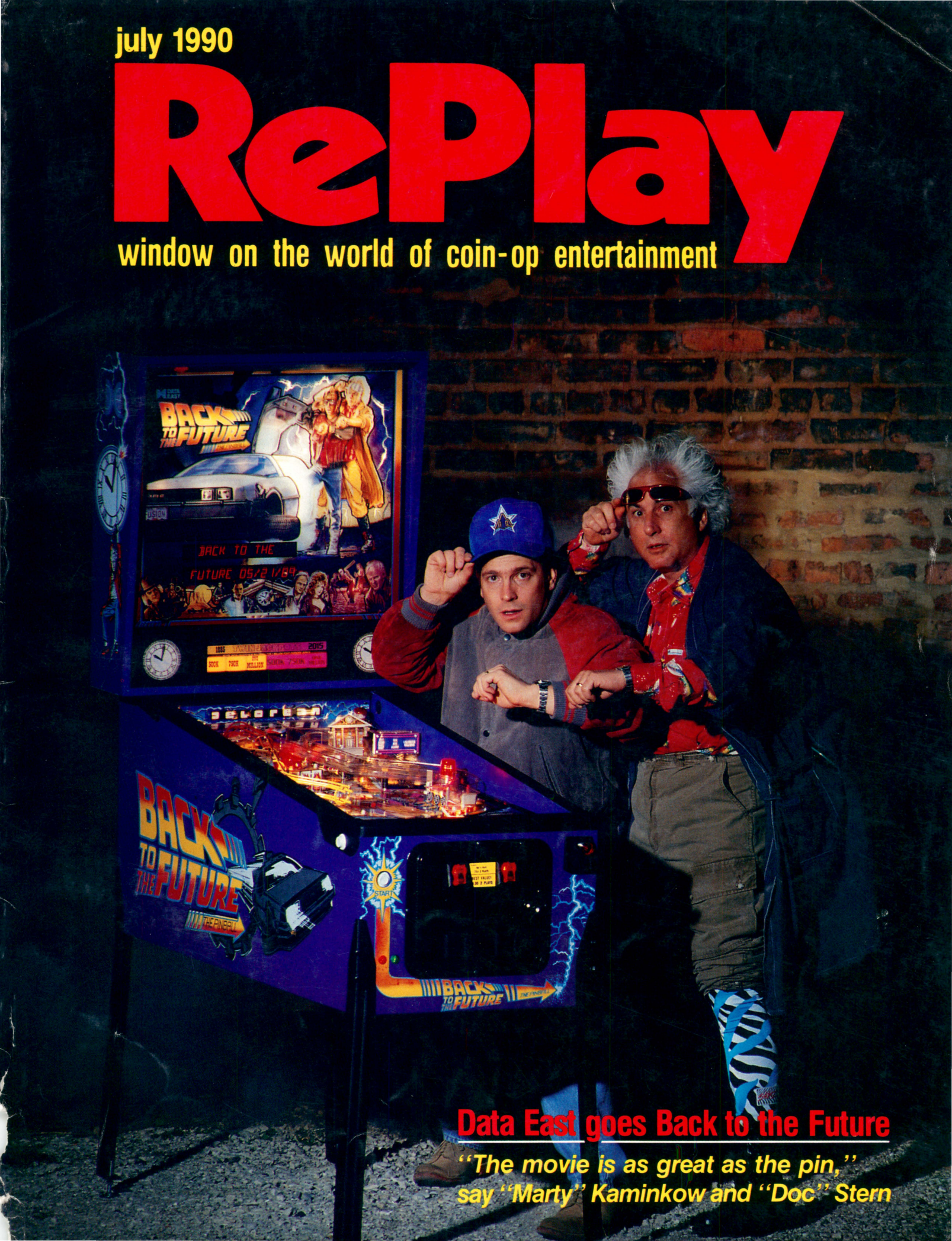
july 1990

RePlay

window on the world of coin-op entertainment



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HOT OFF THE PRESS!

POKER MOVES SOUTH — On June 20, **Louisiana's** House of Representatives passed HB.1509, a **pay-off video poker legalization bill,** by a vote of more than two to one (67 yays, 28 nays), said the *Baton Rouge Morning Advocate.* The LAMOA-sponsored bill would allow per-play bets of up to $5; per-play jackpots up to $1,000; up to five vidpoker machines in liquor-licensed stops; and **unlimited** vidpokers at horse racetracks and parimutuel betting parlors. Machines would return 80% of the total money that's bet, back to players over the long run. The senate could vote by June 29 and LAMOA hopes Gov. Roemer will remain neutral. "I feel sure it will be a victory all the way around," said LAMOA's **David Goudeau.**

JUKE LICENSE SCORECARD — As you'll read inside, the Jukebox License Office has extended the deadline for applications and checks from June 1 to August 1. As of June 21, JLO Manager **Melonie Krisza** told us they'd already computer-logged over 52,000 licensed boxes; many more awaited processing. Some unprocessed forms contained checks written to the wrong parties (like "ASCAP," "Licensor," etc.). Remember: inscribe checks to the "Jukebox Licensing Office." Of the response to date, Melonie said "I think we're doing pretty well so far." 96,000 jukes were licensed for the year 1989. AMOA was instrumental in getting the deadline extended and continues to mail many applications and explanatory letters to certain distributors and one-stops who've requested them, to ensure that as many operators as possible know their licensing duties.

AMOA EXPO '91 — Next year's operator-sponsored expo takes place mid-September at the **Las Vegas Convention Center,** not in Orlando or Nashville. That means Vegas will host both ACME and AMOA again in '91. By the way, the upcoming AMOA Expo '90 (New Orleans, Oct. 25-27) is already an exhibit sellout at the Rivergate.

HANK TRONICK, popular sales veep at C.A. Robinson's L.A. headquarters, underwent emergency surgery June 15 at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica after being hit by a most serious infection centered around his artificial hip. Hank's condition was extremely critical just after the operation and he was placed on a respirator. **Sandy Bettelman** told us on June 21 that Hank had stabilized, though he was very groggy and in bad pain. Hank will be given IV antibiotics for a month at least, even if he returns home, in order to kill the infection. If drugs don't work, more serious implant surgery may occur. In any case, the "Giant of the California Industry" will be sidelined for many months to come. Please include him in your prayers.

PLAY THAT CD — Snap out that CD (pasted onto Pioneer's brochure in this issue) and give it a spin. One of them (or perhaps one going out via direct mail) has a special message on it which will entitle the lucky operator to a **free Pioneer CD jukebox,** to be presented at the AMOA show. Presently shipping their box to dealers, Pioneer will give 9 free "compilation CDs" per juke to any operator who buys one or more boxes duringly July, Aug. & Sept. (that's six current hit CDs, three with evergreens). "We're moving 'em out!" smiled the factory's **Steve Rogers,** "and this free CD offering should give the product even more attraction to operators."

AMOT'S NEW DATES, SITE — Tennessee operators will hold their annual convention and tradeshow at Nashville's spectacular **Opryland Hotel** on **Aug. 10-12.** (The change lets AMOT and exhibitors dovetail their event with the National Conference of State Legislators, slated for the same site Aug. 3-10.) Look for important lobbying, spectacular entertainment and the friendliest folks around. Call AMOT expo chair **Jan Green** for details at 901/521-1234.

KUDOS to **Capcom** for fast action in offering free update chips to fix a minor glitch in some (not all) boards of their high-charting vidgame *Mercs.* The fix boosts earnings up to 27%, said the firm. Ask your authorized dealer . . . **RSI** (45 record subscription service) has pressed its first record: Kim Carnes' "Everybody Needs Someone" from the film "Impulse." It ships with promotional posters for juke locations...Thanks to all who asked after our Editor Marcus Webb's health; he's fine.

RePlay

the Players' Choice

JULY 1990

TOP GAMES NOW IN OPERATION, BASED ON EARNINGS-OPINION POLL OF OPERATORS

upright videos

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
➡	1	**TMNT (TURTLES) (Konami) (7)**	**9.52**	**98%**
➡	2	G-LOC (Sega) (1)	9.00	13%
	3	HARD DRIVIN' (Atari) (16)	8.74	46%
➡	4	SMASH TV (Williams) (1)	8.54	28%
➡	5	GALAXY FORCE (Sega) (2)	8.50	11%
➡	6	MERCS (Capcom) (3)	8.32	45%
	7	FINAL LAP (Atari) (20)	8.03	25%
➡	8	2-DUDE OFF ROAD (Leland) (2)	7.87	12%
	9	OFF ROAD (Leland) (16)	7.80	74%
➡	10	BEAST BUSTERS (SNK) (6)	7.64	20%
	11	BIG RUN (Jaleco) (2)	7.64	11%
	12	TURBO OUTRUN+ (Sega) (12)	7.51	48%
	13	CYBERBALL 2072+ (Atari) (7)	7.39	33%
	14	OPERATION THUNDERBOLT (Taito) (15)	7.36	48%
	15	CHASE H.Q. (Taito) (19)	7.26	46%
➡	16	S.C.I. (Taito) (6)	7.25	23%
	17	S.T.U.N. RUNNER (Atari) (8)	7.23	32%
	18	OUT RUN (Sega) (43)	7.12	67%
	19	SUPER HANG-ON (Sega) (36)	6.99	60%
	20	POWER DRIFT (Sega) (15)	6.89	28%
	21	CYBERBALL (Atari) (16)	6.87	31%
	22	CRIME FIGHTERS+ (Konami) (16)	6.83	56%
	23	NARC (Williams) (17)	6.75	42%
	24	AFTER BURNER (Sega) (32)	6.71	62%
	25	MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE+ (D.E.) (7)	6.71	33%

+ indicates game was produced in both dedicated & software forms

best new videos

➡	1	LINE OF FIRE [s/d] (Sega)	8.00
➡	2	WINNING RUN [u/r] (Namco/Belam)	8.00
➡	3	THUNDERJAWS [h-kit] (Atari)	8.00
➡	4	SPORTSMATCH [h-kit] (Fabtek)	8.00
➡	5	WGP [u/r + s/d] (Taito)	7.75

best software

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
➡	1	**FINAL FIGHT [H] (Capcom) (5)**	**9.22**	**74%**
➡	2	COMBATRIBES [H] (Amer. Technos) (1)	8.43	11%
➡	3	CADASH [H] (Taito) (3)	8.27	21%
	4	WWF SUPERSTARS [H] (Technos) (12)	8.19	81%
➡	5	ALIENS [H] (Konami) (3)	7.98	44%
➡	6	AIR BUSTER [H] (Sharp Image) (2)	7.78	7%
➡	7	MVP [H] (Sega) (3)	7.74	22%
➡	8	DJ BOY [H] (American Sammy) (3)	7.67	24%
➡	9	LIGHTNING FIGHTERS [V] (Konami) (1)	7.43	6%
	10	GOLDEN AXE [H] (Sega) (13)	7.38	73%
➡	11	OFF ROAD TRAK PAK [R] (Leland) (2)	7.20	32%
➡	12	BLOCKOUT [H] (American Technos) (3)	7.19	13%
➡	13	SNOW BROS. [H] (Romstar) (2)	7.18	14%
	14	TOKI [H] (Fabtek) (7)	7.14	35%
➡	15	BLOXEED [H] (Sega) (1)	7.14	11%
➡	16	VS. CRIME FIGHTERS [S] (Konami) (8)	7.08	30%
	17	VIOLENCE FIGHT [H] (Taito) (4)	7.07	12%
➡	18	BUSTER BROS. [H] (Capcom) (6)	7.00	35%
➡	19	BADLANDS [H] (Atari) (5)	7.00	34%
➡	20	TECMO WORLD CUP '90 [H] (Tec.) (4)	7.00	7%

[H] horizontal [V] vertical [S] system [R] retrofit

flippers

	1	**WHIRLWIND (Williams) (5)**	**8.63**	**72%**
	2	ELVIRA (Midway) (9)	8.48	49%
➡	3	POOL SHARKS (Midway) (2)	8.47	14%
➡	4	ROLLER GAMES (Williams) (2)	8.34	34%
	5	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (D.E.) (4)	8.24	34%
	6	EARTHSHAKER (Williams) (15)	8.18	50%
	7	POLICE FORCE (Williams) (10)	7.79	50%
	8	GAME SHOW (Midway) (3)	7.74	28%
	9	CYCLONE (Williams) (26)	7.55	62%
	10	MOUSIN' AROUND (Midway) (6)	7.55	34%

➡ *available brand new at certain distributors; number following brand shows months on chart including this one.*

RATING: *Operators were mailed "ballot sheets" listing games in active operation in U.S. locations and game centers and asked to "rate" the earning performance of each on the "1 to 10" measure: 10 for "power-house earnings," 9 for "excellent," 8 for "very good game," 7 for "good game," 6 for "decent game," 5 for "just average," 4 for "below average," etc. The written votes were tallied up and divided by the actual number of times the specific game was rated. Hence, the decimal points.*

DIST.: *The percentage of the surveyed arcade and street location operators who have the item on location. No upright videos rated by less than 10% of these operators appear on the Upright Videos chart, but promising new items appear under Best New Videos.*

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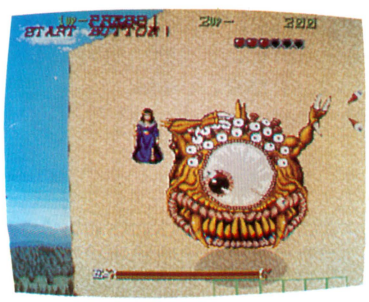

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RePlay magazine

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July 1990
Volume XV, No. 10

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COVER

Our July cover features the heroes of the 'Back to the Future' film trilogy: Marty McFly and Doc Brown. But wait! There's a third hero: it's 'Back to the Future: the Pinball' from Data East! And we suspect that with this hot item on location, you may get the same rush that Marty and Doc get from zooming backward and forward in the Time-Space Continuum. This game comes strongly endorsed by none other than the film's co-writer and co-producer himself, Bob Gale.

Read more about it inside (and take a second look at DE's design leader Joe Kaminkow and General Manager Gary Stern on our cover).

RePlay Magazine, July 1990, Volume XV, No. 10. RePlay is published monthly by RePlay Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 2550, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. Subscription rates (all mailed by First Class Mail): United States: U.S.$60.00; Canada and Mexico: U.S.$80.00 per year (Canadian currency: $100.00). All other foreign countries $200.00 per year (Air Mail), $75.00 Steamer Mail (Surface). Please address subscription applications to RePlay, P.O. Box 2550, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. Copyright 1990 under the Universal Copyright Convention. All rights reserved.

EDITORIAL

*This industry confronts more double standards than Aladdin's Castle has video games. Take gambling, something that's generally considered immoral unless the government runs the operation (sort of like capital punishment, "you **can't** but we **can**"). Sure, there are pockets of the country where private enterprise is allowed to participate in gambling. But who ever heard of a private lottery (i.e. a legal one)? Several state associations (with backing from AMOA) are hammering for legalized pay-off poker. We just hope everyone realizes that the legislators they're talking to are quite possibly "competitors" who are reluctant to give up even a small piece of their "gambling franchise." The state wants a big slice, if not the whole pie. But as they said in South Dakota, "ya never know."*

Another double standard lies in the tobacco field. On one hand, you have federal Health Secretary Sullivan asking states to outlaw cigarette machines, while another branch of the same government is subsidizing tobacco growers. Operators may shake their heads in bewilderment, but they'd do better to shake out the cigarette route to ensure that minors can't buy smokes from their machines. That even means pulling a machine from a place where the personnel don't care if kids buy or not. Don't worry so much about the civil law all the time. Think about the moral one as well.

Now, as everyone who hasn't been asleep the last couple of years knows, the video game developers have been making the bulk of their income from the home sector, not from coin-op. Maybe some operators think this "double standard" is unravelling because so much home software is backing up in the pipe. Not so, that arm of the video business is still robust. It's just that buyers have become as picky about titles as coin-op players. The "hit syndrome" has hit home video, and welcome to it.

The best the game operator can expect is for the video developers to push a bit harder to give our side something players can't get at home. However, some see a very quiet market for coin-op and frankly wonder how much they'll get back on the R&D money put in. For example, operators cry for "something different." Yet, they don't "experiment" with some of the more unique games when released, waiting for them to hit the charts. That's a double standard worth thinking about as well, no?

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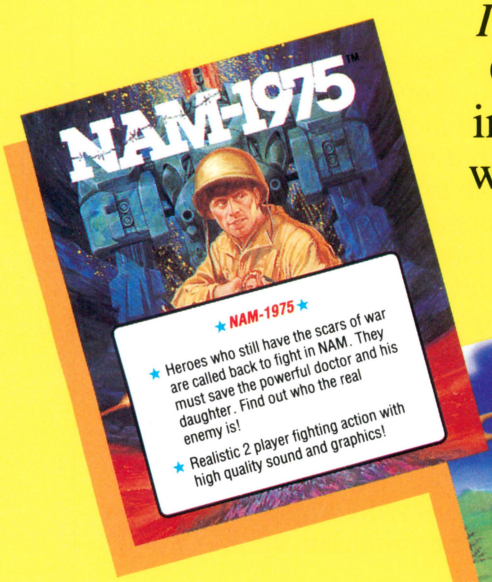

★ NAM-1975 ★

- Heroes who still have the scars of war are called back to fight in NAM. They must save the powerful doctor and his daughter. Find out who the real enemy is!
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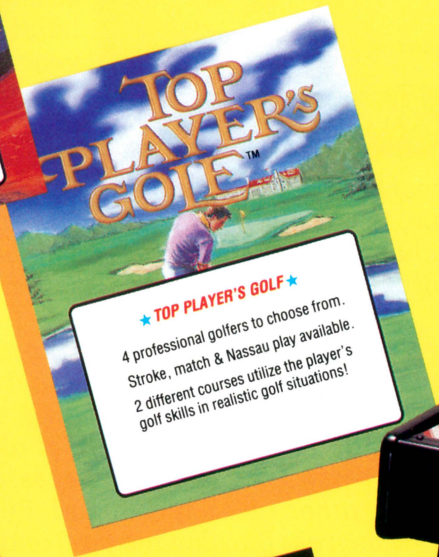

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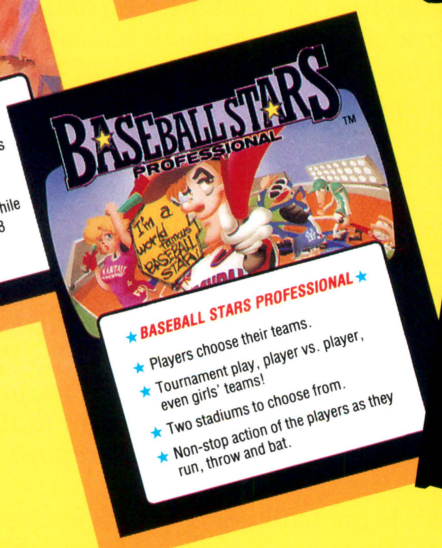
- He travels and battles enemies while searching for the book with the 8 magic instructions.



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INSIDE

JULY 1990

SPECIAL ARTICLES

MEXICO'S SMASH EXPO

Mexican operators organized that country's first-ever trade show for new coin-op amusement goods, and by all reports it was a beauty. We're told 5,000 attended; some of coin-op's biggest had their equipment on view at booths such as Mexel's, which is profiled in a follow-up story. Coverage begins on . . . . pg. 99

VIDPOKER PRO & CON

Wisconsin's a good indicator of a national trend: state associations are dreaming and scheming to legalize pay-off video poker along the lines of the South Dakota model. This upbeat story is followed by a cautionary essay by trade vet Louis Boasberg . . . . . pg. 41

SMOKERS' BLUES

Cigarette vending machines are a disappearing breed in many cities around this country, and let's face it: it's going to get worse. *RePlay* publisher Eddie Adlum ruminates on the forces and the fates that will determine the destiny of tobacco . . . . . pg. 34

SUZUKI SPEAKS

Taito America's new president Minoru Suzuki has moved to Chicago and "gone American." That is, his top priority is to report U.S. tastes back to Tokyo headquarters Future product will be shaped accordingly . . . . . pg. 94

FRANK TALK

This month's column by Frank Seninsky is worth the entire year's subscription price. "How to cope with tough times" is Frank's topic, and he gives you classic advice for making your route run lean and mean . . . . . pg. 130

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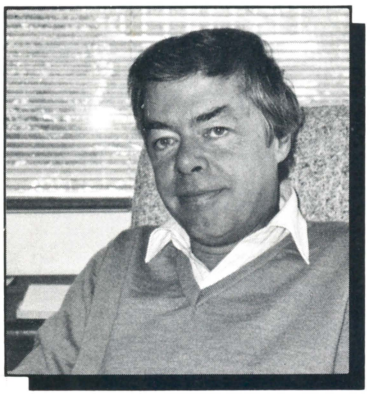

They can try as hard as they like, but the equipment manufacturers and distributors can't stop the earth from turning around the sun. Summer, that dreaded "slow season," has the unwelcome habit of coming along each year. It used to be a time for operators to send some of their machines and all of their kids to camp and then lock the checkbook in the desk drawer. It was a time when the trade said, "The hotter it gets, the worse business gets," and that included big city operator collections when the population shifted to the Catskills or some other vacation spot.

Anthropologists know that the more progressive nations occupy geography that's cold more times than it's hot (Los Angeles has air conditioning, so we're right with you, Jack). Still in all, summer's heat along with its urge to do nothing (unless absolutely necessary) has usually made things rather quiet in coinland. But, things have changed a few degrees (pardon the pun) and the game makers seem to introduce new products almost at the same rate they do during the other seasons. And even though the arcades are supposed to be completely set up by Memorial Day, the better new pieces find their way to the shore despite the date on the calendar.

I haven't the vaguest idea what the summer of 1990 has in store for the trade. Hey, it's been "summer" for many factories this past winter and spring. Operators continue to make money with video, but in the minds of many, aren't putting enough of it back into new goods. And nobody seems to know exactly why. With that in mind, just what will summer hold? Business as usual (whatever that means) or a further drop while "waiting to see what pops in the fall?"

This is the traditional month for trade magazines to roll out their "whitewash the shop wall while you have time on your hands" editorials. Not this year. Too much "catch-up" work needs to be done out there in terms of rotation and injections of new games. Don't whitewash the shop, visit the distributor. Can you think of a better time for a relaxed chat and an unhurried look through the new and reconditioned goods? Take advantage of the "slack months" to put your business a leg up. And remember, those showrooms are air conditioned.

PLAYERS WILL LOVE HOW IT PERFORMS IN THE AIR. YOU'LL LOVE HOW IT PERFORMS AT YOUR LOCATION.

G–LOC AIR BATTLE can pump adrenalin through a body with about the same velocity that an F–4 gulps jet fuel. Ditto for the way coins will be rattling through the coinbox.

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G–LOC offers players 38 stages within three different player–selectable skill levels. The beginner level is a challenging 9–stage training course with plenty of action. The intermediate level introduces the use of the throttle and afterburner and sends players into 13 stages of faster paced aerial combat. The third level lets "Aces" engage in 16 stages of fierce, high–speed dogfights.

G–LOC Air Battle is available in upright, cockpit, and deluxe (moving cabinet) configurations. Each features realistic flight stick, throttle (with afterburner button), guided missile launcher, machine gun trigger,and continous play. Air sickness bags are not included.

G-LOC AIR BATTLE

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VIEWPOINTS

Editor's note: we carried a Viewpoint *in our June issue written by Orlando operator Steve Piantieri, castigating RePlay for selling some subscriptions directly to locations.* RePlay *said it does have some going to locations (less than 1% of its run), and those include bowling alleys that own their own equipment. We received mail in response.*

LOCATION MAGAZINES

To the Editor:

I read with great interest Mr. Steve Piantieri's comments concerning the availability of trade journals such as *RePlay* to locations (June 1990). I am not sure how many hotels Mr. Piantieri has on his route. I do know however that he currently serves four Fair Lanes bowling centers.

Fair Lanes adopted a quantifiable Operator's Performance System approximately two years ago. The system was developed to help in managing the game machine operations in 112 bowling centers located in 18 states and Puerto Rico. We have chosen to use independent game operators rather than purchase our games. Our roster of active operators contains over thirty companies.

The system is based on four standards; quality, quantity, turnover (rotation), and income. The system has worked to improve game income.

We have one additional rule for game operations. We want to know everything we can about the game machine industry; and we want game operators who know more than we do. Mr. Piantieri on the other hand is apparently opposed to having an informed consumer of his service. He advocates ignorance on the part of his customers.

The location is not the end user of game machines. The customers of locations are the end users of the games provided by operators such as Charles Music. A sharp location wants to know if potential income is being lost because a game operator is not providing the proper equipment.

Mr. Piantieri's letter and, to a degree, the editor's response perpetuates a common misconception concerning game operations. First of all, mine are not the "wrong hands" for trade publications. My "hands" control 100% of the game revenue in our locations. We decide who to share this income with by way of our operator selection procedures.

Operators serving Fair Lanes are expected to provide top quality games, keep all games fully operational, rotate games frequently, and participate in promoting the game business in our centers. For this effort, we pay them half of our total game receipts.

I am pleased to say that Fair Lanes currently works with some of the best game operators in the country. The Operator Performance System works only to put weak operators at a disadvantage.

Sincerely,
Joe Schumacker
Fair Lanes, Inc.
Baltimore, Maryland

To Steve Piantieri:

You're right. Trade publications *do not* belong in locations. But unfortunately, many location owners are starved for information regarding the music-and-game industry. Like any good business person, he/she wants to be informed. What sits in his/her location, to the end-user patron, is an immediate reflection of the establishment and its proprietor — not of you, the operator.

In your letter, you liken your situation to that of purchasing a car, where end-users have no access to inside trade publications — nor do they really have any need of them. In that exists some truth. But how many automobile purchasers *do* read *Road & Track, Car & Driver, Consumer Reports* or watch television commercials to see what *is* available before ultimately buying a vehicle?

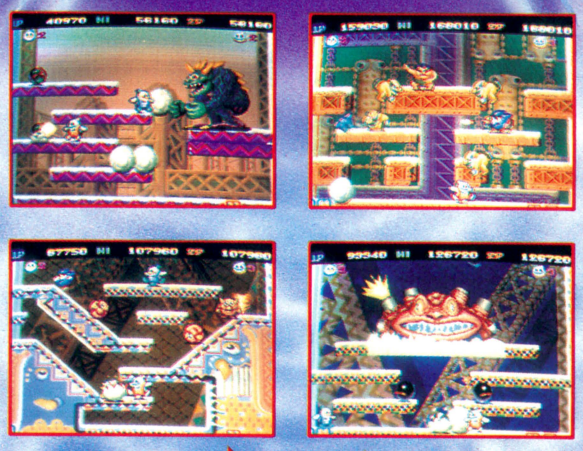
With that point, let us stress that *Tavern Sports International* does not — nor has it ever — encouraged locations to purchase game-and-music equipment direct. On the contrary, we endorse utilizing operator professionalism and expertise. You are right in asserting that operators comprise a service industry. Likewise, TSI serves the coin-op industry by bridging a communication void between what should be two essential partners in business — operators and location owners.

Allow us to get a little self-serving here — while Mr. Piantieri did not address TSI specifically in his letter, *RePlay's* publisher, Ed Adlum, did — and some information printed must be clarified.

Yes, TSI goes to locations. But out of our total circulation of 25,000, our largest single readership segment is operators — all 9,369 of them. The melding of these two audiences requires a diversified and commercial editorial focus to reinforce that union. TSI is not what you're used to — but it can be

You took balloon rides in Bubble Bobble™...
Now take some quarter rides with

SNOW BROS.™



Can you complete the 50 Snowy Scenes?

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effective when it comes to touting industry efforts and garnering a raised public image, sharing promotion ideas or soliciting input *from* locations. Input like what's going on to be printed in our September edition on the results of our location owner/operator survey. You'd be amazed what a majority of location owners say about pricing per play.

Regarding the inference that AMOA did not know of TSI's intent to announce the upcoming expo in New Orleans, we do receive the organization's press releases. Usually, that action implies a request for publication, which was accommodated accordingly. And at this writing, TSI has applied for membership within AMOA as well.

The bottom line is, yes, operators are going to have those hard-case locations that will demand specific games only. We sympathize — TSI receives its fair share of demands for advertising insertions contingent upon editorial trade-offs. Some times, we have to say no. Unfortunately, these situations only result in losses for all involved.

As the recent joint AMOA/AAMA Government Affairs Conference so markedly demonstrated, working together produces enviable benefits.

Jocelyn Hathaway
Managing Editor
Tavern Sports
Chicago, Illinois

[Readers: our brother Steve Piantieri opened an interesting window here. No one who's been in this business a while misunderstands his motives in wanting to keep "the news of the coin machine industry within the coin machine industry." On the other hand, Joe Schumacker makes a telling point as a location owner, saying 'We decide who to share this income with. . .' Then location magazine editor Jocelyn Hathaway believes her publication is filling up a communications gap. Each position has merits, and each has opponents. RePlay *will continue its policy of not soliciting subscriptions from locations, but will honor those that come in unsolicited. Half-baked? It's a gray world. And Jocelyn. . . where'd you get all those operator subscribers from? ed]*

To Steve Piantieri:

I sympathize with you but I don't feel *RePlay* or any other publication is wrong. A location owner, or anyone for that matter, can walk into a distributor's office, pick up a publication and send for a subscription as an "operator." He can tell the distributor he's starting a route or opening an arcade. In other words, "give him a line of bull and get the information needed." The distributor has two choices, but can't take a chance because the person could be telling the truth.

Obviously, the distributor knows the product cost but "must he tell the operator his cost?" It seems that every operator knows the distributor's cost anyway. Why? It's the way the industry seems to function today. The operator "gets to see everything, hear everything and told everything."

I've just begun my 45th year in this sweet business and I pray for many more. I have gone through the peaks and valleys and I really know both. My wish for you is that this problem should be the deepest valley you will ever encounter in or out of this business.

Respectfully,
Larry Berke
Jaleco
Northbrook, Illinois

ABOUT 45 SINGLES

To the Editor:

Let's cut through the fog on the 7" issue. I'm sure that most of you know that for years, the 7" product was fully returnable. If your local one-stop didn't sell it, then they returned it and the record company "ate" the return. Unfortunately, this system was abused for years. After all, there was no penalty for returns, and it was to the one-stop's benefit to always have enough product to sell.

With the record companies absorbing huge losses on the 7" product (for years), it's no wonder that they question the benefit of making them. Since the 7" single accounts for less than 5% of sales of a hit (compared to cassette singles), it seems logical that a company would concentrate on product that represents the other 95% and drop the less profitable line.

However, they didn't drop the 7" record. A&M lead the way with a one-way, no-return policy on their 1400 series. It seems to be working, since most of the other major labels have followed suit. The companies now pass the risk onto the one-stop and we must buy smart so we don't end up with extra product.

I must commend the record companies for their support by continuing to press the 7" single during the transition period from vinyl to CD jukeboxes. The record companies have found a profitable no-risk way to keep the product coming.

Since they continue to support the jukebox operators who serve millions of listeners weekly, my biggest question is this: are they going to press the hits we really need (the super stars?). Who knows, someone sitting at that barstool may like the song he hears and buy the CD? (Record company wins again, no?)

Terry Hopple
President
Music Operators Service
Fullerton, California

Dear Sir:

All we're hearing is about unlicensed jukeboxes. What about the guy playing his stereo. Is he in violation of AMOA?

Danny Edwards
Entertainment Outlet
Tulsa, Oklahoma

[Dan: Only jukeboxes come under the "protection" of what you call the "AMOA." Hi-fis with multiple speakers, record-spinning live deejays, live bands and just about every other form of music apart from the jukebox have to be licensed by the societies in a one-on-one method. We don't. We only have to file prearranged paper. And in that, at least, we have the better part of "music licensing." ed]

The Future Rides On This Flight.

Ask your authorized FABTEK distributor for details or call FABTEK at ***(206) 882-1093.***

A flash of hope fills the sky as RAI DEN thunders into combat against the aliens. It's all or nothing in this exciting fight in flight for Earth's survival!

- *Challenging one or simultaneous two-player action*
- *Excitement builds through eight stages of combat to the final confrontation against the alien command battleship*
- *Hidden power-up items increase fighting power and arsenal with more bullets, lasers, missiles and bombs*
- *Intense graphics and special effects engage players in the action*
- *Second player buy-in at any time*
- *Game continuation mode*

Watch your earnings take off as RAI DEN flies into the final showdown.

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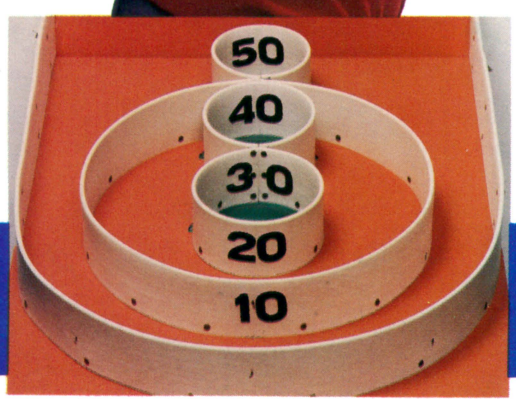

The Newest Concept In High Profit Kiddie Redemption Games from Betson Enterprises...

Skee-Toss, B.C.® It's the irresistable appeal of Skee-Ball dressed up with an exciting new prehistoric-theme scoreboard! Lovable dinosaurs... goofy cavemen... erupting volcanoes... action sound effects... synthesized voice. Skee-Toss, B.C.® attracts kids like a magnet, promotes total involvement, and keeps them coming back again and again.

- Vibrant prehistoric graphics combined with synthesized speech, music and, sound effects for maximum child appeal
- Operator adjustable pricing, payouts and ball selection (3, 6, or 9 per game)
- 3/4", 7-ply birch plywood construction for durability and long life
- State-of-the-art Deltronics ticket dispenser
- All Skee-Toss, B.C.® parts are interchangeable with the original Skee-Ball to minimize parts replacement and repair costs
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NEWS DIGEST

JUKE LICENSE DEADLINE EXTENDED TO AUG. 1

The IRS may hold their April 15 tax deadline secure, but the music performing rights societies showed some good will by extending the original June-1-drop-dead date for filing 1990 jukebox licenses to Aug. 1; amnesty for any previous non-complier (unless he's being sued) was extended as well. While the AMOA (which helped to get the extension) says it's welcome, they also warn unlicensed operators not to abuse the "grace period" (rumors are that ASCAP, BMI, etc. are about to field 2,000 additional "policemen" who will look for unstickered jukeboxes, and this time out, they could get real nasty).

Plans are underway to notify locations that own their own jukeboxes about the new fees. The idea is to get as many registered by Aug. 1 as possible, since the fees will come down in years to come if a set number are licensed this year **(Wally Bohrer** said if the same number is licensed this year as last, the fee savings to the industry will amount to around $250,000 under the new fees). See more details on **page 24.**

WARNING: By the wording in the new license agreement, the performing societies have the right to negotiate fees directly with location owners if they find the box there unlicensed. After Aug. 1, any ASCAP, SESAC or BMI rep finding an unstickered box has the authority to exact his "normal" license money from the location itself. Considering that three different agreements can be exacted, you're talking a lot more money, as well as a load of embarassment for the operator who missed his cue.

NAMCO BUYS ATARI'S ARCADE CHAIN (40) WHILE W.B BUYS NAMCO'S FACTORY SHARES

Namco, Ltd., the prominent Japanese manufacturer and operating company that's been a major shareholder in **Atari Games,** has purchased the entire 40-store Atari Operations, Inc. arcade chain and simultaneously sold its shares in the gameworks to **Warner Communications.** Warner had been a shareholder in Atari Games (which included both the factory and the arcade network) and is now the majority owner of the factory only. The Atari arcade chain has gamerooms located in the Southeast and Southwest. Namco, now the sole owner of this large network, will probably relocate its U.S. operations base to another site in Northern California. The chain's chief, **Kevin Hayes,** continues to pilot the network.

With Namco completely out of the Atari Games picture, it basically means that this Japanese firm has opted for operating in the U.S. rather than game manufacturing (the Tengen home video software division remains a wholly-owned entity of Atari Games). It is also interesting that three of the biggest American arcade chains (Atari, Aladdin's Castle and Time-Out) have all changed ownership in recent times. By the way, **Masaya Nakamura,** Namco's President, moved up to the Chairman's slot at the firm June 28. **Tadashi Manabe** became the new President.

AMOA EXPO '90 SOLD OUT! SRO IN NEW ORLEANS

All 682 booths for **AMOA's Expo '90** were **sold out** by Memorial Day. There's now a waiting list for any possible openings at the show's site: **Oct. 25-27** at the **New Orleans Convention Center.** Tradesters will stay at any of three nearby hotels: the Hyatt Regency New Orleans, the New Orleans Marriott and the Sheraton New Orleans. Association members get free admission badges (how many badges depends on your membership category). If you're an AMOA member who's exhibiting at the show, you also get some free badges on top of that. Additional member badges may be purchased at $30 each before Sept. 1, or $40 each thereafter. You can get discount fares on American (call 800/433-1790 and ask for file number S13ZOKS) or Delta (800/241-6760; file number R0628). For more information, call Registration Supervisor **Laura Maione** at AMOA headquarters: 312/644-6610.

AMOA
Amusement & Music Operators Association

AAMA MAKES PROGRESS ON EQUIPMENT SAFETY APPROVALS

The industry is making progress on the issue of meeting government safety regulations. Some 20 officials of AAMA, the manufacturer-distributor association, met with officials of the ARL (Applied Research Lab, Miami, Fla.) on May 24 to discuss the industry's needs for product safety testing of supplies and component parts. Idea is to get the standard types of individual elements approved in advance, so that all games built from these elements thereafter would automatically be ARL-approved. AAMA hopes to have this problem licked as early as Jan. 1. Cabinets and kits would be submitted independently. Testing procedures will be negotiated by a special AAMA committee chaired by Sega's **Howell Ivy;** other firms represented on the committee include Premier, Midway, Williams, Data East, SNK and Atari. AAMA members will get lower rates for ARL testing and approval.

Since testing is underway, the City of Chicago has given the trade a six-month extension (till October) for safety approvals of games. The request for a "grandfather clause" to waive current equipment from safety approvals was denied by the city. Meantime, AAMA has asked Chicago officials for a clarification of their ordinance: it seems to require $15 ground fault interruptors on arcade games only . . . but not games in street stops.

DIRECTORY IN PRODUCTION

The industry's supreme reference book is in prep and will be presented to subscribers the first week of September. The **Directory** is a combination phone book of factories and dealers, a catalog of current product and a parts source. Dated September, it moves back to its traditional post-Labor Day time slot.

A mailing to companies listed in last year's Directory will go out (for revision) early this month. Anyone (repeat ANYONE) not listed last time has to review the way listings are done and send by mail or fax his own company listing as he'd like it to appear. The issue will also feature tons of product advertising to further flesh up the functional use of this dog-eared "dictionary" of coinbiz.

AAMA MEXICAN SHOW SLATED

AAMA's **Latin American Amusement, Music & Games Exposition** is set for Tuesday and Wednesday **July 10-11** at the U.S. Trade Center in Mexico City. Due to the heat, show hours are 4-9PM both days. A pinball seminar runs from 8-9PM Tuesday. On Wednesday, a jukebox seminar runs 2-4PM while a video seminar runs from 8-9PM. "As of June 15, we have 29 exhibiting companies and approximately 30 booths," said officials at Bill Glasgow, Inc., the trade show management firm which is running the affair. Exhibitors include firms from A to W (Atari to Wico). $15 covers two-day admission. We'll carry a full report on AAMA's July expo in our August issue. Meantime, get an advance look at what's doing South of the Border as we profile Nintendo's Mexican distributor, **Mexel,** in a feature on **page 103.**

AMOA BUDGET TOPS $2 MILLION; LOBBYING IS TOP PRIORITY

AMOA's 1990 budget tops $2 million, according to association leaders who publicly discussed these figures at a recent state association convention. AMOA Secretary-elect **Craig Johnson** stated that this year, the group is spending $50,000 helping states legalize video poker; $110,000 on government relations (including Washington lobbying and — presumably — additional poker promotion efforts); $100,000 on the Jukebox Promotion Committee (some of this will come from the performing rights societies in future years); $100,000 on the Pinball Promotion Committee (most donated by manufacturers); $25,000 on the National Dart Assn.; $83,000 on educational programs; and $687,000 on expo site rental.

"Obviously the total far exceeds our $1.2 million 1987 budget, adjusted for inflation," Johnson said. "We've grown immensely with new programs and new ideas. We're taking a very aggressive stance to promote the joint interests of operators, manufacturers and distributors throughout this industry." AMOA toppers **Wally Bohrer & Gene Urso** expressed the wish that trade journals would do more to publicize AMOA's budget so that members and other tradesters could better appreciate the scope of AMOA's activities, and the depth of its commitment. We'll try to provide a detailed look at the AMOA budget in our next issue.

PREMIER'S *VEGAS* IS SECOND IN SERIES OF 'STREET' PINS

Shipping now, Premier's latest game in its "SL Line" of pins (specially targeted for the street) is ***Vegas.*** Like the earlier SL title *Silver Slugger,* it offers "classic" gameplay and will cost hundreds of dollars less than earlier Premier pins, said the firm. "We expect the simplified gameplay of *Vegas* to provide strong earnings, but few service problems and no ball hangups thanks to our Zero Defects Program," touted Premier execs. The player finds himself in a Las Vegas casino, trying his luck at different styles of gaming. Various targets and shot combinations symbolically represent slots, cards, etc. For example, if you complete the three jokers, a "select a feature" lights up, allowing the player to choose a game mode. If you light up five consecutive cards (hit five consecutive targets), you set up the extra ball shot. Consecutive shots on the "dice high roller" features builds up to a million points. And, in an industry first, the game offers a "super jackpot" of fifty million points. The all-new LEDS Electronic Roto Unit (patent applied for) changes the cards, too!

ThunderJaws™

When it's not safe to go into the water. And the crowd can't wait to dive in.

If one Great White lurking in the waters can become a smash hit, imagine the feeding frenzy when you have giant cybernetic sharks! And mutant mantas, bionic wolves and lizard ladies.

These are just a few of the menacing monsters starring in THUNDERJAWS — the latest, greatest undersea adventure from Atari Games.

Its storyline is spellbinding; its sound effects, sizzling; its graphics, stunning. In short, it's everything you expect from the premier manufacturer of arcade entertainment.

Dive in. Before you get flooded with customers.

THUNDERJAWS comes to you in kit form.

Kit components include:

- Game PCB
- Joystick and fire button assemblies
- Universal artwork fits both 19" and 25" cabinets; includes monitor bezel, artwork for header, control panel and side decals.
- JAMMA harness

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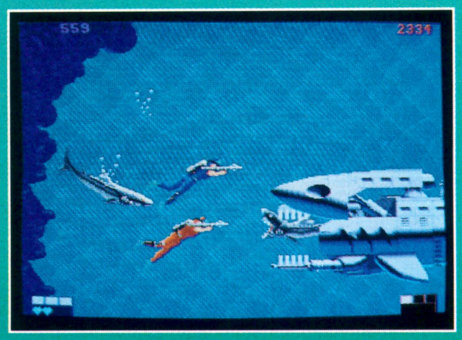
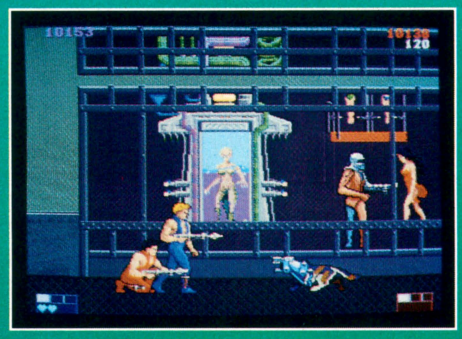


Dive through Cybershark-infested waters to locate a submerged laboratory.



Rescue beautiful maidens who are being transformed into lizard monsters!

Escape from dangerous underwater caverns wracked by powerful seaquakes.

A deadly underground volcanic area erupts with heart-pounding action and excitement.

ROCHETTI FORMS DOUBLE PLAY, RE-ISSUES *OP. THUNDERBOLT*

Ben Rochetti, most recently VP of Production & Marketing for Taito America Corp., has opened his own new video game company called **Double Play, Inc.** and is already well into building and shipping *Operation Thunderbolt,* the late 1989 video gun released by Taito and now under license to the new firm. Double Play headquarters in the Partec facility in Schiller Park, Ill. where final assembly of *Thunderbolt* and other games to come is completed (cabinets are purchased from Linc Smith). The purpose of the new firm is to design, manufacture and market games, although Rochetti told *RePlay* he will also license product and release same in either dedicated or kit form.

The accent at the moment seems to be re-issuing games no longer in production at the original manufacturer but still commanding some demand from the field. Rochetti said he's dealing with a limited number of distributors at present "to keep things streamlined" but accepts calls from others for product (all games, by the way, will sport the Double Play moniker rather than the original manufacturer's). Despite his tenure with Taito, Rochetti is best known in the midwest as a sales rep with Empire/Bally's Chicago outlet. He came into the industry in 1969 as a salesman for Specialty Sales (NSM dealers) and later worked for Stern Electronics, Wico and Ideal Darts besides Empire. Double Play, Inc. is located at 10517 United Pkwy., Schiller Park, IL 60176. Their phone is 708/678-9506.

SEGA SHIPS *MOONWALKER*

As hinted in February, Sega USA will release a coin-op version of ***Moonwalker,*** which the firm's **Lenore Sayers** touts as being "designed by **Michael Jackson.**" The home version of this title featured digitized images of Jackson doing his trademarked dancing moves, along with instrumental versions of three of his famous tunes on the soundtrack. Lenore says the coin-op version will be a three-player dedicated upright, and somewhat different

from the home version displayed at the winter CES. If we know Sega, that means more depth, more excitement, and more earning power! Testing now, production units of the game ship in July, she added.

NEO•GEO GETS GOOD GRADES

By the very fact that SNK's new ***New•Geo*** is a "video system," some have wondered how the product would perform at the distributors, but more importantly, at the location. In brief: would operators buy and would players put money into another entry into the patch-quilt video system concept? The answer is not only "yes" but seems to be a unanimous "yes" from the folks we've contacted. For example, Kansas operator **Mark Blum** chalked it up as number one at one of his arcades on a recent "chart" mailing (and Blum has many new and older games at that site). In addition, Nickels & Dimes, Aladdin's and Time-Out have all put some out and distributors like Betson NJ, Brady, American Vending (a new SNK dealer) and Progressive Games seem to be doing well in the operator order book.

When called with the good news, SNK prexy **Paul Jacobs** replied: "I know, it's working. I get these collection reports too and I've yet to see a bad one." But why is this multi-game video system finding favor when some others haven't? Is it the quality of the games, the price, or both?

Too early to tell anything except that their first two software packages *(Nam-1975* and *Baseball Stars Professional)* seem to have legs . . . and, this software came free of charge to operators (two additional free games called *Top Players Golf* and *Magician Lord* shipped out mid-June to initial buyers of the *Neo•Geo* master cabinet). Anyone who buys a *Neo•Geo* now receives all four software packages when he buys one or more master cabinets, but this offer is limited in time. Additional new software ships in July (which will be charged for), which includes a fighter called *Ninja Combat,* a driver called *Riding Hero* and a "spy game" named *Cyberlip.* Come AMOA showtime, five more titles will be unveiled, making for a total of 12 games in the library (the machines as constructed offer players a choice of four different titles).

NO LONGER INTERESTED

An indirect (but important) crimp in the future of the 45 single came from *Billboard Magazine* when this supreme record trade paper advised its one-stop sales reporters they would no longer call for data regarding sales to jukebox operators. We called their chart director **Mike Ellis** who said, "We're only interested now in charting sales to final consumers." So, even if our industry theoretically bought a million of one title, that sale wouldn't even register on the **Hot 100.** Speaking of this chart, fewer than half of the singles listed on a recent sheet were available as 45 vinyl records.

MUSIC NOTES: X-RATED LYRICS DOWN; CDS UP

If you've been watching or reading the news at all lately, you know some members of a rap music band called **"2 Live Crew"** were arrested recently on obscenity charges for performing their songs in Florida concerts. Also, some Texas retail music stores were reportedly warned by police not to sell the group's hit album, entitled "As Nasty As They Wanna Be." Which raises the question: can operators be hurt legally because of dirty lyrics on jukebox records? AMOA's attorney **Roy Wolff** thinks it's "highly unlikely" that operators would be bothered, because 1. the record labels are really responsible; and 2. the music industry has "deeper pockets" than the jukebox industry, which makes them more attractive targets for lawsuits. AMOA Exec VP **John Schumacher** added that AMOA has no plans to issue an advisory to jukebox operators at this time.

In other music news, cassettes are losing ground in retail music stores. CDs will probably be the top retail sales music format by mid-1991, according to a front page story in the June 23 issue of *Billboard.* Tower Records, a leading chain, said CDs are already their top seller, accounting for 57.5% of dollar volume, with cassettes pulling in 24.6%. CDs also lead tapes in Tower's unit sales. Vinyl LPs account for just 2% of Tower's album sales.

In the future, terrorists rule the skies and the seas.

When special, top-secret packages like mutant virus strains and doomsday devices absolutely, positively have to get through, the only courier governments can call on is you — codename: Hydra.

With nine missions to complete, success rests on your ability to skillfully drive your trusty Hydracraft, using its supercharged speed and firepower to blast past enemy forces like boats, jet skis, zeppelins, choppers, fighters, hovercraft and halftracks.

For your customers, Hydra delivers a driving-flying-shooting game that explodes with fast-paced action, heart-pounding excitement and incredible animation on stunning, digitized landscapes.

In doing so, Hydra delivers something equally exciting to you: profits.

When it absolutely, positively has to get there, the only courier to call is Hydra.

SOMETIMES AIR MAIL JUST CAN'T GET THROUGH.

HYDRA™

The waterways are filled with enemy craft; the skies rain missiles from deadly fighters.

Mini-upright cabinet
H: 71" (180 cm)
D: 34" (86 cm)
W: 24" (61 cm)
Wt: 225 lbs (102 kg)

HYDRA comes to you in a sleek mini-upright cabinet or in kit form. Universal kit includes game PCB, flight controller, boost button assemblies, artwork that fits both 19" and 25" cabinets (monitor bezel, artwork for header, control panel and side decals), and JAMMA harness.

A boost button sends your Hydracraft into the air to take on choppers and air balloons.

ATARI® GAMES

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NEW "ACTIVIST" AAC ASSN. IS "THERE" FOR SOCAL OPS

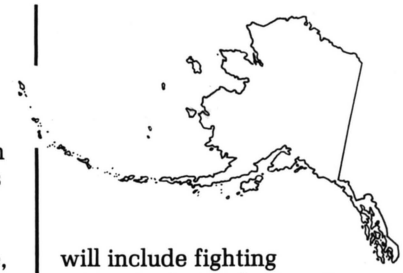
Founded by **Bob Snyder** and **Dave Jackson** (among others), California's new Southern Amusement Assn. of California (AAC) has been growing like an oak. The 50-member group (maybe more at this reading) has tackled L.A. county machine taxation, provided solid info on insurance alternatives and even has a newsletter combining functional news with chatty gossip.

They meet fairly regularly, drawing mostly Southern California operators, and recently gathered at **Peter Betti's** place on Pico (Betson Pacific) to address such "now" topics as the L.A. license (they've discovered a money-saving idea) and the ABC's new authority to preclude machines from carry-out liquor locations when ownership changes hands.

New officers suggested for the incoming term are **Jerry Monday** for prexy, **Snyder** for veep, **Dale Moore** for treasurer and **Gelly Borromeo** for corresponding secretary. Jackson himself will always be there (his phone remains the hot line; dial 818/775-1935 for help and also if you want to join; dues are easy while services are large).

ALASKA OPS FORM STATE ASSN. TO PURSUE VIDPOKER, CIG ISSUES

"It looks very good that Alaska operators have a state association going," said AMOA prexy **Jack Kerner,** who met with a dozen Alaskan operators in mid-June. Kerner estimates that 30 to 40 operators populate the state, many accessible only by airplane, train and snowshoe. The group's tentative title is the Alaska AMOA; national AMOA board member **John Knox** could be the first president. Kerner said the new association's agenda



will include fighting "America's toughest anti-tobacco laws." (And we thought Alaska was the last great outpost of the Wild West.) Video poker legalization could also be a goal.

FLORIDA'S BLUE SKY ARTISTS RUNNING COIN-OP SCAMS

Would you buy a *Capcom Bowling* game for $5,300? Unfortunately, somebody did. It's a great game, but its market value is considerably lower, of course. Seems an office furniture salesman in Florida came into some money and always dreamed of owning his own business. He saw a "business opportunity" ad in a local newspaper and paid $5,300 each for three games. Operator **John Crestani** (Just 4 Fun, Sarasota) tried to help the victim after the scam. "I see these advertisements in the paper every day," John added. "These unscrupulous types promise video games will make $800 per week! It just burns me up to know how people are being taken advantage of." *Newsweek* recently reported Florida scams are flourishing — everything from phony real estate to fraudulent finances. Calling the Sunshine State "a con man's paradise," the publication warned of fake "loan officers" who promise credit to troubled businesses. You pay a big, fat, non-refundable fee. . . and never see a dime in credit.

MICROPROSE TO SHIP REVISED *F-15* LATE JULY OR EARLY AUG.

This innovative Maryland firm says samples of their hi-tech, one-player dedicated upright flight simulator video, ***F-15 Strike Eagle,*** is expected to ship in late July or early August. "We're over-subscribed for them, and many of the first shipment will go to Europe for cash flow reasons," stated MicroProse President **Bill Stealey.** "That's because Europeans provide a letter of credit which translates into cash right away, enabling us to build the next lot. The second week's shipment will go to the U.S." MicroProse expects to have 12 U.S. distribs with exclusive territories.

The trade is looking forward to seeing how players take to this 25" monitor game, with its 3D polygon graphics which allow you to "fly" all around an object, not just move along a fixed, pre-programmed, two-dimensional track. "Some of our distributors were concerned that not every player can meet the challenge of ultra-realistic jet flight on the first go-round," Stealy added. "After three weeks watching tests in an arcade mall, we've added a beginner's mode which will allow a novice to fly around, shoot at targets and have a great time. Then you can graduate to the 'Ace Mode,' which offers real 3D flight. Or, you can pay a higher vend and jump into 3D right away."

CORRECTION:

THE BETSON FOLKS HAVE IT

Contrary to what was reported in last month's "News Digest" section (pg. 16), R.H. Belam (Hempstead, N.Y.) does **not** have the Romstar line. **Betson Enterprises** represents that product on an exclusive basis in both N.Y. and N.J.

DOLLAR COINS POSSIBLE, BUT TOUGH SELL

Congress finally got around to holding hearings on dollar coins on May 23. **Nye Stevens,** a division director from the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO), was the sole witness before a House subcommittee. Based on GAO's own studies, plus consultation with the U.S. Mint, Treasury Dept., etc., Stevens told the committee that dollar coins could save taxpayers a whopping **$315 million** per year. . . but that American citizens would resist the change from dollar bills. Bottom line: the GAO recommended Congress proceed with dollar coins **only** if somebody with clout in the White House (maybe the Treasury Secretary) goes to bat for the idea. Calling dollar coins "our top priority," AAMA leaders met in Washington in late June to recruit a White House ally for just that purpose. Will dollar coins pass? "Not this year," said AAMA EVP **Bob Fay.** "Nothing controversial passes in an election year. But we have strong support — as of mid-June, we're up to 128 House sponsors and 28 Senate backers — and I believe we can get passage." Get more details in our story on **page 29.**

LIGHTENING STRIKES WITH TAITO'S

THUNDER FOX

The sky is the limit in Taito's action packed game, Thunder Fox. This new multi-phase game will test the game player's skill and quickness. Thunder Fox offers demanding challenges on land, water, and in the air as well as hard hitting hand to hand combat throughout the game. But in order to achieve success the player must be resourceful.

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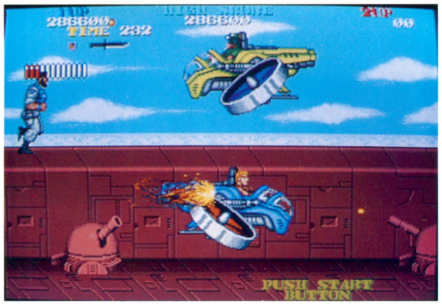
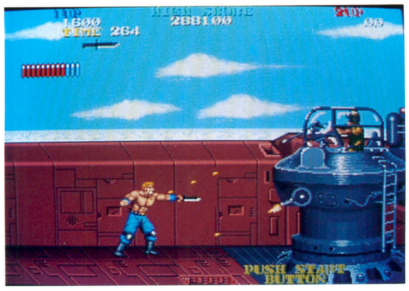
THUNDER FOX

Aside from deadly flying kicks and punishing somersault attacks, Thunder Fox heroes must be on the lookout for more powerful weapons in their attempt to even overpowering odds. Thunder Fox heroes always have their trusty knife but can pick up a variety of assault weapons. Hand guns, machine guns, bazookas, hand grenades, and destructive flame throwers can be obtained in order to aid Thunder Fox heroes in their quest to defuse a terrorist outfit.

While walking through a thunderstorm, the anti-terrorist unit, code named Thunder Fox, must be aware of blitzing lightening bolts from the sky that can strike as quickly as the heroes themselves. The anti-terrorist unit must progress through a rigorous five stage sequence that includes land battles, sea battles, and air battles. Jeeps, marine jets, and autogyros can be used to help the anti-terrorist unit battle the enemy. The Thunder Fox unit must endure the five stages, invade the terrorists' base, and defeat the final boss in order to complete their mission.





With quick non-stop action, state of the art graphics, two player capabilities, and a *continue play option* available, Thunder Fox will surely be a favorite at any location.

Game features include:

- **— Scroll action screen**
- **— Two player and Continue Play Option**
- **— Eight-way joystick action**
- **— Three action buttons**
- **— Special attack capability with button combinations**
- **— Final conflict pits player against player.**

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On Your Mark...

by Marcus Webb

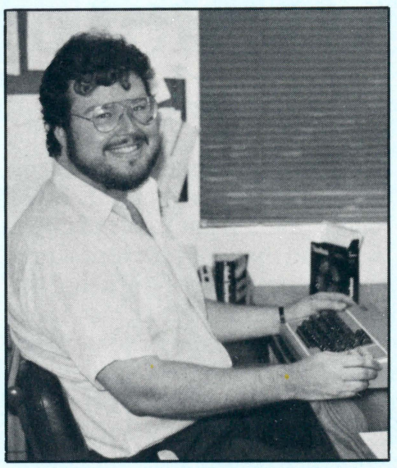
Publishing earnings figures is a touchy business, especially where video pokers are concerned. Still, the numbers are becoming well known. One person who's never asked anybody to bury information is Phil Benson. He's a forthright fellow and a true gentleman. He's also chairman of AMOA's "Truth in Amusement" pro-gaming committee. As Phil says, "The numbers are in the public domain." Let's talk about them.

Before we do, though, please notice: the information printed below is fact, not opinion. This specific article is not advocating pokers, nor criticizing them. We merely note that gambling fever is abroad in the land. . . and some elements of our industry have sure caught it.

Legal video pokers in Montana take nothing larger than a $5 bill. They took in a total of $112 per citizen annually for 1988-89 (or just over $2 per week, per person, times 52 weeks). Montana operators expect 1989-90 vidpoker income (after paying the winners) to total $105 million, of which operators and locations will keep 85% (15% goes to taxes).

South Dakota operators earned an average of $584 per poker machine as of May 5; by now their weekly average could top $600. The state's 3,200 machines grossed $8 million in their first eight months.

Fact: whether you love pokers or hate them, these numbers have had a tremendous effect on our industry. Practically all state operator associations — including those in "conservative" states — are thinking seriously about following Montana's and South Dakota's lead. Many state associations are actually going forward with the legalization attempt, or will soon. Some distributors are actively helping these lobbying campaigns, too (they want the right to sell video poker machines).



Fact: at the national level, AMOA is spending $50,000 this year alone to help state associations legalize pokers. They're working closely with NAGRA (National Association of Gaming Regulators) to create and distribute guidelines for drafting good poker laws. AMOA will send top people to an upcoming world gaming conference in London, etc., etc., etc.

Fact: AAMA, for its part, sent Exec Director Bob Fay to the latest NAGRA convention, where he made a very effective presentation on behalf of coin-op video poker. (NAGRA's state-level bureaucrats really perked up when a former FBI agent took to the podium.) Will AAMA take a formal stand for or against gambling? It's unknown at presstime, but bear this in mind: it's also a fact that some major Japanese video game makers are heavily into gambling equipment production, back in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Okay, those are the facts. Now here's the opinion. The time for discreet sharing of data with "insiders only" is over. Poker legalization is today's hot issue . . . but too often, it's being discussed without the facts on the table, and that's bad. For good or ill, poker is too important to leave to a few VIPs making policy behind closed doors. That's why this column "did the numbers," and why next month's RePlay *will feature a comprehensive special report on the video poker market.*

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Extension

juke license deadline moved back to August 1st

June 1, 1990 was the stated deadline for operators to file their jukebox license applications with the Jukebox License Office. However, on May 29, the performing rights societies agreed with AMOA to extend that deadline to Aug. 1, 1990.

They didn't cite reasons for the extension, but it's assumed they felt the operators had insufficient time to complete and file their applications and also that some operators and locations (which own their own machines) hadn't even heard about the new fee schedule by the original deadline time.

Amnesty for any previously-unlicensed operator was also extended until Aug. 1, provided that the individual wasn't sued by one or more of the performing societies, with litigation currently in progress.

The new "voluntary" jukebox license agreement was announced by the societies and AMOA in late March. Since then, info packs containing license blanks, a question/answer brochure and other pertinent materials have been mailed to AMOA member operators and to state associations and jukebox distributors for disbursal to all operators, previously licensed before or not.

Now, AMOA may include a collection of record one-stops on its list to receive mailed packages of applications and explanatory literature. There is also the possibility that the Jukebox Licensing Office may issue a press release listing the new fee schedule to *Games & Leisure* and *Tavern Sports* magazines (both of which go directly to bar owners) apprising them of the fact that single jukebox owners have to pay $275 per year to the JLO to license the music on their machines.

As previously reported, the fee schedule mandates $275 for the first jukebox license, $55 for the second through the tenth and then $48 ad infinitum. Anyone caught by one or more of the performing society "policemen" with unlicensed machines after the new deadline is subject to suit (and the cost can be considerable).

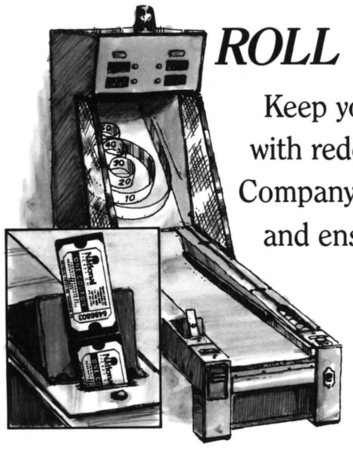
The place to contact for applications and also to send completed applications with checks is: Jukebox Licensing Office, P.O. Box 5458, New York, NY 10185-0044. Operators with questions may phone 800/955-5853. This deadline extention is welcome news on one hand, but also an obvious attempt to gain as many licenses as possible before societies go into their "search and sue" mode. Therefore, it's imperative that all jukebox operators take advantage of this grace period to sign up their machines and have done with this sordid business.

Dock Ringo, speaking for AMOA, said, "We're pleased and encouraged with the positive response from the jukebox industry so far, and we hope that this good-will gesture by the performing rights organizations will encourage further compliance with the new jukebox licensing procedure."

Wally Bohrer, who with Ringo and some other AMOA execs helped hammer out the new fee scale, told *RePlay* that if the industry licenses even the same number of jukeboxes this year as it did last, the trade will save around $250,000 under the new sliding scale. He also shared his belief that the performing societies will be sending an additional 2,000 field agents out this year to locate unlicensed jukeboxes and report same to their superiors for possible litigation.

There are industry people "in the know" who firmly believe the societies are going to get "real nasty" about unlicensed boxes this time around, not that they haven't hurt some operators before. As this is now a voluntary license, it's quite possible that one motive for the societies to extend the deadline was to give them even more legal ammunition when they face off in court with unlicensed operators whose possible claim that they "didn't know" or "didn't have enough time to comply" would be severely weakened.

In order to get the latest figures on compliance with the new agreement, *RePlay* waited until its very own last deadline before calling the JLO. Therefore, you'll see this data on Hot Off the Press, the last page composed by this journal each month.



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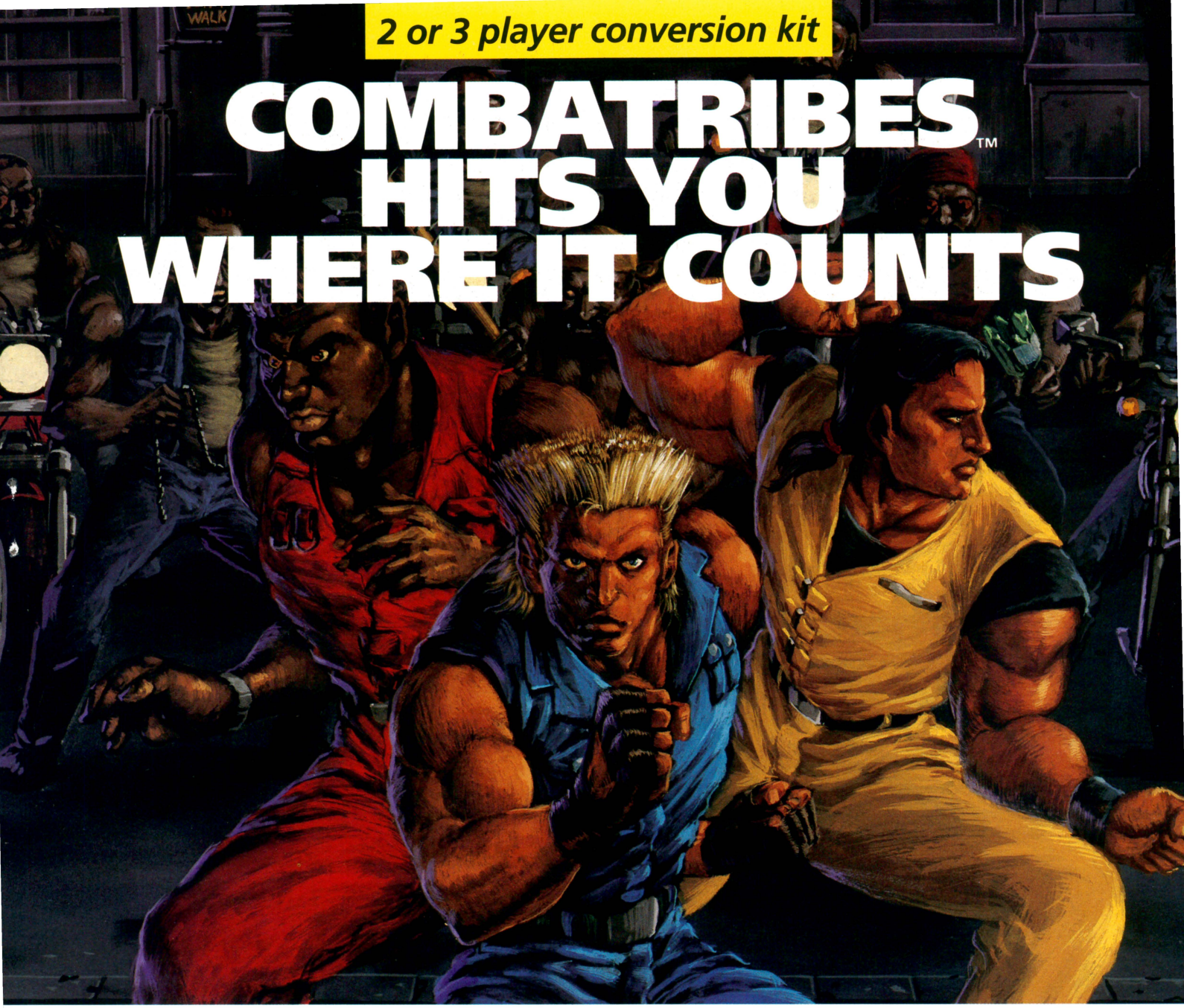

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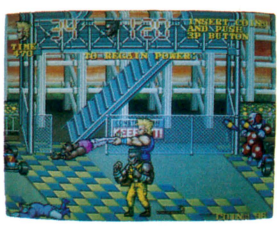

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"What If I Don't License My Jukebox...And Get Caught?"

This article is repeated from the May issue of RePlay since the deadline for jukebox licensing has been extended until August 1. As the first paragraph of this story states, licensing your jukeboxes is voluntary, but just like an innoculation against the measles, "going without" could be fatal.

The new jukebox license setup, they say, is "voluntary." But then, so is getting an inoculation shot against the measles. In both cases, deciding to "go without" could be fatal.

What if you have a jukebox (or several of them), don't sign up for the AMOA-type license, and get caught by a field agent for ASCAP, BMI or SESAC?

Simple. You then have to "cut your own deal" with these three performing rights societies which represent the musicians, composers and music publishers. Each of the societies will charge you on a per-jukebox basis, using their own "formula" to determine the price per box. Their "formula" usually takes into account the size of the location, number of seats, number of speakers, how many nights it's open, etc. (This is the same basic method used to assess other license fees for other forms of musical entertainment in locations.)

How much will your "personally negotiated" jukebox license cost? You could easily wind up paying as much as $600 per jukebox, instead of the (average) $40 per box you *could* have paid, under the AMOA deal. (That's assuming you operate a 50-jukebox music route.)

You can't afford $600 per box, of course. Most jukeboxes don't make that kind of money. So you'll wind up pulling your boxes off the route. And you'll be disqualified from buying the cheaper AMOA-type licenses for two years.

Oh, one more thing: if you're caught without an AMOA-type license, you'll also be subject to copyright infringement fines, because you have broken the law. You publicly performed copyrighted music without permission. That could add up to $10,000 per play, per song.

The way it usually works is this. A performing rights society field agent sits in the location long enough to document that three or four songs were played on your unlicensed jukebox. Now you're liable for $40,000 in fines alone. The societies threaten to take you to court.

Or, they offer to settle out of court, for a percentage of the $40,000 — say, one third. But you have to agree to certain conditions. For instance, providing the societies with a complete list of all your locations. Otherwise, see you in court.

So, friends, if you don't sign up for the new Voluntary Jukebox License, three things will happen: 1. You'll probably be driven out of the jukebox business for two years by the high cost of a "non-voluntary" license. 2. You'll have to pay a big fat settlement cost, plus your attorney's fees. 3. You'll have to give the performing rights societies a complete list of all your jukebox locations.

Now, are you really likely to get caught? Sure you are. Your competitors will turn you in, for one thing. They'll be doing the right thing for the industry, as well as themselves.

"The performing rights societies are waiting for the phones to ring, and they will act," stated AMOA's Dick Hawkins, who helped negotiate the new voluntary agreement. "The societies' field agents weren't very eager to pursue $63 licenses last year, because the financial incentive for each agent was low. But they will be extremely eager to pursue a $600 license."

Hawkins concluded with a grim smile: "Anybody who doesn't license his jukebox is dead in the water. It's a form of rough justice. *Very* rough!"

"Anybody who doesn't license his jukebox is dead in the water. It's a form of rough justice. Very rough."

— Dick Hawkins

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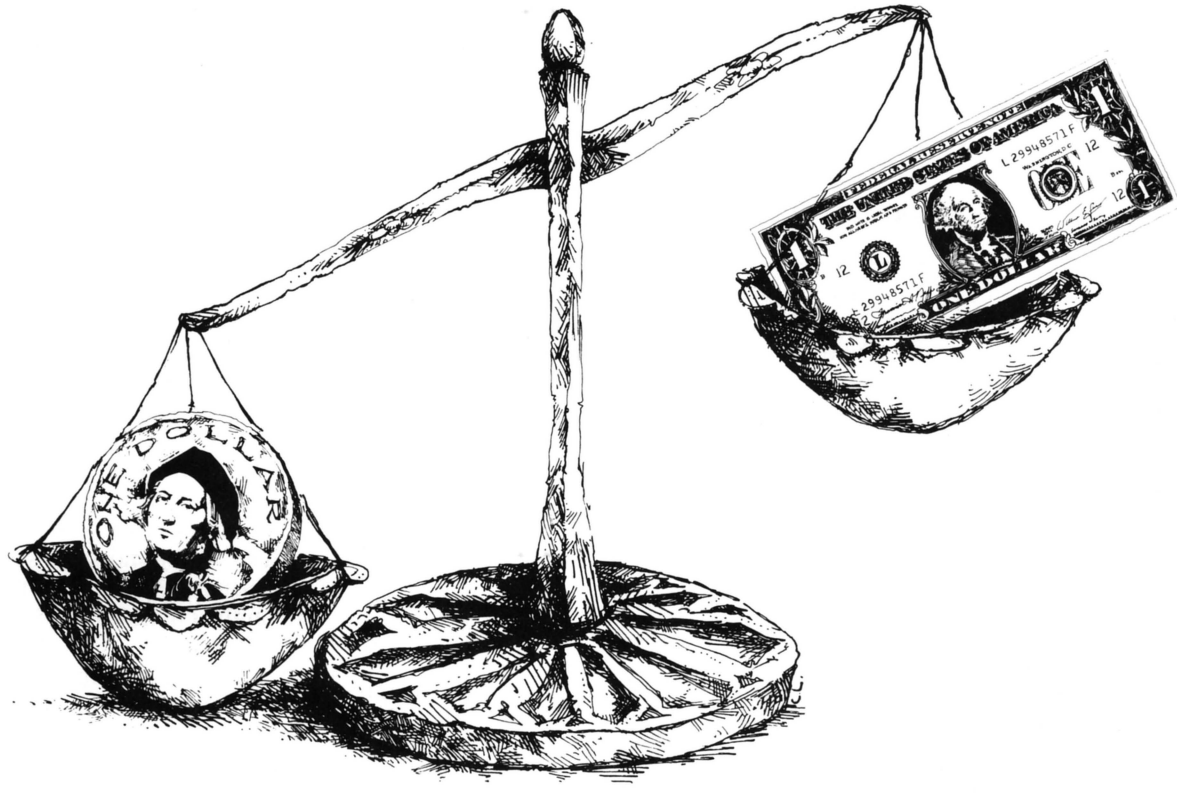

A Currency Affair

Dollar coins are a good idea that will save taxpayers' money. But if you want Joe Citizen to use the new coin, you'd better eliminate the dollar bill.

Problem is, Joe Q. Public isn't exactly storming the streets demanding these changes be made in U.S. currency. In fact, when he first hears about these ideas (creating the coin, killing the bill) Joe Citizen will probably dislike both of them.

To become a reality, the dollar coin needs a "champion" in the White House — ideally the President, maybe the Treasury Secretary — to push it through Congress. The dollar coin also needs a high-powered public education campaign, paid for by Uncle Sam, to overcome expected public opposition.

The good news: such a White House "champion" could probably push dollar coins through the government machinery.

The bad news: it's quite possible no such "champion" will emerge.

Congress finally holds hearings on dollar coins; learns coins could be successful, but strong White House backing is needed

That, in plain English, was the message on May 23 when Congress finally got around to holding its first day of hearings on dollar coins. The hearings lasted just a couple of hours, and only one witness testified. But the "witness" was Nye Stevens, Director of the Government Business Operations Issues Div. (GBOI) of the U.S. General Accounting office (GAO), which means the witness had total credibility with the committee.

The overall impact of Stevens' testimony was probably more positive than negative. To summarize his testimony in a two sentences: dollar coins make good financial sense; they will be difficult, but possible, to accomplish.

If Stevens' assessment is accurate, then the Coin Coalition (dollar coin supporters including AMOA and AAMA) has its work cut out for it: recruit a "champion" in the Bush Administration. AAMA Executive Director Bob Fay, perhaps the industry's single hardest-working dollar coin lobbyist, focused on this part of the GAO testimony. "The industry's next step is to go shopping for a so-called champion," he smiled. "In an upcoming Coin Coalition meeting, slated for June 27, we'll discuss a list of possible candidates for the role . . . then we'll go to work, trying to recruit the right Bush Administration member to our cause!"

COIN-OP WANTS IT . . .

AMOA and AAMA have made dollar coins their top legislative priority for the past two years. Aggressive lobbying by the industry has helped win numerous Congressional sponsors for HR.1068 and S.814, the House and Senate bills which would introduce a new dollar coin into American currency. Based on results in coin-op industries of other countries, the trade believes dollar coins could help raise play prices — and increase industry profitability.

AAMA's latest dollar coin lobbying foray took place June 25-27, when Fay, six manufacturers and one distributor met with key congressmen and some Administration officials in Washington. These industry figures included AAMA President Gil Pollock (Premier), plus NSM's Rus Strahan, Fabtek/Irem's Frank Ballouz, State Sales & Service's Steve Koenigsberg, Nintendo's Al Stone, Dynamo's Bill Rickett, and Coin Controls' Rick Currie.

In his May 23 testimony, GBOI Director Stevens cited a very familiar argument in favor of dollar coins: potential government savings. It's more cost-effective to mint one coin every 30 years, than to print a new bill every 18 months. But whereas the Coin Coalition had estimated a mere $120 million annual savings, GBOI Director Stevens said switching to dollar coins could save a whopping $318 million per year.

. . . BUT JOE PUBLIC DOESN'T

"But [this savings would occur] only if the coin was widely accepted and used," Stevens cautioned. And there's the rub. According to Stevens, the GAO believes American citizens won't take to dollar coins without serious prodding. He told Congress the coin would have to be "imposed" on the public, adding: "We think these savings are unlikely to occur unless the Congress and the Administration jointly resolve . . . to stand up to a *negative public reaction that should be fully anticipated.*" (Emphasis added.)

Spelling out where this "negative reaction" would come from, Stevens said: "A Gallup Survey last month showed that only 15% of the American population would favor abolishing the dollar bill and replacing it with a coin." He added: "Our interviews . . . indicated that public [& business] reaction would be skeptical. Some [groups which handle cash], such as armored car carriers and the banking industry, thought that some of the savings would come at the expense of additional costs being borne by the private sector, particularly coin processing and transportation costs."

The good news in Stevens' caveats was that the GAO backed the idea of eliminating the dollar bill. "Based on the Susan B. Anthony experience, on the lessons learned from foreign governments that have made equivalent conversions, and on public surveys," he said, it seems likely that the dollar coin's success will also depend on Congress and the Bush Administration being strongly committed "to eliminate the dollar note." He added: "A universal belief among those we interviewed was that if a dollar coin and dollar note were both available, people would choose to use the note."

THE POLITICS OF THE ISSUE

The specter of the ill-fated Susan B. Anthony dollar coin (born 1978, died 1979) still haunts the hoped-for "Columbus Dollar Coin." As the GAO noted to Congress in its lengthy written report, also released May 23: "The Susan B. Anthony experience is not conclusive proof that a dollar coin cannot be successful. It does show, however, that if a coin's introduction is not effectively managed, the coin will not be accepted."

Stevens did not sweet-talk Congress with favorable arguments about consumer convenience and the desire of some key elements of the business community for dollar coins. Nor did he discuss the role of inflation, which — in the words of dollar coin supporters — makes "today's dollar equivalent to the quarter of the 1950s."

Stevens didn't talk about these things, because Congress didn't ask

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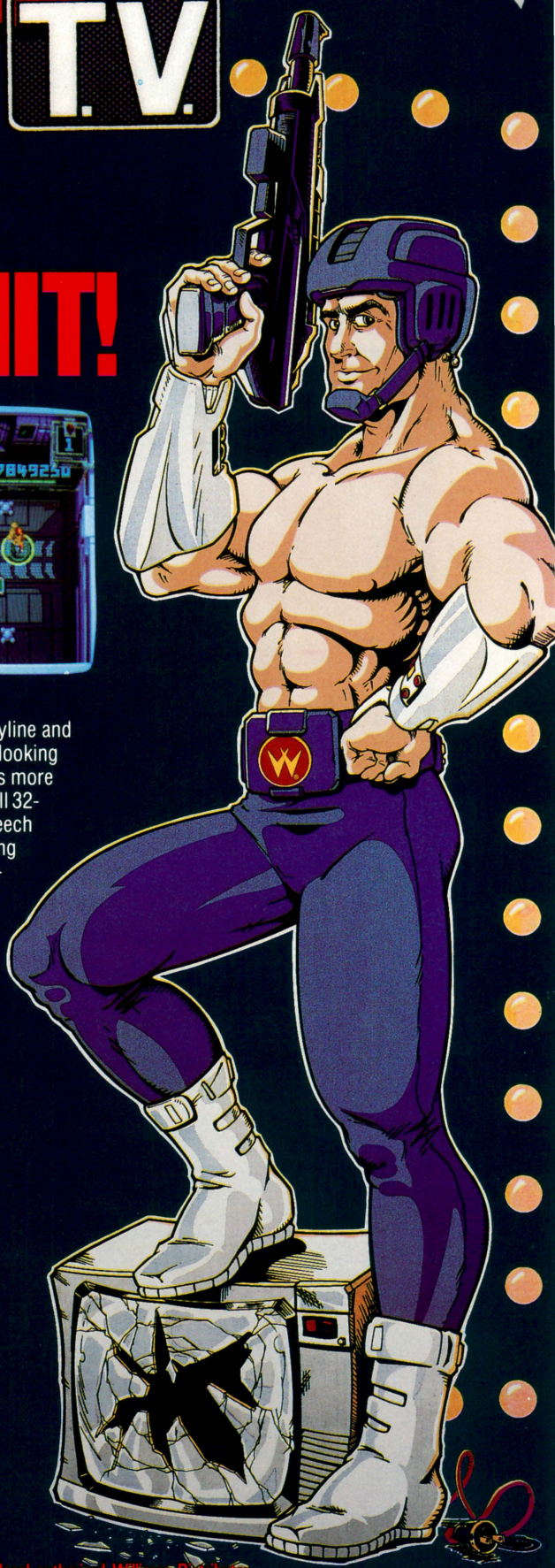

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him to. Those issues are political considerations which Congress wants to evaluate for itself. Congress only asked the GAO to look into "feasibility," and that's what the GAO did.

Director Stevens did tell Congress that other countries which switched from paper to coins had the same basic problems as a U.S. dollar coin: people didn't like the idea at first. However, said Stevens, most of these countries "have parliamentary forms of government, making it easier to impose unpopular changes . . . they have central banking systems, which gives the government more control over the banks . . . and they produce currency and coins on a smaller scale than the United States."

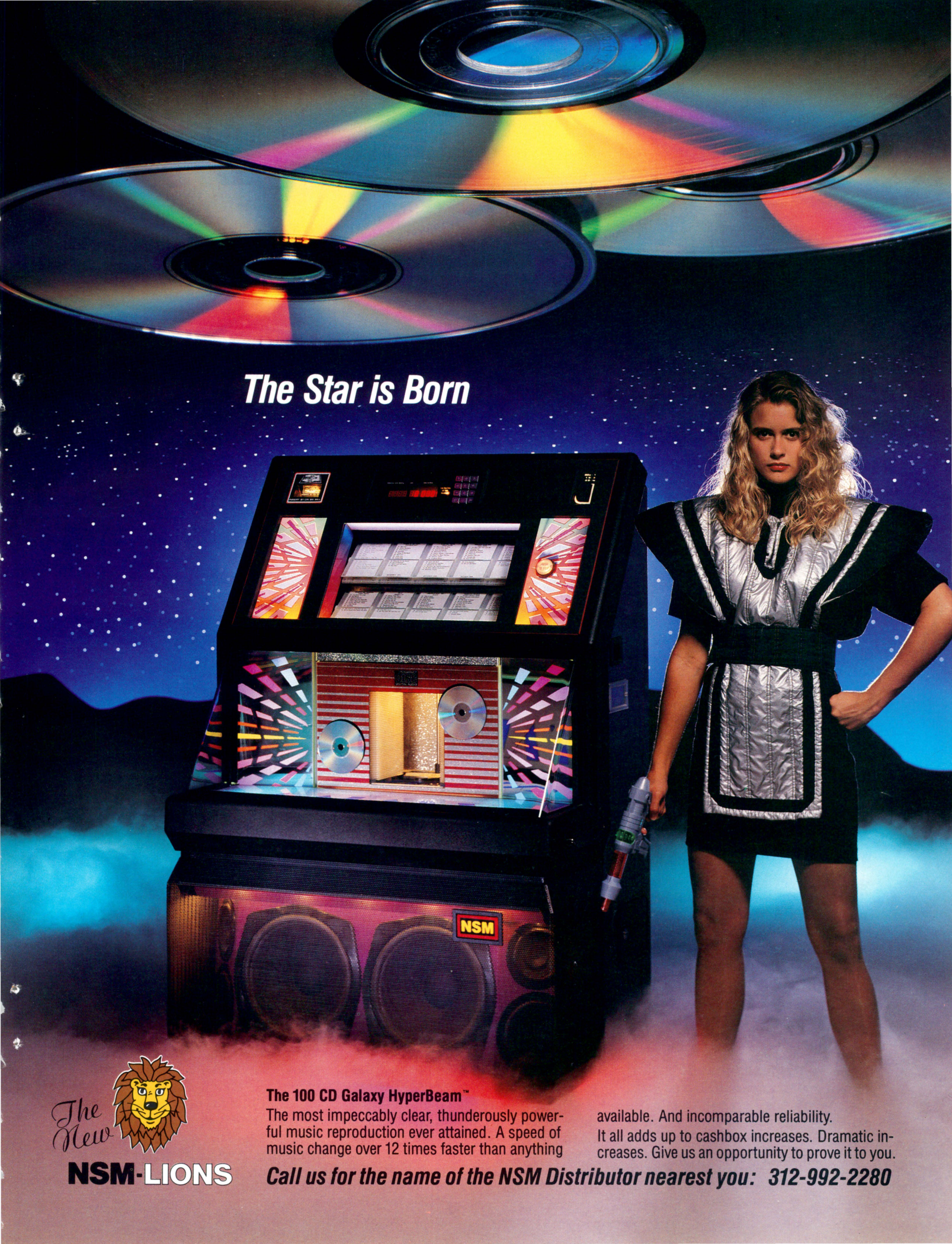
Director Stevens' overall conclusion in his prepared testimony was *not* an enthusiastic pro-dollar coin endorsement. "Treasury, Mint and Bureau officials agreed that because of these differences," he said, "it would be much harder for the United States to successfully substitute a dollar coin for the note."

NEEDED: A "CHAMPION"

What's needed, Stevens added, was a strong, united push from both the White House and Congress . . . a "champion" who will "make it happen" and "sell" the dollar coin to the public. Will we get such a champion?

"We think this is unlikely, in view of what happened with the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin and the Treasury Department's lack of enthusiasm to champion another dollar coin that receives its primary support from special interests," Stevens told Congress. (Of course, that's political speculation and this non-political bureaucrat could be wrong.) The GAO's "final recommendation" was that Uncle Sam should go ahead with dollar coins only if the White House and Congress could give it the strong political backing it needs.

The bottom line: now it's up to the Coin Coalition to knock on the White House door and recruit that "champion"!



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Burning Issue

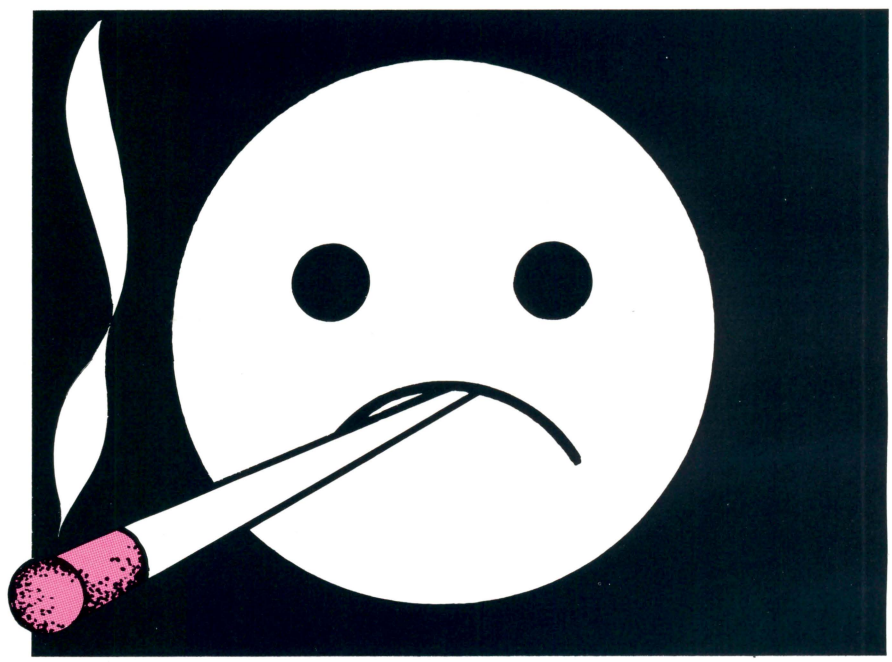
the cigarette light gets dimmer as Solons and public apply more anti-smoking pressure

Years ago, some newspapers and magazines used the term "Solon" (Solon was a wise, ancient leader) in reference to lawmakers in their headlines. And during those post-war days, a lot of those editors were probably smoking while they typed. Cigarette smoking was a roundly accepted practice, especially after many GIs returned from battlefields with "the habit" acquired in the barracks, in trenches or on board ship.

Luckys and Chesterfields were popular brands (regular size, no filter). It was the days when Camels ran ads showing a doctor as their spokesman (one ad even recommended lighting up between every course of a Thanksgiving Day meal). There was the memory of FDR puffing away through his cigarette holder and the romantic example of actor Paul Henreid offering Bette Davis a lit cigarette on a cruise ship in the classic film 'Now, voyager.'

But, while anyone with at least 100 IQ points in his or her head knew that smoking wasn't exactly "health food," the tie between smoking and civility didn't begin to unravel until the U.S. Surgeon General issued his Report on Smoking and Health in the early '60s, officially linking the habit to lung cancer (the top doc's office summarily added other lung ailments, plus heart disease to the list, as the years went by).

Today, the public attitude toward smoking is taking a 180 degree turn. Instead of "being cool," smokers are often considered social pariahs . . . people who have volunteered to "self destruct" and even take others with them ("second hand smoking").



But even those adults who continue to smoke, claiming they have a personal right to do so, do not like seeing kids (especially their own) doing the same thing.

For the American cigarette machine operator, certainly those who have mixed emotions offering this product to the public, the present times are hard on the conscience and (for some) on the route pocketbook as well. Declining sales, public antipathy and massive taxation have all taken their toll on what was once a key ingredient of the national route.

No one alive today, including operators and even members of the tobacco industry, seriously doubts that smoking leads to premature death. Many operators have either pared down their cigarette operations or have gotten out of it entirely, either from conscience, bad business or both. There's even the story (and it's true) about the New York State cigarette operator who sometimes delivered his machines to locations in a hearse, which brought new meaning to the phrase "dark humor."

On the other hand, there are some big cigarette operators around today who will rationalize this arm of the business, citing the taxes paid to state and federal governments and the number of employees they support. A couple may even add the "classic" observation: "If people want to hurt themselves, that's their business." Some operators even smoke themselves, though others wonder if they'd like their grandchildren to light up.

Millions of people don't like to see anybody light up, especially in their presence. And a lot can be very vocal about it, throwing dirty looks

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and starting arguments with smokers even where the practice is permitted. A lot of people, by their own volition, have ruled their cars and their homes no-smoking areas. Pioneer Sales' Joel Kleiman remembers having "words" with neighbors who'd invited him and his wife over for dinner after they told him smoking was prohibited in their home. That was then. Kleiman today has kicked the habit.

The "future" for the cigarette business lies with the next generation coming up, and this subject is core to the controversy. Many if not most adult smokers picked the practice up as teenagers way back when it wasn't considered as much of a "horror" as it is today. Well, times have indeed changed and the many anti-smoking measures being enacted voluntarily or by law, are squarely directed at preventing teenagers from smoking.

ENTER UNCLE SAM

The U.S. government makes a healthy amount of money from cigarette sales from its excise tax. Big money. Part of that is turned around into subsidies for tobacco growers. Thanks to Senator Jesse Helms and a few others, this subsidy continues to exist, even though the "medical" arm of the same government castigate smoking with relish (the Surgeon General recently concluded that second-hand smoking also causes the same smoking-related diseases as smoking itself, although in lesser degrees).

On May 24, 1990, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan made a formal request that the 50 states outlaw cigarette machines, saying minors have access to them. Already, 44 states plus Washington D.C. have laws on the books prohibiting kids, 17 or younger, from buying cigarettes from any source, but Sullivan believes these laws are not seriously policed.

Sullivan has more critics than just tobacco folks. Anti-smoking people, for example, castigated his "limp" approach of asking the states to outlaw the machines, preferring that the federal government do so itself. While the national government hasn't really been "half pregnant" on the anti-smoking issue (they did limit smoking on airlines), most of the "no smoking" signs have been ordered by states and local municipalities.

No smoking areas in restaurants, no smoking, period! in goverment offices and other such local ordinances are not uncommon in the country today. Some private companies have held employee voting and decided to outlaw smoking at their work places (which even includes some in this industry like Lieberman's and Brady's distributing headquarters). It's getting harder and harder to find a "respectful spot" to light up and it will get worse, not better, as news about passive smoking comes out of the pipe.

According to *Newsweek*, the U.S EPA (environmental protection) may issue a report that says second-hand smoking (fumes breathed by non-smokers) is causing 3,800 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year. If this report is approved, *Newsweek* says the document could conclude that airborne tobacco smoke is a class-A carcinogen (just think what happened to asbestos). Based upon other statistics, Newsweek said it's possible that one non-smoker dies for every eight smokers, adding in all the other applicable ailments, the focal one being heart disease.

OPPOSITION

Two of the biggest defenders of the cigarette vending industry are the Tobacco Institute, and NAMA (National Automatic Merchandising Assn.) representing many cigarette machine operators. NAMA has maintained that of the 370,000 (approximate) machines on location throughout the country, 80% of them are in places where youngsters under 18 either don't have access or rarely frequent.

Unfortunately, a "mini sting" of sorts took place at a federal building in D.C. where some youngsters were sent down to buy cigarettes from the building's machine and came back with them in hand, "proving" to the lawmakers that it's "easy" for kids to buy from venders.

NAMA says only 3½% of all cigarettes are bought from vending machines and that minors rely much more on over-the-counter sources than on the cigarette units. According to the vending association, "those who puchase over-the-counter cited four locations as the ones they go to most frequently: convenience stores (43%), gas stations (29%), grocery stores (11%) and drug stores (6%). NAMA's figures were based on a Response Research Inc. study of minors who "frequently purchase" cigarettes.

The association's stance is obvious and compelling from a legislative fair-play position. With so many packs purchased over the counter, why destroy the smaller source while allowing the larger sources to keep selling? And in order to bank the fires even more, the association has repeatedly asked its members (and all cigarette operators) to plaster Minors Are Prohibited stickers onto the machines and (assumedly) ask operators to remind their location personnel about the possibility of kids popping coins into the rigs

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when they're not looking.

NAMA came out with a new piece of ammunition on May 31, declaring that "extensive research shows that the major influence on teenagers' decisions to begin smoking is whether their parents or their peers smoke." NAMA also stated that 28% of smokers under 18 get them from friends and family and (sad if true) that 45% of teenage smokers are permitted by their parents to purchase cigarettes.

HISTORY

The tobacco "industry" started with the American Indians. The "pleasant prospects of the product" were discovered by Sir Walter Raleigh, in the service of Queen Elizabeth I. Comedian Bob Newhart had great fun in an old "Sir Walter" sketch, wondering what anyone would do with ground-up dried tobacco rolled up in a piece of paper. Raleigh said, "You light fire to it" and Newhart (playing a London court administrator) rolled onto the floor in laughter.

No joke, tobacco became big business for early Americans and has been for their forebears ever since. The Surgeon General found out why, when he determined that tobacco was a "chemically addictive" substance (specifically, the nicotine in it). Observers of the amusement machine industry used to say certain games were "addictive," but they were misusing the word. Some games may have been "compelling," but smoking is "compulsive" and therein lies the heart of the matter: is the cigarette operator selling "legal drugs"?

QUANDRY

The jukebox and games business deals very directly with taverns. These places, dispensing hard and softer versions of alcohol, provide a primary spot for its coin-op products. It's been that way for generations. Consider this: alcohol abuse and smoking are the two leading causes of "preventable death" and you see clearly that the average operator has more on his mind than merely running cigarette machines.

Human nature, religious background, moral conviction and all those other forces that push a man to make a decision, come into play. Of course, there's the "greed" side to consider. It depends upon which way the tree is bent. DWI laws have disciplined the amount of alcohol a "player" can consume before he gets into his car. Other laws come into play for those who attempt to stagger home. Athletic games like pool and darts can burn off some of the booze, but the plain facts are that bars vend booze and most else comes second.

Operators can't be responsible for the intake of the players. They *can* be responsible for minors buying smokes from the machines, although that's largely the responsibility of the bar owners and their people (same as when they serve another vodka to a guy who really oughta go home, no?). The best they can do is get the warning stickers onto the machines, get the machines into plain sight of the bartenders and waitresses, tell them to throw the kids out and then cross the fingers somebody's 14-year-old doesn't get nabbed by the cops buying a pack of Kents. Or, they can pull the machine entirely if they know the location doesn't give a hoot whether kids buy from it or not.

The number of new cigarette vending machines produced each year has come down and down. The taxes and prices on the vendibles have gone up and up (another 6¢ was added recently). The use of cigarettes by the general public continues along (compulsion), while many people in their heart of hearts see the day when, as Dr. Koop (last Surgeon General) does, the U.S. would be a smoke-free society. Apart from some diehards, that's what a lot of Americans want, and that includes a lot of smokers as well. Realistically, that depends a whale of a lot on keeping kids away today.

POLITICAL FOOTBALL OR POLITICAL PATSY?

Cigarette sales fall undr the "sin tax" nomenclature. While the federal excise stays pretty much the same (for the moment), many states have had a financial field day slapping on their own excise taxes and slopping up the fiscal rewards. Oddly, those add-on taxes have caused more than one cigarette operator to raise his price (divisible by quarters . . . anyone remember pennying the packs?) where they actually welcomed the increase.

After all, anyone with a compulsion to smoke is going to buy them from a machine, regardless of price, right? Right, unless there's a retail store you can walk to within 20 yards. An east coast operator said Sullivan's ban idea was going to get into trouble because the states make so much from their excise taxes. When reminded that people will continue to buy cigarettes even if they couldn't get them from machines, he said, "I didn't think of that."

ADVERTISING

Cigarette ads have been banned on U.S. television and radio since the early '70s (says the *Los Angeles Times)* due to "concerns that cigarette commercials, particularly on television, largely attracted teenagers and children." That paper says numerous bills are currently before the congress aimed at killing tobacco ads in the remaining media like magazines and newspapers. The fear is that these ads attract non-smoking youngsters.

The *Times* reported that smoking among teenagers in Norway, for example, has been significantly reduced since that nation banned tobacco ads in 1975. Now comes a new French move to ban all tobacco advertising by 1993 which would not only cover broadcast but all print media and sports and cultural events (like our Virginia Slims tennis tour). (Similar legislation is cooking in our own congress.) The idea must go before their national Assembly for a vote.

So, from France, to Australia to the United States and elsewhere, anti-smoking forces are gathering momentum. It will be easier to monitor the daily papers than the monthly trade magazines to see the news on all of this, with events happening so quickly. The dike isn't broken yet, but with so much water trickling through, the vendor had better get his lifeboat in order. The tobacco companies already have . . . it's called diversification.

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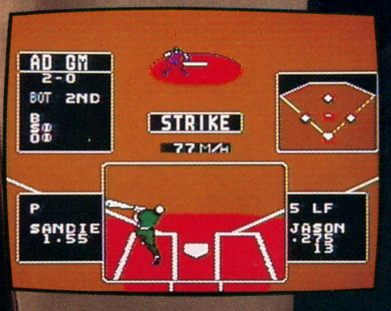

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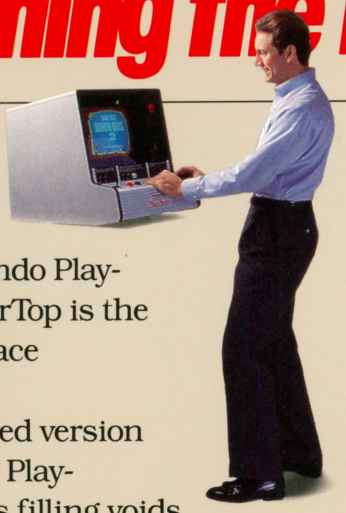

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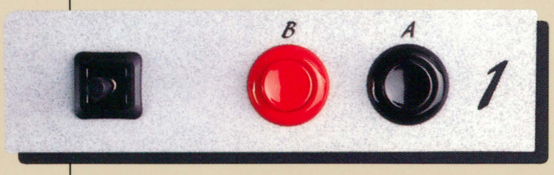

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Bullish on Poker

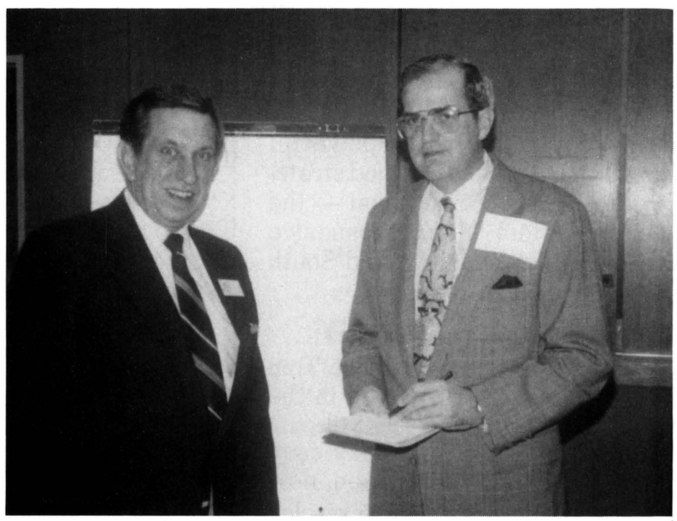
1991 is target date for legalized pay-off vidpoker in Wisconsin; a "very" confident WAMO prepares strong, smart lobbying campaign

Wisconsin tradesters are confidently preparing to wage — and win — a legislative campaign to legalize pay-off video poker in their state. Indeed, WAMO (Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators) feels so confident of getting the legislation passed, that some operators in the state have already placed orders for pay-off video poker games, said area distributors.

WAMO's legalization bill is currently being revised along the lines of South Dakota's ticket-printing, computer-linked system. The final bill is expected to include the following provisions: $5 maximum bet per play; a win percentage of at least 80% (and probably higher); a $1,000 maximum win per play; a maximum of 10 video poker machines (probably fewer than that) per liquor-licensed location only; and perhaps 22.5% of the cashbox take (after paying winners) to go to the state. Winners would get "tickets only" from the machines, which they would trade for cash from the location owners. Gray-area games will become clearly illegal and unable to be licensed.

This revised bill will probably be re-introduced to the Wisconsin legislature when that body reconvenes in January, 1991. The state legislature could vote on the bill by next spring or summer, and Governor Tommy Thompson — a strong WAMO ally — is expected to sign it.

It won't be a slam-dunk, however. "Anti-gambling forces are out there," warned WAMO's lobbyist Tom Coenen. "Remember, pari-mutuel barely passed in Wisconsin. Video lottery may be tougher, because there's no mandate from the people."



WAMO Executive Director Joe Phillips and prexy Jim Stansfield. The group feels quite confident that they'll have legal pay-off poker approved in their state by summer '91.

Still, WAMO is confident enough to look beyond legalization to the eventual effects — good and bad — that legalized poker could have on the Wisconsin market. Even operators who strongly support poker, admit that the price of buying lots of expensive video poker machines is "scary." (South Dakota-style video poker machines have metal cabinets and computer communications capabilities; they can easily cost up to $6,000 each.) Tradesters also concede that the purchase of non-poker amusements (especially video games) may suffer for a while, during the initial period of creating the new poker market.

But distributors, operators and manufacturers alike appear eager for the legislation to pass. The Wisconsin trade anticipates large profits . . . profits which, they say, will eventually be re-channeled into buying more and better amusement equipment.

CONFIDENT OF PASSAGE

WAMO has many good reasons to feel confident about eventual passage of their legislation. A while back, WAMO succeeded in passing crane regulation; since then, operators have run their cranes in a responsible fashion and maintained good rapport with state officials.

These days, the Wisconsin state treasury needs money, and the over-taxed citizens won't stand for higher taxes. Based on the per-capita earnings performance of video pokers in South Dakota and Montana, tradesters believe the State of Wisconsin could realize $25 million per year from legalized video poker. That figure is expected to make legislators' mouths water, especially when they realize the coin machine industry will pay virtually all of the overhead.

More reasons for confidence: WAMO is politically strong on several levels. They enjoy good finances, political unity amongst them-

WAMO lobbyists Tom Coenen and Janet Swandby at the group's recent convention. These two are shepherding the association's video poker strategy.

selves, expert lobbyists, powerful friends in high places, a good strategy, and — last but not least — the "domino effect" (i.e., persuasive precedents in Montana and South Dakota).

WAMO'S STRATEGY

WAMO's primary lobbyist, Tom Coenen, is highly respected in the Madison statehouse. (The *Milwaukee Sentinel* just ran a very complimentary profile of Coenen, now considered one of the "inner circle" of Wisconsin lobbyists.) Coenen and his able associate, lobbyist Janet Swandby, have mapped a grassroots strategy which will bring WAMO members face to face with individual state representatives this summer, fall and winter.

In these meetings, WAMO members will say: "I'm a voter in your district and I support your reelection. My company employs *X* number of people and I hope you can agree to support our pro-poker legislation, which will create higher revenues for the state and bring more jobs to our district." Coenen and Swandby believe this message, repeated dozens of times with individual politicians, will have a powerful impact on the legislature.

WAMO's strategy also depends upon good word-of-mouth from state legislators and regulators in South Dakota. WAMO believes Wisconsin legislators will be favorably impressed by testimony from people such as South Dakota's lottery commission director Susan Walker, who is an enthusiastic supporter of operator-run pokers.

Finally, WAMO is counting on help from their friend in the governor's mansion. WAMO strongly supported Republican Tommy Thompson before he was elected to his first term, and the group remains quite friendly with the state's top executive. WAMO's current and future presidents, Jim Stansfield and Roger Westmont, recently had a 45-minute meeting with Gov. Thompson, during which they briefed the governor on their video poker plans and concerns, and discussed how WAMO could support Thompson in his upcoming political campaign. WAMO members are already writing plenty of checks for the "Friends of Gov. Thompson" committee which will finance the governor's reelection campaign this fall.

By the way, the *Milwaukee Journal* portrays Thompson as a successful governor who has kept most of his campaign promises, so his chances for reelection appear good.

GETTING READY

Beyond following this political strategy, WAMO members are also preparing for a "new era" of legal pokers in their individual businesses. Jim Pietrangelo, VP of poker manufacturer SMS, says that "Substantial orders [for pay-off poker machines] have already been placed" with area distributors. Since the poker machines are housed in die-cast metal cabinets and will probably include sophisticated computer communications equipment, an eight-week gap between orders and delivery will be the norm, Pietrangelo explained. Operators who order early will get the equipment first . . . and get the locations.

Wisconsin operators are also looking to cement good relationships with their locations. Some 12,000 taverns in the state are expected to qualify for video gaming, and operators have been advised that it's smart to "lock them in" with strong contracts now. The expected arrival of video pokers will make contracts needed "by administrative (government) agency or by statute," law teacher John Whitehall informed WAMO members at their recent Spring Meeting. "I wouldn't wait until then to start using contracts," Whitehall continued. "Start learning about them now." (For a report on other aspects of the WAMO Spring Meeting, see our "Associations in Action" section.)

Some operators in the state are also beginning to cement good relationships with their banks. As the South Dakota experience proves, operators must often borrow and repay the cash for thousand-dollar pay-offs (which are made by the location owners) on a daily basis. "Let's start telling our bankers now that we will need this kind of service," past WAMO president Wally Bohrer advised the group.

OUTSIDE THREATS

"Your state needs money and if you don't legalize and run video lotteries, they will," Wisconsin operators have been told by experts. History has shown that state governments leave the coin-op industry out in the cold when it comes to running lotteries; a single manufacturer such as Bally Scientific Games may land the account, instead. The same could happen with legalized video poker in some states, coin machine tradesters fear.

But WAMO believes they can head off this threat before it arises. First, they're moving very fast and running a "quiet" legalization lobbying campaign. They may get their bill passed before an outside manufacturer even realizes the market opportunity exists. Second, WAMO is well-connected politically. They

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believe that legislators can be persuaded to give this opportunity to voters in their own districts, rather than to an out of state firm. Third, WAMO can point to the positive experiences that Montana and South Dakota are having with operator-run pokers.

Finally, Wisconsin tradesters have put up an "advance guard" against having the poker market taken away from them. WAMO officials have already warned their friend Gov. Thompson that a large corporate entity could come along and try to steal the state residents' poker market out from under them.

BIG PROFIT

Based on results from other legal states, WAMO has been informed that its player base could expand tenfold. As stated above, WAMO also expects that the State of Wisconsin's annual share of video poker profits will run around $25 million. Assuming that $25 million represents about 25% of post-payoff profits, operators and location owners would then split around $75 million dollars in profits per year.

Looking at poker profitability on a per-machine basis, SMS topper Jim Pietrangelo reported that in South Dakota, each machine earned about $200 per week (net after payoffs to winners) during the first month of operation (South Dakota went "on line" last October). By May of 1990, Pietrangelo added, South Dakota pokers were netting an average of $584 per machine. "Some are much higher," he advised. "And remember that the income is on a steady growth curve, so by now it's probably higher."

Since video poker equipment carries a hefty price tag, operators will have to borrow heavily to buy their first machines. "It's scary to think about all that debt," said outgoing WAMO president Jim Stansfield. "But at the same time, video poker represents a dramatic opportunity for the entire coin-op industry."

POKER'S EFFECTS ON AMUSEMENTS

If pay-off poker is legalized, will operators rush headlong into gambling, and stop buying traditional amusement equipment? Sales of amusement equipment may suffer a little bit during the first couple of years while the poker market is being established, WAMO's Stansfield admitted. But pure-amusement equipment spending will not slow down in all categories, he said, and would rebound eventually.

"In Wisconsin, we are tied in with dart and pool leagues," he explained. "That will make it necessary for us to keep buying that type of equipment. And people will still want music in taverns. We like to replace a certain number of jukeboxes every year, to facilitate rotation and help justify higher playprices."

Stansfield, part of a WAMO group which made a "field trip" to South Dakota to observe the effects of poker legalization there, said operators in that state are now buying better amusement equipment. "South Dakota's poker profits are being re-invested in amusement-only equipment," Stansfield stated. "We saw some real fancy Rowe nostalgic jukeboxes and other new non-gaming equipment in many locations. Routes out there are looking pretty spiffy."

WAMO members who came back from the "South Dakota field trip" reported that amusement video game sales are still suffering somewhat and have not necessarily enjoyed a rebound from poker profits. But then, video sales are already "soft" in much of the country... particularly the Midwest, where tavern locations are by far the dominant type of location.

WIDER OUTLOOK

WAMO is part of a broader effort to legalize video pokers in perhaps 20 other states...and Wisconsin probably won't be the first state to join Montana and South Dakota in the winners' circle. How many states will have legal video poker by the end of 1991?

"Probably five," predicted AMOA Government Relations Chairman Wally Bohrer, perhaps the trade's savviest political figure. And how many states will get legalized video poker in the 1990s? "I'd guess between 15 and 18 states," said Lieberman Music's Linda Winstead. "Many people see video poker as our industry's next big trend for the '90s," she added.

More and more folks in Wisconsin (and elsewhere) are coming to the same conclusion. Operator Richard Jacomet reportedly was not always in favor of video poker, but he's apparently changed his mind. Called on to give the invocation at a recent WAMO banquet, Jacomet concluded his prayer: "And may we have video poker next year!"

A lot of folks inside and outside of Wisconsin are praying for the same results along with him. ◆

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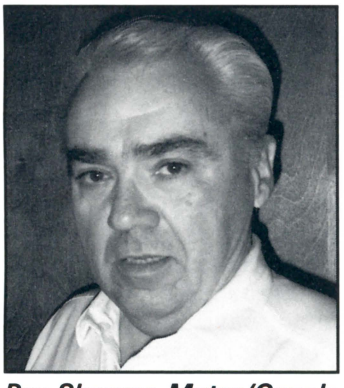
Jim Spinello, The Entertainment Industry of America



Ray Shroyer, Metro/Canale

Q: ***Have you done any pinball promotions? Have they been successful?***

A: "I did a fantastic promotion with WHIRLWIND. Before it came out, only a few of us knew about it. To build excitement and curiosity, I pulled a pinball machine from an arcade and left the space open. On the wall I hung a sign that said 'Something's blowing in from Williams'. And I drew a spiral on the floor. That got everyone asking questions and made the first week phenomenal. That one promotion brought up pinball appeal in general."

James M. Spinello

A: "Right now I'm setting up a dart and pinball promotion where entrants have to play both. There'll be a 32 player grid. All the money is paid back to the players, except the coin drop and collections on the practice play. With a promotion like this every 90 days, the collections continue high. To get the word out and stimulate play, I place advertisements in the newspaper, hang ads in taverns and make phone calls to regular players to pre-register them.

"I've also done promotions where I've given away black & white portable televisions. The location shares the cost, which is minimal to begin with. They're high score competitions with the game reprogrammed every week to make it easier and keep interest high. The high scorers fill out cards in hopes of getting their names next to the winning numbers.

"There are all kinds of promotions you can do and you'll find you get back whatever you put in."

Ray Shroyer

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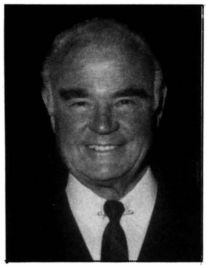
Poker Pitfalls

sure, legalized video poker promises profits . . . but it also attracts powerful opposition, asserts trade veteran Louis Boasberg



by LOUIS BOASBERG

Industry veteran Louis Boasberg says he grew up around gambling and estimates he's visited Las Vegas upwards of 50 times in his life. "But would you believe I've never played the roulette wheel or thrown dice at a craps table?" Louis smiled. "Personally I find gambling somewhat boring and for my own amusement I prefer the theater, classic movies and professional sports!"

But nowadays, with the success of Montana and South Dakota in operating pay-off gambling equipment, "video poker is the buzzword in our industry," as operator Jim Stansfield put it. Several operator associations are actively working to legalize coin-op gambling for their own states.

Is this a good trend, or a bad one? The earnings figures speak loudest to many . . . but the gentleman from New Orleans, Mr. Louis Boasberg, believes the industry should also think seriously about the negative implications of wide-open, widespread gambling. Even if you come down on the pro-legalization side, says Louis, it's important to realize who and what you're up against. (The gentleman from New Orleans also grew up in the Bible Belt, so he's had plenty of experience with "thou shalt nots"!)

Here, then, is the second article in a three-part series on legalized poker gambling by our friend Louis Boasberg.— the editors

I may be wrong in everything I say or suggest in this article on legalization of coin-operated gambling games. But nevertheless, I will speak my piece based on 55 years of operating and distributing all kinds of equipment — legal, illegal and semi-legal! My opinion is also based on many years' experience attending many meetings and conferences with legislative committees, crime commissions, and the media . . . on years of study and discussion of the laws, ordinances and subterfuges which surround gambling . . . to say nothing of years of speeches and debates in favor of limited forms of legalized gambling, as opposed to total prohibition!

Based on all of this, here is my position on legalized gambling. To express it poetically: any industry group which seeks legalization of any form of coin-operated gambling equipment must crawl before they can walk. They must walk before they can run. And perhaps it would be better for everyone concerned, if they crawled permanently!

By this I mean that most groups seeking legalization try for the whole jackpot, right off the bat. They want to rush right in and immediately legalize what amounts to non-automatic slot machines.

Unlimited multiple play! Unlimited pay-offs in cash! The sky's the limit! This is the battle cry for many pro-legalization groups. They may submit this type of equipment because one or two other states are already using this type of equipment for revenue.

This supposed "precedent" is not necessarily relevant to all areas of our country. States which currently enjoy legalized gambling are sparsely populated and do not have too many other attractions . . . except forests, trees, fresh air and blue skies . . . so there is little or no opposition.

But when you get into the majority of states, there's intense opposition to any and all forms of gambling and risk entertainment. This opposition comes from many different elements of our society, and when they all work together, they can prove extremely difficult and expensive to conquer . . . if they can be conquered at all.

First and foremost, there is the opposition of the religious rightists, who believe that any kind of gambling is the Number One evil on

". . . any industry group which seeks legalization of any form of coin-operated gambling equipment must crawl before they can walk. They must walk before they can run. And perhaps it would be better for everyone concerned if they crawled permanently!

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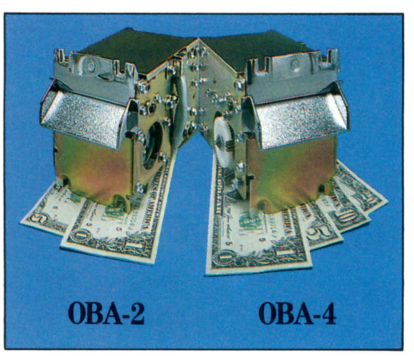

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Earth, and was invented by the Devil himself. These people represent a loud, well-financed minority . . . and believe me, the Bible Belt in every state has a great influence with legislators and other officials.

Many retail and service businesses are also opposed to gambling, fearing if it's legal, their customers may stop spending so much of their paychecks at department stores and others. (This is not necessarily true, as witnessed by the crowds of customers in Las Vegas stores and shopping malls.) But it's a factor. Next, because of pressure from advertisers, newspapers often fall into line, opposing gambling so as to protect their advertisers' perceived interests.

Finally, there is opposition from firmly-entrenched gambling interests (both legal and illegal). These include the thoroughbred racing community, the charity and church bingo groups, the organizations which raise funds with Las Vegas Nights, and other charity gambling. Believe it or not, strong opposition would also come from your friendly sports and race horse bookie, who depends on sports betting and other illegal betting for his living. Nevertheless, he has friends "at court," and all of these people want a monopoly on their own "House of Cards." Naturally, they will fight any threat to their living and welfare.

For all these reasons, I believe that any and all coin-operated gambling equipment operated in bars, taverns and other such street locations is dangerous. Why? Because any form of gambling which makes it possible for a working man to lose his entire week's salary, draws fierce opposition from the above-mentioned groups. The backlash can hurt the entire industry, including gambling and non-gambling sectors alike.

Nevertheless, many groups in our industry will press on, insisting on trying to legalize gambling, despite the pitfalls and dangers. Which brings me back to "crawling before you can walk." If you insist on submitting a bill to the lawmakers for legalization, at least make it a mild form of coin-op entertainment. And call it a "Trade Stimulator," rather than poker, blackjack or a slot machine.

See that the proposed law confines play on said machine to one coin (perhaps a quarter), and see to it that the maximum cash prize or pay-off that can be won on this Trade Stimulator is $5 in cash or merchandise. Merchandise is better than cash, since most opponents of gambling do not consider it gambling to award merchandise, whereas cash awards really fire up the opposition.

It would be wonderful if operators and distributors could get legalization of coin-operated poker, blackjack and fruit-reel machines in their states, and this may come someday. But I cannot see it coming to pass in the very near future. My final article in this series, discussing other pitfalls in legalization of coin-op gambling machines, will appear in August's *RePlay*.

Home Video

the pasture may be overgrazed, but the grass is still a lush green, says C.E.S.

The Summer Consumer Electronics Show took place early June at the sprawling McCormick Place convention center in Chicago. Sitting by Lake Michigan and shouting across the waters, "I am the showcase of industry," McCormick usually does well over 100,000 in attendance at the summer C.E.S., but not this year.

According to one estimate, the headcount was perhaps 25,000 off from last and the expo was dubbed "the wake by the lake." With few electronic things on stage (save for some development in camcorders and in D.A.T.), it was really due to the continuing pull of home video that the show turned out as many as it did. As one tradester put it, "Thanks to Nintendo, it wasn't so bad."

By "Nintendo" the man meant the whole home video exhibition of hardware and software. Nintendo itself maintained the largest exhibit in the arena dominated by television games, all within cruising distance of Sega, Tengen and other home vid firms like "the other Atari" run by Jack Tramile. For some reason, N.E.C. maintained its exhibit in another hall, while the "Nintendo hall" bustled.

So, what's doing in home video, you ask? In a nutshell ("cartridge"?), the sport is very much alive and continuing to grow. (Sega's newish *Genesis* 16-bit system got solid reviews, for example, and Nintendo's *Game Boy* hand-held player is a hot number on the retail circuit, with lots of software to back it up). So it's still growing, but a dark lining has appeared around that silver cloud.

The people who buy home cartridges have gotten just about as choosey as those who play coin-op video. The hit syndrome has infected this once carefree business and unsold titles are backing up in the pipe. Companies who buy cartridges of their own games from Nintendo for use on the latter's N.E.S. player are called "third-party licensees" and while there were little over a dozen of them in the beginning, there are 60 today, and growing.

There are just too many so-so titles on the retail market (someone said around 30 are already being discounted off the shelves). Worse yet, we learned there are huge inventories of cartridges paid for at Nintendo but languishing at factory warehouses with few buyers in sight. There is a definite shakeout going on, but nothing like what happened back in the early '80s when the first attempt to launch a stable market fell right off the cliff.

Any operator who may be salivating over rumors that home video is in trouble had better wipe his lips.

DON'T GIGGLE

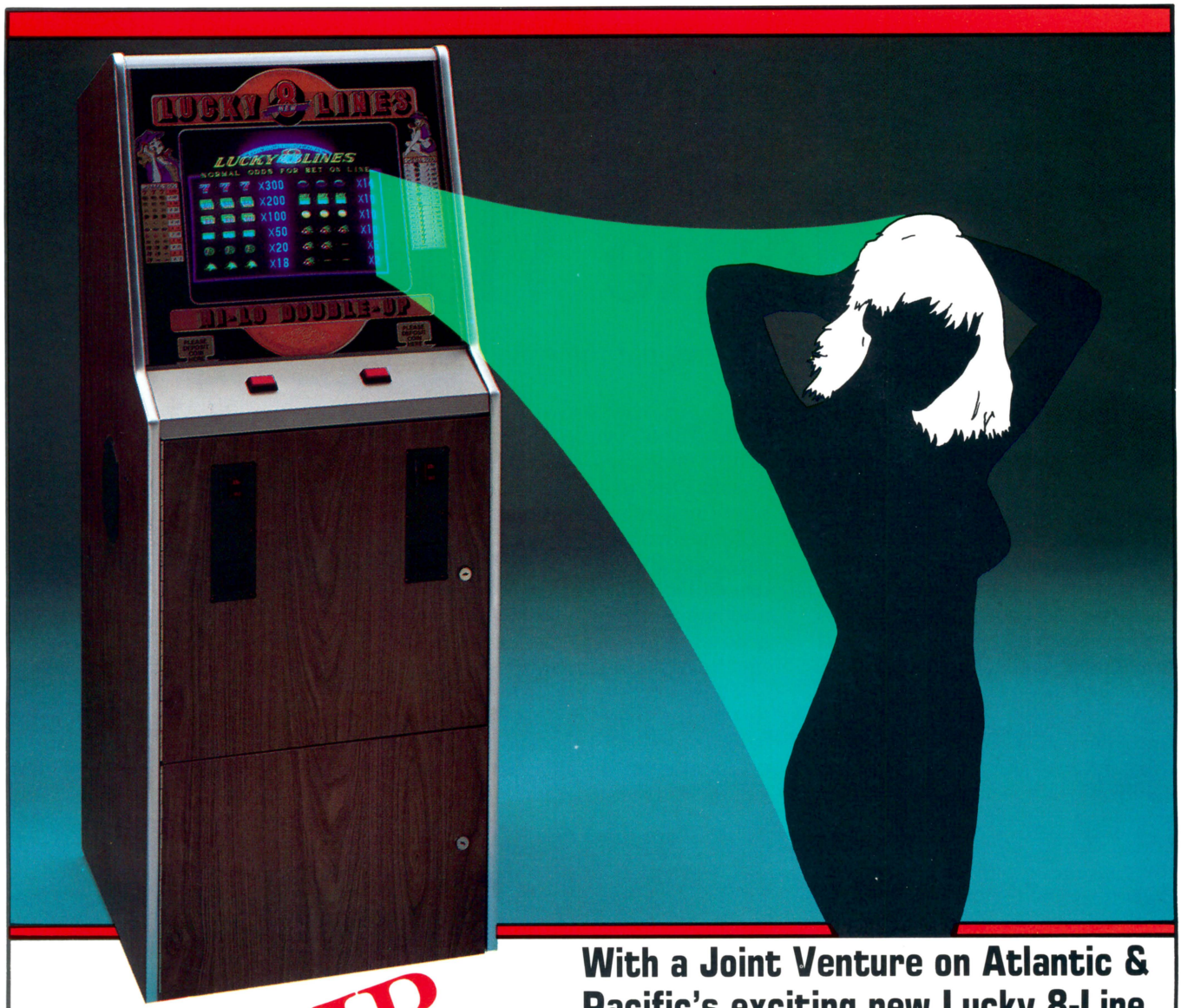
Therefore, any amusement machine operator who may be salivating over rumors that the home video game business is in trouble, had better wipe his lips. It's not in trouble, although some software suppliers are. Trade floor scuttlebutt said one supplier was selling cartridges at $6.00 wholesale when he already paid $16 to make them. There's talk of another supplier (who makes coin-op kits) sitting with $100,000 worth of unsold cartridges, and an even bigger one with a whopping $1 million worth.

There is clearly a glut of software out there with only a minority of the titles selling really well. Those that do sell well like *Super Mario 3* and *TMNT* do so in the millions. But in the past, a "decent" hit sold around a half million; today that same word "decent" is attached to a 200,000 seller. As one supplier put it: "The overall pie, counting in the amount of hardware, is increasing, but the number of pieces taken from that pie are smaller."

Hardware sales are robust. Nintendo, the clear leader here as always, sold something like 20 million N.E.S. home sets into the States before the show and could actually sell an additional 9 million more by year's end. They've already done one million *Game Boy* sales and some think that could increase to five million by New Year's Eve. A supplier told *RePlay* he thinks there will be around 50 *Game Boy* titles available by the end of the year for a total of 20 million cartridge sales. He further said a whopping 70 million cartridges for Nintendo's N.E.S. system could be sold in 1990, "and that could go as high as 85 million," he added.

So, with hardware numbers and software projections like this, what is the problem? "There are too many third-party licensees making cartridges, so there's much too much software on the market," a supplier said. Nintendo itself is partially responsible for this. Their original allocation program was lifted in the second quarter of this year. Now third parties can get as many cartridges for N.E.S. as they want (although Nintendo can still refuse an order if they don't like the game).

There is no longer a chip short-



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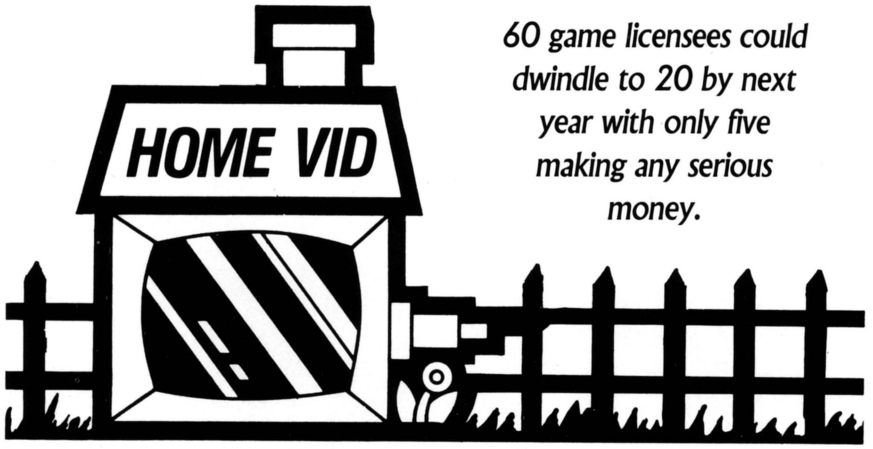


60 game licensees could dwindle to 20 by next year with only five making any serious money.

age, so suppliers can order as many pieces of software as they think they can sell, so long as they pay in front to Nintendo and wait for delivery. Obviously, they have been over-ordering in a market that's turned hit-oriented. Double whammy, unsold goods, fiscal nail biting.

SHAKEOUT

Yes, a shakeout. One supplier thinks the 60 third-party game licensees now on Nintendo's roles could actually dwindle down to 20 by next summer's C.E.S. and of that 20, maybe only five will be making any serious money. "Nintendo will still make money by making cartridges paid for in front and, of course, by marketing software," said one rep. "But some suppliers are getting hurt, and one of the things that's hurting is the rental business."

Nintendo doesn't like it, is trying to find legal ways to stop it, but it goes on: some retail stores are buying software cartridges on a one-time basis and then renting them out for small money just like stores rent VCR cassettes. This hardly helps the glut of unsold cartridges at the stores and in the warehouses, although some think if a player likes the cartridge he rents, he might end up buying one.

Hardware, including hand-held units, continues to sell, but the hit syndrome has bitten home video just as it bit the coin operator. Players (buyers) have gotten very choosey.

COIN-OP IMPACT

The money produced through the sale of coin-operated uprights and kits is only a pimple on George Washington's face compared to the volume done in home video. Operators who may think a pall in home video means an automatic increase in the player coin drop are wrong. The coin drop rises when the individual games are hot, and now the same sort of thing is disciplining home video.

It's bad for some home software people, and some think it could spell the ruin of one or more companies currently making software for the coin machine industry as well. "Many coin-op developers depend on the cash provided by home sales and I feel very uncomfortable with the present picture," said one tradester who straddles both fences. "Let's say the *RePlay Directory* could be smaller next time," another added.

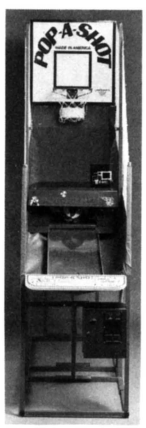
But if the hand-held games personified by *Game Boy* are any indication of the future in home vid, that "directory" is getting larger. Both the "other Atari" and N.E.C. reportedly showed hand-helds, and Sega seems to be working on their own. The N.E.C. one is also supposed to offer an optional attachment that turns theirs into a commercial TV set like Sony's *Watch Man*.

NEW TITLES

A significant number of new titles appeared at the C.E.S. and some names will be familiar and/or curious to operators (e.g. *TMNT 2, Hard Drivin', SCI, MVP, The Simpsons* and *Dr. Mario).* There were mobs of old coin-op titles and mobs of titles never brought out on a coin machine there as well, some on floppy disc for home computers, as well as on cartridges.

On the personal front, the most curious thing to see was Nolan Bushnell (who used to own Atari) heading up Commodore's CD ROM development team while Jack Tramile (who used to own Commodore) headed up the "other Atari." (Nolan, by the way, finds CD ROM serious stuff; it works like a laserdisc and could have future impact on coin-op.)

So, there's a little switch inside the bigger switch of the public spending countless more money on home video when they used to concentrate on coin-op. Might there be another switch as home vid gets bitten by the hit syndrome and game developers turn more of their attention back to coin? Hmmm?



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Oh, Democracy!

British journalist David Snook provides a candid (and entertaining) glimpse into European coin-op's behind-the-scenes political battles

by DAVID SNOOK

It's a fact of life: back-stage political maneuvering, and the shameless pursuit of self-interest, feature prominently in quite a few coin-op gatherings from the local to the international level. Come to think of it, isn't that what democracy is all about? But this magazine rarely enjoys the luxury of no-holds-barred reporting of "behind-the-scenes" scuffles in the American trade. (If we did, we'd compromise our sources, anger our readers, or hurt our advertisers . . . or all of the above.)

Journalism in Britain, however, often plays by a very different set of rules. So when Euromat (the "United Nations" of 14 European trade associations) asked Britain's David Snook (editor of Coin Slot International *magazine) to send the American trade press an official report on their latest confab, they may have gotten more than they bargained for.*

The resulting story deals with concerns far from our own shores, but it's presented with such high-octane entertainment value that we're running the full report. Happily, sanity and fairness seem to have prevailed in the end — a happy outcome for Euromat and democratic principle alike. Think of David's article as "light summer reading" . . . and as you read, remember: this sort of thing happens all the time in this country, too. You just don't get to read about it! We send our thanks to our fellow trade magazine editor across the seas, for his very enjoyable contribution.

It was almost like a Greek tragedy. The actors all knew their lines, right down to the "heavily whispered asides." The dramatic interposes were carefully rehearsed, and the predictably nail-biting conclusion was almost prosaic in its complexity and confusion.

It was, of course, the annual meeting of Euromat, that testimony to European coin machine unity — which so often threatens to be anything but. The leaders of 14 European coin machine trade associations met at the Sheraton Hotel in

Noble Goals, Pragmatic Interests Define Euromat's Role

The purpose behind Euromat is to ensure that the EEC (European Economic Community) Parliament in Brussels, Belgium doesn't implement coin machine laws potentially damaging to the national laws already existing in any one member country. For example, Euromat wants to prevent adoption of one uniform system of testing (if such is ever proposed) which may be inoperable for the amusements business. It also hopes to ensure that such things as a ban on gaming machines (slots) is not imposed on the unsuspecting industry. With Euromat in place, concerted action may be initiated at an early stage in the legislative proceedings to head off anything undesirable.

These lofty principles are unshakable in good intent and indeed, in good sense. It is so often the internal politicking which accompanies the activities of Euromat which creates so much interest, fascination and sometimes downright fun for the rest of the European trade (in the absence of anything "nasty" from the so-far docile European politicians).

Belgium, Holland, France, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Austria, Denmark, Malta, Portugal, Switzerland and West Germany are all among the members of Euromat, which is not necessarily confined to EEC member countries. The respective trade association in each country is represented within the federation, in some cases in multiples. There are, for example, three West German trade associations.

They all have a block of votes dependent upon the relative size and strengths of their coin machine industries. Great Britain and West Germany, for example, each have 12 votes, but Spain, France, Italy and Holland have successively fewer, and so on down to the "minnows" which command just two votes.

The strengths of their markets are generally dictated by whether they have legalized "slots" or similar gambling machines, to add to the obvious video games, jukeboxes and pinballs. In that way, the British, Germans, Spaniards and Dutch are regarded as the "rich" countries, with the addition of Belgium for its permitted bingo tables.

Often, however, Euromat is clearly seen as more of a watchdog of one trade association, or country, over the aspirations of the others. The British, for example, will be there as much to make sure that if common laws on gaming machines are adopted, then it is the British system rather than the German one which gets the vote, as much as it is there to watch the EEC politicians. Many of the trade associations in membership of Euromat, therefore, are seeking to protect what they have at the moment from predators in neighboring countries. Others, of course, without the income generated from slot machines, are there to seek those benefits for their own countries. The protection of self-interest is very much a keyword among Euromat member associations. Hardly surprising, since protecting members' interests is one cornerstone of any trade association.

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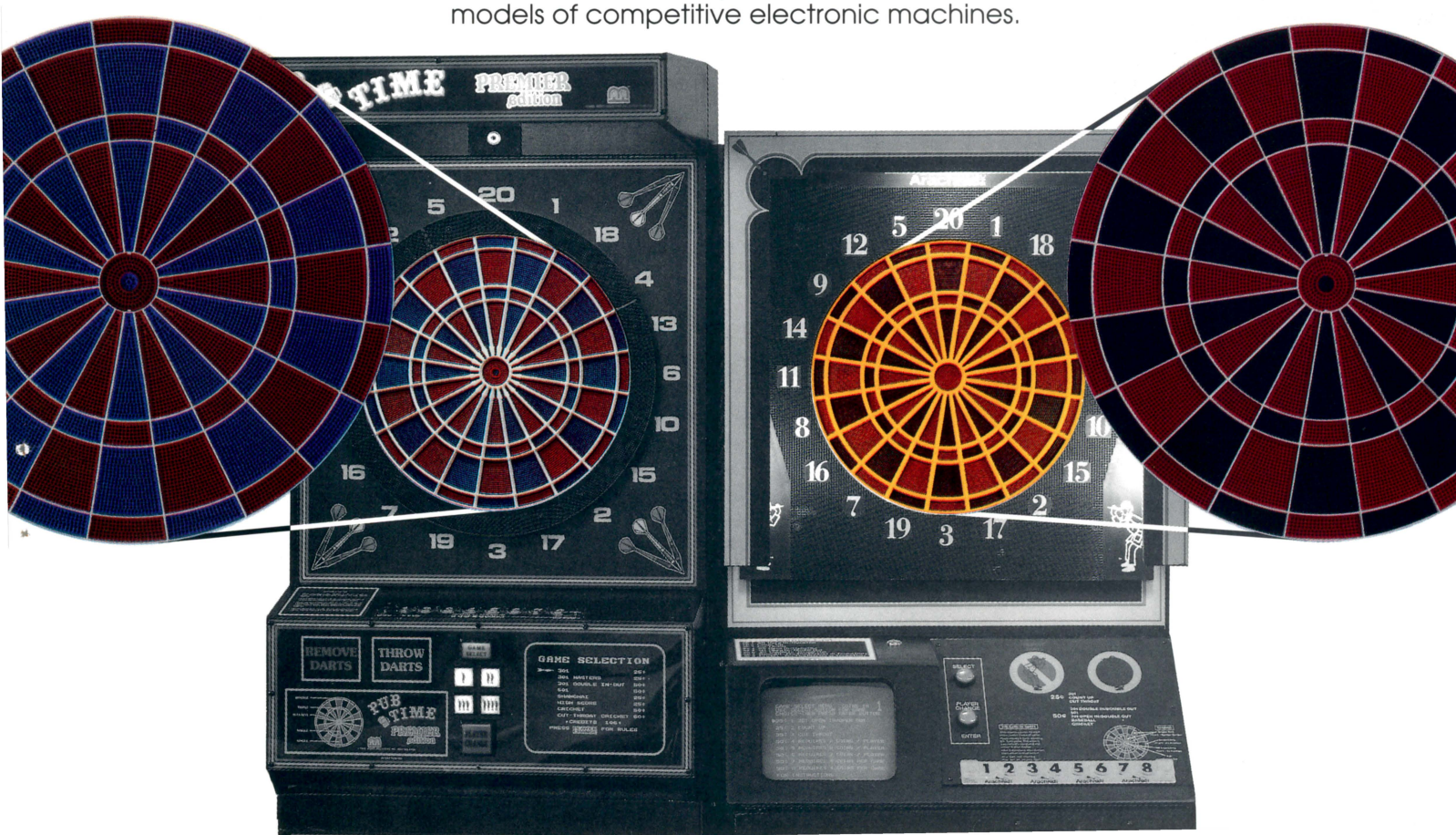
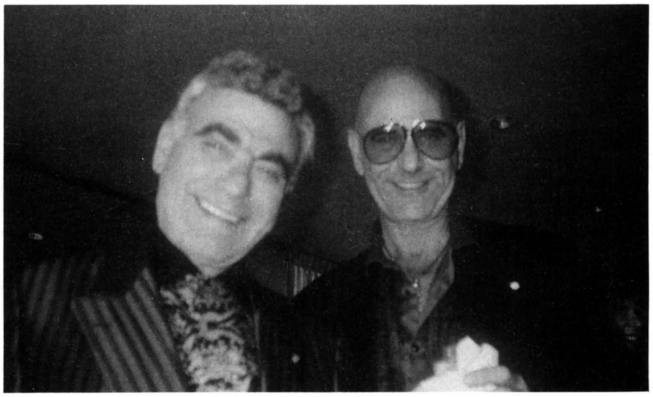


UBA's Omer DeMunck (a Euromat joint secretary) and Willy Michiels (Euromat president) at the 1989 meeting of the association.



AMA president Hank Grant (right, pictured with father Sal Groentemann) has been trying to get Euromat membership for his group since 1988. UBA, with its network of Euromat hierarchy, was ideally placed to thwart his efforts and has been effectively doing so.

Brussels, Belgium on May 22 to carry on their "watchdog" mission at the European Community, to ensure that the politicians don't do anything nasty to the coin machine business.

For all its more serious purpose, the meetings so often turn into illustrations of why so many people firmly believe that there's very little "common" about the Common Market, or unified in intent between the various countries thus involved.

As the May meeting approached, the absence of any proposed legislation set the scene for a somewhat dull meeting. The agenda promised a debate on funding a permanent Euromat general secretary (to replace the current three part-timers already otherwise engaged as full-time secretaries for the British, German and Belgian trade associations respectively). Also slated was a debate on the possibilities of adopting a code of conduct for general application throughout Euromat member associations. The relish on the hamburger came from a delicate piece of in-fighting between two Belgian trade associations, which threatened to break out into open bickering, leaving the somewhat staid European unitarians blushing at the suggestion of scandal.

Belgium is a small country in a unique situation, in coin machine terms. It permits bingo games: the pinball look-alikes which are, in essence, thinly-disguised gambling machines (they're banned in most countries of the world). In the topsy-turvy world of international coin machines, history has seen countries accept slots, reject video games, declare pinball to be "gambling devices," and often — paradoxically — throw the baby out with the bath water.

In the case of Belgium, the authorities declared slot machines illegal, but tacitly accepted bingos. This has never been popular in that country, despite the fact that the Union Belge de l'Automatique (known more simply as the UBA) actually spearheaded public opposition to slot machines in the early years. The UBA (which incidentally supplies Euromat with its president, Willy Michiels, and one of its joint secretaries, Omer de Munck) is as keen to see their bingo tables survive as its British, Spanish, German and Dutch counterparts are to see their legal slots survive.

UBA therefore set its face against the aspirations of the fledgling Amusement Machine Assn. of Belgium, when the latter wanted to join Euromat. The AMA is headed by the mercurial Henry "Hank" Grant, the colorful owner of a giant amusement arcade on the Belgian coast, arguably one of the best arcades in the world. AMA president Grant is also very well known in international coin-op circles and is a familiar face at most of the world's coin machine shows. His father, Sol Groentemann, is a Dutchman by birth but a stalwart of the industry going back 60 years, having at one time run a string of amusement centers in Pennsylvania and running a Bally sales agency, prior to moving to Belgium after the war.

Henry Grant and his membership of around 80 individual amusement arcade owners from around Belgium (with a scattering of traveling arcades operated mainly on carnival sites) sees the return of the slot machine as fundamental to the fu-

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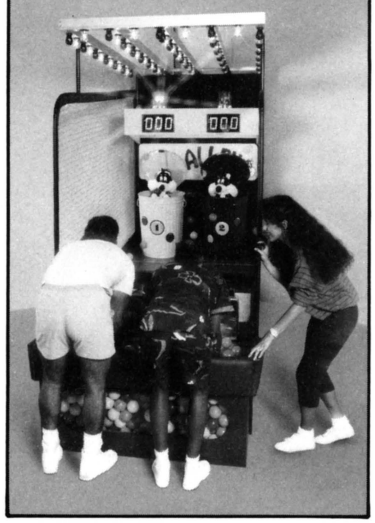

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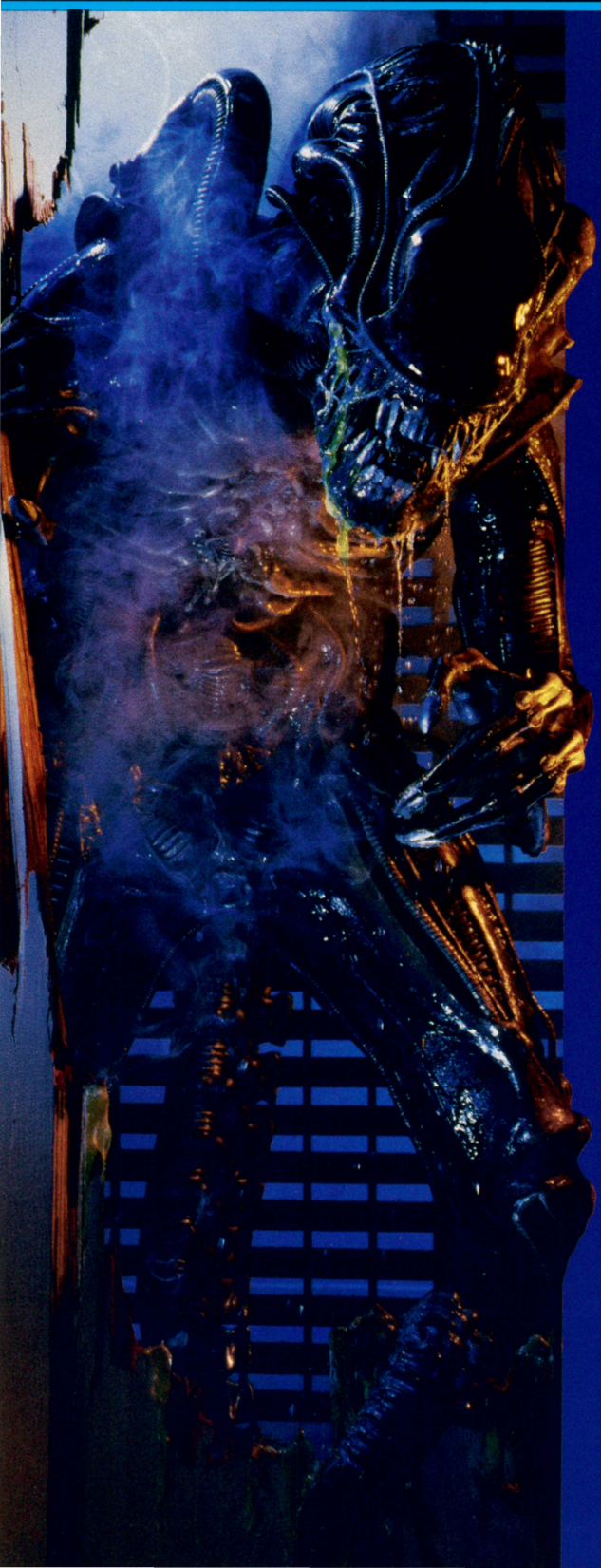

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Upon arrival at LV426 Acheron, the magnitude of the threat sinks in. The settlement is overrun with aliens, and you are expected to eliminate every one of them. The mission takes you through airways, elevators, underground waterways, and tunnel systems within the space colony. Along the way, you will encounter a multitude of species of alien creatures.

The situation gets worse, so you must get tougher. In addition to fighting the existing aliens, there are also incubation rooms and hatching grounds everywhere. You must dodge fatal electric shock waves, barricades, steam blasts, and dripping doses of alien acid in pursuit of your goal. The task of blowing away the aliens is aided with the use of such power weapons as missiles, triple bullets, flamethrowers, three-way shots, and bombs.

You proceed into the mother alien's lair, where she is hatching her larvae. After destroying her, you believe the mission is accomplished, and settle into the space ship for the long journey home. However, you soon realize that there is one more alien—and it's in your ship. In the last, most desperate fight, the fate of the universe depends on you. Will the alien win, and come back to your colony to wipe out all human life, or can you emerge victorious, destroying the alien and blasting its remains into outer space?

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ture of the industry in Belgium. They also see the Euromat tag as an endorsement which will indelibly imprint the credentials of his organization and its aspirations in the minds of lawmakers.

It is not hard, then, to see why the UBA should set its face so firmly against the AMA. The initial shots were fired in 1988 when the AMA, then two years old, first applied for Euromat membership. The UBA, with its network of Euromat hierarchy, was ideally placed to thwart any and all attempts, and duly set about doing so.

AMA's first setback in '88 was on the grounds that it had not been around long enough. "Re-apply in 1989," it was told. AMA did so, and that time they were told it didn't have evidence to show it was officially accepted as a nationally-based organization, and its office was not a part of another business premises. The tacit understanding from last year's debate, however, was that 1990 would be AMA's year (provided it could satisfy Euromat on these two points).

Back came Henry Grant this year to be told, just before the meeting, that he should have put in another formal application more than 28 days prior to the meeting. He had been left with the impression that it would come up automatically, and in any case, in 1989 the UBA was told firmly by Euromat to hold talks with the AMA to settle the issue. Since then, the UBA had made no attempt to do so. The official line to AMA, therefore, was that it had missed the boat again.

This proved rather too much for some to swallow. During the meeting at the Sheraton, from which Mr. Grant and his delegates had again been excluded, Spain's Eddie Morales rose to express concern at the way the whole matter of AMA's application for membership had been handled. He demanded a special meeting of Euromat to re-examine the application.

Under Euromat rules, if a member country demands a special meeting and the proposition is seconded and duly carried by the meeting, then it has to be held within six weeks. In this event, Northern Ireland seconded the Spanish proposition.

The British delegation at the 1989 Euromat meeting (left to right): Jimmy Godden, Philip Shefras, Mal Kravis, Alan Willis and Michael Shefras. Euromat prexy Willy Michiels vacated his chair during the special meeting because he was "personally involved" in favor of First VP Michael Shefras.

Euromat president Willy Michiels, declaring himself "personally involved" because of his presidency of UBA, vacated the chair for the debate, in favor of First VP Michael Shefras from Great Britain. Mr. Shefras began by outlining the circumstances of the case as he saw it, and then making it plain that if the vote was successful, then the proper procedure would be for a Presidium (consisting of himself and vice presidents from Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Spain, France and Italy) to meet within six weeks to discuss the matter. This Presidium would then make a recommendation to the special meeting . . . which would then have to be held within six weeks of *that* date!

Shefras also invoked the ire of the UBA by declaring that Belgium should not have a vote at the Presidium. He overruled the UBA protest, insisting that the UBA should not be able to "sit judge and jury" over a rival trade association, and that it would still have the opportunity to vote on the issue when it reached the special meeting.

Support from the AMA case came from the British delegation in the discussion which followed. The Italians were worried about the costs of a special meeting, the French downright suspicious of everyone's motives, and so the debate went on.

Put to the vote by Mr. Shefras, the 74 votes cast were split: 32 in favor, 30 against, 12 abstentions. (Each association controls a different number of votes, depending on certain qualifications which are described in the sidebar to this story.)

With a plurality favoring AMA's position, Mr. Shefras announced that the Presidium to discuss the AMA application would take place in about six weeks' time (now confirmed as June 28). This brought an immediate protest from the UBA, which attempted to have the vote declared the other way, as it needed a 75% majority. Mr. Shefras dismissed the protest and said that a simple vote was all that was necessary. "Common sense must prevail, or we make ourselves a laughing-stock," he said.

The Amusement Machine Assn. of Belgium is therefore on its way, with the hurdle of a Presidium recommendation to climb, and then the final test: a special meeting of Euromat which will hear AMA's case. This meeting should occur sometime around late summer.

Europe's coin machine "United Nations" got there in the end: democracy won. But it went all around the houses to reach this conclusion. The entire episode was a wonderful tableau, an example of what may yet be to come when the European Parliament really gets down to looking at legislation which may please some, but displease others in the coin machine sector. It all adds up to a fascinating prospect!

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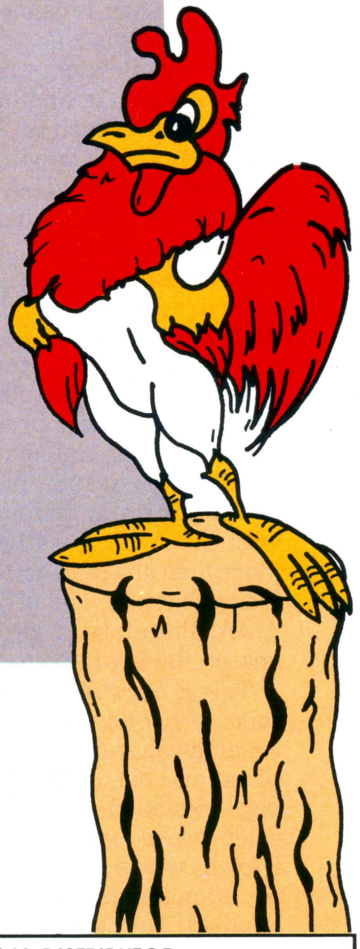

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cover story

'Back To The Future'

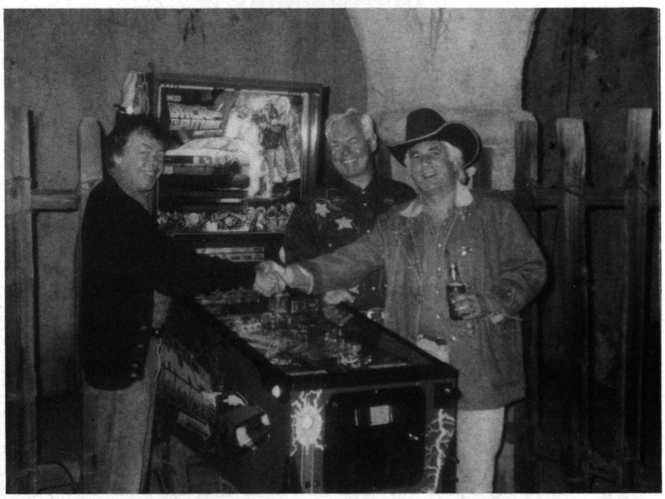
new Data East pin themed on blockbuster movie trilogy bows to trade for summer action

Video Games have had their fair share of promotional tie-ins with the entertainment field (e.g. *TMNT, Robocop* and *Willow),* but pinball's list of honored celebrities stretches back to the electro-mechanical days. While Bally scored a real bunch, Gary Stern at Stern Electronics had his share (with Ted Nugent and Mohammed Ali).

Since Gary's been the head man at Data East's Pinball division, he's more than kept up the practice of marrying entertainment entities to pinballs with critical games like *ABC Monday Night Football* and their still-madcap *Phantom of the Opera.*

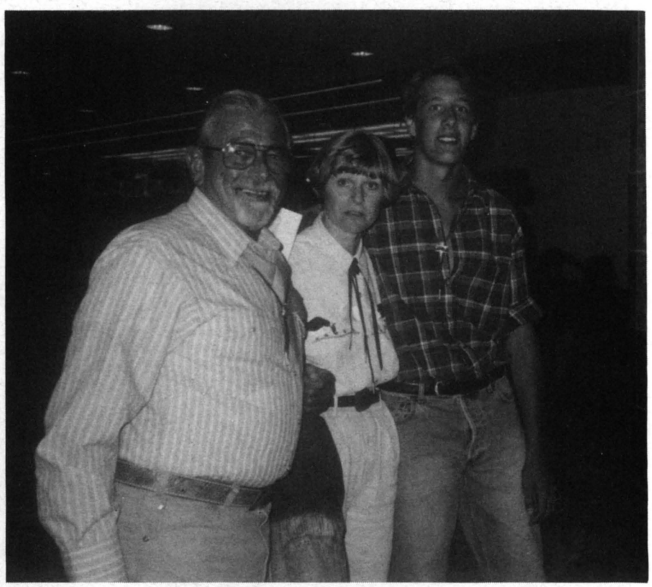
And now, close upon the release of Universal Pictures' *Back to the Future III,* Data East has locked into this box office sensation to theme its newest flipper attraction. Unleashed to the general public on Memorial Day weekend, this latest (and reportedly last) movie epic of Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) and Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) tripping through time swept the ticket buying sweeps that weekend for an inaugural $23.7 million in sales.

Between this latest gambit and the two preceding films, this trilogy is obviously well known and loved by the movie-going public, which Gary Stern says also makes up a big chunk of the pinball-playing public. And, the timing of both product releases could hardly have been better.



On the night of May 21, Universal held the world premier of Back to the Future III *at their studio and followed same with a party where 10 Data East pins were among the attractions. Shown at the display are Ed Adlum congratulating Gary Stern on another fine game with D.E.'s new prexy Joe Keenan.*

You'd never know it, fans, but that's Christopher (Doc) Lloyd at right with Dave & Georgia Stroud (P.G.D.) at the premier party.



C.A. Robinson veep Hank Tronick (left) with RePlay's *Tippy Adlum and Betson Pacific's Mike Betti in the lobby, shortly before the showing.*

Above, thanks to our high-speed camera, Joe Kaminkow is caught mid-word as he explains the numerous shooting possibilities on the BTTF *pinball to an interested bystander. This is camera history. Below, is a studio photo of the new pinball machine.*

Did Data East, under chief designer Joe Kaminkow, make a good "marriage" between movie and pinball? None other than the film trilogy's own writer and producer Bob Gale said they did, and in spades (see separate sidebar this section). Visually and vocally, it appears that Kaminkow & company nailed the spirit of the *BTTF* madness onto a playboard, hopefully creating for the pinball operator the best of both worlds: recognizable title, solid skill play.

The machines sample-shipped to Data East Pinball distributors the latter part of June and production was cranked up the end of the month. So, buyable machines could be at most DE pin dealers by this reading. European dealers got their samples earlier, which is not unusual in the pinball business. And before we go any further in this story, yes, Mr. Haney, *Back to the Future* has a free play knocker!

Ask Joe Kaminkow (who was responsible for the ingredients) how the game plays and you invite a seminar of considerable proportion. Like Fox and Lloyd, Kaminkow is his own artist (the pinball playfield being his canvas. And he loves to talk about it.

"The game has many elements of the films of Marty and Doc going back to their Delorean time machine," he began. "Sound and music designer Brian Schmidt choreographed over two hundred sounds and special effects, like the lightning strike on the clock tower and the Delorean ripping through time, plus the hit music of *Love, Back in Time* by Huey Lewis, and the hit ZZ Top song *Double Back.* The game also features selected cuts from the movie itself and select special effects to spice up the appeal. It also sports a new Twin Jackpot feature for skilled players."

Besides Schmidt, other team designers on *BTTF* included noted graphic artist Paul Faris (who did the artwork on it, as well as on *Phantom).* Kaminkow was joined by Ed Cebula on game design and Rehman Merchant helped out a bunch. Merchant, by the way, has over ten years' experience working at Bally and over 80 pinballs on his credit

list.

"Without these folks and the rest of the design team and the people in the front office, this quality machine would never have been possible," stated Kaminkow. "But, we really had only a glimmer of an idea how well it would really do in the field until we saw the first collection test. Now we know it's strong . . . really a matter of counting the coins . . . and there are plenty of them," he added.

BACKGROUND

The *Back to the Future* pinball came about in a relatively short period of time. According to Gary Stern: "We received the license in early April along with the challenge of getting ten games completed in time for the film's world premiere in late May. We decided to go for it and in one month, engineering put almost two man-years' worth of hours into the project.

"This pinball," Stern continued, "is without doubt the best overall package ever done on a flipper game. It was heavily researched, beginning with marathon viewings of the first two *BTTF* films, plus clips of the third one. Then Joe and Paul went to Hollywood and spent a day with the writer/producer Bob Gale.

"Intensive phone and written communication ensued as the pro-

Producer/Screenwriter Delighted With Translation of Film to Pin

Bob Gale, not only a script writer but a producer of all three *Back to the Future* movies, obviously has an emotional attachment to his "babies" and was rather curious how a pinball machine themed on them would turn out. As the following letter sent to *RePlay* proves, his original skepticism turned to pure love when he saw the finished product. Wrote Gale:

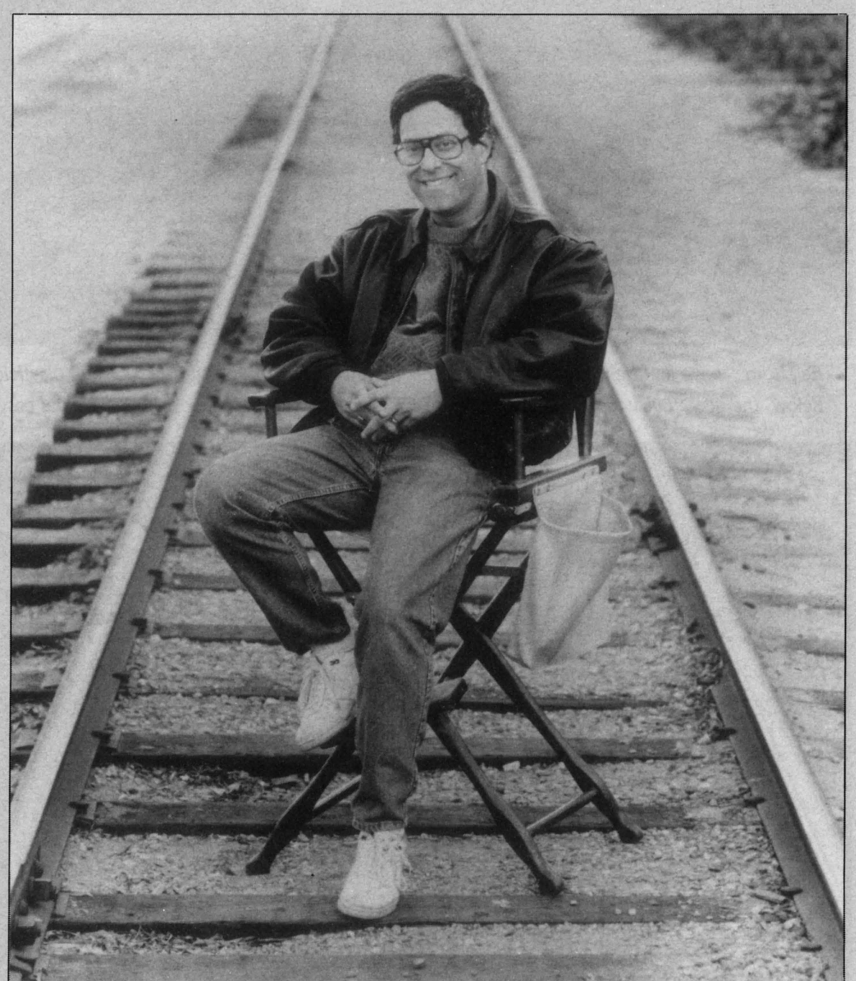
"I was skeptical when I first heard about it: somebody wanted to make a pinball machine based on the *Back to the Future* movies. Right. Exactly how does a movie even translate into a pinball game, much less three movies with the complexity that these have?

"But, the enthusiasm and excitement that Joe Kaminkow and his design team at Data East had for the project convinced me to green light it — particularly after seeing the quality of their work in the *Robocop* and *Phantom of the Opera* pinballs.

"Hey, I thought, this isn't just another case of somebody wanting to throw a *Back to the Future* logo on a piece of merchandise — these guys really love our movies and want to make something with quality and integrity here. They're fanatics!

"Well, it's now several months later, and never had I been more delighted to have approved a licensing deal. The *Back to the Future* pinball is absolutely incredible, exceeding my expectations on every level. It's visually stunning, aurally extraordinary — with its incorporation of actual film dialogue, sound effects and music — and an engrossing, all emcompassing game experience that never fails to leave me saying, 'I gotta try that just one more time!'

"The folks at Data East really pulled it off: they've truly captured the spirit of the three movies in this amazing

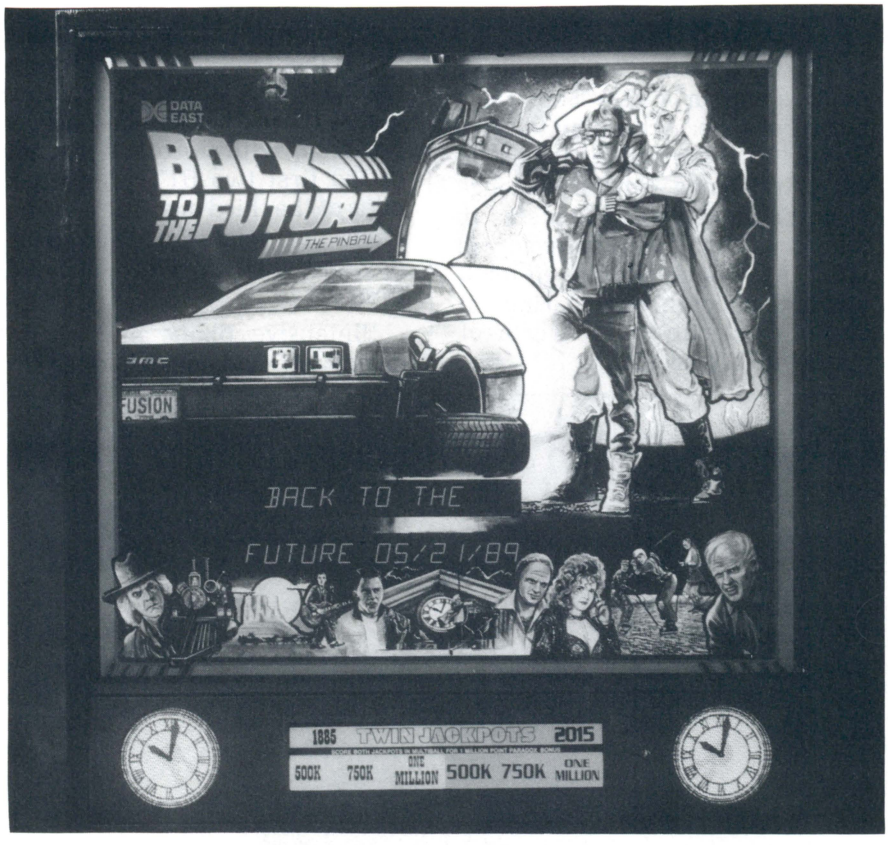


machine. Just when you think you know what's going to happen — Great Scott! — you're hit with something new! It's even a kick to watch somebody else play this pinball!

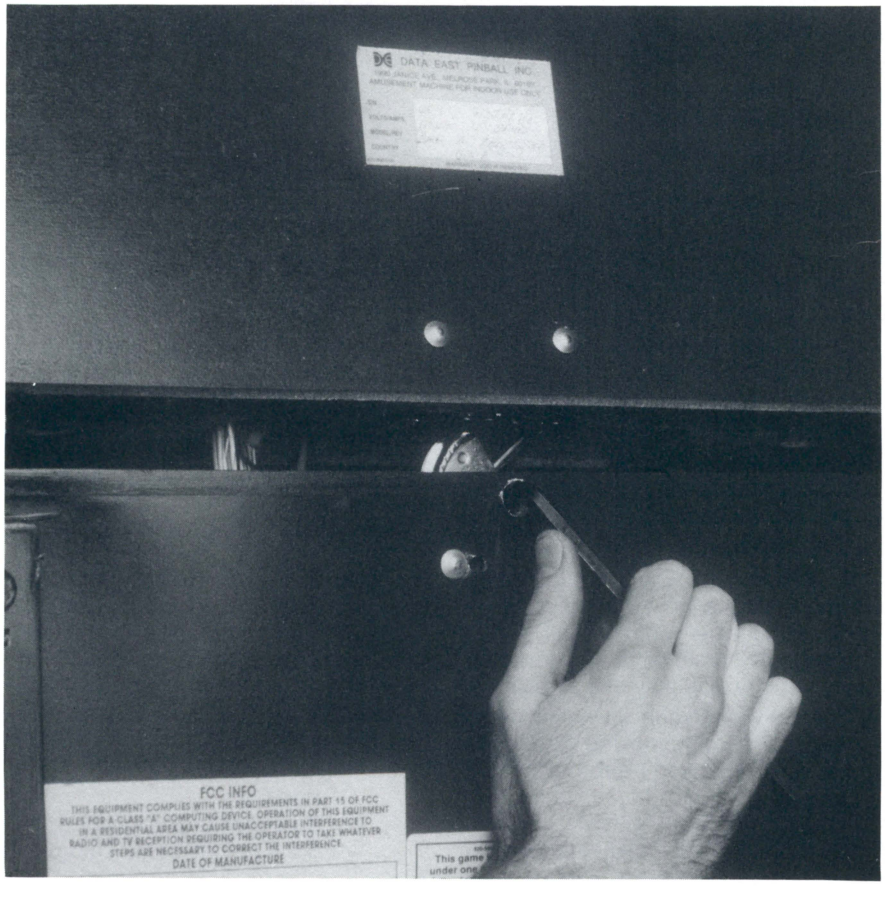
"We've all seen licensing deals and tie-in merchandising that leaves us sour (you won't see me writing about LJN's *Back to the Future* Nintendo cartridges), but Data East's awesome pinball will leave you exhilarated, totally jazzed, and digging into your pocket for another quarter.

"This is a machine that Doc Brown himself would be proud to have invented — and I'm truly proud to have been a small part of it. Thanks, Joe and everybody at Data East — it's an outstanding accomplishment!"

Bob Gale
Screenwriter/Producer
Back to the Future Trilogy



The photos above and right provide a look at the machine's terrific-looking backglass and playfield. Below, the new "quick lock" feature found on BTTF *that makes back box set up quick and easy.*



ject went into high gear. Within a week from that meeting, the white wood was playing and artwork and sound effects were underway. Every supplier and worker for Data East Pinball helped make this game possible in terms of quick art turnaround and cabinets, down to the smallest metal parts," he added.

PHILOSOPHY

Entertainment promo tie-ins have become an important part of Data East's long-term marketing planning. "It's really paying off gigantic dividends in game earnings," Stern declared. "In the past year and a half, we've also worked hard to innovate our pinball technology with impressive firsts like solid state flippers, quick lock and easy-set-up head locking systems. We've also tuned bass-ported cabinets and our new operator alert that even tells the operator when he needs to clean his game," Stern added.

"While the mechanical engineering and game design group headed by Ed Cebula and John Lund have been changing the face of pinball, Joe Kaminkow and I have been busy laying the groundwork for some

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Back in the wild west in the third installment of the Back to the Future *trilogy, Doc (played by Christopher Lloyd) and Marty (Michael J. Fox) confront yet another obstacle in their quest to return to the modern world. The movie has scored big bucks in the box office.*

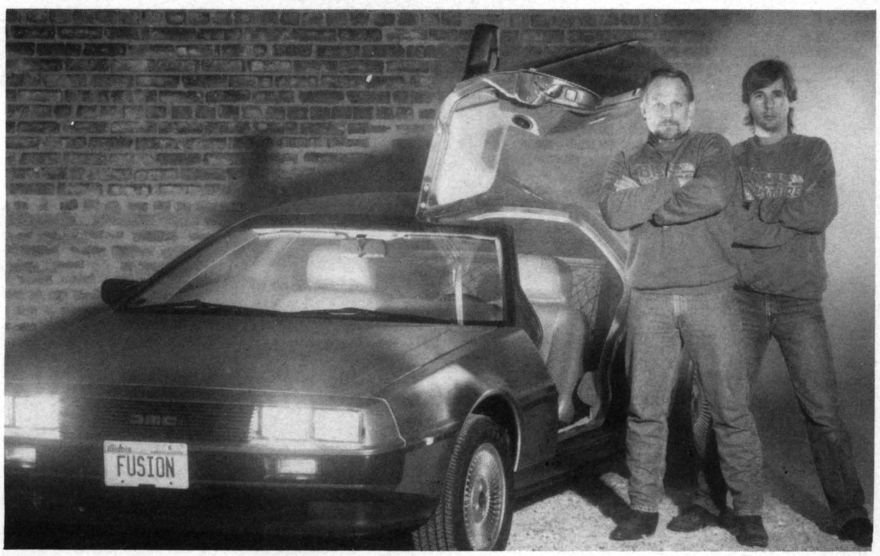
devastating themes for more movie and TV licenses, including things from 20th Century Fox, Warners, DC Comics, Universal, Paramount, ABC TV, Lucas Film and MCA," Stern advised.

DE'S OWN FUTURE

This is a company that many consider the "new kid on the pinball block," even though they've been around for a while. They take that to heart and while devoting the necessary, perhaps "extra" time, to promotional marriages and playfield scoring techniques, are rooted in trying to turn out a Swiss watch in terms of machine durability. Says their Operations Director Wes Moore:

"The games get played before they go into the box. We are very concerned that we ship a product with the highest quality possible. Operators will notice such changes that engineering and Jim Ross and his purchasing staff put into effect."

So, with technique, target challenge and Hollywood's box office attraction behind their newest flipper game, Data East pinball thinks their future is so bright they have to wear shades! Great Scott! Check that *BTTF* out right now...certainly while the film is hot and that initial quarter is trembling in the fingers of the millions of folks who want to see if the whiz-bang on the screen is on the pinball as well.



The dynamic duo set for time travel — Paul Faris and Brian Schmidt.

Real "George"

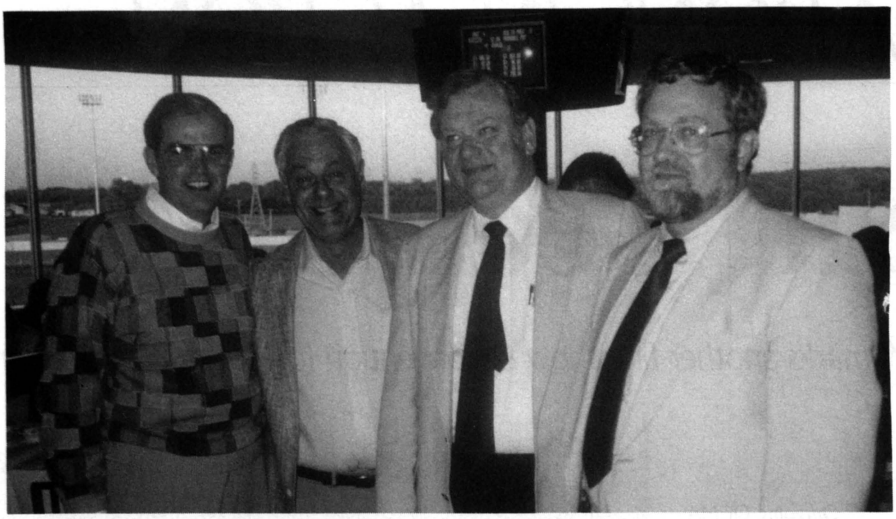
Ohio's "Rumpus in Columbus" marks another fine show & convention for Buckeye association

Way back before the NASA space program, "real George" meant A-OK. Since it seems that every other route operator in Ohio is named George, and since the Ohio Coin Machine Assn. (OCMA) is headed by prexy Dave George, it stands to reason that their May 17-19 Expo '90 meeting in Columbus was yet another solid trade convention and product showing.

In terms of attendance, number of exhibit booths, quality of seminars and social affairs, the mid-May outing was largely an updated repeat of last year's successful convention. Produced by permanent OCMA staffers Paul Corey and Judy Martin, under the aegis of Dave

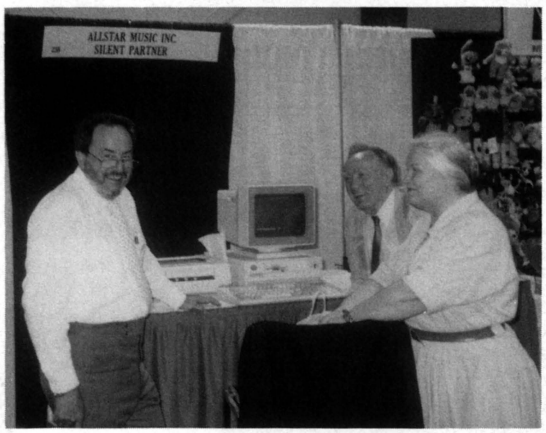
Outgoing OCMA prexy Dave George & wife are presented with a portrait by R.J. Reynolds VP Neal McCleary. Rather than accept a gift from OCMA itself, the Georges gave a check to "Make Room Columbus" a non-profit agency that gets homeless people off the streets and back into the mainstream).

Proving that the Ohio Coin Machine Association never puts the cart before the horse, the group sponsored a harness race at Scioto Downs (May 18) and the winner was Happy Okey, driven by Mark Stockwell. Pictured from the winning horse's "left" are: driver Stockwell, OCMA's Dave Corey, Ron Rentz, horse owner F. Weldon Stockwell, AMOA's Jack & Shirley Kerner and Pat Rentz.

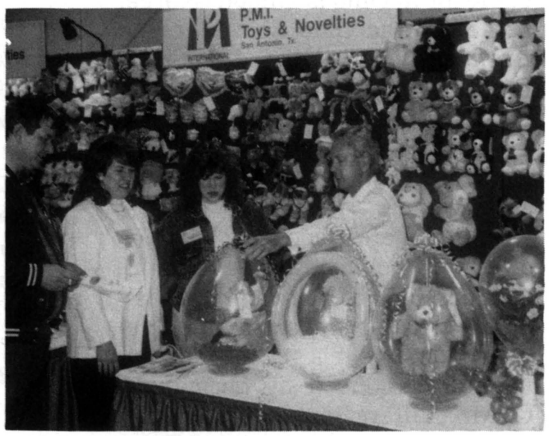


Enjoying the visit to Scioto Downs are (left to right) Jim Stansfield, AMOA prexy Jack Kerner, Larry Van Brackel and Ron Rentz. Dinner was part of the "night at the races."

With a busy exhibit area behind them, OCMA officers Ron Rentz (left) and Lowell Wessels say "good show" over at the Rhodes Hall venue in the Ohio Expositions Center.



Left: The great Ted Furkin showed his Silent Partner computer software to Tri-County's Bob & Jeanne Badgley of Chillicothe. Right: OCMA director Joe Rutherford & wife and daughter Heidi at the PMI Toys exhibit.



George and his association team, the event drew people from 71 different operating companies and sold 46 exhibit booths to firms ranging from distributors to parts and plush suppliers and to some factories like Gamemasters, Seeburg and Valley.

Even the Expo venue was the same as in 1989, although Corey said it will be the last time they have the seminars in a separate hotel (the Ramada North) from the exhibition site (the Ohio Expositions Center). "It's really too inconvenient for the members and guests to have to travel back and forth between the two places, so next year's annual will take place all in one locale," Corey advised. (OCMA did provide shuttle service between the sites for those without cars.)

Not counting exhibitor personnel, the Expo '90 drew 271 trade people, including 14 youngsters. Corey, always receptive to new ideas to keep Ohio at the forefront of the state association pack, offered a baby-sitting service for operators who brought their kids (run by two trained nurses). "It was my son Dave's idea and we'll do it again," he enthused.

Enthusiasm is Paul Corey's middle name. He approaches every show as if it was the first one he ever did. He travels through the exhibits back-patting and checking on action ("every one of the exhibitors was pleased with the business they did, even the guys who like to gripe," he smiled). He hits the seminars, monitors the words spoken between panelists and audience and sometimes gets his own thoughts (and congrats) onto the microphone. He is a whale of an industry booster and one more reason OCMA is looked up to by many other state groups.

Ohio itself is about as "model" a jukebox and games state as they come. It's a highly-populated chunk of territory proudly boasting many route operations that go back many generations. The tradesters not only come to socialize but to learn whatever they can to keep their state a "leg up" on new ideas.

Subjects covered included CDs and 45s and where the software situation is headed (see last month's issue of *RePlay*), Pinball Basics, and Successful Route Management. For "competition among friendly competitors," OCMA held their Ed Shaffer Golf Tournament the day before the show opened, they also had an Arachnid State Dart Championship on Saturday (19). Door prizes, cocktails and dinner plus a trip to Scioto Downs harness racing track spiced up the weekend. If there was a stone unturned, Corey was probably turning it over to see what else they could do to make the affair even more worthwhile.

OCMA's annual membership meeting took place on Saturday afternoon. Their slate of officers is elected by their board (this will take place this month), but board mem-

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bers themselves are elected by the membership. Those coming on are Joe Cordone, Ray Lonsway, Phil Elum, Ron Rentz, Lowell Wessels, Bob Steffey, Tony Paradiso, Mike Zappa and Steve Robinson.

Congratulations to the new members of the board as well as to the outgoing officers for running a solid association and producing a "George" convention. Here are some photos snapped during the "Rumpus in Columbus."

Above left: ***Fielding a question at the "Pinball Basics" seminar are panelists (from left) Greg McKay (Williams), Pete Gustafson (Data East) and Bob Rentz.*** *Above right:* ***Getting ready for dinner at Scioto Downs are Jim Stansfield and Larry Van Brackel.***

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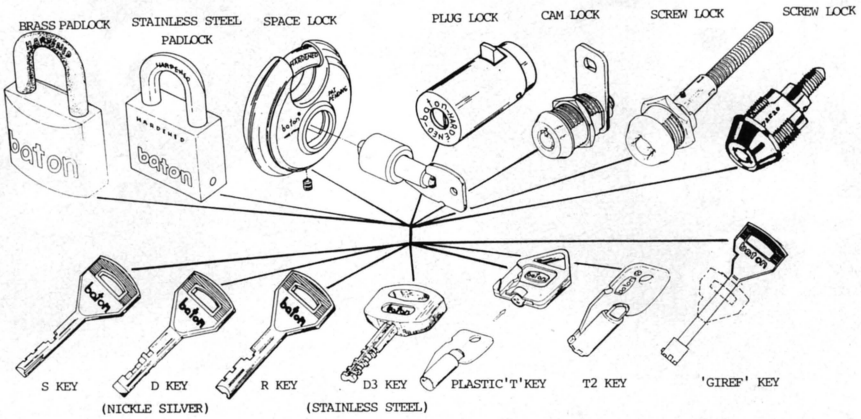

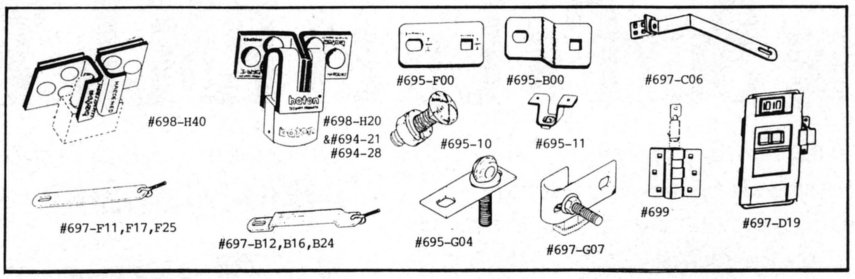

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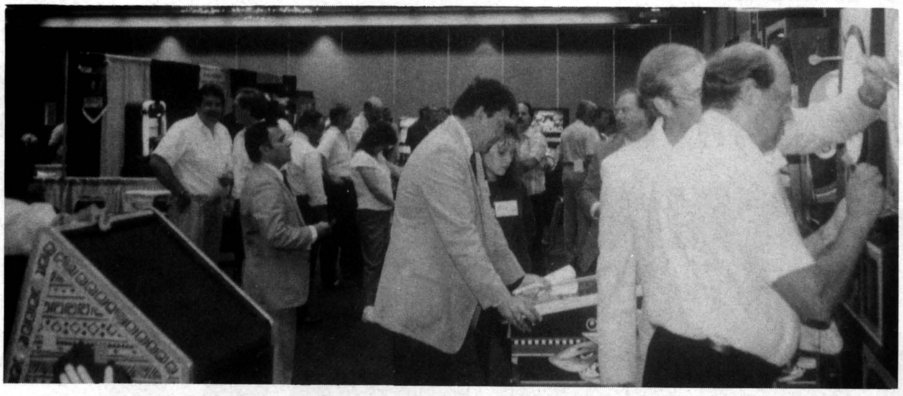
The Sky's the Limit

WAMO holds Spring Meeting & Trade Show at Stevens' Point; video poker dominates agenda but other hot topics covered



Photos above and below show just some of the action on the WAMO trade show floor June 8-9.

Outgoing WAMO prexy Jim Stansfield, at podium, moderates seminar on video pokers. Panelists, from left: lobbyist Tom Coenen, SMS's Jim Pietrangelo, Ralph Fleege and lobbyist Janet Swandby.

"The Sky's the Limit!" proclaimed WAMO (Wisconsin Amusement & Music Operators). That cheerful boast proved true at WAMO's latest Spring Convention and Trade Show, an event which provided another milestone in WAMO's never-ending quest for excellence. The affair took place June 8-9 at the Holiday Inn resort hotel at Stevens' Point, located among the lush green meadows, virgin forest and beautiful lakes of Central Wisconsin.

While attendance was down from earlier years, everything else was decidedly up: WAMO's finances, membership roster, optimism, political ambition, and political stature. Also on the "up" side was the group's fine convention program, organized by WAMO Executive Director Joe Phillips. "We hit all the hot topics," Phillips smiled, "including video poker, music software, pinball promotion, the future of video games and high technology. I'd say it's one of the best business programs we've offered in many a year."

WAMO also elected a strong new officer slate for 1990-92. The new leadership includes: President Roger Westmont; VP Mike Bohrer; Secretary Eric Jacobson; and Treasurer Bryan Hubbard. Pioneer Sales & Service president Joel Kleiman was elected as the new distributor representative on WAMO's board of directors, while Mike Mellen became a new operator board member.

TALKING ABOUT POKER

Video poker definitely topped the WAMO Spring Meeting agenda. As reported in the News section of this issue, WAMO is preparing to mount a well-planned, well-thought-out

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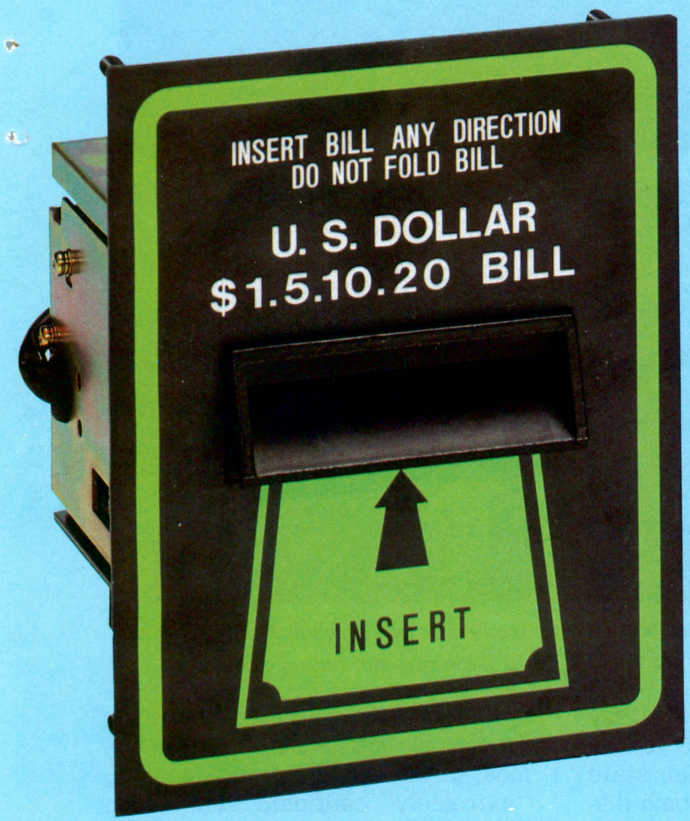

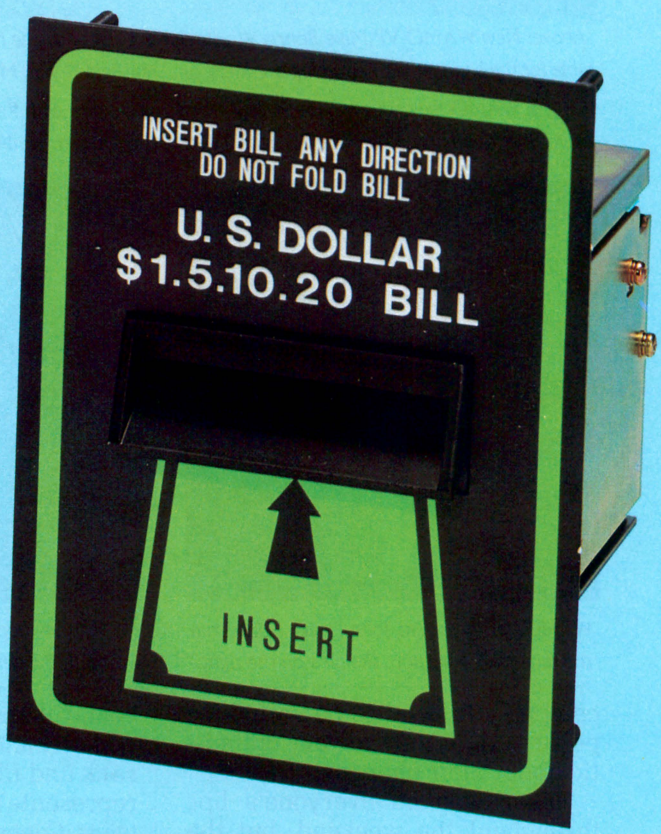

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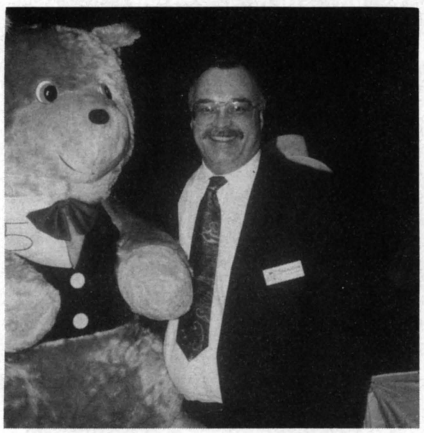
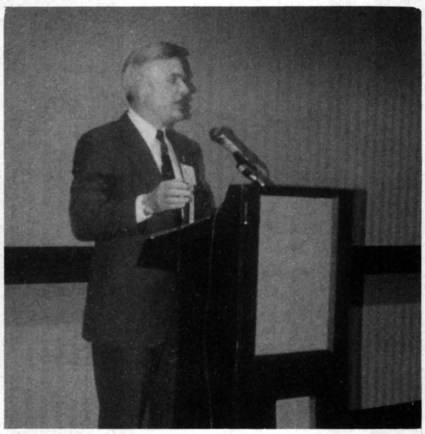
Above: New WAMO VP Mike Bohrer & wife Sue are seated at the head table for the banquet with outgoing president Jim Stansfield & wife Marge.

Right: WAMO Executive VP Joe Phillips dances up a storm with Rene Hayes (her hubby works for Jim Stansfield) during the Western Jamboree.



WAMO past president John Fleege helped run the fund-raising auction. (Ralph's on the right.)



Wisconsin's top tax man, Secretary of Revenue Mark Bugher, gives the luncheon address.

Legal expert John Whitehall discusses the value of contracts with a crowd of WAMOers.

campaign to legalize pay-off video poker . . . and they're very optimistic about their chances.

Poker was on everyone's lips throughout the weekend, but the central poker event was a seminar moderated by outgoing WAMO president Jim Stansfield. Panelists included Jim Pietrangelo, VP of Sales & Marketing at SMS, who strongly advised operators to do the following: make sure you've got 100% political unity when dealing with the state; nail down good contracts with locations; "make friends with your bankers — you're going to need them"; and finally "order early." Some operators had already placed "substantial" orders for video poker games in anticipation of a legal market in 1991, he added.

Also on the poker panel were WAMO lobbyists Tom Coenen and Janet Swandby. Coenen outlined a comprehensive lobbying strategy which included having WAMO's rank and file meet with their state representatives in their home districts. Coenen said he, Swandby and WAMO's leaders were also consulting closely with the governor, the state's attorney general, the Wisconsin Indian tribes which wish to run gambling on their reservations, and with the Tavern League, all of whom he hopes to enlist as allies.

Rounding out the poker panel was WAMO past president Ralph Fleege. Based on observations from a recent "field trip," Fleege said operators in South Dakota were pleasantly surprised by the large amounts of cash they had to handle. Accordingly, he advised Wisconsin operators to "get good security, or you're asking for trouble."

Will the bill pass? "Things look very good," Tom Coenen said. "I'm optimistic." Of course, a fellow in Tom's position must be cautious; most of the WAMO group seemed "extremely" confident that video poker will play a large part in WAMO's future.

TALKING ABOUT DOLLARS

Due to last-minute schedule conflicts, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson could not address the convention, as originally planned. (The day before his scheduled speech, Thompson had a whirlwind day with President Bush in Milwaukee which knocked his calendar askew.) Subbing for the state's chief exec was Wisconsin's Secretary of Revenue Mark Bugher, who gave a light-hearted account of the tax agency's work. ("We've got what it takes, to take what you've got," he joked.) More seriously, Bugher as-

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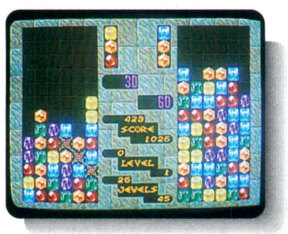
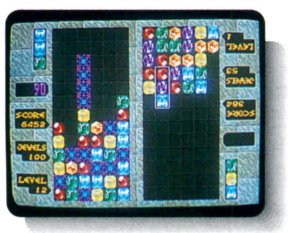


Upright cabinet configuration.



Cocktail table configuration.

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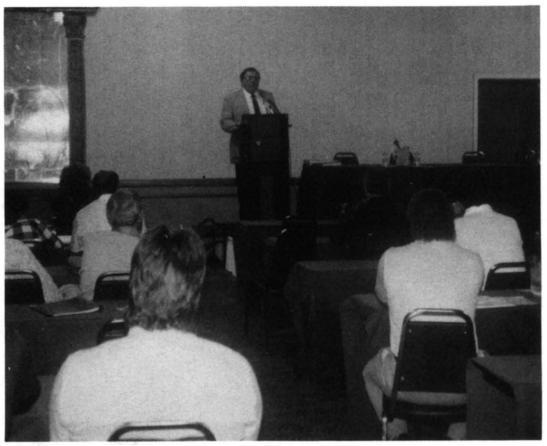
Left: AMOA Secretary-elect Craig Johnson said, "I'll try to make this short," but at his height (6'5"), it was a challenge!

Right: AMOA Gov't. Relations chairman Wally Bohrer outlines provisions of the new Voluntary Jukebox Agreement.



At the podium, Pioneer Sales & Service's Joel Kleiman moderates the Pinball Promotion seminar held during the WAMO convention. Panelists from left: Williams' Roger Sharpe, Midway's Bob Lentz, Data East's Pete Gustafson, Premier's Dan Clarton and Williams' Leslie Ross.

Barry Lederman of PMI Toys & Novelties shows off a handsome tiger.

sessed Wisconsin's improving economic and business climate, and described how the Thompson administration hopes to keep the improvements coming.

AMOA's Secretary-elect Craig Johnson was a featured luncheon speaker. He made a strong pitch for industry-wide political unity, as well as operator and location cooperation. To demonstrate the strength of AMOA's commitment to promoting and improving the industry, Johnson provided key details of AMOA's 1990 budget (see News Digest). Figures for AMOA's total annual expenditures and individual program outlays had never before been made public.

TALKING ABOUT PINS & VIDEO

"Pinball Promotion" was the title of a Friday morning seminar moderated by Pioneer's Joel Kleiman. Panelists included Williams' Roger Sharpe and Lesley Ross; Data East's Pete Gustafson; Bally's Bob Lentz; and Premier's Dan Clarton. All of the panelists indicated that pins made by their firms provided a ticket-vending option (or might offer this option soon), so that pinball could be promoted as redemption equipment. Beyond that, Roger Sharpe spoke for the group when he said, "There really is no single formula to promote pinball that will bring results in every location, for every machine. You have to craft promotions on a case-by-case basis."

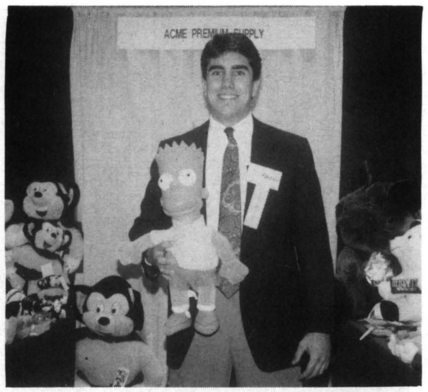
Another business session was held on Saturday afternoon. *RePlay* editor Marcus Webb gave a speech in which he examined market cycles as they apply to new technology — particularly video games. Webb cited the availability of exciting formats such as CD-ROM and others. He also predicted the eventual emergence of dramatic new games which would "make home video systems look like what they really are: yesterday's technology."

TALKING ABOUT MUSIC

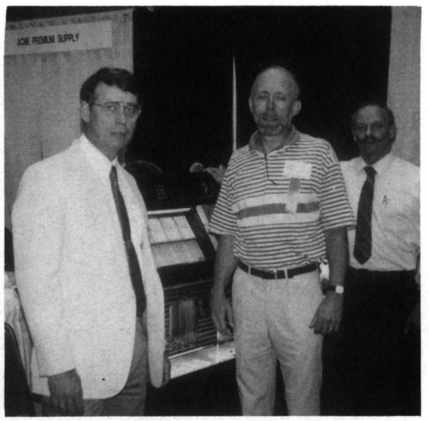
AMOA's Government Relations Chairman, Wally Bohrer, continued the Saturday session with a discussion of jukebox licensing and software. Any operator who doesn't wish to buy a license under the new Voluntary Jukebox Agreement which AMOA negotiated, said Bohrer, is free to negotiate his own license with the performing rights societies (ASCAP, BMI and SESAC). Bohrer warned that the societies collectively would probably want at least $550 per jukebox.

He also said that compared to last year's $63 compulsory license, AMOA members would save over $250,000 per year in licensing fees under the voluntary agreement, assuming the same number of boxes was licensed in 1990 as in 1989. "Some operators in this room will individually save over $10,000 this year," Bohrer added.

Will the new licensing agreement be aggressively enforced? "Abso-



The Simpsons, Mario Brothers, Mighty Mouse. . . Glenn Sagendorph of Acme Premium Supply has 'em all!



J&J Ent.'s Jim Guderjohn, Loose Change's Leonard Stewart, J&J's Jack E.J. Barrett.

From left: at the booth of Video Doctors are the firm's Vern Huntington and Gregg Marwegg with WR Vending's Curt Cooper.

lutely," Bohrer said. "The societies have a much greater financial incentive now to go after non-complying parties. They're adding 2,000 field agents to their police force. . . and believe me, they mean business."

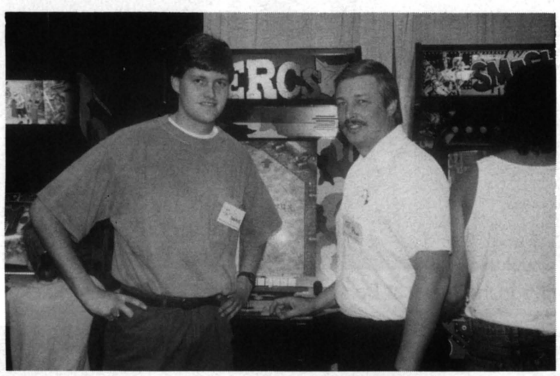
WAMO's Exec Director Joe Phillips seconded this idea. "Two representatives of BMI visited me in my offices recently," Phillips recounted. "This had never happened before in my decade of service to WAMO. The BMI reps politely explained that they appreciated our cooperation. They also warned scofflaws in a matter-of-fact way that 'It's a whole new ball game. Things are going to get nasty.' I firmly believe they really meant it!"

THE PERSONAL SIDE

WAMO's president for the last two years, Jim Stansfield, ended his term of office on June 30. During brief and gracious remarks at the Spring Meeting's formal banquet, he voiced his appreciation to his fellow association members, the WAMO staff, his wife and family, his employees, plus various industry friends and supporters.

"Membership in WAMO is at an all-time high," Stansfield reported. "Our finances are in very good shape. WAMO is healthy, growing and alive." Summing up his feelings about his term, Jim said: "It's been fun," but he declined to claim much credit for himself: "They say nobody is ever successful, unless a lot of other people want him to be," Stansfield demurred. Well, a lot of other people must have wanted Jim Stansfield to be successful, because he turns over an organization to his successor which is stronger because of his stewardship.

WAMO Exec Director Joe Phillips, who shares in that success as he comes up on his 10-year anniver-



Left: Dennis Ferriter (Badger Music & Equipment) with Capcom's Paul Wiederaenders. Right: Bally Midway's Bob Lentz & daughter Erica with Pool Sharks and Mike & Laurie Lorrison (Stansfield Vending).

Left: Ralph Lubinski (Pioneer Sales & Serv.) with Arachnid VP Marcio Bonilla, Jay Jacomet (Red's Novelty) and Arachnid prexy Bill Ward. Right: Nintendo's Mike Minor with Pioneer Sales & Service's Rick Tills.

Midway's Bob Lentz says samples of their new Pigskin *video will be shipping this month.*

Valley Recreation Products' Melody Sutkowi with Valley Marketing VP Alan Schafer.

Lieberman 's Linda Winstead with SMS Sales & Mktg. VP Jim Pietrangelo. Lieberman markets SMS products and hopes to be selling their video pokers to Wisconsin operators next year.

sary with the group, called Stansfield "a consummate professional...an old-fashioned believer in integrity...he will leave behind a legacy of significant accomplishments and a term of service of which he and the membership can be truly proud."

BUSINESS & PLEASURE

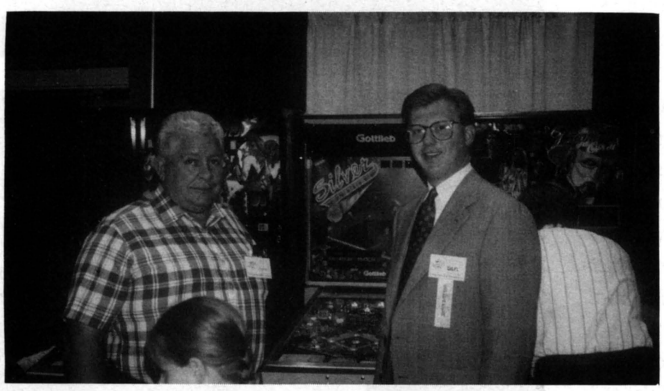
Business done at the Spring Meeting included plenty of talking about and examining equipment on the trade show floor. Over a dozen exhibitors including some top national game makers displayed their wares, as did area distributors (Lieberman Music and Pioneer Sales & Service had handsome spreads) and suppliers of plush and music software.

Other business: Saturday's banquet was followed by an entertaining equipment auction (goods were donated for this purpose by manufacturers, distributors and suppliers). The affair raised over $22,000 for WAMO's legislative action fund. As an added bonus, SMS pledged to match this amount with a check for 10% of the total.

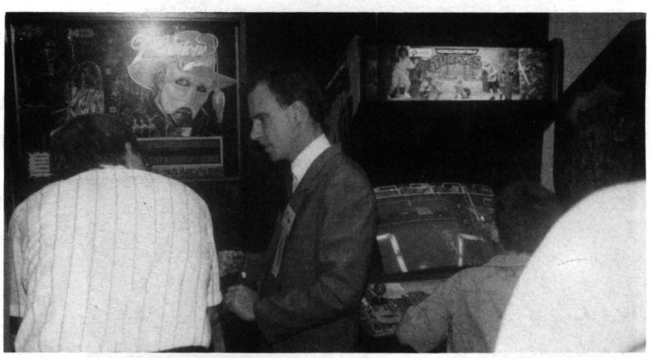
The Spring Meeting enjoyed its social side, as well. Lighter moments included a Thursday tournament

Operator Fred Weigel (P&P Amusement) with Williams' Leslie Ross and distributor Joel Kleiman (Pioneer).

Micro Mfg.'s Mark Brown & Don Hawks with their video poker games.



Operator Bob Fitzke (Wausau Coin Machines) with Premier's Dan Clarton and their Silver Slugger *pin designed especially for street locations.*



Data East's Pete Gustafson takes an operator through the fun features of the popular Phantom of the Opera *pinball. Pete says additional pins with popular licensed themes are forthcoming from D.E. later this year.*

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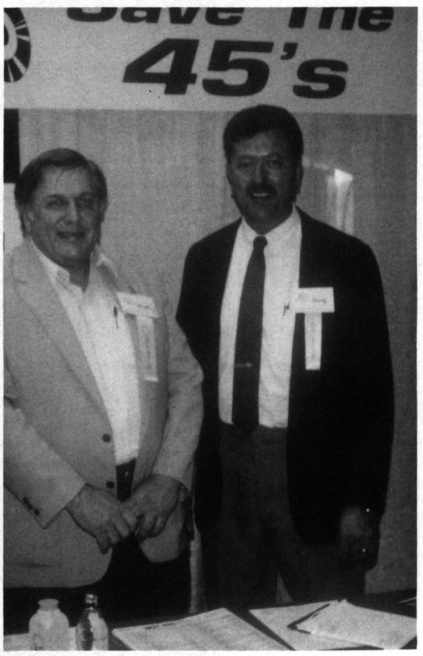
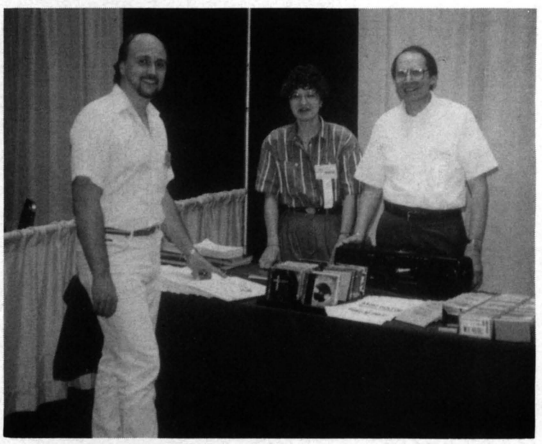
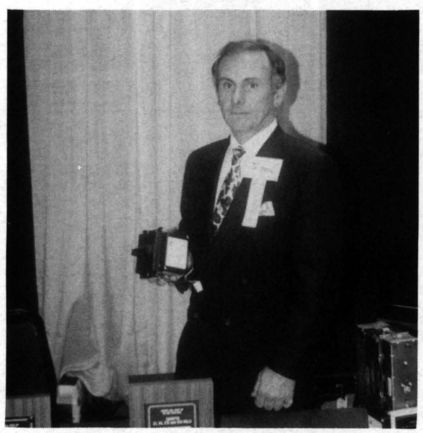


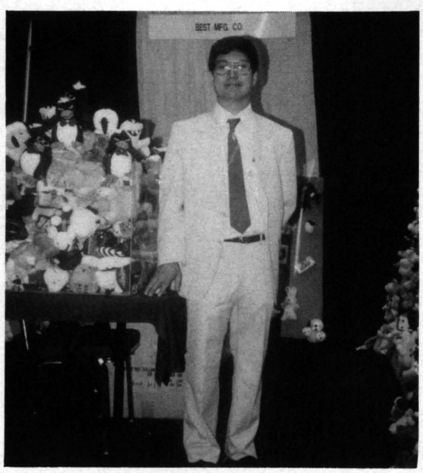
Above: Three tradesters touring the floor of WAMO's trade show: from left, WAMO director Bryan Hubbard; Chuck Sacco (Worldwide Distributing); and Jay Coubal (Northwest Coin Machine). Right: Record Source International co-owner Wally Bohrer and National Sales Manager Doug Young.

Left: newly-elected Secretary Eric Jacobson examines a target segment from Pub Time Darts with Merit's Howard Smoyer. Right: Hanson's Scott Nelson with Annette Jankowski & Gerald Friebert of Wisc. one-stop Radio Doctors & Records Ltd.





Jerry Carr shows off a bill changer from Mars Electronics, which now makes these items especially for the amusements industry.



Does Wisconsin have a local plush supplier? "Yes!' smiles Jim Possi of Best Mfg..

on one of the Midwest's finest golf courses. Tradesters proved that in this crowd, a score of over 100 is no handicap when it comes to winning prizes! (Golf tourney prizes were provided by Hanson Distributing.) Friday night saw a cowboy-style barbecue with a fine country band providing entertainment; tradesters were told to come in their Western duds. Pioneer Sales sent one rep (a fellow from the Middle East) who apparently thought "Western" meant "leave your caftan and turban at home" — he wore a suit and tie. Saturday's banquet was graced with the stand-up comedy of Royce Elliot, whose good-natured act enjoyed a hearty reception.

Future WAMO meetings include a joint event with MOMA (Minnesota operators) on Aug. 10-12 at the Radisson Hotel in Minnetonka (just outside Minneapolis). Next year, the WAMO Spring Meeting takes place May 16-18 at the Country Inn in Pewaukee.

If you're a gambler, odds are good that by then, WAMO will be celebrating the imminent success of its new video poker legislation!

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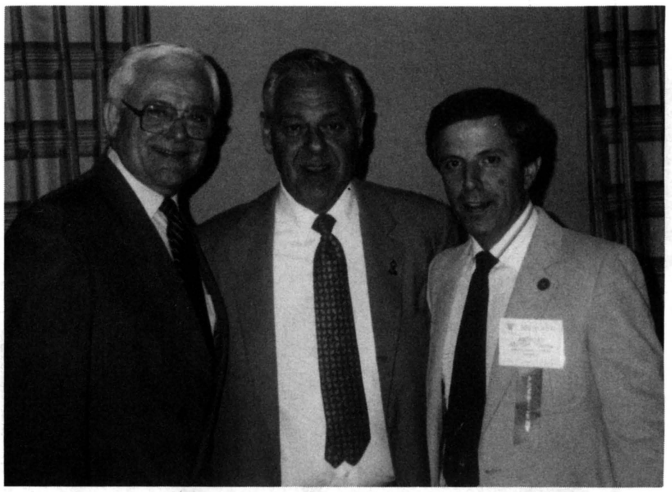
Smashing!

750 attend FAVA's latest music & games convention and trade show; industry works, plays, views tons of product & elects new officers

Ever notice how big states like Florida, New York, Texas, and California are always bragging about big numbers? Like number of operators, number of locations, number of exhibitors? Well, heck, you can't blame 'em. If you got it, flaunt it! FAVA (Florida Amusement Vending Assn.) sure flaunted it during their annual Music and Games Trade Show and Convention, held in Orlando April 19-21.

Over 160 companies registered for the three-day event, and the headcount came to around 750! Exhibitors filled a whopping 94 booths with the latest and greatest in coin-op product and related supplies.

Of course, FAVA didn't just have size. They also had quality. Keynote speaker was AMOA prexy Jack Kerner who, with wife Shirley, was guest of honor at a cocktail reception and the Saturday evening banquet.



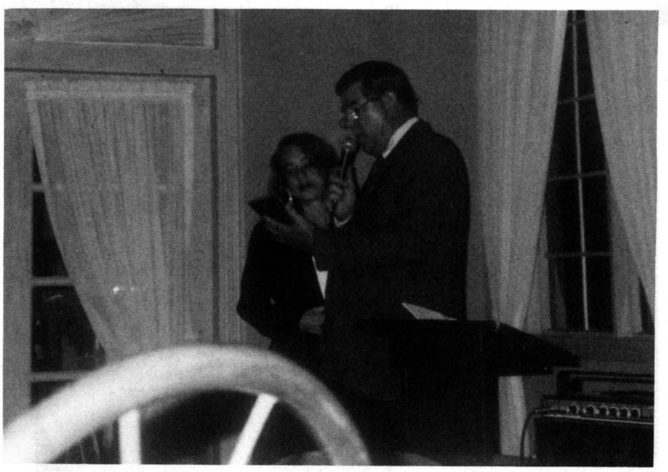
FAVA Exec. Dir. Bob Rhinehart, AMOA prexy Jack Kerner and FAVA prexy Anthony Falcigno (Collier County Games, Naples) at the group's 1990 trade show and convention.

Quality was also evident in the new slate of officers elected to lead FAVA for 1990-91. Bill Miller of WGM Amusements (Kissimmee, Fla.) is the new president. Readers may remember he's also the fellow who led the industry's involvement with "Give Kids the World," that wonderful charity resort for kids with terminal illnesses. First VP is Ed Tolisano (Madeira Beach Fun Center); Second VP is Mike Dodson (Lawson Music Co.); secretary-treasurer is Rick Johnson (All Brands Vending Co.).

All in all, it was another "big" winner for the Sunshine State!

(more FAVA photos on the next page . . .)

The FAVA annual golf tourney was sponsored by Valley and Wico. Left to right are Ken Starling (Starling Music Co., Deland), Valley's Alan Schafer, Wico's Mike Rudowicz and Birmingham Vending's Al Toranto.



Karen Smith (daughter of Donald Smith of Tic Tac Toe, Miami) was the recipient of a Wayne E. Hesch Scholarship Award. Karen is one of 20 national recipients of the AMOA scholarship program. Presenting a plaque to her is convention chairman Stan Seymour (Seymour Music, Sarasota).

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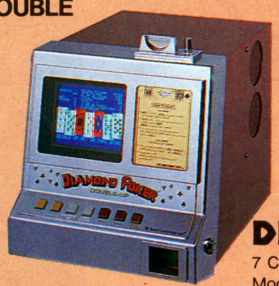

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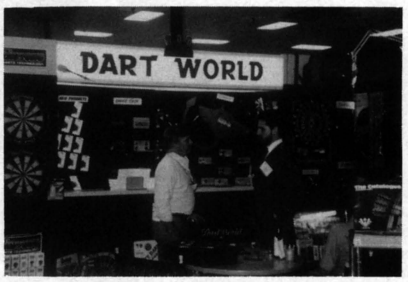
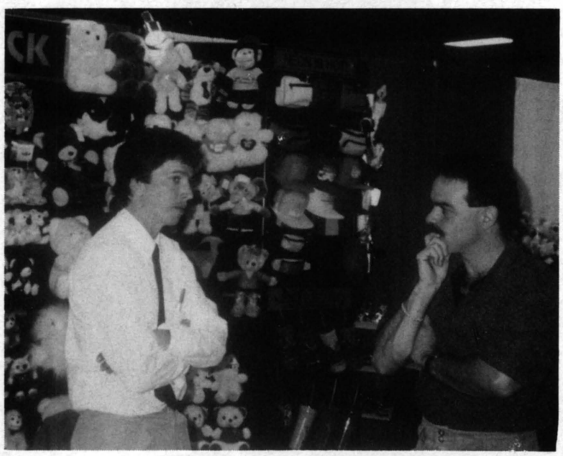
Left: FAVA president Anthony Falcigno awards a plaque of appreciation to Jack Kerner and a gift to his wife Shirley. Right: A showgoer gives Taito's WGP a test drive at the Brady booth.

Folks talk plush at the PMI Toys booth during the 1990 FAVA Trade Show and Convention.

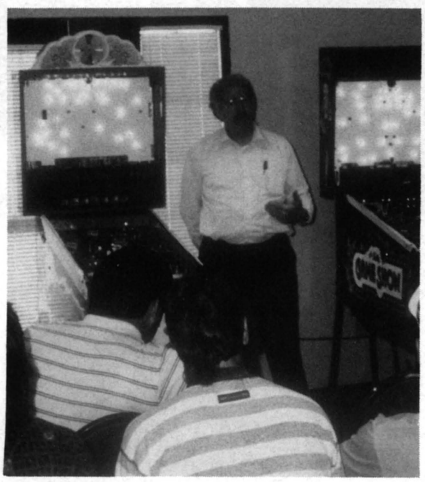
Cummins-Allison's Don Del Greco, Ed Fletcher and Fred Kohlhepp at their FAVA booth.



Dart World's rep talks with a showgoer about the firm's line of darting accessories.



Left: Star Track Plush of Farmingdale, NY headed south to take a booth at the FAVA event. Right: Lawson Music's Mike Dodson and Andrea Lawson were on hand to show NSM jukes to attendees.



Left: Tom Cahill gives Williams and Midway pinball service repair tips at a seminar. Center: Ted Furkin demo'd his Silent Partner software and conducted a seminar on the "ABCs" of computers for operators. Right: Bonita Marie's George Ritacco with a FAVA member.

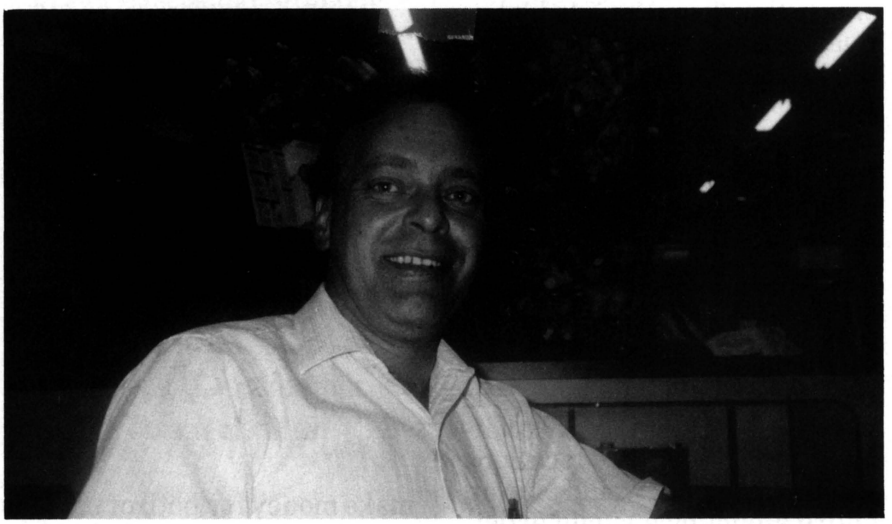
INTERVIEW

Kenn Hague

music op says CD will help raise play prices; plans 100% conversion from 45 route over 8 years

We chatted with Kenn Hague recently about the changing music market. Kenn is president of Hit Parade Music Co. (Albany, Ore.). He's been in the industry since 1974 when he started working for an existing firm, eventually buying the company 10 years later. He calls himself a "typical operator" and runs amusements, vending, pool and music. His route covers nearly 200 square miles in central Oregon, with machines in communities as large as 70,000 and as small as 600 people.

Kenn's street route is evenly divided into various types of locations — taverns, C-stores, pizza restaurants, bowling centers, etc. He operates between 48 to 55 jukeboxes on an annual basis (some are taken off campus stops during the summer). The arrangements he has with his locations varies widely: most are on a lease basis, but others have various commission splits or guaranteed front money for the operator, depending on Kenn's earnings needs.



REPLAY: Kenn, how do you feel about music these days?

HAGUE: I'm hopeful about the future, but guarded about the present. Fifteen years ago, the music business was much better for me than it is at the moment. But I also expect music to get better in the next few years than it is today.

REPLAY: Why was music better 15 years ago?

HAGUE: Today, locations don't promote the jukebox; they're more interested in competing forms of entertainment such as background music.

REPLAY: What's going to make music better again, in the years to come?

HAGUE: I can see a lot of potential down the road with the CD machine. Within six to eight years, I foresee completely replacing my 45 jukeboxes with dedicated CD units.

REPLAY: What percentage of the jukeboxes on your route are CD-capable today (including both combos and dedicated machines)?

HAGUE: Probably 15% of my phonographs are combos. We don't have any dedicated CD jukeboxes yet. We're feeling our way into the market and will probably start buying dedicated CD jukeboxes in September or October.

REPLAY: You're planning to replace between 10 and 20% of your 45 machines per year with dedicated CD units, over the next several years?

HAGUE: Yes. It's a very competitive market!

REPLAY: What play pricing do you use for combos and for 45 phonographs?

HAGUE: All my machines are set for two plays for a quarter, five plays for 50¢, eight plays for 75¢ and 11 for a dollar. So when you get right down to it, you're talking dime play for a machine that should be higher.

REPLAY: Why is play pricing so low?

HAGUE: My locations feel that the economics around here aren't strong enough for higher pricing. Our area's number one industry, timber, has lots of troubles and environmental controversies. My locations believe mill workers and loggers don't have enough money in their pockets to support three for a dollar play. I'm going to have to convince them otherwise, and I think CD equipment will help me do it.

REPLAY: Is that because your combo machines are already collecting more than your vinyl boxes?

HAGUE: No, I haven't noticed any real difference at all. Main-

ly, it's just giving the customers more selections to choose from, that makes CD attractive.

REPLAY: Isn't anybody excited by the higher quality sound of CD music?

HAGUE: Not really. It's kind of a hard working man's area, with basic beer-drinking taverns. If they hear noise, they're happy. We don't have too many places where they'll appreciate higher quality sound, so we haven't gotten too many calls for CD music. Everybody's cheap around here!

REPLAY: What sort of attitude do you and your locations take toward the "album play" dynamics of CD jukeboxes?

HAGUE: I don't believe players are more interested in album play than playing hit songs, on CD. In this area, they're more interested in the the artist and the individual title, and they like variety. I don't have any locations where customers would play an entire album by a single artist.

REPLAY: It sounds like your biggest challenge is to convince locations that although their patrons are facing hard times, they will pay good money for high-quality entertainment. But if nobody's excited about better sound quality, album play, or new technology, why do you expect CD jukeboxes to make more money?

HAGUE: I believe customers will pay more for music, if I can convince locations to raise play prices. We'll justify the higher play price to players, by pointing to the greater selections they get from CD. We'll justify the higher play price to locations, by pointing to the higher price of the CD machine. And we'll also appeal to the locations' natural desire for higher profits. As we get into CD, I'm going to have to sit down with each location and point out that they can have a form of music which brings them income. So why give it to the customers for free?

REPLAY: Your main strategy, then, is to educate locations about the need for higher prices? Congratulations. Many operators are afraid to do that!

HAGUE: We have a good relationship with our locations and they understand that we want to make money for both of us. This area has been so far behind on price increases for all forms of coin-op entertainment, that it's time we began showing the locations that we can raise prices and make money together, if they'll work with us. We've got to educate locations that maybe we don't have to jump to three plays for a dollar right away. At first, we can succeed with four plays for a dollar, or even five for a dollar. The main thing is getting the locations to agree to raise play prices, then getting them to forget about background music and promote the jukebox.

'Our area's number one industry, timber, has lots of troubles and environmental controversies. My locations believe mill workers and loggers don't have enough money in their pockets to support three for a dollar play. I'm going to have to convince them otherwise and I think CD equipment will help me do it.'

REPLAY: So the factor which will bring jukebox income up won't be CD sound quality, it will be promotion.

HAGUE: Promotion and greater musical selection.

REPLAY: You sound pretty enthusiastic about CD.

HAGUE: I do feel CD represents a real opportunity.

REPLAY: In the back of your mind, do you have even a touch of resentment that maybe you are being forced into this new configuration?

HAGUE: It's just the nature of the business that we're going to see changes. Look, there's no more 78s out there, either! CD is really the only way to go now. Sure, the machine and software costs a lot. But down the road, operating these units will cost less overhead, because better selection means you won't have to change the software as much. We'll make more money eventually.

REPLAY: Have you purchased any new vinyl jukeboxes in the last year? Do you plan to?

HAGUE: No to both questions. We're strictly going to go full CD after this summer.

REPLAY: How will you ensure a smooth transition on your route from 45s to CD?

HAGUE: As I said, once I put CD in a few locations, I believe they'll start making a good deal more money . . . **if** the locations promote them. Then, all my locations will want them, right away. They don't realize how costly the initial investment is for the operator, considering both hardware and software! So I'm going to have to insist on a higher price per play, or minimums before the split. That means we'll have to select certain locations to start CD with, and will also have to make careful arrangements to make sure we get proper return on investment.

REPLAY: What arrangements will you ask for?

HAGUE: When locations ask for a CD jukebox, I'll say: "I can put one in, but I have to have a guaranteed $75 a week." When they hear that, they'll go through the roof . . . at first. But I'll say, "Let's put one in and see what we can do. Even if we have to start with five plays for a dollar, that's still more than twice what we're getting now." I think they

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will go along with that. If the $75 minimum still scares them, my line of attack will be to put them on a 50-50 split. Locations will feel more comfortable with the split at first, because many of them don't believe this type of machine can produce this kind of income. Once we set it up and promote it, I expect a dedicated CD will pull in $200 per week. Once locations see that, they'll want to lease it for $75.

REPLAY: Sounds like a carefully planned strategy. Good luck!

HAGUE: Thanks. CD really does look like a good opportunity, and I'm optimistic that as our company gets into CD over the next few years, music will become much more profitable for me and my locations.

REPLAY: Great. Meantime, 100% of your jukeboxes need 45 product. Do you have any problems getting the right 45s for your route?

HAGUE: Yes, we're running into more and more problems all the time as far as new records. We consult Billboard's Top 40 Country and Pop lists, and we get requests from customers. But when we go to our one-stop, we find many of the requested songs are available only on cassette or CD. That's true about half the time now. It wasn't too bad three months ago, but we're noticing it's getting tougher and tougher every month.

REPLAY: Do you actively use a library of 45 oldies to make up any difference in new product availability?

HAGUE: Yes, we have a big library of close to 60,000 records and people seem happy with golden oldie substitutions. A lot of the requests we get, nine out of ten times, we have in our file. We've had no complaints from locations about not supplying certain titles on 45s. As I said, relationships between operators and locations are very close around here; they realize we're going to do everything we can to make as much money as possible for both of us.

REPLAY: Have you heard about Record Source International, the 45 subscription service run by some leading operators and a few entertainment executives?

HAGUE: I've seen it in the trade papers, but haven't had time to really sit down and study the proposal.

'It's just the nature of the business that we're going to see changes. Look, there's no more 78s out there either! CD is really the only way to go now. Sure, the machine and software costs a lot. But down the road, operating these units will cost less overhead, because better selection means you won't have to change the software as much.

REPLAY: Are you interested in dealing with RSI?

HAGUE: If they could supply 45s when other sources couldn't, I would definitely be interested in a subscription service, because we'll be operating 45 machines in at least some locations for quite some time. As I said, we'll probably phase them out over the next six to eight years.

REPLAY: Some operators question whether CD is truly going to be "the" technology in five or ten years. They speculate that some other form of high-tech could supplant CD. Do you ever hear this kind of talk? What do you think of it?

HAGUE: I've heard some of that, but look at history. Take amusement machines. We went from electromechanical machines, to solid state, to CPU boards which made the equipment much more dependable. All of these changes were for the better. So anything which can make the jukebox more reliable will phase out older equipment, and that's fine with me.

REPLAY: So if something else does come along in a few years, it won't bother you that you have already invested heavily in CD?

HAGUE: Right.

REPLAY: How's the competition from other jukebox operators these days?

HAGUE: For many years, competitors would offer a jukebox for nothing, in order to get the location. What they really wanted was the right to put video games in. Today it's different. We're seeing less and less of that. Also, since I bought the company, I've obtained written agreements with all my locations so I can have a guarantee of getting my investment back. I think the operator is finding out you can't give away one thing to try to get something else. Any coin-operated device has to pay its own way, whether it's music, vending or amusement. If any machine can't support itself, then I'm not going to operate it.

'I think more operators need to get involved politically and work at getting taxes and licenses reduced.'

REPLAY: How do you feel about the new "Voluntary Jukebox License," with its sliding scale for music copyright fees?

HAGUE: Of course, any license fee or tax upsets me, because a lot of these people think our business is all profit and no overhead. I've said I'd really fight on a statewide and local level to get license fees reduced on all types of equipment. It's kind of strange how, for many years, record companies would send records to jukeboxes, knowing that if customers heard it and liked it, they would go to the store and buy a copy of that song. Today it's turned around and we're paying to play their music. But who knows, maybe it will turn around again and some day they will want to pay us to promote their music. I think more operators need to get involved politically and work at getting taxes and licenses reduced.

REPLAY: Amen to that! Thank you for your time and your thoughts.

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Game Buffet

Taito spreads out full plate of new vids at second annual distributor conference

Three kits and a cockpit were displayed for Taito America's U.S. and Canadian dealers at the company's second annual meeting and golf outing. Held at the Marriott Lincolnshire resort out in the Chicago suburbs, it was presided over by the video maker's new U.S. President Minoru Suzuki and his sales team at the Wheeling facility.

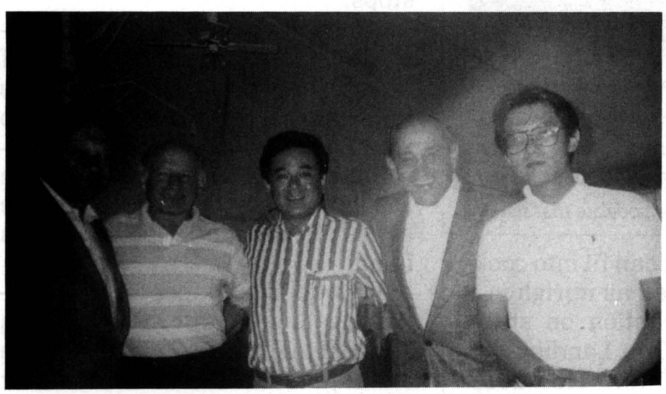
The program began the evening of June 14 with a welcoming cocktail reception and the new products were presented the following morning after a communal breakfast. Before the videos were described by Taito salesman Jim Chapman, Suzuki was formally introduced by Rick Rochetti, VP of Sales. Suzuki himself addressed the dealers through Yoshi Suzuki, saying his goal was to identify the unique "American taste" in video games and speedily bring that knowledge to his developers in Tokyo.

"There are many miles between Illinois and Tokyo," Suzuki said metaphorically, "but that distance can be closed up through communications. America's special needs in video product will be identified with the help of our good distributors and Tokyo in turn will produce the best of them," he added.

Taito America's team lines up for the ballclub shot after the Lincolnshire meeting concluded.

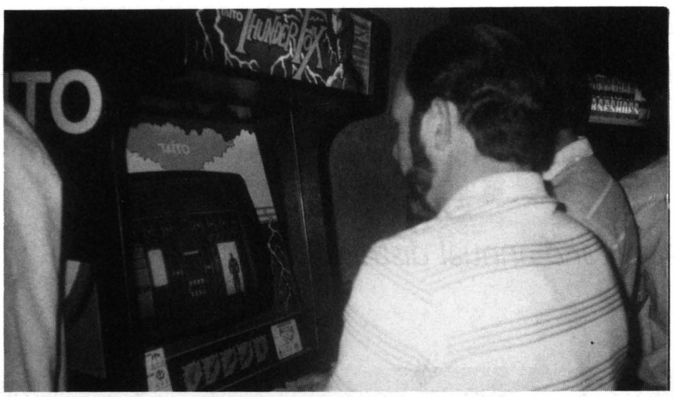
Already reacting to the "unique American taste," Taito then introduced *American Horseshoes* which plays the classic game via a track ball control. This vertical kit affords from one to four players, enabling for competition on realistic horseshoe pitching and scoring (e.g. a ringer is worth three points, a leaner or "touch" two points and a pitch landing within the stake area is worth one point).

In addition to the "screen character" pitching the shoe, a lot of spectators are on the sidelines who react humorously when a wild pitch is tossed. There are other cartoon touches, like a car in the background that goes "crash" when you hit it, and a well-endowed gal who screams when you hit her. The game is even fun when you purposely throw wild pitches, just to see the cartoon work go into action. (A cartoon of a "George Bush" character is also on screen.)



Heavy hitters gather for a snapshot: Jerry Marcus (Atlas), Jerry Gordon (Rowe), Suzuki, Rubin Franco (Franco Dist.) and Naganishi (Taito).

Taito sales teamsters line up for photo during the cocktail reception. From left: Dave Cane, Julie Filips (Marketing Asst.), Natalie Kulig, Tony Calcopietro and Jim Chapman. Yes, Nat's expecting in September.



Steve Koenigsberg bangs the buttons on the new Thunder Fox *video. This horizontal kit also employs an 8-way joystick.*

Atlas Pittsburgh's Lou Larson tries out the new Top Landing *cockpit as Rick Rochetti kibbitzes. This game asks players to land big aircraft at assorted international airports. Looks like Louie crashed in Paris.*

However, real scoring will be the way folks play this piece. Taito even has supplied *American Horseshoes* tournament score sheets, hoping the game takes off in street locations to the point where players will get into organized competition. This game could "happen" and it's fascinating that the Japanese developers were able to translate this American sport onto the video screen. (Rochetti advised that they actually set up a pit to teach to designers how horseshoes is played.)

The next kit is called *Thunder Fox*, a 2-player horizontal item that takes the fighters through five stages of combat, culminating in an interactive final fight between them. Combat settings include an air fortress, an aircraft carrier and a jungle. The screen graphics and sounds are tops and as Chapman said: "There's been talk that fighting games are running on the same theme, but we all know players like these things and *Thunder Fox* is a beaut."

The third (and most inexpensive kit) was seen by some dealers previously. Called *Champion Wrestler*, it's a 2-player horizontal game offering eight rounds of wrestling (players have a choice of eight different wrestlers). You can even fight outside the ring and attack with chairs, sticks and swords! There's even a tag team capability in the logic.

All three kits are available right now and all three offer flexible coinage (e.g. they can be set on quarter, half buck, 75¢ or a dollar to start; continue-to-play can also be set from a quarter on up, but not on a dollar). *Horseshoes*, by the way, has a small board, so it can fit into cocktail cabinets as well as uprights.

'Neath the tent at the Marriott Lincolnshire, Taito treated guests to welcoming cocktail party. From left: Matt Tarantelli, Jim Wittler, Dave Gilfor, Lou Larson & Jeff Tarantelli.

Jon (the Younger) and Joel (the Older) Kleiman trying out Taito's new American Horseshoes. *With Wisconsin their territory, these Pioneer Sales folks could do a bit of business with the game (many taverns that populate that state).*

The "big" attraction on stage was Taito's new *Top Landing* sitdown flight simulator. This dedicated adventure tests the player's take-off, flying and landing skills. There are eight different airports to chose from, including San Francisco, Washington, Paris and, of course, Tokyo itself.

The game is arcadey but it has appeal to older players, especially for those who've spent a lot of time on real airplanes and might like to try and fly and to land a "big bird" themselves. This game gives them the chance, rewards with points if you fly right and pops you on the beanie with a crash when you miss the runway. Control tower advice helps you along. It's a good simulation.

As they say, there was something from column A, something from column B and so on presented at the Lincolnshire. Prices swung from the low end wrestling kit to the higher end sitdown airplane simulator. For those who think there's "little to buy" at dealer showrooms, Taito has done well in filling that up. Check all four out, and certainly spend some time on the horseshoes kit which could end up being one of those rare "stayers" at the tavern stops.

After the product meeting concluded, those distributors into golf (and there are a lot of them) hit the links for the Second Annual Taito Open. On the following day, interested dealers were bused to the Medinah Country Club to spectate at the "real event," the U.S. Open itself.

It was a nice capper for a productive meeting. P.S. More *Cadash* kits shipped to some dealers toward the end of June and Rochetti advised, "It makes for a great V.S. cabinet conversion as well.'

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Taito America's new chief Minoru Suzuki

Late in April, the giant Taito Corp. of Japan ordered an executive realignment at its Taito America Corp. offices in Wheeling, Ill. . . . the manufacturing and sales outlet that serves North America with the video and novelty products engineered by the Japanese parent company in Tokyo.

Many within distribution, as well as competitive video game manufacturers, quickly bent to "reading the tea leaves" about the meaning behind the replacement of Taito America's President Joe Dillon with a veteran Japanese executive Minoru Suzuki. Besides Dillon, others including board enforcement chief Pete O'Neill also exited the firm.

Therefore, RePlay asked Mr. Suzuki to sit for a chat about the direction the company was taking in America (during their Annual Sales Meeting at the Marriott Lincolnshire) and to learn exactly what the "Japanese method" might mean for the trade in this part of the world.

The overriding theme of Suzuki's responses to our questions was his deeply-felt need to establish a "speedier link in communications between the American branch and the Tokyo headquarters concerning the type of video products American operators prefer." In short, it appears Suzuki's fundamental goal is to produce videos with American players foremost in mind for this market, while aware of the differences in player tastes that exist in the other three key markets (i.e. Europe, Southeast Asia and Japan itself).

If we ourselves read the tea leaves correctly, it could mean that Taito Japan will develop product that sometimes will be unique to America and Canada. To learn and communicate that "unique game taste" seems to be Suzuki's personal mission here.

Minoru Suzuki has been viewed essentially as Taito Japan's International Sales Director. What many don't know is that Suzuki is a 25-year veteran of that organization, coming to it fresh out of university and working his way up from its distributing/operating branches to the point where he is presently a director of the company and its fourth most important executive (under President Hasagawa, Exec. VP Oue and Sr. Director Tanabe).

Suzuki, therefore, stands as one of the most important video game executives in the world-wide industry. The very fact that Japan sent him to America to head up its North American office is proof that this market is vital to their interests. And, Suzuki has not only relinquished his international sales duties for Taito products and devoted himself full-time to the American office. . . he has even moved here on a permanent basis, taking a house in Arlington Heights within commuting distance from the facility in Wheeling.

Minoru Suzuki knows about operating (Taito commands over 100,000 units on location), knows about distributing (as commander of their multi-branch network years back, he is even versed in jukebox sales and operations) and obviously knows about video game manufacture and development. He is a triple hitter who understands a good bit of English (although he still feels reluctant to answer back in our tongue). He is a man who wants to understand exactly what the American and Canadian operator want to see under Taito's brand name and then make it happen (the spread of new video product shown the day after our interview was a spread of product for street and arcades, like the American Horseshoes *kit they hope will be one of the rare long-term successes in tavern sites like* Capcom Bowling*).*

We began our chat with the obvious question, working with interpreter Yoshi Suzuki, Taito America's popular Exec. VP and no relation to the interview subject (the name Suzuki is like Smith in the western world):

What exactly do you mean by the "Japanese method" of making products for this industry?

The first part is to challenge the future, looking ahead to new technology and pushing the video sport to unimagined plateaus. The second means being creative, not just improving on tested ideas but exploring new ones. The third requires being a contributor to society, and video games do provide a welcome form of entertainment to a busy world.

How might this impact on the American operator? Could you be more specific?

I've been heading up Taito's international equipment sales for around five years and have close knowledge of what works in the four major markets . . . Europe, Japan, the balance of the Asian rim and America. We have seen U.S. video game sales rather stagnant for many manufacturers, but we all know that America has the great potential. Witness the success of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and that proves the Americans have the ability to buy rather heavily if the game is potent. We ourselves experienced this with *Double Dragon* and *Operation Wolf* in recent times.

America hasn't been strong overall in some time and perhaps that's due to operator investment money going into CD jukeboxes and redemption equipment. These are things the American operators seem to want and what we at Taito have to do is add in our own "wanted" products . . . maybe even make things specifi-

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cally for America. Our new *Horseshoes* game is an example of that.

Let's switch gears for a moment. Some over here think that what happens to Japanese operators happens to us in a couple of months' time. How are machine collections doing in Japan these days?

Well, the larger operators with a diversity of machines on their floors are doing better. We are putting some American products on those floors now, like redemption machines, and business is quite good for the bigger arcade people. We ourselves have many arcades in Japan and one of my other jobs here will be to send communication to the home office about some interesting products that American arcade people are working with. We know about *Skee-Ball* and now we want to learn about some others.

Namco, one of your competitors in the Japanese arcade business, recently bought total ownership in Atari's 40-room arcade chain here. Why hasn't Taito gotten involved in U.S. arcades yet?

Our priority at present is to advise on game ideas, to build up a continuing line of quality product for sales through distributors, so we have no concrete plans to get into American arcade operations. We are looking at American arcades, as well as street locations, not to buy them but to serve them with equipment. That's all Taito America is about.

The next question may be academic, but have you thought about buying into America's street routes at all?

That's a very difficult concept for Japanese. It's very much a local type of situation between the operating company and the various locations they serve. How could you organize this? You need close relations with the locations from a personal and a service standpoint. That's a hard marriage to make and as I see it, the American operator knows best how to run that end of the industry far better than anyone else.

The home video software business seems to be getting closer to what coin-op people have confronted. We call it the "hit syndrome," where buyers largely pick the top titles and the rest is sort of second rate and, at least at present, apparently difficult to sell.

I am personally not involved in Taito's consumer software division. But I know that buyers have become selective and that a glut of unsold product has resulted. Any company involved in the consumer part of the video game business has to be cautious today.

How would you define your own "mission"?

I will work with the established Taito America distributors, as always, to move good new product into the operating field. I will also visit with street location and arcade operators to learn more about their activities in order to give me the proper product direction to pass along to Tokyo. And, I assure you, this is a two-way street. We will also buy certain products from distributors to export back to our Japanese operations. Both countries have something to offer the other and both can grow more rapidly together if there's communication.

As far as Taito America is concerned, we have good people here with Yoshi Suzuki, Rick Rochetti, Natalie Kulig, Jim Chapman and others I could mention. We have even hired three more sales and marketing people. Everyone's goal is to produce and ship quality product on a timely basis and to make the American operator a better profit from his investment. Taito has always been a top brand name. This will continue and hopefully grow in importance.

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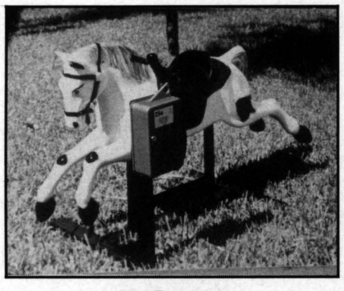

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Lucky, or Unlucky?

Sugerman and A&P win round in Lucky 8 Line drama

In the much publicized case of Yamate v. Sugerman, and Atlantic & Pacific Amusement Corp. v. Dugas, depositions and other pre-trial discovery are well underway in the copyright infringement case over the Wing *Lucky 8 Line*.

As reported in *RePlay* last month, on March 6, 1990, Federal Judge Harold A. Ackerman denied Yamate's request for a preliminary injunction and any impoundment order against Sugerman and A&P, ruling that Yamate (according to the Sugerman group) "failed to show a reasonable likelihood of success at trial" in this case.

Sugerman contends that Yamate was dealt a "stunning blow" by his attorneys Biebelberg and Martin (of Springfield, N.J.). Yamate was represented by Richard Stern of Washington D.C. Keith Biebelberg (of Sugerman's counsel) tried the evidentiary hearing, along with Alan Stark of West Orange.

Sugerman's litigation team was guided by the expertise of Barry David Maurer (said Myron Sugerman). Maurer served at the hearing as a special consultant and has recently become counsel to Biebelberg and Martin. Keith Biebelberg, by the way, is the younger son of Les Biebelberg, the late sales veteran once associated with Runyon Sales and subsequently with H. Betti Industries.

According to Sugerman, a summary of the Court Ruling against Yamate was as follows:

"Number one, there was weighty evidence that the game was published in 1983, and is thus part of public domain, which would render Yamate's copyright invalid. Two, there was convincing evidence that the game was derivative in nature, and that Yamate failed to disclose same in its certificate of copyright registration. Three, the certificate of copyright registration had other false information including wrong date; Yamate failed to show that its omissions were made in good faith."

Continued Sugerman: "Evidence of Yamate's un-clean hands had not been rebutted. Their main witness in their failed attempt to overcome the evidence that the game was in the public domain since 1983 was Shagahiko Murao of the Wing Company of Japan. On cross examination," Sugerman continued, "this Japanese-speaking individual admitted, through the assistance of an interpreter, that he had previously signed an affidavit under oath in similar federal litigation in New York without having the English affidavit fully translated to him."

John Dugas of Yamate USA agreed that his firm lost this round but said, "We're confident we'll prevail when a full disclosure of evidence comes out at the coming trial. We disagree with the March 6 decision and have filed for an appeal and expect them to reverse the lower court." Dugas continues to warn any operator against buying what he calls "counterfeit versions."

The case continues. Sugerman and A&P also press their claims against Yamate and Dugas under the RICO act. Anyone needing a transcript of the Court's ruling or wanting additional information can call Max Hinks, A&P's president, at 800/327-6067.

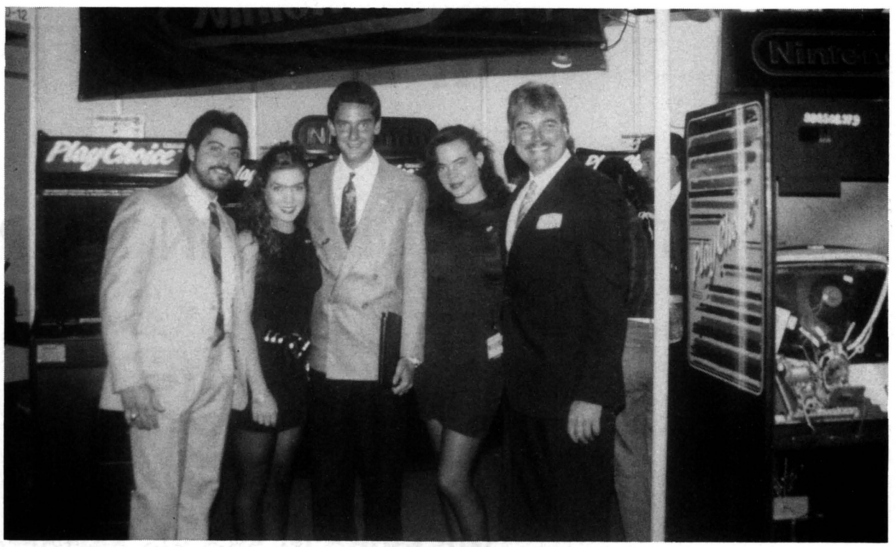
Mexico's First Expo

operators South of the Border hold their own successful show; visitors like huge attendance, polished presentation, big sales

Heavy attendance and excellent organization highlighted the first annual Mexico Expo '90, a trade show organized by the Mexican operators association (it's called the National Federation of Operators, Assemblers and Fabricators of Video Machines). The affair was held in Mexico City's World Trade Center on June 6-9, and reliable sources estimated that "at least" 5,000 people showed or viewed coin-op amusement goods. A program of technical and management seminars was also offered.

Over 40 of Mexico's largest distributors and manufacturers, along with many U.S. manufacturers, displayed everything from videos, pins and jukes to cranes and kiddie rides in more than 110 booths. American firms whose lines were represented included Capcom, Data East, Konami, Taito, Nintendo, Rowe, Sharp Image, James Industries, Happ Controls, Hollywood Merchandising, Wells-Gardner, and more.

The Mexican operators' trade association itself had a stand, as did numerous other Mexican firms and organizations. Among them: Autocontrol Microcomputerization, Computer Programming and Services, Cinescopes and Components, Chrismo, Destre, Disenos Electronicos Avanzados, Distributors and Fabricators of Apparatus for Diversions, Felec, F.M. Distributors, Galactronic, H.M.B. Juegos Electronicos de Video, Mex Video Juegos Professionales, Impulse Electronics, Industrias FD, Industrias Vibrater, Katari's, Matthias Electronics, Media Vision of Mexico, Mercadeo Corp. International, Mexel, Osvic, Rincon Music, Sinfonolas of Guadalajara, Laser Sinfonolas of Mexico, San Andres Tobacco, Sandovol, Video Electronic Games, Video Games of Mexico, Video Juegos Tragamonedas, Video Systems de Juego y Computo, and Video Soft.



At the Mexel booth with president Jacobo Shemaria, friends and Nintendo product is James Industries' John Blouin (at right) who provided most of the photos accompanying this story on Mexico Expo '90. That's James Industries new rep for Mexico & Latin America Carlos Colin at left.

"A lot of product was sold and the Mexican market is strong right now," reported one U.S. partici-

In this photo supplied by Sharp Image, standing left to right are: Jaleco's Larry Berke, D.E.A.S.A.'s Antonio Macias & David Traconis, Hollywood Merchandising's Ron Clapper and a D.E.A.S.A. associate. Seated (also left to right) are: D.E.A.S.A.'s Mrs. Macias, Sharp's Chris Anderson & Fabian Espinosa and D.E.A.S.A.'s Mrs. Traconis. About 5,000 people attended the show June 6-9.

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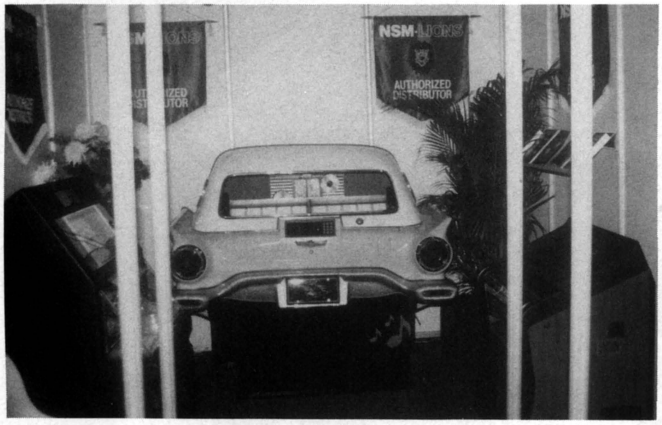
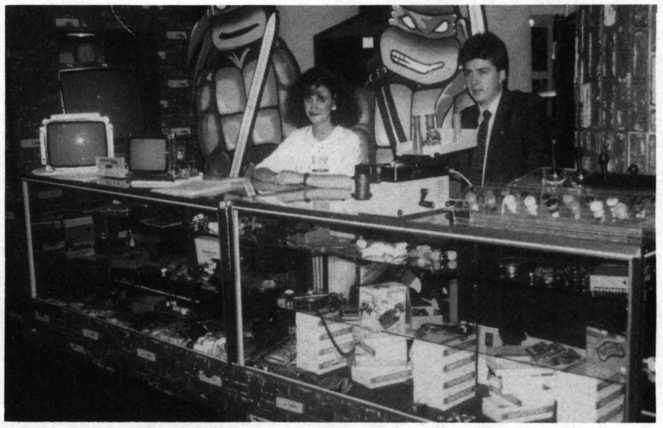
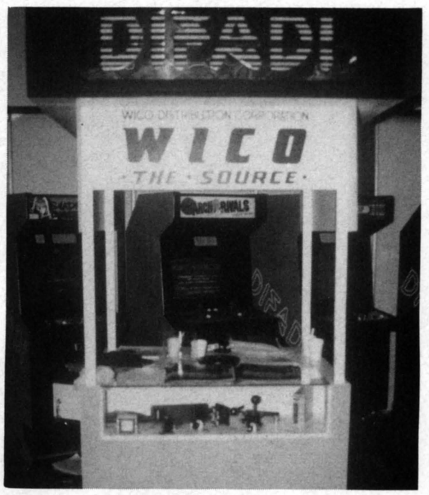


The Sinfonalas booth — they distribute NSM and Carson City product.



Video Mexico's booth featured Konami's Turtles *and Wico's parts.*

James Industries' Carlos Colin and John Blouin with Oscar Gutierrez, president of Video Mexico.



A peek at Difadi's show booth.

Carlos Colin at the Difadi booth with Alberto Garcia Lopez and some of the firm's staff.

pant. Added another: "This expo was much more elaborate and contemporary than any of us had anticipated. It verifies the growth and vitality of the Mexican market."

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, a second major Mexican trade show (this one organized by AAMA) is slated for July. One informed source added that AAMA and the Mexican operators would begin talks later in July, perhaps with a view toward merging their shows in future years. "Basically, the idea is for both groups to help nurture this blossoming market, without stepping on each others' toes," the source said.

At any rate, the Mexican operators staged a show to be proud of. The professionalism and polish were particularly striking, considering that no major trade show had been held in Mexico before. The signs are all encouraging for continued growth and health for coin-op amusements South of the Border.

Mexico's New Dawn

Mexel is Nintendo's exclusive manufacturer-distributor in Mexico; strong sales promise profits, growth, and a healthy, viable market

It's a whole new world out there.

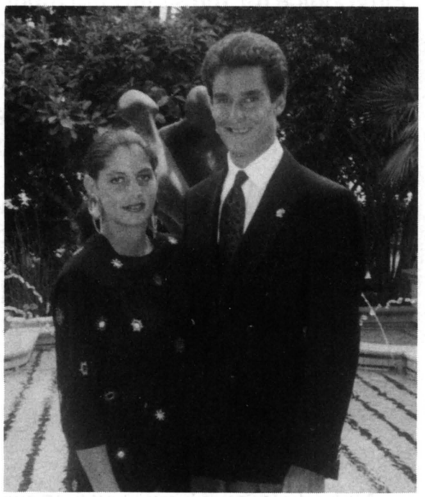
With trade barriers plummeting — and heady talk of "free trade" in the air — Mexico is the hot new market for coin-operated amusements. For the first time, sales of new equipment are zooming; U.S. firms are appointing distributors; and Mexico City seems to be this year's hottest site for coin-op trade show extravaganzas (a successful operator's show was held last month, and a sold-out AAMA-sponsored event is slated for July 10-11).

In this midst of all this activity, Nintendo of America has established a key alliance with a Guadalajara-based manufacturer-distributor called Mexel. This firm's youth, professionalism and ambition perfectly mirror that of Mexico's newly-awakened coin-op industry... and herald an excellent future for Nintendo in Mexico, and for Mexico's coin-op industry itself.

Who is Nintendo's exclusive *PlayChoice* distributor South of the Border? It's a firm called Mexel, an "eight-years-young" company which already plays a major role in Mexico's coin-op renaissance.

Mexel's combined operations are led by two brothers: President Jacob Shemaria, 27, runs Mexel's manufacturing and distribution; Moises Shemaria, 24, is president of Diversiones Moy, the company's operating division. Their father, successful realtor Alberto Shemaria, is a partner. He started the brothers off with a 15-game arcade in 1982, perhaps little realizing his sons would soon parlay that small beginning into a coin-op empire.

With a wisdom far beyond their years, the two brothers have established Mexel as a fixture on the Mexican coin-op industry map... and they're bidding for future "giant" status. Today, Mexel boasts a staff of 160 employees and they do a little bit of everything. They make and distribute Nintendo *PlayChoice* video games (their sole video line). They make and distribute their own line of cranes (and have sold over 2,000 of them). They distribute plush for cranes (they're Mexico's exclusive rep for PMI Toys & Novelties). And they operate 15 arcades, with more to come (such as a planned giant redemption center in Guadalajara). They also operate a street route of over 1,000 games... including over 250 *PlayChoice* games, 200 cranes and various additional videos.



Mexel President Jacobo Shemaria & wife Olga.

Like Mexico itself, Mexel is on the move... and the pace is very fast indeed. "We were five years behind the U.S.," said Mexel President Jacobo Shemaria. "Now it's only two months!"

MEXEL & *PLAYCHOICE*

The Nintendo *PlayChoice* system has always been a popular item overseas, perhaps because of the low cost of software and the efficiency of multi-game, single-cabinet operation. These qualities have made the product a successful "fit" for the economies of more than a few nations. For example, British operators have honored the Nintendo system as one of their favorite pieces of equipment.

Apparently, the same logic made *PlayChoice* the logical "choice" for the Mexican market. When Mexel went shopping for a good U.S. video game line to represent, it tested *PlayChoice* units in key Mexican cities. The result: "They made good money," smiled Jacobo.

From left: Irem's Darlene Kindler (soon to be Mrs. Al Stone), Nintendo VP Al Stone, Olga and Jacobo Shemaria, and Nintendo sales rep Jerry Monday.

Guadalajara, Jalisco is the HQ for Mexel. As Mexico's exclusive supplier of Nintendo's PlayChoice *video game system, Mexel imports boards from the USA, builds the cabinets in their Guadalajara plant and distributes them all over.*

Using imported PCBs (an "international kit" shipped from Nintendo's Redmond, Wash. plant), Mexel manufactures *PlayChoice* video game systems in their Guadalajara plant. Mexel carpenters build three-screen, three-player cabinets exclusively for the Mexican market. Mexel's been distributing these games since January, and by all reports, sales are thriving. "We've sold over 1,000 *PlayChoice* games since the first of the year," Jacobo Shemaria stated.

"We tell our customers, don't look for a location where there's no machine," Shemaria added. "Look for one where there's already a game, and tell the location owner: we'll replace your old game with a *PlayChoice* for the same split (operator's end 70%, which is the norm in Mexico). And your earnings will go up 500%." Jacobo smiled. "Operators come back to us and say, it's working! It earns like you said it would!"

"Their cabinet is probably stronger than ours structurally," said Nintendo VP Al Stone. "One reason is that a lot of hand labor is involved. The result is craftsmanship. A Mexel cabinet is like a piece of furniture."

MEXICO'S NEW OPERATORS

Nobody knows how many operators work the trade in Mexico, but most are businessmen who invest in two or three coin-op games as a secondary venture. Mexel, however, is going after new blood... and expanding the market in the process. "Most of our customers have not been in the business before," Jacobo Shemaria explained. "Coin-op began as a sideline for many, but since then, it has become their principle business."

Mexel, then, is actively helping to build Mexico's new market by recruiting brand-new operators into the trade. Mexel also trains newcomers in the technical and management skills needed for successful game operation, and offers fi-

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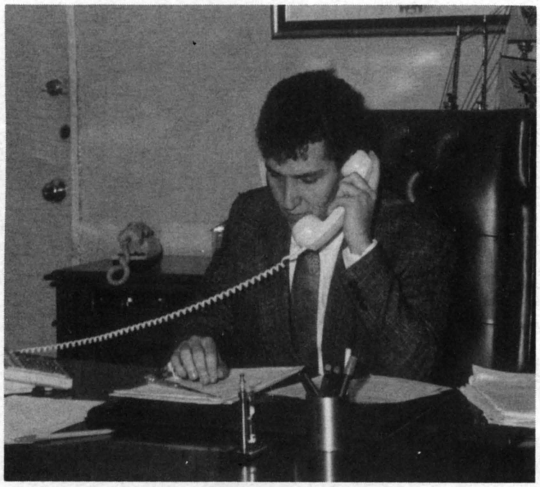

Left: Moises Shemaria is president of Diversiones Moy, Mexel's operating company which runs 15 arcades. Right: Alberto Shemaria, father of Jacobo and Moises, is a successful real estate businessman who set his sons up in the video game business.

nancing for purchase of games. "Getting new people involved is something we don't do enough in the United States," admired Al Stone. Nintendo's Western U.S. regional sales rep Jerry Monday added: "With Mexel's combination of game distribution, financing and a good training program, they are practically offering a turn-key operation."

The Mexican economy enables a "route" of just five *PlayChoice* units to support an operator, Nintendo's Al Stone explained. Machines are set on token play, in part because the value of the currency shifts at least every six months. Using tokens makes it easier to adjust play pricing accordingly.

Above: Here's a production lot of Mexels's PlayChoice *uprights. The company has been building these games since January . . . and is building a strong market as well. Below: Jacobo and Moises with a unique triple-screen version of* PlayChoice *which Mexel makes for Mexico.*

POLICING THE MARKET

The new professionalism of Mexico's coin-op industry is increasingly reflected in a better quality of goods on location. In past years, many — if not most — video games in Mexico were "gray." This was due to high tariffs and to U.S. manufacturer neglect. Both are changing. Tariffs have been coming down for the last couple of years. And, at Nintendo's initiative, the Mexican government has agreed to "expedite" changing the country's laws to facilitate more aggressive copyright and trademark protection activity.

"We're investing considerable resources in the Mexican market, and we intend to protect our investment and our distributors," explained Nintendo's Al Stone. He and Nintendo's Mexican attorney, Dr. Lorenzo de Anda, recently set up a meeting with Mexican Secretary of Commerce, Dr. Roberto Villarreal, to discuss copyright protection issues. Also present for the meeting was Mexel's Jacobo Shemaria.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

In sum, Mexel and Nintendo both share a positive vision of a Mexican coin-op market that may someday even rival America's. "It's really an untapped market," said Nintendo's Jerry Monday. "In this virgin territory, you see a lot of energy, enthusiasm and optimism. You make your own destiny in Mexico. Everybody's young and aggressive."

Certainly Mexel fits that description. "We're very excited about *PlayChoice* and about our future," said Jacobo Shemaria. "New operators, new locations and a whole new country for this product as our exclusive territory . . . it all looks very good to us!"

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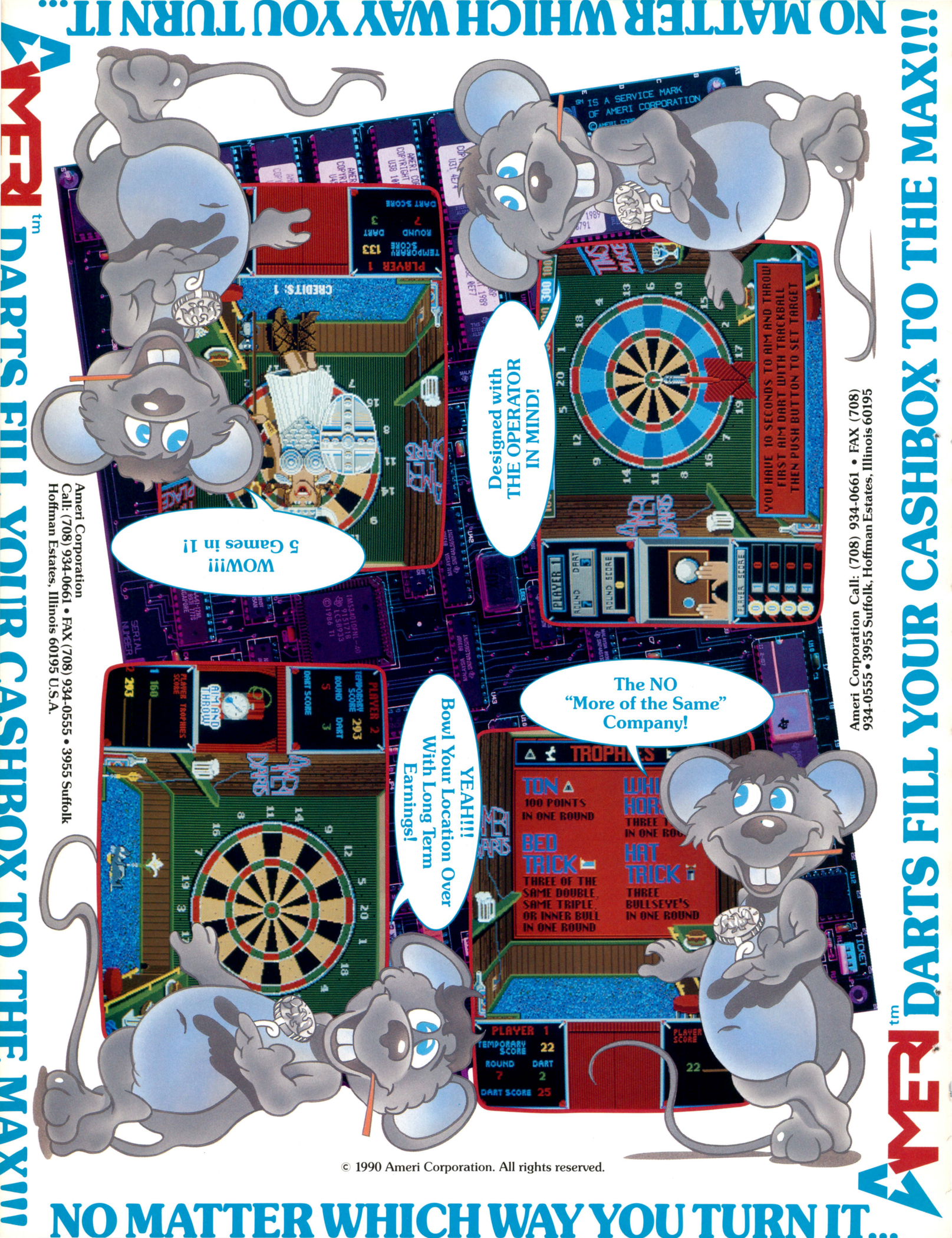

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SPOTLIGHT SPECIAL

Hot Valley Pool Action!

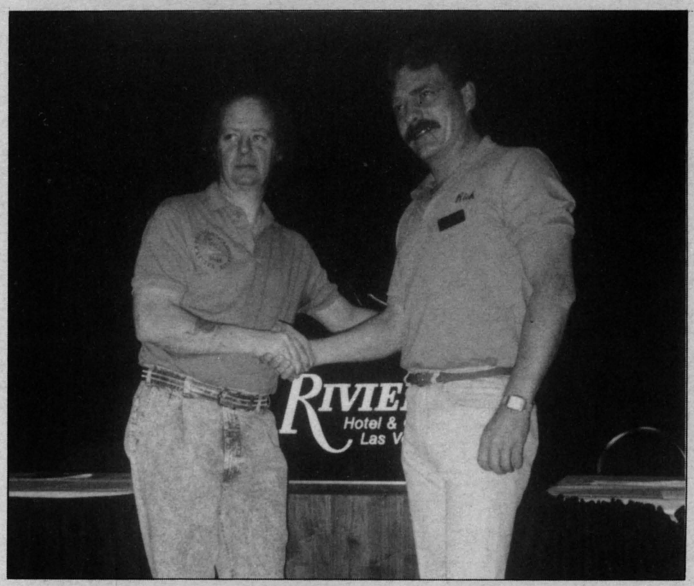
V.N.E.A. stages a colossal 10th anny tourney in Las Vegas

It was huge and it was glitzy. It brought the man on the street into the unreal world of Las Vegas. "More people than you'd find at Grand Central Station during rush hour" bumped into each other, all with one common cause: to shoot 8-ball in the nation's most prestigious coin-oriented sporting event, the V.N.E.A. International.

Held May 26 through June 2 at the Las Vegas Riviera, around 2,500 players from 30 states and five foreign countries faced off over 121 Valley 7½' coin tables for round after round of prize-winning events that this year even included Scotch doubles and 9-ball as well as the most beloved tavern sport, 8-ball.

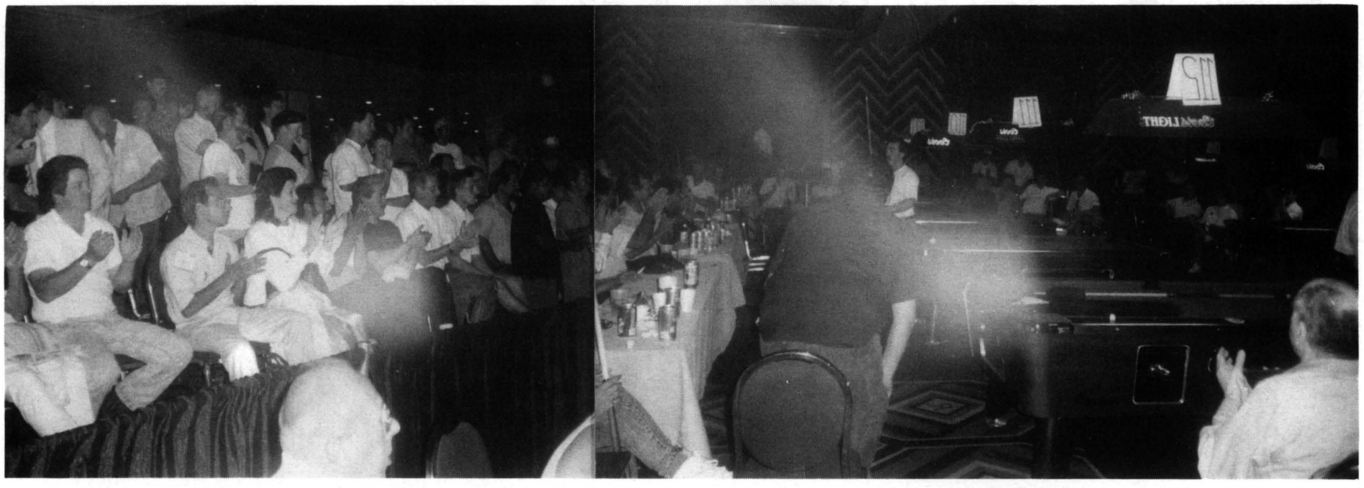
The V.N.E.A. International is possibly the largest amateur pool table competition in the country, if not the world. It has gone far beyond the dream of Valley's Chuck Milhem and a group of operators who started the organization back in 1981 to the point where it has a life of its own where players speak the initials V.N.E.A. with the ease of a tax accountant saying IRS.

Since this year's tournament marked the association's tenth anniversary, extra touches were added (in signage and in emotion). The opening ceremonies were moving, certainly as the American national anthem played and shoulder-to-shoulder players of both sexes froze in attention. Flags flew, music blared and then, it was to the business at

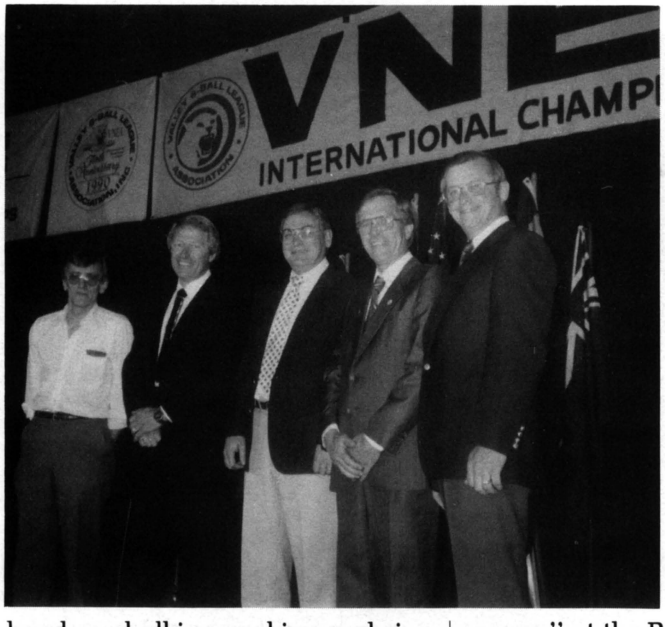


Changing of the guard: after nine years at the front of the platform, Tournament Director Gary Benson (l) turns next year's tourney over to new Director Rich VanDyke.

Pool table "royalty" at the concluding banquet are: Valley supremo Chuck Milhem, Mrs. Mazzone of the L.E.A.N.I. slate company, V.N.E.A. prexy Roger Rasmussen, Florence Milhem & Lorenzo Mazzone.



The final matches of the V.N.E.A. international championships were held in a separate theatre form the grand ballroom. Here we see a light-splashed photo shot at the moment Gary Speath dropped the ball to win first place over Joe Alvarez in Mens 9-ball, to audience applause.



Gary Nelson (center) received this year's V.N.E.A. Meritorious Service Award. That's a real "charter" charter holder, Dick Hawkins, at right.

hand. . . chalking, racking, and giving it your best.

Over $145,000 was offered in prize money and many, many competitors came away with something (for example, while the first-place winner in men's singles got $1,500 and a plaque, even the 192nd finisher in that division was eligible for $60). This is a great idea and underscores the word "amateur" in the whole program. Photos of some key winners appear in this feature.

Competition was run in three separate halls at the Riviera, including the huge 70,000-sq.-ft. grand ballroom. It's interesting that V.N.E.A.'s very first playoffs were held in a ballroom at the Kahler Hotel in Rochester, Minn. which wasn't much bigger than today's "extra rooms" at the Riviera. Clearly, the event has grown like a poplar tree (fast and straight).

Association Treasurer Gene Urso (one of the 175 "charter holder" operator members of the organization) estimated that over 49,000 individual games of pool were played during the meeting. By the way, players must insert coins into the tables for each match; they also pay entry fees for each division they wish to enter (ergo, the size of the total prize purse).

Urso, as well as V.N.E.A. President Roger Rasmussen and the other officers who ran this year's tournament, stay on board for one more year (as do most board members). However, Tournament Director Gary Benson stepped down after so many successful years running the competition and turned the reins of next year's event (to be held again at the Riviera) to Richard Van Dyke. Benson will probably stay aboard in an advisory capacity.

Around 100 of the association's "charter operators" were on hand at the Riviera this year. Between them and the 75 who didn't come out, they run local leagues which count approximately 40,000 registered players in 38 states. What started as a "midwest thing" has spread rapidly. It's a well-run organization, commanded at V.N.E.A.'s headquarters by Executive Director Greg Elliot.

The overseas presence is getting bigger as well. Valley's Jim Griffiths said over 250 foreign visitors (including operator observers) flew into Las Vegas for the event. Countries actually fielding teams this year were Spain, Austria, tiny Bermuda, Canada (of course) and Germany. . . and this latter country, under the tutelage of Ulli Kuennecke, should get even more involved in the V.N.E.A. as the years go by.

Such companies as Kuennecke's NSM, Lorenzo Mazzone's L.E.A.N.I. (slate suppliers), Paul Huebler's cue sticks and Mali's billiard cloth donated special funds to help some of the events. It was a welcome touch and a nice anniversary present to the association.

Besides a President's Reception, a gala suds & chips blowout and the concluding banquet and award ceremony, other social events hap-

Left: Men's Master Singles was copped by Weldon Rogers (left) from Flint, Mich., here with runners-up. Right: Lori Buendorf (3rd from left) won the top spot in Women's Masters Singles. Here she receives her plaque with divisional runners-up.

Gary Speath (left) from Dayton, Ohio, beat popular Joe Alvarez out in the final singles match in Men's 9-ball for a $1,500 check. Gary also shared in $5,000 won by the number one men's team in 8-ball. Gary may have been the MVP of the weekend.

NSM's Uli Kunnecke (standing toward right) brought a group of German game operators over to witness the pool table shoot-off. Some went on to a trip in the mountains with another Valley stalwart, Bill Nemgar, after the Las Vegas event concluded.

pened at the Riviera competition (e.g. a total of 14 couples involved in the tourney got married while in Las Vegas). On a sad note, referee Wayne Stahl passed away from heart failure during the event. May he rest.

If Len Schneller, the modern pioneer of coin machine tournaments, were alive today, he'd bust his buttons knowing how well the V.N.E.A. is doing. Actually, it and many of the industry's other tournament leagues are robust and that's due to the direct involvement of so many operators and their employees.

Of course, there are financial rewards, like the coins going into the cash can on league nights, as well as little benefits when players just automatically brush the felt and otherwise maintain the apperance of the tables when playing. It's their "arena." And as Gene Urso put it: "Never forget that charter membership for an operating company is a corporate asset." It pays to belong. Congratulations to all involved.

Robert Apparacio and his wife (standing) with members of the Spanish team during the banquet.

Shooting the Bull

Arachnid's fifth annual BullShooter finals are their best yet!

Are you surprised that Henry Ford's company is still one of the world's leading auto makers? Of course not. Would you be shocked to learn that Thomas Edison's firm (known today as GE) dominates the field of electrical manufacturing and innovation? Again, no. Those who start in the winners' circle, usually stay in the winners' circle.

Arachnid, Inc. (Rockford, Ill.) proved that classic precept all over again on Memorial Day weekend. The firm, which invented the coin-op electronic dart game, is also creator of the BullShooter World Challenge of Champions (granddaddy of all electronic darts tournaments). So it's hardly surprising that Arachnid scored high at the BullShooter V World Championships, held over the Memorial Day weekend of May 25-28, 1990.

Arachnid President Bill Ward enthused: "BullShooter V was our most successful tournament yet. Numbers were up, organization and logistics were superb, and player excitement was unprecedented!"

Arachnid prexy Bill Ward with MVP's Teresa Nevills and Joe Schmitz at the fifth annual BullShooter World Challenge of Champions Memorial Day weekend.

PLAYERS & WINNERS

A whopping 4,174 entries (up by 500 from last year) competed on 140 *English Mark Dart* games in this $40,000 extravaganza which climaxed months of $5,000 qualifying tournaments held in 16 major cities around the country. Staged at the Holiday Inn O'Hare outside Chicago, the BullShooter Championship was co-sponsored by Coors Light (Arachnid makes a *Coors Light Silver Bullet Sharpshooter* edition of their game) and by Arachnid's own *BullShooter Magazine*.

Eight major contests provided thrills and excitement for shooters who came from every region of the United States, plus several foreign countries. Those eight contests were Pro Singles, Open Singles, Women's Singles, Cricket Singles, Men's Doubles, Mixed Doubles and Mixed Cricket.

Arachnid tournaments are always notable for clockwork precision, high player spirits, a handsome prize menu and skillful administration. This time, the fun of international electronic darting was enhanced by several new developments, including a special contest for dart-throwing, bikini-clad

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Left: 1st place Cricket Singles winner Art Robichaud of Salem, N.H. with Arachnid topper Bill Ward. Right: 1st place Mixed Cricket winners Joe Schmitz & Karen Zimmerman with Bill Ward.

Left: Bill Ward congratulates 1st place Women's Singles winner Teresa Nevills of Pasadena, Texas. Right: 1st place Women's Doubles champs Natalie Hansen and Karen Zimmerman.

beauties...and a computerized registration system which added to player enjoyment, while reducing some of the pressure on Arachnid's hardworking "A-Team" staff.

Perhaps the most dramatic shoot-out of the entire championship weekend came when Californian Craig Belardes and Arizonian John Gray played down to a tie-breaker match, vying for the title of "Pro Singles World Champion." The room was packed with fellow darters and spectators, breathlessly following each feathered flight of the darts. Finally, Belardes ended the match by throwing a T20, T19 and Double 19 for a "9 Dart Out." His score of 155 gave him the title. Craig also took first in Mixed Doubles with partner Linda Endo, also from California.

The Miss BullShooter competition was won by Jill "Miss March" Mittica of Houston (she's at left).

Other top darters included Texas' Teresa Nevills and Wisconsin's Joe Schmitz. Their first place wins in Women's Singles and Open Doubles, respectively, plus additional high-placing victories in other categories, earned them handsome "MVP Gold Ring Awards." Arachnid President Bill Ward made the presentations during the final awards banquet and ceremony.

INTERNATIONAL AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The BullShooter finals are known as the "World Challenge of Champions," and that title is well deserved. Teams from Japan and Canada gave the U.S. a run for its money in the "Pacific Cup" competition. The U.S. team fielded by Arachnid

won this event. It was America's second consecutive victory for this honor (Australia won in 1988).

Looking across our other ocean, the U.S. team took on counterparts from Germany and Canada for the "European Cup." A second BullShooter All-Star team won the contest and will keep this trophy in the Land of the Free for a fourth year in a row.

A new event on the roster this year was the "Ms. BullShooter Challenge." Arachnid's *BullShooter Magazine* runs a monthly beauty contest, printing a pinup-style photo of one winner per month on their back page (the picture always shows an attractive female dart player in a swimsuit, posing next to *English Mark Dart* game). These winners competed in a 301 dart play-off competition . . . and they shot their darts while wearing bathing costumes! "Miss March," Jill Mittica, did the best shooting; her prizes for this feat included $500 and an *English Mark Darts* home electronic game.

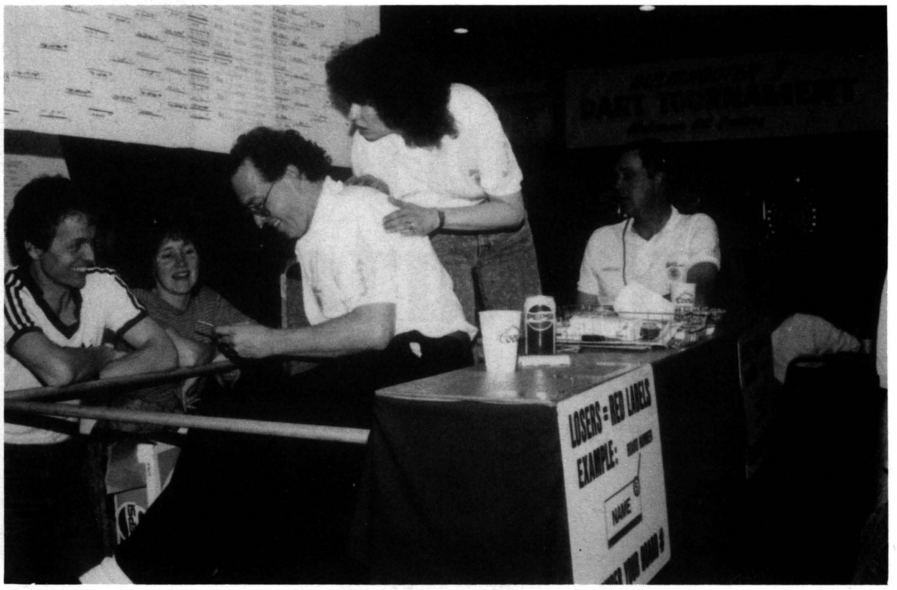
NEW TOURNEY SYSTEM

Another first: under the direction of Marketing VP Sam Zammuto, BullShooter V ran under a completely new computerized system which cut two hours from the charting time. Here's how it worked: when players registered, they received exact times they would play. No more waiting to be called by an announcer! Players caught on fast, reporting to the correct stage (major events were run from mini-stages, located in various places throughout the vast hall) and looked for their name on the chart.

When a board number was placed beside their name, players went to that board and played their match. Afterwards they reported back to the stage, where they signed color-coded stickers indicating a win or loss.

"Our new system worked beautifully," smiled Arachnid's VP of Sales Marcio Bonilla. "Everyone knew exactly when they were supposed to play, and they kept playing — no more idle games."

"More players kept competing in a shorter time by utilizing all the machines," Sam Zammuto explained. "We also were able to gather big crowds for the final matches, and that really added to the excitement."



A peek at the officials at one of the eight "mini stages" during the BullShooter championships.

THE ARACHNID SEASON

Arachnid's full tournament season runs on a "pyramid" system with a broad base of weekly league matches in locations across the country, funneling upward into 16 regional tournaments, and capped by the BullShooter World Challenge of Champions.

Arachnid does not charge an entry fee for the climactic finals; instead, players obtain qualifying certificates (from their local Arachnid league operator, or by placing in the top three in any of the regionals). These certificates entitle the players to participate in the BullShooter championship.

League operators, in turn, obtain the certificates by purchasing Qualifying Kits from Arachnid. Operators can then tie their local league contests into the Arachnid tournament structure. For example, many operators send their league champions to the BullShooter finals; others send their best players with outstanding league accomplishments.

As for the regional winners, any player can obtain a qualifying certificate by placing first, second or third (in any event) at a BullShooter Qualifying Regional. Some players travel great distances, in fact, to compete in the regionals — hoping to qualify to go on the the BullShooter championships.

This year, Arachnid and local co-sponsors staged regional contests in sites including Arizona, Texas, Maine, Alabama, Florida, Nevada, Kansas, Washington, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, New York, California, Pennsylvania and Quebec.

MAINLY, IT'S FUN!

Arachnid's success can be measured in many ways, from the impressive size of its tournaments, to the elated looks on the winners' faces. You can also count up all the dollars earned by happy operators who have joined the Arachnid tournament program, and have seen their league play (and darting profits) grow and grow.

Perhaps the best measure of success comes from the players themselves. If they're happy, everybody makes money — operators, locations and distributors. "That's why we're particularly proud of BullShooter V," Arachnid's Bill Ward concluded. "Many players and operators wrote or called us after they returned home, to congratulate us on the best championship yet."

Indeed, the players gave Arachnid's "A-Team" a standing ovation at the end of the tournament. The sincerity of that kudo will be seen this fall, when thousands of darters around the country stream back to their locations to drop quarters into *English Mark Dart* games . . . and get another successful Arachnid season underway!

World's Best Darter

'How I Won Arachnid's Pro Singles World Championship,' by Craig Belardes

Why are electronic darts profitable for operators? Because they bring so much fun, excitement and social interaction to players. Just ask Craig Belardes, age 28. He's a bulldozer operator and union man from Capistrano Beach, Calif. He's also one heck of a dart player.

Craig's been shooting steel-tipped darts all his life, but now he's a dedicated "soft-tip darter." He came home from Arachnid's May 25-27 BullShooter V extravaganza with over $3,500 in cash from his first-place victories in two events, plus his respectable performance in a third category. Here's the story of how Craig Belardes fought his way to the Arachnid Pro Singles "World Champ" title, in his own words.

Sunday night I was tossing in my bed at the O'Hare Holiday Inn, thinking about competing for the World Singles title the next day. Monday morning, when I got to the staging area, my arm was a little stiff, but it felt okay after I started warming up.

I knew it wouldn't be a cakewalk. The competition was there; I'd seen them during the earlier events on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. By the time we got to the semi-finals of the winners' bracket, I was shooting pretty well.

I'd heard a lot of talk about another player named Terry Brown. Everybody was talking about him, how good he was, and I was looking forward to shooting against him. But I got so pumped up thinking about taking him on, that I stopped concentrating on the match I was playing . . . and lost!

That was the turning point. I decided I'd better stop looking ahead to the next match's competition, and start taking care of business, paying attention to the match I was playing — using my tunnel vision and forgetting everything else.

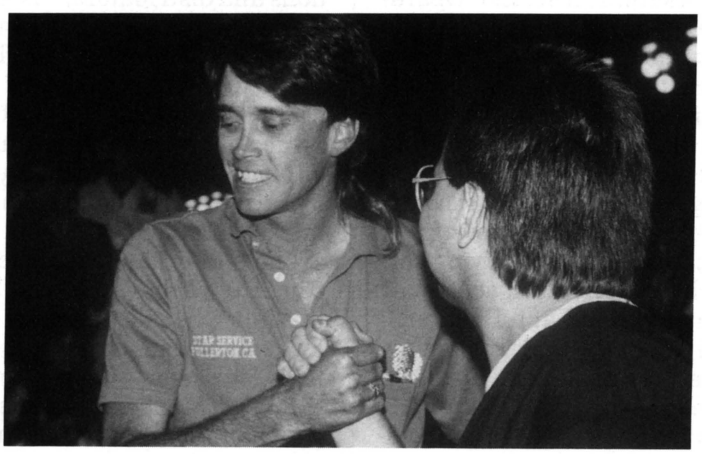
I won the loser's bracket and had my work cut out for me by the time we broke for lunch. When we started up again, I didn't feel too good. I played decent, good enough to get by. But then they called me up on the stage to compete in front of everybody, under the bright lights. And something changed.

There was a packed crowd of people watching every shot. Big-screen TVs showed what happened. Suddenly everything started working for me. I was just in tune. I hit 140 every game, and in the second leg — against past national champion Bruce Holmes — I threw a six-dart perfect game.

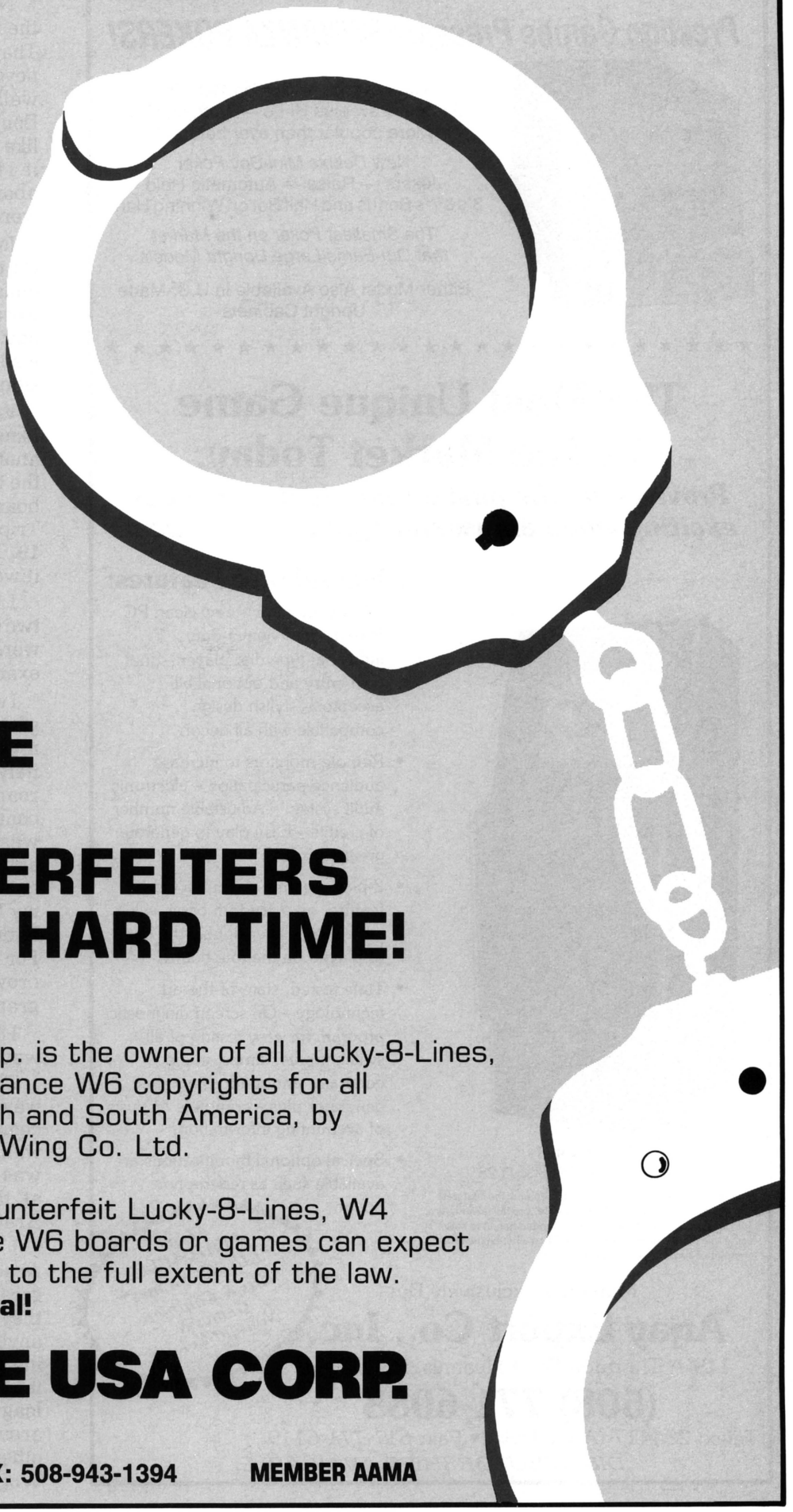
That's when I started thinking, I can win this. I kept hitting my 140 Ons, kept putting pressure on everyone. After seeing what I could do, the crowd started getting behind me. They started rooting for me, and seemed to enjoy my playing as much as I enjoyed hearing them.

We got down to the finals. In order to win, I knew I had to beat John Gray from Arizona, two out of three times, twice. That's because I was the winner of the loser's bracket, and he was the winner of the winner's bracket. So I had to perform better than he, to get the title.

I beat him two games straight in the first two legs, and that brought us to the finals. Now the World Championship was really at stake. I won the first leg; he won the second leg.



Craig Belardes, Singles Pro Champion, is congratulated after his win by runner-up John Gray.



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Now we're on the third leg. I won the bullseye, so I got to start first. That was a big advantage for me. I'll never forget what happened next: I walked up to the line and missed my Double 20! The audience sighed, like they couldn't believe I missed it. I heard it, but didn't really think about it. My focus and intensity were total.

John came up and did pretty well. On my second turn, I shot for the bullseye. But it turned out to be my worst performance of the whole day. Then John came up again, did well and left himself in a great position.

With that quality of competition, I knew this was it. I wouldn't have another chance. I stood looking at the target for a while, studying the board and deciding I'd shoot for a Triple 20, a Triple 19 and a Double 19. Then I threw the first dart and it went right there.

I knew I had it. I knew the next two shots would go right where they were supposed to, also . . . and that's exactly what happened!

I was the World Champion! It was great! It wasn't quite like watching my child be born, but it was definitely an experience. The audience roared and I shook John's hand and congratulated him on his playing. I was pretty excited, as you can imagine. I couldn't really believe it. I came down off the stage and gave my Mixed Doubles partner, Linda Endo, a high five. Then I sat down. For the next 20 minutes, people crowded around, wanting my autograph.

I had a smile from Chicago all the way back to California!

The BullShooter Championship was the best-run tournament I've competed in, steel-tip or soft-tip. It was professionally run, everything was on time. Everything happened at the exact time and place the Arachnid people said it would.

I can't say enough about the Arachnid organization. They're great people. Even under pressure, they were always happy to give you anything you asked for, always smiling and helpful. I'm definitely looking forward to the 1990-91 season of league play in some of the locations around my area . . . and, I hope, another trip to Chicago for next year's World Championships!

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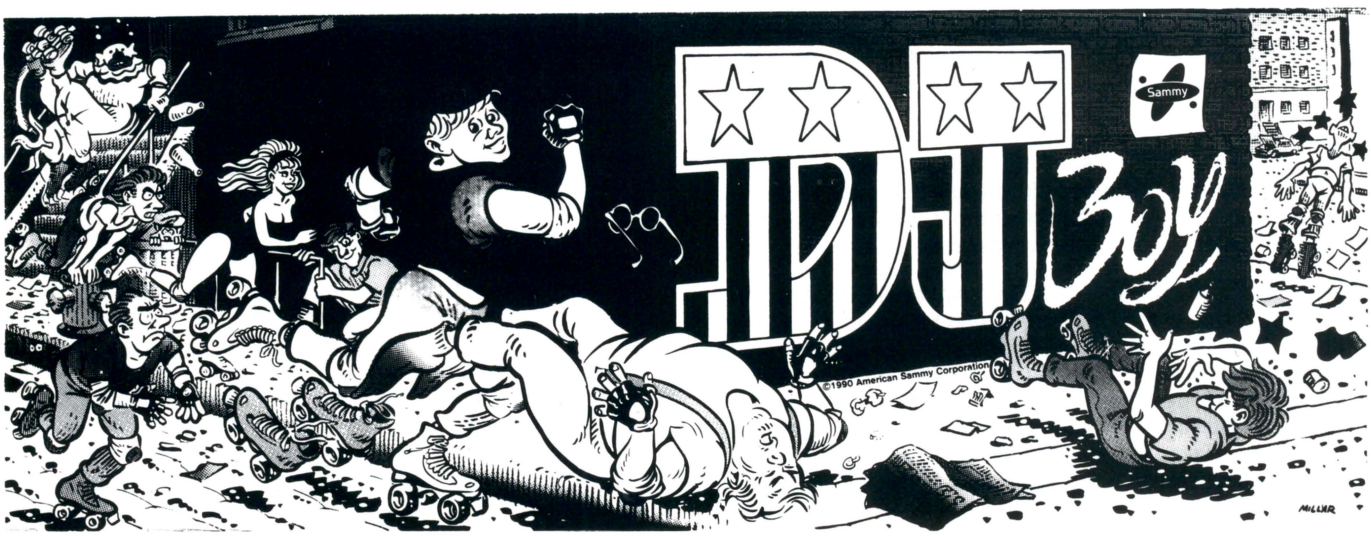

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DYNAMO HOCKEY was promoted at Harper College (Chicago, Ill.) by a "Tournament of Power" event on March 24-25, featuring exhibition matches between current national air table hockey champion Tim Weissman (pictured) and Dynamo's Mark Robbins, also a national champion player. The "pros" gave pointers to new players and then let the kids "take on the champs." As you can see from the rapt expressions on the youngsters' faces, the promotion was a big success!

NDA DART SUMMIT — AMOA's National Dart Assn. held an open forum at the Chicago Hilton O'Hare on June 30 and July 1. Discussed were a myriad of topics relating to the nuts and bolts of dart league operation. NDA prexy Tony Urso and Exec Director Joe Conway piloted the affair. In other NDA news, the group has formed a Judicial Committee to deal with any cases of possible deviations by NDA charter operators from the association's Code of Ethics.

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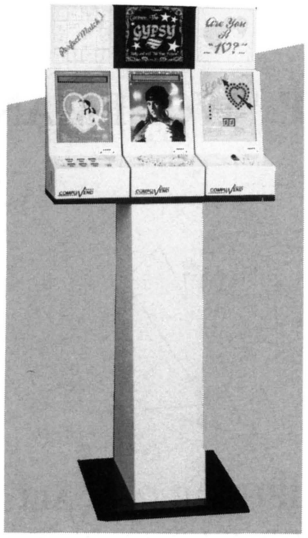

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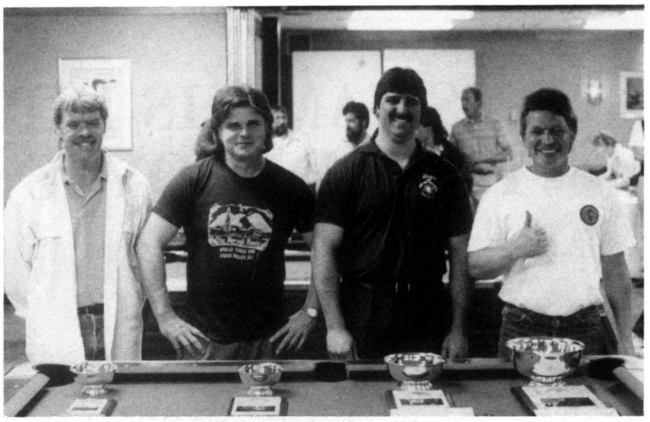

RACK 'EM UP! Operators Bill LaHart, Bob Prescott and Steve Hardy (Upstate Vending, Valley Vending and A.S. Hardy Co., respectively) were tournament directors for the 14th Annual Northern New York 8-Ball Championship, held Sunday, May 6 in Plattsburgh, N.Y. Nearly $5,000 in cash and prizes were distributed to winners in this event, which climaxed eight weeks of qualifying rounds in 47 locations in three counties. Sponsoring locations paid $100 fees to take their winners to the championships, while sponsoring operators furnished the rest of the money and all supporting materials needed to run the event. Also during the event, $941 was raised for local chapters of the Special Olympics, via selling raffle tickets for a special drawing. Given away to the lucky winners were a loaded jukebox, a pool cue and case, and home dart games.

"This championship is the largest 8-ball tournament of its kind in the U.S.," said organizers. "It's played on coin-operated Dynamo pool tables with no entry fee required of players. Players pay only for the games they play at the sponsoring locations and games are set on free play during the championship tournament. We're already planning next year's championship and hope to generate interest on the state and national level, through state and national associations, for like tournaments of a much larger scale."

BIG WAMO TOURNEY — Wisconsin Amusement & Music Operators held its 6th annual electronic dart tourney April 27-29 at a splendid resort hotel in the state. A record 3,200 players competed in various events and over $44,000 in prize money was paid out. Add in trophies and other awards, and the total purse topped $50,000. . . another WAMO record. Over 55 sanctioned WAMO operators were involved in the event which utilized nearly 150 dart machines in continuous play from Friday through Sunday. Congratulations!

TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

JULY 5-10
Coors Light World Series of Bar Games/National Championship, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. For more information, contact Sports Tournaments of America at 800/327-5566.

JULY 6-8
Tornado Soccer U.S. Open, Hilton Hotel, Denver, Colorado. For more information, contact Tornado at 817/572-3708.

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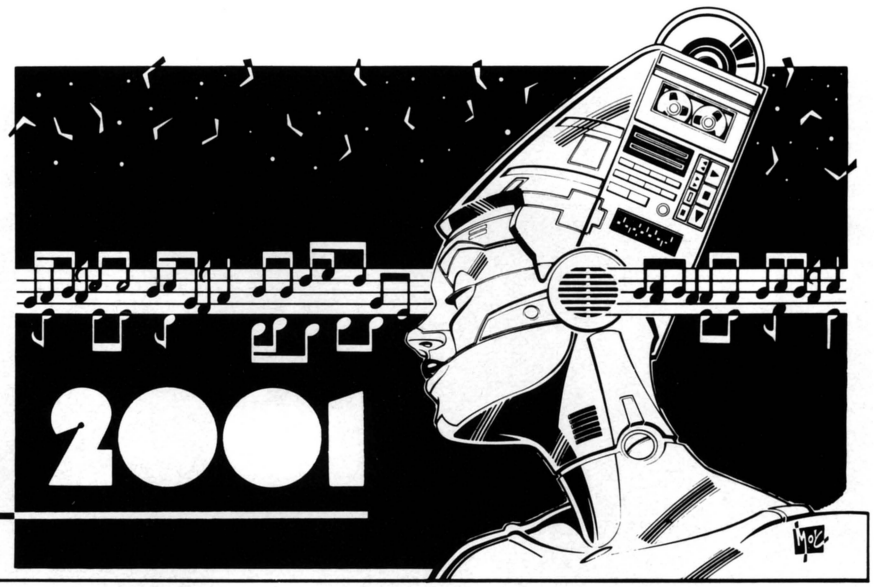


TAKING YOUR MUSIC SERVICES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Cinderella Story: Jukebox Hi-Tech Changes "Frog" Location Into "Prince"

by Emery Kertesz and Steve Devlin

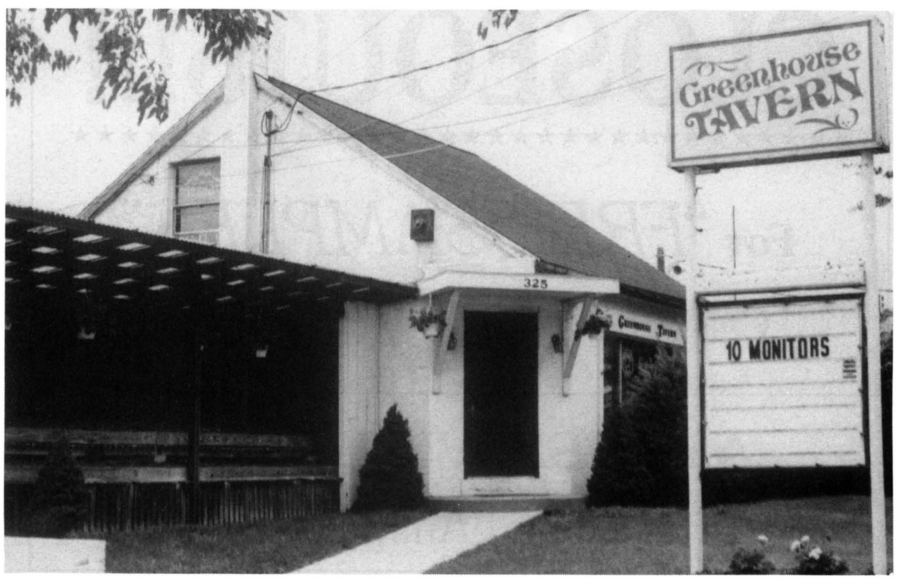
Can jukebox hi-tech, plus a little marketing magic, transform a "frog" of a location into a wealthy "prince"? The answer is definitely **yes**. . . and to prove it, this month we'll tell you our all-time favorite Cinderella story. It's the story of how a rundown, $60-a-week location became an upscale, showcase tavern. . . with a 700% revenue increase for the business as a whole. The coin-op segment has enjoyed a whopping 1,300% revenue increase.

The handsome prince in this tale is a location owner named Brian Johnson. When he purchased the Greenhouse Tavern in Telford, Pa. in December of 1984, it was a money-losing business: dingy walls, crummy carpet, "undesirable" clientele. A classic shot-and-beer bar, with the classic terrible collections. The old console jukebox was taking in $10 to $20 a week. Pinball and video earnings were about the same.

What to do? Brian began searching for answers. . . and along came the "princess" of the story. Operator Eileen Schembri (Lansdale Amusement Co.) offered Brian her assistance.

Brian said yes, and they started by giving the location a face-lift: in-

Eileen Schembri of Lansdale Amusement Co. with Greenhouse Tavern owner Brian Johnson.



Notice the two monitors in the rear. These are just one part of a full-blown entertainment system.

stalled a new floor, totally rebuilt the dining area, extended the bar, upgraded the lighting, etc.

Now it was Eileen's turn to make a contribution. She replaced the old juke with a newer model, and programmed it to attract younger people. The music gross quickly increased to as much as $40 per week. Eileen also brought in two electronic dart games — the first in the area. Brian supported these games by actively promoting two teams in Lansdale Amusements' dart league.

Well, collections began going up. New customers were dropping in, playing the games, playing the jukebox and buying food and drink. End of Act One: Brian was beginning to fall in love with coin-op; and the Greenhouse Tavern was starting to look a bit less like a deserted dungeon, and a bit more like a shining castle of coin-op profits.

But as the poet says, "The course of true love never does run smooth." Like the prince who kept trying the glass slipper on every girl in town (except the right one), Brian tried offering live bands, open mike nights and disk jockeys three nights a week. At first, these attractions seemed to bring in more people, too.

But after a while, Brian ran into trouble with booking bands, more trouble keeping the crowds under control, and even more trouble keeping the noise level down to a bearable limit. The more he struggled with these problems, the more they seemed "built-in" to live entertainment.

Besides, there were six more liquor-licensed locations within a five-mile radius of Greenhouse Tavern . . . and too many of them offered very similar attractions. For all his headaches, Brian was getting "me-too" entertainment.

Fortunately, he remembered the "real" princess, and turned to operator Eileen Schembri with his problem. "I need to create a pleasant atmosphere and draw higher-class clients," Brian told her. "And that means, I need an exciting, reliable entertainment system that supports social interaction."

"I think I've got the answer," Eileen replied. Here's where the hi-tech comes in. By this time, it was the spring of 1985 and Lansdale Amusements had begun offering video jukeboxes to selected locations. When Eileen suggested this possibility, Brian was ready to listen to new ideas. The fact that most locations didn't have video jukes, and knew nothing about them at the time, was a plus. Greenhouse Tavern would be offering something new and different. "Let's try it," Brian said.

Lansdale Amusement first installed a single video jukebox, plus two TV monitors and four external loudspeakers so that everybody in the location could see and hear the entertainment. They also wired the audio signal into Brian's own personal stereo system, which he had brought into the Greenhouse. That meant music filled the place even more. Lansdale and the location worked out a reasonable weekly minimum charge that covered all hardware and installation costs, plus operation and maintenance.

Would it work? You bet. The initial impact was very favorable. Weekly grosses jumped to the $200-250 range. Even more impressive was customer response. They were

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Brian Johnson shows off the "command center" for the system.

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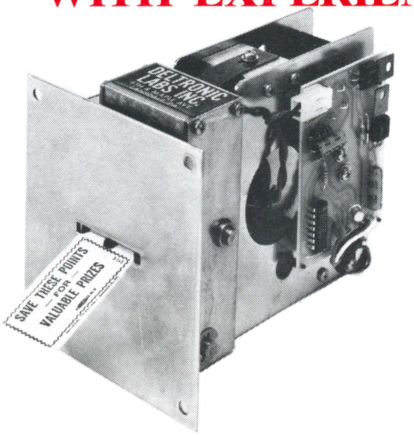

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Left: Eileen Schembri and Brian Johnson with the dart game and the monitor display of the scoring. Right: A look at the bar area with additional monitors.

enjoying the video jukebox more than live entertainment! And they were spending more on food and drink, and — for the first time — they were paying for the entertainment. Brian didn't have to pay for it himself.

All of this was a revelation to Brian Johnson. "In 1985, my customers' average age was in the higher 30s and 40s. The video jukebox started drawing a younger crowd, which was better because younger people tend to spend more money," he said. "Older people seem to want to come in, have one or two drinks, and socialize for four hours. When we began changing our approach and our clientele, some of the old-timers were unhappy and said we'd fail. But the more we offered, the more successful we became."

Brian decided to eliminate the live bands and DJs. If one video jukebox was good, wouldn't more coin-op entertainment be better? What if he got a system which could simultaneously program different sources, to entertain customers who wanted to watch sports, enjoy music videos or play darts? Brian again asked Eileen to help him expand and improve his audio-visual entertainment system.

Lansdale Amusement outfitted the Greenhouse Tavern with additional monitors. They improved the house sound system. They removed the existing home stereo system, and installed a more flexible, commercial system. All of this equipment was purchased by Lansdale and sold to the Greenhouse Tavern, where it became a permanent part of the location . . . but a part which would be operated by Lansdale Amusement, to their mutual profit.

To help Brian cover the costs, Lansdale made him a loan which he could pay back out of weekly collections. "The loan made good business sense for several reasons," explained Lansdale's Eileen Schembri. "First, by giving the location a loan, you invariably secure a three- to five-year location contract. Second, the money is used by the location as a direct, long-term investment for future business . . . not as personal pocket money, which the location owner might spend as a down payment on a fishing boat or some other non-business item.

"Third," Eileen continued, "this form of investment-oriented loan made sense because it resulted in upgraded quality of the audio-visual system . . . which in turn directly affected coin-op earnings. If the customers are enjoying themselves, they'll tend to stay longer, and earnings on all coin-op equipment will increase.

"Fourth," Eileen added, "although there is usually a nominal interest charge attached to the loan, you earn profit on the sale of equipment as well. Think of it as a deferred payment schedule.

"Finally," she concluded, "the loan means the location owner does not have to pay for the system outright. Believe me, that's a valuable sales tool. In return, you — the operator — are guaranteed a weekly payment, the amount of which is agreed upon in advance. And you've developed a long-lasting location relationship."

The happy ending to this story is that the Greenhouse Tavern is now a thriving location. The wide variety of hi-tech entertainment attracts a steady steam of new customers every night and keeps "old faithfuls" coming back regularly. Darts are earning up to $500 per week. The video jukebox peaked at $400 per week, and although today some of the novelty has worn off, it's still pulling in a steady $250 or so per week. The location isn't really a "pinball stop," but its single flipper earns up to $50 per week. Total coin-op earnings in this fairly small location: as much as $800 per week.

"People look at bars as a second home, not a place of business," location owners Brian Johnson said. "They want bartenders to be personal and friendly. They also want a chance to meet other people and socialize. That's where my coin machine operator really helps set my location apart. My customers have lots of ways to strike up a conversation and make new friends. Instead of talking about the Phillies or the decor, they can discuss the artists on the video jukebox, or try their hand at playing darts. We've even got single women coming alone, knowing they can meet new people and have a good time."

Many taverns across the country have suffered under tough new DWI laws, but the Greenhouse Tavern has substituted good coin-op fun for hard drinking . . . and has found a cooperative spirit among its patrons. "If somebody's had one too many, one of the employees or one of the regulars will drive that person home," Brian said. "Sometimes a person will come in and at the end of the night, a perfect stranger drives him home. Invariably, they become friends."

What equipment is responsible for this amazing transformation? Greenhouse Tavern, which is a

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1,600-sq.-ft. location, now has a Videobox Networks jukebox and ten remote monitors, including one large-screen TV. This set-up enables everyone in the bar to see a nice large screen with ease — no craning your neck, no twisting around in your chair, no squinting at a tiny screen way off at the other end of the bar.

This video monitor network not only plays music videos, it can also access 40 channels from the local cable feed. Not only that, but Brian sometimes uses a handheld video camera to film softball games played by teams which patronize his tavern; later he plays back the game on whatever number of monitors is needed.

So the local softball team could be watching their own game on one or two monitors, while three more monitors are playing music videos from the Videobox, and meanwhile the rest of the monitors might display a boxing match or professional baseball game from the cable feed. This total flexibility is achieved at the flick of a switch, and can be changed any number of times throughout the evening, as crowd patterns shift inside the location.

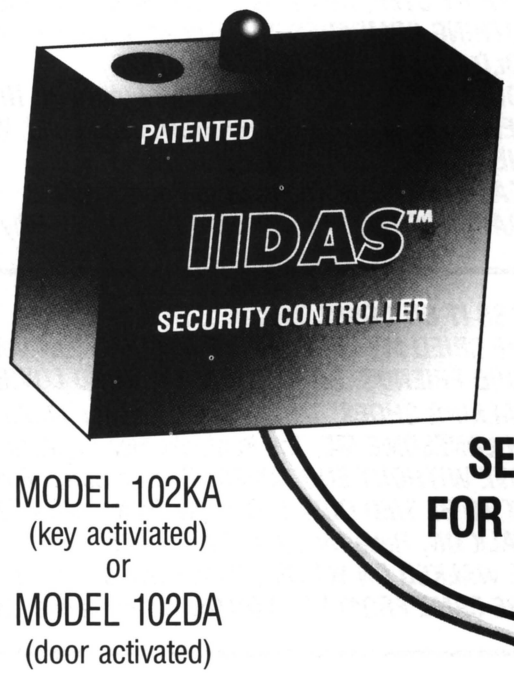
By the way, sometimes Brian brings in a DJ for a special occasion, then uses his camcorder to broadcast live images of his patrons dancing over the whole system. Customers get a kick out of seeing themselves, live, on the "Greenhouse Tavern network."

The audio system has been continuously upgraded over the past five years, and now features individual volume controls for each pair of speakers and each area of the bar. Just like the video monitors, the speakers can broadcast signals from a variety of sources: the video jukebox, the cable TV, a video tape, a radio station, audio cassette tapes, AM/FM radio, etc. A relay ensures that when one source finishes broadcasting, the speakers instantly switch to another source for continuous entertainment. A microphone input enables Mike to sing "Happy Birthday" over the entire system or do any other special announcements or songs which seem appropriate.

"Other location owners have told me Brian's diversity accounts for the success of his business," operator Eileen Schembri said. "These other locations want to copy what Brian has done. His openness to new ideas and new technologies has given his business a definite edge."

Clearly, the success of Greenhouse Tavern has also given Lansdale Amusement a definite edge, which they are happily promoting. "We also find that we can set up meetings with other (non-competing) location owners in the Greenhouse Tavern, and they always come away impressed by what they see — and by what they hear from Brian himself," said Lansdale Amusement. "It's one thing to hear a sales pitch from an operator; it's something else again to hear an enthusiastic endorsement from a fellow owner . . . and to see the results with your own eyes."

The Greenhouse Tavern success story is one that many other operators around the country could repeat. Next month, we'll tell you how.



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HOTHITS PLAY LIST

Top 45s and compact discs on jukeboxes as rated by operators & programmers. ★ = significant crossover activity.

POP

1. ***ALL I WANT TO DO IS MAKE LOVE TO YOU,*** *Heart, Capitol 44507*
★ 2. ***VOGUE,*** *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 19863*
★ 3. ***STEP BY STEP,*** *New Kids On The Block, Columbia 73343*
4. ***NOTHING COMPARES 2 U,*** *Sinead O'Connor, Ensign/Chrysalis 23488*
5. ***HOLD ON,*** *Wilson Phillips, SBK 07322*
6. ***DOUBLEBACK (from "Back to the Future Pt. III"),*** *ZZ Top, Warner Bros. 19812*
7. ***WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD,*** *Jane Child, Warner Bros. 19834*
★ 8. ***THE POWER,*** *Snap, Arista 2013*
9. ***DEADBEAT CLUB,*** *The B-52's, Reprise 19938*
10. ***CRADLE OF LOVE (from "Ford Fairlane"),*** *Billy Idol, Chrysalis 23509*

C/W

1. ***PASS IT ON DOWN,*** *Alabama, RCA 2519*
2. ***I'VE CRIED MY LAST TEAR FOR YOU,*** *Ricky Van Shelton, Columbia 73263*
3. ***GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD WHISKEY, GOOD LOVIN',*** *Hank Williams Jr., Warner/Curb 19872*
4. ***WALKING SHOES,*** *Tanya Tucker, Capitol 44520*
5. ***OH LONESOME ME,*** *The Kentucky Headhunters, Mercury 875450*
6. ***LOVE WITHOUT END, AMEN,*** *George Strait, Epic 73312*
7. ***FIT TO BE TIED DOWN,*** *Conway Twitty, MCA 79000*
8. ***WALK ON,*** *Reba McEntire, MCA 79009*
9. ***HE WALKED ON WATER,*** *Randy Travis, Warner Bros. 29878*
10. ***SHE CAME FROM FT. WORTH,*** *Kathy Mattea, Mercury 876746*

R&B

★ 1. ***THE BLUES,*** *Tony!, Toni!, Tone!, Wing/Polydor 873994*
★ 2. ***HOLD ON,*** *En Vogue, Altantic 87984*
★ 3. ***YOU CAN'T DENY IT,*** *Lisa Stansfield, Arista 2024*
4. ***WHY YOU GET FUNKY ON ME (from "House Party"),*** *Today, Motown 2036*
★ 5. ***I WANNA BE RICH,*** *Calloway, Solar/Epic 74005*
★ 6. ***VOGUE,*** *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 19863*
★ 7. ***TOMORROW (A BETTER YOU. . .),*** *Quincy Jones w/ T. Campbell, Qwest/W.B. 19881*
★ 8. ***POISON,*** *Bell Biv Devoe, MCA 53772*
★ 9. ***DON'T WANT TO FALL IN LOVE,*** *Jane Child, Warner Bros. 19933*
10. ***MAKE YOU SWEAT,*** *Keith Sweat, Vintertainment/Elektra 64961*

CDs

NICK OF TIME, *Bonnie Raitt, Capitol 91268*
PLEASE HAMMER DON'T HURT 'EM, *Capitol 92857*
SHUT UP & DANCE, *Paula Abdul, Virgin 91362*
FOREVER YOUR GIRL, *Paula Abdul, Virgin 90943*
I DO NOT WANT WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT, *Sinead O'Connor, Ensign/Chrysalis 21759*
POISON, *Bell Biv Devoe, MCA 6387*
. . . BUT SERIOUSLY, *Phil Collins, Altantic 82050*
SOUL PROVIDER, *Michael Bolton, Columbia 45012*
I'M BREATHLESS, *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 26209*
ALANNAH MYLES, *Alannah Myles, Atlantic 81956*

HOTHITS BEST NEW

New singles rated chart-bound by our reporters. ★ = significant crossover activity.

POP

WHEN I DREAM OF YOU
Tommy Page - Warner Bros. 19839

I'LL BE YOUR SHELTER
Taylor Dayne - Arista 2005

VISION OF LOVE
Mariah Carey - Columbia 73348

★HOLD ON
En Vogue - Atlantic 87984

★YOU CAN'T DENY IT
Lisa Stansfield - Arista 2024

★SHE AIN'T WORTH IT
Glenn Medeiros featuring Bobby Brown - MCA 53831

★READY OR NOT
After 7 - Virgin 98995

I DIDN'T WANT TO NEED YOU
Heart - Capitol 44553

ACROSS THE RIVER
Bruce Hornsby & The Range - RCA 2621

★THE BLUES
Tony! Toni! Tone! - Wing/Polydor 873994

PURE
The Lightning Seeds - MCA 53816

HOUSE OF PAIN
Faster Pussycat - Elektra 64995

BOUNCE BACK
Alisha - MCA 53802

★TALK TO ME
Anita Baker - Elektra 64964

CW

GOOD TIMES
Dan Seals - Capitol 79120

THIS SIDE OF GOODBYE
Highway 101 - Warner Bros. 19829

RICHEST MAN ON EARTH
Paul Overstreet - RCA 2505

WRONG
Waylon Jennings - Epic/CBS 73352

ON DOWN THE LINE
Patty Loveless - MCA 79004

MY ANNIVERSARY FOR BEING A FOOL
Holly Dunn - Warner Bros. 19847

FROM SMALL THINGS (BIG THINGS ONE DAY COME)
The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band - MCA 79013

DON'T GO OUT
Tanya Tucker with T. Graham Brown - Capitol 79149

I'M GONNA BE SOMEBODY
Travis Tritt - Warner Bros. 19797

WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME
Vince Gill - MCA 79011

NEXT TO YOU, NEXT TO ME
Shenandoah - Columbia 73373

PUTTIN' THE DARK BACK INTO THE NIGHT
Sawyer Brown - Curb/Capitol 79040

WANTED
Alan Jackson - Arista 2032

TANQUERAY
Vern Gosdin - Columbia 73350

R&B

MY, MY, MY
Johnny Gill - Motown 2033

★THE POWER
Snap - Arista 2013

★CAN'T STOP
After 7 - Virgin 98961

WE CAN MAKE IT ALRIGHT
The Gap Band - Capitol 15560

FOR THE LOVE OF YOU
Earth, Wind & Fire - Columbia 73193

FRIENDS' ADVICE (DON'T TAKE IT)
Pointer Sisters - Motown 1986

THIS IS LOVE
Regina Belle - Columbia 73346

★TALK TO ME
Anita Baker - Elektra 64964

★STEP BY STEP
New Kids on the Block - Columbia 73343

I WANT IT NOW
Cameo - Atlanta Artists/Mercury 875668

LAY YOUR TROUBLES DOWN
Angela Winbush (duet with Ronald Isley) - Mercury 87530

LOVE HIGH
Jeff Redd - Uptown/MCA 79028

THE MASTER KEY
Barbara Weathers - Reprise 19826

MIDNIGHT LOVE
Starpoint - Elektra 64956

FRANK TALK

by Frank "the Crank" Seninsky

Sure-Fire Savings to Make Your Route Profitable

Operators are sailing into economic bad weather. For the first time in several years, the U.S. government has just announced that retail sales have dropped for a third straight month in a row — the classic indicator that a recession is coming.

That's not the only ominous sign. Building of new homes is down drastically in the Northeast from a year ago. The once-booming Southern California real estate market is virtually dead. Inventories and retooling orders are uneven at best. Even our good friend Donald Trump is having financial difficulties!

About a year ago, this column predicted that this would happen. I hope operators started tightening their belts at that time. Revamping your route, making it "lean and mean," has been the subject of many seminars given by "the Crank" in recent months. It is also the subject of this month's "Frank Talk."

To most operators, "belt-tightening" means "stop buying new products." This is a seat-of-the-pants, "Catch-22" approach. Without fresh, new, good product, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that you will suffer more than you are now, and may even go out of business. Yes, more cautious buying is in order under these circumstances, but it is by no means a large chunk of the total solution. Operators **must** find other ways to save money and increase their efficiency.

One way is to take a detailed look at how your employees are set up to run your routes. The owner of the business first needs to establish some basic cost factors, then compare these numbers to what's actually happening on his routes. Once the full picture is in view, then some reasonable and realistic goals can be established, and progress toward them can be easily measured over time.

The basic procedure is to discover the average return (operator's commission) of a machine on your route, and compare that figure to what the return *needs to be,* if you're going to be profitable. This will fluctuate depending on what area of the country you operate in, but you should have a good understanding of this number.

The first specific "cost factor" to consider, is what a new game actually costs you to put on location for a year. My number is about $1,500 for a dedicated video game. That includes an average purchase price (plus tax and freight) of anywhere from $2,500 to $3,000, plus interest cost for one year, minus the game's resale value (as is, working) one year later.

For example, *Turtles* costs about $3,000 plus $300 interest to put out in a location. At time of purchase, I projected its resale value at the end of one year to be about $1,800. That translates into a cost of about $30 per week just for the machine, not including operating and maintenance costs, or office overhead, parts, etc. (Note: *Turtles* may be worth more than $1,800 a year after purchase, because

BUY ONE . . . GET 24 FREE!

INDUSTRY STANDARDIZATION—or uniform parts and components for the coin-operated amusement industry—helps both manufacturers and operators reach a higher level of efficiency, productivity and profitability. AMOA's industry standardization committee now has a list of 24 standardization recommendations. These range from power switches and pricing options to coin door locks and leg levelers. Standardized parts and components simplifies the manufacturing process as well as machine repairs. It also saves you money.

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AMOA

Amusement & Music Operators Association

Actual Cost of Machine for One Year

	Dedicat. Videos	Pinballs	Video Kits
1st Year	$1,500	$1,000	$750
2nd Year	$650	$650	$300
3rd Year	$350	$250	$200
4th Year	$150	$150	$150

Break-Even Gross Income Figures

(min. weekly gross needed to pay for machine/service costs based on 50/50 split)

	Dedicat. Videos	Pinballs	Video Kits
1st Year	$80	$80	$50
2nd Year	$46	$66	$32
3rd Year	$34	$50	$28
4th Year	$26	$46	$26

"These two charts show average numbers which can only be used to give you a "ball park" idea of your costs," says Frank. "I did not take into account that as machines get older, maintenance costs increase and the frequency of service calls also goes up. I also did not consider the fact that older games need to be rotated more often and that pick-up/delivery costs for one game could run anywhere between $50-$100."

it's doing so well. But we're talking about the average new video.)

For the average kit, per-year costs average about $750. Take an average kit price of $1,000, add $300 for the cabinet, $150 for kit installation labor, delivery, pick-up, etc., and interest of about $130. The finished kit costs about $1,500. At the end of Year One, the game will probably lose at least half its value (say $750), which leaves you with this figure: it costs $15 per week (just for the game, exclusive of service and overhead) to operate a video kit game.

A pinball machine falls in the middle. Prices vary depending on what brand you buy, but let's say it runs about $20 per week ($1,000 per year) to place a brand-new pin location.

The next step (which I've done for many hundreds of operators around the country) is to determine what it costs to service and collect the average machine on your route. We've heard numbers anywhere from to $7 to $12 per piece, per week, to collect and service a single video game. Service, collection and maintenance runs about $20 per week, for a pinball. These service costs include gas, auto, and every expense that goes into taking care of the machine. I basically use the figures of $10 for videos and $20 for pins, as my collection and service costs.

These are the hard numbers you have to deal with. By now, some operators should be getting the picture: a brand-new, top video game or a new pinball costs you about $2,000 for the first year! Before you see a penny of profit, your new game must gross over $4,000, or $80 per week (based on a 50-50 split). But wait, you also have to remember licenses and taxes. That also adds to your costs.

By the way, these numbers can be very quickly applied to a single location. By comparing total income to total cost, you can find out very quickly if a specific location is profitable or not.

After you've established these figures for your specific route, it's time to gather some data on the income side. Find out the whole company's average per-game income, average per-route machine income, total annual dollars earned by a route, and how many pieces are on that route, etc.

I took each collector and route, and determined the following. 1. The total returned dollars to the company from that man's route; 2. how many pieces he collected and serviced; 3. divide the first figure by the second, and you'll also know this route's average dollar return on a per-machine basis.

I might note that on some routes, two people overlapped or the route needed extra personnel to handle it. I combined the route and corresponding employee salaries to come up with the cost figures.

One other piece of the puzzle will also help you. Take your year-end statement and look at company costs which aren't provided for on a per-route basis. This includes office staff salaries, building rent, phones, insurance, etc. You must assign a portion of these total costs to each route. I did it by dividing each route's income into the company's total income. Let's say one particular route gives you ¼ of your total income. That means you must assign ¼ of the total overhead to that route (not counting game purchases or the salary of that route's people). Another way of assigning overhead is to divide the total number of company machines by the number of machines on a single route. This gives you another fraction. (Luckily for me, these two numbers are very close, which tells me I have accurate data, and/or that each route is "pulling its own weight" in terms of income.)

By performing this analysis, I learned several interesting things. First, the route I thought was the company's worst, turned out to be not that bad. Another route which I felt was just fine, turned out to be our worst.

Here are some numbers I came up with. My good employees were handling about 150 games each (that counts collection, service, cleaning, rotating, etc.). Some employees were only taking care of 70 to 100 games. The average annual return per game fluctuated anywhere from $1,200 to well over $2,000 dollars. (Remember, my route doesn't have all new equipment, so I don't need each game to earn $4,000 per year, only the new pieces. See chart.)

Now we had some realistic standards to apply to individual employees and routes. We assigned responsibility for more games to some of

our employees (which, by the way, instantly eliminated the need for two routemen).

We set a 12-month goal of increasing the total average return per piece by $300 for every game on a particular route. This can be done in many ways, all working together for the same goal. For example, you can boost your per-machine average first by cutting out the lowest-income machines and/or locations. Try to reduce the number of machines per location, which will save money all around: it eliminates the $10 service cost per video game, cuts down on licenses, spreads the employees' efforts to more profitable games. These numbers should enable you to renegotiate commission splits and/or get minimums on many of your "extra" or unnecessary games that the location demands, just for appearance's sake.

Looking at these numbers also shows you the kinds of new locations to seek. Some add money on a per-machine basis, and will boost the average. Obviously, you don't want those locations which pull your averages down.

These guidelines can also help you consolidate routes. Look for locations in the middle of areas you already cover. Consider trading distant locations for nearby ones which are run by a fellow operator who is (of course) a member of your state association. Making such a trade can cut down on travel time and increase efficiency for both of you.

Now, you also need to consider the costs of running various types of games for the second, third and fourth years, etc. The chart which accompanies this column will give you a general idea of what's happening in the first four years (including interest costs, estimated at 10% per year).

Other money-saving procedures include keeping insurance costs down, having employees drive their own vehicles, etc. These ideas have been discussed in detail in previous editions of "Frank Talk."

Sitting down with each employee and showing him this "statistical picture" of his route is very helpful. Most employees run their routes simply because they follow management's orders, without really understanding how their route fits into the company's total picture.

When my company performed this analysis, we discovered that some of our routes were losing money. We also found that certain employees were carrying more of a burden than they realized. Each employee now has a goal, knows exactly what's required to make his route more profitable (and if it becomes more profitable, he knows raises and bonuses become possible).

The statistical portrait is also enlightening for locations, who can be shown why you can't afford higher commission splits, and why you can't afford to buy every new game for that location. Some operators feel the location's goal is to put them out of business. Not true! Locations just don't understand our business. Showing them these figures can help them see the light, and can motivate them to work with you to achieve their maximum game earning potential over the long haul.

With tough times ahead for our economy, analyzing your route in this fashion — and then getting your route into shape — is one of the most important things you can do for your company. I advise everybody to start crunching the numbers, as soon as you finish reading this article!

TOP HITS OF JAPAN

from Game Machine magazine, June 15, 1990

TOP 25 VIDEO COCKTAIL

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Alien Storm (Sega)
2	M.V.P. (Sega)
3	Mercs (Capcom)
4	Columns (Sega)
5	Lightning Fighters (Konami)
6	Tetris (Sega)
7	Final Fight (Capcom)
8	Parodius (Konami)
9	Aliens (Konami)
10	Rough Racer (Sega)
11	Snow Bros. (Toaplan)
12	Super Masters (Sega)
13	Kyukai-Dochuki (Namco)
14	Success Joe (Taito)
15	World Cup '90 (Tecmo)
16	Major Title (Irem)
17	Cadash (Taito)
18	Adventure Quiz II (Capcom)
19	World Stadium '89 (Namco)
20	Capcom World (Capcom)
21	Bloxeed (Sega)
22	Quiz Detective Story (Taito)
23	Super Volley Ball (Vid. Sys./Nam.)
24	1941 (Capcom)
25	Super Formula (Vid. Sys.)

TOP 15 UPRIGHTS & COCKPITS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	G-LOC [deluxe] (Sega)
2	Final Lap [deluxe] (Namco)
3	Beast Busters (SNK)
4	Racing Hero (Sega)
5	Final Lap [standard] (Namco)
6	WGP [deluxe] (Taito)
7	Hard Drivin' (Atari/Namco)
8	Super Monaco GP [del.] (Sega)
9	Line of Fire (Sega)
10	Big Run (Jaleco)
11	Battle Shark (Taito)
12	Out Run [deluxe] (Sega)
13	Turbo Out Run (Sega)
14	S.C.I. (Taito)
15	Winning Run GP (Namco)

TOP 5 FLIPPERS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Earthshaker (Williams)
2	Phantom of the Opera (Data East)
3	Elvira (Midway)
4	Monday Night Football (Data East)
5	Whirlwind (Williams)

Ball Bowling

Capcom & Geoffco team up to market/service Bowlingo attraction: arcade operators are first market, but bigger bars are also on tap

Capcom USA, famous for the *Capcom Bowling* video kit, took a broad jump in that sport June 1 when it absorbed Geoffco, the sales agency for the "real" *Bowlingo* bowling alleys. Naturally, Capcom also "acquired" the professional full-time services of Geoffco principal Jeff Walker who is now quartered at Capcom's Santa Clara plant. Walker will not only devote his sales efforts to *Bowlingo* but will also explore redemption equipment possibilities for the company.

Capcom is obviously branching out by embracing the *Bowlingo* concept. Walker (now Capcom) has the marketing rights to this big ball bowling alley line in all of North America, as well as in Japan and Southeast Asia. Hank Grant's Belgium Amusement Co. actually maintains world wide marketing rights (he concentrates on Europe), so the chain works from Capcom through Belgium to the Mendes manufacturer in Quebec City.

Mendes originally introduced *Bowlingo* back in 1969. Since then, R&D has turned their concept of real bowling pins hanging from nylon strings into a class piece of product. Mendes even makes fully regulation-sized bowling alleys (again with pins hanging from strings), but the shorter versions are the ones of interest to the coin-op industry.

Arcade operators are the target buying audience now, but street operators will follow since the alleys can be ordered in lengths as short as 20', and then on up. This is real bowling, but the ball measures around 4½" in diameter. When the pins are struck, those knocked down rise up on the ropes and when the frame is completed, come back down on their spots.

Players can either buy a line (game) for $2.00 via the bill validator (if that's the way the operator sets it up) or pay cash at the arcade's desk and the attendant pushes the button to activate the game. It's $2.00 a line in either case. It's also a welcome chance to put bowling into a coin-op location for operators who remember the old ChiCoin alleys from past years (U.S. Billiards attempted to launch a ball bowler in the early '80s but the industry was then so video-dominated the game didn't get much interest from operators).

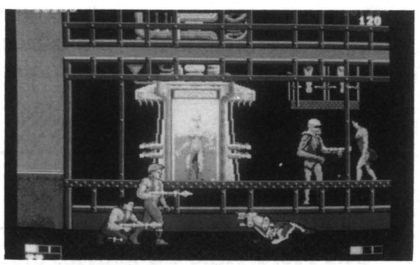
Bowlingo is genuine goods and obviously comes with an impressive sticker. You cannot buy just one alley (two is the minimum order accepted) and each costs $25,000 for any length. Professional installation is included, but not the freight. There's a one-year warranty on parts and Capcom service people are being educated in the repair side of things.

"Operators should know that Hank Grant's been successfully operating *Bowlingos* for a year and the only things he's had to replace have been some pins and cords," Walker advised. "It's so well made it just goes on and on. Of course, it's based on solid state technology," Walker added.

Arcade operator interest is building around the country, Walker advised, one big party being Nickels & Dimes. At last conversation, Walker said they've already gotten commitments for 20 alleys. So with Capcom behind him, and the rest of the sales staff working with him, Walker sees big potential for *Bowlingo* in coinbiz. It's not cheap by any means, but it could be that big ticket (and crowd draw) that some operators may be looking for. For further information, call Walker at Capcom: 408/727-0400

NEW PRODUCTS

New from Atari



Thunderjaws is an interactive two-player video kit for horizontal monitor games.

Theme: underwater and surface combat.

Gameplay: an underwater special forces unit battles armies of mutant humans, cybernetic sharks, bionic warriors, and many other bizarre enemies as the heroes invade the underwater city of Madam Q, a beautiful mad scientist bent on world destruction. Surface action includes jet pack flight, hand-to-hand combat, shooting, jumping, climbing ladders, and activating playfield animations. Swimming action includes retrieving air tanks and first aid kits for extra health, grabbing many weapons for greater firepower, swimming through toxic waste dumps, etc. The final confrontation with Madame Q sees her transform herself into her "true identity": a grotesque and ultra-powerful mutant. Features: one or two players can enter at any time.

Hydra is a one-player video game available as a mini-upright or as a universal kit.

Theme: driving/flying/shooting.

Gameplay: Hydra is a hired courier who delivers cargo to remote locations around the globe in his speedboat/hovercraft, while dodging enemy patrols and grabbing "boost crystals." Hydra's competitor, the Shadow, is always on his tail waiting to pick up dropped cargo. Nine different missions of increasing difficulty are offered; the player can start on novice, intermediate or advanced levels. The final mission is to dispose of a doomsday device (before it blows up Earth) by dropping it into an active volcano, then facing and fighting the Shadow, whose true identity is revealed if he's defeated.

Features: controls for both mini-upright and kit consist of accelerator pedal, air launch buttons and custom flight altitude and directional controller with weapons buttons. Players can buy special weapons with "cash earned" for missions and money bags collected during gameplay, or by adding coins to the cashbox. Artwork fits 19" and 25" cabinets; JAMMA harness.

Gumball Rally is a one-player, electromechanical driving redemption game.

Theme: redemption with driving.

Gameplay: players drive a miniature car on an exciting course full of turns, twists and hairpin turns, trying to drive as far as possible before fuel runs out (gas tank refills with each completed lap). Keeping the car on the road builds faster speed and greater momentum, but the fun is off-road encounters with barnyard animals and characters who sound off with amusing noises and phrases.

Features: compact upright cabi-

Sega's COLUMNS: Correction

Columns, the puzzle-type video kit for horizontal monitors, is for one player or two players **simultaeously** (not two players taking turns, as reported in June's "New Products").

For more information, contact your authorized distributor or Sega Enterprises, Inc. (USA), P.O. Box 610550, San Jose, CA 95161-0550; 408/435-0201.

net; colorful animated graphics; steering wheel and hi-low shifter controls; ticket dispenser on U.S. model; attraction beacon; real horn; step stool for toddlers; adjustable ticket payout levels; ticket enable/disable option; adjustable fuel rate/playing time levels; full diagnostic self-test.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Atari Games Corp., P.O. Box 361110, Milpitas, CA 95035-1110; 408/434-3700.

BALLARENA from Chevalier

Ballarena (name means "Ball Arena") is a one- or two-player video kit for horizontal monitors. Imported by Chevalier Trading from the French manufacturer Systime, this game uses normal or rotary joysticks as player controls and converts uprights and cocktail cabinets.

Theme: pattern-break game.

Gameplay: the player tries to knock out balls from different patterns on the screen. Graphics and gameplay are very eye-catching and cute, with various on-screen characters involved in the action. Eight levels of difficulty keep the challenges coming. Features: hi-res picture with 256 colors; JAMMA standard connection.

For more information, contact Chevalier International Trading Services, 1088 Merle Ave., San Jose, CA 95125; 408/298-4250.

TURBINATION from The Hollywood Group

Turbination is a line of "multi-vend" skill claw redemption games. Players may select 25¢, 50¢, $1- or $2-play, depending on what size and value of prizes they wish to try to win.

Game comes in a basic unit with single or jumbo four-fingered "hyper-claw" (patented); a "model II" with 25/50¢ and $1 play pricing, plus both claw sizes in one machine; and

a "model III" which offers dual player capability, two claw sizes, and play pricing up to $2.

Cabinetry is exceptionally attractive with vast expanses of ¼" tempered glass which show prizes to their best advantage; brilliant blue highlighting and chrome-type strips.

For more information, ask your distributor; or for referral it's The Hollywood Group, 8044 Lankershim Blvd., No. Hollywood, CA 91605; 818/767-0981 or 800/992-2274.

BOZO BASKETBALL from Design Plus

Bozo Basketball (in one- and two-player versions) is a basketball skill toss redemption game for kiddies, youngsters and adults.

Theme: "the world's most famous clown" (whose Emmy Award-winning TV show is seen around the world) is highlighted under exclusive license with a colorful portrait and snappy circus music.

Gameplay: toss balls at the hoop to win tickets. The 89" length was carefully chosen after location research showed it was close enough for tots, far enough away for grown-ups, said the firm.

Features: colorful art; circus music; flashing winner lights; optional ticket system with adjustable ticket settings; all steel construction; pneumatic gate; top crown net; game offers thematic continuity with other "Bozo" products from the firm.

For more information, ask your distributor or Design Plus Industries, 737 E. Marietta Ave., Peoria Hghts., IL 61614; 309/682-9359; 800/541-1288.

Wurlitzer's ONE MORE TIME CD

One More Time CD marries the classic Wurlitzer '1015' cabinet (lighted plastic columns, bubble tubes, etc.) with a modified CD music mechanism from Philips, which invented the CD. Stereo transistorized amplifier with automatic level control and electronic overload protection supplies 200 watts of music power. The cabinet contains six speakers in a three-way stereo system. Fully loaded, the machine offers over 50 hours of music. Discs are stored vertically in a 50-disc carousel, but played horizontally. Machine takes 3" or 5" CDs.

Additional wall speakers with the same colors, lighted plastics and general design scheme are also available, as is infra-red remote volume control.

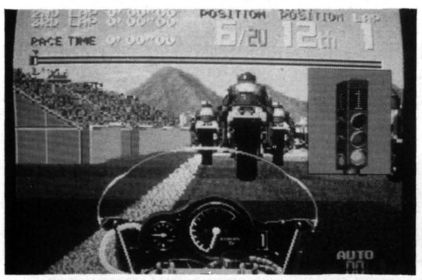
The "program book" shows over 1,000 titles and its pages are automatically turned back and forth, giving full view of six CD song lists at any one time. A four-digit LED display shows the CD and track number; a microprocessor controls all functions including credit and bonus steps, plus record plays and automatic memory of top tunes.

A play stimulator automatically plays a record in intervals which the operator may select — anywhere from every minute, to every 99 minutes. Operators can also program continuous play for background music with random play of all songs. A printer mech provides a hard copy of all essential information.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Deutsche Wurlitzer GmbH,

Postfach D-4995, Sternwede 1, West Germany; or in the U.S., contact Jerry Reeves, 503 W. Central Blvd., Orlando, FL 32801; 407/843-4302; fax: 407-849-1315.

Taito's WGP



WGP is a dedicated video game which is available in two configurations. The deluxe sitdown version looks like a bright red motorcycle (with monitor mounted between the handlebars). This deluxe cycle body can tilt from side to side; screen perspective matches these moves and there's also a small, built-in fan to blow "wind" through the player's hair. The upright cabinet comes with vibrating handlebars attached to the control panel.

Theme: professional motorcycle racing.

Gameplay: players select shift pattern (automatic, 4-speed or 6-speed), controlling the bike with shift pedal in the latter two modes. Handlebar throttle controls acceleration; right handlebar hand lever controls braking, as on a real cycle.

Crashes or rough terrain crossings make the upright's handlebars vibrate and makes the deluxe's whole bike body vibrate. Players can race around eight tracks representing real motorcycle race settings from around the world. Each race consists of three laps; players must beat the clock in each lap to continue that race. A map shows track layout before each event; a data line map graphic on top of the screen shows various key information throughout the course (i.e., 2nd lap, field position 6th out of 20, elapsed time, etc.).

Features: a communications function can link eight machines for interactive racing, with each screen accurately depicting the actions of the other linked "cycles."

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Taito America Corp., 390 Holbrook Dr., Wheeling, IL 60090; 708/520-9280.

Cranes from Imaginomics

SuperCrane & Jumbo SuperCrane are joystick-operated skill cranes featuring Mars $1, $2 and $5 bill acceptors, tilt and abuse alarms, and a toy counter. Options include a modem, ticket dispenser, coin door with coin slot (including bill acceptor and ticket dispenser), and an eye-catching LED advertising marquee which flashes, wipes, rolls and scrolls.

Other features include music, solid-state microprocessor and controller, direct mechanical driver, digital claw tension control, built-in diagnostics, and digital display of remaining time and play credits.

For more information, contact Imaginomics Corp. 607-50A Ellis Rd., Durham, NC 27703; 919/596-4543 or 800/828-8730.

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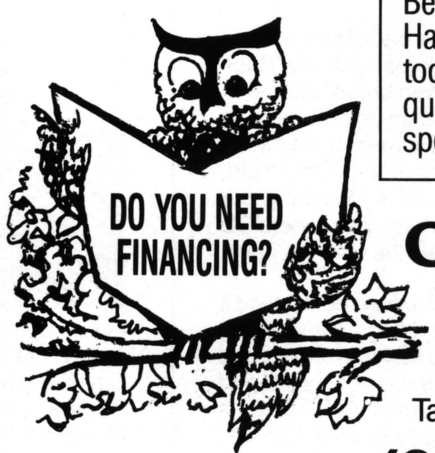

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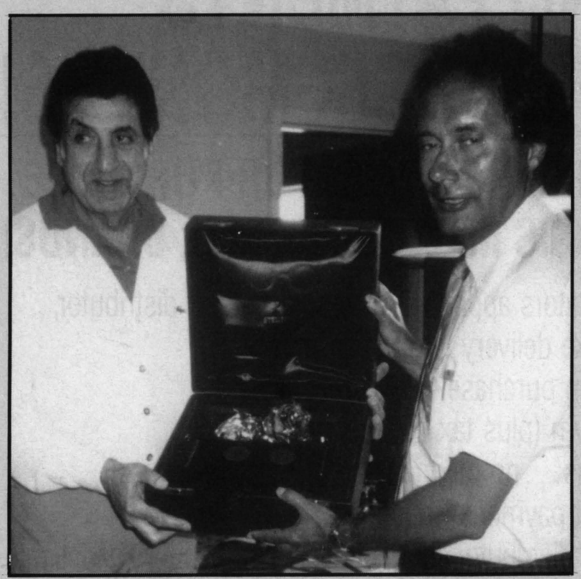


VALLEY HONORS NSM — Yes, the fine German jukebox manufacturer is also European distributor for Valley's electronic dart games. . . and they recently sold game number 20,000! Valley toasted the affair with champagne and a cake cutting ceremony in Florida (where the two firms held their annual international dart tourney). Seen here, Valley prexy Chuck Milhem presents NSM topper Ullrich Schulze with a beautiful Steuben crystal lion to commemorate the historic sales milestone. Congratulations!

GLOBETROTTERS — Gary Stern's back from Europe after June trip doing advance work for their new *Back to the Future* pinball. . . NSM/Loewen brought some of their top U.S. distribs over to Germany mid-June for a week of business pow wowing plus some relaxation. Included in the group were Dave Patterson, Tony Yula, Paul Russell, Ira Bettelman and Steve Henderson. A tour of the Bingen jukebox factory was a highpoint, where CD machines marching off the line thrilled the visiting Yanks.

MONTREAL VIDPOKER RAID — Newspapers called it a "massive crackdown on illegal gambling." In mid-June, around 250 video poker games were seized in and around the city of Montreal during a single day. Police staged coordinated raids on 200 locations, mainly on the city's South Shore. Another 400 machines were seized directly from the offices of poker machine operators. Video pokers and slots have been clearly illegal in the Quebec province since a 1987 ruling, although a local paper pointed out that the government still "rakes in" about $7 million in licenses from the machines at $650 per license.

midwest

ON THE MEND — While taking a routine physical exam before leaving on a European trip with his wife Enid, Joe Robbins got the "good news" that he'd better hit the operating table beforehand. Yes, big Joe underwent quadruple bypass and should be back hollerin' and shoutin' by now. . . Legendary Chicago operator Fred Minter has been in poor health for some time, and your prayers would be welcome. After two attempts at retirement, the old horse (in his 70s) is now out of the business and "getting along" at home. Fred's one of the last of the great "characters" in the operating field and we wish him the very best.

TWEAKING — While Bromley, Inc. puts the finishing tweak to its new *Rock & Bowl* novelty, Frank Bundra did a little toe tweaking of his own. The gorgeous leg (below) belongs to Lauran Bromley who took a suite at the Marriott Courtyard in suburban Chicago to show the prototype off to distributors. It's a redemption piece where you slide quarters through the aiming-slot and steer them toward roll-up point targets at the back of the field for redemption tickets.

Fellas and girls, who enjoyed testing the piece, were Jim Wittler & Lou Larson (Atlas, Pittsburgh) and Marty Smith (Greater Southern), shown with Joe & Frank Bundra (Lauran's sales hitters) and Lauran's friend Minerva Santiago. We don't know yet when this follow-up to *Little Pro* will be coming.

IAMOA OFFICERS — Yes, the new slate of leaders for the Indiana AMOA are in place as of March. They are President Dave Sheehan (J&J Distributors), VP Rose King (Jack Eiser Sales), Treasurer Mike Smythe (Indy Amusements) and Secretary Wayne Cunningham (CPC Music). The board of directors includes Fred Dunham, David Dugan and Gib Clevenger. Congratulations! By the way, the association's 8th Annual State Pool Tournament gave away $8,000; the group hopes the 1991 edition will offer a $10,000 purse.

MOMA OFFICERS — The Minnesota operators have new officers in place. They are President Earnest Woytassek, VP Roger Rasmussen, Treasurer Dan Galvin and Secretary Charles Leininger. New board members include operators Don Awe and Dan Dhalin, plus distributor Ray Hibarger.

JOHN ZEGLIN, R.I.P. — Retired Lieberman Music sales manager John Zeglin passed away on March 22, from a heart attack. Known as a very knowledgeable man with a real grasp of the industry, Zeglin was described as a "tough competitor but a true friend" by Hanson's Ray Hibarger. MOMA Exec Director Hy Sandler said of John: "Johnny was a family man. I remember him with warmth, respect and a good deal of affection." May he rest in peace.

DEAN YOUNG started as the National Sales Manager for RSI (Record Source International) as of mid-April. This record subscription service mails 45s to jukebox operators from RSI chief Dock Ringo's home town of Mineral Wells, Texas. But Dean's office is located in Muskego, Wisc. (close to the HQ of another RSI topper, Wally Bohrer). Dean has operated clubs in SE Wisconsin, done DJ work and handled various sales positions. Welcome to the industry!

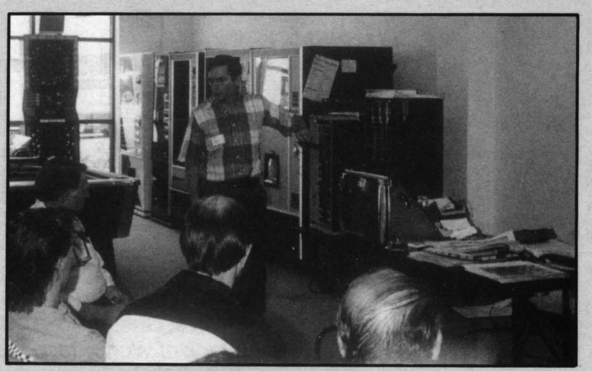
MARK KANE has been appointed general manager for Vari-Tech (Grandville, Mich.) effective Feb. 1. He's been with the amusement and redemption game maker since 1987, when he came aboard as director of operations. In that post, he established the first games program for the Disneyland State Fair. Kane's extensive industry experience includes 11 years in management at the Six Flags organization. Congratulations, Mark!

ANNE COLEMAN has been promoted to operations manager at Vari-Tech. The firm had already added Tim Creswell as plant manager and Reggie Moultrie as sales manager, so they now have "a solid nucleus for the overall management team," said execs.

NEW DIRECTIONS at Vari-Tech are taking the firm into new products (they bowed a whole new redemption line this spring; see last month's New Products section for details) and new markets (international sales now include Europe, Australia and the Far East). This in addition to continuing their line of innovative products, and their consulting and management services. Keep your eye on this firm, ladies and gents. You're going to be hearing more about them in the future!

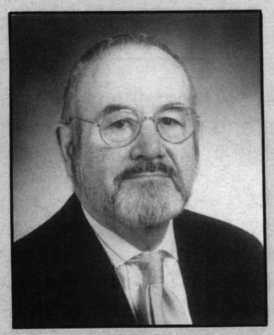
SHOOT POOL, DRINK MILLER — Players who chalk up with the handy *Pool Chalk Saver* device (built by the Mt. Clemens, Mich. firm of the same name) will see one of three Miller Brewing Co. logos. Specifically, these are the logos for Miller Genuine Draft, Lite or High Life. Under a licensing agreement between the coin-op supplier and the brewery, these logos will appear on top of the chalk dispenser, which is attached directly to the pool table. The operating company's name is also displayed on the device. By the way, Pool Chalk Saver, Inc. has added a back plate to its device: now you can secure the chalk-saving dispenser to the pool table with heavy two-way tape, or with a single screw. The dispenser will adapt to the mounting plate, not to the pool table itself, for easy access to replace the cue chalk. Get more info from the firm at 313/949-8855.

northeast



STAR*TECH SEMINARS — The national seminar program for advancing coin-op technicians conducted by *Star*Tech Journal* continues to meet with great enthusiasm. Seattle's General Coin hosted the seminar on May 5-6. Seen here is Star*Tech's Sam Cross lecturing a good-sized Seattle crowd. "Well-prepared, thorough and very informative," judged General's Seattle service chief Steve Murphy. Early June brought the program to Mountain Coin (Vegas) and Dunis Distributing (Portland). Comments by attendees there included: "Very informative, useful info. I passed up the Calaveras County frog jumps for this weekend, and I'm glad I did!" Another student said: "Picked up a lot of good info that will be helpful immediately." An instructor from the Nevada Gaming School was one of the seminar students, by the way.

MORE SESSIONS COMING — More seminars in *Star*Tech Journal's* successful series are on the way. Upcoming hosts, sites and dates include: Aug. 4-5 (First Choice Dist., Denver); Aug. 25-26 (Commercial Music, Dallas); Sept. 15-16 (Struve, Salt Lake); Sept. 22-23 (Cleveland Coin, Detroit); Sept. 29-30 (hosted by Star*Tech in Atlanta); Oct. 13-14 (Star*Tech, Los Angeles); and Nov. 16-17 (New Way Sales, Toronto). Be there!

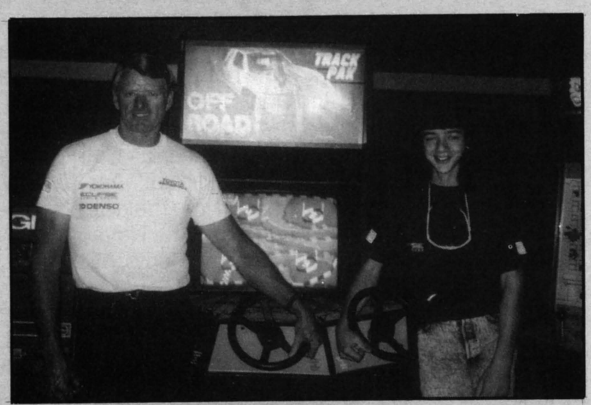


ED WILER has been appointed Senior VP, Vending Products at Rowe International, America's largest maker of vending machines, currency changers and jukeboxes. Ed's previous post at Rowe was VP of National Accounts; he's been an officer since joining Rowe in 1977. Congrats, Ed!

NO SMOKE — What started in White Bear Lake, Minn. has apparently spread domino-style to some other Minnesota burgs (i.e. a ban on cigarette vending, even in bars). Now Frank Seninsky info's the Jersey city of East Brunswick may pop its own banning ordinance. Some Minnesota operators have experimented with the lock-switch which enables location personnel to eyeball the cigarette buyer (for age) before activating the machine (but we hear that some locations find the idea a pain). But, some kind of self-policing is needed to keep youngsters away from the machines. Please do your best . . . Speaking of self-policing, the Outdoor Advertising Assn. plans to adopt a voluntary code precluding any billboard from using cigarette advertising that's located within 500 feet of schools, hospitals, temples and churches (says the *L.A. Times).*

southwest

NICE IDEA — Leland's Debbie Austin wants you to put down this magazine for moment, get your hands on a light-weight get-well card and a 45cent stamp and make a very sick little boy happy. Debbie says a brave young chap (7) named Craig Shergold is suffering from a brain tumor and has very little time left to live. Craig's greatest wish is to get into the *Guinness Book of World Records* with the largest number of get-well cards ever received by an individual. Debbie says there's a worldwide effort to help make Craig's dream a reality, so if you haven't been asked to do so, send a card to: Craig Shergold, 36 Shelby Rd., Carshalton, Surrey SN8 ILD, England.



LELAND'S GOOD WISHES — When the "Make a Wish Foundation" for terminally ill children heard that 15-year-old Sean Noel's fondest dream was to ride with famed off-road race driver Ivan "Iron Man" Stewart, they made his wish come true. Sean, who has Hodgkin's disease, received a free flight and Las Vegas hotel room, courtesy of the Foundation. The charitable organization also arranged for Sean to join the winning driver at the Las Vegas Speedway, from where they started across the desert in a 50-mile trek across some very rough country. In fact, this section of desert is part of the race route which Stewart has won more than once. Later, Toyota (who makes Stewart's vehicles) paid for Noel and family to travel and see Stewart compete in a Los Angeles area, off road event.

Now comes the coin-op part of this story. When The Leland Corp. heard about Sean, they arranged for Sean to find his very own *Super Off Road* video game waiting for him when he got home. Overnite Trucking shipped the game across the country to Sean's home in Boston for free, and New England Coin-Op set up the game. Leland offered special thanks to both. Said the good folks at Leland: "To prove that wishes really do come true, Sean's mother recently reported that not only was Sean absolutely thrilled with the game, but that his disease was in remission. Best wishes to you, Sean," Leland continued, "and may you enjoy many more years of Off Roading!"

PLUSH SOLUTION — Coast to Coast distributors makes up its own 20-piece plush pre-packs for the operator. Why? So you save labor costs on sizing and counting merchandise items. So your crane crews can get on the road faster. So you'll know you've got the right size, correct average price to base costs and pricing on, and accurate amount of prizes per bag, to fill those cranes! They call it the "It's In the Bag" pre-pack assortment; each box contains four 20-piece bags of merchandise. "All your employees have to do is open the box and take the number of bags with them they will need for that day," explained Coast's Patti Novak. She offers to discuss the program in detail and to send a sample collection ticket that will "explain things even more clearly." Call Coast to Coast at 800/752-9879.

WEDDING BELLS — Meltec's Roy Nishi got married "Hawaiian-style" on Saturday, June 9 at his home in San Jose, Calif. Some 200 guests looked on as Roy exchanged vows with his Hawaiian-born Gerry Pepper, then enjoyed the luau-style festivities and Hawaiian dancing. The happy couple honeymooned on the Kona Coast of Hawaii's Big Island, and on the Garden Isle of Kuai. Congratulations!

501 LOCKS — Now available from Lock America is a series of economical multi-purpose alarm systems. Applications range from protecting coin-op equipment, to defending route vehicles and office and warehouse security. "Model 501" is the top-of-the-line alarm in this new series. It attracted favorable attention at the latest NAMA Western Convention, said inventor and manufacturer Doug Stetson. "501" features include a tilt-trigger switch device and a door switch. If a vandal rocks the machine, or attacks it with a tool that induces vibration (pry bar, hammer and chisel, etc.), or manages to drill or force the lock without vibration, a 120 decibel horn will sound. Other features include adjustable sensitivity (avoid false alarms); self-resetting alarm; six-second alarm sound-off before reset; etc. The long-life batteries (no current drawn till alarm is actually triggered) should provide at least one year of protection, Stetson

said. Much more information about the "501" and other alarms, is available from Lock America. Call them at 800/262-2866 (Calif.) or 800/422-2866 (U.S.).

southeast

VALLEY HONORS BV — Birmingham Vending (Orlando, Fla. and Alabama) was honored by Valley Recreation Products as "distributor of the year" for their outstanding marketing and sales of Valley games. Valley Marketing VP Alan Schafer presented the Cougar's Head Award to Birmingham staffers at the conclusion of the recent FAVA show in Florida. He praised the dealer for their fine performance, especially against the competition of an outstanding Valley dealer network. In the photo, Alan and the group are seen after a pleasant golf outing.

MICROPROSE PEOPLE — Some new faces are aboard this Maryland firm as it prepares to launch *F-15 Strike Eagle,* the ultra-realistic video flight simulator. Former MicroProse VP Gene Lipkin is no longer with the firm, so MicroProse's board of directors member Steve Toadvine (recently chairman of a $100 million NYSE-listed firm) is taking over some of Gene's duties on a consulting basis for the next 6-9 months, performing general management tasks. Also involved here is MicroProse sales manager Chris Preus. Other of Gene's former duties are being handled by Tom Dechant, the new project manager who's handling everything from production to game design, hardware and software. "Tom was manager of a $70 million division prior to this and is making sure that side of our company comes together," MicroProse prexy Bill Stealey explained. "Basically, we're twice as large as we were a year ago, kids love our game in test sites and we're excited about our imminent coin-op debut!"

AMOV CONVENTION — The Virginia operators are planning a big 32nd annual trade show and meeting at the Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach Aug. 16-18. Thursday starts with a directors meeting, while Saturday includes a morning golf tourney and afternoon trade show floor hours, followed by a "patio party." Saturday offers more floor hours, plus a seminar on system cabinets, a general membership meeting (including a "report from the poker committee), buffet lunch, cocktail hour and banquet. AMOV calls their show "where good friends and good times come together!" Call the phone number in our "Datebook" section for more info.

STATE LAWMAKERS and their families from around the country will convene in the thousands at Nashville, Tenn.'s Opryland Hotel in early August for the 1990 Annual National Legislators' Conference. AMOT, AMOA and exhibitors are sponsoring a free-play amusement gameroom for the group, including an Aug. 8 parent-child competition. According to AMOT's John Estridge, the group is "simply ecstatic" about the entertainment. The lawmaker's convention also includes a trade show of its own, and the coin amusements industry will have three booths to promote our equipment. *RePlay* had previously reported that the Tennessee gameroom would feature video pokers, but that was somewhere between an overstatement and a misstatement. The gameroom will feature amusements, while video pokers will be displayed in the coin-op exhibit area of the Legislator's Conference trade show, said Estridge. We hope to have more details on this event in upcoming issues.

EG ENTERPRISES is the name of a new universal cabinet maker, headed by Lou and Elizabeth Chapman (she was formerly with CoinData). EG now makes a cocktail table unit and will soon bow a line of upright cabinets. "All conversions will fit into our cocktail cabinets, whether they are for videos or pokers," said the firm. EG says its cabinet line is "space-saving outside, but equipped for all the big jobs" on the inside." Added execs: "If we don't have a model you like, we'll try to custom-manufacture one for you." EG also sells new and used kits, and they do installations and conversions of games in their own cabinets. Contact them at 6934 Cooks Ave., Murfreesboro, TN 37129; 615/459-7427.

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THE WHITE HOUSE recently sent a complimentary letter to AMOA Government Relations Chairman Wally Bohrer. Jeffrey Vogt, Asst. Director in the White House Office of Public Liaison, commended AMOA for its "Carnival for Life" during this spring's Washington, D.C. lobbying trip. Said Vogt: "The event served as good and essential exposure for AMOA in the Washington community."

northwest

CALLING DISTRIBUTORS — Nintendo will gather its U.S. & Canadian dealers to the Meridien at Coronado (San Diego) July 19-22. This will mark the 7th annual coin-op meeting of the Nintendo clan and their families. We've no idea at this point what new coin-op products will be launched there. On the consumer software side, it's clear that Nintendo wants their *N.E.S.* system to be more than an entertainment medium. Sometime next year, they should launch phone modems that can connect to a home *N.E.S.* permitting people to order stocks and do some phone shopping. They've also funded an MIT professor to $3 million toward development of educational software. Expecting to have 29 million *N.E.S.* systems in American homes by year's end, this is a timely idea.

AROUND THE HORN — S&B Vending's Sal DiBona says he's had a Leland *2-Dude Off Road* next to a *Turtles* and the *Off Road* booked more money. "Although both made an excellent collection, thought you'd like to know that," said Sal. . . Another operator sounded a more sour note (written onto his *Players' Choice* ballot): "Locations are complaining that games are starting to look the same. They want something new to stimulate the interest. Collections are continually falling at about 1% each month for the past 21 months. My average collection used to be $150 per machine. Now I'm happy with $50 a week from the videos" . . . Then a reporter named Terry recommends 50cent play in areas where there's limited operator competition, but says, "You can't make it work with three or four other operators on the corner working on quarters" . . . Finally, a fellow named Todd writes: "It's a sign of the times when some of my old fillers are doing as well as games less than 12 months old."

DATEBOOK

JULY 10-11
Latin American amusement machine exposition, U.S. Trade Center/Maria Isabella Sheraton Hotel, Mexico City, Mexico. For more information, contact AAMA at 703/494-2758.

AUGUST 3-4
AMOT-Texas Annual Meeting, San Antonio. For more information, contact Jimmy Franz at 713/529-2440.

AUGUST 10-11
WAMO-MOMA Joint Conference, Minnetonka, Minn. Contact 414/529-4704 for WAMO or 612/927-6662 for MOMA.

AUGUST 10-12
AMOT-Tenn. Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Opryland Hotel, Nashville. For more information, contact AMOT at 615/242-7747.

AUGUST 16-18
Wyoming Candy, Tobacco & Coin Vendors Annual Convention. Contact James Petry for more info at 307/632-2114.

AUGUST 16-18
AMOV 32nd Annual Convention & Trade Show, Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach. For more info, contact Charles Rowland at 804/262-9283.

SEPTEMBER 13-16
NCCOA Annual Convention & Trade Show, Charlotte Marriott Executive Park Hotel, Charlotte. For more information, contact Bobby or Cindy Earp at 919/584-4833.

SEPTEMBER 13-15
West Virginia Music & Vending Assn. Annual Convention & Expo, South Charleston. For more information, contact Leoma Ballard at 304/949-3289.

SEPTEMBER 13-15
MCMOA-Michigan Annual Convention & Exposition. For more information, contact Walt Maner at 517/372-2323.

OCTOBER 11-14
NAMA Convention & Trade Show. Orlando, Fla. For more information, contact NAMA at 312/346-0370.

OCTOBER 25-27
AMOA Expo '90. Hyatt Regency (and two other hotels), New Orleans. For more information, contact AMOA at 312/644-6610.

OCTOBER 25-27
Park Show International, Remini Exhibition Center, Remini, Italy. For more information, contact the organizers at telephone 054/171-1111. Fax is 054/177-4313.

NOVEMBER 9-10
Pinball Expo '90 and Flip Out pinball tournament, Ramada O'Hare, Rosemont, Ill. For more information, call Rob Berke at 316/369-1192.

MARCH 22-24, 1991
ACME Show, Bally's Hotel, Las Vegas. For more information, contact Bill Glasgow, Inc. at 708/333-9292 or AAMA at 703/494-2758.

Those Legal Questions

by LAURENCE MERRITT
& DAVID HAGEN

If a Location Closes With Your Machines Still Inside . . .

Locations close down all the time. Unfortunately, every so often a location closes with an operator's machines inside. Not only does the operator immediately start losing income, but he is also in danger of losing his machines altogether! When this happens, you need to move quickly to protect your machines. This month's column will discuss what you can — and cannot — do.

Usually, the location owner is very difficult to reach. When a business closes down, it is usually because it owes money to many people. Location owners will not return calls, or will simply have their number disconnected, to avoid unpleasant conversations with their "creditors." Operators usually fall within the category of "creditors," even though they usually only want to remove their machines.

If the *location owner* is not cooperative, the key to recovering a machine then becomes making a deal with the *location's landlord.* The landlord must first be located. Some operators require locations to list the name, address and telephone number of the landlord on the location agreement itself. The landlord is then very easy to find when a situation such as this arises.

If the operator hasn't obtained this information in advance, finding the landlord can be difficult. One trick we use is to contact a title insurance company. Many times, a title insurance company will tell you who owns the property if you give them the street address. Many times, they can give you the mailing address for the landlord as well.

Once you've found the landlord, make arrangements with him to allow you access to the premises to remove your machines. It's a good idea to have the landlord present during this activity, so that no one can later claim you took anything that did not belong to you. You will also have to prove to the landlord that the property is yours. Obviously, it's much easier to convince the landlord that the machines belong to you, if you have a written contract for the placement of the machines . . . *and* if they have stickers on them, indicating your ownership. The landlord may also request a receipt, so be prepared to leave one!

Occasionally, a landlord will indicate that he plans to retain the machines to recover the rent due him. If a landlord states that this is his intent, immediately contact your attorney, as it is not legal for a landlord to do this.

If you still have trouble locating the landlord, you may want to consider retaining the services of a private investigator. Many times a private investigator can locate a landlord very quickly. Remember that speed is important in retrieving your machines from closed locations. It is well worth it to pay an investigator $200 to $300 to save machines that may have a value of several thousand dollars.

We realize it's very tempting to simply break into the closed premises to retrieve your machines. However, *we do not ever recommend this.* In most states, this is "breaking and entering" and it is a crime. If you are caught, you will probably face criminal charges.

Remember, the three keys for retrieving locked-up machines are: 1. act quickly; 2. identify and contact the landlord; and 3. be able to prove your ownership of the machines.

This situation will happen at least once to every operator. You should therefore have a "game plan" in mind for when the situation occurs!

The BONDEAL CHART

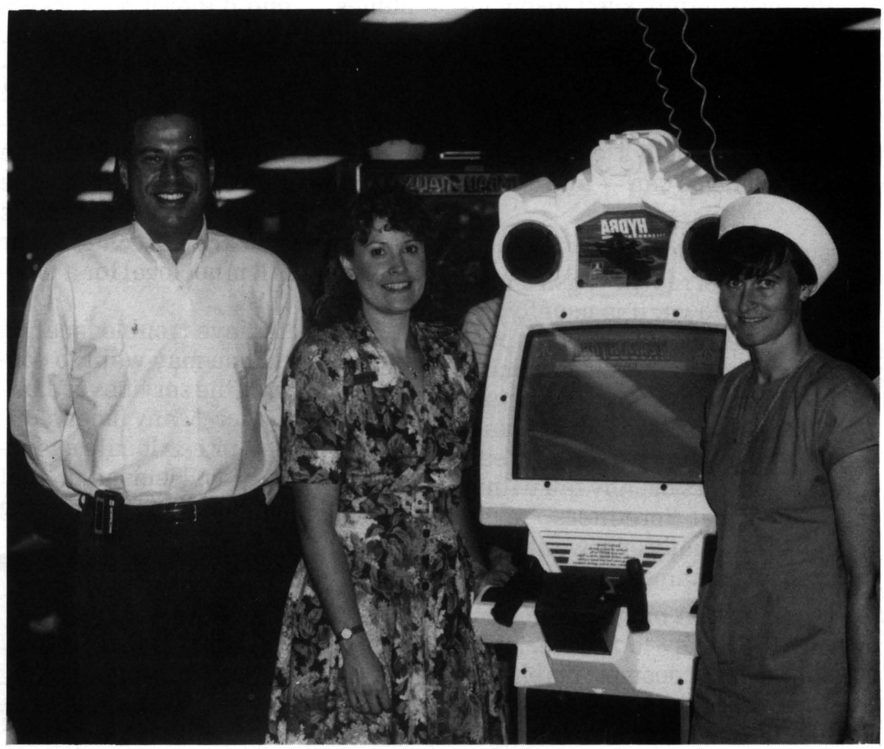
top kits and dedicated videos at the Hong Kong Flashback Arcade for the week ending June 9, 1990

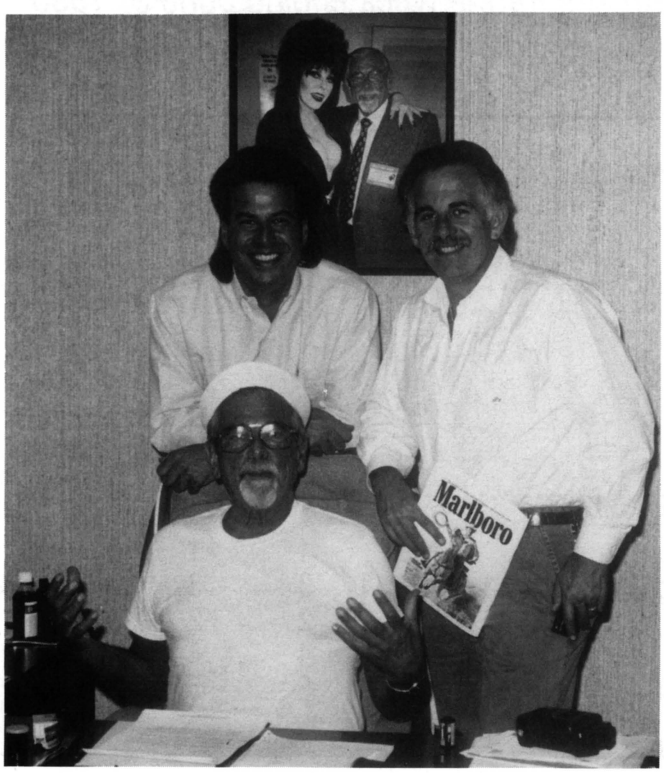
TOP KITS	Jun. 9	Jun. 2	May 26	Weeks on Location
Alien Storm	1	1	8	3
Lightning Fighters	2	3	9	3
Mercs	3	5	2	8
Rough Ranger	4	4	1	6
Chequered Flag	5	6	3	101
Snow Bros.	6	2	4	7
Gigandes	7	—	—	19
Columns	8	7	5	11
Final Fight	9	—	6	19
R-Type II	10	—	10	16
TOP DEDICATED GAMES				
Big Run	1	1	1	19
Super Off Road	2	3	3	62
Hard Drivin'	3	2	2	60
Ninja Turtles	4	4	4	27
Super Hang-On	5	5	5	146

Product on Parade!

C.A. Robinson hosts open house to show off new goods for the summer market

Holy new products, Batman! C.A. Robinson & Co. showed off almost a dozen new games to their customers at a Friday, May 25 open house (they did likewise at their San Francisco digs on June 1). The event, complete with the traditionally yummy C.A. luncheon, treated the operators to first-time-in-the-continental-U.S. look at the latest from Atari — the *Hydra* and *Thunder Jaws* water-action themed videos and their redemption car race game, *Gumball Rally*. The open house also provided a golden opportunity to debut many other new products — Taito's new *Championship Wrestling* kit and *WGP*, Fabtek's *Raiden* kit, Konami's *Lightning Fighters*, American Technos' *Combatribes*, Williams' *Roller Games* pinball and *Smash TV* vid, and Midway's *Pool Sharks* pin. It was most-certainly a fun- and new product-packed day.

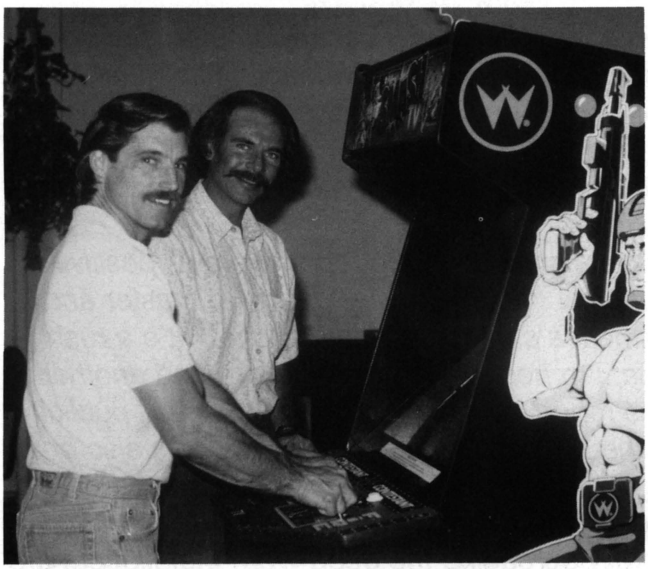




Above: ***Showing off their*** **Hydra** ***for the first time in the continental U.S. are Atari girls Anne Hayes and Linda Benzler with Active West's Paul Spiegel.*** *Left:* ***Paul Spiegel and Dave Peck pay a visit to the lovable sailor boy, Hank Tronick, during the open house (notice the photo of Hank and Elvira in back).*** *Below:* ***Hey sailors! Parts ace Dan Walsh and his son Trevor. (The nautical theme of the event was, of course, in honor of the the two water-themed Atari vids,*** **Hydra & Thunder Jaws.)**

Michelle Marlow, Dean Gamburd, Sandy Bettelman, Shane Breaks, Leah Bettelman, Anne Hayes, Linda Breaks, Linda Benzler and Ira Bettelman with the new Atari product. The dealership showed almost a dozen brand-new machines to their customers at the open house.

Left: Arachnid's Rick Lynch with Don Lee with the bank of dart games. (By the way, Arachnid & C.A. are having the Pacific Coast Dart Championships Aug. 10-12 in L.A.). Right: Bert Contreras of Valley Video (Fresno) and Terry Butler (B's Amuse., Lancaster).



Brian Brown of Crabb Amusement (Lakewood) and Clay Wilson of Funtime USA (Long Beach) enjoy a game of Williams Smash TV.

Don Nauer & Andy Eddy of Video Games & Computer Entertainment Magazine *check out Atari's* Gumball Rally *redemption piece.*

PINBALL POWER

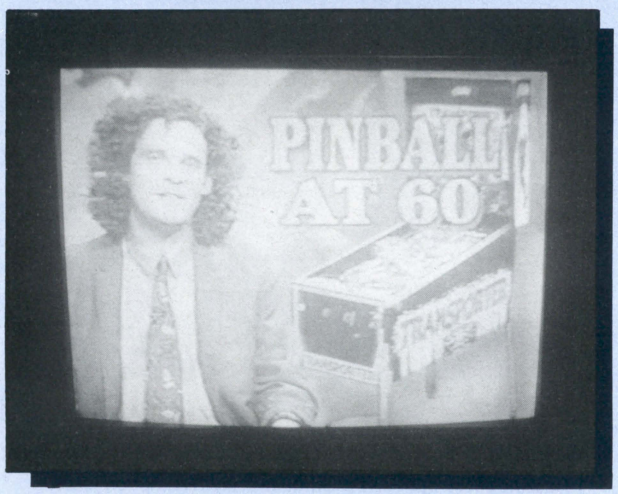
STAN & SHARON PUSH PINBALL ON MTV

Two well-known tradesters recently starred in flashy, nationally broadcast TV report on pinball's 60th anniversary. Featured were operator Stan Harris and his daughter Sharon Harris (she's favored to become the first president of the trade's International Flipper Pinball Assn.). Father and daughter praised pinball as timeless entertainment and classic Americana. The two-minute broadcast aired on the MTV cable channel in mid-June. Here's some of the flavor of the piece.

"Despite the video game boom of the 1980s, pinball is still with us," intoned the anchorman (who wore a skinny tie and shoulder-length hair). "In fact," he continued, "1990 marks the 60th anniversary of pinball, and the game seems to be making a comeback, with arcade revenues up 35% in the past five years. To mark the occasion, we visited Stan Harris & Co. in Philadelphia, one of America's oldest and biggest pinball suppliers."

Quick cuts to shots of flippers flipping, bumpers bumping, and Sharon Harris talking: "It involves skill. It is constantly a challenge. It's been the same price for 20 years, and there isn't anything else out there that's been the same price for 20 years!"

More quick edits: players zinging the silver ball in a pinball arcade; Peter Frampton playing pinball; John Elton singing his hit song about the game; Sharon Harris conducting an "instant tour" of major pins from 1901 to the present; a montage of backglass artwork.



Sound bite from Stan Harris: "Ultimately, pinball continues to go on, and the other things fade into the sunset."

Players showed in the report were all positive about pins. "It's the easiest game to master and it's America's pastime," smiled one. "It's a rush for me; I'm here every night!" exclaimed another.

The report added up to powerful pinball publicity. And the PR doesn't stop there: Sharon's also been doing live radio interviews, promoting pinball, plugging upcoming IFPA tournaments, and generally spreading the good word that flippers are alive and well. Well done!

PROMO GOODIES FOR DATA EAST'S BACK TO THE FUTURE

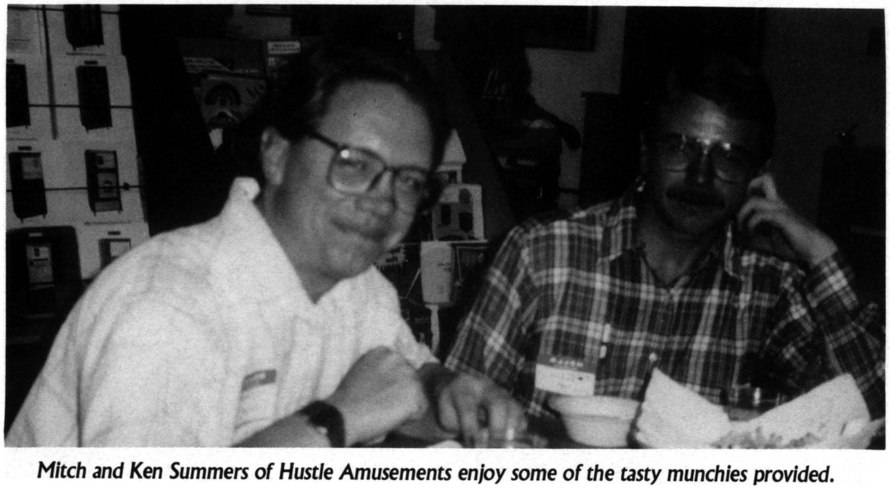
Data East's hot new flipper Back to the Future (BTTF) *already has an effective multi-million dollar "advertisement" (it's called a motion picture). But operators can also offer lots of movie-themed merchandise to further promote this movie-themed pin. Set up a tournament or a contest, offer some of these items as prizes, and watch the collections pile up. We're talking* BTTF *movie posters; futuristic watches, sunglasses and backpacks like the ones seen in the film; pencils, patches, t-shirts, hats, satin jackets and keychains with* BTTF *logos; remote controlled toy cars which resemble the DeLorean used in the film; and a skateboard that looks like the Hoverboard used by movie hero Marty McFly. Fan club magazines are also offered. Prices run the gamut from $5 to $200, depending on how fancy the goodies are that you buy. You can use Visa or Mastercard to pay, but not cash. For detailed product descriptions, prices and order form, write to the Back to the Future Fan Club, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80011. Pictured is Data East Pinball chief Gary Stern with the "time machine" and* BTTF.

Pot o' Gold

the Colorado Game Exchange throws a four leaf clover of a party; 150 enjoy Irish-themed "earnin' of the green" after ACME show

CGE's Harry Popiel, Dan & Barb Corwin (Pair A Dice Vending), Bernadette Popiel and CGE's Tom Grobe.

Rory Cook (left) is congratulated by Rich Babich for being voted "Best Costume" by the manufacturer reps. He won a $50 dinner for his efforts (by the way, that's a fake beard). At right, Rory Cook greets Jerre Leyden from Colorado National Bank at the March 16 event.



Mitch and Ken Summers of Hustle Amusements enjoy some of the tasty munchies provided.

Faith and Begorra! It was fine St. Patrick's Day Eve on Friday, March 16, as the Colorado Game and Vending Exchange (Denver, Colo.) held its day-long, post-show open house. You've heard of "the wearing of the green"? Well, the folks at CGE did even better: their affair was themed "the *earning* of the green"!

The dealer's staff, dressed in their best Irish finery, hosted the party. (By the way, Rory Cook, one of the firm's newest leprechauns — er, employees — took the "best costume" honors with an elaborate get-up topped by dyed red hair, a false red beard and a gold hat.) Operators' eyes were smiling as over 150 customers and manufacturers' reps from all the major firms enjoyed the Irish atmosphere, Irish food and the pot of "golden" new products at the end of the Colorado Game Exchange's rainbow.

These fine distributors always take great pride in serving up a beautiful repast which fits the theme of their parties. This time, the table groaned under such delicacies as corned beef and cabbage, Irish potatoes (naturally), Irish soda bread, and a spread of green (what else?) vegetables. Even the dessert tray went Irish, featuring white fudge with green nuggets, and "Emerald Eyes" (cookies with mint jelly in the center). Traditional green beer and assorted libations were served at the bar.

By the way, the "pot of gold" for many guests turned out to be generous door prizes. An end-of-day drawing sent many operators home with such things as kits, a stereo or TV set donated by CGE and its suppliers.

Said CGE president Rich Babich: "Sure and didn't all the foyne coostomers go home happy after our wee affair, now!" That they did, me boy, that they did.

Safe & Secure

BRW's impact alarm system scares off would-be vandals; customer list reads like "Who's Who of Coin-op"

"The top-selling security system for the video game and pinball industry is BRW Systems' patented IIDAS (pronounced eye-dis) impact alarm unit," according to BRW President Bill Willis (Canoga Park, Calif.). Bill says his phone has been ringing off the hook ever since operators first read about this very inexpensive, very effective, complete system in our May, 1989 issue.

Where else can you find reliable, well-designed, compact alarms from a reputable inventor-manufacturer, for under $50 per unit?

"Operators, distributors and state associations have a crying need for alarms and security systems to protect their own machines, as well those of their customers and members," stated Bill Willis. "They have discovered that IIDAS — the Integrated Impact Detection Alarm System — can do the job reliably and simply. Our sales to the coin amusements industry are running in the hundreds per month . . . and we've found even larger markets in vending, as well as a third market in coin-operated payphones."

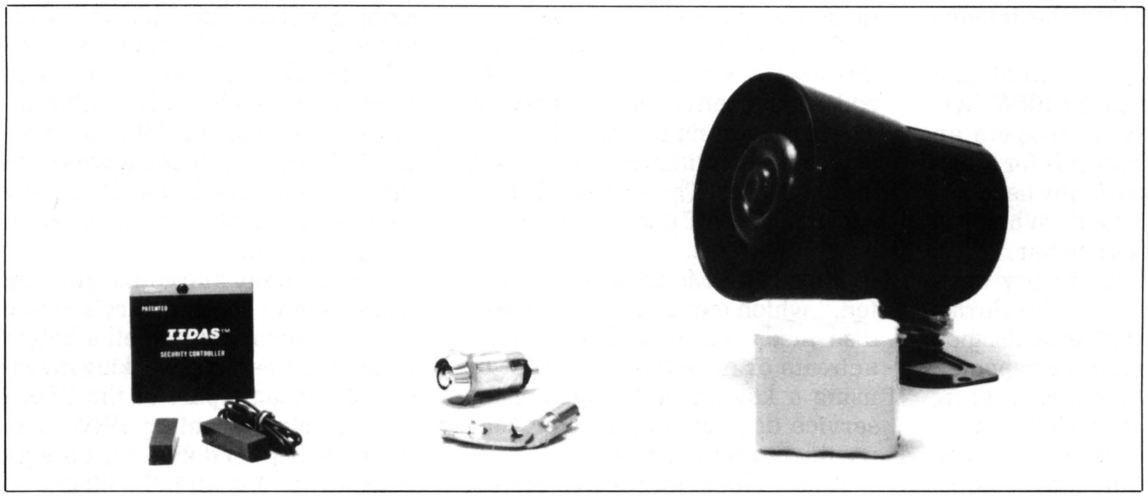
BRW's customer list reads like a "Who's Who" of the coin-op industry. Sega, Capcom and Omni have purchased IIDAS units. Pacific Bell has integrated them into their payphones. The unit is also stocked and sold by outstanding coin-op suppliers like Wico and Lock America. In addition, several crane manufacturers are currently evaluating the product for possible OEM application.

An artist's rendition of the patented IIDAS security controller available from BRW Systems.

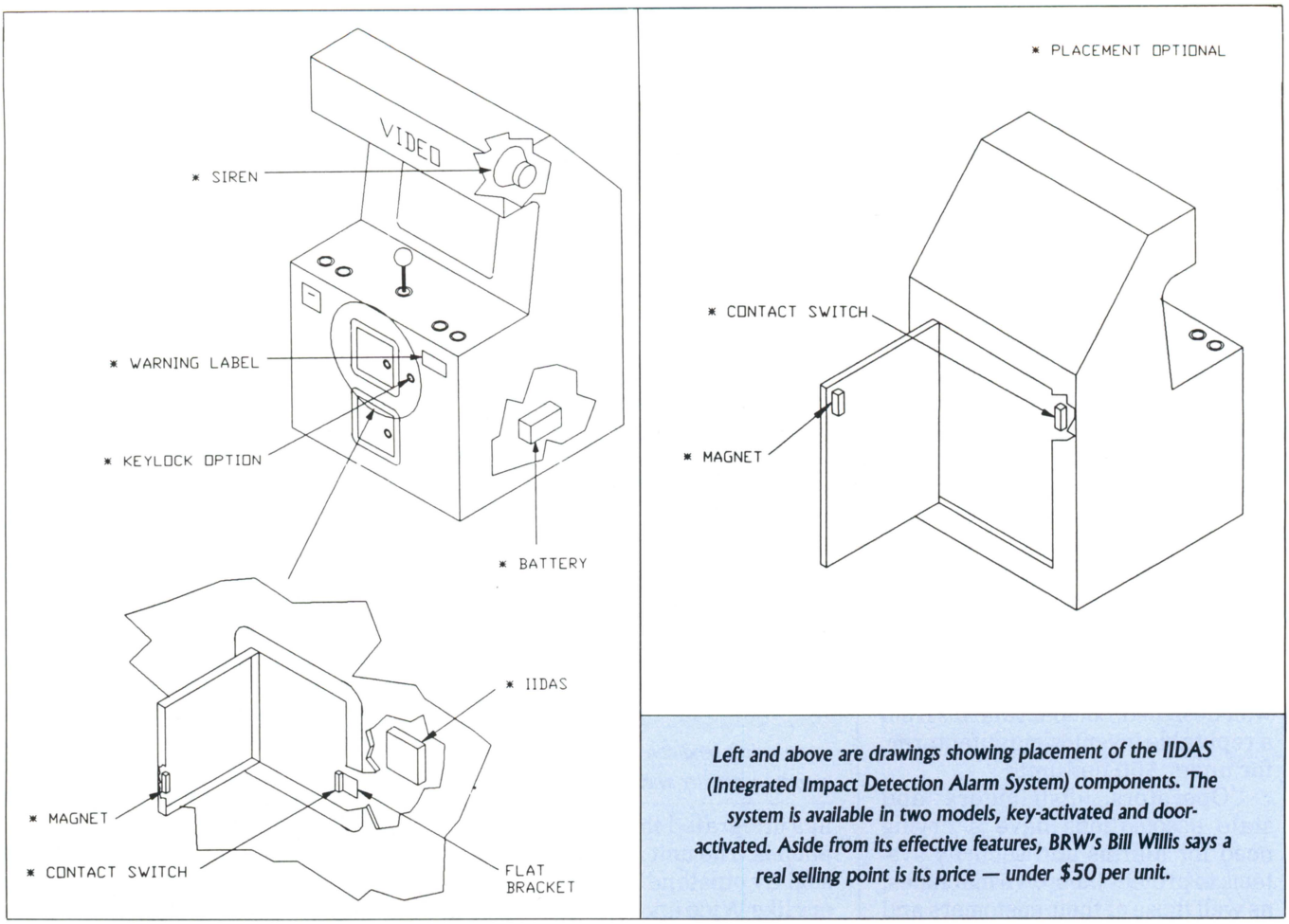
On the operating level, the Time-Out Family Amusement Center arcade chain installed IIDAS systems on all of their Wedges/Ledges games. IIDAS systems have been installed on all the Houston, Texas stops of Pete Casas' large Diversified Coin Services route. Other well-known operators using the IIDAS alarm include Century Vending's Sue Monday (Gardena, Calif.).

"So far I have alarmed at least 80% of my games with Bill's IIDAS system," Sue Monday stated. "It has proven to be a good deterrent. In one location I took over, they didn't even have bolts on the games; they had chained them to the walls. I put in security bars, but also the IIDAS system. For a week, the location constantly called to say 'The alarm is going off.' But since then, I haven't had any calls or break-ins. In this high-risk location, the kids have learned that the alarm is going to sound, and they leave my machines alone. I think BRW's alarm is a valuable deterrent."

IIDAS protection begins with a bright red warning label which scares off many would-be vandals. In case anyone tries to break in anyway, all points of entry are protected by IIDAS. The simple system includes contact points for the coin door, the service door and (optional) control panel. (That's important, because kids try to jimmy the control panel to see if they can somehow make the machine give them a free game.) All contact points are wired to the IIDAS impact unit itself, an approximately 2x2" controller in a black plastic box. This controller is small enough to be con-



At left, the IIDAS "KA" model which means "key-activated." The model is dis-armed by a key lock prior to opening the service door or any alarmed door/compartment. It's also available in a door-activated model.



Left and above are drawings showing placement of the IIDAS (Integrated Impact Detection Alarm System) components. The system is available in two models, key-activated and door-activated. Aside from its effective features, BRW's Bill Willis says a real selling point is its price — under $50 per unit.

cealed inside any coin-op game. The controller senses the impact of a blow and sounds a loud, high-pitched alarm siren (3.5 x 3.25") which is the third component of the system.

"Using an impact system means the alarm makes a noise as soon as someone hits the machine," explained BRW's Willis. "So any potential vandal is scared off *before* he can pry a door open or cause any real damage. That sets IIDAS ahead of other alarms, which don't sound until a door has been opened. By then, it's often too late: the damage has been done."

When vandals try to break into machines protected by BRW Systems, IIDAS instantly triggers an alarm siren which sounds for 30 seconds, then automatically becomes silent and resets itself. When the vandal hits the security bar, bangs on the lock, or tries to pry open the door a second time, the alarms sounds for another 30 seconds, then resets. The cycle can be repeated infinitely. If the vandal is entering through the coin or service door, IIDAS triggers the same alarm. Once the vandal stops, the alarm stops. Operators can adjust the alarm to react to different degrees of heavy or light impact, simply by turning a dial.

To avoid false alarms, IIDAS uses no motion detectors (i.e., no tying of alarm sensors to activity by mercury switches, tilt switches, etc.). Instead, the system is sensitive to impacts on the machine itself. IIDAS can work from the 12 volt current which powers the machine, or from a small 12 volt battery pack (sent with the system) which offers a three-year lifespan.

Two models of IIDAS are offered. The 102 DA Model is "door-activated." That means collectors and service techs can simply open the door, perform collections or repairs, and close the door. The alarm will automatically go off and on at the appropriate times.

The 102 KA Model is "key-activated," which means it is armed and disarmed via a key lock. Operators activate or de-activate the unit by using a key, prior to opening the service door or any door or compartment that is armed.

A new model from BRW System will offer the IIDAS system with a delayed siren alarm, enabling operators to open a door, reach inside and hit a concealed switch to disable the alarm. If the switch is not hit, the alarm sounds after 5 seconds. This variation should be available in late July or early August.

Bill Willis, the man behind the company, has 18 years' experience in the security field. He holds the patents on the very first automobile alarms, and has successfully marketed IIDAS to vending and amusement machine operators for four years. He stands behind his product, and likes to field service calls from customers himself. "After all, I know every aspect of the electronics," Bill smiled. "I can always tell the operator what he needs to know regarding a particular installation or application."

The company's large and growing sales — and the industry's rising need for security — spell a bright future for this hard-working inventor. To become part of the IIDAS success story, contact BRW Systems, 20219 Londelius St. Canoga Park, CA 91306; 818/773-0942.

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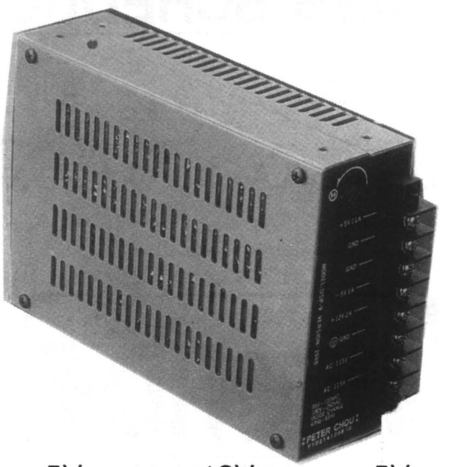

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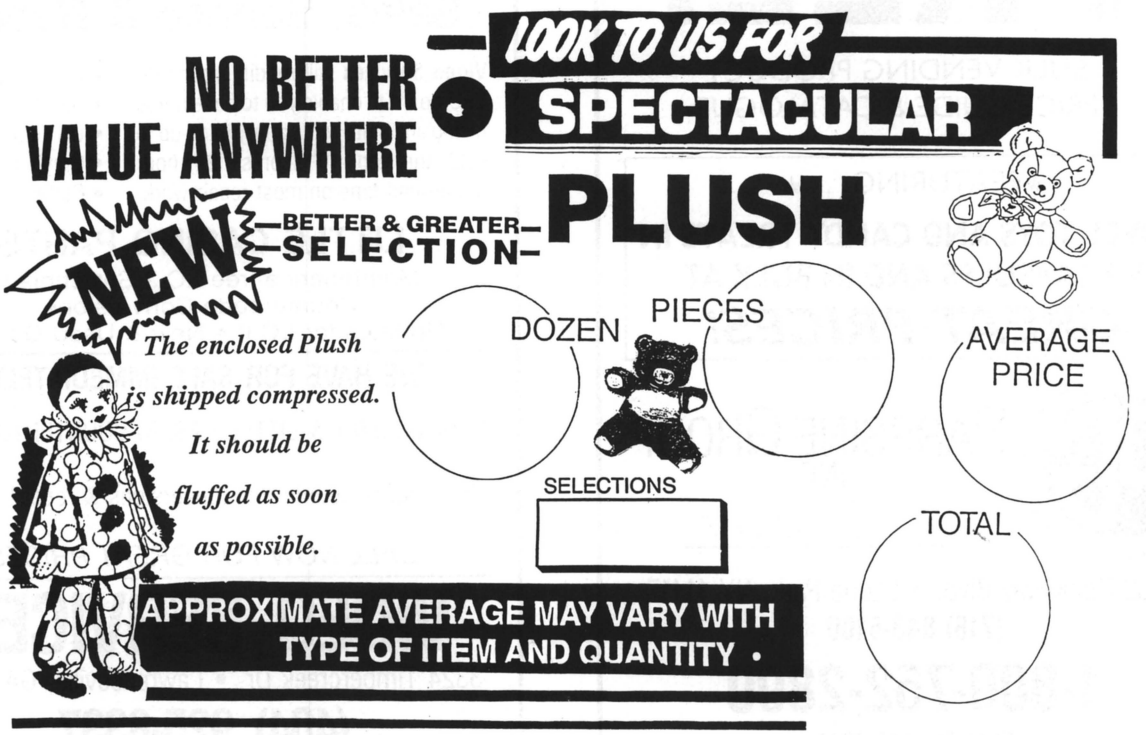

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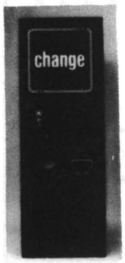

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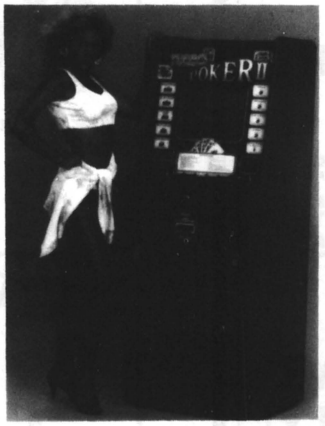

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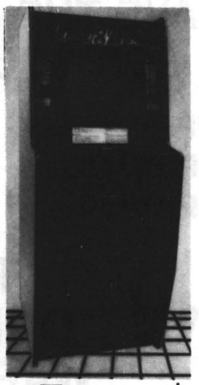

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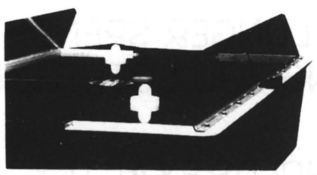

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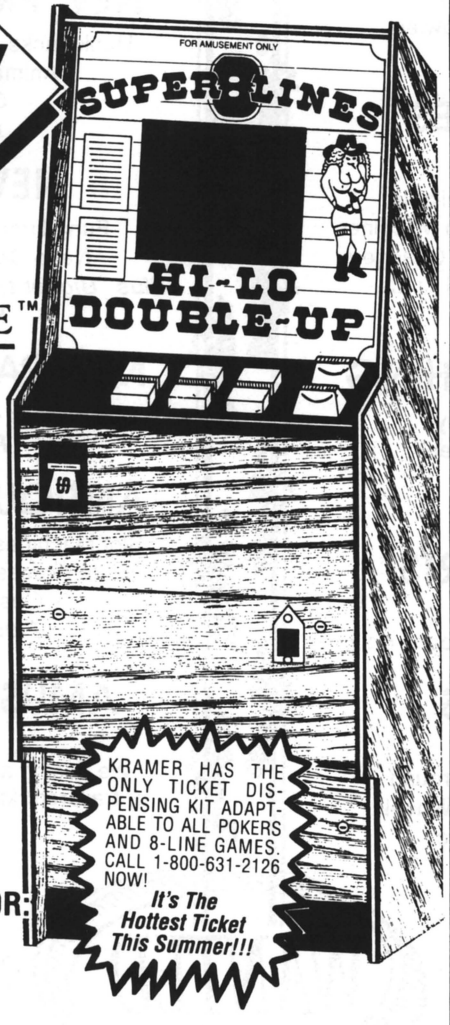

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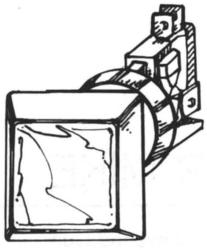

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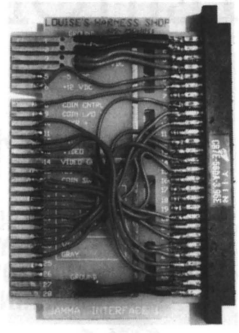

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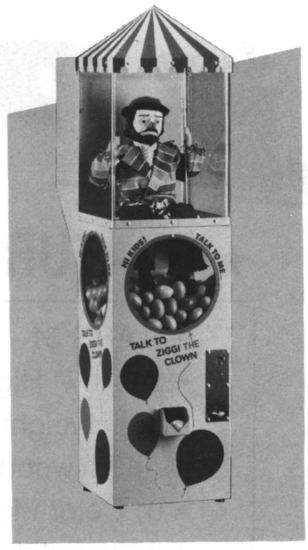

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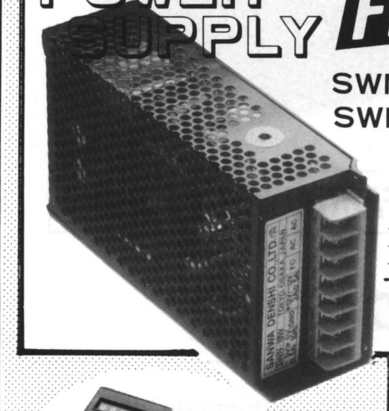

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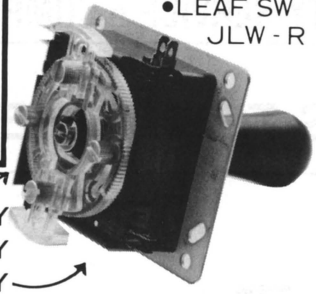

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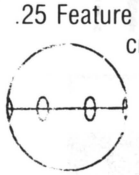

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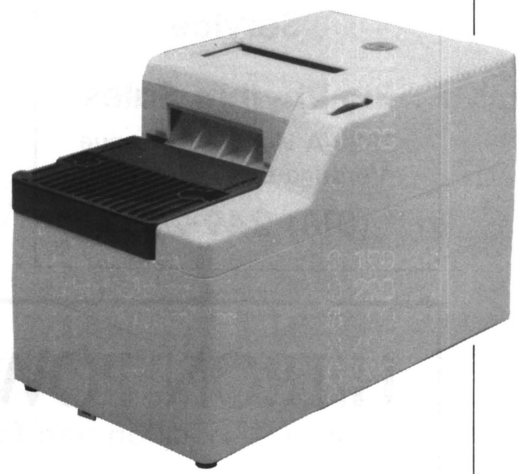

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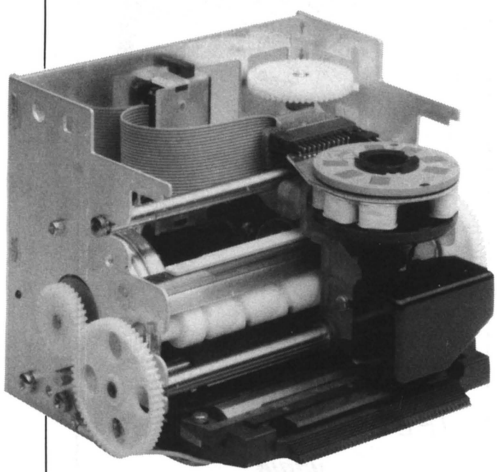

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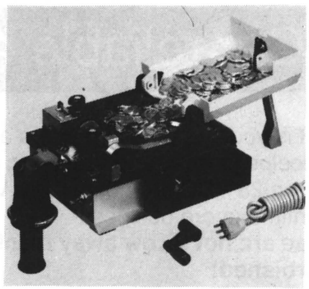

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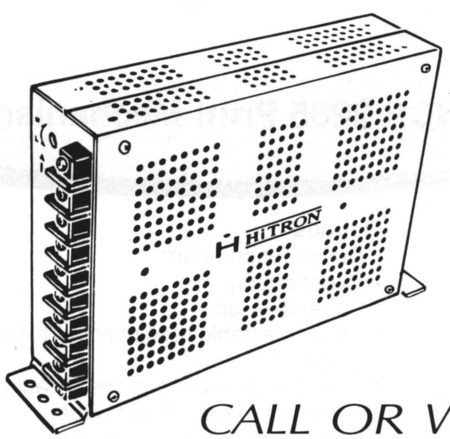

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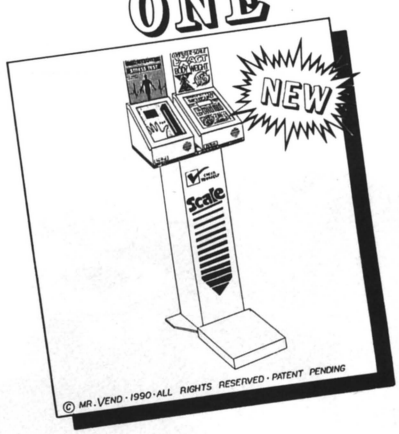

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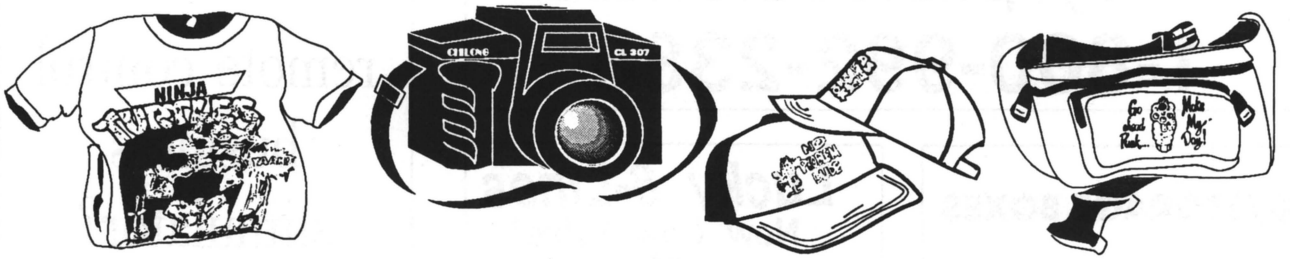

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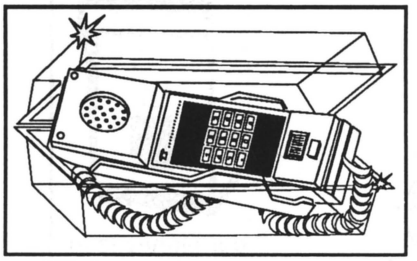

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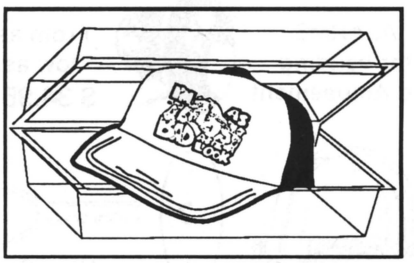

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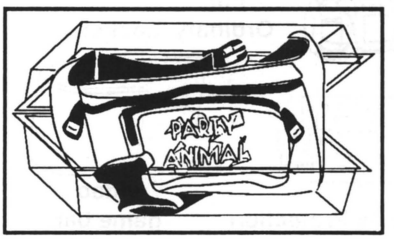

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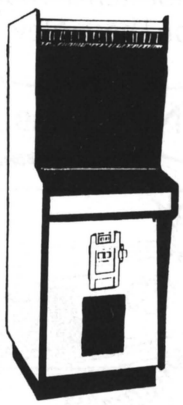

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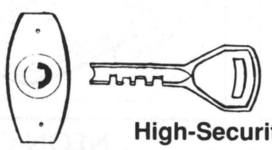

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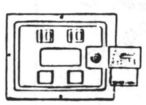

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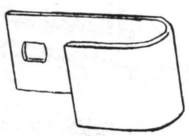

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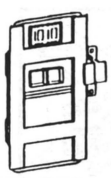

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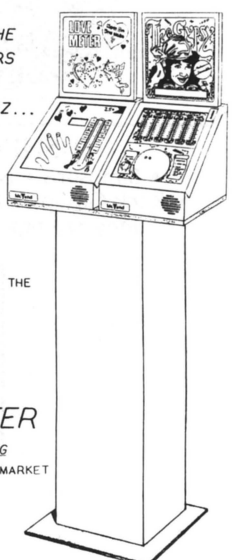

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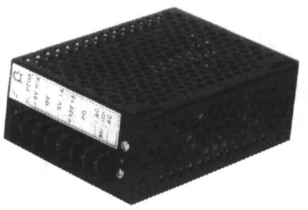

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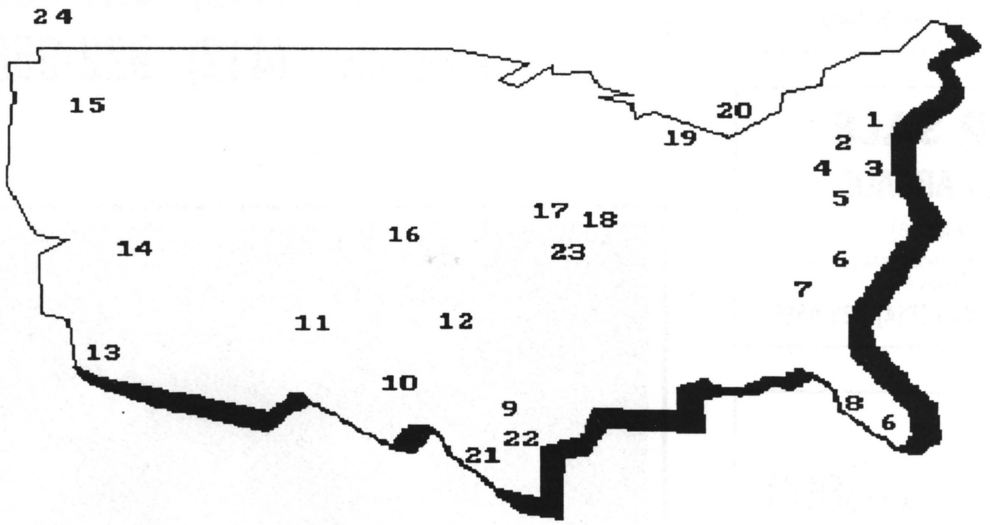

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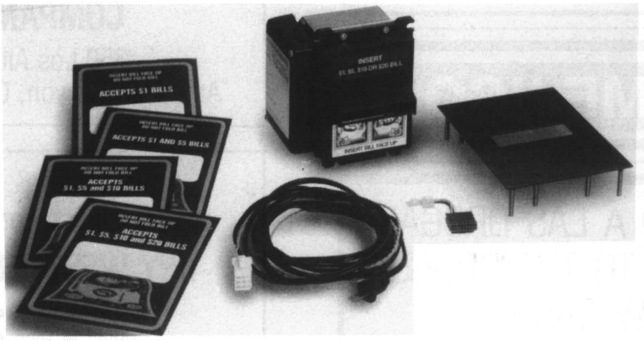

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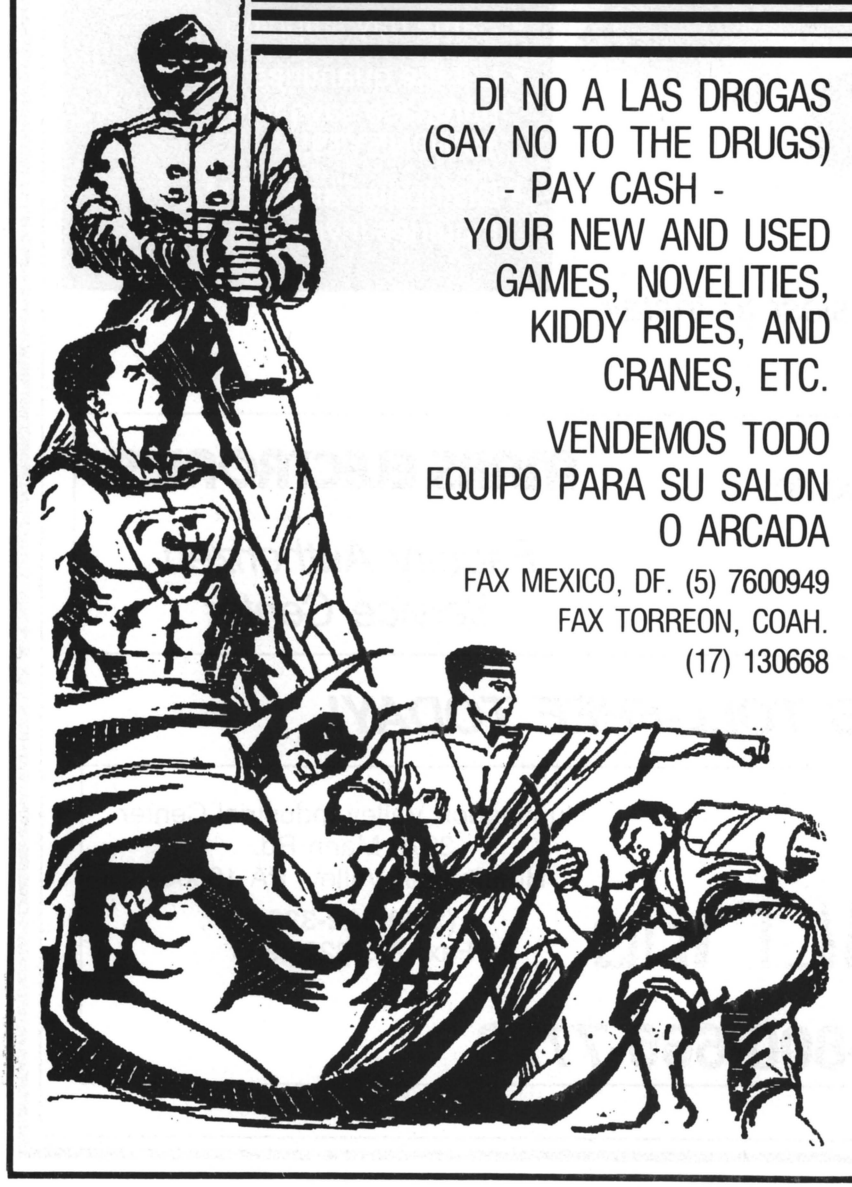

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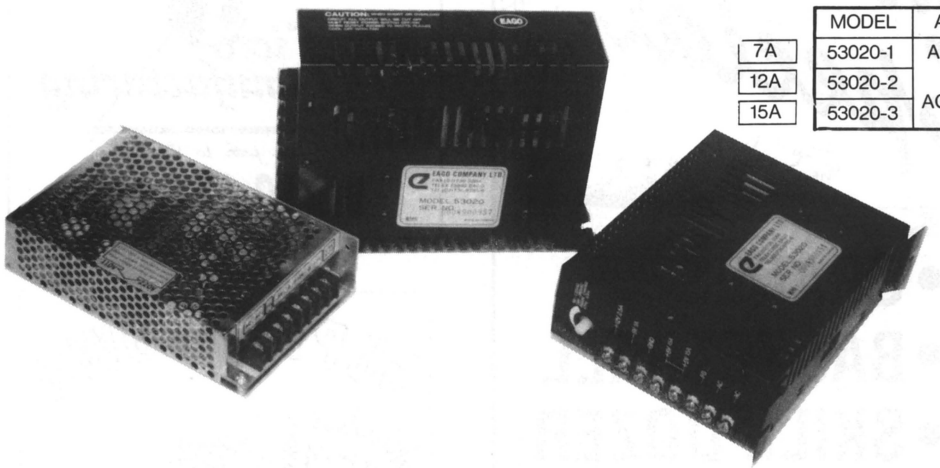

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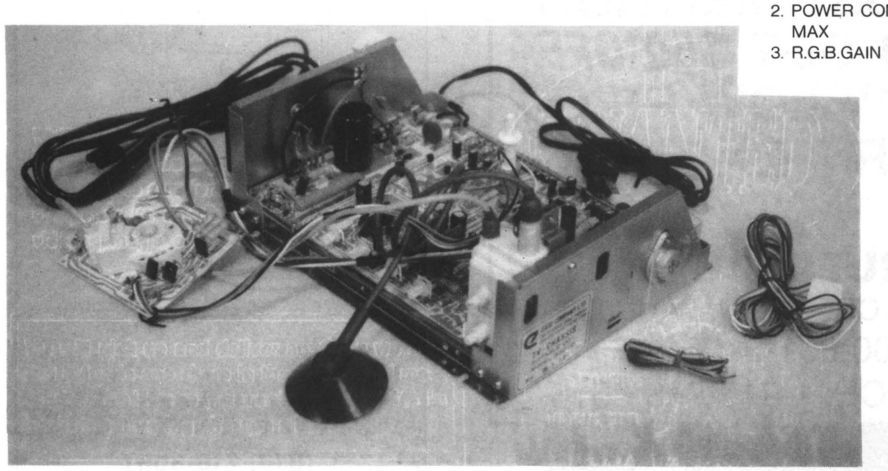

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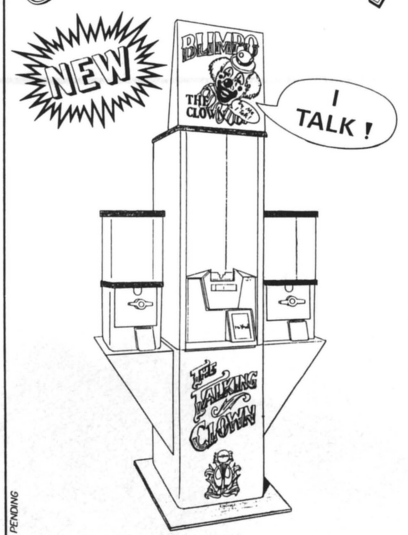

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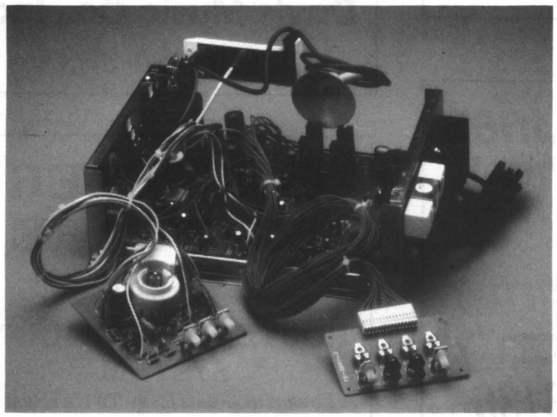

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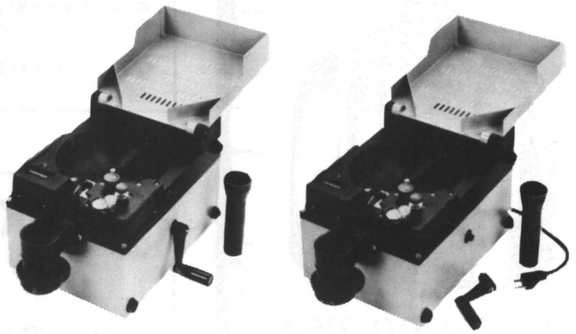

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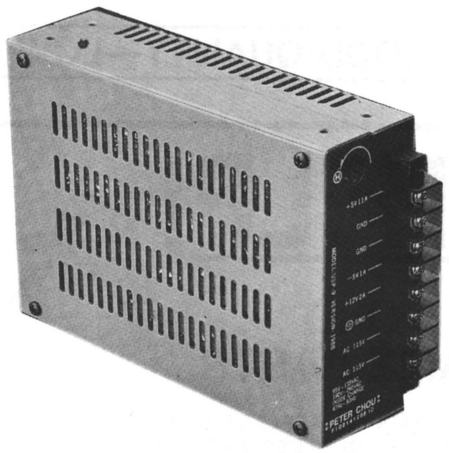

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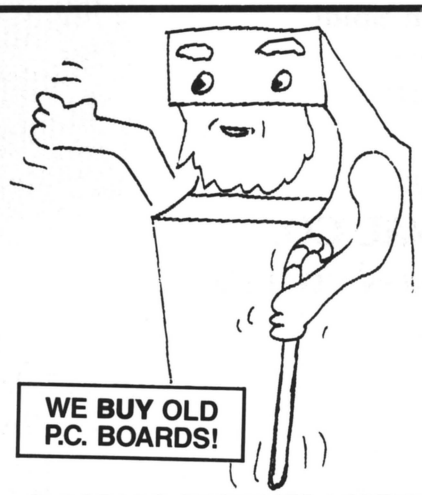

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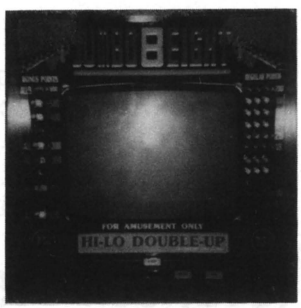

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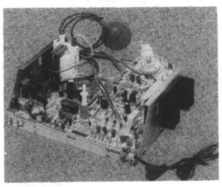

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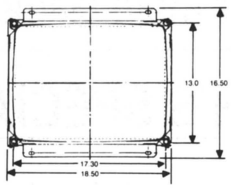

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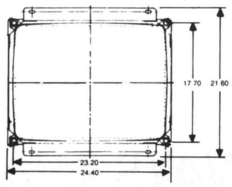

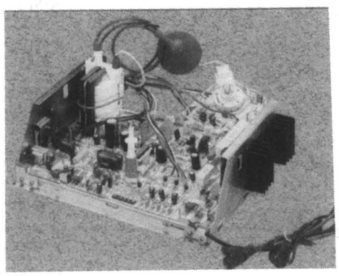

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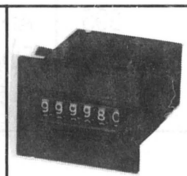
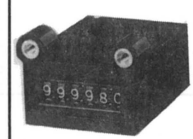
GX SERIES (516 digits)	GX-06R	 GX-06P Lead Wire Connections	 GX-06F	FX-06RL	10 CPS	15 CPS
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