. Normally, a bad high-voltage unit also will take out the horizontal output transistor and blow the fuse when it fails. The voltage regulator is often damaged as well, a victim of the excess current drawn by the shorted transistor and high-voltage unit. But the OCP circuit in this monitor shuts down the power supply as soon as the high-voltage unit fails, preventing further damage. In fact, the monitor doesn't even blow a fuse! After replacing the defective high-voltage unit, most monitors fire right up.

In a situation like this, anything that causes an over-current condition can trigger the OCP and shut down the power supply. Naturally, the symptom is: dead monitor. B+ power supply measures 0 volts. But what is the cause of the problem? Is the B+ power supply bad or has the OCP been triggered, shutting down the power supply? Isolating the B+ power supply from the rest of the monitor circuitry is not enough to verify proper power supply operation. In order to test a power supply properly, it must have a load. In fact, the voltage regulator in many monitors will not work properly or will not function at all without a proper load.

Here's how to test the monitor's B+ power supply by using an ordinary 40 watt light bulb as a "dummy load":

1. Disconnect the collector of the horizontal output transistor or remove the transistor entirely.

2. Use a clip lead (jumper) to connect one side of a 40 watt lamp to the circuit where the collector of the horizontal output transistor used to connect. You can usually find a place to connect the jumper. If not, solder a small piece of wire to the solder pad where the collector of the transistor normally goes and use that as a connection terminal for the clip lead. Do not connect to the collector of the transistor. The transistor is now out of the circuit and actually has nothing to do with this test.

3. Connect the other side of the lamp to the chassis of the monitor

(ground).

4. Apply power to the monitor. The bulb should light at pretty close to normal brightness. If so, you know your problem is not in the power supply. A short circuit elsewhere in the monitor must be causing the power supply's OCP circuit to activate. At this point, you can measure the B+ voltage just as you would if the monitor was working normally. You also can verify that the B+ voltage adjustment (if it exists) is working properly and adjust the voltage if necessary.

However, if the bulb doesn't come on, the B+ power supply is not working properly. You don't have to waste time looking for an overload on the B+ line somewhere. You know your problem lies in the power supply.

Experienced monitor technicians recall a similar situation with the X-ray protection circuit in a monitor. Unlike the OCP circuit that shuts down the B+, the X-ray protector kills the horizontal oscillator, thus shutting down the entire horizontal deflection circuit and the high-voltage as well. In this case the B+ is too high (usually around +160 VDC). Again you have to ask the question, "Is my B+ too high (causing the X-ray protector to activate), or is my problem elsewhere?"

In this case, you don't have to disconnect or remove the transistor. Simply connect the 40 watt lamp between the collector of the horizontal output transistor and ground. The bulb will load the power supply, allowing you to measure the B+ power supply voltage. If the voltage is still too high, the voltage regulator is bad. If the output voltage of the regulator circuit now measures properly, the problem is probably a bad electrolytic capacitor on the B+ line (look for a capacitor with a value of 22-100 microfarads, 160 VDC) or the retrace tuning capacitor that's connected between the collector and emitter of the horizontal output transistor.

"I don't recommend the smoke test, as it usually puts excessive strain on the voltage regulator and other components."

Warning: Never connect the lamp to the collector of the horizontal output transistor if the horizontal deflection circuit is working (you can hear the high-pitched squeal or a neon lamp lights when held against the high-voltage unit, or you can measure the high-voltage at the second anode of the CRT with a high-voltage probe.)

Advanced Arcade School update: Don't forget, my Advanced Arcade School starts April 25th in Las Vegas, Nev. This is a one-shot deal, so if you're interested in learning about digital electronics and advanced monitor repair, be sure to sign up early. Class will be limited to 20 students. For further information, call me at (619) 593-6131 or FAX 593-6132. See you at the Arcade School! □

What's Hot in Coin-Op

(A monthly survey conducted by AAMA)

Convenience Stores

Video: Super Street Fighter II (Capcom)
Mortal Kombat (Midway)
NBA JAM (Midway)
Samurai Shodown (SNK)
Mortal Kombat II(Midway)
Pinball: Twilight Zone (Bally)
Indiana Jones (Williams)
Other: World Rally (Atari)

Pizza Parlors and Restaurants

Video: Mortal Kombat (Midway)
Super Street Fighter II (Capcom)
NBA JAM (Midway)
Mortal Kombat II (Midway)
Pinball: Indiana Jones (Williams)
The Addams Family (Bally)
Other: CD Jukebox (unnamed)
Air Hockey (unnamed)

Nightclubs and Taverns

Video: Lethal Enforcers (Konami)
NBA JAM (Midway)
Pit Boss Superstar 30 (Merit)
Pinball: Indiana Jones (Williams)
Judge Dredd (Bally)
Other: CD Jukebox (unnamed)
Darts (unnamed)

Movie Theaters

Video: Super Street Fighter II (Capcom)
Samurai Shodown (SNK)
Mortal Kombat II (Midway)
NBA JAM (Midway)
Lethal Enforcers (Konami)
Pinball: Indiana Jones (Williams)
Judge Dredd (Bally)

Bowling and Recreation Centers

Video: Super Street Fighter II (Capcom)
NBA JAM (Midway)
Mortal Kombat II (Midway)
OutRunners (Sega)
Run and Gun (Konami)
Virtua Racing (Sega)
Mortal Kombat (Midway)
Pinball: The Addams Family (Bally)
Indiana Jones (Williams)
Judge Dredd (Bally)
Other: Air Hockey (unnamed)
Crane (unnamed)

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	2	4	INALCANZABLE	LOS BUKIS
	3	3	MEXICAN HOT HITS 4	COMPILATION
	4	2	LASTIMA QUE SEAS AJENA	VICENTE FERNANDEZ
	5	6	COSAS DE...	BANDA SUPERBANDIDO
	6	--	PURA SANGRE	BRONCO
	7	7	LA GARRA DE...	TIGRES DEL NORTE
	8	--	VIENTOS	LOS HURACANES DEL NORTE
	9	--	BANDA TORO	BANDA TORO
	10	--	CON SANGRE DE INDIO	BANDA MACHOS
TROPICAL / SALSA	1	1	ES UN ESCANDALO	SONORA DINAMITA
	2	--	MI TIERRA	GLORIA ESTEFAN
	3	--	CARA DE NINO	JERRY RIVERA
	4	--	LOS EXITASOS BAILABLES	JOSSIE ESTEBAN
	5	--	LO MEJOR...	LAS CHICAS DEL CAN
	6	2	ROMPECABEZA	TITO NIEVES
	7	--	EL ESPECTACULAR	OSCAR D'LEON
	8	4	LO MEJOR DE...	BANDA BLANCA
	9	--	PUERTO RICO SOY TUYO	FRANKIE RUIZ
	10	10	COMBINACION PERFECTA	COMPILATION
POP	1	--	LUNA	ANA GABRIEL
	2	1	THE BEST	ANA GABRIEL
	3	2	ROMANCE	LUIS MIGUEL
	4	--	17 SUPER EXITOS	LA MAFIA
	5	3	UN SEGUNDO EN EL TIEMPO	CRISTIAN
	6	7	ARIES	LUIS MIGUEL
	7	6	GRANDES EXITOS	ROBERTO CARLOS
	8	--	AHORA Y SIEMPRE	LA MAFIA
	9	9	GIPSY KINGS	GIPSY KINGS
	10	--	15 ANOS DE EXITOS RANCHEROS	JUAN GABRIEL

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WHAT'S NEW

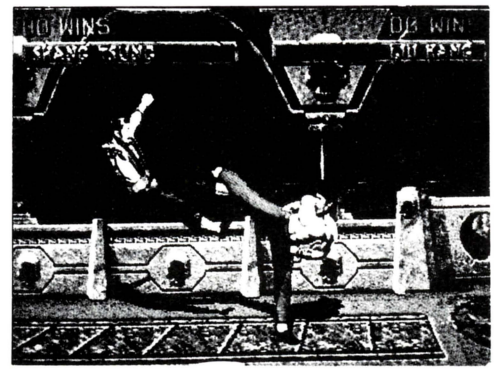
Neon Aire

Imagination Leisure introduces a stainless steel-top air cushion hockey table with a totally new look. The *Neon Aire* sports psychedelic hot pink and green neon lighting on the chrome-plated Top Scorer digital readout overhead scoring unit.

In addition, both goals are neon-lit and side panel graphics on the mica cabinet repeat the bright colors. Dimensions are 130" long x 50" wide.

The *Neon Aire* features a drop coin chute, automatic puck return/puck lock-in at game's end, adjustable time and score, locked access doors to all parts, and a locked cash box.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Imagination Leisure Inc., 251 Dixon Ave., Amityville, NY 11701; (516) 842-4242; FAX (516) 842-0532.



Mortal Kombat II

Finally, it's here. *Mortal Kombat II*. Not a sequel but a continuation of superior martial arts encounters with a deep storyline involving characters Johnny Cage, Scorpion, Raiden, Liu Kang, Reptile, and Shang Tsung from the original *Mortal Kombat*.

Returning characters retain their powers from the past, with a surprising mix of new capabilities. Players are due to experience a learning curve as they gain more understanding of every character's personality and potential. The goal is to create a bond between players and characters.

Costuming and backgrounds are new, as well as a host of fresh characters, among them Kitana, Mileena, Baraka, Jax, Kung Lao, and three undisclosed characters awaiting discovery. Some characters can be controlled by the players while others cannot.

A significant number of new button/joystick combinations are possible. The game is the first video to feature DCS—digital compression sound that combines music and sound effects. Two special features are the violence control dipswitch and Midway's state-of-the-art diagnostics package.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Midway Mfg., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

Animal Land, Lucky Carnival

Taito America debuts *Animal Land*, a combination redemption/video game that fosters good hand-eye coordination, and *Lucky Carnival*, a three-player shooting gallery game that holds 100 large prize capsules.

Animal Land is housed in a vivid yellow, child-size cabinet that measures 25" wide x 34" deep x 49" high. It asks players to bop six animal characters that appear on the monitor by hitting the correct buttons on the control panel. Successfully bopping all the characters in the allotted time means tickets for the players.

Features include a bonus round, double coin mechs, ticket dispenser, and built-in income analyzer. The game can accommodate one or two players at a time.

Lucky Carnival asks players to fire ping pong balls at prize capsules on a moving turntable, hitting the capsules but avoiding six creatures trying to obstruct the shots. Top marksmen win the capsule, which can hold prizes up to 7" tall. The balls come out of a barrel-shaped cannon that emits a loud bang.

Up to three people can play at the same time. The number of balls and playing time are operator-adjustable. Sensors detect a vacant spot on the turntable and automatically drop a new capsule in the space.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Taito America Corp., 390 Holbrook Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090; (708) 520-9280; FAX (708) 520-1309.

Run and Gun

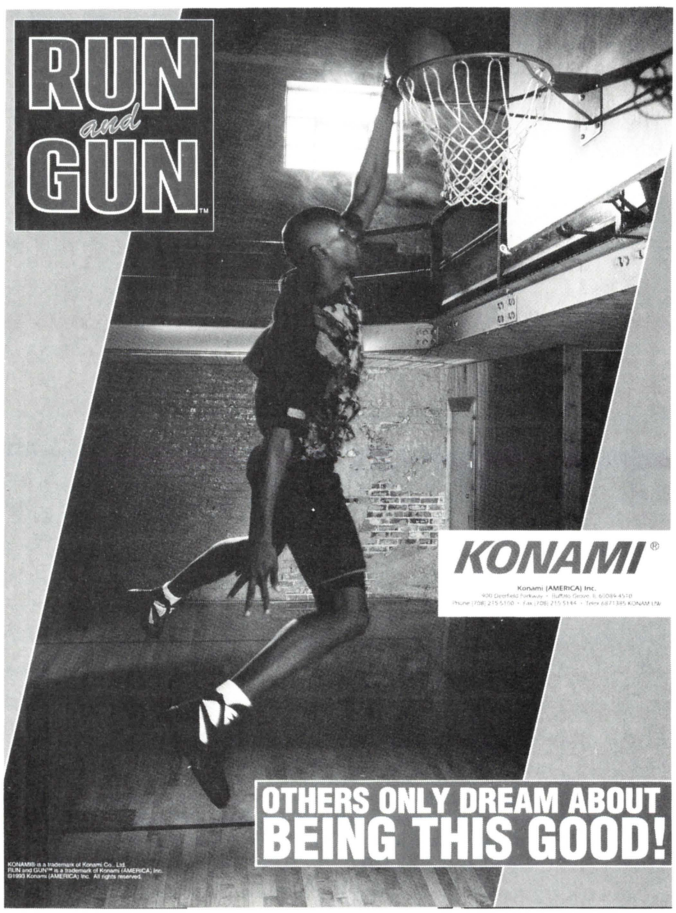
More basketball moves come to the video world in Konami's *Run and Gun*, a one- to four-player dedicated game with two horizontal monitors.

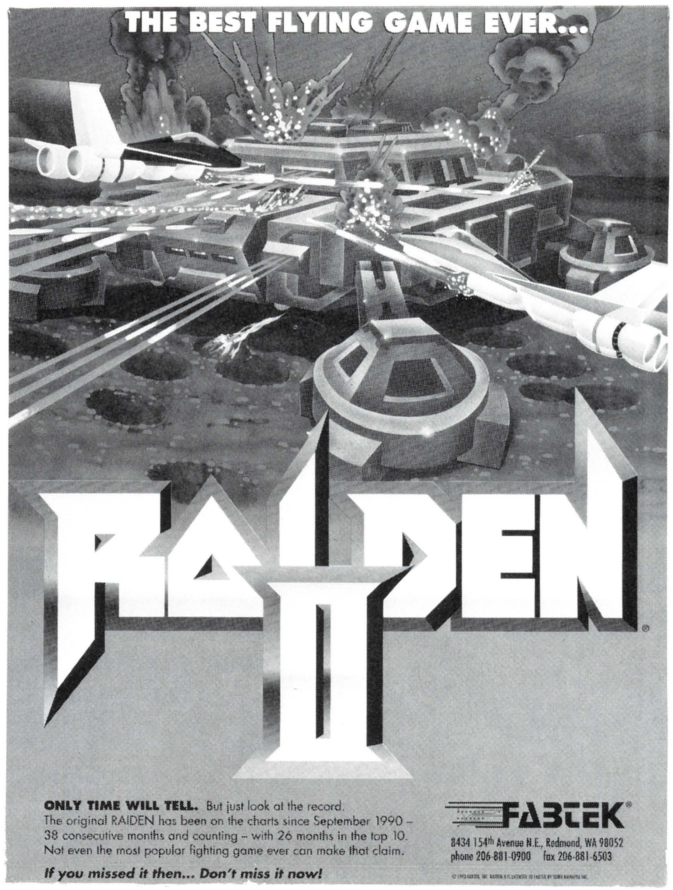
Run and Gun pits the Eastern Conference against the Western Conference, with eight cities in each one. Interactive play allows players and their opponents to have opposite views of the court.

Player controls include an eight-way joystick and buttons for A—shoot (offense) or block (defense), B—pass (offense) or steal (defense), and C—change players from any two of the five available.

Each team gives a skill level for each player (power forward, small forward, center, shooting guard, point guard), to identify strong and weak points. Also look for realistic surround sound crowd noises, an announcer, and the option of instant replays unless opponents object.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Konami Inc., 900 Deerfield Parkway, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089; (708) 215-5100; FAX (708) 215-5144.





Raiden II

Fabtek debuts *Raiden II*, an action-packed vertical scrolling, flying, shoot 'em-up video kit for one or two players. Dedicated fans of the original *Raiden* will be challenged, along with the novice player.

The game features self-adjusting difficulty levels that increase to suit the skill of the player. A continuous buy-in feature offers eight different stages that must be completed to finish the game. Each stage has at least one new boss; some have multiple bosses with special weapons and defenses.

Raiden II's fighter planes feature high-tech weapons, an arsenal, and power-ups. Players can pick up missiles, lasers, bombs, and cluster bombs along the way to help conquer alien forces. Look for enhanced sound and computer-generated graphics. The kit comes complete with panel overlay and bezel.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Fabtek, 8434 154th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 881-0900; FAX (206) 881-6503.

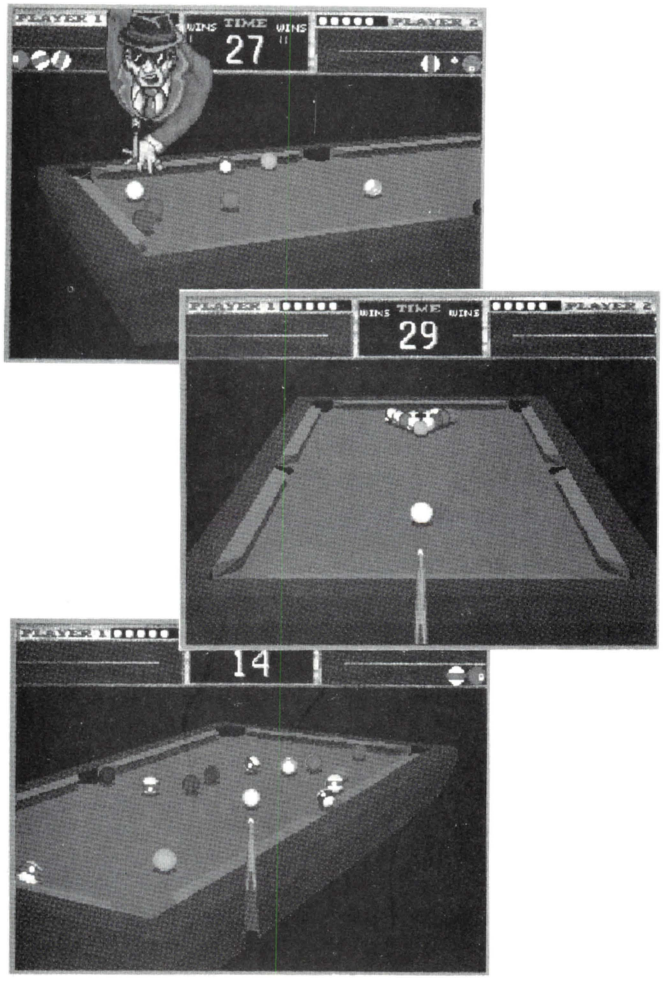
Shootout!

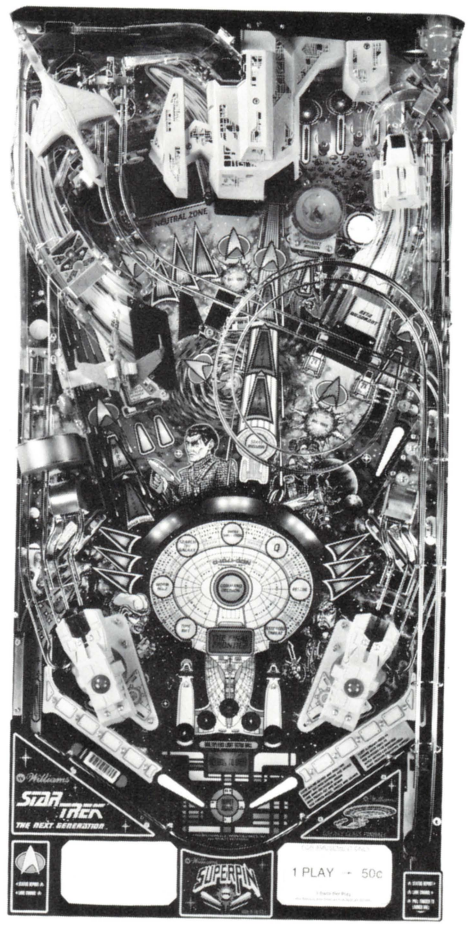
Bundra Games joins with SuperVision to introduce a new billiard-themed video named *Shootout!*. Players can play against each other or against the computer. Three popular games are included: 9 Ball, 8 Ball, and Straight Pool.

Shootout! is a two-player, JAMMA-compatible kit available as a standard upright, countertop, and mini-upright. It features 3-D animation, fast game play, a continuation feature, and controlled bank shots, jump shots, and cueball spin. There's also a keyboard-programmable moving message sign.

Players get to challenge the game's dirty dozen: Jack Hammer, Rosa Stripes, Sumo Same, Trixie Shotz, Cut Throat, Tex Shooter, Eightball, Major Domo, Suzy Cue, Confidence Man, Pix Pocket, and Jumpin' Johnny Joe.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Bundra Games Corp., 1031 Country Club Road, Plaza Level, Lake Zurich, IL 60047; (708) 540-6400; FAX (708) 540-6404.





Star Trek: The Next Generation

Williams' game designers set a course for a new class of pinball and found the right vehicle in the lauded TV series, "Star Trek: The Next Generation." The resulting pinball is packed with an unearthly amount of features, starting with a light-speed ball delivery system via a control grip instead of the standard plunger.

The Star Trek: TNG experience is heightened by custom speech from the major characters: Picard, Riker, Data, LaForge, Crusher, Worf, Troi, and Q (that irritating immortal). All but Q are depicted on the backglass, along with the U.S.S. Enterprise, the feared Borg, and a Romulan Warbird in mid-battle. Original music from the series sets the mood.

The playfield is loaded with transport ramps, targets, and left and right probe launchers. Want to increase multi-ball opportunities? Make it so! Two-, three-, four-, five-, and six-ball multi-ball are possible, as well as Neutral Zone encounters, Holodeck video modes, bigger jackpots, and a hurry-up bonus feature. Plus, Williams' syncrosound dot-matrix animation brings characters to life in eight different missions.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Williams Electronics Games, 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

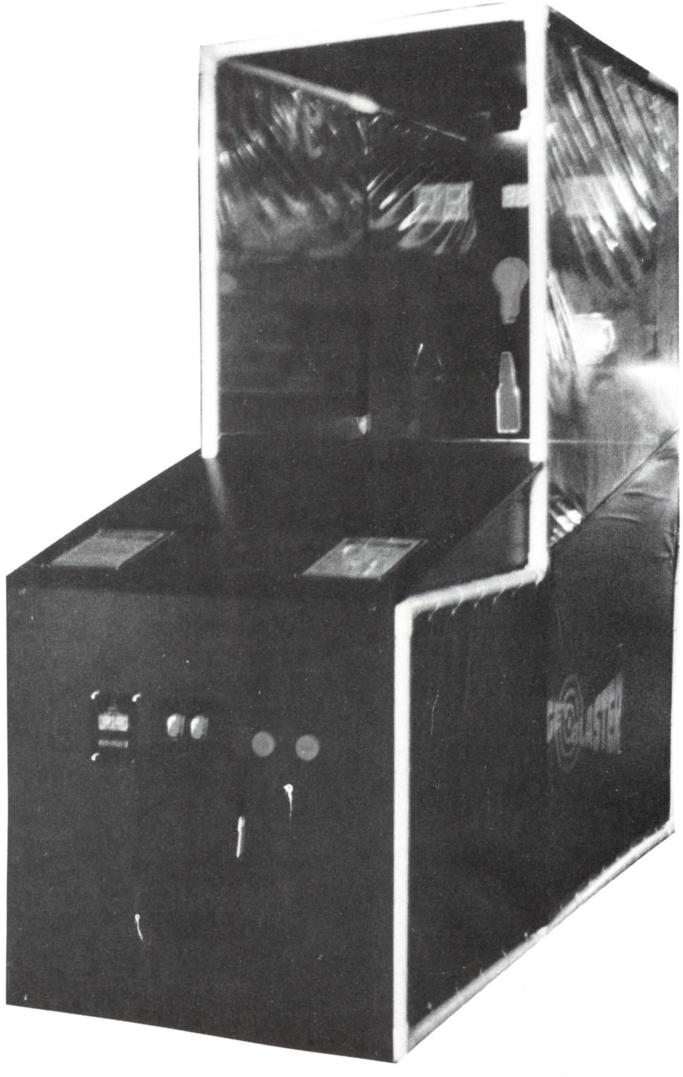
TargetBlaster

Knock-Out Games debuts *TargetBlaster*, a one- or two-player ball toss game with moving targets and unusual sounds. It is available in either adult and kiddie versions, as a redemption or non-redemption game.

Players test their skills and accuracy, aiming for targets such as light bulbs and bottles. It's a race against the clock with game difficulty increasing during play; points advance along with the difficulty level.

Features include digital scoring and time readout, as well as an optional ticket dispenser and bill acceptor. Dimensions are 93" high x 39" wide x 93" long.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Knock-Out Games Inc., 164 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10011; (212) 675-4053.



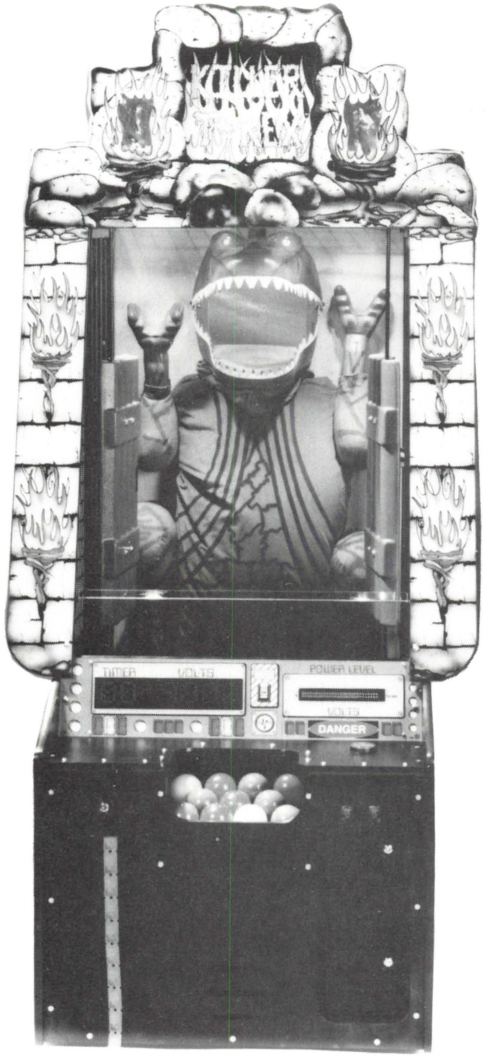
Wacky Wheels

Take spinning wheels, add a skill stop and specific scores as goals, spice it with traditional circus music, and you have the makings of an interesting new game that keeps players returning for more tickets. Amutronics combined these elements to create its new *Wacky Wheels* redemption game.

The carnival-themed game features three spinning wheels, each numbered one to six. Players spin the wheels, skill stop at the right moment, and after two attempts the wheels automatically add up the scores.

Tickets are awarded for wheel totals ranging from three to 18. Players can increase their winnings with random bonus wheel awards. Dimensions are 23-1/2" deep x 25-3/4" wide x 72" high. Cabinet construction is Formica over solid plywood. The front-loading ticket dispenser or token hopper and dual coin mechs are standard equipment.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Amutronics Inc., 405 Munroe Ave., Asbury Park, NJ 07712; (800) 945-3224 or (908) 988-4499; FAX (908) 775-3225.



Killer T-Rex, Refrigerated Candy Crane

Smart Industries debuts *Killer T-Rex*, a dinosaur-themed redemption game, and the *Refrigerated Candy Crane* that accommodates a variety of chocolates and soft candies and maintains product freshness.

In *Killer T-Rex*, players face the feared dinosaur, who is kept behind a steel-reinforced 10,000-volt cage with automatically controlled front gates. When the security fence looses all power, the gates open to reveal T-Rex.

Players must keep him busy until power is restored, which means throwing balls into his mouth for scores that will eventually add up to the 10,000-volts needed. That ultimate score wins the progressive jackpot.

Features include a BSMT 2000 Custom DSP voice and sound system, animated movements, double coin mechs, locking cash box with credit/timer dot-matrix readout, and ticket dispenser. A special buy-in, game continuation feature is included.

The *Refrigerated Candy Crane* follows quickly on the heels of the new *Candy Crane*, which dispenses a variety of individually wrapped hard candies. The refrigerated model is designed to keep soft candies and chocolates fresh.

It includes a motion sound system, double coin mechs with locking cash box, micro-switch prize counter meter, and square steel frame tubing. Dimensions are 24" wide x 28" deep x 68" high. The cabinet is black with gold trim and red and white candy striped graphics.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Smart Industries Corp. Mfg., 1626 Delaware Ave., Des Moines, IA 50317; (800) 553-2442 or (515) 265-9900; FAX (515) 265-3148.

Punky Doodle

Cute new heroes come to the video screen with Sunsoft's one- or two-player maze game, *Punky Doodle*.

Punky and Curly are the main characters, charged with the responsibility of defending Farmer Jones' pumpkin patch from attack by midnight intruders. What are their weapons? Not the usual supply; instead, they have devised the Doodle Defense System.

As Punky and Curly travel the patch on their nightly rounds, they leave a trail of doodles via magic crayons. When the doodles are attached to pumpkins they recoil and knock out approaching enemies.

There are 31 levels of play, 50 kooky enemy characters, and 155 total rounds. Players are continually challenged and intrigued by the ingenuity of the main characters.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Sunsoft, 11165 Knott Ave., Cypress, CA 90630; (714) 891-4500; FAX (714) 892-0150.

Dart Star Spectrum

Medalist Marketing adds to its Dart Star line of electronic dart games with the feature-loaded Dart Star *Spectrum*.

Of special note, and exclusive to Medalist, are the 14" 256 VGA color monitor, extruded aluminum corners, dart barrier skirt, and operator-programmable pricing, rounds, attract audio, and menus.

Medalist offers an extensive game library and digital stereo sound (including voice). Game choices include 101, 301, 501, 701, 1001, a variety of cricket, and much more. The Star Link Modem for leagues, service, and promotion is optional.

In addition, the game offers modular electronics, a fold-down cabinet, heavy-duty leg levelers, a top ten display, back-screened Lexan graphics, and a 1-1/4" plywood bottom.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Medalist Marketing Corp., 266 Frontage Road N., Pacific, WA 98047; (206) 939-2900; FAX (206) 939-0128.

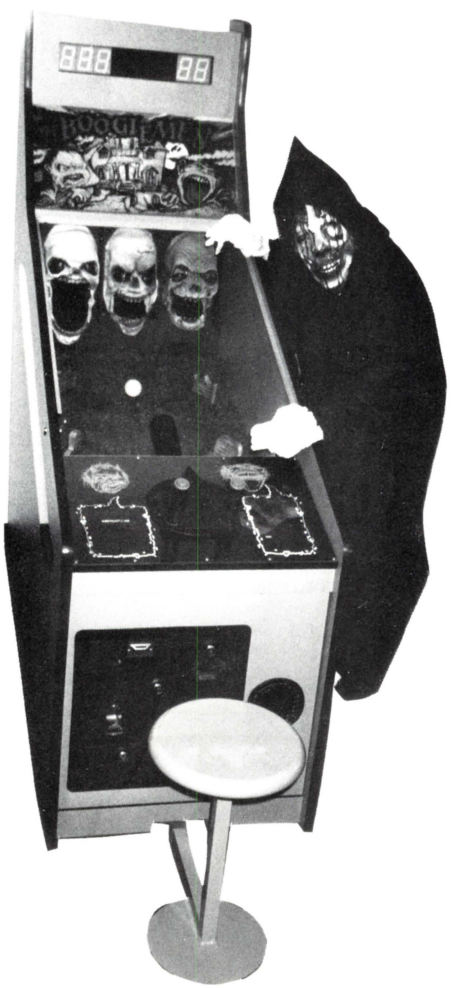
New Boogiemen

GaMCO has scared-up a host of improvements for its popular *Boogiemen* redemption game: black T-molding, a lighter purple cabinet and stool (now standard), a tri-door with separate locking cash box, and locking ticket dispenser and coin acceptor.

The package includes better sound and speaker systems, steel parts and supports where needed, a powder-coated gun, a new gravestone capture system, and a new keypad-programmable CPU with more operator control.

Boogiemen still boasts an all-plywood cabinet and a powerful blower system without compressors. Players shoot balls into the opening and closing mouths of three spooky creatures, who scream in response as players win tickets for successful hits.

For more information, or distributor referral, write GaMCO International Inc., 2153 10th St., Sarasota, FL 34237; (800) 642-7263 or (813) 366-1133; FAX (813) 366-1134.



Pit Boss Supertouch 30

Merit combines classic casino games with new trivia, word, and action games in its touch screen countertop *Pit Boss Superstar 30*.

Over 10,000 questions in 20 categories are included, among them Super Sexy, Comics, Football, Food and Drink, and more. Phraze Craze, a popular game selection on the original button model countertop, is even better with the touch screen. Other games are Temple of Mem-Oh-Ree, Match 'Em Up, Pit Pong, Wipeout, Reacto, and a multi-level Breakin' Bricks.

On the casino game side, look for Joker Poker, Seven Card Stud, and Bonus Blackjack. Thirty-five games in all are featured in this one machine, which is well suited to street locations. The *Pit Boss Supertouch 30* is available as a 13" countertop or 19" upright.

In addition, Merit now offers a *Pit Boss Superstar 30* kit that turns any horizontal monitor upright video game into a unit that offers 30 street-proven games.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Merit Industries Inc., 2525 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020; (215) 639-4700; FAX (215) 639-5346.

Pistol Poker

Alvin G. & Co. takes the appeal of playing cards and pairs it with the wave of interest in all things Western (music and TV series) in its latest pinball, *Pistol Poker*.

Features include multi-level play, an innovative back box card matrix, five different jackpots, over a dozen bonus rounds, and country and western music. Plus, Alvin G. throws in a free parts kit.

Pistol Poker measures 80" high x 24-1/8" wide x 25" deep. The cabinet is bright yellow with boots and six-shooters depicted; the backglass is dominated by a cowboy holding a winning (?) poker hand and a grid of 20 playing cards.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Alvin G. & Co., 905 W. North Ave., Melrose Park, IL 60160; (708) 345-9000; FAX (708) 345-2222.

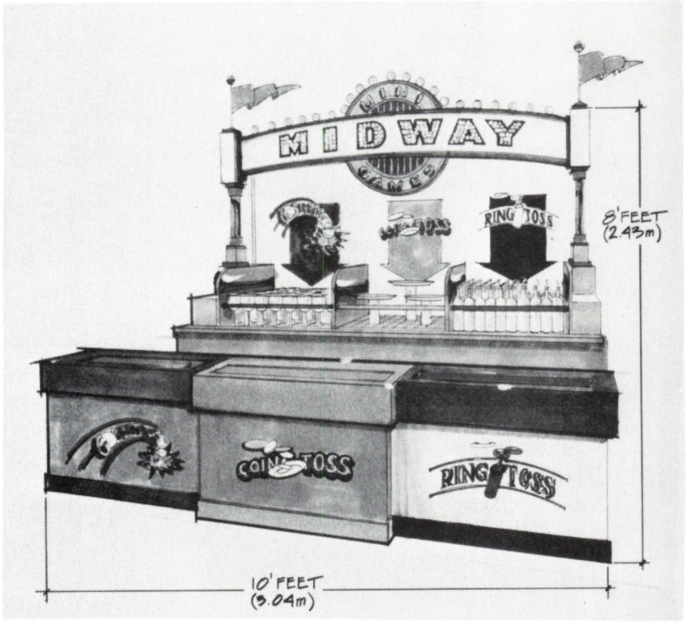
Survival Arts

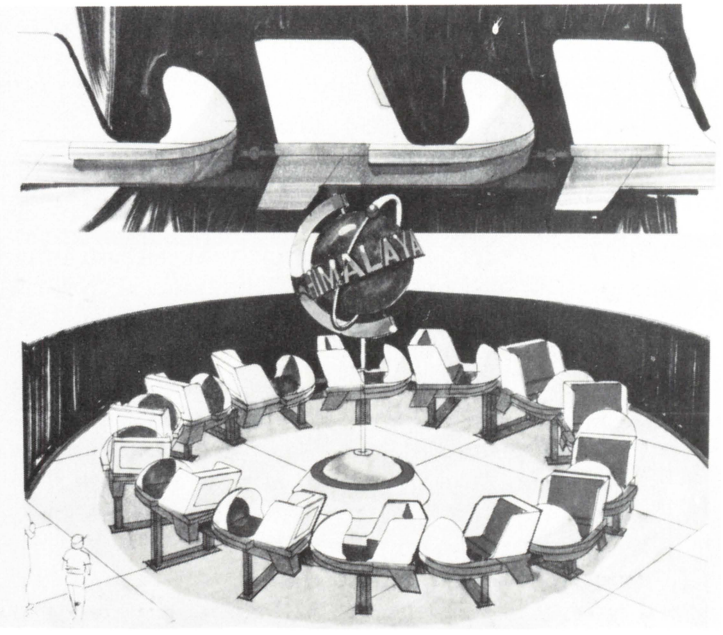
Looking for a reasonably priced martial arts-themed game in kit form? American Sammy has an answer: *Survival Arts*, an action-packed video with eight fearsome warriors.

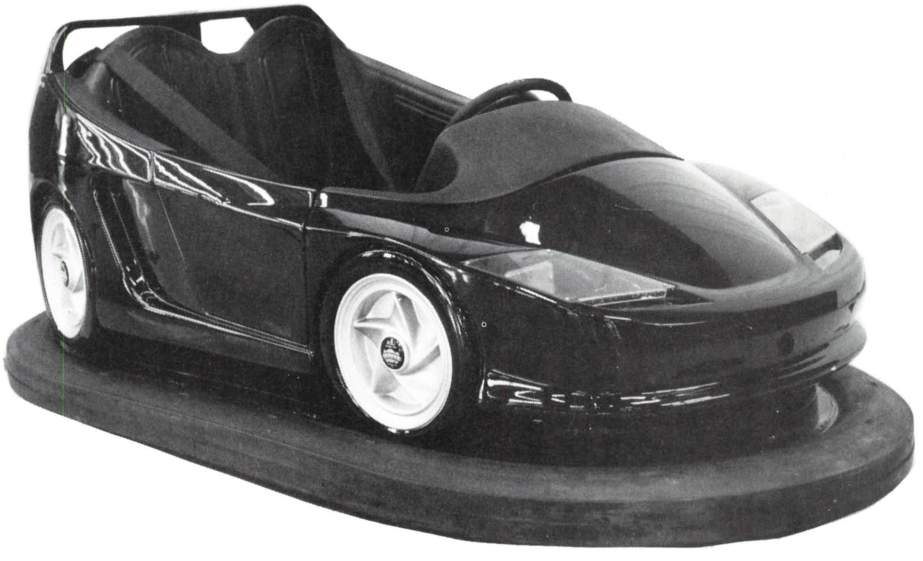
Players can play against the computer or each other, finding hidden features as the game progresses. As players increase their skills the computer rises to the occasion.

The control panel includes six buttons that allow for complicated moves. Characters are digitized and larger-than-life. Over 30 secret hyper moves are possible; a variety of weapons can be used during combat.

For more information, or distributor referral, write American Sammy Corp., 901 Cambridge Drive, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007; (708) 364-9787; FAX (708) 364-9831.







Mini-Midway, Mid-Size Bumper Car, Mini-Himalaya

Designs International introduces the *Mini-Midway* three-games-in-one entertainment center, a *Mid-Size Bumper Car* from Soli, and the *Mini-Himalaya* family thrill ride.

The *Mini-Midway* features three player stations and a choice of 12 different games to suit specific requirements.

Among the games are Big Dart, Milk Can, Ring Toss, and Coin Toss. Modular construction allows switching out games with a minimum of effort. The unit requires only one attendant and is suitable for family fun centers and small carnivals, festivals, or fairs.

The *Mid-Size Bumper Car* has a sleek new design. It holds one adult and one child, which allows parents and grandparents to enjoy bumper cars along with the children.

The *Mini-Himalaya* is a circular train ride of 16 cars on a dual 3" square tubular track. It travels over two hills and down through two valleys at a speed of 12 rotations per minute, forward and reverse. The maximum capacity is 48 passengers. Adults and children can enjoy the ride together or alone.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Designs International Inc., World Trade Center, P.O. Box 58766, Dallas, TX 75258; (214) 634-2900; FAX (214) 634-3364. □

Mind Bender

Nelson Technology responds to the demand for entertaining adult-themed games with its *Mind Bender* countertop game, designed specifically for tavern locations.

Mind Bender offers 17 different adult-themed games for men and women, among them Playhouse Poker, Topless 21, Photo Quiz, Little Limericks, Centerfold Sports, Hunk Poker, and Stud 21. Nudity is presented artistically and in good taste.

The game is housed in a steel and chrome-plated cabinet with a 14" color monitor and hinged front. Dimensions are 14" high x 18" deep x 22" wide. The game has a built-in bill acceptor and stacker for 400 bills.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Nelson Technology Corp., 741 Lakefield Road, Unit B, Westlake Village, CA 91361; (805) 379-0131.

Alien 3 The Gun

Sega introduces an interesting new shooting game that takes place in outer space. *Alien 3 The Gun* is a dedicated video housed in a uniquely configured cabinet outfitted with double machine guns.

The game scenario involves Colonial Marines attacked by dreaded Aliens. Players assist the Marines by deftly throwing grenades and accurately aiming a flamethrower. Graphics scroll with 3-D realism; noise effects are true-to-life. Two players can simultaneously join in the adventure and rid the galaxy of the Aliens at last.

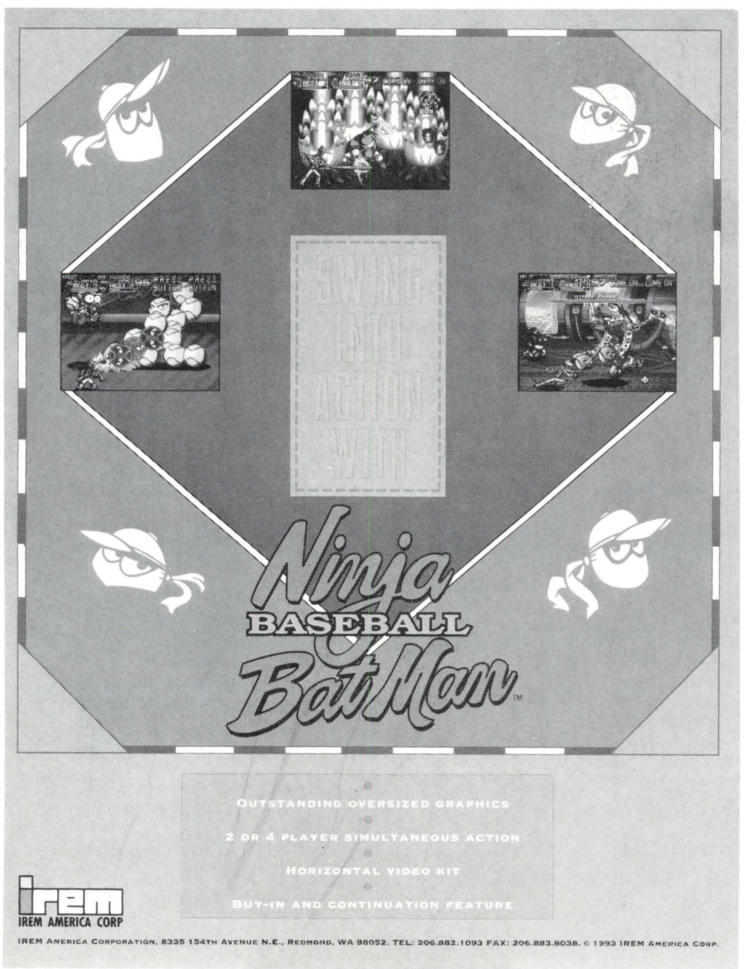
For more information, or distributor referral, write Sega Enterprises Inc. USA, 275 Shoreline Drive, Suite 201, Redwood City, CA 94065; (415) 802-3100; FAX (415) 802-3120.

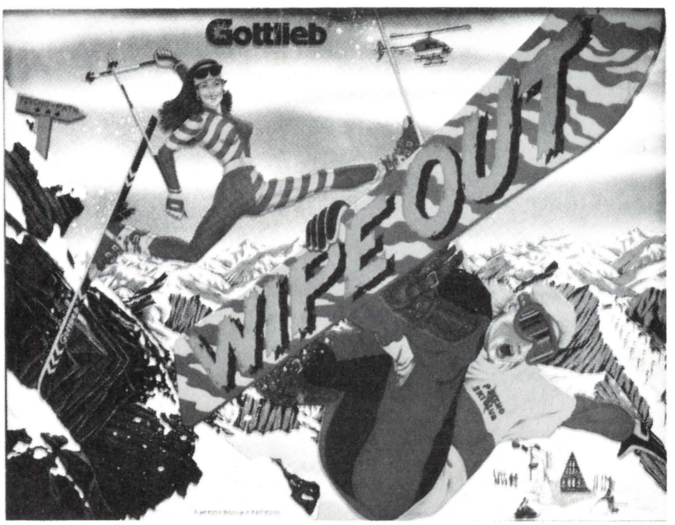
Ninja Bat Man Baseball

Unique oversized graphics are a special feature of Irem's *Ninja Bat Man Baseball*, an improbably named yet interesting horizontal video kit that defies pigeonholeing into one category. The game is for two to four players at a time, with buy-in and game continuation included.

Players take on the persona of the characters on the screen, who engage in comical antics as they attempt to collect baseball equipment that has been lifted from the Hall of Fame. One notable character is Screwball, a baseball with an actual screw in his body.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Irem America Corp., 154th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 882-1093; FAX (206) 883-8038.





Gladiators, Wipe Out

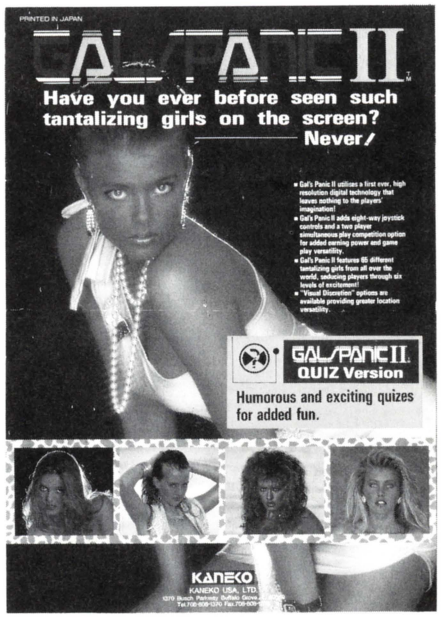
Two diverse subjects come to the world of pinball in Premier's Gottlieb games, *Gladiators* and *Wipe Out*.

Gladiators is a futuristic battle-themed game with a pre-pitch, automatically adjusting pitching system and the new buy-a-ball buy-in option. Robotic men, women, and beasts dominate the backglass; the playfield features an abyss, catapults, and other hazards.

Wipe Out translates a skiing theme to pinball with a lighthearted backglass and a playfield dotted with ski lifts, mountains, and a trusty St. Bernard ready to rescue members of the Psycho Ski Club. Accompanying music is the stirring "Wipeout," a classic originated in the '50s.

Both games are UL listed, offer dot-matrix scoring, and measure 78" high (with light) x 27" wide x 52" deep.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Premier Technology, 759 Industrial Drive, Bensenville, IL 60106; (708) 350-0400; FAX (708) 350-1097.



Bonk's Adventure, Gal's Panic II, Blood Warrior

Kaneko believes in offering something for everyone, from the *Bonk's Adventure* (Arcade Version) for the younger set, to *Gal's Panic II* (Quiz Version) for adults, and *Blood Warrior* for martial arts enthusiasts.

Bonk's Adventure follows the travels of the cute Bonk as he headbutts his enemies, gaining smile bumpers on his head (10 gains a high score). The one- or two-player dedicated video doubles the player's fun by dispensing tickets for the smile bumpers, which are stored and held in banks.

As each stage of the game is completed, players can receive their ticket bank or continue and increase the awards. If players lose their lives they also lose their ticket bank as well. Each control panel features a joystick and two buttons for "head butt" and "jump."

Gal's Panic II brings 65 femme fatales from around the world to the video screen in six different levels of play. As with the previous *Gal's Panic* games, players must "chisel away" portions of the screen to reveal female figures.

For greater location versatility, visual discretion options are available. The game features an eight-way joystick and two-player simultaneous play option. Humorous quizzes have been added for more fun.

Blood Warrior is a one- or two-player horizontal kit offering digitized images (and voices) of nine different fighters, who have dozens of moves. An eight-way joystick and easy-to-use buttons provided complete player control.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Kaneko USA Ltd., 1370 Busch Pkwy., Buffalo Grove, IL 60089; (708) 808-1370; FAX (708) 808-1375.

Candy Shop Crane

Grayhound adds a new model to its growing line of skill cranes with the *Candy Shop Crane*. It includes a play-til-you-win feature, a specially designed claw, and a colorful child-sized cabinet with chaser lights.

In addition, *Candy Shop Crane* has an attract mode with music, a prize detection sensor, joystick or button controls, sound in the game play, and adjustable pricing.

Dimensions are 25-1/2" wide x 26-1/2" deep x 68-1/2" high.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Grayhound Electronics Inc., Rt. 37 & Germania Station Road, Toms River, NJ 08754; (800) 222-0491 or (908) 341-5200; FAX (908) 341-6560.

Countertop Champion

U.S. Games launches the next generation countertop video with *Countertop Champion*, a touch screen unit with a 13" monitor and over 45 multi-player games.

Countertop Champion is a joint effort of U.S. Games and Utopia Technologies of Howell, N.J. The unit affords operators a variety of programming and diagnostics options.

It is housed in a durable cabinet with a swivel base. Among the features are sound effects and high-impact animation with 256 color graphics.

Players can locate their favorite games through a series of menus and sub-menus. Game categories include three pool games, a bowling game with a 3-D perspective, a shooting gallery game, and a classic follow-the-leader memory game. The trivia category offers 40 completely different categories of questions that cover a wide range of subjects, such as movies, food and drink, sports, automobiles, science fiction, magazines, cartoon characters, world history, and United States presidents.

Countertop Champion does not require a keyboard to program the attract mode advertising screens. There are no dip switches; everything is accomplished via touch screen.

For more information, or distributor referral, write U.S. Games Inc., 5825-B Peachtree Corners East, Norcross, GA 30092; (404) 441-2910; FAX (404) 441-1975.

Spinmaster

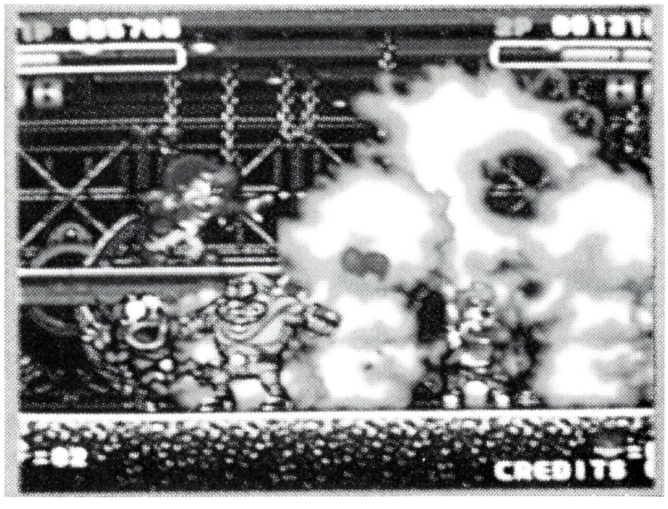
Data East, under license from SNK Corp., brings to market a new comic video adventure for the *Neo-Geo* system with *Spinmaster*.

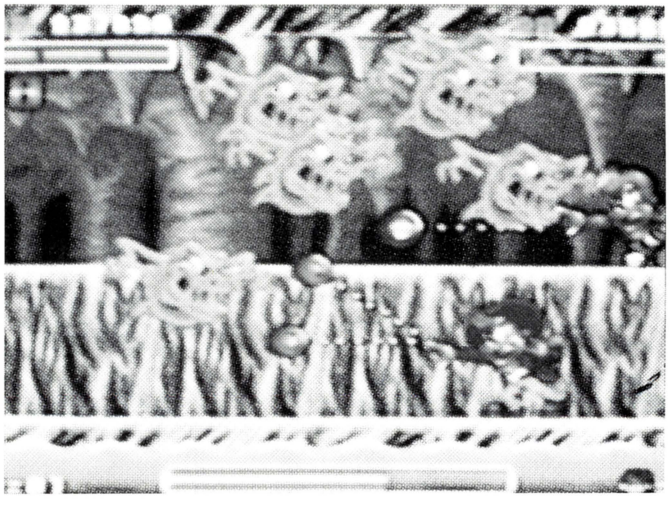
Players are challenged to find pieces to a secret treasure map, then must complete the map to find the buried treasure.

The game's two young heroes match wits with a series of strange creatures encountered on the hunt. Fireballs are one of the weapons at their disposal.

The action-packed game is for one or two players, with a mid-game buy-in feature. The cartridge is compatible with all *Neo-Geo* systems. In the next six months look for new titles with sports, fighting, and futuristic themes.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Data East USA Inc., 1850 Little Orchard St., San Jose, CA 95125; (408) 286-7080; FAX (408) 286-0842.





Sweet Shop

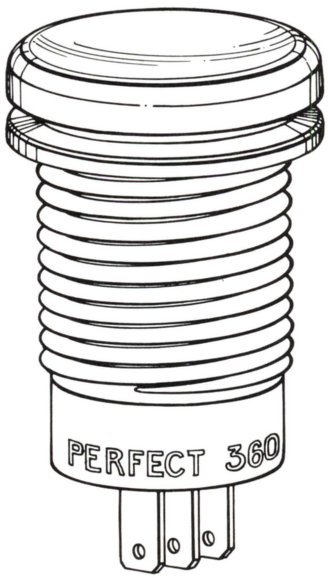
Classic follows up its *Classic Toy Shoppe* crane with its new *Sweet Shop* crane, available in a white laminated cabinet with joystick control.

The *Sweet Shop* features electronic sensors for a winner-every-time, double coin mechs, locking casters, and a claw that's been specially designed to pick up candy.

The crane's header and side panels can be customized. Although the basic unit comes in white, pastel-colored prototypes were shown at the AMOA Expo.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Classic Inc., Rt. 37 & Germania Station Road, Toms River, NJ 08754; (800) 833-4667 or (908) 286-1120; FAX (908) 341-3361.

Spill-resistant button



Perfect 360 Joystick Controls has introduced a new spill-resistant push-button. It is engineered with a patented solid-state switching system, the world's fastest and most reliable switching system.

This new button will virtually eliminate unwanted service calls from drinks spilling and causing microswitch failure. Combined with Perfect 360 Joystick Controls' joystick module, this is a complete control package for the best reliability, speed, and accuracy possible.

The company offers a full two year, money back, factory guarantee on all of its controls.

For more information, contact Perfect 360 Joystick Controls, 3364 S. 2300 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84109; (801) 486-1200 or FAX (801) 486-1255.

Sortomat sorter

Perconta Money Processing Systems has introduced *Sortomat*, the company's top-of-the-line, high-speed coin-sorting machine.

Available with foreign and false coin offsorting, the Perconta-sensor technology makes it possible to recognize and offsort foreign coins or counterfeits into a separate box without slowing down the counting speed.

The *Sortomat* is equipped with bag holders for each denomination and includes unique bagstop features which provide 100 percent accurate bagstops to full federal requirements. Other features include a noise reduction design, large coin tray, automatic coin feed, and high-capacity hopper.

For more information, contact Perconta's USA distributor, Diamond Head Systems, 74-818 Velie Way, Suite #4, Palm Desert, CA 92260; (619) 345-9969 or FAX (619) 345-5594.

Debit card dispensers

Grayhound Electronics has introduced both a single and a double debit card (phone card) dispenser. Each dispenser hold 500 cards, has a display (attract mode), and easy-to-understand instructions.

Other features include stainless steel front, internal key pad for bookkeeping and auditing, modem capabilities, and a currency validator for over 25 countries.

Both units are available in countertop, wall mount, or stand alone models.

For more information, contact Grayhound, Rt. 37 & Germania Station Rd., P.O. Box 1697, Toms River, NJ 08754; (908) 341-5200 or FAX (908) 341-6560.

Transformer catalog

Surplus Traders has released a unique wall transformer catalog. It offers over 200,000 wall transformers in stock for immediate delivery.

Surplus Traders specializes in the buying and selling of factory excess inventories of wall transformers. In addition to the prices being extremely attractive, Surplus Traders makes immediate delivery of these devices when normal factory deliveries can take up to 14 weeks.

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For a free copy of the catalog, contact Surplus Traders, P.O. Box 276, Winters Lane, Alburg, VT 05440; (514) 739-9328 or FAX (514) 345-8303.

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WHAT'S NEW

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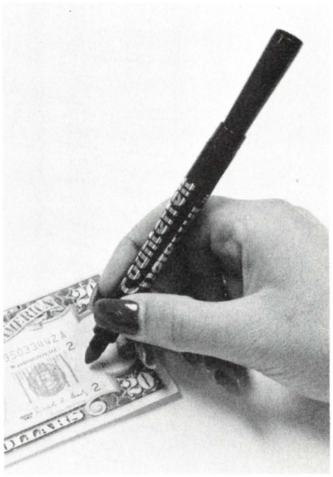
Counterfeit Detectors is offering a pen that spots fake money instantly. The Counterfeit Detector Pen works by simply pressing the tip of the pen on the currency—U.S. and all major international currency. If a gold dot appears—which evaporates in minutes—the bill is legitimate. However, a black dot indicates the bill is probably counterfeit.



The pen requires no batteries or electricity, relying instead on a chemical reaction with the paper. It conveniently fits in a pocket, purse, or cash register. One Counterfeit Detector Pen will test up to 5,000 bills.

For more information, contact Counterfeit Detectors, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (818) 716-9021.

Coinless card system

P&H Systems has introduced its coinless card system. Using a minimal cost card eliminates the need for coin doors and inventory of hundreds of dollars worth of coins. The cards can be reused.

The card system allows you to get instant read-outs of activity and gives you the ability to update hourly, daily, or weekly. You can change the pricing in seconds for slow-time boost in play. No special skills are needed for installation, which takes just 30 minutes.

For more information, contact P&H Systems, 800 El Camino Real West, Sect. #180, Mountain View, CA 94040; (415) 903-2216 or FAX (415) 903-2237.

Low cost meters

Tekbilt has introduced a new low-cost, high-quality meter. The six-digit, nonresettable, electromechanical meter is available in six-, 24-, or 110-volts. Life testing exceeds over 10 million counts. Private labeling is available.

For more information, contact Dave Adelsberger, Tekbilt, 3983 Mann Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006; (800) 666-7776, (215) 322-3232, or FAX (215)322-3238. □

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Play Meter's classified advertising is primarily intended for: buyers and sellers of used equipment, support and supply firms and employment opportunity ads. You may pay by check, money order, Visa or Mastercard. **The deadline is usually the 15th of the month prior to issue (example: August ad must be in by July 15).** Send ad orders to Play Meter Magazine / P.O. Box 24970 / New Orleans, LA 70184 or FAX: (504) 488-7083.

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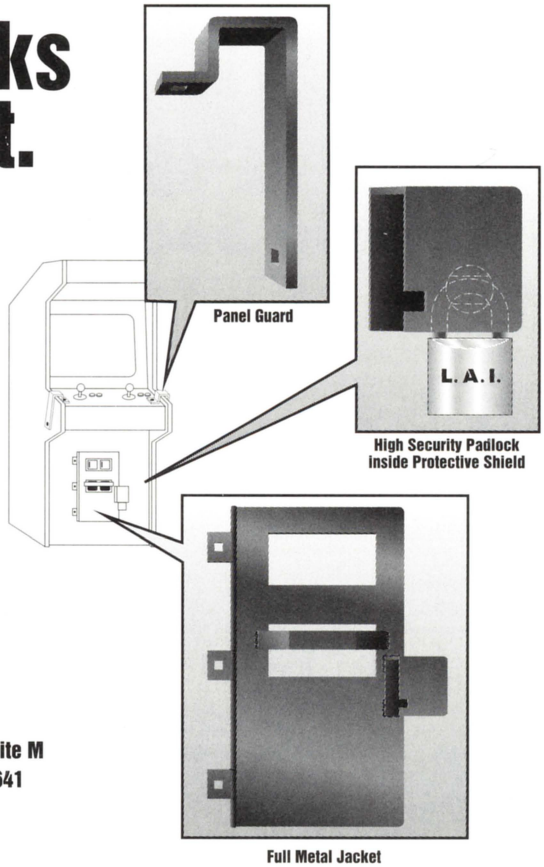

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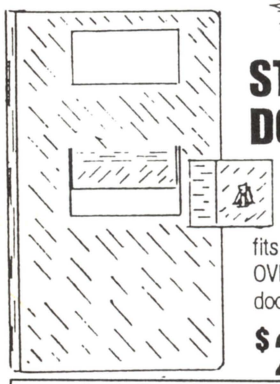

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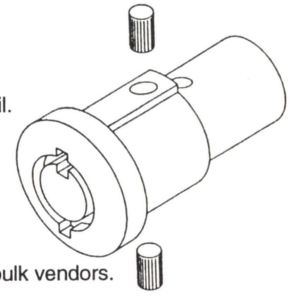

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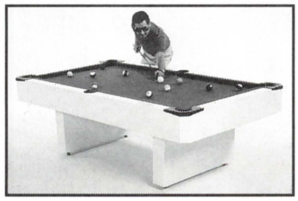

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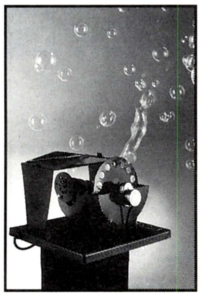

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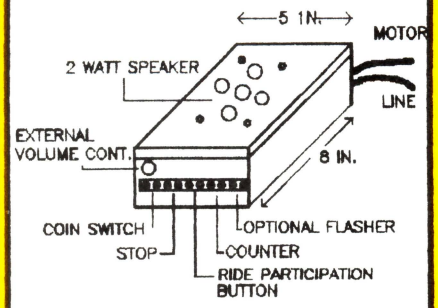

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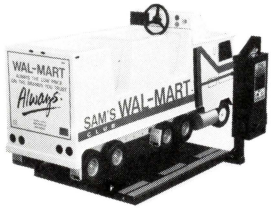

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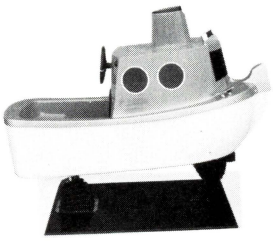

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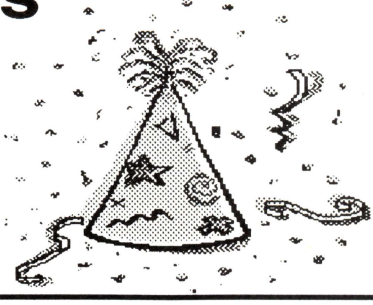

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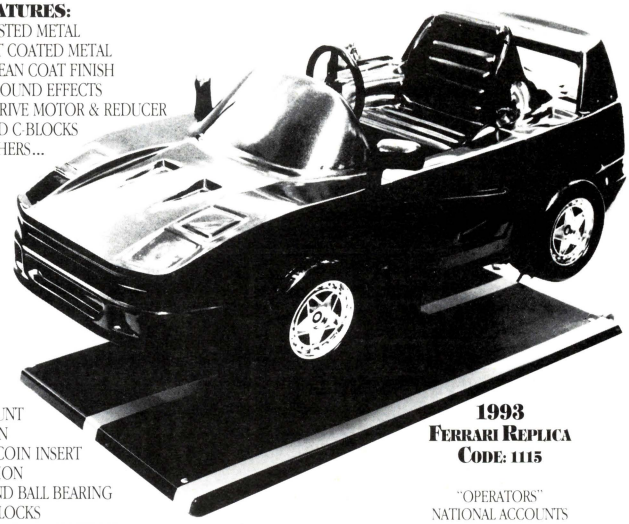

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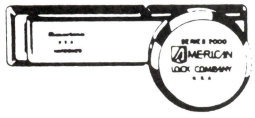

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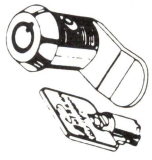

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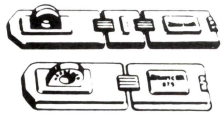

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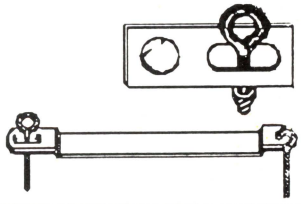

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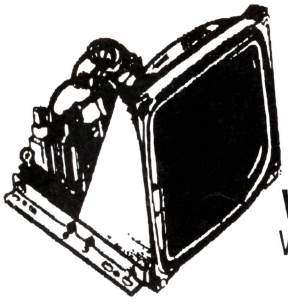

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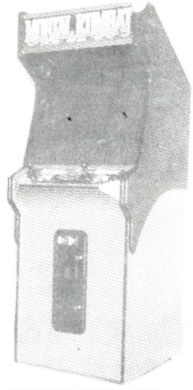

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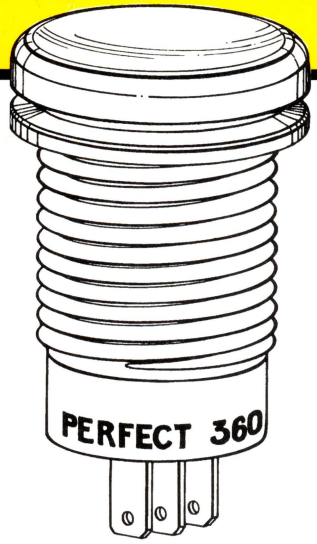

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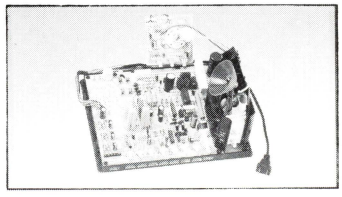

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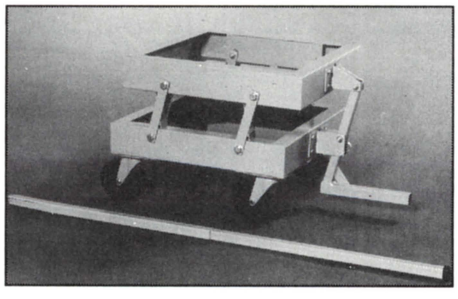

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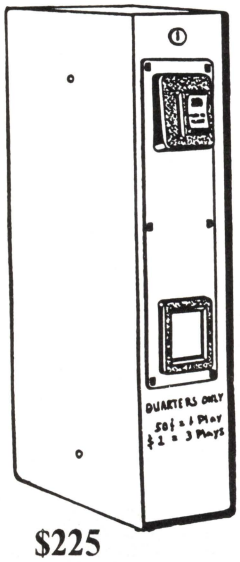

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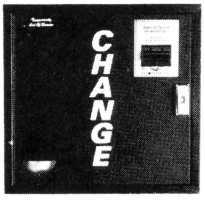

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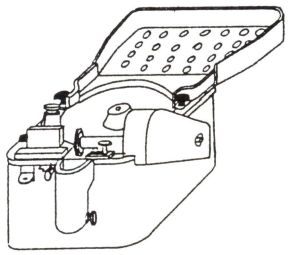

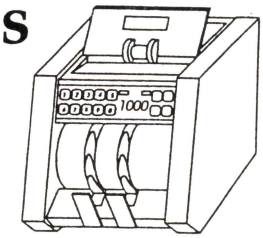

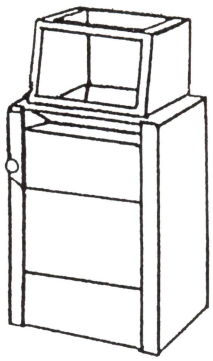

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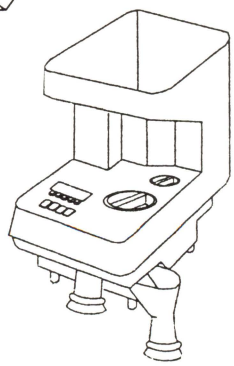

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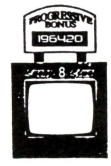

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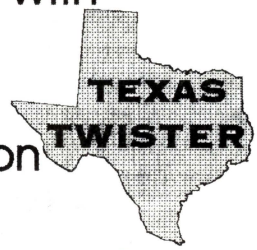

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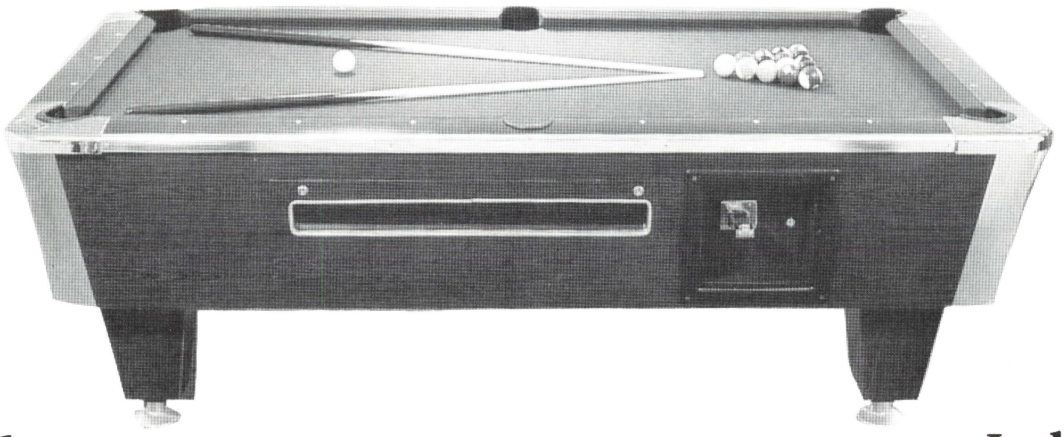

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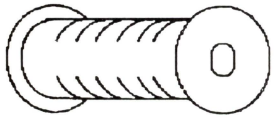

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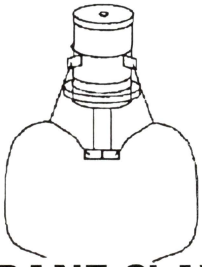

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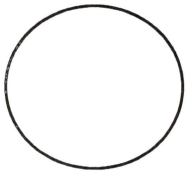

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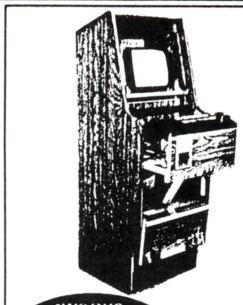

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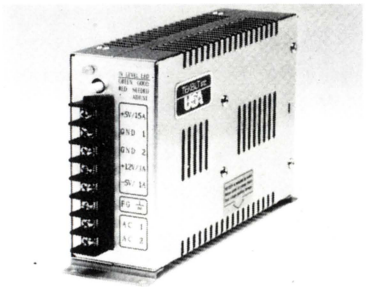

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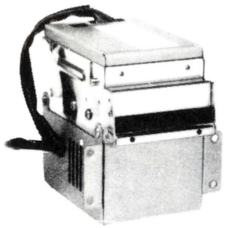

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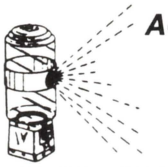

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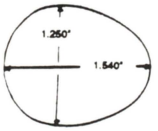

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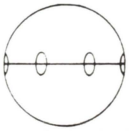

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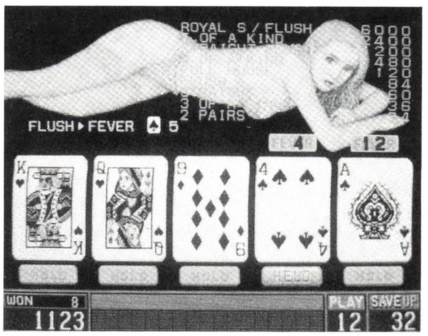

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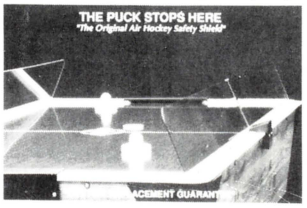

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National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) National Convention and Trade Show, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Contact NAMA Convention Dept., (312) 346-0370. □

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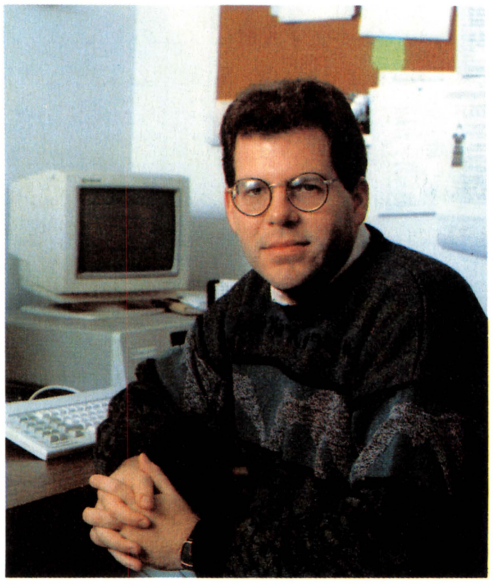
THE LAST WORD

Is it time for Big Brother?

While in Los Angeles for the IAAPA show, I had a chance to read my favorite newspaper, *The Los Angeles Times*. I know fans of *The New York Times* believe it's the best daily in America, but I think this is the one area where L.A. can claim superiority over its East Coast rival.

Anyway, in the Nov. 17 edition of *The Los Angeles Times*, I ran across an item of particular interest. The state's attorney general, Dan Lungren, called a news conference on Nov. 16 to discuss a topic on everyone's mind: violence. He told the gathering of reporters that this nation has experienced a sharp jump in crime by children. There's been a 119 percent increase in juvenile murder arrests between 1986 and 1991; California has experienced a 135 percent increase during this period.



Christopher Caire
Features Editor

Did Lungren cite these chilling statistics as a prelude to an attack on easily available handguns? How about the opening salvo on a tirade against irresponsible parents who let their children run wild in the streets? No friends, this news conference was devoted to one thing: violent video games.

Lungren has sent a letter of complaint to 12 game companies, including Nintendo, Sega, and Capcom. "Continual exposure to violent images and themes in various entertainment may not be the direct cause of these atrocious acts," he said in the letter. But games that "promote" violence "do have a deadening, desensitizing impact on young, impressionable minds," wrote Lungren.

At the news conference he said he was "issuing a strong warning to the parents of California," though, thankfully, he didn't propose censorship or some type of legal crackdown.

It's time to stop paying lip-service to this problem and do something about it. The manufacturers say the kids want—even *demand*—healthy doses of violence in their video games. Well, I wanted to drink beer and watch porno movies when I was 13. Did anyone let me? Of course not. A 13-year-old doesn't need exposure to those things; neither should he be allowed to revel in images of bloody decapitation.

I know what some of you are thinking: "Caire, you're full of it. Kids can differentiate between make-believe violence and the real thing. Get off your moral high horse." I can understand that; in fact, I used to believe it myself. But the more I think about this subject the more I believe that violent video games, along with violent movies and violent TV shows, can't help but influence kids negatively. (Put it this way: they don't make children want to attend Sunday School.) And even if the games *are* harmless, a lot of governmental bodies and parents think otherwise. Isn't that enough reason to take action?

A bar in New Orleans called Hog's Breath Saloon has a motto: "I'd rather have hog's breath than no breath at all." Perhaps. But surely this industry's leaders don't believe that bad press is better than no press at all. Get enough bad press and the government will eventually start sniffing around—and maybe even feel compelled to step in and regulate. Need I remind you of its track record? □

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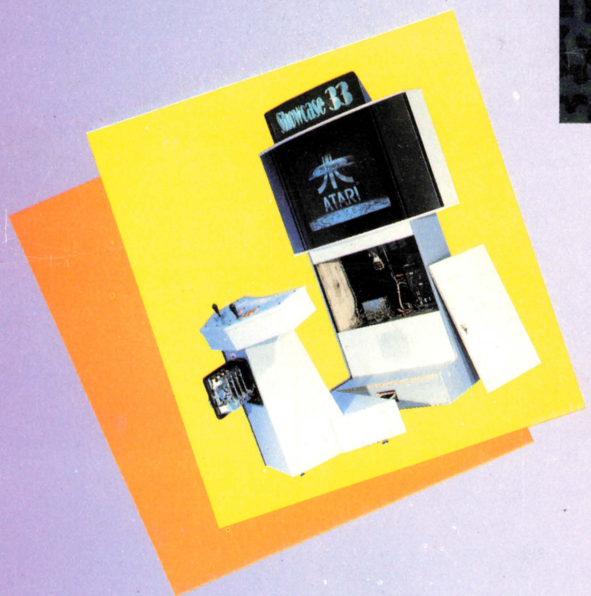

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