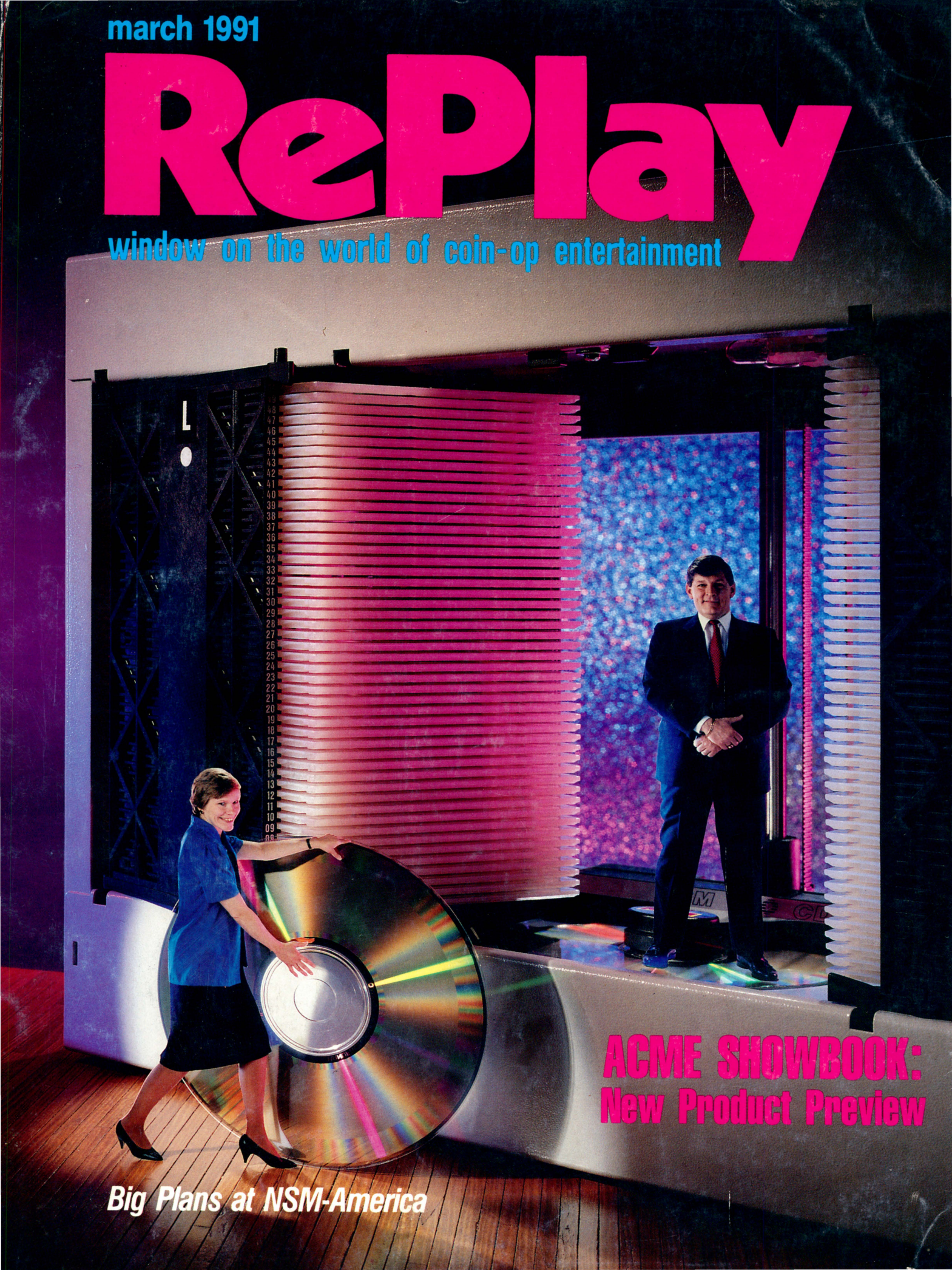
march 1991

RePlay

window on the world of coin-op entertainment



ACME SHOWBOOK: New Product Preview

Big Plans at NSM-America

SEE US AT THE A.C.M.E. SHOW!

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- Try and Win a Gottlieb's CACTUS JACK'S Pinball Machine
- Stop On By For a Boot Stompin' Good Time!

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

JAMMA SPEAKS — As you'll read inside, the American manufacturer/distributor association, AAMA, has announced that it won't fight the new U.S. law which allows operation of parallel imported coin-op videos starting Dec. 1. *RePlay* has learned that JAMMA, the Japanese manufacturer association, also **will not fight** the new parallel legislation, calling it a matter of domestic American law. JAMMA is, however, quite concerned about the possible market impact of parallels. In a letter to RePlay Editor **Marcus Webb,** JAMMA Chairman **Masaya Nakamura** has suggested that an international summit of coin-op tradesters should discuss ways to combat "skillfully-made counterfeits," which his association feels will be intermixed with legitimate parallel shipments into the U.S. "The long-term effect of a flood of illegal copies into the international coin-op market would be devastating," Mr. Nakamura said. In addition, Mr. Nakamura stated to *RePlay* his belief that JAMMA members do not have an effective mechanism of curtailing the flow of parallels from their end . . . but Japanese manufacturers do strongly suggest that U.S. operators would do better with new games, for reasons of game quality and mechanical reliability. We will print the full text of Mr. Nakamura's letter next issue.

IREM & FABTEK are parting ways April 1, when dual prexy **Frank Ballouz** moves his company, Fabtek, to new facilities where he'll devote full time to that firm. **Steve Blattspieler** is expected to remain with Irem of America and take charge.

CIG BAN — May 1 is the effective date for a total ban on cigarette vending in City of Santa Monica, Calif. The city council passed the measure unanimously, making this the state's second town with a total ban (Rancho Mirage was first).

WURLITZER WOWS 'EM — Coming to ACME is a wild, new Wurlitzer CD juke. ***New York, New York,*** previewed at Germany's IMA in January, features the city skyline etched on a mirrored front, bubble tubes and animation on the back, and 8 album covers displayed on the side. By Feb. 20, advance buzz was so strong that U.S. dealers had ordered five containers, sight unseen (and price unset), said Wurlitzer's **Joe Tedeschi.** Joe adds: "If we're ever going to get a 'Jukebox of the Year' award, it will be for this!"

HI-TECH REVOLUTION — The long-awaited video hi-tech revolution is here! Reliable sources say a dedicated video game with 3-D, holographic-style graphics (requiring no special glasses) will be displayed at ACME. This disc-based technology was licensed from an impressive consortium of Southern California developers by the U.S. subsid of one of the biggest Japanese video manufacturers.

MORE REVOLUTION — A different Japanese firm, **Data East,** will bring to coin-op this fall a CD-ROM based dedicated video game, using a special chip from **Intel** which employs "Digital Video Interactive" (DVI) technology. No 3-D here; the big advance is super-realistic, motion picture-type resolution and realism in graphics . . . vastly expanded memory capacity . . . and — get this — lower prices!

Instead of using traditional masked ROM chips, Intel's DVI chip on Data East's proprietary 32-bit PCB hardware stores imagery on a CD-ROM disc. Storage is not in analog picture form, as on mid-1980s laser games, but in the form of digital data (i.e. numbers). DVI's special mathematical formulas can "compress" a huge volume of data, equalling 72 minutes of images, onto one CD-ROM disc. During gameplay, the DVI chip re-translates the numbers back into lifelike, 24-frames-per-second images. Because it's computer-based, not laserdisc-based, performance is reportedly much stabler than 1982-type laserdisc videos. Player mechs are also expected to be far more durable. Prototypes were demo'd at multi-media conferences in Japan and the U.S. last fall, said the firm's new coin-op marketing director **Connie Freeman.** You may have seen recent reports on this from *CNN* and *USA Today.*

NEW NINTENDO SYSTEM — Nintendo previewed a new 16-bit coin-op video game system at the ATEI. At presstime it was still being tweaked and was not expected to show at ACME.

CHECK IT OUT — Data East Pinball designer **Joe Kaminkow** says their new ***Check Point*** is "our best pin ever, even better than *The Simpsons.*" Details inside.

NEXT MONTH — Our April issue, with coverage of the ACME show, will be late (it'll mail early April).

RePlay

the Players' Choice

MARCH 1991

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

upright videos

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
■	1	**RACE DRIVIN' (Atari) (5)**	**9.31**	**36%**
	2	HARD DRIVIN' (Atari) (24)	8.44	42%
	3	PIT-FIGHTER (Atari) (6)	8.39	71%
	4	GALAXY FORCE (Sega) (10)	8.32	13%
■	5	SPACE GUN (Taito) (3)	8.31	19%
■	6	RAMPART (Atari) (1)	8.20	13%
	7	G-LOC (Sega) (9)	8.08	32%
	8	TMNT (TURTLES) (Konami) (15)	7.88	96%
	9	CYBERBALL 2072+ (Atari) (13)	7.48	40%
	10	FINAL LAP (Atari) (28)	7.42	28%
	11	S.C.I. (Taito) (14)	7.39	29%
	12	SMASH TV (Williams) (9)	7.19	64%
	13	OFF ROAD (Leland) (24)	7.05	76%
	14	BIG RUN (Jaleco) (8)	7.00	13%
	15	TURBO OUT RUN+ (Sega) (20)	6.95	56%
	16	BEAST BUSTERS (SNK) (14)	6.93	18%
	17	2-DUDE OFF ROAD (Leland) (10)	6.92	16%
	18	OPERATION THUNDERBOLT (Taito) (22)	6.91	49%
	19	CHASE H.Q. (Taito) (27)	6.89	54%
	20	TEAM QUARTERBACK (Leland) (22)	6.86	46%

+ indicates game was produced in both dedicated & software forms

flippers

■	1	**FUNHOUSE (Williams) (3)**	**9.31**	**52%**
■	2	THE SIMPSONS (Data East) (4)	8.54	58%
■	3	BUGS BUNNY (Midway) (2)	8.33	16%
	4	DR. DUDE (Midway) (5)	7.87	41%
	5	DINER (Williams) (7)	7.85	44%
	6	WHIRLWIND (Williams) (13)	7.73	64%
	7	ELVIRA (Midway) (17)	7.65	54%
	8	EARTHSHAKER (Williams) (23)	7.59	56%
	9	RIVERBOAT GAMBLER (Williams) (4)	7.39	21%
	10	POLICE FORCE (Williams) (16)	7.37	47%

best software

		MODEL/MANUFACTURER	RATING	DIST.
■	1	**HIGH IMPACT [H] (Williams) (2)**	**9.16**	**33%**
■	2	FINAL FIGHT [H] (Capcom) (13)	8.24	82%
■	3	RAIDEN [V] (Fabtek) (7)	8.10	32%
■	4	BLOOD BROS. [H] (Fabtek) (3)	8.00	15%
■	5	CYBERLIP [S] (SNK) (3)	7.93	19%
■	6	CARRIER AIR WING [H] (Capcom) (3)	7.88	11%
■	7	NINJA COMBAT [S] (SNK) (5)	7.67	38%
■	8	MAGIC SWORD [H] (Capcom) (6)	7.32	67%
■	9	HIT THE ICE [H] (Williams) (3)	7.23	15%
	10	VIOLENCE FIGHT [H] (Taito) (12)	7.12	17%
■	11	OFF ROAD TRAK PAK [R] (Leland) (10)	7.05	40%
	12	WWF SUPERSTARS [H] (Technos) (20)	7.03	77%
■	13	VS. CYBERBALL [S] (Atari) (3)	7.00	15%
■	14	STRATA BOWLING [V] (Strata) (5)	6.92	8%
■	15	SUPER SPY [S] (SNK) (3)	6.80	27%
■	16	POUND FOR POUND [V] (Irem) (1)	6.71	5%
	17	TETRIS [H] (Atari) (19)	6.70	70%
	18	THUNDER FOX [H] (Taito) (6)	6.70	13%
■	19	BASEBALL STARS [S] (SNK) (5)	6.68	31%
	20	ROADBLASTERS [S] (Atari) (39)	6.61	65%
■	21	HAMMERIN' HARRY [H] (Irem) (2)	6.60	7%
	22	META FOX [V] (I-Vics) (5)	6.50	8%
	23	HYDRA [H] (Atari) (6)	6.46	26%
	24	LIGHTNING FIGHTERS [V] (Konami) (4)	6.38	11%
	25	ARCH RIVALS [H] (Midway) (16)	6.37	75%

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

best new videos

■	1	MAD DOG (del. u/r) (Betson/Icat)
■	2	GP RIDER (u/r+s/d) (Sega)
■	3	F-15 [u/r + s/d] (MicroProse)
■	4	LASER GHOST [s/d u/r] (Sega)
■	5	CISCO HEAT [u/r+s/d] (Jaleco)

■ *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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RePlay magazine

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COVER

On our cover, that's NSM-America President Rus Strahan inside the firm's "Quick-Change Artist" CD changer mech. Rolling up a giant CD is Rus's lovely wife Carol. (When she's not hauling around oversized software, Carol manages the office for NSM's Chicago-based American subsidiary).

The cover art is most appropriate, because NSM believes they've got the industry's very best jukebox technology "under the hood" of their phonograph. The "big plans" at NSM-America these days include redesign of the product line's exteriors for a flashy, more American, look . . . and much more, as you'll learn from our Cover Story, inside.

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EDITORIAL

Parallel video games will be legal for operation on Dec. 1, 1991. The law says so and now the AAMA has officially abandoned any remaining resistance to the importation of product once called "gray" but soon to be lily white. After "P Day," the operator's mailbox, fax machine and telephone will be busy receiving solicitations from parallel distributors listing titles and prices. Some of these companies will be brand new to operators, and many will be located offshore.

Operators are far from stupid when it comes to ordering goods, and just about every one prefers to buy from a known U.S. company. After Dec. 1, it'll be their right to "experiment" with alternate resources, provided they have the sense to ask the pertinent questions: will parallels really be that much cheaper? Will they have all the goodies (like the cabinet header) along with the board if they want them? Will they be backed by service if they glitch (or arrive glitched)? What's the method of payment if the company's located offshore? And most important: will they be real parallels or knockoffs?

The whole point of operator Bill Beckham's drive to legalize gray goods was to get more uniformity in the marketing of video games (kit vs. dedicated) and in prices throughout the global market. A good bit of this has been accomplished (e.g. few if any new videos come out dedicated these days unless there's a big reason for it).

The way the video game industry is going, it doesn't appear that parallels will become a huge thing in the local operator's scheme. Only 42% of street operators express interest in them. No, the larger issue remains the same: price and play appeal. Manufacturers and distributors know this and often try to work within slimmer profit margins these days in an attempt to satisfy operators, get new goods into the field, get the players more active and (for some) simply to stay in business awaiting better times to come.

The ACME show opens March 22 at the Sands Convention Center in Las Vegas. In these recessionary times, it's not a whole lot to expect operators from all corners of the nation to come out there to inspect the new goods on stage shown by factories months before P Day (you'll be impressed with the spread, we think). But even if new product isn't in your mind, surely parallel developments, video poker legislation and the other key issues are, and Vegas is the place to discuss it all right now.

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INSIDE

MARCH 1991

SPECIAL ARTICLES

PARALLEL PEACE PLEDGE

AAMA's new policy of "not fighting parallels" closes the door on five years of operator vs. manufacturer "cold war." But many questions remain about the market impact to follow when this product becomes legal Dec. 1. . . . . pg. 25

ACME ARRIVES

The trade heads to Vegas this month for the annual spring product show. We provide comprehensive coverage — everything from show hours, to exhibit floor plans, to a long "sneak preview" of what you'll see there. . . . . pg. 59

WHERE THE GAMES ARE

Locations carry the major burden of building customer traffic and bringing people to our games. We survey eight major types of locations, from taverns to "pocket parks," with an eye on their health. Overall, they're surprisingly optomistic. . . . . pg. 95

THE OPERATORS SPEAK

We polled the folks whose ratings create our national equipment chart each month, basically asking them "how's business"? The answer: the majority say it's off. But their reasons why, and their thoughts on other trade questions, make fascinating reading. . . . pg. 133

WHAT PRICE VIDPOKER?

Direct as a shotgun blast, our publisher Ed Adlum holds forth with some fundamental thoughts about the industry's hottest buzzword: video poker. (He despises that "video lottery" euphimism, by the way.) Straight talk about the demands — and eventual effects — of poker legalization. . . . . pg. 48

REGULAR FEATURES

BIG TICKET. 130
BONDEAL CHART. 128
BUYERS' BULLETIN. 207
COVER STORY. 167
DATEBOOK 206
FRANK TALK. 122
GRAPEVINE. 202
JAPANESE CHART. 124
LEGAL QUESTIONS. 200
NEWS DIGEST. 13
NEW PRODUCTS. 194
ON YOUR MARK. 23
PINBALL POWER. 182
TECHNICAL TIPS. 174
TOURNAMENT NEWS. 186
VIEWPOINTS 10
VITAL TITLES. 199

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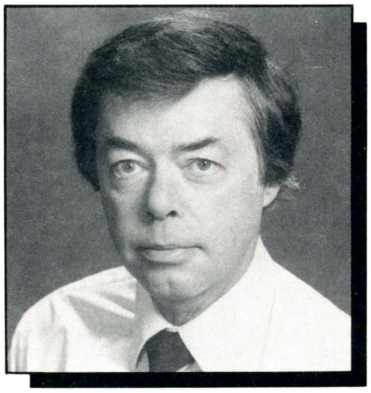

A number of press pundits called the Persian Gulf crisis the "video game war" in reference to the military's use of computer-guided weapons. This gives the rank and file member of the amusement trade a bittersweet taste; like it's fine to see our chief class of product held up in a patriotic way, but not so nice to associate it with real smoke, rubble and human pain (as much as Saddam's egomania has forced the Coalition to respond). Silly to say, but how much better it would have been if Saddam and George fought it out on one of the uprights. All they'd get, after all this time, would be joystick wrist and flat button fingers. We thank one and all in the press for their "compliments," but we didn't invent these games to train people to shoot Patriots or Scuds.

Press linkage of our games with the Gulf War has largely been positive for our side. I remember back when President Ronald Reagan told an audience that today's Space Invaders *players would be tomorrow's pilots. He may have had the wrong game, but his thought was sincere. Now let's just hope press pundits won't dwell on this kind of thing, because all we sell is fun. We are not a "training ground" for combat fliers. And we don't need the thanks of previously anti-video forces who are suddenly our friends, either.*

But there are people within the trade who want to ride the patriotic wave, maybe even naming games after something to do with the war. Whitney Houston's Star Spangled Banner *single is a comer for jukeboxes (a beaut, especially considering the travesties committed by Roseanne Barr and Whoopi Goldberg on our national hymn). Our people have sung their own patriotic songs in varying ways to support the troops (money, sending equipment, other gestures) and in a quiet way . . . the way people have always supported loved ones who stand in front of steel. Some industry activity on the troops' behalf is detailed inside this issue.*

I don't think I have to ask jukebox operators to put Tie a Yellow Ribbon *back onto the jukeboxes; they're ahead of me. I don't have to ask you to read the front pages of the local tabloids before you read* RePlay. *And I don't have to ask for your prayers that this horror show stops. No journalist likes to be scooped, but I'd sure like to learn that my magazine came out **after** the war stopped and I didn't have a story on it "in time." If not now, maybe next issue. See you in Vegas (and wear a yellow ribbon).*

Ed Adlum

Within seconds of being behind RAD MOBILE's wheel, SEGA's new-generation technology sends you rocketing through traffic-clogged cities, skidding over mountain switchbacks, and careening around high-banked turns. You flip on your *headlights* as night falls, and brush aside the torrential rain with RAD MOBILE's *wind-shield wipers*. A quick glance at your rear-view mirror lets you know the status of trailing racers and pursuing troopers.

The moment you climbed behind the RAD MOBILE's wheel you knew that this race across the continent wasn't going to be routine. Not when the thrills were provided by SEGA. And not with the brawny 32-Bit CPU that SEGA engineers have stuffed under the hood.

Thanks to SEGA's advanced "System 32" electronics, RAD MOBILE provides a three-dimensional realism never before possible. Available in deluxe and upright models, the game offers constantly changing scenes through multiple stages of play, exceptional sound effects, and play action that is challenging to all skill levels.

Contact your SEGA distributor for more information, or for an appointment to take RAD MOBILE for a hair raising race cross-country.

SEGA Enterprises, Inc. 2149 Paragon Drive, P.O. Box 610550, San Jose, CA 95161-0550. (408) 435-0201

SEGA

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VIEWPOINTS

GALS PANIC

Dear Ed:

I'd like your readers to know that the use of the phrase "not pornographic" appearing in our February ad was your decision and a totally unnecessary one because our new game *Gals Panic* is in no way pornographic! To put this in the ad seems to have Kaneko apologizing for something there is nothing to apologize for.

We are proud of this two-player interactive action game and have sold over 10,000 units worldwide. It is a proven successful game in very cultured societies like Japan, Germany, France and Italy. I am personally and professionally appalled that you would take this position and not trust me when I told you this was a good game for adult locations, and we made it a good game for most locations with dip switches.

Marty Glazman
President
Kaneko USA, Ltd.
Buffalo Grove, Illinois

[Dear Marty: because I have respected you personally for years, I inserted that wording in your Gals Panic *ad since I wanted readers to know this wasn't some sort of "controversial" item, but a basic fun and skill game for adult sites. I still don't think I hurt this game, though I've deleted those words from the ad should you wish to run it again. I simply didn't want any operator to get the idea this was in any way prurient. I tried to do a favor and ended up making you angry. Guess I should have left well enough alone. Ed]*

PARALLELS SOLVED THE MEDIEVAL WAY

Dear Ed,

I believe I have come up with a way to resolve the parallel issue. If we go back in history to the medieval period, disputes were resolved very simply. Each side appointed a champion to represent him in battle. The surviving warrior was delared the winner and his side won.

My suggestion would be a contest between the champions of AAMA and AMOA meeting in an arena with rows of the 1990 video dogs lined up on each side. Each champion would be given a sledge hammer of equal weight and at a given signal, begin destroying their line of video games.

At the end of one hour, the judges (2 from AAMA and 2 from AMOA) will determine the winner. If they can not, then the contest will continue for another hour and then the four judges will again determine a winner. If they can not, then a fifth impartial judge should be appointed (I would suggest either Wally Bohrer or Bob Fay). After the winner is declared, we should then sit him on a sitdown game and pull him around the arena. As he passes, we'll throw him flowers and proclaim "our industry is saved, the parallel issue is solved." It worked for the Romans, why not us?

See how simple it is to resolve a complex problem? Look at the thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours we would have saved. Then the industry would not have tied up Congress on this issue, even though it is "more important" than such things as the Federal Deficit. On second thought, maybe it was best to present this to Congress because they may have come up with some silly legislation such as: 1. manufacturers cannot sell a kit or game unless it collects a minimum of $250.00 per week for 6 weeks, 2. location share of gross receipts cannot exceed 30%.

If my proposal is accepted and the parallel issue is resolved, then there would be no need to try to implement any of the above proposals even on an individual company basis, as our industry will be saved. I can then come into my office every morning and begin hearing from our customers that their collections are increasing and pretty soon their volume will be so great that we may have to consider equipping our games to accept American Express, Master and Visa cards.

Sincerely,
Norman Goldstein
Monroe Distributing Inc.
President

[Dear Stormin' Norman: your letter came in before AAMA decided to quit fighting the parallel law, so the industry "is saved" without resorting to the fascinating game-bashing contest you prescribed. While your tongue-in-cheek style of prose is well-known (and appreciated) by lots of trade people, the serious sides come through crystal clear (i.e. government involvement), although the idea to cap a 30% lid on location commissions is tasty (hey, Texas has its 50% lid). Enjoyed the letter, particularly since it wasn't one of your periodic subscription cancellations. Ed]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — *If you have something to say, RePlay has a place for you to say it. . . this "Viewpoints" section. Letters should be mailed to RePlay Magazine at P.O. Box 2550, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. While letters signed "Anonymous" are accepted and printed, please send your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Any questions? Call us at: 818/347-3820.*

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NEWS DIGEST

ACME SHOW ORGANIZERS SAY "WE'RE ON A ROLL"

This year's **ACME** takes place March 22-24 in Las Vegas at the new Sands Expo Center. Tradesters will stay at Bally's and other surrounding hotels; Caesar's Palace hosts the annual Charity Banquet. Get complete information on show hours, seminar schedules, exhibit floor layout, etc. in our show section, starting on **page 59.**

VIDPOKER SEMINAR AT ACME

ACME's most crowded seminar may be **"Video Lottery: Outlook for '91."** It's at the Sands Expo Center on Friday, March 22 from 9:15 AM to 11:15. Moderator **Sal Mirando** (president, SMS Mfg.) will conduct discussion among several expert panelists. At presstime, they were expected to include distributor **Steve Lieberman,** lobbyist **Bob Latz** and technical pro **Jim Maida.**

SAL MIRANDO

AMERICAN TECHNOS PLANS RETURN TO CALIFORNIA

Effective April 1, **American Technos** will do business from a new Northern California office. Technos prexy **Ken Iwamoto** noted that "most of our competition is located in the Bay Area," and said the move would bring Technos "closer to the industry's inner circle" where they could keep a sharp eye on the competition. New address and phones are: American Technos, Inc., 19200 Stevens Creek Blvd. #120, Cupertino, CA 95014; phone: 408/996-1877; fax: 408-996-8736.

SNEAK PREVIEW: MANY NEW PRODUCTS TO BOW AT ACME

Lots of new equipment debuts at this month's ACME. **SNK** will bow additional titles for its Neo•Geo system including ***Ghost Pilot, King of the Monsters, Burning Fight, Sengoku,*** and ***Alpha Mission II.*** "We're probably also going to show one or two more!" said the firm's **Susan Jarocki.** SNK will also show its "operator memory card" which translates valuable data from the game to your office computer with ease.

Taito will enter the redemption market in a big way with three games. ***Sonic Blastman*** is a combination video game/novelty with real boxing gloves and a padded target for players to punch (see photo). Taito also has two animal-whackers: ***Rock'n'Mole*** features '50s music, while ***UFO-Mogura*** is sci-fi-themed.

Coin Concepts is bowing three new redemption games: a kiddie skill game called ***Cat 'n' Mouse;*** an electromechanical coin toss game with organ-grinder music and theme called ***Baker's Corner*** (midway version also available); and a bingo-type unit with very large digital display called ***Prize Boxes.***

Merit will show their "five-in-one touchscreen technology" in the *Superstar*

line of video lottery equipment. They'll also have *Pub Time Supreme,* a "Solo Challenger" update program for existing games. New technology is also in the works for Merit's *Pit Boss* countertop video system.

Exidy will have a new "progressive ticket dispenser" (more players means more tickets) on their horserace-pachinko novelty *Camptown Races.*

Not expected to be shown (yet) is the 16-bit arcade system technology that **Nintendo** previewed in London recently, but they will bring out many new PlayChoice games including ***TMN Turtles II, Tetris II, Swordmaster*** and more. A sneak preview of other new products coming to ACME starts on **page 68.**

JUKEBOX MUSIC PROMO SET FOR THIS SPRING

April, May and June will see the jukebox used to highlight four singles (all available on 45) in a **nationwide promotion** called "Jukebox Spring for a Song." Songs on the A and B sides are: *Proof/The Coast* (artist: Paul Simon); *Cry for Help/Behind the Smile* (artist: Rick Astley); *Pocket Full of Gold/A Little Left Over* (artist: Vince Gill); and *Ballad of Davy Crockett/Smooth* (artists: the Kentucky Headhunters). The campaign is jointly underwritten by AMOA and four record labels — Warners, RCA, MCA and PolyGram — and is coordinated among these parties and one-stops by AMOA's music firm liaison **Sam Atchley.** Operators will be able to advertise the songs in their locations with posters, "table tent" brochures and title strips (the latter from Sterling Title Strips). Participating one-stops will furnish these materials at no charge when operators purchase the featured records. For more details, contact your one-stop or AMOA Jukebox Promotion Committee at 312/245-1021.

IAAPA NEW ADDRESS

The International Assn. of Amusement Parks & Attractions relocated as of Feb. 25. Contact them at IAAPA, 1448 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314; 703/836-4800. Fax is 703-836-4801.

cartoon courtesy of
NSM
The Performance Machine

INDUSTRY SALUTES TROOPS: PROMOS, TIE-INS, MUSIC!

With American flags and yellow ribbons popping out all over the country, several coin-op tradesters have jumped aboard the patriotic bandwagon. Machine promotions, redemption merchandise, dollar coin lobbying and even (potentially) jukebox music have been tied into the first "popular" war since WW II.

Atlas Distributing (Pittsburgh) themed a Feb. 23 charity fundraiser around supporting the troops; money from a tourney on 10 Williams' *Fun House* pins was donated to soldiers' families via the American Red Cross. Atlas' cosponsors included Canonsburg Amusement Co., Cameron Coca-Cola Bottlers & radio station WDVE-FM. . . AAMA says new **dollar coin** legislation may jettison the proposed Columbus design (sorry, Chris) in favor of one saluting Our Boys Overseas. . . **Star Track, Inc.** is working overtime to supply Desert Storm-themed

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This show of support for our troops in the Persian Gulf comes from a Dayton, Ohio collection report.

redemption merchandise from t-shirts to mugs and cigarette lighters. Some proceeds will go to the Pentagon's armed forces support group. Call 800/733-5013. . . **Whitney Houston's** stirring Super Bowl rendition of the National Anthem has turned into a hit. The 45's flip side is "America the Beautiful," says **Terry Hopple** of Music Operators Service. Put it on your jukebox if you haven't already!

MEDIA LINKS VIDGAMES TO WAR

The coin-op industry has garnered both good and bad publicity from its perceived connection to the Gulf War. One report broadcast on the CNN worldwide television network showed a video arcade and described *Operation Wolf* as "inspired by the Persian Gulf conflict." Fine, except that game debuted in 1987, a few years before the war even started. The impression left was that our industry was trying to rake in profits by exploiting suffering and death overseas. Not true! If anything, the war briefly reduced earnings in certain locations (see related story in this section).

Other media mentions of our industry have been "gray," neither good nor bad for us. Because U.S. forces are employing hi-tech weapons that use lasers, TV cameras, etc., many journalists and commentators are reminded of video games. . . and the Fourth Estate hasn't been shy about making the comparison. "America is fighting a hi-tech, video game war where faceless pilots push buttons and blow up buildings," was one U.S. correspondent's typical comment. On the other hand, quite a few reporters have asserted: "The Gulf War is not a video game! People are actually dying."

Happily, we're not experiencing a wholesale return to the game-bashing days of old. Some publicity arising from the war has actually been good. For instance, the *New York Post* carried a Jan. 24 column by Charles Carillo explaining how a war-stressed public could find relaxation by playing video games.

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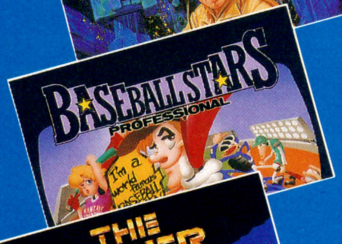

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A'S HOLD FRIENDLIER SUMMIT

With the anouncement that AAMA will no longer attempt to fight the new law legalizing parallel boards (that goes into effect Dec. 1), reps from this manufacturer/distributor association sat down with counterparts from the AMOA operator group Jan. 31 to discuss common concerns. The bigger concern is the drive for a new dollar coin. With a new Congress in place, a lot of start-from-scratch work has to be done (getting co-sponsors, etc.). These senators and congressmen will be lobbied at separate association meetings in DC this May (they may hold joint meetings once again in the future).

The association reps talked about video lottery (AAMA is behind AMOA's drive for state legalization), about location trade shows (jointly sponsored they'll have nine this year) and about pro-cigarette activities (AAMA took a pass on this in Ft. Lauderdale). Still in all, it's nice to see the spectre of a true "detente" rebuilding between the two national associations. Would be grand to see more AMOA people at AAMA's Las Vegas show later this month to cement that. See **page 34.**

FACTORY/DEALER GATHERING

AAMA held its most recent board meeting in Florida, issued a press release backing off the parallel fight completely, and went onto lots of other business. They say they have FCC and ARL technicals under control, are about to issue their third anti child-abuse poster (this one featuring **Nolan Ryan** and his family) and reviewed progress of their ACME show (looking for a booth count that could actually be bigger than at AMOA's Expo in New Orleans last year).

Prexy **Gil Pollock** announced that he will not run for re-election, and a bylaw change now enables distributors & suppliers to dominate their board if May elections run in that direction. They are verbally supporting poker legalization, saying that AMOA and the state operator associations have the point. For more details, see **page 30.**

ROWE ROUTE SALE TO HOUSTON MAN MAKES HIM LARGEST U.S. STREET OP

Last November, TW Holdings (parent of the Canteen Corp.) sold its entire Rowe division to a Houston oil man name of **Terry Davis.** (For newcomers, the Rowe routes have nothing to do with Rowe International; more on this later.) With street routes offering music, games, cigarette, snack and candy vending in a dozen states at least, the combined assets and number of locations purchased make Davis the nation's largest street operator today. (They have routes in Texas, California, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, DC, Virginia, Michigan, Ohio and Colorado.)

Executive control is moving to Davis' Houston headquarters; the Paramus, N.J. office is closing up but veteran Sr. Chairman **Mel Grossberg** remains aboard. All routes will retain their current names (and machine nameplates), according to Grossberg (e.g. B&B Vending in Texas, Oakland Cigarette Service in the Bay Area, Rowe Services in Southern California). More than 300 people are employed by this mega-route.

MEL GROSSBERG

Grossberg said Davis is a foreward-looking exec intent on growing the company. Mel himself will work out of his house after the Paramus office completely shuts down this April. He is one of the deans of the U.S. operating industry and likes the development. He also explained a bit of the background: the original Rowe was founded back in 1926 as both a manufacturer and route operation. They sold out to Canteen in 1955. In 1968, Canteen sold the manufacturing division to Triangle, keeping the routes. Canteen itself eventually became part of TW Holding which sold the Rowe Division routes to Davis this November. Hi, Terry!

CAPCOM BOWS *STREET FIGHTER II*, HINTS AT 3D COMING ON CPS

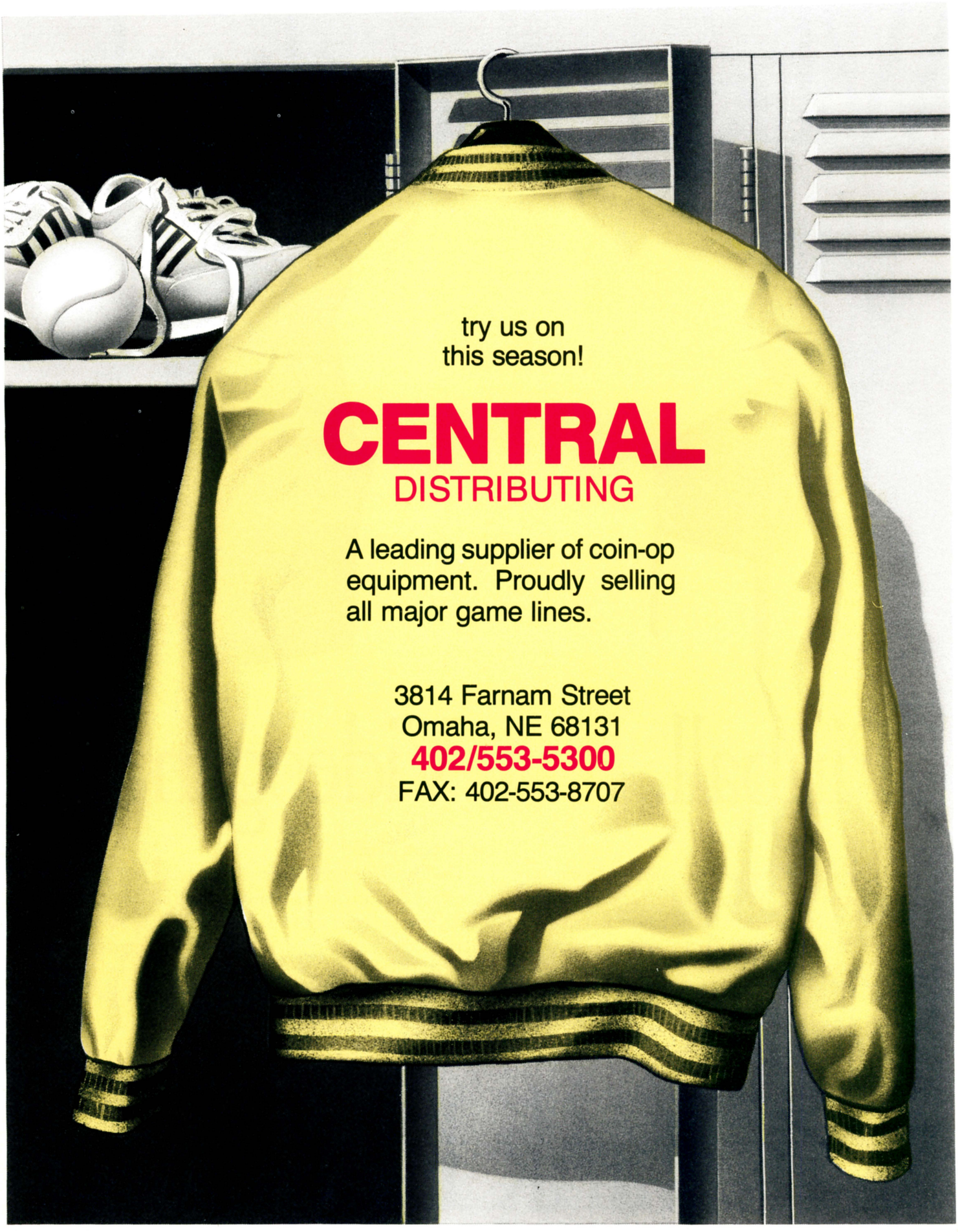
If it's kick & punch you want **Capcom** showed a dandy at their recent dealer meeting. Called ***Street Fighter II,*** it's also been termed by them as the company's "greatest video ever." Maybe, but **Jeff Walker** also broadly hinted that 3D sound and actual 3D vision will be coming to their CPS system, and maybe even in 1991.

Unconfirmed reports say Capcom is dealing with Archer Electronics for the latter's 3D sound concept. Regarding vision, the rumor mill says Capcom is huddling with a licensor who rep's people that have actually developed a way to show 3D visuals without glasses. But, this last thing sounds like you're talking quite a few months from now, probably not until 1992. See more on Capcom's meeting on **page 54.**

DESERT STORM GAMES SEEN ON TEST; MAY NOT REACH MARKET

RePlay has learned that a prototype of a video game called *Operation Desert Storm* was being tested at presstime by a major Japanese video firm. The firm has a full-fledged subsidiary in Northern California; it's a company you all know. Some public reaction at the mall where the test occurred was "not exactly positive," we hear. Elsewhere in the country, a pinball game of the same title was being location-tested. In a third related development, a major American video factory has applied to trademark the name *Operation Desert Storm* for a coin-op game.

All of this could be moot... or confirmed as a definite intention for marketed goods... by the time of the ACME show. Quite possibly neither firm will actually end up using the name *Desert Storm.* Public reaction may be the deciding factor. "We've been getting calls from the *Today Show* trying to build a story to the effect that the video game industry is already profiting from the war," said one video manufacturer. "They were trying to prove that cashbox earnings of combat-themed games have increased since Desert Storm began. *Today* has apparently dropped plans for that story," the manufacturer continued, "but we're not sure we want to add to the controversy by calling a game *Desert Storm* and giving the mainstream press any more ammunition."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LEPRECHAUN'S OFF & RUNNING WITH *BOWL-A-RAMA* RETRO KIT

Now, what's this all about? **Bill Cravens,** owner of the new Leprechaun Games, officially debuted the brand new *Bowl-A-Rama* enhancement kit from the Pellegrini Group to distributors in Ft. Lauderdale Feb. 1. It retrofits the *Capcom Bowling* game to offer flash bowling and a 21-type thing, but the new cabinet header wasn't ready when Billy boy showed it off. Hence, dealers **Johnny Gatens** (Southgate), **Glenn Charney** (Lieberman) and **Bob LeBlanc** (Rowe-Dedham) masked off the old header "just so you ain't confused!"

The games offered by the new kit, however, are anything but confusing. Flash bowling speaks for itself (value numbers dance left and right as you spin your track ball) and the 21 game is even more solid. Idea is to build to a score of 21 with three spins of the ball (a single pin counts for either one or 11, the game works it out). If you go over 21 points, you bust in that frame. Important: even though the game is 21, it's a game unto itself which doesn't require the "gaming element."

The enhancement kit is inexpensive since it's basically a piggyback retro plug-on, but Cravens said it has often doubled collections on *Capcom Bowling* which reportedly count over 12,000 in the field right now. Advanced dealer orders placed in Ft. Lauderdale were impressive, marking a great start for Cravens's new company.

PIONEER RECALLS VID JUKES: IMPROVED VERSION LIKELY TO COME

One of the most unprecedented decisions ever taken by a coin-op manufacturer popped early February when **Pioneer Laser Entertainment** issued a voluntary recall of every LJ-V66 laser video jukebox in the field, including those in distributor inventories as well as those sold to operators. Citing their belief that the machine carries too narrow a selection of songs, plus incompatibility with Pioneer video laser disc technology coming downstream, the factory will issue full credit on all goods sold to distribs and actually double the cost of freighting everything back to their Carson, Calif. plant.

They will not only issue full purchase credit to distributors for machines, plus software, monitors, stands, service kits and spare laser disc players now in their showrooms, but have asked their distributors to offer repurchase (for credit) of goods sold to operators. Monthly production of the disc software will be discontinued as soon as possible and all parts and warranty support will discontinue just after the first week of April.

The machine and its software program were introduced to Pioneer's coin-op distributors in Long Beach, Calif. last August. Being in the forefront of laser disc video hardware and software production, it was a natural extention of their coin-op scope after introducing their CD jukebox (which remains on sale, in production, and not affected at all by the laser disc machine's recall). What happened to the videobox?

Wrote Pioneer Laser prexy **Ted Karasawa** to his dealers: "Although the concept of (coin-op) video music is a good one, the approach of our current product may not be the one that best exemplifies it. We realize now that the machine does not offer a large enough song selection . . . that video music when applied to a jukebox format will require a product that can handle more selections from a larger variety of different song titles." Then in a broad hint at Japanese R&D movements, Karasawa said the LJ-V66 will be "incompatible with the advanced software and hardware Pioneer has planned for the future. Pioneer firmly believes that the future trend of the jukebox industry will incorporate the concept of video music combined with the technology of laser disc software and hardware. The knowledge we have gained from operators and distributors in our efforts to market the LJ-V66 has led us to take the recall action," he added.

RePlay has learned that some technical difficulties with the unit's slider motor may have played a part in the recall decision. Apparently, the machine has so many moves to make on the player (from song selection to the attract mode and eventually to the advertising mode), that the thousands of moves required simply put too much stress on the rig (like asking a 150 lb. man to carry 300 lbs. of weight). This is a gutsy move and clearly will buoy the company's credibility. As stated, they will also cease production of software discs (and even though it's now a moot point, they never made a deal to sell operators of the Videobox Networks laser video jukebox their software as reported in last month's issue).

START OF WAR CAUSED BRIEF COIN MACHINE EARNINGS DIP

Due to national attention to the war, a short-term but serious drop in machine earnings was reported in certain classes of locations for the middle of January. "Customers in many taverns were glued to the TV set, watching CNN coverage of the war," said **David Peck** (Family Amusement Corp., Los Angeles). Said another operator: "Suddenly everybody was ordering take-home pizzas instead of spending time in pizzerias, and coin machine earnings suffered drastically. One of my normally best-earning jukeboxes in a Round Table Pizza restaurant took in just $5 in two weeks."

Other types of locations (notably bowling centers, movie theaters and arcades) said they felt little or no negative effects from the war. And some street operators said business was down, but only by the typical seasonal amount. By now it's expected that customer traffic (and spending) patterns are probably back to normal. After all, even the bomb-dodging populations of Baghdad and Tel Aviv have largely returned to business as usual.

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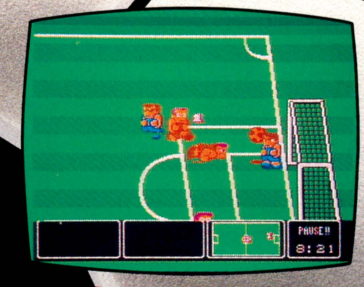

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On Your Mark...

by Marcus Webb

Some of coin-op's most thoughtful and responsible folks believe our down-cycle is ending and things will be looking up — way up — very soon. As evidence, they cite some games that are currently testing, some new technologies which will arrive this spring, and the industry's own past history. All three indicators point the same way: up!

Ron Malinowski (Aladdin's Castle arcades) is testing Konami's new *Simpsons* video and says it looks very promising. "Product and earnings will both improve after Easter," Ron affirms. "We're expecting a strong spring and summer."

Tom Petit of Sega USA says video runs in cycles (roughly five years of growth, then two "fallow" years of regrouping). It was April 1989 when Tom confirmed we were in a "soft market" due to "complacency about the application of new technology." By Tom's own timetable, we're nearly due for an upswing. . . and he says Sega is ready to help spur the revival. In 1991, he said, "specifically from Sega, you will see a new trend of technology that will be instrumental" in leading coin-op to its next growth phase. We believe him!

Midwestern distributor Bob Rothman tracks earnings carefully on his computer. He says the current cycle "appears to be following almost precisely what happened in the earlier video bust. The numbers are so close, month by month, it's almost eerie. If the trend continues to repeat our last cycle, that's good news: it means we're about to come out of the trough and start heading up again. Last time, some 18 months after revenues began to decline in our region, they had rebounded to 80% of their peak. Obviously today some factors are different, but I think we may be about ready to start climbing. One thing I'm sure of, recovery will come."

Then there's new technology. We've been talking about it on these pages (mostly wishful thinking) for a couple of years. But we now have it from at least three well-connected, reliable sources that a well-known video game license broker has a deal in the works to bring authentic 3D vision to coin-op (no glasses needed). The technology was reportedly demonstrated at the Consumer Electronics Show, and it's impressive. At presstime, the broker was reportedly ready to strike a deal with one of the largest Japanese video game developers, a very well-known industry firm. Want more details? Ask us at ACME! (For other coming hi-tech developments, see our story "Technology Watch" in this issue, and the story on Arachnid's new dart game.)

Of course, even the greatest new technology will not, by itself, solve all of this industry's problems. We're still facing a recession; a play-price structure that's old enough to vote; and a perceptible social trend toward "cocooning" (staying home for entertainment with loved ones instead of going out). But some vital ingredients needed to jump-start our next growth phase are in the air.

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PARALLEL FIGHT'S OVER!

AAMA suspends efforts to combat parallel legalization united with operators on other national concerns

In one dramatic stroke, the AAMA Board of Directors put an end to the long fight over parallel PC boards by voting to abandon any remaining efforts to overturn the recently-passed federal law which legalizes the public performance of "certain" gray market video goods beginning Dec. 1. . . now known as "P Day."

In its brief but historic 3-paragraph press release issued on Feb. 4, the manufacturer/distributor association announced the cessation of any attempts to get Congress to "change its mind". . . effectively opening the door wide to the use of parallels on American routes and arcades (provided the copyright owner of the game program also owns appropriate rights to all the music, characters and artwork used on that game).

AAMA's press release speaks for itself (see cut). But its use of the word "certain" bears explanation since the new law exempts games like Konami's *TMNT* and Sega's *Moonwalker* because their game developers licensed music, characters and/or artwork from outside creators. It is hoped that video manufacturers will be placing notices in their product brochures and advertising after P Day whenever a game falls into this category.

But it's clear that parallel versions of many "standard" video games will be legal for operation once the law goes into effect. That law stands to be reviewed by Congress four years afterward. There are some fascinating questions regarding the impact of all this on the U.S. market:

- How many authentic new or used parallel boards will actually reach these shores after P Day? Obviously, the Japanese developers (some of whom are operators) have the ability to curtail or even deny access to much of this product by suspected parallel broker/dealers if they want to, in order to protect their American subsidiaries and distributors. Simply by saying "no" to obvious parallel dealers or by questioning a "suddenly larger" order by a distributor in the Orient or in Europe, they can exercise enormous control over the amount of parallels heading to America.
- How many (if any) "established" American distributors will begin to handle the product? While conventional wisdom says they'll stay in the mainstream of marketing as they know it, one never knows how this new "legal animal in the forest" may be handled downstream.
- What will happen to game prices? Parallels are viewed as cheaper by American operators. Will the market, suffused by a possible rash of used American operator-owned boards, be glutted whereby parallels become just one more piece of dust in the wind? How about "regular kit" prices?

AAMA Makes "Gray Market" Decision

Recently, the U.S. Congress passed legislation concerning the public performance of certain gray market video games. This legislation is due to take effect on December 1, 1991.

In response to this congressional action, the AAMA Board of Directors has voted to accept the action of the U.S. Congress and to suspend all efforts to overturn the law.

AAMA President Gil Pollock summed up this issue by stating, "We feel that there are more important national issues, like the dollar coin, that need our attention and the coordinated efforts of the entire industry. I hope that this action will put the 'gray market' issue behind us once and for all."

• And the granddaddy of all questions: will legalization open the doors to "sleazeballs" who may attempt to sell conterfeit boards masking as parallels?

Conventional wisdom says the actual percentage of legal parallel games sold after P Day will be very small in a market that will be dominated then by "regular authorized kits", improved dedicated attractions which "must" be dedicated by their natures, and by a newish domestic market called "used American operator boards." So, is this best described as "much ado about nothing"? Hardly, because it has already had a profound impact on the nature of the coin-op video game industry here.

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TIP TOE THROUGH HISTORY

As most video game operators know, the whole parallel fight began on a completely different plane . . . on the argument that said "the rest of the world can buy our dedicated games as kits and we're getting it in the shorts on the price." Personified by Ohio operator Bill Beckham, this issue went from the trade papers to the courts and all the way to Congress before parallels were legalized.

Oddly, it was never Beckham's intention to legalize parallels but that's what he, backed up by private operators and by the AMOA itself, ended up doing. How about Beckham's original wish for "fair play" (i.e. kits and comparable prices all around the world)?

The reality of today's American video game market is crystal clear: few if any new video games will be brought out dedicated unless the nature of the cabinet or some other obvious reason commands it. *High Impact* is an obvious example of a strong game that would have been dedicated in years past, but was brought forth as a kit (although some dedicated versions were available to those operators who have wanted them that way).

No, the majority of the videos throughout the world are now marketed in software format and since that's what Beckham always wanted, he gets the "green balloon." Note: Konami's *Simpsons* 4-player video will come in dedicated form both here and in many overseas markets; their American subsidiary has requested that the game be dedicated in Japan as well.

AMOA'S TRUCANO PLEASED

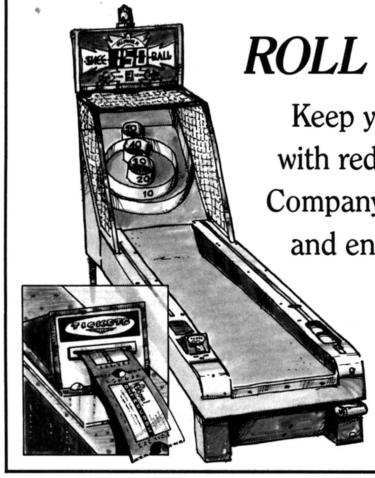
History will score this as a victory for both Beckham and for the AMOA, both of whom fought for legalization of parallel boards. Reached for comment, AMOA's President Jim Trucano stated:

"I'm profoundly pleased that this argument is finished, that operators will be able to buy and use this product if they wish, and more so that everyone on every level of our industry can now go forward in real friendship and tackle some of the other issues on our table."

Trucano was quick to add his and AMOA's condemnation of counterfeit video boards, saying that operators are "wise to this cancer of our industry and will shun it like the plague if anybody knocks on their doors trying to sell this stuff by calling it parallel product."

If the sleaze factor attempts to mask copy games as parallels, they will have AMOA as well as AAMA to contend with this time around, not that AMOA ever condoned the use of such product beforehand and clearly not because they intend getting into any sort of law enforcement process. Their condemnation alone is powerful medicine to fight this disease.

Counterfeit product is still here, but in very small amounts. Thanks largely to AAMA's enforcement activities during the latter part of the '80s, counterfeits (often called "copy games" or "knockoffs") have pretty much disappeared from the domestic market and even from the Canadian market where they were



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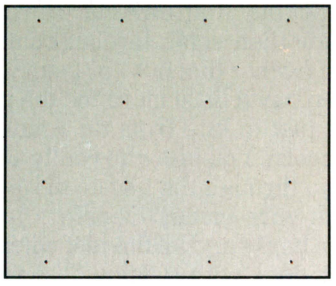

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— Jim Trucano

once quasi-legal. Korea, once the "capital" of the knockoff game, has its own copyright laws now, so everyone wonders if the practice even has the ability to reappear with any strength. Many worry anyway.

BILL BECKHAM

There was no grandstanding here. When Bill Beckham heard the news that AAMA had dropped its fight on parallels, he thought real hard before he made a press statement:

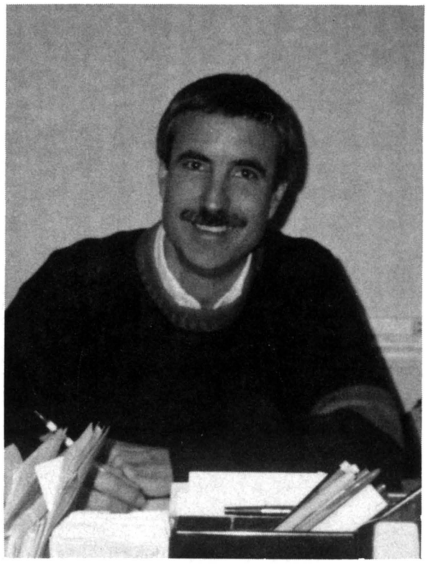
"You know, I hope they (the video manufacturers) really give this a chance to work because I believe it will work out for the best for everyone. I don't think that counterfeits will become a problem at all. Operators are smart enough to know what they're getting and who they buy from and there are laws around the world now that didn't exist in the old days. No, I don't think counterfeits will be a big problem."

Beckham believes that most parallel product will come into the States in used form rather than new once the law goes into effect. "And I'll tell you another thing. I think this will force prices around the world to get more uniform, everything will become a lot fairer and the industry will improve as a result.

"And do you want to know something really important? I'll bet that 100% of American operators would rather buy from an American distributor than some foreign company and further that 80% of them would even pay a little more for the product just to buy from an American concern. I mean, who really wants to go through the hassle of dealing with wire money transfers to foreign banks and all the rest when you can deal with a known company right here?" he declared.

THE FUTURE

Many will score this as a victory for Beckham and AMOA for their fight to legalize parallel boards. But how many will praise AAMA for having the common sense to call it a day even though several members continue to bridle, feeling they never had an adaquate chance to present their side to Congress before the amendment was passed? For



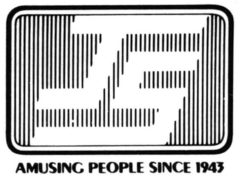
"...I hope they (video manufacturers) really give this a chance to work because I believe it will work out for the best for everyone."

— Bill Beckham

AMOA's part, some residual resentment also remains regarding their belief that AAMA "broke its promise" not to lobby against parallel legalization during the joint association lobbying trip to Washington in 1990.

AAMA people will not say this publicly, but it's clear they hated being at loggerheads with operators who, after all, are their ultimate customers. They also quite rightly felt that other common interests (e.g. getting the congressional ball rolling again toward a new dollar coin and playing their part in the patch-quilt agenda pushing for legal video lottery) command their cooperation with AMOA's people far more than this "mountain made from a molehill" (as one pundit put it).

AMOA's "price" for its victory will clearly be to continually warn its members against the danger of the counterfeit peddler. Beckham doesn't think too many of them will show up. We at *RePlay* do. We also fully expect the two national associations to recapture their business friendship now that this thorn has been removed from the industry's paw and get together to pull our industrial wagon back onto the speedway.



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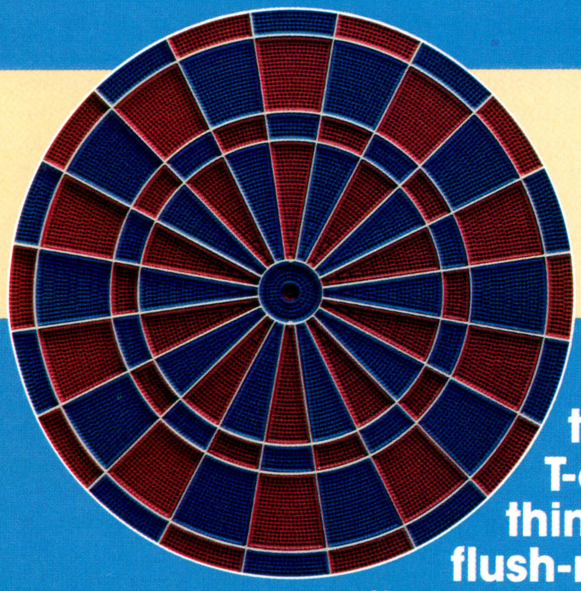

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AAMA ACTION

busy board agenda addressed by those who make and sell the games

The American Amusement Machine Assn. held it Board of Directors meeting Feb. 1 at the Marriott Harbor Beach Resort in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. one day after some previous "summitry" with AMOA reps in the same hotel. The big news at both was AAMA's decision to cancel any efforts to fight the new parallel board law. But the latter's own meeting made news as well.

AAMA is super-active today. Boasting a 87-member roster (with a couple of additional applicants under review), they represent the interests of machine manufacturers, distributors and quite a few service suppliers. They have irons in many fires and it was remarkable they could cover them all in one day's time. We'll try to cover them in one story.

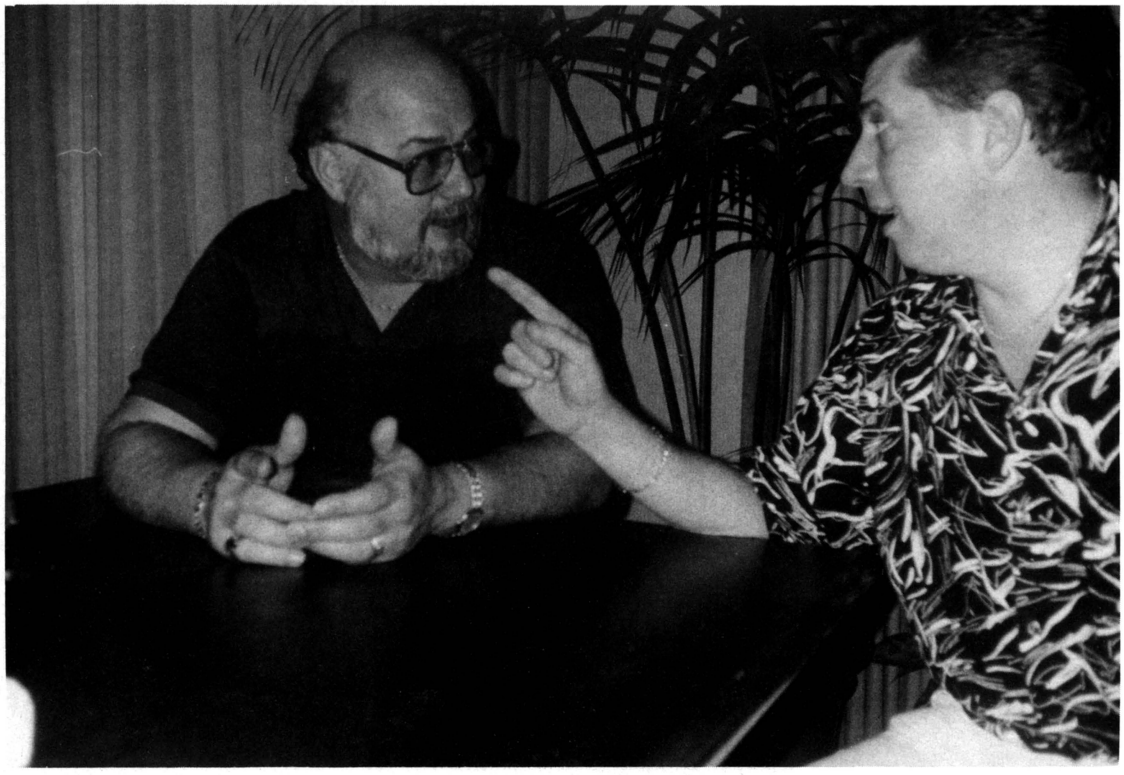
Foremost on AAMA's agenda was their upcoming ACME show in Las Vegas (which they own in partnership with *Play Meter Magazine).* President Gil Pollock and expo chief Bill Cravens happily told the other directors that exibit space already sold for the March 22-24 outing at the Sands Convention Center was not only bigger than at last year's ACME but could conceivably top AMOA's 700 + booths at the latter's New Orleans Expo.

They only began sending advance registration blanks to operators some weeks beforehand, so there was no accurate reading on how well attendance will run at the ACME. But Pollock is quite confident that attendance will be high: "Speaking generally, the last quarter of 1990 wasn't exactly strong in good new equipment brought to market," he said. "Therefore, it's logical that many operators will be looking for new things and I know that good, new products will make their debut at ACME," he added.

In addition, Pollock is pleased that Sal Mirando (SMS) will chair a panel of experts at their video lottery seminar. "Powerful seminars and good products are strong reasons for operators to visit the Sands, and I expect many of them will," the AAMA chief stated.

There weren't any elections at this board meet since this process will be conducted at their full membership conference in Washington this May. Pollock will not run for reelection, opening the field for some other possible candidates (one of whom, present at the meeting), is considered the likely front-runner).

AAMA also made a change in its bylaws in Ft. Lauderdale, which takes all constraints off the complexion of its boards. Previously, the board had to have nine manufacturers and five distributors. Under the new bylaw, there are no such



AAMA heavyweights Gil Pollock (right) and Bill Cravens discuss facts and figures on their upcoming ACME show during the board meeting in Ft. Lauderdale. Pollock told the directors he will not run for AAMA's presidency in May and now the name of his successor is being whispered all over the place.

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parameters, making it theoretically possible for the entire directorate to be composed of non-manufacturers. Along with the new slate of officers for the coming year, their new board members will also be elected in D.C.

This May meeting will afford AAMA members the chance to lobby congressmen and senators on the various items of interest to them. With the parallel issue put to bed, there will be no "pushing and shoving" with operators as at some past lobbying trips (it's impossible anyway, since AMOA's lobbying junket will be held at a different time).

Pollock said the drive to get a new dollar coin is the most obvious "common interest" issue between his group and the AMOA operators. He urges all trade people to participate in their respective association lobbying efforts. "We have a new congress so we have to sign up those cosponsors all over again and get some new ones," he advised.

FCC AND ARL

On the technical side, all video game members have been advised of FCC requirements from A to Z and Pollock said it's up to each of them to comply. AAMA has also contracted with Applied Research Laboratories in Miami to develop test procedures on safety standards, and that ARL's lab (for approval or rejection) is now available to members and non-members alike (but at different rates).

ARL operates like UL. They test samples of new machines at their Miami lab and if they find them up to snuff safety-wise, they issue stickers the manufacturers can place on their cabinets. Most municipalities have electrical codes, and even though few players have ever suffered from shocks or fires resulting from malfunctioning machines, Bob Fay believes it's sensible for coin machine factories to have approval stickers on their equipment. For more information on this, contact the AAMA at 703/494-2758.

By the way, certain "problems" that came up in Chicago and in Los Angeles in this technical realm have been "all worked out and it's all under control," Pollock advised.

SHOWMEN

Besides their big ACME event, AAMA participates in quite a few other machine exhibitions each year. This year, for example, they'll promote the industry at nine different "location trade shows" jointly with AMOA (some of these have already been held).

After their first equipment show in Mexico City last year, they've scheduled a follow-up to be held July 24-25 at the Maria Isabella Sheraton in the same city. This time, non-members will be able to participate as well (at a cost of $2,200; AAMA members will pay less). Called the Latin American Amusement, Music & Games Expo, it might be a good idea for all companies interested in the growing Mexican market to participate. Call Bob Fay at the association for particulars.

INDUSTRY PROMOTION

AAMA has done the industry (and the citizens) a lot of good with its anti-drug campaign (personified by the Winners Don't Use Drugs message shown on so many video monitors these days). But one of their best efforts in meeting a social issue has been their anti-child abuse program.

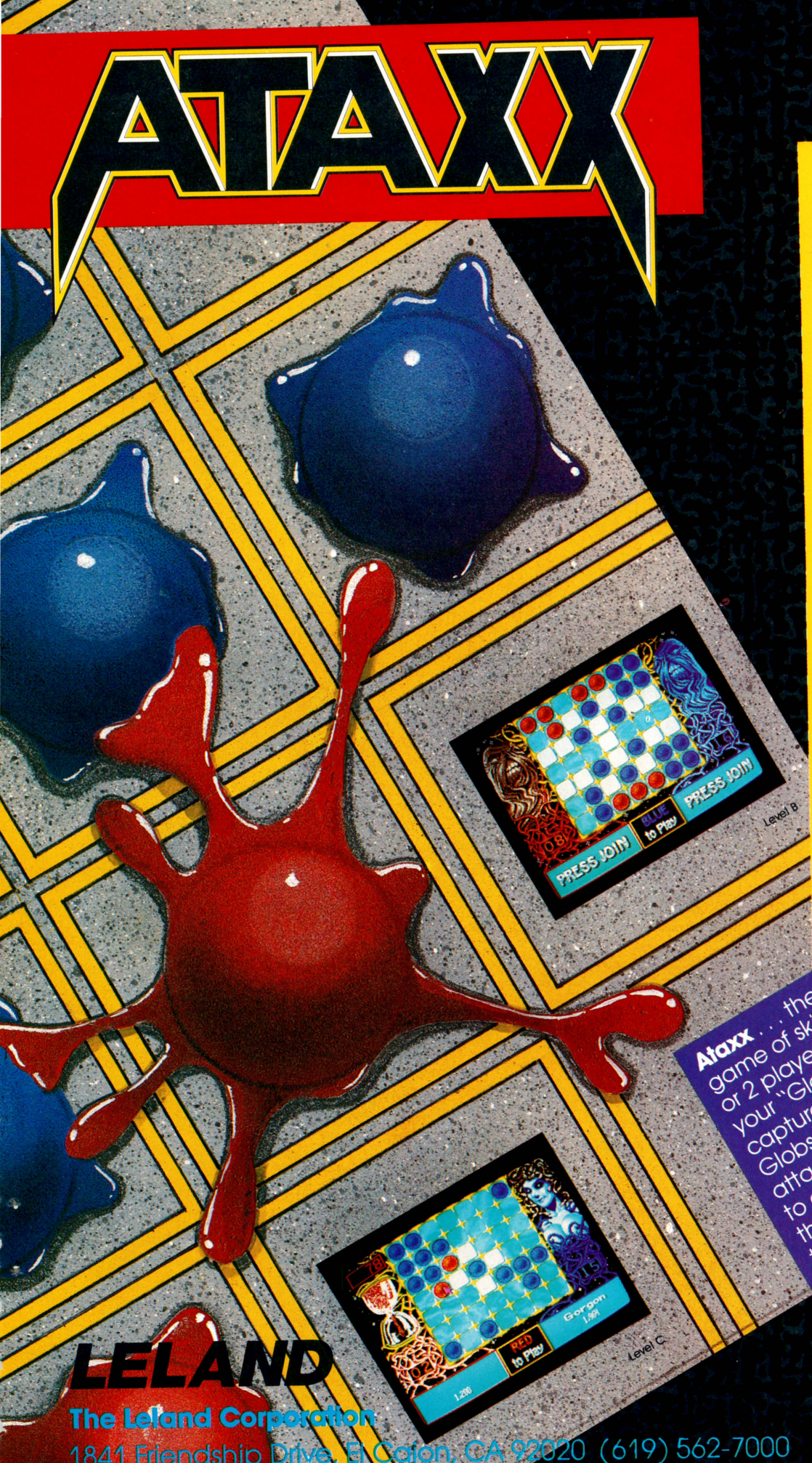
Simple but effective (although not exactly inexpensive), AAMA's program is to take a professional photo of a famous person backdropped by coin machines, make a poster with anti-child abuse wording and distribute it to libraries, schools, boys clubs, etc. via the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

This year's poster photo has already been taken of Nolan Ryan and his family and shows Ryan with one of his sons playing *Air Hockey* (a NSM jukebox is also shown) while Ryan's wife and their other children cheer them on. They expect to print 20,000 of this poster; operators can obtain some by contacting the AAMA office in D.C.

"The child abuse poster is one of the most successful PR programs this industry runs," said Bill Cravens. "We've done Madden, the Savage boy and now we have Ryan. Every one of them jumped at the chance to make a statement against child abuse. This thing works," he added.

Lunch midday at the Marriott featured Florida Congressman Clay shaw who discussed matters affecting small businesses. It was well received. AAMA's agenda of activities on behalf of the coin industry should also be well received by the trade. This is an action group!

ATAXX



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ASSOCIATION SUMMIT MEET

AMOA & AAMA heavies convene in Florida; discuss common goals at friendly sitdown

Spirits were upbeat as representatives of the two national associations gathered at the Marriot Harbor Beach resort in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Jan. 31 for one of their periodic "summit meetings." With AAMA advising the AMOA people of its decision to drop any efforts to turn the parallel board law around, the atmosphere was as shiny inside the conference room as it was outside the window.

With this quarrel between the operator group and the manufacturer/distributor people put to bed, the reps were able to go forward on a variety of common interests. Indeed, the only big legislative issue where they bunked heads was over cigarette vending (AAMA decided not to take a "supportive role" in any pro-cigarette activities endorsed by the AMOA). If there was any further negative side to the meeting, it was AMOA's refusal to combine the two upcoming spring lobbying meetings in Washington D.C. Both organizations will hold separate junkets as scheduled, but the future could be different with joint meetings held as in past years.

The Ft. Lauderdale agenda was mostly positive with such issues as the dollar coin, video lottery, location trade shows and game play-promotion on the table. AMOA was represented by Jim Trucano, Wally Bohrer, Gene Urso, Craig Johnson, R.A. Green and John Schumacher; AAMA by Gil Pollock, Al Stone, Bill Rickett, Steve Kaufman, Bill Cravens and Bob Fay. Administrative supporters April Sojka (AMOA) and Joyce Weller (AAMA) kept the minutes, and the meeting moving along.

DOLLAR COIN

The two associations have always agreed on the industry's need for a new dollar coin. The trouble is, there's a new Congress. But while all the work done with the past Congress is not exactly "in the basket," a lot of "battery recharging" has to be done.

At this writing, neither the House nor the Senate has been presented with a bill to create such a coin. However, both bills are expected to be dropped into the respective hoppers by their former sponsors Sen. Pete Domenici (NM) and Rep. Jim Kolbe (AZ), possibly by the time this article is being read. Now, both associations have to amass all the needed co-sponsors from both branches of Congress all over again (although many who supported last year's legislation were reelected.)

Interestingly, there's now a move to honor war veterans on the proposed coin rather than Christopher Colombus (the previous subject suggested.) Perhaps with the Persian Gulf war in everyone's mind, congressmen will have an extra emotional reason to support creation of a new dollar coin this time around. We shall see.

PLAY PROMOTION

A new idea hatched at this summit and a committee of reps from both groups was formed to tackle the most important (but most elusive) common goal of all: increasing machine play. Composed of Frank Ballouz, Gil Pollock, John Schumacher, Jim Trucano and Bob Fay, the committee was thinking of meeting sometime before the ACME and "brainstorming" ideas toward pushing the good citizens to the machines with more coins (and bills) in hand. Good luck (and we mean this) to all.

VIDEO LOTTERY

AMOA has taken a very active role in helping various state operator associations toward gaining passage of video gaming legislation. AAMA supports the whole idea (provided, like AMOA, that the coin operator gets a role in the program.) But while AMOA has budgeted association funds toward this goal, AAMA's role is largely one of "conceptual assistance" (e.g. their Bob Fay has personally spoken at a num-

22 worlds to Apocalypse and nothing but green in between.

They're big. They're green. They're powerful. They're the bucks you'll earn with **STRIKEFORCE**, the newest video from Midway Manufacturing Company. They're also a race of giant Saurian lizard-men who have overrun the New Earth Solar System colonies. Human captives on all 22 planets are being "mutated" into reptiles for slave labor from an invasion launched from the Saurian Mega-Star, Apocalypse. Ground-Based Marine Infantry utilizing a full arsenal of the latest jetpacks and most lethal weaponry, and Aerial Jet Fighters equipped with the best combat artillery ever created are being sent in. **STRIKEFORCE** has one mission: to free the colonies and destroy Apocalypse.

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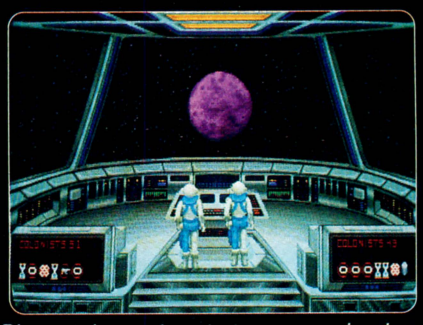
Players decide which planets to attack, which weapons to use, when to purchase additional firepower for their arsenal . . . and ultimately, when to attack Apocalypse! That's why **STRIKEFORCE** has all the earnings power of a direct hit: It's a game with a solid storyline created for street locations and arcade players everywhere. **STRIKEFORCE** delivers profits that will be anything but alien!



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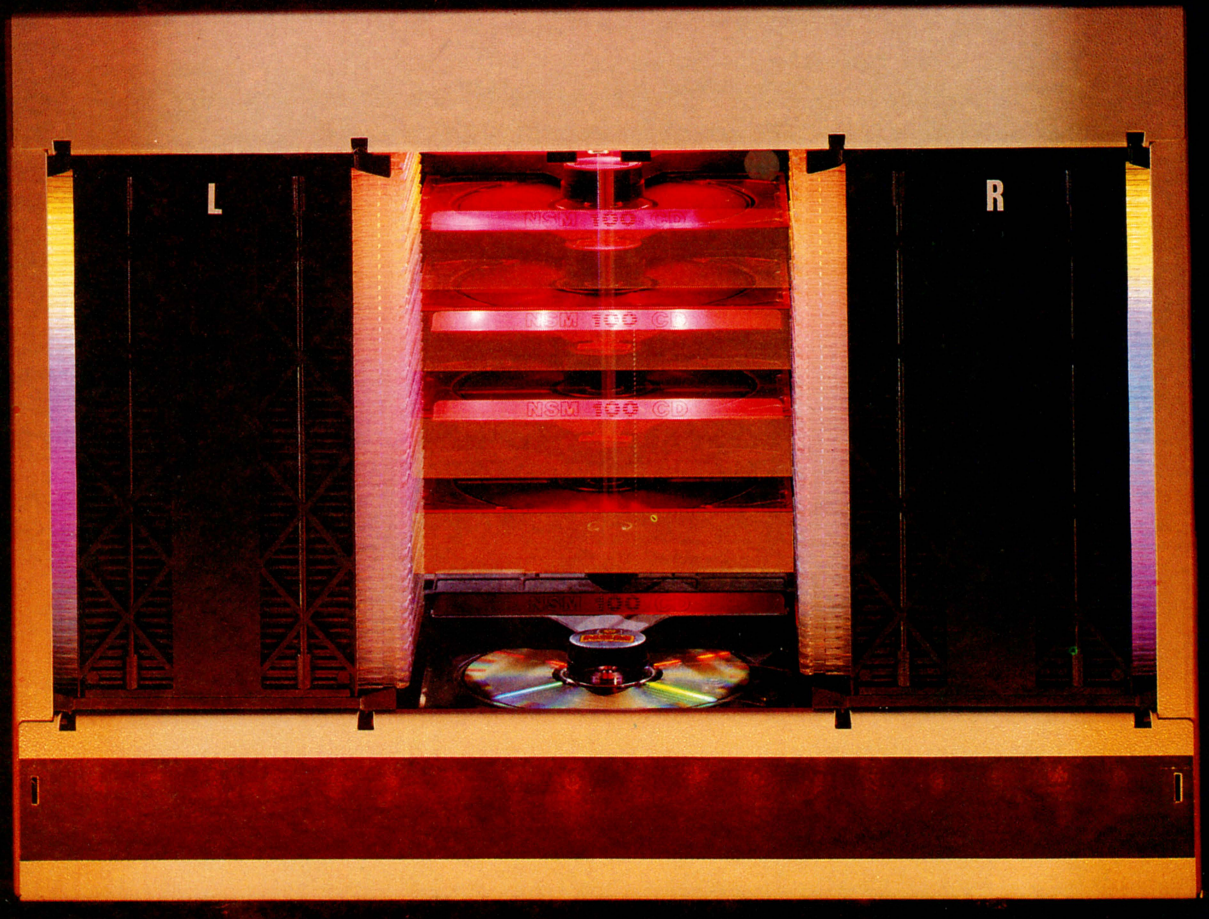

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...Yet it never so much as touches the disc.

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The changer isn't the only "Quick Change Artist" in our new CD Jukeboxes. Just push the button on our new Picture Display title strip mechanism.

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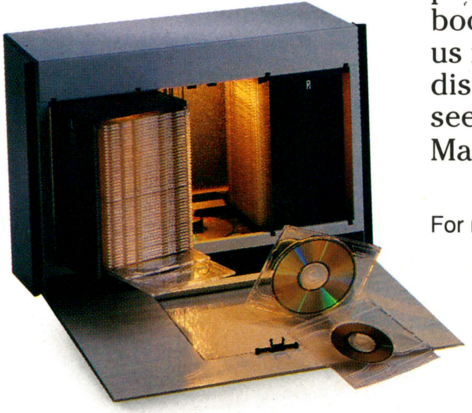
A 100 CD jukebox that looks full with as few as 4 CD's. You can load an NSM with as few as 4 CD's, as many as 100. Or anything in between. Yet, it always appears full. What's more, the NSM system handles 5"album discs, 3" singles and the new "Maxi Singles."



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ber of pro-lottery functions and his weight as a former FBI agent has been duly noted.)

It's no secret that AMOA's Wally Bohrer and Bob Fay have not always agreed with each other, so it was refreshing to hear that Bohrer said Fay was a valuable asset in the drive toward legal video lottery.

AAMA's President Gil Pollock told *RePlay*, "the operators have the video lottery campaign well in hand and I for one believe it's best that operators take the point in this." Pollock also runs the Premier (Gottlieb) factory, so we took the occasion to ask this amusement machine maker why he was supportive of legalizing a machine he didn't make:

"I do believe legalized video gaming will ultimately be good for every level of the industry, regardless of whether you're directly involved. Obviously, it's been good for those operators in the two states where it's running right now. I've also seen gaming work well in Europe and bring in extra cash flow that's been translated right back into the purchase of non-gaming equipment.

"In the beginning, we expect that much of the operator's investment dollars will go into video payoff games if and when they become legal. But after a time, a lot of money they earn will be spent on amusement and music machines. I view it as a long-term benefit for everyone," he said.

Pollock further advised that his ACME show in Las Vegas will feature a seminar manned by a panel of experts on video lottery, a big reason for operators everywhere to attend this Las Vegas outing. (He has also offered AMOA the use of several exhibit booths for their state associations to run.)

AMOA's President Jim Trucano is an extremely sober realist on video lottery . . . and totally experienced, having been one of the pointmen in getting the South Dakota law passed. As AMOA's chief, he supports local drives to create "more South Dakotas." As an individual, he cautions everyone that this won't happen overnight and that the road to legalization must be walked very carefully (he repeated his offer to share advice on this subject to anyone requesting same). His phone number is in the AMOA directory.

LOCATION

Nine non-industry expositions will once again be visited by our people this year in AAMA/AMOA's continuing location trade show campaign (the purpose of which is to promote the use of jukeboxes and games to owners of sites ranging from pizza parlors to amusement parks, with the coin operator touted as the only man to deal with).

The two associations split the cost of these exhibit booths right down the middle and both send reps to man those booths. They've already exhibited at the pizza show and the movie theater show with coming events to include the nightclub & bar event in Tampa, the restaurant show in May, the bowling show, another bar show and two amusement parks events as well as Atlanta's Fun Expo. They like the leads operators get from this combined association effort, so the campaign continues.

TOGETHER

Some say the coin amusement industry is "leaderless" and that it's really just a collection of thousands of little companies that "looks" like an industry a couple times a year at national trade shows. Judging by the renewed spirit of cooperation at the AMOA/AAMA summit in Florida, this is hardly true. We do have leaders and they are leading. But it's a broad agenda and it takes time from their normal businesses for these executives to attend to it all.

Yet they do it. And now that the parallel issue has been tossed into the closet, they may do more . . . all translating into improved economic health for everyone in the trade (and a more "common goal" cannot be found). More meetings like this, please!

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AFFAIRS OF STATE

"AMOA Council" of state operator associations holds 2nd annual meet; participants note progress in interstate and state-national relations

A bad organization chart: information flows from the bottom up and power flows from the top down. A good organization chart: power and information are both a two-way street, with top and bottom "boxes" constantly adjusting to each other's input. . . and information moves laterally among the "boxes" on the bottom of the chart, too.

If the second "chart" represents a picture of a flexible, enlightened organization, then American operators should be smiling these days. The lines of power and communication that connect the national and state operator organizations are getting stronger and more democratic by the month. That was the diagnosis after a Jan. 22-23 meeting in Chicago of the AMOA Council of Affiliated States (a group consisting of leaders of operator associations and the state and city levels).

The Council held this, its second annual gathering, under the direction of AMOA State Association Committee chairman Jim Stansfield Jr. (Jim convened last year's meeting, too.) The event demonstrated that state operator associations are knitting together more closely with each other — and with AMOA — to bring the coin-op industry to new levels of professionalism.

AMOA's Council of Affiliated States 2nd annual meet drew reps from 20 state groups & 1 city assn.

Attendance was up slightly over last year's first Council meeting; associations from 20 states and one city (New York) were represented. Believe it or not, 45 states now boast operator associations, Jim Stansfield reported. Alaska, Maine and Nevada have recently formed — or are forming — new groups; a Hawaiian operator also says he's forming an association there. Currently lacking a state operator association are only five states: New Hampshire, Kentucky, Alabama, Kansas and Oklahoma.

"Some of the smaller states may not have a big membership," Stansfield explained, "but if there are only 20 operators in the state and they have a mailing list, they've got AMOA's full attention and they're hearing from us." Proof of AMOA's attention to the state groups included attendance at this latest Council meeting by leading figures in the national association, including President Jim Trucano, Executive VP John Schumacher and government relations chairman Wally Bohrer.

This degree of state-to-state and national-state coordination is fairly recent, Jim Stansfield explained. In the past, state associations were often out of touch with each other and with AMOA. The Council has done much to solve both problems.

STRONGER TIES TO AMOA

"I've seen a real turnabout in the feeling of state associations toward AMOA," Stansfield declared. "Only a few years ago, many state association leaders were pretty unhappy with AMOA. Today there's very visible improvement in how state groups feel about the way things are going. AMOA has shown that it cares about the health and welfare of state associations and their officers and membership. That has been our goal: to show that we do care, that we want to work with them. I believe the message has been conveyed that AMOA is willing to do just about anything to help state associations succeed."

At the meeting, AMOA Executive VP John Schumacher discussed AMOA's efforts to coordinate with, and support, state associations. He

AMOA president Jim Trucano, the keynote speaker, talks about federal lobbying techniques.

The council members talk over national and state issues and relationships.

asked states to inform AMOA of dates and schedules for their key events (conventions, tournaments, etc.) so that AMOA can schedule its own events accordingly. The idea is to avoid conflicts between the national and state association calendars.

Schumacher also asked states to provide lists of current and prospective members for cross-checking against AMOA's member list in each state. The information would help both national and state groups build better data bases and recruit new members. At presstime, eight state associations had already mailed such lists to AMOA, Stansfield reported. "The results," he said, "are eye-opening. Some people who are members of their state group aren't members of AMOA and vice versa."

AMOA prexy Jim Trucano gave the keynote address. He discussed lobbying with federal legislators, stressing the importance of getting to know your senators and representatives . . . but also not allowing familiarity to become contempt. In addition, Trucano also strongly advised tradesters to protect their credibility with lawmakers by providing a balanced view of any issues discussed.

AMOA's Wally Bohrer provided the Council with a discussion of the upcoming (Dec. 1) parallel legalization, plus a state-by-state report on video lottery legalization campaigns. The Council also reviewed and critiqued AMOA' videotape promotion for video lottery, giving suggestions for improved future editions.

STATE TO STATE RELATIONS

In addition to tying states more closely to AMOA, the Council once again proved itself a useful forum for the state associations to coordinate with and learn from each other. "It was a very fine group with productive exchanges on many nuts and bolts issues of running associations," Jim Stansfield reported. "It provided an excellent workshop, especially for leaders of smaller, struggling groups."

One of the most obvious benefits that states have accrued from each others' experiences, Stansfield added, is that more states are publishing professional newsletters for their members. Many of these newsletters are closely patterned on the formats of other states' newsletters, he said: a president's message, general news, legislative update, new member lists, association calendar, classified ads, etc.

State-to-state communication is stronger all year round thanks to the Council, too. Last year, Council members agreed to try a "news networking" program — a sort of monthly, in-house pony express for material that goes out to all the state associations. Stansfield said the program has been used heavily. If you were on the Council's mailing list, you should now have an 8" stack of material from this source by now, Stansfield noted. For example, the Council's network was the first to provide state associations with NAGRA's recommended standards for video poker legislation.

AN OPEN CHANNEL

"Anyone in the industry who wishes to convey information to state association leaders and/or members is invited to take advantage of this communications channel," Stansfield said. Send material to John Schumacher at AMOA headquarters in Chicago; mark it "Attn: State Assn. News Networking." Materials must be ready for xeroxing (AMOA will not type it for you, will not clean it up nor add artwork!). Materials will not be edited or censored. The network's "packets" are mailed to all the 40-odd state associations on the 14th of each month, so get materials into AMOA by the 10th of the month for timely dispatch.

Other topics discussed during two days of Council sessions included membership-boosting programs; fundraising for states and committees; hiring full-time state executives (for those associations who don't have them); government relations; dollar coins; education; plus such items as a Tobacco Institute briefing on anti-smoking laws, and an introduction to AMOA's International Flipper Pinball Assn. by that group's Exec VP Doug Young.

In all, the January meeting was an important milestone for the AMOA Council of Affiliated States. "We've come a long way," concluded Jim Stansfield, "but we still have a long way to go in increasing membership in local state associations. I believe it's important for AMOA to demonstrate its support for state groups and we're doing that. I also believe that getting more operators to become active at the state level will show these local members the value of their national association . . . which in turn will strengthen AMOA's membership and bolster its activities. It's a two-way street; everybody benefits."

The next meeting of the AMOA Council of Affiliated States will consist of a luncheon, to be held in conjunction with this fall's AMOA Expo. The third annual "Council of Affiliated States" meeting is scheduled for Jan. 21-22, 1992, in Chicago.

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MAINE ANTES UP

Are Maine operators lobbying to legalize video poker? Yup!
Will their (very professional) effort succeed by May? Mebbe

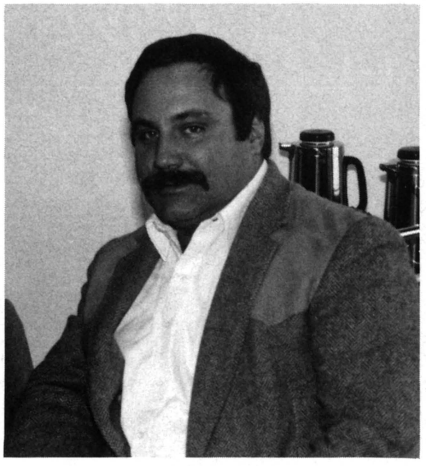
Maine operators have tossed their hats into the video lottery ring. Operators have formed the Maine Gaming Assn. (MGA) to work for legalization of pay-out video games of chance (poker, keno and bingo) in the state. Using the South Dakota system as their model, MGA president Joe Ferris (Ferris Music Service), vice president Ross Furman (Skillful Vending) and their colleagues have moved adroitly to mount a smart, professional campaign.

MGA is very optimistic about eventual success, and for good reasons. The state needs money; the governor and legislature have already demonstrated favorable attitudes toward gambling by establishing a state lottery; and MGA has recruited some real pros and political heavyweights to their cause.

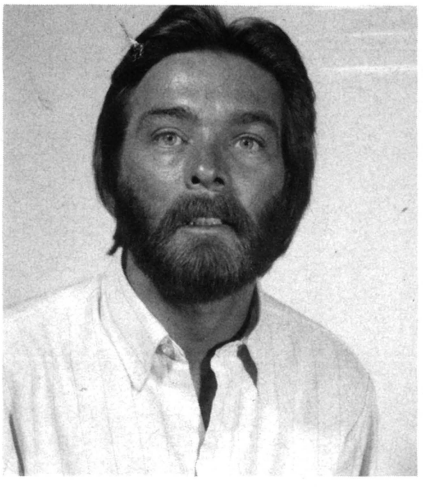
Maine didn't have a state operator association, so MGA had to start organizing from scratch. They have wasted no time about it! Former state senator David Kerry is already working hard as MGA's executive director; by March 1 was it expected that their bill would be drafted, submitted and filed.

State senator Jerry Conley (Democrat, Portland) is sponsoring the bill. Three cosponsors include House majority leader Dan Gwadosky (Democrat), and two Republican representatives, Alan Stevens and Beverly Daggett — both of whom serve on the Legal Affairs Committee, which will have jurisdiction over MGA's bill.

MGA is also rounding up support from key groups like state police and major locations. The group concentrated first on recruiting nonprofit locations to their cause (Elks Clubs, VFW posts, Moose Lodge, etc.). By mid-January, MGA had already recruited 50 location members; that number was expected to rise to about 300 location members by March 1.



JOE·FERRIS



ROSS FURMAN

Maine's state police are charged with regulating games of chance, explained MGA exec director David Kerry. "We've met with them twice," he said, "and what's impressing these people is the South Dakota system and the central computer created by Video Lottery Consultants, which gives regulators readouts on every single transaction." Also, MGA's proposed bill draws strict lines between locations, operators, manufacturers and distributors so that nobody can do business at more than one level, and "the state police like that very much," Kerry said.

How does Maine's legislature feel about video lottery? "I think our legislature is completely in the dark about this," Kerry declared. "But the timing is absolutely perfect because the state is in need of funds. In fact, Maine is in one of the worst financial messes it's ever experienced in its history. And, with the economy in a downturn, the governor needs new revenues and doesn't want to raise taxes."

Nobody knows how Gov. Jack McKernan feels about gambling, but so far he hasn't said he's against it. And the state Attorney General's office has advised that South Dakota-style operator-run gaming would not present any constitutional problems. "The governor does not have a reputation for being anti-gaming," Kerry pointed out. "We don't sense that he's anti-gaming, particularly in view of the fact that Maine's entry into Lotto American came at his initiative."

When MGA eventually makes its sales pitch to lawmakers, they'll tempt the politicians with mouth-

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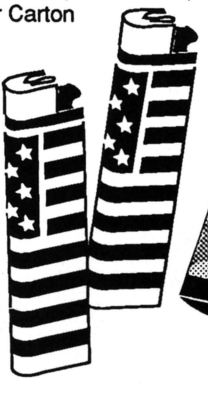

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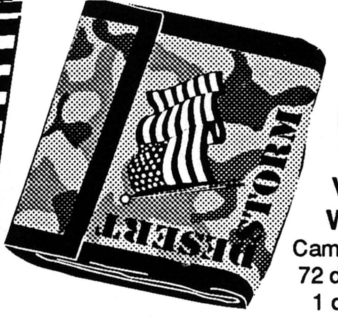

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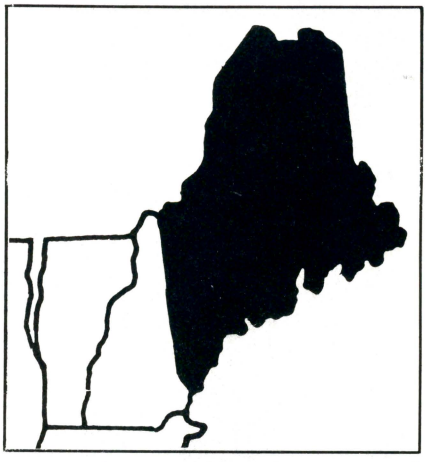
watering numbers. "We think $20 million to the state, per year, is a decent figure," David Kerry said (estimates based on the past experience with video lottery in Montana and South Dakota). "That figure will be worked over more carefully in the future with the police and with the related legislative committees," he added.

The numbers look pretty mouthwatering from the operators' point of view, too. If the state's $20,000 represents 25% of the first year's take, then operators and locations would presumably split the rest — a tidy gross earnings of $30 million each. Current plans call for the state's share to rise gradually to 33% by the seventh year of the program, and remain fixed at that percentage from then on.

Manufacturers would also find some profit opportunities in the projected Maine market. "Conservatively we expect 4,000 machines total in the state would be the market and could be operable by next year," Kerry said. "That's based on regulations permitting no more than three games of chance per liquor-licensed, on-site consumption establishment. We're looking at a $2 bet limit and a top prize of $800 to $1,000," he advised.

Fund-raising is a key requirement for political lobbying, and Kerry



says MGA members have raised "substantial" funds to pay for their campaign. Some money has also come in from sources such as manufacturers and distributors, he acknowledged.

MGA's Kerry is an educated political handicapper; besides state senator his resume also lists service as a district director for a state congressman (who just happened to be a former governor). So it carries some weight when Kerry says, "I think we've got a 50-50 chance of passing our bill in this session." He points out that Maine had negative experience with slot machines in late 1970s and early 1980s, but he believes the virtues of the South Dakota system will overcome any lingering doubts.

Maine's 1991 session runs till June and "I don't see anything happening before May," Kerry forecast. "I hope our bill will be in committee in March, get to the floor in April or May, and come up for a vote at that time . . . but it's all rather hazy right now," he conceded.

Interested parties can contact: Maine Gaming Assn., P.O. Box 134, 132 State St., Augusta, ME 04332-1034. Or call David Kerry, care of Skillful Vending, 207/775-3000.

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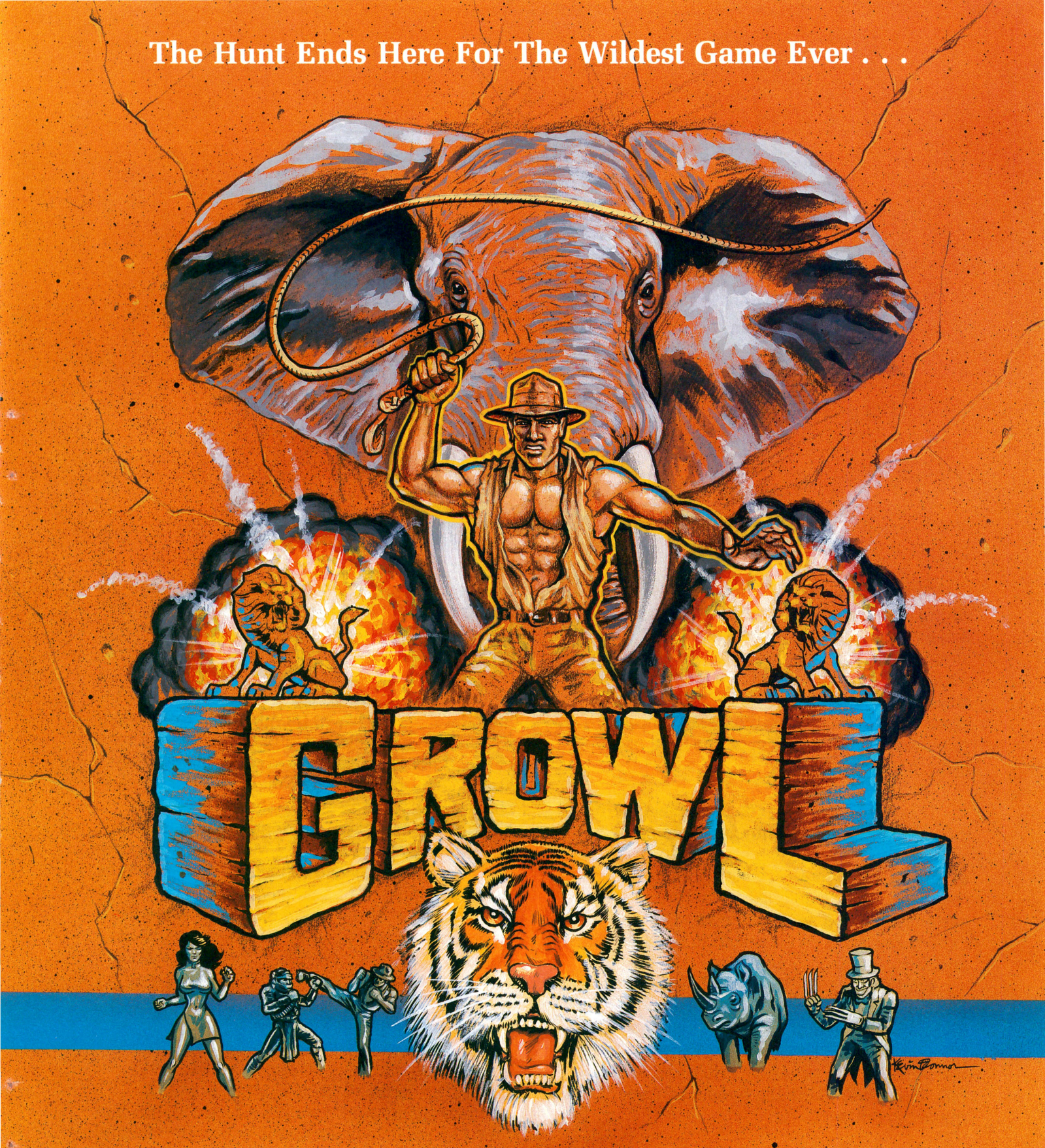

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PLAIN SPEAKING ON VIDEO POKER

Whether they're right or whether they're wrong, an enormous number of trade people believe video lottery will become legal, state-by-state, in our time. While some sober-headed tradesters say, "don't hold your breath before more than South Dakota and Montana come aboard," it seems more others are dripping with sweat awaiting the arrival of this form of gambling in their states.

This nation's reluctance to gambling remains, though maybe not as strongly as before live lottery. But so do many states' needs to gather extra funding without raising taxes. Critics say religious groups could kill any referendum, certainly in some southern states like Texas. Others say don't be surprised to see Louisiana and Mississippi go gaming.

With respect, "little states" like Montana and South Dakota, and maybe West Virginia and Wyoming are far different from "big enchaladas" like Illinois and Pennsylvania (the latter had it last year until its governor veto'd the passed bill). If just one of the big ones says "yes," it will make big noise.

The majority of these United States have a "live lottery" in place these days, and it all started with New Hampshire in the 1980s. The obvious pro-gaming wish is that these new dominos fall the same way. Which "dominos" will tumble this year (if any)? Here's our reading on the likelihood of that and some other thoughts.

West Virginia is, by all reports, the state closest to securing passage of video lottery. Most of the other states which are considered "possible" will not get down to the short hairs until the fall legislative session, but serious contenders include Wisconsin and a couple of "surprise" states we've promised not to mention. Based on seriousness of effort and commitment of resources, plus support from local politicians, states such as Maine, Texas, New Jersey, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Michigan also bear close watching (although none of them faces a cakewalk). Oregon, Vermont, Wyoming, Nebraska and North Dakota have all lost previous attempts to legalize poker but say they'll try again.

Frankly, it doesn't help operators when the trade press labels a certain state as "weak" or "unlikely" to legalize video lottery. Such labels cause local tradesters to lose heart, and may tend to dry up needed financial contributions toward lobbying efforts. So we're not going to bad-mouth anyone here, but let us note that some of the states listed above make "very optimistic" noises in public, while privately conceding that weak operator support, opposition from key politicians, locations and/or entrenched religious groups or gambling interests, may seriously hurt their cause.

This is our opinion, but one supported by much of the talk we hear on and off the record. It is not the be all and end all at this time, because we always seem to hear of yet another

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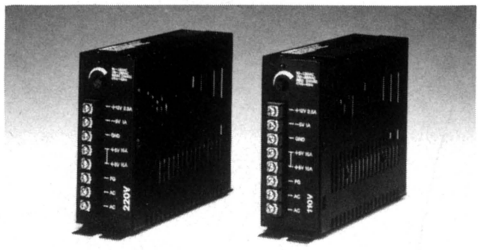

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state operator group cranking up their pro-lottery engine.

Despite the hopes of so many, legalizing video lottery is the farthest thing from a slam/dunk you can find. The very phrase "video lottery" is troublesome because we're really talking about payoff poker, keno, lotto and bingo, having little to do with the state "lottery" per se. To protect the interests of the coin-op industry, each and every pro-lottery bill now drawn up (or in the process of same) should warrant the presence of an "operator." Of course, giving the operators a piece of the financial pie may give some or more states the jitters (as in "why do we need these people anyway?").

No question, without the professional coin machine operator (and his distributor) in the cards, this whole thing is an exercise in futility. And even with them written into the law, there's the very real danger that huge outside companies will bulldoze their way into the program with their mega-bucks and make the little operator look a true fool for doing all the spade work but losing out to bigger investors (who could include some equipment makers themselves).

Gambling is not child's play. Many investors foam at the mouth when the subject comes up. Why should we think they'd leave "our people" alone if they can get a foot in the door? We know why, because we are a professional service industry that's catered to the nation with coin-op for too many years to count, that has the locations on the books, that knows how to fix things, is small-business oriented and cheerfully says "no" when asked if the owner ever had a felony conviction.

Terrific, but do our "wonderful people" have their locations under contract? These security agreements have always been handy, but now more than ever. . . even if video lottery isn't legalized in their states. Warning: never, ever think your stops can't be bumped just because you've been friends with the location owner since Noah docked his boat. We are talking big bucks here. Think Hollywood. Get location contracts.

There have been some operators running poker games for years, many of whom have participated (willingly or reluctantly, doesn't matter) in customer payoffs. Others have tried this device as pure amusement. Oddly, the industry has never been tarred as a result. Even

What lies beneath the SHADOW?

PROFIT$

When it comes down to it, the measure of a game is " the bottom line ".

Kaneko, manufacturer of clever video products since 1980, changed one of the rules to successful " Street Games ".

Keep them,

1) Simple
2) Simple
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Players will be intrigued by the shadow, breaking through reveals a beautiful girl, breaking through again exposes her.

That is just 1/6th of the story!

There are six different girls each one with her own strategy.

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newspaper reports of organized crime allegedly involved back in Jersey haven't hurt the program to any real extent (this may be a good thing for the legitimate industry, considering that state commissions will scrutinize individual operator criminal records, allowing only the whistle-clean to get into the program).

But what program? Other than two cow states (we say this with respect), absolutely nothing else has happened yet. But this hasn't stopped many state operator associations from pushing, nor has it dampened the spirits of some equipment manufacturers (from here and overseas) to slice out a piece of the pie. There's a whole lot rumbling under the surface that never reaches the pages of the trade magazines, all described as "cautious optimism."

Operator groups have done a decent job lobbying various states, but "decent" by our standards. It's one thing to yell about increased licenses but quite another when you want to change the "jelly" of pinball into the "jam" of payoff poker at the neighborhood gin joint. Face it: the very complexion of the industry in legal states will change. Gambling is not amusement! Please drink that sentence in! It is not!

Therefore, many worry about the stability of the "normal" coin amusement business (i.e. how much attention to the jukebox and game operations the lads will spend once they get the nod to install gaming devices). Well, we don't have enough examples yet to go by, only the thought that additional cash flow will enable the average operator to upgrade his "normal" equipment after a period of years outfitting his locations with gaming machines. We sure hope it happens that way. How 'bout you?

End of sermon: be open about your dreams if this is one of them. Don't think you can lobby for this with a whisper. Be candid, be loud, and please have all your ducks in a row when you talk with legislators. If it's gambling you want and your heart and conscience concur, don't be ashamed of it. And please don't be ashamed of your role in all of it. You, the operator, really **are** the best guy to put it before the players. We hope you believe that and understand all the other things said here, because if you think solid state pinballs and electronic video games caused an historical leap in this industry, you ain't seen nothing yet!

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Bully Buster

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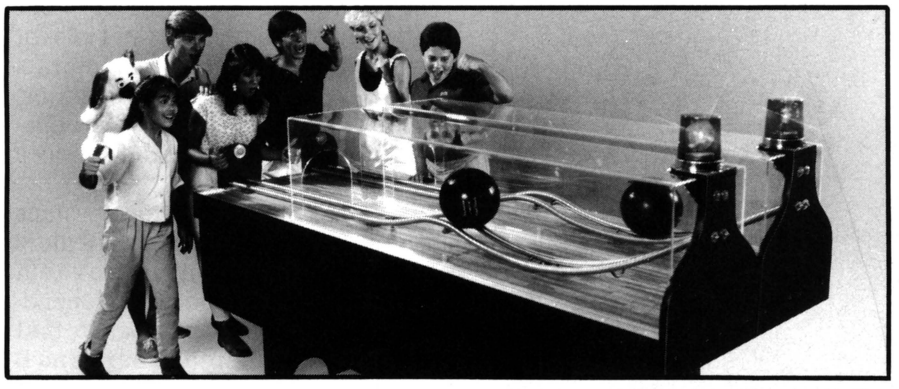
We have become the biggest because we are the best. You can be sure of quality products, dependable service and helpful operations support when you buy or lease our games. Look to us for great games, great new innovations and great operating concepts. We can help you capture **100% OF YOUR CUSTOMERS' INTEREST, AND COMPOUND IT DAILY.**



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STREET FIGHTER II

interactive jawbreaker shines bright at Capcom's Florida dealer meet; nice goods!

Say what you want, but "punching the next guy's lights out" remains a favorite video game theme among players. One of coin history's best in this genre was the 1985 Capcom *Street Fighter*. Now, five years later, the company has introduced the sequel, and it's a doozie!

Called *Street Fighter II,* this latest in Capcom's line of CPS videos made its official debut at their distributor meeting held Feb. 1 at the Marriott Harbor Beach in Ft. Lauderdale. Obviously piggy-backing on the AAMA board of directors meeting held earlier in the day (to save some distributors the trouble of an extra flight in these difficult times), Capcom appreciated the presence of many if not most of its North American dealers, be they AAMA directors or not.

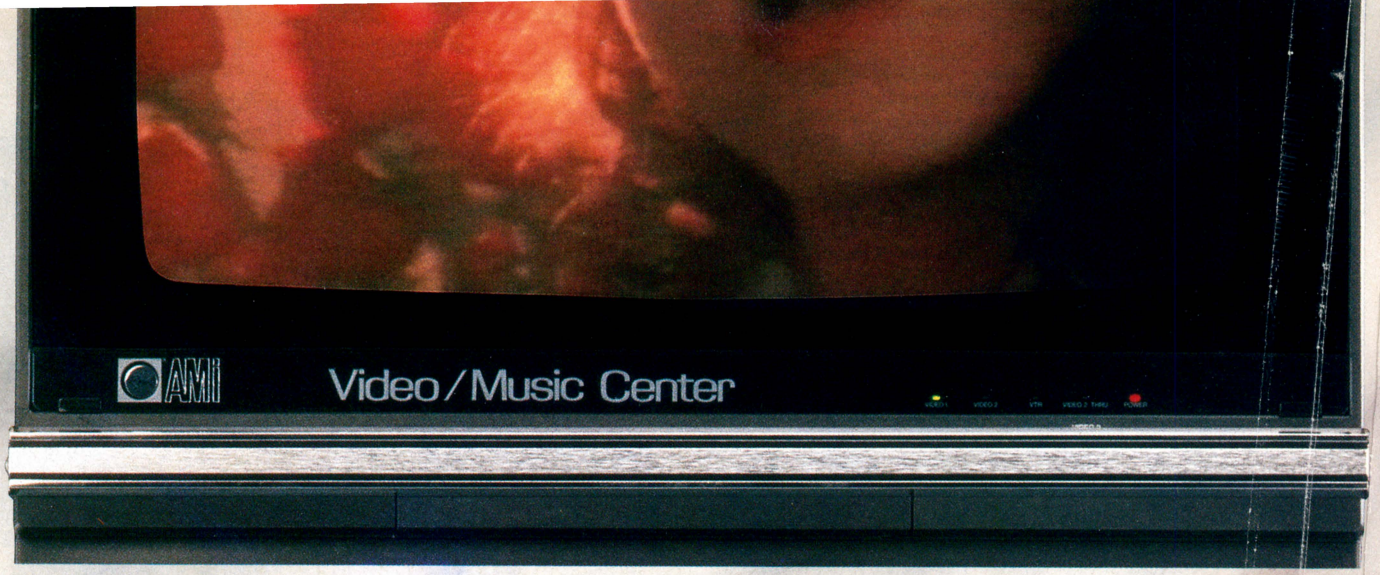
Capcom's Brian Duke (left) and Gene Sieben (M.H. Associates) punch away on the new video game as Capcom USA president George Nakayama observes.

It was a good house watching a good new game born. Jeff Walker, Capcom USA's new sales topper after the departure of Bill Cravens, started the meeting with a promo film about their CPS system, saying "3D sight and sound are coming to CPS in 1991." But right now, they have a solid entry with *Street Fighter II* as even distributors who are wrestling with inventory of unsold products from here and there generally agreed.

Walker minced no words, calling the game "the best Capcom's ever produced." It gives players a choice among 8 different tough guys on the screen (each from a different part of the world). The game uses one stick and three buttons per player and can be played by two interactively or one against the computer. When two play, it's your basic one-on-one street fight, and the graphics and sounds are tops.

Walker said dedicated versions were scheduled to ship to dealers beginning Feb. 15 with kits to go out March 15 (this could yo-yo depending upon the amount of each that distributors ordered). There's no B board change to convert previous CPS games on this one. There will, however, be a $400 future spiff on the cost of the kit board, bringing down the price if mentally deducted from the cost going in. Here's how it works:

Each kit will contain a serialized certificate entitling the bearer to a $400 rebate if he returns a *Street*



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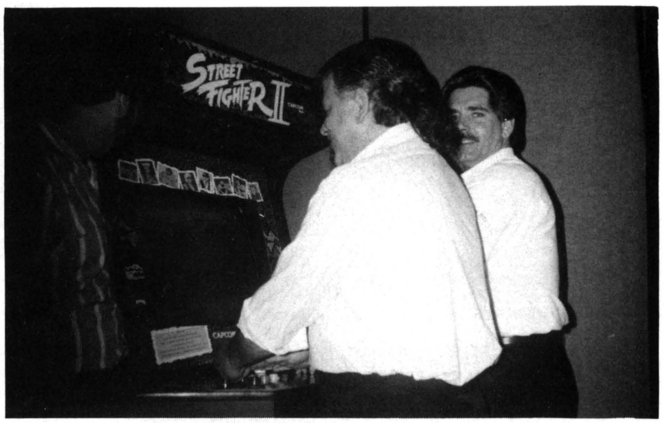
Private talk abounded during the Florida Capcom meeting, like this conversation about the state of the coin machine biz with (from left to right) Bob Haim, Dave Patterson, Jolly Backer and Jeff Walker.



Pittsburgh's Lou Larson and New Jersey's Tony Yula show how real street guys tackle the new Capcom fighter video at the distributor meeting.

Fighter II CPS board to an authorized Capcom distributor on or before April 30, 1992. This rebate can only be used, however, toward the purchase of future Capcom products.

Comparing the "throw weight" of this fighter with the price of the kit, less rebate, Walker termed it a solid investment. "This is bound to become the kit of 1991," he declared. "After reading the state of the video game market, we decided to hold it until now," he candidly revealed.

Capcom likes *Street Fighter II* so much they decided to ship it on 50¢-start/25¢-continue pricing. "We had a two-week test and I can tell you it's earning on the same track as *Final Fight*," said Walker, referring to one of their top games of 1990. (By the way, *Final Fight, Mega Twins, Air Carrier Wing, Super Buster Bros.* and *Magic Sword* are all still available for operator purchase, through Capcom's dealers.

Several Japanese Capcom reps (like Mr. Harata) joined Walker's sales staffers Brian Duke, Paul Wiederaenders and Jolly Backer in hosting the affair. Discussions on service turnaround, inventory, market conditions and futures were discussed formally and informally (they provided a fine buffet dinner to the dealers).

The very fact that Capcom held a distributor meeting in the lower/right corner of the country at this time in coin history was fascinating. The fact that so many dealers, including principles in many cases, came down, showed plenty of life in the business. Best of all, the game was solid.

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A TICKLE, A KICK, A KISS

you'll get 'em all at ACME, plus some pulse-pounding new product; industry heads to Vegas for March 22-24 "in search of our future"

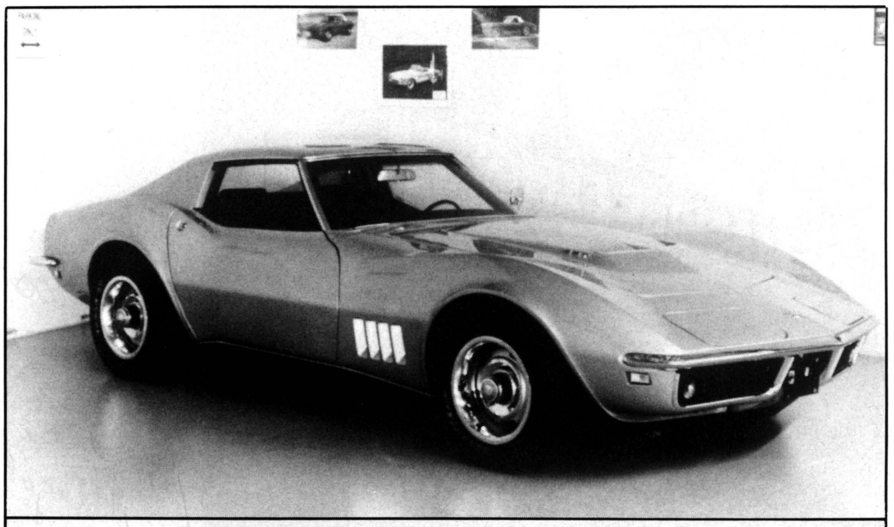
With America facing the twin challenges of war abroad and tough economic times at home, show organizers say this year's ACME will be just what the industry needs to get moving again: a kick in the pants, a poke in the ribs, a tickle under the chin and — most important — a big, fat kiss in the cashbox.

Manufacturers are promising some spectacular new products will be revealed at ACME, the American Coin Machine Exposition, slated to take place in Las Vegas (Sands Expo Center) from March 22-24. Mouth-watering goodies should abound: from the rumored debut of a 3D, holography-style, laserdisc coin-op video game . . . to a spectacular new jukebox design from one of the oldest names in music machines.

"We may be on the verge of a brave new era in coin-op technology," some manufacturers are saying hopefully. That could be true (see our story "Technology Watch" elsewhere in this issue). At the very least, ACME should provide an exciting glimpse into a different future, starting with a keynote address on "The Future of Coin-Op" by vidgame industry founder Nolan Bushnell.

Besides the revolutionary items and ideas, you'll see and hear the usual sterling assortment of pins, table games, sports games, redemption pieces, novelties, impulse games, kiddie rides, video pokers and anything else with a coin slot on it that might turn a profit. You'll have a chance to view over 700 booths' worth of new product, and also many chances to attend a whole slew of industry award ceremonies, cocktail parties, educational seminars, entertainment tours, fund-raising raffles, plus the usual mix of planned meetings and unplanned run-ins with your fellow tradesters in assorted hotel rooms, lobbies and casinos.

It's a trade show, man! We're talking about packing most of the industry (say 6,000 operators, 700 dis-



WIN A VETTE! *That's right, you can win this beauty! It's a silver (with black interior) 1968 Corvette Sport Coupe with a 427 Tri-Power engine, Turbo Hydromatic, automatic and loads of other features. All you've got to do for your chance is enter the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation raffle during the ACME show (though you do have to pay tax, tags and delivery if you win). Each ticket is $50 (or 3 for $100) and the whole shebang benefits a great charity — the Galante/Dunis Northwest Children's Endowment Fund. The drawing will be held the last day of the show (Sunday, March 24) at noon. Buy some tickets!*

tributing people and 800 manufacturing staffers) into just one or two hotels!

THREE DIFFERENT SITES

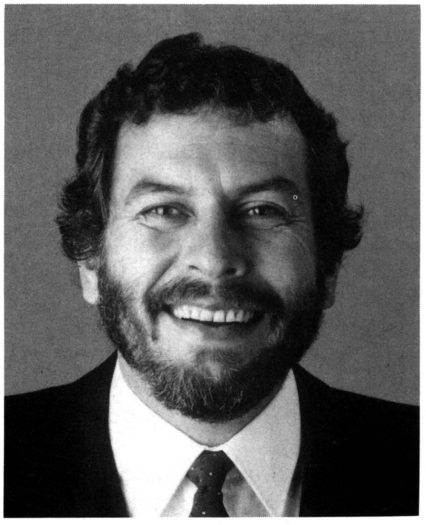
Actually, it's three hotels. Listen up, this is important: ACME officially takes place at **three different sites.** First, the show and the seminars are set for the Sands Expo Center. Second, many of the rooms are booked at Bally's Hotel (and buses will run regularly between the two sites). Third, the AAMA Charitable Foundation banquet takes place at Caesar's Palace (and bus service will probably be available from Bally's to Caesar's). All three hotels are centrally located within a few blocks of each other on the Vegas Strip, so between buses, cabs, private cars and feet we should all be fine.

HOURS & REGISTRATION

It's too late now to register in advance by mail, so you can register on-site from 8 AM to 3 PM on Friday and Saturday, and from 8:30 AM to 3 PM on Sunday. Registration fee is $20 (if you lose your badge, it will cost $10 to get a new one). Minors under age 19 will be admitted provided they've paid their registration fee and are accompanied by a badge-wearing adult.

The registration fee entitles you to attend the exhibit floor, the manufacturer's firing line, the "all-show cocktail party," and the keynote address by Nolan Bushnell (including continental breakfast).

Hours for the exhibit floor are: Friday, March 22, 9 AM to 11 AM (exhibitors only) and 11 AM to 5 PM (general admission). Saturday, March 23: 9AM to 11AM (distributors only) and 11 AM to 5 PM (general admission). Sunday March 24: 10 AM to 4 PM (general admission).



Keynote speaker NOLAN BUSHNELL

HOTELS

The Sands Hotel was sold out for show dates at presstime. ACME had booked a large block of rooms at Bally's Hotel with rates of $109 per night for single or double occupancy, plus 7% tax. But they wanted you to pre-register by mail by Feb. 15, so at this late date your best bet is to phone Bally's directly or try some of the other nearby hotels: the Mirage, the Holiday Inn Casino, Caesar's, the Aladdin Hotel, the Flamingo Hilton, Bourbon Street, Maxim's, the Dunes, the Frontier, the Marriott Residence Inn, Quality Inn, or the Desert Inn. For hotel information you may contact the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce at 702/457-4664.

CHARITY PROGRAM

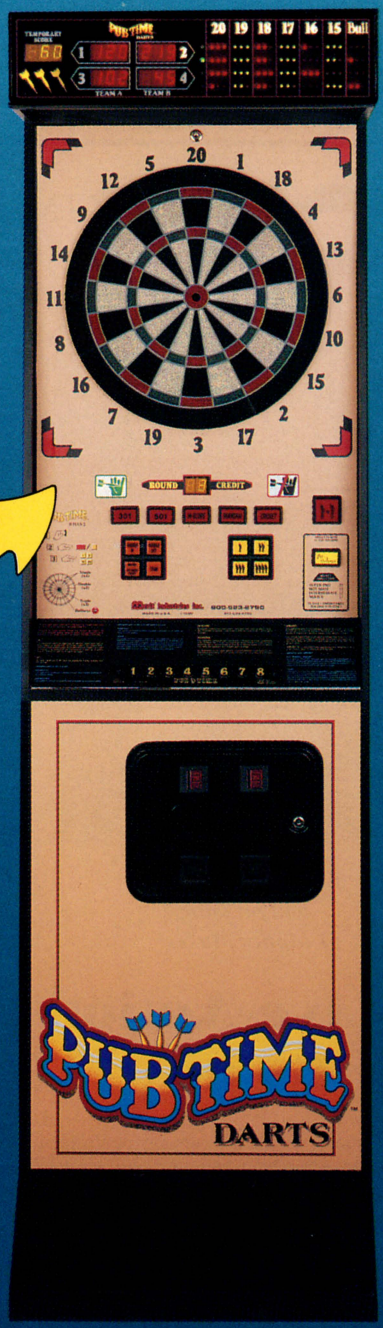
At this year's fund-raising banquet of AAMCF (American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation), the Men of Honor are two outstanding distributors, who also happen to be friends and partners: Ray Galante of Music-Vend and, posthumously, Lou Dunis of Dunis Distributing (who died on Jan. 22).

The AAMCF affair is always a highlight of the ACME show and the 1991 edition promises to be a memorable tribute to a respected and beloved team. Proceeds raised by the banquet will benefit the Galante/Dunis Northwest Children's Endowment Fund, which will make ongoing donations to children's charities in the region.

Tickets cost $125 per person or $1,250 for a table that seats ten. After the award presentation, speeches and dinner, the audience will be entertained with dance music by the Endless Summer Band, featuring Dean Torrence (of the popular '60s duo Jan & Dean) and Gary Beckley (singer from the '60s band America). Cocktails are at 7 PM next to the Sun Garden Pool; dinner follows at 8 PM at the Coliseum Room. You can purchase tickets at the AAMA booth, next to the registration area; or call the AAMCF at 703/494-0756.

The Galante/Dunis fund will also benefit from the proceeds of a raf-

Pub Time II PLUS 2



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fle which will be held in conjunction with ACME. Grand prize is a 1968 Corvette Sport Coupe (silver with all-black interior and lots of snazzy extras). Tickets cost $50 for one chance, or three chances for $100. Tickets are available from your local AAMA member, or at the AAMA booth at the show (next to registration area), or call AAMA at 703/494-2758.

SEMINARS

ACME's Judy Novak and her team worked hard to come up with a creative list of interesting, fresh topics and energetic, qualified speakers this year. They succeeded. Management and ownership subjects will be addressed in separate events by professor Dick Priesmeyer, attorney David Hagen and operator Charlie Ross. Nuts and bolts operating issues will be chatted over in separate sessions by operator Frank Seninsky, operator Paul Spiegel, and a security expert.

Technical pro Randy Fromm offers a whole series of technical seminars; and it will be "standing room only" as two separate panels of experts discuss those "growth markets," redemption and video lottery. Finally, some of the most respected manufacturers' reps in America will take your questions in the traditional "Firing Line."

The firing line is free to all registered showgoers, but everything else costs a nominal fee. The "general sessions" are $20 each or three sessions for $50. The "management sessions" are $30 each or all four for $100. The technical seminars are $30 each or $75 for all three. You can pay on site.

TIME TO RELAX

If you or a member of the family has a free afternoon during the show dates, you can take an "entertainment tour" arranged by ACME. For $40 per person, a tour called "That's Entertainment" includes a look behind the scenes at a Las Vegas revue, a trip to the Liberace Museum, lunch at the Tivoli Gardens, and a tour of the stars' homes.

For $45 per person, you can visit the "Valley of Fire," a Nevada State Park featuring ancient Indian rock carvings and beautiful cliffs, plus enjoy a box lunch and a walking tour of Wayne Newton's famed Arabian horse ranch.

Again, you're too late for advance registration, but you can register on site at the AAMA booth. Also, don't forget the other Vegas entertainment possibilities, ranging from hotel floor shows (your hotel's concierge can help you book tickets) to nearby Boulder Dam. And — oh, yes — we've heard some people actually come to Vegas in order to gamble.

ACME is sponsored and produced by AAMA and *Play Meter Magazine*, and is organized by ACME Show Management, c/o William T. Glasgow, Inc., 16066 So. Park Ave., So. Holland, IL 60473; 708/333-9292.

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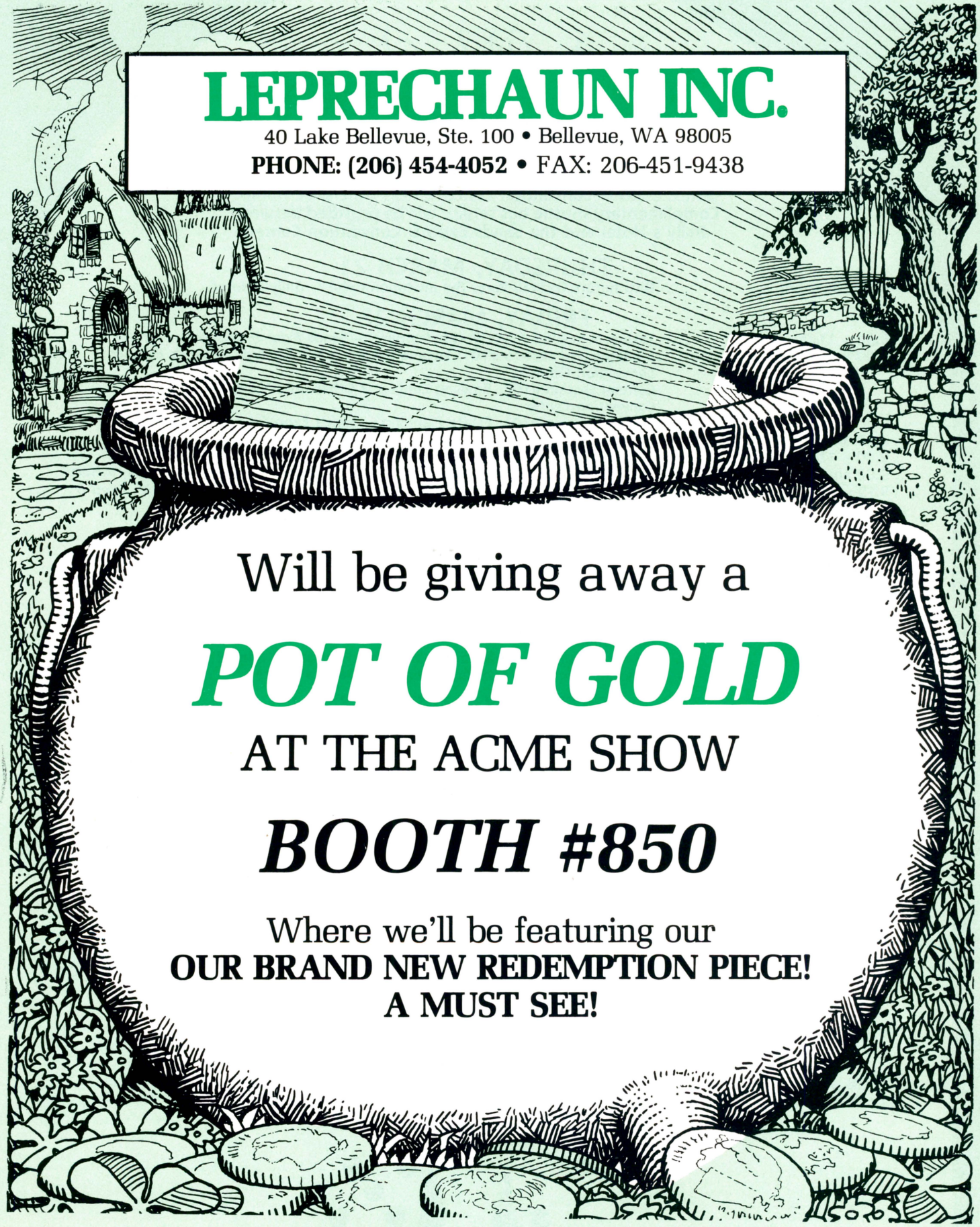

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Exhibits and Seminars will be held at the Sands Expo & Convention Center unless otherwise noted. Complimentary shuttle bus service will be provided between Bally's Hotel and the Sands Expo & Convention Center.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21

8:00-10:00 pm ..... Distributors Cocktail Party (by invitation only) — *Bally's Hotel*

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

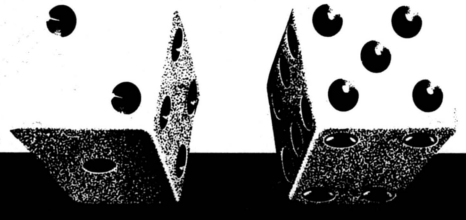
8:00 – 11:00 am ..... Technical Session #100: Power Supplies — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
8:00 – 10:00 am ..... Management Session #101: Location Profit & ROI Analysis — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
General Session #102: Bowling Centers & Other Gold Mines — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
General Session #103: Estate Planning — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
8:00 am – 3:00 pm ..... Registration Open — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
9:00 – 11:00 am ..... Exhibits Open — Distributors Only — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
9:00 am – 2:00 pm ..... Guest Program: That's Entertainment Tour/Luncheon — *Buses depart Bally's Hotel*
9:15 – 11:00 am ..... General Session #205: Video Lottery & Gaming: Outlook For '91— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
10:15 am – 12:15 pm ..... Management Session #104: Performance Management — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
General Session #105: Ways & Means To Increase Price Per Play — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
11:00 am – 5:00 pm ..... Exhibits Open — General Trade Admission — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
3:00 – 6:00 pm ..... Technical Session #106: Monitors — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
3:00 – 5:00 pm ..... General Session #107: Arcade Security: Alarming News — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
7:00 – 10:00 pm ..... American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation Annual Appreciation Dinner honoring Lou Dunis and Ray Galante — *Caesar's Palace*

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

8:00 am – 3:00 pm ..... Registration Open — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
8:00 – 11:00 am ..... Technical Session #200: Conversions — *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
8:00 – 10:00 am ..... Management Session #201: 50 Of The Best Ideas In Management— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
General Session #202: Redemption: Trends In The 90's— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
General Session #203: Location Planning— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
9:00 – 11:00 am ..... Exhibits Open — Distributors Only— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
9:00 am – 5:00 pm ..... Guest Program: Valley of Fire Tour/Box Lunch — *Buses depart Bally's Hotel*
10:15 am – 12:15 pm ..... Management Session #204: How To Prepare An Equipment Budget— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
11:00 am – 5:00 pm ..... Exhibits Open — General Trade Admission— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
3:30 – 5:30 pm ..... Manufacturer's Firing Line (FREE ADMISSION)— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
5:30 – 7:30 pm ..... All-Show Cocktail Party (FREE ADMISSION)— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
Presentation of: AAMA Achievement Awards, Play Meter Awards for Excellence, Play Meter Ralph Lally Award

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

8:30 am – 3:00 pm ..... Registration Open— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
8:30 – 9:30 am ..... "The Future of Coin-Op" featuring Nolan Bushnell (FREE ADMISSION) with complimentary continental breakfast — *Bally's Hotel*
10:00 am – 4:00 pm ..... Exhibits Open — General Trade Admission— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*
12:00 Noon ..... American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation Raffle— *Sands Expo & Convention Center*



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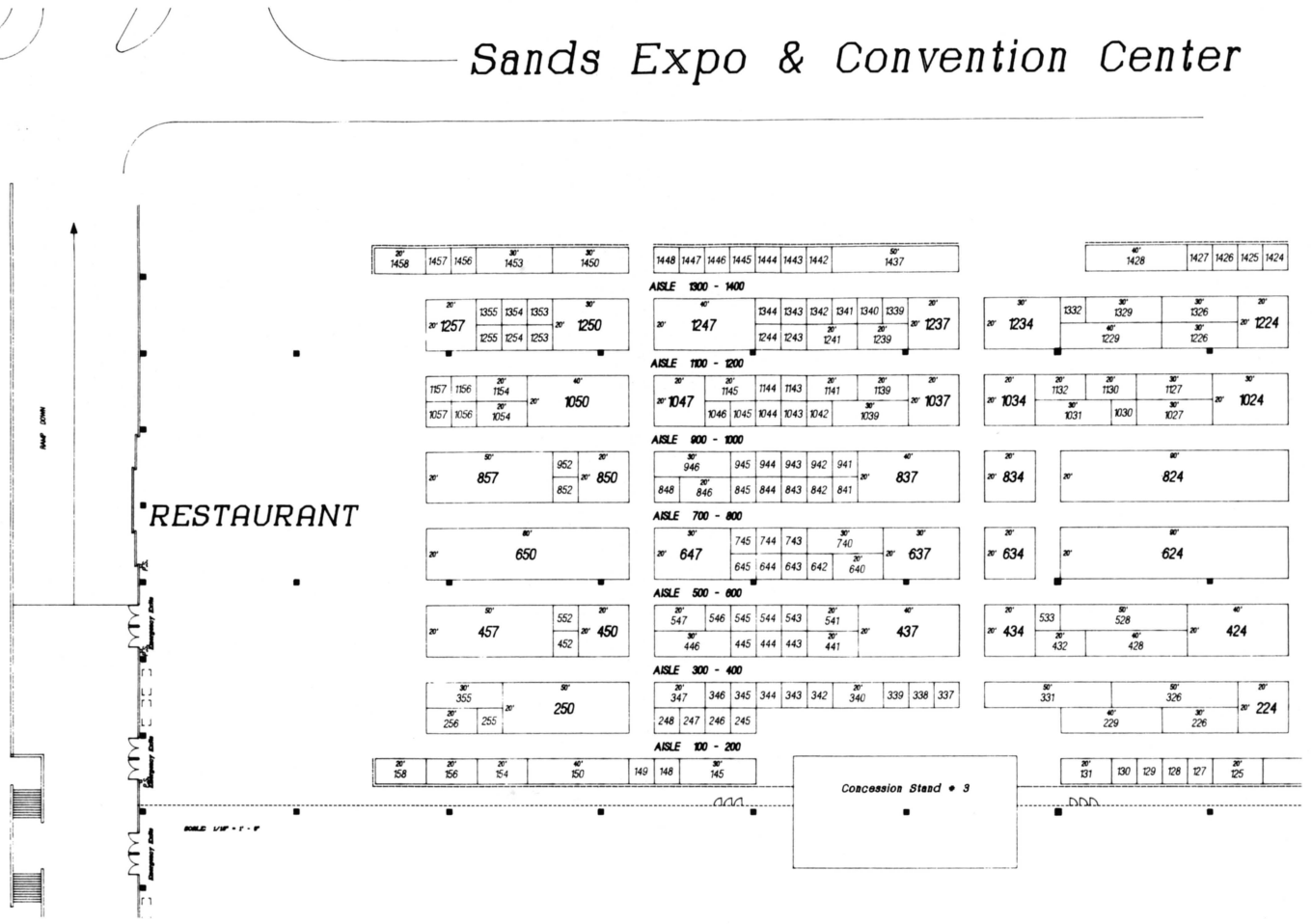
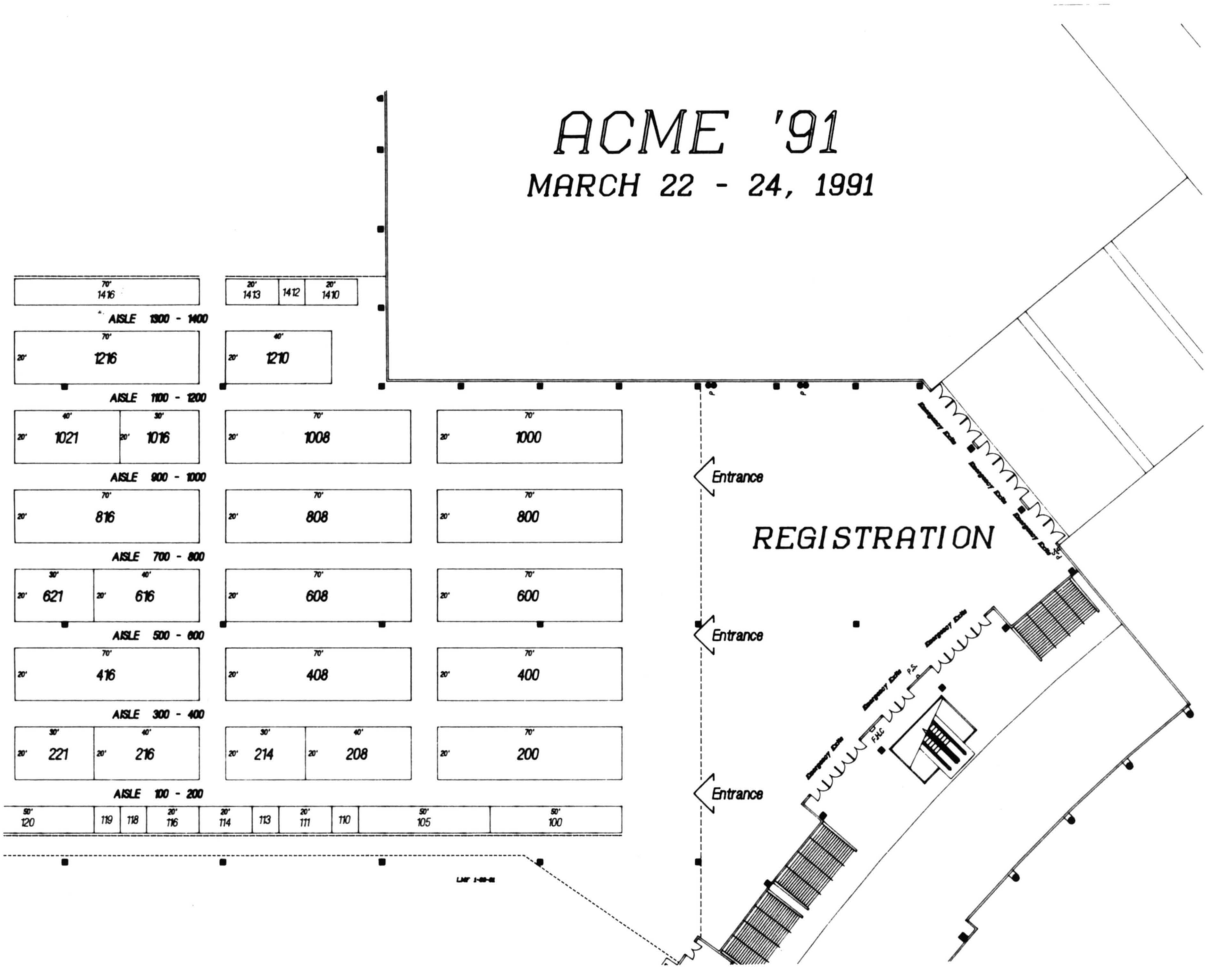


ACME '91 EXHIBITORS:

A-1 Products.....533
Ace Novelty Co.....105
Acme Premium Supply.....1428
Action Lighting.....945
Adastra.....1034
Advanced Graphic Designs.....248
Advent Technology.....1339
Aeries International.....1445
Alman Enterprises.....1458
Alter Enterprises.....229
American Sammy.....647
American Shuffleboard.....1237
American Simulators.....118
American Technos.....1037
Amusement Equipment Exch.....145
Amusement World.....1340
Anscot Distributing.....350
Arachnid.....424
Asahi Seiko USA.....1154
Asia Star Enterprise.....1427
Atari Games.....408
B&C Trading.....545
BRW Control Systems.....845
Bally Gaming.....347
Baton Lock & Hardware.....544
Bay-Tek.....1130
R.H. Belam Co.....434
Best Mfg. Co.....148
Betson Enterprises.....208
Bob's Space Racers.....1234
Bonita Marie.....740
Bottelsen Part Co.....to be announced
Dan Brechner & Co.....326
Bromley, Inc.....256
Bundra Games.....255
C.D. Jukebox Kit Co.....1445
Canadian Coin Box Magazine.....110
Capcom USA.....624
Capitol Lighting/Gem Sound.....1156
Carousel International.....340
Clever Devices Ltd.....1426
Coastal Amusement Distribs.....416
Cofusa Enterprises.....1257
Coin Acceptors.....114
Coin Concepts.....837
Coin Controls.....1410
Coin Mechanisms.....432
D&R Industries.....842
Dart World.....1024
Data East USA.....1000
Debbie's Amusements.....644
Deltronic Labs.....129
Design Plus.....446
Deutsche Wurlitzer.....224
Doyle & Associates.....1229
Dynamo Corporation.....1216
E.S.D. Co.....942
Eagle Lift.....127
East Coast Design.....546
Electro Games Industries.....852
EuroSlot.....1425
Exidy.....128
Exit Entertainment.....850
Eygo Co.....452
Fabtek.....634
Foto Fantasy.....445
Game Sales Manufacturing.....345
Games & Leisure Magazine.....645
Gemini Sound Products.....252
Grayhound.....528
Great Lakes Dart Dist.....846
HMS Monaco Et Cie Ltd.....116
Hamilton Manufacturing.....1332
Hantarex.....450
Happ Controls.....120
Hayes Specialties.....1353
Hoffman & Hoffman.....352
I.C.E......1039
Imperial International.....214
Irem.....637
J.E.R.M. Enterprises.....1341
J-S Sales.....1239
Jaisy.....1042
Jaleco USA.....1210
Jamp Corp.....1342
Just Kiddie Rides.....1142
Just Vibrations Int'l.....1442
Kaneko USA.....1047



Kiddie Rides USA.....640
Konami.....824
Kramer Mfg.....1016
L.A. East.....552
Laramie Interests.....834
Lazer-Tron.....1326
Leisure Entertainment.....1250
The Leland Corp.....200
Leprechaun.....850
Lock America.....331
Loewen-America (NSM).....650
Machine-O-Matic Ltd.....1450
Mars Electronics.....1224
Mayoni Enterprises.....226
McO'River, Inc.....1253
Meltec.....1226
Merit Industries.....437
Micro Mfg.....150
MicroProse.....857
J.R. Minick & Assoc.....1328
Mobile Record Service.....848
Muncie Novelty Co.....1139
Nadel & Sons Toy Corp.....1127
Namco America.....457
Nanco/Nancy Sales.....337
National Sports Games.....1440
National Ticket Company.....130
Nevis, Inc.....1355
Nintendo of America.....400
Nova Technologies.....156
PMI Toys & Novelties.....1021
PVT, Inc.....444
Patt Supply.....1424
Pearson Products.....346
Penn-Ray.....125
Perfect 360 Controls.....1456
Pioneer Laser Entertainment.....1247
Plush-4-Play.....441
Plush Appeal.....1448
Premier Technology.....616
Prizes!.....131
Quantum Industries.....1329
Quicksilver Development.....1045
Ram Star.....1241
Rebecca's.....1141
Record Source Int'l.....253
RePlay Magazine.....745
Rock-Ola Manufacturing.....946
Romstar.....808
Rosette.....1031
Rowe International.....100
SMS Mfg. Corp.....416
SNK Corp. of America.....1008
S.O.S. Good Stuff.....158
Scan Coin.....1015
Scan Coin.....353
Seeburg Phonograph Corp.....1413
Sega Enterprises USA.....800
Seidel Amusement Machine.....254
Selectra Int'l. Designs.....1447
Sharp Image Electronics.....621
Silent Partner.....1056
Skee Ball.....1132
Smart Industries.....816
Space Age Electronics.....154
Standard Changemakers.....1046
Star Track, Inc.....355
Strata Group.....1050
Sunmark Business Products.....1446
Superior Toy Novelty.....541
Taito America Corp.....608
Tavern Sports Int'l.....1457
Technology Exclusive, Inc.....247
Tecmo.....428
Tekbilt, Inc.....547
3-Koam Co.....1054
Tornado Table Soccer.....342
Tourist Attractions Parks Mag.....1412
U.S. Amusement Auctions.....149
Valley Recreation Products.....216
Vari-Tech Int'l.....1437
Vending Times.....119
Vendtron.....130
Wells-Gardner Electronics.....642
Wico Corp.....1027
Roger Williams Mint.....113
Zamperla, Inc.....1453

SNEAK PREVIEW

what new games will be unveiled at this month's ACME? RePlay sneaks a peek at videos, pins & redemption games

Where's that crystal ball when you need it? Valentine's Day was still a future event when we phoned manufacturers for this report. We asked what **new** titles would be shown at the upcoming ACME. Any information received after this story went to press, appears in our "News Digest" or "Hot Off the Press" section.

As usual, some factories didn't know yet what games they would show at ACME. Others prefer to hold back the information until the drapes come off the actual game in Las Vegas. Also, we simply didn't address the jukeboxes, table games, etc. which are largely the same all year long. The following rundown, then, is by no means complete... but here's what we were able to learn about the **new** machines you'll see at this year's American Coin Machine Exposition, March 22-24, slated for the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas.

VIDEO GAMES

American Sammy: a two-player space shooting video called *Paladin* will be shown, plus one other "surprise" game. This firm is one to keep an eye on; chat with them at ACME about their future plans for 1991.

American Technos: this firm, which is moving April 1 to new offices in Cupertino, Calif., will show a videotape which previews the gameplay of a new video game title, *WWF Wrestlefest.* Execs say the game won't actually be released until May or June, but the trade will certainly be looking forward to this sequel to Technos' earlier wrestling hit.

Sega's new driver Rad Mobile *in moving cabinet form; it's also available in uprights.*

Atari will show four new games at ACME. One is a deluxe (and we mean *really deluxe)* version of *Race Drivin'* which is slated for summer release. Think multiple monitors... As one of the leading U.S. firms, we know for sure Atari has a lot of exciting product in the works but... they don't want to spoil the surprise. "Our other games will represent a variety of kits and dedicated uprights," smiled marketing chief Mary Fujihara. "Sorry — no specific names to be revealed yet!"

Betson Enterprises: their big-screen, laserdisc shooting game *Mad Dog McCree* was one of the biggest hits of last fall's AMOA Expo and has earned strongly on locations since then. Betson will preview *Who Shot Johnny Rock?* whose new software features a 1930s private-eye, crime-fighting scenario set in Chicago. As in *Mad Dog,* the new game features a first-person, real-life video scenes in which the player takes the part of hero. This time out, you're a private eye who tracks down the murderer, helped by an sexy onscreen female character named Red (who carries a tommygun).

Capcom will lead off with *Street Fighter II,* a sequel to their 1985 hit. Sales topper Jeff Walker says test earnings are smashing and that "it's the number one game" at a major national arcade chain out-

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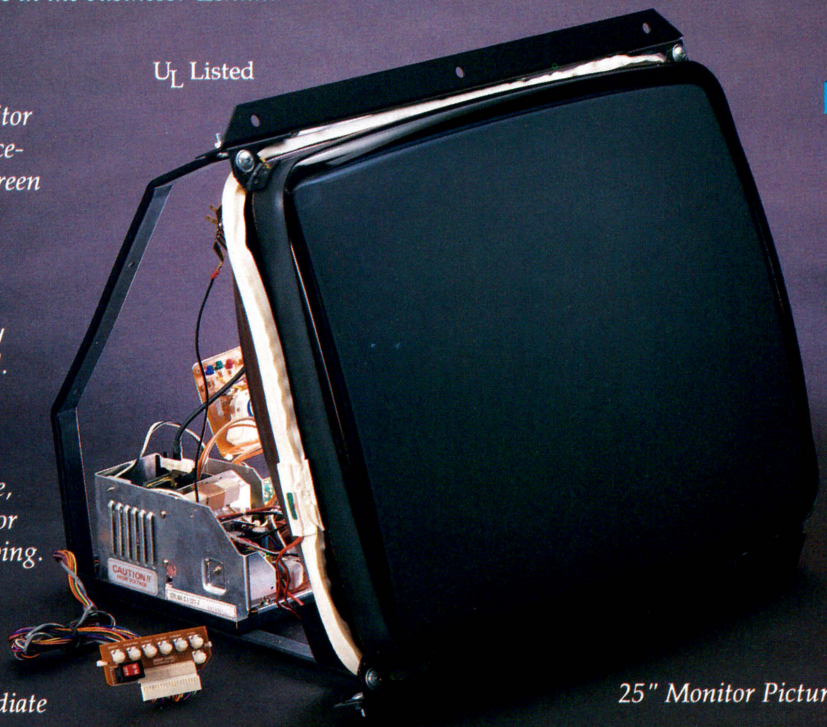

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Namco America's Final Lap 2 *two-player, two-monitor driving game.*

let. (Please see separate story elsewhere in this issue for more on this game.) Also from Capcom: two full lanes of their coin-op bowling import *Bowlingo* will be set up for operators to see and play. Quite an attraction!

Data East promises a good selection of new video. Most are still under wraps but we can tell you there's a lot of excitement and behind-the-scenes development and testing of different products going on. Will their promised CD-ROM/ Digital Video Interactive game appear at ACME, as some sources have claimed? "We don't have a formal release date right now," Data East execs smiled. Guess we'll all have to check out their booth at ACME and see if they clear up the mystery in Las Vegas.

Irem of America will debut *Gun Force,* a shoot-'em-up video with a jungle setting and lots of different vehicles and weapons to enliven the action. "It's got Irem's usual great graphics and is doing very well on test," reported the subsid's prexy Frank Ballouz.

Kaneko: many operators will get their first chance at ACME to see *Gals Panic,* an adult-themed striptease game which did quite well in Japan. (The cartoon images are about as risque as an early *Playboy* pictorial.) Some savvy U.S. operators have said they think it will earn nicely in truck stops, certain bars, etc.

Jaleco USA: the firm's Howie Rubin told us that a dual-monitor version of *Cisco Heat* will be on stage at ACME, along with one or more kits. The company hopes to bring five kits and two "simulators" to the coin-op market per annum! Jaleco in Japan recently bought Bit Box, the design company that played a key role in the development of *Enduro Racer* and *Hang On,* so look for some special products from this new Japanese-American concern.

Konami only plans to show one major new game, but it's a winner: *The Simpsons,* a dedicated four-player video. Operators who have the piece on test say it's absolutely terrific. By the way, Konami intends for the game to go out in dedicated format to all world markets — and they've requested that their Japanese plant follow this plan.

Namco of America: the new U.S. subsidiary of this Japanese giant will show *Final Lap 2,* a two-player, two-monitor sequel to their popular racing game. First seen in Japan last fall (where it was a big hit), this title should fill the bill very nicely for U.S. operators seeking a new driving game. The game now has four exciting race courses to select from (Japan, Italy, Monaco and the U.S.). Up to four units may be linked, allowing eight players to compete in the same race, while seeing their competitors onscreen. Manufactured in the U.S., it will include two 25" monitors, plywood cabinet, backlit header and diamond-plate aluminum floorboard.

Namco will also show *Steel Gunner,* the dedicated upright video gun game which most U.S. tradesters liked best of anything shown at last fall's JAMMA. Ten weeks of tests in the USA have brought "fantastic" results, according to Namco's U.S. sales and marketing chief Joanne Anderson. The game is a sci-fi, anti-terrorist themed unit for two players simultaneously. Ships in April.

Nintendo: among the new titles slated for this firm's PlayChoice system are *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II* and *Mega Man III.* The first "Turtles" game for PlayChoice was different from the Konami coin-op hit of 1990; this new PlayChoice pak basically ***is*** the Konami coin-op game, translated for PlayChoice system use.

Romstar: their Neo•Geo kits *Sengoku, King of the Monsters* and *Burning Fight* will be shown, kitted into other cabinets like *Double Dragon, Joust, Robotron,* etc. "This is what the kits of the future will be like," said the firm's Rene Lopez.

Sega is a big believer in "new technology" and they're going to have some eye-popping examples at ACME. They debuted a sitdown driver called *Radmobile* at the JAMMA show last fall, featuring a 32-bit hardware system (most current coin-op games have 8- or 16-bit systems) that results in "graphics five times sharper than most games," says the firm. Now U.S. operators will have a chance to see *Radmobile* in both a moving, sitdown cabinet version and an upright version. Both U.S. versions have sleeker, flashier cabinets re-styled for the American market. Gameplay takes you on a transcontinental race, featuring obstacles unique to each locale. Players use their rearview mirror, headlights for night driving, windshield wipers in torrential downpours, and speed-sensitive steering to win the race. Operators will probably race to see who gets the first production units.

SNK: At ACME, look for new titles for the growing Neo•Geo system. The flexibility of this system has gone from the six-, four- and two-slot system cabinets available from SNK itself, to the one-slot con-

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version kit marketed by Romstar. Remember though, all software (except for the pak that comes with the Romstar kit) are purchasable only from SNK's authorized dealers.

Strata Group: The sales arm of that U.S. design house, Incredible Technologies, will display their first non-sports themed video. It's a "redemption video game" called *Peggle.* Players use a spinner control and start a button to give the cute, colorful title character a 30-second joyride on two concentric circles of pegs. Idea is to work fast, clear the pegs, keep the character moving — and keep him from falling into one of the carnival train cars passing below him. Strata prexy Richard Ditton calls it a cute, non-threatening game that appeals to all types of players, including women and children. This company created the long-earning *Capcom Bowling,* so check out their latest!

Taito of America: at last — a socially responsible video game! Protecting the environment and cracking down on illegal game poachers in the African wilderness are hot topics for the '90s...and Taito America is right on top of the times with their video kit *Growl.* It started shipping the third week in February, but many operators will get their first chance to see it at ACME. Taito may also have some even newer videos on show in Las Vegas, execs said...plus some redemption pieces!

Data East's Checkpoint *pinball.*

Williams/Bally-Midway: a new version of their very cute video concept *Trog* lets players guide the cartoon dinosaurs with their joystick. Many new twists and features have also been added. Another new video may be introduced, the factory said.

PINBALL

Data East: one new pin you'll see at ACME is *Checkpoint,* themed around race driving. The player turns a chrome-plated key starter to begin. Digital sounds (roaring engines, music, etc.) and a heavy-duty motor shaker are just the start of the game's goodies. How about letting the player choose his own music? (Rock, country, rap, jazz or soul.) How about a revolutionary "dot matrix display" on the backboard (shows instructions, messages and scoring)? This game's got it all!

Premier: The Gottlieb factory will debut a multi-level, multi-feature game called *Cactus Jack's* with a country rock music track and a tongue-in-cheek theme. Backglass art depicts three singing cacti who wear sunglasses and cowboy hats ...and they're being pelted with eggs and fruit by an unhappy audience! This musical trio is duplicated with animated rubber characters at the rear of the playfield area, though they don't interact with the ball. Ramps, light shows and sounds make this a state-of-the-art player's pin. Gameplay has players collect "fruit" for points; the more you score in regular play, the higher you can score in multiball. By the way, the cabinet is a bit longer than recent Premier games have been. "We pegged this game to be fine for the street but also to be especially strong for the arcades, bowling centers and other similar locations," said the firm's Dan Clarton. Be sure to stop by Premier's booth because they're really taking the "amusement" aspect of the amusement business to heart this time: staff will wear cowboy costumes and showgoers will get to compete on the game for "bonus bucks" — these "bucks" will serve as raffle tickets for a prize drawing for one of these pingames. The bonus bucks can al-

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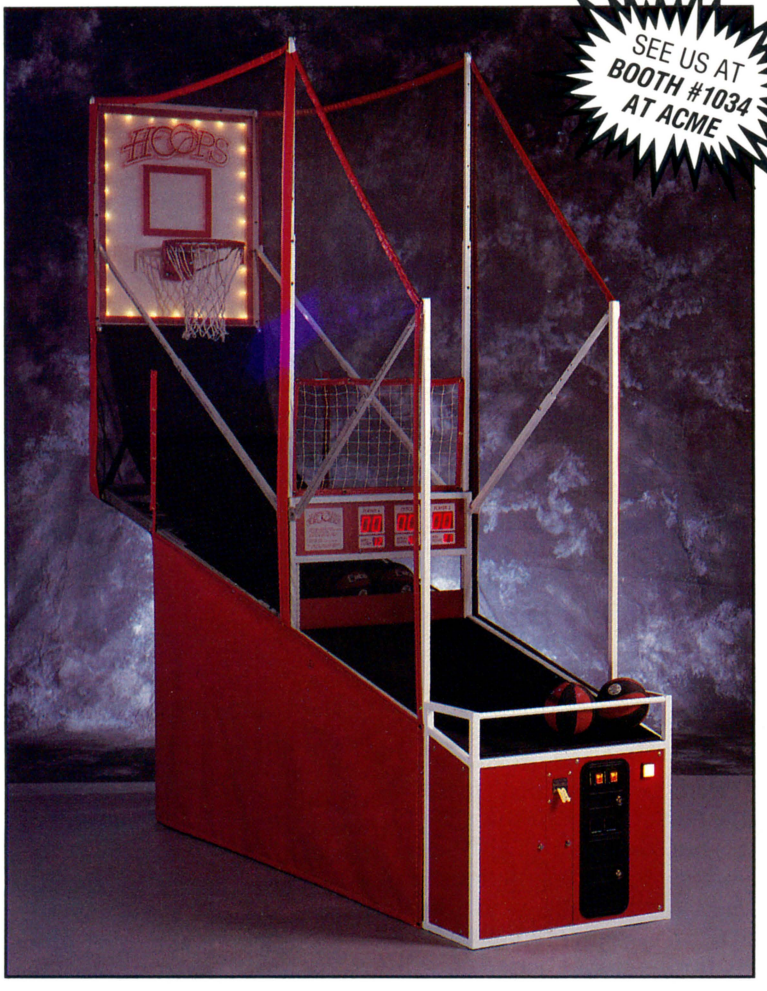
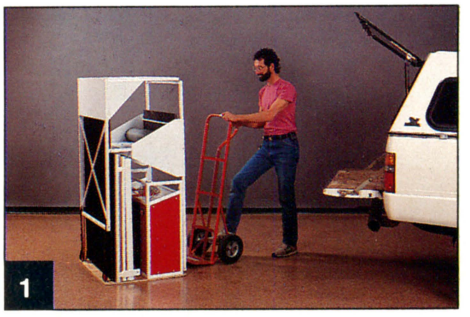


SEE US AT **BOOTH #1034** AT ACME



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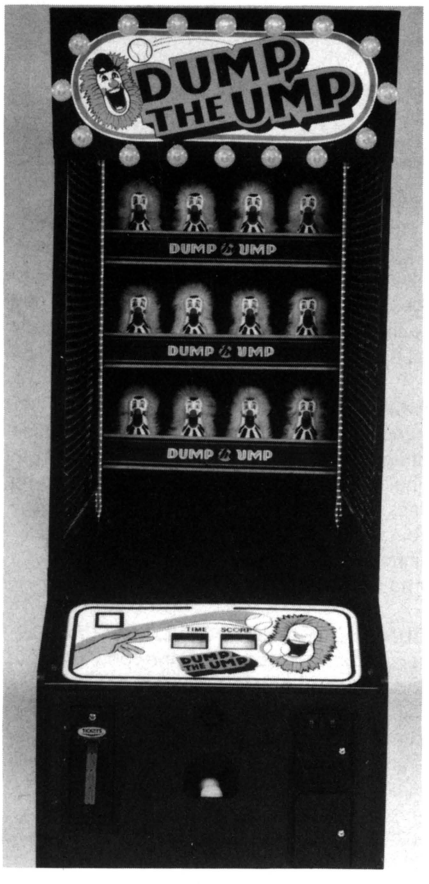
Bromley's Ghost Town.

so be cashed in for some hot-looking hats with the pinball's name on it.

Williams/Bally-Midway: the Midway side of the firm will show their new Bally pin *Harley-Davidson,* featuring a popular licensed theme. This pin incorporates the *Earthshaker* rumbling motor, timed with the game's motorcycle engine sounds and with multiball play. Simpler gameplay makes it perfect for the street (makes reliability higher, too) . . . and there's even a lower price for today's economy-minded operator! A new pin from the Williams side of the factory is also a possibility, execs said.



Doyle's Dump The Ump.

REDEMPTION & VIDEO LOTTERY

Betson: along with their fine line of skill games for kids, families and grown-ups, Betson may show a prototype of a "true skill redemption poker game" called *Quick Draw,* based on an earlier (very successful) game from them. As with all Betson card-themed games, it truly is "amusement only."

Bob's Space Racers: Operators will get their first look at *Sidewinder,* a one-person novelty skill piece that requires the player to use a steering wheel to tilt the playfield so as to roll a ball along a winding path toward the backboard. "It's a reverse eye-hand coordination game," smiled the firm's Jerry Weiman. By the way, an updated version of *Whac-A-Mole* will feature some funny new sounds and voices.

Bromley Inc.: Shades of the 1950s! Bromley's new "shooting gallery" piece *Ghost Town* features a rifle attached to an upright cabinet that is slightly larger than a video cabinet. Players try to hit all 20 stationary targets; a ticket is typically vended with every other target that is hit. The game is adjustable, but has been tested at 30 seconds for 20 shots; the firm says it's earning $500 a week in a Chicago location using that setting. Lauran Bromley says seasoned players can almost get all 20 targets for a special 10-ticket bonus, but "either the pressure of the time factor or just playing the machine tends to make a perfect score very hard to get . . . your eyes go blurry; your trigger finger gets sweaty, the game is audibly telling you time is running out . . . you just blow the last shot!" This timeless theme sounds tantalizing for players of all ages, and profitable for operators of all types of locations.

Design Plus: this dedicated firm will debut *Roll-R-Ball Shuffle,* a mini-shuffleboard in a cocktail-type cabinet that's sized and themed just right for those bars and lounges where operators have been crying for new pieces, said the firm's Diane Seibert. Hey, they've even got drink ledges attached to the cabinet . . . and they'll sell matching barstools if you want! Digital sound, laser lighting and microprocessor-controlled time and score give the unit a bit of flash. Rollers lock down when the game is not in play.

Design Plus' Roll-R-Ball Shuffle.

Doyle & Associates: this leading redemption innovator does it again with *Dump the Ump,* a new ticket-vending game that starts shipping this month. The player pitches balls to knock over clown-like "umpires." Two versions are available: standard sized and kiddie sized.

GaMCO: Personable redemption pro Ron Yaffe says "We're introducing four games in 1991 — more than we've ever done in the business!" A new *Lotto Picks* (a number-picking game with three chambers of bouncing, numbered ping pong balls) has been adapted to fit in with the lottery in all 50 states. A variation on

GaMCO's Lotto Picks.

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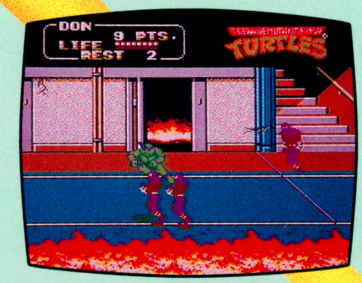
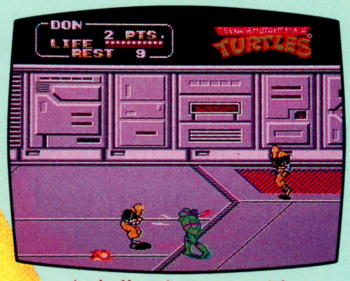
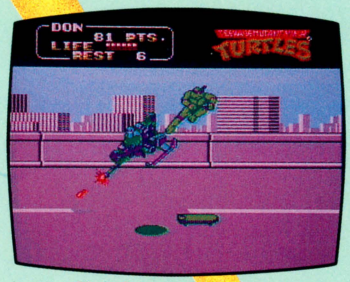


Choose one of four turtles on your way to saving April from the evil foot clan.



A challenging quest with many enemies to conquer.



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Nintendo's whopping PlayChoice™ library also includes these hot new releases: **Yo!Noid**[2], **Nintendo World Cup**™[3], **Dr. Mario**™, **Rad Racer II**[4], **Solar Jetman**™[5], and **Mega Man III**[6]. At Nintendo® the action never stops. So order now! Contact your authorized Nintendo Distributor or Nintendo of America Inc., at 206/882-2040.

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this called *Hi Five* features "poker balls" with card-styled markings; three players can try to get best possible hand. This is a novelty which awards no prizes but makes a great bar piece. Both games are inexpensive and give great ROI, Ron says. *The Music Machine* will be a self-loading, two-player (simulataneous) rotary merchandiser, designed to let players win audio cassette tapes. GaMCO is working with K-Tel Records (you see their music commercials on TV all the time) and operators will be able to buy many tapes from K-Tel at tremendous discounts (cheaper than plush!) It plays extremely fast and Ron says test earnings are quite good.

The Pellegrini Group (including Yankee Games, PMP and others) will debut a fascinating redemption novelty requiring players to move a ball through a transparent tube. That's all we know about it, except that trade sources believe it can be used as a bartop "booze barometer" operating on a dry-cell battery! (Potential claim-jumpers beware; knowing Ed Pellegrini, this concept is his!)

Smart Industries will augment their line of cranes and basketball games with some interesting new items, including a football toss game and a new, mechanical basketball-themed game in a video upright-type cabinet. To play this latter unit, players manipulate controls to maneuver "puppet-type" characters who throw the ball. Sounds very promising!

SMS Manufacturing will bow a new redemption game, *Robo-Bop*. It's a one-player, ticket-vending kiddie game reminiscent of a classic old "striker" carnival game. Kids use a canvas-type hammer to strike the ground-level target. Instead of sending a weight up a tall scale, the hammer blow causes a lighted post in the center of an 8' tall, talking robot to light up. Lights run up to a variable height, depending on the force of the blow. Also, the final version of SMS's new *Video Touch* game for video lotteries, cruise ships, Indian reservations, European gaming markets, etc. will be displayed. This game features touch-screen technology combined with a multiple game format. At least three different poker games, plus keno and bingo, are the minimum number of games you'll see with this unit in Las Vegas according to Jim Pietrangelo of SMS.

Taito America: best known for video, this major Japanese firm will probably bring three redemption games to ACME, execs said, which leads to an interesting question: how many other previously "non-redemption" firms will jump on the redemption bandwagon this time out? Several more, we'd wager.

As we said, this story contains far from a complete list of upcoming new products; many more surprises will doubtlessly be unveiled at the show itself. Reading about a new game is fine, but there's absolutely nothing like seeing it, and playing it, for yourself. We urge readers to find out the rest of the "news about new products" for themselves... on the exhibit floor at ACME!

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HI-TECH UPDATE

video manufacturers agree "it's high time for high tech"; here's current bill & coming attractions for American arcades

The coin machine industry and hi-tech go back a long way together. Coin-op was the first to bring recorded music to American consumers, when the jukebox was invented over 100 years ago. We were also the first to bring electronic, amplified sound to the American market, with the reinvention of the jukebox in 1928. We were the first to bring computers to most of the consumer market with *Pac-Man* in 1982.

But these days, coin-op is not as far out on the leading edge of technology as perhaps we once were. Nine years after CD hit the consumer market, CD jukeboxes are finally the dominant sales product in the coin-op amusements industry. Hi-tech continues to race from the lab into the consumer marketplace, before it reaches the arcades and street locations.

But maybe coin-op is starting to close the gap. Some hi-tech is (finally) coming to the amusement machine market. Let's hope we get aboard some of these other bandwagons a little faster than we did with compact disc music!

Here's a rundown of several recent technological developments, plus a forecast of some items you'll soon see at your local distributor . . . or in some cases, your local electronics store.

COIN-OP CD ROM

The industry took note last month after a news leak that Data East was planning to bring out a truly high-tech coin-op video game. "They are coming out with the first coin-op CD-ROM based game," some sources said. "It will use a brand new video compression chip from Intel to create graphics as realistic as anything you see in the movies." Other sources questioned if, or when, such an achievement would actually be possible. When *RePlay* contacted Data East for details, the company would neither confirm nor deny timing or details of coin-op application of this technology.

Even more persistent rumors buzzed about the possibility that another major Japanese firm would display a CD-ROM or laserdisc-based game at ACME, using technology licensed from a consortium of non-industry developers. Here again, nobody wanted to go on the record . . . but we sure didn't get any denials, either. So it's not clear yet when, where, or from whom the first coin-op CD-ROM or laserdisc game will appear, but remember this: when rumors reach the trade's sales and marketing circles, you know something's getting near to the market.

We're playing catch-up here, since consumers have been able to use CD-ROM discs on their personal computers and home video game systems for a few years already. In 1989, an estimated $600,000 worth of CD-ROM software was sold; by now that market is undoubtedly even bigger.

Can't visualize what this new format does? A CD-ROM encyclopedia for your personal computer lets you see a color picture of, say, Leonard Bernstein; read or hear something about his life; sample some of his music with sophisticated CD sound reproduction (and view the score at the same time); see pictures of the city he lived in; watch films of him conducting and being interviewed; hear or read scholarly analysis of

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Video games using this versatile format are said to be "more like an interactive drama than a standard game." NEC already has five CD-ROM video games for their TurboGrafx home system, and they expect to release 16 more CD-ROM games this year. Sega and Nintendo are working on similar technology, according to sponsors of the Consumer Electronics Show. Also, Commodore has announced plans to market a CD-ROM home game system called CDTV. It looks like a VCR and Commodore claims to have 100 games, reference works and software titles in the works. Nolan Bushnell is heading up Commodore's "Interactive Products" group.

IMPROVED DIGITIZED GRAPHICS

Already on the distributor's floor (and atop the *RePlay* game chart) is *High Impact* from Williams Electronics. This four-player video kit uses digitized, live-action graphics. That is, Williams filmed real football players, referees, cheerleaders and coaches, then turned those film images into computer animation via a process called "digitizing," which translates pictures into numbers that are recorded on silicon chips. The result is a highly realistic-looking animated image which the player can control.

Yes, this technique has been used before with games like *Narc* and *Pit Fighter*. But Williams has taken the process to new heights in *High Impact*. "Past football games used only 100 'frames' of data," explained Eugene Jarvis, part of the game's design team. "*High Impact* includes over 2,000 individual frames of motion compressed into computer memory, which is the current limit for competitively-priced arcade games."

By the way, the computer gets multiple use out of those 2,000 frames by recombining them in an ingenious variety of ways. For example, to create the image of a halfback making a long run, the computer doesn't have to store this actual image. Instead, it can summon up a brief data sequence of a running player, program in the correct uniform color and jersey number, then repeat the action sequence over and over for as long as the run is supposed to last on screen. Thus, the same brief animation sequence can be adapted and multiplied for any or all players on the screen. This versatility greatly extends the range of realistic motions and images created — economically — by the game.

COIN-OP 3D SOUND

Coming (eventually) to video games from Capcom, a patented system called QSound uses standard stereo speakers to create a fantastic audio illusion. Different soundtracks seem to be generated simultaneously at points over, under, and all around the listener. The process was invented by a Canadian firm called Archer. Madonna has already announced plans to record an album in QSound. Reportedly, Capcom has purchased exclusive rights to use QSound in video games.

COIN-OP TOUCHSCREEN

This unique player control allows you to play the game or run the program by simply touching the indicated part of the screen. You can already see it in action in coin-op video poker games such as a new model by SMS Mfg. Of course, consumers have been able to use these at airports, national hardware store

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chains, etc. for several years now. Whether and how soon touchscreen will be adapted to non-poker video games is anyone's guess.

COMPUTER-AIDED GAMEPLAY

Williams' *High Impact* also heralds another industry first: computer-aided gameplay. Combined with simpler controls, this feature means that players can play "instinctively" (making split-second decisions without having to intellectually coordinate many buttons and functions) and the game itself will settle the details of player objectives and execution. Said Williams' John Newcomer: "It's sort of a like an automatic transmission. With this feature, the player can really get into the game emotionally and yet still perform well — even if he's a couch potato, or even if he's playing in a tavern and has consumed a couple of drinks."

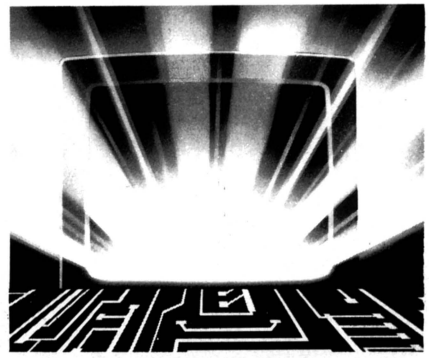
For example, a player can use his joystick to point the quarterback in a general direction and then hit the action button. The computer selects the correct action (make a pass) and determines proper execution (the ball goes to the halfback who's open on the 20 yardline). The computer also helps the player aim the ball.

"With 16-bit games like *Joe Montana Football* and *John Madden football* going to the home systems," observed Williams' Roger Sharpe, "you need something different and better in the world of coin-op. With *High Impact,* we offer something that the home can't duplicate . . . something that provides a reason for players to get out of their houses and play the games on location."

VOICE RECOGNITION

A computer that responds to voice commands? They're getting more common — and more sophisticated — all the time. Businesses already use them to dictate letters and trade stocks. Later this year, Sanyo plans to release a car stereo system that will obey the driver's spoken orders to change CDs, stop or start a new selection track, stop or start a cassette tape, or control the car radio.

Some jukebox manufacturers have speculated that downstream, voice recognition technology could be used for operators to sit in their offices, call up their jukeboxes and verbally order the jukebox to send them electronic data on cashbox take, most popular selections, etc.



HI-DEFINITION TV

Any industry whose most famous product uses video monitors has to be intrigued by this technology. The huge HDTV monitors contain far more lines of "visual information" than regular television, turning your TV screen into a gigantic, startlingly sharp, life-like image. Of course, they're not cheap. At present, an HDTV monitor costs lots more than a complete dedicated video game.

But HDTV monitors are slowly coming into use. Some Japanese TV programs are already broadcast in this format; a few U.S. commercials and other programming are also being filmed (but not broadcast) in HDTV these days. (That decision will pay off in several years when these show go into reruns.) In the latest development, some off-track betting parlors in the U.S. are about to begin testing use of HDTV in their broadcast of horseraces and other sporting events.

Obviously, coin-op is another "special" arena where HDTV might be applied before it reaches the average American home and the magic wears off. Assuming, that is, ROI justifies the prices, and assuming that the product is available to OEMs (original equipment manufacturers). Otherwise, coin-op will

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move to HDTV after consumers have adopted it and come to expect it (as we did in the case of CD music).

The main obstacle to bringing HDTV to the U.S. commercial broadcast market is finding a universal standard system for broadcasting. Zenith has developed such a system which it hopes the FCC will adopt as the industry standard in 1993. If so, the road to HDTV will be wide open. It's expected to be a billion dollar market by the year 2,000 (including worldwide hardware, software, consumer, business and military applications).

But make no mistake, HDTV is coming by early next decade. One reason that Japanese electronics firms like Sony and Matsushita have been buying up major U.S. movie and TV studios (Columbia, MCA-Universal, etc.) is because the Japanese want to ensure a supply of entertainment product. These Japanese firms will reportedly format their future software exclusively for laserdisc and HDTV hardware in a few years. This will help them convert the U.S. market over to their next generation of electronics products.

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AMERICA'S CHOICE ... for Coin Operated Kiddie Rides

AND OVER THE HORIZON...

The above represents just a sampling of hi-tech products which are already well along the consumer pipeline. Much wilder items are moving from the research lab to the product development stage already. For example:

- How about using your telephone as the ordering mechanism to turn your cable TV into a "home jukebox" for music videos? Limited market experiments with this are already underway. Some tradesters wonder what will happen if video games are ever transmitted in the same fashion.
- How about a headband that creates a TV image that floats in space in front of you...no screen needed? A working model is being shown around to various firms by Cyberspace Corp. in Georgia.
- How about compressing an entire movie onto a 5" CD? The Pioneer people in Japan have that one in the works.
- How about 3D graphics on full-motion video, with no polarized lenses or expensive holography needed? RCA/Columbia has invested nearly a million in developing this process.

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: if you thought the 1980s were about hi-tech, wait till you see the '90s!

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KIDDIES MANUFACTURING

Eric Torres reports phenomenal growth in kiddie ride market; his Puerto Rico-based firm (with many U.S. outlets) keeps up

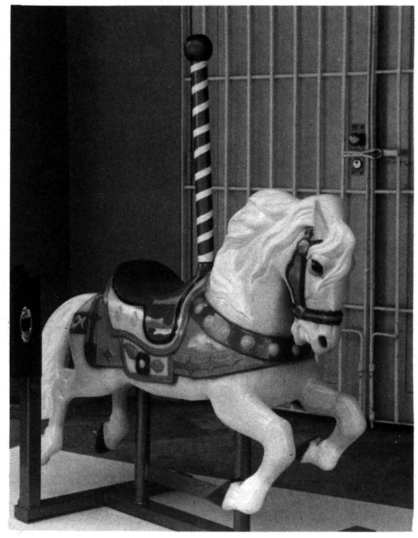
While most game revenues go up and down like a roller coaster," said Eric Torres, "kiddie ride revenues are increasing day by day!" Eric is president and CEO of Kiddies Manufacturing, a leading producer of coin-op children rides (Lares, Puerto Rico). He says the American market is in the middle of a kiddie ride boom, and that today's explosion is "only the beginning" of a long upward trend.

"Sales are up three-fold over last year," Eric declared. Accordingly, his firm has expanded its manufacturing facilities and work force by 40%. Another sign of the kiddie ride renaissance is the formation of an association especially dedicated to this type of product (American Kiddie Ride Assn.). As it happens, Eric Torres was one of the founders and serves on the board of the group.

Kiddies Manufacturing is happily wading into this growing market with additional funding for their R&D group. "We've introduced six new units in the last three months and will continue to introduce many others in the months to come," Eric stated. "We expect to have a whole new line by July of 1991. We're working on the high-end unit, as well as the down-to-earth operational and economic unit." Torres also promised to "meet or beat" anybody else's prices while providing the latest design and production technology. Said Torres: "We're prepared to meet the demand for a reliable and well-priced kiddie ride!"

At the American Kiddie Ride Assn. meeting last October is Eric Torres (center) with Steve Banks, Steve Caplan, Dick Salisbury and Anita Bennett.

The firm has several sales and customer service offices throughout the U.S. to serve its clients. Call 800/543-3437 for the office nearest you.



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MAD DOG'S MAKIN' BACON

Isn't it grand to report that an "AMOA Expo hit" is living up to its hot debut? Such hasn't always been the case, but the story of *Mad Dog McCree,* which began with a resounding boom at the New Orleans show, is moving along with legs as long as Magic Johnson's lugging a cash bag that would get the attention of the Hunt Brothers.

We're talking about the laser disc cowboy shootout developed by American Laser Games and marketed by Betson (which has the machines built for them at Dynamo). Anyone who's seen the game in action at a trade show or in a distributor's showroom (maybe even on location as the numbers begin to build) knows it's fierce fun. You put in a dollar's worth of coins or tokens, pop your pistol from the holster at the appropriate time in the screen saga and the scene on the tube reacts, depending on your speed.

You get three lives for your vend and when you miss, the scene shows an understanding undertaker tipping his hat. When you hit, the bad guy drops and you go on to the next. The wonderful thing is that it works both in the cash pan and in tech-

Pictures speak louder than words. Here's the crowd around Mad Dog McCree *at Ron Mogerman's Grand Prix in Ft. Lauderdale.* RePlay *shot this on Feb. 2.*

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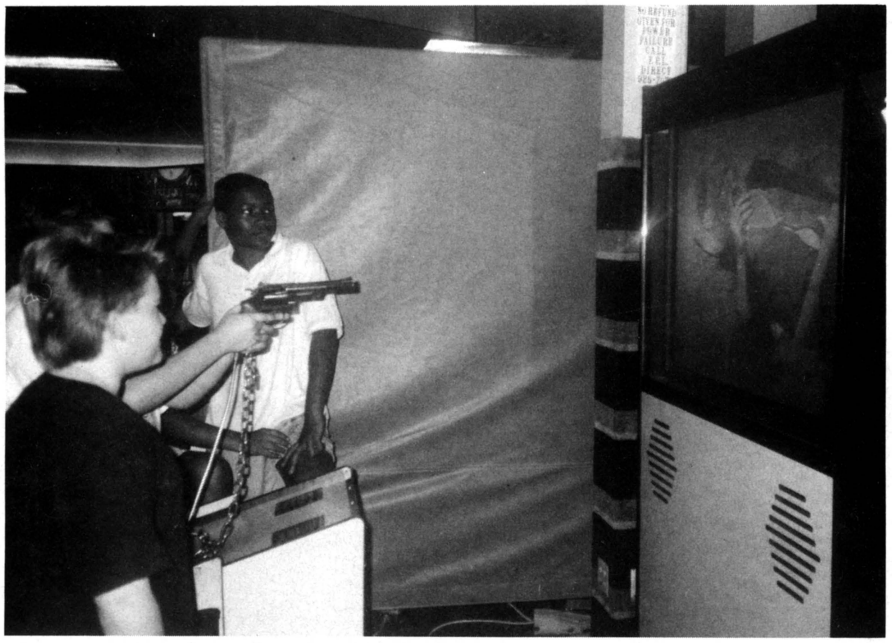
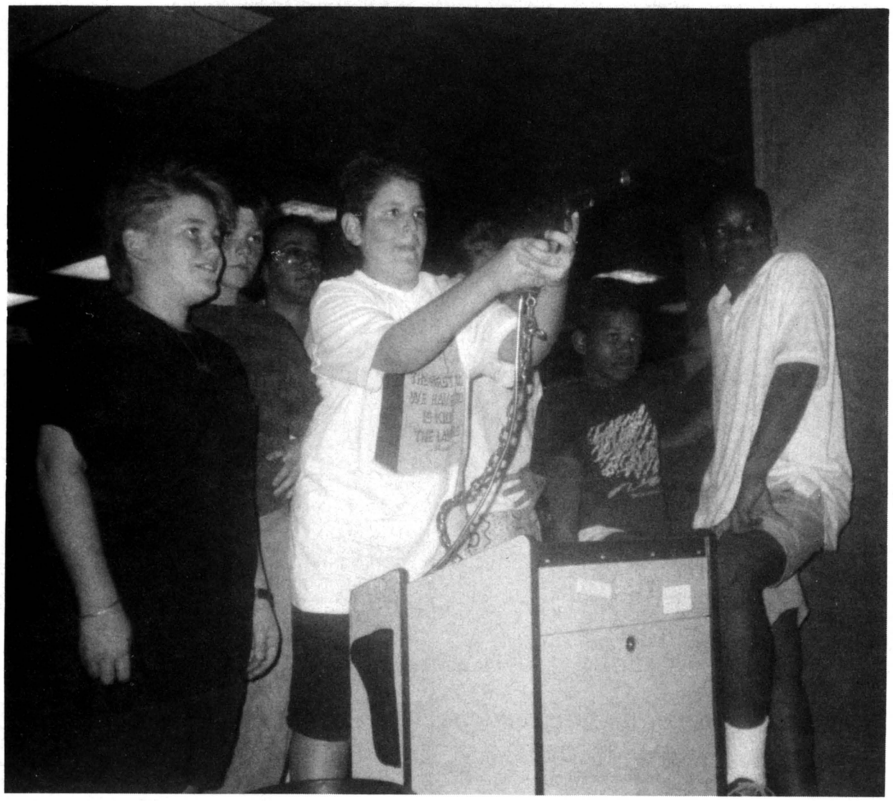


Gotcha! Youngster nails live-action cowpoke at Grand Prix. Sounds from speakers add to the attraction.

nique (the only principle glitch they have had was with the gun holdster combo; new ones have replaced it. It's a far cry from the original laser game days when compliments about earnings were so often blunted by criticism about breakdowns. This game, apparently, wins on both sides.

Peter Betti of Betson said around 400 machines will be on the domestic market by ACME time with an additional 300 sent offshore (Capcom will build *Mad Dog* in Japan, Atari Ireland for Europe, using Sony disc player, PCB, harness and its single disc supplied). Dynamo is presently building two versions for Betson's domestic use: a 50" screen using rear projection and a 33" monitor one (Betti estimates that two 33" versions are selling for every 50" unit).



Two-handed "marshall" in process of cleaning up the town while his buddies are watching.

Betti says collections nationwide have been running at $18 an hour on average. "The game almost never stops being played," he said. "If you want to see the attract mode, you have to come into a distributor showroom." (Betson deals through several picked U.S. distributors like Brady, Shaffer and SunBelt besides their own offices on both coasts and in Phoenix).

He said top spots can do $250 in a day, but more normal locations like pizza places and bowling centers often run around $100. The 50" rear-projected version (more costly) works well in a large arcade or a darkened location while the more popular 33" monitor version is obviously clearer to the eyeballs, especially in a normally-lit site.

Despite the fact that *Mad Dog* makes big bucks, Betti advised that a ROM chip has been developed to speed game play up a tad. "We'd like to get the average up to the low $20 figure a day," he advised. In truth, both versions of *Mad Dog McCree* are pricey, so the manufacturer's concentration on collections is understandable.

American Laser Games promised that software updates would be coming around twice a year. And while the *Mad Dog* version of this shooting gallery is still relatively new to the business, Betson will preview the followup, pre-war detective shootout called *Who Shot Johnny Rock* at the ACME show. It's set to ship mid-summer. All programs feature live-action footage of professional actors playing out their roles. *Mad Dog* scenes shift from a cowboy gloating to a cowboy dying, based upon player skill; we assume the same goes for the bad guys in *Johnny Rock*.

Curiously, there's no generic name to this laser disc system. Right now, it's *Mad Dog McCree*. When its disc is switched to the followup, it'll be *Johnny Rock*. It's a system without a name but one that's making powerbucks, is working (according to its maker) and has the seeds of longevity. There is a godzilla on the map.

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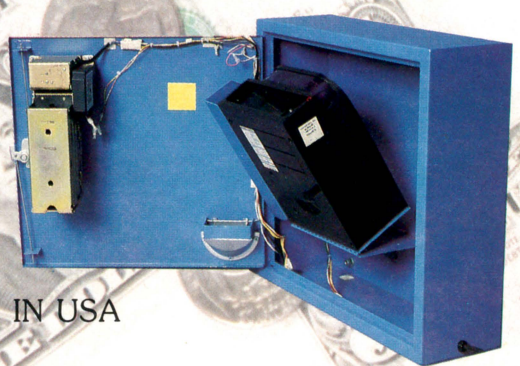

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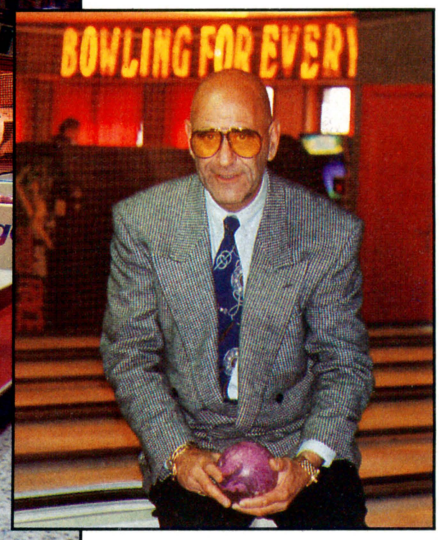

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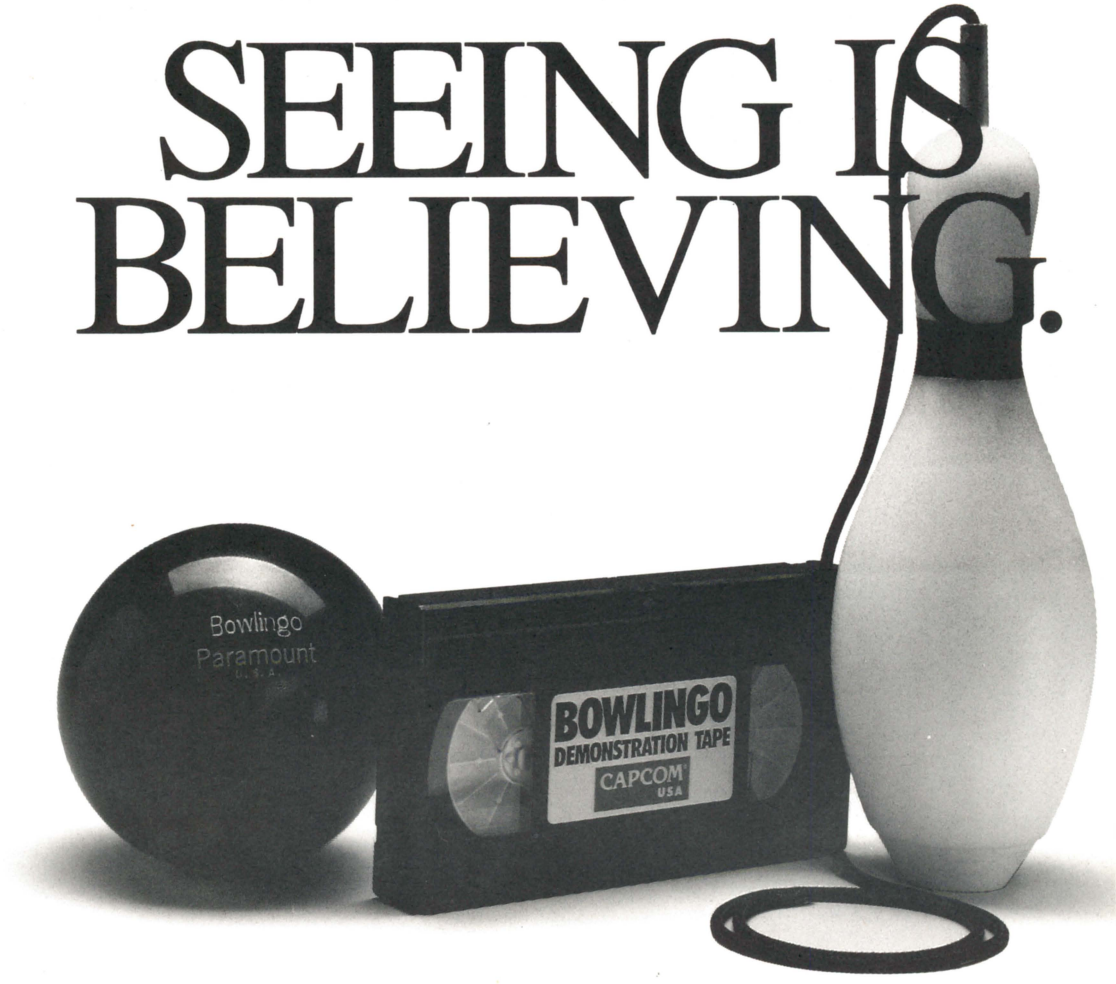

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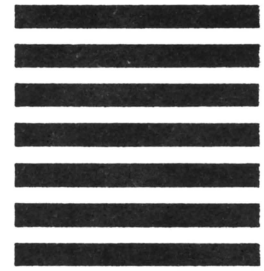

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The three requirements for success in business are:

1. LOCATION
2. LOCATION
3. LOCATION

RePlay looks at the health of the Great American Location — taverns, C-stores, malls, pizza places, truckstops and more in the words of the location experts themselves

Mega-hit products which draw crowds by themselves are rarities in our industry. In the workaday world of coin machine operating, success often depends on "putting your games where the people are" — i.e., operators depend on the location to pull in players. Having the right location can spell the difference between success and failure, profit and loss, for many an operator.

How healthy are the different types of U.S. locations these days? We contacted trade associations and industry publications which represent many of the major locations served by the coin machine industry. We asked them many questions, including: How strong is your market? Is the number and profitability of your type of location going up or down? Has the recession and/or the war affected customer traffic and spending patterns? How are coin-op games performing for you?

The fascinating answers seemed to confirm some timeless "truths" (truckers really do love those cranes). They also seemed to question certain cherished beliefs (on-site liquor places suggest DWI hasn't hurt as badly as we thought). Certain older locations, like C-stores, may be slowly divorcing us while some new ones, like pocket parks, are embracing us with gusto.

Reported effects of the recession are, as you'd expect, mixed: strong regions and lower-priced market niches are doing fine. Weak regions and higher-priced niches are struggling. Competition, promotion and service are the words on nearly every location's lips . . . and our allied industries are talking about maintaining or cutting prices, not raising them.

As you'll see, the "Great American Location" is feeling cautious, but basically optimistic, about long-term survival. Operators can take comfort in knowing most locations believe coin-op amusements remain an intrinsic part of their profit mix for today, and tomorrow. Read on for in-depth reports on several types of locations, their economic health and their outlook on coin-op.

CONVENIENCE STORES

'80s building boom leads to sometimes-painful "restructuring"; as earnings drop, many C-stores reportedly jettison coin-op games

Coin machine operators bemoan convenience stores as one of their bleakest performers in the last few years. Quite a few operators report earnings of videos and pins have dropped 40 to 50% from 1988 highs in this type of location.

"I do a yearly analysis of our stores and I'd say earnings dropped at least 40% in the last few years," said one large Eastern operator. "The result has been a corresponding decline in the number of stores who want our games. In 1986 we operated in 176 C-stores and our average annual earnings per store was over $10,000. But by 1990, we had equipment in only 81 stores and the yearly average earnings was $5,329."

A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM

Similar figures were reported by a large Midwestern operator and two West Coast operators, who all said their C-store earnings have dropped around 50% in the last few years. "We have steadily put top hits into some of these stores, but the earnings keep falling," said one operator. "A strong location that earned over $500 weekly at its peak, now earns just a little over $250. Another decent store is now stuck in the $120 to $140 per week range, no matter what we try."

Why did game earnings sink? "The customer traffic just is not there," explained the Eastern operator. "Competition from home video is part of it. But public concerns about safety, juvenile delinquents and crime in the streets are also partly responsible. Too many convenience stores are hangouts for teenagers. Unfortunately, video games still have a questionable image in that regard."

The consumer press is also full of bad news about the basic health of C-store market itself. Major gas stations chains like Arco and Exxon have added mini-markets, increasing competition and hurting the business of many C-stores. Southland (owner of the 7-Eleven chain) is in bankruptcy court, seeking cash from Japanese investors. The Circle K chain is in Chapter 11.

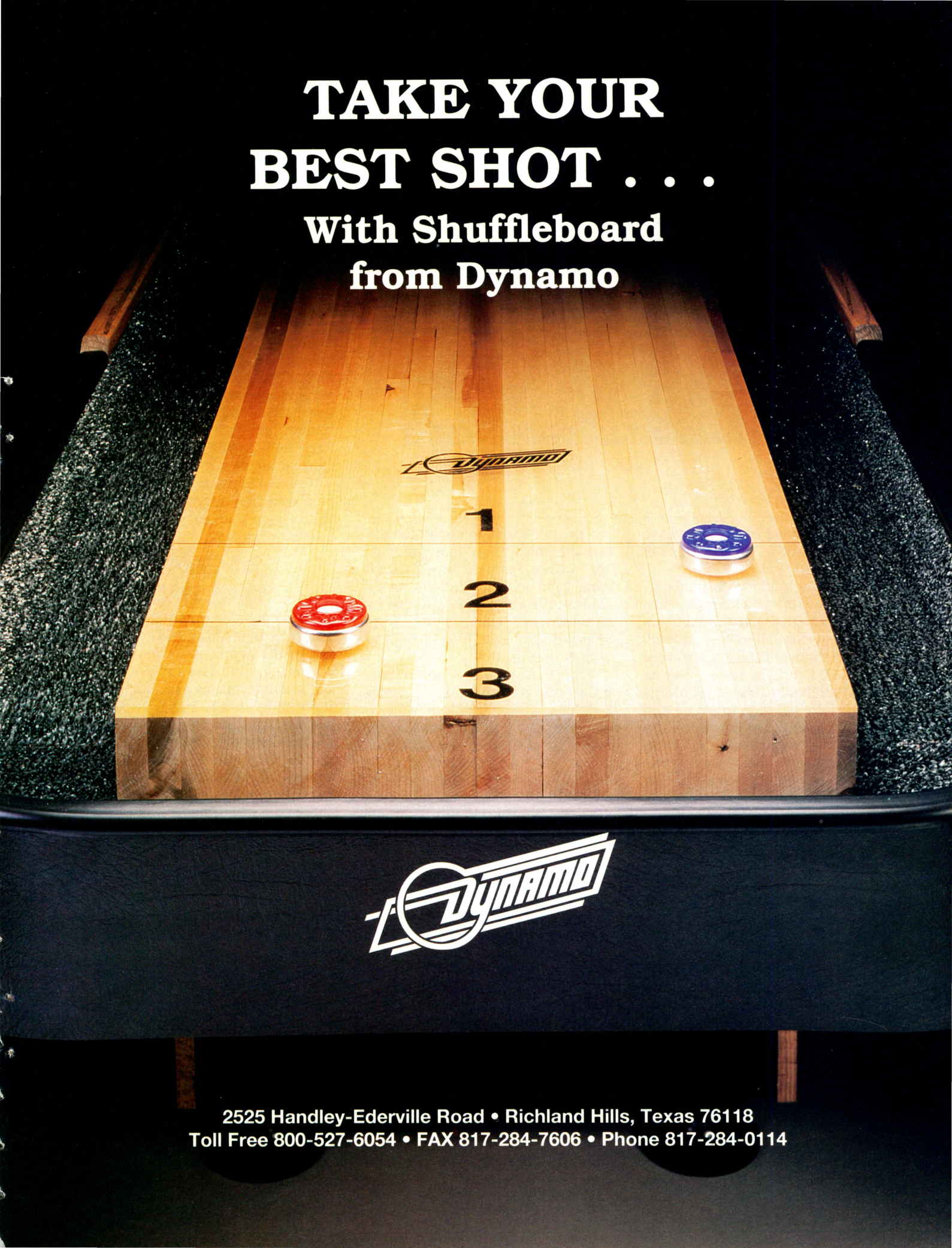
"RESTRUCTURING" THE MARKET

At first glance, figures from the National Assn. of Convenience Stores seem to confirm this bleak picture. But association spokesman Sheri Aguirre told *RePlay:* "The industry is basically healthy and is simply restructuring. The agenda is changing from the expansion of the '80s, to creating value in existing stores in the '90s. It's a mature industry now. You'll see continued growth, but not at the same rate."

And now to those figures. The number of C-stores stores rose slightly from 69,200 in 1988 to 70,200 in 1989 . . . a much slower rate of increase compared to the previous year. In fact, it's the slowest rate of increase since they've been keeping track.

But the eye-opener in the association's official figures relates to C-store profitability. During 1989, pre-tax profits fell right through the floor, plummeting an incredible 76.7% compared to 1988. (And 1988 had already been a bad year with an 11.4% decline in profits.)

This "unprecedented drop" was mainly due to large companies which made huge interest payments (on debt, restructuring, acquisitions and leveraged buy-outs), said the the C-store association. Smaller companies were "four times more profitable than the industry average," the association asserted. Under the circumstances, it was small comfort that overall sales at C-stores rose during 1988-89. Gasoline ac-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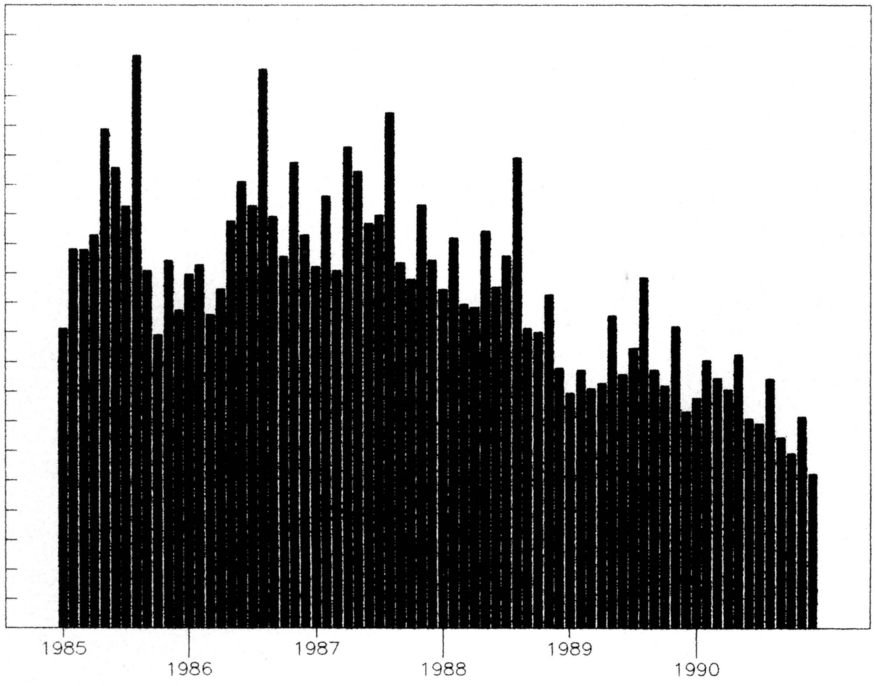

C—STORE TREND

counted for most of that increase (from $61 billion in '88 to nearly $68 billion in '89).

Operators might note that customers spent more nearly one-third more money (per visit) on merchandise in C-stores in 1989 than in 1988. The merchandise sales figure rose from $1.83 per customer visit in 1988, to $2.29 in 1989. Part of this was probably due to inflation and higher taxes, of course. But were C-store customers spending any of that increased amount playing our equipment? Most operators say "no."

C-STORES SAY THEY LIKE GAMES...

How hospitable are C-stores to coin machines these days? The national C-store association says that the overall number of stores with video games on location rose from 55% in 1988 to 60% in 1989. Breaking that down by size classification, 23% of independents and the very smallest chains (one to ten stores) had video games on location in 1989 (no figures available for 1988). The percentage of small chains (11 to 50 stores) with games rose from 14% to 16% from 1988 to '89.

Medium-sized chains (51 to 200 stores) reported a big drop: in 1988, 48% of them had games, but in 1989 only 35% did. Big chains (201 to 500 stores) more than made up the difference, more than doubling from 25% with games to 52% with games from 1988 to '89. And the mega-chains (501 stores and up) also increased very significantly, from 55% with games in 1988 up to 67% with games in 1989.

From those numbers, it sounds as if C-stores and video games are still a match made in "profitability heaven." However, these rosy figures run counter to the "anecdotal evidence," i.e. the experiences reported by many coin machine operators. Several we spoke to claimed that "C-stores are definitely losing their enthusiasm for us."

BUT OPERATORS FEEL UNWANTED

"In our market," explained one operator, "they all wanted automatic tellers several years ago. We lost some C-stores to that. Then they all got into video tape rental, which knocked out some more of our game areas. Then they all wanted to install self-serve food and drink areas, or lottery ticket venders. Every time the C-stores come up with a new plan, they remodel some of them and we lose another handful of stores. We had 205 of these stores at our peak; now it's down to about 80 and I've talked to some other operators who had the exact same experience."

Who is to blame for the decline of the C-store/video game romance? "I think it's lead by their corporate headquarters," said one major C-store operator. "If somebody at the top pushed it, video games would get better placement. But the statement I hear over and over is: 'yes, it provides income, but it's not a priority.' It's very difficult to deal with people who just won't give you a chance."

A Western operator who has serviced C-stores for many years was equally disenchanted with this type of location. "When collections were strong, convenience store owners would put up with a little bit of mess, a little bit of pilferage, and a little bit of aggravation from kids," he said. "But now earnings are down and they're saying 'it's not worth it.' They have to pay a lot of money for rent and they want to make sure that space will earn the optimal amount of money."

BIG GAMES, SMALL SPACE

This operator noted that larger game configurations are contributing to the problem. "C-stores are squeezing us into less and less space, but manufacturers are coming out with more three- and four-player games!" said the operator. "When we tell C-stores that we have a new game but we need another 8 or 12 inches, they say 'no way.' So you can't service locations that need three and four games anymore, and you can't rotate larger games into as many other places, either," the operator lamented. "Yes, four-player games make more money, but it's a Catch-22. I really don't know what the answer is."

So the contradictions and mysteries continue. Why do so many operators feel unwanted by C-stores, when industry statistics seem to prove otherwise? How can operators fit bigger and bigger games into less and less space? When will coin-op games regain customers lost to home systems? If operators do attract these customers again, will the location and other customers resent "too many kids"?

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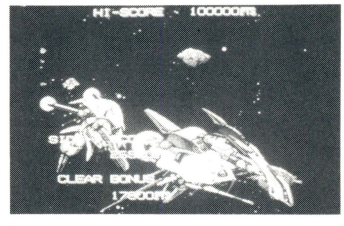

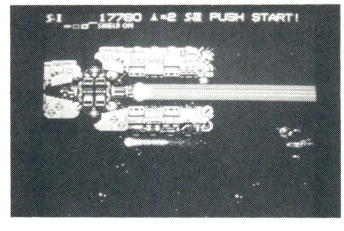

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TAVERNS & BARS

on-site liquor market sees stable location base, great demographics; coin-op seeks to add video poker to line-up of pool, darts & music

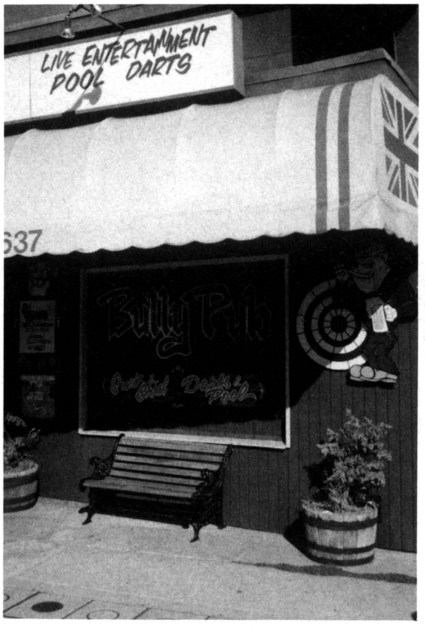
The very first U.S. jukebox location was a tavern (San Francisco's Palais Royale, 102 years ago), and in 1991 taverns remain "the" classic coin-op location. Experts believe about 260,000 sites around the U.S. are currently licensed for on-premise liquor consumption. These sites include restaurants, bars, nightclubs, cabarets, hotels, country clubs, private clubs, etc.

Is the tavern location in good health today? Many coin machine operators would say "heck, no," but the experts who study this market across-the-board reply "basically, yes." Why the differing views?

"DRINKING LESS, BUT DRINKING BETTER"

Coin-op tradesters have long believed taverns are suffering from reduced traffic and lower liquor sales, due to tough new DWI laws, higher drinking ages, and stiffer enforcement. Coin-op people also feel that urban renewal and various demographic trends have wiped out many of the neighborhood bars which were once staple locations for them.

Jack Kenny, editor of *Top Shelf Bar* magazine, confirms some of this, but the overall picture he sees is far less gloomy. "The effects of DWI and urban renewal have hurt the neighborhood bars, yes," he said. "And the cost of having an alcohol-related customer problem is far too high for any tavern operator to experience, so prevention programs and bartender training is becoming very important."



As for lower liquor sales, Kenny stated: "People are drinking less in liquor-licensed sites, but we don't have any information on people drinking more at home. We often hear it said that customers may be drinking less, but they're also drinking 'better': they buy better brands. Food sales are also becoming more important to tavern profitability."

GREAT DEMOGRAPHICS, STABLE LOCATIONS

The bright spot in the liquor-site picture is that demographics are moving in the right direction. The Baby Boomers (America's largest demographic group) are hitting 40 or passing it, and their kids are also reaching their 18th and 21st birthdays. That means an unprecedented number of customers are eligible to visit bars. *Top Shelf Bar* publisher Rod Groetzinger recently wrote that "more two-income, on-the-move families mean more on-premise visits. For now and the next 25 years, American business will market to the largest legal drinking age population in history."

The overall number of on-premise liquor locations has been stable for a good while. "The bar business itself — places to hang out and enjoy after hours — is surviving," Jack Kenny said. The current recession has cost the "upscale" places (white tablecloth restaurants, fancy hotel bars, etc.) some business, but competition is strong and good locations are still succeeding by active promotion and advertising, experts added.

"You can gauge an industry's health by what is happening at chains," Jack Kenny pointed out. "They're taking a good hard look at their beverage operations due to several factors — including prices, DWI laws, insurance and so on. To deal with this, they're changing menus, cutting back on inventory, stressing house brands, renegotiating deals with suppliers, increasing sales with promotions, etc. to avoid raising prices."

FERN BARS & SPORTS BARS

Some coin-op tradesters have touted the upscale, yuppie "fern bar" as the next big tavern location for placing CD jukeboxes and other equipment. The Bennigan's chain and its brothers beckon seductively to many a coin machine operator: such places attract more customers, with more money in their pockets, who may be willing to play a hi-tech

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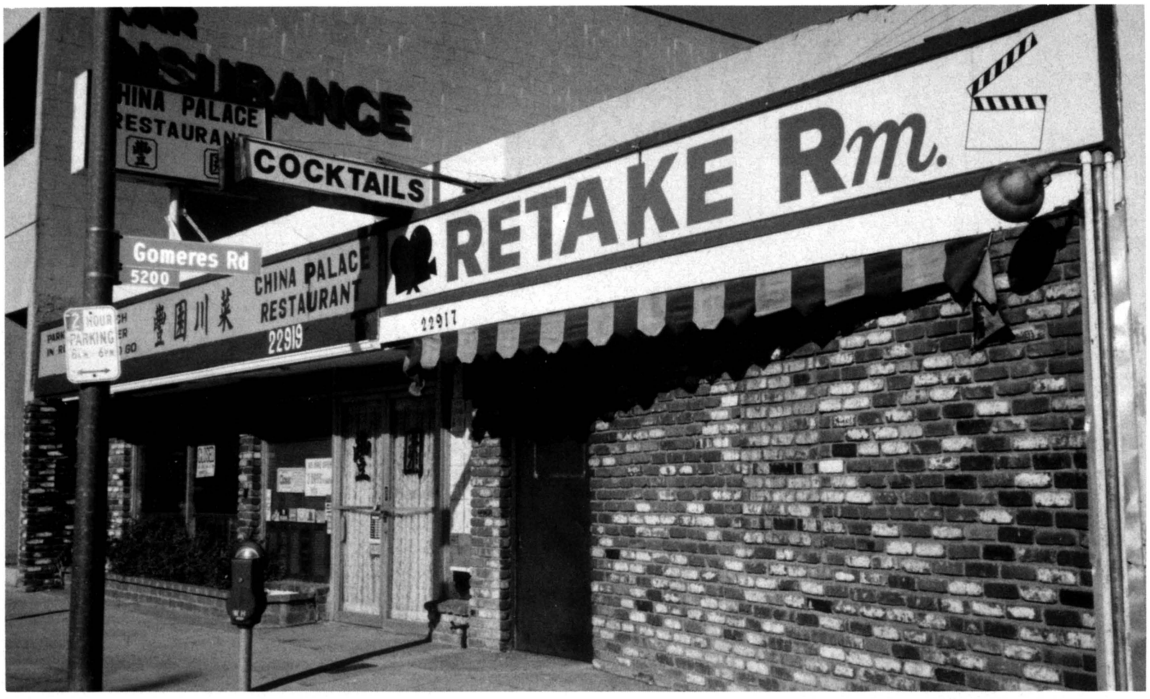

Neighborhood taverns like this remain the classic coin-op location. Experts say there are about 260,000 licensed liquor locations around the U.S. from the small "joints" to "fern bars" to sports bars.

jukebox or other amusement machine. Are fern bars really a growth market?

According to Jack Kenny, "The fern bar picture is not as clear (as the weakened situation with working-class neighborhood taverns). Fern bars are still around, but no one is starting new ones. Yuppies are taking their turn at being hurt by the national economy, and we announced in a recent issue that the fern bar is dead. People who are looking for new ideas to build traffic are the ones who are succeeding — largely through promotional and advertising ideas."

Sports bars are "still pretty solid," Kenny believes, and he says some of the most popular ones include a wide array of coin-op equipment. "There are just some areas where sports bars are big," he said. "The big boom in sports bars is mainly regional, although it's happening in a small way even outside of those regions. The Champions chains, for example, opened their 15th site in Cleveland in January, and number 16 will open in New Orleans soon."

WHERE COIN-OP FITS IN

How does coin-op fit into the larger picture? Operators have found that video games earn the largest share (35%) of their gross revenues — but after the era of *Space Invaders* and *Pac Man,* this biggest weapon in the operator's arsenal has increasingly been viewed by tavern-goers and operators alike as a "kid's game," more suitable to arcades than the local lounge.

In recent years, dart and pool leagues have greatly increased the health of tavern operators and on-site liquor locations alike. The popularity of both continues to spread. Music, the first coin-op tavern amusement device, is enjoying a strong resurgence thanks to the arrival of CD, which gives operators an excuse to increase price per play. Music is a profit center once again, although — as always — ROI is a long-term proposition here.

The trade continues to search for a video game that will appeal to grown-ups in taverns. Many tradesters believe they have found *Pac-Man's* successor in legalized video poker. In up to half of the 50 states, operators are lobbying for the rights to use this equipment. How many states will "go legal," may determine the future health of the coin-op/tavern relationship. In Montana and South Dakota, where legalization first was achieved, video poker has reportedly made millionaires of operators and locations alike, and turned near-bankrupt businesses into flourishing profit centers.

One truth about the tavern market remains exactly as operators picture it, Kenny said: it's still mostly a single-owner business. "Independent, on-premise liquor site operators control 19 out of 20 establishments in this country," he declared. "Chains are important because they represent large buys of food and beverage, and because they do things on a larger geographic scale and set trends. But a recent survey we did indicated that 94% of all on-premise operations are independent."

A MUSICAL NOTE

Jack Kenny's final thought was that a new music trend is sneaking into America's taverns . . . one that operators have heard of, but may not realize is really catching on. "One area of entertainment in bars that's growing is non-coin operated karaoke," he said. "There are three or four big manufacturers, and one of them told me this business has tripled since August. It's certainly starting to get some attention from the consumer press, too.

"But with the equipment I know about," Kenny said, "a DJ is recommended unless there's somebody in the house whose good at running the machine. Having the customers punching buttons on expensive commercial equipment is not a good idea. A DJ helps pump up the crowd, too. On the other hand," he conceded, "if they made a karaoke machine that functioned like a jukebox, so that customers weren't spinning their own laserdiscs, I think it would certainly be worth a try for coin machine operators."

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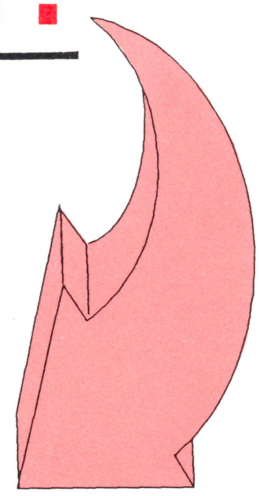

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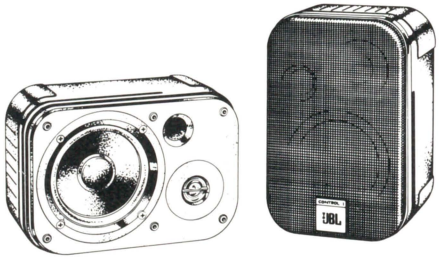

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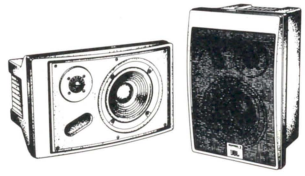

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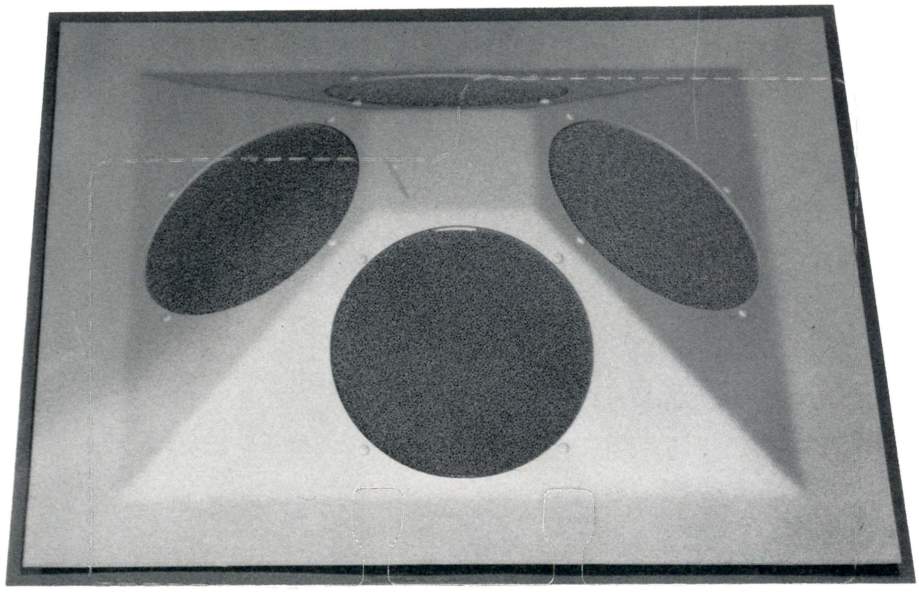

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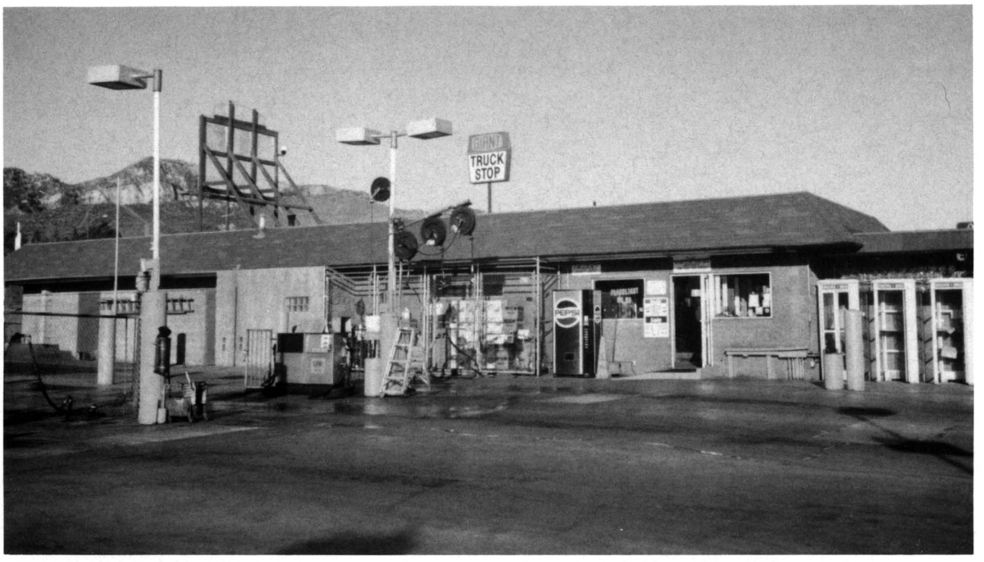

TRUCK STOPS

stable market enjoys high traffic, high turnover, great demographics; cranes still "extremely popular" here & other games also do well

The romance of the road translates into the romance of the dollar for operators who are lucky enough to place equipment in busy truck stops. "Truck stops are good locations for coin machine operators for several reasons," explained Randy Chilton (Chilton Vending, Wichita, Kansas). "Turnover is extremely high; you may not see the same customer twice in a week. Traffic is heavy, and the built-in traffic flow means you can depend on something other than games to draw customers to the location. The more gas and donuts the locations sell, the more money the games make."

Truck stop industry experts say amusement equipment earns well in their locations. "Coin-op games are quite popular in truck stops," confirmed Roger King, manager of member research and communications for the National Assn. of Truck Stop Operators. "Where cranes are legal, they're incredibly popular."

GREAT CRANE EARNINGS

Randy Chilton agreed strongly that cranes hold special appeal for truckers. "That's absolutely correct," he stated. "Of my highest-earning cranes, most of them are in truck stops." In one location where the top video *(Turtles)* earns $149 per week, Randy said his *Triple Bear Claw* crane consistently does $700 per week. "And it's been on that location since 1987!" Randy pointed out. "Visibility is the key to coin machine profits in a truck stop," he added. "If the the crane is in a highly visible location, the earnings are unbelievable. But the crane must be visible! If you put it back in the game room, it won't do squat."

An estimated 2,500 truck stops dot the highways and byways of the American landscape. They range from places that basically just sell fuel, to super-deluxe facilities that include on-site restaurants, customized department stores, shower facilities and even special hotels for truckers. The basic customer remains the long-distance, 18-wheel truck driver, but families and vacationers in RVs, four-wheelers, buses, etc., also visit truck stops if they have restaurants.

STRONG COMPETITION

How healthy are truck stops these days? "I think you'll find in this industry, as in many others, the economic health of the region is a great indicator of the health of any individual truck stop location," said the truck stop association's Roger King. "Many of our members have been hard-hit by the greatest diesel fuel price fluctuation in history."

The price of gas may be doing a rollercoaster ride, but the number of U.S. truck stops is not going markedly up or down. "As in the trucking market, I'd say the number is staying pretty stable," King stated. "However, the competition is becoming tougher." National and regional chains are taking over single-unit ownership "to some degree," he explained, "but there is still a well-run independent market of truck stop operators who own one to six units."

King added that truck stops are responding to increased competition in several ways. The big chains are making stronger efforts to tie up business via exclusive contracts with major trucking fleets. But, King said, "it's mostly a question of expanding and/or improving services."

And that's where coin-op amusements come in.

MOVIE THEATERS

too many movie theaters are chasing too few dollars; keen competition could spell opportunity for coin-op

Where do people go for escapist relaxation during hard times? To the movies! Early returns seem to indicate that 1990 and 1991 will be no exception. Movie theaters — particularly the national chains — are a profitable, but highly specialized, location for coin machine operating. Since movie-goers are seeking entertainment, quite a few of them also play coin-op games — especially the youngsters.

Another reason movie theaters can make excellent locations is because the number of people who flow through the site can be staggering. Multi-screen complexes located in densely-populated urban areas may attract tens of thousands of different people each week to a single location.

Industry estimates are that the U.S. now has around 26,000 screens. Of course, that translates far fewer theater complexes; remember, the most popular locations now have up to 18 screens in one site.

Fewer people went to the movies in 1990 than in previous years, but although ticket sales were down 7% to about one billion, box office receipts remained pretty solid at around $5 billion, due to increased price of admission (statistics from *Daily Variety*).

Inside the theater lobbies of America, the story was mixed. 1990 concession sales dropped by $80 million compared to 1989. But two of the largest game operators in movie theaters reported that their machine earnings remained fairly stable.

Jon Daugherty provides coin-op amusements to the United Artists Entertainment Co.'s huge, nationwide chain of movie theaters. Jon's UA Theater Amusements is a subsidiary firm that operates in hundreds of those UA theater lobbies. "Our 1990 earnings matched 1989," he stated. "I didn't have any considerable falloff at all and I attribute much of this to the fact that we had over 100 *Ninja Turtles*. They were very strong all year and still were through year's end."

Gail Sherman's General Amusement Corp. provides coin-op amusements for several other large nationwide theater chains and she agrees that so long as customer traffic remains high, coin-op earnings do, too. "People still go to the movies," she said. "It's a real seasonal thing, with the summer and holidays being the biggest times. The movie theater industry is basically in good health. Even at $7.50 a ticket, movies are relatively cheap entertainment and that's attractive to people during hard times."

There's a catch or two in operating in movie theaters, however. First, the best locations tend to be owned by large regional and national chains (which either operate their own equipment, or else prefer to work with very large, highly professional operators). Second, even the big chains have good and bad locations.

"I find I've got good theaters and bad theaters," Jon Daugherty explained. "In the good ones, the games perform well regardless of the quality of film they're showing or the crowd, because you have enough of a game-playing crowd to keep the earnings up. Multiscreen places do very well, especially where they're open from 10 or 11 in the morning, and where you don't

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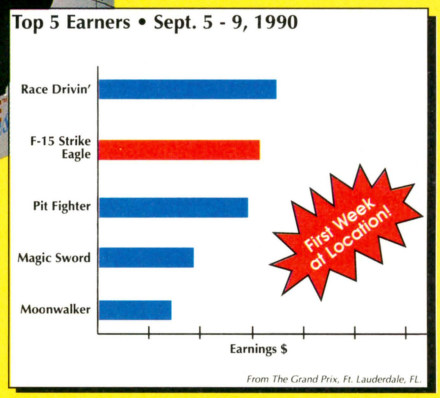

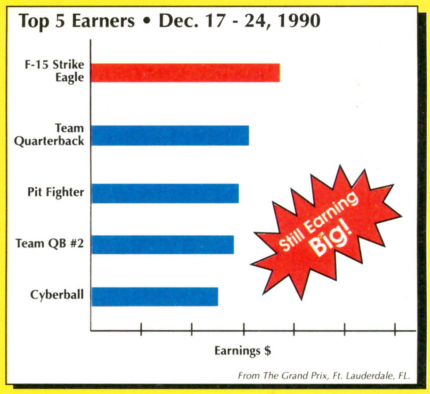

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The best locations are large, multi-screen complexes. "Multiplexes are a good environment because the more screens you have the more people come through the door and the more of them that play the games," Gail Sherman stated. "Also, for some reason we haven't figured out, it seems that people who attend larger complexes are more likely to play games! There's no scientific reason for that, but maybe there's just more entertainment value to attending the larger complex."

Arcades fit right into today's larger theater complexes. "Some of them have attached amenities such as cafes, merchandise, and arcades," Gail said. "That fits a trend in the industry to make going to the theater more than just seeing a film. To capitalize on that entertainment trend, our company has some locations where we've installed arcades adjacent to the theater. Normally that's in a mall or a strip center."

So where does that leave the average operator?

"For local operators, if they have access to an independent, regional chain of theaters who don't operate their own games, it should be a very good opportunity," stated Jon Daugherty. "The problem you'll have is that theater management wants you to put too many games in. Find a happy medium with the best return for the minimum investment. Don't let management get you to put in twice too many games!" Jon cited one theater he took over where the gross doubled after he cut the number of games in half (but raised the quality).

After the operator has landed a good theater location, the next key factor for success is where games are placed. "If they're outside the ticket booth, they can do tremendous business," Daugherty explained. "I have a one place in the New Jersey suburbs where the games make more money than the theaters! They've been on 50¢ play for years. They're accessible to mall traffic and there is no competing arcade."

Many theaters, by design or necessity, will require placing games inside the actual lobby, where only ticket-holders can access them. "If they're inside the lobby, do you see them immediately or are they hidden in back somewhere?" Jon asked. "That makes all the difference."

While video games have long been the staple in this type of location, some theaters are becoming more open to other types of equipment, Gail Sherman reported. "Now we're starting to get some requests for pinball," she said. "They're doing well for us. We also have some cranes doing very well." Jon Daugherty agreed that cranes are "still very profitable" in his locations (though not earning at the stratospheric levels of a few years ago). He also notes "very good success" with auto photo machines.

By the way, theater industry trade talk has made much out of the supposed over-expansion of theaters in the 1980s . . . but by all reports, few theaters are actually closing their doors. Instead, the large chains are slashing staff and tapering off their building plans. "Multiplexes continue to do well," Gail Sherman said, "and if any are closing, they tend to be the single- or two-screen theaters."

A longer-term concern may be that as America's population grows older, the audience for movies is shifting away from the typical preteens and teenagers who make up most of the game players. Hollywood is targeting yuppies and young adults now, not just teens and kids.

"That trend generally hurts us," Gail Sherman said. "The audience for 'Ghost' or 'Pretty Woman' is not the game-playing crowd. I'm working on expanding the pool of people who will play, but it's tough. Many adults think if you're over age eight, you shouldn't play. Even with adult-oriented strategy video games, many people are too intimidated to even try it — particularly women. Our best time is still summer, when the kid-oriented movies come out. I'm working on getting adults and women to play," she concluded, "but it's a slow process."

The good news for operators is that most theaters make their money from concession sales. Since those sales are down, coin-op equipment may look even more attractive to theater managers these days. Perhaps relatively few operators will be up to the job of servicing the "cream" locations . . . but for those who can handle the challenge, the rewards are clearly worthwhile.

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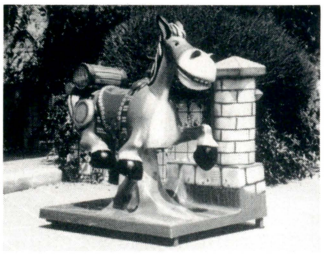

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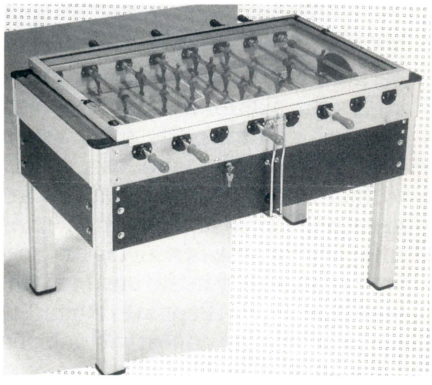

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BOWLING CENTERS

low-cost family sport shines brightly in hard times;
arcade section is often a "small but vital" component

The $3.8 billion per year U.S. bowling industry represents 7,671 good sites for coin-op equipment (according to the American Bowling Congress). People visit bowling centers to be entertained cheaply, and our machines fit right in. Bowling is expected to draw in as much or more customer traffic during the recession than before — and that should benefit bowling and game revenues alike, experts say. In fact, judging from some numbers we've received from the Bowling Proprietors Assn. of America (BPAA), some bowling centers just might be capable of even greater coin-op earnings.

Besides an average 19 lanes, most bowling centers also include a bar (think jukebox), a coffee shop and games. The game area can be as small as a couple of videos, or as large as an entire "family fun center" with redemption, pins, novelties, amusement card games, etc. Some bowling centers also have a dedicated pool room under the same roof.

STABLE NUMBERS, BUT OWNERSHIP IS SHIFTING

The average number of bowling centers has declined very slightly (6% down over the last five years, says BCA). Some of the smaller bowling centers are being closed or going out of business, but they're being replaced with larger bowling centers and chains. In a recent national BCA survey of bowling centers, only 10% were owned by major chains (i.e., strings of four or more sites).

Commented operator Paul Spiegel (an AMOA member who runs arcades for his family's Active West bowling centers): "In most areas, the only people who can afford to build new bowling centers are groups of fairly sophisticated investors, such as big law firms or those who are already in the business and want to expand. People are building 40-lane bowling centers which cost $4 to $6 million. Mom and pop businessmen can't afford it."

THE EARNINGS PICTURE

BPAA and BCA both report good gross earnings for the bowling industry. Of the industry's total revenue, $2.3 billion comes from bowling — that is, money earned from renting the lanes. The remaining $1.5 billion comes from other sources, such as shoe rental, restaurant, bar, coin-op equipment, etc. Games, vending, pool and lockers account for $205 million annually, says BCA.

A recent BPAA survey indicated that for total earnings from all profit areas in the bowling center, 53% of all surveyed BPAA members reported annual 1989 revenue of under $500,000. Another 30% report between half a million and $1 million in average revenue. Another 9% earned between $1 million and $1.5 million annually; while 5% earned $1.5 million to $2 million. Only 3% earned over $2 million annually.

"Profitability is stable," said operator Paul Spiegel. "Fewer games are being bowled, but centers are charging more money per game. We continue to see a big decline in bar business due to more health consciousness and awareness of drunk driving. The game business is down for everybody generally, including us, over the long term . . . but we haven't suffered particularly from the events of the last several months."

STRONG IN RECESSION

The war and the economy may be putting the squeeze on high-cost entertainment, but that's not the case here. "Bowling centers usually prosper in a recession," said Rosie Crews, director of public relations for BPAA. "Many people don't want to throw out $7 per person for a movie that might not be any good. Bowling is always a good value for the money," she pointed out. "The average cost per game is under $2, which is a much better bargain. It's still a fun activity that the whole family can enjoy on a budget."

Paul Spiegel agreed, and added that his bowling center arcades are doing nicely. "Use of bill changers is one good measure of money flowing into our arcades," he pointed out. "At Active West, that figure was much better for the middle week of January 1991 — the week the Gulf War began — than the same measure taken during the

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This bowling center game room shows what you can really do with this type of location. It features a full line of equipment (including redemption).

same week of the previous year. Compared to the period of September through November of 1989 (that is, before the holidays and before the war), revenues are roughly the same, or up marginally."

"OUTSIDE" & "INSIDE" OPERATORS

As stated, quite a few bowling centers are very professional "inside operators" who buy and run their own equipment. Others rely upon "outside" operators to come in and provide, rotate, maintain and collect games. And some centers apparently work with a combination of operator-leased and self-owned machines. According to BPAA's Rosie Crews, the leasing/self-owned picture breaks down as follows.

In the latest member survey, 60% of surveyed members owned 5 or fewer coin-op machines. That's 60% who should or could work with operators! Another 12.5% owned 6 to 10 machines (still plenty of room for outside operators). And 14.6% owned 11 to 15 machines, while 12.7% owned 16 or more games.

On a "leasing" basis, which we assume means operator-owned equipment, 30.9% of BPAA's members leased five or fewer games. Another 37.5% of lease six to 10 games. Still another 18.1% leased 11 to 15 games. For 16 and over, it was 13.4%.

Bowlers are still more interested in bowling than in coin-op games, however. In 1987-88, surveyed BPAA members reported that, on average, 4.2% of total revenues came from coin-operated games (responses ranged from 0.2% to 78%!).

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS?

Obviously, these figures lend themselves to many possible interpretations. To *RePlay*, they suggest there could be many opportunities out there. . . opportunities for bowling centers to increase their game earnings, moving coin-op revenues further away from 4% of the total and closer to 78% of total earnings. This holds true whether the bowling center owner wants to be his own operator (many owners make excellent operators), or work with an outside contractor.

Whether the equipment is run by "inside operators" who also own the bowling center, or by "outside operators" who work closely with location management, the marriage of bowling and coin-op amusements seems likely to remain a strong and stable one.

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SHOPPING MALLS

arcade chains once competed for space in every new mall; today, malls have more vacancies . . . and fewer shoppers

It was the best of times (for arcades); it was the worst of times (for malls). It was the age of closed-down boutiques and suffering retail outlets; it was the age of bigger and better amusement centers.

It was the era of fewer mall customers; it was the era of more visits to family amusement centers. It was the age of mall vacancies; it was the age of arcades getting more space, better placement and more families.

In case you haven't gotten the picture yet, malls may be under a cloud, but this cloud definitely has a silver lining for coin-op amusements. The consumer news media has already trumpeted loudly how retail sales are way down in malls and so is customer traffic. In fact, there's been so much gloom-and-doom that mall experts are getting rather touchy on the subject.

"There's a lot of nonsense about 'malls are dead,'" groused Bob O'Neil, editor of *Mall Monitor Magazine*. "Malls are going to survive, no doubt about it."

THE SILVER LINING

But nobody in coin-op is crying about malls. The bad news is, the twin mall and arcade expansion booms which ran so hot (up through last year in some cases) has definitely cooled. The good news is, top arcade chains are doing a bang-up job at making the most of what they've got.

"A lot of mall developers have stopped building new stores, or have delayed their plans," said Ron Malinowski of Aladdin's Castle, one of America's largest arcade chains. "As a result, the major arcade chains are not running like wild, competing to get into the same malls like we were a year or 18 months ago. We're not going crazy opening a bunch of new stores, either. What we are doing at Aladdin's," Ron continued, "is refurbishments, facelifts and expansions into larger stores. That's done well for us, because it's allowed product diversification."

Ron confirmed that recession and expected seasonal fall-off have combined to cut down on customer traffic in malls in general. But, he added, some arcades are actually drawing more adults and families by stressing a broader product mix. "Before, with 2,000 square feet to work with, we were pretty well boxed into video," Ron explained. "Now, by doubling the size of the store in some cases, we can put in a redemption center and larger skill-type games that appeal to families as well as teenagers."

ARCADES GET VIP TREATMENT

Perhaps sweetest of all is this fact: as retail sales slow down, and as other mall tenants disappear, mall management becomes more and more enthusiastic about the amusement business.

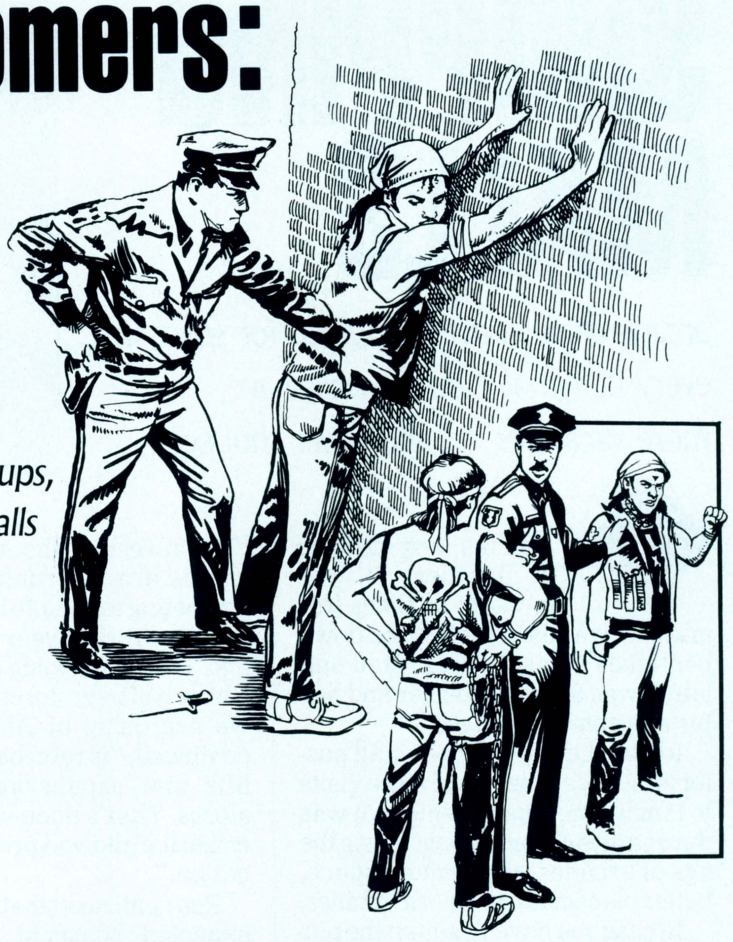
"We've got a plateful of opportunities," Ron smiled. "When times are tough, a mall that once had three shoe stores will find that one of them is behind in his rent. Suddenly an amusement center becomes a welcome tenant! By the way, this happened during the last economic bust, too. Today arcades are being warmly welcomed into the mall and given better space, better visibility, and more prestigious neighbors."

Before we get too carried away with rosy views of mall arcade health, let's note that malls are still charging the very high prices which drove some non-arcade tenants out in late 1990. "Decreased retail business and lower space demand has not translated into lower rents yet," commented Kevin Hayes, director of arcade operations for Namco America. "Everyone in the operating business is suffering from some revenue drop, particularly since the middle of last year," Kevin added. "When Sadaam Hussein went into Kuwait in August of 1990, per-store revenues went off compared to late summer and fall of 1989 and they have remained off . . . although you could make that case that compared to, say, two years ago, we're doing about the same. We don't have any hard statistics on traffic and spending patterns inside our arcades themselves, but generally speaking, we believe we've got the same number of customers. They're just spending less."

Looking at the trend toward larger and larger mall arcades, Kevin warned that perhaps some arcades are being overbuilt . . . too few games in too much space, simply because the malls have the extra space and "the owners are willing to make deals."

But for now, at least, amusement centers appear to be getting the best of the American mall market.

Teenage Customers: BLESSING OR CURSE



teens roaming the mall can frighten grown-ups, but teens spend $56 million per year in malls

Anyone who's ever dropped into a mall arcade knows that teenagers are the typical customer. Teens spend an estimated $56 billion a year on products of all types in shopping malls, according to the *Denver Post*. . . but adults don't appreciate teens using malls as a hang-out. Groups of teens lounging around the hallways can — and often do — intimidate grown-ups who come there to shop. At one mall, 600 kids invaded the "food court" on a Friday night last year. Others malls have had outbreaks of teen violence.

The trouble is, a lot of good kids have nowhere else to go. Many after-school activities have disappeared due to budget cuts; mom and dad are often still at work; some streets aren't safe; and teens are too young for bars and other adult locations. What's the answer?

Some malls, sad to say, have banned teens entirely. The Randall Mall in North Randall, Ohio doesn't allow teens at any hour. If they're going to the movies, an adult must pick them up and drop them off. In Omaha, Neb., the Park Fair Mall says "nobody under 18." Other malls ban teens during "critical hours," such as the McKinley Mall in Hamburg, N.Y., which prohibits teens between 6-10PM Fridays or Saturdays, unless accompanied by an adult.

Happily, some locations and arcades take a more enlightened approach. The Aurora Mall in Denver recruits high school students as Service Ambassadors to help adult customers with shopping and giftwrapping. Southern California operator Larry Stearn (L.A. Amusement Corp.) allows a teen group called "Police Explorers" to meet, under police supervision, in his Space Station arcade in the Northridge Mall after mall hours.

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PIZZA STORES

despite recession, pizza places stress service & hold their own; coin-op can help provide low-cost family fun & in-store promotion

From the great national chains (Pizza Hut, Domino's, Little Caesar's, Round Table Pizza, etc.) to the traditional mom & pop establishments, pizza stores are coping with the recession better than many other types of locations, according to coin machine operators and pizza location experts alike.

"Pizza tends to be very recession-proof," said Paula Werne, editor of *Pizza Today Magazine*. "Pizza is economical food and it's healthy enough that people make it their top choice for eating out or bringing home. In today's economy, our pizza store operators have been very fortunate. They're feeling the pinch, but not as much as some other types of places. And the good pizza stores have been able to cope by using creative promotions."

Coin machine operators agree that promotion helps the better pizza stores stay strong. "The biggest factor in the success or failure in pizza stores is the manager," said Sue Monday (Century Vending, Gardena, Calif.). "Sometimes in a poor location, a new manager will come in, do some promotions and things pick right up."

THE CASH BOX IS MIXED

Some operators report that even if food sales are holding their own in pizza stores, the cash box is having a harder time lately. "Some pizza stores are down drastically, some are down just a little," said Sue Monday. "We're working with store managers on game promotions like high-score contests; it'll take a while to see how that works."

On the other hand, coin-op is the bright spot for some hard-pressed pizza firms. Operator David Peck (Family Amusement Corp., Los Angeles) explained: "We're getting a lot of pizza stores saying if it was not for game revenues, they'd have closed up their doors. It's a very competitive business. I wouldn't want to be in it!"

Pizza Today said the pizzeria market experienced lots of growth over the last decade. Growth has stabilized and now stands at over 53,000 stores nationwide, with openings and closings balancing each other. Many small success stories are cited, such as regional chains of 30 or 40 stores that are booming. No major bankruptcies have hit the headlines recently, and any big chains that experienced financial problems last year are "getting their heads above water," said Paula Werne.

SERVICE & PROMOTION

Consolidation hasn't swept the industry as some expected. "The national chains like to say they're going to take over all single-unit ownership," Paula Werne stated, "but it hasn't happened. There is growth there, but the chains don't seem to be gobbling up the independents nonstop. If many local outlets of national chains are advertising heavily in a certain town or region, that can be difficult for the independents," she added. "But the mom & pop stores make a point of getting heavily involved in community service and that helps build clientele and customer loyalty."

One interesting note: Werne says that in addition to promotion, successful pizza stores are stressing customer service. "Maybe pizza stores can't compete with each other by offering more coupons or cutting prices," she said, "but this is the year to concentrate on service. That's going to be increasingly important as we head into this new decade."

To get in synch with this type of location, good operators should find ways their games can help promote the pizza store. Operators should also keep in mind that as the pizza location owner grows more service-conscious toward his customers, he may also grow more "service-demanding" toward his suppliers . . . such as the operator!

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"POCKET PARKS"

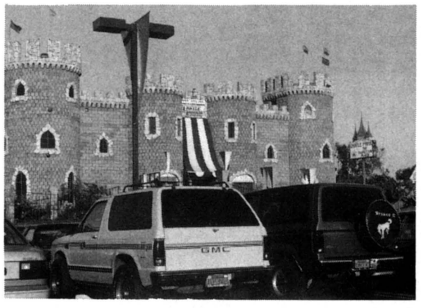
go-karts & miniature golf mix well with coin-op games; some call this "the hottest location trend for the 1990s"

Major amusement parks recorded lower attendance in 1990. Pocket parks, by all reports, didn't. And while no hard figures are available, the word on the street is that more pocket parks are opening . . . practically on a weekly basis.

What is a pocket park? Well, it can be indoors or outdoors. It's much larger than a typical arcade . . . but considerably smaller than Disneyland or Six Flags Over Texas. Take a good-sized attraction — say, a miniature golf course, or go-kart track, or water slide, or bumper cars, add kiddie rides, redemption equipment, pitching and batting cages, video games, pins, novelties, food and drink . . . and *voila!* You have a pocket park.

Some thoughtful coin-op people have pegged "pocket parks" as one of "the growth locations of the 1990s"; so has IAAPA (the International Assn. of Amusement Parks & Attractions), although they call this category "action amusement parks." Others call it "family amusement centers." But whatever you call it, this market is growing. In fact, a whole new trade show is being built around the pocket park sub-niche (Fun Expo, Oct. 24-26 in Atlanta).

"The typical video game arcade appeals mainly to males, and their age range is normally 10 to 25 years old," stated Betson redemption sales topper Jon Margold. "But pocket parks attract the entire family, because they feature something for every member. By all indications, the number of them is increasing very, very fast."



Estimates are that between 1,700 and 2,000 miniature golf centers are operating today (and it's growing steadily). The number of family entertainment centers is harder to pin down, but reports are that it's growing at a very impressive rate, too. Miniature golf courses, go-kart tracks, and family fun centers reportedly attract (all combined) over 100 million visits by families per year.

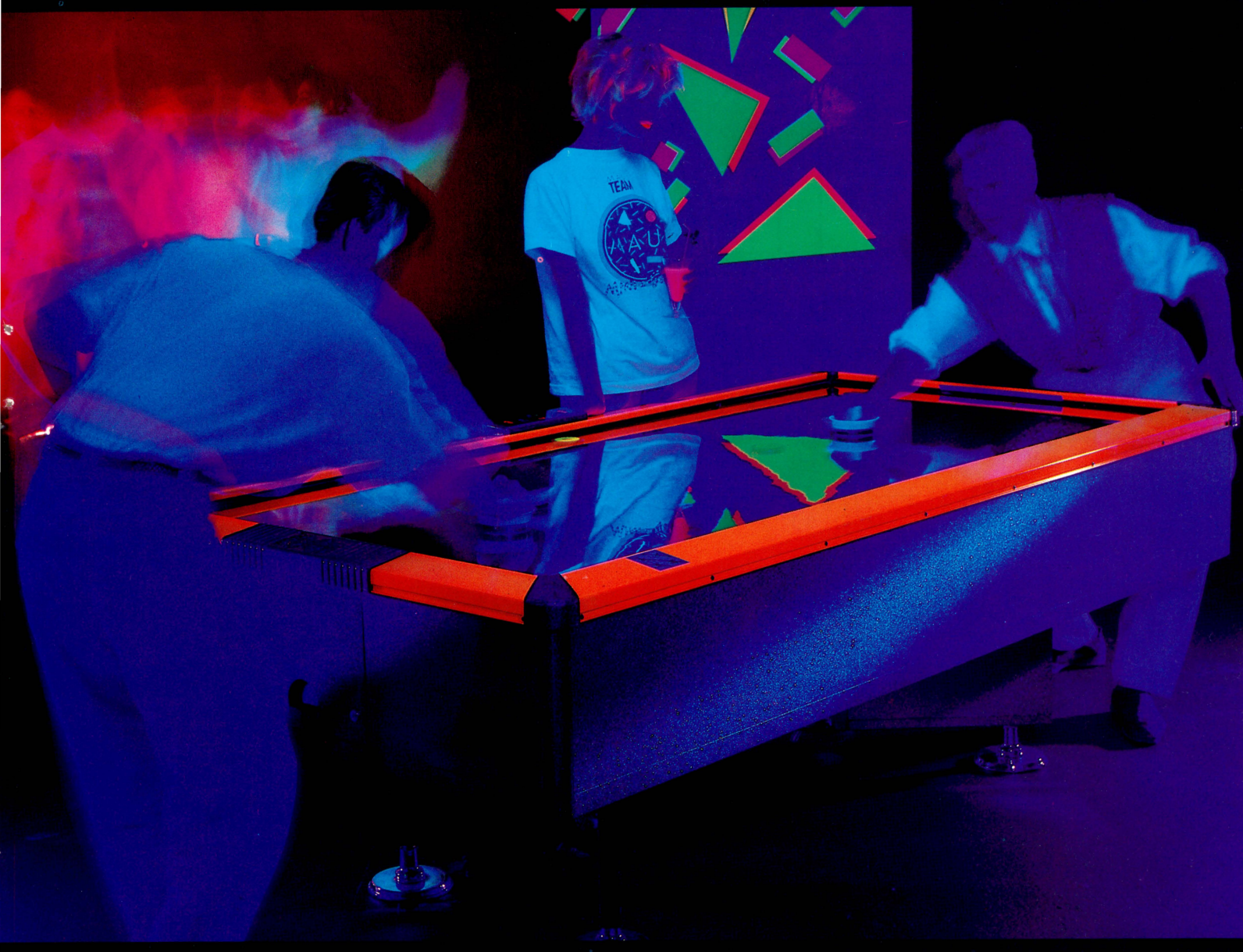
The future looks bright, since the Baby Boom generation (America's largest population group) is now hitting 40, and most Boomers have started their own families or will very soon. "We think the demographics mean that this market will continue to experience growth for at least ten years to come," said Bailey Beeken, show manager of Fun Expo.

A slower economy makes pocket parks more attractive, said quite a few tradesters. Maybe you can't afford a trip to Disney World this year, but if there is a little amusement park nearby it can make Sunday afternoon lots of fun for mom, dad, brother and sister. (And by the way, the experience of some other countries during recessions seems to prove the point.)

Last fall's Parks show (IAAPA) provided yet another informal indicator of the health of this type of site. Several of the exhibitors stated that small arcade owners (who are among their customers) are expanding into this niche. Other exhibitors said "Everybody's getting into it — not just the arcade owners who want to expand, but bowling center operators and restaurant owners, people who haven't traditionally been part of the games and attractions industry before." Execs of Malibu Grand Prix, one of the "granddaddies" of this type of location, smilingly admit: "The competition is heating up."

Perhaps the best proof of whether pocket parks are actually living up to all this word-of-mouth excitement, will come when organizers do a headcount at the Fun Expo. In the meantime, you're sure to hear more about this "in-between" family-oriented amusement location.

DISCO TAIFUN — ACTION AND FUN



Dimensions: Height 86 cm, Width 126 cm, Length 249 cm
Weight: approximately 260 kgs

Equipment:
Playing surface: plastic coated, easily exchangeable (8 screws).
All around profile strip prevents the puck from jumping out.
Rails: special rails fluorescent shining under black light
Fan: radial compressor with 420 m^3/h air transport quantity
capacity 125 W
easily exchangeable
noise level: 61 decibel
Display: indicating the game credit, the time left and the goals made
Electrics: mounted on service slide easily accessible behind the door of the coin rejector,
fully extractable
Cash box and coin mechanism: large format cash box
coin mechanism: electronical or mechanical
variable credit allowance
Installation of the table: simple installation by simply screwing on the feet
adjustment possibility: 20 mm provided by adjustable feet
Standard accessoires: special pucks and mallets
black light lamp (option)
Playing time: optional between time play and combined time-goal play
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FRANK TALK

by Frank "the Crank" Seninsky

Theft Increases in Tough Times; Here's How to Beef Up Route Security

Running a cash business is always a vulnerable proposition. . . but when times get tough (as they are for many people today), the coin machine operator suddenly finds that protecting his income is even more critical. For this reason, tight cash control is doubly important now. In hard times, every quarter you put in the bank is extra valuable!

Theft comes in several forms: the outright stealing of money, products and — something many operators don't normally think of — time. Nobody is safe from theft. Even the mom and pop operators who keep all the keys in their own hands, must still worry about unethical locations and personnel, vandals, and break-ins. For all of us, then, tough times are a signal that we need to strengthen our security systems and procedures. It's hard enough to earn those quarters, without "giving them away" to people who have no right to them!

IT'S A BIG PROBLEM

First, let me give you a few facts and figures that indicate the scope of the problem. A recent survey of American workers shows that "not stealing from your employer" only rates number 10 on a list of employee "no-no's" these days. (A decade ago, it was number three.)

In business generally, many if not most employees feel it's "okay" to steal such items as stamps, paper, office supplies, etc. and to make personal phone calls on their employers' time (and on the boss's dime!). A 15-year study showed that 60% of all cashiers or change attendants consistently come up short — chipping five or ten bucks from their employers — with no explanation. A man I know did an in-depth study of pilferage by toll attendants on a state highway system. He discovered that most toll collectors felt it was "acceptable" to pocket a certain number of collected dollars per week (their technique was to shortchange the drivers, who never pay attention to the change they receive).

Within our own industry (amusements and vending), 30% of repair people reportedly will take money or products from machines they are sent to fix. Also, 30% of collectors reportedly steal from cash boxes, according to a study cited by Al Kreuger at last fall's AMOA seminars. Most employees will take any refunds that are in a coin return slot or in the bottom of a machine, too, I've noticed. They feel it's "theirs."

If you ask "is the glass half empty, or half full," let's give the good employees their due. Even these worst-case statistics show that 30% to 40% of all employees are trustworthy and honest. But the number of non-trustworthy employees is high, and — I'm sad to say — it is growing daily. If you don't install security procedures, the bad employees will gradually corrupt many of the good ones.

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when it comes to "taking." Operators have run into cases of employees stealing tokens and tickets... employees putting their own cigarettes into vending machines, then taking a certain amount of money off the top for themselves... collectors cutting deals with locations to "undercollect" machines and then splitting the missing money between them...I could go on and on.

Operators must try to stay one step ahead of the sophisticated techniques which are used against them. In the last 20 years, my company has developed many systems by trial and error. Preventive strategies fall into three categories: physical security; good paperwork (including computers); and hands-on management procedures.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

Most operators are familiar with game hasps and locks. These are a must. You must also pay attention to who has the keys to these devices. We try to keep each route on its own key, and limit the number of people who possess keys to that route.

We also try as hard as possible to install cash box locks, either on the cash box or, if you have over-under doors, on our padlock on the cash door. The only one who has a key to those small locks is the location. Naturally, each location has a different key and lock system. It's obvious that if a technician has to fix the game, he doesn't have to get into the cash drawer.

I have a few reasons for using these cash box locks. One reason is, it makes the location part of the collection procedure. Location owners are supposed to stand there and watch as money is collected, although I've noticed some location owners simply toss the key to the collector and let him do it alone. We try to avoid this.

Another good reason for cash box locks is to discourage vandals from grabbing the cash box and running with it, when the machine is open during repairs. Technicians are less nervous with this extra protection. Also, it takes just a little bit longer for a thief to go past one additional lock.

As part of our collection procedures, we want the location owner to go around with the collector and witness the meter readings on each machine. These numbers are noted on the collection sheet, and both people sign it.

In locations with a more serious problem, we operate on tokens. The idea behind this move is to discourage people from breaking into the games. You place a bill changer in the location, and make it very secure! Even so, you can find that people use tokens from outside your system, or break into the machines and steal your tokens. (We had one thief who very neatly broke into some machines in a university location, removed a handful of tokens, then sold them at five for a dollar to students outside the game room door! Definitely an enterprising young man.)

In the worst cases, we rent video cameras (it's actually very cheap) and install them, if there is someone who will actually watch the screen. Some cameras even have microphones, so that whoever monitors your screens can be alerted by odd sounds such as someone kicking a door. Other, more expensive, camera systems record three days' worth of video; if you have a break-in you can review the tape and maybe catch the thief (we caught a crook

TOP HITS OF JAPAN

from Game Machine Magazine, Feb. 15, 1991

TOP 25 VIDEO COCKTAIL

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Gun Frontier (Taito)
2	Gals Panic (Kaneko)
3	Pound For Pound (Irem)
4	League Bowling (SNK)
5	Punk Shot (Konami)
6	Super Burger Time (Data East)
7	Final Fight (Capcom)
8	Sky Smasher (Nihon/Taito)
9	Raiden (Seibu)
10	Blood Brothers (TAD)
11	Puzzled (SNK)
12	Dragon Saber (Namco)
13	Columns (Sega)
14	Pit Fighter (Atari/Konami)
15	Tetris (Sega)
16	Quiz H.Q. (Taito)
17	World Cup '90 (Tecmo)
18	Super Masters (Sega)
19	Columns II (Sega)
20	Double Dragon III (Technos)
21	Majestic Twelve (Taito)
22	Capcom World (Capcom)
23	Thunder Force AC (Sega)
24	Super Pang (Mitchell)
25	Shanghai II (Sun Electronics)

TOP 15 UPRIGHTS & COCKPITS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	Final Lap 2 [del.] (Namco)
2	Final Lap 2 [standard] (Namco)
3	Space Gun (Taito)
4	Cisco Heat (Jaleco)
5	Hard Drivin' (Atari/Namco)
6	GP Rider [ride-on] (Sega)
7	Laser Ghost (Sega)
8	Big Run (Jaleco)
9	G-LOC [deluxe] (Sega)
10	Beast Busters (SNK)
11	Out Run [deluxe] (Sega)
12	Super Monaco GP [del.] (Sega)
13	S.C.I. (Taito)
14	Winning Run (Namco)
15	Air Inferno [deluxe] (Taito)

TOP 5 FLIPPERS

	Model (manufacturer)
1	The Simpsons (Data East)
2	Riverboat Gambler (Williams)
3	Phantom of the Opera (Data East)
4	Rollergames (Williams)
5	Whirlwind (Williams)

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that way). One bad break-in of five machines will justify the cost of a camera system.

You can also install inexpensive siren alarms (like a smoke alarm using the test circuit); these go off loudly when a break-in or tip-over occurs. Or, for about $100 per game, plus a console for up to 40 games, you can install silent, ultrasound sensors with radio transmitters. One such system is called "The Supervisor" and is made by Lanier. Just as in a home security hook-up, a central station is instantly alerted when a break-in is in progress; they call the police and sometimes the thieves are caught in the act.

PAPERWORK & COMPUTERS

To institute really secure accounting procedures, you do need a computer. Many of the software programs are advertised in the trade papers. They're inexpensive and I think any operator who doesn't have one is crazy!

We make up a fictitious machine for each location called "Meter Differences" and we track it every week to see how far the meters are off from actual collections. When the difference is big, it's a valuable tip-off that something is wrong.

Our location contracts specify that collectors must keep machine meters in repair. To keep all our defenses working, we had our collection guys hand in reports on why any of our broken meters were not fixed. (Any manager who had ever attempted to get meters fixed before, ran into a stone wall.) We refused to accept excuses for why meters could not be fixed. Within six months, we had dropped from about 180 broken meters to about 18 . . . a 90% reduction!

Our "Meter Difference" is now down to far less than one-half of 1%. Part of that figure is due to refunds; another portion could be due to games being tested by repair crews. I feel under one-half of 1% is an acceptable figure. Our techs have been instructed to use test credits when working on a game. This will further reduce our meter differences.

Our route men generate two copies of each collection report. When route men walk into the location, this report already lists each game at that location, its previous meter readings, last week's dollar collection figure for each machine, and last week's total collection figure for all machines on that location. Accompanied by the location owner (I hope!), the collector goes to machine number one and writes down the present meter reading.

He compares it to last week's meter number and sees if the present collection amount of money in the cash box looks right. If it does, he dumps it into a collection box and goes to the next machine. If the amount of cash collected for the number of plays recorded looks wrong, he bags the money separately and makes a note so that this machine can be investigated later.

When the collector finishes with all the machines, he and the manager go to a back room and count all the money. They enter the total amount of money from the location on the collection report. Any refunds or expenses are deducted and recorded. Both the collector and the location sign the sheet and each gets a copy.

The location also signs a money receipt (a three-copy form), where the collector writes out the total amount of collection, and the amount received by the location, in words . . . just like on a check. This small slip of paper is an added precaution against a mistake or misunderstanding. Again, the owner gets a copy. One copy is attached to the collection report, and one copy goes with the collector's "Weekly Activity Report."

This brings me to the third form used by our collectors — the "Activity Report," which accounts for all the monetary transactions that a collector has made for that week. It goes to the office, along with the collector's bags of money.

We use a fourth form — also in triplicate — called a "money slip." Recorded on this form are cash amounts ($1, $5, quarters, etc.), date, location name, and destination (office, bill changer, etc.). One white copy goes into the money bag, to show how much is in the bag, where it came from and where it's going. A second yellow copy is attached to the collection report, documenting the money that was collected. The third pink copy is signed in at the office when the bag of money is dropped off at the drop safe.

Every bag that an employee drops into the drop safe is witnessed and signed in by a company supervisor on a special sign-in sheet. We have that to prove that an employee did, indeed, drop off a bag from a certain location. (We've had instances in the past where an employee dropped off a bag in the office, or says he did, and apparently somebody walked off with it.) All these bags and slips are matched up weekly to ensure that every money bag actually reaches the office.

In situations where collectors must give money bags to another company employee for delivery to the office, or whenever any other party could have access to the money, the collector first seals the bag with a special bag tie (bearing a unique code for each collector). Without the coded press seal, no one can open the bag, remove some cash and reseal the bag. If the bag is short, we know where to start looking!

We use these seals because sometimes a bag was taken home by a collector at the end of the day, with full intent to deliver it to the office the next morning . . . but a family member or other person could possibly reduce the contents of the bag if there was no seal.

Bill changers are my area of greatest concern. Locations usually don't care about these because it's our money, not theirs . . . so managers walk away and leave employees on their own. Consequently, most shortages occur here. Machine malfunctions almost never cause shortages; I find the meters very accurate on our Rowe bill changers. Shortages are almost always caused by human error (honest, careless errors and the "five finger discount").

How can you secure your bill changer banks? In theory, this is how our system is supposed to work: each collector signs a form making

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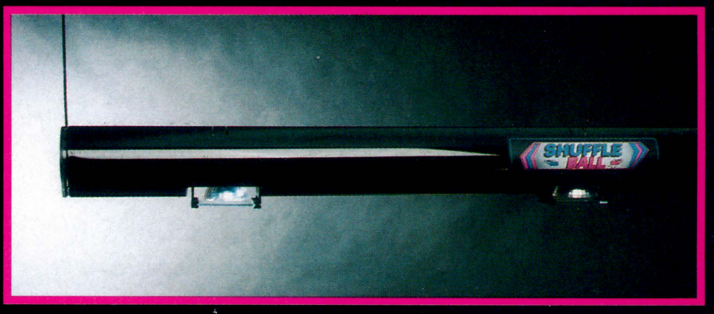

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him responsible for the changer and if he's short, he makes up the difference. He gets the only key to the changer. When changers are serviced, the collector must be there with his key so the repair man can get into the machine. We also test coin counters to ensure accuracy. Each week, every bill changer is inventoried. We always know how much money is in each changer at any given time.

MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Good management is also a vital tool for operation security. In some ways, it's the most important tool you have!

Bill changers, as mentioned above, are a weak spot in cash control. One management defense is to keep records on bill changer shortages. We review these at raise time. The best way to get shortages paid back, I've found, is to let the employee know he deserves a raise and or bonus, but delay it until all shortages are zeroed. This technique has certainly reduced shortages!

When an employee goes on vacation, the ideal is for the route owner to do that collector's job and find out exactly what's going on. Do all the collections match? Are machines clean and working? How hard is the job? You will learn a lot about the route and the employee this way. Perhaps you'll like his work so much that you'll give him a raise when he returns! (Or fire him if you don't like his work.)

If a collector doesn't want to go on vacation, this raises questions in my mind. I don't think the approach of letting employees accumulate leave, or paying them extra for vacations not taken, is a good policy. I insist that each employee take a break.

In addition to having employees take vacations, I also believe rotating collectors among routes where possible. When that can't be done, somebody from management will spend an entire day with a collector, observing everything he does. How does he speak to the location owner? Does he waste time? Make errors? How secure are his habits of handling money? All of this information is valuable. It can detect problems and give you an opportunity to solve them. The employee gets a chance to show off his good performance, or learn how to improve.

It's also a good idea to review these procedures with location owners and request their help. I have found that sharing my concerns about my employees can create rapport with a location owner. This may seem to be a negative at first, but I put it this way:

"I have the same situation you do; I am concerned about making sure everything my employees do is proper and that procedures are followed to the letter. I want to keep honest employees honest, and weed out the dishonest ones, if any. I hope you will work with me on this, and I'll work with you to keep your people on the straight and narrow, too."

Honesty really is the best policy. The location owner usually does feel the same way about his employees, that I feel about mine. Also, I've learned many location owners think that "every" collector steals... that collectors are supposed to do this! I've pointed out that half of any money stolen from the games, is also stolen from me. It would be ridiculous for an operator to pay all his collectors to steal. Location owners who understand this, become better business partners for the operator.

The greatest praise I can get from a location owner is not that I keep machines clean or supply lots of new games. The best reference I can receive is one that says I'm honest.

As I've stated on previous occasions, putting all these procedures into place can only have two outcomes, both good. Either your earnings will stay the same, and you'll be delighted to realize your staff, location owners and customers are 100% honest and efficient, and never make a mistake...or else, your earnings will go up. Either way, you're a winner!

The BONDEAL CHART

top kits and dedicated videos at the Hong Kong Flashback Arcade for the week ending Feb. 9, 1991

TOP KITS	Feb. 9	Feb. 2	Jan. 26	Weeks on Location
Escape Kids	1	1	—	2
Passing Shot	2	6	5	87
Columns	3	3	7	46
Super Pang	4	2	1	13
Super Space Invaders	5	8	8	8
Carrier Air Wing	6	10	10	15
Gals Panic	7	7	2	16
Gun Frontier	8	4	3	5
Thunder & Lightning	9	9	9	8
Edward Randy	10	5	—	2
TOP DEDICATED GAMES				
Hard Drivin'	1	3	3	95
Big Run	2	2	2	54
Cisco Heat	3	1	1	6
Four Trax	4	4	4	10
Super Hang On	5	5	5	181

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the Big Ticket

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF. . . FAMILY AMUSEMENT CENTERS

With the spring buying season fast approaching, equipment purchase may be uppermost in the minds of many readers. I believe that the ultimate goal of every arcade is to attract players of all ages: that should be a guiding thought as you approach your next purchase. The challenge then is to create a *family* entertainment center and at the same time make your facility stand out from the rest.

All too often the facilities I visit around the country limit their business by making two very basic mistakes: they do not make themselves *distinctive* and they do not offer a true variety of games for a variety of players.

For instance, I have often visited arcades on First Street that look exactly the same as the one on Third Street. I walk into the second arcade and feel as if I had never left the first. . . deja vu! Both fun centers may do well, but neither really gives customers a reason to return. Careful equipment purchase can make all the difference.

Of course, all operators want to maximize their income and profit; this is understandable. So it is natural to rent or purchase the best earning games available. But if that is the only basis for purchase decisions, the operator isn't seeing the whole picture. A good operator looks beyond the single machine; the good operator also considers the playing audience. Think about it in another setting: the clothing store. Sure, blue suits sell very well. But if a clothing store offered nothing but blue suits, how big would the business grow? How many times would a customer return to browse?

The machine mix of the most successful arcades are interesting and varied. It attracts all types of players. Some of the recent sports centers are "missing the boat" by not offering entertainment other than the sports games. What about the rest of the family? Games like *Jr. Basketball, Bozo, Grand Prix* and *Toss Em* are proven winners, but can a whole arcade be built on one or two or even three games?

Very often, family games earn $300 to $400 per week, less than expected for the investment. But these games may be played by members of the family who otherwise would not play at all. When you expand the kind of games you offer, you expand your customer base. You create "new revenue." You may offer games that make your center stand out from the crowd. Sure, a sports theme attracts lots of customers, but the added family games, and the added kiddie games provide fun for the whole family. Your sports center becomes a family center with a sports theme. Suddenly, an entire family can come to your arcade and settle in to enjoy fun for *every* member of the family.

I do not mean to suggest that your arcade should try to attract every customer with every kind of machine. . . I know there are limits. But selecting one central theme for the arcade and sticking to it without exception may also be a limit. Select a theme — as I suggested in an earlier article — but then consider the whole arcade and the whole customer base. This is the only point I want to make this month. . . when shopping for equipment, keep in mind whom you want as players.

Also, be advised: I believe that many manufacturers may take a short position on inventory this year. This is, I presume, because of the present economy. So either place your orders early or anticipate 60- to 90-day lead time for deliveries.

And, of course, keep thinking redemption!

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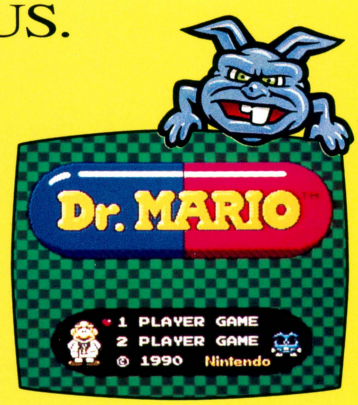

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here's looking at you, guy!

combined operator survey shows dark shadows lingering, and a few bright spots peeking in

The amusement & music operating business heads into the ACME spring show sober as a judge at a farm foreclosure and clothed in more caution than a Missouri cat approaching a hot tin roof. Most will be supremely alert to any promising new products coming to the spring market. Why? As only the dearly departed don't know, business has been off . . . and not just on the street but in the game room as well.

RePlay decided to mount another of its operator surveys just before ACME to see if the ice was finally breaking and to unearth any "bright lights" that may be turning on for the route and arcade folks in terms of their own success stories. Unfortunately, the survey shows that the industrial eagle has more dark feathers than bright ones right now, though a few are peeking through.

All surveyed operators came from our *Player's Choice* reporter pool . . . the same folks who set the numbers on our chart. These people are very special to *RePlay* because their monthly labor of love, exercised by filling out our chart ballot sheets, is often exactly that, a labor. To honestly rate the relative earnings of all the games on our ballot is hard work when done correctly. Then to see an extra survey questionnaire in the same envelope can be a heart stopper.

But, more than 90% of the folks who filed chart ballots this month filed a survey sheet as well, and we thank each and everyone who did. Speaking of "one," we were surprised that ten of the reporters are actually one-man operations! Imagine that?

The survey pool was divided up pretty nicely. 81% of the returns came from street operations, the other 19% from arcades, which is pretty much the way the machine market supposedly breaks down. Reporting operators ranged from mom and pop companies to big routes and arcade chain stores. Roughly half employ five or fewer people (including themselves), another quarter have between six and ten folks on the payroll and the remaining quarter carry eleven or more. Now, let's see what they have to say.

REVENUES DOWN

Asked how overall collections have been this season compared to the same last year, roughly two out of every three responding operators said they're down! While conventional wisdom has repeatedly said that the arcade sector was more healthy than the street side, this survey shows an incredible commonality of woe, as these figures bear out:

STREET LOCATIONS

12% report **higher** overall collections.

20% say they've been **steady** overall.

68% are **down** in overall collections.

ARCADE LOCATIONS

16% boast **higher** overall collections.

16% say they're **steady.**

68% are **down.**

(Notice that both sides were off 68%; and both surveys were tab-

ulated independently. Note also that a couple of operators who said revenues were **up** penciled in the fact that they have more locations & equipment out.)

Street operators service a wide variety of locations, but two of the main ones are taverns and convenience stores. As these figures show, business hasn't been very good at either (especially at C-stores) these last few months:

BAR REVENUES

6% say they're **higher.**
37% find them **steady.**
57% say they're **off.**

(We also asked if they lost any bar locations due to closures and 45% of the street operators did lose some over the last six months; 7% actually said they lost "a bunch," like a Cleveland operator who lost 15.)

C-STORE WOES

The story of the convenience store has turned from a musical into a tearjerker for many operators. Here's how our street folks say their C-store collections have been running:

5% say they're **up.**
15% find them **steady.**
80% say they're **down.**

WHAT'S BEHIND ALL OF THIS?

Nobody in the industry knows the financial picture of his community as well as the game operator. The questionnaire listed five of the more-publicized reasons why collections have fallen and asked them to rate each according to the impact in his respective market therefrom. Amazingly, both street and arcade operators ended up placing the reasons in exactly the same positions. So, why are overall collections off? According to operators on both sides of our aisle, the reasons are, and in order:

1. the general economic recession.
2. equipment play-appeal has fallen.
3. home video game competition.
4. prices of equipment forced them to lower attraction levels by buying fewer pieces.
5. driving-while-intoxicated laws.

(Obviously, none of the arcade operators voted DWI among their reasons for a collection fall-off. But it's curious that tavern operators placed this last on their list. It would appear that industry worry over DWI's impact on the collection box has been exaggerated or at least less important than the other factors listed. Regarding machine prices, one operator pencilled in a short but telling message: "Equipment costs are not that much higher; the machines just earn less.")

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WAR IMPACT

With so many servicemen and women off to the Gulf War, it had to have some impact on the national cash box. We asked the operators if they've experienced any direct loss of income due to Operation Desert Shield/Storm due to troops and reservists leaving their areas and 42% said they have (one said he's had a considerable loss). The survey shows that the war has had a slightly harder impact on the street than on the arcade.

A number of stories linking coin-op war games to the Gulf crisis have appeared on TV and in the newspapers since the troubles began. Curiously, only 16% of the surveyed operators believe they've noticed anything like "anti-game press." Instead of saying "curiously," maybe we should say "gratefully" because a few operators said they've seen positive press relating games to this mideast situation (see our own "press" about the connection elsewhere in this issue).

A West Coast operator wrote a curious addendum to his answer that you'll find fascinating: "About four, five days after war started, we saw a big jump in revenue, even with our dogs, as a result of what I call news burnout. We had TV monitors in the arcade with news bulletins early on, but turned them off after requests from customers saying they wanted to get away from the news. We had a big jump in war-theme games."

Constant TV coverage in the taverns, however, may have had a negative impact on machine earnings there (but this is just hearsay as nobody wrote this on his questionnaire).

ATTITUDES

With business off, we wondered how bullish or bearish the guys and gals were about buying new goods these days. Maybe,

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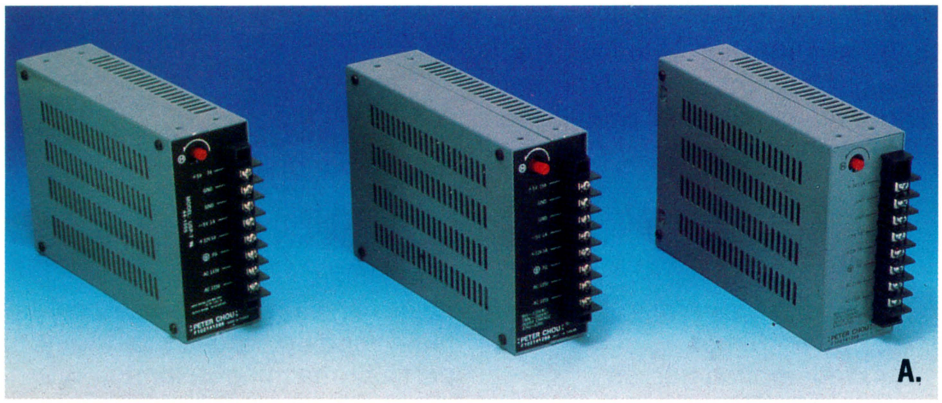

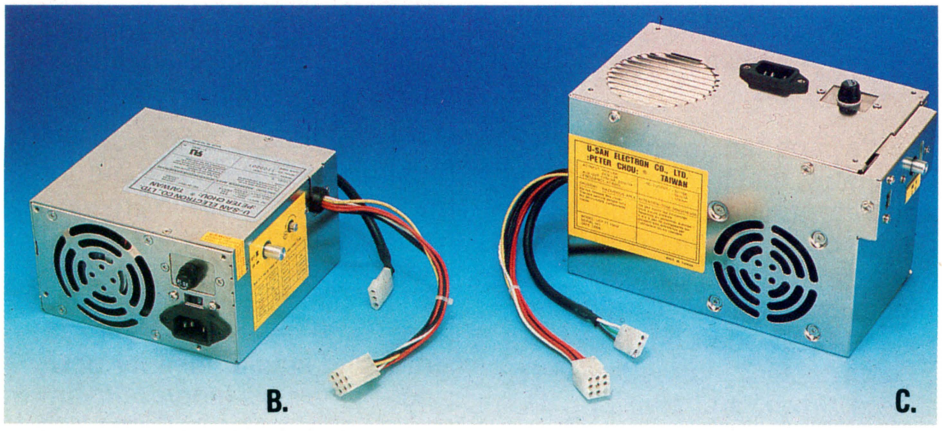

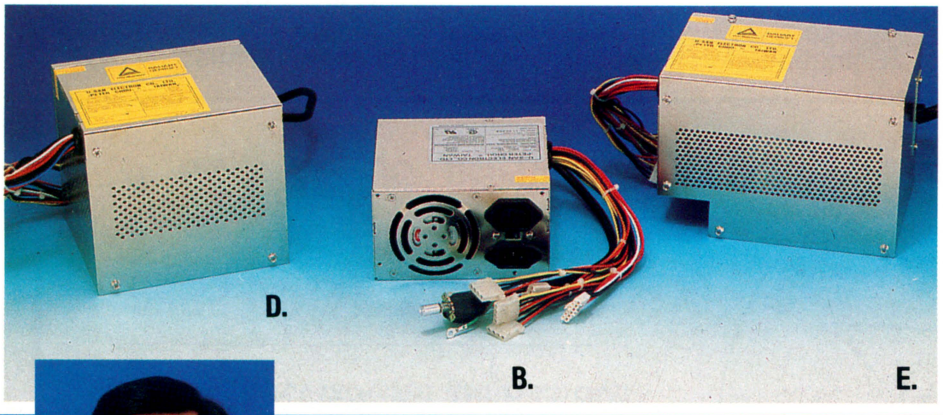

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UK7-3	A	+ 5V 7A + 12V 1A 12V 1A	
*UK9	A	+ 5V 15A + 12V 3A − 5V 1A	
UK9-3	A	+ 5V 11A + 24V 2A − 5V 1A	
UK9-6	A	+ 5V 11A + 15V 1A − 5V 1A	
*USP-11-150U	B	+ 5V 16A + 12V 6A − 5V 0.5A − 12V 0.5A	UL CSA
*USP-11-150X	C	+ 5V 16A + 12V 6A − 5V 0.5A − 12V 0.5A	UL PENDING
*USP-11-200U	B	+ 5V 20A + 12V 8A	UL, CSA
USP-11-200T	B	− 5V 0.5A − 12V 0.5A	TUV
USP-11-200V	D	+ 5V 20A + 12V 8A	UL, CSA
USP-11-200B	D	− 5V 0.5A − 12V 0.5A	TUV
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as some said, the scarcity of good, new product these past months would put people in a hotter buying mood. Sorry, that's not so according to this survey . . . at least, not on the street.

Here's where arcade and street people parted. When asked to check off the description which best identified their present **business posture,** the tabulated results break down thusly:

ON THE STREET

72% said they're only buying equipment they **absolutely need** while making due with what they already own.

21% said they're continuing to buy new & used equipment at their **normal pace.**

7% (only) said they're actually **increasing** their buying in these times.

AT GAME ROOMS

64% said they're continuing to buy product at their **normal pace.**

36% wrote that they're only buying what they **absolutely need,** making due with what they already operate (not one arcade operator said he or she is **increasing** their buying in these times).

BRIGHT LIGHTS

All is not gray sky (or gray goods, as we'll see further along). We wanted to know which class of machine they were most **positive** about right now and any way you look at it, the pinball stands tallest in the biz. Here are the specific "bright lights" listed by order of appeal to the two classes of operators:

ON THE STREET

1. pinball (by far).
2. CD jukeboxes and pool tables (tie).
3. video games.
4. redemption games.

AT GAME ROOMS

1. redemption games.
2. pinballs.

It's important to note here, regrettably, that the video game is also the number one pariah to the street operator. Therefore, many operators qualified their #3 vote for this class by detailing: system video, laser video, good kits, and "high quality" items like *F-15, Race Drivin'* and *Mad Dog McCree.*

Some operators view their businesses through "long lenses" looking downstream while others take a more "right now" approach (like the fellow whose "bright light" is "Williams video" even though this factory hadn't had a smash hit TV game before *High Impact* in a while). Others listed *Putting Challenge* (the golf novelty) and things like "observation systems" as bright lights, and no doubt they are.

Long-haulers penciled in a bunch of their own bright lights like: billiard halls, roller skating rinks, miniature golf courses, college vending, arcade birthday parties, machine exports, impulse games and . . . leagues, leagues, leagues. (One operator said his "bright light" lay in a totally unrelated industry.)

Two "darlings" right now are redemption machines (both for the street as well as the arcade), pinball (especially for the street) and some other interesting classes like vending (candy, soda, snack and even bulk) on the street and kiddie rides for **both** sides of the aisle (survey advantage to the arcade). Darts, CD jukes, soccer, cranes and pool also got street mention.

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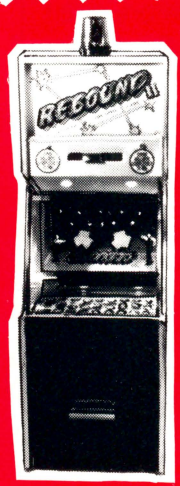

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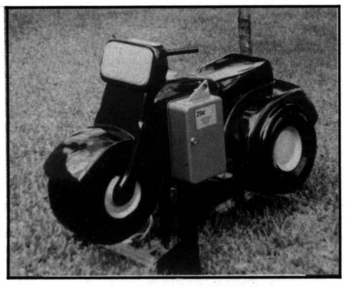

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On the darker side: while many reporting operators simply left the "bright lights" answer blank, around one of four penciled in something like "nothing." If anything, we prefer this response if nothing else can be said: "There are no bright lights right now. We're just maintaining good service and good customer relations."

DARK SHADOWS

We also asked operators to list the classes of games they were most **negative** about right now and 74% put the video game on the top (in one form or another) as their number one bummer. Combining complaints from both street and arcade people, specific complaints were directed toward dedicated videos they felt didn't deserve their prices, but kits were mentioned as well. Here's how the votes tallied up on the dark side. Biggest negatives:

ON THE STREET
1. video games (by far!).
2. pins & jukeboxes (tie).
3. cranes.

IN GAME ROOMS
1. pinballs.
2. video games.

(We assume those who mentioned jukeboxes were referring to 45rpm models, don't you?)

PULLING BACK

You can't beat a dead horse, and apparently you can't beat an unwanted machine on location into making its own hay. We heard a bunch of operators were pulling equipment off location in these times (diminishing the national attraction spread) and asked about it in our survey. The question went: "Are you pulling **more** machines than usual?"

41% of the street operators said **yes** (only 12% of the arcade people agreed). They're pulling less-played videos (oldies & fillers especially), cigarettes, 45rpm jukeboxes and some cranes and pins. With 41% of street operators pulling more goods off the field, that field is getting a tad aired out. Maybe this machine-culling is a good thing; in many cases, it's necessary (as in cigarettes, and phonographs being switched to CDs).

PUTTING BACK IN

There are two (shall we say) "pregnant" types of machines waiting in the wings for operators. One is the parallel PC board, the other the video lottery terminal. Mobs of copy has appeared in the trade papers about both, but we wanted to learn from the folks who count. Poker. Video lottery. Call it what you want, we all know what it is. In one form or another, operating associations in dozens of states want payoff poker legalized. What do their "constituents" in the industry think?

ON THE STREET

49% want video lottery legalized in their states.

42% are "neutral" on the subject right now.

9% don't want to see it legalized.

IN GAME ROOMS

16% want video lottery legalized.

42% are "neutral" on the subject right now.

42% don't want to see it legalized.

Clearly, half of the nation's street operators want legal payoff poker, keno, lotto and/or bingo, but only 16% of the arcade people do (understandable, considering their different audiences). But check out the fact that the other half of the street crowd either doesn't care right now or is against it. Notice that 49% of the yeas fall just under a majority. This industry isn't a democracy, but this is still worth attention. But as one operator wrote: "This is the only way I can see the vending industry lasting much longer."

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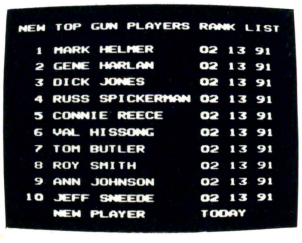

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PARALLELS

You knew we'd ask and we're glad we did. 42% of the street operators are **in favor** of parallel PC board marketing and are awaiting legalization this December. Now, please note: 58% of street reporters don't think this is a big concern for themselves, and that's almost three out of five. Arcade-wise, only one out of four game room people are waiting for P Day.

Wrote one operator: "Currently, I have to wait for the kits to go to closeout because I can't make enough money to counteract the drop. I also only use the PC board, so the parallels are now a favorable item to me." On the opposite poll, another operator wrote: "I have not and will not use them." And said another: "No, almost all of my games are purchased from one mainline distributor." Yet another said: "I don't like it."

LICENSES AND INSURANCE FEES

Parallels are perceived as cheaper video games, the appeal being obvious. But there are other operator expenses that claw at the brain, like licenses and insurance costs. We investigated both.

It turns out that 57% of the street operators usually **split** the cost of their machine licenses with their locations, 41% usually pay the whole fee themselves and only 2% say the location usually pays the fee. An operator penciled this in: "I'd go into jukeboxes except for the stupid license."

Many small businesses have been hit with higher health insurance rates, so we decided to check this subject out. The survey shows that the larger the company (in terms of employees), the more likely it is to have insurance coverage for the help. Here's how the over all picture breaks down:

ON THE STREET

35% of operators insure **all** employees (including themselves).

27% only insure **some** employees.

38% say **none** are insured.

IN GAME ROOMS

9% of the arcade operators insure **all** employees.

59% insure only **some** of them.

32% say **none** are insured.

That's the general picture. Let's examine it more specifically, according to the size of the street route employee rosters:

ROUTE EMPLOYING
1 TO 5 PEOPLE

24% insure **all.**
23% insure **some.**
53% insure **none.**

ROUTES EMPLOYING
6 TO 10 PEOPLE

46% insure **all.**
25% insure **some.**
29% insure **none.**

ROUTES EMPLOYING
MORE THAN 10

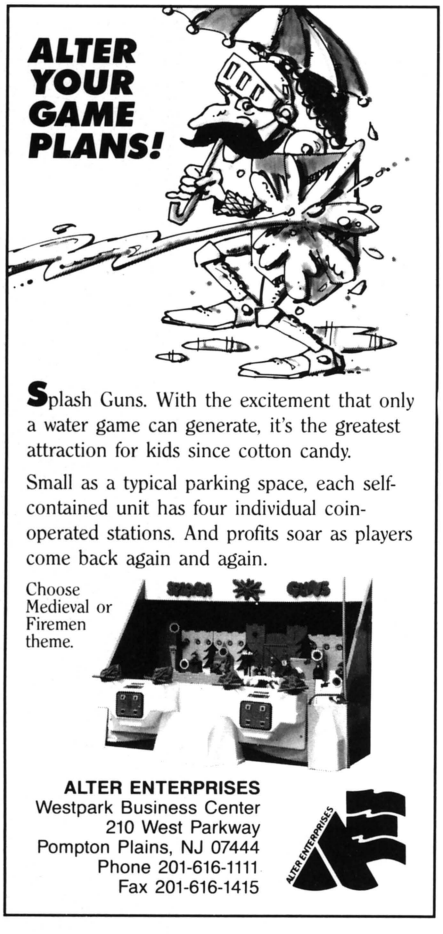
46% insure **all.**
39% insure **some.**
15% insure **none.**

Of the street routes presently insuring **all** employees, 28% are considering either dropping insurance entirely or cutting back on benefits these days. The majority of the rest will maintain their insurance policies as-is (another 23%, though still **fully insured,** said they've already cut back on benefits). We had a good handle on the street side, but not enough response from the arcade operators to explore this further.

WINDUP

Yes, more arcade responses would have given us a lot more confidence when we wrote up their figures, but there's a decent "straw poll" nonetheless. However, in a verbal chat with an East Coast arcade owner (in sharing our figures with him) we heard: "Listen hard. The indoor recreation business is where it's at. If you've got savvy and the right machine mix, you can make money hand over fist," he declared. "What it takes in today's business, on the street or in the arcade, is staying power and a decent level of machine appeal. Those arcade operators who told you their businesses were off have the wrong machines on the floor," he added. Perhaps the same can be said for some street people as well.

Again, we thank one and all for helping out and close with this stem-winder from one of our more vocal **Player's Choice** reporters: "Hey you, get out and look for new accounts. Give the best service on all your games and then you'll get more accounts." We didn't write that . . . one of **you** did.



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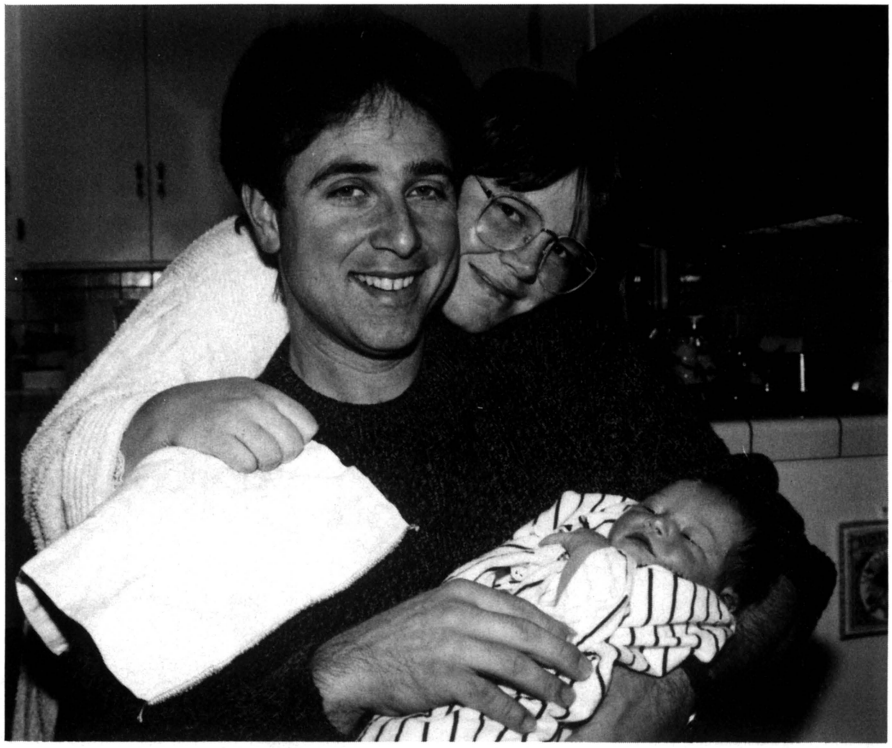
OUR YOGI'S NO BEAR... JUST ONE CONCERNED CAT!

There were no "Likes, Gripes and Swipes" at the close of our operator poll in this issue. But one Guest Editorial said enough for the rest... a valedictory on the business from California's Yogi Taylor (Ultimate Amusements, Inc., San Jose).

Yogi's got concerns and opinions. He's also got a street-wise idea on kit conversions. A big pinball fan, Yogi's put out about quality control on new product right now (you should know he deals with one principle brand, so he's not tarring the whole bunch). Here are his words on the ix, nix, and drix affecting his business in the parlance only an operator could provide.



You can't get more "mom & pop" than this: Ultimate Amusement's Yogi Taylor, wife Trish and their beautiful new daughter, Katie, born Dec. 22 & weighing 7 lbs. 11 oz. ("just like the C-store!" says pop).

The name's Yogi Taylor. I've been intrigued by and impassioned with amusement games all my life. I have an average-sized street route and an independent contractor handles my repairs. I do the rest: I collect, rotate and defuse crises. My fingernails are dirty, my hands are calloused and my back aches.

I've seen a lot and I'd like to tell you what's on my mind and what I'm doing to survive the most turbulent times in our industry since the early '80s. Pick up the phone and call your fellow operators and you might hear "business is terrible," "collections are in the gutter" and/or "the good old days are gone." Call me and I might tell you something similar.

But I'm still making a decent buck on my route. And I'm still thinking ...and thinking about things that affect you as well as me. I want to talk about them, beginning with...

CONTRACTS

The time to get "installation agreements" signed is when collections are booming... like last year when *Final Fight* and *Turtles* were bringing in big numbers. Too many operators try to get a contract signed when times are slow to protect their locations from more aggressive competitors. This doesn't work. When times are good, stockpile your bucks and solidify your business relationships. When times are slow, you sleep a lot better at night with a mattress full of signed contracts.

50 CENT PLAY

Wishful thinking. Yes, I know we deserve a raise and that our equipment costs have escalated. I also know fuel and insurance costs went through the roof. But there's one simple fact about 50¢ play: it does not work!

My new pinballs should command the factory setting (1 play for 50¢, 2 for 75¢, 3 for a dollar). But when you put them out like this, they do $140 the first week, $120 the second and then hover at about a C-note. People are constantly kicking the front door, oblivious to the fact that it takes two coins to start play.

You then "give in" and lower the game to quarter play. The weekly collection doubles to $200 and the regular customers give you "high fives" every time you walk in the door 'cause you're not "ripping them off" anymore.

Times are tough. You can get a taco or burger on any street corner for under four bits. Many other consumer items are down in price. So, my games **stay** at 25¢ per play!

ACTION X8!

When we announced our "strip for action" Lucky 8 Line video game machine back in the Eighties, we really started something. Not only has the demand been tremendous, but it has now spurred the creation of **a full line of new-generation A&P machines for the Nineties:**

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PINBALLS

"It's hit deep! Way back! It's going, going, it's **gone!**" What am I talking about? Quality control of course. Most of you know by now that, for years, I have praised the silver ball and boasted about how profitable pins were to my operation. Times have changed!

I remember the days gone by when I could uncrate a new pinball and have it working perfectly on location within an hour. The games were well built and also thoroughly checked and tested before leaving the factory. My location owners praised me for bringing them quality equipment. I considered the games a drawing card and strove to put a pinball into every location. Revenues were terrific and I touted my success on these pages to the operating world.

Today's pinballs are of a lesser breed. In my opinion, workmanship is shoddy and product is just shoved out the door. I don't know what your recent experiences have been, but with me, it's rare for the machine to work correctly upon set-up. The attention to detail that was evident in yesterday's models is nonexistant today. My locations curse me because their games break frequently, often on a daily basis.

My mechanic gazes at me through bloodshot eyes, caused by sleepless nights spent laboring over these four-legged adversaries. My gray hairs are now numerous and I cringe every time the phone rings, fearing it will be yet another pin-related call. I used to consider pinballs my greatest asset; now they represent my greatest liability.

It's really a shame. I love to put pinballs in front of the public. There is only one problem: I don't want to refinance my beautiful home in order to do so!

CONVERSIONS

Wake up! The days of doing complete conversions are gone! Now, don't get me wrong, because there's nothing more attractive than a completely converted game that looks like it's a dedicated piece. But in today's marketplace, we must put beauty aside and concentrate more

Ultimate's Yogi Taylor with his beloved 1950 Hudson (he still makes collections in it).

on what's practical and profitable. Allow me to introduce the Ultimate Generic System.

We start with a used cabinet. My favorites are the classic Williams and Taito units (there are no better cabinets made today). These street warriors will be on the route a lot longer than today's "system cabinets." These "classics" are made of real wood, have great coin doors and are easy to transport.

The marquee is painted black. If desired, you could put your company name or your location's logo there. The control panel is stripped. An attractive multicolored overlay is applied. Three buttons are installed on each side, each with an accompanying joystick. The sides of the cabinet are left alone. Who looks at them anyway? You've got better things to do than waste time and money painting cabinet sides.

The game's then wired "JAMMA Standard" and we're ready to convert. When our kit arrives, we carefully open the box and remove **only** the board and instruction book. We set our dip switches, replace the instruction book and place the rest of the kit (minus board) up in the rafters. We now install the board in our "generic" cabinet, power it up, and we're ready to go! Our game is on the street and making money within an hour.

Later on when we decide to sell this kit, we simply remove the board from the cabinet, place it back in its original box and it's ready to go. We are selling a factory-fresh kit with a "tested" board. It just happens that the "tested" board has made you hundreds of dollars on the route!

I firmly believe that the "Ultimate Generic System" is the only way to go. It's a breeze to swap games in and out. You get top dollar when you resell your kits. Most importantly, your product is out earning immediately! I also firmly believe that in the near future, manufacturers will be offering "board only" kits for a greatly reduced price, and when they do, you'll be ready to roll!

GAME SALES

I don't know where I'd be today if I wasn't constantly "turning" my equipment. This is a cash flow business, and selling off used and not-so-used equipment is the key to success for the small operator.

The game industry used to be a "buy and hold" business. You kept your games for three to five years and milked every cent you could out of them. You then stuck them in the back corner of the warehouse. Today's environment requires that you take smaller profits and move on, selling your equipment while it still has good resale value. You can always buy your equipment back next month, for less money. Don't "fall in love" with your games; move 'em out! If you plan on surviving on your game collections alone, good luck, Walter Mitty!!

'Nuff said! Hang in there. If you think business is bad now, be prepared; it will probably get worse! Keep your eyes out for those "diamonds in the rough"... those good locations that have been neglected because of today's dismal conditions. These are the stores worth jumping on for future profits. Talk to your locations. Show them how much you have to lay out for your equipment. Let them know that you are barely getting by (if that's the case). They should relate 'cause times are tough for them, too. Defend your right to operate "generic" cabinets and less-than-brand-new equipment. After all, it's your money.

Be energetic! Hustle! Clean those monitors! Shine those playfields! Keep your rotations up! Thank an old location owner for his years of loyalty. Court a new location and promise great service. Look for the good in every man.

Keep you chin up! Walk tall and proud! You are a survivor! Remember: when the going got tough, **you got going!**

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DARTS REVOLUTION— AGAIN

Arachnid unleashes Galaxy Darts *& brings downloading to darting!*
game records own league stats; modems data over phone to operator

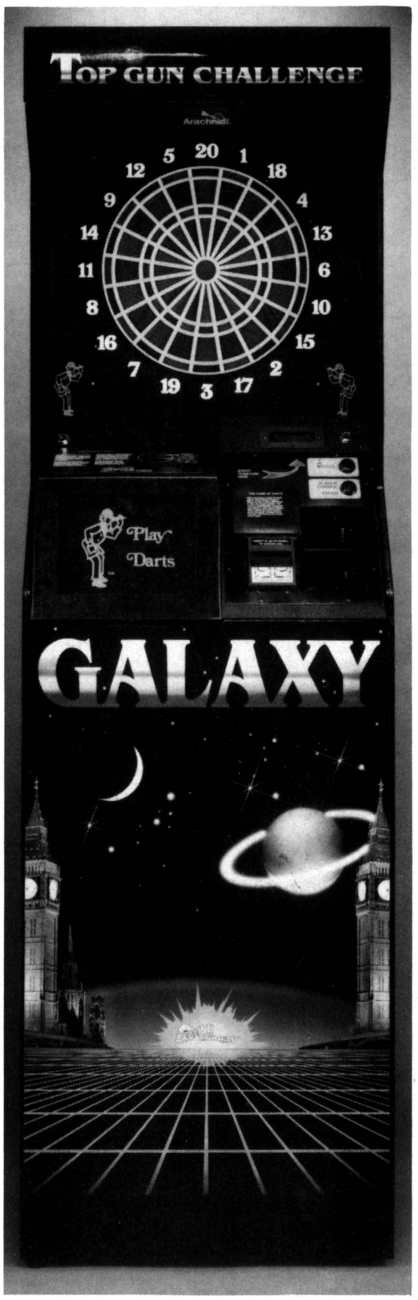
Arachnid has done it again! They were the first coin-op amusement firm to build an electronic dart machine. They were the first to introduce "cricket" to electronic darts. Well, now they're introducing their next two revolutions: automatic league management, and modem-based data transfer from games on location to the operator's office computer. Wow! Debuting at ACME will be the marvelous machine which accomplishes both of these revolutions, *Galaxy Darts.*

The game automatically records dart league statistics. This feature makes money for the operator, since he doesn't have to enter or manually compute this data but can automatically collect it. And, players no longer have to keep a score sheet; they can just enjoy the game!

Another benefit of automatic data collection is that the game enables much more accurate player ratings, since the *Galaxy Darts* statistics program incorporates the player rating methodology used by the National Dart Assn. "It will produce team standings and player ratings, all the statistics an operator needs to run a league," smiled Arachnid President Bill Ward. "We feel very strongly that this feature will remove some of the work and worry of league management which has challenged operators for some time."

MEMORY CARDS

Each dart team will have its own memory card (credit card sized) that is inserted into the game before the match. Since the card was pre-programmed by the operator, it now "tells" the machine which team is playing, who the players are, and what order they're going to play in.



Arachnid's Galaxy Darts

The machine takes this information and personalizes the CRT messages — instead of "Player One" it will say "Bill" when it's his turn. The machine also adds the result of each throw and each match to the statistical data base on individual and game ranking which are recorded in game memory.

To enter all these results (of, let's say, a week's worth of matches) into the league computer, operators no longer have to copy data by hand from player sheets. Instead, the operator can visit each machine with an "operator card" which will extract the new data from each game. Then, back at the operator's headquarters, the operator card will transfer this data into the league computer with Arachnid's "Dartman II" league software package. This package will update all information on individual and team rankings. Results can be printed and distributed as before.

The operator card has other uses, too. Want to put location advertising or league messages on the TV screens of your Arachnid games? You don't have to stand at each game for five or ten minutes, programming in a new message. While at the shop, simply pre-program the operator card and run it through each game. In seconds, each game will have the identical message on screens. By the way, *Galaxy Darts* has the capability to show three different message screens on its monitor.

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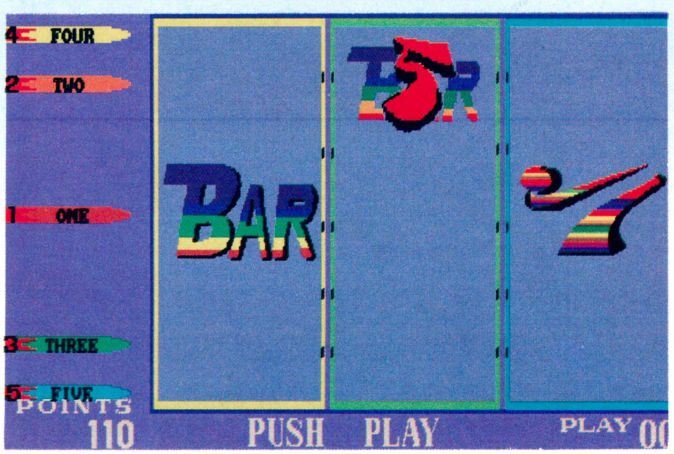

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DIAL-UP INFORMATION

Legal video lottery games in South Dakota are already based on a computer dial-up system. Now this technology comes to non-gaming amusements. By midsummer, said Arachnid, *Galaxy Darts* operators will be able to collect data from each machine over the phone lines. Here's how it works:

After midnight on league match nights, the operator's home office computer will dial the location where league play has occurred. The location will automatically download all statistical results from that night's league play into the office computer. The operator will be able to walk into his office the next morning, calculate individual player stats, league standings, etc.

"The information transmitted is the exact data that AMOA-NDA requires for each league, team and player, plus a lot more information that players would like to know themselves," said Arachnid tournament chief Sam Zammuto. "It will automatically and accurately show player feats, rankings, points and more." (By the way, if some problem with phone lines has occurred, transmission can be repeated manally the next day.)

Arachnid's Chief Engineer Gene Harlan has worked four years perfecting the technology for the Galaxy Darts *machine. See it at ACME.*

When league play is not occurring, the game will create a "Top Gun Challenge," ranking individual players so that they can compete individually (outside of the league and tournament format) to be "top gun" in the location. "It will declare a house champion whose name is different in each location, and who retains the title until he is challenged and defeated — which could be a period of hours, or weeks." But this feature obviously has a stimulating effect when leagues aren't promoting play!

"About 2 million people are playing in dart leagues across America today," declared Arachnid's sales and marketing topper Marcio Bonilla. "Now the operator can rank each player properly and when the player moves, he can take his accuate ranking with him. It's the needed evolution of darts — as the sport grows, it enhances play, keeps more players interested yet allows the operator to control the situation."

Operators can see this revolutionary new product at the upcoming ACME show, or call Arachnid to learn about the nearest authorized distributor at 800/435-8319.

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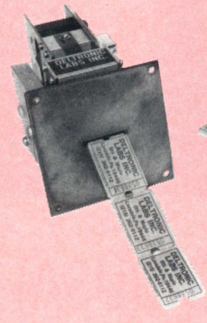
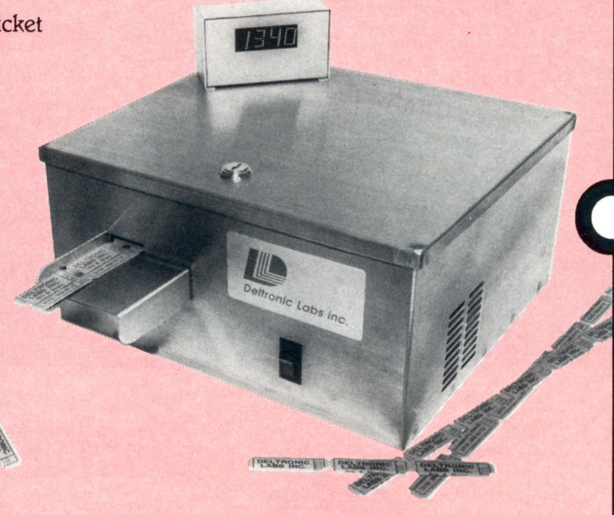


Redemption Machine

"The redemption 'hit of the show' was the 'Ticket Eater' by Deltronic Labs."
John Margold, *Play Meter* 12/90



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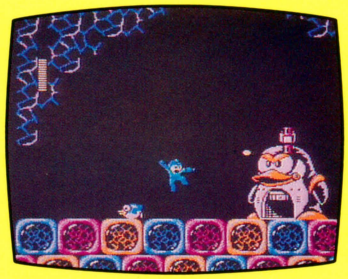
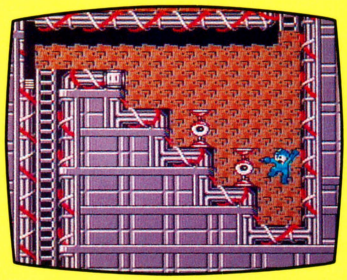
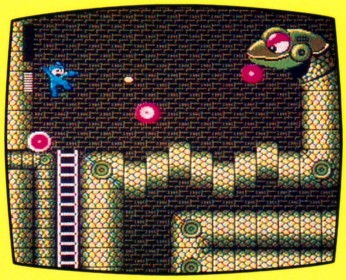


Mega Man is once again after the evil Dr. Wily.



Use your newly acquired weapons wisely to defeat your enemies.



Snakeman is one of many powerful enemies in your way.

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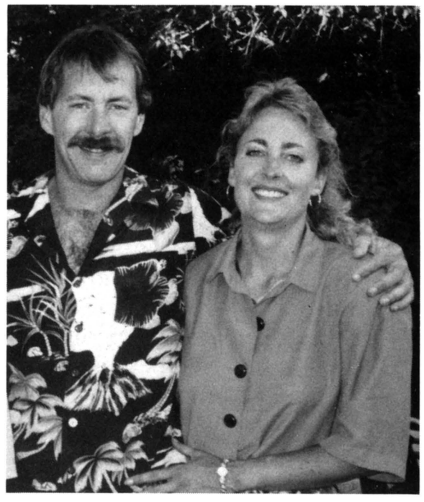
$100 PER WEEK

that's what Bill Van Anda's countertops earn in taverns; "almost any operator in the country can do it," says Bill

Bill Van Anda, who penned this guest essay, has experience at all three levels of our industry. As a manufacturer, he created the classic coin-op table tennis game marketed by National Sports Games (Phoenix, Ariz.). As a distributor, Bill is associated with Coast to Coast Distributing (Roseville, Calif.). As an operator, he runs a small route in Reno, Nevada, called Alpine Game Share. He's a thoughtful, down-to-earth fellow and we're pleased to share some of his insights with our readers.
— the editors

The patient's prognosis is excellent! Reports of its death are greatly exaggerated . . . and completely unconfirmed. What am I referring to, you might ask? Countertop quiz games . . . those socially interactive



Bill Van Anda and his fiancee Sandra Wolf.

video bartops. I'm talking about the video games that mimic the very successful game shows which are an integral part of day and evening programming on all three TV networks.

I personally operate four types of countertop video systems (Grayhound, U.S. Games, and two different types of Merit countertops). I am still making over $100 per week in some tavern locations with these systems . . . and with the majority of them, I get 60% of the gross. (Not with all, but I average 57%). If you are an operator, you can accomplish the same thing. How? By creatively using the software packages offered by the manufacturers.

I'm not talking about amusement video poker here. I operate in Nevada and believe me, nobody would bother playing amusement poker when the casinos and taverns offer gaming machines that pay out in cash!

My feeling is that almost any op-

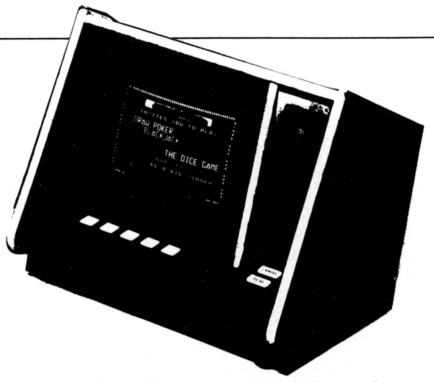
erator in America can succeed with countertops. Let's face it, the most popular kind of game on TV these days is the quiz show — "Wheel of Fortune," "Jeopardy!", "Hollywood Squares," etc. Some of these shows have been on television for over 10 years. These programs are enjoying a resurgence in popularity and are not only shown on daytime television, but also in prime time. Some consistently attract over 10 million viewers in their prime time versions!

What is a trivia video game, except a countertop version of a TV quiz show? The Q&A format has been around since the Greeks, and will be with us forever. The video countertop system will also be with us forever, assuming manufacturers continue to provide us with interesting, topical, thought-provoking, conversation-stimulating questions!

Trivia quizzes are socially interactive games for grown-ups in taverns. Remember, people go to bars to have fun, visit their friends, and meet the opposite sex. Trivia games fit right into that purpose. Unlike sports-themed or combat-themed amusement video games (which pit a single player against the machine), trivia games are social: they allow anywhere from two to 20 people to get to know each other.

In fact, trivia games strongly encourage social interaction. When the player doesn't know the answer, he turns and asks the next guy, who asks the next guy, etc. New players are born! And, with the "sex" question category, men and women have a legitimate excuse to flirt in a more intimate and playful fashion with each other. It's a natural!

A point to remember about operating countertops is to take their name literally: *put them on top of the counter!* It is a cardinal sin to put a countertop game on a table, off in a corner somewhere. Think about it — this discourages the social interaction which is the secret of the game's success. Besides, even when the bar is empty, the bartender and the waitress sometimes become your best customers. They play when they're bored. Maybe the first customer who walks in will join the fun...and you've got something rolling.



Another thing to remember about operating countertops is *variety.* Would you play a jukebox whose records had not been changed in 20 years? Of course not. The operators who claim that "trivia is dead" are often the ones who killed it... by not changing the questions! Too many operators put a countertop system on location, but only install a single software program. They rotate the game, but they never rotate the questions (software)! These operators could bring their "dead" countertops back to life very quickly, just by using the software as the manufacturers intended. Give the players some variety!

People love the Q&A format, but they also get bored easily. They like variety and change. That's why I have acquired thousands of dollars' worth of software in my "trivia library," and why I make a point of rotating the software on a regular basis.

Although each software package sells to the operator at about $400 apiece, we get them for nothing. How? By requesting a *different* software package each time we buy a countertop game unit. Like us, you can accumulate an excellent inventory of software (i.e. new topics and fresh questions) simply by requesting a different program each time you purchase a new unit from the manufacturer. Each of my Merit countertops, for example, came with a *different* software program ...selected by me, because I specially requested it at the time of purchase.

Using this variety of software, I can keep the games fresh and topical for the players... without having to rotate the hardware from location to location. (By the way, Merit deserves special praise for offering the most questions—10,000 per software package — and for offering the highest quality questions.)

Acquiring new software "for free" is instrumental in getting a 60/40 split in favor of the operator. When I solicit the account, I make a point of telling the location that each updated program of questions represents an *investment*... and I promise to keep a constant rotation of software happening.

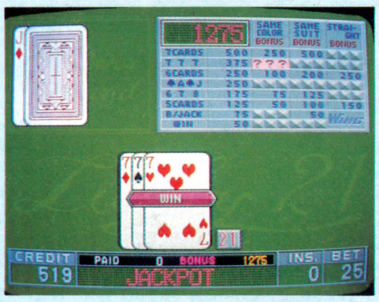
"Let's look at it this way," I tell the location. "We'll split 40/40, with 20% going to new software." Or I might say: "Based on the costs I incur to keep the questions updated, I feel I deserve 60% of the take." Most of the time, the location owner agrees.

As a dedicated countertop operator, I'd like to see manufacturers work as hard as I do, to keep the questions up to date. Their challenge is to come up with fresh, new topics that are relevant to the late 1980s and early 1990s... categories with exciting, thought-provoking, interesting questions. Or at least keep the answers current!

Which football team has won the greatest number of superbowls? Eight years ago the answer might have been Baltimore. Today it's the San Francisco Forty-Niners, but if you're still using 1983 chips, your players are in for a real letdown. Also, let's have some of those interesting tidbits of sociology like you see in *USA Today,* i.e., what are the three most requested electronic gadgets in a U.S. home? (A video cassette recorder, a computer, and a CD player).

In today's business atmosphere, operators need to be innovative enough to find new sources of revenue. Many times, you've heard industry veterans say "The three staples of coin-op are pool, music and cigarettes." Well, in some parts of the country, too many locations own their own pool tables these days. And cigarette machines are under constant assault from lawmakers, health boards, regulators, the Surgeon General... and from locations that operate their own cigarette vending machines! So if you agree it's time to find a new "staple" for that classic tavern location, give countertops a second look.

NUMBER ONE GAMES



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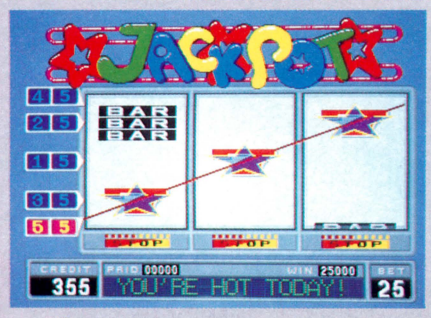

Lucky 37 DUAL REELS

•Super! Double win on dual appear.

Lucky 75

•This is the hottest one.

Lucky 55

•Enjoy easy win from both sides.

Lucky 90

•The top of reel games.

Lucky 77

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Lucky 89

•Your chance for super jackpot!

Lucky 74

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ON WISCONSIN ROADS

by Bob Rondeau

In anticipation of getting more re-involved in our industry, I took a tip from Charles Kuralt and hit the road. During my recent trip, I talked to a few big operators, a couple of distributors, a manufacturer and a lot of smaller operators who make up the major part of our business up here in the Wisconsin area.

This trip was my way to get a first-hand re-education on today's business, and to be told (with no finesse) how the guy in the "jungle" feels. I had my eyes opened on a lot of issues by the guys who put the machines out.

I got the impression, for example, that low priority is placed on the parallel board amendment. It does not worry them that AAMA is upset about AMOA's lobbying methods, nor that AMOA doesn't approve of AAMA's system of doing things.

They see other problems they wish both organizations would spend more time at, such as improving product, opening the door to new areas of operation, making products that don't fade away after six months or less, putting lower prices on kits and, as I said before, making a product that doesn't cost more than the truck you deliver it to the location in.

They are now in the transition period going from vinyl to CD jukeboxes, which is a very expensive thing for them. They have mixed emotions on the gaming laws that seem to be on the agendas of half the nation's state legislatures. They aren't sure if legal poker games represent the future of our industry or if they even want them to. They know it will be expensive (like changing to CD phonos) and some are worried that the state will be their partner and to an extent, control their destiny. (In Wisconsin alone, 12,000 taverns could qualify for poker.)

They're glad the AMOA brought the jukebox license issue to a successful conclusion, but those that paid from the beginning, followed the law and the recommendations of AMOA, ASCAP, etc., are not too happy about the reprive given those who never paid a dime. They figure these are the same guys who ride for free on any good the state and national organizations do...the same guys who put out illegal games while others tried to remain legal and run their businesses legally and proudly.

Our author Bob Rondeau with his bride Bev in Green Bay's East Town Mall with a guy who promises a better year ahead.

While the industry comes back to a good cycle, frustration and irritation are evident. But, the humor... the positive attitude only found in our industry...is there are well. My visits and education took me to a lot of places, and the same honest, straight-from-the-shoulder conversations that you expect from coin machine people took place. I'd like to share a few with you now.

WALLY BOHRER

I stopped in Big Bend to visit Wally Bohrer, past AMOA president and owner of about five enterprises, among them Hastings Distributing.

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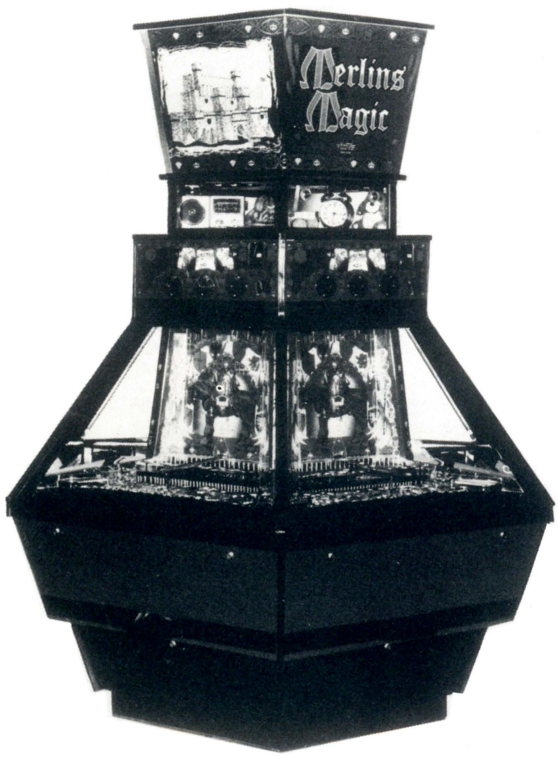

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As everyone knows, Wally has been in the thick of everything in our industry since he bought the company from Sam Hastings over 20 years ago.

Not only has he held about every office in the AMOA and served on every committee, but he's also been past president of the Wisconsin WAMO when he fought against the sales tax and for the free play pinball bill (Wisconsin didn't allow free play for about 15 years). The things Wally's done in our industry would fill a book.

He wears many hats, but after you talk with him for just a bit, you realize his top priority (apart from his family) is the coin machine business. He's also one of those individuals who doesn't see any value in sleep and his "go go" attitude has rubbed off on six of his kids who are in the businesses he either owns or is involved with. For example, son Mike and daughter Debbie run Hastings (a large operation in Milwaukee). Mike is also the active VP of

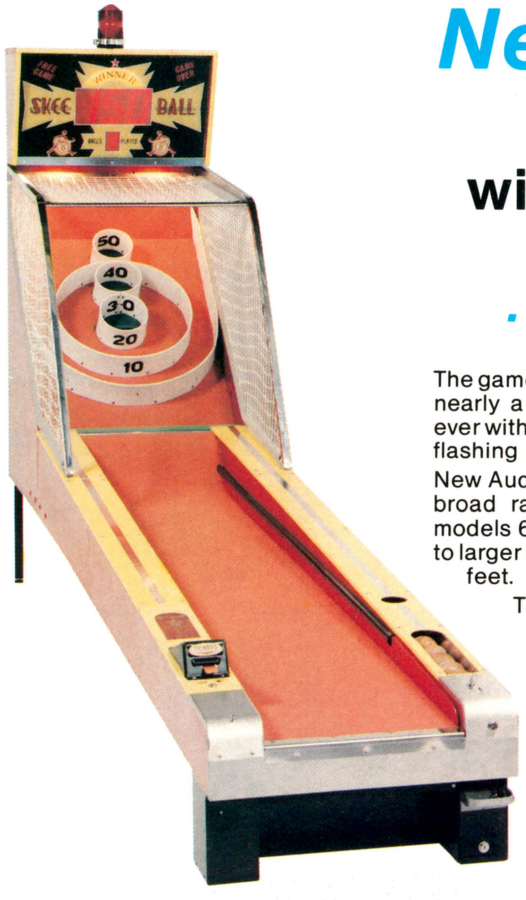
Wally Bohrer at his desk making yet another call.

WAMO, the state operator association.

Wally's wife Pat is his partner, his friend, his confidante. Everyone's who's met her loves her. We have known Wally and Pat for years and years and to be as active as Wally, you need a wife like Pat . . . not too many could keep up with that pace.

Wally is presently head of the AMOA Government Relations Committee, and worked more hours than Carter had pills on the new federal jukebox license procedure. This is a sliding scale, mandating a $275 fee for the first jukebox, $55 for the second through the tenth and then $48 for each of the rest. (I bring the fee schedule up again because this was something Wally and a lot of people at AMOA worked very hard on.)

From my visits and talks, I know that a lot of operators aren't thrilled with this . . . a few will disregard it and some others won't follow it 100 percent. In talking with Wally, two things scared me and should scare the operators who don't license all their phonographs. First off, this is federal stuff and if any case goes to court, it will go to a federal court, not a local or state court (the performance societies have never lost a case in a trial). Secondly, rumor has it that enforcement agents at the societies will be given a commission for every unlicensed jukebox they find playing their music without a



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license.

Now, if any of these agents finds an unlicensed jukebox after March 15th, they will license the establishment where that jukebox is located. This is serious stuff; it wouldn't exactly "improve" relations between the operator and his bar owner if such a thing happened.

Wally's currently involved in the drive to get a law legalizing video gaming in Wisconsin. He wants a law that benefits both the state and the operator. His desk right now is large enough for a professional ping pong match, necessary to support everything he's got going. Keep going, Wally!

BERNIE & JIM'S

I also drove to Delavan, Wisc. to see the new building housing 1002 Distributing, the new dealership formed by Bernie Powers and Jim Buckner. When I got there, the contractors were just putting the finishing touches on, and I was impressed when Bernie said they were planning to add another 5,000 sq. ft. for warehousing soon. Their place is easy to get to since it's near the junction of Highways 43 and 50. Good luck, fellas.

ON TO PIONEER

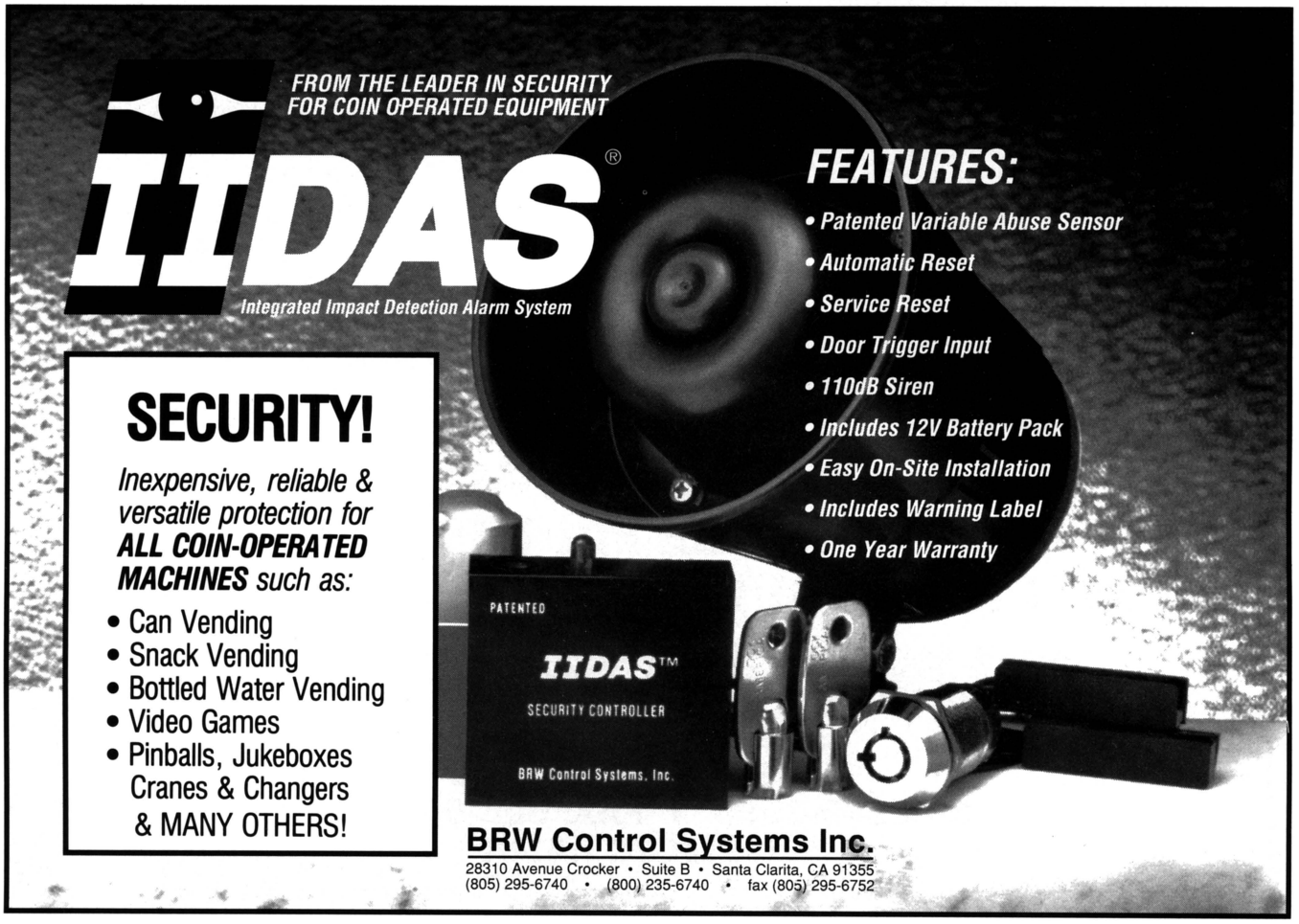
Bev Rondeau & good friend Sam (Pioneer) Cooper.

I stopped in at Pioneer Sales in Menomonee Falls and talked to Joel Kleiman, Sam Cooper, Danny Karolzak, Rick Tills and a gal that I and hundreds of operators throughout the years have talked to, Mary Hontros. As everyone knows, Mary is their receptionist, secretary and peacemaker. She knows where everything is and who everyone is.

Joel, Sam, Danny and Rick know the business, but without Mary, they'd be lost. She's been with Pioneer since 1978. She retired for 15 months, but got lonely for the customers and co-workers and came back, and everyone is glad!

Coming into Pioneer, I stepped back in time when I realized that the large, oval desk Mary works at, greets the customers from and answers the phone at is the same desk Sam Cooper used on Fond Du Lac Avenue 37 years ago, and the same desk upon which we changed our daughter's diapers 39 years ago.

This was an interesting stop on the road, and if (as some say) our in-



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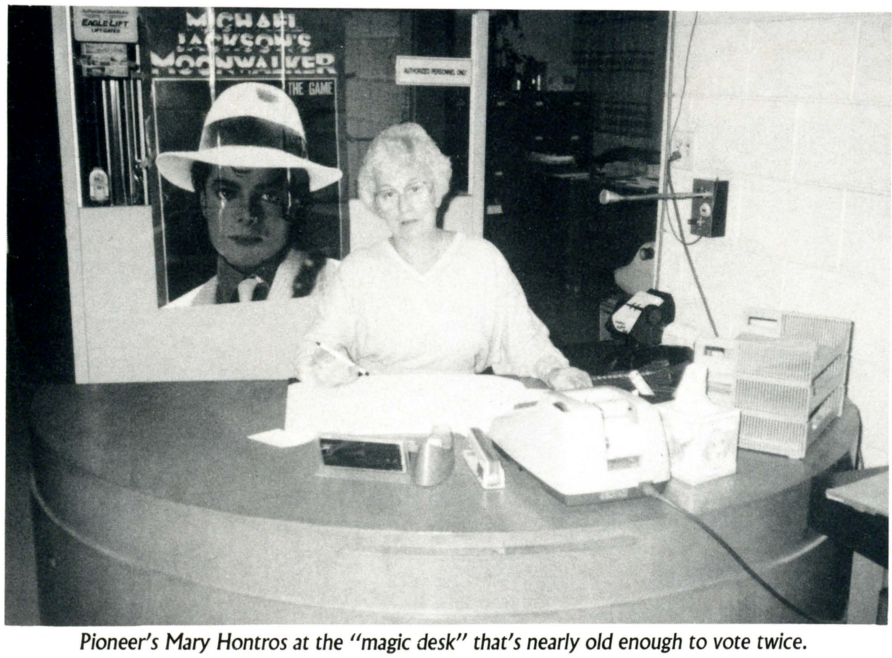

Pioneer's Mary Hontros at the "magic desk" that's nearly old enough to vote twice.

dustry is slowing down, the activity and traffic at Pioneer was no indication. Everyone was busy, the phone was ringing and the display floor was filled with new product. The operators I talked to were busy, busy and very upbeat, and my talks with Sam and Joel were very positive and educational. As Joel said: "Things could be better, but then, they always could be."

Stopped at Mellen Sales in Green Bay where I had a nice talk with Mike and Tom Mellen. They took this operation over from their dad Dick (a long-time active operator) and like him, are involved in civic organizations and support the local, state and national coin machine associations.

They're proud of their business as both have been in it since they were kids. The day I got there, Mike (who is the president) was feeling a little low as he'd just been to court about one of the location's having a poker game. As he told me (and some operators confirmed this), he held out for over two years before he was forced to buy this one machine for this good location.

In two years, he lost six locations because he wouldn't put out a poker game until they were approved. He just couldn't afford to lose another location, and the law wasn't being enforced. Some other illegal machines had been out there for two years. As "luck" would have it, soon after reluctantly putting this single machine out, the police pulled a raid and picked it up.

Tom & Mike Mellen flank Sharon Bryfcznski at their place of business in Green Bay.

Mike and Tom are good people, running a good long-established business. All they wanted was that the machines be declared legal or illegal and the law enforced. For two years, they were losing locations. But as soon as Mike and Tom put one out, the law acted.

While at Mellens, I got to talk to Sharon Bryfczynski. She's been with the company over 15 years and is their Jane of all trades (secretary, home sales manager, record and disc buyer, receptionist, bookkeeper, janitor, etc.). Every Mellen location knows Sharon. She keeps Mike and Tom organized and pointed in the right direction.

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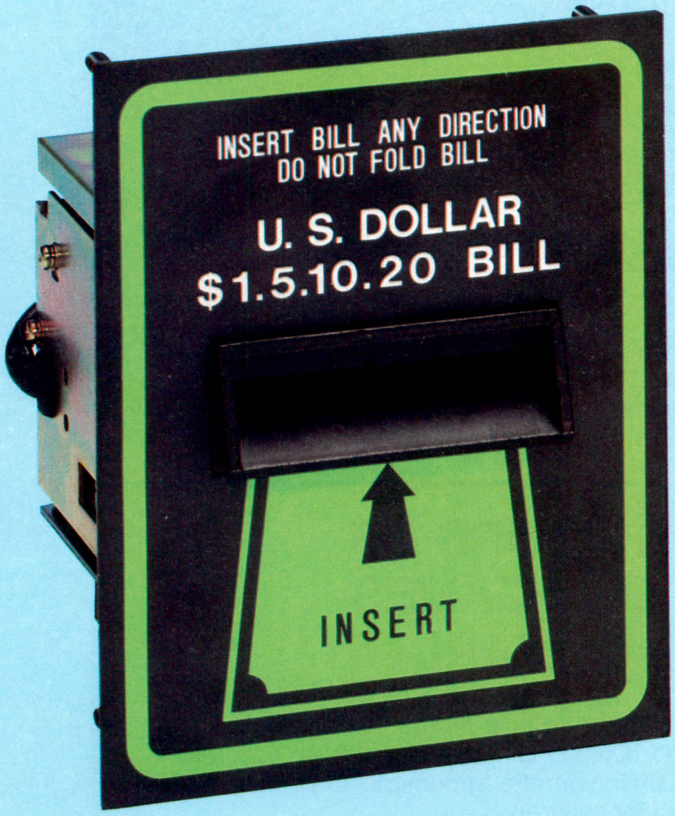

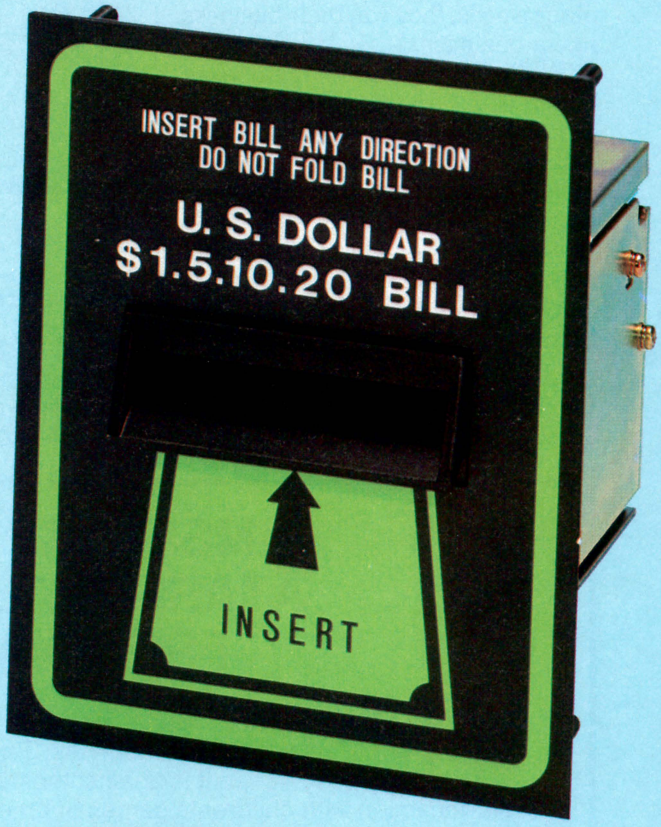

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I stopped in at Hallada Coin where long-time friends and partners Dave Fonder and Bob Greatens were in the place for a change. They have accepted the turns in our business these past twenty years and met them. For instance, they're busy with dart and pool leagues and they upgrade their route when it's time and the correct thing to do.

Bob and Dave have been in this business most of their lives, so they learned the hard way "that no location is worth losing money for." In other words, they run their business like a business.

While discussing poker games in Green Bay, Dave made a statement I think all operators will find interesting. He said they never put out a poker game, but if he could have seen into the future, he would have two years ago because the law was not enforced till then and Hallada lost some locations because they didn't put them out.

Like with the jukebox licensing fee they've been paying since it came up, they want pokers legal or illegal. Either way, they want the law enforced! Like they said, if they had known that the jukebox law was not going to be enforced, maybe they should have gotten a free ride like so many others. There are too many double standards out there in our industry.

Dave Founder & Bob Greatens at their place . . . a rare photo, since they're so often out on the route.

A MESSAGE TO OPERATORS OF ATARI FINAL LAP VIDEO GAMES FROM NAMCO AND ATARI

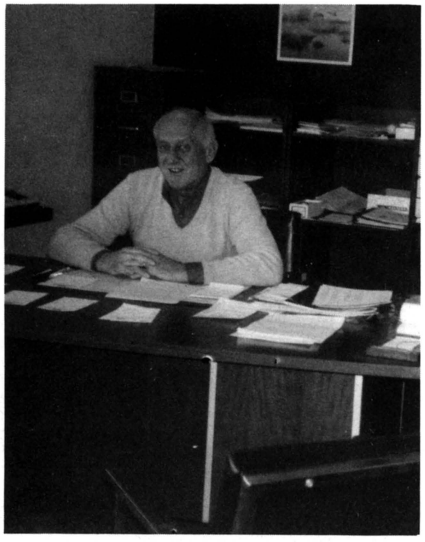
The Atari Final Lap Video Game includes trademarks belonging to Philip Morris Incorporated. Upon learning of our use of their trademarks, Philip Morris raised objections. They do not want children to smoke. They have stated it is against their policy for any of their cigarette trademarks to be used on or in connection with children's games or other items intended for children.

Although our use of the trademarks was inadvertent, Namco Limited, as creator and manufacturer, Namco-America Inc., and Atari Games Corporation, as manufacturer and distributor of the game, take responsibility for such use. Accordingly, we have made up conversion kits consisting of 10 Eproms with instructions for you to convert existing games into non-infringing games. The kits are free and will be shipped to you pre-paid.

We have placed advertisements for the past three months notifying you of the need to convert your Atari Final Lap games. We advised you to work through your distributor to get the necessary conversion kits. To assist you we offered you a $100 credit for each game converted valid against purchases of the new Final Lap 2 dedicated video game. Up to five $100 credits can be added together and applied to the purchase of each new Namco Final Lap 2 dedicated game.

At this point, if any of you are having any difficulties whatsoever in making the conversion please contact Namco-America, Inc. directly at (408) 496-6371, Extension 29, and you will be provided with a means for having the conversion made.

Namco, Namco-America and Atari join Philip Morris in urging you to cooperate with us in making the conversions. This will guarantee your ability to continue using the Atari Final Lap video game and the $100 credits will enable you to obtain new Namco Final Lap 2 dedicated video games at substantial savings.



Ralph Lubinski

Stopped in at Video Doctors and Pioneer Sales of Green Bay, my old stomping grounds, where I met many operators that I dealt with for years and years. The place is the same . . . busy, busy. Pioneer and Video Doctors share the same building (which was the old Bally Dist. place) and work very closely with one another. This is a real smooth-working place where operators can get service, buy new and used equipment and parts from Gregg Marweg, now a full partner in Video Doctors.

Mike Reetz (president) continues to emphasize service and runs Video Doctors in a fashion that if you have a problem, he'll do everything possible to help you now! Unlike a metropolitan area, these operators who need service help come anywhere from 50 to 300 miles away. So it gets very expensive for them if every time they have a machine problem they have to leave it and come back for it.

Mike and Ralph Lubinski both worked for me at one time and I'm, of course, proud of them. Ralph became manager of Bally Green Bay when I left to take those many other jobs at Bally "corporate." He was the best thing that happened to me, to Bally and to our customers in the Green Bay division . . . always level headed, always fair, never hyper-excited . . . we made a great pair.

During the four years I traveled from one point to another for Bally, I never met a guy more qualified to be a distributor than Ralph Lubinski. He was part of my life, and I am glad. When Bally decided to get out of the distributing business there, Ralph joined Pioneer and he handles equipment sales for them while Video Doctors supplies the service and parts. This was one Bally office that the operators never lacked service for even an hour. Video Doctors and Pioneer were there immediately to take care of their problems.

I talked to many operators during my short visit and their theme was the same as mentioned in most of this article. John Miller of Denmark Coin (one of the original guys into dart leagues) looked great after winning a battle with a serious physical ailment. Mark Secora of Bay Coin Machines said some things that impressed me. He is gung-ho on the industry, is ready for change and looking forward to it.

I talked to him about the illegal games and he said "the guy who drops an illegal game into one of my locations will hear about it, and so will all the law enforcement people. I won't put up with illegal equipment screwing up my operation and the industry's image."

Bay Coin's Mark Secora visits Gregg Marweg's parts department at Video Doctors/Pioneer.

BAY-TEK ROLL

In Oneida, I stopped in at Bay-Tek, the manufacturer of roll-downs which have been popular for years. Lori Treankler, VP and sales manager, gave me the grand tour and introduced me to all the people who

Video Doctors' Gregg Marweg's on the parts job. He's become a partner in the company.

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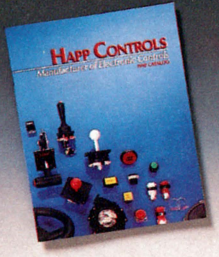

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make and ship games like *Fielders Choice* and *Clown*. They are shipping to distributors all over, most having ticket dispensers for redemption.

Bay-Tek's Lori Treankler joins part of her staff out on the production line.

This is a family-owned business and as Lori said, they really give their customers personalized business. The machines are exciting to play and due to their construction, are dependable and require little maintenance. I was impressed with the names of the people in our industry who are ordering these machines. This may be one of the new things we are looking for. Even though roll-downs have been around for years, these have a new wrinkle and the redemption feature may be something to look at.

Youthful Bay-Tek staffers proudly show off factory sign by their Oneida, Wisc. plant.

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Deluxe Cockpit dimensions:
Height: 77 in. (197 cm.)
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Width: 31.5 in. (81 cm.)
Weight: 750 lbs. (341 kg.)

Compact Upright dimensions:
Height: 79 in. (201 cm.)
Depth: 40 in. (102 cm.)
Width: 27.25 in. (69.2 cm.)
Weight: 475 lbs. (215 kg.)

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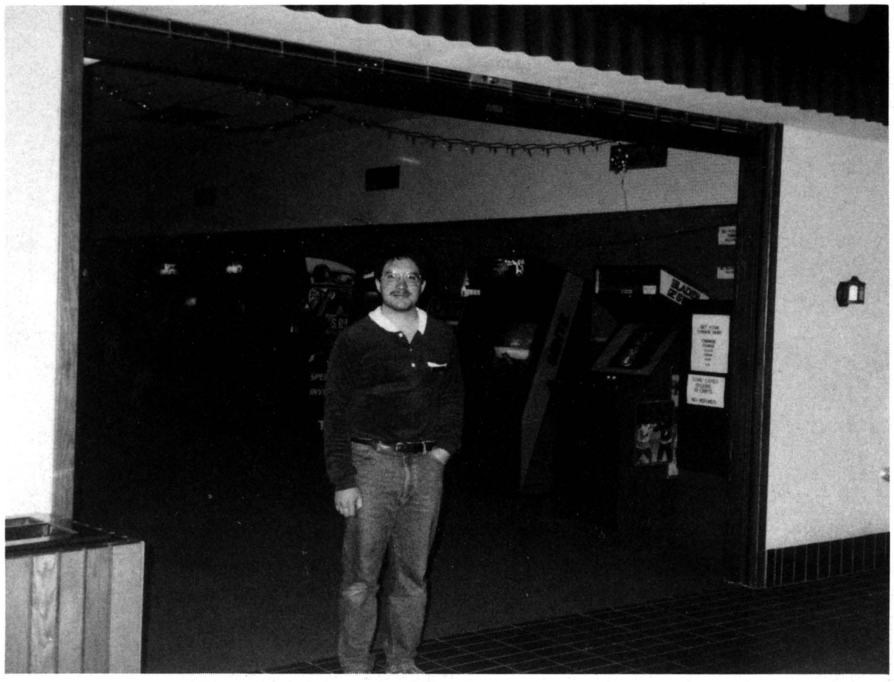
Paid a call to the new Wizard Arcade in the East Town Mall where I met Norb Le Captain, the manager and brother of Bernie Le Captain who owns the arcade as well as an operation in Manitowoc. Norb was well-pleased with business and is trying out a pool table which is doing very well (not always the norm for an arcade). He may try a timetable to see if this will work out better. I'm sure this will not be the last of the Wizard arcades.



"Captain" Le Captain by their new Wizard Arcade in the East Town Mall in Green Bay.

These visits were fun, educational, eye opening. It was different because I wasn't selling anything. I didn't have to worry about saying the right thing, I just had to listen and ask questions. I learned again in talking with people that communication is our greatest gift . . . the ability to exchange information in fellowship and friendship.

It also strengthens my belief in the old saying "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Then we will all learn something from one another. There are some other people in our industry who might try going "on the road again."

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cover story

NSM'S NEW LOOK

Germany's "quiet giant" charts bold new course for America; appearance & marketing will soon match advanced CD technology

The Clark Kent of the jukebox industry is about to step into an exhibit booth, remove his glasses and conservative business suit, and burst into action with bulging muscles, a confident grin and flashy, colorful costume. At last, NSM's secret identity revealed! It's a bird .....it's a plane.....*it's Superman(ufacturer)!*

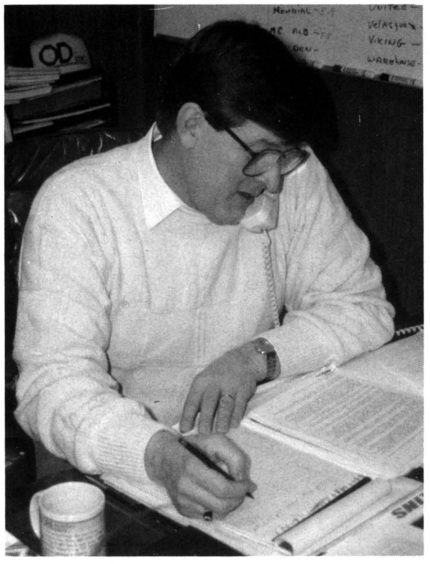
"You will see an entirely new NSM this year," promised Rus Strahan, president of the Chicago-based subsidiary of this huge German firm. NSM's "new look" means a top-to-bottom change of approach, all geared to pleasing the American market by giving everything a more American flavor.

There's a new corporate name and logo for their U.S. subsidiary . . . a new emphasis on getting feedback and input from American dealers and operators . . . a whole new era in NSM jukebox design . . . more advanced technology than other music factories offer . . . new U.S. service personnel, service programs and service tools for operators . . . and new U.S. marketing and advertising campaigns . . . and you'll see it all get started in a larger, more striking booth at the ACME show!

NSM hopes and believes the results of all this will be dramatic. NSM hopes the American operator, like the leading lady in a Hollywood romantic comedy, will wake up and realize that the quiet, hardworking guy who never tooted his own horn very much, was really "Mr. Right" all along.

NEW CABINET DESIGNS

Wisely, the company is starting its make-over for the American market from the outside in. Advanced, smooth-working technology has always been NSM's long suit (more on this later), but appearance was admittedly weak. Now that's all about to change in a big, big way. Design studies are underway and some new visual elements will be introduced at ACME, with more redesign work to follow downstream.



NSM-America President Rus Strahan

"Because this is a European-based company, NSM's emphasis has historically been on technical performance," American chief Rus Strahan candidly concedes. "Visual appearance was always secondary. A lot of things are treated that way in Europe — everything from cars to houses," he explained. "Europeans typically base their buying decisions on quality and performance; looks are not so important.

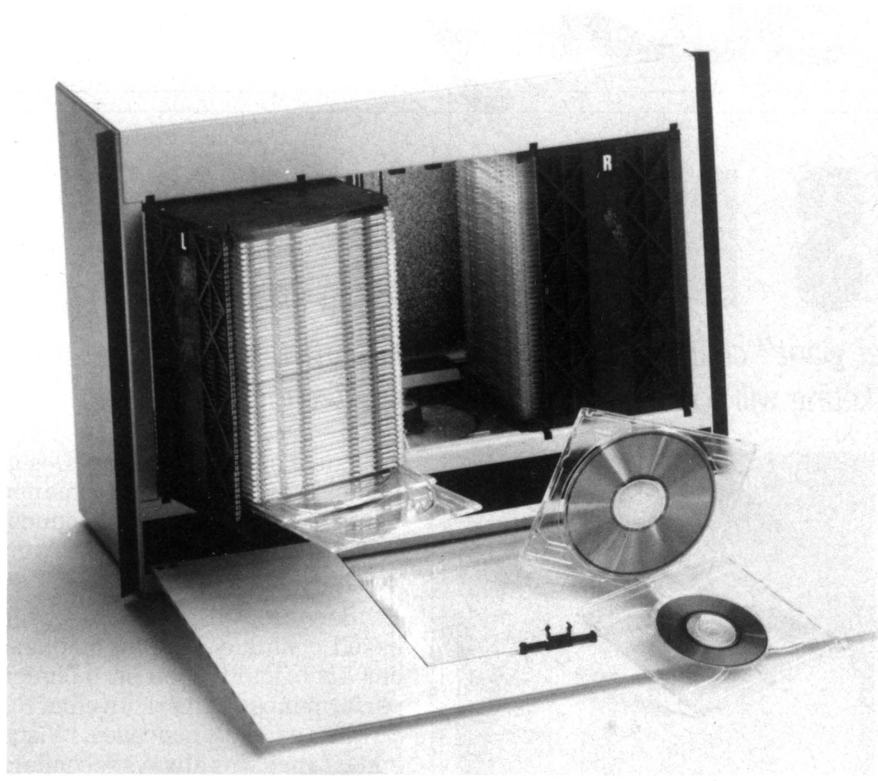
"You've heard the old adage 'You can't judge a book by its cover.' Well," Strahan added, "NSM has found out it's hard to get people to even look inside the book, — no matter how great it is — if they don't like the cover. So now NSM has decided to put the same emphasis on

NSM MARKS 35TH YEAR IN JUKEBOX BIZ

"NSM had a very good last year and is having a very good year this year," Rus Strahan noted. "With the reunification of Germany and the opening of Eastern European markets, they're running production lines six days a week and we're all standing in line for allotments."

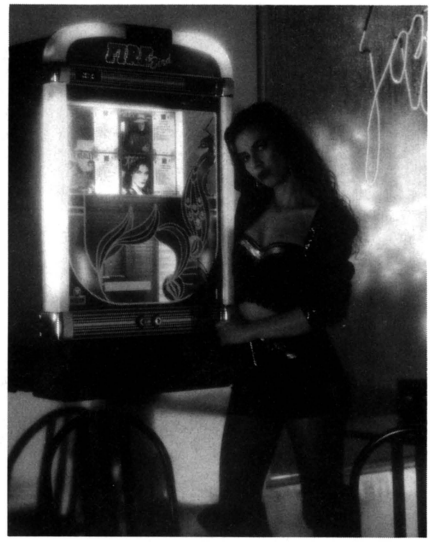
NSM stands for Nack, Schulze and Menke, the trio of German businessmen who founded NSM in 1952. They have made about 160,000 jukes since 1956 and over 15,000 CD changers since late 1988 (some went to consumer applications, etc.). 1991 is NSM's 35th year in the coin-op music market. Currently, NSM employees produce at least 25 jukeboxes per day at their 30,000-sq.-ft. factory in Bingen, Germany (on the Rhine River in the heart of the wine country).

The company employs a total of 1,350 people. Nearly three-quarters of all production is pay-out gambling equipment for the German market; besides jukes and gaming equipment, other current products include vending machines (for video and audio cassettes), universal video game cabinets, and subcontracting work on confidential components or products for IBM. More products are absolutely guaranteed to join this list — soon!



A look at the NSM "Quick Change Artist" CD changer mechanism.

NSM's Silver Sky *phonograph.*



NSM's Fire Bird *wall-mount jukebox.*

appearance, that they've always devoted to technical quality. The result is NSM will shortly offer what I honestly believe is the best-looking jukeboxes of all times.

"Take a look for yourself at the ACME trade show!" Strahan continued. "You'll see the beginnings of an entirely new line of beautiful machines — by anyone's definition. That's not just my opinion. We've now heard from distributors, operators and jukebox patrons."

HI-TECH CD MECHS

Once operators look inside the NSM jukebox, they'll discover a technology that's second to none . . . and light years ahead of many. "Where NSM really shines — heads above every one else — is their CD sound system," Strahan declared. "It's literally a decade ahead in terms of technology. NSM builds the undisputed machine of choice throughout Europe — hands down, number one — because they perform."

Strahan didn't pick that "decade ahead" number out of the air. Unlike some other firms which quickly re-engineered their old 45rpm jukeboxes for CD play, he said, NSM spent 10 long years starting from scratch, building a brand new system "from the ground up" that truly is on the leading edge of technology. They'll keep making upgrades and enhancements downstream, but NSM boldly vows that their basic CD system will not require wholesale redesign in a couple of years.

"Our CD technology is different from what operators are accustomed to," Rus Strahan pointed out. "It's a little like the transition that automobile dealerships had to go through, a few years back. Somebody developed a much more efficient, electronically monitored engine which did away with the 'plugs and points' engines we all grew up with. Some dealerships and some mechanics had a hard time making the transition," Strahan added. "It was completely different from what they were used to.

"Ultimately, of course, all manufacturers switched and so did their dealers and mechanics," he pointed out. "NSM has a similar transition we're going through now with our advanced system. It's fast, extremely dependable and surprisingly easy to service, etc. But it is different."

Strahan goes on to say that some of his competition is still selling "plugs and points" jukeboxes. He suggests that these factories — as well as operators who have invested in their CD equipment — may have to play catch up at some future date. (Indeed, this may already be starting to happen in a small way, some technically savvy jukebox operators suggest.)

"I think the other major jukebox companies in the industry are working feverishly on a new technology system right now," Strahan said. "The question is, will they introduce it in two years? Five years? And once they introduce it, how long will it take them to work out the bugs?"

A wise operator will take these factors into account when making

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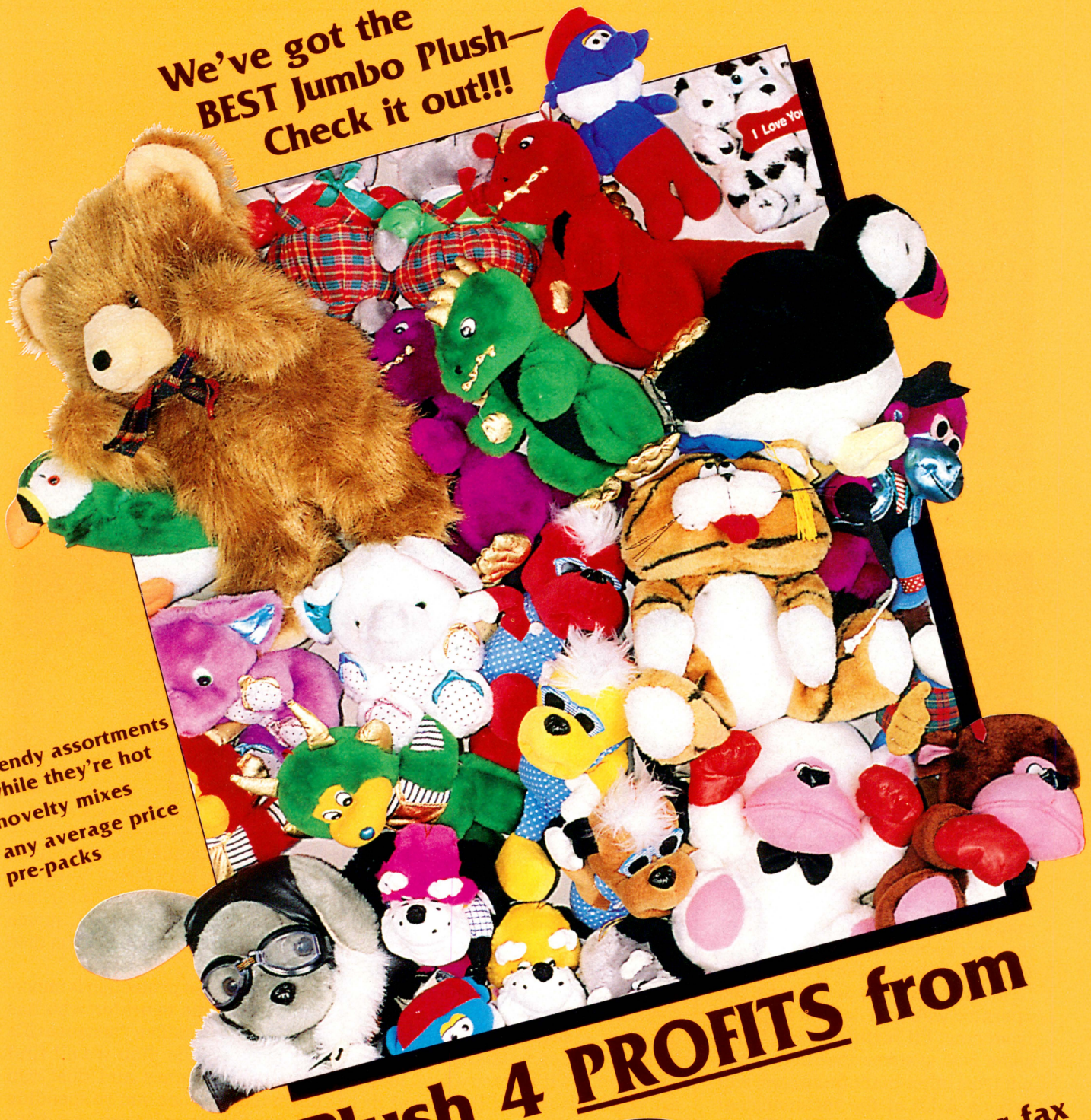

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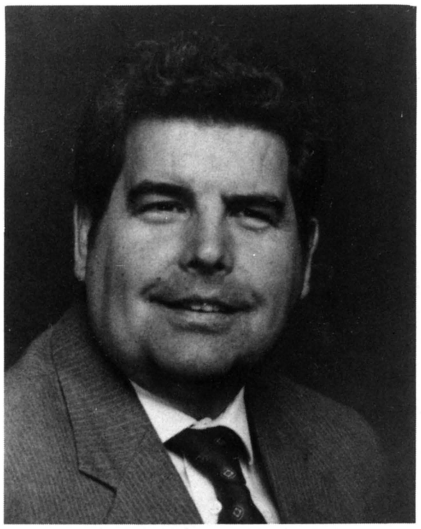
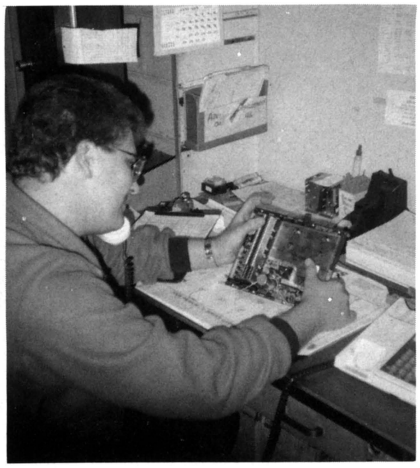
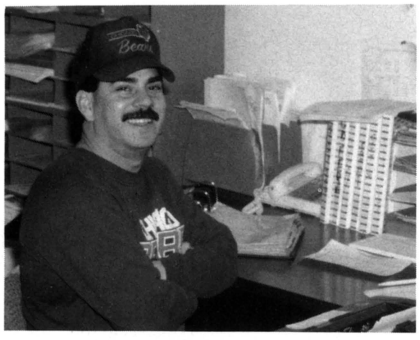


National Sales Manager George Haydocy (a jukebox veteran of over 30 years) will be assuming full responsibility for U.S. NSM sales.

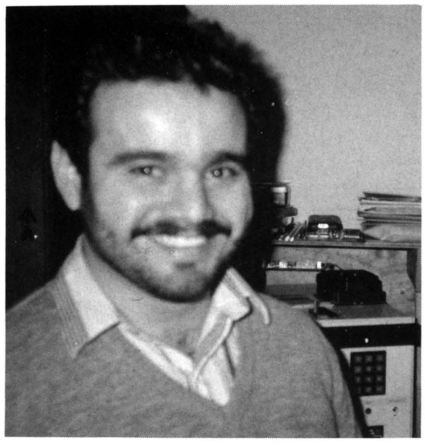
Office Manager Carol Strahan



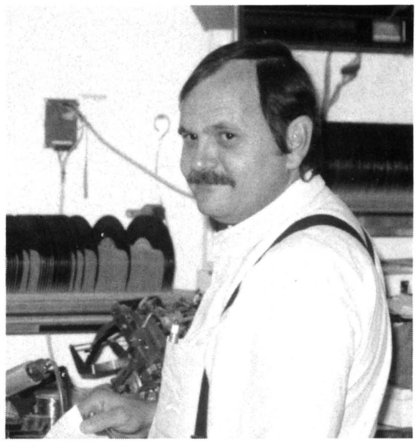
Service Manager Mike Jablonski



Service Technician Orlando Marrero



Chief Engineer Horge Irizarry



National Training Manager Keith White

the transition to CD, Strahan advised. "I recommend that operators look carefully at which jukebox manufacturer offers the level of technology now that will not be antiquated in a few years," he said. "The NSM system will serve the operator well now . . . and 10 years from now. I'll further predict that some new systems that may come out from other manufacturers, will rely on a lot of the technological strides already made by NSM. A good question to ask, when you're considering buying a new box, is: will you obsolete me in six months?"

FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET

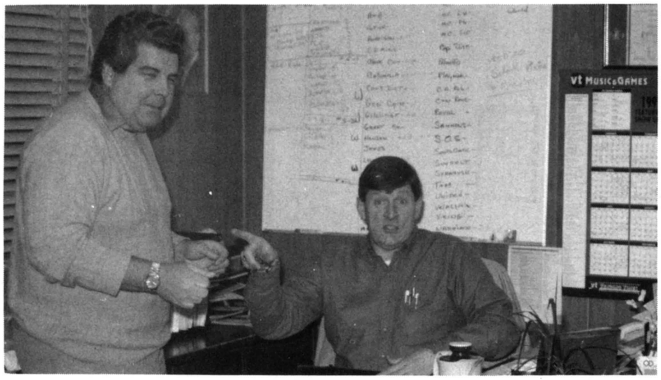
Operators who check out the factory's "new look" will also discover NSM's 100 CD changer mech. They call it the "Quick Change Artist" and — just like Clark Kent when he dons that red cape — it has "powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men." This fast, flexible changer may well soon be used by other industries, too: computers, consumer electronics, radio broadcasting . . . you name it.

The NSM changer can change CD tracks as quickly as 1,500 microseconds (a micro-second is a millionth of a second). The absolute longest it takes to change a CD is 9.5 seconds. "It's the smallest, fastest, most advanced CD changer in the world," NSM engineers assert. Operators know what that speed means to customer satisfaction and to cash box earnings: more of both!

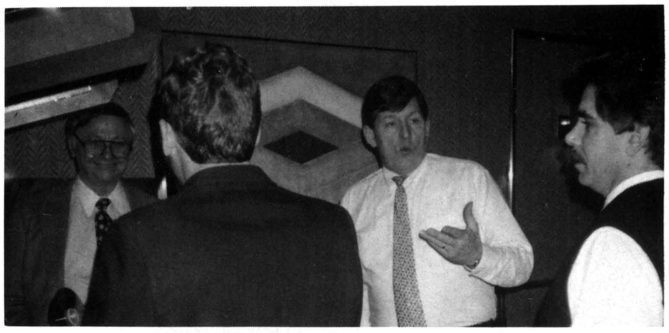
Besides speed, the NSM changer offers another key advantage to operators: it protects the CD disks from wear and tear. Discs are stored in trays; the changer mechanism never actually touches the disc itself. Only the laser beam touches the disc. Also, the changer is sealed inside the cabinet and the cabinet's own outer door is also sealed . . . preventing dust, dirt and other airborne contaminants from damaging the discs or interfering with the laser function. The result: far less chance of music skipping, music track rejection, and long-term disc damage.

"This level of protection is important," said one operator who has studied this question, "because CDs are more fragile than we all first thought. Scratches and dust can harm them. When you're spending $12 per disc on software, you don't want a mechanism that will scratch up the discs. When you're using precision laser-readers, you sure don't want the discs exposed to dust and dirt, either."

As an added bonus, operators will discover that the "tray storage system" in the NSM changer offers extra flexibility. The changer can handle any size compact disc on the market today . . . and if a new size comes along, anywhere up to 5¼ inches, an NSM jukebox can accept it with ease.



George Haydocy and Rus Strahan clown around in the NSM-America offices.



At the NSM January 1991 distributor meeting, George Sammons of Sammons-Pennington, T&M Distributing's Mike Riquier (with back to camera), Rus Strahan and Mondial International's Tony Yula.

TRUTH, JUSTICE & THE AMERICAN WAY

Part of dropping NSM's "mild-mannered disguise" is a new advertising and marketing campaign, aimed squarely at converting the company over to the "American Way" of doing business, Rus Strahan said. That begins with the very name of the firm's U.S. subsidiary. The confusing German-English language hybrid "Loewen-America" is out; the new name for the U.S. subsid is "NSM-America."

Advertising to the American market will take on a big, bold new look as well. "Here again, the European way has dominated our marketing efforts in the past," Strahan stated. "They don't believe in 'blowing your own horn' in the way that Americans do; it's considered a bit crass. Instead NSM has practiced the 'Mercedes Principle': you just keep making the best car in the world, and people will begin to figure it out . . . in 10 or 20 years! I couldn't wait," Strahan grinned. "We're doing our own advertising for the U.S. market now, which is different from anything NSM does overseas."

What will be the ultimate outcome of all this? Knowledgeable tradesters predict that 1991 may begin NSM's "day in the sun." Informed sources have said that in 1990, NSM experienced the biggest sales increase in the American market of any jukebox firm.

NSM is poised for greatness in 1991. From now on the cry is "Up, up and away!"

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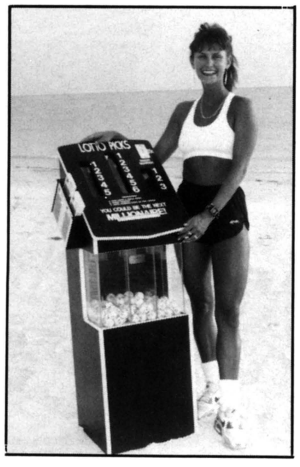

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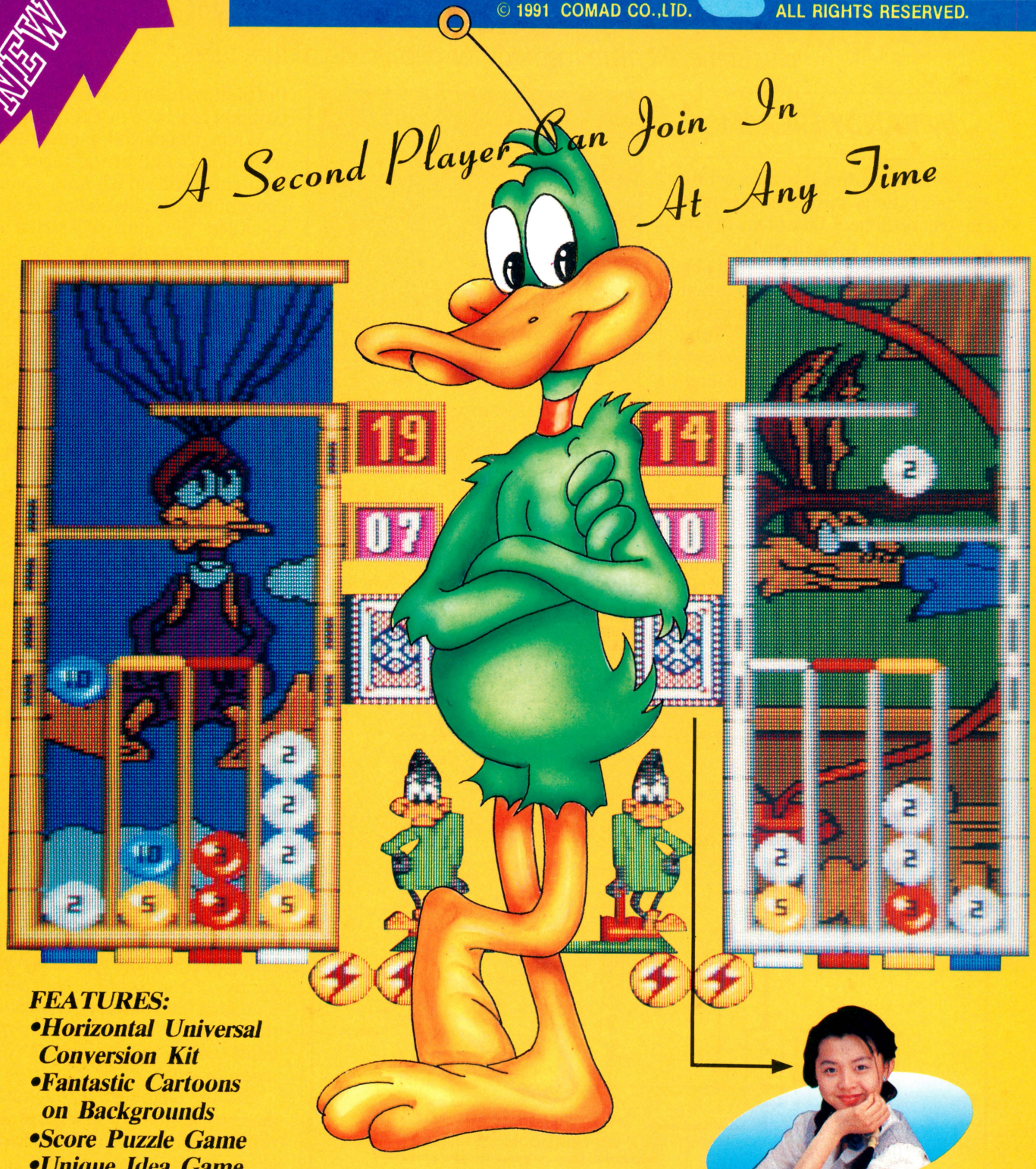

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TECHNICAL TIPS

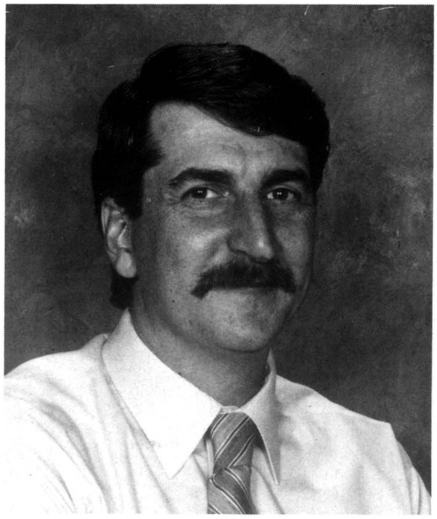
HOW DEGAUSSING COILS WORK

plus some alternate methods for degaussing picture tubes

by RANDY FROMM

I perform quite a few interesting demonstrations and experiments at the Arcade School. One of my favorites is to show the relationship between magnetism and electricity by holding a powerful magnet against the picture tube of a video game monitor. This causes the picture tube to display a beautiful rainbow pattern that follows the invisible magnetic field that surrounds the magnet. But when I pull the magnet away from the screen, the colors remain skewed in large areas of the picture; the picture tube has become magnetized and the display looks lousy!

Let's take a look at the picture tube and see how a little magnetism can really mess up the picture in a color monitor. Take a close look at the screen on the front of a color picture tube. There are thin vertical



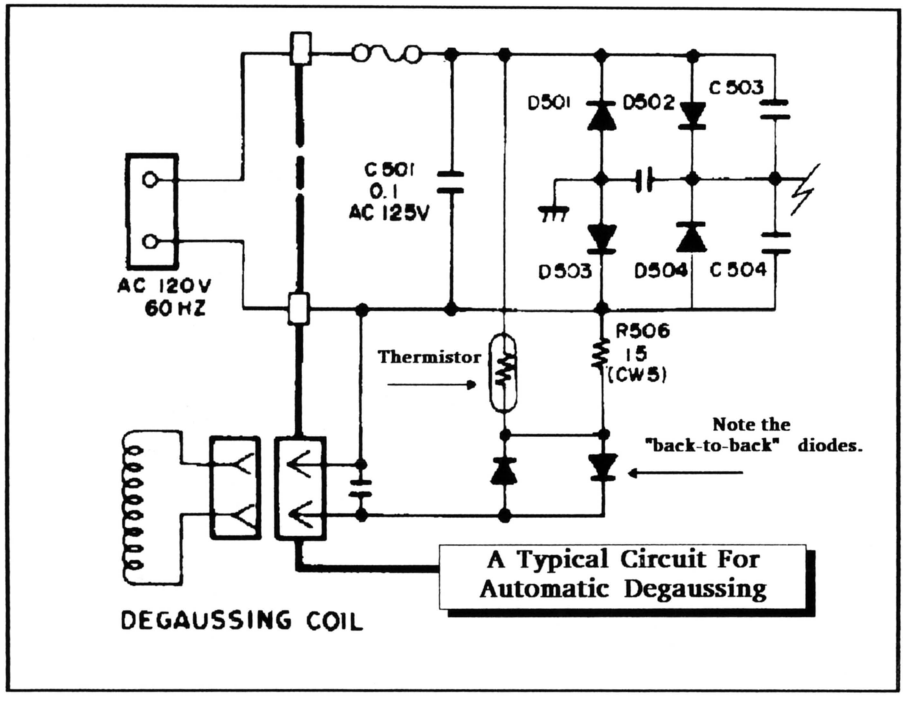
stripes of "phosphor" coating the inside of the glass. There are three different types of phosphor, laid down in alternating stripes. Each glows with a different color when struck by a stream of high-energy electrons. These energetic electron "rays" come from three "electron guns" that live in the skinny neck of the picture tube (also known as the cathode ray tube or CRT).

When properly aligned, the electrons from each of the three electron guns will strike only a single color phosphor. Electrons from the so-called "red gun" will strike only the red colored phosphor, the green gun hits green phosphor and blue phosphor gets zapped by the blue gun. This alignment process is known as the "purity and convergence procedure." Six slightly magnetic rings, centered over the electron gun assembly in the neck of the CRT, are used to bend the streams of electrons so that each strikes the correct color phosphor.

If the picture tube becomes magnetized in any way, the streams of electrons may hit the wrong color phosphor. It doesn't take much of a magnetic field to cause a noticeable change in color. Just the magnetic field of the earth is more than enough to do it. This is especially apparent in a monitor that is mounted "face up" such as in a cocktail table or rifle video. Turn the game on and then rotate it. As you spin the game, you probably will see the colors shift as the picture tube intercepts the magnetic field of the earth.

To prevent the earth (or anything else) from permanently magnetizing the CRT, all color monitors use a "degaussing coil." A degaussing coil is a demagnetizing coil that surrounds the outside of the picture tube. The degaussing coil is powered by 120 volts AC. The rapidly changing field quickly demagnetizes the CRT by scrambling any molecules that might be aligned through magnetic attraction.

But the degaussing coil can't remain continuously energized while the monitor is in normal operation. Disregarding the fact that it will burn up if left continuously energized, the magnetic field produced



A Typical Circuit For Automatic Degaussing

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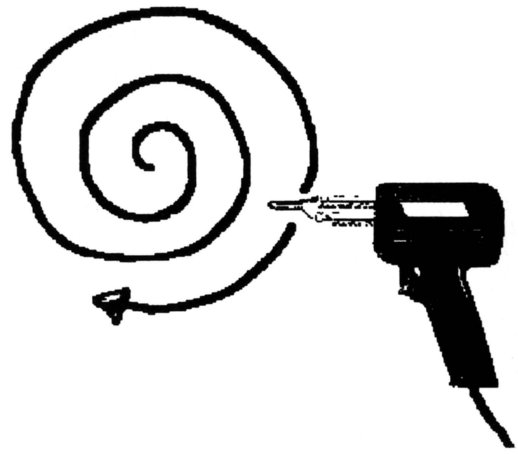
A soldering gun can be used to degauss a picture tube. Start at the center and slowly move the gun out to the edge. Turn off the gun when far away from the monitor.



by the coil will produce some radical distortion in the picture. Most monitors use an "automatic degaussing circuit" to control the coil. The degaussing coil is only activated when the monitor is first turned on, and then only briefly at that. To reactivate the coil, the monitor must be allowed to cool for ten to twenty minutes.

Let's look at a typical circuit and see how it works. The key to this circuit is a component called a "thermistor" — a component that changes its resistance with a change in temperature. In a degaussing circuit, the thermistor will increase in resistance as its temperature rises. This type of thermistor is also known as a posistor. As the temperature of the thermistor drops, so does its resistance.

The basic degaussing circuit is simple. It contains just two components: the thermistor and the coil itself. They are connected in series and to the 120 volts AC input of the monitor. When power is applied to the monitor, the degaussing circuit is powered as well. At this time, the thermistor is cold and has a low resistance. The alternating current flows through the thermistor and the degaussing coil, creating the AC magnetic field and demagnetizing the CRT.

But as soon as current begins to flow through the thermistor, it begins to heat. As it heats, its resistance increases rapidly until just a tiny trickle of current is allowed to pass; not enough to cause a noticeable effect on the screen but just enough to keep the thermistor nice and warm. This prevents the degaussing coil from activating again until the monitor is turned off for a while and the thermistor has had a chance to cool.

A slightly more sophisticated version of the automatic degaussing coil circuit uses a 15 ohm resistor and a pair of diodes in addition to the thermistor and the coil itself. The addition of the resistor assures that the thermistor will heat rapidly (whether or not the degaussing coil is plugged in, by the way) and cut off the current to the coil.

The diodes are used to choke off any residual flow of AC to the coil when the thermistor is at its maximum resistance. Notice the unusual connection of these two diodes. They are connected in parallel, with the anode of one diode connected to the cathode of the other and vice versa. This arrangement allows AC to pass through the diodes and to the degaussing coil when the thermistor is cold. When the heated thermistor cuts off most of the current, the small amount of residual current that's left is cut off from the coil by

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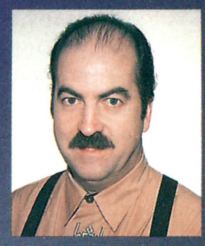

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the voltage drop of the diodes. This assures that there will be absolutely no interference from the degaussing coil; it is completely shut down.

MAKE YOUR OWN DEGAUSSING COIL

If you operate games in a convenience store or other 24-hour locations, your automatic degaussing circuit will never have a chance to operate (remember, it needs to cool for about twenty minutes to operate properly.) You can use your own degaussing coil to demagnetize the CRT manually. Degaussing coils can be purchased from just about any good electronics retail outlet or from industry parts supply houses like Wico.

You also can make your own degaussing coil from parts you have salvaged from a junk color monitor. The obvious method is simply to remove the degaussing coil from the old picture tube and connect it to a line cord with a momentary switch in the line. The use of a momentary switch is critical as the coil may burn up if left energized for extended periods of time.

Another, novel approach is to use the yoke of the junk monitor as a degaussing coil. Specifically, the vertical deflection coil of the yoke is connected to the line cord and switch. If you want to try it yourself, make certain that you connect to the vertical deflection coil only, not to the horizontal deflection coil. Use an ohmeter to identify the two coils. The vertical deflection coil will have a much higher resistance than the horizontal deflection coil. Typically, the vertical deflection coil will have around 30 ohms of resistance while the horizontal will have only 2 or 3 ohms. If you connect the 120 volts AC to the wrong coil, you'll probably blow the circuit breaker, with the possible accompaniment of smoke and pyrotechnics.

Another workable degaussing coil substitute is a bulk tape eraser (normally used to erase magnetic tapes or disks.) You can even use a soldering gun to degauss a CRT. It must be the transformer type such as a Weller 8200 or similar.

Whether it's store-bought, salvaged, jury-rigged or home-made, the method of using your coil to degauss a picture tube is the same. The CRT can be degaussed with the monitor on or off. I like to have it on so I can see the results right away. Besides, it's neat to see how the powerful magnetic field of the degaussing coil distorts the picture. Start at the center of the CRT. Hold the momentary switch closed while moving the degaussing coil in a spiral across the screen. When the spiral extends well beyond the edge of the picture tube, move it away from the CRT, turn the coil at a 90-degree angle and release the momentary switch to turn off the coil. Turning the coil at the end is simply a precautionary measure to assure that the magnetic field of the degaussing coil doesn't have any effect on the CRT at the moment the coil is shut off. In practice, I don't find it to be necessary. Likewise I have found that degaussing the front of the picture tube is generally all that is necessary. "The Book" says you also should degauss the sides and top of the CRT and chassis.

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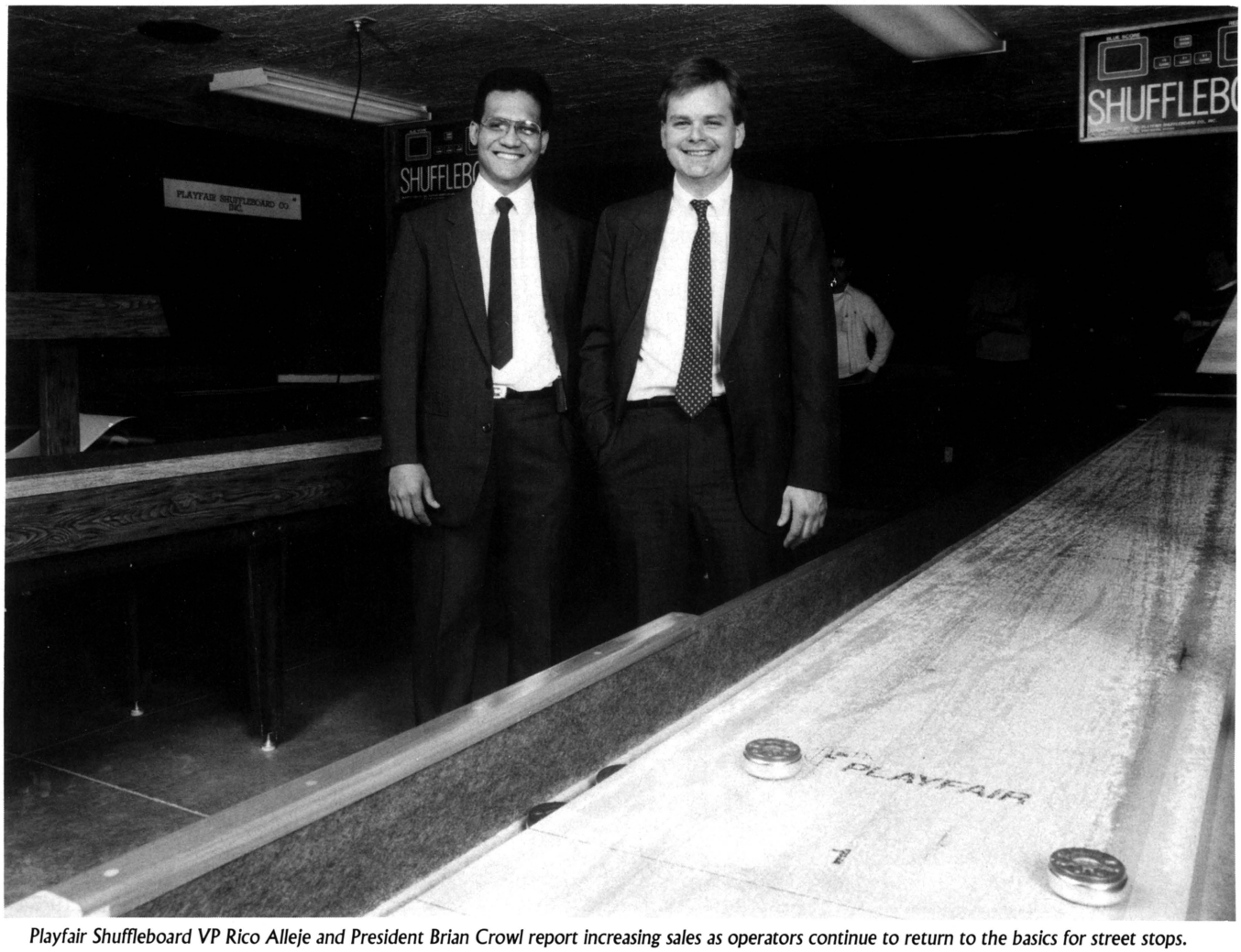
PLAYFAIR SHUFFLEBOARD

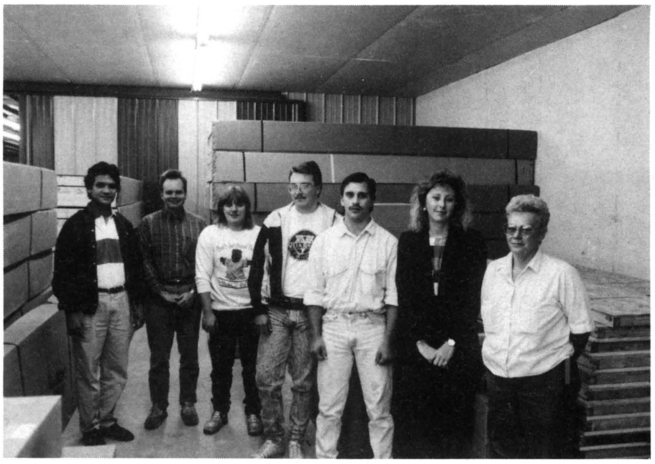
Brian Crowl & company say "shuffleboard is hot"; offer hi-tech table for today's tavern players

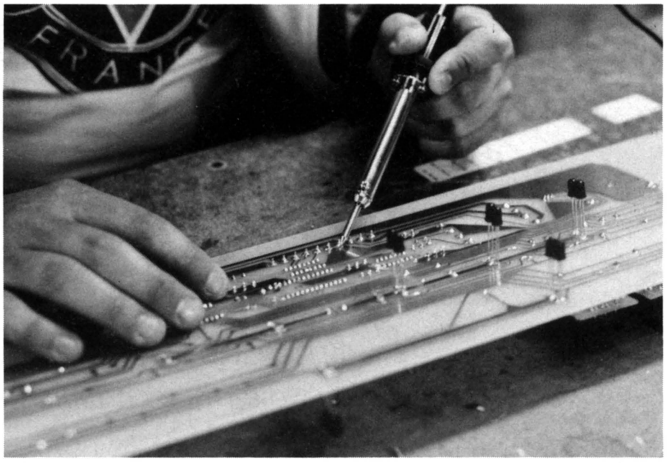
When operators say they are "getting back to basics," they usually mean tavern games. Pool and music are hot these days, and so is . . . shuffleboard. Brian Crowl, president of Playfair Shuffleboard Co. (Ft. Wayne, Ind.), says his sales are up 50% in the last two years. Playfair's *Grand Master* series of coin-op tables features dynamic graphics and versatile chip-based electronics. The latter allows operators to control game time and prices, use a computer interface to collect scoreboard data for tournaments, and tailor boards to many different currencies, rates and playing styles. *Grand Master* also features a "play barrier control" to prevent unauthorized play when the machine is not being supervised.

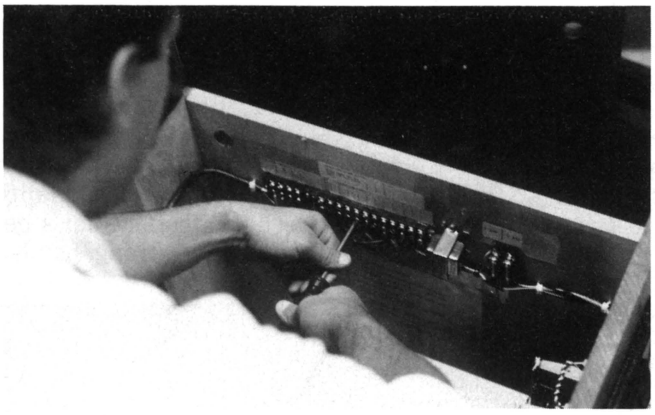
One operator who endorses the game and the company is Al Miller (Miller Music Co., New Carlisle, Ind.). "Shuffleboard is here to stay," he asserted, "and Playfair gets an A-plus for product, service, quality and support." Indeed, Miller's belief in Playfair is so strong, he also

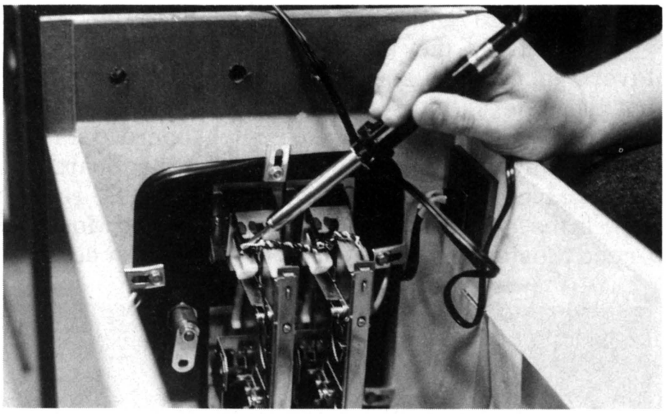


Playfair Shuffleboard VP Rico Alleje and President Brian Crowl report increasing sales as operators continue to return to the basics for street stops.









distributes their game! Operator Hubert Leslie (Leslie Music Co., Logansport, Ind.) agrees. "The big draw," he said, "is the increase in business and customer loyalty that shuffleboard generates." He added that shuffleboard lends itself perfectly to league play, "plus it's a game you can play regardless of age, with equal appeal for men and women."

Playfair was launched nearly a decade ago. "As a distributor and operator, I spotted a niche in the market in the early '80s," Crowl explained. "Tavern owners and club managers were looking for higher-quality, more durable product with more opportunities for entertainment activities. Shuffleboard was the sport with the right fit for long-term growth. Backed by my family's 60 years in the coin-op amusement business, and a hunch that we could do better, we founded Playfair Shuffleboard in 1982."

Playfair's Account Coordinator Kelly Caudill in the firm's Ft. Wayne, Ind. offices.

Today, seven employees assemble Playfair's games and install electronics in the firm's 7,800-sq.-ft. manufacturing facility. The same site houses corporate offices, a showroom and complete customer service and repair centers. Playfair recently expanded its warehouse an extra 2,000 sq. ft. to meet demand, and they've taken distribution worldwide with a special emphasis on, believe it or not, Japan!

With the industry looking more and more to tavern-based staples and league and tournament play for rock-steady cash flow, Playfair's place in the product mix seems guaranteed. For more information, contact them at 7021 Bluffton Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46809-2705; 219/747-7288 or 800/541-3743.

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1ST REGIONAL PINBALL TOURNEY

Steve Epstein and Frank Seninsky organize NE regional event; plan lots more regionals soon & National Championship in 1992

Can league play and major tournaments help promote pinball? Northeastern operators and promoters Steve Epstein and Frank Seninsky answer with a resounding *yes*... and now they've got a successful tournament under their belts to prove it. Initial rounds of their first-ever regional pinball competition took place starting at 9AM Feb. 2 at Epstein's famed Broadway Arcade (on Times Square in New York City). That same afternoon, finals were held at the Lone Star Roadhouse ("New York's favorite Western nightclub"). The whole extravaganza drew favorable journalistic notices from such august media outlets as *The New York Times*. Said a smiling Steve: "The world of competitive pinball has taken a long leap forward."

Epstein's arcade has been running pinball leagues for years under the aegis of his "Professional Amateur Pinball Assn." (PAPA), which also sponsored the Feb. 2 event. New Jersey operator Frank Seninsky (Alpha-Omega Amusements), who serves as PAPA's East Coast promotion coordinator, also has plenty of experience with pinball contests since he organized and ran a few successful ones for AMOA-AAMA Congressional parties in Washington, D.C.

PAPA's regional drew 50 sanctioned players who competed on eight different pingames representing all four U.S. pinball makers. At issue was a purse totalling $1,500 and, for the top winner, a free trip to Rob Burk's upcoming Pinball Expo (fall of 1991).

"This tournament represents just the beginning for sanctioned league and tournament play," Epstein declared. New PAPA leagues will soon begin in Maryland, California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York and Canada, he explained, with a spring league schedule to be announced. PAPA is working toward a National Pinball Championship, the first of which is planned for spring of 1992.

Shimon Iskowitz (4th place), Harris Pankin (3rd), Sam Fields (2nd), PAPA's Steve Epstein, Ken Karamichael (6th), Joel Grant (5th), Alpha-Omega's Frank Seninsky and last but not least, 1st place Joseph Cartagena.

Very fast growth in PAPA league strength was also predicted by Frank Seninsky. "We expect to quickly create a base of 2,000 to 3,000 loyal players coming from all ages and income brackets," he said. "The possibilities are explosive."

Players at the Feb. 2 contest enjoyed Tex-Mex food and the "Rig-Rock" sounds of the "World Famous Blue Jays" band, all courtesy of the Lone Star Roadhouse. First-place winner was Joe Cartagena, a 25-year-old doorman at a Broadway theater (by the way, the *New York Times* quoted Joe as saying that he lived around the corner from the arcade and that Steve Epstein used to be his babysitter!). Joe won $700 and the free tip to Pinball Expo; other winners were paid through sixth place.

For more information on how to participate in PAPA leagues, contact Steve Epstein at 212/247-3725 or write PAPA, 81 Carrar Drive, Watchung, NJ 07060.

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Volume 7 March, 1991

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SUPER SUNDAY

football-themed arcade at Super Bowl XXV entertains thousands at Tampa Stadium

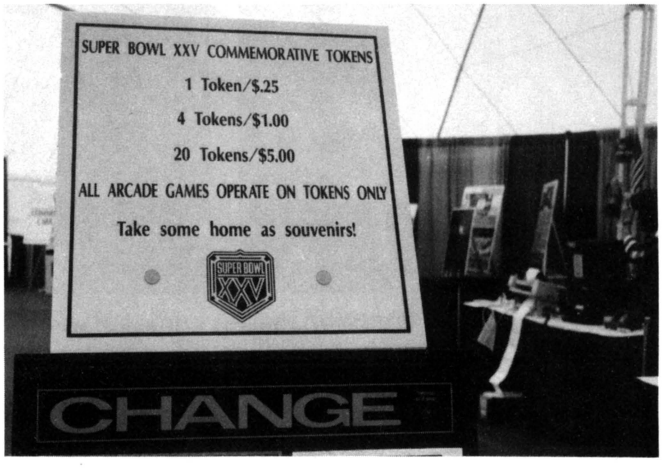
Lucky fans attending Super Bowl XXV got a chance to enjoy football mania of the coin-op variety, thanks to a temporary promotional arcade created by Southeast Game Brokers (Tampa, Fla.). Southeast's Richard Holley and Paul Virgadamo were on hand as thousands of players swarmed through the arcade area to play 10 different games, including two Data East *Monday Night Football* pins, a Williams *High Impact,* two Leland football videos *(Quarterback* and *Team Quarterback),* an Atari *Cyberball 2072,* a cocktail version of the old *Atari Football,* and others.

"The players spontaneously staged their own tournaments!" said Southeast's Glenda Knowles, who helped run the show. "Six or eight of them would compete till they were exhausted, then the next bunch in line stepped forward. It was terrific!" Players used beautiful commemorative Super Bowl tokens which Southeast had minted especially for this event. Many fans saved extra tokens as keepsakes.

The arcade was part of a 250,000-sq.-ft. "Super Bowl Town Square" commissioned by the NFL. Open from Jan. 24 through Super Sunday, Jan. 27, the area featured several bigtop, circus-type tents, under which the public could play the games, tour exhibits, trade bubblegum cards, purchase souvenirs and more. As you can see from the photos, the event was a smash success!

Pictured in their arcade area are Southeast Game Brokers' Ted Bachman, Paul Virgadamo and Rich Holley. Among the sports celebrities stopping by to play the games were Jeff Hofstedler (Giants' quarterback), Dan Marino (Dolphins quarterback) and tennis star Andre Agassi.

Ted Bachman, Paul Virgadamo and Rich Holley "tough it out" in the game area with several members of the Tampa Bay Cheerleaders. Really cheering on the guys from Southeast was distributor Charles Caplan (Birmingham Vending) who they say was instrumental to their success.



At right is a nice shot of the game area before the football fans poured in. It was part of a 250,000-sq.-ft. "Super Bowl Town Square" commissioned by the NFL. Above left, Southeast's Mike La Mondra assembles a High Impact *game.*

TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

Note: The following is a list of local and regional qualifying tournaments for Arachnid and Merit dart programs, plus national events in pool, darts and pinball which are sponsored by various manufacturers, AMOA, etc.

MARCH 1-3

First annual AMOA International Flipper Pinball Assn. team championships, O'Hare Hilton, Chicago, Ill. For more information, contact IFPA Executive Director Doug Young at 414/263-0233.

MARCH 1-3

Arachnid BullShooter VI Qualifying Regional Tournament. Hopkins House, Minneapolis, Minn. For more info, contact Arachnid at 815/654-0212.

MARCH 8-10

Merit's World Series of Darts New York Classic, Buffalo, New York. For more information, contact Merit at 215/639-4700 or 800/523-2760.

MARCH 15-17

Arachnid BullShooter VI Qualifying Regional Tournament. Parliament House hotel, Birmingham, Alabama. For more information, contact Arachnid at 815/654-0212.

MARCH 21-23

Arachnid BullShooter VI Qualifying Regional Tournament. Hotel Ramada, Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact Arachnid at 815/654-0212.

C.A. ROBINSON & ARACHNID hosted a "English Mark Darts BullShooter VI" tourney at the Los Angeles airport Hilton Hotel Feb. 15-17. Players from California and Arizona, including world champion Craig Belardes and his top contender John Gray, competed in eight events to qualify for the BullShooter VI coming to Chicago over Memorial Day weekend. Belardes took second place to top finisher Mike Coots in the Pro Singles event while he and partner Fred Aguero took first in Open Doubles and third in Cricket Singles. Belardes and Linda Endo placed third in Mixed Doubles. John Gray took third place in Pro Singles, first in Cricket Singles, first in Mixed Cricket with partner Ellen Rice and sixth in Open Doubles with Brad Halley.

Through the weekend's exciting matches, the players never lost sight of the war in the Persian Gulf. An Operation Desert Storm USO Fund was established by C.A. Robinson with one game set aside during the festivities for a game of "Count-up." At the end of eight rounds, if a man scored over 900 points or a woman over 700, C.A. Robinson would donate $25 to the fund in the player's name. In all, 19 players made the mark! Pictured above left is the distributorship's Dean Gamburd presenting a check for $1000 to USO Exec. Director Bob Bernier. At right, Craig Belardes and Linda Endo with Arachnid's J.L. Woodard. Below is John Gray and Ellen Rice with J.L. Woodard.

MARCH 23

Valley North American Dart Championships, Imperial Palace Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. Valley dart operators only. For more information, contact Dave Kristal at 517/892-4536.

MARCH 29-31

Tornado Table Soccer $25,000 U.S. Open. San Bernadino Hilton, San Bernadino, Calif. For more information, contact 817/483-0626. Hotel reservations: 714/889-0133.

APRIL 5-7

Merit's World Series of Darts Keystone Classic, Youngstown, Ohio. For more information, contact Merit at 215/639-4700 or 800/523-2760.

APRIL 12-14

Arachnid BullShooter VI Qualifying Regional Tournament. Wendover, Nevada. For more information, contact Arachnid at 815/654-0212.

APRIL 19-21

Merit's World Series of Darts Sunshine Classic, Clearwater, Florida. For more information, contact Merit at 215/639-4700 or 800/523-2760.

APRIL 19-21

Arachnid BullShooter VI Qualifying Regional Tournament. Hyatt San Jose, San Jose, Calif. For more information, contact Arachnid at 815/654-0212.

APRIL 26-28

Merit's World Series of Darts Northwest Open, Spokane, Washington. For more information, contact Merit at 215/639-4700 or 800/523-2760.

APRIL 30-MAY 4

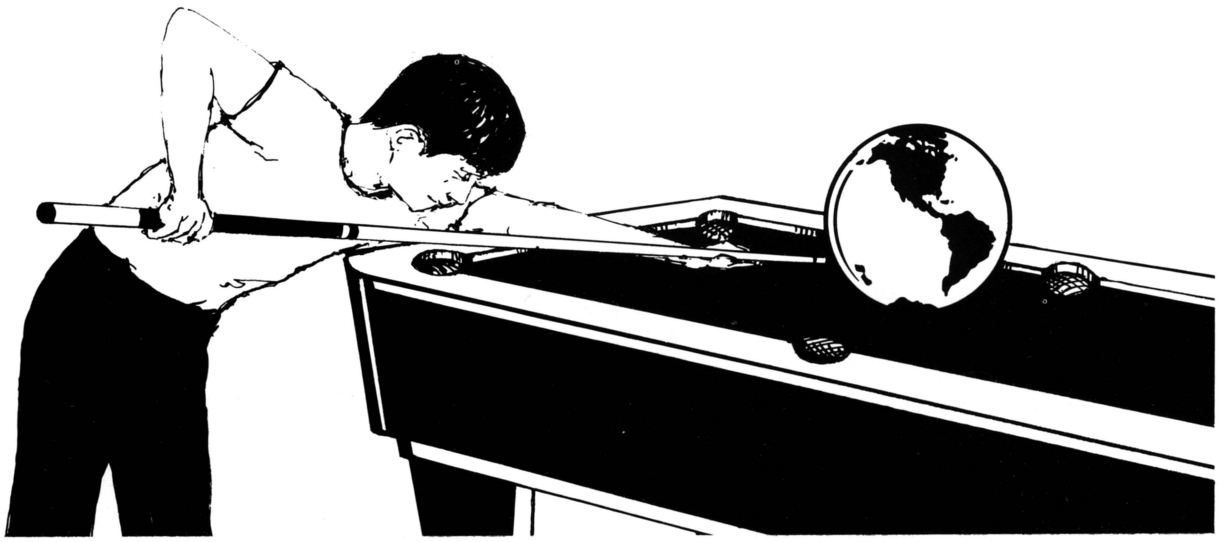
AMOA National Dart Assn. team championships, Sahara Hotel, Las Vegas. For more information, contact NDA Executive Director Joe Conway at 414/263-2444.

MAY 25-JUNE 1

Valley National 8-Ball League Assn. (VNEA) 11th annual international singles & team championships, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada. (VNEA members only.) For more information contact Gregg Elliott at 517/893-1800.

JUNE 7-9

Merit's World Series of Darts L.A. Open, Anaheim, California. For more information, contact Merit at 215/639-4700 or 800/523-2760.



VALLEY'S GLOBAL REACH

integrated marketing, promotion & sales knits world market together; lots of savvy behind their White House "excellence in export" award

"Globalization of markets" is a big buzz-word in business circles these days, but the American coin-op industry has its own very down-to-earth, real-life example which proves all the talk isn't just hype. That example is Valley Recreation Products (Bay City, Mich.).

Valley pool tables keep winning quality awards from operators at AMOA every year, and Valley's operator-run league program is the successful model which many another coin-op league organization has followed. Altogether, it's a "one hand washes the other" marketing strategy in which promotion, player excitement and unit sales all stimulate each other.

But American operators aren't the only ones who appreciate Valley pool. Players and operators around the world are "voting with their quarters" — or pounds, or Deutschmarks, or what have you — for Valley's manufacturing quality and promotional expertise. One proof of Valley's global reach: teams from several foreign countries are preparing to come to Vegas to compete in the VNEA 11th Annual World Championships in Las Vegas this May...and there's a strong sales and promotional program to back them up in each one of those nations.

"Valley now has tables entering all the markets," said the firm's James Griffiths. "Despite the costs of overseas and inland freight, duty and customs charges, and distribution margins, Valley quality is taking preference over less costly, locally-manufactured tables," he stated.

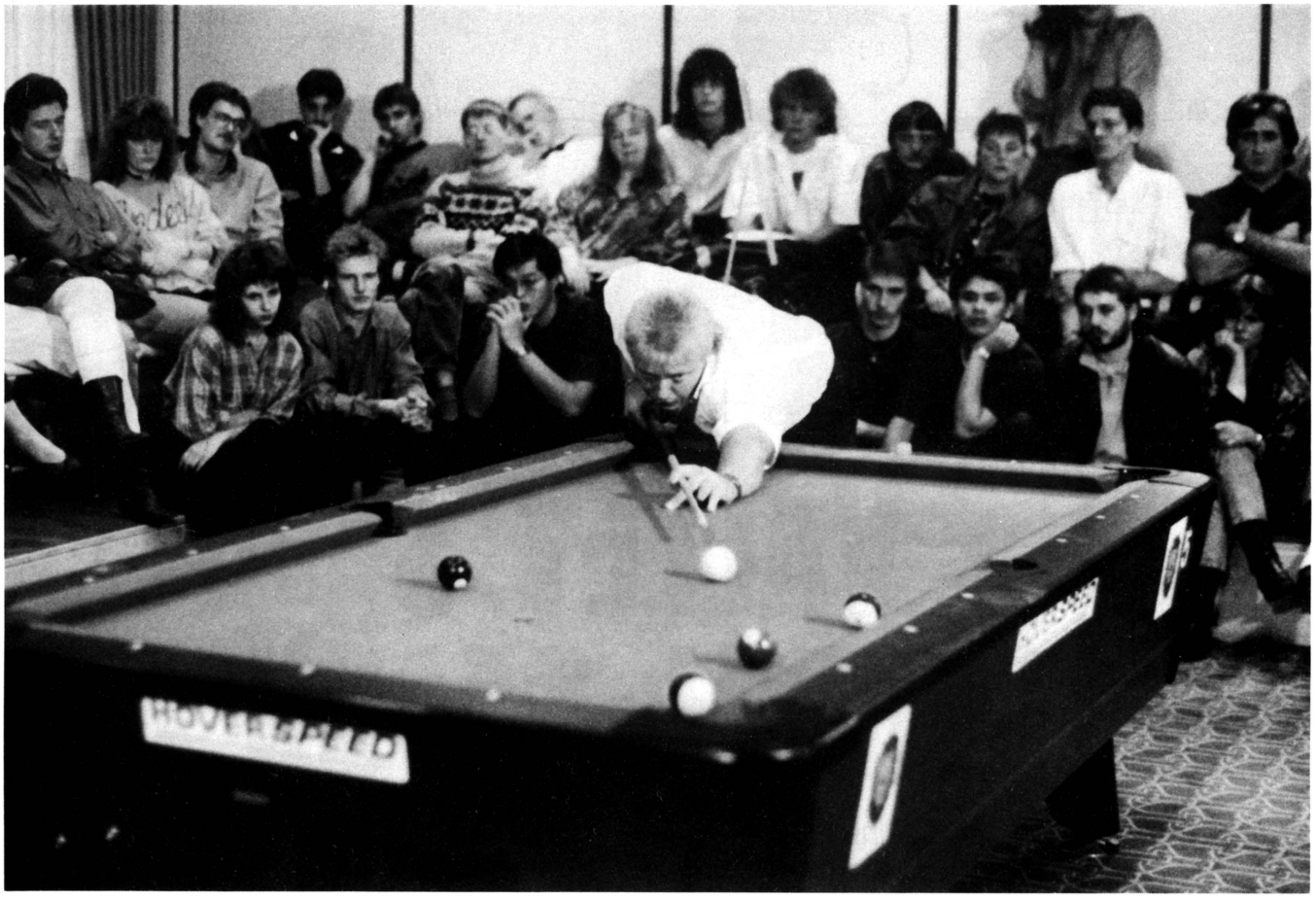
VALLEY POOL IN EUROPE

Griffiths said Valley was achieving notable sales in Germany, where they have a super-strong ally in NSM, their German distributor and charter holder. Valley is also chalking up nice sales in countries like Holland, Belgium and Spain. Valley claims a healthy share of the credit for influencing European pool toward American-style balls and league play.

"Europe does appear to be moving towards American-style pool," Griffiths noted. British firms were Europe's manufacturing giants for many years, but beginning with the slow growth of this market from the 1950s, the European industry was dominated by a smaller ball than that used on Americans tables, he said. "In recent years," Griffiths stated, "there's been a resurgence and players have moved noticeably toward the larger ball that we use. Placement of tables by Valley has influenced this trend. Players — particularly league players — have given us an enthusiastic reception."

GERMAN SUCCESS STORY

Valley's proudest success story in the European market takes place in Germany, where their league tournament is "now regarded as the premier amateur pool event in Europe" and league play had its best



A player takes careful aim during the Loewen Valley Cup competition in Dortmund, Germany. A record number of players participated in the event.

year ever in 1990, Griffiths reported. NSM staged a pool contest which drew a record number of teams and record media attention.

The NSM event took place in the old Westphalian city of Dortmund, which is fast becoming a center of new construction and hi-tech industry. "Scandic Crown," a brand-new indoor recreation location, proved a first-class playoff site for a hard-fought contest. Valley's field consultant and longtime VNEA supporter Bill Nemgar represented Valley at the Dortmund event. He assisted NSM with the judging and play rules, and by the way, Bill "judged" the NSM event to be top quality, both in terms of organization and player skill.

The winning team of German players from the Dortmund tourney is coming to the U.S. for a tour this month, in the company of NSM's Ulli Kuennecke and Guenter Schmidt. These overseas tours for winning players between major events are a built-in part of the Valley program; they help build great excitement around Valley events when the winning players return to their home country and tell their friends about their trip.

"To most people overseas, names like Las Vegas, Miami and others are magical places," James Griffiths explained. "These glamorous spots are high on the list of places our players would like to visit."

The German team will return to the USA in May, to enthusiastically compete in the 11th annual VNEA World Championships (May 25-June 1, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas).

"The Germans continue to improve their standards of play," noted Griffiths. "Match decisions went right down to the last games before a decision was reached." He added that during last year's VNEA finals, the 1990 German team placed a respectable third and predicted that this year's German team would be as good or better.

BILLIARDS IN BERMUDA

Bermuda? Site of that infamous triangle that swallows ships and planes without a trace? No, site of a fine group of Valley pool players! Greg Falzone organizes Valley's league and tournament play in this tiny, sunny island. The player base remains very small, but enthusiasm is big. In addition to play-offs to determine who goes to Vegas for VNEA finals, the group also runs Bingo Nights, etc. to raise funds for the trip.

Valley execs said last year's Bermuda team "played well, mixed well and made an unending stream of new friends. They made a lasting impression and we're looking forward to the same from Greg and this year's team."

COIN-OP SPORTS IN SPAIN

Sport and Spain will be forever associated after the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona . . . "but we won't have

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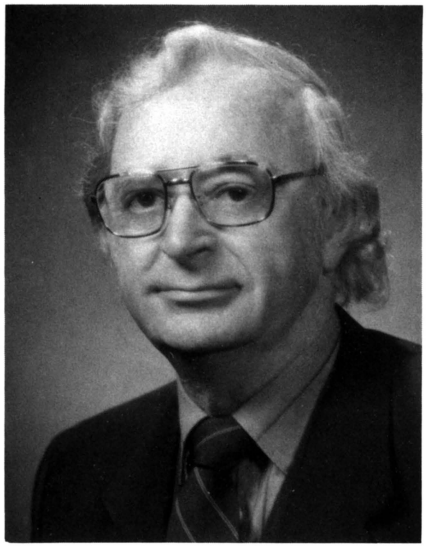


JAMES GRIFFITHS

to wait that long to meet with our very colorful Spanish players," smiled Valley's James Griffiths. "They've been filling the taverns and leaning over the felt, and they are bringing their local league program to a close in anticipation of this year's VNEA finals in the USA."

Yes, Valley's reach extends to this country, too. The 1991 Valley program has attracted more players than last year and is consequently running longer, but Valley's distributor for Spain Roberto Aparcicio said their national VNEA team would be organized by March.

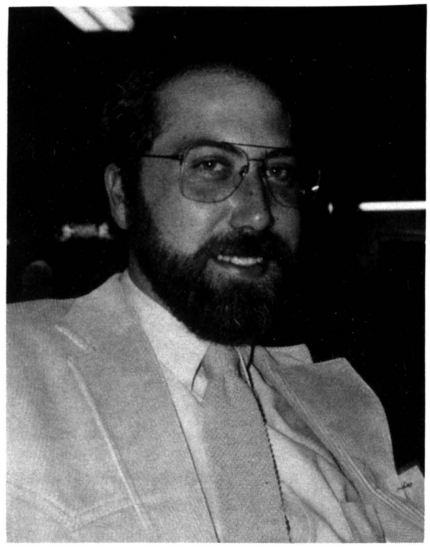
"Since last year, the number of Valley *Cougar ZD4* tables has seen a dramatic increase on the Spanish scene," Griffiths reported. "Interest continues to be very promising. This market is beginning to fulfill the potential that everyone always believed was there."

CHALKING UP IN CANADA

A good mix of Canadian teams is expected at the VNEA Vegas finals. Our neighbors to the north boast thorough knowledge of the game, good strategic moves and very high motivation, said Valley execs. "This has come about over the years because of well thought-out and attentive league functions placed by Canadian charter holders," Griffiths explained. "We expect to see strong challenges in all divisions, and when the prizes are awarded you can be sure the Canadians will be well represented."

SCANDINAVIA AND THE EASTERN BLOC

Valley's been selling tables in Norway for two years, but the population is widespread over this vast, snowy land and that presents a challenge for league organizers . . . and players. "Leagues tend to be fractured," James Griffiths acknowledged. "Distances between locations are great enough to preclude inter-pub rivalry. Nevertheless," he added, "we are hopeful that at least a utility program can be instituted here, along with the small nation of Denmark, which is the newest member of the Valley family."



BILL NEMGAR

As for Eastern Europe, it's beginning to look like a viable future market for Valley. For 50 years, harsh laws and basket-case economies precluded placement of equipment. A few scattered soccer tables and some old pinballs were about it in many nations behind the then-Iron Curtain, Valley execs report.

But now trade barriers are dropping, free enterprise is thawing out from the Cold War, and "our thought turns to the possibility of seeing players from those countries join our program," Valley says. "We've begun to receive many inquiries about pool tables . . . and we believe it's just a matter of time before we see, at least, a representative contingent (of players) from that part of the world" competing in the American VNEA championships.

GLOBAL REACH

In all, the Valley program has begun to knit together the diverse nations of this shrinking globe of ours into a single, unified program. In the process, Valley is turning our whole planet into one big coin-op market. Company execs are quick to share the credit for their success with players, operators and distributors both here and abroad. But the folks at Valley can be excused if the song they're humming is "I'm Sittin' On Top of the World" — because they certainly are!

NSM's Ulli Kunnecke (standing toward the right) with a group of German pool players during the VNEA championships last year. The 1990 German team placed third in the competition.

The Formula Below Is What You Will Need To Assemble A Practical and Profitable Coin Operated Basketball Game

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INDY CLASSIC

Merit's flagship state dart tournament draws 1,265 entries to Indianapolis

Wow! With local TV coverage of a whopping 1,265 entries, Merit's fourth annual "Indy Classic" $10,000 dart tournament was termed "without a doubt, the success of the 1990-91 season" by the Bensalem, Pa. firm. From huge player participation, to notable distributor and operator teamwork . . . from an exciting, competitive atmosphere, to a heartwarming charity tie-in . . . the fourth annual Indy Darts Classic had it all!

Merit Industries makes the fine *Pub Time Darts* line of electronic darts games. They also sponsor an annual "World Series of Darts" state and regional dart promotional program which encourages dart-playing around the country (the World Series dovetails with the AMOA National Dart Assn. finals every year in Las Vegas).

Held Jan. 25-27 at the Sheraton Northeast Hotel (Indianapolis, Ind.), the Indy Classic was once again Merit's "flagship event" at the state or regional level. People came from all over the U.S. and Canada to compete in eight different events, said the firm.

"Huge crowds formed around matches, making it impossible to move," Merit execs reported. "In the crush all eyes were turned to the match and a strange silence fell over the room. Without saying it, everyone knew the best were here to strut their stuff . . . and they did!"

Merit's tournament director Bob Hodges praised J&J Distributors as "an integral part of the team and a key player . . . their support, from the initial planning, to an exhausted sigh of relief late Sunday evening, was outstanding," he added. J&J's veep Dave Sheehan served as jack of all trades through the event, always ready to step forward and lend a helping hand, Bob Hodges said. Then he smiled: "Thanks again, Dave!"

Dan Hoge and Doug Hightshue, winners of the Pro-Am Celebrity Shootout, at the "Indy Classic."

Second place finishers in the 4-person team event: Todd Kurtz, Tom Gantner, Keith Lan, Russ Nelsen.

J&J's general manager Pat Harper was also present throughout the weekend event. "We work hard at these contests because we need to stay in tune with the public," he declared. "We certainly realize that music, pool and darts are keeping our doors open. We want our customers to know we care about them."

Bob Hodges also praised support by Indy Amusements. "Efforts by owner Jo Ann Essex and general manager Mike Smythe were fantastic and went far beyond the call," Bob said. He added that their firm's reputation for strong leagues and a great tournament have been developed through hard work and much care for their people and locations, Merit pointed out. "That work turns out the crowds, and boy what a crowd!" Bob enthused.

With over 400 people in the room day and night, Mike Smythe said: "The key to our success is our dart league players and their elected Dart Player Congress. Their months of preparation and hard work really paid off Friday night during the Pro-Am Celebrity Shoot-Out and again Sunday morning at their Youth Event."

Merit itself deserves a lot of credit for the happy outcome, too. "Indy's tournament," said Mike Smythe, bowing in turn toward his tournament partners, "would not have achieved this level of success without the professional staffs of both Merit Industries and J&J Distributing."

United Cerebral Palsy received over $3,000 collected during the event. The funds were raised via auction of many gifts and prizes, ranging from beach balls and bikes to dart boards and TV sets. The prizes were rounded up by Indy charity committee folks Steve McManus and Terry Sims, plus UCP's Linda Lovel and many more. Merit also credited the players' "golden hearts" for the success of the charity drive.

Local media personalities Ronnie Duncan (WTHR-TV), "Big John" Gillis (WBC-TV) and Ann Craig (WZPL radio) participated in a Friday night "celebrity" event, along with many local merchants and league sponsors. Said Merit, "All of the celebrities learned a little more about our sport and had a great time to boot." By the way, TV's Ronnie Duncan was so impressed with the spirited competition that he came back the next day — with cameras — to provide TV coverage which was broadcast on the "Sunday Sports" show.

In all, it was a model competition that Merit and its partners and players may all be proud of. For information on upcoming Merit events and how you can get involved, contact the company at 800/523-2760.

What's small in height, but big on features?

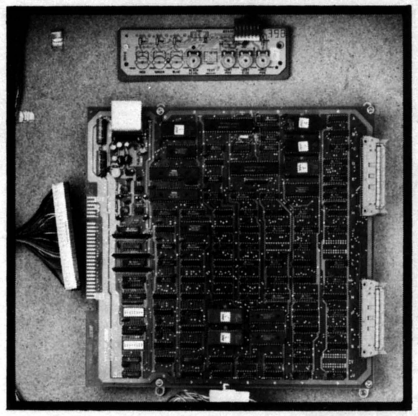
Introducing the Lo-Pro™ from Jaleco.™ It stands only four feet tall, but it's packed with fantastic features for you and your players.

Players will be dazzled by the visual impact of the 19″ Wells-Gardner universal monitor. It's quickly converted to either horizontal or vertical play by unscrewing only four easily accessible bolts.

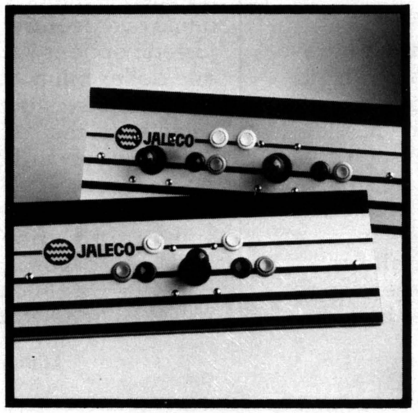
Standard JAMMA cables and connectors make conversion to a new kit simple. A universal control harness fits any 1, 2 or 3 button game that uses 1 or 2 joysticks. Unlike other cabinets, Lo-Pro lets you complete all conversions in front, with no need to remove back panels. Dual speakers offer players stereo sound and excitement.

Custom designed and assembled using screws and hardwood cleats, the Lo-Pro offers years of dependable and durable service. For more information, contact Larry Berke.

- 19″ Wells-Gardner Universal Monitor.
- Horizontal and vertical overlays.
- Converts quickly by removing 4 bolts.



- Standard JAMMA cable and connectors fit any compatible PCB and universal control panel.
- Monitor adjustment board mounted in drawer for easy accessibility and adjustment.



- Two blank panels included for 1 or 2 joystick controls. Joysticks and buttons not included.
- Panels slide in or out by removing 2 bolts.

JALECO™

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Niles, Illinois 60648
(312) 647-7077

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NEW PRODUCTS

Atari's RAMPART

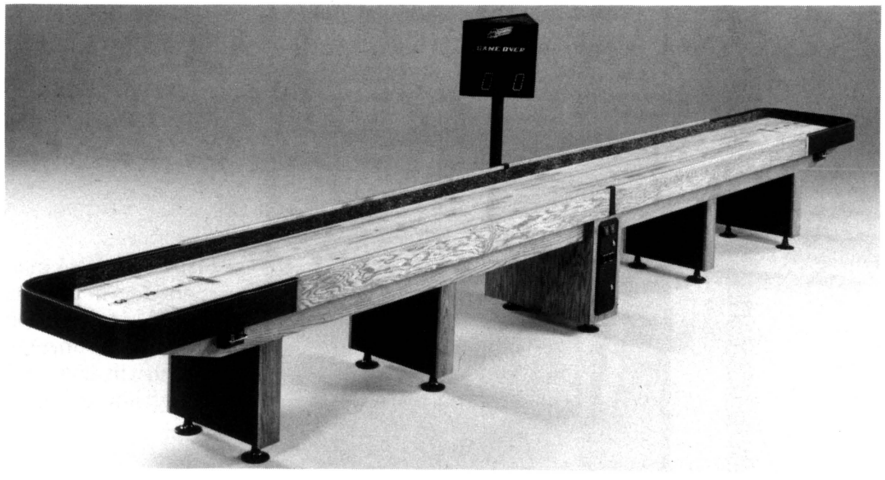
Rampart from Atari is a three-player dedicated video game with wide-bib control panel. The design team's previous hits include 'Cyberball,' '720 and 'Paperboy,' and Atari says initial earnings are living up to strong location test reports.

Theme: a "king-of-the-hill" player vs. player competition, featuring action and puzzle/strategy.

Gameplay: the first phase has players select sites for their castles, then position their cannons. Phase two involves the battle, with each player hurling projectiles to destroy enemy walls. Finally, players must quickly rebuild their own walls before the next onslaught. At the end of each round you must have enough artillery left to completely surround at least one enemy castle (or else deposit another coin) in order to continue play into the next game. Cannonfire grows more destructive in higher levels of gameplay, making wall repair more challenging.

Features: operators can decide how many "battles" constitute one game (factory setting is seven). One player may play against the computer (which controls an "invading armada" against the player's castles); the objective is then for the single player to establish a fort and expand his realm to the entire island!

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Atari Games Corp., P.O. Box 361110, Milpitas, CA 95035-1110; 408/434-3700.



Dynamo's SHUFFLEBOARD

Dynamo Shuffleboard is a "revolutionary" new advance in this staple category, said the firm, because it "eliminates many of the hassles formerly associated with such equipment." A new, tougher finish (3/16" poured resin) has been applied to a 4/4 maple playing surface for much longer use than lacquer allows, without frequent and expensive refinishing. Other features include: furniture-type oak polish; completely programmable scoreboard; heavy-duty leg levelers; metal detector/game over feature; climactic adjusters; options include light kits and dollar bill acceptors.

By the way, the table has been selected as the "official table of the 1990 shuffleboard championships" in Las Vegas.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Dynamo Corp., 2525 Handley-Ederville Rd., Richland Hills, TX 76118; 817/589-7699 or 800/527-6054.

Taito's GROWL

Growl is a video conversion kit for two- or four-player cabinets. It can be linked via an enhancement kit so that a couple of standard two-player games can become a four-player, two-monitor game using one PCB.

Theme: stopping animal poachers.

Gameplay: players use 8-way joystick and two action buttons to control a variety of weapons to fight the enemy and save the jungle beasts. A nice touch: once an animal is freed from its captors, the animal returns to help the players!.

Features: buy-in and continuation are standard; dip switch setting allows adjustment to any coin door configuration.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Taito America Corp., 390 Holbrook Dr., Wheeling, IL 60090; 708/520-9280.

Coin Concepts' PIG RACING

Pig Racing is a new redemption game for one to four players, suitable for children and adults. At the recent IAAPA "parks" show, judges gave it an Honorable Mention in the "best game" contest.

Theme: "group race" featuring cute pig characters.

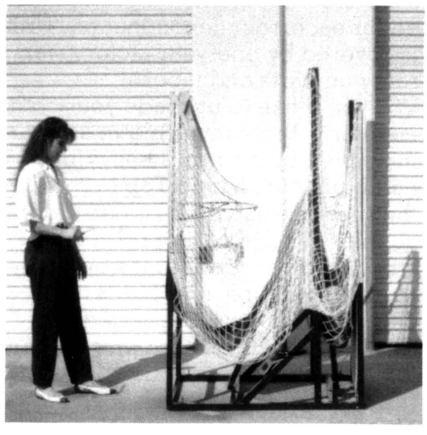
Gameplay: pinball-style plunger shots on a separate playfield at each player station determines how fast each player's pig moves toward the finish line. First across the finish line wins a ticket that can be redeemed for a prize (ticket vended at player station).

Features: colorful playing field and cabinet; four coin mechs; full

metering; adjustable ticket rewards and race speeds; optional bench seat; etc.

For more information, contact your distributor or Coin Concepts, Inc., 16 Edgeboro Rd., Unit 5, E. Brunswick, NJ 08816; 800/462-2646 or 201/390-9009.

HOOP from Access Entertainment



Hoop is a coin-op basketball game which sets up in nine minutes with a single tool. "The trick is that the steel frame collapses into itself, leaving the nets and wiring completely intact," explained designer Eric Brashear.

Son of Adastra's Foster Brashear, Eric says he helped design that firm's basketball game and later picked up additional knowledge of practical design while working with Wedges/Ledges prexy Steve Shoemaker. By the way, this game is not affiliated with 'Hoops' from Adastra.

The company reports that the game's glossy black finish made it acceptable in some upscale locations which previously had declined to accept basketball games. Increased revenues were reported (thanks to greater player appeal) in spots which already had other brands, Access said.

For information or referral, contact Access Entertainment at 800/444-6677.

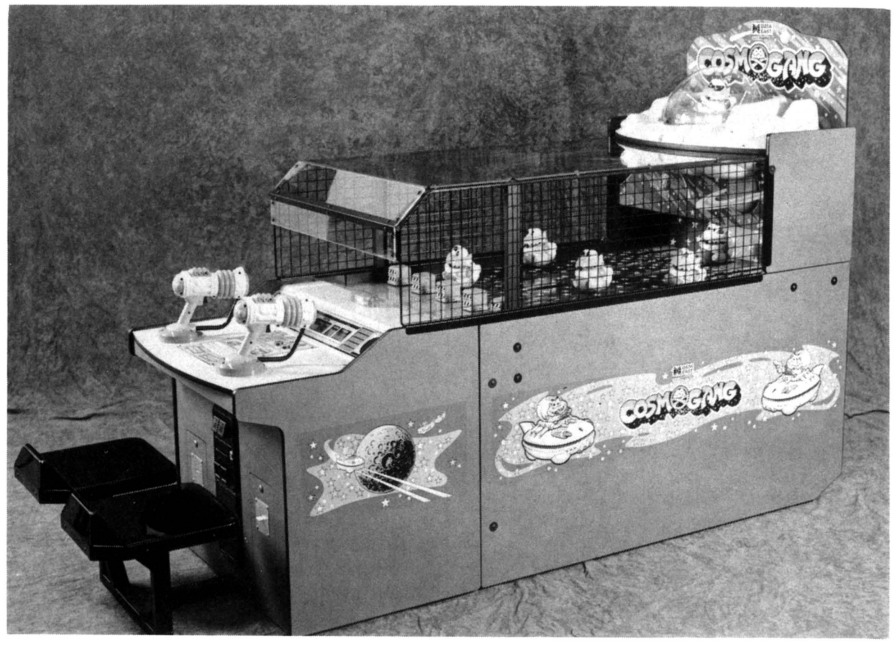
Free Catalog from Championship

For operators who have pool tables to recover, Championship Billiard Fabrics now offers a free catalog with cloth swatch samples, showing a variety of colors, styles, models by weight, backed and unbacked. etc. Fabrics are made in North America with state-of-the-art equipment (no machine in the plant is over 15 years old), even though the firm's been in the fine woolen fabrics business for over a century!

The new catalog is available for free by calling D&R Industries, national distributor to the coin machine industry, by calling 800/323-2852.

Licensed Plush from S.O.S. Good Stuff

The Good Stuff Corp. has acquired stuffed toy licenses for several major sports leagues and associations: the NFL, the NBA, major



Updated Version of Data East's COSMO GANGS

Cosmo Gangs is a fun, family-oriented redemption shooting game with a wacky sci-fi cartoon type theme. Players of all ages from moms and dads to kids have been observed enjoying it at trade shows and the same thing undoubtedly happens on location. Now Data East has updated the game with some extras that add to the fun.

The two-player sitdown unit features five goofy-looking aliens who start from the back of the playfield and move toward the player, babbling funny remarks back and forth with their "leader" who sits atop the backboard in an alien spaceship, giving orders. The five playfield aliens try to roll to the front of the playfield to grab "energy blocks," with which they retreat to their starting position. Players shoot at the aliens with light guns; each hit causes the alien to slam back to his starting line. Then the fun starts over. After a few seconds, aliens are all over the playfield in different phases of advancement, so the action never slows.

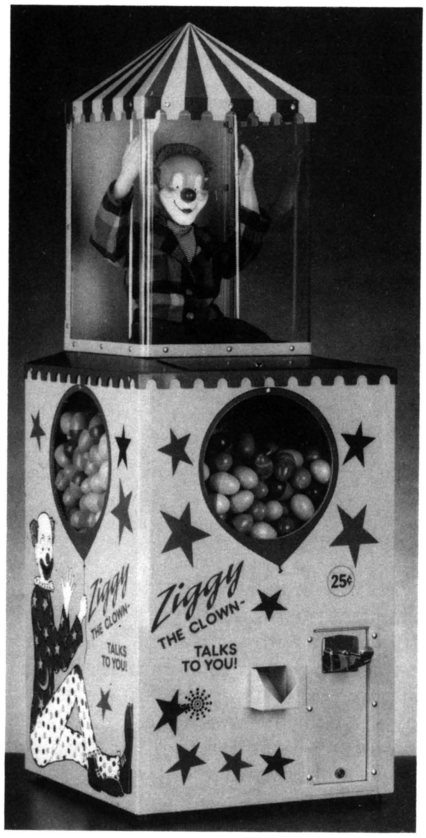
Features include two separate ticket dispensers, updated graphics and instructions, improved sound quality, and a smoked plexiglass top (this increases visibility of the light beams). The game is shipped in a specially designed crate and pallet.

For more information, ask your authorized distributor; or for referral it's Data East USA, 1850 Little Orchard Dr., San Jose, CA 95125; 408/286-7080.

league baseball, the National Hockey League and 65 U.S. colleges. (Rights were acquired as part of their Oct. 10, 1990 purchase of Trudy Corp.'s sports division). The firm now offers bears and other soft toys whose costumes, etc. are themed around all four major U.S. sports — football, baseball, basketball and hockey. Execs stated that these products offer great player appeal and recognition, long-term popularity (sports is not a fad) and should help operators keep redemption revenues high.

For more information, contact S.O.S. Good Stuff Corp., 47-00 — 33rd St., Long Island City, NY 11101; 718/937-3333.

ZIGGY THE TALKING CLOWN from Mayoni

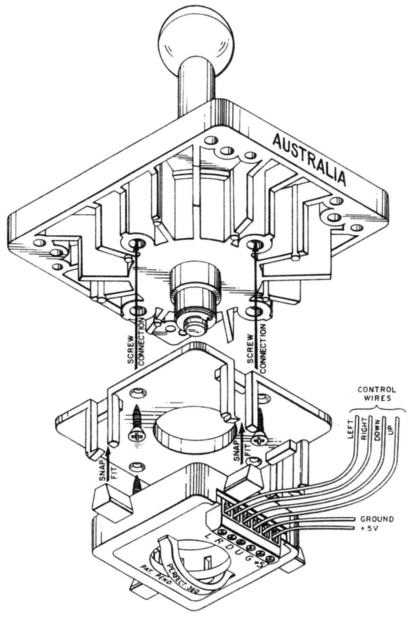


A new, improved version of the popular **Ziggy** vends eggs and capsules; he also talks. After three successful years on the market, the unit has been modified with a new "happy" clown; greater product capacity; more attractive and colorful artwork; and a better voice (generated via microchip, 100% solid state audio). All new electronics, front loading of product and front removal of coins are also featured.

Features retained from the first generation include anti-jamming feature; adjustable ability to dispense any size capsule currently on the market; and a one-year limited warranty on parts and labor.

For more information, ask your distributor or Mayoni Enterprises, 10340 Glenoaks Blvd., Pacoima, CA 91331; 818/899-2488 or 800/345-1183 out of state.

Australian Adapter Platform from Perfect 360



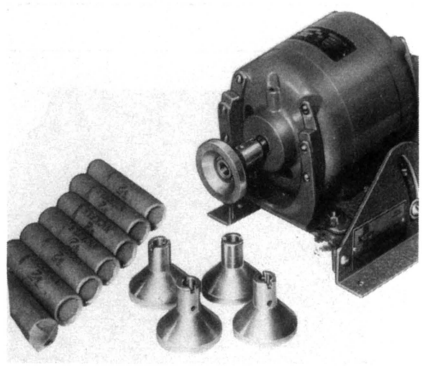
Is the Land Down Under ready for a solid state joystick? If so, a U.S. firm called Perfect 360 has just the thing. The 'Australian Perfect 360 joystick adapter platform' can easily retrofit U.S.-type 'Perfect 360' switching modules to the popular Australian joystick, as well as Wico's heavy-duty and joystick and Happ's Super Joystick.

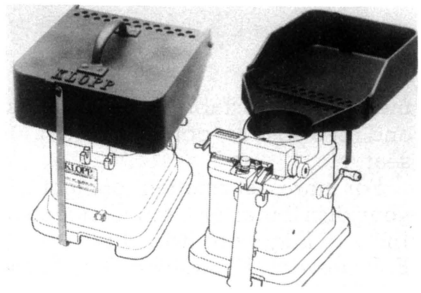
The solid state switching module eliminates outdated mechanical switching on joysticks. Priced under $20, the unit's switching is ultra-fast, precise and designed to operate perfectly for over a decade since it has no moving parts to wear, oxidize, misalign or break.

For more information, contact Amusement Emporium, Inc. at 800/525-7059 or Perfect 360, 3840 Hillside Lane, Salt Lake City, UT 841090; 801/5344-8950.

New from Klopp

Concerned about coin wrapper security? Klopp's **Model C** is a heavy-duty crimper designed for use only with cartridge or gunshell





type wrappers. It crimps the open end of the wrapper, creating a tamper-proof rolled edge so coins can't be removed without wrapper mutilation. Fast, interchangeable, snap-on crimping heads are included for each coin denomination. Unit is covered by one-year factory warranty on parts and labor.

If you'd like to upgrade your coin counter without investing in a new machine, try the firm's heavy-duty, cast aluminum **Klopp Top** to replace the sheet metal tops on older Klopp counters (models D, D-2, DE and DE-2). Easily installed, it's bigger than the old tops, so it holds more coins. Also, the more rugged construction provides more protection for coins while the counter is in transit.

For more information, ask your distributor or Klopp International, Inc., 225 Dunbar Ct., Oldsmar, FL 34677; 813/855-6789.

PVI's IPB 2000 Automatic Photo Booth

IPB 2000 vends the largest-format color Polaroid print available, yet the booth size is 60% of standard machines of this type, making for ease of placement in many otherwise-incompatible locations. Design and construction are completely modular, with easy access to component parts (machine can remain on location while technician replaces any component).

Features: attractive design; voice instructions; instant picture delivery; currency lockout; Rowe $1 and $5 bill acceptor; 30 film pack capacity

Sol Groentemen and Henry Grant of

Belgian Amusement Company

authorized world-wide distributors of the Mendes **BOWLINGO** wish every success to distributors handling this great new coin-op game.

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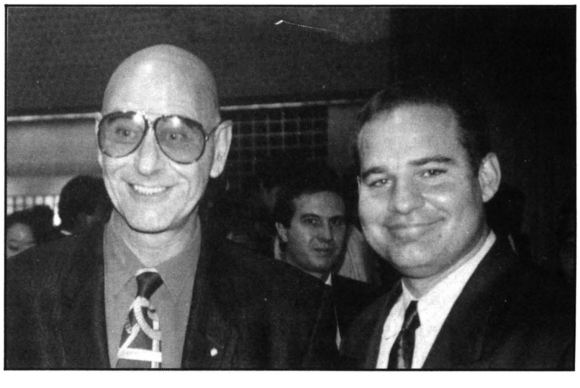
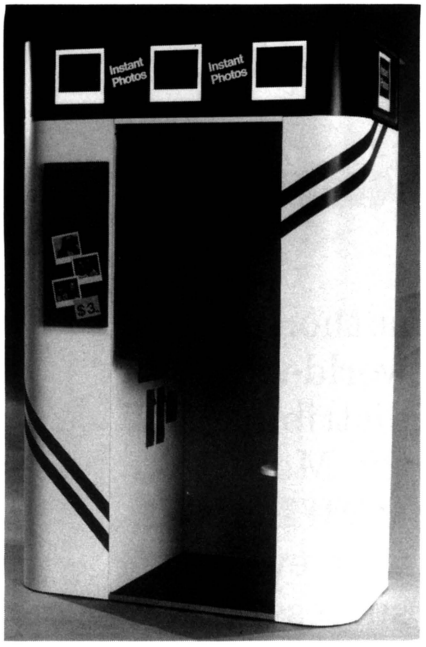


Hank Grant & Jeff Walker say:
"Get to know **Bowlingo!**, *it's a big ticket into the '90's!"*



(300 shots); uses color Polaroid industrial film. Dimensions are 55" long x 32" wide x 72" high.

For more information, contact PVI, Inc., 3363 La Cienega Place, Los Angeles, CA 90016; 213/559-0596.

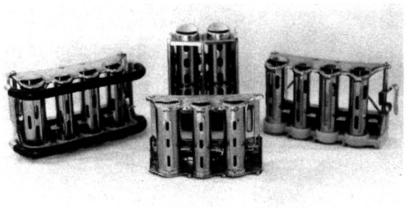
Amusements Bill Acceptor from Mars

VFM2 is an "amusement bill acceptor" from Mars, specifically made for our market and providing all the features that operators need the most into "a single unit that is cost-effective to own and use," said the firm.

"Bill acceptors help operators improve revenue," said Kira Burdick at Mars, "because they let customers play a game whenever the impulse strikes, regardless of whether or not they have the correct change on hand." The device can be set to accept $1 bills only, or both ones and fives. The unit's pulse interface and serial interface make for compatibility with both existing and new amusement machines; the pulse interface is an industry standard used in a wide range of machines, while the serial interface is being used in some. Also, the acceptor can be programmed to provide 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 or 10 pulses per dollar with credit pulse accumulation capability. Compact size, simple installation and transferability between machines make the unit easy and convenient for operators.

For more information, ask your distributor or Mars Electronics Int'l., 1301 Wilson Dr., West Chester, PA 19380; 215/430-2500.

Belt Coin Changers from ABC Coin



ABC Coin offers a complete line of **belt coin changers** in fixed three or four barrel types (penny, nickel, dime & quarter are the standard configurations). A heavy-duty model is available; customers can order as many barrels (any denomination) as they wish. They can also select how many coins are dispensed from each barrel.

Also offered is the **Model 10** four-barrel changer with rubber bumper guard around the front. Attendants can wear this quick coin changer on their person, without scratching anything they graze or bump into.

For more information or a catalog, contact Marcia Steffen, ABC Coin Counting & Sorting Co., 2839 Biscayne Dr., Plano, TX 75075; 214/596-1212.

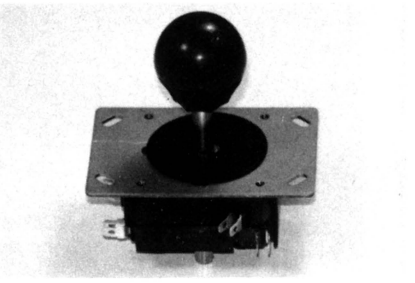
KWIK-KOIN DISPENSER from ABC Coin Co.

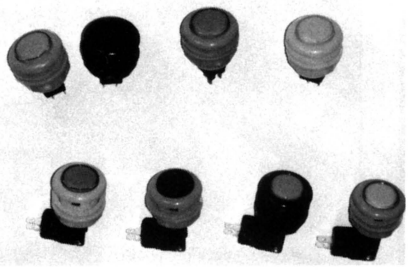
Kwik-Koin is a complete line of fast, easy to use coin dispensers. An effortless thumb movement is all that's needed to release multiple coins. Hitting the 25¢ trigger releases four quarters; hitting the 5¢ trigger releases five nickels; hitting the 10¢ trigger releases five dimes.

Units can be purchased to mount in a single-hole base, or up to a five-hole base. They detach from the base with just the turn of a lever, allowing for quick rearranging to meet your various needs. The 25¢ dispenser holds coins in two sizes ($30 tube and $50 tube). The 5¢ tube holds $8 while the 10¢ tube holds $20.

For more information, ask your distributor or ABC Coin Counting & Sorting Co., 2839 Biscayne Dr., Plano, TX 75075; 214/596-1212.

New Controls from JAMP Corp.





Some innovative new controls made by Sanwa Denshi of Japan are represented in the U.S. by JAMP Corp. in Southern California. They include:

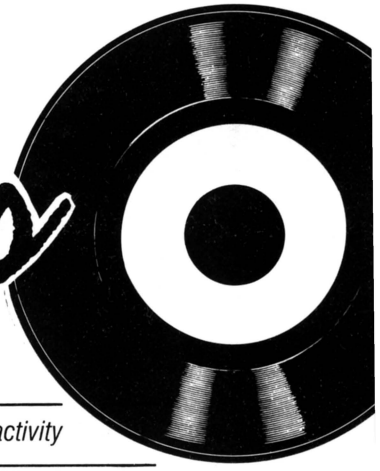
Joysticks: A 2-4-8 way joystick features an interchangeable switch. You can change it from micro-switch to a leaf switch (specially made to fit this joystick) without taking out a heavy control panel. Just loosen four screws on the joystick (you can even use a coin instead of a screwdriver) and make the change in seconds.

JAMP's 360 degree joystick is like the above, except that the micro-switch permits 360 degree motion. The firm says you can even "feel the movement of the character" on-screen by playing with this joystick.

Interchangeable pushbuttons: this model can be made to fit just about any kid of hole on the control panel (from 24 to 30 millimeters), simply by quick-changing some of the components. Button can accommodate a micro-switch or JAMP's unique, original key switch which provides faster action and a "softer touch," says the firm. The result is that players can play longer (and better) without getting tired. Available in many bright colors (check out those neon color caps).

For more information, contact JAMP Corp., 3010 Plaza Del Amo, Unit 47, Torrance, CA 90503; 213/787-0140.

Vital Titles



top-selling 45s and CDs at key one-stops as of Feb. 20, 1991 ★ = *significant crossover activity*

POP

1. ***WAITING FOR THAT DAY,*** *George Michael, Columbia 73663*
2. ***COMING OUT OF THE DARK,*** *Gloria Estefan, Epic 73666*
3. ★ ***SOMEDAY,*** *Mariah Carey, Columbia 73561*
4. ***MONEYTALKS,*** *AC/DC, Atco 98881*
5. ***NIGHT AND DAY,*** *Bette Midler, Atlantic 87825*
6. ***I SAW RED,*** *Warrant, Columbia 73597*
7. ***CHASIN' THE WIND,*** *Chicago, Reprise 19466*
8. ***WICKED GAME,*** *Chris Isaak, Reprise 19704*
9. ***SHELTER ME,*** *Cinderella, Mercury 878700*
10. ★ ***ALL THE MAN THAT I NEED,*** *Whitney Houston, Arista 2153*

POP PICK HITS

CRY FOR HELP
Rick Astley - RCA 2774

PROOF
Paul Simon - Warner Bros. 19464

HOLD YOU TIGHT
Tara Kemp - Giant 19458

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN
Warrant - Columbia 73644

ALL THIS TIME
Sting - A&M 1541

CW

1. ***FOREVER'S AS FAR AS I'LL GO,*** *Alabama, RCA 2706*
2. ***LOVING BLIND,*** *Clint Black, RCA 2749*
3. ***THESE LIPS DON'T KNOW HOW. . . ,*** *Doug Stone, Epic 73570*
4. ***DADDY'S COME AROUND,*** *Paul Overstreet, RCA 2707*
5. ***BROTHER JUKEBOX,*** *Mark Chesnutt, MCA 53965*
6. ***RUMOR HAS IT,*** *Reba McEntire, MCA 53970*
7. ***HEROES AND FRIENDS,*** *Randy Travis, Warner Bros. 19469*
8. ***LITTLE THINGS,*** *Marty Stuart, MCA 53975*
9. ***I MEAN I LOVE YOU,*** *Hank Williams Jr., Warner/Curb 19463*
10. ***I COULDN'T SEE YOU LEAVIN',*** *Conway Twitty, MCA 53983*

COUNTRY PICK HITS

POCKET FULL OF GOLD
Vince Gill - MCA 54026

IF THE JUKEBOX TOOK TEARDROPS
Billy Joe Royal - Atlantic 87770

MARY & WILLIE
K.T. Oslin - RCA 2746

IS IT RAINING AT YOUR HOUSE
Vern Gosdin - Columbia 73632

I'M THAT KIND OF GIRL
Patty Loveless - MCA 53977

R&B

1. ★ ***ALL THE MAN THAT I NEED,*** *Whitney Houston, Arista 2156*
2. ★ ***SOMEDAY,*** *Mariah Carey, Columbia 73561*
3. ***ALL TRUE MAN,*** *Alexander O'Neal, Tabu/Epic 73627*
4. ***FAIRY TALES,*** *Anita Baker, Elektra 64910*
5. ★ ***LOVE WILL NEVER DO,*** *Janet Jackson, A&M 1538*
6. ***IT NEVER RAINS,*** *Tony! Toni! Tone!, Wing/Polydor 879068*
7. ***MELT IN YOUR MOUTH,*** *Candyman, Epic 73652*
8. ***MY LAST CHANCE,*** *Marvin Gaye, Motown 2083*
9. ★ ***POWER OF LOVE,*** *Deee-Lite, Elektra 64912*
10. ***THE FIRST TIME,*** *Surface, Columbia 73502*

R&B PICK HITS

ROUND AND ROUND
Tevin Campbell - Paisley Park/W.B. 19748

STAR SPANGLED BANNER
Whitney Houston - Arista 2207

HERE WE GO
C&C Music Factory - Columbia 73690

I'LL BE BY YOUR SIDE
Stevie B. - RCA 2758

ALL I WANT IS YOU
Surface - Columbia 73684

CDs

1. ***NO FENCES,*** *Garth Brooks, Enigma/Capitol 93866*
2. ***TO THE EXTREME,*** *Vanilla Ice, SBK 95325*
3. ***PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES,*** *Clint Black, RCA 2372*
4. ***MARIAH CAREY,*** *Mariah Carey, Columbia 45202*
5. ***THE IMMACULATE COLLECTION,*** *Madonna, Sire/Warner Bros. 26440*
6. ***DAMN YANKEES,*** *Damn Yankees, Warner Bros. 26159*
7. ***I'M YOUR BABY TONIGHT,*** *Whitney Houston, Arista 8616*
8. ***PLEASE HAMMER DON'T HURT 'EM,*** *M.C. Hammer, Capitol 92857*
9. ***WILSON PHILLIPS,*** *Wilson Phillips, SBK 93745*
10. ***RECYCLER,*** *ZZ Top, Warner Bros. 26265*

Legal Questions

by Laurence Merritt and David Hagen

General Liability Insurance Saves You Money — And Headaches — In The Long Run

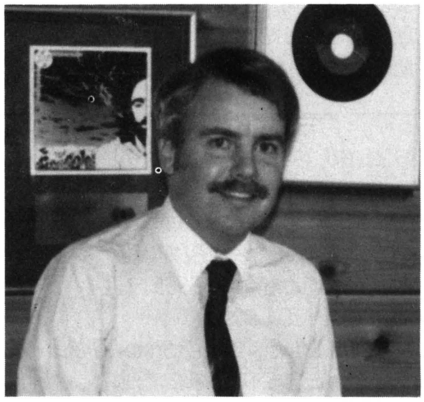
Doesn't it seem like every time you turn around, someone has his hand out for more money? One of the places that business people are always sending money, is to their insurance agent. Vehicle insurance, health insurance, workers' compensation (in most states)... it seems as though the list never ends!

One area where I'm sure many operators are tempted to trim costs is in that of general liability insurance. General liability insurance covers the risk that someone might be injured on the premises of your business or injured by your machines out on location.

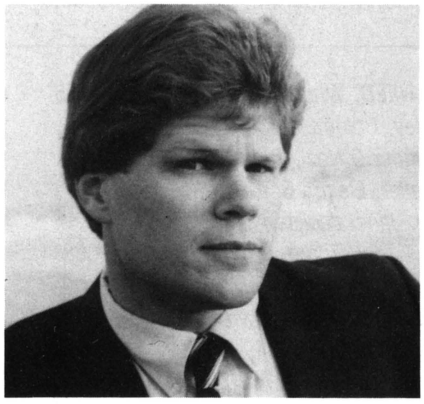
Now, I'm sure you're all thinking, "Well, I guess someone could slip and fall; but it's very unlikely that one of my machines would fall over on someone or electrocute him."

While this is true, the key thing to remember about liability insurance is that it *protects* you from any type of claim... however tenuous or unlikely. This is the true benefit of general liability insurance.

Many of our readers will remember from prior columns what the cost can be, in terms of time and money, to defend a lawsuit. General liability insurance will not only protect you from your lost time, but it will also protect you from a loss of dollars. For example, in California it can cost $25,000 or more to successfully defend a lawsuit. Even if the claim is shaky at best, the cost of a defense is something you will need to pay, to protect your business from a judgment. In most jurisdictions, each party pays his attorneys' fees. Accordingly, you will be saddled with a bill of $25,000 or more if you are uninsured and someone sues you, claiming your machine hurt them.



LARRY MERRITT



DAVID HAGEN

Laurence Merritt has been helping operators with their legal problems for over 12 years. He has experience as a Judge Pro Tem in the Santa Monica Municipal Court and as a family law mediator for the Los Angeles Superior Court. He is also on the panel of arbitrators for the L.A. Superior Court in addition to teaching courses for paralegals at Waterson College. His partner, David Hagen, also has a great deal of experience representing operators in litigation matters. Both welcome comments and questions — they may be reached at their offices by writing or phoning: Merritt & Hagen, Attorneys at Law, 6400 Canoga Ave., Ste. 311, Woodland Hills, CA 91367; 818/992-1940.

The beauty of a general liability policy is not so much that it will pay any judgment rendered against you; rather, the attraction is that the insurance company will have a *duty to defend you.* In our mind, this is one of the most important benefits of having a policy.

Of course, cost is always a factor. Accordingly, you may wish to consider getting a general liability policy that has a $5,000 or $10,000 deductible. This means that if a judgment is rendered against you, you pay the first $5,000 or $10,000. Your insurance company will generally still have the duty to defend you. With a deductible such as this, your maximum exposure would be the amount of the deductible.

Interestingly enough, general liability insurance is usually not tremendously expensive. Claims are usually fairly infrequent and, accordingly, the amount of the premium is less. Many trade associations make arrangements with an insurance carrier to provide low-cost insurance for their members. This is yet another advantage of belonging to your trade association!

Remember, if you are going to cut costs, do not cut on insurance coverage — no matter how annoying it may be to pay the premium. If you must cut costs, obtain higher deductibles on your policy. This limits your exposure and ensures the overall continued success of your business.

SPINAL BREAKERS

A DEADLY SITUATION...

Hildroids were created by humans as a worker force.They had no will, no intelligence, and were submissiveas robots. Then it happened...

Several nuclear explosions around the globe triggered a nuclear war, man's worst nightmare. But nothing compared to the terror of the mutated, now murderous hildroids. In horror and defeat, man fled to the stars.

Now, Captain Waffle must return to Earth and smash the hildroids, before they can complete a diabolical plan to alter history, and destroy humanity.

1 - 2 Player HYPER-Active

Continuation and Buy-In

"ADD-A-COIN" Feature

3 Dramatic Endings

AMERICAN SAMMY CORPORATION
2421 205TH ST. STE D-104
Torrance, CA. 90501
(213) 320-7167 FAX (213) 320-2597

GRAPEVINE

HCCI MEMBER NEWS — Half Century Club prexy Steve Kordek won't be gathering the clan together in any sort of formal meeting at the ACME show, but figures a few of the old-timers may meet informally during the spring national when they meet up at hotels. Steve and Harriet, as you may know, recently celebrated their own golden anniversary wedding in Chicago... Johnny Bilotta was treated to a splendid family dinner Jan. 30 on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Trade people called that day to wish him the best. Daughter Labby and some other Bilotta progeny had fun reading birthday messages to J.B. at their dinner... Joel and Peggy Kleiman (Pioneer/Milwaukee) did an eleven-day cruise aboard the Royal Princess in January. They picked up the boat in Acapulco, Mexico, traversed the Panama Canal, stopped at a few ports and generally had a wonderful time. After returning, Joel had to go in for some minor surgery (not related to the cruise) and should be feeling chipper right now. Looking forward to meeting him at ACME... Arjay's Bob Jones returned from the ATEI show in London, heard our attendance figure of 18,000-plus and said "Huh? I was looking down the main aisle and I'm not kidding when I saw three people walking along, not counting exhibitors." We checked the number out and the ATEI folks insist it topped the 18K mark (twice what AMOA ever did in its rip-roarin' Chicago days.) Maybe they count the same person each day he enters?

PERSONALS — Bill & Marilyn Cravens celebrated their 25th silver anniversary Feb. 5 with family dinner for themselves and sons Todd and Ryan in Redmond, Wash. Bill presented his bride with a gorgeous bracelet he bought via Harriet (Central) Singer (who has contacts in that business). Apparanetly it was a nice piece of goods, because Harriet told Bill, "If you don't like it, I'll buy it"... Dave Fonda of Wisconsin's Hallada Coin is getting married June 12. He's been going steady with his girlfriend for 12 years (local ops say Dave believes in long engagements).

midwest

MOTHER TRUCKER — Jim Gineris, a 12-year vet with freight carriers that hauled Konami's and other games to dealers, has signed on with Jaleco in the sales department, joining Larry Berke. A graduate of Yankton College, Jim also worked for Klein's Attractions (a live music promoter), so he knows his showbiz. What about our biz? Bossman Howie Rubin says Jim's been a pointman delivering freight to dealers like Ira Bettelman and his years running freight-forwarding on the phone stands him in good stead in the amusement business. (Howie recently introduced him to dealers at General Coin, Betson & C.A.Robinson on road trip.)

Product-wise, Jaleco is bringing out a 2-monitor version of *Cicso Heat.* This sitdown has a vibrating steering wheel and joins their upright version of the game (they also had a small run of cockpits). Jaleco intends to be a big part of the coin amusement industry's future and toward that end, recently bought Bit Box, the Japanese designers that played a key role in the development of *Hang On* and *Enduro Racer.* They have also opened a Jaleco Europe division under Norman Leftly. (PS: look for one or more new video kits from Jaleco at ACME.)

SANDLER VENDING showed the new Rock-Ola *Mirage* CD juke to several customers on Jan. 10, fed 'em some lunch and technical tips from service chief Mike Smith. "All of this generated mucho interest in the new phonograph!" smiled David Sandler. "It's the best Rock-Ola box in 15 years—a machine that will make our customers a lot of money!" Operators must have agreed, since several jukes were shipped that very day from Sandler's No. Girard Ave. warehouse. Seen from left: Jim Korhonen (Northern Amusement); Jeff & Loren Beaudoin and Dean Smith (B&K Music & Sales); and of course B&K's mascot J.D. (which probably stands for "Jukebox Dog").

SUPER BOWL PUSH! The debate about sports games picking up collections when "the season is on" (some say it doesn't matter) is leaning toward those who think a football video should do better when the league is playing. Well, Mark (United/Wichita) Blum's collection report at his 225-game arcade showed Leland's *Team Quarterback* hitting number one on his Feb. 4 report, beating out *Hard Drivin'* and everything else in the center. Leland's *All American Football* showed up at number 11.

VICTORY GLASS CO. has mailed out its 1991 catalog of antique jukebox parts for old Seeburgs, Rock-Olas and Wurlitzers. Phone them at 515/223-8820 for info.

Above (left to right): Hans Rosenzweig, Jon Brady, John Gatens, Joe Dillon and Joe Cirillo at the meeting. Below (left to right) are: Ken Fedesna, Hans Rosenzweig, Jon Brady, John Gatens and Joe Dillon (with backs to the camera are Ira Bettelman and Joe Cirillo).

WMS DEALER MEETING — In the first of a planned ongoing series of semi-annual meetings, Williams/Bally-Midway convened its "Distributor Advisory Board Committee" at their Chicago factory in January. Four top dealers from the U.S. and one from Europe met with WMS veeps Ken Fedesna and Joe Dillon to preview new games, to discuss scheduling, and to conduct heavy talks on business conditions and forecasts. Joe Dillon said it was "quality time" for responding to daily concerns of market support and stimulation, with special focus on "what we can do for the operator so he can be more successful and realize greater revenues." Committee membership will be rotated among the factory's entire dealer network.

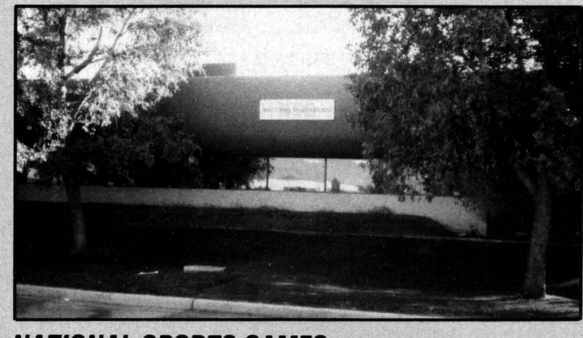
IMPRESSMENT PLUS of Crystal Lake, Ill. is a survivor, back in business and stronger than ever after a major setback last fall. They managed to save $185,000 in redemption merchandise, which luckily was stored in another warehouse. . . but their manufacturing plant was 100% destroyed by a raging fire last October 5. "We moved to a new rental location and were back to normal shipping by Oct. 15," said spunky owner Gene Coughlin. "We have all new goods and our monthly shipments are running ahead of last year. We will re-build," he advised, "and be in a new, bigger and better building at our old address by April 15!" Way to go, Gene!

DUD 'N' SUDS is the name of a nationwide chain of 60 self-serve laundromats which also feature coin-op amusements like pool and video games. Snack bars and big-screen TV rounds out the fun for customers who are waiting for their clothes to wash and dry, says company founder Phil Akin. The firm is one of America's top 500 franchises, and the top laundry franchise for the past three years, according to *Entrepreneur* magazine. Two new games added to the mix include Smart Industries' basketball toss game and their *Smart Ball* novelty. Both were location-tested first; the firm reports steady earnings from heavy customer play. "The games are utilized about 25% of the time, and double that in heavy traffic times," said Suds 'n' Duds franchisee Scott Butler. By the way, players can redeem the tickets vended by the Smart games at the laundromat's snack bar!

TRAINING VIDEOTAPE — NAMA has released a second edition of its VHS-format training videotape for vending service personnel. Called "On the Front Line," the tape provides in 17 short minutes an in-depth lesson on the importance of cleanliness and sanitation rules, tools and habits for vending staff. The new version includes such additional material as how to clean your hands when the only nearby water source is a coffee machine's hot water nozzle! Cost is $20 to members or $40 to non-members; both must also pay $3 shipping cost. (If you have the first edition, you can trade in for the new version for just $10.) Also provided at no extra charge: a newly-printed manual called a "Video Training Guide." This publication tells how to run a training program with the NAMA videotaped program. A short written test for your employees is included. Order by contacting Gale Samuels, Public Health & Safety Dept., NAMA, 20 No. Wacker Dr. #500, Chicago IL 60606-3102; 312/346-0370.

KARL KELLER is the new sales staffer at Atlas Distributing (Chicago). "He'll be particularly attuned to the local operator's needs," said Atlas, "since he was an operator himself for many years in Chicago and its suburbs." Welcome aboard, Karl!

southwest



NATIONAL SPORTS GAMES opened its new 15,000-sq.-ft. facility in Phoenix on Jan. 3. Combining offices, warehouse and production operations under one roof, NSG says they can build even more of their new football-themed *UB-QB, U5* plus their line of sports games. New address and phones are: National Sports Games, 3669 E. La Salle St., Phoenix, AZ 85040; 602/470-1490.

TO LAKE TAHOE — CCMA, the California Coin Machine Assn., has selected the Hyatt Lake Tahoe in Incline Village as site of its June 20-23 annual convention. They

usually select an exotic spot for their get-togethers, but this has to be the most exotic yet. Although their literature says it's in California, the map says Incline Village is in Nevada. A friend of ours advised out-of-towners to fly into the Reno airport and rent a car for the drive to the Hyatt ("a beautiful spot," he adds). There is also a local airport at So. Lake Tahoe, but only American Airlines flies into it. Driving-wise, our friend figures the hotel's about a four-and-a-half hour drive from San Francisco or two-and-a-half hours from Sacramento. Like we said, they've once again picked an "exotic spot" for their annual.

TO THE SUN! Distributors get cold, too, so Atari likes to hold its spring dealer annuals in warmer spots in the nation (last year's took place on Maui, the previous in Naples, Fla.). Their 1991 meeting returns to Florida, April 20-23, at the Boca Raton Beach Resort. . . The 1991 IAAPA Parks show will hold forth Nov. 13-16 at Orlando's Orange County Convention Center. It will mark their 73rd annual convention. By the way, IAAPA's headquarters have moved to 1448 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314. You can call them at 703/836-4800.

FINAL LAP NOTICE — Namco Ltd., Namco-America and Atari Games have served notice that their *Final Lap* game inadvertently contains Phillip Morris trademarks. The tobacco giant objected when it learned of this, saying it doesn't want children to smoke and that it's against company policy for any of their cigarette trademarks to appear on or with kids' products. Namco and Atari have created free conversion kits which will be shipped pre-paid to all *Final Lap* operators. Plugging in the 10 new EPROMs will make this a non-infringing game. Operators who send the old chips to Namco-America will be rewarded with $100 credit (through their distributor) for each game converted. Credit can be used toward future buys; up to five $100 credits can be added together and applied toward the purchase of each new Namco *Final Lap 2*. "Together, Namco-America and Atari join Philip Morris in urging you to cooperate with us in making the conversions," said both firms.

LTGI EXPANDS SERVICES — Parks and attractions, listen up! President Steve Dooner of Leisure Technology Group, Inc. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.) has announced that his firm now offers expanded services. In addition to LTGI's own comprehensive consulting on all kinds of game and amusement facility concept and operations, the firm is now working with Irvine, Calif. based Diversified Marketing Concepts, which provides full marketing and advertising services. By the way, LTGI has opened a European office in Surrey, England (that phone is 0252-713260; ask for Steven Goulder).

northeast

MAILING LIST — The gang at *Star*Tech Journal* advises they've cleaned up their mailing list. Anybody who didn't reply to a mailing for two years was wiped from the data bank, "making this list the most accurate and comprehensive mailing list in the industry!" says the company. Call them at 609/662-1080 for detailed information.

northwest

THOSE MILLER GIRLS — When your dad runs a nice tavern, like Music-Vend VP Rick Koch's dad does, you get all sorts of "extras" thrown your way. From left, here's Rick with the "Miller Girls" (promoting Miller Genuine Draft Beer) and Sean Layman at a certain tavern in South Seattle. . . the Runway Inn, so named 'cause it's near the Seattle-Tacoma Airport. And, hey, isn't that a Rowe CD-100A jukebox in the center? Sure is! "Joel Friedman, eat your heart out!" Rick chortled.

international

CANADA FIGHTS COPIES — The Mounties are still getting their man. Yes, with the new tough copyright law firmly in place, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

BUY ONE . . . GET 24 FREE!

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

INDUSTRY STANDARDIZATION!

Another way AMOA is working to build the coin-op industry.

Amusement & Music Operators Association

AMOA MEMBERSHIP — It's For You

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON AMOA PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND MEMBERSHIP, VISIT YOUR LOCAL AMOA REPRESENTATIVE OR CALL/WRITE AMOA HEADQUARTERS AT 111 E. WACKER DRIVE, SUITE 600, CHICAGO, IL 60601. PHONE: 312/644-6610

have cracked down hard on trafficking in counterfeit video games. One example we can tell you about — after a lengthy investigation conducted with assistance from AAMA, the RCMP filed 27 charges of counterfeiting games against a Hamilton, Ontario firm. The company pled guilty to 17 of the charges last December. Fines imposed by the court totalled $9,500. (Defendants got off relatively light only because all games involved pre-dated tough new amendments to the Canadian copyright act. The next bunch probably won't be so lucky.) "This action shows that both the Mounties and Canadian courts take counterfeiting seriously," commented AAMA's investigations chief Bill Kidwell. "They are vigorously enforcing the law."

JAPAN'S AWARD WINNERS — Congrats to Sega Japan for a double honor! Seen at left is Mr. Masumi Akagi, publisher of Japan's *Game Machine Magazine,* presenting the magazine's "Video Game of the Year, 1990" award plaques to Sega Japan's president Mr. Hayao Nakayama and Sega Japan's senior managing director Mr. Tokuzo Komai. Sega won the award twice — for *Tetris* (best kit) and *Super Monaco GP* (best dedicated game). Mr. Nakayama stated: "We at Sega will do our best to get both awards again next year!"

DATEBOOK

MARCH 1-3
First Annual AMOA International Flipper Pinball Assn. Tournament, O'Hare Hilton, Chicago, Ill. For more information, contact IFPA exec director Doug Young at 414/263-0233.

MARCH 22-24
ACME '91, Sands Expo & Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. For more information, contact Glasgow & Associates at 708/333-9292.

APRIL 12-14
National Amusement & Vending Expo, Commonwealth Convention Center, Louisville, Kent. Contact show organizers Andry Montgomery & Assoc.: 502/473-1992; fax: 502/473-1999.

APRIL 19-21
NAMA Western Convention, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. For more information, contact NAMA at 312/356-0370.

APRIL 25-28
Florida Amusement & Vending Assn. annual convention & trade show. Omni Convention Center, Orlando. For more information, call Wanda Neupauer at 407/898-3451.

APRIL 25-28
Mid-South Regional Amusement & Music Operators Convention & Trade Show, Omni Memphis Hotel, Memphis. For info, contact LaVerle Franzen or Jan Green at 901/353-1000.

APRIL 30-MAY 4
AMOA National Dart Assn. Team Championship, Sahara Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. For room reservations, call 800/634-6666. For more info, contact Joe Conway at 414/263-2444.

MAY 3-5
Northeast Regional Trade Show (co-sponsored by AMOA-NY, NYSCMA & AMOA-NJ). Atlantic City, N.J. For more information, contact Sue Matterson at 518/439-0981.

MAY 5-9
AAMA Government Affairs Conference, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact AAMA at 703/494-2758.

MAY 16-18
WAMO Spring Convention, Country Inn, Pewaukee, Wisc. For more information, contact WAMO at 414/529-4704.

MAY 25-JUNE 1
The 11th Annual Valley National Eight-ball Assn. Int'l. Singles & Team Championships, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. Contact Gregg Elliott at 517/893-1800.

MAY 31-JUNE 1
Ohio Coin Machine Assn. Annual Expo, Columbus. For more information, contact OCMA at 614/486-8677.

MAY 19-21
AMOA Government Affairs Conference, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact AMOA at 312/245-1021.

SEPTEMBER 12-14
AMOA Expo '91, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. For more information, contact AMOA at 312/245-1021.

THE BLUE PAGES

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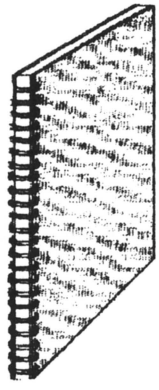

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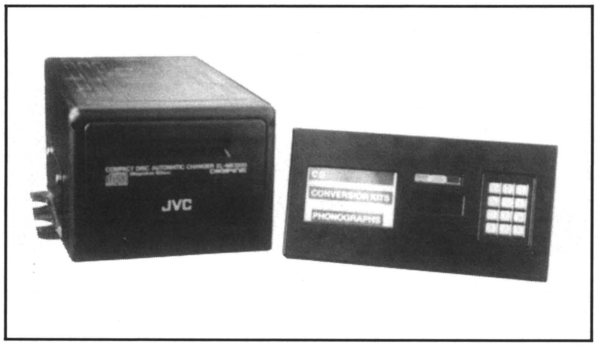

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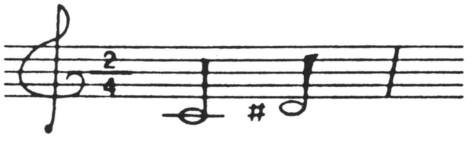

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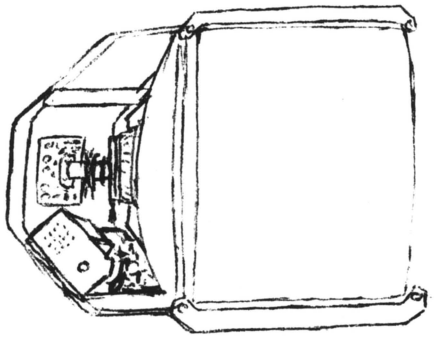

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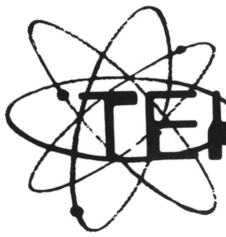

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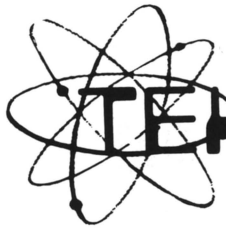

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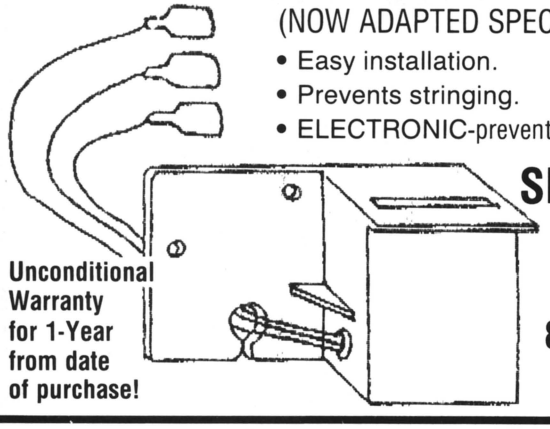

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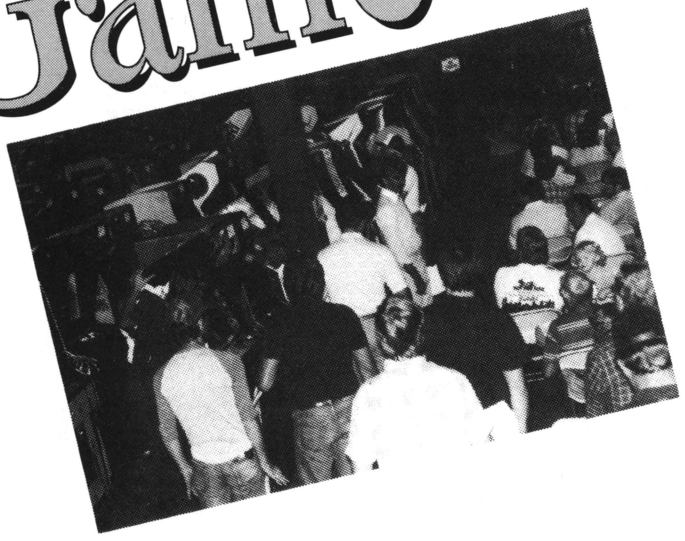

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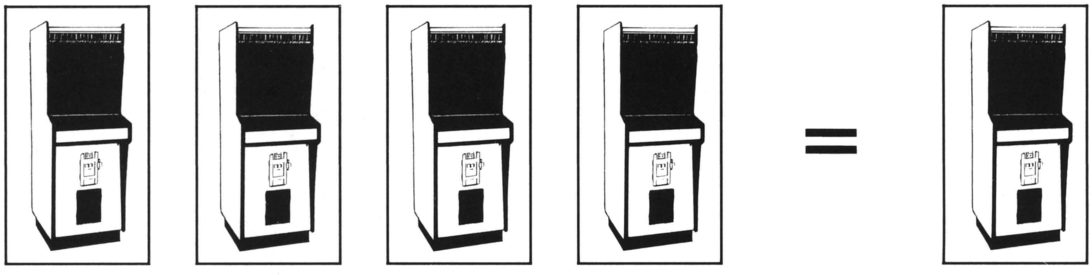

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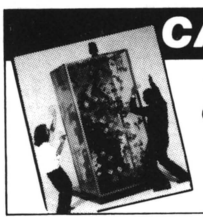

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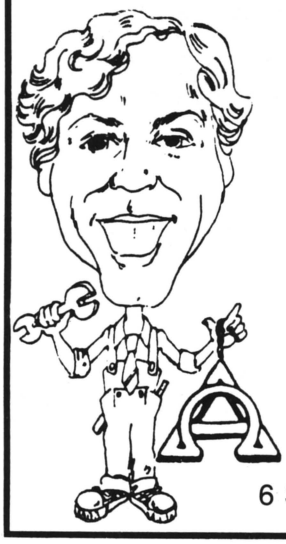

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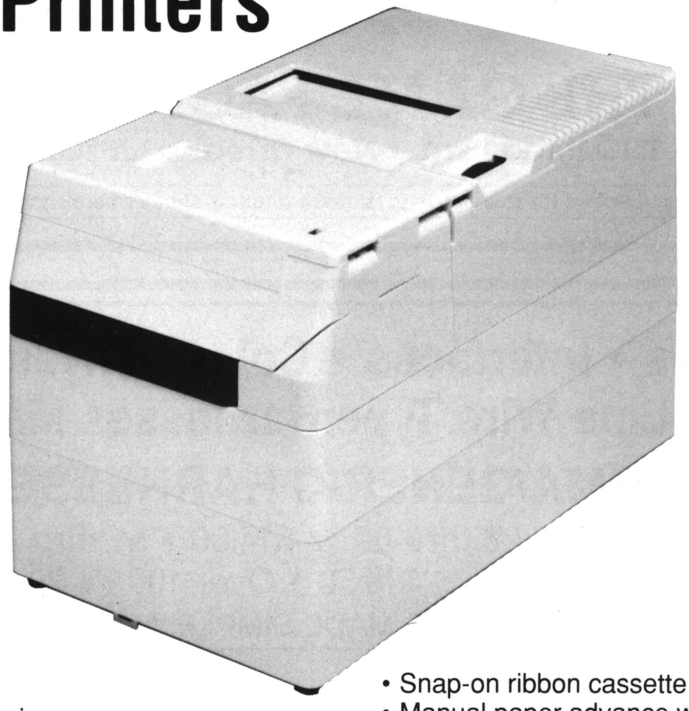

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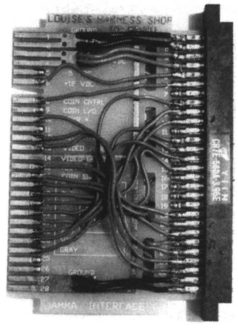

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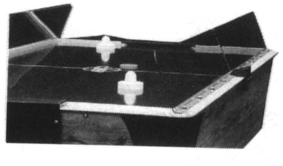

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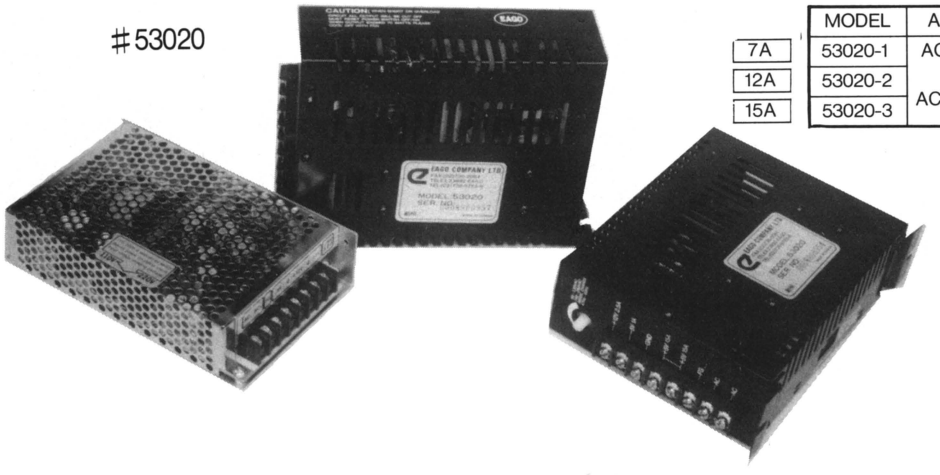

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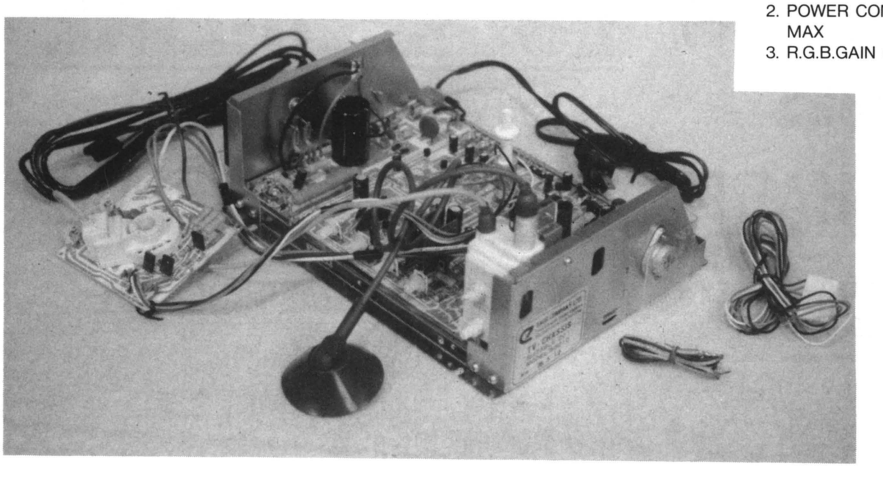

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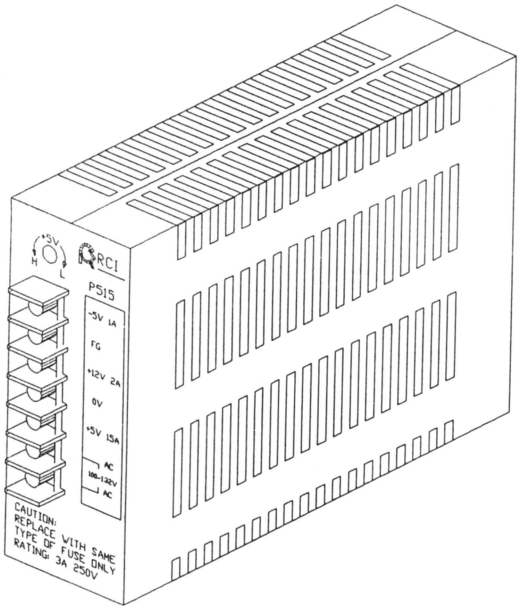

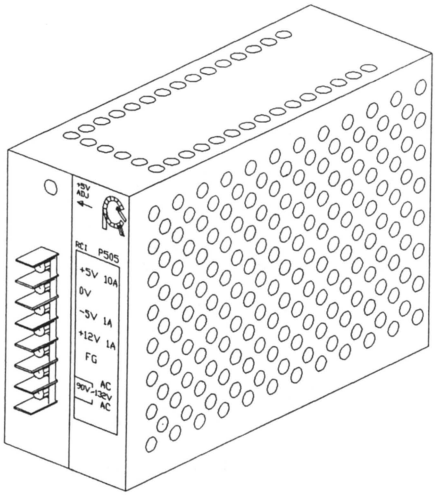

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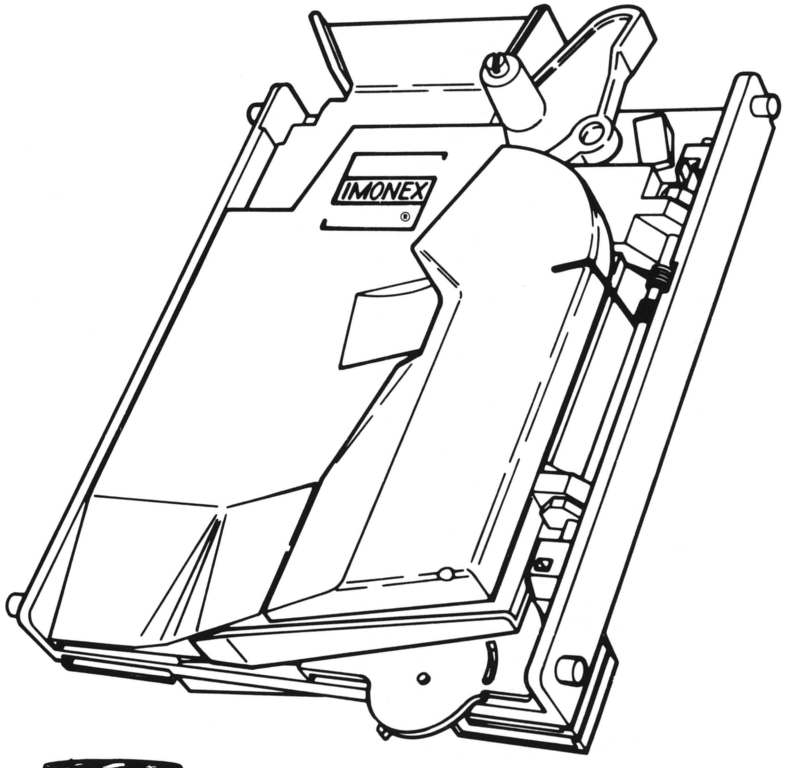

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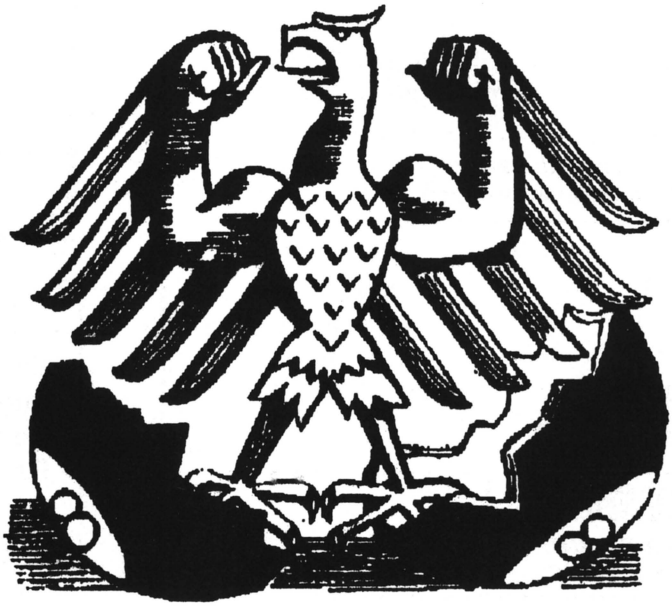

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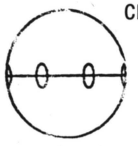

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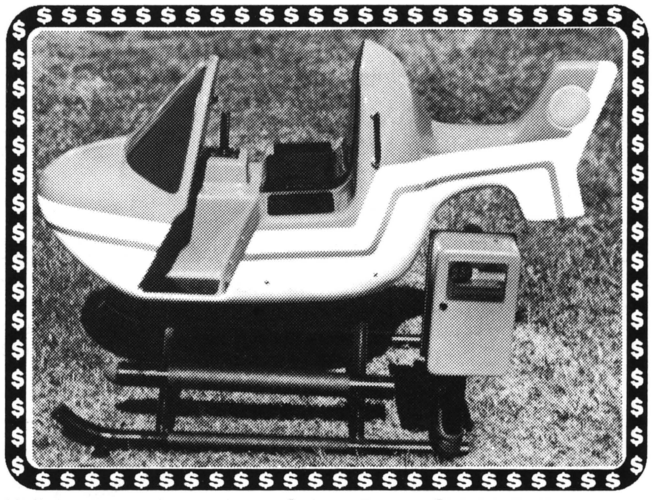

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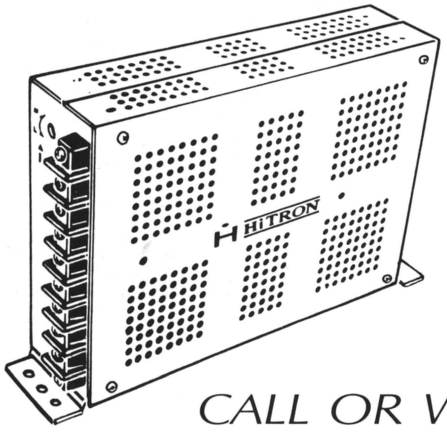

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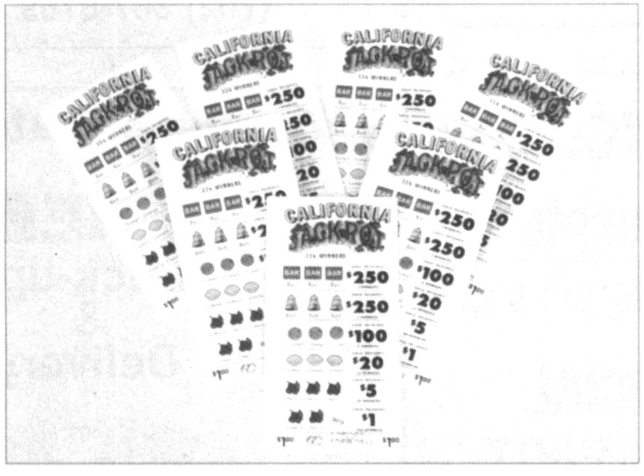

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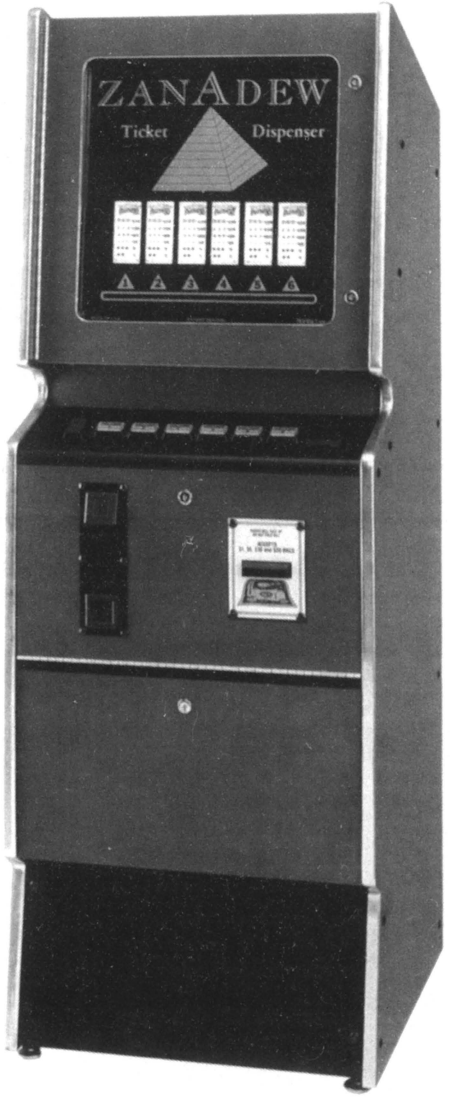

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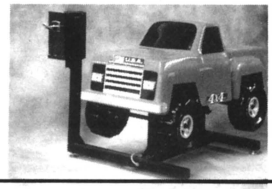

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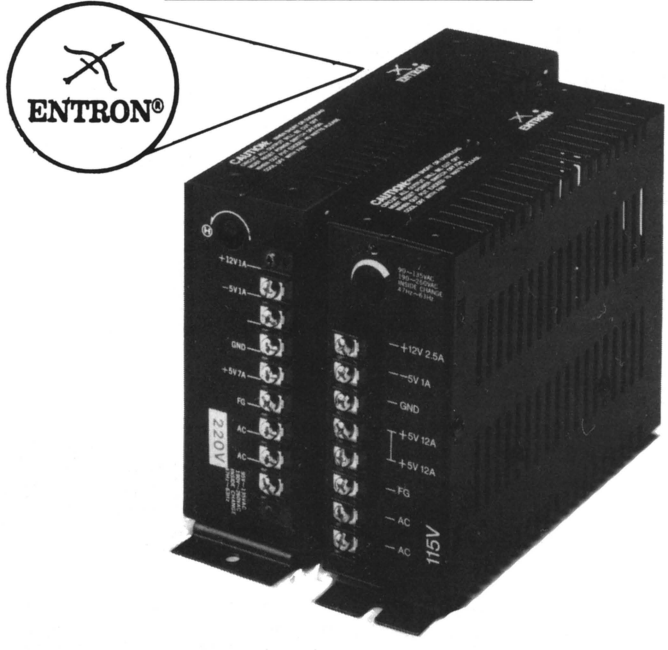

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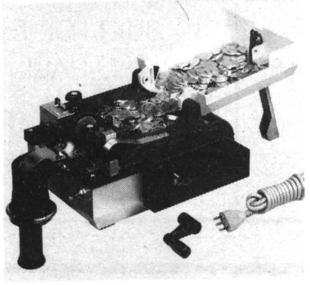

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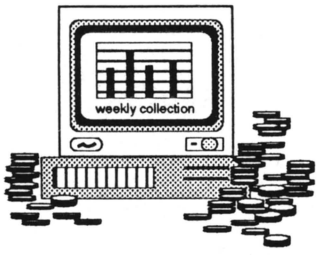

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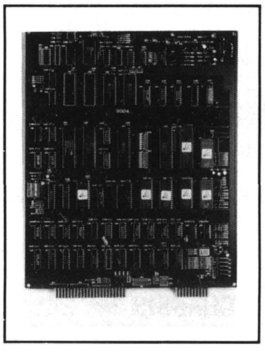

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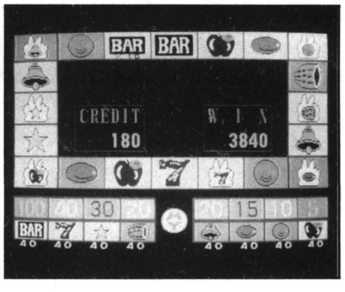

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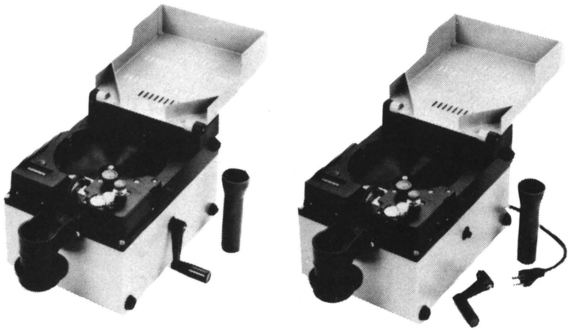

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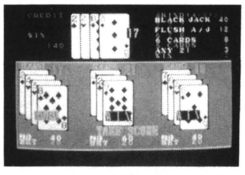

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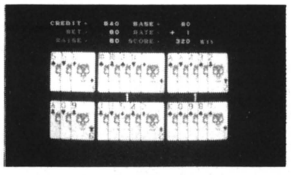

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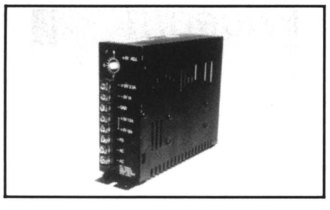

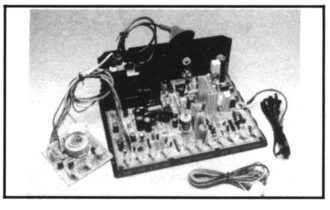

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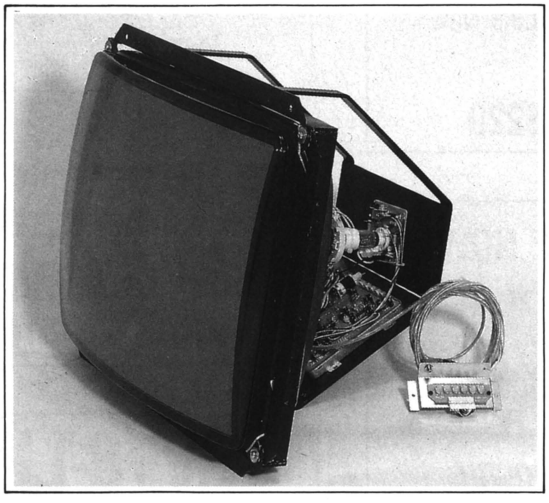

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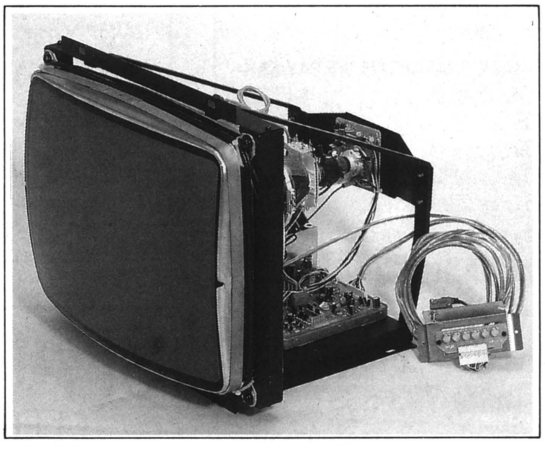

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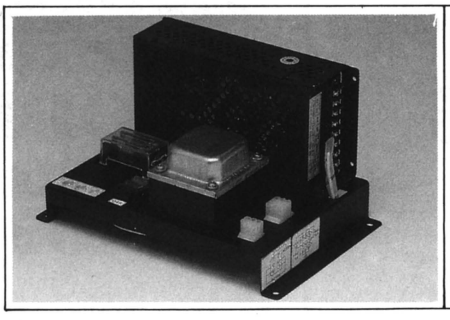

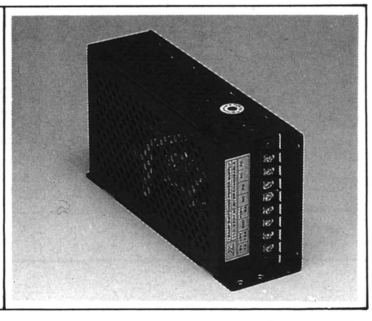

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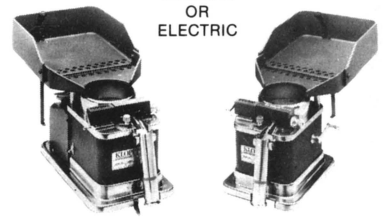

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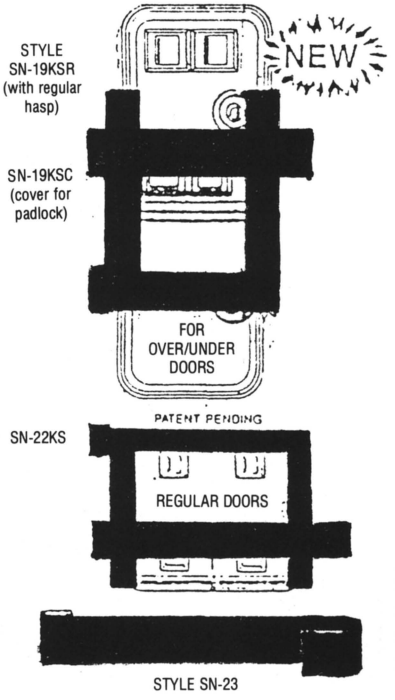

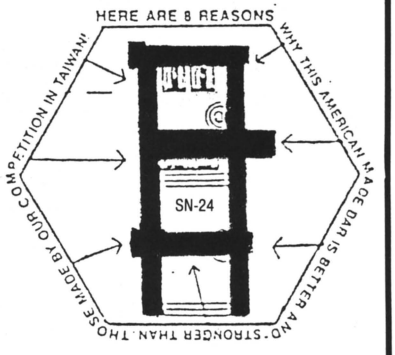

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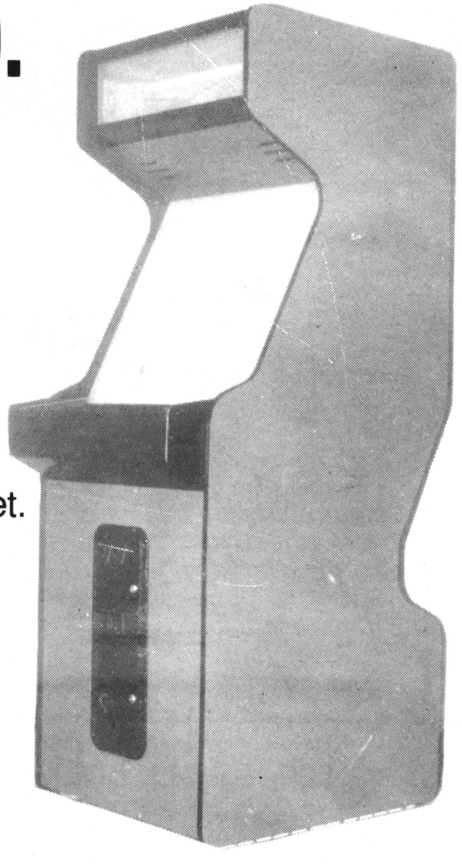

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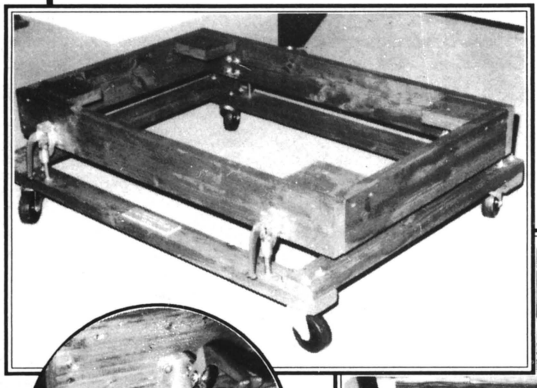

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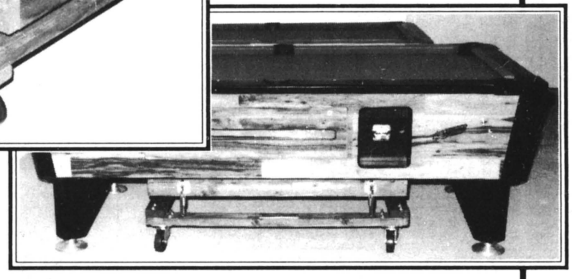

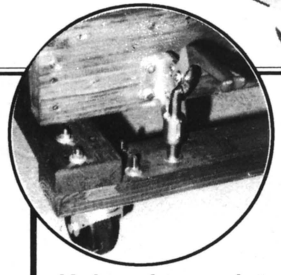

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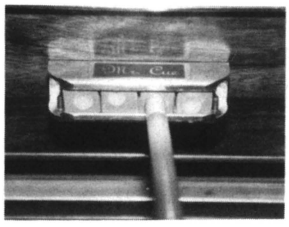

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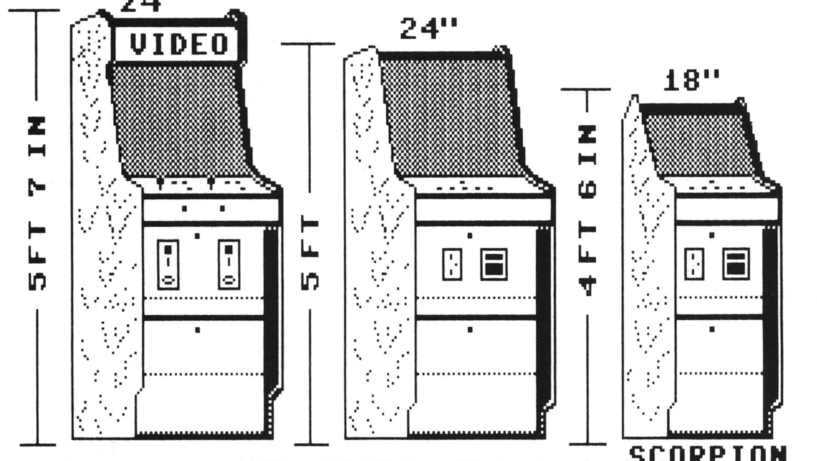

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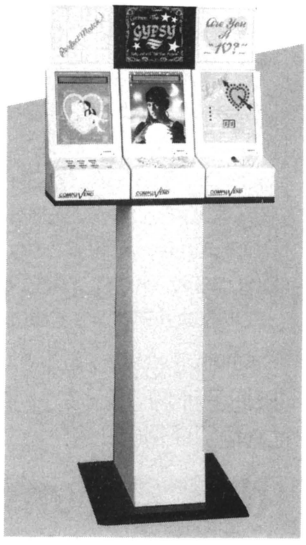

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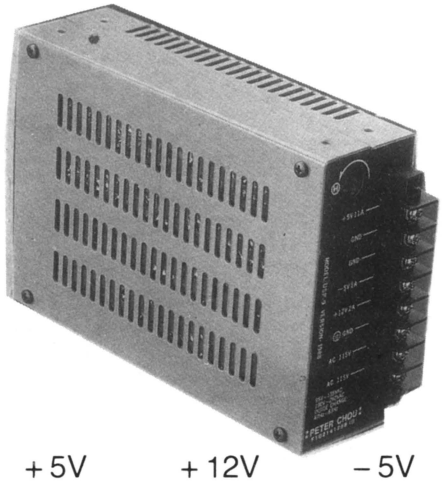

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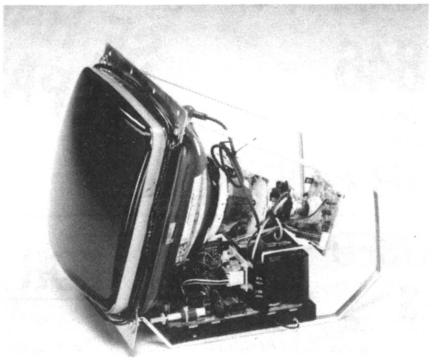

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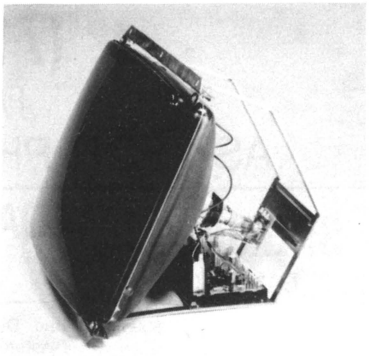

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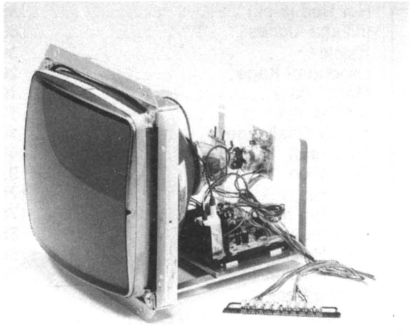

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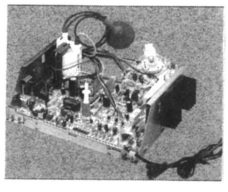

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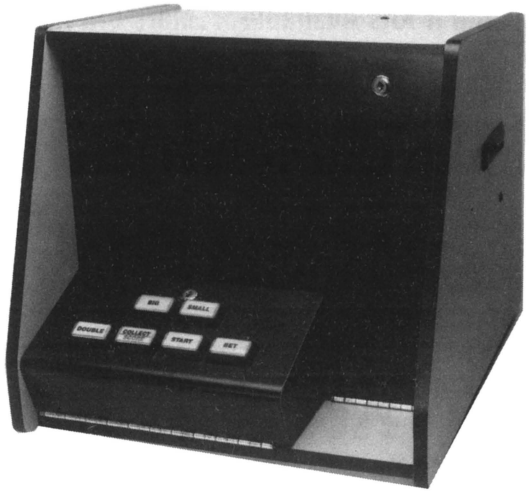

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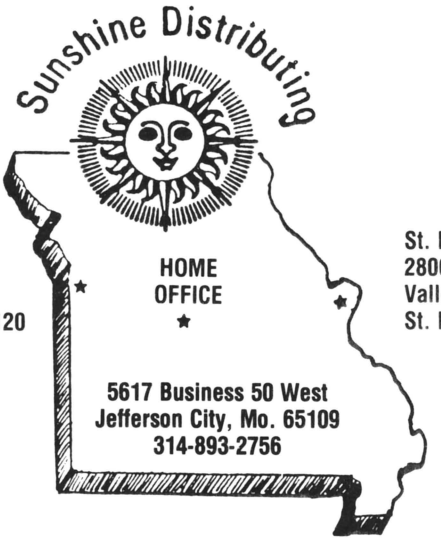

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INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

A.L.D. pg.145
AMOA 205
Acces 191
Acme Premium Supply 113-114
Adastra 73
Alter Enterprises 140
American Sammy 201
Angel's Toys 166A-B
Arachnid 139
Asahi Seiko U.S.A. 111
Atari . . . . . cover 4, 165
Atlantic & Pacific 143
BRW Systems 158
Bally . . . . . cover 3
Bay-Tek 26
R.H. Belam Company, Inc. 109
Belgian Amusments 197
Betson Enterprises 57-58, 159
Betson Pacific . . . . . 178, Toss-In
Big Ten Electronics 123
Bob's Space Racers 53
Bonita Marie 52, 178
Bromley Inc. 141
Capcom 12, 92-94
Carousel 84
Central Distributing 17
Century Distributing 56
Coastal Amusements 155
Coin Concepts 137
Cointek 147
Data East 18
Deltronic Labs 148
Design Plus 43
Don Records 80
Doyle & Associates 89
Drews Distributing 91
Dynamo 97
Eagle Company 153
Electro Games Industries 127
Entron Enterprises 50
Fabtek 77
Four J. International 172-173
GaMCO 171
Grayhound Electronics 101
HMS Monaco 160
Happ Controls 164
Hoffman & Hoffman 23
I.C.E. 11
Imagination Leisure 27
Imperial International 85, 135
Impressment Plus 46
Irem 5
J-S Sales 28
Jaleco 193
Kaneko 51
Kiddie Rides & More 138
Konami 39-40
Kramer Mfg. 181
L.A. East 103-104
Laramie Interests 24
Leisure Entertainment 161
Leland Corporation 33
Leprechaun 63, 71
Loewen-America/NSM-Lions 14, 36-37
Henry W.T. Mali Co. 52
Mayoni 50, 171
Meltec 7
Merit Industries 61
MicroProse 107
Mid-South Convention 136
Namco 87, 162
National Ticket 26
Nintendo . . . 21-22, 75-76, 131-132, 149-150
PJA Action Games 177
PMI 125
Pars Electronics 129
Pioneer Laser Entertainment 31, 183
Plush-4-Play 169
Pop-a-Shot 112
Premier Technology . . . . . cover 2
Progressive Game Distributors 166
C.A. Robinson 49
Romstar 65
Rosette 117
Rowe International 55
SNK Corporation 15
Sega Enterprises 9
Seidel Amusement 82
Sharp Image Electronics 69
Skee-Ball 119, 156
Skill Games 62
Star Track, Inc. 45
Stella 121
Strata 79, 81, 83
Taito America 47
Tecmo 99
U.B.I. 32
Valley Recreation 29
Van Brook of Lexington 82
Van Sickle & Co. 72
Vari-Tech 134
Wedges/Ledges 159
Williams Electronics 35
Roger Williams Mint 38
World Wide Distributing 176
Yamate 157, 189

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