august 1990

RePlay

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Romstar Readies New Kit While 'Snow Bros.' Continues to Perform

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HOT OFF THE PRESS!

BULLETIN — At presstime, *RePlay* learned that agents of the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) have begun citing video games which don't have **FCC Approved** stickers on their cabinets. Agents initially targeted some major arcade chains; citations were issued in Texas, California, Wisconsin, etc. Years ago, the FCC asked vidmakers to perform certain technical steps to ensure their games didn't interfere with radio signals. The problem became one of AAMA's orginal issues. It now appears some vidgame makers may have slacked off and that the procedure must be reactivated, which means: 1. every new game has to get FCC approval, 2. come with a letter saying same to its distributors, and 3. have a sticker to display on the outside of the cabinet. More in our next issue.

JUKE DEADLINE — Aug. 1 was the final deadline for owners to get "amnesty" for unlicensed jukeboxes, by applying for copyright certificates from the **Jukebox Licensing Office** (representing ASCAP, SESAC & BMI). Of the nation's estimated 225,000 jukes, over 88,000 were registered by July 25, said JLO's **Melonie Krisza.** Additional applications had yet to be processed. (By the way, you can still file after Aug. 1, but amnesty's officially over.) At presstime, copyright certificates had been mailed to only about 200 operators; more are mailing daily. "Next year's turnaround will be faster," Melonie said. "This year was slower because it's our first year of operation. Remember, we just started setting up this office in late March." If you're still waiting for certificates, don't worry. You're required to display paperwork on your jukebox 20 days after it's issued, not right on Aug. 1 "which is strictly a filing date," Melonie added. To get (or exchange) information, contact the JLO at 800/955-5853 or 212/581-0190.

JERSEY NOTES — East Brunswick, N.J. has **banned all cigarette vending machines** effective next Jan. 1. AMOA-NJ sued the city, claiming bans require state authority. Correction: N.J.'s new cig excise tax now totals **40¢** per pack, plus 7% sales tax (not 27¢/pack as reported inside). . . U.K.'s **Crompton** (redemption game maker) has "knighted" **Betson Enterprises** as their exclusive U.S. dealer. The Moonachie, N.J. firm has represented Crompton's since 1984, offering all parts and expert service for the games.

VIDEO TOYSHOP — The player's fun is the operator's serious business. After a rather dismal summer, the trade's anticipating a promising new spread from the video "toy makers." Sega's ***Moonwalker*** Michael Jackson-themed 3-player bows Aug. 10 at a dealer meeting; it ships at month's end. Capcom follows Aug. 12 with their CPS ***Magic Sword*** (available as a kit). "It's our next *Final Fight,*" said **Bill Cravens** (who also advised that Jeff Walker's been named coin-op sales manager). Capcom's also popping ***TMNT Pizza Drop,*** a redemption unit designed by **Ed Pellegrini's** crew. Leland's anticipated ***Pig-Out*** 3-player is shipping now; Williams' *Pig Skin* football video ships at month's end.

EASTERN OPENING — German unification is moving fast, but most amusements remain illegal in the DDR (East Germany). A legalization bill had not yet passed as of July 25, but tradesters expected it to become law fairly soon, maybe any day. Thousands of machines may already be running in the DDR (as when NYC ran pins years ago, prior to legality there). To foreign "carpetbaggers" hoping to capture this market: the West Germans will obviously beat you to it!

SYSTEMS NEWS — Many ops will cheer as Nintendo releases a new VS. conversion, ***Dr. Mario.*** This *Tetris/Columns*-type game should find an instant home on the many VS. screens still in operation. . . SNK's *Neo•Geo* vid systems seem to be happening; four just-added titles (including *Nina Combat* and *Cyber-Lip)* have some ops saying the system's a comer.

ANGER DOWN UNDER — Australia's NAMOA op association recently advised overseas manufacturers, via a board of directors resolution, to abolish all exclusive distribution agreements. NAMOA claimed "two distributors keep in place, by tariff protection, high duties on all imported video games and PC boards" — resulting in too-high, non-competitive prices. We don't know who these distribs are, but invite their comments.

AT'S PLANS — American Technos is expanding its Beaverton, Ore. plant to house R&D engineers, starting as early as this month. **Aldo Donnaloia** targets late '91 for their first U.S.-grown game.

RePlay

the Players' Choice

AUGUST 1990

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

upright videos

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
➡	1	**TMNT (TURTLES) (Konami) (8)**	**9.31**	**97%**
	2	HARD DRIVIN' (Atari) (17)	8.66	50%
➡	3	G-LOC (Sega) (2)	8.64	22%
➡	4	SMASH TV (Williams) (2)	8.47	46%
➡	5	GALAXY FORCE (Sega) (3)	8.32	15%
➡	6	MERCS (Capcom) (4)	7.91	54%
	7	FINAL LAP (Atari) (21)	7.71	27%
➡	8	WORLD SOCCER FINALS (Leland) (1)	7.71	11%
	9	OFF ROAD (Leland) (17)	7.70	73%
	10	BEAST BUSTERS (SNK) (7)	7.53	23%
	11	S.C.I. (Taito) (7)	7.40	27%
	12	CHASE H.Q. (Taito) (20)	7.33	56%
	13	TURBO OUTRUN+ (Sega) (13)	7.30	49%
➡	14	TWO CRUDE (Data East) (2)	7.27	23%
➡	15	2-DUDE OFF-ROAD (Leland)	7.24	20%
	16	S.T.U.N. RUNNER (Atari) (9)	7.22	32%
	17	OUT RUN (Sega) (44)	7.18	66%
	18	OPERATION THUNDERBOLT (Taito) (16)	7.18	53%
	19	SUPER HANG-ON (Sega) (37)	7.01	61%
	20	BIG RUN (Jaleco) (3)	6.91	17%
	21	CYBERBALL 2072+ (Atari) (8)	6.86	39%
	22	AFTER BURNER (Sega) (33)	6.75	60%
➡	23	BATTLE SHARK (Taito) (2)	6.74	18%
	24	MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE+ (D.E.) (8)	6.72	37%
	25	CRIME FIGHTERS+ (Konami) (17)	6.71	59%

+ indicates game was produced in both dedicated & software forms

best new videos

➡	1	TOP LANDING [s/d] (Taito)	8.00
➡	2	GATE OF DOOM [h-kit] (Data East)	7.60
➡	3	THUNDER FOX [h-kit] (Taito)	7.25

best software

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
➡	1	**FINAL FIGHT [H] (Capcom) (6)**	**8.85**	**77%**
➡	2	COMBATRIBES [H] (Am. Technos) (2)	8.37	48%
➡	3	CADASH [H] (Taito) (4)	8.00	21%
➡	4	NEO•GEO [S] (SNK) (1)	8.00	16%
	5	WWF SUPERSTARS [H] (Technos) (13)	7.94	82%
➡	6	MVP [H] (Sega) (4)	7.72	26%
➡	7	ALIENS [H] (Konami) (4)	7.65	44%
➡	8	HYDRA [H] (Atari) (1)	7.64	11%
➡	9	OFF ROAD TRAK PAK [R] (Leland) (3)	7.63	37%
➡	10	THUNDER JAWS [H] (Atari) (1)	7.43	6%
	11	VS. CRIMEFIGHTERS [S] (Konami) (9)	7.22	26%
	12	VIOLENCE FIGHT [H] (Taito) (5)	7.11	14%
➡	13	R-TYPE II [H] (Irem) (1)	7.05	17%
	14	GOLDEN AXE [H] (Sega) (14)	7.01	71%
➡	15	META FOX [V] (I-Vics) (1)	7.00	7%
	16	ARCH RIVALS [H] (Midway) (13)	6.98	74%
	17	U.N. SQUADRON [S] (Capcom) (9)	6.84	36%
	18	TETRIS [H] (Atari) (15)	6.82	70%
➡	19	DRAGON BREED [H] (Irem) (2)	6.81	13%
➡	20	TECMO WORLD CUP '90 [H] (Tec.) (5)	6.78	7%

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

flippers

➡	1	**RADICAL (Midway) (1)**	**9.00**	**8%**
	2	WHIRLWIND (Williams) (6)	8.68	70%
➡	3	BACK TO THE FUTURE (D.E.) (1)	8.45	10%
	4	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (D.E.) (5)	8.04	39%
	5	EARTHSHAKER (Williams) (16)	8.02	57%
➡	6	ROLLER GAMES (Williams) (3)	7.94	44%
	7	ELVIRA (Midway) (10)	7.89	56%
	8	POOL SHARKS (Midway) (3)	7.66	25%
	9	POLICE FORCE (Williams) (11)	7.55	52%
	10	CYCLONE (Williams) (27)	7.41	64%

➡ *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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COVER

On our cover this month are the familiar faces of Romstar's sales topper Tim Jackson, prexy Takahito Yasuki and veep Rene Lopez with the also familiar, steady-earner 'Snow Bros.' This horizontal kit, on the market since ACME and still selling, continues to bring in consistent coin week after week, says the Torrance, Calif. firm. And what's in "Box Number One"? A new kit due to debut mid-month that has been "testing very, very strong," according to Tim Jackson. While he wouldn't give us all the details, he did describe it as a "Time Soldiers, commando-type of game." It specs out as a vertical, two-player (ineractive) video. See it at your dealer's showroom soon.

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EDITORIAL

These days, tradesters humming Kenny Rogers' hit single "The Gambler" are not necessarily thinking about jukebox music. Legalized video gaming (pay-off poker, keno & bingo) is a subject of growing interest in the trade.

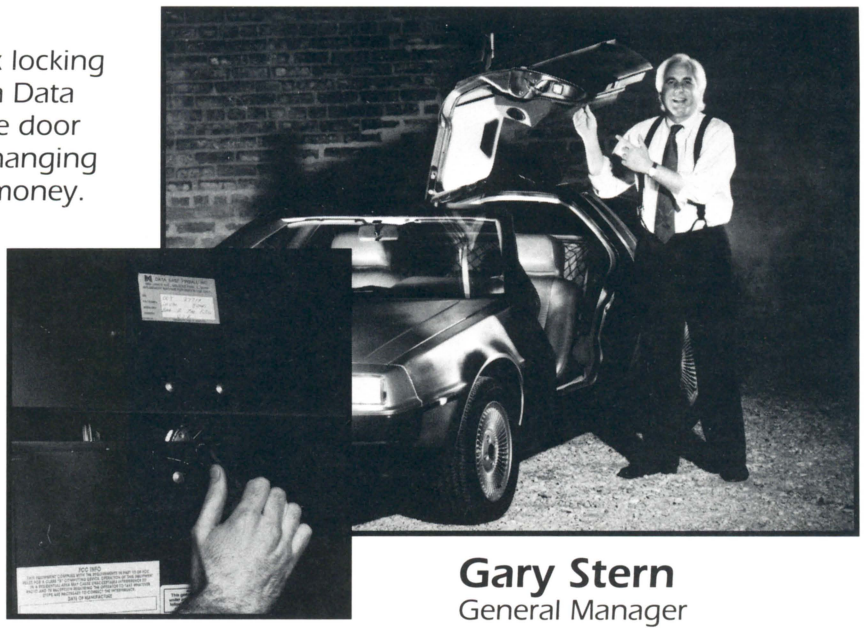
Is this market new? Yes and no. At least 40 states, we hear, already have gray-area machines. But legalization doesn't just mean gaining approval of existing equipment. Montana and South Dakota showed that when everybody from the governor to the cop on the beat got involved, big improvements followed in video gaming technology, the number and quality of locations, the size of the player base — and the amount of operator profits. Indeed, part of the trade's enthusiasm for legal video poker stems from the huge earnings reported by some operators in South Dakota and Montana. Hefty profits are why these operators are more than happy to pay $5,500 for legal video poker games.

Operators aren't alone in their enthusiasm. Some distributors and manufacturers are actively supporting (sometimes even leading) the fight to legalize this market in many more states. If they're successful, look for certain amusement manufacturers to start making pokers, too. Before year's end, we could see two more states approve operator-run, pay-off vidpokers (Nebraska and North Dakota). After that, at least 16 more state associations are actively pursuing poker legalization. It's going to be a long tough battle in each case, with no guarantees of success.

*Some tradesters believe legal poker represents "the future of the industry." Well, it now appears gaming could well become a larger **part** of our future. But kids can't gamble, and they still have well over $100 billion to spend annually. Supplementing amusements with gambling is one thing, but there's no way our industry should — or will — abandon one market for the other.*

Bottom line? In several states, cautious optimism and hard work are certainly in order for poker legalization. Still, operators need to keep up their amusement routes, even while donating money to pro-poker lobbying. Manufacturers need to keep striving for hit games that will justify operator investment. A new market may be a-borning, but our traditional market is still a money-maker today, offering undreamed-of potential for tomorrow. We'll realize every bit of that potential, so long as manufacturers concentrate a bit more on play-appeal, rather than so much on sales appeal.

Introducing our new Quick-Loc™ backbox locking system. Now you can set up the head of a Data East pinball as quickly as you can open the door of a De Lorean. Our new system makes changing locations a snap and saves you time and money. 'Back to the Future,™ the Pinball, features many other new improvements such as a tuned bass ported cabinet and a new all steel speaker housing with our improved high fidelity digital stereo sound system. You don't have to look any further for the most advanced use of PCB mounted lamps, fully gusseted steel legs, solid state flippers, and our exclusive Time Lock feature. If you haven't bought a Back to the Future™ it's about time !



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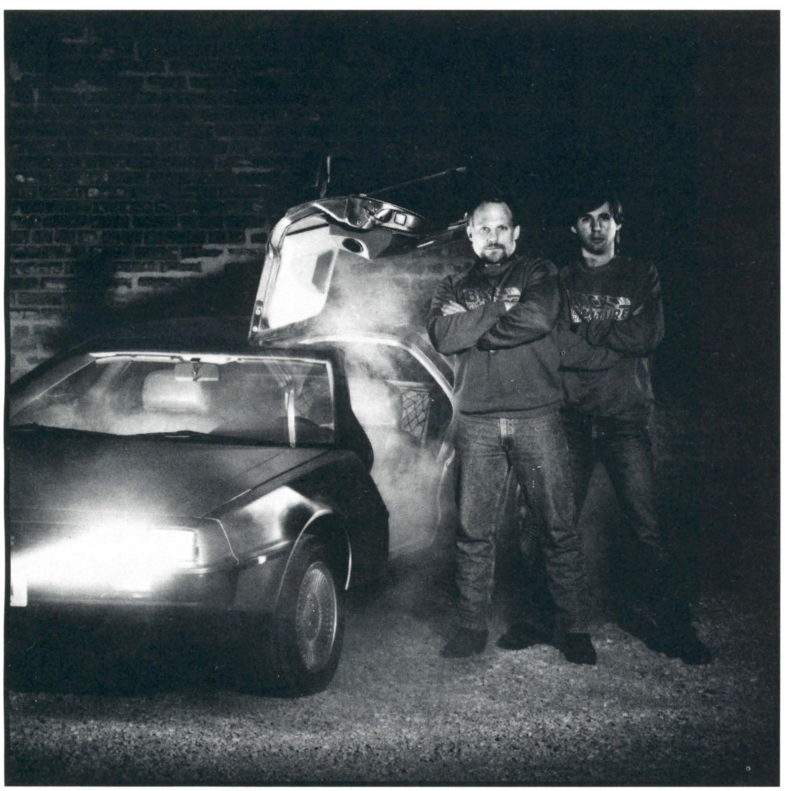

Paul Faris & Brian Schmidt

Back from the beach and out of retirement Paul Faris returns with a vengeance. First Phantom dominated with critical acclaim. Now Paul adds his special touch only the way he can to, Back to the Future,™ the Pinball. Doc and the De Lorean never looked so good. Brian Schimidt returns from the days and nights of movies and music in L.A. with his backround in game design and studio perfect music. Brian composes game music a cut above anyone in the game business. Just one listen is all it will take to let you know why Back to the Future,™ the Pinball, is the most amazing sound experience in the game business today. Paul and Brian the **Dynamic Duo !**

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INSIDE

AUGUST 1990

SPECIAL ARTICLES

VIDEO LOTTERY 1990

Two states already permit operators to run pay-off video poker. Two more could go legal this fall. Also, some 18 state operator associations are saying, "Wait till next year!" They're calling it "video lottery" for PR reasons. We bring you an in-depth look at this market. . . pg. 59

AAMA TO MEXICO

Five new Mexican distributor members enjoyed prominent booths at AAMA's successful July 10-11 trade show in Mexico City. It was the group's first expo outside the USA and seemed to promise closer U.S.-Mexican trade cooperation. . . . . pg. 30

VIDGAME VIRTUE

We asked some operators and distributors: "What's RIGHT with video games these days?" Upbeat answers ranged from success stories with individual titles, to appreciation of a larger market and better demographics. . . . . pg. 48

EDISON BROS.

St. Louis-based Edison Bros. is an arcade powerhouse. In 18 months, they've swallowed up the Space Port and Time-Out arcade chains, as well as the Dave & Buster's fun/food places. Edison chairman Andy Newman discusses coin-op today, and Edison's plans for tomorrow. . . . . pg. 52

HAWKINS' HQ

Dick Hawkins is a classy operator, and his classy facility shows it. The former AMOA prexy gave us the grand tour around his offices (D&R Star, Minn.). Along the way, Dick dispensed a bit of operating philosophy. . . . . pg. 116

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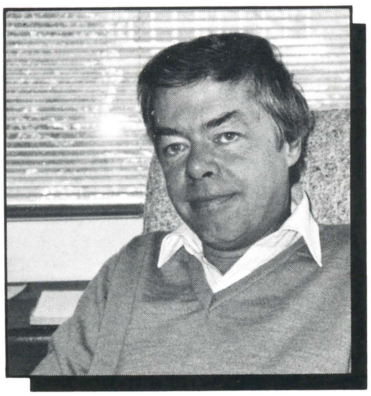

*It's time to wash the blackboard of all of the financial chalk that's gotten in the way of this industry's true purpose. In case anybody forgot it (or never actually knew it), the purpose of this industry is to help people have fun. Once that's accomplished, **then** the industry can take its profits. Unfortunately, we've put the cart ahead of the horse and far too much emphasis on the commercial side of this art form.*

We need legitimate "toy makers" again. . . people who make games merely to make games and then worry about making money from them afterward. Our compass needle has drifted toward the dollar sign and away from the smiling face of the player. I am not castigating all game designers (some actually do get their jollies putting a fun piece together). Rather, I'm worried that the general industry has commercialized our "sport" to such an extent that everyone's first (and sometimes only) measure of a game is "How many can we sell and how much can we profit?" That includes operators too!

I know this is an industry where you have to make a buck when you design, build, buy and then install any machine on location. But, why don't I feel the "romance" that's supposed to be associated with any art form here? When Broadway brings a new show to the stage, do their producers worry about massaging the play or do they hang around the box office and fuss over the promotional signs?

Things are very slow for very many people in the trade right now. And, I think that's largely due to a lack of imagination on the part of some designers. Not that they're untalented, it's just my opinion that they're misdirected toward the sales curve and away from the "fun" curve. Factories and distributors shake heads about the operator's lack of game buying. Operators shake their heads over the manufacturer's lack of "good new stuff." Everybody gets dizzy in the process, but the business is getting dusty.

*As they say at the one-stop level, there are **enough** new 45rpm singles to keep the old jukeboxes rolling. Same can be said for the video routes. But, that's not the idea. Where is that toy maker spirit? Here? Japan? Europe? In some guy's head who's smart about electronic or non-electronic game design but too dumb to reach out to our manufacturers with his invention? Gentlemen: we not only need more good, new games, we need good new thinking about the very purpose of this industry.*

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NEWS DIGEST

AAMA SCORES BIG IN LATIN AMERICA; SEEKS UNITY

AAMA's July 10-11 **Latin American Exposition of Games, Music & Amusements** in Mexico City must be counted as a major success for the whole trade. Not only did U.S. manufacturers sell lots of product, but they also began an earnest dialog with Mexico's coin-op "establishment." Reportedly, six or ten major operator-distributors control 90% of Mexico's market, and it's hoped that close Mexico-U.S. cooperation will lead to many benefits for the trade in both countries. Among them: a better-structured Mexican market; strong U.S.-style distributors; the substitution of new, genuine goods for old, counterfeit goods; a single, jointly-sponsored trade show (by AAMA and Mexico's coin-op Federation); and — most important — higher profits for everybody involved. Such, at any rate, are AAMA's fond goals, and by all appearances, the group has now taken the first big step toward realizing those goals. Most major U.S. manufacturers exhibited at AAMA's "Mexpo," along with key suppliers, plus a sprinkling of U.S. distribs and all the heavyweights from Mexico itself. Get details starting on ***page 30.***



VIDPOKER LEGALIZATION CAMPAIGN HEATS UP

The industry is fast learning how to "sell" legal, operator-run, pay-off video pokers, kenos and bingos to state governments. First, call it a **"video lottery"** (even though it really isn't a lottery). Second, point out how much tax revenue the machines can raise. Legal video pokers will probably earn a combined total of nearly $30 million for Montana's and South Dakota's state governments this year. Remember, that's from a combined total of only about 15,000 machines, played by a combined population of only 1.5 million citizens in both states!

Numbers like these (and reports of $1,000-a-day, 20-game locations) are causing a rush of enthusiasm for vidpoker legalization. This fall, voters in **Nebraska** and **North Dakota** are expected to pass referenda which would permit operator-run gambling there. (Crafting enabling regulations, and getting manufacturing going, would likely delay actual start-up time for operation till mid-1991.) **Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee** and **Vermont** ran into legislative roadblocks this summer, but at least two of those states might stand good chances for next year. **Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota,** and perhaps two more Midwestern states also seem like at least "possibilities" for legalization in 1991.



RePlay takes a cautious stance on operator-run gambling. As you can see from this month's editorials and other features, we believe most operators should continue to make amusements their primary focus for now. But the growing "video lottery" market is one of the biggest stories in coin-op today, and we give it full coverage in a comprehensive special report, beginning on ***page 59.***

REPLAY DIRECTORY DEADLINE!

The new **RePlay Directory Yearbook** is well into prep. Any company which hasn't returned our listing application by now must do so by mail or fax immediately! It's an awesome project, so please help us dot the i's and cross the t's in your specific listing by contacting us straightaway. Many thanks to those who've already supplied their company data.

IT'S ALIVE! *PIG OUT* SHIPS



They say they'd "ship no swine before it's time." Now after months of "tweaking" and teasing, Leland finally began shipping samples of their 3-player ***Pig Out*** dedicated video attraction on June 30. It's a cute character piece featuring three cunning pigs who climb ladders, stairs, etc. in search of food while avoiding Al The Butcher and his buddy The Wolf. One stick, plus two buttons per player lets you run, climb, jump and throw things in this mad-cap pursuit of calories, all displayed on a hog-sized 25" hi-rez monitor.

Shown in photo at official intro at the San Diego plant (from left) are Leland sales/marketing/customer service teamsters **Ken Anderson, Dan Viescas, Debbie Austin, Brian Kopf** and **Donna Jorgensen.** The firm continues to sell *World Soccer Finals,* so Leland's got two attractions for you to bring home the bacon.

HE'S BACK (DILLON), BUT BLATTS & GLAZE ARE GONE

Joe Dillon has returned to Williams, with sales command over both of its game divisions. While **Leslie Ross, Bob Lentz** and **Roger Sharpe** remain on board, and additional sales people will be hired on in a "restructured"sales effort, veterans **Marty Glazman** (Williams) & **Steve Blattspieler** (Midway) have left the firm.

On a headier level, parent company chief **Lou Nicastro** has moved his WMS corporate HQ out of New York City and into the Williams plant in Chicago. A costly move it was, and when combined with other corporate losses for their current fiscal year, will reflect a sizeable overall loss in the the next stockholders report. But Lou is bullish on the future for both coin-op and his hotel/casino enterprises. Please see **page 24.**

BUNDRAS EXIT AMERI

On July 9, **Frank & Joe Bundra** resigned all of their positions with Ameri Corp. (makers of ***Ameri Darts)*** and advised that any tradesters with questions on the game should contact Ameri in Seabrook, Texas at 713/326-1937. The brothers continue to operate Prism Products as a sales organization rep'ing Bromley (now shipping their new ***Rock & Bowl*** novelty) and expect to add one or two additional lines in the future.

Charles Hancock at Ameri told *RePlay* that company execs **Ron & Dave Silla** are continuing along, are presently working up some new products in the R&D department and will now be dealing directly with distributors rathers than through the Bundras. Frank & Joe themselves have begun the design of two new non-video pieces with tavern locations in mind (could be on display by AMOA) which will fall under their no-violence, no-sex guidelines. They can be reached at Prism Products at 708/705-5991; fax is 708/705-8095.

MONDAY TOPS SoCAL ASSN.; UNION WITH CCMA "DISCUSSED"



Jerry Monday (Century Vending) was officially installed as president of the relatively new **Amusement Assn. of California.** Among his specific duties will be to build up membership (already at 50, which is quite good). Jerry succeeds **Dave Jackson** (who founded the SoCal group with **Bob Snyder).** Dave continues to actively work with the association (he was instrumental in communicating the proper new license figures for L.A. County to members: $130 per machine for renewals at same location, $166 for new machines at licensed locations and $188 for new machines at unlicensed stops).

This and other matters were discussed at a June 22 meeting of the AAC held at Betson Pacific's showroom on W. Pico in L.A. Interestingly, officers of the older established CCMA state association were on hand **(George Karas, Rich Scherer** and **Greg Stevens)** to hear the talk but more importantly to try to open discussion with the AAC toward a union of the association into CCMA so the Golden State has but one representative operator association. At this writing, some on both sides are talking about that possibility, but for now, there are two groups in existence. Photo shows the roundtable brainstorm session of AAC & CCMA people talking about that very subject at Betson.

GO HOG WILD WITH

DINE LIKE A SWINE!

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It's Porker Pandemonium!

Cast no pearls before these swine. Because from the moment they break loose from Al's Butcher Shop, these rampaging rooters will have players glued to their controls as they gobble their way to ham hock happiness!



Porcine Fun For Everyone!

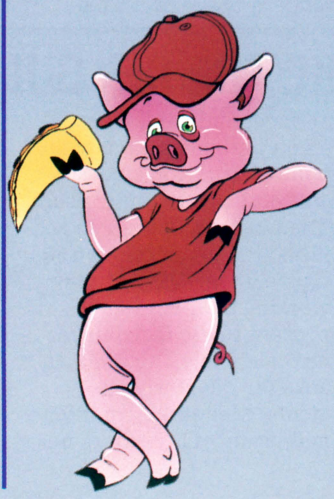
Through food warehouses and giant freezers, meatball factories and hotel corridors, this prodigious pack of porkers runs amuck against scrolling backdrops of the city in their action-packed search for fattening goodies to wolf down.

And speaking of wolves, watch out! Because they're lurking everywhere . . . behind fire hydrants and crates and unlocked doors . . . just waiting for the chance to pounce. As if being pursued by Al the Butcher wasn't enough, one false step and it's pork chops!



PIG OUT!™ Brings Home The Bacon!

Fun for players of all ages, **PIG OUT!™** lets you choose your favorite porker: Josie, Scooter or Floyd. Then, it's a wild swine stampede through an unsuspecting city as you try to stuff your snout with as many goodies as you can grab. The Calorie Gallery awaits a master muncher!





Up to three players can share the fun by joining in at any point in the action. A hog-sized 25-inch high resolution monitor dazzles you with colorful graphics . . . accompanied by "big pig" sound effects. **PIG OUT!™** is available in a rugged, dedicated cabinet designed to withstand even the most ham-fisted crowd!

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CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT GROWS FOR $1 COINS...BUT WILL $1 BILL BE PHASED OUT?

How's the industry's favorite proposed law doing? Good and bad. The good news: Senator **Arlen Spector** and Rep. **Neal Smith** signed up to co-sponsor dollar coin legislation, as did House coinage subcommittee members **Bartlett, Hiler & Pelosi.** Also, during a recent AAMA visit to Washington, several other senators and congressmen said they'll vote for dollar coins, but aren't co-sponsors of the legislation. Senator **Don Riegle,** chairman of Senate Banking, says his committee will hold mark-up hearings on dollar coin legislation this fall; also **Dick Lehman's** House coinage subcommittee may hold public hearings on dollar coins



around the U.S. this fall.

The bad news: some congressmen (even coin supporters) seem **unwilling,** so far, to take the heat for killing dollar bills. If not, that's a problem: experts, history and common sense all say, "For dollar coins to succeed, the dollar bill must go." In Senate hearings on coin legislation, held June 20, Senator **Alan Dixon** said he supports dollar coins — in fact, he's a key sponsor of the legislation. But Dixon also made it very clear he **opposes** killing the dollar bill. He **favors** giving Americans a "choice" between the dollar bill and the dollar coin, he said. Government studies and the Susan B. Anthony coin's failure indicate that given a choice, most Americans would choose paper bills. Other hearing results: Florida's Senator **Bob Graham** also favors "choice." The U.S. Treasury's **Donna Pope** opposes killing dollar bills, and **also** opposes creating coins.

AAMA TOPPERS LOBBY (AGAIN!) FOR $1 COINS

AAMA is working hard to bolster Congressional support for dollar coins. In late June, top AAMA members held 34 Congressional follow-up meetings, dined with House Coinage Subcommittee chairman **Dick Lehman** and Rep. Kolbe's staffer **Rowdy Yeates,** and attended a Coin Coalition meeting. Present were AAMA prexy **Gil Pollock,** past president **Frank Ballouz,** and officers or board members **Steve Koenigsberg, Bill Rickett, Al Stone, Rus Strahan & Bob Fay.** Also

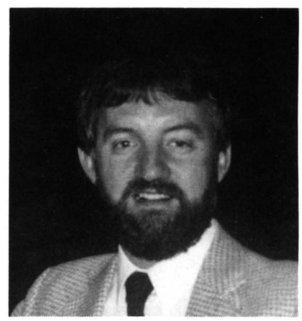


participating were NAMA toppers **Jim Rost & Tom McMahon,** along with the Coalition's **Jim Benfield.**

OREGON OPS TAKE THE BIG GULP

The Oregon state license on jukeboxes & games doubled to $100-per on July 1 (pool tables still pay nothing.) Operators in areas that pay higher per-machine figures may not think this is so bad, but **all** the money was due on that date (no quarterly payments). Truly, it was a big "gulp" for a lot of Oregon tradesters to come up with that kind of cash all at once, and we understand that some have been pulling some marginal machines off location as a result. The lads are fighting to roll it back to the previous $50 figure under OMOA, now working on a bill they'll present to the legislature next summer. The bill also asks for quarterly payments. Meantime, an informal group of operators under **Eric Mahaffey** still wants to kill state licenses completely. Good luck! The additional money raised by the doubled-tax will partially go toward funding Oregon's Youth Conservation Corp., which provides jobs for disadvantaged kids. Our thanks to **Mike McWilliams** for the imput.

BILLY LaHART JOINS PIONEER; FIRM OFFERS FREEBIES



Good news from Pioneer, with the appointment of former Lake Placid operator **Billy LaHart** as their new East Coast sales rep as well as the choice sales incentive of free CD discs to buyers of their CJ-V55 phonograph now through Sept. 30. (The freebies consist of 6 hit compilations for current chart titles and 3 oldies but goodies discs for each box purchased during the time frame.) That's an approximate value of $180 retail. Now, how do you put a value onto Bill LaHart coming on? This gent has been working with Upstate Vending since he's 14 years old (a full-timer since 1971.) The University of Utah grad was also prexy of the New York State association and has been on AMOA's board for three years as well. He's an operator, he's a mechanic, now he's a salesman for a manufacturer, so give this guy your undivided attention.

LaHart left the Upstate Vending route (to take this Pioneer job) in the hands of his mother **Joan** (widow of route founder **Jack LaHart.**) Bill is presently one of the few factory salesmen who comes from the operating business, so it will be fascinating to watch his actions as the months and years go by. He hooked up with a great name (Pioneer) and they equally hooked with another great name (LaHart.)

IT'S DIRECTORY TIME AT REPLAY!



DIRECTORY

ATTENTION! The brand-new **RePlay DIRECTORY** is now in preparation with its listings of manufacturers, distributors, one-stops, parts and service suppliers and photos of equipment and key makers and dealers.

And, it's just not complete without you! Those companies listed in last year's **DIRECTORY** have already received a copy of their entry to correct and send back to us. **If you were not listed in last year's, ACT TODAY!** Fill out the coupon below and send it to **RePlay** (the address is on the coupon). These listings are FREE — that's right! It only costs you the 25 cents it takes to mail it AND it works a whole 12 months for you.

Time, however, is limited. The deadline for these entries is **AUGUST6.** We cannot guarantee that listing information received after that time will appear in the annual. (If you have any questions, call **RePlay** at **818/347-3820**.) This is the last call so **ACT NOW!** Also, as the **DIRECTORY** works as a reference for a whole 12 months, you can't beat the advertising power of this issue. For ad rates and deadline information, call **Barry Zweben** at **818/347-3820** (our fax # is *818-347-2112*)

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number(s): _____ Telex: _____

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Products/Services offered (if distributor, list lines handled DIRECT Only): _____

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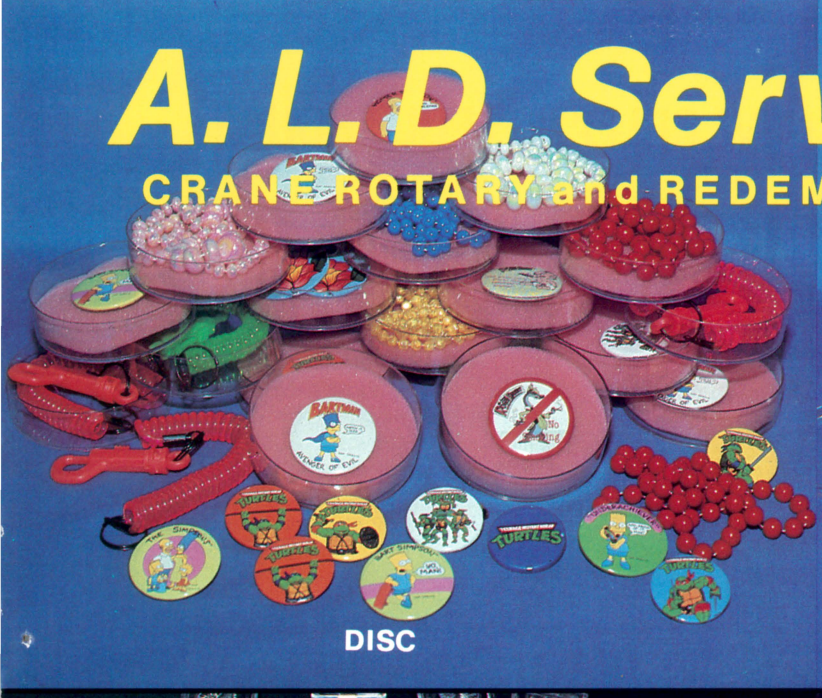

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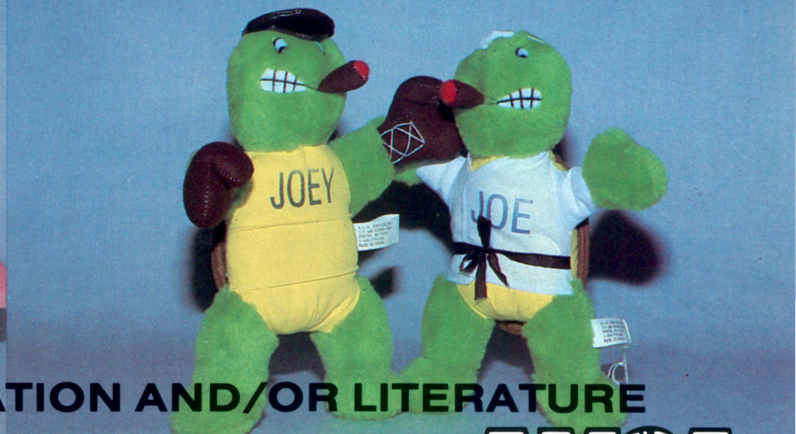

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AMOA
12 YEAR MEMBER

FABTEK WINS SPACE WARS, COLLECTION WARS & PRICE WARS WITH *RAIDEN*

Fabtek's excited about their new vertical-monitor video kit ***Raiden.*** Prexy **Frank Ballouz** says the two-player (simultaneous) spaceship combat game is beating some top videos in several location tests. "It's testing extremely well," he smiled, "and our pricing is extremely aggressive." The game began shipping in July.

ORLANDO'S THE SETTING FOR NAMA

The vending industry's foremost convention & product showing is sponsored by NAMA. This year's outing will take place Oct. 11-13 (three days instead of four) in central Florida's fun capital Orlando. The show and business meetings, will take place at the Orange County Convention Center. Hotel of record is the Peabody, although lots of vendors will be housed in other close-by hotels.

The convention is themed "Your Threshold on the 21st Century," but lots of the accent will be on family fun. The schedule has been structured so operators and their wives and kids can enjoy such as Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World, the Kennedy Space Center and the other marvels Orlando is now famous for. For example, the show starts at 10:00 AM rather than noon as in the past and closes each day at 3:00 PM rather than 5:30 PM.

For hotel, airline and car rental reservations, all operators need do is call 800/666-6757 (discounts are available on much of this.) To register for the show and meetings, call 312/346-0370.

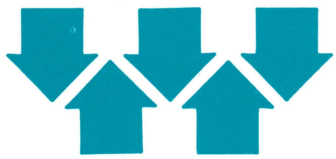
AMOA EXPO IN NEW ORLEANS: FULL HOUSE

Advance registration is running high for AMOA's Thursday-through-Saturday, Oct. 25-27 **Expo '90** (New Orleans Convention Center). Booth space was sold out by Memorial Day (682 booths); at presstime AMOA was confirming paid-up exhibit space reservations and eyeballing the waiting list. Exhibit hours Thursday & Friday will be 9-10 AM for distributors and 10 AM-5 PM for all others. Saturday's hours are 10 AM-4 PM for all. Planning to attend the show? Send AMOA a housing registration form by Sept. 21 for your choice of nearby hotels: the **Sheraton New Orleans** (single $107, double $115), the **Hyatt Regency** or **Marriott** (single $107, double $127 at both). Only suite reservations will be accepted by phone or fax. Otherwise, all housing forms may be obtained from AMOA at 312/565-4602 and should be mailed to AMOA Housing Bureau, 1520 Sugar Bowl Dr., New Orleans, LA 70112.



TAXES & LICENSES UP, DOWN AROUND USA

How sweet it its. The Amusement & Music Operators of Idaho killed the state sales tax on amusement games effective July 1, said IAMO's **Kevin Mahler.** How'd they do it? "We asked our state officials why the timber, trucking, mining and farming industries got exemptions, but not amusements," Kevin said. IAMO also pointed out that amusements were being taxed four times already: gross receipts tax, state corporate income tax, etc. Congratulations!



Another victory comes in Michigan, where MCMOA was the driving force behind repeal of crane location licenses. **Governor Blanchard** signed a new law on June 27 eliminating crane location licenses, raising per-machine fees from $30 to $50, and revising violations penalties. Operators will get refunds from already-paid licenses, MCMOA said proudly.

On the other hand, New Jersey operators may soon be facing cigarette taxes of 27¢ per pack, due to a tax hike on tobacco. The increase has already passed the statehouse and won the governor's signature, we're told, but AMOA-NJ is doing its best to get the measure rescinded.

"MOONWALKING" WITH SEGA: HOT NEW 3-PLAYER VIDEO COMING SOON

Ready for a new hot video to spice up your route? Here's an update on Sega's three-player (simulataneous) dedicated vidgame ***Moonwalker.*** Release of this game "co-created with **Michael Jackson"** is coming in early fall, said the firm. A prototype was displayed at AAMA's Mexico City expo; graphics and music looked and sounded great. Seems the pop star contacted Sega as long ago as 1988 about a vidgame that would capture his stage persona; he personally worked closely with Sega developers and the resulting game is based on his "Moonwalker" film and "Smooth Criminal" music video. Players "become" Jackson as he journeys through many action-packed settings and game stages.



Gameplay features Jackson's unique dance style (Sega achieved startling realism here via digitized images); hit songs on the soundtrack will include "Beat It," "Billy Jean" and "Bad." Praising Jackson's "dynamic creativity," Sega prexy **Tom Petit** confidently predicted: "This type of product is going to have a broad application in our industry." In the photo, Tom shows the game to a fellow tradester in Mexico.

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MAGIC PROFITS

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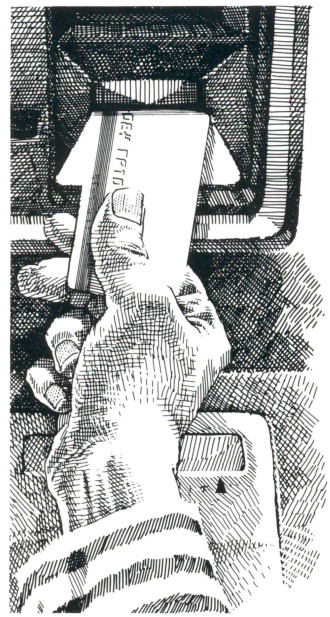
ARCADE'S COIN MECHS REPLACED WITH MAG-STRIPE

Starting July 30, players could walk into the Burlington, Vermont "Dream Machine" arcade in Burlington Square Mall, put currency or credit cards into a machine teller ($1, $5, $10, $20, American Express or Bank Americard) and receive a paper "value card" which uses a new (much cheaper) type of magnetic card-stripe technology. Players can swipe their cards through slots on machine "readers" attached to each game in the arcade. No coin mechs or bill acceptors are on any of the arcade's 47 machines; cash goes only into the point-of-entry value card vender.



What goes on here? It's closely controlled experiment and test of the **"Fun-Pass System"** by the system's creator, **Recreation Technologies, Inc.**, aka "RecTech," a seven-year old "solutions supply company" based in Vermont. Company VP **Bill Condon** says the system's been successful in a Quebec City amusement park for over two years. Many huge benefits for U.S. arcades are possible. Play price hikes would be relatively painless for the consumer. Extremely flexible pricing is possible (you could have different price levels for A-, B- and C-quality games, also D through Z and beyond, ad infinitum). Very fine calibration of prices also is possible (you want to charge 47.893 cents per game? Go ahead!). Time-programmed price changes are easy (half-price play during the slow hours, or whatever). More unique programming can be done (give cards to the birthday child and his friends entitling them to two hours of free play, etc.)

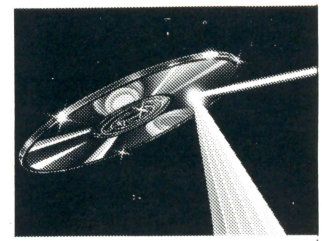
Other benefits, Condon said, include no coin jams; vastly superior data collection and record-keeping of money, playing times and patterns, individual player and machine activity, etc; no collection boxes; reduced break-in risk; and more. It seems like the obvious "wave of the future" and given the success of similar systems in subways, public school cafeterias, etc., you can expect to hear much more about this type of system long-term. Meantime we'll report results of RecTech's test as soon as we receive them.

NO DROP IN CD PRICES SEEN

The giddy growth in overall CD software sales has begun leveling off. Although the number of discs sold in 1989 rose 38% (according to the RIAA,)it pales when compared to the 93% jump in 1987. And while no boom market like CDs originally enjoyed can last forever, some are thinking that the continuing "high price" of the discs on the retail level has begun keeping customers away. Those who thought disc prices would eventually come down know better now. The labels are holding their prices and few expect them to budge.

Suggested retail price of a charting "front line" CD still sits at $15.98. Operators pay well under that for comparable discs at one-stops (in the $11.00 to $12.00 range for hot product, less for older or specialty discs.) Still, the cost of filling a brand new 100-selection CD jukebox runs in the $1,100 range. Once loaded, some operators seem to change very few discs afterward.

So far, no "pattern" has emerged regarding CD disc



changes. Some operators buy the initial load and then "disappear" from the one-stop's door, probably only buying a scattered few new discs at the retail store rather than "bother" the one-stop for "oneseys" and "twoseys." The old 45 rule was to change 3 or 4 singles every two weeks, but CD operators have yet to establish a pattern.

Regarding the availability of new vinyl singles, it's still troubling. Around 25% of the **Billboard** Hot 100 titles in the top 20 are usually unavailable on a 7" disc, including some originally issued on vinyl but then made only in cassette form. There is still enough 7" product to keep the 45 boxes alive and kicking, but the future of the single still looks troubling.

CLECOIN OPENS IN INDIANAPOLIS

Cleveland Coin's topper **Ron Gold** says their new Indianapolis branch should be up and running Aug. 1. Word has it the new emporium is a beauty. New manager is **Tim Dwyer,** a graduate of Ball State and longtime member of the coinbiz in Indiana. Please visit them at 8735 Boehning Lane in Post Road biz park by I-70.

Further CleCoin news says an additional 20,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space has been added to their present Cleveland facility, bringing the place up to 54K. In addition, their office in Orlando is moving to the outskirts of the city (new address will be announced in near future.)

KIDDIES HAVE BIG BUCKS TO SPEND, SAYS *FORBES* AND GALLUP

If young people are the major market for coin-op amusements, then we have a huge, untapped pool of youth (and money) out there waiting for us. A June 11 cover story in *Forbes Magazine* announced that "The new big spenders are 4- to 12-year-olds with **$75 billion** jingling in their pockets." Tagging kiddie spenders as "The Brat Market," *Forbes'* headline read: 'Hey, Dude, Let's Consume!" Earlier this year, a Gallup survey confirmed much the same thing: kids 12 and under have tens of billions to spend. Teens and young adults age 13-24 have scores more billions. Attention, amusement entrepreneurs: let's get busy earning our share!





AMERICAN HORSESHOES™

TAITO's AMERICAN HORSESHOES™

AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING PASTIME IS NOW AVAILABLE IN A TOP EARNING VIDEO GAME!

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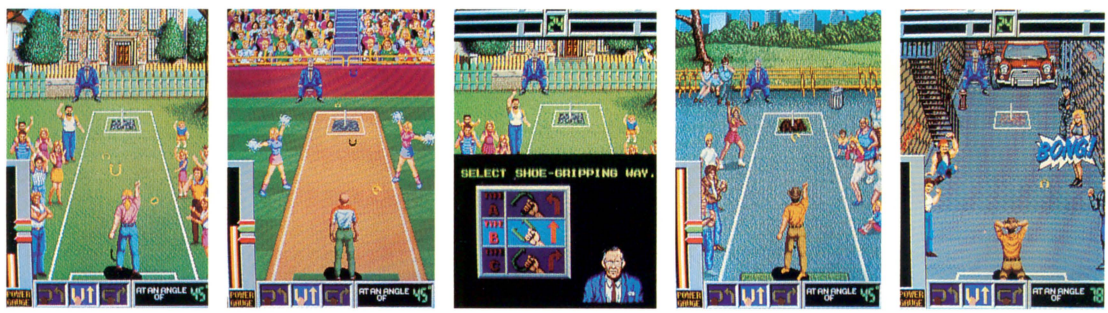

TAITO'S "AMERICAN HORSESHOES" CAN BE PLAYED BY ONE TO FOUR PLAYERS. EACH PLAYER CAN CHOOSE FROM ONE OF FOUR CHARACTERS. THERE ARE TWO PITCHES IN EACH INNING. PLAYERS MAY SELECT GRIP AND THROWING ANGLE PRIOR TO EACH PITCH. THE ROLLING OF THE TRACKBALL DETERMINES THE DISTANCE OF EACH PITCH.

SCORING

- **"RINGER"—3 POINTS. A HORSESHOE WHICH WRAPS AROUND THE STAKE.**
- **"LEANER"—2 POINTS. A HORSESHOE WHICH RESTS AGAINST THE STAKE.**
- **LANDING WITHIN THE STAKE AREA—1 POINT.**

AFTER EACH INNING THE SCORING IS SHOWN WITH AN OVERHEAD SHOT OF THE STAKE AREA. EACH PLAYER'S SCORE IS SHOWN THROUGHOUT THE GAME AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN. AT THE END OF EACH THREE INNINGS THE PLAYERS MAY CONTINUE BY INSERTING ADDITIONAL CREDITS. UP TO NINE INNINGS CAN BE PLAYED PER GAME.

TAITO

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On Your Mark...

by Marcus Webb

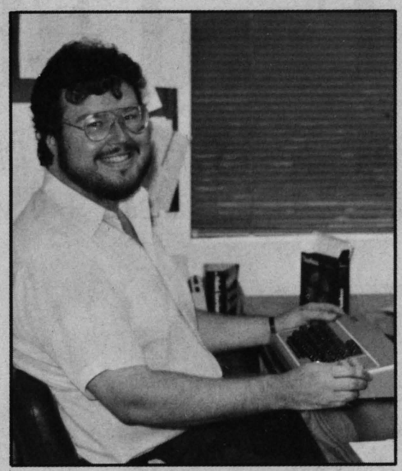
This issue contains much coverage of video gaming, including a great deal of optimistic talk about legalizing more pay-off "video lotteries." (Video pokers, kenos and bingos are not true lotteries, but these days supporters call them that, for PR purposes.)

In truth, the chances for legal video poker look increasingly good in several states. Still, we don't want to give the impression that this cause is an "unstoppable train." Even AMOA Truth in Amusement Committee topper Phil Benson admits legal gaming is a "bubble" which "could burst any time."

Several pins could prick that legal bubble. Perhaps the most important is the fact that George Bush, plus several state legislatures, are going to bite the bullet and raise taxes. Some states, like Pennsylvania and Mississippi, already have hiked taxes in a big way. Others, like California, are gearing up to follow suit. If there's no revenue crunch, there's no screaming reason to seek other forms of revenue.

The second "pin" that could pop the vidpoker bubble is our trade's spreading use of 8-liner games for blatantly illegal gambling. "They're illegal as heck in my state, but I'm putting them out," one Southwestern operator told us. "For five years, I've asked my local police to do something about my competitors' gray area pokers. Nothing happened. Now the other guys are running 8-liners and the police still haven't moved. I'm losing locations. So if you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

Manufacturers of these products have a carefully-researched legal position. So long as they mail out a PCB only, they're not responsible for what you do with it. But operators ***are*** *responsible. Police in Southern*



California busted an 8-liner gambling ring, and we hear law enforcement is starting to pick up the scent in the Midwest and on the East Coast, too. If this activity is tied to our industry, it could damage hopes of legalizing video pokers in selected areas.

The third serious threat to legal gaming will come if kids gamble on video games. The "underage consumer" is already being used as a club to beat cigarette vending to death; it doesn't take a lot of imagination to see how the same thing could happen with video lottery. Yes, legal vidpokers are restricted to over-21 locations. Of course, casinos are supposed to operate that way, too . . . yet every year, Atlantic City's gambling palaces escort 23,000 teenagers out of their emporiums. They turn away nearly 250,000 more teens at the door. The national health lobby is already starting to promote teenage gambling as "the addiction of the '90s." If casinos have this problem, we're going to face it, too.

Video lottery is a grand dream. Where it's become reality, it has made some people rich. To protect that dream — and to defend what we already have with amusements — it's more important than ever for our industry to get extremely serious about grass-roots political lobbying, and to make an unprecedented effort at self-policing.

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WMS Card Shuffle

Nicastro team relocates to Windy City; Dillon returns; Glazman & Blattspieler exit; 2 pins + 1 video coming

The Williams Electronics plant on N. California Ave. in Chicago was shut during July for their normal summer vacation, but lots of news popped from the company anyway. In a sentence, parent company supremo Lou Nicastro (WMS Industries) and some of his executive team are relocating high headquarters to the games plant in Chicago from New York, Joe Dillon has returned as Sales VP over both the Williams and Bally-Midway game divisions and Marty Glazman and Steve Blattspieler have both left their respective positions in game sales.

Bob Lentz, Leslie Ross and Roger Sharpe remain. Ken Fedesna, President of the coin games divisions, further told *RePlay* that additional regional sales reps will likely be hired (perhaps three or even more,) all reporting to Dillon.

Games-wise, the production line began cranking back up in August and will be producing a Williams pin called *Diner*, a Bally-Midway pin called *Radical* (based on the skateboard theme) and a brand new video called *Pigskin* which will be available in both dedicated and kit formats (Dillon describes it as a "prehistoric game").

While the game line cranks up, WMS Industries, the parent company, expects to have evacuated its New York City headquarters . . . a huge move expected to cost the corporation approximately $3 million (counting in severance for those employees who are not relocating to the Chicago area and other big "moving" expenses.)

Those relocating include Lou Nicastro (reassuming the WMS presidency,) Neil Nicastro (Exec. VP and Treasurer) and Norman Menell (stepping down as President and COO, becoming Vice Chairman of the Board). Menell will also continue to serve as an officer and director of WMS' hotel and casino businesses. In addition, Harold Bach Jr. will join the firm in Chicago as Chief Financial Officer.



New Williams Sales VP Joe Dillon.

While the relocation to Chicago will be costly, Nicastro said it will eventually save the company around $2 million per-year thereafter. However, with the present cost of the move, coupled with lower than anticipated sales of games during the fourth fiscal quarter, Nicastro said the firm expects to report "a sizeable loss" for the fiscal year ending June 30 (this was also affected by a $7 million charge to earnings from the company's investment in Divi Hotels N.V.)

"The year end operating loss is also due greatly to Hurricane Hugo's effect on the company's hotel and casino businesses in the Caribbean and," said a press release, "to the delay in introducing our latest video games. The delay contributed to operating losses because design and development expenses were charged to fiscal 1990 results while most of the revenues from sales of those models will not be recognized until fiscal 1991," the release declared.

Nicastro, who has a very positive view of the company's combined future, said WMS is "poised for a strong comeback in 1991. We are well positioned to take advantage of our strengths in both hotels and casinos and in amusement games. As the leading maker of pinball machines, we expect to secure a significant share of the worldwide video game market with new video product about to come," he stated.

Nicastro also said the firm "will benefit from the opening of new markets in Eastern Europe. And, our hotel and casino properties are in better condition with more facilities than ever before." (WMS has also entered into a partnership agreement with Kumagai Gumi, one of Japan's largest construction companies, for the joint development of a $164 million resort complex at the old El Conquistador site in Puerto Rico that will offer 750 rooms, a marina, convention facilities and 18-hole PGA golf course.

There's always lots doing under the Lou Nicastro umbrella, but July was exceptional. But once the dust of the moving vans is clear, the games line starts back up and the hotels and gaming casinos start rustling up fall patronage, Nicastro will be steering a multi-armed entertainment empire from his new desk in "coin machine city." And that, among other things, makes us feel good.

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For a Better Industry

AMOA Exec VP John Schumacher on AMOA's $2 million-plus 1990 budget: "We're doing things to help the whole industry, not just our members"

Greater love hath no association, than that which spends its money helping non-members. And that's why AMOA is justifiably proud when they say: "We are working for the good of the entire coin-op industry, not just our own members."

Benefitting the industry was the theme AMOA trumpeted recently, as it revealed details of its annual budget for the first time. As reported in July's *RePlay*, AMOA Treasurer-Elect Craig Johnson released figures about the group's 1990 expenditures to the trade for the first time in June. To follow up, AMOA Exec Director John Schumacher provided *RePlay* with additional information about the association's priorities and fiscal philosophy.

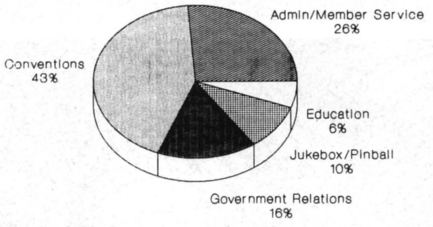
"We think AMOA should be protecting the interests of the entire industry, not just operators," Schumacher explained. "Our budget shows that's exactly what we're doing, and we're very proud of this demonstrated commitment."

AMOA's overall 1990 budget tops $2 million. The association's annual expo is "a major source of revenue," said Schumacher, although he added that dues may be an equally large or larger revenue source. Interest on AMOA's investments is another major revenue source, Schumacher said.

The association's largest single expense is the $687,000 which is budgeted for the annual expo. This figure includes site rental, the exposition itself, the stage show, etc. As stated, AMOA makes a profit on its expo, but the show is the industry's single greatest "trade stimulator" of the year...and thus may be viewed a service to the entire industry, not just association members.

Of non-profit activities, AMOA's largest expense is political lobbying. The association will spend about a quarter of a million dollars on this crucial function in 1989-90. That figure includes $50,000 for the "Truth in Amusement" Committee (video poker legalization efforts). Also included is $110,000 for Government Relations, a category which covers the cost of AMOA's full-time Washington, D.C. lobbyist and his staff, support functions, committee personnel travel expenses, etc. The balance of AMOA's lobbying costs is $100,000 which covers the annual Washington Legislative Conference itself.

AMOA Budget Distribution



Since dollar coins have been AMOA's top lobbying priority for the past two years, AMOA's lobbying expenses comprise another category which benefits the entire industry, not just AMOA members.

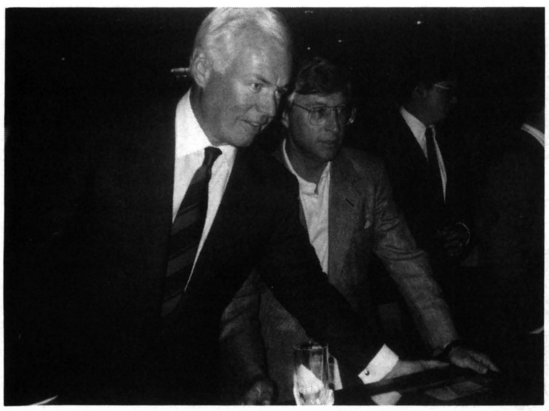
Additional 1990 expenses include a $100,000 budget for the Jukebox Promotion Committee (AMOA contributes the same percentage to this fund as each individual jukebox manufacturer does); $100,000 for the Pinball Promotion Committee (same fund matching as with the jukebox committee); and $25,000 on the National Dart Assn. (reportedly, 1990 is the first year that this activity will break even or show a profit). Obviously, here again AMOA is promoting the health of the entire industry by promoting these specific categories of equipment. The same can be said for AMOA's $83,000 education budget: a smarter operator makes for a healthier industry.

The above items account for about half of AMOA's annual budget. The balance of annual expenditures includes: promoting the industry at location trade shows (bowling, C-stores, pizza restaurants, truck stops, etc.); administrative costs (board meetings, executive staff, computers, phones); membership costs (promoting new members, basic services, etc.); state association committee activity; AMOA internal publications; and travel and planning to arrange future conventions (AMOA is now trying to determine convention sites five to six years ahead).

Executive Director Schumacher cited several recent AMOA activities to show how the association is "actively providing service to the entire industry, which transcends just serving our membership." For example, AMOA execs recently spent a day and a half talking with R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. leaders about long-term strategies for sales, marketing and government relations objectives. This is only part of AMOA President Jack Kerner's plan for AMOA to reach out to related industries (vending, tavern owners, etc.) to improve communication and coordination.

Schumacher also cited AMOA's creation of a "Manufacturers Council," an advisory committee of manufacturers which will give input to AMOA toppers on general industry practice, legislative concerns and the annual AMOA expo. Members will go beyond traditional games and music makers to include novelties, tobacco, vending, components and supplies makers, etc.

Finally, Schumacher reminded tradesters that AMOA's hard-won Voluntary Jukebox Agreement serves to protect the entire industry. "Many people don't understand the ramifications of our successfully concluded jukebox negotiations, but that is another example of AMOA's commitment to protect the industry," Schumacher explained. "The officers and board members who worked on that have a lot to be proud of. Reminding operators across the board, as well as retail establishments, to comply with the new agreement is a service to the whole industry."



Left: New D.E. USA prexy Joe Keenan and No. Carolina dealer Jon Brady enjoy a game of Back to the Future. *Right: New Exec VP Gene Lipkin (right) with midwestern distribs Ed Pellegrini (Atlas) and Jon & Joel Kleiman (Pioneer).*



Triple Hitter

Data East dealers presented new goods at Chi airport meet

Data East USA, now celebrating ten years in business, was originally known for its Deco cassette system, then more generously for its hit videos like *Kung-Fu Master* and *Karate Champ*. These days, this Japanese-owned subsidiary is an authentic triple hitter, making an accepted line of pinballs and an entrance into redemption, besides their tradional TV game line.

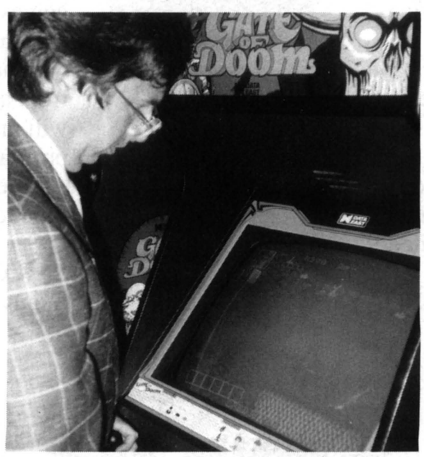
The new Data East goods for summer and early fall were shown to distributors June 28 at the O'Hare Westin Hotel, a mere van ride away from the busy Chicago terminal. Something in each category was on display at the meeting, including their publicized *Back to the Future* pin and their *Whacky Gator* redemption piece. Naturally enough, they took the occasion to unveil their newest video game called *Gate of Doom*.

Data East also made this venue a formal reintroduction of their new executive team, namely new President Joe Keenan and new Exec. VP Gene Lipkin. Both are well known veterans of the coin-op video game business, but this meeting marked their first appearance before Data East distributors assembled.

The product shown to the dealers was solid stuff. The pinball reportedly is doing very well on location already, having shipped before the meeting began. The redemption piece, as explained by one western sales topper Jolly Backer, "is probably the best one out there today. We're continuing to build them and ask any holdout distributors to put one on the showroom floor because their operators could use this game." *Whacky Gator* is a mole-whacker with a lot of flash. Backer advised that two more redemption games are in the works at Data East.

The video *Gate of Doom* is shipping in three configurations: dedicated upright (25" monitor,) works in a drawer (25" monitor) and universal kit. It's a 2-player interactive fighter but less violent than some of the other kick, punch, jump entries. Steve Walton called it a "different" type of fighting game (characters hunt for treasure while they pick up different weapons in this video adventure).

New President Keenan told the dealers that more exciting video product is coming. "We have 160 designers in Japan and more than half of them are in coin," he stated. Keenan also observed that home video may be in a bit of marketing trouble right now in general and this could force some youngsters out of the house and back to the arcade. "My timing (coming back to the coin-op factory level) is right," he added.

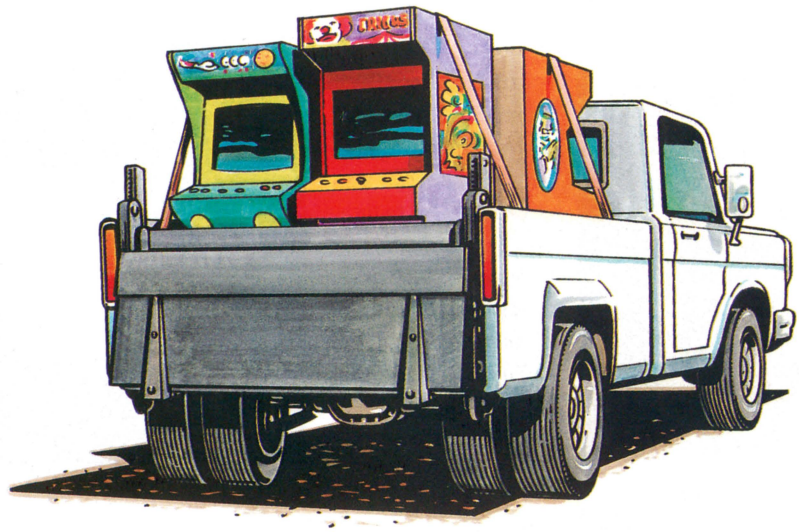


Belam's Marc Haim tries out the new D.E. video, Gate of Doom *(it's an upright & a kit).*

Keenan also said that Data East USA have begun setting up R&D facilities at their San Jose plant to supplement what their Japanese designers are doing. (In a subsequent conversation, Gene Lipkin told *RePlay* they've hired three designers that are already at work in San Jose; he also expects to hire on at least a half dozen more in the months to come, and some of those guys will be familiar faces, he added.)

Lipkin, addressing the dealers, said: "I'm happy to be back with a California video game manufacturer and especially happy to be with a winner." He laid some compliments onto the pinball division as well as on the *Whacky Gator* piece and fielded some questions from the dealers afterward. Pinball division execs Gary Stern and Joe Kaminkow also spoke to the dealers about the pin line in general and the *BTTF* model in particular.

Data East is the only Japanese-owned manufacturer to produce pinballs, and judging by their recent string of games (e.g. *Monday Night Football* and *Phantom,)* some may wonder if the "tail may one day wag the dog. " Lipkin clearly said that their pinball division is making a large impact on the company's prospects but was equally emphatic that Data East will strive to produce money-making games for operators in all configurations presently on their table.



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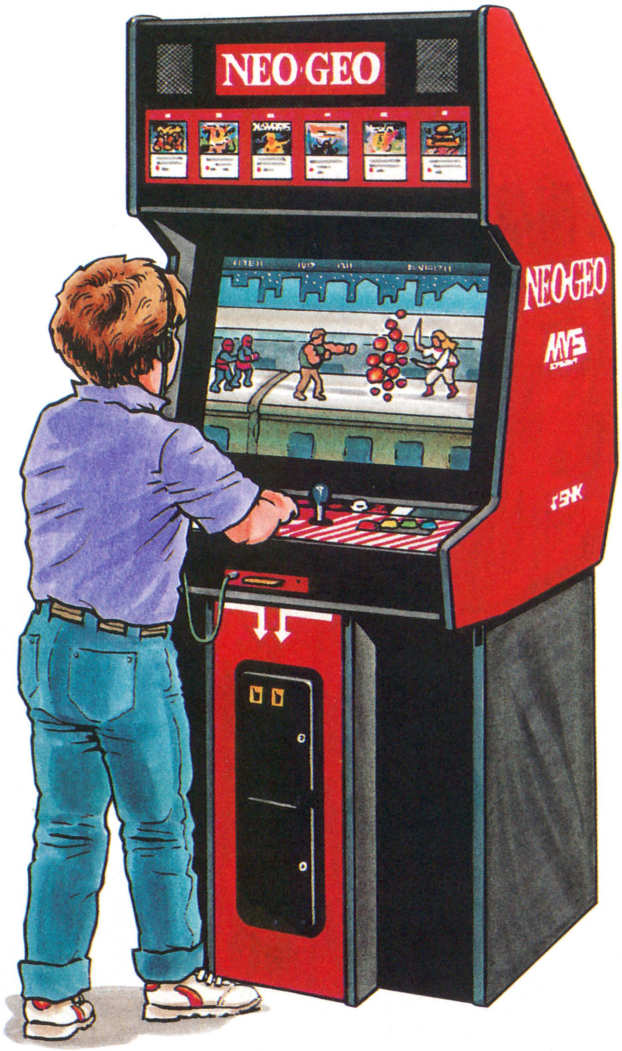

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Mexpo '90

big sales, big names highlight AAMA's first-ever Mexico City expo; U.S. manufacturers seek close cooperation with Latin American operators

"Good fences make good neighbors," claimed New England poet Robert Frost, but the United States' AAMA and Mexico's coin-op Federation have other ideas. At AAMA's first-ever Latin American expo (Mexico City, July 10-11), tradesters on both sides of the Rio Grande agreed that open borders and lower tariffs make for the best neighbors . . . and the best trading conditions. Many U.S. game makers foresee a coming sales boom in Mexico. Quite a few others, such as James Industries' Jim Roberts and Nintendo's Al Stone, happily report that "the boom has already started to happen."

In this heady atmosphere, AAMA's "Mexpo" proved a triple success: high attendance, strong sales, and the promise of growing cooperation between the coin-op "establishments" of both countries . . . a development which promises greater profitability for all. As several showgoers put it: "Forget Eastern Europe for a while, and put the Common Market's 1992 unification on hold. In the 1990s, coin-op's hottest growth market will be Mexico!"

ROLL CALL

The formal name of the AAMA affair was the "Latin American Amusement, Music and Games Exposition." Held at the U.S. Trade Center just a few blocks from the tourist and commercial section of Mexico City, the show was sold out many weeks in advance. And, by the way, it was beautifully organized (as usual) by Bill Glasgow & Associates, the organization which handles the ACME shows here in the States.

Most major U.S. manufacturers displayed their latest equipment and had principles and/or top execs on hand. Some firms (like Atari, Sega, Irem/Fabtek, Dynamo, Kiddie Rides USA and Valley) took their own booths, while most others (Arachnid, Betson, Data East, Capcom, Jaleco, Konami, Leland, NSM, Nintendo, Premier, Smart, SMS, Taito, Tecmo, American Technos, Williams-Midway, etc.) displayed goods in the booths of major Mexican distributors, or shared booth space with a U.S. supplier or fellow manufacturer.

U.S. distributors who showed equipment included Brady Distributing and the Colorado Game Exchange (each had its own booth) and (in cooperation with a Mexican partner) Southgate. Belam, General Coin and Music-Vend sent representatives to the show as well. Why were U.S. dealers there? Some see Mexico as a great potential market for used goods. "Anything low-priced will sell," said one. "As Mexico makes its transition to a contemporary market, there will be a def-



At the ribbon-cutting ceremony are: Konami's Steve Kaufman, U.S. Embassy commercial attache Bob Miller, AAMA Convention Director Bill Cravens, U.S. Commerce Dept.'s Robert Pastorino, Dynamo's Bill Rickett, Sega's Tom Petit, AAMA Convention co-chair Frank Ballouz and AAMA Exec VP Bob Fay.



Site of AAMA's Latin American expo was the U.S. Trade Center in downtown Mexico City.



The show was jammed! Beyond this Spanish-language sign, hundreds of visitors inspect coin-op games on the exhibit floor at AAMA's "Mexpo."



inite place for used goods," agreed one manufacturer. "Yes, they're buying a lot of brand new equipment, but you can't replace an entire market with all new product overnight."

Suppliers who exhibited at Mexpo included Ace Novelty, Coin Controls, Happ Controls, Imperial International, James Industries, J-S Sales, Lock America, Wells-Gardner and Wico. Bee-Line Graphics' Tom Harlan, Space Age Electronics' Carl Fleischman and USA Games' Sam Franklin were also in attendance.

As for the few U.S. majors who didn't come to the AAMA Mexpo, "they really missed the boat," commented an experienced industry figure who deals with most of them.

BRISK SALES

Sales were brisk. "I sold out my stock the first day and had to ask Difadi, our Mexican distributor, to stop taking orders," smiled Leland VP Ken Anderson. "We wrote some serious orders," confirmed Dynamo President Bill Rickett, who added: "Anybody who didn't make sales here, wasn't trying. The people came to do business." Tecmo's Mike Robinson agreed: "Business is being done in volume."

Strong sales at Mexpo highlighted a sales boom which was already well underway before the show. In recent months, Capcom had already sold 750 *Final Fight* kits; Konami had sold "container-loads" of dedicated *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* games; and Nintendo sold thousands of *PlayChoice* systems through its Guadalajara dealer.



Those big grins by the AAMA organizers reflect a successful show. From left, convention co-chair Frank Ballouz, Dir. of Administration Joyce Weller, convention chairman Bill Cravens, Glasgow Inc.'s Judy Novak, Exec VP Bob Fay and trade show management guru Bill Glasgow himself.



If Mexpo was a hurricane, then operator-distributor Oscar Gutierrez (Video Games of Mexico) was probably the eye of the storm. Our camera caught up with him (for a fleeting moment) between J-S Sales' Don Shimel and John Nusser (right). Oscar is a new AAMA member and also a leading spokesman for Mexico's coin-op Federation.



One of the true "heavy hitters" in Mexico is David Traconis (Deasa), seen here (center) with Lock America's Frank Minella and Herbierto Espegel. David is a new AAMA member and a leading spokesman for Mexico's coin Federation.



Fadima is a new, Mexican-American distributorship run by partners Memo Fridman and John Gatens (Southgate). Seen here: Southgate's Ted Schweitzer, Fadima's Luis Torroella, Memo and John.



Difadi's VP Mike Kessler, Williams' Tom Cahill and Difadi CEO Ernesto Felix-Diaz. Difadi builds cabinets, assembles games for U.S. manufacturers, operates at least 35 arcades and is a pillar of the emerging crop of Mexican distribs.



Mexel is the exclusive Nintendo coin-op distributor for Mexico; they build one- and three-player PlayChoice cabinets, make their own cranes, and offer financing/training to new ops. Seen here are Jacobo Shemaria, Enrique Fong, Moises Shemaria.



Stuart Heller of KiddieRides USA (right) with his Mexican distributor Javier Loera of Video Electronic Games and a very unique vid cabinet.

Supplies and components are also finding a booming Mexican market; tradesters estimated that as many as 5,000 monitors are probably being sold into Mexico from all sources. "Most of those sales are for new games, not replacement of old components," asserted Space Age's Fleischman.

A GROWING ECONOMY

Where's the money coming from to buy all of these games, cabinets and components? True, Mexico has struggled through its share of economic troubles, but "there's more money here than people think," said AAMA Exec VP Bob Fay. "There's a fantastic amount of money," agreed Tecmo's Mike Robinson. Some of the larger players in Mexico's coin-op world actually represent "old money" that was made in other industries such as cement manufacturing, leather tanneries, and real estate, to name a few. A portion of those fortunes are being re-invested in coin-operated music and amusement machines.

And where does the money come from, for players to put into the machines? "The present Mexican administration is pursuing economic policies which are building a true middle class," explained James Industries topper Jim Roberts, an experienced player in this market. "When the people get some money in their pockets, they spend some of it playing games," Roberts added. This theme of a growing Mexican middle class, along with praise for the enlightened economic policies of Mexico's President Salinas, was echoed throughout the show by Mexican and U.S. tradesters alike.

GOOD ATTENDANCE

Attendance at Mexpo exceeded AAMA's expectations. According to AAMA Convention Chairman Bill Cravens, some 500 visitors came through the doors on the first day. Certainly, the show floor was jam-packed from 4 PM till the 9 PM closing, with new waves of faces coming in every couple of hours. All of the seminars were "standing room only" affairs, with eager businessmen spilling out of the classroom and into the hall.

"We hoped for 300 showgoers, and we would have counted that as a clear success," Cravens said. "We got 500 on day one, and the heavy hitters were among them. It was a great turnout and we're obviously delighted." Attendance appeared somewhat lighter on the show's second day (partly due to a heavy downpour of tropical rain, which made it nearly impossible to get taxis), but seminars were still "SRO" and traffic in the aisles remained good.

While a handful of showgoers came up from Central and South American nations, the vast majority hailed from Mexico itself. Visitors ranged from Mexican supermillionaires, to low-paid technicians who were looking things over on behalf of their employers. Quite a few showgoers were already involved in the industry. "Everybody I talked to has several arcades," said more than one U.S. exhibitor.

Other exhibitors said many of the visitors were successful Mexican businessmen from other industries. These people responded to AAMA's newspaper advertisements, promoting a chance to become part of a new and profitable industry. "I thought we would see the same people as the last show," commented Mexel President Jacobo Shemaria, "but most were new. Many are businessmen from other industries and that's good; that's what we want!"

NORTH-SOUTH ALLIANCE?

The fine turnout and big sales made U.S. tradesters smile, but in the long run it was political progress which represents Mexpo's biggest success. The AAMA-sponsored show gave U.S. and Mexican trades-



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James Industries CEO Jim Roberts (at left) has done business in Mexico for years with all the major players. He's seen here at Mexpo with Data East's Gene Lipkin and Sega's Tom Petit.



Neighbors from Texas: Dynamo's Bill Rickett and Mark Struhs did major sales during Mexpo. Bill also helped plan Mexpo. Dynamo does some subassembly in Mexico and plans to do more.



Emilio Porte and Hugo Gomez of Electronic Games International, based in beautiful Monterrey, Mexico, had a booth packed with U.S. games.



At the Fabtek-Irem booth, from left: Capcom's Jeff Walker, Irem's Darlene Kindler and Konami's Steve Kauffman. The tall bearded gent in the back is, of course, Fabtek-Irem prexy Frank Ballouz. His eyes are closed because he's trying to remember the Spanish word for "hit game."



Sega's large booth looked splashy, thanks to their G-Loc deluxe video simulator, seen here with the firm's Lenore Sayers & Satish Tandon.



At the Atari Mexpo booth with their goods are Atarians Frank Cosentino and Anne Hayes.



Coin Controls' Rick Currie, Wells-Gardner's Larry Brady, Stephanie (Gas Light Rest.), James' Latin & So. Amer. rep Carlos Colin, Wico's Mike Rudowicz, Smart's Jeff Smart & James' John Blouin.



Selling all their product gets satisfied smiles from Konami's Frank Kaufmann, Betson's Robert Betti and Nintendo's Al Stone.



From left: James Industries' John Blouin with NSM's Mexican distributor Daniel Villa Alverez, NSM's Fire wallbox, Stephanie (Gas Light), an unidentified tradester and JI's Carlos Colin.

ters a chance to talk together, get to know each other, understand each other's perspectives better, and begin to form a possible partnership. This was important, because the initial situation included doubts, misunderstanding, cultural differences — and a serious lack of solid information — on both sides.

"Mexico simply doesn't have a clear-cut structure of manufacturer, distributor, operator as Americans understand it," explained one industry observer. "And I don't know if it's realistic to expect Mexico to acquire such a structure overnight. American tradesters may have been trying to force a square peg into a round hole."

This criticism includes some truth . . . but by the show's end, AAMA's "square peg" was getting rounder, and the Mexican Federation's "round hole" appeared willing to consider growing some edges. Mexpo took the trade from a threatened boycott of AAMA's Mexpo by Mexican operators, to the serious hope of a jointly-sponsored, single Mexican trade show in 1991.

MEXICAN COIN-OP

If Mexico's coin-op industry isn't just like the U.S. industry, how is it set up? Understanding the Mexican market requires first understanding Mexico itself. Some background: Mexico is a nation of 80 to 100 million people. No exact figure is available, because no active census is maintained by the government. Of the total Mexican population, some 20 million are concentrated in Mexico City, which is the oldest metropolis in North America, and the largest city in the world.

Free trade hasn't always been on Mexico's agenda, as U.S. newspapers have pointed out for years. Until recently, in fact, Mexico has kept up many barriers to free market development. High tariffs, a cultural trend toward socialism, and — in some previous administrations — somewhat anti-capitalist ideology and policies have kept the economy stagnant. The country's class structure has traditionally included the very rich, the poor, and virtually no one in between.

For the coin machine industry, this environment has meant few Mexican business people could af-

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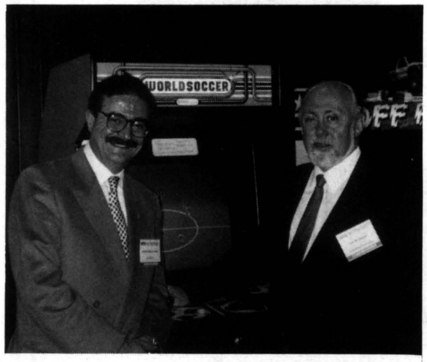
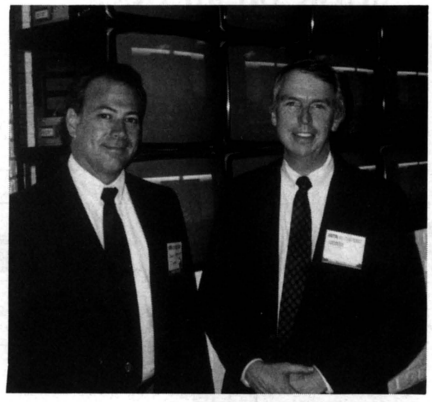
At Mexel's booth are: Nintendo's Jerry Monday and Al Stone, Mexel president Jacobo Shemaria, and industry vet Barry Feinblatt.



At Difadi's booth: Jaleco's Larry Berke, Difadi's Mike Kessler & Ernesto Felix-Diaz, Belam's Marc Haim & Alex Perner, Williams' Tom Cahill.



Difadi's Alberto Garcia Lopez (left) sold so many Off Road videos at the show that Leland's Ken Anderson said: "We ran out and I had to tell Alberto to stop making sales!"



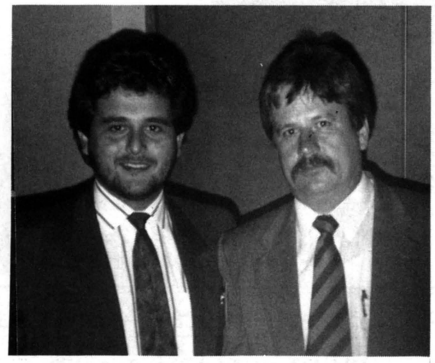
I-VIC's LeRoy Hancuff with Beeline Graphics' Tom Harlan at the successful July event.

ford to buy legitimate amusement products. Even fewer wanted to pay the high import tax, given the availability of cheap Korean counterfeits. In addition, many Mexicans apparently believed their countries copyright laws didn't apply to computer software and electronic amusement products.

Obviously, then, since Mexico didn't buy authorized new products, it didn't need U.S.-type distributors. The Mexican coin-op market consisted chiefly of a few big operators (perhaps six or ten), mostly running arcades, and these arcades were mostly located in the larger cities where the population had enough money to play games.

Along with the handful of large arcade operators, uncounted thousands of small street operators had a tiny amount of equipment. Some of these small-fry operators ran just three or four games. Some of them operated only one game. With a few conspicuous exceptions, equipment for the most part was counterfeit, outdated, and maintained poorly or not at all.

Political chaos was another problem. Five different associations claimed to be the national representatives of Mexican operators, and one association represented distributors and manufacturers. The result was a fragmented industry with no clear voice or direction.



Alex Perner from Belam International Sales (N.Y.) with Video Galex's Gabriel de la Torre.

The bottom line: Mexico's market up to this point has been chaotic, "gray" and fragmented. For many years, Mexico was much further from the rest of the industry in spirit, than it ever was geographically. The world's coin-op establishment either wrote Mexico off as unattainable, or ignored it completely.

NEW BREEZES BLOWING

Happily, all of this is changing. While per-capita income remains low (average $150 per month, according to some sources), President Salinas is clearly interested in opening up his nation to free enterprise. Trade barriers are falling, which means prices of authorized games and jukeboxes imported from the U.S. are becoming more attractive.

As a result, sales of legitimate product is climbing. Some of the super-operators have become — or are now becoming — distributors, assemblers and even manufacturers. For example, Mexel makes cranes and cabinets, and they assemble and exclusively distribute Nintendo coin-op video systems. Difadi makes cabinets and assembles and distributes Leland games, etc.

Given the past conditions of enforced separation and mutual ignorance, however, some Mexican operators were alarmed several months ago when AAMA announced plans to hold a trade show in Mexico City. The Mexican "establishment" did not feel it was consulted sufficiently, nor did it feel welcome to participate in the AAMA show.

In reaction, the four Mexican operating associations and the one manufacturer-distributor association united, calling themselves the "National Federation of of Operators, Assemblers and Fabricators of Video Machines." The Federation beat AAMA to the punch, holding its own trade show June 6-9 at the World Trade Center in Mexico City. Much of the product shown was counterfeit, according to reliable sources — although quite a few American manufacturers and suppliers managed to get their own legitimate goods displayed at the show.

WORKING TOGETHER

Unappealing as Mexico's past chaos seems to many American tradesters, Mexican tradesters have nevertheless made money under these conditions. Coin-op equipment proved so popular in Mexico that even beat-up, ancient equipment earned good money. One U.S. manufacturer said he saw kids liter-

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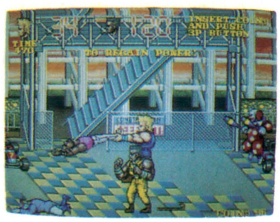

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Difadi's Patricia & Alberto Garcia Lopez; Maxie & Francisco Arguelles of Pennyland Arcades; and Arachnid's Marcio Bonilla. Marcio says Arachnid plans to market darts aggressively in Mexico: tournaments, promotions, the works.



Ace Novelty's Kim Garland with Nintendo's Jerry Monday in front of Ace's plush booth.



In his best dart-throwing attire was Dave Kristal of Valley Recreation Products, seen here with an AAMA-provided interpreter.



Coin Controls' Rick Currie gets a demo from NSM's Rus Strahan. Rus's jukebox seminar was a smash hit; ops kept him answering questions for over 7 hours . . . and that was just the first day! "They asked very astute questions," Rus reported.

ally standing in line to play on a damaged soccer table, and that a five-game location earned $200 U.S. per week . . . with half the games out of order! Another strong point for the Mexican market was that operators kept 70% of the take.

When they heard the Americans were coming, they understandably wanted to protect their profitability. "Do the Americans want to work with us?" some of the Mexican operators-cum-distributors asked at the time of their June show. "Or do they just want to come in and take over our market?" Fearing the latter, the Federation threatened to boycott AAMA's July trade show.

AAMA responded quickly, and on several fronts. First, the U.S. association invited qualified Mexican firms to join. Five Mexican distributors are now AAMA members. And some AAMA members said they hoped to reciprocate and become members of the Mexican coin-op Federation.

Second, AAMA members also let their Mexican distributors (some of whom are leading Federation members) take prime booths at the July Mexpo. Indeed, when visitors entered the U.S. Trade Center, the first display was a large and classy-looking anteroom entirely devoted to products represented by Difadi. Company president Ernesto Felix-Diaz is a big arcade operator and the authorized Mexican dealer for Premier, Leland, etc. Meanwhile, at the exhibit hall's main entrance, the eye-grabbing front booth belonged to Video Games of Mexico, whose president Oscar Gutierrez proudly displayed product from such as Capcom and Konami . . . and Oscar had company toppers Bill Cravens and Steve Kaufman working his booth!

Other prominent Mexican distributors who had booths at the AAMA show included Fadima (Memo Fridman and Southgate's John Gatens are partners here), Mexel (brothers Jacobo & Moises Shemaria), Video Electronic Games (Javier Loera) and Games Electronic International (Emilio Porte). In addition, Mexican distributors Deasa (David Traconis & Heriberto Sandoval), Rincon Musico (Martin de la Cruz) and Video Galex (Gabriel de la Torre Martin) had prominent places in booths shared with U.S. firms.

TALKING IT OUT

Finally, AAMA invited Federation leaders to meet and talk things over in person. The two sides sat down on Monday, July 9, one day before the show itself opened, to discuss the changing Mexican market.

By all reports, it was a stormy session. AAMA officials said the Mexican representatives claimed that their country's copyright law did not apply to the coin machine industry. Accordingly, the Mexican group felt that "gray" goods (counterfeits from Korea) were perfectly legal. AAMA disagreed, and in a follow-up session on July 11, AAMA had a Mexican attorney read the copyright law to Mexican operators.

The result? According to AAMA, Federation members seemed receptive and said they'd have their own attorneys check the legal language in question. "If the Federation's attorneys agree that AAMA's interpretation is correct, the Mexican operators said they will abide by the law," Fabtek's Frank Ballouz stated.

The AAMA-Federation talks were a "carrot and stick" affair. The stick includes a hard line on counterfeits (AAMA says U.S. trade negotiators will insist on copyright enforcement by the Mexican government before granting improved trade status to Mexico). AAMA's Exec VP Bob Fay is working with the American Embassy and Commerce Dept. to ensure this happens. AAMA will also mount the same "operator education campaign" that it ran in the U.S. a few years back, including a Spanish-language brochure on how to identify a counterfeit.

MAKING MONEY TOGETHER

"But we're not looking to go back and chew over the sins of the past," stressed AAMA's Cravens. "We're looking to go forward together and build a market," which brings us to the "carrot." In brief, AAMA wants to see the 6 or 12 major Mexican operators become U.S.-style distributors, buying and selling legitimate games, enjoying larger profits from better equipment, co-sponsoring a profitable and successful trade show with AAMA once a year, and helping to shape and control the Mexican coin-op industry.

AAMA, then, is holding out an


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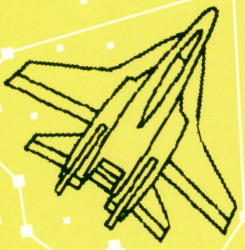
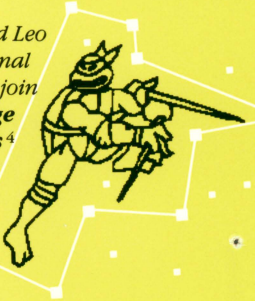
Players join forces with Chip 'n Dale and their Disney pals in the ***Rescue Rangers***[3] to frustrate Fat Cat and his chums in their sinister attempts to destroy the city.



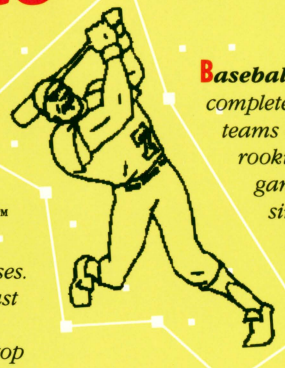
Alien invaders are draining the Earth's energy. As ***Captain Skyhawk***[1], it's the player's job to stop them. All the speed and firepower of a fully equipped, F-14VTS jet is at their disposal.



Don, Raphael, Mike and Leo have become international heros. Now players can join in the action as ***Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles***[4] struggle to protect their friends from the evil Foot Clan.



Super C[5] kicks into action where Contra left off. Players take on a whole army of demented alien soldiers led by the vile Red Falcon. Simultaneous play lets two players challenge the game's eight levels of excitement!



Baseball Stars[2] gives players complete control to choose leagues, teams and players—from green rookies to the true heroes of the game. And now, exciting simultaneous play means two players can push each other to the limit!



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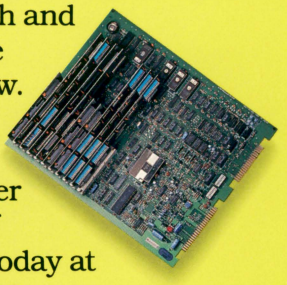

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inspiring vision of the future to Mexico's coin-op trade. To make it happen, AAMA is willing to work to get tariffs reduced from the present 38% to 20% (another carrot). AAMA manufacturers also say they'll supply Mexican distributors with new product at the same time, or shortly after, U.S. dealers receive it. And AAMA has promised to pay for technical seminars, teach service schools, etc.

The AAMA strategy is simple: get the "big boys" who control 90% of the present Mexican market to go legitimate, and the rest of Mexico's coin-op industry will follow along. The current powerhouses will grow even stronger, and some — maybe many — of the small-fry, three-machine operators will probably be driven out of the market, leaving fewer but stronger operators in place, at least initially.

"As Oscar Gutierrez said, once you get the big guys to commit to doing business straight, they'll want copyright laws enforced against the smaller guys who are undercutting their prices," one AAMA member said. It's classic capitalism: the survival of the fittest...and better health for the survivors.

Long-term, as Mexican distributors grow strong enough to offer financing to new customers (Mexel already does this), then an entirely new class of healthy, profitable operators will be created. Everybody will make money: U.S. manufacturers, Mexican distributors and Mexican operators.

Another plus to an open market: American manufacturers may take advantage of skilled, inexpensive Mexican labor to start doing more assembly and manufacturing here. Several U.S. firms confided definite plans for such projects. Costs would be lower (wages, medical insurance, shipping fees, etc.) and profits would be higher.

REMAINING CHALLENGES

At presstime, the Federation had not replied to AAMA's overtures yet, but the outlook was good. "This whole thing has been pretty traumatic for the Mexican operators and distributors," commented Dynamo's Bill Rickett. "We've come down here and changed the way they've done business for 10 years. They've got to reassess where they'll buy games, how much they'll pay, whom they'll sell to, everything. But the potential here is tremendously exciting."

Of course, even with all the good will in the world, Mexico's transition to contemporary business practice will take a while. There's still a lot to learn — by both sides. "We're still trying to figure out who the key players are," admitted one major U.S. game maker. And Mexican currency is still weak and relatively unstable (it's revalued every six months, which is why most Mexican games run on tokens). And Mexico still has to build a middle class which can become the new breed of U.S.-style operators. "The challenge of selling new games is to establish credit for our customers," a Mexican distributor explained. "Most have to buy with cash, because we can't give them a line of credit yet."

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

But these are obstacles which can be overcome. "We feel very positive about what's going to happen," said Bill Cravens as the Mexican trade show wrapped up. "This show is just the beginning." Indeed, U.S. government officials have told AAMA that Mexico is already America's Number Three foreign market (after Canada and Japan), and that it will grow even stronger as the 1990s continue.

Beyond Mexico itself, AAMA hopes its first venture South of the Border will prove a doorway to Central and South American markets. Mexican distribs have already offered to pave the way, and U.S. tradesters say this help is needed and appreciated. "We can learn from a lot from our Mexican friends," stated Bill Cravens. "We need their help just as much as they need ours." Looking forward to possible shows in Columbia or perhaps Argentina, AAMA Exec VP Bob Fay added: "Our Mexican expo was such a complete success, we're thinking of taking it on the road!"

As this publication has said before, Mexican coin-op is fast moving "from siesta to fiesta," and the July 9-10 show in Mexico City put even more Marachi Band rhythm into the trade's global dance step. ◆



USA Games' Sam Franklin & Lock America's Frank Minella (fellow So. Californians).



The seminar on video games gives you some idea just how popular Mexpo's educational sessions were. Every seat was taken and eager listeners spilled out into the hall.



Brady Distributing took a booth at Mexpo; seen here are the firm's Tom Keil and wife Jan with interpreter Guadalupe Morales.



Music-Vend's Marv Galante and Mike Damtew predicted that Mexico will provide an excellent market for used games from the States.



Rich Babich of the Colorado Vending Exchange was another U.S. dealer pleased to find a market for used goods; his sign says "Specialists in Reconditioned Equipment."

Road Show

SNK takes their four new Neo•Geo games on a whirlwind tour of 24 distributorships

SNK Corp. of America has debuted four new games for its multi-game *Neo•Geo* system in an incredibly busy, traveling road show.

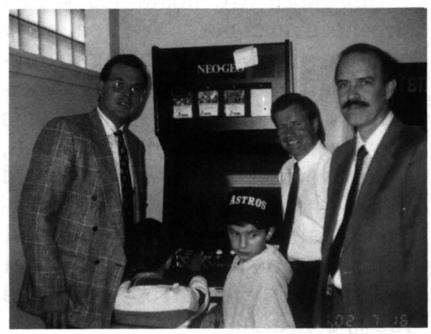
Prexy Paul Jacobs explained that from July 16 to July 27, sales rep Tracy Tate visited many of SNK's dealers in the midwest and on the west coast, while rep Rachel Davies stopped in at those on the east coast. Their distributor stops totalled 24 by the time these frequent fliers returned home, with some days including two stops.

The reason for all the hustle and bustle? Four new games: *Riding Hero*, a motorcycle driving game with the multi-link feature (four cabinets can be tied in for simultaneous competition); *Ninja Combat*, as the title suggests, a fighting game; *Cyberlip*, a futuristic game with robots and androids; and *Super Spy*, an espionage action game. Paul Jacobs advised that *Riding Hero* and *Ninja Combat* are on the market now; the other two will ship mid-month. Also, the firm plans to introduce four additional titles by AMOA showtime, bringing their available library of games to 12.

Traveling with Tracy Tate was Mr. Takeshita from SNK Japan, who was on hand to learn more about the American marketplace, operators, distributors and game tastes. The pairs' stops covered Atlas and American Vending in Chicago, Central in Omaha, Lieberman in Minneapolis, Progressive in San Diego, Mountain Coin and Betson Pacific in Phoenix, Colorado Game Exchange in Denver, Music-Vend in Seattle, Dunis in Portland, and Betson Pacific and C.A. Robinson in Los Angeles.



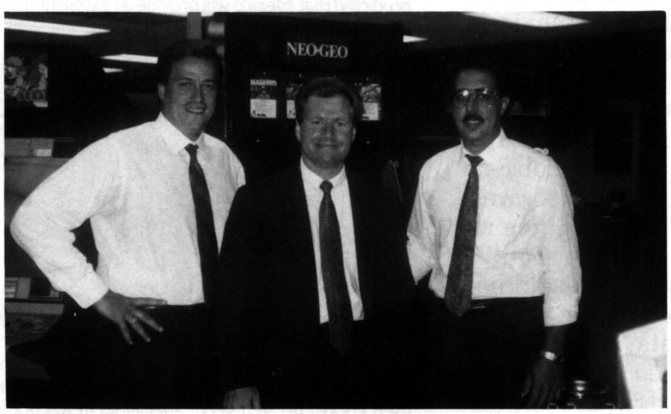
Tracy Tate, Atlas Distributing's Jerry Marcus, Mr. Takeshita (SNK's Osaka representative), Alan Zeidman, Scott Lippman and Mac Brier at one of the first stops on the SNK new Neo•Geo *new game tour.*



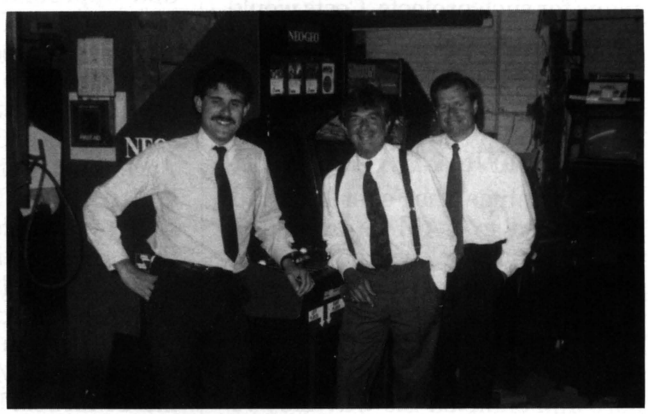
Aladdin's Castle's Ron Malinowski & John Werner check out the games at Atlas with Tracy Tate.

Rachel Davies visited Rowe-Dedham and NECO in Massachusetts, Betson and Mondial in New Jersey, Eastern in Philadelphia, J&J and Cleveland Coin in Indianapolis, Brady in Charlotte, Birmingham Vending in Alabama, Greater Southern in Atlanta and SunBelt in Dallas.

Paul Jacobs said that it was physically impossible for his sales folks to visit personally with every one of their distributors this time around, but that they'll try to cover their other dealers when their next new *Neo•Geo* product debuts.



At the American Vending Sales stop, Ron Bolger, Tracy Tate, Frank Gumma Jr.



In the World Wide Distributing warehouse, Doug & Fred Skor with Tracy Tate.

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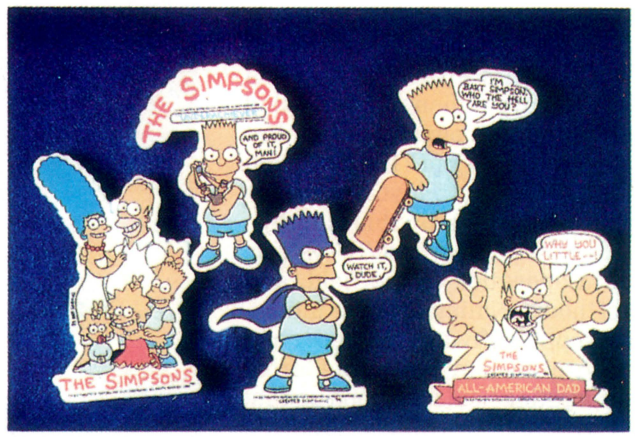

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Nintendo Bows VS. Dr. Mario *Pak At San Diego Distributor Meeting*

We thought that headline would catch your attention. Right: Nintendo has decided to launch their brand new *Dr. Mario* strategy game in a VS. pak, even though they filled their software commitment to that system years back (a "time" version of the game for *PlayChoice* also ships simultaneously this month).

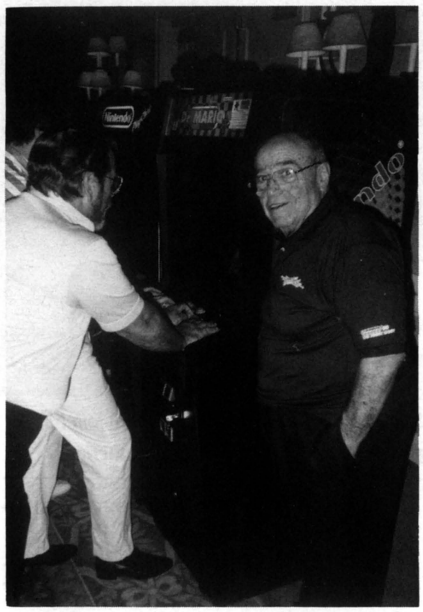
There are numerous VS. systems still in operation in the field, and even though Nintendo never intended to supply software for those cabinets forever, they felt a "tug" from the operating field for a good update and targeted *Dr. Mario.* And it's perfect. The game is similar to *Tetris* and *Columns* in its strategy theme (it uses medicine capsule art and little dealies that represent viruses) but it's basically the classic strategy of filling up the stack.



Feinblatt's 60-foot-plus yacht, dubbed the "Nintendo" for the afternoon, slips by the Coronado Island bridge as coin folk wave at the camera. The cruise was marvelous fun!



Prepare to embark! Tradesters from many nations (including Mexico & Germany besides the USA) gather dockside at Barry Feinblatt's sailing yacht.



New York State patriarch Johnny Bilotta snapped by the Dr. Mario VS. *display. That's Don Waters banging the buttons on the new video game.*

One reason Nintendo stopped making VS. software was because the system's hardware couldn't handle the more exotic type of video product then coming to market. *Dr. Mario* is simple enough to be driven by the old VS. hardware, but that doesn't mean it isn't fun. And, best of all, it's got appeal for all ages and genders in all types of locations. The price, since it's a VS. pak, is inexpensive, but the collection throw could be large.

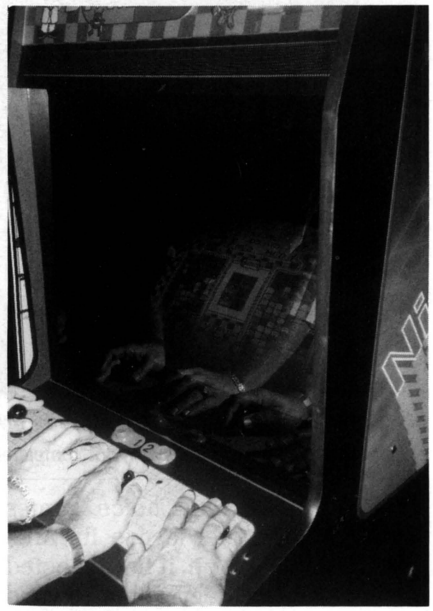
In the simplest possible terms, if you have a VS. system that you haven't converted, this is a hot buy. If you wonder whether the game is also coming out on their home system, it is, but not until the end of the year at the earliest.

Dr. Mario was presented at Nintendo's Seventh Annual Distributor Meeting, held July 19-22 at the Le Meridien on Coronado Island in San Diego. The swank resort provided the golf, tennis and boating that distributors and their families enjoy. Yes, Nintendo provided a whopping amount of social activity, but the chief reason the dealers came all the way down to America's southwestern tip was to talk business.

The intro of *Dr. Mario* in VS. was warmly received. And, the ongoing push on the various *PlayChoice* system configurations got its boost as well; *Rad Racer 2* and *Ninja Gaiden 2* have joined the libary of *PC* titles and *Captain Skyhawk, Yo Noid* and *World Cup Soccer* are testing and probably coming. In addition, the huge public recognition of the very world "Nintendo" is being exploited (the brand name is larger than the *PlayChoice* wording on new cabinet plexes).

Vice President Al Stone stated at the meeting: "Instead of hiding our success in consumer video, we're proud of it. The industry should use that well-known Nintendo name by putting out *PlayChoice* with more vigor. Every distributor showroom must have a *PlayChoice* on the floor. This is a very viable product we're selling," stated Stone, "under a brand name that's widely recognized."

The Nintendo veep further informed dealers that "negotiations are going on now with some major fast food chains to get coin machines in their places . . . places that don't have machines right now. The Nintendo name has begun opening that door and if and when this situation is completed, distributors and operators will participate in the

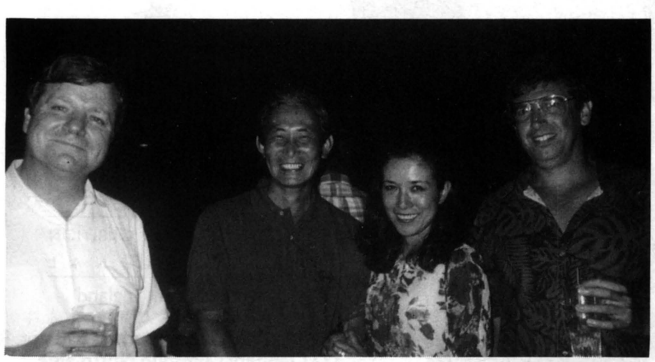


Interesting photo shows distributors' reflected hands pushing the sticks & slamming the buttons on the new VS. Dr. Mario.

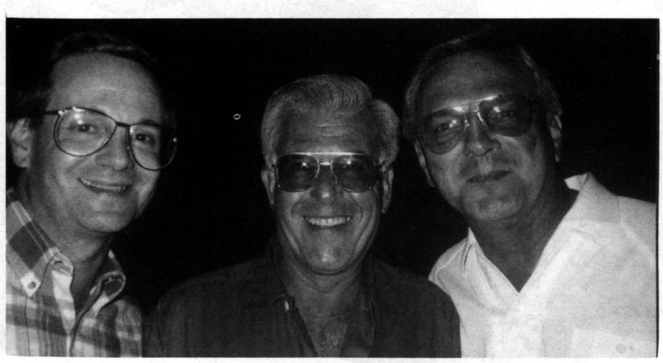
usual way. That's the kind of clout the Nintendo name has in the business world," Stone declared.

Besides Stone, regional sales reps Chuck Arnold and Pete Walton pumped up distributor enthusiasm for the Nintendo line during the meeting. It's incredible to remember that Nintendo was once solely coin-op in the games business and today boasts maybe 100 million home players world-wide (they say one out of four American homes presently has an N.E.S. system).

So, after years of operator rancor about Nintendo leaving *VS.* and concentrating on *PlayChoice* and the more attractive home video market, the message in San Diego was that this seminal video game company wants operators to piggyback on its brand name recognition by put-



On the social side, friends reacquaint at Le Meridien (from left to right) John Gatens, Minoru & Yoko Arakawa and Marc Haim.



Jay Waldman, Harvey Weingarten and Mike Minor give us three good "passport" shots during the San Diego festivities.



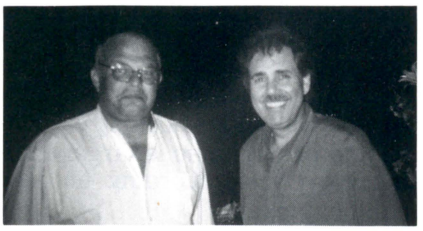
Rich Babich (left) and Jerry Monday with their wives Bev & Sue enjoyed one night away from the biz mill (well, not completely away from it).



Sharon Feder and her dad Sam (from Vancouver's Pacific Vend) join Mr. & Mrs. Art (Nintendo) Gallagher for a snapshot at the social gathering.

ting out those *PlayChoice* games . . . and to further prove its allegiance with coin-op, it has directed a fine new strategy game toward the VS. market.

This doesn't mean Nintendo has reopened its VS. software department (this new game could be a one-time extra); their chief product remains the *PlayChoice* system (the R.O.I. of the concept was hammered out during the San Diego conference).



Bernie Donalies (Stella, Germany) at left with Barry Feinblatt (B.F.E.) stopped their animated conversation to give us a photo at the party.

Good business was done, according to Stone, and certainly lots of pleasure was enjoyed those days in the sun, not the least of which was a fabulous ride on San Diego Bay for a lucky group on Barry Feinblatt's huge sailboat, resplendent for the occasion with a huge Nintendo logo on the mainsail. It sure looked great.

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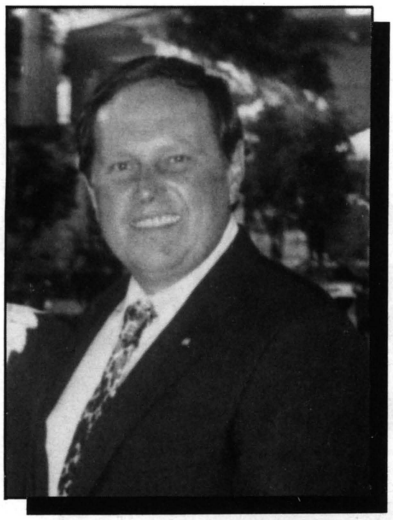
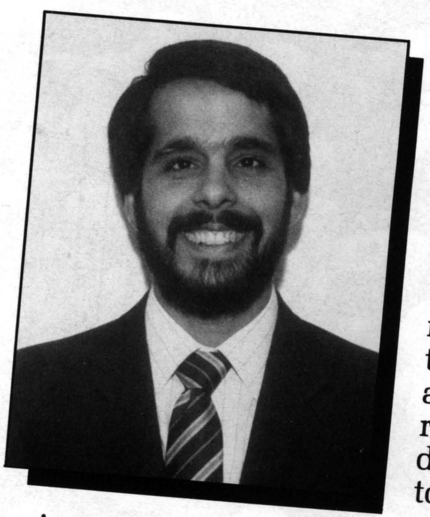


PAUL BORCHARDT
Borchardt's Coin Machines
Amarillo, Texas

Video is doing very well for me right now. We've got some games that are out there performing great, even if it isn't the boom that it was in the '80s. Revenue is up in our amusement park and in street game-rooms. In our game centers, the top 10 games (out of 30 or 40 total) consistently produce 70% of the revenue. In our amusement park, where there are more competing types of coin-op games, our top 10 videos still produce 58% of total coin-op revenues, with help from sitdown deluxe units on 50-cent play. That tells me video is a very successful product for me, if I choose carefully.



DAVID CAPILOUTO
Greater Southern Distributing
Atlanta, Georgia

Video is our bread and butter. It's still our workhorse and earns more money than anything else out there. For all the talk about redemption, video draws the customers into the locations and when they're down, we're in trouble. Video is also the type of game with the most potential for development.



GARY GOUSE
Birmingham Vending
Birmingham, Alabama

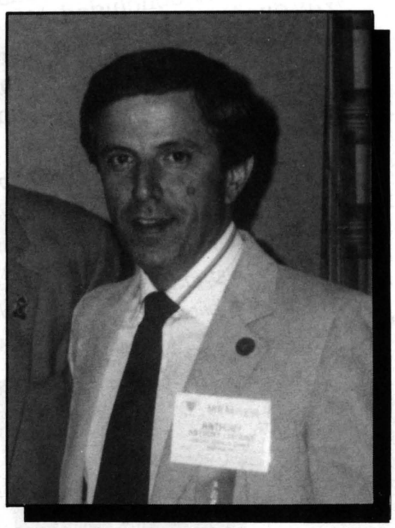
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is a hot game, at the right price at the right time. That's a real video success story. Another area that's doing well for us is good kits in universal cabinets with 25'' monitors. Every month it's something different, but there's usually three or four winning video kits around for us to sell, so we've had some success stories there.

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH VIDEO GAMES



MIKE McWILLIAMS
General Coin
Portland, Oregon

There are some operators whose businesses are up. Business is actually up in locations like bowling alleys and high-traffic malls and chain stores (not convenience stores). That's probably due to a new ingestion of players, created by the home game systems. Parents are more likely to let kids play coin-op and even some adults are playing. I think we have a larger base of players than we had before.



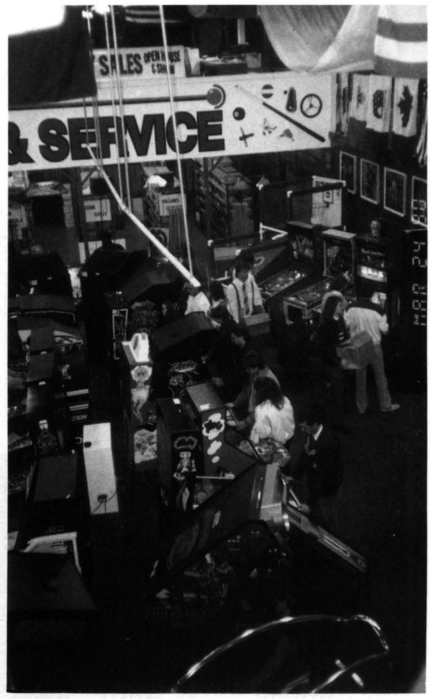
ANTHONY FALCIGNO
Collier County Games
Naples, Florida

As operators, we're alive and well. Anybody who says video is dead is a defeatist! Creativity and perseverance is the key. There's still plenty of profit in video games, if they are placed in the proper locations. Among new games, I feel money-makers and potential winners include *Final Fight, Turtles, Snow Brothers, Aliens,* and others. The key to success is to do your homework at every step. Perform careful research before buying; be wise when making rotations; and keep up the maintenance and service.

Hot Stuff!

New Way Sales (Ontario) hosts a whopper of an open house





"Most successful pinball school ever!" smiled Paul Janda. "Biggest Canadian open house product show of all time!" grinned Jerry Janda. The toppers of New-Way Sales Co. hosted over 200 operators and 100 technicians to their March 23 event (Rexdale, Ontario). Factory reps from a dozen major manufacturers were also in attendance.

"Everyone found the new games fantastic," said Paul and Jerry. "They also enjoyed the lunch and buffet." After the open house and flipper class concluded, the New-Way duo hosted manufacturer reps to a thank-you dinner atop Toronto's famous CN Tower. In all, a memorable occasion!



The photos on this page show just some of the crowd at the well-attended open house at New Way sales, including those who sat in on the pinball school. Check out the really great layout and design of this dealership, including machines coming right out of the walls (photo middle right & below).





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Andy Amasses Arcades

Andrew Newman, chairman of Edison Bros., speaks out for first time after adding Time-Out arcade chain to Space Ports, Dave & Busters

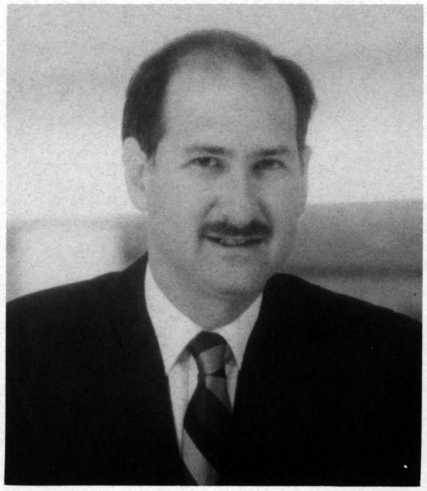
In a remarkably short time, Edison Brothers Stores, Inc. (St. Louis, Mo.) has gone from "Who Brothers?" in coinland, to "Arcade Force to Be Reckoned With." With their May purchase of the Time-Out arcade chain (88 stores) from Sega, the company expanded its coin-op entertainment operations to about 140 stores in 30 states. But wait! They're not finished yet: the firm plans to expand its current arcades into new malls, and may also acquire additional entertainment properties.

At this point, many tradesters are asking: "Who are these guys?" Edison was founded in 1922 with one store in Atlanta, Ga.; the firm moved to St. Louis in 1929. They've always been specialty retailers, and currently operate a "portfolio" of 2,400 retail outlets in all 50 states. Of these 2,400 units, about 1,000 are shoe stores, while the other 1,400 are chiefly men's and women's clothing boutiques.

Edison Chairman Andrew "Andy" Newman and Edison President Martin Sneider were classmates at Harvard Business School. They've worked together at Edison Brothers for 20 years. "Basically, this has been our only job," Newman smiled. They attained their current posts in 1987.

"We began a significant restructuring of the company at that time," Newman explained. "The idea was to start growing our winners and eliminating our losers." They also started an Entertainment Division and began acquiring coin-op properties.

In 1989, they purchased the Dallas-based Dave & Buster's freestanding restaurant-entertainment complexes. In spring of 1990, they purchased Adventure Properties, Ltd. (48 gamerooms, most named Space Port). The Time-Out purchase followed quickly. Adventure Properties did $12 million in sales last year, while Time-Out did $33 million. Purchase prices were not disclosed.



*We chatted with Andy Newman on the phone and found him to be a very approachable fellow ("Call me Andy, please") with a nice sense of humor. He certainly seems to know his business (mall retailing) very well. He also knows what he **doesn't** know about coin-op, and says he's eager to learn. We discussed Edison's moves so far, their view of coin-op today, and their plans for the future.*

REPLAY: What kind of research did you do before entering the coin-op amusements business?

NEWMAN: We began doing some research a year and a half ago, to see what additional areas of specialty store retailing we should be in. We have had our greatest success in serving young customers. We like a lot of the characteristics of young customers and have worked hard to merit their patronage. We sell them a lot of products, but in our analysis, we saw a lot of their spending going into non-products. That is, we saw a lot of time and money devoted to having a good time, doing something experiential, buying something from which they take away only a smile. One of those things is the coin-op business, or games, or indoor entertainment business. And we particularly thought that if we got involved in this in a way that also used our real estate expertise in shopping malls, that this would be an advantage. So we made the acquisitions.

REPLAY: As a matter of fact, you've made some very large investments into coin machine operations.

NEWMAN: Of our capital expenditures in the past 18 months, about $180 million has been put into apparel growth and about $60 million into entertainment. We set up a new division called Edison Brothers Entertainment. Dave and Buster's is part of that, as is Edison Brothers Mall Entertainment, which now consists of the former Adventure Properties and Time-Out operations. We do a little over a billion dollars in sales altogether. On an annualized basis, entertainment represents about five percent of our sales at this time. We call this segment of our business "experiential retailing."

REPLAY: Many mall retailers seem to have a negative image of arcades — they attract teenagers who may behave badly, etc. Did Edison Brothers ever have such a negative image of

the industry, and if so, what changed your view?

NEWMAN: We've always been enthusiastic about young customers, because they've always been the main source of our income. We look at a mall entertainment center as a natural place for young people, just as a shopping mall is. Most shopping centers also understand that young people are very important to attract — not just for the current business they bring to a mall, but also for the business they will bring when they mature. Young people have tremendous spending power and are "with it."

REPLAY: Let's talk about Edison's management plans for its arcade empire. Will you leave the headquarters of the various arcade chains where they were, or move them to St. Louis?

NEWMAN: We're going to be consolidating the operation of the two mall entertainment companies into St. Louis over the summer. They are currently headquartered in Fairfax, Virginia and in Philadelphia.

REPLAY: Industry veteran Arnold Kaminkow was running Time-Out from Fairfax when Sega owned it. Will he remain with Time-Out under the Edison regime?

NEWMAN: No, he's not part of our on-going organization. The president of Edison Brothers Mall Entertainment is Andy Halliday. He has been with Edison Brothers for seven years as general manager of one of our retail divisions. And we will be bringing several of the key people from both Adventure Properties and Time-Out into our organization.

REPLAY: Dr. Jerry Sequin, who heads the AMOA Notre Dame Executive Development Program, cited the "baby bust" and said demographics may be working against the industry, shrinking our customer base. On the other hand, Gallup and Forbes have reported that 4-to 12-year-olds now control $75 billion and like to spend it. What do your figures show?



NEWMAN: There will be some good demographics coming up in the 1990s, relative to growth in the number of teenagers. Naturally, we're looking forward to that.

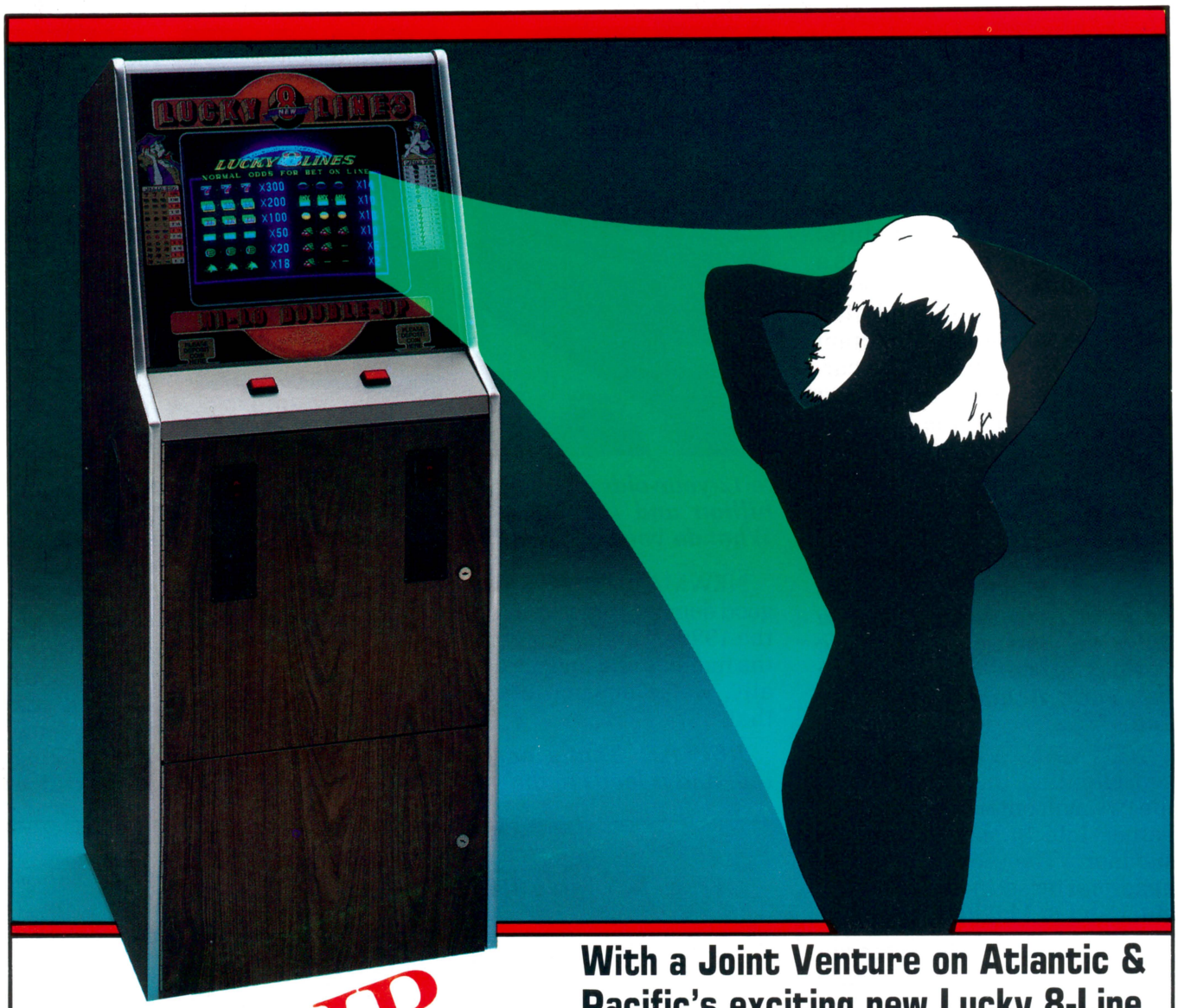
REPLAY: That's encouraging, and it leads to the issue of why Edison decided to buy into arcades at this particular time. Were you conscious of the industry's current "soft market," or did you feel coin-op arcades are a winner long-term, regardless of current market strength?

NEWMAN: We're conscious of the current difficulties of the coin-op business, as well as some market share changes taking place within it. We look at a

The BONDEAL CHART

top kits and dedicated videos at the Hong Kong Flashback Arcade for the week ending July 14, 1990

TOP KITS	Jul. 14	Jul. 7	Jul. 30	Weeks on Location
Combatribes	1	7	—	2
Bonanza Bros.	2	4	—	2
Narc	3	8	—	2
Mustang	4	5	1	5
Dark Seal	5	—	6	3
Thunder Fox	6	10	0	2
Lightning Fighters	7	1	2	8
Rough Racer	8	6	3	11
Smash TV	9	—	—	1
World Cup '90	10	—	—	27
TOP DEDICATED GAMES				
Big Run	1	1	2	22
Hard Drivin'	2	2	1	63
Super Off Road	3	3	3	65
Super Hang On	4	5	5	149
Ninja Turtles	5	4	4	30



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space in a shopping mall as a "box," with a specific, focused, target market. What exactly is inside that box, to attract that target market, changes with the fashion. We regard the coin-op business as another fashion business. So what goes on in these locations, to give people good experiences they're willing to spend money on, will change from time to time.

REPLAY: In recent months, Time-Out's previous management had been putting increased emphasis on redemption games and rides. Is that something Edison will continue doing?

NEWMAN: Right now, there is indeed a resurgence of interest in redemption games, which does allow for some broadening of the targeted customer, particularly at certain hours of the day. The challenge for manufacturers is to continue coming up with new products which the consumer will continue to be intrigued by! As to whether we're going to keep increasing the emphasis on redemption, I'm afraid it's still too early for us to know the answers to these very important questions.

REPLAY: Okay. We'll stop asking you to look into a crystal ball for the moment, and ask for some 20-20 hindsight instead. We've noticed that Time-Out had also added carousels, kiddie rides and other amusement park-type rides to some of its larger centers. Based on your study of past earnings figures, is the ride mix complementing the coin-op games, or do the two types of equipment compete?

NEWMAN: In one sense, I guess you could call rides a complement to video games, particularly if they bring in additional customers. But clearly, any new item competes with any existing item in your facility for the consumer's dollar. In a sense, coin-op or redemption competes with a record store or our own Jeans West or Booktree stores or the movie theater or live concerts.

REPLAY: As a national arcade chain operator, you've got a big pocketbook to open, when it comes time to spruce up your equipment mix. Are you chiefly doing business directly with manufacturers, as a "national account"?

NEWMAN: We're looking at that. We will be exploring the full variety of ways to acquire machines.

REPLAY: Can you discuss your plans for further expansion or acquisition in the U.S.?

NEWMAN: We currently operate about 140 units, including several of the large mall entertainment centers, and we expect to be expanding in both of these areas, as well as Dave & Buster's. How much expansion occurs in what area, will really depend on the demand from mall developers, who appear to be keenly interested in Edison's entry into this business.

REPLAY: How about operating in Canada, Latin America, or overseas?

NEWMAN: We're looking at just the United States right now.

REPLAY: Since you've started a Mall Entertainment division, are you also thinking of acquiring any movie theaters?

NEWMAN: We haven't ruled out other parts of the entertainment business.

REPLAY: What is your long-term outlook on the industry's future?

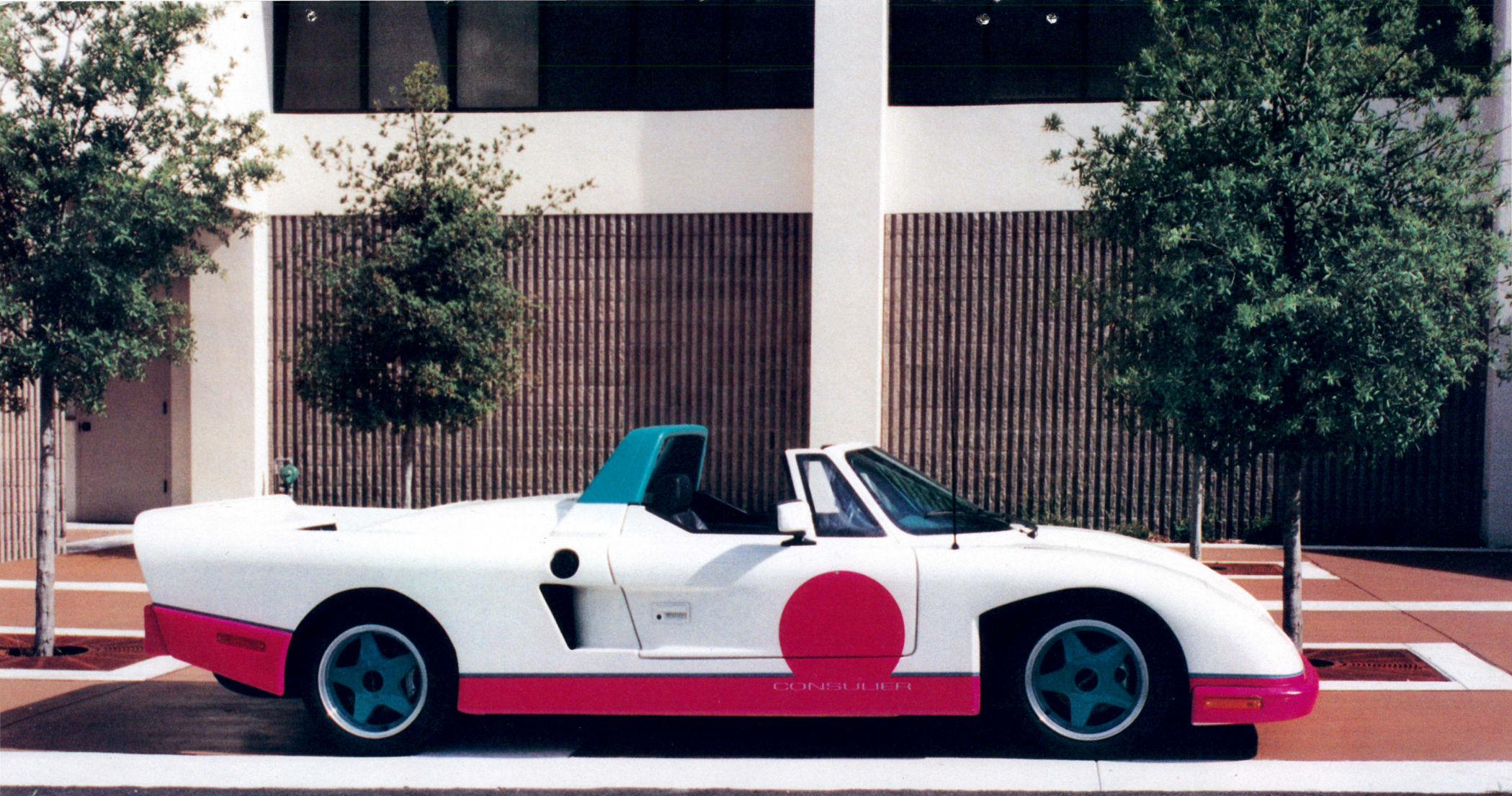
NEWMAN: We hope the future is very bright! We expect to play a large role in it. As for whether it's going to be more family-oriented or youth-oriented, we don't know. We don't pretend to know the answers to many of the important questions in this business, which we are new to. We have a lot to learn and hope we bring a lot to the table, in terms of our ability to operate centrally a large group of widely-separated stores throughout the nation.

REPLAY: Is there any other message you'd like to communicate to the coin-operated amusements industry at this time?

NEWMAN: We would welcome any advice or help from any of your readers, or any of the vendors in the industry, who have had a lot of valuable experience in this most interesting field. We're excited about the industry and looking forward to a profitable coin-op career.

REPLAY: Thank you for this interview. ◆





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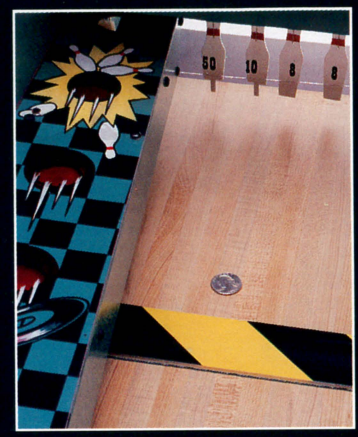

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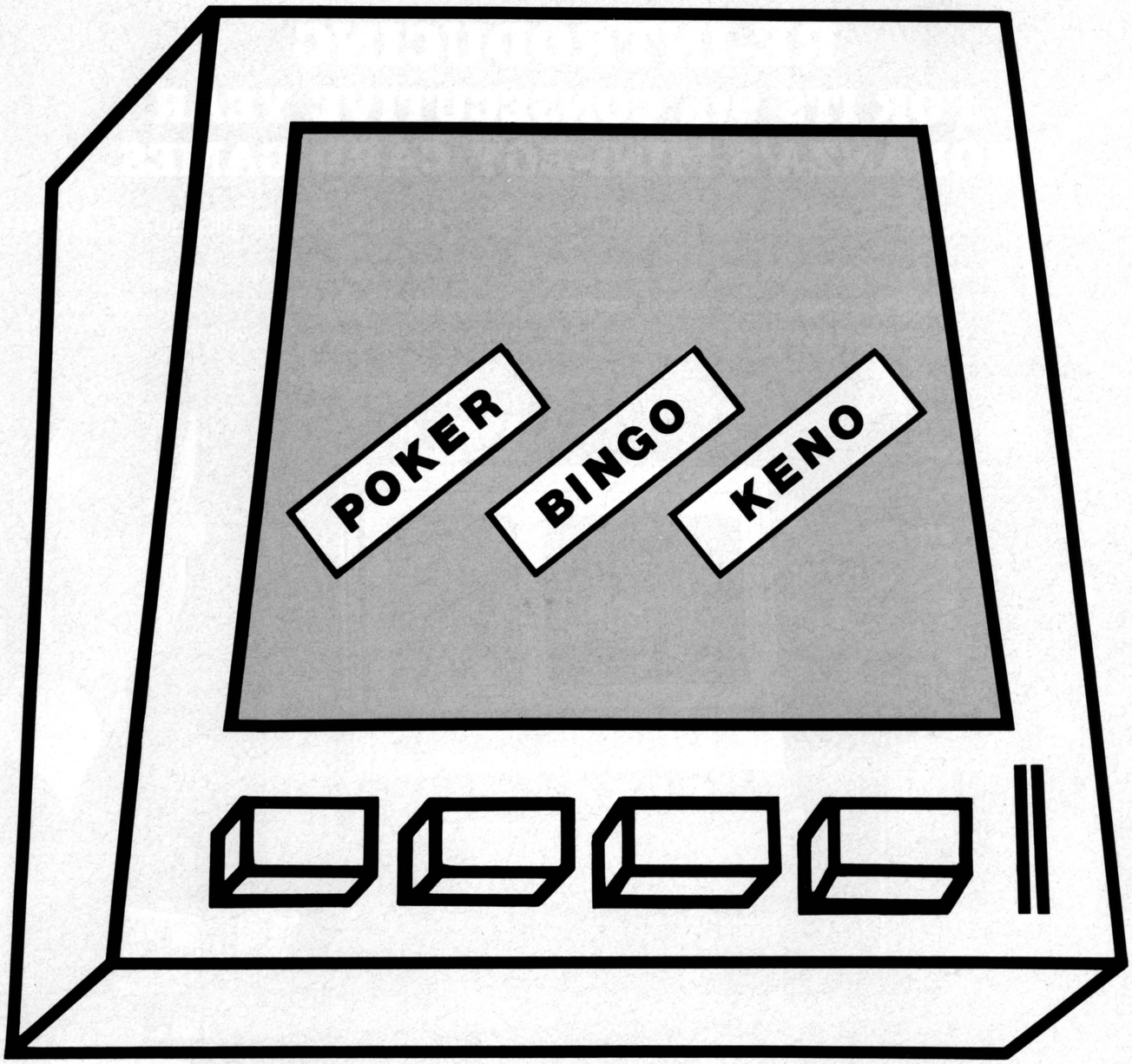

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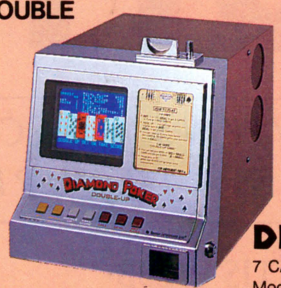

DIAMOND POKER
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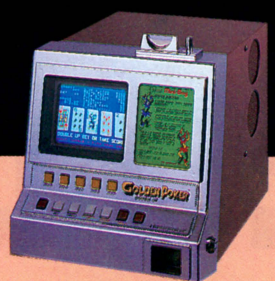

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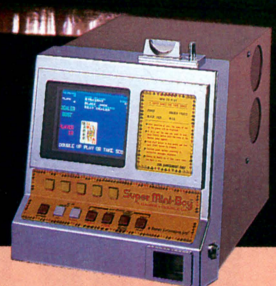

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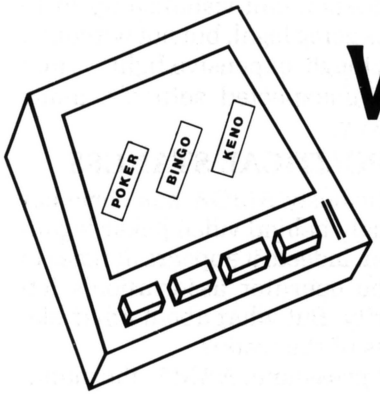
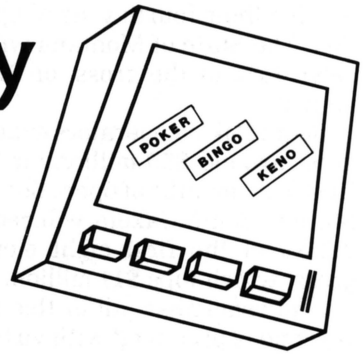


Will Video Lottery Terminals Be *"The Machine"* of the 1990s?



Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink. Change "water" to "money" and you've summed up the fiscal troubles of many a tax-thirsty state government today. State legislatures are suffering a dollar drought. States are parched for revenue refreshment after a decade of Reagan-era federal cutbacks and home-grown "Proposition 13" style measures. Accordingly, state leaders are salivating over the shimmering image of a fiscal oasis: namely, multi-million dollar potential annual revenues from legal video pokers.

Even before a few state governments started getting video poker fever, video pokers had already made believers out of many members of the coin machine industry. Operators, distributors and manufacturers are all looking for the next *Pac-Man*... that elusive machine which promises to create instant wealth. Legal pokers inherited the *Pac-Man* crown from many tradesters, after they began hearing about poker machines in South Dakota that made $500, $600 and even $700 per week... and the same machines kept earning those figures, in the same locations, month after money-making month... year after money-making year.

IMPACT ON OPERATORS

South Dakota and Montana had some out-of-state operators trying to cash in on their markets, but not too many. Thoughtful preparation helped dampen this trend. Home-state operators secured their best locations with contracts long before pokers became legal; they ordered equipment early and in quantity, so they'd be the first on the street to have machines; and they quickly reinvested poker profits into more gaming machines for the first couple of years. (At least, that's been true in Montana's case; presumably South Dakota — a newer legal market — will follow suit.)

Route operations grew after pokers were legalized. Montana's Phil Benson (Montana Music Rentals) said he used to employ 9 people when his route was purely amusements. Now his staff includes 16 full-timers and one part-timer.

Legalized poker has not encouraged larger operators to swallow up the small ones, said SMS Sales and Marketing VP Jim Pietrangelo. "If anything, it's made the small guys stronger," Jim said. "Their routes are really worth something now — profitable to operate, valuable in case they want to sell."

IMPACT ON AMUSEMENTS

What about poker's impact on amusement earnings? In liquor-licensed locations with pool, darts, etc., one South Dakota operator stated that earnings on these machines fell by as much as 40% when pokers were installed. From talking to other Dakota operators, he said, that seemed to be a common experience. But this operator didn't expect videos, redemption, novelties, etc. in non-alcoholic locations to be affected whatsoever.

As for operator purchase of amusements, Montana's Phil Benson admitted that for the first three years of legalization, he virtually ignored amusements and plowed all his profits back into "pokers, pokers, pokers, kenos, pokers. But now I'm starting to come back and refurbish things like jukeboxes, pool and darts," Phil added.

On the other hand, former WAMO President Jim Stansfield said that a recent field trip to South Dakota suggested that operators there are already "spiffing up" their routes with such upscale amusement-only items as nostalgia jukeboxes, etc. Stansfield also noted that, in Wisconsin at least, operators are "tied in" with pool and dart leagues, so buying of those types of equipment should continue uninterrupted if poker is legalized in Wisconsin. Same for jukeboxes, he said, since operators don't like to have too many phonographs from a single era.

IMPACT ON STATES

Legalized video poker makes big money for individual operators, but it makes **tremendous** money for the state government. The basic figure being used by Montana operators is that the state's legal vidpoker program as a whole is grossing $112 per capita, per year. (Figure achieved by dividing total gross into state population.) That $112 translates into about $2 per person, per week, times 52 weeks. (By the way, the Florida lottery commission independently came up with virtually the same numbers for Florida in their lottery survey.)

On a statewide basis, Montana operators expect to gross $110 million for their fourth year of operation. The State of Montana will receive 15% of the gross, or $17.25 million.

South Dakota operators expect to gross around $50 million for their first eight months of operation. The State of South Dakota will receive 22.5% of the first eight months' gross, which tops $11 million.

And remember: all of this state revenue is produced with virtually no overhead for the state.

Wisconsin operators are hoping their state could realize a pre-tax total of $100 million per year from legalized video poker, with perhaps $75 million going to operators and locations, and $25 million to the state.

VIDPOKER BANDWAGON

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Operators want to run them; distributors want to sell them; manufacturers want to build the machines and/or parts and supplies that make them work.

The score so far: at presstime, operator associations in two states (Montana, South Dakota) have won the right to operate pay-out video pokers. Associations in at least 18 states are actively making the attempt.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

How far will it go? Wally Bohrer, respected chairman of AMOA's Government Relations Committee, predicts that by the end of 1991, video poker gambling will be legal in at least five states. AMOA has weighed in strongly on the pro-poker bandwagon with its "Truth in Amusement Committee," its lobbying of NAGRA (National Assn. of Gaming Regulators of America), its lobbying of the National Convention of State Legislators, and its appropriation of at least $50,000 for pro-poker lobbying this year alone.

How many states will have legal pay-off video poker by the year 2,000? It's anybody's guess. Two well-connected tradesters (a poker manufacturer and a poker distributor) think it could go as high as 15 to 18 states. More conservatively, this publication can visualize up to 10 states going legal, but not without a long, tough, expensive fight . . . and some unexpected setbacks along the way.

POLITICAL STANCES

Obviously AMOA has come out strongly behind video poker legalization. Indeed, it appears at times to be the operator association's top priority. But what about other elements of the trade?

At presstime, AAMA, the manufacturer/distributor association, had taken no formal stance yet. Manufacturers and distributors (so far) are officially on the sideline. Many are worrying that operators might stop buying amusements if pokers go legal, and hoping at the same time they'll have a poker product to sell if they do.

Some distributors already have poker lines and have made good sales into legal states. Others are working hard to help operators legalize pokers, so they'll have a new market for these profitable (and costly) machines.

As for what individual U.S. manufacturers think about video poker — well, one AAMA member is primarily a poker maker. One U.S. OEM supplier with noted political acumen has been quoted as saying, "Video poker is our future." Video game manufacturers, who might have been expected to protest first and loudest against poker legalization, have remained surprisingly quiet on the issue. Why? Well, perhaps because several U.S. subsidiaries of large Japanese video game manufacturers know their Japanese headquarters are busily making gambling equipment for the Asian market. Indeed, such equipment is sometimes the primary line for certain of these Japanese firms, with pure amusement manufacturing taking a back seat.

NATIONAL IMPACT?

Let's daydream a bit. What if every state in America legalized video poker along the lines of Montana and South Dakota? If the whole nation achieved an average $112 per-capita net profit annually from all 250 million Americans, then na-

tionally legalized video poker would be a $28 billion-dollar-per-year business, or about four times larger than all the money that runs through all the coin-op games in America in a given year. That's much less than the $250 billion per year Americans already spend on legal and illegal gambling, but still impressive.

Gosh, numbers are fun, aren't they?

Taking it further, assuming a roughly 25% cut for the state tax coffers and a 50-50 split of what's left between operators and locations, the industry's share of this bonanza would approach $10 billion dollars. . . about 1.5 times what the industry makes *before* taxes, licenses and location commissions now.

Also, assuming that video poker machines on a national scale pay an average of 80% of what's put into them back to players over the long haul, then American citizens would be pouring about **$140 billion** per year into the machines (nearly half of the Pentagon's annual budget) and getting back $112 billion in winnings.

NATIONAL PROSPECTS

It's a coin machine dream (or nightmare) and one which definitely *won't* come true. Gambling won't sweep the entire nation because of cultural and religious opposition; because of entrenched financial interests in some areas; because of eventual and inevitable scandals (in state lotteries, if nowhere else); because Uncle Sam and several state governments are finally biting the bullet and raising taxes; and finally because anything that big and that faddish simply collapses after a while.

Already, the public-health lobby (perhaps sensing final victory over tobacco is near) is turning its attention to gambling. "Teenage Gambling, the Addiction of the '90s," screamed one recent headline in *The Los Angeles Times.* Gambling addiction is becoming a popular subject on TV talk shows, sitcoms and elsewhere.

The best proof that gambling's success will be relatively limited in duration (say, several decades) and geography (say, a dozen states) comes from history. We've had legalized gambling in three separate eras in this country, starting with the patriotic lotteries that funded the American Revolution. The second golden age of gambling began with the Gilded Age of robber barons and railroad empires. The third began slowly when Prohibition ended, accelerated with the post-WWII invention of Las Vegas, and is peaking now.

Gambling won't sweep the nation, and it won't last forever. But it probably will go legal in a few more states, possibly several. Operators, distributors and manufacturers who handle these new opportunities with care and wisdom should earn a very healthy profit indeed. As South Dakota and Montana operators, who are happily counting their profits, will tell you: it's sure fun while it lasts!

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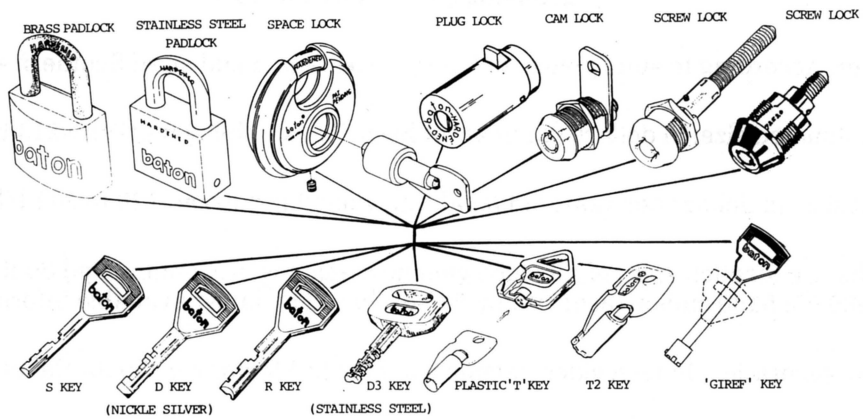

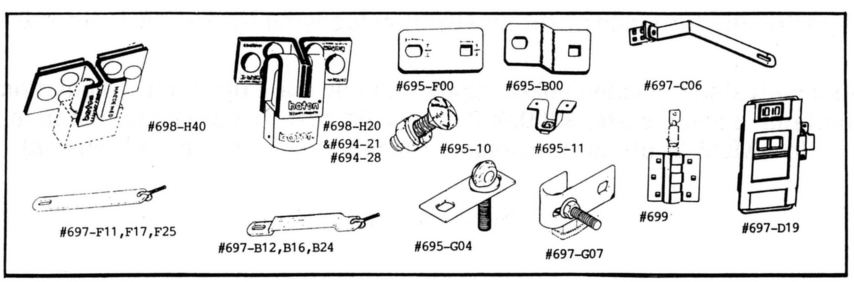

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Video Poker Fact Sheet: USA

Number of states where video gaming (poker, keno, bingo) with cash rewards is legal: 4

Names of legal states: Montana, South Dakota, Nevada (restricted with hard-to-get gaming permits), and New Jersey (resort areas only)

Number of states reported to have current active efforts to legalize pay-off video poker: at least 18

Their names: Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming and others we promised not to name

Number of additional states reportedly "interested" in trying to legalize pay-off video poker eventually: at least 5

Their names: Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, New York, and others we promised not to discuss

Number of states with state lottery: 32 states, plus District of Columbia

Estimated number of states where video pokers are running "gray": 40

Number of states in which regulators are considering some form of legalization, according to a top Montana gambling control official: 40

Estimated number, according to state police, of "gray" pokers in a mid-sized Southern state: at least 30,000

Estimated size, in dollars per year, of legal U.S. gambling market: $213 billion

Estimated size, in dollars per year, of illegal U.S. gambling market: $28 to $42 billion (or more)

Total profits (before location split) of all video gaming machines in Montana and South Dakota for fiscal 1989-90: $180 million (estimate by *RePlay* based on latest available information)

Cost of a new-generation, hi-tech video gaming machine in Montana or South Dakota: around $5,500

Amount set aside specifically for video poker legalization lobbying by AMOA in its 1989-90 budget: $50,000

Total amount being budgeted for video poker legalization by state operator associations: information not available (it cost Montana, a small state, $200,000 and could cost five or six million in major states according to AMOA Truth in Amusement Committee chairman Phil Benson)

Sources: various

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Video Poker Fact Sheet: Montana

Number of licensed video gaming ops (including locations which own their own equipment) in Montana: 104

Number of licensed video gaming locations (including a few non-profit groups): 1,785

Number of licensed video gaming machines in Montana: 11,440

Maximum bet per play: $2 on all types of machines

Maximum pay-off per win: $100 on poker; $800 on keno; $800 on bingo

Maximum number of machines per location: 20 (only 10 can be pokers in any one location)

Average weekly income from video gaming machines (money in, less money paid out): $250 for kenos; $220 for pokers

Fiscal 1989 gross earnings (after paying winners) of all licensed Montana video gaming machines: $88.6 million

Expected fiscal 1990 gross earnings: $110 million

Share of above which goes to the State of Montana, expressed as a percentage: 15%

Share of above which goes to the State of Montana, expressed in dollars: $13.3 million for fiscal 1989; over $16 million is expected for fiscal 1990 (2/3 of this money goes back to local city and county governments)

Cost of annual video gaming operating license (not applicable to locations which own their own equipment): $1,000

Cost of annual per-machine license (not applicable to locations which own their own equipment): $200

Cost of annual location gaming license: none

Number of manufacturers licensed, at presstime, to sell video gaming machines in Montana: 11

Names of Montana-licensed manufacturers: Aristocrat Inc., Bally Gaming Division, Big City Amusement, Big Ten Electronics, HTS Electronics, IGT, Merit Industries, Mills Jennings Mfg., Montana Video Games, SMS Mfg., Video Lottery Consultants

Sources: Bob Robinson of the Montana Administration of Gambling/Control Division; and Phil Benson, chairman of AMOA Truth in Amusement Committee

Video Poker Fact Sheet: South Dakota

Number of licensed video gaming operators in South Dakota: 90

Number of licensed video gaming machines in South Dakota: 3,813

Maximum bet per play: $2

Maximum pay-off per win: $1,000 on pokers

Maximum number of machines per location: 10

Average weekly earnings of a video poker or video keno machine: $584

1989-90 gross earnings (before paying winners) of all licensed S.D. video gaming machines (from Oct. 16, 1989 to June 30, 1990): $127,245,164

Net revenue for same period (profits to be split by operators and locations): $47 million

Share of above which goes to the State of South Dakota, expressed as a percentage: 22.5%

Share of above which goes to the State of South Dakota, expressed in dollars, for 1989-90: over $10 million

Cost of annual video gaming manufacturing or distributing license: $5,000

Cost of annual video gaming operating license: $1,500 or $100 per machine licensed, whichever is greater

Cost of annual location gaming license: $50 initially, $10 in out years

Number of manufacturers licensed, at presstime, to sell video gaming machines in South Dakota: 9

Names of S.D.-licensed manufacturers: Aristocrat Inc., Bally Mfg. Corp., Foxtronix Inc., IGT, Merit Industries, SMS Mfg., Takasago Distributing, U.S. Games, Video Lottery Consultants

Sources: Deb Mortenson, Director of Public Relations for the South Dakota Lottery; and Phil Benson, chairman of AMOA Truth in Amusement Committee.
(Ms. Mortenson stated that income figures were unaudited at presstime.)

Phil Benson

AMOA's "poker point man" reveals the "truth" about video pokers: big profit makes the big debt, paperwork & political chores worthwhile

Montana operator Phil Benson is chairman of AMOA's "Truth in Amusement" Committee. In that post, he works to help operators legalize operator-run, pay-off video gaming (pokers, kenos and bingo) in their states. Phil spearheaded the successful legalization drive in his own state (Montana began legal vidpoker operation five years ago), and he remains one of the most outspoken and enthusiastic proponents of legalized, operator-run video gaming.

Some background: in Montana, operators are allowed to place up to 20 machines per liquor-licensed location. Players may bet up to $2 per play, and they can win up to $100 on a poker machine, or $800 on a keno or bingo. When you win, the machine doesn't spit cash into a Vegas-type hopper; instead it prints tickets which customers may redeem at the bar.

Over the long term, Montana's video gaming machines pay back around 90% of all the money put into them, to the players. The state gets 15% off the top of what's left. The Montana revenue department's share of video gaming earnings will amount to over $16 million dollars this year. After paying this tax money to the state, Montana's 50 video gaming operators (and 54 locations which own their own equipment) will split about $94 million additional dollars with their locations at the end of this fiscal year.

Numbers like these have certainly caught the attention of many tradesters across the country. We spoke with Phil Benson about the effects of legal video gaming on his own route, and on the industry in Montana, and on the state government. We also discussed the prospects for opening this profitable new market to other parts of the nation.



REPLAY: When video gaming was first legalized in Montana, how quickly did you build your gaming route?

BENSON: My first shipment was 75 games on July 1, 1985. It took us until 3 AM to set up those first games. Within two weeks of that, I put out another 45 machines and we built from that. Today, we've got close to 400 gaming machines on just this route.

REPLAY: Are you still building your route?

BENSON: Oh, yes. Just to give you an idea, I had a location that opened up four and half years ago. They bought 18 of their own games and let me run two. Today, I have all the games on their site. Locations that try to run their own equipment can't keep up with the new technology.

REPLAY: How does legalized poker compare to gray-area poker?

BENSON: I'll tell you something. Running 100% legal video poker, like we are in the state of Montana, you're going to make more money than you are running gray. To many operators, the money from operating gray area games looks very attractive. But we're making four times more money running them legally.

REPLAY: Legal video poker out-earns gray area machines by four to one? Why is that?

BENSON: Because you can run four times as many machines when they're legal. We had maybe 2,500 gray machines before legalization, at the very most. Now we're pushing 11,000 machines in the state and it may be higher than that. Also, you get players who would not have used gray area machines. And don't forget, even if players would use gray area equipment, the establishment wouldn't pay off if they didn't know the players personally.

REPLAY: How is your own personal route doing with video poker?

BENSON: Right now, the three routes I have are running over 750 poker machines in total. It's fabulous. I don't have to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning. I mean, I do get up that early, but I don't have to work till 11 or 12 o'clock at night now! Also, I can sleep at night, without having to worry about the possible problems you can get from running gray.

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REPLAY: What is the average cost of a legal video gaming machine?

BENSON: When we first started, the average machine was around $4,100 or $4,200. But I just took delivery on ten more, and with the new technology they're running around $5,500 a pop. What they can do now, compared to our first generation, is just incredible. The player can tell the machine how fast he wants to play. He can add and remove credits. We have touch-screen technology, no buttons at all, you just walk up and touch the screen.

REPLAY: What's the expected lifespan of these machines?

BENSON: The machines I put out five years ago, I'm pulling off the street now. Some are still out there earning, but I've pulled 30 of them off the street. We have replaced 138 of the older keno machines with new ones. So that's about the life expectancy of them. The new machines I'm putting on the street right now are earning 25 to 100% more than my old machines.

REPLAY: Did you have to assume a large debt to pay for all these machines?

'Running 100% legal video poker, like we are in the state of Montana, you're going to make more money than you are running gray. To many operators, the money from operating gray area games looks very attractive. But we're making four times more money running them legally.'

BENSON: Oh, yes.

REPLAY: Are your loans all paid back now, or is the borrowing a continuing, on-going thing?

BENSON: It's a continuing, on-going thing as we continue to put more machines on location and to upgrade the ones which are already there. I'm borrowing out of three different banks and I still need more money! What's happened is that manufacturers are starting to come up with their own financing plans. In the last five days, I've put $690,000 worth of new equipment. . . and I'm not finished yet! It's scary. Years ago, you couldn't go borrow money like this. The banks have their little books that say they can loan so much money to somebody who's opening a drug store, and so much money if you are opening a clothing store. But they had no guidelines for coin machines.

REPLAY: How did you handle that?

BENSON: We had our statements reviewed. That helps, but even with an audited statement, all you can get out of any one bank is $500,000. The result was that to get enough financing, I had to go to other institutions. The banks love us, because we are repaying ahead of time and the cashflow is staggering. By the way, our city council, police chief and sheriffs also love us. We're partners, because I'm out making money for them.

REPLAY: So your business is mushrooming, by several different yardsticks: profitability, number of machines, and so on. Have you also hired more people?

BENSON: Yes. I used to have nine employees. Today I've got 16 full-time and one part-time. Some of the work is being done by other people than myself, or I'd have more gray hair than I do now!

REPLAY: At presstime, 11 manufacturers are licensed to sell gaming equipment in Montana. Do you use all brands of video gaming equipment?

BENSON: I've got all the different brands, but basically I'm just a one-machine owner. You can teach your players what you want them to play, by flooding the market with that type of machine.

REPLAY: What other types of games are legal for players to play, besides video poker?

BENSON: Keno and bingo. The fact is, the kenos are starting to out-earn the poker machines.

REPLAY: How did legalization of video gaming affect your equipment buying patterns?

BENSON: Quite frankly, at first all I did was buy pokers, pokers, pokers, kenos, pokers. I let my pool tables go to heck; I let my jukeboxes go down; I let my video routes go down. All I did at first was run as hard as I could to cover those locations, buying additional pokers and kenos. Because, as we all know, that revenue is there.

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REPLAY: That was nearly five years ago. Have you begun to re-invest poker profits into amusements?

BENSON: Yes, last fall I started to replenish the amusement side of the route, beginning with jukeboxes and then videos.

REPLAY: When Montana first legalized pay-off poker, did more operators jump into the business?

BENSON: Yes, but not a great deal of them. Among those who were here, though, competition got real fierce to start with. A lot of people came in and tried to start giving that big commission split to the location. Some operators offered 80/20; some offered 60/40. That's to the locations, now! On top of that, they were paying the $200 per-machine licensing fee, and then paying the 15% off the top of the cashbox take to the state.

REPLAY: What happened to those guys?

BENSON: We've had one go bankrupt. Two more are real close. You can't give the profit away; you've got to keep it in order for you to grow in the industry, so you can afford to upgrade your route as new technology comes out. Players are very sophisticated and will not touch outdated machines.

REPLAY: What are the best types of locations?

BENSON: By law, our gaming locations are tied to places with all-purpose alcoholic beverage, on-premise consumption licenses. Ironically, in one convenience store that's attached to a bar, the gaming machines in the C-store earn five times more than the ones in the bar, which are just a few feet away.

REPLAY: Within that category of liquor-licensed locations, are some types better than others?

BENSON: Yes. Merchandising and promotions are real important around here. One of my best locations is a restaurant which offers a $1.50 breakfast — a plate so loaded with food that you can't possibly finish it. The location also offers "Lucky Bucks" that are worth 75 cents on the machines, and they have a "Lucky Wheel" near the door that doesn't require the player to spend a cent, but he can win anything from $1 to $1,000 just by walking in and spinning that wheel.

'Gaming increases everything. In the location I just mentioned, my pool table used to do about $30 per month. Now I've got two pool tables and they are averaging about $125 each, per week! Legal gaming simply makes everything better.'

REPLAY: Any other effective location promotions?

BENSON: This location also has customers fill out slips of paper for prize drawings. Names are drawn for cash prizes four times a day. If nobody claims the first prize, the pot grows bigger for the second prize, and so on. At the end of the week, we add up the costs of all the promotions, divide it in two and I write a check for my half. I encourage this type of promotion in all my locations, even if it's just $30 on my end. Gaming is all geared around promotion. The more they promote, the better they do.

REPLAY: Did gaming equipment turn any bad locations into winners?

BENSON: Almost all of them! One half-block long location right next to my shop was a family business that the owner was trying to give away five years ago. Today, the owner wouldn't even entertain the idea of selling it. Without gaming, I used to make only up to $150 per week in that place including income from a jukebox, videos and a pool table. Now I do $1,000 a week my side, just out of the pokers and kenos.

REPLAY: How did legalization of video gaming affect amusements income?

BENSON: Gaming increases everything. In the location I just mentioned, my pool table used to do about $30 per month. Now I've got two pool tables and they are averaging about $125 each, per week! Legal gaming simply makes everything better.

REPLAY: Any downside to video gaming?

BENSON: The paperwork that we've got is staggering. I have hired two people just to handle video poker paperwork. But it's worth it; I don't care how much paperwork it requires.

REPLAY: What kinds of maintenance and service demands come with poker legalization?

BENSON: We've got lots of service requirements and service calls. And that brings more paperwork, too. Every time we open a machine and get into the logistics at all, we've got to write a report to the state, saying why we were in that machine.

REPLAY: Unlike South Dakota, video gaming machines in Montana are not all hooked up to a central state-run computer. Instead, your machines print audit tickets.

BENSON: Right. Every time we open the door on the machine, open the bill head, or access the electronics, a complete audit ticket is kicked out to us. An identical second copy is also generated inside the machine. That means the state can always tell what happened with that machine.

REPLAY: Obviously state officials like that feature. Has it got advantages for the operator, as well?

BENSON: Because of the automatic dual ticket generation, I don't have to worry about any of my employees stealing from me, locations gouging me, or anything. The complete data is all right there. And by the way, virtually 90% of my locations have keys to the equipment.

REPLAY: Anything you'd change about video poker in Montana?

BENSON: Speaking for myself and not for Montana operators, I personally would like our video pokers "on-line." That is, we would physically tie our poker machines to the phone line, which connects to my computer or to the state's computer. That's the way it's done in South Dakota, and that's how we originally wanted our law.

REPLAY: Does Montana have a lottery? How much money does it make, compared to coin machine gaming?

BENSON: Yes. In fiscal 1988-89, Montana pokers did $112 profit for every man, woman and child in the state of Montana. That's profit after paying off the winners, now! The scratch-off lottery did $14.50 in per-capita profit during that same period. It's a big difference! Now, the lottery's figures will probably increase for fiscal 1989-90, because they have that "Lotto America" game that's tied in with 11 other states.

REPLAY: Are any other forms of legal gambling allowed in Montana?

BENSON: We've got live poker with a $300 pot limit, live keno and live bingo. We also have horse racing at state fairs only.

REPLAY: Has legalization of video gaming affected these forms of gambling?

BENSON: Not a bit. These forms of gambling appeal to different audiences and they are pretty small potatoes, compared to operator-run video gaming.

REPLAY: Now let's turn to the national level. As you know, operator associations in quite a few states are attempting to follow the lead of Montana and South Dakota. Why do some tradesters call this type of equipment "video lottery"? In what sense is it a lottery?

BENSON: South Dakota calls them "video lottery terminals." They don't even throw in the word poker or keno. It's really just good marketing psychology. To the public, whenever you use the words "poker," "keno" or "bingo," a red flag goes up. But as long as they call it a "lottery" and it's run by their state lottery department, the public is less skeptical.

'There's a serious lesson here: with any type of gaming, the anti-gaming lobby can jump up and grab you, if you don't do your homework and keep lobbying.'

REPLAY: What's the biggest problem with video pokers for the industry as a whole?

BENSON: The industry faces a very serious question: as more states legalize video poker gambling, is the operator going to run it? Or is the state? We've got to keep this form of risk-reward amusement in our industry. We don't need bureaucrats coming out and trying to take over this market. It just about happened in Iowa a while ago, and it could start happening all over the country if we're not careful.

REPLAY: For the moment, though, things are very good in Montana and South Dakota. Still, legal gambling has gone through cycles in American history: this year it's legal, next year it's not. How long do you expect this to last?

BENSON: Hey! The bubble could pop any time, but right now we're growing.

REPLAY: What would make the bubble pop?

BENSON: The tree-huggers. By that I mean conservative elements of the community, people who might claim that legal gaming is picking the pockets of average citizens. When we initially passed our gaming legislation, a very strong church organization and some conservative senators tried to stop us. We finally passed our bill with just two votes to spare. And despite all our success and our good track record of delivering on all our promises for five years, the anti-gambling people are still around. There's a serious lesson here: with any type of gaming, the anti-gaming lobby can jump up and grab you, if you don't do your homework and keep lobbying.

REPLAY: For instance, if there was some scandal, such as if 12-year-olds were caught spending their lunch money on video pokers?

BENSON: Exactly. That's why we have restricted gaming to the bars. It isn't everywhere you look. But gaming is still growing in Montana and so long as we continue to tend to our political obligations, we should have no problem. I've been lucky: every time there's been a bill that might affect my business negatively, I've been able to call my officials and ask them to vote to protect my interests. So far, they have always helped me.

REPLAY: Legal gaming has helped you forge a very close alliance with your state officials. That's something that the industry has not enjoyed for most of its life.

BENSON: We sure have it in Montana, and gaming operators also have it in South Dakota. The state is becoming very dependent on us, and so are the cities and counties. I take pride in knowing all of my representatives and senators, all the police

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chiefs and sheriffs, all the county commissioners and mayors, I know everybody that counts within a 100-mile radius. As I said, they do consider me their partner. Last session of our legislature, when the state legislators tried to raise the state's share of the take above 15%, I called on these officials and they willingly testified that "It's not broke, let's not fix it."

REPLAY: Your profitability is their profitability. They have a financial stake in your success.

BENSON: Exactly. For instance, legal video gaming has represented a million-dollar annual windfall for my own little community of Missoula, whose population is just 70,000. My chief of police said: "The revenue video gaming operators have generated has in fact increased public safety, by allowing me to expand my operating and capital budgets, and provide more and better service to the citizens of the community." And I've got letters from other key officials just as strong!

REPLAY: For example?

BENSON: On a national level, the biggest asset operators have right now is Susan Walker, Executive Director of the South Dakota Lottery. She's just so gosh-darned happy with legalized video gaming! Let me read to you from a letter she sent me. "Clearly, video lottery works in South Dakota. Not only has it generated additional revenue for the state, but the private sector has benefited as well. Because of video lottery's tremendous growth, many video lottery operators have hired additional staff. These new jobs boost local economies state-wide. Establishments also benefit from increased business." That's the key to the whole thing: we, the operators, have created a new industry that's making money for everybody, but it's not costing the state a penny to operate.

REPLAY: Some say there's a "Western tradition" of gambling, but that it may be tougher to sell in other states. How well do you think operator-run video gaming will transfer to other regions of the nation, which have different traditions and different local cultures?

BENSON: It's a good question. I really don't know how the cultural differences will affect operators' efforts to legalize gaming in different states.

'I just can't say enough good about it. Legal gaming makes everybody profitable — the operator, the distributor, the manufacturer and the location.'

REPLAY: What's your overall advice for operators who wish to legalize video lotteries in their states?

BENSON: One real need I've observed is for operators to get to know their public officials from top to bottom. It's easy to do, once you make the commitment to get off your duff and do it. And it absolutely must be done. Everybody in the community — operators and officials — must play a part in making gaming legal, and in keeping it legal. That's what we did, and that's what other operators must do.

REPLAY: As chairman of AMOA's "Truth in Amusement" committee, you're in close touch with the leadership of many state operator associations. How many states do you anticipate might legalize payoff video gaming by the end of 1991? Some top AMOA officials predict five states will be legal by then.

BENSON: We'd be lucky if it was five. In some of these states, it's just not going to happen that fast.

REPLAY: Longer-term, some pretty sharp tradesters are calling video poker "the coin-op market of the '90s." Some manufacturers and distributors we've spoken to have predicted that by the year 2000, up to 15 or 18 states could have legalized video poker. Do you agree?

BENSON: When you're looking at that 10-year time frame, I can see maybe 20 states going legal. I just got a call out of New York, and as of the last week of June, they're going full-blown to legalize gaming. If New York were to go legal, Holy Toledo! Or if any of the big states were to go legal, or even if Wisconsin went legal, I believe there would be a big boom, a domino effect. These state lottery directors have a tight network amongst themselves, and if one of them starts talking positively about the benefits of video gaming, they'll all be listening real close.

REPLAY: On the whole, then, after five years' experience with legal video gaming in Montana, you're more confident than ever that this is the way for the industry to go.

BENSON: I just can't say enough good about it. Legal gaming makes everybody profitable — the operator, the distributor, the manufacturer and the location. Legal video gaming makes money for itself, and it strongly boosts the income of pure amusement machines. It strengthens coin machine routes and operations, and it also helps the local and state economy. It makes coin machine businessmen a valuable and respected part of their community and their state. It's hard to believe all this, unless you see it with your own eyes. That's why I urge as many coin machine folks as possible to visit Montana or South Dakota. See video gaming in action for yourself!

REPLAY: Thanks for your time and your thoughts.

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Poker Power

Merit Industries is a clear leader in video pokers; matches large market share with consumer, political commitment

The sincerest form of flattery is not imitation. It's when somebody says something nice about you, to a third party, without even being asked. For example, suppose a coin-op tradester volunteers: "Merit Industries is the number one video poker manufacturer in my territory. They control a large chunk of this very competitive market."

RePlay received this unsolicited endorsement from a respected Midwestern distributor. It's powerful testimony to the fact that Merit is a serious force in the emerging video lottery market. "We've been a major player in South Dakota for the last five years, and in South Dakota for the last nine months," smiled Merit President Pete Feuer. "With the success we've had in these two states, we're eagerly looking forward to future developments around the country with video poker!"

Merit currently offers a full line of video gaming equipment. For example, they sell three versions of video pokers: two are available in Montana (the "Jacks or Better" and "Aces or Better" programs), while their third version is an "Aces or Better" video poker for South Dakota. Merit also offers a line of *Superstar Keno* video games. Their latest is the all-new *Dakota Keno*, which features all necessary communication devices and has been approved by the South Dakota Lottery Commission for play in the state. All of Merit's keno games are available in both upright and casino-style cabinets.

The folks at Merit proudly point out that they design their games for







Merit offers a full line of gaming equipment including three pokers and keno games. Pictured are Draw Poker, Dakota Superstar *and* Keno Superstar.

the player. "The various state laws cover things like internal shuffling of the card deck, and how cards are drawn off the deck," explained National Sales Manager David Rubinstein. "Since these factors are, by law, consistent between manufacturers, graphics and player controls become very important in distinguishing between products and creating player appeal. The most state-of-the-art games provide an entertaining visual experience and physical comfort. We feel our games have both, and players seem to agree. No matter where we go, we hear accolades for our graphics, as well as for our large, illuminated, properly-positioned player control buttons. Face it," David added, "it's not the factory that makes up the consumers' preference. It's the consumer! That's why we are so very careful to design our games with the consumer in mind."

One reason the company has been "out front" in video poker is because it takes the poker market very, very seriously. While many competitors treated Montana (the first state to go legal, in 1986) as "just another gaming market," Merit approached Montana as a unique laboratory and "classroom"... and a unique market with a large growth potential. "Now in South Dakota, we can put these experiences to work for us and build an even stronger model of the market," explained Marketing Director Bernie Powers. "For example, the Dakota market is just 10 months old, but we're already introducing a keno game with the strongest player appeal available. This makes money for operators!"

Supporting the poker market goes beyond designing excellent machines, Merit execs said. Merit personnel have played a key role in testifying before state officials who want to be educated and reassured about how legal poker games would work. Merit has done a good job here, helping lawmakers understand complex poker issues such as "triple redundancy accounting," cash flow and video gaming technology.

Added Merit toppers: "We also assist operators with lobbying efforts, as well as make financial contributions on a consultation basis. We expect to endure at full throttle during the entire term required to get a particular state legalized!"

Merit, then, is a poker market leader because they recognize that poker is a "whole 'nother animal" from other forms of coin-op amusements. It's different in technology; different in legal and political requirements; different in player appeal and marketing.

"Video lottery remains an 'unknown' to many in our trade," David Rubinstein stated. "It's a different product line in the coin-op game industry — a line that takes special knowledge to understand, just like darts or pinball. At Merit," he added, "we've made that special effort. The result is our unique knowledge of video lottery. Merit's gaming equipment provides profit for our customers — and fun for our players — every single day!"

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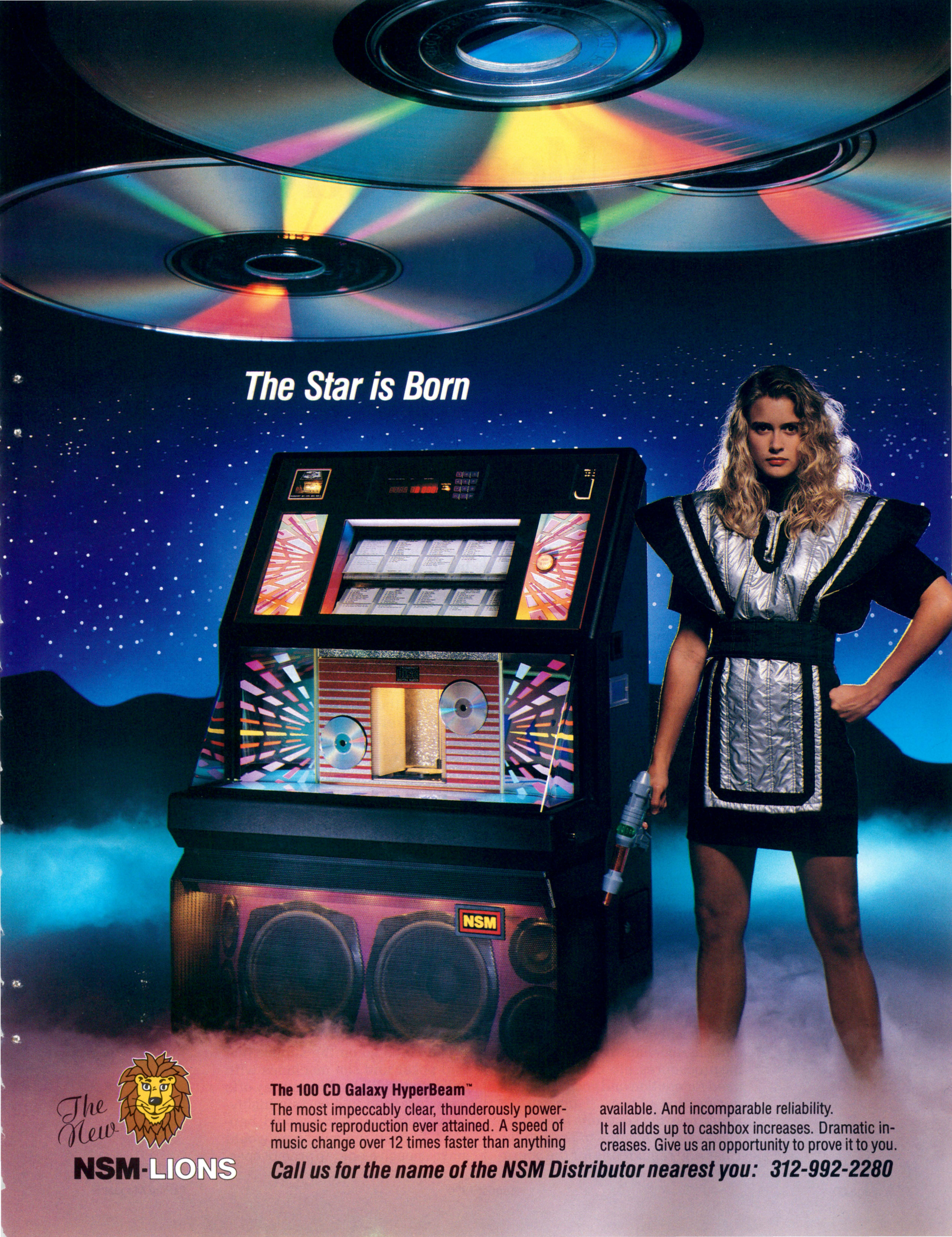

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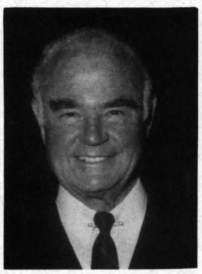
A Measured Approach

if we must legalize gambling, says trade vet Louis Boasberg, approach should be mild & orderly; not chaotic & unlimited



by LOUIS BOASBERG

This guest essay is the final installment in a three-part series on video poker by New Orleans trade vet Louis Boasberg. The first essay (which appeared in our June issue) discussed how an over-supply of amusement video games and pinballs, along with the resulting price squeeze on smaller distributors, is leading many tradesters to look to video poker as a panacea for the industry's problems. July's installment advised that potential pitfalls await some of those who would legalize vidpoker, and suggested how the legal vidpoker market may best be cultivated without arousing a political backlash. Chiefly, the advice was to begin with modest goals and legalize on a modest scale. . . in a phrase, to "crawl before you walk."

This month, Mr. Boasberg addresses the question: "What would happen if gambling were broadly legalized in an unwise fashion?" His answer may be summed up in one word: chaos. It's a particularly timely contribution, since Louis' own state of Louisiana has just voted on the issue of legalizing video poker. Any new Louisiana market, we trust, will be wisely controlled, since the LAMOA-sponsored bill was drafted along the lines of the South Dakota model.

But as our guest essayist can tell you, passage of pro-poker legislation is just the first step. Next, the state government must craft detailed regulations, machine testing and licensing procedures, etc. and there's still need for caution and good judgment during this phase. "I am sure it would take the Louisiana legislature eight or nine months to finalize the rules and regulations for the operation of video poker games," commented Louis Boasberg.

As I have suggested in a previous article, my advice to everyone seeking the legalization of gambling equipment is to crawl before you walk, and walk before you run. But if there are operators, distributors and state associations who are seeking to run and sprint right off the bat, I may have a word of advice.

As noted earlier, multiple-play games and machines, together with unlimited cash pay-offs or prizes (whether they are automatic or over the counter), generate much heat and opposition. Some might say, "What's the difference between some worker going to the race track or an off-track betting parlor, and losing his week's salary to a poker machine in some tavern?"

The difference is, players go to the track or betting parlor with the sole purpose of gambling. But a workingman goes to a tavern seeking fun and recreation. . . then, up jumps "the devil" in the form of a gambling machine that takes everything he has. So, he goes home to face the wife and kiddies with an empty pocket.

Again, some might say: "That's his business, and his privilege, if he loses his money." But, I assume, that is why there are laws to protect the weak.

Now let's go on the supposition that poker and slot machines with unlimited multiple-play and pay-offs were legalized in a certain highly-populated city. What would happen? At first, the machines would make enough money to prompt oper-

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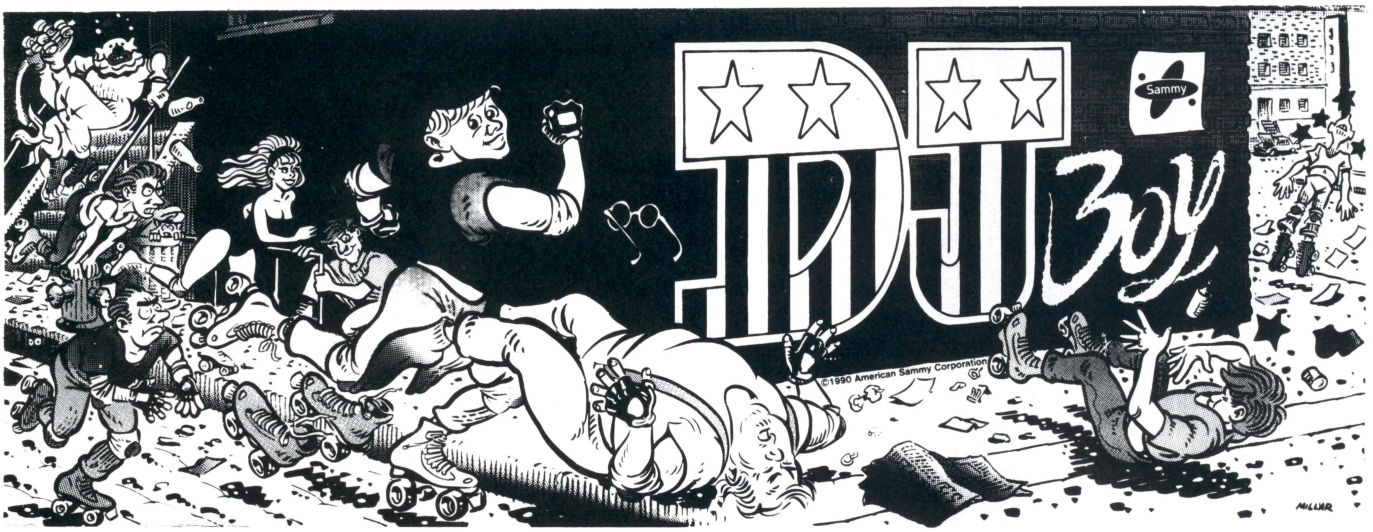

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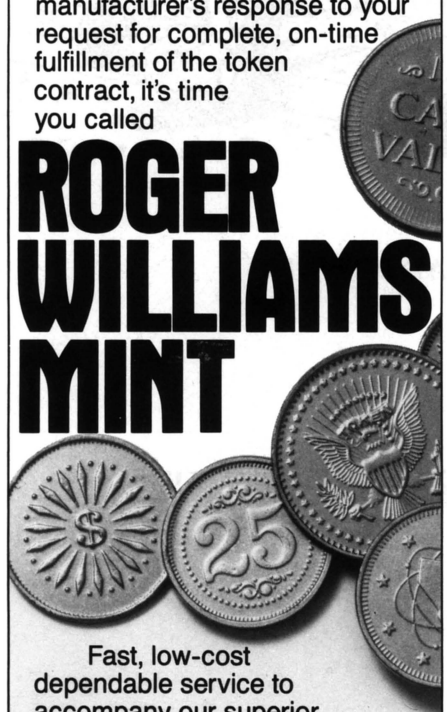

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ators to compete intensely for the right to operate in key locations. Such competition could lead to dire results: price wars, bigger and bigger location splits, lack of profitability for everyone.

Also, what is to prevent the locations from owning their own equipment, if the equipment is legal? Don't let anyone tell you that you can pass laws and force high operating licenses so that locations won't own their own equipment. *There is no law that could be passed, favoring an operator of 10 or more machines, over an operator of one machine, that would stand up under the attack of a good Constitutional lawyer!*

Monopolies and favorable legislation are hard to come by in this day and age in America. That is why I've suggested, in a previous essay, that operators should try for the legalization of mild forms of gambling: single coin per play, limited prizes and pay-offs (preferably in merchandise, liquor, food, etc.). I recommend this course, simply because it seems that officials, lawmakers, the police, the media, the public, etc. do not raise strong opposition to mild forms of gambling or semi-skill games *when the prizes are in merchandise.* But when you pay off in cash, it's a different story altogether.

Cash rewards stimulate jealousy from other industries, and/or from entrenched gambling interests. Cash rewards draw criticism from the religious community and from other conservative elements. Finally, cash rewards sometimes lead to total elimination of gambling — especially if law enforcement finds that the reward system is being abused.

Incidentally, it is my belief that redemption prize games (offering merchandise instead of cash) may be the salvation of operators throughout this country. This is especially true when a true element of skill is involved in these games. And I repeat, any operator who allows cash prizes to be paid on his redemption games is not only asking for trouble, but is endangering an entire industry!

You can imagine what Mama would say if Junior, age seven, played a digger and won a teddy bear with a $5 bill wrapped around it . . . or if he were paid off $2 cash for winning on a skee alley at the local pizza parlor. Mama would be on the phone calling every newspaper, every radio station, every policeman, and every city official from the commissioner to the cop on the beat!

So much for gambling games, slot machines, redemption games and similar attractions. As to the operation of different types of equipment, I believe (and everyone else probably believes) that our industry's equipment has to be legalized and operated to fit the geographical location, the population and the environment of individual states or cities. There are different types of machines which best fit different markets — resorts, industrial centers, sparsely populated states, isolated ocean communities, sprawling suburban communities like Los Angeles, uniquely charming cities like New Orleans, concentrated charismatic cities like San Francisco. Some have their own entertainment — theatrical attractions like Broadway, tourist attractions like Disneyland, or geographic wonders such as the Grand Canyon.

Can anyone honestly imagine that the same exact type of equipment will be equally well suited to so many diverse regions, markets and environments? All of these places are different . . . and all demand different types of video games, flippers, redemption games, novelties, table games, sports games, music programming and so on. Yes, in a few places, there is a call for properly-regulated and properly-marketed, well-controlled slot machines, poker machines, etc. But these gambling devices are hardly ideal for all sites, climes and peoples. Indiscriminate legalization of unlimited gambling won't go everywhere, and should not be tried everywhere.

Some years ago, Robert Mullane (who was then chairman of the board of Bally) made a statement on this topic to the *Chicago Tribune.* He said he would never like to see legalized gambling in its entirety take over the City of Chicago. He said it would bring chaos.

He was probably right.

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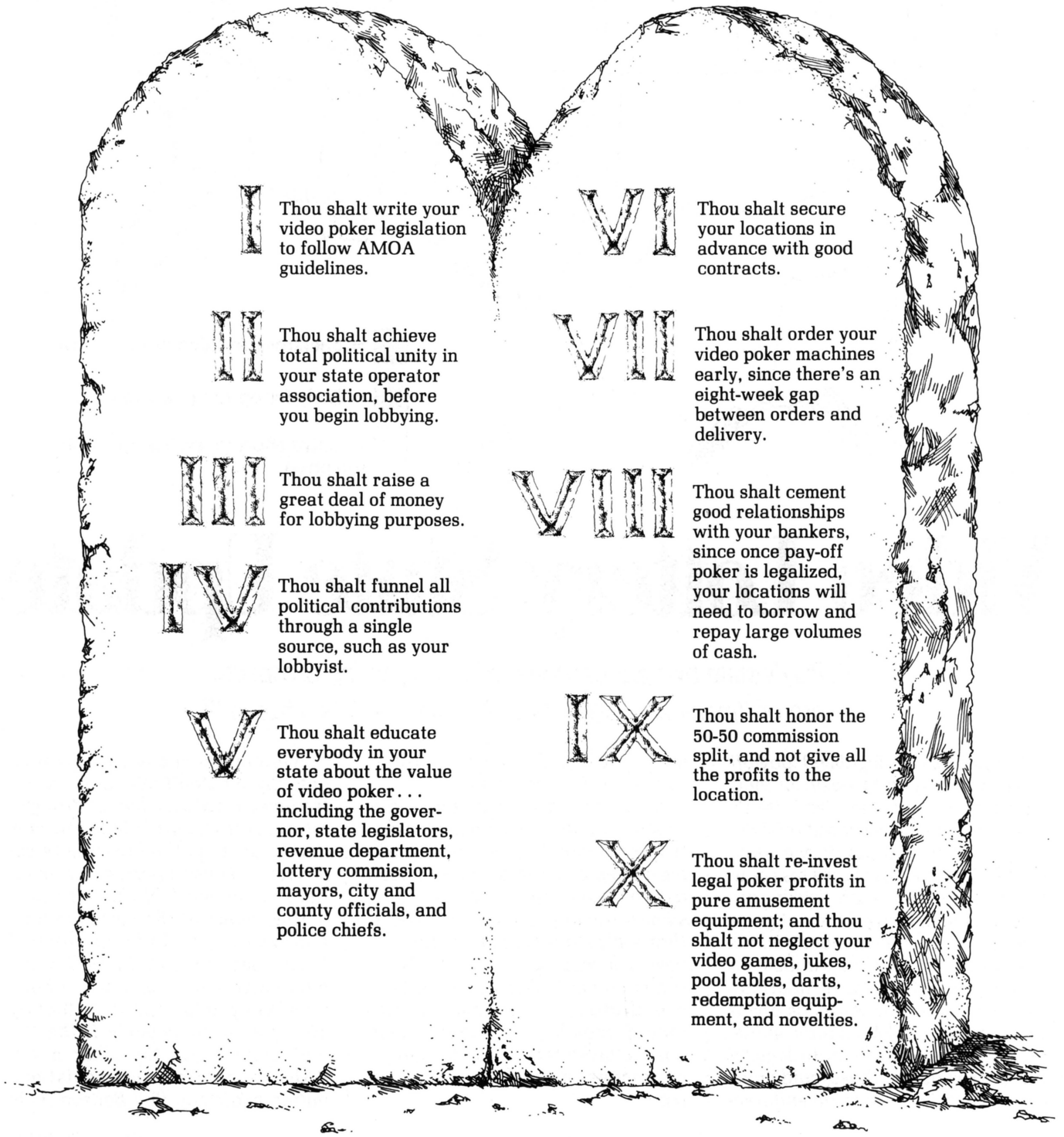
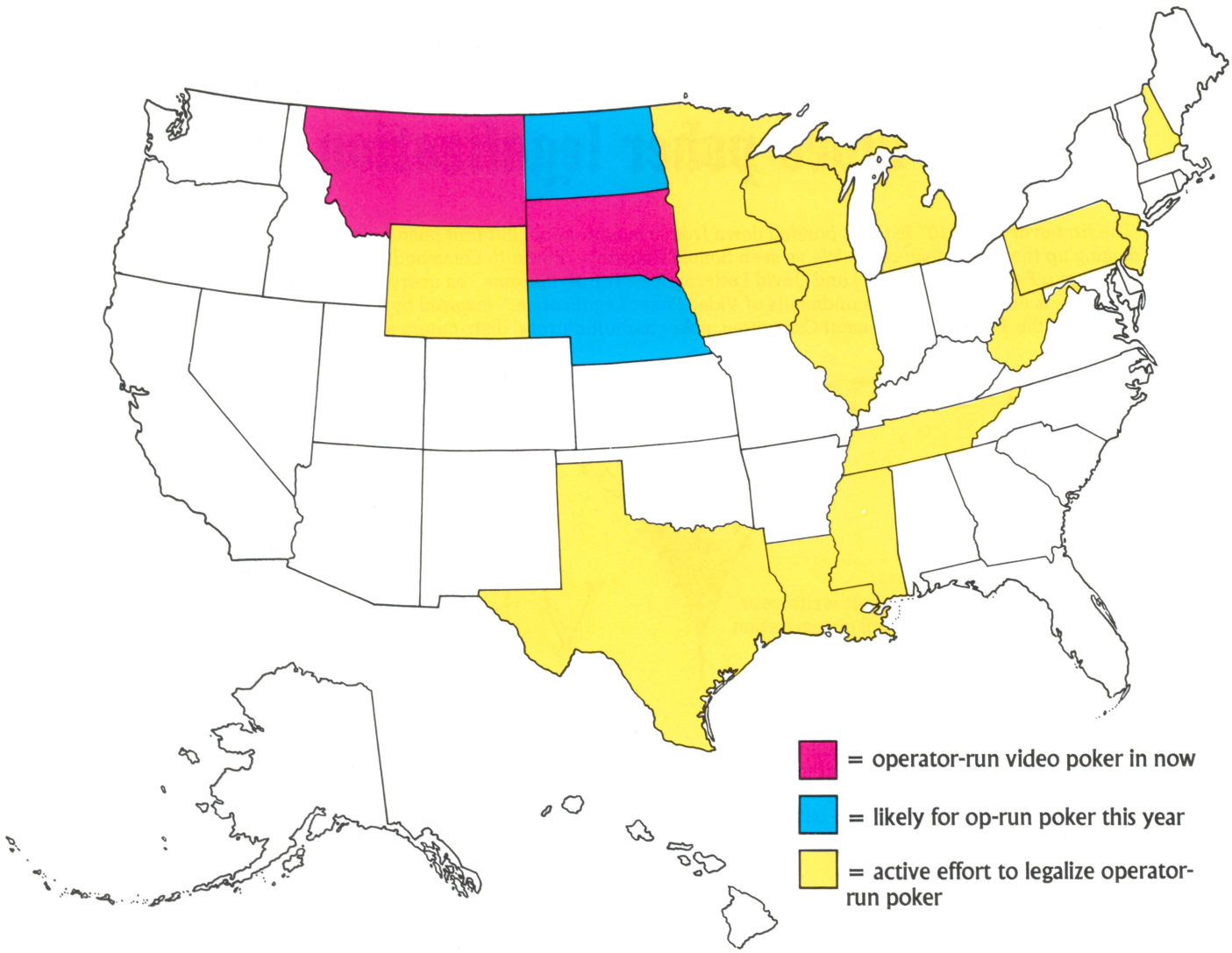
The Ten Commandments
for video poker legalization

The first-ever "Best 10" list was handed down from a mountaintop, but that hasn't stopped people from making up their own deca-rules. We've seen Ronald Reagan's "Eleventh Commandment" (Thou Shalt Not Speak Ill of a Fellow Republican") and David Letterman's "Top 10 Reasons" on every category under the sun. Here, then, is our own "10 Commandments of Video Poker Legalization," inspired by studying with wise men of the Truth in Amusement Committee, poker manufacturers, distributors and operators.

— the editors





Video Lottery State Update

RePlay's state-by-state rundown of video gaming prospects; a case of "many are called, but how many will be chosen?"

Supporters of legalized pay-off video poker say enthusiasm for their cause is a "prairie fire" that's sweeping the industry nationwide. They may have a point: one Montana lottery official claims his counterparts in 40 states are "looking at" legalization and regulation of gray-area pokers. That number sounds high to us, but it's an established fact that NAGRA (North American Gaming Regulators Assn.) is about to issue a set of "legalization guidelines" for release to state legislatures. Obviously, these guidelines are, implicitly at least, an endorsement of the legalization of operator-run pay-off video poker.

It's also an established fact that at least 18 state operator associations are either "considering" pushing a pro-poker law, or actually have a pro-poker effort rolling. True, some associations have only entered that early stage of studying the successful legal poker markets in Montana and South Dakota. But others are drafting legislation and are quietly rounding up advance support in the statehouse, in the governor's mansion, and on the campaign trail.

A few operator associations have actually written their bills and introduced them into their state legislature. A few more will follow suit just as soon as the lawmakers reconvene. These operator associations are openly lobbying for votes.

How many of the state associations will eventually be successful? It's anyone's guess. AMOA Government Relations Committee Chairman Wally Bohrer predicts that by 1992, five states could be in the "legal" column. On the other hand, AMOA's Truth in Amusements Committee chairman Phil Benson feels

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that could be a bit optimistic. Longer-term, Phil (along with some well-placed manufacturers, distributors and others we've consulted) believe up to 18 states could emulate South Dakota by the year 2000.

That sounds high to us... but then, who would have believed that 32 states plus the District of Columbia would ever have state-run lotteries? As one former state gaming regulator told us: "State-level politicians increasingly like the idea of legalizing video poker, because to them it's a hidden tax. They get lots of revenue to spend, yet nobody's mad at them for taking a bigger bite out of people's paychecks."

We placed quite a few phone calls in July to get the latest on each state's video poker situation. While much was learned, not all of it can be printed — lobbying for video pokers is a delicate situation, and nobody wants to advertise the possible creation of a new market, if it would invite unwelcome competitors to come in and take over. That said, here's what we can tell about the status of operator efforts to legalize video poker.

ALABAMA

Alabama is not a member of NAGRA and has no state lottery. Our sources say there's no movement on pokers here.

ALASKA

The newly-formed AMOA of Alaska is taking a hopeful "wait and see" stance on video poker. No formal pro-poker law has been drafted or even discussed by the group, but they're watching current events in the state capital, to see whether poker legalization might eventually have a chance.

In earlier years, a bill to legalize video poker gambling on interstate ferries went nowhere. These days, Alaska has a statewide, citizen referendum pending to allow Vegas-style gambling wherever approved by individual cities. "We won't know what happens on that referendum until after the election in August," said AMOA's board member from Alaska, John Knox. "As far as pokers go right now, we couldn't get anybody in the statehouse to comment on it because the whole House, half the Senate and the governor are up for reelection. They don't want to do anything — and I mean *anything*, including vote on some rather innocuous legislation — that might jeopardize their campaign chances."

ARIZONA

No current efforts to legalize vidpokers were known to our sources.

ARKANSAS

"There's nothing going on in Arkansas about video poker," said Arkansas MOA's attorney Walter Skelton. "I think a lot of our people would like to have legal video pokers, but there's no organized effort." The state's constitution prohibits gambling and lotteries, although a lottery amendment may go before the voters this fall if petition supporters gather enough signatures.

CALIFORNIA

By all appearances, the Golden State's video poker prospects are about as far from "golden" as you can get. California has two operator associations, the state-wide CCMA and the Southern California-based AAC. Neither has discussed video poker legalization. Of the two associations, only CCMA has an active presence at the statehouse level. Their lobbying philosophy has — wisely — been reactive, not proactive.

We say "wisely" because law enforcement in Southern California is rather cool toward the coin machine industry. The powerful police lobby dislikes cranes and would probably be strongly (and effectively) opposed to legalization of video poker. Even if all else were equal, mounting an effective lobbying campaign here would cost a king's ransom.

On the other hand, California desperately needs more tax money, and the statehouse politicians just might notice that video poker is one way that other states are painlessly raising revenues. Several months ago, the *Los Angeles Times* played prominently a prediction by legal gambling expert I. Nelson Rose (professor at San Clemente College) that video pokers would eventually be legalized by the state. But Rose's assertion was based solely on historical trends, not hard political analysis.

COLORADO

No prospects for video pokers here. According to Rocky Mountain AMOA president Gary Benson: "In Colorado, video poker is just about nil. We spent many afternoons down at the state capitol with our lobbyist, but most of the politicians seem too gun-shy to introduce a legalization bill for us. Even if one did, our governor is strongly anti-gambling and has stated that if any gambling bill reaches his desk, he'll veto it. So at this time the outlook is not good."

CONNECTICUT

No legalization effort has been started here, although local tradesters have expressed real interest. Free plays on pinball are still illegal in this state, so any campaign to legalize vidpokers could run into major troubles, operators admit. "Nevertheless, we have serious intentions of making efforts to legalize video pokers in the near future," said AMOC's Tom Riquier.

Good omens for Connecticut operators are that the state does have many forms of legal gambling already (dog tracks, jai ali, lotto, lottery games, etc.), so one more may be fairly easy for the government to swallow. One source says Indians in Connecticut may possibly be permitted to run gambling devices on their reservations, which would "put the state in a very touchy situation" — if Indians are permitted gambling, it could be difficult to prohibit gambling off the reservation, as well.

DELAWARE

No information available.

FLORIDA

According to operator Anthony Falcigno, operators like the idea, but no pro-operator legislation is contemplated. Obstacles include prohibitive lobbying costs and existing lottery laws which could give the lion's share of any vidpoker profits to the state. Floridians decisively voted down casino gambling several years ago, so even if all else was

favorable, privately-run video gaming would be a hard sell.

GEORGIA

No effort is being made to legalize pokers, and if anyone did mount such a campaign, it probably would not succeed under present conditions. The Georgia Bureau of Investigations ruled certain pokers were acceptable for amusement only, and gave letters of approval for specific games by certain manufacturers. "Some of the manufacturers have taken that letter and modified the machines or started paying off," said Special Agent Mike Lewis of the Bureau. "That makes it an illegal machine, but they go in with a letter from the GBI saying that's okay and it's not. So we're now in the process of re-examining the situation and I don't think we'll be issuing any more letters."

HAWAII

The U.S. attorney in Hawaii is dead set against any form of gambling, we're told. Experts say casino gambling, if anything, is the more likely to come here, since Hawaii is already a big tourist destination.

IDAHO

Not a whisper of video poker legalization activity is happening here, according to Kevin Mahler of the Amusement and Music Owners of Idaho. Kevin says the state of Idaho has plenty of tax money; they're not a NAGRA member; they do have a state-run lottery, but its commissioner is strongly and publicly opposed to video poker (or any other form of gambling that would compete with the state lottery).

ILLINOIS

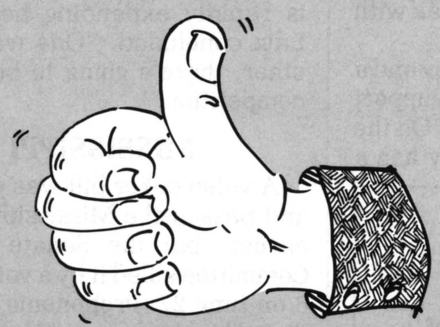
ICMOA's latest annual convention program was headlined: "The Nineties: Decade of the Video Pokers." (Nowadays they've decided to call it video gaming.) ICMOA has formed its own state-level "Truth in Amusement Committee" chaired by operator Ray Shroyer, who says he's very confident of eventual success.

The committee's immediate purpose is to draft South Dakota-type legislation, educate operators and round up ideas and support from them. "We want it to be a united effort when we reach the point of presenting our bill," said an ICMOA spokesperson. "We've had great support from manufacturers in educating the industry and the government officials," Shroyer added. ICMOA has a well-organized lobbying plan mapped out and hopes to be well underway soon. By the way, the state legislature has approved riverboat gambling to begin as early as Jan. 1, 1991, so there's a pretty fair chance that video gaming could be legalized, too.

INDIANA

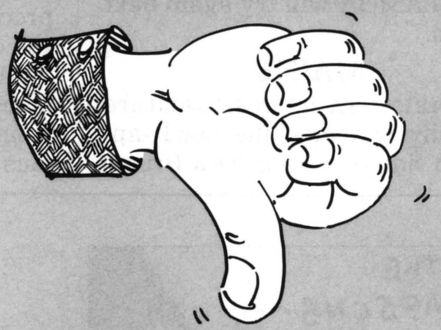
The state just passed a state lottery last year. It's probably premature for operators to try legalizing video pokers, said expert sources. "People are always talking about it, but there's no immediate prospect on the horizon," said IAMOA president Dave Sheehan.

Is Your State a "Contender" for Vidpoker Legality?



What are the signs that a state might be willing to legalize operator-run, pay-off video poker?

1. The state is hurting for tax revenues.
2. The state has a strong operator association (or at least, some well-con-nected, politically savvy operators).
3. The state already has a state lottery (i.e., the state looks favorably on gambling-type revenues) and is a member of NAGRA, the national association of state gaming regulators.
4. The state has Indian reservations which run, or wish to run, gambling (federal law gives Indians sovereignty on their own territories, and it's tough for states to permit gambling for Indians while denying it for everyone else).



What are the signs that a state will probably resist legalizing pay-off poker?

1. The state does *not* have its own lottery, and isn't a member of NAGRA.
2. The state does *not* have an operator association.
3. The state permits legal "pull-tab" charitable gambling. The pull-tab industry exists in many states; it has a powerful lobby and it doesn't want competition from vidpokers.
4. The state has plenty of tax money (yes, a few states actually do).
5. No Indian gambling.

Please remember: indicators listed above are only rough guidelines to a state's chances for video poker legalization. As the pundits say, "all politics is local" . . . which means, decisions on major issues always come down to local economics, culture and personalities. A smart, well-executed lobbying strategy could bring legal poker to an "unlikely" state. A dumb move could snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. (From what we hear, the latter has already happened at least once.)

IOWA

Nobody could or would comment on any Iowa legalization efforts for the record at presstime. One source said the state association "may" lobby for poker legalization. For what it's worth, riverboat gambling has already been legalized and reportedly will begin April 1, 1991; that's usually an indicator that a state government might be receptive to operator-run video poker.

KANSAS

The industry has no operator association in Kansas, but the state government does run its own lottery.

KENTUCKY

No organized effort has been reported to us for legalization of vidpokers — and, we're told, this Bible Belt state would be a tough sell.

LOUISIANA

LAMOA's South Dakota-type bill passed the House by a 2 to 1 margin on June 20 and at presstime, the group was hoping for a vote in the Senate before the legislature ended its session on July 8, but they didn't get it. LAMOA will try again next session.

MAINE

Operators are interested and are carefully watching the newly-approved video lottery in New Brunswick, Canada. If Vermont goes, Maine's chances would be stronger.

MARYLAND

We couldn't reach state association officials, but are told there's no move to legalize video pokers here.

MASSACHUSETTS

No organized effort is taking place here, said CMIA association exec Richard Guild. And Bob Donnelly of New England Coin-Op told us most Massachusetts operators aren't showing a lot of interest; those that are interested, are watching to see results in Vermont.

MICHIGAN

As we reported in March, Cartel Distributing's Hank Heiser is heading up a poker legalization task force called the Michigan Amusement Council (MAC), which is a separate group from the state operator association. State law now permits amusement-only video pokers; MAC wants South Dakota-style, legal payout machines under supervision of state lottery commission. No bill has been introduced yet, but "we feel we're making wonderful progress," said Hank. MAC's board has had a productive exchange of ideas with various state agencies.

MAC has hired an attorney and a lobbyist, and is trying to win support from various state officials. On the plus side, Michigan already has a state lottery, so the legislature might go for the pay-out poker idea, too. On the minus side, the governor is "not particularly" in favor of operator-run gambling to date.

MINNESOTA

"We're now beginning to march forward on a video lottery bill similar to that of South Dakota," said MOMA lobbyist Bob Latz. The next session of the legislature will begin in January of 1991 and MOMA hopes to submit their bill soon after.

Prospects for success? On the plus side, a "video game of chance" machine is already okay state-wide. Also, wide-open, Vegas-style gambling is already taking place on Indian reservations and that puts pressure on lawmakers to approve the same enterprise for other citizens.

On the minus side, Minnesota operators will be up against the powerful pull-tab lobby (charitable gaming interests, paper companies, etc.) who don't want to share this profitable market with the coin-op industry (pull-tabs are a billion dollar business in Minnesota).

"The field of legalized gambling is rapidly expanding here," Bob Latz concluded. "One way or another, there's going to be a lot of competition."

MISSISSIPPI

A video poker bill was proposed and passed the Mississippi House earlier, but the Senate Finance Committee killed it by a vote of 12 to 6 on June 27. Proponents had predicted legal poker could have raised $65 million for proposed educational improvement programs. A local paper quoted a Finance Committee member as saying: "This offers the worst aspect of gambling in all 82 counties. Now [if we approve video poker] we are injecting the machines in counties whether they want it or not." Mississippi operators will try again next year.

By the way, the Senate also killed a state lottery which would have been three times more profitable. On the other hand, legalized video gambling on riverboats reportedly passed the legislature on the week of March 20, and the governor signed the bill, which would allow



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the state to license these games as early as April of this year. We're told that no enabling regulations have been enacted yet, though.

MISSOURI

No organized effort is underway to legalize video pokers, sources said. Missouri does not have a state operator association.

MONTANA

The first state to legalize pay-off video pokers to be run by ordinary coin machine operators was Montana, in 1986. The stand-alone units are not connected to a central computer; instead they're outfitted with dual printers — one inside, one outside — so that operators and state regulators can closely monitor cash flow.

Montana's the only state so far with a multi-year track record for video poker profits, and it sure is impressive. Statewide, video pokers, bingos and kenos earned $34 million in 1986-87; $44 million in 1987-88; $70 million in 1988-89; $87 million in 1989-90; and at presstime, $105 million earnings was projected for 1990-91. (For more information on the Montana, see our "Video Poker Fact Sheet" on the state, elsewhere in this section.)

NEBRASKA

Stan Dinges, president of the Nebraska Operators Assn., feels confident that an operator-run video lottery will be legalized this fall. Trade sources we spoke to share his optimism. If enough signatures have been gathered on a state-sponsored petition, a video lottery initiative will go before the voters for their approval in November. If passed, operators would be able to operate pay-off video pokers something like South Dakota's, except without modem links to central computers. Nebraska's pro-poker campaign actually started with the desire of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans to install regulated gaming equipment, Dinges said.

Nebraska has had an "up and down" history with legal video gaming. According to AMOA's Truth in Amusement Committee chief Phil Benson, "Nebraska legalized video lottery several years ago in some areas, but they became — in a sense — too successful. The machines were cropping up in 7-Elevens or anyplace else you wanted to put them. Little kids were going through rolls of quarters. The state legislation became afraid and shut it down."

NOA is confident they can avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, and as stated, tradesters in the know are betting on their eventual success.

NEVADA

You can trip over pay-out video poker machines and slots almost anywhere in the state, not just in the famous casinos. That includes supermarkets, drug stores and liquor establishments (under a restricted license). But getting the licenses to run this type of equipment, even on a limited basis, is "costly and time-consuming," said

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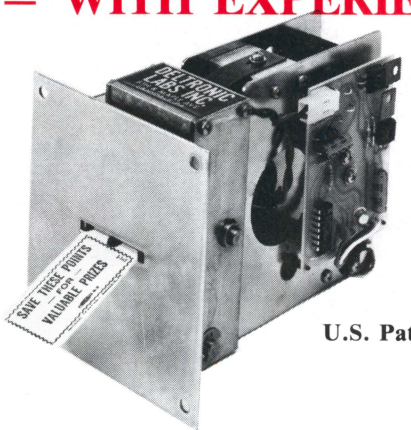

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Reno Game Sales topper Marty Shumsky. He added that the big hotels and casinos would like to see the restricted licenses eliminated (so they can get rid of the small-time competition), but says this is "very unlikely and politically difficult in our laid-back state!"

NEW JERSEY

As is well-known, gambling is permitted on the Jersey Shore, and in the casinos of Atlantic City. If New Jersey AMOA has its way, the rest of the state will follow suit with operator-run video pokers. The association has hired a former assemblyman as their lobbyist, has established a poker legalization committee, and in early July the group sent three members (Betson's Bill Treger, Bill Englehart and lobbyist Dennis Riley) to South Dakota to study poker legalization there.

Some sources expect the state's casino interests to oppose any operator-run gambling. Also, before making progress on any proposed poker legalization bill, AMOA-NJ will have to get the legislature to rescind AMOA-NJ's own 1982 bill outlawing video lotteries. (The bill was intended to prevent single-source giant manufacturers from taking over this market). In AMOA-NJ's favor, an attorney general opinion is on file which says a video lottery would be legal under the state constitution.

"Our new governor still has to appoint a lottery director and we've got to raise a lot of money," said Betson's Bill Treger. "So we're at an in-between point at the moment."

NEW HAMPSHIRE

No information available.

NEW MEXICO

Our sources had no information about any effort to legalize video pokers here.

NEW YORK

Video poker is only a distant gleam in New York operators' eyes at this point. "We've seen the workings, mechanisms and benefits of legalized video poker," said Bob Herman, president of AMOA-NY (the statewide group). "As a result, we'd like to address this issue and get more people involved. The problem is that we're in the middle of a major fight with the state and city on banning all cigarette machines. That's our priority and pokers are on the back burner. Yes, there has been interest; we've had AMOA's Phil Benson and Betson's Bill Treger address our group; and some people have asked us to form a committee to address this issue."

Some insiders have suggested that "even if the New York legislature passed the law, Governor Cuomo would not sign it." Bob Herman's response? "That could well be true, but we've made some inquiries and found some state senators would be for it, and if Mario Cuomo's own man — the lottery commissioner — could show the governor a better way, maybe it could swing the governor over. Some re-thinking could occur. At any rate, it's going to be a hard sell."

NORTH DAKOTA

This is probably one of the strongest bets for vidpoker legalization in 1990. Operator Jim Rader feels NDCMOA can get its pro-poker voter referendum on the ballot and approved by voters on Nov. 6, if the group can garner strong support from the state's 1,100 liquor-licensed, on-premise consumption sites. Jim chairs the video gaming committee of the North Dakota Coin Machine Operators Assn.; they're trying to support a Montana or South Dakota type bill. First, however, they've got to collect 26,200 signatures by Aug. 8 on a petition to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot, which would change the state constitution to permit private enterprise for video gaming.

Operators are also gathering signatures to put an "initiated measure" on the ballot which would provide regulations for operator-run video gaming. Provisions include: maximum of five machines per liquor-licensed location; maximum bet of $2 per play; maximum win of $1,000 per play; computer/modem link-up between machines and a central state-run computer; and 18% of gross revenues (after paying winners) would go to the state (two thirds goes back to local city or county government); etc.

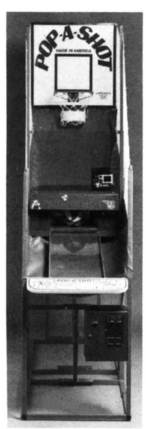
Opposition could come from a strongly-organized charitable gambling industry, but NDCMOA is hoping that economic development and tax relief will carry their measure through. The petitions are "on the street" now and NDCMOA is seeking donations from locations, distributors and manufacturers to support their campaign.

NORTH CAROLINA

No organized effort to legalize video pokers is taking place in North Carolina, that we could learn of. Operators are allowed to award minimal merchandise for credits won playing amusement-only games.

OHIO

OCMA adopted an anti-gambling resolution years ago, feeling at that time that gambling could mar the reputations of purely amusement operators. This resolution still stands, although like everyone else Ohio operators have noticed that the national climate is changing.



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Said OCMA Director Paul Corey: "We've had Phil Benson come in and talk to us and we appointed a committee last year to study the situation. They're meeting and talking, and we're keeping an open mind, but so far we haven't changed our position."

OKLAHOMA

"Oklahoma will be the last state to legalize video poker," chuckled Nick Shah of Galaxy Distributing (Tulsa). "Our legislature is very, very conservative." In fact, according to Nick, as a result of last year's determined enforcement actions, even gray area games are much less in evidence.

OREGON

A vaguely worded pro-gambling bill became law in 1989, but it didn't specify who would run the video lottery. The bill and the coin machine industry ran into trouble when the state attorney general and incumbent governor made poker a political football. Several large firms have reportedly approached the state hoping to secure a single-vendor contract. The final outcome is still unclear.

PENNSYLVANIA

PAMMA has made a determined push for their long-fought, South Dakota-type pro-video poker bill in recent months. In the process, they have garnered quite a few additional legislative supporters. PAMMA was frustrated this summer when, due to basic procedural problems (democracy is slow and cumbersome, folks), House Bill 2300 was put "on hold" for a while. The bill has not been voted on, nor scrapped, but probably won't get serious consideration until the legislature reconvenes and gets serious about passing laws in the fall. PAMMA's hoping they can hold onto their momentum till then.

RHODE ISLAND

The state has no operator association, no distributors and we were unable to contact anyone about possible legalization efforts . . . which seem unlikely here!

SOUTH CAROLINA

Industry rumors have claimed South Carolina tried to put a South Dakota-type bill through during the last legislative session and failed, but that's not accurate. According to SCCOA officials and to government officials in the statehouse itself, operators only wanted to legalize "refunds for unplayed games" (up to the amount the player already put into the machine). There's a fine distinction here, but if refunds were confined to a single player's input, then you're not really talking about pay-off gambling . . . that is, if the games were really operated that way! At any rate, this provision of the bill was struck at the last minute by a House-Senate conference committee, so the effort was not successful.

SCCOA lobbyist J.W. Lawson explained that true pay-off games in South Carolina would be a bit more of a challenge to legalize than many realize. "To legalize paying off on games would require a change in our constitution," he said. Lawson added that amusement only video pokers are legal in South Carolina and have been for some time. Effective July 1, however, the state raised the per-machine annual fee on this class of game to $1,500 (which ought to tell you something).

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota legalized operator-run, pay-off video poker on Oct. 16, 1989. Games are linked via modem/phone line 24 hours a day to the state lottery's computer. This system provides for frequent computer auditing of each machine's accounts; operators depositing taxes weekly to a separate account which they maintain as a "trust fund" for the state; and the lottery electronically sweeps/collects this account every two weeks. The machines are making lots of money; government officials and the coin machine industry are very happy with the situation. Because of the superior security and accounting provided by the computer link-up, South Dakota is regarded as the model for other states to follow in legalizing video gaming.



SMS's So. Dakota-licensed Draw Poker.

TEXAS

Texas looks like an excellent bet for poker legalization, perhaps as early as 1991. "We have bills in place to legalize instant-lottery type equipment run by individual operators," said AMOT president Paul Borchardt. "It's an election year and we think the key people in the statehouse are in our favor. Also, both of the people running for governor have said they'll sign our legislation. We'll introduce our bill after the election, when the legislature reconvenes in March of 1991. We think we're in a very strong position to get it passed."

AMOT is seeking a South Dakota-

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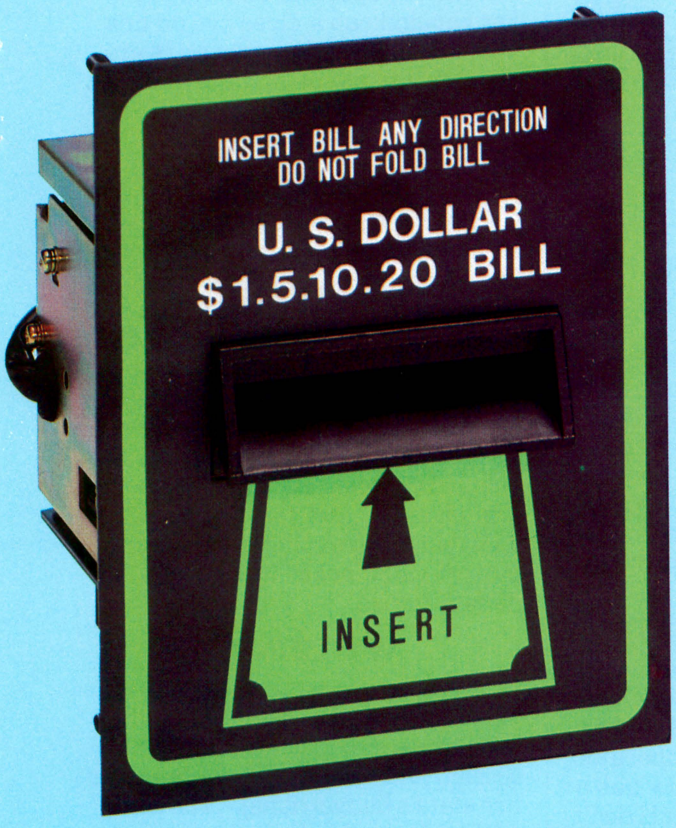

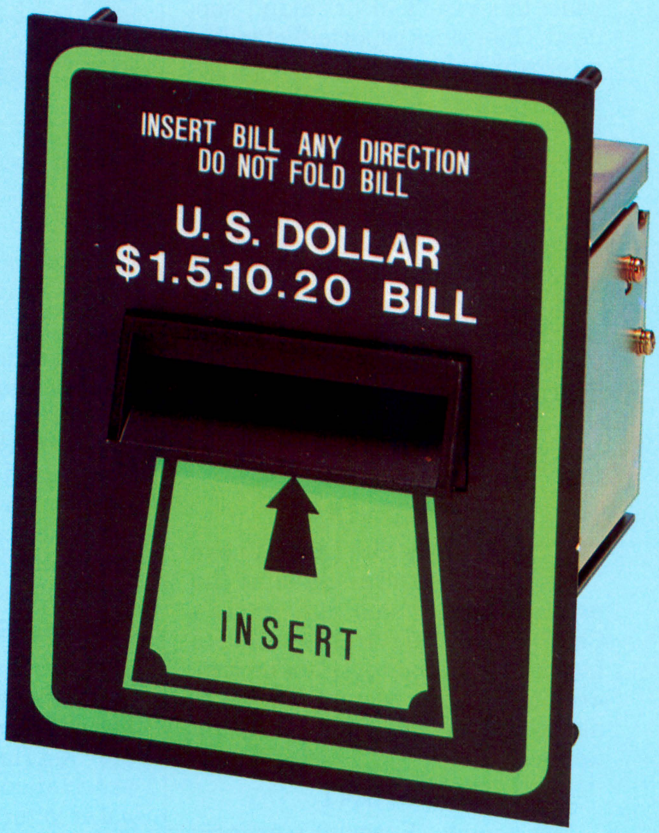

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TENNESSEE

We weren't able to contact anyone at AMOT prior to deadline, but outside sources said a very organized push for pro-poker legalization will be mounted again next year; this year's effort didn't succeed. Operators reportedly face an interesting situation here: legal poker machines are usually tied to liquor-licensed locations, but half of Tennessee is "dry" (no alcohol sales allowed). Private clubs may be the targeted sites, and taverns may have to set up separate "age 21 only" rooms. We're also told the state does need money and that the governor doesn't want to impose new taxes, so these factors could work in operators' favor.

UTAH

Forget it!

VIRGINIA

Virginia operators (AMOV) are "assessing the poker issue at the present time," said the group's Charles Rowland. Virginia is said to be one of the toughest states on gray area poker enforcement. The state has a lottery run by Bally Scientific Games.

VERMONT

For a while, Vermont was looking good for South Dakota-type poker legalization this year, but the VAMOA ran into a roadblock and will try again next year. Persistent reports from people in the industry blame this defeat on "operator greed" (certain operators not wanting to give the state a high share of profits), but the group's legislative counsel Anthony Otis firmly denies this.

Here's the story according to Mr. Otis: Vermont has a state lottery, but the commissioner of this group didn't like the idea of legal video pokers. "Our bill was very, very favorably received by legislators and we had good sponsors," Otis said, "but unfortunately the lottery commission itself came out against the bill and without their support it wasn't do-able." He added that VAMOA made many political friends during their first attempt at legalization and will try again next year, perhaps with a bill linking the industry to non-profit organizations.



The top portion of a flyer distributed by the AMO-Tennessee and several other operator associations urging coin folks to be strongly involved in the drive to legalize pay-off vidpoker (and to belong to their associations).

WASHINGTON STATE

No video poker legalization efforts are contemplated. "Video poker will be a tough sell," said operator Jim Hart of the state operator association. "The state now has a poker lottery of their own and I don't see private poker legislation going anywhere."

A couple of pro-gambling bills were introduced in the last legislative session (one by tavern owners that would exclude operators). Operators didn't support the bill and it went nowhere. Also, pull-tabs are very profitable in this state and that industry's lobby would oppose operator-run gambling.

WEST VIRGINIA

In mid-June, West Virginia operators formed a pro-poker committee, said one source, but we couldn't get confirmation from state association officials.

By the way, the state has just begun its own video lottery... which does not include coin machine operators. At the privately-owned, state-supervised Mountaineer Race Track, video keno is legal and 80 to 100 location-owned machines (reortedly manufactured and run solely by Bally and Scientific Games) are in operation. This is a 60-day trial run which may be expanded to other tracks or even state-wide, said an expert who is involved in testing and certifying the machines. Anyone interested in the fate of operator-run video poker should keep a close eye on this one; if single-vendor games are approved, it could be an unfortunate precedent for the coin machine industry in other states.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin would have to be rated as one of coin-op's strongest vidpoker contenders. Operators promoted a Montana-type law during the 1989-90 legislative session; WAMO has now withdrawn that bill and will introduce a South Dakota-type law at the start of the 1991 session. Tradesters here have built strong political contacts, have an excellent organization, and feel very confident that they're going to have legal, pay-off video poker in the not-too-distant future.

WYOMING

Wyoming operators tried to get a video poker bill considered in the legislature's extremely short 1990 session (only 20 days to get the entire state's budget done). "The committee charged with reviewing our bill advised that it should be held back until the 1991 session," said Jim Petry, executive director of the Wyoming Candy, Tobacco and Coin Vendors Assn. Petry added that this is the third attempt to get a poker legalization bill through; all factions have now been heard from and their input has been considered. "The legislators I've spoken to feel the bill's in good shape and I'm optimistic we'll get a good hearing next year," Petry said. "I haven't made a headcount and don't know the chances of passing, although the current governor — who is up for reelection and is quite popular — is not in favor, so we could be looking at a veto if we get things that far."

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A pint size version of the ever popular basketball game, Coin Concepts presents the Jr. All American. Dimensions are 84" deep, 33" wide and 78" high. Some game features include digital readouts for time and score, ticket and free play optional settings, and selectable coinage. The heavy duty construction will withstand years of constant use.



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Legal Eagles

AMOA enjoys honeymoon at "NAGRA" falls; works with national association of gambling regulators to craft recommended video poker legislation

If you want to persuade somebody, you should look like him, think like him, talk like him and ***be*** like him, as much as possible. AMOA is employing this classic bit of strategy to promote legalization of video poker in states around the country. How? AMOA is working closely with a respected national group of gambling regulators (NAGRA, the North American Gaming Regulators Assn.). AMOA has already won NAGRA's stamp of "official" endorsement on certain forms of operator-proposed video poker legislation.

"In states which are hedging on poker legalization, I think the AMOA-NAGRA recommended legislation could have some positive impact," said former New Jersey gaming control bureau chief Bill Treger. "In states like Wisconsin where legalization is already on the agenda (and where local officials are NAGRA members), it could have a very big impact," Treger added. "Basically, it gives the entire pro-legalization movement some credibility and shows the state legislators that there are national organizations they can work with."

The model legislation created by the two groups is a product of a joint NAGRA-AMOA committee, which was formed last fall at the AMOA Expo. In late 1989 and early 1990, this committee held three meetings to work out details of their joint recommendations. AMOA was represented by Wally Bohrer, Phil Benson, John Estridge and Dick Hawkins. NAGRA was represented by John Willems (Montana Gaming Control Board), who chaired the committee; Betty Mercer (then-president of NAGRA), then-NAGRA Treasurer Bill Treger, Scott Henneman (South Dakota Lottery Commission) and Randy Kerns (Washington State Gambling Commission).



Betson's redemption sales rep Bill Treger was Treasurer of NAGRA for two years. He was also chief of N.J.'s Bureau of Amusement Games Control from 1982-90. He started with Betson in February and resigned from NAGRA at that time.

According to former NAGRA officer Treger (who's now a redemption sales rep for Betson): "We reviewed the video poker systems in Montana and South Dakota, asked for recommendations from manufacturers and operators, and decided which features could be combined to create the best possible system. Issues addressed included funding, licensing, machines, etc."

And what did AMOA and NAGRA come up with? "We basically adopted the South Dakota system almost intact," Treger explained. "Key features include computer telephone link-up, nightly automatic polling of each machine, and so on. The only exceptions were the addition of some penalties, suggestions for different percentaging, and different price of play ($20 bill maximum). We left issues such as maximum pay-out to the discretion of the individual state. We also, to a degree, left it up to the states as to which agency should regulate video poker: the state police, liquor control division, etc. We recommended that it be under the control of the state lottery division, of course, but again it's up to each state."

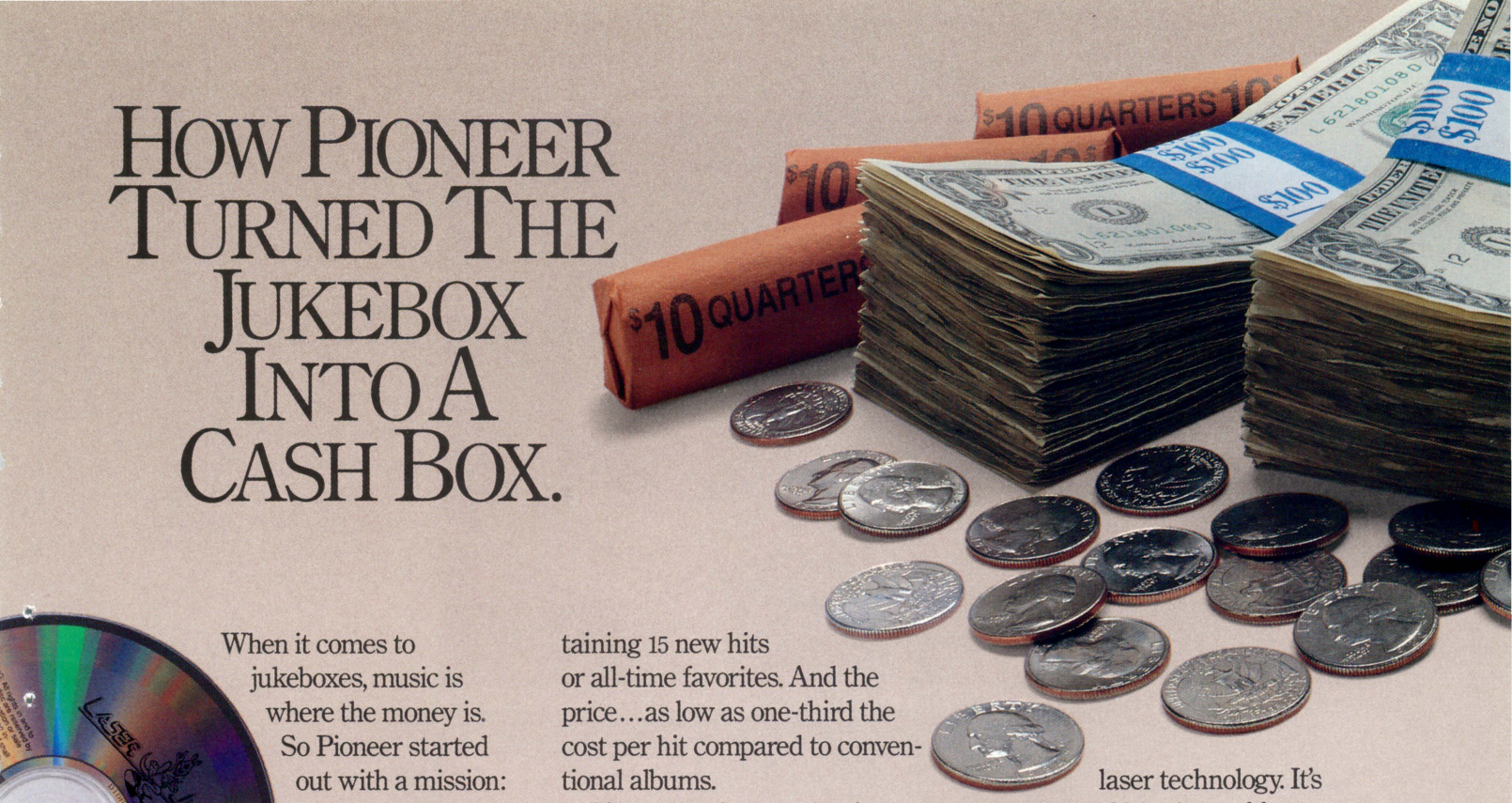
NAGRA as a whole heard a report on the proposed recommendations when the group met in Bismarck, N.D. on May 16-17. In closed session, NAGRA members voted (almost unanimously) to accept the joint committee's ideas. According to AMOA Government Relations Chairman Wally Bohrer, AMOA will soon send a handsomely-bound version of this "ideal video lottery system" to state legislatures which are considering legalization of video poker.

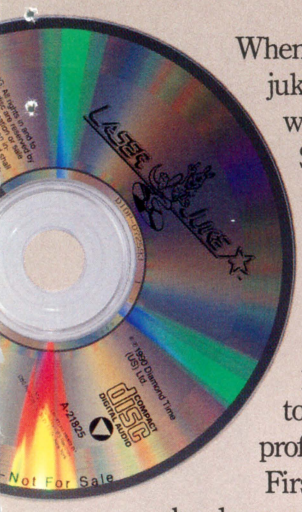
The AMOA-NAGRA recommendations will also be presented at the bi-annual "worldwide conference on risk taking," sponsored in August by the University of Nevada (Reno) in London. Speaking for the industry at this affair will be AMOA's Phil Benson, NAGRA's new president Roger Frank (Minnesota Dept. of Public Safety, Gambling Enforcement) and past NAGRA president John Willems. "It's a very big conference for the casino industry; lottery commissions are represented world-wide," Betson's Bill Treger noted. "This is the first time that the coin machine industry has been involved.

"All too often, the coin industry waits until there's a fire before they go to fight it," Treger added. "The AMOA-NAGRA cooperation probably represents one of the first times the video industry and state regulators have gotten together *before* a crisis exists, to try to work something out. It worked very well and hopefully, more meetings of this type will happen in the future."

At Treger's suggestion, NAGRA's fall conference will take place at the same time as AMOA's Expo this fall in Chicago. NAGRA members will probably tour the exhibit floor during one day.

How Pioneer Turned The Jukebox Into A Cash Box.





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Gathered around for a design meeting are (left to right): SMS's Dan Bennett (Software Development), Bob Harzer (National Sales Manager), Jim Pietrangelo (VP Sales & Marketing), Walter Lee (Director of Engineering), Sal Mirando (President & C.E.O.) and Mike Smith (Hardware Development).

Here's a group of SMS folks in the plant with equipment on the production line (right behind them). There are several key factors contributing to SMS' success and one of them, most definitely, is the people — from the management team to the production team.





At left is SMS's factory, located at 601 Prospect Street in Lakewood, N.J. This 20,000-sq.-ft. facility became home to the "Big Little Company" in 1987 and is quite a step up from humbler beginnings in a 2,000-sq.-ft. locale in Point Pleasant Beach (1982).

SPOTLIGHT SPECIAL

SMS Manufacturing Co.

the "Big Little Company" has grown into a video poker powerhouse; CEO Sal Mirando calls video lottery & redemption "future of industry"

They used to call themselves "the big little company," but SMS Manufacturing has clearly outgrown that slogan. Today, they are just plain *big*. . . and getting bigger. After eight hardworking years, the Lakewood, N.J. firm is feeling on top of the world, and why not? Their chosen fields — video gaming and redemption — are hailed by many tradesters as "coin-op's growth markets for the '90s."

According to SMS's confident president and (now) sole owner Sal Mirando: "The future of this industry, and of our company, lies in video lottery and redemption. That's where all of our efforts, R&D, and development budget are dedicated . . . and that's where our sales are coming from!

"We've enjoyed a 19% average increase in gross sales over last four years," Sal smiled. "For fiscal 1990, SMS will be 22% ahead of 1989 sales. That's steady growth, and that's the kind of growth we like!"



VP of Sales & Marketing Jim Pietrangelo.



SMS President & C.E.O. Sal Mirando.

SMS now holds lottery or gaming licenses in Montana and South Dakota, where they have captured major market shares with their state-of-the-art video lottery games. SMS also holds a license for manufacture of electronic video bingo in Louisiana only.

Far from being mere "machine peddlers" who profit from the video lottery opportunity, SMS is also a good citizen of the industry, helping to create, foster and encourage this emerging market. The firm actively supports state and national associations with time, money and expertise as these groups try to expand the frontiers of legal video lotteries. SMS also provides its distributors with the information and tools they need, to help video lottery operators become ever more adept and professional. Moreover, Sal Mirando personally chairs an AAMA subcommittee on video gaming and lottery, which is helping the association define its position and role in this new field.

It all adds up to a full-service company that enjoys considerable prestige and wields growing influence in the coin machine industry.

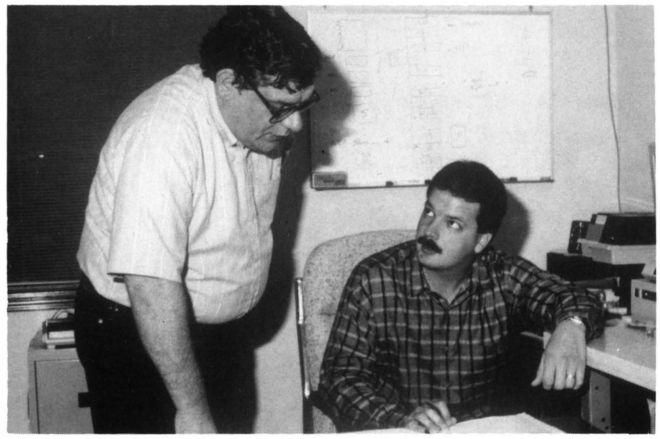
FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

The success of SMS comes from several factors. First among these success factors is their own people. Sal Mirando is justifiably proud of the talented team he's assembled.

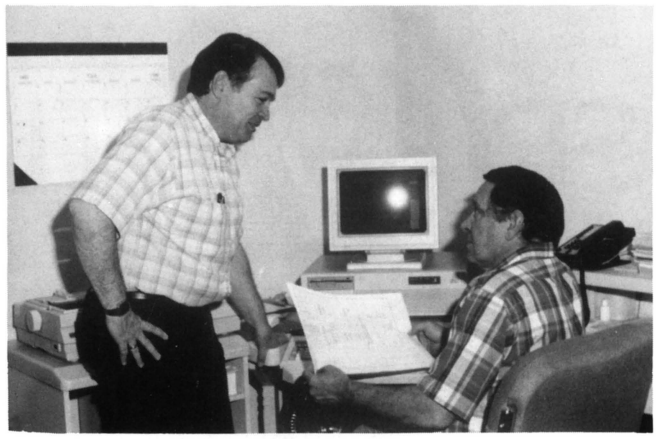
VP of Sales & Marketing Jim Pietrangelo, VP of of Finance and Administration Joan Sierchio, National Sales Manager Bob Harzer, Director of Engineering Walter "Pappa" Lee, Director of Software En-



National Sales Manager Bob Harzer.



Dir. of Software Eng. John McGovney with Dan Bennett (software devel.).



Mike Smith (hardware development) with Walter Lee, Director of Engineering.

gineering John McGovney, Senior Programmer Dan Bennett, Hardware Designer Mike Smith and the rest of the SMS crew are all "aces," said Sal. "We know the industry, we care about it, we work hard and we have a good time doing it," he explained.

Second, SMS makes a good product. They never forget that the final user of their equipment is not the operator, not the location, not even the state regulators . . . but that all-important player. "We consider game designing an art," stated Jim Pietrangelo. "Any computer company can design a computer that plays poker, but only true game designers understand the art of player appeal. Other issues, such as security and accountability, may be uppermost in the minds of state regulators, but at SMS, we're game designers. That means we remember that a player is still playing that game — and he wants to be entertained! We make sure we design that intangible entertainment factor into our games, and we think our sales record shows this."

VIDEO LOTTERY MANUFACTURING

Of course, a major part of making good products is also skilled programming design and manufacturing. SMS chalks up good marks in this department as well. When you are manufacturing video lottery equipment, execs said, the major challenge comes in development, not the actual building of machines.

"The two buzzwords that aptly describe the latest generation of video gaming devices are 'security' and 'accountability,'" Jim Pietrangelo said. "These new games are less like video games and more like sophisticated, computerized accounting devices. Any state which is contemplating the legalization of video poker must first be made comfortable with the reality that these games are, first and foremost, secure from unauthorized access or outside control.

"Since these states are legalizing these machines to participate in the revenue which they generate," Jim continued, "it is important to the state that accounting information particular to any given machine be immediately accessible and absolutely accurate. With today's technology, we're now able to offer that level of security."

As far as other manufacturing challenges, video lottery games do require much tougher quality control, have to pass tougher testing and have longer "burn-in time." Also, the metal fabrication in the cabinetry means longer lead-in times between ordering and delivery. Shelving the inventory also costs more — the empty cabinet costs up to six or seven times more than a video game cabinet, for example.

Video lottery machines are tested either by a state's own gaming laboratory, or by an independent testing laboratory. "Games are tested very rigorously both for software and hardware design, and for serviceability," Jim Pietrangelo said. "For example, our machine withstands three minutes of direct applications of 40,000 volts . . . and the machine, so to speak, doesn't blink an eye!"

The final word on SMS's manufacturing is that they do it all in-house. "From initial concept to final product, it's all done under this roof," Sal Mirando said proudly. "From original concept, to hardware and software design, to prototyping, down to the assembly line for mass production of the final product, we do it all!"

DISTRIBUTOR RELATIONSHIPS

The third factor in SMS's success — and it's a major one — is a strong distributor network. "We've been blessed with remarkable success with the operator, distributor, man-



Jim Pietrangelo and Sal Mirando at the last ACME show with their So. Dakota Video Keno *lottery terminal.*

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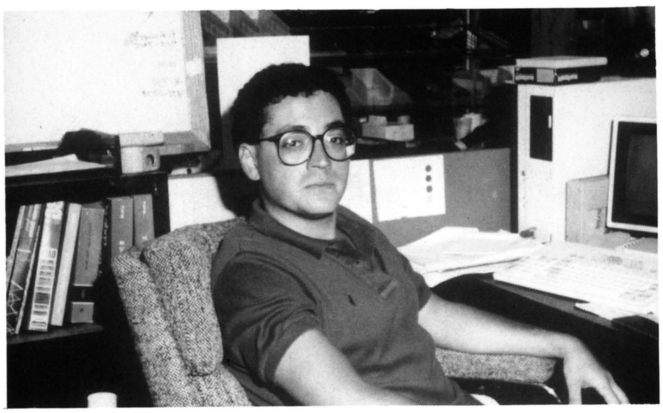
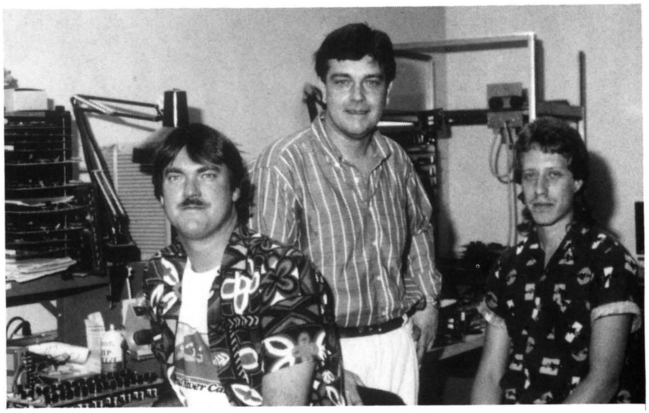


SMS' Production Manager Tad Mauro.



Service techs Jeff Fischer and Dan Burke flank Customer Service's Perry Brown.

ufacturer relationship," Sal Mirando stated, "and we still think that's the way the industry should be, even with the coin-op video lottery. We're taking advantage of eight years of coin-op amusement operator and distributor relationships around the country."

Mirando continued: "That amusement network is now becoming a video lottery network. For the first time, we had the network before we had the product! In fact, our distributor network is already in place in nearly every state in the country. We've nourished those relationships through good times and bad," Sal added, "and now they are as solid as they ever were. We think that's where our real strength is — and will be — in the future."

Here, SMS gives a special salute to the Lieberman distributing organization. "Lieberman is our distributor for the South Dakota video lottery and we attribute our success in South Dakota to their representation of our product, as much as to our technology and manufacturing," Sal Mirando said firmly. "They're in a class by themselves." SMS has granted rights to their video lottery product to Lieberman Music over a five-state region in the Midwest.

MARKETING SAVVY

Marketing savvy is another key factor in SMS's strength. They anticipated the growth of the legal video lottery market and developed their company strategy accordingly. "From our inception, we knew the general direction we wanted SMS to take," Jim Pietrangelo explained. "When Montana first passed legal video gaming, we geared all our activities to someday allow us to establish a foothold in that business."

The same far-sighted marketing approach took SMS into redemption, a market which complements video lottery and does not compete with it. "They really are two different markets," Sal Mirando explained. "The video lottery is restricted to liquor-license consumption locations, and will be the salvation of the street operator. Redemption is strictly arcade games, targeted at kids and moms and dads. That's why the two markets are not competing with each other, even though they're the same in rewarding a prize of some kind."

"Being a New Jersey manufacturer with strong ties to the Jersey Shore allowed us to observe and eventually understand the popularity of redemption games," Jim said. "We knew that, with proper support, what was popular here would eventually become popular in other areas of the country."

Accordingly, SMS began designing and marketing redemption products in the mid-1980s, and SMS acquired an interest in Coastal Amusement Distributors as of May 1, 1988. "We saw the future of redemption and acquired a large interest in Coastal because they're redemption specialists," Sal said. "They automatically became one of SMS's largest customers. I have to credit Coastal's president Lenny Dean with the success of our *Pop-A-Ball.* He lived with it, helped us through R&D, helped us work out any bugs, and marketed the game with great zeal, to make it the robust-selling product it is today."

STATE POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Finally, the reasons for SMS's success must include the firm's political activism. SMS understands that governments and industry associations play a key role in shaping market conditions . . . which is why SMS plays a key role in cooperating with these entities. SMS is a member of AMOA, AAMA and "many" state associations. They also attend all key industry conferences at state and national levels, as well as meetings of state regulators such as NAGRA.

"We contribute financial and technical help, donate products, in fact we contribute everything we can," Sal Mirando stated. "But we always go through the local association. That is the way we believe this business should go. You have to be very wary of a manufacturer dealing directly with the state, and bypassing the operators and distributors."

By the way, one part of SMS's pro-industry agenda in these efforts at the state level is to help promote industry standardization. "We try to promote standardization of equipment and specs in as many states as possible," Jim Pietrangelo stated. "That ensures on-time start-up once the games are approved by the legislature, since we don't have to keep recreating the wheel in terms of new technology." Jim added: "Standardization also will create a market for the operator to buy and sell used equipment."

NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

On the national level, as mentioned, Sal heads up AAMA's video

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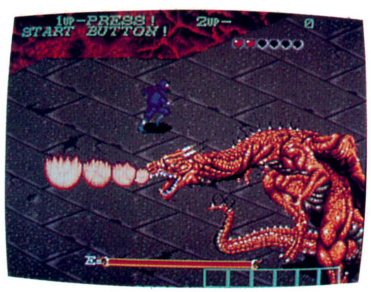

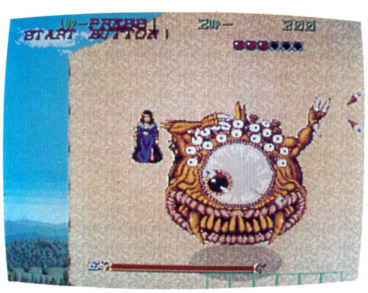

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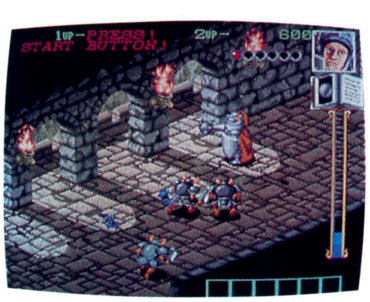

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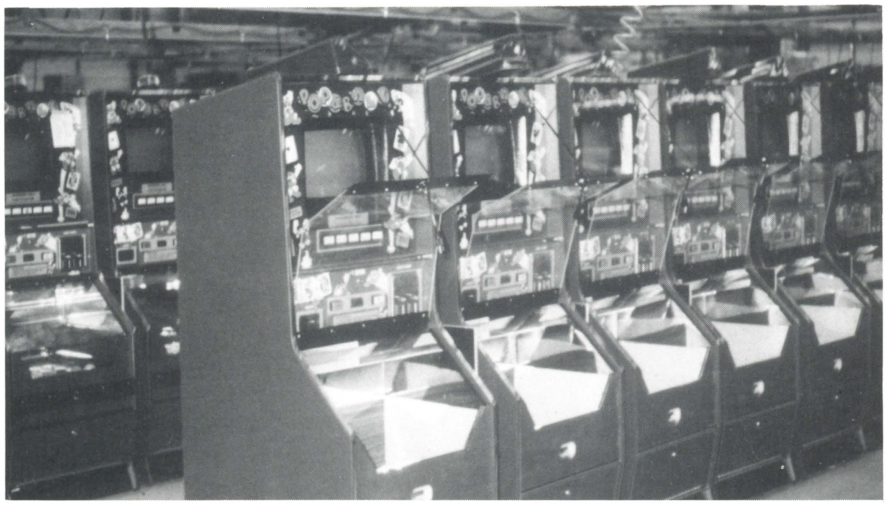

The firm's Pop-A-Ball *on the production line. SMS entered the redemption business in the mid-'80s.*

lottery subcommittee. Other committee members include distributors Steve Lieberman and Mike McWilliams (General Coin). "AAMA is now making a concerted effort to represent our industry in the video lottery arena," Sal said. "Bob Fay made an excellent presentation to NAGRA and I think it's important that AAMA convey to state legislators that we are not the people we had the images of being, 25 years ago. Bob Fay's give speeches around the country, it gives great credibility to our industry in general, and to the video lottery market especially."

Discussing the industry's pro-poker political lobbying, Mirando added: "I commend AMOA for its recognition of operators' interests in video lottery and their efforts to further those efforts on behalf of operators. AMOA is doing more every year, and that's the right thing to do. In the future," he continued, "AAMA will work closely with AMOA to further our interests as an industry in the video lottery market. It's important that we keep this market in the private sector. If we accomplish nothing more than that, we will have done our job."

MARKET POTENTIAL

Once a state does approve operator-run video gaming, SMS plans to be there with state-of-the-art equipment and top-notch service support. Despite the durability of steel cabinets and the ability of the computer components to withstand severe electrical shocks, SMS believes that each newly-legalized state will constitute a "live" market for many years, not just for an initial period of frenzied sales.

"We don't consider any market to be a one-time killing," said Jim. "The investment is too large, the ef-

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fort is too great, for us to make all this sacrifice."

"The sheer size of the market precludes it being a one-time killing," Sal added. "For example, if Pennsylvania legalizes it, the market there could be 100,000 machines. At least, that's mathematically possible if you assume 10 machines per tavern. Even if it's half that size, you're still looking at a tremendous number of machines and due to rigorous quality control standards mandated by the state, it would take a long time for manufacturers to build them. It would also take a long time for operators to gradually acquire the financial wherewithal to buy them.

"So volume alone and then replacement would mean an on-going business," Sal continued. "We anticipate a five-year machine lifespan at most, because of heavy use and because of a constant influx of new technology. Players like variety. For example, Montana's a mature market, but they're still selling games because new technology has come along. That will happen much more on a national level."

Jim Pietrangelo added with a smile: "We're dealing with computer technology here — they obsolete it by the week!"

FUTURE OF BOTH MARKETS

By now it should be extremely obvious that SMS is quite bullish on the future of legalized video gaming. "It's the future of the industry," Sal said simply. Jim added: "It's going to be legalized across the country; the only question is whether operators or the state will run the show. We're doing our best to ensure that the coin machine industry plays its proper part in this emerging market."

Speaking of future market development, SMS is also pursuing the gaming market on Indian reservations, which they expect to be a "very hot" market in the next few years. Currently, the state of Minnesota has the only working, formal "compact" between reservations and state governments to allow legal gambling, but several more states are expected to follow suit and SMS is designing products for this market already.



SMS' Bayou Bingo machines on the production line.

SMS expects the redemption market, by the way, to grow as rapidly as video lottery. It requires much less formal legislation. "I believe redemption requires a more concerted effort on the part of AMOA and AAMA," Sal Mirando said thoughtfully. "It's a very important market and should not be shoved aside. AMOA should pay as much attention to redemption as they do to darts!"

FUTURE COMPETITION

Competition in the video lottery market is stiff, SMS allows. "The manufacturers whose equipment can pass the testing labs are considered to be the cream of the crop," Jim Pietrangelo said. "When you deal with the best, competition is sure to be fierce."

As the video gaming and video lottery market grows, SMS fully anticipates that more manufacturers will enter the fray. "It is a highly competitive market and will become more so in the future," Sal stated. "For example, in the next 12 to 18 months, I think you will see the Japanese entering this market. Poker is no different in this sense from video games or other products," Sal commented. "If U.S. manufacturers don't aggressively pursue this business, Japanese manufacturers will." In conclusion, he declared: "I expect to see new entries from this quarter shortly, and I'm ready to take them on, head to head!"

SMS'S OWN FUTURE

SMS is looking confidently ahead to playing a strong role in twin video lottery and redemption markets . . . which they also expect to continue growing. "A video slot machine such as no one has ever seen before" will debut at the upcoming AMOA, said Sal Mirando. With a twinkle in his eye, he added: "It will be completely unique . . . and that's all I can say about it at the moment."

As for the redemption market, said Sal, "We're designing new redemption games and will have several new redemption titles at AMOA. Those products are really a direct result of Lenny Dean and Coastal Amusement's market research and expertise, and I think they'll have a major impact on the field."

Long-term, SMS execs say they see a very bright future for their bustling company. "We started SMS with the intention of becoming one of the leaders of the amusement and gaming industries," Jim Pietrangelo said simply. "That hasn't changed. If anything, our resolve is even stronger."

"We plan to keep doing exactly what we're doing," Sal Mirando summed it up, "only we'll do it more . . . and do it better!"

The SMS Story

how a handful of folks grew to a humming, thriving factory: planning, persistence, market savvy, innovation and hard work!

The "SMS story" is a success story. Sure, luck is involved . . . but as successful people like to say, "Luck is where preparation meets opportunity." Did SMS always expect to be in the strong position they enjoy today?

"Absolutely!" President Sal Mirando answered, without hesitation. He flashed a big smile, adding: "We planned for our company's trajectory to occur in exactly this way. We wanted to be in the legal gaming market from day one, based on technology, and that's what we have done. After two or three years, we also wanted to be a strong player in redemption — and we are."

Sal Mirando's own industry involvement began in 1979 as a manager for an amusement distributor. As for Jim Pietrangelo, he started in the industry as a New Jersey dealer's sales rep, after taking a top honors degree in business administration from Monmouth College.

On Sept. 1, 1982, Sal and two partners formed SMS Manufacturing Corp., then located in a 2,000-sq.-ft. facility at 3 Broadway, Point Pleasant Beach in New Jersey. "We had one product: *Hi-Lo Double-Up Joker Poker,*" Sal recalled.

The initial employees on that first day of business included then-sales manager Jim Pietrangelo, and bookkeeper/office manager Joan Sierchio, plus receptionist Andy Martinetti. Bob Harzer joined the firm two months later, and his first duties included packing games in the warehouse. "We all did that in those days," Sal smiled. "We used to do everything — sell games, answer phones, pack games, load trucks, you name it!"

Business prospered and within a couple of years, larger offices were obtained at 1 Arnold Ave. in the same city. This site was on top of an arcade owned by SMS; it included the firm's first R&D department, a 96-sq.-ft. "closet" that was to produce big results in a small space. "That was really the start of our own software and hardware capabilities," Sal explained. John McGovney came aboard at that time as our software design chief and Walter Lee as engineering director and chief game designer, covering hardware, electronics, cabinetry, etc. "He takes my ideas and makes them into games," Sal said. The SMS staff then numbered about a dozen. Some 1,500-sq.-ft. warehouse space was retained in the original site across town.

During the firm's first three or four years, video poker was the chief product for SMS, but this market is becoming a smaller part of their business each year. "That's by design, not by default," Sal smiled.

In 1985, the offices, manufacturing, R&D, shipping and warehouse facilities were consolidated under one roof at a 7,000-sq.-ft. facility at 1000 Airport Rd. in Lakewood, N.J. The company's product line remained chiefly pokers (SMS was certified for Montana pay-out poker). By this time, SMS had also expanded to include their biorythym-based lucky lotto numbers game *Lotto Help,* which included SMS's first printer and time/date technology. The company was also producing novelties like *Sex Tester,* the *Face to Face* video game system and the *Emperor* rotary merchandiser.

"The company really started to blossom in 1987 when we moved to our present 20,000-sq.-ft. facility at 601 Prospect St. in Lakewood," Sal stated. "The crane business was booming and we branched into redemption. We acquired the rights to IGT's *Draw 80* and began building it." That piece sold well in its day, but SMS is now leaving gray area machines behind.

In this period, SMS also started a two-year engineering design effort on *Pokerroll* and on one of their top-selling pieces ever, *Pop-A-Ball.* "Both of these are very sophisticated electromechanical redemption games," Sal explained.

In 1988, SMS began design work for its *South Dakota Video Lottery Poker,* which features a one-piece all-steel cabinet with a one-piece chromed front door. "We were the first people to introduce a solid steel, casino-style machine in South Dakota with a full bill acceptor in the 'belly' of the game. Our second-generation South Dakota poker bowed at the 1990 ACME show in March, and it was another first: the first casino-style steel cabinet to use a bill acceptor and 1,000 bill stacker."

SMS's third-generation game is currently under development and will debut at the next AMOA Expo this fall in New Orleans. "We're poised and ready to take full advantage of what we see as the future of the coin-op business," said Sal Mirando. "And that future will be the video poker market."

Sal acquired all outstanding shares of SMS on Jan. 19, 1990 and is now the sole shareholder and owner of the company. But he counts his key people as his most valued assets. "While I may be the owner," Sal stressed, "the company was founded by myself, Jim, Bob and Joan. We were actually the first people to turn the lights on, and we'll be here to turn the lights off. While Walter and Mike, and John and Dan, were not founders, they were here 'the day after the founding,' and they remain crucial to our success. Our success is in our people, not just our products."

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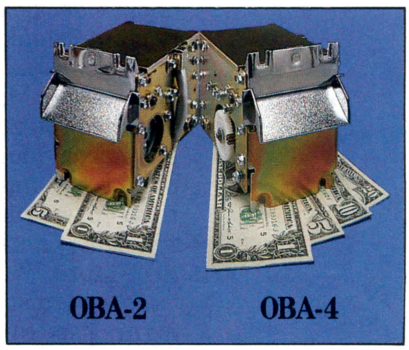

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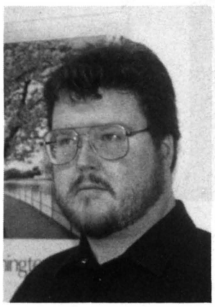
Webb on Video Poker

timely thoughts from Editor Marcus Webb on today's hottest issue: amusements need pizzazz, and vidpoker lobbying had better be done right!



Dear Readers:

A journalist's job is to report the news, but many readers assume if you report a trend, you're automatically in favor of it. Lately, *RePlay* has published quite a few stories about video poker. Many have been positive, although we've also run our share of negative stories and essays. Our stance on this type of equipment is far from a simple "yes" or "no."

To clarify *RePlay's* position, Publisher Eddie Adlum asked me to print in this issue a private, personal memo which I had sent him recently. It explains my own feelings about video poker. Presumably Ed feels some sympathy for this point of view also. "I think operators would learn a lot from this letter," Eddie said. "I know I did."

So here it is.

— Marcus Webb, Editor

Dear Eddie,

Per our recent conversation about video poker, I wanted to clarify what I think about it.

Personally, I don't like gambling. It bores me. More important, as an American citizen I don't want a gambling-crazy country with a bread-and-circus atmosphere and "something-for-nothing" ethics. Confine it to Vegas, fine. But not at the corner drug store!

*I also detest the way state lotteries are used by cowardly politicians as a form of regressive taxation. The poor and lower class folks **play** the most. . . and **pay** the most. As you know, the odds of getting struck by lightning are better than the chances of winning the lottery. The little guy is played for a sucker. I hate to think video poker in some states could follow that precedent.*

But all of that is just personal. As a member of the coin machine industry, my judgments are more guarded.

Many thoughtful operators (and some very sharp manufacturers) think "gambling is our future." We have publicized their views, although I don't wholly agree with them. I'm more in agreement with Jim Stansfield, chairman of AMOA's State Associations committee, who says "Video poker is this year's buzzword, just like parallels were last year's buzzword." A buzzword, as I understand it, is something everybody's talking about, even if they don't really understand it completely.

*But if Jim is right and vidpokers really **are** this year's buzzword, that means RePlay has to cover it, just like we covered parallels. Probably we have to cover gambling **more** than parallels, since AMOA, some distributors, and many state associations are strongly committed to it.*

Operators in around 15 to 18 states hope/believe they can legalize video pokers. I disagree, at least near-term. Over the next five years, I think maybe 10 states can pull it off, max — including Wisconsin, Vermont, Tennessee, Minnesota, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Nebraska. Add Montana and South Dakota, and that's 10. Still, 10 legal gambling states would have a huge impact on the trade, right? (The impact would be both good and bad, of course.)

Operators seem to think gambling will last forever. I think gambling eventually will be outlawed again. The anti-gambling backlash is al-

ON-THE-BALL

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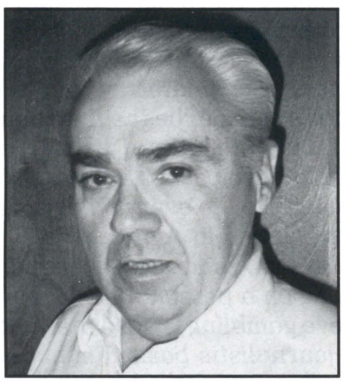
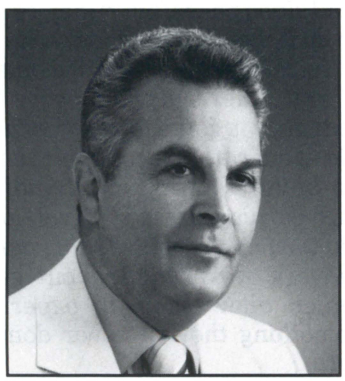


Ray Shroyer, Metro/Canale



Gene Urso, MCM

Q: *How have you made pinball work for your operation?*

A: "The way I turned pinball around was to get back to basics. My advice is to read the book—the instruction manual—and set the games up properly. Don't just jump on them when they come in. Explain to personnel how to reprogram them. When I did that with the new 'Diner', for example, I built the replay effort up to a 35% average. You won't see people walking away from that one!"

Ray Shroyer

A: "I pay close attention to the placement and type of game. I put the hot equipment, such as 'Whirlwind' and 'RollerGames', in more visible areas, like the main bar. I've found that when you showcase a good product where the traffic count is high, it lets that product perform at peak level in terms of taking in money. And if you maintain the piece, you'll be sure to get a higher resale value."

Gene Urso

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ready starting. Did you see the story in Tuesday's L.A. Times about "teenage gambling, the addiction of the '90s"?

Because of avid pro-gambling attitudes by operators, amusement game manufacturers need to realize the time for debating "video poker: yes or no" is over. Operators are already convinced (probably wrongly, in at least half the states) that gambling is their future, and they are acting on that conviction.

Therefore:

1. If manufacturers want to pull operators' attention and excitement back to amusements, they'd darn well better do something ***spectacular.*** *Hi-tech, futuristic video has the best chance of doing this. In my April column, I said "products are changing, but not fast enough." What I meant was, they're not changing fast enough to get operators really excited. Not fast enough to stop video poker from being "the buzzword."*

The "Coin-Op Establishment" may not like it, but operators at industry events do ***not*** *come up to me and say, "What new games are coming out?" Instead, they ask: "How soon do you think gambling will be legalized in our state?" The poor fellows ask this, even in states which haven't got a prayer of legalizing vidpoker.*

2. But again, operators in at least 15 states are "going for it" with legal poker. Some may dislike it, but it's happening. Once we admit it's happening, then from the standpoint of political professionalism, operators should go all-out. Win or lose, right or wrong, they should at least make the effort in a way that builds their political stature, know-how and reputation.

Sneaking around behind closed doors, keeping information and earnings figures quiet, not coordinating efforts through a single lobbyist, not funding contributions through a single source, etc., is politically immature at best. It's an invitation to disaster at worst.

One state which attempted to legalize video poker (and, so far, failed) serves as a warning. Their legalization effort blew up in their faces and could really have hurt the industry there. As a result, some tradesters in this state could have had to carry the RICO stigma for 10 years. Fortunately, I don't think that's going to be the final outcome . . . but from what I hear, it easily could have been. That state should be a lesson to every other operator association in America.

In sum, Eddie, I mildly dislike gambling on a personal basis, but I believe gambling is absolutely vital on a journalistic basis. I'm not necessarily over-joyed about the number of states that want to pursue legalized video poker, but if they're going to do it, I sure hope they do it right.

I strongly prefer amusements, but if any other game category ***as a category*** *is going to become the apple of operators' eyes again, it must do better than offer a handful of high-earning, dressed-up versions of old themes. As you've said yourself, players get excited about games which allow them to experience something they've never done before.*

So that's "Webb on video poker." As you can see, I don't have a straightforward yes-or-no position. If my stories have given some the impression that I'm "in favor of gambling, period" — well, maybe some folks are trying to read too much into my reporting. Or maybe I just blew it! But I think the situation is too complex for a simple thumbs-up or thumbs-down.

Thanks for taking the time to hear me out.

— Marcus

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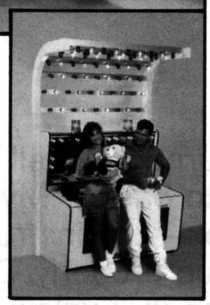

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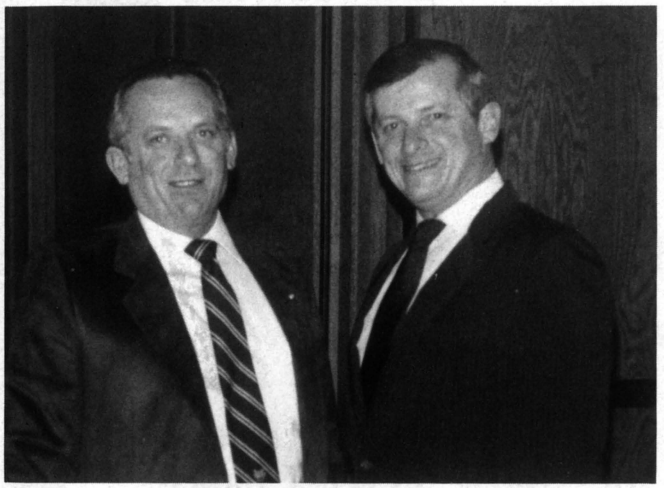
Dick Hawkins: organized, efficient, thoughtful, innovative

Portrait of a super-successful operator: in 28 years in business, Dick Hawkins has purchased 36 routes, served as president of AMOA, and played an instrumental part in creating the National Dart Assn. and the successful jukebox centennial promotion.

Today, the Rochester, Minn. operator and his partner David (they're brothers) employ a staff of 75 at their operating firm, D&R Star, and they serve Southeastern Minnesota with about 5,000 games on the street and in a few arcades. Said D&R president Dick Hawkins modestly: "The industry's been very good to me."

True, but Dick Hawkins has also been very good to the industry. Recently, Hawkins offered this publication a tour of his new 31,000-sq.-ft. headquarters. Few coin machine operators in the world can boast of a building so impressive... and inspecting the facility provides a glimpse into a truly first-class amusement operation.



Brothers David and Richard Hawkins are the "D" and the "R" in D&R Star, one of the nation's premier operating companies.

D&R Star's Rochester site was originally a grocery warehouse. Dick and the employees moved in



Dick and David Hawkins (kneeling, front) pose with D&R Star's staff shortly after they moved into their new building. The operating firm employs 75 people.

two years ago, doing all the layout and set-up of offices, showroom, shop, parts room, counting room, game storage, and loading bays themselves. "My people did a heck of a job," Dick smiled proudly. "The place runs very efficiently."

Visitors to D&R first enter the "Family Fun Center," a large showroom which stocks every conceivable product for the home amusement market: from inexpensive dart sets, up through handsome league jackets and t-shirts, fancy cue sticks and pool ball sets, colorful antique gaming equipment, used coin-op games, lighting fixtures and a wide selection of lavish home pool tables. Hawkins says D&R does good business here. D&R's marketing director Jerry Harrington was running the Fun Center on the day we visited.

Beyond this retail store lies the vast domain of D&R's coin-op headquarters. A dispatcher's office is D&R's communications nexus; it's manned from 8 AM to 10 PM, seven days a week to field incoming calls from locations and to dispatch road crews. All D&R service and collection vehicles in a 100 mile radius are tied into this dispatch office (and each other) via a sophisticated, $80,000 radio telephone system — "the second largest communications system in the state," Hawkins said. "Our Motorola Sentar System," he added, "has saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars in downtime and back-tracking. It binds all of our departments and employees together into a single, united, effective service force. Driving without this communications capability is operating in the Dark Ages."

The small dispatcher's office leads to a large central room which is D&R's computer nerve center. In this room, said Hawkins, D&R staffers run the compact new computer system which, in turn, runs "everything in this business: routes, leagues, service, rotation, all of it." Amazingly, the desktop computer even contains a complete inventory of the number, location, and frequency of use of *every single part* in D&R's inventory...including their exact location in the storeroom, or on any of the fleet of company trucks!



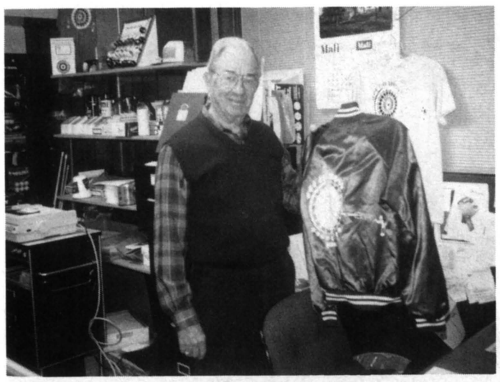
The Rochester, Minn. HQ is a 31,000-sq.-ft. facility, completely re-designed for coin machine operations. Below, D&R Star includes a retail store called the "Family Fun Center." Here are just a few of the games, cues, tables, lighting fixtures and accessories which are sold to the public.



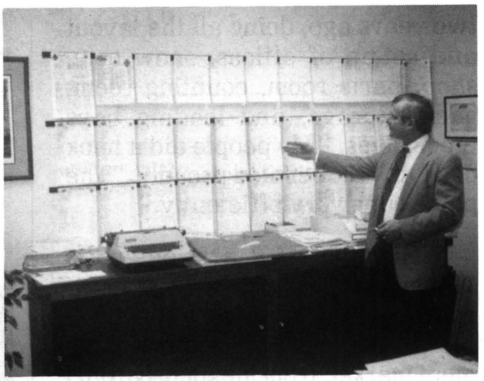
The "computer nerve center" room is adjoined by three or four smaller offices. Separate offices house the firm's full-time pool league director Fred Saack and D&R's full-time dart league director Mike Hawkins (Dick's son). Also connecting directly to the nerve center is the office suite of D&R President Dick Hawkins himself.

Further back in the building is a vast repair shop (it must be around 7,000 sq. ft.) and adjacent to this is a very well-organized 2,500-sq.-ft. storage room for spare parts. The repair shop, under the direction of D&R's service manager Doug Schmidt, includes a bench for each technician, sinks, and common refurbishing stations for various types of coin-op equipment.

Each technician is responsible for his own tools and his own area, and when we saw it, each station had all tools in their proper places on their wall racks and all materials stowed away. All trash had been picked up and taken away, and all the seats were carefully placed upside-down on top of their corresponding benches (to enable cleaners to sweep up). Each workbench was spotless, as was the concrete floor. Hawkins insists on organiza-

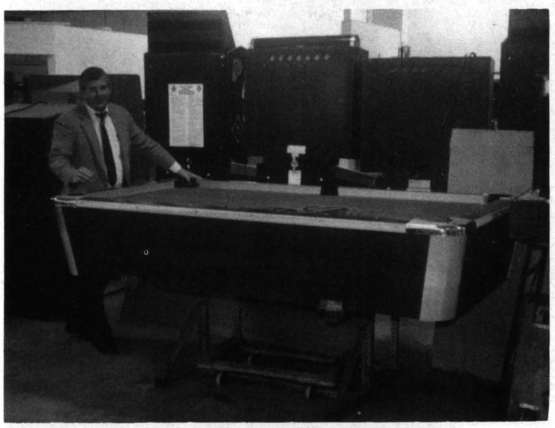


Left, D&R's marketing director Jerry Harrington shows off a handsome satin jacket, embroidered with the logo and emblem of D&R's huge dart league. Right, Dick Hawkins indicates standing sheets for each league, mounted on the wall of pool director Fred Saack's office. Dart director Mike Hawkins has his paperwork organized on his wall in an identical office nearby.

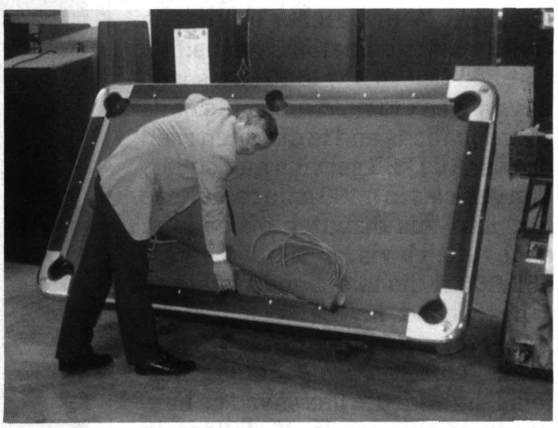




This vast repair shop is the heart of D&R's service department. Well-lit, beautifully organized and spotlessly clean, it also hosts weekly brainstorming sessions, as well as service schools organized by service manager Doug Schmidt. The door and window in back lead into the 2,500-sq.-ft. parts storeroom.



Dick Hawkins demonstrates how a single technician can use this four-wheel tilting dolly to tilt a pool table for re-covering and refurbishing. D&R runs 600 coin-op pool tables and recovers eight a day.



tion, order, neatness and cleanness from his crew . . . and he gets it.

"Our repair shop does get rather dirty during the working week," the D&R president smiled, "but it's all pay dirt. We fix 99.5% of everything we own. All our people are well-trained in repairing every type of machine. I won't even hire a truck driver anymore, unless he's got at least two years' background in electronics."

Hawkins is particularly proud of one device in the repair shop which D&R invented: a tilting four-wheel dolly which enables one man to recover any of the 600 coin-op pool tables operated by D&R. "We cover eight tables a day off this thing," Hawkins explained. "We don't recover a single pool table on location, because we feel we do a better job in the shop. We put the table on the dolly, tilt it and the slate comes off. We strip it down completely, clean it up, fix any nicks or scratches, then bring a like-new table back to the location."

Hawkins pointed out that pool tables are the "number one location-owned device. But with our pool leagues, maintenance program and promotions and service, location-owned tables are non-existent in this territory."

D&R also has a simple but effective ball polishing device which churns dull, scratched-up pool balls around inside a drum filled with sawdust. When they come out, the formerly beat-up balls gleam like brand new products, with nary a scratch or a nick to be seen.

The repair shop is the site for regular 90-minute Monday meetings for 20 to 40 D&R staffers, including Dick Hawkins. "There's no agenda, just getting together and brainstorming," Hawkins explained. "That hour and a half is the most productive time we have. We chat about whatever comes to mind, and invariably we talk some business, too. Also on the agenda for these meetings is a service school, with the topic chosen by Doug Schmidt. We'll hear 20 minutes on a new pinball, a new video game, whatever. Our sales people and others not responsible for machine maintenance

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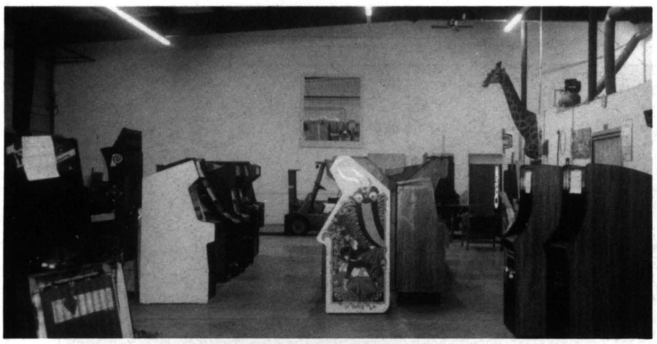
Left, D&R Star prexy Dick Hawkins at his desk. Notice the computer terminal behind him. Also note all those awards on the wall! Right, Dick's office also includes this conference area for consultation with clients, staff, etc. Hunting is Dick's hobby, and the trophies on the wall are just a few souvenirs of his worldwide travels. "Responsible, professional hunters and sportsmen respect the wilderness," said Dick. "They help preserve wildlife and the environment from unscrupulous poachers and developers."





Left, Dick Hawkins demonstrates the Motorola "Sentar System" radio unit in his van (he's also got a mobile phone). All D&R vehicles in a 100-mile radius are tied in via this network. Right, weekend dispatcher Brian Ronningen fields phone calls from locations and D&R's service and collection crews on the road. Brian's a college student; his mom Judy is D&R's league secretary.







D&R's warehouse space stores videos, pins, cigarette venders and other machines. In the rear is a forklift which can drive straight into the company trucks without changing levels or leaving the warehouse area. Notice the giraffe head? "Everyone should have one," laughed Dick Hawkins. Four indoor loading docks connect directly to the warehouse. The loading bay is heated to ward off the chill of Minnesota's winters.

attend these schools, but it's the best hour and a half they spend every week."

A huge storage area houses whatever D&R is taking off the route that week, or holding for transfer to new sites. Cigarette vending machines are currently piling up in this warehouse, victims of the state's tough anti-tobacco laws. Also stored were quite a few of last year's pins and videos, waiting to be cleaned up and disposed of.

The storage area adjoins a heated, *indoor* loading dock which can let semis back right up to the warehouse floor (all of this is important during Minnesota's freezing winters). Forklifts roll along the warehouse floor go right up to the trucks, loading and unloading equipment with the speed and efficiency which is a D&R trademark.

Perhaps the showcase of the D&R headquarters is Hawkins' own oak-paneled office. The company president sits behind a wide desk, under a wall full of awards, appreciative plaques and family photos. He, too, is tied right into the D&R computer network with a monitor and keyboard station right behind his swivel chair. A conference area contains a table and four chairs for consultation with staff, and an easy chair and sofa for visitors. The Early American decor fits right in with the gun rack in the corner and the hunting trophies on the wall. (When Dick Hawkins isn't on the job, he's tracking wild beasts in Africa or roaming the great American wilderness for game.) Windows in this office open onto the D&R central office and toward the service area,





Above, Dick Hawkins stands at the entrance to one of three "Machine Shed" arcades he operates. Right, Dick with wife Patti in the Machine Shed arcade, which also sells t-shirts, hats and other items of casual apparel. Patti recently installed a new computerized device in this store which can copy and imprint any image onto a hat or t-shirt in seconds. It's a big hit with customers.

keeping Dick in visual touch with what's happening in vital areas of the facility at all times.

In all, it's a handsome site and a showcase operation — an example of what coin machine operating should be, at its best. "You'd have to go a long way," Hawkins allowed, "to find a facility any nicer."

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "An organization is the lengthened shadow of one man." That's certainly true of D&R Star, whose well-designed, functional headquarters accurately reflects a hardworking, efficient, constantly-learning crew . . . and president.

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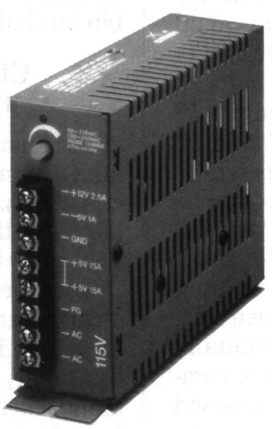

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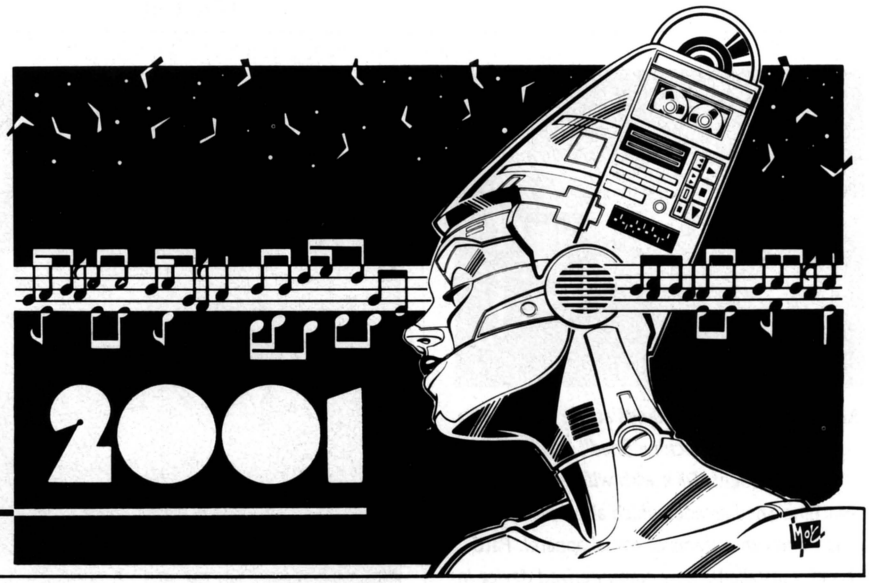

JUKEBOX 2001

TAKING YOUR MUSIC SERVICES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Putting a Jukebox at the Heart of a Hi-Tech Audio-Visual System

by Emery Kertesz and Steve Devlin

Steve Devlin and Emery Kertesz are music operators. Through their firm L.A. East (Hatfield, Penn.), they're also consultants who help fellow operators use add-ons like speakers, amps and monitors to beef up jukebox profits. "Top jukebox earnings require top presentation," the boys explained. "Operators already have service know-how. Putting some glitter on that expertise is what we're all about." Anyone with questions about this complex and technical field is encouraged to phone Steve or Emery at 800/366-4523. You'll find them friendly, extremely knowledgeable, and eager to serve you with expert advice.

— the editors

Last month's column told a coin-op "Cinderella story." Jukebox hi-tech transformed the Greenhouse Tavern from a poorly-earning "frog" of a location, into a highly profitable "prince." The magic wand in that true story was a professional audio-visual entertainment system. In turn, the heart of this A/V system was a video jukebox. This month, we'd like to share with you the "why" and "how" of jukebox operators using video jukes and professional A/V systems to dramatically increase music profits.

It's a topic many operators will find timely later this year, when Pioneer brings its video jukebox from Europe to the United States. Pioneer's vidjuke will join the video jukebox systems already marketed by Rowe and Videobox Networks, which have been successfully earning money for operators since the mid-1980s. With three major vidjuke products available... and with 1,300% profit increases, as at Greenhouse Tavern, to be had for the asking... more operators would be well advised to explore this little-understood, little-exploited market.

The Greenhouse Tavern's A/V system is a simple yet sophisticated multi-component technology which includes a video juke, extra speakers, remote monitors, cable TV, closed-circuit "in-house TV broadcasting," a master control station, and live mike capability. These components were installed gradually over several years. Each new component paid for itself with increased earnings and higher profits, before the next component was added.

Note: the Greenhouse Tavern, due to its extremely competitive environment and its all-out approach to hi-tech, is by no means a "typical corner bar." We focus on this location because the system we installed demonstrates the *full potential* available to our clients. Some locations may require considerably less equipment to achieve a similar result! But the basic point is that the market has changed and that operators must become A/V experts, if they want to win the competition.

Just think: once upon a time, it was enough for the operator simply to plug in a jukebox and select a few new records each week! How did we ever get to the place where all this hi-tech was possible... and where at least *some* hi-tech was necessary... for the most profitable kind of music operating?

COMPETITION FROM CABLE

To answer that question, let's take a short trip back in time to the mid-1980s. That was when local cable TV outlets began to flourish. As a result, the hospitality industry (taverns, restaurants, etc.) began a strong trend toward using video as an entertainment medium. The local bar could now bring its customers many worldwide sporting events. In fact, Joe's Tavern could even pick up *local* games off satellite transmission, games that were "blacked out" for standard TV broadcasting.

In addition, cable TV produced new forms of entertainment and information programming. Ten or twelve years ago, who had ever heard of CNN? Or MTV? Or ESPN

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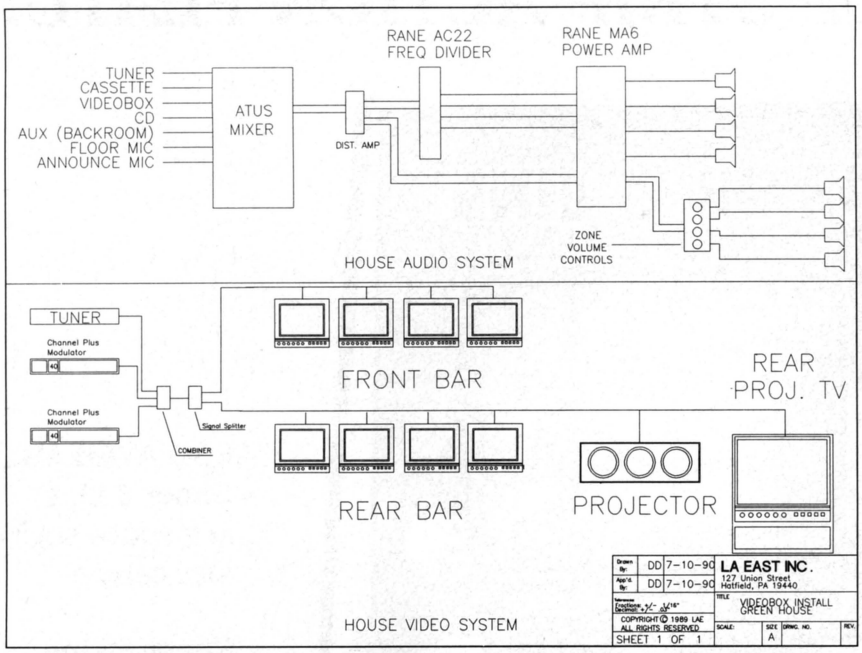

(Sports Network), CMTV (Country Music TV), VH-1 (Video Hits One), the Comedy Channel and all the other new forms of TV entertainment we have today? It's strange to realize how fast these new competitors have popped up . . . but make no mistake, Mr. Operator, they *are* your competitors. The impact of cable TV on the coin-op industry has been devastating, as bar after bar plugged into cable or satellite broadcast, and shoved the jukebox in the corner to gather dust.

Yes, times have changed. And it's important to realize that all this new technology, customer preferences and habits have changed with them. That little remote control box let bartenders (or customers) flip through 87 channels in 15 seconds, if they wanted. Customers quickly got used to having a huge variety of entertainment choices with Hollywood production values . . . entertainment that they could *see and hear*, not just 200 audio-only selections, and a few twinkling lights on a stationary machine. And, with that remote control button available to flip from one channel to the next, customers developed shorter and shorter attention spans.

No wonder the traditional jukebox found it so tough to compete! Cable TV had invaded its turf and attacked coin-op entertainment on its own ground: customer economy, customer selection, variety, top quality entertainment.

TAKING BACK OUR TURF

But what if we could take the jukebox and design a hi-tech entertainment system around it? What if we could make the jukebox an active player in this overall entertainment system? Then it would become a viable alternative to cable TV, the satellite broadcasts, the deejays, the live bands and all the rest! And that's exactly what a well-designed, properly-installed A/V system, including a video jukebox, accomplishes.

In 1986, when it became time to put such a system into the Greenhouse Tavern, this had never been done before. Nevertheless, we felt pretty sure we understood what was needed for success. The system had to feature the jukebox, but it also had to be flexible enough to handle non-jukebox programming needs as well. The quality of equipment had to be able to stand up under "normal" abusive usage. We needed to satisfy viewing habits (learned in other, successful taverns and at home) by installing multiple TVs. To counter the impact of music video channels, we had to replace the standard vinyl juke with a video jukebox.

WHAT WE INSTALLED

Those were our goals. To get down to specifics, we'll tell you exactly what equipment was installed in Greenhouse Tavern. Remember, most of the A/V system was initially paid for by the operator. But since this system was an improvement to the location — and since the equipment would become a more-or-less permanent part of the location — the purchase price of the speakers, monitors, amps, etc. was treated as a "loan," which the location paid back weekly out of coin-op earnings.

The following information will strike some readers as very technical, and we admit it leaves several key questions unanswered. Such as: how did we know what components to select for this specific system and location? How were components installed in walls, ceiling, etc. to ensure customer safety, maximum visual impact, maximum audio effectiveness, etc.? Precisely how were all the various components hooked together for simple control by the location owner? How did all the various media (jukebox, cable TV, etc.) interact?

Educating the operator about issues like these is the exact purpose of this column. However, the technical details of these answers would take many, many pages to print. For now, we'd simply like to focus on what was done and what equipment was used, simply as an "eye-opener" for operators who have never thought about using this type of system before. We'll get into principles of A/V equipment selection and installation in coming months.

THE AUDIO SYSTEM

That said, let's begin by talking about the audio components of Greenhouse Tavern's A/V system. As stated, it required flexibility. During the past four years, the system has broadcast music from a video jukebox, an AM/FM tuner (radio), a cassette tape player, a CD player, live bands and a microphone. To accommodate this many sources, we installed an ATUS AM300 DJ mixer. This mixer can handle up to eight lines of mike inputs, and it has a six-band equalizer. For reasons of security, ease of use and professional appearance, we installed an equipment rack under one section of the bar, where all the components were to be located.

Audio broadcasting was most crucial in the back room of the Greenhouse Tavern, the location's largest

area and the main focus of customer activity. This room is long and very narrow with a low ceiling . . . a bit of a challenge! To create a special environment for customers, we needed to really blanket the room with full, rich sound.

In that physical set-up, we realized several speakers and a compact sound reinforcement system would be needed to provide tight dispersion (really concentrating the sound in each zone, instead of letting it "bleed" weakly all over, so that nobody really hears it very well). On one end of the room, we installed two JBL 4646, 12", low-frequency sub-woofers. Two JBL 46120K speakers were added to handle the mid- and high-frequency ranges. A Rane AC22 active crossover was used to divide frequencies and also correct phase and time alignment. The other end of the room was covered by installing two TOA F-300 three-way loudspeakers and mount brackets. In the bar area, we ordered two additional TOA F-300 loudspeakers.

A Niles distribution amp was installed to provide a low noise signal with minimal loss. Normally, a number of amplifiers would be required to handle the varied power requirements of this many speakers. Instead, we used a Rane MA6 multichannel amplifier. This amp supplies six completely independent amplifier channels. It's rated at 100 watts per channel at 8 ohms, which is what we configured the system for.

Independently controlling the volume of each set of speakers was another requirement set by the tavern owner. For example, the back room might fill up with people, so higher volume would be needed than the bar area, or vice versa. A Niles SVC-4 four-pole speaker configuration was added to provide this capability. It was wired to the TOA loudspeakers. The Rane amp controlled the volume of the loudspeaker clusters.

THE VIDEO SYSTEM

Although a well-designed A/V system is an integrated technology, you really should think of the audio and video components as separate and independent. The video segment must be conceived, purchased, installed and controlled separately from the audio components, then married to the audio system for greatest effectiveness.



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

The video system installed at Greenhouse Tavern was designed to capitalize on the growing "sports bar" trend. It was also designed to encourage customers to blend coin-op music uses with cable TV uses of the tavern's video monitors.

Wisely, the location owner wanted to give all of his customers a "choice seat," no matter where in the location they happened to sit. We analyzed the location to determine good sight lines, proper image sizes and the best mounting areas. To get started, we installed only two NEC 20" monitors to cover the back room. The owner supplied two additional TVs, including a big-screen, rear-projection unit, to cover the bar area. Depending on the site of each monitor, Lucasey brand wall

TOP HITS OF JAPAN

from Game Machine magazine, July 15, 1990

TOP 25 VIDEO COCKTAIL

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Gate of Doom (Data East)
2	Raiden (Seibu)
3	Bonanza Bros. (Sega)
4	Air Duel (Irem)
5	Columns (Sega)
6	Tetris (Sega)
7	M.V.P. (Sega)
8	Lightning Fighters (Konami)
9	World Cup '90 (Tecmo)
10	Rough Racer (Sega)
11	Final Fight (Capcom)
12	Parodius (Konami)
13	Snow Bros. (Toaplan)
14	Mercs (Capcom)
15	Alien Storm (Sega)
16	Super Masters (Sega)
17	Major Title (Irem)
18	Hatris (Video System/Taito)
19	Adventure Quiz II (Capcom)
20	Capcom World (Capcom)
21	World Stadium '89 (Namco)
22	Super Formula (Vid. Sys.)
23	Aliens (Konami)
24	Quiz Detective Story (Taito)
25	Kyukiuki-Dochuki (Namco)

TOP 15 UPRIGHTS & COCKPITS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Final Lap [deluxe] (Namco)
2	G-LOC [deluxe] (Sega)
3	Beast Busters (SNK)
4	Hard Drivin' (Atari/Namco)
5	Super Monaco GP [dlx.] (Sega)
6	Big Run (Jaleco)
7	Final Lap [standard] (Namco)
8	WGP [deluxe] (Taito)
9	Out Run [deluxe] (Sega)
10	Winning Run GP (Namco)
11	Turbo Out Run (Sega)
12	Battle Shark (Taito)
13	Four Trax (Namco)
14	Metal Hawk (Namco)
15	Top Landing (Taito)

TOP 5 FLIPPERS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Phantom of the Opera (Data East)
2	Whirlwind (Williams)
3	Monday Night Football (Data East)
4	Earthshaker (Williams)
5	Jokerz! (Williams)

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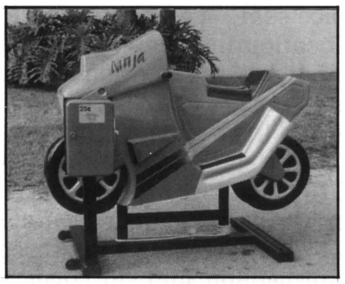

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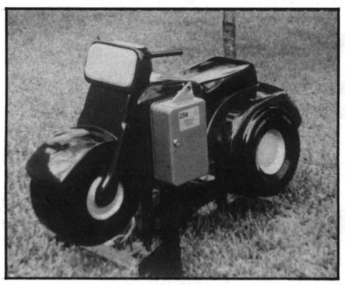

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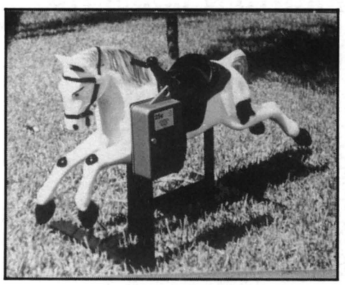

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TV brackets and/or ceiling TV brackets were installed.

Initially, we installed a simple A/B switching system so that the owner could, by the flick of a switch, change the picture as needed from "source A" (perhaps a ball game on cable TV) to "source B" (hopefully, the video jukebox!). We tuned all of the TV sets to Channel 4 and let our video feed (from whatever sources) come on the TV monitor over that channel.

This method, although commonly used in video systems, worked just "okay" for the initial period. We knew we'd want to upgrade the switching controls eventually, when it came time to expand the A/V system. For one thing, the staff constantly had to switch the A/B switches physically and tune the sets to Channel 4. Another headache: the signal loss (picture interference) got worse, due to splitting the cable signal. An RE 20db video amplifier was installed to compensate.

SECOND-GENERATION VIDEO

Once the owner decided to add more TVs and a large-screen projection unit, we convinced him to rewire the system for "video modulation." That means we basically created an in-house cable system. Each video source (VCRs, satellite receivers, laser disc players, video cameras, pay TV decoders, etc.) is modulated (altered in broadcast frequency) and assigned to an unused UHF channel or hyperband channel.

In this case, we modulated two sources, a VCR and the Videobox Networks vidjuke. All monitors can independently view the added sources by using the TV remote to tune each monitor to the desired channel number assigned to that source. Normal airwave broadcast TV channels or cable TV channels are still received by tuning to their regular channel numbers.

We also redesigned the video distribution system, adding a Channel Plus DA-1000 low-noise, high-power video amplifier with adjustable gain. The cable TV signal was combined with the modulated sources (VCR and vidjuke) and split only once, as it was fed into this video amplifier. That meant we eliminated the visual interference caused by splitting the original signal as we divided up and sent it out to all those different monitors.

THE THIRD GENERATION

The number of installed monitors was eventually increased to 10. The bar area now had four regular-sized monitors and one rear-projection TV, while the back room enjoyed four monitors and a 7' front projection system! Again, the video signal was split once and sent to each area. Taps were used to drop the signal to each TV. The result was minimal signal loss with increased picture definition and brightness.

Today, the Greenhouse Tavern is literally a showcase of what can be achieved when coin machine operators take advantage of hi-tech, audio-visual, add-on equipment. Yes, all the speakers, monitors, amplifiers, controls (and the jukebox itself) cost a pretty penny at first. But the location owner paid for it over the long run, out of cash receipts from the equipment.

Profits have more than paid back the initial investment, too. Both operator and location owner are well into profit today, with the video jukebox earning at least $250 per week. During its peak early years, when it was still a novelty to the location (and when there weren't quite so many other forms of entertainment riding on the same A/V system), the juke earned up to $400 per week!

As the coin machine industry marches forward to the 21st century, it's time for jukebox operators to take advantage of the "standard technology" of competing entertainment industries. Speakers, amplifiers and TV monitors aren't exactly cutting-edge devices these days, and operators should not be afraid of them. Instead, add these components to your repertory of profit-making coin-op equipment! Let's not let the other guys beat us at our own game. You'll read more about using A/V components to enhance your jukebox in future columns of *Jukebox 2001*. . . and you'll hear more about it, from successful music operators who are already putting these ideas into practice.

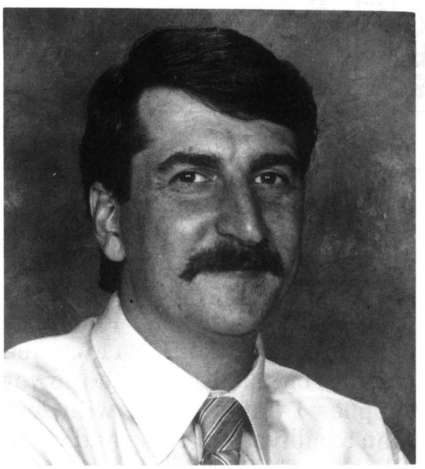
Ultimate Power Supply?

Peter Chou struts his stuff with this new product; offers reliable, clean output & high-rated components

by RANDY FROMM

I am always excited when I get the opportunity to take a look at new products. This is especially true when it comes to video game power supplies. I have had the opportunity to examine just about all of the power supplies that are available to operators but I cannot recall being as excited as I am by the new power supply from Peter Chou and his U-San Electron Company.

From a mechanical point of view, this new power supply (dubbed model USP-11) has a built-in fan and power switch. It is housed in a heavy-duty steel case that opens with just two screws and is considerably smaller than other supplies of this type (approximately 6"X 5½"X3½"). Mounting can be accomplished either by four threaded screw holes on the side of the unit (for installation such that the fan,



RANDY FROMM

fuse and AC input connector are exposed to the outside of the cabinet), or by a right-angle mounting bracket on the side of the case. An AC power cord is included with the power supply.

The USP-11 is fully UL approved and conforms to all of the proposed AMOA standardization guidelines for power supplies as follows:

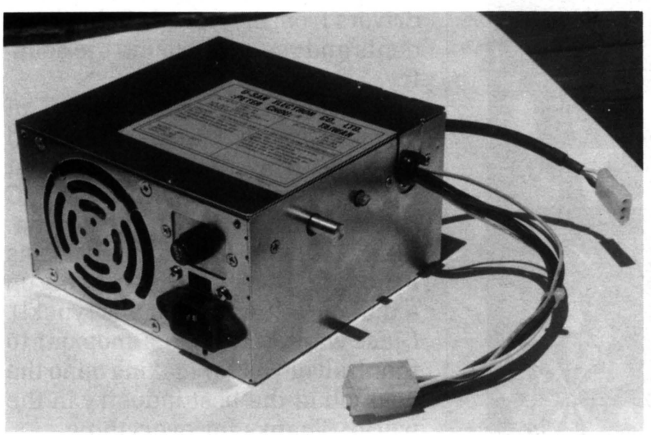
1. All standard DC switching power supplies shall have two separate standard snap and lock connectors (Molex connector or equivalent).

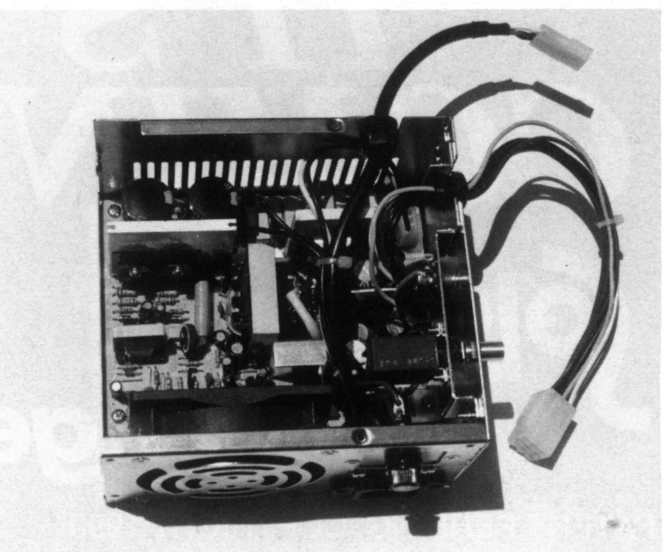
2. Output connector will be 3 x 3 nine pin snap and lock (keyed). Pins 1, 2 and 3 are + 5 volts. Pins 4, 5 and 6 are ground. Pin 7 is -5 volts. Pin 8 is + 12 volts. Pin 9 is unused and kept as a spare.

3. AC connector will be 3 pin snap and lock (keyed.) Pin 1 connects to the "hot" or "line." Pin 2 is the earth ground connection and pin 3 is neutral.

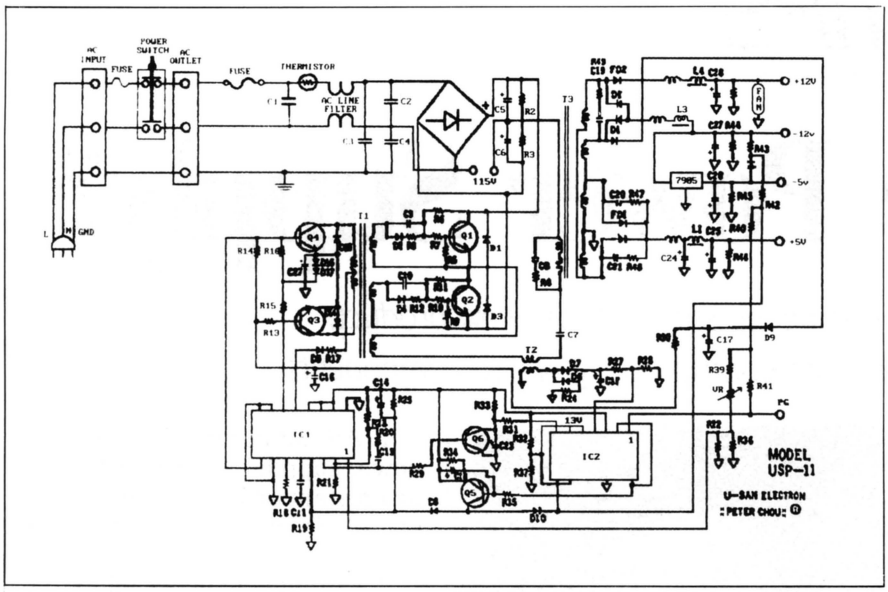
4. All power supplies shall be shielded to protect from liquid spills in vents or holes located above the component.

The USP-11 is a natural choice for manufacturers as well as operators who purchase new cabinets for their conversion kits. The double-insulated AC power output from the power supply can be used to drive the isolation transformer for the mo-





A look at the outside and the inside of the new Peter Chou/U-San Electron Co. power supply (Model USP-11). We've never seen Randy Fromm as excited about a power supply. His reasons include notable improvements in over-voltage and over-current protection and a heavy-duty AC line filter.



nitor as well as the marquis light. This 120 volt AC output is separately fused from the AC input of the switching supply circuitry, so that a power supply failure that blows the fuse will not affect the power to rest of the game. The main AC power fuse is a 2 millimeter fuse and is easily accessible through the fuseholder on the side of the case. The AC input fuse for the power supply circuit is also a 2 millimeter fuse and is mounted in a fuseholder on the printed circuit board.

From an electrical standpoint, the USP-11 is basically the standard "Peter Chou" PWM (pulse-width modulation) design that has become so popular in our industry. As with other Peter Chou power supplies, the USP-11 uses low ESR capacitors to assure long life and low noise output. In fact, the USP-11 has the cleanest output of any of the power supplies I have tested, with less than 5 millivolts of noise and virtually none of the voltage spikes that characterize the outputs of the majority of switching regulator power supplies!

There are however, some improvements that make this power supply the best I have seen so far. Among them are improved over-voltage and over-current protection systems, and a heavy-duty AC line filter that prevents any conductive interference from escaping the power supply. Other improvements include a higher current bridge rectifier, larger high-voltage filter capacitors (330 microfarads instead of 220 microfarads), higher rated driver and power transformers, and switching power transistors that are rated at 80 watts each instead of the 50 watt transistors commonly found in just about all of the other PWM design power supplies. The higher rated transformers and transistors, combined with the built-in DC fan mean that this power supply runs cool, even at full load! I am very impressed by the high quality of the construction and design of this power supply.

The Peter Chou power supplies are distributed exclusively in the Americas by: Imperial International, 1270 Valley Brook Ave., P.O. Box 803, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071; 201/507-0936 or toll-free at 800/526-6261. On the West Coast, offices and phones for Imperial are 5116 N. Azusa Canyon Rd., Irwindale, CA 91706; 818/962-1024 or toll-free 800/423-2753.

Author's note: I have somehow become the "Richard Dawson" of the amusement industry. You know, the guy that used to host the "Family Feud" show. People were always bringing him gag gifts of various types. So far, I have amassed a vast collection of coin-op tee shirts, hats, pens, buttons, flashlights and screwdrivers from my Arcade School students and readers around the country.

But my most treasured gift of all is a small box turtle I received from one of my students at a recent school I gave at the offices of TLC Amusements in Bedford, Indiana. "Indy" is doing just fine and seems to like it here in San Diego, living on a diet of lettuce and snails (yuck!). I just wanted to take a moment to thank all of you for making mine the best job in the best industry in the world! Thanks for everything.

— Randy

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IT'S COMING!
Solo Challenger
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Those Legal Questions

by LAURENCE MERRITT
& DAVID HAGEN

Secretly Recording Phone Calls Is Not a Good Idea

Many operators are tempted to secretly record phone conversations, especially when it involves a problem location. Our simple advice with respect to this course of action is: **don't.** This month's column will discuss why this is not a good idea, as well as other ways to legally document your phone calls.

The reason a person usually wants to record a phone call is to be able to prove what was said. Usually, a problem has arisen with a location, and it appears that litigation is inevitable. What both parties said will be critical at time of trial.

Without any physical proof of what was said, the court will have to rely on your testimony. Because you have a direct interest in this matter, your testimony will be suspect. This is especially frustrating when the location denies making many of the statements that were made. A lawyer's worst nightmare is taking a case to trial where the only evidence is conflicting oral testimony. Either side can win the trial, and it is hard to guess whom the judge will believe. Further, it is infuriating when the other party and you know they are lying, but your side cannot prove it.

Most operators recognize that proof will be a problem in a trial; that's why it's so tempting to record a phone conversation without the other party's knowledge. But despite all the temptation, we stand by our advice: don't do it!

Here's why secretly recording your phone conversations is such a bad idea. First, recordings of phone calls which have been made without the other party's consent are *not admissible as evidence* at time of trial in many states. Worse, recording a phone call without the other party's knowledge *is a crime* in many states! Consult your local attorney for the law in your particular state. If you are not sure of the law in your state, or have not consulted your attorney, it is not a good idea to engage in this course of conduct.

It should be noted that it **is** legal (in most states) to record a phone conversation, **if** the other party knows it is being recorded. To protect yourself, you should start the tape, identify each party in the conversation, and then ask each person if it is acceptable that the conversation be recorded. If this procedure is followed, the recording will then be admissible in a court of law. It will be most useful to your attorney and he will be most pleased.

Another way to document a phone conversation without actually recording it, is to have a "neutral" third party listen in. (That is, somebody who is not a member of your family or company, and who has no financial stake in your business dealings.) If the contents of the conversation ever become an issue at trial, this third party can testify to what was said. Obviously, this third person's testimony will be viewed as more credible than yours, because they do not have anything at stake in the lawsuit.

Of course, it is always better if you disclose the fact that this third person is listening in at the beginning of the conversation. However, it is not a violation of phone-recording laws if you do not.

Good office procedures can also be of help in documenting phone conversations. In past columns, we've always recommended that a file be kept for each location. This file should include the Location Agreement, a record of receipts from that location, and documentation relating to repairs (if any). This file should also include a memo of every phone conversation with the location.

Such a memo doesn't need to be in any special form. It simply needs to have a time, date and person spoken with, as well as a few quick notes as to what was said. Not only does this provide some continuity for yourself when dealing with your locations, but it can be very powerful evidence at time of trial. You can testify that it is your usual business practice to keep memos of all telephone conversations, and that you wrote the memo in question. The memo can then be entered into evidence. Obviously, a judge will give your written memo of that conversation more credibility than someone's recollection at a later time.

Another good method to use in confirming a phone conversation is the "confirming letter." After the conversation, send a letter to the other party restating your recollection of what was said. At the end of that letter, request that if their understanding is different, they should contact you in writing immediately. This puts the burden on the other party to prove that the conversation was different than what was stated in your letter. Obviously, confirming letters work best when a dispute has not arisen. But many times, it can also prevent a dispute from arising.

Incidentally, a confirming letter is an excellent way to memorialize an agreement with a location, if they will not sign a location agreement. A letter sent to a location, setting forth the terms of your oral agreement, can be used at time of trial to prove what the terms were. It also serves as an excellent reminder to the location of what the terms of your understanding are, when some uncertainty arises.

Because there are so many other ways to memorialize the contents of a phone conversation, and because secret phone recordings are illegal in many states, it simply doesn't make sense to record phone conversations without the other person's knowledge. In fact, good office procedures and a bit of foresight will usually head off the temptation (and often, any need) to do so.

cover story

Romstar

ready to hit with another kit; Snow Bros. continues to do steady income, steady sales

What's up at Romstar these days? The well-known Southern California game maker is actively testing a new game and is still selling their *Snow Bros.* kit. And, as usual, President Takahito Yasuki, VP Rene Lopez, Sales Manager Tim Jackson (who are on this month's front cover) and staff (pictured on these pages) continue to evaluate the market to find the right product for it.

As for their current product, *Snow Bros.*, Tim Jackson said it's performed a lot like their *Bubble Bobble* game. "It earns consistently week after week," he said. The game was introduced at ACME and the firm is still selling it today. (For those who haven't seen it, it's a horizontal video for two players featuring loveable snowmen throwing snow at red devils and then rolling the devils into snowballs. Quite a few tradesters complimented Romstar for offering this imaginative, non-violent video.)

As for the new game, the Romstar folks wouldn't release too many details but Tim Jackson said it's a *Time Soldiers* commando type of game. It's a vertical kit for two players (interactive) and should be shipping by late this month. At presstime the video had been on test for two weeks and was reportedly looking "very, very strong."

Check the product out at your local Romstar distributor's showroom and check out the fun folks and the day-to-day activities at this Torrance, Calif. firm on these pages.



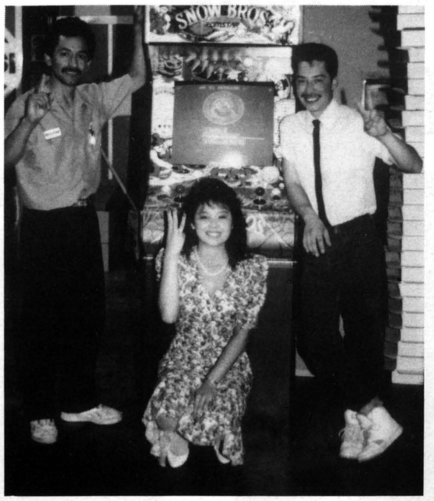
Sales Manager Tim Jackson, President Takahito Yasuki and VP Rene Lopez (who's based out of Chicago).



Romstar employees out in front of the company HQ in Torrance, Calif. (left to right): Tim Jackson (Sales Mgr.), Kim Douglas (Computer Entry), Helen Ota (Credit Mgr.), Heh-Kyu Lee (Purchasing & Traffic Mgr.), Audrey Smith (Customer Service Mgr.), Maribel Mendosa (Accounting Assistant), Yvette Alegre (Accounting Assistant), Tony Gonzales (Customer Service), Angeles Pineda (Administrative Assistant), Darryl Williams (Senior Technician), Mariko Maruyama (Accounting Mgr.), Carmen Sanchez, (Receptionist), Hugo Reyes (Inventory Control) and Joyce Kaehler (National Sales Director — Consumer).



Sales Manager Tim Jackson plays Snow Bros., *a non-violent cute action game (still available).*



The Romstar Champions! The top-scoring Snow Bros. *employees: 1. Carlos Gomez (2,300,100 points); 2. Hugo Reyes (2,163,000 points); 3. Helen Ota (2,003,800 points). Way to go!*



Purchasing/Traffic Manager Heh-Kyu Lee and National Sales Director Joyce Kaehler model in front of the Snow Bros. *kit.*



Busy at work in the Romstar Service Department are Audrey Smith, Darryl Williams (on the phone with a customer) and Tony Gonzales (at the bench).



Key inventory and production personnel hard at work — Hugo Reyes (preparing a parts shipment) and Carlos Gomez (with a .50 Calibre *control panel).*





At left, Administrative Assistant Angeles Pineda and Purchasing/Traffic Mgr. Heh-Kyu Lee check out the office supply inventory. At right, Heh-Kyu, National Sales Director Joyce Kaehler and Credit Manager Helen Ota review new package designs.



The Accounting Department takes a break for a photo. From left are: Kim Douglas, Mirabel Mendosa, Mariko Maruyama & (seated) Yvette Allegre.

Tournament Highlights



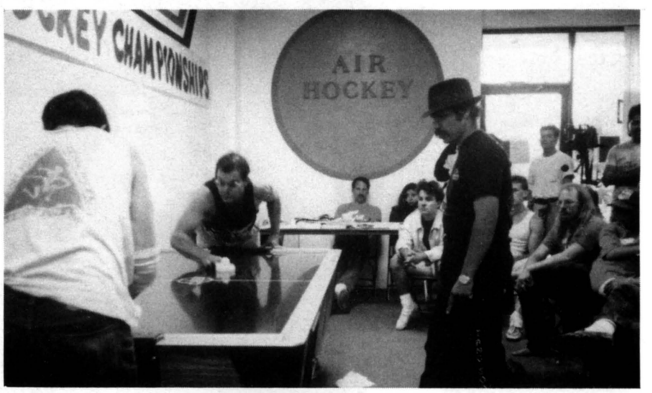
MEDALIST BEATS 'EM ALL! The Tacoma, Wash.-based Medalist Dart League organization drew about 3,500 soft-tip dart players and about 1,000 spectators to their June 22-24 tournament, co-sponsored by Budweiser. The event offered a total purse of $170,000 with minimum cash pay-out of $115,000. Attendance and prize figures made this "the largest and richest dart event to date in North America," according to the American Dart Organization, a steel-tip group. Medalist VP Ed Tuhkanen said his staff (and the new fully-computerized tourney program) pulled off a logistically flawless three-day event at the Tacoma Bicentennial Pavillion, where 21 different team and singles categories drew widespread media attention. In all, it was a mindblowing sample of what tournament promotion can do . . . in any and every region of the USA!

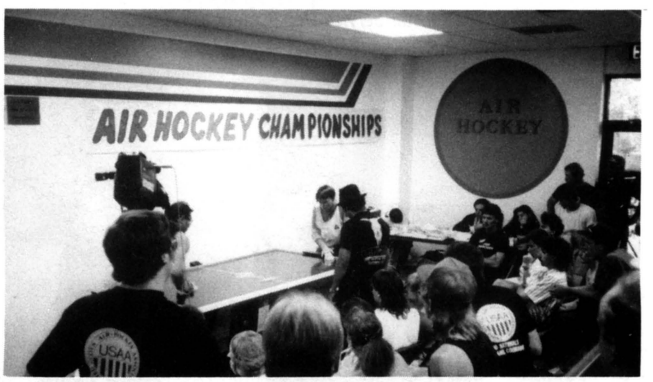


OHIO POOL — After eight successful events in earlier years, the 1990 State Tournament was the largest ever May 4-6 at the Clark County Fairgrounds. Sponsored by the Ohio Coin Machine Assn. and by the Valley 8-Ball League, the event fielded 128 men's teams and 32 women's teams . . . a whopping 62% increase over last year! Twelve OCMA members ran the event which offered a purse of $16,000 in cash and prizes. Hats off to Tourney Director Dave Yuhas and Tourney President John Ramberger for their success, and to Jerry & Toni Dunbar for their hard work and dedication. By the way, OCMA's first statewide dart tourney drew over 100 players to the May 19 event.



The Women's Division winners of the OCMA 8-ball Championships.





AIR HOCKEY NATIONALS — Denver's KUSA-TV Channel 9 and Ft. Collins' Cable Channel 14 covered the event! The 1990 Air Hockey Nationals were completed June 2-3 at Fun 'N Games in Loveland, Colo. Over $8,000 in cash and prizes were provided by Dynamo (the Richland Hills, Texas makers of that fine hockey table). Co-sponsors included the location and 30 other firms. The event capped a long series of qualifying tourneys in the Rocky Mountain region that gave novices and amateurs a chance to enter the big event. Houston's veteran Tim Weissman aced Atlanta's 11-time national winner Jesse Douty for the 1990 championship title. Get more info on upcoming events from Dynamo's Mark Robbins at 800/527-6054 or 817/589-7699.

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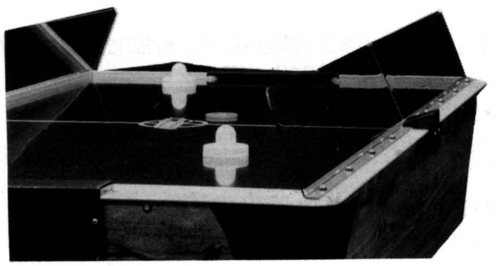

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HOTHITS PLAY LIST

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

POP

★ **1. STEP BY STEP,** *New Kids On The Block, Columbia 73343*
2. CRADLE OF LOVE (from "Ford Fairlane"), *Billy Idol, Chrysalis 23509*
3. HANKY PANKY, *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 19789*
4. DO YOU REMEMBER?, *Phil Collins, Atlantic 87955*
★ **5. VOGUE,** *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 19863*
6. I'LL BE YOUR SHELTER, *Taylor Dayne, Arista 2005*
7. WHEN I'M BACK ON MY FEET AGAIN, *Michael Bolton, Columbia 73342*
8. I DIDN'T WANT TO NEED YOU, *Heart, Capitol 44553*
★ **9. COME BACK TO ME,** *Janet Jackson, A&M 1475*
10. GIRLS NIGHT OUT, *Tyler Collins, RCA 9174*

CW

1. GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD WHISKEY, GOOD LOVIN', *Hank Williams Jr., Warner/Curb 19872*
2. LOVE WITHOUT END, AMEN, *George Strait, Epic 73312*
3. HE WALKED ON WATER, *Randy Travis, Warner Bros. 29878*
4. I'M GONNA BE SOMEBODY, *Travis Tritt, Warner Bros. 19797*
5. WRONG, *Waylon Jennings, Epic/CBS 73352*
6. OH LONESOME ME, *The Kentucky Headhunters, Mercury 875450*
7. PASS IT ON DOWN, *Alabama, RCA 2519*
8. WANTED, *Alan Jackson, Arista 2302*
9. DANCY'S DREAMS, *Restless Heart, RCA 2503*
10. ON DOWN THE LINE, *Patty Loveless, MCA 79004*

R&B

★ **1. MAKE YOU SWEAT,** *Keith Sweat, Vintertainment/Elektra 64961*
★ **2. JERK OUT,** *The Time, Paisley Park/Reprise 19750*
3. MY, MY, MY, *Johnnie Gill, Motown 2033*
4. THE POWER, *Snap, Arista 2013*
★ **5. COME BACK TO ME,** *Janet Jackson, A&M 1475*
6. NICETY, *Michel'le, Ruthless/Atlantic 98980*
★ **7. STEP BY STEP,** *New Kids On The Block, Columbia 73343*
★ **8. POISON,** *Bell Biv Devoe, MCA 53772*
9. YOU CAN'T DENY IT, *Lisa Stansfield, Arista 2024*
★ **10. TALK TO ME.** *Anita Baker, Elektra 64964*

CDs

I'M BREATHLESS, *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 26209*
PLEASE HAMMER DON'T HURT 'EM, *Capitol 92857*
STEP BY STEP, *New Kids On The Block, Columbia 45129*
I DO NOT WANT WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT, *Sinead O'Connor, Ensign/Chrysalis 21759*
SHUT UP AND DANCE, *Paula Abdul, Virgin 91362*
. . . BUT SERIOUSLY, *Phil Collins, Altantic 82050*
SOUL PROVIDER, *Michael Bolton, Columbia 45012*
BRIGADE, *Heart, Capitol 91820*
JANET JACKSON'S RHYTHM NATION 1814, *Janet Jackson, A&M 3920*
KILLIN' TIME, *Clint Black, RCA 9668*

HOTHITS BEST NEW

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

POP

★ ***UNSKINNY BOP***
Poison - Enigma/Capitol 44584

★ ***MAKE YOU SWEAT***
Keith Sweat - Vintertainment/Elektra 64961

BLAZE OF GLORY
Jon Bon Jovi - Mercury 875896

IF WISHES CAME TRUE
Sweet Sensation - Atco 98953

ACROSS THE RIVER
Bruce Hornsby & The Range - RCA 2621

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES
Sinead O'Connor - Ensign/Chrysalis 23528

CUTS BOTH WAYS
Gloria Estephan - Epic 73395

★ ***DO ME!***
Bell Biv Devoe - MCA 53848

HOW BAD DO YOU WANT IT
Don Henley - Geffen 19699

★ ***JERK OUT***
The Time - Paisley Park/Reprise 19750

HOLY WATER
Bad Company - Atco 98944

CAN'T STOP FALLING INTO LOVE
Cheap Trick - Epic 74333

THE OTHER SIDE
Aerosmith - Geffen 19927

★ ***CAN'T STOP***
After 7 - Virgin 98961

C/W

NOTHING'S NEWS
Clint Black - RCA 2596

I MEANT EVERY WORD HE SAID
Ricky Van Shelton - Columbia 73413

FOURTEEN MINUTES OLD
Doug Stone - Epic 73425

NEXT TO YOU, NEXT TO ME
Shenandoah - Columbia 73373

OUGHTA BE A LAW
Lee Roy Parnell - Arista 2028

WHO'S GONNA TELL HER GOODBYE
Earl Thomas Conley - RCA 2511

HOLDIN' A GOOD HAND
Lee Greenwood - Capitol 44576

JUKEBOX IN MY MIND
Alabama - RCA 2643

PRECIOUS THING
Steve Wariner - MCA 53854

I COULD BE PERSUADED
The Bellamy Brothers - MCA 53824

SMALL SMALL WORLD
The Statler Brothers - Mercury 878094

THE BATTLE HYMN OF LOVE
Kathy Mattea & Tim O'Brien - Mercury 875692

MY PAST IS PRESENT
Rodney Crowell - Columbia 73423

SOMETHING OF A DREAMER
Mary-Chapin Carpenter - Columbia 73361

R&B

LIES
En Vogue - Atlantic 87893

★ ***CAN'T STOP***
After 7 - Virgin 98961

I WANT IT NOW
Cameo - Atlanta Artists/Mercury 875588

FEELS GOOD
Tony! Toni! Tone! - Wing/Polydor 877437

GOTTA GOOD THING
Geoff McBride - Arista 2022

LAY YOUR TROUBLES DOWN
Angela Winbush (duet w/Ronald Isley) - Mercury 875430

NEW PRODUCTS

Midway's RADICAL

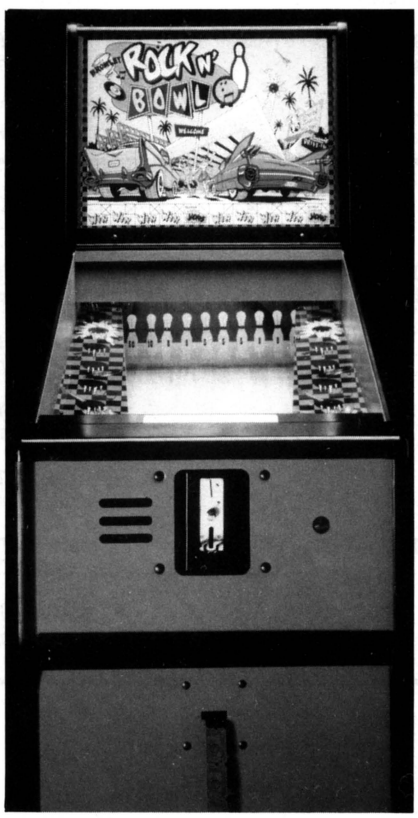


Radical, latest in the Bally/Midway flipper line from Midway Manufacturing, brings the sport of skateboard hotdogging to the pinball playfield with innovative design features like the Vertical Ramp, an open-sided challenge which keeps players "on the edge." The all-new, up-down, self-adjusting Diverter automatically guides the ball to different scoring areas so players can enjoy every curve, swerve and killer trick. Other features include the "Bust a Move" million-point ramp; the Snake Run (rewards everything from extra ball to Midway's trademarked "instant multi-ball"); the Skate or Die challenge and a Mega-Million shot.

Colored strobes provide impressive special lighting effects, while the soundtrack boasts outstanding music and enhanced speech prompts. Graphics are heavy on screaming yellow and New Wave purple. Of course, you get the firm's famous high-quality workmanship and technical reliability.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Midway Mfg. Co., 3401 No. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; 312/267-2240.

Bromley's ROCK-N-BOWL



Shipping early in August, **Rock-N-Bowl** is another clever redemption game from Bromley Inc. This one features coin-shooting with a bowling alley theme. "It's potentially the fastest-playing game ever made," said the firm, "because each coin is a game." Lauran Bromley added that five weeks of tests showed "unbelievable" earnings that increased each week.

Before inserting his coin, the player aims the coin shooter at the bowling pin he desires to hit. (Pins are set up at the back end of the playfield.) Once the coin is inserted, it "magically" rolls on its edge across the playfield, like a bowling ball rolling down the lane. It's a win when a pin is hit, a gutter when no pins are hit. Easily-hit pins yield fewer tickets; hitting tougher targets pays with more tickets.

Any of four different pin values may be selected. Values are changed by replacing the marquee over the pins to show which value the operator wishes to use. Difficulty level on each pin may be fine-tuned by adjusting pin width.

The plywood cabinet features '50s-style graphics, attractive blue and chrome color scheme 100% solid state electronics and a Deltronic ticket dispenser (standard). An indicator light at cabinet front indicates "low supply of tickets."

For more information, contact your authorized distributor; or for referral call company representatives Frank and Joe Bundra at 708/705-5991 or fax 708/705-8095.

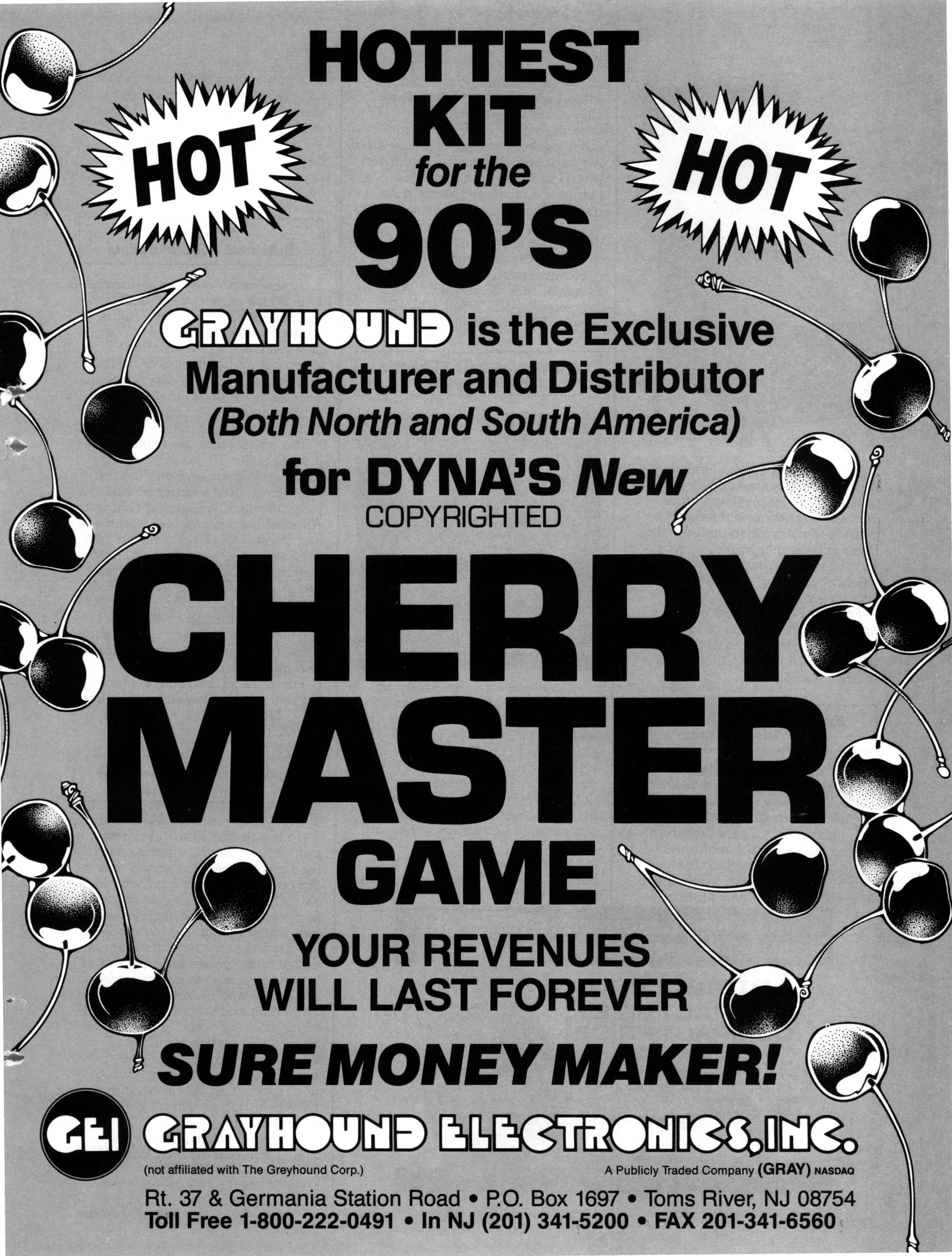
Williams' DINER

If you liked 'Taxi,' you'll love **Diner,** a flipper which takes you back to the classic fast food spots and be-bop mood of the 1950s. It's a highly-themed pinball blending those famous Williams features: innovative design, top reliability and entertainment value.

Theme: serving food in a diner.

Gameplay: players must "deliver" the "plates" ordered by five colorful customers: Haji, Babs, Boris, Pepe and Buck. A fully animated backglass clock lights up with a "DINE-TIME" jackpot worth 12 million points. There's also a "tip": at the end of each ball, players collect up to 5/of their score for each customer "served."

Features: a jukebox shooter skill shot, E-A-T bonus multiplier lanes, "grill bonus" target and "Today's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Special" drop-in hole all enhance the theme. Other special shots, targets and special playing features add more variety and interest. Of course, the game also includes the firm's spectacular sound, musical scoring and lighting effects, eye-catching graphics and colorful speech prompts.

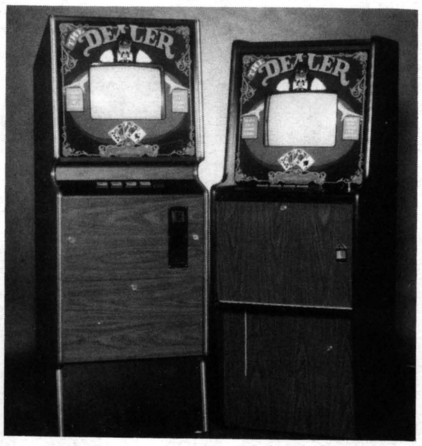
For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Williams Electronic Games, 3401 N. Calif. Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; 312/267-2240.

Universal Video Cabinet from Video Systems

The **Video Systems Cabinet** by Video Systems features quick-change header marquee with incandescent lighting fixture and pre-wired speaker; special control panel inserts allowing many control configurations; top-quality video monitor that mounts horizontally or vertically to accommodate any game format; heavy vinyl laminate construction with vinyl edging for long wear, easy clean-up; functionally-organized chasis pre-wiring for quick conversions; work bench wiring capability for control panel and interface board (just plug game into cabinet on location); heavy-duty over/under coin door assembly, metered for number of plays; slide out drawer for easy access to PCBs, power supply and wiring harness.

For more information, contact Video Systems, 1836 Gum Branch Rd., Jacksonville, NC 28540; 919/455-9846 or 800/762-9842.

Amusement Only Vidpoker from Bailey Mfg.



"No knock-off or bookkeeping capability" makes **The Dealer** a conversion kit for amusement-only, credit-awarding video poker. Four players may compete "on the same screen." During the attract mode, the screen explains game operation, shows card hands being dealt, list of highest to lowest hands, etc., while button lights run in chase sequence.

Kit includes PCB, header, wiring harness, buttons, side decals, front and front panels for a 13" monitor. This publication recommends that you check with your distributor about local regulations for this sort of game.

For more information, contact Bailey Mfg. Co., 3528 Mansfield Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27803; 919/442-3340.

Plateau Universal Cabinet Update

A new swing-out monitor mechanism is now shipping as a standard component on all Plateau "Angle System" universal cabinets. The new mech allows the monitor to swing out in the vertical or horizontal position, allowing easy access to all monitor controls. It also lets a single person switch monitor positions in less than a minute.

The new monitor brackets accommodate either 19" or 25" monitors in the same cabinet, enabling the operator to give a larger screen to a location without changing cabinets. All-steel brackets feature positive in and out stops, via ¾" diameter pins.

"As always," said the firm, "each new innovation does not obsolete the previous Angle System cabinets. A drawer from our first cabinet fits in a cabinet coming off the assembly line today." So all models of the Plateau cabinet are truly universal and interchangeable.

For more information, contact Plateau Inc., 1 Plateau Lane, Tracy City, TN 37387; 615/592-2000 or 800/228-8987.

Updated JAMMA Test Card from Star*Tech

Star*Tech Journal's JAMMA Test Card is now on its third, revised production run and offers easier-to-read display and condensed operating instructions on the back of the card. The test card checks out an entire video game wiring system before you plug in a new logic board. It costs $44 and checks these inputs and outputs: power supply voltages within tolerance; audio and video lines; one- and two-player switches; slam, coin and test switches. . . and virtually every output to the PCB is checked and visually indicated on this device. Ideal for use after game conversion, powers supply substitution, harness replacement, initial cabinet wiring or control panel troubleshooting.

For more information, contact Star*Tech Journal, P.O. Box 1065, Merchantville, NJ 08109; 609/662-1080.

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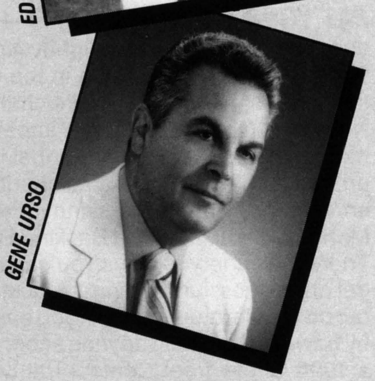

GENE URSO

The industry's International Flipper Pinball Assn. is up and running! Stressing the term "flipper pinball" to ensure clarity and appeal for the strong European market, the first official meeting of IFPA's board of directors took place July 11 at American Vending Sales (Elk Grove, Ill.). The group set up bylaws, including charter membership procedures, and officially became a registered, non-profit trade association in the State of Illinois.

Elected to two-year terms of office are Sharon Harris as president; Ed Valesquez as VP; and Gene Urso as secretary-treasurer. The 10-member board of directors includes these officers, plus one rep from each manufacturer. . . namely, Williams/Bally-Midway's Roger Sharpe and Joe Dillon, Premier's Gil Pollock and Data East's Gary Stern. Distributors are represented on the board by American Vending's Frank Gumma Jr. Two more members will be appointed by AMOA's liaison to the committee, Dick Hawkins.

Serving as "interim" executive director for this fledgling association is AMOA-NDA director Joe Conway. Operator Steve Epstein of New York's famed Broadway Arcade will serve as the 1991 world tournament director.

IFPA might be the new kid on the block, but it's got a hefty $100,000 budget for 1990 to get things going. Each of the manufacturers contributed $20,000 and AMOA did as well. Expenses will include kits, folders, posters, logos, tournament set-up and promotion, etc.

Topics covered at the July 11 meeting included league materials. D&R Star's Mike Hawkins and Stansfield Vending's Mike Jensen have designed a league format which is "designed to promote amusement flipper pinball." These materials (including classification, score sheets, format, getting started" info, maintenance, etc.) will be distributed in kit form to IFPA members in September. "It's cloned from operators' successful dart and pool league packages," explained exec director Conway.

IFPA's next board meeting takes place Wednesday, Aug. 29 at the Williams offices in Chicago. IFPA's "1991 World Championships of Flipper Pinball" will be held in Milwaukee on the weekend of March 1-3 (Friday-Sunday). Over 1,000 participants are anticipated for this gala extravaganza, which will feature team play and doubles play, along with serious prize money.

For more information about IFPA, contact Joe Conway at 414/263-0233.

GRAPEVINE

northeast

JACK SULLIVAN is the new general manager at the fast-growing Pennsy firm, Tekbilt, where he'll oversee all manufacturing, sales and service operations. Jack's an eight-year industry vet who did a lot to help Merit achieve its recent expansion, prexy Buzz Bruner said, adding that he's "thrilled to have Jack with us."

MARY LOU PASSIATORE, beloved wife of John Passiatore (Victor Conte Sales, Utica, N.Y.) passed away June 25. It was rather sudden; she'd been receiving cancer treatments for only three weeks. Services were held at St. Anthony's in Utica. Mary Lou is survived by husband John, son Jack and daughter Joan. The family requested that in lieu of flowers, any memorial donations should go to Ronald McDonald House, where Mary Lou stayed. That's 501 George St., New Haven, CT 06511. May she rest in peace.

PAT YOUR BACK, MR. BETTI — A couple of years ago, this industry raised slightly over $100,000 for the Tomorrow's Children Fund in the name of Bert Betti, the guest of honor at ACME's charitable dinner party. Now, Bert (chief of Betson & Imperial Billiards) is promoting the Lou Avoglia Memorial Tournament whose proceeds will go to the same charity benefitting stricken children. Here's the skinny: the golf tourney runs Monday, Sept. 17 at the Basking Ridge Country Club. There's a variety of ways you can donate money (and get green fees, lunch, dinner, cocktails, etc.) all spelled out on the literature many of you east coasters received by now. And get this: anyone scoring a hole in one gets a 1990 Chevy free! Contact Pat Lennon at Betson in Moonachie if you haven't done so already. Please participate. You owe yourself a fun day anyway, and the sick kids sure could use the boost.

SPORTSPLEX TO OPEN — A new 43,500-sq.-ft. indoor "family fun center" will open in Smithtown, New York (on Long Island) in early September. It's called Sportsplex USA and features Disneyland-type animated robot characters at the entrance and in the 18-hole miniature golf course. Video and redemption games are a key part of the product mix. Other attractions include a remote-control car track, special effect rides, bumper cars, kiddie rides and a hi-tech simulator. A space theme highlights the redemption area including games from Vari-Tech, Smart, Meltec, BayTek, Doyle and Lazer-Tron. There's more: billiards, golf driving range, snack bar, etc., all highly themed. Dayton, Ohio's Joe Gilshenan and partners are experienced restaurateurs and first-time operators; they own this enormous place. Seeking industry expertise, they contracted that city's Collins Entertainment Concepts to design and produce it, including building attractions, props, etc., plus consulting on everything: marketing, personnel, operations, safety, etc. Collins also provides most equipment and merchandise. Gary Tuzalo will manage the place, and Gilshenen plans to build several more such facilities. Congrats and good luck! (See the item under Southeast for background on Collins.)

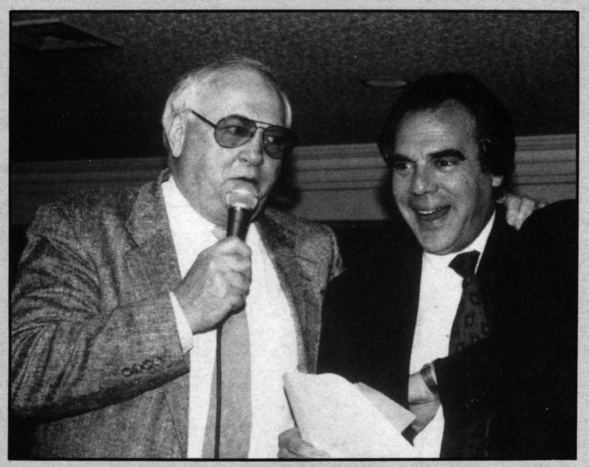
ROWE SUMMIT — This year's conference of Rowe International's jukebox & vending distributors takes place Sept. 13-16 at the La Quinta Hotel out in the Southern California desert. Lush setting, lots of fun stuff in store, but eyeballing new product (certainly in music) will be chief reason for the dealers to come on down. We're anxious to learn what the company has in store for its 1991 CD jukebox lineup, how 'bout you?

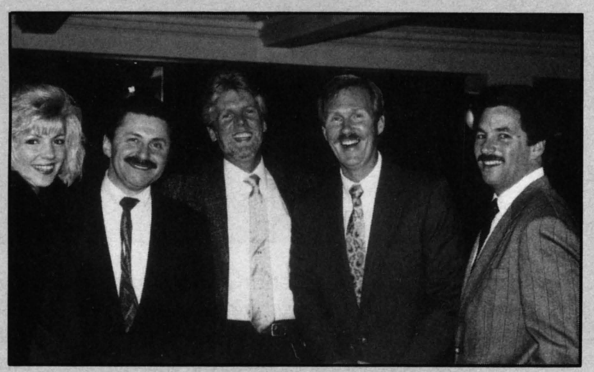


TOM LaMORE has been promoted to VP of National Accounts for Rowe. He's been with them since 1988 and and his prior post was national sales topper for currency products. Before coming to Rowe, Tom did a long stint with Mars in sales and management, and also has industry experience with the Vendo Company.

GAMING LABS INT'L. — In the course of researching this month's special report on legal video poker, we met an awfully nice (and very knowledgeable and influential) fellow named Jim Maida. This key player in the video lottery industry is president of Gaming Laboratories International, Inc., a Toms River, N.J.-based video lottery and casino gaming consultant. Jim has worked closely with state officials in several states that allow various forms of legal gaming (not just operator-run equipment). Jim helped officials draft many of the legal statues and regulations, plus technical standards and requirements for gaming equipment. In addition, Jim's lab runs many manufacturers' machines through the gauntlet, from slots and vidpokers to statewide computer communication systems. The lab tests stringently, to ensure all

technology is secure, properly engineered and well built. For some markets (such as South Dakota, Louisiana, and certain of Minnesota's Indian reservations) if Jim's lab doesn't approve it, it doesn't go into the field!







CMIA FUNDRAISER — The Coin Machine Industries Assn. of New England held a successful fundraiser recently. They had as much "fun" as they raised "funds" (and as these happy faces show, that's saying something!). From left in the photos are (top) Nintendo's Chuck Arnold with emcee Joe Bisaccio (former CMIA prexy). The middle pic shows Valerie and George Tecci of Teddy Bear Arcade, Steve McCallof of Ryan Vending, NECO prexy Rick Kirby and Manchester Music's Bo Harris. The bottom shot highlights Jim Straticos of Stramatic, together with Jerri and John Moss of Dream Machine arcades. Many thanks to our "roving cameraman" Chuck Arnold for the photos!

DANIEL WAGNER is now Eastern regional sales manager for Standard Change-Makers of Indianapolis. He'll manage sales and service functions at the firm's Ridley Park, Pa. sales and service center, plus distributor relations in a 12-state area. Dan's earlier done project management and supervision, quality assurance and standards, etc. and is a double major (business administration and operations management) from the U of Delaware.

COIN CONCEPTS reports "overwhelming" operator acceptance of their two new games for young children. *Jr. All American,* the kiddie basketball game, is now in its third production run with vibrant new graphics; operators like its operating features, large player audience and modest price, said CC prexy Art Warner. *Toss 'Em* has also proven itself in the market. Some early production problems have been solved and CC says any operator with field glitches should contact the firm right way. "We stand behind our products," Warner vowed.

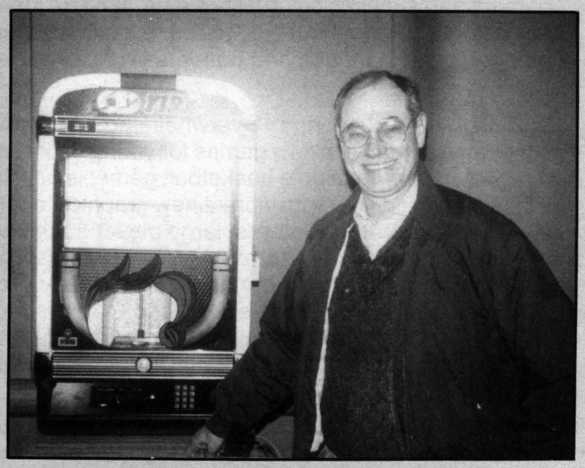
Meantime, we hear *Rebound II* is coming off the line with skill features requested by many operators. New are the skill coin entry, moving targets and eye-catching graphics. "It's been tested and proven even more exciting and challenging than its predecessor," said Warner. "We're darn proud of it!" Art and Wylie Irwin plan new family-oriented games for fall . . . and they thanked the trade for its support in "a wonderful year of growth."

midwest

MENDING SLOWLY — Roger (Boom Boom) Harvey, the midwest trade vet who suffered a stroke early February, is convalescing at a Pontiac, Mich. hospital and from what we hear, his spirits are low. Roger, an alumnus of Bally Midwest, S&M and Cartel distributing companies, still has a paralized right arm, but he has some movement in his right leg and is undergoing a bit of physical therapy. But as his buddy Hank Heiser says, "He's still got a long road yet to go." It would be a grand idea if his many friends sent him a card or a letter (he sure could use the boost). Write: Roger Harvey, Oakland Country Medical Care Facility, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, MI 48053. He's in room 140 . . . . Speaking of get well cards, readers may remember we asked them to send same to a young British lad named Craig Shergold (who's dying from brain cancer). Craig's wish was to get the most cards ever and get into the *Guinness Book of Records.* Well, if you sent a card, feel good: Guinness sent the certificate to him as the first person to receive more than a million cards. Thanks to Leland's Debbie Austin and other trade people who pushed the lad's campaign to success.

STILL FEISTY — Next time you feel like you've put in too many years on the old route, you'd better stand

back if Norm LeFleur is coming your way. The owner of Norwest Coin (Detroit area) just turned 86 and he's still out there on the street, making collections and dealing with locations. With around 55 years in the business under his belt, Norm still drives and pays regular calls on area distribs like Cartel and CleCoin. He's got sons and grandsons working in the business but he's still "the boss." Stay well patriarch!

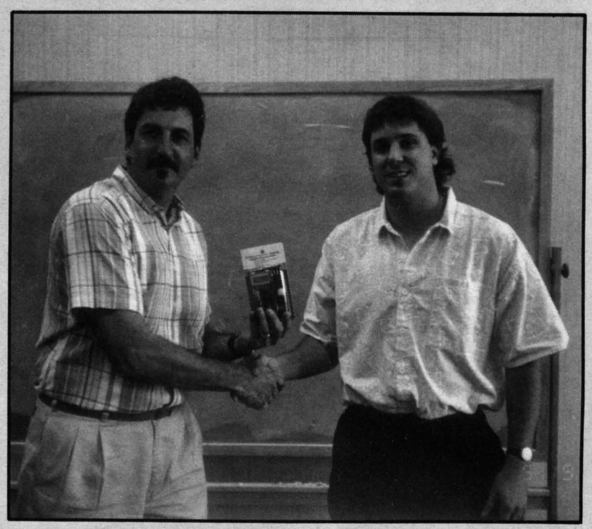


RAY'S ON FIRE — Yes, Hanson Distributing's Ray Hibarger says he's "on fire" about the quality and popularity of NSM's *CD Fire* wallbox. It's sure popular with many tradesters: handsome, compact and with possibly the fastest disk-changer in the industry!



OKAY, LET'S GET ON WITH IT — Being an association president has its ups and downs. Especially on the airport tarmac, where you're constantly taking off and landing for another meeting, another convention, another trade show... We recently caught AAMA prexy Gil Pollock in transit, and understand exactly how he feels.

southeast



DAVID WINS! The top student in each class of the Randy Fromm Arcade School always wins a free Beckman digital multimeter. Recently, David Rudo (Dolphin Lanes of Lauderdale Lakes, Fla.) took top honors. Seen here, from left, instructor Randy congratulates David on his skills.

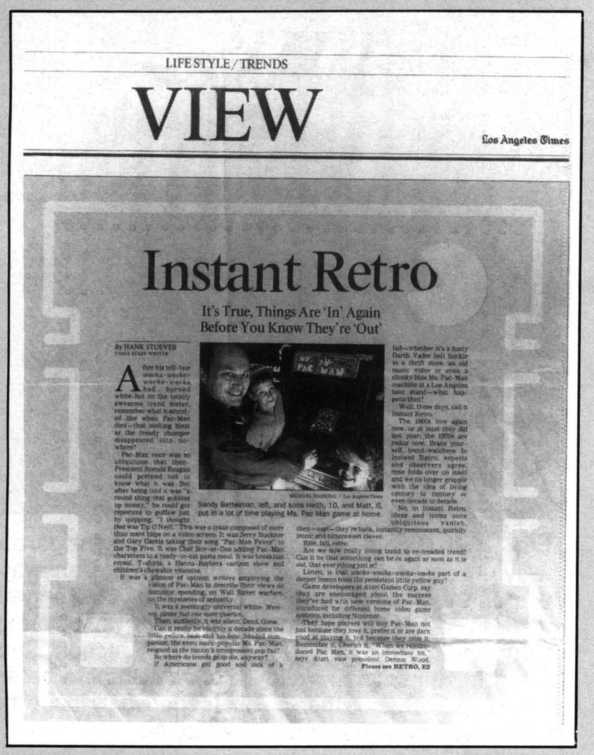
COLLINS GOES SOUTH — If you read about the huge Sportsplex opening soon in New York, you'll be interested to know that Collins Entertainment Concepts (Dayton, Ohio) is run by president Terry Collins. CEC is a full-service designer-producer of attractions, light and sound systems, special effects, etc. They also design entire parks and indoor family fun centers. They've got a lot of Florida and Southeastern clients who've been asking them to open a Southern branch, and in response they have opened a new Orlando, Fla. office under former Creative Engineering vet David "Billy Bob" Irvin which should answer those needs. Congrats!

EXPO DIRECTORY — Amusement Business, the Nashville-based trade journal for the amusement park and entertainment industry, has published the 1990 edition of its *Trade Show & Convention Guide,* touted as "the most comprehensive directory of trade shows and related facilities and services produced in one volume." Covered are expos for up to the next five years with data on locations; expected attendance; number of exhibitors; cost, size and number of booths; products displayed and contact names. Listings of hotels, audi-

toriums and civic centers that hold these meetings in the U.S., Canada and abroad are also included, with detailed info on exhibit space, specs and services available. Local expo service firms, industry associations and trade show management firms are also listed. Price is $85 per copy, including postage and handling. Send prepaid orders to Amusement Business, Single Copy Dept., P.O. Box 24970, Nashville, TN 37202. For credit card orders or for more information, call 615/3321-4251 or fax 615/327-1575.

CHERMAK'S NEW NUMBER — Chermak Vending & Distributing (Tampa, Fla.) has two new phone numbers: 800/533-GAME (which is 533-4263) and, locally, 960-8556. They also have two new lines of equipment: Coin Concepts and Ameri Corp.

southwest



LIFE STYLE / TRENDS

VIEW

Los Angeles Times

Instant Retro

It's True, Things Are 'In' Again Before You Know They're 'Out'

By HANK STUEVER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

After his tell-tale wacka-wacka-wacka-wacka had burned white-hot on the totally awesome trend meter, remember what it sounded like when Pac-Man died—that melting blest as the trendy chomper disappeared into nowhere?

Pac-Man once was so ubiquitous that then-President Ronald Reagan could pretend not to know what it was. But after being told it was "a round thing that gobbles up money," he could get reporters to guffaw just by quipping, "I thought that was Tip O'Neill." This was a crase composed of more than mere blips on a video screen. It was Jerry Buckner and Gary Garcia taking their song "Pac-Man Fever" to the Top Five. It was Chef Boy-ar-Dee adding Pac-Man characters to a ready-to-eat pasta meal. It was breakfast cereal, T-shirts, a Hanna-Barbera cartoon show and children's chewable vitamins.

It was a platoon of opinion writers employing the vision of Pac-Man to describe their views on domestic spending, on Wall Street warfare, on the mysteries of amnesia.

It was a seemingly universal whine. Mem-ing, please feel one more quarter.

Then, suddenly, it was silent. Dead. Gone.

Can it really be slightly a decade since the little yellow, sade-shot has been blended, companion, the even more popular Ms. Pac-Man, resigned as the nation's omnipresent pop fad?

So where do trends go to die, anyway?

If Americans get good and sick of a fad—whether it's a dusty Darth Vader bell buckle in a thrift store, an old music video or even a clunky blue Ms. Pac-Man machine at a Los Angeles taco stand—what happens then?

Well, these days, call it Instant Retro.

The 1960s live again now, or at least they did last year; the 1970s are redux now. Brace yourself, trend-watchers. In Instant Retro, experts and observers agree, time folds over on itself and we no longer grapple with the idea of living century to century or even decade to decade.

No, in Instant Retro, ideas and items once ubiquitous vanish, then—zap—they're back, instantly renouncent, quickly ironic and bittersweet clever.

Rise, fall, retro.

Are we now really living trend to re-treaded trend? Can it be that something can be in again as soon as it is out, that everything just is?

Listen, is that wacka-wacka-wacka part of a deeper lesson from the persistent little yellow guy?

Game developers at Atari Games Corp. say they are encouraged about the success they've had with new versions of Pac-Man, introduced for different home video game systems, including Nintendo.

They hope players will buy Pac-Man not just because they love it, prefer it or are darn cool at playing it, but because they miss it. Remember it. Cherish it. "When we reintroduced Pac-Man, it was an immediate hit," says Atari vice president Dennis Wood.

Please see RETRO, E2

Sandy Bettelman, left, and sons Heith, 10, and Matt, 6, put in a lot of time playing Ms. Pac-Man game at home.

SANDY'S SMILIN' — L.A.'s very own Sandy Bettelman (C.A. Robinson distributors) was smiling out of Page One of the View/Lifestyle section of July 8's Sunday edition of the *Los Angeles Times.* Next to him, in living color, were his sons Heith, 10, and Matt, 6, along with the *Ms. Pac-Man* game they play at home. The story, called "Instant Retro," described a pop-culture trend of having "oldies" in music, movies, TV. . . and video games. . . resurface as familiar, beloved "classics" within just a couple of years. "I guess it's nostalgic," Sandy said of the game's enduring appeal.





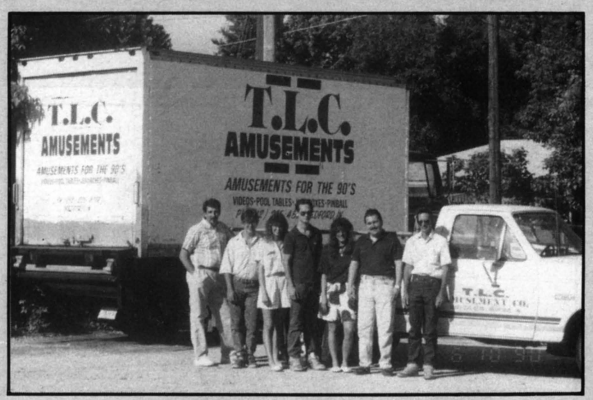


DYNAMO DEALER AWARDS — Dynamo Corp. (the Richland Hills, Texas maker of universal cabinets and pool and soccer table games) recently honored three distributors for outstanding performances in 1989. Seen here are Dynamo's prexy Bill Rickett presenting plaques to Betson's Joe Cirillo for best overall sales, to Brady's Jon Brady for outstanding video sales, and to Operator's Distributors' Steve Henderson for outstanding pool sales. Congratulations to all!

TO THE POOLROOM — Coin-op pool table sales are doing well these days, and one small reason is interesting: some pool parlor owners are installing coin tables right in the same room with the traditional time tables. For example, one parlor reportedly has 16 time tables plus 8 coin-ops. The rationale is sound: some players just want to shoot a game or two rather than go to the counter and start the time clock. Makes sense, although we're not sure where the route operator fits in (but it's worth thinking about).



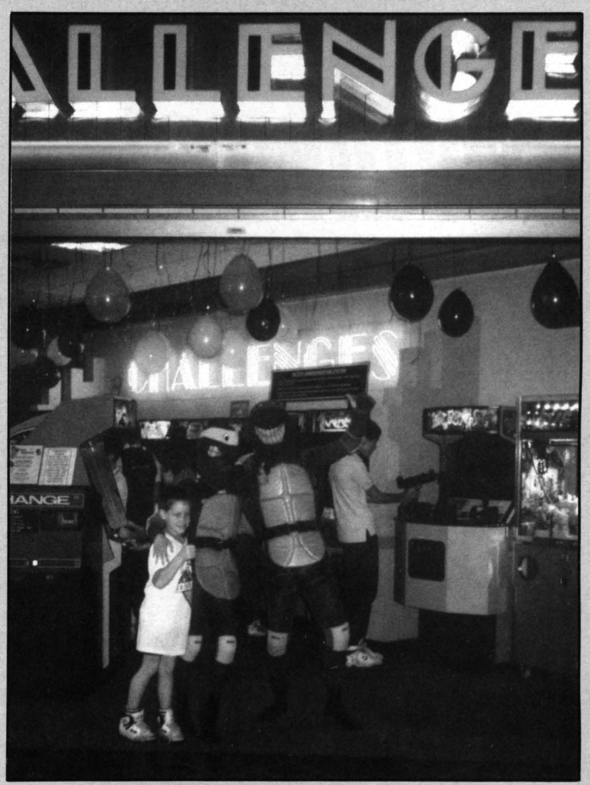
FAST COMPANY — Two of coin-op's biggest "wheels" got together with one of the biggest wheels in pro auto racing recently. From left, that's distributor Peter Betti (Betson Pacific), winning Indianapolis 500 driver Danny Sullivan, and Leland Corp. prexy John Rowe at the Indy raceway, the day before the big race. Makes sense for two fast-track coin-op companies to be in "fast company" themselves!





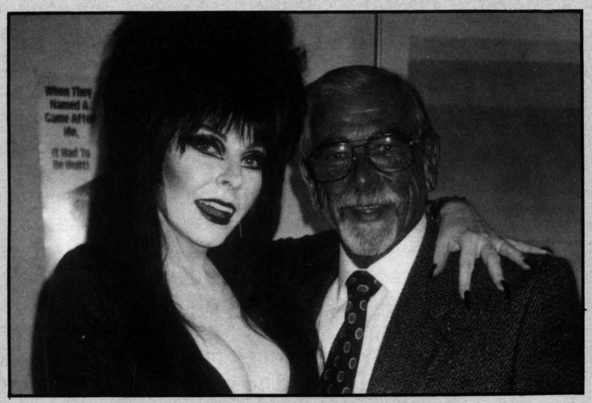
FROMM ARCADE SCHOOLS — Randy Fromm, our sterling technical tips columnist, sent in these pix as a sample of recent arcade schools held around the country. The folks by the truck are Randy and the tech crew of T.L.C. Amusements. The firm's owner, Tim Louden (second from right), asked Randy to conduct a special four-day class at T.L.C.'s office in Bedford, Indiana. In the other photo, the bunch at the Days Inn (Orlando, Fla.) came from as far away as British Columbia and Puerto Rico to attend the Randy Fromm Arcade School there. One Fromm student, John Kinch of Fannie Farkle's (Gatlinburg, Tenn.) repaired a stack of power supplies during the school's hands-on segment. "This more than paid for the class," John smiled.

PAYPHONES PULLED — The *L.A. Times* has reported that certain payphones from New York to California are being disconnected and taken off the street, because drug dealers are using them to set up business transactions, causing the neighborhoods around the phones to suffer. We thought car phones were the instrument of choice for upscale drug kings, but the paper said dealers prefer payphones to cellular units because they "remain anonymous and are difficult to trace." What a sad story!



TEXAS TURTLES — The game was probably inside, but the live Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (actors, anyway) were on the mall concourse outside the Challengers arcade in Fort Worth. Photo was sent by Al Bruck, prexy of the parent company Recreational Concepts, Inc. (based in Huntingdon Valley, Pa.) who runs a better bunch of gamerooms than he takes snapshots (hope it's not too dark for you to see). Thanks, Al.

EXIDY IN MEXIDY — Exidy, says Ginny Kauffman, has appointed Video Challenge (of Mexico City) its exclusive distributor there. "Moises Soffer is a solid veteran in the Mexican game industry," says Ginny of the VC jefe. "With his operations, and Exidy's *Twister, Croaker* and gun system, we have the right foothold in the awakening Mexican coin amusement business." Ginny, Moises plus Ginny's son Ryan (who can handle the Spanish Language) showed off Exidy product at the earlier game show in Mexico City and were proud to be part of the inaugural event.



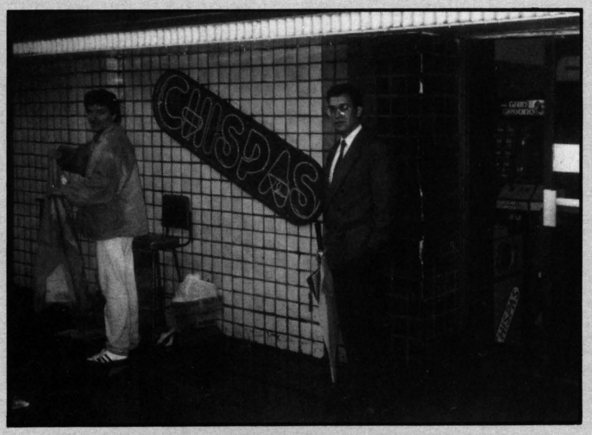
MED UPDATE — Hank Tronick, "giant of the California industry," seems (God bless it) on the mend. As many know, he suffered a severe infection in his artificial hip and spent a couple of very bad days in intensive care at St. John's in Santa Monica. He's now on antibiotics and with luck, will be home by the time this issue is out (he will continue treatment at home, although orally rather than through the IV). Hank thanks all the guys and gals who made phonecalls to the hospital and sent flowers, etc. and wants all to know he's walking on crutches a little bit and is mentally on a higher note. "It all depends whether or not the drugs wipe the infection out," he says. "Tell everyone I will be back!" he added.

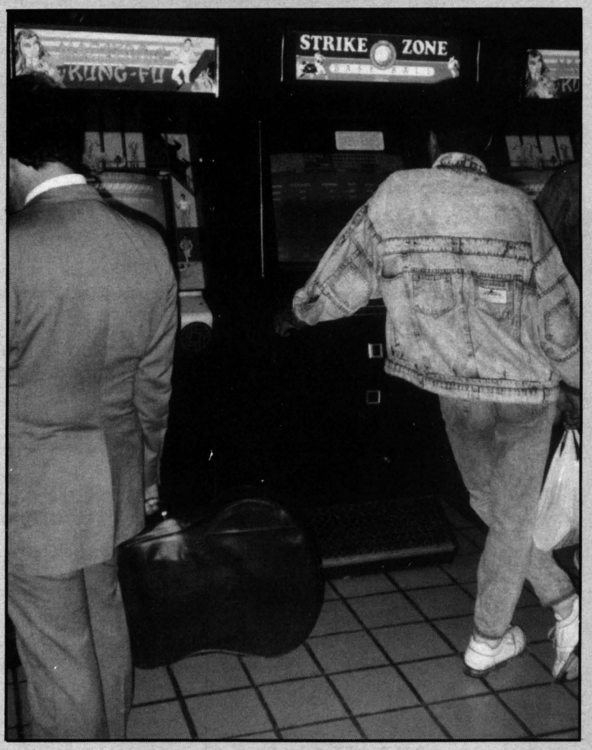
BERNIE SHAPIRO has been appointed Sales Manager at Lock America for coin machine manufacturers and distributors, announced company president Frank Minnella. Bernie started with the Garden Grove, Calif.-headquartered lock and security products company in early July and can be reached at 602/977-3815 or 800/422-2866.

international



ENRIQUE & JOSE — Seen at the glitzy party thrown in connection with AAMA's Latin American Expo in Mexico City in July are two fine fellows from Mexel (Nintendo's Mexican distrib). At left is Enrique Fong, a top man in the organization, and at right is sales administrator Jose Luis Garcia Gonzales.





DIFADI'S ARCADE — AAMA's July 10-11 Latin American Expo took place at the U.S. Trade Center in Mexico City. A few blocks away was a fine arcade called "Chispas," run by Difadi, a major distributor down there. Difadi's Manuel Tendilla cheerfully escorted us through the rain to the site (that's he with the umbrella, standing by the entrance). Inside, he proudly showed off over 100 games, many housed in Difadi's unique cabinet with a broad, rubber-coated player footrest panel in the bottom. Biggest earners in the place are Sega's *After Burner & Hang On,* though the crowd also liked the air table hockey, many other videos, the cranes, and more. Thanks for the tour, Manuel!

PARKS SHOW INTERNATIONAL takes place Oct. 25-27 at the Rimini Exhibition Center in Italy. That puts it squarely into conflict with AMOA's expo, but for many globe-trotting tradesters this huge event for amusement parks and leisure attractions will be a draw, especially in light of upcoming 1992 unification of the European

market. All major Italian and foreign firms making attractions, equipment, components, systems and technology for amusement parks and travelling entertainment will display goods here, said organizers. Seminars are also offered. Last year's event pulled in nearly 4,000 folks, mostly from Europe but also the Middle East. For more information, call the organizers at 0541-711111.

ATEI TO EXPAND — The 1991 ATEI show (Jan. 7-10 in London) will be bigger and better than ever under the direction of new Exhibits Manager Mike Shefras. This year's show included a first: the full-size casino section. It will be back, along with new sections covering everything from games to vending, from professional services to promotion and "swag" (we assume that's British for plush and merchandise prizes). Security, vending, clothing and other ancillary services and products will also be included. According to Shefras, the '91 ATEI show will cater to a changing industry whose diversified members are into everything from arcades to theme parks, discos and casinos. See our "Datebook" section for addresses and phones that will yield more information.

LANIEL'S PINBALL SCHOOL — Laniel Automatique of Montreal hosted a service school on Williams pinball machines on May 2. Two top teachers, Tom Cahill and Pat Riley, addressed the packed house. "They really knew their machines from top to bottom," enthused Laniel's Jean Coutu. "Our school was an extraordinary success!"

FAX CARDS — Toronto arcade operator Wayne Fromm (Video Invasion) has created fax greeting cards, a natural product for the 1990s if there ever was one. He showed 24 cards at a recent National Stationery Show in New York, where they were "the hit of the show," he said. Greeting cards are a $3.7 billion per year industry in the U.S. alone, and Wayne's got international distributors foaming at the mouth to sell his products. Wayne's cards are flat, 4.5x6" items featuring a funny cartoon themed to the classic holidays, etc. and a standard fax addressing form. They roll through the machine in one smooth motion and sell for $2.25 each. Each card can be used over and over, obviously. Wayne said his line of fax cards should hit U.S. and Canadian stores by this summer. Nice going by the Pied Piper of Coin-Op!

DATEBOOK

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, contact Rob Berk at 216/369-1192 or 800/323-FLIP (3547).

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.

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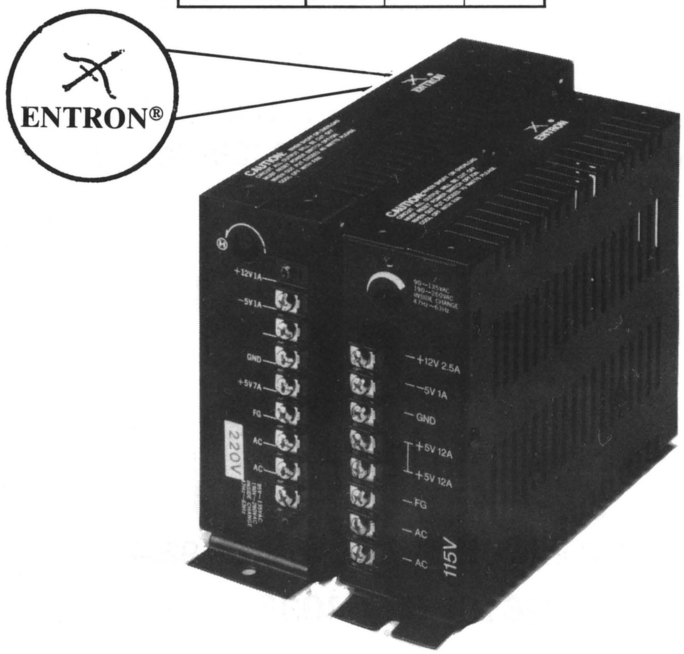

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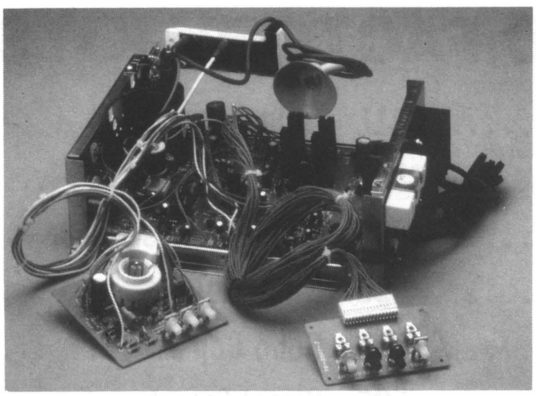

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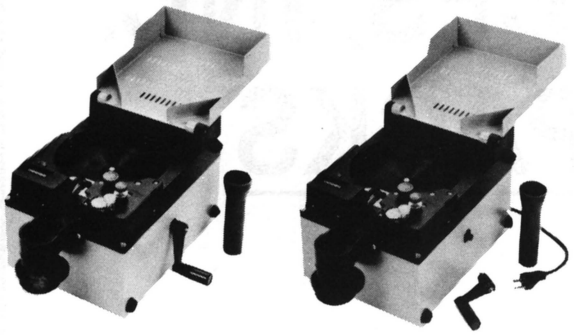

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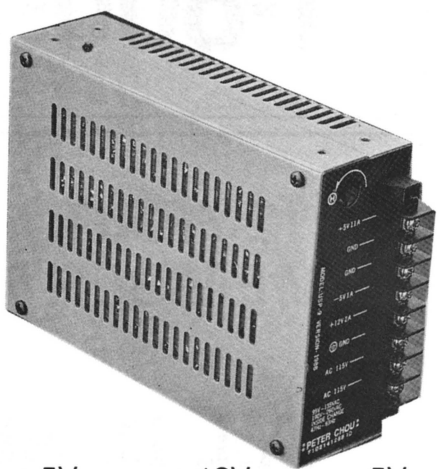

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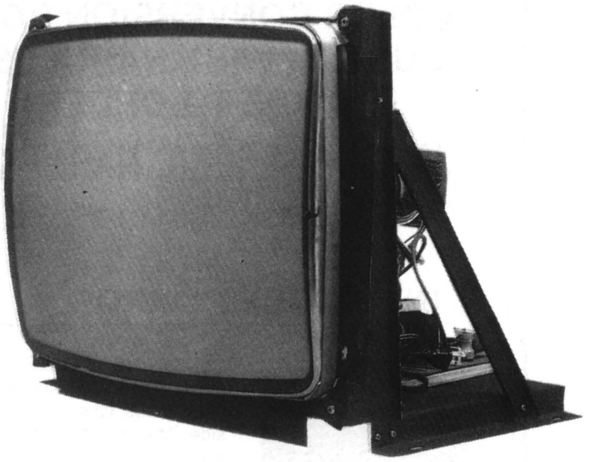

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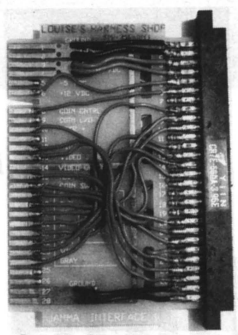

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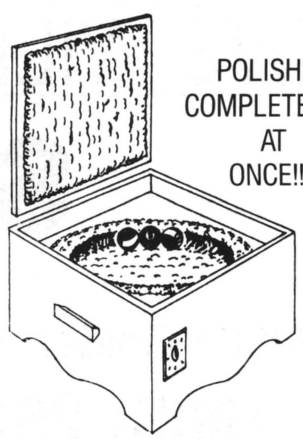

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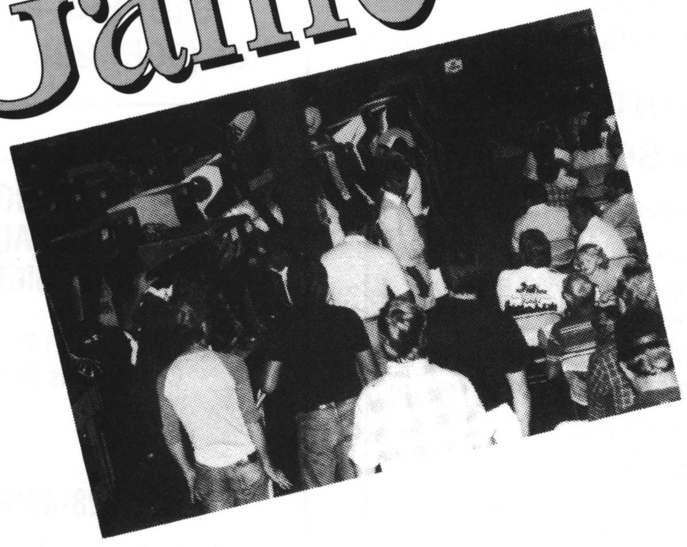

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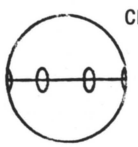



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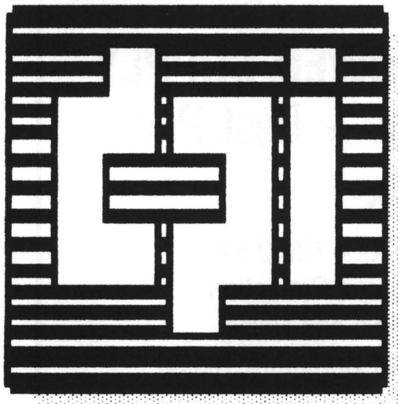

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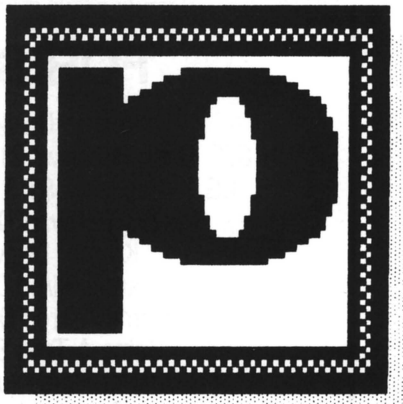

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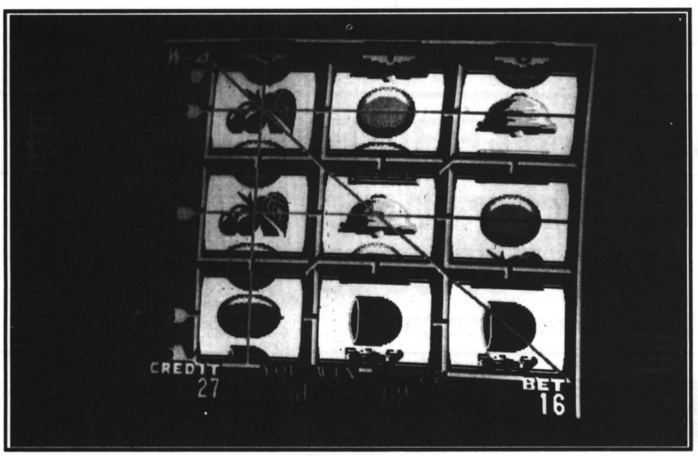

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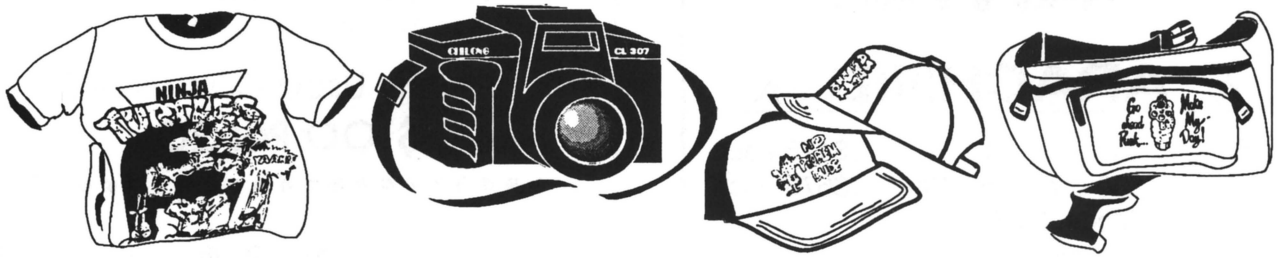

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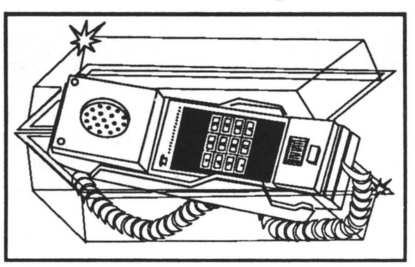

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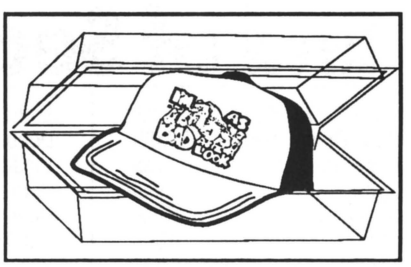

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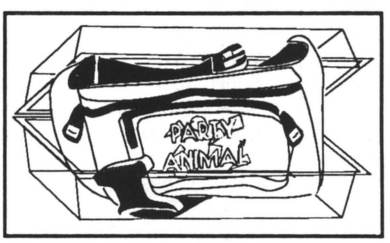

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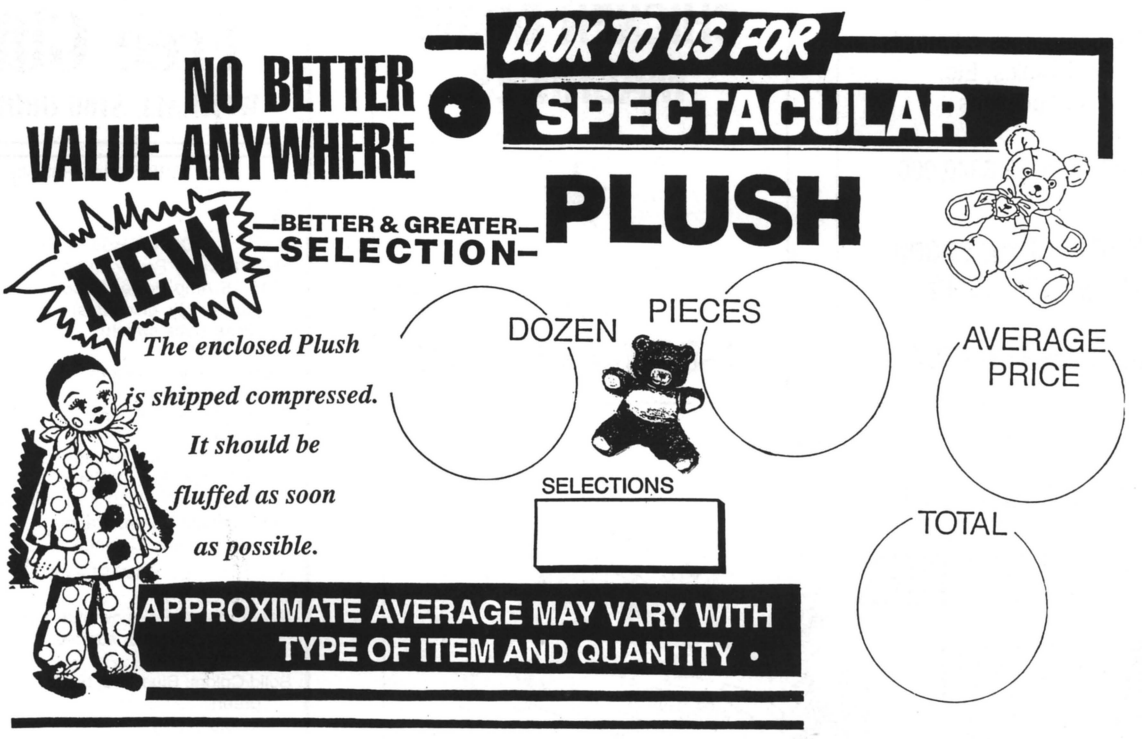

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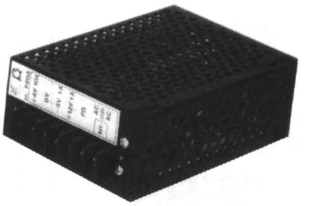

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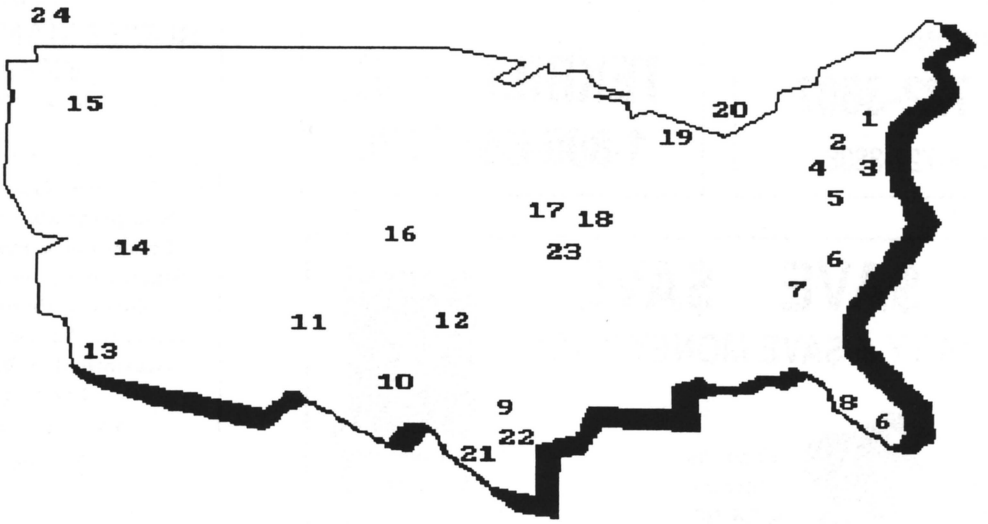

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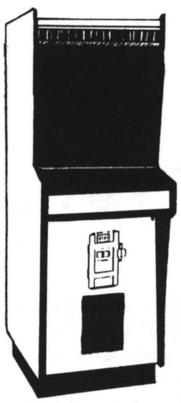

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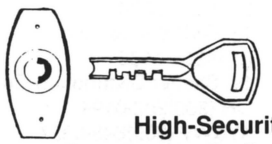

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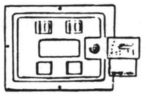

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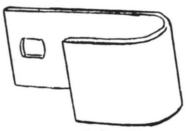

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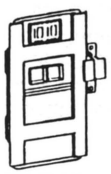

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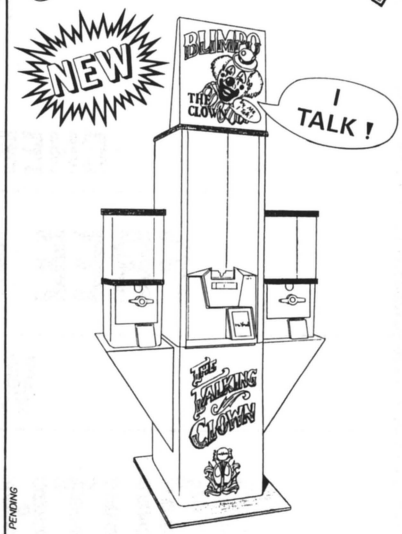

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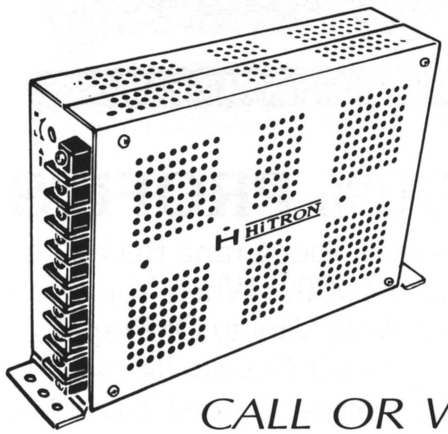

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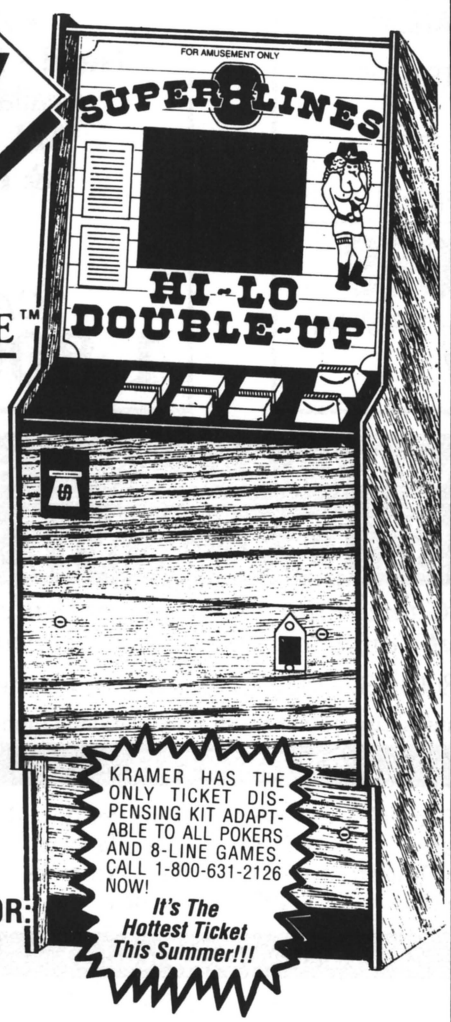

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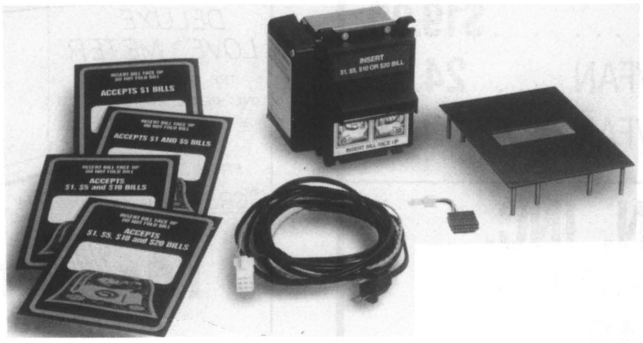

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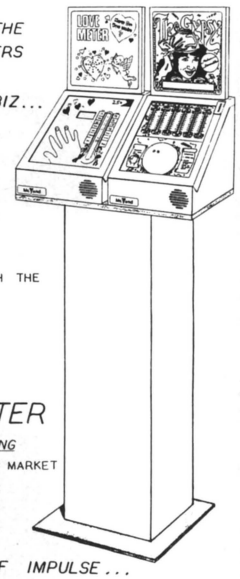

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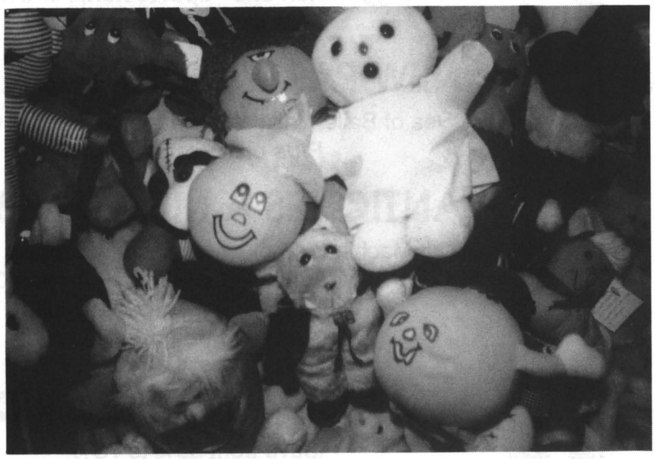

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- 42 column print
- Driver/options board standard
- Fast, simple paper loading module
- Smooth stepper motor line feed and fast feed
- Single and double width printing on same line
- Automatic forms thickness compensation
- Journal cover with autograph window and lock
- Full paper handling capability
- Fully cabinetized
- Snap-on ribbon cassette with tear off edge
- Manual paper advance wheel
- UL recognized component
- Journal paper out sensing (option on receipt)

Options
- Receipt knife - selectable full or partial cut
- User selected Electro-stamp
- Validation of inserted forms (6 or 15 lines)
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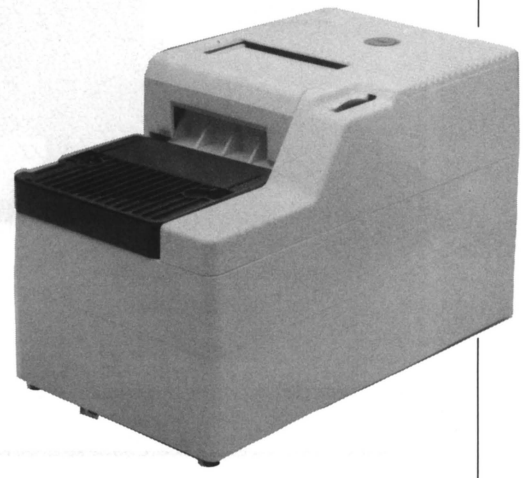
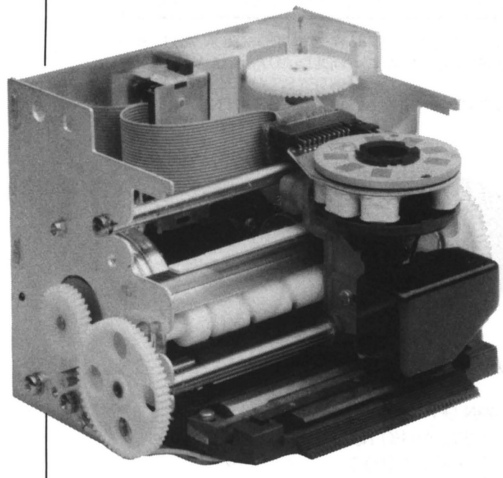
- Two part paper handling (journal take-up)



NCR 2285 Print Mechanism



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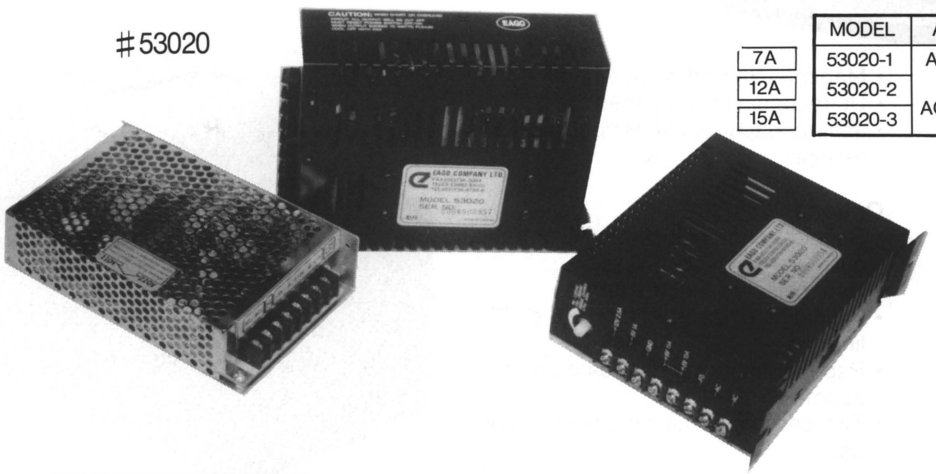

	MODEL	AC INPUT	DC OUTPUT
7A	53020-1	AC 90-135V OR AC 190-245V	+5V/7A, −5V/1A, +12V/1A
12A	53020-2		+5V/12A, −5V/1A, +12V/1.0A
15A	53020-3		+5V/15A, −5V/1A, +12V/2.5A

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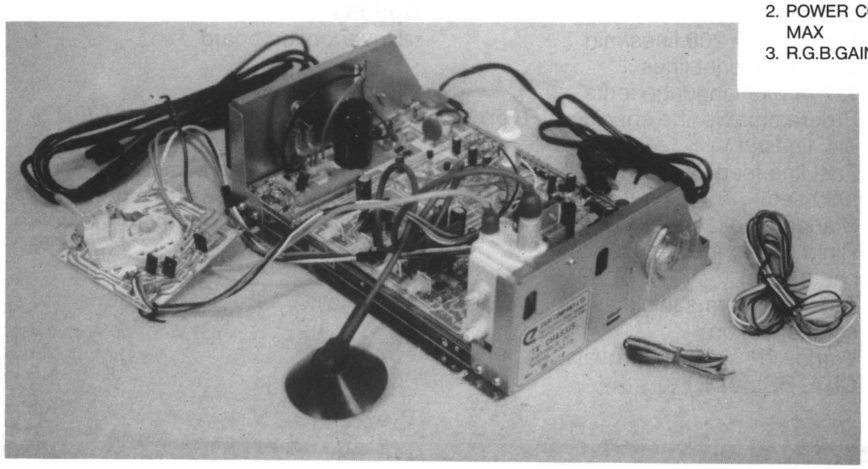

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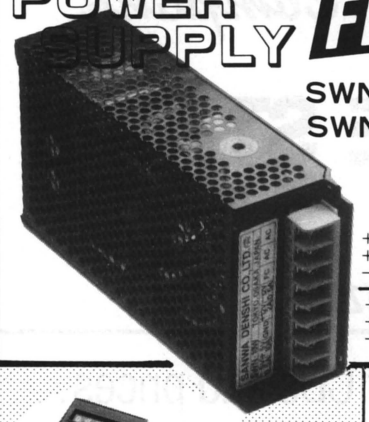

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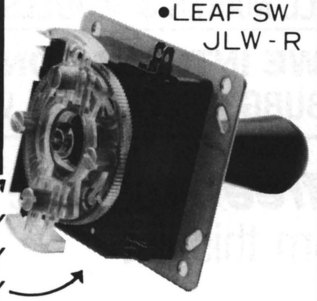

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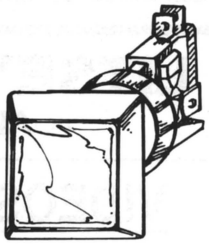

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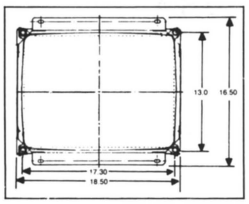

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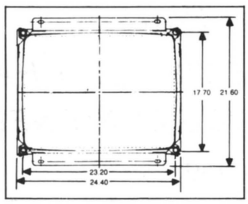

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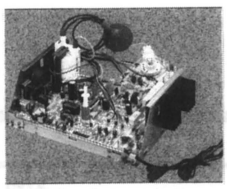

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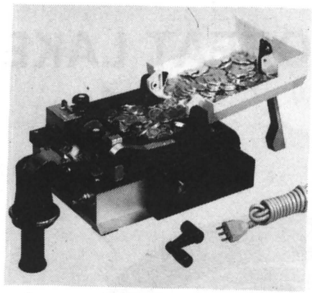

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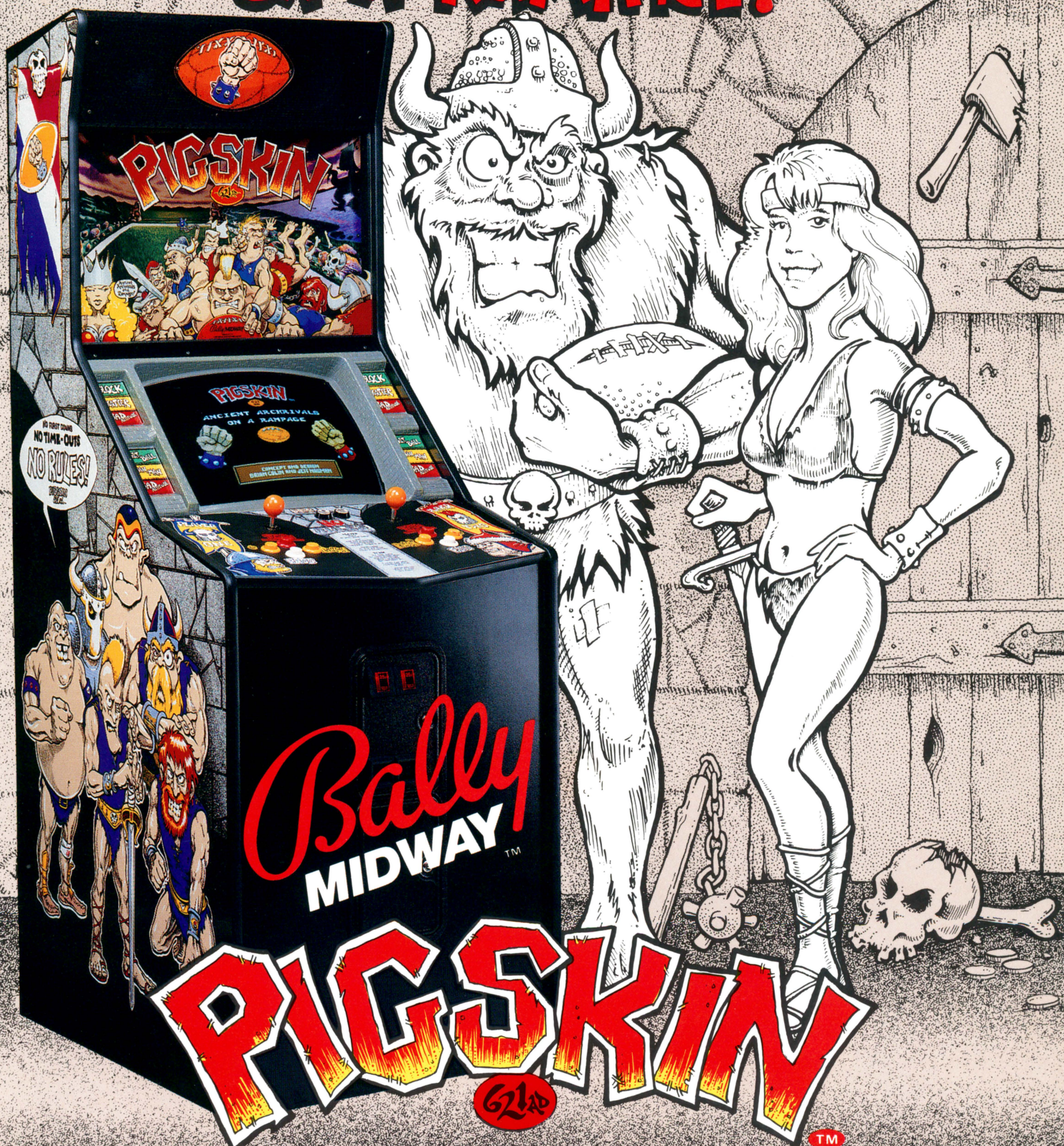

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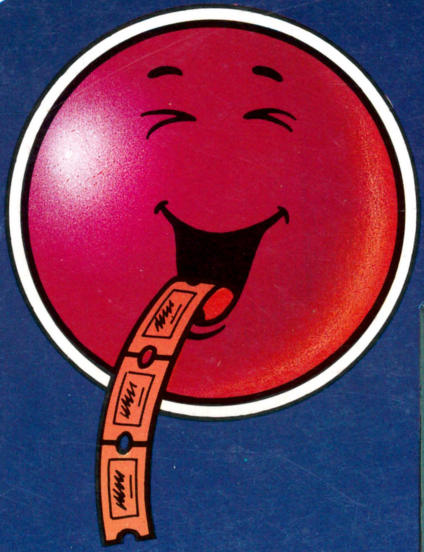

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