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# RePlay magazine

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# SPORTS GAME NEWS

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## SUPER SHOT OUTEARNING OTHER BASKETBALL GAMES

Operators around the country are finding that Super Shot Deluxe Basketball is outearning all other basketball games in head-to-head comparisons.

Tony Thill of the Metro Midway family entertainment center in Phoenix told us, "We have had three linked Super Shots next to what we used to think were the best basketball games on the market. Well, the Super Shots over a period of six months have blown away those other games in earnings by about three times! Customers seem to love Super Shot, particularly the linked play."

Mike Patz of Pocket Change America was similarly impressed, "We compared Super Shot versus each of the other major basketball games and found that Super Shot was superior in terms of product quality, reliability and earnings."

Another example comes from the mammoth Sports Park USA in New Jersey, where they put in two Super Shots next to four brand new basketball games, from two different manufacturers. According to Steve Linzey, "The Super Shots have consistently outearned the other games."

As a result of these and many other examples too numerous to mention, confidence abounds at National Sports Games, the manufacturer of Super Shot.

"We will take on any other game at any other location," declared Kim Cook, Chief Operating Officer at National Sports Games. "Place two or more of our games next to any other game and we are confident that the Super Shots will outearn the others."




## SUPER SHOT WINS SPORTS BAR AWARD

America's Original Sports Bar announced at the Night Club & Bar Show in Las Vegas on January 13th that Super Shot Deluxe Basketball has been named their "Original Sports Bar Game of the Year."

"We are very pleased to award this year's prize to National Sports Games," said Joyce McReynolds, President of America's Original Sports Bars. "We have always had a bank of three to six basketball games in our clubs, but we are replacing those with Super Shot Deluxe. They really improve the earnings, the appearance and the atmosphere at our locations."

Ms. McReynolds went on to say, "We really like the attractive appearance and the moving backboard. But what the customers really get excited by is the linking of the games together. They love playing against three or four other people in simultaneous competition. And it is fun for others just to watch."

Greg Sullivan, who accepted the award from Ms. McReynolds, was obviously pleased with the recognition. "Many people think of Super Shot as a great piece for family entertainment centers. This award will help remind people that it is a great bar game too."

America's Original Sports Bars, based in Dallas, operates 20,000 to 70,000 square-foot night clubs throughout the country. They have been awarded each of the last three years either Night Club of the Year, Operator of the Year or both. This year, they were awarded Night Club of the Year for their new operation in Cincinnati, which features a bank of Super Shot Deluxes.

## NSG PRODUCTS AND SERVICE PRAISED BY EXUBERANT CUSTOMERS

Besides producing great revenue-producing games, interviews with National Sports Games customers indicate that NSG is also building high-quality products and providing excellent post-sale support.

"We are extremely happy with all of our NSG games," said Bob Engel, owner of the Discovery Zone in Aurora, Colorado. "The NSG equipment is, without a doubt, the best built equipment in our location. They do not skimp on anything. Every aspect of their equipment shows these guys are committed to quality products built to last."

Another happy customer is Jeff Victor of the Boomtown Casino near Reno. "We have over 150 redemption games from a variety of manufacturers. NSG's support services and genuine concern for our satisfaction are second to none."

"NSG is currently the class of this segment of the industry," said Dave Schwartz of the 55,000 square-foot Sports World in Paramus, New Jersey. "NSG games are creative and of high quality. . . It's nice to see redemption games with great entertainment value as well. Just as important, NSG listens to our concerns and is a pleasure to work with."




## GV-2

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- New! **SHARK FRENZY**
- **DUMP THE UMP**
- **RAZZLE DAZZLE**
- New! **ENDZONE**
- **BATTER UP!**
- **BULLPEN**
- **SPEEDPITCH!**
- **PROPITCH**

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- **LI'L RAZZLE DAZZLE**
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# HOT OFF THE PRESS

## CAPCOM DOINGS

The Feb. 25 issue of *Video Business* (an established trade publication for movie cassette rental stores) reported that Capcom will expand its revenue sharing program to VCR rental stores, providing two coin-op games at no charge, typically on a three-year contract. Capcom will then split the earnings 60/40 with store owners (the factory gets the lion's share). Capcom USA senior VP **Joe Morici** was quoted as saying games would be changed quarterly, or as the game's life-cycle requires. Capcom USA execs had planned to meet with their U.S. coin-op distribs on Feb. 19 to discuss the firm's revenue sharing policies, but few dealers seemingly attended. Three of Capcom's major distributors told *RePlay* they were not included in the video store revenue sharing program as yet, and did not know if any operator was involved. The *Video Business* story gave a phone number for store owners to contact Capcom directly. At presstime, Capcom USA execs were in Japan for the AOU Show and couldn't be reached for comment....meanwhile, Capcom Japan prexy **Kenzo Tsujimoto** announced that the firm will be getting more competitive in the U.S. coin-op market by lowering distributor prices, starting immediately.

## NINTENDO NEWS

11-year company vet **Howard Lincoln** was promoted from senior VP to chairman of Nintendo of America on Feb. 15, joining President **Minoru Arakawa** as a board member. "They will together be responsible for the management of the company," said the firm. Nintendo Japan topper **Hiroshi Yamauchi** said the move would strengthen Nintendo's management structure "in the face of intense competition in the U.S. home video market." Over the past 18 months, sales of Sega's *Genesis* system have dramatically outpaced those of Nintendo's *NES* products in the U.S. home game wars.

Nintendo confirmed that it will bow a 64-bit coin-op video game system called *Project Reality* later this year, produced in conjunction with Silicon Graphics (the Mt. View, Calif. hi-tech computer and special effects firm). A $250 home version will follow next year. Nintendo VP **Peter Main** told Alexander & Associates' *Interactive Update* newsletter that an arcade version would probably pop in September; both home and coin-op versions will be cartridge-based, he said.

## NEW RMC JUKEBOX

At this month's ACME, Rock-Ola Mfg. Corp. will bow *The Legend — Model 6000*, the first full-sized jukebox designed by **Glenn Streeter's** regime. *The Legend* utilizes the firm's exclusive "four-high" CD jacket display in a striking new way to show 16 full CD album covers at once. Tradesters will also like another dramatic visual design feature (but we're not allowed to talk about it yet!). "Let's just say this one has 'jukebox' written all over it," promised Streeter. "We've been working on *The Legend* for 16 months and we think it will live up to its name in both performance and appearance."

## OPEN HOUSES

Post-ACME product shows include: Lieberman Music (Minneapolis) on March 30, 11AM-5PM. Mountain Coin plans several shows (Phoenix: April 13, Noon to 5PM; Denver: April 8, 11AM-5PM; Albuquerque: dates TBA; Salt Lake: April 14, Noon to 5PM; Las Vegas: April 15, Noon to 5PM). Game Sales (Memphis, Tenn.) is April 22, 10AM-2PM. Belam, Southgate and Central dates were TBA at presstime. More open houses are listed inside this issue's *News Digest.*



## PATRIARCH PASSES ON

**Bill Gersh**, the dean of coin-op trade magazine writers, died at 87 in Florida. Seen here in the late 40's at about the time he founded *Cash Box* magazine, Gersh was once one of the most powerful men in the music and amusement industry. See *News Digest* for more information.

## SOUTHGATE TO HOUSTON

March 1 was the opening date for the new Houston branch of Southgate Amusement & Vending. Address is 4555 Airline Dr., #110, Houston, TX 77022. Phone is 713/691-7335.

## STRAIGHT TALK

AMOA is keeping its vow to communicate more with members on political matters. According to government relations manager **Laura Olson**, issues in the association's top-priority "active lobbying" category are dollar coins, parallels and jukebox licensing. Second-tier items include video violence, quality & standards, tobacco, and video lottery (i.e., AMOA isn't pushing for action here but has "defensive" positions on each issue). Finally, AMOA is monitoring telco bills, Indian gaming, health care, state and federal taxes, and labor issues like worker's comp and OSHA regulations.

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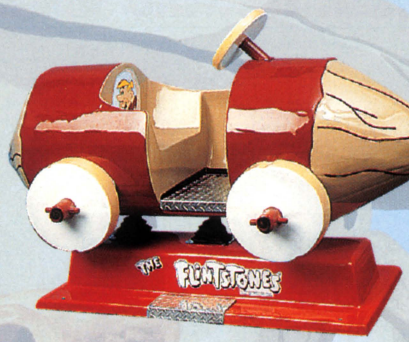


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RePlay

# PLAYERS' CHOICE • MAR. 1994

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

## best upright videos

| | MODEL/MANUFACTURER | RATING | DIST. |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ | **1 MORTAL KOMBAT II (Midway) (3)** | **9.69** | **74%** |
| ▶ | 2 VIRTUA FIGHTER (Sega) (2) | 9.24 | 18% |
| ▶ | 3 RUN & GUN (Konami) (4) | 9.22 | 15% |
| ▶ | 4 NBA JAM+ (Midway) (12) | 8.36 | 86% |
| | 5 LETHAL ENFORCERS+ (Konami) (17) | 8.31 | 69% |
| | 6 MORTAL KOMBAT+ (Midway) (19) | 8.18 | 82% |
| | 7 FINAL LAP 3★ (Namco) (9) | 7.56 | 8% |
| ▶ | 8 NFL HARD YARDAGE+ (Strata) (3) | 7.38 | 11% |
| | 9 SUPER CHASE (Taito) (11) | 7.29 | 18% |
| | 10 ST. FIGHTER II: C.E.+ (Capcom) (22) | 7.10 | 78% |

*+ indicates game was produced in both dedicated & software forms*
*★ indicates game was also produced in deluxe form*

## best deluxe videos

*(sitdowns, cockpits, arcade attractions)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ | **1 RIDGE RACERS (Namco) (2)** | **9.88** | **8%** |
| ▶ | 2 CYBERSLED (Namco) (4) | 8.82 | 11% |
| | 3 OUTRUNNERS (Sega) (6) | 8.76 | 18% |
| | 4 VIRTUA RACING ★ (Sega) (17) | 8.68 | 42% |
| | 5 STADIUM CROSS (Sega) (15) | 8.60 | 5% |
| | 6 LUCKY & WILD (Namco) (9) | 8.56 | 9% |
| | 7 SUZUKA 8 HOURS (Namco) (17) | 8.50 | 15% |
| ▶ | 8 DRUG WARS (ALG) (2) | 8.10 | 10% |
| ▶ | 9 CRIME PATROL (ALG) (7) | 7.86 | 7% |
| | 10 HARD DRIVIN' (Atari) (47) | 7.70 | 24% |

*+ indicates game was produced in both dedicated & software forms*
*★ indicates game was also produced in upright form*

## best new games

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ▶ | 1 | SUZUKA II 8 HOURS [deluxe video] (Namco) |
| ▶ | 2 | TOMMY [pinball] (Data East) |

## best video software

| | MODEL/MANUFACTURER | RATING | DIST. |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ | **1 RAIDEN II [V] (Fabtek) (2)** | **8.15** | **23%** |
| ▶ | 2 GAL'S PANIC 2 [V] (Kaneko) (3) | 8.00 | 5% |
| ▶ | 3 SAMURAI SHODOWN [S] (SNK) (8) | 7.93 | 75% |
| ▶ | 4 WORLD RALLY [H] (Atari) (7) | 7.77 | 27% |
| | 5 SUPER ST. FIGHTER II [H] (Capcom) (5) | 7.43 | 66% |
| | 6 ST. FTR II: C.E. TURBO [R] (Capcom) (13) | 7.10 | 81% |
| ▶ | 7 ART OF FIGHTING 2 [S] (SNK) (2) | 7.00 | 38% |
| | 8 METAMORPHIC FORCE [H] (Konami) (2) | 6.80 | 4% |
| ▶ | 9 FATAL FURY SPECIAL [S] (SNK) (4) | 6.69 | 28% |
| | 10 IREM SKINS [H] (Irem) (11) | 6.57 | 12% |
| ▶ | 11 WORLD HEROES 2 [S] (SNK) (10) | 6.48 | 54% |
| | 12 RAIDEN [V] (Fabtek) (43) | 6.46 | 34% |
| | 13 C.O.W.-BOYS MOO MESA [H] (Konami) (8) | 6.44 | 14% |
| | 14 AERO FIGHTERS [V] (McO'River) (21) | 6.40 | 39% |
| | 15 STREET FIGHTER II [H] (Capcom) (36) | 6.28 | 71% |
| ▶ | 16 FATAL FURY 2 [S] (SNK) (14) | 6.28 | 47% |
| | 17 TIME KILLERS [H] (Strata) (14) | 6.27 | 41% |
| | 18 WARRIORS OF FATE [H] (Capcom) (12) | 6.27 | 13% |
| | 19 OFF ROAD TRAK PAK [R] (Leland) (33) | 6.20 | 34% |
| ▶ | 20 SPINMASTER [S] (Data East for SNK) (2) | 6.17 | 10% |

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

## top pinball

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ | **1 STAR TREK (Williams) (1)** | **8.70** | **46%** |
| ▶ | 2 INDIANA JONES (Williams) (6) | 8.59 | 41% |
| | 3 ADDAMS FAMILY (Midway) (24) | 8.43 | 76% |
| ▶ | 4 WIPEOUT (Gott./Premier) (3) | 8.25 | 8% |
| ▶ | 5 TALES FROM THE CRYPT (Data East) (3) | 8.13 | 17% |
| | 6 JURASSIC PARK (Data East) (9) | 7.85 | 55% |
| | 7 TWILIGHT ZONE (Midway) (11) | 7.77 | 67% |
| | 8 JUDGE DREDD (Bally) (4) | 7.60 | 26% |
| | 9 TERMINATOR 2 (Williams) (30) | 7.57 | 63% |
| | 10 CREATURE/LAGOON (Midway) (13) | 7.57 | 37% |

▶ *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 opeators who have the item on location. No upright videos rated by less than 10% of these operators appear on the Upright Videos chart, but promising new items appear under Best New Videos.*

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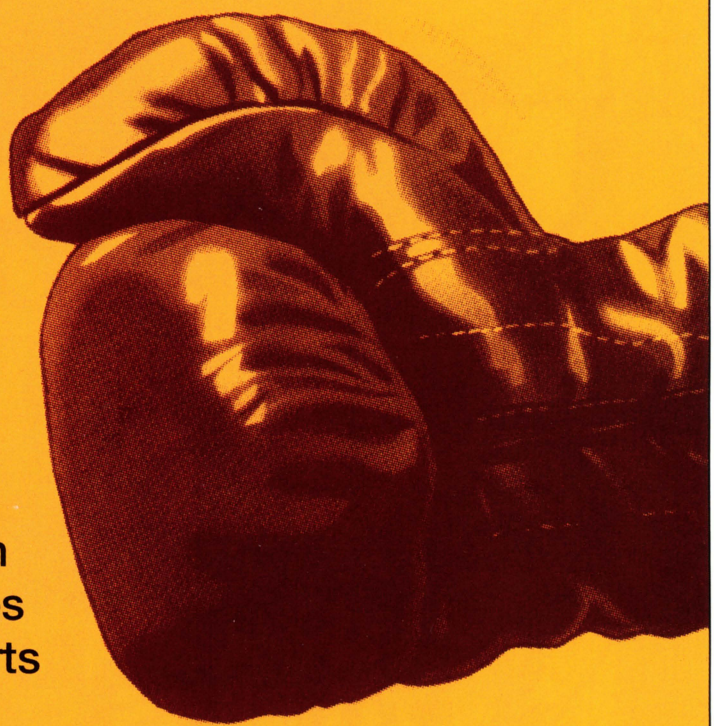

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## COVER

"Tommy," the rock opera that's enjoying a revival on Broadway, is now Tommy the pinball from Data East. This one's got all the flash, glitz and glitter of a top-flight Broadway extravaganza thanks to up-to-the-minute hi-tech pinball wizardry from Data East Pinball. A moving 3D World War II bomber is on the playfield. A giant 3D pinball sits atop the backglass. And show tunes from the play pour out of the exquisite sound system. Our cover shot depicts, from left, Data East USA senior VP Paul Jacobs, Finance VP Holly Mathis, Pinball GM Gary Stern, and Chief Designer Joe Kaminkow with the new machine against a suitable Broadway backdrop.

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# EDITORIAL

*RePlay has been warning readers about the possible threat from hi-tech networks ever since our August, 1992 story "Invasion of the Coin Snatchers." Inside this issue, we profile the first up-and-running interactive entertainment network, NTN Communications, Inc. This organization uses satellites, digital broadcasts, computers and phone links to let customers in 1,300 locations "play along" with live broadcasts of NFL football games and other live sporting events. NTN also offers an extensive menu of trivia games! Wagering is next on their drawing board.*

*Make no mistake, NTN is a competitor. They don't need the operator; they just want his locations. And what NTN does today, Time-Warner and many others can do even bigger and better tomorrow. If our industry fails to respond in some way, hi-tech entertainment networks run by big corporations can — and will — knock operators out of many prime locations (NTN specializes in taverns, by the way). They can provide nearly everything the operator does, and more besides.*

*"You can't send a pool table over a telephone wire," is the trade's great cliche on this subject. True, but you can set up an irresistible pool (or dart) league format on a wire, offering glitzy nationwide contests and big instant prizes. And you can sure download your music programming over a wire; in Japan they are already doing it with karaoke. As for video, the Sega Channel or its equivalent could easily be delivered over an NTN type network. So please, let's stop kidding ourselves that maybe multimedia won't work, or won't "really" apply to our industry.*

*Meantime, keep a close eye on AMOA's board meeting this month. The association is expected (at long last) to announce details of its networking project. At the ACME show, operators should ask manufacturers: if we set up our own interactive network, would you make your games available for digital downloading to our locations? As AT&T's multimedia development chief Steve Marano told the AMOA-AAMA Standardization Committee last fall, a whole new industry is being born here, and its success will require cooperation from all parties.*

***— Marcus Webb***

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***OPTIONS:***
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- Ticket Dispenser
- Bill Acceptor




*Dimensions*
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• Depth - 37"

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# INSIDE

**FEBRUARY 1994**

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### ACME '94
Record numbers of booths have been sold and record attendance is expected for the spring show. Tradesters will like the "almost Chicago" site (that is, if the weather cooperates) and the quick access from O'Hare Airport. We have a complete schedule of events, including seminars, as well as floor plan layouts including booth numbers...pg. 43

### NETWORKING NOW
Want to scare yourself silly? Read how a little known outfit called NTN Communications, Inc. has taken the "networking" idea and run with it to provide interactive entertainment for taverns. Bar-goers get to play along with live sports broadcasts, or play trivia games. No operators need apply...pg. 84

### POLLOCK & PREMIER
*Amusement Business Europe* editor Kate Barnett skillfully interviewed Premier Technology prexy Gil Pollock about his views on the flipper market. A product update follows. Premier is looking for its best year yet.....pg. 97

### REVENUE SHARING
Coverage of this controversial topic includes a sad protest from a "left-out" operator, a gracious explanation from a manufacturer, and our own thoughts about what would be required if this idea is ever going to work.....pg. 117

### MAURY FERCHEN
One of the industry's true professionals gives us the inside scoop on Aladdin's Castle arcades in the new Namco era. With more capital to invest, this chain is upgrading existing sites and aggressively seeking new ones. Their management philosophy could be a model for others.....pg. 135

## REGULAR FEATURES


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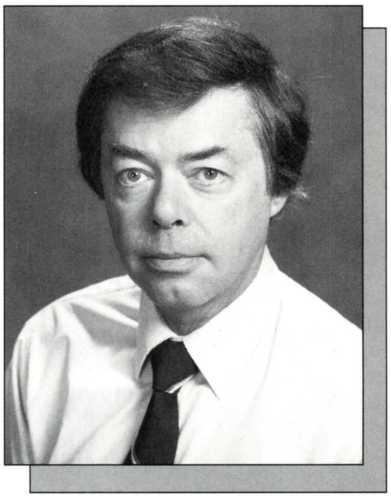
# PUBLISHER



*This month begins my 31st year in the coin-op trade paper business. I put in 11 years at Cash Box and 19 (so far) here at RePlay, and in all that time, I have never seen one single issue of any coin trade magazine as good as the one you're reading now. I specifically refer to our collection of feature stories that will alternately warm you (the Maury Ferchen interview...as in "nice guy makes good"), or sober you (Bob Rondeau's excellent piece on operator-involved gambling in Montana and South Dakota) or even terrify you (the NTN system beaming video games directly into bars, no operator needed). There's also something about video game revenue-sharing...a concept I personally view as political/economic dynamite unless all three levels of the industry become involved...plus other articles ranging from the worthy to even "must" reading. So, I urge you to keep this issue safe for further reference.*

*You'll find some helpful pages (toward the front) about this month's ACME show in suburban Chicago you can use to set up a schedule for yourself and your people — which seminars to hit, which exhibits to prowl, etc. ACME's going to be a good, large show located in a really convenient spot right outside O'Hare Airport. I hope a big, huge bunch of operators turns out for it all.*

*Making magazines today is so far different from my early days playing with blocked photo engravings and lead type. It's taken a real stretch for me personally to deal with all this computer-generated stuff, but I love the modern look of the book. Things have changed quite a bit in the amusement machine business itself during my time covering its ups and downs and ups again. And, the best place to get a heads-up on important trade developments is at a show like ACME. That's one reason I haven't missed one single national show during my first 30 years. See you there? Hope so!*

***– Eddie Adlum***



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# HELP SAVE THE GLENOSAURUS!

*operator Glenn Anderson says he feels like a dinosaur: once all-powerful, now worried about evolutionary forces*



*AMOA board member Glenn Anderson (Microworlds, Inc.) is also president and co-founder of the Amusement and Music Operators of Hawaii. As you may remember from the Thumbnail Sketch we published about him in 1993, he's a very busy guy with interests not only in Hawaii but also in some Alaskan arcades. He runs an efficient, modern business and is extremely interested in the possible impact — for good and bad — of hi-tech on the coin-op amusements biz.*

*Meantime, what prompted this guest essay? "I am sad watching the coin-op video slowly sink," said Glenn. "I had to write down some thoughts." He sent us this short but powerful article in mid-February. Read it carefully, because there's room for more than one interpretation! Is Glenn really pining for the "good old days" of the past, or is he mostly anxious for a better future? — the editor.*

*Dear RePlay:*

Please call me GlenOSAURUS. I am a dinosaur. On my way to extinction. I operate video game arcades. On quarters. I have a couple of cranes, but no other redemption. I have a sentimental affection for video games and the excitement of a video arcade.

I bought two Taito *Space Invaders* in 1980. I fondly remember *Asteroids, Donkey Kong, Frogger, Robetron* and *Stargate. Galaxians* and *Phoenix.*

My customers used to be obsessed with video games. The games were new and exciting. Customers could play for an hour or so on 25-cent play and spend a couple of bucks. There were lots of people and it was a lot of fun.

My customer did not have a *GameBoy* or *Super Nintendo.* He did not have a personal computer at work and home with tons of games copied from his friends. He was not waiting to subscribe to the Sega Channel. Blockbuster was not down the street with all the games you could play for $3 a night.

And what kind of customer do I have today? Maybe he is curious about the latest videos in the arcade. He could wait a while and rent them cheap but he wants to play new games now.

At the arcade, he waits to drop his 75-cents to play, and 50-cents to continue. He waits because there are only two games of the ones he wants to play. There are dozens of games he does not want to play. Unfortunately, nobody else wants to play those games either.

Why don't I have more of the games he wants to play? Is it because they cost so much? Why do I buy a new computer motherboard every time I buy a new game? I constantly upgrade software on my personal computer, but I have one computer — not one for each program I use. How about dedicated video: a new computer, monitor, power supply, and new furniture to put this new program on?

Does my customer understand that he has to pay five or ten dollars to play a game because I have spent two thousand to six thousand? He will be able to buy the game soon at

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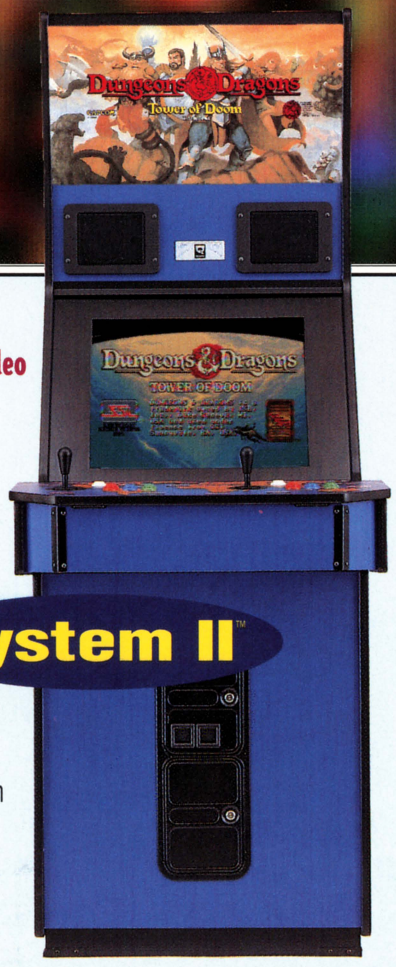


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$54.95 or rent it for $3. Can he conceive that I pay 60 times the amount it cost him? Can he ever imagine that I am part of an industry that is trying to raise the price per play even higher? That new dedicateds cost more than ever?

Will I ever be able to offer licensed, downloaded games at my location? Nolan Bushnell predicted downloading years ago. Do we have to go to the very bottom while protecting the old way of distributing arcade entertainment? Can we try new cost-saving technologies before I go broke?

Dream of the modern arcade. Hi-resolution. Fiberoptics. Big screens. Games change in an instant. There will be 20 or 30 of the hottest new game. You will be able to walk right up and play it. No waiting. You will marvel at how little you spend, compared to movies and theme parks. There will be lots of people playing — a big party atmosphere, fun for all.

Where are the marketers? Where are the programmers? Help save the GlenOSAURUS!

◆

*Dear RePlay:*

As I see it, our industry is working hard to keep up with the technology of today, but we are still overlooking one area. That is the use of credit cards. Here in America we are slowly becoming a cashless society, yet within our industry there are few distributors and parts suppliers who now accept credit cards.

These days, more and more businesses are accepting credit cards, from doctors to psychics. Why not the coin-op industry? I understand that credit card companies charge a percentage of each sale, but these percentages are negotiable and it's quite possible to arrange for lower rates. Am I missing something? Because I only see benefits for both the seller and customer when credit cards are accepted and used.

Benefits of credit cards, received by the distributor and parts supplier:
1. No more bounced checks.
2. The need for all the credit applications is eliminated. Credit card companies do this for you.
3. Customers get the ultimate convenience of being able to order by phone — "instant gratification" is a powerful motivator today. 4. Customers are able to make purchases even if they don't have funds at that time.

Benefits of credit cards, received by the customer: 1. A free loan for 25 to 40 days. Hey, why not stick the purchasing money in a savings account for that time? 2. Some credit card companies give cash back, free air travel, and credit towards auto or home purchases if you pay on time and in full. 3. As you use your credit card, your credit rating increases, making it easier to buy that new home or office.

*Sincerely,*

*Don Blake*
*Twilight Arcade Service*
*Arcata, California*

*[Dear Don: We plead guilty to being one of the coin-op firms that does not take credit cards. Our only excuse is, we're just old-fashioned and still have a lot of "mom and pop" procedures around our office — many of which we're slowly upgrading. We probably will go onto this when circumstances "force" us to do it. That's because every such "convenience" brings a lot of new headaches like more bureaucracies to deal with, etc. But you're right: almost every 800 sq. ft. hole-in-the-wall restaurant takes credit cards now. Why not more coin-op suppliers? Well, there could be all sorts of reasons the suppliers could list...and if someone would like to do exactly that, write it up and send it to Viewpoint. By the way, the use of debit cards instead of tokens or coins to pay for game playing time is also "creeping ahead by leaps and bounds." — RePlay.]*

◆

*If you've got something to say, we want to hear it! Send your letters to RePlay Magazine, P.O. Box 2550, Woodland Hills, CA 91365...or you can always give us a call: (818)347-3820.*


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# NEWS DIGEST

## VIDEO VIOLENCE: AMOA AND AAMA ACHIEVE UNITED FRONT

Key figures from AMOA and AAMA met in Chicago on Feb. 8 to discuss options for dealing with threatened government censorship. Joe Dillon of WMS, chairman of AAMA's video violence task force, led the strategy discussion. AMOA people uniformly gave Joe rave reviews, lauding his diplomacy, persuasive powers & goodwill. Next step is some quiet talks with key Senate staffers, leading up to public committee hearings in Washington D.C. on March 4 which will be conducted (again) by Senator Lieberman. The violence issue, and how coin-op can handle it, remains complex and touchy on all sides...but meantime, it's sure nice to see both associations in better sync. As Dillon himself put it, "AMOA and AAMA are working together with good communications and cooperation on what we agree is an industry-wide problem." Now, can we bring JAMMA to a better understanding of this problem? At least one U.S. tradester was disappointed by the discussion of video violence during the ATEI-London "Summit Meeting" of coin-op association leaders. Some Japanese manufacturers did not seem to fully comprehend the growing reaction against violence in today's U.S. pop culture, nor the possibility of Prohibition-type edicts from Uncle Sam.

## BACK TO CHICAGO! ACME SEES RECORD ATTENDANCE




At presstime, show organizers were predicting record attendance for **ACME '94** (March 17-19, Rosemont Convention Center), based on the number of advanced registrations. ACME will showcase new product from all the major game and music factories, of course, plus tons of components, merchandise and accessories. The comprehensive seminar program includes a tour of local redemption arcades, **Randy Fromm's** multi-part technical lessons, plus chats on hi-tech, pinball promos, mini golf operation...you name it! Distributor **Steve Lieberman** is AAMA's "Man of the Year" at their annual charity dinner. Cocktail parties, awards, and a motivational speech from former Chicago Bears coach **Mike Ditka** rounds out the program. Look to our ACME Show coverage for floor plan, schedules, seminar guide, and more. It all begins on **page 43**.

## KOREAN KOPS KNAB KOPIERS

After decades as a hotbed of illegal counterfeits, today's Korea continues to crack down on illegal copiers. According to Japan's *Game Machine* Magazine, the presidents of two Seoul vidgame companies (J.K. Trading Co. Ltd. and Shinsung Electronic Co. Ltd.) were arrested by city police on Jan. 7, during raids on the two firms. The action followed complaints about the two firms by Capcom and Nintendo. Raids were conducted under Korea's computer protection act. Authorities said both firms sold many counterfeit *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* games in December, 1993. Of the 164 alleged copyboards seized during the raids, 88 were recent Capcom titles and 76 more were copies of games from Data East and others. By the way, cops also grabbed 410 counterfeit Nintendo home game cartridges. Officials said prosecution of the two arrested suspects is likely to result. Conviction for counterfeiting will carry either a jail term or a major fine under Korea's computer protection act.




# PRESENTS

# ONE STOP

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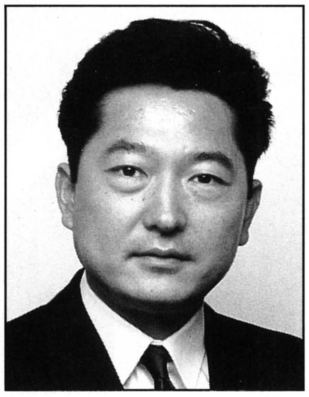
# SNK GETS 3rd-PARTY NEO-GEO SOFTWARE; NEW 32-BIT DELUXE SYSTEM IS COMING

A rapid increase in third-party licensees is helping SNK maintain the strength and flexibility of its Neo-Geo system cabinet, already the most popular and successful software system in coin-op video game history. Currently over 20 top manufacturers are licensed to produce games for Neo-Geo, SNK said. The only examples we can report at present are Data East (which recently released *Spinmaster* and will soon release *Wind Jammer*) and Taito (which will have a Neo-Geo volleyball title before long). "Each company understands the profitability and practicality that our Neo-Geo Multi-video System offers," said company president Marty Kitazawa. "All of our licensees are in total support of our dedication to produce top-quality, high income-producing products at the most competitive and affordable price. We believe this will be a



significant contribution towards the growth of the video game industry which we are a part of." By the way, SNK is now looking at adding another, brand new system to its line in addition to Neo-Geo. This would be a new 32-bit "deluxe type system," Marty advised. "There have been recent rumors that our current system will be modified to 32-bit," he said, "but it seems to have been confused with this new project."

# PENNSY SUPREME COURT OK'S AMUSEMENT VIDPOKER

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled on Monday, Feb. 7 that token-dispensing video pokers were not gaming devices, and ordered the machines returned to plaintiffs **Wylie Irwin** (formerly with Coin Concepts) and his wife **Diana**. The games were being run on a redemption-type basis in a pizzeria; the value of tokens paid out was clearly less than customers spent to play. State police raided the location back in April of 1991. Wylie's lawyer said the ruling won't affect state laws that prohibit knockoff switches and cash pay-offs. By the way, the Court also ordered that Wylie and Diana will get their machines back. Congrats, Wylie!

# DISTRIBUTORS POST-ACME OPEN HOUSES

First comes ACME, then comes the Springtime round of open house parties at your local distributor's place. Here are dates and times we'd received as of Feb. 21. **Betson Pacific** has three (Phoenix: March 21, 10AM-4PM; Buena Park: April 1, 11AM-5PM; San Francisco: March 30, 10AM-4PM). **Betson Distributing** has four (Carlstadt, N.J.: March 23, 1-7PM; Pittsburgh: March 26, 1-6PM; Norwood, Mass.: March 30, 2-8PM; Syracuse, N.Y.: April 10, 1-6PM). **Mondial Distributing** has five events (Springfield, NJ: March 22, 3-7PM; Pittsburgh: March 26, Noon to 4PM; Rochester: March 27, Noon to 5PM; Norwood, Mass.: March 30, 2-8PM; Philadelphia: April 2, Noon to 4PM). **C.A. Robinson** has two (San Francisco: March 30, 9AM-4PM; Los Angeles: April 1, 9AM-4PM). **Century Vending & Distributing** (L.A.) is April 2, 10AM-4PM. **Colorado Game & Vending Exchange** (Denver) is April 8, 11AM-5PM. **Greater Southern** (Atlanta) is March 25, 5:30-9PM. **State Sales & Service** (Baltimore) is March 24-25, 9AM-6PM. **American Coin** has two (Seattle: April 5, 3-7PM; Portland: April 6, 3-7PM). **Sunbelt** is April 2, 11AM-5PM. **Music-Vend & Dunis** have three events (Seattle: April 5, 4-9PM; Portland: April 7, 4-9PM; Anchorage: April 29-30, times TBA).

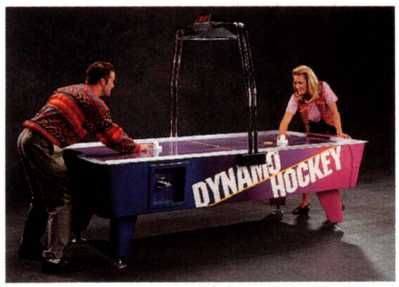
# ELECTRONIC ARTS BOWS 1st COIN-OP

Electronic Arts, one of the most innovative home vidgame makers, debuted its first-ever coin-op game, *Battle Toads*, at the ATEI Show in London, held at the end of January. The 2-3 player kit features frog-type hero characters who kick-punch their way through a fantasy environment, with horizontal and vertical scrolling to spice up the action. "We got very good reaction in London and we're testing now in Chicago area locations," EA's Frank Pellegrini said in mid-February. Shipping this month, *Battle Toads* is licensed from Joel Hochberg's Rare Coin-It. EA plans to bring out a "homegrown" coin-op game very soon.

# BIG SEEBURG MEXICAN BIZ

Seeburg International says it will realize $2.5 million in additional revenues in 1994 from sales of its low-cost *Blast* jukebox to its distributor in Mexico. "NAFTA has been very good to us," smiled Seeburg VP/GM **Jack Kapala**, adding that the order represented a 10-fold increase over pre-NAFTA expectations. He said the "first of many truckloads" of product left the factory dock for Mexico on Jan. 17. The company is already hiring new Chicago staff to beef up production, he said. Seeburg anticipates continued expansion due to ongoing exports to Asia, Europe and the rest of Latin America. Seeburg is now negotiating with other world markets as well.

# Blown Away.

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# IS THERE REALLY "GOLD" IN THEM VIDPOKER HILLS?




Tradevet **Bob Rondeau** took a trip to the South Dakota and Montana video gaming "gold fields" and sent us one of the best features ever to appear in any trade magazine. By the look of the bus above, the region is rather hot about their legal gaming status, but you'll be fascinated to learn what the coin operators involved think about it all. See **page 69**.

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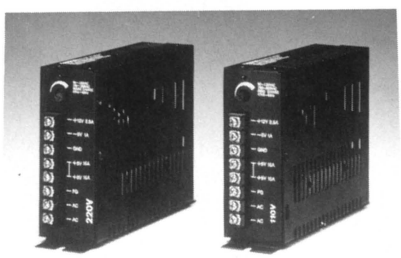

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# DEAN OF TRADE WRITERS BILL GERSH DIES AT 87

**Bill Gersh**, founder of *Cash Box* magazine and considered by oldtimers to be the dean of all who ever wrote for this industry's trade papers, is dead at 87. He had lived for many years in retirement in No. Miami Beach, Fla. and was laid to rest in the cemetery by Ft. Lauderdale's Menorah Temple. Survivors include his daughter **Gail**, son (and prominent press agent) **Richard Gersh** and grandson **Louis**. Bill's wife **Sissy**, herself well-known to trade people during their "days in the sun," predeceased him about four years ago.

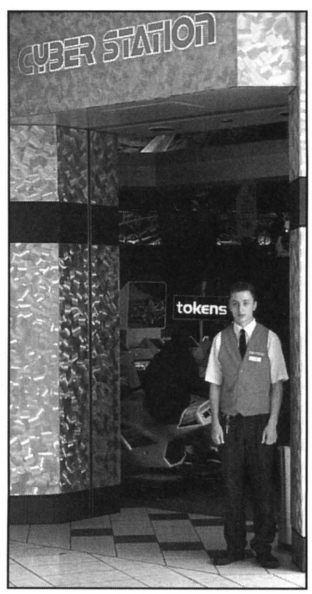
According to veteran Florida operator **Sol Tabb** (one of the tradesters who kept in some sort of contact with Gersh over the years), "Bill had a terrific desire to live, but he still missed Sissy a lot." Death was attributed to heart failure, though Bill had suffered from breathing difficulties for some time.

Bill Gersh was, as another Florida vet **Herb Sternberg** would say, "a tough monkey." A former prize fighter, he was gruff, and during the days when *Cash Box* ruled the roost as the industry's key publication, he was powerful. He minced few words in some of his editorials and was greatly credited with pushing the industry off nickel play and onto the dime.

After selling *Cash Box* to **George Albert** sometime in the '50s, he eventually returned to coin-op publishing with a rather homespun magazine called *Marketplace* which looked as though he put it out on his kitchen table, though it still had flair (he ceased publishing *Marketplace* some years ago). May he rest in peace.

# CAL ARCADE TEST SITES

Ever wonder about those California test locations that video manufacturers use to get early earnings numbers of new product? We did, and visited a few and learned it's a pretty sober-minded situation. Namco's Cyberstation in Pleasanton, for example, is used to test the firm's new redemption games and is considered a good forecaster on how well they'll ultimately perform around the country. That's **Sam Russell** welcoming us at the Cyberstation door. See story beginning on **page 164**.



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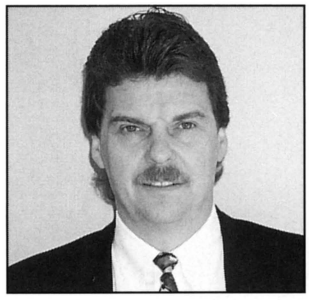
## PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Doug Blair has been hired as sales & marketing VP for Valley Recreation Products. The industry veteran spent 12 years as a Wico sales manager, and has also held posts in the soft drink and snack vending trade. In his new post he'll work closely with Dick Shelton to oversee domestic marketing of Valley's dart and pool tables.

•

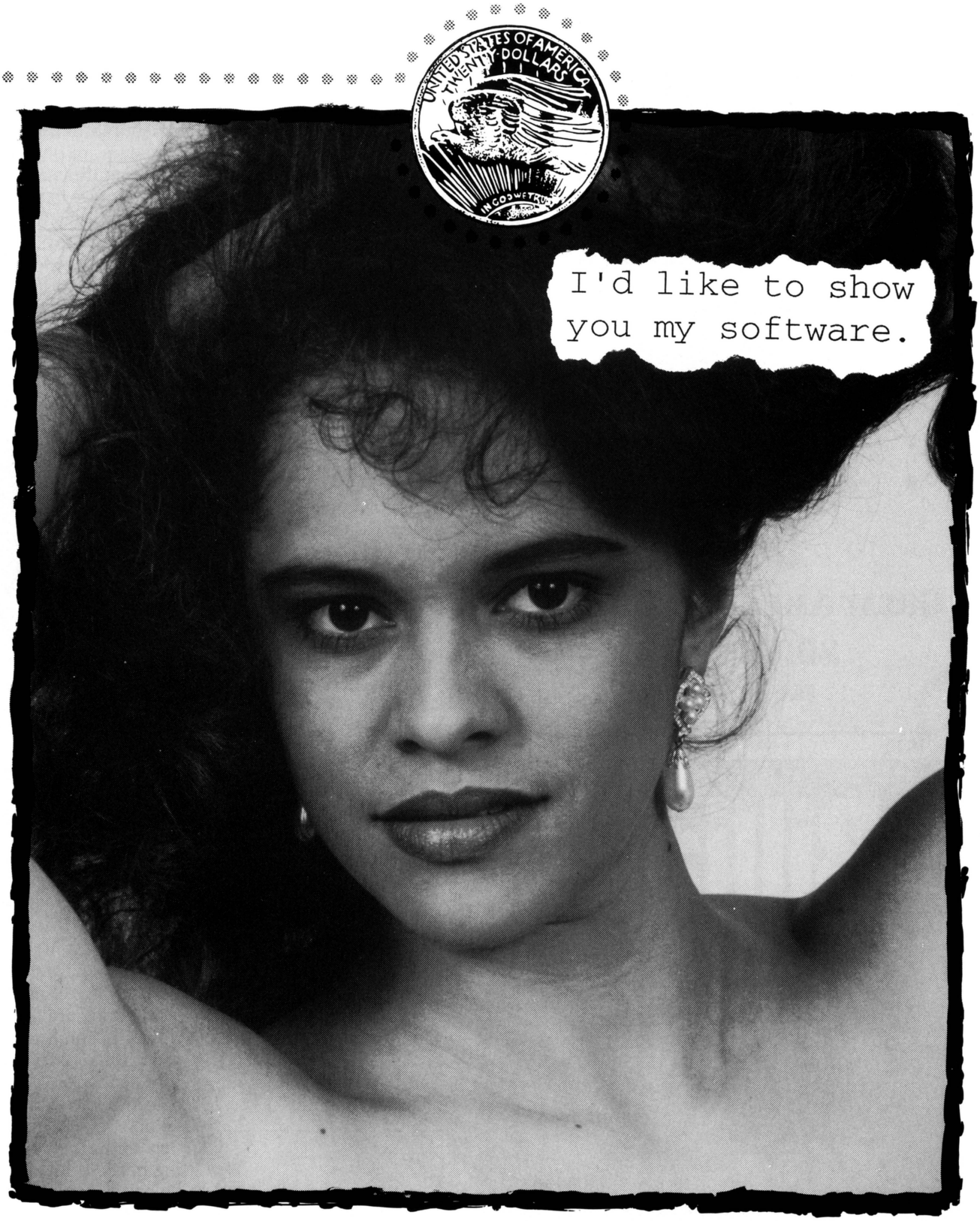
WAMO ended its 13 year relationship with Exec Director Joe Phillips on Jan. 1, citing cost factors. Jane Svinicki of the management firm Svinicki Assn. Services is the Wisconsin operator association's new state exec. Phillips, an outspoken professional with plenty of state capitol experience, had racked up quite a knowledge of the coin machine industry and made many friends in the trade.



Linda Adam (nee Benzler) left Atari Games in January to pursue her new career in nursing. The longtime product manager is back in school, already checking patient's heart rates and providing dedicated care. "We'll miss her and wish Linda a fond farewell," said Atari's Mary Fujihara. "Linda has a great grasp of this business and many, many friends in the industry. She talked to more operators and players than just about anybody!" Good luck, Linda.



Mike Jablonski has been promoted to director of technical services at NSM-America, following 12 years as their service manager. It's a new position with lots and lots of responsibilities. He'll take part in all new product development in the U.S., oversee production of the firm's new nostalgia juke, and seek continual upgrades for components and service alike. He'll also serve as NSM's liaison for all products with the factory in Germany. Working with George Haydocy and John Margold, Mike will also become involved in equipment sales and will cover some state association shows and distributor open houses! Mike said the new position will give him a chance to interact with more operators and helps create a flexible, streamlined system in-house at NSM for faster, better results. Congrats!




Meet Melissa at Coin ConneXion's booth -- #646 -- at ACME 94 in Chicago this month.

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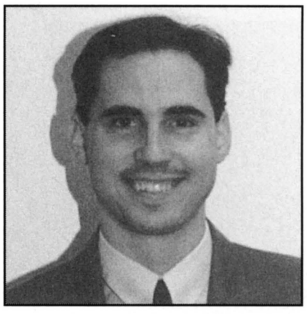
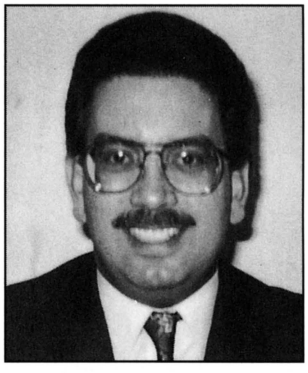
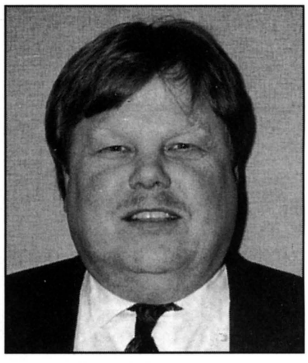


Tony Lantz is the new service manager at NSM-America, moving up to Mike's old job. He'll oversee parts and service departments, plus the warehouse; and will field operator concerns about service issues, parts, shipping and delivery, and warranty concerns. John Margold said the promotion in Tony's third year with NSM reflects his "high degree of competence and dedication." ●

Scott Smith has joined Antique Apparatus/Rock-Ola Mfg. Corp. to head its marketing department, effective Feb. 15, after five years in consumer electronics marketing — including a 1991-94 stint with Pioneer's jukebox and new business division. Scott will market AA/RMC's complete line of CD jukes and accessories, reporting directly to prexy Glenn Streeter who cited Scot's "solid experience... as a valuable asset to our management team."



Patrick Rush has been hired to run Mondial Distributing's branch office in Pittsburgh, Pa. He brings 12 years' experience in credit administration and finance, most recently with American High Reach, Inc. Mondial's Tony Yula noted Pat's strong administrative skills and familiarity with Pittsburgh, calling him "a great addition to an already-excellent team."

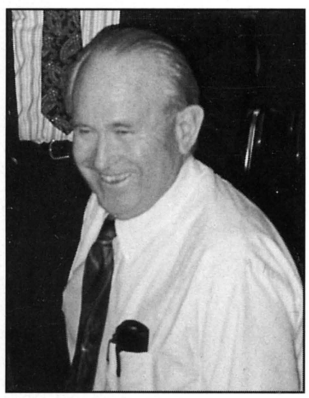


Pete Walton is the new VP of sales & marketing, Eastern division, for Smart Industries. The 12-year-plus industry vet brings plenty of knowledge and broad coin-op experience to his new job. He can be reached in his Atlanta, Ga. office at 404/460-9777 or 800/4984-4094. ●

James "Jay" Waldron is now VP of new business development and acquisitions at MicroTouch Systems, a top maker of touchscreen kits and monitors. His most recent post was president and CEO of Visage, a MicroTouch competitor. Jay's job will be to find and acquire "emerging input technologies" to help broaden the company's product and technology base. His re-sume includes stints at a voice-recognition technology firm, Foxboro Co., and Raytheon. ◆

# STATE EXECS CONFER IN VEGAS

Dozens of state operator association leaders dropped into Las Vegas from Feb. 3-5 for their annual "states council" meeting. AMOA President R.A. Green III gave a good pep talk on member recruitment and involvement. He stressed that one-on-one contacts are the most powerful tool to draw non-members and small operators into active participation. AMOA EVP John Schumacher gave a much-appreciated report on the national operator group's latest activities and plans; and government relations manager Laura Olson outlined their new Washington strategy and reviewed key issues including video violence. The state execs spent lots of time on video lottery, since most associations are still hotly pursuing this issue. Florida's Bill Miller persuaded state execs to ask their boards to help fund the Kid's Village charity; goal is a $25,000 support level. In fact, the 1995 States Council meeting will take place in Florida so attendees can visit the site. "Another great meeting, one of the most valuable I attend all year," state association directors from Michigan and Illinois told *RePlay*. Hats off to AMOA



VP Doug Minter (above) for a fine job in running the affair.

# 50th ATEI SHOW ACHIEVES WORLD-CLASS STATUS

A professional, upbeat mood marked the 1994 ATEI (the Amusement Trades Exhibition International). The show's 50th edition took place in London from Jan. 25-27, drawing record international attendance, record numbers of international exhibitors, and record total attendance. New product may have been a tad scarce but what new stuff was there, looked fine...including a new Atari simulator and a second-generation hardware system from Virtuality Group Ltd. Three new pins also debuted at ATEI, along with a limited selection of new videos from the usual top factories. At the "Summit Meeting" of the world's trade association chiefs, a variety of topics was discussed, none conclusively. BACTA, the British hosts who set the Summit agenda, asked for increased attention to growing copyboard problems in the U.K. itself. Get more details on the ATEI show in our report beginning on page 201.

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Ergonomic design, classic styling, an interactive touch screen, and simple play instructions are the features that initially draw players to our terminals, while innovations like speed controls and optimum hold card recommendations keep games moving fast. And keep your players playing.

What's more, VLC machines can give players a choice of up to ten different games. Games you select from the wide variety of Draw Poker, Keno, Blackjack, and other video versions of popular games found in our vast VLC library. This multiple-game design allows players the convenience of switching games without switching machines - another incentive to keep playing. And another reason our games are the most played games in the industry.

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Because they're designed specifically to withstand use and abuse in an "enthusiastic" bar environment, VLC machines have proven to be the most durable, most reliable video lottery terminals built. Period.

In the rare event there is a problem, the built-in terminal diagnostics immediately pinpoint the trouble spot, while our innovative modular design provides fast, efficient repair. This means less downtime, greater player confidence and, most importantly, higher revenues.

Because when your machines are up, so are your revenues - all the more reason to consider VLC.

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT VLC

VLC video lottery terminals. They're easy to play. They're fun to play. And they're always ready to play.

For more information about how VLC can increase your revenues and profits, dramatically, call 406-585-6600.

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# On Your Mark...

**by MARCUS WEBB**

One time when I was a kid, my little sister — then around age six — glared angrily at me all day, and refused to talk. Finally I asked her what was wrong. "Last night," she said, "I dreamed you insulted me in front of my entire class at school. I will never forgive you!" She was holding me responsible for something "I" had done, in her dream. Nothing I said could convince her that the real me was not to blame. Irrational? Yes. But unmovable!



At *RePlay* we are sometimes victims of almost equally irrational attitudes. We find some folks dislike certain things which they "perceive" or "believe" we have said and done, when the actual facts do not support their belief.

For example: a trade association board member recently advised that some of his group was upset. Why? "You were quoted in *Amusement Business Europe* as predicting that video game violence would get worse and worse, because manufacturers only care about money."

A close check of the story in question revealed that I had said nothing of the kind. A manufacturer said something roughly similar; I had quoted him. But quoting a newsworthy or sensational line is a reporter's job; it's quite different from expressing a certain view while speaking for yourself.

Another example: a Japanese manufacturing exec (who is a friend of this magazine) wrote recently to say he thought the trade press was critical of revenue sharing by Japanese companies. Not true...at least, not in our case. In the past, this magazine has reported that "others" are critical of revenue sharing. Again, note the distinction: just because we report on XYZ, does not mean we that we automatically agree with XYZ!

For the record: we have indeed criticized the policy of secrecy which (too often) surrounds revenue sharing. In private conversations, we have agreed with those who criticize non-equitable allocation practices conducted under the banner of revenue sharing. But that's quite different from criticizing revenue sharing itself...which, in fact, we've never done.

Now another opportunity is coming up for careless observers to confuse what we actually said, with what they "thought" we meant. An article in this issue puts *RePlay* on the record, saying that "under certain carefully controlled conditions, revenue sharing could be a viable way of doing business." Please note: we said "could be," not "is." Please note: this is not an endorsement, nor an embrace, of revenue sharing! (Although some are sure to read it that way.) Instead, our statement is a shrug of the shoulders, a skeptical sidelong glance...a careful, grudging "maybe." We are not head-over-heels in love with the idea of revenue sharing. We are simply keeping an open mind, and refusing to rule it out. Like certain respected AMOA board members and major distributors, we simply believe there's "potential" in this idea...if the traditional roles of operator and distributor are respected.

Anybody who wants to argue with that, fine. But please — argue with what we actually said! Not with what you "think" we said.

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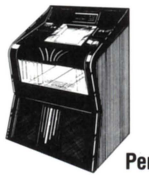

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ACME '94

# BRING IT ALL HOME AGAIN

*Old friends, new products and good times await a winter weary coin-op industry at ACME '94 in Rosemont, Ill.*

Spring is in the air and green is the theme. ACME '94 at the Rosemont/ O'Hare Exposition Center (near Chicago's O'Hare Airport) opens on St. Patrick's day and runs Mar. 17-19. During those three days, the show will offer up a pot o' coin-op gold including seminars, special events and more new products than you can shake a shillelagh at. Tradesters will donning, drinking and seeing green, as they explore new ways to bring in more "green" from their businesses.

Three days hardly seem like enough for all of ACME's planned activities. The exhibit floor will feature over 1,000 booths displaying the best new ideas the industry has to offer. From the trendiest plush to the cutting edge in hi-tech, ACME has it all. Last year's highly successful Redemption City is back for a return engagement, along with the popular Coin-Op Olympics. And of course, there's a full line-up of parties and social events, including the Operator's Cocktail Party and the AAMCF Annual Appreciation Dinner.

## SWEET HOME CHICAGO

This year, ACME moves back to Chicago...well, almost. While Rosemont is a good 17 miles from the downtown area, it provides an ideal venue for this international event. O'Hare International Airport, a major hub for domestic and overseas flights, is just a quick ten minute taxi ride from the Expo Center and hotels. Showgoers will not have to deal with heavy traffic flowing into the city center, and with all the restaurants and nightlife the surrounding area has to offer, Lakeshore Drive will seem even further away.

The Expo Center itself is connected to three hotels (the Hyatt, Sofitel and Radisson) by the Rosemont Skybridge Network, a totally enclosed walkway. The Holiday Inn is just across from the Center, while the nearby Embassy Suites offers a courtesy shuttle to transport guests to the show. Just up the River Road and across the 90 freeway is the Westin O'Hare, and over by the airport is the O'Hare Hilton.

Should you decide to drive in, the Expo Center is easily accessible by two major expressways. Parking is available in one of two facilities connected to the Skybridge Network.

## IT'S SHOWTIME

After looking at the results from last year's post-show survey, the organizers decided not to have a distributor preview the night before the show. Therefore, the exhibit hall will open Thursday, March 17 with "distributor only" showing from 9AM to noon. From noon to 5PM and everyday thereafter, it's general trade admission. The floor will be open from 10AM to 5PM, Friday, and from 10AM to 4PM on Saturday.

Introduced at ACME '93, Redemption City is a special showroom devoted exclusively to the fast growing redemption sector. The concept was such a hit at last year's show that many operators will want to make it their first stop in order to check out the hottest new games and merchandise. This year, Redemption City promises to be even bigger and better, with more displays and presentations by the industry's leading redemption manufacturers and suppliers.

Also returning this year is the Coin-Op Olympics, which is open to all operators attending ACME '94. Running throughout the three days, the tournament is divided into four coin-op categories: Pinball, Darts, Hoop Shot and Air Hockey. The three highest overall scorers win their choice of equipment donated by the "Olympic" sponsors (plus all contestants qualify for a random drawing of one of the designated games). There's no fee to participate, operators just need to sign up at the show.

## WE'RE HAVING A PARTY

The fun continues well after the exhibit hall doors are shut for the night. The Operator's Cocktail Party is ACME's salute to the people who make this industry great. Beginning at 7PM on Thursday, March 17, the St. Patrick's Day celebration at the Exposition Center will be one to

remember.

There'll be plenty of drinks and delicious food prepared the Chicago way, top-notch entertainment, and best of all, it's free! So put on something green and share some good times with your fellow tradesters.

The following evening will see the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation's Annual Appreciation Dinner, this year honoring Steve Lieberman of Lieberman Music Company. Entertainment for the March 18 gala, beginning at 7PM at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, will be provided by the Pink Flamingos. Proceeds from the Appreciation Dinner will be donated to a children's charity of the honoree's choice. For tickets, contact the AAMCF at 708/290-9171.

## A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

All the parties, hospitality suites and good times can't hide the fact that most come here to learn and find out what's new, either by exchanging information with other attendees, chatting with company reps or sitting in on one of many scheduled seminars. Seminar topics range from redemption and miniature golf to health care reform and pinball promotion. The cost of each session and the times vary, so check with the accompanying listing to find out which one best suits your needs.

One of the presentations at this year's ACME will offer something almost all of us could use: a good pep talk. And who could be better qualified for this task than football legend Mike Ditka? The former player and winning coach of the Chicago Bears has earned a reputation as one of the countries most sought after motivational speakers, and he'll be rallying the troops from 8AM to 9AM, Friday, March 18. It's free, so you can't afford to miss it.

## ARRANGEMENTS

The deadline for early registration has already passed, but you can still sign up on-site for $20. All hotel reservations must be made through the ACME Housing, and at presstime, they are filling up quickly. Phone reservations are not accepted and the hotels will not accept direct reservations. All requests must be submitted in writing or on the official housing form. If you plan on going but haven't made arrangements, please contact William T. Glasgow, Inc. at 708/333-9292. It's a first-class operation that organized many a successful ACME show in years past.

Air travel can be arranged through Liberty Travel, which has been named the official travel agent of ACME '94. They offer considerable discounts on several major carriers servicing O'Hare Airport, and can be reached at 908/322-2444 (Mon-Fri, 9AM to 6PM). National Car Rental is the official car rental agency of the show; for reservations or information, call 800/CAR-RENT.

Co-sponsored by the AAMA and Play Meter Magazine, ACME '94 promises to be the hit of the spring. Get ready for warmer months and happier days ahead as the coin-op industry shrugs off the bitter cold and roars into '94 with hot new products and ideas. And that's no blarney. ◆

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ACME '94

# A FEW NEW TRICKS

*There's something for everyone in the ACME '94 line-up of informative seminars*

This year's ACME show will have a full schedule of seminar programs geared towards specific business needs. If you are interested in the latest developments in redemption, Sue Monday (Century Vending & Distributing) and Rhonda Fletcher (ARMS International) have planned an expanded program designed to appeal to operators of redemption at all levels. The Miniature Golf Association of America will bring in operators, suppliers, consultants and builders of their worldwide network of family facilities for a series of round table discussions. Technical wizard Randy Fromm will be back for a return ACME engagement, bringing operators his highly informative advanced technical sessions. Miscellaneous seminars cover the music business, health care reform, future technology and pinball promotion. (The prices listed apply only to advanced registration.)

## REDEMPTION

***100. Special Redemption Field Trip***
**Wednesday, March 16, 9AM - 5PM**

This outing to some of Chicago's most successful redemption facilities is an ACME first. Visit many diverse locations, including a complete entertainment center, soft play environment and children's activity center. Lunch is provided at one of the locations. Buses depart the Expo Center promptly at 9AM. *Cost: $35*

***200. Redemption 101 Revisited***
**Thursday, March 17, 8AM - 10AM**

This seminar covers the fundamentals of a successful redemption center for the new operator or anyone needing a refresher course. A panel of experts will cover a number of topics, including the history of redemption, legal issues, location, fine tuning or payout and hit frequencies, and security.

*Cost: $20*

***301. Redemption for Profit***
**Friday, March 18, 9AM - 11AM**

Once the basics of redemption are covered, this seminar can help the operator fine tune his business and realize more profit. The panel will discuss many new and exciting ideas for the redemption facility, and well as other products available to complement the games.

Cost: $20

## MINIATURE GOLF

***101. MGAA Roundtable Discussion***
**Wednesday, March 16, 8:30AM - 5PM**

The Miniature Golf Association of America has a extensive line up of informative sessions designed for the owners of mini-golf centers and anyone interested in getting into the business. Consisting of seasoned operators, suppliers, consultants and builders, these discussions are an exhaustive and in-depth presentation of facilities of family sports and entertainment. The topics include:

*Miniature Golf—Putting it Together *Miniature Golf—Golf Operators Views & Clues *Facility Financing—How'd They Do It! *Driving Ranges—Alternative Golf Facilities & Supplies *Family Entertainment Centers and Family Fun Centers—Components That Add Up to Dollars! *Family Sports Complexes—One Step Beyond the FEC *Operations, Advertising, Marketing, Promotions & Tournaments

The series of roundtable discussions concludes with a general session in which all MGAA member faculty are present to answer any questions. The program includes a light lunch. Each attendee will be assigned a group number or track, and registrants should come to the Seminar Registration Desk between 8 - 8:30AM to receive their group number and schedule for the day. Advance registration is recommended.

*Cost: $30*

## TECHNICAL SESSIONS

***201. How to Operate an Oscilloscope***
**Thursday, March 17, 8AM - 10AM**

This seminar begins with the most basic use of the oscilloscope and its controls and switches, and concludes with advanced measurement techniques. Some general familiarity with electronics will help those attending.

*Cost: $25*







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***203. Advanced Monitor Troubleshooting***
**Thursday, March 17, 10:15AM - 12:15PM**

This session addresses those sometimes difficult monitor repairs, providing a detailed look at monitor circuits and oscilloscope waveforms. Advanced troubleshooting techniques will also be presented. It will help those attending to have a good, working knowledge of monitor operation, and to have previously attended one of Randy Fromm's monitor sessions at ACME.

*Cost: $25*

***300. Introduction to Digital Electronics and Microprocessor Based Systems***
**Friday, March 18, 9AM - Noon**

Touching on the most basic concepts of digital electronics and troubleshooting, this seminar will help you fix a lot of simple failures in digital systems. But more importantly, it will provide a basic understanding of digital electronics and microprocessor based systems on which to expand your knowledge.

*Cost: $25*

## OTHER SEMINARS

***202. Music Business 101: Programming and Promotional Opportunities to Maximize CD Jukebox Collections***
**Thursday, March 17, 8AM - 10AM**

A panel of leading jukebox operators and music industry professionals will discuss current music trends and opportunities for operators to customize selections, increase awareness and boost earning power. Moderated by Jeremy Tepper, publisher and editor-in-chief of Street Beat Magazine.

*Cost: $20*

***204. Health Care Reform and Its Impact on Operators***
**Thursday, March 17, 10:15AM - 12:15AM**

This important session covers the impact and responsibilities the Clinton Administration's proposed Health Security plan will have on small business owners. Attorney Robert L. Castle will discuss the decisions and costs that will be required of small employers if the legislation is enacted, while attorney Robert L. Waters will report on the current status in Congress of Clinton's plan and the counterproposals to it. Time will be allowed for questions and answers at the conclusion.

*Cost: $20*

***302. Your "Eye" to the Future: Innovative and Interactive Technologies***
**Friday, March 18, 11:15AM - 1:15PM**

Learn which interactive and innovative technologies are available today and how these products can help you compete and succeed in the coin-op market of tomorrow. Michael Getlan of Amusement Consultants, Inc. will act as moderator.

*Cost: $20*

***303. Primer for Successful Pinball Promotion***
**Friday, March 18, 11:15AM - 1:15PM**

This session will teach operators the basics of successful pinball promotion, including ways to use P.O.P., in-store promotions that work, how to get editorial coverage and more. Speakers Steve Epstein, PAPA president and owner/operator of the Broadway arcade, and Joe Schick, PAPA exec director and president of Schick Promotions offer both an operator's and a promoter's perspective.

*Cost: $20*

All seminars will be held at the Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact William T. Glasgow, Inc., at 708/333-9292.

◆

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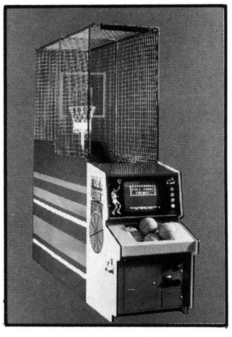

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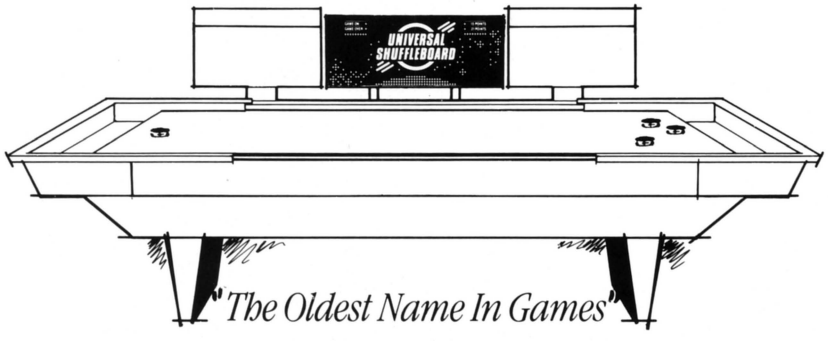


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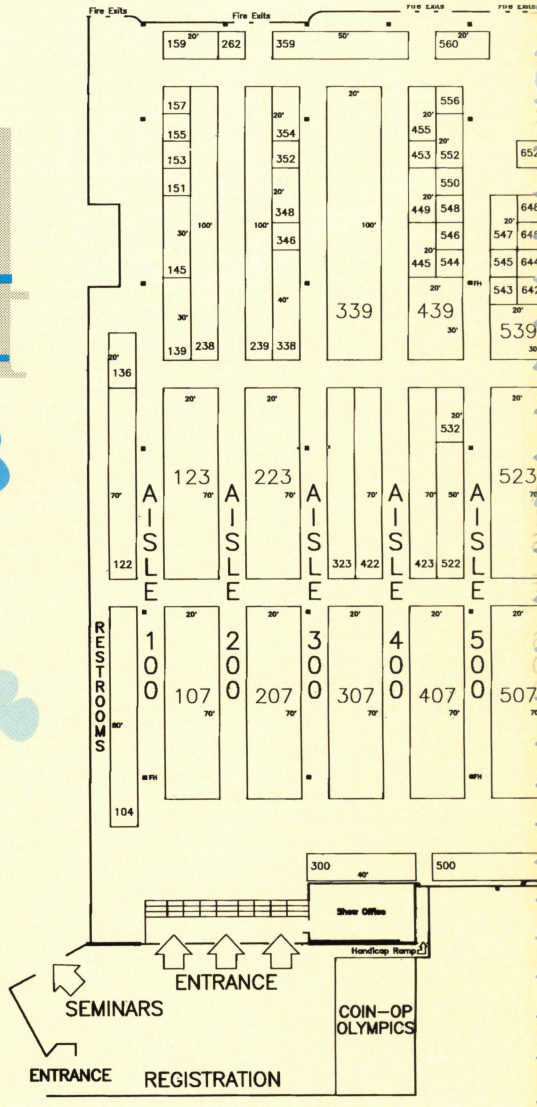
# ACME '94

# Exhibitor List & Floorplan

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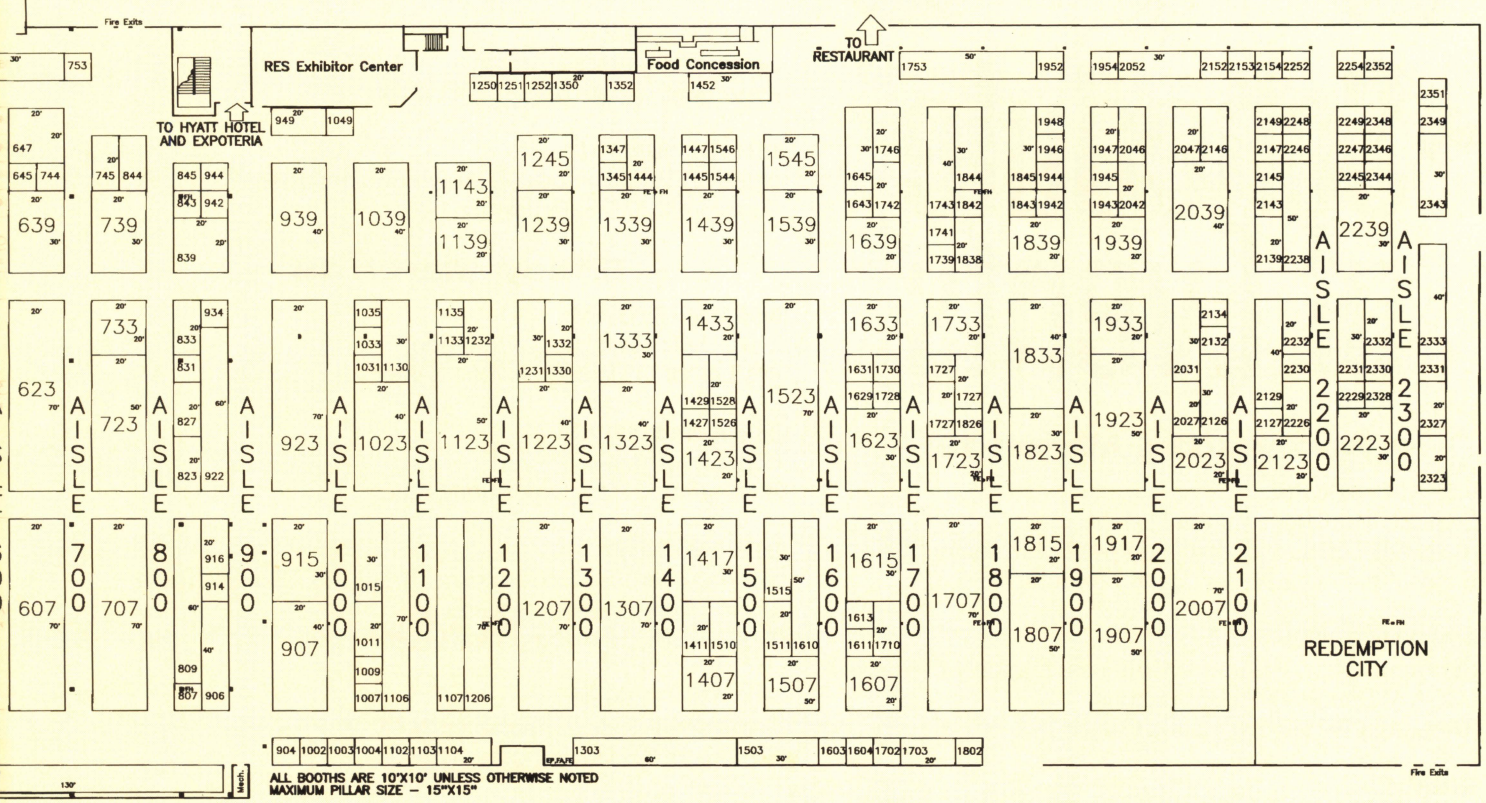


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# Schedule of Events

## — Wednesday, March 16 —

**9:00 AM - 5:00 PM**
Seminar #100: Redemption Field Trip
-Boarding begins at 8:30 a.m. in front of Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center. Buses depart promptly at 9 a.m.

**8:30 AM - 5:00 PM**
Seminar #101: Miniature Golf Association of America (MGAA) Round Table Discussions
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**8:00 PM**
Distributor Gala (by invitation only)
-Westin O'Hare

## — Thursday, March 17 —

**8:00 AM - 10:00 AM**
Seminar #200: Redemption 101 Revisited
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**8:00 AM - 10:00 AM**
Seminar #201: How to Operate an Oscilloscope
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**8:00 AM - 10:00 AM**
Seminar #202: Music Business 101: Programming & Promotional Opportunities to Maximize CD Jukebox Collections
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**9:00 AM - Noon**
Coin-Op Olympics
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**9:00 AM - Noon**
Exhibit Hours: Distributors Only
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**10:15 AM - 12:15 PM**
Seminar #203: Advanced Monitor Troubleshooting
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**10:15 AM - 12:15 PM**
Seminar #204: Health Care Reform & Its Impact on Operators
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**Noon - 5:00 PM**
Exhibit Hours: General Trade Admission-Rosemont/ O'Hare Exposition Center

**4:00 PM - 5:00 PM**
Coin-Op Olympics
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**
ACME Operator's Cocktail Party (free admission)
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

## — Friday, March 18 —

**8:00 AM - 9:00 AM**
Mike Ditka - Live! (free admission)
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**8:00 AM - 11:00 AM**
Coin-Op Olympics
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**9:00 AM - Noon**
Seminar #300: Introduction to Digital Electronics & Microprocessor Based Systems
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**9:00 AM - 11:00 AM**
Seminar #301: Redemption for Profit
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**10:00 AM - 5:00 PM**
Exhibit Hours: General Trade Admission
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**11:15 AM - 1:15 PM**
Seminar #302: Your "Eye" to the Future: Interactive & Innovative Technologies
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**11:15 AM - 1:15 PM**
Seminar #303: A Primer for Successful Pinball Promotion
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**4:00 PM - 5:00 PM**
Coin-Op Olympics
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**7:00 PM**
AAMCF Annual Appreciation Dinner: Honoring Steve Lieberman, Lieberman Music Company (paid admission)
-Hyatt Regency O'Hare

## — Saturday, March 19 —

**8:00 AM - 10:00 AM**
Coin-Op Olympics
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**
Exhibit Hours: General Trade Admission
-Rosemont/O'Hare Exposition Center

**Noon**
AAMCF Raffle Drawing
-Rosemont/ O'Hare Exposition Center

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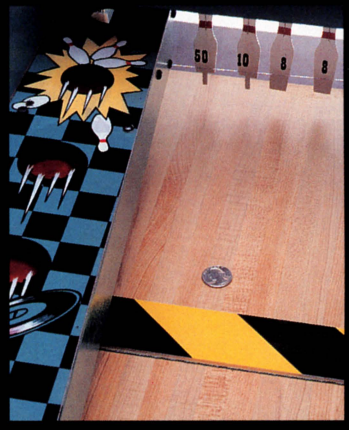


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ACME '94



# STEVE LIEBERMAN

# AAMCF HONOREE

The American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) will honor one of coin-op's outstanding leaders at its 1994 Annual Appreciation Dinner, to be held Saturday, March 18, in Rosemont, Ill. The AAMCF Board of Directors has selected Steve Lieberman of Lieberman Music Company (Minneapolis, Minn.) as this year's honoree.

Founded by Steve's grandfather Samuel in 1907, Lieberman Music has long been a leading distributor of coin-operated amusement games, phonographs and vending equipment, covering Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and central Iowa. Another arm of the Lieberman family business also grew to become one of the country's leading retail distributors of records and tapes.

Steve and his brother David took over leadership of the company in 1967, after the untimely death of their father and Sam's successor Harold Lieberman, an industry leader and nationally recognized coin machine figure. Thus begun the third generation of Liebermans involved in the business. Steve is currently president of Lieberman Music and also of Viking Vending, a distributor of vending equipment added to the company in the 1950s.

Ray Galante, president of Music-Vend/Dunis Distributing, and president of the AAMCF Board of Directors, is pleased with the decision to honor Lieberman. "Steve is an outstanding individual who has made significant contributions to the coin-op industry over the past 25 years," Galante said.

The proceeds from the appreciation dinner and the AAMCF charity car raffle are traditionally donated to a charity of the honorees choosing. Steve plans to select a charity in the near future.

Galante said that he looks forward to this year's banquet (to be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare) as being the biggest and best ever.

Established in 1985, the AAMCF is a non-profit public charity located in Elk Grove, Ill. The foundation has made significant donations in past years to the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse, the U.S. Olympic Committee, Give Kids the World and many other charitable organizations. ◆

# BLASTS FROM THE PAST

*capsule reviews of recent AMOA Expos & ACME Shows help put this year's convention into perspective*

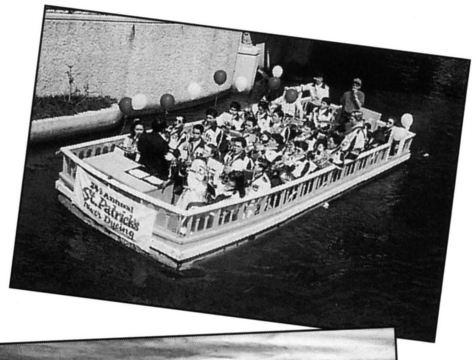
Every silver lining has a cloud, they say. The coin-op industry is growing into a truly global market and expanding to embrace pocket parks and theme parks. (That's good.) But as a consequence, some industry folks' lives are turning into a non-stop barrage of trade shows. (Not so good.) If you have just returned from the ATEI show (London) or the Leisurexpo (Orlando), you could be getting dizzy as the industry prepares to launch into its second biggest annual event...the ACME show.

To help you put it all in perspective, we've prepared a brief "capsule review" of the last several major U.S. trade shows from 1991 to 1993. It's a fast, fun way to check trends and refresh your memory about where the industry has been...and where it's going. You can chart the rise and fall of certain political issues on the industry barometer. You can clock the ebb and flow of optimism and pessimism. You can see patterns in how and why attendance waxes and wanes. In the "hits and dogs" section of each capsule review, you may even notice that time-honored staple of 20-20 coin-op hindsight: a couple of games that were pronounced "hits" on the show floor, but which fizzled on location.

◆











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# AMOA '91

# Successful SUMMITRY

## *good games, VLT hopes, and global politics dominate Vegas event*

**WHERE & WHEN:**
Las Vegas Convention Center, Sept. 12-14

**EXHIBITS:**
780 booths, a record. About 225-250 exhibitors.

**ATTENDANCE:**
Around 7,700 or higher. "Best last day of a show ever," said ACME show chairman Bill Cravens.

**THE BUZZ:**
Great video spread. "More good new machines here than the market can absorb."

**HITS:**
Ops vote Midway's *Terminator 2* video as "game of the show." Other well-received titles: *Dragon's Lair II, Captain America & the Avengers, Spiderman, Captain Commando, WrestleFest* (newly released as kit).

**DOGS:**
Seminars. **Lousy** attendance, even for VLT session. Nolan Bushnell was a no-show; they played a video tape of him.

**POLITICS:**
JAMMA Chairman Masaya Nakamura convenes first-ever three-way summit meeting of JAMMA, AMOA & AAMA. Main topic: parallels.



AMOA, AAMA & JAMMA at "Hilton Summit"

AAMA Exec Director Bob Fay says factories are worried about flood of counterfeits coming up from Mexico. AMOA prexy Jim Trucano reports some sense of agreement, but AMOA board balks at approving innocuous Joint Communique stating common goals (it was eventually approved some time later).

**GENERAL TALK AROUND THE SHOW:**
VLT was most discussed issue. Love-hate, depending on who you talked to. Iowa sole-source deal was killed just 2 weeks before Expo.

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# DEALERS CHOICE

*San Antonio sees heavy sales to distributors; light operator attendance*



**WHERE & WHEN:**
San Antonio Convention Center, March 13-15

**EXHIBITS:**
770 booths, a record. 213 exhibitors.

**ATTENDANCE:**
Disappointing. Show officials publicly claimed headcount was off by just 5%, but privately admitted to a 15% drop. "Official" headcount: about 5,700.

**THE BUZZ:**
Great pins & terrific redemption spread. Lots of sales! (to dealers)

**HITS:**
Capcom's *Street Fighter II Champion Edition.* Konami's *X-Men.* Williams' pinball *The Getaway.* In a suite, Data East's *Lethal Weapon 3* pin.

**DOGS:**
Sunday-Tuesday show dates, ending on St. Paddy's Day. Seminars ok but poorly attended. Certain pricey new hi-tech games disappointing.

**POLITICS:**
AMOA & AAMA meet in closed-door session. AMOA raises the issue of overseas factories possibly operating street routes across USA as "revenue sharing." No explosion on this at show, but AMOA & AAMA agree to investigate.

**GENERAL TALK AROUND THE SHOW:**
Gorgeous city, but lousy show dates and "remoteness" blamed for low attendance. For the first time, many AMOA leaders attend ACME. Genuine (if still cautious) cooperation between the associations. Everybody seemed more realistic about video lottery.

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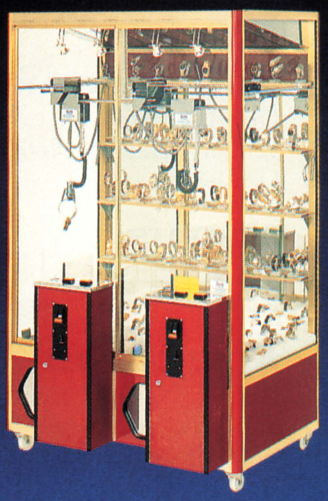

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# NO-NONSENSE IN NASHVILLE

*backstage political tension colors fine show and strong product*

**WHERE & WHEN:**
Opryland Hotel & Convention Center, Nashville, Oct. 1-3

**EXHIBITS:**
202 firms in 758 booths. No record, but very good.

**ATTENDANCE:**
Around 8,000. Again, good but not a record. Aisles mostly crowded, though. This had everyone smiling.

**THE BUZZ:**
Excellent large, expensive videos. Very good redemption and pinballs.

**HITS:**
Ops vote Konami's *Lethal Enforcers* video as "game of the show." Other titles: Sega's *Virtua Racing*, WMS *Fish Tails* pinball, Taito's Monkey Mole Panic redemption video, SkeeBall's *Tic Tac Toe* rolldown.

**DOGS:**
Inconvenience of sprawling, confusing site.

**POLITICS:**
Mood dampened by AMOA & AAMA conflicts behind the scenes. AMOA board now well-informed about "revenue sharing'; unhappy about this and about proposed AAMA magazine. AMOA board votes on approach to new technology, a subject which dominates "summit" of JAMMA, AMOA & AAMA.



"Country-politan" Barbara Mandrell wowed 'em at Expo '92

**GENERAL SHOW TALK**
WMS marketing director Roger Sharpe said mood was businesslike, impersonal, no fun. Said violence in video games was a big issue. Surprisingly few gripes about high prices.









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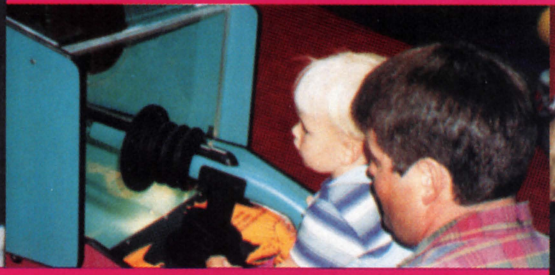






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# VICTORY IN VEGAS

*super attendance makes this expo a real "operator show"*



**WHERE & WHEN:**
Sands Convention Center, Las Vegas. March 11-13

**EXHIBITS:**
921 booths, a record! 254 exhibitors, another record!

**ATTENDANCE:**
Grand slam! Aisles were crowded several hours each day. You'd have to go back 12 years to find a U.S. trade show with a higher headcount. Of 8,586 tradesters registered, about half were buyers (operators, distributors, employees, etc.).

**THE BUZZ:**
Pins, music, dedicated video, & redemption were all strong. Fewer kits than in previous years. Lots of upbeat factory talk about solid U.S. sales and fast-growing overseas markets.

**HITS:**
Data East's *Fighter's History*. All four pins. Seeburg's low-cost *Blast* CD jukebox. Game of the show was Midway's *NBA Jam*. Sega's *Virtua Racing* still strong.

**HONORS:**
Woman of the Year was Mrs. Leah Bettelman (C.A. Robinson & Co.). Manufacturer of the Year was Williams/Bally-Midway, while Distributor of the Year was Atlas (Chicago).

**UPPERS:**
The show ran like a dream. Everybody had enough time, enough space, & enough room. Everything was logical and well-planned. Seminars were super. "Redemption City" was a major success.

**DOWNERS:**
The only downside was the Great Blizzard of '93, which closed most East Coast airports. Hundreds of tradesters were stranded in Vegas for a couple of days after the show.

**POLITICS/ATMOSPHERE:**
A noticeable mood of contentment, confidence & goodwill prevailed. Show was blessedly free of controversy or AMOA-AAMA conflict. "For once all the industry's constellations are aligned right," said Namco's Kevin Hayes. "Let's enjoy this while it lasts!"

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# "MORTAL" MADNESS

*redemption, VR and video boost U. S. factory strength*

**WHERE & WHEN:**
Oct. 21-23, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif.

**EXHIBITS:**
1,002 booths (an all-time industry record!).

**ATTENDANCE:**
With 8,332 people at the show, this was the second-biggest in AMOA history! Only the 1982 "Pac-Man" era convention drew more operators.

**THE BUZZ:**
Hi-tech dedicated video from Japan: wow! But U.S. redemption, pins and virtual reality had some overseas observers waving the American flag.

**HITS:**
Game of the show was Midway's *Mortal Kombat II*. Sega's *Virtua Fighter* and Namco's *Ridge Racer* looked quite impressive. Rock-Ola's new *Rocket* compact jukebox had ops smiling.

**HONORS:**
Williams/Bally-Midway not only won the "game of the show" award from operators, but the company also won "most played" awards in several categories. AMOA honored Wally Bohrer for his many years of service as he exited the Past Presidents Council.

**UPPERS:**
Gorgeous weather, super-convenient setting, excellent logistics and planning, excellent exhibit hall.




The *Mortal Kombat II* team includes WMS exec VP Ken Fedesna and game designer Ed Boon (back row, in suits), plus actor-models Carolos Pesina ("Raiden"), Anthony Marquez ("King Lao"), Richard Divizio ("Kano"), and Daniel Pesina ("Johnny Cage").

**DOWNERS:**
AMOA wanted to make a dramatic announcement about hi-tech at this venue but was unable to do so because certain contracts were still under negotiation. On the show floor, almost no gambling equipment was shown because local California law enforcement is very tough on this category of equipment.

**POLITICS/ATMOSPHERE:**
Meetings, meetings, meetings! This was the most businesslike convention in trade history. AMOA released cautious (but responsible) position papers on revenue sharing and video game violence. Behind the scenes, rivalry between AMOA's veterans and its 30-something "new generation" continued.

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# It's a DREAM COME TRUE

## *Hawaii-based arcade operator wants to open FECs across mainland China in joint venture*

*Branching out into the potentially lucrative new markets in Asia is the talk of the business world these days, and coin-op is no exception. Gilbert Sakaguchi of Honolulu-based Family Entertainment Inc. sent us this article describing his company's success in working with a Chinese firm to open arcades in mainland China. The author, Robert Peters, is a representative of the new joint-venture company.*



Representatives of United Success Far East Ltd., which is jointly-owned by Family Entertainment Inc., Hawaii, and Dizen Development Ltd., China (from left): Georgette Kala and Robert Peters, Family Entertainment; Loretta Wong, Dizen Development; Gilbert Sakaguchi, Family Entertainment; Ada and Fred Ing, Dizen Development.

United Success Far East Ltd., a company jointly owned by Family Entertainment Inc., Hawaii, and Dizen Development Ltd., China, will present its first family entertainment center in Wuhon, China. Wuhon is one of the larger industrial cities of central China, with a population base of approximately 13.5 million.

The venue is located in a renovated motion picture theater, and is in one of the busiest entertainment districts of the city. Wuhon's first amusement arcade will have over 200 (video games, kiddie rides, redemption games, video poker and slot machines). It will also include a food court and a children's birthday party room.

This will be the first of six locations to be opened in China in 1994. In November, a 500-piece video poker and slot machine casino is scheduled to open in the northeastern city of Harbin. Long range plans also call for us to conduct full-scale research development projects with Chinese partners, from planning to completion. Family Entertainment Inc. currently operates 10 video arcades in the Phillippines.

The demand for the family entertainment concept of arcades in China is overwhelming! China is larger than the United States, and has a population base of 1.4 billion. It's hard to believe that little more than a generation ago, Asia was as poor as any place on earth. Today, China is the envy of the West, and its economy is expected to grow 7.1% this year, as compared to 2.8% in the U.S. and a decline of 0.4% in the 12-nation European community.

The final stage for establishing this atmosphere of attracting foreign investors was China's legislative act of 1979, which established Shenzen Special Economic Zones, or "Sez" zones. These sez zones made China alluring, to say the least. Our trip to several major cities in China confirmed our commitment to do commerce there.

China is indeed an astonishing rags-to-riches story that is the envy of the recession-stricken West. Many American operators, both large and small, must now find new domestic and foreign markets to do business in. We anticipate that foreign demand for our equipment will soon exceed our available line of supply. Operators who would like to explore joint-venture opportunities with us in mainland China can contact me, Robert Peters at 808/922-7331, or write United Success Far East Ltd., P.O. Box 240100, Honolulu, HI, 96824.

The rise of family arcades in China indicates how cultures can flow both ways in the information age. But, big and exciting as that may be, even bigger and more challenging opportunities lie ahead.

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# ON THE ROAD

by BOB RONDEAU

# OPERATOR-RUN VLT'S ARE NO GUARANTEE OF UTOPIA!

After last year's two-part column on Wisconsin's Indian casinos (and operator reaction), I decided to investigate South Dakota and Montana, where operators have a piece of the action. These two states were the first to permit operator-run video lottery. They've been running their VLT markets successfully for several years. As such, they're the envy of operators around the USA who think Montana and South Dakota must be "Camelot" where everything is perfect and the sun shines at all times.

Is this envy justified? Are Montana and South Dakota really "heaven on earth" for operators? Do operators in these states have to hire extra staff, just to take the profits to the bank? In the late summer of 1993, my wife Bev and I loaded up the car and hit the road to see it with our own eyes. I met with street operators, tavern owners, distributors, and visited taverns, trade shows and mini casinos. I talked to experts like Elroy Gruenwald, Mike Trucano, Phil Benson, Bob Correa, Harold Bittner, Dave Waylander, Chris Warren and many more.

I learned that legal gaming in Montana and South Dakota is not like Indian gaming in Wisconsin. It is not even close! Yes, there are positives but there are just as many negatives. This month's column will look at both the pros and the cons of operator-run video lottery.

During my visit to Montana and South Dakota, it didn't take me long to discover the truth of that old saying, "There's no such thing as a free lunch." Sorry to burst anyone's bubble, but VLT operators in both states who are successful, deserve their success based on very hard work and paying their dues. (And paying. And paying...)

Lesson number one from legal video lottery: if you make a deal with the state government, it becomes your (senior) partner with the right (and inclination) to change the rules constantly and overnight. This makes you, the operator or distributor, the "real" gambler because you don't really control your own destiny.




This billboard promotes one of many casino type hotels in Deadwood, South Dakota which has turned into a miniature Las Vegas. The "Vote Yes" message refers to a gambling initiative on the state ballot; the gaming industry fights a constant political battle to defend its market.

"There are no guarantees from the state," operators said many times. Montana and South Dakota trade members are proud of getting legal VLTs in their states, but they don't brag about it or jump up and down with joy. In fact, some operators seem almost nervous about the future of their business. Considering how much money they have tied up in VLT machine investments, and considering how unpredictable the state's policies are from day to day, it's fair to say this constant sense of insecurity is a hidden "price" of legalizing gaming...a price that many operators never expected to pay. One operator posted this sign in his office: "No man's life, liberty or property are safe while the legislature is in session." Lots of operators I talked to, seem to really believe this.

Still think legal VLTs are a free ticket to the end of the rainbow? Let me pass on a few more hard realities I learned first-hand from the experts in Montana and South Dakota:

* The negative publicity that existed before operators got the law changed to permit gaming is still there! Operators fight a daily PR battle to create a positive public image (and, once again, a handful of committed activists are doing all the work).




The big sign (and cheap breakfast promo) is typical of gaming advertisements all over Montana and South Dakota.

* There are no gray area games, period. And there are no kits or adapters that can turn gray area games into legal VLTs or keno machines.

* VLT machines cost about $5,200 each, so be prepared to ask the bank for a ton of money if legalized gaming comes your way. Even if banks are willing to work with operators, it's simply impossible to borrow enough, quickly enough to cover all your locations right away.

* But many locations themselves will be happy to buy their own equipment, if permitted by law. They think it's an "easy" business to run. And, there is no shortage of VLT manufacturers who will sell equipment directly to such locations.

* In Montana, everyone with a liquor license can get an operator's license. Just pay $2,000 for the master license and $200 per machine, and you're an "operator."

* Service is not a problem for these new "operators." New businesses have sprung up to specialize in providing service to location-owned equipment.

* "50/50 splits on video gaming just doesn't happen after the first contracts have expired," South Dakota operator (and former AMOA president) Jim Trucano told me. "Location loans, remodeling costs, and increased service expenses are all reali-

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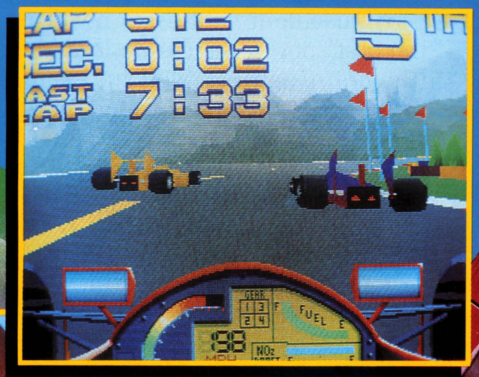

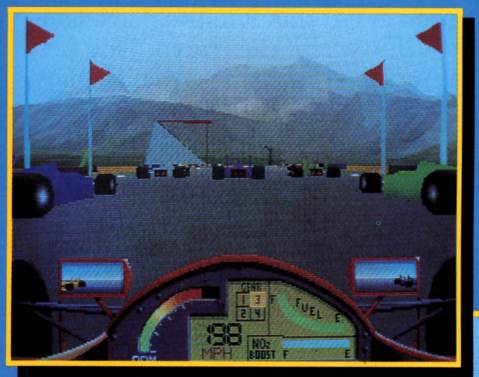



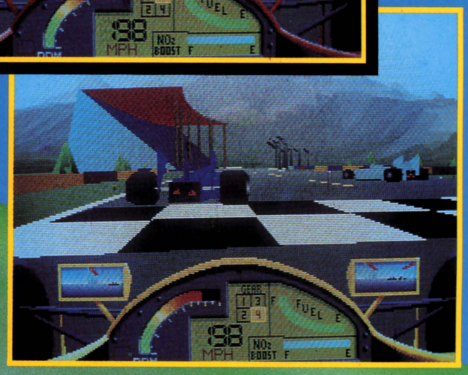

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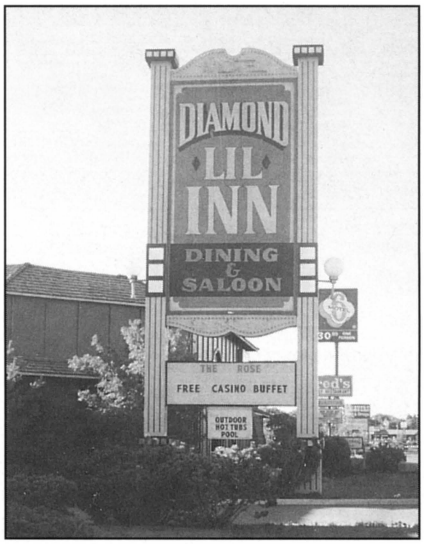
ties under video gaming," he added.

* Plenty of operators mistake big VLT grosses for big profits. They offer stupid commissions and make life harder for the good operators (and for themselves, though it takes a while for them to figure this out).

* In Montana, there are 13,668 poker and keno games operating. There are over 1,600 operator licenses issued in a state whose population is less than one million! Last year, these operators gave the State of Montana $26.8 million dollars, with $8.9 million going into the state general fund. Also, $17.9 million of the total went back to the communities, large and small, where it came from. This fact is very important to maintaining public support for VLTs, in my opinion. It also ensures that mayors, councilmen, city council chairmen, etc. remain allied with operators.

* In Montana, you're allowed 20 games per liquor-licensed location. Indian locations get equal treatment for now, but many operators think this will change soon.

* Competition for customers is heating up to furnace-like temperatures. Not just 99-cent breakfasts and $5 "all you can eat" buffets, but also free bingo in many spots and a "start-up" grub stake in many other locations. That is, the location gives you a roll of coins to play the machines, and if you stay on the machine for 15 minutes, whatever you win is yours.




"Free casino buffet" and "outdoor hot tubs & pool" are inducements at the Diamond Lil Inn, which offers VLTs inside as well as beds.

Another interesting lesson is the role of videos, pins, darts and traditional amusement games in a legal gaming market. During the first few years of VLTs, these machines were a very low priority for operators but now they are finally becoming a key factor again. When the bloom is off the VLT rose, amusements can play a vital role in helping create steady customer traffic. This means operators have an increasingly important role to play, even in locations which own their own VLTs!

Amusement games are never in the best spot in the casino locations (they're usually shoved into some out-of-the-way corner). However, in regular taverns, gaming has actually increased the take in pool, darts, pins...and I saw lots more good new games and lots more gameplay action this time, than during my 1991 visit. In fact, amusement machines can draw customers into the location... customers who then "also" play the gaming equipment...proving that the

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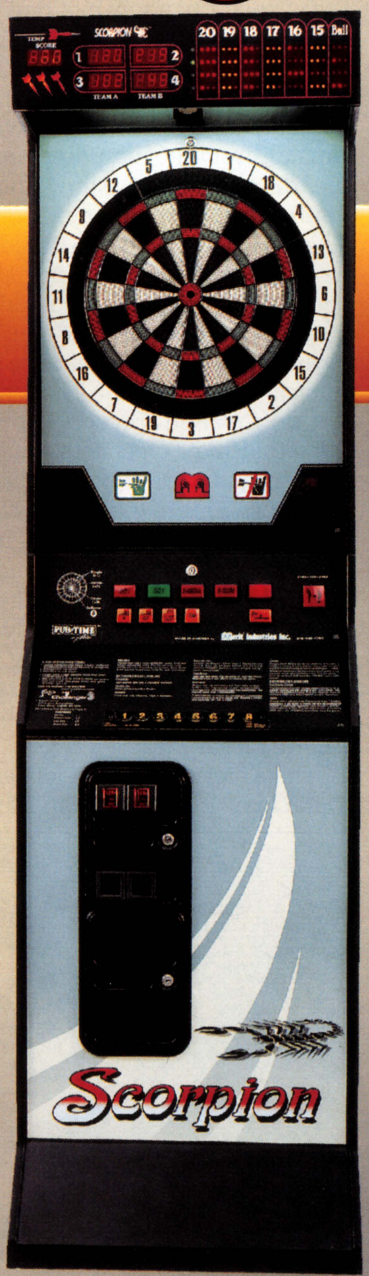


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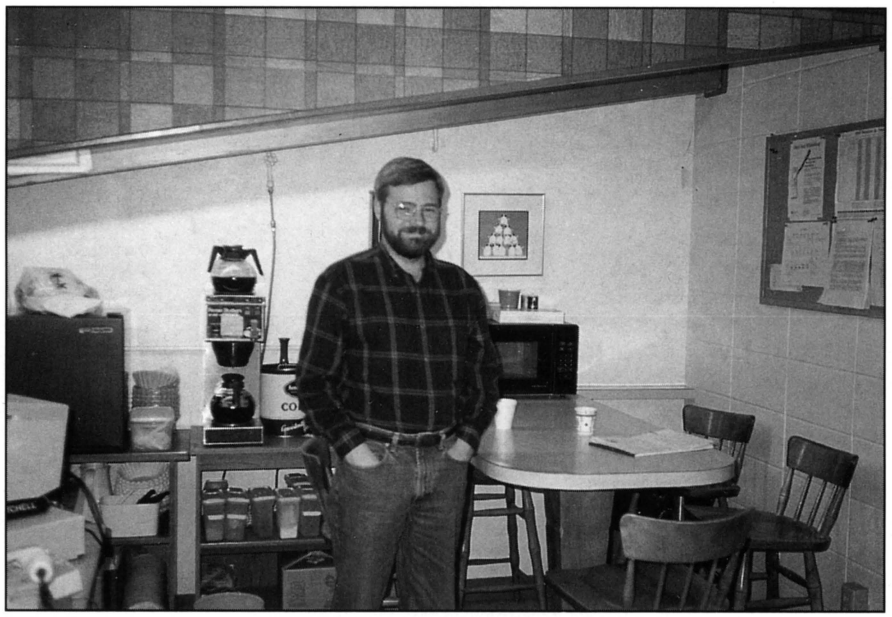
two types of machines can work together!

AMOA board member Chris Warren (Capital Music) and operator Dave Waylander (Yellowstone Music) brought this point home to me, during a tavern show and convention held in Helena, Montana. They had a large booth filled with handsome pool, darts, and jukebox equipment. They were busy signing up taverns for leagues and music services. "An operator must have something to offer which the locations cannot do for themselves," Chris and Dave told me. "Operators must offer something to bring people into the locations." One of the fellows told me he's active with three leagues — VNEA (pool), NDA (darts), and now IFPA (pinball) — and that "the location comes to depend upon leagues. In most places, video gaming is not drawing the customer like it used to. Leagues do! It is worth the effort, believe me."

There are some "Camelot" aspects to the legal VLT markets in Montana and South Dakota. Operators have hired more people. The state is happy about all the money it's making, without costing the taxpayers a penny.



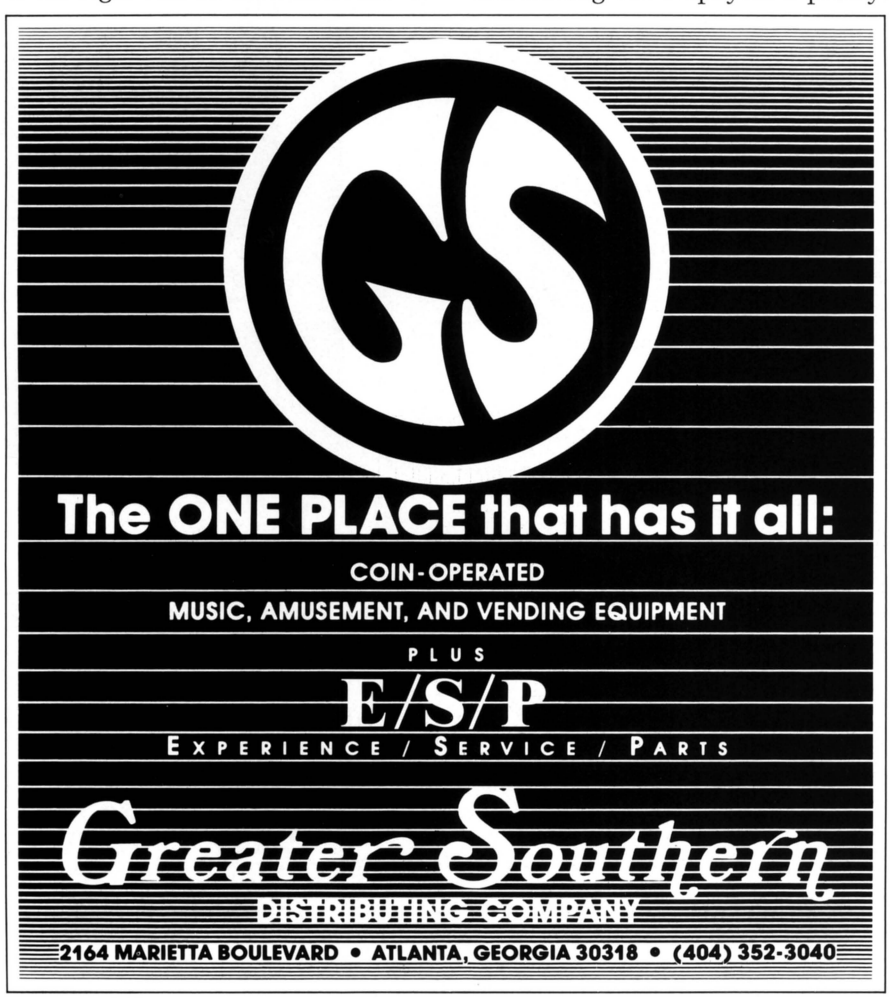
Like many operators in the region, Mike Trucano (Black Hills Novelty, Deadwood, S.D.) is now building pool and dart leagues, rather than depending solely on legalized gaming.

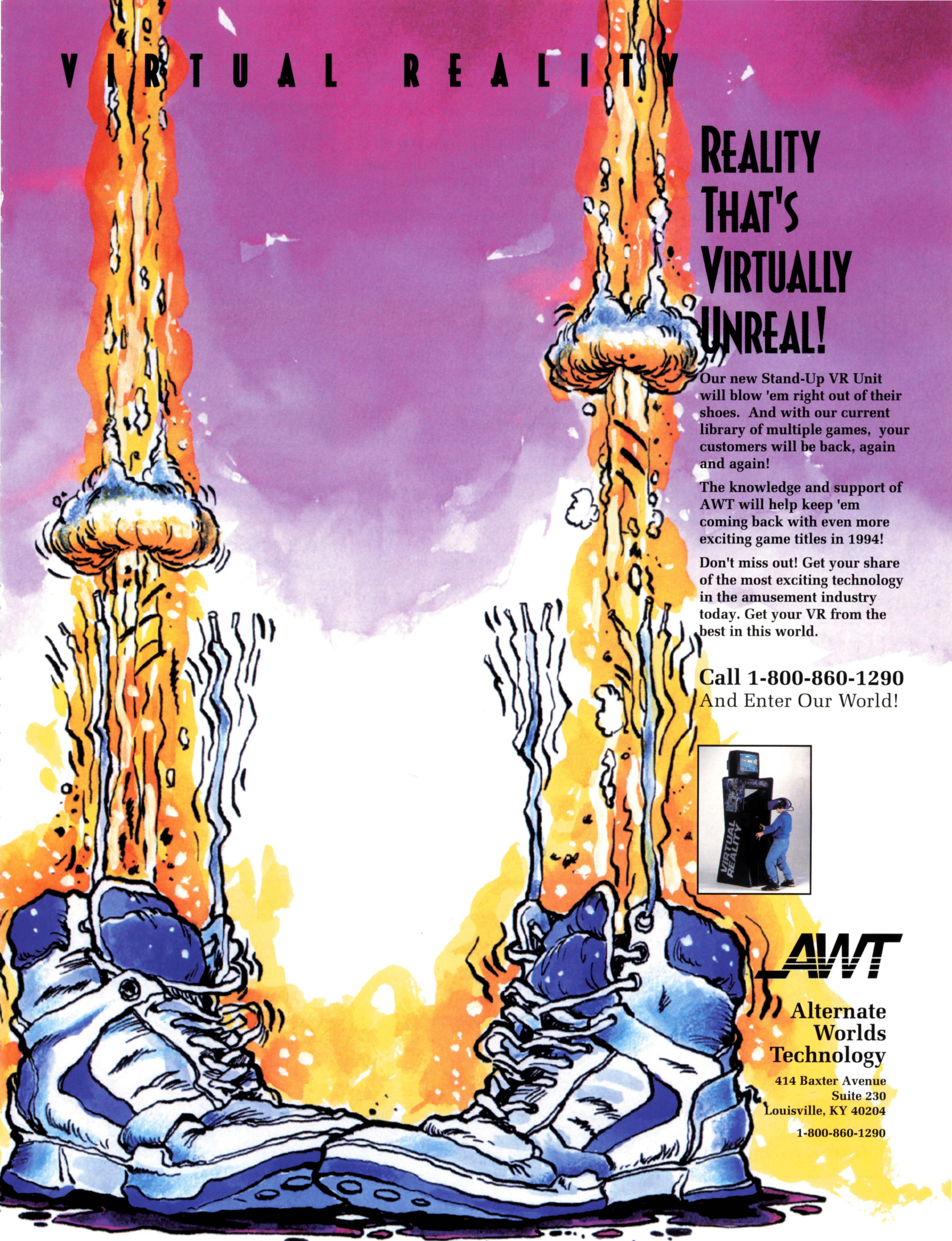
Security is not a problem. South Dakota's on-line system is monitored by a central computer, so nobody has a chance to cheat; and Montana's print-out system has its own safeguards...including the operator's motivation to keep his "senior partner" happy.

In Mitchell, South Dakota I visited the super-busy operation of Elroy Gruenwald, where the phone was ringing off the hook. His company, D&E Music, has a simple answer for locations that own their own equipment. "We concentrate on giving 100% service to our 100% exclusive locations," Elroy said. Yes, a hard-working amusement operator can provide invaluable services to locations...even gaming locations.

I also visited Deadwood, S.D. where casino-style gambling was legalized a couple of years ago on a local basis. Since 1991, this once-dying former mining town has become a thriving, miniature Las Vegas. Main Street's shops and stores have all been converted into neon-flashed casinos and taverns. The population has boomed. The number of local residents used to be 2,200; now the number of gaming employees alone is nearly that high.

In that town, I had a very instructive talk with Mike Trucano (Black Hills Novelty). Many of Mike's insights are reflected in the points made earlier in this article. Mike, by



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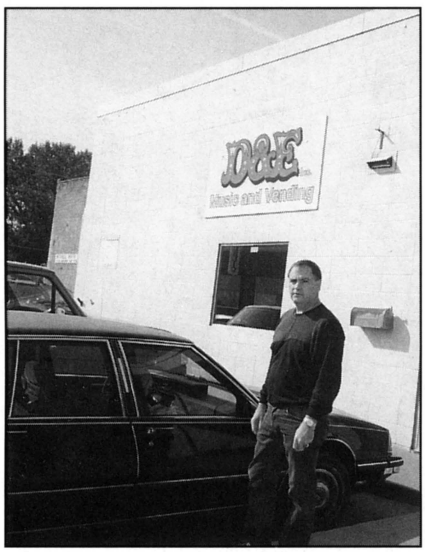
the way, is another operator who is now building pool and dart leagues, rather than depending solely on legalized gaming. Black Hills Novelty works to provide good equipment and good service, with integrity. For example, they won't service location-owned equipment in their locations.

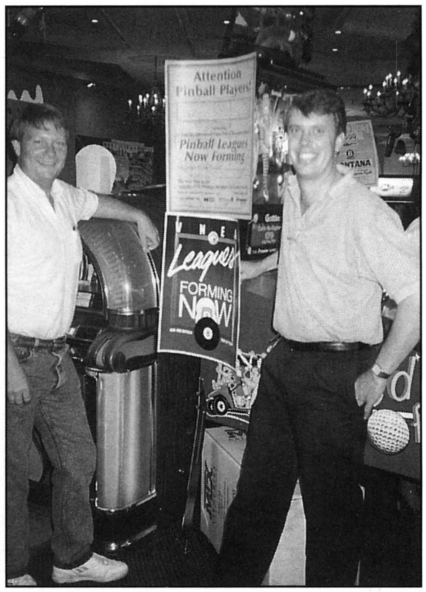



Elroy Gruenwald (D&E Music & Vending, Mitchell, S.D.) delivers good service on amusements; his phone rings off the hook.

As for operator-run VLTs, Mike and his brother Jim (a former AMOA president, like their late father) had some good advice. They stressed how crucial it is for operators to get a voter mandate for operator participation and fair economic return in any proposed VLT system. A voter mandate is much, much better than "trusting" state officials to write the regulations themselves and play fair with operators in the process. After all, the state's share of the VLT pie in South Dakota has gone up more than 50% since this market first opened (from 22.5% to 36%). Enough said!

The truth about legal VLT markets in Montana and South Dakota, as I saw and heard it from the people involved, is very simple. There is no Santa Claus in Montana and South Dakota, no Camelot for operators and distributors...just hardworking trade members who united and got some laws passed that they could live with.

Next month's column will contain some very candid, extended comments from Jim Trucano, Bob Correa and Phil Benson on the pros and cons of legal, operator-run video lottery. You've heard it from me; next you'll get it from the horse's mouth!




Capital Music's Chris Warren (left) and Yellowstone Music's Dave Waylander (right) successfully promoted dart, pool and pinball leagues at a tavern convention in Montana.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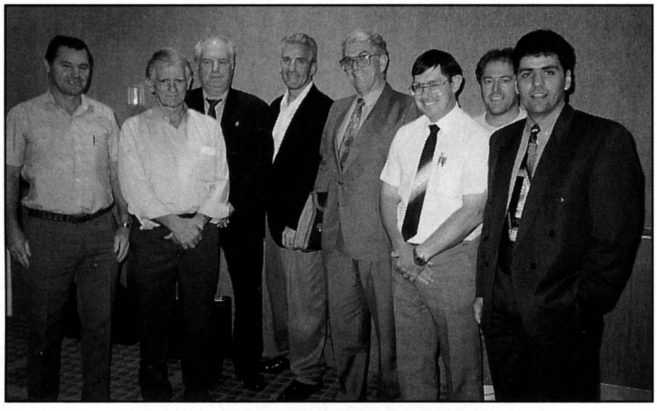
# MATES RATE S.A. BASH GREAT

*The South Australian AMOA's annual trade show in Adelaide served up another winner regional operators.*



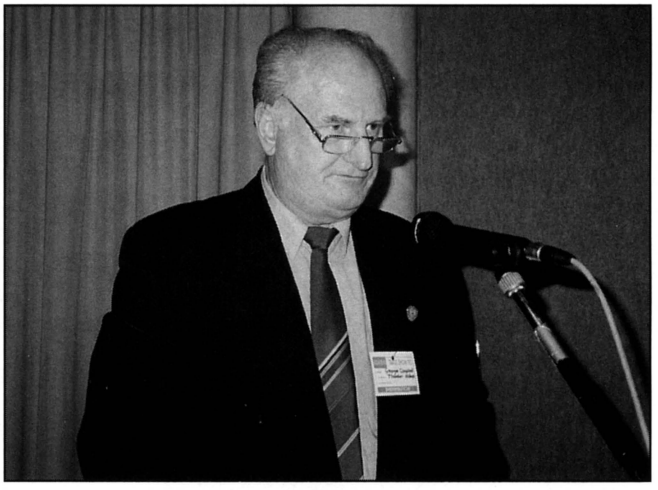
The newly elected National AMOA, Ltd. (Australia) Board of Directors (l to r): Max Griffiths, Jack Rodios, George Campbell (chairman), Frank Sebastyan, Malcolm Steinberg, Ken Priest, David Chell and Paul Modica.




The grand final of the first FM 104.7 Super Pinball Challenge was played on Premier's new *Wipeout* pingame. Shown are players from both teams who competed in the final.



L & A's Chris Blackman speaks at the AMOA (SA)'s industry forum on regulation of violent video games by government legislation. Seated are (l to r): Malcolm Steinberg, George Campbell and Jack Rodios.



National AMOA chair George Campbell speaking on the future of state and national associations during the annual general meeting.

Tradesters from South Australia made a good showing at the Amusement Machine Operators Association (SA) November 26 trade show in Adelaide. According to the association, more than 70 percent of the state's known operators were able to browse among the newest equipment shown by the distributors and attend an evening of fine dining and entertainment.

The opening event was a day of golf sponsored by Leisure and Allied Industries at the picturesque Belair Golf Course. Fortune smiled on those who decided to hit the links by providing a day of gorgeous weather.

The next item on the agenda was a little more serious. Australia's National AMOA held their annual general meeting to make their yearly report and elect a new Board of Directors.

Soon afterwards, the tradeshow was underway in the Adelaide Convention Centre. The strong attendance by South Australian ops was further enhanced by a number of visitors from other states, as distributors displayed the latest vidgames, pinballs and other hot offerings to hit Australia's market.

The Christmas dinner that evening included an entertaining floorshow put on by the AMOA directors. Rounding all of this off was good dancing and great music provided by the Frankie and the Feelgoods showband. As the hours grew late, many delegates were still seen at the casino tables until the call for breakfast.

All in all, the AMOA (SA) show was a hit for everyone, treating showgoers to a nice mix of new products, good food and lively entertainment.

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BY LAURENCE MERRITT
& DAVID HAGEN

# LEGAL QUESTIONS

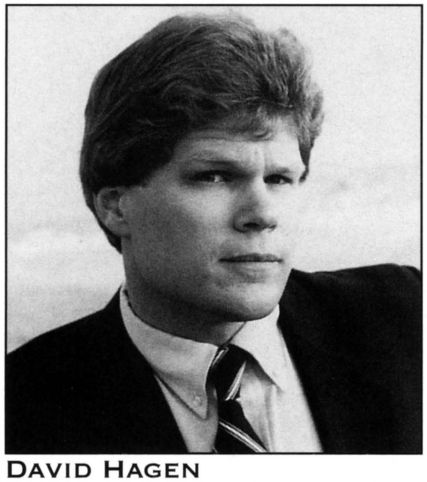
## ASSET PROTECTION

Many business owners are concerned about protecting their assets from lawsuits and economic decline. They have good reason to be concerned. Today there is an explosion of litigation brought against businesses. Sexual harassment, wrongful discharge, hazardous waste, products liability and numerous other theories are being used in the courts to impose liability on companies.

Insurance has been the traditional tool used to protect against lawsuits. However, insurance is not always effective. Insurance policies are now being written to exclude protection from many risks. Additionally, a number of insurance companies have become insolvent.

The economic recession has also created concerns. An unexpected economic slump can cause the loss of a business and all of the assets pledged in support of the business.

Business owners faced with large creditors' claims sometimes panic and try to transfer assets to family members or others. This usually does not work and may cause greater problems. Transfers to family members, partnerships and trusts may be set aside by the courts as fraudulent.



DAVID HAGEN

In an effort to protect assets, a few attorneys have gone to extreme lengths to help clients. For example, some attorneys have set up trusts in offshore countries (such as the Cayman Islands) for purposes of holding and investing monies. These islands are chosen because they have laws that make it difficult for creditors to reach assets.

For most people, this extreme method to protect assets is not necessary and may be unwise. Placing assets overseas creates a number of problems. The foreign depository may prove unreliable, inconvenient and costly. There is also the risk that these foreign countries may experience political or economic instability. The courts of this country may not respect the laws of a foreign country. Local courts may even hold the asset owner in jail until he or she causes the assets to be returned to this country.

There are a number of ways to protect assets that make more sense. Here are some suggestions:

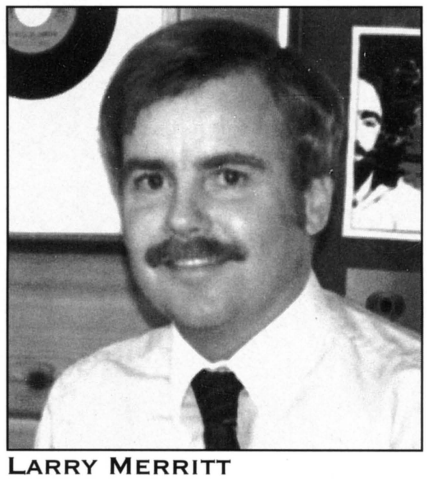
1. Hold property in forms that reduce risk. Married couples often own property jointly. This may subject all of the property to risk of loss to creditors of either spouse. For example, we know a prominent professional whose wife was in a serious automobile accident. The other party sued and won a judgment for millions of dollars. The insurance was insufficient to cover the claim. Consequently, all property owned by the professional and his wife, including the home and family business, were lost.

The laws of most states allow married couples to agree in writing that the assets acquired during the marriage will be held separately. Each spouse will hold assets free from the claims of the other spouse's creditors. These marital property agreements can thus reduce the assets that are at risk.

Transferring assets to children can also serve to protect assets. The gift tax laws allow for the tax-free transfer of $10,000 a year to each child. These yearly transfers can place assets out of reach of future creditors.

2. Invest in exempt assets. Each state has laws which allow people to maintain assets free from creditors' claims. These laws are intended to insure that each person retains at least some assets in the event of financial set-back. These assets cannot be reached by creditors. A person can keep these assets even if he or she files for bankruptcy.

The most common exemption is the homestead. State laws allow a



LARRY MERRITT

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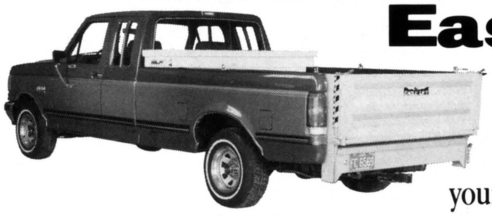

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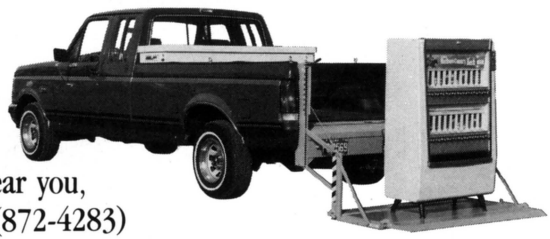

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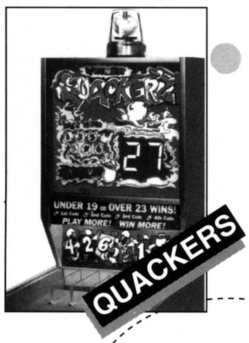


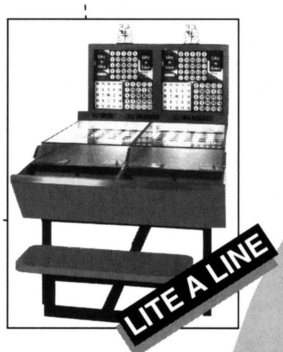


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person to maintain equity in a home that cannot be taken by creditors. Each state has a set amount for the homestead exemption. For example, a married couple in California can protect $75,000 in their home. A few states allow for an unlimited homestead (such as Texas and Florida).

Another way to protect assets is to invest in retirement accounts. Most states provide exemptions to protect these investments. The amount invested in retirement accounts is usually protected to a limited amount. However, the United States Supreme Court recently issued an opinion which allows full protection from creditors' claims for all monies in ERISA qualified retirement accounts, regardless of the amount.

Placing monies in retirement accounts is an important way to plan for retirement. It is now also an excellent means to protect assets from the risk of future creditors.

3. Family partnerships and trusts. Placing property in partnerships or trusts which hold the assets for children or charities can be an effective method to protect assets. However, it is important to understand that the property placed in partnerships and trusts will normally be placed permanently out of the control of the person who contributes the assets.

It is wise to save and invest assets with the goal of protecting them from possible claims from creditors. Funds invested in homes, retirement accounts and family trusts will grow to meet retirement and family financial goals. These investments can also provide protection from unexpected creditors.

---

*Laurence Merritt has been helping operators with their legal problems for almost 20 years, taking many matters to trial and obtaining large judgments. However, he feels his greatest accomplishments are the times when he has been able to obtain successful results without going to trial. Mr. Merritt is on the panel of arbitrators for the Los Angeles Superior Court and has served as a Judge Pro Tem in the Santa Monica Municipal Court. He has also taught several paralegal courses at Waterson College.*

*David Hagen has represented operators for a number of years. He has taught paralegal courses at Waterson College, as well as been an instructor in the MBA program at California Lutheran University. Laurence Merritt and David Hagen have worked together for many years and both welcome comments and suggestions. You can reach them at: Merritt & Hagen, Attorneys at Law, 6400 Canoga Ave. #311, Woodland Hills, CA 91367; phone: 818/992-1940; fax: 818-992-3309.*

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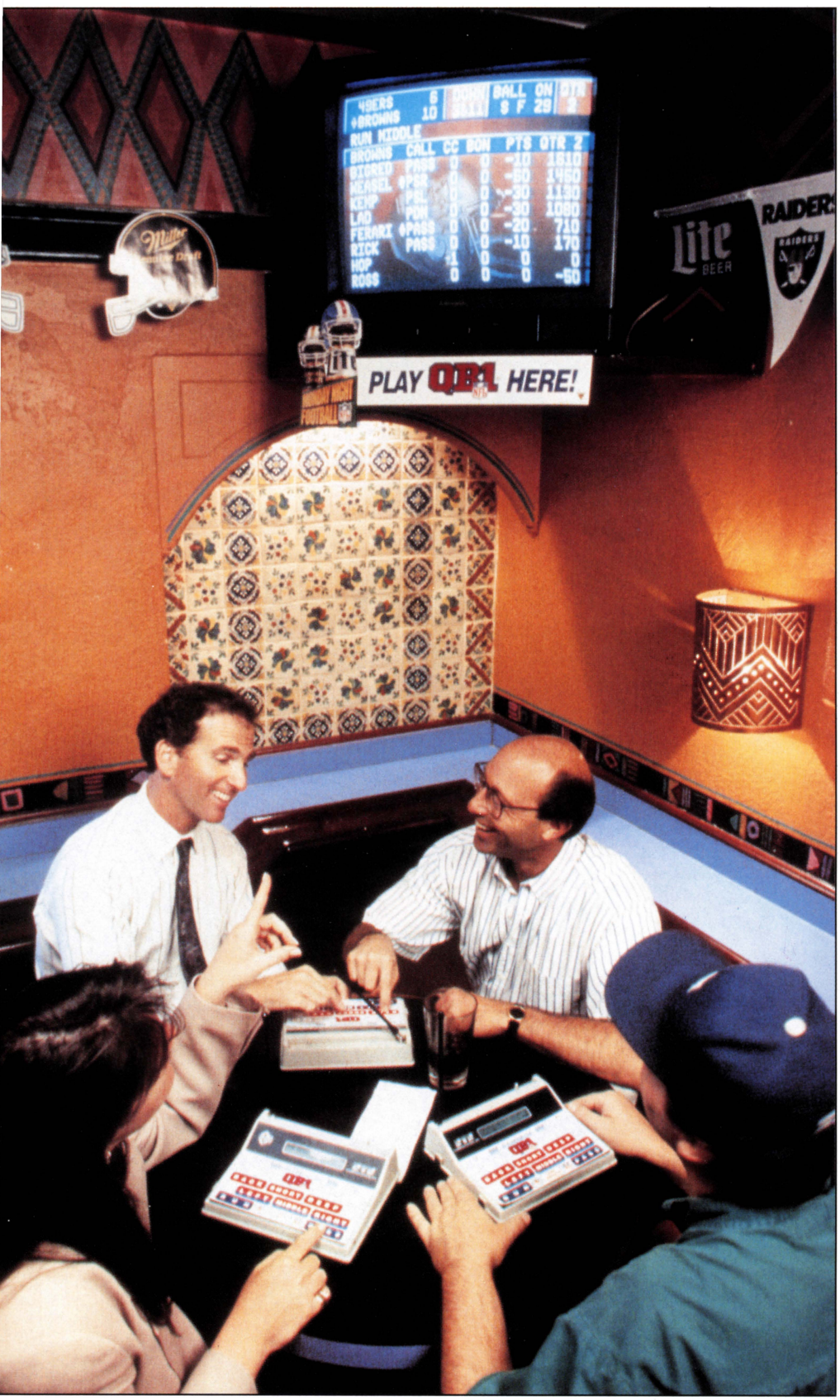



*NTN Communications "downloads" grown-up games to taverns; sole-source network offers a challenge... and a role model*

Okay, here's the not-so-secret formula for the next generation of tavern-based, hi-tech entertainment. Take two TV sets, one handheld keyboard, and a tavern. Toss in a satellite that "downloads" video game formats, and a toll-free telephone hookup for players to zap their gameplay moves back to the network's central computer. Combine them together, and what do you get?

You get futuristic entertainment that's already up and running today in 1,300 locations across North America. Remote, interactive, net-

Tavern patrons can enjoy NTN's interactive digital broadcast game network 24 hours a day in some 1,300 locations across the U.S. & Canada.

# TURE HERE?

worked games are downloaded to taverns, lounges and restaurants by NTN Communications Corp. Their 24-hour, 7-day-a-week menu includes a growing mix of trivia games, interactive sports games and soon-to-come wagering games. They say about 4.5 million people now play on the network each month. The NTN Entertainment Network offers 11 hours of original interactive programming each day.

Could this kind of thing knock operators out of taverns and other traditional coin-op locations? Well, we're forced to admit it's possible. Maybe you still can't send a pool table or cigarette machine over a satellite broadcast or a phone line, but NTN (and similar services from the likes of AT&T, Time-Warner, etc.) could certainly deliver video games, music, and even league formats for darts and pool on their networks.

Not that NTN wants to get into the business of distributing "kids" video games. They are quite proud of their own home-grown programming, which is aimed squarely at grown-ups. Still, the growing success of NTN represents coin-op's final wake-up call: get hip to hi-tech now, or else give up your exclusive grip on your locations. The success of NTN shows that interactive networks are not "the future" anymore, they are "today."

How does NTN make its money? Forget about coin mechs and commission splits. Most locations do not charge customers to play the games, NTN said. Instead, NTN charges taverns $595 per month for programming. Locations are happy to pay up, because the system is really popular with patrons and draws lots of traffic. "Players line up early for their spot on the network," said company officials. "We wouldn't have invested in it if it didn't give us an attractive return on investment," one restaurant chain exec told *Business Week*.

Players may not pay money to participate in NTN's games, but high-scorers can still win prizes from local taverns (anything from a $25 bar tab to big consumer electronics items). Prizes are also awarded by NTN itself.

Live games on the NTN network include "QB-1," an NFL-licensed game where tavern patrons watch a live football match and punch in keyboard selections to predict the next offensive play. Over 35,000 tavern customers are estimated to have done this during the recent Super Bowl.

Live broadcasts of all 256 NFL football games per season, plus basketball, baseball, and hockey broadcasts and college football, are also wired into the NTN network for interactive play-along entertainment.

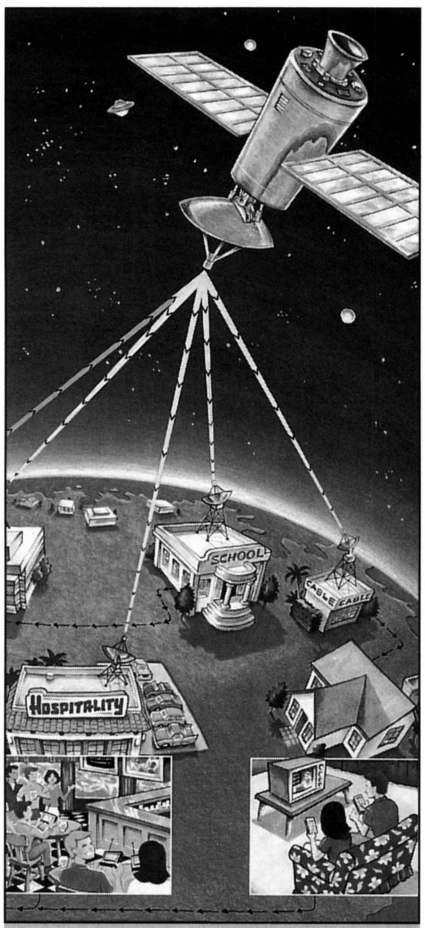
To play "QB-1," players watch a live football broadcast on one screen and predict the quarterback's plays such as "run middle" or "pass left." Correct predictions earn points; scores are instantly tabulated and continually displayed on a secondary screen. Every now and then, NTN flashes a "leaderboard" on the screen, allowing players in specific locations to compare their performances to other players nationwide. "The only thing wrong with QB-1 is that it's impossible to play and meet girls at the same time," one loyal fan told *Sports Illustrated.*

Pre-programmed games include trivia contests like "Showdown," "Passport," and "NightSide" with topics ranging from sports to politics, travel, entertainment, history and sex. Special broadcasts like the Academy Awards are also occasions for NTN to create additional interactive, predictive games. In states like New York, Pennsylvania, etc. (which have just legalized home wagering on horses) NTN will soon offer a secondary "wagering" network that uses credit card swipe slots on the player device. NTN may also offer this network to churches, so they can bring their traditional bingo into the hi-tech era.

NTN does not take coin machine operators as partners. It doesn't need them. Instead, the firm sells licenses to other markets — like a single NTN master license for Europe, and another one for Australia. But NTN does service locations which have traditionally been the operator's "turf" — taverns and restaurants like Bennigans, Black Angus, and more. By the way, they're also going after hotels. NTN's "LodgeNet Entertainment In-Room Network" reaches 250,000 rooms in over 1,900 hotels in the U.S. including Sheratons, Doubletree Inns, Outriggers, and Trump hotels, they advise.




Players use this hand-held control unit called "The Playmaker" to predict the quarterback's next move when playing "QB-1." Newer versions of the control panel include Miller Beer logos and slogans. Interchangeable control panel overlays are used to customize "The Playmaker" for different NTN games.




The NTN network uses a satellite link to send digital signals (i.e., the gameplay format) to locations. Player feedback simultaneously returns to the network's central computer, via toll-free phone hookup.

Oh, yes...there is one type of U.S. "operator" who can be a partner with NTN: your local cable TV operator. That's one way NTN has taken its games into the home market. Other ways include linking NTN programming with computer data services. Current licensed distributors of NTN programming include: GE interactive cable TV; TV Answer; the GE "Genie" on-line data service; the AT&T ImagiNation network (formerly Sierra On-Line); Interactive Systems Inc.; and U.S. Order. By the way, NTN's games are supported by advertising from the likes of Miller Beer, Chevrolet, Winston cigarettes, American Express, etc.

## NTN TECHNICAL BASE: BUILT-IN FLEXIBILITY

Since all these delivery platforms are carrying NTN (and since the company intends to be flexible for transmissions in other countries, or on tomorrow's multimedia networks), the NTN network includes five main delivery methods. They are: FM sideband, direct satellite, TV vertical blanking interval, cable, and the telephone. NTN programs are transmitted from the NTN control center in Carlsbad, Calif. through an uplink to a satellite above the equator. The digital feed is then re-transmitted by satellite and received by all subscriber locations. Time elapsed: less than one second! Transmissions can be sent point-to-point or point-to-multiple receivers. In most cases, the return path uses a toll-free "800" telephone number.

Based in Carlsbad, Calif., NTN was founded in 1983 by professional sports and broadcasting executives. Chairman Don Klosterman is a former pro football player who later served as GM or VP for the Oilers, Colts and Rams. President Patrick Downs' resume includes stints as VP & business manager of the Padres, as well Time-Life's special projects chief and regional GM for Ticketron. NTN spent two years developing its product before going on-line with service in 1985. They've been losing money for quite a while (reportedly racking up $25 million in losses), but a recent issue of *Business Week* (Jan. 24) said they're about to break into profits in a big way. They just had their first quarter "in the black," said the magazine. And 1993 revenues were double the previous year's gross earnings.

"Link-up live and play the world," is NTN's slogan. So far, they're doing exactly that...and their future looks bright indeed.

◆

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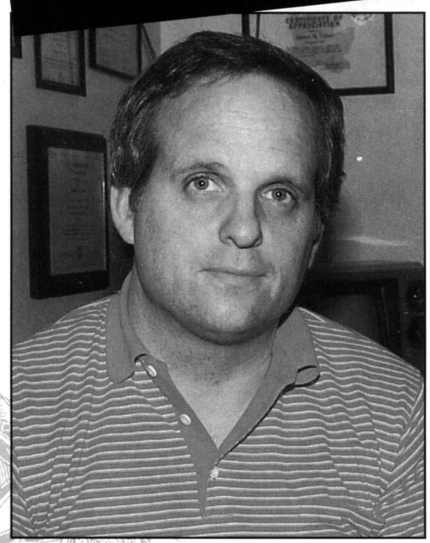
# Employee THEFT

*author claims it costs amusement industry approximately $20 to $35 million per year and even puts some operators out of business*

**by James M. Fisher**



The reasons for theft are many, say the experts. The problem is compounded by temptation and the opportunity to steal. Certainly, human greed is a factor, but still there are many other circumstances that cause a person to steal, especially from his employer.

Many employees rationalize their behavior in order to feel they're justified in stealing. Not every employee with access to the company's property will steal, of course, but sometimes the actions of those that do are a way of handling personal grievances against their employer. Stealing is also a way of demonstrating the employee's dissatisfaction and deviance in the workplace.

Typically, an employee might say: "I had this gripe against the company, and the owner wasn't straightening it out fast enough. You might say my stealing from him was in the spirit of retaliation." Another might think: "I felt I deserved to get something more for my work, since I was not getting paid enough."

Dennis Dalton, a management and security consultant for Fortune 500 companies, declares that the problem of stealing cuts deeper into the company when lax hiring policies occur. Easy access to money by longtime employees also contributes to theft. It has also been shown that the higher the turnover rate in the number of employees, the greater the incidence of company theft.

"If people see their friends getting laid off of it they're worried about losing their own jobs, they may feel they should get what they can while they can. Virtually all individuals who steal from an employer think the company is big and can afford it," says Dalton.

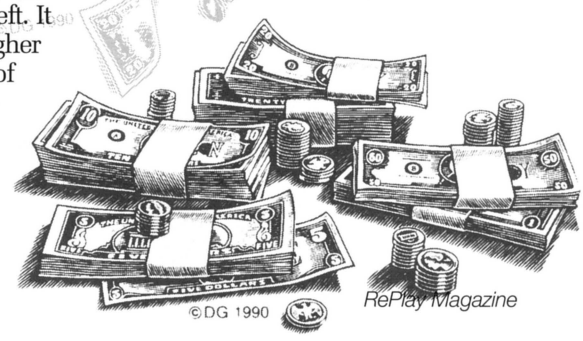
Burke Stinson, a human-resource specialist for AT&T adds: "It's no secret that people who are basically honest sometimes retaliate because they're angry and frustrated. If they feel they aren't getting a fair shake, they rationalize that it's OK to steal."

A survey by the National Institute of Justice revealed that one-third of the polled employees reported stealing some company property. Almost two-thirds reported other types of misconduct such as sick leave abuse, drug or alcohol use on the job and falsifying time sheets.

## employee theft costs billions a year

"Companies that don't take the threat of crime seriously are simply playing Russian roulette," explains Dalton. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that employee theft costs U.S. businesses $40 billion annually. In addition, approximately 20% of all businesses fail due to employee theft. Specifically, more than 16,000 U.S. businesses fail annually because of internal theft!

"Economic crime is ten times greater than street crime," says Thomas W. Wathen, CEO of Pinkerton Security and Investigation Services in California. "But in most cases," he contin-




### READER, PLEASE NOTE

James M. Fisher, though presently working for the real estate marketing firm of R.W. Investments in LaJolla, CA, has a masters degree in journalism. He researched and wrote this Employee Theft article at the request of his friend Mark Castellano, president of Compuline (the San Diego manufacturers of the Coin Tracker...an automated collection system which offers operators the anti-theft protection he claims is lacking in many present coin metering systems).

While Castellano provided some articles that went into Fisher's research pool, the author says he did the bulk of the work, "and, free of charge." Saying he tried to be as objective as possible, Fisher admits that "no one has done a thorough examination of this subject as it affects the amusement machine business. But, using other industry studies, a comparison can be drawn," he declared.

RePlay advises readers that the conclusions and statistics Fisher presents are his, not the magazine's. But no matter how you view it, Fisher's treatise is both thought-provoking and a less-than-gentle reminder of an ever-present danger existing in this cash-intensive industry.

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ues, "there are no police cars, sirens, guns or TV coverage. It ranges from paper clips and rubber bands that find their way innocently into purses and pockets, to employees permanently removing assets like computers, telephones, supplies and money."

Most employees who steal from their employers do not realize the ramifications of their actions. Most are caught up in instant gratification rather than looking downstream to see the result of their actions.

"The majority of Americans don't understand that free-enterprise isn't indestructible," says Wathen. "They don't understand that losses related to theft directly affect their opportunities for promotion, bonuses and profit sharing, and that these losses might even cost their jobs. They think that a company has a deep pocket and that it's all right to steal."

"Failing to protect yourself can be a costly mistake," says Carl F. Jenkins, a certified public accountant and fraud examiner with Macdonald, Levine, Jenkins and Company of Boston. "Small business' owners, therefore, should take steps to avoid suffering losses at the hands of dishonest staffers," Jenkins adds.

## Prime target for theft is cash

The prime target for outright theft by employees is cash. If money is not monitored properly, misappropriation by employees is almost certain. One CEO of a major U.S. company declares that he does not hire thieves, but we make thieves out of the people we hire. Inadequate company anti-theft policy, as well as the lack of an adequate job description of management's responsibilities toward employee theft contributes to the incidence of theft. Most employees who report a lack of clarity regarding the company's rules about theft are only vaguely aware of policies. They are also very impressed with the lack of management's concern toward theft and the inconsistent enforcement of the rules.

Curiously, Jenkins says many crimes are never reported because the owner is embarrassed that an employee stole or embezzled from the firm. This type of behavior may encourage employee theft rather than discourage it. "Small amounts of money stolen every week can add up to thousands of dollars," he exclaims.

One experience involving employee theft occurred when a route collector responsible for several convenience store locations asked some store clerks on the route to help him skim some of the money off the games. The collector told the clerk to disconnect the game's coin meters at mid-week, then reconnect them a couple days later. This went on for a year until the collector was transferred to another route. After his transfer, the income per-machine increased immediately. To the dismay of the owner/operator, it was discovered that over $100,000 was lost due to the dishonesty of the store clerks and the route collector.

*(continued next page)*

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## Theft in amusement industry accounts for 3% to 5% of gross

A prominent industry security consultant from a large northwest amusement company mentions that theft is one of the biggest problems in the amusement industry. He places shrinkage estimates between 3% to 5% or $20 to $35 million per year. While some operators think this shrinkage number is even higher, the factor for employee theft is due to the ease it is to steal from games with the current electromechanical meters installed. All you need to do is disconnect the meter. The game still operates, but the coin drops are not accounted for.

A $7 billion dollar per-year industry relies on the honor system to collect and account for its revenues. The unanswered question is: do we really know how much the industry is losing through shrinkage? If we are to believe recent studies, the answer is not whether some employees are stealing, but how much they are stealing.

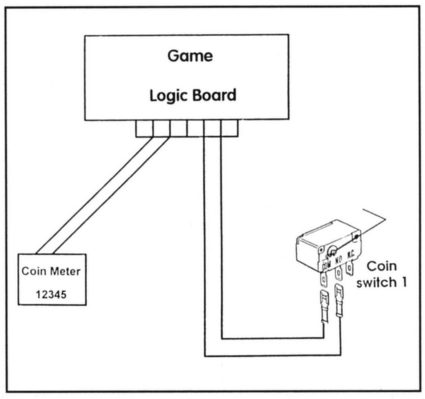


**DIAGRAM F** – According to Fisher, current electro-mechanical meters can be disconnected, allowing the game to operate but the revenue is not accounted for.

Depending on the size and make-up of a company, there are many methods of retrieving coins from an amusement game. One person might do the job of three people in one company as compared with another business. However, for this illustration, six individuals will come in contact with the money.

The first person is the collector who physically goes to the site to retrieve the coins. In a three-game location it takes him around 25 minutes to collect and account for the money. Typically, he counts the cash on location. It's not usual after a day's work that the collector is driving around town in his route truck with several thousand dollars worth of coins.

The second person who has access to the money is the rotator. The third individual is the service person. He maintains and repairs the machines. The fourth person is the money room counter. The fifth is the controller, and the sixth is the owner.Often, the money is kept in the collector's home, regional office or home office for up to a week before it is deposited. The opportunity for an employee to steal from his employer remains a constant threat, especially when you look at the absence of safeguards the industry uses to account for billions of dollars in coins.

Certainly, this collection system gives employees easy access to cash.

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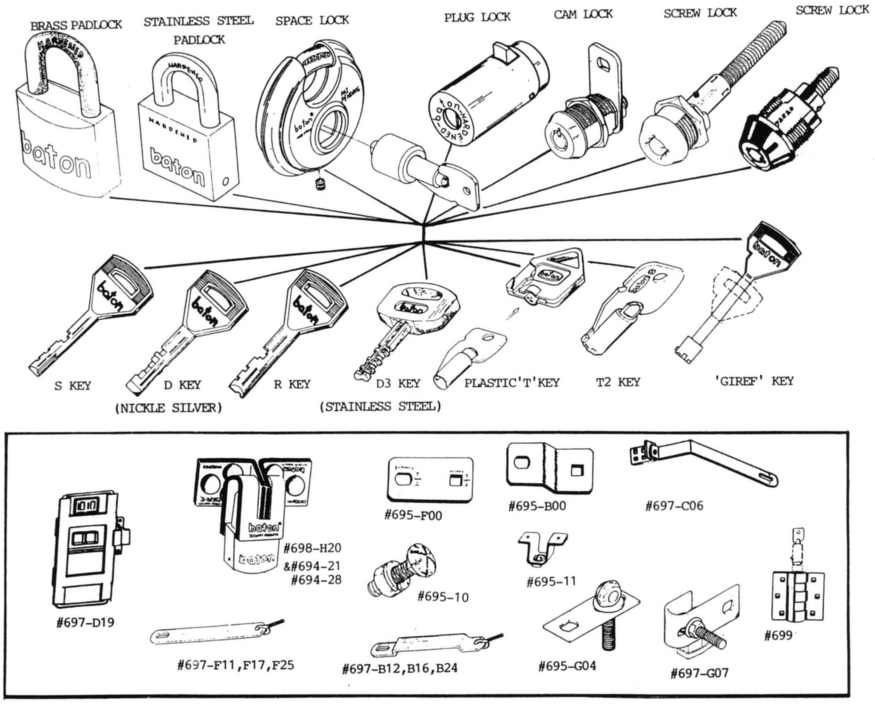


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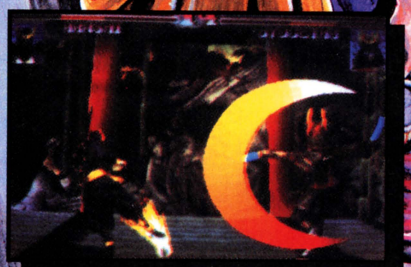



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By the way, it's interesting to note that (statistically) a strong relationship is shown between an employee's theft of the company's property and other forms of deviance, such as the employee's theft of time via a long lunch, coffee break and sick leave.

Again, those companies that maintain explicit policies against employee theft have lower theft levels than those that have not maintained an anti-theft policy. The studies also suggest that management must clearly convey by word and deed to the employee that taking property is not acceptable behavior within an organization.

Read Hayes, a security consultant for Loss Prevention Specialists in Winter Park, Fla., states: "Putting a face on the company helps prevent employees from stealing." And the first step is to establish rigid hiring practices. The company must conduct thorough reference checks on all prospective employees. Call another company to verify employment dates. Check with colleges, universities or trade schools to see whether the person really graduated or not. Also contact personal references and review them more thoroughly.

The second step is to pay employees a competitive salary. Significantly, when an employee is compensated for individual productivity, rather than just an hourly wage, shrinkage decreases. Profit sharing also decreases shrinkage in the company.

Step three is to show the employee that he is as important as the assets of the company. Managers should be aware of the employee and any personal problems they might have. There must also be a free flow of communication between management and the employee.

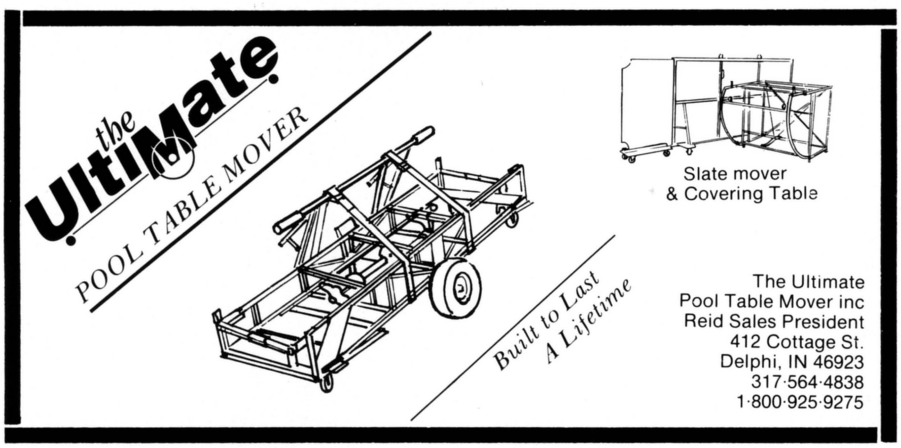
The fourth step is to develop a comprehensive anti-theft company policy. Employees must understand they will be responsible for their actions. Management must be alert to its responsibility in making the employee aware of the company's anti-theft policy. There must be direct adherence to and constant follow-through by management regarding this policy.

Step five requires the company to develop adequate safeguards to protect company assets. For example, the rotation or transfer of employees from one collection location to another is an excellent safeguard to ensure employee honesty. It is also suggested that an independent bonded contractor be used to collect and account for the game revenue.

The sixth and perhaps most important step is to change from the current coin metering system to an automated collection and security system. By changing the current system to a state-of-the-art computerized electronic system, a company may track its revenue without the threat of employee's manipulation of the collection receipts and financial records. Remember, as one CEO said: "We don't hire thieves. We make thieves out of the people we hire."

If this industry is going to decrease theft, these six steps must be taken seriously and implemented. The six steps to prevent employee theft in review are:

1. Make sure potential employees are thoroughly investigated.
2. Pay them according to their merit.
3. Employees have individual worth; remember that.
4. Have a widely-publicized and thoroughly understood employee anti-theft policy.
5. Establish adequate safeguards to protect company assets, especially the cash.
6. Install an automated collection and security system on machines.

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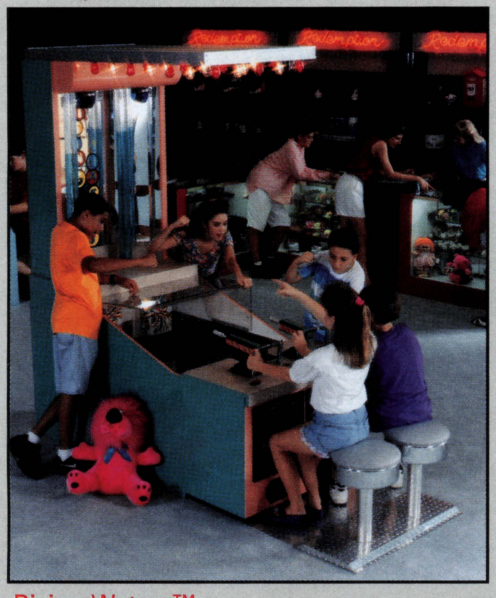

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# TOP OF THE TABLE

## Premier Technology president Gil Pollock chats about pinball and his plans for 1994

[*Editor's note: the following interview is reprinted, with permission, from the (January, 1994) issue of Amusement Business Europe (ABE). It's a coin-op trade magazine published in London under the direction of Publisher Robin Coates and Editor Kate Barnett.*

*Gill Pollock is well-known to the U.S. coin-op trade as president of Premier Technology (Elk Grove Village, IL) and as a past president of AAMA. The following Q&A has a bit of "European" flavor, but since that part of the world is really the number one market for pinball, we think it's quite appropriate to pass along Gil's views to American readers. Our thanks to ABE for a fine interview.*]

**ABE:** *First off, how do you view the European marketplace at the moment?*

**GP:** The general economy in Europe has slowed down over the last couple of years, but I think that's a normal cycle. As things slow down your share in each market remains consistent, there's just a smaller volume of business.

Obviously there has been a large amount of games produced in the last two years which has helped to contribute to the situation, and this proliferation of games is going to take some time to work through the system. As the economy starts strengthening in the next six months that pipeline will start to clear out and I think we'll see the volume go back up after an adjustment period.

**ABE:** *So how important is Europe in terms of domestic sales?*

**GP:** We're the same as all the other pin table manufacturers - everybody does approximately 65 percent to 35 percent; Data East is maybe 60 percent to 40 percent. Historically the volume of exports has always been around 60 to 65 percent.

**ABE:** *Which overseas markets are particularly strong for you?*

**GP:** The strongest markets for us in Europe are France, the Benelux countries and Spain. Sweden and Switzerland are small markets but we do pretty well there in terms of market share. We had some distribution problems in Germany but our new distributor – Tuning – has done an excellent job in trying to re-establish our presence in that market.



**ABE:** *Do you think pinball needs better promotion in Europe?*

**GP:** I think pinball could be promoted much better worldwide. The Germans and French are leading the way in Europe by hosting tournaments. Our ultimate goal is to start leagues, but even here in the U.S., it's not going as quickly as we'd hoped.

But we're working with PAPA – the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association – which is running four major tournaments that have become leagues in San Francisco, Atlanta, Chicago and Minneapolis, with the winners of those ending up in the major tournament in New York.

And then the IFPA – a branch of the AMOA – is also promoting tournament and league play. Both associations are taking slightly different approaches and hopefully one or both will catch on. But the promotion of pinball as a sport will take it to the next level in the future.

**ABE:** *Does the responsibility fall on the manufacturers or operators to get the ball rolling, as it were?*

**GP:** All the manufacturers are working together – Williams/Bally, Data East and ourselves – in supporting both of these associations. But we can only throw money at the situation. The hard work and effort has to come from the distributing and operating level, particularly the operators. They have to make a commitment to allocating the necessary resources

and that usually means the appointment of someone full-time.

The same happened with darts and pool. Merchandising a product line is what it boils down to and that's what the operator has to get better at.

**ABE:** *What's your opinion on profit-sharing for pin tables?*

**GP:** I think profit-sharing benefits the market considerably because it provides an incentive. The problem that has happened in the USA is that, sometime in the 1940s, everybody decided to make that profit-share a 50/50 split. With the increased cost of equipment, operating expenses and so on, the location should really not be getting 50 percent. What they should get, realistically, is 30 percent or maybe only 25 percent.

Some operators are already starting to reduce that 50/50 split with leagues and tournaments. If you go in for a league and the operator puts new equipment in, he will take X-number of dollars off the top before the revenue split. So he's decreasing the location revenue that way.

If the UK is fortunate enough to ever get rid of the rent-only situation, it's important to start off with a 75/25 split in favor of the operator. The problem is that the breweries are so dominant in the UK, if there was a split it would probably end-up 75/25 against the operator.

**ABE:** *There's a huge number of pin tables coming out at the moment. How do you compete?*

**GP:** I think all the manufacturers have had excellent products over the last couple of years. The earnings between products don't fluctuate that much, so the player doesn't have a brand loyalty, he's just playing whatever strikes his fancy, whatever theme attracts him.

We try to keep in tune with what's going on in the market, see what the current trends are and so forth. Obviously we look at movie trends, but the key to the tables now is to have a major mechanical feature. *Jurassic Park* has the dinosaur, you've got the shooting mechanisms on *Star Trek*, you've got a motorized lift and moving table in *Wipeout*, *Indiana Jones* has a tilting part of the table. So you have to build your themes around that major mechanical feature.

**ABE:** *Isn't there a danger that with more working parts, there's a greater chance of something going wrong?*

**GP:** We test our mechanical features over a long time and that pre-testing is done before we ever go into production. If you look at the pinballs today compared to five years ago, all of them are more reliable. You can have the greatest theme in the world but if that machine's down, it's not making any money.

The worst thing in the world is for an operator to have to make a service call. Not only is it an inconvenience, it's also an added expense. In the U.S., the average service call in a metropolitan area – forget driving into the country – costs somewhere between




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**ABE:** *What products do you have scheduled for release in the future?*

**GP:** This year we are introducing four main models and we also have two unique tables, one geared for the European/South American market which should be unveiled in January. Then we're having another one strictly for the U.S. market.

**ABE:** *Is that a first, to gear a table to a specific market?*

**GP:** There have been other pin tables geared to one market over the years. One of the most recent ones is *NFL football* – that was geared to the U.S. market. *Rocky and Bullwinkle* was also far more geared to the U.S., whereas *Judge Dredd* is more well known in Europe. In fact a lot of people here in the U.S. would ask: "What the hell is *Judge Dredd*?"

The licensing approach we take is something that covers all age groups, for example the *Mario Brothers*. Those characters have become known across the world in the last four or five years and they cover all ages groups. The next one to cover all age groups was *Street Fighter*, which was such a phenomenon to the coin-op business.

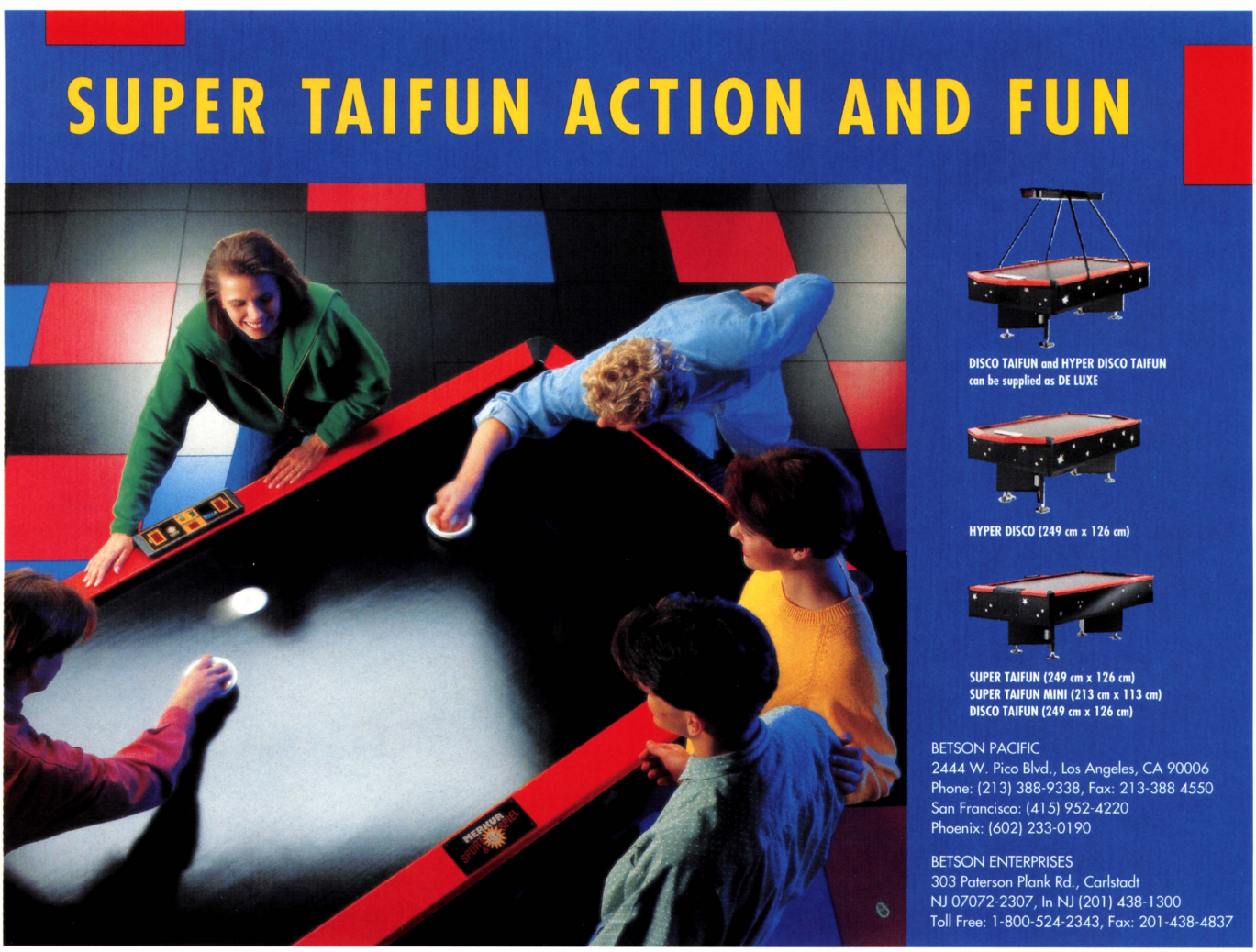
We have a license for next fall, *Nightmare on Elm Street*, and again that's known world-wide and across all age groups. We had another for next summer – *Zorro* – but the movie went in for re-write. That'll be coming out in the summer of 1995.

**ABE:** *Presumably you dealt with Capcom on the* Street Fighter II *table. What is your relationship with Capcom?*

**GP:** It was strictly a licensing arrangement. From my understanding Capcom is planning on getting into the pinball business. Realistically, when any market explodes, people want to be in it. But the problem is their timing – by the time they have products ready, the market will have reached a point where it's down in the doldrums and it will be extremely difficult for any new company, in my opinion, to enter the market place.

**ABE:** *What do you think has been your most successful table so far?*

**GP:** The most successful was the one we introduced at last year's AMOA, *Cue-Ball Wizard*. The nice thing we're seeing in the testing of *Wipe Out* in the same initial test period though, is that it's the strongest earning pinball we've done to date, even more so than *Cue-Ball*. I don't know if it will sell as many units as *Cue-Ball* did but we hope so.

**ABE:** *Do you see yourself doing more redemption pieces? The concept is very popular in America and it's growing in Europe – are you looking at the European market?*

**GP:** Our industry's like any other – 20 percent of the people out there are the driving force and the other 80 percent follow whatever's successful. I know some of Europe's leading operators are looking at redemption. Even in this country, it's successful but we're only beginning to scratch the surface.

The interesting thing over here is the return on investment. You may invest 20 percent of your site to redemption but 52 to 53 percent of your revenue will come from that. And another thing in its favor is the equipment lasts a long time. You can put a *Bell-Ringer* out there and it's going to be on location for five years.

**ABE:** *How many redemption pieces do you see yourself putting out in a year?*

**GP:** We've introduced three pieces over the last three and a half years so we would probably still continue to average one a year, maybe two at the most. We're back in production on these now – we break off production, book some orders, go back into production. It's not a normal production cycle like a pinball machine.

**ABE:** *You did video lottery as well. How's that market?*

**GP:** It's at a complete standstill here. We're involved now in some European and South American presentations so we're hoping that those will become reality.

**ABE:** *Are there any signs of movement in the U.S. regarding legislation?*

**GP:** There's good potential for something happening in Pennsylvania next year, and Illinois has potential too. The legislators don't want to do anything to make them unpopular, so any year there's an election going on, you can forget it – it's not going to happen.

**ABE:** *Is your trade association involved in the lobbying?*

**GP:** The individual state AMOA associations handle that on a local level and we support them.

**ABE:** *It must be a very unstable market with each state having its own legislation.*

**GP:** They can turn it off at any time. Every year the operators have to fight legislation because gaming's a very controversial subject. We should be so fortunate to have the structure that exists in Europe and the UK.

Eventually I think that situation will happen here because of the pressure to minimize tax increases and the need for stronger government funding – it has to happen. I actually thought it would happen a lot quicker, and so did a lot of other people. If a state like Illinois or Pennsylvania – one of the larger states – enact it then Indiana will have to because they'll be losing revenue. And if Indiana does it, Michigan and Wisconsin will follow – it'll be a domino effect. So we'll just have to wait and see. ◆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# GOING FOR THE

*Premier kicks off another year with an enthusiastic marketing and design team, and strong new titles*

A company's most successful year to date...can be a hard act to follow. Just ask the folks at Premier Technology! 1993 was their all-time best sales year. In fact, sales at Premier have increased continually for the past four years. So where do they go from here? Onward and upward! The Chicago-based coin-op manufacturer (and makers of the renowned Gottlieb line of pingames) is looking ahead to make the most of its recent success. This means more exclusive licenses, an exciting new line of games and a stronger presence in the growing redemption market.

The success experienced by Premier in 1993 can be attributed to the strength of the product lines. Pinball models such as *Cue Ball Wizard, Street Fighter II, Tee'd Off, Gladiator*s and *Wipe Out* have kept Gottlieb a consistently strong presence in the international marketplace. Throughout this business growth, Premier president Gil Pollock has maintained a policy of earnings reinvestment. "The success of one year is only as valuable as its benefit to the next," Pollock noted.

The firm's vice president of sales, Steve Walton, stressed that distributors played a big part in Premier's '93 success story. "No matter how strong a product," he said, "success in the marketplace can only be achieved with the support of the distribution channel. The distributors and operators of Gottlieb machines have proven to be some of the most committed and loyal customers in the world."

To keep 1994 on an upcurve, Premier has invested its 1993 success in several areas that will provide benefits during the coming year. "Because engineering is the heart of the firm, we began to expand our R&D efforts," Pollock said. One of the first additions to be made was that of a new design team in the engineering




One of Premier/Gottlieb's best flipper titles of 1993 (and still playing strong) was presented at the Anaheim AMOA show. Timely for this Olympic/winter season, *Wipe Out's* factory friends above are Steve Walton, L.J. Green & Gil Pollock. Operator with back to the camera and face to the playfield is Chuck Queen from Colorado.

# GOAL




department. The company promises the introduction of this team's new and innovative pinball design approach at the March ACME show in Chicago.

Through building a library of solid licenses, Premier has assured that the Gottlieb designers will have a great deal of creative material to work with. "Stargate," a $60 million film currently being produced, will be introduced as a pin in 1994. In addition, Freddy Krueger, the blade-handed villain from the horror movie series "A Nightmare on Elm Street," is another character which will undergo pinball personification this year. According to L.J. Greene, Premier's international sales and marketing manager, "Demographic data shows that Freddy Krueger is the world's most recognized horror personality since Frankenstein." The television program "Rescue 911" is yet another title that will come alive on the pinball playfield.

Gottlieb's licensing program stretches into 1995, when the Steven Spielberg production of "Zorro" is released. "Our collection of licenses," Pollock said, "have taken our design department's enthusiasm to an all-time high."

In addition to licensed titles, Premier has introduced a new series of games, the "Gottlieb Pro Game Series." Sports themes have always been winners in the industry and Gottlieb has proven its ability to create solid sport product with *Tee'd Off* and *Wipe Out*. With clear graphics and real sports-action sounds, the "Pro Game Series" is focused on keeping pinball sports themes alive.

The first Pro Game Series model to be released is entitled *World Challenge Soccer*. While this model is predominately geared towards traditional soccer markets, it has proven extremely successful during its testing period domestically. Noted Greene, "1994 is the year for soccer. Not only is 1994 a World Cup year, but the tournament will be held in the United States. No country can create sports hype the way the U.S. can." In addition to *World Challenge Soccer*, a second Pro Series will be introduced later this year.

Redemption has also been an area where Gottlieb games have experienced great success. New redemption pieces are also set to be introduced at the ACME and AMOA shows in 1994. The creation of these new models, according to Greene, is the result of extensive market testing. "To understand redemption fully," she said, "our team has had to shift focus in player type. We have taken the time to create the ultimate player appeal with our new products."

In the area of video lottery, it's no secret that the domestic market is developing *slowly*. As a result, said Pollock, the immediate focus has shifted to Indian gaming, riverboat gaming and all legalized gaming throughout the world.

Internally, the company has experienced several organizational improvements. A new vice president of operations has been added to the team. Duane Eason comes to Premier after 20 years in the capital goods industry. "The addition of Duane to our management staff will further enhance our ability to continue to grow to higher production levels in a formal and efficient manner," Pollack said. "Duane possesses the skills and ability, from his past experience, to head-up a diversified manufacturing environment with multiple product lines that our management team has needed."

Heading the engineering effort at Premier is industry veteran Mike Vrettos, vice president of engineering. "With the expansion in our product lines and engineering staff, Mike will now be able to devote 100% of his attention to the engineering department," Pollock explained. "He has

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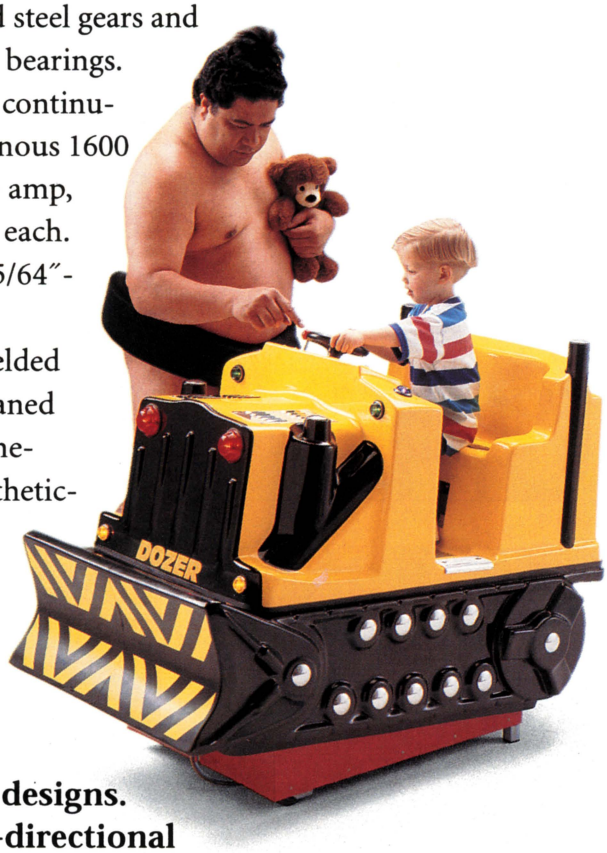


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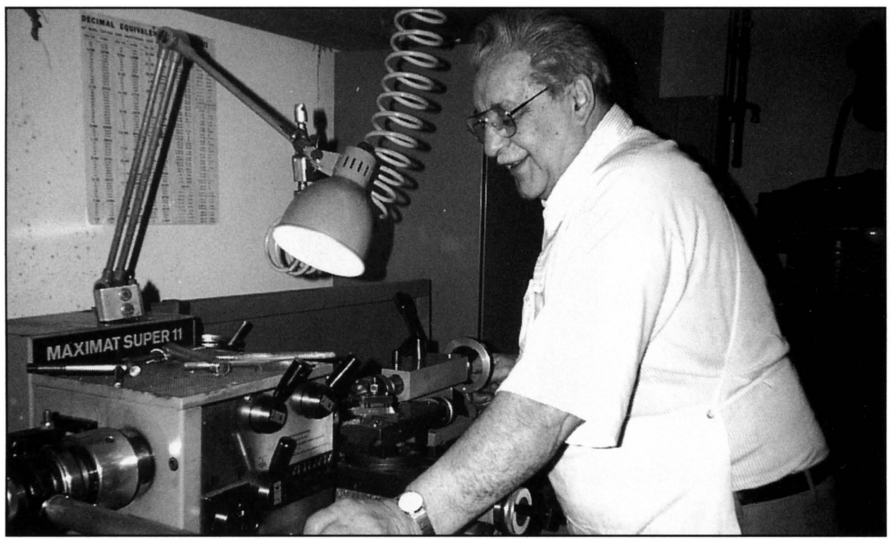
over 20 years' experience and has also demonstrated his excellent 'feel' for coin-operated products.

"Our management team is continuing to grow as is our company," he added. "Once additional product lines have reached marketing stages, there will be further announcements in the first part of next year.

"On behalf of all of us at Premier," Pollock continued, "I would like to thank our customers and promise the industry our efforts will be directed in giving them excellent product."

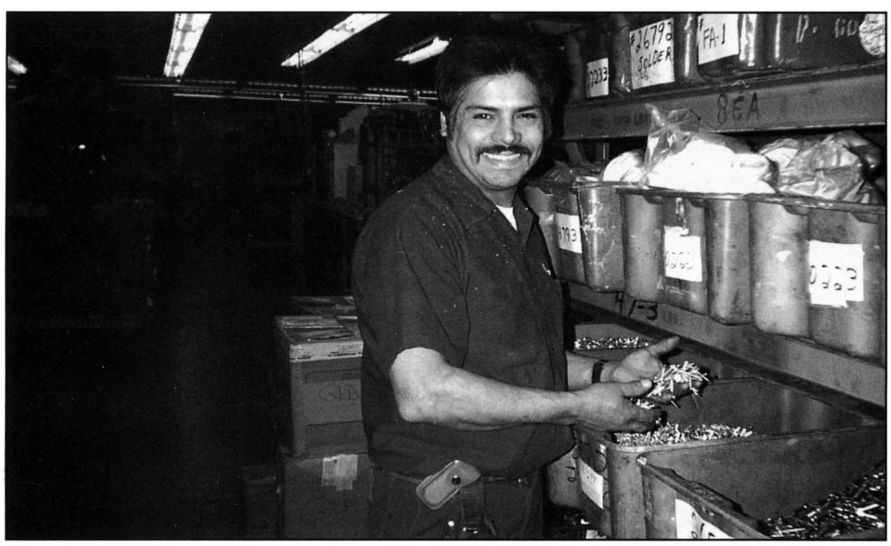
◆




Production engineer Louie Giannini's been with Gottlieb since 1940.



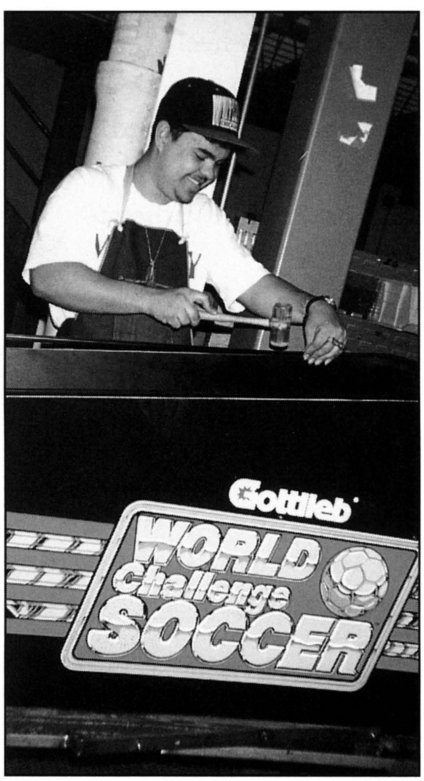
Lucille Jakobik's been a production worker there for 32 years!



Juan Villa helps to keep the production line humming.



Wrapping wire harnesses and other "fussy" jobs at pinball factories like Premier's used to be the domain of the ladies, but apparently no longer (though that smiling face may be telling us something.)




Edging a *World Challenge Soccer* cabinet with mallet and thumb.

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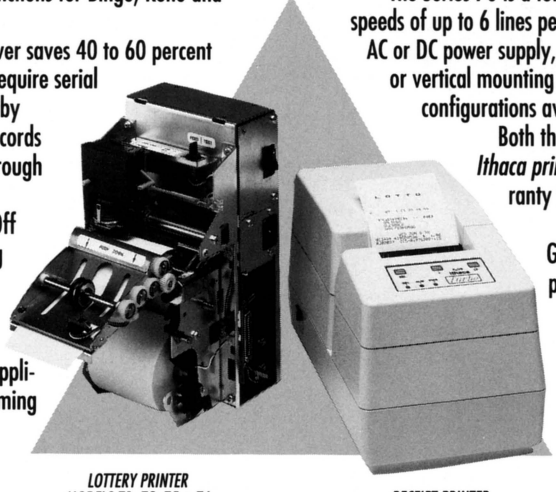

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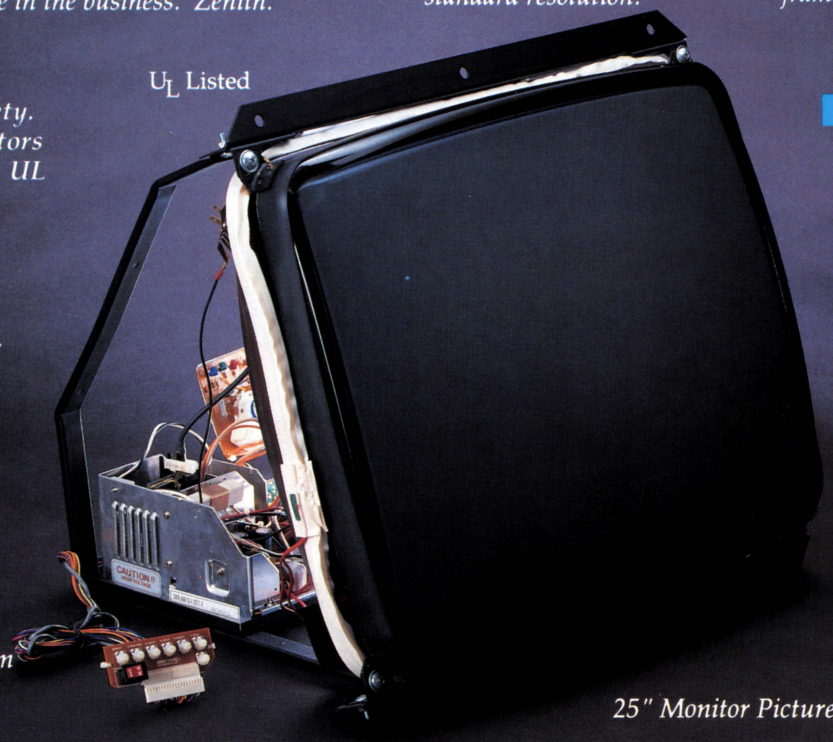

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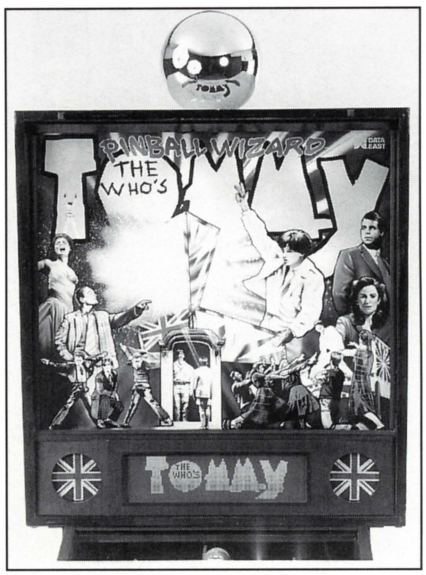



## TOMMY

The lights go down...the music begins...the curtain rises...and the show's on! There's nothing like the excitement of a big-time Broadway show. Our industry's favorite musical "Tommy" has been back on the Great White Way in recent days...and now it's accompanied in arcades and street stops by *Tommy*, the pinball game from Data East Pinball. Both the game and the Broadway show are the story of a "deaf, dumb and blind boy who sure plays a mean pinball"...and both are sure to be embedded as timeless classics of American pop culture.

"Reaction to *Tommy*, the pinball, has simply been fabulous. People love it, and the earnings bear that out!" declared Data East's lead flipper game designer Joe Kaminkow.

Meantime, Data East USA is proceeding rapidly with its announced plans to consolidate all coin-op administrative functions in Chicago. The company is also releasing new video titles for the SNK Neo-Geo system. At this month's ACME show, tradesters will see evidence of a solidly integrated company that's moving forward on all fronts.

Pinball remains the prettiest flower in DE's garden...and their latest, *Tommy*, has enjoyed strongly positive reaction in a variety of settings lately. The game was sneak-previwed in Dallas last October, when the musical revival began its road show. The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, broadcast to 50 million viewers last fall, included the Data East flipper on the "Tommy" musical float, along with cast members. The London and Frankfurt coin-op shows in January provided venues for the coin-op's intro to the game, and U.S. players got their first crack at *Tommy* during the PAPA tournament in New York. Domestic samples began shipping to the U.S. market in mid-February, with production shipments expected to begin by the time this article appears.

"It truly is the quintessential pinball title," said Joe Kaminkow. "*Tommy* is actually a rock 'n' roll game, of course, based on the Broadway musical. Our game captures all the ear-pleasing excitement of that famous score with Data East's digital BSMT sound system...and the game's soundtrack pours out plenty of songs from the musical, including 'Pinball Wizard' plus 'Amazing Journey' and 21 others, all sung by the Broadway cast and reproduced in rich, orchestral sound."

The game features colorful characters and images from the play on the backglass and cabinet. A 10" silver pinball sits atop the backbox. Double steel ramps on the playfield are enhanced by three pop bumpers, double spinners, and a nonstop barrage of additional features. Perhaps the most unique gameplay gimmick: a fan comes out to cover your flippers to put you into "Tommy Mode" — like the title character, you're blind and unable to see the flippers in action!

*Tommy's* design team, headed by Joe, included Curt Anderson, Jack Liddon, Lonnie Rop, Brian Schmidt, Ed Cebula, Lyman Sheats, and Markus (no last name given).

On the video front, Data East is now a licensee for the Neo-Geo system. Their first system title was a comic adventure called *Spin Master*. Their next issue is called *Windjammers*, and it releases around Feb. 15. This one's a sci-fi frisbee competition game. More Neo-Geo titles are




From head to heels (or rather, backbox to playfield), the new *Tommy* is as "today" as its 1975 ancestor of the same name was in the electro mechanical days.



Data East's head pinball designer Joe Kaminkow is promising another "killer pin" with *Tommy*...one more game in his string of licensed-theme flippers. Shown above with C3PO at a trade show, he reminds that the company's *Star Wars* pin hit the top of the charts last January. Is a *Tommy* reprise in the offing?
Speaking of reprise, this is the second pinball using the "Tommy" license. Bally intro'd the first back in January of 1975 in the pre-electronic days. It did quite well, as veterans will remember.



Data East Pinball's original 22,000 sq. ft. factory (at 1990 Janice Ave. in Melrose Park does final assembly. It also houses engineering offices and the purchasing departments.

coming, with at least three or four titles under development right now.

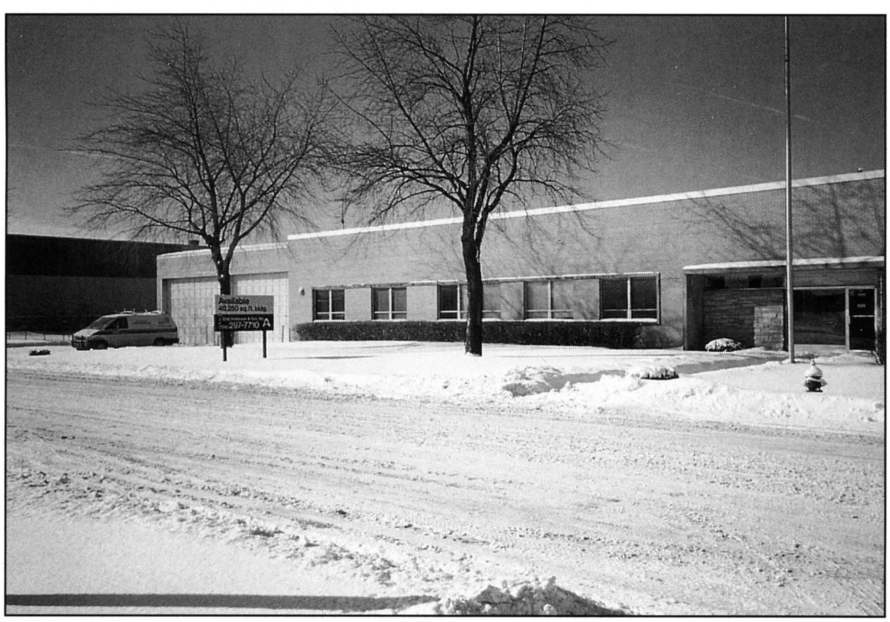
"We intend to be a major player in providing software for Neo-Geo in the U.S. and Canada," declared executive vice president/GM of Data East USA Paul Jacobs. Readers may recall that this popular coin-op vet used to be the head SNK of America himself...so he sure knows the territory!

How's the Chicago consolidation plan going? Fast! The DE management committee is moving to Chicago and some other positions are being phased out to reduce duplication of accounting and service depts., Paul said. Moving to the Windy City environs are Jacobs, VP of finance Holly Mathis, EVP/liaison Toru Hariu, and VP/administration Kiyo Sugie. Pinball division GM Gary Stern, already in Chicago, is also a member of the management committee.

The goal is to have the move completed by mid-May, Jacobs said. Data East's consumer division remains in California, along with some coin-op video market research functions. Earnings tests of coin-op games will continue to be done in Northern California arcades, for example.

The consolidation move will help Data East prepare for a slightly leaner market, Jacobs said. "The last couple of years in pinball has been boom-boom times," he pointed out. "Today's product is better than ever, both from us and from our competitors. In London, our *Tommy* pinball showed as well as any we've ever had. But the market is filled up, settled a bit, so for a while the next little while sales numbers may be a bit diminished. I think this situation has hit Europe a little quicker than the U.S., but that's basically going to be the situation here too. In all, 1994 probably won't be as quite as breezy as 1992 and most of '93."

As far as video goes, "We're definitely in a hit syndrome," said



The new Data East factory and office facility offers 40,250 sq. ft. Located at 2020 Janice Ave., it's slated to be operational by April 1st and will house executive and sales offices, the accounting and credit departments, customer and field service people and some equipment sub-assembly (like wire harnessing).

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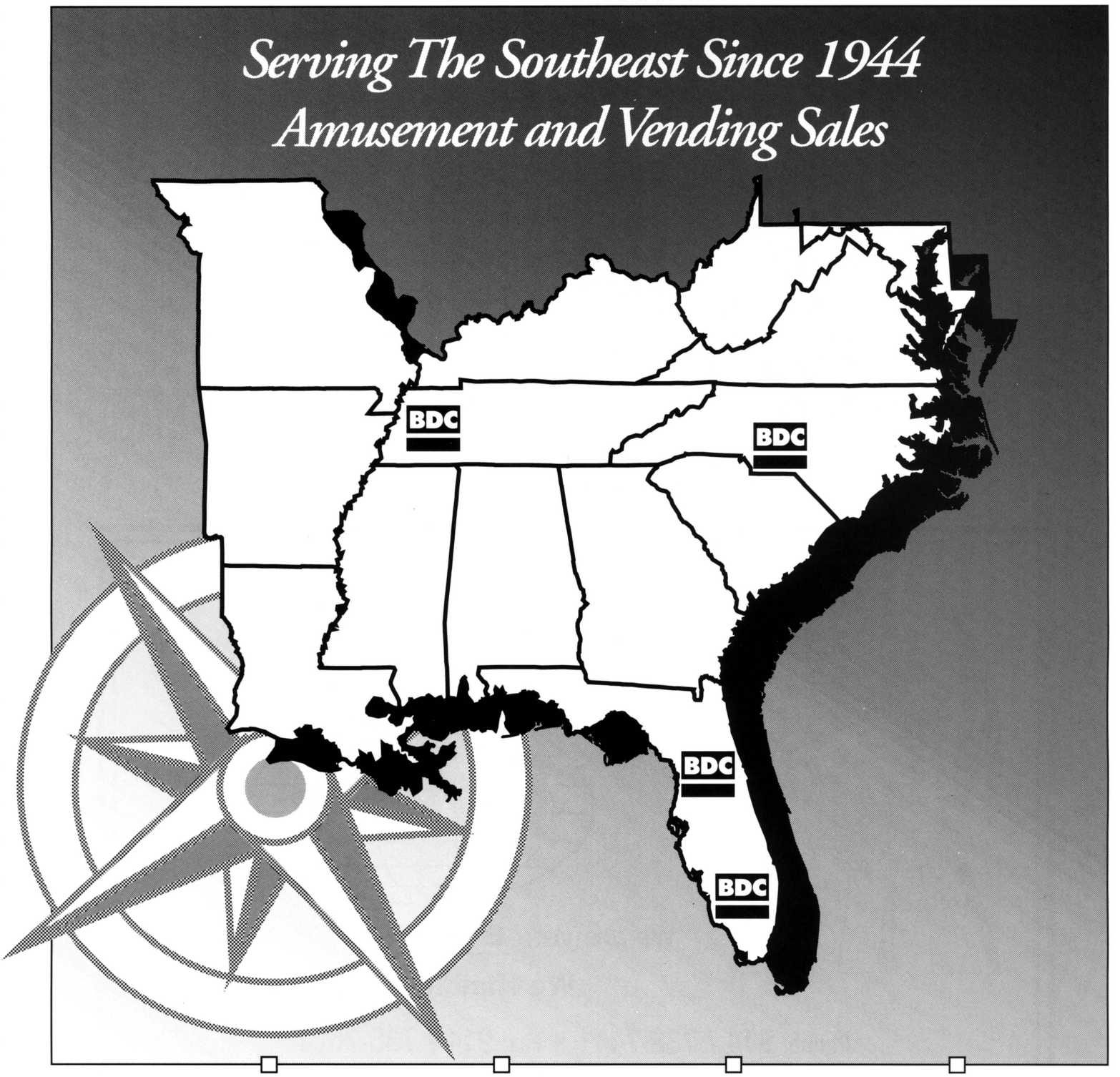


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The wire harness line is currently set up in a temporary second building and will eventually move to the new facility at 2020 Janice. The folks above are working on components for the new *Tommy* flipper.

Jacobs. "That syndrome gets stronger every year, in fact. People zero in on just one product at a time. If you have the number one game you're a hero, but some other firms' video products hasn't performed as well as hoped. Even with Neo-Geo games — which have a readymade hardware base in the field — your software product has to be extremely strong to displace titles that are already in place, already paid for, and already making money."

How will Data East meet the challenge of a market that demands even more quality and better performance? Simple — by giving it to them! "We are setting the highest standards for ourselves, both in pinball and video software, and also in the redemption properties we consider," stated Paul Jacobs. "With excellent product backed by our new 'lean and mean' corporate team, Data East USA will definitely keep a high profile as one of the leading coin-op competitors this year. You can count on it!" ◆




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# ACE & ACME MERGE

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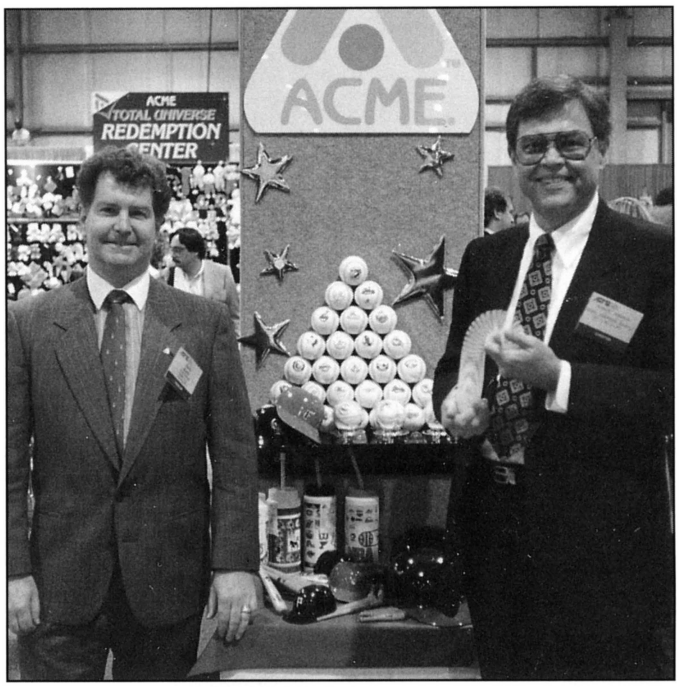


Here we've caught up with Acme Premium Supply folks Jack Kelly and Robert Dawson to say "Hi" and hear about their line of official licensed sports goods.

Two of the trade's leading prize wholesalers, Ace Novelty Co. and Acme Premium Supply Corp., completed their merger in late January. The new organization will operate as a single sales outfit with two separate product lines under the umbrella name of Ace/Acme.

Execs said proudly that their combined companies will have the product versatility and administrative unity of General Motors. That is, Ace/Acme will offer the plush toy equivalent of Chevy, Pontiac and Cadillac under the same dealer's roof: different development, design and pricing, but unified administration and logistical support!

"We are confident that this merger will be beneficial to our customers," said Ace president Ron Mayers. "Our ratio of sales and service people per customer will be much higher as a result. This, combined with the increased number of shipping points, will make us much more responsive to customers' needs."

Acme president Bob Dawson pointed out that "The merger also allows us to streamline and eliminate many duplicated operations. The result is a much stronger company that will operate more cost effectively. That translates into a greater ability to offer an even wider variety of merchandise at competitive prices."

Mayers said Ken Kellerhals will run the combined park/carnival sales force and oversee the Acme line. John Dyer will supervise the arcade/FEC division. Ed Plotkin will supervise the Ace product line and be responsible for distributor sales. A network of regional sales and service staff rounds out the Ace/Acme team, operating from widespread distribution centers (Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Seattle, New Jersey, Atlanta, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto). The company has just completed a 180-page amusement catalog and a 40-page redemption and arcade catalog.

For more information, contact Ace president Ron Mayers at 206/644-1820.



With their Jurrassaic Park dinosaur collection are Ace Novelty's Ed Plotkin, Steve McCaul, Rorie Keller and operator Leon Cauchois of Palisades Amusements.

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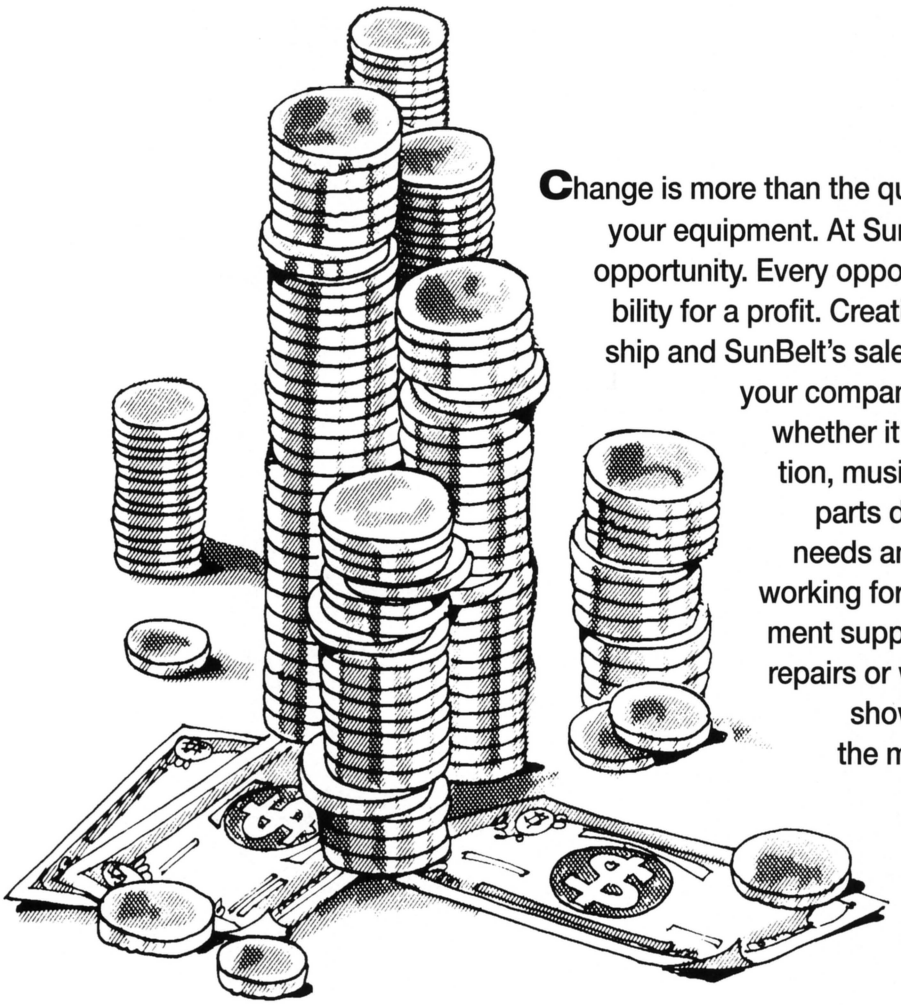

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# REVENUE SHARING

*letter from an operator prompts response from the manufacturer*

*"Revenue sharing" is the industry's term for a type of "lend-lease" operating where the manufacturer retains ownership of his game, but an operator runs it on location and pays by giving the factory a percentage of the cash box take. It's a controversial idea and some manufacturers have taken a lot of heat for dabbling with it in the past. Many operators are worried that revenue sharing is just the opening shot in a campaign by some Japanese factories to take over U.S. street operations. Many distributors resent being left out of the marketing chain.*

*George Randall, an operator in Washington state, saw an item on revenue sharing in our January, 1994 "Hot Off the Press" section and decided to write us a letter detailing his own personal experience. Here it is...followed by a reply from SNK Corp. of America and then our own comments–the editor.*

•

## WASHINGTON OP POPS QUESTION

*Dear RePlay:*

Where is the line drawn on operator, distributor and manufacturer? This past year, myself and another operator shared a chain of convenience stores — approximately 50 stores each. They were not anything very large, but they produced a fair amount for the games required. We operated with the normal approach of trying new games and old games to realize what would produce. I estimate only 10 of these stores would support what you and I would describe as "high-earning equipment." We'd been in these stores for several years, and believed everything was satisfactory with Plaid Pantries Stores.

Well, one day back in May of 1993, we received a call that we should come in and pull all our equipment as quickly as possible. I presumed they had decided not to have games in their stores any more. We started pulling equipment shortly.

On checking back at the stores, we found somebody had replaced our one game with two new Neo-Geo 25" two-slot cabinets. After checking with some of the other stores, I found they were doing this in all the stores. They were placing $6,000 worth of equipment into stores that traditionally produced less than $100 per month. I couldn't understand how an operator could afford to install low-end stores with such expensive equipment.

Upon examining the situation further, it appeared that maybe we were competing with a manufacturer instead of an operator. Every game in every story was the same: *World Heroes* and *3 Count Bout* were installed in each and every cabinet. Even with two cabinets per store, they installed the same games.

It seems there wasn't any involvement from our local distributor. At least, that's what I was told. Recently there was an article in reference to this in *RePlay*. It disturbed me. As a longtime subscriber, I thought I'd write to you and maybe get a better feeling of your stand on this issue. We operators cannot compete with manufacturers. Since your magazine seems to be fair, I thought I would give you our side of the problem.

*Sincerely,*

*George Randall*
*Vice President*
*Coin Enterprises, Inc.*
*790 S.E. Middle Way*
*Vancouver, Washington 98664*

## SNK TAKES "LONG, HARD LOOK"

*Dear RePlay:*

First of all, I would like to thank you for allowing SNK Corp. of America to respond to this question on revenue sharing.

I have previously made a statement to *RePlay* magazine that SNK does revenue share on a limited basis. As a testing program, the revenue share program has assisted us in gaining valuable information through a street operator's perspective.

I am certain that you are aware of the fact that our Neo-Geo game system is one of the few affordable street pieces left in the video game arena. It is because of our commitment to the street operator that we felt a need to expose ourselves to this part of the industry.

Although the revenue sharing program has been a valuable tool for our research and development department, we are not looking to expand this program; we are in fact curtailing it. Over the past few months we have taken a long hard look at revenue sharing and come to the conclusion that it is not in SNK's best interest.

This experience has verified to us the importance of the distributor's role in our industry. Without distribution in the picture, the service and support that we all depend on to keep operations running smoothly is greatly diminished.

Our goal at SNK has been and will continue to be to provide quality products at affordable prices and help maintain a healthy industry. This is the single most important role we as a manufacturer can play to assist the operators and ensure their success.

I apologize to those operators who feel they were hurt in some way by our revenue sharing program. This was certainly not our intent. I also feel that we will all benefit from the knowledge that we have gained through this experience in the future.

*Sincerely,*

*Marty Kitazawa*
*President*
*SNK Corp. of America*
*Torrance, California*

# REVENUE SHARING

## HOT POTATO OR VIABLE ALTERNATIVE? AN ESSAY

In the past, *RePlay* has printed news about revenue sharing, whenever information was available *on the record*. We have reported the fact that some operators like it, while other operators (and most distributors, apparently) dislike it. We reported it when AMOA released a statement suggesting that their operator members "carefully consider" such a business arrangement if one was offered.

Who likes revenue sharing, besides manufacturers? Frankly, we know several very large, well-known, and highly professional operators who are quite open to the idea of taking games on a revenue sharing basis. Tony Parina, reportedly California's largest street operator (Automatic Merchandising), has publicly acknowledged his willingness to try revenue sharing under the right circumstances.

Three other AMOA board members, including people in positions of great respect and authority, are also positive about the revenue sharing idea, at least in theory. We're talking about three very major street operations in all areas of the country. These fellows are reluctant to speak out publicly on this controversial issue right now, but at any rate, they have given revenue sharing *the nod* and we respect their intelligence, experience and judgment.

The same goes for Atari founder Nolan Bushnell, who has pointed out that revenue sharing is the basic way business is done in the movie industry (theater owners never buy or own prints of each new film they show; they just "rent" movies from distributors and pay back a percentage of the box office receipts). Bushnell has stated that as video games become more elaborate, technologically advanced, and expensive, this sort of marketing system may become necessary in order for video games to remain profitable.

Under certain carefully structured conditions, we believe revenue sharing actually *could* be a viable way of doing business in the coin-op industry. The basic moral principle behind those carefully structured conditions comes down to this: "Manufacturers show loyalty by not competing with their customers," as we recently stated in an essay on an unrelated subject ("The Small Operator," January 1994 issue.)

What specific conditions would be necessary for successful and proper revenue sharing? They include working through distributors, as the movie and music industries do. Although certain Japanese manufacturers sometimes seem to question the need for distributors, the U.S. coin-op distribu-


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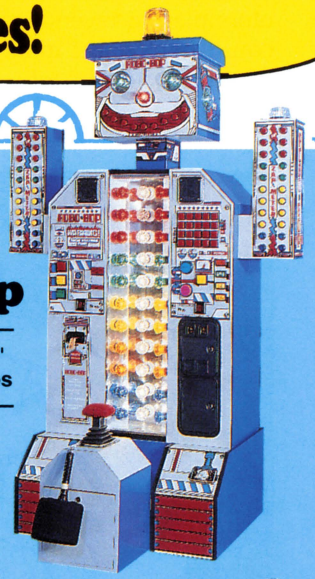




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### Bing-O-Pop

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Weight: 375 lbs.

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tion network plays a vital role in creating market discipline and efficiency in this spread-out, diffuse nation. Besides, most operators like and trust their distributors, and don't wish to give them up.

What role could or should distributors play in revenue sharing? They could help point manufacturers to the local operators who would make the likeliest partners for this sort of program. Distributors could help advise operators on the best sorts of locations to use in connection with revenue sharing. They could help oversee collections and reporting. They could help both manufacturers and operators decide which products should be marketed through revenue sharing, and which should be marketed through traditional sales.

In simpler terms, selected distributors could perform the necessary function of territorial "agent" between manufacturers, and operators, in the full measure of what an agency function means.

Working through the operator rather than with any location owner is another requirement, in our view, for revenue sharing to be successful. Ideally, it would be nice if the manufacturers decided to work through *local* operators. However — as a former AMOA president has reluctantly pointed out — there's certainly nothing unfair or illegal about working with national operators.

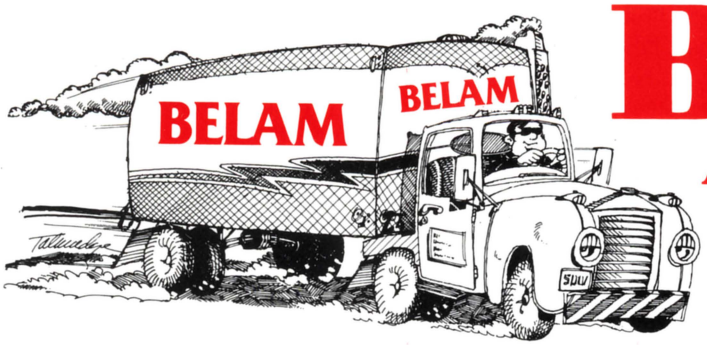
Other conditions for proper and successful revenue sharing would have to include assurances that participating operators do not receive preferential treatment in terms of earlier supplies, superior quantity, and better format of hot product (i.e. chips vs. entire kits or dedicated games, etc.) than non-participating operators receive. (By the way, it is our understanding that any variation from this point might conceivably constitute an anti-trust violation under U.S. federal law.) In addition, we believe the commission structure for all revenue sharing participants should be standardized within a single company's "stable" of operator partners.

Ideally, we believe revenue sharing should be conducted on a fair and competitive basis, such that any well-run operation which met certain standard criteria would qualify for participation in such a program. This may be very difficult to execute in the real world, but some attempt should be made. (Again, this is an area where distributors could perhaps play a role, helping to qualify potential operators to be partners in revenue sharing.)

Finally, we believe it's important that revenue sharing be conducted openly. The policy of secrecy, which has too often surrounded this subject, only creates suspicion and division. This hurts everyone. If revenue sharing is a reasonable, honorable method of doing business — as its proponents maintain — then they shouldn't hide it.

Any honest discussion of this question must also take into the account the different styles and philosophies of doing business between the U.S. and Japan. All Japanese industries are conducted

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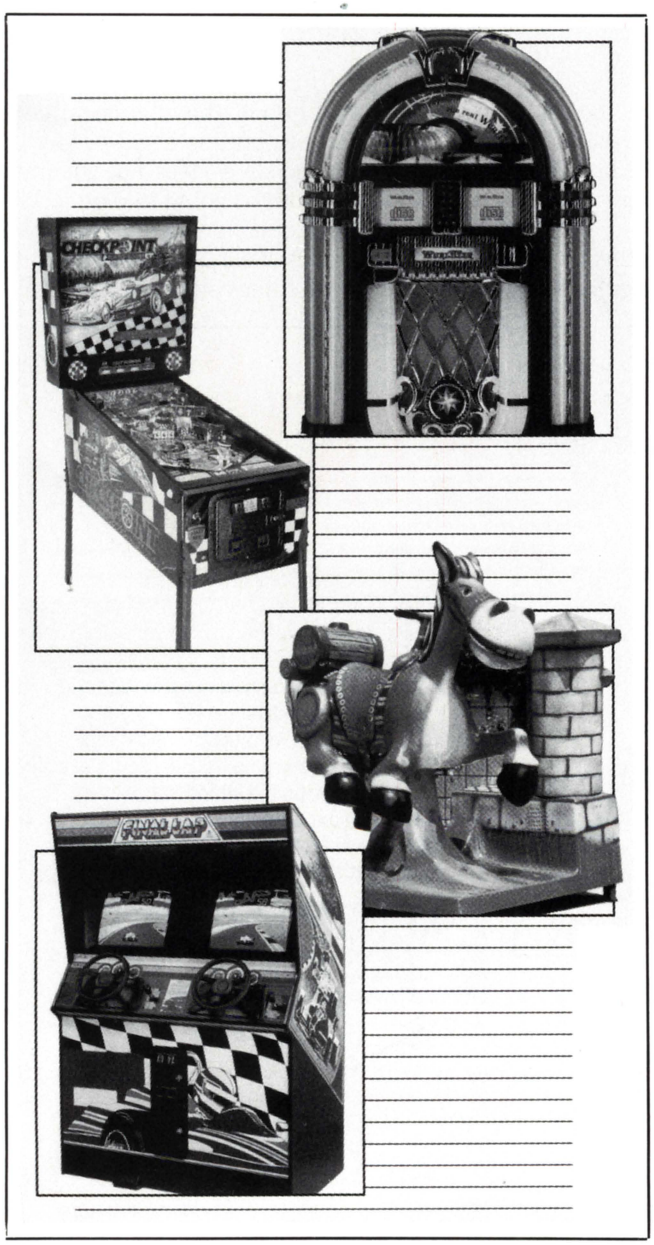


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through a series of very close, long-standing alliances between suppliers, partners, etc.

In the coin-op realm, many Japanese manufacturers began as operators and eventually became their own "suppliers." Given this background, they genuinely have a hard time understanding why this system is so unpopular in the USA.

In this country when a firm undertakes to manufacture, distribute and retail its own product, that is called "vertical integration." Our laws go through periodic cycles where this is considered wrong, and during those times we see Uncle Sam breaking up the big combinations ("trust busting," they used to call it) as with the oil and gas industry, or the movie industry 50 years ago, or the telephone industry 20 years ago.

But at other times in our history, vertical integration is considered perfectly okay...such as right now, when the same companies that make TV sets and radios (like GE) are allowed to own TV and radio networks (like NBC), and they are also allowed to own the local "retail" stores as well (like stations KNBC in L.A. and station WNBC in New York). Coin-op amusement is undergoing a transition from a mom-and-pop business to a professional, "corporate" industry. Like it or not, vertical integration could be a growing part of that trend.

But let us say this: we believe strongly in the traditional three-tiered coin-op market chain of manufacturer, distributor and operator. We think each level has a unique job to do. In many cases, each level probably doesn't fully appreciate how hard the others' jobs really are. We get the feeling that oftentimes, factories are tempted to try revenue sharing because they think they can do a better job of operating than their traditional customers.

We suspect some manufacturers who try operating themselves (which is different from revenue sharing) are in for a tough lesson. They are going to find out that operating on the street is a lot harder than it looks. They are going to find out that nobody can beat the efficiency, dedication, technical know-how, and competitive spirit of the local operator on his own turf. (Indeed, at least one Japanese manufacturer's operating director readily admits this.)

If they don't know it already, manufacturers who try street operating themselves are also going to learn that the American market is very different from that of other countries. Much of our market is rural, spread-out, and absolutely demands ridiculously cheap prices. Accordingly much of our market will not automatically support elaborate, hi-tech, high-priced items with big play prices...no matter how glitzy the neon on the game may be.

Some of the companies which have tried revenue sharing have already learned these lessons. Earnings were not as good as they had hoped, the manufacturers admit. Simply putting a lot of new product on the street does not guarantee that anybody is going to play it. Well, the local operators could have told them that...but sometimes, you just have to learn things on your own! ◆


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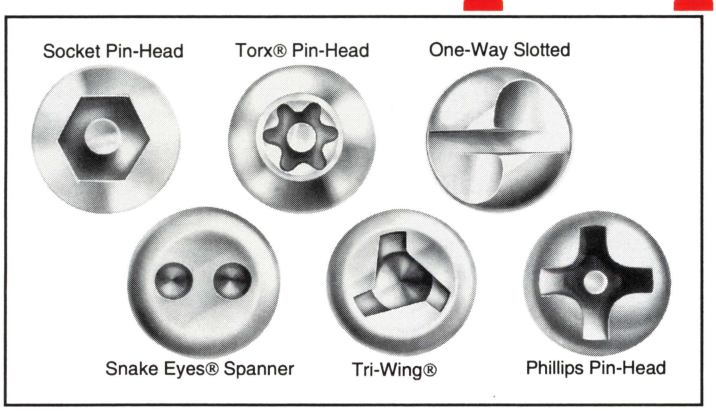


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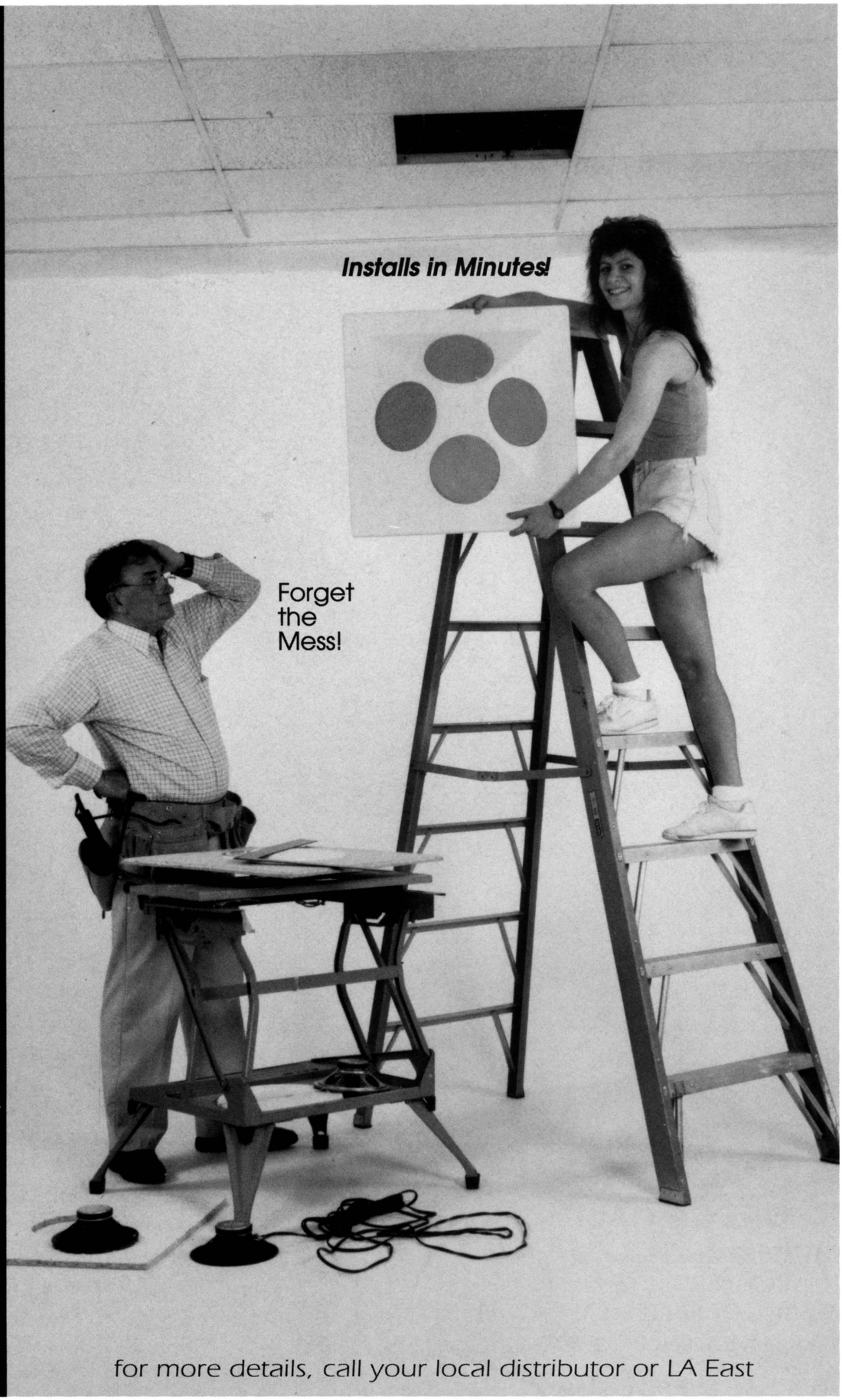


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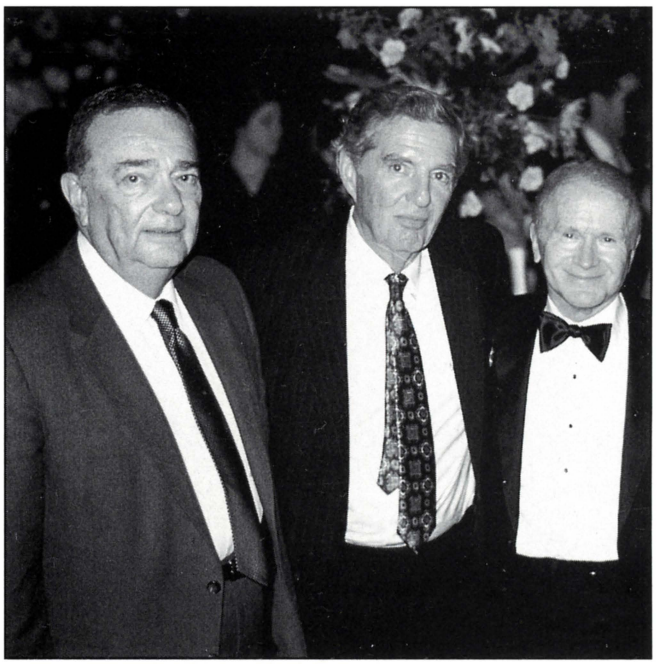
distributor profile



# THE RELAXED PROFESSIONAL

*Joel Kleiman has made distribution "look easy" since 1963; his Pioneer Sales & Service prides itself on integrity*

"This business is mountains and valleys, and we're very much looking forward to the next 'mountain' to climb." That simple but profound statement is typical of Joel Kleiman, president and co-founder of Pioneer Sales & Service (Menomonee Falls, Wisc.).

One of the most trusted distributors in any territory in the U.S., Joel is universally respected for his thorough-going honesty and integrity. His keen intellect and successful business record could justify a big ego — but instead, Joel Kleiman's style is relaxed, easygoing, unpretentious. He doesn't have to toot his own horn because he has the total self-confidence and the vast, sure knowledge that goes with complete professionalism. No wonder Joel is liked personally by tradesters at every level of the industry!

As longtime customer Dick Jacomet (Red's Novelty, West Allis, Wisc.) explained: "Joel Kleiman is a softspoken person who keeps to himself, yet he's very dynamic and knowledgeable about the coin machine industry. I've known him personally for a long time and dealt with his business for 35 or 40 years. He's a man of his word and gives operators good advice. I've had a very good relationship with his whole dealership."

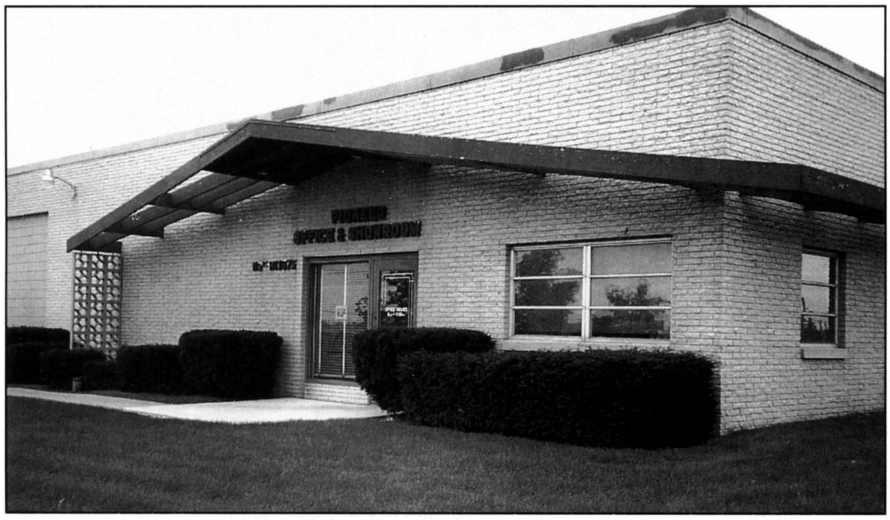
## FACILITIES & STAFF

Now launching into its fourth decade, Pioneer Sales & Service does business from two offices. Their 23,000 sq. ft. headquarters is located in a Milwaukee suburb. There Joel and his co-founder and partner, Pioneer VP Sam Cooper, lead an experienced and dedicated team of coin-op experts. Sam spends most of his time on game and music sales. Scott Larkin is Pioneer's vending sales manager. Joel's son Jonathan is learning the business and sells product in both amusements and vending. Joe Timmerman, a 25 year veteran, heads the parts department. "He knows the numbers without looking in a book!" Joel said. Paul Stachnik helps in parts.

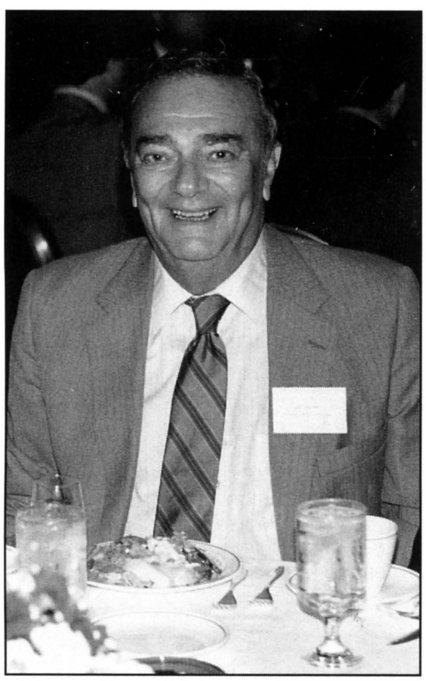
Rob Jorgenson and Ron Toman run the vending service department "which is really tops," according to the boss. Steve Sommer does phonograph service. Dave Schlueter and Jeff Nelson are Pioneer's fine technicians for video and pinball electronics. David Dropp adds a hand "wherever we need it." Office staff includes receptionist Mary Houtrous, accounts receivable supervisor Edith Brantner and office manager Karen Holtz. Shipping/receiving staff includes Bob Majeske and Pam Mauher.

Pioneer's headquarters features two showrooms — one for games, one for vending. Sales offices are located adjacent to one of the showrooms where customers walk in. There's a very large parts department and service area. The loading dock and two drive-in are open for opera-

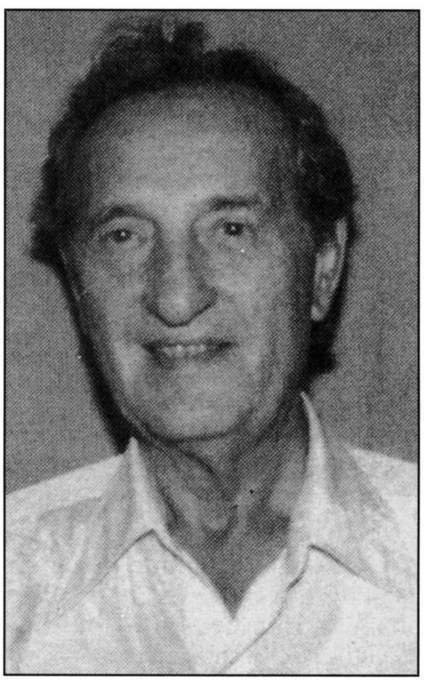
(photo above) Joel Kleiman (left) with Bally scion Bill O'Donnell and veteran comedian Red Button were snapped at an ACME show in New Orleans years back. Joel's no stranger to celebrities: he spent a portion of his World War II tour in Army Special in Hollywood where he hobnobbed with many famous actors of that era (some still famous in black and white movies on late night TV).



Here's the Pioneer office and showroom in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. The 22,000 sq. ft. facility includes twin truck loading docks (you can see one to the far left of the photo).



Pioneer Sales & Service president Joel Kleiman co-founded the firm in 1963.



VP Sam Cooper co-founded the Pioneer distributorship with his partner Joel Kleiman.

tors' and suppliers' trucks to come and go. Plenty of warehouse space takes up the rest.

Pioneer opened a Green Bay branch office around 1988, taking over a former Bally Distributing facility. The place is two hours' drive away "and it gives us coverage in the northern part of the state," Joel said. The former Bally branch manager, Ralph Lubinski, came over to Pioneer at the time of the change. Joel calls him a "top professional" who runs that office "in its entirety" with his own parts and service staff. The headquarters branch does bookkeeping for both on its computers. Trucks run back and forth between the two branches constantly.

## BUSINESS IS STEADY

Business is steady, the Pioneer chief said. "My sales figures for 1993 are about 2% off from 1992," Joel noted. "Vending has picked up some slack and the Rowe CD jukebox is still primary out there — just a great line to have. We also represent Automatic Products which is a super line, and the Vendo can vender which does extremely well. So we feel we have top-of-the-line products we can feel good about selling. Our primary end location in Wisconsin is the tavern," Joel added. "We have bowling alleys and a few arcades, but not too many.

"Unfortunately with our particular area, video today isn't as great as in some other regions of the country," Kleiman said. "It's slowed down materially, with the normal problem of coming up with the right product at the right price. Many operators



The vending showroom has a functional, no-nonsense look that's also comfortable and familiar.



Another part of the game showroom with a solid lineup of current product on display for Wisconsin operators.

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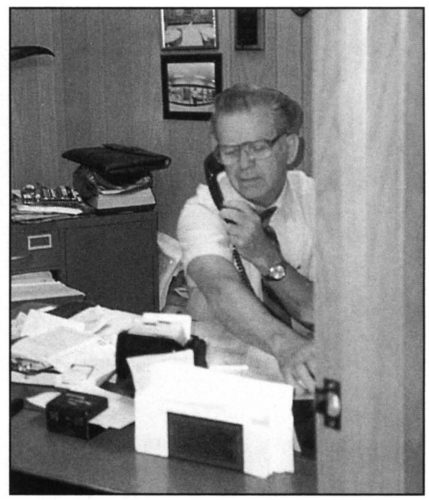
have simply taken videos out because the location doesn't care to have them anymore. Operators are still pushing them around rather than warehousing them, but DWI laws and the shift to more social drinking at home has made the business in general a little softer. But pool tables are good, soccer tables are moving a bit, and dart games are a very big item in Wisconsin. There's always something moving somewhere. Even a few video games do well, though the numbers are a fraction of what they used to be."

Challenges confront the Wisconsin coinbiz from various sources these days. DWI has already been mentioned. In addition, over a dozen Indian casinos in the northern part of Wisconsin are busy from morning to night (some are open 24 hours a day...and there's even an Indian casino in downtown Milwaukee!). These establishments are luring away not just the operators' business, but also taverns, gas stations, restaurants and other hospitality industries. How can operators survive? Well, the state is still living with a recent court ruling that amusement-only poker games are legal, but paying money to winners is illegal. This has created some market confusion and inconsistency of law enforcement in different areas of the state. Legal battles over the situation are still in the state courts at this writing.

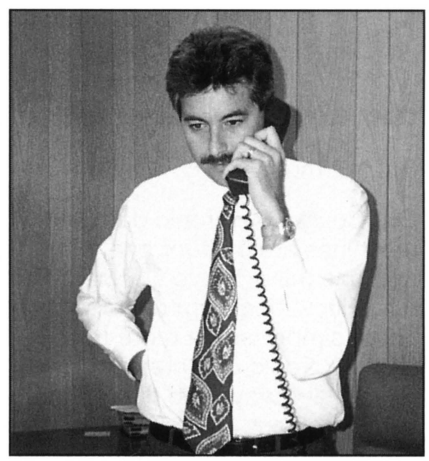
## OPERATORS ARE HOLDING THEIR OWN

Despite the problems, Pioneer's customers remain strong competitors. "The operators, by and large, watch their bottom line," Joel said. "They seem to be holding their own fairly well. A lot of our customers are the same people or the families of the customers we had in 1962, but today the approach is far more professional. They are extremely intelligent business people. They have computers and keep careful records. They know exactly what they can invest, and what it must earn. They have their own excellent service personnel. And they are very conservative buyers — they don't gamble on something being great; they want to make sure it's great before they buy it."

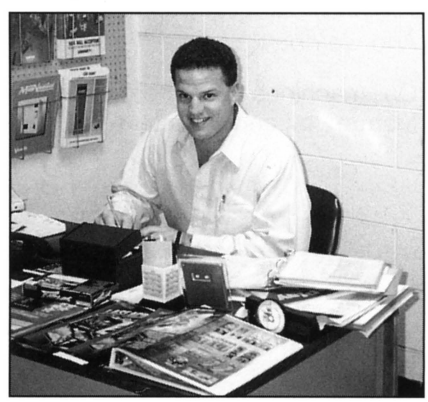
Joel said with a chuckle: "From a practical standpoint, I have to agree with them, because I like to get paid! As a distributor, we really can't shove equipment at our customers. We also want to make sure it's the right type for him to profit with, or eventually everyone suffers." (And there you see the low-key, on-your-side approach that makes Joel so popular with operators.)



Sales manager Dan Karolzak keeps working those phones!



Scott Larkin is manager of vending sales.



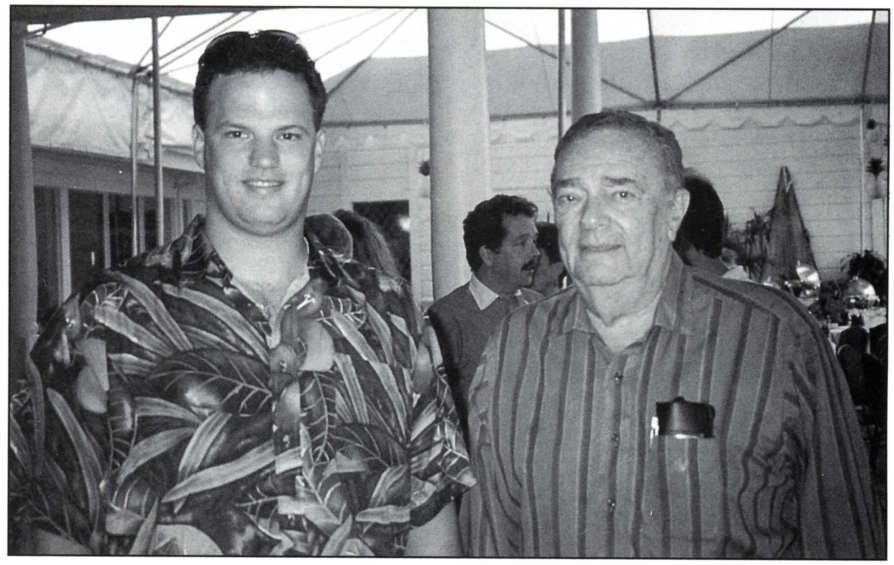
Jonathan Kleiman (Joel's son) keeps all the product brochures handy for his sales work.

## THE JOEL KLEIMAN STORY

Joel Kleiman's coin-op career is a story of decades-long dedication to the industry. He took his degree in retailing from NYU, then flew B-17s over Guadalcanal, Midway, and other hot spots during World War II. He exited the Air Force in 1945 and went to work for Sears, Roebuck in Chicago in merchandising.

In late 1947, Sears decided to try the vending business. "I think I just happened to be working along at the right time, or wrong time," Joel said with a smile. "They called me over and asked to look into what vending was all about, and start a vending operation in their Memphis mail-order plant."

He worked for Mills candy route on Saturdays to learn the biz. He ordered 50 Stoner candy machines from Harry Stoner, and acquired some chrome Adams penny gum machines, peanut venders, Mills candy machines. He placed them at Sears and used the company's prestigious name to get luxury vending items (such as quality chocolate bars from Hershey) that nobody else could get at the time.



Proud papa Joel with son Jon at a 1993 Sega meeting for distributors.

"I was originally the sole employee," Joel recalled. "Like, take a pushcart, fill 'em up, do the inventory, collect the money and turn it over to the cashier!" Joel added cold drinks and got the first *Vendo V-83*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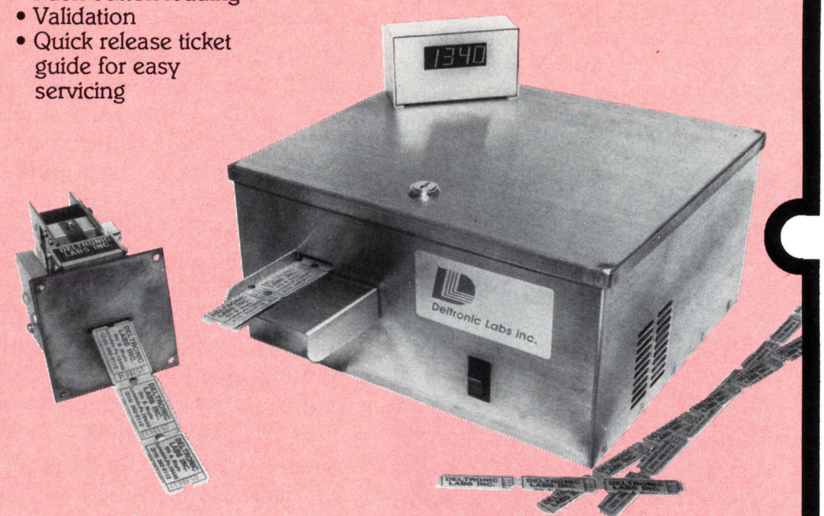


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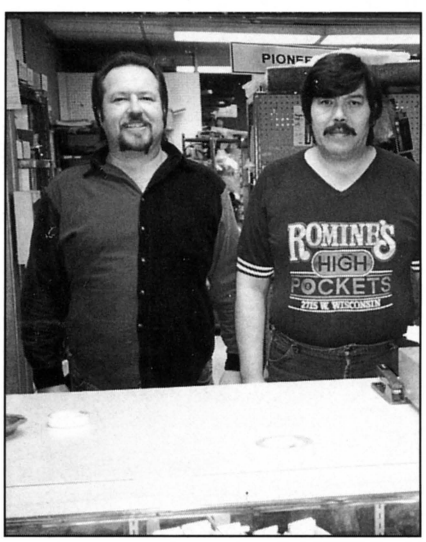
and *Mills 120* machines to sell cold, bottled Coca-Cola. Sandwich vending, sold through pastry machines, followed. "I had all the sandwiches picked up from the machines at 2:30 PM every day and sold them at different bars on my way home," Joel said. "We always had fresh goods and it was a huge success."

Joel's operation became so successful that it slowly began taking business away from the established operator (Canteen Co. of America) at other Sears mail-order plants, plus retail locations.

Joel left Sears around 1950 and went to work as assistant to the president for Canteen. Based in the Chicago Merchandise Mart, it was a national company with corporate branches and distributor-owned operations. He worked on projects like the first high-quality hot food vender. Canteen bought a cigarette and candy vending machine manufacturer called Rowe (you may have heard of them) which also had routes in major cities. Joel served as part of Canteen's liaison team to Rowe at first. After the combined outfit bought AMI, he became president of the Rowe factories. He set up a major distribution network assisted by Dean McMurdy, whom they hired away from Seeburg.

"Basically we bought some distributorships," Joel said, "like Trimount in Boston, Bush in Florida, Atlas in Chicago, and R.F. Jones on the West Coast. From there, we were able to get more important distributors on our team. By about 1962, Seeburg was getting into trouble and we acquired some of their dealers. Meantime, I was very anxious to get into business for myself. The Wisconsin area opened up for distribution and I was able to get that as a distributor. Pioneer Sales & Service was born."



In parts we have Paul Stachnik and parts manager Joe Timmerman.


Office staff includes inventory controller Mary Houtrous, accounts supervisor Edith Brantner (seated) office manager Karen Holtz.

## THE FOUNDING OF PIONEER

Joel brought in his partner Sam Cooper, who had managed a prior local distributor, as co-founder. A few other experienced staff rounded out the team. "We started from go at an office near downtown Milwaukee," Joel said. "Our main lines then included Rowe vending and AMI phonographs, Bally's games and Chicago Coin. We were the first distributor for Brunswick *Air Hockey* and I dealt with Chuck Milhem. A decade later the neighborhood was having trouble with break-ins, so I found a spot in the suburbs, Menomonee Falls. We moved there and that's still our location today.

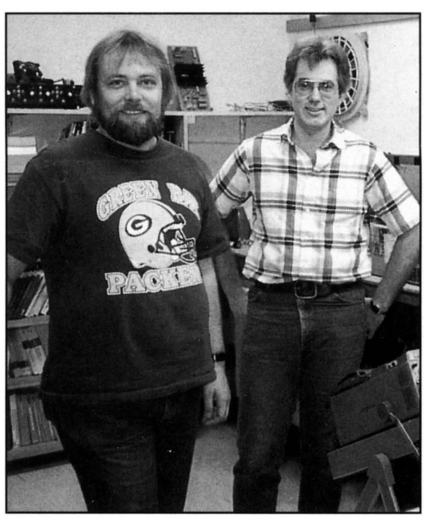
"It's a funny thing — I recently ran across a moving announcement we mailed at the time," Joel said. "In 1972, we represented a list of companies of which very few are left today. Our lines included Rowe/AMI, Rowe vending, Chicago Coin, Brunswick, Allied Leisure, Bally Mfg., Atari, Mirco, Ramtek, Gremlin, Exidy, Edco, Tournament Soccer, Irving Kaye, Valley, Fisher, and United. It's unbelievable how much has changed in 20 years!" he declared.

"When *Pac-Man* first came out, you couldn't sell the darned thing. Then after a couple of months, it took over the industry. The new rage!" The game was "a perfect tavern piece" which mean it worked great in Wisconsin's staple locations. "You didn't have to be a genius to play it, but you could improve," Joel said. "Video games grew like topsy. Instead of being 25% of the business, suddenly it was 50%. That lasted quite a while."

## REFLECTIONS ON TODAY'S BIZ

Coin-op is very different in the 1990s from the old days, Joel believes. "The whole distribution area has changed a lot, and so has the way the whole business is set up," he said. "It used to be most distributors stayed in their own territory and there wasn't too much problem in that area. If you had a competitor that wanted to sell something you handled, he called you and you said: Okay, we'll give you this for $50 over invoice and you do the same for us with one of your pieces. Today you don't find that. A lot of distributors sell whatever they can, wherever they can. A few of the manufacturers have gone out of their way trying to protect the distributors' area, but not too many. A lot feel distributors should try to police themselves, although I don't know how that's possible!"

Joel also sees changes in the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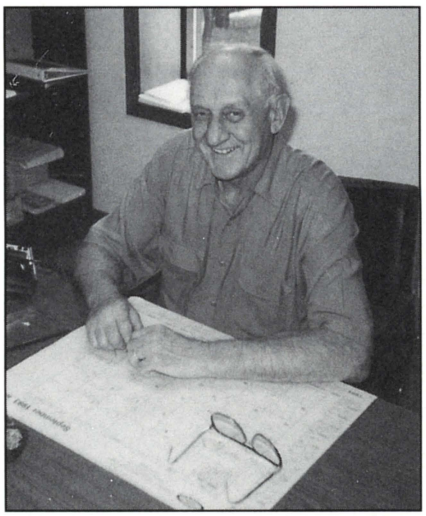
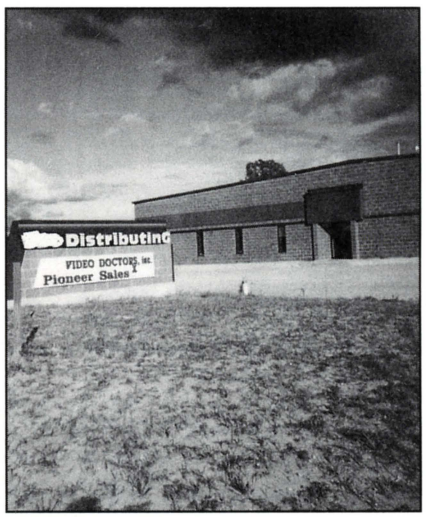


Ralph Lubinski is manager of Pioneer's branch office in Green Bay.

nature of relationships with factories and operators. "We used to have a steadier relationship with operators," he said. "Today they're out shopping more than ever before. Relationships with factories are generally very positive with a great deal of trust. They know which people give them a fair shake. The game area is a little more difficult because factories aren't making as much as they used to, but most factories know we do our darnedest to sell their product. We find them fair in wanting the best possible representation and we try to give it. If we don't, we don't make any money either!"

Pioneer's business philosophy reflects Joel Kleiman's own laid-back style. "We've been here a long time and developed a good rapport with our customers and manufacturers," he said. "We feel comfortable and enjoy doing what we're doing. We try to make sure everyone gets a fair shake, and we bend over backwards to help any customers who may run into problems."

Integrity...and working hard to meet the operators' needs...are what sets Pioneer apart, Joel feels. "Our strongest competitive edge is the fact that we really go overboard in protecting the product that we sell, technically," he stated. "We have excellent service and parts backup. We don't get pushy about selling things to people who really can't afford it.




The new Pioneer building in Green Bay is 20,000 sq. ft. they share with Video Dr.

And we have built up a reputation for integrity with the operator. If we say something, we do our very best to make sure it's the complete and truthful information that the operator needs to know. Now and then — not too often — we make a goof like anyone. But even then, we pride ourselves on standing behind our customers."

For the future, Joel is hoping to see an inexpensive video that's suited for taverns. "We have yet to see some new technology that will really take over and help that area of the business," he said. "Sega's *Virtua Fighter* is a good start, but we don't know how well elaborate virtual reality pieces with headsets will perform in average locations. It seems to be coming, but how much it will cost, and how the market will respond, is hard to tell. Meantime we're sticking with our basics: jukeboxes, pool tables, vending machines, sports games."

Joel Kleiman is happy with the life of a respected distributor. "Frankly I just enjoy the business in general," he said. "You have a nice contractual relationship with a lot of people...both from a customer standpoint and a manufacturer standpoint. You're busy every day. Something always comes up. It's a challenge! We still have a lot of confidence in this industry. We look forward to continuing to serve our customers."

Pioneer Sales & Service is located at No. 55 W. 13875 Oak Lane, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051. The phone is 414/781-1420. Fax is 414-781-4307. ◆

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# A CHAT WITH MAURY FERCHEN

*the genial, expert CEO of Aladdin's Castle discusses arcade operations; Namco's buy opened new opportunities that he's aggressively pursuing*

Aladdin's Castle is perhaps the most famous single arcade chain in the United States. The company was founded as American Amusements (AKA Carousel Time) by Jules Millman in 1968, a man some consider the "pioneer" of mall arcades. In 1974, Bally Mfg. Corp. bought the operations — which included 30 stores at that time — and renamed it Bally's Aladdin's Castle. (The name was inspired by the Aladdin's Castle funhouse, located in Chicago's world-famous River View Amusement Park.) Jules Millman remained on board to help manage the chain for a while. Bill O'Donnell Jr. later replaced him as president for a few years.

Aladdin's had about 456 stores during the peak of the video boom, but closed many marginal sites — especially freestanding stores, strip centers or college campuses — from 1984-86 as the industry took a downturn. Maury Ferchen became president in September 1983. The company was acquired by Wesray Holding Co. in June, 1989. Finally on Jan. 7, 1993 Aladdin's was acquired by Namco-America.

Born Maurice J. Ferchen in 1934, Aladdin's CEO has been a key industry figure for over a decade. He actually spent the first 25 years of his career in the retail world, rising through the executive ranks at Montgomery Ward to become regional VP, managing $1 billion in revenue and directing some 25,000 employees. In 1985, Bally Mfg. tapped him to become president of its coin-op division, putting him in charge of Bally Midway, Bally Distributing and Bally's Aladdin's Castle. Maury also served as president of AAMA during its 1986-87 term.



He remained president of Aladdin's after Midway was sold to WMS, and participated in the chain's 1989 buyout by Wesray. He remained on the job after the chain's acquisition by Namco-America, putting off his intended retirement a bit and helping with the transition to new ownership...a role he has really enjoyed. Maury will "officially" step down as of March 2, 1994 but says he'll remain available for a while to assist Namco as needed. We chatted with Maury in mid-February and found him to be (as always) a cheerful, low-key, highly professional man. He is a thoughtful, careful speaker and positively radiates goodwill. All this makes him a pleasure to talk to, educational to listen to, and the kind of fellow who represents the industry's very best.

**REPLAY:** *Aladdin's has been under the Namco auspices for about a year now, yes? How is that working out?*

**MAURY:** Exceptionally well. Namco and its chairman, Mr. Nakamura, understand this business very well — not only the manufacturing side, but also the operations side. So it's been an excellent relationship. Under Namco's auspices, we can again run this business as it should be managed. We've upgraded our equipment, and are aggressively pursing the opening of new locations, as well as expanding, relocating and refurbishing existing locations. I've seen good years and tough years in this business. This past year definitely falls into the category of one of the best years!

**REPLAY:** *Mr. Nakamura has repeatedly told us he hopes to use Namco's U.S. arcades as a positive example of his entertainment-oriented approach to operating. Can you tell what this guiding philosophy means to you, and how it is translated into corporate policy at Aladdin's?*

**MAURY:** We want to create an environment that gives our customers an opportunity to enjoy themselves, to interact with other people, and in general to have fun. We want to create an exciting atmosphere, using the most advanced products, staying on cutting edge of new technology and giving great customer service. We're working on some very exciting projects along those lines that will occur during the next 12 months.

**REPLAY:** *At time of Namco's acquisition, the parent company said it planned to run its Cyberstation chain and the Aladdin's chain as separate organizations. Will this continue?*

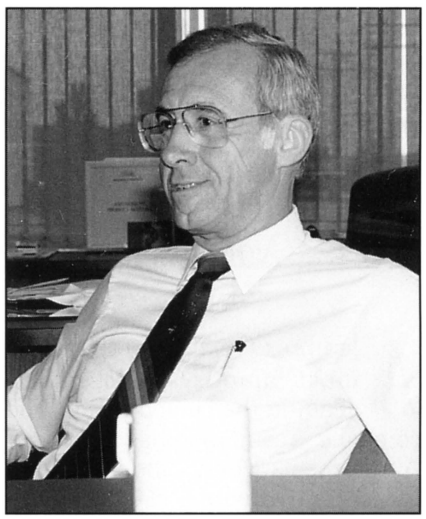
**MAURY:** Basically we're running as separate companies today, but we are sharing common administrative services, taking advantage of resources and economies of scale. We're also coordinating our buying efforts and sharing information on subjects like leasing, equip test results, etc. so we're trying to combine some functions at this point. We always touch base at least once per week, and often it's several times each week. Cyberstation's management in located in San Jose and Atlanta, but all Aladdin's Castle management — except our 23 district field managers — are in this Chicago headquarters.

**REPLAY:** *Who are your key management people, and what are their responsibilities?*

**MAURY:** We have around 90 folks here in Chicago, including technicians, warehouse, purchasing department, the whole structure. Bob Fliday is our executive vice president and chief operating officer. He handles leasing and construction. Our marketing department reports to him. Our senior vice president of finance is Bill Pelafas, who managers our controller, human resources, computers, systems, and taxes. Our vice president of operations is Brent Maples, whose staff reports to me. John Warner and I do the purchasing. Mike Levatino is our director of purchasing; he handles technical services and our warehouse department...including a "fleet" of five semi-trucks that pick up games, deliver them to our stores, and so on.

**REPLAY:** *What have traditionally been the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the Aladdin's chain?*

**MAURY:** The strength of the company has always been its people who can endure, focus, be flexible, motivate and persevere through the good times and through the tough times.



I'm happy to tell you that this past year has been extremely rewarding for my people and me. We're again running the business the way it should be run.

**REPLAY:** *A year ago, word on the street was that much of Aladdins' equipment was older goods. How much have you updated inventory since then?*

**MAURY:** This is a capital-intensive business. During the several years before Namco-America purchased Aladdin's Castle, we simply didn't have adequate capital to outfit our stores properly. This past year has seen a dramatic change in updating stores with top equipment — large pieces, simulators, videos, pinballs, and ticket-dispensing product. Our new stores and our upgraded stores all open up with top available product on the floor, and revenue increases have followed. While we're in a very competitive position today in our quality of equipment, throughout 1994 and '95 we need to continue at same pace as in 1993 — and we plan to do that!

**REPLAY:** *How many stores are in the chain now?*

**MAURY:** We're definitely growing — today we have 269 stores. Immediately after Namco's purchase of Aladdin's last year, we put into place an aggressive three year busi-

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ness plan. During 1993, we opened 15 new stores ranging from 2,000 to 9,000 sq. ft. Also during the past two years, we have relocated, expanded and refurbished another 80 stores. And we're going to do 50 to 60 more of those in 1994! As for new sites, no question about it: we are aggressively competing for them. But we're looking for sites almost exclusively in malls.

**REPLAY:** *Does Aladdin's have any particular regional or geographic concentration?*

**MAURY:** We have stores in 42 states. Since we have a network of management in place across the United States, we don't concentrate on getting leases in any particular area. Our decisions are based solely on the basis of economics of each location, as it becomes available.

**REPLAY:** *How many square feet is the "average" Aladdin's arcade?*

**MAURY:** Our current average is slightly over 2,500 sq. ft. per store, company wide. But the last 20 stores we opened, average slightly over 4,000 sq. ft. In the future, our average size will be at 4,000 sq. ft., with some larger and some smaller. The reason for that is we think in today's marketplace we need that much space to install a proper mix of redemption and video equipment.

**REPLAY:** *Are your stores themed with a mascot, common color scheme, etc.?*

**MAURY:** Our newer stores all have glass fronts, well-lighted interiors, neon accents, a dedicated birthday party area, and brightly colored wall treatments. We try to create an atmosphere that's real friendly for mothers who bring young children in. We don't have an Aladdin mascot character, but we do use the magic lamp as our corporate logo. It's in our storefront signs and our advertising.

**REPLAY:** *You also make a very conscious and deliberate use of space in your stores, we notice.*

**MAURY:** Yes, we present an open-looking, inviting atmosphere that families like. We can entice them by looking through our glass windows to see a carefully presented use of space and light, and a careful arrangement of product. We lead off with kiddie rides and an attractive redemption area in front which are very well lit. All of our newer stores from 1992 and '93 have kiddie rides close to the front entrance, too. I'm not sure what kind of ride makes a difference, but simply having one for that two year old is important, both to keep him happy while the rest of family plays more profitable games, and to create a family atmosphere. Also, having the ride close to the front means families and mothers don't feel intimidated about coming into the store.

**REPLAY:** *Where does video fit in, in terms of physical layout?*

**MAURY:** Whenever we put in large simulators like *Suzuka 8 Hours*, four-player games, or other big attrac-


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tion-type video pieces, they're out front. But otherwise, we separate the redemption area from our regular video games. This is done so that all types of customers can feel comfortable. Usually video is placed further toward the back of each site, because families don't like to walk through groups of teenagers, and vice versa. We're trying to keep both groups happy and I think we do as good a job of creating a family environment as anybody in the business.

**REPLAY:** *How important is video in terms of floor space in an average Aladdin's arcade?*

**MAURY:** If we include simulators and sitdowns, we probably still devote 65% of our total space to video product. However in our new stores and remodeled stores, the ratio of redemption to video space is closer to 50-50. We need to have that kind of profile to attract family entertainment center business.

**REPLAY:** *Have you had any problems/complaints about violent video games? Does Aladdin's have any policy on this issue?*

**MAURY:** We occasionally receive some complaints on violence, but it's sure more the exception than the rule. As individual situations arise, we react on an ad-hoc basis. For instance, say a developer or someone in a mall was very offended by a certain game. We might move it to the back, or remove it entirely.

***Usually video is placed further toward the back of each site, because families don't like to walk through groups of teenagers, and vice versa.***

**REPLAY:** *What about pinball?*

**MAURY:** Pinball is definitely an important part of our business, although we let it shrink somewhat before the Namco acquisition. In 1993, we corrected that. We purchased the best titles in good quantities, and results are excellent, raising our total business by 2 to 2.5%. We need pinball if we're going to be a total family amusement center. That is incremental revenue and it also broadens the demographic base when customers know we have the newest flippers.

**REPLAY:** *Some trade members say the pinball boom of recent years may slow down due to market saturation. Do you agree?*

**MAURY:** I don't believe the pinball boom will slow down. Not for us, anyway! We still have a certain clientele that loves pinball and eagerly awaits the next hot title to come in. So I think we can continue to grow with new revenues in pinball for several years.

**REPLAY:** *How important is redemption to Aladdin's?*

**MAURY:** It's very important to us, especially considering the way we see the business going. Redemption allows us to expand our demographic base. It draws families with younger kids who can enjoy themselves, and adults can enjoy the skill games as well. Our prize centers and redemption walls serve as a real focal point in our stores. The glass cases and mirrored walls and lighted displays create player excitement.

**REPLAY:** *What's you view of the trend toward larger deluxe simulators, virtual reality, and the like? Are you hopeful, or is this something that's been overblown?*

**MAURY:** Larger deluxe products and simulators definitely must be part of our mix and we'll continue moving in that direction. This is an excellent way to differentiate our business from home video. We can offer the customer more excitement and stimulation than he or she can get at home. The player can experience interaction with other people who compete, such as on *Suzuka 8 Hours* and other linked simulators. They are a real attraction which pulls traffic into the store!

As far as virtual reality goes, I've attended every recent show and tried VR with great hope. I'm still very hopeful the technology can be combined with great games. The key is not only to make players want to experience the technology, but also to




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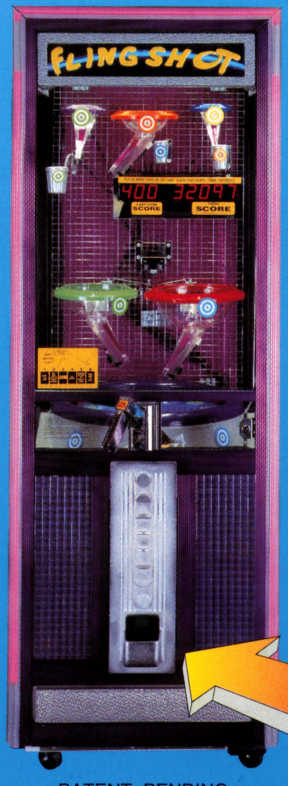


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give them a good game which they can enjoy in itself, something people will come back to again and again, and pay a per-play premium for over a long period. I just hope the hardware suppliers and creative game makers can get together to create an experience that's not just new, but also fun, so people will want to try them more than just once or twice!

**REPLAY:** *What are your thoughts as you see and hear the continuing news about multimedia, video games being downloaded to people's homes via cable TV, telephone, and so forth? Will arcades be able to use this type of technology?*

**MAURY:** Family entertainment centers in mall environment will always offer something you can't get at home: social contact and interaction with other people. All the new technology in the world can't duplicate the fun of being able to interact, to compete with other players right there in the same room, to meet new people and deal with them face to face. We can certainly use the technology as it becomes available, but I don't think technology itself is the issue. The issue is having FUN — you can put that in capital letters — and being able to enjoy yourself!

***NAMCO is a strong supporter of the distribution network. During my days with Bally, I was part of the distribution process myself, so I thoroughly understand that distributors serve a very important need in this industry.***

**REPLAY:** *How much of Aladdin's equipment is purchased on a "national account" basis, directly from the factories?*

**MAURY:** Quite a bit. We do, however, use several distributors on certain products or when we need product quickly in certain areas. Namco is a strong supporter of the distribution network. During my days with Bally, I was part of the distribution process myself, so I thoroughly understand that distributors serve a very important need in this industry. Most operators don't have the technical staff available to them that, for instance, we have in-house.

**REPLAY:** *Aladdin's reportedly did some revenue-sharing with manufacturers in years past. Is this still the case? What's your view of this type of operating?*

**MAURY:** Presently we do almost no revenue sharing. Our primary reason in the past was due mostly to constraints on capital. I think revenue


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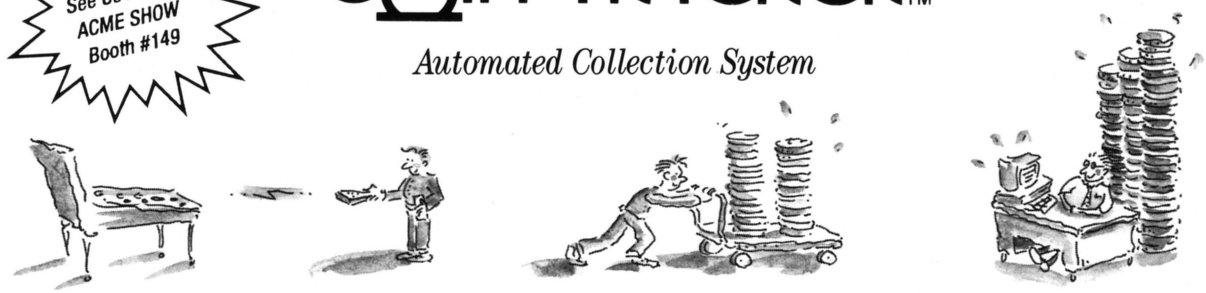

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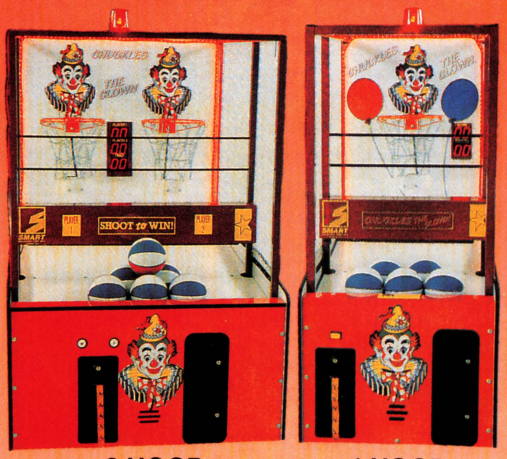


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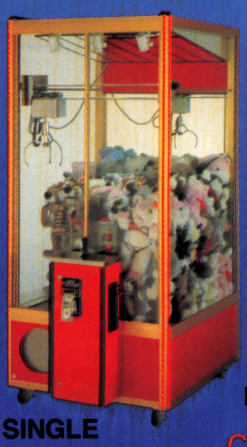
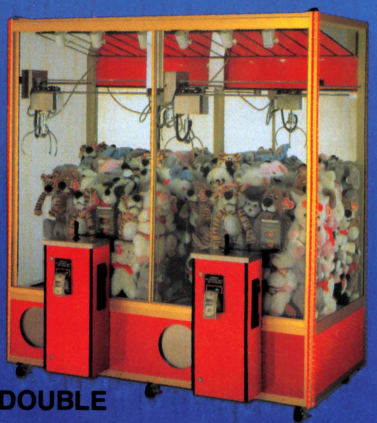


SINGLE



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sharing could still be justifiable in cases like photo booths, where the cost of an unknown concept is high. But at this point we basically have gotten out of revenue sharing. If a game earns well enough to make it an item you want to operate, you should buy it.

**REPLAY:** *Do you use tokens?*

**MAURY:** We use tokens for promotional and security reasons. Tokens are part of our birthday party packages, and they help us sell specials during slow days or slow hours. We sell tokens as gift items, in rolls or tubes, and so on, so we see many promotions you can do with them. For security reasons, tokens are good because they allow you to keep your cash in bill changers, not in every machine. We've tested a debit card system but results were inconclusive.

**REPLAY:** *Are Aladdin's arcades now using modems for data collection and transfer in any way?*

***...at this point, we basically have gotten out of Revenue Sharing. If the game earns well enough to make it an item you want to operate, you should buy it.***

**MAURY:** Not right now. We've had to catch up on new equipment and locations, and we have placed this issue on the back burner for a while. No question about it, the technology is there to perform data collection and other functions with modems, and we're studying the feasibility of this for the future. By the way, let me point out that we've always had very strong computerized data management at Aladdin's: equipment performance, revenue-tracking, lease management and many other systems and functions are all on computers. We make many decisions based on the data which flows from our computers.

**REPLAY:** *Does Aladdin's sell any food, drink, t-shirts, toys, other peripheral items?*

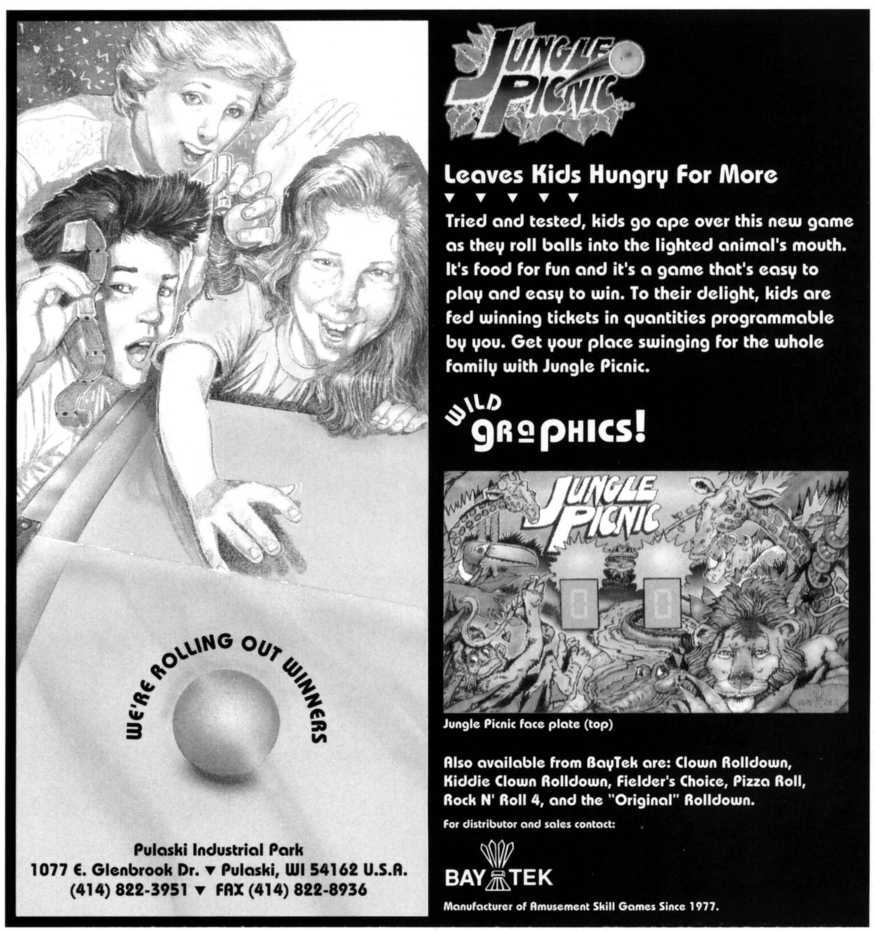
**MAURY:** Only one of our stores sells snacks and soft drinks. We do sell token tubes, as I mentioned, throughout the chain.

**REPLAY:** *What kind of advertising and promotions do you do?*

**MAURY:** Our basic advertising is lease-required advertising. That usually goes into shopping center brochures or flyers. In addition, we also run in-store promotions and direct mail advertising for our birthday party promotions. We have in-store brochures for birthday parties, and we hosted over 37,000 birthday parties in 1993. We call them "No Hassel Birthday Parties" and try to ensure all Mom has to do is bring in the kids. We have an average of 10 kids per birthday party. We offer several different birthday packages: we can include price of food and cake, or they can bring it in themselves. Almost all our stores have tables they can set up for parties, even if they don't have a dedicated party area. We also cross-promote with many fast food restaurants close to our locations; this is quite effective. In the past few years, we've also run a national Bubble Yum blowing contest in cooperation with this subsidiary of Lifesavers. We've had thousands of participants and get lots of newspaper publicity on kids blowing big bubbles! The finals are held in Chicago and we make a big deal of it. Parents and kids really enjoy it.

**REPLAY:** *Let's talk for a moment about overall market conditions for arcades. How many arcades and/or game rooms do you believe are currently operating in the U.S.?*

**MAURY:** If you focus solely on game rooms operating in malls, shopping centers, strip centers and free standing locations, I estimate it's



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around 2,000. If you include bowling alleys, restaurants and miniature golf places with game rooms, as well as pocket parks and so on, that number certainly would go up.

**REPLAY:** *The arcade sector seems hotly competitive with several large national chains hiring each other's personnel, competing for desirable locations, and upgrading to "pocket park" status. There's even a whole trade show (Fun Expo) and new association for arcade, mini-golf, and pocket park operators. Are we in the midst of an arcade boom?*

**MAURY:** First, I think it's important to realize that the arcade business is not really one business. There are several variations. The core business we're in at Aladdin's, is mall-based entertainment. This business has experienced strong growth recently, primarily from existing malls that have added entertainment centers as part of their product mix. The retail business is very competitive, and many developers feel that having movie theaters, food court and family entertainment centers gives them an edge in attracting new customers, as well as new retail tenants. Some new malls continue to be built, and the growth of our business will continue — I'm convinced of that. In fact, developers are asking family entertainment centers to make a larger statement in terms of space and appearance in today's market.



Scene at the National Finals of the 1993 Bubble Yum (bubble blowing) Contest in Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo.

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**REPLAY:** *Okay, what about pocket parks?*

**MAURY:** There's a definite place for them alongside mall centers. We can coexist quite well. They appear to be the same business but are not. We can take advantage of mall traffic, but pocket parks must market to develop and promote their own traffic.

**REPLAY:** *Can the current situation continue?*

**MAURY:** We feel that despite a slowdown in new mall development compared to the pace of the 1980s, plenty of malls are being upgraded. They demand bigger, broader family entertainment centers that will require well-capitalized operators. Also, many developers have completed REITs, real estate investment trusts, which is going public to raise capital. This bodes well for us. A new spate of mall building is coming in the future.

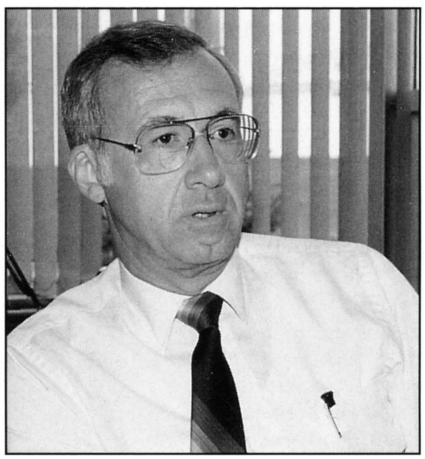
**REPLAY:** *We hear a lot about increased professionalism, the growing use of computers, and the power of big international companies in the operating sector. Is the transition from "mom & pop" to "corporate" operator still picking up speed, or is it now an accomplished fact...over and done with?*

**MAURY:** Developers managing mall-based centers generally prefer management depth in controls, and the financial strength that a larger corporation offers. This is especially true when an arcade operator has geographically-dispersed locations which are managed by a single developer. They're used to us, they know what we're like, and they know they'll get their rent! That's important to developers.

**REPLAY:** *What factors will influence the health of the arcade market in the future?*

**MAURY:** I don't think the keys to success have changed much over the years. We must offer our customers a unique and affordable entertainment experience, in a pleasant, safe, and accessible location. If we do, the business will prosper. Demographic factors definitely tie in here, too, of course.

**REPLAY:** *Are customer demographics different today than, say, five years ago?*



**MAURY:** We watch demographics pretty carefully, and yes, they have absolutely changed over the past five years. If you look at the 5-13 year old age group, that population has increased from about 28.8 million in 1989 to nearly 30.5 million in 1993. So it's increased every year for past five years, and our figures suggest this age group's population will continue increasing over the next three years.

The population of the 14-17 year old group has been somewhat stagnant in recent years, but did increase several percentage points just during the last two years. This age group is estimated to increase more rapidly over the next four years, at a rate of 1.2 to 1.7% each year. All of this means our target market is growing, their income and expenditures are rising, and nearly all of their spending is discretionary. This bodes well for our industry!

We've tried to stay close to these changes with a new equipment mix, a more open look, and family promotions like birthday parties. These elements have definitely expanded and broadened our appeal to different age groups.

**REPLAY:** *That sounds pretty encouraging. Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share about arcades, Namco, or the industry in general?*

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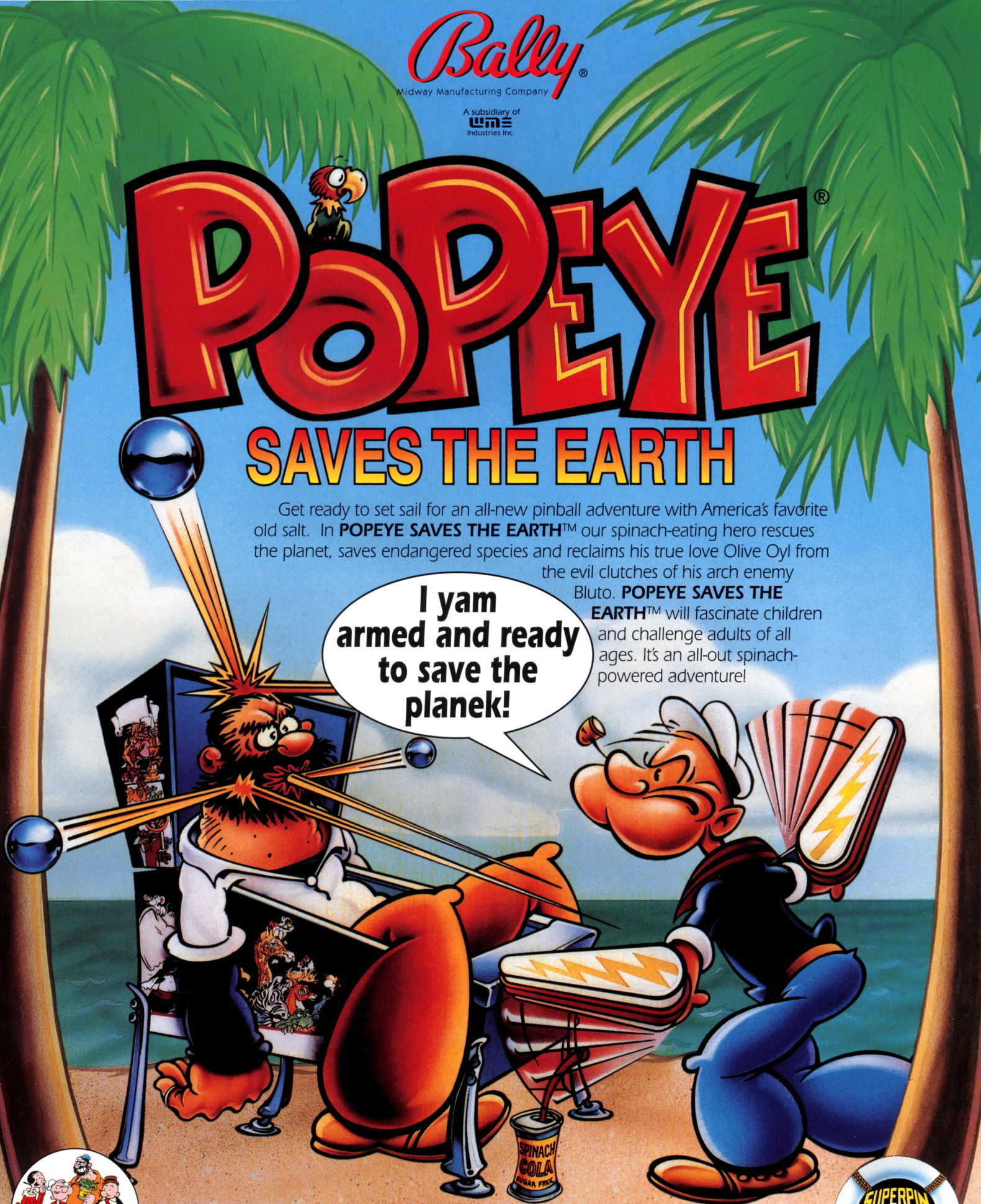


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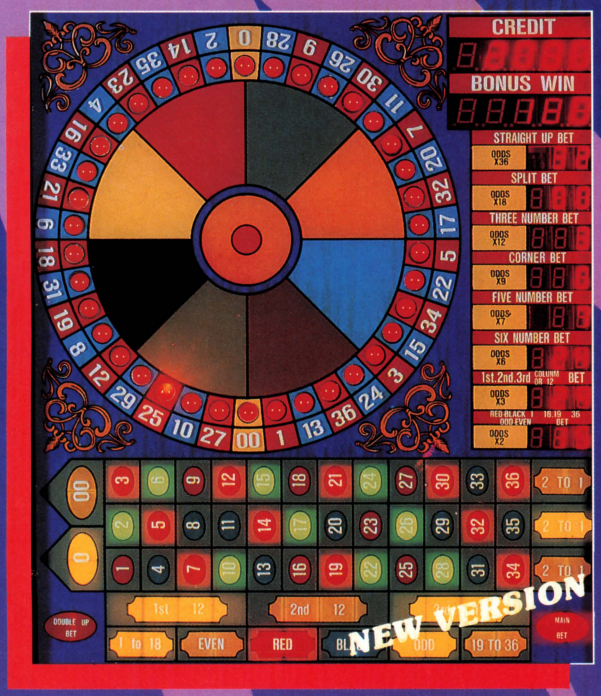


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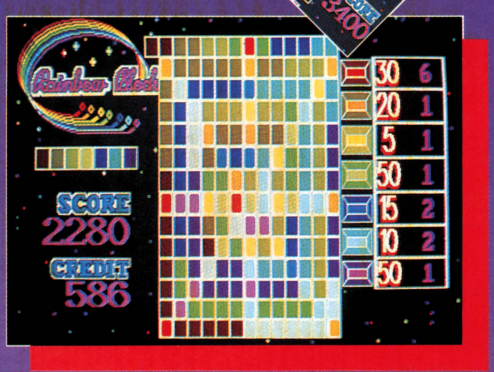


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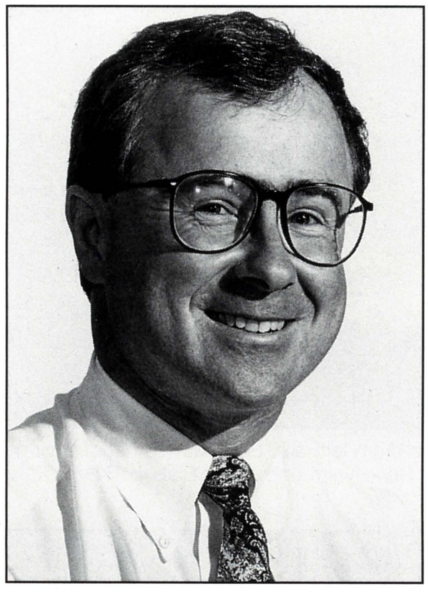
**MAURY:** As you know, I plan to retire on March 2nd, which is the end of our fiscal year. About 20 years ago, and having moved from one city to the next about 10 different times over the course of a career, I set a goal of retirement at age 58. Well, I'm a bit past that now, but shortly after Namco acquired Aladdin's, I informed Kevin Hayes of my intentions last year. This decision was difficult because working under the auspices of Namco and working for Kevin during 1993 has been one of the absolute best years I've had in this industry. I'm committed to continue helping Kevin and Namco in any manner I can during the next five years, at which time I'll be 65.

I want to thank Namco for a great year. I was an honor and a pleasure to work for Mr. Nakamura and Kevin. I also thank all the manufacturers, distributors and industry people who have helped my career and brought our industry to new, higher levels. I'll definitely miss the people in this industry and I hope to see them at the upcoming ACME show.

**REPLAY:** *Thanks, Maury, for this interview and congratulations on a very admirable career. We know many, many people in the industry will always be grateful for your considerable contributions...and best of luck for the future.*

◆

# Aladdin's Chairman Kevin Hayes Praises Ferchen, Outlines Plans



Namco America exec Kevin Hayes became chairman of Aladdin's Castle after the chain was acquired by Namco America in 1993. This month, following Maury Ferchen's retirement, Kevin will take on the president's duties as well. Aladdin's Castle will continue to be run as separate business from Namco's Cyberstation chain, he confirmed, although most administrative functions are being consolidated in Namco's Chicago office.

"We've been very pleased with the performance of Aladdin's," Kevin told *RePlay*. At the end of the first full financial year, it's exceeded what we expected. We spent a lot of money on new equipment and will continue to do so. We're also continuing a big push to expand our stores, particularly the redemption areas. The basic profile is that Aladdin's will continue to specialize in mall arcades, as it has done, while Cyberstation will maintain its mall sites and emphasize newer and bigger projects like Magic Edge and some others that will come up in the next 12 months."

Hayes was clearly sorry to see Maury go, but was glad to have had him aboard during the critical first 13 months or so of the transition. "Maury has been excellent to work with," Kevin stated. "He's very popular and well-respected in the industry, and deservedly so. He has done a superb job with us in running Aladdin's Castle. He managed the situation very well where Aladdin's was almost bought by another company, and he provided a steadying influence in what could have been a turbulent time. We have every confidence in Maury and will continue to avail ourselves of his services, particularly in regard to his relationships to the leasing end of the industry. He has many valuable connections to the mall developers and real estate people!" Hayes added.

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# ALADDIN'S CASTLE INC

# H.Q.



Finally, a look at some of the folks on the Aladdin's Castle staff (working out of their 51,000 st. HQ in Bensenville, IL, shown above).



Maury Ferchen (seated) is flanked (from left) by controller Ron Stevens, CFO Bill Pelafas, Exec. Sec. Judy Vardamaskos and COO Bob Fliday.



Ferchen (standing at right) visits the leasing Dept. and (from left) Don Tollefson, Bob Fliday, San Mavros (construction director) and Judie Zachman.



Construction Dept. execs (from left) are: Sam Mavros, Ohm Sharma, Lou Orr, Ben Senoussi, Gene Veltri and Kristy Bielski. They do nice work.



Service and transportation folks (from left): Carolyn Sebastian, Mike Levatino, Kevin Heins, Wun Yoh, Matt Wolze and warehouse super Bob Lewandowski.



Over in Human Resources, from left, are the resourceful Sue West, Bill Pelafas, Kathy Thompson and Sherilee Kohler.

# STAFFERS



At marketing and purchasing (from left): Peggy Damato, Bill Eich, John Werner, Maury Ferchen, Pat Masucci, Bob Fliday, Jeannie Paige and Chas Gray (Liz Greb was out when photo was shot).



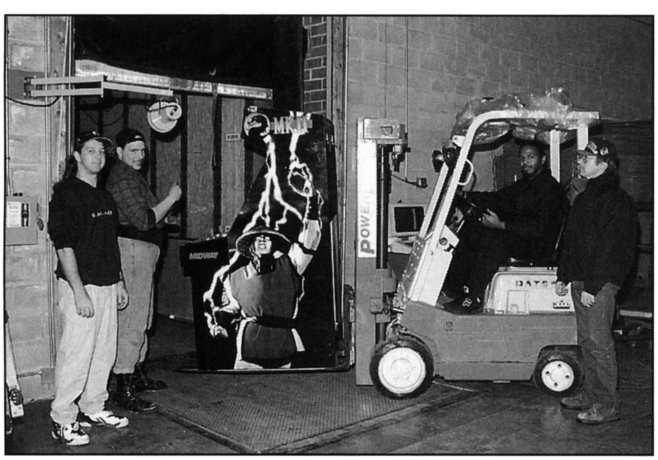
One of the objects of all the employees' attention...the redemption section at their fun center in Wichita's Towne East Mall.



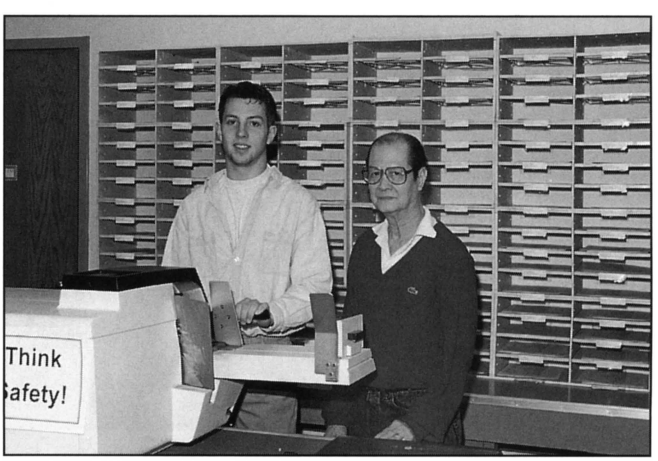
Techs assembled: (front) Jose Gonzalez, Rich Harrison, Warren Crump; (middle) George Padilla, John Kneip, Greg Green, Jovito Martinez, Dustin Schmeckpeper, Dave Stupp, Al Berger, Rich Mark; (rear) Wayne Steffl, Sam Rhodes, Rich Catalan and Ron Ochodnicky.



At the operations department (from left) are: Esther Miniscalco, Latanya Sherlock, Brent Maples (VP), Helen Burlak, Ruben Topinka and Sonya Johnson. Op. Dir. John Collins is not pictured. We also didn't have a snapshot of Patty Birkeland from Financial.



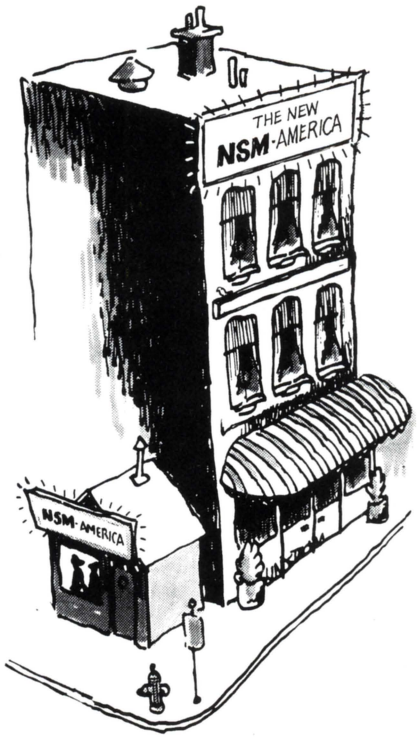
Warehouse guys (from left): Mike Muscarello, Andy Bachar, John Skinner and Rick Evert.




And, down in mailroom/shipping, we find Frank Congine and Leo Garcia.

# NEW DIGS FOR NSM

*NSM-America moves short way to new Chicago area headquarters*




Something about NSM-America's new headquarters reminds us of...NSM jukeboxes. At least, the place reminds us of their jukeboxes in the old days: it's "utilitarian" on the outside, but super-efficient on the inside! The company is settling into much larger Chicago-area offices these days, and loving it.

The new place includes a dozen new offices; a 30-chair-plus training room facility; a huge parts area; an entry showroom for their products; a half-round reception area; a spacious boardroom; a conference room; and a large, hi-tech-looking, service/repair area with continuous work benches around most of the perimeter. Not to mention the massive 16,000 sq. ft. warehouse facility with four dock doors servicing it.

It's hardly luxurious, but the new facility definitely has the look of business efficiency. And it represents a mighty step up from NSM's old office/warehouse facility, where they headquartered till early last fall...over double the space with 25,000 sq. ft. in all. But they're still located right next to Chicago's O'Hare Airport, just on the other side now: a matter of a few miles away.

"It's utilitarian, but extremely well laid out," said John Margold, VP of Sales & Marketing. "And for once we can give our employees a few of the basic things we should have had a long time ago — like a nice clean lunch area, ample bathroom facilities and the like."

But NSM says the real value of their new HQ is not just more space, or even better space. The true shine comes from what they've installed in it. Such as? New, fully functional computers for bookkeeping, inventory monitoring and order processing. Essentially, an order gets entered on one end and all the little pieces start falling into place — inventory is reduced by the order, sales get credited, the distributor's record is updated, shipping labels get generated, an invoice is prepared, and the product gets shipped...typically the same day.

Even more impressive is their parts area, now stocked with over three times the parts they carried just a few months back. And with close to 3,000 sq. ft. and all-new bins and shelving to put them in!

"Now we have enough of just about everything," commented Orlando Marrero. "So we can get out whatever the customer needs, almost instantly. The new computer, coupled with our new level of parts, makes it a breeze to keep up."

More impressive yet is all the new testing and diagnostic equipment. It's a little bit like what you see in hi-tech auto service facilities. You plug in the problem jukebox component — the amp, compact changer, or whatever — then let the computer analyzer tell you what's wrong. Then the component is repaired, plugged in again and it's all-but-automatically checked for performance.

"When it comes to high-performance equipment like our CD changers, fixing whatever the problem is isn't our only goal," explained Tony Lantz, recently promoted to service manager. "We want to make certain that it's performing at peak capacity, and that there isn't some other poten-



In the spiffy new conference room are, from left: sales top George Haydocy, receptionist Charlotte Cooney, Sales/Marketing VP John Margold, marketing man John Tracy and accounting pro Lisa Gierut.

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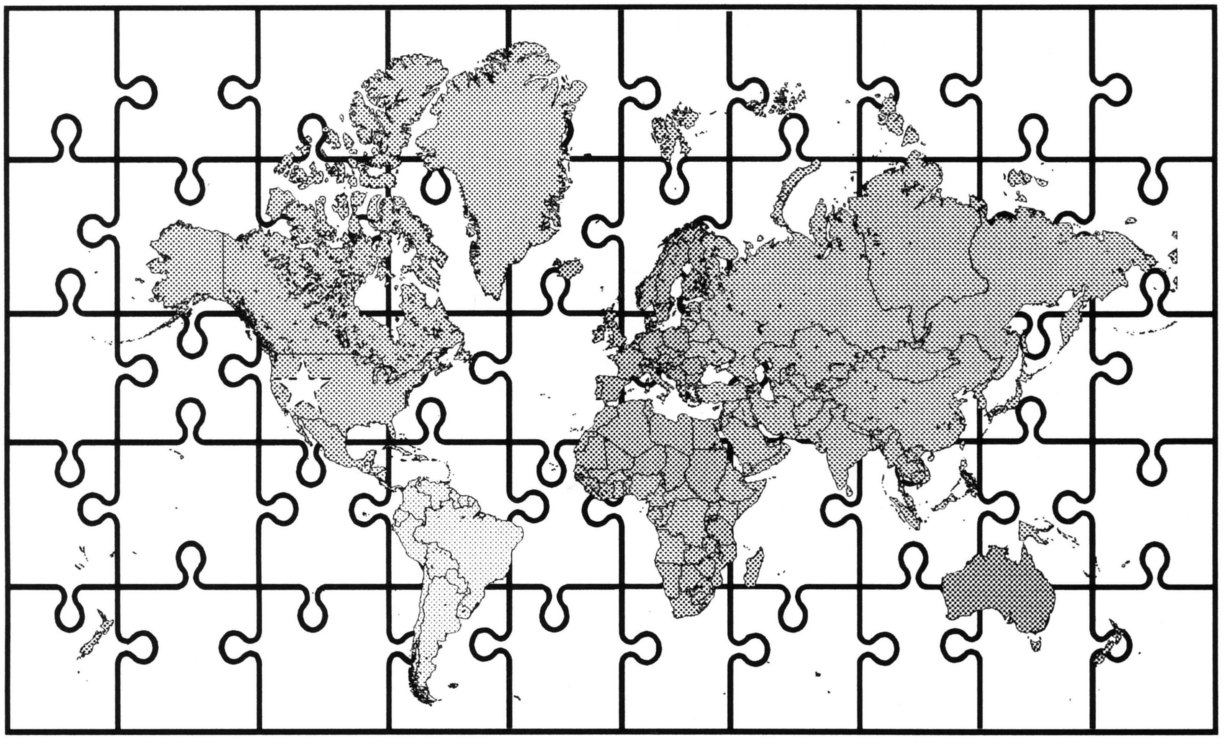

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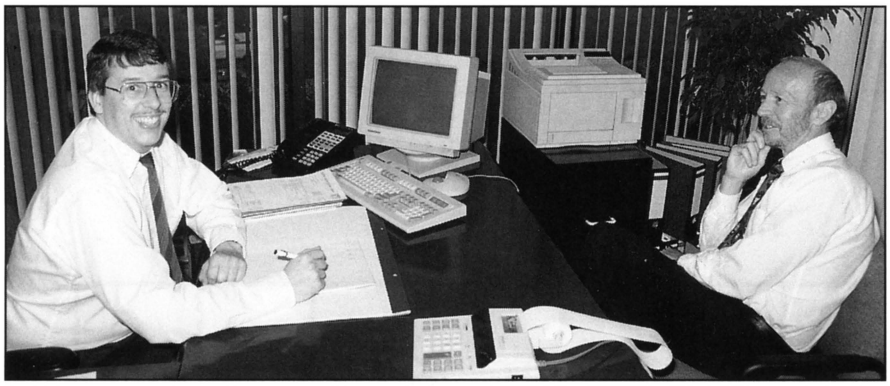
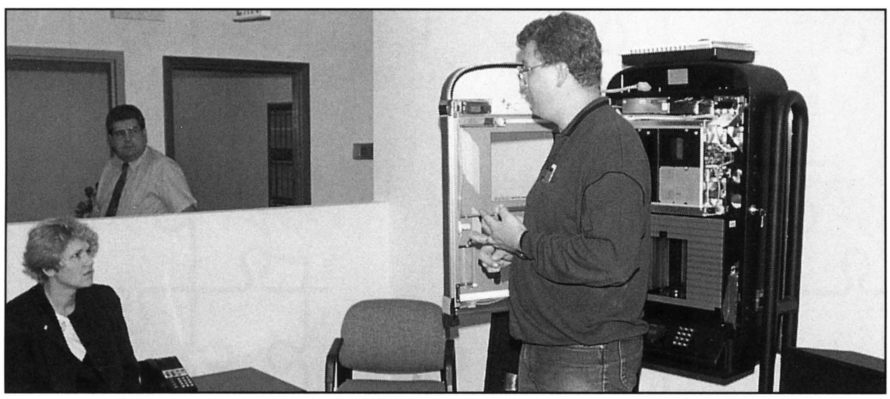


At left, finance/admin. VP Jurgen Jost in his office with FunTecnic prexy Linley Hughes.



Here's the showroom entrance. That's George Haydocy in back, product manager Birgit Weisbrod seated, and tech services chief Mike Jablonski at right.

tial problem we could speak to while it's on the bench, rather than have it crop up a few years down the road."

Tony said NSM-America looks at each service ticket as an opportunity to add to their reputation for quality. The four-man service staff goes overboard when it comes to checking out components, he said. "That's both to let the customer know we do super quality work, but also to add to the life of his jukeboxes," Tony said. "We hope to keep him coming back to NSM when he needs more."

"Soft repairs" are the most interesting, and in NSM-America's opinion, will become more and more important as time goes on. That's fixing or updating software that drives things like NSM's 100-CD changer. Theoretically (and in actual practice at NSM-America's service room) you can control and reconfigure changer commands remotely. That is, punch a few buttons on your computer keyboard and make the changer do something totally different...or ask it to tell you why it's down to six sec-

# TWO VETERANS

*George Haydocy & a classic 1940s-style jukebox are both whistling a happy tune at NSM-America!*

George Haydocy's title at NSM-America may be "Sales Manager," but it's a partial description of his responsibilities, at best. And only hints at a coin-op career that now spans 35 years. Yes, George's primary responsibility is to sell jukeboxes to NSM-America's 40 some distributors in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and South America. And his knowledge of the business and reputation for honest dealings has earned him a level of international respect that few others enjoy.

But he also serves, informally, as a market researcher. George works with NSM distributors and their operators to find out what they like about NSM jukeboxes and what they don't. Then he consults with the technicians and engineers to make changes, add new features and, in general, improve NSM's product.

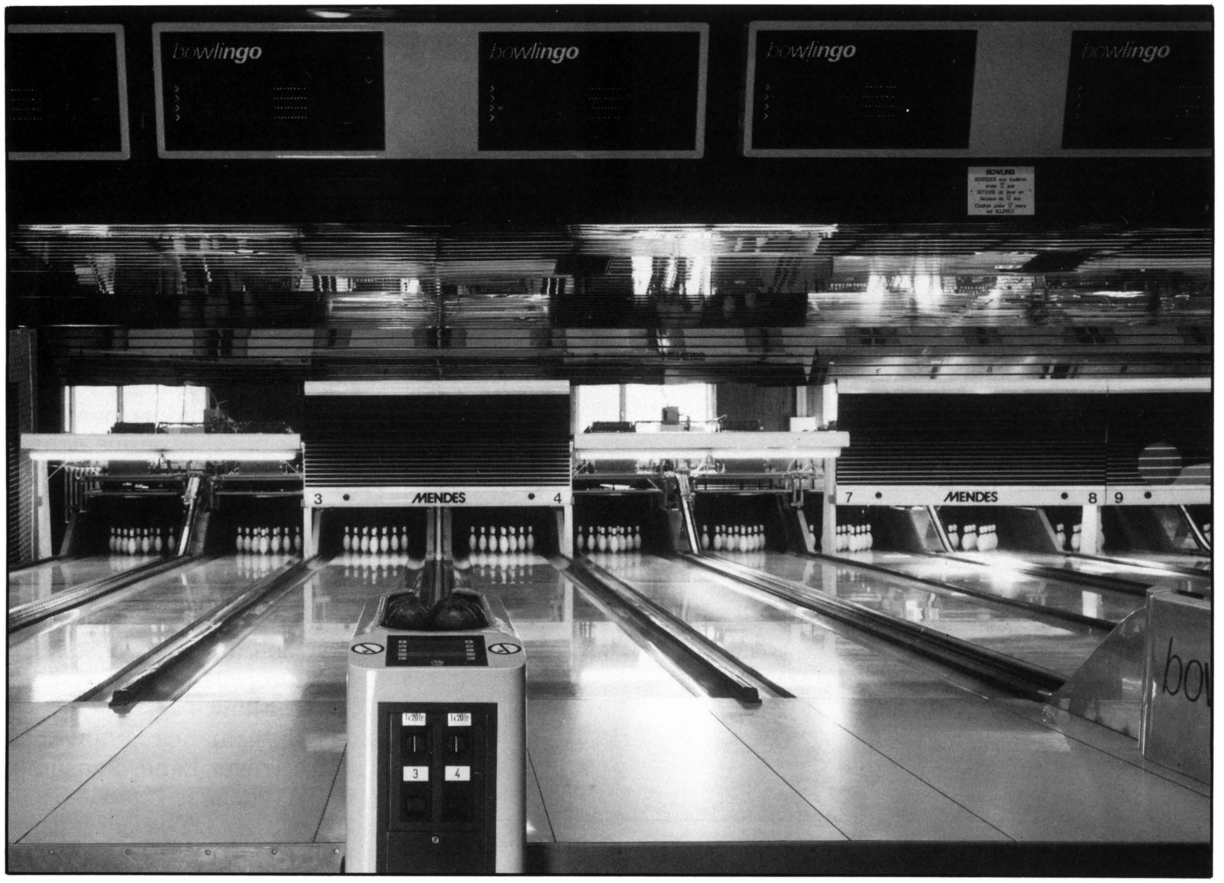



35-year industry veteran George W. Haydocy with the recently intro'd NSM *Nostalgia-Gold*.

The most recent example of George's field-to-factory consulting is NSM's gorgeous new *Nostalgia Gold*. It was added to the NSM line largely because of George's persistent urgings. And, it's built with intense respect for the detail of the era it represents — from the selection of its hardwoods right down to the color gels of its bubble tubes.

"Our operators no longer have to go outside the NSM line to get a nostalgia jukebox," George explained. "And location owners and their patrons are typically astounded at the sound quality that comes out of what appears to be a '40s era jukebox, thanks to the state-of-the-sound-art NSM HyperBeam CD sound system. We're very proud of this achievement."

NSM *Nostalgia Gold* is available through all NSM distributors.

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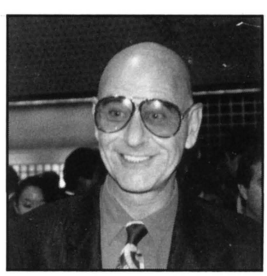

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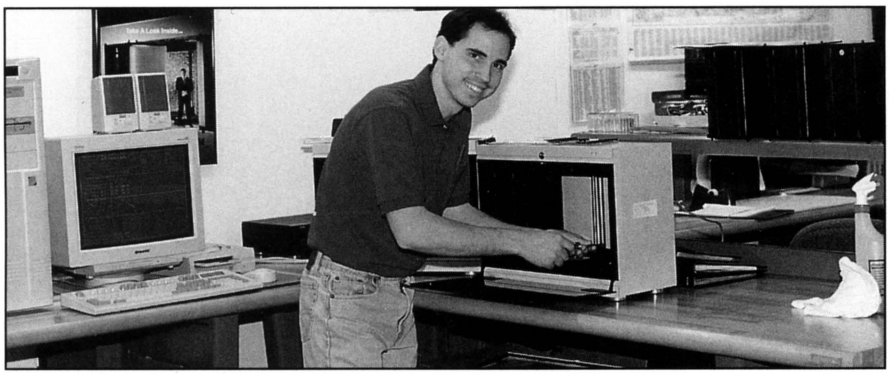
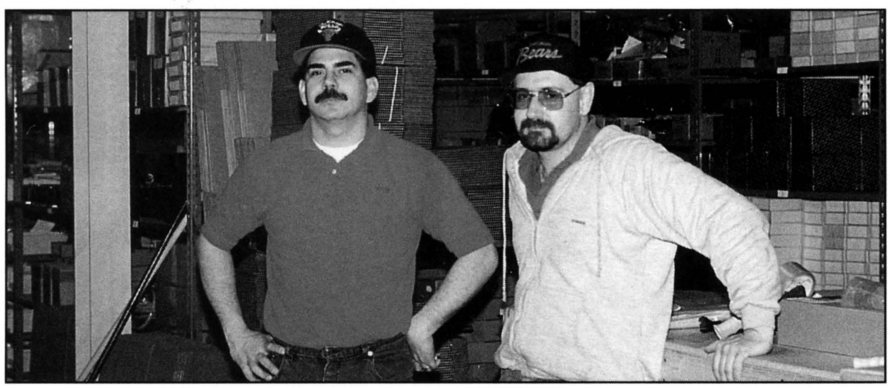


Service Manager Tony Lantz is enjoying all the space in the big new service area.



Parts manager Orlando Marrero (left) with his helper Luke Schiro in the NSM warehouse, now fully stocked.

onds average on song changes, instead of the "under five seconds" it's supposed to be running at.

Of course, the other nifty additions inside NSM-America's new headquarters are the new faces and new responsibilities for this very professional team, from President Peter Kuhn on down. Plus, they have a new music product — their *Nostalgia-Gold* jukebox — and a whole new product line: top-quality imported kiddie rides from EMT. So, with a new building for all this activity, has NSM-America achieved its goals?

"Not at all," smiled VP John Margold. "What you're really seeing here is just a launching pad, and we're still building the rocket!" John said NSM plans much more expansion, and that hints of some exciting new projects may be visible at the ACME Show.

NSM-America is now located at 1158 Tower Lane, Bensenville, IL 60106. Phone is 708/860-5100; fax is 708-860-5144. The Direct Parts Fax is 708-860-9938.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*"It's working just perfect. We love it!"*

*"For a $3 Cigarette Token, it's the only way to do business."*

*"We were using a system which had the "illusion of control" . . . The first shift manager counted all our Tokens. The third shift manager emptied all the cashboxes, and did a day-end count."*

*"The Token Tech has simplified our whole operation, and we know exactly where we stand every hour."*

*"We bought a similar item, made in Europe. It cost a lot more, but it never worked right, so we sent it back. Your Token Tech is far superior."*


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# SEGA DRAWS 3 ACES

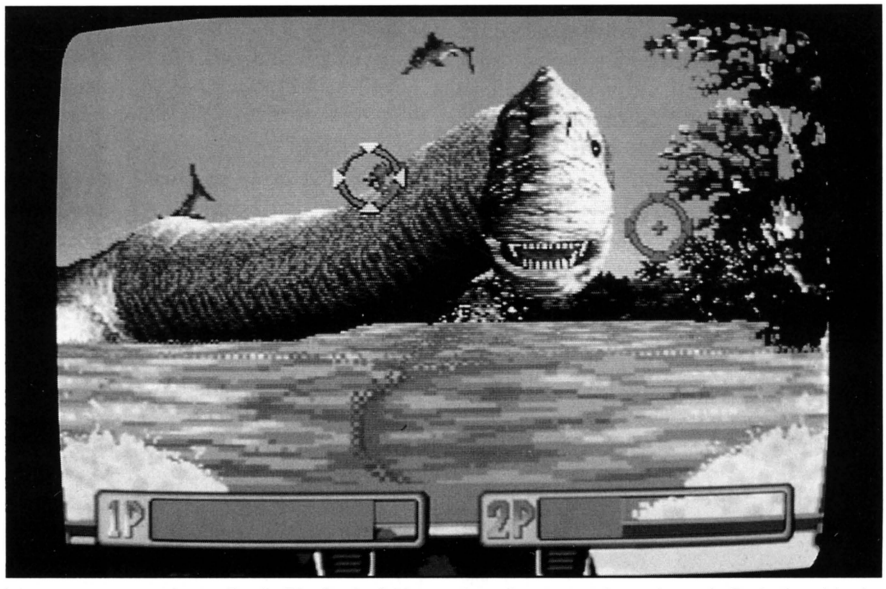


*Sega racing game has 3D graphics with texture mapping at ACME they'll also show* ***Jurassic Park*** *and* ***Star Wars***

If this month's ACME show were a poker game among manufacturers, then Sega would sit at the table with three aces up its sleeve. The company will debut three new games featuring hi-tech computer graphics that are so gorgeous, you could practically hang the screen shots on your wall as artwork. The three new titles are a racing simulator (unnamed at presstime)... *Jurassic Park*, a shooting-driving game based on the hit movie...and *Star Wars*, a sci-fi action game that lets you experience the wild finale of that hit movie, firsthand.

We're serious about the outstanding level of visual quality. Sega's been "teasing" tradesters with videotape previews of it's racing simulator for over a year now, and based on those previews we can report the graphics are mindblowing, eye-dazzling, "knock-your-socks-off" beautiful. The quality of the game's high speed, real-time computer graphics with texture mapping looks almost like motion picture photography. Except you can control the images! We gather from the Sega folks that their other two new games are equally stunning. If so, Sega's living up to its corporate slogan about "seizing the next level," because they're really taking coin-op to the next level of simulation excellence.

This driver offers three race courses: the actual Daytona Beach, Fla. oval racetrack for beginners; a "Grand Canyon" course for intermediate players; and a "Seaside" course for experts. Action begins with scores of eye-catching, colorful cars roaring off



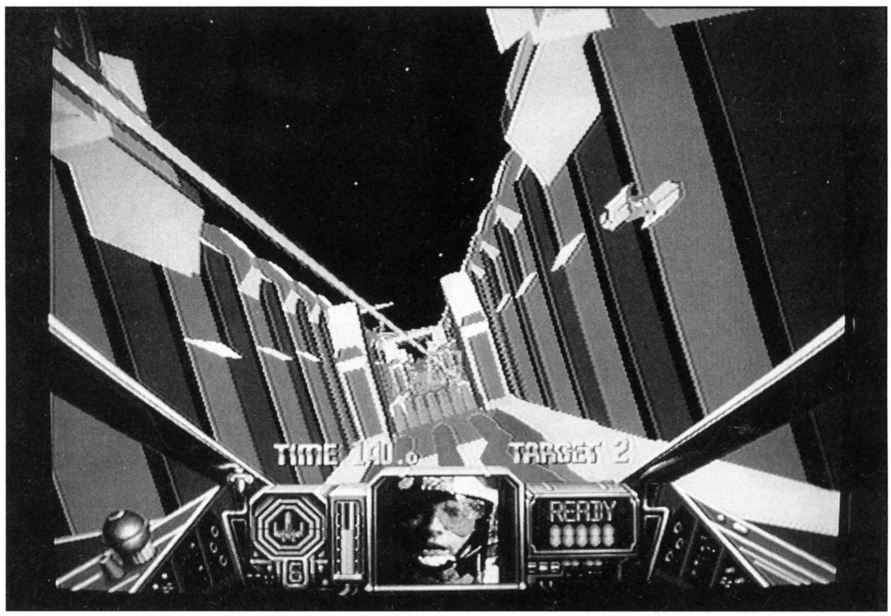

A brontosaurus, or just a Really Big Snake? It's another dino-target from *Jurassic Park*, the video!




The trees look like leafy foliage, not green blocks. The road looks like asphalt, not a gray streak. Welcome to the wonderful world of computer graphics texture-mapping, which adds photorealistic surfaces to the 3D world of polygon graphics.

in a double file column into a 250 mph contest. Up to eight players can interact on the course, with a high quality 50" monitor broadcasting every move.

Thanks to texture-mapping technology, the game offers nearly photo-realistic 3D graphics. A "virtual reality" button allows you to alternate four different visual perspectives, and you'll even see scenery in the rear view mirror! The 3D world of the race actually "exists" inside the computer memory, so you're free to drive anywhere. You can even use the "opposite direction" feature to turn your car around 180 degrees, then watch opponents scream past you at ultra high speed! Imagine a collision where fluttering flags, rolling cars and scattering parts are depicted with life-like realism. Some new mechanical features realistically simulate the sensations of drifting, actual steering weight, and kickback.




"Trust your feelings, Luke!" Sega's *Star Wars* lets players take the part of Luke Skywalker in his hair-raising strike mission to blow up the evil Death Star.

*Jurassic Park* will be configured as a two-player cabinet in the sitdown version. This exciting new game takes you to a Costa Rican island called Nebular, where genetically-recreated dinosaurs have gone on a rampage. Your mission is to shoot the wild beasties with a tranquilizer gun, reactivate the security system, and get out alive. You'll hear dinosaur sounds and see dinosaur graphics from the Universal motion picture. The motion-based seating system responds realistically to dinosaur attacks and course movements. If the realism were any greater, you'd be a prehistoric lunch!

*Star Wars* is a one- or two-player game with 50" monitor. Its 3D computer graphics are on the same order as Virtua Racing (that means 180,000 polygons per second, thanks to Sega's Model 1 CG board). A "VR" button alternates two different perspectives. Two players can be pilot and gunner, or one player can do both jobs on an alternating basis in the one-player mode.

Players will recognize all their favorite characters from the hit motion picture as they take the part of a Jedi Knight...and take the controls of an X-wing fighter to do battle with the evil forces of the Empire. Players can attack key strongholds and enemy ships with laser beams and torpedo buttons. A throttle lever controls speed.

On show once again at ACME will be Sega's equally impressive *Virtua Fighter*, the first-ever street combat video game to use polygon graphics and alternative perspectives. With this slate of products, Sega has truly taken video to "the next level"...and now arcade players will have a chance to see what hi-tech is really all about.

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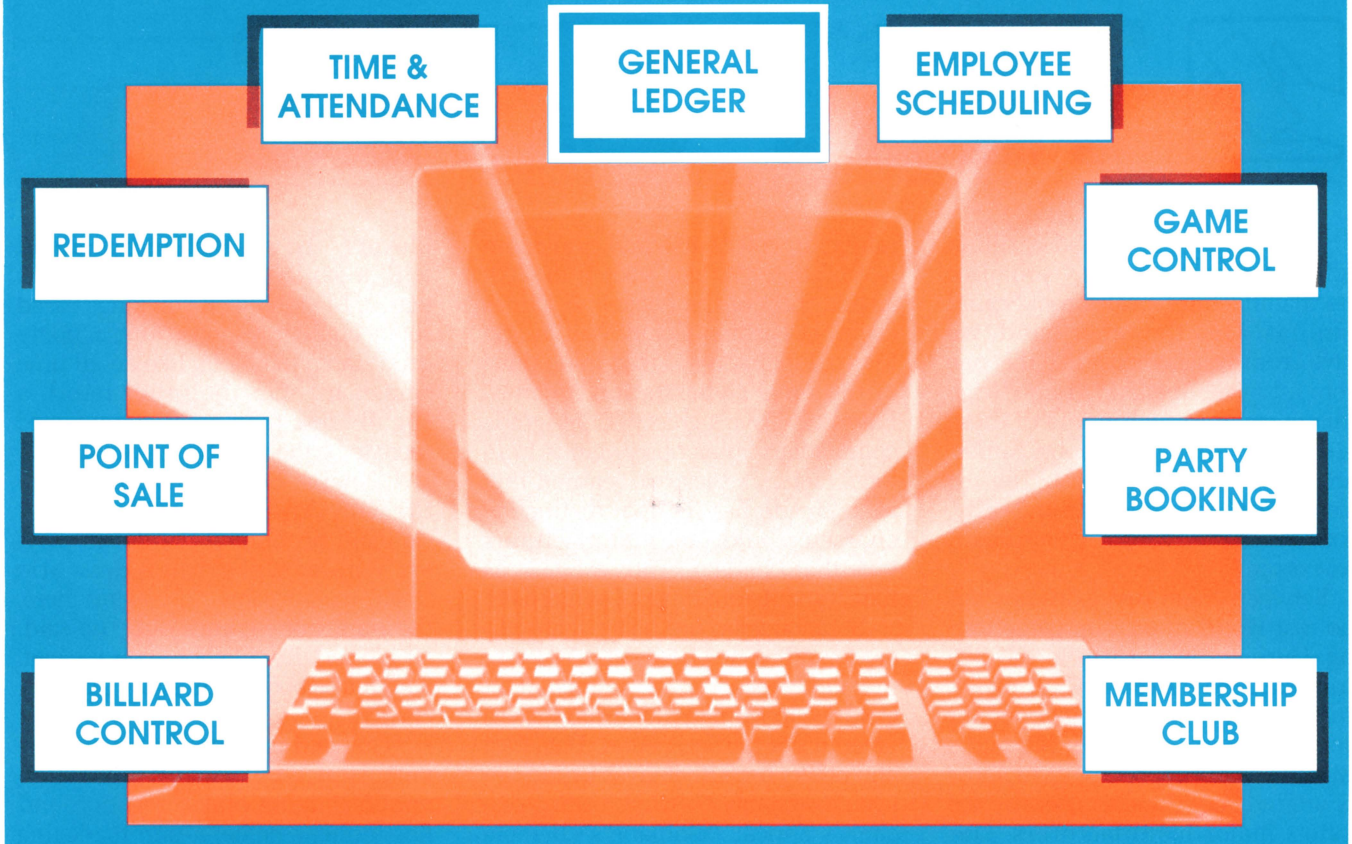


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*you've heard of those famous "California arcade test results?" now, here's a look at the places where factory tests take place!*

# ARCADE TEST SITES

"Our new game earned a zillion dollars a minute on test," promises the manufacturer's sales rep. Sound familiar? One the other hand, we have grumpy statements like this one from a typical operator: "I don't care what a game earned in one of those 24-hour, rich-neighborhood Super-Arcades on the West Coast. Tell me what it earned in a down-and-dirty, six-barstool tavern in Oshkosh, Wisconsin!"

Between these two extremes lies the real world of coin-op game testing. During a recent trip to the San Francisco Bay Area in California, *RePlay* prevailed on mega-operator David Bishop (he runs Namco's mighty Cyberstation chain) to show us around the test sites used by the state's major manufacturers. Our grand tour began at the Golfland miniature golf course and gameroom in Milpitas. We also visited the Tilt arcade (part of the Nickels & Dimes chain) at Fashion Island Mall in San Mateo. Finally, we looked in on three of the local Cyberstation arcades. Based on Dave's gracious tour-guide commentary, plus observations from local factory execs, we learned that each arcade has its own distinctive character...and that manufacturers take that character into account as they test different types of equipment.

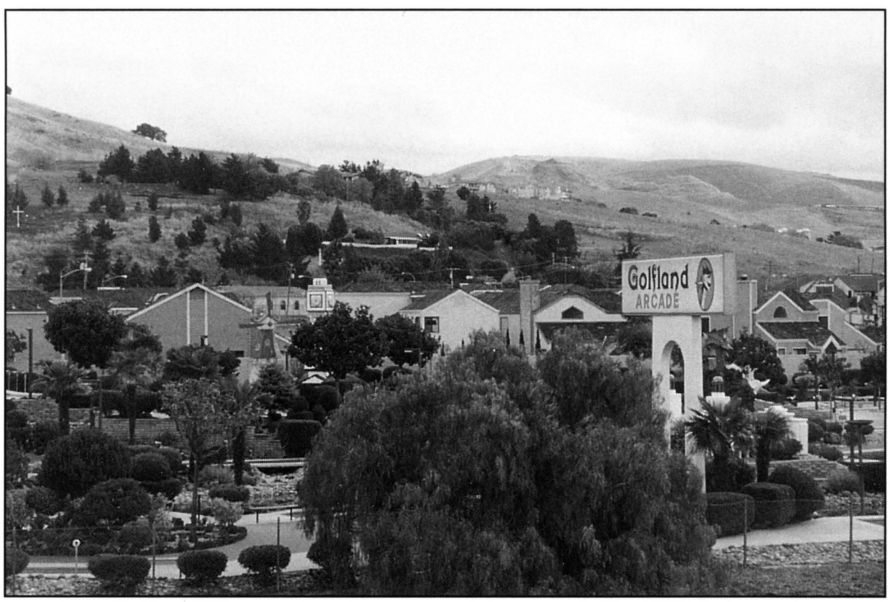
Some arcades are better than others for different phases and types of market research, it seems. The Golfland in Milpitas, for example, is a favorite site for Sega, Atari, Data East and others because it gives a quick — even exaggerated — first reading of a game's appeal. "Golfland's clientele tends to be hardcore, techno-nerd players," David Bishop explained with a smile. "And their reactions tend to be extreme. If you judge based solely on their response to it, a 'pretty good' game may look like an all time smash hit. On the other hand, a slightly less-than-great game could seem to be the worst dog ever made."

Likewise, Sega's marketing director Ken Anderson said another Golfland (in Sunnyvale) draws players who can provide a dramatic "take" on any game. "If you test there, the pure game comes out," he said. "If it's bad, it will show you it's bad. And if it's good, it will show that very clearly."

"Golfland is a good arcade for the very first week of testing, when you're gauging player reaction and fine-tuning a game," Atari marketing director Mary Fujihara said. "After the gameplay is pretty well set, we might move to the Tilt arcade for our next phase, gathering information about earnings strength and longevity. Then a third phase might involve testing in other regions of the country."

Manufacturer execs all seemed highly conscious of player demographics at various test sites. "At Golfland, thanks to the miniature golf you have a very good cross-section of players," Sega's Ken Anderson said. "That ranges from adults, to kids, parents, and teenagers. It draws a very good base of players who know all the various types of games — fighters, drivers, gun games — and these players are proficient at each type of game, and know what's expected."

Ken continued: "Craig Singer's Tilt arcade in San Mateo is located in a big shopping mall with one of the




This Golfland arcade and mini-golf course in Milpitas, Calif. is a favorite test site for many factories. Atari and Sega use it a lot; Data East, Namco and Capcom use it sometimes.

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area's only ice rinks. It's the only mall on the peninsula, and so it generates lots of activity with cinemas and many different promotional events. Again, this creates a good cross-section of people who visit the arcade."

"We have confidence that we know what type of player we're getting in Golfland," said Atari's Mary Fujihara, "because the demographics are consistent, survey after survey. Our demographic knowledge also tells us how this site compares with other locations and, say, the arcade across town. All this creates a comfort level so we feel we know how to interpret the numbers."

Demographics are also prominent in David Bishop's assessment of his own Cyberstations. Namco uses its Cyberstation in the Southland Mall (East Bay) as its prime test center for all types of equipment. Dave feels this arcade's solid middle-class customer base gives Namco a very accurate reading on where new games will rank, compared to other titles, in the rest of his Cyberstations around the USA. For redemption games, Namco prefers the Cyberstation in Pleasanton. "Results for redemption equipment in this store most closely mirror our other arcades across the country," David said. "It's local, family-oriented customer traffic."




The Tilt arcade at Fashion Island Mall (San Mateo) is part of an "entertainment court" including food, movies and an ice staking rink. "When local manufacturers want big numbers they can hand out for market tests, this is where they put it," Namco's David Bishop said.

In addition to demographics, one reason that places like Golfland and Tilt become favored test sites is because they're excellent sources of player comments. Data East's coin-op VP Paul Jacobs said his firm conducts in-depth player interviews at Golfland. "We spend a couple of days observing players, take notes on length of play and so forth, then asking questions in person or asking kids to fill out a questionnaire," he said. "They know we're testing and try to be helpful."

Sega also likes getting players' verbal reactions. "These sites are used to new game testing," Ken Anderson pointed out. "The management knows what the terms are and what we're looking for. We get a good report from them about who's playing and who's making good and bad comments." Atari's Mary Fujihara was another exec who felt factories receive useful player reactions from Golfland and Tilt. "The management there is very cooperative and gives us good feedback," she said. "They pass along players's comments — what they like and don't like."

Naturally, manufacturers don't rely solely on verbal comments and player interviews. Hard numbers are gathered and carefully studied. Atari's Mary Fujihara said, "One important reason we like to test at Golfland is because we have a history

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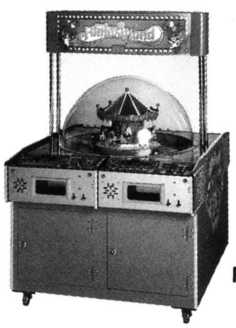
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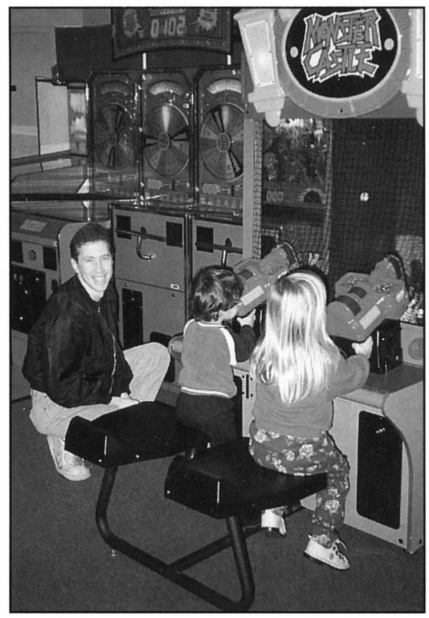
there. We can compare test results of a new title with the equivalent earnings of earlier titles at one week, two weeks, etc. Having these historical benchmarks lets us track earnings performance through time for similar types of games. We do lots of data collection with statistics tracking game time, percentages, etc. We find out where first time players died, where repeat players died, and so on. Initial results from local arcades can give us a very good handle on the fundamental strengths and weaknesses of game, as well as giving us a solid, statistical basis to project earnings strength and longevity. Having this type of data helps us establish player appeal. It also helps us make critical, early decisions about how to fine-tune and tweak the game."

Data East's Paul Jacobs agreed about the importance of statistical information from tests. "You have to get daily income reports on a new title, and the management at both arcades gives us the right information and maintains secrecy," he said. "We also get weekly Top 10 reports, showing the position of our game as compared to the other titles, but our test game earnings are not shown to anyone but us so long as it's in the test mode. The same is done for Sega and other factories when they test there. That's important because the numbers are proprietary to us and the management respects that."



Namco marketing assistant Scott Martin shows a couple of happy players how to score on Namco's *Monster Maze* shooting game at the Tilt arcade in San Mateo.

But just like a good, skeptical operator, the local manufacturers also take Bay Area arcade test results with a grain of salt. "Many operators complain that we get unrepresentative results when we test in our own backyard," Mary Fujihara said. "We know that! And that's why we also do lots of testing in sites further away. We use different locations for different stages in the process. After tweaking a game in Golfland, we might go to Tilt to check earnings 'legs,' and then follow it up with tests in Chicago, New York or Texas."

Paul Jacobs said Data East maintains similar vigilance against results that are too good to be true. "It's nice when players want to be helpful and polite," he said. "Of course, you have to watch out in case players feel they have to be too nice to you. We are careful in how much weight we give player comments; we take that polite-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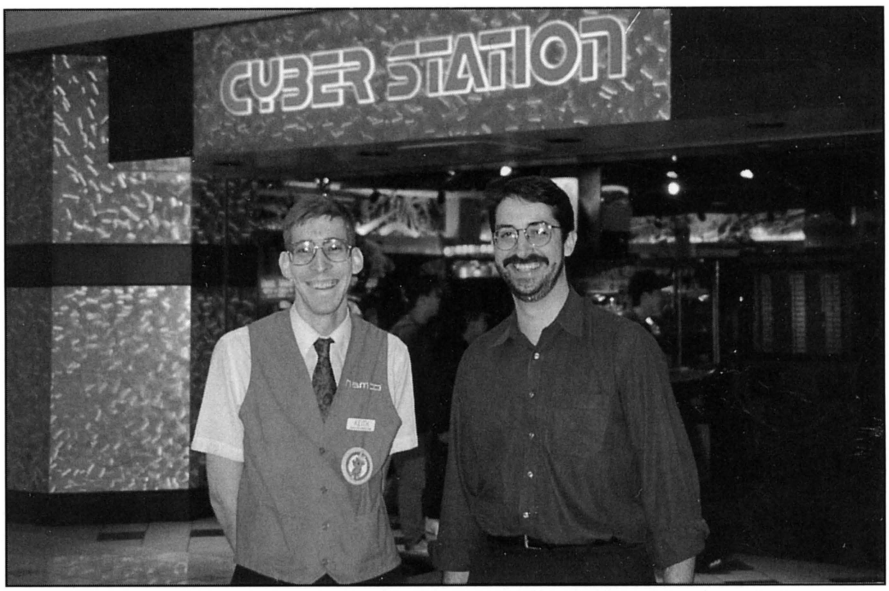
ness into account!"

There's one additional reason that test results from California arcades might be a little "off." That is, as soon as a new game from one factory hits the floor, reps from all the other factories rush over to play it and find out what it's like! "Sometimes if other factories send people in to check out the competition's game, it will skew the results because they're pumping lots of quarters into it!" Mary Fujihara chuckled. "So we take into account that some of those earnings don't always come from real players."

Most of the factory execs said they made a point of getting off the beaten track at times. "Besides the usual places, Atari also tests games in some arcades within a 45 mile radius that we don't talk about," said Mary Fujihara. "These places are used when we want to do some quiet testing without necessarily advertising it to our competition." Paul Jacobs said Data East uses the Keystone arcades in San Jose for similar "quiet" tests, and even makes use of the Cyberstation arcade in San Jose at times.




Cyberstation manager Keith Fisher with Namco operations chief David Bishop at the Sun Valley Mall store (North Bay, close to Oakland). The site generates high-volume traffic flow and Namco likes to use it for "quiet" tests, away from the other manufacturers.

Likewise, for their "quiet tests," David Bishop said Namco favors the Cyberstation arcade in Sun Valley.

Finally, the "human element" is a factor in why certain sites are chosen for tests. "During an early test of a game, especially the very first time out, we like it to be really close by," Mary Fujihara said. "Then we can run by and check on the game at lunch!" ◆

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The Fun Factory bunch bids aloha from one of the company's Hawaii fun centers.

**by Mike Markrich**

The sight of crowds trudging through pouring rain at the Panahou carnival reaffirmed a decision by Linda and Kane Fernandez. If people were that determined to get to a carnival, how would they respond to an indoor carnival at a neighborhood mall? The second-generation proprietors of EK Fernandez Shows Inc. had been refining the concept for more than a year.

When they finally tried it out at Pearlridge Shopping Center in 1977, the first Fun Factory family entertainment center drew crowds that formed lines stretching into the parking lot for a chance to spend quarters on indoor bumper cars, arcade games and cotton candy. First-year sales averaged $125 a square foot—enough to surprise even the Fernandezes.

"The first thing I thought of was, 'Oh no, we're going to run out of prizes.' Then came a tremendous feeling of exhilaration," says Linda Fernandez. "I thought to myself, 'We've done our job. We understood what the families of Hawaii need and we provided it.'"

Sixteen years later, the company's 31 sites are scattered throughout malls in Hawaii and six mainland states. Originally intended as an avenue for growth when EK Fernandez had saturated the local carnival-staging business, Fun Factory, Inc. has become its fastest-growing component. Its $15 million in 1992 sales accounts for more than half its parent company's total. The Pearlridge outlet, harbinger of the concept's popularity, now does $302 a square foot; another site in Waikiki tops the chain at $400 a square foot. Run by president and chief executive Linda Fernandez and a management team that includes a daughter, the chain is one of the few family-run

Appearing in the December 1993 issue of *Hawaii Business*, this cover story on Fun Factory, Inc. is one of the best articles dealing with our industry we've seen featured in a non-trade publication. The text is reprinted here with the permission of *Hawaii Business*, which maintains all copyrights. The photos were provided by 50th State Coin-Op (Fernandez' dealership) & Fun Factory, Inc.

Hawaii companies to launch a successful expansion on the mainland.

But that expansion hasn't come without pricey lessons. At its height in the mid-1980s the company was opening mainland sites at the rate of two a year, sometimes without fully understanding market dynamics in regions far different from Hawaii. The result the company swallowed losses of $2.5 million from the failure of 10 outlets between 1986 and 1987, and sharply reined in its growth while it assessed its mistakes.

Ironically, it is the recession that has put the chain back on the growth track. Fernandez is aiming to double sales at the 200-employee company within five years. (There is even some talk of franchising, which would be another rarity for a Hawaii business.) Key to the company's strength is its concept of inexpensive entertainment, especially when rising prices have put other recreation out of many families' reach.

"Every family needs entertainment," says Fernandez. "The thing they like about Fun Factory FECs is they get lots of value for their time. The average family spends $3 a head with us. There's not much a family can do together any more for that price."



Fun Factory, Inc. president and CEO Linda Fernandez, and chairman of the board Kane (pronounced Kahnay) Fernandez.

## HAWAII CARNIVALS

Until she met Kane on a trip to Hawaii in the early 1960's, Fernandez's exposure to carnivals had been limited to the mainland variety. These typically were traveling shows that followed rodeos from town to town, attracted shady characters, and offered games of chance in which odds were stacked heavily against patrons. By contrast, E.K. Fernandez—who had run circuses and carnivals in Hawaii since 1903—and his son Kane had listed phone numbers that disappointed patrons could, and did, call to voice their gripes.

Kane married the Arizona native, and in 1963, when their first child was two months old, asked his wife to help out with the games. Fernandez took Shelley and later her two other babies to work in the evenings; at bedtime she tucked them into the dime pitch concession and left them in the watchful care of an employee while she continued her work.

A chemistry major in college, Fernandez enjoyed the analytical challenge of building, operating and running the carnival games at a profit. At first she built and ran two games, then four, and then, in an effort to standardize quality, she insisted the company stop using independent contractors and instead own and operate all its games. As she mastered the trade, she and Kane, vice president of EK Fernandez Shows, evolved into effective business partners. The death in 1970 of the company's founder and president made Kane his successor and brought his wife officially into its management ranks.

Having doubled its sales during




The Fun starts here! Linda Fernandez and Warren Asing go over plans for future centers.



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the post-statehood boom, EK Fernandez was grossing $2 million per year. The company dominated its one local rival in the carnival business. But Kane was restless. Growth opportunities would be limited if EK Fernandez continued to rely solely on carnivals; and inflation and the high cost of doing business in Hawaii also meant little chance for large profits or aggressive growth.

By following the mainland trade, Kane discovered a movement toward installing indoor game rooms—updated versions of old-fashioned penny arcades—in shopping centers. Mall developers were experimenting with food courts to encourage people to stay and shop, and there was talk of establishing family entertainment centers to provide diversion for children while their parents shopped.

A Chicago-based chain called Bally's Aladdin's Castle was already offering an early generation of video games in small rooms in a number of locations. But Kane's idea was bigger: He wanted to create an indoor version of the EK Fernandez carnival. In 1975, on a trip to Oklahoma City to look at an indoor mall where an entrepreneur had installed bumper cars and games, he decided he was on the right track. "At that time the family entertainment center was just a concept," Kane recalls. "We thought it made sense, because it was taking the entertainment to where the people were."



From left: Warren Asing, VP and COO, Steven Lau, VP and CFO, and store managers Rick Raquel and Jim Hutchinson.

## REPUTATION AT STAKE

The Fernandezes put up EK Fernandez and their Hawaii Kai home as collateral, borrowed $300,000 from First Interstate Bank and used $400,000 cash from their carnival company to open the first Fun Factory FEC. With little understanding of the indoor carnival concept, Pearlridge management was persuaded on the basis of the family business's reputation. To design the space, Kane hired the mainland specialists R. Duell and Associates, whose credits included the $130 million amusement park at the MGM grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

The concept was unique even for the industry. While mainland operators were filling 2,000-square-foot rooms with small games, Kane insisted that their concept include bumper cars, an electronic shooting gallery, small carousel, cotton candy machine and individual games within a 9,595-square-foot store. The idea was to provide on a small scale the range of activities patrons could find at an outdoor carnival. Mainland operators gave it no chance of succeeding. But since failure would have meant bankruptcy, "We had no choice," Linda Fernandez says. "We knew we had to make this work."

She took charge of merchandising and games. Drawing on her carnival experience, she installed games that were perennial favorites: skee ball, bowling and pinball. Instead of cheap, throw-away prizes, the store lured patrons with stuffed animals, Sony

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portable stereos and TV sets. And in a move later widely copied in the coin-vending industry nation-wide, she started a redemption center: Game winners who opted for tickets instead of prizes could accumulate them and redeem them for higher-end merchandise. A $2 cup at Liberty House would be offered for the same value in redemption tickets. "The retail price is exactly the same," Fernandez notes. "The only difference is that with us, you get the fun for free."

The Pearlridge prototype grossed $1 million in its first year and was a quick success. A year later, *Space Invaders*, the first mega-hit video game, swept the country, and the company found itself frantically trying to meet an insatiable demand. By the late 1970s, *Space Invaders* and later *Pac-Man* were generating half the company's sales. The increased revenues enabled it to get the financing to expand to five locations in Hawaii by 1981.

But the tremendous popularity of video games brought problems as well. Competition in the form of video arcades sprang up throughout the state. The games—essentially personal computers with special circuit boards—needed constant electronic maintenance, and the company spent more than $300,000 to build and staff an electronics repair facility at its Campbell Industrial park headquarters. But being software-driven, the $3,000 to $5,000 machines lost their luster as soon as the next generation of games was produced, leaving arcades with expensive, hard-to-move merchandise.



Fun Factory, Inc. is spotlighted on a Hawaiian television news program.

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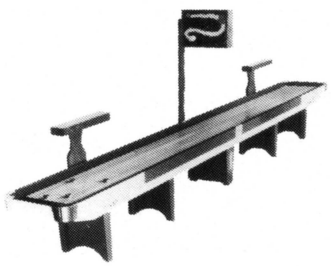

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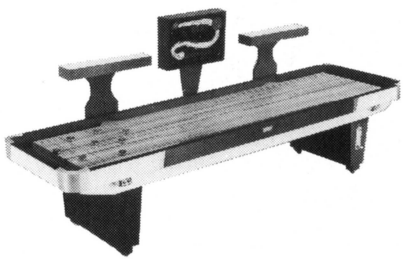

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ment videos and Nintendo, video games crashed. So did the company's sales, by nearly 30 percent in 1984. Its stores had netted as much as a 12 percent pre-tax profit; now, several slipped into the red. But in 1986, with the beginning of a statewide economic boom, sales recovered and the outlets returned to profitability. Video games today bring in about a third of company revenues, but the majority continues to come from prize-oriented games—the old carnival standbys.

## TOWARD THE BIG TIME

With locations in malls on Oahu, the Big Island and Kauai, Fun Factory, Inc., at the beginning of the 1980s had grown into a $2.5 million business and was catching up to the $3 million EK Fernandez Shows. But Hawaii had a limited number of malls, which meant large-scale growth would have to occur on the mainland.

Taking their presentation on the road, the Fernandezes approached shopping center developers in California. They found a cool reception. "Mall developers are extremely cautious," Fernandez recalls. "They're afraid of getting stuck with a client that can't pay. And when we said we're from Hawaii, to them we were just another relatively small tenant from a long way away."

After a number of tries in a series of different states, in 1981 a Kansas City, Missouri mall owner agreed to lease them a space. With $500,000 in financing from Crocker National Bank (since acquired by Wells Fargo) in San Francisco, Fun Factory, Inc. opened it first mainland outlet. The mix of carnival games, food stands, redemption center and video games—a combination untried on the mainland—proved a hit at the 5,620-square-foot Kansas City location. It was soon followed by stores in Michigan, Georgia, Maryland and Illinois.

The couple found that opening in the Midwest had advantages: Cheaper land and construction prices meant capital costs ran 30 percent cheaper than in Hawaii, and high vacancy rates meant more locations to choose from. Stores ranging in size from 2,000 to 12,-000 square feet were opening at a rate of two a year, services by Merchandising Interna-

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tional, a $2.5 million-in-sales Fernandez subsidiary operating out of a warehouse in New Jersey.

But in the fever to expand, setbacks occurred. At Furneaux Creek, a mall in Dallas, a $500,000 start-up was closed after the company miscalculated the impact of nearby movie complexes. In Hawaii, the company had successfully located outlets near theaters. People milling around before or after a movie often spent their extra time at the arcade. Thinking the same formula would work even better at mainland sites with greater population density, the Fernandezes signed a five-outlet deal with a national theater chain. But it bombed. At Furneaux Creek and other sites where competing malls with competing multiplexes clustered together, moviegoers didn't mill. They came, picked a show and a starting time from among dozens of choices, watched the movie and left.

Furneaux Creek was the beginning of a costly lesson. All told, beginning in 1981 the company built 24 mainland stores at an average cost of $350,000 apiece. Between 1986 and 1987 it closed 10 of them. Buying its way out of contracts and closing stores left it with a $2.5 million loss.




Merchandise International supports Fun Factory, Inc. with plush, novelties and more. Pictured is the M.I. team with Shelley Fernandez, VP, and Linda Fernandez, president.

"When we started, we thought, 'shopping center equals success.' But now we know that's not true," Fernandez says. "You have to know if you're in an area that's turned. You have to look at the demographics for the last five years and ask, Is it run down? Are people leaving? Has the crime gone up? Has big industry left so that the average industry is dropping? It's not any one thing. When Furneaux Creek didn't work out, the message to us was investigate, investigate, investigate."

The key lesson: In establishing a location, Fernandez says, determine the size of the niche market and build a store with the appropriate floor space to meet it. Unlike the video game addiction, from which it rebounded quickly, this time it took the company nearly four years to recover its losses.

## MORE FUN

The success of family entertainment centers nationwide has changed the business equation for coin-operated vending arcades. Large corporations have entered the field, such as Namco USA, a California-based Japanese subsidiary with 275 stores. Other chains have opened with names like Time Out, Space Port, Nickels and Dimes, Exhilarama and Discovery Zone, many imitating Fernandez's concepts.

According to Nick Montano, news editor of the trade journal *Vending Times* in New York, these have had immediate impact on family recreation trends. "The new generation of arcade is seen as a destination theme park serving an area with a limited

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radius. They have batting cages, miniature golf, fighter simulators and sophisticated prizes," Montano says. "Coin-operated amusement game centers are now bigger than the movies." His estimate of the industry's size: $2 billion nation-wide.

The Fernandez's face a more competitive marketplace at a time of slow nationwide economic growth. Bigger chains are swallowing smaller ones, and the Fernandezes have turned down offers from interested buyers. Despite a national market share of under 1 percent, the chain has attracted some attention. "The company is profitable and growing fast," says Marcus Webb of the trade journal *RePlay*. "People who walk through one of their operations know it's a well-run business."

By the beginning of 1993, Fun Factory, Inc. was rebuilding: A store in Michigan was remodeled; in Kansas City, another was closed and two more built. Two new outlets opened in Hawaii. Fernandez's aim now is to double the chain's size in five years by opening an average of six outlets a year. With much of the country still in recession, she notes, construction costs are relatively low and shopping centers are offering favorable leases. And in a departure from the past, when the company and other arcades installed violent video games to attract 12- to 23-year-old males, new outlets are broadening the mix to attract customers from ages 2 to 80. At Fun Factory, FEC's, revenues this year should rise slightly above last year's $15 million.

The push to broaden the chain's demographic base is a Fernandez initiative. At the Campbell Industrial Park headquarters her company shares with the EK Fernandez carnival business, she works closely with a staff of 20 including Warren Asing, vice president of operations, and Steven Lau, chief financial officer, and her daughter Shelley, vice president of Merchandise International, which wholesales teddy bears and other prizes to carnivals and arcades across the country. Regarded as a hands-on CEO, Fernandez manages the national chain from its Hawaii base through periodic visits, constant assessment of individual outlet sales and needs by Hawaii-based supervisors, and bonus incentives to keep her 31 store managers long-term.



The Fun Factory team takes on the Stadium Cross challenge. From left: Michelle Oishi, Anthony Montero, Rick Raquel and Sam Kekumu, Jr.

Managers can add up to 50 percent more to their salaries through bonuses, while other employees compete for $5,000 vacations the company offers each quarter as incentives. An eight-point system devised by Fernandez lay out sales, cash control and other targets for managers, and leaves the rest of the decision-making to them. "Money will drive good people. It does not drive people who are

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Right on target. From left: 50th State Coin-Op sales director Joe Hinderer, Fun Factory, Inc. marketing manager Denise Godoy, and facilities director Karen Mitchell.

not interested," she says.

While her station is a long way from running carnival games from the dime pitch 30 years ago, the basics of the business are not dissimilar. Fernandez and Shelley fly frequently to the mainland, Europe and China to assess new rides and merchandise. They have looked into virtual reality games, for instance, but dismissed them (the helmets are too uncomfortable). On matching the right prizes to the right geographic regions, an ongoing problem as the company continues to expand, Shelly notes that while stuffed pink teddy bears work in Hawaii, stuffed



Shelley Fernandez of Merchandise International compares samples of plush animals.

lambs have fallen flat. "People didn't know what these animals with short curly hair were," she says. Stuffed pigs are popular in the Midwest, but not in Hawaii, where boys show little interest in winning pigs for their girlfriends.

The reliance on old-fashioned carnival values sits comfortably with Fernendez. At a carnival, how you treat people is very important," she says. "And you better have the right stuffed animal on Saturday night. Because if you don't they won't play, and that's the whole deal."

(Aloha) ◆

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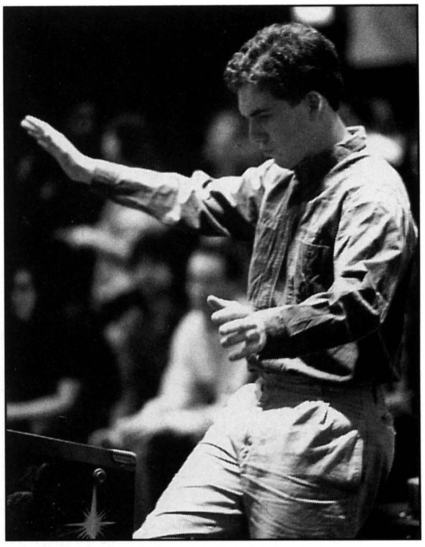
## PAPA's Winning PR Strategy Should Be Applied Industry-Wide!

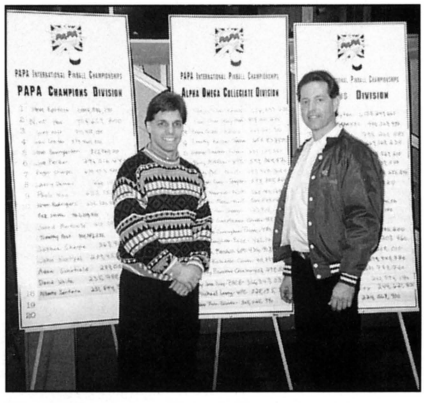
PAPA 4, the fourth annual championships of the Professional & Amateur Pinball Assn., took place Feb. 4-6 at the Park Central Hotel in New York City. After the success of our 1993 "Fall Flip-Offs" in three major cities around the USA, the question for PAPA 4 was: can you do it again? This time we had more entries and more press coverage than ever...and it's time to throw a question back at the skeptics. Our question is, can the industry profit from this success? We'll discuss that question at the end of this column!

PAPA 4 drew more than 650 players and 1,300 entries. We had 60 pinballs, plus plenty of videos for non-tournament entertainment. Qualifying rounds actually ran until 4:30AM on Saturday night/Sunday morning! It was a very exhausting (but fun) weekend. As far as media coverage goes, with four successful championships under our belt, PAPA is now the "established" coin-op tournament event — that is, PAPA is to pinball what the Kentucky Derby is to horse racing. Most of the media we deal with (at least in New York) know that pinball is back. We're getting more sports coverage and more press which acknowledges that pinball is part of our culture. The media actually thanks us for giving them something exciting to cover, with competitive fire and colorful players (complete with nicknames), etc. (A partial list of media outlets which covered PAPA 4 is given at the end of this column.)

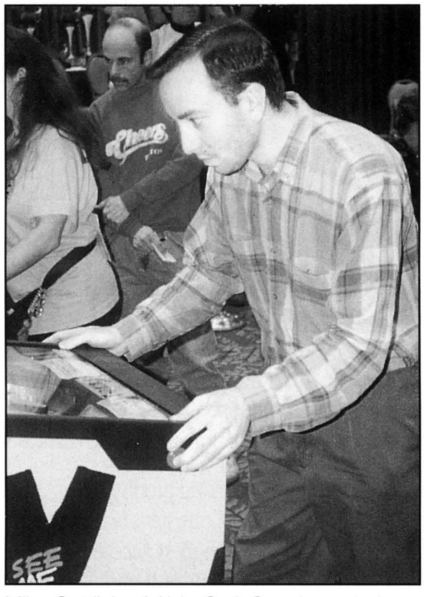
By the way, we PAPA officials didn't have to spend much time talking to the press; they wanted to get the story from the players themselves...and they did. The only distraction was a celebrity appearance by *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit supermodel Elle MacPherson! Other celebrity participants and visitors included famed rock singer Lou Reed; Gillette Penn of Penn & Teller; soap opera star Alice Barrett ("Another World"); musician Laurie Anderson; and the entire cast of "Tommy" which is now back on Broadway; cast members from "Guys



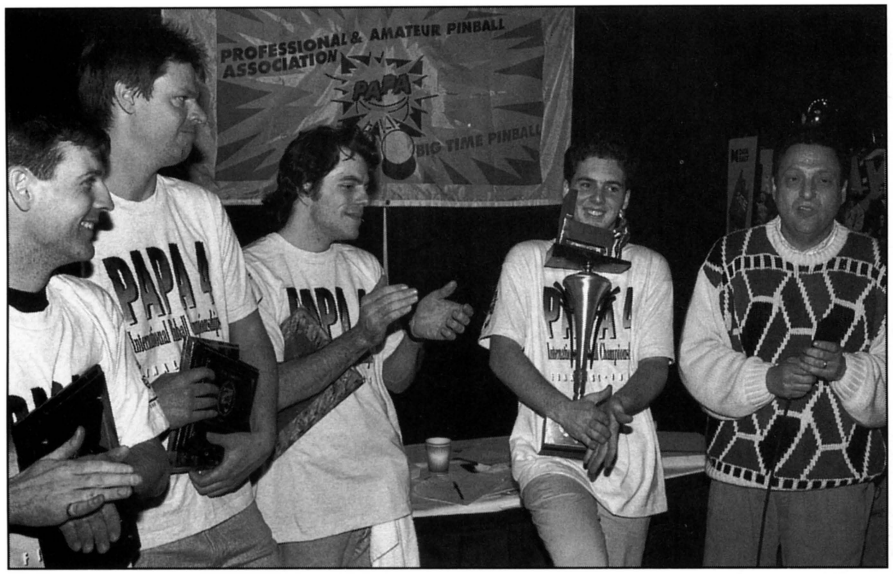
PAPA's top-skill division solo winner was Bowen Kerrin, seen here "dancing" through a round on a *Star Trek* pinball.




The All-Collegiate Pinball Championships were run & sponsored by Alpha-Omega Amusements. Here's Alpha's prexy Frank Seninsky (right) with Sec.-Treas. Joe Camarota.



Mike Gottlieb of Alvin G. & Co. shows he's an intense flipper competitor.



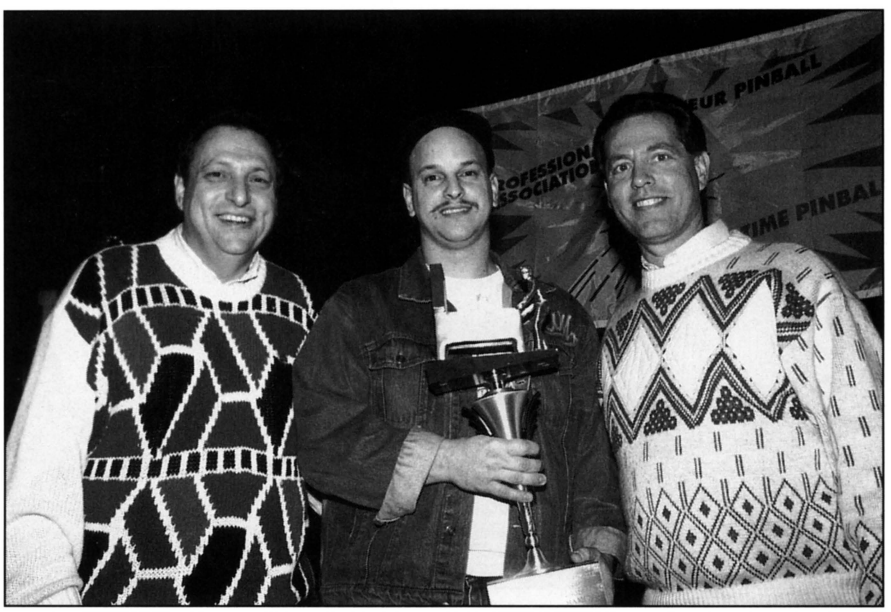

PAPA President Steve Epstein (at right) with winners of the "A" (top skill) division. From left, Dave Stewart took 2nd place, Hal Erickson took 4th, Lyman Sheats took 3rd and Bowen Kerrin finished first.



Doubles champs Lyman Sheats & David Hegge with their well-earned trophies.




Alpha-Omega's comptroller Karen Nagel helps keep track of names and scores. She also expertly added billions & billions of points that were scored by PAPA players!



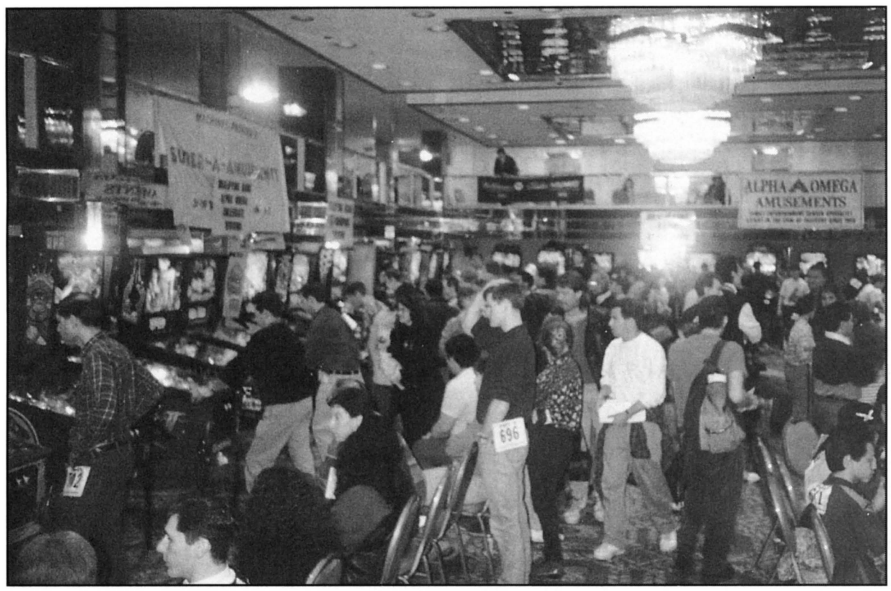
PAPA President Steve Epstein with "B" division winner Kevin Kulek and PAPA veep Frank Seninsky. (Guess who should win the "Bill Cosby weird sweater" awards.




Data East's Lonnie Ropp & Lyman Sheats with "Tommy" star Michael Cerveris and Steve Epstein. The show has returned to the stage, while a new *Tommy* flipper has made it's own reprise.



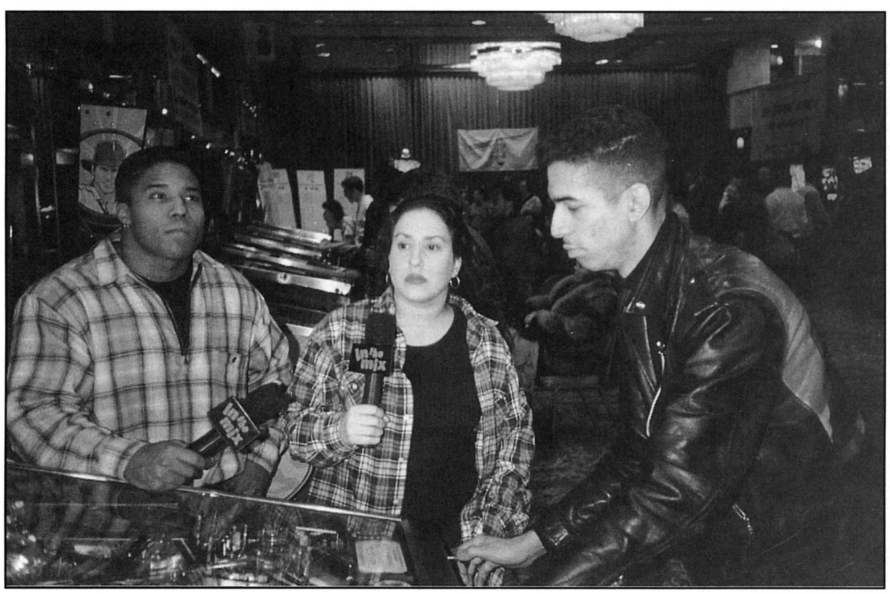

TV lights and boom mike dramatize the great news coverage for PAPA '94. It was quite the media event!




People? Did they get people? Mobs of 'em. Event was staged at a New York hotel.




All-Collegiate Division finalists with Alpha-Omega Amusements staff.



Broadway Arcade PAPA player Kai Bateman is interviewed for *"In the Mix"* TV show.

& Dolls"; Blood Brothers; and The Sisters Rosenzweig.

Our event drew such a crush of people from different cultures that we practically needed U.N. translators at times. I've never heard so many different languages in one place. And it is a family event, drawing just the type of crowd that our industry wants to attract. Of course, with all those people came a very big job of organization and management. PAPA President Steve Epstein and I served as judges, running around settling any disputes among players and machines. Steve leapt into this demanding event immediately after his marathon cross-country trip for the PAPA Fall Flipoffs.

We're very grateful to all the people who put in so much time. Our incredibly hardworking technical staff included Data East's Jim Gorman, Alpha-Omega's Ramon Vivar, WMS's Greg McKay and Tom Cahill, Data East's Lonnie Ropp, Jim from Amusement Consultants, and Jeff from Mondial. Also helping out in various ways were AAMA's Michelle Piazza; Amusement Consultants' Ilyssa Getlan; Alpha-Omega's Joe Camarota, Karen Nagel, Charlotte Camarota, Ada Vivar, Dave Loper and Mike Spillane; Sondi Epstein and their kids Dale and Erica; Mrs. Roger Sharpe; our own PR whiz Joe Shick; the Mayfair Amusements staff (sellers of pinball parts, antiques and related goodies); Premier's L.J. Greene; and WMS's Rachel Davies. Rich Babich came on behalf of AAMA's PR committee and helped hand out awards. Data East's Joe Kaminkow lent his presence and brought the family. Betson's Bob Boals, wife Dardy, and daughter Morgan all gave their time.

The new PAPA "A Division" singles champion is Bowen Kerrins from Newport, R.I. He's 18 years old and attends Stanford University. He took home a prize of $4,000 in cash. Dave "Three Rivers" Stewart from Pittsburgh was second, and Lyman "Silk" Sheats placed third. Hal Erickson, "The Tower of Power" from San Francisco, took fourth place. Rick

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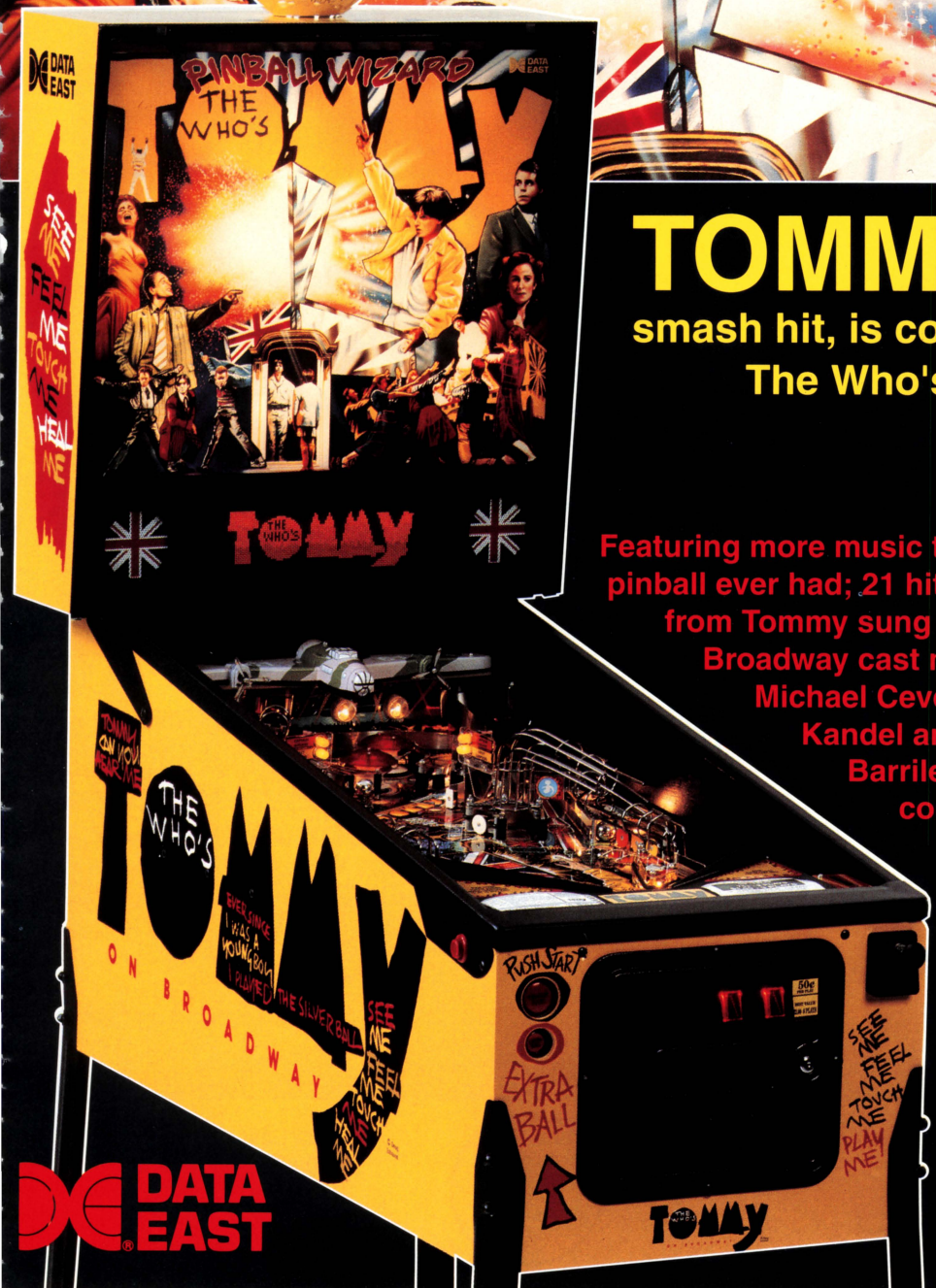


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Stetta, our champion two years ago, was in the semi-finals but didn't place. Same goes for Mike Gottlieb and Dave "the Ice Man" Hegge.

In the "B Division" our top winner was Kevin Kulek (Pinconning, Minn.). New Jersey's Sam Ryan took "C Division" first place. Perhaps our most intense competition was in the "Doubles Division," sponsored by Ampex Software. Lyman Sheats and Dave Hegge took top honors here. In the Women's Division, Ellen "Nails" Frankel from Pittsburgh bested some 30 other competitors for a first place finish. In a special PAPA division (for people who had won PAPA league play in the past), Lyman Sheats won first place and Rutgers student Sean Grant took second, with Hal Erickson placing third.

Our "Junior Division" (16 and under) was full for the very first time; it was sponsored by Toy Biz, maker of the "Pinball Warrior." New champ is Vincent Chasmer from New Jersey. Second place went to Zack Sharpe (Roger's son) from Chicago. Ritchie Truxillo (Wilmington, N.C.) placed third and Joshua Sharpe (Roger's family again) took fourth. (The Sharpe kids competed hotly with each other and did much better than their dad.)

A successful new event at PAPA 4 was the Alpha-Omega Amusements All-Collegiate Championships. Alpha-Omega, my company, ran qualifying tournaments on 60 college campuses last fall; top players from 40 schools in many of the Eastern states actually competed at PAPA 4. The first place winner (Michael Krill from Rutgers) will enjoy a week-long, all-expense-paid trip for two to Cancun, Mexico. Second and third place winners in this division (Paul Chan from StonyBrook and George Dusichka from Rutgers, respectively) got similar trips to the Caribbean.

Other events were called "PAPA Shootouts" with low entry fees and winner-takes-all pots of up to $100 or so. These included the one-ball contest, the two-minute drill, "Zen" pinball (where one person plays each flipper) & "Scotch Doubles" (mixed doubles, taking turns on 2 balls).

Sponsors included the four U.S. pinball manufacturers (Williams Electronics, Midway Mfg., Premier Technology, and Data East Pinball) who donated some machines and brought some new ones. Also sponsoring PAPA 4 were: Ampex Software; Alpha-Omega Amusements, Amusement Consultants, Betson Enterprises, Mondial Distributing, a water company called Laval, Toy Biz (maker of "Pinball Warriors"), AAMA, IBO Interactive Software, Tristan, 8-Ball Deluxe PC, and Subway sandwiches (national headquarters). Our championship party was called "FLIPPERMANIA" and benefited this year's charity, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS to the tune of some $18,000.

Well, a successful event in New York City is really nice, but what does it mean for the coin machine industry as a whole? And, what does it mean for your cash box? The answer is simple and powerful. Well-run promotional events can garner multimillion-dollar publicity for our industry! Our Fall Flipoffs and PAPA 4 prove this conclusively. Their success is not a fluke; it's a solid, repeatable result based on solid, demonstrable principles. AMOA and AAMA should learn the lesson from this years-long success story. They should establish well-funded PR committees, hire professional media consultants, and go out to achieve similar results for video, redemption and other types of games on a daily basis, around the USA. Every operator's cash box would be fuller for it. Every operator's pride and dignity would be lifted a little higher, too...which is especially welcome now, when we're getting (yet another) black eye over video violence.

At PAPA 4, Rich Babich and I spoke about possible ways for AMOA and AAMA to raise funds for

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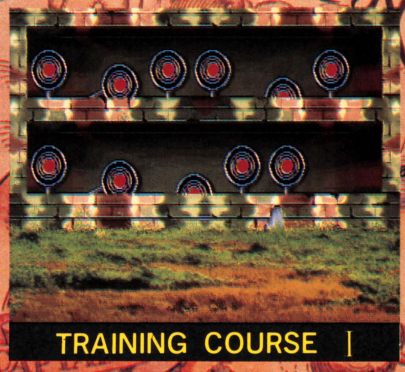
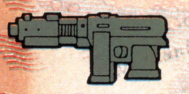
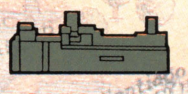


TRAINING COURSE I



MACHINE GUN



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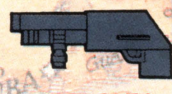


SHOT GUN



DECREASE I LIFE



INCREASE I LIFE



HEADQUARTER

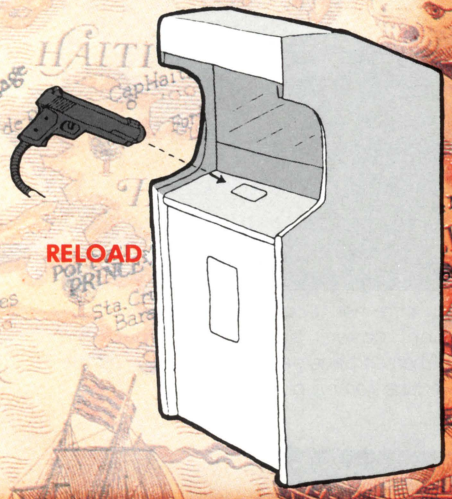


AERIAL COMBAT

Lord of Gun



SEAWAR



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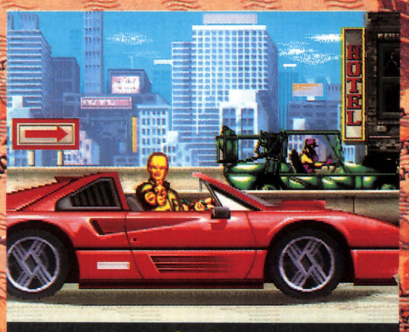

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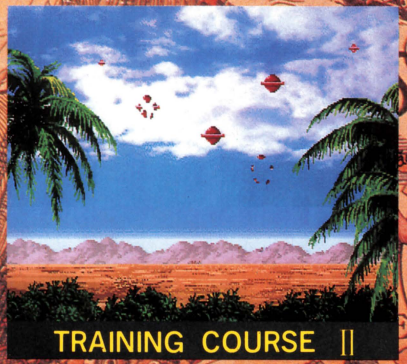
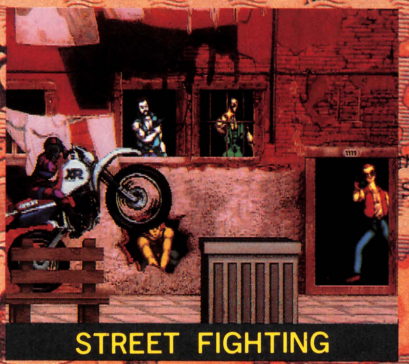


TRAINING COURSE II



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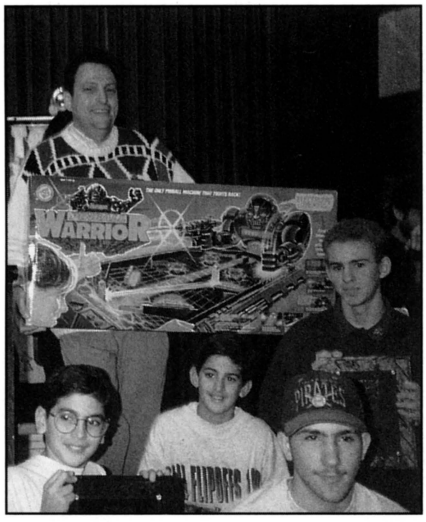
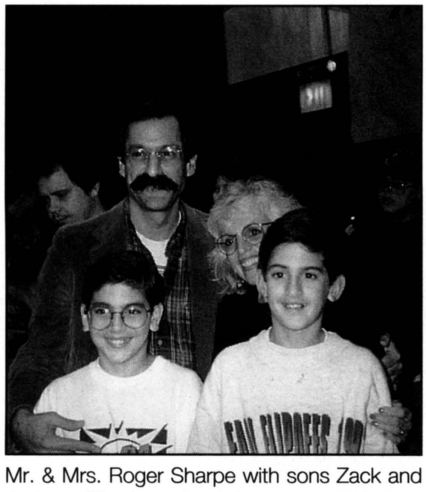



Steve Epstein with Jr. Division winners Vincent Chasmer, Zack Sharpe, Richie Truxillo and Joshua Sharpe.



Mr. & Mrs. Roger Sharpe with sons Zack and Joshua. (The boys beat the pants off dad on the flipper competition. Mom helped run the event.)



Premier's L.J. Greene helps score the flipper contests.

this purpose. Such as, maybe charging another $1 per square foot of booth space at the ACME Show and AMOA Expo, with funds earmarked for PR uses. Let's face it: in the past, individual manufacturers and both associations have wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars on a quest for positive PR, without achieving real, lasting results. Here is a way to get more bang for your buck!

And now, as mentioned above, here is a partial list of major media outlets which covered PAPA 4. In the world of television: CNN, New York 1, NBC *Today Show*, WNBC *Sunday Today in New York*, Japan's Fuji TV, Eco TV (Spanish), "*In The Mix*," WNYW News — New York, WPIX, WOR-TV News, WNBC News, WABC News, ESPN2, KRON-TV (Calif.), and *National Geographic* TV.

Radio coverage was provided by: BBC *World News*, WOR Radio, WBAI Radio, National Public Radio, Bloomberg Radio, 1010 WINS News, NBC Radio Network, WBZ-Boston, Associated Press Radio, San Francisco Radio, WLLH-AM.

Print coverage was provided by: *Harper's Bazaar, New York Times, N.Y. Daily News, N.Y. Post, N.Y. Press, N.Y. Observer, Bikini Magazine, Family Fun, Word Up, Newsday, USA Today, Sassy Magazine, Courier Lifestyles, Boston Phoenix, Boston Herald, Boston Globe, Baltimore Sun, Chicago Tribune, Atlanta Journal & Constitution, New Yorker Magazine, Newark Star Ledger, Daily Mail, Associated Press, Reuters News Service, Brutus Magazine* (Japan), *Philadelphia City Paper, NYU Paper, Columbia U Paper*, Gannette Newspapers, *San Jose Mercury News*, Associated Newspapers, Columbia News Services, *The Villager, The Face, Il Manifesto, El Pais*, N.Y. *Entertainment Scene*, and *College Wire Service*.

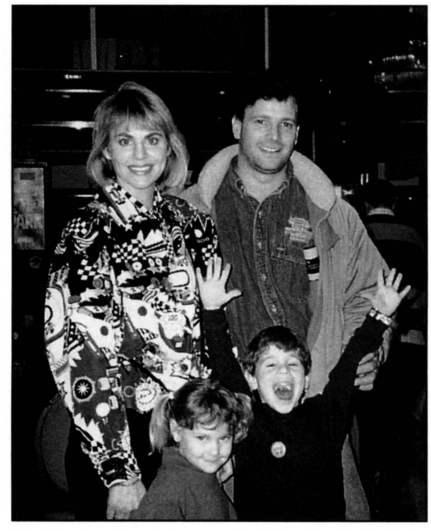
Photo agencies included: Retna, LGI, Granata Press, Gamma, Sygma, and the N.Y. Times photo agency (the famous journalist Dith Pran, whose amazing escape across wartime Cambodia was dramatized in the film "The Killing Fields"). ◆




PAPA President Steve Epstein (at left) presents special award plaque to Joe Schich, who helps organize & publicize the event.




Fresh from her *"Sports Illustrated"* swimsuit edition cover, superstar model Elle MacPherson turned all heads at PAPA as she played the *Tommy* pinball.



Kim & Joe Kaminkow with little David & Katie at PAPA. Great pinball jacket, Kim!

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# A SNOWY RECEPTION

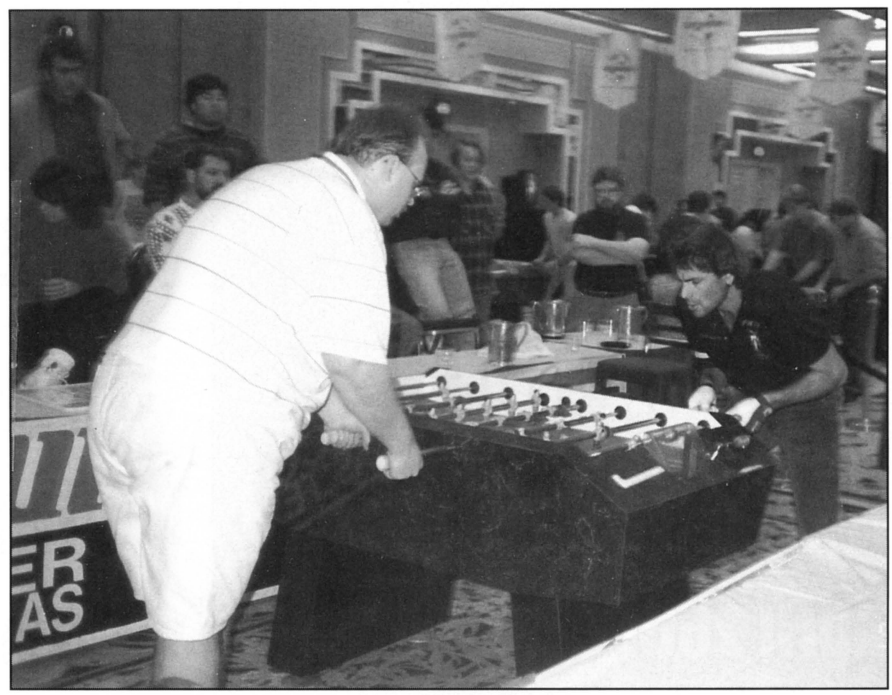
*Competitors braved the elements to reach the third leg of the Grand Slam table soccer tour in Baltimore*

Even one of the worst winters in years couldn't keep table soccer enthusiasts away from the third stop on Dynamo and the American Table Soccer Federation's Grand Slam tour in Baltimore, Md., January 21-23. The Baltimore Airport Marriot hosted the Eastern States Classic, where players from as far away as California competed for $25,000 in prizes in 10 different events.

The weekend began on the heels of a major storm that had rocked the entire eastern seaboard. Many competitors had to literally drive through a blizzard to get to hotel. But the wrath of Mother Nature couldn't stop the legions of devoted table soccer players from attending the largest event on the east coast in ten years.

Tournament officials were very pleased with the large local turnout as well. The storm probably kept some people at home, but those who made it enjoyed a solid weekend of intense competition.

Highlights included a couple of old pros coming out of retirement to take on the big guns. Larry Chesbrough of Spokane, Wash. and Rick Benitez of Tampa, Fla. won Open Doubles II Rollerball, and finished a strong second in Open Doubles I to Terry Moore of San Diego, California and Bob Diaz of Tampa. Since Diaz and Moore already qualified for the Grand Slam finals for the two brand-new trucks, Chesbrough and Benitez are now in the running.



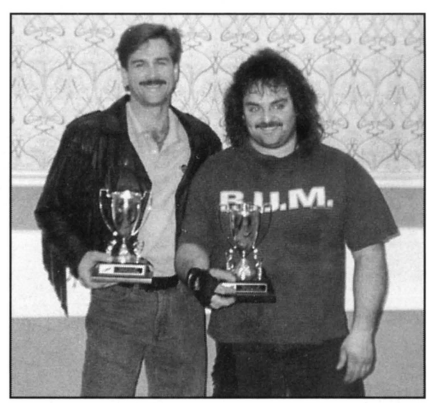
Open Singles semi-final action (from left): Terry Moore of San Diego against Thor Donavon of Ventura, Calif.

Other new Grand Slam finalists include the Rollerball team of Marty Jenkins of Baltimore and Ray Sager of upstate New York. Expert Doubles winners Jim Peters of New York and Aaron Farrone of Florida also claimed a bracket in the playoffs.

The ATSF crew packed up on Sunday night with a vow to return to this area in the near future. Table soccer is alive and well on the eastern USA—thanks in part to the many promoters, as well as the fascination and enjoyment of the game itself.



Don Swan of Columbus, Ohio gives a "thumbs up" after being awarded the top spot in Open Singles.



Expert Singles champs (from left): Aaron Farrone of Florida and Jim Peters of New York.



Winners of Open Doubles II (from left): Ricky Benitez of Tampa, Fla. and Larry Chesbrough of Spokane, Wash.

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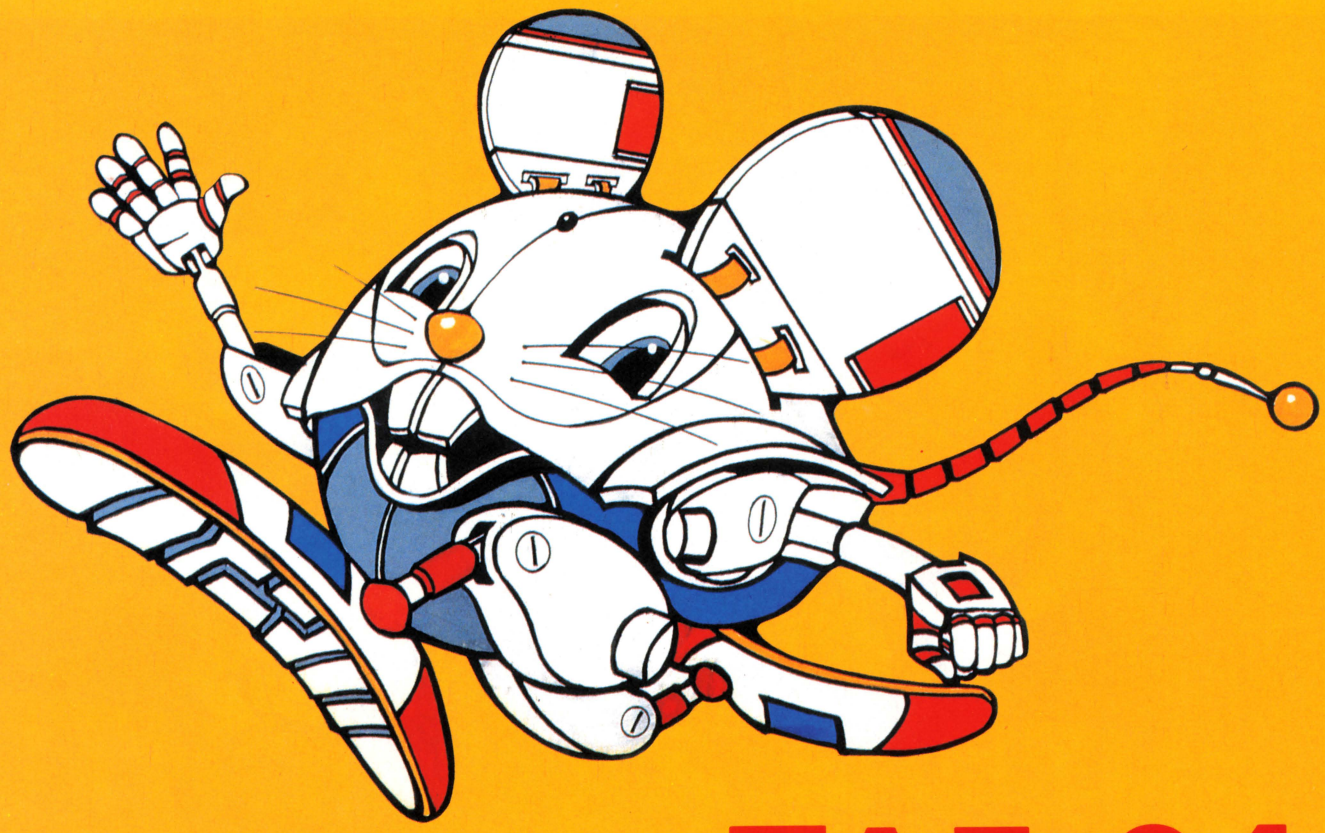

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*London show emerges on a par with JAMMA and AMOA with strong international attendance & exhibits*

[***Editor's note:*** *the following story is based on reports from Amusement Business Europe and our correspondent Martin Dempsey. All photos are courtesy of Mr. Dempsey and Alex Fierek of the show's PR agency Scott and Jones Communications.*]

When is a British coin-op trade show not a British coin-op trade show? When it's billed as an international coin-op "event." When it draws over one-third more international attendance than last year (and last year was plenty). When industry members from around the world — both buyers and sellers — feel they "must" be there.

The 1994 ATEI (the Amusement Trades Exhibition International) met all those criteria. How did they do it? Basically, the show pulled itself up by its bootstraps to reach world-class status in this, its 50th year. Show organizers (and Her Majesty's commerce department) have been beating the publicity drums for at least six months, heralding the Jan. 25-27 show as a global coin-op forum par excellence.

It worked. Americans who attended the show said they saw more of their fellow countrymen at the London show than ever before. International attendance was up 38% to 3,454. The number of overseas exhibitors also broke ATEI's previous records: the 60 international exhibitors represented a 50% increase over last year. Besides lots of Yanks, ATEI also drew big numbers of Czechs, Russians, Japanese, and even some South Africans (and of course plenty of Europeans).

Overall numbers were also extremely good. Total attendance broke previous ATEI records, topping 20,000 for the first time (the official number was 23,571...but remember, Europeans count repeat visits by the same person as a separate attendance unit). In total over 300 firms were represented at ATEI. Some of the 230 amusement booths and 35 gaming booths obviously rep'd more than one company.

Exhibition organizer Peter Rusbridge pronounced himself "extremely pleased" with the show, and U.S. visitors said the logistics at the Earl's Court 1 site were the best they've ever seen. "Trade journalists from around the globe were mentioning ATEI's name in the same breath as JAMMA and AMOA," reported *Amusement Business Europe*.

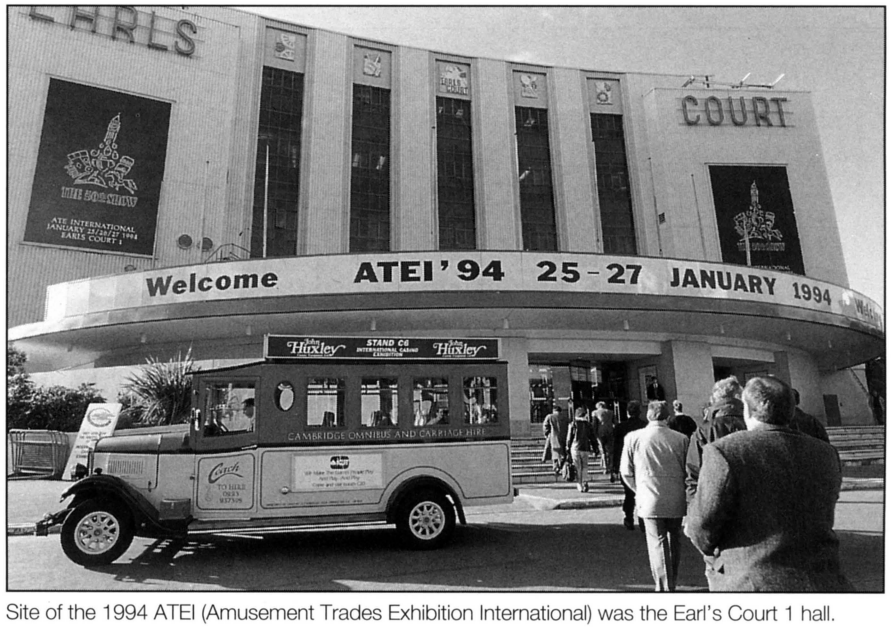
## PRODUCT: "SOME" NEW GOODS WERE THERE

The show may have been a tad light on new product, but of the new goods, some were quite newsworthy indeed. Atari debuted *Hard Drivin' Airborne*. The local hi-tech firm, Virtuality Group Ltd., debuted its second-generation VR system featuring lower prices, lighter headgear and better graphics. Electronic Arts debuted its first-ever coin-op game, *Battle Toads*. It's a licensed product (from Rare) but EA plans to bring out a "homegrown" coin-op game very soon.

Also new were Konami's low-end driver *Racin' Force* and their kit *Monster Maulers*, ISG's *Lord of Gun*, Nova's *Cops*, Jaleco's *Battle K-Road*, and Seibu's *Raiden 2* (sold through Fabtek in the States). Capcom showed three new games: *Eco Fighters, Muscle Bomber Duo* and *Dungeons & Dragons: Tower of Doom*.

Some new pinballs debuted at ATEI, including Midway's *Popeye*, Data East's *Tommy* and Premier's *World Challenge Soccer*. Other flippers, previously seen at AMOA Expo '93, were also shown.

*(continued next page)*




Site of the 1994 ATEI (Amusement Trades Exhibition International) was the Earl's Court 1 hall.



Members of BACTA (British trade group), ATE and guests gather for ATEI's opening ceremony, performed by the Honorable Tim Sainsbury, Member of Parliament and Minister for Industry.




An overview of ATEI '94.




ATEI hosted a World Summit Meeting of leaders from BACTA, JAMMA, AMOA and AAMA.

## OLDER TITLES & UNFINISHED PROTOTYPES

The above titles were a relatively small percentage of the overall equipment shown at ATEI. *RePlay* European correspondent Martin Dempsey put it, "Some visitors from Japan commented that Europe seemed to be in a video game time warp, as many games reaching Europe now have been available in Japan for a long time." Namco's *Ridge Racer* and Sega's *Virtua Formula* were standouts among the "we've seen that already" group, and still garnered very positive reaction. Many other video titles shown at ATEI would be familiar to U.S. tradesters from last year's U.S. shows, observers said.

Unfinished prototypes and "sneak previews" abounded. A very early, unfinished version of Jaleco's *F-1 Super Battle* driving game was displayed, along with their still-under-development MegaSystem 32. Taito showed rough versions of *Under Fire*, a gun game, and *Dungeon Magic*, a kit. Sega showed videotape previews of *Daytona* and *Jurassic Park* to the London crowd (both video games will actually debut at this month's ACME).

## A POSITIVE MOOD

The overall atmosphere of the show was "realistically positive." After years in the doldrums, the U.K.'s domestic market is looking up a bit, and British manufacturers are also pleased about their growing force in international markets. Beyond that, showgoers seemed reasonably satisfied, if not overwhelmed, with the quality and quantity of new goods at ATEI.

Most of all, attendees had excellent reviews for the show itself. "The atmosphere of the show was electric," reported Martin Dempsey. "There were more exhibitors, more visitors, more games and more orders than ever before. The 50th show was marketed as the 'show to beat all previous shows,' and with the International Casino Exhibition running alongside as a separate event, the stage was set for three days of frantic activity...and that's exactly what transpired." *(more photos ahead)*

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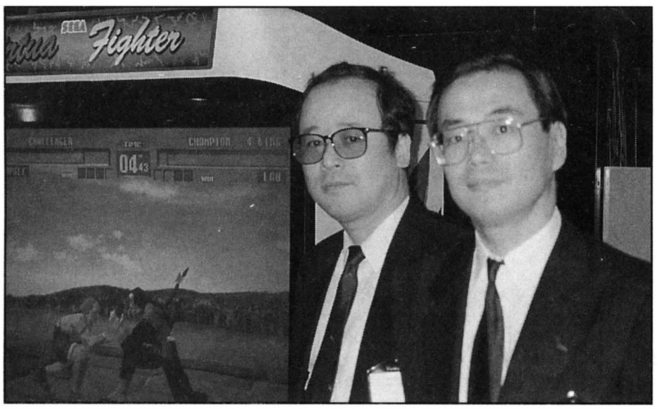
ATE Chairman Charles Henry and BACTA prexy Roger Withers emerge from a Sega simulator.



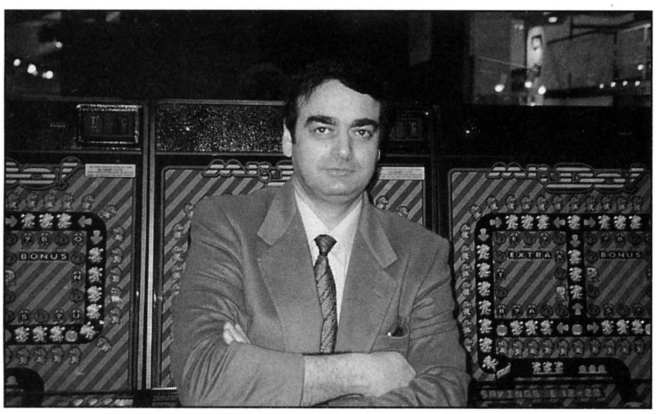

NAMCO's *Ridgeracer* was quite the attention getter at ATEI.



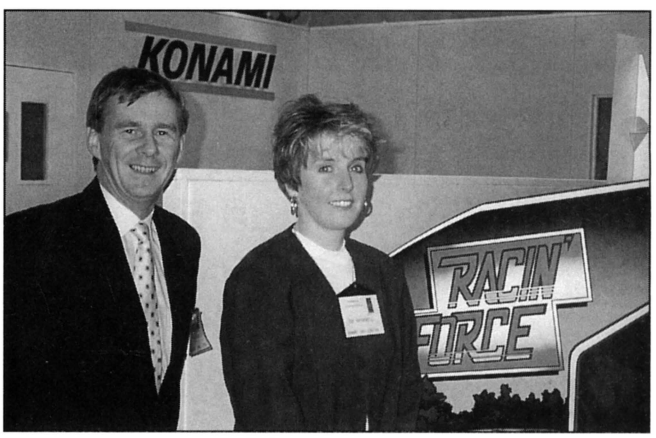

Sega Japan's Kohtaro Noda with Sega Amusement Europe's Kenji Horri.



Taito's S. Yamakata and Gran Freerks with their firm's simulator.



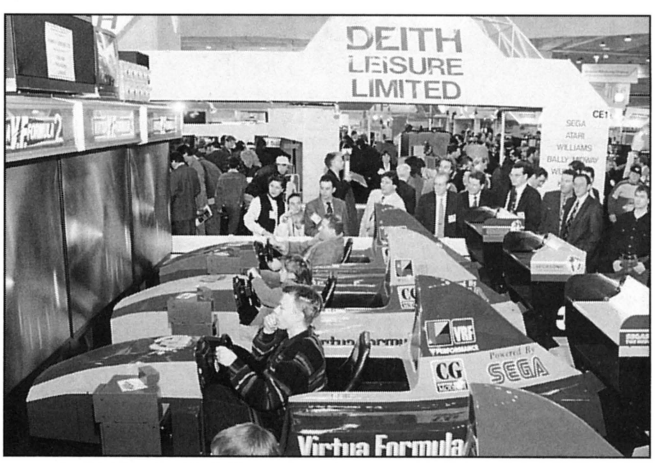

Electrocoin's John Stergides with a prize-payout *Mr. Do* (small-stakes gambling is a British coin-op staple).




Konami's Steve Bierrum & Sue Hatherall with their *Racin' Force* driver.




Family Leisure's Alan Rawlinson, Deith Leisure's Bob Deith, Family Leisure's Michael Green, Deith Leisure's Colin Mallery and T. Ogata with Sega's *Virtua Formula* driving game.




The new *Virtua Formula* driving experience in action.




Data East Pinball's general manager Gary Stern with *Tommy*, their new flipper.



Rowe's Joel Friedman & Bob Navara with their *Lady in Red* CD juke.



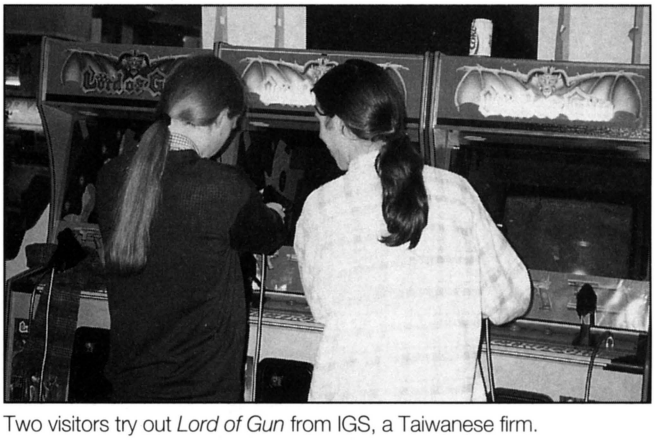

Jaleco's Norman Leftly and Hiroshi Sawai with their *Best Bout Boxing* video.




Strata's *Driver's Edge* got lots of interest.



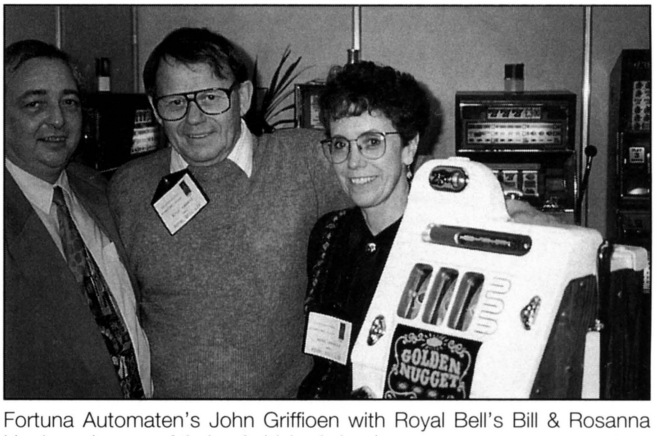

Irish visitor Dick Quirke test-drives *Hard Drivin' Airborne* from Atari.



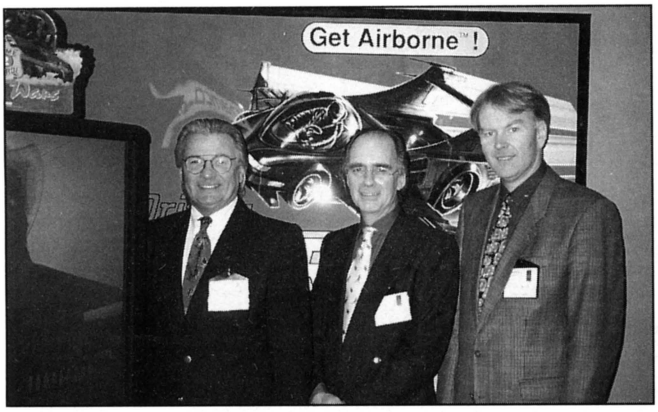
Two visitors try out *Lord of Gun* from IGS, a Taiwanese firm.



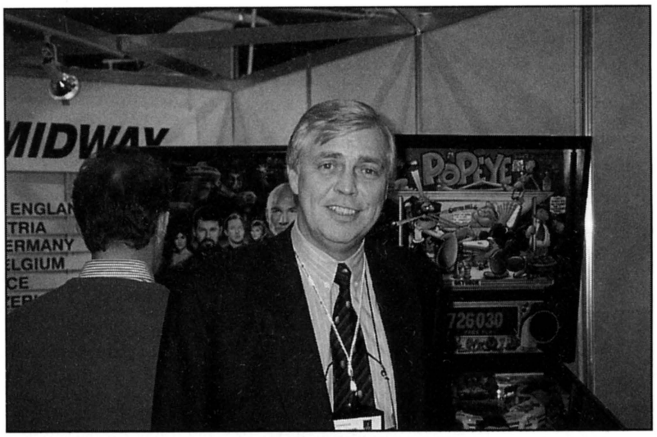
Bob's Space Racers showed *The Water Game*. Alicia Clarke is seen with the game on Crompton's stand.



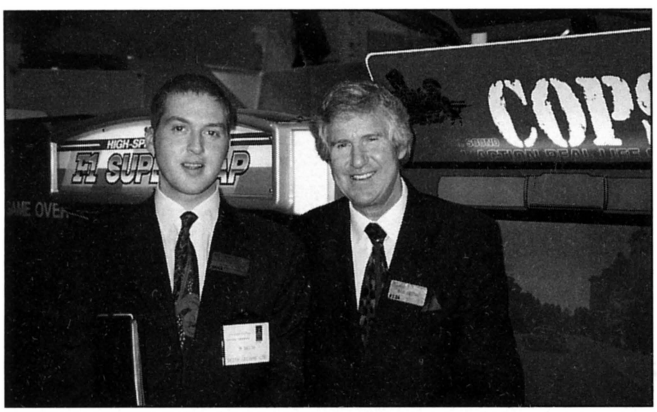

Fortuna Automaten's John Griffioen with Royal Bell's Bill & Rosanna Harris and some of their refurbished classics.




American Laser Games' Stan Jarocki with Atari-Europe's David Smith and Atari-Ireland's Mike Nevin. ALG's *Drug Wars* is shown in the new Atari cabinet.




WMS Games (Europe)'s Mike Sengelman with the *Star Trek* and *Popeye* pinball games.




Deith Leisure's Matthew & Bob Deith with *Cops* laserdisc game from Nova.




Namco's *Ridge Racer* seen here in a new wide-screen, three-monitor format.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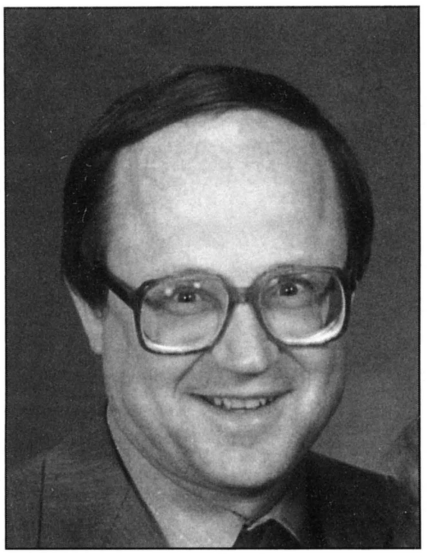
# TODD ON TARGET

## The "Walk-Away" Customer... and How to Get Him Back

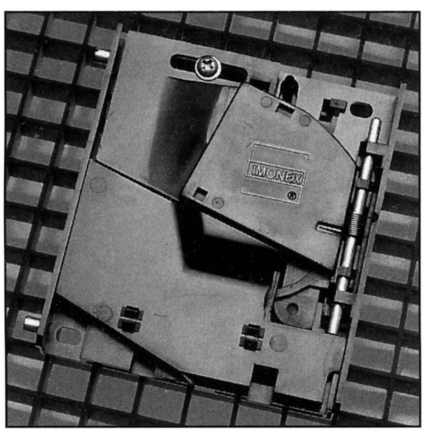


by Todd Erickson

How many times have you inserted money in a phone, vending machine or game — and lost money? Plenty of times, and when this happens many of us get mad enough to hit the equipment. Most of us, after losing a few coins, will walk away from the equipment.

As operators, how many times have we found four to six dollars in the coin entry of a game? How many times does that money represent lost business from "walk-away customers"? Sadly, this kind of thing happens far too often, and every time it does, we are stealing from our customers...not to mention costing ourselves thousands of dollars.

Today, coin calls make up about 30% of the total service calls for the operator. Maybe that ratio was acceptable 50 years ago, when the mechanical coin mechs now in use were originally designed. After all, back in those days, wages were $2 an hour and gasoline cost $0.18 a gallon! But in the 1990s driving time is a big expense factor, both in terms of manpower and fuel costs.

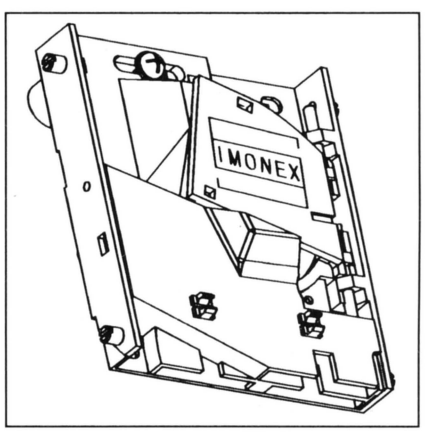



Cutting down on the number of coin calls would dramatically reduce operator overhead. Where can we turn for help on this problem — to our national trade associations? Unfortunately, there is no major effort from AMOA or AAMA to help the operator in this department. But we need to stop passively accepting whatever "the powers that be" hand to us. We need to start thinking boldly in terms of our rights as customers. If manufacturers give you shoddy products which hurt your business, then refuse to correct the problem, it's time to become a consumer activist. (Maybe we don't have to go as far as the group that filed a class-action lawsuit against General Motors because of poor performance by their 4-6-8 diesel motor, but you get the idea.)

Fortunately, the coin mech service problem is one area where we operators can really help ourselves, without calling on trade associations or the courts. In this case, a variety of superior products are already on the market. It's simply a matter of insisting on them. The "coin compensator" from Coin Mechs, and the electronic coin control from Coin Controls, are both nice, if a bit on the "pricey" side. But what I'd really like to call your attention to, is the new coin rejector from Imonex which was shown at the last AMOA Expo.

The difference between Imonex's rejector and the standard model is: no moving parts! The standard coin rejector has two main design flaws. First, the cradle: any time you stop the coin, it has to start moving again. Second, the magazine, which will stop a coin with iron content like Canadian coins, iron slugs, etc. If the rejector is not adjusted correctly and the coin return button pushed in all the way in, the jam-up starts. The Imonex separates by size and iron content. Its small magnet works on the same principle as a Valley pool table.

Many years ago, I purchased a coin counter from a well-known maker. It had terrible problems, but it did perform one function quite well: it separated smaller coins out the side at a rate of 2,000 coins per minute. So if this otherwise poor unit could accomplish that task, surely it would be reasonable to expect the same per-



formance from our standard coin mech in the industry today, right? Wrong. The coin mech generally used by the trade today cannot separate even one coin at a time without having problems!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Looking at Imonex, the next question is how well do they work? Judging by the major game and music manufacturers who have begun putting Imonex into their equipment as standard components, they must work quite well. Rowe was the first to use Imonex 3-coin mechs in their jukebox. Smart Industries saw the Imonex rejectors at the last AMOA Expo, and they're already using this coin mech...probably because President Gordon Smart and VP Jeff Smart were operators before they were manufacturers, and they understand the importance of reliable coin mechanisms. With the Imonex rejector, they have just eliminated approximately 25% of the service on their excellent equipment.

Imonex is not a new company; they are just new to our industry. They've been in the payphone and vending trades for a long while, however. I feel their mech could eliminate at least 80% of the coin jams we operators experience today. I base that claim on my experience so far, testing almost 100 Imonex units which have been phased in over a 60-day period. The first units have been out for around four months. We've seen a few minor problems due to different coin doors, but needed changes are now being made.

Making coin mechs from Imonex the industry standard would be a great first step in an industry-wide program to reduce the operator's service workload by 50%. Is that a reasonable goal for our factories to adopt? I think so. After all, a glance at today's paper shows Northwest Airlines is the only one of the big five to make money in their fourth quarter. The reason? Reduced operating costs! GM is making money again, and the same reason is largely behind it. As for the coin machine industry, Williams Electronics has adopted the "cut service by 50%" goal...and under Dan Galarde of their quality control department, it's starting to happen.

While you're at the ACME Show in Chicago this month, stop by the Imonex booth and meet Butch Bruner. Then you judge the coin mech for yourself. I think you'll be pleased with what you see! ◆

# TECHNICAL TIPS

# SHARP IMAGE INTRODUCES 33" BEHEMOTH MONITOR

**by RANDY FROMM**

Videogame monitors generally sport a warning or two somewhere on the chassis or the picture tube itself. These warning stickers usually refer to the high voltages that are present at various parts of the monitor. I recommend that this monitor carries a warning label that states the following:

WARNING: Do not attempt to lift and install this monitor without help.

When Sharp Image delivered their new 33-inch monitor (dubbed model SI-233) to my home shop for review, I first tried to pull it out of the shipping carton by myself. Ha! No way! This thing is huge! With help, I set it up on the bench to fire it up. Later on, I had to bring the monitor outside in the back yard to photograph it!

This all new design incorporates Panasonic's new flat screen CRT. While this new picture tube is not really perfectly flat, the curvature of the CRT screen is a lot less than other, more conventional picture tubes. It is this massive CRT that contributes mostly to the weight of the monitor. The electronics on the chassis doesn't weigh any more than conventional monitors.

The picture quality was perfectly acceptable, with only a tiny bit of misconvergance in the extreme lower right corner of the CRT. This was only visible using a pattern generator set to "dots" or "crosshatch". With a game board connected, the picture looked great!

This new, 33-inch monitor also includes a switched-mode power supply to provide the monitor's B+ of +123 volts DC. It is also known as a "free voltage" design, although I'm not exactly sure why. Perhaps it's because you're free to use any input voltage from 90 to 265 volts AC to power the monitor. The switching power supply also means that an isolation transformer is not required to power this monitor.

Although the spec sheet provided with the monitor claims a power consumption of 70 watts, I measured it at 105 watts with the AC input set to 117 VAC and the monitor set up at normal brightness. Interestingly, as

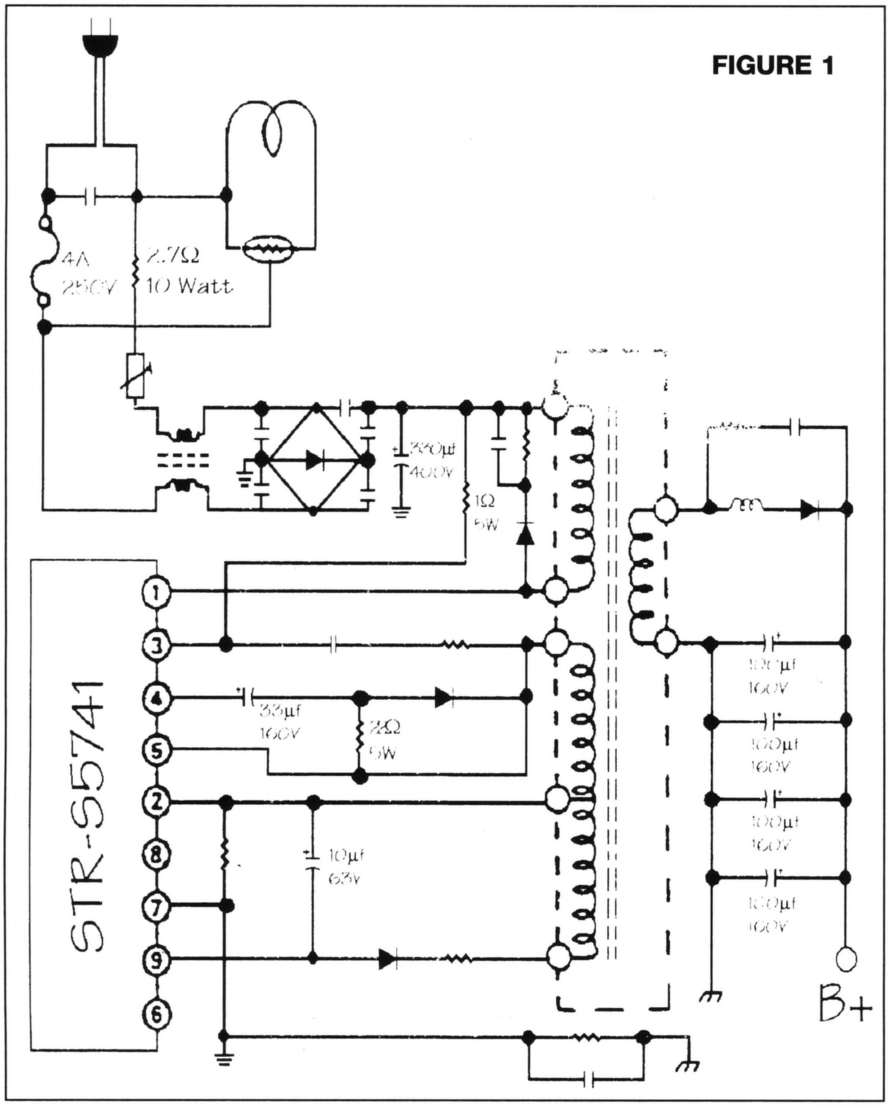

FIGURE 1



the AC line voltage drops, the current consumption goes up, keeping the power consumption level. The opposite is also true; as the AC line voltage increases, the current consumption drops. This is exactly how a switching supply is supposed to work.

Technicians note: As with virtually all switching power supplies, the primary side of the power supply is connected directly to the 120-volt AC line. Never connect any part of the primary circuit to earth ground. Grounding the live primary circuit (through either an oscilloscope ground or the grounded tip of a soldering station) WILL cause some serious fireworks.

The use of a switching supply to provide the monitor's main B+ power is quickly becoming universal. Virtually all computer monitors use switching supplies. The latest monitors from Hantarex and Wells-Gardner do too. The power supply in this monitor is the most straightforward I have seen to date.

Thankfully, the other voltages required by the monitor (the low voltage supplies that power the video amplifiers and the CRT heaters, as well as the +150 volt supply for the video output transistors on the neck board) are taken off the flyback transformer in the high voltage unit just as they are in conventional monitors. This makes troubleshooting easier if for no other reason than the fact that these circuits are familiar to most technicians.

## Troubleshooting

There's a way to use an incandescent light bulb when troubleshooting monitors with switching supplies. Specifically, the bulb can be used to test the monitor's B+ power supply for proper operation when it includes "Over-Current Protection" or OCP. In fact, all monitors that use a switching regulator power supply have an OCP circuit. This Sharp Image monitor is no different. The OCP circuit shuts down the power supply when it detects a short on the B+ supply line. As an experiment, I used a clip lead to short the collector of the horizontal output transistor to ground. This simulates a shorted horizontal output transistor, one of the most common monitor failures in all types of monitors. Instead of blowing a fuse or smoking some components, the power supply detected the short circuit and shut itself down. As soon as I removed the short circuit, the monitor fired right back up again.

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

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

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

2. Use a clip lead (jumper) to connect one side of a 40-watt lamp to the circuit where the collector of the horizontal output transistor used to connect. You can usually find a place to


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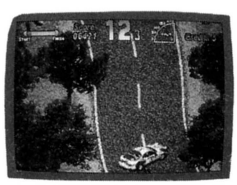
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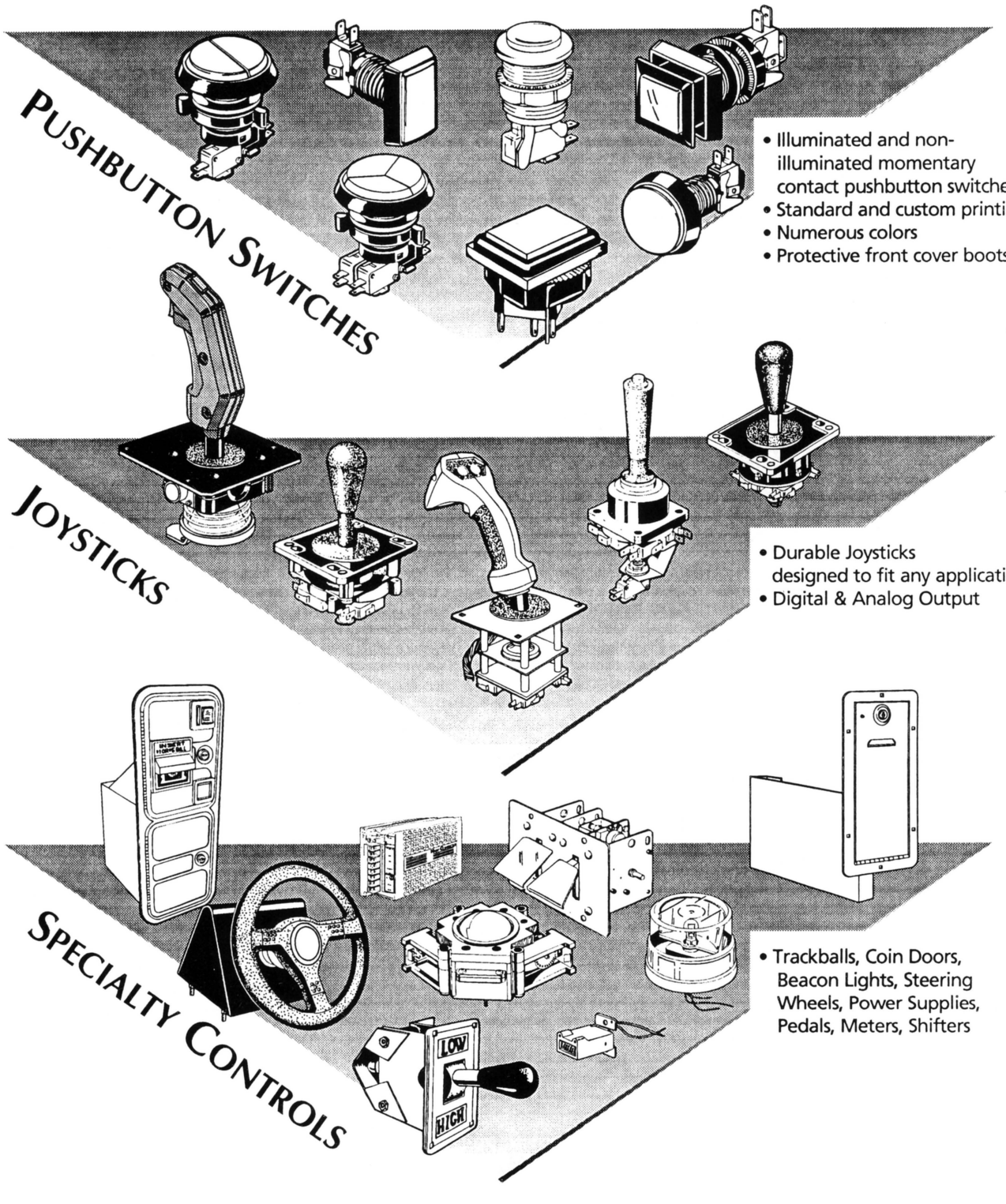


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connect the jumper. If not, solder a small piece of wire to the solder pad where the collector of the transistor normally goes and use that as a connection terminal for the clip lead. Do not connect to the collector of the transistor. The transistor is now out of the circuit and actually has nothing to do with this test.

3. Connect the other side of the lamp to the chassis of the monitor (ground.)

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

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

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

While other "new generation" monitors have boasted increased video bandwidth in addition to the use of a switching regulator power supply, this monitor does not. The video bandwidth of this monitor is standard at 12 Mhz, displaying a resolution of 540 lines X 240 lines. The video circuit is straightforward, using 6 transistors for each of the three colors. Two of the transistors in each video circuit are located on the main printed circuit board; the other four are mounted on the "neck board."

Sharp Image offers this monitor for under $500.00 (I assume that's salesman lingo for $499.95) with a one year, unconditional warranty on both the electronics and the picture tube. U.L. approval is supposed to have been granted by the time this goes to press.

For further information contact: Sharp Image Electronics, 9615 Canoga Ave., Chatsworth, CA 91311; 818/341-8000 or fax 341-8144

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


# NOTICE TO THE AMUSEMENT INDUSTRY

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**FUN FACTORY®** and **#1 FOR FUN®** are federally-registered service marks belonging to our Hawaii-based corporation which owns and operates family entertainment centers in Hawaii and throughout the continental United States. The company continues to build new stores and is actively seeking locations throughout the U.S. and Canada

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Linda Fernandez

Linda Fernandez, *President/CEO*
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# NEW PRODUCTS

## HOME RUN HITTER from Coin Concepts




In the spirit of America's favorite pastime, Coin Concepts introduces *Home Run Hitter*. Players roll coins down a baseball stadium playfield, where coins fall into one of ten different target holes—each scoring either a single, double, triple or home run. Each hit advances a runner around the diamond on an attached header unit, but be careful, two out holes will not award tickets. The greatest payout occurs during a grand slam, which can be worth as much as 250 tickets.

Along with the fast coin action and great baseball sound, *Home Run Hitter* has an optional progressive feature, where multiple balls are linked to award tickets.

For more information, contact your local distributor or call Coin Concepts at 908/390-9009.

## TEXAS FRUIT AND BELLS from Xytek

The *Texas Fruit and Bells* 8-line redemption game (according to its maker) fully complies with Texas SB#522. The program was developed by Wing/Eagle, and Xytek boasts the exclusive arrangement with Wing for this product. The dedicated game is available in a "works-in-the-drawer" upright with a 19-inch monitor, high security bill acceptor and ticket dispenser.

For operators who have purchased grey area games, Xytek also offers conversion kits that make those games legal in Texas.

For more information or distributor referral, contact Xytek at 908/919-7878.




## GODZILLA WARS JR. from Namco-America



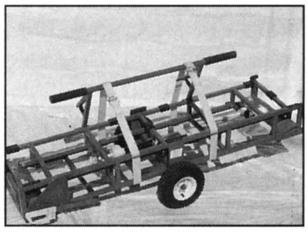

*Godzilla Wars Jr.* is a compact redemption game designed for a variety of locations.

Gameplay: Players press the fire button to launch bombs into Godzilla's mouth. Before the time expires, players must make six shots to win. The creature's mouth opens and closes while he sways back and forth faster and faster, becoming a harder target to hit. Players can win either tickets or prize capsules.

The compact size (64"H x 25"W x 29"D) makes *Godzilla Wars Jr.* suitable for convenience stores, bowling centers and a variety of retail locations.

For more information, contact your local Namco distributor or call Namco-America at 408/383-3900.

## New from the Ulimate Pool Table Mover

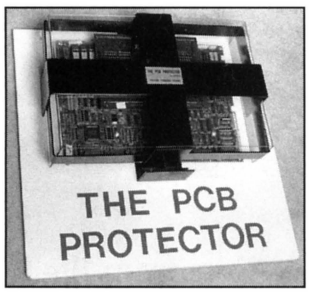


The *Ultimate Pool Table Mover* is six feet long and capable of handling any size pool table. Overall width is 28", allowing for easy access through doorways. Constructed on one-inch tubular steel, the mover is centrally balanced on two 12-inch pneumatic tires. The pool table is secured in place by two ratchet-tightening belts; the roll bar allows the table to be turned vertically without damage to the casters or legs. It also comes with stabilizer bars to stabilize the mover and table when transporting.

The company also manufactures the *Slate Mover & Caddy* to transport newly covered slates and rails to and from locations, and the *Slate Covering Table* to allow one-person recovery of slates.

For more information, contact the Ultimate Pool Table Mover at 800/925-9275.

## PCB PROTECTOR from Loxtronix




Thieves around the country have been breaking into video games and stealing the PCBs for a couple of years now. The *PCB Protector* is designed to stop them. The patent-pending security device consists of wrap-around steel arms which are locked into place with a key, making removal of the main PCB and sound board "virtually impossible without your key," said the firm. Basic version costs $59.95; a deluxe version also comes with a non-breakable lexan cover.

For more information, contact Loxtronix at 818/347-7151 (24 hours).

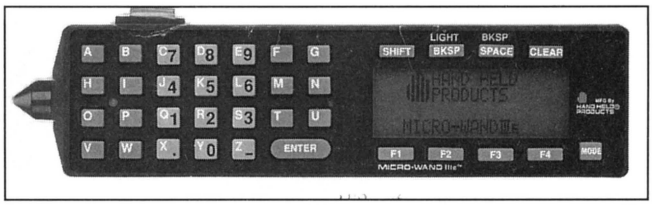
## CONVERSION 25 from J&L Enterprises

Although J&L supports the idea of higher play-pricing for new games, the company says operators need the ability to lower play prices on older equipment. That's the reason for *Conversion 25*, a simple device which reduces the price on Williams and Bally/Midway pinballs from 50 cents per play or three plays for $1, to a straight 25 cents per play.

The unit consists of a 2" square box with four wires coming out of it. Operators can install it inside the coin door in minutes, no soldering required. The company claims its location tests showed dramatic cash box increases for older equipment with reduced play pricing.

For more information, contact J&L at 201/434-7263 (24 hours, 7 days).

## COIN TRACKER from Compuline



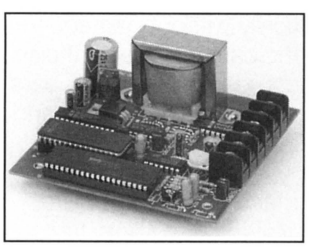

The *Coin Tracker* is an intelligent, electronic coin counting device that's simple and easy to install. Packaged in an encapsuled, tamper-proof enclosure, the device retrofits all types of coin-op equipment. It's compact and designed to fit on the inside of the coin door in each machine. Once installed, the *Coin Tracker* needs no maintenance.

To read the *Coin Tracker*, simply aim the Micro-Wand (shown) at the unit and press a button. The data transfers in less than a second with two-way infrared communications. The data is stored and calculated in the handheld to produce a collection receipt. At the end of the day, just download the information to the home-office with a direct PC link or modem.

System components include a handheld computer, menu driven software, portable printer, home office communications software and modem.

For more information on this innovative collection system, contact Compuline at 619/273-6270.

## Voiceboard from Eletech Electronics



The DM2020 voice board is designed to play back up to 64 seconds of digitized sound stored in its EPROM chip, plus optional short sound effects triggered by external fire buttons.

The board operates directly from a 110V AC power supply, and delivers up to three 3 watts of power into an external speaker. Measuring 4" x 4", it fits easily into tight enclosures. The short sound effects, each lasting up to one second, are stored in the same EPROM along with the music.

The DM2020 is available in three models, each with a different number of fire button support. A PC-based sound development system (VP-880) is available for customers who want to digitize music themselves.

For more information, contact Eletech at 818/333-6394.

## Converter from Two-Bit Score

Two-Bit Score's new RGB to NTSC converter board uses any television set as a game monitor. Just connect the red, green, blue, ground, synch and +12 volts from any coin-op vidgame board; then run ordinary RCA-style cables from the output plugs to the video input plug of any television. It works without effecting the picture on the original game monitor, allowing more than one monitor on each game.

This board can also be used to get the video output of a coin-op game into a VCR or a PC home computer that has a video board or frame grabber.

Features include simple installation, separate red, green and blue drive adjustments, mono or stereo audio inputs and outputs, and RCA plugs on all outputs.

For more information, contact Two-Bit Score at

## New from Glasco

Glasco's new *GSC-8* snack/cold can combo features a combination of three shelves of snacks or candy and refrigerated cold cans. The can module has eight product selections and a total capacity of 144 twelve ounce cans. The unit can also be equipped with the standard five select, 120 capacity gum and mint unit, and is capable of individual multi-price selections for all snack, can, gum and mint selections.

For more information, contact your local distributor or Glasco at 314/298-3510.

## Scan Coin 300's

The *Scan Coin 303* (shown) and *313* are the latest additions to the company's 300-series of coin counters. Each unit is microprocessor controlled with a non-volatile memory for storing data with no battery backup required. Features include electronic sensors for accurate counting and low noise level; seven pre-programmed stops with manual override from 1-10,999; automatic disc reverse for jam clearing and shutoff when no coins are detected; small coin offsort that allows separation of mixed denominations; counts up to 2,700 coins per minute; and an easy-to-read six-digit LED display.



Model *SC303* is a portable machine and comes with a folding tray, built-in carry handle, and both a side bagging attachment and reject cup. The *SC313* has a built-in motorized coin hopper for bulk feeding. Accessories available for both models include two types of packaging inserts, guides for filing small plastic or paper bags, and a large reject tray for convenient table-top sorting.

## New from XCP

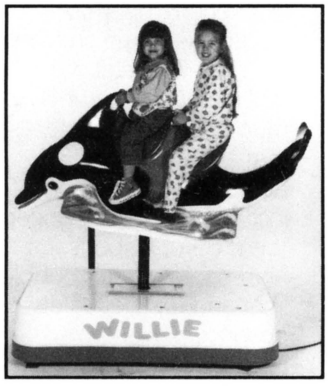
XCP introduces a new redemption ticket *Credit VendaCard*. The magnetic strip card is designed to be used with the industry standard Deltronic Labs redemption *Ticket Eater*. The new card replaces hand written receipts that were run through the *Ticket Eater* or ticket weight scale systems.

In operation, the ticket holder inserts their *Credit VendaCard* into the encoder, then streams their tickets into the *Ticket Eater*. Redemption points are shown on a display on the *Ticket Eater* and on the card's encoder. When finished, the player presses the button on the encoder and the card is written with their new redemption value.




To redeem redemption points, the card is inserted into an encoder connected to a personal computer. The point values are read and debited from the card, with receipts issued to the customer and operator. Total redemption sales are recorded on the PC and data can be exported to most spreadsheet programs.

For more information on the *Credit VendaCard* and related software, call XCP at 708/752-4153.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| | THIS CHART | LAST CHART | TITLE | ARTIST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| REGIONAL MEXICAN | 1 | 2 | ★★ No. 1 ★★ TAMBIEN LLORAN | BANDA MACHOS |
| | 2 | 1 | TU ULTIMA CANCION | LOS TEMERARIOS |
| | 3 | 3 | PURA SANGRE | BRONCO |
| | 4 | 4 | LASTIMA QUE SEAS AJENA | VICENTE FERNANDEZ |
| | 5 | 5 | INALCANZABLE | LOS BUKIS |
| | 6 | -- | RIOS DE BABILONIA | BANDA TORO |
| | 7 | 7 | LA GARRA DE... | TIGRES DEL NORTE |
| | 8 | -- | 20 DE COLECCION | VICENTE FERNANDEZ |
| | 9 | 10 | VIENTOS | LOS HURACANES DEL NORTE |
| | 10 | -- | 20 DE COLECCION | JOSE ALFREDO JIMENEZ |
| TROPICAL / SALSA | 1 | 1 | CARA DE NINO | JERRY RIVERA |
| | 2 | 5 | ES UN ESCANDALO | SONORA DINAMITA |
| | 3 | 7 | MI TIERRA | GLORIA ESTEFAN |
| | 4 | 2 | UN ALTO EN EL CAMINO | GRUPO NICHE |
| | 5 | 4 | MERENGUISIMO | VARIOS ARTISTAS |
| | 6 | 6 | LO MEJOR DE... | BANDA BLANCA |
| | 7 | 7 | EL ESPECTACULAR | OSCAR D'LEON |
| | 8 | 8 | MAMBO | AZUCAR MORENO |
| | 9 | 9 | EL ORIGINAL 4.40 | JUAN LUIS GUERRA |
| | 10 | -- | LOS EXITOS MAS EXPLOSIVOS | SONORA DINAMITA |
| POP | 1 | 1 | LUNA | ANA GABRIEL |
| | 2 | 2 | THE BEST | ANA GABRIEL |
| | 3 | 3 | 17 SUPER EXITOS | SELENA |
| | 4 | -- | ROMANCE | LUIS MIGUEL |
| | 5 | 9 | 17 SUPER EXITOS | LA MAFIA |
| | 6 | -- | LO MEJOR | JUAN GABRIEL |
| | 7 | 5 | VERANO DE AMOR | INDUSTRIA DEL AMOR |
| | 8 | 6 | ARIES | LUIS MIGUEL |
| | 9 | 8 | AHORA Y SIEMPRE | LA MAFIA |
| | 10 | 9 | 17 SUPER EXITOS | MAZZ |

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## Two Newies from Smart Industries



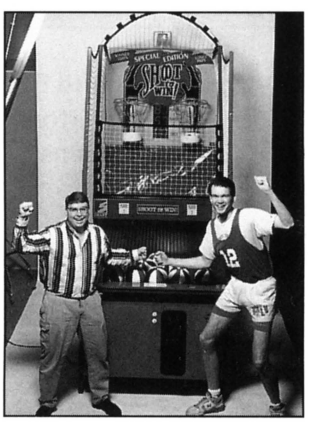

Smart Industries introduces their line of *Clean Sweep Candy Cranes*, including the two-player refrigerated version shown above. All units come in a black cabinet with gold trim, and red and white candy stripped graphics. They also feature a "Play Till You Win" program, allowing anyone to play until a prize is won.

The standard *Candy Crane* is designed to dispense a variety of individually wrapped candies, such as hard candy and suckers, while the *Refrigerated Candy Crane* comes with a refrigeration unit to dispense and keep soft candies and chocolates fresh. Both machines include a motion sound system, double coin mechanism with a locking cash box, micro switch prize counter meter, tamper resistance and square steel frame tubing.

Dimensions for the *Clean Sweep Candy* Crane are 24"W x 24"D x 66"H. The refrigerated unit measures 24"W x 28"D x 68"H. And both are available in single or double units.

Smart Industries also has an updated version of its popular two-hoop basketball game. The *Shoot to Win Special Edition* comes with a number of new features, including a "Winner Stays, Loser Pays" programming: At the completion of the initial game, the loser has 30 seconds to insert his money to challenge the winner to a rematch.

Other features include a solid steel square tubing frame construction, dual coin mechs, microprocessor game boards, photo-eye sensor, operator adjustable game time and high score, metal ball retaining gate, catchy music and 7" basketballs that accommodate all ages. Available options include a $1/$5 bill acceptor, a ticket dispenser, high-score-winner bubble light and top-net safety cover.



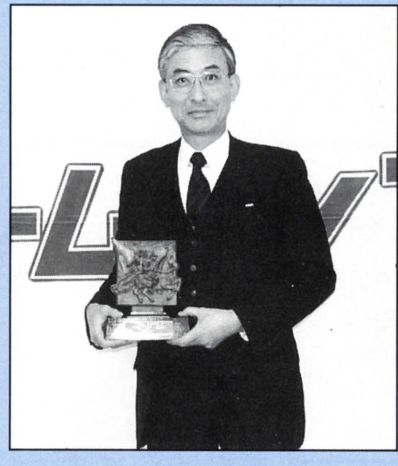
The *Shoot to Win Two-Hoop Special Edition* is 48 inches wide and 9 ft. long, with an adjustable height from 8-9 ft.

# GRAPEVINE

## int'l

***U.K. DEAL –*** New Image Technologies has made arrangements to have its CD-ROM touch-screen coin machine, *Photoplay*, manufactured for the pub and bar market in the United Kingdom by Electrocoin of Cardiff, Wales. The agreement was reached between Electrocoin, Dial-A-Deal of Leeds, England, and N.I.T. just prior to the 1994 ATEI show. Electrocoin has manufactured coin-op pieces, under license for the European market, for companies such as Taito, Konami and Capcom. Dial-A-Deal aided in developing the data base and unique cabinet that has been designed for the U.K. market, and will be actively involved in the distribution of *Photoplay* (pictured above). N.I.T.'s latest offering features touch-screen technology and CD-ROM generated graphics on a high resolution monitor.

***WINNERS –*** Japan's *Game Machine* magazine presented its "Video Game of the Year 1993" awards for the best-earning units during the period from January 1993 through December 1993. Konami Co., Ltd. received the plaque in the dedicated video category, for *Lethal Enforcers*, and Capcom Co., Ltd. was recognized in the conversion PCB kit category for *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition Turbo*. Shown



above is Yasuo Nishimura, president of Konami, while pictured



here is Masumi Akagi, publisher and editor of *Game Machine* (left), and Kenji Tsujimoto, president of Capcom.




***BULLETIN –*** Just learned that the phone and fax numbers in the Taiwan Expo ad on page 200 are dated. If you're having trouble contacting the show organizers for hotel rooms or anything else, try these new numbers: (phone) 011-886-2-746-6860, (fax) 011-886-2-746-6875.

***RESCHEDULED –*** The coin-op Polish show, originally to be held mid-February, will now take place June 23-25. This one will occupy a venue near Krakow. For information on exhibit space, hotels, etc. call the APB sponsors at 818/222-6161.

***DEITH LEISURE*** is celebrating its 20th anniversary in the amusement industry with various promotions and activities. The company has come a long way from its humble origins in a small outlet in Wandsworth, England. Today, it is a part of the Sega Group and operates from a large, modern head office complex at New Malden. The company has four branches in the U.K., four in Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Poland, a sub-

sidiary in France, a 30,000 sq. ft. factory at Wimbledon, and a vast spare parts organization. Deith Leisure's export department covers all of Europe, and its compact bowling systems are being shipped across Europe and the Middle East. Happy 20th!

# midwest

***GAMESTAR ARCADE –*** Word around the industry is that Rene Lopez has purchased a strip mall arcade in the Chicago area on behalf of GameStar, the new Japanese pinball concern. We hear the site was formerly owned by long-time operators Larry Glick and Jerry Gold. It looks like Mike Borg will be operating it under the name "Super Just Games." We couldn't reach Rene for comment.

***YO, ANCIENT ONES! –*** Steve Kordek reminds members and friends of the Half Century Club that the group gathers Friday, Mar. 18, at 3:00PM during ACME in Room 14 of the Rosemont Convention Center (just a few feet from the Williams exhibit on the show floor).

***VALLEY GIVEAWAY –*** When Valley introduced four new *Image Series* pool tables at last year's AMOA expo in Anaheim, they asked operators at the show for their opinions on the design of the new tables. The responses were compiled and a winner was randomly selected to receive a free Valley *Image Series* table of his or her choice. And the lucky tradester was Jerry Stevens of Heritage Amusement Company in Athens, Ga. On the questionnaire, Jerry selected the *Country* table, which should be delivered to him in March. Congrats!

***ACME NEWS –*** Everyone will have something special for this year's show in Rosemont, Ill., but here are a few small pre-show items that have come our way: Rowe International will have a special "Preview Music Presentation" at their booth (#1106 & 1107) during the exclusive distributor showing Thursday, March 17 at 9:15AM; and for Benchmark Entertainment of Pompano Beach, Fla., it will be their first ACME, where they will show their debut product, a skill redemption game called *Roll For Gold*, in booth #2232. See you there!

# southwest

***ON THE MEND –*** Doctors say it's a miracle that Mountain Coin's Salt Lake City, Utah headquarters manager Merlin Symes is still alive after breaking his back and splitting his skull. Last June 16, he was walking on a second-story warehouse loft at their Vegas branch when he fell through a section of sheetrock flooring. He hit his head on a doorstep on the way down, then landed backwards on a concrete floor and stairway. After considerable treatment and rehab, he returned to work on a steady basis this past January. Some problems remain, but his spirit is magnificent. "I feel like I've been preserved for some purpose," Merlin said. "I've still got a lot of living to do!" With an attitude like that, we think "Miracle Man Merlin" can conquer anything.

***HEARTWARMING –*** Rich and Beverly Babich's 14-year-old son Chi (pronounced Kai) underwent an aortic valve transplant Dec. 3, a most serious operation, which the lad came through with flying colors. Matter of fact, the Colorado Game Exchange progeny will go skiing this month. Mom and Pop would like us to pass their gratitude along to all who voiced their concern.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***WEDDING BELLS –*** Data East's Paul Jacobs and his lady Elizabeth Steixner happily announce plans to tie the matrimonial knot, though a specific day has not been set yet....Sharon Harris, famous Philly vendress, and her beau Ron Segal, will wed May 22. All happiness!

***GIVE HIM CREDIT –*** Ira Bettelman, who's gone through the SoCal fires, earthquakes and floods at his Malibu Beach home, sent out a humorous fax announcing the post-ACME open house at his C.A. Robinson outlets. "What's coming next, frogs or locusts?" asked Ira. "Guess it's the most dreaded plague of all – the distributor open house!" Actually, these affairs are great for operators and for airlines that ship factory guys and gals around.

***PREMIER PREMIERS! –*** The fine people at Mission Crane Service will be taking a show booth for the first time at ACME '94 to display their line of *Premier* skill cranes. A visit to booth 352 at Rosemont tradeshow will get you a firsthand look at a crane machine that is not only extremely reliable, but gorgeous. The machine is available in blue and the brand-new red color scheme (both will be on display at ACME). Company president Mike Lewis and others from this Huntington Beach, Calif. firm will be on hand to tell you all about the incredible attention to detail that they say makes their crane stand head and shoulders above the rest. For more information, contact Mission Crane at 714/891-6422.

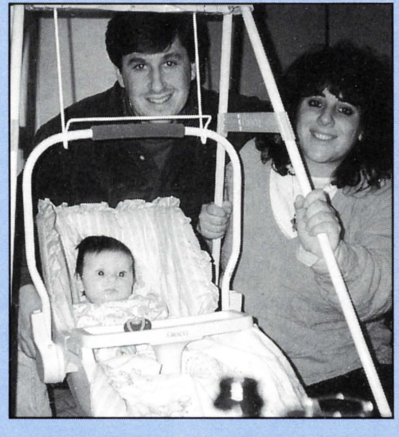
# southeast

***EXCLUSIVELY YOURS –*** Steve Henderson (Operators Distributing) proudly notes that his dealership is now the exclusive Arachnid *Galaxy* distributor in his N.C. territory. Darts, as well as pool, have been doing pretty well for Steve, as is NSM's *Performer Grand* juke, he calls "a sweet music box."

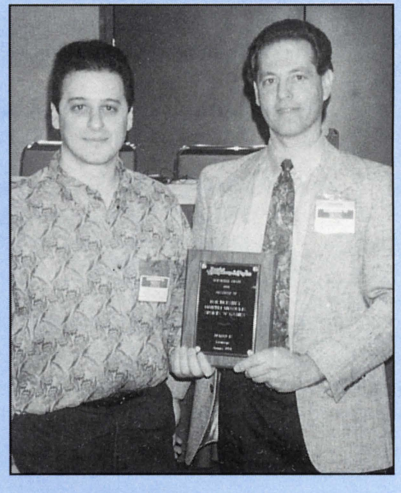



***GREATER SOUTHERN -*** Distributing Co. opened the first session of its amusement continuing education series on Jan. 19. The Atlanta-based distributor is conducting a series of nine seminars from January through August, with a curriculum designed to provide attendees with a positive learning experience. The first session dealt with Williams pinball. Upcoming seminars will cover Rowe music, dart leagues, dollar bill changers, beginning video repair and maintenance and monitor repairs. A vending continuing education series began in February.

# northeast



***PROUD PAPA –*** When Gary Warner of Coin Concepts (East Brunswick, N.J.) sent us a photo and description of his company's new product, he also included a snapshot of his wife Lisa and their new daughter Jessica Gabrielle. Jessica was born on Oct. 21 last year, weighed 7 lbs. 11 oz. and measured 20 and a half inches. Congratulations to both of you!



***FEC AWARD –*** Pictured above is Dimitri Mioulis (left) of Sports 'N Games, who was given the award for "Best Run Family Entertainment Center" by *Tourist Attractions & Parks Magazine* at the recent Leisure Expo '94 in Orlando, Fla. The plaque was presented by the ubiquitous Frank "The Crank" Seninsky (right) of Alpha-Omega Amusements, who provides equipment to Sports 'N Games and writes for *TA&P*. Dimitri's 35,000 sq. ft. FEC is located in East Hanover, N.J.

THE BLUE PAGES

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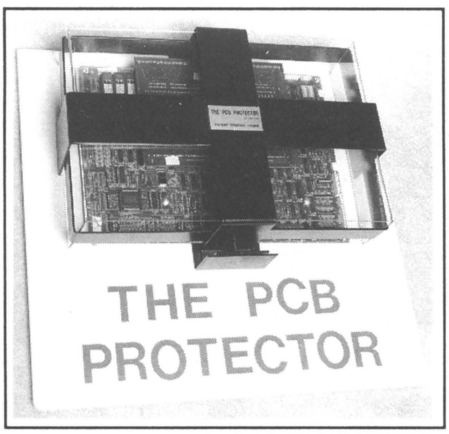


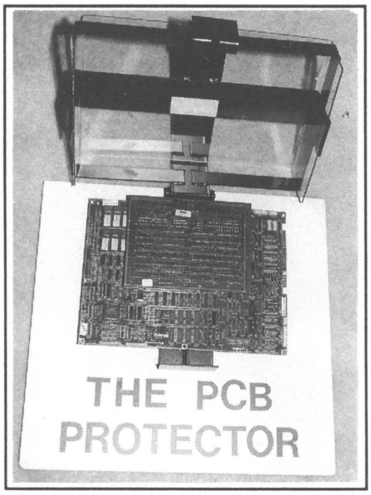


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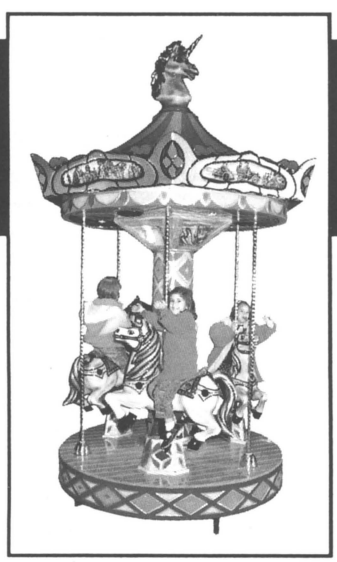

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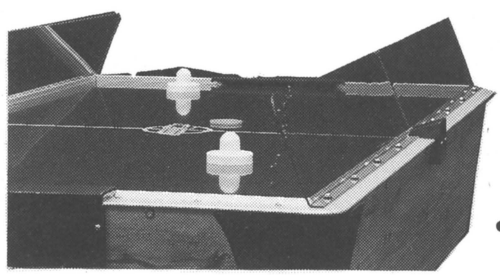

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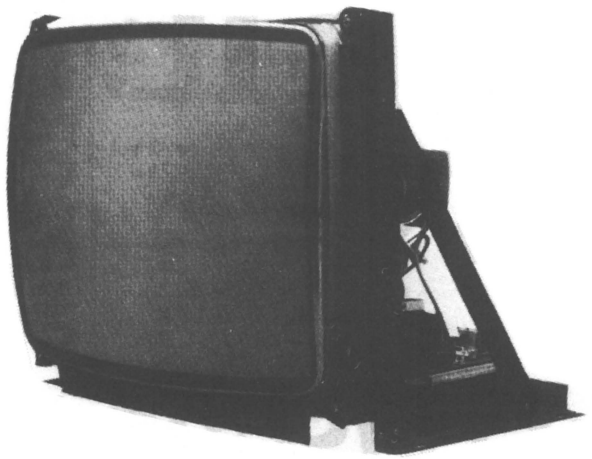

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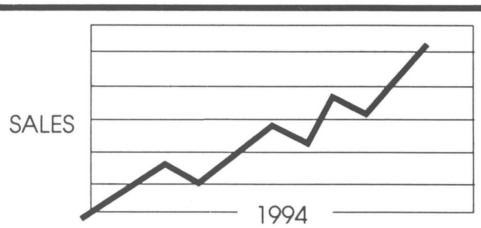


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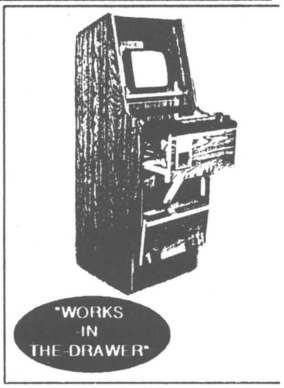


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| **March** | 5<br>**Columbus, OH**<br>Rhodes Building, Ohio State Fairgrounds<br>17th Street & Clair Avenue<br>Cellular: 614-271-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | 12<br>**Indianapolis, IN**<br>Our Land Pavilion<br>Indiana State Fairgrounds<br>Cellular: 317-432-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | **17 thru 19**<br>**ACME Trade Show**<br>**Chicago, IL**<br>**• Not An Auction •**<br>**Visit Us At Our Booth** | |
| **April** | 9<br>**Jackson, Miss.**<br>Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Armory Bldg.<br>High Street Exit (Exit #96B) Off I-55<br>Cellular: 601-946-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | 16<br>**Columbus, OH**<br>Rhodes Building, Ohio State Fairgrounds<br>17th Street & Clair Avenue<br>Cellular: 614-271-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | 23<br>**Tampa, FL**<br>Florida State Fairgrounds,<br>Special Events Building Highway 301 off I-4.<br>Cellular: 813-623-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | 30<br>**Indianapolis, IN**<br>Our Land Pavilion<br>Indiana State Fairgrounds<br>Cellular: 317-432-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 |
| **May** | 7<br>**Houston, TX**<br>Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds, Bldg. 'C' Hwy 36<br>9/10 mile south of Hwy 59 (Rosenberg)<br>Cellular: 713-824-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | 14<br>**Chicago, IL Area**<br>ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS<br>Kane County Fairgrounds<br>525 S. Randal Rd.,<br>Between Route 38 and Route 64<br>Cellular: 312-550-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | 21<br>**Columbus, OH**<br>Rhodes Building, Ohio State Fairgrounds<br>17th Street & Clair Avenue<br>Cellular: 614-271-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | |
| **June** | 4<br>**Indianapolis, IN**<br>Our Land Pavilion<br>Indiana State Fairgrounds<br>Cellular: 317-432-7626<br>Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866 | | | |
| **September** | 17<br>**Columbus, OH** | 22 thru 24<br>**AMOA EXPO '94**<br>San Antonio, TX | | |
| **October** | 1<br>**Indianapolis, IN** | 2 thru 4<br>**FUN EXPO '94**<br>Las Vegas, NV | 8<br>**Chicago, IL** | |
| | | | Oct. 22<br>**Tampa, FL** | Oct. 29<br>**Columbus, OH** |
| **November** | 2 thru 5<br>**IAAPA Trade Show**<br>Miami, FL | 5<br>**Indianapolis, IN** | 12<br>**Chicago, IL**<br>**Ramada Inn - O'Hare**<br>*4th Annual Pinhead Collector's Auction in association with Pinball Expo '94.* | |
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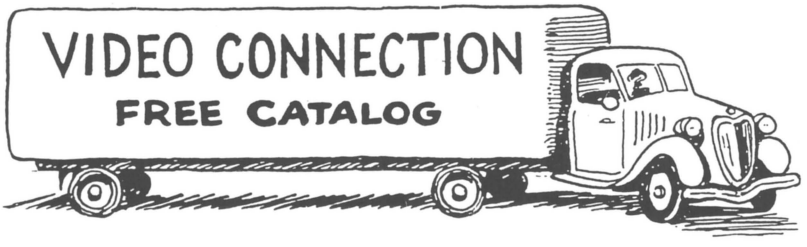


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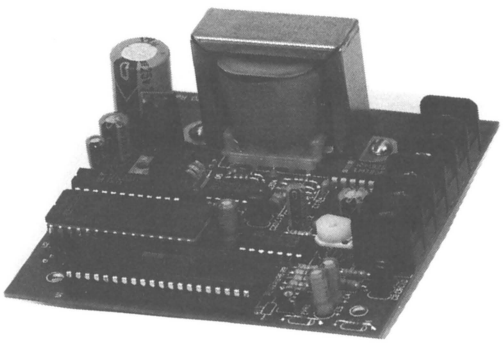

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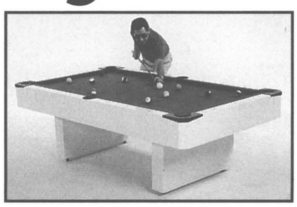
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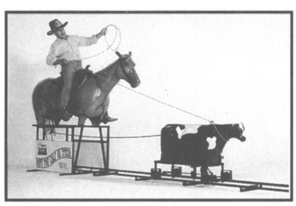
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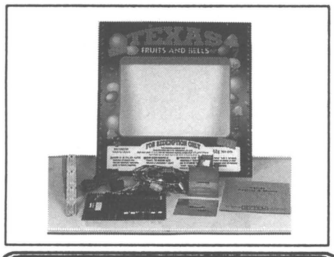


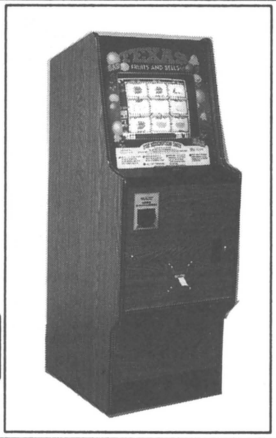


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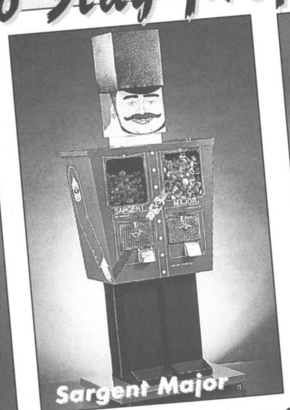








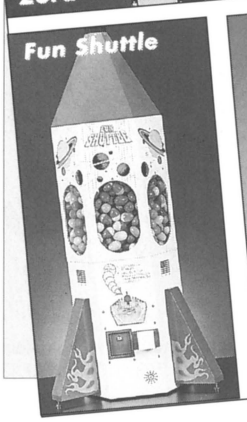


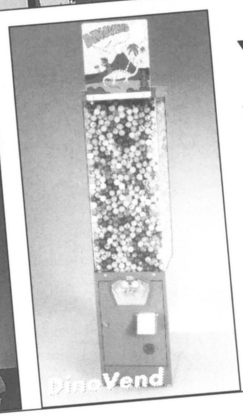


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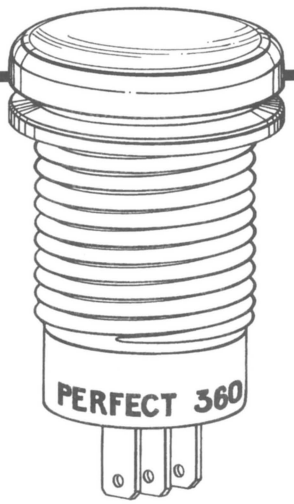


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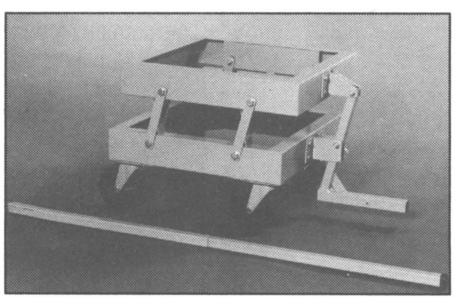

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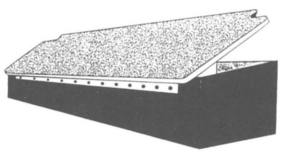

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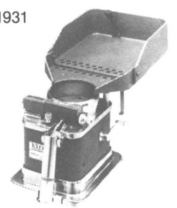

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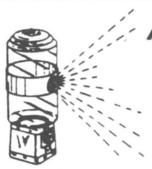

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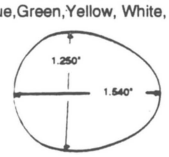


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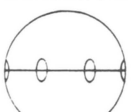

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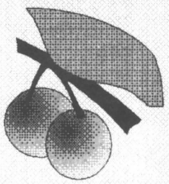

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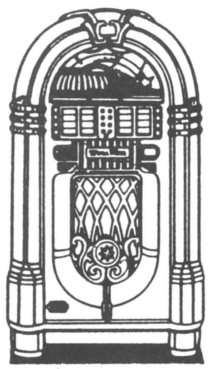

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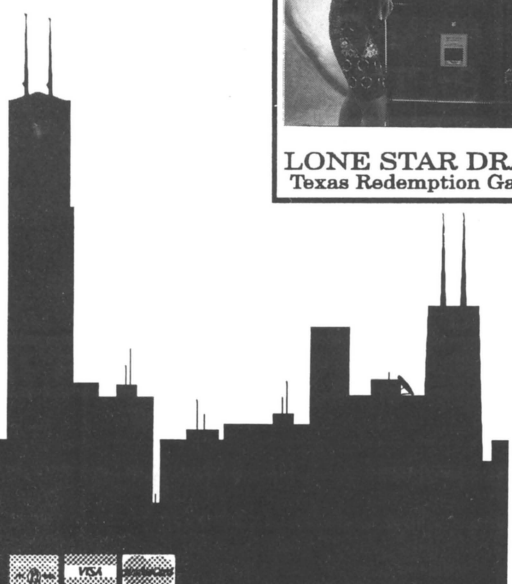

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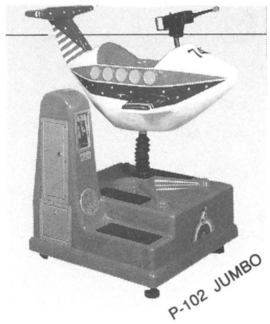

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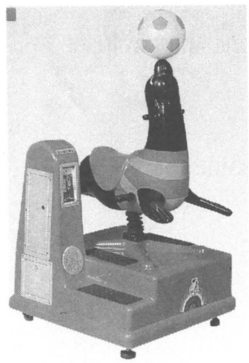

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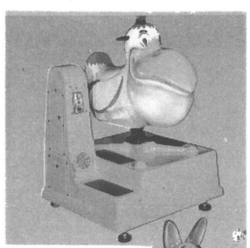

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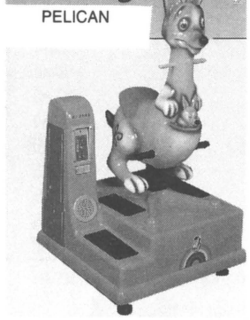

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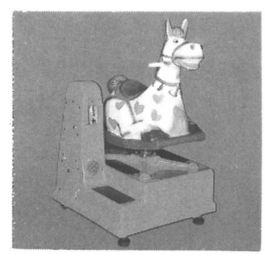

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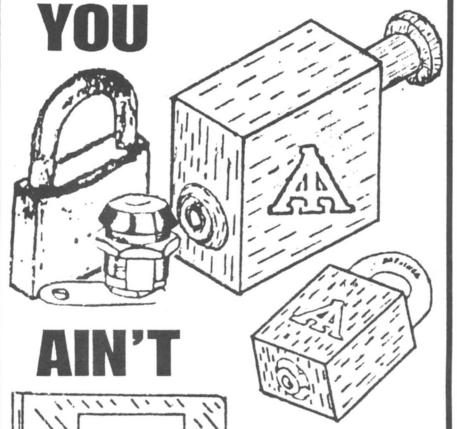
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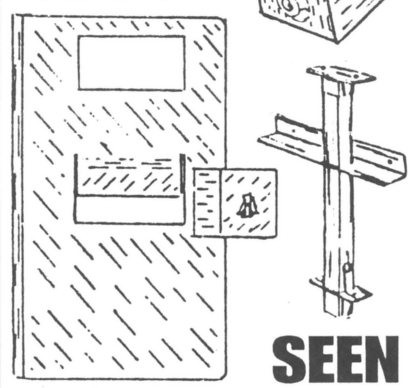
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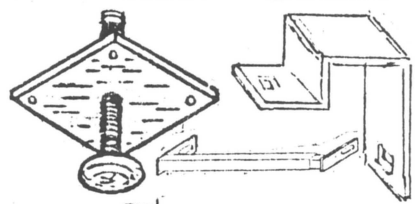
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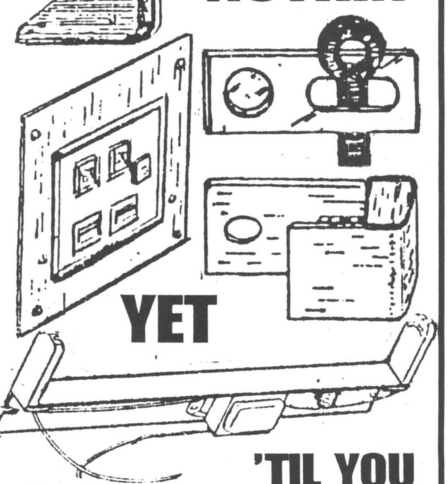
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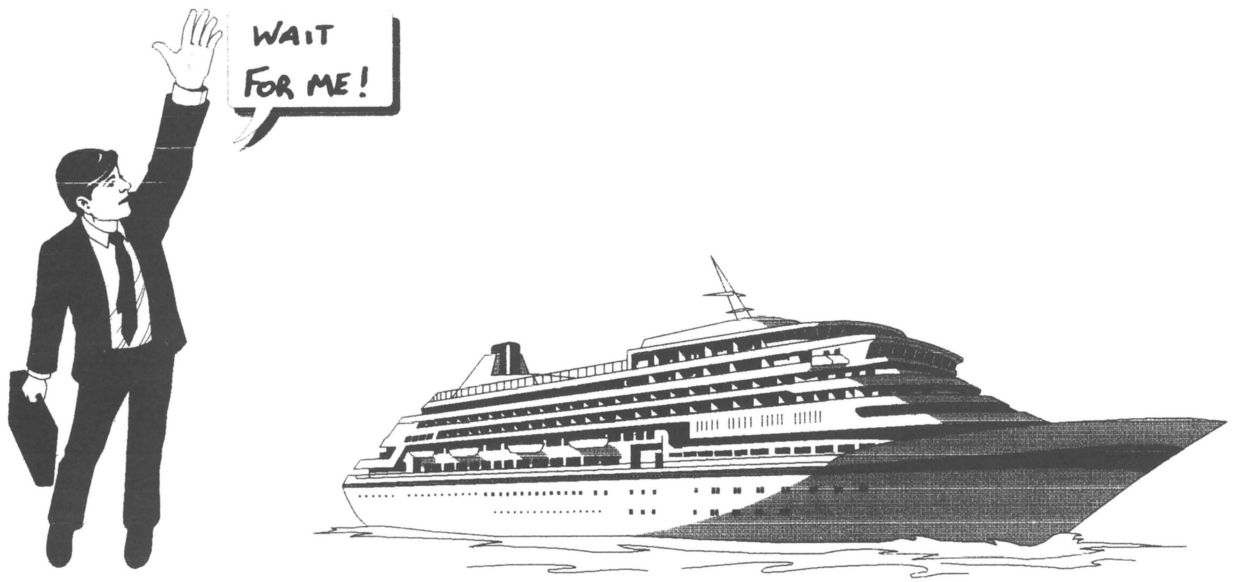


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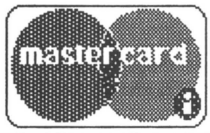


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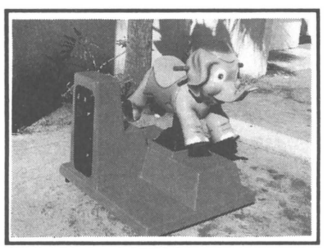

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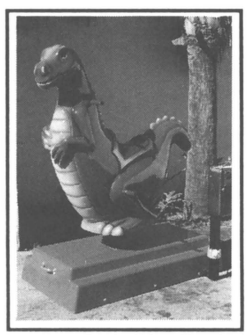

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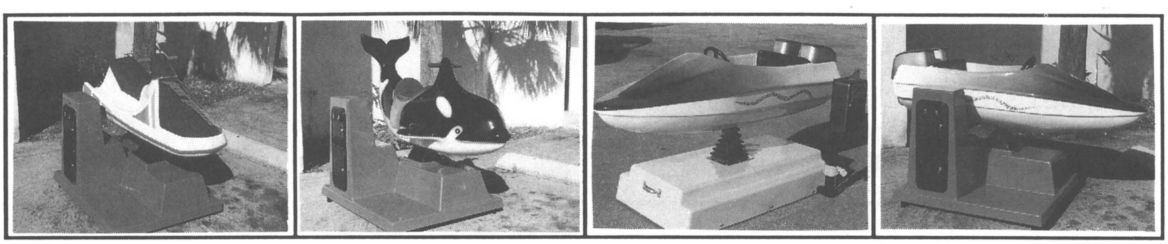

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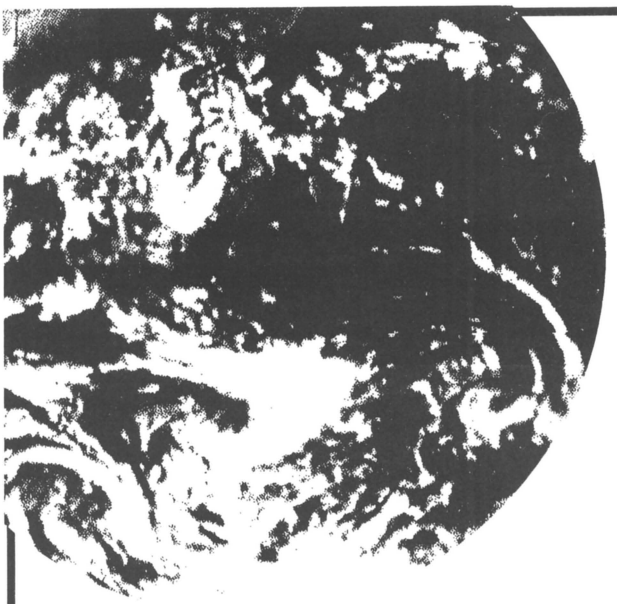

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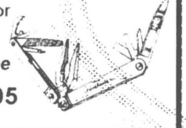

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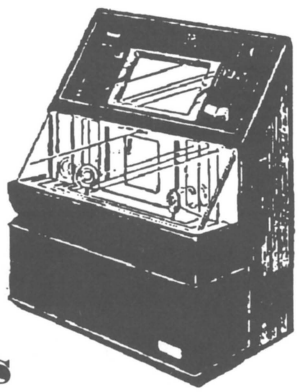

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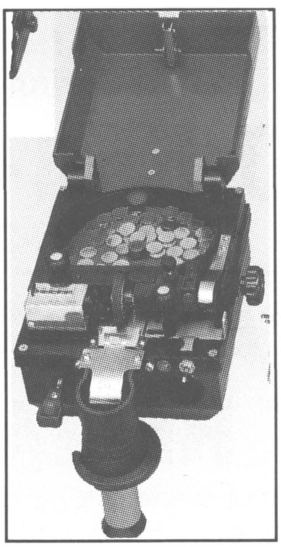

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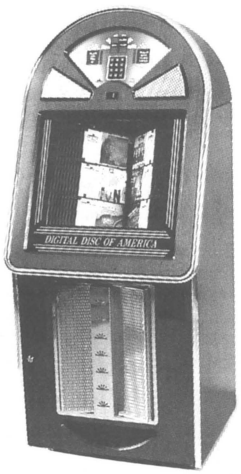


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This classic jukebox has 1940 styling, all-aluminum cast-metal trim (24 pieces); it's hand-polished with triple-plated chrome (optional 14-karat gold trim). Other features include eight bubble tubes, simple push and flip, 60 disc full view display area (40 discs for background or ***KARAOKE*** and Advertising option) Has all the great features of a **DDA** System. Allows maximum flexibility when changing discs. Mos-Fet amplifier with 200 watts of power!!!




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This attractive cabinet is designed with modern-day styling. With 4 position blinking light controls, one big open front door with one small back opening for convenient servic-ing. 100 CD selection pager, Mos-Fet 200 watts amplifier that can be linked up to 3 additional amps providing up to **800 of WATTS POWER!** Has all the great fea-tures of the **DDA** System and ***KARAOKE*** option with additional room to install the **DDA** ***"Cheetah"*** mechanism. This creates no delay in music, and can also be operated in a split mode! This allows 2 different types of music to be played in separate rooms.

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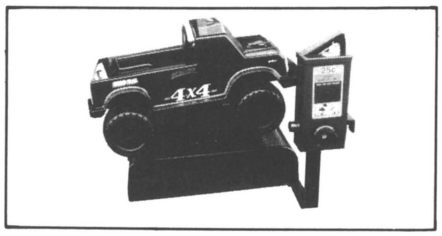


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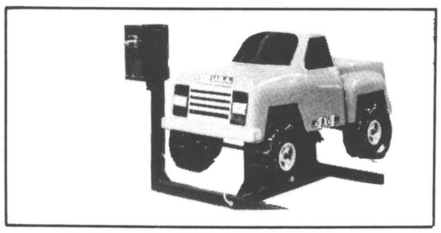

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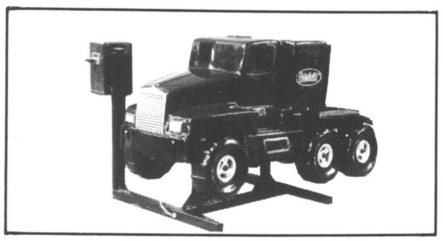

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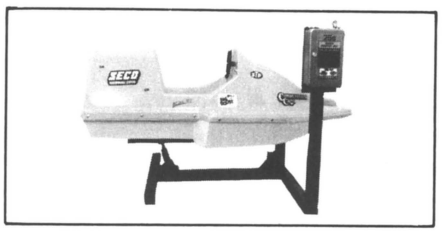

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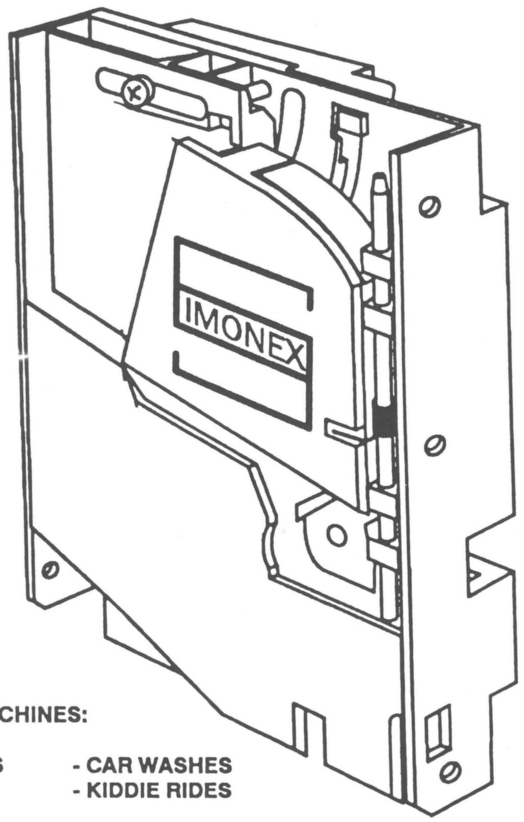


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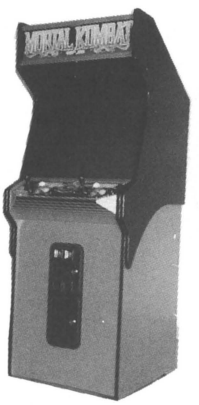


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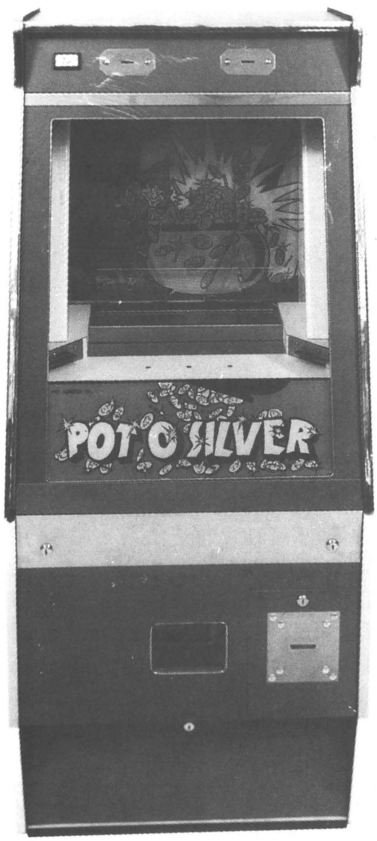





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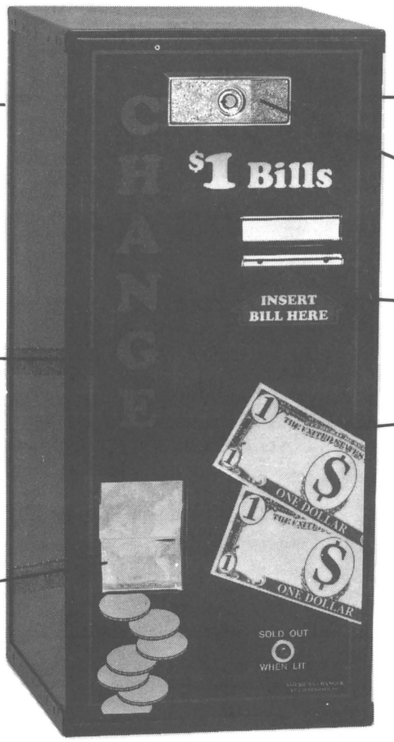


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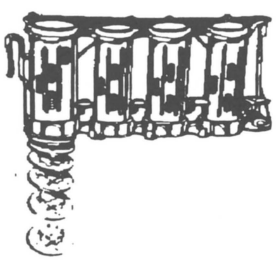

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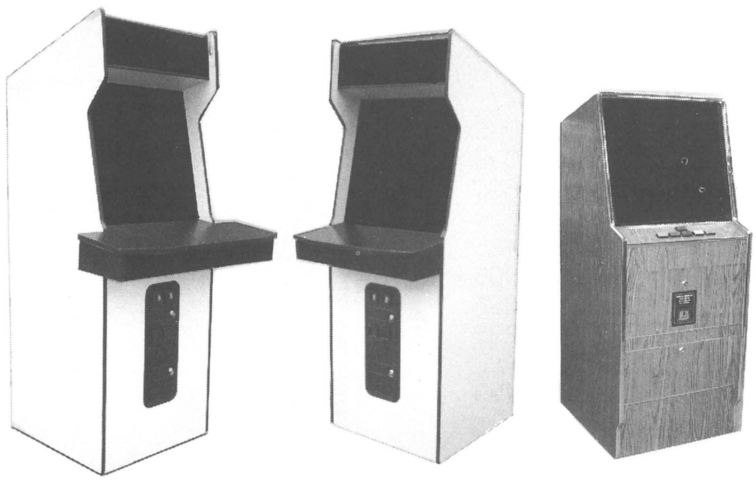

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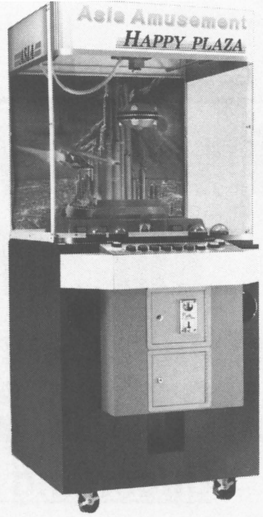
Item No. A1

Size:

| | |
|---|---|
| Height | 191cm |
| Width | 81cm |
| Depth | 84cm |




## Hand Pick Machine

Item No. A3

Size:

| | |
|---|---|
| Height | 193cm |
| Width | 168cm |
| Depth | 83cm |
| Weight | 180Kg |



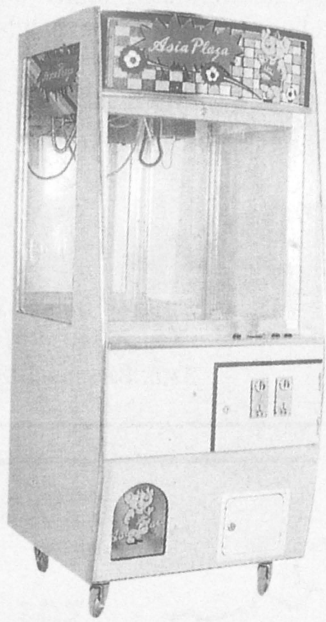



## Catcher

Item No. A4

Size:

| | |
|---|---|
| Height | 194cm |
| Width | 168cm |
| Depth | 89cm |
| Weight | 230Kg |




## Catcher

Item No. A2

Size:

| | |
|---|---|
| Height | 186cm |
| Width | 77cm |
| Depth | 78cm |
| Weight | 95Kg |

## Coin-Slotting Machine

Item No. A5

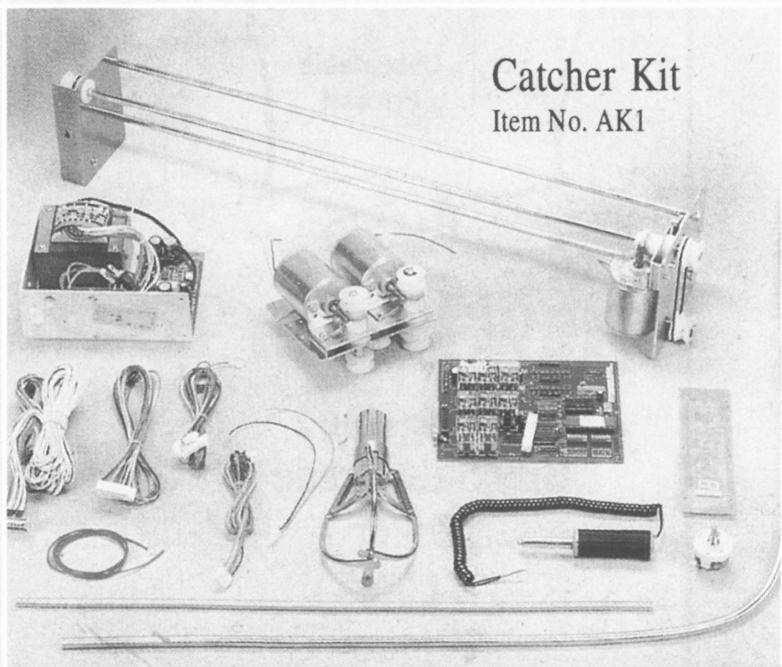
Size:

| | |
|---|---|
| Height | 218cm |
| Width | 155cm |
| Depth | 241cm |



## Catcher Kit

Item No. AK1



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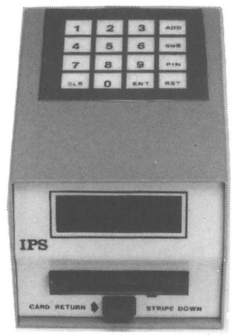


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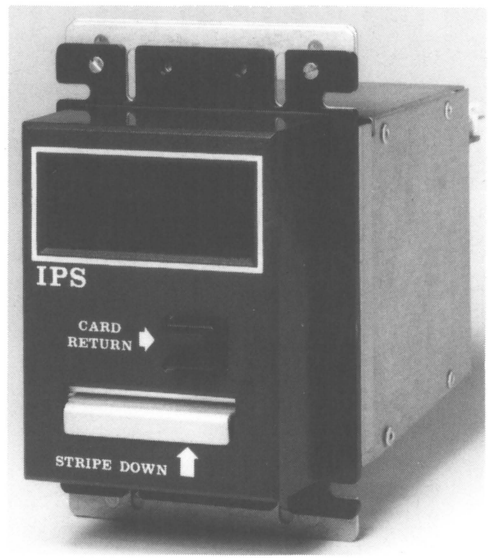


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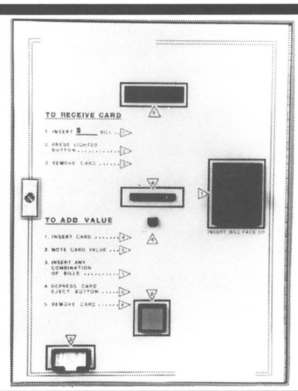


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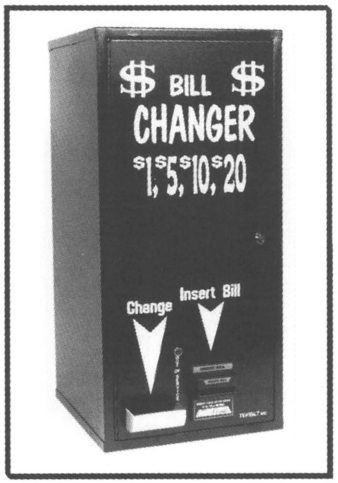
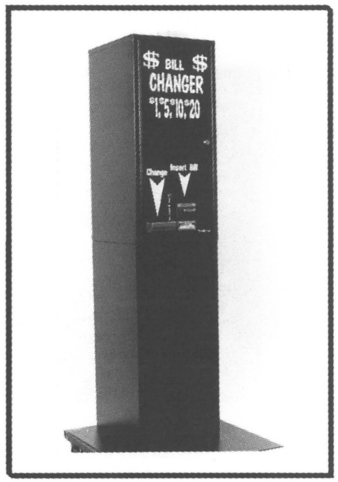



**Model TB2000**

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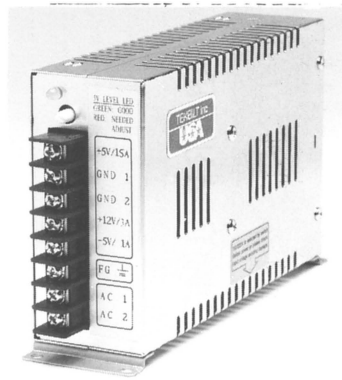


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# RePlay Magazine Deadline Notice:

The ***APRIL 1994 POST-ACME SHOW REVIEW*** issue will close for ads on **Friday, March 11, 1994.**

(This date is before the show, but in-depth ACME coverage will be included in the issue.)


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| NBA Jam II | NEW |
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| Lethal Enforcer | USED |
| NBA Jam | USED |
| Terminator II Gun | USED |
| Run & Gun (ded./used) | CALL |

### KITS/P.C.B.'S:

| | |
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| Super St.F. II (kit-new) | Call |
| NBA Jam (used) | Call |
| Mortal Kombat (used) | $1095 |
| Slam Masters (kit-new) | 495 |
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| Punisher (PCB) | 695 |
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| Cadallacs & Dinosaurs (PCB) | 595 |
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| Street Fighter II: C.E. (PCB) | 400 |
| Time Killers (PCB) | 395 |
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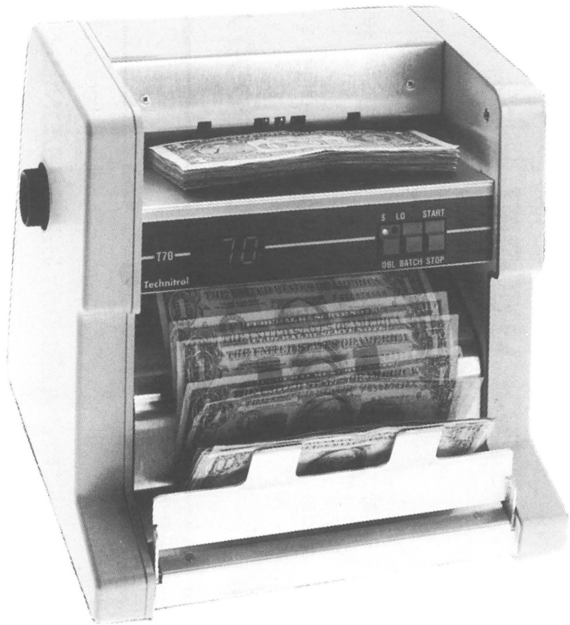


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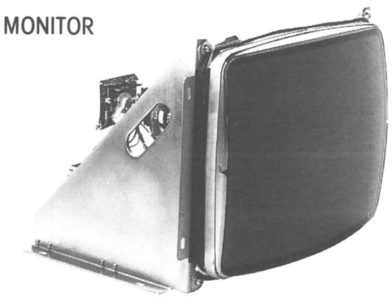

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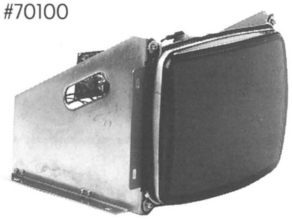

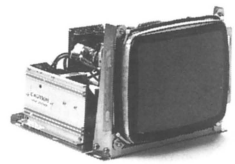

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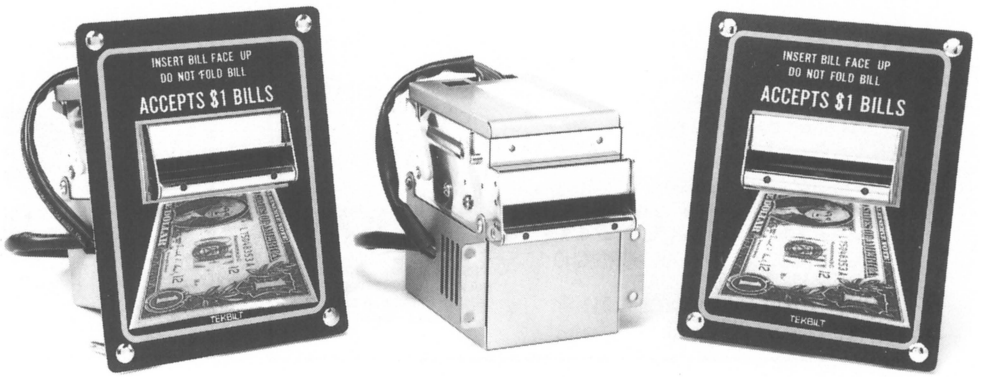


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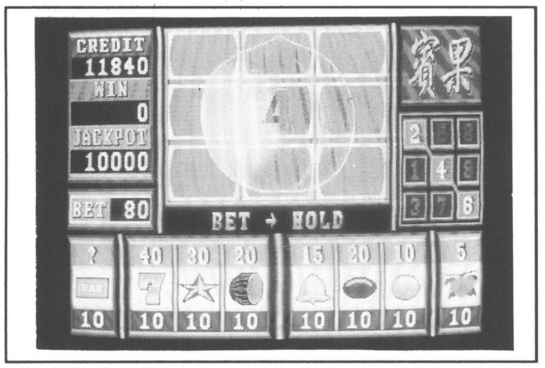


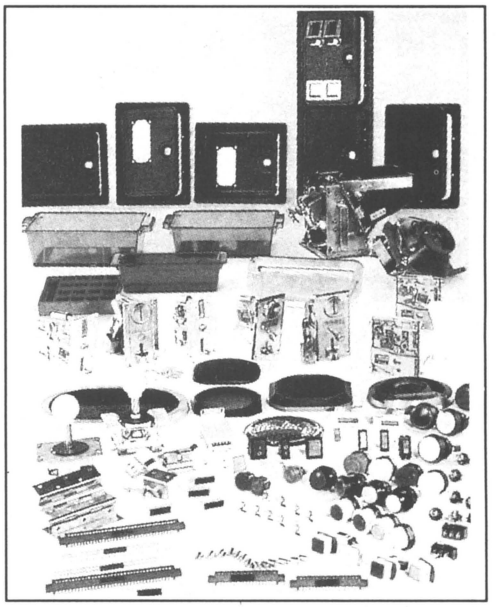

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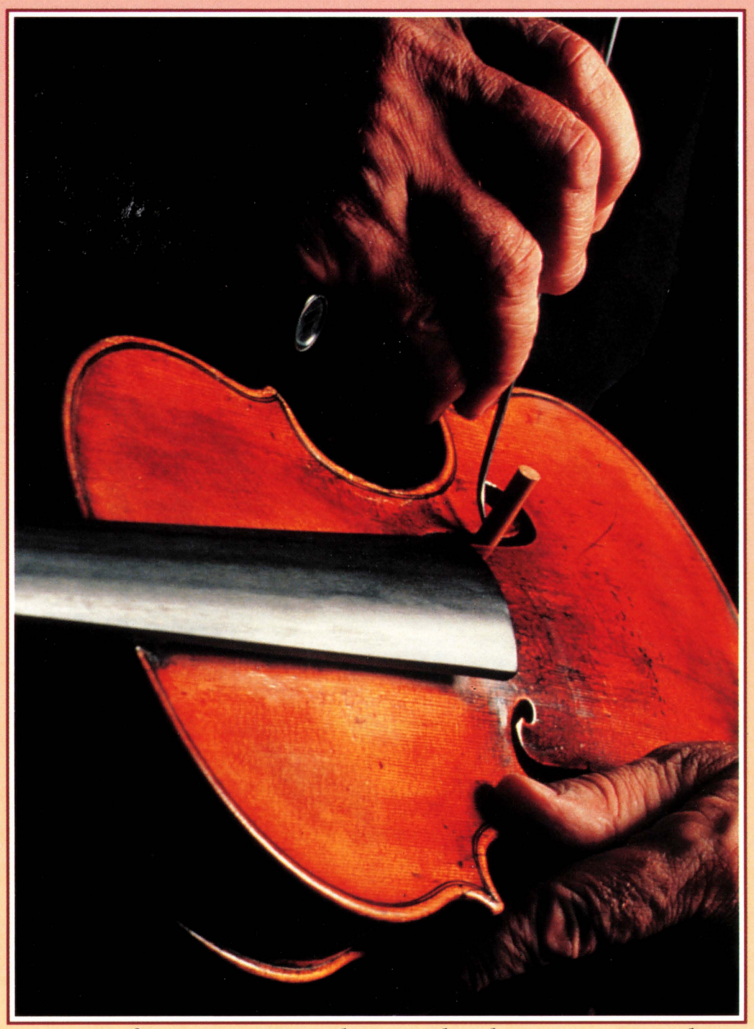

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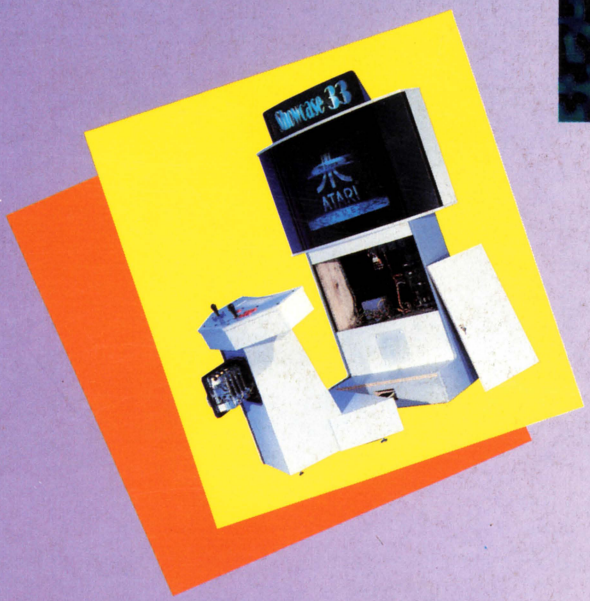
- Wrap-around monitor shield
- UL listed
- Plywood base




## OPERATOR CONVENIENCE

- Universal control panel for 1-4 players
- Fully JAMMA compatible
- Backlit attraction module accepts standard decals
- Front access electronics

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Dimensions:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Height: | 80 in. | (20.3 cm.) |
| Width: | 465 in. | (1181 cm.) |
| Depth: | 60 in. | (152 cm.) |
| Weight: | 660 lbs. | (300 kg.) |

ATARI® GAMES

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